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ON THE COVER

Shawn Herrin of the *We Like Shooting* podcast and Firearms Radio Network is one of six gun world insiders who detail the drinks and cigars they reach for when business hours are over for the day and it's time to relax. (FRED MASTISON)



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(FRANK JARDIM)



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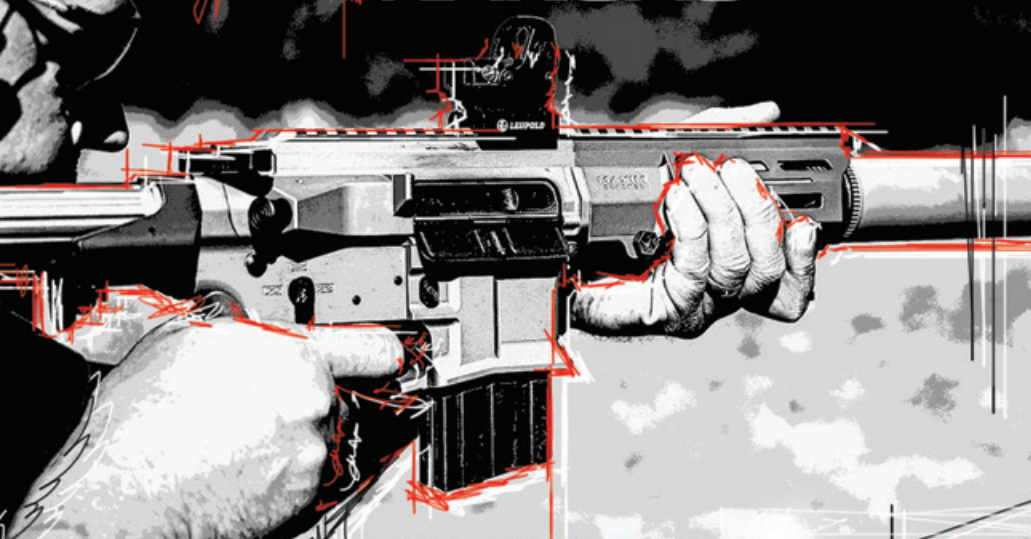
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CROSSROADS OF THE WEST GUN SHOWS crossroadsgunshows.com	July 13-14 July 20-21 August 3 August 10-11	Phoenix, Ariz. Reno, Nev. Ontario, Calif. Bakersfield, Calif.	Arizona State Fairgrounds Reno Convention Center Ontario Convention Center Kern County Fairgrounds
FLORIDA GUN SHOWS floridagunshows.com	July 13-14 July 20-21 July 27-28 August 3-4 August 17-18	Orlando, Fla. Miami, Fla. Tampa, Fla. Fort Myers, Fla. Orlando, Fla.	Central Florida Fairgrounds Miami-Dade Fairgrounds Florida State Fairgrounds Lee Civic Center Central Florida Fairgrounds
GUNTVSHOWS.COM guntvshows.com	August 3-4 August 17-18	Tucson, Ariz. Scottsdale, Ariz.	Tucson Expo Center Embassy Suites by Hilton Scottsdale Resort
RK SHOWS rkshows.com	July 6-7 July 13-14 July 13-14 July 19-21 July 20-21 July 27-28 July 27-28	Lawrenceville, Ga. Grovetown, Ga. Jackson, Tenn. Neosho, Mo. Marietta, Ga. Tulsa, Okla. Somerset, Ky.	Gwinnett County Fairgrounds Columbia County Exhibition Center Jackson Fairgrounds Park Newton County Fairgrounds Jim Miller Park Tulsa Fairgrounds Expo Square The Center For Rural Development
REAL TEXAS GUN SHOWS therealtexasgunshow.com	July 6-7 August 3-4 August 10-11 August 17-18	Belton, Texas Brenham, Texas Taylor, Texas Gonzales, Texas	Bell County Expo Center Brenham Fire Department Training Center Williamson County Expo Center J.B. Wells Arena
TANNER GUN SHOWS tannergunshow.com	August 23-25	Greeley, Colo.	Island Grove Regional Park
WES KNODEL GUN SHOWS wesknodelgunshows.com	No July/August dates		

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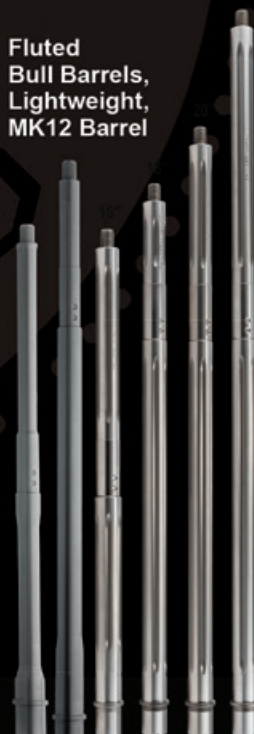
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 uspsa.org	JULY 13-14 Columbia Cascade Sectional Shedd, Ore. JULY 17-21 Federal USPSA Multigun Nationals Forest Lake, Minn. JULY 18-21 Sig Sauer Area 7 Championship Epping, N.H. JULY 24-28 Central California Section Coastal Classic San Luis Obispo, Calif. JULY 25-28 Colorado State USPSA Championship Colorado Springs, Colo. AUGUST 9-10 Tennessee USPSA Section Championship Puryear, Tenn.
 gssfonline.com	JULY 13-14 Buckeye State Ballistic Challenge Wingett Run, Ohio JULY 13-14 Coeur d'Alene Glock Classic Coeur d'Alene, Idaho JULY 20-21 Great Lakes Regional Classic Brighton, Mich. JULY 20-21 Pacific Coast Challenge Shedd, Ore. JULY 27-28 Scarborough Fish and Game Annual GSSF Match Scarborough, Maine JULY 27-28 Virginia Ballistic Challenge Bluefield, Va.
 cmsaevents.com	JULY 6 Colorado State Championship Pueblo, Colo. JULY 6-7 North Mountain Regional West Yellowstone, Mont. JULY 11 Nebraska State Shoot Litchfield, Neb. JULY 13-14 Idaho State Shoot Coeur d'Alene, Idaho JULY 13-14 Mid Central Regional Championship Festus, Mo. JULY 19-20 Connecticut State Championship Moosup, Conn. JULY 20 Oklahoma State Shoot Kiefer, Okla. JULY 25-28 CMSA Western US Championship Las Vegas, Nev.
 idpa.com	JULY 12-14 Pennsylvania State IDPA Championship Hunlock Creek, Pa. JULY 26-28 Washington State IDPA Championship South Hill, Wash. JULY 27 Iowa State IDPA Championship Elkhart, Iowa

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Off the Clock

HAVE A DRINK WITH THE INDUSTRY

STORY AND PHOTOS BY FRED MASTISON

The firearms industry is unlike any other industry in the world. It is more than a collection of business interests; it is a lifestyle. There is a distinct culture in the firearms world, and it goes beyond actual firearms. People in this industry are interested in living life and enjoying even the smallest details. One thing that tends to bind a majority of the industry is the appreciation for a fine drink and possibly a very nice cigar at the end of the day. While some may dismiss this as common, the appreciation that people in our industry have for this goes beyond the physical item. It is about the moment and the ability to let go and relax.

With this in mind, I reached out to some of the most well-known and influential people in the business to see if they would share their thoughts and their choices. As is common, they agreed and shared the following.

KAREN HUNTER

Karen Hunter is one of those people who can't have a single-page résumé. She is a widely published national magazine contributor with hundreds of articles in the likes of *Ballistic*, *Personal & Home Defense*, *Guns & Ammo*, and about a million other spots. She is also a certified master-level instructor in handgun, shotgun and carbine. We also need to throw in that she is an industry product design and business consultant. As the cliché goes, when Karen speaks, people listen. In short, she is one of the most respected members of the industry and one of the finest people I know.

Karen shared with me, "I really represent the population of people that do not drink very often. I much prefer to kick back with a glass of unsweetened iced tea with Splenda, or a Coke Zero. There are times, however, especially when traveling for work, that I will partake in an alcoholic beverage. I have to be so careful, though! It only takes a small amount of alcohol to get me tipsy and throw my behavior into crazy obnoxious. Obviously, this could make a work event extremely awkward, lol."

"So, here are my go-to drinks for when I do indulge," she continued. "Amaretto sours – these are absolutely fabulous! I realize this sounds like an 'old person's drink,' but I just love them, especially when they use the Luxardo cherries! This is a great drink with a very low percentage of alcohol content, so I'm able to partake in several throughout an evening or an event and still maintain my 'professional character.' My next go-to would be Jack and Coke – very light on the Jack, heavy on the Coke Zero, or Diet Coke. Every once in a while, depending on who I'm with or what the event may be, I'll opt for a top-shelf shot of tequila! I absolutely *love* tequila! So tequila shots, margaritas, really anything with tequila, lol. If you really want to see a rare side of Karen Hunter, tequila will do the trick!"

A portrait of a woman with long, dark, wavy hair and light-colored eyes, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a black top with a keyhole cutout and sheer black lace sleeves. She is holding a glass of tequila with ice and a lime wedge. The background is dark and out of focus.

***“If you really
want to see a
rare side of
Karen Hunter,
tequila will do
the trick!”***

KEN CAMPBELL

Pofficially, Ken Campbell is a retired 35-year law enforcement officer and sheriff of a Midwestern sheriff's office. He has been an instructor at the prestigious Gunsite Academy since 1993 and the CEO since 2014. Unofficially, Ken is the face and magic behind Gunsite. There are few people in the business who do not know Ken, and for good reason. He is a strong voice in the industry and one of the best in the business.

When asked about his downtime, he shared this: "Some of the best times of my life have been on the porch of the Gunsite Instructor House sharing a bourbon and cigar. The fine bourbon and cigars were only exceeded by the fellowship. Bourbon, like cigars, is something to savor and enjoy with good company. My 'regular' bourbon is Maker's Mark. If I am in a celebratory mood, Blanton's. I want a bourbon that has the real flavor of 'Kentucky holy water' and not something watered down. If I mix it with anything, it is ice."



"I want a bourbon that has the real flavor of 'Kentucky holy water' and not something watered down."

BRITTANI OWENS

Brittani Owens is the marketing communications coordinator for Vortex Optics. In that role, she is forced to deal with the good-hearted miscreants who call themselves writers. Also in that role, she has gained legendary status because of her machine-like efficiency and professionalism. Beyond the business, Brittani is simply a wonderful lady. At times we can get so caught up in the business side of things that we drift from personal connections. This has never been the case with Brittani. Any communication with her feels like you are talking to an old friend. She is one of the best in the business. Brittani is based in Wisconsin, so her take on my question was unique.

“The Packers, fried cheese and old fashioned – the Holy Trinity of Wisconsin,” she said. “In true Wisconsin style, my favorite drink is the Wisconsin Old Fashioned. What makes this old fashioned different is that it is served with brandy instead of whiskey or bourbon. Famously served at any Wisconsin supper club, an old fashioned is a staple in any Wisconsinite’s diet. These drinks are good all year round and I typically order them with steak or fish (especially a Friday night fish fry). Picture of me at Toby’s Supper Club in Madison, Wisconsin ... on a Tuesday.”

A full-page photograph of Brittani Owens, a woman with long blonde hair, smiling and holding a glass of Wisconsin Old Fashioned drink. The background shows a bar with various bottles.

“The Packers, fried cheese, and old fashioned – the Holy Trinity of Wisconsin.”

KEN ROSS

In this industry, as well as others, there are men. However, there are some who personify this designation and carry themselves as more than a title. They are old-school men. One of the best examples of this is Ken Ross. Ken is the outbound marketing director at Primary Arms. Ken is not a clichéd macho man, but a true cultured gentleman. He has a wisdom and energy that is rare to find in our quick, disposable world. I have watched as Ken enjoyed a cigar and experienced peace in the moment. He is a rare man and one of the most professional and polished men I know.

"Smoking cigars has been a ritual that I have grown to love over the years," he shared with me. "It's a time for me to slow down and enjoy the moment, whether I'm on the range or in a lounge listening to good music. The act of smoking a cigar is a form of meditation for me, allowing me to clear my mind and relax."

"Choosing the right cigar is crucial for the experience," Ken added. "It all depends on what I'm doing and what



"The act of smoking a cigar is a form of meditation for me, allowing me to clear my mind and relax."



my drink of choice is. Sometimes I'll pair my cigar with a good scotch or whisky. Lately, I have been enjoying Macallan 12 single malt scotch or Widow Jane 10-year bourbon. When it comes to choosing a cigar, I have two go-to options: the Alec Bradley Black Market and the Drew Estate Liga Privada No. 9. Both are available in either a robusto or a torpedo, depending on my preference. The Alec Bradley Black Market has a smooth and creamy flavor, with hints of leather and spice. The Drew Estate Liga Privada No. 9, on the other hand, has a bolder flavor profile with notes of espresso and dark chocolate. The beauty of smoking cigars is that it's not just about the smoke itself. It's about the experience as a whole. It's about taking the time to slow down and enjoy the moment."

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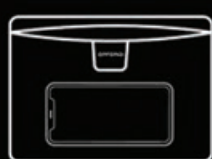
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“Finding a good cigar lounge is key to relaxing after a long day on the range.”



SCOTT JEDLINSKI

Scott Jedlinski is a professional firearms instructor and lifelong martial artist. He has received hundreds of hours of training from people considered to be the best in the industry, ranging from tactical/self-defense to competition. Scott is also one of the most sought-after pistol red dot instructors in the world. Every year he teaches over 100 classes to civilians and law enforcement across the country, specializing in the red dot pistol and AIWB concealment. His company, Modern Samurai Project, is a force. There is more to this, though, than just his understanding of the red dot. Equally if not more important is his ability to teach. In that capacity, he excels and this is one of the reasons his nickname is Jedi. I have had the pleasure of an after-class drink and cigar with Scott on more than one occasion. He was kind enough to take a brief moment and share his thoughts.

“Because I travel so much, finding a good cigar lounge is key to relaxing after a long day on the range,” said Scott. “My drink of choice is a great rye, like the offering from Uncle Nearest. Paired with a great cigar like the Cohiba Red Dot (pardon the pun), it makes traveling an adventure instead of a chore.”



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REDUCE YOUR RECOIL



“My drink of choice is whiskey and bourbon, always with a couple of dark cherries; fruit is healthy, right?”



SHAWN HERRIN

Shawn Herrin is the dynamic leader of *We Like Shooting*, one of the industry's biggest and craziest podcasts, and the driving force behind the Firearms Radio Network. Beyond the airwaves, Shawn is a seasoned medical and firearms instructor and is known for his hands-on expertise and commitment to educating others. A staunch Second Amendment advocate, his voice echoes the core values of freedom and the right to bear arms. He's at the forefront of firearm education, ensuring responsible gun ownership and safety are within everyone's reach.

I visited with Shawn and he shared this with me: “My drink of choice is whiskey and bourbon, always with a couple of dark cherries; fruit is healthy, right? Lately, I've been enjoying the Smoke Wagon Small Batch. I hear the owner is a gun guy and I try to always support our people!”

There is the industry that has truly so many good people in it. I believe this is the case with the firearms industry because it is a lifestyle as much as anything. People who enter this world but don't really “live the life” usually end up moving on to other businesses. It is this bond, both on the clock and off the clock, that makes the firearms industry so special. ★

Editor's note: Author Fred Mastison has written over 2,000 print articles in dozens of magazines. He is also the founder of Force Options USA, a training company for various uses of force, from hand-to-hand training to all levels of firearms training. Mastison is also one of the country's top professional firearms and combative instructors and a certified dignitary protection specialist. He has taught for over 30 years and has over 16 law enforcement post-instructor certifications. In addition, he's taught martial arts for 28 years and holds multiple black belts, including a seventh-degree black belt in aiki jujitsu.

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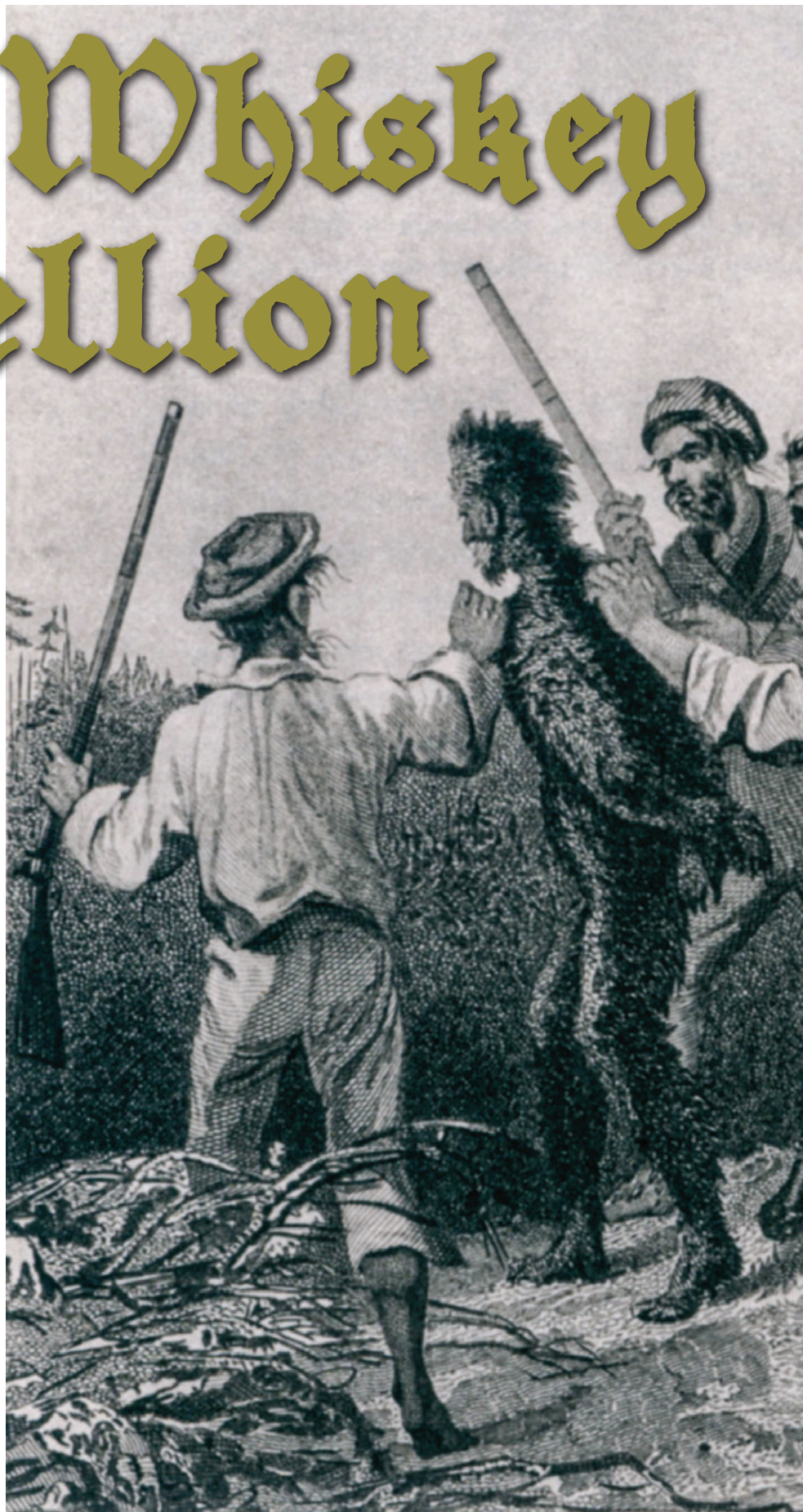
The Whiskey Rebellion

TRAVEL BACK TO 1794 AND WITNESS HISTORY UNFOLD, IN PREPARATION FOR THE CONTEMPORARY LONGRIFLE ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL MEETING AND AUCTION.

