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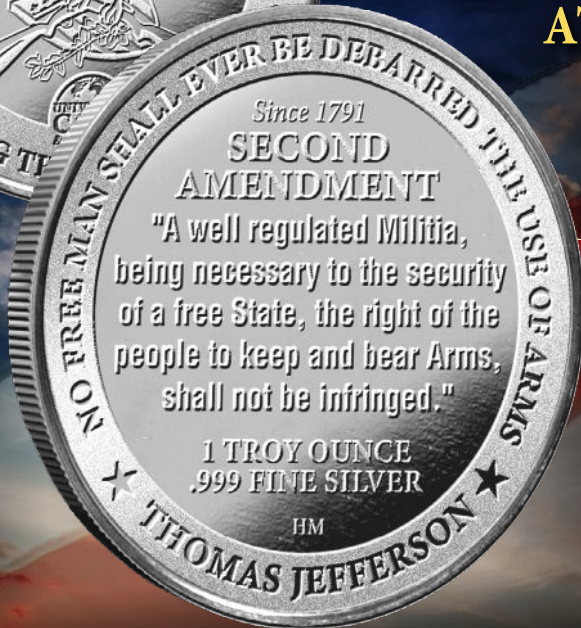


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OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

139th Year of Publication

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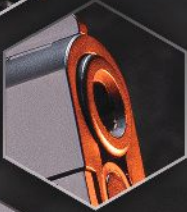
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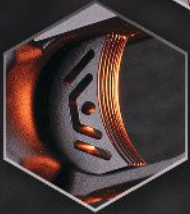
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### Heavy Browning At War: Combat Tales Of The Browning M1917 Machine Gun

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### New For 2026: Taurus TX9 Pistol

Taurus launched its TX9 family of striker-fired, polymer-frame pistols, adding to its popular TX series of handguns. [americanrifleman.org/taurustx9](http://americanrifleman.org/taurustx9)



### Return Of The Red Label: Ruger's New Red Label III Shotgun

Ruger's Red Label III marks the third generation of Ruger's classic over-under shotgun, which is finally making a reappearance after it was discontinued more than a decade ago. [americanrifleman.org/redlabel3](http://americanrifleman.org/redlabel3)

Tune in Wednesday nights to the Outdoor Channel for the best firearm show on television. Now in its 24th year, "American Rifleman Television" brings you a Feature, a "Rifleman Review" and an "I Have This Old Gun" segment in each show. Schedule may be subject to change. To view past episodes, visit [americanrifleman.org/artv](http://americanrifleman.org/artv).



## Catch The New Season!

### February 18

Smith & Wesson's New Training Academy; Mossberg Aftershock In 12 Gauge; Beaumont Adams Revolver

### February 25

Winchester's Latest Long-Range Ammunition; Tikka T3 Ace Target in .223 Rem.; Walther P38

### March 4

Sporting Clays Nationals; Leupold VX-5HD Riflescope; .455 Webley Auto Pistol

### March 11

Fiocchi's Manufacturing Heritage; Taurus Raging Hunter In 350 Legend; MAS 1949



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# Identity Crisis

I just finished the article “Deciphering (Mostly Nonsensical) Cartridge Nomenclature” in the January 2026 issue. The photograph in the beginning of the article has 37 rifle cartridges and shotgun shells displayed. Can you provide the names of each so I can identify them? It is absolutely driving me crazy! I’d love to look up and learn about any I’m unfamiliar with, but I need to know what they are first.

**John Meakin**  
via e-mail



**Glad to hear you enjoyed the article. Here are the names of the cartridges shown:**

**Back:** .220 Swift, 450-400 Nitro Express 3-inch, .50 Alaskan, 12 gauge 3½-inch, 28 gauge 2¾-inch, .257 Weatherby Mag., 6 mm Creedmoor, .223 Rem., .243 Win., 16 gauge (only available factory loaded in 2¾-inch), .460 S&W Mag., 12 gauge 1¾-inch  
**Middle:** .30-06 Sprg., .300 RSAUM, .270 WSM, .338 Lapua Mag., .25-06 Rem., .260 Rem., 6.5 Creedmoor, 26 Nosler, 5.56 NATO, .22-250 Rem., .45-70 Gov’t, 7 mm-08 Rem. (as best I can recall on this round)  
**Front:** 350 Legend, 7.62x39 mm, .460 S&W Mag. (again), .308 Win., 7 mm STW, .410 2½-inch, 12 gauge 2¾-inch, .325 WSM, .270 Win., 20 gauge 2¾-inch, .338 Whisper, .450 Bushmaster, .30-378 Weatherby Mag.

Hope that helps!

—**Aaron Carter**

## Fight for Freedom

I really enjoyed **Stephen Halbrook’s** article on America’s 250th anniversary in the January issue. I’ve been fortunate enough to travel around the world, and his highlighting of the uniquely American idea and practice of the right to keep and bear arms could not be more important. Nowhere else in the world are the people truly sovereign, as they must rely on the government to defend them from criminals, which inherently makes the government too powerful. And a too-powerful government is exactly why the colonies revolted against the British Empire 250 years ago. We should never forget the roots of our liberty, and what we must defend to protect those rights.

**Alvin Bitterman**  
via e-mail

**Stephen Halbrook’s** article in the January issue was excellent. Knowing the history of our country, our rights and the attempts to curtail those liberties is extremely important. Given the space allotted, he couldn’t cover another important aspect of our Second Amendment rights—how the civilian demand for firearms helps our national security and law enforcement professionals. This is a two-way street, of course. While 250 years ago, it was a combination of militia arms and private arms that won our Independence, many innovations that are now used by both armed citizens and armed professionals have been influenced by each group. From handgun design to new rifle cartridges to optics, the symbiotic relationship between government arms and civilian arms benefits both groups. It might be interesting to explore that subject further in the future.

**Paul Whistler**  
via e-mail

## Old Gun Memories

**Rick Hacker’s** writeup of the Remington Model 1888 in the January issue brought back memories of a friend and mentor of mine who had one of the finest collections of Remington revolvers. He passed more than a decade ago, but I cherish the memories of seeing his collection and hearing him explain what each one was. He even had some of the original packaging, which, on its own, was worth about as much or more as the example Hacker discussed.

**Richard Gabriel**  
via e-mail

# AR **NRA** AMERICA'S RIFLE CHALLENGE

ARC is designed to help the everyday responsible AR owner use and excel with their AR through competition and training. As part of the ARC program, we'll provide modernized, specific AR training and competitions at clubs around the nation for beginners and for AR owners seeking to gain a higher level of skill. Additionally, the ARC Program supports the use of rimfire ARs and pistol caliber carbine (PCC) ARs. ARC also supports suppressors for training and competition.



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[arc.nra.org/](https://arc.nra.org/)



**A** man in his 70s was in his home in Jacksonville, Fla., shortly after lunchtime on Nov. 18, 2025, when an intruder broke in through a back window and demanded his keys and valuables. The suspect allegedly pointed a gun at the homeowner and forced him into a back bedroom; fortunately, the homeowner was able to retrieve a gun he had in that room and fire one shot, striking the alleged assailant in the shoulder. The suspect then fled in the armed citizen's vehicle, but police located him about half an hour later and took him into custody. "They're moving up in a special kind of formation on the back of the car, heard a pop, they grabbed him and pulled him out, put him on the ground, and EMS was tending to him [...] Glad to have another one of these guys off the streets," a witness to the arrest told reporters. (firstcoastnews.com, Jacksonville, Fla., 11/18/25)

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**O**n Nov. 25, 2025, a jewelry store assistant manager in Murray, Utah, buzzed in two potential customers, despite some misgivings about their appearance. "I noticed that the beard on one of [the suspects] looked a little too groomed, too straight. I was like that's kind of odd, but I buzzed them in—that was a bad idea," the assistant manager later told reporters. The other man was apparently wearing a wig as a disguise as well. Immediately upon entering, one of the "customers" took out a gun and pushed the assistant manager backwards. He then forced him and another employee to the floor and took out tape to restrain them with. At this point, the assistant manager drew his own gun and fired at the suspects, striking one and causing them both to flee. Police later found the wounded suspect at the hospital where the other one had dropped him off. The other suspect had not been detained at the time of reporting. (fox13now.com, Salt Lake City, Utah, 11/25/25)

**I**n Horry County, S.C., when police responded on the evening of Dec. 8, 2025, to a call about a shooting victim, they discovered a man inside a laundromat with a gunshot wound in his thigh. The man reportedly claimed he'd been randomly shot by an unknown assailant and had fled into the laundromat to escape. However, another person returned to the scene and explained to police that the man had attacked them and they had shot him in self-defense. (The gender of this victim was not reported.) Police arrested the wounded suspect for first-degree domestic violence with strangulation as an aggravating factor. (myrtlebeachonline.com, Myrtle Beach, S.C., 12/9/25)

**O**n the evening of Dec. 10, at a bar in Muncie, Ind., a 53-year-old man allegedly punched a female bartender and then spat on her, on another employee and on another customer. He then reportedly threw metal barstools and chairs with "immense

force" at four other people, causing significant injuries, including broken ribs and collapsed lungs. One of the victims reportedly finally stopped the attack by shooting the assailant, who was later arrested after police found him walking from the scene with a gunshot wound. The suspect is being charged with multiple felony counts of battery. (fox59.com, Indianapolis, Ind., 12/10/25)

**J**ust after 7 a.m. on Dec. 11, 2025, in Gulfport, Miss., two women were at home when a man whom both women had protective orders against broke in through a window. The two women fled from the man, who was armed with a knife and a hammer, as he slashed at them. The women managed to barricade themselves in another room, but the assailant was not deterred. As he tried to break into that room, one of the women retrieved a firearm and shot the man dead. The 29-year-old assailant had been released from jail on bond after being arrested for kidnapping one of the women in October of 2025. One of the women suffered knife wounds, but her condition was otherwise not indicated in news reports. (fox10tv.com, Mobile, Ala., 12/11/25; and sunherald.com, Biloxi, Miss., 12/11/25)

**O**n the night of Dec. 15, 2025, a man reportedly kicked in the back door of a home in Waco, Texas. The homeowner, fearing for his life, shot the man as he entered the residence, striking him in the left forearm. Witnesses said they had seen a white Dodge Charger circling the area before the incident and saw a man fleeing to that vehicle after the shooting. A 32-year-old man with a facial tattoo showed up at the hospital within the hour for treatment of a matching gunshot wound; police also matched the pattern on his shoes to the footprint he left on the home's door and of his clothing to security video footage. The suspect was arrested and charged with a second-degree felony for burglary. (fox44news.com, Waco, Texas, 12/17/25)

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# The NRA Stands And Fights For Freedom

Every company, great or small, needs a realignment now and then. But, when a company has been around for nearly 155 glorious years, straightening the course can take a full reformation.

Any real reformation must begin with the articulation of, and a restated commitment to, its defining principle. For the NRA, any member of this association knows our central principle can be articulated in these eight words: The NRA Stands and Fights for American Freedom!

Naturally, by freedom I am referring to our Second Amendment-protected right to keep and bear arms. But then, all the tenets of true individual freedom cannot be won or kept—the Founders of this great nation certainly knew this—if individuals can't defend their lives with modern tools designed for that job. Since the Founding period and before, this meant the private ownership of, and the ability to carry, firearms. Hence the 27 words in the U.S. Bill of Rights: A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

With this basic truth alive in the words and actions of everything we do, the NRA has always fought in the legislatures and courtrooms to preserve this fundamental right, and to, where necessary, win it back.

But, as has been discussed often in these pages and in the media, some in previous leadership did not put themselves behind this critical cause. This made a reformation mandatory for saving this critical association.

Thanks to reform-minded men and women on the NRA Board of Directors, we've had a complete leadership change, and we now have real accountability, solid accounting (we balanced the budget!), austerity and smart cuts in order to create a leaner, more responsive association. All of that was done, but this wasn't the end of the process—it was but the beginning.

Next, to rebuild, to meet new needs, to overcome obstacles and to utilize changes in technology to its advantage, we made changes across every division.

Now, by realigning every part of the NRA to the core principle that the NRA stands and fights for freedom, we are seeing a renewed purpose in every division. Your NRA Institute for Legislative Action has rebuilt an incredible team; our Education & Training Division is communicating with our tens of thousands of instructors, putting on events and more; our Competitive Shooting Division is growing behind innovative ideas; our Membership & Marketing Division has seen a massive realignment and renewed focus; and our Law Enforcement Division has its mojo back, as do our other programs and services.

Your NRA is now a lean, fast and strong heavyweight. This is critical as we move closer to the midterm elections that will decide if the U.S. Congress will stand steadfast behind our rights or if they will incrementally turn against our freedom.

If we continue to stand together behind a strong NRA as we chant our mantra—The NRA Stands and Fights for Freedom!—we can prevail by keeping America free. We are an association of like-minded, if otherwise very diverse, freedom-loving citizens. When we stand together, the gun-control groups, media elites and others who want this freedom taken from the people must tremble and fret, as they know an awake and educated electorate will never give up its freedom.

**LOOK CLOSELY AT WHAT WE ARE  
REBUILDING ... EVERY PART OF IT  
IS IN STEP WITH THE BEAUTIFUL  
PRINCIPLE THAT THE NRA STANDS  
AND FIGHTS FOR FREEDOM!**

As celebration is an important part of any struggle for a just cause, I encourage you to honor our freedom by attending the NRA Annual Meetings (this year in Houston from April 16-19), NRA competitions, and more. I also ask you to bring others to these events and to talk to friends and neighbors about this critical freedom. Share links to our publications and resources. We can all help to keep this critical association strong.

That said, I read many members' letters and emails, and I listen to messages. I respond to as many as I can. Many NRA employees respond to members who have questions and concerns. Our doors are wide open. Because of this, I know some of the recent changes to our print magazines have raised concerns among those who have long enjoyed these publications. I assure you I'm listening, and we continue to assess our options. As we move forward, look closely at what we are rebuilding; if you do, I think you'll be pleased, as every part of it is in step with the beautiful principle that the NRA stands and fights for freedom!

Ronald Reagan was right when he said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. It has to be fought for and defended by each generation." But, if we keep this association strong, we can spring anew, we can be strong and resilient in each age; all it takes is for us to make it so.

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U N P A R A L L E L E D

## NRA 2.0 Transformations

As reported on Oct. 31, 2025, the NRA announced a major internal reorganization to modernize and increase efficiencies. This reorganization marked the first step in our effort to modernize and improve operations. As mentioned in previous updates, NRA 2.0 is refocusing on its core missions of defending our Second Amendment rights, promoting gun safety and training, supporting our clubs and associations and hosting shooting competitions. Women and youth programs, as well as those focused on hunting and conservation, are also receiving renewed attention.

Last fall, the officers invited an information-technology firm to evaluate our technology infrastructure, systems and operations. The NRA staff was highly supportive in assisting with the assessment and offering valuable insights to improve operations. One of the main findings was the need for better coordination and integration of the latest information technology within the membership-facing teams.

In mid-December, NRA Human Resources posted a new position called Executive Managing Director, Operations & Technology—a role that the Officers and EVP identified through the reorganization and IT assessment. Here is an overview from the job description: “The Executive Managing Director will lead enterprise-wide transformation across core divisions, technology, data and organizational change. This role requires a seasoned executive with a proven record of delivering complex organizational and technical transformations, modernizing legacy environments and driving measurable business outcomes at scale. Reporting directly to the CEO, this leader will own enterprise transformation strategy, execution and deploying AI technology.”

This will be a significant step forward for the organization on a new journey toward operational excellence and will enable EVP Doug Hamlin to fully carry out his duties.

### Membership Magazine Update

Many members are asking why we made changes to our association magazines. To explain, some background information is necessary.



By Bill Bachenberg  
President

In the early 1990s, an annual NRA membership cost \$25. To keep up with inflation, an annual membership would need to be about \$62 today, but it is available for as little as \$35 a year. Similarly, a Life Membership was \$1,500 back then. Today, with inflation, a Life Membership would be \$3,700, yet it remains only \$1,500.

For about 10 cents a day, your annual membership dues help defend your God-given Second Amendment rights and support excellent programs in Education & Training, Women & Youth initiatives, Eddie Eagle, Refuse to be a Victim and Women On Target, to name a few, along with a great magazine.

In 1885, a magazine was first published called *The Rifle*, which still exists today as the *American Rifleman*. *American Hunter* was first published in October 1973. During the 1980s and '90s, the NRA released several other targeted magazines. Back then, paper and postage were relatively cheap, and gas prices were dramatically less. Today, paper costs about six to seven times more, and a first-class stamp increased from 6 cents to 78 cents, a 13-fold rise. Consequently, the cost to produce the NRA magazines has risen to the point where we could not in good conscience continue with the same model.

This was not an easy choice, as we had to figure out how to cover publishing costs without significantly raising membership dues or charging Life Members more than \$20 for a magazine subscription. Leadership has a duty to our members to be efficient and effective with your dues and donations. Our older members, like me, prefer paper, while the younger generations favor a digital experience. We aimed to meet each group's needs with four physical magazines and 12 digital magazines for all members. The exciting part about digital magazines is that we can include videos and sound in the articles. Additionally, your digital experience will feature more current news, not news that is two months old due to publishing deadlines. Plus, the new digital experience opens up interesting opportunities for member interactivity with the content that most interests them.

As we have announced, the Media Division at NRA will be transferring content from the discontinued magazines to the *American Rifleman* or the *American Hunter*, as well as to the digital format. We understood that this might not be popular with some members, but we had to make tough decisions so we could continue publishing a paper magazine. You might not receive them as often as you're used to, but you will still get four print magazines a year at a time when most organizations have completely stopped publishing theirs.

Again, while this was a gut-wrenching decision, we believe it was made in the best interest of the members. Please give the digital format a try on your computer or mobile device.

Lastly, the 2026 NRA Annual Meetings & Exhibits will be held April 16-19 in Houston, Texas. The Exhibit Hall will feature more than 14 acres of the latest guns and gear. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone in Houston.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Bachenberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.



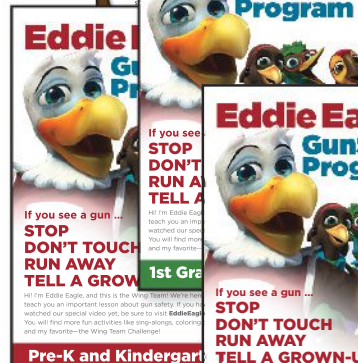
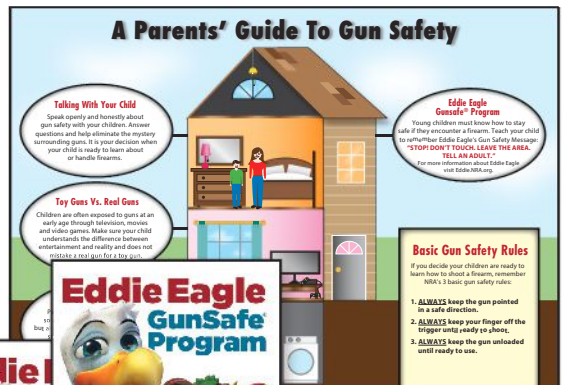
# Eddie Eagle GunSafe® Program

The Eddie Eagle GunSafe® program is the NRA's gun accident prevention program that seeks to help parents, law enforcement, community groups and educators navigate a topic paramount to our children's safety. Eddie and his Wing Team are on a mission to help you teach Pre-K through 4th graders what to do if they ever come across a gun...

**STOP! DON'T TOUCH! RUN AWAY! TELL A GROWN-UP!**

Eddie's fun and free material, available at [eddieeagle.nra.org](http://eddieeagle.nra.org), makes it easy to understand and remember his safety advice with a catchy song and a scenario in which Eddie and his friends—the Wing Team—encounter just such a situation and help each other (with the help of trusted grown-ups) learn how to stay safe. The Eddie Eagle Tree House website at [eddieeagle.com](http://eddieeagle.com) lets children explore these safety concepts more fully, but in a fun way, with lessons, coloring pages, storybooks, etc...

Another important way Eddie spreads his message is through the mascot costume. These costumes are now available to law enforcement, fire departments, EMS and school administration agencies through an NRA Foundation State Fund grant.



