

FIREARMS NEWS[®]

GUN SALES, REVIEWS & 2A INFORMATION / JUNE 2026



BORN FROM A BUZZGUN!

JAMES TARR REVIEWS
MILITARY ARMAMENT
CORPORATION'S

MAC IX!

MINING UNOBTAINIUM: ALY & KAUFMAN'S AKB-23

BUILDING A BRITISH
L85-TYPE SERVICE
RIFLE AT HOME

THE SIG SAUER P365 X-MACRO COMP

MINIMAL FOOTPRINT,
MAXIMUM FIREPOWER

A D.S. ARMS-BUILT L1A1 RIFLE

SHOT SHOW 2026

PATRICK SWEENEY DESCRIBES
HIS FAVORITE FINDS!

■ **CARRYING
CONCEALED**
SUICIDAL EDC/
EMPTY-CHAMBER EDC

■ **IN HUSHED TONES**
THE RUGER DEAD
AIR RXD 910Ti
SUPPRESSOR

■ **RELOADING**
9MM PRESSURE
TESTING

■ **THE WAR GUNS**
THE LAHTI-SALORANTA
M/26 LIGHT MACHINE GUN

■ **THE ACCESSORY ANGLE**
FALCO'S LEATHER
ROTO-SHOULDER HOLSTER

■ **PRODUCT SHOWCASE**
GUN RELATED PRODUCTS!

