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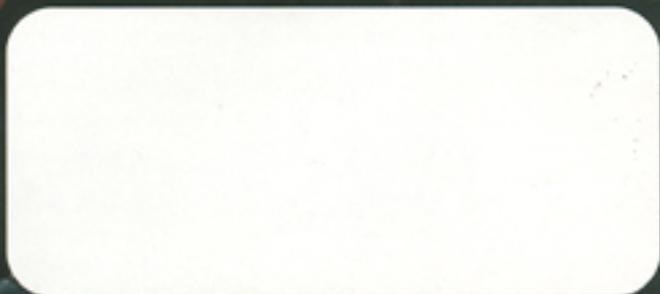
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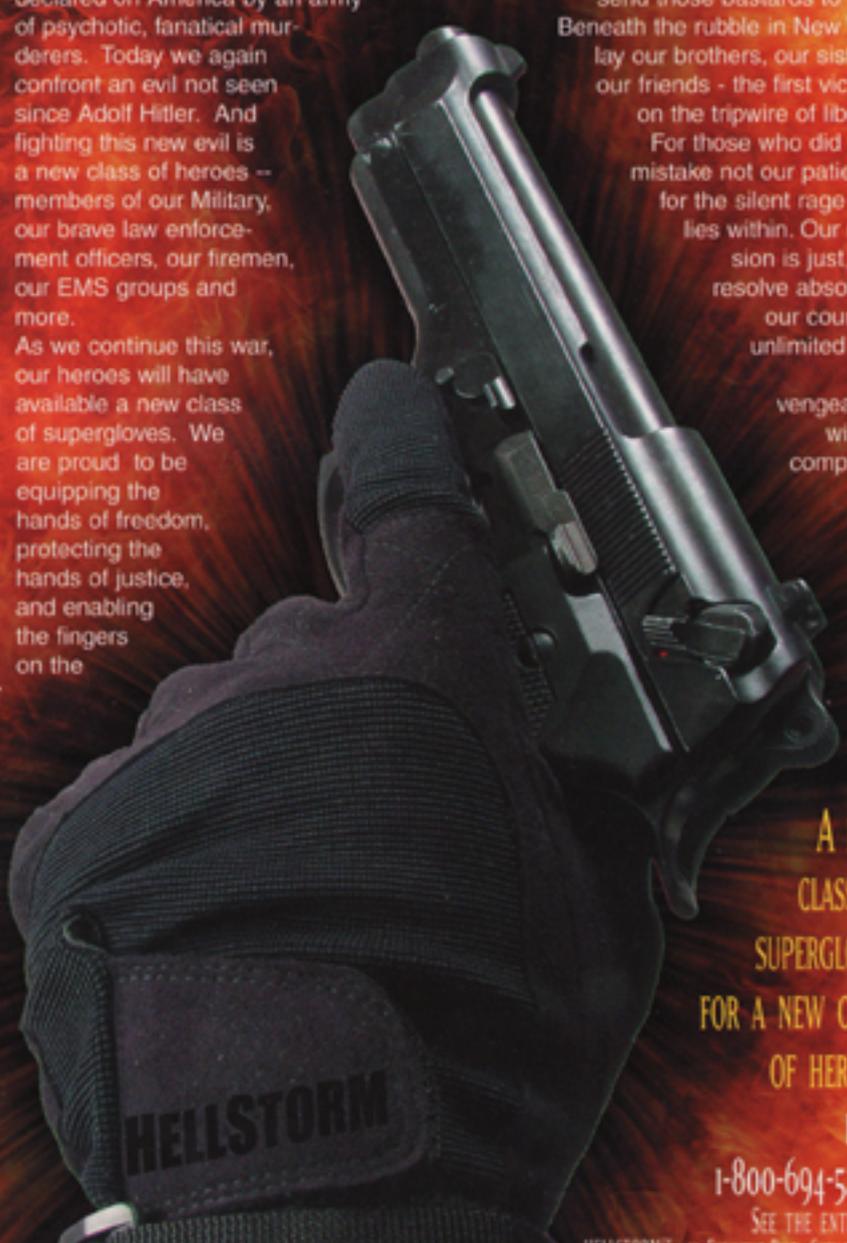
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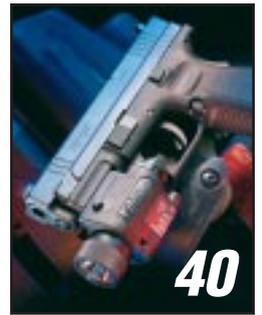
# GUNS

MAGAZINE

JUNE 2002 Vol. 48, Number 06-570

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X-treme Duty

Photo by Ichiro Nagata



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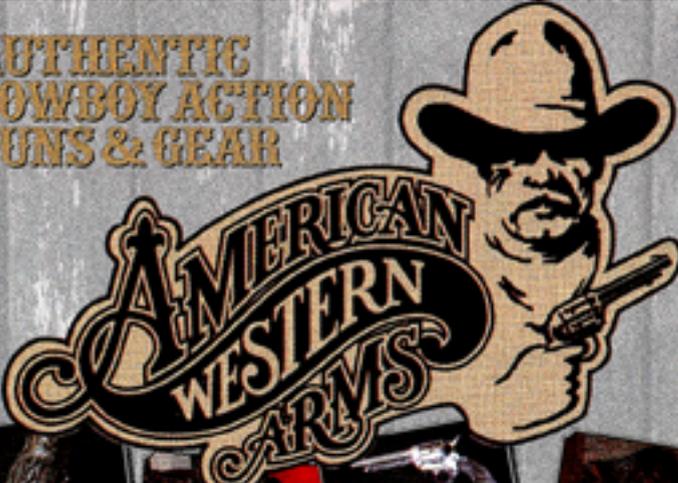
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## FOUNDING PUBLISHER

George E. von Rosen (1915-2000)

## PUBLISHER

Thomas von Rosen

EDITOR Jim Gardner  
ed@gunsmagazine.com

ART DIRECTOR Joseph R. Novelozo

ART ASSISTANT Richard Stahlhut

ASSISTANT EDITOR Edward Carlson

ADVERTISING PRODUCTION Linda Peterson  
production@gunsmagazine.com

## CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR Ichiro Nagata

SENIOR FIELD EDITOR Cameron Hopkins

SHOOTING EDITOR Dave Anderson

HANDGUN EDITOR Massad Ayoob

SHOTGUN & HUNTING EDITOR Holt Bodinson

AIRGUNS EDITOR J.I. Galan

HANDLOADING EDITOR Charles E. Petty

PRECISION SHOOTING EDITOR David Fortier

FIELD EDITORS Sam Fadala, Roy Huntington

SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR Tom Turpin

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

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ed@gunsmagazine.com

INTERNET \_\_\_\_\_ www.gunsmagazine.com

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### Denny Fallon

National Adv. Offices:

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San Diego, Calif. 92108

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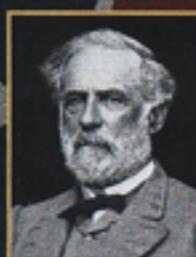
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**WARNING:** Firearms are dangerous and if used improperly may cause serious injury or death. Due to the inherent variables in the reloading of ammunition, be sure to verify any published loads with manufacturer's data. Products mentioned or advertised may not be legal in all states or jurisdictions. Obey all firearms laws. Always consult a professional gunsmith when modifying any firearm. Be a safe shooter!

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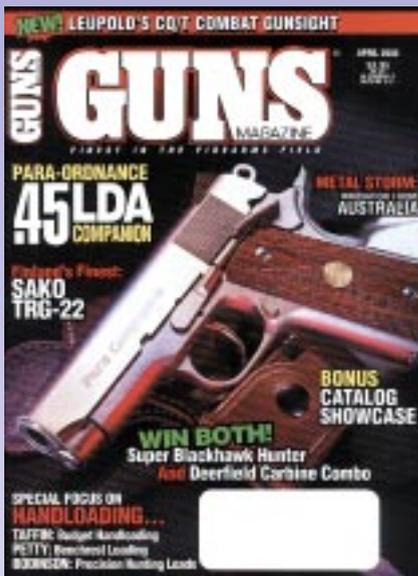
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### LETTER OF THE MONTH



**GUNS MAGAZINE** JUNE 2002

### It's About Time

Just finished reading "Smacking Steel" in your March issue. Thank you for finally publishing worthwhile info on long-range handgunning. I hope that you will have more such articles in the very near future.

I get extremely tired of gun writers bragging about their 4-inch groups at 15 yards or even worse, ashamed to state that the group really was at 15 yards. I'll be watching *GUNS* Magazine for more such useful and interesting articles.

Rick Kelter  
Castaic, Calif.

### Sizing Up Lyman's Service

I feel compelled to write you to relate a recent experience I've had with Lyman Reloading Products.

While handloading a batch of .45 ACP, I experienced a structural failure of my carbide sizing die. The carbide ring stuck to a case and came completely out of the die body. After contacting Lyman and explaining that the die was over 20 years

old, and had probably processed more than 50,000 rounds of ammunition, I sent the die to them for examination. With this degree of usage on a product I did not have any great expectation of replacement. However, about two weeks later I received a package from Lyman containing a new die body. I would like to publicly commend and recommend Lyman Products for their customer support in this age of buyer-beware economics.

Thanks!  
George Powers,  
Denver, Colo.

### Unintentional Wildlife Photo

Thank you for a fine publication. It is always interesting, informative and well worth the cover price. I had to drop you a note to comment on Ichiro Nagata's photo of the Kimber Varminter in the March issue, pages 44 & 45. This is a stunning shot of an impressive rifle. I think that even the fly on the barrel was smitten!

Ken  
Walnut Creek, Calif.

### Service Does Sell

About 18 months ago I purchased a set of electronic ear muffs from Dillon Precision. A few weeks ago, while at the range, I heard the thud my ear muffs made when they were knocked/wind-blown/somethinged to the concrete firing line. The electronics were just fine but the plastic stud that the frame mounts to was broken.

I called Dillon and informed them this happened well past the 12-month warranty on the ears, at which point they issued me a Return Authorization number. Less than 10 days later I received a completely new set of ears as well as the batteries I left in the damaged pair. I have used Dillon's products for over 15 years now and they just, once again, reminded me why.

Joe Woolley  
Houston, Texas

### Don't Try This In Your 10-22

I just wanted to leave a quick note telling you how much I enjoyed reading your test of the Russian's new AN-94 Nikonov (*GUNS* March '02).

The review was very interesting and well done but I would really like to see a ballistics review of this 5.54 x 39 mm car-

tridge. This ammo has sparked my curiosity and I am hoping that maybe some U.S. manufacturers will develop a sport semi-auto or even a bolt action. It would be fun to see an AR-15 conversion in this caliber or maybe Ruger will take the Mini 14 or 10-22 to this round. Even a nice little bolt action would be a sweet little small game and varmint popper.

Anyways, thanks for the article. It's fun to see how the future is going to change the way things work.

Kim Whipple  
Via e-mail

### Toothless Goobers?

Re: "Airport Security, et al [sic], post 9/11" in the April issue: Mas, you really ought to stick to what you do best, which is writing about guns, and lay off the social commentary. Your comments about the "fat cat" pistol owner with his "carry permit bought in a 'discretionary' state" could just as well have been made about toothless goobers and shall-issue states. Might that have offended too many readers?

I don't want to be on an airplane with either. Or, for that matter, with the fellow from our home state who was arrested at a metal detector at Logan Airport with a .22 pistol in his pocket, claiming he had "forgotten(!?)" he had put it there.

William Politt  
Via e-mail

### Ayoob replies:

While most "shall issue" states have some sort of training or competency requirement for a carry permit, many "discretionary" states do not. Too often, anti-gun politicians and the police chiefs they appoint have used their "discretion" to limit the issuance of permits to wealthy people with political connections regardless of competence, hence the "fat cat" comment.

For good or ill, the arming of good people on board commercial aircraft, including even airline personnel who have passed the rigid psychological testing and intensive firearms training recommended by the Airline Pilot's Association, has become a political football. Thus we can't discuss this important firearms-related issue without crossing over the border into social commentary.



**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](mailto:ed@gunsmagazine.com)

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## LONGEVITY AND STORAGE OF COMPONENTS AND AMMO

**W**e are often asked if it is safe to use old primers, powder or ammo. Maybe there is an innate *cheap* streak in we shooters because it's hard to pass up a bargain or to throw out ammunition or components even if they are ancient.

Not long ago a buddy came to me with a powder that had been discontinued for at least 20 years. He was so proud of the bargain he got that he didn't question whether the powder was any good or realize that loading data might be unavailable. A look and a sniff pronounced the powder safe. If it is not discolored or lumped up and doesn't smell bad, it is likely to be just fine. If the powder has an unusual or acrid odor it should be avoided. The secret to longevity in powder is storage. We are told to keep it in a cool, dry place and that's right — although cool doesn't mean refrigerated. Just don't store it in the attic or anywhere exposed to wide temperature swings. Loading data is another matter... he'll need to turn up some equally old manuals. Just because something is a bargain doesn't always mean it's a good deal, but properly stored smokeless powder will keep almost indefinitely.

In the old days, there weren't seals on the

tops of powder cannisters as there are today. So technically, an old can of powder is an open container and may not contain what the label says. It is all but impossible to identify powder by appearance, but if the powder in the can is extruded and the label says it should be ball type, it might be best to pass up *that* bargain. We are always warned to return powders to their original container when we're loading, and we sure hope the person selling the powder did just that.

You don't see ancient primers offered very often. They used to come in little wood trays. And though I wanted to show one in a picture, I couldn't find one. I suppose that is because most of us use them up fairly fast. My practice is to use the oldest first and not order more until I'm close to running out. But as far as storage is concerned, primers also keep indefinitely with proper storage. And proper storage is also cool and dry. But since primers are not packed in an airtight container, we need to consider atmospheric conditions as well. I'm not sure that normal variations in humidity are much of a concern, but constant storage in extremely high humidity might warrant the precaution of storage in an airtight container such as a GI ammo can. It would also be best to avoid open storage in a shop where lots of volatile solvents or paints are used.

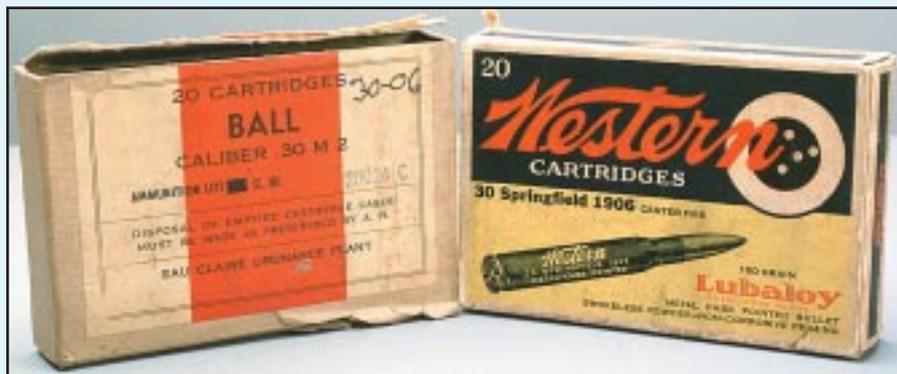
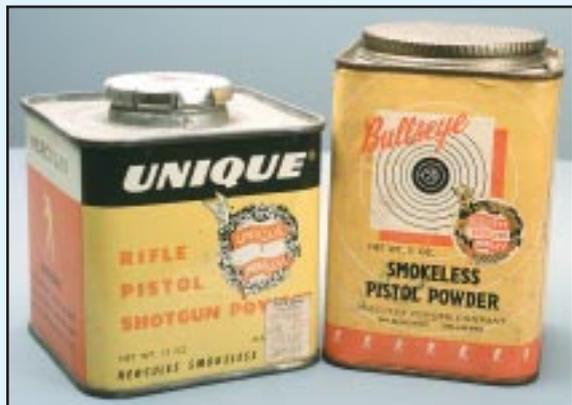
I don't know about you, but I see more old ammo than I do old loading components. That doesn't seem unreasonable but the variety can be confusing. We can divide ammo into two categories: military and commercial, and even further by where it was made: the U.S.A. or anywhere else in the world. With no disrespect to the rest of the world, we colonists do

not always know much about ammo produced elsewhere. It really isn't unusual to see imported military ammo in packages that are unmarked or are labeled in a foreign language. We can usually identify the caliber without too much trouble, but we know nothing about what's inside. I'm thinking primarily about corrosive primers. The American shooter hasn't had to worry about that for a couple of generations — so there are surely some of you who have never seen a gun ruined with them. The problem is that there is no way we can tell by looking whether the primer is harmful or not. The best suggestion I can make is that if it *does not* prominently say non-corrosive either on the package or the advertisement, I'd assume that the primers are corrosive. I see ads all the time for surplus ammo at good prices, so we just need to be sure of what we're buying. That doesn't mean that the ammo isn't any good, just that if it is corrosive we must apply suitable cleaning practices.

Very little American commercial ammunition made after the 1930s has corrosive primers, but the really old boxes of ammo may be worth more as a collector's item so it isn't too likely to find super bargains on old sporting ammunition. But there is still quite a bit of surplus American military ammunition out there — sometimes at bargain prices. By tradition, American military ammunition is headstamped with an abbreviation for the manufacturer and the last two digits of the year made. For example, an LC 85 headstamp tells you it was made at Lake City Army Ammunition plant in 1985. Our GI ammo loaded after 1955, it is non-corrosive. But anything prior to that probably is. Once more, that doesn't mean it can't be used. But proper cleaning is mandatory. One exception is .30 Carbine ammunition, which was never loaded with corrosive primers.

But if we consider buying old ammunition of any type, we must inspect it carefully. Serious discoloration is an almost sure indication that the ammo has been exposed to conditions of storage that weren't too good. It isn't unusual to find "season cracks" in case necks of really old ammo, and even the condition of the box may be informative. The same is true for things like powder cans. The use of plastic containers is a fairly recent development, so if an old can is rusty that's pretty strong evidence of less than ideal storage.

I'm as anxious as the next guy to save money, but sometimes I have to curb my enthusiasm when a really good deal comes along. There may be a fine reason for the seller's willingness to give me *such* a bargain.

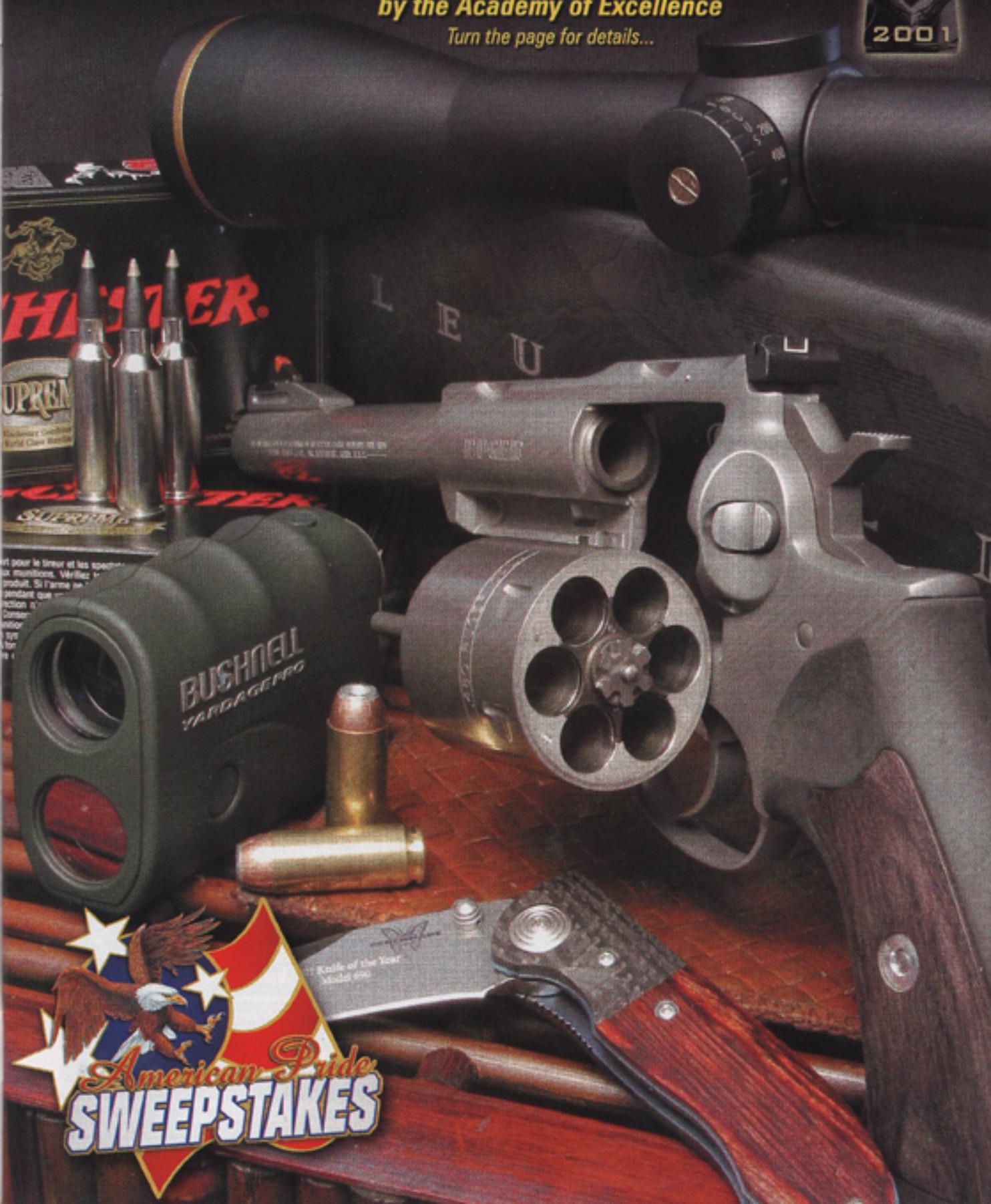


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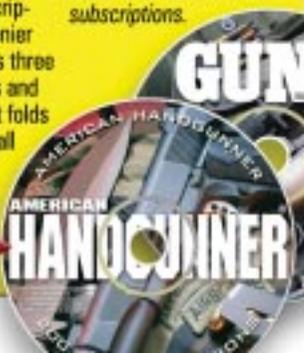
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## Lee Deluxe Pistol Dies

**H**andloaders today are blessed with a staggering variety of really excellent equipment. At first glance, it may seem as if items such as reloading presses and die sets have evolved about as far as they are likely to. But despite this, our manufacturers continually strive to upgrade and improve their product lines. One of the most tireless innovators is Lee Precision.

Lee recently announced a new Deluxe Pistol Die set. It consists of Lee's already highly regarded carbide die set for straight-wall pistol cartridges with the addition of the Lee Factory Crimp Die. There is a lot of really clever engineering in these dies, and if you are not presently using Lee pistol dies, you should consider trying a set. Want a few examples of this good engineering?

The first is Lee's unbreakable decapper. The decapper is designed to displace instead of breaking if it encounters unusual resistance, like a berdan primed case. Anyone who has broken their last decapping pin the night before a match knows what a blessing this will be. As if that weren't enough, the

seating die utilizes a free-floating sleeve to assure proper bullet alignment; all lock rings and other adjustments require no wrenches or pliers to adjust; and lastly, Lee includes a shell holder with the die set.

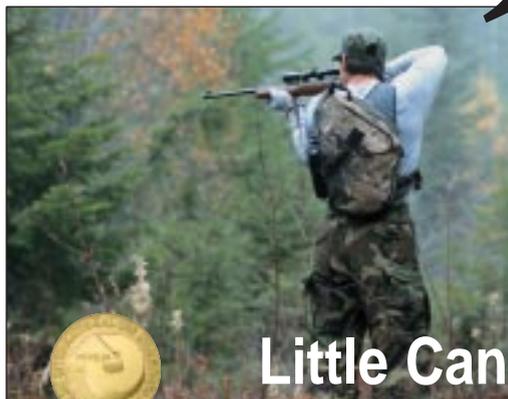
Lee's Factory Crimp die has become extremely popular, and with good reason. It eliminates the well-known problems that can be encountered when seating and crimping in one operation as with old fashioned three die sets. In addition, the Factory Crimp die actually sizes the *loaded* round to proper dimensions, eliminating any wrinkle or bulge that might otherwise prevent it from properly chambering. Many competitive shooters utilize the Lee Factory Crimp die for just this reason, and they don't miss those random bad cartridges one bit!

