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2023

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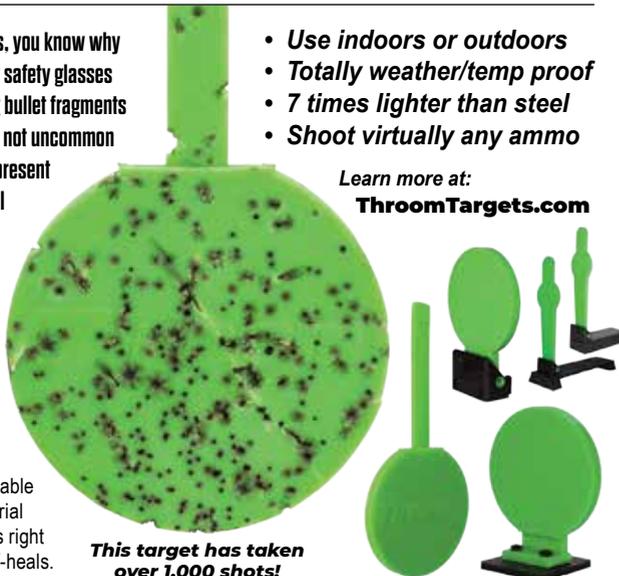
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REVOLVER FINICKINESS

Maybe you or one of your expert revolver contributors has seen a problem like this before and has an idea about how to fix it.

My dad left me a Colt Trooper MK III 357 that has a problem. At the range, you can fire three or four shots with no problem, and then the cylinder will bind up. You can pull the hammer back a little but can't turn the cylinder at all. After a little while, things go back to normal for another shot or two, and then it will bind up again. You can see some daylight all across the cylinder gap, and it turns okay with no noticeable dragging before being fired. Any ideas?

Cliff

Sounds like you might have a slightly bent ejector rod. In an example of fortuitous timing, Tiger McKee shows us in this issue of Handgunner how to fix it! Check out "Revolver Know-How: Extractor Rod Secrets" to see if this might be your problem. —TM

Tactical Reality?

I hope you or one of the other staff can answer a question. I have no LE or military training and have not taken any training such as Gunsite. I know just enough about genuine tactical gun handling to be dangerous. I watch a lot

of military-/LE-based action shows that show two behaviors I question — typically demonstrated most clearly in some type of building-clearing action.

First, many are shown using AR-based weapons, such as an M4, with the adjustable stocks set very short. I under-

stand the need for portability, but such a short stock necessitates an extreme arm bend at the elbow and an extreme wrist bend to reach the trigger. Seems both uncomfortable and physically limiting. Is this correct?

Second, many are shown handling a service handgun, typically a GLOCK or similar, working their way through a room holding the gun at eye level, not



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much more than 6" or so from their face, again with an extreme wrist bend to allow the gun to be pointed forward and level. Obviously, the gun should not be fired from that position. Is that a recommended way to carry the weapon on a room-clearing action?

Thanks for any information.

Jack Thorne

Jack — Good questions. An advantage of the collapsible stock on the M4 carbine, and other firearms, is the ability to better fit the user by adjusting it — shorter or longer. When the military and law enforcement used thicker body armor that covered more of the user, collapsing the stock all or most of the way made the most sense. This can apply to heavy winter clothing as well. With armor getting thinner and covering less, many shooters found that lengthening the stock worked better for them.

As for some of the ready positions you may have seen in some shows — No! The more the firearm is in your line of sight, the greater the likelihood that you will not be able to see as much of what is going on as you need to see to make the best decisions. Especially "Don't Shoot/ Shoot" decisions. There has been good scientific research on this, and we have covered it at AmericanCop.com.

Thanks for asking these questions; hopefully, I answered them for you.

Erick Gelhaus

Editor, AmericanCop.com
Rangemaster, Gunsite

Just Because ...

Here's an idea for an upcoming article, video, or podcast etc. Converting a 9mm 1911 to 30 super carry. Why, you ask?

Just because we're handgunners.

Richard

I agree! — TM

It Must Be Inflation

Okay, Tom, we need to have a discussion — right now!

You and the other two ne'er do-wells (RH & BW) are rapidly driving me into the poor house. Every damn month one or more of you, as well as your superb group of authors, hit me with something new, old, innovative, informative, or just plain desirable. I am weak. I buy what I can and, if it isn't immediately available, add it to my wish list. I am trying to save up for one (or more) of those \$5k pistols, and you guys are destroying my slush fund. Stop it!

Try running a few issues covering some other stuff. Legos, water guns, Nerf and rubber band guns would be a good start.

As it now stands, when I go in to see my gunsmith, he rolls out a red carpet,

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SPEAK OUT

pours me an adult beverage, smiles and waits. All the pictures of exotic cars on his wall are disturbing.

My gun shop has offered to pay for as many lifetime subscriptions to gun magazines as I want. I told them, "No, I can't afford it."

Give me a break ... please.

Jerry Mandel

Golden Years Defense

Mr. Venturino, thanks for your "Golden Years Defense" article in the *Concealed Carry & Self-Defense* magazine. I am 64, and we who have married good cooks know our 32" pants don't fit anymore.

My EDC is a Kimber Micro 9. A bit too long for good summer concealment. I got around this with pocket carry and my .38 snub, which drew faster, but I was giving up two rounds and fast reloads. I wouldn't be concerned, but I am on the security team at our church and like the 1911 platform advantages. I was excited to hear you extoll IWB carry.

I purchased an inexpensive nylon holster for proof of concept, and it works! I am now looking at IWB leather holsters. Thanks for reminding us that not all sheepdogs are 20-something anymore. Our yard may be smaller, but we still stand watch.

Keep up the good work.

Nate Snell

Where's The .327?

I loved the article by Lindsey Bertomen in the March/April issue on the .327 Federal Magnum caliber. With that said, I bought a new Ruger SP101 in .327. I love the gun and caliber, but why don't ammo companies make any ammo for the caliber? Starline doesn't make any brass at this time. Midway USA doesn't have any brass or ammo in stock. What gives? You would think Federal Cartridge Company would make ammo for this caliber. As of now, my Ruger SP101 is a paperweight.

Stanley Hollingsworth

I think I must be about the only person in my region who, for years, has carried the .327. I have a Ruger GP100 with a 4" barrel that I carried until I

read about Ruger's SP101 with a 3" pipe, which is a smaller and lighter version of the GP100. Perfect!

I used to get 115-grain American Eagle but can now only find 100- and 85-grain, but that's like finding hen's teeth.

Paul Ruff

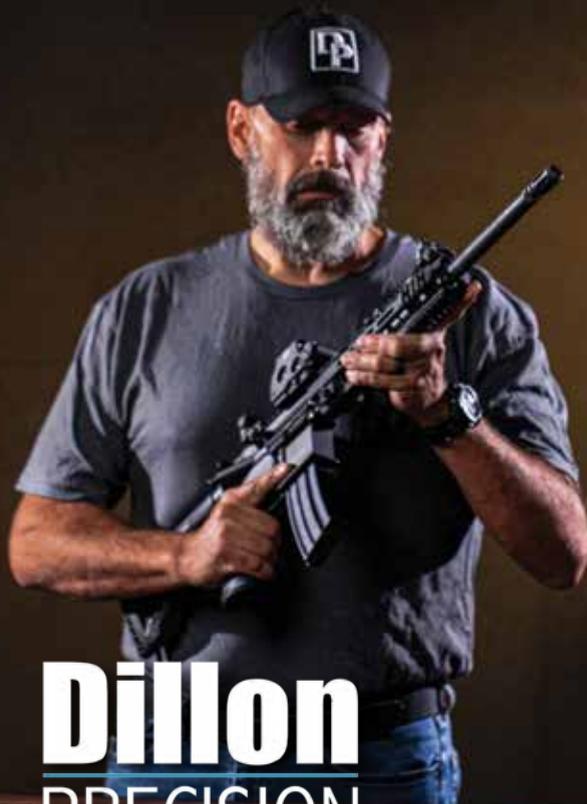
I really am very impressed with this cartridge from what I've read, but little is known about it.

I went into a major gun store the other day looking for some models of it, especially the Ruger LCR hammerless carry model for a relative and the young fellas working there said there was no such thing as a .327 Federal Magnum. I laughed at them and continued browsing. They promptly started Googling on their phones and became instant know-it-alls about it, LOL. But not one in the store to look at or ask questions about, so I walked out.

Mitchell

Nightstand Guns

Gentlemen, after waking up this morning with a pinched nerve or something in my arm, I decided to bring to your attention a problem not often talked about on a nightstand weapon.



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Last night I slept wrong and woke up with a dead arm from a lack of blood flow. Just think if you woke up this way upon hearing a window break or the door smashed in!

I have a 1911 by the bed, but upon pondering this situation, I'm going back to a revolver. Simpler manual of arms for the weak and not always the handiest hand. A tense situation is not the time to try and remember to work the safety with the weak hand. The revolver seems to help with the simple "grip it and squeeze" if the need is there. I realize that handguns like the GLOCK also operate this way, but you can't beat the relaxed-until-called-upon springs of a revolver.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. Keep up the great videos on *Gun Cranks* and the *GUNS Podcast*, lots to learn and enjoy.

Buck

Training Alternatives

Just a question: All of the cries for training are great, but what about folks like me? I'm a retired schoolteacher with a disabled wife, so money is exceptionally tight. At 70, I'm physically okay but not like I was when I was 30. Training costs more than I can pay,

so I do the best I can via *Handgunner* and the 'net. Other than Mr. Ayoob, who is "Superman," what about us older handgunners? Are we just grease for the treads if the balloon goes up? Love the mag; maybe a column about us too? God bless, and keep up the great work!

G. Garrison

There is always more to cover on this front, but a couple of articles in our recent Concealed Carry & Self Defense special editions offer a start. Check out "Golden Years Defense" by Mike Venturino and "Staying Alive ... with Old Trooper Tricks" by Tank Hoover. The magazine is available at FMGPubs.com. —TM

No Carry Environments

For 20+ years, my car or truck keys have been attached to a 6" hard white plastic kubotan. It doesn't look menacing and conceals in the front pocket easily. But, if I have a close encounter of the worst kind, it would give me a chance to inflict a painful or even lethal blow. (It's also good for finding your key if dropped in some long grass!) The other "no carry" zone item I have is a

non-metal, butterfly style knife with a 5" serrated dagger-style blade — very sharp. If necessary, you can go through metal detectors with it. Neither are handguns, and their use might well increase your odds of an ambulance ride. But being an unarmed sheep is increasingly risky these days.

B. D. Woods

Cat Lovers Unite

In the March/April 2023 issue, I noticed two snippets about cats. One was in *Speak Out*, "Cats Are Loyal Too," from Ian Ouei, and the other was a brief, but rather disparaging commentary about cats in the "How Was Your Day" article, penned by Will Dabbs, MD, in his *Guncrank Diaries*.

In his article, Dr. Dabbs laments, "I don't myself care for cats. I don't want bad things to happen to cats; I just don't have any great affection for them. I view cats like lizards or birds. They'll stick around if there's something in it for them, but I never got the vibe that a cat really loved me."

Of course, I do not know Dr. Dabbs, but I can assure him that I totally understand that he "... never got the vibe ..." about a cat. That is because he has never given a cat a chance. I saw a bumper

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SPEAK OUT

sticker once that read: "Dogs are dogs, and cats are people." Don't get me wrong, I love dogs. I've had many dogs, a number of which were also rescues, like the good doctor's dog, Samantha. I am convinced rescued animals have an elevated outlook on life. But that's a separate discussion.

Cats really do get a bad rap. They always have, and here's why. Sometimes, it's because a human has a bad experience with a cat, typically as a child. Gets scratched, or bitten, or something unpleasant and perhaps painful, and that, as they say, is all she wrote. However, humans must approach the cat on the cat's terms. Period. Unlike a dog, that will love us unconditionally, and yes, this is a wonderful and enriching thing, the enjoyable and affectionate "vibe" that we can get from a cat happens when the human in the relationship comes to the cat on the cat's terms. When that happens, the cat gets your "vibe." Many people, unfortunately, cannot, or simply will not, for whatever reason or reasons, take this essential step. Every cat that I have loved, raised, and cared

for, through all sorts of circumstances, life stages, illnesses, etc., has each had an individual and unique personality that I fondly remember.

Tim Cassler

I really got ticked off at Dabbs' comparison of cats to lizards or birds. He obviously isn't very well acquainted with cats. They give affection in a different way than dogs, but if you have a cat, you'll know what I mean. My two cats wouldn't leave my side for weeks after I got home from a four-month hospital stay. They're far more compassionate than some of the doctors I encountered.

Dave

More Fizzics

I just read the article "Fizzics R Us" by Tom McHale regarding the comparison of various cartridges. What happened to the Taylor Knock-Out Formula? This uses all aspects of a particular caliber to come up with a number to compare that actually makes sense!

The formula is $\text{Mass} \times \text{Velocity} \times \text{Diameter}$ divided by 7000.

Some examples: Federal Punch 22 LR: 0.97, CCI Stinger 22LR: 1.6, Federal Champion 9mm: 6.5, 9mm: 7.2, .45

ACP: 12.5, Winchester Super X .45 Colt: 14.1, Corbon .45 Colt +P: 23.1

Granted, this does not take into account the actual ballistics and trajectory of each round, but it gives a more realistic number to use to compare various cartridges. It helps explain how Elmer Keith could kill an animal at extended distances. He brought enough gun. It works for rifles just as well. Just my 2 cents.

Jim Gross

More Bersa Requests

Please do a test and evaluation of the Bersa TPR9c. I've read that Bersa USA has lost its distributor. I hope that's been corrected, as this pistol seems to have several safety features that DA revolver guys like me look for in self-loaders.

Best,
Fred Clarke

We've gotten several requests for stories on various Bersa pistols. So, I guess ... stay tuned! —TM

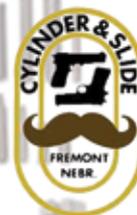
Time Vs. Tupperware

What is the life expectancy of a polymer frame when kept at normal temperatures? I'm thinking of legacy as I inherited my grandfather's 1911 from WWI and still shoot it. Will it



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be possible to safely fire a 60-year-old tactical Tupperware, or will time erase most of the wonder-9 pistols?

Steve Sontag

Super Extended Barrel

I always enjoy your magazine, so wanted to share a “good news/bad news” laugh I had reading the March/April 2023 *American Handgunner*.

The good news: I am living proof that at least some of your readers read every word of every issue, even the advertising copy.

The bad news: I am disappointed that you have not shared with your readers the miraculous new technology advertised on page 78. One of the new products listed is a small pistol with an advertised total length of 5” but an advertised barrel length of 37”. I note the pistol is manufactured in my own state of Texas, where we have a reputation for doing things “bigger,” but this development surprises even me!

My questions ... Does the barrel extend on the draw automatically, or must the shooter manually extend the barrel after the draw? (I am, of course, assuming the barrel retracts for holstering to the specified 5” for carry since we all know that “concealed” carry of a pistol with a 37” barrel would be ridiculous and also tend to get one accused

of sexual harassment.) Does this long-barreled pistol come with a bipod, or is that an extra-cost accessory?

I am confident that many of your faithful readers are anxious to hear more, and have our curiosity sated, about this new weapon technology.

Yours (in good-natured fun),
Steve Goligowski

A Thorough Reader

I really enjoy your magazine and the March/April issue was the best yet. *Better Shooting* about proper stance was right on and *Make Ready* included very important maintenance information. *Tactics & Training* and *Cop Talk* were good, and Ayoob’s words are worth reading every time. I find *Handloading* always informative and *Pistolsmithing* was interesting but seems to not have mentioned that some dove-tailed front sights need to be installed from right to left. (Or was it left to right?) *Vantage Point* was good but might have included Elmer Keith’s pounds/foot ideas.

Roger Smith’s column on casting the .38 and .357 was super interesting because a snub-nosed 357 is my latest carry gun. Jerry Clough’s .22 conversion column has awakened a thought in my mind about going that route in the near future. Pat Covert’s column

about knives was great, as was John Taffin’s piece about Three Old Colts.

“Parting Shots” was pertinent and struck a chord with me. I entrusted a small gun shop about 45 minutes away to sell my K-Frame S&W 38 Special. They sold it but never told me! I found out by accident, and the owner refuses to contact me or pay me what the contract specifies. I guess he figures I won’t engage a lawyer for \$800 to recover \$440. The message here is, check out the gun shop before you sign any agreements with them! There are rats out and about.

All in all, it takes me forever to get through each issue of *American Handgunner*. I thank you for producing such an excellent magazine!

Ed Siccardi Jr.

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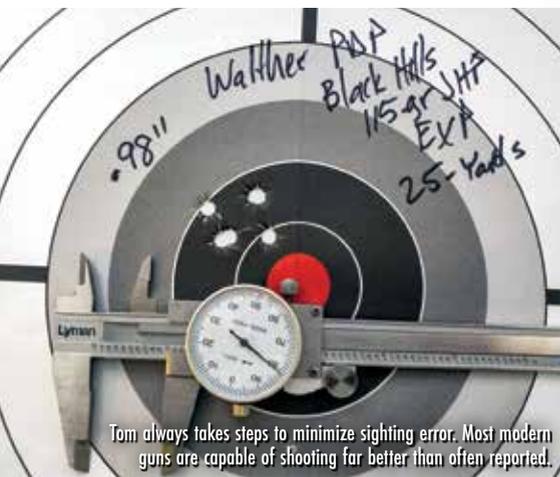
TOM MCHALE

VANTAGEPOINT

Be sure to check for proper trigger reach and whether it's adjustable if needed.



THE ART OF REVIEWING A SEMI-AUTO PISTOL



Tom always takes steps to minimize sighting error. Most modern guns are capable of shooting far better than often reported.

Reviewing guns is 38% objective, 54% subjective, and 93% opinion. Those of you who aced Trigonometry might have figured out we blew right past the 100% limit, but that just goes to show that evaluating a gun isn't an entirely quantifiable exercise. Now that I think about it, there is a word for a perfectly objective gun review. Specifications.

You might have noticed we rarely regurgitate spec sheets around here. You'll find few data tables or lists highlighting such obscure as the weight of a half-loaded magazine when affected by the gravitational influence of a shooting berm. Instead, we try to tell the story of a gun that fills in gaps not relatable by feature lists. How does it feel? Is it easy to shoot accurately? Does it work with a random collection of ammo recovered from the floorboards of your truck? But more than anything, our writers aim to convey the experience of their time spent with a given handgun. That's the stuff you don't get in factory brochures.

Here are just a few items from my mental checklist. Heck, some of these are things you can evaluate right in the gun store.

FIT AND FINISH

There's an old saying that exposes some harsh reality in our character. "You are what you do when no one is looking." A similar concept applies to examining a handgun.

Consider those non-contact areas in a pistol or revolver and take a look at the level of fit, finish, and, sometimes, polish. Do you see burrs, gouges or other heavy machining marks? To be fair, there's little need for detail perfection in non-critical or visible areas. However, it's a pleasant surprise (and bonus points) when a gun manufacturer makes the effort to finish those areas where no one is looking.

Of course, overall fit and finish is always story worthy and rarely are reflected properly on the specifications page. How does wood meet metal? Are moving parts flush when in their resting positions?

I always inspect the muzzle crown carefully for burrs or machining imperfections, as that can impact accuracy.

Does the slide shake laterally or front to back? With springs removed,



Are parts finished flush as needed?

will the barrel move back and forth when locked to the slide?

After shooting, it's a good idea to check the firing pin and extractor for nicks or dings.

TRIGGEROMETRY

Specifications will almost always tell you the pull weight, but that's

just part of the story. Trigger quality means everything. A superlative 7-lb. trigger can shoot better than a subpar 4.5-lb. one.

How does the "pull" feel? Any grit detectable through the finger? Some have a warm butter on warm butter take-up while others are brick on brick. How about the pressure stage? Over-travel? Does the trigger keep moving backward after the break? If so, is there an adjustment to minimize it? Next, very carefully maintaining strict muzzle discipline, I'll listen to the trigger as it goes through the press and reset. Yep, with the muzzle pointed in a safe direction, I hold the gun right next to my ear and listen. What's going on in there? Any grating? Some of our folks will don electronic ears to hear this better. Our significant others are accustomed to the weirdness.

And the break. Is it mushy or crisp or somewhere in between? I'll try to describe that in words as best I can, along with distances for pre-travel, take-up to the break, and to the reset. Don't tell anyone, but I measure these (approximately) with a wooden ruler. Hey, it works.

SHOOTING

Step one is to verify any safeties or decockers. Too many variations to go through here, so for starters, check the Jan/Feb 23 *Insider* to learn the process for 1911s. Also, verify the magazine safety if present.

Limp wristing malfunctions are (largely) preventable. Chalk them up to operator error. While I wouldn't criticize a gun requiring a firm and solid grip, I do award extra points for those defensive handguns capable of forgiving function. Beretta 92s (and many others) can fire reliably when held loosely with a thumb and middle finger. If I'm ever shooting from a less-than-ideal position (off-hand, while fighting, injured, or whatever), I know the pistol is going to work sans a perfect grip.

I prefer to shoot a new gun with a variety of ammo weights and bullet profiles, and I always test accuracy with every load available using 5-shot groups at 25 yards. FMJ, hollow points, lead when applicable and synthetic coated bullets offer insights into a gun's feeding capability.

Checking the ejection pattern can indicate problems if it's erratic or weak. I'll also inspect ejected brass

for unusual damage. Be sure to look at the primers too.

For carry or defense guns, I check how easily magazines drop, whether full or empty. I'm not interested in tugging out empties or bad ones.

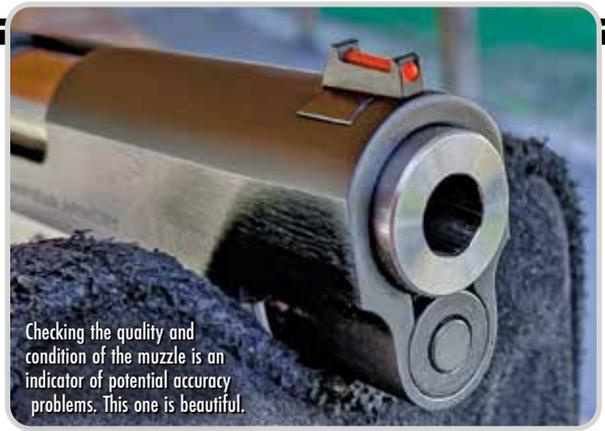
While at the range, I'll shoot a lot with topped-off "plus one in the chamber" configurations to see if the extra mag spring pressure impacts function.

It's also a good idea to shoot normally and with the gun tilted left and right to make sure function isn't impacted.

ACCURACY

I have a pet peeve about gun writers claiming the "accuracy" of a pistol while shooting unsupported and peeping over the iron sights. That tells me how easy the gun is to shoot, how much coffee the shooter had, and how good their eyesight is. It doesn't tell me jack about the mechanical accuracy of the gun.

For a true "what will this gun really do in perfect conditions" measurement,



Checking the quality and condition of the muzzle is an indicator of potential accuracy problems. This one is beautiful.

I'm going to a Ransom Multi-Caliber rest and eliminating all possible sighting imprecision from the scenario. Footnote: A machine rest would be better, but it gets impractical. That means using a handgun scope or at least a red dot. Sorry, but many modern guns are more accurate than our eyeballs at 25 yards. If said gun won't take either, I stole a tip from Special Projects Editor Roy and use Mountain Plain Victory targets (PrecisionTargets.com).

While we're testing accuracy, I like to observe point of impact relative to the sights, especially if the sights have limited adjustability like windage only.

There's clearly much more to do, but this quick and dirty list covers most of the basics. 

An advertisement for The Headrest Safe Co. The background is a dark, blurred image of a car's interior, focusing on the headrest of a seat. A red outline highlights the headrest area, which contains a white silhouette of a handgun and a wristwatch. To the right of the headrest, the text "KEEP YOUR VALUABLES HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT" is written in large, white, bold letters. Below this text, a smaller line of text reads "*HEADREST CAN ONLY BE REMOVED FROM INSIDE THE". In the bottom right corner of the advertisement, there is a QR code.

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The Nosler 200-grain ASP was sent into ballistic gelatin at around 1,000 fps. It penetrated 18.5" and opened up 150%.



Photo: Robert Marvulli

10MM LOADING LESSONS



Photo: Robert Marvulli

Lindsey used a GLOCK 29SF to test 10mm loads. Loaded moderately, the 10mm is one of the smoothest functioning and most reliable cartridges ever designed.

I find that people who reload the 10mm tend to be goal-setters. Of all the reloading hobbyists I know, 10mm reloaders seek a particular performance level. The 10mm is one of the simplest cartridges to reload and can accomplish an amazing assortment of tasks.

The mistake many reloaders make is attempting to make a 10mm into a .44 Magnum. Having said that, the 10mm is magical. Through a 3.78" barrel, I sent 220-grain bullets downrange at 1,000 fps — just shy of 489 foot-pounds.

I like to follow three simple rules.

1 SHOOT FOR 80%

When I shot cast bullet rifle matches, I found that the higher the load density, the more accurate the load. This rule transfers to handgun reloading — mostly. If other factors are equal, the best loads fill the cases greater than 50% and ideally around 80%. This is only a “rule of thumb,” but a good one.

Even though moderate loads can send a 200-grain hammer down range at 1,200 fps, the 10mm can be plenty accurate for defensive use. The *Lyman Pistol and Revolver Handbook* says Winchester 231 frequently provides the best accuracy. I have found that's true with lighter jacketed loads. With the Nosler ASP bullets I used, 3N37 and Accurate #9 worked the best.

Vihtavuori's reloading tables have several loads for the X-Treme 220-grain bullet. The best performers use 3N37. Their loads ranged from 6.2 to 7.3 grains, but it seemed most consistent at 6.6 grains, which is just over 80% full. I used a light taper crimp with an overall cartridge length of 1.259". This load was moderate and hovered in the mid-900 fps range. I had a surplus of these bullets, and my test GLOCK 29SF fed them flawlessly. As I tried to lower this velocity, there was a diminishing return on performance.

The 3N37 seemed to own the sweet spot for 10mm, as it was the workhorse for the Nosler 10mm 180-grain ASP bullets too. Nosler has published load data that runs from 7.1 to 8.1 grains of 3N37. This is about 70% to 90% load density by volume.

2 THE CASE TRIMMER IS YOUR FRIEND

Trim your cases to 0.987". I am particular about trimming 10mm cases square, giving guns a good “shelf” for headspacing. I don't necessarily trim for every loading, but I spot-check case length often. I do not use an inside or outside chamfer for this cartridge. It usually works best with a squared-off mouth.

It does not take much of a case flare to seat jacketed bullets into a 10mm case. The same goes for crimping. Use a taper crimp that barely “kisses” the bullet into the case.

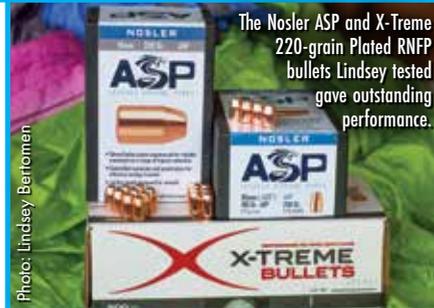


Photo: Lindsey Bertomen

The Nosler ASP and X-Treme 220-grain Plated RNFP bullets Lindsey tested gave outstanding performance.

3 PRACTICE MODESTY

I rarely use full power loads for the 10mm. Most published loads max out at 30,000 CUP. This is not necessarily a linear relationship, but this means many loads send 200-grain bullets around 1,200 fps, close to the lower end of .44 magnum loads. The 10mm loads rarely require magnum primers. None of the loads listed here use them.

When I reload 10mm, I generally find the best performance is in the middle of the published load data. For example, for the 200-grain Nosler ASP bullet, AA#9 data runs from 11.4 to 12.4 grains. It seemed to like 11.9 grains best, which, in the stubby GLOCK I used for testing, ran about 1,025 fps.