STORY BY FRANK JARDIM

This tale of historical fiction is written in celebration of the annual meeting of the Contemporary Longrifle Association taking place August 8-10 at the Exhibit Hall of the Central Bank Center in Lexington, Kentucky. The CLA is an organization of artists, artisans, patrons and historians dedicated to the preservation of the skills and knowledge used to hand-make not just rifles, but all material objects of everyday early American life, just as they would have been made before 1830. That includes clothes, tomahawks, furniture, knives, tools and pottery, among other things, as well as the decorative arts of the period that enhanced the visual appeal of these objects.

While many CLA members are full-time artists and craftsmen who will have their best work exhibited for sale at the meeting, the organization truly welcomes all enthusiasts, skilled or not, who share their sincere interest and





Whiskey Rebellion in Pennsylvania 1795. Whiskey rebels with their tarred and feathered federal tax collector. In the background is the collector's burning home and terrorized family. (EVERETT COLLECTION HISTORICAL/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO)

curiosity about how things were really done in preindustrial times. Many instructional seminars are offered by individual CLA members throughout the year and whatever your interest (e.g., making guns, brain tanning deer hide, carving powder horns, embroidering with porcupine quills), you are sure to find a mentor to help you explore it.

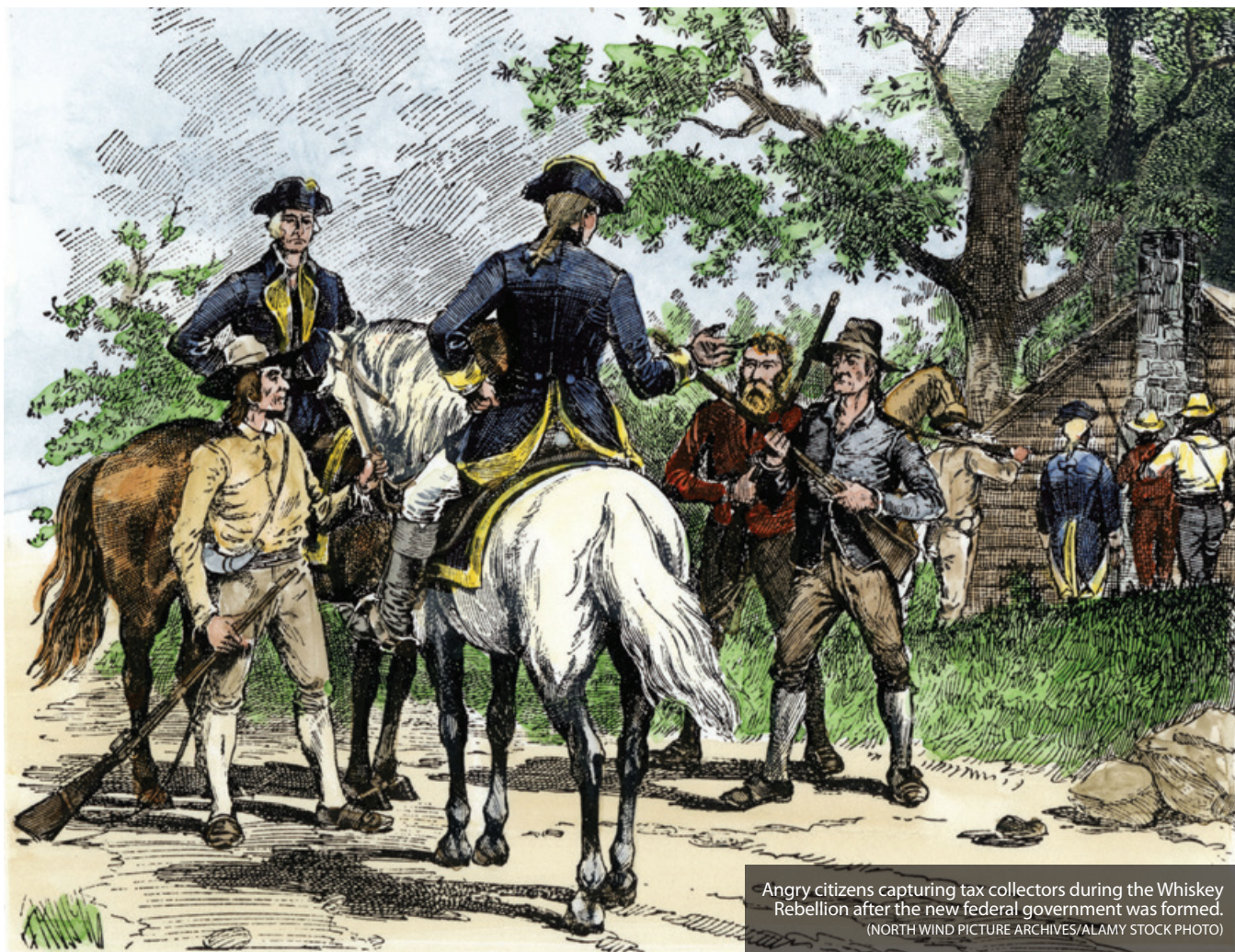
For the past 28 years, the CLA has held a grand auction at the annual meeting of pieces donated by members, the proceeds from which go to support the organization and its programs. This year there are 30 exceptional lots up for bid, seven of which are featured in the prose and photographs of this story to illustrate how they could have been used. While the lead characters in this story are fictional, their circumstances are based on known facts and events and presented as they would have looked through their eyes as frontier Kentucky farmers at the height of the

Whiskey Rebellion in 1794. I invite you to step back in time, 230 years ago, when the authority of the new American constitutional republic faced its first major internal challenge ...

OCTOBER MORNINGS ARE cold in Kentucky. Alexander Peale's plans required he be on his way at least an hour before dawn. Dressed in his hunting shirt bound closed in the front with a woolen sash wrapped twice snugly around his waist and tied tight, he slipped his small bag ax and belt knife through it and slung his hunting bag and powder horn over his shoulder. Picking up his rifle scabbard, he headed for the door of the fortress-like two-room log cabin his family of five called home. Three and a half years earlier, in the summer of 1790, he and his sons had felled a stand of oaks on the edge of their farm's 5 cleared acres to build it with. The slimmest of the logs were 10 inches across when cleaved square. He

felt West Point Army engineers could not have built a sturdier block house.

Like most Kentucky frontier farmers, the danger of Indian raids was never far from his mind, though he now had reason to hope that threat was diminished. Two months earlier, in August, he was among the 1,500 Kentucky Militia routing a coalition of hostile tribes on the Maumee River over 100 miles north. By order of President George Washington, the frontier state militias were called up for three-month tours of service outside their borders to support Federal troops fighting tribes at war with the United States. Many living on the frontier, Peale included, were of the opinion that the new Federal government wasn't doing enough to protect them from Indian raids and Federal troops who were deployed had an embarrassingly poor record of carrying the fight to the enemy in the Northwest over the last few years. Their blundering emboldened the



Angry citizens capturing tax collectors during the Whiskey Rebellion after the new federal government was formed.
(NORTH WIND PICTURE ARCHIVES/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO)



Protestors tar and feather a tax collector during the Whiskey Rebellion in Pennsylvania. (NORTH WIND PICTURE ARCHIVES/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO)

Indians and made the situation worse. The recent successful Battle of Fallen Timbers along the Maumee last August was different. Half the troops there were Kentucky militiamen under the command of their own officers.

Peale's wife grabbed his arm as he began to unlatch the heavy cabin door, got on her tiptoes to press her cheek against his and said, "May God watch over you, dear husband ... and you don't go making it hard for Him!" He turned and winked at her as he hurried outside into the darkness. He had more than the usual number of chores to attend to on and off the farm today, and while less troubled by Indian worries, his mind dwelled on the growing dissension between frontier farmers and the new Federal government over the despised whiskey tax.

The tax began in 1791 when the new Congress approved, and President Washington signed into law, the new constitutional republic's first national tax, an excise tax on the production of spirits. In addition to actual commercial distilleries, most of which were in the East, just about every farmer was a part-time distiller. Congress expected the revenue to be sufficient to pay off the \$75 million in war debt from the Revolution, a third of which had previously been a state burden until the new government took responsibility for their creditors.

Among the small farmers that populated the frontier, the tax was regarded as grossly unfair. Had Kentucky been a state in 1791, her elected representatives to Congress

would have argued vociferously against it. Resistance to the tax was most intense and violent in the western counties of Pennsylvania. Over the past three years, in addition to signing petitions and forming committees and other more gentlemanly means of opposition, tax collectors, and even tax advocates, had been beaten, tarred and feathered, attacked and besieged by organized mobs. Some people had lost their lives, while others suffered their properties burned.

Last August, as a combined force of 3,000 Federal troops and federalized Kentucky Militia, Peale among them, marched toward a battle with the Indians, a mob of 7,000 Pennsylvania tax rebels, amounting to more than a third of the state's western population, was marching on the Borough of Pittsburgh to protest the whiskey tax. President Washington was reported to have sought and received a declaration of rebellion from the Supreme Court allowing him to call up more state militias from Virginia, Eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland and New Jersey to form an army of nearly 13,000 to compel the rebels to obey the law. He temporarily took leave of his duties in Philadelphia, the first capital of the United States, to personally lead this force in the field.

How the challenge had played out, Peale didn't yet know. He was well apprised of recent events, having heard the matters discussed among the officers on the way to and from the Fallen Timbers fight, but back home his news came from the posted notices and

private papers circulating in the county seat, which he visited only a few times a year. He respected Washington and believed the president would act with prudence to protect the new nation he had sacrificed so much of his life for. It was one thing to defy a tax collector and claim him a tyrant, and very much another to direct those accusations against the most beloved hero of the war for independence. If anyone could reel the tax rebels back in from the brink of a second revolution, it would be Washington.

WALKING TOWARD A fire's glow under a lean-to near the barn, Peale reached into his pocket for the wool cap his wife had knit for him the previous fall. He put it on, pulling it over his ears against the chill. This morning his first task was to help his son pour off the spirits that had condensed overnight at their still. Working together by firelight, they sealed the clear liquid in small casks, their nostrils flaring from its powerful odor. As the morning sky was lightening, they hauled the casks to the barn in a cart and stacked them with the others. This eclipsing night's work was the culmination of many weary nights tending the fire under their still. Finally, the last of their surplus corn harvest was converted to spirits. In Kentucky, and all along the frontier for that matter, specie, and even paper money, was scarce. Whiskey was used as currency.

Later in the week, they would load the casks in their wagon in preparation for a trip over the mountains. This was

The seven auction lots featured in this story, in order of first appearance, are:

LOT 18: LONGHUNTER SASH BY CHRISTINE TOLBERT.

This 18th century-style longhunter sash served as a belt for carrying equipment and as a means of securing closed an outer garment lacking buttons. Woven on a typical hand loom of the period, it is made with linen thread and Shetland wool. Handwovens made in this manner were durable, stable in their length either wet or dry, and had a subtle sheen. The sash is nearly 5 inches wide and 133 inches long, with several inches of twisted fringe at each end, and is meant to be worn twice wrapped around the waist and tied tight.

LOT 12: FRONTIER COLLABORATION BY WILLIAM SCHNEIDER, HEATHER SCHNEIDER, CASEY MCCLURE AND ELIZABETH ASHLEE.

This multi-part grouping includes a hunter's hand-forged bag ax with hickory handle and hand-forged hunting knife with antler grips made by bladesmiths McClure and Ashlee. It also includes a frontier-style home-tanned deerskin hunting bag with hand-forged iron buckle, accessory shot/bullet bag of stout striped linen with turned antler spout and wood stopper, and a powder horn made by the Schneiders.

LOT 9: LINEN LONGRIFLE SCABBARD BY KERRY MASARIK AND SHELLY GIER.

Made with cotton canvas and decorated with a variety of leaves gathered from the forests of North Carolina, Masarik used a steaming process to transfer the leaf pigments permanently onto the fabric. The exterior canvas was given a protective treatment of beeswax. The interior of the case is lined with wool and then quilted around various leaves. The entire piece was hand-stitched and has a welt and bark-tanned leather end cap for extra protection.

LOT 15: KNIT GUNNISTER CAP AND BAG BY EMILY BURNS AND BEVERLY SIMPSON.

The cap is made of high-quality Merino Targhee wool and dyed with madder and sassafras bark. Its construction was based on an original discovered in an excellent state of preservation buried in a bog in Gunnister, Scotland. It has a simple turned-up brim with a lace design. "Knit caps," Burns explains, "were a staple of a working man's wardrobe, providing warmth and practical wear." This lot also includes a handy knit bag in contrasting shades of brown and blue made by Simpson.

LOT 30: WHISKEY FLASK BY ALBERT EMANUEL. Made from flattened cow horn, the flask measures 3.5 inches wide and 5.5 inches tall, is fitted with a cork stopper, lined with a waterproof coating of beeswax, and decoratively engraved with a European stag mounted by a crown, a heart and a Scottish thistle on one side, and with the words "Ye Auld Scot Aged Fine Whisky" on the other. The engravings are embellished with polychrome coloring that contrasts against the white background of the horn.



Lot 12

Lot 15



Lot 2



Lot 18



Lot 16

LOT 16: EIGHTEENTH CENTURY-STYLE FOLDING KNIFE BY TYLER MAZER. Based on a fusion of four styles from George C. Neumann's reference work *Swords & Blades of the American Revolution*, its 3-inch blade is 1084 carbon steel with brass bolsters and antler scales secured by steel pins.

LOT 2: RIFLE BY GRAIG OSBORNE. This high-grade, iron-mounted Southern .50-caliber rifle features carving and engraving, premium curly maple stock, dual set triggers, Buckridge English-style lock with waterproof pan, captured lid box, traditional-style tang with beaver tail carving, silver inlay surrounding the feather hole in the bottom of the butt, and forestock molding framing the swamped Rice barrel.



Lot 9



Lot 30



A reenactor dressed as a Kentucky farmer heads to Pennsylvania to defend against the taxing of his whiskey. (CONTEMPORARY LONGRIFLE ASSOCIATION)

an annual ritual all along the Western frontier. Surplus grains were so bulky that there was no economical way for a frontier farmer to transport them over the mountains to Eastern markets and sell them at a profit. Distilled into spirits, those excess grains not only took up considerably less physical space, but they also sold for a higher price east of the mountains than they could be bartered for in the local market. East of the mountains was where the gold and silver currency circulated. What specie Peale and all the frontier farmers like him managed to save was in the main earned by transporting and selling their whiskey over the mountains.

Leaving his son to dismantle and

stow away the still, Peale bid him goodbye, picked up his rifle scabbard, and walked across his bare fields to the wagon trail leading through the forest toward the secondary road that eventually led to the county road and the county seat at Washington many miles away.

Walking along the wagon trail he and his sons had widened from a footpath with axes and a two-man saw, Peale reflected on how much had happened since he mustered out of the Continental Army in 1783 when an eight-and-a-half-year-long state of war between the American states and Great Britain was finally, officially, ended with pen and paper by diplomats. At

the time that he took his wife, sons and daughter west over the mountains to settle on the frontier, Kentucky was still part of Virginia, and the establishment of Mason County and the town of Washington, both named for great Virginia patriots, was years away. Now in 1794, Washington was the second biggest of the five or six towns in the new state of Kentucky. There were over 120 log dwellings populated by about 500 Christian souls.

Even a piedmont Virginian like Peale, growing up in sight of the Blue Ridge Mountains, knew Washington was no Williamsburg, but the settlement was an impressive accomplishment when you considered that most Indian tribes that previously resided on this land before the Revolution sided with the British against the newly United States and did their best to make Kentucky dark and bloody ground all over again. The patriot settlers found no safety in old peace treaties negotiated with the King of England. They had to take up arms and fight the Indians off a second time. They were still fighting them now, for despite the Treaty of Paris in 1783, the British continued to instigate Indian attacks from their forts along the Canadian border.

IT WAS ABOUT 10 in the morning when Peale arrived at his destination along the wooded county road. The sunlight piercing the canopy of trees cast long shadows that dazzled the eye, creating a natural, if temporary, camouflage. This particular stretch of hard-packed earth road curved sharply along the foot of a knob on the south side. The lay of the land was such that a spot a dozen yards up the slope afforded direct observation of 100 feet of the road below just after the curve. "This is the spot," he thought to himself. He drew his ax from his sash and began vigorously chopping off large limbs from young trees just inside the forest. He dragged the limbs into the road, piling them knee-high across the right side of it. As he worked, he noticed two figures with rifles watching him from the forest.

"Fine neighbors you are, letting me do all the work," he shouted with mild annoyance in his voice. The

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two figures – one grey-bearded and older, and the other younger than he – emerged from the trees and approached him with smiles.

“Don’t be cross with us, laddie,” the older man said to him in a heavy Scottish burr. “You had the job near done when we came upon ya.” He pulled an engraved horn flask from his pocket, uncorked it, took a sip, and handed it to Peale. “You could stand to wet your whistle, laddie,” he said, “but don’t let the engraving get your hopes up. It’s just our corn liquor. I haven’t had a drop of proper Scotch whisky to taste since you patriots run the British off.” Peale took a small sip and looked at the flask. Embellished with a thistle, it read, “Ye Auld Scot Aged Fine Whisky.” He handed it back to the old man.

“I hope you brought more than this to sustain you,” Peale said. “If our spies at the court are correct, the gentleman we’re expecting should be coming down this road in a few hours. If not, we may be here all day. Either way, we should get in position.” Then he turned to lead them to the spot he’d scouted the day before on the high ground south of the road. From this position they were 50 yards from the pile of cut limbs with a clear view of it and the road all the way down to the curve.

