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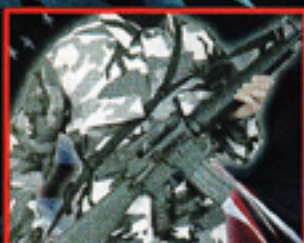
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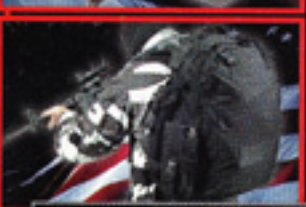
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# GUNS

MAGAZINE

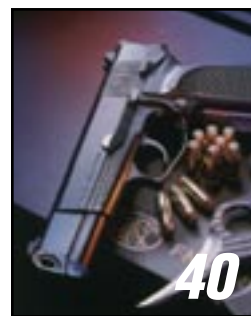
DECEMBER 2001 Vol. 47, Number 12-564

## On The Cover:

FN's HP-DA

By Charles E. Petty

Photo by Ichiro Nagata



## FEATURES

### 26 A New Call To Arms

BY GERALD WACHOWICZ A how-to on calmly discussing gun rights.

### 30 The Evolving Waterfowl Gun

BY HOLT BODINSON Manufacturers have answered the needs of wetlands hunters.

### 32 Ed Brown's M-702

BY CHARLES CUTSHAW Extreme precision in a good looking package.

### 34 .44 Magnum Heavyweight Bullets

BY JOHN TAFFIN Taffin shares the how and why of heavier than standard .44 Magnum bullets.

### 36 High-Tech Hunting

BY HOLT BODINSON The latest in modern equipment can improve your hunting success.

### 40 Double Action Hi-Power

BY CHARLES E. PETTY FN's new HP-DA brings modern features to an old favorite.

### 46 Tikka's Whitetail Hunter

BY DAVE ANDERSON A very fine turn-bolt from Finland.

### 50 Barrel Making

BY CHARLES E. PETTY Five rifling methods outlined for your edification.

### 54 Gun Of The Month

The stunning Ultimate Black Widow from Gary Reeder Custom Guns.

### 58 Ruger's .30 Carbine Blackhawk

BY MIKE CUMPSTON Ruger's .30-caliber revolver is a fine performer in the right hands.

## DEPARTMENTS

### 10 Crossfire Letters to GUNS

### 14 Quartermaster Cameron Hopkins

### 18 Rifleman Dave Anderson

### 20 Handguns Massad Ayoob

### 22 Shotgunner Holt Bodinson

### 24 Handloader Charles E. Petty

### 76 New Products

### 78 Guns Classifieds

### 80 Advertiser Index

### 82 Campfire Tales John Taffin **NEW DEPARTMENT**



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### LETTER OF THE MONTH



GUNS MAGAZINE OCTOBER 2001

### Custom Knife Sharpener?

I just received my October issue of *GUNS* yesterday, and I enjoyed the article on Tim Brian's SideWinder. He has done an outstanding job in crafting the weapon, and I wouldn't mind having one. Several issues immediately came to mind when I first glanced at the cover, and then later on in the article.

As I glanced at the cover, my first thought was "another .45ACP." Pick up almost any gun magazine off the news stand, and it more than likely shows "some" particular .45. There is nothing wrong with .45s. I have one. But I also have a .40 S&W (Not the brand), a 9mm and a .38 spl. Very little is reported about modifications to firearms in these calibers.

Another observation I had is one that I picked up on about a year ago. Why are these modified muscle guns depicted along with a super-duper, lock-back knife? The article was about Tim Brian's modified Kimber. Did he sharpen the knife too?

There! I feel better now that I got that off my chest. I still think that the SideWinder is one of the nicest re-dos I have seen in a long time.

Vernon E. Bang  
Plano, Texas

### Shoot Today, Kill Tomorrow

In the October, 2001 issue of *GUNS* (page 71), the mention of Billy Dixon's shot of 1,500 yards is in fact 1,538 yards. It was fired with a Sharps that he borrowed from Jim Hanrahan on the third day of the Adobe Walls battle, not the second. An Indian's saying for the Sharps was, "Shoot today, kill tomorrow." Source of info, "Life of Billy Dixon," by Olive K Dixon. I pass the site of the battle often. It was a good shot.

Ivan Short  
Fritch, Texas

### Damn Varmints!

I am writing to comment on the article by Holt Bodinson about the Winchester 9410. I had heard about this gun previously, and my first thought was, "What a silly idea, what on earth would *that* be good for?" After reading this article, I began to imagine myself using and enjoying a 9410 for such things as keeping the rodents thinned out around my orchard. Either I was very short sighted about this gun, or Holt is a very persuasive writer — maybe both. I think that I'm going to have to buy one of these 9410s and find out!

Justin Yoder  
Sacramento, Calif.

### Taffin's Top Ten

I don't generally feel motivated to write to magazines, but I just had to comment on the story "Taffin's Top Ten."

I was absolutely delighted to see a hunter and writer of Taffin's stature say that the goal of a hunting trip is not necessarily to kill a record head of big game. While there is certainly nothing wrong with harvesting a fine trophy animal as the result of careful hunting, I am distressed at the current trend in some hunting circles that promotes the idea that only a record-book animal is worth taking. And furthermore, that virtually any means allowed by law should be used to ensure a shot at a trophy. This has led to the proliferation of such dubious methods as "training" deer by using timed feeders throughout the year and employing scope-sighted, sealed-ignition "muzzle loaders" during what were originally intended to be Primitive Weapon seasons.

I applaud Taffin for his skillful use of the pistol, which restricts his hunting range, and much more so for the fact that

he seems to value the experience more than just the opportunity to fill his tag. I would be privileged to share a hunting camp with him any time.

Zach Foster  
Orlando, Fla.

### Boy, How Times Have Changed

John Taffin seems to be one of the precious few men left who understand long-range handgunning. In my late teens, which was back in the late '40s, my shooting mentors were men who hit five-gallon cans at 200 yards with regularity. Some of them used a one-hand hold, and some used a two-hand hold, all standing. Most of the shooters I knew used Colt SAA Revolvers in .38 Special or .44 Special chambering, and most used 7½-inch barrel models. All of them handloaded. In the late '50s, I wrote to and received an answer from Harry Reeves about long-range handgunning. He stated that a "true expert" with a handgun should be able to consistently hit a man-sized target out to 400 yards! At age 69, I'm wishing I was half as good as I was at age 20.

Steve Lassar  
Roseburg, Ore.

### Appreciates Petty

I wanted to say that I really enjoyed Charley Petty's article on the .270 Redding.

From a handloading standpoint, it was quite interesting. I agree with what Petty seemed to be saying; that we don't *need* wildcat cartridges given the amazing variety of factory loads. Despite that, it is very satisfying to seek out a novel cartridge that perfectly meets your interests or requirements.

I was also intrigued by the custom rifle that Petty had built. It looks like a fine one, and I am fortunate to know first hand the pleasure that such a project can bring. Of course I had to study the photos to check out all of the features, and I noticed that there appears to be something interesting about the cheekpiece of that stock. What am I seeing? An adjustable cheekpiece?

Lastly, as much as I enjoyed the entire article, I nearly fell off my chair when I came to the sentence, "you would have thought I had shot the Good Humor man!" Ha! That's the funniest expression I've seen in a gun mag in years!

Ernst Merkle  
Chicago, Ill.

*A call to Charley Petty revealed that what you are seeing is a Sorbothane insert inletted into the stock. This was a feature of the custom stock used on this rifle. The company is no longer in business. Editor*



GUNS MAGAZINE™ welcomes letters to the editor for "Crossfire." Send your letters to: CROSSFIRE, GUNS Magazine, 591 Camino de la Reina, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92108. Email: ed@gunsmagazine.com



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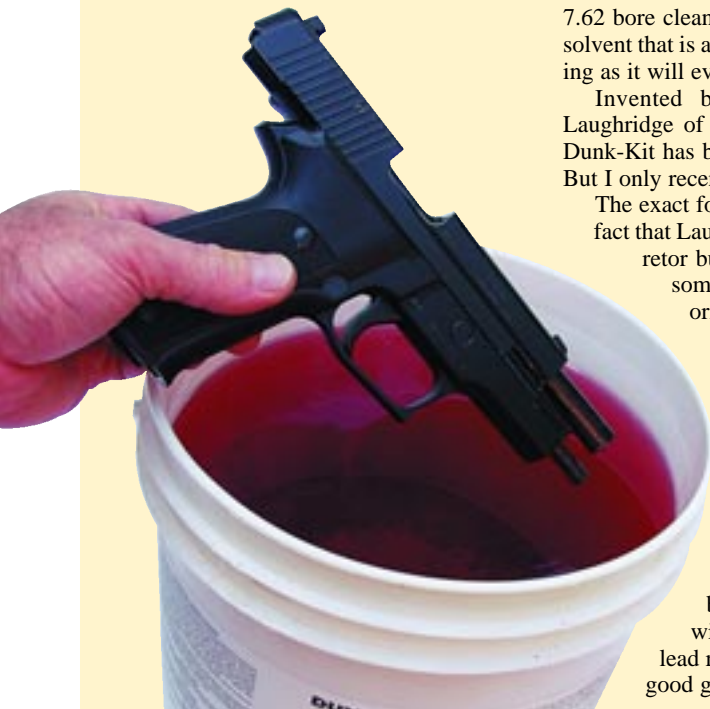
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# QUARTERMASTER

BY CAMERON HOPKINS

## Dunk-It Gun Cleaner



**D**unk-Kit is the greatest thing that's happened to my gun-cleaning procedure since the invention of Sweets 7.62 bore cleaner. Here you have a magical solvent that is as close to drip-and-dry cleaning as it will ever get.

Invented by famed pistolsmith Bill Laughridge of the Cylinder & Slide Shop, Dunk-Kit has been on the market for years. But I only recently discovered it.

The exact formulation is a secret, but the fact that Laughridge once owned a carburetor business on the side gives me some reason to suspect that the origin of this miraculous liquid lies somewhere in the automotive industry.

I don't know what it is, but I know what it does; it cuts crud and powder fouling like no tomorrow. I shot over 500 rounds of lead reloads through a Les Baer Premiere II 1911, which thoroughly fouled the bore and gunked up the rails with powder residue. Those lead rounds made a nice mess of a good gun.

I field stripped the pistol into its components — slide, frame, barrel and spring — and dunked them one at a time in Dunk-Kit. I then swished the parts vigorously and broke loose virtually all the gunk. The frame came out gleaming like a newly waxed Corvette. The slide looked equally spotless.

Immersing the barrel in Dunk-Kit and scrubbing it with a bronze brush did the trick on lead build-up, which was more than noticeable in the first inch of the barrel. While not entirely free of elbow grease, the barrel cleaning in the Dunk-Kit solution took considerably less effort than the usual brush-and-solvent method.

Dunk-Kit is sold by mail order directly from Cylinder & Slide Shop for \$32.95 (3/4 gallon), \$49.95 (1 1/4 gallon) and \$94.95 (4 gallon), including shipping.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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## Dawson Extensions

Adding extra capacity to a magazine has somehow become a guilty pleasure, like ladling fresh whipped cream onto chocolate pie. The Crime Law says that we can only have so many calories in our diet — 10 is quite sufficient — and so we feel like we're getting away with something if we cheat and add a few more.

The government has no more business telling me how many calories to eat than it does how many rounds to put in my magazine.

Pistolsmith Dave Dawson of Dawson Precision agrees that increasing the capacity of a magazine — a Glock magazine in this case — is not only permissible, but also desirable. He believes people want this increase for several reasons, such as competition shooting, tactical applications and the just plain "more is better." Because of this, Dawson has invented an add-on Base Pad for Glock magazines that increases payload by five (.40 S&W) or six (9mm) cartridges.

The Dawson Base Pad is intended for use with "pre-ban" magazines, those for which the government has not imposed a diet restriction.

Available in black, blue, purple, red and silver, the Dawson Base Pad is CNC machined out of T6 aluminum. The pad attaches to the Glock magazine with a sliding gate that opens to fit over the magazine's base lip. The fit of the sliding gate is zero tolerance — a perfect fit.

One word of warning in the installation of the Dawson Base Pad: It requires the use of the D-word. I only use the D-word when absolutely necessary, but this is one of those times when a Dremel tool must be used. Carefully. Very carefully. A nubbin on the left side of the Glock magazine lip needs to be ground off for the sliding gate to fit over the



lip. Grind like you were stroking a newly born baby's head — gently.

Dawson is renowned for building some of the most sophisticated IPSC competition pistols on the planet. His Base Pad is a clever way to bulk up the diet of your Glock magazines. The part retails for \$39.95 each and includes a new magazine spring.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

#### Dawson Precision

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## Concealed And Retained

**S**natch-resistant holsters have been limited to police duty rigs because perceived needs for security holsters in concealed-carry configurations have never been expressed. Until now. Thanks to a long-overdue expansion of CCW laws — we're up to 41 states and counting — there's now a need for John and Jane Q Public to secure their secreted sidearm.

Safariland has stepped up with a nifty snatch-resistant version of their long-admired "paddle" holster. The Model 0702 is an open-top design, yet it offers a degree of snatch-resistance without a thumb snap or other encumbrance.

The retention comes from a cleverly designed locking block built into the holster itself. The spring-loaded locking block secures the holstered pistol against a vertical grab in case someone yanks straight up on your gun. To release the pistol for a smooth draw, simply rock the butt slightly to the rear and draw normally.

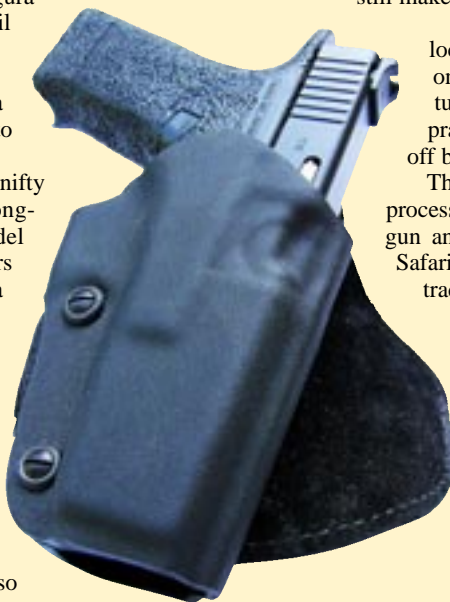
Additionally, the Model 0702 also

features Safariland's unsurpassed "paddle" setup. Made to be easily taken on and off, the paddle holster is perfect for CCW holders who might wish to remove their sidearms once they have arrived safely at work. As a lawfully armed citizen, I carry whenever I'm in public, but I leave my weapon in a secure desk drawer when I'm at work. Guns still make some people nervous around the office.

The paddle design allows the holster to fit snugly; it locks onto a belt with a small plastic "hook" that catches on the underside of your trouser belt. The paddle itself tucks inside the waistband of your trousers. With a little practice, you can whip a Safariland paddle holster on and off blindfolded.

The Model 0702 is made of Safariland's thermolaminate process in which a sandwich of plastic is formed around the gun and then layered with leather — suede on the inside. Safariland holsters conform to the shape of your gun like a traditionally boned leather holster but are impervious to solvents, mold, rot and other dangers that cowhide is susceptible to.

The Model 0702 is available for most popular brands of handguns. It retails for \$85.00.



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# QUARTERMASTER

BY CAMERON HOPKINS

## Tetra Touch-Up Blue

Touching up the slight dings and scratches on firearms should be an essential part of everyone's weapon maintenance. If you like to shop at gun shows and bring home the occasional "unbelievable deal" on a well-worn Enfield or S&W M&P, you'll quickly learn to keep a bottle of cold blue handy to restore your new-found treasures.

Liquid Blue is a brand of cold blue put out under the Tetra Gun brand. Tetra Gun is a relatively new player in the gun-care game, but they came out of the chute with a full line of high-quality lubricants, solvents, cleaners and other gun-care products.

Liquid Blue comes in a 3-ounce bottle — a veritable lifetime supply unless you are a Gerald Ford gun owner, constantly dropping or bumping your guns.

To apply, thoroughly clean and degrease the metal. I like to use Outers Crud Cutter for removing oil from a surface. After dousing with a good squirt of Crud Cutter, allow the solvent to evaporate; you're now ready for Liquid Blue.



Use a Q-Tip to apply Liquid Blue to the metal surface. You'll notice that the metal starts to darken and turn "blue" almost immediately. Allow Liquid Blue to react with the metal for about two minutes, then wipe off the excess Liquid Blue.

Because all bluing is a controlled form of corrosion, you need to stop Liquid Blue from corroding too much. Simply rinse the metal in cold water. I usually just wipe it down with a damp rag.

Presto, that dinged up SMLE looks as good as new. Well, almost as good as new. Anyway, those aren't scratches in the stock. They're character marks.

Look for Tetra Gun products at leading gunshops nationwide, or call for the nearest dealer.

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Jake stirred the campfire embers with a stick, then looked over at Bill, his hunting partner, who was busy cleaning his rifle scope lenses.

"Hope you don't have to shoot at a big mule deer out at 400 yards tomorrow. That little .308 of yours won't even get his attention," Jake said.

Bill grinned.

"That big .308 Mangleum of yours won't either. The way it kicks, you'll likely flinch so bad you'll miss the whole mountain. Now this .308, it's not very big, but it's efficient," Bill said.

"If I wanted efficient I'd use a .22 Short. To heck with efficiency, I want performance!" Jake replied.

"Sure, so do I. Performance is putting a good bullet in the right place. And that's a lot easier to do with an accurate, light recoiling cartridge. Say, how many barrels did you burn out just working up a load for that thing?" Bill asked.

"This barrel will outlast you and me. And speaking of putting the bullet in the right place, that's easier with a flat shooting rifle like mine. Sure, you can hit at long range with your .308, if the buck waits around while you laser the distance, measure wind-speed, consult your trajectory and wind charts, and click in the right adjustments. By the time you're ready to shoot I'm already canceling my tags," Jake said.

And so it goes. Efficiency versus maximum velocity. The basis for the argument is the law of diminishing returns: As increasing amounts of a variable input are added, the returns per unit become less and less. Consider four 7mm cartridges, all firing 139- to 140-grain bullets. Powder charge weights vary with the powder selected and velocities vary from one rifle to another, but these weights and velocities are typical and provide a base for comparison. See Chart-1.

The 7mm TCU (.223 Rem., necked to accept 7mm bullets) is a wildcat that proved very popular in handgun metallicity-shouette shooting.

With 24.0 of powder, the 7mm TCU produces 2,000 fps. Going to the larger 7mm-08 case and adding another 24.0 grains, though, doesn't give us another 2,000 fps. In fact, it only returns an additional 800 fps. Adding 24.0 grains more in the 7mm Rem. Mag. case gives an added return of only 400 fps, and adding still another 24.0 grains returns just 200 fps more in the 7mm Ultra Mag.