For more information, please visit <https://eddieeagle.nra.org>





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# Remembering Phil Schreier, Director of NRA Museums

By Mark A. Keefe IV, Editorial and Public Affairs Director, NRA Media

**O**n Dec. 28, 2025, Director of NRA Museums, Phil Schreier, lost his battle with Acute Myeloid Leukemia. Phil's journey as an NRA employee began as a curatorial assistant at NRA's National Firearms Museum in 1989, located at that time in Washington, D.C. The role was far more janitorial than it sounds, but he ultimately developed the museum into today's revered repository in Fairfax, Va. Walk its galleries, and you will be walking hand in hand with Phil.



NRA PHOTO

This is more personal for me, as I first met Phil in July 1979. I was a homesick 13-year-old attending Boy Scout junior leadership training, and he was the coolest Eagle Scout in the world. He knew everything. He had muskets and a Civil War belt buckle.

But what Phil really had was the ability to put people at ease and to tell a story, whether you were 13 or 103. He made guns—and the importance of them to our freedom—comfortable, real and relevant. So, when I was asked to start “American Rifleman Television” on the Outdoor Channel in 2002, the first thing I did was head to Phil’s office and tell him, “I can’t do it without you.” He was part of every episode for 44 seasons, 22 years.

Phil didn’t just talk about history, either—he lived it. He became an embedded war correspondent for *American Rifleman* during the ouster of Saddam Hussein, earning the distinction of being presented a Screaming Eagle patch and lapel pin from the commanding general, David Petraeus, for seeing more than 30 days on the ground with the 101st Airborne Division. Later, NRA sent him to Afghanistan to report and represent us.

Most of NRA’s millions of members will never meet an NRA staffer, one of the dedicated people who go to work for them every day, so it matters when they do. Phil had the Cal Ripken attitude: You stay and sign the last baseball. At the thousands of events he attended, he would always make time to answer a question or shake a hand.

Wherever he went, Phil represented NRA and the positive side of the gun culture; he represented all of us that have guns and freedom in our hearts. The NRA is diminished in this loss, but we are also inspired to live up to Phil’s legacy.

## U.S. Army Awards \$4.9 Million Contract for FN M240L Medium Machine Guns



**A** \$4.9 million contract has been awarded to FN America to supply the U.S. Army with additional FN M240L medium machine guns.

The M240L was originally adopted by the U.S. Army in 2010, after a joint development effort with FN to create a lighter, yet durable, medium machine gun. (In fact, the model is 5 pounds lighter than its predecessor, the FN M240B.)

“The M240L continues the collaborative effort between FN, the U.S. Army and the individual soldier to provide the most effective weapon systems for the warfighter,” said president and CEO of FN America, Mark Cherpes. “We are extremely proud of this product and look forward to working with the U.S. Army to deliver against this contract.”

## CZ to Supply Pistols to the German Army

**T**he Bundeswehr has selected a CZ pistol as its new standard-issue sidearm, a move the gun company hails as one of its most significant milestones.



CZ was awarded the contract, which will be fulfilled through CZ’s authorized partner in Germany, POL-TEC GmbH, following an open international tender, prevailing over several global competitors. The pistols, designated as P13 for the German military, are based on the CZ P-10 C OR (Optics-Ready) model in a Flat Dark Earth (FDE) finish. The CZ P-10 C OR is a striker-fired 9 mm with a 15-round capacity.

“We are honored that the German Bundeswehr has chosen CZ as its partner,” said Jan Zajic, CEO and chairman of the board of CZ. “It clearly confirms the outstanding reputation our firearms have earned through active deployment in real combat conditions. We look forward to a long-term cooperation with the Bundeswehr and to fulfilling all its requirements in line with the contract.”

## U.S. Army Awards Mossberg Contract for Additional 590A1 Pump-Action Shotguns



The U.S. Army has awarded O.F. Mossberg & Sons a contract for approximately \$11.6 million dollars to supply the U.S. Army with additional Mossberg 590A1 pump-action shotguns.

“Mossberg is honored to receive an additional contract from the U.S. Department of Defense for the battle-proven 590A1,” said John MacLellan, Mossberg’s vice president of Sales and Marketing.

“This award reflects our long commitment to supplying rugged, mission-capable firearms,” added MacLellan. “[It also] reinforces our pledge to provide timely solutions that support the effectiveness of U.S. service members.”

First adopted by multiple branches of the U.S. Military in 1987, the Mossberg 590 met or exceeded rigorous military testing standards.

Following its adoption, the U.S. Military requested a purpose-built variant capable of withstanding sustained, high-volume use in the most demanding environments. That requirement led directly to the development of the Mossberg 590A1—a strengthened, mission-ready evolution of the original 590 platform.

Mossberg 590A1 shotguns are based upon the popular Mossberg 500 pump-action platform, with non-binding, twin-action bars; positive steel-to-steel lock-up; an anti-jam elevator for smooth, reliable operation; dual extractors; anodized aluminum receiver for added durability and Mossberg’s ambidextrous top-tang mounted safety. The Mossberg 590A1 also features a heavy-walled barrel, metal trigger guard, metal safety selector switch and Parkerized finish.

## 150,000 NFA Applications Filed On Day 1 After \$0 Tax Stamp Becomes Official

On average, the number of eForms submitted to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) runs around 2,500 per day. On Jan. 1, however, when the fee for a National Firearms Act tax stamp dropped from \$200 to \$0, approximately 150,000 people filed eForms, causing glitches and delays with the online portal.



The tax stamp is required to take ownership of a suppressor, short-barreled rifle, short-barreled shotgun and what ATF refers to as an “any other weapon.” All other requirements remain.

Suppressor ownership reached record-shattering levels even before the tax stamp was free. According to the American Suppressor Association, there were fewer than 300,000 of the devices in circulation in 2011. By January 2025, that figure was roughly 4.4 million—a growth of more than 1,450 percent.

The stage was set for the New Year’s Day surge in mid-summer 2025, however. “On July 4th, President Donald Trump signed into law his ‘One Big Beautiful Bill,’ which included a provision that eliminated the tax stamp fee of \$200, but did not deregulate suppressors under the National Firearms Act of 1934 (NFA),” NRA-ILA explained after the measure was passed.

## Remington Reintroduces .22 Short Loads

Remington Ammunition announced that it is once again producing the versatile, user-friendly .22 Short.

The .22 Short was the first American-made metallic cartridge. The Smith & Wesson Model 1, released in 1858, was the first defensive revolver chambered for it.

The updated .22 Short line includes both a 27-grain hollowpoint and a 29-grain roundnose offering, tailored for plinking, pest control and training new shooters. The .22 Short has the same rim, case body and bullet diameter of the .22 Long, .22 Extra Long and .22 LR, so nearly any .22-chambered firearm can shoot it (though semi-automatics may not cycle as well.)

“Big tasks sometimes call for short solutions, and our reintroduced .22 Short delivers just that,” said Dan Compton, Remington’s rimfire product director. “It’s a perfect choice for varmint specialists and first-time shooters looking for a low-recoil, lower-noise round that still performs with confidence.”



# Rifle Standard Gold

## Here's how to improve your close-range carbine handling.

For me, drill practice means isolating a single performance element and refining it until it becomes automatic. The goal is simple: build consistency, efficiency and confidence under controlled pressure. Progress comes not from bursts of success, but from reliable, repeatable execution over time.

The Rifle Standard Gold or Mini-Navy Qual is a short, but demanding test of rifle control, reload discipline and marksmanship fundamentals under time constraints. It's a modification to the highly popular Modified Navy Qual shot at 50 yards. This version pushes shooters to balance accuracy with pace, rewarding smooth mechanics over rushed reactions at closer ranges. Every action—from mounting the rifle to breaking the final shot—matters.

### Here's the drill:

Begin from the ready position. On the signal, fire five rounds at each target, performing a reload between engagements. The total course of fire is 15 rounds, spread across three targets (T1 at 20 yards, T2 at 10 yards, T3 at 5 yards). The entire drill must be completed within 15 seconds, using the TCT MK4 target or an NRA B8.

### Course of Fire:

**Distance:** T1 at 20 yards, T2 at 10 and T3 at 5

**Time:** 15 seconds total

**Rounds:** 15 total

### Sequence:

1. From ready, fire five rounds at T1
2. Reload
3. Fire five rounds at T2
4. Reload
5. Fire five rounds at T3 to finish

### Scoring:

The drill uses 15 total rounds, scored strictly as hit or miss on an 8-inch scoring ring. A minimum of 12 hits is required to pass. Once the shooter meets the 12-hit threshold, their final classification is determined by overall completion time.

### Time Standards:

**Less than 15 seconds:** Intermediate

**Less than 12.5 seconds:** Advanced

**Less than 10 seconds:** Expert



After achieving the minimum requirement of 12 hits out of 15, qualifying as a “passing” and “intermediate” performance, shooters are further measured by both accuracy and time. Scoring 13 or 14 hits demonstrates advanced consistency, while a perfect 15 hits reflects true mastery. Time standards then refine performance levels: Finishing in less than 15 seconds serves to indicate intermediate capability, completing the run inside of 12.5 seconds shows advanced proficiency and breaking the 10-second mark signifies expert performance under real conditions.

The key is to let accuracy drive speed, not the other way around. Build a deliberate rhythm through each engagement: mount, sights, trigger and follow-through. Maintain a consistent cheek weld and sight picture, using a controlled-breathing cycle to steady the rifle before each string. Performing clean reloads and stable transitions make the difference between intermediate and expert achievement.

This drill rewards economy of motion, consistency and mental focus. It's not about racing the clock; it's about maintaining control as the clock runs.

By reinforcing disciplined gun handling and precision under stress, the Rifle Standard Gold sharpens both rifle skill and confidence, particularly if you otherwise tend to neglect long-gun handling. Measure progress by consistency, not luck. Stay calm, shoot clean and let performance speak for itself.

## KA-BAR Slabby

Few proprietary eponyms in the knife world are as well-recognized as KA-BAR, the combat/utility design originally requested by the U.S. Military during World War II and used with success by countless troops in conflicts since. So, updating such a classic was a sobering task for the manufacturer, as devotees of the icon were inevitably prone to draw critical comparisons with any reboot. In this case, though, KA-BAR's new U.S.-made Slabby, at slightly more than a pound and more than 12 inches long, appears ready to not only hold its own—albeit through more modern design and materials—but is likely even tougher and more utilitarian than its famous predecessor. The Slabby can be completely disassembled in minutes with only an Allen wrench and a pin punch. Threaded bushings float in through-holes to provide purchase for the scales' four securing screws. The scales themselves are molded of black, glass-filled nylon, and aftermarket versions are already available—some, predictably, mimicking the original KA-BAR's stacked leather washers. The Slabby's 6.9-inch-long blade is of chrome-vanadium 1095 steel, and its Bowie-inspired clip point features a swedge and fullers on each side like the original. Add to all that the new model's U.S.-made polymer sheath with five pairs of attachment eyelets and a lockable thumb latch, and the Slabby succeeds brilliantly at the challenge of ushering the classic KA-BAR design into the modern era.

**MSRP: \$245.22; [kabar.com](http://kabar.com)**



## XS Sights for Smith & Wesson Pistols

XS Sights' steel, fiber-optic sights are now available for Smith & Wesson semi-automatic handguns. These sights, manufactured in Texas, have become well-known for providing exceptional brightness and ease of acquisition. And if you don't like the standard green, the U.S.-sourced fiber-optic insert is user-replaceable.

**MSRP: \$50 to \$60; [xssights.com](http://xssights.com)**



## Shooters Global SG Pulse Pro

The Shooters Global SG Pulse Pro is an impressive all-in-one gadget, offering you a timer, DOPE (data on previous engagements) cards, a level and a stability tracker in one aluminum, water-resistant body with multiple mounting options. The LCD display indicates actual numbers, but bright LED lights quickly indicate whether you're on target or angled too far in one axis or another—significantly simplifying shot assessment. It's highly customizable for audio alerts, cant tolerance and LED brightness. Switch between DOPE cards for stages, including wind speed and direction, plus target distance, elevation, etc. The app also lets you learn from each shot by showing you muzzle-trace data. The SG Pulse Pro is Bluetooth-compatible, and its battery should last through about 600, 2-minute stages. **MSRP: \$296.99 to \$389.99; [timer.shooters.global](http://timer.shooters.global)**



## Steiner ATLAS Aiming and Illumination System

The Steiner ATLAS (Advanced Tactical Laser Aiming System) is a comprehensive, rifle-mounted aiming and illumination system in a lightweight magnesium-alloy body. It incorporates a visible laser pointer, near-infrared (NIR) laser pointer, long-range NIR illuminator and mid- and short-range NIR LED illuminators, all in a low-profile design to avoid interfering with other sighting systems like LPVOs. Ambidextrous controls allow easy switching between the five modes. As for zeroing, the lasers and illuminators are co-aligned with a single set of adjusters—set it once for all. **MSRP: \$4,025; [steiner-optics.com](http://steiner-optics.com)**



## Carbon, Copper or Clean?

**M**y brother and I have virtually identical, heavy-barreled Remington 700 varmint rifles chambered in .22-250 Rem. He cleans his rifle every time he shoots it, even if it is only one shot. His contention is that a perfectly clean barrel will shoot more accurately for a longer number of rounds than a fouled barrel will. It is infrequent for him to shoot more than 10 rounds before he is scrubbing out the bore to prevent copper and carbon from building up.

I keep my ammunition in 100-round boxes, and when I have shot all 100 rounds, I clean the barrel with a bronze brush and a good solvent. Once the solvent sits in the barrel for a few moments, I run three dry patches through it to chase out what's left and call it a day with a light wipe down of the outside of the gun.

My brother thinks that I am ruining a good rifle by not cleaning it more often than I do, and I think he is going to wear his out by cleaning it so much. Both rifles have just more than 1,000 rounds through them and are still solid groundhog medicine out past 300 yards.

Taking our cleaning habits into consideration, which barrel will last longer?



*P.F.  
via e-mail*

**Let me explain from a couple of different angles** and share a little of my experience gathered over the years in chasing that elusive cleaning combination that works every time on every barrel. Every barrel has its own personality, just like you and your brother do. Some have similar traits and give similar performance overall—and some don't.

A test that you might consider is to thoroughly clean both barrels in the same manner and shoot several test groups with your best ammunition. Ideally, both should be shot from a rest and under similar conditions. This will give you both a baseline. Keep a record of the groups and replicate the test every so often to see how long the groups stay within your range of acceptability. Since you clean every 100 rounds, it would be interesting to see if the accuracy changes appreciably over the course of

those shots fired. My guess is probably not, but you will have to see for yourself.

Your brother, on the other hand, should perform his own test to see if his more frequent cleaning is worth the effort. If he uses a bore guide with a coated cleaning rod and a bronze brush with standard cleaning patches to clean his barrel (starting, of course, from the chamber end), I don't see how he could wear out anything moving the brush the full length of the bore with each stroke.

From my experience, seemingly identical barrels not only may shoot differently, but respond to cleaning differently as well. The reality is that unless you have access to a bore scope to inspect the inside of the barrel, you really have no idea whether the barrel is clean or not. I know this is heresy and I'll get a lot of readers taking exception, but I can unequivocally say that I have yet to see a standard barrel, with a box of ammunition through it, that would clean to the base metal on the first cleaning using the conventional and accepted methods to clean a rifle barrel. The methods I'm talking about are written on the side of every solvent bottle for sale in the gun shop. Their caveat is, if the patches don't come out clean after the first cleaning procedure, keep cleaning until a clean patch comes out the other end. This could take days and sometimes weeks to accomplish. I've done it, and borescoped the barrel after each cleaning to see what progress I had really made. I was disappointed in the time it took to get to the base metal because it took a lot more work and time than I had anticipated.

Over the years, it was thought that copper was the perpetrator of inaccuracy in a rifle, and in many cases, it was—to a degree. Now we find that a little bit of copper is desirable in an accurate-shooting barrel. Carbon buildup, however, can hinder accuracy and is often tougher to remove from the barrel. In one of my test barrels, accuracy was detrimentally affected by a carbon buildup just less than 2 inches in front of the chamber. At the time, I had to use a mild abrasive to remove the buildup, as no solvent I had access to would touch it. Each time the carbon was removed, the barrel's accuracy was restored until the buildup re-occurred in a few hundred rounds and the abrasive had to be used to remove it again.

A clean barrel doesn't have to be perfectly clean to be accurate. In fact, even benchrest shooters shoot fouling shots after cleaning, but before they shoot for record.

You and your brother can keep doing what you are doing without worrying about which barrel will last the longest. As long as you hit your targets when you do your part, it will be moot. Odds are that it will be a long time before you find the answer to your question of which barrel will last the longest. Let me know when you find out. 🌀

"Questions & Answers" is compiled by staff, Field and Contributing Editors from the inquiries about guns, ammunition and their use received by American Rifleman. Direct answers to technical and historical questions are provided only to NRA members. Submit questions to: [americanrifleman@nrahq.org](mailto:americanrifleman@nrahq.org). Include your membership number. Please limit each e-mail to one specific question. Technical or historical questions cannot be answered by telephone, and even approximate values on guns or other equipment cannot be provided. Please allow 6 to 8 weeks for replies.

# Weird Guns

## There's no accounting for taste.



An assemblage of Weird-Gun-Guy bait might include a KelTec P50 and a Mateba revolver (front row), a Calico M-900 carbine and a Chiappa Rhino revolver (second row) and the bullpup Steyr AUG carbine (back).

**B**ack in the day, we had a regular customer whom we absolutely knew would absolutely buy a specific sort of firearm. Over the years, we got in everything from a SPAS-12 shotgun to a Crossfire pump-action shotgun/rifle combo to a classic ASP conversion on a Smith & Wesson Model 39. Whenever one of these unusual firearms crossed our books, we'd contact this dude because he was all in on weirdo guns. I had his contact info in my Rolodex (remember those?) as "The Weird-Gun Guy."

His personal tastes just ran to the esoteric. It's not like there was any sort of organizing principle behind his tastes; he just liked weird guns. But, dudes like that are not the only variety of fans of unusual firearms. True confession time: I used to be a huge fan of the P7 pistol from Heckler & Koch.

I made a lot of hay about how it was because of the low bore axis, or the cool "squeeze-cocking" system whereby the pistol was actually a single-action without a safety when the frontstrap was fully depressed and an inert lump when it wasn't. The problem with the squeeze-cocking system was that, when issued to police, there were several high-profile incidents where officers had their fingers already on the trigger when something startled them and they spasmodically squeezed the frontstrap. Predictably, the pistol did as it was designed to do and discharged. As a result, law enforcement agencies from New Jersey to West Germany got out of the P7 business, to the chagrin of us fans.

The gas-delayed-blowback operating system was the real reason I loved the P7, though. That made it novel, different—odd. I could extol the virtues of the operating system, like how the fixed barrel

made for greater mechanical accuracy and, since it didn't have to move inside the pistol, a more compact design. There was also the way that bleeding off gas pressure from just in front of the chamber allowed for a recoil-buffering system that self-adjusted for higher-pressure ammunition.

I brushed off the downsides, like the necessity (and difficulty) of cleaning the tunnel in the frame in which the gas piston traveled, and the way that the frame above the trigger guard effectively became a heat sink. Heckler & Koch attempted to mitigate this by adding a plastic heat shield to U.S. market P7M8 and M13 models, but if you run across a masochist who's still bringing P7s to high-round-count training classes in 2025, you'll see that they'll almost always bring two or even three pistols so they can swap out when one becomes literally too hot for them to handle.

There's a reason why most pistols weren't using this novel operating system (there have been a handful over the years, from the Steyr GB to the Walther CCP) instead of some variation on the common short-recoil setup, and it's not because they weren't brilliant enough to grasp its inherent superiority.

If there were a long-gun equivalent, it'd be any kind of bullpup. Much like fusion has been only 20 years away for the last 50 years, the bullpup was going to be the dominant rifle design of the future since the 1980s and it will be—any day now. Just you wait!

While there have been militaries that adopted bullpups—and they've met with limited success—it's notable that the largest army to adopt one, the French with the FAMAS, is phasing it out in favor of a conventional design that's an HK-manufactured variant of the AR pattern.

Like the gas delay on the P7, a bullpup design solves one engineering challenge by offering a rifle-length barrel with the attendant advantage in muzzle velocity in a compact package, but it introduces several others that must be engineered around. How do you accommodate both right- and left-handed shooters? How do you engineer a good trigger when the lockwork and the trigger lever itself are in different ZIP codes? Most militaries have decided that bullpups are just too much of a long-engineering run for not enough of a short-performance slide and just stuck with conventional layouts.