They worked quickly to disguise their position so as to be completely invisible from the road and reviewed their plans so each knew his role. Peale would fire the opening, and hopefully only, shot of the engagement. If that did not do the trick, his neighbors would shoot while he reloaded and they would keep shooting until the job was done.

As they settled into their hide for what might be a long wait, they talked to each other in whispers. Peale pulled his rifle from the scabbard, positioned it across his lap and sat facing the road. It was a fine, nearly new rifle he got from a North Carolinian three years earlier. The man came to Kentucky with high hopes and just enough luck to realize he wasn’t cut out for a frontier life before it killed him. In Raleigh, he wouldn’t need a rifle, so he said, and was happy to trade it against a horse.

The rifle’s stock was lighter and slimmer than long rifles made in

Colonial times and it was of smaller caliber, firing a half-inch ball faster and flatter than the old-style .54- and .58-caliber guns. Its thicker barrel was swamped to save weight and the furniture was made from iron that was darkened so it didn’t reflect light and reveal a man’s position in the woods like shiny brass sometimes did. It was fitted with a set trigger to enhance its long-range accuracy. Peale had found it easy to take big game at 200 yards with it. His reputation as a marksman was sealed in the summer of 1792 when he won the turkey shoot at the statehood celebration and then, just to show off, split a ball on an ax blade at 50 yards on the first try.

His neighbors, familiar with his fine rifle, took interest in its curious scabbard, the likes of which they had never seen before. The younger man marveled at the realistic imprints of leaves that decorated it and asked if they were painted on. Peale explained that his daughter steamed them over the linen to imbed their pigments in the cloth, then sealed it with beeswax to make it weather-proof. The older man remarked that it would be nice to have a hunting shirt so disguised, especially in wet or cold weather. Peale and the younger man agreed.

PEALE EXCUSED HIMSELF from further quiet discussion to concentrate on continuously scanning the road for movement. He took his tobacco and folding knife from his pocket and cut himself a plug to chew to help pass the time. He would not have much time to pass. Minutes later, he spotted a mounted gentleman wearing an elegant blue coat with an unusually large and embellished matching cocked hat coming around the curve. Peale silently reached his right hand behind him to alert his companions. Their whispering stopped and they picked up their rifles, cocked them, and leaned forward in their hide to observe the road and the mounted man moving along it at a trot. Peale cocked his rifle, set the hair trigger, and took aim.

When the rider noticed the pile of limbs partially obstructing the road, he slowed to a walking pace to investigate, just as Peale expected he would. The

rider seemed nervous, looking rapidly right, left and behind, again and again. He finally stopped his horse 20 feet from the limbs, tipped back the front brim of his hat and began to scan the trees above him. Peale squeezed off a shot that took the gentleman’s fine blue hat off his head and split bark from a tree on the opposite side of the road. The rifle’s report, the bullet’s crack and the flying bark startled the horse, which reared up and nearly threw the gentleman from his saddle. He struggled with the reins a long moment but succeeded in turning the animal back from whence they’d come. Two more shots rang out as he galloped toward the curve, clipping leaves from the tree branches that arched over the road. He was gone from sight before the leaves settled on the ground.

The trio remained alert in their position, now shrouded in black powder smoke, for a few minutes awaiting further developments. The younger man broke the silence first. “I’ll bet you he resigns from his appointment by tomorrow at the latest.”

“I would not take that bet,” Peale replied.

“Nor I,” said the old man. “I guess the gentleman was more ambitious than smart. A man with good sense would be inclined to inquire why the chief revenue officer for the Kentucky district is unable to keep lucrative whiskey tax collector positions filled.”

“The vacancies suggest the position of exciseman is not as lucrative as the good Colonel John Marshall would have them believe,” Peale added, as he got up and returned his rifle to the scabbard. The three men abandoned their hide to make a brief search of the road before clearing the cut limbs away and heading home to their farms.

Peale found the gentleman’s expensive cocked hat on the ground. The front point of the triangular folded brim was holed through both sides. He thought to himself, “Perfect shot.” ★

Editor’s note: For more information on the Contemporary Longrifle Association, visit longrifle.com, and to learn more about the upcoming auction, go to contemporarylongriflefoundation.org/2024-fundraising-auction.



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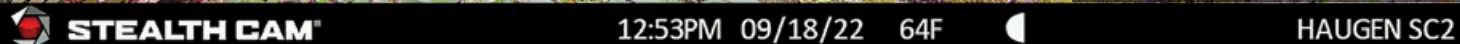
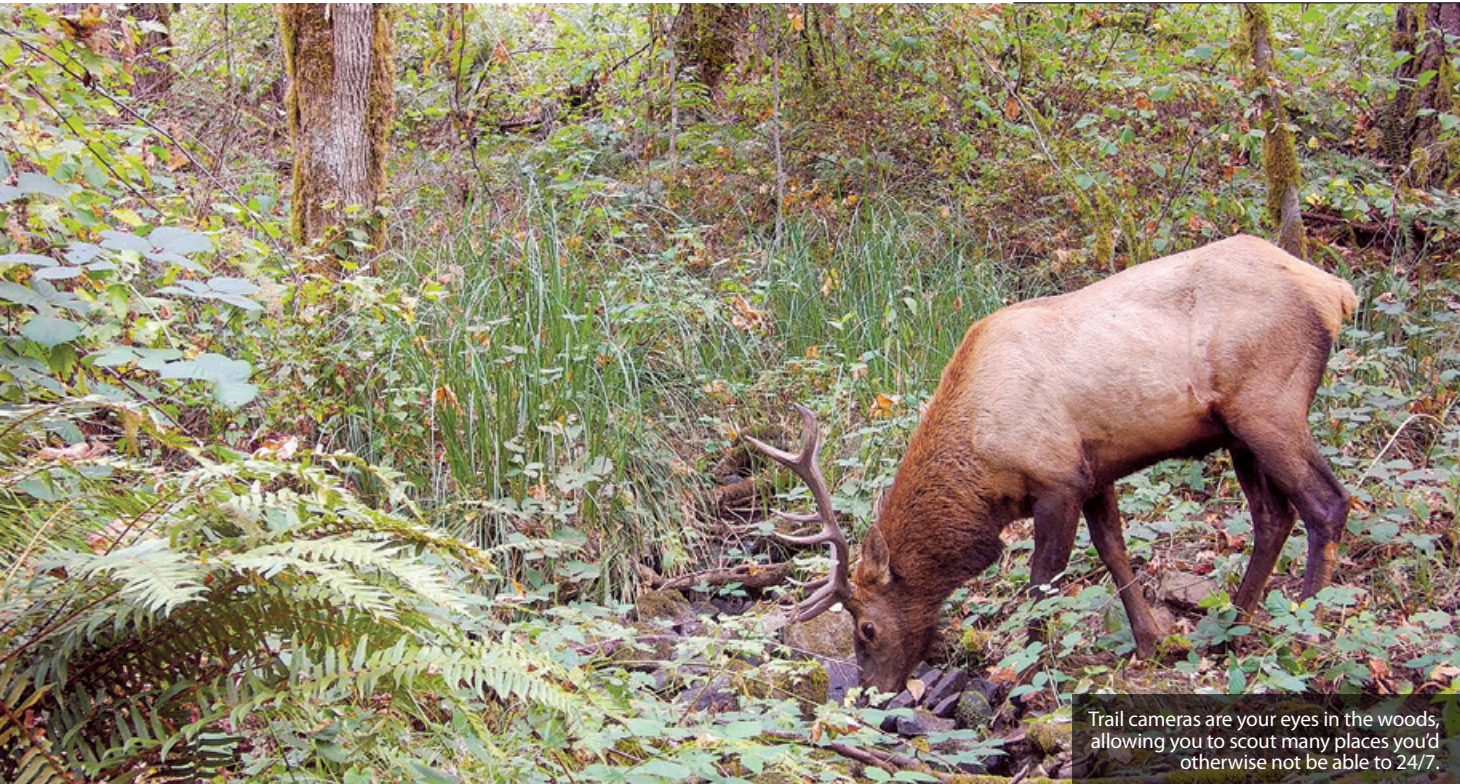
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I'LL BE WATCHING YOU

Why and how one Western elk hunter uses trail cams year-round to keep tabs on resident herds.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SCOTT HAUGEN

The best elk hunters I know spend time in the woods watching elk year-round. Loggers and timber cruisers top the list. They're in the woods five days a week, just about every week of the year. Many are constantly looking for elk, observing them, reading elk sign, monitoring herd shifts and keeping a watchful eye on bulls as they move in and out of areas.



Full-time guides aren't far behind the folks who make their living in the woods. Guides who spend every day

of elk season trying to kill bulls with clients often work year-round to keep tabs on elk. They want to know all they can about the elk they pursue, from bull-to-cow ratios and calf recruitment to predator intrusion and drought impacts.

One thing the top elk hunters I know all have in common is that they run trail cameras year-round. Mind you, these are for non-migratory elk. Folks who hunt migratory elk will wait until closer to hunting season, setting cameras out once elk have arrived in the hunting area.

JULY IS ONE of the top months to locate and track bull elk. With their velvet-

covered racks, bulls are visible and active. There's no greater way to learn about elk than being in the woods and watching them yourself, but a very close second is running trail cameras.

I have over 90 trail cameras set out in three states in places I like to hunt. Many are set just for elk. I always set them on video mode, as this allows me to observe sights and hear sounds that still images can't capture.

In areas with cellular coverage, I run Moultrie Mobile Edge Pro trail cameras. Ideally, I run them with their solar panels, which will keep the cameras powered for months, saving me the time of having to check cards.

In non-cell areas, my go-to trail camera is a Stealth Cam DS4K Ultimate. I run 64GB SD cards in these cameras. Now through November, I'll try to check them at least once a week. If I'm onto something good, like a big bull or multiple bulls, I might check the cameras in that area twice a week in an effort to learn all I can. I like being in the woods checking cameras, as so much is learned about what happens off camera.

WHAT'S MOST AMAZED me about running trail cameras for elk is how much ground mature bulls will cover during the rut. Also, how many big bulls just show up one time, never to be seen on another camera or with the naked eye.

"Every September I catch big bulls on trail camera that I've never seen," shares good friend Jody Smith. Smith



This Moultrie Mobile Edge Pro with a solar panel attached has been active since December, capturing a number of elk for author Scott Haugen.



Noted outfitter Jody Smith runs trail cameras year-round for elk and has been pleased with the performance of Tactacam's Reveal X-Pro.

is the best elk hunter I know. He understands elk behavior intimately. He runs dozens of trail cameras for elk all year. "I've been really impressed with Tactacam's Reveal X-Pro trail cameras. Their video quality is impressive and the sounds, the best I've heard. A lot of times you might catch a single cow feeding on camera, but hear the entire herd talking or a bull bugling out of frame. The Reveals have held up great in terribly rainy weather and they seem to get a signal where other brands have not."

Smith knows how elk are behaving and understands why. He's able to predict their behavioral shifts based on decades of hunting and scouting them. Smith's a full-time guide (jodysmithguideservice.com) and grew up hunting elk in the rugged Coast Range of Oregon. "What's

crazy is how many of those giant bulls I only catch on one camera, even though I have other cameras set in the area, sometimes on the same trail," continues Smith. "It goes to show, these big bulls have a mind of their own, often not even traveling on trails used by the rest of the herd."

When you find an area thick with elk sign and a main trail a herd is regularly using, set two or three cameras on one tree. Point them different directions in order to catch a 360-degree view of the area. What you'll learn might surprise you.

ANOTHER MAJOR EYE-OPENER trail cameras have revealed to me is how many bulls are actually killed by hunters. There's one stretch of mountains where I run multiple trail cameras that's about 20 miles long and 10 miles wide. Several

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cow herds live in these hills and they don't move a whole lot, maybe a few miles throughout the year on average. But the bulls that visit the cow herds bounce around like pinballs.

Early one September, I caught a nice six-by-six on camera in one place, and the next day got it on another camera 9 miles away. Three days later, the bull was back in the first place, and it continued bouncing back and forth between the two cow herds, looking for one in heat, for two weeks. That bull was a dandy and had the potential to be a giant. I didn't shoot it that season, hoping it'd survive another year or two. It didn't. During the last few days of the rifle season, someone killed it.

In fact, the last three big bulls I've kept track of all summer and fall, hoping to let them live another year or two, were all killed by hunters in the last few

days of the general rifle season. During archery season, the bulls eluded hunters by sticking to cow herds on private land. But once the bulls slipped into winter mode, feeding on their own or with other bulls and moving across both private and public lands, the rifle hunters got them.

Trail cameras have taught me that a high percentage of bulls caught on film are killed by hunters in the same year and that I basically have no hopes of managing them to full maturity, not when they cover so much ground. I've also been surprised at how far elk will travel at night to reach prime food, then return to safe bedding areas by daybreak. Covering 8 to 10 miles each night is common.

SUMMER IS WHEN I like finding bulls on trail camera and trying to keep track of them. Come late August and all

through September, I've never seen a herd of cows without a mature bull around, and many of those bulls are ones that first showed up on trail cameras in June and July.

Whenever a big bull is shot from a herd, another bull will move in. If a mature bull is taken from a herd late in the rut or shortly after, another bull might not join the cow herd until late August or early September the following year, but one will show up. This is why I make it a point to find as many cow herds as I can during the winter, spring and summer months. Cows are key to the bigger story of finding bulls come hunting season.

Starting in late May, I move a lot of my trail cameras into drainages and habitats where I've found elk to routinely drop their calves. These are usually wooded draws or brushy

A photograph of two elk with large, velvet-covered antlers standing in a forest. The elk are facing forward, and their antlers are prominent. The background is a dense forest with green foliage.

Velvet-covered elk antlers are some of the fastest-growing tissues on the planet. Because bulls spend a lot of time in the open this time of year, now's the time to be scouting.



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thickets in my region. All summer I monitor calf survival, because the more cows and calves that are in a herd, the more intense the competition is among bulls to breed with those cows.

In cow and calf herds numbering 30 or more head, I've routinely seen and/or heard multiple big bulls competing for them at once. This is where the video clips tell the complete story; while you might capture footage of cows feeding, or cows and calves bedding down, the bugles, fights and raking of trees you hear in the background off camera reveal what's truly happening with bull dynamics in the area.

I also catch a lot of predators on trail cameras that I have set for elk. Coyotes dominate the clips, and from what I've seen, they have very little impact on calf elk in my areas. Over the past five years, I've found one calf killed by coyotes, and that was one that was born with a hip defect and would have died anyway.

I'm actually surprised at the number

of calves that survive the vulnerable first four months of life, even in areas with cougars. Over the past five years, every calf in the three herds I routinely catch on film survived into the fall months. The cougars take their toll on deer – as do the coyotes – but largely avoid the elk, which surprised me but made sense, as I've seen a steady decline in big bucks in this area.

I've caught a lot of cougars preying on small animals like rabbits, squirrels, gray fox and opossum in the elk areas. I'm not saying cougars and coyotes won't prey on elk; they obviously will, but just not to the degree I thought they would in my stomping grounds. Wolves and bears are another story. Wolves take their toll on elk year-round, while bears appear to have a big impact at the time of calving.

RUN ENOUGH TRAIL cameras throughout the course of the year and you'll accrue hours of footage. Studying this footage isn't like watching a TV documentary

on elk. It's raw. It's real. It's uncut. Put it up on the big screen at home, not your phone, and what you see and hear will be enlightening. When animals have no idea they're being watched, they behave naturally, and that's where elk hunters can learn a lot from trail cameras.

Once you start putting together pieces of the puzzle, you'll better understand elk herd dynamics as they shift throughout the course of the year, and ultimately you'll become a better elk hunter because of it. Trail cameras have taught me a lot over the years, including the fact that I still have a lot to learn. ★

Editor's note: To order Scott Haugen's bestselling instructional DVD, Field Dressing, Skinning & Caping Big Game, including elk, visit scotthaugen.com. Follow Scott on Instagram and Facebook.



If you want to increase the chance of filling your elk tag this season, running trail cameras in the summer is a good place to start.

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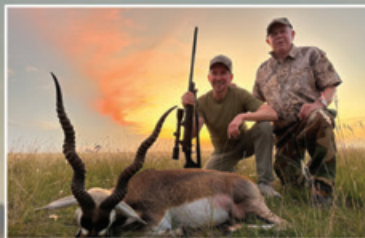
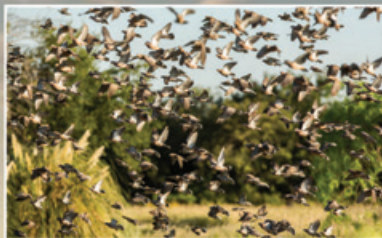


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The Sarracino family – Sam, Brendon, Kristen and Sienna (left to right) – had a successful hunting trip on their first visit to Namibia, joining author Brittany Boddington near the coastal city of Swakopmund.

SHE HUNTS ALUMS, HOSTS REUNITE IN NAMIBIA

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BRITTANY BODDINGTON

Namibia has always held a special place in my heart since my first safari there in 2003. I have spent more time in this country than any other in Africa and feel very at home here. I met my husband when he was about to embark on his first adventure in Namibia in 2017 and he fell in love with



the country as well, so we decided to buy a second home here by the coast a few years ago. We escape the Arizona summers to the Namibian winters, which are very mild and happen to fall smack-dab in the middle of hunting season. This is perfect for us to host our She Hunts alumni as they come through on their safaris!

ONE PARTICULAR TRIP started off with Kristen Sarracino, her husband

Skills camp grads continue their education in Africa, as well as enjoy the sights with fams.

Brendon, and their two kids Sienna (age 14) and Sam (age 11) joining us as soon as school let out in late May. You might remember Kristen from the cover of this magazine with her huge bull bison a few issues ago (*American Shooting Journal*, October 2023). She has hunted a lot since that first camp, including for Axis deer in Hawaii, and she was lucky enough to be drawn – and was successful – on Coues deer in Arizona. This would be their first African



In addition to hunting, the Sarracinos were able to tour the area, including on camelback across the dunes.



Twyfelfontein is home to petroglyphs and rock paintings estimated to be between 2,000 and 10,000 years old.



