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ON THE COVER

Longtime *American Shooting Journal* hunting columnist **Scott Haugen** has taken many elk throughout the West and will be the first to tell you that big bulls don't come easy, but they can be had if you follow his game plan this season.
 (SCOTT HAUGEN)



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(SCOTT HAUGEN)

ROAD HUNTER: START YOUR SEARCH FOR ELK HERE

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105 LAW ENFORCEMENT SPOTLIGHT: COURAGE NOT UNCOMMON

We still don't know his name, but this past May, an Allen, Texas, cop single-handedly neutralized an active shooter at a mall, an extraordinarily selfless act but also, Nick Perna argues, courage that is not uncommon among America's police officers.

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You might not associate James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok with martial arts, but Paul Pawela believes the legendary Old West figure was one of its greatest practitioners of all time. Before you scoff, hear out our self-defense expert's reasoning.



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- 25 TRIGGRCON COMING SOON TO WICHITA**
The latest and greatest in firearms and accessories is coming to Kansas next month, and the public is invited to Wichita's Hartman Arena and nearby Severance Training Center for three days of products, innovations, awards and range time.

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CONSTELLATIONS, INC. kcsshows.com mcsshows.com	September 17 October 8 October 22 November 12 November 19 December 10 December 17	Woodstock, Ill. St. Charles, Ill. Woodstock, Ill. St. Charles, Ill. Woodstock, Ill. St. Charles, Ill. Woodstock, Ill.	McHenry County Fairgrounds Kane County Fairgrounds McHenry County Fairgrounds Kane County Fairgrounds McHenry County Fairgrounds Kane County Fairgrounds McHenry County Fairgrounds
CROSSROADS OF THE WEST GUN SHOWS crossroadsgunshows.com	August 5-6 August 12-13 August 19-20 August 26-27 September 9-10 September 16-17	Ontario, Calif. Bakersfield, Calif. Prescott, Ariz. Layton, Utah Phoenix, Ariz. Tucson, Ariz.	Ontario Convention Center Kern County Fairgrounds Findlay Toyota Center Davis Conference Center Arizona State Fairgrounds Pima County Fairgrounds
FLORIDA GUN SHOWS floridagunshows.com	August 5-6 August 19-20 August 26-27 September 2-3 September 9-10	Fort Myers, Fla. Orlando, Fla. Tampa, Fla. Miami, Fla. Palmetto, Fla.	Lee Civic Center Central Florida Fair Grounds Florida State Fairgrounds Miami-Dade Fairgrounds Bradenton Convention Center
GGS PROMOTIONS gunshowtrader.com	August 5-6 August 11-13 August 19-20 August 26-27 September 16-17 September 22-24 Sept. 30-Oct. 1	Heber Springs, Ark. Canton, Texas Conway, Ark. Marshall, Texas Henderson, Texas Nacogdoches, Texas Hot Springs, Ark.	Community Center Canton Civic Center Conway Expo Fairgrounds Marshall Convention Center Rusk County Expo Center Nacogdoches County Expo Center Garland County Fairgrounds
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REAL TEXAS GUN SHOWS therealtexasgunshow.com	August 12-13 August 26-27 September 16-17 September 30-31	Taylor, Texas Brenham, Texas Orange, Texas Port Arthur, Texas	Williamson County Expo Center Brenham Fireman's Training Center Orange County Expo Robert A. Bower Civic Center
TANNER GUN SHOWS tannergunshow.com	August 4-6 September 1-3 Sept. 29-Oct. 1	Colorado Springs, Colo. Aurora, Colo. Denver, Colo.	Norris Penrose Event Center Arapahoe County Fairgrounds Crowne Plaza
WES KNODEL GUN SHOWS wesknodelgunshows.com	September 9-10 September 16-17	Centralia, Wash. Redmond, Ore.	Southwest Washington Fairgrounds Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center
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COMPETITION

CALENDAR

 usashooting.org	AUGUST 11-13 Utah August 2023 PTO Salt Lake City, Utah	AUGUST 19 Rocky Mountain Regional Monthly Match Colorado Springs, Colo.	SEPTEMBER 28-OCTOBER 3 Rifle & Pistol Olympic Trials Part 1 Fort Moore, Ga.
 uspsa.org	AUGUST 10-13 Area 3 Championship Alda, Neb. AUGUST 12-13 Columbia Cascade Sectional Shedd, Ore. AUGUST 18-20 Battle for the North Coast Hartsgrove, Ohio	AUGUST 24-27 Area 8 Championship New Tripoli, Pa. AUGUST 25-26 Greater Yellowstone Section Championship Roundup, Mont. AUGUST 25-27 Illinois Sectional Havana, Ill.	AUGUST 26-27 Minnesota Section Championship Match Forest Lake, Minn. AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 3 Utah State Championship Salt Lake City, Utah SEPTEMBER 1-3 Washington State USPSA Championship Custer, Wash.
 gssfonline.com	AUGUST 12-13 Rocky Mountain Regional Classic Eaton, Colo. AUGUST 19-20 Keystone State Ballistic Challenge Mertztown, Pa.	AUGUST 26-27 Midwest Regional Classic Hallsville, Mo. AUGUST 26-27 Northern California Regional Classic Richmond, Calif.	SEPTEMBER 9-10 Benton Gun Club GSSF Challenge Bauxite, Ark. SEPTEMBER 15-17 Glock Annual Shoot & Gunny Challenge Talladega, Ala.
 cmsaevents.com	AUGUST 11-12 Kentucky State Shoot Edinburgh, Ind. AUGUST 12-13 Massachusetts State Championship Norfolk, Mass.	AUGUST 18-20 Ohio State Championship Eaton, Ohio AUGUST 19-20 Mega Championship Weekend Mid Atlantic Lumberton, N.C.	AUGUST 26-27 Connecticut State Championship Bethany, Conn. SEPTEMBER 2-4 Wyoming State Finals Lusk, Wy.
 idpa.com	AUGUST 4-5 Steel City Shootout Bulger, Pa. AUGUST 11-12 Potomac Grail Thurmont, Md.	AUGUST 13 Michigan State Match Dorr, Mich. AUGUST 25-27 New England Regional Championship Harvard, Mass.	SEPTEMBER 2-3 Kentucky Classic Wilmore, Ky. SEPTEMBER 3 New Mexico State Championship Los Lunas, N.M.

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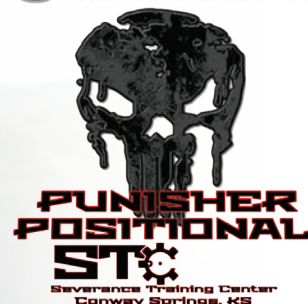
SCHEDULE

Pro Bolt Gun Series

August 5	Silent Night	Ninnekah, Okla.
August 12	RCBS Rumble	Pleasant Hill, Mo.
August 12	Peterson Cartridge Challenge	Kennerdell, Pa.
August 19	Magnolia Meltdown	Carthage, Miss.
August 26	Impact Foundation PRC	Wetumka, Okla.
September 2	Alpha Munitions Nut Crusher	Price, Utah
September 2	W.A.R. Rifles Shootout	Tremont, Pa.
September 9	2023 Federal Gold Medal Match	Carbon Hill, Ala.
September 23	Road to Redemption	Warrenton, N.C.
September 23	CA Sharpshooter Showdown	San Luis Obispo, Calif.
September 30	Bushnell Tactical Gap Grind Pro Am	Finger, Tenn.

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FRANCIS COLON Open Div.
KAHL HARMON Open Div.
187.000/98.942



THS STEEL CHALLENGE

Fort Pierre, S.D.
July 15, 2023

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172.000/100.000
2nd Place
JEREMY WILCZEK Open Div.
168.000/97.674
3rd Place (tie)
NPSHOOTING Open Div.
JOSH EGYED Open Div.
165.000/95.930



TWISTED BARREL SCORCHERS

Little Rock, Ark.
July 15, 2023

1st Place
JOHN INDELLICATI Open Div.
175.000/100.000
2nd Place (tie)
BRANDON HEMBREE Open Div.
DEREK WEBSTER Production Div.
174.000/99.429 (Hembree)/100 (Webster)



SHEEPDOG SHOWDOWN

Conway Springs, Kan.
July 22, 2023

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2nd Place
DEREK WEBSTER Production Div.
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3rd Place
KEN SANOSKI Open Div.
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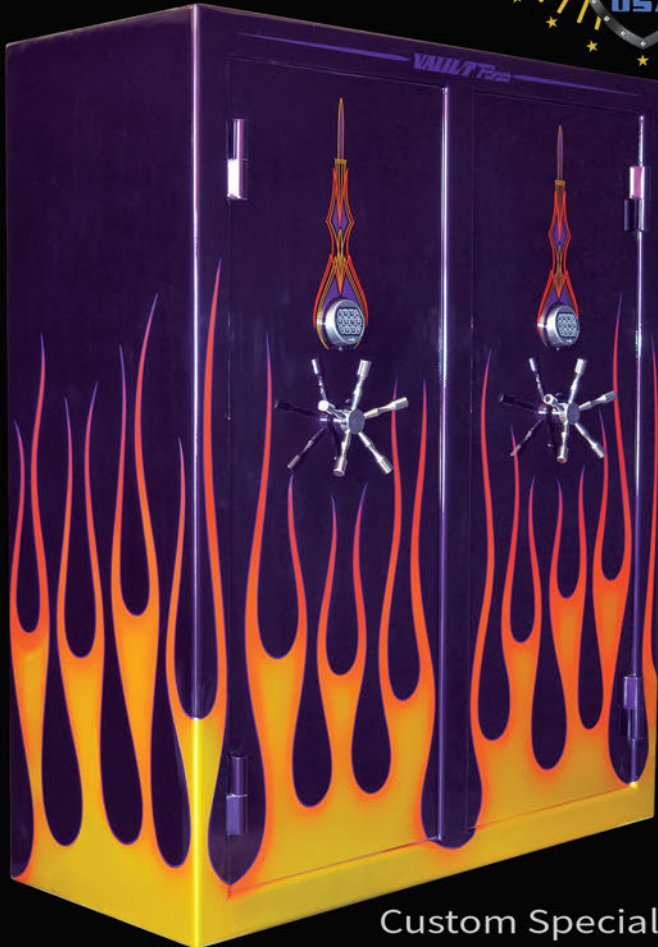
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Along with two days at Hartman Arena in Wichita, Kansas, dedicated to checking out the latest and greatest in firearms and accessories, TriggrCon heads to the range on its third and final day to focus on pistols, suppressors and long-range rifles.

TRIGGRCON COMING SOON TO WICHITA

Three-day September firearms event features new products, innovations, full range day; open to public.

PHOTOS BY TRIGGRCON

TriggrCon is bringing its three-day firearms event to the Midwest for 2023. This year the venues have changed and are anchored around the thriving metro area of Wichita, Kansas. Not only does this allow more room for the show, which has a packed lineup, but it also offers endless dining, entertainment and lodging options for attendees.

TriggrCon is more than a gun show – it aligns the best and newest products with users, law enforcement, business to business, and media networking. This year's show format is also new, with two days at Hartman Arena, then moving to the range at Severance Training Center on day three. Here, there will be pistol ranges,

a dedicated suppressor area, and a long-range rifle range.

The lineup this year is the strongest in the show's history since its beginnings in the Pacific Northwest in 2017. Premier firearms brands like Staccato, Sig Sauer, CZ, Daniel Defense, Kimber, Nighthawk Custom, Walther and many more will be showcasing their firearms and live fire at range day. The show also will have part and accessory manufacturers debuting new products from great brands such as Stern Defense, Continuous Precision, Nomad Defense Co., TriggerTech, Timney and others. Magpul will be hosting a premier lounge open to all attendees to check out their product line, grab a beverage and relax at the show. Media and creators will also be on-site checking out the newest gear and meeting their fans and viewers.

TriggrCon's history is rich in new products and innovation. TriggrCon is actually more than a catchy name,

TriggrCon Details

- September 22-24, 2023
- Wichita, Kansas
- Days 1-2: Exhibitor Show at Hartman Arena
- Day 3: Range Day at Severance Training Center
- Scan this QR code for more info:





TriggrCon, with its many displays and booths, is open to the public. A strong draw for both exhibitors and attendees is the Golden Triggr Award, presented to the most innovative products in the firearms industry.

but also an acronym standing for Tactical Research Guns and Gear Review Convention. One of the core elements of the show is the Golden Triggr Award, presented to the most innovative products the industry has to offer. Many companies have waited to release new products until TriggrCon for this very reason.

The event is open to the public and offers a professional environment for the firearms community to unite and connect. If you like firearms, the latest technology and access to industry stakeholders, this is an event you won't want to miss. Friday night also features a VIP benefit party for The Resilient Warrior, a nonprofit organization supporting veterans and first responders with housing, care and quality-of-life improvement. The Golden Triggr Awards are also presented at this event. With good food, music, spirits and people, the VIP party is always a great time. ★

Editor's note: For info, tickets, schedule and locations, go to triggrcon.com.

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WWW.TRIGGRCON.COM

THE



You can shoot a real Hawken – for *free* – at the 2023 Hawken Classic in Missouri. Visitors are invited to try shooting a traditional muzzleloading rifle, including this rare original 1840s vintage Hawken rifle generously provided by Greg Roberts of the Hawken Shop.

HAWKEN CLASSIC

A historic celebration of St. Louis rifles and the opening of the Western frontier.

STORY BY FRANK JARDIM • PHOTOS BY GEMMER MUZZLELOADING GUN CLUB



Percussion J&S Hawken rifle made in 1836 for George W. Atchison, hero of the Blackhawk War and later steamboat pilot and shipping magnate. It is the most documented and highly embellished Hawken rifle known. (ROCK ISLAND AUCTION COMPANY)

This August 25-27, from Friday to Sunday, make a trip to Missouri to attend the 2023 Hawken Classic. It's the second in a series of four outstanding annual programs where over 100 historic reenactors, craftsmen, sutlers, and some of the leading and most knowledgeable collectors of Hawken and other St. Louis firearms made from the 1820s through the 1850s will gather to celebrate the 200th anniversary of America's first nationally famous high-end sporting arms brand created by brothers Jacob and Samuel Hawken. The event, held at the Historic Daniel Boone Home in Defiance, Missouri, will allow visitors to learn about the expansion of the American West and the contributions made by Hawken rifles, as well as those made by their lesser known competitors.

There are two really amazing things going on at this three-day event. The first is a one-of-a-kind graduate school level opportunity to learn about Hawken and other St. Louis gunmakers through unprecedented access to experts in the field who have collectively spent over 100 years researching and millions of dollars building private collections that include many of the most important and outstanding original firearms extant. These antique arms are rarely, if ever, seen by the general public. Throughout the event, an exhibition of approximately 75 rifles, shotguns and pistols will be on display at the Sappington House, located on the west side of the Boone Home site, a short walk from the Boone house itself. The collection was curated by four advanced collectors who will be present to answer visitor questions.