The same goes for light loads. No matter what I did, I could not get any kind of satisfactory performance from 155- and 165-grain bullets, jacketed or cast. I could push 165-grain Berry's with up to 12.6 grains of AA#9, but the chronograph reading was all over the place. When I moved up to 180–220 grains, everything was smooth sailing. I bought a 500-round box of the plated X-Treme Bullets 220-grain RNFP bullets and backed them up with 6.6 grains of 3N37. They recorded an average just shy of 1,000 fps. This load burned cleanly and I plinked all day with it. For those of you looking for a round that gives high penetration, these bullets never once stopped in ballistic gelatin, even after several blocks.

The 10mm can deliver incredible performance in a concealable handgun. It is one of the most satisfying cartridges to reload, especially for goal-setters.





**SMALL PACKAGE.
HUGE IMPACT.**

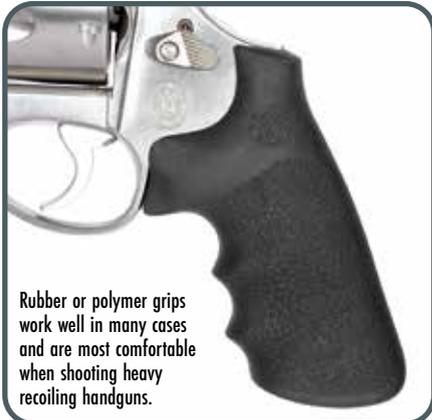


5.7x28 AMMO

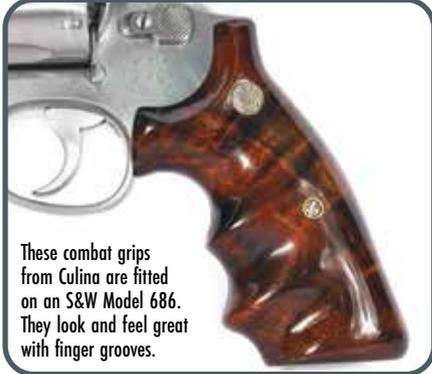
Fiocchi's newest extensions to the popular Hyperformance and Range Dynamics lines – 5.7 X 28mm! This high-velocity, low-recoil, bottle-necked round has a history of personal defense carbine and semi-automatic pistol use. The Hyperformance offering leads the pack with a non-toxic, 35 grain jacketed frangible and a 40 grain tipped hollow point delivering top ballistic performance. Rounding out the pack is the Range Dynamics Subsonic, delivering a 62 grain FMJ for suppressed fun at the range. A trifecta of epic proportions, only from Fiocchi!



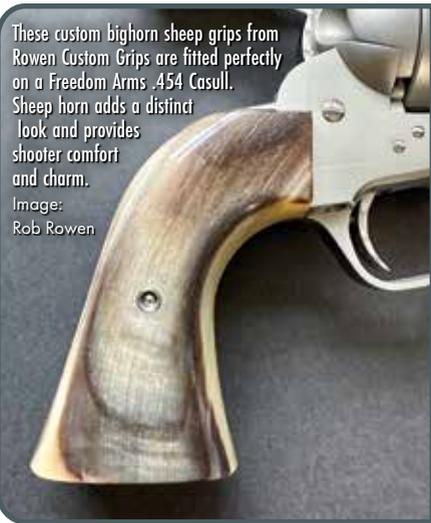
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Rubber or polymer grips work well in many cases and are most comfortable when shooting heavy recoiling handguns.



These combat grips from Culina are fitted on an S&W Model 686. They look and feel great with finger grooves.



These custom bighorn sheep grips from Rowen Custom Grips are fitted perfectly on a Freedom Arms .454 Casull. Sheep horn adds a distinct look and provides shooter comfort and charm.

Image: Rob Rowen

DOES GRIP MATERIAL MATTER?

Does grip material really make any significant difference in your shooting performance? In many cases, it probably matters little. On the flip side, if the gun is shifting during recoil or is uncomfortable, grip material may be a consideration.

Factory grips run the gambit: neoprene, plastic, composites, wood of all varieties, synthetic and horn, just to name a few. What some prefer on a T/C Encore may be totally different than what we like on a revolver. Likewise, the grip to help dissipate obnoxious recoil on a .500 S&W Magnum will probably take a different turn on a rimfire pistol. Depending on the particular application, a smooth grip may be a better choice than a checkered one. Or perhaps a subtle texture with finger grooves might fit the bill. Deep, sharp checkered grips are not exactly comfortable on heavy kicking revolvers but may be ideal in other circles. Highly polished wood might be pleasing to the eye but has a slippery feel to it — the reason checkering can be beneficial. Regardless of what grip material works best for you, a properly fitting grip is a good starting point.

When I was searching for specific grips for purpose-built handguns, I turned to some folks who offer a wide variety of options. Take Gary Reeder, for example. He provides some really neat-looking Mongolian stag grips and fits them on the customer's gun. There are also several options for laminated and exotic wood. I had Gary install some Corian grips on a Ruger Super Blackhawk, which came out looking nice with a flawless fit and finish. The Corian is very durable and comes in various colorations.

Weather resistance may be a factor for some when considering grip material. Rubber is utilitarian, durable and resistant to water, humidity and heat. There's nothing wrong with rubber or polymer grips. I've been shooting an S&W Model 610 with factory rubber grips and couldn't be more pleased. These grips have a soft, subtle texture with slight finger grooves and feel very comfortable when touching off 10mm rounds. On the other hand, I have custom, aftermarket grips with finger grooves and subtle thumb rest that's the cat's meow on a Contender .17 HMR.

BIG GUN GRIPS

When shooting T/C Contenders and Encores, I tend to waffle back and forth between factory rubber grips and custom wood. I like both! The factory rubber grips fit my hand and are comfortable regardless of whether I'm shooting a .22 LR or .45-70.

Bolt-action handguns vary with grip material from composite, neoprene and even synthetic. Nolsen's NCH and Independence models, for example, feature AR-type grips from over-molded rubber. With a monumental amount of AR grips available, you can choose from a wide selection of grip materials. The discontinued H-S Precision pistol incorporated synthetic stocks with a texture providing a secure grip. Several hunters with custom XP-100s have McMillan stocks that utilize industrial-grade paint resulting in a non-slip finish. Bolt-action handguns can be found with an array of grip configuration and materials. Choosing what fits you and your intended purpose best will make shooting more enjoyable.

EXOTIC MATERIALS

Rob Rowen of Rowen Custom Grips is fitting a Freedom Arms .454 Casull with bighorn sheep grips. Rob offers a variety of grip options for revolvers and semi-autos. I've drooled over some exhibition-grade Turkish walnut seen in Rob's shop. Other varieties of wood include Clara walnut, Bastogne walnut, Circassian — from the Persian Gulf region — and French walnut. In addition to the many options of wood, Rob also specializes in horn. While rubber and other synthetics can serve a purpose, beautiful wood or sheep horn is a treasure to embrace and enjoy.

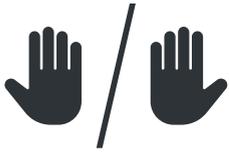
Dall sheep horn usually has a light coloration with occasional reddish streaks. Bighorn varies in color from darker tones to lighter shades. Stone sheep horn is very similar to Dall sheep

horn and usually yields a whitish, lighter color. Then we have musk ox, which generally exhibits character with lighter tones. The neat aspect with horn is you normally get a different appearance with every set of grips. Seldom do different sets of Dall sheep grips appear the same. Sheep horn has an interesting feel to it even when highly polished. My hands tend to grip it well without slipperiness.

On heavy recoiling revolvers like the Freedom Arms .454 Casull, the smooth horn grips are not only comfortable but do not inflict unwanted discomfort. I like the feel and appearance of horn but will confess the rosewood grips that left the factory also work well.

The next time you visit the range, see if grip material makes any difference in your shooting pleasure.





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LIGHT LOADS FOR .45 AUTOS

We shooters and collectors of vintage American military .45s need to pause for a moment and consider something. All military .45 Auto handguns — semi-autos and revolvers — are old and now valuable. Model 1911s are from 112 to 97 years old, and 1911A1s can be 97 to 78. Colt and S&W Model 1917 revolvers (military-marked ones) were made at least 104 years ago. My .45 Auto M1 Thompson Submachine Gun is 81 years old, and my M3 "Grease Gun" is 79. Those two are worth as much as a bucket full of the above-mentioned handguns. Furthermore, no one knows what all these .45s went through in their pasts.



These are Duke's military .45 Auto firearms. At left is the M1 Thompson. Middle from top down: Colt Model 1911, Colt Model 1911A1, Colt Model 1917 and S&W Model 1917. At right is the M3 "Grease Gun."

TRAGEDY STRIKES

About five years ago, I was plinking at chunks of firewood in my yard with a recently acquired Model 1911A1 made by Remington Rand. With the first round from my second magazine, a case head blew out. The checkered grips shattered, stinging my hand, and my face was scored by several bits of flying brass or plastic. And I had shooting glasses on! My thought after realizing I wasn't seriously injured was, "Oh, no! I've ruined this valuable piece of history."

Luckily, I had not. The pistol required a visit to a gunsmith friend to drive that stuck case from the chamber. The barrel appeared okay, but we decided to gunny-sack it for safety's sake. The gunsmith closely examined the rest of that 1911A1 with a magnifying glass and pronounced it safe. I searched for, bought and dropped in another World War II barrel. Then the same was done for a proper set of vintage checkered plastic grips. Some follow-up shooting revealed no problems.

Now here's an admission of guilt. I loaded that ammo, so I was responsible. The load was 5.4 grains of W231 under 225-grain commercially cast RN bullets. Depending on the exact handgun, velocity equated to factory FMJ ballistics, which was my intention. The miscreant load came from a batch of 200 freshly assembled rounds and I pulled the bullets from the other 192 rounds and noticed no problems. I will never know what went amiss.



At left is a .45 Auto 230-grain FMJ factory load. At right is Duke's "soft" .45 Auto load using 225-grain cast RN.

TIME TO SLOW DOWN

On the good side, that mishap woke me up. I like shooting my military .45s. Who wouldn't get a kick out of letting loose a burst from a Tommy Gun? Plinking at firewood chunks with the 1911s and 1917s is fun: watching the big bullets slam them about. However, I wondered, "Do I actually need to fire factory duplication handloads with either lead alloy or jacketed bullets through my vintage military .45 Autos?" The answer to that is, as long as functioning is 100% and accuracy reasonable, I do not.

My goal for a light .45 Auto handload was that it uses lead alloy bullets to save wear on barrels. For velocity, I shot for (literally) about 750 fps from the handguns. For the Thompson and Grease Gun, chronographing wasn't

important to me, but functioning was. Furthermore, I didn't want the powder charge to be a mere dollop in .45 Auto cases wherein a double charge might go unnoticed.

Here's where I got lucky. Hodgdon's Trail Boss powder was designed with cowboy action shooters in mind. Albeit on the fast-burning end of smokeless propellants, it's "fluffy." A smallish charge in grain weight still takes up plenty of case volume. Could it possibly work as a .45 Auto light powder? It certainly can. I perused Hodgdon's own Reloading Data website and found listed Trail Boss powder with 230-grain lead roundnose bullets. The starting load was 3.5 grains with a 4.5-grain maximum. The published velocities were 658 and 761 fps, respectively.

The first loads using Trail Boss in my .45 Auto handloads carried 4.0 grains under 225-grain lead RN bullets. Velocity was about 730 fps. I upped the charge to 4.2 grains, and the velocity was right at 750 fps. Handloads were assembled nor-

Duke's light .45 Auto handload is based on this propellant. It's typically associated with revolver handloading but works perfectly for Duke's "soft" .45 Autos.



mally and given a taper crimp. I chronographed those loads from the Remington Rand Model 1911A1 and they felt "soft." Perfect! Functioning from both submachine guns was 100%. Their RPM (rounds per minute) was down a bit to about 400 RPM for the Grease Gun and 700 RPM from the Thompson. I'd found my light .45 Auto load.

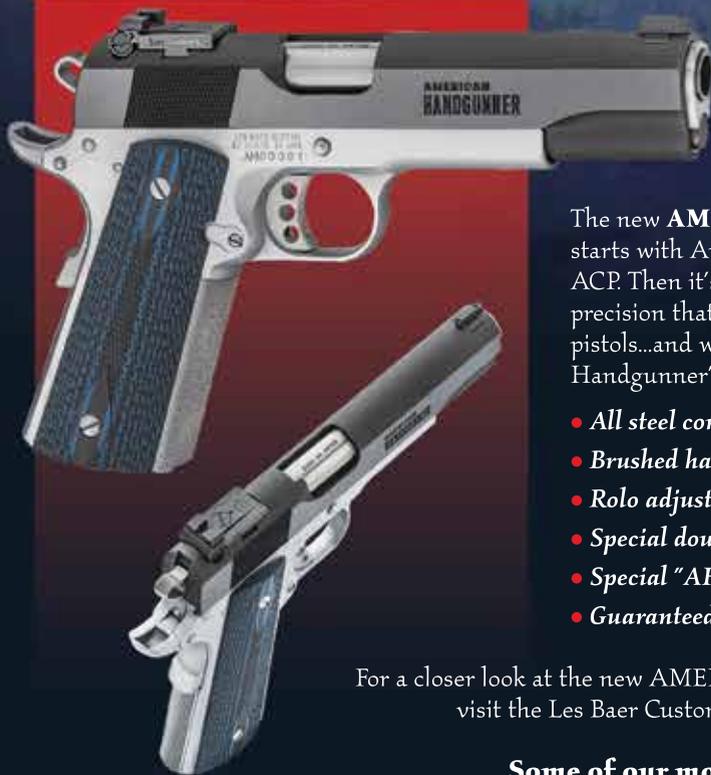
Now here's a final note. Recently I acquired a 3rd Generation Colt SAA from Colt's Custom Shop. It is actually caliber stamped ".45 ACP" and the first such I'd ever seen. From its 4¾" barrel, it chronographed 764 fps with the light .45 Auto handload.



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The CrossBreed SuperTuck Deluxe is a solid offering. John uses one sized for a J-Frame.



SOLUTIONS FOR BIG, LESS BIG AND SMALL

Like any of us who carry a firearm for whatever reason, I need holsters. And like most of us who live the concealed carry lifestyle, I'm not a big-shot and well-connected writer. I don't get invited by the Captains of the Holster Industry to visit their facilities and try out their latest innovations for free. I must figure out for myself what I need and then wrangle with the budget to find some loose coin.

Getting familiar with what's out there and learning what others have found works for them is the easy part. Flip through any issue of *American Handgunner* and you'll find the information necessary to get you going in the right direction; and this regardless of the depths of your budget woes. Those big-shot and well-connected writers can be useful, you know.

For 1911 carry, John went OWB with a Galco Concealable all-leather holster.



BEAR PACKAGE

My first holster fulfillment requirement came upon me in the days before the Internet satisfied every conceivable marketing niche. I needed a functional and reasonably priced holster for my Ruger New Model Super Blackhawk chambered in .44 Magnum with a 7½" barrel.

I always thought those bandoleer-style setups looked really neat. Tracking bear sporting a big revolver strapped across your chest on a nice leather rig laced with steel rivets and spare cartridges made you look, well, like a serious bear hunter. I had two reasons I didn't need no stinkin' bandoleer. The first was money. The second was given my "robust" featured midsection, a big revolver strapped across my chest would tend to complicate the search-and-locate maneuver when I needed to ben over and retrieve the cartridge I just dropped into the weeds. My choice just needed to be functional. I would leave neat to the big shots.

While holster shopping brick and mortar style, I found a Hunter's Series 1100 in size 50 designed for, among other guns, a Super Blackhawk. It's just a light brown leather holster with a belt loop. Here's the best part: Creditors across the nation were not immediately alerted when I handed the holster to the cashier.

What I needed to address was how to open-carry my Ruger in this holster while on the hunt without having hypothermia hound me. I found my solution in the "big man" store I've been alleged to frequent — a 3X-Large leather belt. This belt wraps my cold weather attired circumference and leaves plenty of slack to



The Hunter's series holsters are designed to be "one size fits several." The Model 50 worked just great for John's 7½" Super Blackhawk.

pull my holstered Ruger in nice and tight. I wear the .44 on my right hip because that's where my trained draw instinct is focused. Ya never know when you'll have to Wyatt Earp a big ol' belligerent bruin.

URBAN CARRY

Fast-forwarding to the 21st century, I found myself in possession of a Ruger SR1911 chambered in .45 ACP. I always wanted to carry a 1911. What I needed to address here was how to carry concealed this big gun comfortably and seamlessly.

My first attempt was a CrossBreed Super Tuck Deluxe IWB hybrid (Kydex and leather!) holster. My thinking was the large belt clips would hold this gun on no matter what, and they did. What also happened was, and this is according to my simple machine calculations: The combined vectors of the waistband, the belt, the holster, the clips and the pistol provided the gun's weight enough leverage to torque my drawers down. I was able to somewhat mitigate this effect by cutting more holes in my belt or by wearing suspenders. I needed another holster and decided to return to just functional.

This led me to a popular gun-stuff website where I found the Galco Concealable black leather OWB holster. Again, it's just a holster with belt loops

and I love it. My choice analysis was rather complex, so pay attention: I liked the way it looked. In this holster, the 1911 wears close and tight and I can comfortably and seamlessly wear my big pistol all day and all night if I feel like it. Also, no governments were shut down when the acquisition was proposed.

A "CROSS" MATCH

Moving on to the holstering requirements for my S&W J-Frame, I did not give up on CrossBreed. For the J-Frame, which serves as my backup and light carry gun, I went with the same model CrossBreed Super Tuck Deluxe IWB, but for a J-Frame. In this class, there's more tolerance for my robustness. With no perceivable net leverage vector, my J-Frame just hangs there almost without notice. CrossBreed's workmanship is excellent and the price quite reasonable. Also, the Kydex holstering pocket makes a nice audible click when I re-holster the little revolver. That's about as close to neat as I ever get.





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GOING RED DOT: AN ANALYTICAL APPROACH

Red dot optical sights are the hottest police service pistol trend in America today. Not surprisingly, how to train with them has become an equally hot topic among law enforcement instructors. When the Grantham, New Hampshire Police Department decided to make the switch, it had at the helm a chief who had been a firearms instructor for many years. Chief John Parsons explains, "We had been very happy with the S&W M&P45s we had issued since 2015. We chose to replace them with the M&P 2.0 optics ready pistol, in the same .45 ACP caliber, with 4.5" barrel and suppressor-height night sights."

Why stay with .45 at a time when American police are returning in droves to the 9mm? Parsons explains, "Our officers are confident and competent with their .45s. In our



jurisdiction, we've had to put down moose hit by vehicles, and we also have black bears. Moreover, the M&P45 is standard issue for our state troopers, with whom we work daily." GPD's issue duty load is 230-grain Federal HST, which has earned a splendid reputation for getting its job done.

However, holsters became an issue. Holster makers don't find it profitable to build scabbards for less popular guns. Safariland made the .45 holsters in the 6360 model, which had served the department well for years, but did not offer a model for an optic-equipped S&W .45.



Safariland duty holster protects the RDS and its rear lens from hostile elements.

FINDING A HOLSTER

Through a process of elimination, Captain Vincent Cunningham determined that a Safariland 6360 RDS holster for the SIG P320 RX would exactly fit the S&W M&P45 2.0 with a Trijicon RMR mounted. Some of today's instructors are horrified at the idea of putting a Brand A pistol into a holster built for a Brand B, but older heads remember when a department might replace a Model 686 S&W L-Frame service revolver with a Ruger GP100 and use the exact same holsters and speedloaders as before since they all fit perfectly.

The issue was not what gun the holster was originally built for but whether the new gun fit properly. GPD determined that it did. No slop. No snag. No impingement on the trigger.

The department ordered the 6360 RDS ALS/SLS Mid-Ride Levell III retention duty holsters, and the new issue pistols fit perfectly with the same Streamlight TLR-1-HL lights that had ridden on the first-generation M&P45s, but now accommodating the RMR sight atop the pistols. The Safariland design shields the optical sight until the retaining device is released. This is an important consideration in a four-season climate where an officer might be outdoors for hours at an accident scene or during a manhunt in heavy rain or worse, falling snow, which could build up on the back of an optical sight in a holster that did not protect the lens.

TRAINING

Virtually every agency making this switch has discovered there is a learning curve when optical pistol sights are adopted. Grantham PD saw this coming and met the challenge.

Grantham is easy driving distance from Exeter, NH, where the SIG Academy is located. Parsons reports, "Over that summer, I sent us all through the SIG SAUER Pistol Mounted Optics 102 one-day course. We are all going through the 103 course (two days) as well." By the time you read this, Sergeant James McKenna and Chief Parsons himself will have gone through the SIG Academy's Pistol Mounted Optics Instructor Course.

Upon initial issuance of the new hardware, each officer sighted in the RMR at 15 yards. A hundred rounds per officer were spent initially with

draw-to-the-shot drills at various distances to acclimate to "finding the dot."

Since the initial training, officers have spent plenty of time on qualifications in both day and night shooting. The advantages of the red dot were particularly evident in the latter application. Officers were already familiar with red dot sights on their issue patrol rifles and quickly acclimated to placing the dot with "target focus." Noted Parsons, "I can really only speak for myself, but I

found I was faster on target at distance, and it was easier to pick up the red dot with my 'seasoned' eyes." Overall, acceptance of the new equipment by personnel was overwhelmingly positive.

Staying with the same firearms platform and the same type of holster helped to make the transition seamless. Grantham's experience indicates that the key to a successful transition from iron sights to RDO on service pistols lies in planning and training.





GAIN YOUR ADVANTAGE

The EFLX Mini Reflex Sight was designed with EOTECH's holographic sights in mind. Its ruggedized aluminum housing, ultra-clear glass and wide field of view make it simple and easy to get onto target fast. Powered by a top-loading 2032 battery, the EFLX offers over 20,000 hours of use and is programmable for auto-off or always-on. Designed to mount to any DeltaPoint Pro™ footprint, the EFLX is ideal for professional use, hunting, home defense and more.



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THREAT RESPONSE FUNDAMENTAL NUMBER 5:

THINK

There are five fundamentals to the threat response. The first four are Move, Communicate, Use Cover and Shoot — if necessary. The fifth and most important fundamental is “Think.” Fighting is problem-solving at high-speed. In defense, the threat usually initiates violence. You’re already starting out behind; a speedy reaction is mandatory. The person who can make the appropriate decisions in a timely fashion, and act on them without delay, is the “winner.”

The majority of self-defense confrontations occur in a short span of time — a matter of a few seconds. You should be able to draw from concealment — which is how you carry — shoot accurately in a timely fashion and manipulate the pistol if needed at a subconscious level. The conscious mind thinks, “Threat.” The subconscious takes over to move, draw, position behind cover and fire if needed. This level of skill — which is only achieved through proper practice — frees up the conscious mind to think about solving the problem.

Train Your Brain

Most shooters who have received the proper training and practice with regularity can perform the actions above at an acceptable speed. Sure, you’re always striving to improve, but at some point, your practice should include decision-making. The real “speed” is in making the decision to move, draw and, if need be, shoot. Indecision on when to draw or shoot and you’ll feel the need to go fast. “Fast” is always full of mistakes, which just consume more time. Wait too long, and it won’t matter how fast you can perform; the opportunity has passed.

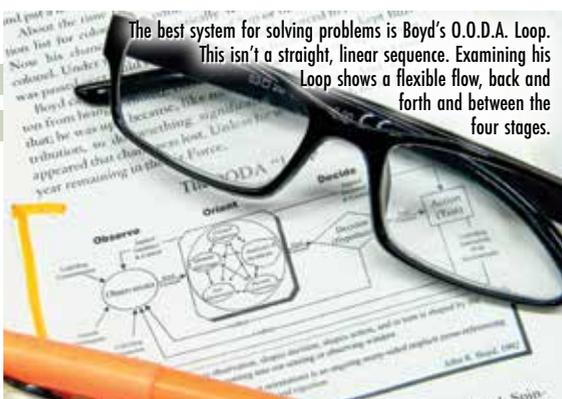
One of the best ways to think about problem-solving is Boyd’s O.O.D.A. Loop. John Boyd was an Air Force Col., fighter pilot and military strategist. Some would say a modern Sun Tzu. I highly recommend *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed The Art Of War* by Robert Coram. His “loop” consists of Observe,

Orient, Decide and Act. This is the key to finding a solution to trouble. You Observe a problem. In the Orient phase, you’re gathering details on what’s occurring. Then, you Decide on a solution. Finally, you Act.

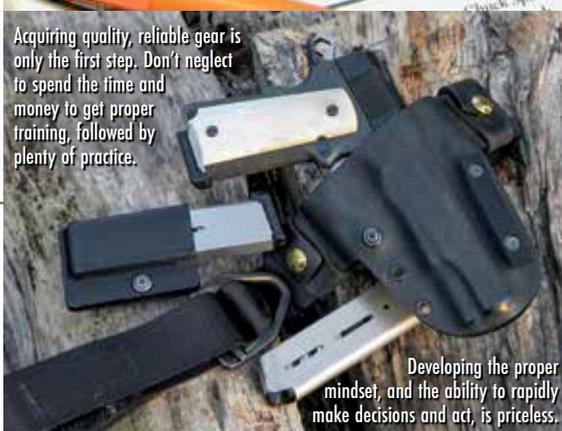
Most people think of Boyd’s Loop as a sequential, linear action. But it’s more of a flow from and between the different phases. For example, the threat attacks. They are “acting.” You’re “reacting” in the Observation phase. You bypass Orient and Decide, jumping straight to Act by moving. This forces the threat back to the Observe state of their loop; they’re reacting to your movement. This buys you time to go back to Orient, gather a couple more details — looking for cover — then Decide, moving to the protection of cover. The goal is to never let the threat get back to the Act phase of their loop. Your “reaction” has beat their “action.”

Own The Flow

Once you initiate your response — Moving, Communicating, Using Cover and Shooting if required — do not stop or slow down. You’re constantly applying pressure to the threat, forcing them back to their Observe stage. Keep in mind, your decisions on what to do don’t have to be “perfect.” This traps you in the Decide stage, and



The best system for solving problems is Boyd’s O.O.D.A. Loop. This isn’t a straight, linear sequence. Examining his Loop shows a flexible flow, back and forth and between the four stages.



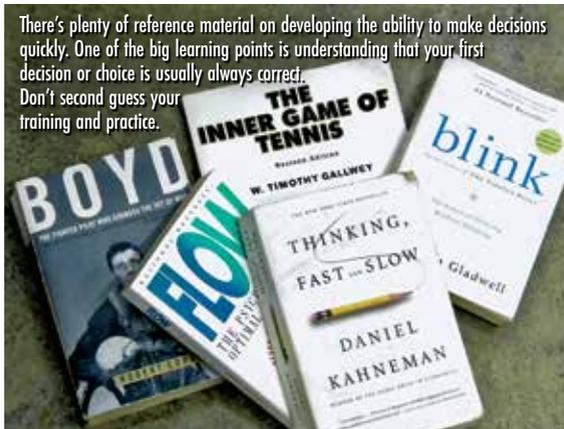
Acquiring quality, reliable gear is only the first step. Don’t neglect to spend the time and money to get proper training, followed by plenty of practice.

Developing the proper mindset, and the ability to rapidly make decisions and act, is priceless.

there may not be a perfect response. You’re looking for a heuristic decision, one based on the minimal amount of information required and that’s “good enough” for the situation. Don’t second-guess your initial thought. This is usually the “right” answer. The speed of your action is what makes the difference. Not the speed of your performance, but again, making decisions and acting in a timely fashion.

Fighting is decision making at high-speed. Prior to becoming involved in a violent confrontation, you decide that no matter what happens, you will win the fight. You decide to practice the fundamentals — moving, communicating, using cover and shooting so these skills can be applied at a subconscious level. During the attack, you’re cycling through the O.O.D.A. Loop, rapidly making decisions on how to respond and then acting.