*Continued on page 53*

# When Price IS the Object

You get what you pay for, right? Maybe yes, maybe no.



Price is often considered to be a solid indicator of a firearm's potential for good performance. If that were a hard-and-fast rule, my highly customized competition and carry model 1911s would shoot circles around my well-worn Springfield XD-S in .45 ACP, even with its aftermarket trigger. But, in reality, the XD-S offsets its lower capacity and slower split times by holding its own in accuracy and reliability at any distance. Don't ask me how or why, it just does—and at a fraction of the cost.

The last few years of my Army career were spent neck-deep in the rapid prototyping, testing and fielding of precision-weapon systems for a small portion of the Special Operations community. Those developments covered the price spectrum, but once the manufacturers' fluffy guarantees were stripped away from the equipment, there was little correlation between cost and performance.

I've seen parallel outcomes in my custom work, accurizing and tuning rifles and large-format pistols from manufacturers at every price level. The results are always strangely similar, regardless of make, model and cost. Minor problems show up at all price levels, but are most common in cheaper firearms. Regular examples include loose screws, improper headspace, poorly cut crowns and chipped or excessively rough feed ramps.

Unfortunately, major issues—especially with rifle barrels—have been most common in premium-priced guns. New barrels that show massive throat erosion within a couple hundred rounds, carbon-fiber sleeve failures and bores with significant damage caused during manufacturing have crossed my bench periodically over the years. While barrels are replaceable, the most expensive manufacturers tend to use proprietary component designs, making repairs very costly.

I saw both sides of the price-versus-performance coin while teaching a precision-rifle course last summer. One student brought a new, switch-barrel rifle made by a well-regarded manufacturer. Just the rifle, with .308 Win. and 6.5 Creedmoor barrels, set him back nearly \$4,000. His .308 Win. barrel's best groups were reasonable, hovering around 1 MOA at 100 yards. But, the brand-new 6.5 Creedmoor barrel, which accounted for 20 percent of the rifle's cost, was another story. Open-tip, match projectiles would not print close enough to measure as groups and were quickly abandoned.

When polymer-tipped projectiles stopped feeding after two shots, we discovered that the rifle's manufacturer missed a critical step in the


chamber-reaming process. A 90-degree face was left at the front of the barrel's throat where the angular leade should have been. That sharp edge sheared the bullets' polymer tips, smashing them in place and causing successive cartridges to be damaged during feeding under the bolt's closing force.

The other students had simpler rifles that were home-built or from lower-end and mid-tier manufacturers. They ranged in cost from \$300 to \$1,500 and, with the exception of a student-built gun with an undersize gas port, none had functional problems. Performance was good across the board with most of them besting the \$4,000 rig's .308 Win. accuracy.

I've seen similar results in some of the evaluations I've done over the years. The most recent example was from a pair of 26-inch barreled, 6.5 Creedmoor rifles: a Sako TRG-22 A1 and a Tikka T3x Ace. The T3x's 100-meter average for five, five-shot groups, using three types of ammunition was .56 MOA to the TRG's .63 MOA. While that's a minor difference, and both showed excellent accuracy for off-the-shelf rifles, the Tikka achieved that win at less than a third of the cost (while weighing 2 pounds less) than the Sako.

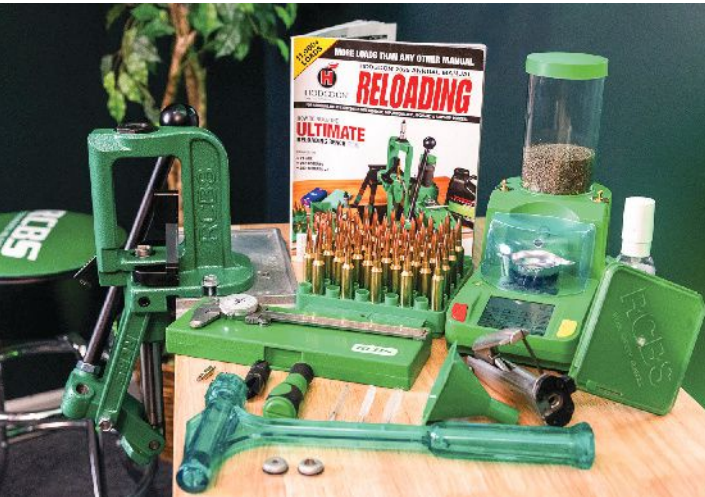
Every manufacturer has problem guns from time to time, but how they handle warranty claims speaks volumes. In each of my past and present firearm-industry roles, I've encountered high-end firearm manufacturers that became very popular or won large government contracts, and then stopped taking care of the regular folks who put them on the map. Any manufacturer or custom shop with a reputation for making warranty service difficult should raise a big, red warning flag—especially when the products in question may be needed in life-or-death situations.

So, how do we discern good from bad before laying down hard-earned money? Personally, I place clever marketing people and well-compensated "influencers" at the bottom of my go-to list. Reviews from print and independent web sources can be good entry points for basic info, but some sorting of wheat from chaff is still required.

Seeking feedback from knowledgeable, legitimate product users is a good place to start. Try-before-buying opportunities are even better, though they're often hard to find. Taking your time to do the best homework possible and not assuming paying more will equal more can save you from exchanging money for heartburn in the long run. 

# New Handloading Helpers

RCBS is rolling out a host of new products to improve your handloading experience.



RCBS

In May of 2024, Hodgdon Powder Company acquired RCBS from Revelyst, which was a segment of what was then known as Vista Outdoor. It looks to be a match made in heaven—after all, Hodgdon is a savvy company when it comes to handloading, and every handloader has probably used Hodgdon powders. But, RCBS has been around for more than 80 years, and you could argue that under Revelyst, it became a bit stagnant, at least when it comes to new handloading products. When Hodgdon took over RCBS, I talked with Joel Hodgdon, and he said all that was about to change. By looking at the new products RCBS is introducing for 2026, it's clear he was right. Here's a rundown of what's coming:

### MatchMaster Powder Funnel Accessories

Unless I'm handloading for bulk, I always charge each case by hand with a charge dispensed from an electronic powder dispenser, which requires a funnel. Last year, RCBS introduced the MatchMaster Powder Funnel (\$99.99) and it's the best I've found. The high-strength aluminum funnel is coated with premium anti-stick finish, and it has specific caliber adapters to limit the chance of any powder spill. The MatchMaster Funnel comes with adapters for .22-, .24-, .26-, .28-, .30- and .33-caliber cartridges, but for 2026, RCBS is offering additional caliber adapters, and for those who like to load on a progressive press with a charging die, the company now has a funnel adapter for that as well. Caliber adapters and the die adapter retail for \$18.99.

### MatchMaster Loading Block

You might think a loading block is not all that important, but if you work with a single-stage press, it's a

must-have. Most loading blocks are made of plastic, but the new MatchMaster Multi-Cartridge Reloading Block is machined from a billet of 6061-T6 aluminum. It's stackable, has pass-through powder holes and non-slip rubber feet, and holds 50 cases. But what's really cool about this loading block is the case holes are sized to work with two rim sizes. It will hold cases with either a .384- or .473-inch rim diameter, which is any case based on the .223 Rem. or .308 Win. Most of the cartridges I load have these rim diameters. I've been very pleased with this block, and it's really nice how it sort of sticks to your bench so you won't accidentally knock it off. MSRP on the loading block is \$78.74.

### MatchMaster Duo Dies

For 2026, RCBS is offering two-die sets that include a standard, full-length sizing die and its Precision MatchMaster Seating Die. These Duo Die sets are ideal for handloaders who like to execute precision control over the seating depth of the bullet, and the seating die also has a free-floating, self-centering seating stem to help reduce runout. The seating die also has a unique bullet-seating window, allowing you to observe the process. Initially, the two-die sets will be available for 20 popular long-range cartridges, including the brand new 25 Creedmoor, and some not-so-popular cartridges like the .22 and .25 GT. MSRP for each set is \$174.99.

### Rock Chucker Supreme Elite Kit

To better align this kit with modern handloaders, the new Rock Chucker Supreme Elite Kit comes with a ChargeMaster Link Electronic Powder Dispenser. I've been using the ChargeMaster for quite a while—it has revolutionized my handloading—and its inclusion welcomes this reloading kit into the 21st century. The Elite kit also comes with a dial caliper, loading block, funnel, hand primer, bullet puller, case-prep tools, manual and the RCBS Accessory Base Plate. It has a suggested retail value of \$854.99. That's steep, but the ChargeMaster alone sells for \$300, so overall, you're looking at saving \$175.

### Henderson MatchMaster Trimmer

The biggest news from RCBS is the new electronic case trimmer. Many savvy handloaders consider the Henderson case trimmer the best in the industry, and RCBS has partnered with Henderson to introduce the new RCBS MatchMaster Trimmer. Not only will this unit trim cases, but it will also chamfer the inside and outside of the case neck at the same time. It delivers .001-inch precision and trims cases from .22- to .30-caliber, from 1.36 to 2.85 inches in length. The unit can mount directly to an RCBS Accessory Base Plate (\$42.99) and additional cutter heads (\$79.99), pilots (\$9.99) and collets (\$16.99) are available for a variety of calibers and cartridges. This trimmer will help you prep cases faster and with more precision. MSRP is \$774.99. 🌀



# The Future Past

What was once a service rifle for a brave new world all those wasted years ago is now running free as a rimfire option for armed citizens.

Photos by Holly Marcus

By Jeremiah Knupp

**A**merican firearm enthusiasts are pretty lucky. We're a big enough market that, for most international gun companies, it's worth the effort to sell their products here. And despite the restrictions we have on our freedoms, those manufacturers can offer a wider variety of their firearms in the U.S. than most anywhere else in the world. One notable exception to this reality is the absence of the Heckler & Koch G36 on the U.S. civilian market, but H&K is doing its best to change this—with a rimfire G36 we can own now and the hopes of a centerfire G36 in the future.

At first glance, the H&K G36 .22 LR is just another black polymer "tactical rimfire" and, unlike the numerous rimfire AR-15s on the market, one whose form most Americans aren't familiar with. That form is significant, however, and to understand why, you first need to know the history of its centerfire big brother.



When the Bundeswehr adopted the rifle it would designate the *Gewehr 36*, or “G36,” in 1997, it was not only a vastly different rifle from the Cold War-era G3 it replaced, but also a radical departure from designer H&K’s tried-and-true, roller-delayed-blowback action and stamped-steel firearms. It took many features from H&K’s revolutionary G11 caseless-ammunition rifle, including its extensive use of glass-fiber-reinforced polymer and its integrated optical sight. Polymer was used for G36 parts like the receiver (with a steel trunnion and reinforcing inserts) and components in the fire-control group, resulting in a significant cost and weight savings. Not having iron sights, the G36 had a 3.5X optic with a red-dot sight mounted above it, both integrated into the carry handle.

Firing 5.56 NATO, internally the G36 used a multi-lug, rotating bolt that rode in a square carrier and a short-stroke, gas-piston operating system. It fed from proprietary magazines made of translucent polymer that were released by a paddle behind the mag well.

In 2022, the G36 was replaced in German service by the G95K, a variant of the HK416. During its 25 years of service, it also became popular with special-operations groups and law-enforcement agencies around the world. It even nearly became a U.S. service rifle, when its design was used as a component of the XM29 Objective Individual Combat Weapon (OICW), and later as the basis of the standalone XM8 rifle, neither of which ended up being adopted by the U.S. Military.

Despite its popularity, G36-type rifles have been elusive on the U.S. civilian market. All jokes aside, H&K really doesn’t hate its civilian customers. The company is just stuck between a rock and a hard place, a.k.a. the German and U.S. governments. With its home country limiting what it can export and our own government restricting what can be imported, H&K is forced to jump its products through numerous hoops before they can be sold to us.

One year after Germany adopted the G36, H&K introduced the SL8. Using the basic operating system of the G36, but in semi-automatic-only form, the SL8 was modified to be sold in civilian markets around the world so it could be imported into the U.S. as a complete, factory-built rifle.

The original SL8-1 variant was imported into the U.S. from 1998 to 2004 and again from 2006 through 2008. In 2021, the company re-introduced the model as the SL8-6. This version uses black polymer throughout its construction and has a G36-type carry handle rail with no iron sights. It is currently discontinued from HK USA’s catalog.

Heckler & Koch fans went to great lengths to make the SL8 into a “true” G36. Elaborate conversions involved cutting the original receiver and grafting in portions of a salvaged G36 receiver from a surplus parts kit, modifying the magazine well and even re-dyeing gray parts black. While the results are impressive, they are out of the price range of the average firearm enthusiast. In 2013, H&K



*The hooded front post is typical of H&K rifles, but a departure from the original G36. The flippable rear sight consists of an aperture for speed and a notch for greater precision.*



*Visually, the G36 .22 LR is a relatively faithful facsimile of its centerfire inspiration. The first effort to import a G36-pattern rifle was the SL8, which included, among other departures, a gray thumbhole stock to satisfy both export and import restrictions. The G36 was adopted by the German military, but eventually replaced by the HK416. The G36 .22 LR’s stock folds to the right. Beneath the stock, pins can be removed for disassembly, though this is not needed for standard takedown for cleaning. The U.S. Army considered the G36-inspired XM8 to replace the M4 family.*



announced the HK243, a significant re-design of the G36 to make a semi-automatic-only rifle for the European market. A model for the American market, called the "HK293," was announced, but never materialized.

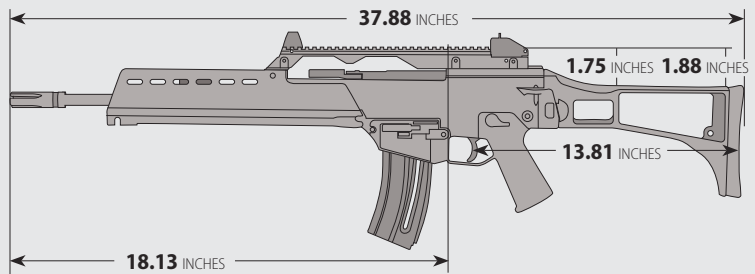
Although absent from shelves, the G36 has nonetheless staked a claim within American culture. Now that H&K is manufacturing firearms in the United States, including rifles, it would be possible to make a civilian version of the G36 in the U.S., and the company has officially acknowledged this possibility. In the meantime, the closest an American citizen can currently get to a factory-produced G36 is this .22 LR-chambered version.

In 2025, HK USA re-introduced the G36 .22 LR (the model had been offered for a few years starting in 2015 under the Walther nameplate). Born of the partnership that the company has with Umarex (of which Walther is a subsidiary), which has also produced semi-automatic .22 rimfire versions of the MP5 and HK416, the G36 .22 LR has the same overall dimensions as the centerfire G36, but weighs about 2 pounds less. Its barrel is 18.13 inches long and has its muzzle capped with an authentic-looking, four-prong flash hider, like what is used on shortened C and K variants of the G36.

Controls are identical to the centerfire version, with an ambidextrous charging handle that folds out to the right or left side and bilateral safety levers that have a 45-degree throw between the safe ("no bullets") and fire ("bullets") positions. A bolt-hold-open catch

## H&K G36 .22 LR

**Manufacturer:** Umarex (Germany). **Importer:** HK USA; (706) 701-5554; [hk-usa.com](http://hk-usa.com)



**Action Type:** Blowback-operated, semi-automatic

**Chambering:** .22 LR

**Capacity:** 20 rounds

**Receiver:** Polymer

**Stock:** Polymer buttstock and handguard

**Barrel:** Steel

**Rifling:** 6 grooves; 1:16.5-inch RH-twist

**Sights:** Fully adjustable aperture/notch rear; fixed hooded front post

**Trigger Pull Weight:** 7 pounds, 14 ounces

**Weight:** 5 pounds, 11 ounces

**Accessories:** Lock, manual

**MSRP:** \$679

## SHOOTING RESULTS

Load	Velocity	SD	Energy	Group Size		
				Smallest	Largest	Average
Armscor 36-grain PRNHP	1,144	17	104	1.67	2.08	1.86
Remington Golden Bullet 36-grain PRNHP	1,232	38	121	1.21	2.15	1.78
Federal Auto Match 40-grain LRN	1,144	12	116	1.31	1.98	1.71

Velocity and standard deviation (SD) measured in fps 10 feet from the muzzle for 10 consecutive shots with a Competition Electronics ProChrono DLX chronograph. Temperature: 62 degrees Fahrenheit. Humidity: 61 percent. Energy measured in ft.-lbs. Accuracy measured in inches for five consecutive, 10-shot groups at 50 yards from a Caldwell Matrix rest. Abbreviations: PRNHP (plated round-nose hollow point), LRN (lead round nose).

is located in the trigger guard. Like the original centerfire G36, it can be actuated to manually lock the bolt to the rear, but is not designed to release the bolt. Unlike the centerfire G36, the reciprocating charging handle on the .22 model cannot be locked into the bolt carrier for forward-assist capabilities.

The G36 .22 LR uses the same design of carry handle/sight rail with fixed sights as used on the original C and K versions of the G36. Sights consist of a fully adjustable rear that can be flipped between an open notch and an aperture (instead of the dual apertures of the centerfire G36), and a hooded front post. Both are mounted on a carry handle with a section of Picatinny rail. As an additional bonus for H&K fans, many of the G36 .22 LR's parts are compatible with the centerfire rifle, including the handguard, sight rail and stock.

A single button releases the buttstock (which has the 10.5-inch length of a full-size

*Continued on page 51*



U.S. ARMY



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# Reinventing the Wheel(Gun)

Taurus' new 66 Combat shows that even  
revolvers can get with the times.



**R**eleasing a new revolver, especially one aimed at the concealed-carry/self-defense segment of today's firearm market, with plentiful micro-9 mm, double-stack pistols, seems about as sensible as releasing a new automobile with a standard transmission. I mean, modern automatic transmissions are far from the clunky, three-speed horror shows of the malaise era, right? The manual transmission is an anachronism, championed mainly by drivers who harken to a romanticized version of the past where automatic transmissions were expensive, slow and took all the driving experience out of the hands (and feet) of the driver. You know, much like how semi-automatic handguns were finicky and required break-in periods and specific ammunition to run properly, so a revolver was a better choice

overall. Stick with me here, I'm going somewhere with this.

Consider that even with advances in automatic-transmission technology and "flappy paddle" gearboxes, manual transmissions are still offered by most automobile manufacturers out there. Heck, even Cadillac, which more or less pioneered the automatic transmission in the 1940s, started offering its CTS with a five-speed manual after a more-than-60-year hiatus from stick shifts, and continues to offer manuals even today. Sure, automatics are faster and arguably more economical than manuals now—flipping the script from when I was a new driver, mind you—but there's still a large-enough pool of drivers who fancy shifting their own gears that it's worth it for a luxury-based company to offer manual models.

Photos by Forrest MacCormack

By Jay Grazio, Executive Editor



## COVER STORY | REINVENTING THE WHEEL (GUN)

Thanks for the brief history of manual transmissions, Jay, but what the heck does this have to do with Taurus' new revolver? That's a great question; I'm glad you asked, nameless person who exists solely so I don't appear to be talking to myself. Taurus' new 66 Combat revolver offers what might be considered one of the best setups for a modern, fighting revolver yet. However, it's offering the 66 Combat at a time when tiny, pocket-size 9 mm handguns are cheap, plentiful, reliable and carry quite a bit more ammunition than even the seven-round cylinder of the 66 Combat. So, why then would the company go through all the trouble of designing what might be the best fighting revolver in at least a generation and a half?

Another great question. For the answer, I asked Caleb Giddings, Taurus USA general manager of marketing (and resident revolver guru) to walk me through the idea behind the 66 Combat. "The 66 Combat is in many ways like the 856 Executive Grade," he said. "This gun was born in a room with serious revolver shooters and people who carry these guns every day. It is everything you want in a proper fighting revolver—a 3-inch barrel, concealable grips, amazing trigger, usable sights and of course we go the extra step and make it optics-ready. A big feature is



Overall, the dimensions of the 66 Combat make it slightly larger than compact 9 mm semi-automatics, but the ease of operation and powerful chambering are in its favor. While the 66 Combat is double-action-only, the trigger is quite smooth and manageable. Opening the cylinder involves sliding the release toward the muzzle, much like a Smith & Wesson revolver. Up top, two screw holes come pre-drilled to allow the addition of an optics-mounting plate for fans of powered optics on handguns.

the double-action-only hammer, which is by design because a revolver specifically for personal protection isn't going to need a single-action function, especially considering how good the Combat's trigger is."