For those with a serious interest in American firearms history, and

the guns of the Hawken brothers and their St. Louis contemporaries like H.E. Dimick and J.P. Gemmer, think of this as akin to walking in on some esteemed university professors during their office hours and having an in-depth discussion without having enrolled in the school or paying the average rate of \$1,000 per credit hour that graduate school classes cost. Those kinds of introductions are hard to get in the real world, just like an up-close look at these rare guns.

THE SECOND ASPECT of the Hawken Classic is a great public/living history program for kids and adults alike. Families, students, history buffs and the merely history curious can experience the sights and sounds of a frontier village populated by tradesmen and camping mountain men during rendezvous when they gathered to sell their furs, resupply for the next venture and socialize. Visitors can try their

hand at learning some of the skill sets that allowed the intrepid explorers, hunters, prospectors and fighting men of a fledgling nation to survive in, and ultimately thrive in, the wild frontier west of St. Louis, Missouri.

The adventurous independence of spirit that characterized so many of the restless, freedom-loving people of early America wasn't cowed by fears of starvation and hardship, crossing vast distances and uncharted areas, deadly heat or cold, hostile Indians, lethal predators or seemingly impassable terrain. Rugged and often rough-hewn, they relied on themselves to meet every challenge, every day. Their legacy is still present in every American who will not be deterred from the pursuit of their dreams, bravely does what needs to be done, and doesn't tolerate anyone telling them what to think.

Though their motivations and goals varied in the 40 years that



Historic reenactors will bring their expertise to the event at the Boone Home at Lindenwood Park in Defiance, Missouri, turning the 19th century village site into an educational rendezvous-like experience for visitors to learn about many aspects of Western exploration from the early fur trade years of the 1820s through the 1850s.



The exhibition of original arms is one of the largest ever assembled for public display, offering an unprecedented opportunity for visitors to study them up close and get their questions answered by collectors who are experts in the field.

they trekked the plains and Rocky Mountains between the Mississippi River and the Pacific coastline, they were then, and are still today, called *mountain men*. The likes of Jim Bridger, Kit Carson, Seth Kinman, Jedediah Smith, William Sublette, Hugh Glass, Jim Beckwourth, and John “Liver-Eating” Johnson (the real-life inspiration for the fictional Jeremiah Johnson) were well known in their day. Most of their fellow frontiersmen are forgotten, but their combined efforts paved the way for White settlement and the fulfillment of what Americans of the era saw as their Manifest Destiny to control the continent from ocean to ocean.

There will be ongoing demonstrations around the site by men and women in authentic period attire. Visitors are encouraged to explore the rendezvous encampment and engage the mountain men with their questions. Some may look scary, but they are there to share their love of the time period with visitors and delight in presenting “living history.”

The Early Arkansas Reenactors Association will exhibit their full-scale replica keel boat. This type of vessel



Of course there will be genuine antique Hawken rifles to see up close, along with many other St. Louis-made guns of the period.

was used extensively to move men and goods in and out of the frontier along rivers in the mid-1800s. Visitors can board the craft for a crew’s eye view of the compact boat and learn about the skills needed to operate and navigate it along the river highways of the West.

The Rendezvous Competition is an event within the event that I consider a must-see for visitors. Reenactors will stage the pageantry and braggadocio of an actual mountain man shooting, knife- and tomahawk-throwing, and fire-starting contest, minus the drunkenness and obscenity for the sake of a family audience.

Craftsmen, many of them recognized as artists in their specialties, will be demonstrating how to weave a basket, forge a Bowie knife in the manner of a frontier blacksmith, work wood with hand tools, start fires with only those

materials gathered from the ground, and more, now nearly forgotten, skills that were common knowledge in the 1800s. Some of these activities are participatory, like fire-starting, traditional archery (the modern compound bow wasn’t invented until the 1960s), and shooting black powder muzzleloading rifles.

AS THE HAWKEN Classic is sponsored by the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association with the goal of educating the public about the role of the iconic Hawken rifle in America’s history, the NMLRA will set up a free shooting range where visitors can try firing traditional black powder muzzleloading guns, including a rare original 1840s vintage Hawken rifle generously provided by Greg Roberts of the Hawken Shop.

Visitors who have their own

traditional-style replica percussion or flintlock muzzleloading long guns and pistols, Hawken or otherwise, are encouraged to bring them to demonstrate their offhand shooting skill (or lack thereof) on the range's 25-, 50- and 75-yard hanging steel targets. Bring powder, ball/shot, patches and priming for your own guns and remember to get them tagged at the gate when you enter. There will be an NMLRA-certified range officer present to oversee range safety. Shooters will have four firing lines spaced out about 25 yards apart. Each shooter can fire once at each of the three targets in their line for fun and the challenge. Depending on how busy the shooting range is, more shots for each shooter may be allowed. A range waiver must be read and signed by everyone who wants to shoot. No modern guns will be allowed on the range.

In addition to the shooting and living history program, several one-hour-long educational seminars will be held each day in the pavilion. The lectures will be conducted by experts whose breadth of study in their subjects greatly exceeds anything one could expect to find in a typical university setting. Unlike college classes, these fun, factual and often deep-diving seminars are also completely free, limited only by available seating. Seminars conclude with ample time for questions from the audience and discussion. Some seminars are repeated on multiple days.

Among other presentations, Bob Woodfill will speak on "The Flintlock Hawken"; Wilson Windham (Masonic Mountain Men) will present "The Mountain Men Era and the Hawken"; Greg Roberts and Art Ressel will deliver a lecture on "The History of the Hawken Rifle"; and Benjamin Gall will lecture on "Supplying the American Fur Company: The Hawken Brothers in St. Louis". Pablo Baum will deliver three exciting lectures of frontier adventure and mayhem: "The Incident at Skull Lick Creek", "Treachery on the Oregon Trail: The Donner Party", and "Terror on the Santa Fe Trail". Dick Walsh will present "Brain Tanning: An Easy Guide", and Bob Browner, an accomplished traditional gunsmith who has built many Hawken's, will lecture on "Building



Roberts lectures on the history of the Hawken rifle. A dozen free seminars will be held over three days by recognized experts on this and other subjects like the mountain man era, the fur trade, brain tanning, etc.



You can get what you need to make your own Hawken too. Last year Rice Barrels, one of the most respected makers of top-quality barrels for traditional muzzleloaders, attended the event.



There will be many vendors of 1820s-1850s period replica products including clothing if you want to equip yourself from head to toe like a mountain man.



The Hawken Shop will set up a combination historic display and retail store in the village where you can inspect, and place an order for, a contemporary Hawken rifle.



Visitors are free to explore the period rendezvous encampment to see how the mountain men lived.

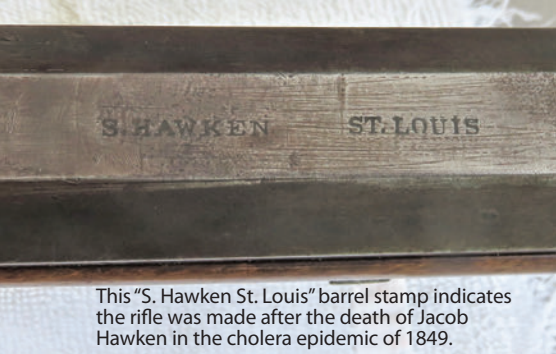


Visitors are encouraged to bring their own traditional muzzleloader, along with caps, balls and powder, to shoot for fun on the free steel target range.

the Hawken Rifle". Finally, Jack Mitch, Gerry Messmer and Scott Amish Staggs will present "William Ashley's Return From His First Rendezvous and The Super Hawken". Visit gemmermuzzleloadingclub.com for the latest schedule of seminars and events.

THE 2023 HAWKEN Classic will be held at the Historic Daniel Boone Home at Lindenwood Park, which is about 35 miles west of downtown St. Louis in Defiance, Missouri. The site is a composite early 19th century pioneer village that includes over a dozen structures original to the site, as well as historic buildings relocated there from other parts of the state. The main focus of the village is the elegant two-story stone house situated on high ground at the southeastern edge of the settlement. The largely Georgian-style house was built by Nathan Boone, Daniel Boone's youngest son, as a residence at the start of the 1800s. He lived there until 1837 when he moved his family farther south. The house is closely associated with Daniel Boone because in 1804, shortly after it was completed, Daniel and his wife Rebecca moved in with Nathan and his family and spent most of their time there through 1813 and then again from 1816 to 1820 when the great frontiersman died on the premises. Tours of the house are offered by the park for a fee (\$8 adults and \$5 children), but only the first floor and lower level are wheelchair accessible. Fortunately, the rest of the Hawken Classic activities are handicapped friendly, and there will be golf carts onsite to assist those with mobility limitations.

The event and its activities, excluding tours of the Boone Home and food, are free. Parking is free too. If you aren't bringing your own food and drinks to picnic, you can buy them onsite from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. Cheeseburgers top the menu at \$6, but you can get a hotdog for \$2. If you have any folding money, there'll be reproductions of all manner of early 1800s merchandise, short of complete rifles, for sale at the event from some of the best vendors



This "S. Hawken St. Louis" barrel stamp indicates the rifle was made after the death of Jacob Hawken in the cholera epidemic of 1849.

THE HAWKEN CLASSIC ST. LOUIS ANTIQUE ARMS EXHIBIT AT SAPPINGTON HOUSE

By the geographic virtue of its location at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, St. Louis became the gateway to the West. Many commercial and exploratory ventures were launched into the wilderness there. Most returned. Gradually, as the decades passed, the frontier west of the Mississippi was explored to exploit its wealth of resources in furs and gold, and trails were opened up to effect White settlement. Whether actually settling or just passing through, the frontier was a dangerous place for Whites to be. It was exactly the kind of place where you really needed solid, reliable guns. Native Indian tribes remained a threat until the United States Army concluded the Indian Wars at the end of the 19th century.

As a result, from the 1820s through the 1850s, St. Louis, Missouri, was a great place to be a gunmaker. It was there that the Hawken brothers made a name for themselves producing



St. Louis shotguns made by Schilling, Meier, Albright, Scott and Gemmer.

excellent arms. Hawken became synonymous with quality, durability and accuracy, and they were America's first nationally famous, top-tier sporting arms brand. They proudly marked their guns with their name in various ways and places to indicate their pedigree.

Contrary to myth, Hawken rifles

weren't ubiquitous on the frontier. They were expensive and just like today, not everyone can own a Cadillac. In their period of greatest production, they made only about 200 rifles a year. The majority were sold into the local market around St. Louis rather than to mountain men. This created an opportunity for other

Some of the many original Hawken and Hawken-style rifles from private collections that will be on display for close inspection at the Sappington House.



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The display will include standard 1820s to 1850s St. Louis-made hunting arms, as well as some of the rarest and fanciest in existence. These were made by J.P. Gemmer, a former employee of Sam Hawken turned successor. An excellent engineer, his guns benefited from advances in manufacturing technology that allowed consistently superior products. Note the Civil War surplus Spencer carbines he converted to fine sporting rifles.



In ascending order: big caliber S. Hawken plains rifle, small caliber Hawken squirrel rifle, Gemmer sporting rifle, St. Louis-made air rifle, modern copy of a pre-1849 J&S Hawken plains rifle made by R.V. Browner.



H.E. Dimick was a later competitor of Hawken who also made guns of exceptionally high quality. Many important specimens will be on display.

gunmakers to capture a slice of the market.

Hawken's quality was matched by some of their competitors. Johann P. Gemmer and Horace E. Dimick even exceeded Hawken, thanks to advances in manufacturing technology that allowed more consistently superior products to be made more efficiently. (Hawken rifles were, after all, handmade one at a time and each one was slightly different.) Gemmer, a former employee of Sam Hawken turned successor, was also an excellent and imaginative engineer. One of his niche specialties was converting Civil War surplus Spencer carbines into fine sporting rifles. Dimick was a later competitor to Hawken and couldn't catch up to, much less overtake, the Hawken rifle's established reputation in the marketplace.

The Sappington House exhibit includes many important guns from Hawken, Dimick, Gemmer and other St. Louis makers, as well as some plebeian but historically significant Northwest trade guns made specifically for bartering with the Indians. Available at bargain prices, they were often used by White settlers on a tight budget.

Upwards of \$1 million worth of antique arms, around 80 pieces, will be exhibited in three first-floor rooms of the Sappington House. In today's auction market, the sale prices of the more common, good original condition, solid Hawken plains rifles usually start at \$50,000.

The Sappington House is a historic structure that was moved from its original location in St. Louis County to the Boone Home park. The Sappington family was prominent in the development of St. Louis alongside the Chouteaus, Sublettes and other preeminent families of that time. The Sappington and Hawken families were actually united by marriage, so it's possible that this was not the first time that Hawken rifles have been present in the house.



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The home of Nathan Boone, Daniel's son, was where the great frontiersman spent the last years of his life.



Period blacksmithing demonstrations are part of the weekend's educational program.



Participants in the event will don authentic clothing and gear. Visitors are welcome to do the same and jump into the historic time warp of the event.



Missouri State Representative Mazzie Boyd and historic artist Kyle Carroll holding a Hawken made by Bob Browner. She will be at the event Saturday to shoot the Browner Hawken and meet with attendees.



There's lots for kids and grownups to see and do. Here, a reenactor instructs youngsters how to start a fire old-school style.

in the country.

The Hawken Shop will set up a combination historic display and retail store in the village where you can inspect, and order, a contemporary Hawken rifle for yourself. If you are the DIY type, you'll find what you need to make your own Hawken from the many parts vendors in attendance. In the extensive outdoor sutler area on the central field, you'll find A Second Chance at History, Callahan Bag Molds, The Marquee Trading Company, Trail Creek Trade Company, Powder Horns and More, Mz T's Fiberworks, and many more companies offering all the 1820s to 1850s period accoutrements and clothing you need to equip yourself from head to toe like a mountain man from two centuries ago.

For as little as \$1, attendees can buy a raffle ticket for a chance to win one of the many 19th century rendezvous-worthy themed prizes, including a Head Lok throwing tomahawk from the Hawken Shop, handmade powder horn and shooting bag sets by Brad Dickinson and Mark Hasty, a bullet mold from Callahan Bag Molds, original art, and other quality prizes donated to support the event. You need not be present to win at the Saturday drawing, and tickets can be purchased online or onsite at the information tent.

In the realm of fine art, noteworthy is the planned attendance of the well known painter David Wright, recognized for the historic accuracy and detail of his early American themed work. He created *Taking the Long Shot* to promote the Hawken Classic and will sign prints and posters sold at the event, with proceeds going to support the NMLRA.