Like all of Lee's products, the Deluxe Pistol Die set is priced right, at only \$42.98.



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## Marlin Upgrades From Wild West Guns

Outside of the good folks at the factory in North Haven, Conn., probably no one knows as much about Marlin rifles as Jim West of Wild West Guns in Anchorage, Alaska. The Wild West “Co-Pilot” — a short, handy, Marlin 1895 in .45-70 fitted with ghost ring sights, lever opened for glove use, and a crisp trigger, plus modified into a takedown for ease of transport — has received rave reviews from all who test it.

After building a boatload of custom Marlins, West has a great respect for the basic design, but there are two areas that could use improvement. He now offers two custom components that would benefit any Marlin, custom or not.

The first is the “Trigger Happy” kit. Like most modern production firearms, the Marlin leverguns frequently suffer from a heavy, creepy trigger that is not conducive to good shooting. The Trigger Happy kit is a simple, user-installable replacement that will greatly improve the stock Marlin trigger. I took an old Marlin .444 from my safe and weighed the stock trigger. At 4.25 pounds, it was

really not bad. Installing the Trigger Happy kit was a breeze, requiring less than 10 minutes. After working the action to seat the new parts, the trigger was found to weigh a delightful, crisp 3 pounds. The Wild West trigger also eliminates that annoying flop that characterizes the stock Marlin two-piece trigger. Price for the Trigger Happy kit is \$89.

The other new component from Wild West is the “Bear Proof” ejector. It incorporates a couple of subtle enhancements, but the biggest improvement is that the ejector spring is made in one piece with the ejector. West has seen recurring problems with the stock ejector in the heavy caliber Marlins,



and this new component was designed to withstand all the abuse you can dish out. At \$25, it's a real bargain.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

#### Wild West Guns

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[www.wildwestguns.com](http://www.wildwestguns.com)

## KEL-TEC SUB-2000



The SUB Rifle 2000 is a self-loading carbine for pistol cartridges. Different versions of the SUB-2000 will accept most modern handgun magazines, e.g. S&W, Glock or Beretta. By rotating the barrel upwards and back, the SUB-2000 can be reduced to a size of 18" x 7" to facilitate secure storage. The SUB-2000 also features an internal keyed deployment lock.

#### 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	Recessed push-button Lock-back operating handle Keyed deployment lock	

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## Steiner Predator Binoculars

**O**K, I confess, I'm a sucker for good "glass." It's just that I spent so much time using poor quality bargain riflescopes and binoculars that I *really* appreciate the performance difference that can be had by selecting better quality optics. There seems to be a greater variety than ever of high-quality optical gear. One specimen I've tested recently that definitely falls into the high-quality category is Steiner's 10x42 "Predator" binoculars.

These glasses feature a comfortable, ergonomically designed rubber armored exterior, with grasping ribs for a secure purchase. The objective lens covers are attached to the binoculars, but may be removed in an instant. In fact, this same quick-detachable mounting system is used for the binocular strap as well. It's a clever and very handy feature. Weight is 1 pound, 10 ounces, and the dimensions are roughly 6 inches tall by 4.5 inches wide.

The diopter adjustment is mounted on the left barrel and is sufficiently rigid that it is unlikely to be moved by accident. Focussing

is via a center mounted wheel and impressed me as being the fastest, most responsive such system I've used. Until you get used to it, it is easy to overrun the desired focus, but after a few moments you'll feel right at home. I spent a lazy quarter hour watching a red-tailed hawk thermaling over a nearby canyon, and had no trouble keeping him in crisp focus.

In addition to all of these good features, the Predators feature a proprietary lens coating that is designed to make it easier to spot game. I can't speak to the effectiveness of that, but I did find these binoculars much more resistant to picking up sun flare than my old Steiner Military Marine model. The optics are sharp and bright, and in short, I've found the Steiner 10x42 Predators to be a pleasure to use.



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All HK pistols are manufactured to meet those same demanding standards. The HK USP, USP Compact, USP Tactical, and USP Expert all follow the same tough design and engineering path pioneered on the HK Mark 23.

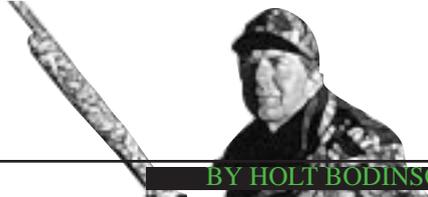
And like the HK Mark 23, all USP models are available in hard-hitting .45 ACP, the caliber preferred by American shooters.

All USP pistols use a control-lever as a combination safety and decocking lever, and can be converted to any of nine trigger firing modes for left- or right-handed shooters.

Joined with features like a machined steel slide, polygonal rifling, choice of corrosion resistant bluing or stainless steel, and a lifetime warranty; it becomes clear why HK weapons are the first choice of the world's most elite warriors.

To put an HK pistol in your hand, see your authorized dealer. For the location nearest you, call (703) 450-1900 or visit our web site at [www.hecklerkoch-usa.com](http://www.hecklerkoch-usa.com).





## SHORTER SHELLS AND LIGHTER GUNS

Coming upon some fellow quail hunters the other day, I was curious about the 12 gauge 3½ inch chambered autoloader one of the hunters hauled around. We exchanged your normal fellowship-of-the-field notes about numbers of quail taken, and missed, and seen, and their whereabouts. In the course of the conversation, I drifted around to asking the 3½-inch toting chap how he liked his gun. He observed that it was heavy, about 8 pounds, and long, but he bought it because it was a universal shotgun that could handle 2¼ inch, 3 inch and 3½ inch shells interchangeably. I didn't comment that his gun was really designed for more static field activities like waterfowling and turkey hunting, but it got me thinking about gun weight and design and current ammunition offerings for upland game.

As shotgunners, we've been a pretty conservative lot recently. Our rifle toting brethren are out there buying the lightest wands they can find, as evidenced by the popularity of the 5.25-pound Remington Model 700 Titanium and Kimber's 5.5-pound 84M Classic Sporter chambered in short, efficient cartridges like the .308 Win. and 7mm-08 Rem. And don't forget the new rimless short magnums. Even the rim-fire hunters are now chasing the Lilliputian, ultra-new, .17 Hornady Magnum Rimfire, while we're still sitting here with 6.25 to 11

pound shotguns firing the same .410, 28, 20, 16, 12 and 10 gauges that evolved before recorded history.

Now I'm not advocating that we bring back the 24 gauge or the 32 gauge, although FIOCCHI still turns out excellent field loads for both. Nor that we give the 16 gauge the stretch of a 3-inch magnum. But as shotgunners, we ought to do something creative.

I keep looking at Aguila's little 1.75-inch "Minishell" that pushes 5/8 ounces of No. 7s out of a 12 gauge at 1,175 feet per second, and wondering if a little bit of imaginative development on the short end might be the way to go.

### On The Lighter Side

In the heyday of English wingshooting, when a gentleman upland hunter might account for 100 driven birds a day and thousands over the course of a shooting year, he very well might have been shooting a 5.5-pound, 12 gauge SxS chambered for the 2 inch shell or a 6-pound SxS taking the 2½ inch shell. English makers of the day were very much attuned to the concept of balancing gun weight and scale to recoil, and the use of the shorter 2 to 2½ inch 12 gauge cases holding 7/8 to 1 ounce of shot respectively allowed them to build light framed, svelte doubles that did glorious work at ranges out to 45 yards without beating up the shooter.

And the 2 inch and 2½ inch 12 gauge shells are still with us.

Gamebore offers a complete selection of field loads. Bismuth markets a 2½ inch waterfowl loading. Empty FIOCCHI hulls are available in 2 inch and 2½ inch sizes. And Ballistic Products even offers a complete reloading manual entitled *Care and Feeding of Fine Doubles*, with scores of recipes for the 2, 2¼ and 2½ inch cartridges.

So my modest New Millennium proposal to the shotgun and ammunition manufacturers of the world is to bring back the light framed, dynamic, upland, 2 inch or 2½ inch 12 gauge with a load of 7/8 ounce of No. 6, 7 or 7½ shot. It needn't be a double, although a Browning Citori Upland, Beretta Ultralight or Bill Hanus Birdgun would be nice. No, it could just as well be a shortened-action, lightweight, Remington 1100 or Franchi AL 48.

I know, I know, the marketing departments will think I've really dipped off the deep end this time. But I have met at least one quail hunter who would gladly trade-in his "universal" 3½-inch autoloader for a real upland gun.

No... make that two quail hunters!



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

#### Aguila

[www.aguilaammo.com](http://www.aguilaammo.com)

#### Ballistic Products

[www.ballisticproducts.com](http://www.ballisticproducts.com)

#### Beretta

[www.berettausa.com](http://www.berettausa.com)

#### Bill Hanus Birdguns

[www.billhanusbirdguns.com](http://www.billhanusbirdguns.com)

#### Bismuth

[www.bismuth-notox.com](http://www.bismuth-notox.com)

#### Browning

[www.browning.com](http://www.browning.com)

#### FIOCCHI

[www.fiocchiusa.com](http://www.fiocchiusa.com)

#### Franchi

[www.franchiusa.com](http://www.franchiusa.com)

#### Gamebore

[www.KentGamebore.com](http://www.KentGamebore.com)

#### Remington

[www.remington.com](http://www.remington.com)



(R-L) While the 1¼-inch Aguila and 2-inch Gamebore cartridges are dwarfed by their 2¼-inch and 3½-inch kin, the short 12 gauge shell might be the upland performer of the New Millennium.

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# NAA Guardian

## .32ACP

By Sanford Woo  
Photos by James Bogdan

A factory custom version of this compact pistol is the author's prescription for concealed-carry.

In handgun circles, the L.W. Seecamp .32 ACP enjoys a reputation as an ultra dependable, last ditch, save-your-life pocket pistol. But with a fast growing reputation and limited production, market demand has caused the Seecamp pistols to sell for hundreds of dollars over the suggested retail price.

North American Arms recognized this demand and entered the micro-sized autoloader market with the introduction of the Guardian .32 in 1997. While the Seecamp remains ever desirable, those wanting a reliable ultra-small pistol now have an alternative in the NAA Guardian minus the scalper's price and endless waiting.

Why does demand exist for such small caliber pistols when noted experts such as Mas Ayoob and many others believe the .38 Special is the *minimum* caliber suitable for self-defense? Why use the .32 ACP which some consider suitable only for stopping alley rats, not alley thugs? To borrow a phrase from "Godzilla", size matters. Not everyone can conceal or comfortably carry a full-sized gun.

Ask the informed individual which gun he would use for concealed-carry and a likely reply is a 1911, large frame Glock, or Sig. All

are excellent choices, but try wearing one for a while. How does it feel having 2 to 3 pounds of mass hanging from one side of your body all day? How does it feel having that iron jam into your kidney every time you lean against a chair? What do you wear year round to ensure the weapon remains fully concealed? Given the problems associated with carrying a full-sized gun, you may be tempted to leave home without it.

Let's look at how the Guardian may be a better choice for some. It is roughly 4.4 inches long, 3.2 inches high, .86 inch wide, and it weighs in at 13 ounces empty or 15 ounces fully loaded. Compare this against the "lightweight compact" Kimber Ultra Carry .45 ACP that measures roughly 7 inches long, 4.9 inches high, 1.2 inches thick, and weighs in at 25 ounces empty. It readily becomes apparent which is less burdensome for the daily grind of concealed carry.

### A Closer Look

The Guardian comes boxed with a DeSantis nylon case, a case lock, and two stainless 6 round magazines. One magazine has an 1/8-inch plastic base and the other fea-

tures an extended finger rest type baseplate.

The slide and frame are machined from 17-4PH stainless steel, chosen according to Ken Friel, NAA general manager, for its combination of strength, hardness, and rust resistance. Kahr Arms in cooperation with NAA manufactures the current run of slides and frames. Incidentally, 17-4PH is the same steel used in the Freedom Arms .454 Casull. If this material can withstand the repeated assault of the 55,000 CUP force of the .454, it will undoubtedly resist a lifetime of "abuse" from a .32 ACP.

The slide has brushed finish sides and a matte finish top. The top of the slide is capped with a full-length rib with a small-notched rear sight and a thin front sight blade. Bo-Mars these are not; the sights provide a reference point but little else. For my purposes, I felt the sights would be a detriment. More on this later.

The gun operates by direct blowback, which to the user means more effort to muscle back the slide. It feels as though it takes more effort to retract the slide of the Guardian than that of a 1911. I asked Friel about this. He stated that it takes about 9 to 11 pounds to

*continued on page 66*



**Left:** The diminutive size of the Guardian becomes apparent when viewed next to this Spyderco Delica. Selecting the flat bottomed magazine will reduce the pistol's profile even further. **Below:** The custom Carry Package Guardian is snag free and extremely pleasant to carry. A quality pocket holster by Aker Leather makes the little NAA disappear into a pocket.





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Rifles are fascinating artifacts and the pursuit of rifle accuracy is a fascinating activity. So fascinating, in fact, that for many people the pursuit of accuracy is their sole reason for shooting. They want rifles that can shoot small groups in order to shoot small groups — and nothing else.

Nothing wrong with that. As long as an activity is legal and doesn't infringe on the rights of others, I believe people should be able to do pretty much as they please, no explanations needed. Benchrest competitors, whose objective is to shoot tiny groups, have done more to unlock the secrets of accuracy than anyone. Every rifle shooter is indebted to this dedicated group for the superb equipment and technical knowledge we have.

There are also shooters who want to use that equipment and knowledge not so much to shoot tiny groups, but to hit specific targets on demand. If this is your objective, obsessing over tiny increments of accuracy and constantly shooting from the bench may not help achieve your goal. Such activities may even make it more difficult to achieve your goal.

## Consistency Versus Predictability

One aspect of rifle accuracy is consistency — the ability of the rifle to put all its shots in a small group. When we state that our rifle will shoot 1 inch groups or 1/2 inch groups, we are measuring consistency.

But another aspect of accuracy, one that is often overlooked, is predictability — the ability of the shooter to predict with a high degree of confidence that he can hit a specific target. Maybe an example will illustrate the difference.

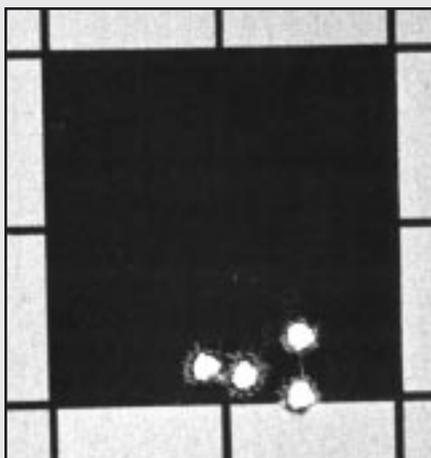
Let's say we have a very accurate (consistent) rifle, one that will put all its shots inside a 1/2 inch circle at 100 yards (judging from what I hear and read, everyone and his cousin has such a rifle). One pleasant day, we take the rifle from the gun safe where it's been standing for the last six weeks and head for the range. We tape a quarter to the 200-yard backstop. The objective is to take the rifle from its case, load one round, and hit the quarter.

If we miss it's not the rifle's fault. We already know the rifle shoots under 1/2 inch at 100 yards, meaning it should also shoot under 1 inch at 200 yards. A 25-cent piece is approximately 0.95 inch in diameter. We should, therefore, hit it the first time and every time from 200 yards. If we miss (as I suspect most of us would) it is because the other aspect of accuracy — predictability — has been neglected.

A lot of experimenting, development, research, and workmanship has gone into assembling consistent rifles: precision barrels, rigid actions, cartridge design, powders, bullets, bedding. To achieve predictability, we need all those problems solved, plus a lot more.

For example: do we know precisely where bullet impact will be relative to the sighting system? Where does a bullet impact when fired from a cold, clean barrel? How about from a cold, fouled barrel? From a hot barrel? Is the sight system — scope, rings, bases — durable and strong enough to maintain zero during the unavoidable jostling and jiggling a rifle gets when it is transported and used in the field? What effect do extremes of temperature and humidity have? What happens to point of impact if we shoot from a tight sling, or a bipod, or with the forearm resting on a log or binocular case?

Shooting small groups takes skill and quality equipment. Hitting a specific target — first shot, on demand — adds another level of difficulty.



## Bad Habits

Watch typical hunters at the shooting bench, sighting in or testing handloads. Seldom do they have the sophisticated, adjustable rests used by experienced benchrest competitors or the knowledge of how to use the bench for maximum precision. Usually the rifle's forearm will be sitting on a jury-rigged rest such as a folded jacket or bag of shot. Such expedient measures can be made to work, but their common fault is that they are almost always too low.

With too low a rest the shooter has to lean well forward to get his face on the stock and acquire a sight picture. Draped over the bench like this the body takes the full force of recoil, with no flexibility to absorb the jolt. Furthermore, the buttplate often rides too high on the shoulder, resting against bone rather than muscle, usually padded by no more than a light summer shirt. Under such circumstances, even the recoil of .270 to .308 class rifles with hard buttplates can be painful.

I believe this type of shooting is a major reason why so many shooters flinch, or feel they can't handle more powerful cartridges. For comfort, use a higher rest that lets you sit up straight. Use some padding such as a

PAST recoil shield and settle the buttplate into the muscular pocket of the shoulder instead of on bone. Use the bench no more than is required to develop loads and sight in, and you'll find you can handle more recoil than you thought.

After our typical shooter fires, what happens? First, he keeps looking through the scope for a while, trying to spot the bullet hole. Then he sits up, slowly opens the action, carefully extracts the fired case. He ruminates over the case, studies the primer, looks inside the case neck, then sets it back in the cartridge box and takes out another round. He pats the barrel to see how hot it is, studies the new round lovingly, then finally pokes it into the chamber and closes the action for the next shot.

## Real World Result

None of this causes problems until three months later up in the high country, when he fires at a nice elk. Watching through the scope he suddenly realizes that instead of falling, the bull is headed for cover. Never having learned to cycle the bolt from the shoulder, he lowers the rifle to reload. That's when he finds out that the cartridges, with bullets seated far out, won't feed from the magazine.

With fumbling fingers he finally clears the action, inserts a round into the chamber, and slaps the bolt closed. By then, of course, the bull has reached the treeline. Angrily he opens the bolt to see why the rifle malfunctioned. The bullet, seated too far out, sticks in the rifling and all he gets is the case and an action full of powder. His buddies find him there an hour later, still digging through the snow, looking for the ejected case from the first shot. Next day the ravens and magpies lead them to the elk, and they find that the super-accurate, lightly-constructed bullet, which would have worked fine on smaller game, failed to penetrate adequately for a quick kill on a big, tough animal.

Placing consistency ahead of predictability can lead to problems. Such as: selecting bullets solely on the basis of accuracy instead of considering impact performance as well. Worrying too much about rifle weight and not enough about balance and handling. Investing in accurate rifles and quality optics and then scrimping on the vital link between them, the scope rings and bases. Putting up with poor quality trigger pulls. Spending too much time testing accuracy and not enough time testing reliability.

Freestyle competition among shooters and among manufacturers has given us fabulous equipment. We take for granted accuracy that a generation ago was expensive and uncommon. To make use of that performance, to achieve predictability, we have to get our priorities in order.



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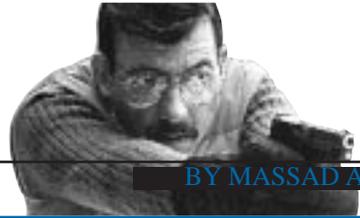
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BY MASSAD AYOUB

## National Junior Handgun Championships



*.45 brass flies as young Cody Maxwell wins the first National Junior Handgun Championship.*

It all began at the Second Chance Shoot in 1997. Old handgunning stalwarts will recall that this was the single “funnest” event on the Pro/Am handgun shooting tour. Hundreds of people milled around for days, enjoying each other’s company, and shooting courses of fire that could only be described as a carnival that involved shooting handguns.

Some of us brought our kids. It occurred to Second Chance veteran John Maxwell that there should be an event for the youngsters.

“I’ll second that,” I said, along with a bunch of others. John brought the proposal to Rich Davis, the harried match director.

You have to bear in mind that Second Chance is a cornucopia of shooting. There were events for big revolvers and little revolvers. Space guns, race guns, and stock guns. Two-man team, three-person team, all-women team, and mixed doubles. Events for shotguns with buckshot, shotguns with slugs, rifles, and submachineguns.

“Look,” sighed Rich. “I’ll tell you what. Everybody and his brother says we ought to have a match for this, that, and the other category. If you guys get the prize money together, we’ll do it.”

“Done,” said John, and we started circulating among the shooters. Their donations were generous enough to bring tears to the eye. During the day at the shoot, I was on the phone with industry sponsors getting them to cough up donations, too. We made the nut.

Richard was as good as his word. He announced that the following year, 1998, Second Chance would host the first National Junior Handgun Championships.

### Precedent

There were already junior champion titles within the various disciplines at their regular national championships. The metallic silhouette shooters, the bullseye shooters, IPSC, etc. There was little uniformity. A 7-year-old would have to shoot head to head with a 17-year-old. In some disciplines, 18 and 19-year-old shooters were still considered juniors. In theory, a full time member of an armed services pistol team could be shooting against your fifth grade son or daughter. We wanted a somewhat more level playing field than that.

Enter Tom Sheppardson.

### Standards

Tom was one of the Second Chance vets who was with the concept from the beginning. An administrator of a middle school in Michigan, he knew more about level playing fields for young people than the rest of us. Calling upon his knowledge and research sources, he determined that 17 would be the top-end cut-off age. The contestant could not have reached his or her 18th birthday as of the last day (awards day) of the tournament. Someone old enough to join the armed forces and get married without permission is no longer a Junior. Fair enough.

Perhaps more important was the middle cut. Fourteen to 17 was established as Junior class, and age 13 and down as “Sub-Junior.” Tom’s resources in the well-informed physical education community indicated that this was the point where most adolescents had morphed from children to young adults. One of our worries was that “stage dads” would

drill their kids a couple of hundred rounds a day with hard-kicking Magnums and .45s. We did not want to damage growing bones. The collective wisdom Tom was able to tap into said that kids 14 and up could handle that, and it wouldn’t be good for 13 and down. We locked that in as the standard.

Juniors shot the same 5-pin array as the adults, having to blow them a yard back off the table with powerful guns. Sub-Juniors were given a 5-pin “tip-over” array at the back edge of the table where .38 Special, 9mm, and even .22 bullets would take the pins off.

The first year was an outstanding success. Then, unfortunately, Second Chance stopped running matches. Steve and Clare Dixon, who ran NAPSA (North American Pin Shooting Association), took it over for ’99, but in 2000 their shoot went on hiatus too. No one was in place to pick it up for 2001.

### The Junior Nationals Are Back!

In 2001, Pioneer Sportsman Club in Dunbarton, New Hampshire voted to take on the Junior Nationals. It is scheduled for July 12-14, 2002. Shooters can complete the course of fire in one day. A parent, guardian, or adult coach must accompany the youngster. The course of fire will be three stages: conventional bullseye, a Steel Challenge event, and a stage of NRA Hunter Pistol.

All shooting will be done with .22 LR handguns, on the theory that these are the guns most commonly used to introduce youngsters to pistol shooting. Revolvers and autos are allowed, but iron sights are required. There will be no drawing from the holster; all stages will start at low ready or with the gun in hand resting on a table provided. All shooting will be two-handed, except in bullseye, where Sub-Juniors can still use both hands but Juniors must fire one-handed in the traditional manner. There will be an optional parent/child team event in which the young competitor and escorting adult will shoot together with .22s at Bianchi Cup-style falling plates at 10 yards.

A number of suitable sporting firearms are already in inventory for prizes. The Second Amendment Foundation is co-sponsoring the event. In the evenings, there will be seminars on firearms safety and junior shooting, taught by experienced coaches and past Junior shooting champions.



**FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:**  
**National Junior Handgun Championships, Pioneer Sportsmen**  
 PO Box 403, Concord, NH 03302,  
[www.pioneersportsmen.org](http://www.pioneersportsmen.org)  
 Volunteer adults who would like to assist in running the tournament are also welcome to apply.