■ **SPECIAL REPORT**
DISMISSAL OF
IMMIGRATION THREAT
IS WHAT THE GUN
PROHIBITIONISTS'
WANT: A RESPONSE
TO CAM EDWARDS

■ **NEWSSTAND**
IMPORTANT
2A NEWS



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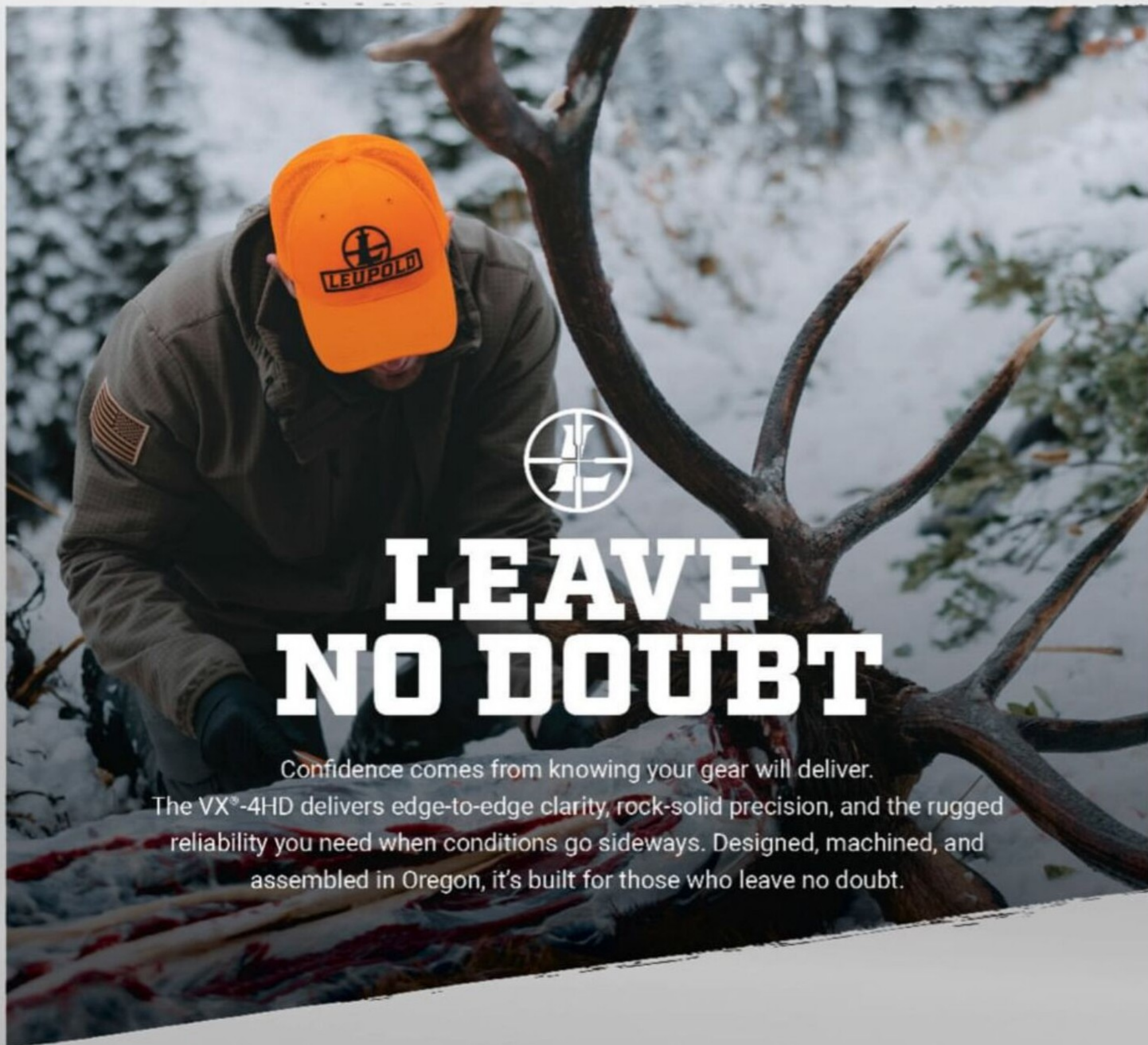
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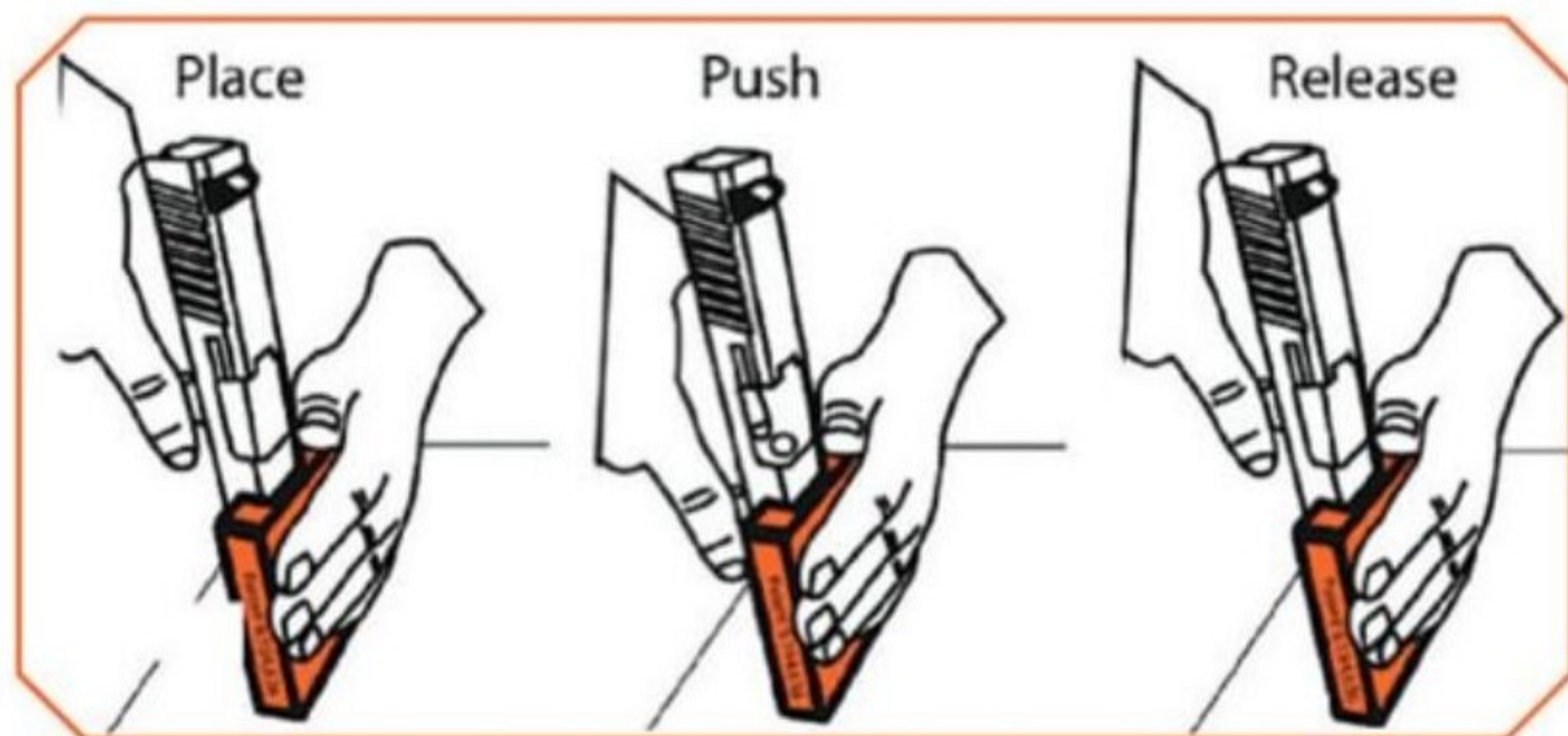