Does action beat reaction? Most people will answer, “Yes.” This is true, but only on a very simplistic level. Fighting is more like a game of chess. White always moves first, but this doesn’t guarantee victory. With the proper training, practice and development of your decision-making process, your “reaction” can beat the threat’s “action.”



There’s plenty of reference material on developing the ability to make decisions quickly. One of the big learning points is understanding that your first decision or choice is usually always correct. Don’t second guess your training and practice.



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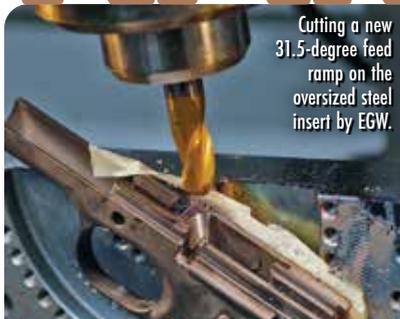
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SAFETY TIP: Store firearms securely, inaccessible to children and unauthorized users.

Consult and comply with any and all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, requirements, and/or restrictions, including but not limited to those regarding the purchase, ownership, use, transport, and carrying of a firearm. Not all products are available in all states or jurisdictions.

RAMPING IT UP



Cutting a new 31.5-degree feed ramp on the oversized steel insert by EGW.



The milled aluminum Kimber 1911 frame next to the steel EGW feed ramp insert.



A Kart barrel with a Clark/Para feed ramp fit to a Colt .38 Super 1911. The milling process requires one setup for the frame.

Feed ramps on a firearm are critical to proper function — “no feed, no fire,” they say. It’s also the first thing the inexperienced shooter looks at and eventually toys with.

There are three types of feed ramps: Ones on the frame of the gun like the 1911, ones built into the barrel like a GLOCK or some built into the magazine as in European target guns.

I am working on a few alloy frames with very damaged feed ramps. The cause for the damage seems to be aggressive edges on the bullet design. The sharp edges tend to catch rather than slide on the feed ramp. Combine this with the soft alloy, and divots appear and eventually grow. There are two courses of action to cure this: a ramped barrel or a steel insert in the alloy frame.

STEEL INSERTS

This time it’s steel inserts for two compact .45s. It’s more economical to go with the insert rather than a re-barrel operation. For this job, I chose the EGW steel insert. It’s premade for this purpose and oversized for custom fitting. The first step is to map the frame to find the center. Next, I mill a pocket in the frame using my milling machine equipped with digital readouts. There’s no room for error here. EGW provides some great instructions with measures down to the thousandths of an inch. I still verify the measurement of the part to ensure its spot on before cutting the frame.

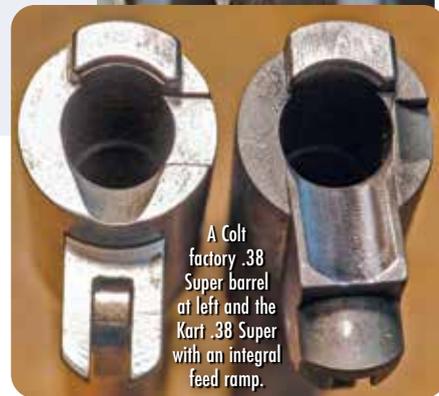
The 3/16th end mill cutter moves easily through the aluminum frame. I cut the pocket to almost be an interference fit, meaning it takes some pressure to seat the steel in the pocket. The instructions call for a threaded hole to be drilled through the frame and into the side of the steel insert on the left side under the slide stop location. This will hide a set screw. With this tight of a fit, I opted for an adhesive bond after talking with another Guild member. I pulled out the insert and scuffed up the bottom and backside, on which I applied two-part epoxy. This should provide plenty of hold. After 24 hours to cure the epoxy, I placed the frame in the mill to cut the new ramp at a 31.5-degree angle from the top rails. This is the correct angle for a 1911.45 ACP. Once I cut the ramp with a 1/2" end mill, I repositioned the frame to 20 degrees to trim the bottom of the steel insert for magazine clearance.

Before I do a final polish, I want to test-fire the pistol. Bench testing with dummy rounds was smooth and provided the perfect sound, “clunk,” and the ammo stripped off the magazine.

RAMPED APPROACH

Ramped barrels are another option, particularly in higher pressure loads like the .38 Super and 9mm major. Colt produces all their guns with what we term “unsupported” barrels;

this goes back to the ’20s when the Super 38 hit the market. Today ammo is available with much higher pressure loads and hollow-point bullets that add to feeding woes. For ramped barrels, I prefer the Clark/Para ramp style; this allows me to machine the slide with one setup in the mill instead of the Wilson/Nowlin, which requires two setups. Both work equally as well on barrels made by Kart, Bar Sto or KKM. The integrated ramp allows for smooth feeding of a number of bullet shapes and adds support to the lower-case section to prevent blowouts under high pressure.



A Colt factory .38 Super barrel at left and the Kart .38 Super with an integral feed ramp.

HOLLOW POINT HELL

Every year, a new hollow-point bullet design seems to hit the market. New designs are great for sales but can be troublesome for feeding in older gun designs.

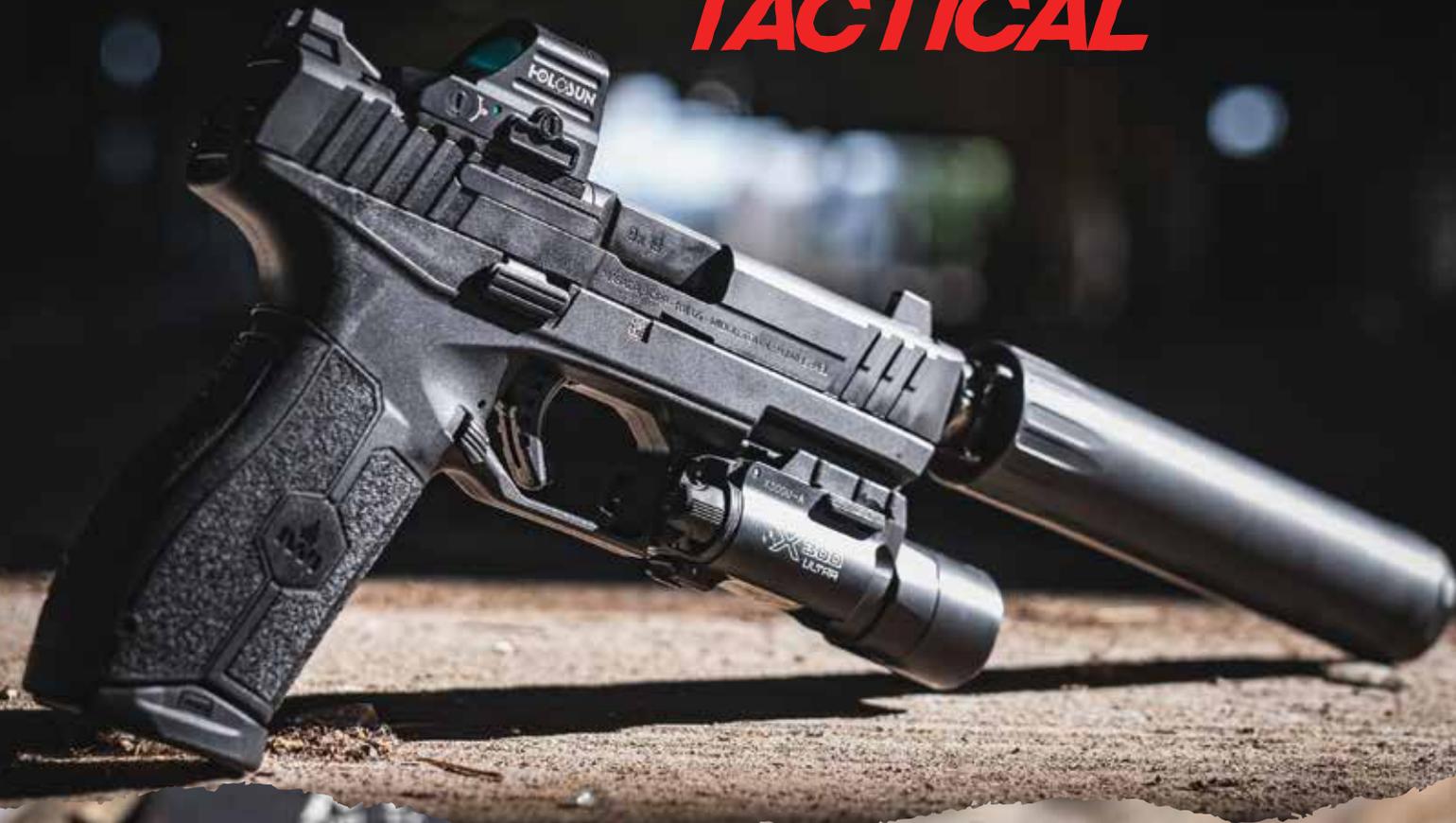
Some hollow points come with such sharp edges that I think all the test firing was done with a revolver. Some things can help feeding, like quality magazines with good followers and springs, but there are limits. Polishing ramps and opening barrel throats can just be done so often. I like to educate clients when they come into the shop by showing my collection of hollow point ammo. The wide variety of shapes available is incredible. I recommend finding a bullet shape that feeds flawlessly over other factors. “No Feed, No Fire.”  Your life may depend on it.

For more info: EGWGuns.com, JBWeld.com, KartBarrels.com



MASADA

TACTICAL



*ATTACHMENTS NOT INCLUDED

The MASADA Tactical is a 9mm, impact-resistant, fiberglass reinforced, polymer-framed striker-fired pistol featuring a low-profile barrel for reduced perceived recoil. Trusted in the harshest environments, this firearm is built with an easily removable and modular-serialized high-grade steel trigger mechanism housing, allowing for simple disassembly and maintenance. It includes an intuitive pointing grip angle to enhance the shooter's accuracy and safety, as well as three interchangeable wrap-around back-straps with a deep beavertail to accommodate multiple hand sizes. The MASADA Tactical also comes with suppressor height sights and a threaded 1/2x28 barrel.



LEARN MORE

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SIZE MATTERS: CARRYING BIG EDC

It was once said that a fighting pistol should be of a large caliber, preferably a large frame semi-automatic, with sights you can see and a good trigger that breaks cleanly. In a world of micro and sub-compact pistols, it seems we have forgotten all of these tried-and-true traits. As someone who conceals carries full-sized pistols and revolvers every day, year around, I can tell you that not only is it doable, but it is also just as easy as a micro-pistol.

While capable, sub-compact micro pistols come with idiosyncrasies. For example, I can't get my pinkie on the grip

with my L/XL hands, preventing magazines from falling free. Likewise, I find I tend to adjust my grip slightly after my draw stroke from the holster. Not ideal. My thumbs tend to block the slide lock, keeping the slide from locking on the last round. Finally, smaller pistols have more perceived recoil without much real estate to hang on to.

If you stick with full-sized handguns, you alleviate all the above concerns and carry the pistol you are most familiar with and apt to train with. For me, EDC'ing is a lifestyle, and I have adjusted my attire to complement my way of life.

Clothes

Concealed carry starts with the clothes. I tend to buy my jeans a size larger than what I need; this makes room for the inside-the-waistband (IWB) holsters I have. I also don't wear form-fitting shirts or jackets. For summer wear, I prefer shirts with printed patterns because if my pistol somehow does print, the pattern on the shirt helps break up the outline of the firearm. 5.11 Tactical has excellent options for concealed carry shirts with fun (sometimes obnoxious) patterns. These shirts also have breakaway snaps down the front to assist in drawing from concealment.

Gear

When I was younger, everything was Kydex and tactical belts. Now as I get older, I find myself gravitating back to leather. Rob Leahy of Simply Rugged Holsters is one of my favorite go-to leather holster builders. Owning quite a few of his holsters for both revolvers and pistols, I can attest to the rugged dependability and the ease of concealment his products deliver. His belts are likewise sturdy enough to comfortably support the



Note how Matt's hand interferes with the slide lock and magazine. Big hands plus a small gun translates to extra adjustments while shooting.

weight of full-sized steel handguns all day without dragging you down on one side. I also have OWB holsters from Kirkpatrick Leather, Milt Sparks IWB holsters, and carry belts from Galco holsters.

Your holster should be sturdy enough to carry the weight of your handgun, keep it positively retained, stay in position and cover the trigger. If you can carry in the appendix position, that's great, but make sure you train that way. I always carry at the 3 o'clock to 3:30 position. Remember, during high stress, we default to our level of training; make sure you are training from where you are carrying.

EDC Ammo

If you carry a handgun, you should carry enough ammo to do at least one full reload. Do most civilian shootings end in the first few shots? Statistically yes. But do you want to bet your life on that? What if your perpetrator is on an unknown substance? How many shots will it take to make the threat go away? I'm not a lawyer, but my answer would be as many as it takes.

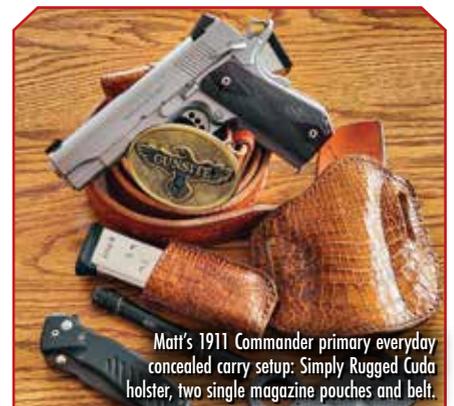
Like your pistol, you want your ammunition to be positively held and where you put it. Don't leave yourself fishing for a magazine, speed loader, or loose ammo in your pocket. My extra magazine is in

the 9 o'clock position. However, my primary ammo carrier for my revolver is at 1:30 because we reload our revolvers with our shooting hand. I also carry additional ammo in Speed Strips held in place with a NeoMag Revolver Ammunition Strip Concealment (RASC) clip in my strong-side back pocket. It looks like a pocket-knife clip and holds the bullets in the position I need for my reloads.

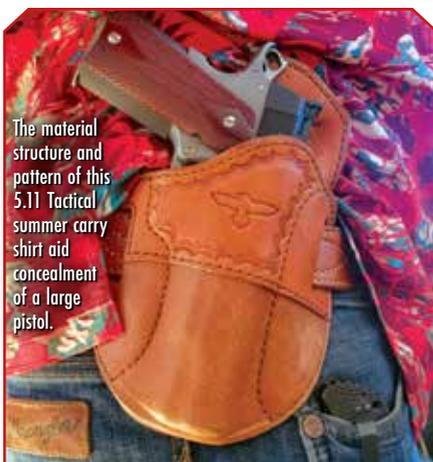
If you're still not convinced you can easily conceal carry a full-sized handgun daily, I'm here to say you can; it's a simple style choice. Remember, there are reasons why companies offer larger versions of their popular micro-pistols. In theory, a compact pistol is great for certain scenarios but not so great in everyday practice.

Regardless of your choice, don't forget to train with and test your gear and equipment. How you train will ultimately decide how you fight; make sure you're as ready as you can be. 

Gunsite Academy is the world's oldest and largest firearms training facility. Originally known as the American Pistol Institute, Gunsite Academy offers firearms training to elite military personnel, law enforcement officers and free citizens of the U.S. For more info: GunSite.com



Matt's 1911 Commander primary everyday concealed carry setup: Simply Rugged Cuda holster, two single magazine pouches and belt.



The material structure and pattern of this 5.11 Tactical summer carry shirt aid concealment of a large pistol.

HOLOSUN

SIZE MATTERS

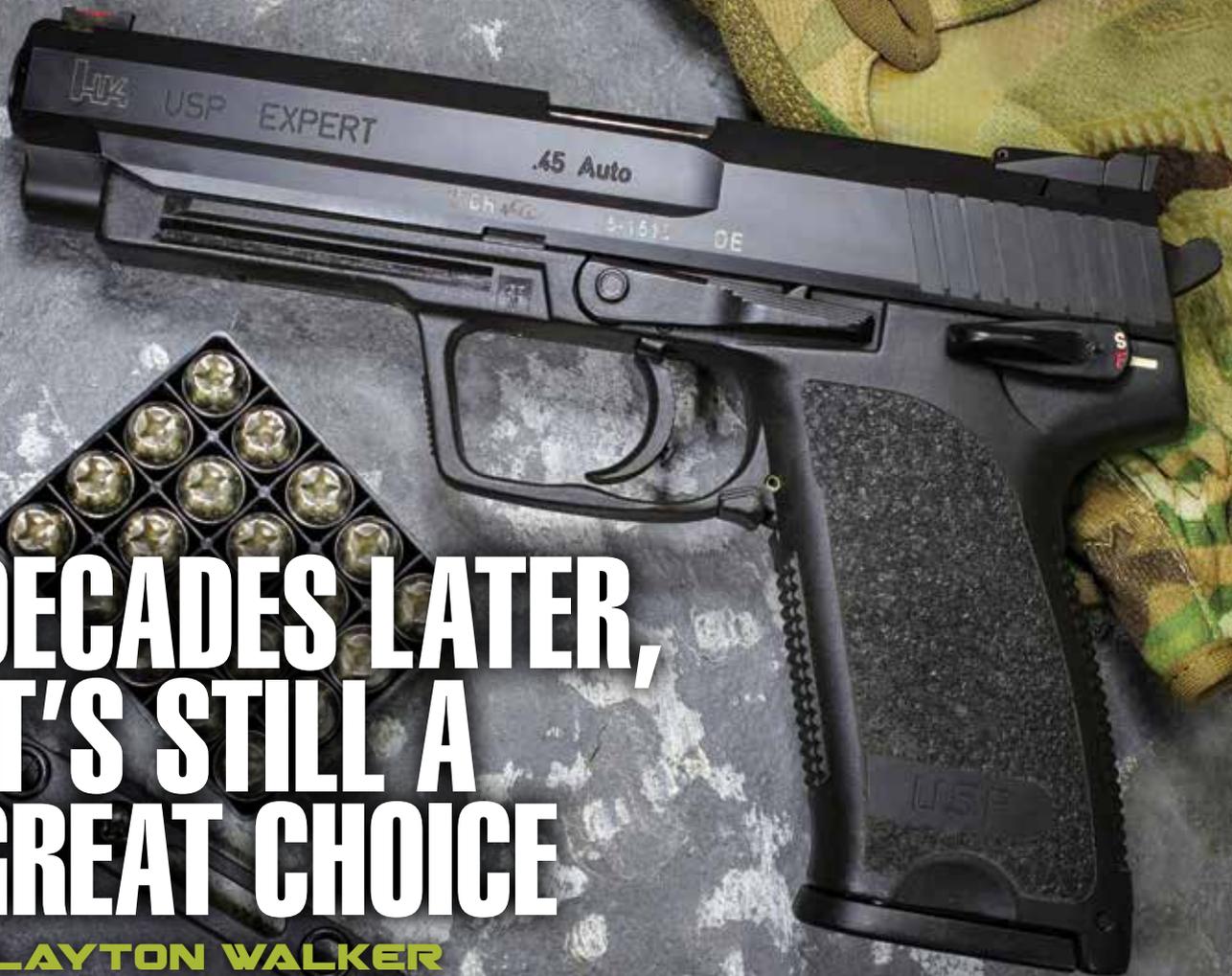


507 COMPETITION

The 507Comp is our newest handgun sight that was built based on feedback from professional shooters to create the ultimate competition handgun optic. Tracking the dot through recoil has never been easier with such a large 1.1" x 0.87" objective lens. Holosun's new Competition Reticle System (CRS) comes available with four reticle components that include a 2MOA dot, an 8MOA circle, 20MOA circle and 32MOA circle that all can be used in various combinations to suit the individual shooter's needs. Fits the 507C Optic Footprint.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [HOLOSUN.COM](https://www.holosun.com)

HK'S USP EXPERT



DECADES LATER,
IT'S STILL A
GREAT CHOICE

CLAYTON WALKER

It'd be hard to find a car nut who didn't consider the first-generation Ford Mustang a triumph of American engineering and automotive design. Even today, I can't help but think it's really darn neat to see them on the road, and they're still turning heads just as they did in 1965.

To nobody's surprise, you can't walk into a Ford dealership and buy that same car. You can buy a 2023 Mustang, of course. Ford would tell you the Mustang you can purchase now is a better car than the 1965 model; in over half a century, they've improved the car's handling, power, safety features and countless other amenities.

By and large, we're conditioned to think this is the natural order of things: the 1965 Mustang begets the 2023 Mustang, the iPhone 7 begets the iPhone 14, the Intel dual-core processor begets the Intel quad-core processor, and so on, and so forth. Time waits for no man, but as a consolation prize, time gives us cooler stuff at progressively lower prices if we manage to stick around long enough.

It's generally gone the same way with guns. Witness today the number of firearms with bells and whistles like tritium sights, sub-5-lb. triggers, optic cuts, frame stippling, beavertails,

Found on the USP Expert and Elite, the rubber O-ring ensures consistent barrel/slide lockup and stellar mechanical accuracy.



extended controls, and gilt-edged accuracy as standard features. Not even the venerable 1911 has withstood the tides of change. Could John Browning have ever imagined the level of technology deployed to make his seminal design stronger, faster and more user-friendly?

At this point, we turn our gaze to Heckler & Koch. Today, consumers are understandably agog at the company's VP9, and the P30L continues to draw longing stares every time someone watches a John Wick movie. Before those guns, however, H&K brought the HK45 to market, along with the well-regarded P2000 series of pistols.

But here's the head-scratcher: H&K still catalogs the USP family in its product lineup — a line of pistols that initially hit the market in 1993. Certainly, some will question whether the USP still contends with the latest and greatest. I say this: Not only do these guns contend, but they also continue to excel. In my opinion, the Expert is the best of the bunch.

A Short History Lesson

The development of the USP series is fascinating and deserves a deeper dive than I can devote to it here. However, I did want to focus on a few details in particular.

First, perhaps no pistol has been more assiduously tested than the USP. As a prototype, the USP went for over 20,000 rounds without any detriment to accuracy or parts wear until H&K called it quits. When H&K designed the USP45, it passed another durability test of 24,000 rounds of +P ammunition, again with no consequence. All guns ran in extreme cold and volcano-hot temperatures alike.

How some USPs have held up since release is nothing short of mind-bending. H&K's official Twitter posted a gun finally sent in for service after digesting 200,000 rounds. There are also anecdotal reports of a USP used as a test platform by an ammunition company still going strong after nearly 300,000 rounds.

Another interesting factoid: The USP and H&K's famous Mark 23 "offensive handgun" were developed side-by-side; it isn't necessarily accurate to say one was an offshoot of the other. What H&K learned testing the USP made the Mark 23 better, and some Mark 23 innovations bled back into the USP platform.

The USP Today

In nearly three decades since the USP's release, some of what made it novel at the time has become *de rigueur*



One drawback: The proprietary rail system hasn't aged well since 1993. Today's lights and lasers will require a Picatinny adapter.

in 2023. In particular, a high-capacity gun with a polymer frame is no longer a connoisseur's choice; it's the industry default for a defensive handgun.

Compared to most of the duty-type polymer guns on the market, the USP has a few critical differences. The first is that it's a hammer-fired, "traditional double action" design. Some consider this inferior to a striker-fired pistol; as acolytes of such platforms opine, "there's only one trigger pull to master."

While true, I no longer see this as a detriment. I've been shooting long enough

that the long DA pull is no longer something I fear. I like the confidence of knowing the first round out of the tube requires a much more deliberate trigger press to touch off, and the DA-to-SA transition shouldn't be too difficult for anyone reading these pages.

However, the USP family lets shooters of all kinds have their cake and eat it, too. If one so wishes, the novel safety/decocker lever allows the gun to be carried cocked and locked like a 1911. The lever is intuitive, and while some have posited that one could conceivably "off-safe" and inadvertently decock the gun, I find it's hard to do this unintentionally in actual practice.

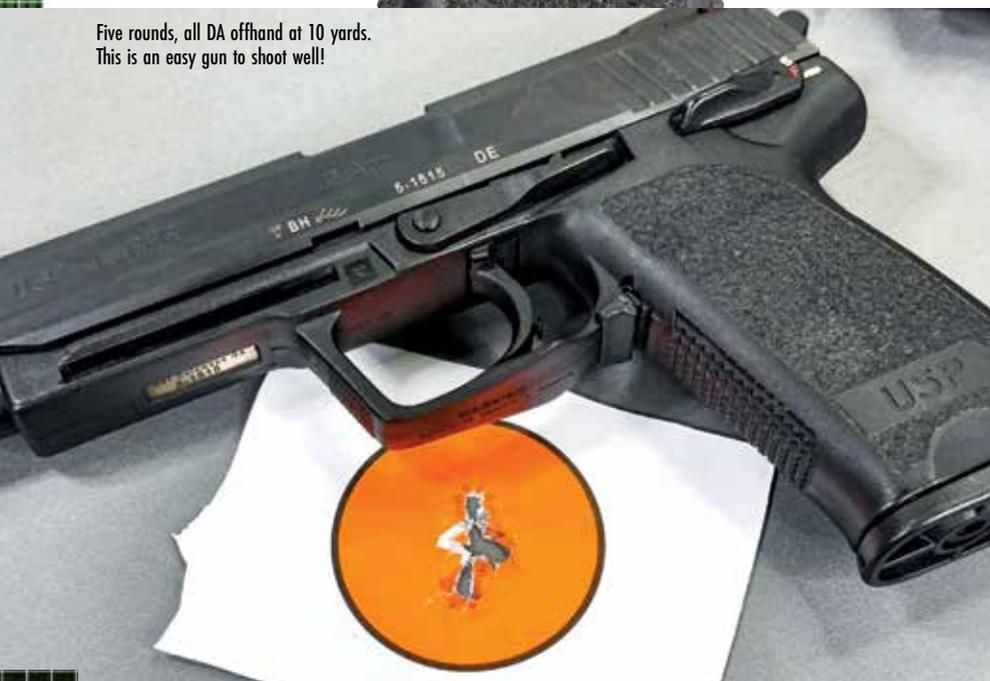
The USP also has its own method of magazine release I think is still good in the year 2023. Truly ambidextrous, the user needs only to push down a lever under the trigger guard. While John Browning mostly standardized the thumb button disengagement, the USP system allows me to easily swipe my thumb or right middle



Aftermarket barrel weights make the USP Expert a superb target gun that tames even +P recoil.



Controls are generous and intuitive across the USP family and easy to get the hang of!



Five rounds, all DA offhand at 10 yards. This is an easy gun to shoot well!

finger down over the part quickly and easily. It seems strange until you try it.

My favorite part of the USP, however, is a part that's standard across all of the full-size guns in the family: the dual recoil spring. The figure I've seen thrown around by H&K and other scholars of the platform is a 30% reduction in recoil. Based on my experience with other .45 caliber platforms, including the HK45 (which lacks the system), I'd vouch for that number.

Simply put, the system feels like alchemy. As a general rule, a polymer gun should not shoot as soft as a 1911. And yet, the USP family mellows .45ACP recoil as well as anything I've ever shot.

The Expert's Choice

The USP Expert was developed specifically for hard-use competition and is immediately recognizable by its 5.2"

barrel and lengthened slide. Naturally, the Expert benefits from the durability that comes standard with the platform, but H&K throws in a few extra bells and whistles. The adjustable sights deserve mention; I've found them very robust, and they contribute to a very good sight picture. I decided to pair them with a Dawson fiber optic front sight, giving me both speed and accuracy.

H&K also includes their match trigger system by default on the Expert. The numbers don't seem amazing at first: SA is 4.5 lbs. on the dot, and the DA pull is a consistent 12 lbs. However, the DA pull lacks a telltale "shelf" or "stack" at the rear of travel, allowing for a pull that seems to fall off a table and ensure

a surprise break. It's the only DA/SA gun I own where I shoot the DA mode as well or better than the SA. The single action is crisp and repeatable with very little creep.