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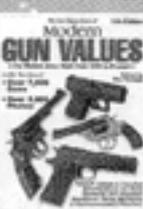
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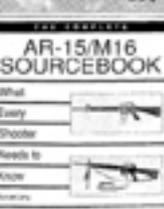
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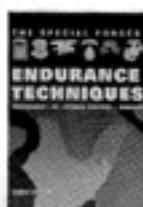
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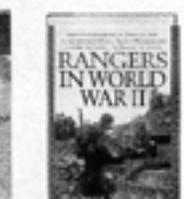
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A dedicated .270 Winchester fan, Bodinson says Winchester's new .270 WSM is a dandy.



# CHARGES ING .270

By Holt Bodinson

It didn't take long. But like a good wild-catter, Winchester has necked down their hot, little .300 Winchester Short Magnum (WSM) to the caliber they originated in 1925 — the .270. And it's sensational.

It's hard to believe that the ever popular .270 Win. is now 76 years old. Combining power, flat trajectory and accuracy with moderate recoil, it has proved to be one of the world's most successful big game cartridges. It was created by necking down the .30-'06 case to a unique bullet diameter of .277 inch. It didn't take hunters long to appreciate that a 130-grain .270 bullet was equivalent in sectional density to a 165-grain .30-caliber bullet, and the trajectory of the 130-grain load at 3,100 fps was extraordinarily flat for the 1920s.

What's curious to many is why Winchester didn't capitalize on the .270 caliber by incorporating it into their .243-.308-.358 family or their standard .264-.300-.338-.458 magnum series of cases. But the wait has been worth it. The .270 WSM is a sterling successor to the .270 Win., particularly since it is ideally mated to today's lighter weight, compact, short-action rifles.

## Modern Case Design

In designing the .270 WSM beltless case with an overall length of 2.1 inches, Winchester essentially adopted a .404 Jeffery case diameter, added a rebated rim of .532 inches (the standard H&H magnum rim), a 35-degree shoulder, and a .277 inch long neck. It differs from the .300 WSM only in the length of the one-caliber neck, which measures .300 inch in the .300 WSM. It is a very modern case design when you consider that the .270 Win. case is 2.54 inches long and sports a long, shallow shoulder angle of 17 degrees and 30 minutes inherited from the .30-'06.

When we think of short-action big game rifles, we are normally referring to an action adapted to the .308 Win. family of cases that are 2.015 inch long with an overall loaded length of 2.8 inches. The new WSM case is slightly longer on both counts. The case length is 2.1 inches or .085 inch longer than the .308 Win. The maximum overall loaded length of the .270 WSM is 2.860 inch or .060 inch longer than the .308. Given its large case and rim diameters and overall loaded length, adapting some existing short actions to the new case could prove quite a gunsmithing challenge.

Breaking down a factory round of the 130-grain .270 WSM loading reveals 66.0 grains of ball powder. Winchester repre-



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was a perfect complement to the Model 70 Featherweight .270 WSM. Designed for the American market, the new model features a 1 inch, one piece aluminum tube and what can only be described as brilliant optics and quality adjustments.

Similarly, the definition and light-gathering qualities of Kahles' new 10x42 binoculars with twist-in eyecups for eyeglass wearers proved impressive when accurately evaluating the quality of herd bucks that appeared to the naked eye to be little, white pinpricks on the distant plains.

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sentatives indicate that handloaders will find Winchester 760 ball powder ideally suited to the new cartridge. The working pressure for the new case is right up there at 65,000 psi. By necessity, bullets are seated quite deeply in the WSM, and I'm sure it won't be long before experimenters begin chambering the little, beltless magnum in standard length actions and single-shots to enable them to seat bullets out further in order to gain additional powder space and subsequent velocity.

What we have learned about the squat WSM case design with its sharp 35 degree shoulder is that it is very efficient when considering the amount of powder burned for the velocity achieved, and it appears to be more accurate, rifle-for-rifle, than longer cases offering equivalent levels of performance.

### Tale Of The Tape

How does the .270 WSM stack-up to the original .270 Win.?

The factory is loading the new cartridge with three bullets — a 130-grain Ballistic Silvertip; a 140-grain Fail Safe; and a 150-grain Power-Point. Here are the comparable velocity figures taken from a 24-inch barrel:

#### 130-GRAIN BALLISTIC SILVERTIP

.270 Win. 3,050 fps  
.270 WSM 3,275 fps

#### 140-Grain Fail Safe

.270 Win. 2,920 fps  
.270 WSM 3,125 fps

#### 150-Grain Power-Point

.270 Win. 2,850 fps  
.270 WSM 3,150 fps

The 130-grain Ballistic Silvertip and 150-grain Power-Point loads are perfectly suitable for most big game, and indeed the 150-grain bullet is often selected over the 130-grain simply to minimize meat damage. The very stout, steel reinforced, 140-grain Fail Safe bullet is better matched to larger-boned, heavier game such as elk and moose. Its deep penetration and 100 percent weight retention can be effectively utilized.

TRAJECTORY FIGURES FOR THE .270 WSM				
100 Yds	200 Yds	300 Yds	400 Yds	
<b>130-Grain Ballistic Silvertip</b>				
1.1	0	-5.5	-16.1	
<b>140-Grain Fail Safe</b>				
1.4	0	-6.5	-19.0	
<b>150-Grain Power-Point</b>				
1.4	0	-6.5	-19.4	

When you compare these values to those of the .270 Win., you'll find that the original .270 is no slouch and that its trajectories come within an inch or two of those of the new .270 WSM; however, where the .270 WSM shines is its ability to deliver more down-range energy than its predecessor. For

*continued on page 65*

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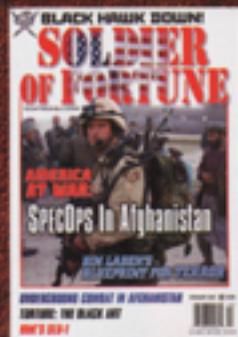
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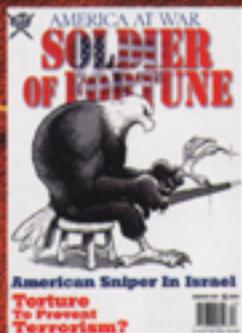


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AHG002

# CLEANING GUNS

Here are a few suggestions for easy, no-hassle maintenance from a man who enjoys shooting 'em more than cleaning 'em.

BY JOHN TAFFIN

I was not very old before I discovered the three greatest smells in the world. They are, not necessarily in order, diced onions and green peppers sautéing in a frying pan, perfume on a lovely lady, and Hoppe's #9. I discovered the former and the latter first, and when the other fragrance came along, it was the only time in my life my guns became dusty.

This was not a good situation. To correct it, I married the lovely lady three months later so we could smell onions, green peppers, and Hoppe's #9 together. By our second Christmas, we had a baby on the way and I was out of work and going to college full-time. We had a grand total of a little over \$6 to spend on each other for

Christmas, so we cut it down the middle. And with her share, she bought me a bottle of Hoppe's #9 and some cleaning patches. She was, and is, a fast learner!

## Proper Cleaning Interval

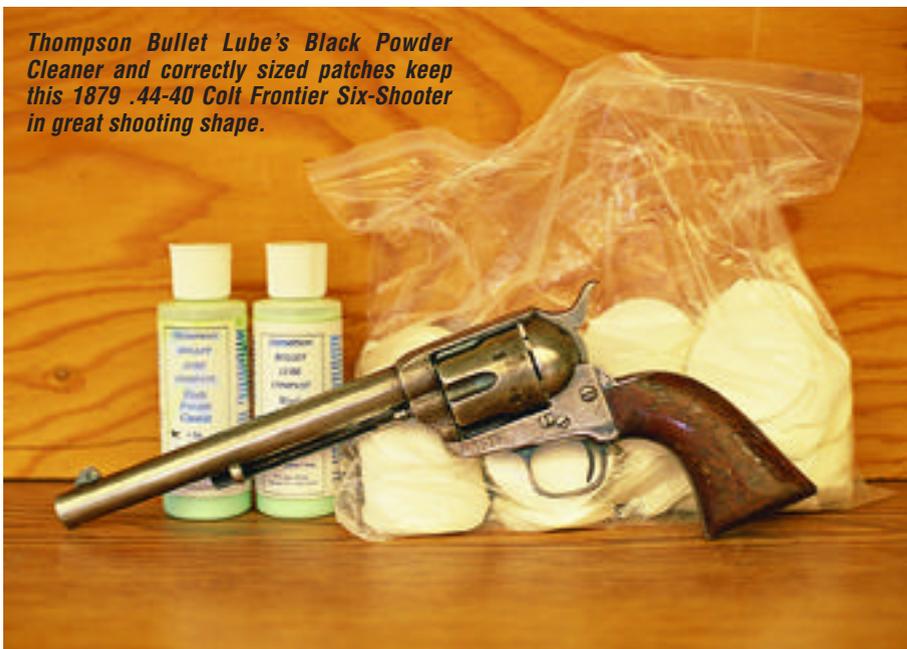
Prior to meeting this love of my life, I would spend every Saturday afternoon shooting my sixguns and leverguns, most often the affordable-to-shoot .22 caliber Ruger Single-Six and Marlin 39A Mountie. After every session, I would religiously clean both guns and actually enjoy doing it. This was, in the words of Burt Lancaster in the movie "Valdez" *Is Coming!*, "Before I know better." Every



gun does not necessarily need cleaning after every session. It depends on the gun, the situation, and most assuredly the area of the country that one lives in. I live in a high desert environment with very little need to be concerned about humidity or moisture. Those that live in damp climates must learn how often their guns need to be cleaned. For some, it definitely means after every use.

This past weekend, I shot black powder in a cowboy action shooting match in a steady rain. You can be assured that I cleaned those guns as soon as I got home, completely stripping them, and making sure there was no moisture left inside. I'll also clean them again tomorrow just to be sure. If

*Thompson Bullet Lube's Black Powder Cleaner and correctly sized patches keep this 1879 .44-40 Colt Frontier Six-Shooter in great shooting shape.*





*Outers' excellent line of cleaning products.*

*Tetra Gun's gun care offerings.*

the weather had been dry and sunny and I had been shooting smokeless powder, I would simply have wiped them off and put them away. The key to cleaning and not spending a lot of unnecessary time is to know when, and what, to clean.

For example, I always clean black powder guns the same day they are used. In addition, about every third time, they are completely dismantled and all inner parts are also cleaned. Such firearms as the sixguns from Freedom Arms or those custom sixguns from any number of gunsmiths that specialize in tight tolerances must also be regularly cleaned, or they will not work. The same holds true for defensive handguns but for a more important

reason. They must always be ready to go without unburned powder or crud under the ejector star on a double action revolver, or a sluggish slide or dirty extractor on a semiautomatic. I have to admit that a little superstition enters in here, as I have never swabbed out the bore of my custom Thompson/Center Contender chambered in 6.5 JDJ. It is fired two or three times to check its zero before each hunting season. And since it has more than two dozen straight one-shot kills to its credit over the past dozen years — on everything from turkey to mule deer to waterbuck to zebra — I am afraid to touch it and possibly break the magic spell.

### **A Common Sense Approach**

I approach firearms maintenance the same way as I maintain my vehicles. I do not change the oil every time I drive, nor do I go anywhere past the recommended period between oil changes. If my truck goes through a period of heavy-duty use, it is serviced accordingly. The same holds true for light duty use. The key is to know which is which. And again, allow me to repeat this simple fact — how often your firearms must be cleaned depends upon which part of the country you live in.

Here are the products I keep on my workbench and use to maintain my firearms. When I started shooting seri-

*continued on page 35*



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## CLEANING GUNS

continued from page 33

ously in the 1950s, I don't know if there was even anything available other than Hoppe's #9. It is still used regularly and has also been joined by Hoppe's Black Powder Solvent. For years, the black powder guns were cleaned with hot soapy water. However, the use of solvents made for black powder certainly simplifies things. I also use a lot of Thompson Bullet Lube's Black Powder Cleaner and patches. Their solvent comes in a small, easy-to-use bottle with a spout for applying it to patches. While shooting black powder, I keep the guns going with a spray bottle of Windex. A soaked patch down the barrel, or a spray at the front and back of the cylinder, keeps the guns relatively clean while shooting and also prevents binding.

When I'm finished, I spray them all over with Windex, wipe them down with a paper towel, and then wrap them in a couple layers of paper towels for the trip home. This simplifies the final cleaning with black powder solvent. Two other products are especially necessary for black powder guns and/or guns that have been used in wet weather. For the latter, Outers' Metal Seal is a lifesaver. This is a spray on lubricant that displaces water. After every firearm is cleaned, Metal Seal is sprayed on the surface and wiped down, and I also use the extension tube to spray lightly inside the mechanism.

Colt-type cap and ball revolvers require separating into three parts before cleaning — frame, cylinder and barrel assembly. Before reassembling, I use Tetra Gun grease on all contact parts, especially the indexing pins at the front of the frame, the cylinder pin, and on the wedge itself. This prevents any problems in future disassembly. The same grease also goes on the base pin and the front and back contact points of the cylinder of every single-action sixgun.

### Labor Free De-Leading

There are a lot of other products on my bench bearing the Outers and Tetra Gun label. No longer do I spend a lot of time trying to remove leading from the gun barrel. The introduction of Outers Foul Out has removed any need for laboring over a leaded barrel, and this product removes it quickly and electronically. Two spray cans of lubricant from Outers take care of most situations, one being Lube Oil and the other Teflon based Tri-Lube. Finally, from Outers is a most handy product called Crud Cutter, which is a metal degreaser and cleaner. All of these come in spray cans with extension tubes for getting into small or tight areas. By the way, be certain to wear your safety glasses when using these pressurized solvents.

In addition to Tetra Gun grease I also keep a large can of Tetra's degreaser known as Action Blaster, which works to flush out the crud in actions, around pins, and under extractor stars. Tetra Gun Spray is a light

penetrating lubricant that goes on after Action Blaster has done its work. All of the products, by being in spray cans, certainly make for an easier cleaning process.

### Snake In A Box

A most handy item that is now marketed by Uncle Mike's is the Bore Snake. It should also receive some sort of an award for ingenious marketing, as it is packed in a small plastic box shaped like the head of a cobra. The Bore Snake is a cleaning kit on a rope that is pulled through the barrel. It has a built-in bore brush and in the kit comes a bore cleaner to apply to the rope and a small wiping cloth to remove moisture and debris from the outside of the firearm. It is billed as the "World's Fastest Gun Bore Cleaner," which it certainly is. It's an excellent product.

Uncle Mike's also has another product that is perfect for protecting guns after they are cleaned and placed in the safe. This is especially true for handguns, which are placed in Uncle Mike's zippered Pistol Rugs after cleaning. This not only keeps them clean but protects them. Instead of placing a few handguns on a shelf, the use of these Pistol Rugs allows them to be safely stacked on top of each other. The addition of a labeled tag on the zipper pull allows for quick and easy identification.

Finally, for use with the various cleaning products, I have Midway's Shooters Box completely stocked with all sizes and manners of slotted tips, jags, brass brushes, and patches. Gone are the days when I tried to make one size fit all.

Quality firearms are expensive and deserve proper care. With today's excellent variety of cleaners, lubricants and preservatives, the job of maintaining your guns has never been simpler.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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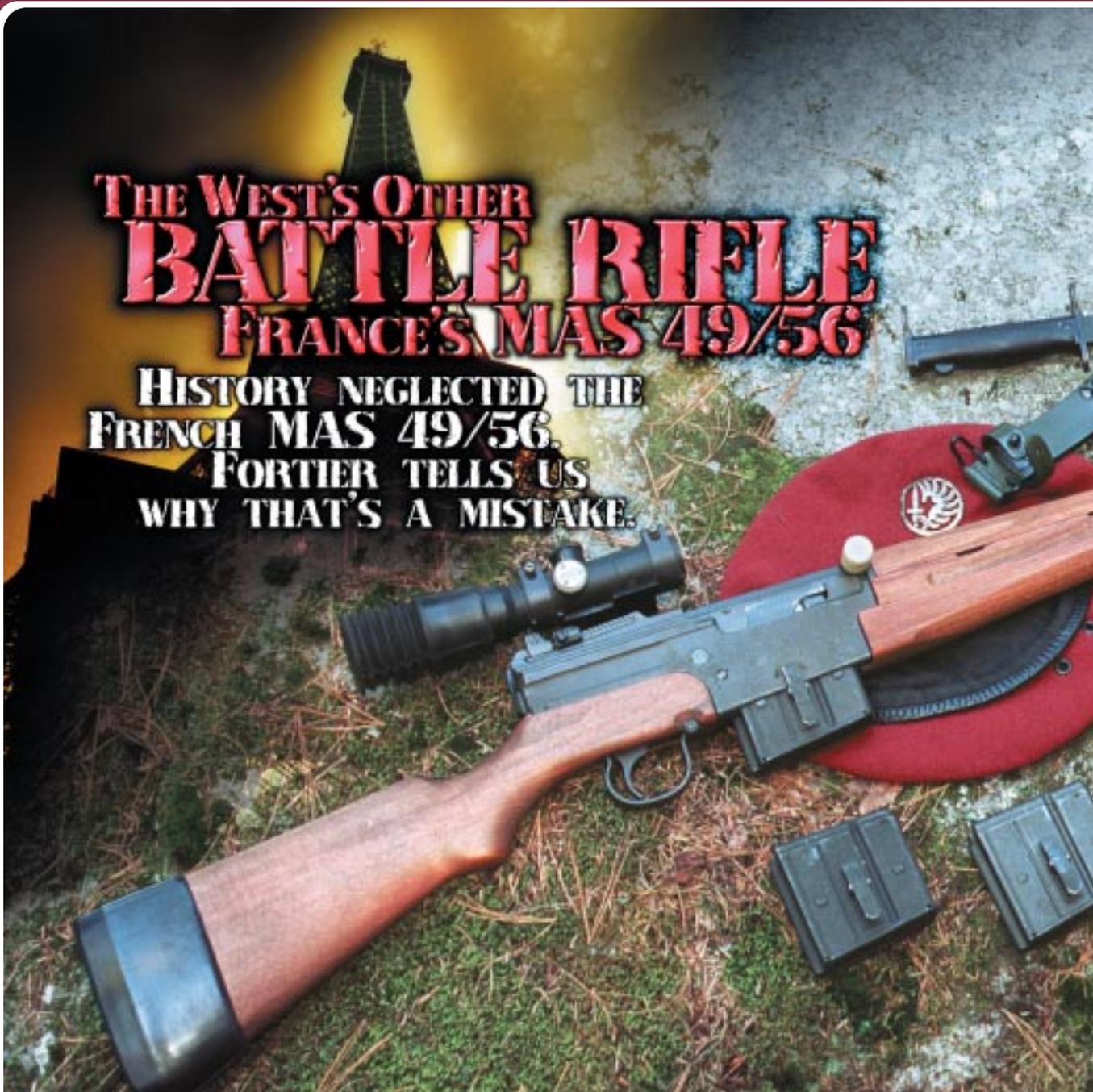
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# THE WEST'S OTHER BATTLE RIFLE FRANCE'S MAS 49/56

HISTORY NEGLECTED THE  
FRENCH MAS 49/56.  
FORTIER TELLS US  
WHY THAT'S A MISTAKE.

**STORY BY DAVID M. FORTIER**

**PHOTOS BY EMILY K. FORTIER**

**A**fter the close of World War II there was a great flurry of activity among arms designers. During this period in time men around the world were hard at work creating what would become the next generation of combat rifles. This is when Mikhail Kalashnikov breathed life into his Avtomat, Dieudonne Saive and Ernest Vervier begot the FN FAL, Garand's M-1 evolved into the M-14, the AR-10 sprang from the creative genius of Eugene Stoner, and Nazi Germany's StG 45 was resurrected to become the basis for the CETME and H&K's G-3.

These rifles were all destined to become respected designs that, with the exception of the AR-10, would see extensive use. These were the weapons that defended the ideals of

the East and the West. Other than the AR-15, which was eventually developed from the AR-10, these were the only major players of the '50s, '60s, and '70s. Right? While this may be what many think, it's simply not true. One major player, who's roots reached back further than any of the rifles mentioned and saw heavy combat, is the French MAS series of rifles that culminated in the MAS Mle 1949/56. That so little is known of this rifle series is really a pity, as it proved to be a sturdy, reliable and accurate weapon in actual combat.

Truth be told though, there is no major power, with the exception of China, with less known about its small arms development than France. Cloaked in a shroud of silence since the late 1800s, France has historically kept her developments a secret. So

while she is known as the birthplace of smokeless powder and the first modern combat rifle/cartridge (the M1886 Lebel and its 8x50R round), after that things get hazy. We know, and shake our heads at, how she sent her boys off to fight in two World Wars with a hodgepodge of outdated bolt action rifles. Then somewhere around 1980 she rearmed with a modern, albeit strange looking, 5.56x45 bullpup. But is that all there is to it? Were her small arms designers simply unable to produce anything of value between 1886 and 1980? Hardly.

Traditionally one of the great military powers of Europe, France made many outstanding advances in both arms and ammunition after their invention of smokeless powder. However, everyone involved in her



defense research community was strictly charged with remaining silent about their work. No patents were ever sought, so as not to arouse outside suspicions. All was done for the Glory of France. This has had the effect that nobody today realizes how much the French actually accomplished. A prime example of this is the development of the rifle in question, the MAS Mle 1949/56.

To trace the lineage of the MAS 49/56, one has to go all the way back to the 1890s. Too quick on the draw, the French soon realized, much to their chagrin, that their Lebel and its groundbreaking 8x50R cartridge were obsolete overnight. However, rather taking an evolutionary step by designing an improved bolt action rifle, the French desired to take a revolutionary step, and field the world's first autoloading rifle. So towards the end of the 19th Century, studies

were begun that led to the development of several remarkably modern cartridges. These were in the 6, 6.5, and 7mm range, and autoloading rifle prototypes were also developed to fire them. Between 1894 and 1913, over 20 autoloading and fully automatic rifles were developed and tested. One of these was the 6x60mm B1 rifle developed by weapons inspector Rossignol and perfected in 1901. This rifle, NOT the Swedish Ljungmann AG m/42b, introduced the pistonless, direct-gas impingement system as typified today in the AR-15. Amazingly enough, Rossignol also developed a companion weapon, a detachable magazine-fed, machine-rifle with a bipod. Between his battle rifle and squad auto he had developed the world's first weapons system. His gas system, from 1922 onwards, would remain a cornerstone of MAS rifle design.

***Above: While not as well known to Americans as the FN-FAL, G-3, or M-14 — the MAS 49/56 is a well-designed combat rifle that saw lengthy service around the globe.***

However, through no fault of the weapons designers, France did indeed send the flower of her youth off to war in August of 1914 armed with the obsolete Lebel M1886-M93. What is not so often stated is the fact that she also became the first country to widely issue to her infantry an autoloading rifle, the Fusil Automatique Modele 1917. While the Russians can claim to have fielded the first unit armed entirely with light automatic weapons — a company from the 189th Ismailskiy Regiment that went into action in December 1916 armed with Fedorov Avtomats — their numbers were small. When the Fedorov went out of



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production in October 1925, only 3,200 had been produced. Compare this to 85,333 Mle 1917s produced and issued to combat troops from April, 1917 to September, 1918. An improved version, the Mle 1918, came too late to see action in World War I but did see combat in Morocco in the Rif War of 1921-1926. According to field reports, there was "complete satisfaction" with it, even in the harsh desert conditions.