Bigger powder charges require longer barrels to burn effectively. As charge weight goes up, recoil increases and barrel life is reduced. The barrel life argument is a bit of a red herring; given reasonable care (letting the barrel cool between shots when possible), even magnum hunting rifle barrels should outlast their owners. And at worst, replacement barrels aren't that expensive. Recoil,

CHART-1

CARTRIDGE/ BARREL LENGTH	POWDER CHARGE (GR.)	MUZZLE VELOCITY (FPS)	FPS PER GRAIN OF POWDER
7mm TCU/14"	24	2000	83.3
7mm-08 Rem./20"	48	2800	58.3
7mm Rem. Mag./24"	72	3200	44.4
7mm Rem. Ultra Mag./26"	96	3400	35.4

CHART-2

CARTRIDGE	BULLET WEIGHT (gr.)	POWDER CHARGE (gr.)	VELOCITY (fps)	RIFLE WEIGHT (lb.)	RECOIL ENERGY (ft.lb.)
7mm-08 Rem.	140	48	2800	7.5	16
.280 Rem.	140	58	3000	8	20
7mm Rem. Mag	140	72	3200	8.5	27
7mm Rem. Ultra Mag.	140	96	3400	9	38

CHART-3

MUZZLE VELOCITY	ZERO	MAXIMUM PBR	REMAINING VELOCITY			BULLET PATH		
			300	400	500	300	400	500
2800	204.6	239.1	2259	2094	1936	-7.37	-21.77	-44.12
3000	218.5	255.2	2435	2262	2097	-5.45	-17.50	-36.36
3200	232.3	271.2	2611	2431	2258	-3.95	-14.13	-30.20
3400	245.9	287.1	2785	2598	2418	-2.78	-11.45	-25.28

though, is there for every shot. Compare recoil energy for different 7mm cartridges in appropriate rifle weights. See Chart-2.

The costs of higher velocity include bigger powder charges, longer barrels to burn those charges, shorter barrel life, more muzzle blast, heavier recoil and/or more rifle weight. The payoff is flatter trajectory, which makes distance estimation less critical; higher velocity and striking energy out where the bullet and target meet; and greater resistance to wind drift.

The following chart is based on information from the external ballistics calculator included in the excellent RCBS.LOAD reloading software. (The bullet is the 7mm 140-grain Nosler BTSP.) The chart shows the calculated zero to keep the bullet no more than two inches above or below line of sight. Maximum point blank range (PBR) is the range at which the bullet falls more than 2 inches from line of sight. The other columns show remaining velocity in fps and bullet drop in inches at 300, 400 and 500 yards. See Chart-3.

What about wind drift? At 2,800 fps muzzle velocity, a 10 mph crosswind will move the bullet 11.9 inches at 400 yards and 19.1 inches at 500 yards. Start the same bullet at 3,400 fps, and these figures are reduced as the same wind moves the bullet 9.1 inches and 14.5 inches at 400 and 500 yards, respectively.

Air resistance increases with the square of velocity, meaning that the faster a bullet starts out, the faster it slows down. Note that a 600 fps advantage at the muzzle has

dropped to a 482 fps advantage at 500 yards.

By increasing muzzle velocity from 2,800 to 3,400 fps, there will be an increase in maximum point-blank range by 48 yards (20 percent); an increase in impact velocity by 21 to 24 percent; and a reduction in wind drift by 3 to 5 inches at 400 and 500 yards. The most significant improvement is reduced bullet drop as ranges reach 300 yards and beyond. With the Ultra Mag., on most big-game animals you can hold on hair at 400 yards and have the bullet drop into a vital area. With the same hold and a 7mm-08, the bullet would likely be low. Alternatively, you can load heavier 160-grain-plus bullets in the Ultra Mag. and get better retained energy and penetration.

The tradeoffs are having to carry a rifle that is 6 inches longer, 1.5 pounds (20 percent) heavier, and deal with recoil energy that is 137.5 percent higher. So which is better? That's the wrong question. The right question is, what do you want? What's important to you? How do you hunt, in what sort of terrain, what kind of game? How important is rifle size, weight and recoil? Do you have the hunting ability to get close to the game? Do you have the shooting ability to hit at long range and the discipline to decline uncertain shots? Think about your own needs and do an honest evaluation of your abilities. Get what works best for you and don't worry about what others say. True efficiency is the rifleman who makes an informed selection of rifle and cartridge, and then hones his skill to make the most of it.





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## Jordan's Rule

Readers think it's a cop-out when a gun writer asked to recommend one of two handguns answers, "They're both good. Try them both and buy the one that fits you better." There's actually some time-proven conventional wisdom supporting this advice. If the guns are in fact equal in reliability, controllability and accuracy, the one that fits your hand best is indeed the one that will make you happiest.

A good example is my police service pistol. My department uses the Ruger .45 auto. My issue P90 model is splendidly reliable and will deliver a 1.25-inch, five-shot, 25-yard group, even with cheap generic hardball. But it fits my hand like a brick with a trigger. Yet the optional P97, Ruger's less expensive polymer frame .45, fits my hand as if the gun was made for it.



## FLAT OR ARCHED

One "handgun fit argument" that's guaranteed to last more than one round after the match is, "Should the 1911-style auto pistol have a flat mainspring housing or an arched one?" The flat style came with the original 1911 pistol, but when our military determined that doughboys tended to shoot low during the Great War, in the 1920s they came up with the arched housing for the 1911A1 modification. The theory was that the protruding lower section of the grip frame would lever the muzzle up and correct the tendency to shoot low.

The reason it's worth so much argument is that it's so subjective. I own and shoot both styles. Ask me which feels more comfortable and I'd have to say the flat housing. Ask me which I shoot better, and we have a problem. I have a horrible suspicion that the arched housing actually works better for me.

A couple of years ago, Ken Hackathorn got me into the race to see who would be the first four-gun master in IDPA (International Defensive Pistol Shooting). I made it in the Enhanced Service Pistol class with a Colt 9mm by Al Greco ([www.alscustom.com](http://www.alscustom.com)) with a flat housing. The last class was Custom Defensive Pistol, and I needed the 1911 automatic in big bore caliber. And I kept trying and missing. Fine Colt .45s by Mark Morris and Dick Heinie, all with the flat backstrap I preferred, brought me almost to the Master level, but not quite. Then, almost for the hell of it, I shot the IDPA Classifier with a Kimber Gold Match .45 that I borrowed from my friend Mark Maynard — and made Master. I couldn't help but notice that the borrowed gun had an arched 1911A1-style housing.



## GLOCKS AND REVOLVERS, TOO

A few years earlier, I discovered the same situation mentioned above to be true with the Colt Pythons that I used in PPC shooting. No grip felt more comfortable in my hand than the Pachmayr Professional, with perfectly shaped finger grooves in front and a soft cushion of neoprene in the back. Then I tested Hogue grips for a magazine article. They didn't feel "right" in my hand. But perhaps because they brought the web of my hand all the way to the steel backstrap of the revolver's frame, they let me get more finger onto the trigger. All I know is that I suddenly found myself shooting slightly better.

I thought at first that it was the advice National IPSC champ Mike Plaxco had given us: "If you're on a plateau in performance, change something — whether it's your grips, or your grasp, or your stance. That'll make you focus on the basics again. And that's the only way you'll get better." I left the Hagues on, and it wasn't a fluke. I was shooting better with them. So, I kept the Hagues. When the choice is performance versus comfort, whether it's your Chevy auto's shocks or your Colt auto's grips, you're wise to go toward performance. Bear in mind, however, the Hogue versus Pachmayr or arched versus flat housing might, for your hand, be exactly the opposite of what it was for mine.

I recently spent a day shooting with my old friend Jim Cirillo of NYPD Stakeout Squad fame. He's a big fan of the Glock pistol, but all his years of shooting service revolvers left him pointing high with the Glock's radically steep grip angle. He found a solution: Cirillo went the opposite way from the 1911/1911A1 paradigm and had Robbie Barrkman at Robar reshape the back of his Glock to a flatter angle. Cirillo added some friction tape 'til it was just right. Now it pointed perfectly — problem solved.

Human hands seem sometimes to be almost as subtly different as human fingerprints. What works for one may not work for another in terms of perfect fit. Test, try and don't be afraid to alter. Finally, remember that what feels best in a static situation may be different from the grip shape that gives you maximum performance when the shooting gets hot, heavy and urgent.

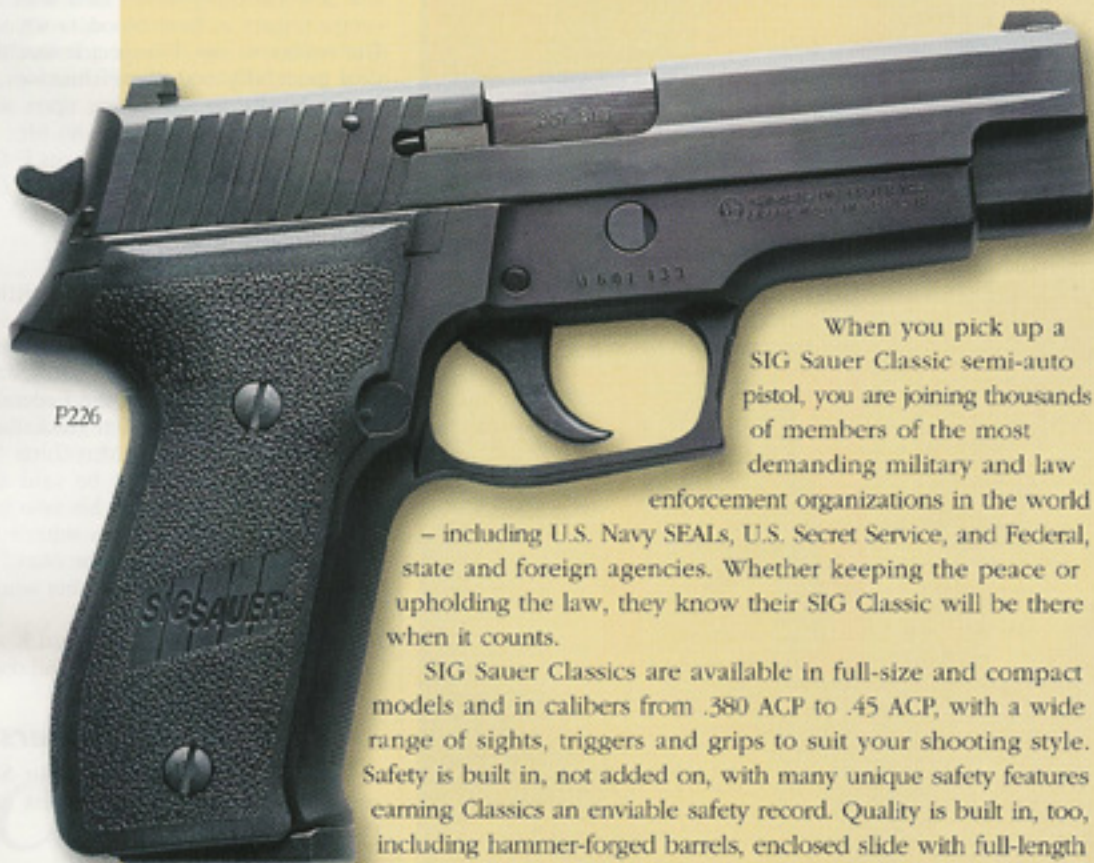
**Above:** Glock M17 radically reshaped by Robar. Straightening out the grip angle changes the pointing characteristics, and the coarse texturing ensures a nonslip grip. **Left:** A perpetual debate rages among 1911 fans as to which mainspring housing — flat or arched — is best.



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## Shotgun Grips And

While we may take them for granted, the grip and forend of a shotgun are the controlling surfaces of the gun. They either aid or hinder our ability to point and hit with a shotgun. And their variations are many, so it's important that we come to grips with this intriguing subject, particularly when buying a new or used shotgun.

The ideal function and relationship of the grip to the forend is to bring both hands into the same plane, thereby enhancing natural hand-to-eye coordination. An excellent example of this design is a straight-gripped, side-by-side double shotgun with a splinter forend. Here the leading hand grasps the barrels, creating a straight line back through the grip and the trigger hand. If we were to

add a full, deep beavertail forend to the same gun, the leading hand would be shifted to a lower plane relative to the bore axis and the ideal relationship of the hands would be compromised.

But what if we added a properly proportioned, full pistol grip to the gun? This will cause our shooting hand to ride significantly lower in relation to the centerline of the bore. Now the proper relationship of the two hands would be restored, as would our natural hand-to-eye coordination.

Of course, there are exceptions, and one can find many older American doubleguns stocked with splinter forends and full pistol grips.

When the forend encircles a magazine tube, as it does in the case of

autoloaders and pumpguns, the leading hand is by necessity positioned lower. Because of this, most autoloaders and pumps feature full pistol grips to bring the rear hand into the proper plane.

It gets a bit tricky when autoloaders and pumps are stocked with straight pistol grips to save weight and to approximate the handling qualities and balance of a rather racy upland gun. Remington has used this design quite successfully in their "Special Field" series. If one studies Remington's stocking carefully, it is apparent that the angle they have incorporated into their straight grip is sufficient to position the trigger hand correctly. The Remingtons handle and point quite nicely.

The relationship of the grip to the forend is important — so when selecting your next shotgun, get a very good grip.



*(Below) Right: This Parker double with its beavertail forend will point best with a full pistol grip. Left: A splinter forend, as shown on this Parker side by side, will function best when mated with a straight grip stock.*

## GET A GRIP

There once was a great joke about a naturalized American who was totally confused about the use of the word *grip* in the English language. He complained that the word *grip* could mean a firm handshake, a suit-

case, the handle of a bat, sickness or seizure, attention holding and coping. More along our lines, we might speak of a pistol grip, a semi-pistol grip or a straight grip.

*Below: Matching the grip to the forend enhances hand-to-eye coordination. Three types of grip pictured here are the straight grip, the full pistol grip and the semi-pistol grip.*





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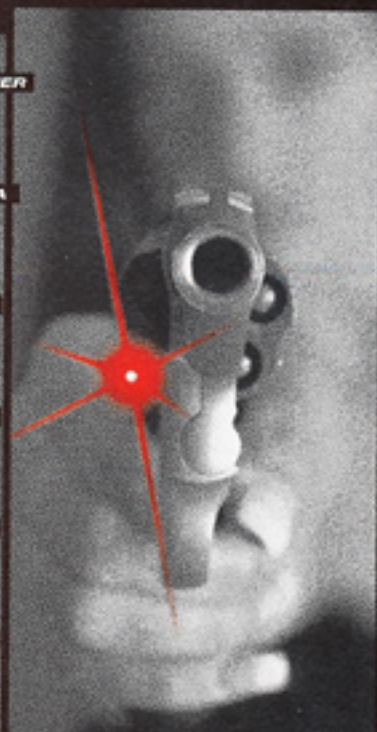
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**Technical specifications**

Weight unloaded	4 lbs	1.8 kg
Length open	30"	760 mm
Length closed	16"	406 mm
Barrel length	16.1"	409 mm
Practical range	150 yd	150 m

**Safety:**  
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## Ever since 1899, handloaders have enjoyed the use of a powder called *Unique*. It is aptly named.

If the time ever came when I could have only one handgun powder, it would probably be Alliant's Unique. It works for everything from the tiny .25 ACP to the big .454. Now it might not be the perfect choice for that particular caliber, but it will work. And I know this from first-hand experience. As a youngster with limited funds, Unique and Bullseye were the only pistol powders in my inventory. And Unique's utility has ensured its popularity all this time. Even with the monstrous variety of powders available today, Unique can still be used for almost any handgun cartridge.

One ongoing complaint about Unique is that it's *dirty*. When I get one of those gripes, I always ask about the load that caused the problem. You'd be amazed at how many of those complaining are shooting lead bullets. They blame the powder for the residue left by the bullet lube. Really.

Unique is, at least by today's standards, a bit dirty. Or rather it was. As part of an ongoing campaign, Alliant has done a lot to clean it up. You can tell the new stuff by the label. It says *Cleaner Burning* right there.

### But how does it burn cleaner?

"We did not change the recipe," said a friend at Alliant. All the changes that lead to cleaner burning are in the manufacturing process. To the naked eye, there is no difference between the old and the new Unique. But

under the microscope, the differences are there. The grains are much more uniform. Alliant has also changed a more basic manufacturing practice. Most powder is made in batches of fewer than 1,000 pounds. These are called "sublots," and many of them are then blended to provide a powder that meets the specifications for the specific product. "Base grain" powders were often used to make several different propellants, but Alliant now identifies sublots as Unique from the outset.

During the manufacturing process, the wet powder is extruded through a plate with a number of holes. The size of each hole determines the diameter of the finished powder grain. On the other side of the plate is a rotating knife. The knife's distance from the plate determines the thickness of the grain. When we examine any powder with enough magnification we see that there is quite a bit of variation in grain size and thickness. Obviously different size grains burn at different rates and it is the unburned powder left in the bore and case that influence our call of, "dirty powder."

By careful process control, the new Unique is much more consistent in grain size and therefore burns more completely. Alliant tests powder cleanliness by swabbing a bore with a weighed patch and then weighing the dirty patch to determine how much residue is in the bore. Using this test method, the *new* Unique reduces residue by over 50 percent.

### Testing

Outside of a laboratory, it's hard to conduct the same cleanliness test that Alliant does, so I came up with two tests to compare old and new. First was just simply to load some ammo with both powders. The load was a pretty snappy .357 Magnum load I've used before: 9.4 grains of Unique with a 125-grain Nosler JHP. The first test was to set the Redding powder measure to throw 9.4 grains of the new stuff, load the ammo and then change powders. The scale still read 9.4, proving that the bulk density is the same. Those rounds were then chronographed through a 6-inch S&W Model 27. Twenty rounds of each showed 1,383 fps. for the new Unique vs. 1,360 fps. for the old. Please don't be misled into thinking that is *different*. We

might very well get that much variation from batches loaded from the same can of powder.

The second test began with the gun spotlessly clean. The loads with the improved powder were fired first. A visual inspection showed a little "dust" in the bore but no gross fouling. Then the loads with the older powder were fired. There was a noticeable increase in the amount of unburned powder in the bore, although it was not enough to be a cause for concern.

So I'd have to say that Alliant's claims are accurate. It is cleaner, but unchanged in ballistic terms. That's no small feat. Unique continues to be a wonderfully useful powder. If you could only have one handgun powder, Unique would serve nicely.

### A Personal Note

I have lost a great friend. And shooting has lost a gunsmith whom I've spoken of as the best ever on the Government Model. This is high praise, but something I

feel qualified to give. You see the man we just lost was named Bob Day. And he trained me.