Perhaps the most novel aspect of the Expert (and the USP Elite) is an undeniable piece of Mark 23 DNA: a rubber O-ring about a quarter inch from the end of the barrel. This ingenious part ensures the barrel and slide lock up with just a little bit of extra consistency. Like anything else on the USP, it's ready to put in work; H&K suggests it should be good for 10,000 rounds, though my Expert came with a few extra spares.

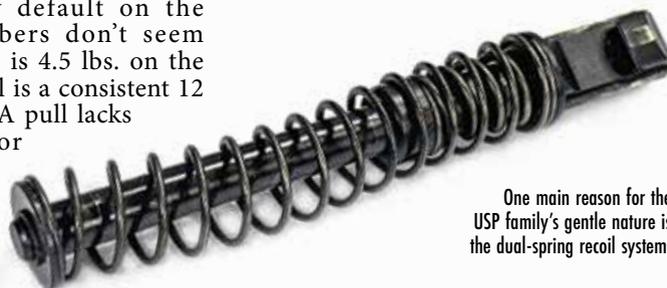
Accuracy is better than most shooters will be able to take advantage of. I've heard from other owners who report 25-yard bench-rested groups under an inch and a half. I've found that in my two hands, the gun easily allows me to shoot ragged holes within 7 yards, keep rounds within a 2" bull at the 50-foot limit of my indoor range, and ring steel targets about the size of a dinner plate out to 75 yards. Again, this gun allows me to shoot very close to the ceiling of my own ability.

Is It For You?

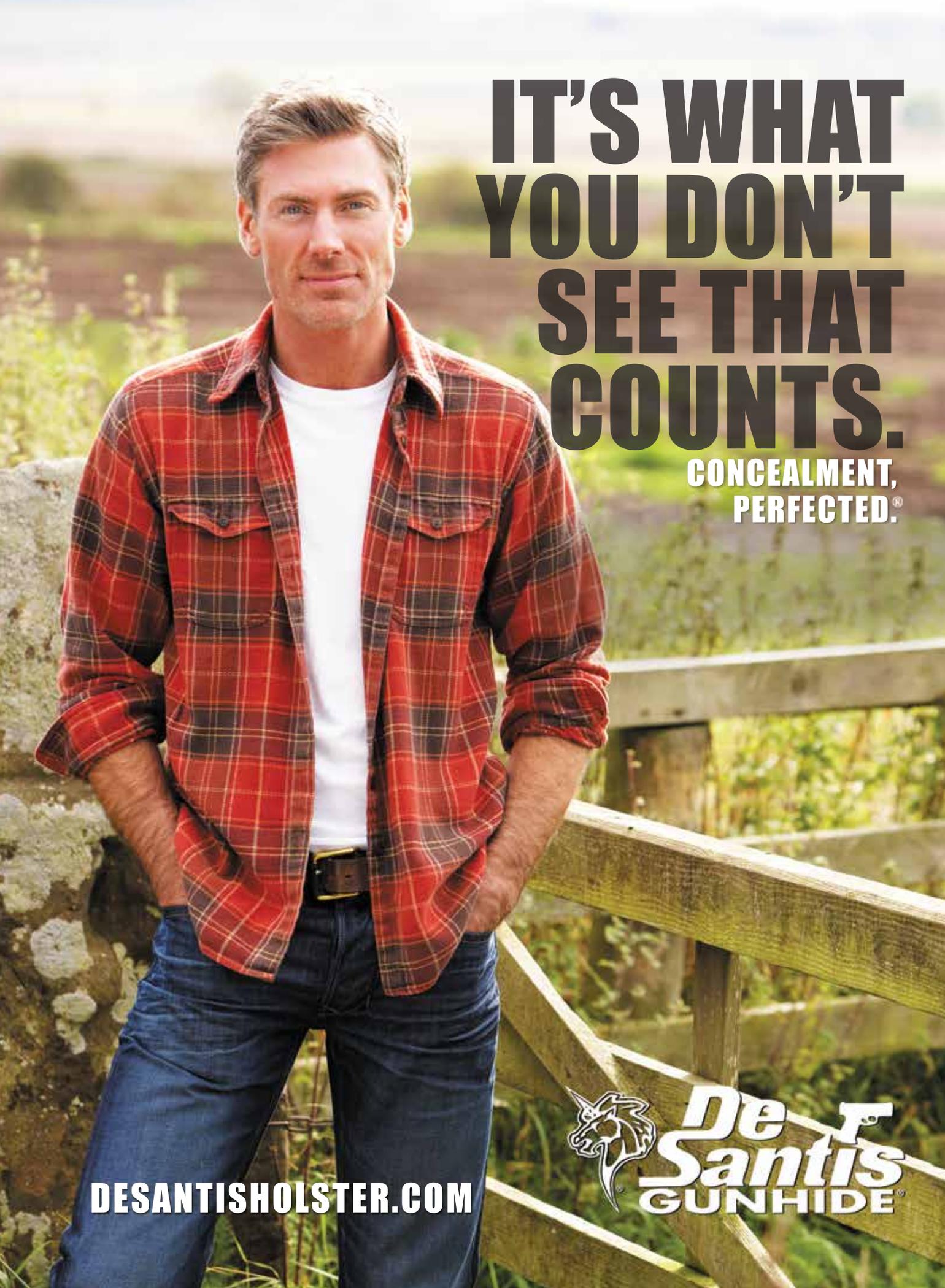
Granted, some may encounter a few deal breakers. The .45-caliber, full-size USPs are big pistols. I'd absolutely trust my USP Expert in a home defense role, but I certainly wouldn't want to try stuffing the thing inside of a waistband.

Beyond that, the family's proprietary accessory rail hasn't aged well; mounting just about any light or laser will require an adapter. Additionally, the USP series was designed in a time well before today's current trend of micro red dots. There are companies making slide cuts and mounting plates that replace the rear sight but don't expect such niceties as factory options.

Supposing one can hang with all of that, I'm hard-pressed to think of a polymer handgun that's more accurate, easier to shoot, and has a richer feature set — all with faultless reliability, to boot. If you've never had too much trigger time on these guns, the USP Expert officially welcomes you to the party. I certainly don't plan on leaving any time soon!



One main reason for the USP family's gentle nature is the dual-spring recoil system.

A man with short brown hair and a slight smile stands outdoors. He is wearing a red and black plaid button-down shirt over a white t-shirt, and blue jeans with a brown belt. His hands are in his pockets. He is leaning against a wooden fence. The background is a blurred natural setting with greenery and a stone wall on the left.

**IT'S WHAT
YOU DON'T
SEE THAT
COUNTS.**

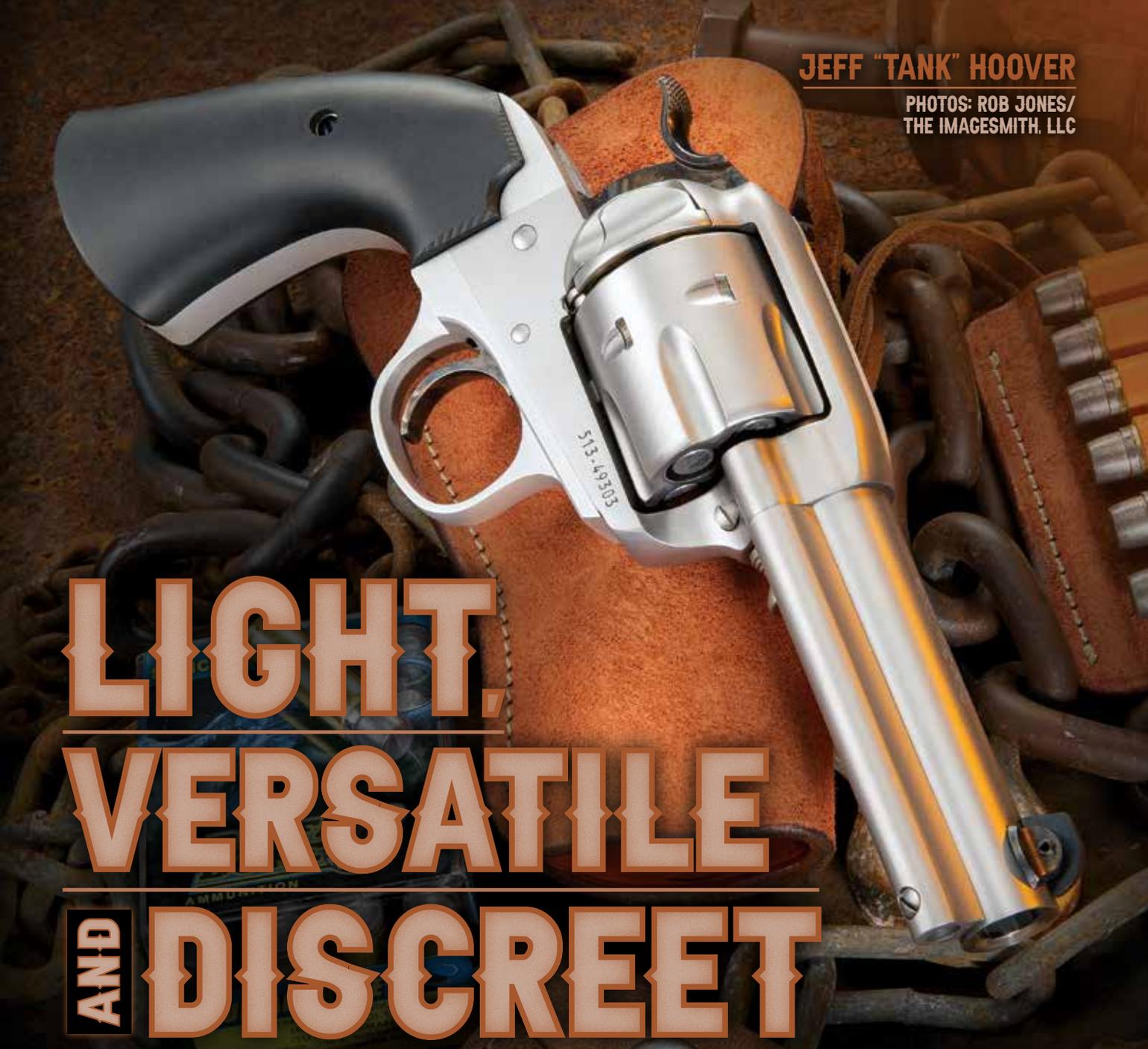
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TYLER GUN WORKS CUSTOM FEATHERWEIGHT RUGER VAQUERO





LIGHT, VERSATILE AND DISCREET

The idea was simple. After all, they're the best kind. Build a gun tough enough to be carried all day, in a caliber capable of performing a wide range of tasks, while being light enough to go unnoticed when worn. Ask a slew of handgunners about the perfect platform fitting these criteria, and it's obvious what sixgun style it'd be.

The gun would be like the men and women it was made for — rugged, reliable and resilient. Giving up is never an option for this group. Add to it basic mechanics and simplicity of operation, and one firearm type stands above all others — the humble single-action revolver. Being chambered in the .45 Colt, the original cartridge, makes it perfect! The best news?

The base gun was already available in the guise of a stainless-steel New Model mid-frame Ruger Vaquero. It just needed some Tyler Gun Works and RW Grip Frames love and attention.

The Mastermind

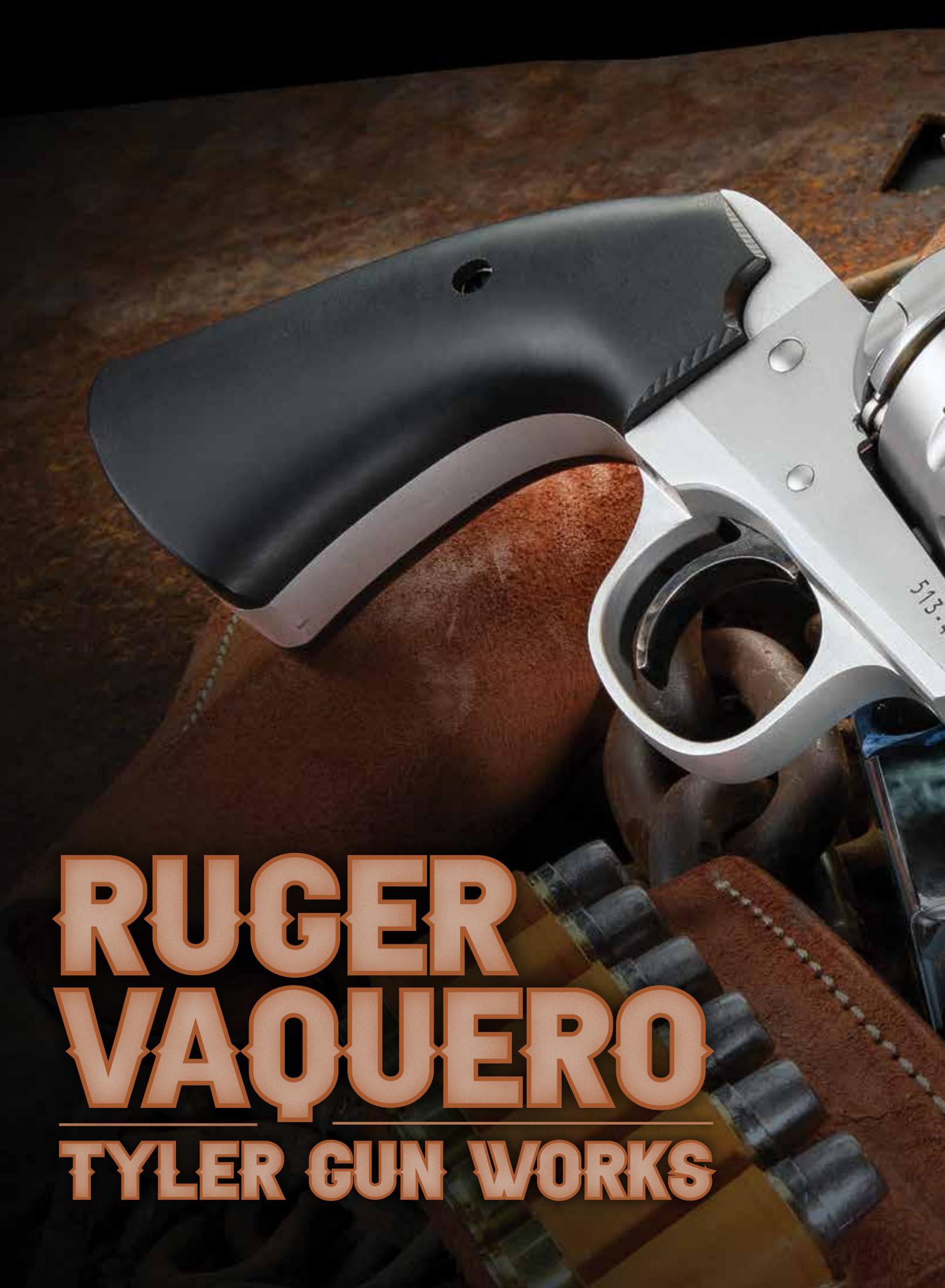
Who could come up with such a simple and seductive sixgun idea? Why, Bobby Tyler, head honcho of Tyler Gun Works, that's who! Bobby has a brilliant mind. He's not your typical "fix Grandpa's old shotgun" kind of gunsmith, although he's perfectly capable of doing so. No, Bobby is a custom gun designer specializing in making guns people want without them knowing they need that specific gun — until they see it.

When shooters, real shooters, see said guns, bells and whistles go off, light bulbs

flash, and the person knows they want, no, make that need, that gun. I know. It's happened to me — quite a few times. And therein lies Bobby Tyler's success: making batch gun runs of 50–100 units, adding his embellishments and selling them.

Grip Gripe?

For this project, a custom grip frame would be conjoined to the cylinder frame, blending as one. The grips frame design stems from Bobby personally handling Elmer Keith's famous #5 custom revolver. The #5's grip frame consists of a Colt Bisley backstrap married to a Colt SAA trigger guard, forming what may be the most copied grip frame in existence. As perfect as it seemed, Bobby noticed something. He's good at that!



**RUGER
VAQUERO**

TYLER GUN WORKS

AMERICAN
HANDGUNNER[®]



10303

BUFFALO BORE
AMMUNITION

BUFFALO BORE
STANDARD PRESSURE
HEAVY AS COLT
Korth GC



While it may have been perfect for Elmer, it came up short for people with above-average or larger hands.

When one spends a lifetime working with their hands — be it farming, ranching, construction, or gunsmithing — the hands, like any well-worked muscle, grow. You know what I mean when shaking hands with someone spending 12–16 hours a day riding fence, pulling cable, bailing hay, or stacking feed. Their calloused hands are vise grips, capable of cracking walnuts — and huge.

So, Bobby modified the #5 grip frame, making it 1/4" longer to fit larger hands and rounding the butt. This last tweak

removes sharp corners, so they can't dig into your hand during recoil. It spreads recoil through your whole hand, not just your web. The more you hold it, the more you appreciate what it is you are holding.

Industry Organizer

Bobby Tyler is smart enough to know he can't do it all himself. So, he partners up with good people to get his projects completed. Dusty Hooley is Bobby's lead gunsmith and evidence of Bobby hiring good people. Bobby sets the plan in motion, and Dusty ensures it's completed to Bobby's standards.

While coming up with the grip frame modification, only one man could pull it off. It's Ronnie Wells of RW Grip Frames. Ronnie is the grip frame guru, having over 350 different style grip frames using aluminum or brass.

He's a master mechanic, knowing how to rebuild, set up, and program CNC machines to make any gun-related part. He specializes in making parts for mass production. You can see why Ronnie and Bobby make such a great team. Anyway, Ronnie makes the grip frame for the Featherweight Vaquero to Bobby's specs. Ronnie calls it the "Bo Ty," short for Bobby Tyler.

Rugged black micarta stocks are fitted to the grip frame as if they sprouted from it. This is accomplished by sanding and fitting the stocks while they're bolted onto the frame.

Outta' Sight Sights

Being built on a Vaquero frame, the Featherweight has all the classic lines only

a fixed-sighted single-action revolver possesses, including a durable hog trough rear sight. But thanks to the skills of RW Grips, the rear sight is like none you have ever seen before on a single action. A horse-shoe-shaped notch is cut in the frame's rear and serrated to diffuse ambient light, providing the shooter with a consistently bright sight picture.

Bobby tells of shooting a rattlesnake in the pitch dark on a recent hunt. After illuminating the snake with a flashlight, sight acquisition was quick, and the sight picture was clear due to the hog trough channel and modified serrated rear sight notch. It didn't end well for Mr. Rattler.

Focus Pocus

The front sight is a Tyler Gun Works custom windage adjustable dovetail design. For most, the front sight is the most noticeable, standing out like the crown jewel that it is. Bobby told Ronnie Wells what he wanted, and Ronnie figured out a way to manufacture it. Ronnie states, "It's designed to be user-friendly and easily manufactured while being beautifully elegant and traditionally rustic at the same time." And it is!

The dovetail base also has a lock-down screw for added security from movement. The lock screw is covered by the 0.100" thick sight blade and held in place with two more set screws. The blade front is serrated to deflect glare. These sights are strong, durable, will stay in place and are color cased, providing a nice contrast to the satin-finished gun.

Powers Parts, Too

The Powers Custom Bisley hammer has a half-cock notch for traditional cocking and is also color cased. The hammer spur has a dimpled pattern for positive cocking and good looks. The trigger is also a Powers Custom, matching the front sight base and hammer with Tyler Gun Works' beautiful color case.

A Keith #5 Belt Mountain base pin is included to ensure a tight cylinder fit. The cylinder gap is set at 0.003" or less, and the trigger pull is set at 2 lbs., 8 oz. The gun is also custom tuned and accurized by Tyler Gun Works. The 4 1/8" barrel is short enough to stay out of the way while riding in your truck, yet not too short to cut down on ballistic performance and ejection of the old warhorse .45 Colt cartridge.

The cylinder has a Black Powder chamfer, and the bolt notches are deepened, straightened and cleaned up, as needed, to ensure tight lock-up with the cylinder bolt. Lastly, the cylinder is converted to a free-spin for ease of loading and unloading.

The recoil shield and loading gate are skillfully scalloped, lightening the



gun to 2 lbs., 2 oz., without interrupting strength integrity. The factory stainless steel ejector rod housing is also recontoured and set back as needed.

Packaged Goods

The Featherweight Vaquero has both the Tyler Gun Works Action and Accuracy packages performed on it. The Action package deals with timing, action and lock-up. All moving parts and contact points are polished for friction-free performance. The Accuracy Package deals more with tolerances and measurements, such as barrel/cylinder gap, ever-important cylinder throats, barrel condition and crown.

Each gun is sighted-in for a 250- to 260-grain “Keith” bullet at just under 900 FPS at 25 yards. For you handloaders, this load consists of 8.8 grains of Unique powder and standard large pistol primer.

Birth Marks

The gun has Tyler Gun Works Friona, Texas, on top of the barrel, proving that it has been given a Tyler Action and Accuracy package job. Tyler & Wells is stamped on the bottom of the cylinder frame and .45 Colt is stamped on the left side of the barrel. A laser-engraved floating feather for the “Featherweight” model is on the right side of the cylinder frame.

Leather Goods

Bobby turned to Doc Barranti to stitch up a special shuck worthy of carrying this featherweight .45 and it comes with the gun. Dubbed the “Outfitter,”

it is a rough-out model, meaning the rough or suede side of the hide is facing out. This gives the holster a rugged look, making scratches and other marks less noticeable from hard-wearing wranglers who are not only tough on themselves but their equipment.

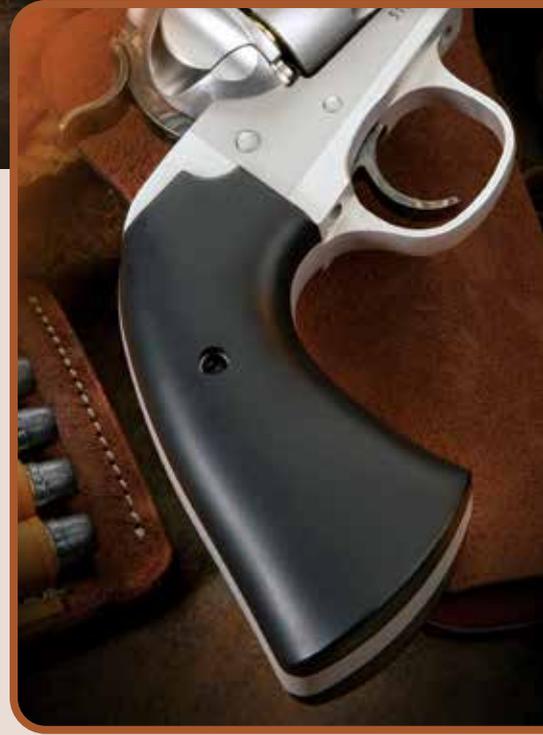
This rig and gun are made for people not afraid of drowning in their own sweat and using guns as the tools they are. “Safe Queen” isn’t a known principle, or meaning, to these guys and gals. They want the kind of equipment they know they can rely on, one that may be needed to save their life from any mean critter, be it unruly cattle, nuisance animals in the wild, or ne’er-dowells in town. These folks just want to be left alone yet will respond appropriately when called upon.

When wearing Barranti’s Outfitter rig, the Featherweight goes unnoticed. Bobby testified he recently carried his for a week while on a mountain lion hunt and never noticed he had it on. He also stated he never felt the “what a relief” moment when taking the rig off.

Fine testament for what is designed to be the “working man’s” gun, and yes, it’s for women too!

Shootin’

I loaded some handloads consisting of 260-grain Lyman/Keith 454424 slugs loaded over 9.3 grains of Power Pistol. For factory fodder, I used Buffalo Bore’s Standard 3E .45 Colt load rated at 1,000 FPS with a 255-grain soft-cast gas-checked bullet. Both loads shot well. Distance was 20 yards, and the gun consistently grouped 1” to 1.5” for five



shots. The groups had three shots in 1/2” or less. The best three-of-five shots are more representative of the gun’s accuracy using a Ransom Rest, removing the human factor.

Phantom Featherweight

The Featherweight is a beautiful concept for a tool meant to be carried a lot but shot infrequently. It just may be the ultimate “multi-tool” in my mind. It’s the insurance policy you pack yet don’t notice. When called upon, there’s no doubt to its reliability or performance.

It can feed, protect, or put an animal down should the need arise. It’s what you need to get you through your day — in one piece! The Tyler Gun Works Featherweight is peace of mind without knowing it’s there.



A CZ75 RETROSPECTIVE

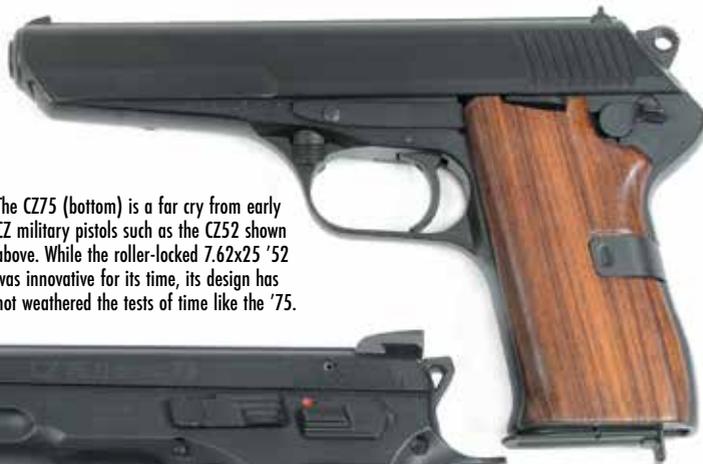
BETTER

THAN

I KNEW



The CZ75 (bottom) is a far cry from early CZ military pistols such as the CZ52 shown above. While the roller-locked 7.62x25 '52 was innovative for its time, its design has not weathered the tests of time like the '75.



Below: Browning used a removable bushing and link on the 1911 barrel (top), even though he had already patented the simplified profile used later on the Hi-Power (middle). The CZ75 incorporates these changes and completely encloses the lower locking surfaces (bottom).



JEREMY D. CLOUGH

With the recently revived Hi-Power getting its deserved resurgence, it's time to talk about another classic 9mm service pistol due for a little more attention. Introduced, unsurprisingly, in 1975, the double/single-action CZ75 spent its earlier life cloistered in the Communist bloc until those winds of change the Scorpions sang about blew down the Iron Curtain and spread it more readily to the free world. *Česka zbrojovka* was a long-established producer of Czechoslovakian military firearms, and the '75 represented a sharp

departure from its previous service pistols, which were functional, and at times innovative, but never mistaken for elegant. Take, for example, the fearsomely bulbous VZ 38, an image that will haunt the dreams of the aesthete forever.

