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The Bergara B-14R, a rimfire wolf hiding in centerfire sheep's clothing!

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CROSSFIRE

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ABOUT THE NRA ...

Keep it up. I totally agree we need the NRA, but not the bloated do-nothing self-serving organization that exists today. They are passing California-style second Amendment infringements every day in Colorado and not a peep from the NRA. I'm a life member and all my donations this year and last have been to SAF and similar organizations. Keep the pressure on. I applaud your strength of convictions.

Tom Hurst

I just finished the NRA Podcast episode, and I couldn't agree more.

- If I had my druthers, the following are some immediate changes I'd suggest.

- Any CEO would have one 6-year term, with the possibility of re-election or re-appointment for one more.

- The Board would immediately be reduced from 76 seats to a maximum of 13, and the head of the Board would not have a vote.

- So-called "Golden Parachutes" would cease. Any retirement stipend would be limited to 40% of what the executive earned.

- The NRA would cease spending anything on such frivolous items as private jets, yacht trips, clothing allowances and limo rentals.

- Any hiring of lawyers or law firms would be strictly to defend the NRA's position in Court.

- Board membership for any member shall be limited to three 6-year terms.

- Board meetings would be available for rank-and-file members to view/watch.

- Any damage the NRA Board has suffered has been brought upon their heads by themselves. It's hard to have much sympathy for their plight.

Mike Bell

I am very happy to hear that finally some who are in the gun industry are starting to step up and call for action about the cancer that is Wayne LaPierre.

Not sending any more of my money to the NRA is actually the best thing I can do. I hope somehow we all can get Wayne LaPierre and the entire BODs out of their comfy chairs soon, or in my opinion the NRA will need to die. I don't want to see that latter outcome.

Mark Klosky

Just listened and watched your piece on the NRA. I am an old Benefactor Member and do know a few of the Board members. I agree with 99% of your points from the Podcast. Stay a member. Send your money to the 2nd Amendment Foundation. Contact the NRA Board Members directly. The NRA Board is too big. The executive suite needs a house cleaning. Wayne needs to go away.

I just trash all of Wayne's requests for money. But I have signed up some of my grandchildren.

Thanks for all you folks are doing, keep it up.

Brian Thompson

It's about time industry leaders come forward and explain to the rank-and-file NRA members what has really been going on. When the mainstream media began reporting on the situation, most of us didn't believe it. Simply put, we've gotten used to not listening to them. It's a shame it's taken this long, though.

There were times when I gave them money I really didn't have. What the management has done to us is disgraceful. I still believe in the NRA and the fight that lays

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GUNS

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PART 6

THE .44 MAGNUM

The real story of the .44 Magnum comes through Elmer Keith. By 1950, the .44 Special chambered in a Smith & Wesson sixgun reached its climax with the superb 1950 Target Model. Since 1907 S&W — and later Colt — provided the .44 Special sixguns but it remained for men like the members of “The .44 Associates” to bring out the best of the .44 Special cartridge. From the 1920s to the 1950s Association members, most notably Elmer Keith, called for a “*real* .44 Special” load.

He especially called for a “.44 Special Magnum” with a 250-grain hard cast bullet at 1,200 feet per second. His pleas seemed to fall on deaf ears. Ammunition companies were afraid of heavy loaded .44 Specials

taking old sixguns apart. He then asked for a new cartridge 1/10" longer than the .44 Special to preclude its being used in any old sixguns. Again, the plea was ignored.

THINGS CHANGE

Unbeknownst to him S&W started to listen in the 1950s. Working in tandem with Remington, who would supply the new .44 Magnum ammunition, S&W engineers went to work on the new sixgun. In 1954, Remington gave Smith the dimensions of a new cartridge 1/8" longer than the .44 Special. S&W then chambered four specially heat-treated 1950 Target .44 Special sixguns for the new “.44 Magnum.” The guns performed well but at the 39-oz. weight of

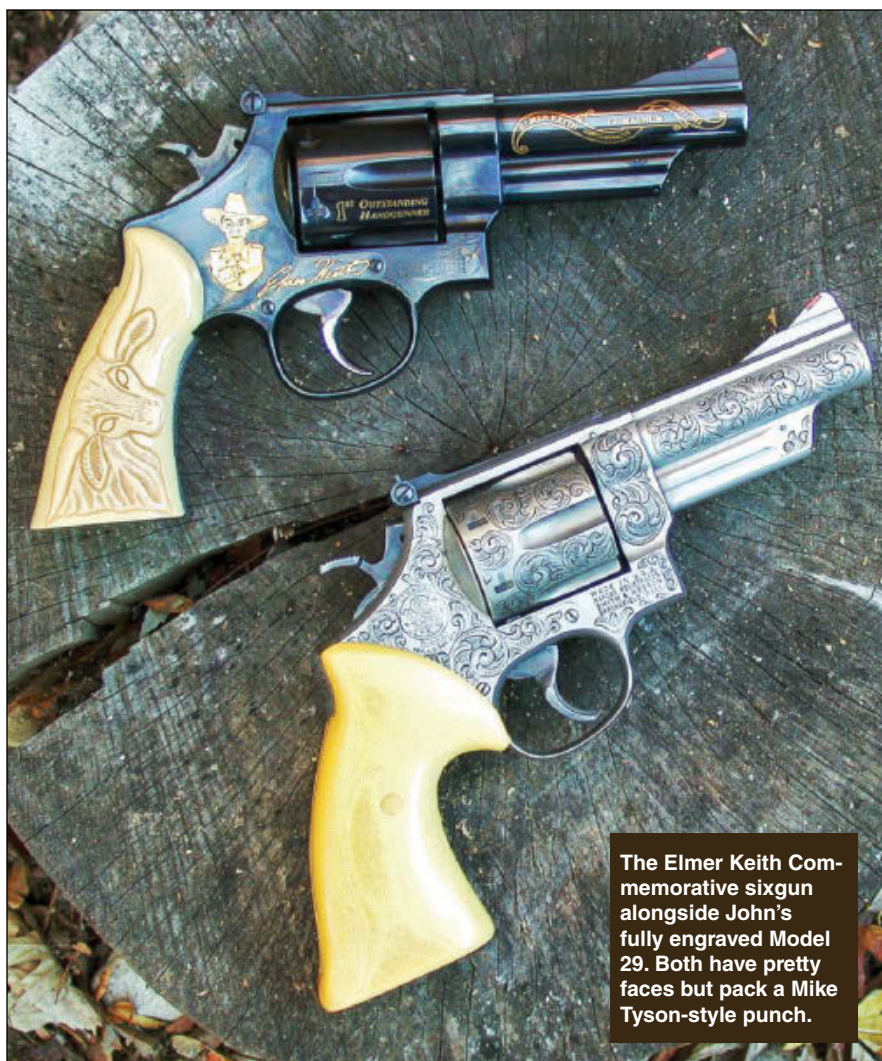
the 1950 Target, recoil was brutal. Elmer had asked for a new .44 with a 250-grain bullet at 1,200 fps and his .44 Special load generates heavy recoil in the Model 1950 Target .44 Special. Remington delivered a 240-grain bullet at 1,500 fps that was originally fired in the same 39-oz. Model 1950 Target. After my first experience with the .44 Magnum load in a 4" S&W .44 Magnum, I don't want to even contemplate this!

Weight had to be added so the cylinder was lengthened to fill in the cylinder window and the 6-1/2" slim barrel was changed to a heavyweight full bull-barrel style as found on the 1955 Target .45 ACP, resulting in a weight of 48 oz. The new sixgun, as the .357 Magnum was introduced back in 1935, was simply and fittingly named by its chambering and called The .44 Magnum. Elmer was not happy with the first loads as the bullet was too soft, affecting accuracy and raising pressures significantly. He quickly developed a standard loading for the new .44 Magnum consisting of the same 250-grain hard cast bullet he used in his .44 Special loads and 22.0 grains of #2400. This loading is over 1,400 feet per second.

Elmer urged Smith & Wesson to also bring forth the .44 Magnum with a 4" barrel for defensive and peace officer use and while waiting for this to occur, he had a .44 Magnum cut to 4-1/2" and engraved and ivory stocked by the Gun Re-Blue Company. He preferred the steer head carved-ivory grip as it fills in the hand perfectly and helps control recoil. I was still a 17-year-old teenager when I first shot the 4" .44 Magnum S&W sixgun. It had hand-filling target stocks and the recoil was *heavy*! I always wondered how Keith could handle his loads with the magna-style stocks he preferred. I found out when I examined his sixguns — the carving of the ivory stock perfectly filled in the crease in his hand and helped to control felt recoil.

Smith & Wesson presented Elmer Keith with a Bright Blue fully-engraved, ivory-stocked 4" .44 Magnum in November 1956. This gave him two 4" engraved and ivory-stocked .44 Magnums to join the likewise finished 4" 1950 Target he had been carrying daily since he moved into Salmon, Idaho. His every day Perfect Packin' Pistol was a Bright Blue non-engraved but ivory-stocked 4" .44 Magnum.

The first Bright Blue 4" .44 Magnums



The Elmer Keith Commemorative sixgun alongside John's fully engraved Model 29. Both have pretty faces but pack a Mike Tyson-style punch.



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“... THE CARTRIDGE IS STILL, AS KEITH CALLED IT, ‘THE KING OF THE SIXGUN CARTRIDGES.’”

were beautifully finished and fitted sixguns and they were soon joined by a nickel-plated version. The very first S&W .44 Magnum was introduced in December 1955 and the last production model was dated January 1999. In 1957 the .44 Magnum became the Model 29. S&W introduced the stainless steel .44 Magnum Model 629 in 1979 with the 4" barrel version arriving 1981. For those who carried their .44 Magnum every day in any kind of weather, the stainless steel Model 629 was a much better choice than the Bright Blue model 29. In 1990 Smith & Wesson added a heavy underlug barrel as the Model 629 Classic, however, I do not know of any with 4" barrels that seem to me to be a natural for helping tame felt recoil.

Instead of offering the heavier 4" .44 Magnum, S&W actually went backward by first coming up with the Model 29 Mountain Gun. For this they reached all the way back to the 1950 Target using the slim barrel of the .44 Special on the Mountain Gun making it a little easier to carry all day. If I thought the 4" .44 Magnum had tremendous recoil when I was a teenager, and is still not easy to shoot with full house loads even with all my 60+ years of experience, I was not prepared for what was to come next.

CARRY MUCH, SHOOT LITTLE

Concentrating mainly on carrying and very little on shooting, S&W came up with the Model 329PD AirLite Sc. This sixgun definitely needs to be experienced to be appreciated — or maybe not appreciated — but just experienced at least once. The Model



The ultimate lightweight packing .44 Magnum is this Model 329 PD AirLite.



Elmer Keith especially favored 4" S&W .44s. Shown are (left to right) his custom 4-1/2" fully engraved Magnum, special presentation .44 Magnum from Smith & Wesson, his every day packin' blued .44 Mag and his fully engraved 1950 Target .44 Special.

329PD arrived in 2003 as a Scandium/Aluminum alloy N-Frame weighing 26 oz. The six-shot cylinder is titanium and it has a full underlug 4" barrel. Actually, the barrel has a shroud with the underlug. Touching off full house .44 Magnum loads in this lightweight sixgun is something one will never forget, however, it performs quite well with .44 Special loads and with its light weight is very easy to carry all day. This is one of those sixguns if you ever need it in a serious situation such as a very mad and very big bear, the full house loads will not even be noticed. It is easy to see why this sixgun has become very popular in Alaska. Mine certainly carries and shoots very easily with .44 Special rounds. It is very easy to stoke it with four .44 Special loads, backed up by two .44 Magnum loads just in case.

In 2014 Smith & Wesson came up with a very practical 4" .44 Magnum reaching for the epitome of Perfect Packin' Pistols with the Model 69 Combat Magnum. This is a stainless steel, five-shot, 4-1/4" double-action sixgun. Sights are typical S&W adjustable sights with a white outline rear sight matched up with a red ramp front sight. The frame screws, hammer, trigger and cylinder release as well as the front and rear sight are matte black finish and contrast nicely with the matte stainless steel of the

rest of this excellent big bore revolver. The front of the cylinder is chamfered for easy entrance into a holster and the muzzle has a deep concave crown protecting the rifling. The right side of the barrel is marked in two lines with "44 MAGNUM" and "COMBAT MAGNUM." The grips are wrap-around, finger-grooved style of pebble-grained rubber. The cylinder locks at the front of the frame with a modernized version of the Triple-Lock set up instead of locking at the front of the ejector rod. Since this is a five-shot .44 Magnum, the locking bolt notches on the cylinder are in between chambers so there is no weak spot under each chamber.

I can use it with everything from standard 750-fps .44 Special loads up to full house Magnum loads and it shoots accurately and handles well. I would call it the most useful .44 Magnum S&W has produced since the original .44 Magnum/Model 29 design disappeared in the waning years of the last century. I like it.

The .44 Magnum, both the original S&W sixgun and cartridge have been around now for 65+ years. The former is still the Perfect Packin' Pistol by which all others are judged and the cartridge is still, as Keith called it, "The King of the Sixgun Cartridges." I don't see this ever changing, at least in my lifetime.



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ON THE LEVEL ABOUT THE BEVEL FILLING YOUR NEED FOR SPEED

One debate you find in the electronic gun forums is the importance of reloading speed. I've spent years hearing "If you can't do it with six, you can't do it at all." I wish those who say this could interview some of the people I have, who went way past six to survive, often after reloading. Besides, it's not just about reloading speed but loading speed, too. There are many households in which the pro-gun spouse and the anti-gun spouse came to the compromise of "We'll have a gun, but it has to be unloaded."

When the unforgiving clock is ticking and we need ready-to-fire bullets, I think we can all agree we want them ready to launch as soon as possible.

If you want to reload faster than the devil, you might want to bevel.

AUTOLOADERS

Reloading a semiautomatic pistol sounds simple — empty cartridge container out, full one in, round in chamber, back to work. However, there are subtleties which will make it all go faster and a big part is making things go smoother.

Early in the third quarter of the 20th Century, when Jeff Cooper and his colleagues began combat pistol competition on the West Coast, techniques and hardware advanced exponentially. Reloading was a big part of winning against the clock, and Cooper credited his friend and colleague Ray Chapman with developing the speed



Edges of chambers (above) on this S&W Model 15 perfectly beveled by the late, great Denny Reichard. Tapered double stack G19 (below) already has some funnel effect, but the wider well on this stock Gen5 makes insertion easier still.

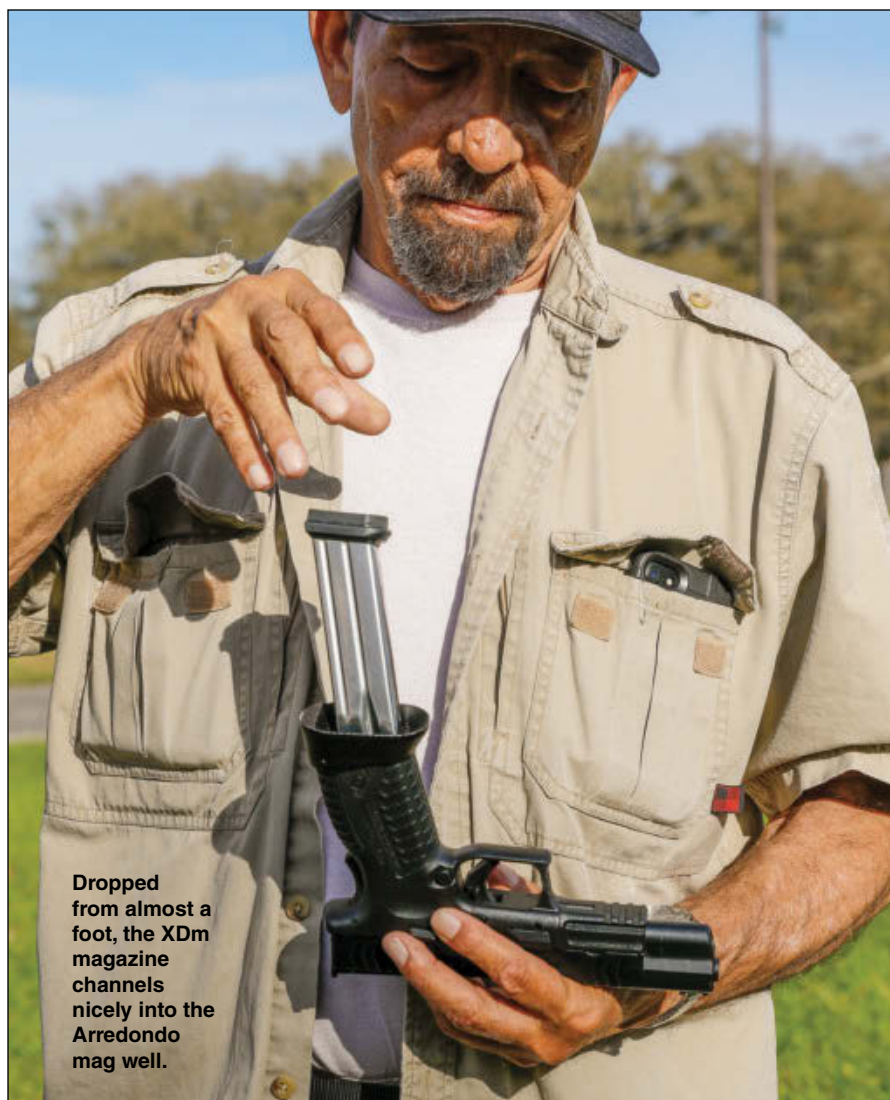


reload of the pistol most of us use today. Ray was among the first to realize rounding off the square edge at the opening of the magazine well would expedite things.

Before long, the beveled mag well was not just a standard modification for practical shooting competition but desirable for a defensive pistol as well. Most 1911s manufactured today will come with at least a modest beveling of the magazine well.