Missouri State legislator Mazzie Boyd, a pro-gun advocate, will be at the Hawken Classic on Saturday to meet her fellow Missourians and shoot a replica Hawken made by gunsmith Bob Browner. When historic artist Kyle Carroll proposed the idea of making the Hawken rifle the official Missouri State Firearm to Representative Boyd, she became the driving force behind it and got that legislation passed in the state house.

Take it from me, the 2023 Hawken Classic is too good to miss! ★

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2025

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Taking the Long Shot, by painter David Wright, is available for sale as a commemorative poster or a print. The artist will be there to sign them.

2023 HAWKEN CLASSIC: WHEN & WHERE

Dates:

August 25-27, 2023

Location:

The Historic Daniel Boone Home
St. Charles County, 1868 Highway F
Defiance, Missouri 63341

Times:

Friday, August 25 – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturday, August 26 – 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday, August 27 – 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Other than service dogs, no animals are permitted on the event site.

Lodging options:

Nearby hotels include the Best Western in Washington, Missouri, and the Holiday Inn Express and Sleep Inn and Suites in O'Fallon, Missouri. Remember, even hotels in St. Louis are less than an hour away by car. Beyond the Trail RV Park is located in Defiance itself, only 10 minutes from the event. Cabin and tent camping at nearby Klondike Park offers a more rustic and inexpensive option, but reservations are advised.

Website:

gemmermuzzleloadingclub.com/hawken-classic

Facebook page: facebook.com/hawkenclassic

Email: hawkenclassic@nmlra.org

Future event dates:

September 27-29, 2024

September 26-28, 2025

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In velvet now and not worried about a nearby person taking its picture, this buck will play hard to get during fall's hunting seasons, making it all the more important for muzzleloaders to ensure their rifle and powder are ready to make the shot.

LITTLE SECRETS FOR BLACK POWDER HUNTING

These tips won't make you a better hunter, but will help ensure that your rifle goes boom when it counts.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MIKE NESBITT

Some of these things might have been said before, but if so, they're simply worth saying again. These little secrets about black powder hunting mainly involve loading and keeping your rifle or smoothbore in the best condition to fire.



Because, as too many seem to find out, if the shot doesn't go off, it doesn't get you any meat or trophies.

Most of the little mistakes we make with our muzzleloaders result in misfires, or rifles that remain terribly quiet when we wish they would speak with roaring authority. And because we are talking about hunting, the first try is usually the best try – that all-important

first shot. If that shot fails, it is often the very same as a missed shot and our chance for taking game is usually gone, given how long reloading takes.

OIL IN THE barrel, such as in the case of a new rifle, can easily lead to misfires. It is far better to have a very clean barrel. Oil can soak into the powder to the point that it can't be ignited. Grease



Author Mike Nesbitt carries his priming for a flintlock under his jacket.

in a barrel can be worse because it has the tendency to block the flash channels, either in a patent breech or with a drum and nipple on percussion rifles, as well as in the flash-hole of a flintlock, which renders those rifles unshootable. In order to be certain that the rifle will fire when we want it to, clean the barrel as thoroughly as possible, from all entries, both the muzzle and the breech.

Cleaning or wiping from the breech end can involve making sure the flintlock's flash-hole is clear with a pipe cleaner. Most drum and nipple percussions have a clean-out screw that can be removed, so the pipe cleaner can be used on those too. For patent breeches, things are not quite as easy, but a thorough flushing with hot water will most often do the trick. Then let the breech dry completely before

loading for the hunt.

While loading the rifle for hunting, I usually wipe the bore dry, pour in the powder and then lubricate the bore again with the greased patch that is wrapped around the ball. The act of loading will swab the bore with patch lube, but it is certainly best to have the barrel clean to begin with.

The real reason for wanting a clean barrel is so the flash channel on a percussion rifle, or the flash-hole on a flintlock, is also clean. Anything plugging those holes will generally result in a misfire. And misfires often translate into empty game bags, which contributes highly to forgettable hunts.

ANOTHER HABIT OF mine is to remove the nipple after loading a percussion rifle to visually check for powder in the breech, or in the drum under the

nipple, for the cap to ignite. If powder is not visible in the flash channel just below where the nipple will rest, there is a big question about whether the rifle will fire or not. The flash from the nipple cannot be trusted to go anywhere but in a straight line in either a patent breech or with a drum and nipple. When powder is not visible, I add just a touch of FFFFg from a flintlock pan primer and then reinstall the nipple. That is one way to greatly increase the potential for good ignition.

After carrying the percussion rifle hunting for a day, and then leaving it loaded but unprimed overnight, I remove the nipple again the next morning to repeat that last step. Powder that was compressed when the rifle was loaded has a way of rearranging itself slightly so the

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This Green River Rifle Works "S. Hawken" was Nesbitt's first .54.

powder charge will no longer be as tight as it was just after loading. This means that the powder that was under the nipple might have moved farther forward, due to some slight shifting of the irregularly shaped grains, and more priming powder needs to be added under the nipple.

Be sure you don't add too much powder under the nipple. That powder must not be compressed or crushed by the nipple when the nipple is screwed back into the breech or drum of the gun. Powder that is compressed by the nipple seems to form a glaze on its surface and then it becomes very hard

to ignite. The powder under the nipple, whether it is priming powder or just a small portion of the main powder charge, must remain loose. At the same time, that powder must simply be there in order to get good ignition.

Some of you may think that removing the nipple to check for powder is being just a little too careful. One of my old partners felt that way; he never liked to take that added precaution. In fact, he'd ask me, "Why do you take the time to do that?" when he'd see me making those checks. I'd usually reply, "So my rifle will go off!" or something like that, without ever

expecting to have an opportunity to prove it.

But that opportunity later came on a deer hunt, while he was using one of my percussion rifles. We'd hunted for a day without seeing anything but tracks and he watched me check under the nipple again the next morning. He did not bother checking the .54-caliber rifle he was using. That afternoon he was watching an area when a fine doe stepped out just in front of him. A doe was just what he wanted and it was an easy shot. He was sitting down, hammer back and trigger set, and the deer was just a few yards away.

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Everything was perfect except that the rifle didn't fire. The cap fired loud and hard, more than enough to spook the doe, and he never got another chance with that deer.

WHEN USING FLINTLOCK rifles, checking the priming powder is even easier and, again, I check for the powder occasionally, at least every morning, while hunting with a flintlock or smoothbore. The powder in the barrel can shift slightly and thus can fall away from the flash-hole on the inside. Another possibility is for powder to fall out of the flash-hole. Either way means there may not be powder immediately inside the flash-hole, and having powder available for the flash from the pan is necessary for good, fast, consistent and reliable ignition.

If there is no powder behind the flash-hole inside the barrel, I simply add a little more to the pan and push some of the FFFFg through the hole

until the powder in the barrel is tight and can be felt with a flash-hole pick. Having powder packed in the barrel, on the other side of the vent and yet not *in* the vent, always makes for the best ignition with flintlocks. When carrying a flintlock on a hunt, we naturally take more care in the loading and priming of our guns, but we should be that careful all of the time.

Another thing to do while hunting is to load the rifles with a non-evaporating patch lube. We never really know how long the rifle will remain loaded when we start out on a hunt and a spit patch can dry out rather quickly. Spit on a patch is good, but only if you're going to shoot that load right away, before the dampness of the patch can dry out. There are several greases available and they are all good; just be sure to use a lube that will not dry or evaporate, regardless of weather conditions. I prefer the pre-cut lubricated patches that are sold by

Bridgers Best, from The Gun Works, because those patches make life for a muzzleloading shooter a little simpler and they are very good.

One more thing about flintlocks, and this is in the primary interest of safety. In short, don't ever check the spark of the lock while the gun is loaded, even while the priming pan is empty. A spark is all that is needed to ignite the powder inside the barrel and if one of the sparks from the frizzen bounces around in the pan enough to go into the flash-hole, the gun more than likely will discharge. In other words, sparking the lock on a loaded gun will fire the gun, although it might not happen with the first try.

These little secrets I've just shared with you won't make you a better hunter. A good hunter knows how and where to find game. But after you find your quarry, these tips might really help ensure that your muzzleloader will fire when it is needed. ★

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LOADING UP FOR AN AFRICAN SAFARI

From the Tiny Ten and plains game to big cats and even bigger critters, these bullets will get the job done.

STORY BY PHIL MASSARO • PHOTOS BY MASSARO MEDIA GROUP

So you've booked an African safari, and now you've got to outfit yourself for the game animals you intend

to hunt. Nowhere on Earth will you find a greater number of huntable species, nor a more diverse selection. While there are a few



cartridges that are accepted as truly universal – think .30-06 Springfield and .300 Winchester Magnum for the lighter stuff, and the .375 Holland & Holland Magnum and .416 Rigby for the heavyweights – bullet choice is absolutely paramount. After all, it is only the bullet that ever touches the game animal.

Let's take a look at the various situations across the continent, and

which bullets have proved to be Africa-worthy.

PLAINS GAME

A plains game hunt is usually the “gateway drug” that makes addicts of those of us who fall hard for Africa, and this group of animals probably represents the most diverse. You might be stalking a greater kudu – who doesn't want a kudu? – while



Federal's Trophy Bonded Tip makes an excellent choice for any and all plains game species, from the Tiny Ten to the eland and roan. (FEDERAL PREMIUM)

the impala of your lifetime grazes unawares across the *vlei*. Or while looking at a decent springbok, a massive eland bull might happen by to offer a shot opportunity. From steenbok and duiker up through sable and eland, you'll be asking a whole bunch from one particular bullet. Many of these species are very similar in size and stature to a whitetail deer, while others are as big as elk and moose, so



Swift A-Frames recovered from a variety of African game, including ostrich, eland and Cape buffalo. Note the classic "rivet" behind the partition.

my mindset is to carry a cartridge/bullet combination suitable for the largest species on my checklist, and not worry about the overkill on the smaller species.

I like a premium bullet for plains game, and depending on the area I'm hunting and the correlative shot distances, there are a number of projectiles that have worked very well for me. The Nosler Partition is,

was, and always shall be a great do-all choice, as it gives good expansion at the front part of the bullet, and the intact rear core guarantees deep penetration. Though it may not have the best ballistic coefficient on the market, it works very well inside of 250 yards, and that's where the vast majority of African game is taken. You can say the same for the Swift A-Frame, though I find that bullet to

For both dangerous game and plains game, a Swift A-Frame of appropriate weight and caliber will get the job done.





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The Barnes LRX features a copper-alloy construction in a sleek design best for longer ranges. Author Phil Massaro used these to good effect on Mozambican reedbuck.

The .318 Westley Richards loaded with 250-grain Woodleigh Weldcore bonded-core bullets, and a recovered example from a longitudinal shot on a big kudu bull.



Massaro took this Zimbabwean elephant bull with two shots from a .404 Jeffery using 400-grain Woodleigh Hydrostatically Stabilized Solids.

be a bit more “meat-resistant,” in that the bigger the slab of meat you launch it at, the more expansion you get. It’s a tough cookie, for sure.

Monometals also make a good choice, and you might be able to get away with a bit less bullet weight and still get the same terminal performance. Choices like the Barnes TSX, TTSX and LRX, the Hornady CX, and South Africa’s Peregrine PlainsMaster bullet all kill quickly and will penetrate tough shoulder bones. The vital organs of most African species lie more forward than do the vitals of North American species, and broadside shots regularly require shooting on the shoulder joint. Copper monometals are great at holding together when thick hides and tough bones are hit.

There are also the bonded-core choices – usually equipped with a polymer tip – which have the ability to handle long-range shots in windy conditions, will open at lower velocities (longer distances) and yet are tough enough to hold together on close shots at bigger species. Federal’s Trophy Bonded Tip and the newer Terminal Ascent, Nosler’s AccuBond and AccuBond Long Range, Swift’s Scirocco II, and Norma’s Bondstrike all have very respectable BC values and are wonderfully tough. I’ve used the Trophy Bonded Tip to great effect on

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But we quickly discovered that the rifle mount would only pan and tilt, which is a problem in the field because when you pan the rifle, your crosshairs don't stay level. We used the tripod off and on for a year, hunting prairie dogs, deer and coyotes with much frustration. Well-made product that just fell short on the execution.



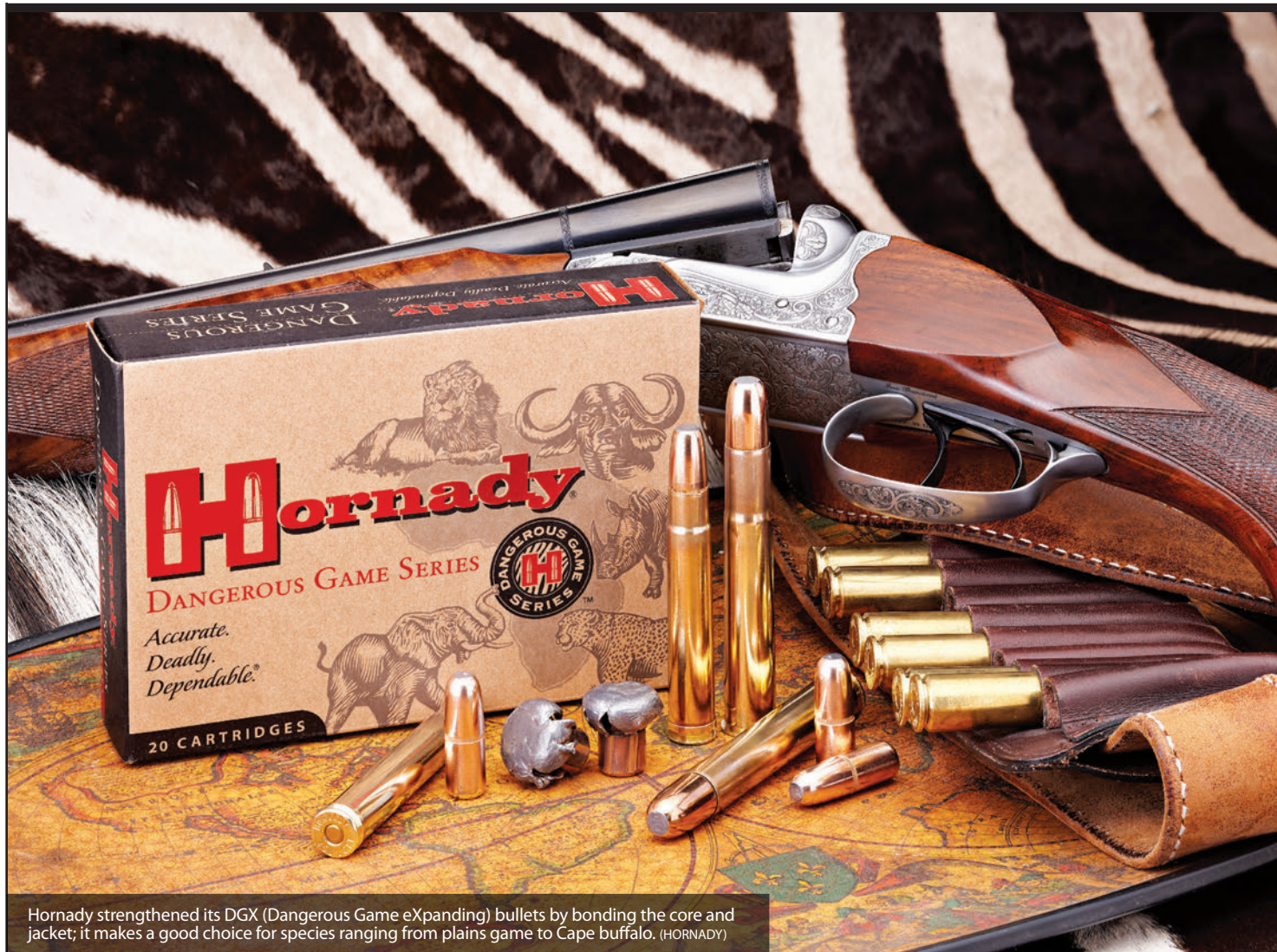
What the DeathGrip needed was a ball mount adapter. A couple years ago, we bought a ball mount and made a prototype adapter to convert the tripod. Complete game-changer! We field-tested the heck out of this thing ever since and can honestly report that we are 100-percent satisfied with the end result. Our DeathGrip Adapter pans and tilts much smoother than the OEM parts and it's a simple matter to level the reticle once you're on target.