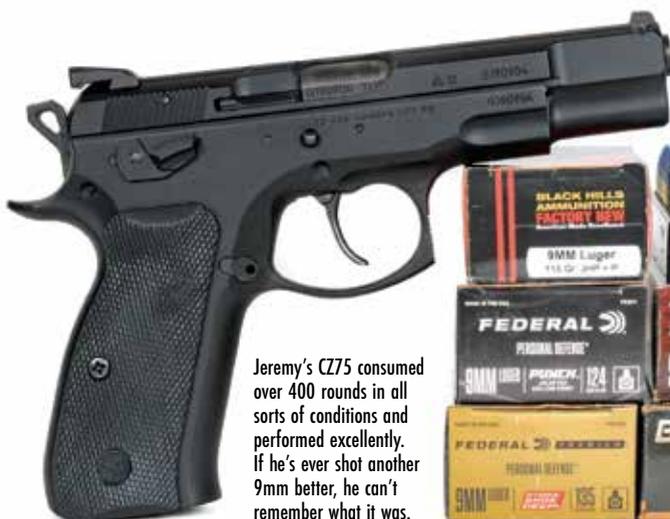
Similarities & Differences

A high-capacity double-action 9mm, as was popular at the time, the CZ75 combined the service pistol trends begun in WWII with the double-action Walther P38 and the 13-round Hi-Power. And you could be forgiven for thinking of the CZ75 as a double-

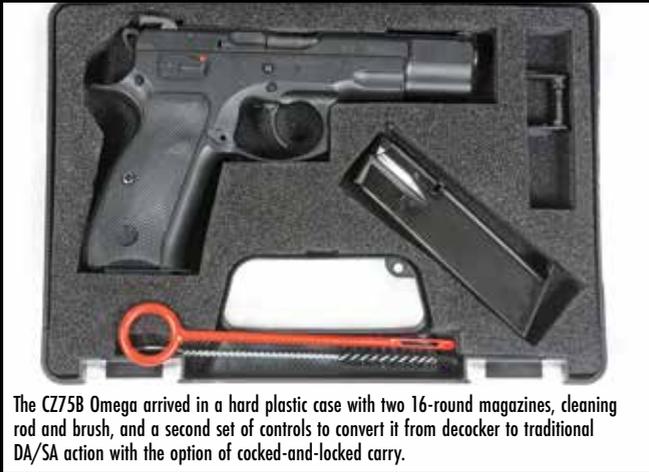
action Hi-Power: The magazines are similar enough that a '75 will feed in a Hi-Power if you hold it in place, and both have the same distinctive narrowing cuts on the slide, though they extended much farther back on the earliest CZs. Both barrels share the familiar Browning-type upper lugs and cam lower lug JMB patented around 1905.

Double-Action? Or ...

The departures begin at the trigger mechanism, which is neither single-action nor the decocker-safety double-action pioneered on the P38 and adopted by CZ75 contemporaries like the S&W 59 and Beretta 92. Even before the '75, CZ was no stranger to double-action: Alois Tomiska, who in 1910 patented the Little Tom .32, believed



Jeremy's CZ75 consumed over 400 rounds in all sorts of conditions and performed excellently. If he's ever shot another 9mm better, he can't remember what it was.



The CZ75B Omega arrived in a hard plastic case with two 16-round magazines, cleaning rod and brush, and a second set of controls to convert it from decocker to traditional DA/SA action with the option of cocked-and-locked carry.



Both sets of controls are visually distinctive and can easily be swapped without tools.

The muzzle of this CZ75 shows the Hi-Power influence. Also, note the rails that show how the '75 slide runs inside the frame instead of vice versa and the generous removal of sharp edges.

to be the first DA auto, designed pistols for the company that later became CZ starting in 1919. CZ had prototype double-action pistols no later than 1931, followed by the .25 caliber VZ 36/45 and later VZ 50/70 blowback autos that the Walther PP/PPK clearly inspired.

Instead of the more broadly copied Walther system where the safety drops the hammer when applied, the CZ75 safety locks the hammer in the cocked position ("condition one") or, with the hammer in half-cock, locks the entire action down where the slide cannot be cycled. Starting with a DA first shot requires gingerly lowering the hammer by hand. It offers you a choice of both worlds: an off-safe double-action first shot for those who are nervous about carrying a pistol with the hammer laid back or cocked-and-locked for those of us who aren't.

Inside Ride

Like the SIG P210, and unlike virtually everything else, the CZ75 slide rides inside the frame rails instead of having the slide overlap the frame rails on the outside. While I've heard it claimed this makes it inherently more accurate, that's not quite true in the way it might seem. Mechanically, I know of no reason the simple placement of the rails affects accuracy. What does, though, is the fact that riding inside the frame means there

is no obstruction at the front of the slide that acts as a stop against the frame rails, requiring them to be shorter than those on the slide. Instead, the rails on the CZ's frame run the entire length of the frame, allowing for a far longer bearing surface than on most pistols. It also creates a wider frame, which is generally to be expected on a double-stack pistol, though it does make the top part of the CZ receiver a bit bulkier than it would be otherwise. Nonetheless, the flare at the bottom of the frontstrap and the slight palm swell of the grips gives it an excellent feel in the hand.

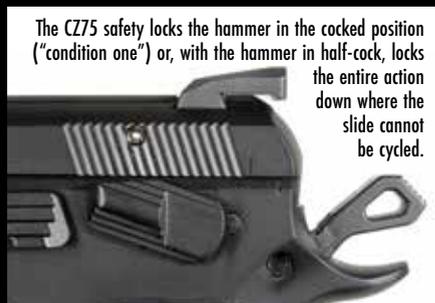
Safety Action

Like all guns, the CZ75 evolved to have a firing pin safety (CZ75B) and ambi controls (CZ85), and CZ has wisely used it as the core design language for most of their handgun line, including the polymer-framed P-09, the .45 caliber CZ 97, SP-01, Shadow, RAMI and other pistols. There have also been a blue million copies, including the Dornaus & Dixon Bren Ten that introduced the 10mm cartridge and was promoted by no less than Col. Jeff Cooper himself, whose home I'm sitting about a hundred yards from as I write this.

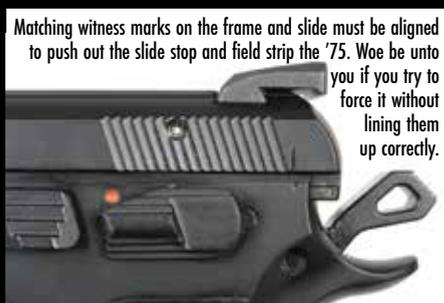
Of the still classically styled '75 derivatives, the CZ75B Omega convertible was the most advanced. With a slightly simplified mechanism, it's

readily user-convertible between a decocker double-action (like the current CZ75 BD) or the traditional DA/SA with a safety that allows cocked and locked carry (CZ75B). Visually, it has a slightly different contour for the trigger and the frame directly behind it, and a squared hammer rides above a subtle but shapely integral beavertail. Capacity is 16-in-the-clip-and-one-in-the-hole, for a total of 17 rounds.

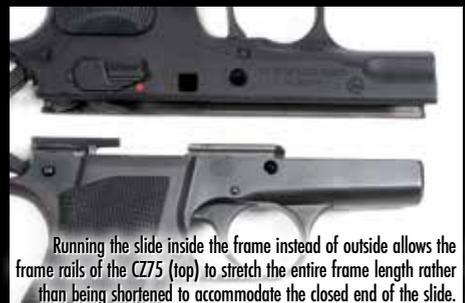
Mine, purchased shortly before CZ announced the end of production, came with the decocker safety installed. To change it (which I did promptly), first field strip the gun by clearing it and removing the mag. Like any other '75, you pull the slide back until the witness mark on the left rear of the frame lines up with the one on the slide so the slidestop



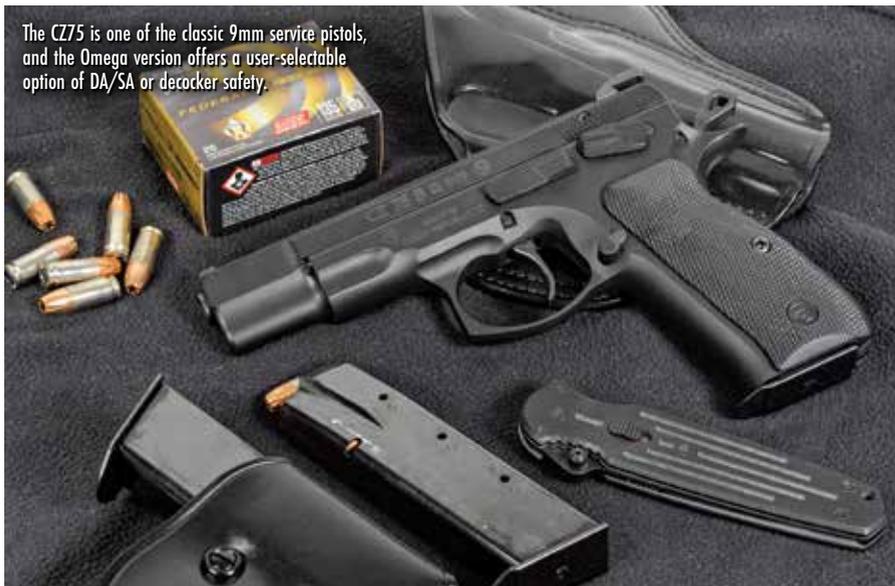
The CZ75 safety locks the hammer in the cocked position ("condition one") or, with the hammer in half-cock, locks the entire action down where the slide cannot be cycled.



Matching witness marks on the frame and slide must be aligned to push out the slide stop and field strip the '75. Woe be unto you if you try to force it without lining them up correctly.



Running the slide inside the frame instead of outside allows the frame rails of the CZ75 (top) to stretch the entire frame length rather than being shortened to accommodate the closed end of the slide.



The CZ75 is one of the classic 9mm service pistols, and the Omega version offers a user-selectable option of DA/SA or decocker safety.



To field strip the CZ75, line up the witness marks on the frame and slide, then tap out the slidestop from right to left. It requires a tool — it will not push out by hand — but very little force is required to push it past the spring that holds it in place.

can be tapped out. Unlike a Hi-Power or 1911, it will not push out with your fingers: It has to be driven out, and woe be unto you if you try without the witness marks lined up correctly. Run the slide assembly off the frame, and you'll see the cross shaft of the ambidextrous safety/decocker. The right-side lever has a tab that, once inserted through its hole in the frame, is locked into place by the trigger bar. It comes out last. The right-side lever, another feature borrowed from the Hi-Power, is held in place by the ejector. To separate them, push down on the ejector while pushing inwards (right to left) on the cross shaft, where it protrudes through the right-side lever. A small punch will help. Once the left side lever

is out, rotate the right side one and push down on the trigger bar to remove it.

The decocker has a spring that rides on the cross shaft and you'll want to pay attention to its orientation before you remove it to ensure you reinstall it correctly. Better yet, take a picture with your phone. One other word to the wise: The safety lever detent is a small, flat spring-loaded piece held in tension against the back of the safety plate and fits into a shallow recess on the side of the receiver. It pops out easily, and you'll want to ensure it's oriented correctly in the safe/off-safe position before you try to shove it into place. Obviously, I learned this the hard way, but at least the tiny black tab was easy to find against the light-colored carpet in my office.

likely to get deactivated (or activated in recoil, as can happen with 1911s) accidentally. I put over 400 rounds through the CZ75B Omega, a mix of ball and JHP from Federal, CCI and Black Hills, and my handloads using 124-grain Blue Bullets. It had two hiccups in the first few magazines, then steadily fed everything thereafter — except one malfunction later on when I stripped it and removed all the oil for photos and forgot to re-oil it, which is on me. A little oil on the rails and it returned to its sewing-machine smoothness.

I shot it at close range and long range. I bounced shotshell hulls down the range, out beyond 25 yards. I shot around 2" on paper at 25, and sometimes better. I shot it in the summer, in the fall, in the rain, and in blowing snow, and I shot it better than I remember having shot any other 9mm pistol.

I've long believed that CZ is the most underestimated gun company in the world. I just didn't realize I was still underestimating them. 

For info: CZ-USA.com, GalcoGunleather.com, FederalPremium.com, Black-Hills.com, TheBlueBullets.com



The bold white dot front sight fits into a recess in the slide where it is held in place with a crosspin.

Shooting Performance

The trigger is excellent with a smooth double-action pull of 10 lbs., 8.5 oz. and a single-action of 3 lbs., 12.9 oz. that releases with a short, smooth roll rather than the proverbial glass rod. While the safety lever is flatter than on other single-action pistols, I had no trouble hitting in a hurry, and the lower profile does make it less

Galco provided their Combat Master holster and a double mag pouch for the CZ75. While Kydex seems all the rage, there's still nothing quite as classy as good leather, especially with a classic auto like the CZ75.



The fixed rear sight is both high profile and snag-free and has white dots to match those on the front.



GUNNYSACK

HOLOSUN EPS CARRY RED DOT SIGHT

You will become spoiled rotten by the reticles on many of Holosun's new red dot sights and this compact model has it too. Rather than a simple dot (you can choose that if you like), the unit offers a 32 MOA circle with a dot in the center. My daily carry guns now have this; the speed and ease of "finding the dot" are unmatched.



While compact for easy concealed carry, you get all the bells and whistles. Shake-awake tech means it's ready to go with no buttons or switches required. It's got 12 brightness modes (four of which are night vision compatible) and an automatic mode that adjusts brightness to the environment. Solar panels will run the unit if your battery dies, but that's unlikely if you change it out every year.

It uses the RMS footprint and includes an RMSc adapter, so it'll fit plenty of guns. The enclosed body makes it waterproof and durable while keeping dirt from the electronics. Holosun.com

AMERICAN TOMAHAWK ... KNIFE?

Wait a tic ... this does not look like any tomahawk I know. I do love the sheer handiness of the traditional Model 1 and 2 hawks, but now the company is expanding.



Don't tell Brent over at *GUNS* we're covering it here in *Handgunner*, but this new fixed blade is called The Rifleman. It's a classic and rugged design but also suited for finer work like field cooking. Imagine the offspring of a quality kitchen knife, rugged folder, and sturdy fixed blade, and you have The Rifleman. It measures 9.5" overall and includes a 5" non-serrated blade surface. The black Richlite handles have plenty of space to fit my entire large hand, and rounded notches in the top of the blade present a great place for the thumb to add control and a little extra oomph if needed.

This knife will cut steak and veggies at the campsite but is solid and thick enough to cut wood, rope and most other things that need cutting. AmericanTomahawk.com

OTIS CONTINUES TO EXPAND

I've been an OTIS Technology cleaning system fan for as long as I can remember. The innovative breech-to-muzzle cable systems made us all reconsider the logic of pulling the fouling out the dirty end rather than back toward the action. More recently, they've been expanding their tools and related accessories lines.

The new Gunsmithing Punch Set is all brass ... and solid. Unlike cheapies, these are machined from single bars or whatever shapes hunks of brass come in. They're also stamped with the punch size.

The Gunsmithing Pick Set has some familiar tools for you OTIS users. Take-apart rod segments attach a punch, brass blade, brush, pick, rail scraper and more. Just what you need to get in the areas where grime likes to hide.

Last, you handgunners might like the new Patriot Series pistol cleaning kits. Short and thick cable segments make pistol cleaning easy using the included pull handle, patches, patch loop and brushes. It all comes in a tiny shooting bag-friendly box. OTISTec.com



STREAMLIGHT TLR-8 SUB

The "sub" in this one hints at its small and (extremely) light nature. Designed for compact carry guns like the GLOCK 43X and 48, SA Hellcat, SIG P365 and XL and other common sub-compact models. Do check the model numbers carefully; some are gun specific, like the model shown here for GLOCKS with thin rails.



The combo laser and light unit packs a whopping 500 lumens of steady or strobing light (your choice) into the small footprint powered by a CR123A battery. It'll run for about an hour and a half with light and laser activated.

It comes with swappable high and low activation paddles (I like the low), a "locking" rotating bezel for times you don't want to use the light and laser and a simple removal and mounting system — it goes on or off your gun in seconds. There are models with green lasers, too, if you prefer that color. Streamlight.com



REVOLVER KNOW-HOW

Some pistols, like S&W's Combat Magnums, come with an underlug to protect the extractor rod. But, like all other revolvers, the rod is exposed when the cylinder is open.



TIGER MCKEE

EXTRACTOR ROD SECRETS



An inch-pound torque wrench is used with the cylinder wrench and extractor rod wrench to tighten the extractor rod to factory specifications. If it's too loose, it can unthread during firing. Go too tight and it strips threads.

Situation: The trigger on your revolver is difficult to press, requiring more force than it should to complete the firing cycle — but only on two or three of the chambers. Or the cylinder is hard to open. You actually have to “smack” it to release and swing it open. Chances are — as long as you’re shooting quality ammunition — there’s a problem with your extractor rod. It’s time to stop shooting and make the proper repairs.

The extractor assembly on revolvers does more than just pull and remove empty brass from the cylinder. The assembly locks the cylinder into the frame and keeps everything in alignment. The extractor rod, actually a tube, is threaded into the extractor and can be bent or become loose. Identi-

Ensuring the extractor rod is aligned with the cylinder must be done after torquing the rod and with everything assembled. Grandmasters' "Extractor Rod & Yoke Alignment" fixture makes this an easy task.



fying the symptoms above helps avoid bigger complications. Understanding the cause makes it easier to explain the problem to a gunsmith. Or, with the right tools and knowledge, putting your wheel gun back into spec and functioning properly is a simple task.

Diagnosing

I spend my time with S&W revolvers, so that's the example used here; exact details vary according to manufacturer and design. On an S&W, the extractor rod threads into the extractor and captures the extractor spring, a center pin and spring, and normally a gas ring, which looks like a sleeve. The center pin locks the cylinder at the front of the barrel and in the rear of the window or gate of the frame. Pressing the cylinder latch pushes the center pin forward. The rear of the pin clears the frame, and the cylinder is unlocked to swing open for loading and unloading. The extractor rod assembly must be true and straight with the cylinder and frame for the pistol to function properly.

The extractor assembly is a delicate part of the pistol, and with many revolvers, it's exposed. (Some pistols have an underlug beneath the barrel to protect the rod when the cylinder is closed.) A bump or drop to the ground, especially with an open cylinder, can bend the rod. The misalignment between the frame, cylinder and front

The extractor is at the top, and the center pin and spring are below. Next is the gas ring — a sleeve that fits over the rear of the extractor rod, which is actually a tube and the extractor spring. All of this must be centered and aligned with the frame and barrel.



lock increases the pressure required to rotate the cylinder when firing. Normally, unless the bend is severe, you'll notice this only on two or three of the chambers. A bent rod also makes it difficult to open the cylinder, again, usually on two or three of the chambers.

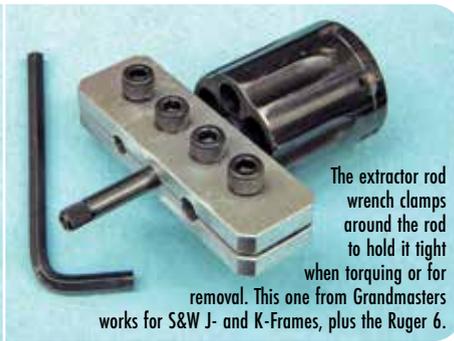
The rod can also become loose, increasing the length of the assembly. This makes it difficult to open the cylinder on all chambers. Often, the shooter just uses "a bigger hammer,"

banging against the cylinder, forcing it free. This will definitely bend the rod and possibly break something else in the process. Regardless of the cause, when firing, if the trigger becomes hard to press or the cylinder requires more force than usual to open, stop shooting.

Obviously, a gunsmith who's well-versed in revolver affairs can correct the problem. If you're reading this magazine, chances are you have several revolvers and enjoy maintaining



The cylinder wrench has plugs that fit into the cylinder for tightening and removal.



The extractor rod wrench clamps around the rod to hold it tight when torquing or for removal. This one from Grandmasters works for S&W J- and K-Frames, plus the Ruger 6.

your own weapons. It might be worth acquiring the proper tools and investing some time to perform the work yourself. If not, at least you'll be well-versed in what's required. Asking the proper questions can help "audition" gunsmiths for the job.

The Right Tools

The tools needed are specialized and mandatory. First on the list, something every gun owner should already have is the correct screwdriver and bit set. Common screwdrivers for slotted screws are tapered at the tip. They only apply pressure to the top corners of the screw slot. The bit twists inside the slot, damaging the screw head. Gunsmith drivers are straight hollow ground bits that fit the slot tightly and apply force

against the entire slot. A bit that's just a little shorter than the head's diameter reduces the risk of contact between the driver and the hole in the frame.

An inch-pound torque wrench is used to tighten the extractor rod. The rod must be tight enough that it doesn't come loose. Over-tightening will strip the threads, requiring new parts. Early model S&W's have right-hand threads on the rod; later models use a left-hand threaded rod. For tightening and removing, you'll need a wrench that works for both left and right-hand threads.

An "extractor rod wrench" clamps around the extractor rod. This reduces the chances of bending the rod while tightening or loosening a rod for removal. Do not use pliers or vise grips on the rod. A "cylinder wrench" keeps

the extractor from twisting inside the cylinder while tightening or removing.

Straightening a bent rod properly requires performing the action with the extractor assembly installed in the cylinder, so everything is one complete unit. Even if your rod only requires torquing, this action will likely bend the rod slightly. Just a little "wobble" will cause trouble. You're going to use a setup like GrandMasters' "Extractor Rod & Yoke Alignment" fixture. They have a video on the 'net showing its use.

If you're considering working on S&W wheelguns or just "revolver curious," I recommend Jerry Kuhnhausen's S&W shop manuals. I have the third and fifth editions. Each one has different information, so get both. Last but certainly not least, make sure you have and use general safety equipment.

Repair Process

Confirm the pistol is unloaded. Point the muzzle in a safe direction, open the cylinder and position it against a light-colored background. Slowly turn the cylinder while inspecting each chamber. Do not spin it rapidly. Take your eyes off the cylinder, then look and repeat. Also, make sure your work area is clear of all live ammunition.

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Jerry Kuhnhausen's S&W shop manuals are the "go-to" books for working on S&W wheelguns. They have factory specs, plus recommendations on specialized tools needed.

Start by removing the cylinder assembly from the frame. On S&Ws, it's held in position by the front side-plate screw. This screw is fitted specifically to your pistol; do not lose it or confuse it with others. Remove the screw, swing the cylinder out and hold it in place while pulling the crane forward to remove it from the frame. Sliding a thin piece of cardstock between the cylinder and frame prevents the two from bumping or scratching while removing the crane. The cylinder is now free. Reverse the order for installation.

Install the extractor-rod wrench and cylinder wrench on the rod and cylinder, and use the torque wrench to check the tightness of the rod. Remember to confirm whether you're working with right- or left-hand threads.

Once the rod is tightened, the entire assembly is mounted into the alignment fixture. A dial indicator is used to check for straightness as the cylinder is rotated. The fixture comes with a rod that slips over the extractor rod for adjustments. Tweak it, using light pressure, until the extractor rod is within one to two thousandths when rotating the cylinder.

Done. You're ready to install the cylinder assembly into the frame. Ensure the pistol is unloaded and stroke the trigger several times through each cylinder chamber. Each stroke on the trigger should feel the same. Open and close the cylinder on each chamber, again ensuring it opens and shuts consistently.

It's always good to know how to maintain your firearms. Using proper techniques during manipulations helps ensure the extractor rod doesn't get bent. But accidents still happen. Or, maybe the former owner didn't take care of their pistol as one should. Once you're familiar with how the extractor assembly functions and how to maintain your revolvers, making repairs is easy and quick. It takes longer to read this article than to perform the work.



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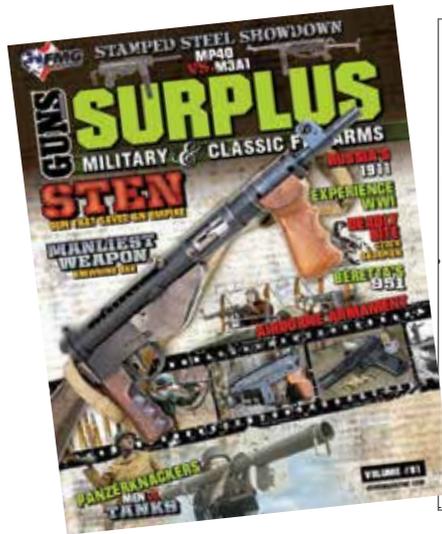
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Baracuta-Blaze



Talon Hunt w/ Hook

PAT COVERT

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Havalon Knives is well known in the hunting and fishing segments of the outdoors market for pushing the envelope of replaceable scalpel-bladed knives farther than any other manufacturer — and not surprisingly, given the company's roots. "Our parent brand Havel's Inc. has been supplying the surgical world with blades, needles, sutures and the like for over 40 years." Havel's Marketing Director Ryan Cull informs *American Handgunner*. "Before the Havalon brand was born, we had a rapidly growing taxidermy business. That audience was buying up our autopsy blades at such a clip that the idea of making something for that audience was hatched. Our president at the time had an old folding field scalpel he kept in his desk and thought something similar could work for hunters. Fast forward to October of 2005 and the replaceable blade Piranta Original was born."

Today the Havalon Knives line has exploded to include a wide variety of

scalpel-based folding knives as well as a multi-tool, field kits and the first EDC (everyday carry) for urban users. "Our surgically sharp replaceable blades are unmatched in the industry," notes Ryan. "We make them sharper, stronger and better than anyone else that has come along after us. We can say without favor because our factory has been making blades like these for over 40 years. Our resources and know-how just can't be touched by an upstart." Noticing an uptick of interest in these extremely sharp replaceable blade knives in the last few years, we thought it was time to inform *Handgunner* readers of their benefits, so we went straight to the source to show you some of their sharp offerings.

Precise Slice

The Piranta line, revised over time, is still a staple in the Havalon line. The Piranta-EDGE was one of the first knives Havalon introduced and is still their best seller. Primarily for skinning game, the Piranta-EDGE is 7.25" fully extended with a 2.75" 60A stainless steel

drop point style scalpel blade. Havalon blades are installed by dropping a slot in the blade's base over an elongated post on the carrier (which also serves as the folder's pivot) and sliding it backward, securing it in place. To change the blade, you simply push its base forward and lift it off once it clears the forward end of the carrier. Both actions are done after the blade carrier is engaged and locked in place by a liner-lock mechanism in the handle. Note: There are ambidextrous thumb studs on the rear of the carrier for opening the blade.

The Piranta-EDGE's 4.5" handle is durable orange/black military grade polymer and the knife comes delivered with a black nylon pouch with a detachable clip. Also included are 12 60A scalpel blades for future use and the EDGE also accepts all other Piranta blades should you desire a different style.

DRESSERS!



Talon (attachment detail)



Piranta-EDGE

Want something bigger? The Baracuta-Blaze is ideal for hunters who need to process larger game. This larger game skinner/de-boner stretches out to 10.375" overall yet weighs only 3 oz. The standard blade is Havalon's 4.375" #115XT Hunter's blade, but for variety, the company also offers two other options — #115SW Serrated Bone Saw blade and #127XT Fillet blade. The 6.0" handle is a military-grade polymer with black rubber inserts for enhanced grip. Like its smaller sibling, the Piranta, the Baracuta-Blaze is delivered with a nylon pouch with a removable clip and Havalon throws in five #115XT Hunter's Blades to get you rolling.

The Talon Hunt is a complete system for sportsmen who want to be prepared for any endeavor. The Talon's handle is wider similar to a standard outdoor knife. It has an adapter that allows it to accept a wide variety of blades using Havalon's Quik-Change II system, which has an internal locking mechanism that allows the user to quickly switch blades without losing cutting area. The blade selection included in the base kit has both the hunter and angler covered for a variety of situations. For the hunter, there is both a partially serrated skinning blade and one with a guthook. For those who fish, there are fillet blades in three different lengths. The Talon's handle has a removable back panel for easy cleanup. The icing on the cake is a black nylon roll-up snap pouch, making the Talon Hunt system easy to carry — and you can customize the entire kit to suit your needs.

Havalon offers many other blade options, allowing the user to customize the Talon Hunt system to suit their needs. If a longer blade is required, the company offers a two-pack of 5.0" Talon Bushcraft blades that can perform a myriad of functions around the camp, such as cutting cord and rope, de-barking and notching limbs, plus preparing meals. There is also a 3-piece

Talon Fish Serrated Blade Set that includes a scaler with ruler markings up to 5.0" plus one each of 5.0" and 7.0" serrated back fillet blades to allow the user to remove scales with the backside and fillet with the front. In addition, the company offers multi-packs — some assorted — of all the blades found in the Talon Hunt system. Last but not least, they offer the Talon Hip Holster, which allows the user to take their knife into the field. This nylon and polymer sheath can be worn on the belt for right or left-hand carry — and it also has two pockets for extra blades or accessories.

