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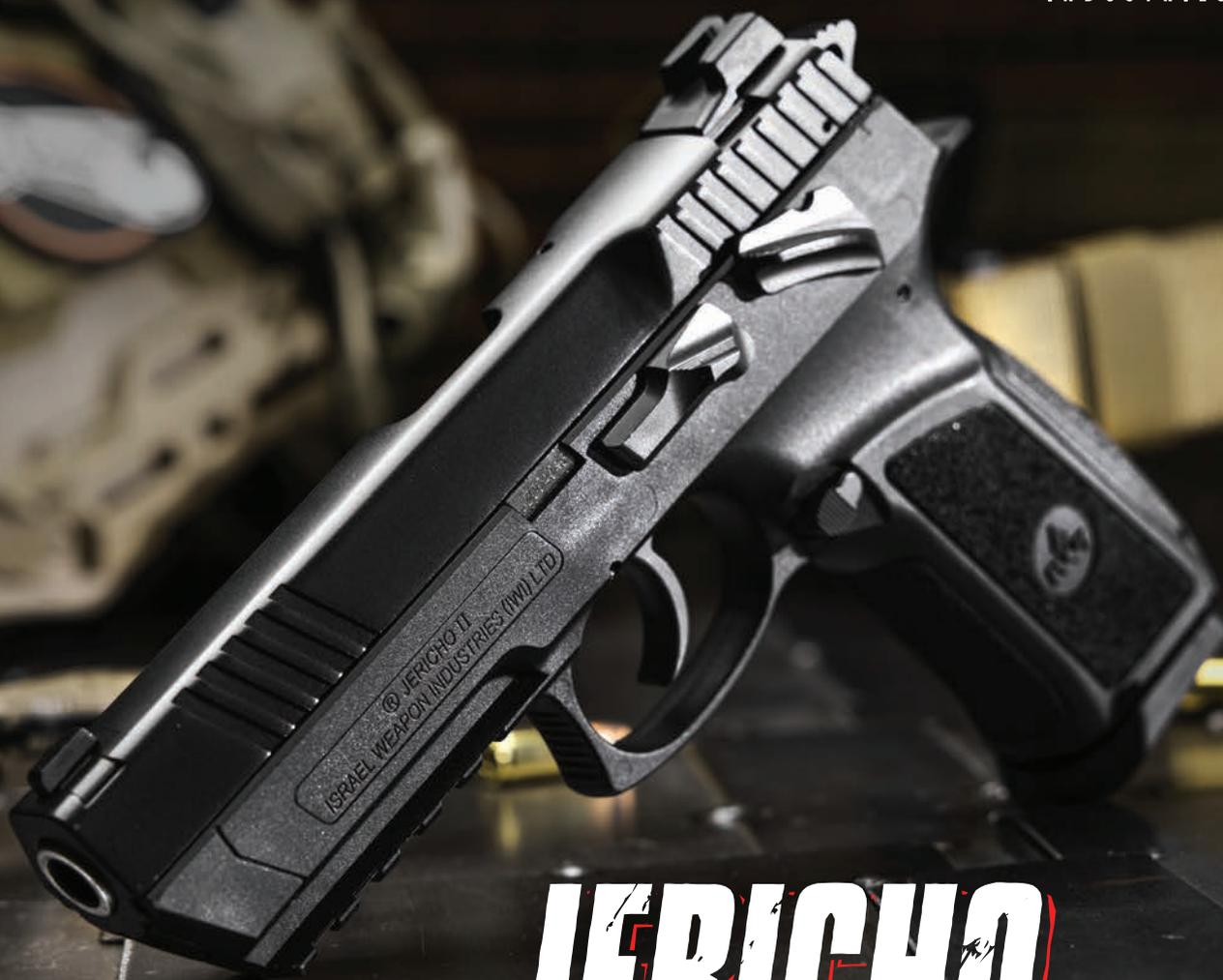
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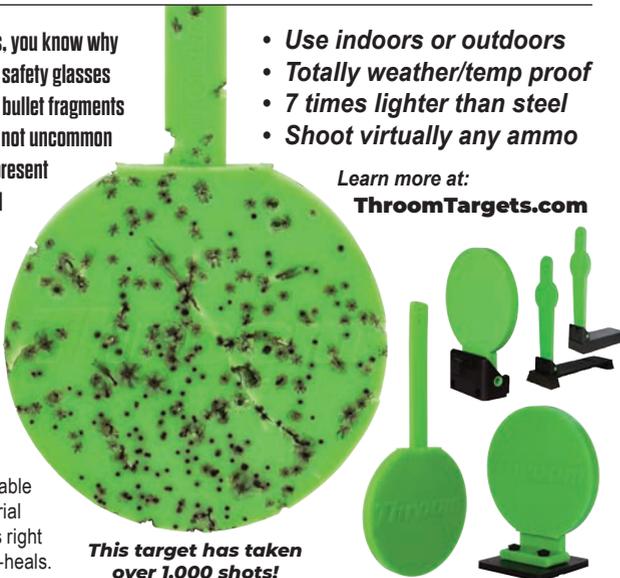
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I agree (and so does John Taffin) that unless otherwise purposed, lighter hand and gun-friendly loads are the way to go. That doesn't mean hotter loads for defense or competition aren't warranted as required. But for practice and just fun shooting, why embrace the extra stress and the wear-and-tear of hot loads? Lots of powders can meet this requirement.

Back in my competition days, I even devised a lower power .44 Magnum load for my Desert Eagle for bowling pins. Velocity of 1,090 fps with 240-grain SJHP bullets was plenty to reliably cycle the gun and whop the pins — always a concern for semi-autos.

By the way, a splitter works better than a .45 for the woodpile ...

B.D. Woods



Greetings From Germany

Hi Guys, I'm a legal gun owner for 40 years now. I've never had problems with any laws in Germany. No complaints, verdicts, indictments, convictions — absolutely nothing my whole life. Not of much interest here, I guess, but I didn't have one car accident, no tickets either, driving for almost 46 years.

German gun laws are totally different from U.S. laws. With a German Hunting License (I received mine in May 1983), I'm allowed to have two handguns — just two. Why is that? You tell me, I really don't know. Open carry, concealed carry for a nobody like me over here? Forget about it — impossible! Maybe for judges, attorneys, prosecutors, MDs, politicians ...

I could fill up a dime novel full of all the crap I went through the last 40 years regarding gun laws here. But never mind, I'm not gonna bother you with that stuff, I promise.

Gee, I wish I could leave this country once and for all to have a good time in the Southwest USA like Texas, New Mexico, Arizona or Nevada, but



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there's an immigration law, and the answer to my application would almost surely be a "NO!"

Regards,
John Fuechtenkord



Gun Cranks

I just watched your *Gun Cranks* episode about Big Foot. I am surprised at Roy NOT believing in Big Foot. There have been so many "sightings" near him in Eastern and especially South Eastern Oklahoma; he has probably been visited by Big Foot in his own backyard and doesn't even know it! He had better put out some of those trail cameras. You were wondering if they would ever shoot back ... no, they won't. They are so big, they cannot get their fat fingers in any trigger guard!

Ron

Tom, great show last Friday with the *Gun Cranks* ("Gifting Guns, Don't Be Cheap!"). I agree with you that if I buy ammunition, I would not want somebody else to be holding it for me. That being said, however, I would note that if someone made just about any kind of investment whatsoever and a common caliber of ammunition in the fall or toward the end of 2019, they would've been able to triple their investment by the spring of 2020.

Ben

I don't know what the fifth card was in Bill Hickok's Dead Man's Hand (*Gun Cranks*, "Black Powder for Self Defense?"), but I am pretty sure the Ace of Spades was not "made in China."

Look at page 58 in the July/August 2023 issue of *American Handgunner*.

Mike Freeman

Okay, that's pretty funny! —TM

Help! He's Addicted!

It's sort of an addiction, I suppose. I've been feeding it for quite a few years now ... escaping to an easy chair and ingesting the articles of *American Handgunner*.

I just finished reading the article by Jeff "Tank" Hoover, "Being Under Skeeter's Influence." I completely understand



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SPEAK OUT

and share the emotion and sentiment conveyed in this piece.

I virtually “grew up” as a gun enthusiast nurtured by the literature of John Taffin and Mike Venturino. I own several of their books ... which stand next to those of Elmer Keith.

But I’ve also really grown to appreciate the creative, often humorous, writing of Roy Huntington, Will Dabbs and Massad Ayoob. What a bevy of creative Pistoleros.

American Handgunner is the only magazine I choose to continuously subscribe to for what has now been decades. I believe I’ll stay a while longer ...

With greatest regards,
Gregg Gibson

Entertainment!

I was re-reading John Taffin’s “Colt’s 1851 Navy: The Gunfighter’s Choice” (July/August 2023) the other day and was so thoroughly impressed that I just had to write in.

His ability to seamlessly pour that much entertainment and that much knowledge into one article is why he remains, for my money, the best gun writer in the business today.

Chris McKeever

.32 Fan

I thought this may be of interest to you (and others). The revolver is a Ruger New Model Single Six chambered in .32 H&R Magnum. The load of 2.4 grains duplicates a European .32 ACP. The load of 3.2 showed no signs of pressure — quite a pleasing “pop.” Primers remain rounded. I’d be comfortable bumping it up to the next hopper on the Lee Safety Disk Powder Measure in .32 Long. Even more in a .32 H&R case. Personally, for this overused and wonderfully worn and polished revolver, I’ll stick to the 2.4-grain load. Bullets in bulk. One can of powder will net 2,900+ rounds. If primers come back around, this is a really cheap plinking and survival tool. This gun is also very accurate and point of aim as an aside — what a gem situation. TiteWad is viable as a pistol powder and, in this case, certainly earns the moniker.

Craig Hines

H&K USP

Good day and thank you for the most recent article on the H&K USP 45. I purchased the older model about 10 years ago from someone who barely fired it. I was told the H&K was the Lincoln

Continental of handguns and I was not surprised. I’ve put hundreds of rounds into it and have not been disappointed. It was refreshing to read about this firearm rather than the countless repetitive stories on which a startup company was remaking a version of a 1911.

Continue to create and educate your readers with your professionalism. Thank you.

Bill Dudzik

Full Impact

After reading the “Full Impact” (AmericanHandgunner.com) article about the effects of the Bruen decision, I’m left wondering if Illinois is actually unaffected by Bruen! They must have found the elusive loophole. If I could only convince my wife to leave this state I’d be out of here.

FMG is the best, but I still miss Connor.

Doug, sadly in Illinois

Size Matters

I’m sitting on the deck reading the July/August edition this Memorial Day while our new grill is seasoning, and after reading *Make Ready*, I wanted to add my (unsolicited) \$0.02 worth. I usually flock to the concealed carry stories and columns first, always looking for a “better way.”

I agree with Matt’s suggestions, especially about carrying big. Ultra-compact wonder guns are hard to shoot accurately, small calibers can lack the stopping capability needed (perpetrator having psychosis, on drugs, etc.), and as age has begun to affect me, a tiny slide is all but impossible for my hands to rack.

I only carry in the 3 or 4 o’clock position; appendix carry was just painful (4-foot-long legs and a 2-foot torso sucks). My preferred carry is a full-sized HK45 or my SIG P220, all in a DeSantis pancake holster, preferably with a thumb snap. Here’s where I have a small disagreement (my only disagreement) with Matt — not all of us can easily conceal a full-size handgun. Judging by the pictures of his hands, he’s probably a stockier fella than me. I’m 6’ even and presently 193 lbs., with a 36” waist. When I was a rookie in ’93, my duty gun was an S&W 4506, affectionately called “The Boat Anchor” by most of my shift partners. And as I was dealing with some form of Gulf War Syndrome back then, at 6’ tall but 140 lbs., I could only conceal that boat anchor when off duty and in plain clothes during winter months. Hence a Rossi M68 came into play.

After retiring from 20 years of uniformed patrol, I took a job as a plain-clothes detective and had to carry a certain Austrian product (not a fan) for

the agency that was a mid-sized version in 9mm, which at 190 lbs. I could conceal fairly easily following the steps Matt suggests — dark clothing that doesn't cling is a must! Pretty much my best bet to carry something bigger than a micro on this lanky body is the P220 with a suit coat on or a very baggy shirt, or my HK P30 9mm, although the double-stack mag of the P30 makes it stick out a little more than a single stack .45.

Bottom line: Some of us are just cursed with a figure like Gummy, and authentic full-size pistols are really, really difficult to keep concealed.

Fantastic article overall, and again, I agree with almost everything Matt said. And especially, practice.

James McCubbins

New ... Again?

While reading a piece on AR-style pistols, it occurred to me they are very similar to the Mauser C-96 "broom-handle." Is everything old new again?

James Slack



Forgetting To Remember

Not many things grab my attention and immediately say, "you need to respond now," but this article did! ("Forgetting to Remember," AmericanHandgunner.com).

I have a few years on Roy. When he was a 12-year-old perusing *Gun Digest*, I was 16, most likely reading the same thing or something very similar. Consumed by both history and firearms, I voraciously read through everything related to either subject that I could get my hands on. That's really never changed, but I've noticed the crowd of like-minded has become small. Thank God it hasn't disappeared.

Like Roy, I see the aversion to history among our youth and wonder where we are heading when we choose not to know our past. Hopefully, like Roy, I can change that propensity among some of the youth I know.



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I also have the habit of squirreling away those magazines with articles I "might" and very often do want to refer to in the future because they relate to my interests or "potential" interests ... they are legion.

So, thank you, Roy, and those like you, whose interests I share. And, to those of you who wield the pen and affix them to paper ... so to speak.

Gregg Gibson

Curmudgeon Alert!

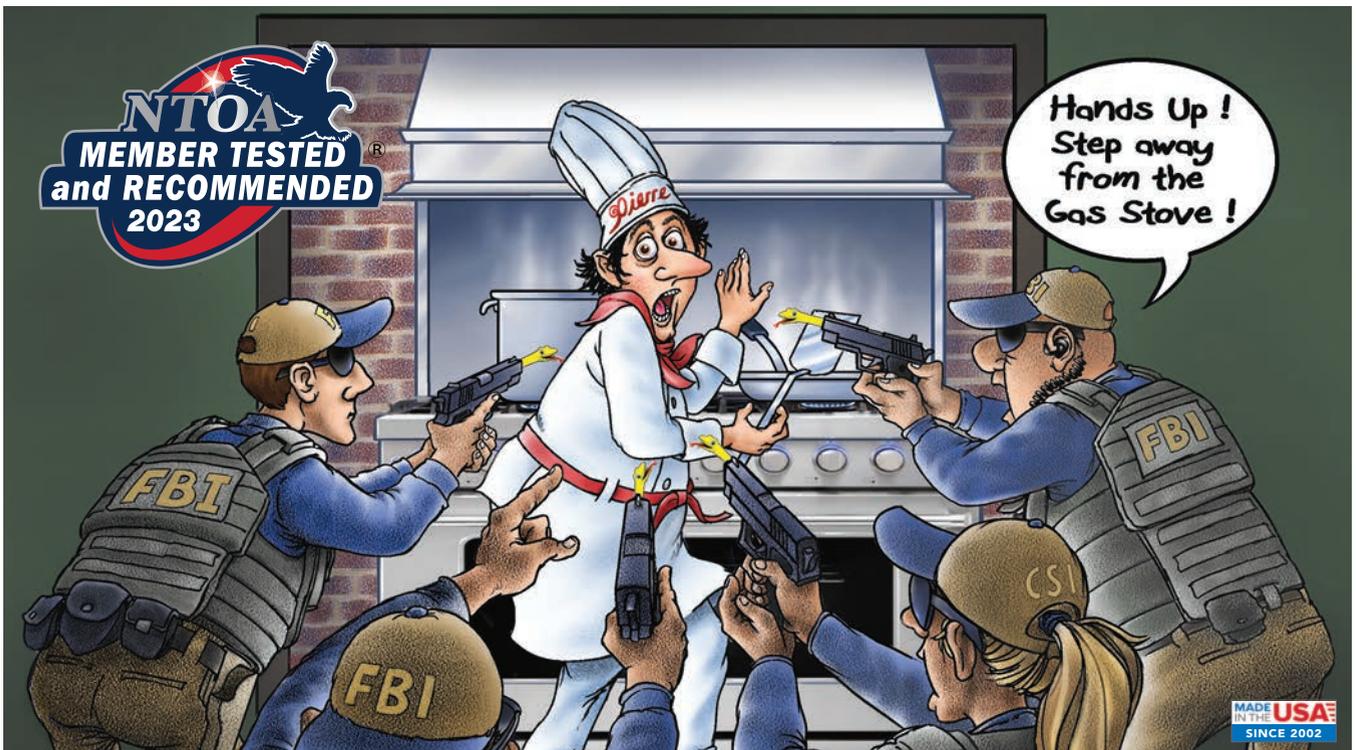
I love reading *GUNS* and *Handgunner* — both great magazines.

I have now become a senior, according to the government, so I also get to be a curmudgeon.

First, the latest craze of Red Dots on concealed carry pieces. I can fit my Kimber Solo or my S&W 360 in pocket holsters, and no one sees them. At least a laser like a Crimson Trace does not bulk up the gun. The laser and night sights certainly keep concealment obtainable. If you are a "prepper," keep your iron sights handy. An EMP attack will render that red dot useless.

Second, what is with all the calls of a 10mm round for viable self-defense? It was too much for the FBI and the .40 S&W arrived.

I understand the industry needs to have new products to sell, but this



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seems a bad choice for recycling a dying round. I predict a lot of slightly used 10mm guns to show up on the market.

BTW, I am not keeping my .375 H&H by the bedside for self-defense as there are no Cape buffalos in my backyard regardless if this becomes the next industry trend.

Jens Jensen

Response To Cat Contempt

I was just reading the letters in the July/August issue, and there were a couple of missives from cat fanciers that reminded me of both Dr. Dabbs' article in which he revealed his personal feelings about felines and something that has bothered me for some time about cat dis-likers. (Dr. Dabbs claims to merely dislike cats and not wish any evil upon them, so I won't call him a "hater.")

People who have no affection for cats often feel the need to make snide remarks about these animals and even disparage their owners. Their smugness in this indicates they believe the vast majority of humans agree with them. I hate to break it to them (not really), but Americans own more cats than dogs. In sheer numbers, cats are the most popular pets.

Oddly enough, I can't recall anyone who doesn't care much for dogs ever

making the same kind of smugly hostile remarks about dogs and their owners. I fully understand people have personal preferences as to whether they like a particular species of animal. That's perfectly normal, and their right. But why the open contempt?

The single biggest complaint I hear about cats is their perceived aloofness. Dog lovers usually refer to their "best friend's" unconditional love and affection, but I contend if any of their human acquaintances behaved like the average pet dog, they wouldn't want them anywhere near them! Such a person would be branded a "toady" or a "sycophant" and summarily shunned. So maybe the best way to understand our pets is to acknowledge they are not people and simply appreciate them for their own characters. I do totally agree with Dr. Dabbs in his assessment of snakes, however.

Robert

Knock-Down Power

Probably like Mr. Jim Gross, (*Speak Out*, July/August 2023), I've been using Taylor's Knock-Out (T.K.O.) Formula for years.

The T.K.O. value was from P.H. John Taylor's spin on the momentum formula to give precedence to the superior

stopping power of heavy large-bore bullets over the much faster, lighter bullets from smaller bores.

At the muzzles, a .460 Weatherby 500-grain bullet (2,950 fps) and a .577 Nitro Express 750-grain bullet (2,400 fps) both strike with nearly the same energy in foot-pounds. However, the .460 bullet has a T.K.O. value of 96.5 and the .577 bullet has a T.K.O. value of 148.4!

T.K.O. values could be easily calculated for downrange velocities for more comparisons.

Thank you, Mr. Gross, and thank you to the Editor.

Robert Jordan, Jr.

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Here's a new service, duty and defensive pistol in town, compliments of the busy folks at Springfield Armory. While no one is saying "replacement for the XD series," it is a brand-new, ground-up design.

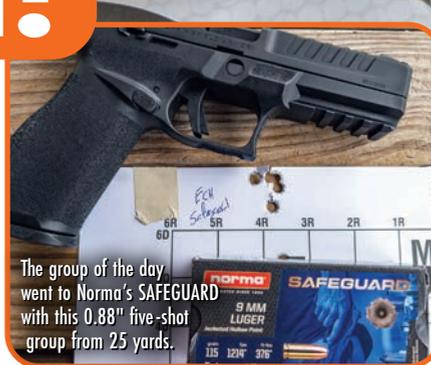
To hit right on the "what makes this different" features, the Echelon is a modular pistol system with a Central Operating Group (Springfield's name) that serves as the serialized "pistol." Like some other models on the market, this system contains the trigger, striker, sear, etc. and can be easily moved between polymer frames of different sizes and proportions.

Feelings

I do like the feel of this pistol — literally. The grip is far more rounded than other polymer models — think oval with flat sides, so the front and backstrap are shaped more like semi-circles rather than flat surfaces with rounded corners. Feels great in the hands. I would describe the stippling as "skateboard tape with rounded points," so it offers a positive grip without sandpapering your hand or gut during IWB carry.



The Echelon is clearly built for duty, service and defensive use. A threaded barrel model is also available.



The group of the day went to Norma's SAFEGUARD with this 0.88" five-shot group from 25 yards.



The direct optics mount system is both flexible and low. Removable pins accommodate different optics footprints.

Leading to the ambidextrous magazine release buttons are ledges with a slight shelf. If you're a thumbs-forward shooter, it's a nice index point for your firing hand thumb (either side). If you're a thumbs straight-up shooter, they don't interfere.

Above the front of the trigger guard is another textured shelf, placed perfectly for a trigger finger rest while not shooting. Your finger has to slide over a slight indentation to get there, so it's a positive tactile indicator of a safe position. I can reach it with either a straightened or slightly bent trigger finger.

The slide has aggressive cut groove cocking serrations in the rear and even more pronounced serrations up front. At the back of that area, a recess in the slide creates a "ledge" of sorts that catches your hand and fingers to provide more leverage for press checks. You'll also notice similar "wings" at the rear of the slide for the same purpose. If you're a pinch racker, you'll find it easy to get a sure grip with your thumb and forefinger. If you're a "hand over

the top" racker, your index finger and palm meat below your thumb will also catch that ledge for additional leverage.

All of this adds up to a soft shooting pistol, even with full-power 9mm self-defense loads.

One Size Fits Infinity?

The COS system comes packed, by default, in a medium-sized frame, but the company also offers optional small and large frames. When you open the box, you'll also notice two extra backstrap inserts. Here's the nifty part. Those swappable backstraps fit any of the three (current) frame sizes, so if my math is right, that gives you nine possible gun and grip sizes.

Optics Puzzle Solved

The Echelon is optics-ready out of the box. This sample shipped with a standard Trijicon RMR, so I shot that for a bit, then mounted the new Trijicon RMR HD, which gave me an opportunity to inspect the new mounting system. Instead of using custom mounting plates, the Echelon goes for the lower and better co-witnessing direct mount approach, using swappable pins to fit different optics like the Leupold DeltaPoint pattern. Those pins are designed with a useful twist. As

Tom tested the Echelon with a variety of 9mm ranging in weight from 100 to 124 grains.



you torque down on them, they press outward against the frame holes to eliminate any lateral shake or variation in mounting position. The idea is to maintain the point of aim and point of impact.

Features & Functions

The Echelon is orderable with a standard 4.5" barrel or a 5.28" threaded version. You can also choose the sight configuration from a U-Dot with front Tritium and luminescent ring or a standard Tritium three-dot configuration. This sample came with the U-Dot and would be my choice — it offers a fast sight picture.

The Echelon normally ships with a 17-round flush fit and 20-round extended base pad magazine. The bodies are steel and drop freely, whether full or empty. I did notice the magazine base plate has a bit of grip stippling on the sides. A nice but subtle touch to help yank one out in the event of some malfunction. If you happen to live in a “we’re here to protect you from yourself” state (insert epic eye-roll and sarcasm here), the company offers 10-round magazine configurations.