If you're going to carry a revolver despite other, more capacious offerings, you're best served with a purpose-built firearm, engineered with input from serious shooters and folks who know their way around wheel-guns. And Giddings isn't kidding about that trigger—when I first shot the 66 Combat, I was stunned by how good that trigger actually is. The pull weight is slightly more than 10.5 pounds, but that really doesn't tell the whole story. It's smooth. Real smooth. Like, the closest comparison I can come up with is the double-action pull of a Langdon Tactical Beretta smooth (which, if you're not familiar, is amazing). The trigger on the 66 Combat is easily one of the best DAO triggers I've ever pulled, and I do not get along with most DAO triggers.

So, now we're getting somewhere. The 66 Combat has a really good trigger. That's important. Capacity is seven rounds, and the 66 Combat is chambered in .357 Mag., so you've got a powerful round, but not a ton of them. The 10 mm is roughly equivalent in power to the .357 Mag., and the Glock G20 is about the same size as the 66 Combat and carries more than double the number of rounds. So, realistically, if you wanted the power of the magnum, you could carry a semi-automatic with double the capacity. What it comes down to, basically, is what we like and are comfortable and familiar with, and there's nothing wrong with that.

In fact, I pressed Giddings on the revolver-vs.-semi-auto argument, and he agrees: "[The] official answer is that if you're purely looking at CCW as a numbers game, a medium-frame, heavy, low-capacity revolver doesn't make sense when compared to say, a [Taurus] GX4 Carry. But, at the end of the day, what we carry is a personal choice, and since I personally enjoy shooting revolvers more than semi-autos, I want my carry gun to be the best possible version of the thing I already like."

That makes a ton of sense. I mean, I'm an old man, so revolvers appeal to me. I grew up in a time where the 9 mm cartridge was not thought of as a viable defensive round (which, honestly, was unfair considering that this was all post-Miami shootout and Hydra-Shoks were on the market), whereas the .357 Mag. was (and still is) quite viable out of



Containing seven rounds rather than the expected six, the cylinder of the 66 Combat is also devoid of fluting, adding weight for recoil mitigation (and making cleaning easier). Cut into the topstrap, the rear sight is fixed, while the front sight is a pinned fiber-optic pipe that catches the eye immediately for excellent target acquisition.

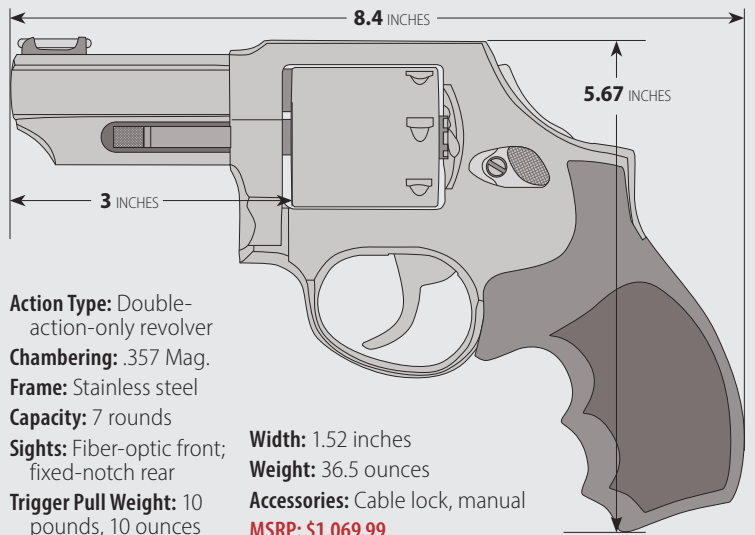
any length barrel and a medium-frame revolver with a 3-inch barrel was (is) eminently concealable, even with the rudimentary holster options of the Pleistocene era. Viable semi-automatic options for concealed carry at the time were Officers Model 1911s and, well ...

Yes, there were options, but they were few and far between. And it didn't help at all that right as concealed carry was really starting to take off, we were faced with the nonsensical and anti-rights 10-round magazine limit of the Federal Assault Weapon Ban of 1994. The capacity of the then fairly new Glock G19 was blunted by nearly 50 percent—which does put a damper on carrying one. Besides, if you're going to carry the heft of a 1911, why wouldn't you carry a six-round Model 19 (the other Model 19, the .357 Mag. revolver designed by Bill Jordan)? In summation, carrying a revolver in the early days was not as unusual a choice as it is in the present.

If you were to peek into my handgun history, you'd see I spent a good deal of time searching for the perfect concealed-carry revolver, too. I started my journey with a

## TAURUS 66 COMBAT

**Manufacturer:** Taurus; Brazil **Importer:** Taurus USA; (800) 327-3776, [taurususa.com](http://taurususa.com)



**Action Type:** Double-action-only revolver

**Chambering:** .357 Mag.

**Frame:** Stainless steel

**Capacity:** 7 rounds

**Sights:** Fiber-optic front; fixed-notch rear

**Trigger Pull Weight:** 10 pounds, 10 ounces

**Width:** 1.52 inches

**Weight:** 36.5 ounces

**Accessories:** Cable lock, manual  
**MSRP:** \$1,069.99

## SHOOTING RESULTS

Load	Velocity	SD	Energy	Group Size		
				Smallest	Largest	Average
Winchester 125-grain .357 Mag. JHP	1,354	37	509	2.01	2.51	2.22
Remington 158-grain .357 Mag. LSWC	1,196	22	502	2.09	3.03	2.58
Hornady Critical Defense Lite 90-grain .38 Spl. FTX	947	34	179	1.44	2.14	1.70
Federal Premium HST 130-grain .38 Spl. +P JHP	822	17	195	1.89	2.54	2.16

Velocity and standard deviation (SD) measured in fps 6 inches from the muzzle for 10 consecutive shots with a Garmin Xero C1 Pro chronograph. Muzzle energy measured in ft.-lbs. Temperature: 67 degrees Fahrenheit. Humidity: 10 percent. Accuracy measured in inches for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 10 yards from shooting bags. Abbreviations: JHP (Jacketed Hollow Point), LSWC (Lead Semi-Wadcutter), FTX (Flex Tip eXpanding)

Smith & Wesson Model 36, an exposed-hammer Chiefs Special, which had been my dad's backup as a Massachusetts State police officer. I had a Taurus 431 in .44 Spl., but that was too expensive to shoot very much. I found a Colt Lawman .357 Mag. revolver with a 2-inch barrel that, on paper, sounded perfect—except that it weighed about as much as a framing hammer and had about the same number of holster options. Lastly, I alternated between a Smith & Wesson Model 13 with a 3-inch barrel (the last revolver issued to FBI agents) and a Model 242 Ti (the only-made-for-one-year, ultra-rate L-frame, hammerless, seven-round .38 Spl.), in addition to various J-frames.

When it comes to revolvers today, though, there are so many excellent choices that it comes down to carrying what you like and

*Continued on page 52*



WHAT'S IN THE BOX?



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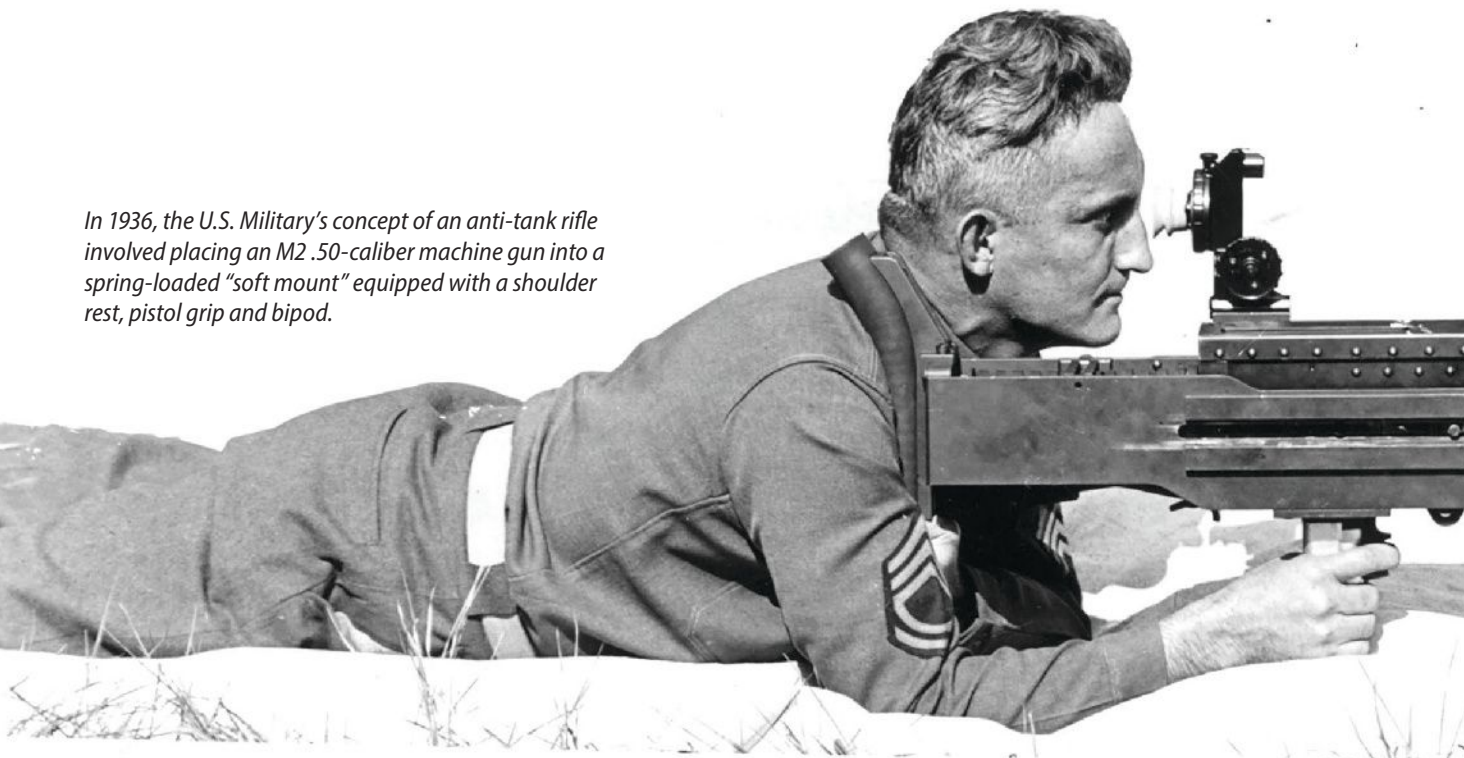


# The Short Life Of America's Anti-

**At the dawn of mechanized warfare, the U.S. Military contended with the reality that infantrymen would need an effective arm to defeat tanks. Their idea? Bring more gun.**

**T**he advent of tank warfare during World War I introduced a totally new battlefield threat to the infantryman. The first operational tank was fielded by the British during the Battle of the Somme in September 1916, and the French developed their own tanks in the spring of 1917. Although slow-moving and plagued by mechanical difficulties, the tanks were relatively safe from rifle and machine-gun fire

*In 1936, the U.S. Military's concept of an anti-tank rifle involved placing an M2 .50-caliber machine gun into a spring-loaded "soft mount" equipped with a shoulder rest, pistol grip and bipod.*



SPRINGFIELD ARMORY NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

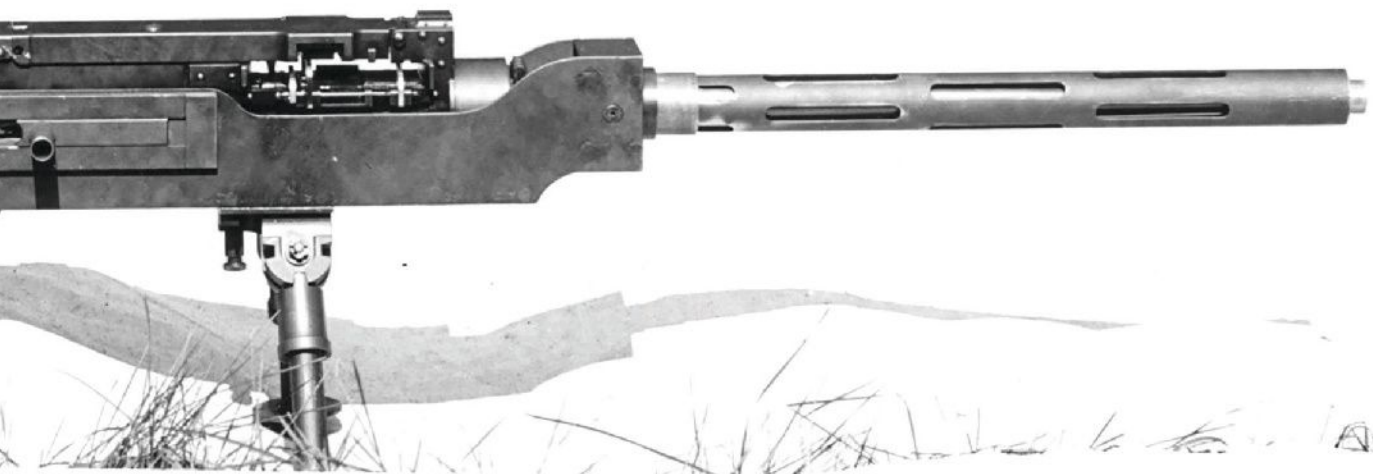
# Tank Rifles

and struck fear into the average German soldier.

But, the Germans soon concluded that a large-bore rifle firing a high-velocity cartridge would be able to penetrate the armor of these early armored vehicles. The famed Mauser Werke at Oberndorf designed a massive, single-shot, bolt-action rifle. The hefty 35.8-pound weight of the rifle was supported by a folding bipod with spiked feet. Overall length was

67 inches (slightly shorter than the height of the average man at the time), and the gun was chambered for a 13 mm cartridge with an 800-grain bullet exiting the muzzle faster than 2,700 fps. It could stop any tank on the battlefield at that time. However, limited numbers of the Mauser 13 mm anti-tank rifles were fielded before the Armistice, and the gun did not have any significant impact during the war.

By Bruce N. Canfield



Modern tank armor had rendered the concept of an anti-tank rifle obsolete as much more effective weapons using shaped charges, such as the Bazooka and anti-tank rifle grenade, were developed ...

**Early American Anti-Tank Rifles**

On Nov. 2, 1918, the U.S. Army evaluated a prototype magazine-fed, bolt-action .50-cal. rifle designed by Winchester, dubbed the "Model 1918 .50-Cal. High-Power Bolt-Action Swivel Gun." It might have had some application as an anti-tank rifle, but further development was dropped with the ending of the war. The gun was subsequently used primarily to test the early .50-cal. cartridges being developed for the M2 Browning heavy machine gun.

In 1921, the Browning .50-caliber machine gun was adopted, and the Army believed that if an anti-tank rifle should be required, it would meet the need. The U.S. was hardly alone in its lack of a suitable infantry anti-tank weapon during the post-World War I period. However, in the early 1930s, Germany was working on improved tank designs that did not go unnoticed. A number of nations, including England, Japan, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Sweden, Italy, Switzerland, Finland, Denmark and the Soviet Union began development of anti-tank rifles in varying calibers with bolt-action or semi-automatic mechanisms.

**The British .55-Caliber Boys Anti-Tank Rifle**

In October 1934, the British military assembled a design team under the supervision of Capt. H.C. Boys, assistant superintendent of the design department at the Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield, tasked with the development of an anti-tank rifle originally

dubbed the "Stanchion" gun. Capt. Boys died while the weapon was still being developed, and it was renamed in his honor.

On Nov. 24, 1937, the "Rifle, Anti-Tank, .55 in. Boys Mark I" was approved for service. The gun utilized a conventional bolt-action mechanism with a five-round detachable box magazine, scaled up to accommodate a .55-caliber cartridge. However, by the time the rifle went into production, it was already essentially obsolete as a "tank killer" due to the tremendous strides made in improving tank armor by the late 1930s.

Nevertheless, the Boys anti-tank rifle was subsequently used with some success against lightly armored Japanese and Italian tanks and fixed positions such as pillboxes and gun emplacements.

**Modifying The Browning Machine Gun For Anti-Tank Use**

In the late 1930s, with war looming on the horizon, U.S. Army Ordnance embarked on the development of an anti-tank version of the Browning .50-caliber machine gun. This was to be accomplished by equipping the machine gun with a pistol grip, bipod and shoulder stock, which would eliminate the need for the heavy tripod. The gun was designated as an "Anti-Mechanization Weapon." Since full-automatic fire from a gun of this configuration would be uncontrollable, as well as unnecessary, the experimental .50-caliber anti-tank gun was capable of semi-automatic fire only. Thus, it could be used with short belts of ammunition, which

U.S. MARINE CORPS



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Marine Raiders on Guadalcanal made use of the Mark I\* Boys anti-tank rifle (l.). The British-produced Mark I Boys .55-caliber anti-tank rifle (bottom r.) differed slightly from the Boys Mark I\* (top r.) as manufactured by the Canadian firm John Inglis and Company, as the Canadian-made variant incorporated a horizontal muzzle brake and a folding bipod.



The Winchester Model 1918 .50-caliber High Power Bolt Action Swivel Gun prototype (top) emerged before the end of WWI. During WWII, Winchester developed a prototype .50-caliber semi-automatic rifle based on an enlarged M1 Garand action (middle). American anti-tank rifle development was spurred by the Germany's deployment of a massive Mauser bolt-action rifle developed to counter Allied tanks introduced during WWI (bottom).



helped to further reduce weight. While designed to be operated by one man, the gun was quite hefty. Even though it could be broken down into two sections, two men were still required to move it any appreciable distance.

There were apparently three different types of prototypes fabricated and tested. The first type, tested in the late 1930s, was an early M2 air-cooled, .50-caliber machine gun fitted with a shoulder rest, pistol grip and bipod resting in a spring-loaded (and rather massive) "soft mount" surrounding the receiver. The gun was also equipped with a T3 optical sight. The second pattern was a modified M2 heavy-barrel, .50-caliber ground machine gun with a 36-inch barrel, bipod, pistol-grip assembly, butt rest and shoulder pad, and it, too, was fitted with a T3 sight. The final model was similar to the second pattern, but fitted with a 45-inch barrel and a slightly different bipod and shoulder pad. After the testing was completed, a September 1940 report stated:

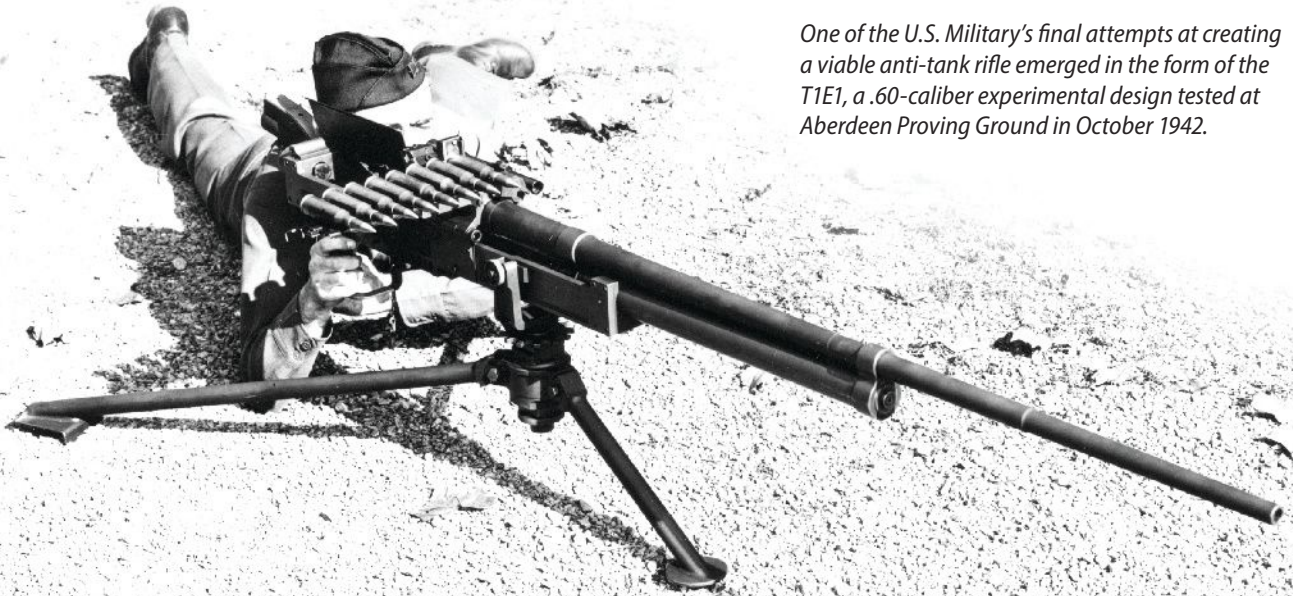
"The Chief of Infantry recommended that the present standard mount and gun [M2 with tripod] be considered superior to the subject gun for infantry use and that the subject gun be not adopted as standard. The present standard mount and gun have greater mobility. Their total weight is approximately 22 pounds heavier, but it can be broken down into 3 loads while the weight of the subject gun can be broken down into only 2 loads, the heaviest being 77 pounds."