Pushing Envelopes

I mentioned in my intro that Havalon had introduced its first EDC for city use. It's called the REDI, and it uses thicker blades than typical scalpels, which allows them to be re-sharpened. The REDI also has a stouter slide-locking system mechanism that keeps the blade positively locked into place at all times. There's also a liner lock inside the frame that keeps the blade assembly rigid when deployed. The REDI's 4.4" green handle is a pistol grip style for improved grip, with checkering added for improved purchase. A tip-up pocket clip on the backside is positioned for right- or left-hand carry. Although the REDI is billed as an EDC, don't let that keep you from using it in the field if you want a beefier game-processing knife — it's ready for action there as well.

The Evolve is a multitool geared for the hunter. The Evolve incorporates Havalon's Piranta Quik-Change II game processing system and is further accoutered with pliers (with wire cutters/stripers), a fixed gut hook, a replaceable saw, a universal bit driver, and a carabiner clip. The Evolve also comes with a flat head/Phillips head reversible bit, and there's room to store two more 1/4" bits of any style you wish. Havalon provides a zipper holster and delivers the Evolve with a host of goodies, including six standard 60A Piranta blades and two

new replaceable saw blades. All Piranta blades will fit the Evolve, allowing you to fine-tune your multitool.

There is much more to be seen on Havalon's website, and you'll be surprised at how affordable it is to add their replaceable blade technology to your hunting or fishing repertoire. Havalon's knives and tools are lightweight and easy to stow so they won't bog you down. These knives may not replace your heavy duty wood-chopping hunting knife, but they'll add a level of precision to your game dressing and fish processing that is astounding. Go check out the Havalon website. 

For more info: Havalon.com



Evolve Multitool



JUST THE

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Girsan's PI has a barrel and slide 1" shorter than the traditional Hi-Power, which reduces the weight from 1.8 to 1.6 lbs. It accepts all Hi-Power magazines.

GIRSAN'S

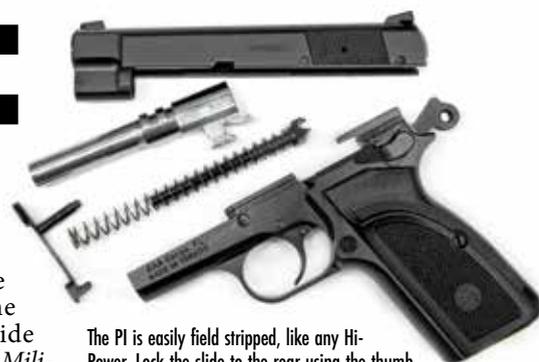
"DETECTIVE"

MC P35 PI HI-POWER

There's no debating that the FN Browning/Saive 9mm "Hi-Power" pistol — 1935 — is iconic. It was manufactured and used by both Axis and Allied powers during WWII and has seen military and law-enforcement use in over 90 countries around the globe. The Hi-Power has also been cloned by numerous manufacturers worldwide, some licensed by FN, some

not. One of the rarer and more desirable of these clones was the "Detective" Hi-Power, a short-slide variant produced by *Fabricaciones Militares* of Argentina. Luckily, the short-barreled Hi-Power has been resurrected by Girsan of Turkey as the MC P35 PI — "Private Investigator" — which is being imported into the U.S. by EAA.

FM produced "Detective" Hi-Power pistols and conversion kits you could



The PI is easily field stripped, like any Hi-Power. Lock the slide to the rear using the thumb safety, remove the slide stop and slip the slide off the frame.

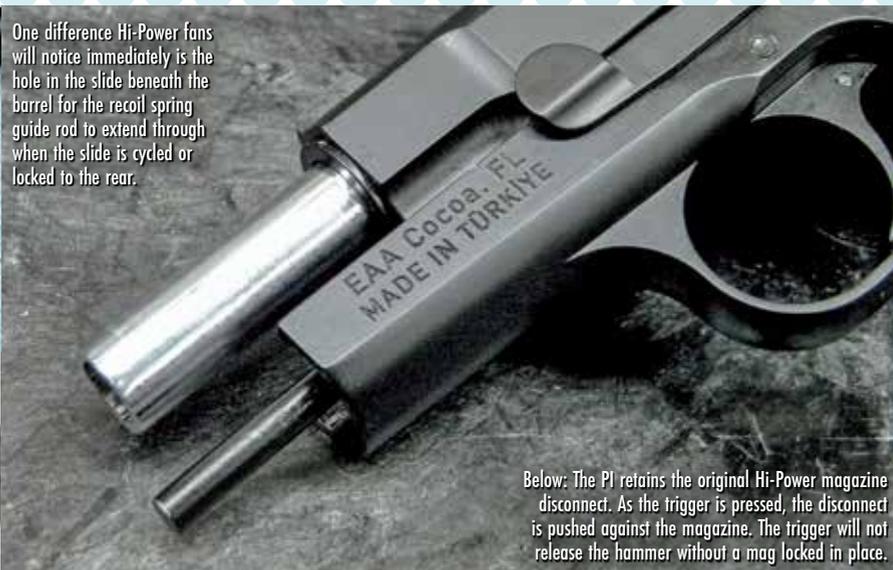
install on standard Hi-Power frames. Both pistols and kits and their advertisements in *Shotgun News* disappeared in the early 2000s. Occasionally, there's a Detective for sale on the 'net, but they're

FACTS, MA'AM

The P.I.'s recoil spring is wound from flat wire instead of round wire. The strength of the spring and longer guide rod make it a little tricky to remove them from the slide until you figure out just the right moves.



One difference Hi-Power fans will notice immediately is the hole in the slide beneath the barrel for the recoil spring guide rod to extend through when the slide is cycled or locked to the rear.



Below: The P.I. retains the original Hi-Power magazine disconnect. As the trigger is pressed, the disconnect is pushed against the magazine. The trigger will not release the hammer without a mag locked in place.



The small parts inside a pistol reveal a lot about its quality. All the pins, springs and internals of the P.I. spec out and function as they should.

expensive. Master Hi-Power gunsmiths will shorten full-length Hi-Powers, but like any detailed, precision work, it's costly. The new Girsan short barrel "P.I." is readily available and affordable.

Girsan has been producing a variety of firearms in Turkey since the mid-'90s. In 2019 they entered and earned respect in the 1911 market. A couple of years later, they released the MC P35 Hi-Power, available in several variations, including a red dot sight-equipped model. The short-barrel "P.I." is their latest addition to their Hi-Power line.

The frame of the "P.I." is standard double-stack Hi-Power fare. The slide and barrel have been shortened approximately one inch — from 4.87" to 3.88". This reduces the pistol's weight from 1.8 lbs. to 1.6 lbs. These numbers might seem slight, but it's a 20% reduction in slide length and a 12% reduction in total weight. For a pistol that's carried all day, every day, this is significant. The shorter slide is easier to conceal and clears the holster just a little sooner on the draw. With the factory-supplied 15-round Mec-Gar magazine and one in the chamber, it's a compact, reliable package holding 16 rounds.

Parts And Pieces

When it comes to non-FN/Browning Hi-Powers, there's a lot of variation in quality. Some were considered equals in fit and overall character. Others, not so much. Girsan's P.I. is one of the good ones. The matte black finish is smooth, even on the small parts. The chrome finish on

the barrel is a little shiny for my taste but will hold up well in hot, humid environments. The "P.I." comes with an Mk III style ambidextrous thumb safety, a Commander-style "ring" hammer and Mk III style synthetic stocks. It also retains the original design's magazine disconnect; it will not fire without a mag locked in place. Blame this on the French military's "demands" that this feature be included in the original design. The white-dot sights are set in dovetail slots cut into the slide. The front of the slide has a hole below the barrel that the guide extends through when the slide is cycled.

The first thing I do with a "new" firearm — used or factory-fresh — is take it apart completely. The Hi-Power is easy to field strip. Lock the slide to the rear using the thumb safety, remove the slide lock and slip the slide forward off the frame. The "P.I." uses a flat recoil spring instead of a spring formed from round wire. It's strong — the guide rod is long and has to line up with its hole in the slide. Initially, it's difficult to remove the spring and rod from the slide; it takes just the right combination of push and wiggle to remove and install. You only need a few punches and a hammer for complete disassembly of the slide and frame. On this subject, and all other things Hi-Power, I recommend Stephen A. Camp's book, *The Shooters Guide To The Browning Hi-Power*.

The Hi-Power uses a sear lever that pivots in the slide to transfer movement from the trigger lever, which pushes upward, to press the sear down, releasing the hammer. It's kind of like a see-saw. The P.I.'s sear lever is a late-model Mk III-type Devel lever, which has a wing that blocks the firing pin, preventing forward movement unless the trigger is pressed.



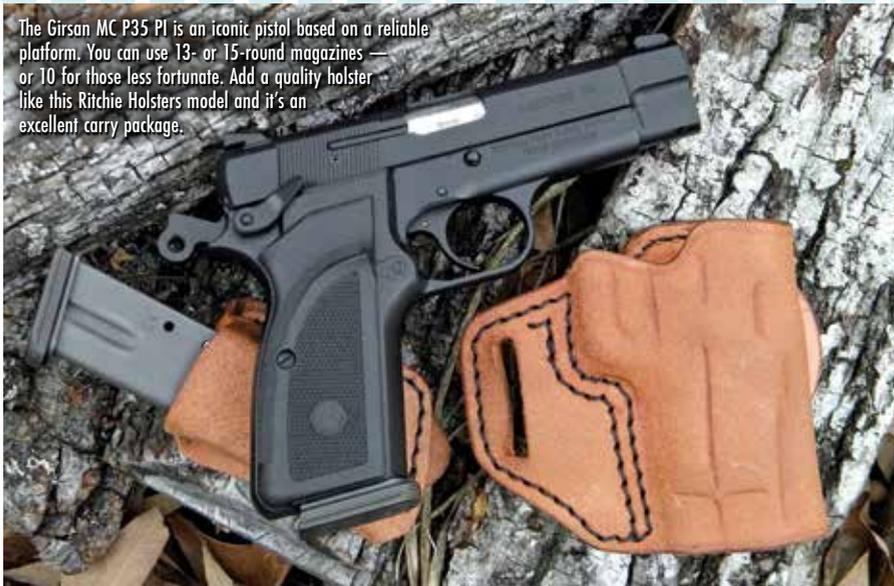
The factory Mk III style stocks didn't fit my small hands. The thumb rest is right next to the magazine release, and I couldn't press it efficiently. I pulled a variety of different stocks from my stash to test their fit; some fit well, while others had a little wiggle. This isn't uncommon with aftermarket stocks and various "Browning" clones. Stocks from a FEG fit and those from a Springfield SA 35. It may require experimenting, but finding the right fit for you shouldn't be a problem.

Small parts like pins and springs are a big indicator of a pistol's quality. The "P.I.'s" internals spec'd out at the proper size and tension. Another sign of a properly made Hi-Power is the fit between pins that hold parts like the sear, sear lever, extractor and ejector and the frame. The pins shouldn't require much force to tap them in and out. Plus, as long as you use the proper punches, the pins shouldn't deform during removal and installation. The P.I.'s internals look good, but the true test is at the range.

Range Day

"Range Day" is the most exciting part of testing a new gun. The two most interesting characteristics of any firearm are

The Girsan MC P35 PI is an iconic pistol based on a reliable platform. You can use 13- or 15-round magazines — or 10 for those less fortunate. Add a quality holster like this Ritchie Holsters model and it's an excellent carry package.



There are plenty of aftermarket options for Hi-Power accessories. Hi-Power clones vary in actual dimensions, so some stocks may require building up the area on the inside of the panel where it indexes with the frame.



tion and ejection. Empty cases landed in a one-foot square area about 7' to 8' from the shooter at 4 o'clock. Perfect.

Like all Hi-Powers with the magazine disconnect, you can feel some grittiness in the trigger as the disconnect engages the magazine. This is something that wears in over time. Or, you can easily polish the parts. Girsan offers full-size Hi-Powers without the mag disconnect and will hopefully follow through with similar models of the "PI." The trigger is crisp and breaks at 7½ lbs. For a military-style weapon, it's a good trigger. As an experiment, I removed the magazine disconnect to get an idea of what the trigger would feel like after some tuning

reliability and accuracy, which are only revealed through live fire. "Fit" and "feel" are also important but more subjective. Does this pistol feel right in your hands?

Lives depend on the reliability of a defensive pistol. A clean, freshly oiled gun with quality ammunition and magazines should function. Factory-recommended "break-in" periods and such do not apply. A defensive pistol shouldn't be finicky about what ammo it will fire.

I test a pistol's reliability by putting it through the "trash ammo" test.

I loaded 15- and 13-round Mec-Gar magazines with "homeless" rounds lying on the range, stray ammunition from the dusty cardboard box in the shop and all the questionable stuff rattling around the floorboard of my truck. The "Private Investigator" ate everything with no malfunctions. It also displayed very consistent extrac-



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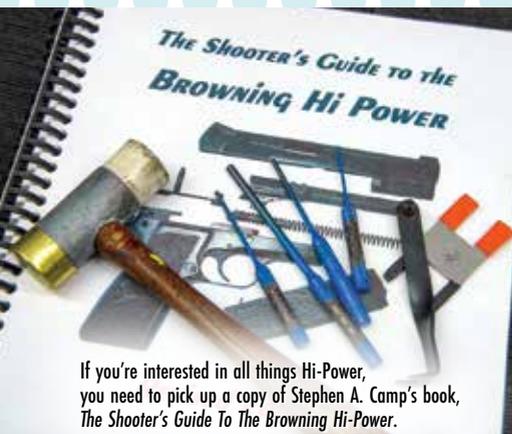


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If you're interested in all things Hi-Power, you need to pick up a copy of Stephen A. Camp's book, *The Shooter's Guide To The Browning Hi-Power*.

and polishing. This brought the pull weight down to a perfect, crisp 5½ lbs. Like all “military” style pistols, there’s improvement to be had.

Accuracy is subjective. An accurate defensive pistol might not fire tiny groups during a bullseye competition. Under stress, with both you and the threat moving, accuracy involves placing hits in the proper locations of the threat’s body. *Defensive accuracy is more about what you can do with the pistol, as opposed to how tight a group it will shoot under perfect conditions.*

I used factory-fresh ball ammo to test practical accuracy. You can expect improved precision with quality defensive rounds if a pistol groups well with ball ammunition. At seven yards, slow fire, the Girsan grouped well — minus one shot I called “bad” because of my trigger press. The group size was better than I normally get with more expensive pistols. Hi-Powers are always a pleasure to shoot; the “PI.” actually seemed to recoil less than the full-length barreled Brownings.

At 75 yards, I had to aim about a foot low and slightly left to hit the torso target. Most people never fire their pistols at these distances. But it’s a good idea because there are enough documented situations that required long-distance pistol shots. This reveals the difference between the pistol’s point of impact and point of aim. The “Investigator’s” long-distance accuracy is up to that task if you are. Eventually, I’ll adjust the sights to my eyes and shooting style, much like zeroing a rifle.

The MC P35 PI is the first Girsan pistol I’ve handled. After inspecting it inside and out and spending time with it on the range, I can safely say it won’t be my last. The “PI.” is an excellent pistol with the right features at an affordable price. Those new to Hi-Powers will be very pleased; longtime fans of the “Browning” won’t be disappointed. And, if you’re thinking about a custom pistol build, the Girsan is the perfect starting point. That’s a win, win, win. 

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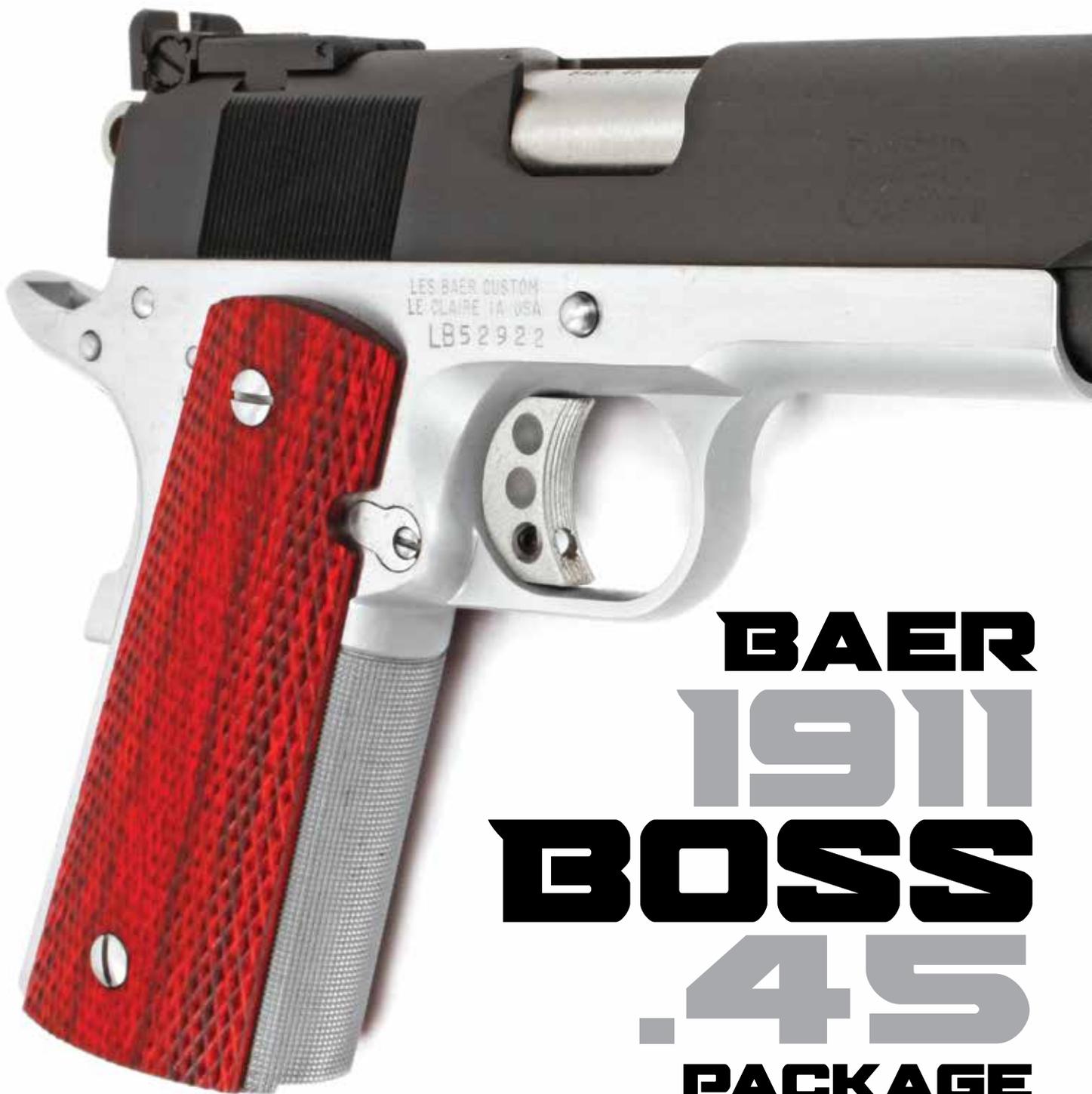
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Behold the gun of the month for the July/August issue of *American Handgunner* — The Baer 1911 Boss .45. It is a fitting tribute to the high-performance 1970s muscle car that inspired it. Les Baer is the king of custom-built 1911 pistols in addition to being a well-known aficionado of American muscle cars. That's why Les named this 1911 model after the Boss 429 Mustangs he admires above all other cars. Like Les Baer's entire pistol line, this exciting .45 is based on the Premier II but it has enough thoughtful extra touches to really make it the Boss of custom .45s. The Boss we're giving away shoots 1.5" groups at 50 yards. There's a 1.5" group guarantee option for \$295. Special features include rear cocking serrations on the slide, a slide fitted to the frame, Baer fiber optic sight (red), chromed complete lower, blued slide and two 8-round premium magazines.

If you win this giveaway, you'll be ready to carry your new Baer 1911 Boss .45 in the *Luna OWB Holster*. Part of Versacarry's Vintage Series 2023, the holster has a cutting-edge design and rapid draw-ready features to ensure you can access your firearm at lightning speed. Crafted with premium water buffalo leather, the Luna molds to the user's firearm.

The *Flyby* from Kershaw Knives has a stylish design and sharp cutting performance. Open the modified 3" Wharndcliffe blade effortlessly with assisted opening. Its D2 tool steel is high performance and high-edge retention and the blade shape is an ideal box cutter.

The Les Baer 1911 Boss .45, Versacarry's Luna Series OWB Holster and Kershaw Knives' Flyby are awesome prizes for one really lucky person. It may be you — if you enter the giveaway now! Go to AmericanHandgunner.com/giveaways or mail a postcard. —Jazz Jimenez

BAER 1911 BOSS .45

MANUFACTURER: LES BAER CUSTOM; LESBAER.COM; (563) 289-2126
CALIBER: .45 ACP, CAPACITY: 8; BARREL LENGTH: 5", WEIGHT: 37 OZ.
VALUE: \$3,238

LUNA OWB HOLSTER

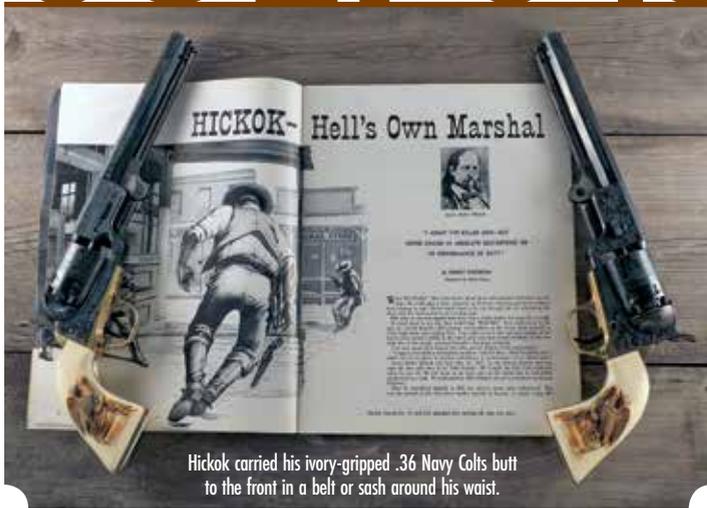
MANUFACTURER: VERSACARRY; VERSACARRY.COM; (979) 325-2891
VALUE: \$54.99

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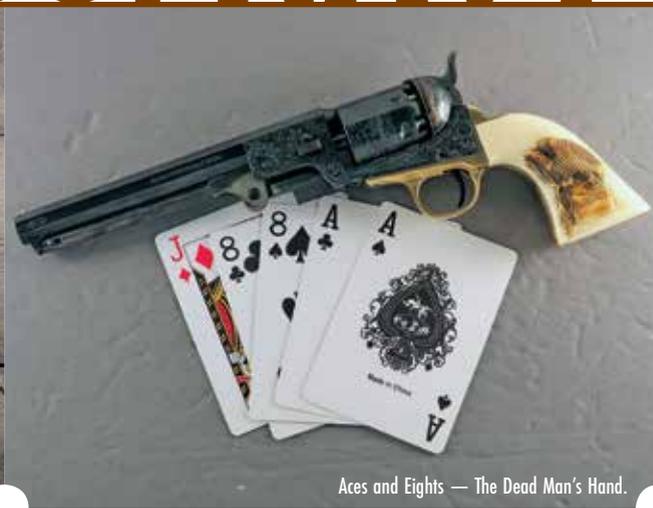
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COLT'S 1851 NAVY:



Hickok carried his ivory-gripped .36 Navy Colts butt to the front in a belt or sash around his waist.



Aces and Eights — The Dead Man's Hand.

THE GUNFIGHTER'S CHOICE

Power notwithstanding, Colt Walkers and Dragoons were much too large, heavy and cumbersome to be carried in a holster on the belt, so eventually, Colt went the complete opposite direction and brought out a series of Pocket Pistols, which were five-shot .31 caliber and easily carried concealed on the person. Today these are known mainly as the

Baby Dragoon, the Wells Fargo, and the most popular and the highest-selling Colt firearm during the percussion era, the 1849 Pocket Pistol.

With both ends of the spectrum covered, Colt now looked at what would turn out to be the first sixgun, which combined both power and portability, and would usher in the age of the gunfighter. That sixgun was the 1851 Navy .36. No, it was not as powerful as the Dragoons. However, it was adequately so, and with its 7½" octagon barrel was about half of the weight of the Walkers and Dragoons. The basic platform of the 1851 Navy would be used to build the 1860 Army, which featured the streamlined barrel and loading lever. Then, this was used to develop the 1861 Navy .36, which featured the same style barrel and loading lever.

In the first issue of *GUNS Magazine* in January 1955, Robert Rozeboom wrote an article, "Hickok — Hell's Own Marshal." What follows is a quote from that article:

"Wild Bill Hickok! They told stories about those silver-plated six-

shooters on his hips. He could plug an edgewise dime at 20 paces — drawing and firing without seeming to aim. Or he could chase a tin can through the air, alternating his shots with the rapid precision of a Gatling gun. But when it was man-against-man, they said a single bullet was generally enough. It wasn't hard to see why they called him Wild Bill; you could see it in the way he carried himself — 200 lbs., six-foot-three in his boots, bent forward as if his high heels were tipping him. You could see it in the tapering lengths of his hands as he nursed a drink, and the bland gray eyes that stirred restlessly, in the thin tight line of his mouth, centered beneath the drooping mustache. You are aware of it even in the calm, precise diction of his conversation as he said, 'I suppose I'm called a red-handed murderer — which I deny. That I've killed men, I admit, but never unless an absolute self-defense or performance of an official duty.' Were Hickok's feats with the percussion revolver real or something more akin to the Hollywood legend? You can decide on your own whether or not you want to believe these marksmanship feats using a percussion revolver."

The lengthy article provides much information about Wild Bill's life, including the famous shootout between him and Dave Tutt. The story goes that Tutt had grabbed Bill's watch during a poker game for nonpayment of his debts. Hickok warned him not to wear

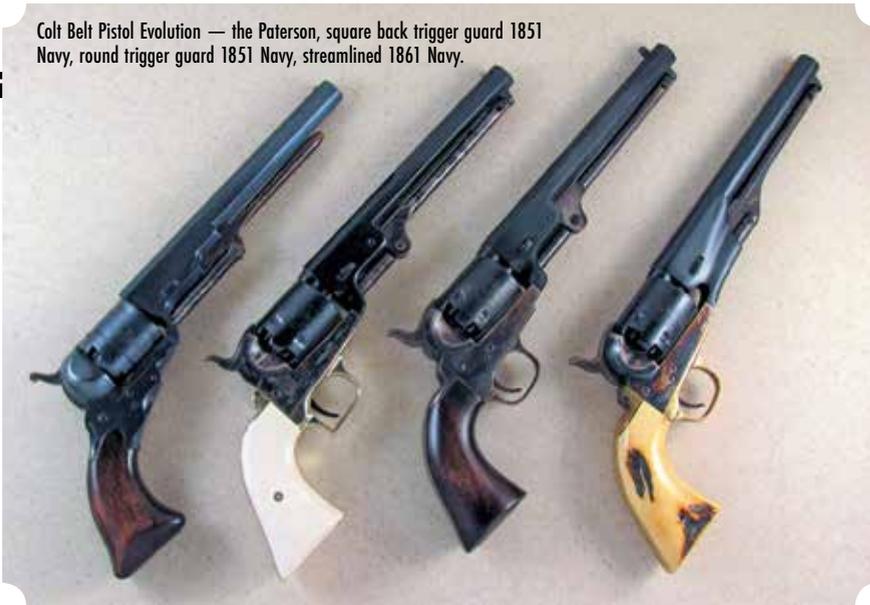


Slim Jim holsters never go out of style. These are by San Pedro Saddlery.



Kirkpatrick Leather produced this pair of Slim Jims, which hang straight on the belt.

