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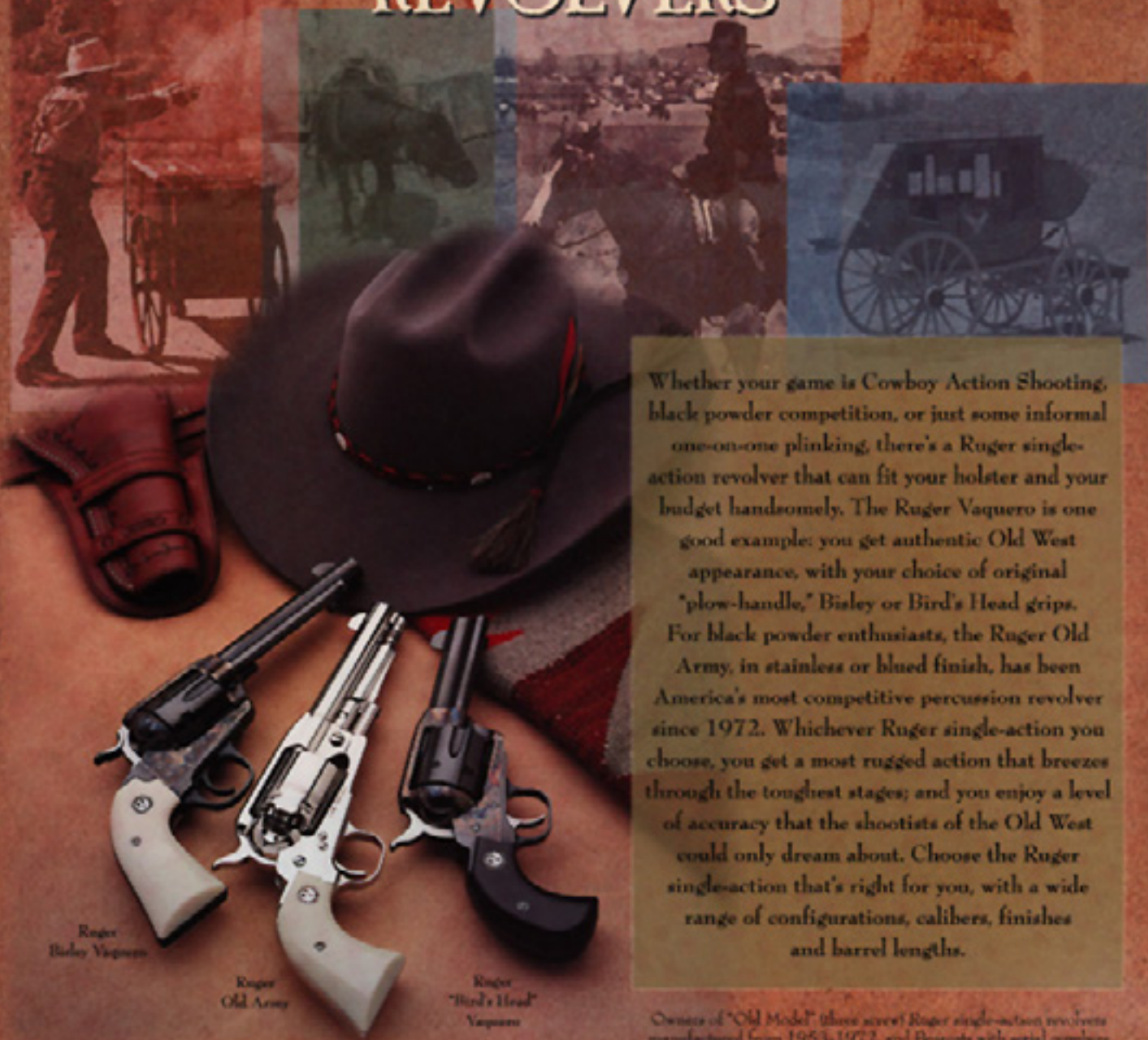
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# GUNS

MAGAZINE

**FEBRUARY 2003**

Vol. 50, Number 02-578



**30**

**On The Cover:**

H&K MP7 PDW

By Charles cutshaw

Photo by Ichiro Nagata

## FEATURES

**23** **Casull CA-3800**  
**BY JOHN TAFFIN** It isn't all sixguns for the man in the big hat.

**26** **ACGG's Project No. 18**  
**BY TOM TURPIN** A to-die-for custom Springfield you can win.

**30** **Cutting-Edge Compacts**  
**BY CHARLES CUTSHAW** Latest in high-speed hardware from H&K.

**34** **Tikka's M595 Continental**  
**BY DAVID FORTIER** A highly-refined turnbolt from Finland.

**40** **R93 Tactical From Blaser**  
**BY CHARLES CUTSHAW** Is this the ultimate evolution of the bolt-action precision rifle?

**50** **Five Proven Holsters**  
**BY CAMERON HOPKINS** Five holsters that have stood the test of time.

**54** **The Top Secret Of WWI**  
**BY CHARLES E. PETTY** Would this have turned the tide in the trenches?

**60** **LRF1200 Laser Rangefinder**  
**BY DAVE DOUGLAS** No bigger than a venison sandwich, says Douglas.

**72** **Competition Glass**  
**BY CHARLES E. PETTY** Quick review of a first class 'scope.





## DEPARTMENTS

- 8 Crossfire**
- 10 On A Positive Note**
- 12 Handloader** Charles E. Petty
- 14 Quartermaster** Jim Gardner
- 18 Shotgunner** Holt Bodinson
- 20 Rifleman** Dave Anderson
- 49 Handguns** Massad Ayoob
- 76 New Products**
- 78 GUNS Classifieds**
- 80 Advertiser Index**
- 82 Campfire Tales** John Taffin



# GUNS

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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

**INDUSTRY EDITOR** Russ Thurman

**HANDLOADING EDITOR** Charles E. Petty

**PRECISION SHOOTING EDITOR** David Fortier

**FIELD EDITORS** Sam Fadala, Roy Huntington

**SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR** Tom Turpin

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### ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

#### Denny Fallon

National Adv. Offices:  
591 Camino de la Reina, Suite 200  
San Diego, Calif. 92108  
[619] 297-8520 FAX: [619] 297-5353  
email: denny@gunsmagazine.com

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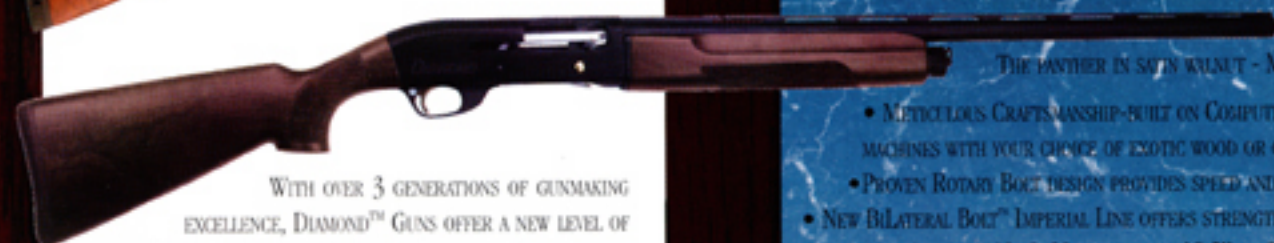


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**GUNS MAGAZINE**  
DECEMBER 2002

# CROSSFIRE LETTERS TO GUNS

**GUNS MAGAZINE™** welcomes letters to the editor for "Crossfire." Send your letters to:  
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## Letter Of The Month

I was extremely pleased to read the recent article on Savage bolt action rifles. I have several of these fine 110 series rifles in my collection, all in different calibers, and find as you did that for the money they are the best around.

The last one I bought was a .30-'06 with synthetic stock and scope package. I bought it because, with a limited budget, it was all I could afford. I was not disappointed. Out of the box, it placed its first round in the center of the bullseye at 100 yards.

I have been preaching the benefits of Savage arms for many years to my friends; it was just good to see it in print.

Robin Wood  
Thurmont, Md.

## Quick Change Act

Tell me the truth — you actually have only one photo of John Taffin that you've been using all these years, and you just Photoshop in the hand cannon he's writing about each month. Right?

John Payne  
Oakland, N.J.

## Timely Information

While watching news coverage of the horrific hostage taking at the Moscow theater, I was interested to see footage of a Russian special operations trooper carrying an SV-98 rifle.

Of course I would have had no idea what this weapon was, had I not just finished David Fortier's excellent article in the December *GUNS* Magazine. Fortier's articles are among the best and most interesting I've seen, and I hope you will see fit to continue with them.

Given the current glut of surplus military rifles on the American market, how about asking Fortier to give us a little report on these? Yes, we all know the basic facts about the Mauser and Lee-Enfield, etc., but Fortier's in depth take on any subject would be sure to make for interesting reading. What do you say?

Randall Clark  
Montrose, Colo.

## Whatever We Please

Thanks for a great article (High-Tech, No!/Yes!, December 2002). I was happy to see both authors express flexible opinions.

I used to wonder if we haven't lost our way when black powder rifles sport Leupold scopes, synthetic stocks, in-line ignition and fire the latest premium bullets using plastic sabots. The fact is, we have the right to design and shoot whatever we please and I have to admit it's fascinating to watch high-performance black powder rifles in action. I suppose the next step will be for Remingtons' Etronx to "go black."

Can we expect an article on black powder match rifles anytime soon? I'd like to see just how well they can perform.

John Snover  
Monument Beach, Mass.

## Voice Of Authority

On Page 21 of your November 2002 issue, Glenn Barnes says, "The Ruger MK1 .22 LR, also known as the "Standard Model." This is an incorrect statement.

Ruger originally introduced the Standard Model with fixed sights. The adjustable sight models, released shortly thereafter, were called the "Mark 1." These terms are not interchangeable, as they designate different models. Otherwise, I agree wholeheartedly with author Barnes about the fun of plinking with any .22 — and especially a 50-year-old designed by Bill Ruger.

Tom Fetzner  
Via e-mail

## Fortier Fan

For the last four years or so, I have noticed the name of David M. Fortier in more and more publications. I share Mr. Fortier's interest in all firearms and the old Soviet block weapons in particular. My interest goes back to being a paratrooper during the end days of the Viet Nam war. The first time I touched an AK-47 or an SKS, it was placed in my hands by the U.S. Army. Anyhow, enough of that.

Fortier has a to-the-point way of writing that I enjoy very much. It is usually different

than the mainstream and usually correct. Please keep him on as a writer.

It's kind of hard for critics of your magazine to claim you provide only favorable articles on guns in return for advertising revenue, when I seriously doubt the SV-98 is even available in this country. Ask him to do an article on the Russian .22 LR target pistols and target rifles.

Name Withheld By Request  
Via e-mail

## Salad Days

At age 77 and now a city dweller, my shooting days are well behind me.

I did some shooting in the '50s and '60s; mostly woodchucks with a Remington model 722 chambered for the .222, with a Weaver 6x scope. Didn't realize that the rifle and load had become obsolete along with the shooter until I read your article in *GUNS* Magazine! All of this because I wanted to know what a .223 was. Thanks for a fine article.

Simon Kleeeger  
Via e-mail

## Eye Of The Beholder

I'm writing in regards to Charles Petty's article in the most recent *GUNS* (Navy Arms 1892 SS, December, '02).

I've been reading your magazine for years. One constant I have appreciated is the exquisite photography of Ichiro Nagata. It struck me just recently how much all of your photography is generally superior to what I see in the other gun magazines. This recent article by Charles Petty is just another example.

The photos were sharp, large enough to show good detail, and carefully lighted. Other than a couple of "hot spots," which are extremely difficult to avoid, I was impressed.

I say this as a rather dedicated amateur photographer with many years experience. I've shot many photos of my own guns, and I know it is damnably difficult to get good results. Nice work. Keep it up.

James Winthrop  
Orlando, Fla.





# CAVES ARE DARK, BUSINESS IS GOOD.

Special Forces operators are using SureFire WeaponLights in Afghanistan to clear the caves and bunkers that Al Qaeda terrorists use to hide. No other flashlight has the rugged construction, shock-isolated lamps and dazzling bright fighting light. All SureFire WeaponLight systems are NVG compatible with IR filters to give the operator total dominance of the darkness.

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# ON A POSITIVE NOTE BY JIM GARDNER

## The XD Challenge

In recent years, *GUNS* Magazine has devoted scant coverage to competitive shooting. This may be a mistake. I personally believe some form of competitive shooting experience is necessary to fully develop your shooting skills, even if it's as informal as using a hand thrower to toss clays with your hunting buddies.

One reason some shooters drop out of competitive shooting after having tried it is the feeling that an expensive, highly specialized, "race-gun" is necessary to be competitive. Those who shoot the various combat pistol games frequently fall for this idea.

It is completely untrue. It's your skill — not your hardware — that determines the scoreboard at the end of the day. Nevertheless, it's easy to fall into the, "If only I had one of those (fill in the blank) guns, I'd be winning too," syndrome. I've heard some variation of that line at least 50 times.

Thus it was with particular interest I learned of the inaugural "XD Challenge," hosted by Springfield Armory on the 12th and 13th of October, 2002. The XD (short for X-treme Duty) is of course Springfield Armory's new polymer-framed pistol. It's a particularly nice design. I'm very impressed with it, as were Charles Petty and Massad Ayoob when they jointly reviewed it in the June, 2002 issue of *GUNS*.

**Roy Huntington receives coaching from Tara Venard.**



So, what's so interesting about the XD Challenge? In addition to the fact it was a very well-designed and run match shot on steel targets, every competitor used *identical firearms and ammunition*.

That's right. For your \$75 entry fee, you were provided both the X-treme Duty pistol to shoot and excellent PMC ammunition. Different variants of the XD were in place at the different stages, so by the conclusion of the match, you had fired stages with 4- and 5-inch barreled XDs, as well as 9mm, .40 S&W and .357 SIG caliber pistols... and so had everyone else.

Finally, here is a pistol match where every contestant stands on an

**JIM SCOUTTEN**



even footing. Not only that, it truly was a nicely organized match, and the feedback I received afterward from shooters was extremely positive.

Regrettably, my schedule precluded me from shooting the match, but I did look over the stages, and was even allowed to fire a couple of them just for fun. The result left me itching for more, and, once again, I was extremely impressed with the X-treme Duty. Sooner or later, I'm going to have to own one of these.

The only sour outcome of this experience was the fact that rascal Roy Huntington, editor of *American Handgunner Magazine* (and a darn fine fellow), out shot me handily on the stages we fired together. Hmm, I'm going to have to start practicing again.

And speaking of being impressed with the X-treme Duty...

Jim Scoutten, host of the popular *American Shooter* television program, was in attendance the day prior to the match. I was able to query Scoutten on his personal estimation of the XD:

"To be honest, before my first outing with the X-treme Duty, I really wasn't sure I cared for it," Scoutten admitted candidly. "It's rather a different animal from what I was used to. But after just a little use, I changed my mind. The XD now feels like an extension of my hand, and to be brief, I *really* like it."





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The handguns shown here were picked as the top three for 2002 by industry professionals who represent the Shooting Industry Academy of Excellence. Kimber's Eclipse Custom II was selected as the Handgun of the Year. You can win it plus the other two in the Pride & Liberty Sweepstakes.



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2002 saw the introduction of the Springfield Armory X-Treme Duty — an innovative, DAO polymer import, with a uniformly fine trigger action. This slick-shooting pistol is winning converts across the country.

2002 also saw the long awaited return of the Ruger Super Blackhawk Hunter. This is the sixgun John Taffin described as, "All the handgun hunter could ask for." Bull-strong,

rust-proof and equipped with excellent adjustable sights as well as quick detachable scope rings, the SBH Hunter is justly popular.

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# HANDLOADER

BY  
CHARLES  
E. PETTY

## Two Good Tips

I'm sure you've experienced the horror of forgetting to clean and lubricate the inside of a rifle case neck, and felt it come to a screeching halt as you try to pull it out of the die. Sometimes it seems as if there is no way to get it out, and I've even had to go to the extreme of pushing the case back up and unscrewing the decapping rod to the point where I can squirt an aerosol lubricant into the case. That's messy, and then you've got to — somehow — clean the lube out of the case.

We know carbide sizing-dies make life better for loaders of handgun ammo, but carbide can come to the rescue of the loader of bottleneck cartridges too. One of the better-kept secrets is that you can buy a carbide expander button to replace the standard steel component.

The carbide button doesn't completely eliminate the need to pay attention to the inside case neck, but you can almost always do well by just running a dry nylon brush in and out a couple of times.

These are accessory items, and I don't believe a carbide expander is standard on any die set. But you can buy, from Hornady, an expander that will fit RCBS dies and Redding has one for their product. Available calibers run from .22 to .338.

### Importance of Labels and Records

Even though handloaders are often preached at about record keeping, there may be a tendency to not bother with a label if the load is one you use all the time. Of this I speak from first hand and recent experience.

I loaded 500 rounds of .45 ACP with a 230 grain Hornady FMJ, to use on a shooting visit to another range. The stuff worked just fine, but I didn't shoot very much that day and had about 300 rounds left. It was in one of those ubiquitous blue bins. Didn't need a label. I knew what it was.

Some time later I was preparing to shoot a pistol in the Ransom Rest and used some of that ammo to settle the rest. Much to my surprise the group was of bragging dimensions and rivaled factory match ammo. Several more groups confirmed the accuracy so I planned to load some more. And here is where the trouble started.

I was pretty sure the powder was Vihtavuori N-350, but the charge was another matter. That's okay. Go back to the records and find the

charge that had been most accurate. Rats... there were several that had similar accuracy. Okay... pull a bullet and weigh the charge. I did this and found the charge weight was way out of line with what was expected. See the little light bulb turn on!

My other favorite powder for .45 target loads is Power Pistol and fortunately those two can be visually identified since they're so different looking. The one time I deviated from normal practice it bit me.

My loading has two very different aspects. When trying to develop loads for new cartridges or components, I rarely load more than 10 rounds of any specific recipe. I'll prepare a spreadsheet using Excel with spaces for load data, velocity and accuracy.

The other type of loading is stuff I shoot mostly for fun. These tend to be lead bullet loads for everything from .32-20 up to .45 Colt. All of those are shot in Colt or S&W revolvers and Winchester or Remington rifles. Over some time I've developed trusted standard loads for all of those. Accuracy is far more important to me than velocity and, frankly, there are a few of my loads that have never flown over a chronograph.