The trigger of this sample broke consistently at six pounds with a decent break after a grit-free take-up stage and about 1/8" of movement under pressure. The reset was crisp and easy to detect.

Accuracy Heritage

I’ve always experienced impressive accuracy from models of the XD series; I suspect Springfield Armory pays a little extra attention to barrel and lockup tolerances. For example, an XDM OSP Threaded I tested produced a series of 25-yard, five-shot groups ranging from 0.88" to 1.84" with five different types of ammo.

The Echelon doesn’t disappoint, either. I tested five different loads from 25 yards and recorded the following five-shot group sizes: Norma Hexagon 124-grain (1,091 fps) 1.51", Black Hills HoneyBadger 100-grain

(1,262 fps) 1.69", Black Hills FMJ 115-grain (1,157 fps) 1.96", Black Hills JHP 115-grain (1,205 fps) 1.90" and Norma Safeguard 115-grain (1,098 fps) 0.71". Those groups were shot with a 3.25 MOA red dot. Would even smaller groups be attainable with a 1 MOA dot? I wouldn’t be surprised as the 3.25 MOA dot covered a large part of the aim point.

MSRP of the Echelon series ranges from \$679 for the standard U-Dot models to \$739 for the threaded three-dot version. 

For more info: Springfield-Armory.com




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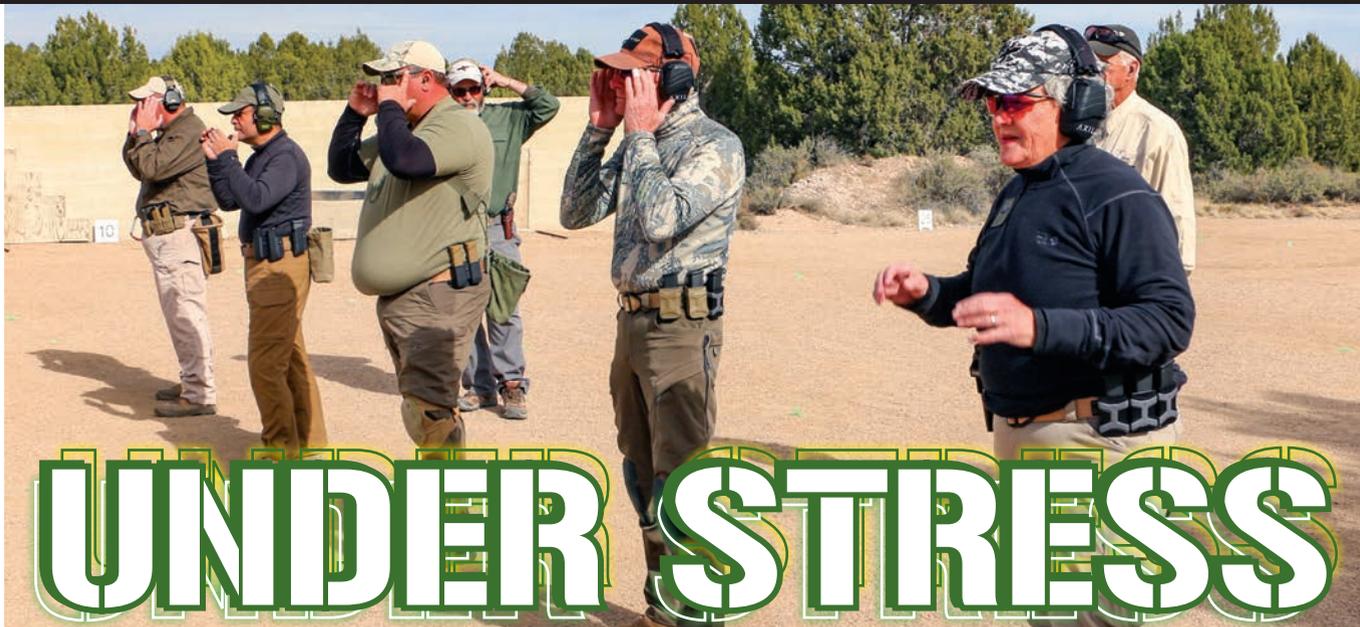
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UNDER STRESS

Good grief! The article is due when? "Under stress" is dealing with something that causes worry or anxiety. I'm feeling the stress of inking this article (late) for our friends at *American Handgunner*. All the while, we have a record number of students again here at Gunsite Academy, risk mitigation, campus construction to the tune of about \$2.5 million coming to a close, the 2024 Gunsite Training Calendar completion, all the normal administrative work of a CEO, selling our house in Prescott as we just completed construction of our new home at Gunsite and my 45th wedding anniversary is approaching. Stress? Don't know what you mean.

In my prior life as a Jail Deputy, Patrol Deputy, SWAT guy, SWAT Commander, Firearms Instructor, candidate for Sheriff, Sheriff, husband, and dad, I experienced stress just as you do. Some manage it better than others. What's the secret?

First and foremost, it really isn't bourbon and cigars (or other pharmaceuticals or enhancers). Those are a nice retreat for relaxation, but not the answer. What I can offer is what I've picked up from learned mentors over the years that seems to have worked for me.

Mitigation Strategies

Planning as much as I can for events I can predict in the near and extended future seems to work for me. No one likes surprises, but they happen. If you have some idea of what's coming up, it is less of a surprise and less of a stressor.

When others around me seem stressed about events, asking "Is anyone dead or anyone's hair on fire?" The condition of your mind controls your readiness. Let's keep the issues in perspective.

Paraphrasing Jeff Cooper in his *Principles of Personal Defense* book and in discussing his Color Code: Pre-planning or pre-thought of crisis behavior actions allows one to be in control.

Col. Dave Grossman (Ret.) in his books and lectures speaks of "Combat Breathing." (Breathe in through your nose to a count of four. Hold it to a count of four. Exhale out through your mouth to a count of four. Pause for a count of four. Repeat as necessary.) I have used this in the back of the SWAT van heading into the breach and I've seen my guys do it as well. Struther Martin said as the "Captain" in *Cool Hand Luke*: "Luke, you've got to get your mind right." (If you haven't seen *Cool Hand Luke*, tear a corner off your Superman or Wonder Woman card.) Combat breathing helped me get my heart rate back to normal and most importantly back to clear thinking. If you can maintain your cool during a stressful event, it allows you to do what is necessary, including taking that precision shot if need be.

Pre-Conditioning

If we narrow this down to a potential fight, use the Color Code (White, Yellow, Orange and Red) to precondition your mind and readiness. There is less stress if you are not surprised and have pre-planned things. How does one precondition the mind for possible events?

On patrol, after a traffic stop, my mind would think about what could have happened if things turned ugly. While standing in line at the local "stop and rob," I ponder what is concealment and what is cover. Where are the exits? What options do I have

should the place get robbed? Do you have a plan if you come home and find your place burglarized? Do you have a tornado or fire drill or home invasion plan? Do you drive defensively on the roadway, checking your mirrors and traffic? Poor planning leads to poor performance. You reduce your stress by pre-planning events so there is less surprise and decreased reaction time. Let the excitement come after the event has concluded.

We are not speaking of being paranoid or deluded. We simply recognize the world is not the place it once was, and we want to continue living in it unharmed.

What has worked for me during my 35-year LEO career and in my business career is similar to our "Make Ready" range command. Every day I "Make Ready." Not by protecting my eyes and ears and checking my carry gun, (okay, I do that), but by mentally preparing myself for the day. Will this be "the day" when I face the demons?

We have a term at Gunsite: "Semper Gumby. Forever flexible." If it is the day, I'll not be surprised, and I will have some sort of a plan, execute it as best I can, and think on my feet. Don't let the stress be the demon you face.

When the event is over, reports are submitted, the storm has passed, the fire is out, then it's time for the  bourbon and cigar.

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BEST OF THE BEST

As a firearms industry dinosaur, I'm sad to have seen the end of double-action revolvers' golden years. In my time, barrels were actually barrels, sometimes even forged with integral front sights, not tubes setting inside shrouds. Grip frames were steel and could be fitted with custom stocks crafted from wood, ivory or pearl. Quality when I entered the shooting fraternity in the 1960s was exquisite in regard to timing and smoothness, fit and finish. So much of this is gone now.

However, among all those revolvers was a genre of sixgun I considered the *Best of the Best* — N-Frame S&Ws. They ranged from fixed sight "military or army" versions to target models and from .38 Specials to .45 Colts. I owned them all at one time or the other. Never



did I encounter a bad one, and I had samples dating from as early as 1915 up to the 1990s.

In my horseback years traveling into the backcountry here in Montana, my "bear gun" was an S&W pre-Model 29 .44 Magnum with a 5" barrel. Luckily there was never an altercation with any bruins. Back in 1976, my sixth published magazine article focused on load testing a 6½" Model 29 from a machine rest. The target range was 50 yards, and after much fiddling with powders and cast bullets, I was able to achieve 1½" five-shot groups pretty

much on call. I've had expensive rifles and carbines that wouldn't shoot with such precision. (I must admit, however, the Model 57 .41 Magnums that came my way over the years would deliver tight groups with less load development than .44s.)

S&W Hand Ejector 4th Model with rare 4" barrel.



The small nubbin at the front of the cylinder's crane is the third lock that gave rise to the nickname "triplelock."

N-FRAME DOMINANCE

Perhaps my predilection for N-Frames started because I was born and raised in Mingo County, WV, the site of the 1920s Coal Mine Union Wars. By my understanding from talking to old timers in the 1960s, many men involved in the fracas went about armed. It seemed they wanted nothing to do with .38s and I judged they were telling the truth because early 1960s pawn shops in my hometown of Williamson had lots of large-frame revolvers. Most were S&Ws, but some Colt New Services were mixed in. My own grandfather was a coal miner in Kentucky, and in the 1950s, he let me play with his boxes of .44 Special factory ammo. I'd dump them out on the rug in front of the coal stove and place them back in their boxes one at a time.

Early in the 21st century, I got the idea of owning every one of the S&W Model 20-somethings. You couldn't just go out to a well-stocked store and buy such sixguns. For instance, Model 21 .44 Specials ceased production in 1966, with only 1,200 made. Model 26s were something I had to research because I had never encountered one; didn't even know what they were. They turned out to be lightweight barreled .45 Auto/.45 Auto-Rim with target sights. Luckily I stumbled upon one in a Montana gun shop, or I may never have completed my assortment of N-Frames. Complete it I did, but today I only have the Model 23 .38 and Model 27 .357 Magnum.



S&W's four versions of Hand Ejector .44 Specials all with 6½" barrels.

N-FRAME SPECIALS

Next, I focused on .44 Specials. There were four basic N-Frames made for the cartridge. They started in 1908 when S&W introduced both that frame size and that cartridge together as the Hand Ejector, First Model. They came to be known far and wide as "triplelocks" because they had an extra lock meshing the cylinder crane with the main frame. They were made with 4, 5 and 6½" barrel lengths, with target or fixed sights.

For various reasons, one being their price of \$21 was considered high in 1915, a Hand Ejector, Second Model replaced triplelocks. By removing the third lock and eliminating the shroud for the ejector rod, the price was reduced to a more reasonable \$19. In 1926 a request from a Texas-based firm spurred the S&W factory to reintroduce the ejector rod shroud. That became Hand Ejector, Third Model. Both Second and Third Models came with the same barrel length and sight options as the First Model. Second Model production ceased with the advent of World War II, and Third Model production had a hiatus for the war but resumed manufacture in 1946. And finally, a Hand Ejector, Fourth Model replaced it in 1950 that was renamed Model 24 in 1957.

I had them all at the same time in 6½" barrel lengths. They were shot plenty, but then my ardor cooled, and Third and Fourth Model .44 Specials were sold. Now of all the dozens of N-Frames I've owned, only six are in my vault. That's kind of sad.



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LESSONS FROM MIKE PLAXCO

Michael Plaxco died recently, too young, a few months short of his 70th birthday. Mike was one of the early superstars of practical shooting competition, winning the IPSC National Championship (pre-USPSA) and the Steel Challenge in the early 1980s. There was little industry sponsorship for even the best shooters in those days. Mike mostly paid his way by building competition pistols, designing the Plaxco compensator (one of the first expansion-chamber comps), teaching classes and writing.

The best money I ever spent learning to shoot was on instruction from top shooters such as Plaxco and Rob Leatham. I'd encourage anyone who really wants to become a good shooter to do the same. I know. Training costs money. But without some kind of guidance, your time and money will produce results slowly at best. At worst, you'll spend years learning bad habits.

In 1985, it was a humbling lesson to see Plaxco shoot a match at a level far beyond anything I had ever seen. I took a three-day seminar from Mike the same year, and by good fortune, it was a small class, so each student got lots of attention. Mike was a very upbeat, enthusiastic, cheerful person who liked people and liked seeing them improve.

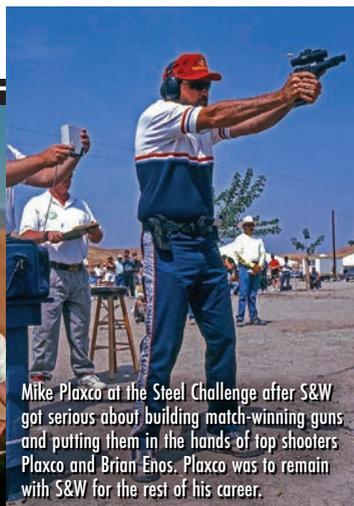
Plaxco was also a highly intelligent and articulate person. He had an analytic mind, he could figure out what worked and why, and he could communicate his ideas. I don't think he had any formal training as a teacher but he seemed to understand the basics of effective teaching, one of which is repetition. He expanded his teaching notes into an excellent book, *Shooting from Within*.



This must have been one of the last times Dave talked with Mike Plaxco, when he was representing S&W at the SHOT Show.



Mike Plaxco was always good company, cheerful and with an infectious laugh. This photo was at the 1985 U.S. Nationals: Left to right, Brian Enos, Rob Leatham, Mike Plaxco. In the background is the outstanding photographer Nyle Leatham.



Mike Plaxco at the Steel Challenge after S&W got serious about building match-winning guns and putting them in the hands of top shooters. Plaxco and Brian Enos. Plaxco was to remain with S&W for the rest of his career.

FOUR BASIC REQUIREMENTS

In that seminar long ago, he repeated what he then considered the four basic requirements for learning to shoot. It's a tribute to his teaching I remember them clearly after nearly 40 years.

1 Accuracy takes precedence over speed. The foundation of good shooting is the ability to hit the target on demand. Speed comes from smoothness and develops naturally over time. If you focus on speed, the accuracy will never come. The old gunfighters expressed the same concept in pithy phrases: "Speed's fine, but accuracy is final." And, "Take your time, fast."

Mike suggested around 200 rounds per training session. Fifty rounds are barely enough to maintain skills. On the other hand, most shooters lose focus if they shoot too much. Break training days into morning and afternoon sessions of 200 rounds each.

He advised beginning and ending every session with 10 or 20 slow-fire, precision shots striving for maximum accuracy. Doing so improves sight focus, trigger control, hold and stance consistency, and mental discipline. He once commented that few shooters have the mental discipline to fire 20 straight A-zone hits — at any range. Mike also taught that whatever skill one is practicing, one should always be scoring 90% of the available points.

2 The sight picture dictates the cadence of fire. In bullseye and precision shooting events, only the perfect sight picture is acceptable. In practical shooting, there are an infinite number of acceptable sight pictures depending on the difficulty of the shot. You should be shooting as fast as possible while maintaining an acceptable picture. The cadence of fire is very different for a full target, five-yard shot than for a partial or moving target at 25 or 50 yards.

3 You must learn to recognize an acceptable sight picture for the shot required. At three yards, a glimpse of the top of the slide may be acceptable; at 10 yards, you might need to see the front sight clearly on target; at 50 yards, the perfect picture of the front sight framed in the rear sight notch. Moreover, what is acceptable can vary with each individual.

When Jerry Barnhart was winning multiple national titles, his speed was simply phenomenal. After he had smoked a tough stage, I recall someone asking Barnhart what sight picture he saw while shooting so fast. Jerry thought for a moment and then replied, "I saw what I needed to see."

4 Until the sight picture is acceptable, do not break the shot. Again, it relates to discipline — knowing what you are doing. Plaxco was a great believer in calling the shot based on the sight picture as the shot broke. He said, "If you tell me the shot was a D at 9 o'clock, and the bullet hole is a D at 9:00, you are learning. If it's an A and you don't know how it got there, you haven't learned anything."

Mike left us with one last lesson: "When all else fails, align the sights on target, take up the trigger slack and press the trigger straight back." 



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Left: Legendary Ranger Frank Hamer preferred the Remington Model 8. This is one of his in .30 Remington at the Texas Ranger Museum. Middle: This ornate Colt .45 auto was carried by a Texas Ranger. Right: Wilson Combat Texas Rangers Commemorative 1911.



Photo: Texas Ranger Museum, Waco

Photo: Steve Woods, courtesy Wilson Combat

THE HANDGUNS OF THE TEXAS RANGERS

Founded with 10 brave men in the year 1823, the Texas Rangers are now celebrating their 200th Anniversary. Their first leap forward came with the very first Colt revolver, the five-shot Paterson. Historian Tom Clavin writes, "... back in 1839, the Republic of Texas had purchased almost 200 handguns for the Texas Navy. When Samuel Houston disbanded the navy four years later, Captain Jack Hays armed his company of Texas Rangers with surplus stocks of the pistols." The Rangers became one of the first law enforcement agencies, perhaps the first, to issue service revolvers.

In 1844, at the Battle of Walker's Creek, the revolvers proved their worth fighting a Comanche war party. Indian tribes had developed the strategy of probing their opponents' lines and provoking a volley of shots, then charging while the Texians were reloading their single-shot muzzle-loaders. At Walker's Creek, they found the Rangers armed with two rapid-firing revolvers apiece. The stunning Ranger victory promoted the Colt revolver and changed the face of the Indian Wars.

One Ranger in that battle was Samuel Walker, who approached Colt with the recommendation of a more powerful .44 caliber revolver holding a sixth shot. The legendary Walker Colt, the first of the company's heavy Dragoon series, was born.

Two traditions were born with it. The Texas Rangers, forever after, would make a point of having the most modern, state-of-the-art weaponry. Also, the Colt company, whose founder, Samuel Colt, felt he owed his success to the Rangers, would thereafter give Texas Rangers precedence ordering firearms.

ISSUE GUNS, PERSONAL GUNS

In his autobiography *Six Years With the Texas Rangers*, James Gillett wrote when he joined up in 1875, "each recruit was furnished a Sharps carbine, .50 caliber, and one .45 Colt's pistol. These arms were charged to us, their cost to be deducted from our first pay. Our salary of \$40 per month was paid in quarterly installments." Those Single Action Army .45s, with 7.5" barrels, had only been introduced two years earlier, and production was going primarily to the U.S. Army, but the Colt company saw to it the Rangers were accommodated. There were Rangers wearing single-action Colts to work still in the 1930s, including Frank Hamer, who carried his into retirement until he died in 1955.

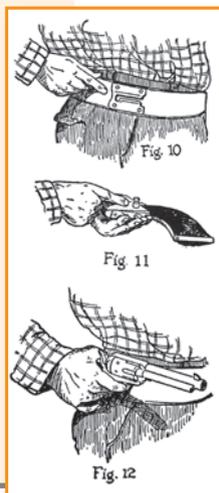
In the 1890s, the .30-30 Winchester Model 1894 became a favorite, as did the more powerful box magazine Model 1895 lever action, initially in .30-40 Krag. The Thompson submachine gun became popular upon introduction. Some Rangers bought their own 1907 model .351 Winchester autoloading carbines, while others, including Frank Hamer, preferred a more powerful autoloader, Remington Models 8 and 81. When the

Colt 1911 .45 pistol was introduced in the eponymous year, production was supposedly initially limited to the U.S. Military, but by 1912, the first one appeared in a Texas Ranger's holster. The Colt company had strong institutional history and remembered its debts.

The 1911 pistol remained a favorite and can still be found on Rangers' hips to this day. Legendary

Ranger Manny Gonzauillas carried a pair of customized cocked and locked Colts, their grip safeties pinned down and their trigger guards cut away in a fashion that would give today's armorers cold chills. While .45 ACP seems to have been the predominant caliber, many chose the .38 Super, knowing it was developed for shooting through auto bodies. Frank Hamer's son said his dad was carrying a .38 Super on the day he and his team took down the infamous Bonnie and Clyde, though the Ranger approached the fugitives' bullet-torn car with "Old Lucky," his SAA .45 in hand after shooting the pair with his .35 Remington rifle. Another famous Ranger (and NRA Director), Joaquin Jackson, swore by his lightweight Colt Commander .45 and Winchester .30-30, the .223 autoloader in his patrol car notwithstanding.

Not all 1911s were Colts. There is at least one engraved Caspian 1911 in the Texas Ranger Museum in Waco, and when Wilson Combat produced a Texas Ranger Commemorative, I'm sure some found their way into the hands of Rangers. And some, of course, preferred revolvers. Hamer killed one gunman in Sweetwater with a Triple Lock S&W .44 Special, a make and caliber many other Rangers favored. When Ramiro Martinez, a hero of the Texas Tower massacre, became a Texas Ranger, he chose to carry a .357 Magnum S&W Model 19.



Ex-Ranger Jim Gillett favored this strange rig, as depicted by Eugene Cunningham in *Triggernometry*.

TODAY

The Texas Rangers are under the umbrella of the Lone Star State's Department of Public Safety, which for many years issued the SIG P226 in .357 SIG, and today issues the SIG P320 in 9mm. Nonetheless, the tradition of carrying personal guns of choice continues with the Texas Rangers, one of the most storied and respected law enforcement agencies in history.



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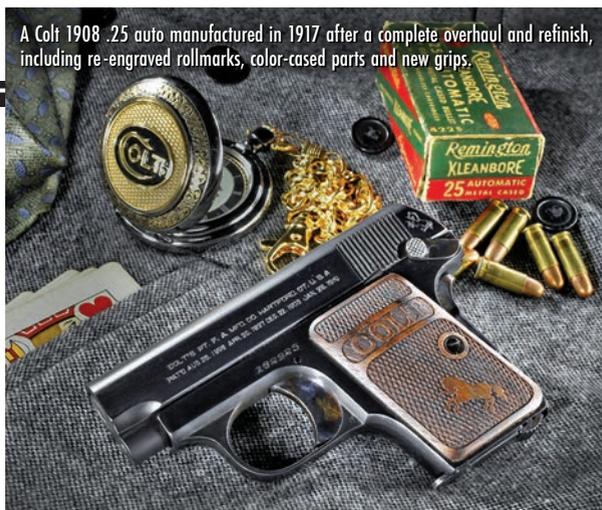


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IT'S THE SMALL THINGS

Some of the best things in life are small. Take the Colt “Vest Pocket” 1908 auto. A very small pocket pistol built at the turn of the last century designed by John Browning, chambered in .25 caliber — which he also designed. This example is from 1917. The owner picked it up at a very reasonable price, but it needed full refinishing.

First, I disassembled the pistol to evaluate all the parts. Next, what was



A Colt 1908 .25 auto manufactured in 1917 after a complete overhaul and refinish, including re-engraved rollmarks, color-cased parts and new grips.

left of the bluing was stripped with muriatic acid. The slide and frame were repolished, like the original factory finish. Some scratches were deep enough they could not be removed without loss of the roll marks. The Colt “Rampant Stallion” logo needed to be re-engraved, so it went to Brian Powley, a master engraver. Small parts that had once been color-case hardened were stripped and sent to Tyler Gun Works in Texas for a new color-case finish. The barrel was lapped with JB Bore compound to remove some minor frosting. Eagle Grips replaced the original broken cel-

luloid grips with wood matching the factory design. My son Nick blued the frame and slide while I cleaned up all the internals. For a little bit more color and style, Nick nitre blued the pins and screws. There are not too many parts — making assembly easy. Wolff offers new springs, which were needed. The little pistol shoots great. It's a little small for big hands to activate the grip safety but makes a great out-to-dinner pistol for the pocket or purse.

The new Ned Christiansen “wide trigger” that converts a Colt Gold Cup to a standard width 1911 trigger shoe. The part needs fitting.