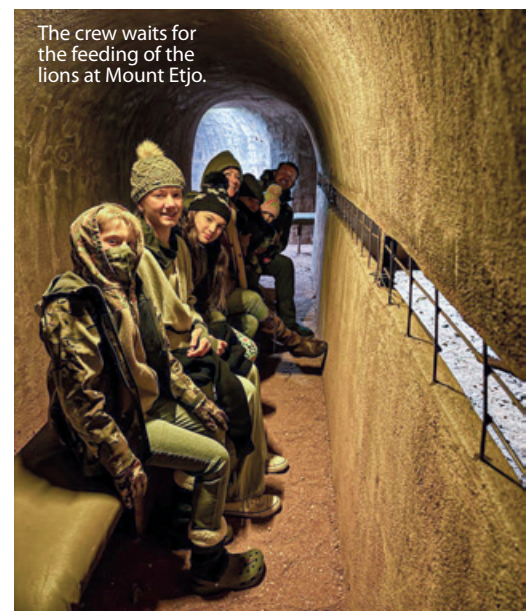
Boddington and her daughter Lilly are still not sure about the camels.

safari, but I don't think it will be their last. After they arrived, we spent some time at our house at the beach near Swakopmund before their safari with Dirk de Bod began. We spent a few days getting acclimated and exploring the area. If you are not familiar with Swakopmund, it is a beautiful coastal city where the dunes meet the sea. It is just north of Walvis Bay, which is the largest Namibian harbor and a major shipping port for this part of Africa. It is home to a large number of wild flamingos, dolphins, birds and whales. We took the kids out in the dunes on a camel ride, which they really enjoyed; I'm still a bit wary of

the giant creatures, but I toughed it out for the kids. Next up was some touring. We decided to check out a new spot for us, a site called Twyfelfontein, which is home to petroglyphs and rock paintings. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site and is said to be between 2,000 and 10,000 years old. It was a great experience and the whole family loved the hike to explore the paintings.

We left early the next day to drive through Himba lands and stopped along the way to buy treasures and crafts from these nomadic tribal people. The next night we stopped at Mount Etjo, where we often frequent because of the incredible lion feeding attraction. They have basically built a dugout like you would find at a baseball game and covered the open area with mesh. Then they put out a large piece of an animal that is tethered to a cement pad and open the gates at a certain time. The lions know where to go for a free meal and the females usually show up and argue over who eats first. When the male shows up they defer to him. It is fascinating to watch and your face is only about 10 feet from where the lions are eating. Their tails brush the mesh as they walk around the meat. It is a pretty wild experience and definitely unique to this safari park.

AFTER ALL THE touring, we arrived at Safaris Namibia, where Kristen and her family were hunting for a week. We love to hunt with Dirk and his son Dirk Jr., also known as Dirkie and an accomplished bow shooter and hunter in his own right. Brendon brought his bow with him and was excited to hunt for some of the more beautiful spiral antelopes. Kristen and their son Sam were hoping to harvest a few animals each with a rifle. Our 13-year-old daughter Ava was able to join us on this trip and was excited to get the



The crew waits for the feeding of the lions at Mount Etjo.

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Lilly likes watching her sister hunt through her binoculars.

opportunity to hunt for a kudu, which she has been wanting to hunt for years.

Ava tried for a kudu last year and must have done at least a dozen stalks but was never quite able to close the deal. She left last year's hunt feeling a bit defeated and has been ready for another try. Kudu are not easy to stalk, as they stay in thick bushy areas and usually prefer hills and steep terrain. Ava is 13 and fit, since she is playing club volleyball back in Phoenix, so she was very up for the challenge.

I joined Ava on the truck with Kristen's daughter Sienna and our 4-year-old Lilly for one of her days out hunting. On this day, Ava did four stalks without any luck. On the last stalk of the day we watched from the truck as she disappeared down a steep hillside. The kudu we spotted from the truck was well over 300 yards away, so she followed



The author's 13-year-old daughter Ava was finally successful in getting her kudu.

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During her rifle hunt, Kristen was able to bag a sable antelope, eland (below left) and kudu (below right).



Dirkie down the hillside and out of sight into the thick bush full of stickers. About 30 minutes later we saw her pop out on top of another hillside and we had a perfect vantage point to watch through binoculars as she got on the sticks and prepared to take the shot. I noticed her kick up her foot at one point and thought it looked like she took the shot, but I didn't hear a boom. It turned out that the safety was on and she forgot to put it off. The kudu ran and the stalk was blown; Ava was super bummed out. I explained to her that it happens to everyone, but that now she will definitely remember to put the safety off next time.

The following day Ava got another opportunity to stalk a kudu and this time the stars aligned. The kudu stopped on a hillside and Ava was able to take a beautiful shot at 150 yards and drop the animal. She was so excited about having succeeded that she really didn't know what she had until we got up to the massive old kudu bull. Dirkie's face told me everything I needed to know about the size of this kudu; he was beyond excited. After we took some photos, he got out a tape measure and sure enough this kudu measured 55 inches on one side and 56 on the other. If it helps give you reference, my biggest kudu was 53 inches. Ava was over the moon and she said that all the work and stalks she had put in were worth it. She knew that the struggles and failures had led her to this particular old bull and she is so very proud of it.

The Sarracinos also had a very successful hunt. Brendon got a roan and eland with his bow with two perfectly placed shots. He spent a lot of time patiently waiting in a ground blind, but as all bowhunters know, that is how it goes. Kristen was rifle hunting and got a sable, eland and kudu while mostly out with Sam, who got a wildebeest, gemsbok and waterbuck of his own. They had a great family trip and left very happy with their trophies.

MY FAMILY WENT back to the coast and had a little over a week of relaxation time, where we visited with friends who



Sam with his gemsbok and waterbuck (below).



Brendon was able to take down this roan with his bow.





Amanda Potter, another She Hunts alum, caught this tiger fish on Namibia's Caprivi Strip.

live here and celebrated Father's Day at a super cool spot called Goanikontes, which is a literal oasis in the Moon Valley outside Swakopmund. They have a hotel and restaurant that does a big Father's Day lunch. There is a petting zoo and kids' play areas, as well as a lake that kids can fish in. We had a very good and laidback holiday and then got ready for our next She Hunts alum to arrive.

OUR NEXT VISITOR was Amanda Potter and her husband Chris. You might remember Amanda from last December's article about her completing her turkey slam in camp. Amanda and Chris were hunting and fishing in the Caprivi Strip and in Zimbabwe before ending their adventure with a week here with us on the coast of Namibia and in the capital of Windhoek. They had heard the often-told story that all first-time hunters should start in South Africa before venturing into the rest of Southern Africa, but were pleasantly surprised at how friendly, safe and fun Namibia is. As a side note, I highly recommend Namibia as the first country for travelers who are new to Africa. It

is safe, friendly and everyone speaks English, and the hunting is top-notch.

The Potters had been to Africa before but had never spent time in Namibia until this trip. They enjoyed some epic fishing up in the Caprivi for tiger fish and then visited Victoria Falls and hunted in Zimbabwe before arriving to see us. We spent a few days showing them the coast and Swakopmund before we roadtripped into Windhoek, where we stayed at the

beautiful Olive Exclusive hotel. With only seven rooms, it lives up to the title but is so warm and inviting. We showed the Potters our favorite markets and shops in the capital city, but the star of any Windhoek tour is always a meal at Joe's Beerhouse, which is a very cool restaurant with all sorts of taxidermy and curios on the walls. There are entire walls lined with Jägermeister bottles and a koi pond runs through the middle of the restaurant. We said goodbye to the Potters just a few days ago and are looking forward to the next alum coming in a couple weeks.

We didn't plan to have She Hunts reunions in Africa when we bought this house, but I'm so happy it worked out this way. It is so much fun to see She Hunts campers pursuing their hunting dreams all the way over on the other side of the world, and I feel so fortunate to be able to share our little slice of heaven with them. ★

Editor's note: Brittany Boddington is a former outdoor television host and journalist with 15 years' experience hosting shows about various hunting adventures around the globe. She has hunted on six continents and collected just under 100 species. With her father Craig's help, Brittany discovered a love for the great outdoors and has become a passionate hunter and conservationist. Follow Brittany's adventures on Facebook, Instagram and X.



A meal at Joe's Beerhouse makes for the perfect ending to the day.



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CCI'S .22LR RIMFIRE COLLECTION

A classic target and hunting cartridge benefits from modern projectiles.

STORY BY PHIL MASSARO • PHOTOS BY MASSARO MEDIA GROUP



ention the .22 Long Rifle to any shooter or hunter, and I'll wager you'll see – at the very least – a small wry smile come across their faces. Whether a deer hunter, waterfowler, upland game junkie, elk hunter or a safari geek like me, all will have had at least



some experience with the universal .22LR. In production since 1887, the .22LR is the most popular and plentiful cartridge around the globe, and has assuredly outlived the trio of rimfire .22-caliber cartridges that preceded it.

Where the .22 Short, .22 Long, and .22 Extra Long all had a solid foundation in the late 19th century, the .22 Long Rifle combined the case length of the .22 Long with the heavier

40-grain bullet of the .22 Extra Long and, well, the rest is history. Whether a rifle, handgun, combination gun or what have you, the .22 Long Rifle is the friend of the target shooter, hunter, and has even been called upon for defensive duty. And though just about every company that has ever manufactured ammunition has offered some form of .22LR bullet, over the years I have found myself reaching for CCI ammo more often than not.

IT PROBABLY STARTED with my father, whose prolific use of the CCI Stinger in his bicentennial Ruger 10/22 made an impression on me, but as I've gotten older I have found that a good number of the offerings from the Lewiston, Idaho-based company have more than suited my needs. CCI – standing for Cascade Cartridge, Inc. – was the love child of Dick Speer and Arvid Nelson, though today it falls under the Vista Outdoor umbrella of companies. Founded in 1951, the company has gone on to be a huge player in the rimfire market, offering all sorts of options from the speedy Stinger and Mini-Mag to subsonic options for those who wish to quietly dispatch vermin and garden pests.

Where the .22LR has an overall cartridge length of exactly 1 inch, the CCI Stinger uses a longer case and a shorter 32-grain copper-plated hollowpoint bullet to maintain that 1-inch dimension, while still giving more case capacity than a standard cartridge. With a muzzle velocity of 1,640 feet per second, I see why Dad enjoyed this ammunition, as it gives a flatter trajectory, rising only 1.9 inches at 50 yards when zeroed at 100 yards.



The famous "C" headstamp equals quality, and CCI products have long been relied upon by hunters and target shooters alike.

IF SPEED IS your thing – and for longer-range rimfire shooting, it certainly should be – the CCI Clean-22 line is augmented with a Hyper Velocity variant that sends a 31-grain polymer-coated lead bullet from the muzzle at 1,550 fps. While just a bit slower than the venerated Stinger, the Clean-22 uses the same polymer coating as others in the line, over a lead projectile with an optimized geometry to give improved accuracy. My dear old Ruger 77/22 really likes these, and while the Remington Thunderbolts are still a staple for this rifle, if I need a choice for longer shots, this might just get the nod in that bolt gun of mine.

The famous CCI Stinger uses a longer case and shorter bullet to offer a hyper-velocity load, which gives one of the flattest trajectories in the .22LR realm. (CCI)



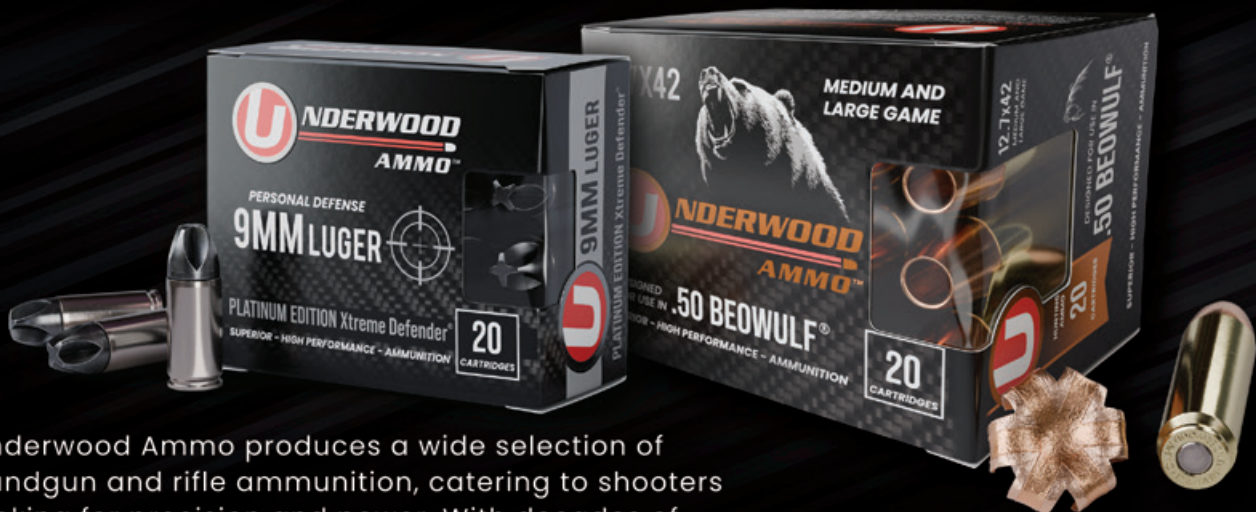
CCI's Clean-22 now has a hyper-velocity option, pushing a 31-grain polymer-coated bullet at 1,550 feet per second. (CCI)

On the opposite end of the velocity spectrum, the long-adored Quiet-22 gets a minor tweak, optimizing the bullet for semiautos. Using a 45-grain



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Some subsonic loads won't cycle a semiautomatic action; this is not the case with the Quiet-22 Semi-Auto, as the 45-grain bullet at 835 fps still has enough oomph to cycle a Ruger 10/22 without issue.



bullet at the sedate muzzle velocity of 835 fps, it isn't the flattest-shooting load ever created – with a 100-yard zero you can expect a midrange rise of 6.3 inches at 50 yards – but when you want a subsonic load that will operate in your semiauto with the quietest performance possible, this stuff checks all the boxes.

CCI has also given the Clean-22 polymer coating treatment to a subsonic load, offering the coated 40-grain bullet at 1,070 fps. While nice and quiet, you may find there are a few autoloading pistols and even a rifle or two that won't see the action cycled with the subsonic stuff, though my Ruger 10/22 carbine cycles this

ammo just fine. The Clean-22 Sub-Sonic .22LR is perfect when you don't need to announce to the world that the garden woodchuck has gone to the great lettuce patch in the sky, or when you want to get some range time without offending the neighbors. It is plenty accurate in my 10/22, giving five-shot groups just under $\frac{3}{4}$ inch at 50 yards, where I zero this ammo. Should you want to use this with a 100-yard zero, you'll see a rise of 3.8 inches at 50 yards. The deep blue polymer coating surely helps keep things clean; after putting over 100 rounds of the stuff through my autoloader, things were still nice and clean in both receiver and barrel.

And, of course, there is the good

CCI uses a polymer coating over a pure lead projectile to minimize fouling and lead vapors. The Clean-22 Hyper Velocity gets a deep blue coating. (CCI)



old Clean-22 High Velocity load, pushing a red-coated bullet – or in some instances a pink-coated or a camo-themed tan, black and green



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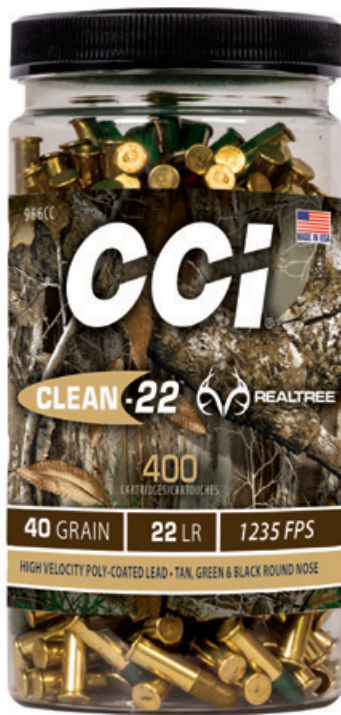
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The CCI Clean-22 Subsonic load cleanly eradicated this red squirrel, who decided to go on a campaign of damage. The war was over quickly.



Clean-22 with the pink polymer coating (left); CCI donates a portion of proceeds from this ammo to finding a cure for breast cancer. Released in conjunction with Realtree, CCI also offers the Clean-22 in a trio of black, green and tan coatings to make a camo pattern. (CCI)

variant – to a muzzle velocity of 1,235 fps. The pink variant was released to promote breast cancer awareness, with CCI donating a portion of the proceeds from this ammunition to find a cure for that horrid disease, while the camo-coated stuff is released in conjunction with Realtree Camo. It's all the same stuff, and performs interchangeably – and it performs very well. Whether a kid wants to learn marksmanship, you want to get some cheap range time with a .22LR handgun, or rabbits and squirrels are on the hit list, the Clean-22 gets the job done.

That coating works as advertised, keeping your firearm much cleaner than wax-coated lead bullets or even the plated stuff. I don't really like cleaning guns, especially the small-bore stuff (though I do love the smell of Hoppe's No. 9), and CCI's Clean-22 line puts that chore off, for certain. The only drawback



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to the Clean-22 ammo that I have found is that some of the cartridges will stick in one of my guns when extracting a loaded cartridge. It doesn't happen all the time – maybe one in 20 rounds, and usually when the gun is hot – but it seems to be limited to one gun.

FOR THE HUNTER who enjoys the pursuit of not only small game species

like squirrels and rabbits, but also uses a .22LR for the varmints and predators that can keep us sane once the big game seasons are closed, look to CCI's Mini-Mag Segmented hollowpoint ammo. Engineered to have the projectile break into three equal parts upon impact, the Mini-Mag Segmented puts a period on the end of the sentence when it comes to a

hunting load. Pelt damage on coyotes, bobcats and foxes will be minimal, as the projectile probably won't exit at all, leaving just a small entrance wound on the impact side. But internally, well, that's a different story; the Mini-Mag Segmented will wreck the vital organs, resulting in a quick and humane kill. Yes, there are plenty of choices for a hunting load in .22LR, but the Mini-Mag Segmented hits like a hand grenade. It has been very accurate in my rifles, with some printing ½-MOA, which is more than enough for the hunter, even for head shots on squirrels.

If the rimfire target competitions tickle your fancy, or if you simply enjoy an afternoon of punching paper or ringing steel, look to the Green Tag .22LR from CCI. Among the target-grade .22LR ammo, I like the stuff from Norma and Lapua, and I really like the

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For devastating terminal performance on varmints and predators, the CCI Mini-Mag Segmented is your baby. The hollowpoint projectile is engineered to break into three equal parts for a large wound channel and destruction of vital tissue. (CCI)



The standard variant of the Clean-22, though labeled for target use, still makes a great hunting load for small game species. (CCI)



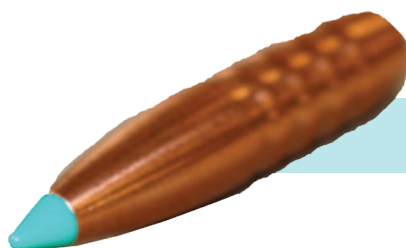
Federal Gold Medal Match, but the new Green Tag ammo sits at the top of the heap with the others.

