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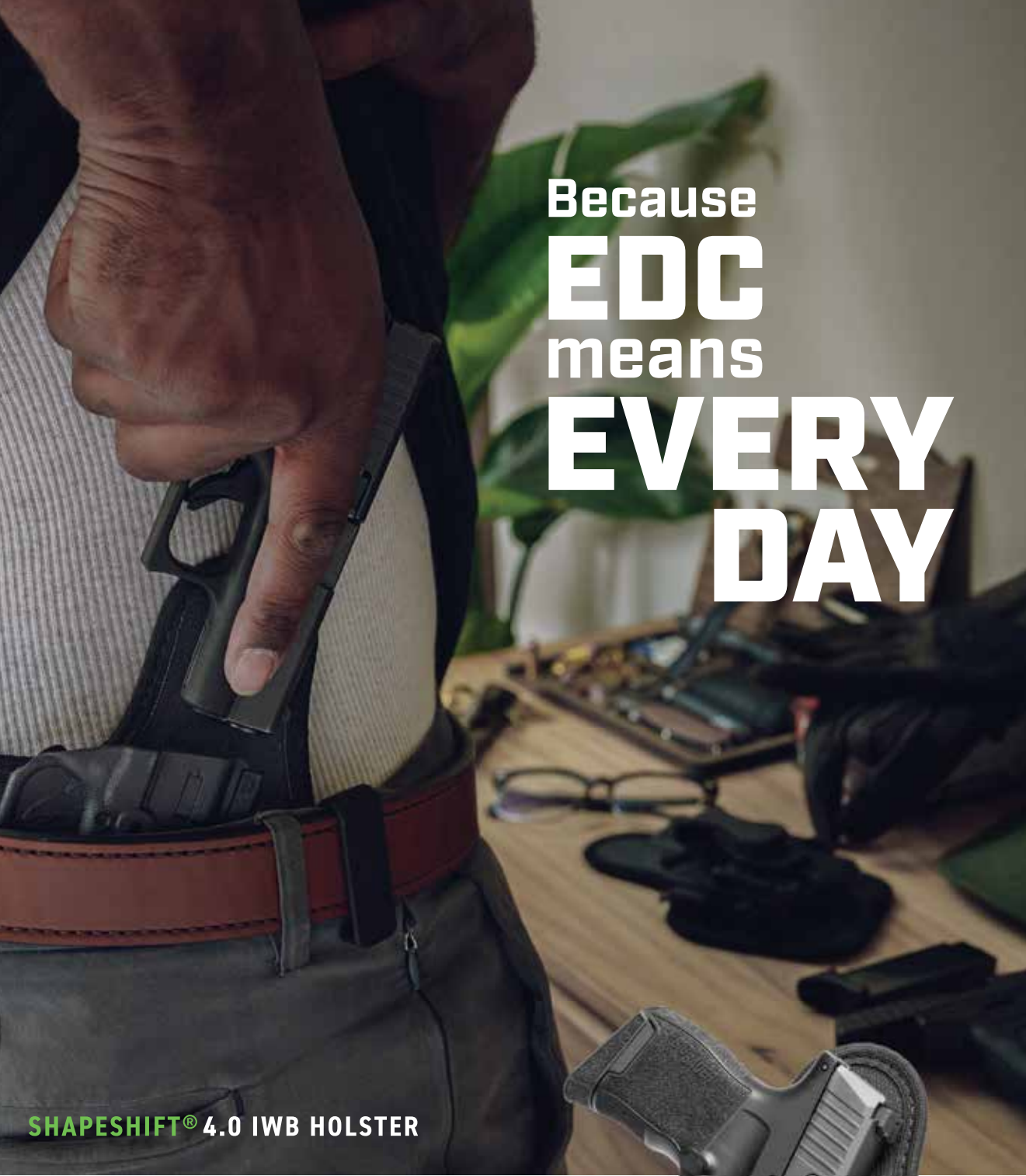
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MOSSBERG SHOCKWAVE 590S



Ravenous Short Scattergun



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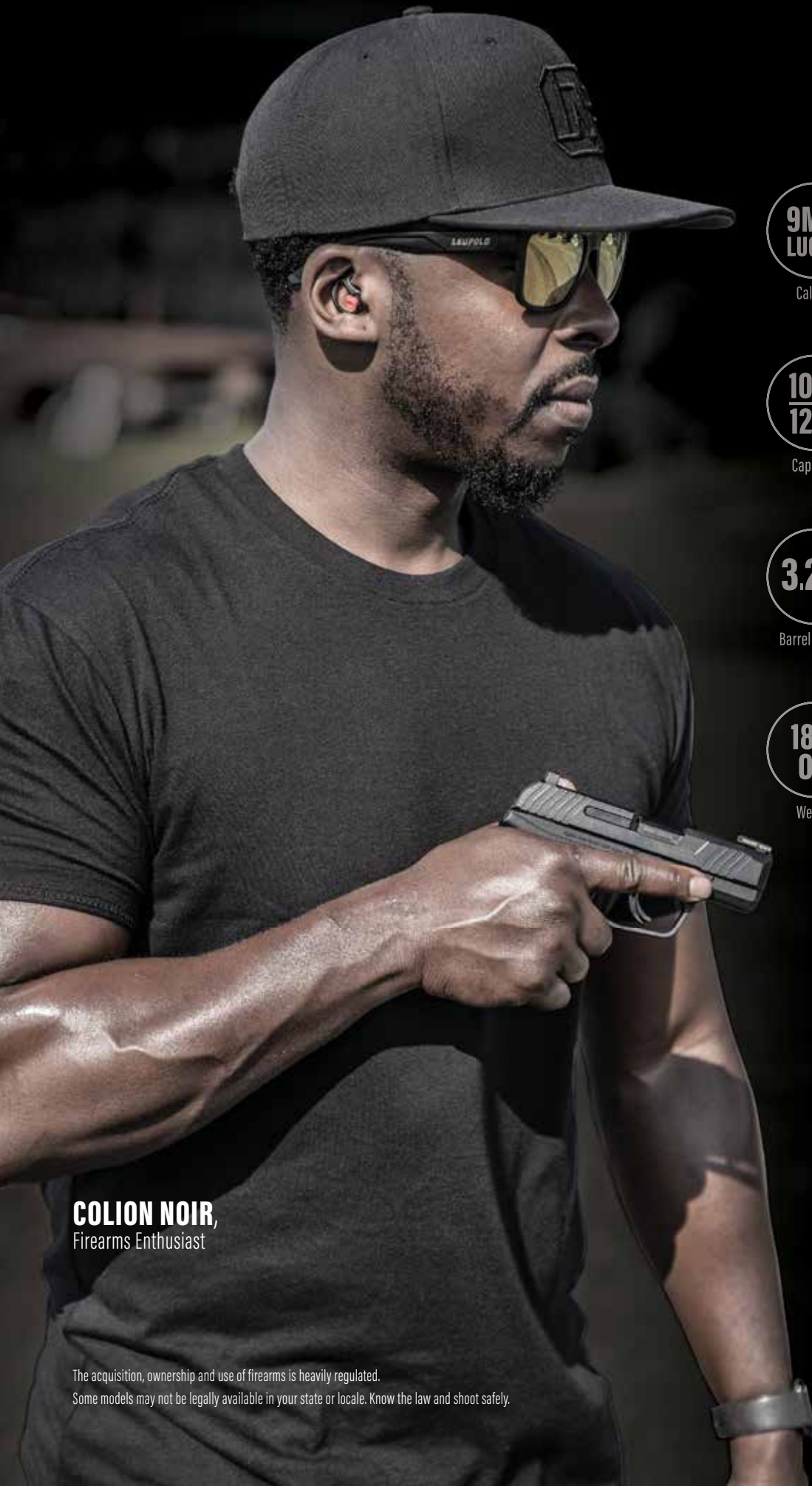
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9MM
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12+1

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KEEP IT COMING

Wow, what an issue (Nov 2021)! I have grown up reading Mike "Duke" Venturino articles and books for the past 35 years. I look forward to his "stuff" each month. It was great to see he has reached his 50th year and really cool to see his place! I hope Mike never retires from writing. I have also come to look forward to Alan Garber's articles. I am so glad there are still writers like me who are "afflicted" with the Single Action Revolver and Lever Action Rifle "virus"! Keep it up Alan! And by the way, thanks to both Mike and Alan for costing me thousands of dollars over the years in firearms, reloading equipment, bullet casting tools and leather gear — it has all been money well spent!

Chris Haynes

Thank you for the kind words. I truly enjoy writing about guns of America's West. My goal is to keep the firearm industry moving full-steam ahead by driving readers in a quest for a much needed obscure bullet mold or vintage gun. My reloading bench and gun safe

can attest to the effect on my own wallet. More cool stories are coming so be sure to keep your subscription current!
—Alan (Cholla) Garbers

POOR CHOICE?

I was heart-sickened to read the apparent attempt at humor by Denny Hansen and Brent Wheat in the article "Mossberg Nightstick." The sentence that read "Unless the shooter rode the extra-short bus, this is a self-correcting problem" is unacceptable any way you look at it. There is no humor when you are attacking children, especially when you go after children with cognitive challenges. Now I find one of your writers and your editor snickering about how clever and funny they are using this term. I'm sure you must approve of this sick humor. Don't we have enough hatred in this world today already? At least you are not trying to hide your ignorance, you come out in print with it.

Rick Peryam

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CRAZY CARTRIDGE CONFUSION

“A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME ...”

The .38 Long Colt in the early double-action Colt revolver was a military disaster.



John Taffin

In the beginning, Oliver Winchester's company brought forth the first really successful repeating firearm with the .44 Henry levergun. This rim-fire cartridge was a true .44 — actually almost .45 — as it used a bullet with a diameter of 0.445", the outside diameter of the cartridge case. This was accomplished by using a bullet that had a base of a smaller diameter than the rest of the case and this smaller-diameter "heel" fitted inside the cartridge case. When Smith & Wesson brought out the first big-bore cartridge-firing sixgun in late 1869, they followed the same pattern using a bullet with two diameters, a smaller heel and the main part of the bullet being 0.441". Then along came the Russians.

Smith & Wesson received a large order from the Russian military for their S&W American Model #3 revolver, however, the Russians made two significant changes. One was for the revolver itself changing the grip frame by adding a hump to the top of the curved backstrap and also placing a spur on the bottom of the trigger guard. To this day there is still no common agreement on the purpose of this spur. Was it to give a more solid grip or simply to keep the pistol from sliding down when placed in a sash at the waistband?

The more important change was the cartridge — the Russians wanted a bullet

of uniform diameter. When the bullet was fashioned to fit inside the case (the normal way today), the bullet diameter was shrunk to a standard 0.429". This has been the case ever since with the ensuing .44 Special, simply a longer .44 Russian, and the .44 Magnum which came about by lengthening the .44 Special case.



WE CAN PURCHASE SIXGUNS TODAY CHAMBERED IN .44 COLT, HOWEVER THESE ALSO HAVE BEEN CHANGED FROM THE ORIGINAL.

Here is also a good spot for making another correction of misinformation both I and others have been guilty of in the past. We gave the Russians credit for coming up with the inside lubricated bullet, that is, a bullet with the lube grooves inside the case. This is not true as the original .44 Russian rounds still used an outside lubricated bullet until 1887 when the Union Metallic Cartridge Company began placing the lube grooves of the .44 Russian cartridge inside the case.

We can purchase sixguns today chambered in .44 Colt but these also have been changed from the original. Colt's first .44 also used a heeled bullet, however, today's .44 Colt cartridge is simply the .44 Special shortened and with a smaller rim diameter. The latter was done to fit the first replica sixguns which had cylinders too small in diameter to accept six .44 Russian or .44 Special whose rims would overlap. Today's .44 Colt replicas, at least some of them, have larger diameter cylinders to also accept .44 Russian and some are also chambered to accept all three of these .44 cartridges.

DASH-SOMETHING

Many of the rifle cartridges of the 19th century were hyphenated, consisting of two numbers with the first one giving the bullet diameter while the latter was for the powder charge. For example, we have the .45-70 which used a bullet of 0.457" to 0.459" diameter over 70 grains of black powder. Notice .45 rifles are actually closer to .46 caliber. Other rifle .45 caliber nomenclature included such as the .45-60, .45-75, .45-90, .45-100, .45-110 and .45-120 with the second number in each case denoting the charge of black powder under the bullet. Then came the Winchester Model 1894 and more confusion.

This now-legendary levergun was first chambered in .38-55 and .32-40, which both follow the original nomenclature

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pattern. Then in 1895 the first smokeless cartridge arrived in the 1894, the .30 Winchester Centerfire (or .30 WCF) that is now mostly known as the .30-30, the second number having nothing to do with a black powder charge. About 10 years later saw the arrival of first the .30-03 and then the .30-06 with the second numbers having absolutely nothing to do with powder charges but rather the year they were introduced. The .308 Winchester of the 1950s actually was named for the bullet diameter.

Winchester's original centerfire cartridges for the Model 1873 levergun were the .44 WCF, .38 WCF and .32 WCF. Today these are more commonly known as .44-40, .38-40 and .32-20. The prevailing wisdom is Marlin started this difference in naming the cartridges because they did not want to write "Winchester" on their barrels so the .44 Winchester Centerfire became the .44-40 with the second number denoting the number of grains of black powder. The .32-20, actually a .31, was loaded with 20 grains of black powder but what of the .38-40? The actual bullet diameter is not 0.38" but rather 0.401". There are some who say it actually was a .40-38, however .38-40 sounded better and then there would be the confusion if it was called a .40-40. Perhaps we shall never know. Even more confusing is a so-called .41 Long Colt which uses not a 0.410" bullet as the later arriving .41 Magnum, but actually a 0.386" diameter bullet. And both the .38-40 and .41 Long Colt sixguns produced by Colt had a barrel groove diameter of 0.401" with the latter cartridge designed so the smaller bullet would expand to match the barrel.



From left to right, the .44, .38 and .32 Winchester Centerfire cartridges. They are actually .43, .40 and .31 caliber. Confusing, no?



All of these are chambered for .38 Long Colt/.38 Special but left-middle and lower-left examples have been fitted with Conversion Cylinders and require either true .38 bullets or soft expanding-hollow-base bullets to fit the rifling.

THE .38 SAGA

When Smith & Wesson introduced a new cartridge in their M&P about the time the 19th century was becoming the 20th century, they called this new cartridge the .38 Smith & Wesson Special, whereas the .38-40 was actually larger in size than the .38, the .38 Special is smaller than .38. There seems to be no end to the confusion. How is it the .38 Special can be fired in a sixgun chambered for .357 Magnum? The answer is the latter is named for the actual bullet diameter used while the .38 Special, although it actually uses the same bullet diameter as the Magnum, is mis-named. Just before the .357 Magnum arrived in 1935, Colt brought out the .38 Super which is also not a true .38 but actually uses bullets of 0.355" to 0.356" diameter. So all of these are actually .36 caliber.

Another cartridge surrounded by confusion is the .38 Colt, both the Long and Short of it. I as well as several others have assumed the .38 Short Colt came first followed by the .38 Long Colt. The latter will always be remembered for its failures rather than its successes. When the United States military switched from percussion pistols, they adopted the Smith & Wesson American .44 in the early 1870s and the Smith & Wesson Schofield .45 in 1875; however both were short-lived and the .45 Colt Single Action Army of 1873 was the official sidearm until the 1890s. Colt had introduced the

.38 Long Colt for use in their smaller centerfire New Line Revolvers in 1874 and then brought out their first double-action sixgun, the Model of 1877 or as it is more well-known, the Lightning. In 1889 the United States Navy adopted the .38 Colt New Navy Double Action Revolver as its official sidearm and then the Army followed adopting the Model of 1892. This turned out to be one of the worst disasters as far as adopting military cartridge in United States history.

The cartridge, which was weaker than the .38 Special which soon followed, failed miserably in the Philippine campaign. So much in fact the .45 Colt Single Action Army was removed from storage and shipped to the Philippines for use. This turned out to actually be a good thing as it led to the adoption of the .45 Government Model of 1911.

So the .38 Long Colt actually arrived before the .38 Short Colt and to make it even more confusing, we have the .38 Short Colt (Short Case) and the .38 Long Colt (Long Case). The latter also originated about 1874 and was chambered in the Colt New Line Revolver. The former, which we would expect to be the forerunner of all of this, actually was the last to appear, being brought out by Remington-Peters in the 1920s.

I started this piece with the idea of clearing up some confusion. I hope I haven't just done more to muddy the waters.

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ONE PARTICULAR M&P

YOU MIGHT THINK 'SEMI' BUT YOU'D BE WRONG

Massad Ayoob
Photos: Gail Pepin

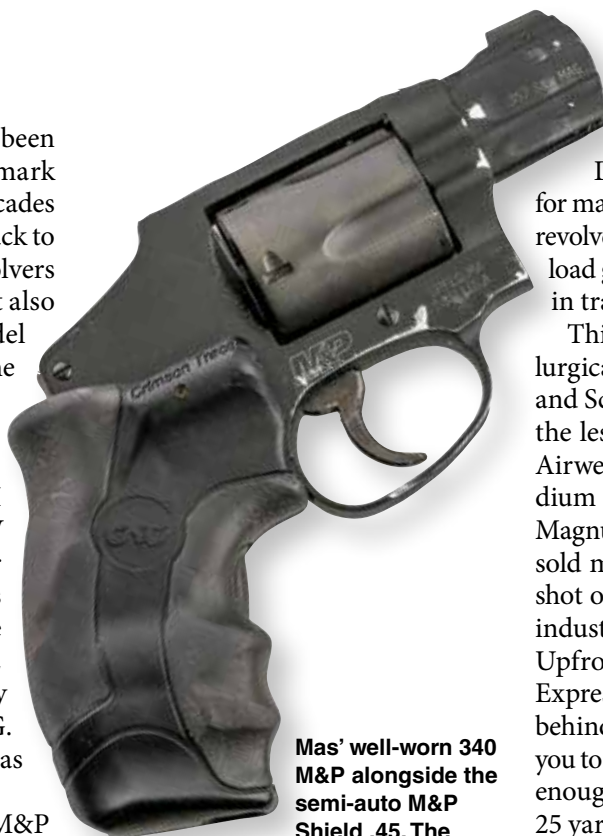
The “Military & Police” has been a Smith & Wesson trademark since 1899 and over the decades I’ve accumulated several, going back to the first iteration. My M&P revolvers include .38 Special, of course, but also .357 Magnum, a couple of Model 58 .41 Mags, and even a pair of the uber-rare Coast Guard 6” fixed-sight .22s. Been a while since I carried one, though.

Like other S&W collectors, I had mixed feelings when S&W put the M&P sobriquet on their polymer pistols almost 20 years ago but the guns themselves are pretty cool: Mine range from .22 LR to a long-slide 9mm to a very sweet M&P Compact in .357 SIG. I admit, though, I don’t use them as much as I used to.

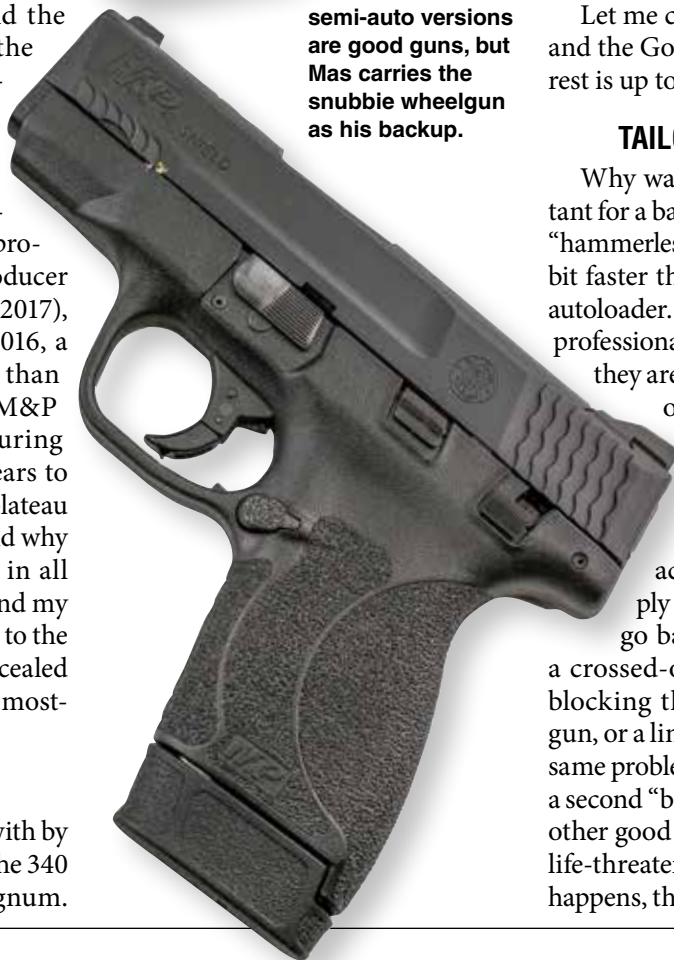
The Shield comes under the M&P umbrella and these M&Ps sold the most in the shortest time. In the August 2021 issue of *GUNS*’ sister publication *Shooting Industry*, editor Jade Moldae noted, “Smith & Wesson was the top maker of 9mm-chambered pistols in the 2010s, with 3,976,014 produced. It was the lead 9mm producer for five consecutive years (2013-2017), peaking at 823,260 pistols in 2016, a record mark (and more pistols than the entirety of 2005). The M&P Shield was a primary driver during this period, taking just three years to reach the 1 million production plateau after its 2012 debut.” I understand why they’re so popular. I own them in all three calibers: 9mm, .40 S&W and my favorite .45 ACP that brought me to the prize table at the Pin Shoot’s Concealed Carry event. But they aren’t my most-carried M&Ps, either.

