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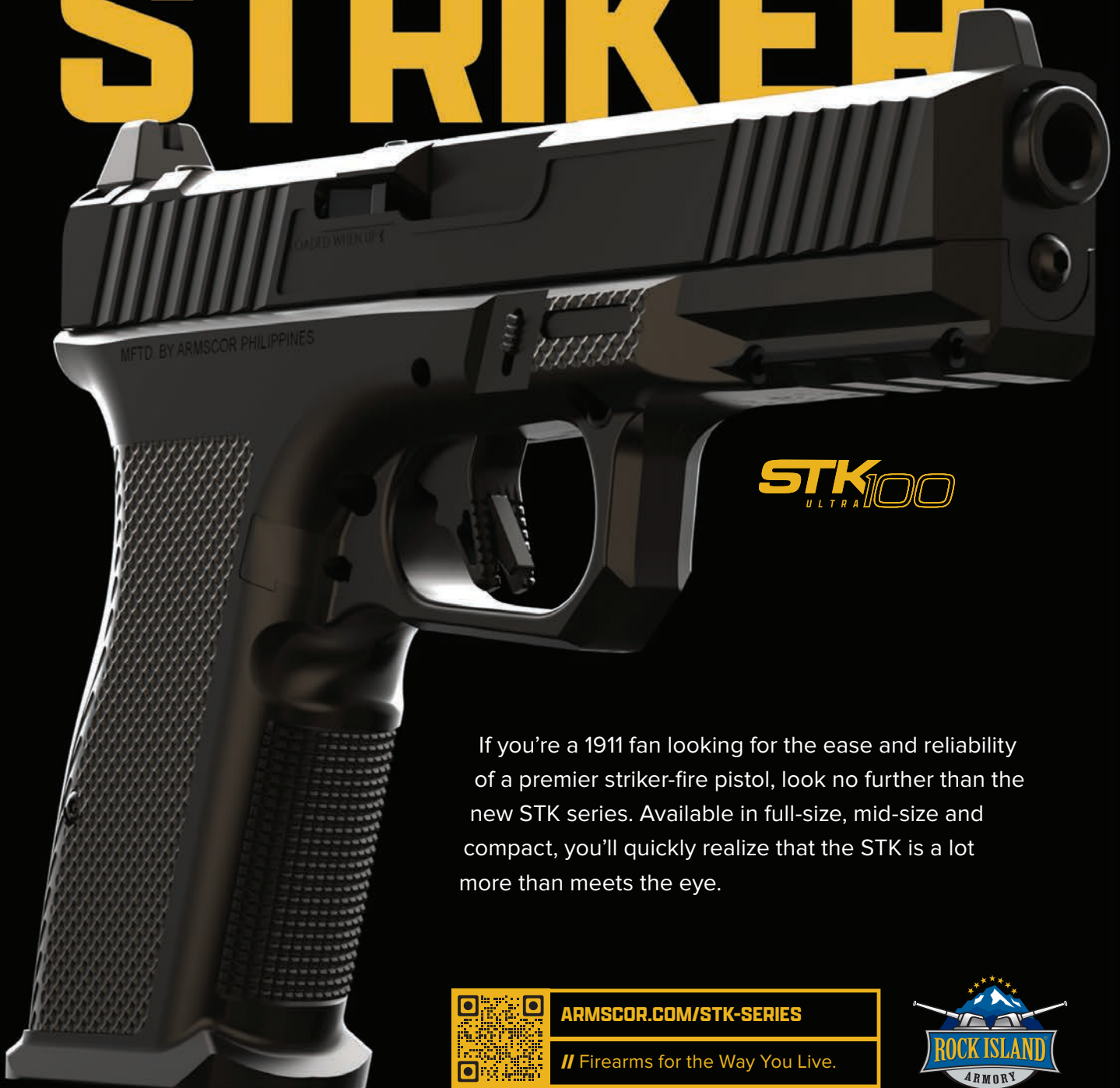
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SPECIAL EDITIONS

FMGPUBLICATIONS.COM

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MEA CULPA ... YES, WE'RE HUMAN TOO

As a few of you noticed, we ran an observation skills test on the cover of the last March/April issue of Handgunner, sneakily substituting the word "Magsafe" for what should have been "Magpul." We're pleased to say many of you passed, catching this clearly intentional trap! Yeah, that's it! Let's go with that story rather than the "How on earth could so many of us on this end miss that 'oops' clearly generated by autocorrect gone rogue?" Yep. We're human too ...

—TM



Bigly Muzzle Blast!

I enjoy Tank's articles. "Do Not Open Until 2025" (online) struck home with the description of tinnitus. In 1969, as a 20-year-old Artillery Surveyor (82C20) assigned to the 25th Infantry Division, several times I ended up humping ammo (98 lb. H.E.) for 155mm self-propelled howitzers. They have muzzle brakes that direct part of the blast to

the rear, right where the guys humping ammo are. The only ear protection the army gave us were hollow rubber things that were useless. We mostly used cigarette filters, which were plentiful as most of us smoked.

My ears have been ringing since then. Now, when I shoot, operate my zero-turn mower, use a chainsaw or weed eater, anything loud, I have

good foam ear plugs and Walker earmuffs on. My ears ring all the time, some days a lot worse than others. While I get disability checks from the V.A., I would rather have ears that don't ring. I am retired after a 40-year career in the mining industry, mostly as a Project Manager doing Superfund Cleanups of historic mining sites in Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma and



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Montana. My usual topic when I gave Safety Talks was hearing protection. While you often have mention of it in the magazine, I suggest doing it more often. And, once a year have a doctor with experience with hearing issues and a gun person write something.

Thanks for a Great Magazine!

John E. Carter

Gunnysack

The difference between *Gunnysack* and *New Products* for me is *Gunnysack* shows no prices so I don't read it while the *New Products* has prices and I do read it. Just saying.

Jerry

Actually, there's quite a difference between the two sections in the magazine. Gunnysack reports on products used with "hands on" success by editors and staff, usually over time. So consider them field-tested with a resulting editorial report on how things went. New Products are "news" announcements with text and photos provided by the manufacturer with no editorial commentary. —TM

Some Cops Enjoy Guns

Tom, great article. ("Test Yourself Like the Pros," Online). Started shooting pistols at age 12. From 1973 to 1994, top shot out of 500 in Lexington, KY Police. I loved shooting and figured it was kind of important in the job. After seven years I got black belt in shoal in kung fu. Ditto.

We were told to stop resistance quickly. We were respected on the street. No way I could be a cop now.

Rock on!

Nine Toed Ted

Hawk Knives Mea Culpa

I was reading Pat Covert's article in May/June *Handgunner* about Hawk custom knives. But there is no website or contact info listed, and a web search was negative.... Can you forward this to Pat or whoever can advise where/how to contact this Hawk company for retail sales?

Thanks, Don

Thanks for the heads up, Don! We normally try to include that, but we messed up on this one. Here's the web address in case anyone else would like more information. HawkKnifeDesigns.com

More Love for Tank

Twenty-to-one.... That's the ratio of positive comments necessary to overcome the impact of a single negative statement — according to common wisdom. Let me contribute one of the 20.

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SPEAK OUT

In 50 years of perusing the literature and participating in the sports and pursuits associated with the handgun, the only magazine I've continuously subscribed to has been the *American Handgunner*. The chief reason, aside from common interest, has been your superb staff of writers.

Today, I wanted to take a moment and compliment Jeff "Tank" Hoover, whose articles approach "soul mate" status with me. His humorous and informative texts, relative to casting, powder coating and experimentation with "big bores," is a conversation with the like-minded ... and kindles old memories and further inspires excitement for future projects.

Kudos to "Tank," perhaps we'll meet down the road, and if not ... then every other month in the pages of *American Handgunner*!

Cheers to the crew,

J. Gregg Gibson

Springfield EMP Tip

I have a Ronin standard model, and it has an over-travel screw on the trigger. But you can't access it from the outside. And you don't need to strip the fire control out of the pistol to adjust it. Instead, after making sure the pistol is empty and no magazine is inserted, remove the magazine catch lock. This involves pushing the mag catch button in most of the way and with a proper fitting screwdriver, turning the catch lock screw 1/4 turn counterclockwise. This captures the magazine catch with the spring and screw captive.

Push it out to the right side of the pistol. Look inside the right-side hole, and you might find the Allen head screw there. Using a 1/16" allen wrench, turn the screw counterclockwise in small increments — 1/16th turn or so. Put the magazine catch back in and try the trigger. Keep adjusting in small increments until it is minimized and the sear doesn't catch on the drop safe notch in the hammer.

Thank you for your timely articles and videos. They are informative and entertaining.

Howard S. Hadley

Alan's Retirement

It is with heavy heart I read that Alan is retiring. I have read his articles for the entirety of his time at *American Handgunner*. That puts me close to him in age. His articles have always just made sense to me, and likely many others over the years. I do hope the column continues, with new blood, new energy (not that

You lacked any, Alan), and the same purpose. Inform and educate us. Even when I didn't read every gun article (shock), I always read Alan. He, along with Connor, Clint, Mas, Will, John, Duke (RIP brother) and all your excellent writers, are the foundational rock upon which I, and others, depend each month.

Alan, enjoy a very well-deserved retirement. I look forward to when you take a whim and grace us with a new article. Thank you for the many years you looked after us and brought us the truth. *Vaya con Dios*.

William Carmickle

Well, good news! The Gun Rights column is here to stay, as we all depend on preserving those rights. I am pleased to announce David Codrea will be taking the reins of Gun Rights. I met him going on 20 years ago and always respected his tireless work. —TM



Lovely Place, Alcatraz

As normal, Dr. Dabbs clears the bases. Decades ago, as a typical SF tourist, I took the boat out to Alcatraz. During the tour, I snapped off this image of a typical housing for the dregs. Regards,

DJ McNamara

Spring Balancing

I recently purchased a threaded barrel for a G44 only to find that with a Banish22 installed, the action won't cycle with subsonic ammo of several brands. Silencer Central says I need a lighter recoil spring (told me this after the fact of purchase). What is the factory spring weight, and where can I find a lighter one? How much lighter?

J.D. Ray

Ah ... the joys of finding the perfect balance in the pas de deux of reliable pistol suppressor operation. I wouldn't be too hard on the Silencer Central folks.

There are so many permutations of gun model, spring weight, suppressor type and ammo that this kind of thing now and then is inevitable. I would refer you to the spring gurus at Wolff Springs for a solid answer on this one. You can find them at GunSprings.com. —TM

Miracles Exist!

I really enjoyed Dr. Dabbs' "Miracles Exist" article in the recent *Gun-crank* email. Thanks for letting him tell more stories other than on guns. And encourage him to tell about whatever happened to him similar to Fred's experience ... real soon.

Ron

Backward ... Forward ...

Roy Huntington's article about .44 wadcutters was incomplete! .44 wadcutters, particularly inverted semi-wadcutters, work spectacularly well for bowling pin shooting.

As a college student who could barely afford ammo, I experimented with loading cheap 240-grain LSWCs backwards into .44 Mag cases. (Inspired by an article about .38 inverted wadcutters in this very publication!) Doing that created a .44-special length wadcutter round, which I loaded using .44 Special load data.

The idea worked better than I could have hoped. My cheapo solution gave me .60-plus caliber expansion despite low levels of energy/velocity/recoil. I managed to win enough money to pay off my 629 that way and have used that load as my "secret weapon" for pins ever since.

Robin Taylor

Gun Company Feedback

I just wrapped up reading through the *Speak Out* section of the Jan/Feb 2025 issue. Lots of great points made by all, but two that stood out I'd like to reference. Both of these replies center around the idea that gun-related manufacturers tend to do the right thing and listen to feedback from the end users.

A reader under the "Real Service, Real Avid" letter states that he was made whole without expectation of replacement of his cleaning bottle. I recently had an issue with my River Red Label shotgun, wherein the action lock was misplaced and the mid bead seemed to have worked its way out under recoil or transportation. I merely mentioned my problems to Ruger, and their reply was "Please provide serial number to verify model, and a shipping address; parts will arrive in a few days." All this under the expectation that I would be shelling out cash for parts. Ruger has had, by far, some of the best customer service I've ever dealt with. Along the same lines as Walther.



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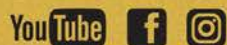
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SPEAK OUT

Kimber disappointed me a little bit with a situation all too similar to a Mr. Ketch. He mentioned he had reached out to a manufacturer about seeing if they would offer a legacy pistol chambered in the smaller bore 30 Super Carry, and that he would be in the market to purchase one. But to no avail, the company wasn't biting. I had a similar conversation with Kimber. I have a few of their 1911s, love them both. They released the K6 line of revolvers a few years ago, and I was interested in the 327 Federal round. So I thought I'd reach out and see if they were considering offering the K6 line in 327, and if so, they'd have at least one guaranteed sale.

They chimed back with a simple one-line answer, something along the lines of, "No we are not currently planning on offering such a model." Bummer. I think it would have sold well.

Just my two cents. Great magazine, keep up the excellent work!

RML

Hits Home

I have never written into any of the gun magazines I read, but this one hit me in about every spot possible. First, I own and shoot a Colt Custom in .38 Super and it is the most accurate 1911 style pistol I own, just love it. Second the HK P7 is the pistol I take to the field almost every time we have a day just having fun. I will look into my vault to choose guns for the day and just about every time it is the P7. The trigger pull is absolutely one of the best and it is just plain fun. Last, but not least, I have been buying, gifting, and using the Kershaw Leek for years. I think I have purchased at least seven for various reasons. Even managed to break one and Kershaw fixed it for the price of shipping and handling.

When I finished with this issue, it was like you had written it with me in mind!

Keep up the good work.

Larry B

P7 & A Blowed-Up Pistol

American Handgunner is one of my favorite (of many) "gun rags" and is always interesting and informative. I actually still learn stuff! Every so often you nail a personal bullseye, and in the Nov/Dec 2024 issue you scored a double tap!

Back in the early 1980s in my hometown of Holbrook, Ariz. there was an unspoken cadre of gun nuts who horse-traded guns with regularity. Generally, one would buy the newest "cool thing" from the local Western Auto, the de-

facto LGS, from Al, everybody's go-to gun guy. It would then pass through many hands giving us all a chance to own and shoot a variety of ordnance. One such goodie was an original H-K P7 9mm. You almost had to throw away everything else you owned just to be able to remember how to shoot it! And then Hans Gruber went and made it famous. Great memories.

And then, just a few years back ... A now-departed buddy and I were at the local range when he pulled out of his bag an AMT III .30 carbine!! Talk about a hoot!! I was loading my third magazine when a round failed to chamber fully, but then with little coaxing went home. One second later, my (protected) ears were ringing, I was disoriented, and found myself staring at the remnant of a rare, expensive detonated hand grenade, still clutching the grip. We were in a wooden shooting house and found parts embedded in the wood, but by God's grace neither of us was hurt. We were shooting his handloads, but we're both convinced that, given no crimp, the bullet was unknowingly pushed back into the case creating catastrophic pressure. What a way to remember such a significant piece of firearms history!

Oh yeah, if you had to lose John Connor, you couldn't have picked a more worthy successor than Dr. Will Dabbs. What a raconteur! (Great tribute to Duke in the Custer piece).

God bless America and the 2nd Amendment.

J. Cropper

Hey Bear!

I just wanted to say, I really enjoyed Dave Anderson's short story, "Bear Guns and City Folk."

John Kraus

How Does It Work?

I don't know why I haven't thought to include this on one of your YouTube shows but I have a refreshing story for the times we live in.

I couldn't exactly figure out how the flutes on Lehigh bullets work and I'm one of those people that almost have to understand it before I use it. I decided to call Lehigh directly and ask. I didn't expect much of an explanation but wow! I was totally wrong. I called Customer Service and as soon as I asked my flute question, I was asked to hold on for a second. I'm on hold and I figure I'd be there for 5 minutes or so. Within 15 seconds I was connected to one of the engineer guys. I asked a couple of questions and this guy went into detail on everything including the deep penetrators and the defense version. He also did it in a way that I understood.

We always hear the bad stuff about companies so I thought I'd give some praise to a company that cares. I immediately bought a few boxes of .380 and .38 Spl. I haven't tested them in my gel blocks yet mostly because I need to melt them and reform them and I've been a little lazy.

Thanks for providing a venue to voice this.

Kevin Ramsey

A Great Friend

My wife said, "Your gun magazine came today." To her they are all the same. I thought great! Then I saw the top line, that Mike Venturino had passed.

A lot went through my mind quickly: I had been reading Mike before he worked for *Handgunner*, and was glad to see he was writing there. When he said "brothers and sisters" he really meant it. Anything he wrote was the truth, at least he could make points in support of his position. His knowledge was immense.

I said, "Oh, no." My wife caught my sorrow and asked what was wrong. I was surprised to have some odd kind of moisture in my aged eyes. I looked at her and said, "I just lost a great friend I never met." That was the kind of man he was.

C. Johnsen

Ayoob Files

In the 1997 film noir *LA Confidential* (based on crime fiction writer James Ellroy's 1990 novel), Johnny Stompanato (Paolo Seganti) is having dinner with Lana Turner (Brenda Bakke) at the Formosa Cafe in West Hollywood. Until reading this edition of the *Ayoob Files*, I assumed this ex Mickey Cohen bodyguard character to be fictitious and not the real John Stompanato stabbed to his death by Ms. Turner's 14-year-old daughter, Cheryl Crane. The movie itself should have won many more Oscars than the two it did, but 1997 was also the year of *Titanic*.

DJ McNamara

Speak Out Email Hack?

As I have been going through many of my old firearm magazines recently and very late after their posting dates for reasons not relatable or associate here, I just came across a post from "myself" in that Jan/Feb 2022 issue regarding Dr. Dabbs' "Fantastic Voyage" of the Sept/Oct 2021 article, signed by me, Peter J. Bertini.

The only problem is that at 74 years old and having always signed my name exactly that way, using my J. middle initial, I have never in those years seen anyone ever use my first and last name replete with middle initial, and I was

not that person who wrote in regarding the Doctor's post because I look up to him and he has his own prose like no other which I highly admire. I would never write such a thing. I love the Doctor and you guys.

It all makes sense now, the number of email attacks I've received in the past couple of years and so, I ask if you guys (and ladies) could please input a small typo redaction referencing that the "attack" on the good Doctor was not from me so as to clear my good name? Also, please pass on my admiration to the dear doc as well. Lol!

Peter J. Bertini

Mini 1911

Your article about converting a 1903 from internal to external hammer is the coolest gunsmithing story I can remember. I am not a fan of internal hammers. I want a hammer I can see, and that can be let down when you're not ready to fire. Anyone who has ever had a gun go off on them unexpectedly, when gun internals are worn out, will appreciate the safety of an external hammer.

Bill Sims

Deadly Force

Massad Ayoob renaming "*Cop Talk*" to *Deadly Force* is a timely change. Beginning in 2019 and continuing through 2023, there have been more justifiable homicides by civilians than by law enforcement officers (see Number of justifiable homicides U.S. 2023 | Statista).

Presumably non-fatal use of force has followed a similar trend. The most commonly used weapon was a handgun. Those of us who carry or even keep a handgun at home (or any weapon) for self-defense, face a terrible and growing responsibility to know what skills we must develop, how to equip ourselves and train, and what educators call an "affective awareness" of our moral and legal responsibilities when we are heeled.

Thank you for providing us with the tool this column represents.

A.X. Perez

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NEW FOR 2025

Every year, when it's cold out, even in Las Vegas, the faithful gather at the Sands Convention Center to swap every known virus and a few clearly yet to be discovered. Amongst all that, 2,800 gun, outdoor and accessory companies pitch their booths and fill them with the latest products to show their wares to prospective retail and wholesale buyers and the firearms industry media (that's us, among others).

This year was no different. I can't communicate the scale with currently invented vocabulary. I can say there are 13.9 miles of booths (a real number), and if you attempt to walk by each one, using every waking minute of the show's four days, you'll only be able to spend 43 seconds at each before running out of time.

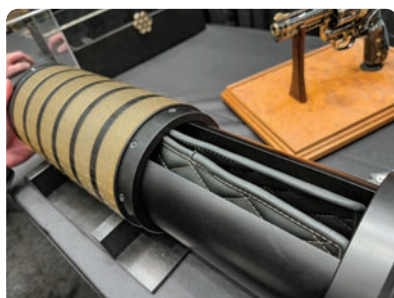
Knowing you likely don't care about our sore backs and forthcoming viral plagues, here's a quick look at some new things that caught our wandering eyes.



Korth Bitcoin Revolver

One weird thing about Bitcoins, besides the fact they're not real, is there will only ever be 21 million of them. How you can have a finite quantity of something that doesn't exist is a bit of a quandary, but here we are.

In a nod to the skyrocketing value of Bitcoin (somewhere near \$100,000 each as I write this), the gunsmiths at Nighthawk/Korth have created the Bitcoin revolver. Made with just shy of 2 oz. of real gold, there are only 21 allotted to the U.S. Market and 210 planned worldwide. The cryptic case is also a monument to machining excellence, along with the wooden case that holds that.



I don't know the price, but as the saying goes, if you have to ask ... KorthArms.com

North American Arms

They're not new, but enjoying a resurgence of popularity, possibly as part of North American Arms' anniversary. This belt buckle securely holds a .22LR NAA revolver with a 1 7/8" barrel. A flip of a lever and it releases for use.



Is it an example of "open discreet carry"? These days, with everyone's face buried in phones, few would notice it's a real gun. NorthAmericanArms.com

Lyman Gunsmith Screwdriver Sets

The company will offer a couple of different configurations. The one shown here is the larger set and includes a broad assortment of dedicated tools and a universal driver for any standard bits — many included. Stands for both sets are equipped with mounting holes on the back so you can keep your bench clear. LymanProducts.com



SHOT SHOW FINDS

Silencers To Your Door?

Yes, the folks at Silencer Central, working with the ATF, have cracked the code of buying a suppressor without requiring a PhD in government forms and process navigation. Using a mobile setup with a camera, fingerprint scanner and computer with their sophisticated software, customers complete a one-time registration and capture of the required information for suppressor paperwork. From that point on, order online, and Silencer Central will automatically process all your paperwork, and your new suppressor will be delivered to your door. Yes, you heard that right. I did the process at SHOT Show and will be completing a purchase when I get home. We'll report back in a future article. SilencerCentral.com



Watchtower Firearms Apache Handguns

Slick as butter on butter, these double-stack 1911 9mm pistols are made in Texas by real American patriots, many (most?) of whom are Armed Services veterans. They're absolutely beautiful handguns, machined with care and excellence. The compensator is screwed onto the barrel and recoils partially with the barrel. Interesting touch. We'll be doing a feature in *Handgunner* as soon as practicable. WatchtowerFirearms.com



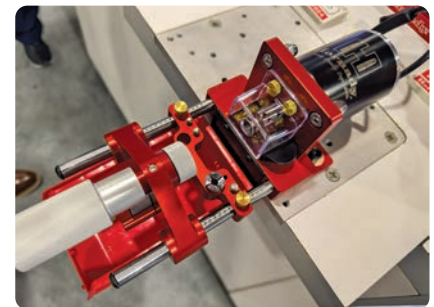
Vantage Point Armory Compensator

Want to add a compensator to your rail-equipped pistol? Check this out. Offered in partnership with the folks at Lyman, this device attaches to the rail to support a compensator forward of the muzzle. If you have a rail-mounted light or laser, there's a way to attach it to the compensator assembly, too. VPArmory.com



Hornady 3-in-1 Power Case Trimmer

Reloaders celebrate. Hornady's new machine blends speed and precision with its 2,000rpm quiet-as-a-mouse-motor. The real brilliance is the length adjustment mechanism and case holder. A tiny twist locks a new case into place while an equally tiny turn of the big, fat handle drops a completed one into the finished bucket. It'll cut trimming time in half compared to traditional power case trimmer designs. Oh, and it trims, chamfers and deburrs all in one step. It'll support rifle cartridges first but expect handgun case support soon. Hornady.com



Lime Wedges, Orange Wedges Anyone?

We've covered the ultra-handly Streamlight Wedge flashlights before. The simplicity of the rotating switch design and flat profile make it perfect for everyday carry. New this year are additional colors: lime green and bright orange! Streamlight.com



CRKT Provoke-X Axe

The demo of this nifty product stopped passers-by cold. When folded into a no-sharp-things-exposed 8.7" pocket-ready package, a quick flip of the wrist opens it into a fully functional axe complete with a spike opposite the blade. A safety button keeps things securely closed until you're ready to deploy. CRKT.com



CREATIVE ENGINEERING: MAKIN' BULLETS

Old .45 Colt barrels run 0.454". Later models run 0.451". Sometimes, I find bullets that meet my weight requirements, but they are too fat. I started by getting a Lee Bullet Sizing kit in 0.451" to accommodate finding 0.454" bullets that I liked but didn't fit my gun. This ruined me for life. If I'm buying bullets and changing the diameter, why don't I just make my own?