But *pistoleros* and pistolsmiths didn't stop there. Next came add-on funnels which helped still further in guiding a fresh magazine into the pistol at speed. The most popular seem to be the Smith & Alexander brand. Since these extended below the frame, they pretty much mandated an extended pad on the floorplate of each magazine to assure full seating. It is believed magazine pads were originally the brainchild of another Cooper/Chapman contemporary, Elden Carl, circa 1960. This, of course, was not a bad idea even for a 1911 in original GI trim — the standard flush-bottom magazines often failed to fully seat if not carefully inserted. Those of us who carried 1911s concealed would generally have a flush bottom magazine in the gun, seated at leisure in an administrative load and topped off, to minimize butt protrusion under a concealment garment, along with padded-bottom magazines for reloads.

The final evolution was humongous funnels large enough to serve as small flower pots. These are seen mostly in open class competition guns, though a barely legal IDPA-approved version exists. (I use the Arredondo brand.) The faster you're trying to go,



Dropped from almost a foot, the XDm magazine channels nicely into the Arredondo mag well.



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Mag well progression on some of Mas' Colt 1911s. Above from left: Stock GI style, beveled, small funnel, wider funnel.

the sloppier you can get, particularly when reloading on the run or in some awkward position which changes the body coordinates to which we've become accustomed. So wide they seriously compromise concealment, I see them occasionally on the butts of privately owned/departments approved police service pistols on the hips of gun enthusiast cops — most often, on GLOCKS.

The tapered top of a double-stack magazine, combined with the already wide mouth of such a pistol's mag well, creates some funnel effect to speed up the reload. However, the wider, the better for catching and channeling a sloppy reload. Get going super-fast, and you'll revel in the bevel. If you doubt it, look at the flower-pot mag well of an experienced speed shooter — every one of the many scratches and dings you'll see marks a reload that would have been fumbled without the wide funnel.

REVOLVERS

When I got into revolver shooting with speedloads (PPC) in 1972, shooters were already chamfering the edges of the charge holes in their cylinders. This was particularly important because the typical load was a flat wadcutter, which needed all the help available to quickly insert six of them into six exactly sized chambers.

But there was a devil in the bevel — I've heard experienced revolversmiths warn an out-of-hand do-it-yourself job could remove enough metal to leave the case head partially unsupported, resulting in a case head blowout. This could be particularly ugly with a hot Magnum load. The best 'smiths advise to just break and polish the edges of the charge holes and leaving the ejector alone to avoid a spent case slipping under the star. Don't bevel like the devil — rounding the edge just a tiny bit will increase reloading speed, especially with the full wadcutter .38 loads that have come into popularity for self-defense lately in the super-light small-frame snubs. 



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RIFLE RECOIL IS ANYBODY HONEST ABOUT IT?

What are the single biggest obstacles to accurate rifle shooting? Recoil and muzzle blast! If rifles didn't kick and make a deafening noise, accurate shooting would be a lot easier but they do, and the more powerful the cartridge the greater the noise and recoil. Unfortunately, "more power!" is what many shooters need — or think they need.

Ego is another factor. Saying you dislike heavy recoil is kind of like saying you can't drive a manual transmission. Everyone likes to say they aren't bothered by recoil. Everyone lies. I know shooters who boast of their recoil tolerance but when I see them at the range they have 50 lbs. of lead stacked behind the rifle.

Any of these would do well for most North American game: (from left to right) Rem. 700 in .280 Rem., Browning A-Bolt 7mm-08 Rem., another A-Bolt in .284 Win., Brno ZG-47 7x57 Mauser, Winchester 70 .270 Win., Winchester 70 7x57 Mauser.

TAKE STOCK

Fool me all you want, but don't fool yourself. If you really want to find out, have a friend at the range load the rifle for you, leaving the chamber empty on occasion so you never know if the rifle is going to fire or not. When the firing pin clicks on an empty chamber after a string of live rounds, you'll know. If you really can handle it the sight picture will remain steady. If not ... I've seen people with both eyes closed, face pulled away from the stock and contorted in a grimace. If shooting offhand sometimes they'll actually stumble forward a step or two.

I used to find it flattering when people would ask for advice on purchasing a

hunting rifle. I quickly got over it when I found they paid no attention. At least half a dozen young relatives told me they were thinking of a .300 Magnum as their first hunting rifle. I'd ask what they planned to hunt. Deer, mostly, antelope and black bear, maybe elk or moose one day. Got to have a .300 for elk.

I'd say a .300 Magnum is a bit much for a novice shooter. Get a cartridge you'll enjoy shooting, something like a .243 Win., .260 Rem., 7mm-08 Rem. If you go elk hunting someday and really feel you need a .300, I'll lend you one.

They listen politely and then get .300 Win. Mags. or a .300 WSM. My nephew Mike got my usual advice. A couple of weeks later he showed up with a handsome Winchester 70 Featherweight .300 Win. Mag. I helped fit and bore-sight a scope. After a couple of shots at 25 yards to get on paper he shot a nice 1" three-shot group at 100 yards. I was impressed with both the rifle and his shooting.



MODULAR DRIVEN TECHNOLOGIES (MDT)

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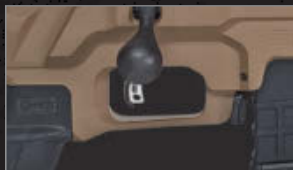
OBSESSION



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One of Dave's favorite hunting cartridges is the .300 Win. Mag., loaded with 180-grain Barnes TSX bullets by Black Hills Ammunition. His favorite rifle for the cartridge is this Ruger 77 Sporter with a field-ready weight of about 9-3/4 lbs. If you want to be a good rifle shot you need to shoot. For training nothing beats a medium-size bolt rifle in .223 Rem like this Ruger Hawkeye (below).

The next group wasn't an inch, in fact it wasn't even three shots. After two shots about 5" apart — and neither where they should have been — he said, "You know what, uncle, I don't want to shoot anymore today." I was impressed again, because he had the good sense to quit before a flinch could get a foothold.

Then ...

A couple of months later Mike showed up again with another new rifle. It was a Weatherby Vanguard he got on sale. The cartridge? .243 Win. His shooting with it was outstanding. He called a few weeks later to say how much he enjoyed shooting it. He still planned on using his .300 for hunting, although he asked if I thought the .243 would do for deer hunting. I said, "You know, I think it just might."

Previously I've written the .300 Win. Mag. is one of my favorite hunting cartridges. I've shot more species of big game with it than any other cartridge. So am I being a hypocrite now? Maybe a little, but there's a qualification. Of several .300 Win. Mags. I own, the most-used is a Ruger 77 Sporter, stainless steel, with a fairly heavy



barrel. The stock is a heavy brown laminate. With scope, rings, leather shooting sling and loaded magazine, it weighs over 9-3/4 lbs.

With factory Black Hills Ammunition loads using Barnes TSX bullets at 2,950 fps, recoil is about like an 8-lb. .308 or .30-06. I can shoot this rifle with the same hold I'd use on a .223 or .243. Recoil energy computes to about 24 ft.-lb. From the bench, sighting in or testing loads I can shoot 20 to 25 shots in a session without feeling any recoil fatigue.

These days I like light rifles and to keep recoil tolerable I like lighter cartridges. With bullets like the Barnes TTSX, Hornady

ELD, Nosler Accubond, lighter cartridges perform like the heavyweights of old. Current favorite deer cartridges include .243 Win., .240 Wby., .250 Savage, 6mm and 6.5mm Creedmoor. I was so impressed with the Creedmoor I got a Tikka T3 in 6.5x55. I've used Hornady 143-grain ELD-X bullets to kill six deer with six shots.

Other factors influence recoil such as stock fit, recoil pad, muzzle brakes, suppressors and ear protection to reduce muzzle blast. For now though, consider the benefits of a pleasant, light recoiling rifle. If you really want to get good with a centerfire nothing beats a handy sporter-weight bolt action .223!



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The Stoeger P350 with ATI M4-type stock (above), a decent use tactical shotgun Denny had to rescue from a life of excessive maintenance. The Stoeger rotating bolt (below) has three massive locking lugs.

STOEGER P350 CLEANUP

"HOW MUCH OIL DID YOU USE?"

Recently I was asked by a friend to take a look at a shotgun he had acquired — a Stoeger P350 Tactical. He told me the action was hard to work and shells would occasionally bind in the magazine tube and not feed.

BACKGROUND

Manufactured in Turkey and imported by Stoeger Industries, the P350 is a slide-action (pump) and will fire both 2-3/4" and 3" shells. The P350 is normally equipped with a red-bar front sight but the gun I examined had a bead on a post. The "tactical" model usually has a full-length stock with a pistol grip while this one had an adjustable M4-type stock with adjustable cheekpiece made by ATI. The P350 is out of production but widely available on the used market for around \$300.

The forend has aggressive diagonal serrations for a sure grip but is not so harsh it's uncomfortable. The bolt, driven by twin action bars to prevent binding, is different from most shotguns — the rotating bolt has three large lugs that lock up steel to steel in the barrel. The P350 uses a single extractor.

MECHANICAL PROBLEMS

With the magazine cap removed, the barrel and forend can be separated from the receiver. The bolt comes out on the action bars when the forend is removed. Ideally the bolt should move freely within

The Stoeger Denny examined had a bead on a post for the front sight.

the bolt carrier, falling forward when pointed downward and falling back into the carrier when inverted. It took pressure to move the bolt by hand.

My friend told me the former owner had informed him the shotgun was kept "well lubricated." Talk about an understatement ...

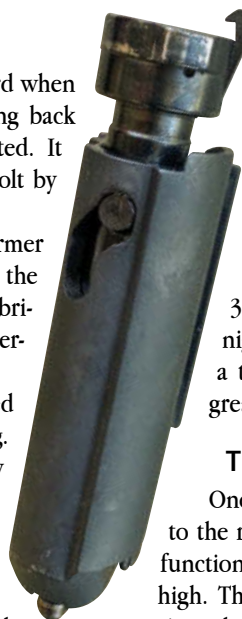
Oil and dirt had congealed near to the point of solidifying. I took apart the bolt assembly and after some consistent tugging was able to remove the bolt. The only way to totally clean the bolt and carrier was to douse it with brake cleaner. I needed to perform this two times. Next was washing the parts in a mixture of hot water and Dawn dish soap. I used compressed air to remove all traces of moisture.

I did the same thing with the trigger group. When put back together, the pump-action slid back and forth easily. Interestingly, there was no evidence of lubrication on the action bars.

Next came the problem of shells sticking in the magazine. I thought removing the magazine spring retainer, followed by the magazine spring and follower would be a simple matter. No such luck.

The magazine spring retainer is an internal C-clip. I tried to use my circ clip pliers but the retainer would not budge.

After a night of soaking in Kroil it came free and I was able to complete the magazine disassembly. The follower, spring retainer and spring were both caked with the same congealed oil as the bolt. Just a reminder — never, ever lube the inside of any mag.



I used a 10-gauge bore brush wrapped in a patch soaked with Hoppes 9. When I pulled it out, it was unbelievable how dirty and grime-filled the magazine tube was. It was left to soak in Hoppes 9 overnight. Once cleaned, it would finally feed shells.

What should have taken 20 to 30 minutes — not counting the overnight soakings — had turned into a three-day job with a lot of elbow grease.

TERRIBLE STOCK CHOICE

Once reassembled, I took the Stoeger to the range for a test fire. While the gun functioned fine, it was shooting high — very high. The problem was the M4-type stock since there is no drop at the comb as there is on most shotguns.

When brought to bear with a proper cheek rest, the shooter is looking far above the barrel instead of sighting down the barrel. To hit a 10" plate in the center from 15 yards I had to hold almost a foot low, even with the adjustable cheek piece raised as far as it would go.

I suppose there are some folks who find an adjustable M4-type stock on a shotgun exciting. They have the right to their opinion, but the CDI ("Chicks dig it!") factor should never override performance. Form follows function. This is a case where form gave way to function.

SUMMARY

None of the above is a condemnation of the Stoeger P350. I have come across several of these guns over the years and while budget priced, they have proven to be reliable shooters. Rather, this is a criticism of crude maintenance and a poor choice for the stock.

Caveat Emptor.



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STR-9C, 9MM
13+1 CAPACITY

Overall length of the STR-9C is 6.9" compared to 7.44" for the standard STR-9.

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Duke plinking steel with cast bullets using his favorite Model 1903 .30-06. Scope is Leatherwood 3X.

CAST BULLETS AND OLD BATTLE RIFLES

GO SHOOTING REGARDLESS OF AMMO SHORTAGES

As this is written, the United States is perhaps experiencing the worst ammunition and reloading component shortage since World War II. Gun and sporting goods stores have little or no supplies of loaded ammo, gunpowders, primers and factory-made bullets. As to powders and primers, I have no advice. Bullets are a different matter.

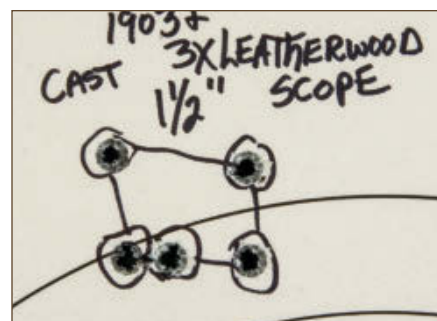
With a few exceptions I have a bullet mold for — and have shot cast bullets in — most rifles in my vault. The exceptions are semi- and full-autos and my Remington .222 Remington Magnum Model 700ADL. Formerly I cast for it too, until my fingers stiffened from arthritis to the point

handling such tiny bullets and even tinier case checks became difficult.

My vintage battle rifle collection runs from 6.5mm on to 8mm. They're used for recreational shooting such as plinking steel or informal competitions where cast bullets easily fill in for jacketed types. Instead of history as to how I arrived at a good cast bullet load for this rifle array, I'm just going to tell how I do it.

THE COOKBOOK

First is powder. After trying everything from 2400 to H4831 with mediocre to decent results, I've come to settle on one cast rifle bullet propellant that gives superb



This is the sort of groups Duke expects from good cast bullet loads in good condition, scoped battle rifles.

results — Accurate 5744, now a product of Hodgdon. Lyman's *Cast Bullet Handbook 4th Edition* gives many loads for 5744. I'll also mention some of my favorites at the end but before I want to give one caveat — don't worry if 5744 leaves a few unburned powder kernels in rifle barrels! The important thing is how close to one another the bullets strike targets! I've been questioned about this many times and my reply is always, "How about accuracy?" The answer is usually "Great." Enough said. A firm crimp of case mouth to bullet will greatly reduce unburned powder.

Next is the topic of bullet molds. My battle rifle molds come from Lyman and Redding/SAECO, and all are double cavity. I don't sort bullets by cavity or weigh them for consistency. They only get a casual look-over while sizing and lubing. Lube can be anything on the market but since



Three of Duke's favorite bullet molds for .30-06, .303 British and 8mm.



Duke swears by Accurate 5744 for cast bullets and also uses the components shown.

"AS THIS IS WRITTEN, THE UNITED STATES IS PERHAPS EXPERIENCING THE WORST AMMUNITION AND RELOADING COMPONENT SHORTAGE SINCE WORLD WAR II."

I'm also an avid black powder cartridge shooter, I stick to lubricants specifically labeled for black powder such as SPG and DGL. The first is now located in Missouri and the latter in Idaho. Incidentally, both are also great smokeless powder lubes. I use them for *all* cast bullet shooting.

PAYLOAD

The shapes of bullets I use are round-nose or semi-round-nose/semi-pointed. For example my all-time favorite .30 caliber bullet is Lyman's #311299 at nominally 200 grains. Lyman gives us a bonus because they make the same design of bullet for .31 calibers, i.e. 7.65mm Argentine, .303 British, 7.7mm Japanese, and 7.62x54mm Rimmed. It's their #314299 and also is nominally 200 grains.

Bullet metal isn't a difficult matter. At one end is Lyman No. 2 formula, also listed in their *Cast Bullet Handbook*. Its Brinnell Hardness Number (BHN) is about 15. On the hard side is straight Linotype alloy of which a friend gave me a lifetime supply. Its BHN is about 22. If scrounging alloy is not your forte you can buy pre-blended

6.5MM JAPANESE TYPE 38 RIFLE

Lyman #266673 150 grains,
16.0 grains/5744

7MM MAUSER, BRAZILIAN MODEL 1908 RIFLE

Lyman #287346 140 grains,
20.0 grains/5744

.30-06, U.S. MODEL 1903A3 RIFLE

Lyman #311299 200 grains,
25.0 grains/5744

.303 BRITISH ENFIELD #5 JUNGLE CARBINE

Lyman #314299 200 grains,
22 grains/5744

7.62X54MM RIMMED FINNISH MODEL 1939

Lyman #314299 200 grains,
25 grains/5744

7.7MM JAPANESE TYPE 99 RIFLE

Lyman #314299 200 grains,
25 grains/5744

8MM MAUSER GERMAN K98K RIFLE

Redding/SAECO #081 195 grains,
27 grains/5744.

Magnum type alloy from several sources such as Buffalo Arms in Idaho.

THE RIGHT SIZE

As for sizing diameters, I go large — as in a couple thousandths over nominal jacketed bullet diameters. For instance, jacketed 6.5mm bullets are 0.264". I size 6.5mm cast bullets 0.266", jacketed .30 caliber bullets are 0.308". I size 0.310" and so forth. In my mind, gas checks are necessary but brands don't matter — they're all pretty much crimp-on types now anyway.

A case neck/mouth belling die is absolutely necessary for good cast bullet shooting. All the bullet mold manufacturers supply proper ones by caliber. For primers nowadays, use what you can get, just don't try to substitute pistol primers for rifle primers.

Here are some of my settled-upon cast bullet/battle rifle loads. (See chart at left.) Powder for all is 5744. I'm not listing exact velocities as they vary from rifle to rifle anyway. All these loads run in the 1,600 to 1,900 range:



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HANDLOADING THE .45 ACP

PART V

POWDER-COATED BULLETS

Today's latest idea in bullets is powder coating. Several companies offer powder-coated bullets and it's pretty easy as a do-it-yourself project. Powder-coated bullets are cheaper than jacketed bullets and not as messy as cast-and-lubricated bullets. Powder coating comes in various colors in powder form and a little goes a long way.

AND I HELPED!