AND THE WINNER IS ...

The M&P I spend most time with by far is my preferred backup gun, the 340 M&P. Chambered for .357 Magnum.



Mas’ well-worn 340 M&P alongside the semi-auto M&P Shield .45. The semi-auto versions are good guns, but Mas carries the snubbie wheelgun as his backup.



Mine is generally loaded with Speer 135-grain .38 Spl +P Gold Dot, the bonded, jacketed hollow point designed by Ernest Durham and his team expressly for maximum performance in 2” barrel revolvers — a long-since “street-proven” load giving excellent rapid fire control in trained hands.

This J-Frame five-shooter is a metallurgical vichyssoise of steel, aluminum and Scandium. It’s about the weight of the less-expensive aluminum-framed Airweight Model 442 .38, but the Scandium makes it strong enough for .357 Magnum. All of this is good — but what sold me on the 340 M&P when I first shot one when it was introduced at an industry show in 2005 was the sights. Upfront, there’s the Big Dot Tritium Express sight you just can’t miss while behind it is a huge U-notch. This allows you to center the big front sight precisely enough for a guaranteed head shot at 25 yards.

Let me clarify one thing — the gun and the Gold Dot guarantee it, but the rest is up to us shooters!

TAILORED TO THE TASK

Why was this feature set so important for a backup gun? From a pocket, a “hammerless” revolver draws just a little bit faster than a square-back compact autoloader. Another thing: When even professionals are relaxed and off-duty, they are concerned their significant other might be able to use their gun in self-defense if the occasion arose and they themselves were incapacitated. The double-action-only revolver is simply easier for anyone to “make go bang” and not worry about a crossed-over support hand thumb blocking the slide and jamming the gun, or a limp-wristed hold causing the same problem. One reason for carrying a second “backup gun” is to allow some other good guy or gal to be armed in a life-threatening emergency. When this happens, there won’t be time to give the

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other person a tutorial on “here’s the safety, here’s the decock lever, and by the way don’t let your support hand thumb get behind the slide.” A “hammerless” revolver eliminates all those issues.

My wife ain’t gonna cross her thumb behind the slide on an auto: She’s a state and regional champion shooter who generally carries a gun of her own. But I’ve been in situations with guys I knew were competent but had gained their competence with guns other than mine, and if it happened again I didn’t want to worry about crossed-over thumbs and such. Actually, like Jerry Miculek, I personally *do* cross the support hand thumb over the back of the firing hand to get it out of the way on a little J-Frame.

Now, I’ll grant the J-Frame doesn’t have the cartridge capacity of the M&P Shield Plus 9mm I just bought. The Shield Plus carries 11+1 with its short magazine — the payload of a J-Frame and a six-shot K-Frame M&P revolver — and you get 13+1 with the extended mag. But I’m faster clearing



The Model 340 has a large U-shaped rear sight to mate with the Big Dot tritium sight (above) — perfect for a fightin’ gun! Mas prefers the controllability of the Speer Gold Dot (below) 135-grain .38 Spl +P over .357 Magnum rounds in the super-lightweight gun.



the hammerless J-Frame than I am with any auto due to the shape of the guns and I’d rather have five shots in hand now than 11 or 14 a few seconds from now. Your needs may vary.

There was a time when it was more important to me to have a backup that fed the same ammo as my duty gun. As a young patrolman, there were two years when I had to carry a K-Frame S&W, so my backup was a D-Frame snub-nose Colt which would take the same HKS speedloaders as the service revolver. During the couple of years I wore a GLOCK 22 as a duty pistol, the backup on my ankle was a GLOCK 27 that would feed the G22’s .40 S&W mags. In either case, if my duty gun was out of my control, I had another gun and two reloads to fight with. Today, as a geezer retired from police work, a spare Bianchi Speed Strip in the cargo pocket is there to feed my 340 M&P. As the late, great Pat Rogers used to say, “The mission drives the gear train.”

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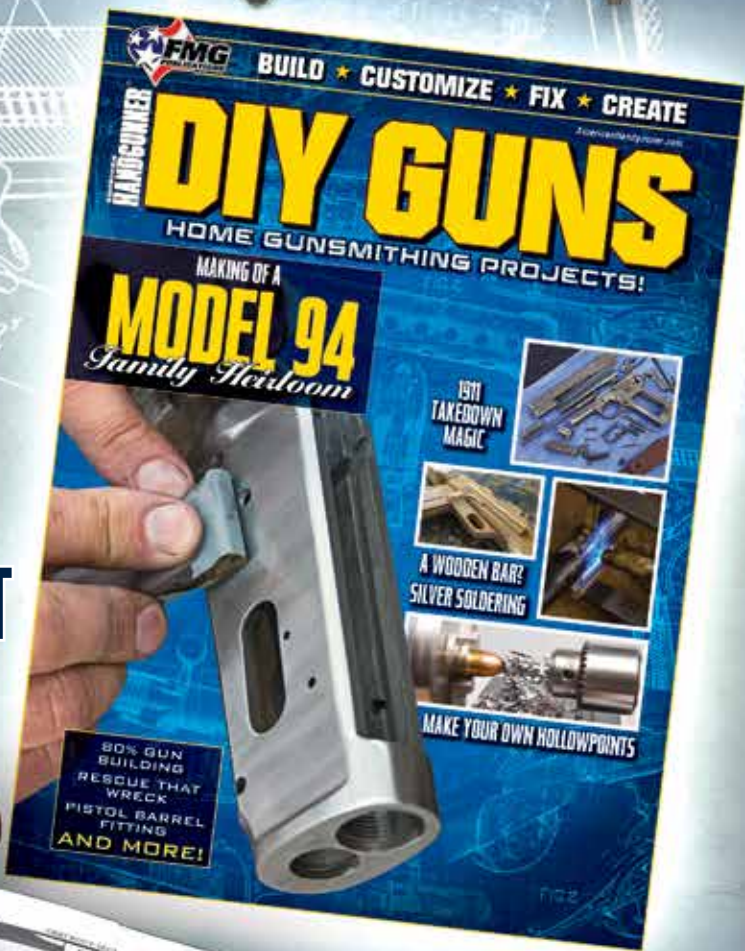
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Ruger .44 Magnum rifles (from top) — the 77/44, Deerfield and Deerstalker.

RUGER .44 MAGNUM CARBINES RIFLES EVEN A SIXGUNNER CAN LOVE

John Taffin

Ruger has offered pistol-caliber carbines over the last 60 years chambered in .44 Magnum, including two semi-automatics, the Deerstalker and Deerfield, as well as a lever-action and bolt-action chambered for the .44 Magnum. Despite my love for sixguns, I am able to find room for these excellent rifles in my shooting heart.

DEERSTALKER AND DEERFIELD

Ruger's original Deerstalker arrived in 1961. Elmer Keith had high praise for it at the time saying: "True, it's not a long-range weapon, but I cannot readily think of a handier and more deadly little gun for all timber and reasonable-range shooting of animals that are wanted for the table ... It would also make a most excellent fighting weapon in close combat for any peace officer or the military."

As so often happened with manufacturers, Ruger dropped the original .44 carbine because of the cost of



For easy-shooting .44 Magnum carbine loads giving the same muzzle velocity as sixguns, John goes with Speer bullets and IMR 4227.

production. In the newer Deerfield, this expense was addressed with simplified gas-operated feeding mechanisms. It does not have the classic look and very nice walnut stock of the Deerstalker, however instead of loading shotgun-style from the bottom as the Deerstalker it has a four-round removable magazine which is much easier on my fingers.

The Deerfield is quite selective as to

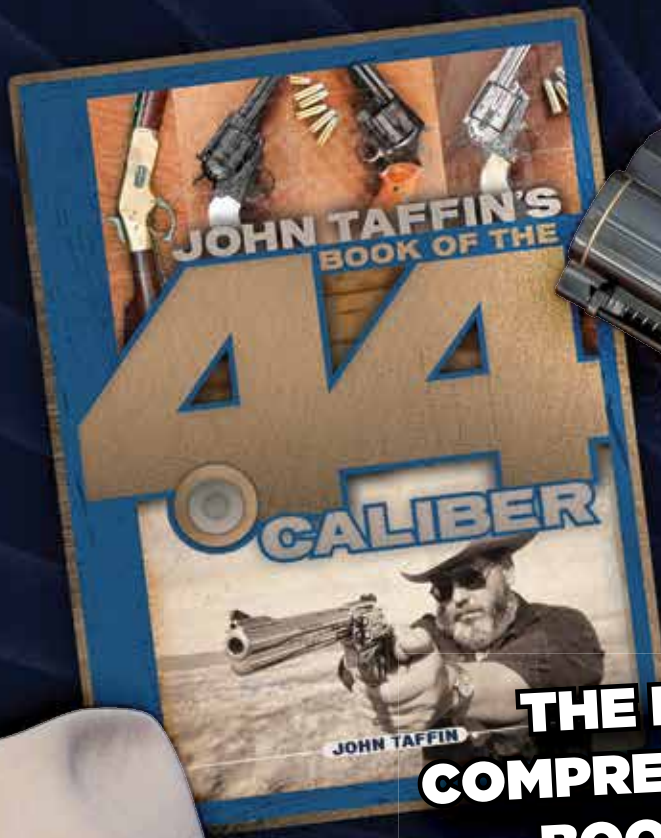
which ammunition it will use, and overall length must be such that cartridges will enter the magazine, thus precluding the use of some of the Heavy-Duty hunting ammunition now available with long 300-grain bullets. One notable exception is .44 Magnum ammo loaded with 300-grain Hornady XTPs. Speer's heavy-duty loading using the 270-grain Gold Dot also feeds flawlessly and the Deerfield easily handles the .44 Magnum loads with both 180- and 200-grain JHP bullets, however, Ruger cautions against the use of cast bullets because of the danger of lead buildup in the gas port.

LEVERS AND BOLTS

In addition to these two semi-automatic pistol caliber carbines, Ruger also offered both lever-action and bolt-action models. The Ruger 96/44 was Ruger's .44 Magnum lever action using a rotary magazine holding four rounds, The 96/44 had a barrel length of 18-1/2" with a weight slightly under 6 lbs. The Model 96/44 comes easily to the shoulder



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CALIBER



Targets fired with the .44 Magnum Deerstalker.

and points naturally for this shooter. It would be a top choice for hunting in deep timber for anything of the deer/black bear/hog sized category.

Ruger's latest rifle entry chambered in the .44 Magnum is the Model 77/44. The gun turned out to be one dandy little carbine which dispelled any misgivings I may have had about such a chambering in a bolt action rifle. With the same 18-1/2" barrel length as found on the old Deerstalker, if anything the 77/44 feels even more compact and handles even easier. Conventional leverguns are often difficult to load through their loading gates on the side of the receiver especially in cold weather. The 77/44

reloads quickly with the removal of an empty magazine by pressing in on the lever behind the bottom of the magazine and replaced by a full magazine carried easily in a jacket pocket.

If the Ruger Model 77/44 has one drawback it's the same as for the semi-automatic .44 Deerfields — namely the fact the magazine will not accept rounds with long-nosed bullets, meaning such excellent hunting rounds such as Garrett's 310-grain hard cast Keith bullet .44 Magnum load cannot be used except as a single shot. The same is true for the old standard Keith loading of the 260-grain hard cast semi-wadcutter bullet over 22.0 grains of #2400.

For the handloader this means overall cartridge length is very important. I find it helpful to make dummy rounds with properly seated bullets without primer or powder to make sure they will feed flawlessly and chamber correctly. I often caution reloaders who are seeking loads for both their sixgun and rifle to find their rifle load first as they are more picky about cartridges than sixguns are. This is especially true with the Ruger rifles.

Since cast bullets can cause problems in the semi-automatic Ruger carbines, I normally stick with jacketed bullets for all of my loads for the Rugers. Powders include IMR4227, Alliant #2400,



Targets fired with the .44 Magnum Ruger Model 77/44. Notice the cloverleaf on the first target!

Accurate #9 and Hodgdon's H110. My most-used jacketed .44 Magnum bullets are Hornady's 240 JHP and 265 FP, and Speer's 240 JHP, GDHP and JSP. All of these, when crimped in the crimping groove, will feed and chamber through all Ruger .44 Magnum carbines. I especially appreciate the quality of Redding's Titanium Carbide .44 Magnum dies and use them for all reloading for Ruger rifles.

ACCURACY

With previous shooting of factory loads, I found all three of these rifles will stay well under 2" for three shots at 100 yards. For this round of testing, I went with nine handloads with seven of those being standard 240-grain bullets and the other two a 225 Barnes XPB and the Hornady 265 FP originally designed for the .444 Marlin. The 77/44 averaged exactly 1" for three shots with all loads, the Deerstalker came in just over 1", while the Deerfield was the most accurate at just under 1". So actually there is no practical difference in accuracy between the three.

For the 77/44 the two most accurate loads were the Speer 240 HP over 20.5 grains of #2400 for just over 1,700 fps while the Barnes 225 XPB with 18.5 grains of Accurate #9 clocked out at 1,625 fps and shot all three bullets into the same hole measuring 1/4" center to center. Two other Full House loads which performed exceptionally well were loaded over 20.5 grains of #2400 and both shooting in 1" were the Speer 240 GDHP and the Hornady 240 HP with both clocking out right at 1,700 fps.

Switching to the Deerstalker, the most accurate loads all just under 1" were the Speer 240 SP over 22.5 grains of #4227 for an easy shooting 1,425 fps; the Speer 240 SP with 20.5 range of #2400 for 1,650 fps; the Speer GDHP also with 20.5 range of #2400 for 1,630 fps; and the Hornady 265 FP just under 1,600 fps with 21.5 grains of H110. My favorite of the three, the Deerfield, shot the following loads at less than 1": the Speer 240 SP with 22.5 grains of #4227 and 1,485 fps; Speer 240 HP, 20.5 #2400, 1,680 fps; Hornady 240 SIL, 21.0 Accurate #9, 1,675 fps; and the 225 Barnes XPB which clocks out at 1,634 fps using 18.5 grains of Accurate #9.

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THE SKINNY ON SCOPES

TIMES CHANGE — FOR THE BETTER!

Dave Anderson

The first time I tried using a rifle scope must have been around 60 years ago. The father of a friend had somehow managed to attach a 3/4" tube scope made for .22 rifles to his old Savage 1899 in .303 Savage. I remember how excited I was at the opportunity.

Being nearsighted from an early age I found it hard to use iron sights, even with glasses. I was sure a scope would solve all my problems. Put the intersection of the crosshairs on target just as pictured in the ads and press the trigger — what could be easier? My high hopes made the reality all the more crushing.

LIGHTS OUT

At first, I couldn't even see an image. The eye had to be in exactly the right spot or the image simply blacked out. At best it was dim and out-of-focus. The intersection of the crosshairs was off in a corner. It was quite a blow to a naive and trusting farm boy.

The scope had just about every fault a scope can have. Happily, even at the time (circa 1960) clever engineers and optical designers were solving the issues. Scopes became tougher, more resistant to recoil and accidental impacts. Eye relief became much less critical. Moisture-proofing became much more effective. Permanently centered reticles became the norm. Better optics and optical coatings greatly improved image quality and low-light capability.

One issue didn't get much attention, mainly because shooters didn't ask for it — the issue of reliable, repeatable adjustments. Don't get me wrong, we wanted adjustments, but we weren't very demanding. As long as we could get the rifle sighted-in, we were satisfied. Our hope was, once sighted-in, we'd never have to touch the adjustments again. It didn't matter if the clicks weren't quite the value the maker claimed, or if adjusting to the right also moved point of impact up a bit.

Makers had little incentive to improve the adjustments since most shooters didn't care. There were a few serious target shooters who did care but they used scopes with sophisticated external mounts, too heavy, bulky and fragile for hunting use. Then, a new form of rifle competition — metallic silhouette — became popular in the 1970s. Competitors engaged targets off-hand at 200, 300, 385 and 500 meters. They needed reliable, repeatable and durable scope adjustments. Moreover, the scopes and mounts couldn't be too heavy as rifle and sights were subject to

weight restrictions. The only problem was such scopes didn't exist.

A NEW DAY

In 1977 Weaver announced its T-series of scopes with what it called the Micro-Trac system. If there were ever a scope Hall of Fame, the T-10 Micro Trac would be the one I'd nominate. The Micro Trac used a carbide ball bearing on the reticle cell. The adjustments were what competitors were demanding — accurate, reliable, repeatable and durable. The T-series proved sensationally successful in



The Weaver T-series scopes with Micro Trac adjustments were introduced in 1977. It was one of the first mass-market scope with accurate, repeatable and reliable adjustments. Two landmarks in scope development, the Weaver T-10 Micro Trac (below, top) and the 2.5-10x42 Nightforce NXS. Both have reliable, repeatable and durable adjustments and can be dialed for different distances and wind conditions.

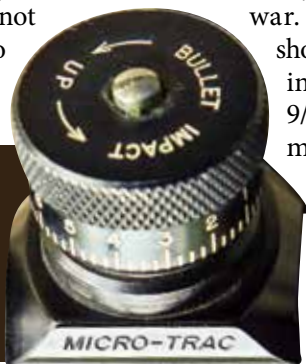


competition. Many are still in service; in good condition they still sell readily.

I have a T-10 on a '50s era BSA Hunter .222 Rem. It has its faults. The parallax adjustment is a ring on the objective end of the scope, less convenient than a knob on the left side, and the 2/3-minute dot and fine crosshairs can be hard to see in field shooting. It's long compared to current designs. Optics are good though not quite up to current standards. But it is still a useable scope.

A few *avant-garde* varmint shooters began dialing scopes for field shooting. For old timers such as myself this seemed downright foolhardy. Decades of experience had shown us not to touch the dials except to sight in. The concept of twisting dials and then

The repeatability of the Micro Trac system popularized the idea hunters could actually dial their "dope" in the field rather than using hold-over or special reticles.



The Micro Trac set-up quickly became popular with metallic silhouette competitors and proved so successful it became standard on Weaver hunting scopes as well.



expecting the scope to return to zero seemed impossible. In fact, for many of the scopes we used, it was *impossible*. Even if the scope did dial accurately, the relatively soft contact surfaces wouldn't hold up for long.

Shooting innovations are generally spurred by either competition or war. Interest in long-range shooting was already growing in the 1990s and after 9/11 there was increased military interest as well.

Precision shooting was seen both as a way of protecting troops and for taking out enemy targets without a lot of collateral

damage. Scope makers, notably Nightforce, developed scopes to meet military demands — not only extremely precise but incredibly tough. For those of us who still regarded scopes as fragile, delicate instruments, the toughness was

hard to believe.

The final hurdle was price. These money-no-object military scopes come with price tags in the range of \$2,500 to \$4,000, and yes, they truly are spectacular. Modern competitive rifle shooters, and those of us who shoot paper, prairie dogs and pronghorns don't need the toughness military use demands. We do need precise, repeatable and durable adjustments at a price we can afford. Established makers such as Bushnell, Burris, Leica, Leupold, Nightforce and Zeiss are making them for us, along with relative newcomers like Athlon, Maven, Primary Arms, Sightron, SWFA, Tract, Vortex and others. Exciting times!

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SRM ARMS 1216 SHOTGUN

CAPACITY-PLUS IN A TRUE FIGHTING GUN!

Denny Hansen

Most fighting shotguns are descendants of hunting shotguns modified for use in a defensive/offensive role. Many, such as the Remington 870 and Mossberg 500/590 series, have served with distinction.