Designed to run at subsonic velocities – 1,070 fps, to be precise – this line uses a 40-grain roundnose lead bullet, held to very tight tolerances for competition use, though I'm absolutely certain that it will suffice in a hunting situation. My Oehler 35P chronograph shows that the velocity variations for this ammo are less than 15 fps in most instances, though among several guns the average velocities run a bit lower than advertised, around 1,045 fps. But no matter; once your scope is properly dialed in and you learn the real-world trajectory from your rifle in your atmosphere, this stuff won't let you down. Surprisingly, the projectiles for the Green Tag ammo line have a lower ballistic coefficient (according to the manufacturer, anyhow) than do the

40-grain bullets for the Federal Gold Medal Match or even the Clean-22 standard loads, yet I believe it's the consistency in the loading and priming that sets this stuff apart. Whatever the voodoo (uniformity in rimfire ammo is much more complex than it is in centerfire stuff) that has gone into the Green Tag, I like it.

Quite obviously, the folks at CCI have not been sitting on their laurels. They have continued to produce the classics like Stingers, Velocitors and Quiet-22s, while also bringing us useful new products (I'm looking forward to putting the new Uppercut .22LR ammo, optimized for short-barreled handguns, through its paces). If you've spent time with the CCI lineup, you already know how good it is. If you haven't, then I suggest you head to the gun shop to start trying some of their stuff as soon as possible. Visit cci-ammunition.com for more. ★

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SPRINGFIELD ARMORY ECHELON



A 9mm polymer-frame service pistol contender.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY FRANK JARDIM



t SHOT Show last January, I took a look at Springfield Armory's new Echelon, a full-size 17-round-magazine, polymer-frame, striker-fired service pistol, which at first struck me as a refinement of their XD M Elite series. Once I got into the new pistol's features, it became apparent that while it retained, and improved on, the XD's sound ergonomics, by adding the superior Adaptive Grip Texturing introduced on the Hellcat series, a more angled grip and grasping points actually sculpted into the slide, the Echelon as a whole was an entirely new approach for Springfield.

The XD series are great guns, but the Echelon offers shooters "the whole package" in ways the XD platform couldn't, like offering three backstrap options to tailor the grip to the unique

Springfield Armory's new Echelon looks to be a contender for law enforcement contracts, competing against other top-end 9mm striker-fired, polymer-framed, full-size duty guns like the Glock 17, Walther PDP and Sig Sauer P320. Author Frank Jardim believes the Echelon's low barrel axis gives it an edge in rapid fire.



The Echelon has ambidextrous slide lock and magazine release buttons, a trigger guard big enough for a gloved hand, and generous coverage with Springfield Armory's Adaptive Grip Texture.

geometry of your hand. This begs the question, why would Springfield Armory compete with its own highly successful XD line? Did they see the writing on the wall? Was prophecy involved? I don't know at this time, and frankly, nobody has outright admitted to me that the Echelon is destined to replace the XD line. However, my prediction is that if Springfield takes the new platform as far as Sig Sauer has taken their P320, I can't see

anyone settling for the XD except in its single-stack compact form.

ONE OF THE main new features of the Echelon's design is that, like the Sig P320 and Walther PDP, it uses a self-contained, serial-numbered chassis system that can be easily switched between various polymer grip frames by the user. At present, Springfield only offers three grip frame choices, all of them full size for the standard

The pistol is available in three grip frame sizes that differ only in the circumference around the top. Pistols ship from the factory with the medium grip frame module; large, medium and small backstraps; 17- and 20-round magazines; an extra 20-round magazine floorplate extension; a magazine loading tool; three sets of optics mounting pins and screws; a lock; and a nylon-padded storage case. The street price ranges from \$600 to \$630, depending on the iron night sights you want.



Grip backstraps slide down after releasing a tab inside the magazine well.

You have a choice of small, medium and large backstraps. If you can't find one you like, you can try a smaller or larger grip frame module for another six options.

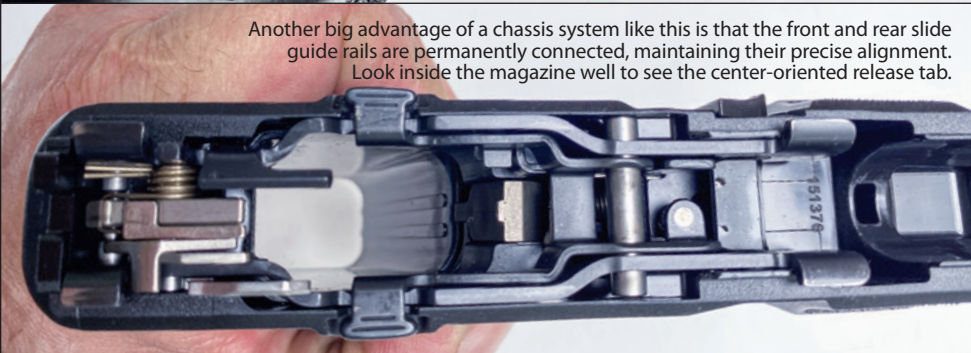


One of two factory iron sight options is an XS Sights Big Dot-style tritium front sight and white outline U-shaped rear.



The deep, wide serrations and sculpted sides of the slide form a grasping shelf in front of the chamber for safer press checks. You can also see the steel optics cut over the patented Variable Interface System optics mounting system.

Another big advantage of a chassis system like this is that the front and rear slide guide rails are permanently connected, maintaining their precise alignment. Look inside the magazine well to see the center-oriented release tab.



Like the P320 and PDP, the Echelon uses a serialized chassis system that can be switched into different grip frames. Notice how thick and robust the stainless steel that forms the main body of the chassis is.





The Echelon's 4.5-inch barrel is hammer-forged and Melonite-treated for strength and wear-resistance. A threaded barrel option is also available.



The semiauto comes with a 20-round extended and 17-round standard magazine. An extra extended floorplate lets you increase the 17-round magazine to 20 rounds. Both have stainless-steel bodies and drop freely when the ejection button is pressed.

17-round magazine, but with differing grip circumferences at the top. Pistols ship from the factory with a medium grip frame module; additional ones have an MSRP of \$65 but come with the safety installed and all three backstraps options. At this stage, the Echelon offers a wide latitude for grip customization. Three grip frame module sizes, each with three backstrap options, allows nine different grip frame shapes to choose from. If you can't find something you love, there's probably no pleasing you.

What would really make the Echelon a player across the broader market would be compact-length grip modules, with a shorter, perhaps 15-round magazine, and shorter barrel and slide assemblies better suited to concealed carry. At present those aren't in the catalog, but Cerakote flat dark earth and olive drab color options for the three full-size grip modules are.

Another thing the Echelon has going for it is that it's already a more compact pistol by design than the taller XD and much taller PDP and P320. I like the lower bore axis.

In keeping with consumer preference, the Echelon is optics-ready out of the box, thanks to a clever and versatile patent-pending pin-and-screw, direct-to-slide mounting system called the Variable Interface System, or VIS. It can be configured for 30 types of popular micro-red dot optics using RMR, SRO, DeltaPoint Pro, EFLX and Shield mounting patterns. By omitting adapter plates, the VIS gets the optic as low and as close to the barrel as possible; sometimes low enough to allow you to use the iron sights. The pistol comes with three sets of screws, cylindrical pins and oddly faceted triangular pins, the latter designed to cam outward into their mating holes on the bottom of your optic

when tightened to eliminate side-to-side movement and shifts in zero. It's very clever. Care must be taken not to lose the little parts, but, once assembled, I can't see how the optic could budge. The VIS system is also fairly economical. A Glock MOS adapter plate will run you about \$13. If you lose some VIS pins, Springfield Armory sells all three sets together for \$20. That's worth it just for peace of mind. I should mention that the Echelon can't direct mount Doctor or ACRO base sights, but you can get an adapter plate to do that for \$30.

While we're on the subject of sights, the Echelon can be bought with your choice of two types of night sights. The first type has an XS Sights Big Dot-style front sight illuminated by a tritium vial surrounded by a high-visibility fluorescent green circle. The second sight option is a more conventional three-dot (one front and

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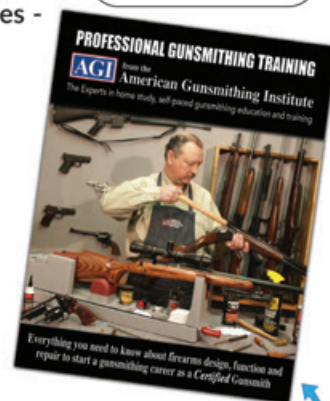
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two rear) setup with three tritium vials and the cost is about \$30 more. The sights are steel, drift-adjustable for windage in their dovetails, and the rear has a sharply upswept front face that permits emergency slide racking.

Regarding slide racking, the Echelon slide was designed to make it virtually impossible for you not to get a solid hold. It has deep, broad serrations and sculpted shelves on the sides just in front of the ejection port and at the very rear of the slide. It's about time someone put all the excess metal most modern autoloaders have in their blocky slides to good use.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY FEATURES found in the Echelon include unobtrusive but easily operated ambidextrous slide stop levers and magazine release buttons, both shielded to reduce the likelihood of accidental activation. Unlike some dual-button ambidextrous magazine releases, the Echelon's works with equal ease using either button. The magazine lock actually engages a hole right in the center of the magazine's front face rather than just on one side. Magazines insert smoothly and easily into the grip

thanks to flaring on all four sides and drop freely when either release button is pressed. Included with the pistol is a standard 17-round and extended 20-round magazine, and an extra extended magazine base and loading tool. Magazine bodies are blackened

stainless steel. The 17-round magazine protrudes about a quarter inch from the grip and has the Adaptive Grip Texture stippling along the exposed sides and front, which could help if it needed to be pulled from the magazine well to clear a jam. The extended 20-round



Note the red line showing on the external extractor that serves as a loaded chamber indicator. Note also the outward flare at the bottom of the finger rest on the side of the frame in front of the trigger guard. It serves as a positive rest for the trigger finger without slowing it down.



This rugged MeproLight MPO Pro-F sealed emitter red dot optic is a professional-grade sight like you would expect on a pistol like the Echelon. The author noticed that the hole tolerances on the bottom of this sight were so tight that the front camming pins in the VIS mount couldn't pull the sight base flush with the top of the optic cut in the front. Still, once tightened, even an earthquake couldn't move it.

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magazine is 0.88 inch longer on the front face and stippled on all four sides of the base plate.

FOR RANGE TESTING, I installed a MeproLight MPO Pro-F closed emitter red dot using the RMR footprint pin set. I chose this sight because it is weatherproof (rated at IP67), lightweight at 1.8 ounces, has a choice of three reticles and 10 brightness settings, and is extremely durable. MSRP on the Pro-F is \$350. It's exactly what you'd want on a daily duty pistol that has to perform in all environments. Rain or snow won't render it useless, like a rear emitter red dot. For my testing I selected the 3-MOA dot dialed down in brightness to a fine point.

I found the big Echelon pleasant and easy to handle during some warmup general plinking. It has a two-stage trigger that breaks around 5.25 pounds. Two-thirds of the overall travel is take-up on the first stage before you

hit the wall and apply full pressure to squeeze off the shot. It's a flat-faced trigger, which makes the pull weight seem lighter than it really is. The deep undercut behind the trigger guard and sharp grip angle made for a low bore axis hold and quick recovery between shots. The controls worked smoothly from the start and function was excellent with no failures of any kind.

Bench-rested, I found accuracy was better than acceptable at 25 yards for a service pistol. Black Hills Ammunition 115-grain FMJ produced five-shot groups averaging 2.98 inches and 1,173 feet per second. Fiocchi Defense 147-grain JHP averaged 3.13 inches and 983 fps. Winchester's +P loaded, 115-grain, flat-nosed, jacketed M1152 military training rounds produced 3.14-inch groups at a smoking 1,289 fps. Three-inch average groups are decent for any centerfire service pistol.

Looking at where the Echelon fits in among the competition, its street

price is running about \$150 more than a comparably equipped Sig P320 and \$60 more than a Gen 5 Glock 17. I'd argue that the Echelon is a better handling and shooting gun, and a better value overall because of the customizable grip and VIS optic system. In the full-size, 4.5-inch-barrel Walther PDP (also a versatile chassis system pistol), the Echelon starts to bump up against a peer competitor that costs \$50 more but has a superior trigger pull and an 18-round standard magazine capacity. However, the PDP doesn't have an ambidextrous safety button, has fewer grip customization options and is a significantly taller handgun than the Echelon.

Evaluate those factors as they apply to you. It's a tough call that I'm not yet ready to make. If Springfield Armory fully exploits the Echelon's chassis system with concealed carry options, I might just be lured away from my Walther. ★

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When it comes to traveling throughout America, author Paul Pawela has some tips for how to do so safely. For starters, always have a bug-out bag in case of emergencies. Pawela's includes his Ruger LCR .38 with Hamre Forge grips and Zeta6 speed loader and speed strips (at left), and his Smith & Wesson 442 in .38 with HKS speed loaders (right).

ADVICE FOR TRAVELING SAFELY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY

Carry these essentials to safeguard yourself and loved ones while going from point A to point B.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PAUL PAWELA

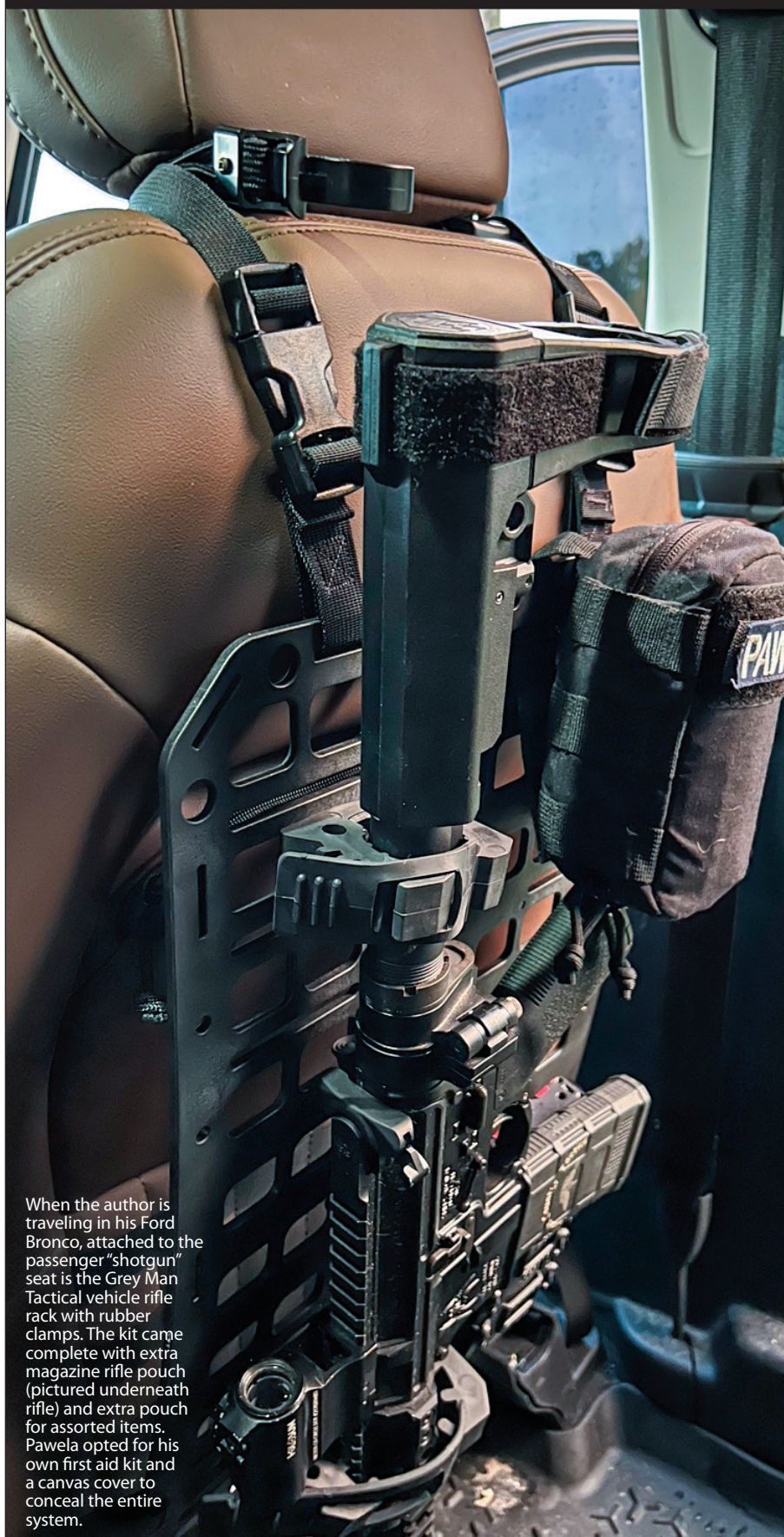
Our country's true greatness lies in the freedoms it affords us. The Constitution and the Bill of Rights are the pillars that uphold our liberties. Among these is our freedom of movement and travel, a privilege we often overlook but one that is fundamental to our way of life.

Grateful for the opportunities that have come my way, I've been on the road, attending various functions that will soon find their way into the pages of *American Shooting Journal*. We're all on this journey, and I'm

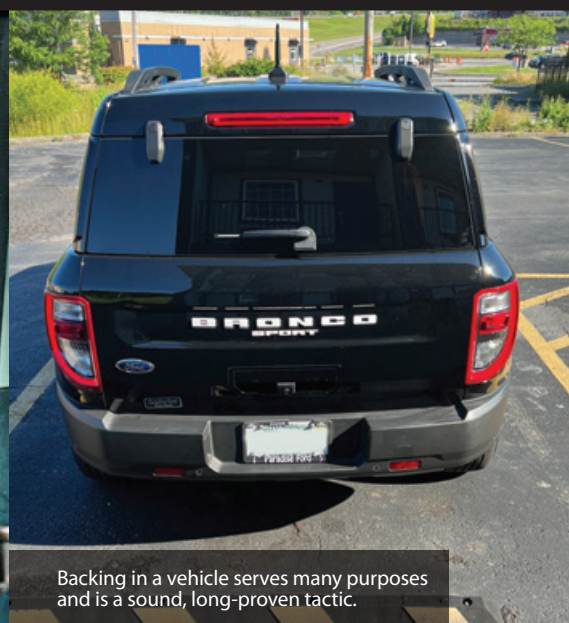


honored to share it with you. I have flown back and forth to Vegas and Dallas for both the SHOT and the NRA shows, driven from Florida to Texas and back, only to then drive from Florida to Ohio partly to attend the Blade Show.