Day was the gunsmith for the USAF Pistol Teams during the 1960s, and I was a shooter and gunsmith in training. It was his job to inspect the guns I built and he did so with much enthusiasm. It wasn't unusual for him to write a page of things for me to fix. Now mind you, the guns all grouped and functioned well, but the quality wasn't up to Bob's standard for a pistol bearing the AFPG (Air Force Premium Grade) stamp. We went round and round, but he never bent. Finally one day, I took him a gun that I had sweated and slaved over. It was the best work I'd ever done. Day spent an hour going over it, taking it apart meticulously, piece after piece, scrutinizing it near to death. Finally he put it back together, walked across the room and laid it on my bench. "That'll do," he said and turned on his heel — I wanted to punch him out. It was one of the proudest moments of my life.

Over all the years that passed, we were more like brothers than friends and shared a special bond that sometimes defied logic or description. Late in life Bob grew wings, and flying became a consuming passion. Flying claimed him after only 71 years — much too soon.

So even if you never knew or heard of Bob Day, your loss is almost as great as mine, for he established a standard of quality that the best smiths of today should envy. God speed old friend.





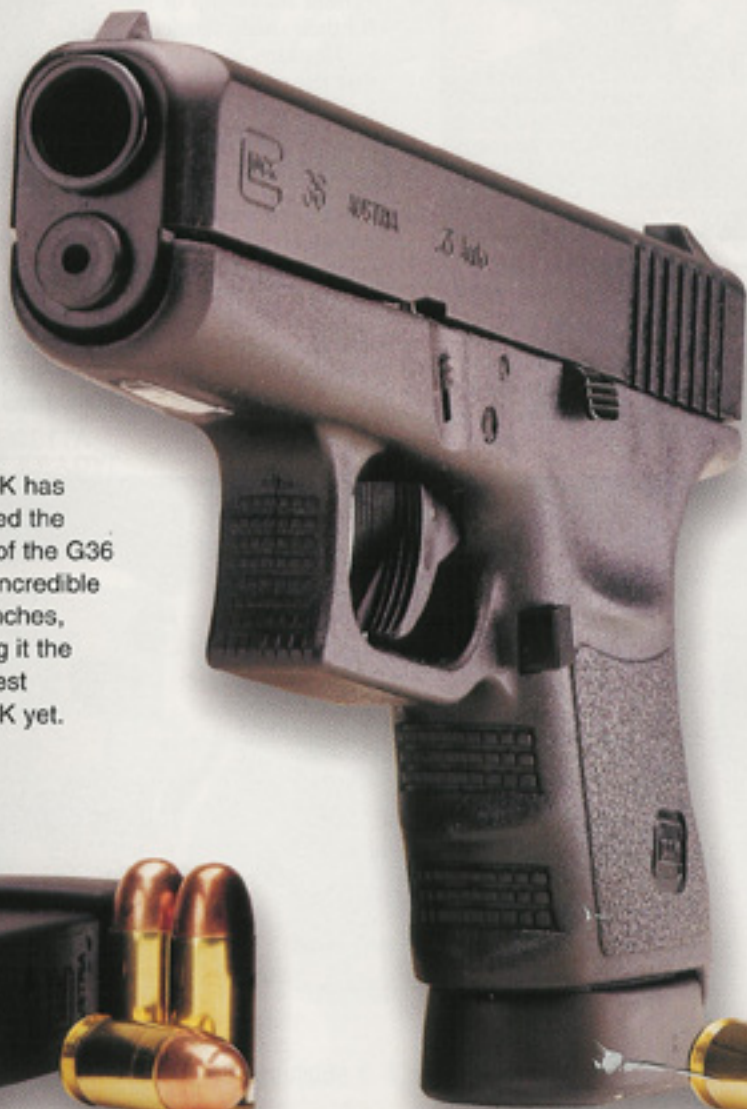
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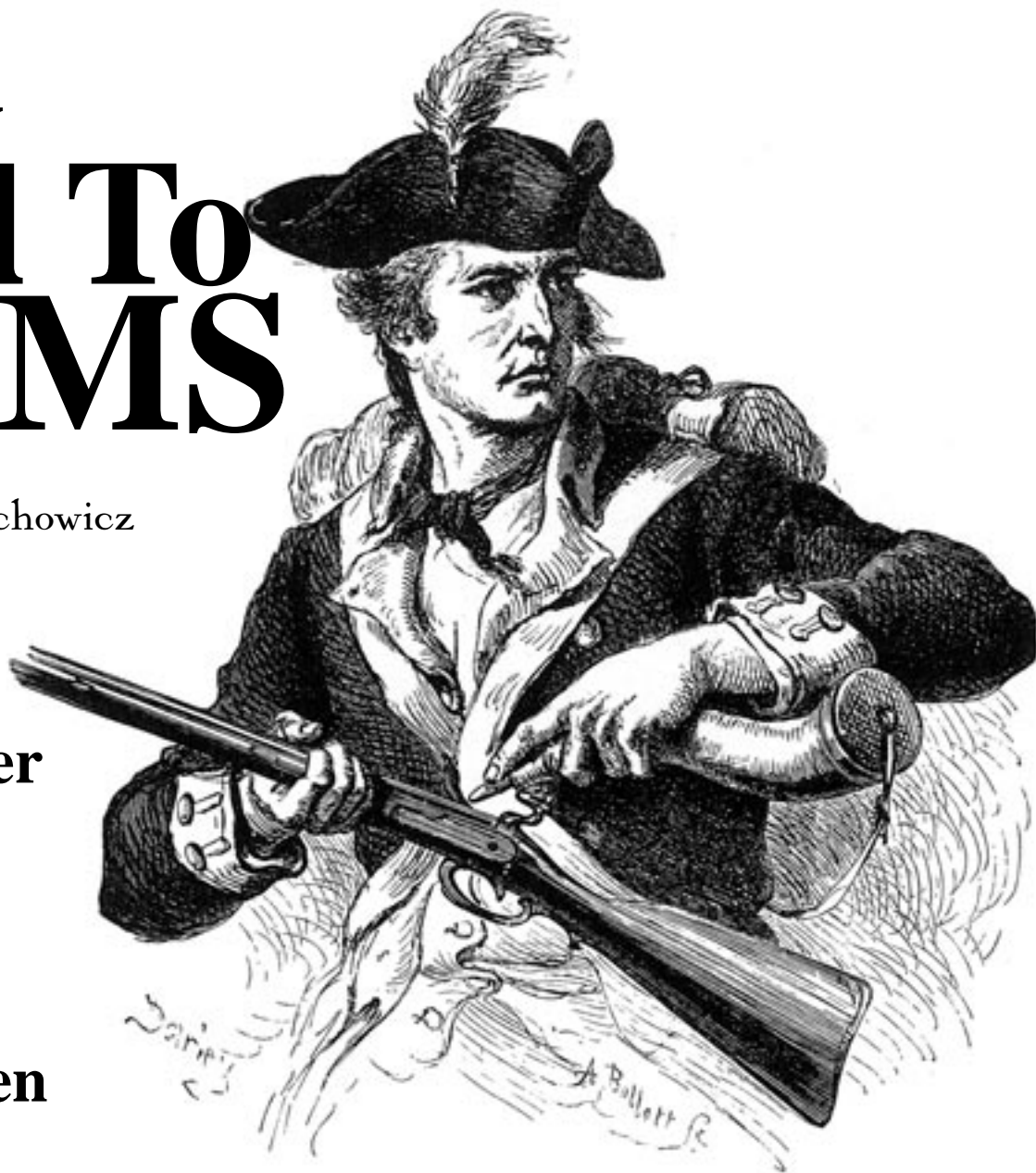
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# A New Call To ARMS

By Gerald Wachowicz

**The proper  
role for  
today's  
Minutemen  
is to be an  
intelligent  
spokesman for  
the right to  
keep and  
bear arms.**



**G**un control advocates, who see private firearm ownership as the source of all evil, have existed for nearly as long as firearms themselves. Recent events have swelled both their ranks and the volume with which they proclaim their beliefs. The Clinton administration tried to terrify the nation into believing private-gun ownership caused violent crime and passed the Brady Act and the



# America's Top Choice

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Perhaps you've always yearned for a 22 lever action. Our Models Golden 39A and 1897 Cowboy are slick-shooting classics with a heritage that goes back more than a century.

Our Model 25MG "Garden Gun" is ideal for protecting a farm or garden against pests and predators. This bolt action 22 Win. Mag. smooth-bore fires shot cartridges and offers smashing power at close range, with relatively low noise.

Whatever your choice in Marlin 22 rifles, you'll find they all share the highest levels of quality and value. All incorporate the finest materials, design and construction, so they'll stay dependable and accurate for years to come. And, of course, every one comes with our exclusive Micro-Groove® rifling, for less bullet distortion and a better gas seal for superb accuracy.

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Model 60 Self-Loading 22 LR



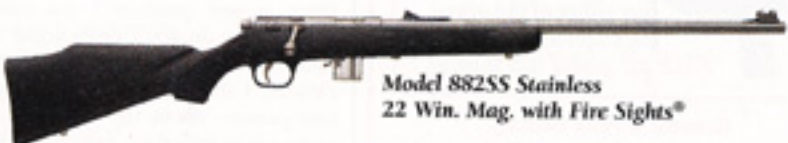
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Assault Weapons Ban. But when conservatives took control of the House of Representatives in '94, the anti-gun agenda ground to a halt. When stand-alone laws on "junk guns," ammo taxes, one-gun-a-month limits and registration restrictions couldn't pass, liberals had no option but to attach them as riders to popular, necessary legislation.

Clinton-supported, anti-gun efforts sprang up like weeds in the White House's front lawn. A "million" moms marched, and Rosie preached that if you own a gun you should go to prison (unless you're guarding her children, of course). Director Spike Lee called for the murder of NRA President Charleston Heston with a large caliber handgun. And the media stumped for the reasonable destruction of the Second Amendment. Major cities sued gun manufacturers. The Clinton/Reno Justice Department told the courts that the Second Amendment wouldn't stop them from banning all guns. And misinformed people whose only experience with guns is the mayhem on television and movie screens proclaimed themselves as enlightened activists protecting our children.

## Take The High Road

Since the NRA can't be at every town or county board meeting, it's up to us to stand against these lies and bogus statistics. But there is one question I am continuously asked: How do you calmly argue with gun-control activists? Even after numerous experiences, I still find the idea of bashing the anti-gunners about the head and knocking some sense into them appealing. But we're better than that, right? This means that in order to command agreement, we're limited to telling the truth in a logical and compelling manner.

The secret to remaining calm while debating is having fun and remembering that no matter what you say or how you say it, you won't convert a hard-core anti-gunner. That's right, I said have fun. Because if you believe that you can convert Sara Brady's brainwashed minions, you need a serious reality check.

However, if your intention is to convince an audience of undecideds and misguided, then you can have a satisfying experience. And by remaining calm you'll keep the discussion from becoming a verbal street brawl that can further damage the image of legal gun owners.

Although there is no one-size-fits-all answer for dealing with anti gunners, there is one vital requirement: preparation. Knowing what you know, what you don't know, and when to walk away makes you look more authoritative. Have verifiable facts at your fingertips. Nothing will make you look more foolish than trying to bluff, because if you bluff you will get caught.

Expect lies and paranoia from anti-gunners, so question everything and accept nothing. Challenge them as they elevate

their personal fears to the status of conventional wisdom — because verifiable facts prove the opposite. Remember that the phrase "everybody knows" is the tip-off that means the anti-gunner is stating opinion, not fact. Question each statement and ask how your opponent can support such outrageous ideas. Put them on the defensive and make obvious the fact that they're making up excuses, not speaking facts.

## Three Types Of Anti-Gunners

Most anti-gunners you'll confront are not hard core Brady supporters. They are sincere people who want their fears seriously addressed and given proper consideration. So let's look at the anti-gun types you're sure to meet.

Group one is the well-meaning but clueless type. I faced a group of mothers convinced that kids carried undetectable plastic, "terrorist" guns past their school's metal detector. One mother even displayed a length of PVC pipe she smuggled past metal detectors as an example of lax security. The group was petitioning for a statewide ban on plastic guns, and our interaction was a pleasure.

Genuine worry needs comfort — not an argument. Mothers who want to insure their child's safety will examine viable alternatives. As a parent myself, I praised and agreed with their concerns but demonstrated how their solution was the wrong one. I placed the facts before them and saw their distrust of Brady literature grow as they realized that no guns are made entirely of plastic and that polymer-framed guns have enough metal to be detected by any properly calibrated metal detector. They were also surprised to learn that "plastic" guns are a popular choice with police departments worldwide.

This particular group learned to distrust anti-gun propaganda and, more importantly, to see the pro-gun side as the authoritative source of facts. Since then they've contacted me about other gun topics. This group now petitions their state representatives for Project Exile. And I had bags of fun speaking with them.

*Project Exile is an NRA inspired program of strict prosecution and sentencing for violators of existing gun laws. The program has been linked to a 65 percent reduction of crime in one test community. Ed.*

Group number two is the reluctant pro-gun liberal. This person doesn't own a gun, but admits that you have a right to own a gun — one gun. That one gun fulfills the constitutional guarantee was the consensus of political science professors at a Chicago University. Having fun with the argument just edged it up a notch.

I thanked the professors for supporting the Second Amendment and then asked, based on their research, which single gun they would recommend. I reminded them that it must be suitable to hunt everything from squirrel to duck to Cape buffalo. It

*continued on page 56*





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The principle components of the Otis System are so well built that they are warranted for Life! The circular all-caliber patches are made of 100% cotton, and unlike cheap synthetic patches are not dissolved by the bore solvent, turning into plastic gunk left on the rifling. The tight weave of these patches actually pulls metallic copper flake buildup out of the grooves rather than leaving fibers embedded along the bore. The SupraTime brushes

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are custom made with more and finer bristles than lesser brands. The belt-pack cases are made of ballistic nylon, with heavy duty zippers. The Bore Obstruction Removers are designed to avoid deforming a stuck bullet and will gently force it out of the bore with multiple taps from the Memory-flex rod. The Memory flex rod is nylon coated, aircraft-grade cable with compression welded fittings that will support over a quarter ton of pull force!

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# THE EVOLVING WATERFOWL GUN

Today's waterfowl guns have been adapted to meet the demands of current hunting conditions.

By Holt Bodin

It wasn't that long ago when something as specialized as a dedicated waterfowl gun was pretty rare in the average duck blind or goose pit. What one would see at the water's edge were a lot of standard field-grade pumps and autoloaders that had largely displaced those quality doubles of yesteryear: Browning Auto-5s; Winchester Model 97s, 12s, and possibly a Model 50, 59 or Super-X1; Remington Model 31s, 870s, 11s and 11-48s; Ithaca 37s; and a sprinkling of Stevens, Savages, High-Standards, Marlins and Long Tom 36-inch barreled bolt guns. Fixed chokes were the standard, but after-market Poly-Chokes and Cutts Compensators were making inroads.

The most specialized waterfowling gun of the time was Winchester's Model 12 Heavy Duck Gun. It was chambered for the 3-inch shell and featured a heavy-walled barrel of 30 or 32 inches. Weight was a substantial 9 pounds.

*continued on page 62*

**(Below) Top:** The Browning Gold 10 gauge makes the most of steel shot when gunning for the high flyers. **Middle:** For those who just can't enjoy wing shooting unless a fine doublegun is involved, Ruger's Red Label in Stainless will handle the harshest conditions. **Bottom:** The Mossberg 835 Ulti-Mag chambered for the 12 gauge, 3½-inch shell ushered in a new era of performance in waterfowl guns.





## CURRENT STATUS OF **NONTOXIC** SHOT

**B**y any measure, steel shot is still the leading and least expensive nontoxic shot option available to waterfowlers.

It's getting cheaper every year, too, as evidenced by Winchester's new Xpert brand of lower-cost steel shot for the 12 and 20 gauges. Being lighter than lead, steel requires the use of a larger shot size and a different choke to gain the same performance. But it does perform.

For older shotguns with pre-steel shot barrels, Bismuth, Federal's Tungsten-Polymer, and Kent's Tungsten Matrix ammunition provide downrange performance closely approximating traditional lead and are entirely safe to use in all shotguns designed for smokeless powder. The same-size shot as lead shot can be used with the same degree of choke.

Federal's Tungsten-Iron and Hevishot's Tungsten-nickel/iron shot are dense, hard-hitting substitutes for lead. Expensive, they still may be the best of their kind developed so far.

But stay tuned. The nontoxic-shot race gets more interesting every year, and, hopefully, the resulting competition will help moderate prices.



*The guns and loads of waterfowling may have changed, but the smile on your face after a morning of good shooting remains the same!*



# Ed Brown's

# M702

## Precision Tactical Rifle

## Precision Tactical Rifle



Ed Brown, long known for building superb custom pistols, now offers a series of precision long-range rifles that justify his reputation for extreme quality.







**TABLE 1:**  
**100-Yard Accuracy Results**  
**Ed Brown M702 Tactical Rifle**  
*(5-round shot group — 3-group average)*

<i>Federal 175 gr.</i>	<i>0.600"</i>
<i>Black Hills 175 gr.</i>	<i>0.65"</i>
<i>Remington 168 gr.</i>	<i>0.61"</i>
<i>Black Hills 168 gr.</i>	<i>1.06"</i>
<i>Federal 168 gr.</i>	<i>0.95"</i>

*The M702 is a high-quality rifle that delivers superb accuracy and performance on a par with others costing substantially more. I have shot other tactical precision rifles that deliver similar levels of accuracy, but most were more expensive than the M702. The quality of its construction is evident in every detail. If you have a need for a rifle that surpasses normal accuracy expectations, will stand up to a lifetime of rugged service, and that is backed up by one of the most respected names in the firearms industry, you will find that the Brown M702 hits the mark. Suggested retail of the M702, as we tested it, is \$2,800.*

**R**ecent years have seen the development and widespread acceptance of the specialized “tactical” or precision rifle. Used by both military/law

enforcement and civilian shooters, this rapidly evolving

class of rifles has set new standards for long-range accuracy.

For some riflemen, good is not good enough. Although very good factory-assembled precision rifles are available at modest cost, they must still embody some compromises. Despite such features as an action developed with hunting rather than precision in mind, and a “lawyer approved” trigger mechanism, these factory rifles perform surprisingly well. But for riflemen who refuse any compromise, a higher standard of performance can be had.

*continued on page 64*

**Above:** The Brown M702, fitted with Leupold 3.5-10 scope, Versa-Pod and Tuff-Cuff sling. The rifle proved to group well under MOA in testing. **Opposite:** (left) The M702 features a Winchester-type three position safety. (middle) The bolt-stop of the Brown Tactical rifle is sturdier and more convenient than that found on many other rifles. (right) Even the finest precision rifle is useless without good optics. Shown here is the outstanding Leupold 3.5-10 Long Range M1.