Not satisfied with the Mle 1918, the French continued development of a self loading rifle. In 1921, examples of a new rimless cartridge intended to replace the 8x50R first appeared. They used a case based upon the 7.92x57 Mauser and a projectile inspired by the Swiss 7.5x55. This cartridge was eventually developed and shortened to become the 7.5x54mm Model 1929. In 1921, new specifications for France's postwar autoloading rifle program were also established. Throughout the '20s and '30s, various designs from different manufacturers were tested and refined. Manufacture Nationale d'Armes de St-Etienne (MAS) resurrected Rossignol's gas system in 1922 and then developed a carrier controlled, tilting, rear locking bolt in 1928. This locking system used no pins or linkages, and was well in advance of either Fedor V. Tokarev or Dieudonne Saive's designs. This rifle was eventually developed into the MAS 38/39. Featuring a two piece stock and a bayonet under the barrel, this model looks very

similar to the bolt action MAS 36. It was the first French autoloader to consistently perform as reliably as existing bolt action repeaters. During shooting trials held on January 8, 1940 it proved superior to the MAS 36, especially on moving targets. The design was adopted in March 1940, but it was too late. A few months later France was overrun, unable to cope with the lightning speed of modern warfare.

Four years later, when the St-Etienne region of France was liberated, work again commenced on France's autoloading rifle. The design was modified to accept a 10-round detachable magazine and adopted as the Fusil Automatique MAS 44. However,

Germany surrendered before production had commenced. Eventually 6,200 of this model were produced, most of them going to Marine Commandos in Indochina. Combat use of this model led to a desire for increased accuracy, an adjustable rear sight, ability to mount a telescopic sight for sniping out to 600 meters, and integral grenade-launching capability. It was refined first to become the MAS 44A and then the MAS 49. This latter model saw heavy combat both in Indochina and later Algeria, where it proved tough, accurate, and reliable.

However, as good as the MAS 49 was, there was still room for improvement. The barrel was shortened and the forend cut back, making the rifle both lighter and handier. In order to shorten the recovery time between shots a muzzle brake was mounted. At this time rifle grenades were an important part of small unit tactics in the French Army. So a gas cutoff was added and an improved Spigot-type grenade launcher was mounted. To aid the operator, a sight for launching grenades, either directly or indirectly, was incorporated. Plus the ability to mount a bayonet was added. The result was the 7.5x54 MAS Mle 1949/56. A fine combat rifle, the MAS 49/56 would serve France well until it was finally replaced officially in 1979 by the 5.56 FAMAS bullpup.

Up until fairly recently, the MAS 49/56 was a very uncommon item here in the U.S. However, as the rifles have been replaced in French service, small quantities have shown up on the U.S. surplus market. A few years ago a number showed up for sale that the U.S. importer had rechambered to .308 Winchester. These invariably had numerous problems due to the differences in pressure curves between the .308 and the French 7.5

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**300 Yards:** 4 inches

### 7.5x54 139 grain FMJ ball

**Velocity:** 2,600  
**100 Yards:** 3 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches

*Velocity readings taken 12 feet from the muzzle at an ambient temperature of 50 degrees F with an Oehler 35P. Groups are an average of four 5-shot groups from the bench.*

## MAS Mle 1949/56 SPECIFICATIONS

### Method of Operation

Self-loading via direct gas impingement, tilting bolt

### Caliber

7.5x54mm M1929 C

### Overall Length

40 inches

### Barrel

19.7 inches, 4 groove

1:10.6 LH twist

### Weight, empty

9.66 pounds

## SIGHTS

### Front

Protected post adjustable for elevation

### Rear

Aperture, adjustable from 200-1200 meters, and for windage.

### Feed

10 and 18 round detachable box



*Right (Top): The MAS strips easily for routine maintenance. (Middle): The Modele 1953 APX L 806 is a tough little scope which attaches easily to the rifle's siderail. Featuring 3.85 magnification, a post reticle, and BDC out to 800 meters, it's a simple and reliable unit with surprisingly good optics. (Bottom): The rear sight is an aperture adjustable for windage and elevation from 200-1200m.*

round. Failures to extract and case heads torn off were common and did nothing to endear the MAS to American shooters. This was a pity, as the problem lay solely with the shoddy caliber conversion by the importer. Time went by and the MAS disappeared from the scene for a while and then recently reappeared being offered by SOG International Inc. The difference this time though is that the guns are offered in their original caliber and in excellent like-new condition, for only \$239.95.

I acquired one and it arrived in literally "like new" condition. The rifle's stock was not only perfect, but the wood was quite handsome and nicely fitted. The metal work was finished in an even and attractive gray phosphate. Pulling the weapon apart revealed it to be in excellent mechanical shape with a perfect bore. In the hands the MAS 49/56 feels quite good. With a 19.7-inch barrel and an overall length of only 40 inches, it's a quick handling rifle. However it is a little on the heavy side, tipping the scales at 9.2 pounds. The rear sight consists of an aperture adjustable from 200 to 1,200

*continued on page 72*

# SPRINGFIELD ARMORY X-TREME DUTY THE CROATION CREATION



*Above (Top-Bottom): The swinging lever in the face of the trigger will look familiar. The loaded chamber indicator is easily felt in low light. A close look at the XD's grip safety and "firing pin status indicator."*

Story By Charles E. Petty  
Photos By Ichiro Nagata

A couple of years ago, a very neat polymer frame 9 millimeter pistol called the HS 2000 came on the market. It was made in Croatia. I learned about the gun when a writer for another magazine told me about it at the SHOT Show. Unfortunately, I didn't get to see it then and, frankly, forgot about it until I saw one in a local gun shop some time later. A thorough examination revealed nothing but good things, so I bought it.

Though I read only a few Internet message boards, on one someone told of recently purchasing an HS 2000, and how happy he was with it. Then there was another, and another who talked about the pistol's comfort, reliability and accuracy. But those who had good things to say were shouted down by a closed minded tribe. And quite an interesting little hissy fight ensued.

The Law of the Better Mousetrap states: "If you build one, the world will beat a path to your door." But better mousetraps usually have an uphill fight, and are criticized by those irrevocably committed to another brand — even if they have never seen the new one, much less tried to catch a mouse with it. Brand loyalty is sometimes so strong that it denies the possibility of a better choice existing. Credit for this goes to excellent marketing.

Today the HS 2000 has a new distributor, and a new name. It is now the XD from Springfield Armory. The XD stands for "X-treme Duty," hinting that maybe Springfield is going to target the law enforcement market. And for now it is available in three chamberings: 9mm Luger, .357 SIG and .40 S&W.

### A Close Look

Comparisons are inevitable, because when you first see the pistol, it strikes the chord of familiarity. Though it has elements we've seen before on other pistols, the XD is no copy. Springfield Chairman Dennis Reese said it is, "A melting pot of the best features of modern polymer pistols." The takedown looks like SIG's, but it rotates the other way. The slide, machined from bar stock, looks Siglike as well, as does the barrel lockup. The frame looks similar to Glock's, but closer study shows it to be different in both shape and mechanics.

The XD feels good. Little dimples in the grip are positioned just where your thumbs want to go. I wouldn't call it a thumb rest because the connotation is usually of something that sticks out from the frame or grip. Though shallow, they provide a convenient place for the thumb to ride. The magazine release is fully ambidextrous without changing anything. You can simply push the button from either side.

*continued on page 44*

# THE XD40 IN THE FIELD

## Springfield Armory's latest import is an exciting addition to the world of defensive auto pistols.

By Massad Ayoob

Somebody in Croatia knows how to build a handgun. If the Archduke Ferdinand had been carrying a Springfield Armory XD40 when his assassin approached, WWI might have been averted, at least for a while.

Charlie Petty gives you the hardware and design particulars elsewhere this issue. The editor asked me to report on the XD40's user-friendliness and "shootability." In a word — I like it.

### Feel

A good deal of ergonomic thought has gone into this pistol. It is light and well balanced, but that's common today. The upper backstrap of the frame has been "niched out" to bring the web of the hand in deeper, meaning you can get more finger on the trigger. The hugely-popular Glock appears to have been sized for the hand of an average adult male, with the pad of the index finger on the trigger. On the XD40, such a hand can reach the trigger with the palmar surface of the index finger's distal joint. This is the point the old revolver masters called "the power crease," and gives you more

leverage on the trigger.

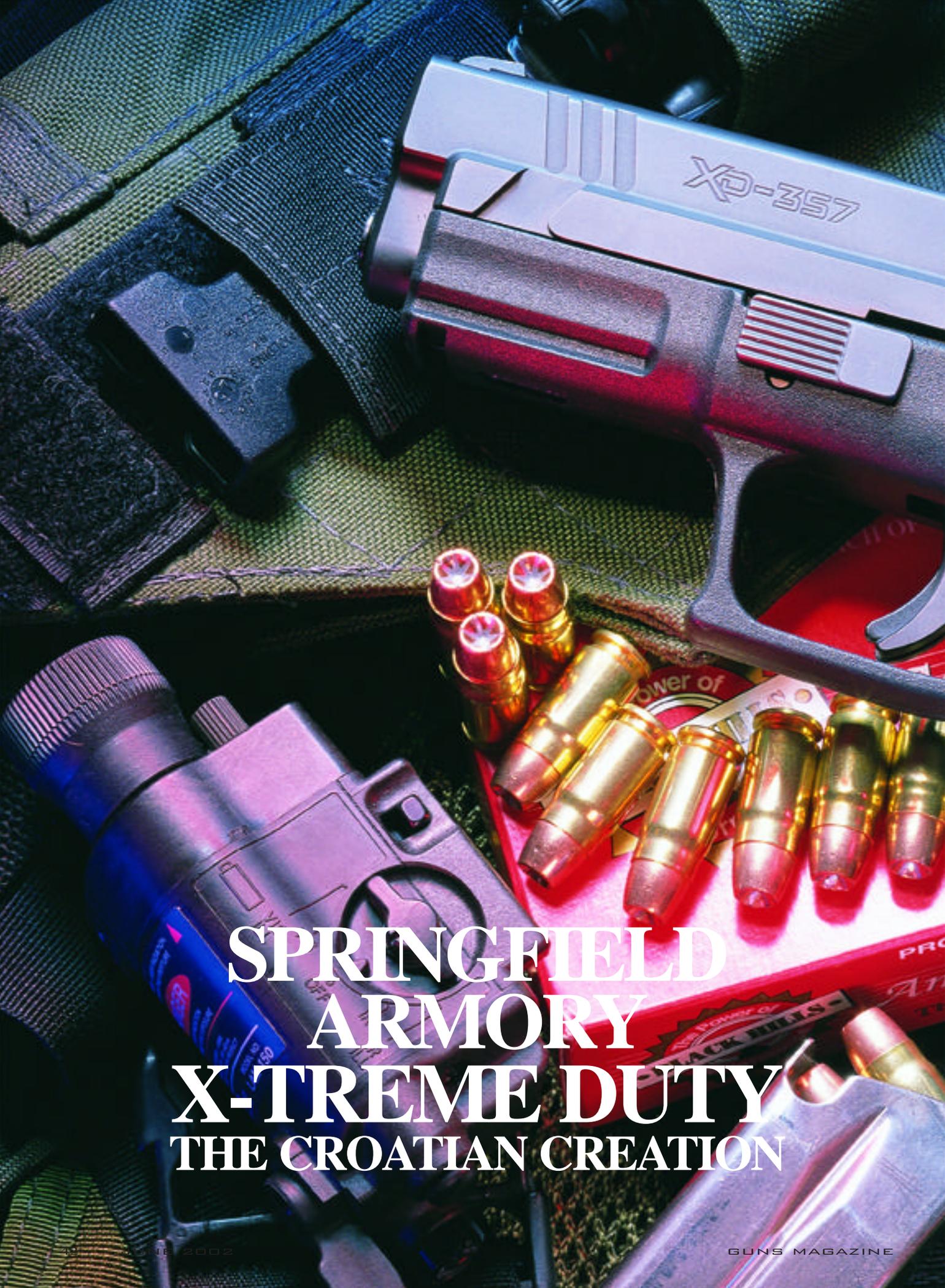
The grip safety is well placed. I for one like the feature on a gun of this type. When you shove a striker-fired pistol into its holster in the dark after a fight or some other strenuous activity that might have had you rolling around on the ground, you never know if a too-thin safety strap or a twig your body picked up from the ground might find its way into the trigger guard. With an outside hammer gun, a thumb on the hammer stabilizes that part and prevents an accidental discharge. Not so with most striker-fired autoloaders. With the XD40, a thumb in the same place — right where it will feel the protruding pin that is the cocking indicator — pulls the web of the hand away from the back of the grip-frame and "locks on" the grip safety. This will prevent an accidental discharge in the scenario just outlined.

Some sort of manual safety also eases anxiety when you have to shove a striker-fired pistol into the waistband, loose, without a holster. I carried the XD40 that way for a day, and the peace of mind was indeed there.

*continued on page 46*

*There is a lot of careful design in this pistol. The sight dovetails are standard SIG, the dust cover sports an accessory mount, and the magazine release is ambidextrous. The entire pistol seems built for hard service.*

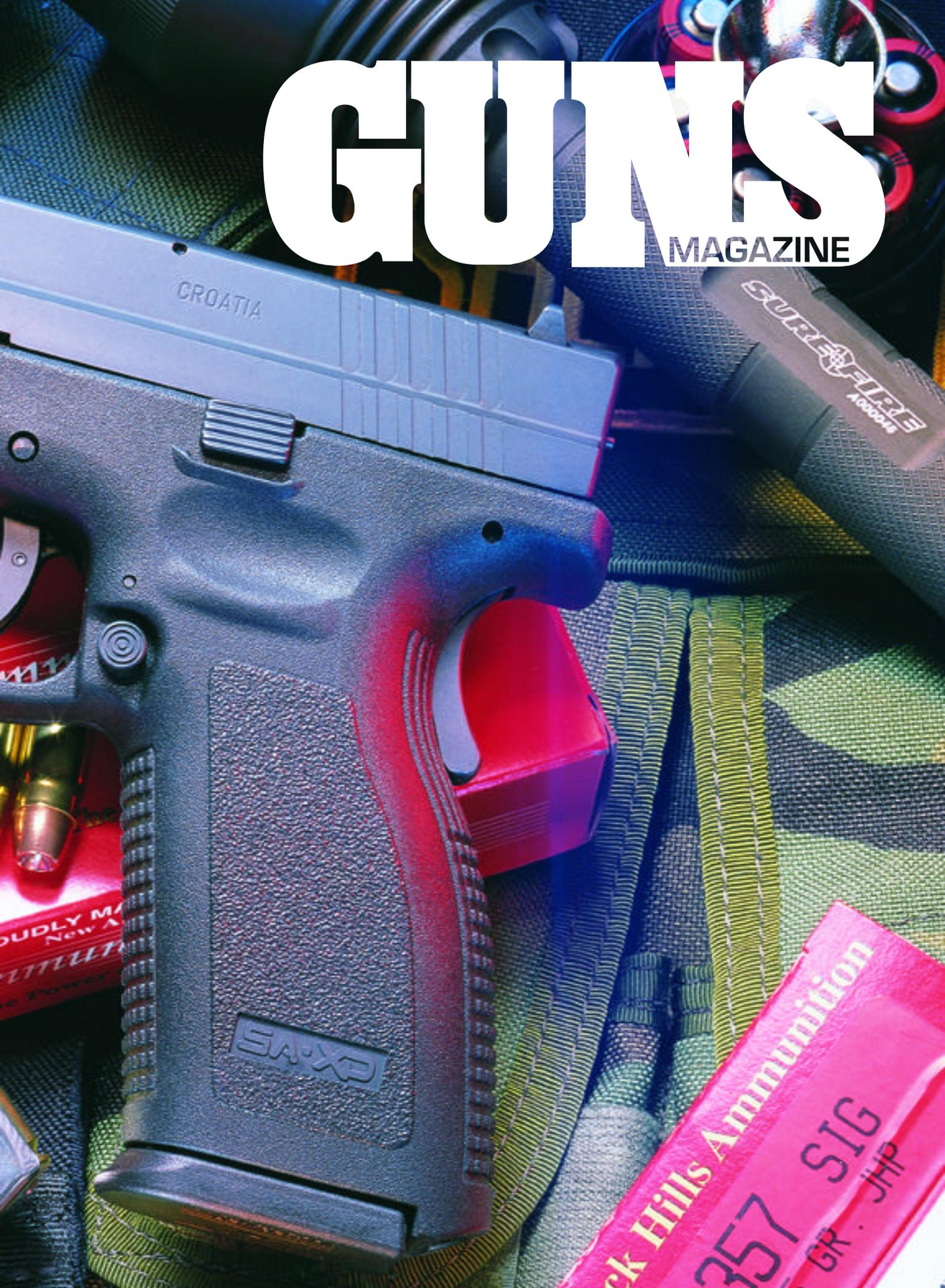




**SPRINGFIELD  
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X-TREME DUTY  
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Black Hills Ammunition  
357 SIG  
GR. JHP

## X-TREME DUTY

*continued from page 41*

The trigger has the little internal lever we've seen before but with a little more hype. Now it is a U.S.A. (Ultra Safety Assurance) Trigger System. The trigger is, depending on how you view these things, single-action or "double-action only" (which is what Springfield calls it). Either way, the trigger is *good*, and a marked improvement over what we're used to with pistols of this type. There is no pull-to-pull variation, and the trigger weights on the two pistols are 6.5 and 7 pounds respectively.

The slide is machined from solid bar stock with the rails on the inside. Grasping grooves are present front and rear. There is a loaded chamber indicator which consists of a small lever located at the rear of the ejection port. It is raised if a cartridge is present, and provides both tactile and visual evidence of this fact. There is also a "firing pin status indicator." On a traditional single-action pistol, we'd call this a cocking indicator. But since

the striker is never "cocked," we can't do that. It is a small pin that sticks out of the back of the slide when the striker is in the ready position. It is easily seen and can be felt in the dark just as you might with the loaded chamber indicator.

The gun is striker fired, so pulling the trigger loads the striker spring and pulls the striker back until it slips off the sear to fire the gun. In a way, it has a very distinct two-stage trigger pull with about 1/4 inch of movement before the striker is engaged. After this takeup, there is very little creep or additional movement until the gun fires with a total pull weight of 6 to 7 pounds.

### Safety Considerations

One of the more distinctive visual points is the grip safety; something really new on a pistol of this type. It is very positive and must be fully depressed for the pistol to fire. But the location at the top of the backstrap arch makes it sure to be depressed with a normal firing grip. It's just a rugged steel lever that blocks movement of the sear until it is depressed. A simple addition of a feature some think is very worthwhile.

There is also a striker safety that provides a positive lock unless depressed. The striker safety lever moves up as the sear moves down. Both actions happen simultaneously based on the last stage of trigger movement. The system is effective and provides an element of redundancy since the grip safety must be depressed fully before the trigger can move to a point where the striker safety is released.

The frame has no embedded metal parts. Later polymer frame pistols have a unitary construction method where steel assemblies that contain the slide rails, barrel seat and feed ramp are part of a unit that is inserted into the frame and held in place with one or two pins. The XD's forward slide rails are part of this assembly and 1.25 inches long. The front rails bear the greatest load but there are also a pair of smaller rear rails that provide a little additional support.

Magazine capacity for all the civilian models is 10 rounds, but those "dreaded" high capacity magazines are available for law enforcement. Springfield dubs them, "Easy Glide" and they do, in fact, drop free easily. They have a nicely polished stainless steel tube and plastic follower. Loading to the full 10 rounds is not difficult. Two come with the gun.

The XD has a light rail as part of the molded dust cover, and Springfield will offer light and laser accessories at a later time. The sights are made of steel — not plastic — and have the common three-dot pattern. Night and adjustable sights will be available. The pistol weighs 23 ounces and has a 4-inch barrel cold-hammer forged with a conventional rifling pattern so that there is no restriction on lead bullets. The chamber nicely supports the cartridge case.

Field stripping is uncomplicated but does have one feature common on striker fired guns: the trigger has to be pulled before the slide will come off. On the XD, you lock the slide to the rear, remove the magazine, and inspect the chamber to be sure the gun is unloaded. On the left side of the frame, just forward of the trigger, is the takedown lever. With the slide locked back, rotate the

*continued on page 70*

### ACCURACY TEST RESULTS

## SPRINGFIELD ARMORY X-TREME DUTY

LOAD	VELOCITY fps	ACCURACY			AVERAGE
		1	2	3	
Black Hills 124 gr. JHP	1,139	1.64"	2.62"	2.91"	2.39"
Federal Hydra-shok 147 gr. JHP	1,008	3.31"	2.70"	2.87"	2.96"
Pro Load 115 gr. JHP +P	1,287	2.47"	3.02"	2.75"	2.75"
Remington Golden Saber 124 gr. JHP +P	1,123	2.78"	3.16"	2.14"	2.69"
Speer Gold Dot 115 gr. JHP	1,164	3.07"	3.47"	2.73"	3.09"
Winchester SXT 147 gr. JHP	986	3.41"	3.17"	2.67"	3.08"

Average For All Loads: 2.83

LOAD	VELOCITY fps	ACCURACY			AVERAGE
		1	2	3	
Black Hills 155 gr. JHP	1,089	3.19"	3.12"	3.37"	3.23"
Federal American Eagle 165 gr. FMJ	1,010	2.03"	2.58"	3.11"	2.57"
Pro Load 135 gr. JHP	1,190	2.07"	2.51"	2.86"	2.48"
Remington Golden Saber 165 gr. JHP	1,078	2.57"	2.93"	3.70"	3.07"
Speer Gold Dot 180 gr. JHP	968	3.13"	2.75"	3.43"	3.10"

Average For All Loads Tested: 2.89

Notes: Accuracy results are 5-shot groups at 25 yards from Outers Pistol Perch.

Velocity is the instrumental average of 10 shots at 10 feet as measured by a PACT Professional Chronograph.



## Firing

Recoil was mild, even with the hotter .40 loads. There was more muzzle jump, however, than with the similar-size Glock and Sigma with the same ammo. It's simple physics: the slide and barrel of the XD40 ride distinctly higher above the hand than the Glock's, and consequently, the recoiling pistol has more leverage with which to lift its muzzle against our grasp.

The trigger stroke is sweet. A long, easy pressure comes to a firmer resistance, and then suddenly releases. It is conducive to a surprise trigger break once you've made the decision to fire, and that always helps good shooting. Indeed, the trigger might be a little too easy for high-stress "threat management" applications when you're taking felony suspects at gunpoint. In such moments, our bodies experience vasoconstriction, redirecting blood flow away from extremities like the fingers and into major muscle groups and internal viscera. This is probably the main reason that our dexterity turns to crap under stress. If the finger has migrated to the trigger, none but the coolest and most experienced hands may feel that the trigger is inching backward. I would like to see this pistol offered with an analog to Glock's excellent New York (NY-1) trigger option, which gives a firm resistance to the trigger finger from the very beginning of the stroke.

Sharp edges? The slide grooves were just right, even the ones in the front that some people can't seem to live without, but which some of us consider extraneous. The rear sight edges were sharp, which could be a problem doing malfunction clearance drills with the overhand method, though not with the slingshot (Israeli) method. The only sharp edge I found disconcerting was at the lower rear of the slide stop lever. When firing right-handed with a straight thumb, I found that it would dig into the thumb upon recoil. Not enough to lacerate, but enough to irritate. If I was going to take a class or shoot a big match with this gun, I'd take a file to that corner. Shoot with the right thumb curled down, and it's no problem. It will bother you not at all in left handed shooting, and in fact, the XD40 is very southpaw friendly.

An element of that in point is the ambidextrous magazine release. If you're a right hander, as a generation of HK P7M8 and USP shooters have come to realize, it's faster to hit the lefty's thumb release with your trigger finger than to get your thumb around to the one they put there for *you*. I have always worried about ambi mag releases dumping the mag unintentionally when they get bumped, but that never happened when I was carrying the test XD40. The designers have wisely built up the polymer grip frame around the release buttons to keep that disaster from happening.

At no time did the pistol malfunction in any way. Reliability was 100 percent. The gun was shot entirely with carry-type hollowpoints.

## Accuracy

Testing outdoors on a literally freezing day, I tried the XP40 with four loads, representing the most popular bullet weights for the .40 Smith & Wesson cartridge. All would easily stay on the head of an IDPA target from 25 yards. Big, clear sights helped. A distinct, square sight picture was visible even to this geezer's myopic dominant eye, even without corrective lenses. The fixed sights had been reasonably well registered at the factory, being right on for windage and hitting just enough high that a 6 o'clock sight picture put the shots on the money at 25 yards. This was the distance at which accuracy testing was done, with the gun hand-held at the bench.