IF THE SHOE FITS — TRIGGER SHOE THAT IS

For years, some shooters have struggled with the Colt National Match and later Gold Cup pistol models with the “wide” target trigger. The trigger was unique to the two models and so limited that few after-market options are available. My dad shot the Colt National Match in NRA Bullseye matches. His trigger was modified to fit a short finger by cutting it in half, removing some length and soldering it back together. Evolution Gun Works (EGW) offers a “blank” wide aluminum trigger that needs machining from its block form. Now along comes Ned Christiansen, a mad genius in his own right for one-off pistol creations. Ned designed an aluminum Gold Cup trigger that fits the frame's wide trigger track but ends up being the standard 1911 trigger width. It is also oversized to allow the shooter or pistolsmith enough material to get a snug fit with little or no vertical play. The trigger is offered by EGW under license from Ned.

Re-crowned barrels machined on the lathe to a 35-degree angle, adding a custom feature to a .40 caliber 1911.



The “spider jig” made in-house that holds pistol barrels and allows adjusting to get the correct alignment for cutting crowns of varying degrees on the lathe.



CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT

Hardly a day goes by that someone asks about a “reverse barrel crown.” I just think of them as crowns. The crown has gone from protecting the terminal rifling from damage to more of a fashion statement today. Most manufacturers apply a small crown to the barrel muzzle in the order of 11 degrees as a finishing touch. Today custom gun owners want pretty heavy bevels up to 45 degrees. I like to make them at 35 degrees, a compromise deep but not megaphone deep.

To make the crown, I turn the barrel on a lathe, making sure the inside of the barrel is turning true. If the crown is not concentric to the bore, it looks terrible. For precise milling, I use a “spider” jig, a tube with eight screws holding the barrel, allowing it to be adjusted to turn true to the bore's axis. It takes a bit of time to tune in a barrel at first, but it gets easier with practice. I use a mandrel made for the bore, which allows me to dial indicate the barrel. Once dialed in, I remove the mandrel and use a small cutter to remove material from the center of the barrel and make a new crown. The final pass is very light to remove tool marks. Some light sanding with crocus cloth removes any burrs and brightens the crown. As for accuracy, I have not seen any difference after deep crowning. I think the accuracy is a result of the clean cut of the crown.

The muzzle end and crown are a major focal point of any gun; it's important to take the time to get it right. 

For more info: EGWguns.com, EagleGrips.com, TylerGunWorks.com, GunSprings.com

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THE RIA 5.0E A PERFECT 10



Introducing the RIA 5.0.E – the “E” stands for enhanced. That means NEW optics cuts and plates for easy customization and an updated barrel that’s crafted with improved materials and slide geometry. It contains aggressive serrations for easier manipulation. Combine this with an upgraded elite-series finish, and you have improved performance with a whole lot of bad-ass visual appeal. Hand crafted for the ultimate in fit and finish, it’s our masterpiece. A perfect 10.



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This Volquartsenized Ruger is loaded with embellishments making a superbly accurate pistol. Burreis 2-7x handgun scope and Lapua Center-X ammo augment accuracy.



This Anschutz .22 rimfire wears a Sightron rifle scope with Murphy Precision 20 MOA base, Lapua Super Long Range .22 LR ammo is deadly accurate from the now discontinued Anschutz Exemplar.

SQUIRRELY SOLUTIONS

Small-game hunting is often overlooked and unappreciated by many handgun hunters. Squirrels and rabbits don't take the glamor spot compared to big game but do provide a great opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors. Squirrels can be most challenging — and downright humbling — to hunt, especially with a rimfire handgun.

Small Game Benefits

In many states, seasons are long, lasting several months as opposed to a few days like big game seasons. Here in my home state of Missouri, opening day of squirrel season begins Memorial Day weekend and runs until February 15th. That's over eight months to enjoy some quality time in the woods. You can hunt them in the early season when the green leaves are in full production until the fall and winter months without any foliage. The cost of a small game license is minimal compared to a lot of big game tags.

Access to land is another factor. The same property owner who doesn't allow deer hunting may very well grant permission to hunt squirrels. You don't have to own a huge amount of property and public land is usually not as crowded during small game seasons.

Another benefit of hunting small game is specialized, expensive equipment is unnecessary. You can stalk the timber with a Ruger Single-Six with iron sights, your favorite semi-auto with a red dot, or a single-shot with a scope if you desire. Heck, you have ample time to hunt with as many rimfires as you own.

Small Game Tips

I've spent a lifetime hunting squirrels. In my younger days, I never needed the aid of optics, always using open sights. Today, if I expect success, optics are mandatory. Red dot sights work well, and I like the 2 MOA dot size or smaller. Head-

shots are preferred so as not to waste any meat, so the target is quite small. Let's put it this way: There is a lot more room around the head than inside, so accuracy is your friend. Scopes are another option. Normally I lean toward variables like the Burreis 2-7x.

Without some sort of rest, I normally don't have to worry about skinning too many squirrels. Fortunately, there are tree limbs and other natural support options nearby in most situations. For me, it's imperative to attain a good, steady rest of some kind; otherwise, I'm probably just wasting ammo. Squirrels can be shot from a lot of different angles, from up high in the tree all the way to ground level. These diverse shooting angles add to the challenge, forcing you to position yourself accordingly.

Squirrel Guns

Like many squirrel hunters, I have a few favorite rimfires. Until recently, I grew emotionally attached to a Freedom Arms Model 83 with a 10" barrel and Burreis scope. It's superbly accurate and a joy to shoot. Prior to that, I hunted with a Ruger upgraded with a Volquartsen treatment with barrel, competition bolt, trigger and grip. It, too, was scary accurate with the Burreis scope. Both of these handguns shoot a lot better than I can hold.

With a rimfire competition match forthcoming, I got the bright idea to procure an Anschutz Exemplar in .22 LR. These bolt-action handguns are now discontinued, so I was searching for a used model. Anschutz is synonymous with accuracy in rimfire circles. When I purchased a 10" model, it came with iron sights. Immediately I replaced



The Ruger 22/45 Lite makes a handy rimfire for walking the woods. UltraDot sight and CCI Green Tag ammo enhance the experience.

the sights with a Murphy Precision 20 MOA base that would accommodate some long-range target work expected in the competition. I had a Sightron S-TAC 3-16x scope demanding attention, so I mounted it. Yes, this is not your typical small-game handgun. It's darn near impossible for me to shoot off-handed, so a rest is essential. Lapua has just introduced their new Super Long Range ammo and it seemed fitting for the upcoming shooting event — and squirrel season.

With Anschutz in hand, my wife and I hit the range, and there were no surprises. At 25 yards, five-shot groups punch out one ragged hole. I'm not sure if the quality of the barrel or the two-stage trigger enhances the accuracy; perhaps it's a combination of the two. Obviously, it is designed for target shooting, so the trigger is light — less than 1-lb. pull. At 50 yards, all five shots were touching — just a tad inside 1/2". I was ready for squirrel season.

Opening morning at daylight, I was in the woods with the Exemplar. I managed to get five gray squirrels before 7:30, and that's all I needed. I cleanly missed two shots, but overall it was a great morning to be a handgun hunter. Now if you will excuse me, I must whip up some biscuits and gravy to go with the fried squirrel.





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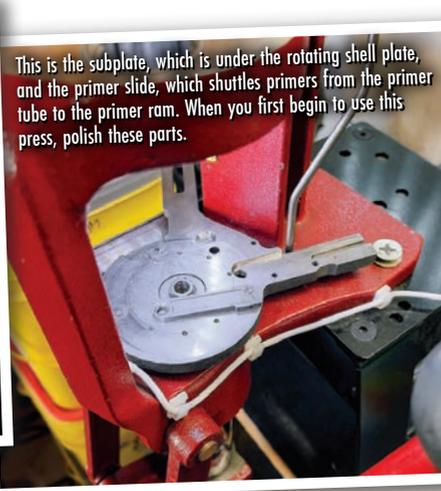
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DEAR LINDSEY...



Even without the optional case and bullet feeder, reloading speed is amazing. There are dozens of innovative 3D-printed bin mounts available for this press.



This is the subplate, which is under the rotating shell plate, and the primer slide, which shuttles primers from the primer tube to the primer ram. When you first begin to use this press, polish these parts.

Dear Lindsey,

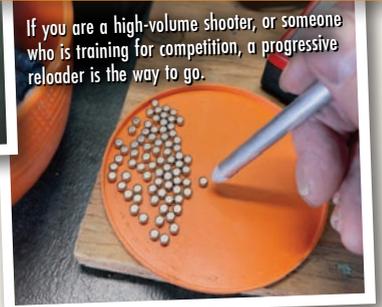
I'm considering buying presses for each of my sons. All three enjoy shooting, but have distinct personalities. My eldest, Zeke, shoots three gun. He has great attention to detail and is mechanically inclined. My middle son Kai never can make up his mind about what kind of shooting he likes — he enjoys reloading. My youngest, Josh, likes to reload and just wants a press that will work.

Signed,
The Spoiling Mom

Dear Spoiling Mom:

There is a press for each personality type, so I'm afraid you're going to get three letters. Let's talk about Kai. For him, I would pick the Hornady Lock-n-Load AP Press.

Lindsey



If you are a high-volume shooter, or someone who is training for competition, a progressive reloader is the way to go.

FEATURES

There are plenty of videos about this press, so I'll dispense with the how to." Rather, let's talk about why this is the best one for your Kai.

The Hornady Lock-N-Load AP system is one of the smoothest-running presses in the industry, advancing halfway on each of the up and down stroke.

The slightly offset frame gives the user a full 180 degrees of observation in the reloading process so Kai can visually confirm all of the reloading operations in a single glance.

It's a five-station press and the autonomous powder dispensing allows it to be placed where you want it for custom reloading sequences.

The Lock-N-Load AP uses a shrouded primer tube, which sits at the back of the press, opposite the handle. To load it, use a primer pickup tube. A fiber rod serves as a level indicator for primers. When the last primer is dispensed, the rod sticks in the mechanism and locks it up. This is a reliable and safe system.

The press should be mounted so the user works it at eye level, with the opening about the level of the user's bicep when seated. If the primers ever detonate in the tube, the user is well protected by the shield (housing tube, primer in the exploded diagram), and face and eyes are below the top of the primer tube, where debris might eject. This will also give the best leverage for loading. I always wear eye protection when reloading and Kai should also.

The Lock-N-Load system uses a quick-change bushing system. These allow the user to remove and replace dies without losing adjustments. Even powder dispensers can be swapped mid-stroke with the AP.

Since the Lock-N-Load press accepts standard dies, it allows the user to have four die operations plus powder dispensing so Kai can use separate seating and crimp dies. It's also my go-to press for single or abbreviated operations. For example, I often size, deprime,

and flare my .45 ACP brass without loading them, so I can tumble with the primer pockets exposed. I can just pull the quick-change dies I'm not going to use and put them back later. I can size and prime rifle cases smoother on this press than on a single-stage setup. It has a consistent primer feel, so it's a beast for a .308 shooter.

The powder dispenser for the Lock-n-Load AP press is their bench-rest-grade dispenser, with an added case-activated powder drop section. Not only is this tool infinitely adjustable, it has a quick change metering insert for changing powders, or going from rifle to pistol. In the tens of thousands of rounds I have loaded with mine, I've never experienced a measurable variance in loads dropped.

The rotating shell plate with its spring case retainer allows me to pull a case for inspection. On some presses, users have to remove parts or even wait until the brass goes all the way around.

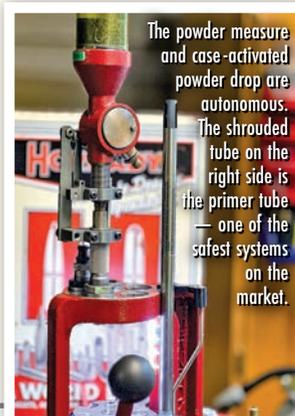
TIPS

When I first got my Lock-N-Load AP, I was pretty frustrated. The primer system kept jamming, and it would pop the AP breakaway cam wire, the part which moves the primer slide back and forth, out of the frame. To fix, I covered the primer slide track with jeweler's rouge and polished it. When it was as smooth as cat poop on linoleum, I added lube and reassembled. It never jammed again.

I keep a brush nearby to keep the area clean. Powder dispensing sometimes drops a little debris.

I am the kind of reloader who likes reloading for the pure pleasure of creating new cartridges. The Hornady Lock-N-Load AP has a calming mechanical operation for people who consider reloading a hobby.

Next time around, we can talk about Josh.



The powder measure and case-activated powder drop are autonomous. The shrouded tube on the right side is the primer tube — one of the safest systems on the market.



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THREE IWB OPTIONS FROM VEDDER HOLSTERS

I think 1911 Government models get a bad rap. Sure, few would argue about their proven ability in fights, at least as far as pistols go, but there are lots of folks who consider carrying one concealed out of the realm of possibility.

Yeah, I know, they're heavy. The two I've been toting around for some time include a Springfield Armory TRP (2.6 lbs., unloaded) and a Springfield Ronin 10mm (2.5 lbs.). On the other hand, they are slim compared to most any double-stack pistol. If you subscribe to the benefits of inside-the-waistband (IWB) carry, the barrel length of the full-size government model is largely irrelevant as it's hidden beneath whatever clothing you wear from the waist down.

Netting this out, if you're going to carry one concealed, you've got to accommodate the weight and hide the grip. Enter three holster models from Vedder. To be clear, Vedder makes holsters for most any handgun, but I like 1911s, so that's what I tried!

Before we talk about models, one thing you'll notice about the Vedder offerings is the degree of customization available. You can order your holsters with or without optics cuts, with clips for 1.5" or 1.75" belts and with or without a claw attachment, useful for appendix carry. As for colors, take your pick from about 30 different colors and basic patterns of Kydex and another 24 graphic designs like digital camo, American flags, Hexagon or snakeskin.



Vedder's ProTuck with Tom's Springfield Armory 1911 TRP. It's a heavy load but easy to carry with this dual-clip rig. Note the leather hinges for better form fitting.



The LightTuck is the versatile, low-profile option, carryable in most any belt position with its cant adjustments, single clip and optional claw attachment.



The SideTuck is built specifically for appendix carry.

The only modification Tom made to this one was adding a pad to the back for comfort. It hides this Springfield Armory 1911 Ronin 10mm and a spare magazine with ease.

LightTuck Kydex IWB

Intended to be the "flexible" and "low-profile" offering from Vedder, the LightTuck offers a thin body mounted with a single, wide belt clip. The one-clip design, combined with adjustable ride-height screw adjustments and cant angle adjustable 30 degrees in both directions, means you can position this holster anywhere in the traditional strong side area — or as an appendix or even cross-draw option.

The holster body is perfectly fitted to the gun, offering "built-in" retention to some degree, but a retention screw, separate from the clip mounting screws, allows you to adjust for a more positive grip on the gun. None of the holsters shown here had any trouble whatsoever with the "turn the rig upside down and shake" test.

SideTuck Kydex IWB

The SideTuck is designed specifically for appendix carry. What makes this one stand out is the design of the optional spare magazine sidecar. Many appendix rigs with sidecars place the holster and mag pouch too close together, cluttering things up in the center area. Not to be crass, but think about challenges using the restroom or even just sitting down. With additional horizontal space, this more separated but still hinged relationship between the gun and spare magazine works much better.

Both the gun side and magazine holder use very thin metal mounting clips. Also important because your belt

buckle, even if pushed off center, is in the same area, so the thinner clips make a big bulk reduction difference. It doesn't sound like much, but a thicker plastic clip, combined with belt thickness and a buckle, makes for a not-nearly-as-concealed setup. The rig also includes a claw mounted to the retention screw that pushes out against the belt from the inside to force the grip of your gun to follow the contour of your body. In my test case, this is one of the details that make hiding a full-size 1911 easy.

ProTuck Kydex IWB

Another new model is the ProTuck Kydex IWB. This one is designed for traditional IWB strong side carry in the four to six o'clock position. Like the other models, the holster body is built with full sweat-shield coverage on the backside and thin, gun-fitting Kydex all around with a separate retention screw.

It's a dual clip design, so it's great for handling the weight of all-metal pistols like the 1911. The clips are attached to the central body using leather pads operating like hinges. This allows the holster to contour to your body for better concealment and weight distribution. Again, the thin metal clips, available in 1.5" or 1.75" widths, keep things stable yet discreet.

Check them out. The company offers a 30-day money-back-guarantee and a lifetime warranty.



For more info: VedderHolsters.com



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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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CANIK



METE MC9

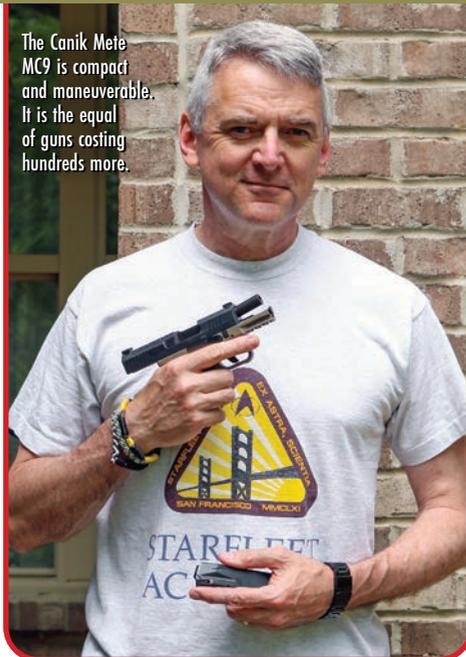
WILL DABBS, MD

THE MICRO COMPACT CARRY GUN FOR SMART PEOPLE



The Canik Mete MC9 is compact, reliable, accurate and powerful. It also comes in a C-note or two less than the Other Guys. It represents a superb value in a cutting-edge concealed carry gun.

I'm an unapologetic fan of Canik handguns. Century imports them, and nowadays, there are scads of variations. From the very first TP9 introduced back in 2012, this line of reasonably priced combat handguns has expanded to include service weapons, competition race pistols, and variants optimized for concealed carry. Throughout it all, the TP9 family has manifested superb quality, cutting-edge design, and a little something extra, all at a price that was consistently way better than the other guys.



The Canik Mete MC9 is compact and maneuverable. It is the equal of guns costing hundreds more.



At 12 meters, the Canik Mete MC9 groups just fine.

The typical TP9 came as a package with a spare magazine, a decent concealment holster, and sundry support equipment like a magazine loader and cleaning gear. The Mete line took that to the next level. It was like a DIY gunman kit. Just add ammo, and you were proof against most any threat. With the new Mete MC9, the mad geniuses at Canik have breached the wall into the micro-compact world.

In case you've been living under a rock for the past decade, micro-compact carry guns are all the rage. It's tough to divine why we are just now figuring this out, but nowadays, it is reasonable to expect your carry gun to ride comfortably underneath shorts and a T-shirt yet still pack a dozen or more rounds onboard. In years past, a combat pistol with a 15-round magazine capacity was as big as your left shoe and weighed as much as a brick. Nowadays, that same 15-round handgun will hide in the front pocket of your 501s. I'm guessing 9mm rounds were somehow bigger back then.

The rub is that, like everything fresh, new, and innovative, such capabilities have, in the past at least, been expensive. Add to that the obligatory carry rigs, spare mags, and support gear, and you could be flirting with a grand for a state-of-the-art concealed carry gun. And then there is the Mete MC9.

The Trappings Of Wealth

God knows I cannot be trusted with wealth, good looks, or fame. That is why He, in His infinite wisdom, saw fit to withhold all three of these critical attributes from me. Now well into my fifth decade, it is becoming increasingly obvious I am not destined to own a jet airplane, cause attractive women to swoon when we pass each other on the street, or host my own wildly popular

Instagram channel. Were I rich, good-looking and famous, I would be that obnoxious guy who commutes to the local firing range every afternoon in his own personal gold-plated fighter jet.

Warren Buffett lives in the same modest ranch-style home he bought half a century ago for \$31,500. That guy has a net worth of \$60 billion and yet still takes his meals out at Dairy Queen. The fact he legitimately owns Dairy Queen means he probably gets his DQ Oreo Blizzards at a steep discount and is quite likely treated fairly well whenever he eats there. If I owned Dairy Queen, I'd eat there a lot, too.

Carlos Slim could spend \$1,000 every minute for the next century and still not burn through his fortune. He nonetheless doesn't own a boat and flies commercial because apparently, private jets are just such a hassle. The Indian philanthropist Azim Premji is worth \$16.2 billion, yet he drives a beat-up old Toyota. In each of these cases, these exceptionally wise investors focused their resources on the things that matter while eschewing those that don't. Along the way, they became just filthy rich.

By contrast, I save and scrape until I can secure my next modest gun-related conquest and then index onto the next short-term fix. I would say it is like drug addiction, but heroin addicts typically show a bit more restraint than do I. After my passing, I will likely leave my kids enough ordnance to topple

the Venezuelan government along with \$5.67 in change harvested from underneath the sofa cushions.

The point is that really smart people invest their assets wisely. They seek out stuff that is reliable and effective yet represents good value for the money. That is the perfect description of the new Canik Mete MC9 micro-compact pistol.

Technical Bits

Three years in the making, the Mete MC9 has literally all the bells and whistles. The gun comes in a lockable case with a flush-fitting 12-round magazine as well as an extended 15-rounder. There is also an extended magazine base plate if your fifth finger is feeling lonely and needs someplace to hang out with its friends. The custom IWB holster is the equal to any other name-brand carry rig. There are three interchangeable backstraps as well as a full array of maintenance, support and cleaning tools.

The MC9 is 1.12" wide, 4.52" tall and 6.1" long. This puts its dimensions solidly in the same league as the big-name micro



The Canik family of 9mm defensive pistols has evolved into something extraordinary in the past 11 years.

Each gun offers state-of-the-art performance at a very reasonable price.

The Canik Mete MC9 is a DIY concealed carry kit all in one tidy lockable box. The included CCW holster is superbly well-executed.



The Canik Mete MC9 is the perfect addition to your daily defensive loadout.



readily reversible should you be cursed with left-handedness. The primary safety is a blade built into the trigger face. The gun presents quickly and runs well. The striker-fired trigger is the equal to guns costing hundreds more. So long as I paid attention at reasonable CQB ranges, I could absolutely dominate a discarded Coke can.

compacts. The MC9 sports a 3.18" barrel and weighs a paltry 21.2 oz. unloaded. The slide is cut for an optic, and the steel sights will readily co-witness. I've been in this gig a long time, and I really can't think of anything you might want that this gun doesn't include as standard kit. Additionally, the MSRP is only \$439.99. That is substantially cheaper than any comparable gun elsewhere, and it includes all the cool-guy stuff for which you'd most typically pay extra.

Taking It Out For A Spin

If you're like me and you carry a gun any time you're not asleep or in the shower, then how a gun packs is on par with how well it shoots. When coupled

with a decent gun belt, the IWB holster that comes with the Mete MC9 rides comfortably underneath my surgical scrubs at work while not alarming the little old lady who wants to prattle on for decades about her hemorrhoids. The Mete MC9 really does ride as comfortably as any other micro compact I have had the privilege of tasting.

On the range, the Mete MC9 continues the legacy of excellence for which Canik has become justifiably renowned. The gun is small, but that is the point. The superlative design ensures the pistol is still controllable, accurate and smooth.

The slide stop is replicated on both sides, and the magazine release is

Ruminations

Maybe you made better life choices than did I. You might have spare money cluttering up the crawl spaces in your attic and packed underneath your bed. Maybe you mulch your extra cash up along with premium imported alfalfa to feed your favorite albino unicorn. However, if, like me you have to work for your money, then the new Canik Mete MC9 from Century is the carry gun for you. It's hands-down the best value in a micro compact carry gun in America today.