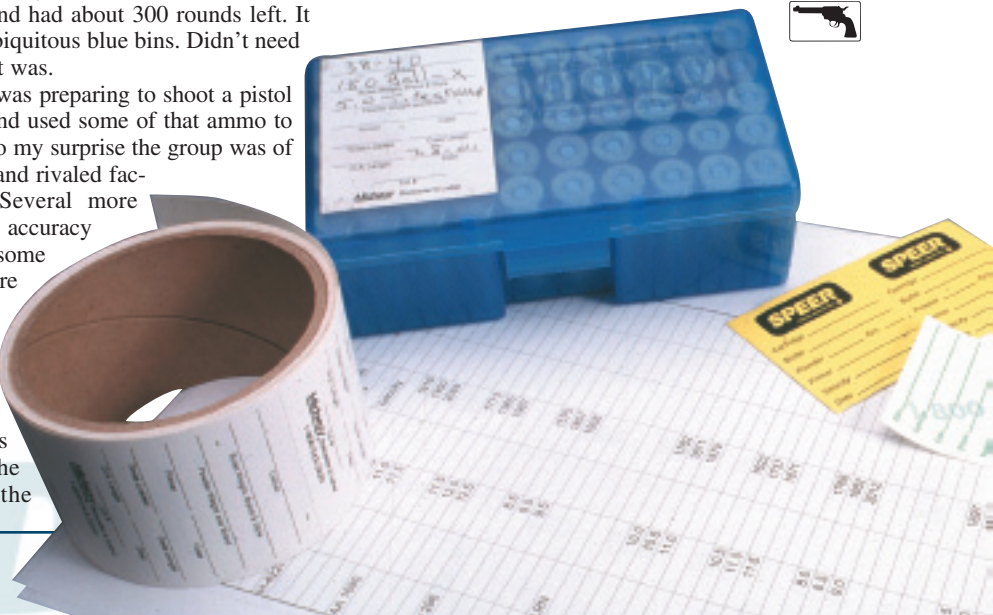
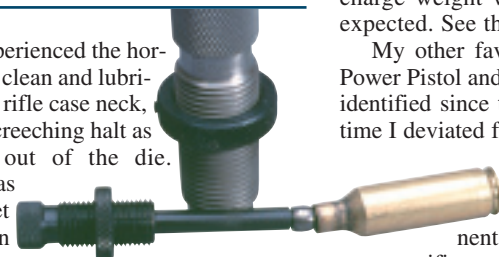
There are two reasons. In this type of ammo, accuracy is almost always better at modest velocities. But the other reason is going to strike some as a mite odd. I usually shoot at round steel targets that are 70 yards away. They range in size from 4 to 12 inches in diameter, and provide the instant feedback that is so important in fun shooting. There is no question over whether you hit or not because the target tells us right away.

My favorite fun loads are modest in velocity so that the bang won't obscure the clang. If the bullet gets there too fast it is no fun at all.

All of this ammo goes in plastic boxes from Midway or MTM and has a proper label. All I have to do, when it's time to load more, is look at the label and make some more just like that. Simplicity is good, but proper labeling is vital.



*"There may be a tendency to not bother with a label if the load is one you use all the time."*





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# QUARTERMASTER

BY JIM GARDNER

## SureFire G2Z

It's difficult not to be really impressed with a product that is so improved over its predecessors it obsoletes them. Case in point? Anyone out there still using a slide rule rather than a modern electronic calculator? Didn't think so.

We've mentioned the SureFire line of flashlights and weapon-mounted lights previously, so there's no need to describe them in detail. What should be briefly remembered is how incredibly well they perform. Compared to the dim, fragile flashlights of my youth, the SureFire lights are as advanced as the latest scientific calculator is over that dusty slide rule in your attic.

The latest from SureFire is the G2Z. Unlike most of the SureFire line, this is not constructed of machined aluminum, but of a proprietary polymer. The result is a light that is actually stronger, fractionally lighter, corrosion proof and less likely to be damaged by dropping or rough handling. And, it's a bit less expensive as well.

The G2Z is of SureFire's "Combat Light" pattern. It features a reduced diameter section (about .75 inch) and a rubber grommet. These features enable the light to be used with a handgun in the popular Bill Rogers "cigar" technique.

Other good features include a lanyard loop and lanyard; lock-out tail cap; momentary or constant-on switching; and a hexagonal, anti-roll bezel.

Like all of SureFire's 6-volt combat lights, the G2Z is compatible with two lamp types. The furnished P60 lamp delivers 60



lumens of light for approximately one hour. The optional P61 lamp assembly doubles the output to 120 lumens, while shortening the run time to 20 minutes.

The G2Z, like all the SureFire equipment, is a darn nice piece of gear. Call for a catalog, or have a look at the very informative Website.

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# QUARTERMASTER

BY JIM GARDNER

## Lyman No. 55 Classic

Since the early '70s, I've used a Lyman No. 55 powder measure with complete satisfaction. It's a darn good unit, rugged, accurate, and easy to use. I particularly like the three separate slides, which are used to adjust the rotor's internal volume and set a particular charge weight. Two of these are micrometer adjustable, and it's remarkably simple to set the measure to the desired weight.

I enjoy loading and shooting vintage black powder cartridges. Black powder loading, though simple, requires different techniques than those used with smokeless propellants. One common element of black powder loading is the use of a drop tube.

By pouring the powder charge through a long drop tube, the charge tends to arrange itself more compactly in the case. The result is a cleaner burning, more uniform load. Black powder must be handled with a little more care than smokeless, and may not be safely used with conventional powder measures.

Until recently, I measured my black powder charges using a dipper, then poured them through a long drop tube. The process produced accurate ammunition, but was painfully slow.

This all ended when I acquired a new Lyman No. 55 "Classic" powder measure. The Classic is adapted to both smokeless and black powder use. In addition, an optional 24-inch drop tube attaches directly to the measure.

The principle difference between the No. 55, and the No. 55 Classic, is the use of a non-sparking brass insert (in which the rotor



revolves) and a hopper made of aluminum to avoid static electricity buildup. The hopper will easily hold one pound of powder, great for loading those cavernous .45-120s.

I was pleased to see this brand new Lyman measure is just as nicely made as my 30-year-old specimen. If you need a measure for smokeless or black powder use, you can't go wrong with the good old No. 55.

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# QUARTERMASTER

BY JIM GARDNER

## Sinclair's 2003 Calendar

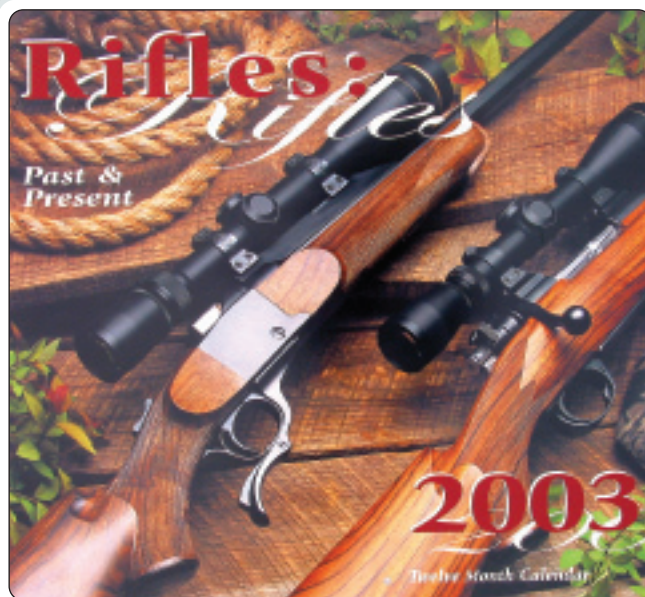
**F**or the serious rifleman, sitting down with the Sinclair catalog is the next best thing to a paid vacation. The 120-page book is chock full of everything a shooter and hand-loader could desire, from the simplest reloading aid, to the most exotic match trigger assembly for your pet varmint or benchrest rifle.

Among the innumerable nifty products in the catalog is a timely item we can all use and enjoy. Sinclair's 2003 calendar is titled, *Rifles: Past & Present*. It features 12 months worth of incredibly handsome rifles — from a flint long rifle to an exotic Palma match boltgun — with nearly every era in between represented.

Obviously, this calendar would look splendid hanging near your loading bench, or anywhere else in your home for that matter. But a better idea might be to take one to the shop or office.

It will stand as constant mute testimony to the fact you are "one of those gun guys." Your anti-gun or undecided co-workers will see this, and knowing you as a rational and pleasant fellow, they may be forced to modify their position on "the gun issue." Well, maybe not. But at least you'll have a great calendar to enjoy.

Sinclair's 2003 calendar is priced at \$14.95 plus postage. It would also make a great gift for a favorite shootin' buddy. Be certain to request a catalog when you call.



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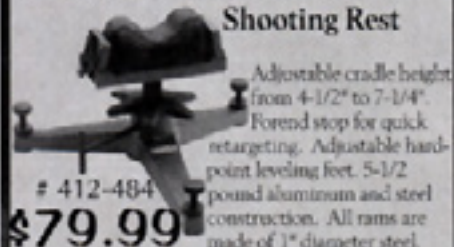
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# SHOTGUNNER BY HOLT BODINSON

*"It's time for a commonsense approach to the subject of shotgun chokes."*

## Wild, Wonderful World Of Chokes

**W**hat do the following seven shotgun barrel or choke tube designations commonly found on shotguns have in common: 7/10; \*-; \*\*; 3/4; II; .030; IM?

As discerning shotgunners, you probably know, or maybe not, that each one of these seven arcane codes designates a barrel or choke tube with an "Improved Modified" degree of constriction.

Second challenging question. Looking at the muzzle end of a Browning shotgun fitted with Invector Plus choke tubes, what chokes are designated by the following notches cut into the rim of the choke tube: I; II; III; IIII; IIII?

If you're a dyed-in-the-wool Browning shooter, you probably know that when shooting lead shot, I notch equals Full; II notches equal Imp. Mod; III notches equal Mod; IIII notches equal Imp. Cyl; and IIII notches equal Skeet choke. However, did you know that when you're hunkered down in a duck blind shooting steel shot, II and III notches equal Full; IIII notches equal Mod.; and IIII notches equal Cyl. ?

### It's enough to drive you crazy.

Between inch and millimeter measurements, plus historical gunmaking traditions that dictate choke codes, there simply isn't a common, universal language when it comes to choke designations, and I don't see any improvements looming on the horizon. So, we do the best we can and keep a few notes tucked away to insure we're just a little bit knowledgeable when we're out shopping for a new smooth-bore or sounding literate at the range.

### As If That Weren't Enough

I wasn't going to mention it, but there's an additional problem when it comes to deciphering the chokes of barrels not fitted with choke tubes. Short of actually measuring the bore and the existing degree of choke constriction, there is simply no way to know what you're dealing with.

Many fine old doubles have been lightly rebored to remove pits, and many original chokes in shotguns of

all makes and ages have been modified by a qualified gunsmith or polished out by the owner using a portable drill and sandpaper wrapped around a dowel.

Remembering that choke is determined and measured as the difference in diameter between the main bore and the tightest portion of the choke, the amount of constriction within the choke will vary depending upon the nominal diameter of the bore. With many modern barrels being overbored, choke tubes for various brands of shotguns will have different degrees of constriction while providing the same degree of choke.

For example, the nominal bore diameter of a 12-gauge Browning shotgun that accepts Invector Plus tubes is 0.742 inches, while that of a Beretta will run only 0.730 inches. Thus an improved modified tube for the Browning might be 0.715 inches while that for a Beretta might be 0.700 inches.

Chokes are described as having a specific degree of constriction. In this regard, both domestic and foreign makers share a similar set of dimensions, whether they are in inch or millimeter measurements. Here are the standard specifications for chokes expressed in thousandths of an inch:

<b>True Cylinder:</b>	0.000-inch constriction
<b>Skeet-1:</b>	0.005-inch constriction
<b>Improved Cylinder:</b>	0.010-inch constriction
<b>Modified:</b>	0.020-inch constriction
<b>Improved Modified:</b>	0.030-inch constriction
<b>Full:</b>	0.040-inch constriction

### Another Country Heard From

On the range, you may often hear the terms "quarter choke" or "half choke" being bandied about. These are the choke designations used in England, and it's good to know them. They are:

<b>Full:</b>	equals Full
<b>IM:</b>	equals Three Quarter Choke (3/4)
<b>M:</b>	equals Half Choke (1/2)
<b>IC:</b>	equals Quarter Choke (1/4)
<b>S-1:</b>	equals Improved Cylinder
<b>Cyl:</b>	equals True Cylinder

One of the most interesting questions that often comes up when discussing chokes is whether or not a full choked 28 gauge, for example, throws the same pattern as a full choked 12 gauge. The answer is yes and no. Yes, because the diameter of the patterns will be equal at 40 yards. No, because the density of the overall patterns will favor the heavier shot charge delivered by the 12 gauge.

Talking chokes is a fascinating subject. And as knowledge of this subject translates directly to more game harvested in the field, or more clays dusted on the range — we'll be doing more in the future.



*If you still use the old "Dime Test" to determine the choke of a 12 gauge, read on...*



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# RIFLEMAN BY DAVE ANDERSON

## For The Better Half

**W**hen my wife, Simone, took up big game hunting, selecting a rifle seemed a minor concern. Many hunts and three rifles later, we've almost got it right. Maybe an account of our trials and errors will be useful to others in the same situation.

### Hand-Me-Down

She started out with a rifle already in my gunrack, a Remington M700 in .243 Win. Simone practiced through the summer with a .22 and with the .243, and by fall was shooting 2- to 3-inch groups at 100 yards from the sitting position. That year she collected her first head of big game, a pronghorn at 90 yards.

Positives? Well, the price was right, as were the rifle's light recoil, accuracy, and excellent trigger. Negatives? The rifle was just too big for her. My mistake was to impose my standards on someone else. To an adult male, the 8-pound Remington was a light-weight dream. To someone barely 5'4" tall and 115 pounds, it was a burden. The stock, which had fit well enough while practicing in summer, was too long once she was wearing her winter hunting jacket.

Our next attempt was a Remington M600 Mohawk in 6mm Rem. With the stock shortened to 12.5 inches LOP, it was much easier to handle and shoot. Nosler

95-grain Partition bullets exited the 18.5-inch barrel at just over 2,900 fps. Simone used this rifle for several years with good results. Experience showed that while we were on the right track, there was room for improvement.

The rifle was still a bit heavy, and the dogleg bolt handle and heavy mainspring made bolt operation from the shoulder difficult. With full power loads, even the mild 6mm Rem. had a piercing, unpleasant report in the short barrel. And the stock, though well designed to handle recoil, was plain as a post.

### Use Determines The Tool

Analyzing several years of hunting experience provided valuable input. She refused to attempt long or running shots, preferring either to stalk or wait on a stand for one careful, unhurried shot. Most shots



*Overlooking river breaks on a mule deer hunt. I believe there was a 3-9X Bushnell on the A-Bolt at the time.*

were at 100 yards or less, none beyond 150 yards. She didn't need a super flat trajectory. She needed light weight and compact size. And she wanted a rifle that looked nice.

After looking over many rifles, Simone settled on the Browning A-Bolt Micro Medallion. It has the features she desired — light weight and compact size — as well as a handsome appearance with its high-gloss walnut stock, rosewood forearm tip and grip cap, and floral scrolls on the receiver and floorplate.

Personally, I don't care for shiny wood or engraving. But this rifle wasn't for me. It's vital to remember in a situation like this you're helping select a rifle for someone else, not yourself. People practice more and become more skilled with a rifle if they like using it.

### Cartridge Selection

We decided to trade a little velocity for a bit more bullet weight. In the early '70s I had shot several white-tails with a .250 Savage. It had been wickedly effective, with terminal ballistics out of proportion to the mild report and inconsequential recoil. Similar ballistics in a rifle that fit Simone seemed to be the answer. After much debate, we selected the 7mm-08 Remington.

### Most Positive Outcome

Fitted with a Burris mini 2-7x variable, weight is a couple of ounces over 7 pounds. We loaded 120 grain Nosler Ballistic Tips at 2,700 fps. Sighted for 200 yards, it hit just 2 inches high at 100 yards.

Recoil is light, and with a relatively small charge of medium-burning powder (W-W 748), the report is mild. How effective it would be at 400 yards we neither know nor care. At the ranges she was willing to shoot, it proved deadly. The 120-grain Barnes X bullets at 3,000 fps have also produced sensational performance.

We bought Simone's rifle about 1990. Since then, Browning has replaced the Micro Medallion with the Micro Hunter, dimensionally identical but with a more practical, low gloss stock. Rifles with similar characteristics are available from Remington, Ruger, Savage, Weatherby, and Winchester. They are superb tools for anyone who appreciates a light, compact, adequately powerful rifle.



*The Winchester M70 .375 on the right is bigger and about three pounds heavier than the little A-Bolt.*





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By John Taffin

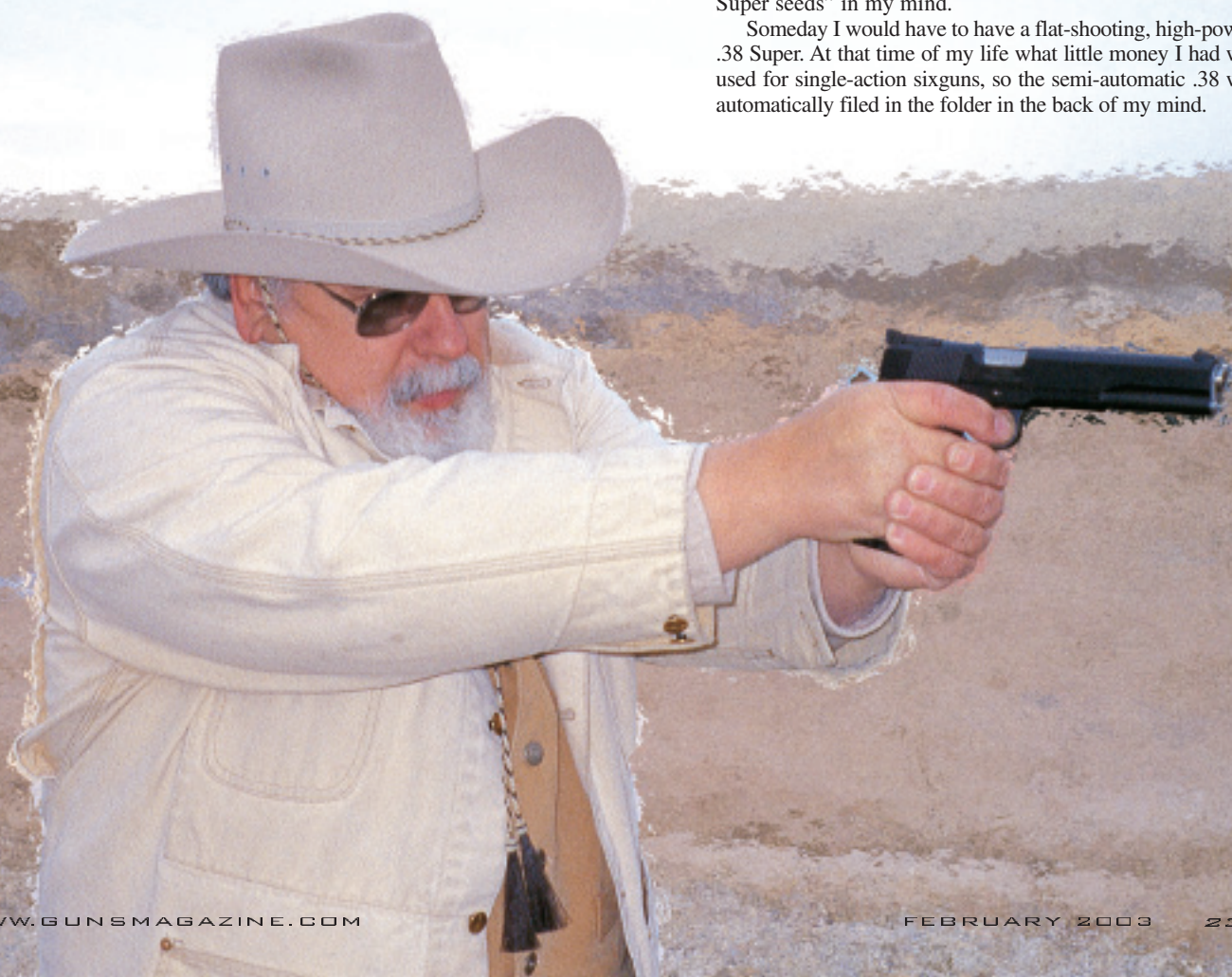
**I**t is most mysterious how the human mind works. With all the thousands upon thousands of images it receives day after day, year after year, how does it choose those relatively few that are to be saved, while the vast majority are deleted?