Groups were measured twice, to the nearest .05 inch. The first measurement was the whole group, to see what the gun could do for an experienced shooter who had time to brace. The second was the best three shots, to factor out human error as much as possible and get a better idea of the gun's inherent, mechanical accuracy. It's kind of like "the best evidence rule." Even Charlie Petty, the high priest of the Ransom Rest, didn't test his XDs from one, probably because inserts are not yet available.

Federal's Personal Defense load, with a 135 grain Hydra-Shok bullet running at moderate velocity, delivered a 3.05 inch five shot group. The best three shots measured 1.75 inch apart, center to center. This round had by far the mildest recoil of any I tested.

Pro-Load's 155 grain Tactical bonded lowpoint was distinctly zippier. It had the best accuracy in terms of windage — the group measured 1.2 inches left to right — but the worst for elevation. Vertical stringing put the farthest shots 4.35 inches apart, with the best three in 1.95 inches.

Black Hills EXP with the 165 grain Gold Dot bullet at 1,150 feet per second had a healthy smack on the back end, but nothing you couldn't handle. This is the most accurate .40 S&W factory load I've found, and it topped the XD40's performance chart with five shots in 2.10 inches and the best three in .90 of an inch.

Winchester's USA brand JHP line, introduced in 2001 and duplicating the firm's original 180 grain subsonic format, was the second best performer. Five of these generically-priced rounds went into 2.45 inches, the best three into an impressive one-half of one inch.

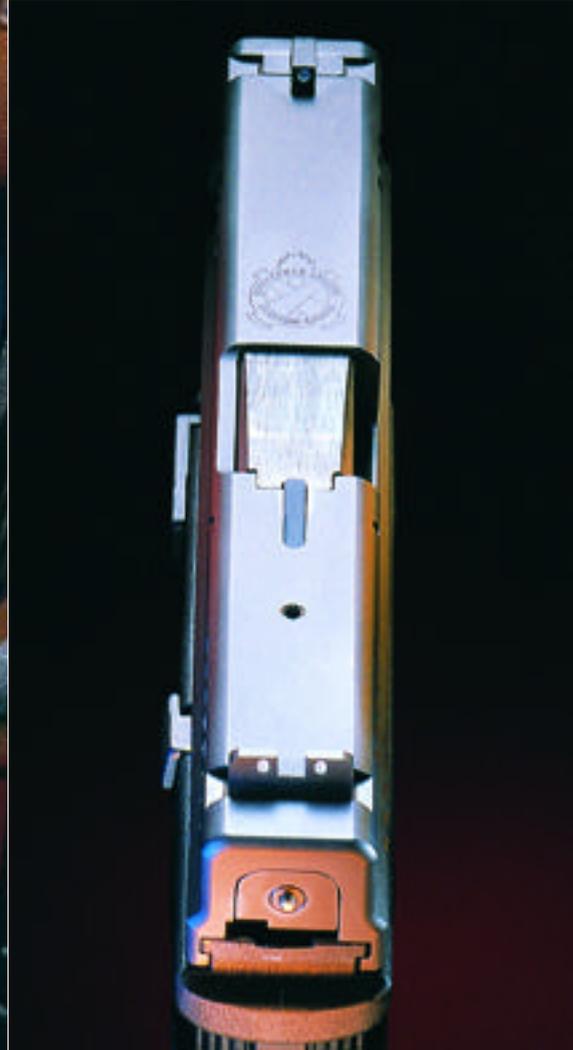
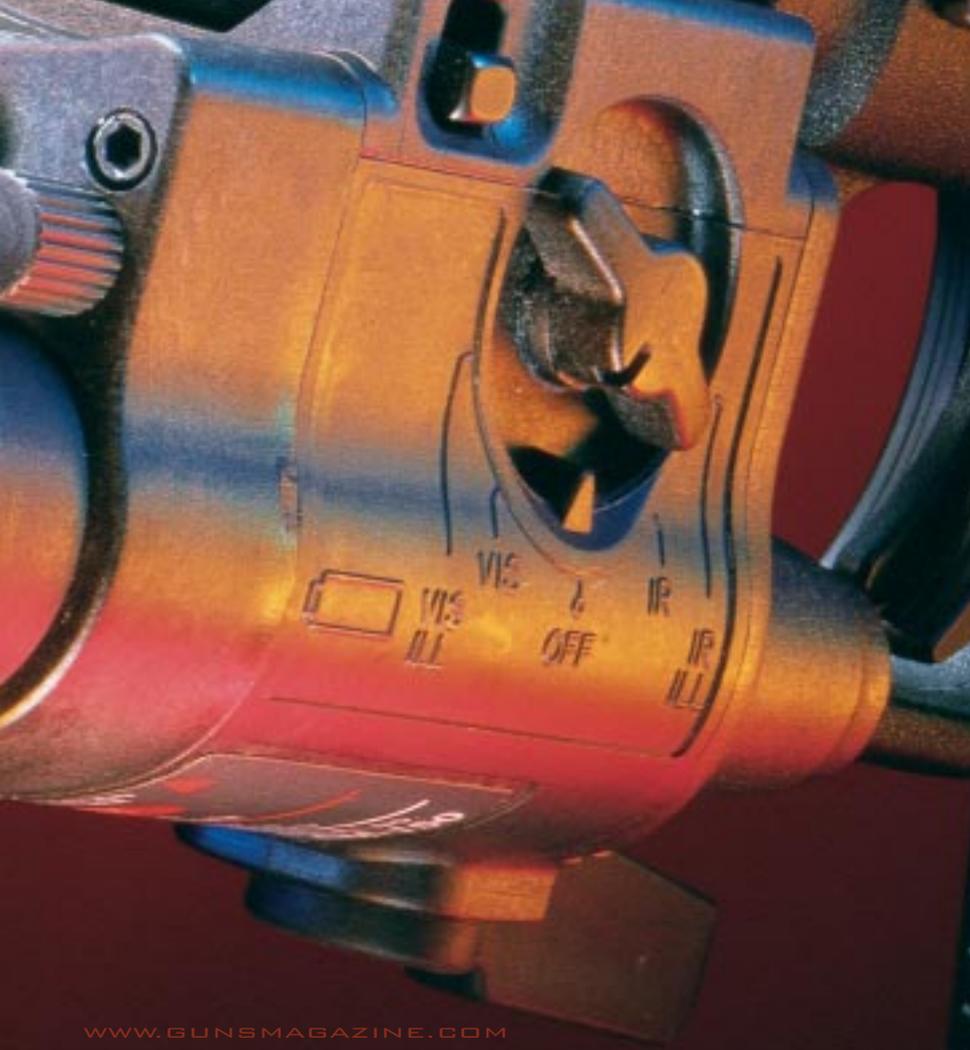
Clearly, this gun shoots.

## Carrying the XD40

It was a good thing that I felt safe carrying the XD40 just tucked bare in my waistband, because I had to do just that the first day. I couldn't find anyone making holsters for it yet, and trying to locate a scabbard to fit it was a nightmare. It's not that it's a huge gun; it's just that the front portion is extremely square, and the takedown lever sticks out a bit.

Holsters for Beretta, SIG, S&W, and Ruger were all too small. A molded laminate *continued on page 71*





# SAKO'S FINNLIGHT RIFLE

A longtime fan of old Sako rifles, Anderson wanted to see if newer Sakos measure up to their heritage. And the answer is... Yes!



BY DAVE ANDERSON

**S**akos are newcomers. They didn't reach the North American market until after World War II, and in a market where competitors have been around for more than a century, the Finnish-made Sakos could have easily disappeared. But they didn't disappear, and for one reason — respect. And the respect that Sakos enjoy is as consistent as the quality of their construction.

Those in the know about Sakos tend to debate which era's Sako was the best. But there is one truism buried beneath the debate — that even the short-lived Model 72, which lacked fine polishing and deep bluing — even this “economy” model was superior in both fit and finish to all of its similarly-priced competition.

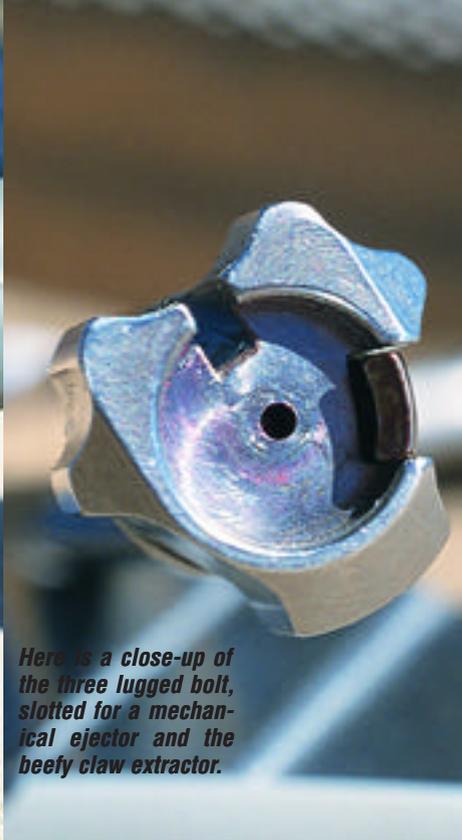
## A Reputation For Quality

I've owned Sakos, fired Sakos, and handled them by the hundreds at gun shows and gun shops. They are, invariably, well fitted, well finished, and outfitted with smooth-operating actions. In his book *Bolt Action Rifles*, Frank de Haas commented that, “The Sako action is synonymous with high-quality material and workmanship” and that “I have never seen a Sako action that failed in any way, or developed excess headspace after long use.” And de Haas could claim this for one reason: because Sako's actions are fashioned from top-quality steel properly heat-treated for strength and durability.

Sako's 75 action doesn't fail its proud tradition. A three-lug action with a relatively short bolt lift, the 75 provides plenty of clearance between a scope and bolt handle. Currently made in four sizes to fit cartridges from .17 Rem. to .375 H&H Magnum, the 75 provides



*The small mold line on the underside of the forend displeased Anderson, but he praised the well-shielded location of the magazine release.*



*Here is a close-up of the three lugged bolt, slotted for a mechanical ejector and the beefy claw extractor.*



*A look under the hood shows the Sako's trigger group.*

manual ejection, to my knowledge the only three-lug action that includes this feature.

The majority of today's actions have a spring-loaded plunger ejector built into the bolt face. These prove to be generally reliable, though on rare occasions rust or debris may inhibit the plunger from operating properly.

Some shooters feel plunger ejectors are less convenient since the spring-powered plunger tosses the ejected case with the same force whether the bolt is worked fast or slow, even though the shooter may prefer to pluck it manually from the action.

With mechanical ejection, as the bolt is withdrawn, a fixed ejector extends through the slotted bolt face, striking the head of the case and flipping it out of the action. Even if the action is rusty or dirty there's not much that can go wrong. When the bolt is worked normally, cases are

tossed well clear of the action, but if desired the shooter can stop the bolt before the case strikes the ejector and simply pick it up from the loading port.

The Sako's recessed bolt face and hook-type extractor takes a healthy bite on the extractor groove of the case. Cartridges are pushed ahead of the bolt into the chamber. Only after the cartridge is chambered does the extractor engage the case.

### **The Sako Finnligh**

Sako's recently-introduced Finnligh is my favorite of the current Sakos. Light, handy, handsomely proportioned and ideally suited to hunting in the toughest conditions, the receiver, bolt, and barrel's stainless steel construction offers maximum corrosion resistance.

As with all Sako rifles, the stainless steel barrel of the Finnligh is made by cold hammer forging. Rather than being slimmed down to minimum dimensions as with other lightweights, it is made to standard size and then fluted to reduce weight, making for greater rigidity than a light barrel. Except for a short section just ahead of the receiver, the barrel is free-floated.

Three of the four receiver sizes are available in the Finnligh configuration. The medium (size III) action is offered in .243 Win., 7mm-08 Rem. and .308 Win. Barrel length is just over 20 inches and weight (empty, without scope, bases, or rings) is 6 pounds. The long action (size IV) is chambered for the .30-'06 and its offspring (.25-'06 Rem., .270 Win., .280 Rem.) plus the 6.5x55 Swedish Mauser, with a 21 inch barrel and a weight of 6.5 pounds. Two popular



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magnum cartridges, the 7mm Rem. and .300 Win. are available in the size V action, with 22½ inch barrel and a weight of 7.5 pounds.

### Europe's Favorite Son?

In Europe, and especially in Scandinavia, the 6.5x55 cartridge is ever popular. On this side of the pond, what the cartridge lacks in number of fans is made up for by their enthusiasm. It is an efficient cartridge, with light recoil and good ballistic performance. Fired at high velocities without excessive recoil, bullets in the 140 grain range in 6.5 caliber serve up high ballistic coefficients. And though American shooters haven't exactly flocked to the various 6.5s in the past, the .260 Rem., which was initially developed for metallic silhouette shooting, has gained a following with deer hunters who appreciate its fine combination of adequate power and light recoil.

The Finnlight in 6.5x55 has a rifling twist of 1:8 inches. Personally I don't see much need for bullets heavier than 140 grains in this caliber, but for shooters who like the classic long, lean 160 grain round-nose bullets, the quick twist should be adequate to stabilize them. The barrel throat is long enough to accept these bullets and the magazine, designed around the longer .30-'06 family, has plenty of space for the longer OAL of the 160 grain loads.

### Finnish Bliss

The Finnlight shows the high quality of fit and finish expected of a Sako, and operating the bolt is pure bliss. I don't know of another model, even custom models that cost several times as much, that match the silky smooth operation of the model 75's bolt. This smooth operation results from a patented system of five guiding surfaces. Cartridge feeding, chambering, locking and unlocking are all reliable and effortless.

Sako triggers are likewise renowned for their quality. The Finnlight trigger's single-stage design, adjustable from 2 to 4 pounds, is factory set with virtually no perceptible movement or overtravel.

The sliding two-position safety on the right side of the receiver locks both the sear and the bolt. I prefer a safety that locks the bolt, as it prevents branches or other objects from from accidentally lifting the bolt. At the same time, it's nice if the action can cycle for loading or unloading with the safety engaged.

The Sako gives you the option. Just ahead of the safety sits an unobtrusive lever, out of the way and not effecting handling and operation. However, with the safety engaged, depressing this lever allows the bolt to be operated. The shooter can load or remove a cartridge from the chamber with the sear locked.

Some Sako 75s come with either a detachable box magazine or a more conventional Mauser-type magazine with a hinged floorplate. The Finnlight offers only the detachable box magazine. The magazine box and floorplate are polished stainless steel while

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the baseplate is aluminum. If desired, the magazine loads from the top through the action. It locks solidly in place, with a recessed magazine release well protected against accidental activation. Magazines hold five standard or four magnum cartridges.

Sako 75s incorporate the Sako Key Concept, which allows the shooter to lock the action. Of the various firearms which include an integral lock, I know of none as neat and unobtrusive. A special key fits into the rear of the bolt and locks the action. If you want this feature, it's there. If not, you won't even notice it is present.

### Essential Components — Scopes And Rings

The well-proven Sako integral scope bases are retained on the 75 action. These dovetail grooves in the receiver taper from front to back to resist movement of scope and rings under recoil. A notch in the rear dovetail provides additional security against ring movement. Sako currently markets an excellent ring/base combination called "Optilock." However I didn't want to wait for these to show up so I took the old-style Sako rings from my Finnbear .338 and found they worked perfectly in attaching a Leupold Vari-X III 2.5-8x scope.

This fine scope deserves a comment. I have identical models on other rifles, but none are used more than this one. I got it some years ago in a trade for a Remington 700 7mm Rem. Mag. The previous owner had used it on two or three rifles already, and since then it's been fitted to a host of test rifles. Its adjustments are used constantly. Its finish shows a bit of wear from rubbing against gun cases but it remains as clear, sharp, and reliable as ever. It's hard to fault performance like that.

The stock of the Finnlight is injection-molded black synthetic, with added softer gray material over the forearm and pistol grip. It gives the rifle a striking and unusual appearance, and the soft material provides a comfortable and secure grip. As injection molded stocks go this one is fairly rigid. The one jarring note is the obvious mold line on the underside of the forearm. Somehow it seems out of keeping with the overall classy appearance of the rifle.

### Road Test

Ammunition in 6.5x55 is not as commonly available as popular American calibers. After visiting a few gunshops I located some Remington 140 grain Core-Lokt and Winchester 140 grain Super-X soft-point loads. Accuracy was good and consistent. From the bench at 100 yards, no 5-shot group quite broke the 1-inch mark, but neither did any exceed 1.5 inches. Bullets in these loads are designed for dependable expansion rather than match accuracy. Therefore, I felt these results were very good.

Pressures in American factory-loaded 6.5x55 loads are kept down in deference to

the caliber's many old military rifles. Both 140 grain loads tested rated 2,550 fps muzzle velocity — quite adequate for deer hunting — along with very mild recoil. In a strong, modern action like the Sako, hand-loaders can improve on this considerably. Although the choice of factory ammunition is a bit sparse, there is a wide choice of bullets in the correct 0.264-inch diameter.

I found several boxes of Sellier & Bellot ammunition at a gun show for just \$10 a box. Accuracy wasn't quite as good as the American brands, but still acceptable — averaging a bit over 1.5 inches for five shots. But I didn't really want this ammunition for group shooting, rather to test the rifle from various field positions; offhand, sitting, and from improvised rests.

### Light And Fast Handling

The range I use has a series of steel targets of various sizes at ranges from 50 to 300 yards. The Finnlight really excelled in this type of practical shooting. Some lightweights with very slim barrels tend to be a bit muzzle-light, and difficult to hold steady. The Finnlight balances and handles beautifully — light and fast-handling with enough barrel weight to hold steady. The excellent balance and outstanding trigger made for dependable first-shot hits, which is the real test of a hunting rifle. The bolt was a joy to operate from the shoulder for fast follow-up shots.

Other than the previously mentioned mold line on the Finnlight's synthetic stock, I cannot find anything to criticize. I happen to prefer integral magazines to detachable box magazines, but that's just a personal choice. Some shooters prefer the fast loading and unloading of detachable boxes.

In addition to the Finnlight, the Sako 75 is currently available with unfluted, highly polished blue steel barrel and action with handsomely shaped, checkered walnut stock in the fancy Deluxe grade and a practical Hunter grade. With stainless steel barrel and action, the 75 is available with the same walnut stock as the Hunter or with a synthetic stock. The catalog also lists two heavy-barrel varmint models and a neat little carbine with iron sights and 19.25-inch barrel.

I have great respect for the old two-lug Sako actions, especially the Vixens, Foresters, and Finnbears of the '60s and early '70s. Frankly, I started out a bit resentful that the newer three-lug actions have replaced my old favorites. But thankfully, in appearance, workmanship and finish a Sako is still a Sako. The new models are undoubtedly smoother operating than the best of the old ones. Sakos have never been cheap. But in my experience they've always been worth their cost.



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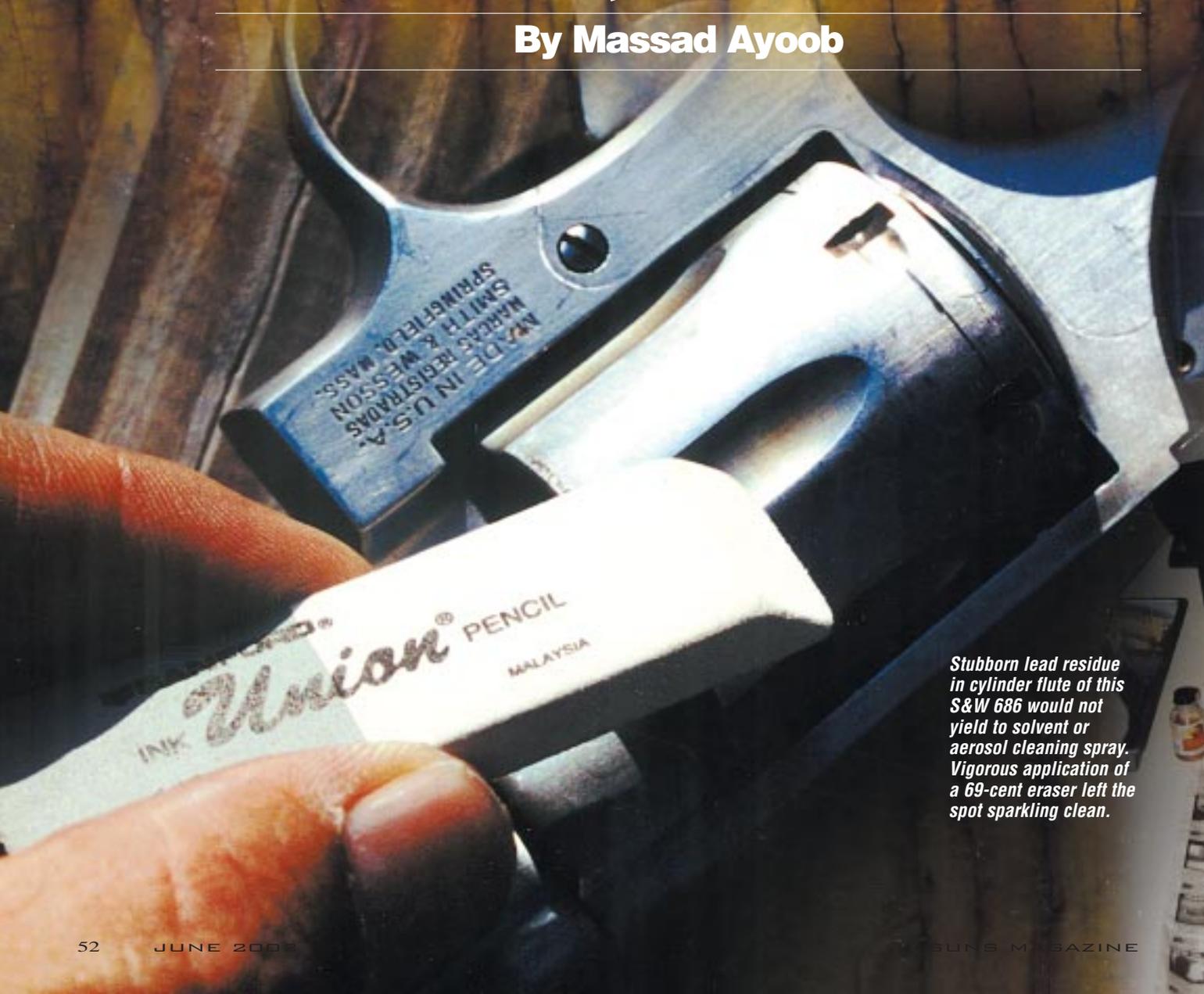
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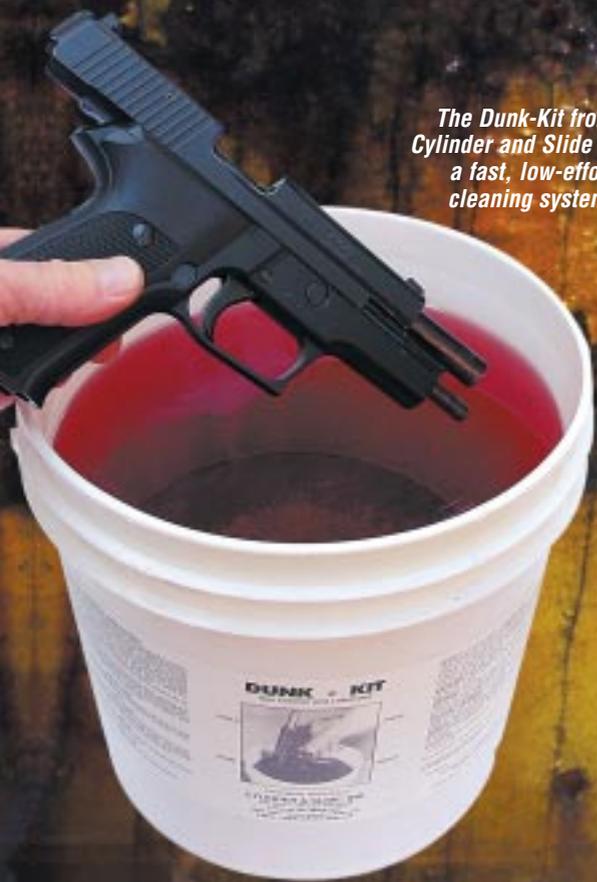
# The Lazy Man's Guide To **GUN CLEANING**

If you can't clean hard, says this veteran shooter, at least clean smart.