Another plus of our DGA kit is that the DeathGrip clamp unit can be quickly removed from the ball mount Arca slot, allowing you to use the included Arca plate to mount additional field items like a spotting scope, rangefinder, chronograph or digital camera. Or if your rifle is equipped with an Arca rail, you can slide the rifle directly into the Arca slot on the ball mount, which is our preferred mounting method.

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Hornady strengthened its DGX (Dangerous Game eXpanding) bullets by bonding the core and jacket; it makes a good choice for species ranging from plains game to Cape buffalo. (HORNADY)

species as small as springbok and as large as eland, and that bullet just might be my favorite of this last group. It will offer all the penetration you could ask for, even on tough animals like zebra, wildebeest and eland. If you can still find it, Woodleigh's Weldcore bonded-core softpoint is an excellent option for medium-range plains game hunting.

If you are a fan of traditional cup-and-core bullet designs, they can be used on African game, but I'd recommend you stay on the heavy side of the bullet weight spectrum, and that you choose a projectile with a thick jacket. I like the Sierra GameKing and ProHunter, Hornady InterLock, and Speer Grand Slam in calibers from 6.5mm up through the .30s; you just want to avoid the frangible designs.

For the tiniest antelope species – commonly referred to as the Tiny Ten – including the steenbok, duiker, grysbok, oribi and klipspringer, many hunters will use a nonexpanding “solid” bullet to do the least amount of damage to the pelt. Even premium softpoints can make a considerable mess, and a solid will whistle through cleanly, especially when carrying a big bore rifle hunting plains game in a dangerous game block.

BIG CATS

Lion and leopard may not be bigger than the plains game species, but might require a bit more thought. A male lion can approach the 500-pound mark, and makes a formidable foe. Yet most professional hunters, or PHs,

will recommend a traditional softpoint bullet – though of suitable caliber and sectional density. The Nosler Partition, Woodleigh Weldcore and Hornady InterLock are all fine choices; just keep the sectional density value as close to .300 as possible. Lions are strong and can be awe-inspiring, but they aren't actually very tough. Most PHs will smile when they see a bullet of 250 grains or more, and they'll smile even more when you put that bullet where it belongs.

A leopard over bait might be the easiest shot in Africa, as you'll be on a rest, (hopefully) it'll be at considerably less than 100 yards, and your *chui* will pose for you. A big tom leopard will tip the scales at 150 pounds, and a bullet suitable for a big whitetail buck will also be a good choice for Mr. Spots.

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I tend to prefer a heavy-for-caliber choice, to keep the pelt as presentable as possible, but I have no problem with the common deer bullets, from the Winchester Ballistic SilverTip to the Hornady ELD-X, Nosler AccuBond and even the Remington Core-Lokt. If you're a handloader, the Sierra Tipped GameKing, Speer Grand Slam or any of the excellent boutique bullets – like

the Badlands Precision Super Bulldozer or the Hawk Bullets softpoint – will certainly suffice. On either cat, shot placement is paramount.

AFRICAN HEAVYWEIGHTS

This is the category where bullet choice has changed the most, and if you compare literature regarding hunting the Cape buffalo,



The Woodleigh Hydrostatically Stabilized Solid, loaded in Federal Premium Safari ammo. Note the blue plastic cap to facilitate ease of feeding; it breaks off upon impact with the animal.

North Fork's cup point solid is perfect for thick-skinned game; the small cup at the nose offers just a bit of expansion, but the bullet is designed for thorough penetration.



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Swift's Scirocco II (left) is a polymer-tipped spitzer boattail with a thick jacket chemically bonded to the lead core. It makes a great choice for a plains game safari. Federal's Trophy Bonded Bear Claw (middle), shown here in the universal .375 Holland & Holland Magnum, has a short lead core chemically bonded to the copper jacket/base. It is a great choice for any situation where a softpoint is applicable. And the .280 Ackley Improved (right) is a good selection for a light rifle on safari, and with the strong Terminal Ascent bullet, it is made even better.

hippopotamus, rhinoceros and elephant from the 1980s to modern stuff, you'll see why. Back in the day, the .375 Holland & Holland Magnum and the .458 Winchester Magnum were about all that was available; the former might be called a bit light, and

the latter had its own issues since conception. So the general consensus was "solids on buffalo," but that has changed. Modern premium softpoints are the recommended first shot on Cape buffalo, with older PHs still liking solids for backup. I've shot a few

buffalo, and PHs aged 50 and under pretty much concur that premium softpoints are the way to go to avoid overpenetration, especially when taking a bull from a herd.

Among my favorite buffalo softpoints are the Swift A-Frame

Massaro used his Heym Model 89B double rifle in .470 Nitro Express, loaded with 500-grain Peregrine BushMaster softpoints and Federal Trophy Bonded Sledgehammer solids, to take this Cape buffalo bull in Zimbabwe.





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Some Peregrine BushMaster bullets from the author's .470 Nitro Express, used to take some Cape buffalo bulls in Zimbabwe; all were recovered against the offside hide, having penetrated the entire animal.

(possibly the best choice), the Barnes TSX, the Woodleigh Weldcore, the Peregrine BushMaster and the Federal Trophy Bonded Bear Claw. If you appreciate the penetration of the solids but want a bit of expansion, there are the Woodleigh Hydrostatically Stabilized Solid (an unprecedented design) and the North Fork Cup Point Solid. In a conventional solid, the Barnes Banded Solid, the Federal Trophy Bonded Sledgehammer and the Cutting Edge Bullets Safari Solid all get the job done perfectly.

Moving to the pachyderms, a solid, nonexpanding bullet is assuredly the way to go. An elephant has 2 feet of honeycombed cranium in front of its brain, and a hide measuring over 1½ inches thick. Both rhino and hippo also have very thick hides, along with incredibly strong bones and a constitution to match, so all of them warrant a big cartridge and a stout bullet. Were you to ask me what my

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A trio of Barnes TSX bullets recovered from a Cape buffalo bull; the shots were at longer range for that species, fired from a Heym Express in .505 Gibbs.



A .30-06 Springfield or .300 Winchester Magnum, loaded with the classic 180-grain Nosler Partition, can make a fantastic plains game rifle.

favorite bullet for these species is, I would readily offer the Woodleigh Hydro Solid, as it has served me very well. I've taken big-bodied elephant in Zimbabwe, near the Botswana border, and used this bullet to physically knock a buffalo bull off its feet in Mozambique. The Barnes Banded Solid has a rounded nose profile, which will feed (generally

speaking) in any rifle, and has the structural integrity to sort out any animal that walks on Earth. I can say the same for Federal's Trophy Bonded Sledgehammer, despite a flatter meplat. In a double rifle, Hornady's DGS is a great choice for double rifles that have been regulated with the old Kynoch ammunition, and it performs rather well in bolt guns, to boot.

IN CONCLUSION

No matter the type of safari you book, a bit of homework and experimentation before the hunt will most definitely enhance your experience and have you returning home with photos full of smiles, rather than sad tales. Cartridge choice is not as difficult, but when a bullet performs perfectly, it will engender all sorts of confidence. ★



Africa's grey ghost – the greater kudu. Massaro took this 55-inch bull with a single Texas heart shot using a 250-grain Woodleigh Weldcore from his Mauser 98.318 Westley Richards, in Zimbabwe's Chirisa block.



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STAG PARTY CENTRAL

High Adventure Ranch in Missouri's Ozarks offers trophy hunting for red stags, elk, bison and more.

STORY BY JASON BROOKS

PHOTOS BY HIGH ADVENTURE RANCH

When planning a hunt with an outfitter or a ranch-style hunt, some hunters use a booking service or just do an internet search hoping to find the right hunt for themselves. This can lead the hunter to a good experience, but it can just as easily lead to a bad one if you don't find the right hunting outfit or the booking service doesn't understand exactly what you are looking for.

This is why calling High Adventure Ranch is a good starting point for planning that hunting vacation. When you call, you will likely talk with Brad Puff, a third-generation High Adventure Ranch outfitter who has spent his entire life being involved in the business of providing hunters and their families with the vacation of a lifetime, or even an annual one.

High Adventure Ranch started with Brad's grandfather Charles Puff, whom I had the pleasure to talk with last year (*American Shooting Journal*,



High Adventure Ranch, located in Missouri's Ozark Mountains, gives hunters based in the United States the chance to pursue trophy red stag without having to fly up to 20-plus hours to hunt the species in New Zealand. (SHUTTERSTOCK)

March 2022). Charles opened the ranch because he loved to hunt and had a life goal of taking a 100-pound elephant, which he accomplished. A 100-pound elephant refers to the weight of the tusk, marking a mature

bull. There are no elephants in the Ozarks, where High Adventure Ranch is located, but the property does offer other exotic and highly sought-after trophy animals.

THIS TIME WHEN I called the ranch, Brad answered and explained that Charles had passed away last January. Though I was sad, Brad reassured me that his grandfather had lived a great life, one full of high adventures and family. We soon began chatting about hunting and all that High Adventure Ranch offers. There are whitetails, elk and bison for those seeking North American species, and then there are the various sheep and African game animals. But if you ask Brad what the highlight of the ranch is, he would say the red stag.



The family-run ranch also offers North American species such as elk, bison and whitetail.

Brad states that hunters wanting to hunt red stag need to head to far-off lands – or they can head to the Ozarks. If you want to hunt red stag in New Zealand, plan on flying up to 20-plus hours – each way. Meanwhile, High Adventure Ranch in Cook Station, Missouri, is centrally located in the United States. Most hunters can drive to the ranch, or rent a car from the St. Louis airport, which is only two hours away.

Also, if you hunt red stag in New Zealand, travel insurance is recommended, and it runs \$300-plus per person. There is no need for this if you hunt at High Adventure Ranch. If a hunt needs to be rescheduled, High Adventure Ranch will work with you to schedule new dates, whether it be the same season or anytime in the future. Hunting red stag in New Zealand also means you're going to have to take the time and money to purchase a passport. You don't need a passport to hunt at High Adventure Ranch if you live in the United States.

At High Adventure Ranch, most stags score from the upper-200-inch range to over 400 inches, and last year a 540-inch stag was taken on the ranch.

"Our genetics are pretty terrific and it is a challenging hunt," Brad says.



The ranch's red stags typically score from the upper-200-inch range to 400 inches, but last year saw a monster 540-incher taken. "Our genetics are pretty terrific and it is a challenging hunt," states Brad Puff, whose grandfather Charles Puff founded the hunting preserve in 1983.

"Most of the hunting is done 'safari-style,' where you cover the nearly 5 miles of ranch with a four-by-four truck and look for game. From there, it is a thick forest where you will play

'hide and seek' until you can get close enough for the shot."

Brad says that the stags are a herd animal and it takes some good stalking skills to get in position for the shot. If you blow the chase, the herd will run off and you will spend hours trying to find them again, but this is a ranch hunt and he guarantees the hunt. If you don't get your stag – or the animal that you are there to hunt – then you don't pay for the hunt, just the accommodations and food, which is hearty and served family-style.

One of the best things about red stag is the meat. If you hunt red stag in New Zealand, don't plan on getting to enjoy the venison because it cannot be brought back. Red deer, or stag, venison is typically what they serve in America's finest restaurants and historically has been a delicacy for the nobles of Europe. This tender meat is rich in taste, high in protein, and low in fat. If you hunt at High Adventure Ranch, full meat processing is available; they will hand-cut your meat, vacuum-seal, label and



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High Adventure Ranch caters to all kinds of hunters – even those who hunt critters with their camera. A pair of black bucks spar.

put it in their walk-in cooler until you depart. This is all done on-site and part of the hunting package.

THE RED STAG hunt is a highlight because of the meat quality and because the hunt is exciting and not an easy one to do. But Brad states that High Adventure Ranch can tailor the hunt to any hunter, as well as offer other game animals for those who want a trophy whitetail or to chase elk east of the Rocky Mountains. All of their tags are guaranteed and since they have permits allowing them to hunt out of trucks, the hunts can be custom-made to fit any hunter's needs, even those in a wheelchair.

"From the first-time hunter to the 92-year-old who just wants to keep

hunting but might not be able to hike the hills, High Adventure Ranch can provide that hunt," says Brad.

Some families return each year for an annual bison hunt, and that means a lot of meat to care for. The same guides who will dress a red stag also do this for all of the hunts, including bison. Brad explains that not only do families return each year as an annual vacation, where nonhunting spouses can just relax in the ranch's cabins or cast a line in its lakes, but some opt to take a camera along and photograph all of the different animals they will see.

"Some people prefer to shoot animals with a rifle, and some with a camera, and here at the ranch they can do both," says Brad.

The bison hunts will fill your

freezer with high-protein and lean red meat, and it is more cost-effective than buying it at the grocery store. Just as with the other hunts, the meat is professionally cut and vacuum-sealed right at the ranch.

HIGH ADVENTURE RANCH in the Ozark Mountains of Missouri is where a hunter can chase the red stag of their dreams or just plan a family vacation and relax, taking in the rolling hills and all of the different animals on the ranch. It is a great place for first-time hunters or seasoned vets who want to continue their days afield. Give Brad a call and start your High Adventure hunt. ★

Editor's note: For more information, visit highadventureranch.com.

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Author Scott Haugen has taken many elk throughout the West and will be the first to tell you that big bulls don't come easy, but they can be had if you follow his game plan.