## SPECIFICATIONS

### Ed Brown M702 Tactical Precision Rifle

<b>Caliber:</b>	7.62x51mm (tested); .300 Win Mag
<b>Barrel:</b>	Heavy contour, 26", 1:10" or 1:12" twist
<b>Empty Weight:</b>	14.5 lb.*
<b>Stock:</b>	McMillan tactical A-3, hand-bedded
<b>Length, O/A:</b>	45"
<b>Suggested retail price:</b>	Approx. \$2800

*\*As-tested weight includes Leupold Vari-X III Long Range telescopic sight, Versa-Pod bipod and Tuff-Cuff sling.*

By Charles Cutshaw



BULLET	MV-8"	MV-10"	MV-16 1/2"
<b>BRP 290 GC</b>			
9.0 GR. UNIQUE	1058	1122	1240
10.0 GR. UNIQUE	1109	1173	1279
21.0 GR. H4227	1200	1301	1474
18.5 GR. AA#9	1274	1345	1478
19.5 GR. LIL' GUN	1232	1326	1527
18.5 GR. #2400	1289	1367	1560
21.5 GR. H110	1306	1372	1563
21.5 GR. WW296	1313	1383	1576
<b>BULL-X WILSON 300FP</b>			
9.0 GR. UNIQUE	1025	1075	1143
21.0 GR. H4227	1232	1292	1433
18.5 GR. AA#9	1352	1421	1521
19.5 GR. LIL' GUN	1259	1352	1534
18.5 GR. #2400	1327	1382	1559
21.5 GR. H110	1259	1420	1567
21.5 GR. WW296	1337	1404	1576
<b>CAST PERFORMANCE BULLET CO. 300LBT-GC</b>			
21.0 GR. H4227	1252	1314	1478
18.5 GR. AA#9	1296	1349	1523
19.5 GR. LIL' GUN	1254	1346	1534
18.5 GR. #2400	1308	1410	1549
21.5 GR. H110	1363	1426	1584
21.5 GR. WW296	1335	1401	1612
<b>CAST PERFORMANCE BULLET CO. 320 LBT-GC</b>			
9.0 GR. UNIQUE	938	1021	1111
20.0 GR. H4227	1148	1195	1382
17.5 GR. AA#9	1198	1256	1412
18.5 GR. LIL' GUN	1155	1237	1453
17.5 GR. #2400	1213	1285	1456
20.5 GR. H110	1231	1301	1471
20.5 GR. WW296	1249	1318	1521
<b>LYMAN #429650GC</b>			
9.0 GR. UNIQUE	1060	1118	1225
20.0 GR. H4227	1179	1263	1389
17.5 GR. AA#9	1217	1297	1421
18.5 GR. LIL' GUN	1189	1283	1490
17.5 GR. #2400	1281	1332	1501
20.5 GR. H110	1304	1367	1515
20.5 GR. WW296	1307	1376	1553
<b>LYMAN #429649GC</b>			
9.0 GR. UNIQUE	983	1033	1114
20.0 GR. H4227	1191	1324	1409
17.5 GR. AA#9	1187	1265	1390
18.5 GR. LIL' GUN	1157	1247	1472
17.5 GR. #2400	1235	1289	1466
20.5 GR. H110	1255	1338	1499
20.5 GR. WW296	1252	1370	1526
<b>RCBS #44-300GC</b>			
9.0 GR. UNIQUE	1041	1127	1222
21.0 GR. H4227	1234	1320	1460
18.5 GR. AA#9	1291	1372	1507
19.5 GR. LIL' GUN	1206	1300	1534
18.5 GR. #2400	1307	1365	1552
21.5 GR. H110	1302	1343	1561
21.5 GR. WW296	1306	1369	1592
<b>OREGON TRAIL 300TC</b>			
9.0 GR. UNIQUE	1004	1078	1179
20.0 GR. H4227	1228	1275	1428
17.5 GR. AA#9	1269	1334	1428
18.5 GR. LIL' GUN	1216	1306	1482
17.5 GR. #2400	1288	1342	1513
20.5 GR. H110	1307	1396	1540
20.5 GR. WW296	1343	1409	1582
<b>SSK #285.429FP</b>			
9.0 GR. UNIQUE	1069	1153	1285
22.0 GR. H4227	1244	1389	1563
19.5 GR. AA#9	1368	1439	1602
20.5 GR. LIL' GUN	1312	1351	1606
19.5 GR. #2400	1355	1435	1632
22.5 GR. H110	1375	1438	1657
22.5 GR. WW296	1390	1490	1685
<b>SSK #310.429FP</b>			
21.0 GR. H4227	1245	1331	1485
18.5 GR. AA#9	1327	1372	1511
19.5 GR. LIL' GUN	1252	1341	1574
18.5 GR. #2400	1298	1314	1567
21.5 GR. H110	1332	1345	1587
21.5 GR. WW296	1339	1359	1612



<b>HEAVYWEIGHT JACKETED BULLETS</b>			
BULLET/LOAD	MV-8"	MV- 10"	MV-16 1/2"
HORNADY 300 XTP-HP/18.0 GR. AA#9	1242	1277	1447
HORNADY 300 XTP-HP/20.5 GR. H110	1207	1270	1438
NORTHERN PRECISION 280/19.0 GR. AA#9	1245	1301	1508
NORTHERN PRECISION 280/21.5 GR. H110	1227	1270	1495
NORTHERN PRECISION 310/18.0 GR. AA#9	1185	1257	1419
NORTHERN PRECISION 310/20.5 GR. H110	1175	1229	1434
NORTHERN PRECISION 325/18.0 GR. AA#9	—	—	1382
NORTHERN PRECISION 325/20.5 GR. H110	—	—	1428
NOSLER 300 JHP/18.0 GR. AA#9	1229	1251	1461
NOSLER 300 JHP/20.5 GR. H110	1199	1241	1439
SIERRA 300 JFP/19.0 GR. AA#9	1233	1239	1481
SIERRA 300 JFP/21.5 GR. H110	1225	1240	1455
SPEER 300 JFP/18.5 GR. AA#9	1148	1145	1465
SPEER 300 JFP/21.5 GR. H110	1183	1237	1515





# HEAVYWEIGHT BULLETS

## IN THE .44 MAGNUM

BY JOHN TAFFIN

Most shooters who have been around a fair amount of time know that Elmer Keith's writings about the .44 Special from the late 1920s into the mid-1950s were directly responsible for the advent of the .44 Magnum. He did not invent the cartridge, per se. However, without his articles about taking big-game with big-bore sixguns — especially when chambered in the .44 Special and using what is now known as the “Keith Load” of a 250-grain, hard-cast bullet of his design at 1,200 fps from a 7½-inch sixgun — we would in all probability have never seen the .44 Magnum. He not only spent 30 years paving the way, he also negotiated directly with Remington and Smith & Wesson to bring about the ammunition and the sixgun to shoot it.

Keith was not an overnight sensation by any means. He started like most of us, from nowhere, knowing next to nothing. In fact, nearly 20 years after the .44 Special had been introduced by Smith & Wesson, he had yet to see one. Remember that in Keith's early years there were no gun magazines as such, and the closest thing to instant communication was a letter that took several weeks to travel across the country. He was simply

*continued on page 69*

SUPER HEAVYWEIGHT LOADS		
FREEDOM ARMS .44 MAGNUM ONLY!!!!		
BULLET: BRP 290 GC		
LOAD		MV-10"
19.0 GR. #2400		1420
20.0 GR. #2400		1504
22.5 GR. WW296		1483
23.5 GR. WW296		1551
BULLET: SSK 310.429 FP		
LOAD		MV-10"
19.0 GR. #2400		1458
20.0 GR. #2400		1542
22.5 GR. WW296		1519

**Above:** Taffin enjoys using heavier-than-standard cast bullets in these '50s vintage .44s. But he limits them to lighter loads with 300-grain bullets in deference to their light weight. **(Right) Top:** These heavyweight .44 Magnum cast bullets are (from left) BRP's 290, Bull-X's 300, Oregon Trail's 300, and SSK's 285 and 310-grain. **Bottom:** Dual cannelures on some jacketed bullets permit increasing the powder capacity. (from left) Hornady XTP using top and bottom cannelures, Sierra, Nosler and Speer.





# HIGH-TECH HUN

USING TECHNOLOGY  
WISELY IN THE  
HUNTING FIELD CAN  
HELP MAKE THE  
MOST OF YOUR  
OUTDOOR  
EXPERIENCE.

*The Hawk-eye unit allows you to monitor trail use and game movement.*



Technology has made our lives easier. There is no denying that fact. It is equally true that one of the joys of hunting is escaping the fast-paced modern lifestyle. Such things as cooking over an open fire and sleeping on the ground connect us with a simpler time.

It is a rare hunter though who cares to shed too many of the modern conveniences. How many of us would care to light that morning cook fire with flint and steel, or would trade our down-filled, nylon sleeping bag for a couple of thin woolen blankets?

It is also a fact that for many of us the opportunity to hunt each year is limited. A one week trip is probably the norm, and with travel time factored in, that leaves precious little hunting time. Modern high-tech tools can help today's hunters make the most of their time in the field. They can also assist in achieving the goal of all hunters — a quick, humane kill, and a recovered animal.

## Beating That Old Devil Wind

More shots are missed or misplaced by underestimating the wind rather than the elevation when game is beyond 200 yards. Wind drift is a major factor and little appreciated. For example, with a 20 MPH crosswind, a typical .30-caliber, 180-grain spitzer being driven at 2,800 fps will drift 16 inches off target at 300 yards and a whopping 29 inches at 400 yards. That's a missed or a wounded animal!

If you have the time, it pays to measure wind velocity accurately and to crank the resulting value into your hold before pressing the trigger. And it's never been easier.



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BY HOLT BODINSON

# TING

**Below:** Kestrel and Dwyer wind speed meters offer information that can otherwise only be guessed.







*The proper use of Atsko's products can help you avoid the "walking neon bulb" effect.*

The Dwyer Wind Meter is a simple, lightweight, inexpensive tool that is surprisingly accurate for wind measurements from 2 to 60 mph. Simply hold the Dwyer Meter facing into the wind. The air enters two holes in the base of the unit, and a little poly-plastic ball floats up and down on the column of air. Velocity is read at the intersection of the plastic ball and the printed scale. The accuracy of the Dwyer Meter (selling for \$15.99 from

Midway) compares favorably with wind meters that cost four times as much. The real differences are that the Dwyer model is a bit more fragile; it can be affected by static electricity and moisture; and it must be kept clean. Stored in your shooting box, it is ideal for range use.

The alternative is the rather sophisticated and field tough Kestrel 1000. Housed in a self-contained hard case, the Kestrel utilizes an ultra-light impeller, mounted in jeweled bearings, and a large liquid crystal display. It features three operating modes: wind speed, average wind speed and maximum wind speed. And it can record speeds from 0.7 to 89 mph.

The Kestrel is waterproof (it floats) and is modular so that either the impeller or the display can be changed. The Kestrel, like the Dwyer, can be ordered with scales that read

knots, miles per hour, feet per minute, meters per second or kilometers per hour. Because of its toughness and ease of use, the Kestrel is the ideal wind meter for hunting or for long-range target practice. The Kestrel 1000 is available directly from the manufacturer, Nielsen-Kellerman, and sells for \$89.

### DeLorme's Amazing Topo USA 3.0 Mapping Software

Big-game hunters have traditionally relied on USGS topographic map sheets for navigation. The problems with USGS map sheets are they're not readily available and are often years out-of-date. And the ability to mentally translate contour lines into a 3-D image of the land is an acquired skill. What if, using your home computer and an inexpensive new mapping program for the entire United States, you could do all of the following:

- View land forms in 3-D and in color from any height, angle or compass point
- View actual land-use and land-cover information, including mixed and coniferous forests, wetlands and ice
- Upload or download GPS waypoints and convert GPS waypoints into trails
- Download topographic maps on a Palm OS handheld using Solus Pro software
- Trace a trail and view it in 3-D or in 2-D with 20-foot contour lines and shaded relief





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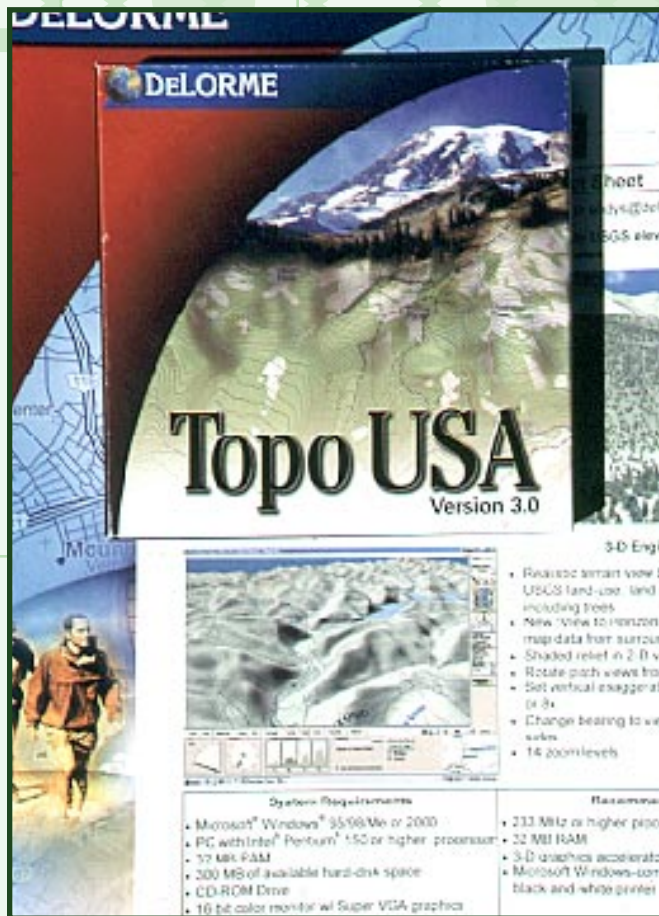
- Have access to the latest trail information for National Forests and Parks
  - Customize and print topographic maps for field use
  - Generate automatic door-to-trailhead, road-routing data
- Throw away those old topo sheets! You can do all of this, and more, with DeLorme's new TOPO USA 3.0 mapping software. As with all new software, it will take you some time to learn all the moves and clicks, but the program does include a tutorial. The cost of TOPO USA covering the entire United States is \$99, and if you need just a multi-state regional area, the regional programs sell for \$49.

### Compact 800 Yard Rangefinders

Technology has a wonderful way of compressing circuits and size. It's now possible to buy a relatively inexpensive rangefinder with twice the power and half the size of rangefinders used only five years ago.

Recently, Bushnell and Leica introduced compact 800-yard models that will do anything worth doing in the hunting field. Why 800? You'll not be shooting farther than that. And with the extra power of an 800-yard model, you'll receive very accurate readings in the more practical 300- to 600-yard hunting range.

Bushnell's Yardage Pro family of rangefinders has been around a long time. And there's a model for every possible use, from bow hunting to golf. (There's even the big 1,000 yard model.) I still carry the very first Yardage Pro 400



**Above:** The advanced features of DeLorme's Topo USA 3.0 software allows you to plan a future hunt in detail. **Left:** Here is technology that hunters could only dream of a few short years ago. (from left) Bushnell's original Yardage Pro 400 and new Yardage Pro 80, and Leica's LRF 800.

afield and am pleased to report that up to 400 yards, that bulky, old warhorse proved as accurate as either of the newer 800 yard entries.

The Yardage Pro 800 is a small rangefinder, measuring 2x4.75x3.75 inches and weighing 11.5 ounces. It features an 8X eyepiece, runs on 4 AA batteries, and is rated with an accuracy of +/-2 yards. The outstanding quality of the Bushnell is its selection of useful operating modes, consisting of modes for yards or meters, highly reflective targets, rain, scanning and a >150 mode, which ignores objects closer than 150 yards, such as brush. In use, the unit is activated by pressing the power switch, sighting on the desired object and pushing the power switch once again to take a reading. The aiming point is a crosshair with an open center. The case is rounded and ergonomic and is very stable when sighting on an object. The Yardage Pro 800 retails for approximately \$350.

Leica's entry into the rangefinder field is its LRF 800, which measures 1x4x4 inches and weighs 10 ounces. It features a 7X eyepiece with a diopter adjustment and a fold down eye cup. The LRF 800 operates on a standard 9V battery and is rated with an accuracy of +/- 1

*continued on page 73*





# DOUBLE ACTION HI-POWER

Story By Charles E. Petty

Photos By Ichiro Nagata

**FABRIQUE  
NATIONALE'S  
NEW HP-DA  
BRINGS THE  
CLASSIC  
BROWNING  
HI-POWER  
INTO THE  
21ST CENTURY**

**I**narguably, the Browning Hi-Power, or P-35, is one of the most successful pistols in the world. As double-action auto pistols increased in popularity among U.S. shooters in the '70s, speculation ran rampant that a double-action variant of the Hi-Power would be introduced. There were many stories of their imminent arrival, but despite the occasional photograph of some factory prototype, they remained elusive. A few conversions were done by domestic gunsmiths; the late Louis Seecamp built two by adapting the system he used to convert Colt Government Models. But an affordable, commercial DA P35 failed to become a reality.