Most do-it-yourselfers follow the "Shake and Bake" method. For this all one

needs is a container like an empty Cool Whip, cottage cheese, sour cream container or any other plastic container preferably with a fitted lid. Bullets are placed in this container, I usually go with around 50 at a time and then around a tablespoon of powder is added, the lid placed on and then the shake begins. I like to shake them back and forth and up and down for one to two minutes. They then go in a colander or wire basket to allow the excess powder to be removed.

Now it is time to bake. A toaster oven

works best and they can usually be found at secondhand stores. However, I ordered a new one online and it was delivered to me in two days for less than \$30. I use wire baskets I make myself. Ace Hardware has rolls of quarter-inch mesh garden fencing lightweight enough to be molded to the shape of a basket and also to be cut very easily with side-cut pliers.

With the bullets in the basket on the tray provided with the toaster oven, it's now time to bake. My first couple attempts were for learning. I had to be more careful about making sure the bullets were coated properly and also use the right setting of temperature.

When I set the oven too high — around 450° — some of the bullets actually melted. The proper setting is right at 400° for 10 to 12 minutes. When they are finished baking, the bullets are very hot and need to be handled carefully. It is best to size them as soon as they are cool as they can harden overnight. For sizing I use the very simple Lee Bullet Sizing Die which fits into my Rock Chucker Press along with a bullet punch that fits into the ram much like a shell holder. The bullet is placed on the punch, pushed through the die and goes into a plastic bottle on top of the sizing die. If the bullets are oversize, spraying with something like case-sizing lubricant will make it much easier.

LOAD UP

As I have mentioned in previous installments, I also use Lee equipment for loading all my .45 ACP rounds. I have been reloading .45 ACP rounds for over 60 years and since I have switched to the following method, I have excellent results and no problems with feeding and chambering rounds except in those very rare cases where a particular pistol simply does not like the bullet profile being used.

I always sort my brass by head stamps and then, using the RCBS RockChucker single-stage press, each case is sized and de-primed with the Lee Undersized Carbide Sizing Die. After this I use the Lee Universal Expanding Die to just kiss the mouth of the case enough to allow the bullet to enter. Using these two dies ensures the tightest possible bullet-to-case fit. This is especially important with .45 ACP loads as there is no crimping groove.

After priming, each case is charged



John's Colt Lightweight 1911 (above) thrives on a steady diet of coated "Lipstick" bullets. The bullets are less expensive than jacketed and not messy like cast-and-lube. John's Ruger SR 1911 Target Model (below) really takes a shine to these Acme red "lipstick" bullets!



"IF YOU PREFER TO **PRODUCE YOUR OWN** POWDER-COATED BULLETS, YOU HAVE A CHOICE OF SEVERAL ADDITIONAL COLORS INCLUDING **BLACK, GRAY, BLUE AND GREEN.**"

with powder, bullets are seated and then separately taper crimped with the Lee Factory Crimp Die. Powder-coated bullets and jacketed bullets are quite slippery and the use of the Lee Undersized Sizing Die, Lee Universal Expanding Die and the Lee Factory Crimp Die produces ammunition as perfectly as I can make. It also prevents bullets being pushed back into the case during feeding, thus raising pressures. By chronographing each load and watching the results I know this does not happen.

Let's look at some of the results using Acme Powder-Coated, or "Lipstick" bullets as they are called due to their red color. If you prefer to produce your own powder-coated bullets, you have a choice of several additional colors including black, gray, blue and green. I have been using Acme bullets for the past year in weights of 185, 200 and 230 grains. The 200-grain version is available in three profiles: round-nose, flat-point and semi-wadcutter.

RESULTS

Using the 185 Acme SWC over 5.0 grains of Red Dot in the Ruger SR 1911 Target Model results in a muzzle velocity of 976 fps and a five-shot group at 20 yards of 1-1/2". The same load in the Springfield Armory Range Officer is slightly slower at 938 fps, however the group tightens up to 1". The Iver Johnson 6" Longslide duplicates the results obtained with the Ruger SR 1911.

Going up to the 200-grain Acme bullets and using 5.0 grains of Red Dot result in the following — the Ruger SR 1911 Target with the SWC bullet gives a 1-3/8" group with a muzzle velocity of 960 fps while the Colt Combat Elite shoots into 1-1/4" with a muzzle velocity of 963 fps. The Colt 1911 Rail Model duplicates this muzzle velocity and shoots into a slightly tighter group. Switching to the 200-grain RN, again with the same 5.0 grains of Red Dot and using the Springfield Armory Range Officer, gives a 1-3/8" group with a muzzle velocity of 951 fps. My best results with this bullet and powder charge comes from the Colt



Step one: Bullets are placed in a plastic container with a tight-fitting lid.



Step two: Powder is added, the lid shut and the affair given a two-minute shake until everything is thoroughly coated.



Step three: The bullets go into the toaster oven inside John's homemade 1/4" mesh basket. Don't get too hot or the bullets might melt!



Step four: After cooling, the bullets are ready to be sized with the Lee sizing die.

Rail Model at 964 fps and a 7/8" group. All of these loads are more than adequately powerful as well as accurate for most applications.

For duplicating Hardball loads, 230-grain round-nose bullets from both Acme and Syntech are used. With 5.2 grains of Sport Pistol, the Ruger SR 1911 Target Model clocks out at 858 fps with a 1-3/8" group with the Acme 230 while the Syntech over the same powder charge gives 871 fps and a 1-1/4" group. In the Springfield Armory Range Officer the same two loads are at 848 and 868 respectively with groups

of 1-1/8" and 1-1/2" also respectively.

Powder-coated bullets are cheaper than jacketed bullets and not as messy as normally cast and lubricated bullets. Six different 1911s were used in testing six different loads and five of these performed flawlessly in both feeding and chambering, while one example did not like the Acme 185 and 200 Semi-wadcutter bullets and refused to feed them. Once again this points to the fact whatever load and whatever pistol is to be used, should be thoroughly tested for reliability before trusting them for any purpose.

UMAREX ORIGIN .22 AIR RIFLE KIT PCP IN A BOX!

Pre-charged Pneumatic (PCP) rifles are the Ferarri Enzo of the air rifle world. What's not to love? Smooth operation, no "springing" noise from springs or pistols, lots of shots before having to "reload" more air and plenty of power to boot. The beauty is PCP rifles are available in any caliber from .177 to .50. As for price points, manufacturers like Umarex have brought the PCP to everyone with sub \$300 rifles designed to impress.

In fact, the only downside to PCP is you need to sort out your air supply. A PCP rifle's powerplant is an onboard air reservoir holding enough air at high enough pressure to drive 10, 20, 30, or even 90 shots before a refill. By enough pressure, I mean 3,000 psi and up. Considering my Toyota Sequoia land yacht tires run at 34 psi, the electric pump in your garage isn't going to cut it. You'll generally need an air supply capable of delivering 4,500 psi to the rifle's onboard system.

You have three choices: buy a large backup reservoir like a SCUBA-type tank and get it filled periodically at a dive shop, fire station, or paintball center; purchase your own air compressor; or use a purpose-built high-pressure hand pump. The hand pump option is the most economical but unless the rifle is designed for efficient human-powered filling, you'll get a serious workout.

ORIGINS

Umarex is making the world of PCP shooting even more accessible with the Origin 22 air rifle. Well, actually it's not a

rifle, it's more of a kit. The Umarex Origin 22 comes with a high-pressure hand pump capable of delivering 4,500 psi air directly to the rifle, so you have your own infinite compressed air supply right in the box.

To be clear, this isn't just a marketing bundle. The Umarex Origin rifle is actually optimized for hand-filling. You know — to shoot more and pump less. Umarex has engineered some kind of mojo into the rifle's air reservoir mechanism to allow full-power operation with less incoming air. The Ever-Pressure system makes whatever quantity of air residing in the system more useful, doing "more with less" so to speak. All of this translates to less manual pumping on your part.

With just a few cycles using the included 4,500 psi hand pump, you get a legit full-power shot. Additional pumping won't increase velocity or power but it will give you more shots. With about 100 cycles of the hand pump, you'll get about 40 shots before it's time to refill the onboard air cylinder. The company claims the Origin 22 rifle requires just 50% of the air input of comparable rifles.

Unless you've used a high-pressure hand pump to refill a PCP air rifle, you may not fully appreciate the benefit. Consider the underlying physics. Filling a bicycle tire with 50 psi of air is no big deal. However, when your muscles need to produce a tank filled with 3,000 or so psi, you'll be exerting some serious effort as the tank nears maximum pressure. The



first bit is easy, like a bike tire but the work increases exponentially as your rifle fills. Look at the bright side, you'll save a ton on a Cross-Fit membership!

ORIGIN TOUR

The rifle itself is a solid piece of gear. The air reservoir is a full-length and slender tube slung under the barrel. Paired with a polymer stock, the result is a smooth handling and surprisingly light gun that's easy to shoot offhand. I found I liked the molded-in vertical pistol-like grip and found it easy to shoot off the bench with my thumb floating free. I like to rest the thumb lightly on top of the receiver when shooting for precision. Your mileage may vary, but



The whole kit-n-caboodle: The Origin package includes the rifle and a 4500 psi manual pump.



The Umarex Origin uses a slender under-barrel air reservoir. The regulator system is optimized to get every ounce of efficiency from the onboard air supply.

this method allows my firing hand a relaxed grip, translating to less movement of the rifle. If you're really into fine precision, the "thumb resting on the side" method also eliminates most of the heartbeat effect too.

A built-in receiver rail allows easy attachment of standard rings. The primary rail is standard Picatinny, but an additional 11mm rail is machined in on the top so you can use either size scope rings. If you've already got an airgun scope fit for 11mm, you're good to go.

The two-stage trigger is adjustable in three different ways, using Allen screws accessible through the trigger guard. You can adjust the overall length of trigger travel, the weight of the pull, and the over-travel distance. Using a combination of 1.5 and 3mm Allen wrenches, knock yourself out and create your personalized trigger feel.

Out of the box, I measured the pull weight at precisely 2-1/2 lbs. The first stage offered about 1/8" of near-zero-weight take-up, followed by a crisp break and no detectable over-travel. I didn't make any adjustments as I found the trigger action



Easily adjustable scope turrets (above, left) are a must on an air rifle. The variety of pellet types, weight, and velocity options make matching point of aim to point of impact a must. The Origin features a straight-pull bolt for loading from the magazine and cocking (above, right). Smooth and simple!



just peachy as it was.

The fill mechanism is located under the forend, just forward of the trigger guard. The system uses a probe fill and the probe itself has a Foster-type connection attaching to the female Foster connection on the included hand pump. You'll also find this connection type common on compressors and larger air cylinders. You shouldn't have to buy any extra adapters to get the connection you need between your alternate filling systems and the Origin 22.

SHOOTING

I shot in the clean mountain air of North Carolina using the H&N Barracuda Match pellets — 21.14-grain round-nose

projectiles. Using a portable Doppler Radar chronograph, I measured average velocity of 758 feet per second right at the muzzle. On my 30-yard outdoor range with little wind I set up a prone shooting position using my pack and a rolled-up sweatshirt to fire some groups for accuracy. When the smoke cleared, I measured an average five-shot group size of 0.62".

The MSRP of the Origin 22 system is an aggressive (in a good way!) \$349.99 — and includes the 4,500 psi hand pump — so you're ready to start shooting a PCP from the get go. Just add pellets of your choice and your favorite optic and you're off to the range.

UmarexUSA.com

THE WALTHER *POLIZEIPISTOLE*

THE FIRST FAMILY OF MODERN COMBAT HANDGUNS

Will Dabbs, MD

1929 was a pivotal year in modern human history. The 1929 stock market crash triggered the Great Depression, fundamentally altering the fabric of life on earth. The St. Valentine's Day Massacre showed the world just how pitiless and bloodthirsty American gangsters had become. Motorola produced the first car radio and Sam Foster sold the world's first pair of sunglasses. Meanwhile in Germany, Carl Walther

produced a trim little pocket pistol to change the trajectory of combat handguns forever.

In 1929 Germany had yet to recover from the First War to End All Wars. WWI ended in defeat for the German Empire, and the onerous stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles crippled the German economy and humiliated her people. Across a bitter Germany this desperate economic restlessness set the stage for Adolf Hitler and the most repugnant political regime of the modern age.



The Walther PP family tree from top to bottom: The two PPK/S pistols at the bottom are now made in Arkansas.

The .32ACP Walther PP (right) combined the trigger from an SA/DA revolver with the trim lines of a pocket pistol. The seminal design debuted in 1929 and soon evolved into the abbreviated PPK version (left).



“WHAT REALLY LAUNCHED THE PPK TO WORLDWIDE FAME, HOWEVER, WAS A CERTAIN **FICTIONAL MI6 AGENT** NAMED AFTER AN OBSCURE BRITISH ORNITHOLOGIST.”

TRIGGERING THE POCKET PISTOL

Amidst this toxic political milieu *Carl Walther GmbH Sportwaffen* introduced the *Polizeipistole* (Police Pistol) as a weapon with which to arm European Law Enforcement Officers. The PP featured an exposed hammer, a fixed barrel, a single-column magazine, an automatic internal safety system and a simple blowback-operated action. These features combined with the gun's original rather anemic .32 ACP chambering kept it tidy, compact and perfect for undercover concealment. What really shook the world, however, was the PP's radical single-action/double-action trigger mechanism.

In the 19th century Samuel Colt laid the foundation for the modern combat handgun with the Colt Single Action Army revolver. Packing six rounds and featuring a divinely crisp single-action trigger, the

Colt SAA changed the way men killed each other. However, in the world of gunfighting, speed is life. In short order gun manufacturers were producing similar weapons equipped with a double-action trigger firing the gun via a long trigger pull. In the early part of the 20th century the single-action/double-action wheelgun reigned supreme, filling Law Enforcement holsters around the globe.

Autoloaders like the P08 Parabellum Luger and the Colt M1911 pistols were fine combat tools to be sure. However, they both featured single-action triggers. The P08 had an awkward safety, while the M1911 had to be manually cocked before firing. Herr Walther felt he could do better.

The Walther PP featured a radical hammer drop-safety mounted on the slide. Rotating this lever down with the action cocked safely dropped the hammer over a live round. A gunsmith friend I knew as

a youngster introduced me to this device as a “heart attack safety” for the sound it made as it dropped the hammer over a live cartridge.

The gun could be stored with the hammer down and safety on for maximum security. It could be carried with the chamber loaded, hammer down and safety off for fast access. In this state, a firm pull on the trigger automatically deactivated the internal safety system and fired the gun from a cold start. This negated the need to manipulate any extraneous switches. For maximum precision, the hammer could be manually cocked yielding a single-action trigger that was relatively crisp and precise.

PP PARTICULARS

The original PP was produced in .32 ACP, .380 ACP, .25 ACP and .22 LR. Two years after its introduction Walther debuted the PPK (*Polizeipistole Kriminal* — Police

Pistol, Detective Model). The PPK featured a shortened barrel and frame making it even more concealable than the previous PP. It also just looked super cool.

We grizzled gun nerds really shouldn't care about a firearm's aesthetics. However, I'm not the only guy in the world to be taken with the rakish lines and sexy contours of

the Walther PPK. Adolf Hitler was an acolyte, as was Elvis Presley. The head of the South Korean CIA, Kim Jae-gyu, used a PPK to assassinate the South Korean dictator Park Chung-hee in 1979. What really launched the PPK to worldwide fame, however, was a certain fictional MI6 agent named after an obscure British ornithologist.

Ian Fleming was a spy during WWII, and he parlayed his wartime espionage exploits into one of the most popular book and movie series in history. Agent 007 actually started out packing a diminutive .25 ACP Beretta 418. After receiving a letter from a British firearms enthusiast named Geoffrey Boothroyd, Fleming switched his titular government assassin to the PPK, selling hundreds of thousands of Walther pistols in the process. In appreciation, Fleming wrote Boothroyd into the Bond narrative as 007's long-suffering quartermaster Q.

THE MODERN COMBAT PISTOL'S FAMILY TREE

The original Walther plant was located in Zella-Mehlis in the Thuringia province of Germany. After WWII this area fell under the Soviet zone of occupation, so Walther



Ian Fleming's James Bond originally carried a .25 ACP Beretta 418 like this one. He removed the steel grips and described the gun as "skeletonized." Seems like a good way to befoul your heater with pocket lint!

YOUR NEXT **GREEN** OPTIC

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HE507C-GR X2



HOLOSUN introduces all-new models with Super Green LED technology. With the human eye more sensitive to green light (507 nm and 555 nm), HOLOSUN's Super Green LED technology produces a 540 nm reticle that allows for a fast sight picture in all lighting conditions with more contrast against various backgrounds. Experience the innovation and durability of HOLOSUN for yourself and see why self-defenders, competitors, hunters, and law enforcement all trust HOLOSUN.

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The influence the Walther PP (left) had on the more modern Beretta M9 is fairly obvious.



moved his operation to Ulm in West Germany. The Allies forbade gun manufacture in post-war Germany, however, so the enterprise was then moved to France. PPK pistols are made in Arkansas today.

The United States has always been the world's largest consumer of commercial handguns. However, the Gun Control Act of 1968 outlawed importation of compact concealable handguns. This resulted in the PPK/S, a holy melding of the stubby PPK slide with the longer PP frame holding

an extra round of ammunition. This was likely the only example in history wherein gun control legislation made a gun better.

In the 1980s the gun world was overcome in its enthusiasm for the "wondernine." These high-capacity 9mm pistols packed at least 15 rounds onboard and all featured the same single-action/double-action triggers pioneered by the Walther PP back in 1929. The SIG P226, Beretta M9, Walther P88 and period Smith and Wesson guns all followed this same general

template.

Nowadays it is the polymer-framed, striker-fired action reigning supreme. However, for a generation, Carl Walther's trigger drove every major combat handgun in the world. Versatile, intuitive, effective and safe, the Walther PP indeed blazed an enviable trail.