SEARCHING FOR ELK

Digital and boots-on-the-ground advice for figuring out where to find your bull anywhere in the West.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SCOTT HAUGEN

Finding a place to hunt elk is easy. Finding a place to consistently kill elk is a different story.

This isn't another one of those articles you'll find in every magazine this time of year, on the best states and the top game management units to hunt elk. The starting point of this story begins once you've drawn a tag. This is how to locate elk.



START AT HOME

Once I draw an elk tag, the scouting takes on three forms. I already know elk should be in the area I'll be hunting, because otherwise I wouldn't have applied for the tag. But going to where elk should be, and finding where the elk are, can be two different things.

Start by making calls to regional wildlife biologists in your hunting area. If the area you'll be hunting is big, there may be more than one office to contact. Ask about current elk herd trends, recent population counts and where the elk are thought to be during your hunt, be it bow, muzzleloader or rifle season. Inquire as to whether wolves, disease or wildfires have impacted the herd.

Next, get on the computer and track wildfires. There are several programs at national, regional and state levels that contain valuable information on wildfires, both past and present. Research the recent history of wildfires in the area you'll be hunting and track

the progression of current burns. Many archers throughout the West have had seasons canceled in recent years due to fires. Even rifle hunters have experienced closures, so be prepared and have a backup plan, if applicable.

Third, physically scout. This takes time and money, but think of it as an investment for years to come. If it took you 20 points to draw a tag, it's likely a once-in-a-lifetime hunt, which is even more reason to physically see what you'll be facing. But if you and your buddies might draw the tag every couple of years, learning all you can from the outset will also pay off.

FIRES!

The number and severity of wildfires raging throughout western elk country has been atrocious in recent years. Some fires have killed a number of elk when the animals sought safety in wooded draws, only to be consumed by flames engulfing the hills and canyons on either side.

Fires have also forced elk to move from their high-country habitats. In many cases, herds have traveled miles, dropping into river valleys, even private farmlands. As a result, many elk have taken up residence at lower elevations.

If a burned area receives fall and spring rains, it can provide consistent food for elk. Late in the summer, if a fire is put out in time or the edges don't burn too hot, that land can generate grass for elk to graze on that fall if rains hit in late September or early October.

Avoid scouting and hunting where



Research wildfires in your hunting area, because if severe enough, they will drive elk from entire drainages.

fires burned hot. If the soil is scorched, it may take decades for the land to recover and provide adequate food for elk. Searching for elk a mile or two from a burn, where food and cover are prime, can also pay off.

THE PREDATOR FACTOR

When talking with biologists about wildfires, also ask about the impact predators may have in the area you're looking to hunt. I've found coyotes, even cougars, have minimal impact on forcing elk herds to move from an area. But wolves and bears are a different story.

Bear predation largely takes place during the elk calving period in late spring. I've killed a number of elk

in areas thick with black bears and grizzlies, meaning that by hunting season, the elk calves are big enough to avoid bears.

The biggest mover of elk is wolves. When scouting and hunting an area, look for wolf tracks and scat and listen for them howling at night. I've seen wolves run entire elk herds from a drainage in one night, ruining a hunt. Wolves like traveling roads and game trails. Setting up trail cameras will help reveal what predators are on the move, along with what elk are in the area.

THE HUNT

When on the hunt, if elk aren't where you expected to find them, keep moving.

This is where summer scouting is most valuable because come hunting season, you don't want to be wasting time finding a place to hunt. Then again, sometimes elk move and you have to find them. If you saw elk or promising elk sign when scouting, you know the animals will be in the area; you'll just have to work hard to find them. Hunt early and late in the day, and spend midday hours looking for tracks, fresh rubs and droppings.

In many places where I've rifle hunted for elk, hikers, archery elk hunters, archery deer hunters, upland bird hunters and rifle deer hunters have been educating elk up to three months before the season even begins. Such pressure



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Once your elk tag is filled, the work begins. Before the hunt, make sure you're prepared to handle a downed bull.



If you're not seeing elk, study sign closely. While this rub looks fresh, it was actually very dry, meaning the elk were here several days, even weeks prior. Hunting this spot could be a waste of time.

often forces elk into the deepest, most dense habitat. If you're not willing to head into the bottom of the canyons and root them out, you may not see an elk.

The number one reason elk tags go unfilled is because hunters are not in good physical condition. Elk country is big and rugged, and if you can't get to where the elk are, you can't kill one.

You don't have to be a marathon runner and bench-press 400 pounds to kill elk. But you do need to be in good shape. Being in top cardio shape is more important than squatting a rack full of plates. Stamina and flexibility will take you into elk habitat that 80 percent of our fellow hunters can't reach.

Even if in top shape you may still need help reaching the elk. This is where scouting pays off. Looking at a drainage on a map or Google Earth

is different than seeing it in person. Study it with your own eyes and you'll know if you need horses or mules, if you need to be dropped by a packer, or if an ATV will be needed. You'll learn whether or not a base camp can be set up, or if you need to keep moving deeper into the mountains, meaning a spike camp will be essential.

Elk hunts can be mentally and physically demanding. Go into a hunt expecting to lose weight due to intense physical exertion. If you're bowhunting when it's hot and dry and you're seeing lots of fresh sign every day but no elk, try scouting at night. Move quietly and listen closely for bugling bulls in the distance and cows and calves communicating; they're often very vocal at night. It's nothing for elk to move 5 miles every night to feeding



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areas, retreating to bedding grounds high in the drainages well before daylight. I've arrowed a number of bulls after learning their nighttime movements, which allowed me to move up into ravines and wooded hillsides and intercept them when heading to bed.

MEAT: THE CHALLENGE

The fun of elk hunting stops the minute you kill a bull. One time two buddies and I each arrowed big bulls on opening morning. Despite the high elevation in the Rocky Mountains, daytime temperatures were hot and grizzly bears were thick. We quartered and boned out one bull, which we loaded into saddle panniers. One buddy took that load 21 miles to the trailhead, then drove 35 miles to the

nearest town, where we had already arranged for cold locker storage.

My other buddy and I stayed back to take care of the other two bulls. We hung one in game bags in shaded, cool pine trees so grizzlies couldn't reach it. The other bull we loaded onto our horses and headed down the trail. We met our friend well after dark. He took that bull to the cooler, along with written permission from me to transport the meat, then stayed in town that night and got some needed rest.

The next morning my other buddy and I broke down camp, got the meat we'd hung in the trees, and were off the mountain by late morning. We didn't lose an ounce of meat, just some sleep. Before the hunt, prepare to handle the meat because it can be a lot of work.

There are many successful elk hunts that take place from the comfort of a big camp, a cozy trailer, even a nice hotel. I've not experienced many of those, however, likely because tags are limited in those areas and my luck with winning any lottery is very poor.

Most elk hunters I know – myself included – love the captivating places elk take us. Escaping people, cell phones and city lights is what elk hunting is all about. The harder you're willing to work to find elk, the more rewarding the experience will be when you punch that tag. ★

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.

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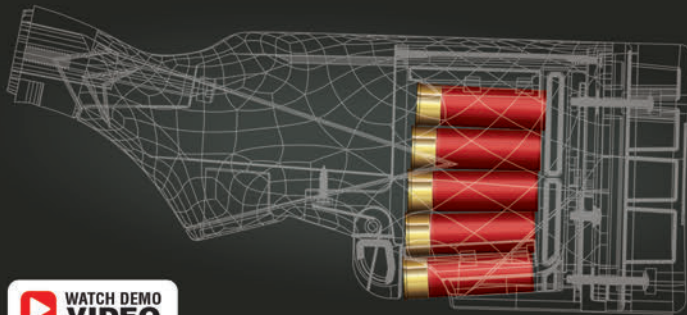
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It might take awhile to become as good a shot as world record holder Dave Miller is, but taking up trap, skeet or sporting clays will improve your aim, helping you to down more birds come hunting season. (CZ-USA)

PULL! AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SHOTGUN GAMES

Here are three fun ways to improve your aim, as well as new shotguns, ammo and gear to get started.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LARRY CASE

Summer is on the downhill slide and according to my famously poor math skills, as I write this we have about 42 days until the opening of dove season (usually September 1). Yes, you read that right, 42 days and you could be standing on the edge of a field sweating in the heat, yet you haven't

hit a bird after a box of shells. The shotgun games we will talk about here will help greatly with bagging more doves, pheasants and ducks.



It occurred to me that I have not talked to you enough about shotgun shooting and

the shotgun sports lately. There is a wide variety of shotgun-related sports and if you like to shoot, they are great fun. (There is that "fun" thing again; we are supposed to be having fun out there, right?)

Nonshooters will not understand this, which is a pity, but if they go just one time to a trap or skeet range and



Makayla Scott heads to the range for a day of clay target shooting.

try it, they will be changed forever. That first time – that first magical time when they mount the gun and bring it to bear on a flying clay target and pull the trigger to see the clay evaporate into a fine mist – is a wonderful experience.

So here, my brothers and sisters in camo and shooting vests, is a down-and-dirty intro to some of the basic shotgun games for you to try. You old and experienced shotguns out there will no doubt think it rather simplified and trite, but we need to give the new shooters some information on getting started.

TRAP

I have no problem telling you that trap is my favorite shotgun game and the reason is simple: I think it is the easiest. Now, there are shotguns out there who would leave me in the dust on any

range and will disagree with this. They don't think trap is the easiest game. Why they think this is an absolute mystery to me, but we must forge on.

American trap that we shoot here in the US is different from European or bunker trap that has an English or European origin. Our game of trap evolved when the sport of live pigeon shooting started to fall into disfavor in the late 1800s. In the live bird game, the shooter calls to the person operating a cage to release a bird. Because this person, called a "trapper," pulls a string to release the bird, the shooter calls, "Pull!" This is still how you call for a target on the trap (or skeet) range. Trap is generally shot with a five-person squad standing on fixed positions lined up on a curved row. The shooters are 16 yards from the trap house, which contains an

oscillating target thrower. The targets can be thrown 27 degrees right or left of center and are more or less going away from the shooter.

A squad of five experienced shooters is a thing of beauty to watch and reminds one of a well-oiled machine. As one shooter pulls the trigger, the next in line closes his gun (if it is a break-action) and raises it to a shooting position. He calls for the target ("Pull!") and makes the shot. The next in line continues all this. The shooters rotate positions after every five shots and when they have expended 25 rounds of ammo, the game is over. A round of trap will only take about 15 or 20 minutes and I believe it is the best game for the beginner to start on.

On a side note, the older, very experienced trap shooters (you can

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recognize them with the baggy pants) can be notoriously grouchy around new shooters. Don't let this faze you one bit. Go to the range; watch and listen awhile and learn. When it is your time to shoot, it would be good to start on a squad of other inexperienced shooters and one old hand who is willing to help and teach. Any gun club will have such shooters around, and most older shooters (even the grouchy ones) will welcome the chance to share all of their wisdom once they get to know you. Go and learn and have fun. Don't worry about your scores when you first start down the shotgun trail.

SKEET

We are told that in the 1920s a couple grouse hunters in New England invented the game of skeet (I'm not sure if they were drunk or just mean-spirited) to make shooters more proficient at hitting ruffed grouse. Many shooters (including me) think the targets in skeet may be more related to dove and duck hunting scenarios in the field than to upland hunting (like grouse or pheasants), where the birds are generally flying away from you. The targets in skeet offer a lot of crossing shots and some coming toward you.

The skeet field consists of two target houses on either side of the field. On the left is the "high" house, which is



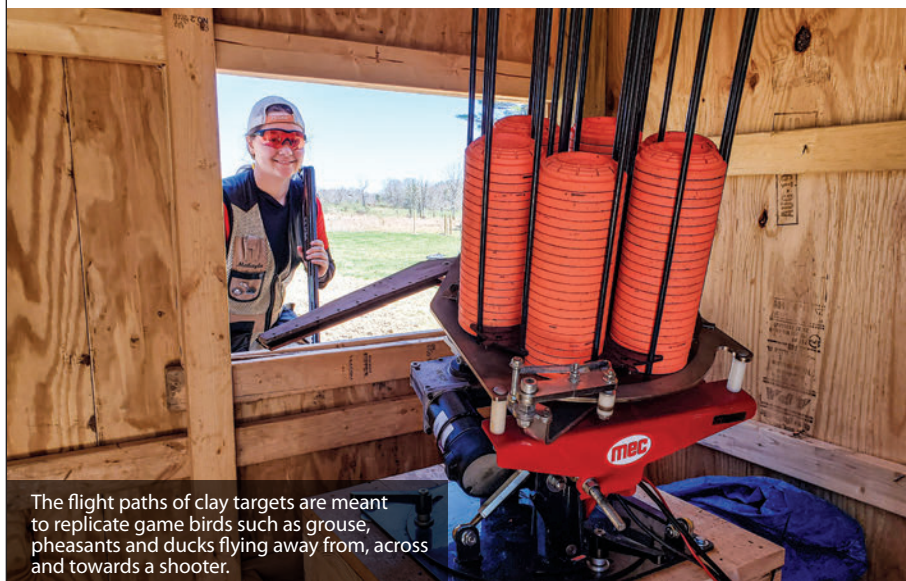
These shotgun sports feature a trap house, from which a thrower sends clays downrange.

taller than the one on the right, or the "low" house. There are seven shooting stations in a half-circle connecting the two houses, with the last, station 8, being in the very middle between the two houses. (I believe that station 8 was invented by the devil himself.) A squad of shooters makes their way around the positions and shoots singles at all the stations 1, 2, 6 and 7. On your first miss you get one redo, called an "option" or

a mulligan, and if you have no misses – lucky you – you get to shoot the station 8 low house bird twice.

Just to get this out of the way, I detest skeet, mostly because I really stink at this game. I know it is probably some kind of mental block I developed long ago, but I just can't seem to climb out of that hole. More than a few times I have had good shooters tell me that skeet is not that hard once you figure out the angles of the different stations, and in fact they think the game of trap is more difficult. I usually just thank them and smile, then walk away toward the trap field.

I would suggest going to the skeet field the first time with an experienced shooter who will help you get past the initial bumps in the road. If possible, don't make your initial foray into the skeet world with a squad of experienced shooters who are dead serious about all this and may fall into a deep depression or a trance if they miss one bird. The ideal here would be to visit the range on an off day with your experienced friend and go through the course in a leisurely manner, learning the ropes as you go. As we talked about in the trap section,



The flight paths of clay targets are meant to replicate game birds such as grouse, pheasants and ducks flying away from, across and towards a shooter.



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most any gun club will have older, experienced shooters who are usually happy to take new shooters under their wing and teach them.