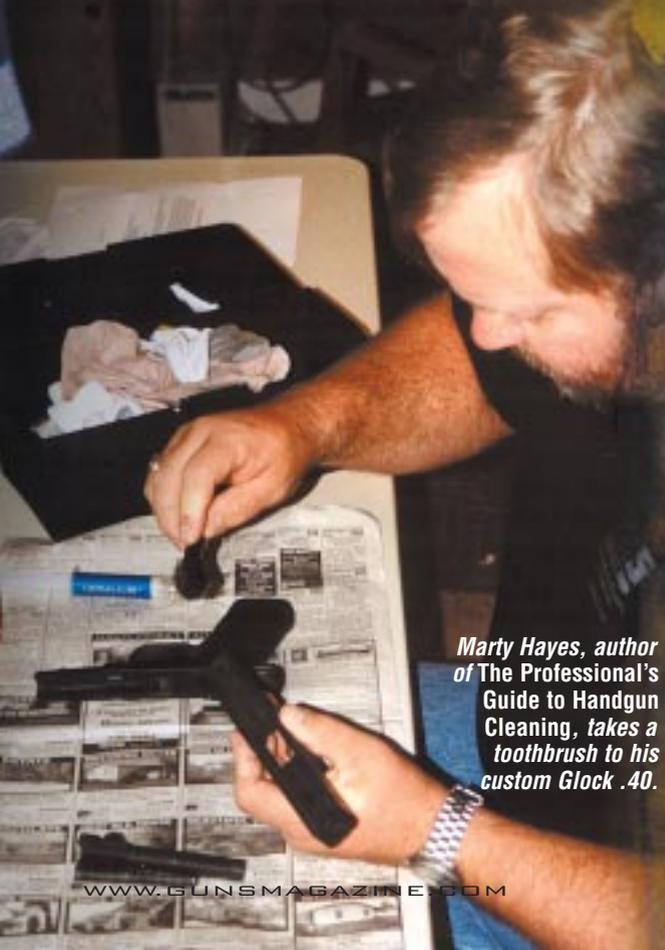
By Massad Ayob



*Stubborn lead residue in cylinder flute of this S&W 686 would not yield to solvent or aerosol cleaning spray. Vigorous application of a 69-cent eraser left the spot sparkling clean.*



*The Dunk-Kit from Cylinder and Slide is a fast, low-effort cleaning system.*



*Marty Hayes, author of The Professional's Guide to Handgun Cleaning, takes a toothbrush to his custom Glock .40.*

**W**hen I was young, I cleaned my guns with an almost religious fervor. When I got in from a day of hunting, especially in rough weather, I cleaned my guns before I ate. A cowboy took care of his horse before he took care of himself, didn't he? Same deal.

That was then. This is now.

Did I become complacent? Lackadaisical? Maybe just old?

I dunno. I don't wanna know. All I know is I don't have nearly as much time to clean guns as I did in my younger days.

This doesn't mean that my guns are filthy. I keep them in good working order. I *have* to: it's part of my job description. It just means I'm not obsessive about cleaning them anymore.

Call me lazy. I won't deny it. But if I'm lazy, there's method to the madness. We all know the rifleman's creed: "Without me, my rifle is nothing. Without my rifle, I am nothing." Well, let's just say I figure my gun is here to take care of me *more* than I am here to take care of the gun.

Cleaning a gun can be a great "leisure thing" for people like us. The thorough disassembly and meticulous cleaning of each part is an effective stress-reliever when we have time to kill. When we don't have much time though, all that's required is to get the crud out, make sure there's nothing in the way of moving parts or rounds, and get the thing back to work. Let's look at some different minimalist approaches to gun cleaning.

### Base Line

Talk to the guy who wrote the book on it. Marty Hayes is the author of *The Professional's Guide To Handgun Cleaning*, published by the Firearms Academy Of Seattle in 1992 and due to appear as a new edition in 2002. It costs \$9.95 plus \$3 postage, and is worth the price.

Marty told me, "I could probably get by with a good cleaning rod, bore brush, nylon toothbrush, and Break-Free, along with some rags. It's better to have solvent, but if you're going absolutely minimalist, Break-Free has a cleaning function as well as a lubrication function."

Living as he does on a training range (when you order the book, ask for info on the excellent courses at Firearms Academy of Seattle), Marty normally cleans his guns in great detail and uses a kit that resembles something a carpenter might carry to a construction site. For what you need to "just get you through the night," though, I think he's got it nailed down.

### A Drop In The Bucket

Several years ago, I ran across Bill Laughridge's Dunk-Kit and instantly fell in love with it. It's this, like, bucket of oil stuff. Ya strip your gun, slosh the parts around in it, and cleaning is, like, over real quick.

Well, maybe Laughridge can say it better than I.

"It's all petroleum based," says Bill, "with no acetones or any other chemicals on 'the bad list.' It will discolor wood and eat through rubber or similar substances, so take your grips off when you put the gun in. All you have to do is field strip your auto and put the assemblies in to soak for three to five minutes. You might want to agitate the frame a little to let carbon wash away. Then, toothbrush the frame. That's it."

With your revolver, advises Bill, "Just take the grips off and put it in for five minutes, then reach in and cycle the action a few times under the surface. That will flush the guts of the revolver clean. Wear safety glasses, so that cycling the gun doesn't splash anything into your eyes."

Truly massive lead deposits should be brushed out of barrel and chamber as best you can before inserting them in the bucket of Dunk-Kit. After removal, a much quicker

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brushing should leave everything smooth and sparkly clean. If the lead has really gunked things up, Bill suggests swabbing barrel and chamber(s) with his special De-Leading Wool.

You can get three-quarters of a gallon of Dunk-Kit for \$32.95. A 1½-gallon bucket is the most popular and perhaps the best balance of ease of dunking with ease of storage at \$49.95. For those with massive gun cleaning chores, or those de-carbonizing their shotguns or their AR-15 lowers, the best bet is the 4-gallon container at \$94.95. All prices include freight paid in the continental U.S.A. That De-Leading wool is \$4.25 per package. Bill finds that a bit of it on a cleaning rod jag will clear the most stubborn accumulations in a half-dozen passes.

Bill assures us that the solution won't harm night sights, and that the polymer frames of Glocks are "Dunk-Kit proof." He was surprised when I told him that a friend of mine swears the polymer frame of his old HK P9S pistol was shriveled like a prune when he pulled it out of the Dunk-Kit after an overnight bath.

Note also that Dunk-Kit doesn't need to be dumped until it reaches the consistency of crankcase oil, which takes about a year of heavy use. When that happens, it can be dropped off at any service station that is set up to recycle waste oil. Note that if you are allergic to petroleum, you should use nitrile gloves, available at any hospital supply store. This stuff will eat through regular rubber gloves. For ordering info, you can reach Laughridge's Cylinder & Slide Shop at [800] 448-1713.

### High Speed, Low Drag

In the Time of the Ancients, when cops carried revolvers and computers were run on COBOL and FORTRAN programs, I worked in my dad's jewelry store. That industry was already using ultrasonic cleaners. Later, gunsmiths picked up on them. Even more recently, Outers made the technology readily accessible to individual gun enthusiasts, and several more ultrasonic cleaning units have come on the market.

No question, they get the crap out of the nooks and crannies, and once they're set up they can save a lot of time. However, there is no free lunch. Talk to Rick Devoid, who makes his living customizing guns and has a couple of ultrasonic units in his shop.

"They're not cheap," he begins. "They start at \$400 or so and can easily go into four figures. All the ultrasonic units I've worked with have a biodegradable, non-toxic solvent. If a gun is really dirty, the ultrasonic is a great time-saver. If there's a lot of carbon on the parts, I'll leave them in for 15 or 20 minutes. If the gun is just 'typically dirty,' it's a lot less."

However, Devoid reminds us that if we're going to use professional equipment,

we should use it like professionals. "All the ultrasonics I've seen have water-based solvent. It's critical that the gun be lubricated on all its metal surfaces after it comes out of the machine."

Listen to the man. I've talked with more than one gunsmith who shared horror stories of guns with barrels unwittingly pitted by amateurs who took them out of an ultrasonic unit and didn't oil the bores.

Personally, between the set-up time and cost for the ultrasonic unit and the need to re-apply lubricant *everywhere*, I figured I was too lazy for this particular "lazy man's alternative." Your needs may be different from mine. I know a lot of people who think their ultrasonic cleaning tank is the greatest technological blessing for gun buffs since Mike Dillon's progressive reloader.

However, Rick Devoid offers something else that *absolutely* fits the lazy man profile, and that is ...

### Sentry Solutions

Rick Devoid is licensed to apply Sentry Solutions, a silvery gray coating that bonds to the molecular structure of metal surfaces. The initial application is called Smooth-Kote. It improves the friction coefficient between moving parts, and dirt doesn't stick to it. Consider it a "long-lasting lube job." My police department had it done to all our issue service pistols — Ruger P90 .45s — a few years ago. The P90 is a splendidly reliable workhorse, but it still gets dirty, and any dirty autoloader can still jam. Ours no longer do, unless they get so cruddy that lower life forms are beginning to evolve inside the mechanism.

A number of the departments in our area followed our lead in purchasing P90s for duty. When we qualify together, one thing becomes apparent. An officer from another department comes in with a gun that hasn't been cleaned in months, and it may jam. One of ours shows up with a Ruger in similar condition, and it doesn't jam. The only difference is the Sentry Solutions treatment. It costs \$80 per gun and is well worth it.

You might want to consider the Deluxe (\$120) treatment, which is the same as above plus a hand burnishing of all parts with BP2000, a powder finer than graphite which adds lubricity and reduces the friction coefficient by another 10 to 20 percent over the base Smooth-Kote. For either of these jobs, figure \$35 for the return shipment of your handgun. Two caveats: some of us find the silvery-gray tone of the treated gun kind of ugly, and the treatment gives lubrication, not rust prevention. Your gun will still need some routine maintenance attention. When it gets dirty, a light wipe-out with a nylon brush or a couple of minutes with a compressed air hose whisks away carbon, which no longer seems to stick. Notes Devoid, "Even on a revolver with lots of lead build-up around the forcing cone, a toothpick will

take it off after the gun has been given the Sentry Solutions treatment.”

For information contact Tarnhelm Supply, 431 High St., Boscawen, NH 03303, [www.tarnhelm.com](http://www.tarnhelm.com).

### The Absolute Minimalist

Being old and lazy, I can even undercut Marty Hayes' minimum recommended equipment when I need to. I find paper towels handier than rags. Like Marty, I'd rather have Hoppe's #9 or another good, dedicated solvent, but can get by with Break-Free and am just as happy with FP-10.

Where Marty likes toothpicks, I like the tips of ballpoint pens, swathed in bits of paper toweling if need be. Toothpicks can break off little bits of wood inside the gun; on the other hand, little shreds of toweling can get caught there, too. Six of one, half-dozen of the other. However, unlike toothpicks, pen tips do a good job of holding back plungers when re-inserting 1911 slide stops.

### Secrets of the Ninja

**Emergency Lube.** When you run out of your favorite gun cleaning fluids, you may find that the only lubricant/rust-preventative available locally is the ubiquitous WD-40. This product is all but universally condemned by gunsmiths. "It may be OK as a detergent, but it's a lousy lubricant," we are told. "It evaporates too easily." "It sets up and turns into shellac."

Yeah. OK. Got it. However, I've been places where it was WD-40, the most widely distributed product of its kind, or nothing. I've found that it is, indeed, a good detergent when you don't have a dedicated solvent. It also keeps the gun lubed perfectly well for the few days you need it to do so. If in doubt, clean and re-apply more frequently until you are again within reach of your favorite lubricant.

Besides, WD-40 smells good...

**De-Greasers.** Yes, these products save a lot of scrubbing, which is why the most popular of them is called Gun Scrubber (TM). Yes, as a matter of fact, much cheaper carburetor cleaner from the hardware store or discount mart seems to perform exactly the same function. Remember, however, the following:

(1) Any such product using carbon tetrachloride or similar chemicals needs *lots* of ventilation, or it can make you really sick. Outdoors is the best place to do it, preferably with a breeze blowing it away from you. (2) Wear gloves. Laughridge is right: use nitrile gloves. (3) Wear eye protection. I've been hit in the eyes accidentally with Gun Scrubber. I've also been hit with pepper spray. I'm not sure which is worse.

**Mask Up, Glove Up.** The O.R. team gloves-up and puts on gauze masks before going to work on the patient. This is partly to protect the patient from their germs, and partly to protect the O.R. team from anything the patient has that might be communicable.

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I don't feel I need latex gloves to keep my sweat-salty, rust-producing fingerprints off this particular "patient." I'm going to wipe down the finish with a fine coat of something protective once I'm done, anyways. Nor am I worried about getting my hands dirty. However, when using bore and chamber brushes, I like to have nitrile gloves on. When you accidentally pick up the brush by its business end, the sharp brush strands can make micro-punctures in the skin surface, and with all that lead around...

The gauze mask is a good idea whenever you're brushing out chambers and bores. Some of the little particles that come out with the brush's exit stroke are suspended in the immediate air you're about to breathe. Ya don't need a Scott Air Pack or nothin'; a two-bit gauze mask from the drugstore does the trick.

**Erasing Lead.** Back almost a quarter century ago, I was cleaning guns with IPSC shooter Ted Hunt. I was whining about how the lead deposits weren't coming off my beautiful blued steel. "Hey," smiled Ted, "it's *lead*, isn't it? Why don't you just take an eraser and erase it?"

I was about to come back with some smart crack about lead pencils actually being made out of graphite when Ted whipped out an ordinary eraser and proceeded to — yes — *erase* the lead stains from the slide of my Colt .45. I shut up just in time, and have been erasing stubborn lead deposits since. No, it isn't a Lewis Lead Remover, but it costs 69 cents and it gets the lead off.

## Final Tips

The last bit of gun cleaning stuff in the spray can that you thought would be just enough to clean every gun for tonight... won't be. Keep one more little plastic squeeze-bottle of FP-10 or Break-Free in your Minimalist Cleaning Kit.

Always have one of those small emergency screwdrivers on your keychain, and always have the keychain with you.

Do *not* clean your gun with the towels in the hotel bathroom. The management will say hurtful things to you and charge you full price to replace the towels. How do I know this, you ask? Trust me, I know this.

Do *not* clean your guns with your wife's towels, either. In addition to having to buy newer, fancier, even higher-priced towels than at the hotel, there will be additional penalties in the form of long-stemmed roses and involuntary sexual abstinence.

How do I know this, you ask? See above...



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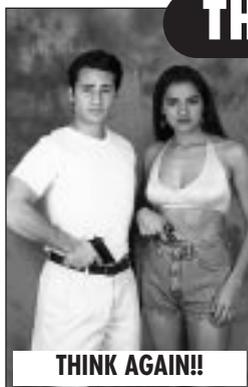
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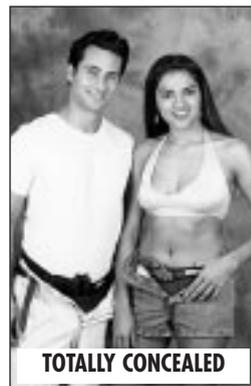


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# Keep 'Em Clean

Good firearms deserve good care. Here are a few thoughts on the subject from the *GUNS* staff.

**M**arch down to your local gun shop, and odds are that you'll find a wide variety of products designed to clean, lubricate and/or preserve the finish of your fine firearms. Unless your local shop is particularly well stocked, you can look at the assortment of different concoctions on the shelf, multiply that number by about 15, and you'll be close to the actual quantity of such products available on the market.

Out of this staggering variety, which products are actually the best for your uses? The only person who can answer that question is you. You'll want to experiment to learn for yourself what works well, but you will probably also observe what your shooting and hunting partners tend to use. That is the idea here.

Massad Ayoob and John Taffin have shared some thoughts on cleaning materials in the pages of this issue. Here is some additional input from other members of our staff...

## GUN CLEANERS

By Charles E. Petty

**W**hen I got this assignment, I went to the workbench where I do most of my gun cleaning and took inventory. Frankly I was a bit surprised to find 15 different *cleaners* and 11 lubricants. Now in my work I am often sent samples to try out and — packrat that I am — they don't get discarded. At one time or another I've used them all but routine cleaning chores are usually done with a few favorites.

I make a distinction between rifles and handguns. Almost any good solvent will do a great job on handguns because the main thing we have to remove is powder fouling. Most often I'll use Outers' Nitro Solvent in an aerosol can because it is so convenient and I don't have to worry about spilling bottles.

Rifles are a very different story. High pressure/high velocity cartridges leave

*continued on page 62*

## VOODOO FREE CLEANING

By Roy Huntington  
Editor *American Handgunner*

**F**rankly, I've found virtually all of the name-brand, quality cleaning products seem to work well. For specific chores, like heavy leading, heavy copper fouling, etc. it does pay to work with a product specifically intended to attack the problem at hand. For general cleaning, I've had very good luck with MP-7 products, from their cleaner to their lubricant. It is non-hazardous and doesn't stink up the garage when you're using it. Having said that, there simply isn't anything as delightful as good old Hoppes #9. And for all the reasons we all understand, it smells better than \$200-per-ounce perfume.



Sweets 7.62 makes easy work of copper fouling and Brownells JB Bore Cleaner (a mild abrasive) makes a good companion cleaner for the really tough stuff. Ditto for getting the lead out. Find a Lewis Lead Remover and worship at the alter of whoever invented it. In revolvers and autopistols, it is the final word in scraping out all the crud prior to a good working over with your favorite solvent.

Outers' Foul Out is the period on the end of the sentence when it comes to the lazy man's cleaning gear. Plug the bore, dump the solvent in, turn on the power and go have a cold one. The lead or copper is magically transferred to the Foul Out rod and everyone is happier for it. Don't ask me to explain it but suffice to say there isn't any Voodoo involved. Or at least I don't think so.

Finish up with a good quality light oil or rust fighter. The aerosols work nicely. Just a quick shot on a shop rag, a wipe down, and your favorite Parker is protected from those friends you have with sulfuric acid fingerprints.

But mostly, just clean the darn things once in a while. Having worked behind the counter of a gun store I am still astounded by the general state of disrepair and levels of grunge on the average gun brought into the store for repair or cleaning. Don't be one of those customers the guys behind the counter make fun of when they leave.



# KG CLEANING COMPONENTS

By Sam Fadala

I've had good luck with KG(tm) Industries 4-step series cleaning components, relying on KG-1, 2, 3 and 4, used in that order. KG-1 Carbon Remover dissolves carbon and is pledged to be especially effective on black powder. KG-2 Bore Restorer goes after lead deposits and copper fouling. KG-3 Solvent & Degreaser evaporates rapidly with no film residue, serving as a bore flusher. KG-4 Gun Oil also cleans, but its major goal is lubrication and metal preservation. Recent work with a Marlin 336 Cowboy 38-55 required a great number of shots fired with both Winchester factory

jacketed and cast bullets from a Redding/Saeco double-cavity 255-grain RNFP mould. The KG system did a fine job of removing both lead and copper fouling.

The system runs like this: KG-1 on a patch attacks the carbon first, followed by KG-2, which goes after copper fouling and lead wash. KG-3 is a bore-flusher sprayed directly into the muzzle, firing a short burst followed by a cleaning patch. Next, KG-3 is fired downbore again followed by patches run through the bore several passes to mop out leftover residue. When patches emerge clean, a touch of KG-4 Gun Oil is applied as



a metal preserver. The job is done.

There is also a KG-5 Micro-Teflon® Trigger Lube, which promises to "improve trigger pull and control." This chemical is especially formulated, says the company, for trigger mechanisms. Finally, I like the KG Systems packaging — four plastic bottles with well-fitted snap-off tops, plus one spray can. Easy to use, easy to store.

## CLEANING GEAR

By David Fortier

To some, cleaning firearms is a great labor of love. To others, myself included, cleaning a dirty weapon is a necessary evil. While I love to shoot large quantities of ammunition, I don't look forward to cleaning up after the fun is over. So, when it's time to break-out the cleaning gear, I want stuff that works — no muss, no fuss.

While there is a vast amount of different solvents, cleaners and lubricants on the market, I'm pretty old fashioned. For the most part, I

make due with Hoppe's No. 9 and Break-Free CLP. Hoppe's not only smells good, but does the job. My heavily used and abused self-loaders are cleaned and lubed with Break-Free. This cleans (even residue from corrosive ammunition), lubricates and protects. My only change of pace comes when cleaning precision rifles. For this I use Shooter's Choice, period.



It cleans well without being abrasive.

More important are the tools used to clean your fine firearm. It's a fact of life that an improperly used steel rod can quickly degrade a rifle's accuracy. A bore guide is cheap insurance and a must have item. I use one from Stoney Point. This, in conjunction with coated rods from Dewey, helps to protect my rifle's bore and crown. Also of extreme importance are the brushes you use. I use only high-quality bore brushes with a brass, *not steel*, shank. A brush with a steel shank can scratch your bore, so avoid them. This is just a simple matter of spending a few extra dollars. I buy brass-cored brushes a dozen at a time from Brownells. Keep them clean, and when their time is past, replace them. While cleaning your firearm may not be fun, the right gear will certainly make the job easier.

## KEEPING IT SIMPLE

By Jim Gardner

I confess that I'm not very rigid about the selection of cleaning solvents. Like most, I'm intoxicated by the scent of Hoppe's No. 9, but to be honest, I don't always have a bottle on my bench. In many of the gun-smithing shops I've frequented, kerosene or commercial Stoddard solvent was used simply because it was always on hand in the cleaning tank. It seemed to do a fine job. I am careful to keep some Sweet's 7.62 within reach for dealing with particularly bad copper fouling, as well as a jar of J.B. Bore Paste. For cleaning after firing with black powder, I have had

great success with Chopie's Black Solve (available from Dixie Gunworks) as well as the old standard of hot, soapy water.

I'm a little more adamant about my choices in lubricants. Break Free CLP is hard to beat where an oil is desired, but for many uses, I insist that only a grease will stay in place to lubricate where desired. RIG "+P" is a good choice and it makes specific claims about preventing galling on stainless-steels — an important consideration. For lubricating the M1 Garand and M-1A, I still use

*continued on page 62*



HERE'S WHAT I USE...

By: Holt Bodinson

### Solvents / Cleaners:

High power rifles: Shooter's Choice Bore Solvent; Hoppe's Bench Rest-9 Copper Solvent; Sweet's 7.62; and Brownell's J-B Bore Compound.

Shotguns: Shooter's Choice Bore Solvent and Birchwood Casey Gun Scrubber.

Handguns And Rimfires: Shooter's Choice Bore Solvent; MPro 7; and Shooter's Choice Lead Remover.

Blackpowder: Ballistol

### Lubricants:

Birchwood Casey Synthetic Oil and Break Free CLP.

### Preservatives:

Break Free "Collector;" Brownell's Rust Preventive No. 2; and Renaissance Micro-Crystalline Wax.



# AMERICAN CUSTOM GUNMA

**Story By Tom Turpin   Photos By Mustafa Bilal of Turk's Head Productions**

**E**ach year at the combined American Custom Gunmakers Guild (ACGG) and Firearms Engravers Guild of America (FEGA) Exhibition, the winning ticket for a very special firearms project is drawn. As the No. 17 signifies, the 2002 version is the seventeenth such project for the ACGG. For this project, 4,000 raffle tickets at \$20 each will be sold. The lucky winner of the raffle need not be present at the Reno exhibition to win.

## Genesis Of An Idea

The project for 2002 was hatched, as so many good projects are, during a bull session among four shooters and hunters. The late Harold Randall, Ron Harter, Mike Kelly and Steve Nelson were all gathered in Randy's shop in Monmouth, Ore. Randy was a custom stockmaker and

machinist who did great work but was scarcely known outside his local area. Ron is a professional welder and machinist and an amateur gunmaker from Independence, Ore. He is also an avid elk hunter. Mike is a serious aficionado of custom gun work and a former competitive pistol shooter.