For more info: CanikUSA.com

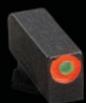
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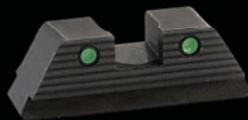
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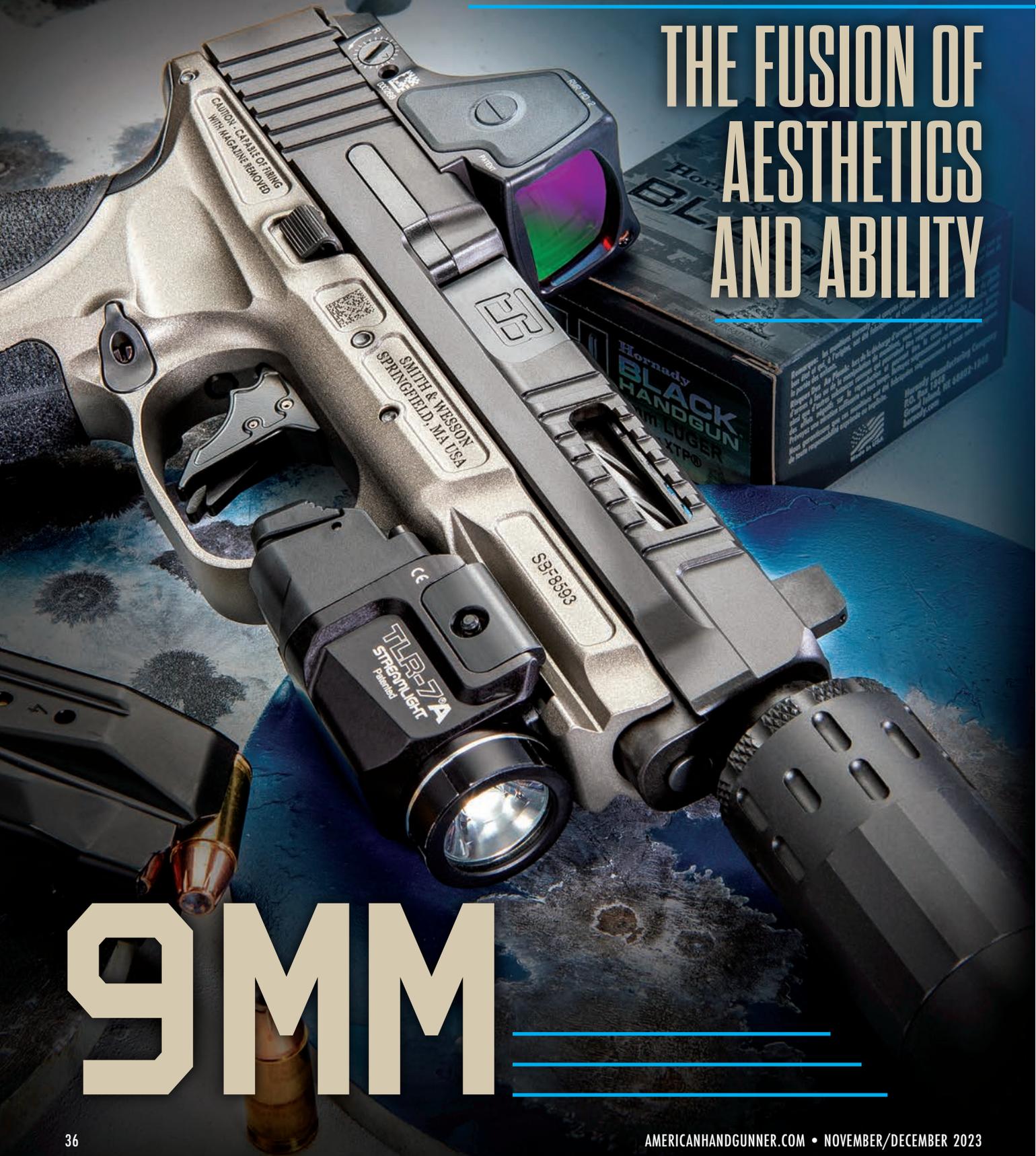
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9MM

M&P FUELED



TOM MCHALE

PHOTOS: ROB JONES/THE IMAGESMITH, LLC

Just about 55 years ago, Ed Brown started his American dream in the way so many successful entrepreneurs do. He began moonlighting in his garage after work and on weekends, doing (and learning) custom gunsmith work. After 20 years of honing his skills, he finally quit his day job and went “all in” to the business of making custom parts like magwells, hammers and beavertails.

Fast forward through lots of custom 1911 builds, a Pistolsmith of the Year award from the Guild and continued expansion, and the Ed Brown crew has expanded from 1911 builds and customizations to the Fueled series. When you think about it, it's not surprising the

company started that project with the S&W M&P with its rough similarities to the 1911 platform — think grip and pointing attributes.

What's a Fueled M&P? Think completely standard, except nearly every component in the pistol has been replaced with high-end custom versions including the rail block, slide, barrel, trigger system and most other critical parts. So, on second thought, it's not very standard at all! But seriously, if you were going to build a custom gun from scratch, following the basic M&P design principles, you'd end up with an Ed Brown Fueled.

Are there words to describe this “service pistol” masterpiece? I don't think so — let Rob's gorgeous photos tell that



story. As for the performance and operations, here's a summary of my experience with the Fueled M&P.

Ergonomics

I would describe the grip texture as “skateboard tape” as it's a shallow but aggressive texture. I didn't have any slippage on my shooting outings, but

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WITH MAGAZINE REMOVED



AMERICAN
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M&P FUELED 9MM



ED BROWN M&P 9MM



then again, I wasn't really sweating with the early 70 and 80 temperatures here during testing. The placement of said texture is nifty looking. The curvy shape on the frontstrap section caught my firing side pinky quite nicely, while the rear portion accommodated all of the palm of my firing hand and gave good contact to the base of my support hand on the opposite side.

Just below all of this, you'll see an external magwell funnel. It's black, offering a nice-looking contrast to the rest of the frame, barring the black grip texture areas. The magwell funnel has finger-width cutouts on both sides, which do allow you to grasp the magazine base in case you ever need to forcibly pull it out. The magazine basepad extends only 1/8" below the bottom of the magazine well funnel, so those cutouts do make a difference should you need to grab the magazine.

The slide has standard square-groove serrations on the rear. The serrations on the front are another feature combining cool appeal and function. The side cutouts go right through the center of the serrated area on both sides ... and the top. The serration continues right across the top of the slide too, aiding press checks with a bit more "grip."

There are generous cutouts/indentations directly behind the trigger reaching almost to the rear of the grip. On the trigger finger side, it was largely irrelevant to me as there was

plenty of airspace between my trigger finger and the frame with the factory default length of pull configuration. I shoot with thumbs straight up, so on the support side, this turned out to make a nice index for the edge of my palm just below my thumb.

Trigger

The trigger face is flat with a small hook at the base to keep your finger pad or joint in place on the face. It's also wide — about 3/8". It breaks at precisely 3.5 lbs. After depressing the usual safety leaf in the center of the trigger face, it moves resistance-free just about 3/16" until you hit the pressure wall. From there, you'll travel maybe a hair less than an additional 1/8" until you hit a crisp break. If there's any overtravel, I can't see or feel it. If you're one to care about reset, it travels just about 3/16" forward before you hear and feel the reset click.

In short, the trigger that comes on this pistol out of the box is like one you'd add as a significant aftermarket upgrade. It's glorious. On one of my shooting days, I was testing both this pistol and a standard service configuration of another make and ... wow, this trigger system will spoil you rotten. The side-by-side comparison was revealing to say the least. There is no reason whatsoever to do anything to the included trigger.

Controls

The magazine release button has the same skateboard texture as the front and backstraps of the grip, so dropping the magazine is easy even with off-kilter thumb placement on the button. The steel-body magazines drop freely with ease whether loaded or unloaded. This

is one of the benefits of steel vs. polymer magazines. Crammed full polymer mags can get a bit sticky in certain scenarios.

Slide lock controls are present on both sides.

Sights

The sights are tall, and work beautifully out of the box with the Trijicon RMR HD tested. Co-witness was in the bottom area of the glass, so sights didn't get in the way of optics shooting yet were easy to find.

The rear sight is a flat black notch with no texture on the rear. The front ledge of the rear sight is perpendicular to the slide, so if you're not using an optic, it's a simple and sure one-handed racking aid.

The front sight is an Ameriglo model with a tritium center surrounded by an orange luminescent ring.

Barrel And Slide

This model came with a threaded barrel with a standard 1/2x28 thread pattern. I stuck my SilencerCo Osprey 45 with a 9mm piston on there and was good to go. Even the included thread protector contributes to the overall "cool" custom appearance. It's octagonal in shape, but even each flat is recessed with a small ridge. It looks great but also serves a legit purpose — making it much easier to hand tighten and remove the cap. I don't know about you, but I'm always finding myself re-tightening these while shooting. It'll be nice to have one I can torque properly without breaking out tools and botching up the finish.

The three slide cutouts show off the cool-looking spiral fluting cut into the barrel itself.

New From Trijicon

A few months ago, I had the opportunity to spend a few days shooting



with the new Trijicon RMR HD. Before we get into the differences from the original RMR, let's talk carnage.

The units in use were pre-production prototypes. They looked like the final product, but most already had 30 to 40,000 recoil cycles from pre-production testing on them, so they were well used. Engineers and marketing folks from Trijicon on hand made one thing clear: Don't baby these optics. In fact, we were given full permission (encouragement!) to try and smash them to bits.

Before the optics abuse began, we zeroed our respective samples to a 1" target square at 15 yards and verified repeatability. Check. This is important because, as we were to find out, the purpose of the abuse was not to see if we could break the new RMR HDs but rather to see if they held zero. No one wearing a Trijicon shirt seemed the least bit concerned about any of us actually breaking one of the optics. And they were right.

First, I used a 2" thick hardwood bench as a slide racking device, using the front face of the RMR HD as the racking surface "lever." I'm not talking about "pressing" through the wood; I'm talking about holding the pistol 6" above the bench and smashing it down on the edge with all my strength. After 10 repetitions, the hardwood was "tore up" as we say here in the south, but the optic kept right on ticking. I loaded up the pistol and went back to the 15-yard firing line. My 1" zero remained dead on.

Next up, after unloading, I flipped my pistol around, holding it by the muzzle, and proceeded to use the optic as a hammer, again for 10 or 12 repetitions of violent hulk smashing. Wood tore up? Check. Optic working? Check. Perfect zero maintained? Check.

Consider me impressed. I literally beat the living snot out of this thing, and it just worked. Clearly, you're not going to deliberately do these things in real life. But you will, over time, bash it into walls,

tables, doors, cars and whatever else you bump into in your daily travels. Those of you using the HD in a duty scenario will certainly subject it to more hard knocks. The point isn't that the RMR HD makes an adequate hammer. The point is it will keep working regardless of what adverse conditions you encounter.

So, besides reputational durability, what else is in the HD? It's now got a top-loading CR2032 battery. So every year or three, when you need to change it, no re-zeroing is required. A forward-facing light sensor can auto-adjust reticle intensity based on the target's light reading. Or you can manually set it where you like, even setting auto-adjustment limits. The buttons are improved, as are the windage and elevation adjustments. Before, they were a bit mushy but offer positive clicks now.

The mount footprint is identical to that of the original RMR, so if you're upgrading, no worries: Two screws and you're done. The deck height is also the same, so whatever co-witness setup you have remains constant.

A couple of other nice enhancements round out the package. You'll see an indexing ridge on top of the lens housing to aid sighting. And some big news, you now have a choice between a single dot and dot with a 55 MOA segmented circle. Dot options include one or 3.25 MOA, and you can even adjust contrast between the dot and circle. If you intend to do any beach assaults or stand out in the rain, the unit is waterproof to 66 feet.

A Capable Looker

For more formal testing, I ran five different ammo varieties through

the Fueled: Black Hills HoneyBadger 100-grain, Black Hills JHP 115-grain, Norma Hexagon 124-grain, Norma MHP 108-grain and Norma Safeguard 108-grain.

I started with some general plinking to get the feel of the pistol. Between the 9mm chambering, the phenomenal grip texture and the suppressor, the gun shoots quite comfortably. It didn't move in my hand shot-to-shot, even with moderate grip pressure. It's easy to control this pistol, so I shot well with it.

To see what all those upgraded components really do in the accuracy department, I set up targets at 25 yards and proceeded to shoot five-shot groups, measuring velocities along the way.

The Norma Safeguard (1,224 fps) seemed happiest with this pistol, turning in a 0.78", five-shot group. Yeah, this pistol will shoot if you do your part, and I didn't do anything special other than use a Ransom Multi-Caliber pistol rest and some careful trigger work. The Black Hills JHP (1,245 fps) also went sub-1" with 0.94" for five shots. The Black Hills HoneyBadger load moved somewhat faster with its 100-grain weight at 1,289 fps and printed a 1.56" group. Norma Hexagon (1,117 fps) and Norma Safeguard (1,131 fps) printed 2.22" and 2.36" groups, respectively.

This sample was the F1 Metal version of the M&P Fueled, but several other polymer-frame versions are available. As for pricing, that depends on the specific configuration, but count on  starting around \$2,195.

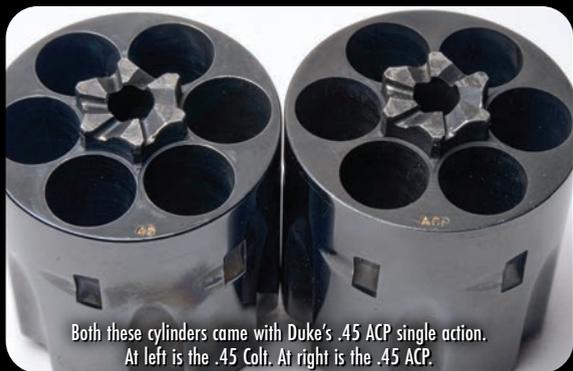
RIMLESS REVOLVERS

MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO
PHOTOS: YVONNE VENTURINO



At left is a Taurus Model 905 9mm double action with a 2" barrel. At right is a Colt SAA .45 ACP with 4 3/4" barrel.

COLT SAA .45 ACP & TAURUS M905 9MM



Both these cylinders came with Duke's .45 ACP single action. At left is the .45 Colt. At right is the .45 ACP.



Duke has owned .45 Colt single actions previously with .45 ACP auxiliary cylinders, but this one is his first caliber stamped like this.

Without a doubt, some of the most popular and longest-lasting handgun cartridges developed have been with semi-auto pistols in mind. Primarily, I'm talking about 9mm Parabellum and .45 ACP — both dating from the early 20th century. Of course, both rounds were based on rimless cases in order to promote the best functioning from

autoloading pistol mechanisms. Anyone who is an avid reader of this magazine already knows .45 ACP made a fine double-action revolver cartridge 105 years ago. That's when S&W and Colt, at the behest of the U.S. Government, adapted their large-frame revolvers for .45 ACP. The trick to solving the problem of extraction with rimless cases was clips — as in three-round "half-moon" clips. Those little spring steel devices furnished a surface upon which

the star-type extractors of swing cylinder revolvers could push. The army even issued boxes of .45 Auto rounds already "clipped-up."

I bet few modern shooters think .45 ACP is a fine single-action revolver chambering. I'm here to tell you it is. What is odd, however, is it has taken me 50 years to recognize that fact. And furthermore, I've owned two .45 single actions that came with both .45 Colt and .45 ACP cylinders. They were a Ruger



Duke's "accuracy testing" of the Taurus Model 905 was done at 10 paces firing double action as quickly as he could reacquire the front sight.



The Taurus Model 905 9mm is a five-shooter based on Taurus' small frame.

Blackhawk and Colt SAA. And I never bothered to shoot either with their .45 Auto cylinders! My bad for willingly remaining ignorant!

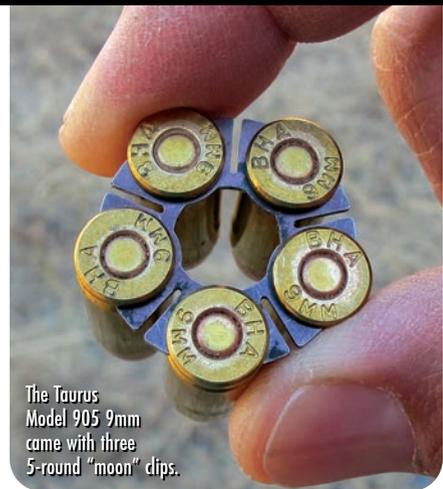
.45 Rimless

Late last year, on a website, I spotted for sale a 3rd Generation (made in 1996) Colt Single Action Army .45 with a 4¾" barrel. Nothing special there; I've owned many such. Then, enlarging the photo for a closer look, the caliber stamp jumped out at me. It was ".45 ACP." Also shown was the Colt's factory box from their custom shop specifying it was ordered as such. As said, I've known of .45 Colt SAAs that had auxiliary .45 ACP cylinders, but in all the hundreds of Colt SAAs I've owned and handled, never had I seen one actually caliber stamped .45 ACP. (Now that I'm looking, I've observed a few others on the Internet.)

Of course, I could barely hold still until my new Colt arrived. No disappointment there. It was as shown by its owner on the website: pristine condition, blued with color case hard-

ened frame. Additionally, that fellow had also instigated a few nice touches of which I approved. One was the so-called bullseye ejector rod with its round nubbin that makes punching out empties a touch easier. Another was cosmetic: The hammer had been color case hardened to match the frame. Third was a set of Altamont checkered rosewood grips. To top it off was an extra cylinder for .45 Colt. It was numbered to the Colt, but its factory box mentioned nothing about it. Someone who knew what they were doing had slicked up its action and given it a very fine 2-lb. trigger pull.

It doesn't require one of those "brain scientists or rocket surgeons" to realize that single-action revolvers are just fine for shooting rimless cartridges. It just took a mite for the idea to catch on in my mind. All handguns accepting straight (or very slightly tapered) rimless rounds have a ledge in their chambers so the front edge of the case has a place to seat. Then with



The Taurus Model 905 9mm came with three 5-round "moon" clips.

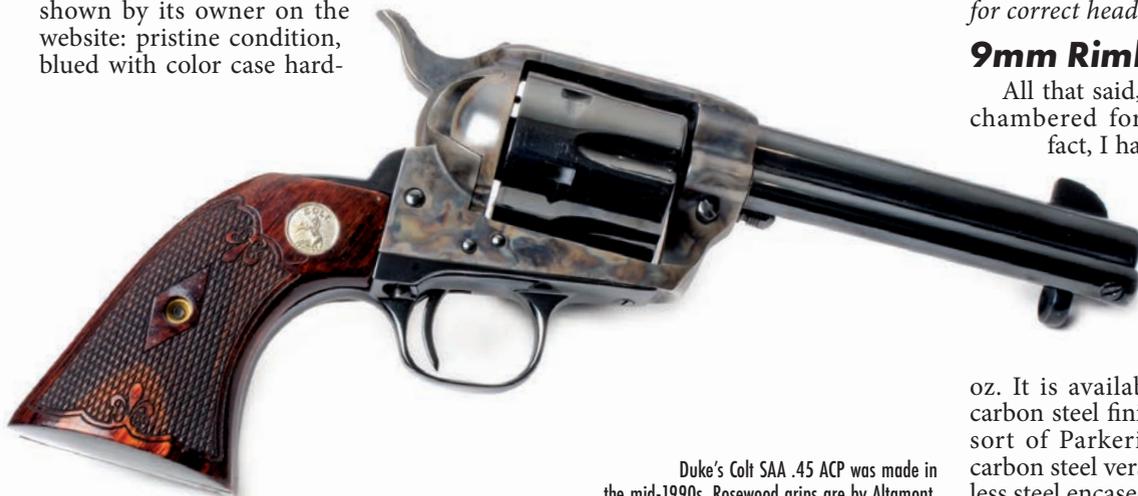
a traditional single action, after the case is fired, there is that handy ejector rod in its housing on the right side of their barrels. It pops empties out with a simple push of a finger. There is one factor of which handloaders must be aware. *Do not roll crimp handloads because that case mouth must be there for correct headspacing.*

9mm Rimless

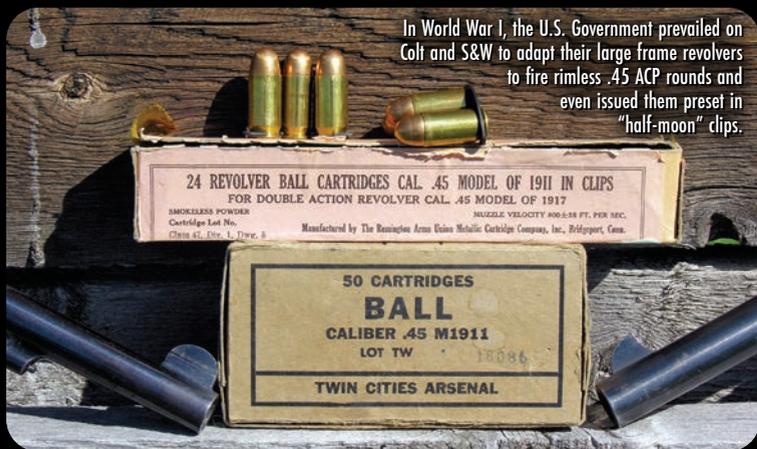
All that said, there are also revolvers chambered for 9mm Parabellum. In fact, I have one here on my desk.

It's a Taurus Model 905; small frame, double action, five shot with 2" barrel. Unlike most current snub nose revolvers, the 905 is all steel, which gives it a weight of 21

oz. It is available as stainless steel or carbon steel finished with a matte black sort of Parkerizing. Incidentally, the carbon steel version's barrel is also stainless steel encased in a shroud.



Duke's Colt SAA .45 ACP was made in the mid-1990s. Rosewood grips are by Altamont.



In World War I, the U.S. Government prevailed on Colt and S&W to adapt their large frame revolvers to fire rimless .45 ACP rounds and even issued them preset in "half-moon" clips.



Although in a pinch, the Taurus Model 905 will fire 9mm rimless rounds without the "moon" clips, the empty cases cannot be ejected normally without them.

Model 905 grips are checkered rubber with striations down the back. Sights are pure service revolver — groove down the frame's top strap and 0.130" wide front blade. As normal with a side-swing double action revolver, a push button on the frame's left side releases the cylinder. As with those big .45s from 1917, there has to be something to push when extracting empty cases. Those are five round "moon" clips furnished with the 905.

Out of curiosity, I loaded the Taurus with five 9mm rounds but sans the "moon" clip. They fired perfectly but, of course, had to be hand-plucked from chambers. This revolver can be used in a pinch without clips. Mine came with three clips; my intention is to order more. The Model 905 is a well-made and nicely finished little revolver. My only complaint is the trigger pull. As is normal nowadays, manufacturers give their handguns rather stiff triggers. My 905's single-action pull is 5½ lbs.

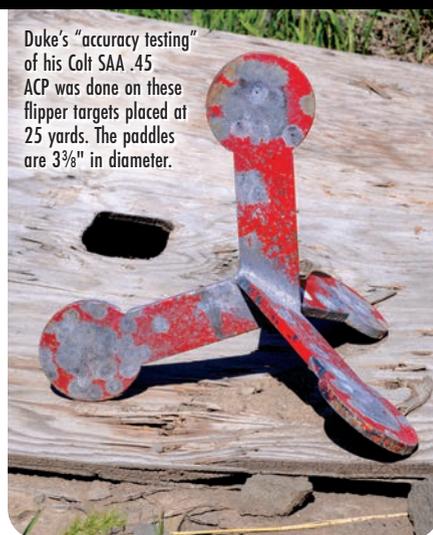
A handgun such as this 905 is meant for self or home defense at short range. I see no reason to sit at a bench rest and shoot groups with it. Therefore my shooting, except for some chronographing, has been at steel plates. Functioning has always been perfect.

Also at hand when chronographing 115-grain FMJ factory loads by Federal and Black Hills was an S&W Model 39 with 4" barrel. The Federal factory load clocked 1,175 fps from the Model 39 and 1,107 fps from the Taurus. Black Hills' factory load gave 1,203 fps from the 4" semi-auto's barrel and 1,133 fps from the revolver's 2" barrel. I think a loss of only 70 fps from the shorter revolver barrel with its barrel cylinder gap is impressive.

Which Cylinder?