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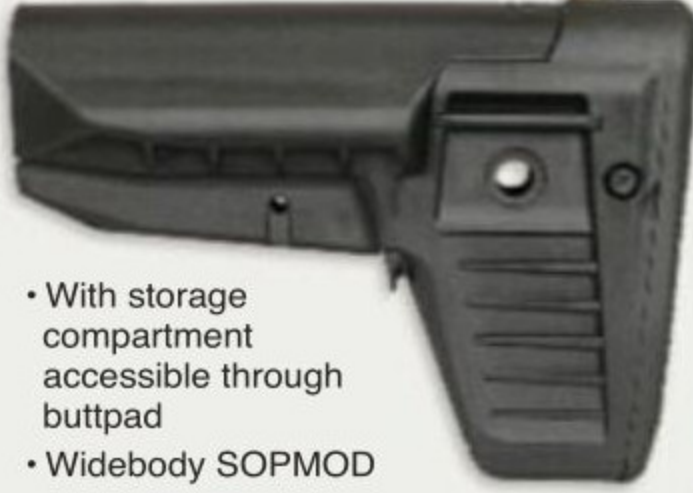
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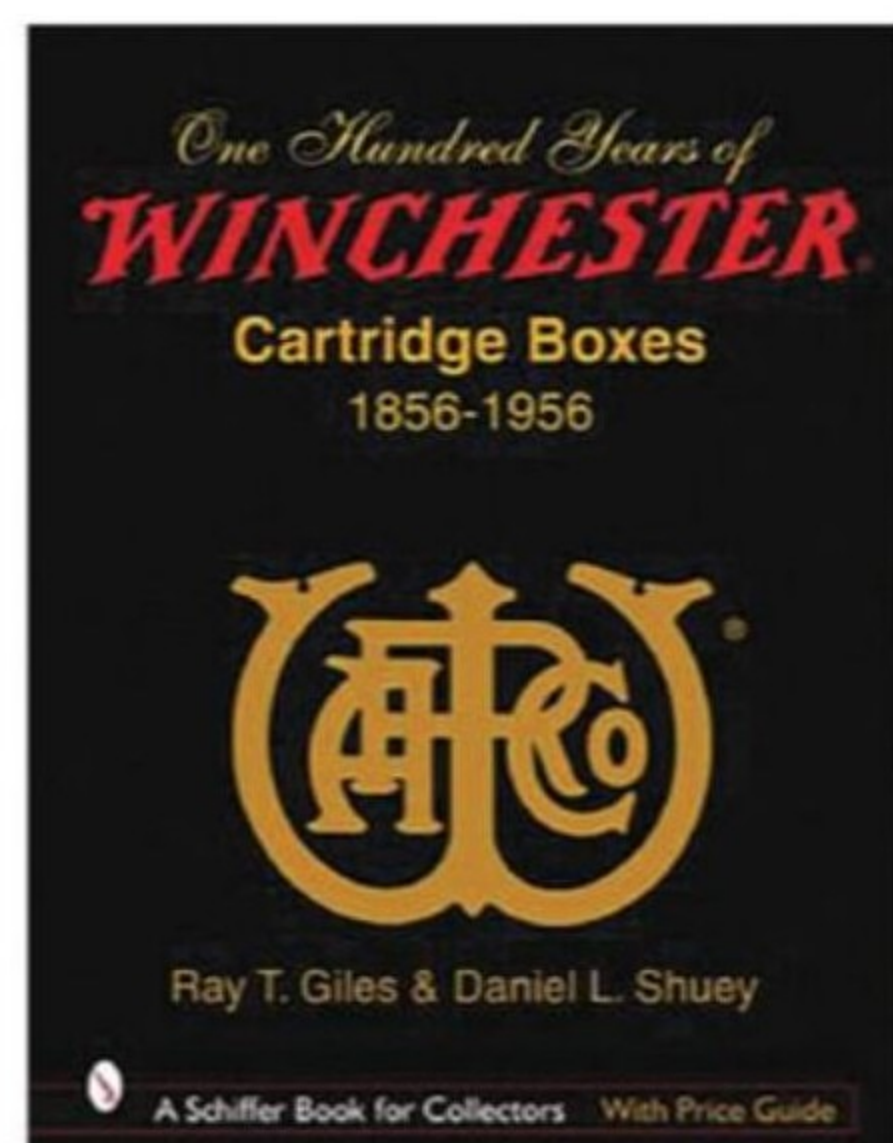
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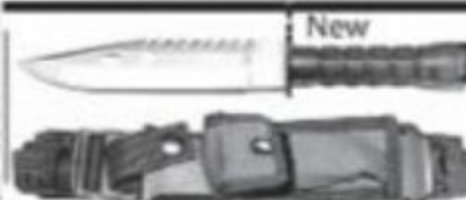