Due to their genealogy, they share the common complaint of minimal ammunition capacity. Even “tactical” shotguns are somewhat limited. For example, the Remington Express Tactical has a capacity of 7+1 and the Mossberg 590 comes in at 8+1.

What if you could have a shotgun built from the ground up as a fighting

shotgun, shorter than most while weighing within a few ounces, and with a total capacity of 17 shells?

DETAILS

The SRM Arms 1216 (hereafter referred to simply as the 1216) is a roller-delayed, straight blowback semiautomatic shotgun. The lower receiver is polymer while the upper receiver, bolt group and barrel are made of steel. While not necessary for routine maintenance, the upper receiver can be detached and is the serial numbered part, making it the “firearm.”

Barrel length is 18½". The muzzle is threaded and comes with a screw-on

thread protector. The optional stand-off device, as shown in the photos, adds 2½" to the length of the barrel.

On top of the receiver is a 6" Picatinny rail. The handguard has three 6" rails located at 9, 12 and 3 o'clock.

A rubber recoil pad caps the buttstock. On either side of the stock are recessed sling attachment points. A sling attachment is located at the front of the side rails and is reversible for right- or left-handed use.

The test gun came set up for a right-handed shooter, but the bolt release, charging handle, safety selector and ejection port can be converted for use by a left-hand shooter.

The 1216 doesn't come with sights,



WHAT IF YOU COULD HAVE A SHOTGUN BUILT FROM THE GROUND UP AS A **FIGHTING SHOTGUN**, SHORTER THAN MOST WHILE WEIGHING WITHIN A FEW OUNCES, AND WITH A **TOTAL CAPACITY OF 17 SHELLS?**

though any backup iron sights fitting on a Picatinny rail can be used. For the evaluation, I used an Aimpoint Micro T-2 red dot sight. Due to the straight-line design, the Aimpoint indexed perfectly with the high spacer used on carbines. Out of habit I also attached a set of Magpul MBUS back-up sights but were not used in the evaluation.

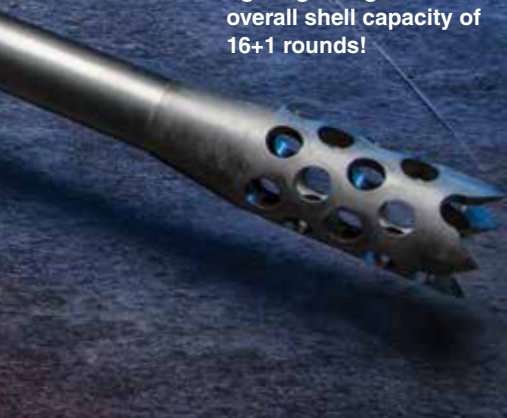
QUAD TUBE MAGAZINE

What sets the 1216 apart from other fighting shotguns is the revolving magazine. The magazine has four integral magazine tubes each holding four shells. Each tube has its own spring-loaded shell retainer.

To load the magazine into the gun, insert the rear of the magazine into the magwell and push the front of the mag up into the magazine hanger. Rotate the magazine if necessary to make sure it locks in place. To remove the magazine, push in on the front of the



Each tube (above) has its own spring-loaded shell retainer. The SRM 1216 is a purpose-built fighting shotgun with an overall shell capacity of 16+1 rounds!



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A right-side view of the SRM 1216 with optional standoff device.

release lever located at the front of the magazine hanger.

A manual index lever is located at either side on top of the magazine hanger. To rotate the magazine to the next tube, push up on this lever and either push or pull the magazine with your fingers. The magazine can be rotated either clockwise or counterclockwise.

During this evaluation, several shooters fired the 1216, and reactions were mixed on the easiest way to rotate the magazine. Personally, I found it easier to push up on the magazine with my fingers and turning it counterclockwise as viewed from the rear.

DISASSEMBLY

Field stripping the 1216 is similar to the takedown of an AR-style rifle. Place the shotgun on safe and remove the magazine. Pull the charging handle and visually and physically verify the chamber is empty, then push the bolt stop and allow the bolt to go forward.

Locate the latch pin at the top rear of the receiver and push it out until it

stops. Pivot the stock away from the upper receiver. Grasp the charging handle and pull the bolt carrier to the rear. No further disassembly is necessary or recommended.

AT THE RANGE

There was a time when I would pattern numerous brands of buckshot through a shotgun to find the buckshot load a particular shotgun liked. To save time and ammo, I now go with two proven performers that seem to work great in all shotguns — Federal 00 buckshot with FLITECONTROL wad and Hornady Critical Defense 00 buckshot with Versatite wad.

With these two loads, instead of starting at five yards and working my way back, I normally start at 20 yards — they really do pattern this tightly.

For my purposes, I consider the shotgun/load has reached its maximum potential when all nine 00 buckshot pellets won't stay inside the "C" zone of an IPSC target — roughly 18" high by 9" wide.

At 25 yards, the Hornady load kept all pellets inside the "A" zone and kept



SRM 1216 hinged open for cleaning. Disassembly is similar to that of an AR-15-type rifle.

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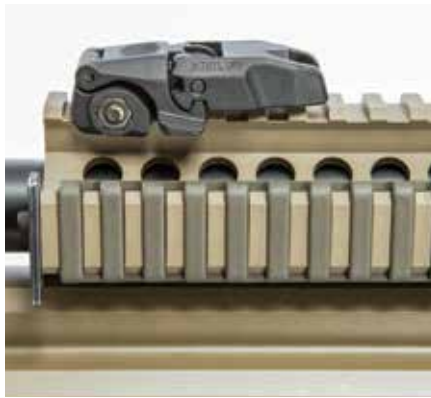
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Rail covers are a good idea, especially on the plastic rails, to protect the slots.

them all within the “C” zone out to 35 yards.

All pellets from the Federal were inside the “A” zone at 25 yards and did not drop a pellet outside of the “C” zone until I reached 40 yards, proving the old myth buckshot opens up 1” per yard is just that — a myth.

Switching over to slugs, I once again went with Federal and Hornady. The Federal load was their 1-oz. TruBall Rifled Slug. I was curious how the Hornady Superformance Shotgun slugs would perform, as they were designed for shotguns with rifled barrels.

I went back to 75 yards with the Federal slug and achieved five-round groups just over 6’ fired from braced kneeling.

Three rounds of Hornady Superformance slugs went into about 3” at the same distance but, as mentioned above, since they are designed for rifled barrels, two of the five rounds keyholed from the smooth bore, opening the group up to 6½”.

While neither of the slug loads was as precise as a carbine, I didn’t expect them to be, but both loads maintain minute-of-bad-guy accuracy.

SUMMARY

One drawback of the 1216 for some folks will be the cost. Suggested retail price is \$1,799 with the going street price about \$1,500.

However, if you want or need a firearm built from the ground up as a fighting shotgun and has more than twice the ammunition capacity as any other shotgun, the SRM Arms 1216 deserves a close look.

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MOLD ADDICT!

MADNESS, INSANITY AND MORE AT THE CASTING BENCH

Mike "Duke" Venturino, Photos: Yvonne Venturino

No doubt about it — I'm an addict. But, not for any sort of chemical substance. I'm a bullet mold addict! Here's some evidence.

I've owned several hundred bullet molds starting at age 17. Over the years the majority of those have been sold, traded, or ruined within days due to ignorance in my early casting days. At age 72 I still have well over 100 bullet molds running from .25 caliber on the small end to .58 on the large side. I formerly even cast .22 caliber bullets but my hands became so smitten with arthritis, handling such tiny objects became problematic.

NEVER STOP

I've tried to experience most any sort of bullet that can be cast at home with my own two hands. Molds for hollowpoint, hollowbase, semiwadcutters, wadcutters, round nose, round nose/flatpoint, plain base or gas check have passed through my hands. Of course combinations are available such as hollowpoint semi-wadcutter with gas check.

Over the years I've tried iron, brass and aluminum mold blocks. Collectively they have been cut with one, two, three, four and six cavities. The most recent mold I've acquired came from Accurate Molds in Salt Lake City. It is for a .38-40, 175-grain RN/FP plain base bullet and made of iron with three cavities. It pretty well illustrates what I like in a revolver bullet mold in regards to the block material, number of cavities and bullet form.

Here's a good example of my affliction. In 2020 I purchased a fine .41 Colt SAA made in the early 1900s. I won't go into detail about this cartridge's oddness just now but suffice it to say I needed a hollowbase bullet of about 190-grains about 0.386" to 0.388" in diameter. I'll explain the mismatch of dimensions in a future column.

After buying the .41 Colt I began looking for a used hollowbase mold dropping about a 190-grain bullet of 0.386"/0.388". Lyman used to make them and a now-defunct company called Rapine Molds did so too. Both versions were single cavity only. I had no luck, but a tip led me to MP Molds

which offers an ingenious method of casting hollowbase bullets in multiple cavity molds. Surprisingly, MP Molds is located in Slovenia but the .41 Colt mold arrived in a mere week. It is made of brass and of beautiful quality.

Why is this .41 Colt story a sign of my addiction? Because I would not stop. Diligently I kept searching until I found on eBay a Lyman mold #386178 and later a Rapine mold #386185. Then I had custom-made by Buffalo Arms Company of Idaho both 0.386" and 0.388" lube/sizing dies. In the end I spent about \$750 in molds and sizing dies for this one revolver. I just couldn't help myself!



Duke's two favorite cast bullets for BPCR Silhouette competition come from custom molds by Steve Brooks. At left is .40 caliber, 425-grain "Turkey Killer" loaded in .40-65. At right is .45 caliber, 560-grain "Popcorn" loaded in .45-70.



One of Duke's most recent molds came from Slovenia. It's a multiple cavity .41 Colt hollowpoint design weighing 190 grains.

A major change in bullet molds has occurred since I started in 1966. Back then most were produced in factories and cut by the “cherry” method. This was when a hardened cutter was built in the image of the bullet. Then it was spun in a milling machine while the mold blocks were pressed together. Therefore, manufacturers offered standard selections as is still done by Lyman, RCBS, Redding/Saeco and Lee.



Buffalo Arms of Idaho makes many cast bullet designs such as these using CNC machinery.

TRANSFORMATION

Times have changed. Now there are a plethora of custom bullet mold makers. Lathe boring the mold blocks is common. Some shops cut each mold to a customer’s desire. My long-time friend Steve Brooks of Walkerville, Mont. does so using only iron blocks with a single cavity. His molds are favored by precision-minded cast bullet rifle shooters. Steve is a two-time national champion in the BPCR Silhouette game and knows what a winning bullet should be. My few wins have been with bullets from his molds.

Other makers have turned to CNC machinery. For instance, Accurate Molds mentioned above has about 700 bullet designs in their computer. Pick one and it can be made with one, two or three cavities in aluminum, brass or steel blocks. Such is how my recent .38-40 mold came about. Another custom maker using CNC machinery is Buffalo Arms. I don’t know how many designs are on their computer system but I know there are plenty. Again, the ones I have are single cavity in iron blocks and popular among the

BPCR Silhouette crowd. Additionally, a customer can supply either Accurate Molds or Buffalo Arms with detailed drawings of a cast bullet brainstorm and either outfits can turn it into a fine quality bullet mold. I can speak from experience their products are excellent.

My sage advice after casting bullets for 55 years is this — never sell a good mold, never loan a favored mold, and never say you have enough molds. Surely there is another captivating design still lurking out there. **GUNS**

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The Firearms International Bronco is perhaps the world's most austere .22 rifle. However, Will says his copy is surprisingly well made.

THE BRONCO .22 LR SURVIVAL RIFLE

HOW TO PROFIT FROM A BUDDY'S MISFORTUNE

Will Dabbs, MD

“Will, it’s for you,” my mom shouted as she pulled together yet another fantastic meal. I was occupied in my bedroom painting a 1/35-scale plastic model of a German PzKpfw V Panther tank. I was cool like that.

The phone was the size of a brick and tethered to the wall. Ours was extra neat because it had buttons rather than a dial. The year was 198 and life was awesome.

I was in 10th grade and worked after school as a janitor in a local drug store. I made \$56.26 every other week and had no expenses beyond gas. My buddy Mike was on the phone. Mike had a problem.

Mike needed girl money. Many folks don’t realize this, but there are three major types of currency in the world. Regular money pays for stuff like rent and groceries. Gun money is what it sounds like, going to guns and ammo. Girl money is used to initiate

and maintain relationships with the fairer sex. These three types of currency look the same and can potentially interchange, but they are fundamentally quite disparate. It is amazing this stuff is not taught in the major Economics schools.

Mike’s girl fund was depleted, yet he had a pending date with a cheerleader. Mike desperately didn’t want to look lame in the drive-through at the local Wendy’s. He also knew I had a job.

Mike had a beat-up old .22 rifle he could live without. He described it over the phone and explained he needed \$25 to get through the weekend. Could I help a brother out?

GUN BRO ECONOMICS

Live in this quirky little world long enough and we will all get these calls. As a point of honor, never take advantage of anyone’s misfortune. If some widow calls you up trying to get rid of

her dead husband’s German machine-gun collection, pay the lady a fair price. Play this one wrong and you’ll forfeit your soul. However, when your buddy Mike reaches out in desperation wanting to sell a gun, it behooves you to hear him out.

The gun sounded delightfully weird. It was a single shot .22 rifle with a skeletonized stock and pivoting barrel. I was certainly intrigued. We agreed to meet in the school parking lot after class the following day.

Nancy Pelosi, if you’re reading this, you might want to sit down. I was 16 years old and bought a gun out of the trunk of a friend’s car in the parking lot on my high school. I paid him cash. I didn’t undergo a background check or endure a waiting period. We didn’t do any paperwork. I just gave my pal two 10s and a five, wrapped the gun in a towel so as not to garner undue attention, and retired to a nearby cotton field



The Firearms International Bronco .22 survival rifle is admittedly not much to look at but Will says, “Like me, it’s so ugly it’s almost cute.”



to give it a whirl. And yet the world kept right on spinning ...

THE GUN

I couldn't find much out about this quirky old rifle at the time. In 1982 Al Gore was 34 years old and hadn't yet invented the Internet. I just knew it looked cool and the price was right. I've since learned a bit but not a lot.

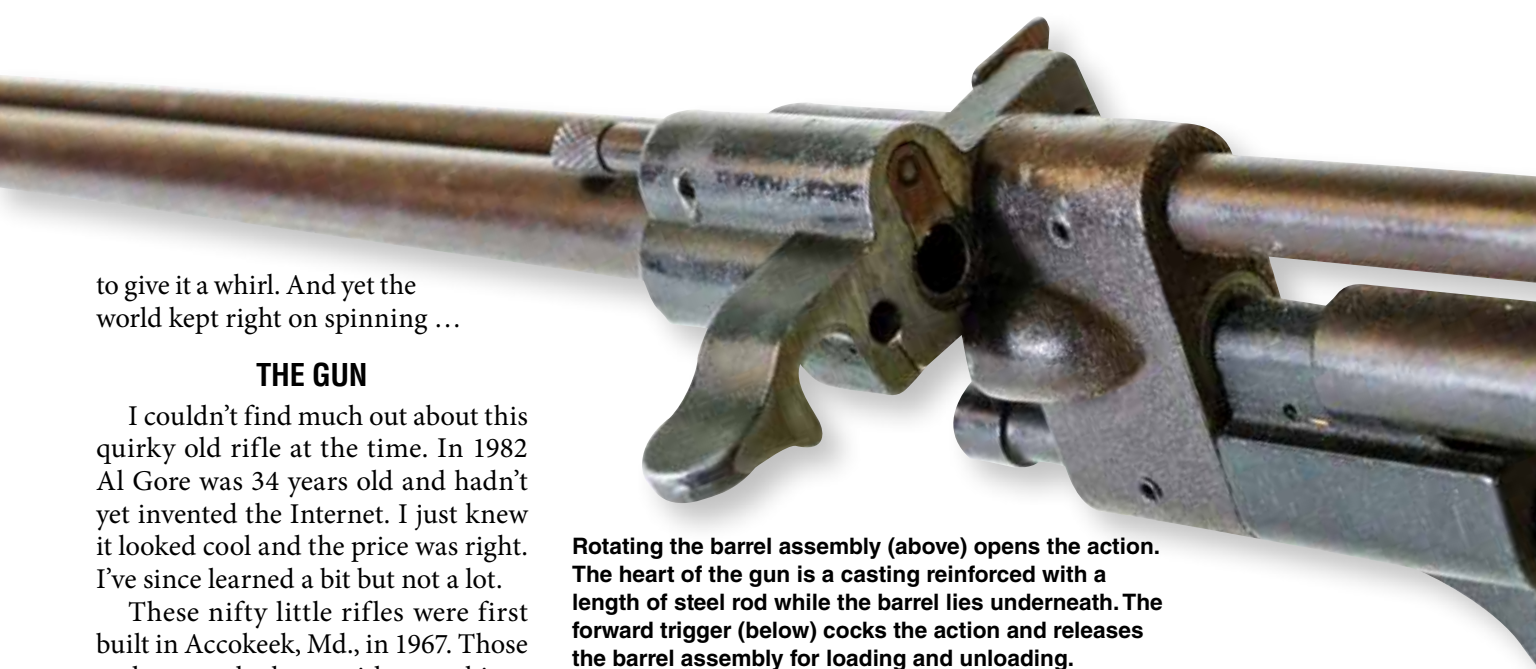
These nifty little rifles were first built in Accokeek, Md., in 1967. Those early examples bore neither markings nor serial numbers and sported an MSRP of \$9.95. That's about \$91 today. The guns were available in .22LR, weighed 2.5 lbs. and had 16.5" barrels.

In 1968 the Gun Control Act mandated guns be serialized so the price climbed to \$14.95. Dealer cost at the time was a flat \$11. In 1970 a company called Garcia took over and christened the weapon the Bronco. Garcia offered the guns in .22LR, .22 WinMag, .410 and a nifty .22LR/.410 over-and-under combination. The shotgun variants had 20" tubes.

They eventually sold under the trade name "Bauer Rabbit." Production wrapped up in 1978 at which point the retail price had climbed to \$45. I'm told the shotgun version actually packed a fearsome recoil.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

The Bronco was loosely based upon the Hamilton Number 11 Boys Rifle. Introduced in 1900, the Hamilton Number 11 was a skeletonized inexpensive .22 rifle marketed toward children. Their marketing catchphrase was "So you want to be a Real Boy?" The guns were advertised in comic books. These



Rotating the barrel assembly (above) opens the action. The heart of the gun is a casting reinforced with a length of steel rod while the barrel lies underneath. The forward trigger (below) cocks the action and releases the barrel assembly for loading and unloading.



little rifles were also sometimes called bicycle guns.

Clarence J. Hamilton sold around half a million of his skeletonized utility rifles. Retail companies gave the weapons out as incentives to kids selling products like costume jewelry and magazines door to door. Feed companies would drop a Hamilton rifle randomly in sacks of meal as a promotional gimmick. It was obviously a different time.

The Bronco orbits around a cast receiver reinforced with a length of steel rod. What looks like a second trigger upfront actually cocks the firing pin and releases the barrel assembly to rotate for loading and unloading. There is a manual extractor for removing empties.

The safety is a serrated pushbutton.

My gun is of the early unmarked solid sort. Later versions sported a rotating lever allowing the barrel assembly to be removed for easy portage or storage. The front sight is heavily fenced. The rear sight is a stamped steel V secured with a machine screw. I have read most Broncos shoot high as they were designed in the days before high velocity ammunition.

RUMINATIONS

My Bronco represents a Spartan design exquisitely well-executed. The fit remains glassy smooth despite more than half a century of hard use. Retiring to the range with my old Bronco and a couple boxes of ammo is, and always shall be, a ton of fun.

I hope Mike got the girl. We were never really close and we lost touch afterwards. However, while teenage dalliances might come and go, guns are forever. My little Bronco is immutable proof.

GUNS

MY KINDA GUN

IF IT COULD
ONLY TALK...



Made with a Vaquero frame, the fixed-sight gun sports a beautifully-machined ejector rod button and base-pin head to allow full case extraction.



The “Frankengun” was built by Tyler Gun Works for museum curator Robbie Roberts. It’s a perfect packing size and bears brilliant case colors along with the beauty of ram horn stocks.

Jeff “Tank” Hoover

I knew the grin all too well and it usually led to trouble for me. He knows I’m hooked, before ever presenting the bait. That’s how it is with Bobby Tyler, head honcho at Tyler Gun Works (TGW), and me. The familiar friendly voice asks, “Hey Tank, how’s it going?” I start calculating how many Benjamins I have in my wallet, as I’ve been through this scenario many times.