SPORTING CLAYS

This is another game that originated in England and was first known as hunter's clays. The idea was to portray hunting situations more realistically (than trap and skeet) in the field with flying targets. Back then the game was more centered toward the hunter, and in truth, as sporting clays gained in popularity, it attracted more shooters who had little interest in actual hunting. This brought on target scenarios that were more complicated but didn't really have much to do with hunting. Regardless of all this, shooting sporting clays will sharpen your skills for wing shooting in the field.

The sporting clays course is different from trap and skeet. It is comprised of several different stations (usually 10 to 15) over a large area, so there is walking involved between the stations, or at some clubs shooters ride fancy golf cart buggies between the stations. (I like that part). Typically, and this can vary, you shoot five pairs of doubles at each of the 10 stations,

totaling 100 rounds of ammo. These pairs can come in three ways: a "true" pair, when both are released at the same time; a "report" pair, when the second bird is thrown upon the report of your shotgun in shooting the first bird; and a "following" pair, when one is released right after the other.

Sporting clays courses change all the time, as those running the club usually try to keep it fresh and have something new for returning shooters. This is good in many ways, as even skilled experienced shooters don't become familiar with the course and will have misses like everyone else. Just like trap and skeet, I would visit a sporting clays course with an experienced teacher and let them guide you through your first few attempts. Again, go and have fun and learn. Sporting clays is more socially oriented than trap or skeet; you can talk and socialize between stations and if you are paired with strangers, you won't be at the end of the course.

GUNS, GEAR AND AMMO

To get started, use what you have. If you have a favorite hunting shotgun, by all means use it until you see what you like best for these games. You

may find that you want to take the step to acquire a shotgun dedicated to clay shooting. To start out, most any shotgun that will shoot twice will work for these games. You need low brass target and field load shotgun shells with shot no larger than No. 7½ (serious skeet competitors often use No. 9), and the powder charge should be moderate. Save those magnum loads for hunting; don't bring them to the trap field.

You will need some form of ear and eye protection and either a shooting vest or a pouch for carrying your shells. If you are shopping around for any of this, here are some ideas.

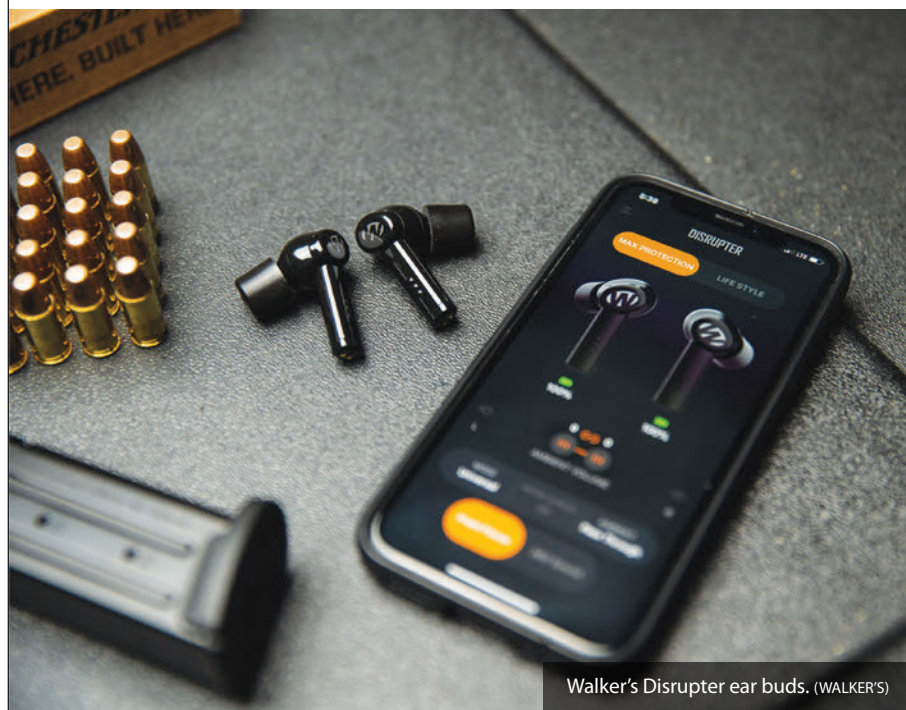
WALKER'S DISRUPTER EAR BUDS

I was waiting on this and Walker's Game Ear (which, by the way, has a huge selection of hearing protection and hearing enhancement products) came through with the goods. This is an in-your-ear hearing protector that connects to your cell phone via Bluetooth. The Disrupter is designed to protect your hearing by canceling dangerous-level noises, such as shots at the gun range or while target shooting. At the same time, the earbuds can be used to enhance desired environmental sounds or deliver superior audio originating from a smartphone, tablet or other device through Bluetooth connectivity. This makes the Disrupter a completely comprehensive noise protection and a best-in-class sound enhancement solution for anyone with an active lifestyle – on the range, in the gym or deep in the wilderness.

Info: walkersgameear.com

FIOCCHI EXACTA LINE OF SHOTSHELLS

Fiocchi's Exacta line of target shotgun shells includes the Crusher, Little Rino, Interceptor Spreader and Low Recoil Trainer, just to name a few. The Exacta line provides competitors of all levels the industry standard for reliability, consistency and accuracy. Several competitors say that Fiocchi makes the finest sporting clays ammunition in the world today and the company has



Walker's Disrupter ear buds. (WALKER'S)

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CZ-USA 712 G3 Target shotgun. (CZ-USA)

Franchi Instinct Sideplate 16-Gauge shotgun. (FRANCHI)

Stoeger Model 3000 Series of shotguns. (STOEGER)

dominated the trap and skeet circuits for decades. Fiocchi is an Italian-based company but, in case you didn't know, has been making ammunition here in the USA for many years and the number of different shotshells is quite extensive.

Info: fiocchiusa.com

FEDERAL TOP GUN TARGET AMMO

The Federal Top Gun line of target ammo is enormous and you will need to peruse the Federal website to find the particular shotshell you want. (There is also a High Overall line of target ammo you will need to check out.) Some clubs now require steel shot on shotgun ranges and Federal has you covered for that as well. The Top Gun loads' high-quality lead shot produces even patterns that crush clays with a combination of hard shot, a consistent and reliable Federal primer, an eight-segment crimp, and a unique wad column for consistent patterns.

Info: federalpremium.com

CZ-USA 712 G3 TARGET SHOTGUN

CZ-USA has recently upgraded their 712 line of autoloader shotguns, really from the ground up; it is basically a brand new shotgun. With the added features of an adjustable comb, a stepped rib and 30-inch barrels, this shotgun is designed to meet the

needs of the most demanding target shooters. The adjustable comb allows for a customizable fit to ensure the perfect cheek weld, resulting in greater comfort when shooting. The stepped rib provides a clear and unobstructed sight picture, allowing the shooter to acquire their target quickly and accurately. The combination of these features makes the CZ 712 G3 Target a great choice for both novice and experienced shooters. Built with a gas-operated system, the CZ 712 G3 Target ensures reliable and smooth cycling, shot after shot. The 30-inch barrel is constructed from high-quality steel and is finished with a matte black finish for durability and reduced glare. The shotgun is chambered for 2¾- and 3-inch shells, providing versatility for different shooting situations.

Info: cz-usa.com

FRANCHI INSTINCT SIDEPLATE SHOTGUN

First launched in 2022, Franchi's Instinct Sideplate Over/Under 12- and 20-Gauge models were an instant success with seasoned upland hunters and will serve clay target shooters as well. For 2023, Franchi sweetened the Sideplate lineup by adding a pair of new subgauge models to the family – the Instinct Sideplate 16-Gauge and Instinct Sideplate 28-Gauge. Franchi's Sideplate-style shotguns take shooters

back to when European gunsmiths designed firearms to capture the eye and imagination, while also providing a second-to-none shooting experience. Showcasing sleek lines, lustrous AA-grade walnut, gold inlaid game scenes and blued barrels, each gun comes with auto ejectors, barrel selectors, auto safety, C, IC, M, IM and F extended chokes, and a custom-fitted hardcase.

Info: franchiusa.com

STOEGER MODEL 3000 SHOTGUN LINE

Stoeger has improved its Model 3000 line and it is a lot of shotgun for the money. For 2023, the M3000 line sports nine new-and-improved semiautomatic 12-gauge shooters. New recoil pads and removable cheek pieces on all models except the satin walnut and satin walnut/burnt bronze models ensure maximum comfort and customization. Stoeger engineers also went to work and the overall ergonomics is brand new – the grip has been thinned, and the look is less boxy and more streamlined. More prominent controls increase functionality, especially when wearing bulky gloves, and a slimmer magazine cap with improved grip makes disassembly a breeze. The bolt handle has been enlarged for increased functionality, and the beveled loading port makes reloading a quick affair.

Info: stoegerindustries.com

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ALPS OUTDOORZ SPORTSMAN'S BELT

One of the first things a shooter needs is a way to carry shotgun shells and other items while on the range. ALPS OutdoorZ offers a classic-style game and shell belt system ideally suited for upland bird hunting or a day of busting clays. The Sportsman's Belt is constructed of traditional waxed cotton canvas that looks great in the field and rugged enough to survive years of hard use. The system includes two large shell pockets, a generous game pouch, and a water bottle pouch. All compartments are secured to a 2-inch-wide webbed waist belt that cinches with a heavy-duty brass SR buckle. The Sportsman's Belt system is modular in design, allowing the shooter or hunter to easily remove and position the pockets as needed thanks to integrated snap-button belt loop panels. The two shell pockets feature grab loops and a hold-open closure system to easily open the pockets and remain open, if needed, for quick cartridge access. This pouch will become your favorite for on the skeet range or in the pheasant field.

Info: alpsoutdoorz.com

SSP EYEWEAR TOP FOCAL ULTRA KIT

Good safety glasses are essential on



ALPS OutdoorZ Sportsman's Belt. (ALPS OUTDOORZ)

the range for any shotgun shooting, and many of us find we need a little help in the vision department when we reach a certain age. The SSP Eyewear Top Focal Ultra Kit includes everything you need for pistol, rifle,

AR and shotgun to view your sights and the target in every light condition. It comes with a full set of lenses with bifocal magnification at the top of the lens, and a full set of lenses with regular bottom bifocals, so you can use the upper bifocal lens on one eye and a bottom bifocal on the other lens. The list of shooting glasses available from SSP Eyewear is extensive, so spend some time on their website and find the shooting glasses you need.

Info: sspeyewear.com ★



SSP Eyewear Top Focal Ultra Kit. (SSP EYEWEAR)

Editor's note: Larry Case has been a devoted outdoorsman since he was a child. He will admit to an addiction to turkey hunting (spring and fall), but refuses any treatment. He enjoys the company of gobblers and cur dogs that are loud and people who speak the truth softly. Case served 36 years as a game warden in West Virginia and retired with the rank of district captain. You can check out his podcast and other stories at gunsandcornbred.com.



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With roots in the racing world and a focus on helping high-volume shooters maintain their firearms, Dumonde Tech's innovative product line includes True Blue Gun Grease, True Blue Gun Cleaner and True Blue Gun Oil.

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Dumonde Tech's True Blue Gun Care products improve cleaning and lubing, as well as long-term storage.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JASON BROOKS



Gun maintenance is one of those tasks that you either love or hate. Unfortunately for my guns, I fall into the latter category.

Spending a day at the range or afield and burning through ammo is not only a lot of fun, but is also necessary for the hunter and competitive shooter, and especially the military and police whose lives depend on a proper working firearm. Once the day of shooting is

over, the guns are often stowed until the shooter arrives home. As the guns sit in their cases, the carbon and other debris cool off and bond with the metal and moving parts. This often happens because the previous gun lubricant that was left on the firearm carbonizes from repetitive high heat and burnt gunpowder.

Cleaning a firearm involves three basic steps: take the gun apart; scrub it; lube it. Then the gun is reassembled

and safely and securely stored. It is the scrubbing and lubing part that is not only tedious, but stinky. Some companies try to sell the shooter a product that does both to cut down on time and shortcut the process. The problem is that these cleaners or solvents that also act as a lubricant break down easily and the shooter must ask, how is it that a solvent can also be a lubricant if the solvent breaks down the lubricant to clean the firearm?



True Blue Gun Oil features eight times more lubricity than Teflon and its needle applicator allows for pinpoint oiling.

THIS IS WHERE Dumonde Tech Racing Oil focused its research when the company decided to give gun solvents and lubricants a try. After a lot of success in the motorsports world, where their oils – which use Micro Resistant Complex Compounds, or MRCC – proved to be some of the best lubricants on the market, Dumonde Tech figured their product would work well for bicycles and the company soon became a leader in the biking industry as well.

In 2016, Dumonde Tech turned to one of its distributors, Andy DeVol at My Life at Speed. DeVol reached out to military and police organizations for testing and soon came up with the True Blue Gun Care line of products. Instead of coming up with a “cut the corner” all-inclusive solvent and lube, shooters and those whose lives depend on proper working firearms helped develop three products that work together to make sure your firearm always performs and is protected from rust and carbonization.

True Blue Gun Cleaner is just that, a cleaner that removes all soil, carbon and other residues and leaves

nothing behind. It also does not smell, is nearly odorless, and is 100-percent biodegradable. The cleaner is water-soluble; this helps in the cleaning process because once the firearm is dry, it is clean down to the bare metal, plastic, wood and polymer, which won’t be harmed by the cleaner.

The lubricants come in two different forms, and can work independently or together. For the frequent shooter, True Blue Gun Oil has a very low coefficient of friction. Through polymerization, Dumonde Tech’s MRCC technology, its wetting and migrating ability, and molecular plating of all surfaces, contact points and moving parts through movement, heat and pressure, True Blue Gun Oil will reduce attrition in high-wear areas. It has eight times more lubricity than Teflon and comes in a bottle with a needle applicator that won’t break off and is protected by the cap. Their motto for this unique bottle is “Cap it and pack it!” – reinforcing its ease of use and transportability. The Gun Oil is waterproof in both fresh- and saltwater, making it a great lube for any shooter

who lives near water or high-humidity environments.

True Blue Gun Grease is a grease product used before long-term storage or on any high-use firearm. For the shooting enthusiast who shoots a lot, True Blue Gun Grease will help protect those often tricky areas, such as shotgun choke tubes or muzzleloader breech plugs. It is also a great product for when you decide to put your firearm in long-term storage where humidity might be problematic.

From everyday plinking to keeping your firearm ready for personal safety, you can trust the True Blue Gun Care product line to make sure everything operates smoothly. Do not shortcut gun cleaning or maintenance, even if you hate it as much as I do. Instead, make sure they are clean and properly lubricated so the next time you head to the range, or wake up to a prowler in your home, your firearm will work properly when you need it most. ★

Editor’s note: For more information, visit truebluegunlube.com.



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WHIDBEY ISLAND RESCUE AIRCREWMAN PUTS HIS LIFE ON THE LINE FOR OTHERS

STORY BY GEOFF ZIEZULEWICZ

The life of a sailor assigned to the elite Whidbey Island Search and Rescue, or SAR, unit at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington, is one defined by unpredictability.