Among the many firearms and other weapons employed by U.S. Army Rangers during WWII was the English-made .55-caliber Boys anti-tank rifle, which clearly displays the round muzzle brake and folding monopod of the English-made Mark I variant. Each Ranger Battalion was equipped with 20 Mark I Boys rifles, as they were the only man-portable anti-tank weapon available at the war's start.



One prototype variant of the M2 Browning developed for use by the U.S. Cavalry was essentially a standard, air-cooled, HB ground gun with a 45-inch barrel, pistol grip, bipod and modified shoulder stock. Unlike earlier variants that used a spring-loaded mount, the shoulder stock on the Cavalry version was heavily padded to mitigate (as much as possible) the gun's heavy recoil.



*One of the U.S. Military's final attempts at creating a viable anti-tank rifle emerged in the form of the T1E1, a .60-caliber experimental design tested at Aberdeen Proving Ground in October 1942.*

The Boys anti-tank rifle was subsequently used with some success against lightly armored Japanese and Italian tanks and fixed positions such as pillboxes and gun emplacements.

Thus, on the eve of the World War II, the United States military did not have a man-portable anti-tank weapon in its inventory. By the time the United States entered the conflict, it was clear that effective anti-tank weapons would be required. Such weapons as the "Bazooka" rocket launcher and anti-tank rifle grenades were eventually developed, but for the first year of the conflict, Uncle Sam's infantrymen had nothing in their inventory that could be used in an anti-tank role.

**Raiders And Rangers With The Boys Anti-Tank Rifle**

When the U.S. Marine Corps formed its Raider Battalions early in the war, the need for some sort of anti-tank weapon that could be carried by troops during the fast-moving engagements envisioned for these units was clear. To fill this void, the Marines turned to the British Boys anti-tank rifle. The fact that some of the weapons were being made in Canada simplified procurement. Boys anti-tank rifles were issued to Marine Raider units and utilized in several campaigns such as the Makin Island raid and Solomon Islands campaigns, including Guadalcanal. As stated in the book "Our Kind of War:"

"Unusual to the Raiders was the Canadian Boys .55-caliber Anti-Tank gun ... The Raiders called this massive 36-pound weapon the 'Elephant Gun.' ... Its high velocity, armor-piercing shells gave ... much needed fire-power to knock out armored vehicles, flak

towers, and engines of all types. A single Boys Rifle was issued to each Marine Raider company. It was .55 caliber with a five-round magazine of armor-piercing shells. It has a muzzle velocity of 3,000 fps, and was deadly accurate up to 2,000 yards."

There were mixed feelings regarding the efficacy and popularity of the Boys rifle by the Marine Raiders. On one hand, the book claims Raiders loved the hard-hitting "Elephant Gun." On the other hand, a 1943 report of the various weapons used by a Marine Raider Battalion on New Georgia Island had the following succinct summation of the weapon: "Rifle, Boys, AT, Cal. .55; of absolutely no use in jungle warfare."

The weight of the Boys rifle, along with the scarcity of suitable targets in the Pacific, were significant disadvantages. The introduction of the Bazooka and anti-tank rifle grenades resulted in the Boys anti-tank rifles being dropped from the Marine Corps inventory in 1943.

While the use of the Boys AT rifle by the Marine Raiders has been discussed in several books and articles, the issuance of the firearm to U.S. Army Rangers has received scant coverage. Since the newly formed Army Rangers would need the same type of weaponry as the Marine Raiders and British Commandos, it is no surprise the Boys rifle was selected, since it was the only man-portable anti-tank weapon available at the beginning of the war. The original Table of Organization and

Equipment (TO&E) for a Ranger Battalion in 1942 authorized 20 Boys .55-caliber anti-tank rifles. The Boys rifles procured by the Rangers were the English-made Mark I variant with a round muzzle brake and folding monopod.

While the Boys anti-tank rifle was primarily used for training, 50 Rangers were attached to the Canadian and British troops during the ill-fated 1942 Dieppe raid in France. Boys anti-tank rifles were employed during the action, with some Rangers serving alongside the British Commandos and Canadians. Other than this limited action, the rifles continued to be used for training until dropped from the Ranger Battalions' inventory when the Bazooka became available.

While soon outclassed by more effective anti-tank weapons, the Boys anti-tank rifle was there when no other weapon of that type that could be carried and operated by one man was available. While it may be a case of damning with faint praise, it can be said that the Boys rifle was better than nothing.

#### What Could Have Been: Final Experiments In American Anti-Tank Rifles


Even though the Boys anti-tank rifle was dropped from active use as a front-line combat weapon after 1943, there was still some interest in the development of a large-caliber rifle for use against armored vehicles. Winchester designed a semi-automatic rifle chambered for the standard .50 BMG cartridge based on what was essentially a strengthened, scaled-up M1 Garand action. The rifle was purportedly developed for the Canadian Armed Forces as an anti-tank option and was tested in late 1944. Although it passed all field tests, the German surrender in May 1945 resulted in the Canadian government canceling the project.

As the potential of an anti-tank rifle based on the .50-cal. machine gun in the late 1930s and early 1940s was being evaluated, the Ordnance Department had a similar gun in parallel development. However, the rifle was chambered for a more powerful round since it was apparent that the .50 BMG round was not sufficient to defeat the armor of the new German tanks.

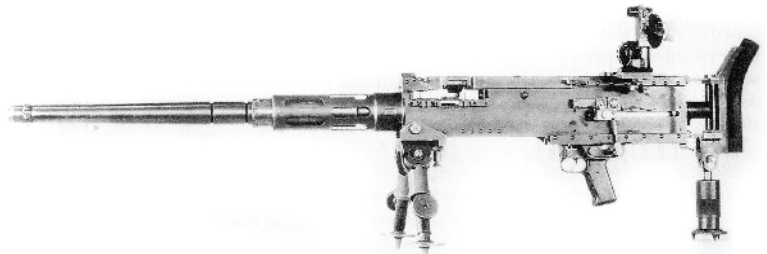
As early as 1939, the Ordnance Dept. was developing a .60-caliber cartridge that could be used for aircraft armament as well as for a new type of anti-tank rifle. While the .60-caliber, armor-piercing cartridge was being developed, work began on a prototype semi-automatic anti-tank rifle. Designated as

the "T1E1," the weapon was tested at the Aberdeen Proving Ground on Oct. 30, 1942.

The results of the testing at Aberdeen have not been found, but Ordnance Department records indicate that all work on the .60-caliber anti-tank rifle was suspended in May 1943 when the Ordnance Committee concluded that, based on combat reports, such a firearm would be effective only against the lightest of armored vehicles. Although work continued on a .60-caliber aircraft machine gun throughout the war and into the post-war period, this marked the end of the development of an anti-tank rifle by the United States. Modern tank armor had rendered the concept of an anti-tank rifle obsolete as much more effective weapons using shaped charges, such as the Bazooka and anti-tank rifle grenades, were developed and put into production in late 1942.

The sudden abandonment of the .60-caliber T1E1 left the .55-caliber Boys, by default, the only anti-tank rifle to see combat use by U.S. armed forces during World War II. The interesting story of these little-discussed guns is an integral, if minor, part of the story of American infantry weapons of the Second World War. 

*It is no surprise the Boys rifle would be selected, since it was the only man-portable anti-tank weapon available at the beginning of the war.*



U.S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS



TOM LAEMLEIN

*As part of the U.S. Military's "Anti-Mechanization Program," the M2 Browning was also developed into a prototype .50-caliber machine gun equipped with a 36-inch barrel, bipod, pistol grip, butt rest, shoulder pad and T3 optical sight. The design challenged the concept of a "man-portable" anti-tank weapon, though, as it was more difficult to transport than the standard M2 .50-caliber machine gun and tripod, which could be easily broken down and managed by a team of trained infantrymen.*

# CROWD CONTROL

*Staying safe in a crowd is much different than staying safe from a crowd.*

Imagine yourself alone or with your family or a small group where you suddenly and without warning find yourself in a situation where a mob of irritated humans (perhaps “peaceful protesters”) start forming up around you and appear hostile. What are some recommended courses of action you can take on foot, at home or in a vehicle to reduce risk, break contact and get to safety?

First off, you want to approach mob defense as a proactive measure followed by reactive measures (if needed). Before entering a potential threat area, do your

homework and look for any upcoming events, protests, marches, assemblies, road closures, etc. Utilizing this valuable protective intelligence, you may then plan your travel accordingly. Avoid any potential choke points (bottlenecks that could potentially impede your immediate egress) or confined corridors (lengthy pathways without alternate escape routes). The odds of a hostile crowd forming at a protest are never zero, so watch for it, along with related traffic jams and first-responder activity, so you can pivot early.

By Steve Tarani

You can't react to something you can't see, so practice the basics of situational awareness. Keep your face out of your phone, maintain your attention on your environment and have a plan. The untrained might call this a "paranoid posture," but protective-services professionals call it proactive planning—just another day at the office. These cursory protective measures can help you sidestep the proverbial "fatal funnel" (choke points) where mobs can build crushing mass and momentum.

Another very useful tactic is commonly referred to as "read the need." Trained professionals read crowds like a meteorologist predicting the weather. There are a few rules of thumb to reading the need. Crowds have an observable flow and ebb. Pressure builds at choke points such as bridges, intersections, protest lines and police activity (arrests, mitigating property damage, riot control tactics, etc.).

Situational awareness doesn't end with seeing; it continues with processing and anticipating. The most successful professionals and civilians under stress don't just look—they interpret behavior, body language and energy flow in real time. Pay attention to tone shifts, chanting, shouting, movement from fluid to erratic, signs like thrown objects, sudden silence or people covering their faces; all signal transition from crowd to mob.

The key is to detect these pre-incident indicators early enough to make micro-adjustments like crossing the street, changing elevation, rerouting or ducking into a

secure structure before the wave crests. The faster you interpret those cues, the more time you buy to maneuver and stay ahead of the action-reaction power curve.

Your primary responsibility is to keep yourself and those with you alive and injury-free. You can accomplish this by staying clear of undesired events. Technically speaking, it's about moving across the shortest distance between two points. Avoid movement through the dense core or mass (mob density) and getting pinned between a rock and a hard place (fixed objects like a building and the mob) or between two or more moving crowd subdivisions (clusters).

Yet another reliable mob-defense skill is the ability to de-escalate early and preferably at a safe distance. The most common visual de-escalation display is body posture and verbal judo (a high-leverage communication method that uses calm, strategic language and tactical empathy to defuse confrontation, gain compliance and steer interactions toward safe, controlled outcomes).

Keep your hands clearly visible with your palms out (universal symbol of "surrender"), work to maintain non-challenging eye contact and speak in brief quips like "We're just passing through" or "We're just leaving." Keep it short and simple and keep moving—a moving target is much more difficult to confront than a stationary one. Refrain from videoing, as it occupies both hands, locks you in place and disengages your awareness from your immediate environment in exchange for



*Having a police scanner in your car (where legal to do so) can prove useful in avoiding potential bottlenecks. There is also a smartphone app offering many emergency bands. An IFAK (individual first-aid kit) can slow or stop bleeding if you or a passenger are injured. Regardless of socio-political tensions, daily carry should include a pistol, holster, reload, knife and compact tactical flashlight.*

“getting the shot.” Don’t “square up” or make any such physical challenges. You want to be the quintessential “gray man” and melt into the environment as you evaporate from the threat area.

If law enforcement is present and you have nowhere else to safely transit, then move toward them; otherwise, the “A” answer is immediate exit away from crowd density and toward either your vehicle, if it is accessible, or a place of business (restaurant, storefront, etc.). As difficult as it may be, you must not get in someone’s face as you and your family are exponentially outnumbered and at an overwhelming tactical disadvantage.

What if you are in your vehicle and surrounded by a mob? The best technique is to avoid it at all costs. Drive around it—up on the sidewalk, grass or the median if you must—but avoid the threat. Stay mobile, as the split second you switch from mobile to stationary, your threat profile rises dramatically. If you’re caught by surprise, keep your doors locked, hazard lights flashing, windows rolled up, seat belt on and, again, stay mobile. Move as quickly as allowable.

It is a common protective-services practice to leave at least one car-length space between your bumper and the bumper of the car in front of you so you can steer out of a trap if traffic stops. You may need to shorten that distance if other vehicles try to cut in front of you.

Refrain from leaning on your horn or pushing too close to the crowd, as you don’t want to escalate the situation. Call 911 when feasible. Use-of-force laws vary by state; treat self-defense as a last resort and follow your jurisdiction’s statutes. The general rule of thumb is unless they break a window and reach in, you are restricted to zero use of force. Remember, your primary objective if you can’t avoid being there in the first place is to immediately move to safety.

Today’s vehicles feature active safety systems—ABS, airbags, seat belts and multiple electronic control units (ECUs)—that can override driver input under certain conditions. Advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS) like traction control, adaptive cruise, lane-keeping and automatic braking constantly monitor and react according to

their programming. Many late-model cars also use LIDAR or LADAR sensors that can automatically limit or disable movement during perceived collisions—so the idea of “just driving through a mob” is often unrealistic in addition to being illegal in some jurisdictions, as the vehicle’s own safety technology will likely stop you before you get far.

Should you be on foot with kids, elderly, injured or a small group, your best bet is to stay together. Mobility is your friend. Stay mobile. Even moving slowly is better than not moving at all. For kids, a practical technique is to say “hold on to dad’s belt and don’t let go;” that way you can feel their connection at night or if you need your hands for a next or equal priority. One- or two-word communication is sufficient so that everyone remains on the same operational plan, moving in the same direction, “to the car” for example.

If you happen to be at home anticipating social unrest, then you want to make your residence look as



*If sheltering at home, a few practical items can help you endure a civil disturbance. A powerful flashlight that can illuminate a wide area, but also disorient attackers, is a good idea. Getting to and extinguishing fires may prove critical to home protection. Stay informed of developments, including crowd movements and emergency announcements, with a manually charged emergency radio or keep fresh batteries on hand. A potent, maneuverable firearm is essential any home-defense kit.*

unattractive as possible. It should scream “not worth your effort.” That means concentric rings of both visible and invisible security: lighting, cameras, motion sensors, trimmed landscaping (removes any cover or concealment), upgraded protective hardware (1-inch lock bolts, long framing screws, etc.), and a simple interior safe-room (not facing outward glass) with snacks, water, phone charger, defensive tools (if applicable) and an emergency plan.

If unrest is forecast, secure any vehicles off the street and review your safe-room procedures and family plan. The goal here is deterrence, distraction and delay. As predators are attracted to low-hanging fruit (easy marks), converting your residence to a more-difficult target provides likely predatorial bypass.

Mobs commonly introduce debris, smoke, fire, physical violence, chemical irritants and trampling risk. For urban movement, personal safety gear includes eye protection (glasses), a mask, gloves and a light trauma kit (tourniquet, gauze, pressure bandage). You should have these items at home and a duplicate kit in your vehicle. Know how to perform the basics, like flushing eyes, applying a tourniquet and treating extremity bleeds. You are your own first-responder before any help arrives, so the better prepared you are, the less you’ll default to panic that may increase risk.

If an incident occurs, once safe, you may document time/date, location, who/what/where, names and details if police interacted; photograph damage and injuries and compose a short, factual narrative written while memory is fresh. If needed, call your attorney. If a vehicle or property was involved, notify your insurer; file a report. Do not post on social media. A clean paper trail helps you with law enforcement follow-up, legal proceedings and insurance claims.

Civil unrest can include lawful demonstrations, unlawful acts and rapidly developing police activities. Should authorities issue a dispersal order, leave the area immediately along a safe route. If stopped, be calm, keep your hands visible and ask if you’re free to go. If not, ask the reason, request counsel and stop talking. Your objective is to exit without escalating or saying something that could be used against you.

Distance is your friend. The greater the distance between you and the mob, the more time you buy to think, move and adapt. Distance equals reaction time—and reaction time equals survival. Every extra step between you and chaos is another second to see, decide and act. Maintain that buffer like your life depends on it, because in a crowd situation, it might. Distance gives you options—escape routes, concealment, cover or even the ability to de-escalate before physical contact becomes unavoidable. The opposite is also true: Once that distance collapses, your time, choices and control quickly evaporate with it.

If you are a business owner, update your risk assessment, brief staff on lock-in/lock-out procedures, stage or

refresh medical aid procedures and coordinate with local law enforcement on further proactive or defensive measures. Assign a single decision-maker per shift. If social unrest ensues, secure entry points, move your people and valuables away from glass and prepare to close. The standard is layered, concentric-circle-style security that deters opportunists and buys time for first-responders.

Mob defense is only a concept until you run drills. Mental rehearsal is recommended, but hands-on and team coordination come only from practice: Build short, realistic safety drills (think fire-drill simplicity) your household or group can run repeatedly. Vary the scenarios—crowded street, parked car, living-room lockdown—assign clear roles (who leads, who watches kids, who navigates routes), time each run and practice low-stress cues so people respond without needing complex instructions under pressure.

Include rehearsed communications (easy hand signals, few words, single-line instruction), a quick post-drill debrief to capture what worked and what failed and a simple checklist of actions to carry on a phone or printout. Repeat periodically, but keep drills short and build confidence so they don’t cause panic. When something happens for real, the pros know that drills are what gives everyone a tangible plan to follow—and that plan is the difference between chaos and controlled escape.

Surviving a mob is about awareness, preparation and disciplined execution. The most important and powerful tool you possess isn’t a firearm, pepper spray or a vehicle, it’s your mind. It doesn’t need batteries or bullets and is with you 24/7. Calm, clear-headed thinking under pressure keeps your options visible when panic would collapse them.

The same situational awareness that lets you see a threat early also lets you pivot, de-escalate or escape before danger peaks. Rehearse these principles until they become instinct: Avoidance first, movement second and defense only as a last resort. A steady mind, a flexible plan and practiced awareness will always outperform impulsive reactions.

Mob defense isn’t about fighting crowds—it’s about creating space, time and options. Your goal is not to fight or prove a point—it’s to survive, protect those you love and reach safety intact. The original, triggering issue is no longer immediately important or resolvable.

Mob defense is, at its core, risk management under stress: maintaining lawful behavior, minimizing exposure and preserving freedom of movement.

Every measure—planning routes, reading crowd energy, de-escalating with posture and tone, hardening your home or rehearsing exit drills—builds a margin of safety that compounds. Should that moment arrive, you’ll rely not on luck, but on preparation, discipline and composure to carry you, and those with you, through it alive and with the lowest scale of injury. 🌀



# Staccato HD P4.5

Combining an exclusive pistol with a ubiquitous magazine makes this 2011 practical and desirable.

**T**hirty years after its introduction, the hybrid-frame, 2011-style pistol has gone mainstream, moving from the hands of high-level competitive shooters to the holsters of law enforcement and civilians going about their everyday business. With more eyes and hands on 2011 pistols comes more scrutiny. While the concept of a separate frame and grip module allowing a double-column magazine is still high-tech, at its heart, a 2011 pistol is based on the 114-year-old 1911 design. Staccato seeks to change this with the HD series of handguns, which it considers to be 2011s rendered modern, practical and rugged for everyday use.