Lindsey used a "pusher" from another Lee Bullet Sizing kit to mash down the lead inside the jacket.

LIVE WIRE

I purchased lead wire from Rotometals and swaged short lengths into copper jackets. I stuffed lead wire sections into the pre-formed copper jackets and used reloading dies to form bullets. It doesn't sound complicated, but the first dozen bullets I made were disasters.

Corbin sells precision core cutters to cut lead wire. They use a steel die that matches the diameter of the wire, positioning it for an accurate cut. The adjustable-stop cutters measure length and make a squared-off cut. It stays within a couple of grains of the target weight.

I'm too cheap for that. I bought a \$10 cable cutter. This tool can lop almost a 1" cable, so I thought it would be perfect for lead wire. I cut the first length, but no matter how hard I tried, the cuts were angled. OK, if the cut produced a consistent angle, I could aim for a consistent weight.

Eventually, I could cut the lead wire within 3 grains of the desired weight. The copper cups weighed an average of 24.1 grains. Within a few minutes, I had a dozen 225.9-grain cores matched up to the cups.

CREATIVE ENGINEERING

When I was making 250-grain bullets, the lead core stuck out over the case a little over 1/8". Since it was cut off at an angle, I figured I should push it down a little before forming the nose. I put a 0.451" Lee Bullet Sizing die in my press and took an extra "pusher," which is the part one seats into the shell holder

to push the bullets through the die, and put this into the base of the sizing die without attaching it to the press. Using the "pusher" that came with the kit, I ran a cup with the lead core sticking out up against the base of the pusher. The pusher on top doesn't stay in the die; I had to hold it all together until I actually began squeezing the bullet. My purpose was to squeeze the lead down into the copper jacket by sandwiching the lead-filled jacket between the two pushers.

Wrong. As the angled lead core contacted the upper pusher, it veered off a little, resulting in distorted jacket bases. I learned to square off the protruding lead first, using light pressure from this setup, before trying to force the lead into the cup. Once the leading surface of the lead core was flat, everything fell into place. The lead began to fill the cup and flattened out perfectly. I discovered that the amount of lead to make a 250-grain bullet became flush with a 0.45" x 0.580" cup.

For the nose, I used a Lee 9mm Taper Crimp die, which has an initial steep angle to push the case into the die. I only wanted the steep angle in the first 0.10" of the nose. I used a Lee .243 Winchester RGB sizing die to form the nose, removing the decapping internals and punching out formed bullets.

From 200–270 grains, the lead core will ooze out of the nose, forming a soft point. I don't have a nose-forming plug on my dies, so getting the lead square is critical.

I was able to make bullets that ranged from 200–260 grains.

Lindsey scored the lead wire he purchased from Rotometals and stuck them into the 0.45" x 0.580" jackets from Center X Bullets.



FINE TUNING

Bullet makers use various means to keep the jacket and core from separating. These methods can be mechanical, like placing a cannelure band, or physical, like using adhesive. I used a drop of epoxy, but I may have wasted my time.

My 250-grain bullets shot rather well. I used loads right out of the *Lyman Pistol & Revolver Handbook*, which included my favorite of 7.2 grains of True Blue at 1.590" OAL. They averaged 588 fps and were comfortable to shoot.

The bullets sailed right through 16" of gelatin. I can't say this is a bad thing, but through a comedy of errors, I have yet to capture one of these bullets in ballistic gelatin.

Making bullets is not just for major manufacturers. A competent reloader can crank out pretty good products with just a little effort.



The lead cores in the jackets sort of look like lipsticks before the lead is pushed into the jacket. The bullets on the right are some of the first swaged bullets Lindsey made using this method.



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THE UNDOING

We all would like to go back and change things we did at one time ... the mullet, bell bottoms and disco.

Many things were done to handguns that seemed like good ideas at the time. I get called frequently to either remove some old modifications or replace them with new ones.

MILLET SIGHTS

For example, the Millet Dual Crimp front sight. It was a good idea at the time, but today, with dovetail sights, it's easy to replace one sight style with another. Not so much with the Millet which is no longer available. Dovetail sights were used in the 1800s by rifle makers. Too bad it took so long for them to be used in pistols. Thanks, Wayne Novak, for making them popular.

The Millet used two very large holes drilled through a semi-auto pistol slide to secure two studs with a "ball crimping" tool. This made them secure when the factory's small tenon-style sights would fail. The Millets



The Millet "Dual Crimp" style front sight that was a hit in the '80s. Notice the micro welding that filled in the holes on this Colt 1911 slide.

were offered in a few bright colors for easy sight pick-up. Today, dovetail sights are offered in dozens of styles, including Tritium inserts.

To upgrade a slide from the Millet set up to a dovetail requires a bit of welding or silver soldering to fill the two holes. I choose to have them welded. Micro tig welding fills in the holes and adds enough material to recontour the slide to the original profile. For this I use Jim French of JMF Welding. Once welded, the slide can be machined for whichever size dovetail is desired or flat-topped. Jim uses the correct filler material to allow for bluing without any visible seams.

The first step in restoration for a valuable first year .38 Super Colt is to smooth down as much of the stippling as possible, then the remaining divots can be welded in.



A first-year Colt .38 Super which was "stippled" in its 95-year history. Stippling was a way many shooters got a better hold on their pistols.

TURN BACK TIME; INCREASE VALUE

Imagine buying Apple stock at the IPO price. I recently was given a three-digit Colt .38 Super frame. That's a 1929 first-year production specimen. Somewhere in its history, it was stippled. Stippling is an added texture to the grip area, done with a hammer and chisel. The resulting surface is kind of like permanent skateboard tape. We still do it in-house, but I would never do it on a high-value pistol like this. The frame had all the period-correct parts, especially the cross-checked mainspring housing.

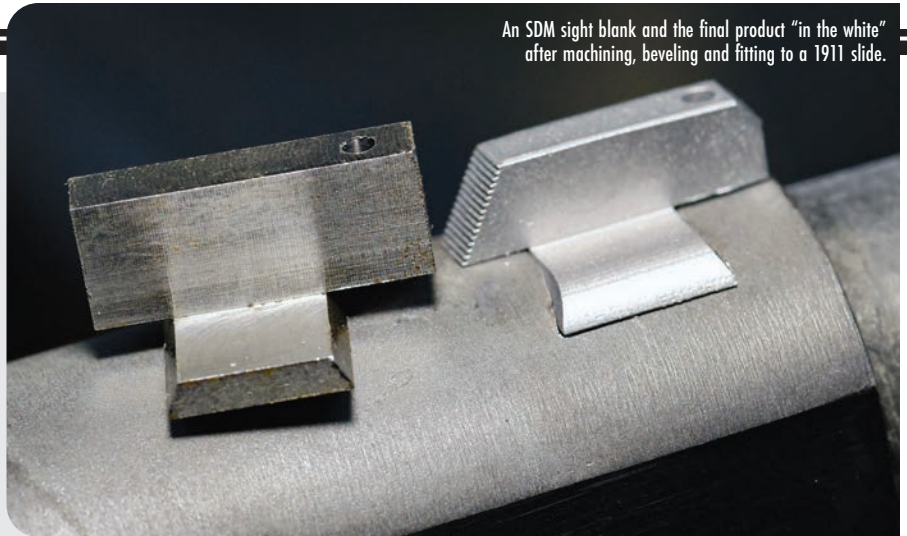
The first step was to remove the stippling with sandpaper. The stippling was mostly shallow, but some deeper spots would have to be welded by JMF. If that fails, as a last resort, I can cut off the front strap and weld in a replacement piece. That will take some time — and courage. The original bluing and polish were high polish and charcoal bluing, like many early Colts. Restorations like this require lots of hours, but in the end, the pistol will be original, albeit with a new finish. Done right the value to the collector will greatly increase.

An SDM sight blank and the final product "in the white" after machining, beveling and fitting to a 1911 slide.

MAKING IT YOURSELF


Many times, in custom work, it's a challenge to find just the right fit, not only mechanically but artistically. In most cases there are plenty of aftermarket parts to be had, but sometimes I just need something a little different, more unique. In this case, it's a front sight on a 1911 project. There are hundreds of choices from Novak, Wilson, EGW and so on.

For this project, I needed to make my own shape. I started with an SDM "sight blank," which is oversized in all dimensions. I like the idea of filling the complete dovetail cut with the sight, but the blending to the slide method to make it invisible never really works



out. The metal sight blues a little differently and shows up, or if you want to change the front sight, it still leaves the extra dovetail space showing.

For this sight, I wanted it to be carry-friendly. I used a radius cutter to chamfer the sight "wings" to match the slide cut very close to the slide profile but still allowing for a softer organic look. Once it was regulated

for zero, I added angle cuts on the front and back, beveled the sharp edges and added 70 lines per inch serrations on the blade. A light bead blasting was the final preparation before bluing. 

For more info: SDMFabricating.com, MillettSights.com, Colt.com, JMFMicroWeld.com

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FLINCH

Flinching is the most common and potentially most damaging shooting fault. Flinching is an involuntary reaction to pressing the trigger — a reaction to the muzzle blast and recoil. Humans have natural reflexes to protect against danger. One is the blink reflex to protect the eyes against sudden movement which might threaten the eyes. Another is an involuntary reaction to a sudden loud noise.

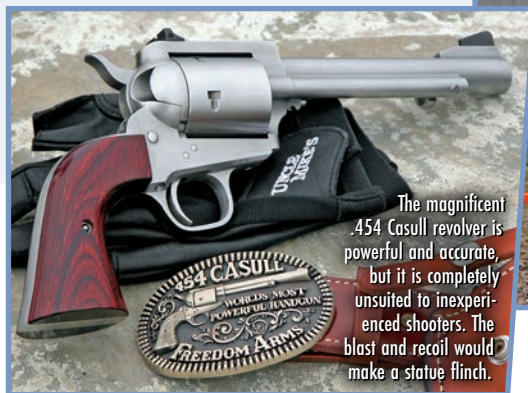
FLINCH IMPACT

Flinching is not the same thing as poor or mediocre trigger control. A novice shooter can have poor trigger control without flinching and, through regular training, can advance to acceptable trigger management. But even superlative shooters can flinch on occasion. In fact, some top shooters refuse to even use the term, just as some pro golfers refuse to use the word “choke,” fearing using or even thinking of the word may summon the demon.

The result of an all-out flinch can be wondrous to behold. I’ve seen flinches so bad the bullet dug up dirt halfway to the target, even when the target is only 10 to 15 yards away. Many a handgunner in a defensive situation has missed his target at a range of just a few feet. It is easy to criticize such misses but add a flinch to the enormous stress of a life-and-death situation, and one can understand.

EXORCISING THE DEMON

The first step in curing a flinch is to recognize it exists. Many shooters are unaware they flinch or deny it indignantly, as though they had been accused of swindling orphans and widows. The best way to identify a flinch is an



The magnificent .454 Casull revolver is powerful and accurate, but it is completely unsuited to inexperienced shooters. The blast and recoil would make a statue flinch.



Champion shooter Rob Leatham demonstrates complete control of the handgun. Note the shoulders ahead of ankles and ears ahead of shoulders.

exercise called “ball and dummy.” The shooter fires at a target on the range without knowing if the firearm is loaded. One way is for a companion to hand you the firearm, sometimes loaded and sometimes not.

Another way, if you don’t have a companion available, is to reload dummy cartridges with no powder and a dead primer and mix them with your regular practice ammunition. When the firing pin drops on an empty chamber or dud round, any tendency to flinch will be glaringly obvious. I’ve seen shooters try this with powerful center-fire rifles and practically fall on their faces when the rifle clicks. Obviously, you don’t want these dud cartridges to get inadvertently mixed in with your competition or defense ammunition.

The surest way to develop a flinch is with a loud, powerful, hard-kicking handgun. Some seem to find it hilariously funny to hand a novice shooter a very powerful firearm and video the result. A predictable result is we lose a potential handgun enthusiast. Those who pull such stunts should, in my view, be Tasered until they permanently lose bladder control.

CURING THE FLINCH

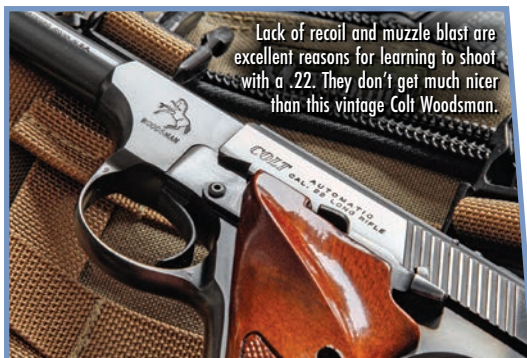
To avoid or cure a flinch, the basic rule is to never let the gun hurt you. Firearm reports lead to flinching and permanent hearing loss, so always use hearing protection. Modern ear protectors are very good for the

most part; I especially like electronic muffs so range commands can be heard. It isn’t foolish to double up with both foam ear canal plugs and ear muffs.

Limit the level of recoil. A new handgunner will progress fastest with a .22 LR using regular speed ammunition. I appreciate many new shooters are primarily interested in personal defense and don’t want to buy more than one handgun. Such shooters are best served with a medium-sized handgun chambered for medium cartridges such as 9mm Luger and .38 Special. I think a 9mm or .38 weighing around 30 oz. is about right. Leave the ultralights and big bores for later, after you’ve learned to shoot.

“Blinking” is the mildest and least harmful type of flinching. Blinking is shutting the eyes at the exact instant the gun fires. It happens so quickly most people are unaware of it. Blinking can often be seen with TV and movie actors when the camera angle shows the shooter’s face as the gun is being fired. It happens so often you can practically count on it. I believe all shooters blink occasionally; some blink all the time. Most are blissfully unaware of it as the blink happens so quickly. The best way to detect it is with a video camera set downrange on a tripod and focused on the shooter’s face.

Blinking won’t hurt your shooting, but unless you see what is happening when the shot is fired, it is hard to improve. The best cure is by dry fire; replace the bad habit with the good habit of keeping the eyes open while shooting. When you can “see the flame” when actually shooting, you’ve beaten the blinking habit.



Lack of recoil and muzzle blast are excellent reasons for learning to shoot with a .22. They don’t get much nicer than this vintage Colt Woodsman.

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ARO-EVO is the ARO (Advanced Rifle Optic) EVolved. ARO-EVO features an all-new 26mm housing design that offers a larger sight picture providing the user with more information for improved performance shooting along with our new lower 1/3 co-witness pedestal mount. Additionally, ARO-EVO is available

with our new Special Purpose Reticle (SPR) which is a bullet-drop compensating and ranging reticle which balances the performance of a 2MOA dot with accuracy at intermediate distances. ARO-EVO is available with our Special Purpose Reticle or a 2MOA dot only in Red, Green, and Gold.

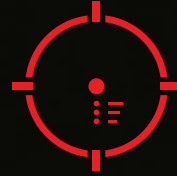
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THE VERY REAL DANGER OF OVER-PENETRATING BULLETS

One canard you've seen in print in the gun press and on the Internet is, "Don't worry about over-penetrating bullets going through your attacker and striking an innocent bystander. A missed shot going at full velocity is a lot more dangerous." That's like saying, "Don't worry about herpes; AIDS is much more dangerous."

If you have a three-digit IQ and common sense, you don't want either thing to befall you!

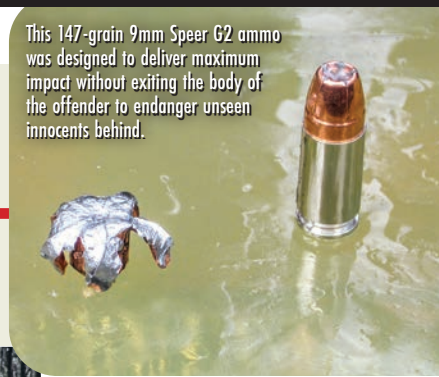
Many who tell you over-penetration doesn't matter will say, "If there's someone behind the bad guy, just don't shoot." They haven't thought things out in the total dimension of gunfight reality. Why are you shooting at this person at all? He is an immediate threat to your life and everyone on your side of the fight.

In the principle of the Doctrine of Competing Harms, sometimes known as The Doctrine of Necessity or the Doctrine of Two Evils, the danger his wanton, murderous gunfire presents to you and those near you exceeds the danger your hopefully trained and disciplined defensive gunfire presents to anyone behind him. The tunnel vision research of Dr. Alexis Artwohl impacts more than half of defenders. The opponent may be so large and close that he physically blocks your view of anything behind him. It's shoot or die, your choice, even though circumstances are such that you can't fulfill Rule Four of Firearms Safety and "Be sure of your target and what's behind it."

If you're one of those who have confused the rule of hunting (through and through shots are desirable) with responsible use of deadly force in self-defense, you have a problem. The very rules of firearms safety demand that the bullet stays in the backstop — in this case, the body of the violent offender.



Bullets designed to "mushroom" also have a "parachute" effect that slows them down, hopefully keeping them in the body of the criminal.



This 147-grain 9mm Speer G2 ammo was designed to deliver maximum impact without exiting the body of the offender to endanger unseen innocents behind.

ON POINT

Those who emphasize deep penetration often cite the work of the late wound ballistics expert Dr. Martin Fackler. When I

met Dr. Fackler 30-some years ago, he had two diagrams on the wall. Each featured the approximately 30" trajectory of an FMJ pistol bullet. One was superimposed over a Bad Guy in a dueling stance aiming a pistol at the Good Guy, whose bullet strikes the Bad Guy's gun hand and travels all the way up his arm and into his chest to the heart. The other had three men standing in a row, and the same bullet went through the chests of two of them and into the chest of the third, showing that even Fackler, the strongest proponent of deep penetration, recognized the possibility of a bad outcome with the wrong ammo.

DOCUMENTED CASES

Advocates of hardball and other deep penetrators often say, "Show me a case where it went through the Bad Guy and hit a Good Guy." OK. September 2024, Detroit: The initial aggressor draws a gun, and an armed citizen outdraws him and shoots him in the head. The bullet passes completely through his head and strikes the head of an innocent bystander. Both men die of the headshots. The shooter is cleared on the principle that a shot responsibly fired in good faith should be treated as if it struck only the lawfully intended target. I've seen commentators say, "So what? He didn't get charged." That soulless thinking ignores the grief of the innocent victim's family, the lifelong guilt trip for the man who pulled the trigger, and the possibility of a massive lawsuit.

For a bigger picture, look at how NYPD finally got hollow points in the late 1990s after decades of the union and the Firearms Training Unit begging for them. Clueless politicians and media had made hollow points an avatar of police brutality, and one top cop had famously said, "I'm not going to be the commissioner who gave New York cops dum-dum bullets." That all

changed when the *New York Times* published an NYPD study that included this: "According to statistics released by the department, 15 innocent bystanders were struck by police officers using FMJ bullets during 1995 and 1996, the police said. Eight were hit directly, five were hit by bullets that had passed through other people, and two were hit by bullets that had passed through objects." The report also noted, "In that same period, 44 police officers were struck by police gunfire using the old ammunition: 21 were hit directly, two were struck by bullets that ricocheted, and 17 were struck by bullets that passed through other people."

Wait, who just thought, "That's cops; it's not relevant to me, an armed citizen?" Suppose you are grappling with a home invader. He has you down and is on top of you, trying to stab you. As you fire into him, his body physically blocks your view of a loved one, your spouse or eldest child, who is running in to pull him off you.

If that was a deep-penetrating hardball round, when you see what you've done, you may want the next bullet for yourself.



MUST READS



Each one of these books is a must read for everyone.

THE INSIDER: Roy Huntington's *Insider* columns from *American Handgunner*, niftily secured in one spot, the culmination of over 120 episodes. After 20 years as editor, read what he has said over the years. **\$34.00**

SHOOTING IRON: A complete collection of Mike "Duke" Venturino's *Shooting Iron* column originally published in *American Handgunner* from 2005 through 2024. Venturino's extensive gun knowledge and easy-reading writing style entertained and informed a generation of readers. **\$24.95**

ODD ANGRY SHOT: John Connor's *Odd Angry Shot* content was first published in *GUNS Magazine* from 2002 to 2018. John's unique views of life outside the ordinary and socially correct, entertained a generation of enthusiasts. **\$24.75**

BEST OF SMITH & WESSON: Both *American Handgunner* and *GUNS Magazine* have showcased *S&W* products on their covers and in their pages, literally thousands of times over the decades. This book includes all the guns featured between 2010 and 2019. **\$34.95**

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WORLD WAR I

The Model 1912 Steyr was among the best military semi-automatic pistols of its time.



AUTOLOADER OF THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE

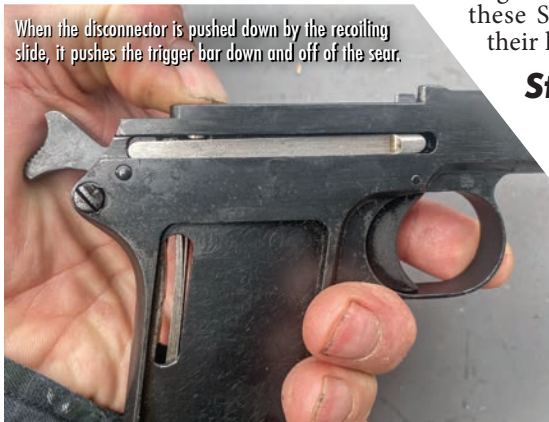
By World War I, the early designers of semi-automatic pistols had overcome the initial ergonomic, caliber and reliability limitations that hampered their wide acceptance, and many practical models were in general use by civilian, police and military forces. The American .45 ACP caliber Colt Model 1911 and German 9x19mm caliber P-08 Luger are the most famous semi-automatics of this period on the military side. Less well remembered, though fully successful as a combat

handgun, was their peer, the 9x23mm caliber Steyr Model 1911 and 1912. In the Austro-Hungarian Army, this pistol was nicknamed the Steyr-Hahn. Hahn is German for hammer. In this column, I'll focus on an overview of the brilliant and original engineering that went into these Steyr pistols so I'll cover their history only briefly.



The disconnecter up at the moment of firing allows the trigger bar to engage the sear.

When the disconnecter is pushed down by the recoiling slide, it pushes the trigger bar down and off of the sear.



Steyr Story

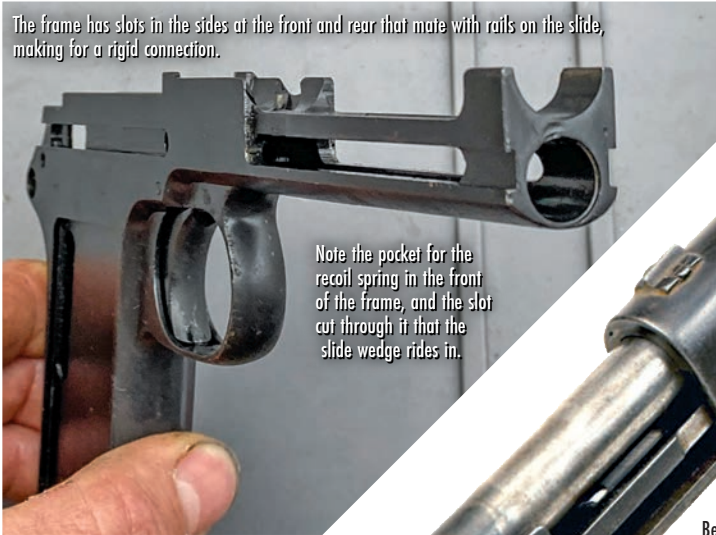
The Steyr-Hahn was developed in Austria specifically for military use by Österreichische Waffenfabrik Steyr. Approximately 250,000 pistols were made between 1912 and 1919. Chile and Romania were early adopters, but the Austro-Hungarian Army was initially uninterested in

the new pistol because they had just adopted the semi-automatic, 8x18mm caliber Repetierpistole M.7, commonly known as the M1907 Roth-Steyr. The outbreak of World War I changed their minds. In 1914, they adopted the new Steyr as the M1912 and purchased the vast majority of the production. Bavaria and Bulgaria purchased several thousand, too, for use in the Great War. The Steyr-Hahn, as it quickly came to be called, earned a solid reputation on the battlefield and

The recoil spring is also the trigger return spring.



The frame has slots in the sides at the front and rear that mate with rails on the slide, making for a rigid connection.



Note the pocket for the recoil spring in the front of the frame, and the slot cut through it that the slide wedge rides in.

Though it resembles a modern semi-auto on the outside, on the inside, its engineering shows it belongs to an era long gone.



Below: Trigger bar, sear spring, hammer and hammer spring arranged to show their relationship to each other when installed in the frame (above). Note how the sear spring is also the sear.



served afterward with the Austrian military and police and quite a few other less likely places through World War II.