Special thanks to WorldWarSupply.com for the replica gear used in our pictures. 🗡️

WaltherArms.com



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The Springfield Armory HELLCAT RDP

A carry gun "as good as it gets"

WILL DABBS, MD

The Springfield Armory Hellcat showed the world what we could expect from the next generation of concealed carry guns. Packing an industry-leading 13+1 rounds into a chassis you could conceivably hide in the front pocket of your cargo shorts, the Hellcat brings full-sized combat pistol capabilities to the realm of deep concealment mouse guns. However, it seems the wizards at the Springfield Armory skunk works were not satisfied to simply sit back and bask in the unfettered coolness of this groundbreaking defensive handgun.

The new Hellcat RDP (Rapid Deployment Package) takes everything righteous and wholesome about the Hellcat and amps it up a notch. The peerless ergonomics and state-of-the-art quality are obviously still there. In addition, however, now the Hellcat RDP includes a Self-Indexing Compensator mounted onto an extended threaded barrel, a Springfield Armory exclusive HEX Wasp micro red dot optic and an

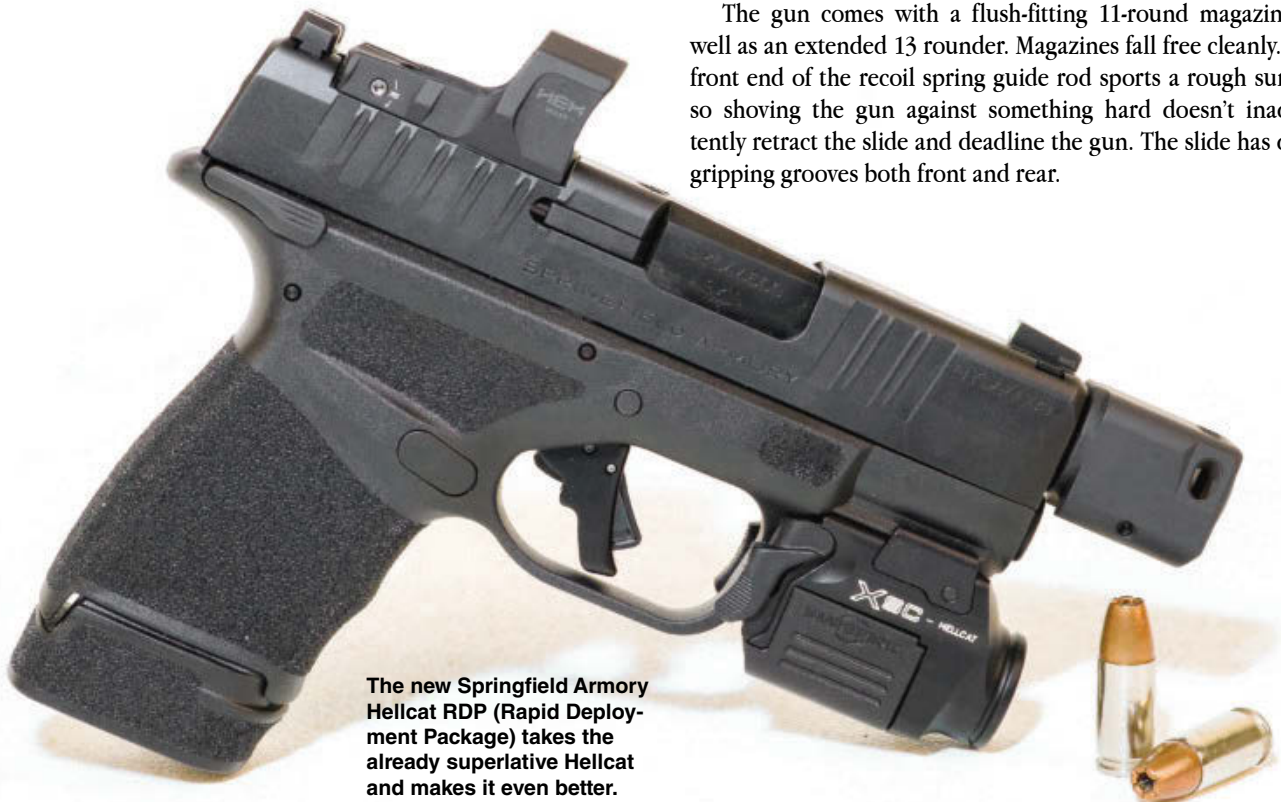
optional bilateral manual thumb safety. The end result is solid enough to bet your life on.

I've packed heat for 30 years. The sex appeal was gone after the first 48 hours. Carrying a gun is uncomfortable and a hassle. However, if you ever need it for real, it will be worth more than your house and your 401k put together. If it's a piece of kit that spells the difference between going home to momma and going home in a box you want it to be the best you can afford. Behold — the Springfield Armory Hellcat RDP.

THE HELLCAT'S CLAWS

The basic Springfield Armory Hellcat features unimpeachable reliability, a trigger blade safety and a magazine release reversible at the user level. Adaptive grip texture consists of scads of little microscopic pyramids. The harder you squeeze, the tighter it grips. Tactical rack sights look like a tritium-powered grinning cyclops and are the best in the business.

The gun comes with a flush-fitting 11-round magazine as well as an extended 13 rounder. Magazines fall free cleanly. The front end of the recoil spring guide rod sports a rough surface so shoving the gun against something hard doesn't inadvertently retract the slide and deaden the gun. The slide has deep gripping grooves both front and rear.



The new Springfield Armory Hellcat RDP (Rapid Deployment Package) takes the already superlative Hellcat and makes it even better.

Thread a sound suppressor like this compact Gemtech Lunar 9 on the end of its snout and you can take the Hellcat micro compact pistol in some shocking new directions.



The Hellcat used for the RDP package is the OSP (Optical Sight Pistol) version. The Hellcat OSP features a milled rear slide deck to accept a micro red dot. Previously you had to track down your own red dot and make sure it fit. The Hellcat RDP comes fitted with a red dot from the factory.

The new HEX Wasp micro red dot is Springfield Armory's first foray into the world of electro-optics. The sight stays on all the time and adjusts its brightness automatically to compensate for ambient light. Expect a couple years out of a battery. Just plan on swapping it out every other birthday or so and you'll be fine. The batteries can be had at any drug store or Walmart.



The HEX Wasp is Springfield Armory's first foray into electro-optics. It is tiny, rugged and capable.



The most obvious addition to the Hellcat RDP is the Self-Indexing Compensator. This nifty rig puts some of the muzzle chaos to work controlling recoil and muzzle flip.

The Hellcat RDP is also available with an optional bilateral thumb safety. Use it if you want, ignore it if you don't. I work closely with children and personally like the option.

The Self-Indexing Compensator is cuter than a bucketful of puppies and helps redirect some of the chaos into something useful. Ports on the sides and top help counteract both recoil and muzzle flip. The compensator threads directly onto the muzzle without a fuss and includes a spring-loaded detent to keep it lined up and secure. As the barrel is threaded 1/2"-28 it will accept any appropriate handgun suppressor as well.

The SureFire XSC micro compact weapon light is rechargeable without removing the light from the gun. It will run about half an hour before needing a boost. The battery has a built-in fuel indicator to let you know when it needs attention. This thing is about the size of my thumb yet still puts out 350 lumens of night-shredding illumination. Unlike some other guns, the dust cover rail on the Hellcat is of standardized dimensions.

DENOUEMENT

The Springfield Armory Hellcat RDP runs just like the previous unadorned Hellcat only better. Recoil is snappy without being frustrating and this tiny little gun will keep my rounds in a tangerine all day long at reasonable handgun ranges presuming I do my part. The trigger is of the expected 5.5 lbs. or so and remains monotonously identical from the first shot to the last. Unlike most tiny little compact carry guns which will just beat you to death on the range, the Hellcat RDP is actually kind of fun to run.

If you're going to bet your life on some mechanical contrivance, you don't want it done halfway. My first carry gun was a \$50 FIE Titan in .25 ACP. The piddly little peashooter was a gift from my precious wife and was all we could afford at the time. I still own lots of cheap guns. These are not, however, what I choose to carry every day. If you want to pack the state-of-the-art in micro-compact concealed carry iron, nowadays it would be the Springfield Armory Hellcat RDP. This is as good as it gets.

Springfield-Armory.com

BERGARA



The Bergara B-14R — a rimfire trainer and competition rifle with visions of centerfire grandeur.



Aside from being a great .22 LR rifle, the B-14R accepts all Remington 700-pattern accessories such as aftermarket triggers and stocks.

B-14R

SIMPLY THE
BEST IN
RIMFIRE TRAINERS

BRENT T. WHEAT

PHOTOS: ROB JONES/
THE IMAGESMITH, LLC

Everything came down to this shot. The felon was flanked on either side by hostages and there would only be the briefest of windows to make a single critical trigger pull.

I knew the range down to the tenth of a yard and I was confident. The only problem was the wind. It was whipping with a vengeance, a physical force like an invisible hand — calm one moment then raging the next. Of course, trouble never comes calling on a calm, 72° day.

The gun in my hand was comfortable like an old pair of boots. I'd handled this species of rifle on many real-world law enforcement missions, lying in the snow at 10 degrees below zero and steamy summer nights where the 300% humidity kept fogging the scope in spite of miracle coatings and constant wiping.

I pushed all this from my mind as the wind waned a bit and the trigger began to move almost unconsciously. Scientists have a name for this state: tachypsychia. This is when time slows down, you become hyper-sensitive to stimulus and it feels like you could play a hand of euchre between each heartbeat pounding in your ears.

The trigger felt good, the gun was solidly against my shoulder and I swear I could feel



The operating controls (above) are exactly where you'd expect them on a Remington 700. No learning a new manual of arms here! In spite of awful wind conditions, Brent managed to tweak out a 0.961" group (left) at 60 yards using mid-grade ammo.



the lockwork slide forward to detonate the primer. In the blink of an eye, I saw my wind-call was perfect and the hostage-taker had a neat hole drilled in the middle of his forehead. I silently congratulated myself.

"Good shootin' there, Tex," I mumbled while standing up and checking my cell phone in case our dinner reservations had changed.

Okay, frankly, this scenario wasn't as dramatic as the previous 280 words might have indicated. The bad guy was simply a piece of paper and if I had muffed the shot, my only problem would be dreaming up a new opening scene for this review of the Bergara B-14R. However, allow me to explain why I choose such a dramatic tableau to grab your attention regarding a mere .22 LR bolt action rifle.

GETTING STARTED

"It's great rifle, supreme accuracy, top-quality, well-constructed, yada, yada, yada ..." is how most of these reviews go. I get it. In every case — at least in *GUNS* — the writer isn't wrapping a proverbial dog log in gold foil but reporting accurately on the positive features of our cover gun. However, in the case of the Bergara, there is more to the story — much more.

Bergara says the B-14R was designed as "the best production precision .22 possible for both beginners and seasoned competitors."



The heavyweight HMR stock is adjustable for LOP and cheek weld. This isn't a light-weight gun and nicely duplicates the feel of its Rem 700 cousins.

BERGARA B-14R

THE BERGARA B-14R GEAR LIST

AMMO: CCI Green Tag, CCI Suppressor Subsonic, Federal HV Match

SCOPE/RINGS: Vortex Strike Eagle 5-25x56, Vortex Rings

SPOTTING SCOPE: Vortex Razor UHO

TRIPOD: Manfrotto Base with U.S. Tactical Supply Hog Saddle

SUPPRESSOR: Gemtech GM-22

EAR PRO: MSA Sordin Supreme Basic

STEEL TARGETS: Bluegrass Targets 1/2 Sized USPSA

SHOOTING MAT: U.S. Peacekeepers Tactical Shooting Mat

BIPOD: Harris HBRMS





GUNS[®]
MAGAZINE



The 30 lbs. of steel didn't keep the portable target stand from rocking wildly at times. It was critical to wait for lulls in the wind to get an accurate representative of the B-14R.



The B-14R bolt (above) continues building the dream of centerfire precision, running like a bank vault with no play, binding or slop. The AICS-pattern magazines (below) have a special 10-round inset to handle the .22 LR cartridges while otherwise mimicking a short-action centerfire rifle magazine.



Fair 'nough. Whether you're competing in the National Rifle League (NRL), Precision Rifle League (PRS), or "Billy Bob's Local Loco League Sagebrush Shoot" rimfire matches, the B-14R will handle things admirably. If you want better quality and more accuracy, you'll have to find a Voodoo doctor-gunsmith who builds custom .22 rifles under a full moon.

However, the deeper part of the story is something Bergara glosses over until you dive deeper into their website. On page two where the detailed specs live, the company notes the gun is "an incredible accurate full size precision trainer." Therein lies the beauty of this particular beast — it's an ersatz Remington 700 platform with .22 LR guts.

LET IT SINK IN

In other words, you can practice for your PRS matches or your police sniper missions for pennies on the dollar, burning up .22 LR cartridges instead of your particular flavor of centerfire fun. The manipulations are the same, you can add standard centerfire rifle accessories, the only thing different being the bang and recoil are much smaller so you and your wallet can hit the range anytime you feel like it. Even better in our current ammo-shortage world, you can generally find .22 LR at reasonable prices without seeing more highways than a bus driver.

FEATURES

Manufactured in Spain, the B-14R builds on the family of the Bergara B-14 centerfire rifle series. Available now in .17 HMR and .22 WMR, we're sure the .22 LR version will outsell the others significantly because of the .22 LR chambering.

As mentioned, the platform fits nearly all Remington 700-pattern stocks, scope bases and triggers. The magazine well is standard short-action AICS magazine dimension though the rifle uses a special full-size magazine which holds 10 .22 LR

rounds in a single stack.

The heavy HMR factory stock is no slouch in itself and offers LOP spacers, an adjustable cheek piece and flush-mount sling mounts. It's solid enough to bludgeon a walrus and is covered in an attractive gray-and-black speckle pattern. The 18" #6 taper barrel lives in a wide, free-float channel built on a full-length integrated mini-chassis for stability. The overall length is 38" and the gun weighs a relatively heavy (for a rimfire) 9.2 lbs. The barrel uses a 1:16 twist and includes a 1/2-28" threaded end with protector in case you want to install a muzzle device.

The action features a safety in exactly the place you'd expect on a Remington 700 and the bolt runs like ice in a hot skillet. During testing I had zero feeding problems nor other issues.

Our gun was mated with a Vortex Strike Eagle 5-25x56 First Focal Plane MRAD scope in Vortex rings. This scope is perfect for a rimfire gun as the parallax adjustment goes down to 15 yards, something to consider when shooting .22 LR, especially in practical competitions.

RANGE TIME

I'll say upfront I'm a bit embarrassed. Our test gun, rather than being a loaner from the manufacturer, is personally owned by our own ace photographer Rob Jones. As a major acolyte at the altar of accuracy, he is wildly frothy about the B-14R and graciously sent the gun to His Worshipfulness The Editor for a test run.

The reason I feel bad is because of the conditions. Due to deadlines, range schedules and Midwest springtime weather, I didn't have the best circumstances to wring out the gun. In fact, if you're slinging tiny, slowpoke — 40 grains at 1,200 fps — bullets in a 23-mph wildly gusting quarter-value wind, it's not really being fair to the gun or ammo. But, as they say, "It is what it is," and you push through because you have no choice. Deadlines wait for no one, even editors.



Okay, they weren't real bad guys but Brent had flashbacks of missions past as he buckled down behind the B-14R to engage a few paper "Tangos." Note the wind meter: 16.9 mph average, not good for a .22 LR!

At 25 yards, I found the gun boring, as in "10-shots-into-one-hole" boring. Even with the wind ripping the baseball cap from my head and pushing a half-full box of ammo off the table, a full magazine routinely created a single large rent in the paper despite the gun being just a touch too long in length-of-pull. The stock includes spacers but since Rob was gracious enough to share his prize, I didn't want to monkey too much with the set-up.

The problems started when I moved back to 50.1 yards as determined by my faithful Halo XLR 1600 laser rangefinder. My range is an open field surrounded by berms, so the wind was funneled right to where my portable shooting table was sitting. Normally stable enough for long-distance riflery, today's wind had the scope reticle bouncing around like a bowling ball in a washing machine. This was compounded by the target stand which, in spite of 30 lbs. of steel resting against the legs, insisted on moving back-and-forth during the heaviest gusts. Trying to outwait the wind proved only marginally successful as I often rushed the shot whenever the wind slacked, resulting in a slapped trigger and an eight-ring shot.

After an hour of trying, I gave up and moved under the cover of the range shed porch where I commandeered a composite picnic table. Out of the wind, the heavy table provided a steady rest for my sandbags and rifle. The Halo XLR indicated the distance to target was 59.1 yards and I was 20° off perpendicular.

However, this caused another problem — the wind call. Now, protected against the gale, I couldn't tell what the wind was doing. This meant I'd get a nice stable shooting position and perfect trigger pull but suddenly the round would go 2" or 3" off the mark because I couldn't tell the wind was ripping downrange. My best five-shot group using Federal Target ammo measured 0.916" — truthfully, not too shabby for 60 yards in these conditions with a rimfire using non-match ammo but I still feel it's not representative of the Bergara.

The .22 LR guns are notoriously finicky about ammo but the


14R didn't seem to mind much. Other than the groups opening up a bit, it was generally happy with everything fed from a bouillabaisse of different manufacturers, velocity and bullet weight. A few twists of the .1 MRAD scope turrets and I would have been dialed in for any particular round.

CONCLUSIONS

I shared all this windy backstory to explain why you won't have a humble-brag series of statistics documenting incredible shooting by the matchless editor. Suffice it to say I'm certain this gun is monotonously accurate and if I can put Rob off another week or so, I'll wait for perfect conditions and see *how* precise this gorgeous peashooter can be at 100 yards and beyond.

The gun isn't perfect — nothing is. Our main complaint, in the sense of trying to find *something* to grouse about, is the trigger is a little erratic, something Rob warned us about. Using my Lyman digital trigger gauge, the trigger averaged out in 10 pulls to 1 lb., 15.9 oz, except the few times it inexplicably rose to 2 lbs., 10 oz. To my non-calibrated Mark I finger, I never noticed these variations while on the bench. The trigger was otherwise slick with minimal creep, certainly good enough for most users since the limiting factor is usually the shooter rather than the firearm.