For travelers, I would like to offer some tips from people who know



When the author is traveling in his Ford Bronco, attached to the passenger "shotgun" seat is the Grey Man Tactical vehicle rifle rack with rubber clamps. The kit came complete with extra magazine rifle pouch (pictured underneath rifle) and extra pouch for assorted items. Pawela opted for his own first aid kit and a canvas cover to conceal the entire system.



Backing in a vehicle serves many purposes and is a sound, long-proven tactic.

how to travel safely; advice and wisdom come from two different sources in book form. The first is *Shotguns and Stagecoaches: The Brave Men Who Rode for Wells Fargo in the Wild West* by bestselling author John Boessenecker, available from Thomas Dunne Books. The other is *Sentinel: Become the Agent in Charge of Your Own Protection Detail* by Patrick McNamara, retired sergeant major and Delta Force operator who has been featured in the pages of this magazine previously. His book is available at iuniverse.com.

AS WE TAKE this advice on traveling tips, both from pioneers of the Old West and from a modern ex-Delta Force operator, we will also look at many of the products that came to me from SHOT, NRA and the Blade Show, which made traveling a lot easier.

I have previously stated in writing, quoting Solomon from the Bible, that there is nothing new under the sun. I have also stated that there are no new tactics concerning close-quarter fighting; technology is the only thing that changes, which still holds true.

In *Shotguns and Stagecoaches*, Boessenecker describes what it was like in the early days of delivery through the gold rush, when Wells Fargo oversaw vast shipments of gold that they had to protect from robbers and the Plains

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Always sitting by his bedstand at home (or in his hotel room) is Pawela's survival kit. It includes his Glock 17 with 30-round magazine and a Streamlight TL-1 Tac Light, another Streamlight handheld light, and a good tactical knife, in this case the Cold Steel Warcraft. Completing the picture is the author's cross and personal Bible.

Indians, who were upset that the white man was riding into their territory. One person drove the wagon to protect Wells Fargo's goods and services; another was an armed guard, which is where the phrase "riding shotgun" came from.

The men and women who guarded the stagecoaches and trains of the frontiers were armed with an assortment of weapons, such as sawed-off double-barreled shotguns, rifles and revolvers. Both drivers and guards were deadly serious and dedicated to getting the job done. Just to state how dangerous the job was, from 1870 to 1884, there were 347 actual and attempted armed robberies that took place. Six guards and drivers were killed, and 10 were wounded.

Contrary to popular belief – thanks to the Hollywood myth of stagecoach robberies – most of the bandits would simply post themselves on a steep grade where the driver was forced to walk his team. While one robber stepped in front of the coach and seized the horses, a second would cover the driver and

give the command to throw down the box. The robbers of the day were the same as today's convicts, loafers and professional thieves. *Shotguns and Stagecoaches* is an excellent read on brave men's encounters while working for Wells Fargo. I highly recommend it.

THE OTHER BOOK, *Sentinel*, provides advice on traveling from McNamara. In personal protection language, the vehicle is the mobile command center. The driver should know all primary and secondary routes to and from home/the destination, as well as all emergency routes, such as hospitals and safe havens. The driver should drive all the routes in daylight and at night to become familiar with them, considering that landmarks look different at night.

Always ensure the vehicle is clean inside and out. Check the vehicle's mechanical condition, including oil, tires, power steering fluid, belts, radiator fluid, wipers, brake lights, flashers, headlights and horn.

When traveling, consider that parking lots are a risk area, so establish a parking routine. Backing into a parking area provides a better exit and mitigates the possibility of would-be scammers waiting for you in a blind spot while you back out. Of course, before you climb out of your vehicle, carefully look around, noting shadows and corners.

You should change the car battery every five years. Also, since flat tires are a fact of life, everyone should have a spare tire, a can of Fix-a-Flat emergency sealant, and a tire plug kit in their vehicle. Depending on your tire type, a plug kit will help you make a near-permanent tire repair when driving.

Other must-have items to have in your car include a pencil and notebook, scissors, duct tape, pocketknife or multi-tool, lighter, flashlight, and maps or a sound GPS. It is also good to have super glue, a power cord, band-aids, antibacterial hand sanitizer and antibiotic ointment.

WHEN TRAVELING BY car, you should also have a medical bag. First-aid training is highly recommended. In the medical bag, consider having the following items: at least one roll of absorbent cotton, iodine antiseptic solution, aspirin for adult use, ibuprofen in child

When carrying, it is always smart to have something identifying yourself as the good guy, like this DSM safety wallet.



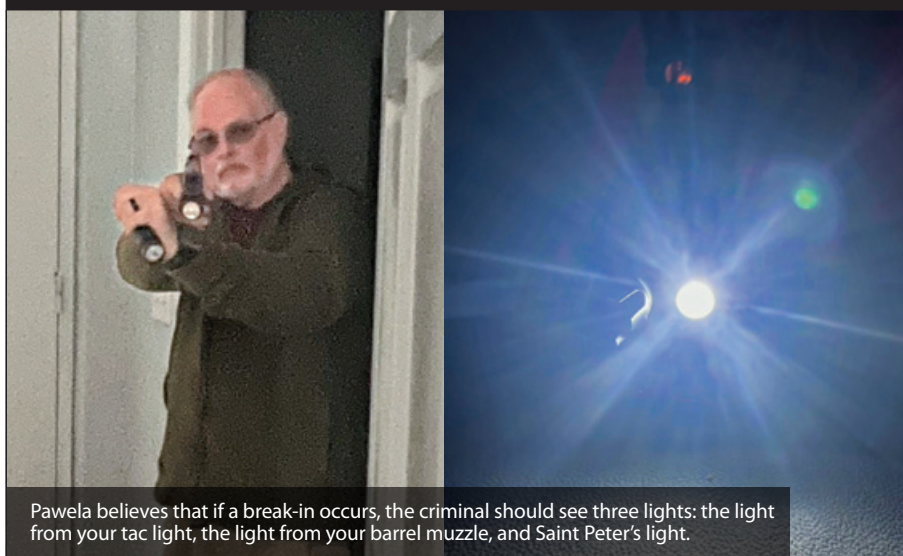
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Pawela believes that if a break-in occurs, the criminal should see three lights: the light from your tac light, the light from your barrel muzzle, and Saint Peter's light.

and adult dosages, 1-inch-wide adhesive tape, and bacitracin ointment to treat cuts, scrapes or puncture wounds. Other necessities include bandages in various sizes, butterfly bandages and thin adhesive strips to hold skin edges together, cold packs, a mouthpiece for protection when performing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, cotton tip swabs, elastic bandage or wraps, eye dropper for irrigating, flashlight, 4-inch by 4-inch gauze pads, disposable surgical gloves, saline eye drops, scissors, safety pins, tweezers, sewing needle to help remove splinters, thermometer, and two triangular pieces of cloth to use as slings or to cut up as bandages or straps.

Also, consider having a go bag or a bug-out bag that contains items you would need to have on your person in emergencies. Your bug-out bag should include batteries, flashlights, your red dot scopes, spare cell phone batteries or a burner phone, pocketknives, matches or fire-starting kits, paracord, emergency cash in small denominations, sturdy shoes, socks, a change of clothing with a warm hat, permanent marker and paper. I also always have extra jackets and blankets.

Other items you should pack include photos of family members and pets for

Another look at the contents of Pawela's bug-out bag. In addition to the .38 Ruger and Zeta6 speed loader and speed strip, it also includes a Streamlight flashlight, Skallywag Tactical MDV Plus One neck knife (below), and Vanquest pocket pouch (left) to store extra bullets, flashlights, knives, business cards and more.



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identification purposes; list of emergency contacts and phone numbers; list of allergies (especially antibiotics and food); list of medications; copy of health insurance and identification cards; extra prescription eyeglasses, hearing aids or other vital personal items; extra prescription medications and first-aid supplies; and extra keys to your house and vehicle.

Of course, the most essential items anyone should have when traveling by car are their primary handgun and knife. Additional weapons should be in a go bag or bug-out bag with easy access. I always have an assortment of knives, handguns, an AR rifle, and plenty of extra ammo for both.

THE PRIMARY MISSION of any trip is to safeguard yourself and your family from situations likely to endanger their well-being, be it murder, manslaughter, willful threats to kill, extortion, kidnapping or assault. Self-preservation must be front and center. If we are the head of a family, our priorities must always be to preserve our family and self. Always remember, no one is coming to rescue you.

You must take charge and have the tools necessary for safe travel, and that's my two cents! ★

Editor's note: Author Paul Pawela is a nationally recognized firearms and self-defense expert. For his realistic self-defense training, see assaultcountertactics.com.

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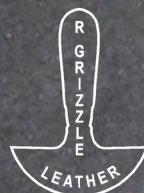
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BURSTING APPENDIX-CARRY DOUBTS

Making the case for concealed style that offers more flexibility for self-defense.

STORY BY JASON BROOKS

PHOTOS BY ANNA BROOKS



Where do you carry your weapon on your body for concealed carry?

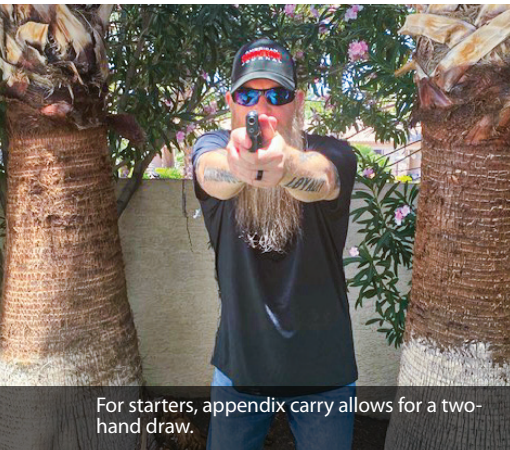
This question is asked of me multiple times whenever I am teaching a firearms training class. It is debated by some of the finest trainers, combat veterans, competition shooters, law enforcement officers and civilian instructors. Everyone has their opinion, and I respect everyone for that. However, some people are uneducated in the reality of carrying a firearm concealed.



Let us start with me answering the initial question. I carry my weapon in an appendix-carry style. When I train people on the range, especially when training them for carrying a concealed weapon, I tell them and show them why I carry the way I do. Women and men respond differently. Most women I train are open to learning a new style of carry, and they appreciate the



Author and firearms trainer Jason Brooks always explains to his students, both men and women, why he prefers appendix-style carry.



For starters, appendix carry allows for a two-hand draw.

explanations of the “why.”

Most men I talk to tell me they do not want to carry a weapon in the appendix style because they are afraid of shooting themselves in their private parts, so they carry on their right or left side (that would be the 3 o’clock or 9 o’clock position, depending on what your dominant hand is). My response to

that comment is always this: “How many times have you shot yourself in the leg then?” They give me a weird look and say, “Well, never!” I respond with the obvious, “Well then, what makes you think you will shoot your privates off?”

I contend that if you are uncomfortable with carrying a weapon in the appendix position due to fears



Appendix carry also allows for one-handed draw with your dominant hand and arm ...

of shooting yourself, then you need more training and possibly shouldn't be carrying concealed in the first place. Being intimidated by your own weapon can cause hesitation in the time of need, and someone else can get hurt through your own negligence.

NOW LET'S GET back to the "why" of carrying a weapon in the appendix position. One thing I like to show students is the draw of the weapon. When drawing a weapon that is on your hip concealed, there is a big telegraph motion that you go through when drawing said weapon. Your elbow flares out, and a good majority of people will lean to the side where the weapon is when they go to draw it. This can be problematic in certain situations, as drawing a concealed weapon is supposed to take the aggressor or assailant by surprise. The less movements you do, the better.

Which brings me to another point. You should always have one in the chamber. I know, I know; some people are going to hit the roof hearing that, but do you really want to take an additional step in split-second timing to draw and put down a threat? That is for you to decide, as each individual has the right to do what they want in that situation.

Getting back to the draw, on an appendix carry I can draw with one

hand or two, and I can draw either right- or left-handed. This is important, as you never know what the situation will be when you do have to draw your weapon from a concealed position. You might be carrying bags, a box or a child at that moment when one of your hands has to be busy either blocking or grabbing someone out of the way as you're drawing your weapon. The point is, think about your everyday activities and how they might affect drawing your concealed weapon.

Next, what if someone is already attacking people (e.g., an active shooter) and you are hit in your dominant arm or hand, or you somehow got injured in a car wreck

during a road rage incident? Once your dominant arm or hand is compromised, you are left to fend off the attack with your nondominant hand. Can you draw your weapon that is situated on your right side (since you are right-handed) with your left hand? And vice versa for you lefties? Try it at home during a dry fire training event for yourself. Please ensure you are following all firearm safety rules if you are doing dry fire training at home.

When carrying in an appendix position, I can draw with either my left or right hand, and engage a target one-handed. This is crucial training that any person carrying a concealed weapon should be practicing, both dry fire and live fire. This drill should also be practiced moving forward and backward during live fire exercises, as moving and shooting is a reality when defending yourself on the streets. Preparing yourself for any situation when carrying a concealed weapon is paramount to not only safety, but survival. ★

Editor's note: Jason Brooks is a combat medically retired marine, force recon hand-to-hand instructor, counterterrorism instructor trainer, recognized national law enforcement trainer, active personal protection specialist and co-owner of Assault Counter Tactics. Visit assaultcountertactics.com for more.



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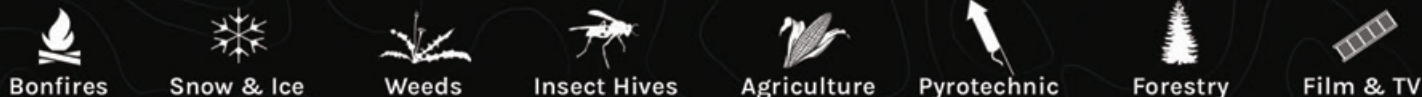
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Triple K Manufacturing has a near-80-year tradition of producing, selling firearms accessories.

PHOTOS BY TRIPLE K MANUFACTURING



fourth generation family-owned and -operated company, Triple K Manufacturing has been serving the firearms industry since 1946.

Over the decades, the San Diego-based company has evolved from a retail store specializing in GI surplus to a manufacturer of premium holsters and shooting accessories, and the business continues to expand to this day. James Wells, national sales manager, credits much of the company's continued success to its high-quality, American-made craftsmanship.

"Ultimately, our customers know we are committed to providing the best quality, value and assortment in our product line with made-in-USA quality," he explains. "As many of our peers in the industry retreat to offshore or south-of-the-border production, we remain committed to providing made-in-USA quality that is second to none. We are always committed to improving our production capacity and quality with our skilled team of craftsmen."

Wells continues, "Our team of craftsmen set us apart from our peers in the industry. Our average craftsman has been with our company for over 15 years and we have several that have been employed with us for over 50 years. Our leather holsters and accessories are 100-percent American hides and all our hardware and snaps are solid brass. Shooting enthusiasts worldwide know they are buying leather goods that will last a lifetime."

Some of Triple K's most popular products include the Cheyenne holster and Wyoming drop belt, which Wells



One of Triple K Manufacturing's hottest items is this Big Thunder Scoped Torso Rig.

says is “the most popular Western rig on the market and built for generations of wear in the field.” Other hot items include the Big Thunder rig and the Space Cowboy holster. “These chest-carry and waist-carry rigs have had a great reception from our customers with large-frame scoped hunting revolvers,” he says.

As the concealed carry market continues to grow, Triple K has a number of offerings, including the No. 274 Ultra Three Piece dual harness holster, which delivers the ultimate in comfort and concealment, and the No. 671 Crossdraw holster, which provides max comfort and fast deployment from both sitting and upright positions.

“As new gun models are produced, you can bet we will continue to add holsters and rigs to fit your exact model,” says Wells.

Triple K also offers a wide variety of hunting and shooting accessories. For example, they produce over 1,000 different models of handgun, shotgun and rifle magazines for both new and vintage firearms. In addition, says Wells, “Our Vintage Grip division produces over 1,500 models of vintage grips, butt plates and other accessories that are not available anywhere else.”

Triple K Manufacturing is committed to exemplifying the spirit of “Made in America” and protecting the Second Amendment heritage. ★

Editor’s note: Learn more about the company’s offerings at triplek.com.



Another of their top sellers is this Space Cowboy Scoped Holster.

FISHER BLADES' BECKWITH COVERT

Inspired by martial arts and Delta Force's founder, this knife 'is just what you imagined it would be: a tool designed as a last-ditch effort to save lives by ending the lethal threat fast.'

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PAUL PAWELA

Before starting this month's column, I must first state that we, as citizens of the United States, need to understand the laws of the land pertaining to self-defense, especially if a knife is involved. As I teach knife self-defense across the country, I emphasize that using a knife should always be a last resort.



It's imperative to grasp the gravity of using a knife for self-defense. Legally, it's considered deadly force, a term that should never be taken lightly. This understanding is particularly crucial for those contemplating using a knife for self-defense. It's not just a tool but a potential weapon with serious legal implications.

Legally, the right to self-defense is upheld, provided you did not initiate or provoke the confrontation. If you possess a concealed carry permit, it's expected that you exercise caution to

avoid situations that might escalate to the use of deadly force. The use of lethal force is generally authorized when a person is facing an immediate threat that could result in grave bodily harm, serious bodily injury, or death. Understanding these conditions is essential for anyone considering using a knife for self-defense.

AS AN EXPERT on knives, I admit I try to gather as much information on the subject as possible. I have been known to troll YouTube for hours watching videos on knives. One YouTube knife sensation that I have come across is Melissa "Backwoods" Miller. Intrigued by her in-depth knowledge of the subject, I watched quite a few of her reels. Then she introduced the Beckwith Covert knife made by Fisher Blades. Truthfully, I don't remember



The Beckwith Covert is named to honor Colonel Charlie Beckwith, the founder of US Delta Force. The fixed blade is designed expressly for defensive daily carry. (FISHER BLADES)

what she said about the blade, as I was already fixated on the design.

Based on the design features of the knife, I already knew the creator was a well-trained martial artist in the field, and I felt that there was no coincidence in the name, the Beckwith Covert.

After doing some research, I was able to find Fisher Blades' phone number and called them. Initially, I spoke with John Fisher. I was pleasantly surprised by what a delightful individual he is and how wonderful he was to talk to. In finding out a little bit about him, the best way to describe John is that he is an outdoor adventurer who enjoys a wide range of activities, including sailing and off-road motorcycling.

John apprenticed as a knife maker with the legendary Andy Roy at Fiddleback Forge. Under the Fisher



Author Paul Pawela with the Fisher brothers, John (left) and Chas, at this year's Blade Show.