Basic Mechanics

At first glance, the Steyr-Hahn has a fairly conventional appearance by modern standards, with the magazine housed inside the grip, a full-length slide enclosing the top of the frame, and an exposed hammer. If you were a gun aficionado 123 years ago, you would notice its exterior was similar in general appearance to Colt's Model 1902 .38 ACP self-loader, which also used a horizontal wedge to link the slide to the recoil spring, the latter housed inside a machined-out pocket in the frame beneath the barrel. Both pistols are locked breech, short recoil, operated. Both had 8-shot magazines. The 5"-barrel Steyr-Hahn's proprietary 9x23mm (9mm Steyr) cartridge was ballistically similar to the .38 ACP fired in the 6" barrel Colt. Both shot a 115-grain bullet at around 1,200 fps.

Compared to the Colt M1911, the Steyr-Hahn slide lock release button and manual safety lever are similarly located on the rear left corner of the frame for easy shooting hand thumb operation, but the Steyr's grip angle is steeper, which causes the gun to point lower than the Colt.

Cosmetics and barrel wedge aside, mechanically, the Steyr-Hahn was vastly different from its Colt peers. The

Colt M1902 barrel was hinged to the frame at both the muzzle and breech end, so it remained level as it dropped down to unlock from the slide. The Colt M1911 barrel was hinged to the frame under the chamber only, causing it to tip downward at the rear and upward at the muzzle when unlocking.

In contrast, the Steyr-Hahn barrel wasn't hinged to its frame at all. It locked and unlocked from the slide by rotating on its longitudinal axis! The barrel had a pair of locking lugs on its upper surface that engaged pockets cut into the slide and an angled turning lug and transverse stop lug on the bottom that engaged a slot and pocket milled into the frame. The Austrians seem to have had a thing for rotating locking mechanisms in firearms, and the Steyr-Hahn reminds me of a pistol version of Ferdinand von Mannlicher's straight-pull bolt action rifles. The Steyr-Hahn barrel/slide/frame lock-up design was much simpler than Browning's, had

fewer parts, and took up less vertical space, allowing for a lower bore axis and improved control in recoil.

Magazine

The Steyr-Hahn did not have a removable box magazine. It was loaded using 8-round stripper clips. The unique clips had long "legs" on each end, measuring about 3mm, that passed through the slide into mating slots in the frame to lock the slide open while the cartridges were pressed into the magazine with the thumb. After the last round was in the magazine, the slide remained locked back



The combination disconnector/ejector is one of the most complex parts Frank has seen in any machine.

safety lever was also designed to serve as a slide-hold-open latch, allowing the pistol to be fully loaded without a stripper clip. That's a feature the C96 Mauser never had!

Unloading & Functions

Another distinctive feature of the Steyr-Hahn is the safe and efficient way it is unloaded. Like most military semi-automatics, the magazine follower locks the slide open after the last round is fired or when the slide is drawn back with the magazine empty. What looks like a slide-lock release button on the Steyr-Hahn is useful in that sense only when the pistol is unloaded. Its main purpose is to empty unfired ammunition from the magazine, which it will do with spectacular effect. It would not be inaccurate to describe it as launching a fountain of bullets into the air. I assume soldiers held the pistol upside down with their hand cupped over the ejection port or perhaps held their cap under it while unloading.

The Steyr-Hahn hammer has no half-cock safety position. It's either cocked or down. The manual safety lever locks the slide and blocks forward movement of the hammer regardless of its position. When engaged and in conjunction with a spring-tensioned inertial firing pin, the user is protected from accidental discharge if the weapon is dropped. When carrying the pistol with the manual safety on and the hammer down over a loaded chamber, there is no need to switch the safety lever off before cocking the hammer to fire. Cocking the hammer will automatically move the safety lever to the firing position.

Elegant Engineering

The Steyr-Hahn shows an efficiency of engineering that manifests itself in many parts serving multiple roles.

The recoil spring serves as the trigger return spring. The sear spring serves as the actual sear. The disconnector serves as the ejector. The safety can be used to lock the slide open for cleaning or unloading. The pocket in the frame serves as the recoil spring guide. The unloading button is also a slide lock release.

The Steyr-Hahn design principles are also very sound. The trigger and sear



Close-up of the dismantled safety illustrating how it blocks movement of the hammer when engaged.

by the legs of the empty stripper clip. Removing the clip let the slide move forward, strip a round from the magazine and load it in the chamber. It takes less time to do than it does to tell, though it's not quite as fast as changing a box magazine.

Though the Steyr-Hahn's loading procedure wasn't a notable handicap in World War I, by that time, it was clear that detachable box magazines, particularly those that loaded up through the grip of the pistol, were more popular.

However, since they had fewer parts, stripper clip-loaded, fixed magazine pistols allowed for lower manufacturing costs. They also appear to offer the operational simplicity needed to "soldier-proof" a weapon system. The Steyr-Hahn's manual



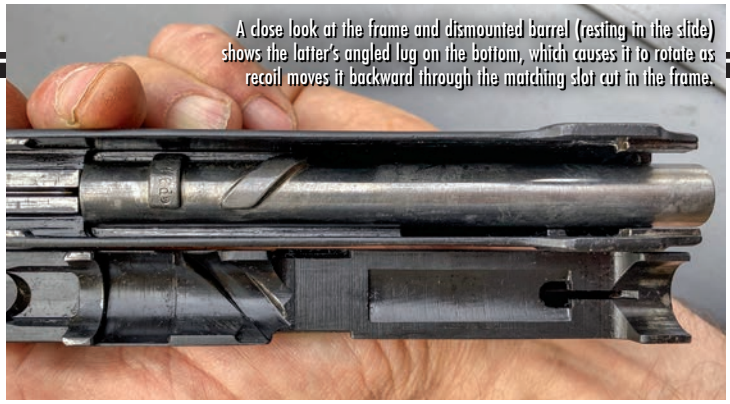
Hammer, sear and disconnector spring are fixed to the magazine base, which is held in with the single grip screw.

A very efficient design, the pistol has only 32 parts, all of them shown here.





Operation of the unloading button pulls down a magazine feed lip on the left side of the magazine. Note the cuts in the frame where the stripper clips legs seat during loading.



A close look at the frame and dismounted barrel (resting in the slide) shows the latter's angled lug on the bottom, which causes it to rotate as recoil moves it backward through the matching slot cut in the frame.

are linked by a single rigid trigger bar, giving the gun a crisp (though heavy) trigger pull. The trigger is the hinged type, but the trigger bar attaches to the very top of it, close to the trigger pivot pin, which affords excellent mechanical leverage. The slide-to-frame fit is tight with no detectable wiggle. I attribute this to the slide's substantial guide rails that engage channels in the frame with 80mm of contact area on each side. In addition, the slide wedge, which moves inside a closed slot in the frame, further stabilizes the slide on the frame. There's

nothing loosey-goosey in this gun's fit. The wooden grip panels are even dovetailed into the frame.

In closing, let me point out that the machine work on the Steyr-Hahn pistol, while much less elaborate than that found on the P-08 Luger and Mauser C96 pistols, is more complex than John Browning's designs. The M1911 has 47 parts to the Steyr-Hahn's 32 parts. The Steyr-Hahn has fewer parts because so many serve dual roles or are so well designed that, by themselves, they can take the place of several related parts. Those parts would still be challenging to make today, which is probably why we don't see pistols made like this anymore.

At the time the Steyr-Hahn was in production, it was a lot easier to make than a P-08 Luger or C96 Mauser but more involved than the contemporary John Browning designs. At a time when highly skilled labor was relatively cheap, some manufacturing choke points could be addressed by enlarging the labor force, but the limitations of this became apparent during World War I when the sheer magnitude of the materiel, not to mention the men consumed in battle, exceeded replacement capacity. The Steyr-Hahn was among the last and best of the early semi-automatic designs that marched to a different drummer.



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THE S&W PERFORMANCE CENTER

2000 SCHOFIELD

Jesse and Frank James were just two of the legendary outlaws who saw the value of the Schofield revolver. But, those who lived by the Schofield also died by them.



ALAN J. GARBERS

HISTORY REBORN

The year 2000 brought many things. The blockbuster *Gladiator* had us rooting for a slave to defeat an emperor. The International Space Station received its first crew. We learned what a hanging chad was. At the 2000 SHOT Show, S&W stunned us with its re-introduction of the S&W Schofield revolver.

For Old West historians, the Schofield was a legend. Some even speculate the outcome of the Battle of The Little Bighorn would have been different had

Custer and his Seventh Cavalry been armed with Schofields instead of the slower-loading Colt Single Action Army.

Most Western movie fans are familiar with the Colt Single Action Army (SAA), even if they don't know it by name. The Colt SAA has been in more films and television series than any other gun, bar none. While accurate and reliable, its Achilles heel was the slow loading and unloading process. Each car-



The 150th Anniversary Series featured gold overlay portraits of Smith & Wesson.

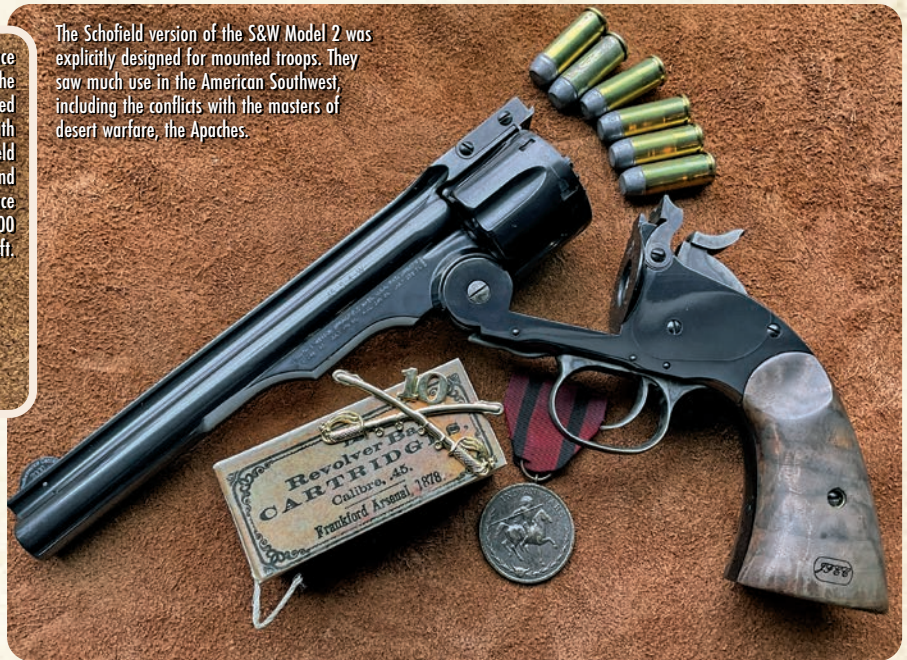
tridge has to be ejected and loaded one at a time while slowly turning the cylinder. If the user rolls the cylinder too far and misses the open chamber, tough luck; the cylinder doesn't roll backward,



All versions of the Performance Center Schofield have the specially marked front sight with Mod. 3 Schofield on the right and Performance Center 2000 on the left.



The Inspector J.F.E. Chamberlain cartouche was replicated with laser engravings.



The Schofield version of the S&W Model 2 was explicitly designed for mounted troops. They saw much use in the American Southwest, including the conflicts with the masters of desert warfare, the Apaches.

so it has to go around again. Almost all S&W revolvers at the time were break-top frames, and all cases were ejected at once for rapid unloading and loading. The weakness of the S&W was its complexity and hinged frame.

A Veteran Brainstorm

The Schofield was the brainchild of U.S. Army officer George W. Schofield, a veteran of many battles in the Civil War and the American West. While the U.S. Army had purchased 1,000 S&W American Model 3 revolvers and saw merit in their design, Schofield felt he could make improvements more suited for horse soldiers. The original version of the S&W American Model 3 break-top revolver required two hands to open and reload, the cylinder was challenging to remove for cleaning, and the extractor was overly complicated. Schofield's modifications changed the frame latch, making it possible to do with one hand, reduced the complexity of the case extraction mechanisms, and made it easily cleaned. Schofield was granted patents for his designs, and the army demanded S&W implement the changes on their following orders.

But, there was one improvement S&W refused to make. The army wanted the revolver to accept the .45 Colt cartridge already used for the Colt SAA. S&W declined to alter their gun to receive the cartridge developed by their arch-competitor. The .45 Colt case had a minimal rim then, and S&W felt their ejector would not work reliably. Instead, they created their own cartridge, the .45 Smith & Wesson, which was slightly shorter and less powerful.

The selling point was it could be used in the Colt SAA. The drawback was that the Colt cartridge could not be used in the Schofield.

Adoption ... To A Point

Despite that flaw in judgment, S&W sold some 8,000 Schofield revolvers to the army. They were distributed to cavalry units on the western frontier, including Schofield's 10th Cavalry. The 10th was home to the distinguished Buffalo Soldiers, a unit of African American soldiers who fought extensively in the Apache Wars.

Those that carried the Schofield considered them a superior weapon. Testing proved a soldier could fire and reload the Schofield seven times faster than the Colt! The article "The Custer Disaster, Defective Arms in Indian Warfare, The

Useless Revolvers of the Seventh Cavalry" in the *Sunday Herald* and *Weekly National Intelligencer* on September 24th, 1876, criticized the Colt as nothing more than a club once their cartridges were fired!

The stage was set for S&W to take the lead if they would make one last change and convert to their competitor's cartridge! Oh, the irony. Think how it would have changed history. All the heroes of the Saturday matinee would be holding a S&W Schofield revolver on the marquee posters. Audie Murphy, John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, and all the other Western stars would be using a Schofield to bring justice to frontier towns if only S&W hadn't been so vain.

The inability to use standard ammunition led to some units receiving the wrong cartridges. This wasn't a problem for those with the Colt, as the Schofield



The domed hammer stud was only found on the Wells Fargo Schofield (WFS) series. All others were machined smooth.

When the U.S. Army sold off the Schofields, Wells Fargo Express Company quickly bought them, cut down the barrels, and even had a few nickel-plated. While the originals are highly sought after, they are also highly faked.



Schofield version of the S&W Model 2.

cartridge worked perfectly. The problem arose when units with Schofield revolvers received .45 Colt cartridges. The longer cartridges would not fit in the shorter S&W cylinders.

It took a few years, but the army decided they were done with this nonsense. They withdrew the Schofields from service, issued them to National Guard units, or sold them to jobbers.

Post Military Use

Of those sold, many made their way west into the holsters of frontiersmen and others into the ledgers of the Wells Fargo Express Company. Those sold to Wells Fargo had their barrels chopped to 5" and were stamped with their property marks.

and their rarity, collectors highly prize the S&W Schofield. The rise of popularity in Cowboy Action Shooting in the 1980s drove the market on reproduction guns found in the Old West. The Schofield made the shortlist, and many accurate Italian-made reproductions are on the market. I believe it was that market that S&W looked at when they decided to reintroduce the Schofield in 2000.

The New Schofield

The run of modern S&W Schofields was just over 3,000. I often shoot CAS matches with Rick Mangel, a collector with an impressive cross-section of what was produced and has made a quarter-century quest to know all he

can about their production. Rick interacted significantly with S&W historian Roy Jinks and compiled a mountain of information on the new Schofield. I know no one with more knowledge in this area, and I was privileged to have seen a small portion of Rick's collection. His collection has brought some variations to light that many did not know were produced.

Due to their association with the Old West and their rarity, collectors highly prize the S&W Schofield. The rise of popularity in Cowboy Action Shooting in the 1980s drove the market on reproduction guns found in the Old West. The Schofield made the shortlist, and many accurate Italian-made reproductions are on the market. I believe it was that market that S&W looked at when they decided to reintroduce the Schofield in 2000.

The S&W Performance Center produced the 2000 Model of the Schofield. At 10' away, the new version looks identical to the original. Under closer inspection, the purist will become frustrated with the differences that are easy to spot.

The barrel and frame markings were roll-marked on the originals. On the 2000 version, the markings were laser engraved with "Schofield's Pat. Apr. 22d 1873" on the right and ".45 S&W" on the left, with patent dates listed below. The butt has "US" and the serial number.

The lawyers got involved, and the modern Schofields have a floating firing pin to reduce the possibility of accidental discharge when dropped or mishandled. The grips on the first 125 Schofields sold at auction by S&W were made of cherry, but most are of black walnut.

All I inspected had the military inspection cartouche, JFEC, for Inspector J.F.E. Chamberlain, laser



The 150th Anniversary Series featured unique roll stamps, cherrywood grips, and a cherrywood case.

engraved on the grips. The inner clockwork also has been upgraded to modern standards. Despite the 21st-century upgrades, the guns are still a product of the S&W Performance Center, and the finish shows it. Jim Rae from the Performance Center stated the Schofield took five times the labor as modern designs due to the required hand finishing. I believe it. Each gun was so smoothly finished that I struggled to get photographs without reflections.

Variants

The variations reflect its use in history. Most shipped in the original military configuration with a 7" barrel, blued cylinder and frame, color case hardened barrel latch, hammer, and trigger guard. Some shipped nickel-plated, perhaps in keeping with those sold on the secondary market.

The 5" barrel version honors the use of the Schofield by Wells Fargo Express Company. They came in blued and nickel versions and had the color-case hardened components described before.

The original Schofields had a domed hammer stud. Of the more than one dozen Performance Center Schofields I examined, all but one had a flush hammer stud. The one example with a

domed hammer stud was a special run of the WFS prefix Schofields with this feature. No explanation is known for this.

The pinned front sight is inscribed on all versions with 2000 Performance Center on the left and 1875 Mod. 3 Schofield on the right.

When word came out of the upcoming release of the Schofields, collectors and cowboy shooters lined up with fists of cash. Some had original Schofield revolvers and wanted to obtain the new offering with the same serial number, and others wanted an American-made reproduction for cowboy action shooting events. The suggested retail was around \$1,500, but some went for more at auction.

The first 125 (GWS0001 – GWS0125) were sold in a special auction and had Cherrywood grips and a Cherrywood case. The serial number prefix GWS stood for George W. Schofield.

A unique series of 151 revolvers was offered to commemorate the sesquicentennial of S&W. Each had gold engravings of Horace Smith and Daniel B. Wesson and a banner proclaiming the dates and caliber. Each also came with a specially minted medallion and presentation case. Each revolver serial number had the prefix DBW for Daniel B. Wesson, followed by a year that S&W had been in business.



Other serial numbers can be confusing, but Rick's research found they have meaning.

GWS stands for George W. Schofield. WFC stands for Wells Fargo & Company.

WFE stands for Wells Fargo Express, while WFS stands for Wells Fargo Schofield.

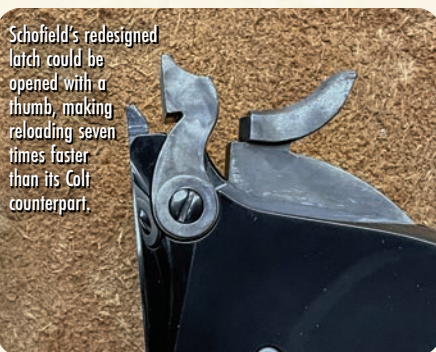
NKL stands for nickel plated, while NTM designates a limited run made for Nelson Tool and Machine, a subcontractor for the PC2000 Schofields.

Some series came in a wooden presentation box, while others came in a fancy golden cardboard box.

Does this make sense? Rick supplied a list of serial number variations and the number of revolvers produced under each:

GWS SERIES: 7" BLUE, GWS0001 – GWS2599 (2,599)
NKL SERIES: 7" NICKEL, NKL0000 – NKL0121 (122)
NTM SERIES: 7" BLUE, NTM0001 – NTM0006 (6)
DBW SERIES: 7" BLUE, WITH WOODEN CASE, DBW1852 – DBW2002 (151)
WFE SERIES: 5" BLUE, CARDBOARD BOX, WFE000 – WFE0151 (152)
WFS SERIES: MIXED BARREL LENGTHS/FINISH WITH WOODEN CASE, WFS0001 – WFS0072 (72)
WFC SERIES: 5" NICKEL CARDBOARD BOX, WFC000 – WFC0106 (107)

After 25 years, the value of these revolvers varies depending on what remains of the original packaging, wear, and whether they have been fired. I see them offered intermittently in the cowboy action shooter forums and on firearm auction sites. While the Performance Center Schofields will never command the price as the originals, they are still beautiful and fun to shoot.



The Shadow Systems CR920XP represents the elusive tactical compromise. Small enough to comfortably carry while still remaining sufficiently substantial for solid control, this is the Goldilocks gun.

THE SHADOW SYSTEMS CR920XP

WILL DABBS, MD

I'm pretty picky about my carry guns. I do this for a living. That is kind of my job.

I also carry a gun whenever I'm not asleep or in the shower, so comfort is a legit consideration. Shadow Systems calls their new compensated CR920XP a crossover. This is the elusive, effective tactical compromise.

In the Beginning ...

The Shadow Systems CEO, Trevor Roe, is a combat vet, West Point grad and former professional grunt. He applies modern industrial best practices to the manufacture of handguns. Based in Plano, Texas, Shadow Systems makes bespoke striker-fired combat pistols that

At 12 meters off of a simple rest, the Shadow Systems CR920XP shoots plenty straight.



SERIOUS COMPENSATION

are a cut above your standard name-brand, box store fare. Everything about Shadow Systems is optimized for both aesthetics and performance.

The company began as a good idea. Through hard work and a compulsion for mechanical perfection, Trevor and his crew have built themselves a respected position among the modern pantheon of high-end gun manufacturers. Their offerings occupy a unique niche.

Combat pistols fractionate into four broad tiers best appreciated by means of an automotive analogy. Nowadays, there are lots of decent-quality guns available for \$400 or less. These run fine but might be tough to pick out in a congested parking lot. That's the Ford Fungus of the gun world.

Name-brand pistols hover around \$550 to \$600 retail. Think of that as a Toyota Celica — dependable but commonplace. Then there are the \$2,000 superguns. That's the Ferrari or Lambo that normal people read about but seldom actually encounter in the wild.

Shadow Systems is like a BMW. Their offerings are within reach of normal folks of decent means. However, they also offer a rarefied shooting experience that reliably sets them apart from the crowd. With a street price of \$800-ish, the new Shadow Systems CR920XP is, to boldly plagiarize our German automotive friends, the Ultimate Shooting Machine.

Details

The CR920XP is indeed a cross-over. That means the gun is smaller than some but larger than others. The geometry is driven by the magazine.

The previous expansive line of Shadow Systems pistols fed from GLOCK-standard mags. That's reasonable, considering the ubiquitous nature



This all-steel compensator redirects muzzle blast up and back to help mitigate recoil and muzzle flip.



The reason Shadow Systems can produce such a small gun with such a prodigious magazine capacity is its trim, svelte 15-round steel magazine.

of these pistols. However, GLOCK mags sport fat polymer bodies. The thickness of the magazine drives the width of the pistol frame. Using GLOCK magazines meant that their concealed carry guns could only be shrunk down so far before running afoul of the laws of physics.

For these new crossover pistols, Shadow Systems designed their own trim 15-round steel mags. The mag bodies sport a nickel Teflon finish for smooth manipulation and environmental resistance. The follower springs are intentionally stronger than what you might find with lesser guns. This ensures better reliability with heavy bullet weights, infrequent maintenance, or unconventional firing positions. CR920XP mags still come in under 30 bucks should you find yourself covetous of spares. There is also a “+3” mag kit should you feel the need to cram 18+1 into your daily carry gun.

These lithe magazines give the CR920XP a frame that is only 1.05” at its widest point. Despite packing 15+1 rounds of 9mm Para chaos, the CR920XP nonetheless still remains skinnier than a comparable single-stack GLOCK 43. The grip length is also just perfect to accommodate my ample mitts. This makes recoil management easier.

The steel bits are nitride-finished, and the slide is festooned with gripping grooves. The top deck accepts Holosun K-style optics without an adaptor. Little windows let you see the gold-colored barrel underneath. I’m not sure that this actually improves anything, but it sure looks neat.

The polymer frame fits the human form perfectly and includes little parking pads for your weak thumb and trigger finger. The dust cover is naturally molded

to accept lights and lasers. The rear sight is serrated and black, while the front includes a bright Tritium insert. The slide release is the perfect size.

The flat-faced trigger sports the expected blade safety. However, it is incrementally heavier than that of a comparable GLOCK. Not much, but a little. Trevor explained that a consistent, predictable bang beats a light primer strike every single time.

Those are the high points. It is these particulars that set Shadow Systems apart from its competition. However, what really makes the CR920XP epic is its unique compensator.

Generous Compensation

Guns are the very embodiment of physics. As a mechanical engineer myself, that is honestly one of the reasons I find them so fascinating. When you fire a round, mass times velocity in one direction will always equal mass times velocity in the other direction. That law is unbreakable. Managing that physics is where dreams thrive or die in the world of combat handguns.