At long last, they are here. But the Browning name is nowhere to be seen on them. Marked as the FN HP-DA, the name will require some explanation. Americans tend to think of Browning as a giant company with facilities all over the world. That's not quite how it is. Browning is a wholly owned subsidiary of FN Herstal — perhaps





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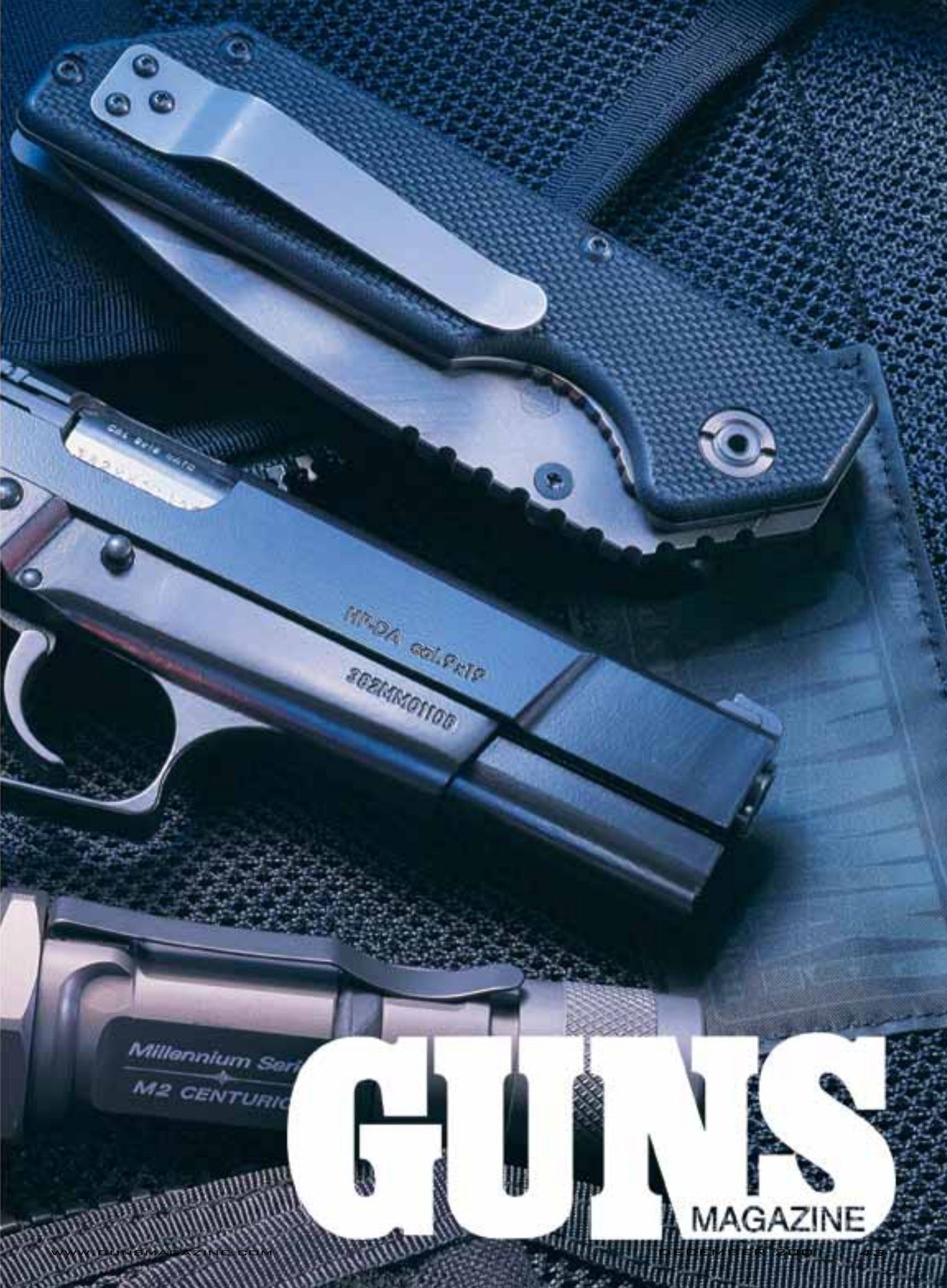
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# DOUBLE ACTION HI-POWER







# GUNS

MAGAZINE



## ACCURACY TEST RESULTS

Load	Velocity	1	2	3	Avg.
Black Hills 115-grain JHP +P	1,329	2.01	1.61	2.25	1.96
Pro Load 115-grain JHP	1,246	2.65	2.74	3.08	2.82
Federal 124-grain Hydra-shok	1,156	3.00	2.21	2.30	2.50
Remington Golden Saber 124-grain +P	1,172	4.38	3.15	2.90	3.48
Speer Gold Dot 147-grain JHP	1,000	3.24	3.46	2.40	3.03
Winchester SXT 147-grain JHP	980	3.92	3.48	3.77	3.72

*\*Accuracy measurements are the resultant average of three, five-round groups fired at 25 yards.*







better known to us as Fabrique Nationale de Armes de Guerre. Browning U.S.A. is alive and well but won't be selling the HP-DA.

Some years ago, FN opened a plant in Columbia, S.C., to manufacture M-16 rifles and M-240/M-249 machineguns under government contract. This company is known as FN Manufacturing Inc. FNMI also has a law enforcement division, which offers the unique P-90 sub-machinegun and other firearms to law enforcement.

Since management primarily views the HP-DA as a law enforcement product, it will be sold through FNMI's law enforcement distributors. Not to worry, there are no limitations on who can buy it. The HP-DA is only available in 9mm. And there are no present plans to make it in .40 S&W. This may change if demand is sufficiently strong.

### **Straight From Belgium To You**

We've grown accustomed to seeing "Made in Belgium — Assembled in Portugal" stamped on Browning Hi-Power pistols. Parts are manufactured at FN's modern plant in Herstal and shipped to its Portuguese subsidiary in Viana do Corto, where they are assembled, finished and tested.

The new HP-DA is simply marked "Made in Belgium," and the Browning name is nowhere to be

*continued on page 74*

**(Below) Top:** Despite the general external resemblance to the original Hi-Power, the internal components are of course quite different. Note the captive recoil spring assembly. **Bottom:** Right side of the HP-DA shows the ambi-decocking lever.



*Ichiro Nagata just couldn't resist putting this light recoiling, fast handling 9mm through its paces.*





# TIKKA



**BY DAVE ANDERSON**

**T**he Tikka 595 and 695 hunting rifles are well made, attractive and accurate. And they are also a remarkably good value. Their name derives from the city of Tikkakoski, Finland, where Tikka firearms were manufactured prior to 1989. For several years in the early '70s, Ithaca imported Tikka rifles, which were sold under the model names LSA 55 (short action) and LSA 65 (long action). Actions of current rifles are similar to those of the LSA models with just a few minor design details. Currently Tikka rifles are manufactured by Sako, in Riihimäki, Finland.

Because of their association with Sako, Tikka rifles are sometimes described as less fancy, lower-priced versions of the highly regarded Sako rifles. This isn't quite accurate. The actions of the two rifles do have some similarities, but they also have significant differences. The current Sako 75 uses three locking lugs and a fixed, mechanical ejector. Whereas the Tikka is a two-lug action with a spring-loaded plunger ejector in the bolt face.

Actions and barrels of Tikka rifles are made of the same high-quality materials and with the workmanship for which Sako is renowned. The price savings on the Tikka rifles can be attributed to a few things: They make use of synthetics instead of steel in non-critical areas; they use plainer grades of wood and checkering patterns on the wooden-stocked models; and they offer fewer options in terms of action length and style of magazine. Tikka rifles also do not incorporate the Sako Key Concept, the individually keyed action lock that is standard on current Sako rifles.

Beretta U.S.A. is now the U.S. importer of Tikka rifles. Two action lengths are offered. The 595 is a short action for calibers from .17 Rem. to .308 Win. The standard-length 695 action is for the .30-'06 family of cartridges. The 695M is the same action length as the standard 695 but with a longer barrel and chambered for the .300 and .338 Win. Magnums, and the 7mm Rem. Magnum.

The rifle on loan from Beretta was the Whitetail Hunter Stainless Synthetic model on the short action and chambered for the excellent 7mm-08 Rem. cartridge. In terms of operating features, design, overall length, barrel length and weight, it is a fairly conventional rifle by today's standards. That is by no means intended to be a criticism. Designs



# S Whitetail Hunter Stainless Synthetic

## These smooth feeding, accurate and good looking rifles are a first rate bargain.

become conventional because they are popular and because they work. The rifle balances and handles nicely. Bolt operation is as slick and smooth as any factory rifle you're ever likely to encounter. And you could likely include most custom rifles as well.

Bolts on Tikka rifles have twin locking lugs, a recessed bolt face, a spring-powered hook extractor and a plunger ejector. The bottom-right bolt lug is slotted to engage a guide rail in the receiver while the bolt is being moved back or forward. Winchester used this anti-bind feature in their 1968 revision of the post-'64 model 70. It's a very effective way to reduce bolt play and wobble, and to provide smooth bolt cycling. The rear of the bolt is capped with a metal shroud to protect the shooter from escaping gas in the unlikely event of cartridge-case failure. A red indicator shows when the action is cocked.

The receiver itself is flat-bottomed. The left and right side rails are unusually deep and thick. Instead of a regular flat recoil lug, the stainless synthetic action has a round steel stud projecting from the bottom front of the receiver. The stud is drilled and tapped to accept the front action screw. When the barreled action is joined to the stock, this stud seats into a corresponding hole in a block that is imbedded in the injection-molded synthetic stock. Tightening the front action screw locks the two together.

The trigger housing is machined from a block of aluminum, with the trigger and sear components made of hardened steel, hand fitted for proper operation. Removing the stock allows access to an adjustment screw for weight of pull. As set at the factory, pull was rather heavy at five pounds. But overall trigger quality was very good, with minimal creep and overtravel. The two-position sliding safety on the right rear of the receiver oper-

**Opposite:** The Tikka Whitetail Hunter, shown here in stainless and synthetic trim. **Top-left:** The Tikka's action incorporates a number of novel features. **Bottom-left:** Dave expressed reservations about the synthetic trigger-guard assembly, but could not fault the rifle's performance. **Below:** Weatherproof, smooth feeding and accurate — the Tikka is a dandy for foul-weather hunting.







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confidence when viewing the target,  
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ates conventionally (back for safe, forward for fire). When engaged, the safety both blocks the sear and locks the bolt closed.

The barrel, which is threaded into the action, is hammer-forged, stainless-steel, measures 60cm (22 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches) and is nicely contoured. Barrels on all Tikka models are hand crowned and free floated. Rifling twist, of course, varies with caliber. For the 7mm-08 caliber, Tikka uses a twist of one turn in 9.5 inches. On the stainless model, both the action and barrel have a matte finish, which is attractive and also less reflective than highly polished steel. Blued models carry a polished, low-luster finish.

The trigger guard and magazine well are synthetic, molded in one piece. A spring-loaded, synthetic magazine latch is located on the right side of the magazine well. The latch fits flush with a notch in the stock which protects it from being released inadvertently. Steel washers beneath the action screws and steel pillars in the stock keep the synthetic material from being compressed when the action screws are torqued into place.

The detachable magazine is made entirely of synthetics — the box itself, the baseplate and follower — all parts other than the magazine spring. On some earlier models, only the magazine baseplate and follower were synthetic while the magazine body was made of steel. The slim magazine holds three cartridges in a single column and fits flush with the stock when locked in position. Optional five-shot magazines are available but will extend below the line of the stock. The magazine release latch fits flush with the stock and is well protected.

Receivers of Tikka rifles are grooved to accept scope rings and are also drilled and tapped for other types of scope bases. Tikka's own Optilock rings fit these grooves. They are fitted with synthetic inserts that hold the scope firmly but allow for minor dimensional differences and protect the scope tube from scratches or ring marks. They're offered in various heights, in both blue and stainless steel, and in versions to fit either 1-inch or 30mm scope tubes. A set of old-style Sako rings were on hand, and they were used to fit a Leupold 2.5-8X Vari-X III scope to the rifle for testing.

With scope, rings and four cartridges, the rifle weighs a whisker over eight pounds. The combination balanced and handled well and proved comfortable to handle and shoot from the bench and from various hunting positions. Stock length-of-pull is adjustable by removing or adding spacers (available from the importer) beneath the butt pad.

The most vivid impression one gets in handling the rifle is the amazing smoothness of the bolt. This feature alone will likely sell a lot of rifles. The straight-line feed of cartridges from the slick synthetic magazine results in an impressively smooth bolt cycle. All the testing was done by loading the magazine rather than feeding rounds singly into the chamber. The first time the action was cycled, I had to open the bolt and double

check that a round had actually been chambered because the feeding was so smooth.

The ammunition on hand for testing included Winchester Power Point and Winchester Ballistic Silvertip, both with 140-grain bullets. The Tikka proved completely reliable; feeding, firing, extracting and ejecting were positive and smooth. Five, 5-shot groups were fired from 100 yards with each type of ammunition. Average group size with the Power Points was 1.35 inches. And for the Ballistic Silvertips the average was 1.15 inches. The smallest 5-shot group was with the Silvertips at .90 inch, and the largest group was the Power Points at 1.75 inches.

There are a few things I don't care for about the Tikka, most of which are simply matters of personal taste. I don't care for detachable magazines, mainly because they have a way of getting left behind. Elmer Keith once commented that he liked revolvers because, "if you have any of it, you have all of it." I feel the same way about rifles with integral magazines. To be fair though, interchangeable magazines do make short work of changing loads in the field.

The pistol grip has a modest palm swell, a feature European shooters seem to like but which has never really caught on here. I could do without the Monte Carlo dip on the buttstock. And I have trouble with any rifle accepting plastic trigger guards. I know, "Swallow a camel and strain at a gnat." I don't know why I can accept synthetic stocks and then fret about the trigger guard material, but there it is. I'll take refuge behind Emerson, who said that "consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds."

Allowing for personal foibles, the Tikka is a heck of a good rifle: Workmanship, fit and finish, accuracy and functioning are all excellent; the adjustable trigger is very good; the rifle looks good and handles well; and cycling the action is just about worth the price of admission all by itself. The current strength of the U.S. dollar against other currencies helps make the Tikka an excellent buy.

Currently, four versions of the Tikka are being imported. The Whitetail Hunter version has a blued, carbon-steel barrel and action in a wood stock. The Hunter Deluxe has a fancier wood stock with rollover cheekpiece, rosewood grip cap and forearm tip, and a high gloss wood finish. The Hunter Synthetic has the blued steel barrel and action in a synthetic stock. And the Hunter Stainless Synthetic has a stainless-steel barrel and action. Tikka offers other models as well, including a left-handed variant.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**Beretta U.S.A. Corp.**

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# A Short Treatise on **BARREL MAKING**

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HERE IS A BRIEF LOOK AT RIFLING METHODS,  
BOTH SPACE-AGE AND CENTURIES OLD.*

---







---

## By Charles E. Petty

---

If you visit the gunsmith's shop in Colonial Williamsburg, you will see a massive, wooden rifling machine that was used to manufacture rifle barrels during the Revolutionary War. If you visit H-S Precision in Rapid City, S.D., you will see the same technology being used today. In Williamsburg, a man provided the power. At

H-S Precision, it's done with an electric motor and controls.

Three key events directed the evolution of our sport. First was the invention of gunpowder in the 14th century. Second was the invention of the rifled barrel in the 18th century. Third was the inception of the metallic cartridge case in the mid-1800s. And now, the 21st-century rifleman is blessed with the finest rifles ever produced: stable, durable, synthetic stocks and optical sights of the finest quality. Modern ammunition is supremely accurate and reli-



**Above:** Here a barrel is being rifled by the button rifling process. **Below:** Deep-hole drilling machine. If this process is not performed correctly, there is no hope of producing a top-quality barrel.

able, and its noncorrosive properties free us from constant cleaning and maintenance.

With this abundance, we easily forget that there is one feature still essential to making our rifles perform — rifling. While there are modern methods of rifling a barrel, the same basic procedure developed by 18th-century gunsmiths is still in use today. Understanding how barrels are rifled may not make you a better shooter, but it is sure to increase your appreciation for your rifle's performance and of the history of our craft.

### Five Rifling Methods

The basic mechanics of barrel production have remained essentially the same. A cutter is drawn through the barrel at a specified rate of twist and slowly cuts one groove at a time. Called **cut rifling**, it was the first method ever used to rifle a barrel. A small hook-shaped cutter is pulled through the barrel to remove a tiny amount of metal. When a pass is complete, the barrel is rotated or indexed to the position of the next groove.

Once each groove has been given the first cut, the tool is adjusted to cut slightly deeper. The whole process is repeated until the desired groove-depth is reached. In the Williamsburg shop, a small shim of paper was placed under the cutter to adjust it. Modern tools use a screw adjustment that can increase the depth of the cut by as little as 0.0002 inch.

Cut rifling was the standard method of manufacturing rifle barrels up through World War II. You may also have heard of the famous "two-groove" Springfield rifle barrels that were a wartime expedient. The process reduced the





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number of rifling grooves from four to two, and production was doubled with no practical loss of accuracy or function.

Shooters reported that the two-groove barrels actually shot quite well. And since they were dirt-cheap after the war, they were widely used by cost-conscious shooters. Cut rifling is the most time-consuming method of rifling. Even today, 45 minutes or more of machine time is required to complete a single barrel.

Shorter handgun-length barrels are rifled through a cutting process known as **broaching**. A broach is a complex cutting tool with a series of cutters that increase in diameter by small increments. This segmented cutting tool begins with a diameter that will just enter the reamed bore. As it travels through the bore, each fractionally larger diameter segment cuts the desired rifling pattern slightly deeper.

It is not unusual for a rifling broach to have 20 or more sections. It can do an exceptional job of cutting rifling and has the advantage of cutting each of the multiple grooves at once, in a single pass. The broach is pulled through the workpiece at a slow and constant feed, and it turns as it goes to give the proper twist rate.

By far, the most common method of rifling barrels today is the process known as **button rifling**. This is a swaging process that can be both fast and economical. It is also capable of producing extremely accurate barrels. Unlike cut or broached rifling, the extremely hard carbide button impresses its pattern into the metal rather than cutting it from the bore. The button is highly polished and carries what amounts to a negative of the desired rifling pattern. After the button passes through the bore, the steel will actually spring back to a certain extent. It takes a lot of experience to know the specific properties of the steel being worked in order to end up with the desired internal dimensions.

Another method of barrel rifling is **rotary-hammer forging**. Like button rifling, this is a cold swaging process. A full-length mandrel that has the negative image of the desired rifling is inserted into the drilled and reamed blank. Three or four powerful hammers then beat upon the outside of the barrel blank and force the metal down around the mandrel. This is probably the fastest method of rifling, but the machine required is incredibly expensive.

This entire operation takes about 90 seconds at a rate of over 7,000 blows per minute. It is fascinating to watch this machine work, for it can also define the outside contour and dimensions of the barrel. Since metal is swaged around a mandrel, the blank actually gets longer during the process.

The newest rifling method is **electro-chemical**. In this process, a carbon electrode engraved with a rifling pattern passes through a prepared tube. An electrolytic fluid completes the circuit, and the metal is removed and carried away in the fluid. This is a fast process, but the equipment is expensive. It is best suited for relatively short barrels.

## It All Begins With A Hole

All five of these processes require drilling a basic hole through the barrel blank before any rifling operation can be performed.

At first glance this seems simple, but it is actually very difficult. If you've ever drilled a hole through a relatively thick piece of steel, you know that drill bits tend to wander quickly. The deeper the hole, the greater the tendency for the drill to depart from a straight and true path. The best rifling in the world isn't worth much if the original hole isn't straight. Very special drills are used for this type of work.

Deep-hole drilling machines throughout the industry are pretty much alike. But how they are operated can vary. Of course, the diameter of the bore and type of steel are significant. But the rate at which the cutting is done governs both how smooth and how straight the hole will be. If the drill is advanced too fast, the cut will be rough and more likely to wander. Drill too slowly, and production rates will suffer. The drilling is done at high speeds — around 6,000 rpm — and the cutter is advanced at an average rate of around two inches per minute.

The drill bits themselves are very special. They are hollow, and a cooling liquid is forced through a hole right at the point of the drill. These are not common twist drills but rather single-flute cutters with a channel down the side. As the drill is pushed forward, there must be some place for the chips to go, and they are washed to the rear and out of the barrel blank by the constant stream of very high-pressure cutting fluid.

After gun drilling, the rough bore must be reamed to establish the desired internal diameter and to improve surface finish. Reaming is done at low speeds of around 250 to 400 rpm. The reamer is pulled through the barrel at a rate of approximately five inches per minute. This rate is possible because reaming removes very little material.