It was only natural that when this quartet got together, the subject always turned to custom rifles. On one such gathering, even though none of the group had any personal experience with dangerous game hunting in Africa, they each speculated about the choice of a dangerous game rifle. After their discussion — which lasted several hours — they arrived at a consensus. They decided that they would choose a rifle with a Mauser action chambered for the .404 Jeffrey Nitro Express cartridge, and fitted with iron sights only. They further decided that the rifle would be similar to the style turned out by Jeffrey and



## KERS GUILD PROJECT NO.17

other London makers around the turn of the twentieth century. That was a time when many young British military personnel and civil servants of limited means were being posted to British colonies in Africa and India and ordered rifles to take with them.

These rifles were usually rather simple in design with absolutely nothing to interfere with fast handling in tight situations. The group decided that no scope was necessary but, unlike most British express rifles, they also ruled out a series of folding leaf-open sights. Rather, they decided on a single fixed-leaf rear sight with a gold bead front sight. They did agree that a large ivory bead might be useful for low light conditions. The stock would be crafted from walnut of course, but one selected for ideal grain flow instead of flashy figure. Any embellishments would have to be tasteful but not pretentious.

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After ending the discussion, the group regarded the events as speculation and went on to something else. However, Steve Nelson couldn't quite get the idea out of his mind. In fact, in his spare time, he started tinkering a bit with some metalwork for just such a rifle. A few months later, he learned that the originally scheduled project for the 2002 ACGG raffle had run into some difficulties. Steve suggested the .404 project as a replacement and after a series of discussions with the Board of Directors, it was accepted.

Steve did all the metalwork on the rifle. He started with a 1947 FN Mauser action with no thumb cut. He altered the action to a single square bridge configuration and added an original Oberndorf bent bolt handle. He likewise added a trap grip cap and drop box magazine with straddle floor plate. He installed a 25-inch Kreiger barrel and

chambered it for the .404 NE. Nelson then added an island rear sight ramp with a single standing leaf, a barrel band sling stud, and a barrel band front sight ramp featuring both a gold bead and a flip-up ivory night sight.

He also installed an auxiliary recoil lug. The trigger is a single stage Oberndorf honed to a crisp 3-pound release. Nelson then turned the metalwork over to stockmaker Charles Worthing to whittle the stick of English walnut into a stock.

Worthing shaped the blank into a traditional British style and finished the wood with a hand-rubbed oil finish. He also checkered the stock with a 24 lpi pattern, added a leather covered recoil pad, a gold nameplate, an ebony forend tip and a steel crossbolt.

Next, the piece was turned over to Robert Hughes for the engraving. He complemented the rifle with a traditional English scroll pattern with a Cape Buffalo in gold inlay on the floor plate. Once Hughes was finished, the rifle went back to Steve Nelson for rust bluing of the action, barrel, floor plate and grip cap as well as a nitre blue job on the screws, pins and other small parts.

Marvin Huey then crafted one of his elegant fitted oak and leather trunk type cases to cradle the rifle and its accessories in French fitted compartments. A custom forged Damascus knife crafted by Keith Kilby, completed the accessories in the case.

## Beautiful, But Meant To Be Used

While many, if not most, of the ACGG annual projects are more museum pieces than they are functional field pieces, Steve Nelson was true to the consensus reached in Harold Randall's shop a few years earlier. Nothing would please the makers more than to see this rifle taken to the field and used for the purpose it was designed and built for. This does not mean that the quality of the rifle is any less than the museum pieces that preceded it. It only means that they left off many of the less useful bells and whistles that are not really functional on a rifle built to stop dangerous game.

The stock blank was also selected for function rather than for show, with good grain direction through the wrist to withstand the force of the potent .404 cartridge. The rifle is utilitarian, but of the highest quality.

The owner of this fine rifle was determined on February 10, 2002 with the drawing of winning ticket number 450. A total of 1,806 tickets were sold, so as you can see, your odds of being drawn as the winner are certainly much better than for example, playing the lottery.

## Will No. 18 Be Yours?

Why not purchase a handful of tickets for the ACGG's project No. 18, which will be a beautiful M1903 Springfield, cham-

bered for the .35 Whelan cartridge and remodeled in the best classic style? The drawing will be held February 2, 2003, in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the M1903 Springfield. Tickets may be purchased via the ACGG, 22 Vista View Drive, Cody, WY 82414-9606.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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## GUN CLEANERS

*continued from page 58*

jacket metal behind as they pass through the bore and before long you've got to remove it or accuracy will go to pot. Conventional solvents are unlikely to do this job. For the last few years I've been using a bore scope to monitor the condition of several barrels and judge the effectiveness of various cleaning products and procedures and have developed a two



level process using escalating force. At the range I clean the bores of most rifles every 15 to 20 rounds. The solvent changes from time to time, but right now it is Butch's Bore Shine. I've found it to do a good job of removing metal fouling without being so aggressive as to be difficult to use somewhere that you can't wash your hands. Let me explain.

Almost all bore cleaners that effectively remove copper fouling contain some form of ammonia. Most commonly these are in a solution that is basic — sometimes very much so. In chemistry class I learned that if you get a base on your fingers it feels really slick right before it starts to burn and make you want to get it off. You can usually identify these cleaners by smell — it's hard to miss ammonia's smell.

I'm not one who believes that you have to get every microgram of copper out of the barrel and my routine usually does not require further work. But now and then a gun may need more. My next step up is either Shooter's Choice Copper Remover or Outer's Super Solvent. Both of these are pretty stout but if they don't get everything the next step is Sweet's. This stuff is strongly ammoniacal and really needs to be used with care and ventilation. The last step is to use the Outer's Foul Out electrochemical cleaner. If none of those work it's time for a new barrel.



## KEEPING IT SIMPLE

*continued from page 59*

the old G.I. standard of Lubriplate grease.

For a preservative, Break Free CLP comes into use again, unless the arm is to be stored for a longer period, in which case I'm partial to RIG (Rust Inhibiting Grease).

There you have it. Frankly, all of the commercial products are good. But some suit my needs a little better than others. The bottom line is to keep your guns reasonably clean and especially to keep them properly lubricated. You wouldn't run your automobile without oil, would you?



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example, at a range of 300 yards, the .270 WSM with the 130-grain Ballistic Silvertip delivers 18 percent more wallop on target. Energy doesn't kill, but it does enhance bullet expansion and performance.

### Testing On America's Plains Game

I've enjoyed hunting deer and antelope with the .270 Win. over the years, and indeed, one of the most accurate and flat shooting coyote loads I've ever used is still the 90-grain Sierra hollow point steaming along at 3,500 fps. So when Winchester signaled that a Model 70 Featherweight in .270 WSM mounted with a Kahles 3-9x42 and a supply of the 130-grain Ballistic Silvertip load were available for testing, it was off for a late season antelope hunt at the popular Mankin Ranch near Gillette, Wyo.

Combining Wyoming's windy plains with late season antelope that were so skittish they churned into overdrive when you were still a mile or two away, the hunt turned out to be an excellent test of the .270 WSM and the optical definition offered by a pair of Kahles 10x42 binoculars.

The Model 70, .270 WSM ammunition, and I arrived at the ranch late in the afternoon before the beginning of the hunt. There wasn't time for analytical group shooting, but settling down at the 100-yard bench to establish a zero, I was pleased to see my first

three shots fall into 1.25 inches in spite of Wyoming's gusting winds. Recoil seemed to be on the level of a similar weight .30-'06 when firing 150-grain bullets.

Taking full advantage of the .270 WSM's ballistics with the 130-grain loading, I sighted in the Model 70 Featherweight 2.5 inches high at 100 yards, which placed the bullet 1.5 inch low at 300 yards and 11 inches low at 400 yards. At the ranch, there were 15-inch diameter gongs set up at 345 and 400 yards. Holding dead-on at 345 and at the top edge of the 400 yard gong, one could play a gong serenade for as long as the ammunition lasted.

Campbell County, Wyoming is home to the largest antelope herds in the West. Its rolling sage lands are now sprinkled with oil and methane wells, but the pronghorns don't seem to mind the intrusion a bit. Even at the tail end of the season, we were seeing numerous herds of 20 or more antelope marshaled by some very fine quality herd bucks.

Making a ground-hugging sneak on one particular herd, I miscalculated the range. My first shot on game with the .270 WSM at a little over 350 yards away zipped right over the back of the herd buck. As the herd streaked off and was cresting a ridge 300 yards to my right, I connected with a slightly lesser buck and the hunt was over. The 130-grain Ballistic Silvertip opens up a large wound channel and on light 100 to 140 pound pronghorn bucks, it will typically penetrate completely.

So, if you've enjoyed hunting with the .270 Win. or if you've never owned a .270 and would like to try one, by all means, choose the ultra-modern .270 Winchester Short Magnum in a compact Model 70 Featherweight or Browning A-Bolt. It's all a modern cartridge should be, while retaining those qualities that have made the .270-caliber an outstanding choice for seven decades.

And quite to the surprise of many of us, Winchester is tweaking the basic WSM case design a bit more in order to give us another new short magnum, the 7mm WSM. In fact, look for more WSM calibers in the future as soon as there are enough .270, 7mm and .300 WSM chambered Model 70s and Browning A-Bolts in the retail pipeline.



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## NAA GUARDIAN

continued from page 20

retract the Guardian's slide but the perceived effort may be greater as there is less surface area to grip.

The Guardian operates double-action-only with a 10-pound trigger pull of typical smoothness for a factory gun. The edges of the trigger are relatively sharp and can cause pinching of the trigger finger for some individuals.

### Range Time

The number one consideration in any defensive handgun is reliability. On the first trip to the range, the Guardian experienced three failures to fire and three failures to feed in the first 50 rounds with FMJ ammunition. I suspected a weak magazine spring was responsible for the malfunctions as the last round consistently failed to feed. I was at a loss to explain the failures to fire, but suspected an underpowered hammer spring.

A second trip to the range with Federal and Aguila 71-grain FMJ ammunition confirmed a problem existed with the gun. Firing 100 rounds, there were four last round failures to feed, but the worst problem was the inconsistent ignition. One particular magazine full required about 15 pulls of the trigger to empty the magazine.

I e-mailed Sandy Chisholm, NAA president, on a Saturday and received a response Sunday. He said to send it back with a note listing the problems and of course any work would be free under the lifetime warranty. I was impressed that a company president promptly and kindly responded to a request for help from an average customer.

I was considering ordering some factory custom work but because of the malfunctions, had concerns about throwing in good money after bad. Should I be sure the problems were taken care of first and then ship the firearm back to NAA for custom work? Or should I have the custom work done while the Guardian was at the factory to avoid the cost and frustration of shipping the firearm a second time via UPS? Chisholm's response gave me the confidence to place the order.

The NAA Custom Shop offers many options such as special sights, stippling, porting, and exotic finishes. The custom work I wanted was the Carry Package, which involves a comprehensive melting of all sharp edges of the Guardian for comfortable pocket carry.

The gun came back in a month having undergone a massive physical transformation — a feast for the eyes! The vestigial front and rear sights and the top rib had been machined off. The top was refinished in its original matte finish and the sides were left brushed. All sharp edges had been melted with the most radical work performed on the barrel muzzle. The trigger face was polished mirror smooth and I no longer feared pinching the trigger finger. A new magazine was also included to take care of the feeding problems. Considering the quantity and the quality of work done, I thought the asking price of \$99 for the carry package job was very reasonable.

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Incidentally, when asked about the possibility of NAA offering production Carry Package models, Chisholm stated there were no such plans, but a Carry Package gun or any other customization desired could be ordered direct from NAA via an FFL holder. This eliminates the step of buying a production gun from a retailer and sending it back to NAA for customization.

The Carry Package Guardian looked like a keeper but would it perform like one? After 500 rounds, there have been zero failures to fire. There were two failures to feed due to operator error, both occurred while shooting with one hand and using too relaxed a grip learned from days of bullseye shooting. Pistols, especially small lightweight autos with their short slide cycle times and lighter physical weight, need an extra firm grip to reliably feed and eject.

### Not A Bullseye Gun

Without sights it's difficult to test for accuracy, but after much practice, I gained a semblance of good point shooting accuracy. Shooting from about 6 yards, two-handed, slow firing — six rounds clustered within a 3-inch circle. This is more than adequate for encounters of the closest kind.

I teamed the Carry Package Guardian with an Aker Pocket Holster. An extra flap of leather on the front of the holster obscures the gun's profile, leaving observers to believe a wallet sits in the front pocket. The dehorning job on the Guardian allows a smooth uninterrupted draw from holster or pocket without worry; no more protruding sights or sharp edges to snag on loose pocket threads.

How does the Guardian stack up as a defensive firearm for concealed-carry? It hiccuped out of the box, but after returning it to NAA and subsequently shooting 500 rounds without a hitch less operator error, it has proven itself to be a reliable defensive pistol. NAA stands behind its products and eagerly works with you to make it right. The Carry Package option facilitates sudden death draws from concealment and as a bonus, it enhances the beautiful lines of the Guardian, making daily carry as irresistible as a siren's song.

There's no arguing that few, if any, would consider the Guardian as an *ultimate* choice for concealed carry; but often it's the *right* choice. For slightly built persons like myself who don't find it easy to conceal a large handgun — smaller is better. Now there's no excuse to break the cardinal rule of gunfighting — always bring a gun to a gunfight. As the jingle goes, "don't leave home without it."



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## You Can Win This Cooper Arms Of Montana MODEL 21 VARMINTER

**T**he Gun Of The Month for June is a special treat — a Cooper Arms Model 21 Varminter. This is an absolute sweetheart of a rifle, beautifully trimmed and properly proportioned to the .223 cartridge it is chambered for. The Model 21 action is a single-shot. The lack of a magazine cut-out greatly stiffens the action and maximizes accuracy. Other features include a three-lugged bolt, plunger ejector and a positive Sako type extractor. The bolt handle sets out from the stock just the right amount to facilitate easy use. Length of the stainless-steel barrel is 24 inches, with a target crown and straight tapered contour that results in a rifle weight of about 7.5 pounds.

The stock of the Cooper Arms Model 21 Varminter is a beautiful piece of walnut. The wide, flat forend will ride solidly on sand bags or other support. Wrist and pistol grip are finely hand-checked, and a non-slip Pachmayr rifle pad is carefully fitted.

Accuracy is the watch word at Copper. As you would expect, the trigger is light and crisp. Barrels are meticulously air-gauged inspected. The barrel is free-floated, but without an ugly, oversized gap. Wood to metal fit is beautiful throughout. The proof of all this careful work is the test target that is furnished with each Cooper rifle. In short, Cooper builds an astoundingly beautiful and impressively accurate rifle. If you appreciate truly fine rifles, you *must* call to order a catalog. You should have a look at Cooper's Website as well. Look for a feature article on Cooper Arms by Charles Petty in the near future. In Petty's words: "This is a keeper!"

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**X-TREME DUTY-G. PETTY**  
continued from page 44

lever up. Release the slide and allow it to move forward a little, pull then release the trigger, and the slide can be removed to the front. The compound recoil spring is assembled as a unit and is removed easily. The barrel lifts out just as it does on most other pistols.

This is a full-size pistol available in 9mm Luger, .357 SIG and .40 S&W. Springfield's future plans include a .45 ACP and compact models. The suggested retail price is \$489. It's a lot of gun for the money.

**Off To The Range**

For this review I tested pistols in 9mm and .40 S&W. Fortunately I've been able to shoot them each quite a bit, literally putting hundreds of rounds through each. A wide variety of ammo was used, from very light handloads to +P 9mm and 155 grain .40s, which always have the greatest chance of stoppage due to the extremely fast slide cycle. I have yet to experience a malfunction. As you might expect, recoil with the .40 was a bit more brisk than the 9mm, but surely not a problem. The gun handles very well, and is fun to shoot. The sights are well regulated.

The shape of the grip is comfortable and the decent trigger pull made it easy to shoot. Accuracy testing's biggest surprise was that the results for the two different guns were almost identical. Very often in this type of test we'll see one gun show a strong preference for one load. That wasn't the case here, eliminating worries about basing ammo selection on accuracy.

Other shooting impressions are uniformly favorable. Though more of an observation than a complaint, the .40 requires a firm grip. Recoil is sharp, and while far from punishing, I found the pistol wanting to twist in my hand. But even a very loose hold would not induce a malfunction.

Springfield has formed a joint venture company (Springfield Armory Croatia Ltd.) with IM Metal, the manufacturer in Carlstadt, Croatia. And there's a new logo to go with it. On top of the slide you'll see the traditional crossed cannon logo. But it reads, "Springfield Armory Carlstadt Croatia."

I began by talking about better mouse-traps and here we have one. Reese was right, for the XD blends good features from a number of pistols — and adds to them to make the whole better than the sum of the parts.



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## XD40-MASSAD AYOOB

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Safariland duty holster for the big Glock 21 was too small. Good grief, even a nylon Uncle Mike's belt slide was too small. At last, I discovered I could shove it into a leather Aker belt scabbard made for the .45 caliber Glock 30 and get an adequate fit. The good news was that the magazines didn't need extra-large carry pouches. Regular pouches for double stack mags (SIG, S&W, etc.) fit the XD40 magazines perfectly.

Once the gun was on it felt like, well, like carrying a Glock. The light weight makes it comfortable. No sharp edges present themselves to dig the wearer, even with "the naked gun" inside the waistband, and none present themselves to snag on covering garments.

As a late update, the holster manufacturers are coming onboard already. Bianchi, Galco, Safariland, Uncle Mikes, Desantis, and Waldon have all commenced the introduction of holsters correctly fitted to the XD.

### Observations

The dust cover at the front of the XD40's polymer frame is molded for a flashlight attachment. This has become the current fashion in polymer pistols and even in the metal-framed Smith & Wesson Tactical series. I slipped the Insight Technologies M-3 Tactical Illuminator off my Glock 22 and tried it for size. It slid smoothly onto the XD40 and locked in place.

And I do mean *locked*. I'm glad this was the final portion of the test, 'cause I was unable to remove the light. Rather than risk breaking anything, I sent it back to Springfield Armory. They stripped the light from the gun and felt that it may have simply been a little dirt in the wrong place. That said, the gun and light work reasonably well together. Perhaps because of the high slide, the sights (and the shot) are high in the circle of light rather than centered in it at close range, but that becomes less of a problem as the distance increases and the M-3's powerful cone of light spreads.

I don't like a gun obviously designed to be a 14- to 16-shot .40 that only comes with 10-round magazines (two of them), but I can't blame the Croats or Springfield. Blame Bill Clinton. Springfield Armory fought the high-cap magazine ban vigorously, and the 10-round "Clinton magazines" stick as badly in their craw as in ours.

Some observers have mentioned that the loaded chamber indicator at the top of the slide and the cocking indicator at the rear are sops to "over-safe gun regulation" a' la' recent Massachusetts and California legislation. Maybe, but they're also damn handy when you want to check your weapon's status in the dark, just to be sure. I'm not sure "cocking indicator" is the right word, since the pistol is not truly cocked. What that little pin is telling you is that the trigger is set to firing position.

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This gun does not give second-strike capability with a misfire, but hardly anyone cares about that anymore. Current doctrine is that if a round misfires, you don't give it a second chance to fail you. You slap the butt to make sure the magazine is in, you jack the slide to eject the offending round and chamber a fresh cartridge, and then you get back to business.

Springfield Armory obviously wants this gun to catch on with cops. For that to happen, there will have to be duty holsters available and a strong repair and armorer's training network in place. For most of my 27 years in law enforcement I was in charge of the department's weapons, and believe me, factory service backup is a bigger concern for cops than most citizen gun enthusiasts realize. Springfield Armory is great at taking care of its customers, but unless their SWAT teams have M1A Springfield rifles, most police departments haven't had occasion to find that out yet. An option for a heavier trigger wouldn't hurt the XD40 in the police market, either.

Bottom line? The XD40 is an accurate, reliable pistol from a company that has a history of taking good care of its customers. They have fought long and hard for gun owners' civil rights, and that always makes me feel even better about owning a Springfield. And I am seriously thinking about purchasing my test sample XD40.



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## FRANCE'S MAS 49/56

*continued from page 39*

meters for elevation and for windage when zeroing. The front sight consists of a protected post adjustable for elevation. The bolt handle is a large white plastic knob located on the right side of the action. The weapon's safety is located on the right side of the trigger guard and is easily manipulated via the trigger finger — if you're right handed. Feed is from 10 round detachable magazines (although 18 rounders were also produced and issued). Of interest is that the magazine catch is located on the right side of the magazine, rather than the rifle. Magazines insert easily by simply pushing straight up, and they lock securely in place. The bolt locks back on the last shot and the bolt carrier has a slot for stripper clips. This, in conjunction with a cutout on the receiver, allows the weapon to be loaded via 5 round stripper clips if the operator desires.

The weapon was designed to allow an operator to quickly and easily launch rifle grenades. At the front of the upper handguard is the gas cutoff switch. Lifting this up 90 degrees cancels the normal gas flow for operating the action and blocks the operator's view of the front sight. The grenade launcher sight may be deployed by pulling back and lifting up. Between the front sight and muzzlebrake is a sliding collar. This can be adjusted to increase or decrease how far a rifle grenade will be propelled by a blank cartridge. Slick. On the left side of the rifle's beefy receiver is a rail for mounting day/night optics. The rifle's sling swivels are located on the left side of the weapon as well.

In addition to the rifle, SOG International Inc. sent us a host of accessories that are included with each rifle. These consisted of four 10 round magazines, sling, bayonet, manual, night sights, rubber butt extension, cleaning gear, spares, and pouches. All of it was in new or like new condition and still sealed in plastic. It was an impressive array of new gear and a fine looking rifle. To adequately test it, I borrowed an original French Modele 1929 C drives a 139 grain FMJ at 2,756 fps for 2,336 ft/lbs of energy at the muzzle. Surplus 7.5x54 ammunition is currently available through Wholesale Guns&Ammo, Inc. They were kind enough to supply us with 200 rounds of bright and shiny ball loaded on AA52 links. It was produced by Societe Francaise des Munitions, Paris in 1976. However, rather than relying only on surplus ammunition for accuracy testing, I contacted Pete Cardona of Quality Cartridge. Pete specializes in custom loading ammunition to a customer's indi-

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vidual specifications. What I was looking for was accuracy, so Pete loaded up some 7.5x54 Match ammunition for me using the 155 grain Sierra HPBT Matchking bullet. With these two loads in hand I put the MAS through its paces at 100 and 300 yards.

As I zeroed the rifle at 100 yards, I was hoping for groups of less than 3 inches. After all, it was a rack grade service rifle. Stripping the ball out of the MG belts, we loaded magazines. With this load the MAS averaged 3 $\frac{3}{4}$  inch 5-shot groups. But as soon as I switched to Match ammunition, I was pleasantly surprised. The MAS would keep three shots into an inch or less. Firing 5 shot groups for record off the bench, the rifle averaged 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  inch at 100 yards. Moving back to 300 yards the MAS/Quality Cartridge combo astounded me with one 3-shot group that measured a mere 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  inch! While impressive, three shot groups don't count. Firing for record, the MAS again put on a good show and averaged five shots into 4 inches at this distance. Recoil was mild, ejection was positive and consistent. The trigger, although a little on the heavy side, broke nicely. Moving from the bench, we removed the optics and did some shooting offhand, kneeling, and prone. Here the MAS did extremely well. The sights are very good, the safety easily manipulated, and magazines quick to change. The only thing I could have wished for was some of the rare 18 round mags.

I came away quite impressed with the MAS 49/56 and its 7.5x54 cartridge. The rifle is both well-designed and well-made. Our specimen ran flawlessly during testing and, when teamed with Match ammo from Quality Cartridge, shot extremely well even at 300 yards. With this load I would expect this rifle to perform well out to at least 600 yards. While not the best known battle rifle of its era, the MAS is none the less a fine design that served France well. For someone looking for a fine example, I heartily recommend that they contact SOG International Inc.



#### REFERENCES:

Huon, Jean. *Proud Promise: French Autoloading Rifles 1898-1979*. Collector Grade Publications, Inc., Cobourg, Ontario, Canada. 1995.