In one of the earliest issues of *GUNS* Magazine, there was an article about a Canadian, one Francis Wharton, who was called the “Backwoods Wizard.” Wharton lived out in the middle of the Canadian wilds and did a lot of what most of us would consider kitchen-table gunsmithing to satisfy his needs.

He had some really weird looking firearm modifications, but the one that stands out in my mind was a Colt .38 Super on which he had welded two flat pieces of steel — one on each side of the slide — supposedly to provide more strength to handle his high power reloads.

I don’t know that this accomplished its intended goal, but it did do two things: it added extra weight to reduce recoil, and more importantly, for me at least, it planted “.38 Super seeds” in my mind.

Someday I would have to have a flat-shooting, high-power, .38 Super. At that time of my life what little money I had was used for single-action sixguns, so the semi-automatic .38 was automatically filed in the folder in the back of my mind.

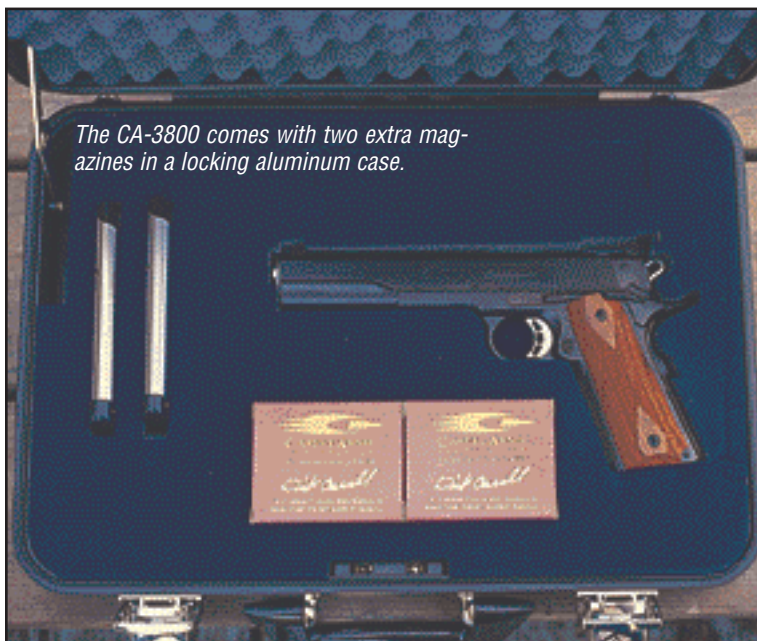




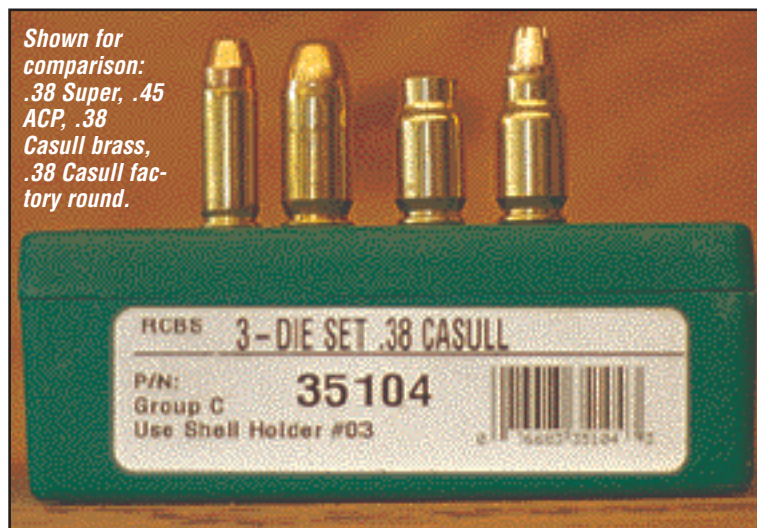
*Components used in handloading the .38 Casull: Winchester 296 powder, Federal #155 Primers, and bullets from Hornady, Sierra, and Speer.*



*The CA-3800 comes with two extra magazines in a locking aluminum case.*



*Shown for comparison: .38 Super, .45 ACP, .38 Casull brass, .38 Casull factory round.*



## Another Seed Is Planted

About five years later, I picked up several books by Jeff Cooper. Cooper, who was not yet the reigning 1911 guru, spoke in loving terms of the 1911 in .45 ACP. He also put forth the notion that the 1911 in .38 Super was just about perfection for what he called a Trail Gun.

This was a pistol not strictly for hunting, but to be carried for self-defense in the wilds against two- and four-legged creatures. A second image was placed in my mind's .38 Super file.

Then came the infamous GCA '68 (Gun Control Act of 1968), which required the filling out of special federal BATF forms before a firearm could be purchased. I decided to buy one more handgun "without paper", and as luck, or fate would have it, the first handgun I spotted was a Colt Commander in .38 Super. My quest was over, or so I thought.

## A Dream Not Realized

That .38 was literally the handgun with which one could not hit the broadside of a barn when shooting from the inside. Okay, it wasn't quite that bad; however, 12-inch groups with my handloads were the norm. I couldn't live with that, so it was either peddle it or fix it.

The former would require passing on a poor-shooting firearm to someone else — which to me is both dishonest and unethical. The only choice left was to fix it, but how? The obvious answer was to turn it over to an expert, and I called upon Bill Wilson. Wilson fitted one of his barrels, and groups with the same handloads shrank from 12 inches down to 2 inches.

The problem with those Colt barrels was that of head spacing. Unlike most semi-automatic cartridges, the .38 Super is not rimless but in fact has a very small rim. It is large enough that .38 Super cartridges can be shot in some .357 Magnum revolvers, however, it's not large enough to provide reliable, accurate head spacing in a semi-automatic chamber.

Wilson's barrel headspaced on the case mouth and the problem was solved. I might add that Colt finally addressed this problem, and later .38 Supers from Colt should be fine.

The Colt Commander was fitted with an adjustable rear sight from MMC, and I now had a good shooting .38 Super. It was not quite a full-sized 1911, and that image still remained in the back of my mind and would someday be brought to reality.

## Another Super .38

Someday came two years ago. After attending a Springfield Armory seminar, I ordered the Mil-Spec in .38 Super. I would finally have a full-sized 1911 .38, and if it showed promise, I would have it tuned and fitted with new sights. The Mil-Spec turned out to be such a good shooter as it came from the factory, there was nothing to "tune."

Not only does it shoot well, it also shoots to point of aim with factory or standard .38 Super handloads. The sights are easy to see, or at least are as easy to see as any iron sights will be with my long experienced eyes. I have done nothing to this second .38 Super except shoot it and enjoy it.

I now owned two fine-shooting Super .38s, but somehow, my itch for a high-power .38 Super remained. Would it ever come to life? We all experience strange twists and turns in life and one was about to happen to me that would bring a truly high-power .38 to my hands.



## Meat For The Masses

Every year I participate in the Handgun Hunters Chapter (of SCI) annual Handgun Hunters Against Hunger Hunt on the YO Ranch in Texas. Each year, 50 handgunners harvest their choice of numerous animals with all meat going to benefit the less fortunate through the Salvation Army. Each hunter pays his/her own expenses, and also the trophy fees to be able to give away the meat. The total donation is usually somewhere over 100,000 pounds. That is a great deal of high-quality, well-cared-for meat.

This year my contribution was a buffalo, an American bison. I took him with Buffalo Bore's hard cast 410-grain .480 Ruger cartridge that clocked 1,100 fps from a 4¾ inch Freedom Arms Model 83 .475 Linebaugh with the .480 cylinder in place. At 35 yards, the bullet penetrated completely. I had a beautiful head to be mounted, and the Salvation Army would receive the meat from the 1,200-pound bull. However, this was the beginning — not the end — of the story.

## Enter The CA-3800

During one of our lunch breaks, a representative from Casull Arms was there with samples of the Model CA-3800 for us to shoot. I fired both a standard, long-slide CA-3800 as well as a compensated model. Metal targets were set up at 25, 50 and 100 yards for testing. I found it easy to hit all three targets with the same sight setting. This CA-3800 was a great shooting pistol and I wanted one.

At our Saturday-night banquet, donated prizes from the industry are always handed out for those who provide the largest portion of meat. My 1,200 pounds was a lot of meat, but I had no illusions of winning one of the three firearms

that were donated as I had taken only one animal. I knew others had taken several large animals. One of the three firearms happened to be a Model CA-3800.

The first place winner had his choice of any of the three firearms. He did not pick the CA-3800. The second-place name was called, and although apparently tempted, he also did not take the Casull.

Now I was ready to kick myself for not shooting another animal, since I knew someone else had taken both a buffalo and a red stag doe. I was stunned when my name was called as the third place winner. I even asked them to recheck the figures, as it seemed unlikely I could have won.

*continued on page 66*

## CASULL MODEL CA-3800, 6-INCH BARREL

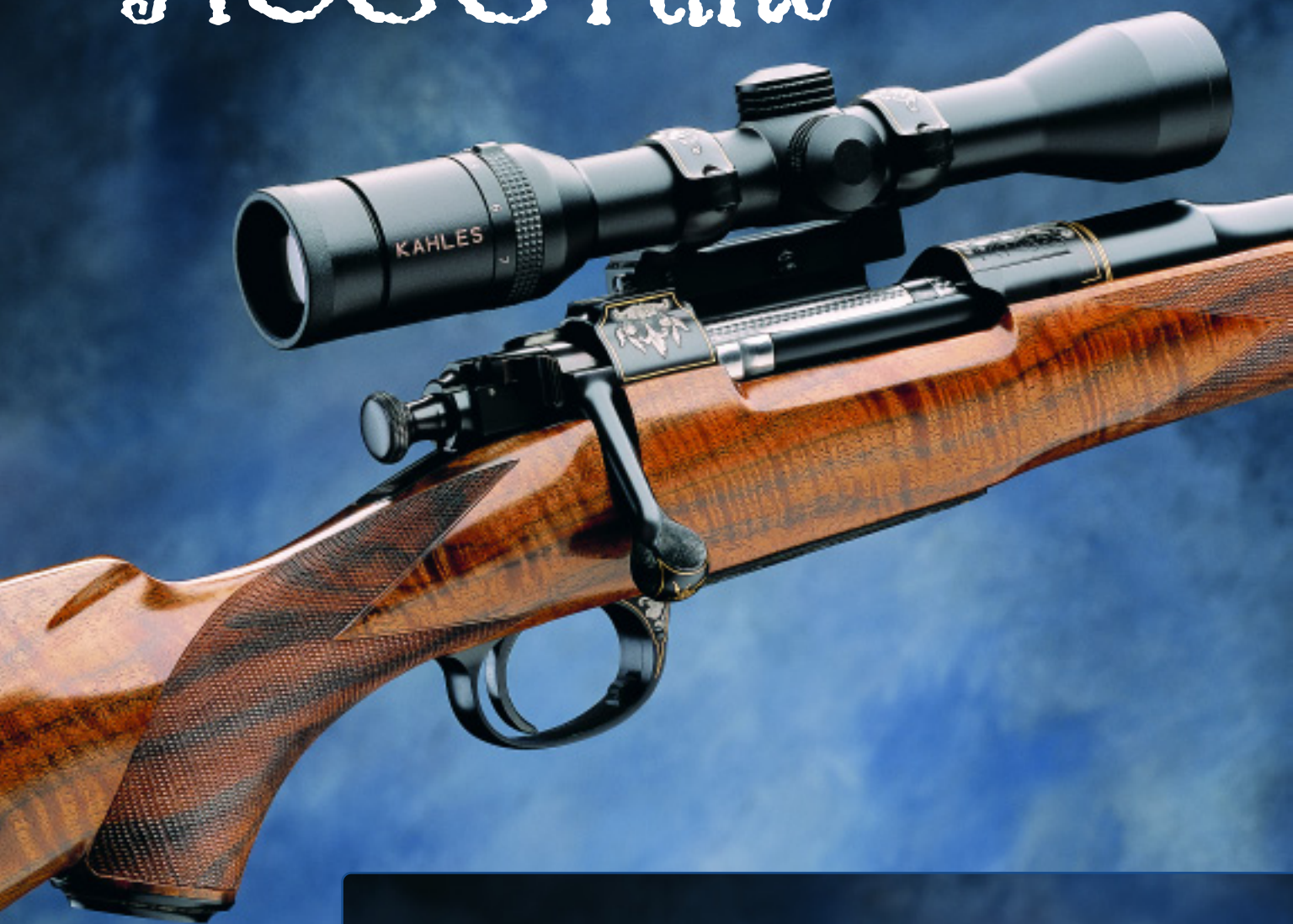
Load	MV	7-Shots/25 Yards
<b>Factory 124 gr. XTP-JHP</b>	1,722	2¼"
<b>Factory 147 gr. XTP-JHP</b>	1,547	2¼"
<b>Hornady 147 gr. XTP/17.5 gr. WW296</b>	1,590	1½"
<b>Hornady 147 gr. RN-FMJ/17.5 gr. WW296</b>	1,584	2"
<b>Speer 147 gr. Gold Dot/17.5 gr. WW296</b>	1,528	1¾"
<b>Hornady 124 gr. XTP-JHP/18.5 gr. WW296</b>	1,629	1¾"
<b>Hornady 124 gr. RN-FMJ/18.5 gr. WW296</b>	1,710	2"
<b>Speer 124 gr. Gold Dot/18.5 gr. WW296</b>	1,652	1¾"
<b>Speer 115 gr. JHP/18.5 gr. WW296</b>	1,678	2¼"
<b>Sierra 115 gr. JHP/18.5 gr. WW296</b>	1,649	2¼"
<b>Sierra 130 gr. RN-FMJ/18.5 gr. WW296</b>	1,621	2¼"

*Typical twenty-five yard target shot with the Model CA-3800, .38 Casull.*






Artistry In Steel  
The 2003  
ACGG Rifle







# The American Custom Gunsmith's Guild not only fosters the preservation of fine gunsmithing, they offer you a chance to win this magnificent '03 Springfield.

Story By  
Tom Turpin

Photos by  
Turks Head Productions

**J**ust as I was beginning to wonder who would come up with something special to honor the centennial birthday of the 1903 Springfield rifle, the American Custom Gunmakers Guild (ACGG) announced their raffle project for 2003. ACGG's Executive Director, Jan Billeb, pronounced that the project theme would honor the 100th anniversary of the legendary rifle.

For those readers unfamiliar with the annual Guild project, it is a fund-raiser for the operation of the Guild. Each year, selected members of the organization are chosen to participate in the crafting of a special firearm project. Throughout the year preceding the annual exhibition, the Guild offers raffle tickets for the project at \$20 each. Tickets may be purchased by mail, by telephone, or via the Guild's Website: [www.acgg.org](http://www.acgg.org). Ticket holders need not be present to win.

On the final day of the 2003 event — Sunday, February 2nd — the winning ticket will be drawn and the lucky winner announced. The odds of winning the masterpiece are one in 4,000 or less, as no more than 4,000 tickets will be sold.

## A Cast Of Talented Artisans

The Springfield centennial project is the 18th such annual project. For 2003, the selected primary craftsmen/artisans chosen to execute the project were metalsmith Edward LaPour, stockmaker Bruce Farman and engraver Robert Evans. Ralph Powell crafted the magnificent display case.







Since the 1903 Springfield was a military rifle, the Guild decided to craft a rifle using the Springfield action in the style of the pre-war, Griffin & Howe-built rifles of that era. There was almost a cottage industry in America during the pre-WWII years, converting former military rifles into elegant sporting models. Griffin & Howe was the preeminent company involved. The Guild also selected a proper cartridge for the project rifle, the popular .35 Whelen.

## Metalwork

LaPour first worked over the Springfield military action by welding over the receiver bridge, and machining the resulting metal into a square bridge configuration. He likewise filled the left side of the action where the original bolt stop was installed. The weld fill created a smooth surface for engraving, and allowed the making and fitting of a new bolt stop.

LaPour fabricated and installed a new bolt stop pivot pin, along with fitting a new spring and plunger system to hold the bolt stop in its open and closed positions.

Next, a Griffin & Howe side-mount scope base was welded to the action. This precludes any concern over loose scope-base screws. An entirely new bolt handle was fabricated and welded into position to permit scope use. The stripper clip slot was filled as well. LaPour fabricated a new three-position safety, complete with a new firing pin, although retaining the original 1903-cocking knob.

Due to its strong, all-steel construction, a Canjar trigger mechanism was selected

and installed, although a new finger piece was fabricated for a more pleasing look. Jim Wisner, of Precise Metalsmithing Enterprises, supplied one of his custom one-piece bottom metal units for fitting to the rifle.

An Austrian made Kahles 4x scope was selected for its period look. Since the scope was constructed using a 26mm tube, new rings had to be fabricated to fit the Griffin & Howe base already welded to the action.