In the absence of a lapping, the quality of the reaming operation establishes the interior finish of the bore. If the reamer leaves behind deep tool marks, they will probably be there forever. Even though rifling operations may smooth things out, they normally will not remove tool marks left from the reaming operation.

## The Finishing Touch

Many custom barrels are finished with a lead-lapping process after rifling. This process has not really changed since colonial days, and involves using the barrel as a mold to cast a lead slug onto the end of a long rod. Taking care never to remove the resulting lead lap completely from the bore, it is then coated with a fine abrasive compound and pumped carefully through the bore until the desired level of polish is attained. This can either be done manually or by a machine. There is also an electro-chemical polishing process that can be used in high-volume production.



Over the years, I have been very fortunate to visit factories, both large and small, where barrels are made. Not long ago, I was able to visit Douglas Barrels in Charleston, W.Va. When, way back in the 1950s, I built my first centerfire rifle on a surplus Mauser 98 action, the unanimous recommendation was to use a Douglas Premium barrel. Today there are a number of shops making custom barrels, but Douglas is still a leader.

A visit to the Douglas plant is, in a way, a trip back in time to witness barrels being made as they have been for generations. The equipment is spotless, but it has actually changed very little since World War II. In fact, almost every barrel-making shop I've seen uses rather elderly machines that have been rebuilt and modernized over the years. Nothing wrong with that.

### Good, Better And Best Barrels

For as long as there has existed more than one way to rifle barrels, there has been discussion, and even bitter arguments, over which method is best. Let me say from the outset that I don't think any method of rifling is automatically superior to any other. It is far more complicated than that. Each of these methods has produced match-winning barrels. The real question that remains unresolved since the earliest days of the rifle is why all barrels produced by the same manufacturer and on the same equipment do not perform equally.

Frequently the quality of the barrel is blamed when a rifle shoots poorly. While that may be the cause, there are other factors that must first be eliminated. Was the barrel installed into the action properly? Is the chamber cut concentrically and to proper dimensions? Is the muzzle crown true and undamaged, and is the action bedded properly into the stock? If these details are not correct, the best rifling in the world isn't going to help.

Even if everything is done correctly, sometimes we encounter a barrel that just won't shoot up to expectations. We can look at it, measure it, and study it 'till the cows come home and still not always understand why one barrel shoots poorly and a supposedly identical barrel shoots one-hole groups.

These days, a barrel that genuinely will not group is so uncommon as to be rather remarkable. Regardless of the manufacturing process used, modern barrels are uniformly quite good. That colonial gunsmith who hand cranked his wooden rifling machine to produce a usable barrel would have leapt for joy if he could have made a product as accurate and as precise as our modern barrels.



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- (D) Collecting
- (E) Benchrest shooting
- (F) Skeet/trap/sporting clays
- (G) Cowboy action

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## A NEW CALL TO ARMS

continued from page 28

needs a 30-inch barrel for skeet & trap, yet must fit into an ankle holster for legal concealed carry. It must be rugged enough to defend the home if police cannot respond in time, yet be a finely tuned precision instrument suitable for national and Olympic competitions.

A spirited, yet congenial, discussion showed the professors to be fast learners. Realizing the impossibility of their one-gun stance, they conceded that multiple-gun exemptions should be available for active participants in various disciplines. But not just to own more guns (although they couldn't figure out how to make this discrimination while complying with the equal-protection clause of the Constitution).

Oblivious zealots make up the third tier of anti-gunners. I faced off against the leader of the "Inter-Community Action Coalition," a group that petitions Illinois' urban congressional districts for a statewide one-gun-a-month scheme. This woman insisted that no law-abiding person needs to buy more than one gun a month. She appeared unable to distinguish between "need" and "want," and was unable to find a needs-based requirement in the Second Amendment.

Having fun here was a result of alchemy —

mixing forced politeness with the mental game of "now I got you." But calmness did rule.

It was a joy shredding her logic when she couldn't deny the undeniable statement that law-abiding citizens with 1,000 guns and 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition are not a threat since they are, by definition, law abiding. Even if they buy the contents of a gun shop, their status as a law abiding citizen immunizes them from suspicions that don't result from evidence of actual wrong doing.

But unlike the professors willing to amend their stance when faced with facts, these zealots believe their facts are statements of faith which incorporate the belief that the mere presence of a gun leads directly to crime. To them, it is axiomatic that law-abiding citizens with guns are criminals waiting to burst from their shells.

"Our minds are made up," they seem to say. "Please don't confuse us with the facts."


This brings us back to Sara Brady's minions. These zealots are all over the map, and the only fun is punching holes in the moving targets that they offer. They will try to suck you into that dark place where keeping a calm attitude is a labor worthy of Hercules himself. Here is where you must remember that the prizes are the uncommitted minds — and defeat cannot be an option.

As you answer A, they will say B. Destroy argument B, and they will say, "Yes but C." Like a child who constantly asks why, they tell lie after half-truth. Expose one lie, and another comes around the corner.

You'll have to openly deplore their tactics because the subject is too important for game playing. Promise them, and yourself, that should they ever want to have an honest discussion on core beliefs, you'll be happy to discuss it like an adult.

Remember, your goal is getting the undecideds to recognize the deceptive and insincere attitude being used by your opponent. Make the zealots your vehicle to convince others. Remember, too, that you're in a situation where you must be the poster boy for politeness. Like I said, Hercules.

Although there are no magic answers for all situations, by keeping calm and having fun — even if you can't defeat their arguments — you will at least give them pause. If enough of us are willing to do the homework, learn the facts and meet these people head on, we will secure our freedoms for future generations — an absolutely great side-benefit of just trying to have some fun.

*Jerry Wachowicz is an independent businessman and director of research for the National Center for Firearms Law and Policy where he specializes in* 

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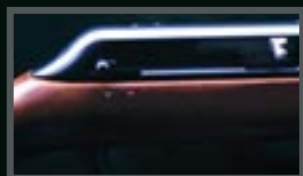
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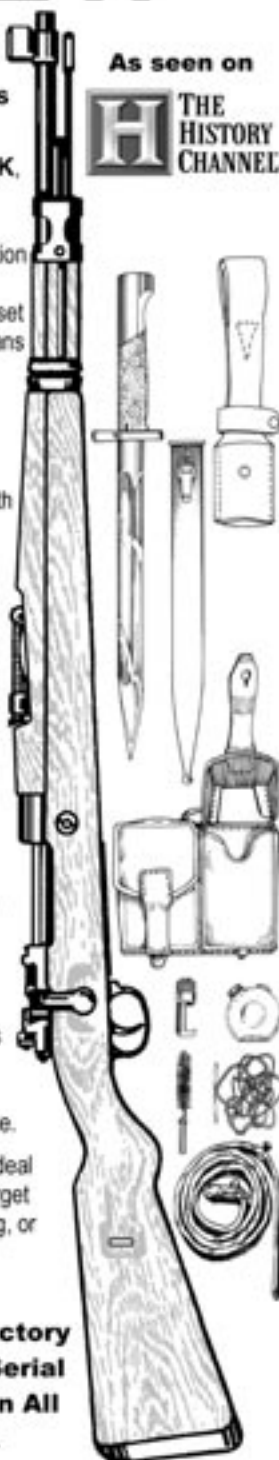
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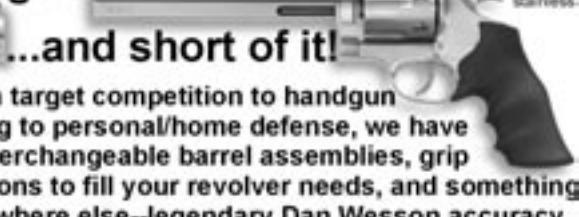


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# The .30 Carbine BLACKHAWK

## Ruger's Enduring Dark Horse

*Not widely popular, the .30 Caliber Blackhawk continues to perform beyond expectations.*

*By Mike Cumpston*

Of the handful of side arms chambered for the .30 M1 Carbine round, the Ruger Blackhawk is certainly the most persistent and prolific. Shortly after its initial introduction in the late 1960s, one reviewer remarked that its appearance should shut up contemporary gun writers, who were then calling for the introduction of a high-performance, .32 Magnum revolver. The carbine round clearly outdid the ongoing efforts to hand load the scarce S&W K-32s and scarcer Colt Officers Model Match target revolvers to magnum performance.

By the time the Ruger came on the scene, the .30 as a handgun cartridge already had a fearsome reputation. In 1944, Smith & Wesson developed a hand ejector revolver to fire the round. It went through 1,232 rounds without incident and launched the standard GI ball to an uninspiring 1,277 fps, producing an equally inauspicious extreme spread of 4.18 inches at 25 yards. Most impressive was the earsplitting blast that remains the most often mentioned feature of the .30 M1 Carbine cartridge as fired in a handgun.

In 1958, the J. Kimball Arms Co. went into business (and out of business quite shortly) producing a .30 Carbine caliber pistol that closely resembled a slightly scaled-up High Standard Field King. It was extremely well-

made and functioned on a delayed blow-back principal. This one contributed much to the mystique of the .30 by coming apart in the hands of one W. B. Edwards of *GUNS Magazine*. The rear slide lugs fractured on the 192nd round. No provenance is found for the

legend that the Kimball has lodged its slide in the eyeball of several unlucky shooters, but the story is widely believed.

Ruger brought out the Blackhawk in .30 Carbine as a companion piece for the owners

*continued on page 60*

**Above:** The half-jacketed, 110-grain Speer Plinker is a favorite in this cartridge. Note also the extremely thick cylinder walls that lend to the strength of this gun. **Below:** Ruger's under-appreciated Blackhawk is a great field gun in the right hands.





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## **.30 CARBINE** *continued from page 58*

of the then common surplus M1 Carbines. The massive cylinder went far toward allaying concerns about the suitability of the round as a handgun cartridge, although the ear-rending muzzle blast was still abundantly present even from the 7.5-inch barrel. The sport shooter was the targeted consumer, but the Blackhawk also found its way into combat.

### **An Unlikely Combat Gun**

A local veteran of the Vietnam conflict had the unenviable job of repairing sabotaged electric and telephone lines. He was issued a .30 M1 Carbine and was adequately supplied with ammunition for the arm. Unfortunately the nature of his job forced him to leave the weapon on the ground, along with whatever degree of security it offered. Considering that an armed sitting duck was better off than the plain old garden-variety sitting duck, he parlayed a Ruger .30 Blackhawk to add to his utility belt. Fortunately, he never had to go up against an AK-47 with the rig and made it home from the war unscathed.

In the early years, few serious shooters were particularly impressed with the performance of the round from carbine or handgun. The carbine would drive the 110-grain FMJ bullet to 2,000 fps while the revolver lost enough velocity to make expansion with civilian soft-point rounds problematic at best. The half-jacket Speer Plinker and later the Speer 110-grain "Varminter" became the bullets of choice for handgunners who wished to use their Ruger to hunt varmints. The "Varminter" developed a reputation for fine accuracy along with reliable expansion at handgun velocities. The 110-grain Speer Plinker delivers a good balance of expansion and penetration. The accepted role of the Blackhawk in this chambering is that of a plinker or varmint. Under ideal circumstances, it will work on light-skinned, medium game such as white-tail deer, although its selection as a deer load is almost universally condemned.

### **A Performer In The Right Hands**

The real saving grace for the .30 is a consistently high level of accuracy. Groups in the neighborhood of one inch at 25 yards with selected loads are common, and the cartridge can be reloaded with good success. Operating pressure is 38,000 to 40,000 psi, and the cartridge case is designed accordingly. Since the round headspaces on the front of the case, case length is critical for proper ignition. Roll crimping can create excessive headspace; therefore, only a light taper crimp should be applied. The case is designed for rifle primers, and small rifle primers are used even when loading for handguns.

With the realities of the rimless case addressed, the .30 Carbine case has more capacity than the .32 Magnum and greater strength and durability than the popular but dated .32-20 WCF.

Jim Stacy brought out his New Model Blackhawk to check out some loads we had on hand. The revolver is fitted with a Super Blackhawk grip frame — chiefly to allow the use of some finely figured factory stocks he had on hand. It was sighted for factory 110-grain loads with the rear sight bottomed out. PMC generic 110-grain ball averaged 1,507 fps, with 46 fps extreme spread over five rounds. Five-round, 25-yard groups measured 1 inch and 1.3 inches.

The Federal 110-grain Soft Point load averaged 1,511 fps, with an extreme spread for five rounds of 71 fps and groups of 1.25 inches and 1.4 inches. These groups were typical of the accuracy observed from several .30 Blackhawk revolvers over the years.

A Hornady 90-grain JSP designed for the 30 Luger over 14.8 grains of Accurate Arms #9 showed promise as a "hyper velocity" load delivering 1,711 fps, with a 46 fps spread and a group of just over 2 inches.

The 110-grain Speer Plinker over 15.5 of H 110 is listed as a maximum load in the Speer #12 Manual. Most other loading manuals recommend a slightly lighter charge weight. Velocity was 1,555 fps, with 55 fps extreme spread. Recorded groups were 1.7 inches and 2.3 inches, with point of impact about two inches above the lowest sight setting. Several years ago, Stacy used this combination to take a 100-pound East Texas whitetail buck. At that time, he was using an Old Model .30 equipped with a second generation Bushnell Phantom scope. He was presented with a broadside shot at about 75 yards, and his deer blind provided a rock steady rest. He was aware that he could hit a beer can at that distance and felt confident in going for a heart shot. The Speer Plinker did take out the heart, centering a rib on the way in and smashing another rib on exit and leaving a wide exit wound. This shows what an "inadequate" load can do under ideal conditions, and when used with practiced skill.

It is difficult to conceive of a use for the .30 M1 Carbine round that would not be better served with other existing handgun cartridges. The old GI .30 carbines are presently undergoing a resurgence of popularity, and affordable ammunition is more commonly available than was the case a few years ago. It seems likely that the .30 Blackhawk will continue in its role as a companion piece to the long guns and Ruger's Dark Horse will continue to endure.







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440-C Stainless blades are about 10 1/4" overall, blades are 5 1/2". Kits supplied with blade, brass guard, threaded pommel and block of Dymondwood handle material.

### TEXAS BOWIE KIT

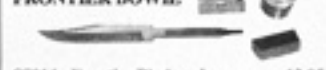


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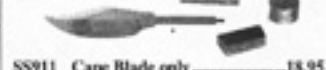
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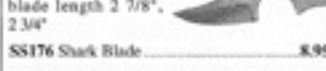
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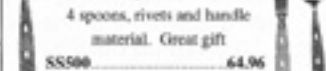
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## WATERFOWL GUN

*continued from page 30*

### A Decade Of Change

Trends in the '60s and '70s began to change the face of waterfowling. Plastic shells and plastic wads revolutionized shotgun ammunition, which was typically stashed in wet blinds and the bottoms of duck boats. No longer did waterfowlers have to deal with paper hulls that soaked up moisture like a sponge, often failing to either chamber or extract. Camouflage clothing became the rage. And suddenly I was looking at my shiny duck guns and coming up with creative solutions to hide them as well. Working with camouflage tape and a razor blade, I turned out some pretty bizarre looking fowling pieces. And when camouflage paints and leaf stencils hit the market, my artwork deteriorated further.

In 1975, Ithaca gave the goose-hunting public exactly what they had been waiting for, the Mag-10. The new 11-pound, 10-gauge, 3½-inch autoloader, pushing a full 2¼ ounces of shot at 1,200 fps, was just what the doctor ordered for the big Canadas. The Mag-10, modified and now marketed by Remington as the SP-10, became even more valuable in the wetlands when nontoxic shot regulations were imposed on the hunting community by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The big-bore 10 gauge proved that it could digest and pattern steel shot better than any 12 gauge on the market.

In the late 1980s, a unique collaborative effort took place between Federal Cartridge and Mossberg to develop the 12-gauge, 3½-inch magnum shell and the Model 835 Ulti-Mag pump gun to chamber it. The 3½-inch magnum — with its potential of handling 1½ ounces of steel shot at 1,300 fps — has become the most versatile 12-gauge waterfowling load on the market, approximating the effectiveness of the big 10-gauge shell in guns that are both lighter and much less expensive.

### Enter Steel Shot

The impact that steel shot had on traditional waterfowling shotguns cannot be stressed enough. Because hard steel shot lacks the easy flowing characteristics of lead shot through forcing cones and tight chokes, older guns could not handle it without some damage to their barrels. As a result, many fine guns that had given decades of service over the water and grain fields were retired forever or returned to service only after the development of softer and more expensive nontoxic shot such as Bismuth and Tungsten-Polymer in the 1990s.

There is a positive side to the story, however. Steel shot did hasten shotgun design changes that have been very beneficial to overall shotgun performance: specifically, lengthened forcing cones,



**Popular waterfowl models, chambered for 10- or 12-gauge magnum cartridges, that offer options such as synthetic stocks and camouflage finishes include:**

- Browning's Gold autoloader and BPS pump in 12 gauge, 3 and 3½ inch; and 10 gauge, 3½ inch
- Winchester's Super X2 autoloader in 12 gauge, 3 and 3½ inch; and the 1300 pump in 12 gauge, 3 inch
- Remington's SP-10 in 10 gauge, 3½ inch; and the 11-87 autoloader and 870 pump in 12 gauge, 3½ inch
- Mossberg's 835 pump in 12 gauge, 3½ inch; and 9200 autoloader in 12 gauge, 3 inch
- Beretta's AL391 Urika autoloader in 12 gauge, 3 inch
- Benelli's Super Black Eagle autoloader and Nova pump in 12 gauge, 3½ inch
- Weatherby's SAS autoloader in 12 gauge, 3 inch
- Franchi's 912 Variomax in 12 gauge, 3½ inch

**There are also two new entries at the affordable end of the price scale:**

- Charles Daly's Field Hunter Maxi-Mag autoloader and pump in 12 gauge, 3½ inch.
- EEA's Baikal MP-153 autoloader and MP-133 pump in 12 gauge, 3½ inch

back-bored barrels, and refined, screw-in choke tubes.

After much debate and hand wringing in the hunting community about the effectiveness of steel shot, waterfowlers have adjusted to steel shooting and discovered that it works. Shot sizes and velocities in steel loads increased in order to gain energy and range. BBBs and Ts in a modified choke were found to be effective on geese. Steel shot numbers 2, 3 and 4 worked for ducks over decoys. And if the wind was really blowing, or if the ducks weren't decoying well, BBs saved the day.

Today we have a stunning selection of waterfowl guns to choose from. Whether the

choice is a SxS, O/U, pump or autoloader, there's a model out there for every taste and style of hunting.

The 12-gauge, 3- and 3½-inch magnum chamberings are the most popular because of their ability to handle 1½ and 1¼ ounces, respectively, of low-density steel shot at high velocity. Velocity counts with steel shot. And we're now seeing factory loads for the 3½ inch with 1¼ ounces of steel shot at 1,450 fps, and for the 3 inch with 1¼ ounces of steel shot at 1,500 fps. These are great loads. Try them. If you handload, focus on the 1,400 to 1,500 fps velocity levels for your reloads rather than on heavier charges of steel.