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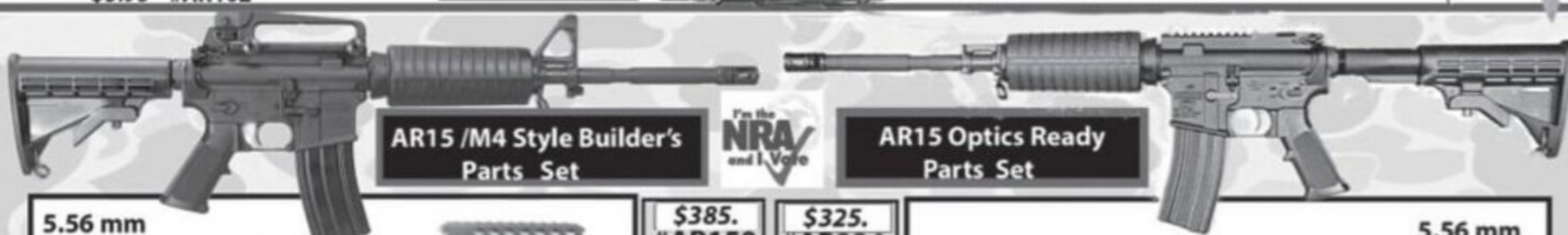
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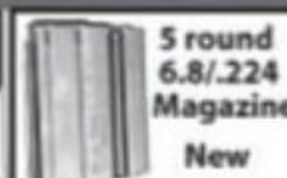
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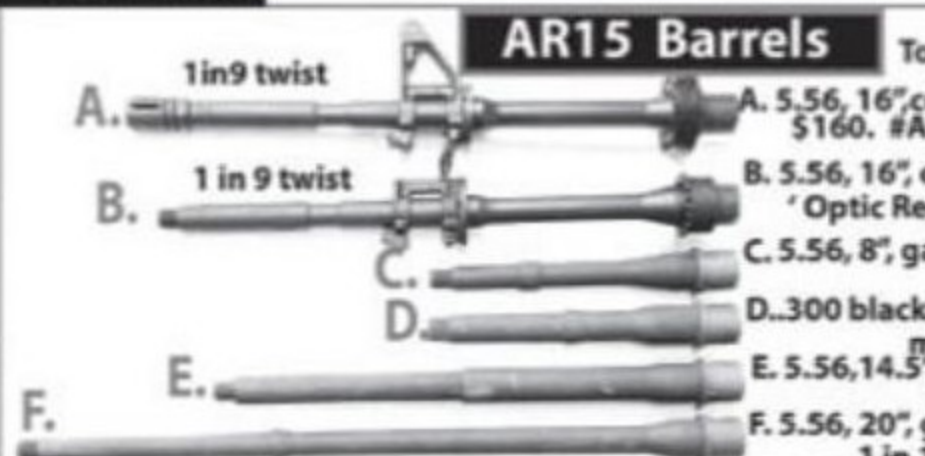