The CR920XP compensator is steel rather than aluminum. It mounts to the barrel via a proprietary tri-lug mount not philosophically dissimilar to that of the MP5 submachine gun. That means the

compensator can be trim and compact without wasting space on an unduly cumbersome thread mount. This inspired device captures some of the muzzle blast that would otherwise be wasted and redirects it back and up. Just like one of Elon Musk’s extraordinary space rockets, this plume of hot, fast gas tends to push the gun down and forward. In so doing, the compensator reduces both felt recoil and muzzle flip. The hotter the ammo, the more pronounced the effect.



Fat magazines make fat guns. Using a steel magazine thins the grip considerably with no loss of capacity.

Disassembly involves releasing a small cam and rotating the compensator around and off the barrel. The gun then strips in a fairly conventional fashion. The compensator is really tight out of the box. It's easier to remove after you've fired a few rounds. Because of the nature of the design, it is best to shoot true jacketed bullets through any comped gun. Raw lead or the plated sort can make a mess over time.

The front sight sits a bit farther back from the muzzle than might be the case with a more conventional heater. At the risk of seeming vapid and shallow, I think that just looks cool. Tragically, there seems not to be the grand gulf between we grizzled gun guys and your typical 14-year-old girl that you might think.

Trigger Time

This is the archetypal Goldilocks gun. It is sufficiently skinny and compact as to be easy to carry yet remains substantial enough to be comfortable on the range. The 9mm Para is not a terribly powerful cartridge. However, in a true pocket pistol, a 9mm can still beat you up rather badly. The compensator and optimized particulars of the CR920XP quite effectively keep that chaos in check.



The Shadow Systems CR920XP is Will's new concealed-carry gun. That's a statement as he has more than a few from which to choose.

Unlike a lot of deep-cover guns, the CR920XP shoots nice and straight as well. Excessive recoil is a disincentive to train. While hardly a .22 rimfire plinking pistol, the CR920XP yet remains quite manageable.

This really is a love story. After our first range outing, my previous tried-and-true carry pistols got quietly retired to the gun box for a

little Me-time. I own weapons that are easier to carry. Rimfire guns are more pleasant to shoot. However, as the mission is to find that sweet spot between everyday portability and combat-capable particulars, the CR920XP is as good as it gets. It seems I'm smitten.



For more info: ShadowSystemsCorp.com

PRECISION FORGED

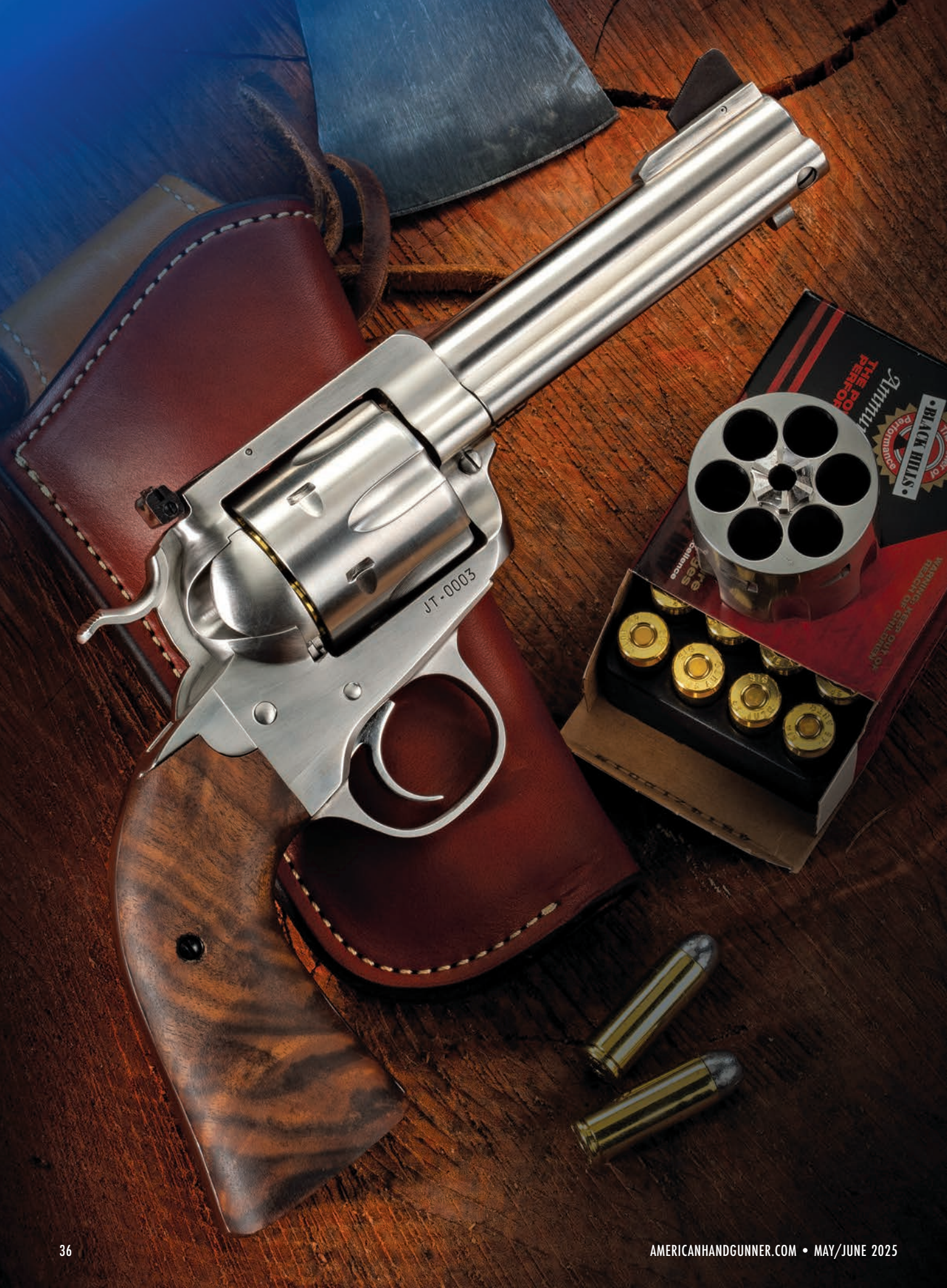
Each model begins construction with a forged steel frame, enhanced with all the modern features a fine 1911 pistol must possess. Featuring a milled front strap and steel milled mainspring housing, all the internal parts are made from CNC machined steel and are hand fit for precise operation.



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THE IDEAL PERFECT PACKIN' PISTOL

JEFF "TANK" HOOVER
ROB JONES/THE IMAGESMITH, LLC



A SIXGUN TRIBUTE HONORING JOHN TAFFIN

When gun writer John Taffin conjured the phrase "Perfect Packin' Pistol" (PPP) years ago, he had no idea how it would influence the gun industry. By definition, a PPP possesses several character traits. First and most obvious, it had to be packable, capable of being comfortably carried in a myriad of conditions. Whether in the field, on the dusty trail, spending all day in a saddle, or driving long distances by truck, it had to be comfortable. Also, it had to be accessible. No sense carrying your shooter if you can't retrieve it when needed.

The type of gun someone carries is personal, needing to fit the identity and character of its owner. Whether double-

action sixgun, single-action smoke wagon, or semi-auto handgun, they're all considered pistols, giving the carrier plenty of options. For John Taffin, the choice is obvious. While John has shot just about every handgun in existence, knowing the history, origin, and nomenclature, while having several handloads, be they smokeless or black powder, he is a single-action sixgunner at heart. This choice speaks volumes about the man choosing to carry such a basic gun.

Simplicity

It's the simplicity a good single-action sixgun provides that makes them so versatile. With fewer moving parts, they are stronger, more rugged

and reliable, capable of handling the most powerful cartridges in the world. Words that also describe John. Yet, they can also be refined, customized, beautified and worked over to shoot easier recoiling cartridges. Dare we say honest when speaking of sixguns? For surely the single-action sixgun is as honest as they come. Again, words describing John Taffin.

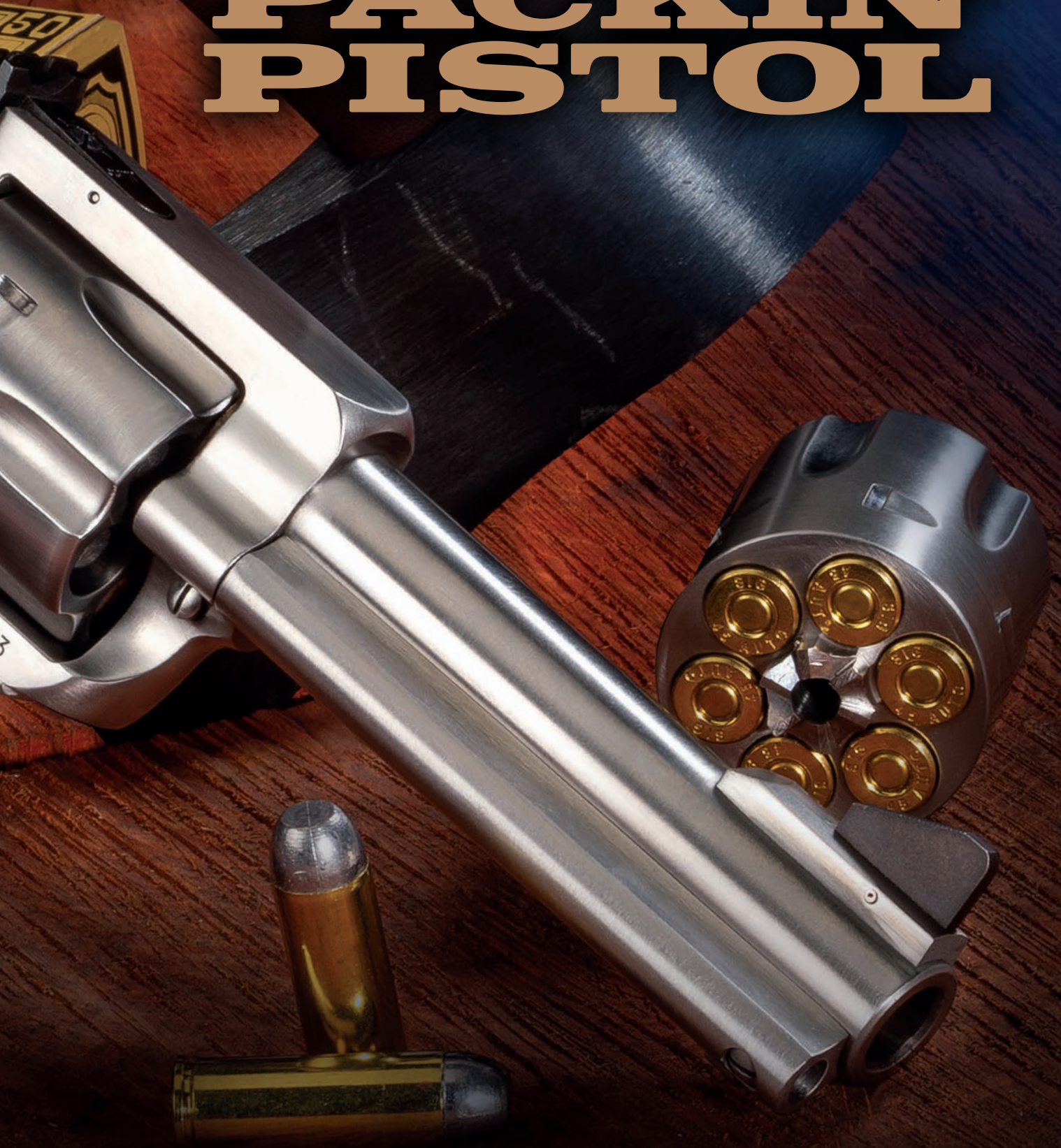
Lipsey's John Taffin Gun

Jason Cloessner is the kind of community organizer we love. He has a knack for rallying the troops on special projects and this one will be near and dear to everyone. The gun fills two niches. First, it's the epitome of John's



AMERICAN
HANDGUNNER®

LIPSEY'S PERFECT PACKIN' PISTOL



LIPSEY'S | PERFECT PACKIN' PISTOL



Jason did, making this PPP tribute gun doubly good by having a .45 ACP cylinder. Now John has the honor of shooting both .45 Colt and ACP in the same gun!

The .45 ACP is also a well-known performer with a proven history and track record as a man-stopper. Abundant factory ammo provides a wide variety of self-defense ammo and cheaper plinking or practice-type fodder.

Blackhawk History

In 1955, Bill Ruger introduced the .357 Magnum Blackhawk. Approximately the same size as a Colt SAA, Bill Ruger took the advice of Elmer Keith and used coiled springs, rather than traditional flat springs, for longer, trouble-free service. Ruger also used Micro adjustable rear sights, which provided better accuracy, pleasing hunters and outdoorsmen, as guns could be sighted in for specific ammunition.

The Blackhawk grip frame mimicked Colt's in size and grip angle but was cast of lightweight aluminum. Elmer Keith mentions the Blackhawk in the book "Sixguns" praising its virtues as being "one honey of a gun," adding it would be perfect chambered in .44 Special and .45 Colt. These chamberings never occurred, being overlooked by the development of the .44 Magnum cartridge.

When Ruger first heard about the .44 Magnum, he asked Elmer about the possibility of chambering the original Blackhawk for it. Elmer thought the gun too small, but Ruger tried it anyway. As usual, Elmer was right, as the gun "let go" during testing and a larger framed gun was made.

The larger framed gun became known as the Flat Top Three-Screw Blackhawk, being produced from 1956 through 1962, when production ceased. In 1959, the Super Blackhawk (SB) was released, having protective ears near the rear sight and a 7½" barrel. The cylinder was left unfluted, and the grip frame was changed, resembling the Colt 1848 Dragoon BP pistol, and replaced with steel, adding weight to help reduce felt recoil.

In 1972, due to frivolous lawsuits, Ruger stopped making the three-screw action for a more modern, lawyer-proof New Model action with transfer bar safety. Now, single-action sixguns could be carried safely with six rounds without fear of detonation from external hammer blows.

In 2005, Ruger's 50th Anniversary of the Blackhawk was celebrated, and the mid-frame-sized gun returned as an Anniversary Model, chambered in .357 Magnum. This led to Lipsey's finally making the .44 Special flat top a reality in 2009. Jason Cloessner was the driving force behind it. The Bisley version was



thought, here's a guy who understands my interests, making me feel "normal," if that's possible.

Besides thousands of articles, John has written an incredible 10 books on handgunning of various types, and I'm proud to say I own all of them. In fact, of all my books, his bear the brunt of excessive wear the most. They've been referred to and read so often, much like my Elmer Keith books. Think there's a connection?

A Perfect Choice

The gun selected by Jason Cloessner, representing John's PPP, was perfect, in my opinion. It's Ruger's mid-frame new model flat top Bisley Blackhawk. Like most guns, this model has evolved from its original conception. It possesses all the traits of the PPP, as well as adding versatility for the carrier.

Having a PPP capable of shooting two cartridges certainly adds to its resourcefulness and versatility. Better yet, Ruger already has this perfect pair in production. The cartridges were used by fighting men during times of war, having stellar track records for effectiveness. Both are oozing with historical accounts of their performance, too.

Cartridge Selection

The historical .45 Colt, the cartridge that started it all in 1873, exemplifies everything John loves, making it a perfect selection. Powerful, historically significant, versatile and a cartridge preferred by cowboys. A battle-proven, big-bore cartridge with over 150 years of service. It brandishes history, versatility and power, especially when handloaded to full potential.

Being chambered in .45 Colt provides the option of having an auxiliary cylinder, and that's exactly what

PPP. Second, it honors John, paying tribute to all he's done for the sixgun community! John has led the way, carrying the torch of sixgunners for nearly six decades in various periodicals.

His writings taught us the magic, science and bewilderment of sixgunnery by sharing the words of past masters like Elmer Keith and telling the stories, anecdotes, and information from Skeeter Skelton, Bill Jordan, Ed McGivern and others. He has covered all aspects of sixguns, from Col. Sam Colt's BP Walker revolver to the newest sixguns built by the latest gunsmiths of today.

John pulls us into his world through his writings and photographs. I know his "Big Bore" writings lassoed me when I discovered his articles years ago in *GUNS* and *American Handgunner*. John's writings provided a kindred connection that kept me subscribing to these magazines. His articles on bullet casting, handloading, big-bore sixguns, leverguns and TC Arms single-shots were captivating. I

added the following year. That's how the Ruger Blackhawk evolved into today's New Model mid-frame Bisley convertible.

PPP Details

The JT PPP guns will be available in both stainless steel and blued, having barrel lengths of 4 5/8" or 5 1/2". The front sights will be pinned on both guns and have adjustable rear sights. Both cylinders have a black powder chamfer.

Each gun has a personalized serial number with a JT prefix for John Taffin, followed by the number. Jason honored John by presenting him with JT-0001. You should have seen the smile on John's face when Jason, Bobby Tyler and Brian Pearce presented John with his gun. It's on YouTube, and well worth the watch. John displays the enthusiasm of a kid when handling his gun. It will warm the hearts of sixgunners, one and all.

TGW Stocks

The JT guns have figured walnut stocks made by Tyler Gun Works. While not fitted to the frame, the next best thing is used with CNC machining. Ruger provided the "specs" and Bobby dialed them. From the samples I've seen, the fit is excellent. The stocks display a comfortable palm swell, providing a custom feel when shooting.

Bobby obtained a nice supply of figured walnut for this project. The stocks are void of Ruger medallions, giving the gun a custom look. For a special, personal touch, the inside of each panel has an outlined silhouette of John Taffin.

Leather

Jason recruited Mike "Doc" Barranti to make accompanying holsters for the JT gun. Holsters are not included but can be ordered, and "Doc" will personally stamp your serial number on the back of your holster. An embossed image of John Taffin, along with Barranti Leather - Dunn, Texas, is also on the back.

Options include saddle tan or a natural finish for his Threepersons style holster with hammer thong. Doc told me his No. 5 was the first holster coming to mind for this project. Years ago, Doc presented John with the first floral carved version of his No. 5 model, serial numbered EK-01, the first time they met.

Doc and his team exclusively use Wickett & Craig leather, the oldest tannery in North America. The team starts with saddle skirting sides and adds a lining for the JT holster, giving it a clean, finished look. The holster is stitched using a heavy-duty stitcher with premium nylon thread.

Shooting

For .45 Colt, there's only one bullet necessary for this gun, the Lyman/Ideal 454424. While a mid-frame-



sized gun, it can still drive this slug 1,100-1,200 fps. Factory ammo by Buffalo Bore using their 255-grain SWC is also a good option.

My hands down favorite loading in .45 ACP is Buffalo Bore's 255-grain Outdoorsman load featuring a radiused flat-nose slug going over 900 fps with excellent accuracy. While mid-framed guns, there's nothing middle about their power potential.

Shootists

In 1985, John dreamed up the idea of inviting a handful of knowledgeable friends consumed by sixguns, handloads, gun leather and shooting for a holiday of sorts. More importantly, there'd be fellowship, along with the sharing of ideas, stories, hopes and dreams. Attendees were allowed to bring just two handguns. Semi-autos were allowed, but only if chambered in .45 ACP, .38 Super or 9mm. Talk about torturous!

The two guns had to handle any unknown task, hunt or situation. The event was a huge success and continues to this very day. What started as a few handpicked friends has grown into 100-plus invitation-only members displaying high character and fortitude. Shootists meet every year at the NRA Whittington Center in Raton, NM, to continue the tradition JT dreamed up.

The Shootists sponsor the Whittington Center Adventure Camp, which provides teenagers with a chance to learn all shooting disciplines, archery, camping, cooking and survival skills and leadership. The camp also holds a winter gun raffle, which supports St. Jude Children's Hospital. Jason, Bobby, Doc and I are proud members of the organization.


Last Words

Men like John Taffin come along once in a lifetime. Just as there will never be another Elmer Keith, there will never be another John Taffin. As a young man, John worked full-time while attending college to better



provide for his family. I remember reading he was so exhausted at times driving to work he'd cry. But he pressed on and succeeded.

With a degree in hand, he moved his family from Ohio to Idaho, to reside in the land of Elmer and got a teaching job. He still worked two jobs, but this time he split teaching with writing gun articles. After 30+ years of teaching, John retired, becoming a full-time gunwriter.

John's words influence not only his readers, but also the gun industry, his words having impact while being influential. John always said the greatest part of being a gunwriter is the people, and he's surely right about that. I'm happy the JT PPP Tribute gun by Lipsey's came about and even happier that John will be able to enjoy  it. He's deserving of it.

Though M1911 pistols were issued and used during World War II, only the M1911A1 was made during the conflict with all production ceasing in 1945. These pistols were standard issue for U.S. military personnel until the 9mm M9 pistol was adopted in 1990.

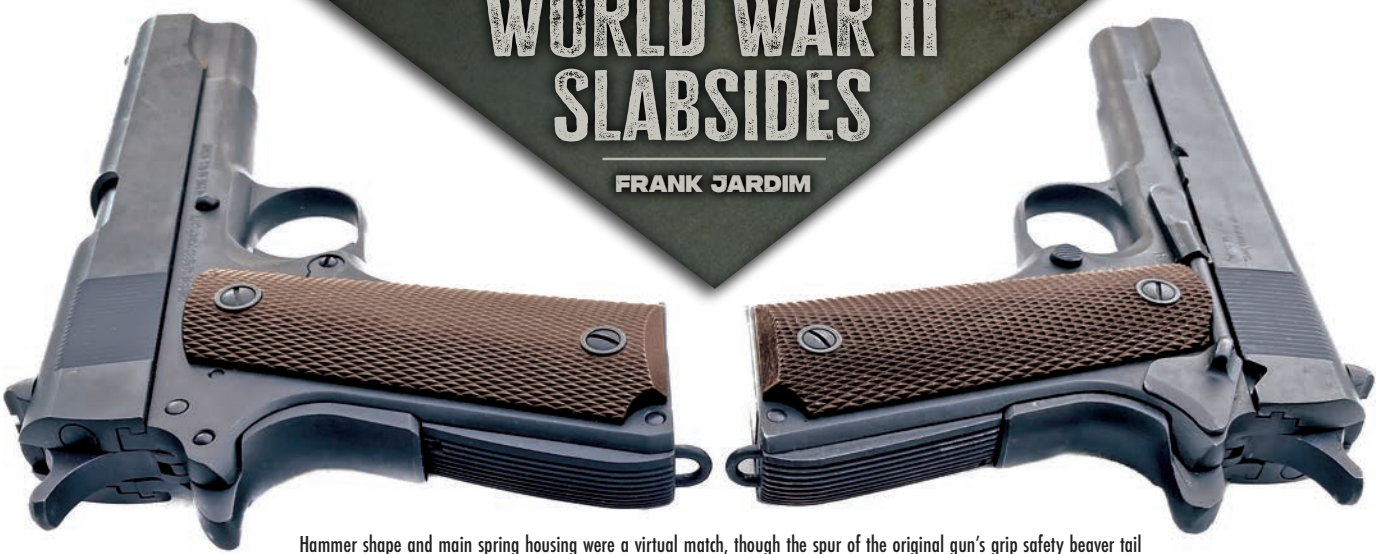


SDS ARMS

TISAS ASF M1911A1

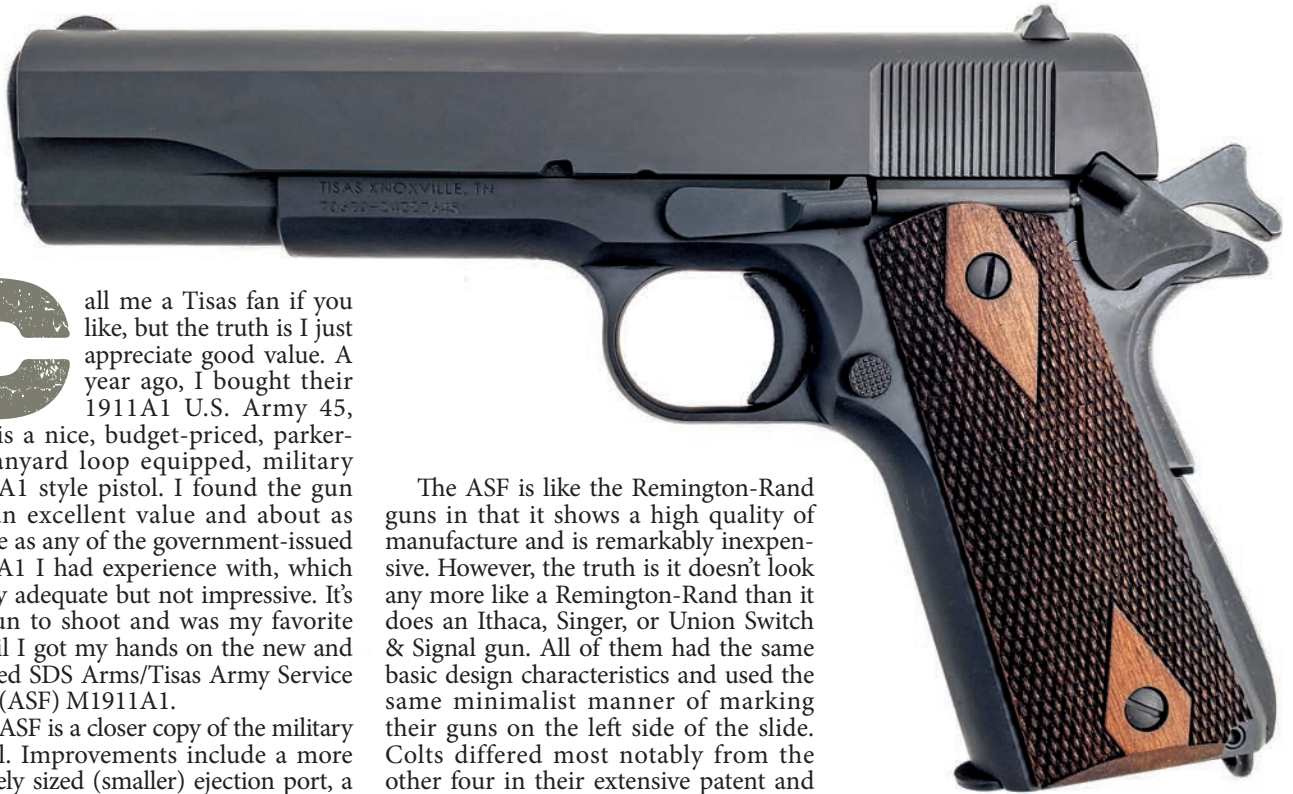
**A HOMAGE TO THE
WORLD WAR II
SLABSIDES**

FRANK JARDIM



Hammer shape and main spring housing were a virtual match, though the spur of the original gun's grip safety beaver tail was thicker. The original gun was rebuilt in the Vietnam War era and could have some non-Remington-Rand parts on it.