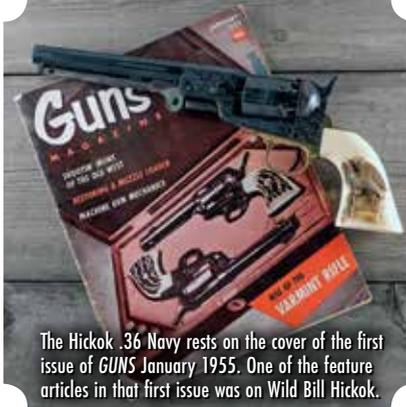
Colt Belt Pistol Evolution — the Paterson, square back trigger guard 1851 Navy, round trigger guard 1851 Navy, streamlined 1861 Navy.



that watch, which is exactly what Tutt did, stepping out on Main Street the next day and taunting Hickok. This was a real gunfight, not the Hollywood style. They did not meet on Main Street at 12 paces, with both going for their sixguns. They did not wear metal-lined low-slung holsters such as those used by Matt Dillon and Paladin, which allowed amazing speed but only in the movies. The story is that Tutt started firing from 75 yards away, and Hickok calmly raised his pistol and shot Tutt through the heart.

The prevailing wisdom is that Hickok used one of his .36 Navy Colts. However, the article in that January 1955 issue of *GUNS* gives a different story. The author claims Tutt was carrying a brand-new .36 Navy while Hickok used a .44 Dragoon. There may be other references to this, but this is the only one I have ever encountered.

Consider this. Hickok was a town-dweller to the point it was said he never owned a horse. He spent his time sitting at the poker tables or walking around town, which tells me he would much rather have a .36 Navy than the 4-lb. .44 Dragoon. We do know Hickok and the .36 Navy Colts are matched together by history. Was James Butler Hickok, who early on took the name



The Hickok .36 Navy rests on the cover of the first issue of *GUNS* January 1955. One of the feature articles in that first issue was on Wild Bill Hickok.

of Bill and then Wild Bill, the nice guy portrayed by Guy Madison or a bloodthirsty killer? The truth is probably somewhere in between.

Modern Day Navy's

Thanks to Italian manufacturers, all of the original Colt Percussion Pistols are now available in replica form. I have examples of the .36 Navy from both Pietta and Uberti. My "Hickok" .36 Navy Colts are a pair of engraved Pietta blued finish with brass grip frames. The grip frames have been fitted with Buffalo Brothers' version of the antique ivory carved Hickok Eagle.

Today's modern replicas are a far cry from those that first started appearing in the 1950s. Whichever the manufacturer, Pietta or Uberti, one can expect a quality piece with excellent fit and finish. Just like any production sixguns this side of Freedom Arms, they are not perfect. Perfection requires a much more significant expenditure of funds than these replicas.

Typical groups fired with the .36 Navy Colt.



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Pietta offers these engraved .36 Navy Colts; Hickok grips are by Buffalo Brothers.

A few minor things need to be done to any Italian replica, all of which I can handle myself.

Replica Tweaks

I routinely replace the factory cones/nipples with stainless steel Slix-Shot nipples from Slix-Springs. These high-quality nipples are shaped to accept Remington #10 or Speer #11 caps, and they also are vented on the side, which helps prevent hammer blowback — a significant cause of cap jams.

Any replica I acquire is completely disassembled, all parts are totally cleaned of factory oil, and I then use hones, stones and small files to remove any burrs that may have been left behind. Production has come to the point where burrs are not all that prevalent. I especially check out the slot in the frame, which accepts the hand to ensure smoothness. I also hone the sides of the hammer, hand, bolt and trigger to ensure smoothness.

I do two things to the hammer. The tiny slot on the top of the hammer, which serves as a rear sight, is opened with a cut-off wheel on a Dremel to give a better sight picture. Then I smooth off the face of the hammer where it hits the cap and remove any sharp edges in the slot on the hammer face, which fits over the safety pin on the back of the cylinder. This also serves to prevent cap jams as it reduces the tendency of the hammer to grab a fired cap. Once all of this has been accomplished, I lubricate moving parts with a quality gun grease, not oil, and coat the arbor, which accepts the cylinder also with grease. This helps to keep the revolver functioning and resists the fouling afforded by black powder or black powder substitutes.

My Navy Loads

Most of my loads for the .36 Navy are assembled with the 0.375" swaged round ball, whether from Hornady or Speer, which weigh approximately 90 grains. I measure all loads using a black powder volume measure. The measured amount of powder desired is placed in the cylinder chamber, a felt wad is placed over the powder, and then the round ball is seated using the loading lever on the Navy. To help keep things clean, I fill out the cylinder in front of the ball with a lube such as 50:50 beeswax and mutton tallow. This is especially important to minimize fouling with top loads, as there is no room for a wad between powder and bullet.

Typical results using FFFg black powder with a felt wad between powder and ball are 15 grains for 725 fps, 20 grains for 855 fps, and 25 grains tops out just over 900 fps. Switching

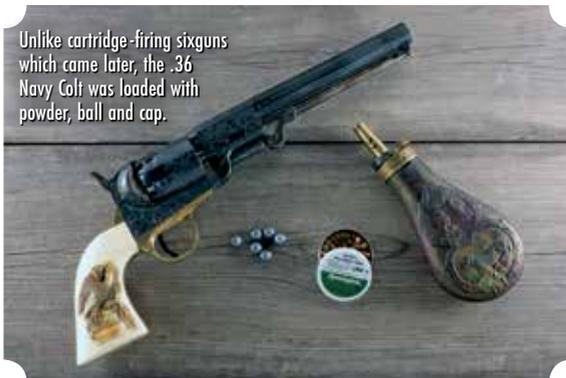
to Hodgdon's black powder substitute, Pyrodex, results in just over 800 fps with 20 grains, while 25 grains gets us very close to 1,000 fps. By today's standards, these would not be considered very powerful loads; however, they seemed to work very well in the 19th century.

Maintenance And Carry

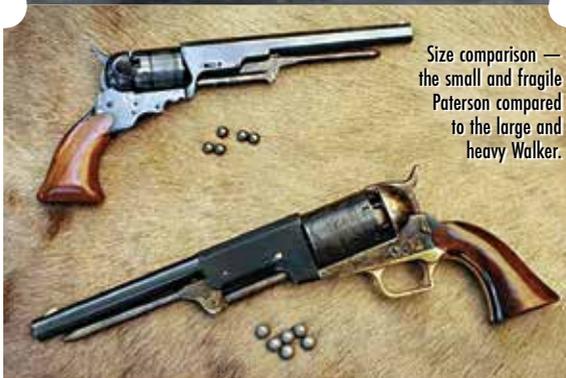
One of the drawbacks of shooting percussion pistols is that they must be thoroughly cleaned after shooting. It is said Hickok emptied both of his sixguns by firing them every morning and then putting in fresh loads. He would also have had to clean the cylinder and barrel daily to keep them from rusting or pitting.

Apparently, Hickok never even bothered with holsters, preferring to carry his pair of ivory-gripped Colts butt to the front first in a belt and then later in a sash around his waist. In all probability, he did not use the sixguns in cross-draw fashion, but rather with a twist or cavalry draw, grabbing the butt of the sixgun with a hand on the same side. Historically correct holsters, which are still a grand choice today, are known as the Slim Jim design. These typically carried the sixgun butt to the front, high on the belt, and out-of-the-way. They are both secure and easily assessable. Unlike the modern Hollywood Fast Draw Holster with metal lining in the shank and body and mounted on a heavy belt, the Slim Jim can be carried in comfort all day.

Even after the advent of the cartridge-firing S&W .44 and the Colt Single Action Army .45, Hickok stayed with his old cap-and-ball sixguns. He was still using his .36-caliber Colts when he was shot in the back of the head by Jack McCall. Hickok was playing poker at the time and died with two pairs in his hands. There is not a lot of agreement on what his fifth card was. I have seen Museum displays with black aces and eights and both the Jack of diamonds and the Queen of hearts as the fifth card. The cards have come to be known as the Dead Man's Hand. 



Unlike cartridge-firing sixguns which came later, the .36 Navy Colt was loaded with powder, ball and cap.



Size comparison — the small and fragile Paterson compared to the large and heavy Walker.

DEATH OF A MONSTER

SITUATION: An attempted assassination turns into a giant cluster of confusion and malfunctioning weapons.

LESSON: Guns that don't work can't stop the people trying to kill you. Always have a backup plan in case the first plan fails. When the fight is over, some will get your story wrong.

Gunfights are hard to reconstruct.

Every witness has only their point of view from their particular angle. Tunnel vision and auditory exclusion — inattentional blindness and inattentional deafness — occur with witnesses and participants alike. Those who investigate may never get the stories of some participants because those people are dead. Some who talk or write about it later may selectively amplify “this thing” and deliberately overlook “that element.”

A classic example is the shootout between the Earp and McLaury factions in Tombstone, Ariz., near the O.K. Corral in 1881. To this day, historians debate exactly who shot who, whether Doc Holliday's shotgun was 10 gauge or 12, and whether Wyatt Earp wielded a Colt or an S&W — and if the former whether it had a 7.5" barrel or longer. The great 20th Century gunfighter and gun writer Charles Askins, Jr. maintained Wyatt Earp put bullets into all three of the men who died, while the late Old West historian Michael Hickey was convinced until the end of his life the only blood Wyatt Earp spilled that day came from Tom McLaury's horse.

We offer you another famous shooting incident in which historians wildly disagree as to some of the guns used, who fired and who didn't, and even dispute precisely what killed the only fatality in an exchange of gunfire that would ripple out into many more deaths in the events following the incident.

It was a gunfight that Mack Sennett, the creator of the “Keystone Kops” in the old silent films, might have choreographed. It appears three of the four firearms deployed in the incident failed to fire at some point, and the one thrown explosive didn't land in the intended spot.

We now explore the death of one of the most wicked participants in the Second World War. Reinhard Heydrich was chief of Reich security at the time of his demise and also the acting governor of Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia and Moravia. Except for Adolf Hitler, few men were hated more during World War II than Heydrich. He was among the highest-ranking Nazis and a co-architect of the Holocaust, reporting only to Heinrich Himmler and Hitler himself. Many called him “The Hangman” for all his genocidal murders. In Czechoslovakia, he was called “The Butcher of Prague” for his atrocities in that country. Hitler treated him like a favored son and said Heydrich was “The Man with the Iron Heart.” And one historian said of him, “He is a man of outstanding significance, a criminal mind of Luciferic grandeur.”

In the old days of the American West, it would be said of such a man, “That sumbitch needed killin'.” And that was precisely his fate. While the word “assassination” generally connotes a cowardly murder, in this case, it was deemed a necessary extermination of one of the world's vilest human beings.

The Assassination: An Overview

Let me quote from my review of Giles Milton's excellent book *Churchill's Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare*, which appeared in my blog “Ayoob on Firearms” at BackwoodsHome.com.

“The year was 1942. The designated hit men, Jan Kubis and Josef Gabcik, had been trained by the British group Milton writes about, the Special Operations Executive. Milton relates,

Continued on next page

AYOOB FILES

'Gabcik and Kubis were to be disguised as street cleaners and were to begin sweeping the road at a selected corner. Their explosives and arms were to be concealed in their dustman's barrow.' If (their) grenade failed to kill Heydrich, they were to shoot him 'at close quarters (with small arms).'

"When Heydrich's chauffeured vehicle passed them at close range, Gabcik whipped up the Sten and pulled the trigger, but nothing happened: The sub-machine gun had 'jammed.' An enraged Heydrich drew his pistol and ordered his driver to halt just as Kubis lobbed a grenade. Specially built by Churchill's pet scientists for maximum power, the grenade hit by a rear tire but still exploded with enough power to mortally wound Nazi Germany's chief mass murderer."

Milton narrates what happened next. "Kubis had been hit by the flying shrapnel, and blood was streaming into his eyes. Through a veil of blood, he saw (Heydrich's chauffeur Johannes) Klein jump from the car and run towards him, pistol drawn. Gabcik had managed to avoid the shrapnel, but he was horrified to see Heydrich drag himself from the vehicle and level his gun. He was lurching

forward, shouting wildly as he prepared to fire. Gabcik ditched his jammed Sten and drew his Colt, taking potshots at Heydrich from behind a telegraph pole.

"Kubis wiped the blood from his eyes, dodged Klein's bullets and jumped onto his bicycle. Klein took aim once again and tried to bring down the fleeing Kubis with a hail of bullets. But his gun also jammed, enabling Kubis to get away ...

"The situation was more desperate for Gabcik. He was caught in a shootout with Heydrich and risked being either shot or captured. But as he was ducking the bullets — suddenly — the unexpected happened. Heydrich staggered to the side of the road and collapsed in agony.

"Both of the Czech patriots escaped the scene. Heydrich died a few days later from sepsis due to shrapnel wounds from the powerful grenade created by Cecil Clarke, one of the scientists in Churchill's elite unit. While the Nazis inflicted severe reprisals on the Czech citizenry, many historians believe that overall, Heydrich's death saved more innocent lives than it cost."

That was the general story. Now, let's get into some details.

The Weapons

There is broad disagreement about the three handguns drawn during this incident but none about the one

long gun that was deployed. Gabcik was unquestionably armed with a 9mm British submachine gun. It was compact enough to be easily folded or disassembled to hide from view until brought into action. The Sten gun, as it's usually spelled, should probably be spelled in all caps as STEN because it's neither a nickname nor a contraction but an acronym. The name pays homage to both the designers and the manufacturer. *Handgunner's* own Dr. Will Dabbs explains, "The word Sten was a portmanteau combining the last names of the gun's designers, Major Reginald Shepherd and Harold Turpin, along with EN for the Enfield factory where it was designed. In its simplest form, the Sten gun had a mere 59 parts and cost \$10 to build (\$160 today, or about one-seventh the cost of a wartime Thompson)."

Regarding the three handguns, though, historians can agree on only two things. One is that the Germans were using German-made pistols, and the Czech freedom fighters, American-made semi-automatic pistols, only one of which was fired during that particular incident. The other is that the pistol fired by the one Czech, Gabcik, was a Colt.

Johannes Klein, Heydrich's chauffeur and sole bodyguard, was the first to fire shots. Different documentaries and history articles have him shooting a Walther PPK, a Walther P-38, or a Luger.

Heydrich himself was seen to draw a pistol, stand up in his open-top Mercedes and take aim, and then pursue Gabcik for a short distance on foot before doubling over in apparent great pain. While some accounts have him shooting at Gabcik and missing, others have Heydrich not firing a shot. We'll return to that matter shortly.

What pistol did Heydrich draw? Accounts by historians and documentarians again vary wildly. Some say a Walther PP or PPK; some say a Walther P-38, but most, including Wikipedia, insist it was a Luger.

The Nazis investigated this incident thoroughly and produced a detailed report. With typical Teutonic precision, one would presume it would have detailed these things down to the serial numbers. Unfortunately, I have been unable to find it. If any of our readers can lead us to a copy, please advise me via *Handgunner's* editor.

Almost every source indicates the Czechs had been issued Colt Pocket Model autos, usually described as the 1903 model, which would have been .32 ACP as opposed to the .380 ACP Model of 1908. These guns were definitely out there in the European Theater, issued to some OSS operatives and among the handguns general officers of the U.S. Army were authorized to be issued. General George Patton, Jr. had

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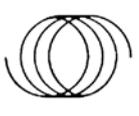
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a 1908 .380 which he rarely carried. The Allies' Supreme Commander, General Dwight Eisenhower, chose another option, the .38 Colt Detective Special, which he wore concealed as an early adopter of appendix inside-the-waist-band carry.

However, in his authoritative book on the SOE's operations such as this one, Giles Milton wrote, "If (their) grenade failed to kill Heydrich, they were to shoot him 'at close quarters with their Colt .38 Super.'"

The assassination plan — the third, after two other plans had proven logistically impossible — was for the Czechs to ambush Heydrich in his open-top Mercedes convertible at a hairpin turn on what intelligence had established would be his route of the day, where his driver would have to slow to a crawl. If the plan was to shoot through an automobile, that was exactly what the Colt .38 Super was designed for! Introduced in 1929, its purpose was to shoot through auto bodies to defeat the "motor bandits" dominating crime stories in American newspaper headlines. Its pointy-nose copper jacketed 130-grain bullet at over 1,200 feet per second, with nine rounds in the magazine and a tenth in the firing chamber, would have been the right tool for the job. The Special Operations Executive group, which oversaw the assassination plan, had access to the advice of their elite commando trainers, William Fairbairn and Eric Sykes. Fairbairn had armed his Shanghai police earlier with the same platform, the Colt Government Model 1911, albeit in .45 caliber, and proven its worth in combat. For this assignment, the .38 Super version would have been perfectly logical.

The "Jam-O-Matic" Factor

Even the bomb-thrower screwed up a little bit: The grenade he aimed at the open cockpit of the Mercedes, had it landed where it intended, was powerful enough it could have instantly killed both Heydrich and his driver. Instead, it landed to the side, inflicting a long-term mortal wound. Because it was an anti-tank grenade, significantly larger and heavier than the fragmentation grenade an infantryman like Kubis would have been familiar with, it has been suggested the fault may have rested with the trainers for not giving Kubis enough practice time lobbing the heavy explosive.

Why did the STEN gun jam and never fire a single shot? Those who've seen the German government's report say the Nazis attributed it to "panic" on the part of the Czech soldier, but that would be in keeping with Nazi propaganda theory that all but the Germans were incompetent fools. Most who have impartially studied this incident believe that, because to keep it from the eyes of occupying



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Nazi authorities, the STEN gun had been secreted in a container of rabbit food, some organic matter had gotten into the mechanism causing the malfunction.

By all accounts, when bodyguard/chauffeur Johannes Klein ran after the Czechs, shooting as he went, his pistol jammed. According to a majority of accounts, the magazine fell out. This would be consistent with clumsily, accidentally hitting the side-button magazine release on a PPK or a Luger. It would also be consistent with the butt-heel magazine release of a P-38 carried in a straight-draw hip holster being inadvertently activated by rubbing against the back of the driver's seat, partially dropping the mag. Either would explain witness stories of Klein firing one shot before the pistol stopped working, which would require a tap-rack or a reload to get it back up and running.

Of all the guns deployed there that day, only Gabčík's worked. His Colt ran flawlessly when he fired warning shots into the air to scatter pedestrians in the way of his flight on foot, and for the shots he fired that put Klein down and allowed Gabčík to finally escape on a passing tram. (Some accounts have him hitting Klein's knee, some say the shin, and some say both.)

Which, as far as the guns, leaves us with Heydrich himself. What could account for the many witnesses' observation that Heydrich pointed his gun at his assassin but didn't fire a shot and the certainty that he didn't shoot anyone at all? Some thought Heydrich did fire but bear in mind the three men with pistols were well apart from one another, and all were moving. Witnesses seeing them and hearing gunfire might well have been unable to see who was firing when and assumed that all were shooting.

The answer may be in the book *The Hangman and His Wife: The Life and Death of Reinhard Heydrich* by Nancy Dougherty. Biographer Dougherty intensively interviewed Frau Lina Heydrich. The Butcher's widow was an apologist for the Nazis and a Holocaust denier, but she was also high in the Third Reich pantheon and had access to the inside stories from the official investigations of her husband's assassination. With all that insider information, the late Nancy Dougherty ended her chapter on the assassination with this: "Afterward, the Gestapo discovered that the chief of Reich security had not bothered to load his gun."

Who Or What Killed?

Here, theorists have created something murky. Regarding the proximate

cause of Heydrich's death, heroic Czech patriot Jan Kubis killed him with a thrown anti-tank grenade.

Some historians say medical malpractice killed Heydrich, whose cause of death was variously attributed to infection, sepsis and blood poisoning. That's sort of "po-TAY-to, po-TAH-to." However, Hitler sent his personal physician to treat Heydrich, and historians debate whether or not that doctor administered the proper antibiotics or waited too long to do so.

And some say poison killed Reinhard Heydrich. Theories have been put forth that botulism or other toxins had been implanted in the anti-tank grenade by British technicians. That has never been proven.

One can argue Heydrich's own hubris killed him. Anyone with a functioning brain should realize that when you are the most hated person in the area you govern, you are a target for assassination. Other Germans — reportedly including Albert Speer, the industrialist "armoror of the Third Reich" — had warned him he should be in a bulletproof limousine and accompanied by vehicles full of guards, but Heydrich had blown them off because he thought the Czech peasants were *undermenschen*, cowardly lesser humans who would

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not dare challenge him. Part of the foreign matter causing the infection, which fatally complicated his wounds, was horsehair from the luxurious upholstery he had expressly ordered for greater comfort in his Mercedes, in which he liked to ride with the top down in the pleasant European spring. When Kubcik became visible to him with the jammed STEN, Heydrich could have seen no other opponents. All historians agree he expressly ordered his driver Klein to stop and engage when he could have let him follow his presumable orders and accelerate out of the kill zone to escape the ambush unharmed.

Aftermath

The Nazis hunted down those who killed their prominent monster, finally catching up to them at a cathedral in Prague where they had taken refuge. In a siege that lasted some six hours, the Czechs managed to kill 14 Nazis and wound another 21. Gabcik, a combat veteran, is presumed to have shared in that enemy death toll before the situation became hopeless. Gabcik then shot himself, presumably with the Colt, and Kubis died shortly thereafter from wounds inflicted by a German hand grenade during the siege. The Nazi revenge

was of legendary proportion: The Holocaust Museum would later report, “An outraged Adolf Hitler demanded the murder of up to 10,000 Czechs as revenge for the attack.” The entire Czech village of Lidice was destroyed, one of the great atrocities of that war, with at least 340 innocent men, women and children murdered by the Nazis there alone.

Lessons

Learn from your enemies as well as your friends.

If you think you might be in a gunfight, make sure you have operable weapons!

If you are the target instead of the shooter, often getting out of the line of fire will save your life more effectively than returning fire. The objective is to survive, not to kill your opponent; neutralizing the opponent is simply one option for achieving the objective of survival.

Never underestimate your opponent. The arrogant Heydrich thought he faced only one incompetent fool with an unshootable gun. In fact, he was up against multiple powerfully motivated combat veterans highly trained by enemy forces. There was backup he couldn't see.

Consider potential “corollary casualties.” The plainclothes Czech commando team that took out Heydrich

knew they were on something close to a suicide mission, and it pretty much turned out that way. Churchill and the other Allied leaders who approved the mission had to have anticipated the savage revenge the Nazis would take upon the innocent in places like Lidice. Their assessment of the English common law principle of the doctrine of competing harms — one must take the lesser evil over the greater evil — had convinced them killing Heydrich was worth the innocent deaths that would follow for the greater good.

I strongly suspect the price exacted at Lidice and beyond haunted the great Sir Winston Churchill and his peers to their dying days. 

Partial Bibliography: Will Dabbs, MD. *TheArmoryLife.com/garbage-gun-of-the-British-empire/*; Nancy Dougherty. *The Hangman and His Wife: The Life and Death of Reinhard Heydrich*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2012; *Encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/lidice*; Giles Milton. *Churchill's Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare*; *HolocaustResearchProject.org/nazioccupation/heydrichkilling.html*; *Defense media network: DefenseMediaNetwork.com/stories/the-assassination-of-hitlers-hangman-reinhard-heydrich/*; Charles River Editors. *The Assassination of Reinhard Heydrich*.

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THE TIMELESS ALLURE OF

THE ARMY SURPLUS STORE



The storefront should look familiar to any self-respecting gun nerd above a certain age.

Recently, while driving from Mississippi to Dallas, Texas, I passed a real-live dinosaur on the side of the road. Right outside Texarkana, on the right heading south, there rests a derelict F-111 fighter/bomber. It's tough to miss. It took a little maneuvering to find the right off-ramp, but I soon found myself standing before Turner's Army Surplus. This deep into the Information Age, I thought Army Surplus stores had gone extinct. As I pushed into the dimly lit place, I was transported to a better time.

An Endangered Species

I grew up in a small town in Mississippi. Our commercial and social opportunities were limited, but I neither knew any better nor cared. I had a family that loved me and a rudimentary starter gun collection. Life was good.

One of the high points of visiting my grandparents down in Hattiesburg was Sack's Army Store. Sack's was located downtown and was a fairly high-brow establishment. In addition to the obligatory GI-surplus uniforms and field gear, they also carried commercial camping kit and survival supplies. Even now, some four decades later, I still have stuff that I bought there.

The archetypal Army Surplus Store, however, was something else entirely. There was a great one in Brandon, Miss. You know the sort I'm talking about. It occupied an unadorned metal building, the exterior of which had been crudely camouflaged with green and brown house paint. The few windows were heavily barred and old surplus Air Force practice bombs set into the ground defined the limits of the parking area. Just thinking about that place conjures a smile.

The interior smelled like a toxic combination of mildew, bug juice, cigarette smoke and feet. Rack after rack of old camouflage fatigues filled the main showroom, such as it was. Crammed haphazardly around the periphery were old combat boots (they never once seemed to have my size), stacks of vintage helmets, musty old sleeping bags and piles of filthy camo nets. Somewhere in the place was always one of those oversized cutaway military training rifles, most commonly a Garand, Carbine, or BAR.

The place in Brandon was run by a chain-smoking Vietnam vet who only rarely acknowledged my presence. He occupied his time burning coffin nails while glued to a 12" portable TV. I swear,

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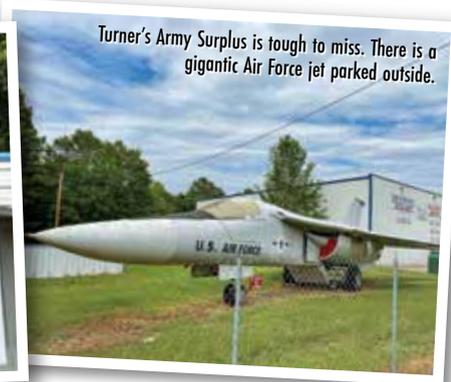
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I-30 Exit 213 Ph. (903) 832-6985



Turner's Army Surplus is tough to miss. There is a gigantic Air Force jet parked outside.

one time I went in there, the guy was watching an aerobic exercise program.

This store actually had a few guns. There were always a handful of vintage GI bolt action rifles along with an SKS or three. As this was the Deep South and formerly a war zone, there was typically a smattering of Civil War pieces as well. I recall drooling over a beat-up old Colt Navy that was way outside my price range.

I loved those old places. In my mind, every helmet dent was a ricocheted round, and the old guy would indeed tell you war stories if you sat down long enough to listen. Alas, I thought they were all gone by now. The proprietors fell prey to emphysema and heart disease, while the stores succumbed to the Internet and eBay.

Turner's Army Surplus

That is what made my serendipitous find alongside the highway in Texarkana such a treat. Turner's Army Surplus was like a time capsule. Dropping by brought back all those epic memories from my childhood.

For starters, part of the sign is misspelled, and I love that. What should say "Tactical" is actually spelled "Tactical." A piece of 8.5"x11" paper taped inside the front door says simply, "Smile, Jesus Loves You," and is undeniably sincere. Another notice posted on the surrounding chain-link fence seems comparably genuine and states, "Are You Going to Listen to Me in English, or Do I Have to Speak to You in 12-Gauge?" This placard includes a graphic depiction of a pump-action 12-bore for emphasis.