Besides being extremely talented, Bobby is one of the nicest people I know, a true gentleman. Opening the lid, he shows me one of his latest builds. I slam it shut, not allowing anyone the chance to see it. “How much?” I utter weakly? “Well, let me tell you about it...” He was going to torture me — as if I needed it. Did I mention it was a .45 Colt? Bobby says “I call it the ‘Frankengun.’”

THE MONSTER LIVES

The heart of this beast is a ’70s Ruger original brass grip-frame. It made the circuit, passing from ’smith to ’smith, no one knowing what to do with it.” Bobby being Bobby, he saw the beauty in the brass grip-frame, mentally building a gun around it. After sandblasting, Bobby sealed it with his own concoction so the brass would never tarnish. Chalk it up to imagination, vision, or know-how, Bobby puts it to good use. The shape kinda’ resembles a round-butted Bisley/birds-head grip. Call it what you may, I love it, especially with the fitted rams-horn grips with Ruger medallions.

The ram horn is full of texture, looking rugged yet is smooth to touch. Bobby fits them flush to the frame, the way I like. Knowing rams bash horns during yearly

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“

... IT CONTINUES THE CYCLE AND CAUSES SOMEONE DOWN THE TRAIL TO WONDER, 'IF THIS OLD GUN COULD TALK,' WHAT STORIES WOULD IT TELL?"

courting rituals, I know they're strong and durable. Gripping them is like shaking hands with a long-lost friend.

The frame is from an older Vaquero with a 3¾" barrel, kinda' looking like a Colt Sheriff's model. Yet, this gun has its ejector rod housing trimmed back, with ejector rod button and base-pin skillfully machined by Bobby to provide positive case extraction. It's the dandiest packing piece ever, chambered in my favorite caliber!

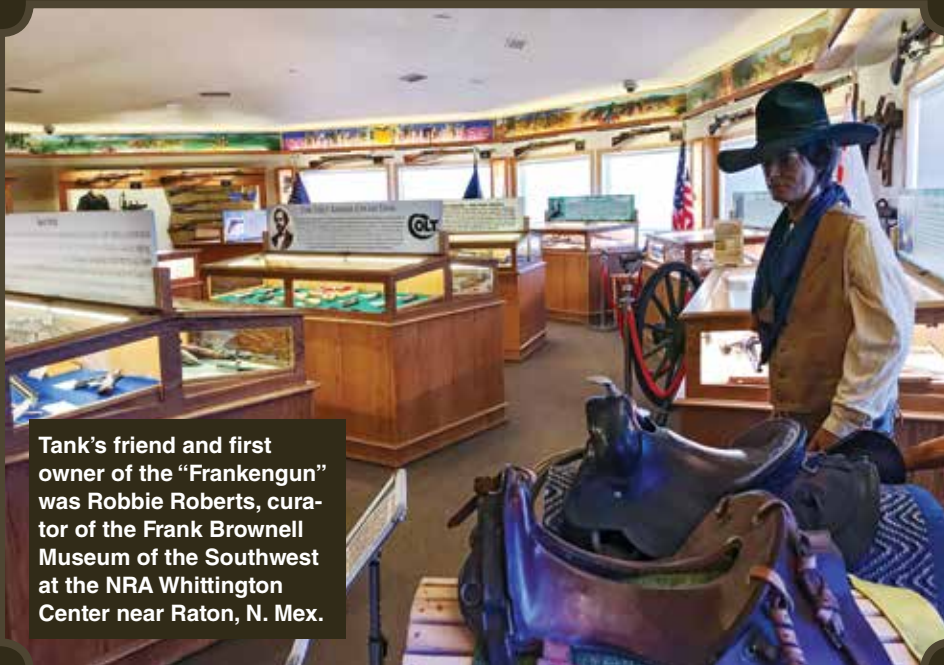
If this isn't enough to induce a severe case of gun lust, the frame, hammer and trigger are beautifully color cased. The gun was given a TGW action job, making it a symphony of harmonic clicks, locking up tightly when cocked. Trigger pull measures an honest 2 lbs. Bobby also administered his Accuracy package, consisting of re-cutting the forcing cone to 11 degrees, followed

by a polish and lapping of the barrel face, ensuring it's square, and lastly setting cylinder gap so tight barely any sunlight can pass.

A target barrel crown completed the job. The barrel and cylinder were then re-blued after removing the warning label from the barrel. Talk about a full workover!

REMEMBERING ROBBIE

After the deal is made, Bobby tells me the clincher. The gun was from a beloved mutual friend who was curator of the NRA Whittington Center's Museum — Robbie Roberts. Knowing he died this spring, I was hoping to get one of his guns to remember him by and the 'Frankengun' fills the need wonderfully. Bobby tells me it was in rough shape, meaning it was a favorite of Robbie's.



Tank's friend and first owner of the "Frankengun" was Robbie Roberts, curator of the Frank Brownell Museum of the Southwest at the NRA Whittington Center near Raton, N. Mex.



The complete series of excuses, alibis, pithy observations and general ephus now in a new book.

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SENTIMENTAL SIXGUN

I'll miss the yearly conversations, usually out back, with Robbie sitting at the picnic table, coffee and cigarette in hand. We'd talk guns, or simply sit enjoying each other's company, words not necessary. With our paths crossing several times during the week, a simple wave was the only thing needed to acknowledge our friendship.



The Long Horn Companion allows removing the main body from the belt with a simple unsnapping, perfect for modern cow pokes who occasionally have to leave their piece in the truck!

Having this gun from Robbie gives me the opportunity to talk of the fine man he was, how his gun was used for this project, making it special.

Whether strapping it on, showing it off, or surely shooting it, it'll be like shaking hands with my old amigo. This is especially true while sending lead downrange, the way Robbie would want it. I picture him above — smiling, nodding approval, watching and hearing his old gun speak once again.

Robbie once wrote an article in the Whittington Center's *The Bulletin* titled, "If this Old Gun Could Talk." Gunmen never die when their shooters are passed on, to be enjoyed, shot; it only continues the cycle and causes someone down the trail to wonder, "if this old gun could talk," what stories would it tell?

Yes sir, this is my kinda' gun. **GUNS**

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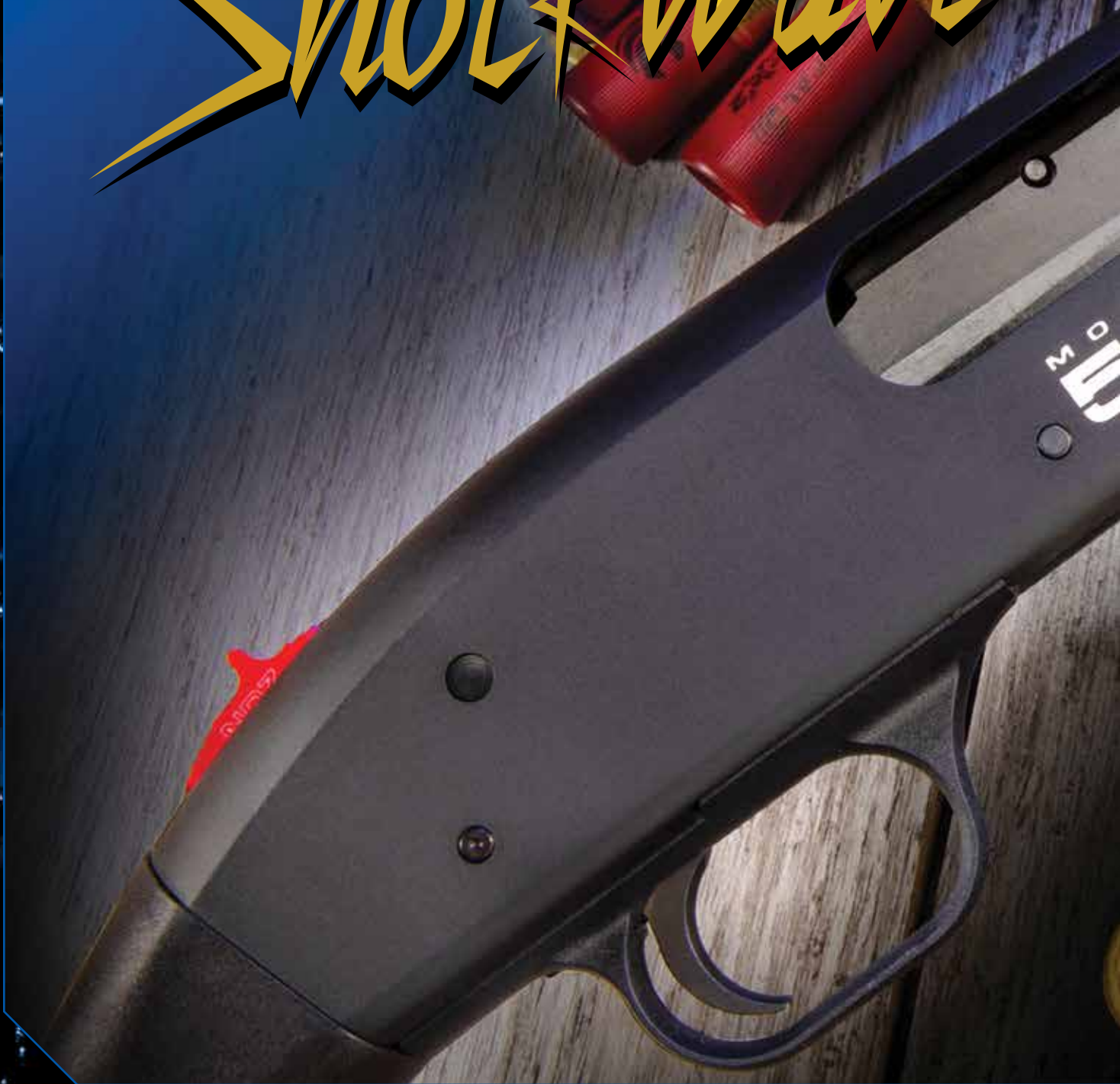
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590S

Shockwave





WORLD'S MOST OMNIVOROUS SHOTGUN?

Brent T. Wheat

Photos: Rob Jones/The Imagesmith, LLC

First, let's get something clear — this is a magazine for discerning shooters who are experienced and don't fall easily for the latest "Gun of the Month" or "Technique of the Week" hype. We strive to present articles packed with real-world information written by a team of world-class writers.

Having made this point, I must interject something — The Mossberg 590S Shockwave is purely, absolutely cool, possibly straying into the realm of "Kick Butt!"

Yeah, the Shockwave 590S is great big fun to shoot but getting back to my chronological age, I'll point out it's a great special-purpose self-defense scattergun with a major improvement

giving it even greater utility.

This enhancement is the added capability to feed shorty shotshells, a modification many Shockwave users previously made by adding aftermarket parts. Now, straight out of the box, you can throw over a *half-pound* of lead down-range faster than President Biden can churn out anti-gun executive orders.



GUNS[®]

MAGAZINE



590S

Shockwave



The Mossberg 590S Shockwave — A short-but-sweet 12-gauge pump gun for those intimate moments when bad breath isn't your biggest concern ...



“

AFTER A FEW BLINKS OF THE EYE, THE CARDBOARD **SILHOUETTE TARGET** 15 FEET AWAY — AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL BEDROOM SIZE — HAD BEEN **SHREDDED INTO HAMSTER BEDDING.**

THE LEGAL MUMBO-JUMBO

Before getting to the fun stuff, we need to examine the one big issue many folks have trouble understanding: How is this thing not considered an illegal sawed-off shotgun? I'll admit it has more than a passing resemblance.

More-restrictive state or local laws aside, the BATF has officially decided — at least for now — the Shockwave is a “firearm,” nothing more or less. Note we didn't say “shotgun,” “NFA weapon,” “pistol-grip shotgun” or any other legal “thing.” Therefore, the Shockwave is not subject to the strictures of those categories. Federally at least, if you're eligible to own a modern firearm under the 1968 Gun Control Act, you can own a Shockwave.

This is possible because of design work, especially the “bird head” grip, specifically intended to work within the existing legal framework. It's not concealable (legally speaking) due to length and it's not designed to be shoulder-fired, so it's technically not a shotgun. In other words, the government couldn't find an existing legal definition to cover it, so it's just considered a generic “firearm.”

Keep in mind there are a couple of things you could do with a Shockwave or any such shorty scattergun to get yourself in plenty of trouble under federal law — you can't carry it concealed and you can't put any other type of grip or stock on it. You also can't fire it from the shoulder, though it would be almost physically impossible and incredibly painful if you tried. Regardless, doing any of those things terminates the

To test the omnivore premise, Brent loaded a literal smorgasbord of shells, long and short, buck and slug, even a plastic “less lethal” round, then tried to emulate full-auto ... with predictable results. The target was destined for the trash can and the Mossberg 590S digested the mixed-up shells without pause.



Aimed fire using the front sight by holding the gun up to eye-level is actually quite easy at close range — and quite devastating to the recipient.

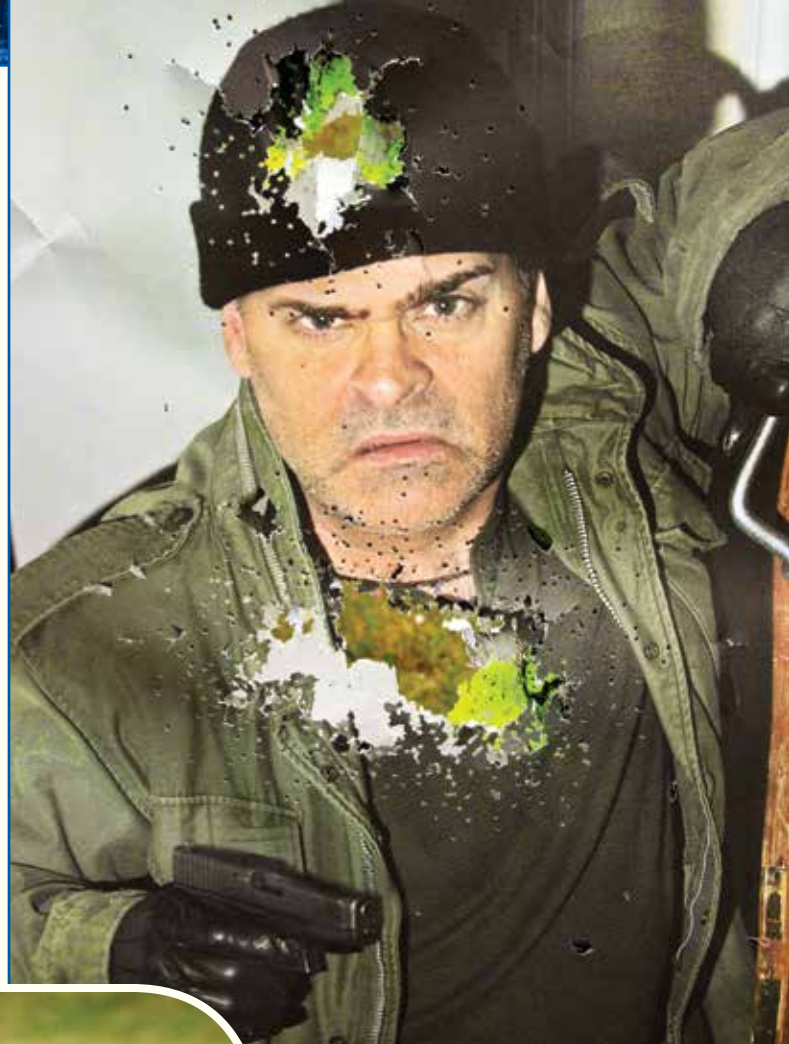
legal design features and invites trouble with the Feds.

As of this writing, the administration is making noise about trying to re-classify these as something subject to more regulation and tax such as “NFA weapon,” so stay tuned. My advice — get 'em while you can.

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

We've messed around with the 590 Shockwave before and find it highly useful for certain specific situations and missions. This is not an all-purpose, general defense shotgun, oops, sorry, I meant “firearm,” but in certain circumstances it is your best choice. Unlike some other pint-sized shotguns, it's also pure unadulterated fun to shoot now that shorty shotshells are on the menu.

The original Shockwave, and all 500-series Mossberg shotguns on which it's based, could not handle “mini” shotgun shells exemplified by the Federal Shorty shotshell line. These are 12-gauge shells downsized to only 1-3/4" in length rather than the standard 2-3/4 or 3" of “normal” shells. Most pump shotguns won't accept them as



a matter of course unless you install certain aftermarket parts or otherwise modify the gun. Mossberg saw this and smartly incorporated the popular modification so your new 590S will gobble up nearly any 3" and under 12-gauge shell you can stick into its maw.

SHELL SHOCK

There are several advantages to the mini shells. First is capacity — without modifying the gun, you'll get several more shells into the magazine. In the case of the Shockwave 590S, I jammed three extras into the tube for a total eight versus five with 2-3/4". When you're talking slugs, you've just added three additional ounces of hot lead to your blaster.

Of course, there is a trade-off: payload. The slugs are "only" one ounce, while #4 buck and #8 shot loads weigh in at 15/16 oz. Less lead equals less kinetic energy so there is an official reduction of "power" on the receiving end. But, considering this gun is largely combat-ineffective the past 20–25 yards, who really cares?

Fortunately, for the minor sacrifice of terminal energy there is a huge upside — reduced recoil and enhanced controllability.

The 590S can be a handful to shoot, especially if you're gungy enough to try full-house 3" slugs. With the shorty shotshells, you get more of 'em and they kick significantly less so in my mind, the benefit outweighs any negatives. Fortunately with the 590S, you can also mix mini, 2-3/4 and 3" shells at random so you have plenty of options.

TEST GUN

Though the gun is perfectly serviceable straight out of the box, I decided to add a couple of personal-choice touches. First, I replaced the factory fore-end with Streamlight TL Racker, a fore-end that includes a 1,000-lumen LED light powered by two CR123A batteries. I felt this is important because a fighting gun, even one without much room to mount a light, is naked without some type of onboard illumination device. The TL Racker installed easily and includes a nylon hand strap like the factory original, which I *highly* recommend you use to avoid earning nicknames like "Stumpy" or "Two-Finger Magee."

The second modification was an NDZ extended safety. The safety on the Mossberg 500 series of shotguns is light-years better, ergonomically speaking, than the one on my beloved Remington 870. However I like the NDZ version because it is slightly taller and extra-deeply contoured for a more positive thumb engagement. I ordered the red

anodized aluminum version because it's easier to see against the black receiver.

Otherwise the gun is a straightforward 500/590 platform with the aforementioned internal modifications to feed shorty shells.

The stock is known as a "bird's head" style. It looks ungainly but is actually quite comfortable to carry and shoot. I think it was probably modeled after somebody's old-school illegal sawed-off shotgun but it works



The operation of the 590S, aside from the Billy Goat-like ability to digest any length shell, is basic and easy for anyone who has ever run a pump gun.

amazingly well and does pass legal muster. It also includes a single sling swivel on the end, though you must refrain from hiding the gun under a coat or other concealment as this would take things into “NFA weapon” territory.

The barrel is 14.4" and crowned with a simple golden bead front sight. There is no rear sight though our test gun receiver was drilled and tapped for a rail. It's actually fairly easy to aim by holding up and using the front sight if you choose. Given the intended use of this

particular gun, I would recommend you refrain adding any gear-snagging gadgets such as lasers or red dots.

WHY?

Now I'll endeavor to answer the big question: Why does such a gun exist and why does anyone need one?

As mentioned earlier, this certainly isn't a general-purpose home-defense shotgun. Given the rig, even a 25-yard shot is pretty challenging but if you keep this “limitation” in mind, what you have is a relatively small, easily-controlled gun capable of throwing 9 oz. of lead (8+1) at a problem as fast as you can cycle the action. In my testing using shorty shells, I could empty the gun inside of four seconds even when I wasn't trying hard to channel my inner Rob Leatham. After a few blinks of the eye, the cardboard silhouette target 15 feet away — average residential bedroom size — had been shredded into hamster bedding.

Imagine having the same capability tucked in an umbrella stand at your front door, lying next to your bed or nestled behind your vehicle's front seat.

Therein lies the beauty of the Shockwave 590S — if you need to repel boarders at close range, a situation where you'll probably need plenty of lead in a hurry, the Shockwave 590S might be the most devastating thing this side of an antipersonnel mine.

And, last I heard, the government isn't much interested in allowing you to own one of those.

THE VERDICT

On top of the benefits already discussed, the Shockwave 590S is also relatively affordable for a heavy-duty defensive firearm. As of this writing the price wasn't set in stone but a standard Shockwave 590 starts with an MSRP of \$500 so we'd anticipate the 590S will be in the same ballpark. The gun will be available in four versions — a state-compliant “Mockwave” with a 20" barrel, along with full-sized-stock 18" or 20"-barrel models featuring 13+1 capacity, M-Loc forend and interchangeable chokes.