Improvements of the original military M1911 pistol made through the mid-1920s became official in 1926 in the M1911A1. The SDS Arms/Tisas 1911A1 ASF U.S. Army 45 comes with both wood, early style double-diamond, and plastic grip panels.



Call me a Tisas fan if you like, but the truth is I just appreciate good value. A year ago, I bought their 1911A1 U.S. Army 45, which is a nice, budget-priced, parkerized, lanyard loop equipped, military M1911A1 style pistol. I found the gun to be an excellent value and about as accurate as any of the government-issued M1911A1 I had experience with, which is to say adequate but not impressive. It's great fun to shoot and was my favorite .45 until I got my hands on the new and improved SDS Arms/Tisas Army Service Family (ASF) M1911A1.

The ASF is a closer copy of the military original. Improvements include a more accurately sized (smaller) ejection port, a longer hammer, military frame markings, and a non-flared magazine well. MSRP of the new SDS Arms/Tisas 1911A1 ASF U.S. Army 45 is \$479, though the actual price seems closer to \$435. It's a lot more gun than you would expect at that price point!

Historical Design Goals

The SDS Arms/Tisas 1911A1 ASF U.S. Army 45 is advertised as being a "more accurate representation of the 1911A1 Remington-Rand that was manufactured during 1943-1945." Remington-Rand was a typewriter company in Syracuse, NY, and the single largest contractor producing the M1911A1, ultimately making 875,000 pistols and earning laurels for producing guns of unrivaled quality for the lowest cost.

The ASF is like the Remington-Rand guns in that it shows a high quality of manufacture and is remarkably inexpensive. However, the truth is it doesn't look any more like a Remington-Rand than it does an Ithaca, Singer, or Union Switch & Signal gun. All of them had the same basic design characteristics and used the same minimalist manner of marking their guns on the left side of the slide. Colts differed most notably from the other four in their extensive patent and rampant Colt trademark roll markings on the left side of the slide but resembled the others in their physical features. You really have to be an advanced collector to recognize the slight variations between the different manufacturers. The good news here is the SDS Arms/Tisas 1911A1 ASF U.S. Army 45 is a great representative piece for all the M1911A1 pistols of World War II.

Comparing The Real Deal

I happen to have an early 1945 vintage Remington-Rand M1911A1 that was arsenal overhauled after the Korean and Vietnam Wars (if only it could talk) and appears unissued. While I can't say if it has all the parts it had when it left New York almost 90 years

ago, it can still serve as a good representative World War II gun to compare against the SDS Arms/Tisas 1911A1 ASF U.S. Army 45.

Studying them side by side, the differences are tiny. The checkering on the hammer spur and trigger face of the modern gun are laser engraved with a wide cross-hatching rather than stamped

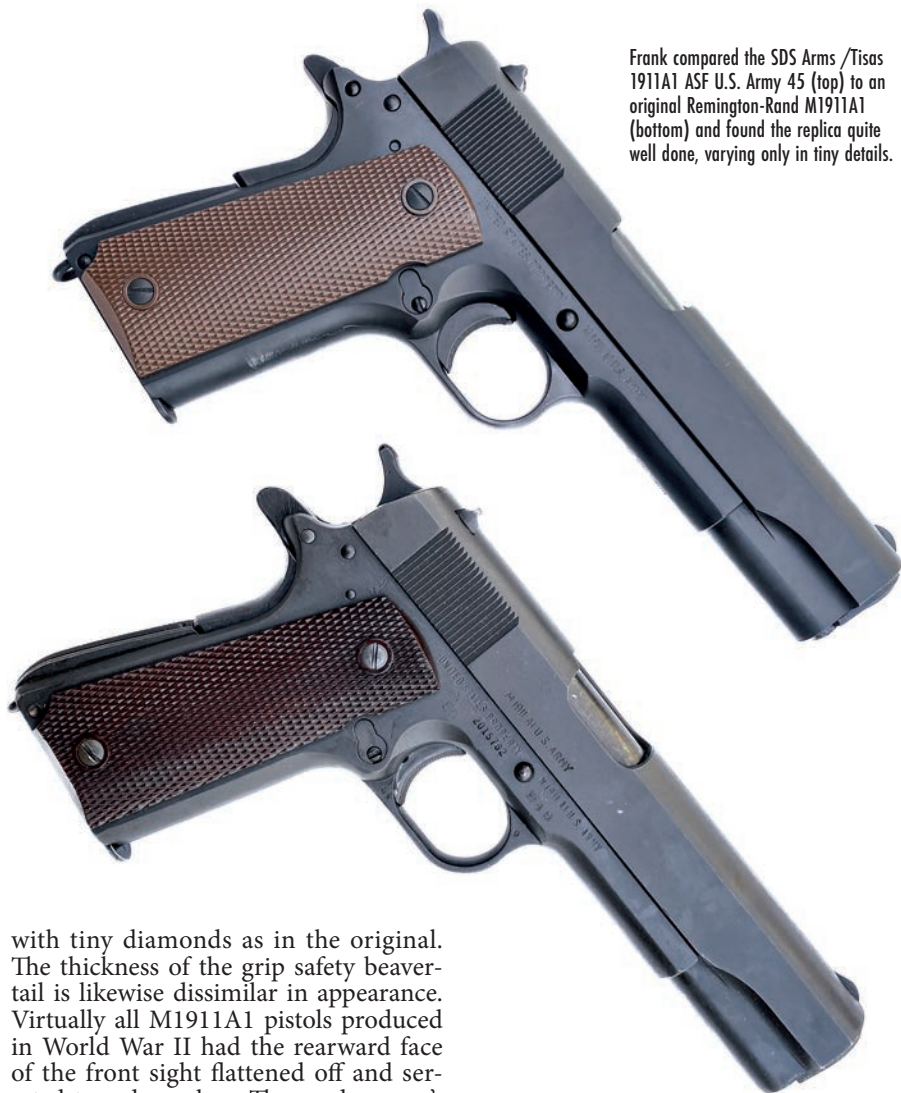


The left side of the SDS Arms/Tisas 1911A1 ASF U.S. Army 45 (top) is unmarked. Original M1911A1 pistols (bottom) will always have their manufacturer markings here.

Right: Note slight differences in the size of the serrations on the slide and slide lock release, and the checkering on the manual safety and hammer spur.



Frank compared the SDS Arms /Tisas 1911A1 ASF U.S. Army 45 (top) to an original Remington-Rand M1911A1 (bottom) and found the replica quite well done, varying only in tiny details.



with tiny diamonds as in the original. The thickness of the grip safety beaver-tail is likewise dissimilar in appearance. Virtually all M1911A1 pistols produced in World War II had the rearward face of the front sight flattened off and serrated to reduce glare. The modern gun's front sight is the right thickness but has a round profile. The size of checkering on the plastic grips and their color differs slightly from the original, being smaller and lighter, respectively. The modern gun comes with an extra set of World War I-type wooden double-diamond grip

panels, which is a nice bonus. Compared to the originals, they look coarse because their checkering is laser cut. The slide serrations are also slightly closer together. The "UNITED STATES PROPERTY M 1911 A1 U.S. ARMY" on the right side of the frame is laser engraved on the modern gun rather than stamped, but the

awkward spacing of the nomenclature was thoughtfully preserved. Judging from the absurd length of the serial number, it may have been impossible to fit it below the "UNITED STATES PROPERTY" marking like the original.

The slide has no markings, and I wonder if folks who have a laser engraver will be tempted to mark it with the manufacturer of their choice. None of these minor differences diminished my enjoyment of the SDS Arms/Tisas 1911A1 ASF U.S. Army 45, and I hope they won't discourage you either. If you want to have the experience of shooting a new World War II M1911A1 without mortgaging your home, you can't beat this gun.

Build Observations

In response to customer demand, Tisas 1911s now only use fully milled parts, rather than a mixture of Metal Injection Molded (MIM) and milled-from-billet parts. While the difference in strength, and by extension durability, may be slight, milled-from-billet parts are recognized as superior to MIM parts. Slides and frames are milled from steel forgings for the highest strength, consistent with the original design specifications. Unlike many far more expensive 1911 pistols, the safety and slide lock release lever were easy to operate with the shooting hand thumb. Trigger pull measured 5.5 lbs. with a very short take-up of perhaps 1/16" to the wall and another 1/16" of travel to a crisp break. I felt it was great right out of the box.

Shooting "New" History

I tested six different loads for accuracy at 25 yards, shooting five shot strings from the bench with a Caldwell Pistolero rest and recording velocity at 15 feet from the muzzle on a Competition Electronics Pro-Chrono Digital Chronograph. All the ammo functioned perfectly, though the Italian Mec-Gar magazines would not hold the slide back after the last round. Rather than the standard G.I. double-stepped follower nose, they have only a single step. They are well made, and the follower is polished stainless steel, but to get the slide to stay back, I needed to insert a standard G.I. magazine.

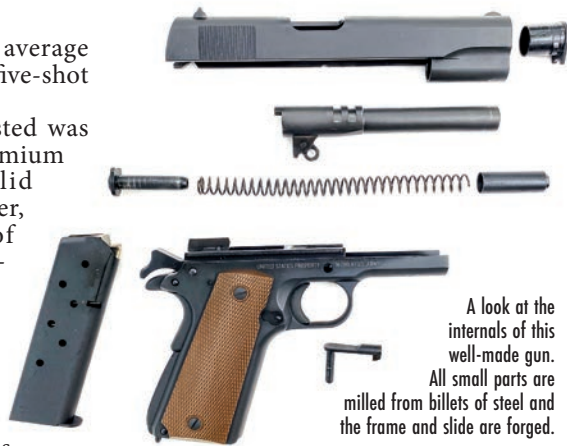
As hole after hole appeared in the 5.25" diameter bullseye of my standard NRA 25-yard slow-fire pistol target downrange, I came to the delightful conclusion that not only was Tisas 1911A1 ASF U.S. Army 45 showing very good accuracy for a service pistol, it was notably better accuracy than most of the genuine military M1911A1 pistols I've shot over the years. When I averaged all the group sizes shot with



Like the military M1911A1, the SDS Arms /Tisas 1911A1 ASF U.S. Army 45 doesn't have a beveled magazine well.

the various ammo types, the average center-to-center spread for a five-shot group was only 2.85".

The most accurate load tested was Black Hills Ammunition's premium self-defense bullet, the solid copper 135-grain HoneyBadger, with an average velocity of 1,119 fps and groups averaging 2.11". Hornady Critical Defense 186-grain FTX JHP, a very reliable expander due to its unique elastomer plugged star crimped jacket hollow-point design, averaged 974 fps and groups of 2.63". Black Hills Ammunition's 230-grain JHP averaged 834 fps and groups of 2.73". Essentially tied for accuracy were: Federal's American Eagle 137-grain lead-free ball, a frangible bullet designed for safer indoor range practice, which averaged 1,073 fps and groups of 3.04", Winchester WIN 1911 230-grain JHP which averaged 899 fps and 3.06" groups and Focchi Defense Dynamics 200-grain JHP which averaged 863 fps and 3.06" groups. Point of impact on the



A look at the internals of this well-made gun. All small parts are milled from billets of steel and the frame and slide are forged.

target seemed to range from 2.5 to 4.3" above the point of aim at 25 yards, depending on the load.

Included with the SDS Arms/Tisas 1911A1 ASF U.S. Army 45 are a sturdy plastic, lockable hard case, two Mec-Gar seven-round magazines, two sets of military-style grip panels (plastic and wood), a cleaning brush, non-marring plastic bushing wrench, and a trigger lock and instruction manual.



For more info: TisasUSA.com



If you want a close copy of the M1911A1 that saw action in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and every other place American military personnel held the line for freedom, the SDS/Tisas 1911A1 ASF U.S. Army 45 is tough to top.

Simplicity Meets Effectiveness

The essentials you need at a budget-friendly price!

Get the perfect balance of price and features. Each unit is assembled with quality craftsmanship and is proudly made in the USA.



Competition Electronics



815 874 8001
competitionelectronics.com

Smith's "Third Generation" of autos, like this 4506, have been historically underappreciated, though their reputation is growing with time.



RIGHT FOR ME; RIGHT FOR YOU?

COMING AROUND ON THE 'TDA' AUTO

CLAYTON WALKER

The gun shows here in Los Angeles are pretty terrible these days — I remember better times. Around the early 2000s, I was on the hunt for a few specific and rare pieces, and it seemed like just about every table had a "third gen" Smith and Wesson autoloader. Guns like the 5906 and 4006 were once mainstays of the LAPD, but as it became an increasingly striker-fired world, you'd see them more frequently up for sale with "USED" tags and asking prices of about \$450.



Sure, guys like us know this 1911 is "on safe," but many people (including some shooters) are made uneasy by a cocked handgun.



The first gun that turned Clayton around on the DA/SA platform: H&K's superlative USP Expert.

Below: Ten rounds of 147-grain ammo shot quickly at 7 yards in DA/SA pairs. The transition isn't nearly as daunting as one would imagine, and the DA mode doesn't preclude accurate shooting.

As that old hair metal song by Cinderella goes: "You don't know what you got—'til it's gone." Today, all of those ex-LAPD guns, along with any "beater grade" Beretta 92, SIG P226, or HK USPs are rare encounters in the consignment cases. Movies and TV shows like *Training Day*, *Die Hard*, *Collateral* and *The Shield* probably boosted the "ooh!" factor of a lot of these models, but I think the word got out: Far from archaic tech, the DA/SA autos are great guns.

I've certainly come around on them, and I think you might, too.

A Little History

Our story begins with the Walther P38, a revolutionary design for its era. Easier and cheaper to build than the iconic Luger P08, the P38 was at the same time more reliable and better suited to battlefield conditions. It incorporated an ingenious "falling block" locking system that continues to live on in the Beretta 92 models and its derivatives. And, most significantly to our topic here, it popularized what is now known as the DA/SA autoloading pistol — sometimes called a "traditional double action" auto, or TDA for short.

Unlike the single action auto, such as John Browning's ubiquitous M1911, the TDA gun could be decocked after it was loaded to allow the trigger to work like a double action revolver: Through a long pull of the trigger, the hammer would be cocked and released to fire the first round. After that, the



That first DA pull is tricky. Novice shooters may find a rimfire conversion kit or .22 revolver a great (and fun) way to practice on the cheap.



The TDA gun is designed to be loaded and decocked. A long DA pull fires the first shot, after which all subsequent rounds are fired in the SA mode.



auto avoids this perceptual issue while also ensuring the first shot isn't going to break without deliberate, sustained motion of the trigger. And at the same time, the gun can be rapidly brought into action without having to disengage any manual safety.

The Gripes

Imagine yourself pushing a wheelbarrow loaded with bricks up a steep hill, and you've got a sense of what it's like to work the worst triggers on a DA/SA platform. True, a long and heavy pull makes it harder to unintentionally discharge a round, but it also makes it harder to intentionally place shots where the user wants them.

I remember about 15 years back, a few of the IDPA guys on my shooting forum were running Beretta 92s and SIG P-series guns. They were asked how they managed that long DA pull. The advice seemed to be to mash the first round out of the gun to get it over with, then rely on the SA mode to produce hits.

pistol would operate in the single action mode, with a lighter, shorter trigger pull to drop the already-cocked hammer for all subsequent shots.

Opinions of this system were — and remain — mixed. Regardless of whatever other safety features may be simultaneously engaged, a cocked pistol seems to invite apprehension from bystanders (and many gun owners) as something that could more easily “go off.” When carried as the designs are intended, the TDA

Unsurprisingly, the “common-sense” wisdom from guys like these was to steer new shooters away from DA/SA platforms entirely. A familiar refrain: “Why spend time mastering two trigger pulls when you can just master one?” Following that line of thinking, novice shooters were directed toward striker-fired platforms, which were seen as simpler and more shootable.

Around the same time, law enforcement and military units seemed to be moving away from the TDA pistol in droves. As noted, I saw them first disappear from the holsters of LAPD officers. By the time the military switched from the Beretta 92 to the SIG P320 platform, the market seemed to have spoken: Just about nobody wanted to deal with that stiff, long DA pull if they didn't have to.

Rethinking

I'll admit I began to add a few DA/SA guns to my collection simply because of the initial challenge. I wanted to learn a new skill set, and so I forced myself to run any of my traditional double actions as their designs intended: with the first round out of the pipe shot DA.

Yes, this was harder. But it was hard and fun, much in the same way that car junkies will learn to operate a manual transmission, a vastly more complex process than what an automatic transmission requires from the driver. They certainly don't have to as a matter of necessity, but for most “slushbox” haters, the process of shifting gears connects them more closely to the machine and to motorsports writ large. Often, it teaches them to be better and more conscientious drivers.

In getting to know the DA/SA gun, I arrived at a number of benefits. First, it helped me conquer my flinch. Jerking the trigger almost always resulted in a miss. Pulling slowly and deliberately, however, was an act of fine motor control. An accurate shot in DA only came through repeated stress inoculation: You are tasked with executing a kinetic operation with consistency and fluidity, knowing full well it will result in an explosion. Easier said than done! I feel it is this aspect in particular that causes most shooters to turn away from the platform.



Gun makers like Wilson Combat and Langdon Tactical have elevated the TDA to new heights.

Second, it taught me the trade-off between speed and accuracy. It is easier to make a center-punched hit in the DA mode of these autoloaders when you take your time — time you may not have in a critical situation. Speeding things up involves learning how to try to compress that fluid pull rather than jerking on the trigger to rip a round out of the pipe. As a result, the TDA auto allowed me to shift from a binary hit/miss assessment of my shooting to one that was more dynamic: How quickly could I make a hit on a target at a specific distance? Was there room to push myself a little faster, even if I knew my groups would open up a bit?

By the same token, I began to appreciate the degree of mechanical safety present in these designs. At least to me, and if we're talking about the systems of a handgun's design that prevent the unintended discharge of a round, there's a difference between "shouldn't" and "can't." I understand, intellectually, how the various safety systems of striker-fired firearms work. I don't know how much I would absolutely trust some of these guns to keep the striker cocked if they were hurled down a flight of stairs.

On the other hand, it's hard for me to imagine how an accidental discharge would happen on my Beretta 92 if knocked or dropped: Its firing pin is prevented from forward travel unless the trigger is fully depressed, and at rest, its hammer lacks the spring tension to bust primers.

The TDA Today

You don't need to look hard to find examples of the TDA that are still being produced. I've mentioned the H&K USP, SIG's "P22X" series of guns, and the Beretta 92, which have all remained in continuous production. To those, I'd add the HK P30L, several of the CZ-75 models, and IWI's Jericho models. Clearly, these are successful products with several decades of avid buyers to vouch for their effectiveness.

The Beretta 92 deserves special mention because of a small renaissance these guns are experiencing as "semi-custom" platforms thanks to Wilson Combat and Langdon Tactical. I'd do a disservice to Bill Wilson and Ernest Langdon to try to parse all of their thoughts on the Beretta 92 in the space I have here, but I did want to signal out one small bit of wisdom from Mr. Langdon: I came across a recent video in which he too praised the TDA auto because of the deliberation required to fire the first round.

However, Langdon said the deliberation comes from the length of the trigger pull, not necessarily the weight of the pull. This is a biggie.




Thanks to the wizards at Grayguns, Clayton's P229 came back with a delightful 7-lb. DA pull.

Over the last 20-some years, bright minds have expended quite a lot of effort to re-engineer the lockwork of many of these already excellent TDA models. As a result, the DA pull can go from a chore to a delight. The LTT Beretta 92 has an advertised DA weight of 6.3 to 7 lbs., and my own SIG P229, after coming back from the wizards at Grayguns, has a buttery DA pull of 7 lbs. on the dot. Where shootability is concerned, a great DA trigger makes a tremendous difference.

I suppose if you put my feet to the fire, I'd agree the DA/SA auto might not be the best choice for a total newcomer to shooting. However, to conclude these guns are obsolete is simply

a bridge too far. On the contrary, I would say these platforms are superlative for teaching intermediate shooters how to reach the next level of performance, supposing they can work under a stern taskmaster. An expert will easily overcome the learning curve.

Along the way, such shooters might surprise themselves as the DA/SA handgun goes from an intriguing historical novelty to the platform they'd prefer to have at their side for the defense of life and limb. That's exactly what happened to me and judging from my continued search for a clean and affordable S&W 4506, I think there are a lot of guys like me out there. 



A good TDA auto should have an easy means of decocking the gun. The USP features a generous control lever.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL



Craig "SouthNarc" Douglas demonstrates his retention position with a dummy gun. Note the flagged thumb, high elbow, and pelvic angle of the shot. Photo: Shivworks



As Craig Douglas demonstrates, contact struggle can twist both parties to unpredictable angles. Photo: Shivworks

SUBTLETIES OF SHOOTING FROM RETENTION

MASSAD AYOUB

When shooting from retention, the devil is in the details ... and failures can be devilish indeed.

Many articles, books and videos advocate shooting from retention without touching on the fine points. "Shooting from retention" is inherent to combatives, meaning a physical fight with guns involved and where the opponent is close enough to grab your handgun, and you are trying to keep it out of his reach. This involves pulling the firearm in close on your gun-hand side and firing from a body position index, unable to visually aim.

One problem is that in live fire, it's practiced on static targets, but in real-life employment you're likely to be in physical contact with the opponent and moving each other's bodies. I cringe when I see pictures of someone's student holding the shoulder of the cardboard target while firing into its chest from retention: In an actual fight, the opponent need only pivot and drop a bit to pull your own hand and arm into your own line of fire.

There is no greater expert on retention shooting than Craig "Southnarc" Douglas, the retired undercover cop who teaches nationwide through Shivworks (ShivWorks.com). Craig teaches shooting downward into the pelvic area for several

reasons. One is to keep that spare hand of yours from being pulled down into where you're firing a bullet. He explains, "I teach the firing arm elbow up as far as it goes to the rear. A downward drop of the elbow to elevate the gun for an A-zone (chest) shot significantly increases the chance of hitting my own other arm." He adds, "We explain retention shooting as 'diminishment'; if we don't finish the problem, our shots release us from the clinch, and then we get on the sights or dot to improve quality of shot placement as we create distance."

Preventing Injuries

I recommend a Najolia block with the support arm, named after defensive tactics instructor Kerry Najolia. The support arm comes up with the humerus horizontal or a little higher, the elbow pointed at the opponent (or out to the side), and that hand open on or adjacent to the side of your head opposite your gun-hand side. Graciela Casillas has the simplest description of that maneuver I've ever heard: "Run your fingers through your hair at the temple, and you have your block." Effective and safer with a blazing gun in your other hand.