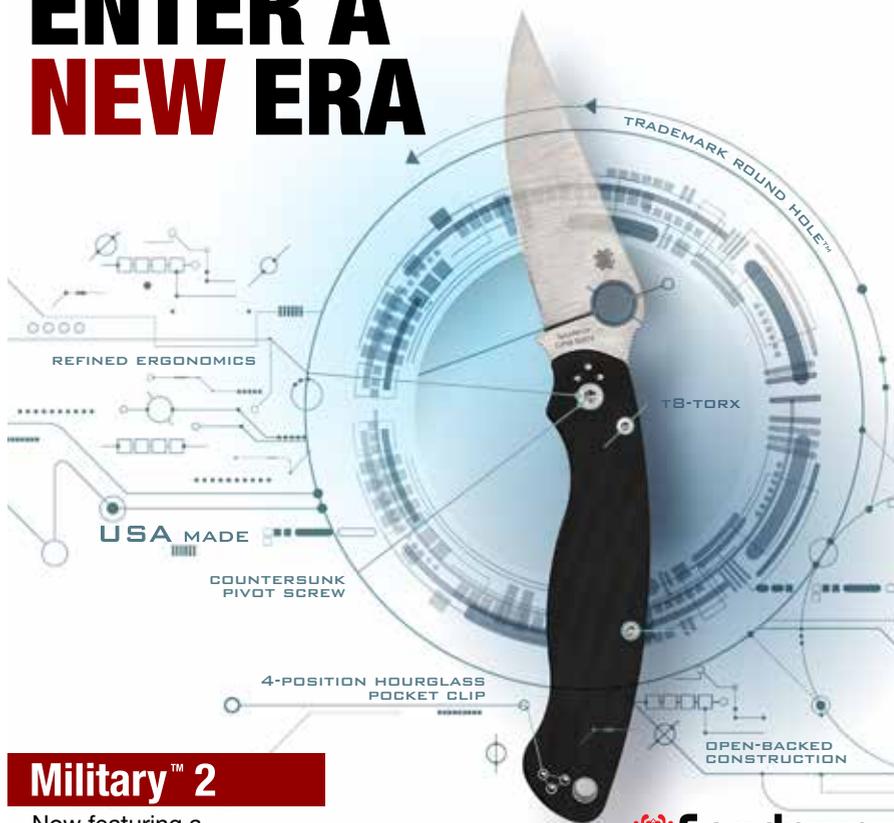
Turner's sports that same intoxicating Army surplus smell along with a fantastic array of tantalizing cool-guy stuff. In addition to the massive strike fighter parked outside, the nearby barn/shed contains a couple of beautifully restored vintage jeeps. Practice bombs and empty artillery shells litter the grounds.

In addition to the surplus gear for sale, Turner's also includes a walk-through museum. This bit is adorned with interesting memorabilia obviously collected over decades. You can take it in over perhaps half an hour and will be glad you did. The staff is predictably friendly, as are most gun folk.

Lots of people trek up or down I-30 en route to someplace or other. If ever you need to stretch your legs around Texarkana, then Turner's Army Surplus and Museum is definitely worth the stop. It's at Exit 213. You can't miss it. Just look for the massive swing-wing attack plane parked outside.  It's a genuine dinosaur.

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DAVE ANDERSON

SAGE ADVICE

It was a glorious spring day at the Lewis & Clark Rifle & Pistol Club, and the Senior Member was in his usual spot. The rifle range was far enough away the shots were only a pleasant accompaniment to his two favorite activities, reading a book and drinking coffee. He glanced up to see young Rodney Patmore headed his way, carrying the coffee pot accompanied by an attractive young woman. Patmore had many traits the old man admired, most notably respect for his elders.

“Let me top off your coffee,” said Rodney. “I’d like you to meet my partner, Patricia Kelly. Call her Pat.” The old man got to his feet and made a courtly bow. “A great honor to meet you. Please, both of you, be seated.” The Sage had not adapted to the times. In his vocabulary, a partner meant a business partner.

The young woman seemed non-plussed, as indeed she was. No one had ever bowed to her before. “Pleased to meet you too,” she said. “Rod speaks highly of you. He says you’ve given him good advice. We were hoping you might have some advice for me.”

“Of course, Miss Kelly, whatever I can do to help.”

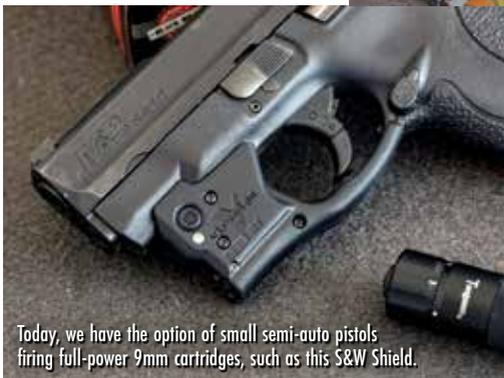
“Just a bit of background, Old One,” Rod interjected. “Pat’s taken a firearm safety course, concealed weapon course and has her carry permit. She read my copy of Massad Ayoob’s book *In the Gravest Extreme*. I’ve suggested a .380 semiauto as her defense weapon and thought to ask what model you recommend.”

“Thank you, young Patmore, though I am sure she is perfectly capable of speaking for herself. Tell me, Miss Kelly, what would be your purpose in carrying a defensive firearm?” She looked astonished again, apparently at being addressed as “Miss Kelly.”

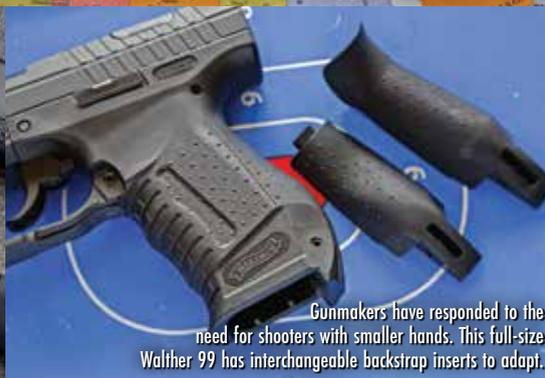
Small semi-auto pistols such as these for cartridges in .22LR, .32 ACP and .380 ACP were often suggested for women.



The problem is the people who endanger women are not smaller.



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“What? Well ... to defend against imminent and unavoidable danger of death or grave bodily harm from an attack by stopping the attacker.”

“Very good. What sort of attackers do you anticipate?”

“I guess muggers, street robbers, rapists, home invaders, terrorists, violent nutters....”

“As I recall, Rodney, those are the same concerns you mentioned a couple of years ago, except for the rapists. The PDW you chose was a GLOCK 19, which I assume is what I detect under your jacket since you insist on wearing a bulky belt holster instead of an inside waistband holster.”

“My holster conceals well enough, and IWB is too slow ... what the ... ?” The Sage had made a movement smooth as oil on water and was holding a pistol; muzzle pointed straight up. Rodney spoke more respectfully, “Is that your old favorite Nighthawk Commander .45? You’re pretty fast for an old man.”

“I’m pretty fast, period.”

“That’s what I meant.”

“Yes, this is the Nighthawk. My point is you and I carry 9mm Luger and .45 ACP pistols. Why would you suggest a .380 for Miss Kelly? Are those who might attack her smaller, feebler, more susceptible, more easily stopped?”

“Of course not,” Rodney said a bit indignantly. “I just think it is important to shoot accurately with a gun you can control. Most women don’t have the strength to handle recoil; what do you say to that?”

“Lisa Munson, Kay Clark Miculek, Lena Miculek, Julie Golob, Jessie Harrison, Randi Rogers, Tori Nonaka, Maggie Reese ...”

“Okay, I get your point. I’ll concede women can shoot a full-power pistol. But they still need a small gun they can carry comfortably.”

Pat Kelly spoke up. “You know what Clint Smith says, the purpose of a pistol is to be comforting, not comfortable.”

The Sage’s eyes widened almost imperceptibly, which for him was the equivalent of leaping to his feet and applauding. In a span of two minutes, this young woman had accurately and cogently quoted both Ayoob and Smith. “Well spoken, Miss Kelly. And there are plenty of compact Nines, even .45s. We should talk about holster options.”

“With deepest respect, Wise One, I think I’ll do some online research. Only another woman understands the many issues women face with daily firearm carry. I’d still want your invaluable guidance in so many other aspects of shooting. Such as, how did you get the Nighthawk out so quickly and effortlessly?”

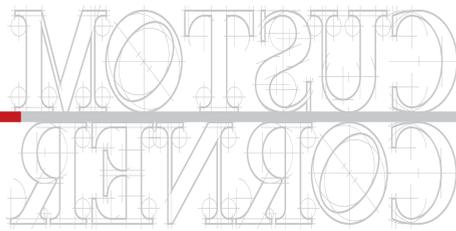
“By doing it many times over till it is done perfectly — for it is worth doing.”

“Ah, Kim!” she said. “One of my favorite books. Of what use is a gun unfed?”

At this, the Sage’s eyes opened wide. For a moment, he was speechless. Then he turned to Patmore. “Young Rodney, if you don’t lock this down, you’re a darn fool.”



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from CZ-USA is designed for competition in the IPSC. The 5.2" bull barrel delivers increased accuracy, better control and a significantly longer service life. Extra serrations on the top front edge of the slide ensure more comfortable cocking. It also boasts higher-positioned ambidextrous safeties, a reduced height magazine release button and modified recoil spring guide for simplified disassembly. OAL is 8.86"; weight is 50.3 oz. MSRP: \$2,199. For more info: (800) 955-4486, CZ-USA.com



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The new *Leather Hybrid Holsters* from Mission First Tactical are both functional and comfortable. These Kydex-style holsters are fused with genuine American full-grain leather and are ideal for everyday carry. With these holsters, you get exact tolerances, secure retention and easy re-holstering. Features include an adjustable cant of 0–15 degrees, a 1.5" belt clip and ambidextrous hole patterns for right- or left-handed carry. MSRP: From \$69.99. For more info: (267) 704-0001, MissionFirstTactical.com



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Diamondback Firearms

The Diamondback *Sidekick Birdshead Revolver* features a frame and handle made from zinc with a Cerakote finish. The compact revolver has an OAL of 7.83" and weighs 24.5 oz. The 3" barrel has a 1:16" right-hand twist. With a capacity of nine rounds, the revolver is ideal for personal protection or target shooting. MSRP: \$327. For more info: (321) 305-5995, DiamondbackFirearms.com

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In *DILLON: A Memoir*, you'll discover how Mike Dillon transitions from a career in aviation to the firearms industry.



After capturing the retail marketplace with his quality reloading machines, Mike then redesigns a weapon for the military. Thanks to his ingenuity, the electric Gatling Gun becomes one of the most fearsome machine guns in the history of warfare. The book, written by Michael John Dillon with Carol McCoy Dillon, is subtitled *A Life of Warbirds, Reloaders & Machine Guns*. MSRP: \$35. For more info: (800) 223-4570, DillonPrecision.com



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The Versacarry *Rebel 2.0 IWB Holster* comes with an attached mag pouch. It features a closed cell foam padded comfort backing. The backing covers the entire backside of the holster keeping all sharp points off the user. The Rebel 2.0 has a custom-molded polymer front for a secure fit for the firearm and magazine pouch. The Rebel 2.0 is available to fit a wide range of popular firearms. MSRP: \$59.99. For more info: (979) 778-2000, Versacarry.com



LAUNCH 15

Kershaw Knives

The *Launch 15* from Kershaw Knives is a full-size auto that snaps open at the push of a button. Its 3.5" bayonet-style spear point blade is made of CPM MagnaCut powdered steel with a BlackWash finish. There's a canvas micarta inlay on both sides of the aluminum handle and spine. A low-profile push button makes it harder for the blade to accidentally deploy. MSRP: \$191.99. For more info: (503) 682-1966, Kershaw.KaiUSA.com



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RUGER SECURITY-380

Sturm, Ruger & Co.

Ruger introduces the latest addition to its Lite Rack family of pistols — the *Ruger Security-380*. Chambered in .380 Auto and designed for new shooters and those who struggle with racking traditional slides, it features a blued through-hardened alloy steel slide and barrel. The slide has a vertical ledge on the steel rear sight and a fiber-optic front sight.

MSRP: \$369. For more info: (336) 949-5200, Ruger.com



80X CHEETAH

Beretta USA

Beretta's *80X Cheetah* boasts a sleek design and enhanced features. It includes a smaller Vertec-style grip profile, the X-treme S Double/Single trigger and skeletonized hammer. The optics-ready pistol has a 14-round capacity. With an easier-to-rack slide, lightened recoil from tuning of the slide weight, spring rates and chambering in .380, the *80X Cheetah* is designed with an enhanced fit and style for elevated speed and control.

MSRP: \$799. For more info: (800) 237-3882, Beretta.com



DEFINITIVE CRKT

The *Definitive* is one of the first CRKT knives to incorporate a Crossbar Lock. Fast, smooth and fully ambidextrous, the Crossbar is easy to operate and very fidget friendly. The 3.7" drop-point blade uses 154CM steel, providing exceptional strength and edge retention, while its black G10 handle offers a solid all-weather grip. A prominent thumb stud allows for quick deployment with one hand. MSRP: \$215. For more info: (800) 891-3100, CRKT.com

M&P 5.7

Smith & Wesson



S&W adds to its M&P family with the full-size *M&P 5.7* with a 22-round capacity. Designed within the M&P 5.7 is the company's new gas-operated, locked-breech, rotating Tempo Barrel System. The 5" barrel allows for a quicker extraction once the bullet passes the gas port, creating a more secured fireform effect. The *M&P 5.7* is slide cut for optics, has a Picatinny-style rail and includes a threaded muzzle with thread protector. The *M&P 5.7* ships with two magazines. MSRP: \$699. For more info: (800) 331-0852, Smith-Wesson.com

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FALCO Holsters added four *G200 Series Concealed Carry Handgun Bags* to its lineup. Constructed from durable, water-resistant ballistic nylon, each bag features an integrated internal gun holster in the primary storage compartment large enough to contain firearms with tactical lights or lasers.

The *G200 Series* includes the Large Tactical Bag (in picture). Other items in the series are a CrossBody Bag, Shoulder Bag and Thigh Carry Bag. MSRP: \$109.95. For more info: (421) 903 430 057, FalcoHolsters.com



CR920P

Shadow Systems



Shadow Systems has released the *CR920P*, a 9mm subcompact pistol with an integrated compensator. The built-in compensator does not make use of a threaded barrel, making it compliant

in jurisdictions with threaded-barrel bans. It uses a proprietary 3-lug muzzle in combination with a centrally located locking lever in the body of the comp to allow self-indexing and self-locking within a confined space to create a compensated subcompact with a 13+1 capacity. MSRP: About \$1,100. For more info: (469) 458-6808, ShadowSystemsCorp.com

ACRO MOUNT TangoDown Inc.

TangoDown introduces the TangoDown *ACRO Mount* for the Smith & Wesson *M&P9 M2.0 (AASW-01)*. The *AASW-01* is the ideal choice for installing the *ACRO* on your *M&P9 M2.0's* slide. It is made of ordnance-grade steel with a QPQ rust-resistant finish. Torx mounting fasteners are supplied, with a Vibra-Tite VC-3 thread locking compound packet provided for installation security. MSRP: \$70. For more info: sales@TangoDown.com, TangoDown.com

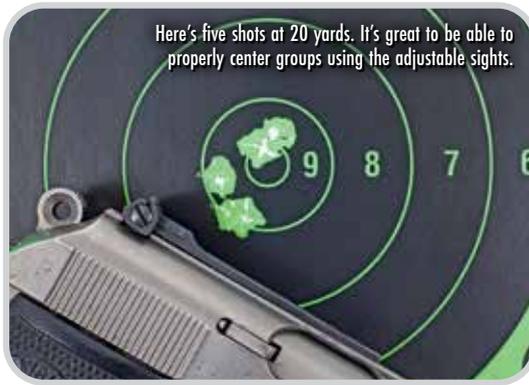


thumping heart, I donned my ear protection, glasses and loaded the magazine.

It worked. A few trips back and forth to the mill to get the front sight height correct, then a bit more work shaping it “just so,” and my dream of an adjustable sight on my trusty Walther .22 was a reality. Double ha!

I stumbled onto a couple of challenges. There’s not much thickness to the slide, so the rear sight “strap” holding it on needed two screws to keep things in place. Also, much to my surprise, the steel S&W uses on that strap spun two twist drills before I ended up using a carbide end mill to make the holes. I also draw-filed the serrations from the sight plane on the slide top to get the rear to sit right. I also measured about 50 times (100?) before I took that front dovetail cut, and even then, my stomach was in a knot hoping the dovetail cutter didn’t break through the slide top. Whew!

So, the moral of the story is if you have a bit of skill, the right tools and



think outside the box at times, dreams can actually come true. I checked with Dusty, my young friend here who builds custom 1911s and such, and he said he’d be willing to chat if someone wanted this work done. The hitch is you’d need to locate an adjustable rear sight for an S&W J-Frame first, as they’re not that common. I’m not sure what this work would cost, but keep in mind it may not be cheap!

I met Skeeter a time or two just before he passed away. I wish I’d had this gun to show him. I know he’d have smiled.

For more info: HS-Custom.com, email: hscustom34@gmail.com

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THOMPSON CENTER ASSOCIATION



Shooters everywhere dearly love the TC single shots. Nevertheless, S&W, who owned the company, decided to close it down, and it’s now officially gone. But there are still tens of thousands of us out here who still want to learn, buy, shoot, share and enjoy this amazingly versatile gun/barrel system. I’m not sure, but I think I have about 15 barrels and three frames and plan on finding more. If you want to learn more, get involved, find cool guns, parts, barrels and accessories and get the wonderful “*One Good Shot, the Journal of the Thompson/Center Association*,” you need to join up! Membership is about \$35, as I recall, and the maga-

zine (4x yearly) is well worth the money alone. The people are great, and I’d call them all “gun people” in the best meaning of the words.

Email them at tcaogs@metrocast.net or find them at ThompsonCenterAssociation.org. If you want, call Art Lamontagne, the president, at (207) 252-3663 for more info. He’s a great fellow and knows his TC stuff!



GUN RIGHTS

Alan Korwin

AN “AGEIST” ATTACK ON GUNS?

VOTING AGES AND GUN OWNERSHIP AGES SHOULD MATCH.

America’s voting and counting problems go deeper than the legitimate noise about voting, counting and integrity. It’s no secret progressives seek to lower the voting age to 16. They believe it will give them an unbeatable advantage and permanent lock on power going forward. It has nothing to do with restoring anyone’s civil rights; it’s about elitists controlling power.

On the same scorecard, we’re way beyond the point where the number of immigrants illegally crossing our borders is enough to seed the electorate and swing elections permanently, presumably leftward — a disgraceful tactic but also no secret. The planning and logistics have been exceptional right down to coordinated, “the border is closed!” falsehoods, which media lapdogs lap up.

All Rights Matter

But quiet rumblings surfaced about how these masses, “yearning to be free,” just might appreciate due process, personal prosperity, free enterprise, the profit motive, private property, and so many things progressives dislike, including the big one — gun ownership. That’s power in people’s hands, literally. It might be enough to shift the tide.

So much liberty is a risk that progressives can’t dismiss it unheeded. It’s long been apparent that progressives have gained near total control of the teachers’ unions and school curricula, and thus our children, so they might actually accomplish one-party rule. The deal might seal with a lowered voting age, now openly proposed. The left-leaning influence of big tech and, with it, children’s addictive access to screen time — all screens all the time — further speaks to the wisdom in abolishing any thought of lowering the voting age to children’s level. But even this is almost immaterial to the underlying difficulty.

The most deceptive and surprisingly overlooked element in the guns-

and-voting-age quandary is unspoken — creating partial citizens. How do you justify granting only some of the Constitution and Bill of Rights to a person and not all the rest?

Splitting Rights

“All of the Bill of Rights for all Citizens” is the rallying cry of one civil-rights group. (1) Are they wrong? Does a 16-year-old who gains the right to vote also gain the right to trial by jury, no longer subject to the “justice” and protections of juvenile court? Where is the rationale to deny the right to keep and bear arms to a person sufficiently whole to vote and send troops to war? Those are rhetorical because there is no justification. Splitting rights is an abomination.

“The most deceptive and surprisingly overlooked element in the guns-and-voting-age quandary is unspoken — creating partial citizens.”

You can’t do it morally or legally — it creates slaves. The Civil War settled that — no person is three-fifths of a citizen. You either have your rights intact, or you do not. Progressives lose that on principle, but that rarely deters them.

You can almost hear the hypocrisy justifying it as valid and not irrational: “We’re giving these kids the vote, but nothing else. It’s only fair.” Republicans choose other topics but often have equally baked hypocritical reasonings; Dems are not alone. When asked, would either party respond, “Sure, kids should file 1040s on income, qualify for a mortgage, get a pilot’s license, and anything else an adult can do. They can vote, can’t they?” Trigger warning: They could vote it in for themselves.

“For years, our citizens between the ages of 18 and 21 have, in time of peril, been summoned to fight for America. They should participate in the political process that produces this fateful summons.” —Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954.

Suppose progressives succeed in this new public-control tactic, lowering the voting age to 16 or even less. In that case, youngsters can band together and vote themselves powers (not rights) for whatever they desire: to buy alcohol, tobacco and drugs, drag race on streets (only after dark, for safety), run for and obtain office — all the things where adults know better. When voters commit crimes, they’re locked up with the general prison population. That should prove interesting. We’ll have to stop calling so many of the refugees at our borders children. Countless images have gutted that bald-faced lie, but it keeps getting repeated. Voting-aged children have reached maturity by definition. Guns? Sure. They aren’t children any longer. We will have taken their childhood from them.

One progressive response is that young voters could be educated in school to be properly qualified to vote. Like what, starting now? Wouldn’t you love to see adults educated enough to vote intelligently? How many registered voters can name the three branches of government or other most basic elements needed to cast an informed ballot? You’ve seen TV man-on-the-street interviews ... hysterical. 

(1) *Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership, JPFO.org.*

Award-winning author, writer, consultant and musician Alan Korwin has written 14 books, 10 of them on gun law, and has advocated for gun rights for more than three decades. He is now writing his 15th book, Why Science May Be Wrong. See his work or reach him at GunLaws.com.

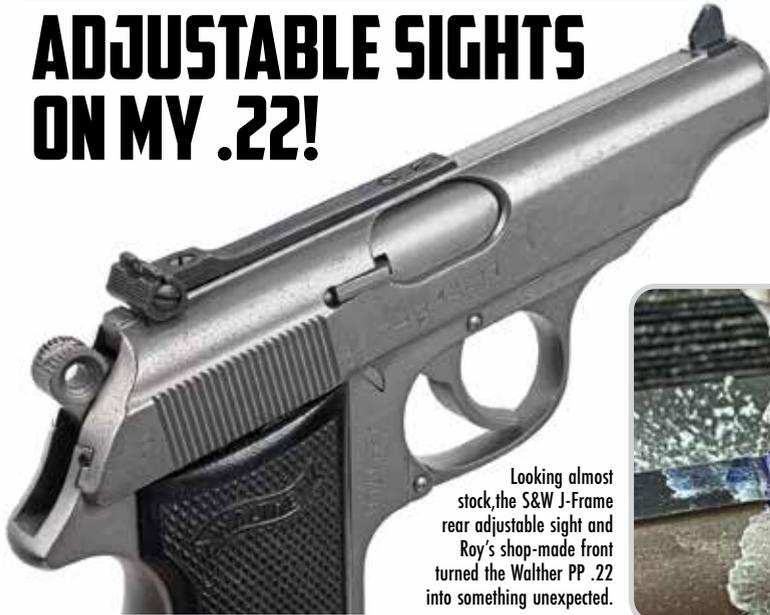


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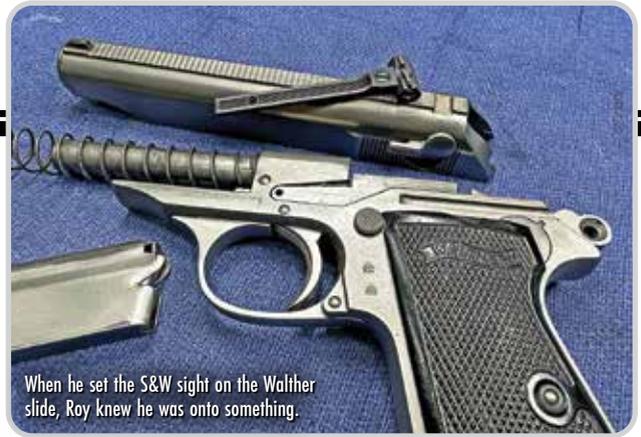
THE INSIDER™

PERFECTING A WALTHER PP

ADJUSTABLE SIGHTS ON MY .22!



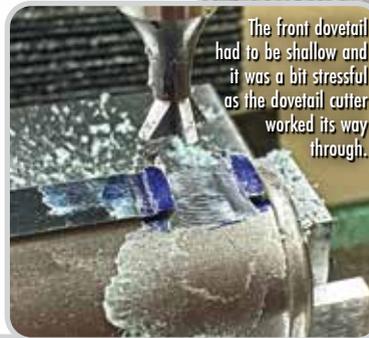
Looking almost stock, the S&W J-Frame rear adjustable sight and Roy's shop-made front turned the Walther PP .22 into something unexpected.



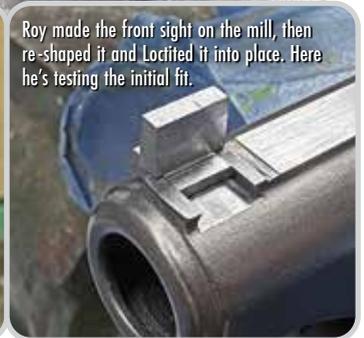
When he set the S&W sight on the Walther slide, Roy knew he was onto something.



Here's preliminary drilling, tapping and screw sizing and shaping.



The front dovetail had to be shallow and it was a bit stressful as the dovetail cutter worked its way through.



Roy made the front sight on the mill, then re-shaped it and Loctited it into place. Here he's testing the initial fit.

In a recent *Insider*, we chatted about the joys of small-frame .22 autos (Nov/Dec 2022). Part of the charm of the little guns is they're easy to carry, easy to shoot, often surprisingly accurate and just plain handy. But alas ... one of the pitfalls is the fact virtually none of the small .22 autos have truly adjustable sights.

Sure, you can knock a sight left or right to adjust for windage, but if your elevation is off, it's time for welding up the front and re-shaping or filing things down. The downside to all that is you've now carefully zeroed for just one load, and we all know .22 ammo varies like crazy, so chances are good the next load you shoot will stray off onto another bit of target real estate.

About 40-odd years ago, I read an article by Skeeter Skelton where he mentioned MMC had made a tiny adjustable rear sight for his Walther PPK .22. But alas, MMC said it was so difficult to do Skeeter's was going to be a one-off. Legions of Walther fans sighed in despair.

I've wanted something like that sight for decades and have simply never found anything that would work.

Until now.

Casting About

Over the years, I've collected countless little drawers full of, as I call them, "assorted gun parts." Pins, screws, hammers, triggers, springs, rifle action bits, factory sights of a zillion sorts, sling swivels, flat spring stock, barrels ... well, you get the drift. What amazes me more than anything is the fact my increasingly aged brain can recall a specific part "I know I have" — even though it was acquired 35 years ago and stashed.

Need a front side-plate screw for an S&W Victory Model? My hand will reach instinctively to the right drawer. Hammer pivot pin for an 1895 Harrington & Richardson 1895 falling block? Oh, got it right here.

So I was digging in my "don't throw these away because they're not that broken" rear sight drawer, and my eyes fell upon a smaller-sized S&W J-Frame adjustable rear sight assembly. By a miracle of coincidence, my Walther PP .22

was laying on my bench right at hand. I looked at the sight, then at the Walther as my brain dusted off some ancient thought. Then I looked at the sight, then back to the top of the Walther's slide again as dawning swept over me. I admit my fingers trembled slightly as I reached for my Starrett dial caliper. I also noted the J-Frame rear didn't need the complicated T-slot cut a K-Frame sight needs. About one minute later, I realized ... it just might work.

And Did It?

You bet. Some delicate filing on the rear sight dovetail on the Walther, and drilling and tapping two tiny holes to hold the sight on had the rear looking like it was factory-installed. Ha! The front was a bit more complicated as I could find nothing in my various stashes that'd work. I milled out a tiny front, then cut a corresponding very shallow dovetail in the slide, muttering "Oh please, oh please" as the cutter worked its way through. There's not a lot of slide meat there. I pressed the rough sight home and Loctited it in. With a

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