In total — the 590S is a short, federally legal, easily handled, higher-capacity, more controllable shotgun perfect for close-range defense. You give up a bit of muzzle energy but you won't really miss it inside of 20 yards. Mossberg has created a winner, which is the reason why I not only tested the 590S Shockwave for this article but became a buyer too!

Of course, all these reasons aside, it's still awfully darn fun to shoot — but I'd never buy a gun just for fun.

As far as my wife knows.

GUNS

Mossberg.com
NDZperformance.com
FederalPremium.com



One other change Brent made was the Streamlight TL-Racker. It includes a 1,000-lumen LED light and nylon handguard. Forego using the handguard at your own risk!



The Bird's Head grip on the 590S is short but officially legal. It might look odd but is quite comfortable to hold and actually keeps felt recoil within decent limits.

RELOADING

THE 32 RIMFIRE

TEACHING AN OLD DOG NEW TRICKS

Alan Garbers

Not long ago I bought a nickel-plated S&W Model 1-½ with mother-of-pearl grips whose former elegance couldn't be dulled by time. The biggest problem? It was chambered in an obsolete caliber — .32 Rimfire.

I knew several companies offer rimfire reloading kits and components but the pandemic made them impossible to find. I decided to find another way. In my quest, I met resourceful individuals Dennis Heckman, Alan Tyznik and Jack Harrison. They're .32 Rimfire aficionados and all developed ways to overcome the lack of tools and materials to reload their favorite round.

PIECE OF CAKE, RIGHT?

The task seemed easy. The .32 Rimfire family of cases is the same diameter as the .32 Colt. I assumed I could drill out the primer cup just large enough to accept a commonly available .22 rimfire power load or .22 rimfire acorn round. The .22 Rimfire load would be centered but it appeared the firing pin should reach it. Heckman confirmed he had done this very thing and the modified cases worked properly in most of the .32 Rimfire firearms he owned.

Following Heckman's instructions, I carefully modified the cases and attempted to test-fire the revolver.

Power-actuated loads come in .22 and .27 calibers in varying power ratings and are found at home improvement stores. Starter pistol loads, called acorns, can also be used.

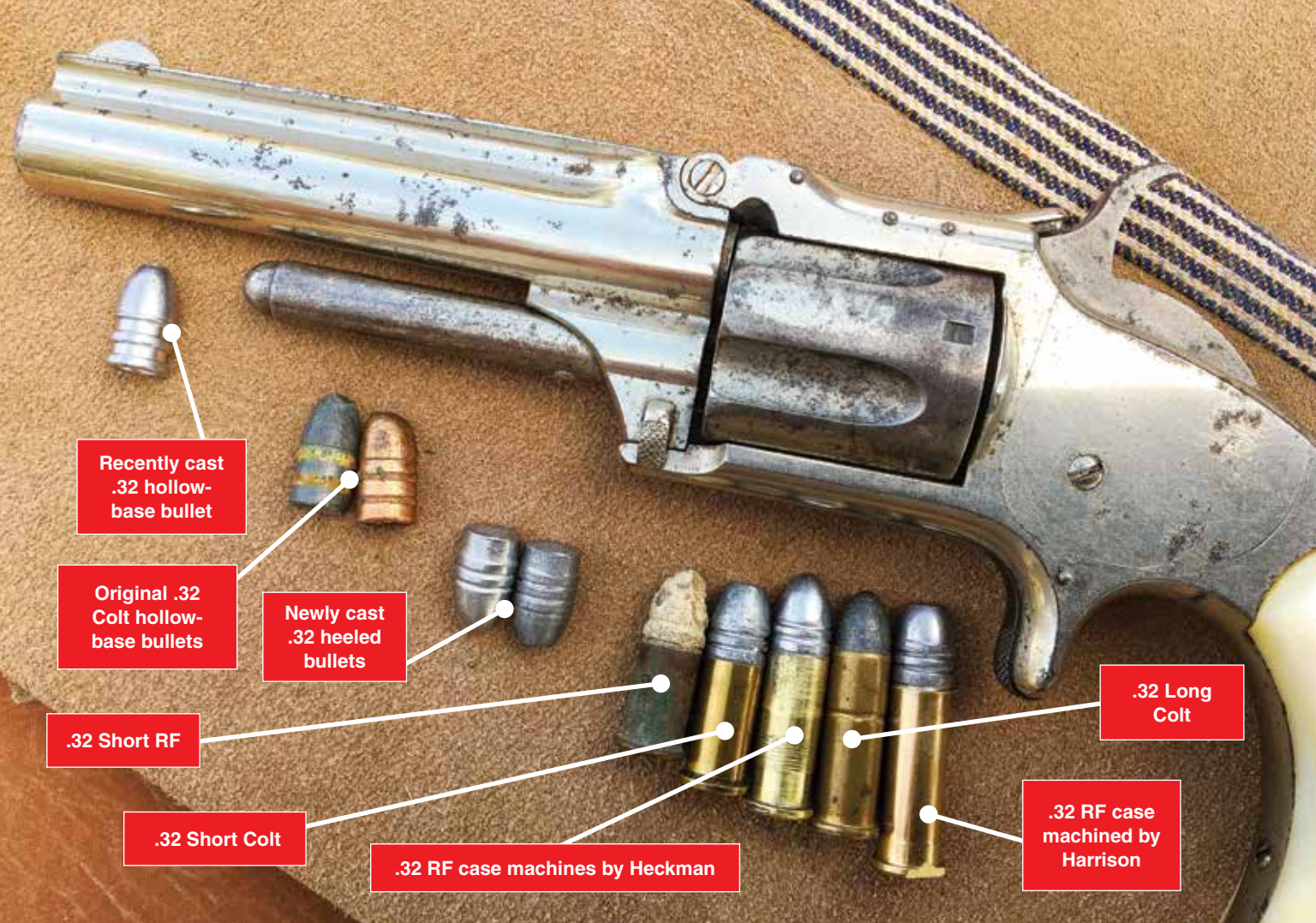


In many ways, Heckman's tools mimic the Lee Hand Loader sets. A common nail is used to punch out the spent power loads.

Much to my frustration, the firing pin did not reach deep enough into the rim to catch the .22 power load.

Heckman confided some shooters use .27-caliber power loads. I did some measuring. The firing pin in my revolver should be able to hit the .27 power load rim, but it would take precision machining to leave enough case rim to chamber correctly. My feeble drill press and tools were not exact enough for the task. Each attempt ended with the rim of the case coming off. But, in doing so, the .27 power load fit perfectly into the .32 Colt case, leaving only the power load rim exposed. A test fit in the





revolver proved the modified case would chamber properly. I loaded up a few rounds to test. Excitement turned to frustration when nothing happened. An inspection of the rounds found no marks in the rims! The .27 rimfire rims did not hold the case far enough out to allow the firing pin to strike them!

Luckily, I just received a sampling of cases and reloading tools Heckman made in his home shop. Unlike the cases I made, Heckman offset the power load rim to match the rim of the .32 Colt case. With reserved excitement, I loaded up a batch of rounds.

After weeks of failures and frustrations, I was somewhat expecting another hurdle to appear, but the new cases worked! The elegant old revolver shot perfectly!

THE TAKEAWAY

Not all rimfire guns have identical firing pins, hit the cartridge in the same spot or at the same depth. While locating the power load in the center of the case eliminates the need to orientate each round so it can fire, it may not work in all guns. Using an offset style case means each case has to be oriented properly but more reliable ignition is possible.

RELOADING TOOLS

Finding reloading equipment is a problem. Heckman enjoys the challenge of repurposing older tools, much



IF ALL OF THIS SOUNDS LIKE TOO MUCH WORK, I DO HAVE AN EASY BUTTON OPTION. UNFORTUNATELY, IT HAS A TRAGIC SIDE.

like I want to make old guns shoot again. While there are options for those who enjoy searching for orphan reloading equipment, here is a list to ease the way:

- Sizing Die — A .32 Colt die will work perfectly, but they are scarce. One can be made with a size O drill bushing fit into an orphaned large-caliber neck-expanding die. A .32 S&W sizing die will not work.
- Neck sizer — If a .32 Colt neck sizer can't be found, a Lee Universal neck expander will work. Note: I did not



Dennis Heckman enjoys re-purposing old reloading gear like this old shotgun primer reloading tool, used to press the power load into the case.



A .22 RF power load is easy to center in a .32 Colt case, but not all firing pins can reach the power load rim.

Offsetting the .22 RF power load is the most reliable option but each round has to be oriented correctly to fire.

A .27 RF power load is wide enough that most firing pins can impact the rim.

find a need for a neck expander when using heeled bullets.

- Bullet seater — A .32 S&W seating die will work.
- Crimp Die — I used heeled bullets and did not find a need to crimp. Some shooters use super glue to keep loose bullets in place.
- Power Load Remover — A hollow base stand of some sort will be required to allow the spent .22 case to be punched out.

BULLETS


The original .32 rimfire used a heeled bullet. On a heeled bullet, the bulk of the bullet is the same diameter as the case, while a smaller-diameter base fits into the case mouth. The .32 Colt started the same, but the industry transitioned to a smaller bullet with a hollow base which fit inside the case, as most modern ammunition does now. The hollow base flared out to engage the rifling.

Finding old bullet molds can be difficult but the Ideal 299152 and 299153 were heeled.32 caliber. Accurate offers their 31-090S and 31-095H which also produce heeled bullets. If plinking is in order, the common .32 round ball can be used.

PROPELLANT

The easiest option is to use tool power loads. Several manufacturers offer them. Ramset is the best known. The power loads are graded by power level signified by a number and color. Gray (1) is extra-low; Brown (2) low; Green (3) medium-low; Yellow (4) medium; Red (5) high; and Violet (6) extra-high.

Most shooters recommend using the lowest power (gray and brown) for revolvers and weaker actions. Green can work well for stronger rifle actions. As with any older firearm, approach higher power loads with caution.



Results — While low-powered, punching holes in paper with an obsolete pistol was satisfying. As Heckman says, “We made a hanger into a banger!”

Another option is to use .22 acorn loads used to train hunting dogs and starter guns for sporting events. The small load is used to ignite a larger powder charge, usually black powder.

Most .32 rimfire reloaders modify .32 Colt and .32 S&W cases. The .32 Colt cases easily convert. The .32 S&W cases are larger and require some lathe work on the base.

ANOTHER OPTION

If all of this sounds like too much work, I do have an *Easy Button* option. Unfortunately, it has a tragic side.

When I first started down this road, I watched a video on YouTube. In it, Alan Tyznik gave a demonstration on how to easily reload .32 RF using a reloading kit he designed, complete with every tool needed to be successful using bullets and cases sold by Gunbroker.com seller “Tenmile.” I contacted Alan about the kit, then got caught up in other more pressing projects.

A year later, I attempted to contact Alan again, only to find out he had passed away at the age of 56. Hoping I could still purchase a reloading kit, I contacted Tenmile, (Jack Harrison), and asked what his relationship was with Alan Tyznik. His response: “Alan was my nephew, best friend and partner in all sorts of shenanigans.”

Luckily for us, Harrison is honoring Tyznik’s legacy

“

**SINCE I NOW KNOW THE WAY,
IT WOULDN’T TAKE MUCH TO
MAKE THE DOG BARK!**

by continuing to produce the .32 reloading kits, bullets, and cases — truly a living memorial.

THE RESULTS

Thanks to Dennis, Alan and Jack, my quest to shoot my vintage 1870s S&W revolver was a success any way you look at it. I learned useful things along the way and the results were an accurate load that chronographed at 450 FPS, far below the original .32 Short Rimfire velocity of 945 FPS. I could have gone to a more powerful load but I was punching paper, not hunting rabbits. Many members of online forum “Castboolits” at Gunloads.com have used stronger power loads in stronger rifle actions. I recommend searching the forum for a wealth of related information.

What’s next? I saw a cool old Colt Deringer in .41 RF at a recent gun show that started the wheels turning. Since I now know the way, it wouldn’t take much to make the dog bark!

GUNS

TAURUS .460 S&W MAGNUM

RAGING HUNTER

Mark Hampton

For several years Brazilian gun maker Taurus has been offering a variety of revolvers for shooters and hunters alike. Their Raging Hunter series has been quite popular with the shooting fraternity in several variants chambered in .357 Mag., .44 Mag. and .454 Casull. Its apparent Taurus is not resting on their laurels as they have just introduced a new big bore in .460 S&W Magnum. Why the .460 S&W? Well, why not?

The .460 S&W Magnum cartridge has been around since 2005. It's becoming more popular with handgun hunters, especially those interested in large critters like elk, moose or bear, though it shouldn't be overlooked for whitetail deer or big mean hogs. The .460 S&W is touted as being the fastest production revolver round. The cartridge is basically a lengthened .454 Casull, which in reality is a lengthened 45 Colt. It's a straight wall rimmed case with an overall length of 1.800" compared to the .454 Casull at 1.383". The SAMMI maximum pressure (MAP) is 65,000 psi. That's huge! Realistically, commercial factory ammo is not loaded to these specs. The mighty .44 Mag., by comparison, shows an MAP of 36,000 psi. Suffice to say, the .460 S&W Mag. is a behemoth round designed for a revolver.

The .460 S&W is by no means intended for personal defense, competition, or casual plinking. It was purely designed as cartridge for handgun hunters pursuing big game or backup while hiking in big bear country.

RUNDOWN

Taurus has introduced their new Raging Hunter in three barrel lengths — 5.12", 6.75" and 8.37", with a matte black or two tone finish. My test gun came in matte black with a 6.75" barrel. The revolver tips the scales at 54 oz.

The new Raging Hunter incorporates a steel sleeve inserted into an aluminum-shrouded housing. The 6.75" barrel is ported with four holes on each side of the front



FACTORY SPEE

sight. A full-length underlug looks all business-like. Underneath the barrel in bright white lies the serial number. An integral Picatinny rail makes mounting optics quick and painless without having to install a base mount. The rail has nine slots for flexibility on optic placement.

The fully adjustable rear sight is all black with the standard square notch. The front sight consists of a black post. I elected to shoot the new Raging Hunter with optics so I skipped range sessions with iron sights. An UltraDot Matchdot II was mounted employing the rings which came with the optic. This red dot sight has withstood pounding abuse from other handguns producing copious



Versatility — all these can be shot in the .460 S&W Mag, from left to right: .45 Colt, .454 Casull, .460 S&W Mag. Taurus has just introduced the .460 S&W Mag. in their popular Raging Hunter line.

DUSTER FOR BEAR OR BIG-GAME

amounts of bone-jarring recoil so I thought it would be a solid candidate for the .460 S&W Mag. The UltraDot has 11 adjustments for dot intensity which is ideal for changing light conditions. The red dot can be adjusted for 2, 4, 6 or 8 MOA along with two additional reticles. This is a superb optic for handgun hunters with many beneficial features.

A rubber grip with cushion insert is most welcome when touching off a .460 S&W Mag. The black grip is attached to the frame with a single screw that goes through the bottom. It is slightly textured with subtle finger grooves.

The massive black oxide cylinder holds five rounds. The cylinder features dual locks and it took me a while before I got the hang of it. The rear lock pushes forward while pressing downward simultaneously on the front thumb lock. This lock is located on the crane with both latches finely textured. The five-shot cylinder swings out to the left and rotates counterclockwise.

A large hammer spur is checkered aggressively to provide non-slip cocking. The trigger is both wide and smooth, much like you would encounter on a target trigger. The Raging Hunter features a transfer-bar safety with frame-mounted firing pin.



The barrel is ported with four holes on each side of the front sight. Mark says the recoil- and muzzle-flip-reducing ports were very welcome!



The wide target-type trigger is smooth but at 7.5 lbs. on our test gun, a little heavy for most shooters.

VERSATILE

One of the positive attributes of the .460 S&W Mag. is it provides shooters with the capability of shooting other cartridges such as .454 Casull, .45 Colt, or .45 Schofield. This ability to shoot lesser-recoiling rounds could extend your shooting sessions and lessen the pain in your wrist and wallet. I needed a few more rounds to complete the shooting evaluation on this project and a box of 20 Hornady 200-grain FTX costs \$43 — or \$2.15 per pop.

At the range I tested two factory Hornady offerings — 200 FTX and their new 200-grain Monoflex bullet in Handgun Hunter ammo. I also shot two Federal Premium offerings — the 275-grain Barnes Expander and 300-grain Swift A-Frame. This is serious hunting ammo!

Targets were set at 25 yards since the gun had not been sighted-in or previously shot. The first thing I noticed was the trigger pull. According to Lyman's digital trigger pull gauge, the trigger broke at 7.13 lbs. This is too heavy for my liking but a competent gunsmith could change this quickly. The Raging Hunter balances well and the cushioned grip feels comfortable.

I would be remiss if I did not address the recoil — it is a handful. Recoil is subjective but you will definitely know when the hammer drops on a .460 round. Those cushioned grips are most welcome and so is the porting. Groups from 25 and 50 yards were satisfying with all factory rounds tested. After shooting the 6.75" barrel, as a hunter I would opt for the longer 8.37" model for my undertakings. The shorter barrel models may be ideal for carrying a powerful package in bear country.

During the range session, I also shot a 30-grain .45 Colt load from HSM. This ammo also performed well by judging from the small groups and is much friendlier to the wrist. Despite the heavy trigger pull, the new Taurus was accurate with a variety of ammo tested.

ROLL YOUR OWN

If the rising costs of new ammunition is prohibiting you from shooting all you want, handloading the .460 S&W Mag. may ease some of the financial discomfort. I've been using Redding equipment with four dies. I prefer seating the bullet in one stage and crimping in a separate step. Thanks to Redding's T7 turret system, you can install and adjust all four dies. When one stage of the process is complete, simply turn the turret and go to the next stage.

There are several premium bullets available for the .460 S&W Mag. capable of tackling a variety of big game



THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH THE .460 S&W MAG. AS AN EFFECTIVE DEER CARTRIDGE AND WILL DEFINITELY HANDLE THOSE BIG MEAN, UGLY HOGS.

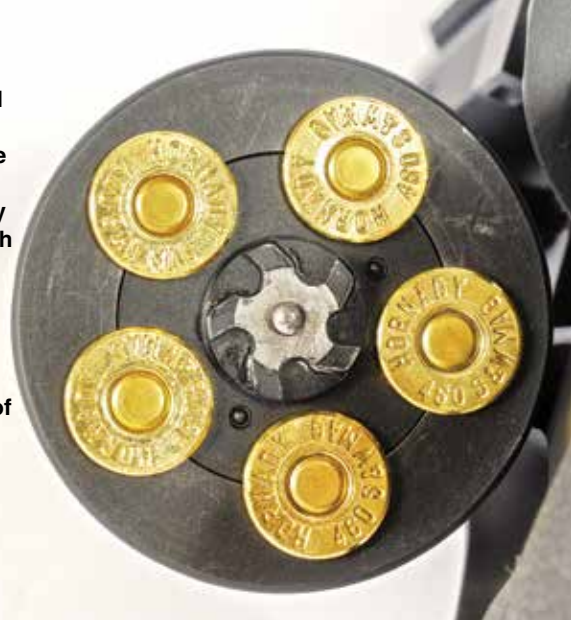
pursuits. Hornady provides their 200-grain FTX and 240-grain XTP Magnum Barnes. Speer and Swift also manufacture quality bullets intended for large critters. I've been working with H110 and IMR 4227 recently. Other powders may work equally as well including Accurate #9, 2400 and Accurate 1680. For lighter loads and cast bullets, Trailboss is your friend. The .460 S&W Mag. was designed for large rifle primers.

TO WHAT END?

So what purpose does the .460 fill for handgun hunters? Great question and the answer will vary greatly depending on individual preference. Some states allow



The gun has dual cylinder locks fore and aft of the cylinder (left). This is necessary for the .460, which nearly *doubles* the pressure of some other big-game cartridges. The massive cylinder holds five of the equally massive rounds.



An UltraDot MatchDot II was installed on the integral barrel shroud sight rail for testing. Handloaders can customize their loads with a variety of premium bullets. Redding Reloading Equipment provides quality dies and accessories.



The ergonomic finger-groove rubber grips incorporate a cushioned insert.



handgun hunting with straight wall pistol cartridges only. While some consider the .44 Mag. realistically effective out to 100–125 yards, the .460 S&W Mag. can extend the effective revolver range when that big buck steps out in the bean field 200 yards away. Obviously a lot of practice will be necessary but the cartridge is up to the task if I do my part. There is nothing wrong with the .460 S&W Mag. as an effective deer cartridge and will definitely handle those big mean, ugly hogs.