Design: Semi-Autos

If you go for your opponent's chest when shooting from retention, your arm will form an "L" with only the bottom



Mas demonstrates the Najolia block as applied to retention shooting. The pistol is an unshootable SIRT for the photographer's peace of mind. Photo: Gail Papin

leg of that L behind the gun. It's easy for the whole forearm to move back with the pistol on recoil. Momentum that should be running the slide dissipates through the hand and arm, and the slide fails to eject or return to battery. It's similar to the dynamic of a "limp-wrist stoppage," and you can't afford it. The arm needs to be locked tight.

Craig Douglas recommends fingers of the firing hand tight against the lower rib cage, with the gun hand thumb flagged



Disarming can be a viable option to retention shooting. ("If he's close enough to grab your gun...")



Beware upward gas blast from compensators in retention position. Here, 9mm blast shreds paper well above the Springfield Prodigy Comp.

(held vertically) as a felt index against your chest. This helps lock the frame in place and also rotates the slide outward. The latter is important to keep the slide from binding against clothing, which can also cause a malfunction. Some instructors prefer to rotate the gun 45 or even 90 degrees over on its side. This is particularly critical for southpaw shooting: Most autos eject to the right, and you don't want a fold of coat fabric to block the ejection port or bounce a spent casing back into the port as the pistol is cycling.

Craig's "elbow as far back and up as it can get" also takes the arm to the end of its range of movement and prevents the type of malfunction just described.

Design: Revolvers

Let's not disregard side-spit from the barrel cylinder gap, nor muzzle blast from snub revolvers or any very short-barrel handgun. A .357 Magnum's side-spit is coming out of that narrow gap at plus/minus 40,000 psi pressure with a flame-cutting effect. Obese people and buxom women seem particularly vulnerable in this regard. In training, try to establish a gun hand index point that will keep the barrel/cylinder gap forward of the body and clothing.

Design: Compensators

"Carry-comps" are experiencing a resurgence in popularity. They help keep muzzles down by expelling jets of burning gases upward. If such a muzzle is too close to the face in a retention position, that hot stuff goes straight up toward the eyes, and most eye protection doesn't shield against "bottom up." Rotating the pistol outboard 90 degrees helps solve the problem. CAUTION: This can direct that gas toward a shooter at your side on a practice firing line. Douglas' admonition to angle the muzzle down also helps to ameliorate this problem.

Training

Mimicking something we saw on YouTube isn't enough. Follow Craig Douglas' example. In his classes, the

students will fire some 80 rounds from this position, but under close personal supervision from Craig and his staff. In retention shooting, you can't see where your gun is pointed. A coach watching you is important.

Just live fire from a static position only programs us to deal with one part of the combatives problem, which is a dynamic physical fight with guns in play. Craig teaches that element with unshootable dummy guns in actual hand-to-hand practice with a live opponent, both of you wearing appropriate protective gear.

Only then does it really come home to the student that when it's done for real, the defender and attacker will both be moving unpredictably, with little to no ability to see who might be behind the homicidal criminal they have to shoot. This is another advantage to Douglas' admonition to bring the muzzle down. If the bullet directed into the pelvis over-penetrates or misses, it is likely to strike the ground or floor a short distance behind the assailant and greatly reduce the danger to unseen innocent bystanders.

In Perspective

Abraham Maslow warned us that if our only tool were a hammer, every problem would look like a nail. This is true in a lot of firearms training. Let's not forget that the object of it all is not "How do I shoot the Bad Guy." The problem is "How do I keep the Bad Guy from killing me or any other innocent person?" Shooting him is merely one of our options for achieving that greater goal.

Why are we firing from retention in the first place? Obviously, because he is close enough he can grab our weapon. That means, by definition, that you are close enough to grab his weapon.

When you and the Bad Guy are within arm's reach of each other, I don't know any currently living Good Guys or Gals who can react, clear their cover garment, draw from concealment, and shoot the Bad Guy in a guaranteed one-half of one second. I do know

that in our advanced classes, we show that when they are facing each other squarely, almost every student can get their hand on the opponent's gun or gun hand in about half a second or less. The trick is you have to know how to proceed from there into deflecting the muzzle (or the point of the knife) and flowing into a disarm. Disarming requires technique and practice — practice that's less fun than shooting — but it's sometimes the best answer. That's why Craig Douglas teaches disarming as part of the repertoire of life-saving skills he shares with his students.

Shooting from retention is a piece of the puzzle, and the puzzle is a very complicated one with many parts. The simple fact is shooting from retention is a life-saving skill that is potentially dangerous to the user if done wrong and, therefore, must be learned and practiced correctly with all the subtle safety details in place.



Rotating the pistol 90 degrees vents the compensator blast sideways, making it safer for the shooter. Photo: Gail Papin

THE WEIRDLY HORRIBLE LIPSTICK GUN

WILL DABBS, MD



Cocking the Stinger involves unthreading the base cap and pulling it back until the striker catches.



The Stinger is classic Military Armament Corporation 1970s spy gun chic.

THE MAC STINGER



The MAC Stinger is an adorable little deep concealment spy gun that seems profoundly dangerous to operate.

Left: The .22-caliber MAC Stinger is not much bigger than a 12-gauge shotgun shell.

I've actually met a spy or two. They seemed almost unsettlingly normal. However, some in the espionage business seemed to have read too many Ian Fleming novels.

The flamboyant Mitch WerBell III was a good example. A veteran of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) in WWII, WerBell was a legit spy. After the war, when he wasn't out toppling governments for money, he dabbled in firearms design.

WerBell allied himself with the Military Armament Corporation, the same mob that brought us the Ingram sub-

machine gun. He actually designed the distinctive two-stage MAC submachine gun suppressor. He also fathered the MAC Stinger, patterned after a curious WWII-era spy gun called the T-2.

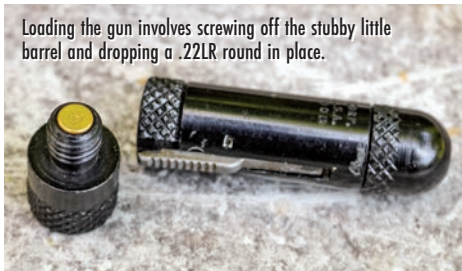
Disposable Single Shot

The T-2 fired a single .22 rimfire round and was actually disposable. It looked like a pen in dim light and included a pocket clip. WerBell's MAC Stinger was a bit more substantial, but only just barely. These adorable little firearms were about the size of a tube of lipstick and were turned out of aluminum.

They could be had either in anodized gold or painted black. The Stinger was 3.25" long and weighed 2.25 oz.

Each Stinger came with a short leather carrying strap. This was designed to help keep the tiny gun oriented in a pocket or to secure it in your armpit or croch. The logic there being that these might be the last places you would be searched. Just imagining packing a loaded version this way gives me the heebie-jeebies.

The Stinger shipped in a clear plastic case along with two stubby little barrels. One tube was intended for practice, while the other was sealed on the end to exclude



Loading the gun involves screwing off the stubby little barrel and dropping a .22LR round in place.



The Braverman Stinger pen gun came later, but it broke in half for firing. That allowed the Braverman Stinger to transfer like a conventional handgun.

pocket lint when carried for real. These guns originally retailed for a whopping \$36 apiece — about \$200 today.

MAC offered some curious accessories to include a 16" barrel. Thusly configured, the gun could pass for a swagger stick.

WerBell also designed sound suppressors for these little guns. The earliest versions were twice the diameter of the weapon and three times as long. A second prototype was the same diameter as the gun but was still long-ish. The final production version was 9" in length and roughly 1.5 times the gun's diameter. MAC didn't produce a great many of these things, as the suppressor made the overall package fairly bulky. However, I would think the Stinger was a great deal safer with a can installed.

Practical Tactical

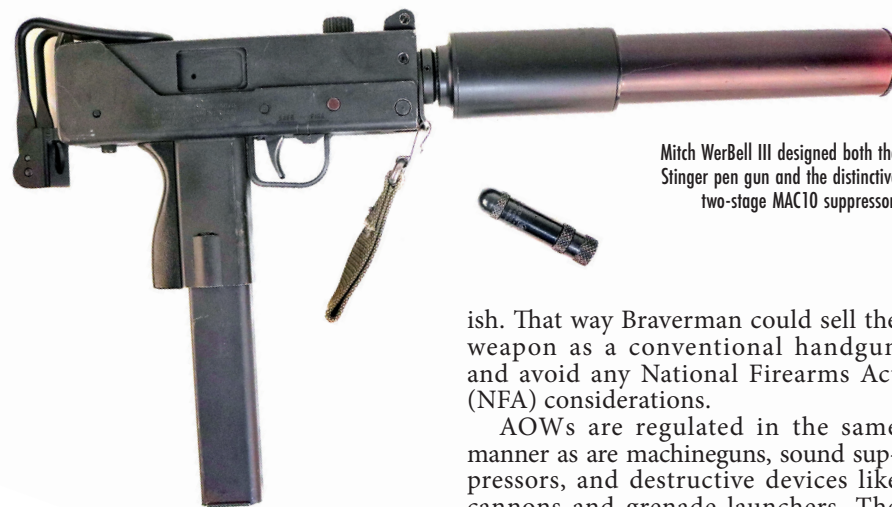
The barrel is 0.25" long and smooth-bore. I'd admittedly sooner not find myself on the receiving end of one of these monsters. However, given the option when selecting a deep cover defensive tool, I'd probably just pick a decent knife.

The manual of arms is as weird as is the gun itself. Unscrew the barrel and ensure that there is no ammo within easy reach. Then unscrew the back cap until it comes free. Pull the cap back until it locks in place. This will expose the little trigger bar. Once cocked, push the end cap back into place and thread it tight.

There is a hole to accept a small wire safety. However, mine has been lost. There is purportedly a sordid set of circumstances wherein you can load the gun and have it misfire with the safety wire in place. Then the weapon will supposedly go off once the wire is removed.

Once the gun is cocked, drop a round in the barrel and thread it in place. Remove the wire safety, point the gun in the general direction of something you dislike, and squeeze. There are no sights, and it essentially has no barrel. This is a point and click last-ditch survival gun designed to be used at contact range. Curiously, the firing pin strikes the base of the case in two places on opposite sides of the rim.

WerBell did mean well. In addition to the wire safety, there is a knurled ring up front that rotates to secure the trigger in place. However, mine seems to be seized in place. No amount of vigorous contortion or verbal remonstrance on



Mitch WerBell III designed both the Stinger pen gun and the distinctive two-stage MAC10 suppressor.

my part could break it free. I don't love you guys enough to put my weird little aluminum gun in a vise. As a result, my example is deadly as soon as it is cocked. I'm terrified of it.

Mitch WerBell's son supposedly once accidentally shot himself with one of his Dad's Stingers. I'm told he pulled through. However, I wouldn't carry one of these for real for love or money.

Legal Considerations

As you might imagine, Uncle Sam found the little Stinger to be just super confusing. It doesn't look or act like a conventional gun. The Stinger does indeed technically throw bullets, but it otherwise certainly doesn't fit into any handy morphological firearm category. As a result, the BATF declared it an AOW (Any Other Weapon). AOWs include conventional handguns with vertical foregrips, novelty guns that look like canes, umbrellas, cell phones or calculators, or pen guns that still resemble pens when they are fired.

The Braverman Stinger pen gun was a different beastie that was marketed much later. To fire the Braverman Stinger, you cracked the weapon along its middle so it looked kind of pistol-

ish. That way Braverman could sell the weapon as a conventional handgun and avoid any National Firearms Act (NFA) considerations.

AOWs are regulated in the same manner as are machineguns, sound suppressors, and destructive devices like cannons and grenade launchers. The paperwork and transfer processes are identical. However, where the typical transfer tax is \$200 for those other cool-guy toys, the AOW tax is only five bucks. In the case of this MAC Stinger, it was worth the hassle and the \$5 transfer tax just for the novelty of the thing.

Ruminations

There are persistent rumors that the Stinger was designed to be encased in a condom, lubed up with KY jelly, and discreetly hidden in the sorts of places where only the most diligent searcher might find it. I think that, should I find myself in such dire circumstances, I might just willingly give up and die. Regardless, the MAC Stinger is an interesting footnote to a very different time.

During the height of the Cold War, a WWII veteran spy designed a terribly impractical little gun that was really a solution in search of a problem. Somewhere between 1,000 and 1,500 copies were purportedly produced, some of which were supposedly given away as promotional gimmicks by the MAC company. In practical application, they were all likely about as dangerous to their firers as their targets. However, the MAC Stinger nonetheless still drips with Cold War cool points.



SHARPS BROTHERS



Meanstreak Button Lock Detail



Meanstreak Frame Locks



Grille Steak Knife



Meanstreak Boat Rescue

PAT COVERT
ROB JONES/THE IMAGESMITH, LLC

SHARPS' CUTS!

Sharps Bros. has been in the firearm upgrade business since 2012, offering receivers, bolt action chassis, grips and grip modules. In 2023, the company added knives to its repertoire and has since rapidly expanded the company's line to several cutlery categories ranging from EDC, outdoors and culinary fare. Like their firearms accessories, these offerings have been impressive and forward-thinking — a good marketing strategy to set their knives apart, considering the sheer glut of knives on the

market today. They've aptly named their knife line of folding and fixed-blade knives "Meanstreak" for their aggressive looks and sheer toughness — and back it up with 6AL-4V Titanium handle construction and top-shelf steel.

Fierce Folders

Sharps Bros. chose an Integral-lock (also called a Frame-lock) construction for their first series of Meanstreak folding knives. Known for its beefy construction, these folders use a locking leaf milled into the rear handle frame to secure the

ENTER THE CUTLERY ARENA

blade in the open position. The Meanstreak 3.5 and 2.75, the numerals connoting blade length, feature sleek frame styling featuring a raised rear scalloped area milled with a diamond grid pattern on the surface for added purchase. The handle's surface has a matte, bead-blasted finish for reduced glare. Both models feature deep-bellied Clip Point blades of top-shelf Crucible Industries' CPM MagnaCut steel — a premium powdered-alloy stainless steel that is lighting up the cutlery market on both fixed-blades and folders alike. The blades roll out via flippers on a nicely sized caged ball-bearing pivot. For carry, a burly 2.25" reversible pocket clip mounted for tip-up carry handles the toting chores.

The Integral-lock models launched Sharps Bros. entry into the folding knife category — the new Meanstreak Button-lock kicks it into overdrive. In recent years the Button-lock, or Plunge-lock as it's also called, has been gaining popularity among EDC users because it makes for a cleaner, spiffier handle. The button lock (located on the front frame slab) has a highly polished stainless-steel bolster housing the blade release button cleverly disguised as the Meanstreak logo. Ingenious. The folder's 3.0" Crucible S35VN stainless steel blade slots nicely between the two Meanstreak Integral locks in size, giving users a third viable option from which to choose.

A Fixed-Blade Feast

Sharps Bros. has also served its innovative styling in a trio of fixed blades. The Meanstreak 3.5 Fixed-blade is an all-purpose knife as content working in the field as an EDC in urban environs. Served up with a 3.5" Crucible S35VN stainless steel blade, this fixer features a hefty finger guard with comfortable curves in a sturdy, full-tang handle design. The Meanstreak 3.5 Fixed Blade's deeply ground Clip Point blade has jimping on the base of the rear spine for enhanced purchase and allows the user to choke up the blade for tough cutting chores. In the field, 3.5 Fixed Blade's 6AL-4V Titanium handle

makes it easy to rinse off mud or viscera without fear of rusting. Sharps Bros. provides a black thermoplastic MOLLE-adaptable sheath with the Meanstreak 3.5 Fixed Blade.

If you need more blade, the Sharps Bros. Meanstreak Grill & Steak fixed blade will fill the bill. At 9.5" overall, this large slicer can take on larger chores around the deer camp, backyard, or kitchen. The Meanstreak Grill & Steak is outfitted with a 5.0" Crucible S35VN stainless steel blade in the same Clip Point style as its brethren but is mated up to a more streamlined 4.5" Titanium handle with the Meanstreak logo machined into the front handle scale. Like all Sharps Bros. Titanium-handled knives, they're corrosion-resistant and easy to clean.

The Meanstreak Boat/Rescue fixed blade is a compact knife designed to aid boaters and automotive users alike. At 6¹¹/₁₆" overall, the Boat/Rescue's 3.0" VG-10 corrosion-resistant stainless-steel blade has all the essentials needed for boaters and divers to handle general-purpose and emergency situations. One side of the Spear Point style blade is lined with serrations for cutting rope, cord and webbing, while the other has an upper section of plain edge for slicing and a finger groove for choking up on the blade for tougher chores. The tip of the blade is squared off with a dull edge to prevent any errant harm to a rescue victim or the puncturing of inflatable gear. The Boat/

Rescue's handle, just under 4.0" in length, is wide for ample purchase, and the 6AL-4V Titanium scales offer excellent protection against rust and corrosion.

The Boat/Rescue will also serve automobile and truck drivers in similar circumstances. The serrated edge can be invaluable in cutting seatbelt webbing to extract an accident victim and the plain edge can be used for small cutting chores. The Meanstreak Boat/Rescue is delivered with a black injection-molded sheath, including a clip that allows it to be attached to the user's attire — or you can simply store the sheathed knife in the vehicle's glove box or valet.

A lifelong firearms enthusiast, John Sharps took a leap of faith in 2012 and turned his American dream from a one-man show to a full-blown manufacturing enterprise. Part of that success has been his ability to think outside the proverbial box, creating and producing firearms aftermarket products with his own stamp on them. We're delighted to see he's added cutlery to the Sharps Bros. repertoire because, as a famous unknown man once said, "You can't have enough knives!"



For more info: SharpsBros.com





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SCAN TO ENTER



TISAS USA

The .45 caliber 1911 *Duty 45 Raider* is "an awesome looking, and extremely well performing handgun," says SDS Arms/Tisas USA CEO Chris DiCenso. It has the features those who carry a weapon every day wants. The *Duty 45 Raider* has a hammer forged full-size frame, hard chromium-coated 5" barrel, a .45 caliber SS barrel bushing and recoil spring plug with a sleek matte finish. The Picatinny rail allows mounting of accessories and the Novak front sight has a GLOCK dovetail rear sight (1/3 co-witness). With an OAL of 8.62", the handgun also features a skeletonized hammer, titanium firing pin and extended beavertail safety and more. It comes with a firearms case that includes two 8-round SS magazines w/ black plastic base plates, a cleaning kit, bushing wrench and trigger lock.

The *Spartan Harsey Folder 3.25* or *SHF 3.25"* is the latest from Spartan Blades in collaboration with the legendary knife maker, William "Bill" Harsey Jr. This exceptional folder combines the artistry of design with the functionality demanded by knife enthusiasts. Crafted with precision and attention to detail, the *SHF 3.25* is a reliable 6AL4V titanium frame-lock knife with an OAL of 7.125". Its 3.25" CPM S45VN stainless steel drop-point blade has a flat ground, stone washed finish. Blade hardness is 59-61.

The Tisas USA 45 Raider and Spartan Harsey Folder are the prizes for this month's giveaway. There's only one way to win these amazing prizes and that's to join! Go to AmericanHandgunner.com/giveaways or mail a postcard. —Jazz Jimenez

PLUS



SPARTAN BLADES SHF 3.25

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MANUFACTURER: TISAS USA; TISASUSA.COM
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SHF 3.25

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VALUE: \$435

TOTAL VALUE: \$1,184.99



AN HEIRLOOM PISTOL, A LOYAL SLAVE AND SOME WELL-FERTILIZED ROSES

I have a friend who has in his possession a vintage M1855 Harper's Ferry horse pistol. This single-shot hand cannon was obsolete by the onset of the American Civil War. How my friend came into this extraordinary artifact is a compelling tale indeed.

My buddy is old Mississippi. His family owned a sprawling plantation outside Vicksburg back during the 1860s. By 1863, the American Civil War was in its third year, and the country was already well-blooded. With the men off fighting for the Confederacy, the family homestead was left in the care of the women and the slaves. As fate would have it, it was this strategic spot of dirt upon which General Grant landed.

Vicksburg occupied a strategic promontory overlooking the expansive Mississippi River. Whoever controlled Vicksburg controlled the river. Whoever controlled the river controlled trade in and out of the South. The war hinged on such stuff as this.

The Villain

For the pending siege, U.S. Grant commanded 70,000 Federal troops. Arrayed against them were 33,000 Confederates under John Pemberton. Grant and his entourage passed through the old family place with dispatch. One of his staff officers confiscated a horse, but the advancing Federals left the place otherwise unmolested. For the moment, it looked like the immediate crisis had passed.

The following day, a drunken Union officer appeared. This man was clearly a straggler, and he was three sheets to the wind. Before moving on to catch up with Grant's command team, the inebriated soldier thought he might take a moment to get to know the fairer members of the family. The matron of the house posted herself in the doorway, barring his entry.

Meanwhile ...

As this noisy little drama was unfolding, one of the family slaves was busy breaking up the soil in front of the manor house in anticipation of planting a fresh rose bed. Inside the domicile was indeed the flower of Southern femininity. Sadly, the matriarch was a slight woman. She would not slow this drunken miscreant down for long.

The slave spontaneously ceased his work and advanced up the broad steps of the family home while the drunkard tried to push his way past the Ole Miss. With minimal fanfare, the enslaved man then buried his pickaxe up to its shaft in the back of the randy Federal officer's head. The man was dead where he dropped.

Fallout

The lady of the house was rightfully discomfited. While the Civil War pitted brother against brother, it was still a most dreadful war with all of the concomitant horrors. Once word got out that they had killed a Union officer, she expected Grant and company would hang them all and fire the grounds. The murderous slave, however, had another idea. He helpfully observed that he was right in the middle of digging a lovely rose bed ...

In short order, the dead soldier's cooling corpse was arrayed underneath the rose bushes. The lady of the house



The bloody fight at Vicksburg was a turning point in the war. Photo: Public Domain

hid the man's pistol deep among the family things. In due time, it passed down to my buddy.


Once the hostilities were complete, the Union officer who had taken the family horse was posted to the Army of Occupation in New Orleans. Despite the intervening two long bloody years, this diligent soldier posted a letter to the family apologizing for having taken the animal after his own mount came up lame. Enclosed, he included fair payment for the beast. That letter still remains in the family as well. No one ever inquired after the dead man. His body remains undisturbed to this very day.

Ruminations

More than 600,000 American soldiers perished during the Civil War. One of them died with a pickaxe through his brain on the front porch of a Vicksburg plantation house. Associated artifacts were passed down through the generations to the present day.

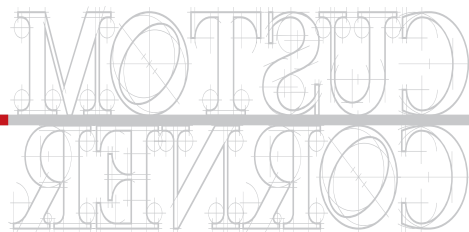
“Once word got out that they had killed a Union officer, she expected Grant and company would hang them all and fire the grounds.”

In 1932, a German journalist, satirist, and pacifist named Kurt Tucholsky wrote, “The death of one man: This is a catastrophe. Hundreds of thousands of deaths: That is a statistic!” This darkly prescient quote has since been attributed to both Stalin and Mao. In this forgotten Union officer's gory demise, we see that timeless axiom embodied.

Union forces suffered 4,910 casualties during the siege; Confederate losses six times that. However, those are just numbers. In the unlikely person of this aspiring alcoholic rapist and the enslaved man who killed for the family that owned him, we see the true humanity of the war. That curious dichotomy intrigues me to this very day. 

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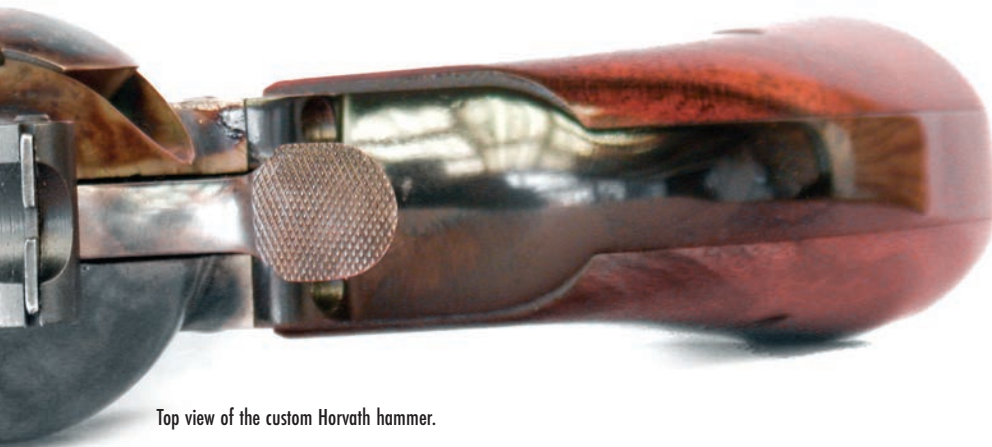
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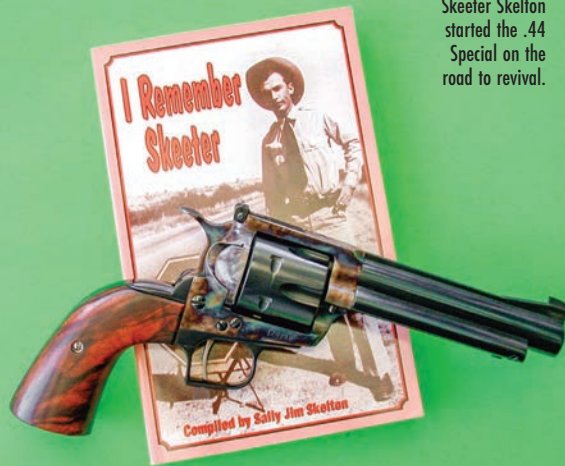
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Typical groups with the Ben Forkin .44 Special.