Always giving credit where credit's due, Pawela poses with YouTube knife sensation and survival expert Melissa "Backwoods" Miller. Had it not been for her review of the Beckwith, this article would not have been possible.

Blades banner, he has produced hundreds of fine handmade bushcraft hunting and everyday carry fixed blades.

In talking to John about the Beckwith Covert, I explained a little bit about my background and told him about the excellent design features that were crafted into the knife itself. John

then politely said he would defer the conversation to his older brother, Chas, because he was the designer of the knife; John humbly stated that he just named the knife. Of course, I asked him why he named it Beckwith. Without missing a beat, John said, "I named it after one of my favorite heroes

of all time, Charles Alvin 'Charlie' Beckwith, founder of the United States Counterterrorism Unit Delta Force." My instincts were correct, and John was put on my Christmas card mailing list for that response.

THEN JOHN TURNED the phone over to Chas to continue the conversation about the knife design. Once again, my instincts were correct, as Chas has a long history in martial arts, with a lineage that includes holding the title of sifu in the art of Wing Chun and teaching at the Wing Chun school in Seattle. Chas is also well versed in pencak silat, which I consider one of the deadliest arts on the planet. I was overwhelmed and pleased that Chas is a part-time instructor for InSights Training Center under the tutelage of master firearms instructor Greg Hamilton, a man I have known and respected for many years. Chas teaches not only the unarmed combatives at InSights, but also pistols and rifles.

Chas has the best of both worlds:

Pawela's package from Fisher Blades came complete with a Beckwith Covert knife, a Kydex sheath pocket holster, an outstanding user manual, a copy of the Constitution, a history sheet on the knife, and a bandage for those silly enough to test the blade's sharpness – or in other words, "muck" around and find out.



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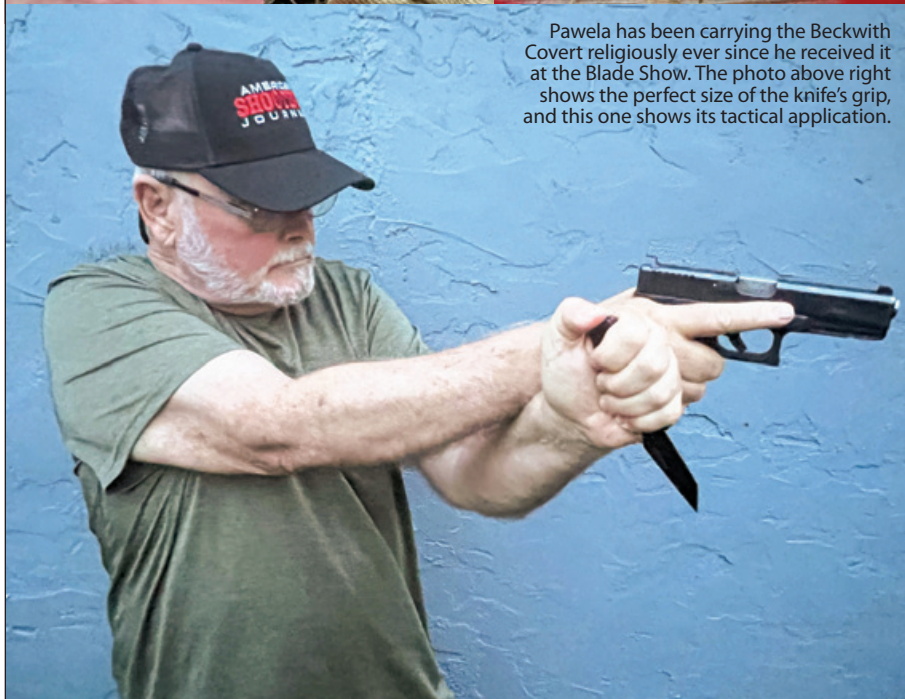
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Pawela has been carrying the Beckwith Covert religiously ever since he received it at the Blade Show. The photo above right shows the perfect size of the knife's grip, and this one shows its tactical application.



being around the caliber of Special Forces people like Hamilton and many other serious martial artists, and holding executive leadership positions with SOG Knives and Boker USA.

After talking with Chas, I told him I was pretty much sold on the knife. He replied with a question: "Will you be at the Blade Show in the upcoming week?" I answered affirmatively, and Chas invited me to his booth to talk.

As it would happen, I could only get to the Blade Show on its last day, Sunday. But I was able to cover every square inch of the property as I interacted with many of the top knife makers in the business. Sadly, I forgot

to write down Fisher Blades' booth number and had a total memory lapse of the company name. Just when I was frustrated and disappointed because everyone was packing to get out of the show, fate would intervene; as I was working my way to one vendor to say goodbye, I walked right into both Fisher brothers. To tell you the truth, it was like talking to family.

The brothers were so nice that they gave me a Beckwith Covert knife and two different knife sheaths to test and figure out which way I wanted to carry the knife in my pocket. The Beckwith Covert is just what you imagined it would be: a tool designed as a last-

ditch effort to save lives by ending the lethal threat fast.

ONCE AGAIN, LET'S review why we should carry a knife like the Beckwith Covert as a backup.

1) If the primary weapon (the gun) does not go bang in a deadly-force scenario, for whatever reason, immediately go to the backup weapon, the knife.

2) Your opponent may have either knocked your primary weapon out of your hand or disarmed you of your primary weapon; immediately go to your backup weapon, the knife.

3) If your opponent has taken you to the ground and is now wrestling you for your gun, immediately go to your backup weapon, the knife.

The Beckwith Covert comes with an excellent user manual, which is very impressive. The knife's overall length is 7 inches, the blade length is 3 inches, and the weight is 3.6 ounces, which means it is lightweight, so it's easy to carry.

With that information, we can understand that the Beckwith Covert is "intended as a sub-compact discreet-carry fixed blade for daily carry as a protection knife," as the manual states. It is ultra slim with a Kydex sheath for front pocket carry; this is impressive to me because this works for both standing fighting and on-the-ground fighting. A modified tanto blade and an aggressive thumb ramp are instrumental for optimal blade control and a positive rear quillon is included in the handle for a reliable draw of the knife out of the Kydex holster.

Speaking of the Kydex sheath holster, the retaining clips have inner and outer clips to secure the sheath to your pants pocket for a fast draw, and you have peace of mind that the sheath stays in your pocket while the knife stays in your hand.

Remember, this Beckwith Covert is for when SHTF and everything is going from bad to worse. The knife is designed to be gripped either in a forward or reverse hammer grip



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The knife's sheath is extremely well built, thanks to double retention inner and outer securing clips.



because, under stress, the body automatically closes the fist.

I HAVE ALWAYS maintained that the backup knife should be carried on your nondominant side. In contrast, many knife instructors will teach slashing techniques, telling their students that if you cut and slash the limb, it will be better in court because you didn't allegedly kill your opponent with a stab that is usually fatal. Of course, this advice is utter nonsense due to several factors. In general, knife

instructors do not know how the US legal system works. In fact, you can distinguish bad knife trainers from good ones by asking them if their training syllabus has been reviewed by a district attorney, and also if they have courtroom experience on the subject.

Also, teaching slashing techniques is illogical. We don't use firearms to shoot to wound, and we wouldn't slash at an opponent if we're in a situation that warrants deadly force. Whether it be a gun or knife, we use our tools to stop the threat, which is what the

Beckwith Covert was designed to do. That's why this knife makes the cut! ★

Editor's note: Author Paul Pawela will teach at the famed International Association of Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors annual training conference in September. One of the blocks he will teach covers getting to your backup weapon while on the ground; the Beckwith Covert will make many appearances for these training blocks. For more information on Fisher Blades, go to fisherblades.com.



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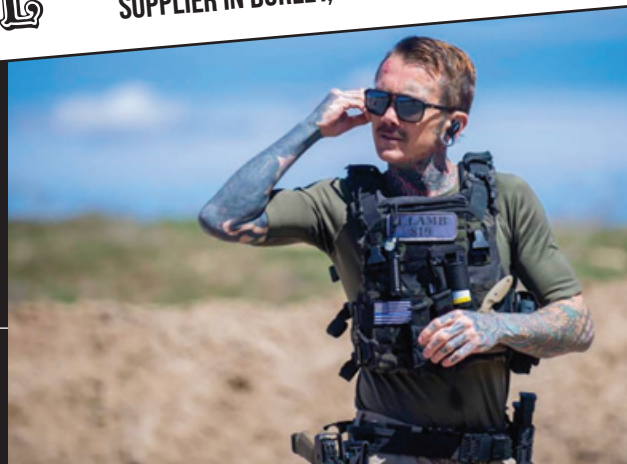
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Shooting competitions are a place to “validate training, focus practice and add value to the time, treasure and effort focused on shooting,” says author Ash Hess. Pictured is Ken Rose, the 2023 IDPA Virginia Indoor Regional Stock Service Pistol Champion.

THE SPORTING SHORTAGE

More gun owners should participate in shooting competitions, and here’s why.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ASH HESS

The number of people who participate in the shooting sports is exceptionally low when you compare it to the reported gun ownership population. There are a few reasons I have heard over the years, and in this article I am going to work through them one by one and share my thoughts.



What I want to say first, though, is that not all competitions are great.

However, even if they are of low value, there is some skill at each style that can be beneficial to defense, tactical, hunting and other competition styles. The rest of it might very well be terrible, but I do not know anyone who purposely puts on a match that is terrible. Some demos and range days? Absolutely, but not matches.

For this reason, people who have followed me for a decade will remember a time when competition was not high on my list. I was focused directly on combat operations and had limited exposure to distinctive styles of competition. As my

time in combat and the Army ended, I was exposed to other styles and began to see the value in them. Nowadays, the odds of me being in a gunfight are, like 99 percent of the population, extremely low. That makes competition a place to validate training, focus practice and add value to the time, treasure and effort focused on shooting.

So let’s get back to the reasons why many gun owners do not participate in shooting sports.

REASON NUMBER 1: “Competition makes

you do things that will get you hurt in real life.”

Well, about that. Yes, there are some bad habits that I see people do in and after stages that would be detrimental if they did them in a fight. Most of the popular competition styles do not encourage these bad techniques in a match; rather, they come from those either trying to be cool or finding an edge when speed and skill are lacking. You do not see them used by the leaders in the sport, but they are done by the novice or the showboat.

Many will point to equipment that is only used for matches, like speed holsters or dedicated race guns/calibers, and say they do not work for defensive shoots. While there is some truth to this, I have yet to see experienced

competitors rolling around town in their competition rigs with the intent to protect their family. They understand that their competition gear is for that purpose and have a different equipment set for everyday use. Honestly, some of the high-end competition rigs I have seen are too expensive to either have torn up in a fight or turned into evidence without a very valid reason.

Let us add one other thing to the mix. Most of the popular series allow you to use the equipment you would/could carry on the streets. You also can fight the stages the same way you would for real. What you are going to find, though, is that you are slower than those who “game” it. If your ego can handle getting beat, you can absolutely run normal equipment with its limitations.

REASON NUMBER 2: “I am a good shooter, and I don’t have to prove that.”

It is more than that. Being able to produce high performance on demand is something that takes training, practice and dedication. If you are not doing that, something will be lacking when it comes time to perform. Anything else is just ego speaking.

Any time I hear someone talking about how they used to shoot, particularly my fellow veterans, I am reminded of football stories from high school and the song “Glory Days.” I know how fast my skills atrophy and most people are about the same. We know we cannot produce the same results in anything else we have not been actively doing, but something about shooting makes people think they can still do it.

Find a local club match and go try a stage after they are done.

LET US TALK about some different match styles and what you gain from it. While I have shot a bunch of styles, I will just focus on a couple and their benefits to general shooting.

- **F-Class.** F-Class or High Power matches focus on a few different ranges and extremely accurate and precise shooting. The X-ring is ½-MOA and the leaders are shooting 10 or more X’s during a course of fire. To be competitive, you not only need a sub-½-MOA rifle, but you need to make wind calls that will result in no more than a ¼-MOA effect by wind. Then you need to be able to press a shot within that ½-minute. This means wind calls within 1 mile per hour, a fine-tuned shot process and exact bullet flight predictions. Anything less than perfection will result in a loss.

These matches are not tactical, and some divisions are not even practical, but the skills needed will transcend into any longer-range shooting.

- **Positional long range.** While not the official term for it, matches like Precision Rifle Series and Quantified Performance, as well as many snipers and designated marksmen, are what I refer to as positional long range. To be competitive in these matches, you need



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to be able to produce a quality shot from various props and shooting positions. You will shoot from roofs, tank traps, barrels and many other props chosen by the match director. You then need to be able to get stable enough to engage targets from 100 to 1,500 yards from that prop, usually under some type of time constraint. Targets are various shapes and sometimes as large as 3-MOA down to 1-MOA.

These style of matches force you to have a solid shot process, accurate flight prediction data and a rifle that is not only capable of accuracy and precision but also mobile and reliable.

• *Two-gun.* Many of the more tactical-oriented matches have you shooting a carbine and a pistol. Ranges for the rifle are within 200 yards, with a few stages reaching beyond that. Most stages will have rifle and pistol on the stage and will have you either slinging the rifle or putting a cleared gun in a safe location. They have some sort of movement and stage planning that is

required. Most will have a reload for one or both firearms.

These matches require you to be fast, transition from one firearm to another, have smooth movements and an awareness of muzzle orientation and firearm status.

• *Pistol.* Matches like IDPA, USPSA and Steel Challenge require draws from the holster, reloads and fast shooting of multiple shots. There are enough divisions to cover everything from race guns to everyday carry guns. There will be decision-making and target discrimination. Those are all skills that translate directly into what you would need to do in a defensive encounter.

THE BOTTOM LINE is that somewhere in the shooting sports, there is a match for you. I know of hunting-specific matches, fitness-oriented matches, extreme long-range matches and, well, everything in between. There is one local for you to go and watch. Remember this, though: there is only one winner per division

and an overall winner. Everyone else at the match was just chasing the winner. People will be helpful if you arrive with a good attitude and maintain it.

I have shot over 70 matches, according to PractiScore, and I have wins in less than five of them. It is not about a win or loss. It is about maintaining skills and most importantly exercising your rights under the Second Amendment in a fun and competitive environment with others who enjoy the same sport as you. ★

Editor's note: Ash Hess is a highly seasoned combat veteran of 22 years with four combat deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq, totaling 52 months. His military training includes the US Army Master Marksman Trainer course, as well as rifle marksman instructor, urban combat leaders', senior leaders', army basic instructor, high-angle marksman and unit armor courses. He also wrote TC3-22.9, the Army's marksmanship manual.



"It is not about a win or loss," says Hess, pictured here shooting from a bipod at a long-range match. "It is about maintaining skills and most importantly exercising your rights under the Second Amendment in a fun and competitive environment with others who enjoy the same sport as you."

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Allen Cunniff takes steady aim over cross-sticks at the Black River Buffalo Runners' annual .50-70 Match. The club, based near Olympia, Washington, puts on these yearly matches in honor of the .50-70, the first centerfire military rifle cartridge, introduced in 1866.

A TALE OF TWO .50-70 MATCH SHOOTERS

Club's growing annual event yields very divergent results for author and buddy.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MIKE NESBITT

For me and my shooting, let me tell you right up front: Our club's annual .50-70 Match was quite a letdown. There was nothing wrong with the match; that was great as usual. My letdown



was simply because of my shooting, and why my performance was as poor as it was is a mystery to me. The loads I was using were prepared for that match, and my rifle, of course, was in fine shape. Things like this happen to most shooters, now and then. I'll take it like a good sport, but let me give you some more details.

Our .50-70 Matches were started five years ago, put on by the Black River Buffalo Runners at the Capitol City Rifle & Pistol Club near Olympia, Washington. We started these matches with the idea of shedding some light on, and encouraging the use of, the .50-70 in honor of its colorful history. As you should know, the .50-70 was



Mike Moran took third place in the most recent match, shooting a .50-70 by C. Sharps Arms with a 1¾ Heavy barrel.

our very first centerfire military rifle cartridge, introduced in 1866. That's why it is most often referred to as the .50-70 Government. Some outstanding shooters in the 1860s and '70s used their .50-70s in memorable ways; these shooters include Buffalo Bill, Wild Bill Hickok, General George A. Custer and Captain Thomas French, as well as numerous buffalo hunters. At our first .50-70 Match, however, only three shooters with .50-70 rifles showed up.

THE WAY WE run these matches is rather simple. The .50-70 rifles are given priority in scoring and awards, although rifles in other black powder calibers can certainly be used. At

that first match, three shooters had .50-70s, like I said, but five more were shooting .45-70s and one other shooter "boomed" through the match with a heavily loaded Sharps in .45-90 caliber. Inviting those other calibers to participate certainly adds shooters to our firing line, and the competition remains just as strong as in our other black powder cartridge rifle matches.

Reflecting on that first match just a bit more, the rifle I used was a Model 1874 Hartford Sharps by C. Sharps Arms, weighing 13 pounds and with a No. 1½ heavy barrel that was 32 inches in length. For that first match, we used two paper targets that were posted at 50 and 100 yards, respectively. My

loads used 445-grain bullets cast from Accurate Molds' No. 52-450L2 seated over 65 grains of Olde Eynsford 2F powder. With that rifle and those loads, I took first place in the match with a score for the day of 180 points out of the 200 points possible.

While that first match did not receive the attendance we had hoped for, it certainly proved to be a worthy shoot, drawing quite a bit of attention. That attention was shown again and underlined by the increased participation the match got in the following years.

The second .50-70 Match had a curious twist to it. We moved the targets out to 100 and 200 yards, and there were only eight shooters on the firing line – one less than the year before – but six out of those eight were using .50-70 rifles. The curious twist involves the shooters who would end up shooting the four highest scores. Jerry Mayo, who used his .45-70 rifle the previous year, came to me and asked if he could borrow a .50-70 rifle for the match. I agreed to that but asked him which .50-70 he wanted to shoot. Jerry very quickly said he wanted to use my just-completed custom rebuilt rolling block Remington, the very rifle that I planned on shooting. I asked Jerry if he wouldn't care to shoot my Sharps, but no; he wanted to shoot the rolling block. So we shared the rifle; he shot it during one relay, and then after the bore was wiped clean, I'd shoot it in the next relay.

We weren't the only ones to share a rifle. "Loco Jeff" Ritter and his son, "Doc" Ritter, also shared a .50-70 rolling block. That was Loco Jeff's rolling block that was restocked like a Gemmer, so it looked like a rifle that came out of the



A practice target along with a paper-patched .50-70 cartridge.



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Moran aims and fires over his cross-sticks. His loads used bullets from Accurate Molds' No. 52-460N over 65 grains of Olde Eynsford 2F powder.