With a spring black bear hunt in Alaska scheduled, I plan on taking the .460 up north. I'll be hunting in a two-bear area and will try two different loads if things work out. In my home state of Missouri, we're scheduled to experience our first black bear season late in the fall so the .460 may possibly get another opportunity at a bruin. Later in the year a trip to Africa is on-tap for some plains

game. The .460 will also get a workout on the Dark Continent for kudu, nyala, warthog and more.

Whether you're sitting in a deer blind on the back 40, stalking big bears in Alaska or chasing Rocky Mountain elk in the west, the .460 S&W Mag. makes a worthy candidate for those big-game encounters. Taurus has just provided a new platform to launch this round in their Raging Hunter at an attractive price-point. I liked the 6.75" model but will opt for the 8.37" barrel for my hunting purposes. Those who wish to keep weight and length to a minimum could very well prefer the shorter 5.12" model, especially for a packing pistol. Taurus provides choices and this new iteration in the Raging Hunter line-up will see action in the field. Let's go hunting!

GUNS

Taurus-USA.com

THE RUGER MINI-21

*Easy DIY M21
Sniper Rifle
Simulator*

Will Dabbs, MD

The M21 Designated Marksman Rifle used to be the apex predator among gun nerds truly dedicated to their craft. Images from Vietnam of filthy bush-savvy snipers crawling out of the jungle with their scoped M14 rifles made a deep impression on this young stud. When I came of age I built up one of my own.

The M21 in military service was an accurized M14 action mated to a Leatherwood Automatic Ranging Telescope (ART). This lethal combination offered accurate precision fire combined with a reliable semiautomatic action. It was also one of the sexiest military weapons ever contrived.

My M21 clone began life as a heavy barreled Springfield Armory M1A. I traded into this magnificent rifle back when I was a newlywed. The deal quite nearly cost me my young marriage, but that's a tale for another day.

What my ad-hoc M21 really excels at is looking cool. It shoots straight enough, to be sure. However, the thing weighs as much as a vending machine and feasts upon





match grade bullets. A single box of those spendy rascals costs as much as a nice meal out with the wife. It is also so pretty I almost, but not quite, regret dragging it out into the field. I needed some kind of simulator.

Back when I flew helicopters for Uncle Sam, the simulator was where we trained on the kind of stuff you couldn't or shouldn't do in the real \$26 million helicopter. Ever wonder if a 50,000-lb. CH47D Chinook will do an inside loop or fly inverted? Yeah, me, too. The simulator claims it will. I needed something like it for my classic Vietnam-era sniper rifle.

Who am I kidding? I didn't need anything like that. All I really need is a little food, a sturdy lean-to, a source of potable water and a loincloth. Truth be known the loincloth would be more for decorum than practicality. I built up a .223-caliber small-scale M21 just because it was so freaking awesome.

RAW MATERIAL

The M14 rifle was an evolutionary development of the M1 Garand that American GIs used to kick the dog snot



Will sourced the inexpensive scope mount (below) someplace online but doesn't remember the brand name, if it ever had one!

out of the Axis during World War II. With its 20-round detachable box magazine and selective-fire action, the M14 stood poised to make George Patton's "Greatest Battle Implement Ever Devised" into something yet greater still. However, when America subsequently went to war in some of the planet's most fetid jungles we found the cumbersome 44" M14 battle rifle to be a bit much.

The whole sordid mess led to the M16 and the zippy little 5.56mm cartridge soldiers use to this very day. One might



Is it, or isn't it? Will's home-built DIY Mini-21 sniper rifle is fun to shoot and cool to boot. Sure, it's not an exact copy but it's close enough to start conversations at the range!



The Mini-21 (bottom) is essentially a .223-caliber scale model of the full-sized GI sniper rifle (top) built by Will on an M1A chassis.

think the M14 design would then be relegated to museums alongside aged 1903 Springfields and vintage Krags. However, it seems the American shooting public just couldn't quite let go of all that sweet Parkerized steel and walnut.

Springfield Armory has built a thriving business providing American shooters with semiauto .308 M1A rifles. In 1973 Sturm Ruger introduced the most adorable miniaturized version chambered for .223. Designed by Bill Ruger and L. James Sullivan, one of the original designers of the AR15, the subsequent Mini-14 has remained reliably popular ever since. It also spawned a thriving market for aftermarket accessories. It is from this deep well we drew what we needed to build a miniaturized M21 sniper rifle.

Mini-14 rifles are ubiquitous. Walmart sold them for decades at around \$400 apiece back before the woke

crowd castrated the Walmart sporting goods department. I picked up my high-mileage copy at a gun show. With this beater as a foundation, it was time to wax creative.

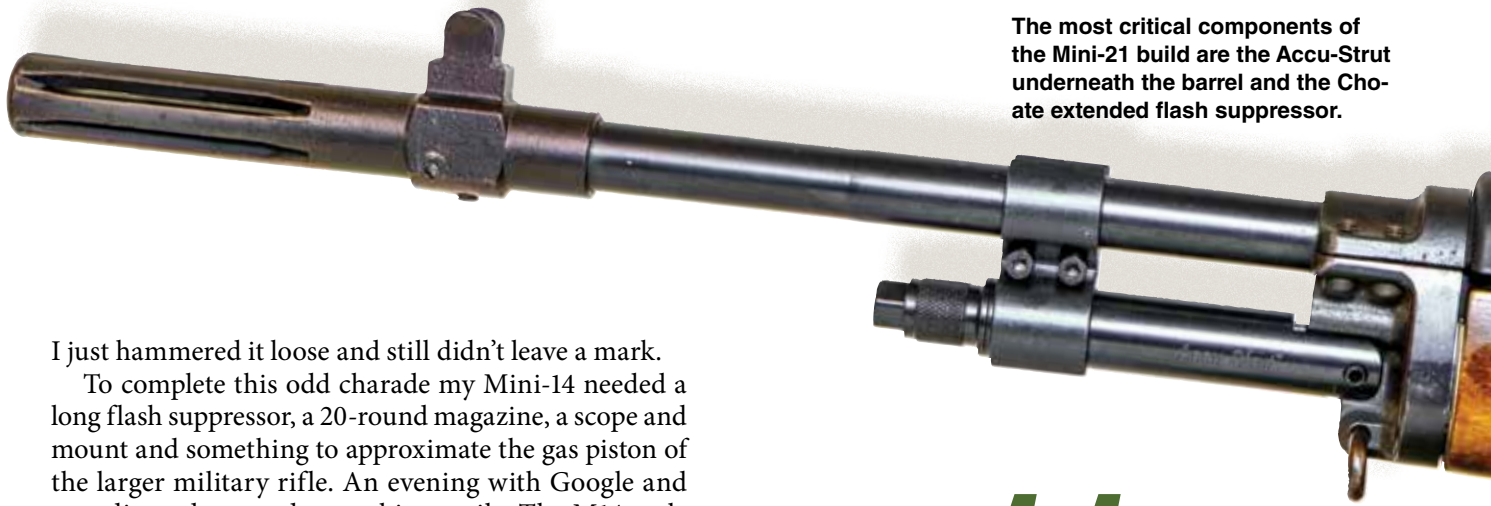
DETAILS

Unlike the forged receiver M14, the Mini-14 orbits around an investment-cast, heat-treated steel receiver that is plenty strong but cheaper to produce. The rifle sports a self-cleaning, fixed-piston, gas-operated action. While the Mini-14 intentionally looks a great deal like the larger M14 rifle it apes, its beating heart is actually quite different.

For starters you need to lose the original Ruger front sight. Just tap out the retaining pin and gently bump the front sight off with a hammer. Use a piece of brass or aluminum if you want to avoid marring the old part.



The most critical components of the Mini-21 build are the Accu-Strut underneath the barrel and the Choate extended flash suppressor.



I just hammered it loose and still didn't leave a mark.

To complete this odd charade my Mini-14 needed a long flash suppressor, a 20-round magazine, a scope and mount and something to approximate the gas piston of the larger military rifle. An evening with Google and a credit card sourced everything easily. The M14-style flash suppressor comes from Choate Machine and Tool.

Choate is an Arkansas-based company that cut its teeth on stocks and gun accessories back in the 1980s. HK selected Choate's side-folding stock for their MP5K Personal Defense Weapon (PDW). There are scads of aftermarket muzzle accessories for the Ruger Mini-14, but the Choate flash suppressor most closely mimics the long M14 number. There's no bayonet lug, but Springfield Armory eschews bayonet lugs on their modern M1A rifles as well for some reason. Installation requires you drill a hole to accept a 1/8" roll pin. A drill press is the ideal tool but I knocked mine out in a jiffy with a hand drill just to prove I could.

The fake gas cylinder is from Accu-Strut. This accessory is technically an accurizing device bolted underneath the barrel. While the Accu-Strut does improve barrel rigidity and subsequently accuracy, I picked it simply because it made my Mini-14 look more like an M14.

The stock Mini-14 has a fairly lightweight barrel. This feature contributes to the little gun's handy portability. The longer two-clamp version of the Accu-Strut dampens the thin barrel's harmonics for more consistent shots. The short version doesn't help so much, but it looks great. Installation required nothing more than the included Allen wrenches and a little Lock-Tite.



The raw material: Will's nicely aged Mini-14 was a gun show conquest. The old-school Ramline folding stock was a nice blast from the past!



THE RESULTING MINIATURIZED M21 JUST DRIPS COOL.

A proper scope and mount complete the charade. I found the mount online and sourced a cheap Chinese CenterPoint scope from my local Walmart. Before you seasoned long-distance shooters poo-poo my cheesy imported scope, it is a surprising lot of glass for the money. It is clear whoever made the thing has actually launched a round or three downrange.

The newest versions of the Ruger Mini-14 feature a redesigned front sight assembly that does not readily interface with the Choate flash suppressor. My high-mileage gun show trade Mini-14 was fairly old, so it wasn't a problem. However, you might want to check the Choate website for guidance if you are thinking of using a more modern Mini.

RUMINATIONS

The resulting miniaturized M21 just drips cool. Ammo costs about half what the full-sized 7.62x51mm rounds might, and recoil is a non-event. I did get a bit nuts with the details just for aesthetic purposes, but my Mini-21 is undeniably adorable. Trigger time with the small-caliber, low-recoiling version is pure unfiltered ballistic bliss. The Mini-21 will also reliably set you apart at your local range. We grizzled gun nerds really shouldn't care about such stuff, but, in quiet moments, we invariably do. **GUNS**

ArchangelManufacturing.com
Accu-strut.com • Riflestock.com • Ruger.com

SMITH & WESSON SHIELD PLUS

MORE FIREPOWER, SAME SIZE

Massad Ayoob, Photos: Gail Pepin

About three years ago, SIG-SAUER opened a new market niche with their P365, a subcompact 9mm carrying 10 rounds of 9mm Luger in its smallest profile magazine, an 11th in the chamber and more in extended magazines. It rocketed to the top of the carry gun charts and the rest of the industry quickly followed.

GLOCK's answer was their Slimline series, the G48 and the shorter barrel G43X with "semi-staggered" magazines also holding 10 rounds and aftermarket mags available which held more. Springfield Armory went directly at the P365's market niche with their Hellcat with 12 rounds on board.

Smith & Wesson, in late first quarter 2021, followed suit with their Shield Plus.

PUTTING THE "PLUS" IN "SHIELD"

When Smith & Wesson introduced their striker-fired, polymer-framed subcompact Shield as a part of their Military & Police line almost a decade ago, it was just as much of an instant hit as the aforementioned P365 SIG. It quickly hit the magic One Million Sold mark — in a far shorter period than their all-time classic, the Military & Police revolver of 1899 — and has remained a best-seller for Smith & Wesson and for American gun shops ever since. When the P365 "changed the game" by upping the ante of round-count, it was a logical place for S&W to start their counterattack into the new subset of the market.

It operates exactly like the familiar Shields of recent years, with the big difference being a different trigger which we'll discuss shortly. Our test sample, serial number JHC9222, came with a short 10-round magazine for discreet concealed carry and a longer magazine marked as 13-round capacity with finger extension

Shield Plus is designed for same 13+1 capacity as a larger Beretta 92 Compact (left) or a full-size Browning Hi-Power.



for full grip. A witness hole at the breech of the barrel serves as loaded chamber indicator and our sample had a right-hand-only thumb safety. Sights were fixed and plain with three white dots. Our sample had neither optic cut nor light rail.



**THERE IS A LIGHT TAKE-UP
AND THEN YOU HIT A WALL
OF FIRM RESISTANCE.
A LITTLE MORE MOVEMENT
AND THE SHOT BREAKS CLEAN.**

TRIGGER

The Shield Plus is distinct from the M&P series' signature hinged trigger, being more GLOCK-ish with a tabbed trigger. No one who handled it on this end had any problems with it.

A Lyman digital trigger pull scale revealed a pull weight averaging 5.75 lbs. at the toe, or lower tip of the trigger and 7.35 lbs. average at the center of the trigger where the digit activating the go-button generally lies. There is a light take-up and then you hit a wall of firm resistance. A little more movement and the shot breaks clean. During that last short roll of the trigger before the striker falls, there was a little bit of scrape — “creep,” as we trigger-pullers call it — but you have to be pressing *ve-r-r-ry* slowly to feel it. The creep was no longer palpable in rapid fire.

ACCURACY

With these very-short-barrel subcompact 9mms, it has become customary in the firearms press to accuracy test



Siblings from different mothers — (above, top gun) Shield Plus, Springfield Hellcat, (middle gun) SIG P365XL. SIG ammo and the S&W Shield Plus (above, bottom gun) played well together at 25 yards. The new S&W 9mm Shield Plus (below) is designed for 10 or 13+1 9mm capacity.



them only out to 15 yards, or 10, or maybe even seven. I have yet to find a case of a violent criminal shouting to his accomplice “Aw, Spike, let’s give the poor armed citizen a break. Let’s get closer so he has a better chance of hitting us.” Accordingly, I still test at the standard distance for full-size service pistols — 25 yards. At this distance, we used a Caldwell Matrix rest on a concrete bench. As usual, ammo represented the three most popular bullet weights for the caliber.

I hope S&W and SIG will forgive me for mixing their brands but I wanted at least one dedicated short-barrel load in the mix and the SIG “365” with their 115-grain V-Max jacketed hollow point filled the bill. Rated for a bit over a thousand foot-seconds out of a short barrel, recoil was noticeably mild. The five-shot group just kissed the commonly quoted acceptable level of accuracy for a full-size duty pistol, 4" at 25 yards. The

five bullets went into 4.05" measured center to center of the farthest, with the best three in half of that, 2.00".

The group with 124-grain FMJ American Eagle training ammo was strikingly similar: 4.00" for all five, 2.05" for best three.

The 147-grain subsonic was more to this gun’s liking. It gave the tightest five-shot group, 3". The best three was another case of “halfies” — 1.50". Ya don’t see this very often. As is usual with 147-grainers in most pistols, these rounds — Winchester jacketed truncated cone training ammo — grouped high over point of aim, in this case by a couple of inches.

SHOOTING AND CARRY CHARACTERISTICS

The original Shield was noted for its soft recoil in 9mm and particularly for its surprisingly mild “kick” for such a light gun in the .40 S&W and .45 ACP versions.



The 25-yard bench performance was good for such a small pistol (above). Don’t let others fool you with short-range sub-compact tests; bad guys don’t move closer because you’ve got a tiny pistol! Surprisingly, Winchester 147-grain FMJ gave the best 25-yard accuracy test (below).



SIG ammo and the S&W Shield Plus played well together at 25 yards. In spite of the short sight radius and abbreviated grip, the test gun gave creditable performance on 8" falling plates.



Presently made only in 9mm, the Shield Plus predictably proved likewise easy to shoot. A part of this may come from the fact the Shield Plus is an ounce or two heavier than most of its direct competition, not something you're likely to notice in carry.

The stippling pattern on the grip-frame is more aggressive than on my earlier Shields in the three calibers. It sat solidly and comfortably in hand and didn't move within the grasp at all upon firing. With the short magazine, it was no problem to tuck the pinkie finger under the butt and maintain excellent control, but not surprisingly, the longer magazine giving purchase to all three grasping fingers felt better.

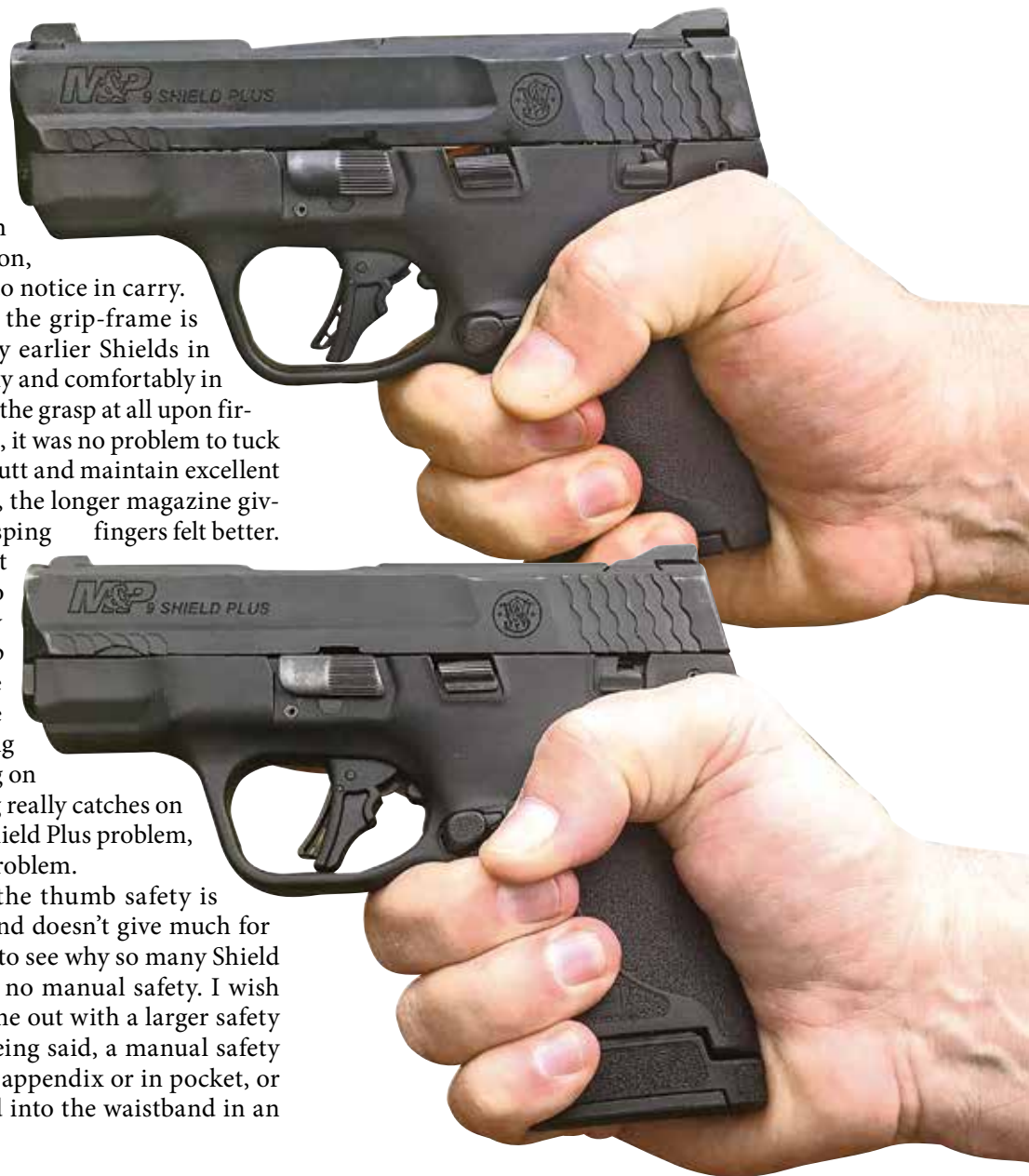
As with all such short-butt guns, we found we had to relax our grip considerably to get a clean magazine drop during speed reloads. The heel of the hand blocks the short magazine as it is trying to fall away, and the stippling on the extension of the long mag really catches on the heel of the hand. Not a Shield Plus problem, but an endemic short butt problem.

As with earlier Shields, the thumb safety is farther back than I'd like, and doesn't give much for the thumb to catch. It's easy to see why so many Shield fans prefer the models with no manual safety. I wish Apex or someone would come out with a larger safety lever for these guns. That being said, a manual safety is reassuring when carrying appendix or in pocket, or if the pistol has to be shoved into the waistband in an emergency.