Now back to the Colt SAA .45 ACP. I've been shooting it with both cylinders, but again I haven't worried about group shooting since my Colt SAAs are essentially just for recreational use. However, I have targets at 25 yards called flippers. They have 3⅞" steel paddles at the ends of three legs. Hit the high one, and one of the others flips. I've had no trouble hitting the paddles with the SAA using either cylinder — as long as I make a smooth trigger pull. It might interest detail-minded readers that I checked both cylinders' chamber mouths. As expected, the .45 Colt cylinder had six 0.456" chamber mouths, but the

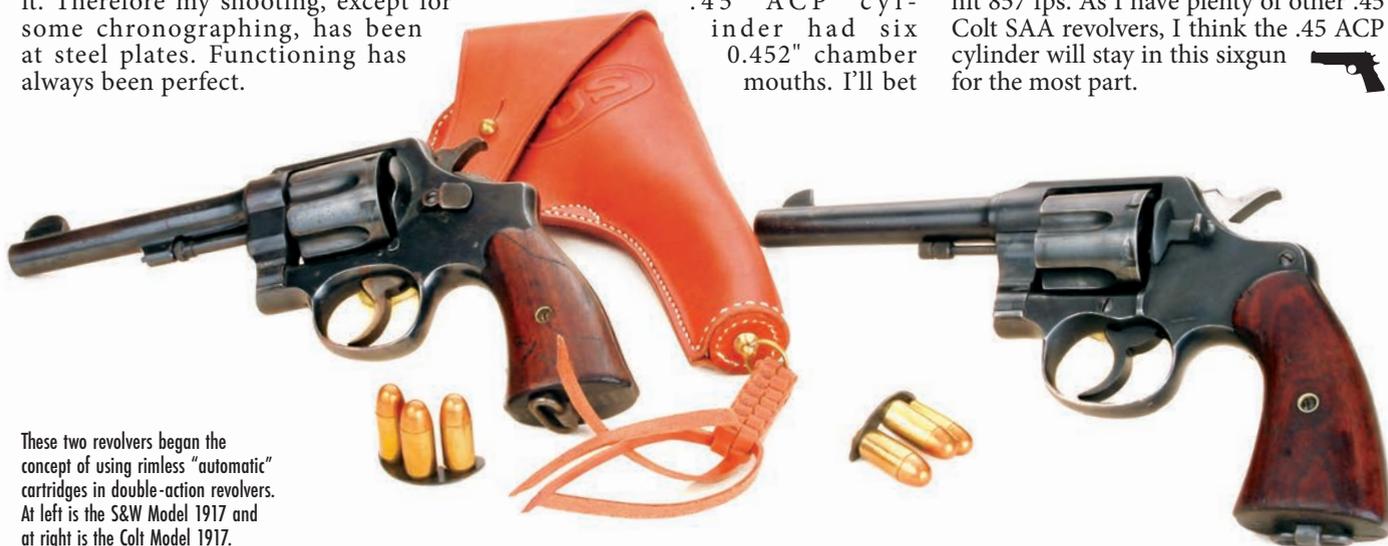
.45 ACP cylinder had six 0.452" chamber mouths. I'll bet



Duke's "accuracy testing" of his Colt SAA .45 ACP was done on these flipper targets placed at 25 yards. The paddles are 3⅞" in diameter.

could hard cash that when I get around to machine rest testing this SAA, the .45 ACP cylinder will deliver better groups than the .45 Colt one.

I did a minor amount of chronographing with the Colt. My favored "light" .45 ACP load uses 225-grain cast RN Oregon Trail bullets over 4.0 grains of Trail Boss powder. That load chronographed at 764 fps from the 4¾" barrel. Black Hills 230-grain FMJ factory loads hit 857 fps. As I have plenty of other .45 Colt SAA revolvers, I think the .45 ACP cylinder will stay in this sixgun for the most part. 



These two revolvers began the concept of using rimless "automatic" cartridges in double-action revolvers. At left is the S&W Model 1917 and at right is the Colt Model 1917.

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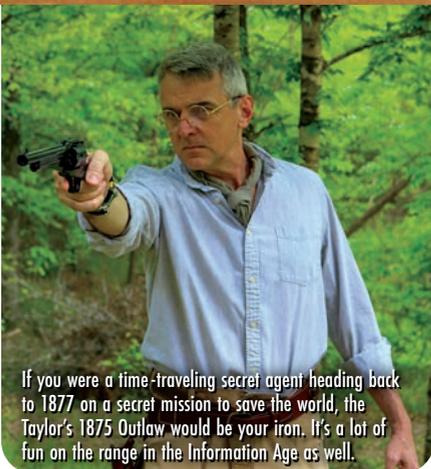
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THE TAYLOR'S 1875



WILL DABBS, MD

WILD, WILD WEST IN 9MM?



If you were a time-traveling secret agent heading back to 1877 on a secret mission to save the world, the Taylor's 1875 Outlaw would be your iron. It's a lot of fun on the range in the Information Age as well.

Taylor's & Company has built a well-deserved reputation for offering top-quality Western-themed firearms at reasonable prices. Their guns are the spitting image of their vintage counterparts while being built using modern materials and production techniques. With the explosion of interest in the SASS (Single Action Shooting Society), cowboy action shooting, and Old West reenacting, the market for vintage firearms has never been stronger. Taylor's newest offering is the 1875 Outlaw in 9mm Parabellum.

The 1875 Outlaw is a faithful rendition of the 1875 Remington single-action revolver. While the Colt Single Action Army got all the press, the top strap Remingtons were strong, accurate and reliable. In his prime, legendary outlaw Frank James rocked an 1875 Remington with a 7½" tube.

James used Remington revolvers during his service in the Civil War and held them in high esteem. In his words, "The Remington is the hardest and the surest shooting pistol made." Considering the source, that's pretty high praise.

As one might expect, Taylor's 1875 features a beautiful forged blued steel

OUTLAW REVOLVER

The Taylor's 1875 Outlaw is a 9mm Parabellum rendition of a classic Old West-era Remington wheelgun. The workmanship is sublime.



frame and barrel, a two-piece walnut grip and the gun's characteristic webbed ejector rod tube. However, that's where the old stuff ends. This 1875 is chambered for the more modern 9mm Parabellum cartridge.

Georg Luger designed the 9mm Para in 1901. Despite its being well over 100 years old, this compact yet powerful round is the most-produced centerfire pistol cartridge on the planet today. When charged with modern high-performance loads, the 9mm 1875 Outlaw is soft-shooting while projecting plenty of downrange thump. The synergistic combination of the Taylor's 1875 Outlaw and the 9mm Parabellum is the perfect solution to some unique defensive challenges.

Wild, Wild West

Artemus Gordon took an Uber to the front gate of the unmarked government facility in rural Virginia. He thanked his driver, a Pakistani national named Tanvir, who was working to bring his family over from Faisalabad, and exited the vehicle with his day bag. Tanvir

asked what he was doing out so far in the country, and Gordon simply answered work. That was not altogether untrue.

Gordon flashed his credentials to the security officer in the simple metal building unnecessarily. He and Eddie had known each other for several years now. Ever since meeting the TDA recruiter at the Delta compound at Fort Bragg, Captain Artemus Gordon, formerly of the U.S. Army Special Forces, had spent most of his time working at this top-secret facility. TDA stood for Time Displacement Administration.

Gordon found his deployment clothes waiting in the locker room as expected. He changed out of his 5.11s and Under Armour in favor of long john underwear, rough homespun, and a pair of well-aged boots. He checked his pockets one last time to ensure he had sanitized himself of everything made in the 21st century, powered off his smartphone, and secured it all in his locker. His deployment briefing was scheduled in 10 minutes.

The fixed firing pin on the hammer is period correct but necessitates leaving an empty chamber under the hammer when packing the gun.

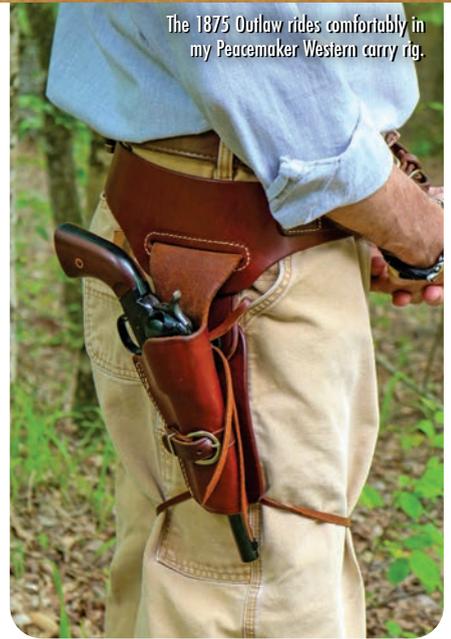


Miguelito Quixote Loveless would actually be born in St. Petersburg, Russia, in another seven years. He was the reason Artemus Gordon was about to step into the time displacement apparatus and reappear in 1877 to meet his counterpart James West. West was already deployed and waiting, though "waiting" was a relative term when time machines were involved.

Dr. Loveless was a malignant dwarf with a genius IQ and a propensity for megalomania. He had developed and exploited theoretical time displacement along a parallel arc from the U.S.



The Remington Model 1875 Single Action Army was a direct competitor to the more familiar 1873 Colt Peacemaker.



piece of high-end television bridged the gap between traditional Westerns and the burgeoning spy genre. Its creator, Michael Garrison, first pitched the show as "James Bond on horseback." The end result was vintage TV gold.

The *Wild, Wild West* was part comedy, part action/adventure and part unfiltered fantasy. In crossing such disparate genres, this groundbreaking production helped usher in the steampunk era. The original show did not, to my recollection, involve time travel. However, if Jim West and Artemus Gordon did need to arm themselves in the Information Age to remain secure in the late 19th century, the Taylor's 1875 Outlaw 9mm seemed the right sort of iron.

The Gun

The original was technically the Remington Model 1875 Single Action Army or the Frontier Army. It was designed in direct response to Colonel Sam Colt's 1873 Peacemaker. Developed from the previous Remington Model 1858 cap and ball revolver, the Frontier Army kept the same rugged top strap design and webbed frame while incorporating a removable bored-through cylinder chambered for modern metallic cartridges. The original 1875 Remington was produced in .44 Remington Centerfire, .44-40 and .45 Caliber. Standard physical attributes included a fluted cylinder, walnut

government and sent himself back to the late 1800s to sow chaos. Like so many psychopaths, Loveless wanted to rule the world. However, he was insightful enough to realize this was an unreasonable aspiration in the interconnected digital age. To wield truly supreme power, he would have to start somewhat earlier. Gordon and West were tasked to stop him by any means necessary before he disrupted all subsequent time streams.

The briefing was a formality. Like an astronaut, Gordon had trained for this particular mission for months. He drew his weapons and equipment from the TDA quartermaster and packed it all to his liking inside a brace of shopworn leather saddlebags. He carried a change of clothes, a straight razor and toiletries, and \$1,000 in vintage gold pieces. His weapon was a modern 9mm rendition of the tried-and-true Remington 1875 revolver.

The gun had been a special order with markings that reflected the period. The cartridge was chosen for its proven controllability, accuracy and downrange effectiveness. He dropped five Winchester

PDX-1 Defender hollowpoints into the cylinder and slid the gun into his well-used low-ride leather thigh rig. It rode there like a piece of his anatomy. Gordon dropped another 200 loose rounds into a cloth sack and stowed them in his bag.

Once he was satisfied everything was as it should be, Gordon stepped onto the glowing platform and smiled at the technician. Her name was Monica. She was a gorgeous strawberry blonde whose number he had secured in his phone. With a nod, she energized the coils, browned out half of the Eastern seaboard, and sent CPT Artemus Gordon back to meet his friend in 1877. If all went as planned, Gordon and West would be back in two weeks with Dr. Loveless neutralized. If they failed, then everything and everyone he had ever known, including Monica, would likely just cease to exist. No pressure ...

Details

The *Wild, Wild West* ran for four seasons from 1965 through 1969. Coming just as the golden age of Hollywood Westerns began to wane, this inspired



The parentage between this Remington 1858 cap and ball revolver (pale grips) and the subsequent cartridge-firing 1875 is obvious.



stocks, a blued or nickel-plated finish and a lanyard ring. Barrels were offered in 7½" and 5¾" versions, though the longer tube was much more common.

The Taylor's 1875 Outlaw loads from the right side via a loading gate in the manner of a Peacemaker. The rimless 9mm Para cartridge head-spaces on the case mouth. This makes the round fairly impractical in guns that utilize a star ejector. However, with a manual rammer-style ejector like that of the 1875 Remington, the gun ejects empties in much the same way as it might in vintage rimmed chamberings.

The gun weighs 2.7 lbs. and is just over a foot long. The ample firing pin is built into the hammer just like the originals. Packing the gun with the hammer down over an empty chamber just channels some of that Frank James ambiance.

The rear sight is a fixed notch ground into the frame. The barrel is rifled 1:16" with a right-hand twist. The diaphanous single-action trigger breaks like a little girl's heart and the deep-blued finish is simply gorgeous.

Ruminations

The biggest difference between the Taylor's 1875 Outlaw 9mm and more conventionally chambered wheelguns is that ammo is soft-shooting and cheap. FMJ 9mm blasting bullets cost a fraction of what .45 LC might. Additionally, as this is a single-action revolver, the gun really doesn't much care what you feed it. Lightweight polymer bullets, big 147-grain subsonics, or heavy, hot 124-grain SMG rounds, the 1875 Outlaw eats them all with aplomb. The combination of the sweet, crisp trigger and the gun's ample steel habitus makes it a sweet-heart on the range. Legit, I can see why Artemus Gordon would choose it. The 1875 Outlaw is an absolute joy to shoot.

When my kids would bring friends home from college to burn bullets, the machineguns always grabbed everybody's attention. However, at the end of the day, it was invariably the vintage wheelguns that kept everyone most enthralled. I honestly have lost count of how many times half a dozen rangy college guys had, like locusts, burned up all of my cowboy action bullets in an afternoon. Now thanks to Taylor's, you can get that same vintage single-action sweetness without breaking the bank. It's your key to  tasting the wild, wild west.

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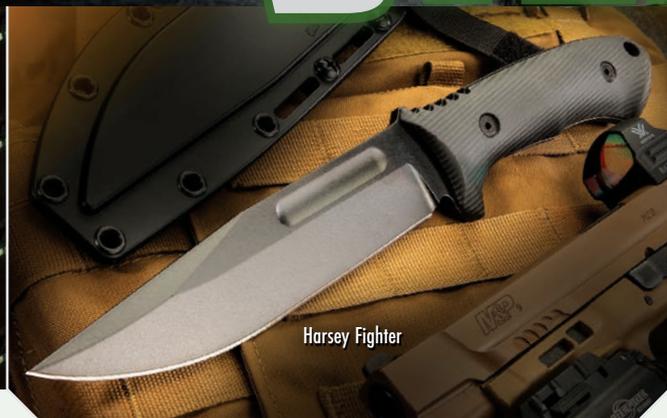
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Last time we checked in with the folks at Spartan Blades, they had formed Pineland Cutlery, Inc. with plans to expand their line by infusing more affordable cutlery alongside their already established upscale fare. That was two years ago, so we thought we'd contact Spartan co-founder Curtis Iovito for an update. According to Curtis, it has exceeded their expectations. "We have enjoyed threefold growth since the formation of the company," Curtis informs *Handgunner*. "Pineland Cutlery, Inc. doing business as Spartan Blades, has enjoyed continued growth after the formation

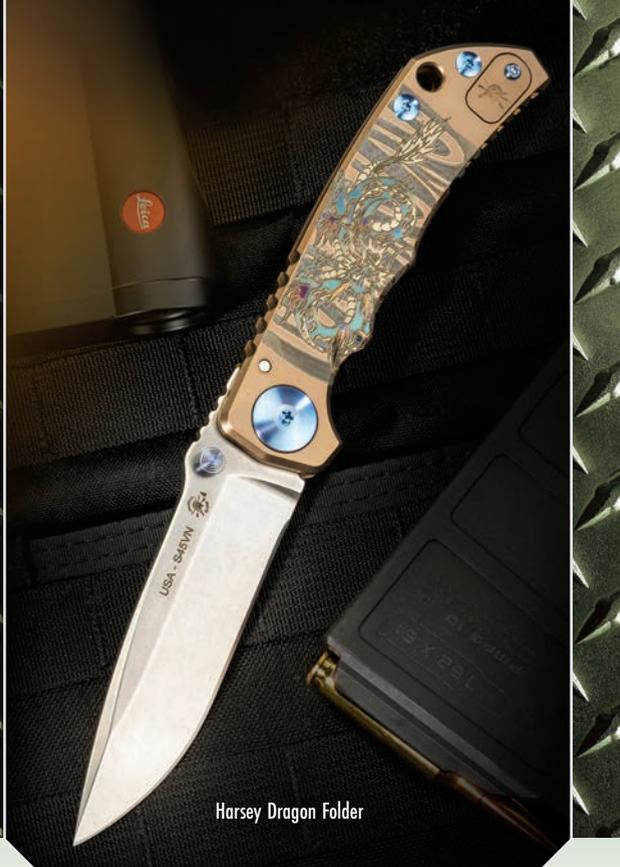
of the company. We have introduced several new products into distribution with distributors such as Blue Ridge Knives and Davidsons, allowing for the ease of purchase by small gun shops and retailers, which has added to growth."

Part of that rapid growth can be attributed to a joint venture with KA-BAR Knives to expand the line. "The development of new products continues, and the synergy between Spartan Blades and KA-BAR in the Pineland Cutlery venture is strong," explains Iovito. "We released several new products this year, one of which is a MagnaCut KA-BAR Fighting/Utility Knife, in our North Carolina shop. This will be the first super steel version

of this iconic knife. We joked last month that KA-BAR and Spartan Blades are still in the 'honeymoon phase' of our Pineland collaboration because we continue to enjoy working together and exploring new projects." Indeed, when I surfed the Spartan Blade website, the first thing I noticed was a much broader range of pricing, particularly on the entry-level side. Mission accomplished!

Legendary Tribute

The aforementioned newly minted version of the USMC Fighting/Utility Knife, dubbed the Spartan-KA-BAR, takes the enduring legend to new heights. It was at the request of John Stitt, CEO of



Harsey Dragon Folder



Carnivore Dining Set

both KA-BAR and Pineland Cutlery, to produce a modern version of the “KA-BAR” knife with increased edge retention, toughness and corrosion resistance — and the Spartan production team delivered. They chose CPM MagnaCut stainless steel manufactured by Crucible Industries of Syracuse, NY — the world leader in particle metal technology.

A refined version of the original, the Spartan-KA-BAR is 12.0" in overall length with the familiar flat Saber ground Clip Point blade with Fuller groove. Optional finishes are PVD — Tungsten DLC Flat Black or ZrN Flat Dark Earth. The 5.0" handle is true to the real McCoy upgraded to durable Kraton G with a 301 stainless PVD flat black coated guard and butt cap. Sheath options include a leather reproduction of the original military version or a thoroughly modern Kydex belt hanger in black or Coyote Brown.

Harsey Fixers

Noted knifemaker Bill Harsey has been an integral part of the Spartan Blades team since its inception. The slick 11.0" Spartan Harsey Fighter is one of his consummate works, exhibiting the fluid design from tip to tail that makes his knives so popular. The knife's 6.125" black powder-coated clip-point blade is 1095 Cro-Van high carbon steel with a Fuller groove parallel to the spine. The sumptuous 4.875" handle has Black GFN scales with nice palm swell and a diagonal ribbed pattern for enhanced purchase. Weight is very manageable at 11.5 oz. The Spartan Harsey Fighter belt sheath is injection-molded black polymer with a black Nylon drop loop

and retainer strap. A swing-out thumb lock at the rear guard further secures the Harsey Fighter in the sheath.

The Spartan Harsey Nessmuk takes the Harsey Fighter's superb handle and serves up a hunter's hard-nosed skinning knife. Designed primarily for large game, the Harsey Nessmuk's upswept, flat-ground blade features 1095 Cro-Van high carbon steel, black powder-coated for corrosion resistance and low reflection. An inch shorter than its Fighter stable mate at 10.0" overall, Harsey designed the unique Nessmuk blade with a slightly flatter profile to enhance its ability for all-round field use without sacrificing superb game processing capabilities. Weight is 10.88 oz. and the Harsey Nessmuk is delivered with an injection molded polymer sheath for both belt or MOLLE carry. Both the Spartan Nessmuk and Fighter are manufactured by Ka-Bar and reflect the company's goal of offering more affordable pricing in their line.

Finery And More

Spartan built much of its reputation on top-shelf tactical folders, and they still offer some of the finest in the industry. The Spartan-Harsey Folder — SHF model for short — is their flagship folding knife and demonstrates Harsey is every bit as talented designing folding knives as he is fixers. Lately, SHF fans have been treated to a bevy of Special Editions, and the exquisite Dragon model is featured here. The Dragon is based on the large SHF with a 4.0" Crucible Industries CPM S45V stainless super steel blade and 5.0" Titanium frame. This makes for a nice size canvas for the etched and multi-col-

ored anodized Asian dragon that graces the front slab. The dragon art is repeated on the rear slab, sharing space with a frame-lock mechanism and pocket clip.

Spartan also offers SHF 4.0" Special Editions in Asian Koi Fish, Viking Long Boat and Royal Flush themes. The smaller SHF 3.5" blade series folders can be had in a God and Country theme. If you want something more subdued you can simply go with a Chad Nichols Damascus blade with anodized gold or blue accents on the pivot, thumb stud, pocket clip and spacer screws.

Last but not least, if you find yourself eating on the run more often than you like, make it a pleasurable experience with the Carnivore Personal Dining Set. This sturdy, screw-together knife and fork duo is built for chowing down on the road or in the wild. Made of Japanese VG-10 stainless steel, don't be surprised if it outperforms your domestic fare, and should you need to sharpen the knife's edge, the Carnivore comes with a set of ceramic V-rods complete with base. The knife has a 2.125" blade and the G-10 handled pair of utensils clock in at 6.1". Everything tucks away in a durable black 4.31x2.63x.5" injection molded polymer case.

If you haven't meandered over to the Spartan Blades website lately you will be delightfully surprised. Call it "sticker shock in reverse." The company offers fixed-blade and folders for budgets large and small, plus tools and accessories — even their own blend of Spartan coffee. Promises made. Promises kept!



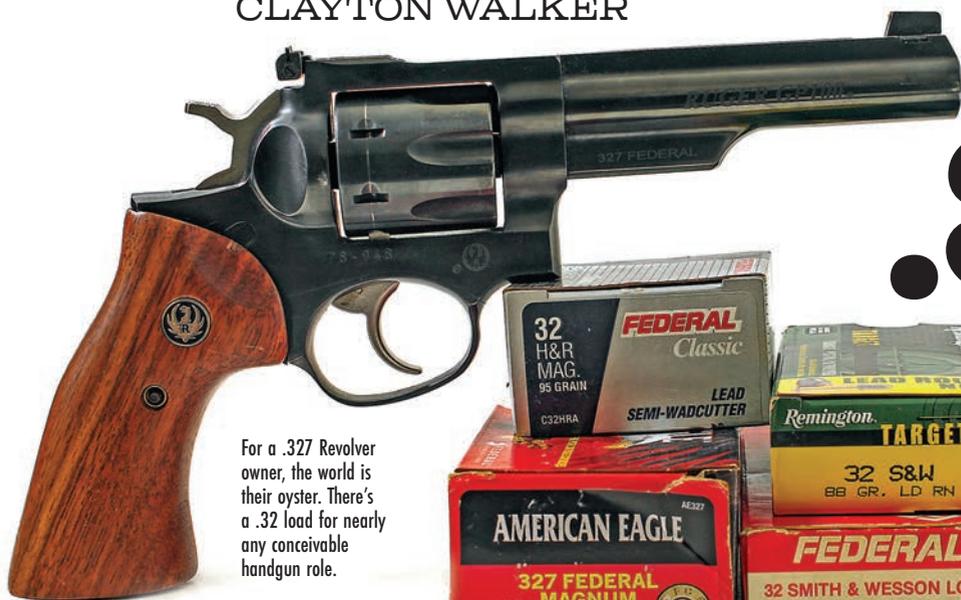
For more info: SpartanBlades.com

THE LONG AND SHORT

CLAYTON WALKER

OF THE

.32



For a .327 Revolver owner, the world is their oyster. There's a .32 load for nearly any conceivable handgun role.