Top view of the custom Horvath hammer.



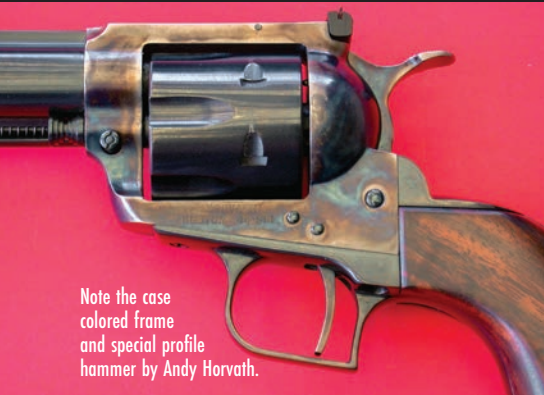
Skeeter Skelton started the .44 Special on the road to revival.

A PLENTITUDE OF PERFECT PACKIN' PISTOLS

It's a story nearly as old as time itself. The newer, younger, stronger replaces the older, more experienced, battle proven veteran. In this case, it's not men we are talking about but rather six-guns and sixgun cartridges. The .44 Special had been doing everything asked of it for nearly half a century and now it was being pushed aside. The flashier, more powerful .44 Magnum basically killed off the .44 Special, although it took 10 years for the funeral to occur.

Up & Down .44 Special

Skeeter Skelton also embraced the .44 Magnum even to the point of selling his S&W 4" 1950 Target .44 Special. It did not take him long to realize the S&W



Note the case colored frame and special profile hammer by Andy Horvath.

.44 Magnum was larger, heavier and more powerful than he needed for LEO duties. He went back to the .44 Special. By 1967, S&W officially dropped the 1950 Target, by then known as the Model 24, .44 Special from production. Meanwhile over at Colt, the 2nd Generation .44 Special Single Action Army would be produced from 1957 to 1966 with the companion New Frontier arriving in 1962. Colt closed the lid of the coffin and S&W nailed it shut.

Skelton began writing in glowing terms about the .44 Special when no factory .44 Specials were available, so he took another road. In April 1972 Skeeter's article, "Converting .357s to .44 Specials" appeared outlining the conversion of both the Ruger Old Model .357 Blackhawk and the S&W Highway Patrolman to .44 Special. The first conversion required a re-chambered cylinder and a custom barrel, while the latter worked best when using a 1950 Target/Model 24 barrel, which was still available at the time.

That one article started the ball rolling both in having other gunsmiths convert .357s to .44 Special, and in a few years resulting in the return of the Colt Single Action Army .44 Special. In February 1979, Skeeter announced "Victory At Last" with the return of the Colt .44 Special. It didn't last long. By 1986, both the 3rd Generation Single Action Army and the New Frontier .44 Specials were gone once again. In the early 1990s, I was told by Colt we would never see the New Frontier or .44 Special again. Times and people change.

Meanwhile, over at S&W, a special run of blued Model 24s arrived in 1983-1984 followed by the Model 624 in 1984 only to disappear again in the early 1990s. However, the .44 Special is a survivor. S&W offered five-shot .44 Specials in both the Models 396 and 696 and, just perhaps, both the Mountain Gun and 329PD Scandium make better .44 Specials than .44 Magnums. Thanks to Clint Smith, S&W returned



Whether as a .44 Special or .44-40, the sixgun from David Clements shoots well.

the 4" N-Frame, fixed sighted 1950 Military/Model 21 as the Model 21-4. Since the turn of the century, 21st that is, Freedom Arms has offered the Model 97, five-shot single action in .44 Special, and USFA offers American-made single actions sixguns, both the standard Single Action Army and the Flat-Top Target in .44 Special.

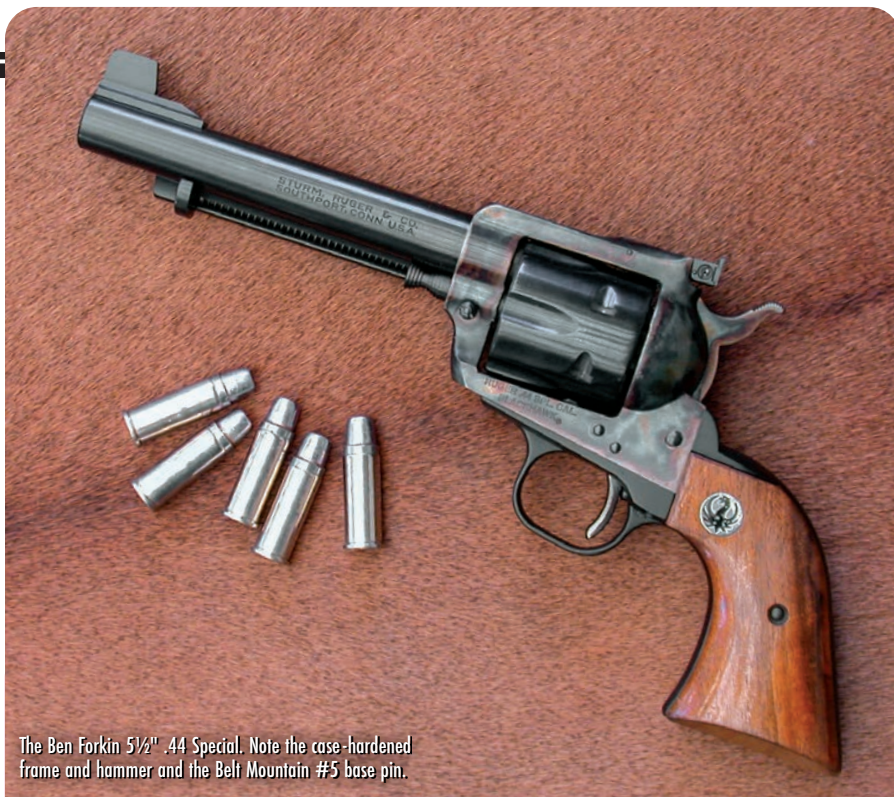
Perfect Packin' Pistol?

Skeeter started a trend more than three decades ago resulting in many shooters having Ruger Flat-Top and Old Model .357 Blackhawks converted to .44 Special. I have experienced several such conversions from Andy Horvath, Ben Forkin, Hamilton Bowen, David Clements, Bill Grover and John Gallagher over the past 25 years. Just recently, I have been privileged to shoot three more versions of what could very easily be regarded as the ultimate Packin' Pistol.

Both the Flat-Top .357 Magnum Blackhawks (1955-1962) and the Old Model .357 Magnum Blackhawks (1963-1972) are the same basic size as the Colt SAA, which means they are just about perfect for most hands and they can be converted to .44 Special. Shooters are privileged to have the best gunsmiths whoever lived practicing their craft today. Three of those men are David Clements, Ben Forkin and Andy Horvath. We take a look at three totally different .44 Special conversions by the three master gunsmiths in alphabetical order.

Clement "New Frontier"

David Clements' rendition of the .44 Special starts with a .357 Magnum Ruger Old Model Blackhawk and two Ruger cylinders. Both cylinders have been line-bored and re-chambered, one to .44 Special and the other to



The Ben Forkin 5 1/2" .44 Special. Note the case-hardened frame and hammer and the Belt Mountain #5 base pin.



These mouthwatering "one-piece" grips on the Clements .44 are by Larry Caudill.



The Andy Horvath custom .44 Special.

with a crescent shaped ejector rod head to replace the little button head found on Ruger single actions beginning with that first Single-Six in 1953.

My most used bullet for any .44 Specials are Oregon Trail's 240-grain semi-wadcutter, which does exceptionally well in .44 Specials. In fact, over 8.0 grains of Universal clocks out at over 1,000 fps and places five shots in 3/4" at 20 yards. A machine cast commercial bullet has no business shooting this well but such is the beauty of the .44 Special. The most popular bullet for the .44 Special for the last 75 years has been the Keith bullet. In the past I have cast these from Lyman's #429421 mold as well as NEI's 260.429 and the RCBS #44-250KT.

Forkin Masterpiece

Ben also started with a .357 Magnum Ruger Old Model Blackhawk. I picked up a like new, probably unfired, 6 1/2" Ruger Flat-Top .44 Magnum barrel. Shortly after this Ben and Kelye Schlepp of Belt Mountain Base Pins stopped by and, naturally we got to talking great sixguns and especially .44 Specials. When they left, Ben had the Old Model .357, the .44 Magnum barrel, and an XR3 grip frame and grips sent to me by a good friend to be used for just such a project.

The cylinder was converted to .44 Special with the throats cut to accept loads using Dry Creek's .44 Keith bullets and these same bullets over 7.5 grains of Unique were used to regulate the sights. The Ruger Flat-Top .44 Magnum barrel was cut to 5 1/2" and installed along with a steel ejector rod housing with a crescent-shaped ejector rod head.

Kelye added a Belt Mountain #5 base pin, which is patterned after the original pin on Elmer Keith's #5SAA. From Hamilton Bowen came one of his adjustable rear sights, which had been matched up with a special post front sight.

The XR3 grip frame was re-anodized and fitted perfectly to the Old Model mainframe. Right now it wears Ruger factory black eagle walnut grip panels;

.44 WCF, or as it is more commonly known today, .44-40. Both cylinder throats have been cut for 0.429" bullets. For a not so common look, instead of a custom barrel, this conversion now wears a 4 3/4" Colt New Frontier barrel resulting in a most beautiful combination. The finish is all blue including the hammer. I never could understand why Colt stopped finishing the sides of their hammers nor why Ruger never even started. Sides of hammers should be blued or case colored.

As a nice contrast to the rest of this "New Frontier Ruger," an XR3 grip frame from a Ruger Flat-Top has been fitted. This original Ruger grip frame was identical in size and shape to the Colt Single Action and, at least from my perspective, it is unfortunate Ruger ever went to the XR3-RED with more room behind the trigger guard. Clements pol-

ished the aluminum XR3 grip frame to a nice bright finish so we now had a deep blue finish contrasting nicely with the silver look of the grip frame.

Clements turned to stockmaker Larry Caudill, specializing in extra fancy wood for stocks. Clements sent the grip frame off to Larry who fashioned absolutely gorgeous hidden screw-style extra fancy Walnut stocks. This style of grip has the screw coming in from the left side with the nut hidden in the right panel giving a completely smooth uncluttered look on the right side.

The action was tuned and smoothed with a 2 1/4" trigger pull with a full-strength mainspring for positive ignition. The smallest feeler gauge I have is 0.002" and it would not fit between the front of the cylinder and the back of the barrel. The aluminum ejector rod housing was replaced with a steel housing complete

however, off in the future I see ivory panels fitted with the black eagle medallions. The action was totally tuned, the trigger pull set at 3½# and matched with a full-strength mainspring for positive ignition. This .44 Special also does not accept my 0.002" feeler gauge between the barrel and cylinder. Ben and David both build 'em tight!

The barrel and cylinder have been finished in a high polished blue. The grip frame, as mentioned, was re-anodized to a matte black finish, and then to top everything off, Forkin had the mainframe and hammer beautifully case colored by Turnbull. The case coloring, bright blue, and walnut grip panels all come together to fashion another piece of sixgun artwork.

Horvath .44 Special

How about a custom Ruger .44 Special with an S&W barrel? This custom .44 Special is Andy Horvath's personal sixgun. He picked up a beater .357 Magnum Flat-Top Blackhawk for \$75 at a gun show with virtually no finish left and parts missing. A perfect project pistol.



The 5½" .44 Special from Ben Forkin.

The cylinder was re-chambered to .44 Special, a heavy ribbed Smith and Wesson .44 Magnum barrel was cut to 5½", the ejector shroud was removed, and an undercut post front sight on a ramp base matching the barrel rib was fitted. An extra-long steel ejector rod housing along with a matching crescent head ejector rod was fitted and a custom #5-style base pin was added. The Old Model frame was Flat-Topped by welding and re-contouring the front of the frame to match up with the new

barrel. The action was totally tuned and smoothed with a 2# trigger pull, and, once again, the barrel/cylinder gap will not accept my 0.002" feeler gauge.

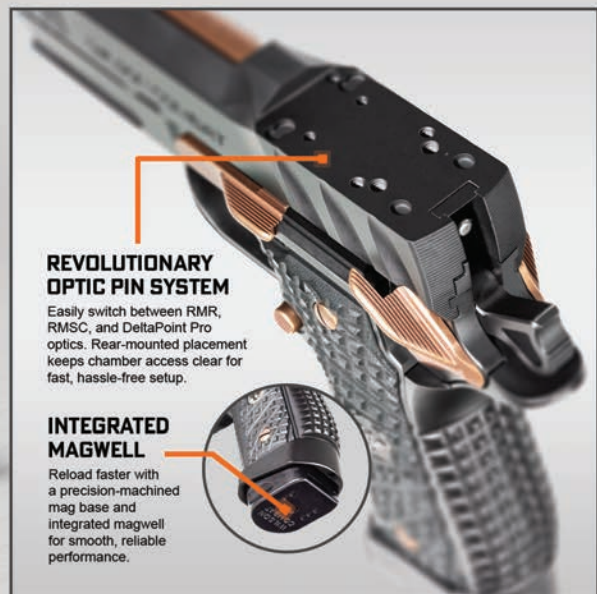
Horvath fashioned a new trigger and hammer with a wide, oval, finely checkered spur, which from the side gives a very thin profile. The hammer and mainframe were case colored by Turnbull, the balance of the sixgun, including the steel modified Super Blackhawk grip frame, were finished in high polish blue, and fancy walnut grips were fitted.



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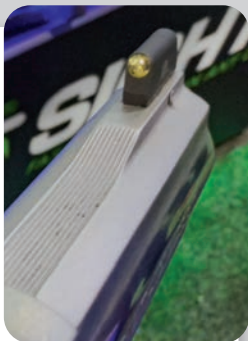
TOM McHALE

XS BRASS BEAD SIGHTS

What comes around goes around, right? Well, at least the good ideas tend to make return appearances. Thankfully, I haven't seen the re-emergence of those psychedelic tank top T-shirts with colorful mushrooms on them from the '70s.

The folks at XS Sights have released a new line of brass bead sights for various revolvers including models from Smith & Wesson, Colt and Taurus. I suspect the list of compatible models will only grow with time. The first iterations are pre-drilled for easy, drop-in installation.

The bead is convex in shape, allowing it to collect and reflect the maximum amount of ambient light. If you haven't tried brass bead sights, you're in for a treat — they're shockingly visible in a wide variety of light conditions. XSSights.com



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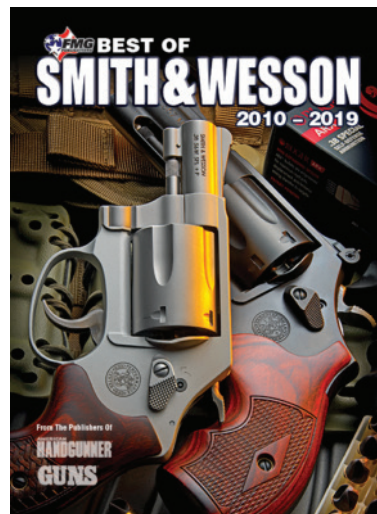
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TOM McHALE

HYSKORE PISTOL RACK

Analagous to good vs. evil, the eternal battle in my gun safe continues. Someone around here keeps adding guns, yet the safe never seems to have the courtesy to get larger. How rude. The result is predictable. Over time, scratches and marks appear on my handguns, no matter how carefully I store and remove them.

The folks at Hyskore have developed a beautifully simple solution. While it won't "create" more space in your safe, it will help protect the guns you jam in there while keeping things organized and easier to find.

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STOPPING A DANGEROUS ANIMAL ATTACK LIKE A ROCK STAR

SITUATION: You're on the ground being crushed by 800 lbs. of horned, hooved fury. Now, aren't you glad you were carrying a powerful handgun?

LESSON: A gun not in immediate reach won't save you. Something other than you might start the fight you'll have to finish. Relevant practice and a determined will to live can both save your life. The gun you're most familiar with is likely to be the one that works best for you under stress ... and it helps to remember what you're fighting for.

In today's American argot, doing something spectacularly well is often articulated as "you did it like a rock star!" Let's also consider that armed self-defense is not always applied to our own kind when they turn homicidal. Venomous things that slither, large felines and canines with fangs and claws, and huge enraged beasts with sharp hooves and even sharp horns can threaten human beings, even the ones who own and feed them.

Bring that all together, and you have the formula that created the incident we'll share with you now. It involved an actual American rock star.

If the word association test was "rock star with guns," the first answer most informed people would give would be "Ted Nugent." They call him the "Motor City Madman." He has delighted gun owners by being "One of Us," like his music loud and strong for Second Amendment Rights. I first met him at my all-time favorite shooting match, Richard Davis' Second Chance Shoot, where Ted competed back in the day. It's now known as The Pin Shoot (PinShoot.com), ramrodded by Richard's son Matt. I often see Ted at the NRA Annual Meetings.

Nugent is famous as a hunter, too. But few know that he once had to use a pistol to survive a deadly attack by a huge animal.

What follows is Ted's story of the incident, as told to me in 2023. Total disclosure: It was originally for another magazine that went out of print. This is just as well, as we have more space for details here.

In His Own Words, Ted's Story

A career in rock music has been good to me, good enough to allow me to indulge my passion for hunting all over the world and to own a ranch in Texas well-stocked with exotic game. I get to practice shooting almost every day. As a hunter I learned early to always have a powerful handgun on my person. When GLOCK introduced their first 10mm AUTO in 1990, I bought one and was hooked. I own half a dozen or more, from the little G29 to the long-barrel G40, but the one I bonded with and carry just about every day was the GLOCK 20. Its 16 rounds of deep-penetrating .40 caliber bullets made me retire the .44 Magnum I used to wear, and the G20 became my daily carry wherever I am with at least two spare 15-round magazines. I'm 6'2" and 220 lbs., so it's easy to conceal under an un-tucked, unbuttoned shirt discreetly.

About a decade ago, that habit and that GLOCK 20 saved my life.

I was doing my chores on my ranch, attending my trap line, with three of my dogs: Happy, a Catahoula Cur; Sadie, a little yellow Lab; and my German Shepherd Coco. We hunt squirrels every day, so my suppressed Ruger 10/22 rifle was along. I heard the dogs barking, thought they had a squirrel and headed toward the barking. But then, the sounds became a crescendo, which told me they were probably chasing a hog. I grabbed the .22 and ran through the woods toward the noise. But then the sounds turned into an animal screaming.

Continued on next page

AYOOB FILES

I ran through the forest and came to an opening, and there I saw Happy had a gemsbok calf down and screaming its head off. I laid the .22 down and crawled under the barbed wire fence. I was ready to grab Happy and pull him off the calf when I saw a dark blur rushing at me from my left.

I knew in an instant what it was and how dangerous it was. I have hunted the gemsbok in its native Africa, where they are known to kill lions with their spear-like horns ... and I knew this particular animal because I owned it. The cow gemsbok weighed about 800 lbs., and she was an alpha of her kind. When a vehicle came by, the others would run, but she would stand truculently to face it. Now, she was coming at me, and I knew very well that she intended to kill whatever she perceived was harming her calf — which was me.

The Gemsbok Express

She hit me like a freight train. She was trying to skewer me with those long, sharp horns, but I was able to turn just enough that the points missed my torso, and her forehead hit me square in the chest, driving me back and down. In an instant, I was on the ground ... but even as I was falling, my training and practice kicked in, and I was drawing the GLOCK from its leather Galco hip holster and already pulling the trigger. My first shot went off about the time my back hit the earth.

In the next few seconds, her head was rocketing back and forth, trying to stab me while I was down, but I was shooting right-hand only at the same time my left arm was trying to pull me back away from her along the ground. My legs were kicking furiously. Somehow, my subconscious managed to keep me from firing when my feet were in front of the muzzle.

With each shot, I could feel her slowing and weakening, but she was still trying to kill me, so I kept shooting. Everything seemed to go into slow motion. My dogs tried to rescue me, harrying her at her back legs. She swung toward them as if to skewer these new threats instead of me.

That bought me time to pull the gun up and point-shoot a one-handed shot at her head. I saw the bullet hit her jaw and knew it had missed the brain. She was sideways to me now, and I was finally able to see my front sight, and I put a couple through her ribs. She began to stumble.

I came upright, still on my butt. The slide was still closed, but I had lost count of my shots and didn't know how many rounds I had left, so I quickly pulled a spare mag out of my pouch and

reloaded. We were now 10' apart. I took an aimed shot at her ear, and that killed her instantly.

I spent the next few minutes checking out myself and the dogs. We were OK. All I had were scrapes and bruises. The horns had torn my shirt on both sides but hadn't hit the torso the maddened cow gemsbok was trying to spear.

I donated about 250 lbs. of prime gemsbok venison to the local soup kitchen. If I'd been carrying the .44 Magnum six-shooter of yesteryear, I think I would have been dead. My 16-shot 10mm GLOCK was loaded with urban defense loads, 150-grain JHPs at 1,300 foot-seconds. The side-to-side shots expanded and lodged under the hide on the opposite side, and the ones from the front went through the brisket but not deep enough into the internal organs as the hunting loads I later wished I'd had in the gun.

The GLOCK 20 saved my life and the lives of my dogs. So did the training and constant practice with that pistol. I believe God had a plan for me, and all those things came together, which is why I am here to tell you this story.

Analyzing The Details

Handguns for large game (usually bear) protection is a frequently discussed topic on the gun-related Internet, including a whole lot of posters who are unlikely to ever see a bear except in a zoo. Choices seem to evolve into four major categories. Some on one end of the bell curve ask, "What 9mm for bears?" occasionally citing a single very experienced bear guide who killed an attacking grizzly with a hard-cast Buffalo Bore 9mm specialty load or an outdoorman who, when his companion panicked and dropped his shotgun, emptied a Taurus 9mm into the charging bruin in question and finally got a full metal jacket bullet into its brain. On the other end of the bell curve are those who insist on .500 Magnum, .460 S&W Mag, or at minimum .454 Casull, often ignoring recoil and hit potential elements.

Essentially, though, it breaks down to the choice Nugent dealt with: .44 Magnum six-shooter versus 16-shot 10mm Auto. And you've just read why Ted credits his survival to his selection of the latter.

Ted has killed thousands of animals, averaging a hundred head of big game a year since the early 1970s, including game ranch culls, control work at airports, and unlimited doe tags in Michigan. He estimates he has killed about a hundred large animals with 10mm pistols, including a cape buffalo.

The incident under discussion here with the gemsbok was not his first time dealing with a charging quarry, just the first time one made contact. Ted

recalls, "In 1968, I was charged by a 150-lb. European-bred boar at a game preserve in Michigan. I was blood trailing it when it came out of a downfall. I had a 9mm loaded with 147-grain subsonic; it buckled at the first shot, and the second shot killed it."

The cape buffalo was an aborted charge. Nugent relates, "For a TV show, I hit a cape buff in South Africa in 1999. The arrow got only one lung. We tracked it for hours. When the buff got up out of its bed and swung its head toward us, I put three rounds of 10mm Cor-Bon 190-grain Penetrators along its vertebrae quickly and dropped it."

For a long time, Ted's favorite carry load was the Cor-Bon 135-grain JHP, rated for 1,450 feet per second. "It worked well on kudu, zebra, impala, and a big waterbuck. It killed like I was shooting a .30-06. I used the 165-grain Cor-Bon on a big running elk, held under his nose, impacting the shoulder and rolled it as if it had been hit with a .338 Magnum rifle. The bullet went all the way to the far side. The 10mm Auto can give amazing handgun performance."

When he carries his GLOCK 10mm on the ranch today, he says it's loaded with Remington 200-grain CoreLokt. He told me, "That Remington load is a monster. It expands but punches very deep." The 10mm GLOCK has been his daily carry for many years, hiding well under an un-tucked shirt. Nugent's vast gun collection contains many GLOCK tens, from the little G29 to the 6"-barrel G40, but his rotating battery of 4.5" barrel GLOCK 20s hit the sweet spot for him. He generally carries at least two spare 15-round magazines.