After joining the Navy in 2016, Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Anthony Anglikowski soon realized he wanted to be a part of that life.

This elite crew of two MH-60S Seahawk helicopters, 10 pilots, three search and rescue medical technicians and 10 rescue aircrewman respond to rescue needs throughout the wilds of western Washington state and beyond.

And when the call goes out, their 15- or 30-minute alert posture means they can be airborne and on the way fast.

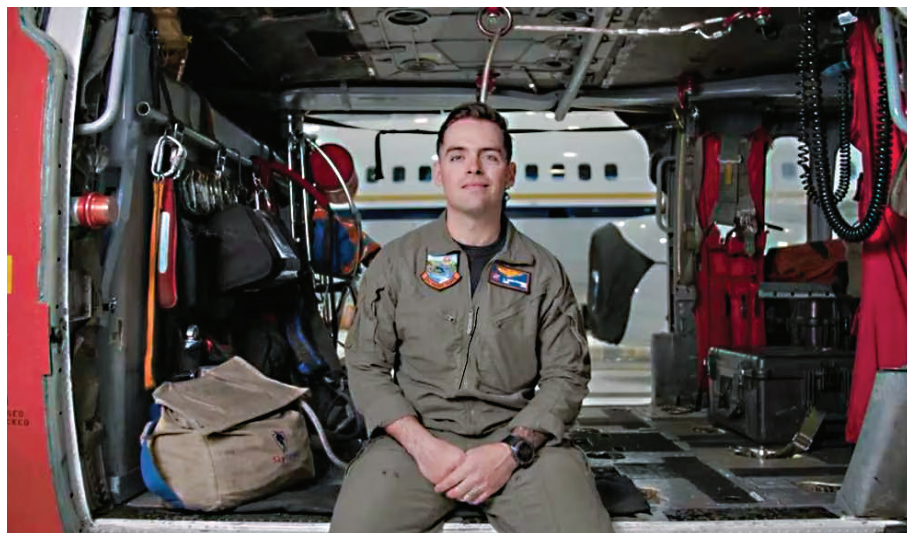
But SAR life is not like a movie. It's a dangerous job that requires regular improvisation to rescue stranded or injured hikers across the vast Pacific Northwest wilderness, or to respond to plane crashes or sea mishaps.

And sometimes, despite the most valiant efforts, not everyone makes it home.

But the individuals they save, and their family members, know those efforts matter.

Anglikowski, 28, a SAR medical technician and helicopter inland rescue aircrewman, learned this lesson firsthand when a call for help came in on May 23, 2021.

It would be the most intricate and technically challenging rescue mission Anglikowski had ever encountered, and one for which he would later receive the Navy and Marine Corps Medal, the service's



Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Anthony Anglikowski, a member of the search and rescue unit at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, responds to distress calls across Washington state. (WESTON SCOTT/NAVY TIMES)

highest award for noncombat heroism.

"HM2 Anglikowski epitomizes the very best in terms of his technical skills as well as his servant leadership approach to all he does," Capt. Juliann Althoff, the commanding officer of his unit, Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command Oak Harbor, said in a statement. "His valued contributions to our team are a testament to his profound work ethic and dedication to community service."

That day, Anglikowski and his comrades got a call about two hikers who had gotten into trouble while descending a challenging mountain formation known as "The Brothers" on the Olympic peninsula.

Anglikowski and his crew never know what to expect when such calls go out, but they are soon airborne.

"When we got there, the weather was the biggest thing holding us back," he recalled recently. "There's a significant cloud layer and quite a bit

of terrain to navigate."

The SAR team ended up orbiting for about 30 minutes until they could find a cloud hole for their descent.

Eyes peeled in the helicopter, Anglikowski and his comrades began inching up the valley.

They eventually found some good Samaritan hikers surrounding an injured man they had placed on a rock slab along an icy slope that Anglikowski remembered sitting at a steep 50 degrees.

Anglikowski and his partner descended to the icepack and made their way to the injured man.

"(The man) told us that himself and his girlfriend had summited the mountain early in the morning," Anglikowski said.

They were on their way down when either one or both of them tripped.

"The terrain was a V-shape and ended up pulling them together where they kind of bounced off each other,"



Capt. Eric Hanks, right, commanding officer of Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash., presents the Navy and Marine Corps Medal to HM2 Anthony Anglikowski. With them is Capt Juliann Althoff, left, commanding officer of Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command Oak Harbor. (NAVY)

Anglikowski said. “He saw his partner then slip down into this hole.”

The hiker and the passersby had shined lights into the hole and shouted the woman’s name, but received no response.

Anglikowski said the icy hole was about two-feet by two-feet and descended about 40 feet down.

In there, a furious waterfall had formed as the mountain’s snowpack thawed in the spring weather, and he remembered the interior measuring about 60-feet wide.

The SAR team had gotten there about an hour after the woman’s fall. The male hiker was medically stable but hysterical, Anglikowski recalled.

Pacific Northwest search and rescue missions like the one Anglikowski embarked on that day are by nature a cooperative affair. Often, civilian authorities will call the Whidbey SAR crew when they are

outgunned.

In this case, Anglikowski realized it was going to take a lot more than what he and his fellow sailor had on them to get the woman out of that crevasse.

They called in some colleagues from the local Jefferson County Search and Rescue team, and once on site, the rescuers jury-rigged a rope hoist system to bring the woman out of the depths.

The man was soon evacuated via the SAR helo, and Anglikowski and his team went to work.

As they built the rope hoist system, Anglikowski recalled how there weren’t many anchor points in the forbidding terrain.

Still, they built a two-rope system and lowered one of the county rescuers into the hole.

There, that rescuer found the woman deceased and in the water.

The combined crew tried to hoist

her out of the hole.

“On the way up, she ended up getting lodged under a rock ledge,” Anglikowski recalled. “So, I hooked into the rope and got lowered down into the waterfall.”

Down in those confines, Anglikowski used his own body to get behind the woman and get her unstuck from the rock ledge.

She was pulled up and the sailor soon followed.

They then waited on the steep terrain for the helicopter to get a cloud opening and retrieve them all.

“At significant personal risk, Anglikowski and one of the Jefferson County members rappelled into the crevasse,” the Navy said when announcing the the medal for his bravery and ingenuity.

Not every rescue has a happy ending, and Anglikowski indicated he is at peace with not being able to save



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everyone.

"It wasn't the ideal ending that everybody wanted, but we received some thank yous from the victim's family for at least recovering her from the mountain and not leaving her out there," he said.

Unfortunately, death is sometimes part of the job, he said.

"It is an expectation, and we do stay busy here," Anglikowski said. "People know it's a possibility. Some people end up dealing with more than others. But it's just something that you lean on your team for and cope with in your own, hopefully healthy, way."

Before enlisting, Anglikowski was a paramedic and firefighter back home in Erie, Pennsylvania.

But Whidbey SAR has been a whole other beast, he said.

"Training that the Navy provides gets you to the bare minimum to operate here," Anglikowski said. "But the experience is really what makes



Before enlisting, HM2 Anthony Anglikowski was a paramedic and firefighter back home in Erie, Pa. (NAVY)

you a good provider and a good rescuer."

Even on the hard days, Anglikowski said he loves the job and the variety it entails.

"Most every day is something different," he said. "We get to see incredible parts of Washington that people don't often set foot in, let alone

lay eyes on."

Being able to assist civilian counterparts and help the outdoor community has also been gratifying, he added.

"It's very rewarding to be able to provide that service and that capability to the community, especially the backcountry outdoor adventure community," Anglikowski said. "Most of us are an avid part of that, so it's nice to be able to give back to the people that we share those spaces with." ★

Editor's note: This story originally appeared in Navy Times and is reprinted with their permission. Author Geoff Ziezuiewicz is a senior staff reporter for Military Times, focusing on the Navy. He covered Iraq and Afghanistan extensively and was most recently a reporter at the Chicago Tribune. He welcomes any and all kinds of tips at geoffz@militarytimes.com.

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MODTAC's carbon fiber shields popular with military, LEO, shooters.

PHOTOS BY MODTAC



Modern Tactical Creations, or MODTAC, was formed in 2017 to provide simple solutions to everyday tactical problems. But the history behind the company goes back more than a decade, when Dave Mason and Jason Bryant were both operators with the US Army's 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne). From 2008 to 2013, Mason and Bryant were members of this elite Green Beret unit, and in that time they discovered some inconveniences that could use improvement.

"We found that there were deficiencies in both the equipment that was being issued, as well as the procurement process in getting the

necessary equipment to the team," explains Mason. "In 2012, we began our search for both better equipment and a better way to get this equipment to the team."

Their initial idea – and still the company's flagship product – was the carbon fiber suppressor shield. Mason had the idea after witnessing a fellow student in sniper school use a fabric wrap, which trapped the heat inside the can and led to the degradation of the suppressor and barrel, causing a loss of accuracy.

"It was then that the idea of a rigid suppressor shield that would prompt air flow, and still mitigate mirage, was born," says Mason.

The suppressor shields quickly

Modern Tactical Creations' signature product is a rigid wrap-around carbon fiber suppressor shield. Its ¼-inch gap from the suppressor itself improves airflow to eliminate mirage and protect against burns.



MODTAC founders Dave Mason and Jason Bryant deployed in Iraq.

grew in popularity and after a few years of building products in their garage and barn, the duo decided to officially form MODTAC in October 2017. The company now operates out of a 2,400-square-foot facility with its own range for testing, and has a team of eight people producing hundreds of suppressor shields a month for law enforcement and federal agencies, the Department of Defense, and civilian shooters.

“Our carbon fiber suppressor shields come in two main configurations, with a third on the way,” says Mason. “Our best seller by far is the suppressor shield with Universal Rail Attach Coupler, or simply the U-RAC. The U-RAC suppressor shield attaches via the top Picatinny rail on a carbine’s forend, and allows the carbon fiber tube to extend out over the suppressor with about ¼ inch of airgap. This design allows the shooter to be protected from burn, eliminates mirage, and maximizes airflow around the suppressor.”

MODTAC’s suppressor shields come in lengths of 5 to 9.5 inches, which makes them fit on a majority of rifles and suppressors on the US market.

“Over the last several years, our feedback has been almost 100-percent positive,” adds Mason. “What we hear the most is people commenting on how

Along with a 2,400-square-foot operations facility in Colorado, MODTAC has its own range nearby for product testing.



unique our product is, and how light it is. Most people don’t handle carbon fiber on a regular basis, so when they get their hands on it for the first time, it clicks in their mind that something that weighs less than a cellphone can prevent injuries and mirage so effectively. Our suppressor shields are also designed to look and function in a way that tells the customer there was thoughtful design and a purpose behind the product.”

In addition to their suppressor

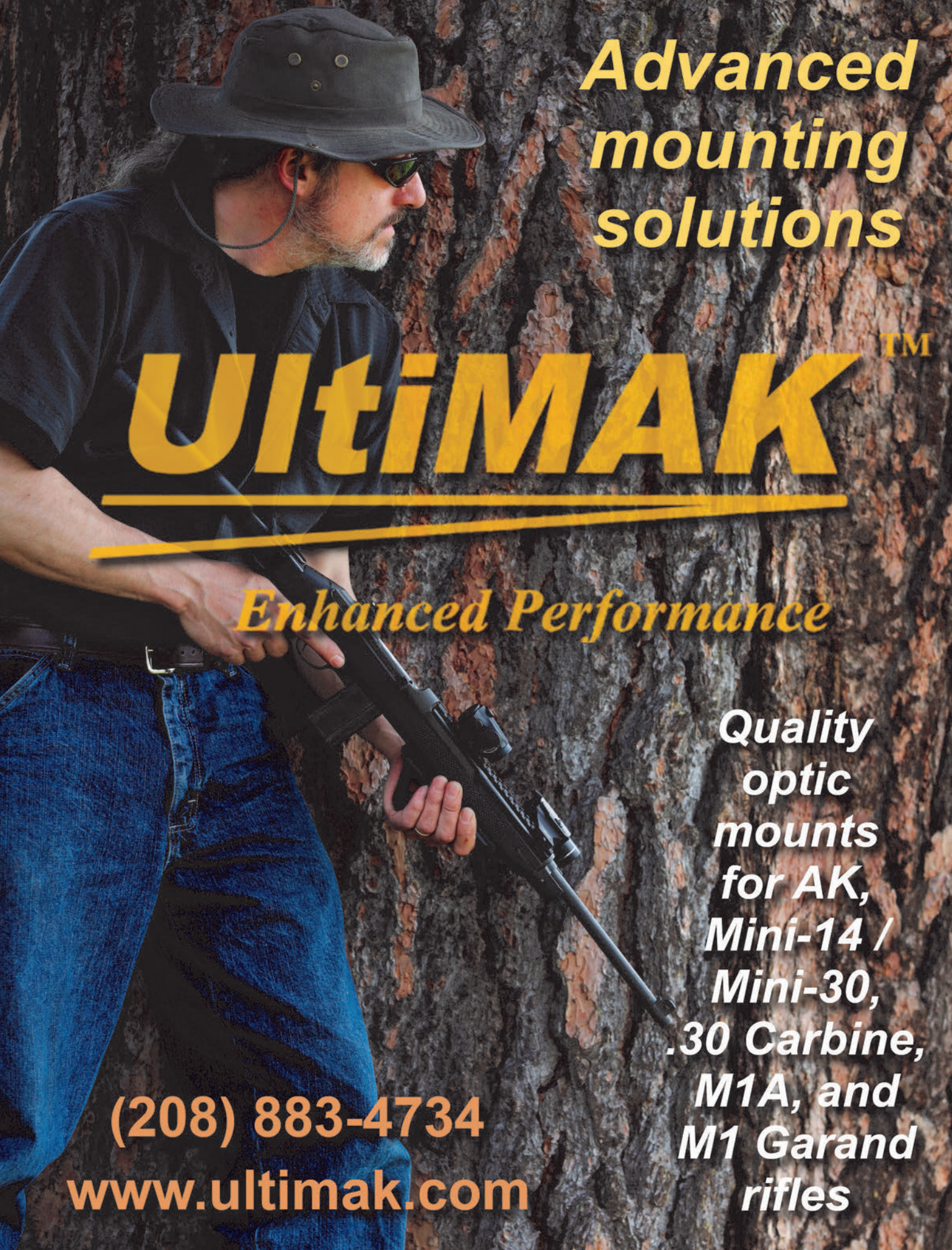
shields, MODTAC also offers numerous firearm accessories, and later this year the company will be announcing a new product for bolt-action rifles and precision rifles.

Says Mason, “2023 has been a great year so far, and we have some very exciting products and services coming to market in 2024.” Keep an eye on the MODTAC website and sign up for their newsletter for forthcoming details. ★

Editor’s note: Visit modtac.us for more.