John Krieger provided one of his superb oversize barrel blanks which was then turned to a medium sporter-weight contour. The design includes an integral barrel band sling mount, and an integral banded rear sight base with a secondary recoil lug on the bottom. Precise Metalsmithing Enterprises also provided the banded ramp front sight base.

## Stockmaking

With the metalwork complete, stockmaker Bruce Farman took over. Keeping in mind the styling of the early "American classic gunstock," as crafted by Tom Shelhamer, Al Linden, Bob Owens, R.F. Sedgley, August Pachmayr and others, Farman started with a stick of quarter-sawn California English walnut featuring fiddleback figure from end-to-end. He whittled out a classic stock with lines somewhat softer than they tend to be these days,

but in keeping with custom stocks typical of the pre-war era.

The cheek piece features the European style of rounded ends and has a beaded shadow line. The stock features light fluting along each side of the comb's nose, and is fitted with a steel buttplate so typical of the pre-war period. Farman fitted a steel grip cap of the style used most often by Westley Richards during the era, and also fitted an ebony forend tip. He finished the stock with a traditional hand-rubbed tung oil finish, and checkered the stock in a point pattern at 24 lpi. The wonderful checkering was then accented with a fine line border, something not often done these days.

*continued on page 69*







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# Heckler & Koch's **Cutting-Edge Compacts** **G36C And MP7 PDW**

By Charles Q. Cutshaw

***When Less Really Is More***



**H&K MP7 PDW**



## H&K MP7 PDW

Personal defense weapons (PDWs) have been of military interest for some time. The United States issued a PDW requirement several years ago, but never brought it to a solicitation. Britain's Ministry of Defense, however, declared its intent to purchase some 15,000 PDWs between 2003 and 2005.

There has been no final action on this solicitation and like the American requirement it now appears dormant.

H&K's MP7 was clearly in anticipation of the UK requirement and others that might potentially follow, although PDWs as a class of small arm have yet to be adopted by any military service.

## Neither Fish Nor Fowl

PDWs are intended to arm soldiers whose duties are not near the forward combat area, soldiers whose duties require their hands to be free, and soldiers whose duties do not normally require an infantry rifle. They essentially bridge the gap between pistols and rifles, being chambered for a cartridge whose ballistics exceed those of the former, but are less than those of the latter.

In that context, H&K's MP7 is the quintessence of a PDW. Whether or not PDWs as a class of small arm will establish itself is not within the purview of this brief article, but any new weapon such as the MP7 combined with an untried cartridge entails a degree of risk for the manufacturer.

Technically, H&K's MP7 is a state-of-the-art small arm. The receiver and external components are virtually all of polymer construction, as are other recent H&K designs, such as the G36 rifle and UMP submachinegun. The PDW is chambered for a new cartridge, the 4.6x30mm (.18 caliber), developed jointly between H&K and Royal Ordnance Radway Green.

## Detail Inspection

H&K's MP7 is a locked breech, select fire, gas-operated small arm. The gas system utilizes a short-stroke piston to drive the bolt carrier assembly to the rear. The MP7 has a cold hammer forged, chrome-plated barrel with six lands and grooves with a right hand twist. The bolt mechanism uses the tried and true Stoner principle with a multiple lugged bolt in a carrier that uses a cam and pin mechanism for locking and unlocking.

The reflex sighting system is made for H&K by Hensoldt and is mounted on a MIL-STD-1913 rail. The optical sight has relatively long eye-relief, so it can be used either close to the eye when the MP7 is fired as a carbine, or at arm's length when the PDW is fired as a pistol. The optical sight works either by using ambient light or under low light conditions, from a battery or tritium insert. There are backup open sights in case the optical sight becomes damaged or is removed.

## H&K G36C



## SPECIFICATIONS

MP7		G36C
4.6x30mm	<b>CALIBER</b>	5.56x45mm
Gas, locked breech	<b>OPERATING PRINCIPLE</b>	Gas, locked breech
700 rd/min	<b>CYCLIC RATE</b>	750 rd/min
Box magazine, 20/40 rd.	<b>FEED</b>	Box magazine, 30 rd*
Collapsible	<b>BUTTSTOCK</b>	Folding
Optical, open sight backup	<b>SIGHTS</b>	Open**
Polygonal, 6 grooves, RH	<b>RIFLING</b>	6 lands & grooves, RH
7.08 in (180mm)	<b>BARREL LENGTH</b>	8.9 in (228mm)
21.2 in (541mm)	<b>OAL, STOCK EXTENDED</b>	28.2 in (718mm)
13.4 in (340mm)	<b>OAL, STOCK COLLAPSED</b>	19.6 in (500mm)
1.8 in (48mm)	<b>WIDTH</b>	2.4 in (62mm)
6.7 in (172mm)	<b>HEIGHT</b>	8.8 in (224mm)
2.6 lb (1.2kg)	<b>EMPTY WEIGHT</b>	6.17 lb (2.8kg)

\*10 or 100 round magazines optional.

\*\*MIL-STD-1913 rail mount for optical sights is standard.





The MP7 feeds from a detachable staggered-row box magazine. Two magazines are available — 20 and 40 round capacities. The magazine well is in the weapon's pistol grip. The MP7 has a folding foregrip and collapsible buttstock. Cyclic rate is approximately 700 rounds per minute.

### Hot Brass And A Caution

We found the MP7 to be very pleasant to shoot. The controls are well-placed, fully ambidextrous and intuitive to use. The sliding buttstock retracts easily into its fully extended position and the foregrip aids in maintaining control in fully automatic fire.

Our only possible complaint about this little weapon is

that its barrel is so short that the potential exists for a user to place his or her hand over the muzzle under stress.

We should note, however, that H&K has placed a "hook" at the forearm tip to prevent one's hand from overriding it and inadvertently covering the muzzle. We preferred to shoot the little PDW using the folding foregrip. The MP7 was easy to control both in rapid-fire semiautomatic and full automatic. Felt recoil was negligible, and muzzle rise virtually nonexistent.

We fired the weapon at ranges of 25 and 50 meters, the latter distance representing about the limit of the realistic effective range of such a weapon. We found it easy to place a high percentage of bullets in the center of mass of our silhouette target. The reader will note from our discussion of the 4.6x30mm cartridge below that the PDW can be used effectively to a range of at least 100 meters.

Shooting the MP7 can best be described as pleasant and uneventful, a tribute to the overall excellent design of the little weapon and its diminutive 4.6x30mm cartridge.





### The Cartridge Is The Question

A key element of the MP7's design is the 4.6x30mm nontoxic cartridge. The bullet is of solid steel, copper plated and weighs 24.7 grains (1.6g). It leaves the muzzle at 2,379 fps (725 mps), with muzzle energy of 312 ft-lb. (420 joules). In contrast, the standard NATO 9x19mm cartridge has a muzzle velocity of 1,299fps (396 mps) and a muzzle energy of 430 ft-lb. (583 joules).

The 4.6mm bullet has a high ballistic coefficient, and is fired at a higher velocity than the 9mm, which gives it a flatter trajectory and greater range. The 9mm bullet, for example, will not defeat the standard NATO CRISAT target (1.6mm of titanium and 20 layers of Kevlar®) at 50 meters. The 4.6mm bullet, on the other hand, will defeat it at over 100 meters, with sufficient velocity to transfer 85 ft-lb. (115 joules) of energy into and completely perforate a 150mm thick block of ordnance gelatin behind the armor barrier.

This greater penetration is due to the higher velocity



of the 4.6mm bullet, as well as its construction of copper-plated solid steel, while the 9mm bullet is copper with a lead core. H&K states the PDW's 4.6mm bullet will also penetrate NATO's CRISAT armored personnel target at 200 meters.

*continued on page 64*



# FINNISH RIFLE WITH FLAIR: TIKKA'S M CONTINENTAL VARMINTER

**STORY BY DAVID M. FORTIER**  
**PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMILY K. FORTIER**





# 595



## TIKKA M595 CONTINENTAL SPECIFICATIONS

**Caliber:** .223 Remington, seven other standard and Magnum chamberings available

**Action:** Manual turn bolt w/dual opposed lugs

**Feed:** 3 round detachable box

**Barrel:** 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ " Cold hammer forged Match w/1:12" twist

**Overall Length:** 43 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

**Weight:** 8.1 pounds

**Stock:** Walnut w/adjustable butt

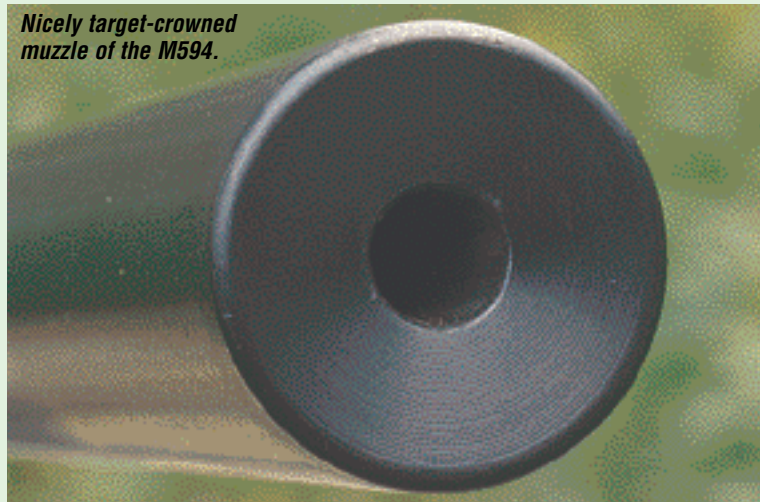
**MSRP:** \$720 (\$750 for Magnums)

## ACCURACY AND VELOCITY CHART

LOAD	VELOCITY	AVERAGE
<i>Black Hills 52 gr. Match</i>	3,260 fps	.605"
<i>Cor-Bon 50 gr. Ballistic Tip</i>	3,222 fps	.75"
<i>PMC 52 gr. Match</i>	3,198 fps	.641"
<i>PMC 55 gr. FMJ</i>	2,992 fps	1.43"
<i>Winchester 50 gr. Ballistic Tip</i>	3,359 fps	.625"
<i>Wolf 62 gr. FMJBT</i>	3,178 fps	1.125"

Groups are an average of four consecutive 5-shot groups fired from the bench at 100 yards. Velocity readings were taken 12' from the muzzle at an ambient temperature of 64 degrees F with an Oehler 35P.

*Nicely target-crowned muzzle of the M594.*



**W**hen it comes to sporting rifles, one of the best-kept secrets is a Woodpecker from Finland. While everyone has heard of Sako and rightly so, few are aware of the fine line of rifles marketed by Sako under the Tikka banner. Recently I had a chance to test a Tikka M595, Continental Varmint rifle in .223. I came away quite impressed by its handsome good looks and slick action, as well as its superb accuracy.

The more I handled and shot the Tikka, the more I liked almost everything about it. It's an impressive rifle, yet the name is one few recognize here in the U.S. Since so little is known about this line of rifles I decided to do a little digging. What I found was not the mundane history of a company building hunting rifles for sportsmen, but instead an epic tale of a people's desperate fight for freedom.

## Born In Turmoil

To be honest, it would be impossible to properly tell the history of this rifle's lineage without speaking of how Tikka rifles came into being in the first place.

Prior to 1917, Finland had been part of Imperial Russia, the Czar ruling as the Grand Duke of Finland. However, this came to a rapid and abrupt end at the outbreak of the Russian Revolution. While the Reds were able to pull the Czar from his throne and eventually subjugate all of Russia, such was not the case in Finland.

A Finnish Aristocrat and former Czarist General, Baron Carl Emil Mannerheim, rose up and led the White anti-Communist forces during a brutal civil war. He crushed the Red Communists around mid-1918, and cast off the oppressive Russian yoke.



1

*The bolt head carries a beefy claw extractor and a plunger-type ejector.*

the company was located — Tikkakoski, which means Woodpecker Rapids.

### Checkered History

This village is located in the center of the country, 15 miles north of Jyväskylä. While Tikkakoski was not originally involved in the manufacture of firearms, such work was undertaken in 1918. Like Sako, Tikkakoski was tasked with the refurbishment of Mosin rifles, although their most famous wartime product was probably the M-31 submachinegun designed by Aimo Lahti.

When the Soviets returned to lay claim to Finland in 1939, the Finns put their Sako and Tikka produced Mosins to good use, heroically defending the freedom of their homeland. In doing so they gained lasting respect for their marksmanship skills, and bravery, during the Winter War of 1939/40 and the Continuation War.

As can be expected, the defense of their newfound liberty was of immediate concern to the Finn's. During these early years, two companies would come to play important roles by providing weapons for the defense of Finland. The better known of the two was of course Sako, and the other Oy Tikkakoski.

These two companies would both play a key part in rebuilding and later refurbishing Mosin-Nagant rifles for the Finnish Defense Forces. While Sako's story begins in 1919, Tikkakoski's history actually predates Sako's, the company having been established by 1890. The name Tikka (woodpecker) is derived from the name of the village where

*Integral scope mounting rail combined with drilled and tapped holes maximizes your options.*

2

3

*Buttstock shows nice shape, attractive wood grain and crisp checkering.*



Unfortunately their bravery and skill-at-arms could not save them from the relentless Russian hordes. They were eventually overwhelmed. To save Sako, a controlling interest was donated to the Red Cross in 1945. This was done to exempt the company from confiscation by the USSR as part of Finnish war reparations.

### Sewing Machines?

Civilian goods were produced for a time, but by 1946, Sako was back in the arms business and has remained there ever since. They produced not only military weapons, but also became famous for their handsome and superbly accurate sporting rifles. From an austere birth rebuilding Mosin-Nagants in an old brewery, Sako has gone on to earn an enviable reputation for both quality and accuracy.

Unlike Sako, Tikkakoski did not immediately return to the manufacture of firearms. Instead, the company suffered the indignity of being forced to produce sewing machines,





which were shipped to the Soviet Union as war reparations. However in 1957, they introduced a line of hunting rifles and combination guns, and the Tikka banner returned. By 1974 though, the company had fallen on hard times, and was purchased by Nokia.

Production continued in Tikkakoski until 1988 when the company was merged with Sako and the facility moved to Riihimäki. There the production of Tikka models was renewed, independent from the Sako line. In 2000, Sako Ltd. was purchased by Beretta, and today these impressive Finnish rifles add character to the respected offerings of this Italian firm.

### First Look

Upon arrival, my Tikka M595 Continental Varmint rifle proved to be a fine looking rifle. No kin whatsoever to the 98 Mauser action that had been used on previous Tikka models, the M595 is a thoroughly modern design. The heart of the rifle is a robust, cold hammer-forged receiver. Designed to be extremely stiff

to enhance accuracy, it features slab sides and a large ejection port.

The receiver is available in both a long and short action, and the rifle is offered in a variety of popular magnum and non-magnum calibers (.17 Remington, .22-250, .308 and in their Long Range Hunter .25-06, .270, 7mm Rem. Mag., and .300 Win. Mag.). Our test rifle, being a .223, featured their short (.308 length) action.

On the left rear of the receiver is the bolt release, and on the right the safety. The safety is a simple two-position affair, push it forward to place the weapon on Fire and to the rear for Safe. The top of the heavy receiver features an integrally machined 17mm dovetail for mounting optics. In addition, it's also drilled and tapped for universal scope mounting blocks.

Inside the receiver rides a fairly conventional looking bolt with dual opposed locking lugs. The bolt face is recessed to enshroud the base of the cartridge for added strength and safety. It features a beefy Sako-style claw extractor in conjunction with a plunger

ejector. One feature that I like is that the bolt's right lug is slotted, and rides over a guide in the receiver. This ensures that the bolt does not bind, even during rapid manipulation.

At the rear of the bolt is a cocking indicator. When the action is cocked, a tab with a red dot protrudes from the rear of the action indicating the rifle is cocked. The bolt can be fully disassembled with the aid of only a screwdriver.

### As It Should Be

Beneath the action is a well-designed adjustable trigger. In these days of litigation spooked companies where even Remington Police rifles come with 6-pound triggers, I found this a breath of fresh air. The trigger is a single-stage unit, easily adjusted from 2 to 4 pounds. It arrived from the factory set to 3 pounds.

To the front of the trigger assembly is a detachable magazine. It's of the reliable and smooth feeding single-stack design, is fabricated from a durable synthetic material, and



has a capacity of 3 rounds (a 5 rounder is listed as an option). It inserts easily by pushing it straight in until it locks in place. Once locked it's held securely and does not rattle. The magazine release, a rectangular button, is located on the right side of the rifle's stock. A spring-loaded plunger ensures the magazine is ejected cleanly, a nice feature.

To the action is mated a 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch varmint weight match barrel. The barrel is cold hammer-forged and featured a well-executed target crown. For superior accuracy it's free-floated for its entire length. As it's intended for shooting lighter weight bullets, the twist is 1:12 inches. Dropping a borescope down the tube revealed a nicely finished bore with only a few rough spots.

The barreled action is dropped into an oil finished walnut stock. This unit is adjustable for length of pull via spacers, and the buttplate can also be adjusted for height. The forend is wide and flat enough to settle nicely into sandbags, yet round enough to be comfortable in the hand. The forearm and pistol grip both feature nice checkering. All in all, it is an attractive rifle, with nicely blued metal contrasting with an attractive piece of walnut.

### A Single Reservation

Weight without optics is surprisingly light, at just a hair over 8 pounds. My sole

complaint involves the trigger guard. It's manufactured of a synthetic material. Give me a steel trigger guard any day.

I was interested in evaluating the Tikka for five major points. These were workmanship, reliability, accuracy, handling, and bolt speed. To facilitate testing, I mounted a Leupold 3.5-10x40mm Vari-X III M1 Long-Range scope. Warne rings were utilized.

These particular rings are a new offering by Warne. They're both rugged and beautifully made. Available in either regular or a Quick Release lever style in a variety of heights, they nicely complement this attractive rifle. The Leupold I chose because it's an excellent piece of glass for the serious rifleman. Featuring target style turrets with reliable 1/4 MOA adjustments, a side parallax knob and excellent optics, it looked right at home on the Tikka.

To check the Tikka's accuracy, it was fired from a Wichita rest in conjunction with a rear bunny bag at 100 yards. Five, 5-shot groups were recorded with each load. Velocity readings were recorded 12 feet from the muzzle with an Oehler 35P chronograph.

Ambient temperature during testing was 64 degrees F. A steady 2-mph wind blew from the 9 o'clock position. While only in the 60's, mirage was considerable during testing, making things more difficult than I would have liked.