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Classic M16 'Silent' Black Sling
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F. 5.56, 14.5", gas hole, threaded
muz. \$95. #AR483
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H. 5.56, 20", gas hole, threaded muz.
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M9
Bayonet
w/ Scab.
w/ stone,
wire cutter
slot, & hex
bolt take
down in
pommel.
\$69.95 #BAY363

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Scabbard like the M8A1

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1905 scabbard

1910 scabbard

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Original Like New
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U.S. M8A1 Scabbard
USGI Body with new canvas hanger assy. Fits M3, M4, M5, M6 & M7 bayonets & knives
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Overall Length 14"

Comes with Leather Scabbard

New

M1942 16" Garand Bayonet

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Fits the M16 /AR15 Rifle

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Brown Compact \$29.95 #HOL221-Brown Khaki Compact \$29.95 #HOL221-Khaki

Right hand draw Brown Leather NEW

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U.S. Philippines C96 Hip Holster Early 1900s Officer holster as used with acquired C96 pistols after the Philippines was liberated from Spain. U.S. marked. Belt loop on back. \$40. #HOL113 *comes w/ 2 8rd. stripper clips.

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Also have for Left Hand Draw \$25. #HOL102 New (for S&W Service Revolver)

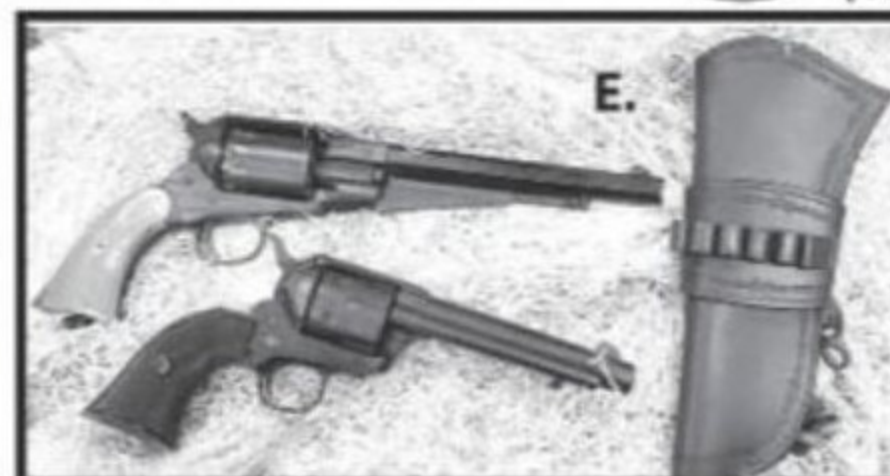
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Lengths of 34", 36", 40" & 44".
Adjustment Strap can reduce up to 3 inches and be modified by adding several more holes to the strap.