The company’s shields fit a majority of rifles and suppressors on the market and come in two main configurations – one for attaching to a Picatinny rail, the other for mounting to an M-Lok rail – but Mason says a third is on the way.

A man with a beard, wearing a dark bucket hat, sunglasses, and a dark short-sleeved shirt, is holding a black rifle. He is standing next to a large tree trunk with rough bark. The background is a close-up of the tree bark.

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A screenshot from the bodycam video of a Texas police officer who single-handedly neutralized an active shooter who had shot 15 people at a mall, killing eight of them, including three children.

COURAGE NOT UNCOMMON

Bodycam footage shows Texas officer running solo towards danger, taking down an active shooter at mall.

STORY BY NICK PERNA • SCREENSHOT COURTESY OF ALLEN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Fortune favors the brave. When the sticky stuff hits the fan, we have two primary courses of action: do something or do nothing. When danger lurks and the possibility of serious bodily harm or death faces us, the common reaction of most people is plan B.



There is an expectation by society that those who are sworn to protect them, do just that. When everyone else begins running from a threat, cops are supposed to run towards it. Law

enforcement has taken some criticism of late, and rightfully so, for cases where cops failed to protect others, resulting in innocent people getting killed. A notable example is the lack of response in Uvalde, Texas, where a group of school children were murdered while a well-equipped group of cops stood by and did nothing. Whether it was “analysis paralysis” or pure cowardice, those officers failed to act when acting was the only option.

Fortunately, this lack of action on the part of law enforcement is a very rare occurrence. Usually it’s the opposite – cops risking their



Seal of the Allen, Texas, Police Department.

lives to protect those they serve. Whether you're talking about more mundane events like traffic stops and disturbance calls – which, unfortunately, get cops killed with alarming frequency – or going into clear and obvious danger, like running to the sound of gunfire, uncommon courage is a common occurrence for the vast majority of cops.

ON MAY 6 of this year, an Allen, Texas, Police Department officer whose name hasn't yet been released was doing what cops often do, interacting with members of the public. He was outside a mall of this Dallas suburb talking to two girls and their mother when he heard the unmistakable sound of gunfire nearby.

The officer wasted no time springing into action. He grabbed his patrol rifle, locked and loaded, and moved toward the threat. According to bodycam footage, which has been

made available to the public, the officer ran a very long distance to get to where he heard the shots. It's an agonizingly long time until he vectored in on the threat, but when he did finally visually observe the suspect, armed with a rifle, the officer didn't hesitate. He fired, hitting the suspect and ending the threat.

The suspect, 33-year-old Mauricio Martinez Garcia, was a neo-Nazi radical. He had attempted to join the US Army in 2008 but washed out of basic training for mental issues. He was armed with an AR-15 and other weapons. He killed eight innocent victims, including three children. He would have killed more if the Allen PD officer hadn't ended the rampage.

If this is the first time you are hearing about this, don't be surprised. The mainstream media doesn't like to cover two types of stories: One, where good guys with guns kill bad guys with guns; and two, cops who risk

their lives to take out threats. They get more viewership, mileage and money covering stories about "gun violence," where the firearms rather than the perpetrators are somehow to blame, and headlines about subpar cops like the Uvalde crew. You could fill volumes with what the media doesn't report.

Nevertheless, the actions of the Allen PD officer were extraordinary, and the courage he demonstrated is not as uncommon as the media would like to report. ★

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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LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE G.O.A.T. ON SELF-DEFENSE

Why 'Wild Bill' Hickok was the greatest martial artist of all time.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PAUL PAWELA

In the article titled “My Two Cents on Revolvers and Gunfighting,” which appeared in the June 2021 issue of *American Shooting Journal*, I briefly touched on how James Butler Hickok, better known as “Wild Bill” Hickok, generally approached the subject of self-defense.

In this article, I would like to go more in depth on the subject and explain why I think Hickok may have been the greatest of all time on that subject and why many of the lessons learned from him are still applicable to date.



THE ORIGIN OF this article stemmed from a debate I had recently with a martial artist who proclaimed that Bruce Lee was the greatest martial artist who ever lived.

Happily, I contested that while Lee is a dominant figurehead in martial arts to this day, he was hardly the greatest fighter ever; in fact, I reported, he was not even a fighter in the martial arts. This seemed to irritate the irate martial artist, who gave me his resume as well as his knowledge on Lee. I responded with my bonafides: over 50 years in the martial arts; recognized by the martial arts elites as a grand master; trained by Bruce Lee's instructors and certified to teach jeet kune do; and I



James Butler Hickok. (WIKIPEDIA)

have extensively trained with martial arts world champions like Joe Lewis, Jeff Smith, Bill Wallace, Benny Urquidez, Royce Gracie and Graciela Casillas, to mention a few.

I have interviewed all of them on their opinions of Bruce Lee; all had much respect for him in the martial arts world as a pioneer for all he did. Still, he was not a fighting champion like the “Big

Three”: Mike Stone, Joe Lewis and Chuck Norris in his time.

“Martial arts” is a Latin term that literally means “arts of Mars,” referring to the Roman god of war. Typically, and quite erroneously, martial arts are often attributed to arts that come from east Asia. But having lived and trained in Korea and Japan, I learned that these arts



One of the most famous gunfights of all time occurred in 1865 between Hickok and Davis Tutt (pictured). The shootout launched Hickok to fame as a gunfighter. (WIKIPEDIA)

came from people who were conquered by other people with superior weapons. It was then that I realized I was learning to fight from people who were literally remembered in the annals of history as losers.

OF COURSE, TRADITIONAL martial artists lose their minds when I state these facts, and people challenge me to come up with my opinion on who is the greatest martial artist of all time. My response is always “Wild Bill” Hickok.

Here is the rationale behind this pick: Hickok was the proverbial man in the arena; he was a bonafide Indian fighter, an Army scout, a Union spy, a federal marshal, and a proficient brawler in hand-to-hand fighting as well as with sticks, knives, handguns, rifles and shotguns.

Some highlights:

- Hickok was not only one of the best marksmen of his time (performing in many shooting competitions), but he was also considered one of the deadliest gunfighters of all time by surviving

many gunfights he participated in. Many of these gunfights were against multiple opponents.

- Hickok was in at least three documented life-and-death encounters

with a knife; one was against a grizzly bear.

- Hickok once used a pool cue to beat up men (plural) who were accosting him and a friend in a pool hall saloon.

- And when challenged to a boxing match by a rather famous pugilist who was trying to make a name for himself, Hickok pounded the man into oblivion and ran him out of town.

TODAY'S MODERN SELF-DEFENSE trainers follow John Farnham's tactical advice: “Don't go to stupid places with stupid people at stupid times to do stupid things!”

However, in Hickok's day, the common location for entertainment, where drinking and loose women were plenty, was the local saloon. The saloon was the scene of many gunfights that were caused by excessive drinking that stimulated belligerence and arguments about almost anything, including gambling disputes and fights over women.

If we look at today's headlines, not much has changed. Drugs, alcohol and loose morals cause the demise of many people.

But as human beings, we can learn from those who have lived through violent encounters. Throughout history, those lessons have always been the same,



Author Paul Pawela stands at the site where Hickok shot Tutt in Springfield, Missouri.

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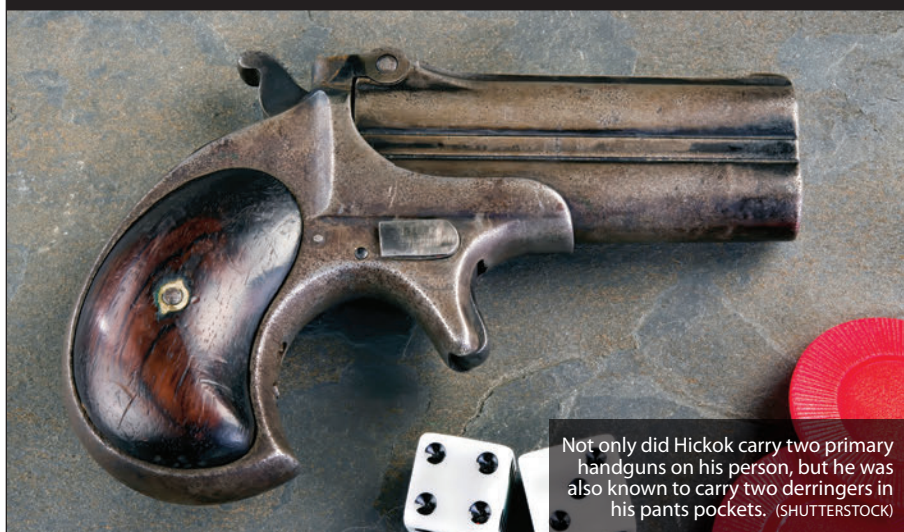
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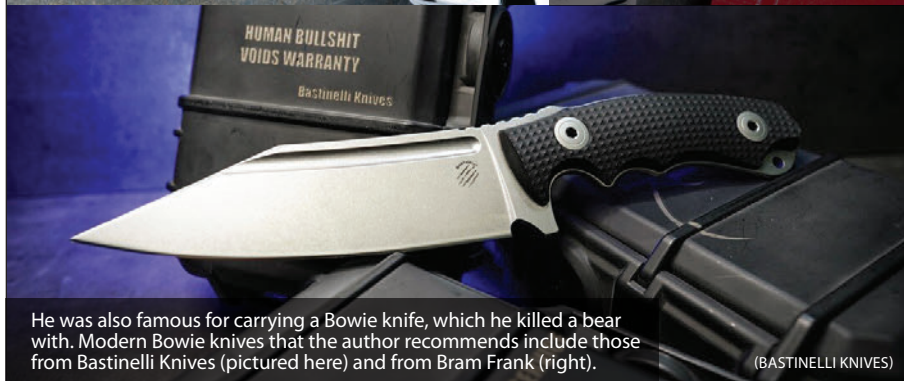
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Not only did Hickok carry two primary handguns on his person, but he was also known to carry two derringers in his pants pockets. (SHUTTERSTOCK)



He was also famous for carrying a Bowie knife, which he killed a bear with. Modern Bowie knives that the author recommends include those from Bastinelli Knives (pictured here) and from Bram Frank (right).

(BASTINELLI KNIVES)



(BRAM FRANK)

and Hickok perfected them. Let's take a look at some of those lessons.

It all starts with situational awareness, defined as a working blend of preparation and training, which includes knowledge of the environment, perceptual alertness, and instinct or

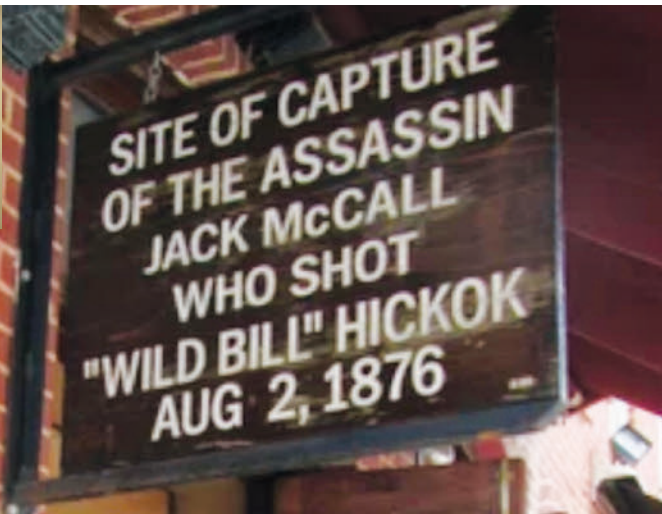
gut feeling. Hickok practically invented the practice of having his back against the wall in restaurants or saloons, which gave him the tactical advantage of viewing all who approached him. When patrolling the streets as a sworn law enforcement officer, Hickok walked

down the middle of the street, never trusting corners or alleyways. Upon retiring for the night, he placed crumpled newspapers outside his hotel room that would alert him to anyone trying to sneak up on him in the middle of the night. And lastly, he always slept with a gun either under his pillow or readily available on a nightstand. That is pretty much sound advice for this day and age.

The difference between our country's development and others' was our superior weaponry compared to that of our enemies. Hickok not only understood this, but he lived it. He had on his person at all times either a model .36-caliber or a .44-caliber Colt pistol on each hip; some sort of Bowie-type knife in his belt; and a .41-caliber derringer in each side of his pants pockets. When he walked the streets as a marshal, he also carried a double-barrel shotgun or a Winchester rifle. Hickok was always prepared for W.A.R., which we know from other warriors is an acronym for We Are Ready!



(SHUTTERSTOCK)



Jack McCall shot Hickok in the back of the head while the latter was playing a game of poker in Deadwood, Dakota Territory. At the time of his death, it was reported that Hickok had in his hand two black eights and two black aces, which has come to be known as the "dead man's hand."

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However, there is a difference between having weapons, carrying them and being proficient with them. From the time Hickok started shooting at an early age, he always used his shooting skills with great purpose. Be it for hunting food, winning shooting competitions, or saving his life or others, Hickok was always practicing for shooting perfection and he was proficient and deadly-skilled with both hands.

MANY TACTICAL INSTRUCTORS have said that shooting the body is your best bet and best target; my personal retort has always been, "In whose opinion?" Hickok said that in his experience in close-quarter shooting, "A man shot in the torso can keep firing even if fatally wounded, but a bullet in the head usually put him out of action."

There are several documented cases of Hickok shooting men in the head and ending the fight. One such case took place in a bar in Jefferson County, Nebraska, when four men accosted

Hickok while he was drinking. Naturally, guns were drawn. Hickok and his antagonist shot at about the same time; Hickok took a round in his right shoulder, rendering his right hand useless for the rest of the fight, while his opponent took a bullet to the jaw. Going immediately to his left hand, Hickok put three remaining rounds in the heads of the other attackers, killing all of them.

Two months later in Kansas City, Hickok shot two more men in the head who tried to ambush him. One man jumped out with a gun pointed at Hickok, putting him at a disadvantage. But with some skullduggery tactics of his own, Hickok pretended he had help, telling his "backup" not to shoot. When the man turned to see whom Hickok was talking to, Hickok shot his opponent in the head, killing him.

There are other documented cases, but we must move on due to limited space and time.

As mentioned, Hickok was also

proficient with a knife; he dispatched one grizzly bear (that mauled him pretty badly), one antagonist in a barroom knife fight, and one Confederate soldier on a sentry removal/escape.

When it came to fist-fighting or frontier-style combat – which meant anything goes, including eye-gouging, groin-kneeing and ear-chewing – well, Hickok was proficient in that as well.

Time does not permit me to talk about Hickok's marksmanship with a rifle, but he shot multiple people many different times with that weapon!

So when it comes right down to it, in self-defense and in martial arts, no question James Butler Hickok was the greatest of all time. 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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