### Wide Variety Of Ammo

Ammunition used during testing consisted of PMC's 52-grain HPBT Match and 55-grain FMJBT. PMC's .308 Match load has earned my respect, and their .223 Match load is also very consistent and accurate. From Black Hills' extensive line of .223 loads, I selected their 52-grain HPBT Match load. I shoot quite a bit of Black Hills 68-grain Match loads in fast-twist AR's with excellent results, and have come to be very fond of this brand of ammunition.

In addition, I examined two hunting loads, Winchester's 50-grain Ballistic Tip, and Cor-Bon's 50-grain Ballistic Tip loading. From past experience I knew Winchester's load to shoot like match ammunition but the Cor-Bon load was new to me. Lastly, I utilized a large quantity of Wolf Performance Ammunition's inexpensive steel-cased 62-grain FMJBT.

The Tikka proved extremely comfortable to shoot, both on and off the bench. With a round in the chamber, all one had to do was settle the rifle into the Wichita rest, align the Leupold's crosshairs, and slowly squeeze the trigger. At the exact moment 3 pounds pressure was applied to the trigger, the rifle would bark.

Recoil, of course, was mild. Working the bolt would send the empty case flying and load a fresh round into the chamber. Four more squeezes and you had an impressive group for an out of the box rifle.

*continued on page 71*

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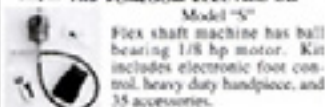


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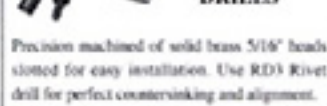
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## **Blaser's R93 Tactical Rifle**

*An unusual action design coupled with careful construction produces an outstanding long-range rifle.*

**STORY BY** Charles Q. Cutshaw

**PHOTOS BY** Ichiro Nagata



**T**he recently introduced Blaser (blah'zer) R93 LRS2 (Long Range Sporter, Version 2) Precision Tactical rifle imported by SIGARMS is an extremely accurate and reasonably priced rifle intended for military, police and civilian precision shooting and long-range hunting. To say the Blaser R93 LRS2 is unconventional in appearance is an understatement, but every aspect of the rifle is designed for precision shooting.

As far as we can determine, this unique rifle also represents the state-of-the-art in bolt-action firearm technology and design. That's a pretty strong statement, but stay with us and see just what causes someone who has been shooting for nearly 50 years to make such a categorical statement.

### **Purpose Built**

The Blaser R93 Tactical Rifle is optimized for use at ranges to 500 meters and beyond. To provide some idea of the innovative technology that went into the Blaser, we should note that the rifle incorporates no less than nine separate patents in its design!

Standard Blaser optics are the excellent Leupold Vari-XIII Tactical scope, but we equipped our test example with a revolutionary 4 to 16 x 50mm Horus Vision Sighting System that eliminates dialing in "come-ups," and uses computer technology to virtually guarantee first round hits every time at unbelievably long distances.

We'll go into this remarkable new sighting system in some detail



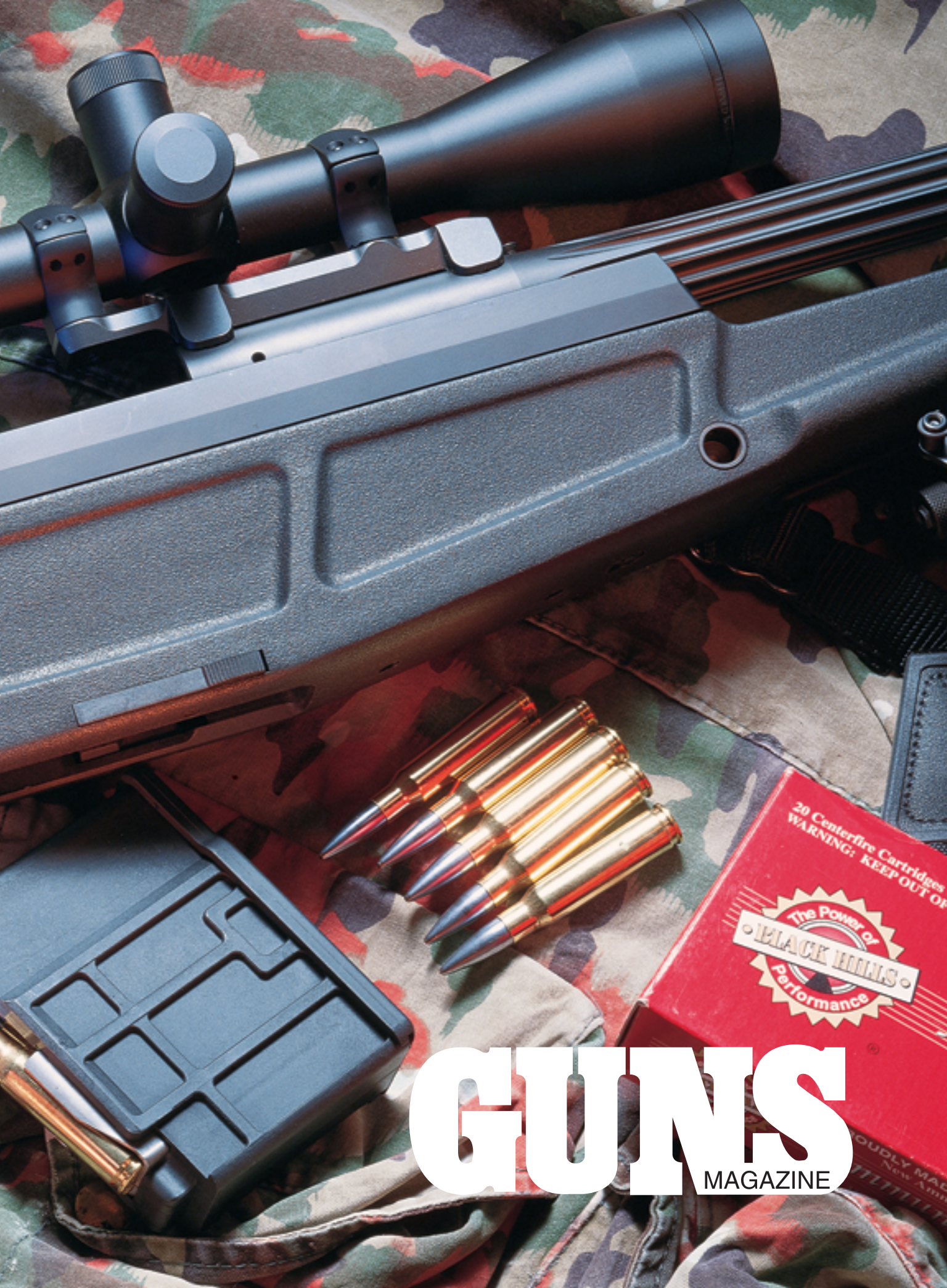




# ***Blaser's R93 Tactical Rifle***







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separately, but we believe that the combination of the Blaser R93 and the Horus Vision sighting system will surpass virtually any production rifle in practical long-range accuracy.

The R93 LRS2 Tactical is built on an aluminum frame, with non-slip polymer-covered aluminum furniture. The stock is adjustable for length of pull via spacers. It also has a vertically adjustable cheek piece and the butt plate is adjustable both up and down and pivots 15 degrees right or left. The rifle is also provided with a buttstock monopod that can be fine-tuned via a threaded "foot."

The single stage match trigger is adjustable for pull weight, take-up and overtravel. The R93 Tactical's standard

barrel is of hammer forged chrome molybdenum steel, cryogenically treated and fluted to minimize vibration and optimize cooling. An optional muzzle brake reduces felt recoil in the .308 version to approximately the .243 level, while the .300 Winchester Magnum variant's recoil is reduced to approximately that of a .308 without affecting accuracy.

Interestingly, barrels can be changed by the user in a matter of minutes. All steel parts are protected with a corrosion resistant, hard powder coating. A detachable anti-mirage strap is optional.

In addition to the Horus Vision telescopic sight mentioned previously, we also fitted the rifle with a Versa-Pod bipod from Keng's Firearm Specialty. The Versa-Pod is a close copy of the very expensive Parker Hale bipod, albeit at far less cost. The Versa-Pod can be attached using the standard hand stop, or via Keng's new adapter that mounts directly into the R93's integral forearm rail.

The Versa-Pod requires only one hand to deploy, has individually adjustable legs, pivots and has traverse capability. Once the shooter obtains his best position, leaning slightly forward on the rifle locks the Versa-Pod into position.

## Horus Vision Sighting System

**T**he Horus Vision Sighting System is the first system that incorporates every element necessary for precision long range shooting into a single telescopic sight. Used properly, it eliminates dialing in elevation "come-ups" and windage adjustments. The sighting system comes complete with telescopic sight, hand-held computer, Kestrel Weather Station and computer software.

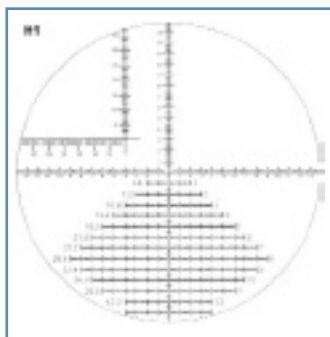
The latter is used for preparing range cards to supplement the hand held computer. Most experienced shooters, however, simply use the range card as a cheat sheet for rapid fire

shooting even out to 1,000 yards.

The hand-held computer, though, is more precise and virtually ensures a first round hit as far as the rifle's effective range. With a Horus Vision Sighting System installed, if a target can be seen, it can be hit — usually with the first shot.

Once the rifle is properly zeroed, the ballistic data for the round used, along with weather data is simply entered into the hand-held computer. The Horus Vision reticle, graduated in standard Marine Corps milliradians (mils) is used to determine distance to the target. Horus Vision rangefinder works with the widely used "Mil-Dot Master."

Wind is doped either with the Kestrel, or via the usual methods. Distance and wind are then entered into the hand-held computer, which indicates exactly where on the reticle to hold for a first round hit. If the first shot misses, the second shot correction is as simple as moving the reticle's point of aim. Horus Vision is actually much simpler and more precise than the current mil-dot reticles in use by the military.



If a second target is observed or the wind changes, there is no need to turn the elevation or windage knobs; range is changed by adjusting the point of aim on the reticle.

Needless to say, the Horus Vision System is far faster and more precise than any long-range sighting system in current use. Several different reticles are available that are tailored to the type of long range shooting envisioned.

The accompanying illustration shows how the Horus Vision reticle. For a complete description of its workings, see the company's Website.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
Horus Vision Sighting  
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## Novel Action

The R93 Tactical is a manually operated straight-pull bolt action rifle unlike any previous such design. Feeding is from a detachable five-round (four rounds in .300 Win. Mag.) box magazine. One might believe that using the straight pull bolt would initially be cumbersome and involve relearning bolt manipulation, but this was not the

**The buttstock features both a multitude of adjustments and a monopod.**





**TABLE 1: ACCURACY RESULTS AT 100 YARDS.**

	Average Velocity	Largest Group	Smallest Group	Average Group
Black Hills .308 Match 175 gr.	2,600 fps	.6 inch	.48 inch	.54 inch
Remington .308 Match 168 gr.	2,680 fps	.58 inch	.5 inch	.54 inch
Black Hills .300 Win. Mag. Match 190 gr.	2,950 fps	.75 inch*	.28 inch	.52 inch

\*This group was fired from a very hot barrel and is not representative of the accuracy of this rifle. Groups from a cool or warm barrel consistently were less than .5 MOA.

### Blaser R93 Tactical Rifle SPECIFICATIONS

**Caliber:** .308 Winchester standard. Also available in .223 Remington, .22-250, .300 Winchester Magnum and .338 Lapua Magnum

**Locking:** Collet locking system, 360-degree support

**Operating System:** Manual, Straight pull bolt action

**Trigger:** Single-stage match, adjustable for weight and overtravel. Standard setting: 3.2 lb.

**Barrel:** Chrome molybdenum nickel steel, Cold hammer forged, cryogenically treated, fluted, corrosion resistant powder coated. 600mm (23.6") long; twist rate, 1:11"

**Stock:** Aluminum skeleton frame/receiver, non-slip polymer finish on buttstock and forearm.

**Weight:** 12 lbs.

**Price:** \$2,480 MSR, base rifle. Options include anti-mirage strap, sling, bipod, muzzle brake, mounting rings and hard carry case. Total suggested retail price with all options is **\$3,450.**



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case. Pulling the bolt to the rear was a natural movement that required no learning curve whatsoever.

The rifle's functioning over several hundred rounds of Remington and Black Hills .308 and Black Hills .300 Win. Mag. match ammunition was flawless. There was not a single stoppage of any kind. The smoothness and ease of operation of the R93's straight pull bolt action defies description. It is difficult to imagine the rifle is actually working through a full operating cycle of unlocking, extracting, ejecting, feeding and chambering.

On the Blaser, bolt manipulation was one smooth "pull-push" for each round, with no binding or obtrusive resistance whatsoever. This is almost certainly attributable to the novel collet bolt locking system and the rail system on which the bolt assembly rides. The absence of a feed ramp over which each cartridge must pass also contributes to the rifle's smooth operation and its accuracy.

The Blaser's ease of operation facilitates quick follow-up shots and bolt movement is short enough that the shooter need not lift his head from the cheekpiece as he works the action. Empty casings were thrown well clear of the action by the plunger-type ejector.

### The Collet Is The Key

Locking is by a unique collet system that gives 360-degree support to the 14 locking "fingers." The bolt assembly slides on two steel guide rails mounted in the aluminum receiver and the radial collet locking lugs lock into a ring in the barrel extension, obviating the need for a conventional steel receiver.

When the bolt is pressed fully forward, an internal stud expands the collet lugs, locking the bolt and barrel together. When fired, chamber pressure against the bolt face actually forces the locking collets more tightly into the locking ring, thereby minimizing the possibility of locking mechanism failure. There is no bolt rotation whatsoever.

The Blaser system also eliminates the need for a feed ramp — cartridges are aligned with the chamber while in the magazine, and fed in a straight line as the bolt is pushed into battery. This feature prevents damage to bullet noses as the cartridge is chambered.

As if this weren't enough, the Blaser bolt system can be changed to left hand operation simply by changing the bolt and bolt carrier. The bolt head must be changed for left-hand ejection while the southpaw bolt carrier places the operating handle on the rifle's left side.

### Take-Down Convenience

For transportation, the R93 LRS2 can be disassembled by separating the barrel and stock assemblies without affecting the rifle's zero. We tested this by zeroing our R93 LRS2, removing the barrel, then replacing it and shooting again. The point of impact was unchanged. Of course, changing calibers requires having a barrel that has already been zeroed. Once barrels have a sight installed and

have been zeroed, they can be interchanged.

On top of everything else, the Blaser R93 LRS2 is a multi-caliber rifle. Changing calibers is almost as simple as changing the barrel, which is held in place by two captive socket-head cap screws. Loosening the two cap screws with the bolt retracted frees the barrel, which can then be lifted off and replaced with a barrel of different caliber.

Our R93 LRS2 came with two caliber conversion sets — .308 Winchester and .300 Winchester Magnum. The conversion to .300 Win. Mag. necessitates replacing not only the barrel, but the bolt head and magazine as well. The entire conversion process takes less than five minutes, if both barrels have sights installed.

Changing bolt heads requires lifting a small retaining bar in the bolt carrier to allow the bolt head to be withdrawn. The new bolt head is then inserted and locked into place by lowering the retaining bar. The final step in the process is changing magazines. When changing barrels, there is no torque setting for the lock screws; hand tightening them using a T-handled hex wrench automatically sets them to the proper torque.

### Quick Change Act

The R93 LRS2 Tactical is available with several different interchangeable caliber barrels, bolt heads and magazines — .223 Remington (5.56x45mm), .22-250, .308 Winchester (7.62x51mm), .300 Winchester Magnum and .338 Lapua Magnum are all available.

The R93's patented trigger mechanism, like the rest of the rifle, is unique. It does not have a sear in the traditional sense. The striker release presses down on a small "button," actually a captive pin in the stock that also serves as a disconnect. The test rifle's trigger broke like the proverbial glass rod at precisely 3 pounds.

The safety is stated to be of the three-position type, but actually it is what might better be termed a "Two and one half position" safety. In the "up" position, the rifle is ready to fire, indicated by a large red dot on the bolt's rear. Pressing the safety in slightly allows it to move down under spring pressure to the "safe" position, covering the red dot. In this position, the entire rifle, including the bolt and trigger is locked and the firing mechanism decocked.

In order to open the bolt, however, the safety may be pressed slightly forward until spring resistance is felt. With the safety button depressed, the operating handle may be pulled to the rear and the bolt opened. The firing mechanism remains safely locked and decocked during this operation.

### Aluminum Heart

The heart of the R93 LRS2 Tactical is an aluminum frame on which every component is mounted. This lightweight frame is extremely rigid and is one reason for the Blaser's accuracy. The magazine well is integral to the



frame, and incorporating this feature in no way degrades from the R93's accuracy.

The innovative construction of the Blaser that makes it very rigid also makes it light for a rifle of its class. The Blaser R93 tactical weighs only 12 pounds (5.4kg) complete with telescopic sight, bipod and all accessories.

Despite technical innovation, the proof of any new rifle is in the shooting and so we headed to the local range to put the Blaser to the test. The important thing with this rifle is not only its accuracy, but its ability to maintain that accuracy when barrels are changed. We proved this capability by removing and replacing the barrel and then by changing caliber to .300 Win. Mag. The point of impact did not change any more than it would have if we had simply gotten up and then resumed our position.

Our first five-round shot group at 100 yards using Black Hills 175-grain moly-coat ammunition ran .58 inch. With a warm barrel, the second shot group measured a mere .48 inch! The largest shot group using Black Hills 175-grain ammunition was a scant .6 inch.

Removing and replacing the barrel had no effect on group size or point of impact. Remington 168-grain match ammunition delivered a shot group of .58 inch. We should note these groups were achieved from an out-of-the-box rifle with no break in whatsoever.

### More Power In An Instant

Switching caliber, groups fired with the .300 Winchester Magnum barrel were slightly smaller than those using the .308 barrel. After firing a fouling shot, the first .300 Win. Mag. group was only .36 inch in diameter! The second group was slightly larger at .412 inch. At 100-yards distance, the Blaser delivered well under sub half-minute of accuracy out-of-the-box, with no barrel break-in whatsoever.

After 10 shots of 190-grain Black Hills .300 Win. Mag. Moly-coat bullets at 3,000 feet per second, the Blaser's barrel began to heat up and the groups to expand slightly. The last two groups were approximately 3/4 MOA, but the barrel was also quite warm — nearly too hot to touch.