This minor oddity might go away after a couple hundred more pulls, but Rob mentioned he's going to add a new aftermarket trigger when his baby comes back. After all, Remington 700 interchangeability is the key here, right?

In the end, if you're seeking a great competition or training .22, especially as an "Understudy gun" for your Remington 700-pattern rifle, the Bergara 14-R offers exceptional performance and accuracy at a truly eye-opening price — \$1,150. 

Bergara.online

THE **.50** ALASKAN LEVER GUN

PLENTY OF JUICE FOR MOOSE!

JEFF "TANK" HOOVER

It's been over 25 years since I first read about the .50 Alaskan cartridge. The history captured my imagination like no other. Why wouldn't it? The cartridge and rifle were designed by two Alaskan "sourdoughs," a term used for identifying Alaskan bushmen who know what they're doing, surviving by using their resourcefulness and wits.

For years, this story stuck with me, dreaming of having a Marlin 1895 .45-70 converted to .50 Alaskan and then heading to Alaska to hunt moose and bear. Imagine my surprise when friend Darrell Harper tells me he did this very thing! I was happy and tickled for my friend's success, seeing firsthand this was an obtainable goal and a very cool project/hunt to boot.

THE .50 ALASKAN

Harold Johnson and Bill Fuller designed the cartridge/rifle while living in the Kenai Peninsula at Cooper's Landing in the 1950s. Johnson designed the .50 Alaskan using the .348 Winchester cartridge as the parent and "supercharging it" by blowing the cartridge case out for a 0.510" bullet.

The cartridge would need to be capable of taking the largest brown bears Alaska is known for. In true Alaskan form — i.e. resourcefulness — Bill Fuller used an old section

of a .50 caliber BMG barrel. A skilled machinist, he threaded and turned it down to proper dimensions for fitting onto a Winchester 1886 rifle and chambered it for the blown-out .50 Alaskan cartridge.

Johnson cut 720-grain .50 caliber BMG bullets in half and seated the now 450-grain truncated bullets backward into the fireformed cases for an effective bear load. Johnson stated, "I never recovered a slug from a bear or moose, no matter what angle the animal was shot at."

DARRELL'S DEAL

Darrell Harper is not your average hunter. For the past 10 years, he's hunted exclusively with big-bore handguns. He's hunted Africa, Australia and all over the USA, taking both cape and Asiatic buffalo with a handgun as well as Alaskan brown bear, caribou and elk.

Like any successful person, Darrell sets goals and his next is another Cape buffalo hunt in Zimbabwe. He took a Cape buffalo in South Africa with his .475 Linebaugh revolver but Zimbabwe has a foot-pound restriction for the calibers used. The next best thing? Using a lever gun! However, Darrell's largest lever is a Marlin .45-70 1895 — even with stoutly-loaded Buffalo Bore ammo, he would fall short of Zimbabwe's requirement.

**"JOHNSON STATED, 'I NEVER RECOVERED
A SLUG FROM A **BEAR OR MOOSE**, NO MATTER
WHAT ANGLE THE ANIMAL WAS SHOT AT.'"**





A happy hunter, Darrell Harper with his beautiful moose!

THE GUN

To hunt in Zimbabwe, Darrell purchased a used Marlin 1895 GBL with the intention of converting it to .50 Alaskan. It was sent to SSK Industries of Winterville, Ohio for the work. SSK installed a custom 0.510"-diameter barrel, Pachmayr decelerator recoil pad and a New England Custom Guns banded front sight ramp with a silver bead. They did all the necessary action work so the .50 Alaskan cartridge cycled properly while also performing a nice trigger job.

After receiving the gun from SSK, Darrell installed an XS Sights Lever Rail and mounted a Trijicon RMR reflex sight. He also installed an XS Sights winged rear peep sight to use in conjunction with the silver bead front sight for a backup sighting system.

Since this gun is for dangerous game, Darrell installed a safety delete from Bear Tooth Mercantile. Steve Roe, owner of Apache Machine & Custom, LLC, applied a beautiful Cerakote graphite black finish.



Darrell Harper's Marlin 1895 GBL .45-70 converted to .50 Alaskan by SSK Industries of Winterville, Ohio. It bagged a nice moose, now a cape buffalo is next on the menu!



Darrell used solid brass bullets from Cutting Edge Bullets for his Alaskan hunt. The big .50 Alaskan is on the right with the .348 Winchester on the left.

THE LOAD

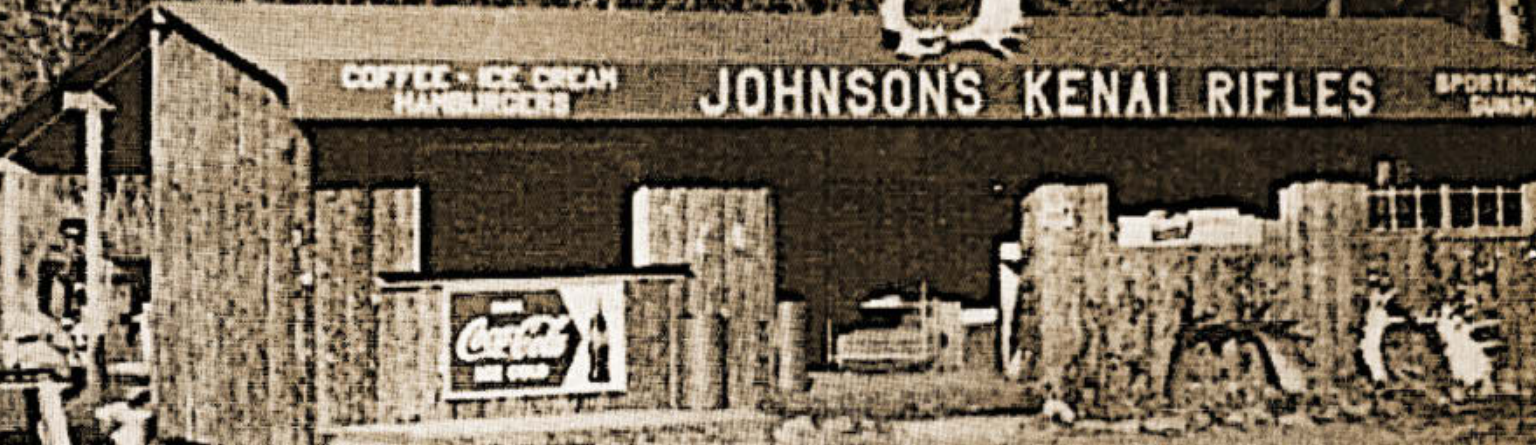
Darrell uses monolithic solids since he's heard great field reports about them. Using 0.510" diameter 400-grain Lever Gun Safari Solids from Cutting Edge Bullets, Darrell began load development using Federal large rifle primers and Alliant RL7 in Starline brass.

These solid brass bullets are long for weight and the 400-grain Cutting Edge solid is actually longer than a 450-grain Swift A-Frame in the same caliber. Load development was minimal — the gun fired the 400-grain bullet over a case full of RL7 with great accuracy.

THE TALE

Darrell shared the story of his .50 Alaskan hunt:

I scheduled a September 2020 moose hunt with the Shoemaker family in Becharof National Wildlife Refuge. With an upcoming cape buffalo hunt, I thought it would be nice to have some large animal experience with the .50 Alaskan before



Cooper's Landing in the Kenai Peninsula is where the .50 Alaskan was born out of necessity (above) by Harold Johnson and Bill Fuller. The sight picture (right) of Darrell's .50 Alaskan with Trijicon red dot and back-up peep sight.

tackling a dangerous cape buffalo.

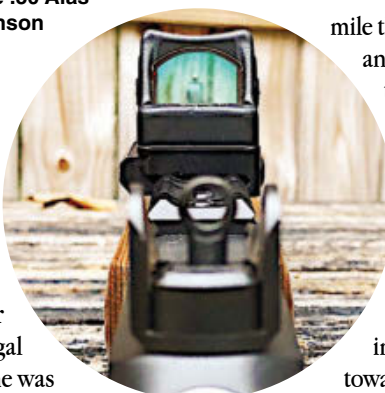
We flew into spike camp a few days early and met my guide, Austin. On the flight in, we saw several cows along with two bedded bull moose. We also spotted another bedded bull less than 200 yards from camp!

On opening day we were glassing the area and saw moose antlers a couple hundred yards away in the river bottom! After studying the bull, we agreed this was a legal bull we watched the previous day but Austin didn't feel he was a "first day shooter."

We glassed for a couple of hours, spotting several brown bears along the river, but no additional moose. My binoculars kept going back to the legal bull, which was about 350 yards away from our vantage point.

I was glassing upstream when Austin spotted a bull a couple of miles away downstream. The bull moved into thick brush before we got the spotting scope on him and Austin wanted to get a closer look. After hiking a

A close-up of the XS Sights scout rail (right), winged rear sight, Trijicon red dot sight and Cerokote finish by Apache Machine. The parent cartridge for the .50 Alaskan (below, right) is the .348 Winchester (left). Starline brass conveniently makes brass for both calibers.



mile the bull was still a ways off so we picked an opening in the brush to navigate toward. If we could reach the opening undetected, there was a good chance we could get a look at the bull.

It was a tough hike, crossing several gorges, alder and willow thickets, tromping across wet, spongy ground before finally making it to the opening where he'd be visible in the basin below. We begin crawling toward the edge. I was behind Austin when

I notice a large set of moose antlers below us to our left. Studying the bull, we decided we would take him.

We needed to get closer since the bull was over 500 yards away. We low crawled away from the bull, keeping out of sight. The wind was perfect, blowing directly from the bull, hitting our faces.

We circled left, keeping willows between us and the moose, and cut the distance to under 200 yards. This was the maximum range I felt comfortable with my reflex-sighted .50 Alaskan.

Continuing our stalk, we made it about 150 yards from the bedded bull. Crawling to a clump of willows, we cut the distance another 40 yards.

I placed my backpack on the ground as a shooting rest. With Austin ready to back me up, I pulled the hammer back on the lever gun. Austin grunted and the bull stood up, exposing his left shoulder. I placed the red dot and fired. We were rewarded with the tell-tale "thump" of the big 400-grain bullet hitting flesh. The bull reacted but didn't take a step. "Hit him again," Austin said as I worked the lever.

Once again we heard the "whump" of the bullet hitting. The bull turned, facing us, head drooping low and stopping me from taking a frontal chest shot. The bull finally exposed his chest and I fired my third and final shot.

TIME TICKS BY ...

It's been 25 years since I first read about the .50 Alaskan. I think it's time to get one built and book a hunt in Alaska like Darrell. Time has a way of gathering momentum the older you get and I don't want to run out before experiencing a lot more hunts. I'll bet you do too!

Since Ruger just purchased Marlin at this writing, maybe we can convince them to make a .50 Alaskan lever gun for us? 🏹

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THE 'OTHER' SINGLE-ACTION SIXGUNS 1870-1890

JOHN TAFFIN

Those in my age group who grew up on B-Western Saturday matinee movies in the 1940s, followed by a long list of TV Westerns in the 1950s, could easily be convinced there was only one single-action sixgun in the period from 1870 to 1890 — the Colt Single Action Army. However, there were more large frame single-actions aside from Colt available during this time period.

1870 – S&W MODEL #3 AMERICAN

The S&W Model #3 American was not only the first big-bore cartridge-firing sixgun, it was also the first cartridge revolver to be adopted by the U.S. Military. We have had replica S&W Single-actions for several decades now beginning first with the Model #3 Russian and then the Model #3 Schofield. Now the Uberti-manufactured Model #3 American is a reality.

Mike Harvey of Cimarron Firearms has worked for several years to see this project come to pass. After firing one of the first to arrive in this country, I can say it has been well worth the effort and certainly the wait. The first examples arriving are chambered in .45 Colt, which means they will also handle .45 Schofield. These will be followed by revolvers firing the .44-40, .44 Special and .44 Russian. I already have my order in.

1874 – S&W MODEL #3 RUSSIAN

Daniel Wesson was visited by his Imperial Majesty, the Czar of Russia, as he wanted weapons for his army. In fact, he planned to equip both his cavalry and artillery with S&W, a great windfall for the company. Not only was this contract a financial boon, the Russians also provided significant improvements to the American revolver and its ammunition. In fact, the Russians were much more serious than the Americans



An original Colt Cartridge Conversion (right) compared to replicas of (top to bottom) the Richards, Richards-Mason and 1871-72 Open-Top.



The three main single-action sixguns from 1870–1890 were (top to bottom) the Colt Single-action, S&W Schofield and Remington Model 1875. These are all replicas from Cimarron.

CAN YOU NAME ONE BESIDES THE FAMOUS COLT?

about using these new cartridge-firing weapons and ordered 150,000 guns.

The most significant Russian change was the ammunition — in fact, it was the Russians who gave us the model for all currently produced sixgun ammunition. Instead of a heeled bullet, with a base smaller in diameter than the rest of the bullet (as used by the .44 American), the Russians insisted upon a bullet of uniform diameter.

The original American had a square butt with a rounded back strap. The Russians rounded the butt slightly and a hump was added at the top of the back strap thus providing not only a more secure grip but also prevented the revolver from rotating upwards in the hand when fired. A spur was also added to the

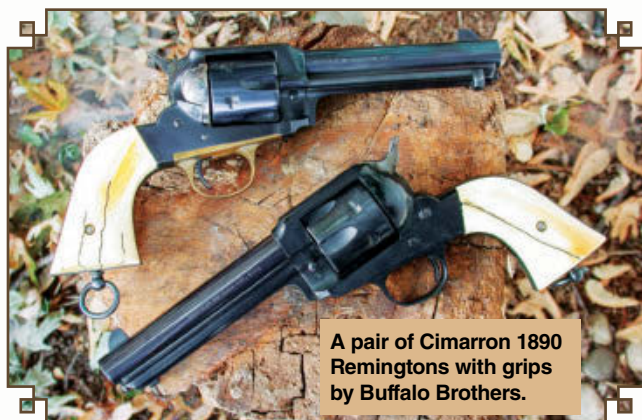
bottom of the trigger guard and to this day, there is no agreement on its exact purpose.

The Model #3 Russian had a standard barrel length of 6-1/2". Several years ago, when returning from the first Linebaugh Seminar and Winchester Gun Show in Cody Wyoming, I stopped in Idaho Falls for a break at a local gun store. I left the gun shop with my first single-action S&W, a Model #3 Russian dated 1874. The finish is mostly gone however the barrel is in good shape and it locked up and functioned very well, certainly enough to allow it to be safely shot with black powder loads. The mating of the top-break locking parts was a trifle loose, however, my gunsmith at Buckhorn Gun Shop did a little welding and filing and it's now as tight as it was when it left the factory more than 140 years ago.

1875 – S&W MODEL #3 SCHOFIELD

The U.S. Military liked the convenience and quick loading of the .44 American compared to the percussion 1860 Colt Army which had been the standard issue. However, they preferred something more powerful. This was not lost on one Col. Schofield. If the Army wanted .45s, he felt S&W should offer .45s. Not only did he look at the larger chambering but also at an improvement in the Top-Break S&W. The .44 American and the .44 Russian required two hands to operate. The locking mechanism was on the top strap and it required holding the sixgun in one hand and operating this mechanism with the other.

Col. Schofield, later Major Schofield, redesigned the latch



A pair of Cimarron 1890 Remingtons with grips by Buffalo Brothers.

Three versions of the S&W Model #3 are (left to right) the American, Russian and the Schofield with its frame-mounted lock for faster one-handed reloads.



Colt replicas available today are (left to right) the 1860 Army, Richards-Mason Cartridge Conversion, 1871-72 Open-Top and Single Action Army. The first two are percussion models.





An original 1875 Remington compared to the short-lived 1875 replica from Hartford Armory.

by placing it on the frame. One now only had to press with the thumb of the shooting hand and the barrel would unlatch, then by pressing against the leg or any other stationary object it was pushed down to open. The operation was now simplified, so it was time to change the cartridge — that is when trouble began.

The frame and cylinder of the Model Number Three was too short to accept the .45 Colt so a new cartridge, the shorter .45 S&W Schofield, was used. A problem soon arose — units armed with the Schofields often received .45 Colt ammunition which would not fit the cylinders. Meanwhile, units armed with the Colt Single Action Army but issued Schofield ammunition were okay as the shorter case would fit the longer cylinder.

It did not take long for this to result in the .45 Schofield revolvers being dropped by the military with many of the barrels cut from 7" to 5" and sold off. The latter barrel length became popular with Wells Fargo. With the passing of the Schofield sixguns, the military still had a large stock of .45 Schofield ammunition which worked just fine in their .45 Colt sixguns. Today, the Schofield Model #3 is available chambered in .45 Colt and several other offerings as well as both barrel lengths. In the year 2000, S&W also resurrected the Schofield as the Model 2000 and this one was chambered to only accept .45 Schofield ammunition.

1878 – S&W NEW MODEL #3

The last single-action S&W arrived in 1878 as the New Model #3. It looks much like a Model #3 Russian except the spur on the bottom of the trigger is gone and the hump on the backstrap is less pronounced. It was a sixgun way ahead of its

time. It is so precisely fitted it demands smokeless powder for perfect functioning. However all of the frames of these guns were built in the black powder era and should only be used with black powder. The machining and tolerances used in their manufacture were so precise they are easily fouled and work very sluggishly after just a few black powder loads. The only answer is to keep them clean. Using replicas with smokeless powder solves this.

COLT 1871-1872 OPEN-TOP

While the "Richards" and "Richards-Mason" conversions to existing cap-and-ball revolvers bridged the gap, the 1871-72 Open-Top was Colt's first big bore single-action cartridge-firing revolver. It was a totally new design and parts were not interchangeable with the earlier percussion models or conversions. All original Open-Tops were made in .44 Rimfire and when the 1871-72 was unsuccessfully submitted to the Army for testing and adoption of a new sidearm, Colt Factory Superintendent William Mason was sent back to the drawing board to come up with a stronger gun and a more powerful chambering. The result was the solid-frame Colt Single Action Army, but still in .44 Rimfire. The U.S. Army then asked for a larger, centerfire caliber and one final change resulted in the Single Action Army being chambered in .45 Colt.