The Staccato HD's most notable feature is that the handgun is designed around the Glock-pattern magazine. If 2011 pistols have a weakness, it is their magazines. The commonly used STI/SVI pattern can be pricey—and may need tweaks to run reliably with specific pistols or ammunition. Glock magazines have a solid reputation and run about \$20 at any gun shop you walk into, and many quality aftermarket models exist. The HD is compatible with any full-size (17 rounds or

more), 9 mm Glock-pattern magazine and comes supplied with Mec-Gar's new steel-body version. By using metal instead of polymer as its main component, the Mec-Gar magazines can fit an extra round within the same overall space for a total capacity of 18. The HD's use of a Glock-pattern magazine results in a different grip profile that is slightly slimmer than a standard 2011, yet maintains the grip angle for which the 1911 is known.

There is more to the Staccato HD than just being a 2011 that takes Glock magazines, however. Taking feedback from military and law enforcement users of other Staccato products, the company designed the HD from the ground up to be more rugged, durable and reliable. It was put through a battery of testing that Staccato said resulted in "our most thoroughly and aggressively tested set of pistols to date." This redesign includes many changes from a traditional 1911 format. Gone is the traditional grip safety, replaced by a Series 80-style firing-pin block in the slide. The extractor is now external, like Staccato's Carry line of pistols, and the recoil spring is a captive, flat-wire design.

The Staccato HD has been engineered to accommodate modern shooting techniques and right- and left-handed shooters. Controls are fully ambidextrous, with a manual safety lever and slide stop present on both sides of the pistol, and the magazine release is reversible. The slide stop has been moved rearward from the usual 1911 position, allowing the thumb of the shooting hand to reach it, but keeping the support-hand thumb from accidentally actuating it. A prominent



*The front sight is mounted on a dovetail in the barrel-mounted sight block. Designed primarily as an optics-ready handgun, the HD uses a fixed rear sight pinned in place behind the ejection port and in front of the optics mount.*

*Both the P4 and P4.5 use the same slide, but the longer-barreled P4.5 has a sight block on the end of the barrel. Optics are mounted on the HD with Staccato's HOST system, in which screws pass through an adapter plate to mount the optic directly to the slide. Fieldstripping the HD P4.5 follows a different process from most 1911s, but it remains a simple procedure.*

beavertail and an undercut trigger guard allow for a higher grip. Thumb indexing “gas-pedal” platforms have been machined into both sides of the frame, as well as a four-slot accessory rail on the dustcover. The slide has a more pronounced bevel on its upper surface, with texturing on the radii and front serrations that extend over its top surface to provide a firmer grip when using gloves or working around an optic.

What remains of a 1911 in the HD design? Namely that hammer-fired, single-action mechanism with a manual safety that allows for an excellent trigger pull and “cocked and locked” carry, the swinging barrel link that unlocks the action as the slide moves rearward and some remnants of that classic 1911 visual aesthetic.

The iron sights are of sufficient height to co-witness with most optics. Optical sights are mounted with Staccato’s HOST (Host Optic Specific Technology) plate system, which uses two screws, each of which passes through the adapter plate to attach the optic to the slide. Plates are available for a wide variety of optic footprints and retail for \$75.

The HD is offered in two versions—the 4-inch-barreled P4 and the 4.5-inch-barreled P4.5 that is the subject of this test. A unique feature of the HD series is that both pistols use the same recoil system and slide, with the P4.5’s barrel having a sight block on the end. This means that the longer-barreled P4.5 benefits from the quicker cycling time and reduced reciprocating mass of the shorter slide with the additional muzzle weight of the sight block to produce a quicker and flatter-shooting pistol.

Staccato is now also manufacturing ammunition, and I used its range and match cartridges to test the HD. Unsurprisingly, the company’s 136-grain, open-tip match ammo provided the best groups. Reliability was 100 percent from round one. Staccato recommends the use of the included Mec-Gar magazines, as well as OEM Glock magazines, and both functioned perfectly in testing.

The HD’s trigger has about .05 inch of take-up, as a proper duty/defense 1911 should, and then breaks crisply at just lighter than 4.5 pounds. Only about .05 inch of movement is required for the trigger to reach its positive reset.

Ease of disassembly and reassembly is where the HD differs from most modern service pistols. The first step in disassembling the HD is just like a standard 1911. After

## STACCATO HD P4.5

**Manufacturer:** Staccato; (512) 819-0656, [staccato2011.com](http://staccato2011.com)



**Action Type:** Recoil-operated, semi-automatic  
**Chambering:** 9 mm  
**Capacity:** 18+1 rounds  
**Slide:** 4140 steel, billet precision machined  
**Frame:** 4140 steel  
**Sights:** Front post, fixed notch rear; optics cut

**Trigger Pull Weight:** 4 pounds, 7 ounces  
**Width:** 1.59 inches  
**Weight:** 37.9 ounces  
**Accessories:** Two magazines, soft case, gun lock, manual  
**MSRP: \$2,699**

## SHOOTING RESULTS

Load	Velocity	SD	Energy	Group Size		
				Smallest	Largest	Average
Nosler ASP 115-grain JHP	1,088	16	303	1.50	1.84	1.59
Staccato Range 124-grain FMJ	1,101	23	334	1.37	1.84	1.78
Staccato Match 136-grain OTM	961	9	279	1.10	1.49	1.27

**On Target:** Common, inexpensive magazines

**Off Target:** Optic plates must be purchased separately

Velocity and standard deviation (SD) measured in fps 10 feet from the muzzle for 10 consecutive shots with a Competition Electronics ProChrono DLX chronograph. Temperature: 72 degrees Fahrenheit. Humidity: 75 percent. Accuracy measured in inches for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 25 yards from a Caldwell Matrix rest. Abbreviations: JHP (jacketed hollowpoint), FMJ (full metal jacket), OTM (open-tip match)

confirming the pistol is unloaded, retract the slide to align the slide stop with the slide-catch notch (that also serves as the takedown notch) and remove the left-side slide stop. Removing the slide from the frame, lift out the captured takedown spring and remove the reverse plug. The barrel can then be removed through the front of the slide.

HD pistols are available in three packages, from the base model to upgraded front sights, mag wells and deeper “X-serrations” that are lightening cuts that expose the barrel. HD pistols start out at an MSRP of \$2,499 for the base model P4, and the P4 is also offered in a California-compliant model. The P4.5 I tested came with Staccato’s “Standard Package” and has an MSRP of \$2,699.

Staccato is certain enough of its HD pistols to call them “the future of 2011s;” traditional, yet innovative and now durable, turning the once-niche 2011 into an everyday handgun.



WHAT'S IN THE BOX?



WATCH US SHOOT IT!





# Dark Mountain Stowaway

Survival rifles have generally been chambered for relatively anemic rimfire cartridges, but this new offering ups the power without sacrificing portability.

**A**aron Voigt is a gun designer who began making waves in the shooting-sports marketplace in 2017 with the release of the cellphone-size series of Trailblazer Lifecard folding single-shot rimfire pistols. Later, in 2024, Trailblazer would take home a coveted Golden Bullseye Award for his uncommon and innovative Pivot pistol-caliber carbine. By 2025, his latest manufacturing venture, Dark Mountain Arms, was in full swing producing yet another proprietary platform called the Stowaway, which is available in several chamberings, including the 5.7x28 mm version I tested.

The Stowaway is a single-shot, takedown, bolt-action carbine designed to be as lightweight as possible while maintaining a high standard of quality. As configured from the factory, the 5.7 mm version weighs in at a small fraction lighter than 3 pounds unloaded; making

the Stowaway one of the lightest—if not the lightest—rifles currently available in this chambering. Intended for use as a backpacking or survival rifle, the tubular receiver is milled from 6061-T6 aluminum and treated with a matte-black Type II anodized finish. The front of its receiver is threaded for a 4.7-inch-long aluminum barrel sleeve that serves double-duty as a barrel nut, securing the barrel to the receiver, and also as the rifle's fore-end.

The thin-profile barrel is made from 4140 steel treated with a corrosion-resistant black-nitride finish; its bore is button-rifled with a 1:9-inch, right-hand twist, while the muzzle is threaded  $\frac{1}{2} \times 28$  tpi for popular muzzle devices, including compensators, flash hiders and sound suppressors. A knurled, anodized-aluminum thread protector is provided.

The barrel is listed with a nominal length of 16 inches, but I measured an actual length of 16.63 inches on my sample gun—this is due to a reduced-scale AR-15-style barrel extension installed to engage the three lugs of the bolt assembly. At the top of this extension is a small post that aligns with a notch cut into the threaded portion of the aluminum receiver to ensure barrel alignment.

A nine-slot, aluminum Picatinny rail is fitted atop the receiver assembly. At the rear of the rail is a takedown lever used to remove the bolt assembly from the rifle for routine cleaning. The simplified bolt assembly consists



*Should a sound suppressor be desired, the barrel comes threaded in the standard  $\frac{1}{2} \times 28$  tpi pitch. A thread protector is included if no muzzle device is to be attached. While the bolt appears to be set up for a left-handed shooter, it allows a right-handed shooter to work the bolt and insert rounds with the weak hand while maintaining a firing grip. Removing the bolt from the receiver requires pushing down on a lever on top of the receiver, after which the bolt can be removed for cleaning or lubrication. Minimalist in nature, the buttstock doesn't add much bulk, but anchors the rifle well against the shoulder. Unscrewing the metal collet allows the barrel to be taken out of the receiver and breaks the Stowaway down for easy transport and storage. Closing the bolt does not cock the firing pin; that must be done manually for every shot using the glass-reinforced nylon cocking knob. If the end-user wants to swap out the grip for any reason, the Stowaway accommodates most standard AR-15-style pistol grips.*

mostly of black-oxide-coated 4140 steel components. Where needed, these parts have been heat-treated for durability.

Located on the left side of the rifle, the knurled charging handle is made from aluminum, while the cocking knob is molded from glass-reinforced nylon. Between shots, the knob rests away from the firing pin in a half-cocked position to prevent an unintentional discharge if bumped or dropped while the chamber is loaded. This rifle does not have any other external safeties.

The receiver is mounted to a glass-filled nylon frame that also supports the trigger group, a monolithic aluminum trigger guard that also serves as the mounting point for the B5 Systems AR-15 pistol grip and the aluminum rod with a textured polymer butt-plate that serves as the buttstock. Breaking on average at 4 pounds, 4 ounces of pressure, the vertical, flat-face steel trigger is listed as a single-stage, but in testing, I found it to behave more like that of a double-action revolver.

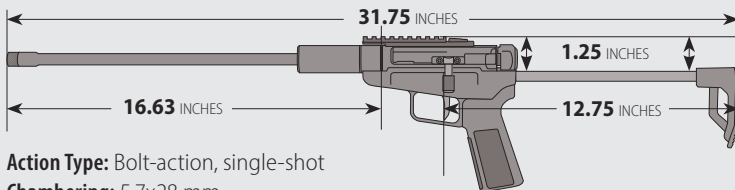
Disassembling the Stowaway is a simple process accomplished without the need for tools. First, verify that the rifle is completely unloaded. With the bolt assembly in the open position, twist off and remove the barrel sleeve and then pull the barrel out of the receiver. Lastly, close the bolt and the rifle's major components are ready to be stored or packed.

On the range, the Stowaway proved to be easy to use and utterly reliable with all the



## DARK MOUNTAIN STOWAWAY

**Manufacturer:** Dark Mountain Arms; (828) 273-8791, [darkmountainarms.com](http://darkmountainarms.com)



**Action Type:** Bolt-action, single-shot

**Chambering:** 5.7x28 mm

**Capacity:** 1 round

**Receiver:** 6061-T6 aluminum; matte-black Type II anodized finish

**Barrel:** Black-nitrided 4140 steel; button-rifled

**Rifling:** 6 grooves; 1:9-inch RH twist

**Trigger Pull Weight:** 4 pounds, 4 ounces

**Sights:** None; Picatinny rail for optics

**Stock:** Polymer

**Weight:** 2 pounds, 13 ounces

**Accessories:** Lock, manual

**MSRP:** \$419

## SHOOTING RESULTS

Load	Velocity	SD	Energy	Group Size		
				Smallest	Largest	Average
Fiocchi Hyperformance Defense 35-grain JPT	2,230	21	386	1.93	2.38	2.15
American Eagle 40-grain FMJ	2,049	14	373	1.16	1.65	1.40
Hornady Critical Defense 40-grain FTX	2,299	12	469	1.23	1.79	1.51

**On Target:** Affordable and portable

**Off Target:** Narrow range of uses

Velocity and standard deviation (SD) measured in fps 10 inches from the muzzle with a Garmin Xero C1 Pro chronograph. Energy measured in ft.-lbs. Temperature: 84 degrees Fahrenheit. Humidity: 13 percent. Accuracy measured in inches for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 50 yards from a bench rest. Abbreviations: JPT (jacketed polymer tip), FMJ (full metal Jacket), FTX (Flex Tip eXpanding).

5.7x28 mm ammunition tested. Although a few of the spent cartridge cases for the hotter rounds exhibited some resistance when extracted from the chamber, there were no failures to eject the cases properly. Rimfire options like .22 LR and .22 WMR are popular for takedown survival rifles in the same class as the Stowaway, but the 5.7 mm centerfire round offers a notable boost in kinetic energy without the need to reinforce the receiver or barrel as may be needed with other centerfire options.

The Dark Mountain Arms Stowaway provides a useful blend of reduced weight, reliability and durability for a suggested retail price of \$419. It is also available chambered in the ubiquitous 9 mm cartridge, and cartridge-conversion kits consisting of a barrel and a complete bolt assembly are available for \$199. The company also offers its Stowaway platform in large-format-pistol configurations with or without braces, with prices starting at \$389. And for those who are interested in a rimfire option, .22 LR and .22 WMR offerings were nearing completion at the time of this writing.



WHAT'S IN THE BOX?



WATCH US SHOOT IT!



# Armasight Contractor Lite 320

As technology advances, thermal optics are becoming both better and more affordable.

Thermal riflescopes have quickly moved from specialized military equipment to practical tools for hunters, shooters and land-owners. With processing power advancing and manufacturing costs decreasing, thermal technology continues to become more accessible. Armasight's newest release, the Contractor 320 Lite, reflects this trend.

Built on the same foundation as the original Contractor 320, the Lite version retains a durable aluminum housing, sealed compartments and tethered, gasketed caps to prevent loss in the field. The control layout emphasizes simplicity, with tactile knobs and a single selector button for capturing still images or video. A locking power switch requires both depression and rotation to engage, preventing accidental activation during transport or storage.

The Contractor 320 Lite employs a 320x240 thermal sensor with a tighter 12-micron pitch—an upgrade over the more common 17-micron configuration. This sensor provides a base optical magnification of 2X, paired with a 4X digital zoom, for an effective range of 2-8X. The rectangular display can be tailored through five color palettes that are quickly cycled via the left-side control knob. Features such as a stadiametric rangefinder, picture-in-picture mode and recoil-activated video recording are integrated into the software suite, extending functionality beyond what is typically expected in an entry-level thermal. Recordings and image data are stored internally and accessed through a USB port, which also accepts external battery packs for extended run time.

Mounting the optic is straightforward. The Contractor 320 Lite attaches to a rail via dual-nut hardware that, while not quick-detach, offers a dependable return to zero when properly torqued. Weighing less than 2 pounds, the unit adds minimal bulk to most rifles, and its swept-back mounting profile simplifies eye-relief adjustment. The



removable rubber eyecup provides the option of a sealed viewing experience.

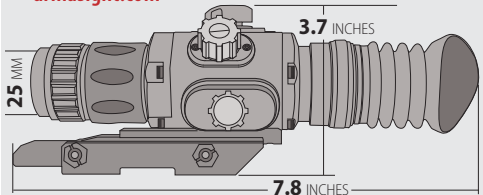
In practical use, the optic delivered effective detection and identification ranges suitable for most field applications. I could easily identify small animals such as birds and squirrels within 100 yards, while human-sized figures were positively recognized at roughly 300 yards. Beyond those distances, warm objects remained detectable, though precise identification became more challenging.

Zeroing is conducted through a familiar thermal process: Establishing a group on a thermal-reactive target, then electronically aligning the reticle to the point of impact. The Contractor's software adds refinement with its "Boresight" feature, which allows adjustments in MOA increments. This additional precision proved useful both for fine-tuning zero and for compensating when cartridge trajectory data was known.

Armasight set out to build an affordable thermal that did not compromise on core performance, and the Contractor 320 Lite fulfills that mission. Its intuitive interface, rugged construction and practical software package make it a strong candidate for shooters seeking thermal capability without the premium price tag. The 320 Lite demonstrates that reliable thermal imaging is no longer beyond the reach of the everyday firearm enthusiast.

## ARMASIGHT CONTRACTOR LITE 320

**Manufacturer:** Armasight; (888) 504-2762; [armasight.com](http://armasight.com)



**Magnification:**

2X (optical);  
1-4X (digital)

**Field of View:** 46.4 feet (2X) to 11.6 feet (8X) at 100 yards

**Eye Relief:** 1.77 inches

**Display Resolution:** 1024x768 pixels

**Reticle:** Eight options

**On Target:** Ready to use right out of the box

**Frame Rate:** 60 HZ

**Battery Life:** 4 hours

**Weight:** 26.6 ounces

**Accessories:** Two CR123A batteries, lens caps, rubber eyepiece, soft case, USB-C cable, lens cloth, thermal zeroing target, manual

**MSRP:** \$2,499

**Off Target:** Non-QD mount



Thanks to its relatively compact size, the Contractor Lite 320 takes up minimal space on an rail. Installation of the two (included) CR123A batteries in the optic's waterproof battery compartment is straightforward and simple. Eight reticle options and onboard digital tools like an inclinometer and a cant indicator help ensure accurate shot placement.

G36 stock), to fold to the right and lock in place onto the receiver's case deflector. The rifle will fire with the stock folded, with a cut in the stock's upper arm directing spent cases downward. The handguard attaches to the receiver, allowing the barrel to float freely within it. There is a faux gas block mounted on the barrel. The slots on the handguard are for ventilation only and are not compatible with M-Lok or any other accessory attachment system.

Instead of the one-piece polymer receiver with molded-in steel inserts, the G36 .22 LR uses a two-piece "clamshell" receiver design that screws together. Underneath its exterior, the rifle uses a simple blowback-operated action. Its magazine well follows the STANAG pattern present on centerfire G36 rifles, with a left-side-only release, and the rifle uses the same magazine as the HK416 .22 LR and the Walther M4 .22. Magazines are available in 10-, 20- and 30-round capacities, and the rifle ships with either a single 10- or 20-round version. The polymer magazines feature an assist tab to make loading easier.

Where the current rifles differ from the original imports from a decade ago are in

their markings, which list H&K as the importer and the manufacturer as Umarex—and by the lack of a hand stop and the absence of screw-in attachment points for rail sections on the longer handguard. The threaded-on muzzle brake is not secured by a roll pin, making it easier to remove for installing other muzzle devices or a suppressor. The result is what H&K calls "the most realistic civilian version of the G36 yet," to which I would add the caveat "on the U.S. market."

Heckler & Koch recommends using high-velocity .22 LR loads, so I headed to the range with a variety of bulk-pack ammo meeting that criterion. At the end of the day, the G36 .22 LR is a high-volume plinker, and the types of cartridges in those loose-packed boxes are what will likely be its primary diet. The rifle proved up to the task. Reliability was 100 percent from round one; it even fed my gold standard for baseline .22 ammunition—Remington Thunderbolts—without hesitation. This reliability continued through several hundred rounds without requiring cleaning.


The rifle's single-stage trigger is "mil-spec" in the sense of being similar to the centerfire G36, with a nearly 8-pound pull that is long and must be fully released to reset. An empty magazine locks the bolt open, and then a short pull of the charging handle will release the bolt once a loaded magazine is in place.

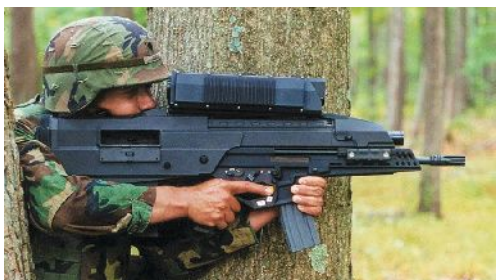
On the precision side, the G36 .22 LR is no match rifle, but it is capable of "minute of milk jug" accuracy out to 100 yards. More importantly, it's just fun. The rimfire G36 gives those of us without any experience with the real thing a chance to fall in love with the innovative design and intuitive controls of the G36. In terms of aftermarket customization, there are telescoping G36 stocks available that should appropriately shorten its length of pull for shooters of smaller stature. With H&K's promise of parts compatibility, other extant H&K and clone accessories, furniture and part upgrades are also available online.