We should point out that one will rarely, if ever, fire this many rounds of hot .300 Win Mag ammunition in rapid succession. Several days after our initial test, we returned to the range with the Blaser and achieved a three-round .300 Win. Mag. group of only .285 inch diameter!

### Texas Testing

We took the Blaser with us to "Rifles Only," a new long-range shooting facility near Kingsville, Texas, to better test the Horus Vision sighting system and the Blaser out to 1,000 yards distance. Even in the strong (up to 15 mph) and variable South Texas winds, we were able to achieve 90 percent plus hits on man-size steel silhouettes at 1,000 yards.

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The rifle and scope combination made shooting at 500 to 700 yards so simple as to be routine. It took shooting at 900 and 1,000 yards to really challenge the .300 Win. Mag. Blaser and its Horus Vision Sighting System. There were several law enforcement snipers present during our shooting exercises that were deeply impressed by the Blaser's accuracy, simplicity and speed of operation.

Because of the Horus Vision Sighting System, we could engage targets at any distance instantly without taking time to reset the elevation and windage knobs.

### Final Words

All in all, we found the Blaser R93 LRS2 Tactical Rifle to be remarkable in every way. It is remarkable in overall quality, remarkable in terms of innovative features, remarkable in accuracy and remarkable in breaking new ground in precision shooting.

The rifle is superbly accurate, well balanced, easy handling, and — thus far — totally reliable. The flexibility of having variable power with precision accuracy by simply changing barrels is unique — the Blaser is almost like getting two rifles for the price of one.

Our sole reservation — it can't be called a complaint — is the Blaser's proprietary method of mounting 'scope rings on the barrel. While the mounts are rigid and return to zero, we'd like to see an adapter for a MIL-STD-1913 rail, so we could have some options.

That said, the rifle's many positive attributes lead to the impression the R93 LRS2 will probably hold up well under extended use, although this will require extended testing. In sum, there are a few custom rifles that equal the Blaser's accuracy, but none have the Blaser's combination of innovative features, and all are far more expensive. Simply stated, there is nothing in the world quite like the Blaser R93 LRS2.



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# HANDGUNS BY MASSAD AYOOB

Shooting instruction from his father sparked a lifelong interest. Today, Massad Ayoob is an award-winning practical shooter, author of numerous books on the subject, and through his Lethal Force Institute has taught many thousands of students.

*“Train on the range — don’t bleed on the street.”*

## Lessons From Matches Can Reflect Lessons From The Street

**W**hen I shot on the fledgling “pro tour” of practical pistol matches, I played the game and shot to win. For the score of years since, I’ve learned to shoot them as laboratories for self-defense shooting techniques and skills.

A combat match certainly isn’t a gunfight, but the best matches are a microcosm of a gunfight, in that you have to exhibit similar skills under stress to win. Thus, the lessons you learn at the matches can translate directly to the street. This was reinforced for me at two recent shooting events.

### Know Thy Sidearm

I recently competed in the New England Regional Championships of IDPA (International Defensive Pistol Association), sponsored by Pioneer Sportsmen in Dunbarton, N.H., and ably run by a crew led by Mike Briggs and Bob Wescott. I decided to shoot it with a newly introduced 1911 pistol with an unconventional type of extractor that this particular manufacturer was using for the first time.

Bad move. Five hard-to-clear malfunctions in four of the eight stages left me dead last in Master class. The new extractor design was not, it seemed, all its designers had hoped it would be. I had been dumb enough to trust a brand I’d had good luck with before, running only three magazines through it to make sure it was sighted in before I took it to the line.

Sad story? No, just a stupid story. The sad story would have resulted if I’d been on the street when I found out the new gun didn’t work, instead of at a match. Lesson: Never trust for serious purposes a gun you haven’t fired enough to be certain of its reliability. I wouldn’t carry on the street a gun I hadn’t put 200 duty loads through with zero malfunctions. And I was an idiot not to follow the same rule at the tournament.

The consequences of this sort of thing are much worse in the real world. Years ago, a high-tech gun buff out toward the

Pacific loaded his gas-operated pistol with trendy, ultra-light bullet hypervelocity ammo, but never tried firing the gun with the expensive pre-fragmented rounds. He simply trusted it to work.

When he needed it, it jammed after the first shot, since the light, super-fast rounds wouldn’t reliably cycle the gas-operated mechanism. He got a savage beating out of the deal, and escaped being shot only because when the attackers got his gun they couldn’t figure out how to clear the jam.

### Beware the Shoot-Through

The Nashua Fish & Game Club sponsored the N.H., IDPA State Championships as an unsanctioned event, since unlike IDPA, they prefer to use a hot range. Greg Doppstadt and his team did a great job running it, and with input from their sister organization — Tactical Arts Group — came up with some challenging scenarios.

One was a bank holdup that had turned into a massacre, requiring the shooter to fire at the perpetrator targets amidst a maze of “innocents.” What I thought was a good run with my Bob Lloyd-tuned S&W Model 686 revolver suddenly turned bad.

Scoring revealed that two of my 158-grain round nose lead Federal .38 Special slugs had gone through one bad guy target and into a good guy target behind that I hadn’t seen. The penalty at the match was several seconds added to my time. The penalty on the street would have been incalculable.

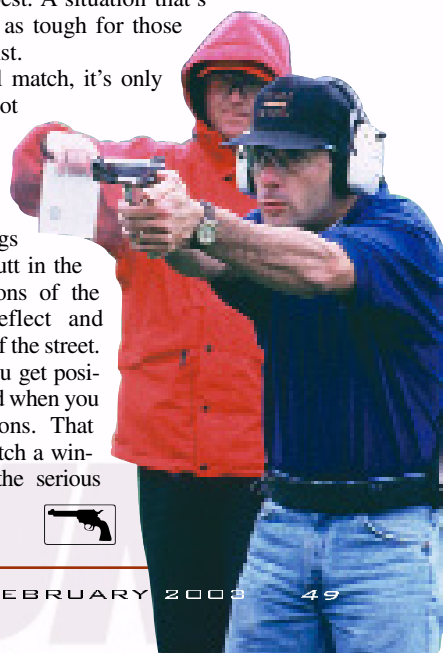
This reinforces why deep-penetrating ammo should not be used for self-defense. The same “practice ammo” might well have shot through a three-dimensional human criminal’s torso in exactly the same way. NYPD had a rash of some 17 innocents, including cops, shot with over-penetrating police bullets before they switched to 124-grain Speer Gold Dot +P hollow points for the 9mm autos most of their officers carry. They likewise changed to 158 grain +P Federal Nyclad hollow points for the .38 Special revolvers some of their older officers still prefer.

Lesson? For defensive use, we should carry handgun ammunition designed to lodge in the body of the violent attacker and not pierce through and through, where it can endanger innocents on the far side of the intended target. Tunnel vision, experienced by a majority of gunfight participants, makes this a real concern. In addition, the body of the offender may physically block your view of the bystander, as was the case in this match-replicated scenario.

I managed to shoot high aggregate score in Stock Service Revolver class and successfully defend my state champion title there. Another lesson: stay in the fight and keep giving it your best. A situation that’s tough for you is just as tough for those you’re shooting against.

In a combat pistol match, it’s only your ego on the line, not your life. Even so, ego is a great motivator. Harness it, use it right, and it can help you learn things that may save your butt in the real world. The lessons of the shooting matches reflect and reinforce the lessons of the street.

When you win, you get positive reinforcement, and when you lose, you learn lessons. That makes the combat match a win-win proposition for the serious defensive handgunner.





# Five Proven Holsters

By Cameron Hopkins

## Gunleather that works



Kirkpatrick's Texas Yaqui

**P**ractical holsters, for our purposes, can be defined as those suitable for carrying a pistol daily in urban America today. Except for the most rare exceptions, this means carrying concealed. Indeed, among the 41 states where it is possible to obtain a CCW, only Arizona allows a citizen to go heeled openly in public.

Good practical holsters, it follows logically, are also good concealment holsters. And it's from this premise we're looking at six great practical holsters from five different makers. Five are for the 1911 Government Model .45 ACP pistol — the greatest fighting pistol ever designed — and one is for S&W's .357 Magnum L-frame, a classic revolver.

Our criteria for selection as a great practical holster is three-fold: design excellence, proven performance and overall quality. Design excellence encompasses those aspects of a holster that affect its utility—comfort, concealability, retention of the handgun, and speed of use.

By proven performance, we refer to a track record, time in the saddle, the holster's reputation. Lastly, we look at overall quality, the leather itself and how well the leather-maker demonstrates his skill in fashioning it into a holster.

### Kirkpatrick Yaqui Slide

The Yaqui slide holster came to prominence primarily through the writings of Col. Jeff Cooper who liked the simplistic practicality and versatility of a holster that retains only the trigger guard portion of a handgun. With nothing to hold a barrel, any length barrel can be carried in the same Yaqui slide, from a two-inch Model 19 to a six-inch K-22.

The Yaqui slide, well... slides on your belt and is contoured to conform to your waist. It conceals the pistol extremely well because it hugs the gun directly into your side.

One of the better things about the minimalist design is that when there's no gun in it, the Yaqui slide doesn't "look" like a holster to casual observers. Even though a CCW may make you perfectly legal, some workplace environments frown on carrying firearms, but a Yaqui slide is so unobtrusive you don't have to take off the holster along with your pistol just to avoid offending a coworker.

Because the 1911 pistol comes in so many slide lengths, the Yaqui slide is an ideal choice for the slab-sided Government Model. We chose the Texas Yaqui Slide from Kirkpatrick Leather Co. of Laredo, Texas, one of the most respected purveyors of classic Western leather since 1950.

Joe Kirkpatrick's rendition of the venerable Yaqui is clean and tasteful, nicely boned and evenly stained an attractive natural leather color. The edges are nicely polished and finished with dark edge stain. The stitching is doubled at the rear welt



where the holster attaches to the belt slide. The quality is top notch, especially for what's a great buy. The Texas Yaqui Slide sells for \$40 retail.

### Kramer Belt Scabbard

Traditionally known simply as a pancake holster, this double belt-looped, body-hugging design has been a longtime favorite of federal agents and undercover cops. The pancake is often found with a thumb-break, an invention of the devil along with flour tortillas and light beer. We much prefer a pancake that relies on a well-boned, proper fit to retain the pistol securely.

We found a great rendition of the classic pancake in the Kramer Belt Scabbard from noted leathermaker Greg Kramer. What sets this rig apart from lesser designs is the rock-solid fit and precise boning that comes from Kramer's use of horsehide. Tougher and more durable than cowhide, horsehide holds its hand-boned fit much better than cowhide.

We tested a Belt Scabbard in black, for a 1911 Government Model .45 ACP pistol. The quality of construction was exceptional, with Kramer using not double, not triple, but quadruple stitching in the crucial holster-belt loop junction.

All stitching was at least doubled in non-stress areas, another sign of quality. The stain was even and carried a subtle matte black color throughout. The holster was non-lined, but the roughout side of horsehide is surprisingly smooth.

The tightly fitted holster needed considerable break-in to obtain a good, fast draw. This is normal of tightly boned horsehide. Having to do several hundred dry-draws is not an altogether terrible thing, after all.

The Kramer Belt Scabbard retails for \$85 and is available, like the Model T, in black only. By the way, Kramer's shark-skin belts are superb, so if you pick up a rig, get a belt as well.

### Milt Sparks Summer Special

The Summer Special is an inside-the-waist, rough-out design that over the years has come to be recognized as the sign of a true combat cognoscenti. Virtually all the old guard instructors at Gunsite wore a Summer Special tucked in their Levis with a cocked-and-locked 1911 protruding out of their waists.

The Summer Special was invented by Bruce Nelson, a southern California cop who stitched holsters part-time in his garage at night. When Milt Sparks saw the elegantly simple rig designed for the balmy California climate, he asked Nelson if he could offer the design himself. "No problem," the over-worked lawman allowed, "be my guest."

Milt improved on the design by adding sight rails — two strips of leather to prevent the front sight from snagging a piece of leather on its way out. Milt later added a second belt loop, his last improvement to Nelson's original design.

## Sparks' Summer Special II



## Belt Scabbard from Kramer





The Summer Special has a piece of spring steel in the top band that holds the holster open to allow for effortless, one-handed reholstering. The rough-out leather grips clothing for secure positioning and the extension of a piece of smooth-out leather keeps the gun from rubbing or abrading clothing.

The Summer Special is astonishingly fast. We've seen many a top hand be able to draw and fire an A-Zone hit from 10 yards in under 1.5 seconds from a Summer Special. As long as you don't grab a handful of shirt, the Summer Special gives up nothing in speed to a belt rig.

The Milt Sparks Summer Special is available for all barrel lengths of 1911 plus other small autos and revolvers. However, the Sparks crew warn that short-slide autos

or snubby revolvers are best used with the Summer Special II. This slight variation of the original design repositions the pistol slightly for better concealment with short-barreled pistols. The retail price of the Summer Special is \$62.50.

### Haugen Wedge

Finding a novel version of the pancake came as a pleasant surprise when we encountered The Wedge from leathermaker Jerry Lee of Haugen Handgun Leather. This well-executed, thoughtfully designed belt rig offers an interesting twist on the classic pancake design with the leading edge of the holster intentionally raised, giving the design a wedge-like shape.

The wedge is formed by hand boning

over three reinforcing strips of leather on the inside of the holster. The wedge shape makes for a natural sight track to prevent the front sight from snagging on the rough-out interior of the holster.

A former cop with 21 years on the job, Lee is a craftsman of the first order. The stitching is clean and even, with double reinforcing where the holster meets the belt loops. There is an upper band at the holster's top to facilitate easy one-handed reholstering.

The design sucks into the wearer's side quite well, although the wedge shape prints under clothing more so than does a traditional pancake. The rich cordovan finish is expertly applied, rubbed to a pleasant gloss. Quality overall is superb.

### El Paso Tom Threepersons

Tom Threepersons was a border lawman in the 1920s who led a most colorful, if not short, career as a Texas peace officer. Born on a Cherokee reservation, Threepersons scouted for Gen. Blackjack Pershing on his expedition after Pancho Villa in 1916. He was wounded twice in different gunfights, run over by a smuggler, fought in World War I and lived a hair-raising life on the Prohibition-era Mexican border.

During the course of his lawman career, he designed a simple yet effective holster that was fast to access, yet secure with a safety strap. The rig was made for him by El Paso Saddlery. Amazingly, in this age of dot-com-and-go businesses, the very same company continues to offer the Threepersons design today.

In business since 1889, El Paso Saddlery specializes in Western holsters and rigs. Their offerings under the "modern" category are traditional classics, beautifully made and finished. El Paso offers a Yaqui slide, for instance, several inside-the-waist models and pancakes.

The Threepersons rig is made for autos or revolvers. We selected one for a 4-inch S&W L-frame M686. The fit was snug in this time-honored, one-piece design. We ordered ours with hand-stamped decorative tooling. Why? Because this is El Paso Saddlery. Do you order a plain gold wedding band from Tiffany?

Stained a deliciously rich mahogany color, the inside of the Threepersons is light tan. This is a traditionally lined holster, with smooth-out top-grade cowhide on both inner and outer surfaces of the holster.

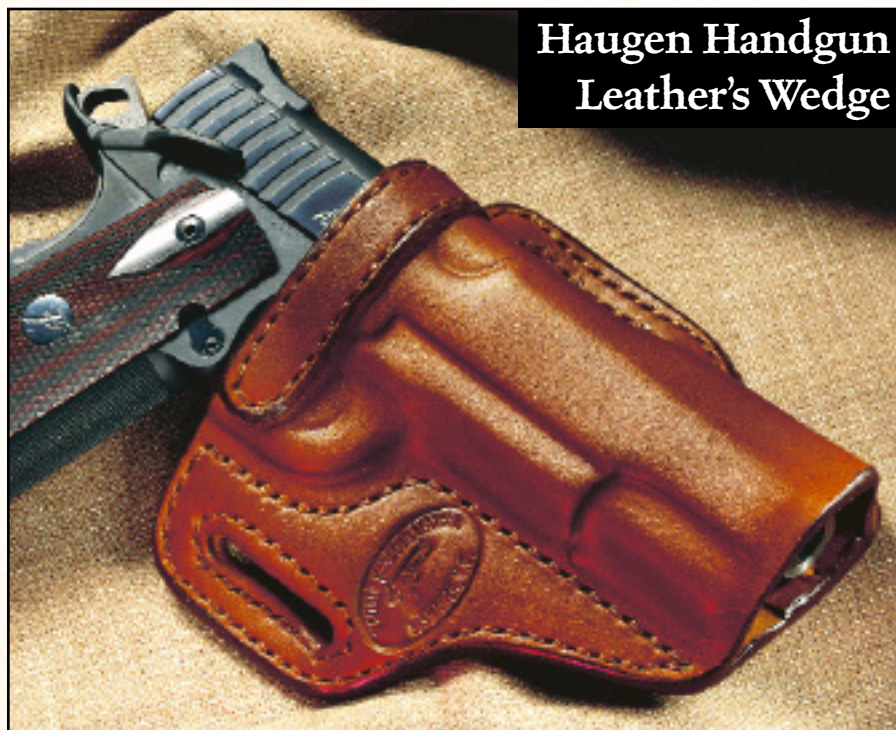
The edge welts were nicely polished and finished in a matching oil to the holster body. The stitching was contrasting white, evenly spaced and well sewn. There is one row of double stitching where the belt flap attaches to the holster body.

Overall, quality is very good. There is a slight mar on the front of the holster, no doubt a barbed wire scar on the hide of some tough old Longhorn from whom El Paso made this holster.

The Threepersons retails for \$58 plus an extra \$20 for the hand-stamped border tooling.



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All of these five holsters from these five fine makers meet our criteria for an outstanding practical holster. We recommend matching any holster to a suitable belt, preferably from the same maker to assure a perfect fit. All of these rigs should be accompanied by a magazine pouch in the case of the 1911, or a speedloader case or 2x2 pouch for the revolver. Practical holsters require practical accessories.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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# THE TOP SECRET OF WORLD WAR I

This “Manhattan Project” was going to change the tide of trench warfare . . . but didn’t

Story By Charles E. Petty

Photos By Stephen Richie



*Jim Devereux fires the first round of replica ammunition through the Pedersen Device. GUNS Magazine gratefully acknowledges his permission to share this interesting story with the readers.*





*Not visible in this view is the huge grin on Charlie's face as he test fires the Pedersen Device. An opportunity very few persons have enjoyed in the past 80 years.*

**L**ong before I ever dreamt I might be able to earn a living writing about them, I was a serious collector of guns. With no disrespect, a *collector* is not simply someone who owns a lot of guns. To qualify as a real collection there must be a theme. Mine turned out to be High Standard pistols. Later, my experiences led to a book on the subject.