1890 – REMINGTON MODEL 1875/MODEL 1890

As much as I love Colt Single Actions and the percussion revolvers preceding them, I have to admit contemporary Remington models were an inherently stronger design. Where

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Replica 1875 Remingtons are available in both blue and nickel finishes.

Colt used three parts — mainframe, back-strap and trigger guard — bolted together, Remington used a one-piece engineering marvel incorporating the mainframe and grip frame with no screws to loosen while shooting. Unlike the open-top design of Sam Colt's percussion revolvers, the early Remingtons had a solid top strap, which the U.S. Military insisted Colt use on their Single Action Army.

The first Remington cartridge-firing revolvers arrived in 1874 with the first few hundreds chambered in .46 Remington. However this was soon changed to .44 Remington with approximately 16,000 being manufactured by 1878, most of which went to the Egyptian Government. Remington then began offering the Model 1875 chambered in .44-40 and .45 Colt. In 1883 approximately 1,000 nickel-plated Model 1875s were purchased by the U.S. Government to arm the Indian Police. The last of the Remington big-bore single-actions, the Model 1890, was produced in .44-40 with less than 2,000 being manufactured before production ceased in 1896. The Model 1890 is easily distinguished from the Model 1875 by the lack of the full-length web under the barrel.

For several decades now, Uberti has been producing Remington replicas which have been offered by Cimarron, EMF and Navy Arms. I have considerable experience shooting both the 1875 and 1890 Models chambered in .44-40 and .45 Colt. I have never found these to be as easy to shoot as the Colt-style sixguns due to the shape of the grip and the angle of the hammer. I simply cannot reach nor cock the hammer on any of these Remington replicas as easily as on a Colt. However, they are not lacking in accuracy.

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“Throwing Down” With The SAA

EATING CROW BUT RELISHING THE TASTE

ALAN GARBERS

My wife refuses to watch westerns with me. Why? I pick apart details in the show. If John Wayne is shooting a Winchester '92 and the story is set in 1866, it bugs me. When Roy Rogers is packing a Colt Single Action Army revolver during the Civil War, I cuss out loud. It's the curse of being a western history buff.

The same is true for the character's actions. When an actor pulls a lever-action down from his shoulder to cock it, I know they are not familiar with the gun. The same was true in old westerns in which the actors sling the bullets at the bad guys! I used to mock them without mercy!

Unfortunately, I have to eat crow because now I know better.

HOLD ON, VARMINT!

The topic of bad acting in westerns came up in a conversation with my friend, Jim Martin. Along with being a record holder in

fast-draw competition and trick-shooting, Jim is also an expert on many aspects of the Old West.

Jim corrected my verbal blunder, telling me the technique I mock was actually how it was done back in the Old West. The technique was called “throwing down.” I decided to dig into this deeper.

So what is throwing down? In the technique, the shooter hooks their thumb over the hammer, then flings the barrel muzzle downward, using the weight of the barrel to aid in cocking the revolver. In firing the gun, the recoil raises the muzzle, thus making it easier to grab the hammer once again.

It makes sense and yet doesn't make sense. Cocking the hammer on my Colt clones is never so difficult I need to flick the barrel down to cock them. Jim only added to the mystery when he tried to enlighten me, “You could use the Colt mainsprings as leaf springs on a Ford Model A!” Unfortunately, Jim didn't have any original Colt Single Action Army mainsprings to illustrate his point.



The first cartridge developed for the Colt Single Action Army used a Benét primer (left) then a folded-head case (center) and the balloon-head case (right). It was eventually replaced by the modern solid-head case.



Not one to let a topic go, I contacted Christie Janis at Peacemaker Specialists, sellers of original Colt parts. She agreed with Jim, "They called the Colt SAA a thumb-buster for a reason! The original mainsprings were quite stout." She was nice enough to send photos and dimensions of Colt mainsprings and the change over the years is astonishing.

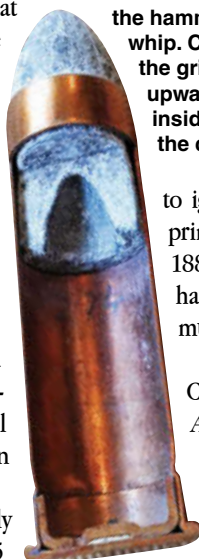
WHY?

The original mainspring of the early 1st Generation Colt SAA was a whopping 0.127" thick at the base! By the end of the 1st Generation production, Colt reduced the thickness to 0.080". Over the last 148 years, the mainsprings have been reduced to less than half of the original — typical mainsprings on modern Colt SAA revolvers run 0.053" thick.

So why was the mainspring so stout at first? Most likely it was due to the type of ignition used by the original .45 Colt cartridges.

For roughly the first 10 years, the cartridge used a Benét primer. The Benét primer looked like a rimfire cartridge but was a center-fire with the priming compound and anvil crimped inside the cartridge base. The firing pin had to hit with enough force

To throw down, raise the muzzle and hook the thumb over the hammer spur. Fling the muzzle down as if popping a whip. Complete the motion by sliding the thumb down onto the grip. When firing, allow the recoil to drive the muzzle upward for easier re-cocking. The Benét primer (left) was inside the case. The anvil was held in place by a crimp in the case sidewall.



to ignite the primer through the copper case. The Benét primer wasn't replaced until the case design changed in 1882 to an external primer. We can assume the military had stockpiles of Benét primer ammunition to use up for much longer. Mystery partially solved.

John Kopec, a well-known authority on all things Colt SAA and co-author of *A Study of the Colt Single Action Army Revolver*, shed further light.

In the Colt records, regular and extra-strong mainsprings were sent as spare parts to the U.S. Army.

Under what circumstances a mainspring would be replaced with an extra-strong version is not known but the strong mainsprings caused many of the soldiers to develop their own throwing down technique, which in turn causes problems.

The act of throwing down is violent and creates a great deal of energy in moving the cylinder. The original Colts had almost no bolt approaches and shallow bolt-lock slots. With the accelerated speed of the cylinder, it was common for the bolt to not lock in place and the cylinder to stop out of alignment. At best, this caused lead shaving as the bullet jumped the barrel gap. At worst, the revolver blew up. This happened enough the U.S. Army sent letters to Colt asking the design be changed. In the correspondence, this phenomenon was called "throwing past." This can still happen today when gunsmiths lighten the bolt spring too much.

SILVER SCREEN ANTICS

Mystery solved, almost. In old silent movies, many of the actors were ex-cowboys, lawmen, even former outlaws who found a market for their unique skills. What we see on the screen — minus the melodrama — is them being themselves and acting out events using methods they used to survive. Those techniques were passed on for a while until Hollywood and Colt watered it down or washed it away altogether. As odd as it looks now, throwing down was real in the Old West.

While I don't like eating crow, the quest Jim set me on opened my eyes to things I never knew about in a period of history I love. So, it's like adding mashed potatoes, buttered rolls, and a slab of pecan pie to the crow I'll gladly eat!



Original Colt SAA mainsprings (bottom) were quite strong. By the end of the First Generation run, the thickness had diminished. Third Generation Colt SAAs sport a much thinner and narrower mainspring. Photo: Peacemaker Specialists



The double rifle is a study in lethal elegance. Intended for hunting dangerous game up-close and personal, the sleek, purposeful double is perhaps the pinnacle of the gunmaker's art. Photo: Westley Richards & Co.

Double Rifles

AND WHY THEY MATTER

LETHAL ARTWORK FOR LETHAL ANIMALS

JEREMY D. CLOUGH

Whether it's the insolent, amber gaze of a lion supremely confident in his lethality, or the wicked hooked horns of a Cape buffalo, the hunters — Capstick, Hemingway, Percival, J.A. Hunter — always seem to be lining up the sights over twin barrels. Sleek, menacing, often gorgeously built and shockingly big-bored, the double rifle is woven through the bloody tapestry of African hunting.

Double-barreled shotguns have been made forever, but

double rifles are as different as chalk and cheese. This ain't your sweet-shooting bird gun full of #8s. There's no inertia-reset trigger — otherwise, if the first cartridge misfires you'll die cursing both the slack trigger and the second round it refuses to fire into whatever is trying to eat you. There are seldom exposed hammers — the grasping brush can stealthily cock them, leading to tragedy. They can pose other hazards, as the legendary Frederick Courtenay Selous learned when a double-charged four-bore rifle drove one into his forehead in recoil.



This Jeffery .450/400 was used by Jim Corbett of India, and later Kenya, perhaps the greatest hunter of big cats who ever lived. Photo: The Bill Jones Collection



While it's possible to mount a scope on a double, it's rare as doubles are not known for tack-driving accuracy. Photo: Sportsman's Legacy



BY THE POUND

Yes, I said "bore." Many early doubles were chambered for calibers so large they measured on the shotgun scale of how many lead balls the diameter of the bore it took to add up to a pound. The four-bore fired a four-ounce bullet, while the fearsome two-bore fired a half-pound slug and the relatively-smaller eight-bore threw *only* 2 oz. of lead per bang!

There are reasons for this. The African explorers who debarked at Mombasa or some other exotic port and wandered inland discovered large, interesting animals who will cheerfully gore, trample, bite or maul you to death with little to no provocation. They're also devilishly hard to stop. Stopping an attack requires penetration and energy transfer, but since black powder and soft lead bullets were the order of the day, the only way to achieve it was to throw a bigger, heavier ball — with recoil up to and beyond the limits of human endurance.



Cartridge size was a major factor in double rifle development. While there were repeaters in existence, none were big enough to handle the massive Express rounds. Photo: Sportsman's Legacy

Twelve-gauge shooters may believe they are inured to recoil but it's more like a friendly shove from your big uncle who moves houses for a living. High pressure safari cartridges develop a sharper recoil, increasing in intensity with the size and weight of the bullet, delivered through the tiny footprint of the buttpad. Think of it like jousting with 2x4s. They will break teeth; they will break bones.

That kind of impact complicates gun-making. First is the problem of making a gun that won't break into pieces, accompanied by a mechanism that can withstand recoil without doubling. Stock design making the

gun somewhat easier to manage is also part of the art.

Early African explorers were often English, so naturally British gunmakers created many of these rifles. Repeaters were certainly around — the perfected Mauser bolt action dates to 1898 — but none were large enough to handle the huge black-powder rounds larger than your average cigar. Thus the development of dangerous game rifles began, and continued, with doubles.



A 3" 00 buck cartridge develops around 2,600 foot-pounds of energy but the frightening .700 Nitro Express generates 9,000! Photo: The Bill Jones Collection

EXPRESS TRAINS

The revolution was not in the mechanism but in the advent of smokeless powder and bullet design. "Nitro" powder quickly supplanted blackpowder, first as "nitro for black" replacement loads for extant calibers, then cartridges designed only for smokeless, most notably the Nitro Express (NE). Nicknamed after express trains by James Purdy, the dozens of high velocity NE calibers ranged from .240 to the quintessentially African .470, .500, .577, .600 and the shocking .700 launching a 1,000-grain bullet at a couple times the speed of sound. The popular .470 Nitro Express remains the definitive chambering for a double.



There are dozens of Nitro Express calibers but the most famous is the .470 Nitro Express, the classic chambering for a double. Photo: Westley Richards & Co.



The finest auto racing engine or Mosler bank vault has nothing on the meticulous handwork required by high-end double rifles. Photo: Westley Richards & Co.

Advances in power were accompanied by those in bullet design such as the advent of jacketing a soft lead core with a harder metal to create non-expanding “solids,” or a variety of creative hollow- and soft-points. Jacketing made penetration easier to achieve and produced a means to both enhance and control expansion, which generally comes at the expense of penetration.

While nitro cartridges shrank considerably in size from the bulky blackpowder rounds, they were still large and only a single-shot or break barrel could contain them. Putting two barrels side by side added recoil-absorbing weight and an instantaneous second shot, an advantage the double has never lost. It also meant the hunter had, in effect, two rifles — two barrels, two locks, two triggers. If one broke he still had a functioning rifle for the months or years it could take to get it to a gunsmith. Since the over/under arrangement is slower to reload, doubles are almost exclusively side-by-sides which also creates a broad sighting plane allowing them to be shot almost instinctively like a bird gun. Except you're trying to stop the half-ton buffalo coming for you and if you miss, the winged creatures you see will not be quail.

In keeping with the reality of close-range charges, the sights are designed to be fast. The classic express sight has a round bead front and a shallow-V rear, often with a non-tarnishing gold line down its center for faster alignment. Some also had an auxiliary flip-up “moon” sight of ivory or light-colored metal. The safari rifle is as much a self-defense gun as anything else and the minute-of-lion express sight trades the gilt-edged accuracy of peep sights for the opportunity to live long enough to get back to a target range — a good trade to me. Doubles do not have the

tack-driving accuracy of a bolt gun but that's not what they're for, and it's one of the reasons you seldom see one with a scope. Other reasons have to do with speed and weight, which affects the gun's regulation.

WITHIN REGULATION

Putting a sight between two barrels doesn't guarantee either one will put its bullet where those sights suggest, much less both. Good enough for birdshot isn't good enough for a rifle bullet. Just as with magnum revolvers, recoil affects point of impact and each barrel recoils away from the other and the bullet strike moves both upward and outward. While some makers currently use a laser to get both barrels lined up, it fails to account for the effects of recoil. This can be so nuanced a double is generally only accurate with the ammunition for which it was originally regulated.

This was even more of a problem in the early nitro days. The blistering African sun can heat up rifle barrels until it's like cuddling with a branding iron and the heat created additional pressure. When the cartridge fired, the bullet went faster and in a different direction than it did in the cooler temperatures of the sceptered isle on which the rifle was regulated. Thus came “tropical loads,” downloaded to accommodate the added pressure which came from transporting them to a substantially hotter climate.

The traditional way to regulate a double is to solder the barrels together, test fire, separate, adjust and re-solder the barrels. Repeat until it's right, a skilled, laborious process accounting for much of the expense of a fine double.

BRING YOUR CHECKBOOK

Doubles *are* expensive, usually starting in the five-figure range and promptly adding a zero when you move into the better-known English *maisons* such as Purdey, Holland & Holland or Westley Richards. Perhaps because the mechanics of building one make them so expensive, doubles are often finely engraved and built with stunningly beautiful wood since a buyer who can afford \$50,000 for a rifle can probably manage the extra expense to make it pretty. It's ironic to think of hunters caked in dirt, low-crawling through thorns, while clutching a rifle which belongs in an art museum. Chalk it up with the other paradoxes of Africa.

There is one notable exception to the idea a double rifle should cost more than a modest home — the British government contracted with many of the better-known makers to build simple, unadorned working doubles sold in its Army-Navy stores spread across the Empire. Built by makers ranging from Westley Richards to Rigby, Wilkes and others, the unembellished, unmarked rifles offer excellent service but give few clues as to who exactly made them.

Some hints come from the design of the gun. Some makers specialized in box locks, with the firing mechanism built into the frame of the gun, while others used removable sidelocks offering a larger palette for the engraver. Spare sidelocks could also be ordered with the gun, simplifying repair in the field. Westley Richards did one better with the removable frame-mounted drop lock.



As heirloom-quality tools — like this Westley Richards .470 Nitro Express — most double rifles come in fitted leather and velvet cases. Photo: Westley Richards & Co.

CHOOSE YOUR POISON

Each mechanism has devotees and drawbacks, and each weakens the part of the gun in which it is mounted — box locks remove material from the receiver and sidelocks from the stock.

Another point of contention among aficionados is ejector versus extractor. Many early ivory hunters, who were shooting for volume, preferred the double for its silent second shot — no bolt to run — and disliked the “ping” of ejected cases which they felt was more likely to spook a herd than the disorienting crash of the shot. It was also harder to find the brass to reload. Extractor guns are, however, slower to reload, which gets important when you're facing animals which, as Elmer Keith noted, occasionally derail passenger trains.

Also, the automatic safety must be pushed off every time the gun is reloaded. Cowboy action shooters deactivate them on coach guns for the same reason dangerous game hunters dislike them. It's one more thing to get right under stress when facing a trumpeting elephant intent on kneading you into putty.

Of course in a perfect world, no second shot would be needed but things tend to fall apart when you come face to face with your own mortality in an immediate kind of way. For such moments, you want the most efficient tool you can find and the double rifle is track-bred to be *the* tool.

Much of the added mystique, though, comes from the men who used them, and in upcoming issues we'll cover doubles used by legendary dangerous game hunters, African and otherwise. Get ready for a wild ride.



Westley Richards employees created the hand-removable drop lock. Rifles could be ordered with a spare pair, making field serviceability very easy. Photo: Westley Richards & Co.



The new Gerber Gear EXO-MOD Caper is a sleek, lightweight knife with an equally thrifty price tag.

GERBER EXO-MOD CAPER

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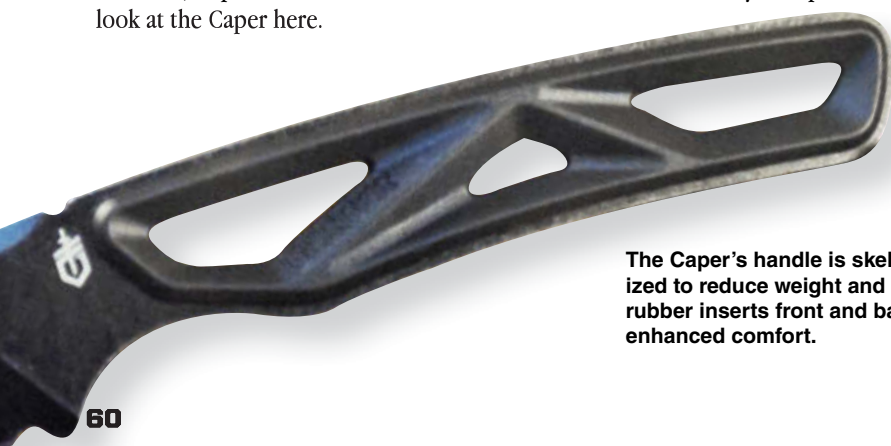
Just when you think fixed-blade sporting knives are pretty much cut-and-dried, along comes Gerber Gear with a flashy new idea. The company's new EXO-MOD series brings a fresh look for hunters, campers and survivalists to consider when planning their next trek — and for good reason. If you're looking to shed weight, the EXO-MODs with their skeletonized handles are a breeze to pack or carry. Thus far there are three offerings in this innovative series: a Hunter, Caper and Bone Saw. We'll take a look at the Caper here.