CARTRIDGE FAMILY

Certain cartridges are beloved for good reason. Consider the 9mm: While it's over 100 years old, it offers adequate power and good accuracy without being overwhelming to the novice. Additionally, just about every shooter will come to own a firearm chambered in .22 LR, at which point they'll join a club of devotees who love the affordability and utility rimfire guns provide.

Oppositely, if there were a Rodney Dangerfield award offered to a particular caliber, it would go to one of the oft-marginalized .32 family of cartridges. As the late comedian might say, "Let me tell ya: They don't get no respect at all."

This is a shame, to put things mildly! Just as a .357 revolver can safely fire .38 special rounds, so too can a .32-caliber revolver fire any round *in the family* shorter than its designated chambering. Additionally, I'd argue each of the four

cartridges — the .32 S&W "Short," the .32 Long, the .32 H&R Magnum, and the .327 Federal — has something to offer today's shooter. When you put them all together, the versatility is unmatched.

Today, let's look at the growth of the .32 family, literally and figuratively.

The .32 S&W

It all begins with a cartridge invented in 1878, meaning the diminutive ".32 short" is older than automotive mufflers, contact lenses and ballpoint pens.

Though it was first chambered in Smith and Wesson's "Model one-and-one-half," it's best associated with the company's top-break Safety Hammerless model — as well as just about all of that gun's imitators, including Iver Johnson, H&R, and too many Belgian clones to name. The .32 short was also a popular caliber for many turn-of-the-century derringers.

By anyone's standards, the cartridge is antiquated and anemic, pushing an 80-grain bullet at about 700fps. (Allegedly. Out of many short barrels, it's probably closer to 550 or 600 fps.) This was the quintessential "card table



Projectile variety hints at the various roles of the cartridge family, from cheap plinking to self-defense, small game hunting and serious competition.

Left to right: The .32 S&W "short", .32 Long, .32 Magnum and .327 Federal.



distance" round, and it was barely adequate at that task. As a morbid piece of historical trivia, President McKinley was laid low thanks to two rounds of an assassin's .32 S&W, though most doctors would argue the resultant gangrene did the heavy lifting.

Surprisingly, the .32 S&W is still obtainable today as a special-order cartridge, thanks largely to the millions of .32 top break revolvers still floating around (and their owners, who are always morbidly curious as to what kind of accuracy they can wrangle out of these old guns).

I certainly wouldn't trust a .32 short to stop a charging elephant, but surprisingly enough, they do have utility in 2023. This is the lowest recoiling centerfire cartridge of which I am aware. Out of a S&W K-Frame or GP-100, it's comically sedate, which makes it perfect for shooters very young, very old, or for those who are otherwise extremely recoil averse. If you want a round that positively removes fear and apprehension from a new shooter, the .32 short is an excellent choice.

The .32 S&W Long

Without a doubt, playing around with the .32 Long was my own "gateway drug" to the .32 family, and I'd recommend a newcomer start here. I found myself in the possession of a few S&W I-Frames: This was the company's predecessor to the J-Frame, a gun that defined the ".38 snub"

If you've never thought a tiny gun could be accurate, get yourself a .32 caliber I-Frame immediately. I have shot better with my little .32 than I have with many .22s, and it's not hard to understand why: Recoil is minimal. With just a little more oomph than a .22, the .32 Long avoids the "toy gun" feel that leaves many nonplussed about rimfire firearms, though the lack of bite and snarl allows *pistoleros* of all ages and skill levels the ability to shoot as long as they wish.



While anemic in power, the .32 S&W can provide flinch-free fun and has utility as a training round.

European shooters have their own love affair with the .32 Long. In fact, a bewildering number of exquisite, Olympic-grade target pistols are chambered for the cartridge. Ballistically, most loads peter out just past the 50-yard line, but within that distance, the round can offer the right shooter a winning edge thanks to its shootability and inherent accuracy.

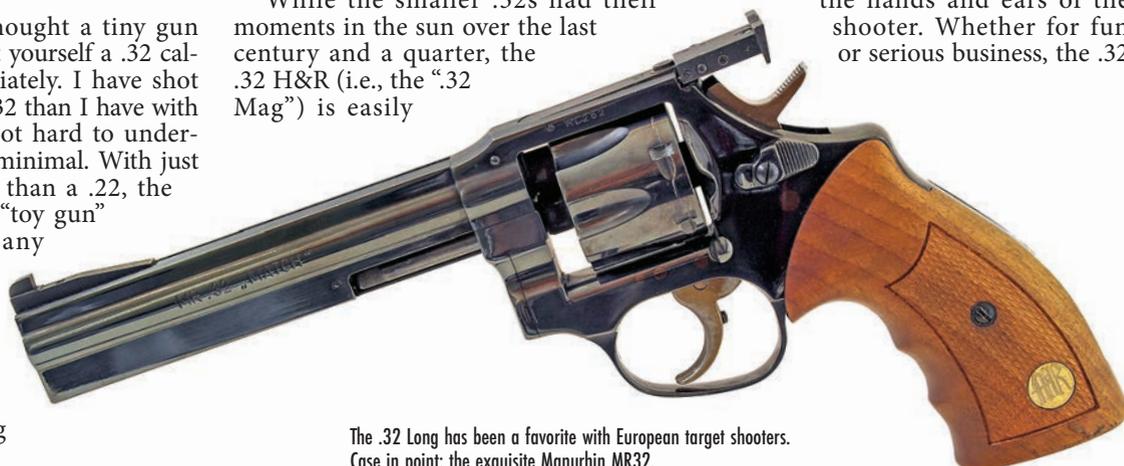
Additionally, quite a few knowledgeable hunters have extolled the .32 Long as a superb small game cartridge. It's a little more reliable than a .22 (both in terms of humane killing power and ignition, thanks to a centerfire primer), and it doesn't tend to destroy much meat. Squirrels and jackrabbits beware!

The .32 H&R Magnum

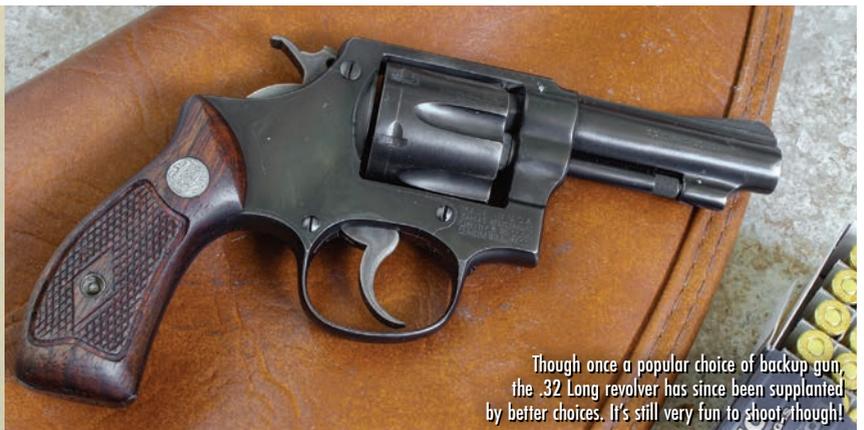
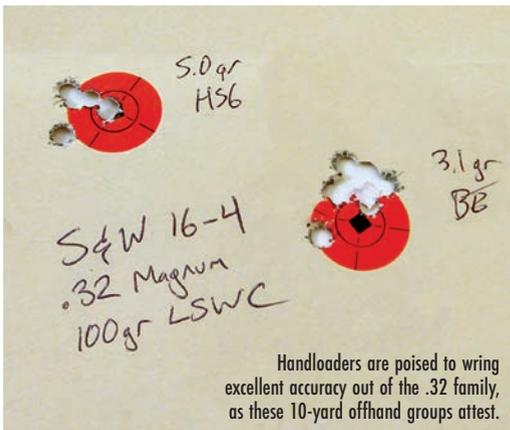
While the smaller .32s had their moments in the sun over the last century and a quarter, the .32 H&R (i.e., the ".32 Mag") is easily

the most maligned of the group. As the story goes, the round was designed for the more, "ahem," economical H&R revolvers that lacked the metallurgical strength of Smiths or Colts. As such, its relatively modest SAAMI pressure ceiling of 21,000 CUP hamstrings its performance. Officially, the standard .32 H&R load will propel an 85-grain projectile at about 1,100 fps, though hotrodders have bumped those velocity numbers by a few hundred in guns capable of handling the extra pressure.

On its own merits, the cartridge is a superb Goldilocks round. It has enough power to be pressed into a self-defense role, but has less muzzle rise than a .38 Special. When it fuels a range day, the .32 Mag makes for a flat shooting and very accurate round that's still easy on the hands and ears of the shooter. Whether for fun or serious business, the .32



The .32 Long has been a favorite with European target shooters. Case in point: the exquisite Manurhin MR32.



Though once a popular choice of backup gun, the .32 Long revolver has since been supplanted by better choices. It's still very fun to shoot, though!

Mag offers palpable performance over the .32 Long without much additional noise or recoil.

Good luck finding either the guns or the cartridges on store shelves, though; the list of revolvers specifically chambered in “.32 Magnum” is exceedingly short, and what few models exist are often bid into the stratosphere by collectors. Worse yet, demand for the family’s middle child is destined to remain low, especially when many feel the .32 Mag lives in the shadow of its biggest brother.

The .327 Federal

Having cut my teeth on the other .32s, it was only a matter of time before

a GP-100 in .327 Federal ended up in my possession. The cartridge is the latest and longest iteration of the caliber family, and it puts up some impressive numbers: The textbook factory load propels a 100-grain bullet at 1,500 fps. Talk about flat shooting!

Essentially, the .327 was created to fulfill a very particular niche: Its smaller diameter allows just about every manufacturer to fit an additional round in a revolver cylinder. Thus, the snub nose shooter gets six shots to solve his or her problems instead of five, while the owners of full-sized revolvers like Ruger’s GP-100 find their sixguns transformed into seven-

shooters. Ruger’s Blackhawk in .327 Federal does one better and stuffs 8 rounds into the cylinder.

Performance-wise, the .327 will shoot about like a +P .38 Special but offers terminal performance closer to the .357 Magnum. Ballistic testing of the .327 Federal has shown it to be a truly excellent round for self-defense — particularly out of snubbies, where the round retains impressive velocity and expansion characteristics even with less than 2” of barrel to work with.

There’s no such thing as a free lunch. The .327 operates at more than twice the pressure of the .32 Magnum (45,000 psi vs. 22,000 psi), meaning it’s loud. Addi-



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tionally, expect stickier brass and more difficult extraction if, like me, you go a little longer between cleaning sessions or if you shoot other members of the .32 family through the gun. The extra pressure really seems to smooch fired cases into any debris left in the cylinders.

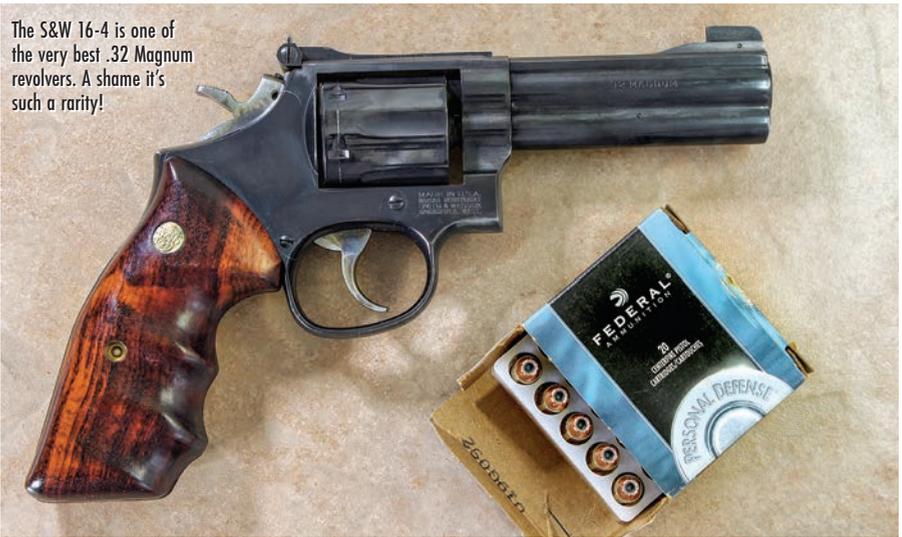
Additionally, bear in mind the .327 Federal is frequently paired with very small, very light guns. Remember: These are purpose-driven tools! While a tiny revolver in .327 may be more manageable to shoot than one chambered in .357 Magnum, I still wouldn't expect it to be particularly "fun" when it's screaming out of a 17-oz. platform.

Versatility Defined

While the .327 Federal gained quick accolades from gun writers and other industry types, it's a shame the general public hasn't responded with similar love and affection — at least so far. With any newly introduced cartridge, there's always a Catch-22: Firearm manufacturers don't want to make guns in a caliber nobody's heard of, and ammunition manufacturers need to know there's a broad base of new gun owners ready to buy their wares.

As a result, choices of revolvers in .327 Federal are fewer than I'd like. In the same breath, I think reloaders are

The S&W 16-4 is one of the very best .32 Magnum revolvers. A shame it's such a rarity!



a little more poised to capitalize on the strengths of the .32s than those buying factory ammo — that's not to say it can't be done for one lacking presses, projectiles and powder; it's just going to take some serious shelf hunting.

However, if a person is lucky enough to find and feed a .327 Federal or .32 Magnum revolver, they'll have a true "do it all" gun. With just a few different boxes of ammo, one platform can be used to train a young shooter, dispatch small game, punch paper, and defend

life and limb. While it might seem like this is one of those "Jack of all trades, master of none" situations, the truth is a gun like my Ruger GP-100 or S&W 16-4 handles all of these disparate jobs remarkably well!

I'll leave you with this: It's said that friends are the family you choose. Supposing you choose to explore the .32 cartridge family, it's very likely you'll find a lifelong range companion you had no idea you were looking for!



An advertisement for Edbrown.com featuring a silver and blue FX2 handgun. The handgun is shown in a close-up, angled view, resting on a dark, textured surface. The Edbrown logo is prominently displayed in the top left corner, and the text "FX2" is written in large, bold letters on the right side. The bottom of the advertisement includes social media icons for Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, along with the text "Custom Handguns and Accessories".



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ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY NOVEMBER 30, 2023 WINNERS CHOSEN BY RANDOM DRAWING. Limit one entry per household. To protect the privacy and security of winners, their names will NOT be made public. Contest void where prohibited by law. Winners must undergo a background check and comply with all other federal, state and local laws. Taxes and fees will be the responsibility of the winner. Contest open to U.S. residents only. Employees and agents of Publishers' Development Corp. are not eligible. No purchase necessary. Winners will be notified by certified mail on official letterhead. Winners must respond within 30 days of receiving notification or an alternate winner will be selected. Attention deployed military: use stateside address! Giveaway guns and accessories may have evidence of being test fired or exhibit minor handling marks. Factory warranties may apply in some cases. The *Handgun of the Month* package is awarded only to the entrant drawn and will not be awarded if the firearm presented is illegal in the jurisdiction of the winner. An alternate, authorized winner will be selected. No substitutions or transfers to a third party are allowed. **UNABLE TO ENTER ONLINE?** Mail a postcard with your name and address (no envelopes please) to *American Handgunner*, GOM November/December 2023, P.O. Box 1926, Escondido, CA, 92033.



SCAN TO ENTER



In this issue's giveaway, the focus is on the *Masada Slim* from IWI US. Our top prize is a compact, polymer striker-fired, easily concealed pistol with the same modular, serialized, high-grade steel trigger mechanism housing concept as the full-size *Masada*. This scaled down version has a white front dot and blacked-out rear sight and the slide uses RMS Shield optics cut for direct optic mounting options. Additional features include a flat trigger, clean and crisp break, positive reset and built-in trigger safety. The *Masada Slim* is offered in 9mm caliber, includes two 13-round magazines (10-round in restricted states).

If you win the *Masada Slim*, you will need ammo. So we're adding two boxes of *Liberty Overwatch 9mm* to this giveaway. Liberty Ammunition created the *Overwatch* line at the request of a government agency seeking deeper penetration while still creating a devastating hydrostatic shock event. Precision CNC turned solid copper projectiles feature an Open Cavity Design to promote delayed rupture. This ammo is lighter to carry, hits harder and gets to the threat faster.

The *Spartan Harsey Folder* is a reliable 6AL4V titanium frame-lock knife with a 3.25" CPM S45VN blade. This hand-crafted folding knife is coated in DLC, or Diamond-Like Carbon, for strength and durability.

The *Masada Slim* from IWI US, the *Liberty Overwatch 9mm* ammo and the *Spartan Harsey Folder* are prizes worth your while. Click on AmericanHandgunner.com/giveaways or head to the post office to mail a post card. —Jazz Jimenez

MASADA SLIM

MANUFACTURER: IWI US, INC.; IWI.US; (717) 695-2081
CALIBER: 9MM, CAPACITY: 10 OR 13; BARREL LENGTH: 3.4", OAL: 6.25";
WEIGHT: 1.27 LBS. WITHOUT MAGAZINE
VALUE: \$450

SPARTAN HARSEY FOLDER 3.25

MANUFACTURER: SPARTAN BLADES
SPARTANBLADESUSA.COM; (910) 757-0035
VALUE: \$415

LIBERTY OVERWATCH 9MM

MANUFACTURER: LIBERTY AMMUNITION
LIBERTYAMMO.COM; (941) 567-6178
VALUE: \$40 PER BOX OF 20

TOTAL VALUE: \$945

FAMILY NAMES

Seen the news lately? Not since 1865 have Americans held each other in such unfettered contempt. Vigorous disagreement morphs into abject hatred. Politicians weaponize ideas and neighborhoods burn. Ours is a most dangerous time. However, it is not without precedent.

My grandmother once related a particularly moving story. Mom's people hail from Alabama and represent a long line of Godly altruistic folk. Incidentally, our family also makes exceptionally pretty girls.

Vaughn is a common name amongst my clan. Mom had a great uncle named Vaughn. However, that's a fairly atypical moniker hereabouts. Its wartime origins are tragically fascinating.

Amidst the madness that was the American Civil War, a Union cavalry unit was riding hard through rural Alabama, sowing chaos. Along the way, one young Federal cavalry officer caught a ball. His wound was serious though not life-threatening. However, mounted mobile warfare in the 1860s was legendarily hard. This young man's injury meant he could not keep pace with his comrades.

Warfare then was a very different beastie from what it is today. Combat medicine was in its infancy and organic

support for wounded soldiers was minimal at best. In the case of ram-paging cavalry formations, such stuff was nonexistent. In desperation, this officer's commander beat on the door of a random homestead and demanded the family therein feed his men. He then dropped the wounded soldier off and ordered those inside to care for him — on pain of death. The rest of the unit then galloped off to complete their mission. The Yankee soldier's first name has been lost to time. However, he was a Major, and his surname was Vaughn.

Christian Charity

This young man was an enemy combatant and their world was at war. However, his injury rendered him helpless. In the face of such the family provided what support they could, dressing his wound and availing him of food, drink and a warm place to sleep.

The war had gone on for several long years already and all the young men of military age were off on far-flung battlefields prosecuting it. What remained in this tight-knit agrarian community were men past their prime and the women. Word got out in short order there was a wounded Yankee officer recuperating at the homestead.

Amongst this family, chosen at random by a passing Union cavalry commander, was a certain fetching young lass. Though no photographs survive, she was said to be quite a looker. As history would attest, she had a soft heart to match when faced with the prospect of this inadvertent helpless houseguest she was tasked with most of the nursing.

Aside from his wound Major Vaughn was strapping and healthy. With a little attention and good Southern food, he healed both rapidly and well. A ringside seat to all-out war is a terrifying thing. Through the retrospective lens of history, we know how it all turned out. At this time and in this place, however, every day offered new uncertainty.

There was no real plan. Major Vaughn's unit was long gone. He

didn't even have a horse. They just lived moment to moment and the injured man grew incrementally stronger each day. As is the nature of things, as time went by, these two young people, cursed to have been born in the absolute wrong places at the absolute wrong time, developed a mutual fondness. In short order, that fondness evolved into something else. In such a small rural community, such developments could not go unnoticed. That the flower of Southern womanhood might be beguiled by one of the cursed Federals was more than the local men could bear.

Something Truly Horrible

Late one night, the men of the community came together and approached the family farm under cover of darkness. Social mores were markedly more civilized then than is the case today, so Major Vaughn slept in an outbuilding. The local vigilantes surprised the hapless young man before he could make a sound.

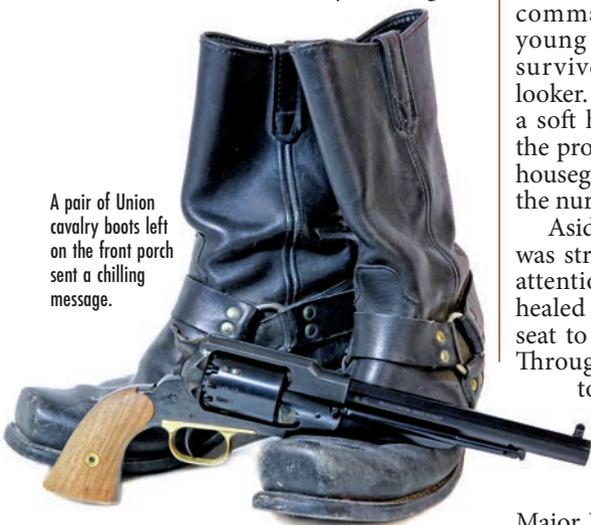
They trussed the recuperating soldier up and frog marched him out into the woods. The following morning the young lady discovered the Major's distinctive high cavalry boots deposited on the front doorstep and immediately appreciated their significance. The woman was heartbroken on a scale few normal folk can comprehend.

Denouement

Eventually, this war, like all others, finally ground to its bloody terminus. Those young men of the community who survived made their way back home and one of them eventually successfully wooed this fair lass and married her. When she first gave birth, it was to a son. She insisted he be called Vaughn. In addition to being pretty, our women can be comparably headstrong. And that is how my expansive Southern family came to be so liberally peppered with men named Vaughn. 

Get more Guncrank free every Friday. Subscribe here: AmericanHandgunner.com/guncrank/

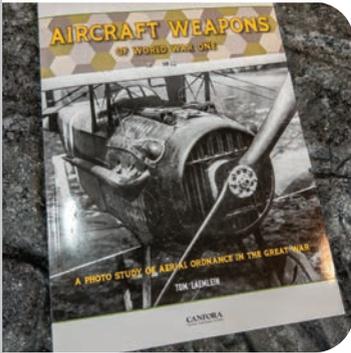
The American Civil War touched the entire country in one way or another. The detritus of this bloody conflict remains in the American Deep South even today.



A pair of Union cavalry boots left on the front porch sent a chilling message.

GUNNYSACK

AIRCRAFT WEAPONS OF WORLD WAR ONE



You might recognize the author of this book — Tom Laemlein. He writes for FMG Publications, often using cool pictorials to tell historical stories.

Here's his newest — an up-close and personal look at weapons used from the very beginnings of aerial combat. The incredible period photos within

tell the story of armed conflict in the air, from the days of hurling bricks at passing enemy planes to mounted automatic weapons of the skies.

Of particular interest to *Handgunner* readers are stories about the use of 1911 pistols in the air. Using 20-round extended magazines and a fitted cage to catch ejected brass, the .45 saw some use, arguably ineffective, against combatants in the air. Oh, and the cage? That kept brass out of the props of pusher-style planes. The other side was known to use "artillery" P08 Lugers with stock and 32-round drum magazines. The 9mm for plane-to-plane combat was less than potent. *Canfora.se*

XS SIGHTS R3D 2.0 TRITIUM SIGHTS

New stuff from XS Sight. With all the recent announcements, XS is becoming even more of the leading DIY gun upgrade company.