The current trend in waterfowl guns is certainly heading in the direction of autoloaders and pumps and away from traditional doubles. From my observations in the field, the autoloaders are the most popular guns today among the general waterfowling public. The distinct advantage of the gas-activated autoloader is its ability to soak up the considerable recoil generated by heavier waterfowl loads and high-pressure cartridges like the 12-gauge, 3½-inch magnum. Plus, current 3½-inch guns offer the flexibility of interchangeably handling 3-inch and 2¾-inch shells. In the case of the 10-gauge, 3½-inch magnum, Browning's Gold and Remington's SP-10 autoloaders really tame that big Roman candle and place it at the top of the list for pass-shooting geese of all varieties. And with autoloaders and pumps, that third shell in the gun can come in mighty handy sometimes.

Interchangeable, steel-compatible choke tubes have largely supplanted fixed chokes even in doubles. The older 30- and 32-inch barrels have given way to 26- to 28-inch combinations. Tough waterproof composite stocks have replaced wood in most serious waterfowling models. And one of the most interesting developments has been the widespread appearance of factory-applied camouflage patterns to the whole gun. Patterns like Mossy Oak's Shadow Grass are so good in the typical marsh environment that you had better remember exactly where you set your gun down.

And if one could not possibly be seen in the field without a good double, there is always Ruger's stainless steel, composite stocked combination, the All-Weather Red Label 12-gauge, 3-inch O/U.

So in selecting a worthy companion for waterfowling, you will not go wrong in choosing a durable, modern 12 gauge with a 3-inch or preferably a 3½-inch chamber. Choose an autoloader if it fits your uses, preferably one with a camo finish and a barrel no longer than 28 inches fitted with steel-shot-tolerant choke tubes.

Fortunately, the selection has never been better.



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## ED BROWN'S M702

continued from page 33

Ed Brown is well-known in the handgun community as a builder of high-quality, M1911 type pistols and accessories. Brown's components have earned him a well-deserved reputation for superior quality that has been carried over into his first rifle effort. With his M702, Brown has taken the best features of some of the world's most successful bolt-action rifles and combined them into a superior precision rifle.

The M702 Tactical is available in either 7.62x51mm (.308 Win) or .300 Winchester Magnum. Standard features include a McMillan A-3 tactical stock, recoil pad, steel trigger guard and floor plate, custom sight bases and Mark 4 rings. Options include a stainless-steel barrel, open backup sights and Jewell trigger.

Brown manufactures several other rifles in addition to the one that is the subject of our test. Most are sporting rifles, but Brown also manufactures a M702 Light Tactical rifle that differs significantly from the model we evaluated for this article. This less expensive version of the M702 is available in .22-250, .243 Win., 7mm-08 and .308. All are essentially custom rifles, despite the fact that Brown maintains a stock of rifles and components to quickly respond to customer orders, with deliveries averaging 30 to 45 days.

### Built To Be Better

The receiver of the M702 Tactical is similar to that of the common Remington Model 700, but with several significant differences. In fact, the external dimensions of the M702 receiver are such that the Brown action will fit any stock that also accepts Remington M700 actions. This allows the potential purchaser to specify any one of a number of stocks.

Despite the dimensional similarities, the Brown rifle is most definitely not a Remington clone. One major difference is the M702's bolt release, a button on the left side of the receiver that retracts a heavy stud-type bolt stop. The M702 receiver is made of 4140 steel with the bridge precision ground to ensure accurate scope mounting. The mounting holes are threaded 8x40 rather than the usual 6x48 for additional strength.

The M702 bolt face is sized to accept virtually any cartridge, up to .338 Lapua or .460 Weatherby case head size. The bolt shroud is Mauser-like but with a three position horizontal safety, which bears a resemblance to that of the Winchester M70. The rearmost safety position locks the striker, trigger and the bolt, while the center position locks only the striker, allowing the bolt to be worked for loading or unloading. Fully forward is the "fire" position.

The bolt body is a single piece of 8620 steel with the handle welded into place. The shroud and striker assembly can also be removed from the bolt body for maintenance without the use of tools. The bolt is hand-fitted

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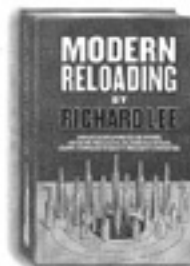
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to the action and trued to ensure alignment with the case head. Independent tests have shown sample Brown M702 bolt faces to be true to within 0.0002 inch. The bolt is heat treated to a surface hardness in the low 50s on the Rockwell C scale. The difference between the surface hardness of the bolt and receiver results in an exceptionally smooth action that is absolutely free of galling.

The extractor is an oversize AR-10/AR-15 type with a very strong spring for positive extraction. The Garand-type plunger ejector positively ejects spent casings horizontally to the right, but not so far from the rifle that they cannot be easily found. The shooter can also easily control case ejection. The latter two features are important considerations for some tactical shooters.

Standard barrel blanks for the M702 are manufactured by Shilen and machined to Brown's external tapered configuration and the bore hand lapped. Other barrels, such as Kreiger, are available as an option. The muzzle is deeply countersunk and precision crowned. The chamber is reamed to close match dimensions using Brown's proprietary reamers. The barrel is, of course, fully free-floated along its entire length. The M702 barrel is available in either 1:10-inch or 1:12-inch twist rates. Our test rifle had the Shilen barrel with 1:10-inch twist.

The standard trigger is also manufactured by Shilen, but modified by Ed Brown's technicians for a better release with enhanced safety to preclude the possibility of inadvertent release if the rifle is dropped. The trigger on our test rifle broke like the proverbial "glass rod" at a consistent 2 pounds with absolutely no creep or backlash. We subjected the rifle to simulated rough handling to verify that there was no tendency of the trigger to "jar-off." The trigger proved perfectly trustworthy. The trigger is fully adjustable for both pull weight and over-travel, although we found it ideal as received. A Jewell trigger is available as an option.

The steel trigger guard of the M702 tactical is manufactured by Dakota and has a hinged floorplate. A potential complaint is the "inside the trigger guard" floorplate release button that might conceivably be accidentally pressed, thereby emptying the cartridges from the magazine. We feel that this possibility is remote. However, Brown has designed a new proprietary steel trigger guard and floorplate assembly that has the release button outside the forward edge of the trigger guard.

As mentioned, the Brown M702 action will fit any stock that will accommodate Remington M700 actions, but the standard stock as of this writing is a McMillan. The stock is provided with three sling-swivel attachment studs for quick disconnect sling swivels and bipod attachment. The tactical stock is coated with a nonslip phenolic that provides a sure grip, even if wet.

The stock has a 1-inch thick recoil pad that gives 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch length of pull. In a relatively heavy 7.62x51mm precision rifle of this type, we believe a recoil pad to be



redundant, but it does provide a nonslip surface. Brown is in the process of taking up manufacture of his own proprietary stocks to meet the demand for all variants of the M702, which include several sporting versions in addition to the tactical version discussed herein. As mentioned, the current stock used with the M702 is McMillan's A3 Tactical model, although Brown will fit any stock the customer desires.

I feel obliged to comment at this point that although the M702 that I tested is a tactical rifle with all black furniture and is not necessarily intended to be pleasing to the eye, the rifle is without doubt the most aesthetically pleasing precision rifle I have ever observed. The fit and finish of every component is superb. The mating of the receiver to the stock is flawless, with a hardly visible line where the receiver meets the stock.

Metal surfaces are a deep, smooth, black-satin matte with no discernable flaws anywhere. The gently-tapered barrel is especially pleasing to the eye and the overall appearance of the rifle is one of quality and solidity. There are no visible tool or machining marks anywhere. The proportions, including the relation of barrel to stock length, are ideal as far as I am concerned. I have never before felt the urge to comment on the aesthetics of a rifle of this type, but the M702 is so attractive that I felt it deserved special notice in this respect.

### Fitted Out For Duty

To prepare for our evaluation, we fitted a Leupold 3.5-10X Vari-X III Long Range telescopic sight with Marine Corps type Mil-dot reticle, a Versa-Pod bipod and Tuff-Cuff tactical sling. The Leupold telescopic sight is well-known to the readers and needs no further description, save for the difference between the Marine Corps and Army-type Mil-dot reticles. The most obvious difference between them is that the Army Mil-dots are round, while those of the Marine Corps pattern are oval.

The Versa-Pod bipod, imported by Keng's Firearms Specialty, is a close copy of the Parker-Hale bipod. The Versa-Pod is far less expensive. We found the Versa-Pod to be more flexible than "fixed" type bipods because its ability to pivot slightly enables the shooter to accommodate for irregularities in the ground. Also, the Versa-Pod flexes slightly forward and aft so that once shooters have established their best position they can "lean" forward slightly into the bipod, essentially locking it in place for a rock-solid shooting position.

The Tuff-Cuff tactical sling was designed by an Oakland, Calif., SWAT sniper because he couldn't find a sling that met his demands. Its design is similar to the specialized slings used by some competitive rifle shooters but modified to permit more versatile employment. His design allows for the instant use of either a hasty or deliberate sling in situations where the bipod cannot be used.

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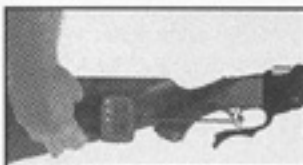
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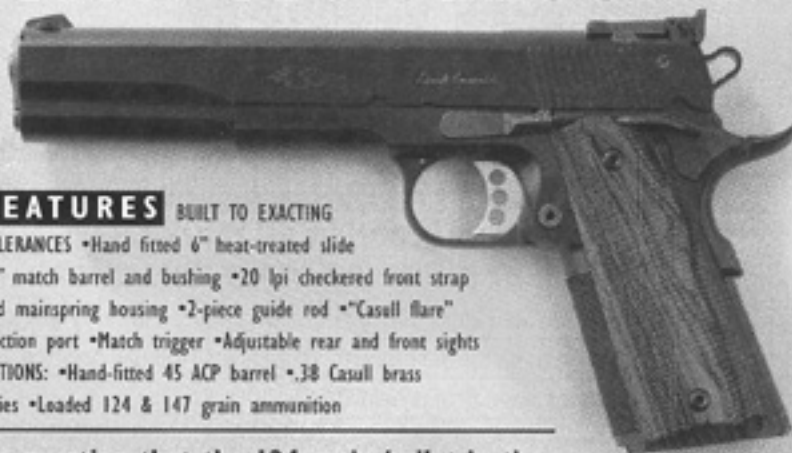
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## Testing With Factory Ammo

With our test rifle fully fitted out, zeroed and ready for action, we headed for the range. Unfortunately we had only a 100-yard range upon which to evaluate the M702, but the results were every bit in keeping with Brown's claims regarding his latest product. We fired a single "fouling shot" through the barrel the day before traveling to the range for our formal test.

Our first "cold" shot of the day was true to point of aim. The group size figures in Table 1 speak for themselves. We fired three, five-round groups from the rifle in the prone position with each type of ammunition and using the Versa-Pod for support. The barrel was allowed to cool for 15 minutes after firing each type of ammunition. We tested the M702 with Federal and Black Hills 175-grain and 168-grain match ammunition and with Remington 168-grain match ammunition. The rifle preferred the 175-grain fodder, delivering essentially the same 0.6 MOA average accuracy with both Federal and Black Hills ammunition. Using 168-grain loads by Black Hills and Federal, accuracy was again similar, with group sizes of 1.1 and 0.95 MOA, respectively. The surprise of the day came with Remington's 168-grain match ammunition, which turned in a 0.6 MOA five-group average (That's a 5/8-inch ragged hole at 100 yards!), duplicating the results of the heavier Black Hills and Federal cartridges.



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# HEAVYWEIGHT BULLETS

continued from page 35

a young, hard working cowboy in the 1920s who was enamored with sixguns, mostly the old Colt SAA .45, which in his time and economic condition were probably black powder specimens that had seen better days.

## Genesis Of The .44 Magnum

In the early 1920s, Keith had an experience that changed his life forever. He decided to celebrate the Fourth of July by firing his old black powder .45 Colt 5½-inch SA. He went upstairs and onto the back porch of his little ranch house to make some noise.

"When the gun rose from the recoil of the first cartridge, I unconsciously hooked my thumb over the hammer spur and thus cocked the gun as it recovered from recoil. When I turned the next one loose, I was almost deafened by the report and saw a little flash of flame. My hand automatically cocked the gun and snapped again, but no report. I stopped then, knowing something was wrong. The upper half of three chambers was gone. Also one cartridge and half of another case. Also the top strap over the cylinder. My ears were ringing, otherwise I was all OK" (*The American Rifleman*, August 15, 1925).

This was described in a letter to the editor of *The American Rifleman* and would begin Elmer Keith's long, colorful and tremendously influential career as a gun writer. When the above "accident" was investigated, it was found that Keith had been using heavy .45 Colt loads in the SAA made up with 300-grain bullets with a diameter of .458 inch originally intended for use in the .45-90 lever-action Winchester. Not only that, it also appeared that he had aided the ignition process by crushing the black powder into a finer grain size.

His old Colt simply died that morning, and Elmer Keith switched to the .44 Special. By 1929 he had a full-blown article in *The American Rifleman* about his famous Number Five Single Action .44 Special that he built to be, as he called it, The Last Word.

When Keith got his .44 Magnum, he got even more than he had asked for. All he wanted was his .44 Special loading of a 250-grain, hard-cast bullet at 1,200 fps. He suggested new, longer brass so that this load would not chamber in older, weaker guns. Ammunition manufacturers were afraid that early .44 Special handguns could not handle the load. Instead of duplicating the Keith Load for the .44 Special, Remington came out with the .44 Remington Magnum with a 240-grain bullet at 1,400+ fps. Keith was ecstatic about the new load, and about the Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum sixgun.

It is interesting to read the early reports. Keith downplayed the recoil of the new cartridge. Major Hatcher of *The American Rifleman* staff likened it to being hit in the palm with a baseball bat. For most of us, reality was somewhere in-between Keith and Hatcher, probably leaning in Hatcher's direction. The .44 Magnum kicked! It kicked hard!! Especially in the 4-inch Smith &

Wesson .44 Magnum with the plain clothes stocks that Elmer preferred, and definitely in the Ruger Blackhawk with a grip frame that was identical to that found on the Colt Single Action Army. Over the years, I have learned to handle the recoil of the .44 Magnum by practice, by using hand-filling, custom stocks and, most assuredly, by welcoming new sixguns that added extra weight over the 3-pound heft of the original .44 Magnums.

I also learned something else. Going back to Keith's original blow-up story, I noticed that he was using heavyweight bullets, not the 255-grain bullet standard for use in the .45 Colt at that time. Why? I would guess he was looking for greater power and deeper penetration for use on big-game animals. When he switched to the .44 Special, he also designed a heavyweight .44 bullet, which was produced by the old firm of Belding & Mull. However, remember that in the early stages of his sixgunnin' life he was still learning. His 280-grain .44 Special bullet had a very blunt, rounded nose, and he soon found that it was lacking in long-range accuracy. He went back to the drawing board and came up with the classic #429421 250-grain, semi-wadcutter bullet, which everyone knows today as the Keith Bullet. When the .44 Magnum arrived, he used the same bullet and simply increased the muzzle velocity by 200 fps over his .44 Special loading. This was his standard load for every purpose until he suffered his terribly disabling stroke at the age of 81.

For at least 25 years the Keith Load was the standard load for the .44 Magnum, just as for 25 years earlier the .44 Special loading from Keith had been the standard. That is a half-century of tremendous influence on .44 shooters by one man! Once the .44 Magnum arrived, many sixgunners began to take a serious look at hunting with a handgun. They also found very quickly that if they did want to hunt, they would have to load their own ammunition because there was very little available on the shelves which was truly suitable. The Keith load has served us well.

## Heavier Can Be Better

Then in the late 1970s, a new influence began to be felt. J.D. Jones founded SSK Industries, which was dedicated to providing the best possible products for handgun hunters. Much of his early work was with wildcat chamberings in the Thompson/Center Contender. One of those wildcats was the .430 JDJ, which was simply the .444 Marlin trimmed back. There were few bullets available, so Jones designed his own as well as supplying bullet molds. One of these bullets was a 320-grain, flat-nose that he would soon discover worked superbly in .44 Magnum sixguns.

I acquired one of Jones' early molds for this bullet and used it extensively in a custom 10-inch Ruger Super Blackhawk over 23.5 grains of WW680 for 1,400 fps. Now we had the same velocity as the original factory loaded .44 Magnum but with 80 grains more bullet! A new era had dawned for the .44 Magnum. Today we are fortunate

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Why use heavyweight bullets in the .44 Magnum? There are two reasons:

1. *Accuracy:* The longer a bullet is in relation to its diameter, the more accurate it normally is. It is a rare .44 Magnum sixgun that does not shoot 300- to 320-grain bullets more accurately than it does 240- to 250-grain bullets.

2. *Big Game Hunting:* To be successful as a handgun hunter, you must understand the four Ps: Placement, Power, Performance, and Penetration. Placement refers to where the bullet hits the target; Power, the muzzle energy; Performance, whether it expands or not; and Penetration, just how deeply into the animal we can expect the bullet to go. The latter is extremely important when hunting large or dangerous animals. And the simple fact is that heavy bullets penetrate more deeply.

### Cast Heavyweights

Let us look at some of the heavyweight bullets used in the .44 Magnum, beginning with 10 cast-bullet loads. All were assembled using Starline's excellent and durable .44 Magnum brass, CCI #350 Magnum Large Pistol primers and Redding's equally excellent .44 Magnum carbide dies. Loads were chronographed over Oehler's Model 35P. Six powders normally used for heavy duty Magnum loads were pressed into service: Alliant's #2400, Accurate Arms' AA#9, Hodgdon's H110, the relatively new Lil' Gun, H4227 and Winchester's 296. There are also some loads included with Unique and BRP's 290-grain, Keith-style bullet simply because I shoot so many of these in older .44 Magnums. Other bullets are also shown with Unique loads for the simple reason that heavyweight bullet loads in the .44 Magnum need not always be shot at full power.

The 290-grain, gas-checked, Keith-style bullet is my most used heavyweight .44 bullet. I have the NEI double-cavity mold for this bullet. BRP also supplies excellent ready-cast bullets of this design that actually weigh 290 grains. I have two favorite loads for this bullet: 21.5 grains of H110 for 1,350 to 1,400 fps, and 10.0 grains of Unique for 1,100 to 1,150 fps. The former is used in currently manufactured heavy-duty .44 Magnums, while the latter mostly sees service in .44 Magnums built in the 1950s, namely the original Smith & Wesson M29 and Ruger .44 Blackhawk (flat-top).