During much of the building of my collection, I traveled with lifelong friend Jim Devereux. We went to a lot of gun shows. Devereux's passion is almost anything U.S. Martial. He started in his teens, and since neither of us will ever see 60 again, you can imagine that he's acquired some rather nice items.

### Unexpected Development

Now neither of us gets too revved up about guns anymore. We haven't seen everything, but we have been around the block many times. So it was a bit unusual for Devereux to call and suggest — with veiled excitement — I drop by. When I walked through the door, he handed me a sock with something heavy in it. The shape was odd — not the usual handgun he stores in socks — but it only took a moment for me to know what it was.

"You didn't," I asked?

A reply wasn't really necessary. His grin, posture, and everything else about his countenance said... "Yep."

In my hands was a, "Pistol, Caliber .30 Model of 1918," more commonly known

as a Pedersen Device. It is the rarest of the rare. Normally, if you desire to see one a museum is your only hope. By any measure Devereux is an advanced collector, but this was a real coup.

"I never thought I'd own one," he told me. It was the first he'd seen for sale in over 30 years of collecting. Normally, when a treasure like this is up for sale, it goes to a dealer who specializes in the super-rare and is sold within a small circle of known collectors. Not so here. It was found at a small South Carolina gun show.

### Designed To Fight The Hun

The device was one of the biggest secrets of World War I, and the naming was a bit of disinformation. With the addition of the Pedersen Device, special Mark I 1903 Springfield

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rifles became a very different animal. They were transformed from a five-shot, bolt-action into a 40-shot semiautomatic — you might call them the first assault rifles.

Trench warfare involved both sides — armed with bolt action rifles — trying to wrest control of the other's trench. They were separated only by yards and the idea of our troops going, "over the top" with eight times more firepower than the Germans held obvious appeal.

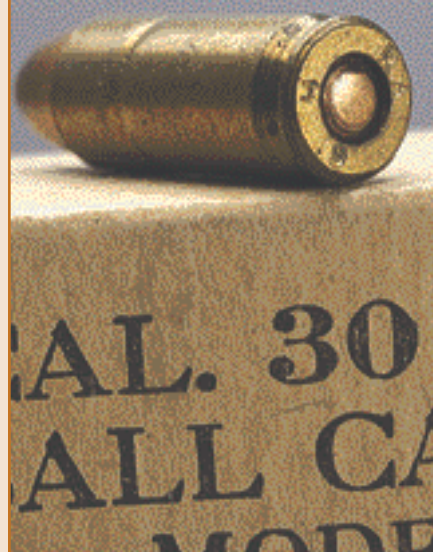
You could probably compare the Pedersen device to an auxiliary chamber that allows you to shoot a smaller cartridge with the same diameter bullet in a larger chamber. The forward portion of the device is shaped just like the standard .30-06 cartridge, and can be adjusted to fit the rifle's chamber. The foremost portion of this auxiliary chamber incorporates many small rifling grooves to just stabilize the bullet before it engages the bore.

The remainder of the device is the mechanism, which converts the rifle to a blowback-operated firing cycle. There is a heavy bolt that extends out the back of the action, and a 40-round magazine goes off to the right at about a 45 degree angle to preclude blocking the sight line. The rifle itself is specially modified in the trigger and magazine cutoff to mate with the device, and an ejection port is cut on the left side of the action.

**Bertram 7.65mm French Long brass and Redding .32 ACP dies were pressed into service to create the reproduction Pedersen round on the right.**



**Headstamp of a 1919 manufactured Pedersen cartridge.**





## Direction From The Top

When General "Black Jack" Pershing saw the device, he immediately ordered that 100,000 be manufactured. The Remington Arms Co. produced both the Pedersen device and its ammo. One of the best recitations of the history of the device can be found in *Hatcher's Notebook*, for the general was one of the officers who — in company with the designer, Pedersen — demonstrated the highly secret device for Pershing and a small group of his staff.

From the Springfield, the device's 80-grain bullet produced a velocity of about 1,300 fps, and the Army discovered the effective range was really quite short — they put it at 300 yards — but half that was probably more realistic. The war ceased before the device could see combat and production ended after 65,000 had been made.

## Your Tax Dollars At Work

As its limitations became more obvious, the Army ordered all Pedersen devices and accompanying ammunition be destroyed. Most were put in a pile, doused with gas and fuel oil, and set afire. Of course some escaped and some of the burned relics are around, but the Pedersen Device is the rarest trophy for the Springfield collector. Nobody knows how many survive but dozens, rather than hundreds, is the estimate.

As we sat around and studied and talked, both of us remarked on how totally cool it would be to shoot it. Devereux also had a few rounds of original ammo, and as I studied it a very dim bulb lit up above my head. There was another cartridge that looked very much like the Pedersen. A bit of research revealed a terrific similarity with another, equally obsolete cartridge, the 7.65 MAS — more commonly known as the .32 French Long.

## Irresistible Temptation

I wasn't sure, and did not have a French round for comparison, but then I stumbled upon some Bertram (Australian) brass in the Midway USA catalog. It's not cheap, but by then the urge was strong and I'd never know without the brass. Oh, why not? When the Bertram brass arrived, comparisons of the two cases were virtually identical. A trip to Devereux's was the clincher. The case fit the chamber and bolt face. *Eureka*.

Now all that was left was to load ammo. Time for the old books. There, in Nonte's book *Cartridge Conversions*, was something a policeman might call a clue. In the section concerning the .32 French Long cartridge, Nonte stated you could fire .30 Pedersen ammo in the pistol.

A simple measurement showed that .32 ACP dies would probably work. Loading data is a different story, but Nonte also

included a load of 2.5 grains of Bullseye with the 80-grain bullet. Both Hornady and Sierra offer .30 caliber bullets in 85 to 86 grain weights, which is close enough to the original.

With brass the limiting factor — only 20 cases were on hand — I loaded three rounds with 2.0- and three more with 2.3-grains of Bullseye and the 86 grain Hornady bullet. But when the day was set to go try it, I couldn't resist the urge to load the rest of the cases. These loads might prove a failure, but if they succeeded even remotely, six rounds would never be enough.

## It All Comes Down To This

There was quite a crowd at the range when Jim loaded the first two rounds into the magazine and clicked it into place. He drew back the bolt but it failed to strip a round. A little fiddling got the round to chamber.

Upon pressing the trigger, we were rewarded with a modest *bang* and the empty sailed straight out the ejection port in the side of the action. The bolt closed on the second round. I heaved a sigh of relief and the celebration began. The next round fired uneventfully. Careful examination of the fired cases showed absolutely no signs of trouble.

It was my turn. This time we put in three rounds and, once more, the first one needed a little encouragement to feed. The trigger pull was amazingly heavy. The first shot was mostly a surprise because I didn't think it was going to fire at all. There was a little — not much — recoil and a small splash of dirt 70-yards downrange. The remaining rounds fed and functioned uneventfully.

## End Game

The happy experiment was recorded by lots of pictures, and several members of the crowd successfully petitioned to shoot a round. Pretty soon, the ammo was gone with only one fired case unaccounted for.

Self-satisfied smugness would probably be an accurate description of how I felt. My problem solving skills made it possible for several of us to do something few men alive today have done. Later, one of the guys asked if I had read Phil Sharpe's *The Rifle in America* which was said to contain some information on the subject.

At home I dug out the 1938 book and found an explanation of how, in 1935, the French had copied the Pedersen cartridge for their pistol. Had I read this passage earlier, I could have gone straight to go on the project. My ego deflated... but only a little.

But shooting was just icing on the cake, and frankly, not very remarkable. The things that usually make shooting something memorable — noise, recoil, muzzle blast or spectacular target response — were all absent. Nevertheless, it was one of the most thrilling shooting experiences I've ever enjoyed.



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# Leica's LRF 1200

**Compact, reliable  
and easy-to-use,  
is this the best  
of the laser  
rangefinders?**

**By Dave Douglas**

**W**hen I hear the name Leica, I remember the first really high-quality camera I ever owned. It was the famous Leica M-3. The year was 1969, I was 19 years old and very much into photography. I bought it used in a downtown Philadelphia pawnshop.

It was beat up, ugly, about my age, cost three months of my meager retail sales salary and it was the best, most prestigious 35 mm camera I ever owned.

I used about all of the Asian produced single lens reflex cameras available around that time, but none was as sharp and clear, nor as forgiving as my Leica. It was the kind of camera that when you brought it up to your eye to compose your shot, other photographers around you would stop what they were doing and point out the classic to their compan-







**Left:** Leica LRF1200 is actually a bit smaller than this venison sandwich. Used appropriately, it will help you refill your plate.

**Above:** The LRF1200 is compact, well armored and easy to use. The supplied nylon case is also nice. **Right:** Yard/Meter selector is shielded inside the battery cover.

ions. It was to cameras what an Armand Swenson .45 is to the 1911 shooter.

We parted company about two years later when my '54 Chevy lost a contest with an elm tree. The Leica was crushed and so was I, both physically and figuratively. I was only a month away from going off to Army basic training and just couldn't replace it.

### New Heartthrob

Since then, Leica products have always meant top engineering, bulletproof, reliable performance, and downright pure quality to me. At a recent photo shoot, a fellow participant offered one of the brand-new Leica LRF 1200 rangefinders as a photo prop. I begged, pleaded and sniveled until he agreed to loan it to me for evaluation. The diminutive LRF 1200 didn't disappoint at all. In fact, it reaffirmed everything I recalled about the German company's products.





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*Diopter adjustment and folding rubber eyecup enhance the performance of the LRF1200.*



Leica entered the rangefinder market with the high quality binocular, infrared ranging and electronic compass system called the Geovid. Their newest offering is the LRF 1200. The LRF 1200 comes on the heels of the highly successful LRF 800.

Extremely compact, the package is about the size of a sandwich — measuring 4 by 4 1/4 by 1 3/4 inches. The black, polycarbonate case weighs 10.5 ounces. It's covered in black, water-resistant, rubber armor.

Its 7x monocular is of fine quality, with glass lenses, diopter focus, and a 21mm objective lens. Hunters will want to use the monocular in lieu of binoculars. With its extraordinarily bright, clear picture, you can just about count the ticks on a boar's back at 100 yards.

The LRF 1200 uses an eye-safe laser system. Ron Cormier, technical expert at Leica Sports Optics, told me that in order to qualify as eye safe, the system must be able to

focus directly on a subject's eyes for 48 continuous hours and do no damage. I didn't try it. I just can't stay awake that long anymore.

Pushing the distance-measuring button activates the laser. A red targeting mark appears in the view window. Using the targeting square, you select the target to range and depress the go button a second time. Distance to the target appears just below the targeting square. Distance can be measured from 10 to 1,200 yards.



## Incredible Accuracy

Accuracy is within one yard up to 400 yards, and two yards out to 1,200 yards. It will read even further under optimum lighting conditions. The system may be set to display distance in meters rather than yards. This is accomplished by switching the unit's single mode switch. The mode switch is hidden from errant fingers under the battery housing cover.

Align the dot on the "M" for meters, or rotate the dial counter clockwise 180 degrees to "Y" for yards.

"It's hidden like that to prevent those of us with sausage size fingers from inadvertently pushing the wrong button," said Cormier, "and getting a reading of 137 (meters) rather than 150 yards."

Leica uses a pulse laser. The light makes 60 trips back and forth to the target every millisecond. This system eliminates the need for a degraded operation or rain mode switch. If there is an outcropping of rock or tree branches in the way, the laser will read the target. If the laser bounces the main target 51 out of 100 times, and the branch 49 out of 100 times, it will read back the main target distance. Majority rules here.

## Critical Difference

The milliradiance, or size of the beam, of the Leica laser is 2.3 meters wide by .5 meters high at 1,000 yards. Most systems give a reading of 7 meters by 5 meters at that distance. That's bigger than most double-car garage doors.

The LRF 1200 also uses this in lieu of a rain mode. Its beam is much more narrowly focused than competing systems. When functioning in the rain mode, other systems block out the first 60 to 110 yards. Now, if your trophy white tail is 54 or 104 yards away, it is very frustrating when the range read-out gives you triple zeros.

The LRF 1200's four digit display numbers are produced using a Light Emitting Diode. Liquid Crystal Displays (LCD) are used in most other rangefinders. LCDs require far greater power draw from a little 9-volt battery than an LED does.

This becomes especially critical when the temperature is low. Battery power is required to keep the LCD warmed up in order for you to see the read out. Leica's LED has an auto-sensing system that varies the intensity of the read out. It has seven adjustments to give the user the best contrast possible.

Returning the LRF 1200 to its owner was almost painful. My experience with it had been completely satisfactory. Like my much-loved Leica M-3, 35mm camera, it proved easy and enjoyable to use, and simply personified refined quality. Hopefully, there won't be flashbacks of my '54 Chevy and that Leica-killing elm tree. In all these intervening years, I failed to replace my camera. I don't think I'll make the same mistake with *this* Leica.



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## H&K'S G36C AND MP7

continued from page 33

### The Big Question

Although we cannot dispute the claim, the ability of so light a bullet to inflict an incapacitating wound after having passed through 1.6mm of titanium and 20 layers of Kevlar(r) at any range is questionable. Particularly so in light of reports of the lack of terminal effectiveness of 5.56x45mm SS109/M855 ammunition in both Somalia and Afghanistan.

Further, the tiny 4.6mm bullet cannot create a large permanent wound cavity — a key element of wound ballistics performance. H&K and Radway Green are also developing tracer, frangible, JHP, training (Solid copper bullet), blank and plastic training ammunition for the PDW.



In sum, H&K's new PDW is an excellent overall design. It is handy, lightweight, and can be fired either as a carbine or a pistol. Despite the fact the 4.6x30mm cartridge offers improved penetration in comparison to standard NATO 9mm pistol ammunition, its actual terminal ballistics are sure to be questioned due to its small permanent wound cavity.

There may also be objections because adopting the MP7 will add another small arms caliber into an already complex ammunition logistics system. Only time and the acceptance of PDWs as a class of weapons will tell whether H&K's latest product will be a success.

### New G36C

H&K's G36C (Commando) is the company's latest version of the G36 assault rifle. We will not go into any great detail on the description and functioning of the rifle, as the principal features of the G36 are well known.

The G36 essentially uses a modified AR-18 operating system that incorporates a fixed piston and operating rod to drive the bolt carrier to the rear. The G36 is an excellent overall design and has been adopted by several nations as a standard infantry rifle. The G36 is noted for its reliability under adverse conditions and its simplicity of operation.

### Dedicated Mission

The G36C is intended primarily for special operations units that require an extremely compact carbine for close



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range engagement (CRE) to 50 meters. The G36C combines all of the best features of the larger G36 in an extremely compact package. The G36C is comparable in size to a 9x19mm MP5A3 submachinegun, yet fires the 5.56x45mm cartridge which totally outclasses the MP5's 9mm pistol round.



It is compact carbines, also known as subcarbines, like the G36C that are spelling the demise of the submachinegun in many military special operations units. Pistol-caliber submachineguns simply do not have the effective range, terminal ballistics, or versatility of subcarbines, and thus are beginning to be phased out of many major military special operations forces.

### Proven Ancestry

The G36 is lightweight, versatile, easy to operate and like most H&K firearms that we have encountered, pleasant to shoot. If its parent G36 is any indication, the G36C will also prove to be extremely reliable.

The G36C incorporates MIL-STD-1913 rails on the upper carrying handle and lower forearm to mount optics and other accessories. The example we test fired was equipped with a Knight's Armament foregrip that clamps to the adapter rail. This foregrip makes the weapon easier to control on full-automatic fire.

The G36C is also equipped with an advanced design, Vortex-type flash suppressor that virtually eliminates muzzle flash, which is always a problem with short-barreled carbines due to incomplete combustion of powder in the shortened barrel. Although the G36C has a short sight radius, we did not find that to be a problem in our shooting.

### Final Verdict

Whether we fired semi- or full-automatic, the little G36C was easy to control and keep on target. There was slight muzzle rise, but it was easily controllable.

In the final analysis, we found the G36C is a very satisfactory weapon, based on our brief experience with it. The reliability and ruggedness of the parent G36 rifle is well established. If this new addition to the G36 family approaches its parent rifle in these areas, it will appeal to any organization seeking a compact carbine for close range engagements.



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## Happy Outcome

As it turned out, my bull was large enough to outweigh both the other buffalo and the doe, and I now had my "choice" of firearms. The Casull CA-3800 was the only gun left, which made absolutely no difference to me, as it would have been my first choice. At last, it seemed I was destined to have a high-powered .38 autoloader.

The Model CA-3800 is from Casull Arms, and as the name suggests was designed by Dick Casull. A little background material is apropos here. When Utah gunsmith Dick Casull was in his early twenties, he became interested in heat-treating and metallurgy. He eventually developed a method to heat treat single-action frames to 40 Rockwell without warping them in the process.

That was 1954, and using a Colt Single Action .45 with a special five-shot cylinder, he was able to achieve velocities of 1,550 fps with 250-grain bullets. This was two years before the arrival of the .44 Magnum, which despite the accolades, fired slightly lighter bullets at lower velocities than Casull's experimental Colt.

## Obsessed With Power

Casull had harnessed the power, but with little margin of safety. Casull insisted upon ultimate power in a portable package,

and along with this power the technology to make the guns completely safe. By 1957, in pursuit of his goal of power plus safety, Casull decided to build his own single action frame. He was also now at the point that he could engineer parts as needed. Using 4140 steel for the frame, and 4150 steel for the cylinder, the first ".45 Magnum" was created. The .45 Casull had progressed from modified Colt SAAs to a custom built, five-shot single action.

## Fertile Mind

Dick Casull did not start designing and building guns with what would ultimately develop into the .454 Casull. In fact his first gun, made from a car axle, was turned out at the age of 11 — it's still in his possession and still shoots. While in high school, Casull designed and built a sleek .22 Single Action he hopes to offer someday through Casull Arms.

Casull holds a couple-dozen major patents, and is, in fact, a complete gun designer covering everything from mini-revolvers to machine guns to magnum handguns.

In 1979, after a number of false starts, Casull and Wayne Baker came together and the result was Freedom Arms. It had been a long hard process over the span of 30 years, but finally in 1983, the first factory-built .454 Casull was delivered. Casull is no longer connected with Freedom Arms, except for the fact his house and horse corral overlook the factory.

## A Time For New Beginnings

For several years now, Dick has been out on his own, forming Casull Arms. His first product was a mini-gun, a small five-shot, double action only, pocket .22 with a folding trigger. Known as the CA-2000, this little palm-sized revolver is machined from 17-4 stainless steel and features an external safety and ivory micarta grips.