20 cartridge Loops on Belt handle .38, thru .45 cal.

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Holster handles multiple types of Revolvers & Semi Autos w/ Medium to Large Frames

Beautifully 'Tooled' scrolled leather on the Belt & Holster. Thick 3/16" leather will last a lifetime!

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Loops handle .38 thru .45 cartridges

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Holster handles multiple types of Revolvers and Semi Autos with Medium to Large Frames

DEPARTMENT OF WAR MEMORANDUM ON PRIVATE GUNS ON MILITARY BASES A STEP IN RIGHT DIRECTION



(Mason Lawrence/Shutterstock)

Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth, Signed an Order Which Will Allow Military Personnel to Carry and Store Personal Firearms on Military Installations. However, There are Restrictions.

By David Codrea, Gun Politics Field Editor

“Secretary of War Pete Hegseth signed a memorandum directing military installation commanders to allow War Department personnel — namely, uniformed service members — to request to carry privately owned firearms while in their nonofficial duty capacity on DOW property within the United States,” Pentagon News announced April 2. ““The memo I’m signing today directs installation commanders to allow requests for personal protection — to carry a privately owned firearm — with the presumption that it is necessary for personal protection,” he continued.”

“These warfighters — entrusted with the safety of our nation — are no less entitled to exercise their God-given right to keep and bear arms than any other American,” Hegseth declared in a statement that cited “several active-shooter incidents on U.S. military installations in recent years,” and noting the “Non-Official Personal Protection Arming on Department of War Property” is authorized by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016.

There is a “presumption of approval” on personal carry applications, the

announcement states, adding, “If a request is for some reason denied, the reason for that denial will be in writing and will explain — in detail — the basis for that [decision].” One further restriction for the Pentagon is that “the memo stops short of allowing personal-carry within the walls of the building,” mandating “that the Pentagon Force Protection Agency must allow fair consideration for Pentagon personnel to store a privately owned firearm in a vehicle on the Pentagon Reservation.”

State Bans Still in Place

While this is a welcome and much needed announcement, and while Hegseth’s acknowledgement that the Second Amendment is a “God-given right” is consistent with the clear intent of the Framers of the Constitution, it needs to be recognized for what it is—a good first step but not the journey’s end. For instance, making base carry subject to permits and unconstitutional gun bans imposed by the state the base is located in automatically means infringements will take legal precedence, especially when considering that means there will be no possession or storage of personally owned AR-15s in over a

dozen states, and no standard capacity magazines, forced reset triggers, etc.

Also unknown, since Hegseth acknowledges it is a right, what provisions will be extended to contractors and civilian employees? And in a related concern, guns are still banned from military cemeteries, meaning visitors must travel unarmed to visit departed loved ones. While this ban is codified in law and can’t be overturned by memorandum or order, Hegseth and President Trump could capitalize on the momentum of the military base memorandum and encourage Congress to correct this affront to patriots who died fighting for freedom.

Hegseth’s memorandum is long overdue and appreciated. But it’s just the first step.

—
David Codrea is the winner of multiple journalist awards for investigating/defending the RKBA and a long-time gun owner rights advocate who defiantly challenges the folly of citizen disarmament. In addition to being a regular featured contributor for Firearms News, he blogs at “The War on Guns: Notes from the Resistance,” and posts on Twitter: @dcodrea and Facebook.  



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SUPREME COURT “CONSERVATIVES” THROW GUN OWNERS UNDER THE BUS, AGAIN

Perhaps, It's Time to Reject the Notion of Failure and Embrace That of Complicity.