CARRY

I spent a day carrying this gun with 12-plus-1 in the long mag, in a high ride thumb-break holster from Precision Holsters (precisionholsters.com). It was very secure and concealable — the latter, after all, being the *raison d'être* of the Shield series in the first place — and quick to hand. It proved very comfortable on a hip suffering from sciatica. I expect, though, the relatively aggressive grip stippling would be abrasive if worn all day tight against bare skin. My colleague Steve Denney found he could carry the Shield Plus comfortably and draw it cleanly from a Galco pocket holster in his Duluth pants, even with the long magazine.

My one real beef with this gun came on the capacity side. None of us could get the 13th round into the supposedly 13-round magazine. This may ease up after the magazine has been filled up longer than ours were. We could get all of the specified 10 rounds into the short magazine, but the 10th took a bit of effort and then we really had to pound it into the gun to get it to lock. This put downward tension on the magazine release button/



Pinkie-tuck grip used when the Shield Plus sports the short, 10-round concealment mag ...

mag release slot area and made unloading a bit difficult and awkward.

Overall, price is competitive with the GLOCKS and SIG in the same market niche. While we didn't have the usual volume of test ammo to put through the Shield Plus during the ammo shortage you're all familiar with, it worked 100% with all of the couple hundred or so rounds I and others happily put through it. On the falling plates, if I did my part, it gave a reliable six hits for six shots.

If you are in the market for a pocket 9mm that's "shootable" and is built to hold as many rounds as a full-size Browning Hi-Power, you definitely want to consider the Smith & Wesson Shield Plus.

GUNS

Smith-Wesson.com

NEW!

**IBD — THE ISRAELI BANDAGE DEVICE**

This is a pressure dressing often mistaken for a tourniquet. It's great for treating massive bleeding and can be used in conjunction with a tourniquet — but it's not a tourniquet.

CAT — THE COMBAT APPLICATION TOURNIQUET

The CAT is the big daddy of bloodstoppers, the military-issue tourniquet of choice. Once chosen by the military, it drifted widely into law enforcement, EMS and fire service use, along with countless private citizens, rangemasters and shooters. It is also widely copied and modified.

THE GOOD: Very effective when applied properly, widely available.

THE BAD: You must train to use it beforehand. Believe it or not, lower-quality counterfeits are common.



FIELD GUIDE TO TOURNIQUETS

CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG?

Brent T. Wheat

Editors note — Welcome to the first installment of our new bi-monthly column “Everyday Carry.” Self-defense, self-reliance and preparedness are hot topics with our readers so we wanted to devote a little more space to the subject. Every other month we’ll have tips from our bevy of world-class experts regarding their take not only on guns and shooting for self-defense, but holsters, lights, packs, ammunition, knives and the million other things which fall under the category of “EDC.”

Our esteemed cohort Tom McHale said something a while back I intuitively understood but could never put into words: “Shooters Are Binary.”

What he meant by this statement is the fact most shooters take a black/white, good/bad, yes/no outlook toward almost everything. Get a couple of firearms enthusiasts together, toss in a topic and watch the fur fly. One of those topics is my rant *du’ jour* — tourniquets.

During a recent discussion with the editor of another esteemed firearms journal over a few spiritous beverages, he bluntly mentioned a story I had written a few years ago on the subject of gunshot wound treatment was dead-wrong, especially in regards to tourniquets.

He stated his own expert in the field had seen the story and taken the article

apart piece-by-piece based upon his own life experiences which, frankly, were far greater than my own.

After discussing the matter at length we decided to “agree to disagree” and have another toddy. This is what friends (should) do but the whole incident stuck with me as I realized when it comes to creating controversy, there might not be any topic this side of the whole “Wheelgun versus Semi” debate to inspire more profound, overheated disagreement than the matter of which tourniquet to carry for emergencies.

Having spent significant time over the years applying bandages and occasionally a bare hand to serious wounds, along with countless hours in training and discussion on the subject with a bunch of real “been there, done that” people, it’s apparent to me there’s a couple of dozen ways to skin this particular

kitty — and most of them are effective.

Depending on whom you poll and which “camp” they fall into, there seems to be no common ground among the adherents of each type of tourniquet. In fact, the devotion to the different brands or styles is pursued with almost religious fervor — “I’m right and everybody else is wrong.”

I know people who have treated countless gunshot wounds with every particular flavor of tourniquet and many will tell you their personal favorite is the only suitable type on the market, bar none. Furthermore, they will give you compelling data and practical examples of why they are correct.

It was after many such conversations I began to realize each of them was right, maybe a little wrong and wholly somewhere in-between.

The experts don’t hold their beliefs as a matter of pride, capitalistic avarice or simple pig-headedness. My sources have all been thoughtful, intelligent and highly-driven in their goal to save lives. Rather, I think the whole debate falls under one of my favorite sayings — “Your Mileage May Vary.”

That’s because individual situations,



SWAT-T — STRETCH, WRAP AND TUCK

This is essentially a giant stretchy band, simple to apply, compact and easy to carry. While on patrol, I always had one in my pocket, not because it was the single most effective but because it was compact and could buy time until better equipment arrived.

THE GOOD: Anyone can apply, extremely compact, one-third the price of other types.

THE BAD: Not as effective as other types, hard to apply one-handed, can easily come loose.

RATS — RAPID APPLICATION TOURNIQUET

The RATS is a favorite because of its simplicity — it’s basically a big rubber band with a cinch tie at the end. However, unless you don’t have anything else handy, a length of shock cord is not an acceptable substitute.

THE GOOD: Easy to apply even if untrained, no moving parts, less expensive than the CAT.

THE BAD: Not easy to apply one-handed.



training level, age, prior experiences, patients, external support system and even weather play a role in developing the opinion and conclusions of experienced professionals. This is why two experienced gunfighters will never agree on the single “best” pistol for social work and two medics will seldom concur on the very best way to treat a gunshot wound.

Boiled down, here’s my point — if the experts can’t come to some kind of consensus, we mere mortals only get confused when we start listening to all the well-intentioned but contradictory advice. Therefore, my simple mind has come to rest somewhere between the various extremes.

I don’t believe it’s necessary to get completely lost in the idea of finding the single, best, all-purpose tourniquet to stuff into our first aid bags and “blow-out kits.” We don’t need to get wrapped around the axle worrying about the differences between the CAT, RATS, SWAT-T or The Mincing Wombat tourniquet, now available in floral pattern. They all work for better or worse but none will save a life unless you have it handy and the intestinal fortitude to use it if lead meets flesh.

GUNS



OTHER TYPES — RACHETS TO ROPE

Some tourniquets, such as the ratchet type, are extremely effective while others such as rope, belts and scarves are nearly useless. Whatever you decide to carry, make sure you know how to use it and have it available whenever taking part in hazardous activities such as shooting, woodcutting — or arguing about tourniquets!

CONFRONTING STATE LAWMAKERS HELP THE GOOD, HINDER THE BAD

Dave Workman

Across the country this month, state legislatures will be opening for business and by now grassroots gun rights activists should know who their local representatives are, how to reach them and someone on their staff to contact.

It's not rocket science and you can bet the farm people in the gun prohibition movement already have this information. They will be using it to support their anti-gun-rights friends in state capitols and to browbeat, bully, harass and scare lawmakers they see as the enemy. Pro-rights state senators and representatives or assembly members on their enemies lists will be branded as tools of the "gun lobby," child-haters and bigots. Name-calling begins the moment anti-gunners have lost the argument but that's really all the gun control movement has left.

You may be able to testify at hearings. You may be asked to simply show up in an effort to display solidarity, or just provide force of numbers. The critical thing is to be there. The numbers count and the mere image of numbers people can't count accurately can be impressive.

Remember this: Nothing so dreadfully sends a wrong message to politicians as a sparse turnout at a demonstration/rally. Stage an event on the Capitol steps with only a few dozen or maybe a couple of hundred people and your cause will get laughed out of town. Politics is a game of numbers and if you can't rally the troops to take a day out of their lives to show up, legislators are going to be less-than-impressed. Eventually, they will wonder why they're expending political capital for people who can't be bothered to get in the game.

The message they perceive — "These people don't care enough to show up, so they're not going to do anything but

complain on social media when we add more restrictions."

They might reach one more conclusion — "People who don't show up to protect their rights are also people who won't vote me out of office."

YOUR 'TO-DO' LIST

Every state legislature has a website, with links to the names of each state lawmaker, governor and secretary of state.

In my home state of Washington, activists have created a Facebook page called "Washington Legislative Action Group." You should be able to do like-

Amendment. Ten months from now, this money could become important to help elect the right people to office and remove the deadwood.

The same legislative websites should have links to allow voters to see the text of submitted bills. Say somebody introduces House Bill 101, described as "a bill to regulate high capacity revolvers." (Trust me, somewhere, some anti-gun lawmaker is dumb enough to author such a bill because his supporters are dumb enough to believe such things exist!) Look it up, forward the link to your "legislative action" group, and publicly rip it apart. Be ready to testify during any public hearing.

Important point — If you start a legislative action group, be sure to add as a member every lawmaker, regardless of party. Be sure to identify caucus leadership. Anybody who asks to be dropped is signaling their opposition to your issue and your concerns. Make a note of that and make it public.

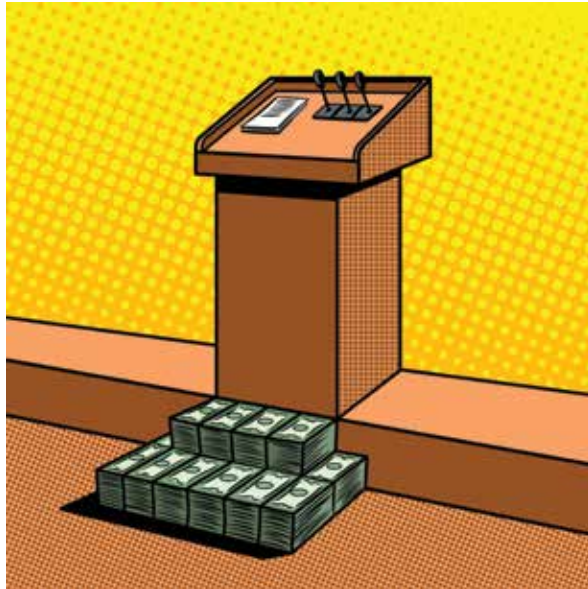
Equally important — Do everything by the book. Follow all the requirements of a PAC and be scrupulous about filing reports and keeping track of contributions and expenditures.

SET UP A LEGISLATIVE SHOOT

Some years ago, a former Washington State senator set up an annual "Legislative Shoot" at a gun range near the state capitol in Olympia.

It was a great opportunity for activists to meet state lawmakers, share concerns and — most importantly — work on strategies to pass good bills and stop bad ones. Such an event was also an opportunity to find out who is running for re-election this fall and now's the time to offer help with their campaign. It's also good for a local media photop and maybe a television news story.

These events usually occur in February, so there is still time to set up such a gathering if you have a facility and a



wise for any state, just set it up and start inviting your friends to join. Tell them to invite their friends to join. Pretty soon, you'll have a core legion of activists; maybe an army of activists.

Figure out a way to raise money. Money is the life's blood of politics, whether you like it or not. About every three or four days, groups like Everytown for Gun Safety and its subsidiary Moms Demand Action are blitzing large email lists for donations. They raise small fortunes to pay for lobbying, election campaigns, whatever it takes. Instead of buying an extra box of ammunition "just in case," start a war chest to support the Second

handful of volunteers to serve as range safety officers. If not this year, start the advance work to hold one next year. In the interim, put together a gun safety workshop and invite lawmakers. The money you've been raising will pay for food and beverages, and rent for the facility.

If there is a Cabela's, Bass Pro Shop or some other large "hook-and-bullet" retailer in the vicinity of the state capital, contact the management right now to see if they have a conference room or would be interested in hosting such an event.

Such a workshop is a way to send a message to the media you are the genuine "gun safety" experts, not that bunch of twerps who disguise gun prohibition as "safety."



"NONE OF THESE SUGGESTIONS IS IMPOSSIBLE. ALL IT TAKES TO MAKE THIS STUFF HAPPEN IS YOU, AND YOUR FRIENDS IF THEY WANT TO COME ALONG."

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE

None of these suggestions is impossible. All it takes to make this stuff happen is you, and your friends if they want to come along.

See, it's not enough just to get angry and frustrated, then blow off steam on social media. All this accomplishes is high blood pressure. It's imperative to channel the anger and frustration into action, and January is the month to do it when most Legislatures convene. If you wait until spring to rally at the state capitol, nobody's going to be there.

The history of the Second Amendment movement is filled with people for whom the fight was all-important. Wouldn't you just like to win and be done with it?

GUNS

CROSSFIRE

continued from page 8

I just finished reading Denny Hansen's article on the Mossberg nightstick. Although it was a good article I took exception to the last paragraph when he made the comment "...unless the shooter rode the extra-short bus..." I'm sure many of your readers have been touched by someone in their family or know someone that had a special needs child that needed to go to school in a "short bus" and this hit a nerve. In this day and age I would think your magazine would have a little more respect for your readers. Or maybe someone should proofread the articles before they are published with hateful comments.

Dino Audo

Initially I spent a paragraph here explaining why I have first-hand experience in the matter but in the interest of privacy for family members, suffice it to say I have standing on this issue whether you choose to believe it or not. Regardless, I knew some people would be upset but after a bit of soul-searching, I decided to approve it. It certainly didn't specifically "attack special-needs children" (by the way, I just got dressed down a few weeks ago by a family member who said "Special Needs" is now considered derogatory so I'm really not sure what word to use). As far as "hateful comments" goes, I'd suggest this one story is a pretty weak evidence of glowering hatred within people you don't know — but I choose not to be offended. Ultimately, I do take full responsibility for the statement as I saw it, considered it and decided to let it stand. Perhaps it was in poor taste and I might choose differently if facing the choice again, but calling it hatred is like killing flies with a nuclear weapon. —BW

.....

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

Regarding the *GUNS Magazine* Podcast episode #97 — when you and Roy were talking about the H&R nine-shot .22 LR revolver, my eyes opened wide. I had never heard anyone ever mention this pistol before so I went to the safe and just had to hold it. It is the first 22 pistol I ever shot!

My dad bought it for my mom for

protection while he was traveling. He took her to the local PD and had them train her, she was pretty good with it. I still have my mother's H&R 922 and the box it came in. Thanks for bringing back the memories.

"Billy Mac"

.....



GUM WRAPPER GUN

Whatever got into the Ruger design team when they okayed the SASS medallion on the grips of the new Vaquero? That logo is more suited for a gum wrapper than a fine firearm! If I was purchasing a new Vaquero I would insist on a grip panel trade out. Of course with the current handgun scarcity I might be shown the door! Let's take a minute and discuss the Bisley Vaquero. The original Colt Bisley had the newly-designed target grips. No doubt they helped the shooters of the day. The Italian replica makers do an excellent job on all the old west six-guns and they duplicated the grip size and shape on the Bisleys to be exactly original. Too bad! I find them ugly, uncomfortable, awkward and hard to shoot. Along comes Ruger, more interested in making a good shootable grip than pure authenticity, so they design a grip that looks great, feels great and shoots great. I want one! Yes, different tastes make the world, and the economy, go 'round. The Ruger Bisley Vaquero (as shown on pg. 55 of the Nov. issue of *GUNS*) is for me the ultimate sixgun.

Joel Wood
GUNS



BUCK AUTO IMPACT RAPID TRANSIT REVIVAL!

Pat Covert

Buck Knives introduced their new, upscale Legacy series for 2021 and one entree really caught my eye. The Impact folder, introduced in 2015, was Buck's first



The push button blade release and slide safety latch are done up in eye-catching copper. The button also releases the blade when you're ready to stow it.

traipse into the automatic knife world and the company was hell-bent on getting it right. With knife laws beginning to loosen up at the time — with many states starting to overturn laws against those “nasty old switchblades” — it was only fitting Buck would jump into the fray. The Impact auto has a design typical of modern tactical folders and is built strong and stout, just like Buck likes them.

The Buck Legacy Impact is a slick sidewinder dressed up in attractive Carbon Fiber frame scales, premium Crucible CPM S35-VN stainless steel, and some sweet copper touches to jigger the eye appeal up a notch. The Legacy Impact's 3.125" Drop Point blade has a long, deep swedge grind on the spine for enhanced penetration. The blade opens out the side with authority and closes with aplomb via a copper button-lock release. A slide safety allows the user to keep the blade from accidentally opening during fetch and

Buck Knives' Legacy Impact is an out-the-side auto decked out in Carbon Fiber frame scales and upscale Crucible CPM S35-VN stainless steel, and cool copper fittings.

carry. The blade pivot, stainless steel liners and pocket clip are all topped with black Cerakote and the frame spacer is copper to add a further touch of pop. The upscale Impact checks in at a very manageable 4.25 oz.

WHY YOU'LL LIKE IT

This is the stealth missile version of the Buck Impact. Everything has been boiled down into a clean, aerodynamic version of the knife's former self using top shelf materials and, like the legendary Buck 110, the Legacy Impact exudes strength. This ain't no gent's folder — it's meant for combat and hard duty. There are five knives in the 2021 Legacy Collection and while these aren't produced in limited numbers, they are limited to their year of production. After 2021 Buck will produce no more. MSRP for the Buck legacy Impact is \$280.

GUNS

BuckKnives.com

Editors note: this is a special edition of *Quartermaster* in which we take a look at some favored products we reviewed earlier to see how they have withstood the test of time.

WARTHOG CLASSIC II KNIFE SHARPENER

This is another item I felt had promise, but there were nagging doubts because it hadn't yet received a long-term workout on hundreds of different knives by the time it was reviewed. Fortunately, my mind is at ease now because I've witnessed the Warthog working wonders.



It's certainly ungainly and odd. In the initial review of the sharpener in the August 2021 issue, I said it resembles an 18th century torture device but once the levers start levering and rods start sliding, knives get sharp quickly and with minimal fuss. I've now sharpened everything in our house and garage, so I *know* it works!

The contraption looks complicated, gangly and unintuitive but once you get past the homely appearance, this thing could put even a sharp edge on a dull wit. Joe, we're thinking of you.

MSRP: \$99.99
WarthogUSA.com

N8 TACTICAL OT2 IWB HOLSTER

It's been almost one year since we covered the N8 Tactical holster and at the time, frankly I had my concerns about its longevity. The key to the versatility of this design is the elastic-based holster and I wondered how long the stretchy stuff could keep its shape under the daily onslaught of movement, heat, humidity and flab slapping (mine).

I wasn't joking when I said it had become my 'daily carry' holster, cradling my Mossberg MC2c nearly every moment since arrival. Now, after 10 months and countless hours of carry, I can say the holster has passed the test with flying colors.

The holster is as secure as ever while the composite backing material is a bit bent and worn but only enough to tell it isn't brand-new. There is still plenty of life left in the rig and I've become an unabashed convert on these holsters.

MSRP: \$39.99
N8Tactical.com



STREAMLIGHT WEDGE FLASHLIGHT

This light was initially reviewed based on the glowing recommendations of others whom I trust. Since it was made by Streamlight, I already knew it was good quality but I wasn't sure if I'd like the largish size and semi-unusual shape for an Everyday Carry (EDC) light. Boy, was I wrong.

First is the "carry" part of EDC. After eight months of daily use, I find I almost feel naked if I don't have a clip knife riding in one pocket and the Wedge clipped in the other. It's now almost instinctive to grab the light and flick the rotary switch with my thumb anytime there is the slightest need for a light. Of course, I'm always using the hyper-drive "THRO" setting that explodes with 1,000 lumens of light and is amazing for a light this size.

So far, the case shows little signs of wear, the electronics operate perfectly, the pocket clip is wholly unbent and sitting here, I can only think of one little problem with the light — I'm not sure where mine is located at this exact moment. Temporary misplacement aside, I'm madly in love with my Wedge.

MSRP: \$149.95
Streamlight.com



6MM ARC RIFLES AMERICAN TACTICAL, INC.