Nugent's Opponent

The African gemsbok, also known as the Greater Oryx, is a large antelope with long, spear-like horns. Those of the female, I was told by the professional hunters when I stalked them in Namibia, tend to be longer, straighter and more spear-like than those of the male. Our native trackers called them "the devil's riding horse" because they fight so ferociously to protect their young. I was also warned that they were tough critters that took a lot of lead to stop. I found that to be true. So did Ted Nugent, attacked by a specimen unusually large for its breed.

In The Moment

Long-time *American Handgunner* readers will recall that decades ago, this *Ayoob Files* feature grew out of a discussion in the *Cop Talk* column about the altered perceptions experienced by people during life-or-death encounters. Ted Nugent experienced many of those phenomena during the Gemsbok attack.

Tunnel vision. “I absolutely had tunnel vision,” he told me. “The whole world was down to me in a tunnel with her, nothing outside the tunnel. It may be why I was able to avoid shooting my own feet. I could see where my bullets were hitting her.”

“She hit me like a freight train. She was trying to skewer me with those long, sharp horns, but I was able to turn just enough that the points missed my torso, and her forehead hit me square in the chest, driving me back and down.”

Tachypsychia. FBI calls it “visual slowdown,” a perception of things happening in slow motion. “I really did have that slow-motion thing,” Ted relates. “I know how fast it must have been happening. Later, I figured out that from her first hit on me to when I turned her away, it was maybe five or six seconds, and from when she started toward me to when I put the final shot behind her ear, it was perhaps 12 seconds. But it seemed a whole lot longer while it was happening!”

Auditory exclusion. A full-power 10mm load has a sharp crack of a report, so much so that some find it objectionable even on the shooting range when wearing muffs. Shooting incident survivors often report that gunfire seemed muffled during the fight and occasionally don’t consciously hear the shots at all. We have something rather unique in this case: a man wearing hearing protection at the time of the shooting.

Ted explains, “A lifetime of hunting and shooting has left me with some hearing impairment. I put hearing aids in when I’m doing interviews. On that day, as always when I’m out and about on the ranch, I had Sonic Ear Valves in both ears. That’s because I know I’m probably going to be taking some shots of opportunity.”

He had the ear valves in place that day, which helps explain why he was in no way distracted by the sound of his own gunfire during the Gemsbok attack.

Life review. Ted told me, “You know how people say after something like this, ‘My life flashed before my eyes?’ That absolutely happened to me during the gemsbok attack. There was time to think of my wife, Shemane, our kids, and my grandkids. I thought for a moment, ‘Who’s gonna find my body?’”

Lessons

Don’t forget domestics. As with most such discussions, we’ve been looking so far at wild animal attacks. Just as the

human attacker is sometimes a rogue member of the family or extended family, the animal attack sometimes takes the form of large livestock turning on the owner or handler. Elmer Keith wrote of how powerful sixguns saved him and others from maddened horses

or enraged bulls. In Ted Nugent’s case, while the Gemsbok was wild, it still belonged to him. Then and now, his ranch occasionally hosts big game hunts. Ted figures the Gemsbok would have been worth about \$10,000 to a paying hunting client. “Believe me,” he laughs now, “that thought actually went through my mind too for a fraction of a second while it was happening.” He didn’t let that deter him from performing the indicated response, and the same should be true if the attacking animal is a favorite horse or prize steer.

Being in shape is always advantageous. Ted was in his 60s and had recently had a double knee replacement at the time of the incident. Fortunately, he had remained extremely active. While he was acutely aware that he wasn’t as athletic as when he was younger, he had the stamina and the mental strength to stay in the fight and prevail.

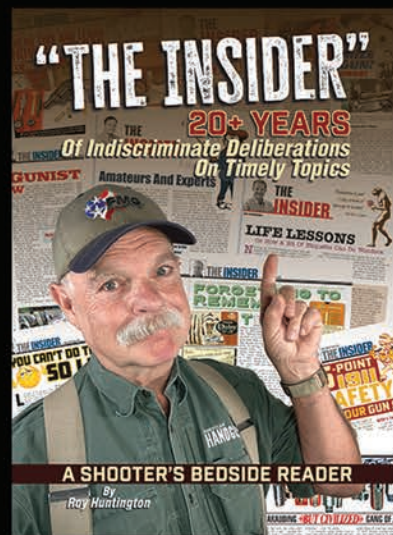
Immediate availability. Having the 10mm right there on his hip saved his life. Anyone who has studied a lot of armed self-defense cases will confirm that only tools within immediate reach — which usually means on your physical person — can be counted on.

Remember what you’re fighting for. The single most important lesson in this case may come from that moment when Ted Nugent’s life flashed before his eyes. He thought of his wife, his children, and his grandchildren. There are many people who work for him and would lose their primary income if he ceased to live.

History shows us that we fight harder for those we love, for those who depend on us than we do for ourselves. It may be why our survival instinct sometimes makes our “lives flash before our eyes” when we stand at the brink of death and look down into the abyss.

It is something we would all do well to have in mind before we find ourselves on that brink.

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Available in three models, FALCO's *TalonGuard Hybrid IWB* holsters combine premium Italian leather with a customized Kydex insert that fully covers the trigger guard on both sides. The A910 features a Kydex *TalonGuard* and is fully enclosed by leather, while the A911 and the A911 L combine a Kydex *TalonGuard* with an exterior that's half leather and half Kydex. The holsters' open bottom allows for threaded barrels. The double-thickness leather sweat guard shields the gun from body moisture. MSRP: From \$109.95. For more info: (800) 490-7147, FALCOHolsters.com



ACHRO STORAGE CASE

Mission First Tactical

Designed with both function and aesthetics in mind, the *ACHRO Storage Case* is the solution for storing and transporting essentials. Whether you're heading to the range, going on a camping trip, or just need a reliable storage solution, this case has you covered. MSRP: \$29.99. For more info: (267) 704-0001, MissionFirstTactical.com



80X CHEETAH TACTICAL URBAN

Beretta

The *80X Cheetah Tactical Urban* .380 ACP from Beretta boasts a Vertec-style grip profile, the Xtreme S Double/Single trigger, skeletonized hammer, easier-to-rack slide and more. It is suppressor-ready with a threaded 4.4" barrel as well as three white dot sights, black polymer grip panels and an optic-ready slide. The pistol is 4.9" tall, 1.4" wide, 7.3" long and weighs 25 oz. (unloaded). Comes with two 15-round magazines. MSRP: Starting at \$749. For more info: (800) 237-3882, Beretta.com



NPL25 GL

NITECORE

The NITECORE *NPL25 GL* takes everything you love about the *NPL25* flashlight but adds an integrated green laser for enhanced precision. Ideal for tactical or range applications, the new green laser adds essential accuracy and versatility to your lighting tool. With a maximum output of 900 lumens and a throw of 236 yards, the *NPL25 GL* is compatible with most compact and full-size pistols. MSRP: \$119.95. For more info: (512) 258-6649, NITECOREStore.com

XOLOTL CRKT

Named after the Aztec god of fire and lightning, the CRKT *Xolotl* combines mythical inspiration and modern materials for a durable, high-performance fixed-blade knife. Part of the Forged By War Program, the *Xolotl* features a 4.53" SK-5 steel spear-point blade with a dagger grind, Veff Serrations, a textured G10 handle and a thermoplastic sheath. The *Xolotl* weighs 5.7 oz. and is 9.88" long overall. MSRP: \$84.99. For more info: (503) 685-5015, CRKT.com





FOR MORE INFO ON SEEING YOUR PRODUCT FEATURED IN NEW PRODUCTS, CONTACT DELANO AMAGUIN (delano.amaguin@fmghq.com)

MSRP is subject to change without notice. FMG Publications presents the MSRP in good faith and is believed to be correct at the time of printing.

WEDGE EDC

Streamlight, Inc.

The *Wedge EDC* (everyday carry) series of flashlights now comes in Orange and Lime Green. The *Wedge XT* is now offered in a Silver finish. The USB-C rechargeable *Wedge* gives 300-lumen constant-on mode and a 1,000-lumen THRO (Temporarily Heightened Regulated Output) mode for a 35-second burst of high intensity light. Compact and portable, the 5.46" *Wedge* weighs 3.3 oz. and is IPX7-rated. It also comes in Black, Coyote, Red, Blue and Purple. MSRP: \$173.49 for Orange and Lime Green; \$159.65 for Silver. For more info: (800) 523-7488, Streamlight.com



GIRSAN REGARD MC X

EAA Corp

The 9mm *Girsan Regard MC X* from EAA Corp has a spiral-fluted, threaded barrel and two-tone Cerakote finish. The trigger is tuned to provide a smooth double- and single-action shooting experience. Attributes include an accessory rail, black finish on slide, tungsten finish frame and barrel, ambidextrous safety and 19-round capacity. MSRP: \$519. For more info: (321) 639-4842, EAACorp.com



STRIKE ARMS COMPACT PISTOL FRAME

Primary Arms

The *Strike Arms Compact Pistol Frame* is a serialized frame that comes fully assembled with GLOCK 19 Gen 3 compatible internals. The frame boasts a host of features for improved ergonomics and control, including a grip angle that closely resembles a 1911, resulting in a more natural and intuitive point of aim compared to OEM frames. MSRP: \$149.95. For more info: Strike-Arms.com



FROG MARKET SPECIAL MINI

TOPS Knives

The *Frog Market Special Mini* started as an idea to shrink the original FMS into a collectible size, but it became more than just a novelty. With a 3.25" cutting edge, 0.06" blade thickness and an overall length of 6", this knife is lightweight and easy to carry as a neck knife. Made from 1095 high-carbon steel with tan canvas Micarta handles, it's ideal for precise cuts, boning meats and other small tasks. MSRP: \$190. For more info: (208) 542-0113, TOPSKnives.com

SC3 SUPPRESSOR CASE

MTM Case-Gard

MTM's *SC3 Suppressor Case* is for the secure transport and storage of cooled firearm suppressors. Molded from high-impact polypropylene, it features an ergonomic handle, snap-tight latches, a mechanical hinge and two padlock points. Inside, cooled suppressors are held in place by high-quality foam padding, with additional space for documents. MSRP: \$21.98. For more info: (937) 890-7461, MTMCase-Gard.com



WALTHER MAGNUM PISTOL (WMP)

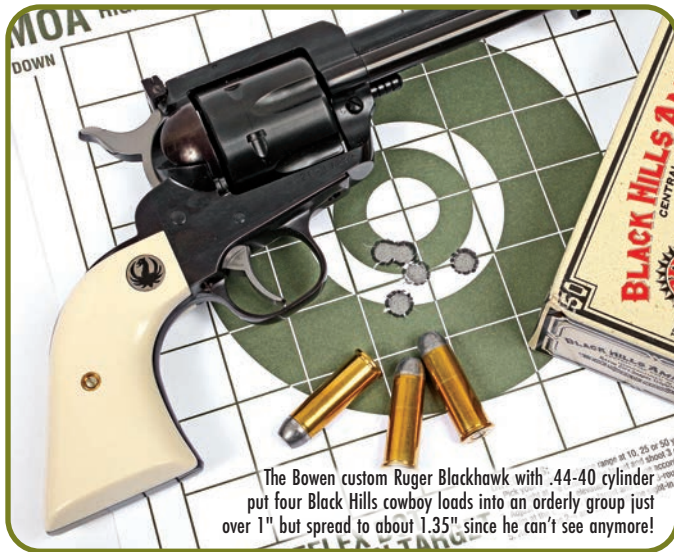
Walther Arms

Walther Magnum Pistol (WMP) epitomizes Walther Arms' commitment to TEQ (Trigger, Ergonomics, and Quality). Featuring a slide-mounted red-dot optic and an optics-ready slide, the WMP offers best-in-class ergonomics and a patented ambidextrous reloading mechanism — the Quad Release. With an OAL of 8.6", the pistol has a 4.9" barrel and comes with two 15-round magazines and two optics adaptor plates. MSRP: \$599. For more info: (479) 242-8500 Ext. 7, WaltherArms.com

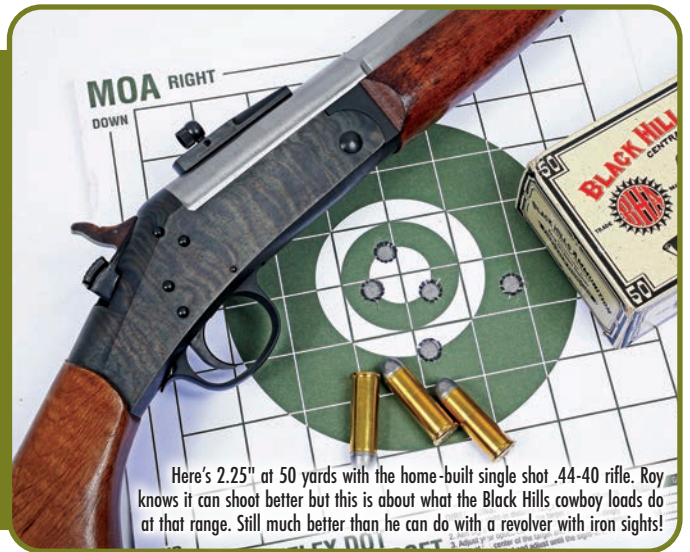


DT47 Bond Arms

Bond Arms' limited edition *DT47* honors the victory of Donald J. Trump, the 47th Commander in Chief. Chambered in .45 Colt/.410, the *DT47* features a 4.25" flat-sided barrel, engraving on both sides and an ergonomic B6 grip. It has a stainless steel single-barrel and frame, patented rebounding hammer, retracting firing pin, cross bolt safety and spring-loaded locking lever. MSRP: \$545.47. For more info: (817) 573-4445, BondArms.com



The Bowen custom Ruger Blackhawk with .44-40 cylinder put four Black Hills cowboy loads into an orderly group just over 1" but spread to about 1.35", since he can't see anymore!



Here's 2.25" at 50 yards with the home-built single shot .44-40 rifle. Roy knows it can shoot better but this is about what the Black Hills cowboy loads do at that range. Still much better than he can do with a revolver with iron sights!

rifle I built when I'm doing chores in the E-Z-Go or taking a stroll to check the walnut grove. Suddenly that unexpected coyote or groundhog at 100 is in serious trouble. And I can't tell you how many dangerous dirt clods, pieces of wood and pinecones who tried to sneak up on me died at the hands of that little .32.

The Concept

So while I like these little single shots, maybe your "Perfect Packin' Pair" is something completely different. In your truck all day around the farm? Maybe a Ruger single action .22, paired with a bolt action .223 would handle your chores. Hiking a long trail? How about a light .22 LR single shot rifle lashed to your pack, paired with a bigger

bore revolver on your hip? I have a neighbor here who favors an old Model 94 in .30-30 with a beater Ruger Standard Auto .22. Everyone's "job" might be different, so different guns would be the norm and there's no right or wrong combo in my mind.

Shooting

To prove a point, I shot a Charter .32 Mag. revolver (their new Professional with a 3" barrel and 7-shot cylinder) at 20 yards and my .32 rifle at 50. I did the same with an SA .38 Special "Stallion" (3.5" barrel) from Taylor's & Company and my single-shot .357 rifle (shooting .38s). The Bowen Custom .44-40 did the work at 20, and my single shot .44-40 took on the 50-yard chore. I used 50 yards

since that's outside the range most handgunners can place truly accurate shots. So what happened?

While all of the revolvers did well at 20, the rifles excelled at 50 yards, shooting groups most people could only dream about shooting with a handgun. Can some people shoot 2" groups at 50 yards with a good revolver or auto? Sure. But the rest of us mere mortals can't usually.

Either way, the idea of being able to "reach out and touch something" out of reach with a side-arm is appealing. We don't all need this, but even if you're just afield on a hunt, the idea of a Perfect Packin' Pair makes sense. Plus, it's fun to think about and can give you no-end of interesting things to talk to your shooting friends about. But be prepared for conflicting ideas!



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GUN RIGHTS

David Codrea



'GUN OWNERS FOR TRUMP' SHOULD BE MORE THAN CAMPAIGN WINDOW DRESSING

Donald Trump was sworn in for the second time as president on January 20. With his victory comes new hope for gun owners, relieved that four years of unrelenting attacks by the Joe Biden administration will be coming to an end and that there will be no Kamala Harris administration with Supreme and inferior court appointment powers.

With new hopes comes no shortage of expectations for what a Trump administration can and should do for us. After all, he campaigned with bold promises, including "My administration will protect the right of self-defense wherever it is under siege." He would not have gotten elected without gun owner support based on those promises. It's fair to say he owes us.

Missteps Or ...?

We'd heard such seductive assurances about "our beautiful Second Amendment" before and felt justifiably angered, disillusioned, and betrayed during the first Trump administration when he banned bump stocks, endorsed Red Flag assaults on due process ("Take the guns first, go through due process second."), considered raising the minimum age to buy firearms to 21, and thanked then-Florida Governor Rick Scott for signing post-Parkland infringements into law.

But what other option did gun owners have? Trump stepped up his pro-gun rhetoric and pledges on the campaign trail, telling us what we wanted to hear. With Harris as the alternative, the only real political choice was clear. And now comes the great task of keeping a strongly willful man known to make up his mind based on what he thinks and wander off track at will.

In recognizing this, we need to keep our expectations realistic.

Realistic Expectations

The Constitution established checks and balances via three separate branches of government, and the executive is not delegated

authority to impose its will on the other two. While some may wish that President Trump could, in our case, that kind of power, once established, is not something gun owners would want to see in the hands of a Democrat violence monopolist.

So, Trump won't be able to wave a magic wand and "give" us concealed carry reciprocity or suppressor deregulation/hearing protection paybacks. Don't look for the Hughes Amendment banning post-1986 machine guns to disappear or the Holy Grail of scuttling the National Firearms Act and all the infringements that followed to happen. He can't unilaterally shut down ATF, and doing so wouldn't eliminate its functions, which would just transfer to the FBI anyway.

The president can veto any bad bills that make it to his desk if the Republican Congress fails at its job, and with "Vichycons" exemplified by Pennsylvania's Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (endorsed by Giffords) or Maine's Sen. Susan Collins running interference for the gun-grabbers, we can't count on a Congressional majority to pass the good ones.

One thing Trump can do immediately is get rid of George H.W. Bush's import ban on 43 types of semiautos deemed not compliant with the 1968 Gun Control Act's "sporting use" requirement. He could order ATF to declare them as such, just like such guns manufactured domestically are classified.

Government Support?

Most of all, he can make wise appointments, especially with judges.

Whoever he selects to head ATF needs to focus on dangerous criminals and stop with all the "rules" (although performing many of those crimefighting functions still runs afoul of delegated Constitutional authority for a federal government intended by the Framers to confine itself to piracy, counterfeiting, and treason). It's a no-win assignment until the laws are changed, so the best we can hope for is ATF doing minimal damage and knocking off its mania for redefining parts as firearms, inciting the media mob

to spook the herd on "ghost guns," harassing FFLs for paperwork glitches and persecuting gun owners.

Matt Gaetz, with his correct understanding of the Second Amendment, was a good choice for Attorney General, but it was not to be. Trump's Attorney General pick, former Florida AG Pam Bondi, is damaged goods as far as many gun owners are concerned, having fought for age restrictions on gun purchases, red flag prior restraints, bump stock bans, open carry prohibitions, and more. As Trump's AG, she needs to back off pushing restrictions like she did in Florida and start proactively defending the Second Amendment against state infringements like DOJ does in "civil rights" cases. Currently, that's all left up to gun rights groups scraping up donations from members so they can challenge government entities with virtually unlimited legal war chests. A DOJ ally would be a game-changer.

He should eliminate Biden's Office of Gun Violence Prevention and replace it with an Office for Second Amendment Protection, chaired by Vice President JD Vance and populated with prominent "Gun Owners for Trump" influencers introduced in his campaign, who would serve as informed advisors on gun issues reaching his desk. They could report their efforts and progress to us "ordinary" gun owners who could also provide feedback to help shape agenda priorities, including ATF oversight, bill analyses, and legal strategies. We could have a conduit to share our hopes, concerns, and objections with an approachable council of "gun rights leaders" whose ears we have and who have the president's ear.

With the election of Donald Trump, gun owners dodged a bullet. Now, we need to guide his aim toward the right targets and hope no new catastrophe coupled with a kneejerk reaction makes us victims of "friendly fire." Such an office would be an invaluable safeguard.

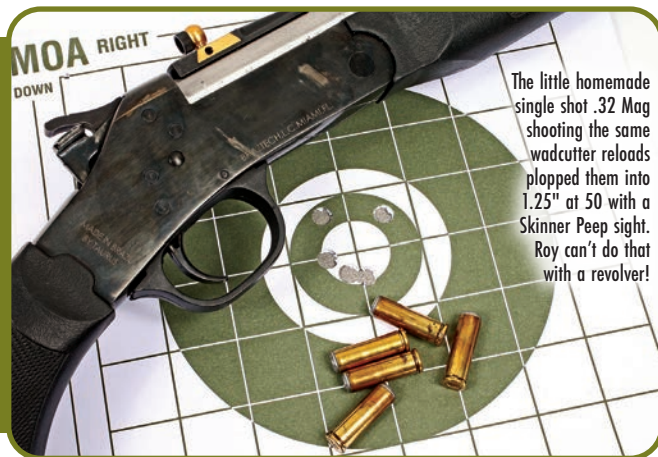




PERFECT PACKIN' PAIRS



The .32 H&R Mag, Charter Professional at 20 yards with Roy's 98-grain Wadcutter loads. Call it 1" without that pesky flyer!



The little homemade single shot .32 Mag shooting the same wadcutter reloads plopped them into 1.25" at 50 with a Skinner Peep sight. Roy can't do that with a revolver!

THE LONG & THE SHORT OF IT

With apologies to our own John Taffin, after stealing his "Perfect Packin' Pistol" concept, we covered "Perfect Plinkin' Pistols" and "Perfect Plinkin' Rifles" in the *GUNS Magazine* Podcast. We also kept the momentum going by covering "Perfect Packin' Pairs" not long ago, and I think the idea deserves a visit here.

The idea piqued my interest after I built a string of short, single-shot rifles in various pistol calibers. My first, a .32 H&R Magnum, weighs in right at 3.5 lbs. and takes down into two handy pieces. It not only gave me an appreciation for that versatile cartridge, but it also shoots like a rifle should shoot. Suddenly, that modest but deceptively powerful car-

tridge could hit at 100 or 150 yards. Sure, a revolver can do pretty good work out to 25 yards, but asking for really tight groups at 50 just isn't within the ability of most revolver shooters.

With a bit of practice, I found I could hit a 6" steel plate at 100 yards off-hand way more often than not with that little .32 rifle. What's not to like about that? After completing two more rifles, a .357 and of all things, a 44-40, I found I could do the same thing. The



At 20 yards, Roy's Stallion .38 SA delivered a satisfying 1.25" group using target wadcutter loads. The gun can even do a bit better at times due to his giving it a target crown and re-cutting the forcing cone.

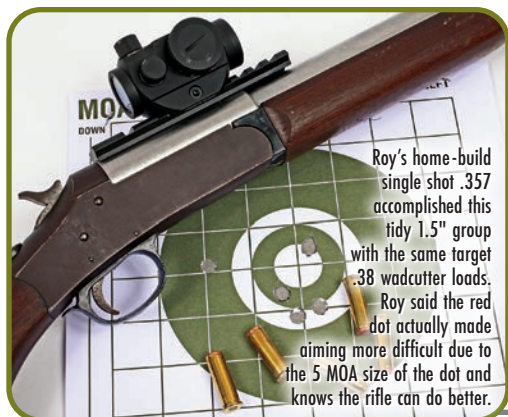
.357 can deliver a 158 at about 1,300 fps and nail that same plate using a Skinner aperture sight and post front. That, as they say here in Missouri, is "Deer killin' power." I can't do that with a .357 or .38 revolver, at least all the time.

Big Bore

The .44-40 is a real hoot too. Shooting a 200-grain bullet at about 1,000 fps from the rifle really clangs that plate. It's just heavy

enough to have little recoil but small and handy enough to not want to put down once you pick it up. I have a nice Bowen Custom Ruger Blackhawk in .44 Special with a 44-40 cylinder, and the darn thing shoots like crazy at 20 or 25 yards. But hitting that same 6" plate at 100 is iffy at best.

Around my property here, I always have some sort of handgun along, even if it's just the Ruger LCP MAX in my front pocket. But now and again, I want to "reach out there" for something, and a handgun isn't always the best. I've taken to slinging that little .32 Mag.



Roy's home-build single shot .357 accomplished this tidy 1.5" group with the same target .38 wadcutter loads. Roy said the red dot actually made aiming more difficult due to the 5 MOA size of the dot and knows the rifle can do better.

Continued on page 72

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