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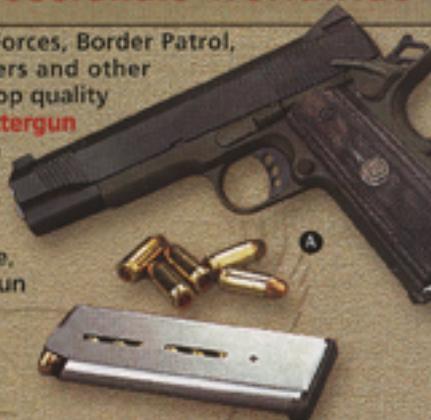
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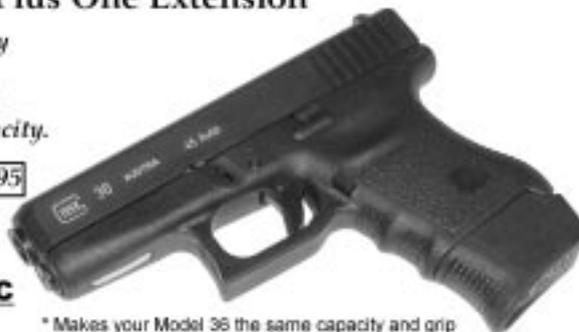
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From Mossberg

Mossberg has two new SSI-ONE (single-shot interchangeable) long guns on the market for 2002, the Sporter and the 12-gauge Slug shotgun. Both are lever-opening, break-action design. The Sporter is available in .223 Rem.,

.243 Win., .270 Win., .308 Win. and .30-'06 Springfield. The Slug shotgun features a fully-rifled ported barrel. Contact Mossberg, 7 Grasso Ave., North Haven, CT 06473-9844, telephone: (203) 230-5300, FAX: (203) 230-5420, Website: [www.mossberg.com](http://www.mossberg.com)



## Sportster Pocket Knife

From Gerber  
Legendary Blades

The Sportster pocket knife from Gerber Legendary Blades is a concealable lightweight folder with a 2.88-inch blade and a molded polycarbonate rubber non-slip grip. The Sportster features a fast one-hand opening design, pocket clip, and weighs only 2.4 ounces. Contact Gerber Legendary Blades, 14200 S.W. 72nd Ave., Portland, OR 97224, telephone: (503) 639-6161, FAX: (503) 684-7008, e-mail: [sales@gerberblades.com](mailto:sales@gerberblades.com), Website: [www.gerberblades.com](http://www.gerberblades.com)



## Improved Add-A-Rest

From Stoney Point

The lightweight Add-A-Rest is designed to complement any shooting bench or elevated shooting blind. The improved rubber over-mold V-yoke cushions the rifle and protects the finish. The base attaches to any flat surface with three quick adjustable screws. A large hand wheel provides infinite height adjustment from 3½-inches to eight inches above the bench top. Contact Stoney Point Products, P.O. Box 234, New Ulm, MN 56073, telephone: (507) 354-3360, FAX: (507) 354-7236, e-mail: [stoney@newulmtel.net](mailto:stoney@newulmtel.net), Website: [www.stoneypoint.com](http://www.stoneypoint.com)

## High Power Air Rifle

From AirForce Airguns

The new TalonSS is a U.S.-made single-shot adult air rifle with interchangeable .22 and .177 caliber match barrels. The TalonSS features a chamber in front of the

barrel that lessens air turbulence, protects the muzzle, and reduces felt recoil. Power is adjustable from 400 to 1,000 feet-per-second. Comes with optional instructional video. Contact AirForce Airguns, P.O. Box 2478, Ft. Worth, TX 76113, telephone: (877) 247-4867, FAX: (817) 451-1613, e-mail: [john@airforceairguns.com](mailto:john@airforceairguns.com), Website: [www.airforceairguns.com](http://www.airforceairguns.com)



## New Double Nine Holster

From Don Hume Leathergoods

The Double Nine is a new concealment holster for both semi-automatics and revolvers. It features a metal-reinforced thumb break design with recessed snap and double-stitched sew lines at stress areas, covered trigger and covered slots at each end. Fits belts up to 1½-inches wide. Available in black, saddle brown and natural finishes. Contact Don Hume Leathergoods, P.O. Box 351, Miami, OK 74355-0351, telephone: (918) 542-6604, FAX: (918) 542-4340, e-mail: [donhume@mmind.net](mailto:donhume@mmind.net), Website: [www.donhume.com](http://www.donhume.com)



## Black Powder Camo Rifles

From Austin & Halleck

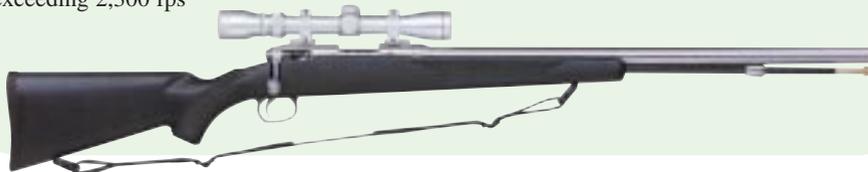
Austin & Halleck's fine long-range black powder rifles are now available in Realtree Hardwoods and Mossy Oak Breakup camouflage patterns. Features include in-line percussion action with removable weather shroud, receiver and barrel in either polished blue or electroless nickel-plate finishes, 26-inch octagon barrel, with a Timney match trigger, and a .199-inch hammer throw. Contact Austin & Halleck, 2150 South (50 East, Provo, UT 84606-6285, telephone: (801) 371-0412, FAX: (801) 374-9998, e-mail: [asusa@worldnet.att.net](mailto:asusa@worldnet.att.net), Website: [www.austinhalleck.com](http://www.austinhalleck.com)



## New Muzzleloaders

From Savage Arms

Savage Arms has a trio of new Model 10ML .50 caliber big game muzzleloader rifles for 2002. The three new stock options are black synthetic, Realtree Hardwoods camouflage synthetic and brown wood laminate. The 10ML produces velocities exceeding 2,300 fps



and delivers more than 3,000 ft. pounds of stopping power. Features include No.209 primer ignition, patented removable breech plug and vent liner and adjustable fiber-optic hunting sights. Contact Savage Arms, 118 Mountain Rd., Suffield, CT 06078, telephone: (800) 668-2168, FAX: (860) 668-2168, Website: [www.savagearms.com](http://www.savagearms.com)

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## New Semi-Auto Shotgun

From Weatherby

The new Model SAS Field semi-automatic 12-gauge shotgun from Weatherby features a hand-selected walnut stock and blued receiver and metalwork. Other features include choice of 26- or 28-inch barrel, brass front bead sight and 3-inch chamber.



Comes with hard-sided molded plastic take-down case with individual storage compartments for buttstock, barrel, choke tubes and wrenches. Contact Weatherby, 3100 El Camino Real, Atascadero, CA 93422, telephone: (805) 466-1767, FAX: (805) 466-2527, Website: [www.weatherby.com](http://www.weatherby.com)

## Protector Revolvers

From Taurus

The Protector is a new concealment revolver from Taurus with a fully shrouded hammer allowing for optional single-action operation. The hammer, while presenting zero-profile, may be manually cocked. The patented Taurus Security System is built in and accompanied by an unlimited lifetime guarantee. The Protector is chambered in .38 Spl. and .357 Magnum and offered in matte stainless steel, blue steel UltraLite, UltraLite Titanium and Total Titanium. Contact Taurus International, 16175 N.W. 49th Ave., Miami, FL 33014, telephone: (305) 623-7506, Website: [www.taurususa.com](http://www.taurususa.com)



## Left Handed Pro-Series 2000

From H-S Precision

H-S Precision now offers a left handed version of its Pro-Series 2000 rifle action. The action features one-piece body machined from heat-treated steel. It has a stainless steel floor plate and detachable magazine box with center feed design for positive cartridge feeding. The bolt handle is machined with a 360 degree ring and the three-position safety is accompanied by a safety and cocking indicator. Contact HS Precision, 1301 Turbine Dr., Rapid City, SD 57703, telephone: (605) 341-3006, FAX: (605) 342-8964, e-mail: [hsprecision1@hotmail.com](mailto:hsprecision1@hotmail.com), Website: [www.hsprecision.com](http://www.hsprecision.com)



## New Gold Label Shotgun

From Ruger

Ruger's new Gold Label side-by-side 12-gauge shotgun is a high quality firearm with a suggested retail price of \$1,950. It features a 28-inch barrel, choice of straight or pistol grip, smooth assisted-opening cocking system, convenient safety/barrel selector, low-profile stainless steel receiver and a selective single-trigger allowing a quick choice of either barrel. Weighs just 6.5 pounds. Contact Sturm, Ruger & Co., Ruger Rd., Southport, CT 06490, telephone: (888) 317-6887, Website: [www.ruger-firearms.com](http://www.ruger-firearms.com)



## Three New Rifle Scopes

From Swift Instruments

Swift Instrument offers three new light-weight rifle scopes for 2002. These illuminated reticle scopes are waterproof, shock tested and feature multi-coated lenses to provide bright, sharp glare-free images in



low light conditions. The Model 680M is 3-9X, 40mm, the Model 681M is 1.5-6X, 40mm and the Model 682M is 4-12X, 50mm. Contact Swift Instruments, 952 Dorchester Ave., Boston, MA 02125, telephone: (408) 293-2380, FAX: (408) 292-7967, e-mail: [info@swiftoptics.com](mailto:info@swiftoptics.com), Website: [www.swift-optics.com](http://www.swift-optics.com)



## New Rex Lion Shotgun

From Heckler & Koch

The 12-gauge Rex Lion is the latest addition to the popular Gold Lion line of high performance shotguns from Heckler & Koch. The Rex Lion is available in choice of 26 or 28-inch barrel lengths, a silver and

black finish receiver with English-style gold inlaid engraving and premium grade oil-finished Turkish walnut stock and forend. Contact H&K, 21480 Pacific Blvd., Sterling, VA 20166, Website: [www.hecklerkoch-usa.com](http://www.hecklerkoch-usa.com)

## Tactical Weapon Case

From Bagmaster

Bagmaster's newly redesigned Tactical Weapon Case features a full 1/2-inch thick 2-pound closed cell foam core and a durable polyester lining. The case accommodates weapons with large scopes and bi-pods attached. The rugged closed foam construction allows the case to float. Comes in choice of three sizes: 35, 38 and 42-inch. Made in the U.S.A. and backed by lifetime guarantee. Contact Bagmaster, 2731 Sutton Ave., St. Louis, MO 63143, telephone: (800) 950-8181, FAX: (314) 781-3363, Website: [www.bagmaster.com](http://www.bagmaster.com)



## New Rifle Scope

From HorusVision

Horus Vision's new Vision Reticle rifle scope delivers precision accuracy from 100 to over 1,000 yards. The Vision Reticle scope is calibrated for shooting at unknown distances, providing accurate "holdover" points for windage and lead adjustments. The accompanying lap-top/desktop computer TRAG 1S5 Ballistic Software Aiming Program eliminates guesswork by indicating where the shooter should hold for any point-of-impact. Contact Dennis Sammut at Horus Vision, 659 Huntington Ave., San Bruno, CA 94066, telephone: (650) 583-5471, FAX: (650) 589-4569, e-mail: [dennis@horusvision.com](mailto:dennis@horusvision.com), Website: [www.horusvision.com](http://www.horusvision.com)



## Browning Hi-Power Lasergrrips

From Crimson Trace

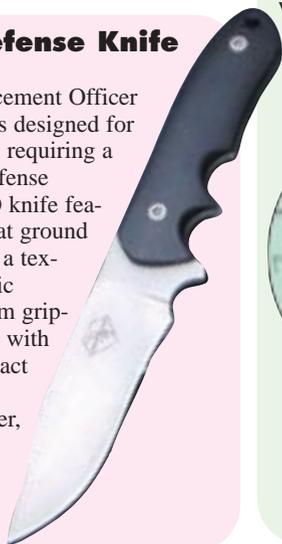
Lasergrrips for the Browning Hi-Power pistol are now available from Crimson Trace Corp. The laser sight is activated by dual activation pads built into the wrap-around rubber grips. The laser itself is fully adjustable for windage and elevation. Lasergrrips fit standard holsters and include a master on/off switch for complete system over-ride. Fits most Hi-Power models and clones, including the Browning Hi-Power Standard, Mark II and Practical models and the FN Herstal HP-SA. Contact Crimson Trace Corp., 8089 S.W. Cirrus Dr., Beaverton, OR 97008, telephone: (503) 627-9992, FAX: (503) 627-0166, e-mail: [customer@crimsontrace.com](mailto:customer@crimsontrace.com), Website: [www.crimsontrace.com](http://www.crimsontrace.com)



## New Self-Defense Knife

From T.H Rinaldi

The Law Enforcement Officer self-defense knife is designed for police and civilians requiring a concealable self-defense weapon. The L.E.O knife features a 4.25-inch flat ground recurved blade and a textured black synthetic handle for maximum gripping power. Comes with sturdy sheath. Contact Trace Rinaldi, P.O. Box 718, Winchester, CA 92596, telephone: (909) 926-5422, e-mail: [thblade@pe.net](mailto:thblade@pe.net)



## Flashlight Knife

From Sabot

The LITENIFE is a combination hunting knife and flashlight developed for field dressing at night. The light assembly, powered by two AAA batteries, is sealed with O-rings to allow the knife to be rinsed under running water. The 4½-inch hollow ground stainless steel blade has a clip point and is ice hardened to Rc.59 for superior edge retention. Overall length is 10 inches. Solid brass bol-



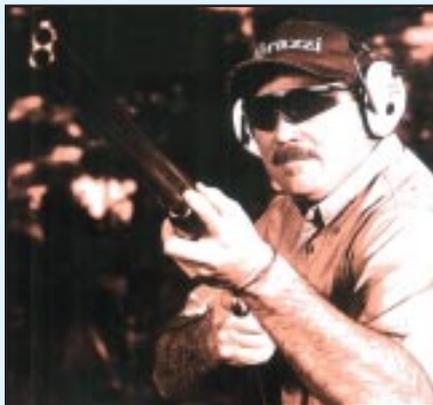
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## Ballistic Eyewear

From Wiley X

Wiley X has a complete line of stylish ballistic sport shooting protective glasses, specifically designed for the needs of recreational shooters, hunters and shotgunners. Pictured is five-time FITASC champion shotgunner Andy Duffy wearing the Model PT-2, which features an interchangeable frame system. The extended eight base lens is die-cut, ground and polished for a distortion-free view. Lens tint options are smoke green, light rust, pale rose, crimson red or clear. Contact Dan Freeman at Wiley X Eyewear, 4777 Bennett Dr., Ste."D", Livermore, CA 94550, telephone: (800) 776-7842, FAX: (925) 455-8860, e-mail: [wileyxsales@wiley-x.com](mailto:wileyxsales@wiley-x.com), Website: [www.wiley-x.com](http://www.wiley-x.com)

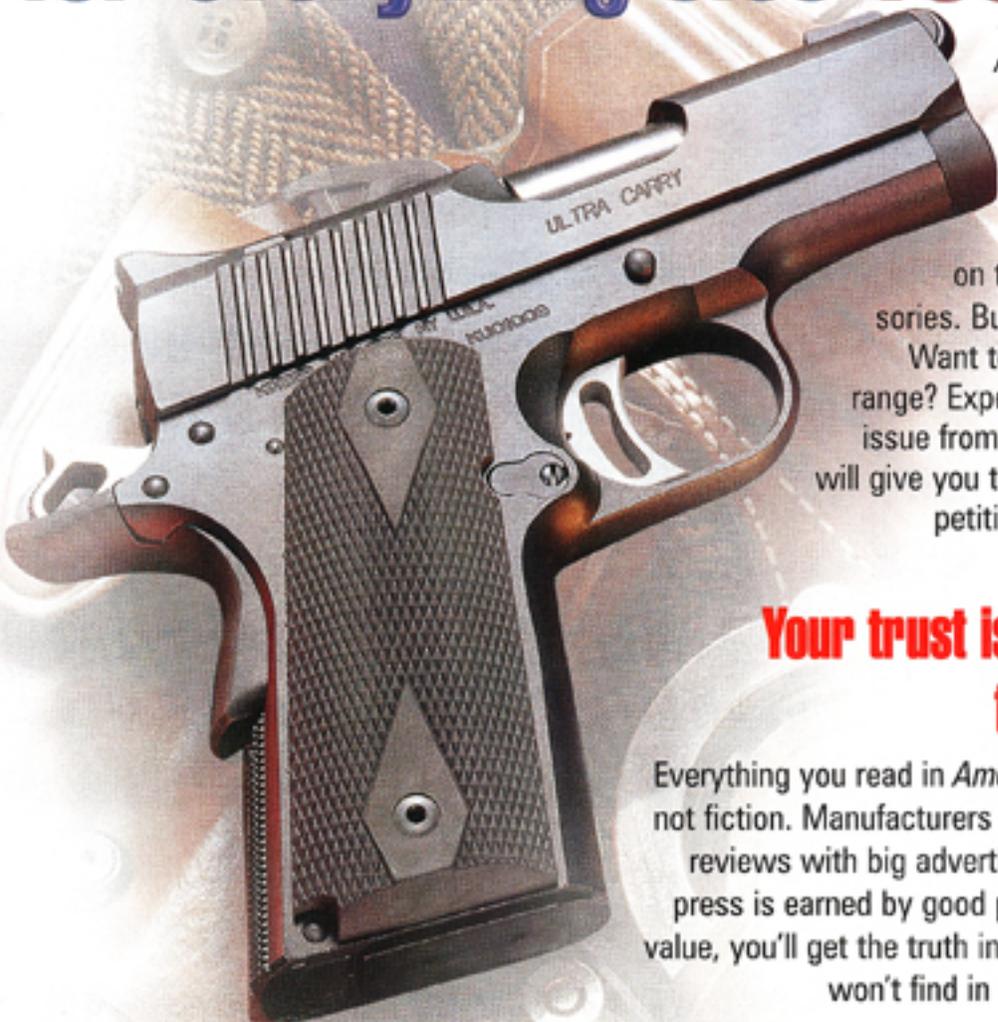


## Huntsman Muzzleloader

From H&R 1871

H&R 1871 introduces the Huntsman, a new single-barrel break-open muzzleloading rifle. Available in either .45 or .50 caliber, the Huntsman features a short-fall hammer mechanism that speeds ignition and improves accuracy. The Huntsman is equipped with a 24-inch barrel, ramp front and adjustable rear fiber-optic Fire Sights, a telescoping brass ramrod with hardwood handle and an antique color case-hardened frame and a walnut-finished hardwood stock. Contact H&R 1871, 100 Kenna Dr., North Haven, CT 06473-5621, telephone: (203) 239-5621, FAX: (203) 234-7991, Website: [www.marlinfirearms.com](http://www.marlinfirearms.com)

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# CAMPFIRE TALES

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vince him. It is obvious to me that just as I fired the second shot, that old mulie decided to fall, and the 120 grain Speer JSP bullet took one antler dead center. I could not have pulled off that shot had I been trying. At least it gives Tedd some arguable breathing room, and that shot got me out of the cold weather as I spent the next day feeding wood into the fire while the rest of the hunting parties spent a fruitless time looking for bucks that no longer existed in that hunting area.

At the opposite end of the weather spectrum, another strange shot occurred while battling 100 degree weather while hunting Ibex in Texas. Frank Pulkrabek, who was my guide, also arranged my trip to Africa the following year. This trip I wanted an Ibex, and he had put us on a herd of large Ibex-Goat crossbreeds. Frank stayed at the Jeep, while I worked my way through the brush, and into the trees were I could get a solid rest. I picked out one of the big goats with large horns and a black ring around his neck, steadied the .375 JDJ Contender on a limb and fired. The gun came back down out of recoil, the herd was still there, and my black collared goat was still standing. "How in the world did I miss a 140 yard shot?" was whispered, as I tried to calm myself down before firing the second shot.

The next shot performed perfectly, I saw my Ibex go down this time, and the rest of the herd ran off. I fired three shots to Frank to let him know I had one down and he was to bring the Jeep up. We had the necessary congratulations, took a few pictures, and then Frank said, "Look over there!"

I had, in fact, not missed on my first shot, and there 20 yards away was my first Ibex. Frank muttered something about the fact that I should know when I pull the trigger and that I should also be confident enough to know that I am going to connect; however, I was just thankful that these were not high dollar trophy animals. Everything turned out just fine and both of them are now mounted and hanging above my workbench where they can look down at me when I am reloading.

The next occurrence does not really fall perfectly into the "strange shot" category but is certainly weird in what happened after the shot. We were on the Y.O. for the Annual Handgun Hunt organized by Blackie Sliva and J.D. Jones. Jerry, my hunting companion, had connected on a black buck antelope with his .41 Magnum. The buck, however, refused to cooperate and ran off. The guide, Jerry, and I spent several hours walking around trying to find some trace of him with no luck. So when we rendezvoused back together, we all got in the old suburban so we could cover a lot more territory

and also do it a lot quicker.

Now I am no fan of cell phones. I do have one but I only take it with me when I am out by myself. I do not enjoy hearing one-half of other people's phone conversations while standing in line at a check-out, sitting at the next table in a restaurant, nor the close calls that result when behind the wheel and someone is talking instead of concentrating on their driving. With my shooting activities and testing of so many firearms I do keep one, turned off, but in my shooting box on my solo trips to the desert. I finally had to admit to myself that I was no longer invincible, hence the abominable cell phone goes along on my shooting excursions.

As we were driving around trying to find that black buck, the guide's cell phone rang. He stopped the Suburban to answer it, and as we sat there I looked around and there not 50 yards away was a black buck antelope under a tree. It couldn't be, could it? It was the very antelope we were looking for and if that phone had not caused us to stop we may never have seen it or found it on the 50,000 acre ranch. The phone did it for us, but that's not the strangest part.

It was a wrong number!



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## OF STRANGE SHOTS AND CELL PHONES



**M**y invincible period was a wonderful time of life. Weather had no effect in those days, not the stifling humidity of the summer, nor the brutality of winter, though I did not realize it at the time. We were young, and as long as we had time off from school the thermometer had no effect on the enjoyment we could have. My how times have changed! My comfortable threshold now seems to be no lower than 60 nor higher than 70 degrees, so when I found myself hunting in the bitter cold of southern Colorado, I was definitely looking for a way to spend more time by the fire.

"I saw several trophy-size bucks here last week, and my friend took a 36 incher off this same ranch last year" were the encouraging words spoken by my friend Tedd, who had scouted the ranch in beautiful weather the week before the season opened. However, as the first day passed without any of us seeing a single deer of any kind, let alone a buck, it started to sound more like the proverbial "You should've been here last week" that accompanies so many fish stories.

It was now late afternoon of the first day, and we had four-wheeled down deep into a canyon just north of the New Mexico border. That's when the snow hit. By the time we got back to the top — barely making it I might add — it was a genuine white-out. The weather had turned so quickly that the other party could not get their truck out and wound up spending several hours walking to the top. Along with the snow came the bitter cold, and we were more than happy for a hot meal and a warm bed.

The next morning dawned cold, at 20 below zero. Some folks may enjoy such weather, but my only thought was that I could somehow find a good shootable buck and be able to spend the next day by the fire. But the second day was a repeat of the first... until just before dark.

There he was at the edge of the trees. He was nowhere near Boone & Crockett, but he was shootable, even respectable. And he was within range, around 125 yards and slightly uphill.

I had a good rest with my 6.5 JDJ Thompson/Center Contender. I fired, and I saw the buck stiffen as they often do, unable to move. He was still standing, but I knew he was dead on his feet. My guide wanted me to shoot him again just to be sure. I couldn't convince him that the 6.5 was about as sure a kill as one can get. But if I was wrong, I certainly did not want the buck to take off for the trees, and then spend the cold snowy night looking for him.

The crosshairs went on him the second time. I fired and down he went. Fast. In fact, it looked too fast. The guide, Tedd and myself jumped in the truck and headed up to him. Tedd got in the bed of the truck and was looking over the cab as we pulled up to the deer.

Now I must explain something here. Tedd is known far and wide, amongst both his friends and his hunting companions, as one who is notorious for shooting the antlers off deer. And believe me, we never let him forget it. As I piled out of the front of the truck, I could hear him yelling "Yes! Yes! Yes!" His source of joy was my mule deer buck lying on the ground with one antler shot off!

I knew exactly what happened but I will never con-

*continued on page 81*



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