American Tactical's Mii-Sport Rifle and Omni Hybrid Maxx Rifle are now offered in 6mm ARC. The cartridge is known for its low recoil and high accuracy, making it ideal for these two

rifles. The 6mm ARC rifles feature an 18" barrel and 15" MLOK-style rail. Both models have the ATI SR-1 Rear Stock and the Omni Hybrid Maxx model has a Nano Composite Trigger Kit. MSRP: \$949.95 for the Mii-Sport; \$829.95 for the Omni Hybrid Maxx. For more info: (800) 290-0065, AmericanTactical.us



MINIMALIST PERSIAN CRKT

The *Minimalist Persian* has a long curvature design with a minimalist Micarta grip for control and precision. It has an OAL of 5.81" and weighs 2 oz. Its 2.76" blade is made of 8Cr13MoV steel with a bead blast finish. The handle is glass-reinforced nylon. The Minimalist Persian comes with a polypropylene sheath. MSRP: \$39.99. For more info: (800) 891-3100, CRKT.com



1911 EMISSARY SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

Springfield Armory's *1911 Emissary* in .45 ACP has a 5" forged stainless steel, match-grade, bull barrel. The frame and slide are forged stainless steel as well. Overall length is 8.4"; weight is 40 oz. Its recoil system is a one-piece full-length guide rod. The 1911 Emissary sports VZ Grips Thin-Line G10 and Tritium/Luminescent Front sight with Tactical Rack U-Notch rear and comes with two 8-round magazines. MSRP: \$1,279. For more info: (800) 680-6866, store.Springfield-Armory.com

SINGLE ACTION OUTDOORSMAN GALCO

The *Single Action Outdoorsman* is great for field carry of a single-action revolver, whether for hunting or peace of mind in the wilderness. It can be worn strong side or crossdraw at the user's discretion. Made of premium steerhide, the SAO holster employs a retention strap for simplicity and security in the brush. Tension screw adjustment allows for a custom fit to the revolver. The SAO fits belts up to 1 3/4". MSRP: \$114. For more info: (623) 434-7070, GalcoGunleather.com



WATERPROOF LED SPOTLIGHT CYCLOPS

The *Waterproof LED Spotlight* from Cyclops has a standard pistol grip/lamp body configuration for easy and fatigue-free use. The chassis is a combination of aluminum, PC, rubber and TPR for a comfortable, no-slip grip and to protect the unit from hard impact. The housing is waterproof, dustproof (IP67) and floats in water. The front spotlight is powered by a really bright 20W XHP50.2 Cree LED. At the back is a 6W Cree XP-G3 LED that serves as a floodlight or a lantern. MSRP: \$89.99 for 700 lumens; \$44.99 for 300 lumens. For more info: (877) 269-8490, CyclopsSolutions.com



ABDO MAGAZINE POUCH TENICOR

With its simple and low profile design, the *ABDO Magazine Pouch* is built for everyday carry. Utilizing the security of the T1 clip by Discreet Carry Concepts, the magazine sits close to the body and hidden from view. Made from a thick and durable thermoplastic, the ABDO is optimized for appendix carry, forward of the hip. Works with the G43, PDP, P365, Shield+ and more. MSRP: \$47. For more info: info@tenicor.com, Tenicor.com



TD SSM-BUIS IRON SIGHT SET FOR SIG SAUER P320 TANGODOWN INC.

TangoDown partnered with TruGlo to create the *TD SSM-BUIS Iron Sight Set for SIG SAUER P320*. The sight sets work in conjunction with TangoDown's recently released optic mounts. Front sights are precision-machined steel, with optional HD ring or Tritium dot only. Rear sights are non-Tritium, with a location-locking set screw. MSRP: \$86.65. For more info: (909) 392-4757, TangoDown.com



G2 SERIES BACKER
N8 TACTICAL

N8 Tactical announces the next generation in EDC holster technology with the *G2 Series Backer*. This second-generation series of holsters combines three layers: 1) black leather ergonomically contoured for a no-pinch fit and support for the handgun; 2) moisture-proof neoprene, prevents sweat and body oils as well as uncomfortable pressure points; and 3) a perforated suede material positioned next to the skin or clothing to reduce chaffing and prevent uncomfortable bunching and pulling. MSRP: Starting at \$44.95. For more info: (888) 732-5011, n8tactical.com



PRO MODEL 1911
D&L SPORTS

D&L Sports *Pro Model 1911* pistols continue to lead the way with state of the art innovations and old world craftsmanship in each firearm. The Pro Model is offered in .45 ACP. MSRP: Starting at \$2,600. For more info: (928) 636-1726, DLSports.com



CRAWFORD 1 FLIPPER
COLD STEEL

The *Crawford 1 Flipper* is a flip-open pocketknife designed by Wes Crawford. The blade, constructed of Japanese 4034 steel is 3.5" long and 3.3mm thick. The hollow-ground edge offers razor-thin sharpness that's easy to maintain. A flipper integrated into the tang provides fast and smooth one-hand blade deployment. The handle is made of Zy-Ex, a glass-reinforced nylon with high-traction rubber inlays textured for maximum grip with wet or slippery hands. MSRP: \$49.99. For more info: (877) 269-8490, ColdSteel.com



BASE GUARD BULLET
NORTHERN PRECISION

The *Base Guard Bullet* from Northern Precision can be fired nearly as fast as a jacketed one, without fouling the bore. In fact, it helps clean the bore on every shot by scraping out previous fouling! The Base Guard design features a lead bullet with a bore-cleaning disk attached firmly to the base by means of a perfectly centered rivet, formed from the bullet material itself. Available in both .429 and .458 cal. MSRP: Starting at \$20 for 50 bullets. For more info: (315) 955-8679, NPCustomBullets.com



GRIPFIX
HUMP ELIMINATOR
OT DEFENSE

You can now fix the GLOCK issue, that is, the way it naturally points towards the sky with the *GripFix Hump Eliminator*. With GripFix, you can fix the GLOCK "hump," stipple the finished product and leave holes in the back of the frame to allow water and dirt to fall out the base. You can either reshape and glue and/or melt the removed portion back into place, or use one of OT Defense's Flat Backstraps (sold separately). MSRP: \$79.99. For more info: (541) 566-6908, store. OTDefense.com



MULTITOOL HOLSTER
VERSACARRY

Comfortably and conveniently carry your multitool, flashlight and pen with Versacarry's *Multitool Holster*. Made of vegetable-tanned water buffalo leather and sewn together with industrial-grade nylon thread, this holster can be used with standard 1.5" wide belts. It's proudly made in the U.S.A. and comes with a lifetime warranty. MSRP: \$44.99. For more info: (979) 778-2000, Versacarry.com



ACROPOLIS 3- AND 4-PERSON TENTS
ALPS MOUNTAINEERING

ALPS Mountaineering introduces the *Acropolis 3- and 4-Person Tents*. Designed to accommodate either three or four adults, the Acropolis uses a free-standing pre-bent pole system with a top cross pole for more interior space than dome tents.



The Acropolis is a three-season tent. Mesh walls provide warm-weather sleeping comfort and ventilation. A 75D 185T full-coverage polyester fly with 1,500mm coating can be deployed for cool nights or inclement weather. MSRP: \$299.99 for the 3-Person; \$349.99 for the 4-Person. For more info: (800) 344-2577, ALPSMountaineering.com

**SUBMIT
YOUR
ENTRY
ONLINE:**

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

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

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



**BIGHORN
ARMORY[™]**

AR500

AUTO MAX RIFLE GIVEAWAY

On the first month of 2022, *GUNS Magazine* would like to give you something to hope for — winning our fantastic giveaway prize — a Big Horn Armory *AR500 Auto Max Rifle*! It's an AR rifle like no other. Chambered in 500 Auto Max, the AR500 is a powerful, pleasant shooting, rapid firing versatile rifle in a platform weighing less than 10 lbs. It features a 1:24 rate of twist, a threaded muzzle with muzzle brake, a recessed crown, an adjustable butt stock and more. The 500 Auto Max cartridge is powerful and incredibly versatile. It can launch projectiles from a speedy 200 grains to a massive, truck-stopping 700 grains in almost



**9-ROUND
MAGAZINES (2)**

Value: \$150



CKAGE GIVEAWAY

any type of bullet imaginable: Jacketed soft points, hollow points, monolithic solids, hardcast, and even frangible. Essentially a rimless 500 S&W Magnum, the 500 Auto Max is easy to reload with the same dies, shell holders, and even most loads and bullets.

The AR500 has a 5- or 9-round capacity, depending on the mags you use. A 5-round mag comes with the gun but the giveaway package also includes two 9-round magazines!

There's also one more prize: a BHA Rhodesian Sling so you can easily carry your AR500 (that is, if you win) on your shoulder when you go hunting. This two-point sling is made of bridle leather and solid brass hardware.

Owning the AR500 Auto Max Rifle package will be within your reach, if you enter this giveaway. Go to GUNSMagazine.com/giveaways or mail a post card!

—Jazz Jimenez

GUNS



BHA RHODESIAN SLING

Value: \$75

AR500 AUTO MAX RIFLE

Maker: Big Horn Armory
(307) 586-3700

BigHornArmory.com

Caliber: 500 Auto Max, **Capacity:** 5 or 9

OAL: 38" (collapsed); 41" (extended)

Barrel Length: 18", **Weight:** 9 lbs.

Value: \$1,999



NORTHERN PRECISION'S .405 WINCHESTER SLUGS

SOLVE ALL YOUR PROBLEMS WITH 'BIG MEDICINE'

Jeff "Tank" Hoover

The .405 Winchester was designed in 1904 for the Winchester 1895 lever gun. Today, it's still considered one of the most powerful lever-gun rimmed cartridges. The hard-hitting cartridge was a favorite of Teddy Roosevelt during his long East African safari. With such a rich history, it's no wonder there's still a strong following for this nostalgic cartridge.

There's something special when handloading, shooting, or even just holding cartridges designed over 100 years ago. Loading them into a firearm magically transforms you to times past, when shooting game was done at spit-tin' distances.

Better yet is loading your rifle with these mythical cartridges for a long-awaited hunt, following the footsteps of your heroes as you head afield. These are the thoughts coursing through my mind whenever loading the .405 Winchester cartridge. It was Teddy Roosevelt's "Medicine Gun" for lions and if it's good enough for our 26th President, it's surely good enough for us. Besides,

it's fun mimicking our heroes.

A WINNER!

Years ago, I actually won a raffle in a fireman's "gun-a-day" lottery. There's a first time for anything, eh? I wasn't interested in the gun listed but offered paying the difference for a gun I really wanted, the Ruger #1, chambered in .405 Winchester. The firemen agreed and the gun was ordered.

A few years later, I see an ad for some TC Encore barrels for sale chambered in the same caliber. I order one, happy to receive such a bargain. Now I had two .405 Winchester shooters with a grin bigger than Teddy's on Mt. Rushmore because I know how cool this cartridge is.

COOL CAST CONVERSION

I have an RCBS .417 350-grain FNGC single cavity mold for my .416 Rigby rifles. It drops slugs at 0.417" that is easily sized down to 0.413", perfect for the .405 Winchester. Loaded over a stiff charge of Alliant ReLoader 7, it's a very accurate load. I've shot thousands of these cast bullet loads from these guns



Tank's Lee Classic Turret press, with Hornady dies was used for all handloads with excellent results.

and while taking a few deer too. The deer never knew what hit them! But being a handloader always has you looking for more options.

Imagine my surprise looking on the *GUNS Magazine* online site and seeing a headline — "Northern Precision .405 Custom Bullets." Huh? Whoda' thunk? I click on the heading and read about William Noody's custom shop and the .405 bullets he makes. I'm stoked and



The two targets at left are from the TC Encore at 50 yards, while the two right targets are from the Ruger #1 at 100 yards.



Here's the .405 Winchester line-up (from left to right) — a sized-down RCBS 0.417" cast bullet, and Northern Precision bullets 225-, 265-, and 325-grain.

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PS Form 3526, July 2014 (Page 1 of 2) PSN: 7530-01-000-9031



Here's William Noody doing what he loves, making bullets for handloaders to shoot. He's a viable option for many out-of-stock bullets in the bigger stores. Call him! Northern Precision bullets are accurate indeed.

make a phone call, ordering bullets in weights of 225-, 265- and 325-grains.

Noody uses heavy presses to swage and jacket his bullets. For tougher bullets he uses epoxy to bond lead cores to the bullet jacket, avoiding separation. Noody advises using his regular swaged jacketed bullets for sight-in and soft skinned game and more expensive bonded bullets for tougher, thick-skinned game.

THE LOADS

For the 325-grain bullet, I use 55 grains of IMR 4895 for just over 2,150 FPS. Accuracy was excellent, with three-shot groups going 1" to 1.5" at 100 yards. Groups with the Skinner Sights peep-sighted TC Encore went the same, only at 50 yards distance.

The 265-grain loaded over the same powder charge went 2,250 FPS, with the same accuracy. This may be the perfect deer-sized-game bullet. It reminds me of the devastating 265-grain .444 Marlin load, only with a tad more SD because of the slightly smaller diameter.

Last, was the 225-grain screamer. Loaded over 53-grains of ReLoader 7,

velocity reached 2,500 FPS. Wow! Talk about a terminator load for whitetail and smaller critters. Accuracy was again excellent, snugging right around an inch for three shots at 100 yards.

OPTIONS

It's always nice having options as a handloader and thankfully we have Northern Precision providing us .405 Winchester lovers some excellent options. I think the extra weight and sectional density of the 325-grain bullets is pure perfection for heavy game like elk, moose and bear, while the 265- and 225-grain slugs will easily handle whitetail work.

Give Northern Precision a call and talk with William. He's a heckuva' nice guy and you just may learn something from him. Check out his other bullet options too. I also ordered some 250-grain .358 bullets from him for my .35 Whelen and I'm anxious to see how they do. As Teddy would say, "Bully for Northern Precision!" Now to find a Winchester 1895 ...

NPCustomBullets.com

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

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a continuum of sounds which seem likely produced by a felon who is working in my home, things go to Condition Red and the game plan takes a serious turn.

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

You now have an important choice to make: offense or defense. As I mentioned, most of us automatically charge ahead to defend Truth, Justice and the American Way and make sure the darned burglar is sorry he ever chose our home. After all, we've spent countless hours and untold amounts of money training and preparing for this exact situation. However, I'll explain why this might not be the best course of action against a real-deal midnight marauder.

First, a concept — experience from several thousand years of warfare has found an attacker (you) needs to outnumber a defender (bad guy) by a 3:1 ratio. If there are two people currently rifling through your silverware drawer, you now need at least a squad-sized group to have a reasonable chance of safety. Most beds don't hold such numbers, even in California.

A lone good guy facing an unknown number of people in the dark, armed with who-knows-what and motivated by greed, evil, drugs or a combination thereof, brings up a major concern — if something happens to you, a major part of your home's protective force is now gone. There is a better way.

STAND AND DELIVER

The best course of action, assuming everyone is or can quickly be gathered in a safe place, is to stay put and protect the ground you already own. This is the time to grab your weapons, hunker down behind a bed or substantial piece of furniture and have someone dial 911 — most likely your spouse or partner, tonight playing the role of "the sexy tactical communications officer."

In the meantime, loudly challenge the intruder using your best "Wrath of God" voice and announce you are armed and the police have been notified, even if they haven't. The person manning the phone should keep

an open line to law enforcement so responding officers know you are armed, you can give periodic updates and it also makes an audio recording of your actions.

At this point, if the bad guy makes the really bad decision to approach your stronghold, take the appropriate and necessary action then repeat as necessary. Fortunately, most incidents never reach this point.

BACK TO REALITY

Typically, things are ambiguous enough you'd feel silly to invoke a major law enforcement response for what simply might be the sound of grandmother's favorite fern falling off

When clearing an area, speed isn't important because it's a matter of careful, thorough and safe checking rather than performing a one-person Delta Force hostage-rescue mission. If you don't have a good, working knowledge of things like "slicing-the-pie," "fatal funnel" and other standard concepts, you might not want to check the house on your own anyway.

Another odd but fairly common situation is finding someone inside your house who isn't actually a criminal. I've handled several instances where drunken or narcoleptic friends, neighbors or even strangers have entered residences under the impression they had made it home, sometimes even

“
YOU MIGHT WANT TO
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PUBLIC MANNER BUT DON'T.”

the windowsill due to a passing truck. Therefore, since you'll probably be investigating some of these instances, I'll share a few thoughts.

Use lights to your advantage. Most homes have light switches positioned so you can illuminate the areas ahead as you leave the sleeping quarters. While you should still be carrying a high-intensity flashlight, use of overhead lights prevents nasty little surprises such as a bad guy hiding behind the credenza.

Verbally identifying yourself isn't a bad idea, either. Don't worry about giving up the element of surprise as our ultimate goal is to stay safe rather than to capture a criminal or engage in gunplay. Most burglars worry about escape more than fighting so announcing your presence will likely cause such people to flee. If they do, let them — it's just stuff.

breaking in when they couldn't unlock the front door. If you have teenagers, there is also the distinct possibility someone is sneaking in or out.

You might *want* to kill these folks in a slow, painful and public manner but don't. Always identify and challenge people from cover or concealment before taking any non-revocable actions.

I once pointed a shotgun at my own son, a flash sight-picture I'll never forget. If I had decided to shoot first and ask questions later, my own life would have ended that very moment. Just keep in mind someone standing in the living room isn't always a homicidal maniac.

There are a few more points we could discuss but everybody is asleep and I just heard the unmistakable sound of moldy bread and coffee grounds being eaten in the foyer — I need to check it out!

GUNS

A BUMP IN THE NIGHT

SOMETIMES THINGS AREN'T WHAT THEY SEEM

Brent T. Wheat

CRASH!!! I sat bolt upright in bed after a smashing, clattering noise burst from my living room. I then heard another thump, a scuffling sound and an odd crinkling noise I couldn't quite interpret.

Wide awake and hyperventilating in my bed, I knew decisive action was necessary before the crazed machete-wielding murderer in the next room could ply his trade on our whole family. This was a moment I had trained and prepared for my entire life.

Sliding quickly to the floor, I grabbed my bedside GLOCK 21 pistol then cautiously padded to the bedroom door. Listening for a moment, I slipped into the long hallway leading to the living room.

At the doorway of the living room I stopped for a moment to pinpoint the source of the noise, said an abbreviated prayer, then slid quickly around the door jamb while simultaneously flipping the light switch.

There, in the middle of the living room, was our English setter blinking in surprise at the sudden brightness. She was presiding over a large buffet of trash from the kitchen wastebasket, a piece of decaying spaghetti dangling from her lips. She looked up quizzically as if to say, "Hey boss. Just havin' a snack. What are you doing awake? Want some of these egg shells?"

I dropped the pistol to low ready after momentarily pondering where I could hide her corpse.

BUMP IN THE NIGHT

Hearing a noise inside your home at night is perhaps the single most common crime-related emergency most people will encounter during

their lifetime. Given the likelihood you will personally experience such an "intruder" during sleep hours, I thought it might be worthwhile to discuss a few points on how to respond to those big midnight frights.

However, before we lock-n-load and "go tactical," we really need to separate fact from fiction.

Most home burglaries — most, but certainly not all — happen during the day. Typically, Mr. John Q. Dirtbag will knock or ring the doorbell and if you



answer, he'll give some cockamamie explanation such as asking for directions, then leave. If you don't answer, he'll slip around the back to bust a window or kick in a door. Once inside, he'll grab a pillow case and stuff it with as much swag as he can carry, then escape to meet his partner or girlfriend who is circling the area in the getaway car.

If someone does come in your home at night, they are generally desperate for drugs, or loot to sell for drugs. At the first sign of trouble or noise, they'll instantly flee because they're not looking for a fight.

The final category is home invasions, thankfully a somewhat-rare event. In these instances, the best defense is a ready gun but in most cases, folks either wake up in mid-assault or have already been greeted at the front

door by violent attackers. This is why a dog, outside lights, nosy insomniac neighbors, motion cameras and alarm systems are valuable adjuncts to help prevent such things. The key is early warning, then you can strap-up and be ready.

BUT HONESTLY...

In the vast majority of instances, a bump or crash in the night *probably* isn't a problem. It's also why I don't have an issue with investigating unusual sounds or incidents before you call in the police. I've probably had dozens of such things happen through the years and I'd have been embarrassed to hide behind the bed and call the cops only to discover a picture fell off the wall in the middle of the night.

Of course, there is no harm in summoning the police and this is always the safest course of action. However, I don't think most of our readers default to "safest" and they do what makes the most sense under the circumstances so we'll push forward.

FIRST THINGS

My immediate-action drill upon being awaked by a strange or frightening noise is simply to listen. If I *really* got scared, I'll probably reach over and get my pistol "just in case," but most of the time I lie quietly and motionless to gather audio information.

In most cases, the noise was a single-serving of panic and I may or may not investigate. When I have, I've found the dog eating garbage, a rogue robot vacuum self-activating in the middle of the night, a water softener on the fritz and countless mystery noises, the source of which was never found.

However, if I'm lying there and hear

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