Bull-X offers a Bill Wilson designed, 300-grain flat-point that weighs 305 grains in my alloy. This bullet has a long tapered nose with a full-caliber shoulder band and one wide grease groove. I order them unsized and unlubed so they may be tailored for each gun I intend to use them in.

Lyman offers bullet casters two heavyweight .44s, #429650GC, a Keith-style with one large grease groove and a gas-check with a hard-cast weight of 306 grains. Bullet #429649GC is heavier at 331 grains. It basi



cally offers the same case capacity as the Keith-style bullet with a much heavier nose of the RNFP, or round-nosed, flat-point design. From RCBS comes another Keith-style heavyweight .44 bullet, #44-300SWC that weighs out at 298 grains with my hard alloy. It is very similar to the Lyman design with slightly more case capacity and a slightly longer nose.

From Oregon Trail Bullet Co. we have a 300-grain TC (Truncated Cone) that weighs out at 299 grains. This bullet puts most of the weight in the body with a very short nose. This may be the choice if one has a lever-action that is reluctant to feed the longer bullets.

Finally we come to the heavyweight bullets designed by J.D. Jones of SSK Industries. Bullet #285.429 FP weighs in at 281 grains with one very large grease groove and two crimping grooves for use in short or long cylindered revolvers. All loads assembled herein used the top groove for use in any cylinder length or lever-action rifle. Last, but certainly not least, is the bullet that started it all, SSK's #310.429, another flat-point that with my hard alloy weighs 302 grains. This bullet has a full caliber shoulder in front of the crimping grooves, a plain base, and three grease grooves. It has a great reputation for taking big game with a .44 Magnum.

### A Wealth Of Jacketed Bullets

At least five companies now offer excellent jacketed, heavyweight bullets for the .44 Magnum: Hornady's 300-grain XTP-JHP;

Northern Precision's 280, 310 and 325 grain; Nosler's 300-grain JHP; Sierra's 300-grain JHC; and Speer's 300 JFP. You will note that of the four major manufacturers, three provide hollow point versions of their 300-grain bullets, while Speer goes with a flat-point. Northern Precision custom tailors their bullets for individual needs, and they can be

ordered with different jacket thicknesses for the game that is going to be hunted.

Two sixguns and one levergun were used for chronographing these loads, an 8-inch Dan Wesson .44 Magnum, a Freedom Arms 10-inch .44 Magnum, and a Winchester Model 94 Trapper .44 Magnum with a 16-inch barrel.




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## HIGH-TECH HUNTING

*continued from page 39*

yard. In terms of modes, by turning a switch inside the battery compartment, the unit can be set for either yards or meters. By holding the power switch down for half a second after taking a reading, the unit enters a multiple-object mode, which displays the reading to the closer object first and the more distant object second (if it's over 80 yards away). This mode also suppresses reflections from raindrops. The unit is activated by pressing the power button once, which generates a small red box that is the aiming mark. The power button is pressed again to take a reading. The Leica LRF 800 retails for about \$400.

How do the 800 models compare? Either unit is comparable in terms of useful accuracy. The body of the Bushnell is more comfortable to hold and more stable to use. The viewing lens system of the Leica is noticeably brighter. The Bushnell offers better operating modes. The Leica is slightly smaller. Compromises! Compromises!

### The Invisible Hunter

ATSKO, the originators of Sno-Seal, have developed a line of products to eliminate human scent and reduce the visibility of hunting garments by neutralizing the effect of U.V. brightening dyes found in modern fabrics and laundry detergents.

Backed by scientific research, ATSKO claims that today's camouflage and blaze-orange clothing emit a bright-blue glow to the eyes of most wildlife. In short, you might think you're camouflaged when you're actually glowing like a walking neon bulb. ATSKO's remedy kit contains a washing compound (Sport-Wash) that eliminates existing brighteners, perfumes and other contaminants from clothing. The kit also contains a U.V. Killer spray that neutralizes the reflection of U.V. light. If you examine your clothing with a U.V. light (also marketed by ATSKO), you'll see that this system really works.

To eliminate the most challenging problem, human body odor, ATSKO has another kit that contains Sport-Wash, a N-O-DOR spray solution for clothing and a non-residual hair and body soap.

Products like these can give hunters that all-important edge when afield. Why not use them?

I've been carrying ATSKO's 2-ounce folding cleaning rod in my pack for years. It's the handiest tool in the world if you accidentally plug your muzzle with snow or mud, or just need to clean a barrel in camp.

### Thermal Game Recovery

Finding downed game in brush and thick vegetation can be frustrating and sometimes futile. Game Finder is a handheld unit that detects downed game based on body heat. Game Finder has been

around since 1991, and its "pattern recognition software" has been greatly refined. Currently, there are three units available from the Bonner Technology Group, ranging in sophistication and sensitivity levels. They retail for \$125 to \$325.

### Recording Animal Movements In Absentia

How about a weatherproof camera system that will photograph any animal that trips its sensor beam, day or night, and print the time and date on the picture taken? Game Country Inc.'s Hawk-eye and Hawk-eye Jr. game surveillance systems do just that.

They are serious tools for positioning a tree stand, for checking on game-trail use before the season, or for general nature photography and family fun. Both models feature an automatic Vivitar camera that accepts 35mm film with ISO ratings of 100 to 400. The camera can be programmed to time exposures at a delayed interval so the unit doesn't exhaust 36 exposures on one deer, for example. The Hawk-eye model throws a 3-foot diameter infrared heat sensing beam approximately 60 feet, so there's quite a bit of latitude when positioning the unit. Available directly from Game Country, the Hawk-eye sells for \$326, and the Hawk-eye Jr. (with a few less bells and whistles) sells for \$200.



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## DOUBLE ACTION

*continued from page 45*

found. Also notable at first glance is the finish, which is a matte synthetic coating that is baked for toughness. While not the brilliant, highly polished blue we associate with older P-35 pistols, it is an eminently practical finish.

At first glance, the Hi-Power and the HP-DA look quite similar, but they are two very different guns. It is obvious that a great deal of effort was made to preserve the sleek appearance of the P-35 in the new design. A cursory look might lead you to think that the slides are the same. One significant external difference is seen in the extractor, which is considerably more robust than that of the Hi-Power.

The frame is obviously different. But, once again, the general appearance is retained. In fact, the effect works so well that it became a source of some embarrassment. When the HP-DA first arrived, I grabbed a couple of old magazines and took off for the range. That's how I learned that the magazines of the new gun are *not* interchangeable with the Hi-Power.

The HP-DA magazine that is available in Europe and to law enforcement holds 15 rounds — up from the normal 13 of the Hi-Power. Guns destined for the U.S. civilian market will be delivered with 10-round magazines. Barrel length of the two guns is identical. The HP-DA is .9-ounce lighter than its predecessor.

## A Look Inside

Further examination revealed that, other than the look, there is little in common between the two designs. Oh, there are a few parts common to both, but nothing major. Even things that you think would be the same aren't. For example, the double-action pistol has a simplified recoil-spring guide that won't fit the older barrel, and vice-versa.

Recent production Hi-Power pistols incorporate a firing-pin safety. But the one on the HP-DA is sure to catch the eye. Most of these gadgets are inside the frame and slide. And the shooter neither sees nor feels their action. On the HP-DA, it's a cleverly different part.

The FN design utilizes a firing-pin stop, which also functions as a positive firing-pin block. When you pull the trigger, you can see the firing-pin stop rise up just a bit. This frees the firing pin to move forward. Instead of complex linkages and levers, this one keys right on the trigger bar and a small protrusion pushes the firing-pin stop up. It has no harmful effect to the feel of the trigger pull. And for a factory trigger, this one is rather nice. The double-action pull is a little under 10 pounds and pleasantly smooth. There is a little stacking right before the shot breaks, but this improved after initial break-in. The single-action pull

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breaks crisply at 5.5 pounds. A DAO version of the HP-DA is available.

What appears to be the safety on the HP-DA is actually a decocking lever that functions much better than most. Many decockers require some un-natural motion to operate, or are so poorly placed that the pistol must be shifted in the hand to gain access to it. The ambidextrous decocker on the HP-DA is right under your thumb, and the motion is exactly the same as disengaging the safety of a 1911 or older Hi-Power. Operation is positive, easy and natural.

### Familiar Feel

Shooting the HP-DA is very much like shooting the old favorite. In fact, after the initial double-action shot, you'd be hard pressed to say there is a difference at all. Even though the mechanical differences are many, the new pistol retains the comfortable feel of the Hi-Power that endeared it to generations of shooters. Furthermore, the HP-DA is not cursed with the one glaring fault of the original: It does not bite the hand that feeds it. To this day, the hammer spur of the original P-35 extends menacingly over the back-strap and has a nasty tendency to chew a hole in the web of the hand between thumb and index finger. People with small, skinny hands usually don't experience this problem. But for others, the hammer will bite if you're not careful. The HP-DA's hammer spur is

much shorter and causes no pain.

The HP-DA was subjected to a three-stage test procedure, which included an initial function test and break-in of about 100 rounds. Then an accuracy test was conducted. On the third trip to the range, an additional function test was undertaken with a wide variety of ammunition. This process results in a test duration of approximately 400 to 500 rounds, and the pistol functioned flawlessly throughout. Ammunition included all the popular bullet weights from 115 to 147 grains, in both standard and +P loadings, where appropriate. There were no stoppages of any kind.

As a service pistol, the original Hi-Power has a history almost as lengthy as Browning's 1911. The HP-DA shares the features that made the P-35 popular around the world, while adding the double-action operation that many modern users demand. Thoroughly modernized now, the basic Browning design is ready for the new millennium.



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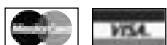
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## New "Ecco" Lockblade From Buck Knives

Buck's new Ecco lockblade knife features two locking blades, one at each end of the handle, and a convenient one-hand open/close action. The Ecco comes in 2¼ and 2½-inch blade sizes. Both models have a modified drop-point blade at one end and a partially serrated sheepsfoot at the other. The ergonomic handle is made of glass-reinforced nylon and has a thumb slot for maximum performance. For more information, contact Buck Knives, 1900 Weld Blvd., El Cajon, Calif. 92020, telephone: [800] 326-2925, Website: [www.buckknives.com](http://www.buckknives.com)



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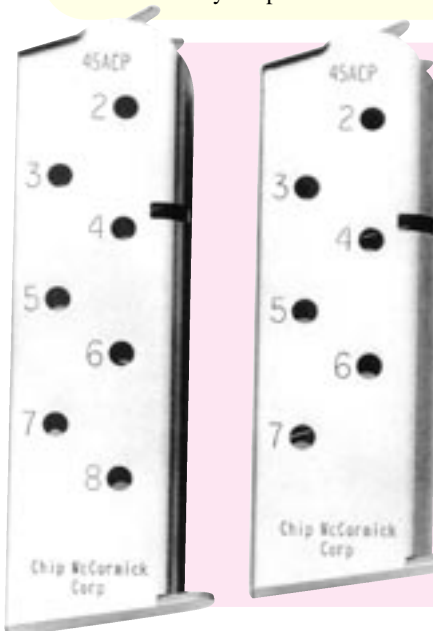
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## Match Grade Magazines From Chip McCormick

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## New Lockbacks

*From SOG*

SOG Specialty Knives has added the Night Vision and X-ray Vision to its line of high-tech lockback blades. Both models are available with either G-10 or Zytel handles. The new Arc-Lock security system delivers reliable one-hand ambidextrous security. Geometric grind lines on the TS-34 stainless steel blade focus power on the edge and tip, while partial serration allows for a variety of cutting applications. For more information,

contact SOG Specialty Knives, 6521 212th St., SW, Lynnwood, Wash. 98036, telephone: [425] 771-6230, FAX: [425] 771-7689, e-mail: [sogsales@earthlink.net](mailto:sogsales@earthlink.net), Website: [www.sogknives.com](http://www.sogknives.com)



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# GUNS

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## ADVERTISER'S INDEX

### ADVERTISER PAGE

Accurate Arms	28
Ajax Custom Grips	64
American Sales & Mfg.	63
Auto-Ordnance	62,64
Bagmaster	74
Baird Co.	62
Barrett Firearms	16
Benchmade Knife	71
Blackhawk Industries	4-5
Blacksmith Corp.	81
Bond Arms	62
Ed Brown Products	73
Camillus	52
Carbon Creations	64
Casull Arms	67
J.A. Ciener	23
Clark Custom Guns	68
Colorado School of Trades	63
Compassec	28
Crimson Trace Corp	23
DCG Inc.	68
Defense Security Products	75
Devtron Scopecoat	14

### ADVERTISER PAGE

Dixie Gun Works	74
Dynamit Nobel	8
Emerson Knives	70
A.G. English	81
European American Armory	19
Flash Distributing	69
Fobus USA	15
Fort Knox Security	81
FTI Inc.	8
Glock	25
Golden Age Arms	81
Groves Edge	66
Gun Parts	66
Heritage Building Systems	63
Heritage Fund	72
Hogue Grips	60
Jantz Supply	61
Kaltron-Pettibone	57
Kel-Tec	23
Kimber	C4
Knife Outlet	74
Law Concealment	66
Lee Precision	65

### ADVERTISER PAGE

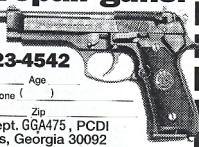
Legendary Arms	81
Lyman Products	67
Marlin	27
Masters of Defense	7
Millett	48
Mitchell's Mausers	57
MPS Company	81
MTM Molded	70
Nil Grips	71
Otis Technology	29
Paladin Press	81
Para-Ordnance	C3
Pearce Grip	62
Shooters Online Service	81
Sigarms	17
Sigarms	21
Sinclair Int'l	53
S & K Scope Mounts	81
Springfield	75
Sturm, Ruger & Co.	C2
Surefire	9
Thompson /Center Arms	56
Dan Wesson Firearms	57
Wilson Combat	53
X-Treme ShockMunitions	3
Zanotti Armor	63

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## CAMPEIRE TALES

continued from page 82

around two dozen whitetails with this sixgun and load, all one-shot kills with most dropping in their tracks. Just about the time I had this whole situation totally figured out, along came the exception.

Two years ago I arrived at the Baggett Ranch late in the afternoon. And since there was hunting time left, Penn suggested that he drop me off at a deer stand. I had been in place no more than 15 minutes when I saw the antlers coming through the brush. He was not a huge deer, but simply a nice 8-pointer that was certainly worth taking. As he came into view, I spent a little time looking him over and decided to take him. I lined up the crosshairs, squeezed off the shot and expected him to go down just as had all the other whitetails I had shot with this load through the Freedom Arms .44 Magnum.

Instead of going down he took off running, showing no indication that he had been shot. I climbed down from the stand while trying to convince myself that I had missed. I looked all around where he had been standing and could not find any blood. Again, I tried to convince myself that I had missed. But I could not bring myself to believe it. By now it was getting dark, and my pickup arrived. I explained what had happened. As the weather was quite cold, and the buck would not spoil overnight, we decided to look for him in the morning.

I had not missed. The shot placement was perfect. He had taken off running, went about 100 yards, turned 180 degrees, and came back through the brush in front of the stand. He died about 100 yards in the opposite direction. The only blood found was where he had finally gone down. Everything had been perfect. But there is no perfect in hunting. I may go through several dozen more deer using the same gun and load and everything may work out perfect. Then again, who knows? It certainly keeps things interesting. And most importantly, it keeps us from turning into "experts."

At the beginning, I mentioned my T/C Contender. It is chambered in 6.5mm JDJ. It is my most used handgun hunting single-shot. Since the incident with the little Mouflon ram, I changed bullets. I'm now using the Speer 120-grain JSP at 2,400 fps, and it has a run of 24 one-shot kills, ranging from a turkey at 50 yards to a black-buck antelope at 250 yards. It has taken everything from Colorado mule deer to zebra, impala, gemsbok and waterbuck in Africa. Critters from 20 pounds to near 1,000, all with one shot and with the same load and bullet. Most dropped in their tracks, the gemsbok and waterbuck went less than 50 yards, while one little impala went about 100 yards before going down. I have seemingly tapped into the perfect gun-bullet-load combination, and everything is working perfectly. Will it keep doing so? Don't count on it! Murphy certainly must have been a hunter.



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It was the perfect situation. The ram was standing broadside at about 125 yards. The shooting position was perfectly steady. The let-off was perfect. Even the shot was perfectly placed. He went down so fast, I could not even see him fall. It was the perfect ending to a perfect hunting trip. I broke open the action of my Thompson/Center Contender and did not even bother to load another cartridge. Then, as we stood there, perfectly happy, with my hunting partner congratulating me, we looked up and saw the sheep get up and take off running. For the next four hours, I spent a perfectly frustrating time chasing that little 125-pound Mouflon ram. I shot him five more times, including one shot that went diagonally all the way through him as he was running up a hill. I saw his hind quarters dip slightly, but he simply kicked it into high gear and kept on running.

Bad shooting? Not quite. When I finally got him down, I found five shots behind the shoulder that could be covered with my hand and the sixth shot that went diagonally through him. When we skinned him out, we found a large area of tissue destruction that should have put him down for keeps on the first shot. He was simply one tough little animal, almost supernatural. And had it been in my power, I would have returned his life to him and sent him on his way. Instead, he has a place of honor in my reloading room.

The more I learn about hunting, bullet performance and shot placement, the less I know! Even when everything is seemingly perfect, the unexpected can — and often will — happen. I watched my friend Tedd Adamovich make a beautiful shot with a .454 Casull on a bison. That big, shaggy beast ran only about 30 yards, and I do not believe I have ever seen an animal go down so hard. Maybe it was my imagination, but it certainly felt like the ground shook as he went down with all four feet up in the air and then slowly settled down on his side. Everything had worked perfectly. And it was a one shot kill. But then came the next morning.

Now, instead of critters that weighed 1,000 pounds or more, we were again hunting sheep and goats which were more like 100 to 150 pounds on the hoof. The area we hunted was rocky with several small canyons. Tedd and I had separated so each of us could work one side and then meet at the top. As we were coming back together, Tedd jumped a ram and pulled his .45 Colt sixgun. I watched him shoot at that sheep at 20 yards until his gun was empty, look at that gun incredulously, and put it back in his holster. He pulled his second single action sixgun, a .44 Magnum, and continued to shoot. The ram just stood there!

On the eighth shot, the ram finally went down when a bullet went all the way through and broke his leg. If Tedd had not been above him with the proper angle, he might still be shooting. When we skinned this animal, we found five hard-cast bullet holes in his heart. He should have died on the first shot. And perhaps he would have if the bullets had been jacketed hollowpoints. The bison died almost immediately with one shot through his heart; the ram took five shots through his heart and just stood there.

One of my favorite pastimes is hunting whitetail deer. Texas, in general, is a great place for whitetails, especially on the Penn Baggett Ranch in Crockett County. My number one whitetail gun is a Freedom Arms .44 Magnum using Black Hills ammunition loaded with 240-grain jacketed hollowpoints. I have taken somewhere

*continued on page 81*



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