The EXO-MOD Caper is 7.375" overall with 3.25" of the total in a flat-ground Drop Point blade handling the cutting chores. The blade has a saber grind on the back edge for improved penetration and jimping on its forward portion for close-up work. The handle has three skeletonized cut-outs to reduce weight to a svelte 1.78 oz. — less than half of many typical sporting knives its size. The 7cr stainless steel main body has a protective, non-reflective black stonewash finish. To make your processing more

comfortable there are soft rubber insets in the handle (both black and hunter's orange versions are available) which also make for easy cleaning. The Caper snicks into its black polymer molded sheath with surety for belt or pack carry.

WHY YOU'LL LIKE IT.

First off, you'll hardly notice you're carrying the EXO-MOD Caper — there are common pocketknives weighing more than this lightweight fixer. Secondly, the Caper's streamlined styling is virtually snag-proof from errant limbs and branches lurking along the trail. Thirdly, this knife is part of a lightweight system able to handle all the game processing needs of most hunters. Finally, and every bit as important to many hunters and other outdoors sports-types, all the EXO-MOD components in the system are budget friendly. The Caper has a welcome price tag of only \$28. The two EXO-MOD knives and saw together can be had for under 100 bucks — great news for thrifty hunters!



The Caper's handle is skeletonized to reduce weight and has rubber inserts front and back for enhanced comfort.

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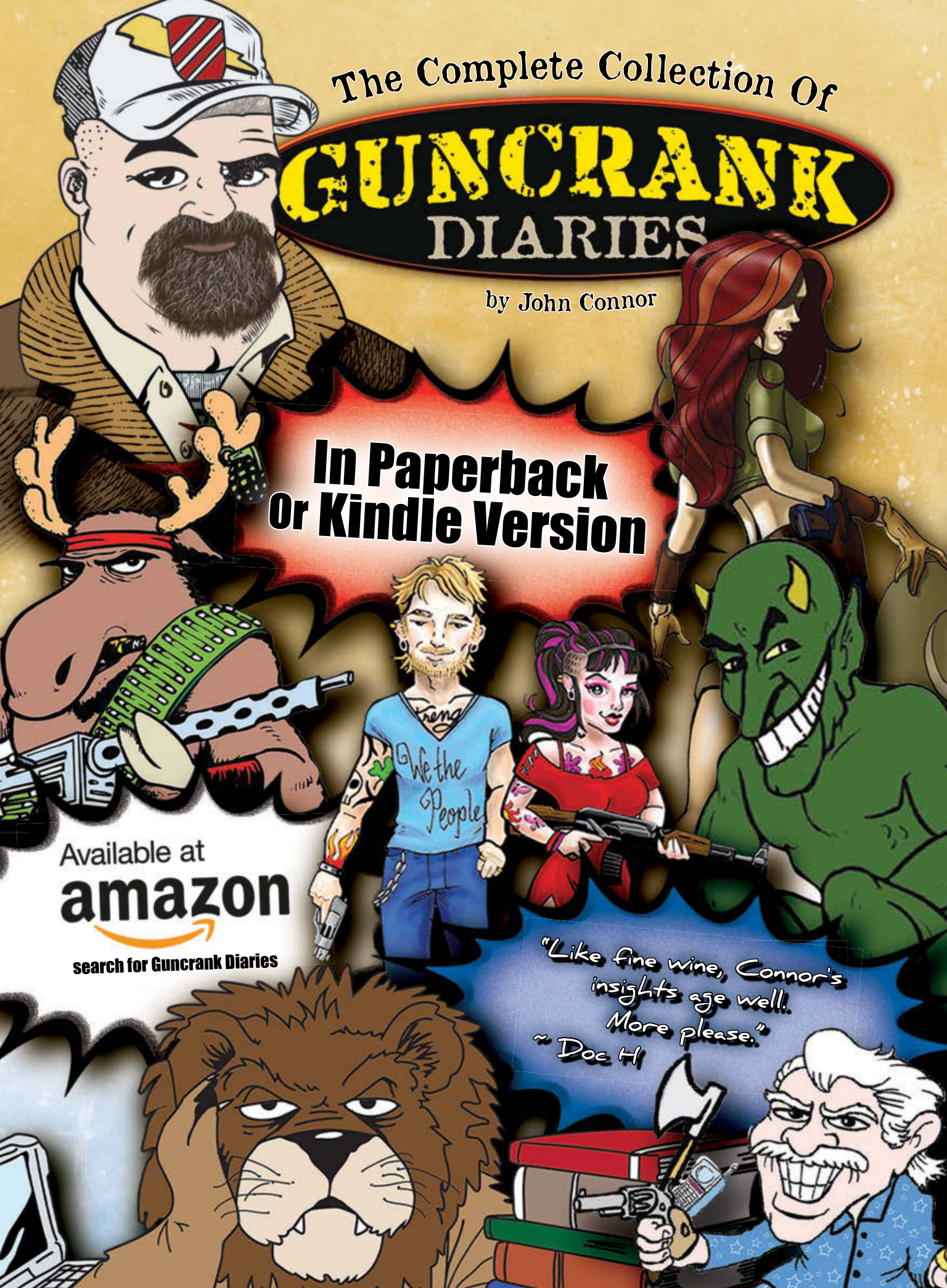




Photo: NSSF

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN WELL THEY ARE THE SECOND AMENDMENT'S BEST PROTECTION

Dave Workman

We're two months away from an important election, in Virginia, where gun rights activists in the Old Dominion will — in theory anyway — have a chance to take back their state government and undo the wrongs from 2020. Hopefully they put in motion the movement to take Congress away from anti-gunners in 2022.

But playing political back and forth is only a piece of the puzzle. There is another, more important part of the puzzle and it is within everyone's grasp to make it work.

The real key to perpetuating our Second Amendment rights isn't only at the ballot box. It's in the playpen, the sandbox, the backyard, playgrounds and parks. It's the next generation — the youngsters now who will be the decision-makers tomorrow and for decades to come.

We may be leaving them a mess, but if we're half the people we claim to be, we can instill in these youngsters the devotion to the Second Amendment that will make the difference. It may easily involve cultivating a love for the outdoors, for hunting and shooting. We may need to join a local gun club and get involved in their junior shooting program. If they don't have one, volunteer to create it.

A few years ago, I was working on a gun test at the local range. There were two men and their sons at a nearby shooting

bench, letting the kids shoot their .22 rifles. As it happened, my gun test involved a .22-caliber Ruger Mark 4 pistol. Having the better part of a box of ammunition left over, I gave it to the kids. It was almost like Christmas in July because it allowed the two fledgling shooters a few more rounds to burn up. Call it a personal investment in the future.

In the case of a single mom trying to let her child enjoy an opportunity to learn firearm safety and marksmanship, even .22 Long Rifle rounds might challenge a tight budget. Be a good mentor and keep a couple of 100-round boxes of rimfire in your vehicle, or buy a 500-round brick of rimfire ammunition for your club's juniors program.

YOUTH HUNT OPPORTUNITY

In several states, there are special youth hunting opportunities in early fall. I was recently contacted by an old friend now involved in a special spring youth hunt project in his region, being put together in cooperation with a local hunting club. He expected maybe 10 to 15 participants and wanted a bit of guidance and some help.

First, go to the local sporting goods store and grab some new 2021 hunting regulations pamphlets if they are available. Have one for each and a black marking pen so they can write their names on the cover. From then on, it will be their regulations pamphlet and they will take care of it.

Next, get some gun safety pamphlets from the National Rifle Association. Have enough to give one to each kid and write their names on these handouts as well. Don't be surprised if they go home and memorize every word and rule.

Work with a local sporting goods store to get a deal on orange caps for each hunt participant. This has two or three purposes. It will be an instant reminder hunting safety is

actually firearms safety. The orange cap will become a keepsake. It will also be the mark of a unique group — hunters who are also “gun people.”

BE A MENTOR

In for a penny, in for a pound — if you know a kid from a single-parent home who wants to learn, be the teacher. Keep the parent close at hand because this is not daycare, it is, well, “gardening.” You’re not just letting a kid enjoy some range time, you’re cultivating a new crop of shooters. Not only will the youngsters benefit, so will you as you remember the gun safety rules and take care to follow them and provide an example.

If you start or get involved in a junior shooting program, be certain to let each youngster keep his or her target. Whatever else this piece of paper might be, to the kid it’s a trophy — something to show mom and dad and even the grandparents. Trophies have a way of building pride and a sense of accomplishment that may not only keep these kids interested, but turn them into future activists who will want to protect the shooting sports and the right to keep and bear arms for the next generation. Because, suddenly, it is their right to keep and bear arms at stake and they’ll want to protect it.


CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Always set time aside for a good cleaning session, during which the safety lessons can be repeated.


You want to instill some sense of ownership, so each young shooter should learn the importance of taking care of a valuable piece of property. With this “sense of ownership” will come a determination to not allow his or her property to be taken.

One other worthy investment as a giveaway during a youth hunt would be a small bottle of gun oil. They are relatively inexpensive and serve as a physical reminder to clean firearms when the hunting or shooting is done for the day.

All of these things are small bits and pieces that — when combined — help build a new shooter and possibly a future activist. Nothing good is created overnight; it takes years to produce the kind of good citizen we all know will be the future defender of the Second Amendment. It takes patience and care.

Building the next generation of gun owners and activists is up to all of us, and will be the legacy we leave behind. Failure, as they say, is not an option. 

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ALSO AVAILABLE FROM 

MANTIS LASER ACADEMY TRAINING KIT

Brent T. Wheat

I've made no secret of the fact I love the Mantis X10 Shooting Performance System. Now, the big brains at Mantis have developed a portable laser/mobile device training system you can use in your own gun to dry fire with bullseye targets, silhouettes and even channel your inner Navy SEAL with a *mano-a-mano* competition setting.

The system is outwardly simple though undoubtedly complex under the hood. The shooter unloads, puts a laser module in his firearm, places one of the special Laser Academy targets on the wall and aims a phone/tablet on the target using the included tripod. The Mantis Laser Academy app then manages your shooting drills with audio prompts, scores your targets and keeps a record for better or worse.

It's a fantastic system for indoor practice, training and friendly competition. The system isn't perfect — set-up is a tiny bit fiddly and it eats battery power like a ravenous teenager — but those are minor problems in comparison to the benefits gained, especially at under a Benjamin!

MSRP: \$99

MantisX.com



SPYPOINT LINK-MICRO-LT

Trail cameras aren't anything new. I've used them since the days of when you had to take film — remember film, kids? — down to the local drugstore and get the pictures developed. You'd usually get back 15 blank pictures along with one or two photos of a deer butt. Nowadays, the technology is mature with hi-def digital trail sensors and many, like the SPYPOINT, use the cellular phone network to transmit the pictures in real time.

I decided to review the SPYPOINT LINK-MICRO-LT for a decidedly non-hunting purpose — home security. The camera is easy to set up and if someone or something trips the sensor, I nearly instantly get a picture sent to my own phone. Best of all, with SPYPOINT, the purchase price includes up to 100 photos transmitted per month — for life! It's not a replacement for an alarm, but if you need to keep tabs on the barn, your hunting cabin or the backyard, this

is one of the best and least expensive methods. Plus for hunters, the LINK-MICRO-LT can even use special software to identify target species! All this versatility and ease of use comes at a mere \$119.99!



SPYPOINT.com

STREAMLIGHT TLR-6 FOR SPRINGFIELD HELLCAT

The Springfield Hellcat micro-9mm is a great and very popular carry gun but now the package can be even better as Streamlight has redesigned the popular TLR-6 light to fit the little 'cat.



First and foremost, make sure you get the correct TLR-6 model for the Hellcat as there are many flavors of the design already in existence. Once the proper light arrives, you remove three allen screws, remove the side plate and fit the light on the forward part of the trigger guard. After installing the included CR-1/3N batteries you now have a 100-lumen light/laser combination which doesn't add much bulk but upgrades the gun into a real 24/7 fighting tool.

The light — of course — isn't as powerful as a "big" duty-gun light but it's still a darn sight better than anything else and the laser makes aiming the micro-gun faster — if you practice. I'd consider the TLR-6 a required accessory for any Hellcat owner.

MSRP: \$187.43

Streamlight.com

CROSSFIRE

continued from page 8

ahead, but we need a new skipper at the helm. Plain and simple.

Mark McCoy

The latest show, concerning how to fix the NRA, has had an effect on how I think regarding the NRA. I've long resisted joining, because I couldn't stand the thought of my hard-earned money going to support LaPierre. What you all said about maintaining a membership, and no more than that monetarily, rang true. I'll be joining this afternoon.

Thank you both for being willing to answer reader mail. It must take a significant amount of time you might productively use otherwise. I know I've had several letters unexpectedly responded to, and you didn't say how many you do respond to, but thank you for doing so. It helps me think maybe my voice can be heard. I really appreciate it!

Mike Bell

We receive a veritable deluge of mail about the ongoing NRA discussion. One thing I hope we can all agree on is this. It's up to us to build, protect and preserve a strong NRA. If you don't like what's going on, get involved to help fix it. There are thousands of NRA employees and dedicated volunteers fighting the good fight each and every day. Let's give them a hand. —TM

MIGHTY 410

Hi, I am a young reader of your awesome magazine who loves all things that go boom. I was wondering about the practical applications of the .410 shotshell, especially as a home defense cartridge in an AR-15. What can you tell me about it, and any advice you have would be great.

Akiva Diskind

I can tell you this. I love the .410 and one of my favorite firearms is a .410 Winchester 9410 lever-action. While no one wants to get shot with anything, I do believe the .410 is a bit light for reliable home defense. Remember, the primary defensive goal is to stop a threat as quickly as possible. The shot density and mass of the smallbore load is a bit light for that in my view. If the gun is reliable, slugs might present an option, but we're still talking handgun-like performance. —TM



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BULL-DOG SHOTGUN

AMERICAN TACTICAL INC.

The *Bull-Dog Shotgun* from American Tactical is a semi-automatic, 12-gauge shotgun with a 3" chamber, an 18.5" barrel and an OAL of 26". It has removable adjustable open sights, an adjustable cheek rest and a patent-pending AR-15 style charging handle. A five-round magazine with a Picatinny cut-out plus three choke tubes are included. MSRP: \$499.95. For more info: (800) 290-0065, AmericanTactical.us

MBA-5 BUTTSTOCK

LUTH-AR, LLC

The *MBA-5 Buttstock* is the latest in Luth-AR's MBA Series. It's designed as an affordable, lightweight, adjustable carbine butt stock with a paddle-style adjustment lever for rapid positioning. The wide flared cheek rest provides a comfortable cheek weld and with the integrated Picatinny rail, mono-pod and other accessories can be attached. The MBA-5 is available in Black or Flat Dark Earth. MSRP: \$49.95. For more info: (736) 276-1145, Luth-AR.com



XSC WEAPONLIGHT

SUREFIRE

The *XSC WeaponLight* is SureFire's first weapon light designed and engineered for micro-compact pistols. Designed to mount seamlessly to the Springfield Armory Hellcat micro-compact pistol, the single-output XSC features a premium LED delivering 350 lumens of intense white light shaped by a parabolic reflector. The XSC also features a unique rechargeable battery (Model B12) that can be quickly and easily replaced. MSRP: \$329. For more info: (800) 828-8809, SureFire.com



POP GRIP MULTI-TOOL

SOG KNIVES

SOG collaborated with PopSockets to bring this innovative multi-tool to the back of your phone. The *Pop Grip Multi-Tool* puts a bottle opener, pry bar, hex bit driver and small screwdriver on the back of your phone and at your fingertips. It pulls double duty as a phone grip and stand. MSRP: \$24.95. For more info: (425) 771-6230, SOGKnives.com



MULTI-CALIBER MAGAZINE

WILSON COMBAT

Wilson Combat's *Multi-Caliber Magazine* is compatible with all AR-platform rifles. Made of durable fiber-reinforced polymer material in OD green for high-visibility, the magazine is proven to be reliable in harsh field conditions. Weighing only 5.5 oz., it comes with an anti-tilt universal follower, an enhanced grip and an easy-to-remove floorplate. MSRP: \$18.95 to \$23.95. For more info: (800) 955-4856, ShopWilsonCombat.com



MODULAR SPORTSMAN'S BELT

ALPS OUTDOORZ

The *Modular Sportsman's Belt* from ALPS OutdoorZ is a belt system for upland bird hunting or a day of busting clays. Made of waxed cotton canvas with a TechMesh bottom, the system includes two shell pockets, a game pouch and a water bottle pouch. All compartments secure to a 2" webbed waist belt that cinches with a heavy-duty brass SR buckle. The Sportsman's Belt comes in Coyote Brown and weighs 2 lbs., 2 oz. MSRP: \$69.99. For more info: (800) 344-2577, AlpsBrands.com



SOUTHLAND MEN'S HUNTING BOOT

DRYSHOD USA

The *Southland Men's Hunting Boot* has WIXIT Cool-Clad lining to provide comfort and breathability for hunting in warmer climates. Features include a breathable air mesh lining, removable EVA sock liner, DS1 molded outsole, instep reinforcement and a nylon shank for ankle stability. Made with hand-laid rubber overlays with no PVC, PU, or TPR, the Southland boot comes in VEIL Whitetail camouflage for concealment. MSRP: \$169.95. For more info: (866) 663-6825, DryshodUSA.com



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FORTE WOOX



The WOOX FORTE is a hybrid of classical American and Italian axe designs. It draws from the best of both to come up with the right features for the modern hand tool user. Crafted from 1060 high carbon steel with blue polish finishing, the FORTE is compact to be easily packed but heavy enough to tackle big tasks. It's a professional axe built for serious work. And if you need more power and reach, there's the FORTE-X that's 6" longer. MSRP: \$180. For more info: (303) 947-2865, WooxStore.com