The new version of the R3D sights is designed with special lead-in areas on the sight dovetail combined with a crush zone. The idea is to make it even easier for people like you and me to install the sights at home without special gunsmithing tools. The net effect is, according to the company, a 50% reduction in force required to put the sights in place and (usually) no need for filing or sanding. Of course, XS offers affordable sight installation kits and bundles too.

The R3D 2.0 offers a sizable Tritium front dot surrounded by an orange or green photoluminescent ring for light-to-dark transitions. The rear sight has even brighter Tritium lamps set in a blacked-out, serrated rear body that reduces glare. A vertical rear ledge can be used for emergency slide manipulation. *XSSights.com*



REAL AVID SMART-JAWS

First, you have to have the greatest general-purpose gun vise ever invented — the Real Avid Master Gun Vise. If you don't have one, go get one. I'll wait.

Now upgrade the vise "sleeves" to the new Smart-Jaws

Reversible Multi-Fit sleeves — the "grippy" part that covers the steel vise jaws and protects your work from scratches and scrapes. The originals were pretty darn useful with closed cell foam on one side and hard plastic on the other — great for holding stuff firmly but gently and with a flip, rock solid for higher torque work.

The Smart-Jaws add new dimensions. On one side, the very firm infrastructure is covered with lightly textured, thin, rubberized material. Use this when you need flat surfaces for gripping. The opposing sides have various grooves of differing sizes cut horizontally, vertically and even diagonally — also rubberized. This is great for barrels, bolts, retaining rods, pins — you name it.

The handiest vise just got handier. *RealAvid.com*



GUNZEE HOLSTER CUSHION

Pokey IWB holsters got you down? IWB carry is great for concealment and gun retention, but many of the Kydex models can poke and stab sensitive body parts as you move throughout your day.

The GunZee Holster Cushion is a three-layer foam sheet, just over 3/8" thick, which attaches to the body side of your holster and separates skin from hard plastic. The material is closed cell foam, so it's durable and can be cut to shape if you like.

Instead of the entire GunZee backing being covered with sticky material to attach to the holster, the company provides separate and narrower, hook and loop sheets. This allows you to configure and cut (or not) the pad to any size you like without worrying about sticky stuff extending beyond the holster body. In short, you can run with an "oversize" pad that wraps around sharp holster corners.

GoGunZee.com



RUGER'S SUPER WRANGLER

The Ruger Super Wrangler using .22 SGB (Small Game Bullet) loads is more than adequate for close-range varminting.



The .22 Long Rifle cylinder is easy to distinguish from the Magnum cylinder at a glance due to the band around the front edge of the former.



This carved silver tin can by the late Sid Bell captures perfectly the idea of plinking.



That wonderful year was 1953. A young William Batterman Ruger changed the face of sixgunning forever. Four years earlier, he brought forth a .22 semi-automatic pistol for half the price of those being offered at the time, and it shot just as well or better. The year 1953 was also time to take another path — to resurrect the single-action sixgun. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, television swept across the country, and much of the airtime was taken up showing old Western movies. Viewers wanted single-action sixguns, and they were not to be had. Ruger stepped into the breach and offered the Single-Six.

Single Six Revolution

Bill Ruger always seem to read the pulse of the public perfectly and he certainly did in 1953 as he was wise enough to bring out a sixgun that operated and

felt like a Colt Single Action Army. However, rather than chambering for an expensive-to-shoot centerfire cartridge, he instead scaled down everything but the grip frame to .22 size. The grip frame was virtually identical to the Colt Single Action and although the new Single-Six was a traditional single action with a flat loading gate that was opened to insert cartridges and an ejector rod for shuckin' empties, the lockwork was redesigned to use all coil springs eliminating the breakage-prone flat springs of the Colt. The action was so strong that when a Single-Six was hooked up to a machine that would continuously cock and dry fire the single action .22 as a display at that year's NRA Show, the machine finally broke. Bill Ruger now had a second winner on his hands.

Perhaps just to show he wasn't perfect, Ruger changed the Single-Six and not for the better. The perfectly shaped Colt Single Action-style grip frame, which had been entitled the XR3, was changed to the XR3-RED, allowing more room between the back of the trigger guard and the front strap. For most of us, it was ill-conceived, and I have a parts box with the new grip frame and subsequent grips from several post-62 Rugers, for which I replaced those parts with the original design. To be fair, there are those who actually like the newer grip design; however, for me, the original just seems to fit my hand close to perfection and also delivered less felt recoil.

By 1964, 10 years after the Single-Six first appeared, it still was just a great little sixgun with three versions available: .22 Long rifle, .22 Magnum only and a Convertible with both cylinders. How could they possibly make it any better? The obvious answer was to look to the sights. All versions available still had the rear sight in a dovetail allowing it to be drift adjusted for windage while the front sight remained the standard Colt SAA style. By now, Ruger had a full line of Blackhawks, all with adjustable sights; it was time to bring the .22 Single-Six up to the same

The Ruger Super Wrangler was test-fired with a variety of both .22 Long Rifle and .22 Magnum ammunition.



level. The result was the Super Single-Six, a Convertible Model with both cylinders and offered mainly with a 5½" or 6½" barrel, with the 4⅝" being rare.

The Wrangler

After offering the Single-Six for all these many years, someone at Ruger caught the same skill at reading the public pulse and came up with an alternative version of the .22 single action. The Wrangler has the basic Single-Six New Model lockwork and is also the same size. The original Ruger Single-Six was steel with an aluminum alloy grip frame. A Lightweight version of the Single-Six was also offered, and these are definitely collector's items today.

The Wrangler has an aluminum alloy mainframe and a zinc alloy grip frame, while the cylinder and cold hammer forged barrel are steel. The cylinders are blued steel, and the hammers and triggers are a silver finish; however, the rest of the Wrangler is quite colorful. The main frame, grip frame, barrel and ejector rod housing are not blued, stainless steel, or nickel-plated, but rather they are Cerakoted, just as many of the polymer-framed



The Ruger Super Wranglers are available in the three standard Wrangler finishes of bronze, silver and black Cerakote.

semi-automatics offered today. There are three models available. One is black; the other two are more colorful in Silver or Bronze Cerakote. I've been a blued steel/exotic grip guide for a long time; however, I find these new Rugers quite attractive.

Newest Iteration

Now Ruger has done the same thing with the Wrangler that they did with the Single-Six in the 1960s — adding adjustable sights. The newest iteration of the Wrangler is offered with a 5½" barrel and an auxiliary cylinder chambered in .22 Magnum. When the Wrangler first appeared, it came with a warning not to try to fit it with a .22 Magnum cylinder because of the alloy frame. This Super Wrangler has a stronger steel frame, and

the .22 Magnum and .22 LR cylinders are slightly longer than the originals, so the Magnum cylinder cannot be dropped into one of the original Wranglers. For now, at least, it is only offered in the one-barrel length but in all three of the original finishes.

The Super Wrangler has steel cylinders, steel barrel and now a steel mainframe. The grip frame is the same alloy as found on the original Wranglers, and the hammer and trigger are MIM parts. They are not interchangeable with the steel hammer and trigger found on the regular .22 Single-Six. As with all Wranglers and other Ruger single actions, the Super Wrangler Convertible is a New Model action with a transfer bar, which means it is safe to carry fully loaded.

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Targets fired at 17 yards with .22 Long Rifle and .22 Magnum loads.



All pre-New Model Rugers can only be safely carried with the hammer down on an empty chamber.

Ruger advertises the Super Wrangler will accept Single-Six grips. True? Yes, no, maybe. Going into my parts box, I tried several XR3-RED factory original grips as well as custom grips. They do fit, they feel more comfortable to my hand than the supplied plastic grips on the Wranglers, and they certainly looked better. However, the grip frames of the Wranglers are about 1/16" longer and protrude below older grips. The bottom

area of the backstrap also protrude slightly beyond the grip panel. I have several New Model steel grip frames in my parts box and am thinking of swapping these out for the grip frames that come with the Super Wrangler.

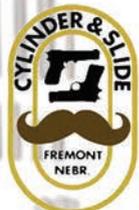
As they came from the factory, the Super Wranglers, just as the original Wranglers, have heavier trigger pulls than what I prefer. A Taffin Instant Trigger Job brought them down to right at 3 lbs. For test-firing, I went with 12 varieties of .22 Long Rifle ammunition consisting of both lead- and copper-

plated versions, as well as solid and hollow-plated examples. Sixguns and rifles both can be picky when it comes to .22 Long Rifle ammunition, so I always try to come up with plenty of samples to try. The best loads I found to be CCI Green Tag with a muzzle velocity of 939 fps and a 1" group; CCI SGB at 1,010 fps and the same group, while CCI Quiet .22, SK Pistol Match and Remington Yellow Jackets all came in at 1 1/8" with muzzle velocities of 612, 865, and 1,145 fps. This makes both the SGB and Yellow Jackets the ones to



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Original Wrangler cylinders are shorter than those found in the Super Wranglers.

reach for to use on varmints and small game. All targets were shot at 17 yards.

Switching to .22 Magnum loads, I had six varieties of ammunition at my disposal and I got the best overall results with all three sixguns using the Armscor HPs, which put five shots into 1½" with each of the three Super Wranglers with velocities running 1,248, 1,333 and 1,347 fps. My two most accurate loads were the Federal 50-grain HP giving a 1" group with a muzzle velocity of 1,089 fps. My choice for varmints and small game is the 30-grain Remington Accu-Tip with a 1¼" group at the muzzle velocity of 1,560 fps — the fastest speed recorded. The Maxi-Mag HP is just slightly slower; however, nowhere near as accurate.

A wise man at Ruger once told a group of writers, "No matter what we

make, someone wants something else." And yes, I do want something else, and that is a Super Wrangler Magnum "Cavalry Model" with the same features as the current Super versions but with a 7½" barrel. Meanwhile, I will enjoy these 5½" Super Wranglers and the 7½" Wranglers until the two are blended. The Wrangler has proven to be a very popular small-bore sixgun, so we could see more versions. Hopefully!

The MSRP for the Super Wranglers is currently \$329, while the Ruger Single-Six Convertible has a price tag of \$799. Going with the Super Wrangler leaves a big chunk of money for buying ammunition without sacrificing any operational features. It also has a finish that matches up easily with hard outdoor use. 



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LESSONS FROM A GUNFIGHTING TEXAS RANGER

SITUATION: Early in your life, you find yourself set against the most dangerous and vicious criminals of your place and time.

LESSON: You will be proud of stopping murderous violence. You will regret not being present when you might have been able to do so. And you'll find ways to do things differently and, sometimes, better.

The year 2023 is the 200th anniversary year of the Texas Rangers. James Gillett (1856-1937) wrote his autobiographical *Six Years With the Texas Rangers* in 1921. He is one of the few gunfighters of the Old West who left an account of his adventures in his own words. Remembered by firearms historians as the proponent of an unusual method for carrying a six-gun, his legacy includes more lessons than that.

Early Start With Firearms

Gillett wrote that at the age of 12, he bought an Enfield percussion musket for \$3.50. "It was almost as long as a fence rail, and at my age, I could not begin to hold it out and shoot it off-hand, so I had to use a rest ... I could cock my gun with both hands, but if I failed to get a shot, I was not strong enough to let the hammer down without letting it get away, so I had to carry it cocked. To keep from losing the (percussion) cap, I would take it off the tube and put it in my pocket until I had a chance for another shot," he wrote. Gillett added that a year later, "I bought a double-barrel shotgun for \$12. With it, I killed quail, ducks, and other small game, all of which I sold on the streets of Austin. By the fall of 1870, I was 14 years old and could handle a gun rather well for one of my age."

Gillett became a working cowboy at about age 16, and it wasn't long after that he joined the Texas Rangers. It was 1875, and he would have been about 19. He was not the only teen to join that storied band. The youngest Texas Ranger killed in the line of duty, as historian Tom Clavin reports in his book *Follow Me To Hell: McNelly's Texas Rangers and the Rise of Frontier Justice*, was L.B. "Sonny" Smith, shot and killed at age 17 by rustlers in a pitched gun battle in June of 1875. Other Rangers avenged the death, shooting the young man's killers "to doll rags" in the parlance of the time.

First Blood

One element of a Texas Ranger's job description in that time and place was "Indian Fighter." It was a couple of months after young Smith's death that Jim Gillett got into his first shootout, a battle between a company of Rangers and a group of well-armed Indians. Wrote Gillett, "The captain with a smile turned to us and said, 'Boys, they are going to fight us. See how beautifully the old chief forms his line of battle.' From a little boy, I had longed to be a Ranger and fight the Indians. At last, I was up against the real thing, and with not so much as an umbrella behind which to hide, I was nervous. I was awfully nervous."

Gillett continued, "In a minute, we had killed two horses and one Indian was seen to be badly wounded." The situation devolved into the Rangers pursuing their foe, both on horseback. Gillett related, "The redskin riding behind would point his gun back and fire at me, holding it in one hand. I retaliated by firing at him every time I could get a cartridge in my old Sharps carbine. I looked back and saw Ed Seiker coming to my aid as fast as (his horse) would run. He waved encouragement to me. Finally, the old brave ceased shooting, and as I drew a little closer, he held out his gun at arm's length and let it drop, probably thinking I would stop to get it. I gave it but a passing glance as I galloped by ...

I drew up within 20 steps of the brave, jumped from my mount, and made a sort of random shot at the horse, Indian and all. The big .50 caliber bullet struck the Indian pony just where its head coupled on its neck, passed through the head, and came out over the left eye. It killed the horse at once, which fell forward 20 feet."

Continued on next page

AYOOB FILES

Then, wrote Gillette, “By this time Ed Seiker had arrived and was dismounting. The fugitive warrior now peeped from behind a tree, and I got a fine shot at his face but overshot him 6”, cutting off a limb just over his head. He broke to run again, and as he came into view, Ed placed a bullet between his shoulders. He was dead in a minute ... Seiker scalped him. We took his bow, shield, and a fine pair of moccasins.”

Fleeing Felon

In December of 1877, the Rangers were after a murder suspect named Dick Dublin. When they caught up with him, Gillett wrote, “We were so close upon Dublin that he had no time to mount his horse or get his gun, so he made a run for the brush. I was within 25 yards of him when he came from behind the wagon, running as fast as a big man could. I ordered him to halt and surrender, but he had heard that call too many times and kept going. Holding my Winchester carbine in my right hand, I fired a shot directly at him as I ran. In a moment, he was out of sight.”

Gillett continued, “I hurried to the place where he was last seen and spied him running up a little ravine. I

stopped, drew a bead on him, and again ordered him to halt. As he ran, Dublin threw his hand back under his coat as though he were attempting to draw a pistol. I fired. My bullet struck the fugitive in the small of the back just over the right hip bone and passed out near his left collar bone. It killed him instantly. He was bending over as he ran, and this caused the unusual course of my ball ... We found him unarmed, but he had a belt of cartridges around his waist.”

Near Misses

There were times when Gillett was on the scene of famous gun battles but wasn't the man who pulled the trigger on the outlaw in question. Gillett was among the party that took down infamous outlaw Sam Bass. He wrote, however, “Bass' death wound was given him by Dick Ware, who used a .45 caliber Colt's long-barreled six-shooter. The ball from Ware's pistol struck Bass' belt, cutting two cartridges in pieces and entering his back just above the right hip bone. The bullet mushroomed badly and made a fearful wound that tore the victim's right kidney all to pieces. From the moment he was shot until his death three days later, Bass suffered untold agonies.”

Gillett was among the many who pursued the great Apache war chief Victorio, and reading between the lines

of the Ranger's autobiography, it's clear he wanted to be in on the kill of an enemy he considered responsible for the murder of many innocent settlers. Many whites in the West bitterly believed “the only good Indian was a dead Indian,” and Gillett's chapter on the Apache chief was, in fact, titled “Victorio Becomes a Good Indian.” The chief had been killed in a battle with Mexican forces. Gillett bore a grudging respect for Victorio and declared him a brilliant strategist. Such was the hatred — and occasional atrocity — that manifested on both sides of the Indian Wars on the 19th Century American frontier.

Kidnap Or ... ?

At the end of 1881, two Mexican brothers murdered a New Mexico newspaper publisher in Socorro and fled across the border. The brothers were spotted in El Paso, Texas, where their uncle was a judge. Gillett arrested one brother (and, mistakenly, another innocent man) and angrily refused the judge's bribe of \$1,000 to let his nephew go. A month later, acting on a tip, Gillett and fellow Ranger George Lloyd crossed into Mexico, seized the other killer brother, and brought him back across the border. The suspect was snatched from Gillett by a lynch mob and promptly strung up.

“Expedited extradition” or kidnap? Gillett answered that question himself.

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He wrote, "... I thought I might as well 'fess up.' I told (Texas Ranger Captain Baylor) I had arrested Baca at Saragosa and kidnapped him out of Mexico. Captain Baylor's eyes at once bulged to twice their natural size."

Though Gillett was not criminally charged for his action, it brought his six-year career with the Texas Rangers to an end.

In Old El Paso

Gillett wrote, "Immediately on leaving the Rangers, I had accepted a position as a captain of guards on the Santa Fe Railroad under my friend, Captain Thatcher. I did not remain long in the railroad's employ, however, resigning after a few months to become assistant city marshal under Mr. (Dallas) Stoudenmire (in El Paso). On his resignation as marshal, I was appointed to succeed him." Stoudenmire was unfortunately on an alcoholic downward spiral and soon got into a brawl with an ex-deputy named Page at the Acme Saloon. The local newspaper reported, "Stoudenmire drew his pistol and fired at Page; the latter, however, knocked the weapon upward, and the ball went into the ceiling. Page then wrenched the pistol from Stoudenmire and the latter drew a second pistol and the two combatants were about to perforate each other when Marshal Gillett appeared on the premises with a double-barrel shotgun

and corralled both of them." Stoudenmire would later die in another booze-fueled saloon shoot-out.

In the spring of 1885, Jim Gillett resigned from El Paso to go into ranching. He died peacefully at age 80 in 1937 at his ranch in Marfa, Texas.

When Jim Met John

We old gun guys consider the book *Triggernometry: A Gallery of Gunfighters* by Eugene Cunningham (1896-1957) to be a classic "must read" in the field. Younger gun guys and gals should consider it likewise. It was first published in 1941. Its author knew some of the last surviving Old West gunfighters. He dedicated the book to a pair of straight-shooting Texas Rangers who had personally mentored him. One was the legendary John Hughes. The other was ... Jim Gillett.

Cunningham wrote, "During (John Wesley Hardin's) transfer from one jail to another in the custody of Ranger Lieutenant N.O. Reynolds, the Ranger guards were very curious, as men of arms, to see what this wizard of the sixes could do. With Lieutenant Reynolds' grudging consent, they handed Hardin empty pistols and told him to show his stunts. Jim Gillett says nothing he had ever dreamed of compared with Hardin's speed and skill. The quick



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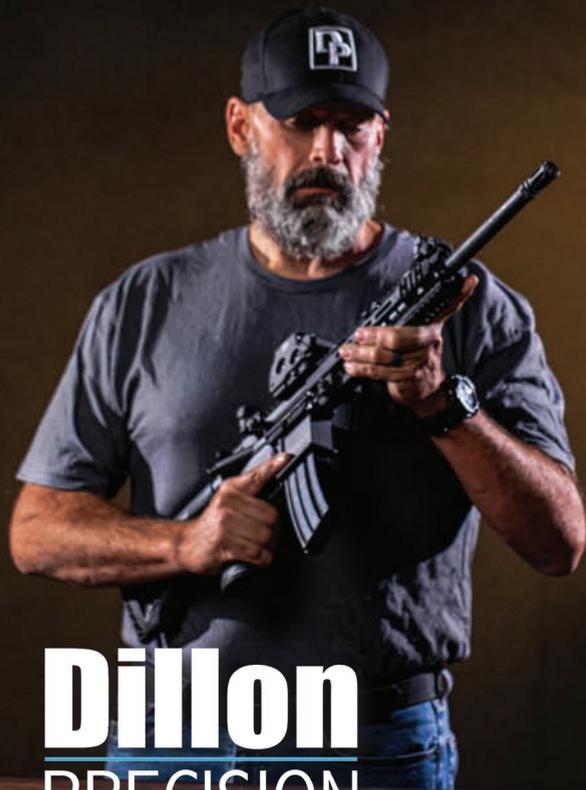
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draw, the spin, the rolls, pinwheeling, border shift — he did them all with magical precision.”

Though he was known to carry guns in many holsters or even stuffed inside his shirt, Hardin was famous for having designed and often worn a leather vest with holsters built in, butt forward, riding in a similar fashion to shoulder holsters. Gillett was clearly aware of this.

Added Cunningham, “When James B. Gillett succeeded Dallas Stoudenmire as chief of police of old El Paso ... (his admirers) presented him with a beautiful pair of white-handled double-action six-shooters, holstered in a John Wesley Hardin vest. Captain Gillett relates with much enthusiasm his pride in the outfit. He went back to his office and exhibited the vest and pistols to his deputies. They were impressed by the elegance of the rigout. They asked for a demonstration of Wes Hardin’s cross-arm draw. Gillett says he lifted his hands to shoulder level, then snapped them down, crossing each other to the butts of the new weapons. His hands interfered with each other. The pistols, coming out, clashed together. He tried it again and again, with little more success. Deputy

Marshal Scotten said gravely, ‘Jim, that’s a tony rig-out ... We’ll bury you, later in the week, in that vest.’ ‘And I was having the same idea,’ Captain Gillett told me.”

Which leads us to ...

Gillett’s Quick Draw Rig

Cunningham quotes Gillett as having told him, “I had always worn a pistol in a belt holster, and I was used to drawing fast from that position. This was no time for me to be changing my style of drawing! I got out of that vest, and later it was raffled off. A little later, I put on a belt which carried two Colts without holsters. I like that belt better than anything I’ve ever used on the ground.”

Per Cunningham’s description, “On the belt is riveted a plate slotted to receive the hand-made pin-headed screw which replaces the regular hammer-screw of the single-action Colt. To carry the pistol, the pin is entered in the slot, and the pistol pushed back until the pin drops into the slight depression at the rear end of the slot. It hangs there, swinging easily.”

Cunningham continues, “I used to have to watch the gambling games,” Captain Gillett says. “So I’d sit on the edge of a table or on the bar in a saloon. I could swing the gun muzzles up or down, and they were out of the way and, at the same time, ready for

instant use. I could shoot the pistols — though I never had to — without drawing them, just as one shoots out of an open-toed swivel holster.”

Gillett was an innovative soul to the end of his days. *The Texas History Blog* notes, “(Gillett) had an active mind, and in 1936, he was issued a patent for a safe bathtub. It came equipped with a stout rope to be attached to the ceiling. If a user started to slip, he could grab the rope, steady himself and ‘utter a prayer of thanksgiving to Mr. Gillett’s patent,’ a newspaper account stated.”

Lessons

Regarding Gillett’s killing of Dick Dublin, we have to remember in that time and place, gunfire was considered an acceptable method to stop the flight of felony suspects. Dublin was wanted for the murder of two men and, until that day, had proven exceptionally elusive.

Remember, too, Gillett’s account of Dublin reaching as if for a concealed handgun when the Ranger shot him. This is known in our time as a “furtive movement shooting.” This movement is reasonably consistent with reaching for a gun and not reasonably consistent with anything else when considering the totality of the circumstances. The rule has always

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been, "You don't have to be right; you have to be reasonable." Sadly, today there are prosecutors who charge "good guys" who shoot "bad guys" under these circumstances, notwithstanding having graduated from three years of law school and passing a bar exam. Perhaps such things were better understood in the 19th Century.

Today, the anti-gun movement wants to ban young adults aged 18 to 20 from purchasing even rifles or shotguns. They advance the theory the human brain is not fully formed and capable of responsible decision-making until age 25 or so. Gillett's experience long ago gives the lie to this. He became a Texas Ranger in his late teens, was quickly promoted to sergeant, and was appointed the chief law enforcement officer of the city of El Paso at the age of 25. His skill at arms learned very early stood him in good stead when he had to fight for his life and to protect the innocent.