Basic fieldstripping of the G36 .22 LR matches its bigger brother. The spring-retained push pins for which H&K is famous hold the handguard, mag well and lower housing in place, and conveniently store in holes in the buttstock to keep them from getting lost when the rifle is apart. Folding the buttstock out of the way allows for the bolt, carrier and recoil spring to be removed through the rear of the receiver. Obviously, there is no gas system to disassemble.

Umarex works with manufacturers to produce licensed .22 LR replicas of classic military firearms, which has resulted in a resurgence of the "tactical rimfire" market. Its popularity is easily understood once you've spent time with the G36 .22 LR. The features that make it "tactical" also make it "practical." It's a rugged, compact and modular rifle that is accurate enough to be deployed (see what I did there) for small-game hunting and varmint control.

Its authentic size and controls make the rifle a great trainer for modern sporting rifles and for the centerfire G36 we will hopefully have one day. One word of advice for AR-15 users who transition to the G36: Make sure the push pin that holds the magazine well in place is inserted from right to left to deter your index finger—that is accustomed to finding an AR-15 magazine release in that position—from accidentally pushing the pin.

In 2024, HK USA announced it was working with both the ATF and German authorities to find a "path forward" for a civilian centerfire G36 for the U.S. market. Although the program was "in progress," H&K fans were warned to not expect anything until at least this year, and we've seen nothing yet. In the meantime, the G36 .22 LR is a fine stop-gap and a great rimfire rifle in its own right. 



U.S. ARMY



*Prior to testing the XM8, the U.S. Military considered the XM29 OICW, which consisted of a G36-pattern rifle beneath an airburst-grenade launcher and an integrated optical fire-control system. As a rimfire rifle, the G36 .22 LR is blowback operated. The "gas system" is just for show to maintain similar looks with its centerfire cousin.*

shoot well—and it is easy to like the Taurus 66 Combat and shoot it well. There’s a concession to modernity up top: Two screw holes allow an optic plate to be attached so you can have a powered optic if you prefer (an RMSc-footprint plate is available from Taurus; while other footprints, such as the RMR footprint plate shown in this review, are available from companies like C&H Precision). Believe me, as we get older and our eyesight diminishes, that’s a big plus. Even if you don’t care for powered optics, the front sight is a bright-green, fiber-optic pipe, which readily draws the eye to it. The rear sight is the standard notch carved into the top strap; an aiming convention that’s about as old as the revolver itself.

The 66 Combat is a solid piece of steel, weighing 36.5 ounces unloaded. That means that even a steady diet of .357 Mag. isn’t going to break your wrist, and shooting standard .38 Spl. is downright fun. This does highlight one of the advantages of the revolver, which centers on ammo choices and construction. The .357 Mag. chambering of the 66 Combat allows you to choose both .357 Mag. and .38 Spl. for carry and practice, and since there’s no feed ramp on which a hollowpoint edge might catch, just about every bullet design will work. Even shotshells are available for those who live in snake-infested regions. You can practice with light .38 Spl. rounds and carry hot .357 Mag. (just be sure to practice occasionally with the magnums, of course). As an interesting side note, the gamut of .38 Spl. and .357 Mag. ammo used to test the 66 Combat ranged in muzzle energy from a low of 179 ft.-lbs. (similar to a mid-level .380 ACP) to a high of 509 ft.-lbs. (slightly less than 10 mm). That’s quite the range of options.

Rounding out the 66 Combat, the discerning eye will note the Hogue Monogrip rubber stocks, which are helpful when it comes to holding onto the revolver under recoil, but not so helpful when carrying it concealed—the grippy rubber does have a tendency to catch on cover garments. This is by no means a knock on the 66 Combat; the choice of the Monogrip is a solid one across the industry (Smith & Wesson, Ruger and Colt offer revolvers with

Monogrips as standard equipment). But, this leads to another advantage of the revolver: Changing grips is as simple as turning a screw, and other options are available from Taurus and Hogue. Whether you want a wider grip to better fill your hand, a smooth wooden grip that won’t catch on clothing or something different entirely, it’s easy to change to suit your needs.

On the range, there were no surprises while shooting the 66 Combat. It’s a revolver; it’s like a fork—you pick it up, it works. But, I really shouldn’t say that, feeding into the incorrect assumption that revolvers never jam or break, which they certainly can and do. In testing, however, no malfunctions of any type occurred, with either .357 Mag. or .38 Spl. In excess of 250 rounds ranging from 90-grain .38 Spl. to 158-grain .357 Mag. were expended in testing. I even ran a handful of timed drills to get a feel for how it handled compared to small 9 mm handguns, and while I’m no Jerry Miculek, I can run a wheelgun fairly quickly. I didn’t have any problems with the turning of the cylinder keeping up with fast shooting, as can (infrequently) be experienced in revolvers. If you want to shoot this revolver fast, you absolutely can—Taurus (and Giddings) wouldn’t have it any other way.

So, what’s the verdict on the 66 Combat? If you’re a revolver fan, you owe it to yourself to at least check one out. If you carry a revolver and are looking to upgrade, this should be high on the list of wheelguns to investigate. Between the excellent trigger, carry-friendly size and ability to add powered optics, Taurus’s newest purpose-built revolver is a rock-solid choice. It’s reliable, accurate and just plain fun to shoot—and that’s a fantastic combination.

What does the future hold for Taurus’ new wheelgun? I’ll close with a quote from Giddings, again: “Guns like the 66 Combat and 608 Competition fall in the middle of our line, above the standard 66 or 608 models, but not fully custom guns like you’d get with the Executive Grade series. The names of these models signify very much what their design intent is, and it’s a pretty safe bet there will be more named models coming.”



*Hogue Monogrip stocks keep the 66 Combat firmly anchored in the hand, but watch out to make sure it doesn't catch on a cover garment. Despite the heavy pull weight, the trigger was very smooth and allowed for surprisingly good accuracy. The shrouded ejector rod allows most spent cases to be ejected easily. Adding an electro-optic involves bolting a plate to the topstrap and then the optic to the plate.*



In the revolver world, there are three dedicated varieties of the Weird-Gun-Guy Virus.

The first is the revolver that fires shotshells. For a while, it was largely the province of the rarely seen Thunder Five, but now the Taurus Judge has been on the market long enough that everyone who has Shotgun Revolver-itis has been able to get a dose and scratch their itch.

The second is the low-bore-axis variety. Over the years, various Mateba designs and, currently, the Rhino from Chiappa solve the inherent bore-axis problem in most revolver designs by having the wheelgun fire from the bottom chamber in the cylinder.

The thing is, the basic design of the revolver has sorted itself out by means of convergent evolution over the course of nearly two centuries. While a Colt, Ruger, Smith & Wesson or Taurus may have differences in

detail, they all now basically operate with a pawl (usually called a "hand") in the rear of the frame window advancing the cylinder by acting against a ratchet on its backside.

The cylinder is locked in place during firing by a stop or bolt protruding through the bottom of the frame window and engaging a mortise or notch in the cylinder.

Revolvers firing from the bottom chamber turn a lot of this on its ear and, again, most companies decided that any minimal benefit in felt-recoil reduction and muzzle flip was not worth the increase in complexity.

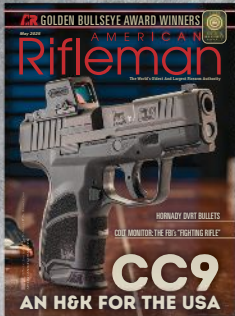
The most persistent and widespread version of the Weird-Revolver Virus is the one that crops up on discussion forums any time someone brings up top-break revolvers.

If you really want to get it out of your system, there are a bajillion relatively inexpensive top-breaks out there chambered in .22 LR or .32 and

.38 S&W, and you can go out and learn for yourself why manufacturers stamped to solid-frame double-action revolvers en masse in the final decade of the 19th century. (Hint again: It wasn't that they didn't understand how awesome top-breaks are. Trust me.)

Interestingly, there's a holy grail out there for weird-revolver guys. During the Cold War, the Soviets made a prototype survival weapon for cosmonauts: the TOZ-81. No, it wasn't to fight aliens or NASA in low-earth orbit, but rather in case they encountered dangerous wildlife upon landing in the far reaches of Siberia. The TOZ-81 is a bullpup top-break revolver that fires .410 shotshells from the bottom chamber. It's practically a Voltron of every weird-gun-guy obsession. If some Western arms manufacturer turned out a reproduction, I'm pretty certain they'd sell dozens of them! 

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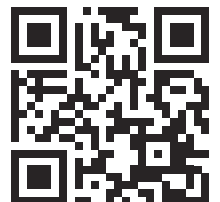


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In December, Second Amendment rights litigation veteran Harmeet Dhillon announced the creation of a dedicated Second Amendment Section at the CRT.





# DOJ Civil Rights Division's New Second Amendment Section Hits the Ground Running

**J**ust over a year ago, a hostile federal executive branch had gun owners under siege on all fronts. The White House "Office of Gun Violence Prevention" was encouraging states to implement so-called "red flag" firearm confiscation laws, and according to allegations from the U.S. House Oversight Committee, potentially colluding with gun-control activists to target a prominent member of the firearm industry. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives was misinterpreting federal law to intimidate gun owners from engaging in lawful private firearm transfers and driving gun dealers out of business under an oppressive "zero-tolerance" policy. The federal public health apparatus was churning out reams of dubious anti-gun "science" and propaganda—going so far as funding an item encouraging dentists to lecture patients on firearms.

Upon taking office, President Donald Trump lifted this siege.

The Trump administration shuttered the White House gun-control office on day one. On Feb. 7, 2025, President Trump signed the executive order "Protecting Second Amendment Rights," demanding the attorney general conduct a full review of Biden-era anti-gun regulations and policies. In April, ATF announced its plan to revisit its private transfer rulemaking and end "zero tolerance." The administration has removed gun-control propaganda from government public health websites and exercised some much-needed prudence in research-funding decisions.

Working to get gun rights back to where they were before the disastrous Biden-Harris administration has been important. But the second Trump administration hasn't been content to play defense for gun owners. As the actions of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division (CRT) illustrate, this administration is intent on moving the ball forward.

The DOJ's CRT was created following the Civil Rights Act of 1957 and has accrued further enforcement authority with subsequent civil-rights legislation. As the name suggests, the division is tasked with protecting Americans' civil rights, including an ever-expanding panoply of legislated positive "rights." Conspicuously absent from the CRT's work over its first six decades was any meaningful effort to protect

Americans' fundamental right to keep and bear arms enumerated in the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights.

That all changed when President Trump nominated Second Amendment rights litigation veteran Harmeet Dhillon to serve as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights and oversee the CRT.

In December, Dhillon announced the creation of a dedicated Second Amendment Section at the CRT. The move finally put protecting the natural right embodied in the Second Amendment on par with Congress-prescribed rights that enjoy dedicated CRT sections, such as immigrant and employee rights, disability rights and educational opportunity.

In a video announcing the new right to keep and bear arms section, Dhillon affirmed her belief that the Second Amendment is not a second-class right and that she was "really excited about" the new office. The assistant attorney general added, "For the first time, the DOJ Civil Rights Division and the DOJ at large will be protecting and advancing our citizens' right to bear arms as part of our civil rights work."

The response from gun-control supporters was predictable.

Brady (formerly Handgun Control Inc.) issued a press release with the title, "Brady condemns DOJ launch of new 'gun rights' office that will endanger gun violence prevention laws." According to the item, the group's favored gun-control measures are "policies [that] are in no way inconsistent with the Second Amendment." Of course, if that were truly the case, Brady would have nothing to fear from the new civil rights section.

So far, the CRT under Dhillon has given civilian disarmament advocates reason for concern and gun owners reason for optimism.

Even before formal creation of the Second Amendment Section, on Sept. 30, 2025, the CRT filed suit against the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, alleging the office was not complying with the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark decision in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen* (2022).

In *Bruen*, the Court struck down New York's century-old discretionary carry-licensing regime, which required license applicants to justify a special need to carry for self-defense.

In doing so, the Court affirmed that “the Second and Fourteenth Amendments protect an individual’s right to carry a handgun for self-defense outside the home.”

Following the ruling, some of the dwindling minority of jurisdictions with discretionary carry-licensing schemes responded with unyieldingness. Sometimes this meant legislation making it more difficult to obtain a license and undermining its usefulness, others used bureaucratic obstinance to nullify the right.

The CRT’s suit charged the L.A. sheriff’s office with the latter, alleging the agency engaged in a “pattern or practice of law enforcement officer conduct that deprives persons of rights, privileges, or immunities secured or protected by the Constitution or laws of the United States” in issuing California Carry Concealed Weapons Licenses. Specifically, the sheriff’s office engaged in a “systematic practice of delaying the processing of concealed carry weapon permit applications.”

The details of L.A.’s licensing procedure cited in the CRT suit are staggering. The complaint noted that 3,982 new license applications were filed between Jan. 2, 2024, and March 31, 2025, but as of May 8, 2025, only two licenses had been issued. The suit noted that of the applications still pending, required interviews “are already scheduled for as late as November 2026—more than two years after some applications were first filed.” A California Carry Concealed Weapons License is only valid for two years.

In a case that touches upon similar issues, on Dec. 16, 2025, the CRT filed suit in the U.S. District Court of the Virgin Islands St. Thomas and St. John Division against the government of the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) and the Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD).

Those in the Virgin Islands are required to obtain a license to possess or carry firearms. The suit alleged that USVI and VIPD operate the licensing regime in an impermissible discretionary manner and “have continued to obstruct and systematically deny law-abiding American citizens this fundamental right by systematically delaying the processing of applications and imposing unconstitutional conditions on the exercise of this constitutional right.”

The complaint noted that, akin to pre-*Bruen* New York, “USVI law generally denies private individuals the right to carry a firearm unless such a person ‘established to the satisfaction of the Commissioner [of VIPD] that he has good reason to fear death or great injury to his person or property.’” Moreover, the suit took issue with the defendants’ requirement “that applicants submit to intrusive and warrantless home searches as a condition of obtaining a gun permit.”

Shifting from the question of who may bear arms to what arms individuals may have, on Dec. 22, 2025, the CRT filed suit against Washington, D.C., in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia for its ban on commonly owned semi-automatic firearms, such as the AR-15.

## THE CRT COMPLAINT CONNECTED THE DOTS ON THE AR-15’S COMMONALITY IN A MANNER THAT EVEN THE MOST ANTI-GUN JURIST SHOULD FIND IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE.

D.C. law requires registration of firearms but denies registration for a swath of common firearms it deems “assault weapons.” Citing the U.S. Supreme Court Case *District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008), the suit explained that the “Second Amendment of the United States Constitution generally protects the right of law-abiding individuals to keep and bear arms in common use for lawful purposes such as self-defense while in the home.”

Gun owners know that the AR-15 is the most popular rifle in the U.S. Citing polling data, a 2023 *Washington Post* item reported that “6 percent of Americans own an AR-15, about 1 in 20.”

The CRT complaint connected the dots on the AR-15’s commonality in a manner that even the most anti-gun jurist should find impossible to ignore. The suit pointed out that in the recent unanimous U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Smith & Wesson Brands, Inc. v. Estados Unidos Mexicanos* (2025), the Court noted, “The AR-15 is the most popular rifle in the country.”

Further, the new and improved CRT isn’t just initiating suits, it’s lending the federal government’s weight to ongoing litigation.

In September 2025, Dhillon and the CRT filed an amicus brief with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in the case *Barnett v. Raoul*. Like the CRT’s own case against the federal enclave, the case concerns Illinois’ ban on commonly owned semi-automatic firearms, including the AR-15.

As with the DOJ-initiated case, the CRT made clear that “the AR-15 is in common use by law-abiding citizens for lawful purposes,” and, therefore, cannot be banned. Dhillon also participated in the oral arguments to drive home the federal government’s position.

On Jan. 5, 2026, the CRT filed an amicus brief in the long-running case *Rhode v. Bonta*, which is before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. The case challenges California’s background checks for ammunition purchasers.

The brief described the not-so-Golden State’s ammunition background-check regime as “novel,” explaining, “California is the first State in this country’s history to require an in-person background check before every ammunition transaction.” In stark contrast, the *Bruen* decision made clear that “[o]nly if a firearm regulation is consistent with this Nation’s historical tradition may a court conclude that the individual’s conduct falls outside the Second Amendment’s ‘unqualified command.’”

As witnessed during the Biden-Harris administration, and earlier, the federal government has routinely been used to indulge gun-control advocates and undermine Americans’ Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. Conversely, a core function of the federal government should be as guarantor of fundamental rights—with those enumerated in the Constitution’s Bill of Rights taking chief priority. With the CRT’s work under the leadership of President Trump and Assistant Attorney General Dhillon, the federal executive branch is at long last positioned to help carry out this vital duty. 🌀



By John Commerford  
Executive Director,  
NRA-ILA

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# A Story On Violent Crime I'm Happy To Tell

There's a saying in media, "If it bleeds, it leads." This is a cynical reference to the notion that reporting on tragedy and victimization sells newspapers, or—in our modern media landscape—generates clicks. For my part, I would rather write about anything else, although sometimes it's necessary to discuss the dynamics of violent crime to gain a fuller understanding of our right to keep and bear arms.

This month, however, there is good news to report on that topic. Homicide rates in the United States, including those where firearms are used, have been declining over the last few years. According to multiple reports on early projections, 2025 is expected to see the largest decline in homicides in the U.S. ever recorded, with some estimating a roughly 20% drop.

Much of the data on crime from last year still needs to be reported, compiled and analyzed, but what we are seeing preliminarily is quite promising. Real-Time Crime Index, an online project that follows crime trends, showed a 19.8% drop in murder when comparing January to October numbers from both 2024 and 2025. But it's not just murder rates that are falling. Estimates are that all violent crime will show a decrease of around 9% in 2025, including a decline in rapes of about 6%, robbery 16% and aggravated assault around 8%.

As will always be the case, there will be debates over what has led to these reductions. Some will call it a "return to normal" after the national spike in crime during the COVID years. Others may point to the efforts of President Trump, who has made no secret of his desire to promote law and order in America.

Trump, of course, has been strictly enforcing our nation's immigration laws, and we have seen a parade of violent criminals the previous administration allowed to illegally enter our country apprehended by federal agents and sent back to their home countries (or elsewhere when those countries also did not want them to return).

Our president also famously deployed the National Guard into areas where violence was rampant. Washington, D.C., for example, saw troops arrive in August of last year. I can tell you firsthand how reassuring it was to see these brave men and women when I was in the District, whether they were at Metro stations, in high-crime areas or simply walking the streets.

While reminding you of the old "correlation is not causation" axiom, I will note that just about every category of violent crime in D.C. looks like it will see a dramatic decline for 2025.

So, although it may be up for debate as to what has led to plummeting crime rates in the U.S., what is not up for debate is that this trend is another nail in the coffin for the anti-gun argument that more guns in the hands of law-abiding citizens leads to more crime.

The legal sale of firearms surged greatly during the COVID pandemic, and sales have remained robust. Lawrence Keane, the Senior Vice President and General Counsel of the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), wrote an article recently titled: "As Gun Ownership Surges, Murder Rates Fall." Following the correlation versus causation caveat, Keane wrote:

*This is not a claim that guns "cause" crime to fall. Crime is driven by offender behavior, enforcement, prosecution and local conditions. But it is a direct rebuttal to the overly simplistic gun control talking point that increases in lawful gun ownership will absolutely increase murder and firearm violence.*

That's not to say that I (or Keane, for that matter) don't firmly believe firearms in the hands of law-abiding citizens contribute to lowering violent crime rates. There is no doubt in my mind of the deterrent effect of armed citizens.

It's difficult to quantify, however, why something *did not* happen.

On the other hand, year after year, anti-gun extremists proclaim that guns cause crime, and every time restrictions on law-abiding gun owners are eased, these same radicals start predicting the streets will now run red with the blood of innocent victims. It started back in 1987, when Florida began the trend of loosening restrictions on carrying firearms for self-defense. As more states followed suit, the cries of impending doom from those who despise our right to arms grew louder.

But they were wrong.

As our efforts transitioned from shall-issue carry permits to constitutional carry, and more than half the states passed laws no longer requiring a permit for a law-abiding citizen to carry a firearm for personal protection, those cries grew louder.

And they were wrong, again.