SAGAX LUX2 TENICOR



The SAGAX LUX2 from Tenicor is a light holster for appendix carry. It is more concealable than most "non-light" holsters. Available for the Stacatto and GLOCK, the SAGAX LUX2 is also compatible with compact weapon lights like the Streamlight TLR7, SureFire XC1-B and more. Its body contour feature is designed to make the holster fit to your body, driving the top of the gun flush against the torso. The SAGAX LUX2 comes with three detachable camming bars. When cinched by the belt, the camming bar works with the body contour to rotate the grip into the body to keep the gun hidden. MSRP: \$109. For more info: Tenicor.com



PISTOL CASE QWIK2CONCEAL

The Pistol Case from Qwik2Conceal hides valuables in the most obvious places in your home, mobile home, car or boat. With the case, your pistol with magazines can be hidden from sight but still be quickly accessed for personal defense. Qwik2Conceal cases has a zipper opening on the front side and a pistol cavity fit for many pistol styles. The cover is made of 600 Denier Poly/Nylon with a Urethane coating while the interior plastic-foam is Corrugated Black Polypropylene. MSRP: \$49.95. For more info: (800) 819-4245, Qwik2Conceal.com



MARINE CARE LINE BREAKTHROUGH CLEAN TECHNOLOGIES

Breakthrough Clean's Marine Care Line introduces two products: the Smooth Cast Line Conditioner and the Universal Reel Maintenance Kit. The conditioner lubricates and extends the life of fishing lines, improves casting distance, lessens reel noises, reduces backlashes and line memory. The Universal Reel Maintenance Kit provides corrosion protection to most brands, makes, models and types of fishing gear. MSRP: Conditioner \$16.95; Maintenance Kit \$24.95. For more info: (888) 455-5499, BreakthroughClean.com

DOUBLE SAFE HUNTER FOLDING KNIVES COLD STEEL

The Double Safe Hunter Folding Knives from Cold Steel offers added security via a rocker lock, secondary safety mechanism. This device is shock and impact resistant and prevents unintentional blade deployment. The 3.5" wide clip-point blade is ideal for field dressing big game. Made of high-carbon 8Cr14MoV stainless steel and treated to 57-58 Rockwell hardness, the blades of Double Safe Hunter knives are tough, corrosion resistant and maintains a sharp edge. Cold Steel now offers Double Safe Hunter line of folding lockbacks in camo, orange and green. MSRP: \$39.99 to \$44.99. For more info: (877) 269-8490, ColdSteel.com



SELF-DEFENSE "COMBAT TRAINING" TARGET TACTICAL TARGET SYSTEMS

The Self-Defense "Combat Training" Target was developed for military and LE. The targets give professionals quick feedback on hits and misses plus education on accurate anatomy in the scoring areas. Two 1" diameter black dots for practicing trigger control and acute shot placement are also printed on the targets. Dimensions: 19"W x 25"H. MSRP: \$24.95 for pad of 25 sheets. For more info: TacticalTargetSystems.com



RIMZ MOON CLIPS EZ MOON CLIP

According to EZ Moon Clip, their RIMZ Moon Clips are the "world's only hydrocarbon polymer moon clips." Use them to avoid hurting your fingers while loading or unloading. No tools needed. The RIMZ 625 will fit most 45 ACP revolvers including the S&W Governor. The RIMZ 25 retains rounds more securely and is made of stiffer material. Note that RIMZ moon clips only work with rimless ammo. MSRP: \$35 for 10 clips. For more info: (937) 919-5910, EZMoonClip.com



SCCY CPX-2RD PISTOL PACKAGE

Our gun-of-the-month is from the company whose initials don't mean anything but since SCCY is pronounced "sky," we know they offer sky's-the-limit value in all their products. SCCY's *CPX-2RD*, for instance, offers quality and precision without compromise. It's equipped with the Crimson Trace CTS-1500 with a 3.5 MOA red dot sight with built-in backup sight to help you focus on your target. With a capacity of 10+1, this 9mm EDC pistol has a 3.1" barrel machined from bar stock with a 1:16 right-hand twist. The receiver is made from 7075 T6 aircraft-grade, heat-treated aluminum alloy. The slide is heat-treated stainless steel in Natural Stainless or Black Nitride finish. The grip and frame are made from Zytel polymer. Other features include an all-steel recoil system, a steel slide lock/release, a hammer firing system, a DAO trigger and trigger lock. Two double-stack, 10-round magazines come with the CPX-2RD.

Aptly named because of its shape, the *Wedge* from Streamlight Inc. is a USB-C rechargeable EDC flashlight

with a slim, compact design. With a length of 5.46" and weighing 3.3 oz., the *Wedge* can emit 300 to 1,000 lumens of light. It is IPX7-rated for waterproof use to one meter and impact-resistance tested to one meter.

The *Click-N-Cut* from Cold Steel is a utility knife that's built for strenuous cutting chores. It comes with three easily interchangeable 2.5", 420J2 steel blades — a drop-point, serrated and plain-edged version.

Slip the Sport Ridge *14-Piece 9mm Pistol Field Cleaning Kit* into your range bag so you can clean your SCCY CPX-2RD (that is, if you win). Includes a patch slot tip, 9mm brass jag, two brass rods, 9mm bore mop, 9mm bore brush, 25 cleaning patches and more.

Consider our prizes for this issue — a SCCY pistol offering precision and quality without compromise, a flashlight from Streamlight with a unique shape, a Cold Steel knife with three interchangeable blades and a gun cleaning kit. You just have to enter! Click on GUNSMagazine.com/giveaways or mail a (post) card. —Jazz Jimenez



14-PIECE 9MM PISTOL FIELD CLEANING KIT

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ColdSteel.com
VALUE: \$28.99



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MANUFACTURER: Streamlight
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Streamlight.com
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We've heard it's difficult to find post cards these days so here's a tip — use index cards, the back of greeting cards or even cereal boxes!



CPX-2RD

MANUFACTURER: SCCY
(866) 729-7599
SCCY.com

CALIBER: 9mm, **CAPACITY:** 10+1

BARREL LENGTH: 3.1", **OAL:** 6.1"

WEIGHT: 17.5 oz. w/ unloaded mag

SIGHTS: Crimson Trace CTS-1500

VALUE: \$339

PACKING A LIGHTWEIGHT ISN'T WIMPY!

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO OVERCOME YOUR MACHO

If the eyes are the windows of our very soul, the gun we carry is an extension of our defensive cognition. As young bucks, we wanted guns like us — shiny-new and in the latest, greatest, biggest and baddest caliber we could handle; or at least thought we could handle. Size and weight didn't mean

a thing to us. If it did, we wouldn't admit it.

As time rolls by, funny things start happening for some. Your 5" Government Model 1911, with three magazines, strapped on your belt used to be joyfully carried over hill and dale. Over time it seems to have gotten heavier.



A few of Tank's lightweight guns: a Ken Kelly custom Ruger GP-100 in .44 Sp. (top left), S&W 3" 66 (lower left) and single-stack 9mms represented by Honor Defense (top right) and S&W Shield (bottom right).



Poly-framed guns lighten the load while offering plenty of firepower. Good choices are (left to right) the Ruger Security 9, S&W Shield in 9mm and .45 ACP.

Now, wearing it all day, or even 5–6 hours, takes effort. Every time you strap it on your lower back starts tightening up. Some big-clawed monster is squeezing your lower spinal erectors and won't let go! Can you say "Uncle?"

THE ALTERNATIVE

Welcome to middle age. We can't eat cereal sprinkled with gunpowder anymore. No sir, its bran flakes with bananas now. Funny things happen to our bodies as we age, it's not for sissies.

The harder we worked, or more strenuous the activities we subjected our bodies to, the more those aches and pains hauntingly visit in protest. What comes around goes around, eh? Now, lugging a heavy six-shooter or autopistol throws your sacroiliac into psychotic dislocation.

Like the infamous water-drop torture, the steady, continuous exposure drives you crazy. The slight tugging causes you to subconsciously compensate by leaning to the opposite side, unbalanced, leading to spasms. Eventually, the mere thought of strapping on 2.5 lbs. of iron makes some cringe as their backs protest from injury, arthritis, or simply age.

However, going unarmed isn't an option! You know better! Besides trying to make your spine more flexible through stretches and exercise, what else can we do to help? How about packing a lighter piece? You know, one weighing half the weight of your old hog-leg, horse pistol or artillery piece.

OPTIONS?

Sure, we love blued, all-steel guns, maybe even stainless steel but checking out one of the polymer-framed, striker-fired pistols available today would sure be easier to pack. Some have an aversion to poly-framed guns, I don't understand why. I've carried GLOCKS, S&W and Ruger — they've never failed me.

I very much appreciate the lighter weight. Plus, polymer is immune to rust, a nice feature when packing during hot weather. If you can't stand the thought of poly-framed guns, there are still plenty of other options available.

REDUCED REVOLVERS

For the revolver aficionado, smaller J-Frames from S&W fit the bill. Go with one of the Performance Center aluminum-framed



Tanks 3" SP-101 and 2.25" SP-101 on left and a Ruger Night Watchman and Commander-sized 1911 on right are powerful but lighter versions of their full-sized brethren.

442s or Lipsey's 642 Exclusive and you'll see how light things can really get. As with everything in life, it's all about give and take, the smaller J-Frame having a 5-shot cylinder.

Ruger's SP-101 is another viable option. They have several different models in calibers .327 Federal, .38 Special, or .357 Maggie. Built with 2.25" or 3" barrels, you'll have a mighty fine and powerful packing piece.



A couple of true pocket rockets: an alloy-frame S&W Performance Center 442 with laser grip (top) and the Ruger LCP. Both are excellent back-up guns and are better than being unarmed.

POLY-FRAMED WONDERS

As noted, the flux of polymer-framed, striker-fired pistols is astronomical. The lightened weight of the grip-frame makes them easier to pack without pulling your pants down. S&W has a slew of Shields which are up for the job. I personally like the Performance Center 2.0 Shield in .45 ACP.

For really hot weather, when clothing is kept to a minimum, the Ruger LCP or LCP II are worth their weight in gold. With a pocket holster, they can accompany you anywhere.

1911 BRIGADE

For those with a fondness for traditional 1911 armament, there's several ways to go. Simply switching to a Commander size, or better yet, an Officers Model, and you've cut several ounces of weight. One of my favorites is a Lightweight Commander from Ruger called the Night Watchman.

As you can see, there are a multitude of options to choose from. We haven't begun scratching the surface of guns available to ease the load as you go. The important thing is finding a gun you're comfortable with, something you'll carry every single time you leave your home. If you feel naked without being armed, you get it.



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26. When in doubt, doubt. Your “little inner voice” is world’s smarter than you give it credit for.

27. Virtually everything you see on commercial television is staged. Everything . . . as in *everything*.

28. If you don’t practice a movement at least 500 times (some say 2,000), you will never perform it correctly under stress. This is an iron-clad, unbreakable rule we all ignore.

29. A vehicle will kill you just as dead as a high-powered rifle. Always respect traffic.

30. No instructor is God. Some can reach

38. You are personally responsible for the right to keep and bear arms. Take this responsibility seriously or the gun magazines of the future might be pretty dull — “Cover story: A bar of soap in a sock — the ultimate manstopper!”

39. There is always “one more” — one more gun, one more problem, one more knife, one more bad guy.

40. Our opponents are frequently smarter than we give them credit.

41. A bad outcome in the legal system after a justified use of force can be just as devastating as a major gunshot wound. Know your legal rights and responsibilities.

42. Never get between two people fighting.

43. Train yourself to relax during and

“GO SOMEWHERE INSPIRING AND MEDITATE ON THE **CONCEPT OF ‘HONOR.’ DO THIS REGULARLY AND YOU ARE LESS LIKELY TO DO SOMETHING **COWARDLY OR IMMORAL.**”**

demigod status after decades, many of them are pretty good and few of them should be prosecuted for false advertising. Beware the Cult of Personality, especially if you are new to firearms training classes — almost everybody seems brilliant when you’re new!

31. There is nothing wrong with blued guns, revolvers, leather holsters or firearms without “cutting-edge aerospace technology.” Then again, there’s nothing wrong with “black guns” either. Don’t be dogmatic.

32. The human brain is the deadliest weapon ever invented.

33. You’ll never wake up knowing “today is the day.”

34. Practice doesn’t make perfect; *perfect* practice makes perfect.

35. If you can’t tie a trustworthy knot, change a tire, kill your own food or perform basic first-aid procedures, you are not really prepared.

36. There is no one-weapon system, tactic, technique or school of thought to address every situation. Those who believe such claims are positively delusional.

37. Murder is wrong, while killing is sometimes necessary and excusable. Make sure you are okay with this idea. If not, you shouldn’t carry a weapon.

after stressful events. You’ll perform better and even live much longer.

44. Go somewhere inspiring and meditate on the concept of “honor.” Do this regularly and you are less likely to do something cowardly or immoral.

45. Guns and alcohol don’t mix. If you drink, you must be unarmed. If you can’t live by the rule, don’t drink. This rule personally chafes me, but I follow it religiously.

46. Never stand in a doorway.

47. Use light to your advantage. Whenever possible, just flick light switches rather than using a flashlight. Then again, if you aren’t proficient with flashlight shooting techniques, you are at a disadvantage in many dangerous encounters.

48. Always carry a knife, a gun and a light. Two is better, but one is critical.

49. “Preparedness” or “being tactical” should be an unspoken lifestyle, not a publicly shared hobby.

50. Buy a three-year subscription to *GUNS* for every one of your friends, family members, acquaintances and random homeless people on the street. You’ll end up richer, thinner, have more friends and be gloriously rewarded in the afterlife, or my name isn’t Hilary Clinton.



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THE 50 RULES

Advice for life

I will hereby lay claim to the spurious honor of being the world's foremost "good example of a bad example," especially in the arena of personal safety.

Through a lifetime spent as a cop, adventurer and shooter, I've managed to make nearly every mistake possible yet lived to tell about it. Fortunately, I'm also a testament to why luck and a benevolent Supreme Deity are a nice fallback when you're dumb. And — let's be frank — almost all of us are dumb once in a while.

Well, maybe not Massad Ayoob, but pretty much everybody else does foolish things on occasion.

This overview of personal (dis)qualification is given to explain why I have both the temerity and experience to present my own collection of the 50 most important rules of personal safety. They're not the *only* principles for dealing with danger, especially of the social and interpersonal variety, but I think they're a good start.

Some of this information comes firsthand from the countless "real-deal" folks I've had the honor of knowing, some comes from training, still more comes from direct observation of rapidly-coagulating pools of blood and the remainder was learned from The University of Life, School of Hard Knocks, Bachelor of Science in Blunt Trauma and Gunshot Wounds. I'll allow some of these points are a bit facetious and snarky, but then again, so is life.

So, without further ado, I present "My 50 Rules for Life."

1. There is no "ultimate manstopper" except perhaps a 105mm High Explosive shell.

2. Shot placement is far more important than caliber, energy, velocity, momentum or advertising hype. Remember the .22 Long Rifle has killed things as large as grizzly bears while a miss with a .458 Win does nothing but punch holes in the blue sky.

3. Wearing "cool guy gear" doesn't make you cool. Brand-new "cool guy gear" will make you look like a poser. A plate carrier — with multiple witty "morale" patches, of course — worn on the range merely for visual effect when you've never actually

worn one "in the field" makes you an Ultra-poser with Extra Posing Sauce.

4. The bigger the cleavage on the advertising copy, generally the worse the product. Nowadays, with political-correctness being in fashion, you see less and less of this. Of course, some of us sure miss the old days.

5. Fear is natural. Embrace it and learn to use it to your advantage. Invite it into your home, make it dinner and let it drink your best bourbon because being "fearless" means taking stupid risks.



6. The more combat a person has seen, the less likely they are to talk about it.

7. Scars are nature's way of saying "I screwed up." They also make for good graphic training aids and sometimes can even get you a free beer, though the cost/benefit ratio is not usually worth it.

8. Courage is the first requirement of success in a crisis. It's easy to "talk the talk" but you should really test your courage periodically in some way to make sure it hasn't died of inattention — or never really existed in the first place.

9. Even a ruggedized, fully redundant, satellite-enhanced, broadband-data-capable multimillion-dollar tactical communication network will break down under adverse conditions such as dew or nightfall.

10. A sense of humor will get you through anything from a gunshot wound to a divorce. It's hard to think of droll comments when suffering a sucking chest wound during court proceedings, but it

does help lighten the mood.

11. Everything on the internet should be considered "For Entertainment Purposes Only." By now, hopefully everyone has realized "SuperDeathSEALKillerCommando99" on an internet forum is probably a morbidly-obese 13-year-old gamer on a laptop.

12. Gun store clerks come in two flavors: aficionados and salesmen. It's your job to know the difference.

13. Any product with the word "miracle" in the title isn't. Any shooting technique named after its developer — as named by said developer — is probably the same thing.

14. Trust no one except your mother. Keep an eye on her.

15. Being alert will prevent 99% of problems. If you are alert, you'll be much more ready for the remaining 1% which are a problem.

16. Do unto others as they would do unto you; just make sure you do it first.

17. Death loves a braggart. Everyone else loves to see him get kicked in the groin — therefore, don't ever brag about your tacti-coolness. See rule #3 and #6.

18. There is no such thing as a fair fight. If you fight, don't be fair. This is why many old, slow, creaky guys are still very dangerous.

19. We should do more to include our loved ones in crisis preparation and training.

20. If you know it all — you don't.

21. There is someone who is tougher, faster, a better shot or just plain luckier somewhere out there in the world. Remember this when considering a fight you could otherwise avoid.

22. The corollary to #21: There is no shame in avoiding a problem. This is otherwise known as "wisdom."

23. The first rule of knife fighting is "Don't get into a knife fight." If you are in a knife fight, the best self-defense technique is applying a magazine full of large-caliber bullets as quickly as possible.

24. Anything and everything can and will fail at the worse possible moment. Plaintiff's Exhibit #1 — Viagra.

25. We could all use a little more cardiovascular exercise.

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