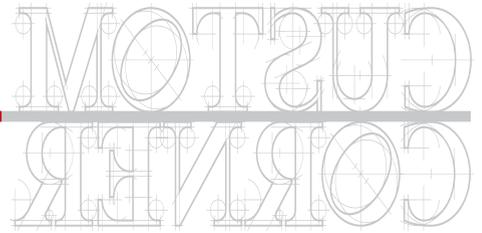
The racial hatred of the Indian Wars, and the atrocities known to be perpetrated by both sides, is apparent in Gillett's book. Dehumanizing the opponent is a characteristic of war. Gillett's attitude is a classic example.

Even in the 1880s, Gillett was miraculously lucky to escape charges for the kidnapping in Mexico. Sometimes justice and law are two different things. Gillett was lucky this breach of the latter cost him only his career with the Texas Rangers.

Oh, and the gun stud on the belt slot? That didn't catch on. One can picture the revolver flopping constantly, and not being where the hand reached for it if the draw was preceded by dynamic movement. A photo of Gillett during his Ranger years shows him wearing his 7.5"-barrel Colt single action .45 in a relatively high-riding leather scabbard on his right hip. Shooting from the hip, one rationale for Gillett's belt contraption has never been a sure thing. We note that when he shot the murder suspect Dublin, Gillett himself said he "drew a bead" first. 

Bibliography: Six Years With The Texas Rangers: 1975 to 1881 by James B. Gillett, ©1921, published 1925 by Yale University Press; Triggernometry: A Gallery of Gunfighters by Eugene Cunningham, University of Oklahoma Press, 1941; Follow Me to Hell: McNelly's Texas Rangers and the Rise of Frontier Justice by Tom Clavin, St. Martin's Press, 2023; The Texas History Blog, "James Buchanan Gillett, Texas Ranger" <https://texoso66.com/2016/09/15/james-buchanan-gillett-texas-ranger/>

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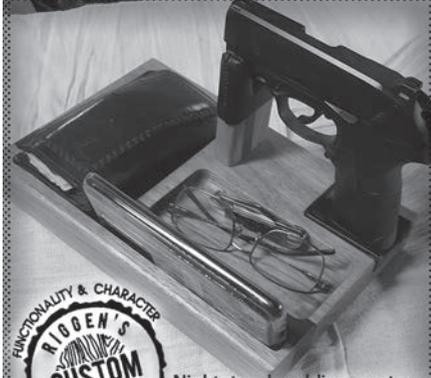


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Mission First Tactical's *Multi-Mount* allows users to mount essential equipment virtually anywhere. It is ideal for holsters, multi-tools, communication devices, flashlights, knives, tourniquets and more. Comes with a choice of 3M adhesive for hard mounting or a hook backer for use with a loop. The Multi-Mount easily attaches to almost any surface. Works with most 1.5" belt-clip equipment. MSRP: \$24.99. For more info: (267) 704-0001, MissionFirstTactical.com



AFTERSHOCK AUTOMATIC KNIFE

Telum Tactical



Telum Tactical announces the launch of its *Aftershock Automatic Knife*. Designed for tactical applications, the Aftershock boasts a 3.5" D2 black titanium-coated tanto blade with a flat grind and a contoured black G10 handle. A blue titanium-coated liner showcases Telum Tactical's support for police officers. Measuring 4.5" when closed, the Aftershock is finished with a reversible tip-up design pocket clip. MSRP: \$74.99. For more info: TelumTactical.com

HEIRLOOM 1911

Dan Wesson Firearms



Offered in a limited-production run, the Dan Wesson *Heirloom 1911* in .38 Super is adorned with decorative scrollwork on its black high-polished slide and frame. A brass front bead, Commander-style hammer and solid medium-length trigger add to its elegance. MSRP: \$2,399. For more info: (800) 955-4486, DanWessonFirearms.com

ORIGINAL BAMBOO

Duck Camp



Duck Camp's women's spring collection includes the *Original Bamboo Hoodie*. It combines soft viscose bamboo (66%), cotton (29%) and Spandex (5%) to achieve a comfortable weight feel for active pursuits. In photo, the Original Bamboo Hoodie in Woodland Camo. MSRP: \$69. For more info: (737) 270-7665, DuckCamp.com

RMR HD

Trijicon



With the same durability of the RMR, the Trijicon *RMR HD* is designed to meet evolving user needs. The top-loading battery offers convenience like never before, and the forward-mounted light sensor adjusts the reticle for light at the target. Within the same footprint as the RMR, it features an even bigger window to maximize the field of view, and a dot or segmented circle reticle. The RMR HD is everything you ever loved about the RMR, plus more. MSRP: \$849. For more info: (800) 338-0563, Trijicon.com

OZ9 V2 ELITE

ZEV Technologies

ZEV Technologies has launched the *OZ9 V2 Elite* series of pistols. The series offers modularity with a single Compact receiver that can be customized into 10 different configurations. The V2 combines the best of Gen 3 and Gen 5 parts, resulting in an integrated system with advanced performance. MSRP: From \$1,763. For more info: info@zevtech.com, ZEVTechnologies.com



GEN 2 INFINITY TARGET

Infinite Defense

Denser, Thinner, Stronger. This describes the 2nd generation self-healing target material used in the *Gen 2 Infinity Target*. The synthetic ballistic blend is 100% recycled, 33% lighter and 30% longer lasting than the original target. MSRP: \$129. For more info: InfinityTargets.com



GEN 2

HOLOSUN

SIZE MATTERS



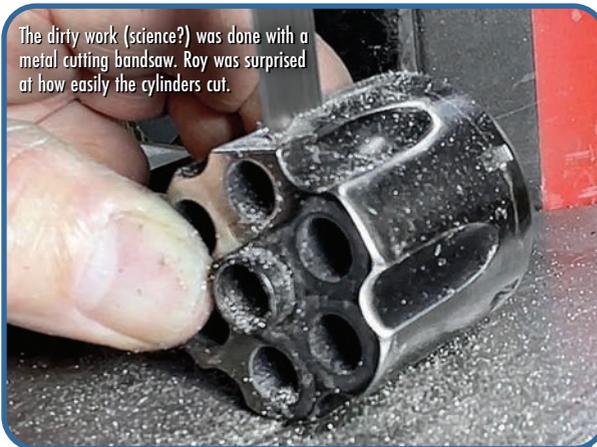
507 COMPETITION

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 shooters needs. Fits the 507C Optic Footprint.

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

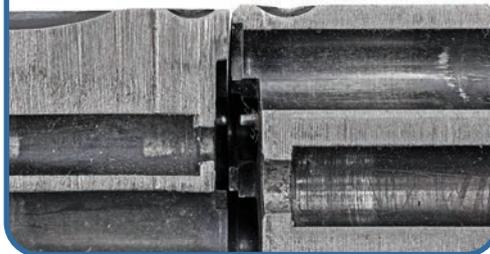
them in two, right at the cylinder bolt cut-out points. Keep in mind the 6-shot N-Frame's bolt cuts were right at the chamber points, while the 5-shot J-Frame enabled the bolt cuts to be in the steel *between* the chambers. Check out the photos.

Note the normal cylinder wall thickness on the N-Frame and the thinner section at the bolt cut. Thickness runs from 0.120" next to the bolt cut (full cylinder wall thickness) to 0.055" at the cut — essentially half the thickness, right where the pressure happens. The J-Frame is unaffected by the bolt cut, but you still have to behave when it comes to pressure since the cylinder walls at the chamber are still at factory specs and able to handle factory specified pressures.



The dirty work (science?) was done with a metal cutting bandsaw. Roy was surprised at how easily the cylinders cut.

J-Frame on the left, N-Frame on the right. Note the differences in where the bolt cut-out is placed.



Some Back Story

In 1917 the Model 1917 S&W .45 ACP revolver was the first to have a heat-treated cylinder. By 1920, heat treating was introduced on all the current models of the time. By 1945 new steels were developed, enabling S&W to stop having to heat-treat the cylinders. You can shoot standard velocity .38 Special loads, for instance, in all the old .38 special guns, but stay away from +P and high-performance modern ammo. The heat-treating allowed guns like the 38/44 to be introduced, leading to the .357, which had a heat-treated cylinder.

Here's a bit from a letter by D.B. Wesson (his great grandson, not the original DB), dated 1934, when responding to a customer letter asking about revolver cylinder strength:

"As a matter of fact, even in our larger calibers the steel as it comes from the mill shows a tensile strength in the neighborhood of 80,000 pounds, which does not make the additional strength gained by heat treating a necessity."

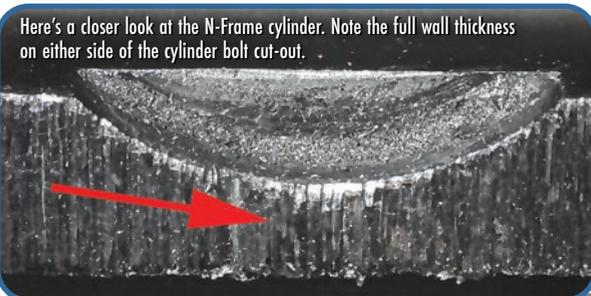
Before everyone started using stainless steel alloys today, most "gun steel" was and still is 4140 series. Interestingly

enough, most guns aren't hardened the way people think they are. For instance, I've heard Ruger tends toward Rockwell 35 (RC35) for their barrels and cylinders. For comparison, a good knife blade might be in the high 50s. Most other makers tend toward the 20 to 25RC range. I have also heard from techs that many (most) revolver frames won't even rate on the Rockwell "C" scale but will show up on the B-scale.

It's complicated to harden, then treat steel so it's not just hard (which means it's brittle) but also "tough" to withstand pressure. Most modern steels used in gun-making come from the supplier already hard and tough enough to do the job without additional treating needed. There are exceptions of course, but generally, the steel is plenty able to handle the pressures the *cartridges are rated at*.

I hope as you look at those thin cylinder walls under the bolt cuts it makes you think hard before you increase the next load "just a tad" to chase another 100 FPS. I honestly can't think of a time when an additional 50 or 100 FPS would make a significant difference in a bullet fired from a handgun, unless it was so slow as to be ineffective to begin with.

I always enjoy getting my hands dirty learning about stuff like this and I hope you learned a thing or two — just like I did. 



Here's a closer look at the N-Frame cylinder. Note the full wall thickness on either side of the cylinder bolt cut-out.

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GUN RIGHTS

Alan Korwin



WE'RE OVERDUE FOR AGGRAVATED INFRINGEMENT LAWS **NO MORE IGNORING THE CONSTITUTION**

Americans love the Constitution. It is the ultimate statement of righteous governance, with balances of power and brakes on tyranny. Our Founders said it will only work if we are a moral people. We all realize our morality has been slipping through our own lazy lack of attention and deliberate acts of the nation's enemies.

The Founders did not include punishment in this Grand Charter for failure to uphold the oath of office and failure to heed the terms of that contract. They presumed we would always cherish liberty, the rule of law, truth, and justice and behave in a moral way. All around us, though, we see evidence that people, especially in leadership, have strayed from decency and a freedom-oriented posture, pursuing power, wealth, personal agendas and even socialism.

Fix The Flaw

The fatal flaw — no teeth — must be corrected. Our precious rights are infringed constantly. You might argue minor infractions are no big deal or “necessary” for our safety, but infringements are infringements.

The few options in the Big C for setting the course straight have proven inadequate over time. Yes, you can vote out the offenders, but only every few years. Even the ability to spread information about the bad actors is controlled by the bad actors, so casting informed ballots has bordered on the impossible. Candidate selection is tainted.

Complicating the “just vote ‘em out” solution, communist dictator Joseph Stalin reportedly framed that problem: It doesn't matter who votes; what matters is who counts the votes. After 2020 many stopped trusting the system. Widespread proof of corruption exists, feebly denied against overwhelming evidence. The political left openly battles against certifying the electorate or requiring ID to cast ballots and seeks to allow foreigners to vote, flooding the nation with ineligible. Changing the rules, even the dates for voting —

without legislative acts — is standard now. These pernicious threats un hinge the safety valve of voting.

The arms we bear, specifically for the defense of liberty, have been eroded by propaganda, rewritten history, slandering firearms and conflating crime with guns. Even the size of the unelected, unaccountable bureaucratic state poses problems. Our firepower is not stemming the tide.

No Infringement

What America needs, what our Republic and Constitution need, is strict adherence to a policy of “No infringement shall be tolerated.” Small encroachments — like licenses to carry arms or speech codes — must subject people proposing such violations to penalties. Gross infringements like, “We're going to take away your favorite rifle — and of course, we'll keep ours,” require prison terms.

There is a fine line to draw here. Speaking about so-called “gun control,” with its bans, limits, conditions and Constitutional violations, is something we cannot properly deny. It is free speech. Talking about things must not be harmed; it must be held sacrosanct. But doing something that constitutes infringement and acting against our rights is another matter. Acts have consequences. Acts can cause harm. Harm is punishable. Punishment must reflect the degree of harm done. Unconstitutional “laws” are not law: *Marbury v. Madison*, 5 U.S. 137, 1803: “An act of the legislature repugnant to the Constitution is void.”

Norton v. Shelby County, 118 U.S. 425, 1886: “An unconstitutional act is not law; it confers no rights; it imposes no duties; affords no protection; it creates no office; it is in legal contemplation as though it had never been passed.”

Olmstead v. United States, 277 U.S. 438, 1928: “Men born to freedom are naturally alert to repel invasion of their liberty by evil-minded rulers. The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding.” (Quoted from dissent.)

Murdock v. Pennsylvania, 319 U.S. 105, 1943: “... a person cannot be com-

pelled 'to purchase, through a license fee or a license tax, the privilege freely granted by the Constitution.”

Shuttlesworth v. City of Birmingham Alabama, 394 U.S. 147, 1969: “And our decisions have made clear that a person faced with such an unconstitutional licensing law may ignore it and engage with impunity in the exercise of the right of free expression for which the law purports to require a license.” (Referring to free speech.)

Getting bills introduced that are de facto infringements, clear violations of delegated power, is Misdemeanor Infringement and cannot be tolerated. Quash such proposals if formally made. Voting for self-evident infringement or acting upon such once passed is Aggravated Infringement — knowing actions designed to deny rights and violate the Constitution. This is felonious behavior. Treat such acts as felonies:

How about this proposal? “Any elected or appointed official who introduces a proposal designed or capable of infringing upon the right to keep and bear arms, has committed Simple Infringement, a misdemeanor. Any effort to implement a new or extant infringement is Aggravated Infringement, a felony. These offenses apply to all other enumerated rights.”

Enacting Aggravated Infringement statutes may be difficult; they trash so much of what elite leadership is doing. But it's a shot across the bow, a call to action. We cannot remain asleep while evil woke folks take our rights, principles and nation. We must threaten our enemies with prison for blatant violation of their oaths and the strictly limited delegated powers we provide. This is what due process demands. 

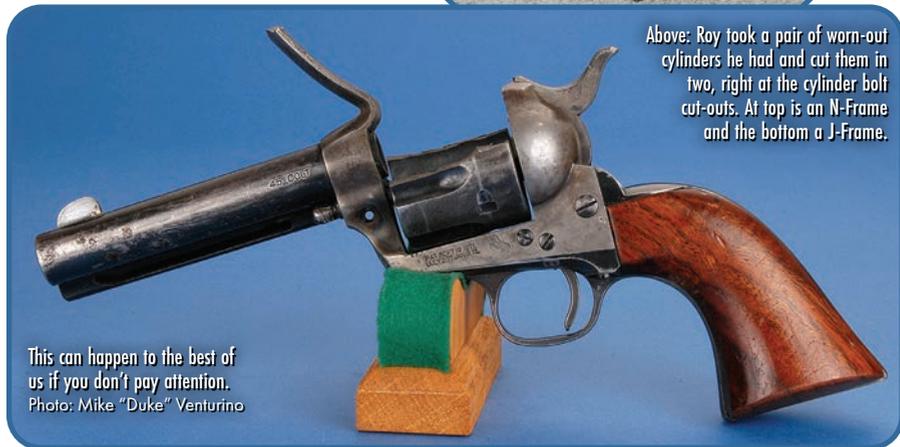
Award-winning author, writer, consultant and musician Alan Korwin has written 14 books, 10 of them on gun law, and has advocated for gun rights for more than three decades. Now writing his 15th book, Why Science May Be Wrong, see his work or reach him at GunLaws.com.



CYLINDER SAVVY



Above: Roy took a pair of worn-out cylinders he had and cut them in two, right at the cylinder bolt cut-outs. At top is an N-Frame and the bottom a J-Frame.



This can happen to the best of us if you don't pay attention. Photo: Mike "Duke" Venturino

I've always been confounded by shooters who chase velocity, pressure and "power" in handgun calibers. If you're developing a new cartridge, then indeed there are experiments to be made. Just ask Elmer Keith as he blew up old Colt single actions working toward the .44 Magnum. But for established cartridges like the .38 Special, .357, .44 Magnum, etc., virtually any standard velocity factory load will do whatever job needing doing. I've shot com-

pletely through deer, front to back, with a standard velocity hard cast .44 Magnum load. Why do we need more?

I hear comments like, "Well, that additional 65 FPS may make all the difference!" Difference in what? And what price tag does that additional velocity come attached to? I see people pushing their .38 loads into .357 territory, and their .357s into who-knows-where territory. Ditto for .44 Magnums, .45 Colts and even smaller calibers like the .32-20 or .32 H&R Magnum. They're always chasing some ultimate happy place for them where they finally think "Oh, I've arrived." Arrived where? Revolver cylinders are only "so" strong and are built to accommodate pressures as specified for the calibers they're chambered in. It's not good to play with Mother Nature.

A .500 S&W Magnum can handle 50,000 PSI, for instance. A .357 Magnum can safely handle 35,000 PSI, while the friendly .38 Special peaks at 18,000 PSI. The list goes on, of course. But what happens if you push that boundary? We've all seen photos of — or have experienced — a revolver cylinder

letting go. What's behind that and why does it happen? While there are a few good reasons you can get a "blow-up" gun, let's tell a short story first.

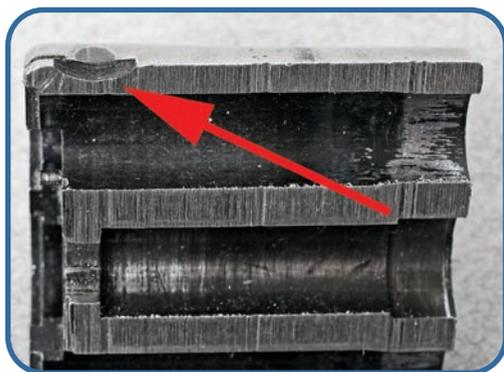
A Pressure Saga

I'm friends with a gent who spent some 25-odd years working for a big gun company who mostly made revolvers when he was there. He was hands-on, designing, building, doing quality control — the works. I brought up the concerns I have with people loading their revolvers too hot in pursuit of some velocity nirvana. He laughed and said, "If only they would think about those pesky cylinder bolt notches in their cylinders. In most guns, that cut is made right where a chamber rests, effectively cutting the chamber wall thickness there in half."

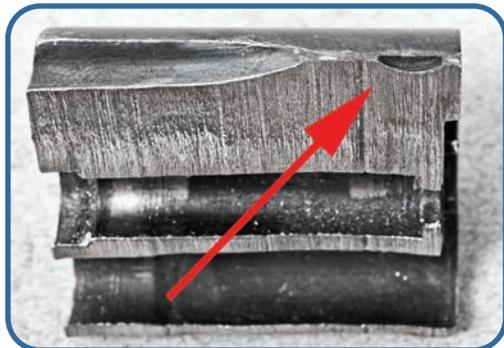
In half? "I've seen revolvers where that bit of steel at the bottom of the bolt cut-out is pushed out, convex, due to pressure from a proof round. And the amazing thing is that means it met specs for that gun."

It's a fine line we stride between "safe" and "scary" when it comes to revolvers, and astute regard for load data is critical.

So, to prove this point, I took an old J-Frame cylinder and an N-Frame cylinder I had I normally use to set up fixtures or tooling, and simply sawed

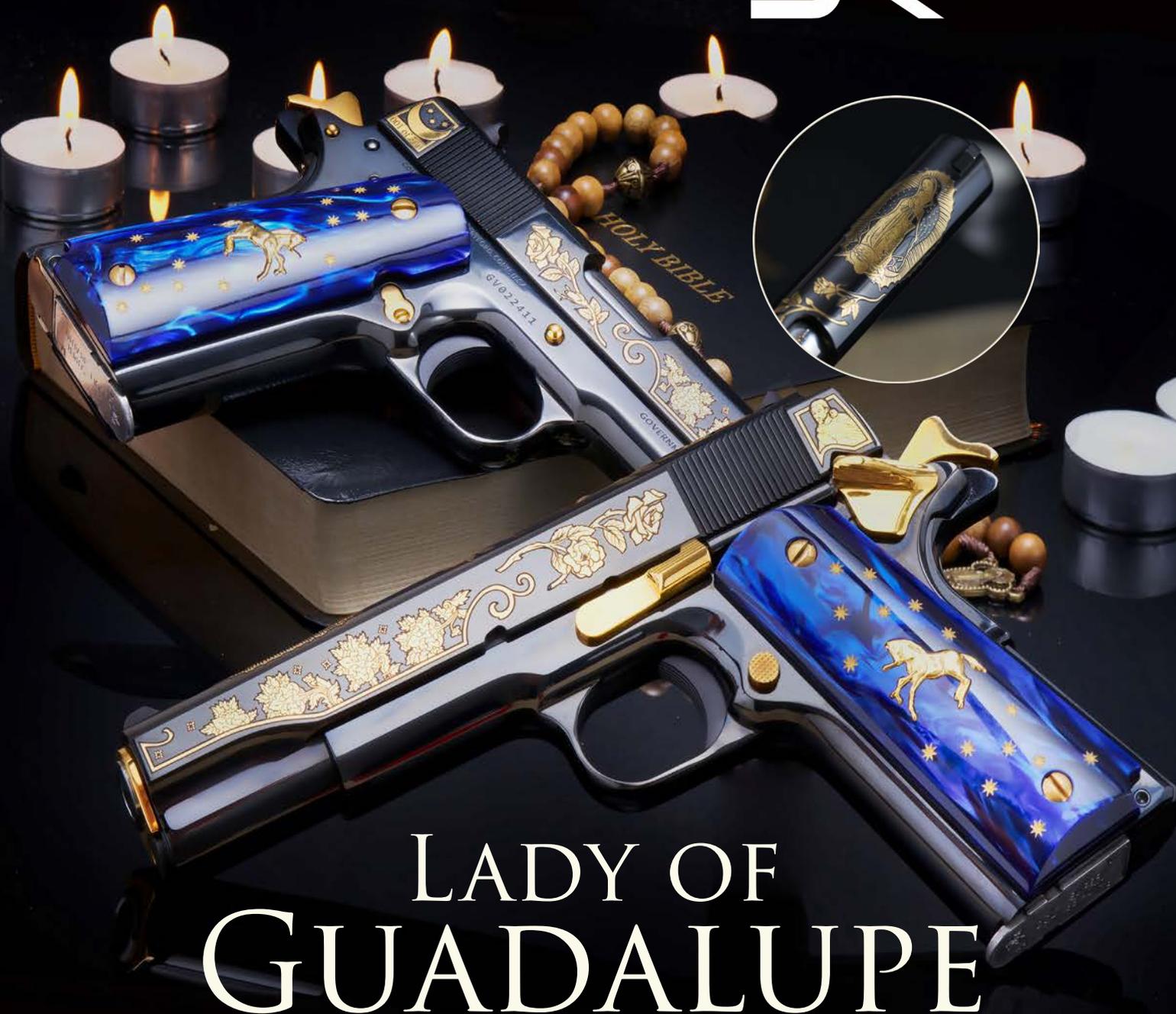


This is the N-Frame cylinder. Note the thickness of the cylinder wall under the bolt cut-out. Full dimension sidewall is 0.120" while the thin portion is 0.055".



Note the bolt cut-out is in between the chambers on a 5-shot J-Frame allowing the chamber walls to be full thickness.

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