After the landmark decision in the *Bruen* case came down, striking may-issue permit laws, the cries were renewed. Keane's article notes that, after *Bruen*, California's notoriously anti-gun governor Gavin Newsom ridiculously proclaimed the decision would "return California to the days of the Wild West."

Wrong again.

So, crime is down, and that should make everyone happy. But that's not to say we should consider the mission accomplished. I remain convinced that loosening restrictions on law-abiding gun owners is a major contributor to the decline, so you can rest assured your NRA will continue to focus its efforts in that area.

That's a promise.

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NRA-ILA website: [nraila.org](http://nraila.org)

### **IN MEMORY NRA-ILA CONTRIBUTIONS**

**December 1-31, 2025**

**Robert Herstine**, Blythewood, SC (from: Palmetto Gun Club); **Michael LaFave** (from: Modesto Rifle Club); **Malcolm Drennon**, Summerville, SC (from: Palmetto Gun Club); **Bruce Curvin** (from: Hamburg Rod & Gun Club); **Raymond Parker** (from: St. Joseph Rifle & Pistol Club).

# The “L” in NRA-ILA Refers to Legislation, But Litigation is also Critically Important

In 2025, the National Rifle Association worked just as hard battling to protect the Second Amendment in the courts as we did in Congress and state legislatures, so we wanted to make sure you knew what was going on.

We defeated New Mexico’s seven-day waiting period for firearm purchases, the ATF’s “engaged in the business” rule, the ATF’s “pistol-brace” rule, a lawsuit seeking to ban lead ammunition in the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge and, in a case now being reheard by the en banc Ninth Circuit, California’s background-check requirement for ammunition purchases. NRA filed 10 new cases; three petitions for certiorari in the U.S. Supreme Court; and 20 amicus briefs, including nine in the U.S. Supreme Court. NRA counsel also published three law review articles, hosted webinars to discuss our litigation efforts across the country and continued its Legal Scholar Video Series, all while litigating dozens of other cases across the country.

## Litigation Victories

- **Ortega v. Grisham:** The Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals held that New Mexico’s seven-day waiting period for firearm purchases violates the Second Amendment in August 2025. The state petitioned for rehearing en banc, but the court denied that petition last week.
- **Butler v. ATF:** In October 2025, an Alabama federal district court held that the ATF exceeded its statutory authority by issuing its 2024 Final Rule expanding the definition of what counts as being “engaged in the business” of “dealing in firearms.” The court permanently enjoined the ATF and the DOJ from enforcing several of the Final Rule’s provisions against NRA members.
- **Rhode v. Bonta:** The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals struck down California’s background-check requirement for ammunition purchases in July 2025. But the court voted to rehear the case en banc in December 2025. En banc oral argument has been scheduled for the week of March 23, 2026.
- **NRA v. ATF & FRAC v. ATF:** After defeating the ATF’s “pistol brace” rule in the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in *FRAC v. ATF*, the ATF conceded that its rule was unenforceable and these two challenges were resolved.
- **National Wildlife Refuge Association v. Haaland:** The plaintiffs dismissed their lawsuit—in which the NRA intervened—that aimed to ban lead ammunition in the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge.
- **Jensen v. ATF:** An NRA-supported challenge to the National Firearms Act of 1934’s restrictions on suppressors, short-barreled long guns and NFA-defined “any other weapons,” filed in Texas.
- **Hanlon v. Campbell:** A challenge to Massachusetts’ ban on “assault-style firearms.”
- **Escher v. Noble:** A challenge to Massachusetts’ law prohibiting adults under 21 from possessing or carrying any handgun or semi-automatic firearm.
- **Jaymes v. Bonta:** A challenge to California’s ban on Glock-style handguns.
- **Padua v. Platkin:** A challenge to New Jersey’s ban on suppressors.
- **Struck v. Platkin:** A challenge to New Jersey’s “one-gun-a-month” restriction.
- **Dunn v. Glass:** A challenge to Florida’s three-day waiting period requirement for firearm purchases.
- **Langston v. Humphreys:** A challenge to Colorado’s excise tax on firearm and ammunition sales.
- **Sportsmen’s Alliance Foundation v. BLM:** A challenge to the Bureau of Land Management’s shooting ban on the Sonoran Desert National Monument.

## Cert Petitions

- **NRA v. Glass:** NRA petitioned the Supreme Court to hear its challenge to Florida’s ban on firearm purchases by adults under 21. Florida responded to the petition by urging the Court to hear the case and rule its own law unconstitutional. The Court distributed the petition for the Nov. 14, 2025, conference, and has not yet ruled on it.
- **Duncan v. Bonta:** A petition for certiorari was filed urging the Supreme Court to hear this NRA-supported challenge to California’s prohibition and confiscation of magazines that hold over 10 rounds. The Court first distributed the petition for the Dec. 5, 2025, conference, and then redistributed it for the Dec. 12, 2025, conference, and has not yet ruled on it.
- **Rush v. United States:** NRA-ILA counsel petitioned the Supreme Court to hear a challenge to the National Firearms Act of 1934’s tax and registration requirements for short-barreled rifles. The Court denied the petition on Dec. 15, 2025.

These are just highlights of a busy and productive year fighting for your rights in the courts. Many earlier cases continue to make their way through the legal process, and NRA-ILA is also engaged in the process of legal scholarship and continuing education for legal professionals. Please stay tuned to [nra.org](https://nra.org) for future updates on NRA-ILA’s ongoing efforts to defend your constitutional rights, and please visit [nra.org/litigation](https://nra.org/litigation) to keep up to date on NRA-ILA’s ongoing litigation efforts. 🌀

## New Cases

- **Brown v. ATF:** A challenge to the National Firearms Act of 1934’s restrictions on suppressors, short-barreled long guns and NFA-defined “any other weapons,” filed in Missouri.



## Statement to Members Regarding Indemnification Insurance for Directors and Officers

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA:

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE**, pursuant to N.Y. Not-for-Profit Corp. Law § 726(d), that:

**1.** The National Rifle Association of America has purchased insurance under N.Y. Not-for-Profit Corp. Law § 726 for the indemnification of directors and officers.

- (a). The insurance carriers are:
  - i. Beazley Lloyds (primary)
  - ii. Forge Lloyds (1st excess)
  - iii. Markel (2nd excess)
  - iv. Sompo (3rd excess)

(b). The contracts of insurance are dated 08/01/2019.

(c) The cost of the insurance is \$697,633.82. This premium covers the period 08/01/2019 to 07/31/2020 and obtains coverage up to indemnification limits of up to \$15 million across the four policies, for judgments, fines, amounts paid in settlement, and reasonable expenses, including attorneys' fees actually and necessarily incurred in connection with any criminal or civil action or proceeding, or any appeal therein, in which the person holding the insured position may be made a party, provided that all conditions prescribed by law have been met.

(d) The corporate positions insured include, among others, all directors, officers, employees, volunteers or trustees of the organization.

**2.** Following is an explanation of all sums, not previously reported in a statement to members, paid under any indemnification insurance contract:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Wayne LaPierre	Exec. Vice Pres.	Approx. \$5.1 mil
John Frazer	Secretary	Approx. \$2.9 mil
Wilson Phillips	Treasurer	Approx. \$2.2 mil
Josh Powell	Chief of Staff	Approx. \$3 mil

**3.** These sums were paid for the following reasons:

The advance fees were made to provide legal expenses for NRA executives in connection with investigations by various New York government authorities as well as a civil enforcement action brought against the NRA and four NRA officers in 2020 concerning alleged financial improprieties at the NRA. The civil action was entitled *New York v. NRA et al.*, No. 451625/2020 (N.Y. Cnty. Sup. Ct.). Named Defendants were the NRA, Wayne LaPierre, Wilson Phillips, John Frazer, and Josh Powell.

The case concerned allegations of self-dealing, related-party contracts, breaches of New York fiduciary duty to the NRA, misuse of nonprofit assets, misleading regulatory filings, and compliance failures. Former executives LaPierre and Phillips were found individually liable for breaches of fiduciary duty and misuse of the NRA's assets. Former executive Josh Powell entered in a settlement with NYAG, admitting wrongdoing and paying \$100,000. All three had left NRA leadership before judgment. Accordingly, legal fee advancement and insurance decisions as described herein were made during LaPierre's tenure.

Insurers directly advanced Powell and Phillips their respective legal fees. Insurers additionally reimbursed NRA for LaPierre's and Frazer's advancements in the amounts listed above.

The NRA is currently attempting to recover the unreimbursed funds advanced to LaPierre and Phillips.

Any questions regarding indemnification and this Statement should be directed at Doug Hamlin.

Dated: January 5, 2026

Doug Hamlin  
Executive Vice President and CEO



## Statement to Members of the National Rifle Association Regarding Indemnification Paid Otherwise Than by Court Order or Action by Members

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA:

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE**, pursuant to N.Y. Not-for-Profit Corp. Law § 725(c), that:

1. The NRA has made payments in the amounts and on the dates specified to John Frazer as described below:

Name	Title	Amount	Date
John Frazer	Secretary	Approx. \$6,000,000	December 11, 2024

2. The payments were made to indemnify Frazer named for legal expenses in connection with investigations by various New York government authorities as well as a civil enforcement action brought against the NRA and Frazer and three other NRA officers in 2020 concerning alleged financial improprieties at the NRA. The civil action was entitled *New York v. NRA et al.*, No. 451625/2020 (N.Y. Cnty. Sup. Ct.). Named Defendants were the NRA, Wayne LaPierre, Wilson Phillips, John Frazer, and Josh Powell.

The case concerned allegations of self-dealing, related-party contracts, breaches of New York fiduciary duty to the NRA, misuse of nonprofit assets, misleading regulatory firings, and compliance failures. Former executives LaPierre and Phillips were found individually liable for breaches of fiduciary duty and misuse of the NRA's assets. Former executive Josh Powell entered in a settlement with NYAG, admitting wrongdoing and paying \$100,000. All three had left NRA leadership before judgment. Accordingly, although legal fee advancement decisions as described herein were made during LaPierre's tenure, the indemnification decision regarding LaPierre described below has been made by current leadership.

3. At the time the indemnification of Frazer became operative, the nature and status of the NYAG litigation were as follows: The lawsuit had terminated at final judgment. Frazer engaged separate counsel after the filing of the lawsuit in August 2020, and throughout the course of the litigation NRA advanced approximately \$6 million to that separate counsel for Frazer's legal expenses. On December 11, 2024, the court issued final judgment in that matter in which "Plaintiff's request for relief" against Frazer were "**DENIED.**" Dkt. No. 3630 at 6. Under New York law, this outcome entitled John Frazer to mandatory indemnification at that date by operation of law.

4. The amounts paid were otherwise than by court order or action by members, to wit: Frazer's entitlement to indemnification was by operation of law due to the final judgment in his favor, without further action by the NRA's Board or members.

5. The NRA will not indemnify former officer Wayne LaPierre. Although the NRA advanced LaPierre approximately \$8.7 million in legal expenses throughout the same time period as for Frazer, the NRA is entitled to recoup the unreimbursed portion of the advancement (\$3.6 million) from the former executive, who was found liable after the December 11, 2024 final judgment. LaPierre was ordered to pay the NRA \$4.3 million, plus interest, and has done so. The NRA Board took action not to allow the former executive to keep the funds advanced to him and has thus passed a Resolution directing the current Executive Vice President to recoup the aforementioned amount advanced to LaPierre as legal expenses.

Any questions regarding indemnification and this Statement should be directed at Doug Hamlin.

Dated: January 5, 2026

Doug Hamlin  
Executive Vice President and CEO

# NRA Online Regional Report

To search for events in your area, go to

[nrapublications.org/regional-report](http://nrapublications.org/regional-report)

Visit the links below to find gun shows, programs, clubs, events and training in your area.



## LAW ENFORCEMENT

[le.nra.org](http://le.nra.org)

Public and private officers interested in becoming law enforcement firearm instructors should attend one of NRA's Law Enforcement Firearms Instructor Development Schools. NRA Police Pistol Combat competition is intended to be used as an extension of an officer's training.



## FRIENDS OF NRA

[friendsofnra.org](http://friendsofnra.org)

Friends of NRA events celebrate American values with fun, fellowship and fundraising for The NRA Foundation. To learn more about events in your area, visit [friendsofnra.org](http://friendsofnra.org), contact your local field representative or send an email to [friends@nrahq.org](mailto:friends@nrahq.org).



## GUN SHOWS

[gunshows.nra.org](http://gunshows.nra.org)

Dates and locations of gun shows are subject to change. Please contact the show before traveling. Discounted NRA memberships are sold through NRA recruiters. Some shows may offer free admission to people who sign up for new memberships or renewals.

To become an NRA Recruiter, contact NRA Recruiting Programs at [recruiter@nrahq.org](mailto:recruiter@nrahq.org).



## TRAINING

[refuse.nra.org](http://refuse.nra.org) | [nrainstructors.org](http://nrainstructors.org)

The NRA's Refuse To Be A Victim® program provides information on crime prevention and personal safety. To learn more about the program, visit [refuse.nra.org](http://refuse.nra.org). The most up-to-date seminar and instructor training schedule is available on the Internet by visiting [nrainstructors.org](http://nrainstructors.org), or online training is available at [nraonlinetraining.org](http://nraonlinetraining.org).

Questions? Email to [refuse@nrahq.org](mailto:refuse@nrahq.org) or by calling (800) 861-1166.



## AREA SHOOTS

[ssusa.org/coming-events](http://ssusa.org/coming-events)

For more information, please contact the NRA Competitive Shooting Division at [compchelp@nrahq.org](mailto:compchelp@nrahq.org).



## STATE ASSOCIATIONS

[stateassociations.nra.org](http://stateassociations.nra.org)

Joining NRA-affiliated state associations supports NRA's mission in your state. See [clubs.nra.org](http://clubs.nra.org) for more information.

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MEDIA RELATIONS (703) 267-1595

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The "NRA Regional Report," a service for NRA members, is an up-to-date listing of NRA conducted and/or sponsored events scheduled in your region for the current month. Call to verify event dates and locations before traveling.



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Friends Of NRA 2026 Gun Of The Year

# Daniel Defense H9 With Vortex Defender-ST Red Dot



**D**aniel Defense has been a well-respected name in U.S. rifle manufacturing (especially notable for cold hammer forging its own barrels in-house), so the company surprised many in 2024 when it expanded its options to include a 9 mm handgun: the H9. The 15-round Daniel Defense H9 sports an aluminum alloy grip frame with ambidextrous controls, removable G10 grip panels and a three-slot Picatinny rail for accessories. One unusual feature is the bottom-hinging blade safety in the gun's 1911-esque straight-pull trigger.

The Vortex Defender-ST red dot graces the top of the Friends of NRA DDH9. This well-reviewed 1X optic is noted for its durability, clarity and easy-to-use controls.

The Friends of NRA version of the DDH9 showcases the NRA logo engraved on the grips and etched on the Vortex Defender-ST red dot. Crafted exclusively for Friends of NRA events with special NRA serialization, it is limited to just 615 units.

"We're grateful and humbled to be named Friends of NRA Gun of the Year," said Rod Reasen, CEO of Daniel Defense. "We stand unapologetically for the Second Amendment and the

God-given right of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms. We appreciate the NRA's work to protect these freedoms in the courts, in legislation and in the public square."

"The Daniel Defense H9 9 mm, paired with the precision of the Vortex Defender-ST red dot, represents the innovation and craftsmanship that our community values most," said James Carter, Senior Executive Director of NRA Advancement and Membership. "As the Friends of NRA 2026 Gun of the Year, it stands as a symbol of tradition, excellence and the enduring spirit of responsible firearm ownership."

Friends of NRA fundraising events include exciting games, auctions, exclusive merchandise, and dinner with pro-freedom friends. With more than 600 fundraising events across the nation each year, Friends of NRA is invested in supporting the community of safe, shooting sports enthusiasts. The

funds raised by Friends of NRA helps local and national programs of all sizes by providing training equipment, safety gear, and other resources.

"We are especially grateful for the continuous support from Daniel Defense," Carter said, noting the company's unwavering commitment to quality and partnership.

"At Daniel Defense, our mission is clear: Honor God, Defend Freedom," added Reasen. "We will keep showing up with excellence and integrity, building tools you can trust and standing with responsible Americans in defense of their inherent rights, including the right to bear arms for the protection of life and liberty. Stay ready. Stay free. Stand together!"

Photo by Peter Fountain

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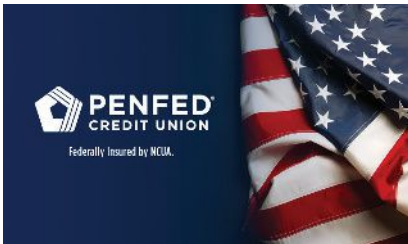
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# Winchester 1886 Saddle-Ring Carbine

**Gun:** Model 1886 Saddle-Ring Carbine  
**Manufacturer:** Winchester Repeating Arms  
**Chambering:** .38-56 WCF  
**Manufactured:** c. 1893  
**Condition:** NRA Very Good (Antique Firearm Condition Standards)  
**Value:** \$6,500 to \$7,000

As our country was celebrating its centennial 150 years ago, Oliver Winchester dominated the lever-action market with his Models 1866 and 1873 and was just introducing the Model 1876. But there were problems. The Winchesters 1866 and 1873 were only chambered for, respectively, .44 rimfire and .44-40 centerfire cartridges—mid-range, medium-game loadings at best—while the new Model 1876 still couldn't handle some of the popular big-game chamberings of the day, most notably the coveted .45-70 Govt.

To add to Oliver Winchester's issues, in 1881, his neighbor in New Haven, Conn., the nascent Marlin Firearms Company—which previously made only rimfire derringers, small-frame revolvers and single-shot Ballard rifles—took a giant leap and vaulted directly into Winchester's arena by coming out with its first lever-action. The Marlin Model 1881 Repeating Rifle was not only chambered for the company's proprietary .40-60 Marlin, but also for the .45-70 Govt., with other chamberings to follow. Clearly, something had to be done to maintain Winchester's lead in what was sure to turn into a highly competitive arms race.

In the past, two gunsmith-inventor brothers from Ogden, Utah—Matthew and John Browning—had come to Winchester's rescue with their design of the Model 1878 single-shot, which became the Winchester Model 1885. Now, as if by fate, the Browning brothers presented their new concept for a repeating rifle to the same individual who had purchased the patent for their single-shot: T.G. Bennett, Oliver Winchester's son-in-law, who was also vice president of the company. Bennett bought the rights to the new rifle immediately, thus beginning an 11-year string of lever-action successes between the Brownings and Winchester.

Taking inspiration from his single-shot rifle's falling breechblock, John Browning developed what many still consider the ultimate big-game lever-action rifle: the Winchester Model 1886. The falling breechblock was transformed into twin vertical locking bars that slid up along opposite inside walls of a dramatically beefed-up receiver, anchoring the bolt

closed, then lowering as the action was opened, aided by a muscular feeding mechanism that was perfected by Winchester's William Mason. The result was a solid lockup,

combined with a smooth action. A 26-inch barreled Sporting Rifle, pistol-gripped Fancy Sporting Rifle and a 22-inch barreled Carbine (along with a briefly catalogued 30-inch Musket) were introduced, with prices ranging from \$36 for the Fancy Sporting Rifle to \$19 for the Carbine.

The Model 1886, and particularly the Sporting Rifle model, met with immediate success. Calibers eventually ran the gamut from .33 WCF to the .50-110 Express, with the popular .45-70 Govt. taking the lead. However, unlike Winchester's previous lever-actions and those to follow, the 1886 Carbine lagged far behind the

rifles in sales. Perhaps it was the '86 Carbine's 7.5-pound weight and 22-inch barrel (compared with the 6.5 pounds and 20-inch barrels of Winchester's other carbines), but the hefty saddle gun did not share the popularity of the 1886 rifles, despite the carbine's lower price. By the time the Winchester 1886 was discontinued in 1935, with a total of 159,994 guns produced, only 6,223 of those had been manufactured as carbines.

But time—and collector demand—have a way of altering things. Today, the Winchester 1886 Carbine is one of the most sought-after versions of this model. As George Madis stated in *The Winchester Book*: "One of the rarest carbines in the Winchester line is the Model '86." This saddle-ring carbine was made in 1893 and is in 50-percent condition, having developed an age-worthy patina while retaining sharp rifling and worn but legible markings. As such, it is worth \$6,500 to \$7,000.

—Rick Hacker