Author Mike Nesbitt used a KAL .50-caliber adjustable paper-patch bullet mold. The loads worked well in practice, but the match was a different story.

Hawken shop. The funny thing about that match was that Jerry won it with my rifle, then Doc took second place while using his dad's rifle. I placed third with the rifle Jerry had used, and Loco Jeff placed fourth with his Gemmer-style rolling block. Jerry had the high scoring target at 200 yards in that match, getting a 92.

In the third .50-70 match, my scores put me in second place. I was still shooting fairly well, again using a Sharps rifle. Allen Cunniff was our top shooter that year and he continued to shoot the top scores with his .50-70 Sharps while using paper-patched bullets. By the fourth .50-70 match, Al's scores were going up but mine were going down because this was in the period when my right eye stopped seeing things clearly, especially rifle sights.



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The latest .50-70 Match had the most shooters in the event's short history. "I'm proud to be in the lineup – and on the firing line – with these shooters, no matter what my score might be," writes Nesbitt (front row, yellow coat).

WE MUST COMMENT on the increase in the number of shooters for these .50-70 matches, shooting Sharps, Remington rolling block, and Springfield trapdoor rifles. One of those added shooters was Mike Moran, shooting a rather new Sharps Hartford Model from C. Sharps Arms. Mike and I often practiced together during the weeks leading up to the most recent .50-70 match.

One difference for me is that I must now shoot left-handed. My transition from being a right-handed shooter to a left-handed shooter has been mentioned before and I do believe that I'm doing well at it. The rifle I selected for use is almost a twin to Mike's and we were often practicing with the same loads. The loads I liked and selected for use in the match used 70 grains of Olde Eynsford 2F powder under a 473-grain paper-patched bullet cast from a KAL adjustable mold (kaltool@mts.net) with ignition provided by Winchester large pistol primers.

Those loads, which had lubrication beneath the bullets, had an average muzzle velocity of 1,205 feet per

second. They worked well in practice with just blow-tube attention between shots. Paper-patched bullet shooters will often wipe their rifle's bores between shots for consistent shooting, but I didn't plan on doing that. In practice, my loads worked well enough that I offered to make similar loads for Mike to shoot in the match. Mike was lucky enough, or wise enough, that he didn't accept my offer.

Instead, Mike's loads for his .50-70 Sharps used bullets from Accurate Molds' No. 52-460N (accuratemolds.com), slightly heavier than a standard bullet, over 65 grains of Olde Eynsford 2F powder. In the match, Mike partnered with Allen, and Allen spotted his shots while shooting in the first relay. Mike started on his 200-yard target and his score climbed with every shot, giving him a good score of 83 out of the 100 points possible with his 10 hits. Then he moved to his 100-yard target and repeated his good shooting while scoring 87 points at the shorter distance.

When I shot in the second relay, my hits were not close to the center of

the target and I'm not sure why. And my hits were too irregular to make appropriate sight adjustments. I was shooting from the sitting position, while during practice my shots were taken from a benchrest, but that shouldn't have made such a difference. Perhaps wiping the bore between shots might have helped. Let me conclude in regard to my shooting by simply saying that I'll fall back and try again, with every expectation of doing very well.

My heartiest congratulations certainly go to the winners of this year's match. Allen won the match again and he's simply a hard shooter to beat. In second place was Eric Johnson, who was shooting a Pedersoli Sharps in .50-70, getting scores of 90-2X and 87 on his two targets. My pal Mike placed third. It was actually rewarding to see these shooters get good scores, and this .50-70 match had the most shooters, 10 of us, in the history of this small and still rather young event. I'm proud to be in the lineup – and on the firing line – with these shooters, no matter what my score might be. ★



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RESCUING A RASCALLY RABBIT

California Highway Patrol officer, construction crew save beefy bunny from becoming pavement pizza.

STORY BY NICK PERNA

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL, SANTA CRUZ OFFICE, FACEBOOK PAGE

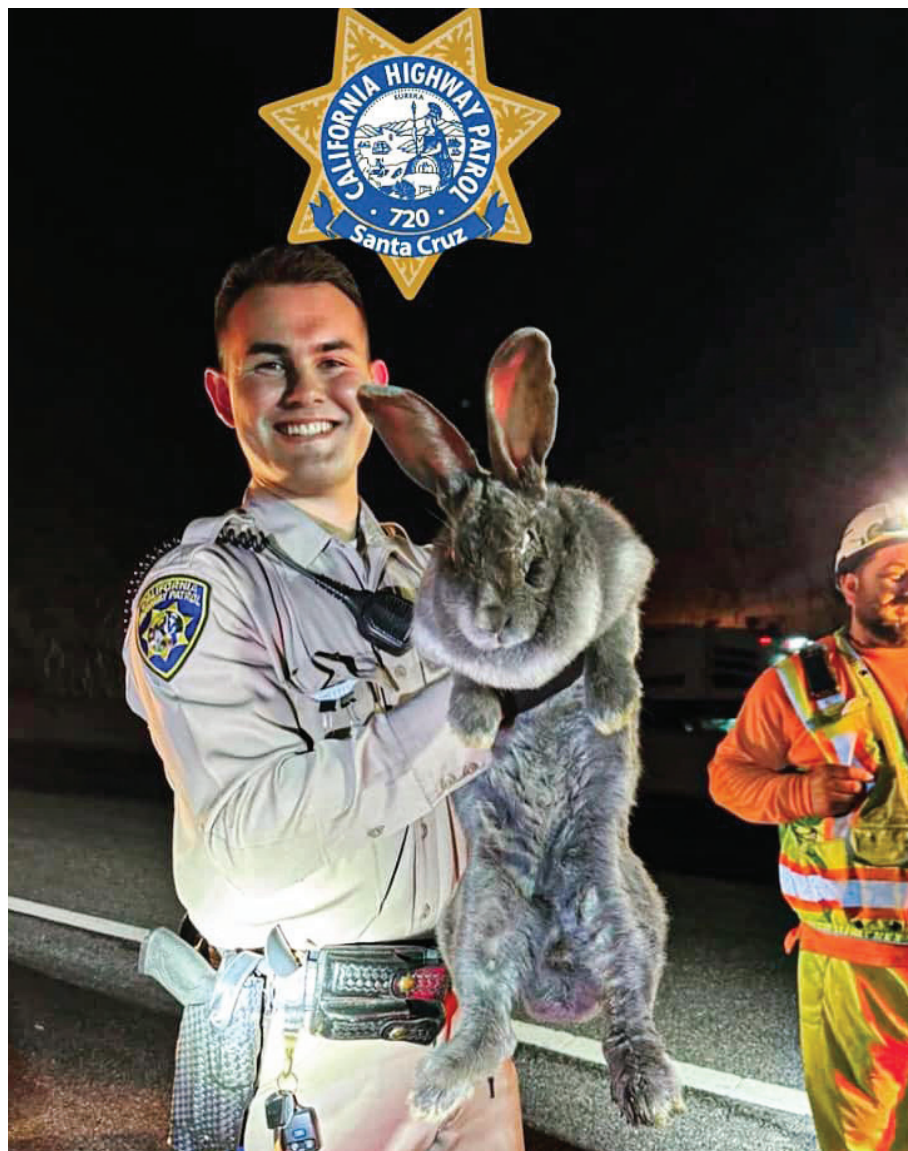
To protect and serve. This basic motto of law enforcement takes many forms: Protecting citizens' lives, health and property. Serving the people who live and work in our communities by providing all manner of services to keep them safe and secure.

Our fellow human beings are generally the intended recipients of this motto. But law enforcement officers also have a responsibility to protect and serve our furry friends.



I've written in the past about when law enforcement has come to the aid of non-human clients. There's the usual creatures: lost dogs, cats stuck in trees, and so on. But I've also documented the efforts of cops who have rescued cows from a burning barn, and even officers who have assisted a sea lion cross the road to safety. So, in keeping with that theme, I will tell you the story of Bugs, the overweight rabbit.

IN CALIFORNIA, in lieu of a traditional state police force, we have the California Highway Patrol. As the name implies, CHP officers patrol the highways throughout the state. Referred to as "Chippies," they have a tough, dangerous job. The ones who work in urban areas deal with all of the same issues that their city officer and sheriff's deputy counterparts deal with. In more rural jurisdictions, they often take on a larger role in sparsely



A 26-pound Flemish giant rabbit, nicknamed Bugs by his rescuers, running in and out of traffic in central California's Santa Cruz County was saved thanks to a quick-thinking construction crew and California Highway Patrol officers, who extended their motto "to protect and serve" to the cuddly critter.

populated communities where they may be the only law enforcement presence around for hundreds of miles.

On June 3 of this year, a CHP officer responded to a call of a large rabbit that was running in and out of

traffic on Highway 17 in Santa Cruz County. The rabbit was spotted by a construction crew doing work in the area, and a CHP officer was able to catch the rabbit. The rabbit didn't have any form of identification, so he

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was given the name of Bugs by the officer on scene.

Bugs weighed in at 26 pounds! Obviously he is someone's pet, but so far no one has come forward to claim ownership. Hopefully someone will get Bugs on a diet, and maybe an exercise program too – something safer than playing *Frogger* on a busy highway. In his defense, Bugs is a Flemish giant, which tend to get bigger than most rabbits. Still, luckily for Bugs, Elmer Fudd was not in the area at the time.

The CHP public information office said, “Our officers gave Bugs a cozy ride to Pacific and Santa Cruz Veterinary Specialists, where he’s now receiving the care he needs. A big shoutout to the vigilant workers who spotted Bugs and took quick action to ensure his safety. Kindness and prompt response made all the difference.”

So there you have it, the most recent edition of odd animals saved by law enforcement. ★

Editor's note: Author Nick Perna is a sergeant with the Redwood City Police Department in Northern California. He previously served as a paratrooper in the US Army and is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He also has a master's degree from the University of San Francisco. He is a frequent contributor to multiple print and online forums on topics related to law enforcement, firearms, tactics and veterans issues.



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Medal of Honor recipient Sammy Lee Davis (right) talks with Don Mann, a former member of SEAL Team 6, at the recent NRA convention in Dallas. Davis was there signing his 2016 book, *You Don't Lose Until You Quit Trying*.

MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT SAMMY LEE DAVIS

Meet the Vietnam veteran whose heroism inspired a *Forrest Gump* battle scene.

STORY AND PHOTO BY PAUL PAWELA

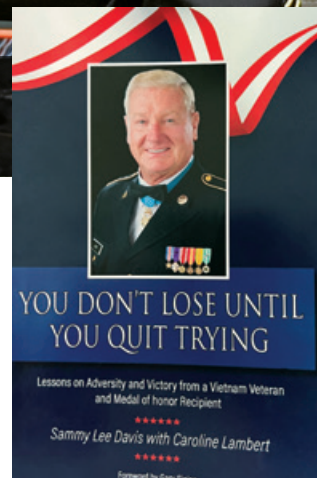
America was founded on the principle of fighting for what is right. We must never cease fighting for the right cause until we prevail. The battle is not always won by the strongest, smartest or most elite; ultimately, it comes to those who are persistent and persevere.

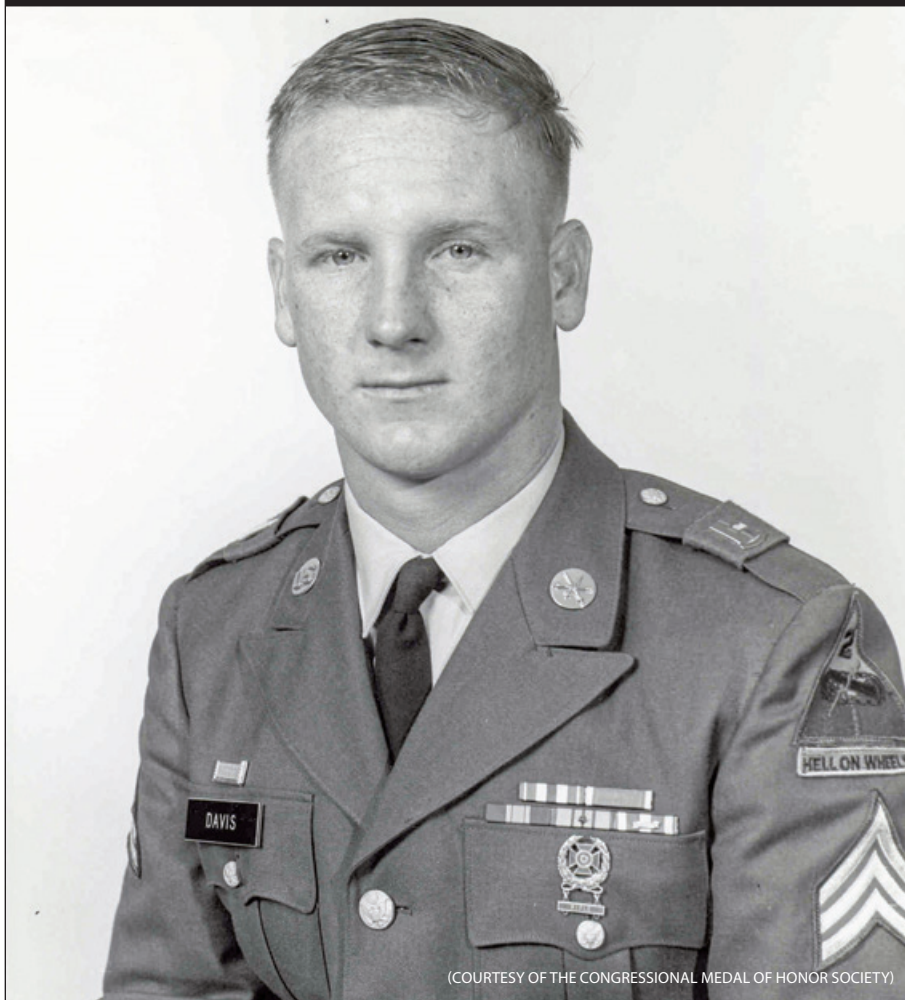
These words have never been truer than when discussing the real-life story of retired US Army Sergeant First Class Sammy Lee Davis. Davis, whose heroism in Vietnam was the inspiration for the war scenes in *Forrest Gump*, has since become known as “the real Forrest Gump.” And there is probably

no one who can say more about Davis than Gary Sinise, the actor who portrayed Lieutenant Dan in the film.

In Davis’s book, *You Don’t Lose Until You Quit Trying*, Sinise wrote the foreword and had this to say:

“He is a kind, gentle man of great





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strength and faith. A tender warrior who continues to give in service of something greater than himself. Each day, with courage, dignity, and his lifelong devotion to Duty, Honor, Country, Sammy honors all his fallen brothers, those for whom he wears the medal. His is an extraordinary story. Yet he would be the first to tell you that he was simply an ordinary soldier doing his job. On November 18, 1967, fighting an enemy force of over 1,500 with only 42 fellow soldiers in his artillery unit, he did his job and more. About the medal and going to war, in his own very humble words, he says, 'I didn't do anything heroic. I did my job. That's what soldiers do. And if there was one of these medals given that night, there should be at least 42 of them. Because if any one of us had not done his job, there would be none of us alive. It sounds silly perhaps to say that I went to war and found out

about love. What real love is. You know I didn't go to war to kill people, I went to war because I love my daddy, I wanted him to be proud of me. And I went to war because I love my grandpas, and I love my country. And when I got over there ... the reason why we fought so hard was because we discovered we loved each other, and that we were all we had. And they became brothers. We became brothers. And that's lasted up ... you know ... it's been 36 years, and those men that I fought with are still my brothers. So I learned about what real love is.'

Davis clutches the Medal of Honor he was awarded for actions in Vietnam during a ceremony marking the partnership between the Army National Guard, US Army Reserve and Helmets to Hardhats at the Pentagon on July 2, 2009. Helmets to Hardhats is a nonprofit program that connects service members with careers in building and construction trades. "There is nothing broken in this nation that we people cannot repair," Davis said. "You don't lose until you quit trying." (US ARMY/JIM GREENHILL)

"I have learned a great deal from this brave, humble soldier and his giving heart. His story, told in the following pages, will grip you, and move you, and inspire you, and teach you about love, as Sammy has done for me. I love him dearly, and after reading this story, I have no doubt that you will, too. I am grateful that our country has such men and women who give so much of themselves so that we can remain free. And to Sammy, let me simply say, thank you, brother."

NOT ONLY DID Davis receive the Medal of Honor in 1968 for his actions during the Viet Cong attack on Fire Support Base Cudgel, but he also received the Silver Star and the Purple Heart, was named one of *Newsweek's* 100 unsung heroes, and received the Joe Foss Institute's annual award. He now travels throughout the United States and abroad, speaking to various groups.

His book should be required reading in every high school nationwide; it should be mandatory for young people to truly understand what commitment, loyalty, courage and love are all about.

Davis and his wife Dixie are salt of the earth. They love each other, their children, their family, God, and their country.

God bless America, God bless Sammy Davis, and God bless the men and women who serve in our Armed Forces. ★





Tatted Tactical not only specializes in custom tactical rifles, but also makes firearms training a top priority. Says owner Terry Lamb, "The community's safety is priority number one. With well-educated and trained individuals, we keep the community safe."

WHERE CUSTOM BUILDS MEET FIREARMS TRAINING

Terry Lamb and Tatted Tactical combine rifle making with skills to keep communities safe.

PHOTOS BY TATTED TACTICAL

Tactical games shooting enthusiast. Three-time contestant on *American Ninja Warrior*. Obstacle course racing athlete. Burley, Idaho's Terry Lamb has led a colorful life, to say the least. Now he can add another descriptor to the list: custom rifle maker.

Lamb began building custom rifles in 2019 and established his company, Tatted Tactical, just before the pandemic as an FFL07/SOT3.

"We specialize in custom tactical rifles, as well as long-range builds on the semiauto platform," explains Lamb. "From custom handguards, cerakote

and components, we can bring anyone's imagination to life. My shop is the only one around that offers indoor virtual training, shooting and hand-to-hand combative training as well."

Both firearms training and safety training are extremely important to Lamb, because as he says, "owning a



Lamb started building custom rifles back in 2019 and specializes in tactical and long-range semiautos.

fire extinguisher doesn't make me a fireman."

"The community's safety is priority number one," he says. "With well-educated and trained individuals, we

keep the community safe."

Lamb continues, "I owned a nonprofit kids' ninja training facility for over four years, specializing in working with at-risk youth ... We keep the same

mindset going forward for safety and education with younger generations to come. Tomorrow's leaders are trained, educated and built into leaders today with each and every action we take as leaders. Our goal is to keep our community safe and ready for any circumstance they may face that could require the use of deadly force." ★

Editor's note: For more information about Tatted Tactical's custom rifles and/or training classes, contact Lamb at tattedtactical@gmail.com.



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