Now, Dick Casull has turned his many talents in a radically different direction. Instead of a revolver, Casull Arms is producing the Dick Casull Signature Model — a 6-inch, 1911-style semiautomatic chambered in .38 Casull.

The Model CA-3800 incorporates a number of tempting features. The barrel and bushing are of match grade, carefully fitted. The frame incorporates a beveled magazine well, and 20 lpi checkering on the front strap and mainspring housing. Also included are a full length, two-piece guide rod, an aluminum match trigger, and a high ride beavertail grip safety. Sights consist of a fully adjustable rear sight, matched up with a dovetailed post front sight.

As one would expect with any firearm from Dick Casull, the CA-3800 shows close-tolerances and careful hand fitting. No corners are cut here when it comes to quality, and this is also evident in the checkered stock panels made from beautiful exotic woods. Weight is 40 ounces empty and a full 3 pounds loaded.

The capacity of the .38 Casull is rated at

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8 plus one, however I prefer to use 8 rounds, 7 in the magazine and one in the chamber. Most autopistol magazines seem to work better if they are not pushed to their capacity. The Model CA-3800 comes with two Wilson magazines, and wrenches for bushing and guide rod — all packaged into a quality locking aluminum case.

### A Real Hot-Rod .38

Currently, Casull Arms also offers two factory .38 Casull loads, a 124 grain XTP-JHP rated at 1,800 fps, and a 147 grain XTP-JHP at 1,650 fps. From my gun, these clocked out at 1,722 fps and 1,547 fps respectively. For testing purposes I acquired five, 20-round boxes of both types of factory ammunition as well as 200 rounds of brass and reloading dies made by RCBS. Casull Arms also offers a fitted slide and barrel in .45 ACP for those desiring a little versatility.

At the present time, Casull Arms recommends one powder, Winchester 296, and all of my handloads were assembled with this propellant. In the future I will be experimenting with other powders, but I felt it appropriate to start with 296. For testing I used 9mm bullets from Hornady, Sierra, and Speer. All loads were primed with Federal's No. 155 Magnum Pistol primer.

Overall length is important and loaded rounds must fit in, and feed from a standard sized 1911 magazine. Casull Arms recommends an overall length of 1.26 inches, how-

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ever this may be too long with some bullet profiles. I have ordered some copper Keith-style bullets for future reloads, and it will be interesting to see what OAL will be required using these different style bullets.

## The Answer Is No

To arrive at the .38 Casull, Dick started with the standard .45 ACP case, trimmed it back slightly, and then necked it down to .38. The natural question that will arise is, can I make .38 Casull brass from standard .45 ACP brass? The answer is no. This would be unsafe as .38 Casull brass is heavier than standard .45 ACP cases. The right brass is easily obtainable from Casull Arms at reasonable prices and I recommend it be used exclusively.

Shooting the CA-3800 was a most pleasant experience as expected, since I had fired two test guns six months earlier on the YO Ranch. Recoil is about the equivalent of +P loads in a standard 1911 .45. All my test shooting was accomplished at 25 yards. Although the sights are big, bold, and black — just as they should be — unfortunately my aging eyes do not make the best of them.

With this in mind, I am most gratified with the test results and would guess that someone with younger eyes could do even better. It would be interesting, to me at least, to see what I could accomplish with a red-dot scope in place.

One can really see how strong the recoil spring on the CA-3800 is, not only by pulling the slide rearward to chamber the first round from the magazine, but also by how far the ejected brass travels. With some of my loads, I found the brass 42 inches behind and to my right. When the slide comes back, the fired brass really flies!

## Appreciation

Dick Casull is a true firearms genius and one does not need to spend much time with him in order to discover that he is a modest, quiet, humble man who truly loves his country and strongly believes in every American's right to keep and bear arms. I recommend his newest creation highly.

It certainly is portable enough to be a true Trail Gun, so that part of my dream has finally been fulfilled; and it also would make an excellent hunting handgun for turkeys, cougar, small deer, in fact anything weighing 200 pounds or less. Not only is this a keeper, I did not have to wait until I received a test firearm bill to make that decision. This one is already mine, free and clear.



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# THE 2003 ACGG RIFLE

continued from page 28

## Engraving

Farman's stock work now complete, the metalwork was turned over to Bob Evans for one of his superb engraving jobs. He designed the pattern in a pre-war styling as well, executing the "Blackleaf" style of engraving very similar to that used by Arnold Griebel in the 1930s. Evans follows my preferred practice for engraving a fine firearm. He provides ample coverage, but makes no effort to cover each and every square millimeter of the metal surface.

Sometimes, the engraver (or client) gets carried away and the resultant effect is too ornate for my taste. This often happens with checkering as well. When this happens, the effect is more gaudy than elegant, at least to my way of thinking.

Of course Evans provides whatever type of coverage is demanded by his client. However, given his head, he seems to prefer more modest patterns, the result of which is a refined, tasteful elegance. This particular rifle does feature a reserved amount of gold highlights that, once again, I think is about the right amount of accent. His artistry — like that of LaPour and Farman — is marvelous.

## Finishing Touches

The rifle and accessories were then turned over to Ralph Powell for casing. Interestingly, Powell fashions his otherwise completely traditional oak and leather cases with legs which, when extended, convert the case into a presentation stand. His cases are highly refined and exquisitely crafted.

Fortunately, 2003's project was completed in time to have photography done well ahead of the exhibition. Once again, Mustafa Bilal of Turk's Head Productions placed his considerable talents at the ACGG's disposal. Hopefully, this will enable aficionados with an interest in the project, to purchase a chance(s) to win it.

Normally, the metalsmith still has the metal parts in the bluing room two days before departing for the exhibition. The stockmaker, in turn, is practicing all sorts of alchemy trying to speed up the drying of the oil finish. All the contributors to this year's project are to be commended for completing their labors in such timely fashion.

Now that you've seen this stunning project rifle for 2003, I'll wager you're ready to send for your tickets — you can be assured I've already sent for mine.



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## TIKKA'S M595

continued from page 38

Best group of the day, despite the mirage, was 5 rounds into .375 inch, fired with Black Hills Match. Average group size with the same load ran only .605 inch. However, both Winchester, at .625 inch, and PMC, at .641 inch, were hard on their heels. As stated earlier, these are all excellent loads.

### After The Serious Work

After firing for record, I spent a considerable amount of time just getting to know the Tikka. I fired it offhand, kneeling, sitting, and prone to get a feel for it. I came to really like the way the Tikka balanced and the shape of the forend. It's a very comfortable rifle to shoot, especially prone. The bolt throw is quick, the trigger very crisp and light, and rounds feed smoothly from the detachable magazine.

I have to admit I took a liking to the Tikka M595 Continental. It's a handsome and well-made rifle with a slick action. Accuracy was very good, as seems to be a trait of Tikka rifles. This can be seen in the fact the 1999 British Long-Range Benchrest Championship was won by a Tikka Continental in 6.5x55. Group size was an almost unbelievable 10 rounds into 4.4 inches at 1,000 yards. Anyone looking for an accurate out-of-the-box varmint rifle would do well to consider a Tikka.



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# LEUPOLD'S **NEW** COMPETITION SCOPES

BY CHARLES E. PETTY

In the world of the benchrest shooter, the scope on the rifle is of equal importance to both the gun and ammunition. If any one item comes up short, the entire equation breaks down. When we are talking about trying to literally put bullet after bullet through the same hole, a scope of both high magnification and absolute adjustment is all that will do.

Since 1989 that field has been virtually Leupold's private playpen, for their BR-36 model has been overwhelmingly successful. To be sure there are some others. Weaver's T-36 is popular, and some shooters still use Lyman, Redfield and Bausch & Lomb scopes that have been updated and often modified to increase their magnification.

## Difficult To Do Well

High magnification in a benchrest scope is a necessary commodity, but sometimes it's hard to find. I've seen some scopes with high magnification that were useful only in the brightest sunlight. On a cloudy day, .22 bullet holes might as well have been pinpricks. Leupold's older model didn't suffer that malady.

Neither does the new one. And if winning championships is any measure it is surely a success. Shooters using it have won both U.S. and International championships.

The new "Competition Series" scopes have more than a little visual similarity to Leupold's Mark IV series of tactical and military scopes. The most obvious is the

*Side focus and precise adjustments make these scopes winners.*

30mm tube and the presence of a side focus parallax adjustment. This is ever so much handier than having to reach all the way out to the front of the scope for an adjustment. It has a cap as well to prevent unintentional movement.

## Choice Of Three

The new scopes are offered in 35x, 40x and 45x, with either crosshair or dot reticles. Since I routinely use the older 36x target scope, I wanted to compare the highest magnification. Placed side by side and switching from one to another, my eye really did not detect any difference in apparent brightness.

In their press release, Leupold uses the word "revolutionary" to describe the new optical system designed from scratch for the competition series, instead of adapting from older designs. The 45mm objective diameter and 30mm tube allow for an overall increase in the size of the lens elements.

"It's an entirely new prescription," said a Leupold spokesman.





Each side of all 9 lens elements is fully multi-coated with a proprietary new coating Leupold calls Diamondcoat. Leupold states it is superior to other coatings in light transmission and glare reduction.

45x is a common magnification in spotting scopes, and if you've ever looked through one, you'll notice there is a significant amount of shake — even when the scope is on a good sturdy tripod. It was a pointless concern for benchrest gear is much more stable than tripods.

### Range Test

For the purpose of this review, I put the scope on two different rifles: one in .22 BR, the other in 6mm PPC, and interchanged my older BR36 so I could easily switch from one to another. My eye was unable to tell any difference in brightness on a nice sunny day. The new scope might have been a tad sharper although it may be nothing more than the additional magnification.

I wish that I could tell you that my group

averages were dramatically smaller with the new optics. They weren't, but I do believe that seeing the target even better can't hurt. The downside is that when you do something wrong it is real obvious.

### Extra Deluxe

One very notable feature is the focus knob on the left side of the turret. We're used to seeing that on tactical scopes but I'd never really given it much thought for benchrest. Focus has always been one of those "set and forget" things, and it is something of a pain to have to lean way out over the rifle to adjust the front focus ring. With a knob on the left side and well within easy reach, I found myself fine-tuning the focus more often and came to value that convenience much more than I had expected.

As you would expect, adjustments are spot-on and this type of scope is a good place for fine 1/8 MOA windage and elevation adjustments. Even though I knew in

advance what to expect, I found myself driven to check the repeatability of the adjustments. On a target with a 1-inch grid, eight clicks moved the bullet the expected one inch. It didn't matter which dial you turned or in which direction you turned it. There was no evidence of bounce-back where you have to go way past the desired adjustment and then come back to avoid getting less than the desired correction. Nor was there ever a shift in point of impact after the first shot.

The new Competition Series scopes are just what you would expect from Leupold — first class.



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From TangoDown

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### 8mm Mauser Ammo

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### New Shooting Video

From Matt Burkett

Professional marksman and instructor Matt Burkett is offering his popular Practical Shooting volumes one, two and three on a two-disc DVD video set. Assisting in the instruction on the video are world class competition shooter Brian Enos and professional gunsmith Don Golembieski. Contact Matt Burkett at Hot Shots, 7040 E. Wilshire Dr., Scottsdale, AZ 85257, telephone: [480] 949-1553, FAX: [480] 947-2773, e-mail: [matt@mattburkett.com](mailto:matt@mattburkett.com), Website: [www.mattburkett.com](http://www.mattburkett.com)



### New Shoulder Holster

From Bob Mernickle

The Model SH9 shoulder holster is a compact, lightweight system accommodating a pair of semi-automatic pistols with magazine clips.

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From H&R 1871

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## ADVERTISER'S INDEX

ADVERTISER	PAGE	ADVERTISER	PAGE
Adco	.3	Diamond Guns	.7
AllVertical	.62	Dixie Gun Works	.69
Armed Forces Merchandise Outlet	.67	El Paso Saddlery	.53
Bagmaster	.69	Extreme Shock	.6
Baird	.67	Firearms Engravers & Gunmakers Exhibition	.69
Beretta	.C3	Flash Dist.	.71
Cannon Safe	.71	Fobus USA	.67
Carbon Creations	.65	Fort Knox Security	.68
Charles Daly	.48	Groves Edge	.62
Clark Custom Guns	.63	Hodgdon Powder	.14
Colorado School of Trades	.71	Hogue Grips	.46
Columbia River Knife & Tool	.59, 81	HydraStorm	.13
Compasseco	.68	Jantz Supply	.39
Crimson Trace Corp.	.63	Kimber	.C4
Defense Security	.66	Kirkpatrick Leather	.53
DeSantis	.47	Knife Outlet	.68
		Lee Precision	.64
		Legendary Arms	.68
		Michael's of Oregon	.15
		MidwayUSA	.16
		Mitchell's Mausers	.47
		MTM Molded Products	.48
		Numrich Gun Parts	.65
		Outdoor Channel	.21
		Paladin Press	.67
		Performance Company	.67
		RGuns	.29
		Shoot Magazine	.64
		Sierra Bullet	.38
		Simonich Custom Knives	.65
		S & K Scope Mounts	.69
		Souther Security	.69
		Springfield Inc.	.17
		Sturm, Ruger & Co.	.C2
		SureFire	.9
		Tag Extreme Expo Interactive Conference	.22
		Verona Shotguns/ PMC Express	.19
		Wilson Combat	.53

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of the Soviet Union. On this particular July 3rd, I climbed the ladder to the top of an abandoned observation post on what had been the border. My heart was broken as I thought of what people had gone through trying to escape this enforced captivity. For the first time in my life, I think I truly appreciated freedom.

**“You have this young baby-faced fellow hanging on your wall and you don’t have the slightest idea who he is.”**

Shortly after this episode, I had gone to visit my son and his family in one of the large northwestern cities. What began with all of us going out for a lighthearted lunch took a very strange and unusual twist. As we entered the restaurant, I was happy to be greeted by a large wall covered by dozens of photos of cowboy stars from the B-westerns of my youth. A young girl came to seat us and in my joy I asked her if she knew who all these men were.

“Why, yes I do,” she cheerily replied.

Not convinced, I pointed at a photo and asked, “Who is this?” Her answer was delivered with a bit less cheer.

“Ah, I don’t know.”

Pointing to a second photograph brought the same response. Now I would understand if she didn’t recognize Wild Bill Elliot or Tim Holt, but she had failed on Roy Rogers and Gene Autry!

I was unable to restrain myself.

I raised my voice, “Get the manager out here right now!” I asked him the same question. At first, he also claimed to know the identity of these portraits so prominently displayed in his place of business, however, when I pinned him down, I learned he also had no idea who any of these men were.

“This is your restaurant and you have all these men’s photographs on the wall,” I asked incredulously and in my most menacing tone, “yet you don’t know any of them?”

“I’ve only been here a few weeks,” he responded.

“Listen up,” I began, “I am going to tell you who every single one of these men are.”

By now, he was probably convinced he was dealing with a real nut case, but he listened patiently as I continued. I went through every photo, naming Hopalong Cassidy, Tom Mix, Tim McCoy, the Three Mesquiteers, the Durango Kid and on and on.

Surely, at one time, someone appreciated the entertainment all of these men had given. However, had it not been for the last photograph, I would not have raised this minor disturbance, and as we came to it, I tried my best to make this fellow understand.

“Now, Sir, I have told you who all these men are, and perhaps you feel it is of little importance. However, this last portrait is important. You have this young baby-faced fellow hanging on your wall and you don’t have the slightest idea who he is. I am going to tell you who he is. This young man is Audie Murphy, the most decorated soldier of World War II.”

“He was too young to enlist, so he lied about his age. Even then the recruiter hesitated to take him because of his small size. He went on to prove his worth and he is a representation of all the young man from the Greatest Generation. Thousands of them never came back. He came back physically but was emotionally scarred for the rest of his life. He admitted he never, ever had another good night’s sleep for the rest of his too-short life.”

“Some day, I’ll be coming back to this restaurant, and I don’t care if you remember any of these other people, but I’m telling you when I do get back you better remember this one young man. Don’t you ever forget Audie Murphy!”

As it turned out, my son and his family have now moved to Lewistown, Mont., and I will probably never return to that restaurant. But, may we never, ever forget Audie Murphy and all those young men who gave everything so that we might remain free.

The frightening thing is, the majority of the population seems to readily accept the words of a former president who said, “We must be willing to sacrifice some freedom for security.” Safety and security are a myth. It is my hope and prayer that freedom does not end up in the same category.

#### Audie Murphy

- Born June 20, 1924 in Hunt County, near Kingston, Texas
- Enlisted in 1942
- Received battlefield commission to 2nd Lieutenant
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- Starred in 39 motion pictures
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# CAMPFIRE TALES

BY JOHN TAFFIN

## DON'T YOU EVER FORGET AUDIE MURPHY!

**L**ife is the ultimate conundrum. For example, the shooting industry is always in a Catch-22. If the party in power is doing their best to limit gun sales, sales go up and the manufacturers do well. When we have an administration favorable to gun owners, most seem to relax, comfortable with the assumption of being able to buy that sixgun, levergun, or whatever, at any time — and sales go down.

The current administration has publicly announced support for the Second Amendment as an individual right, while at the same time we are seeing more freedoms disappear than we ever have in my lifetime. Under the all-encompassing banner of Homeland Security, we've witnessed great changes.

Airport security in particular changed overnight. Other drastic changes loom on the horizon, and politicians who have for years openly argued for tightening controls on the population have renewed their efforts. Such things as a national I.D. card, spying on one's neighbor, spying by commercial carriers and the United States Postal Service, wire-taps, immediate access to bank account records — all these are a great danger to the freedoms we have taken for granted for such a long time.

Growing up before it was politically incorrect to be patriotic, I was blessed with wonderful teachers who shared the great history of our country. Lesson plans revolved around Washington's and Lincoln's birthdays, and Columbus Day. We celebrated Armistice Day and even in high school, a special moment of silence always occurred on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

Thanksgiving always took at least a month to get ready for with all kinds of special projects, followed immediately by preparation for Christmas. History was a wonderful living subject, with the founders of our country and the pioneers who expanded it held up as wonderful role models. Those who have recently been hailed as the Greatest Generation were not that far away. They were our mothers and fathers, older brothers and cousins.



I always thought I appreciated freedom, but my understanding of this changed forever when I spent the eve of the Fourth of July in a very special place. There, looking past the rubble of what had been the Berlin Wall and the barbed wire fence stretching between East and West Germany, I saw the faces of the old men in East Germany. Men, who even though they had been released, still wore that haunted look.

As young men and boys, they had survived Hitler's Nazi Germany only to be enslaved by the Communism

*continued on page 81*



# PERFORMANCE BY DESIGN. SAFETY BY B-LOK.

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