By Darwin Nercesian

The Supreme Court has yet again scorned its obligation to the Second Amendment and American gun owners by refusing to hear a challenge to Illinois' ban on carrying loaded concealed firearms on public transit systems. The ban was initially ruled unconstitutional by an Illinois district court; however, that ruling was overturned by a three-judge panel of the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals prior to the petitioners' Writ of Certiorari to SCOTUS last October.

On April 6, the Supreme Court demonstrated once again that the “landmark” *Bruen* decision isn't worth the paper it's written on, and neither are the paper tigers that President Trump appointed to the bench in his previous administration. Decisions like this come as no surprise from left-wing puppets like Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, and Ketanji Brown Jackson, and Chief Justice John Roberts have long since tipped his hat to the Democrat agenda, but what happened to Trump's “legacy-making” Supreme Court appointees, Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett? This isn't the first time they've been on the wrong side of the issue, and I wrote about it almost a



(Photo by Darwin Nercesian)

year ago in my article, *SCOTUS Fails Americans Again, Kicking Gun Rights Further Down the Road*.

Credit goes to Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito for standing against the Constitutional breach, but it will take more than two to tango with the remaining anti-gun activist Justices.

The case, *Schoenthal v. Raoul*, was brought by four Illinois residents who are also concealed carry permit holders, making it clear that even those vetted by the state are being targeted. It's important to note that Americans who carry on a daily basis can easily be denied their right and their ability to defend against violent criminals who do not heed such bans by creating Constitutional bottlenecks in areas frequented by the public. Further, one could easily argue that the ban unfairly prejudices working-class citizens who are more likely to brave mass transit systems, especially in liberal metropolitan dumpsters like Chicago.

The Supreme Court, having all but given its blessing for such a ban

in what is demonstrably and consistently a criminally violent venue, has also set a dangerous precedent, not only leaving the restriction in place but opening the floodgates for comrade anti-American “states” to follow suit. As it sits, this unconstitutional provision means that Illinois concealed permit holders will only be permitted to carry unloaded guns on public transportation, leaving commuters at a severe disadvantage to the criminal element, a move that intentionally skips the back of the bus and throws law-abiding Americans directly under it.

Darwin Nercesian is a long-time gun rights advocate and shooter of targets far, far away. As a News Field Editor at Firearms News, Darwin writes about the Second Amendment, firearms, and related gear. Follow him on Instagram, X, and YouTube @DFOE_Official. 

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

BIDEN... EXCUSE ME, I MEAN TRUMP ADMINISTRATION COMING AFTER PISTOL BRACES... AGAIN

Meet the New Boss, Same as the Old, an Anti-Second Amendment Panderer and Liar-In-Chief.

By Darwin Nercesian,
News Field Editor

Bolstering rather than reversing the previous administration's mandates as promised, President Trump's record when it comes to the Second Amendment will be worse than that of Obama and Biden combined. While that may sound like hyperbole, keep in mind that the two aforementioned purveyors of fascism and the destruction of American values at least had the decency to tell us who they really were on the subject of gun rights, while our sitting President lied to us, securing our support and hijacking our votes with zero intent on keeping his word. If you're a Trump supporter, don't take this as an indictment of your intelligence or decision-making ability, because he got me, too.

Contrary to the backlash I am sure to face for my loyalty to the Constitution over another dishonest politician, my opinion on the matter has been shaped over countless examples (over 60 articles at that link) of anti-Second Amendment treachery on the part of



(Darwin Nercesian)

the President and his "best people" since he first took office in 2017. At the tail end of 2024, I wrote *Let's Talk About Pam Bondi*, detailing her rise to fame as a red-flag sweetheart and proponent of bump stock bans during her tenure as Florida's attorney general (Trump also favored both and banned bump stocks). Of course, who could forget Trump nodding and agreeing as Bondi rolled out her Gun Violence Restraining Order agenda in the Roosevelt Room back in 2018. During that same year, Trump clashed with pro-2A Republicans stating that semi-auto "weapons" should be regulated further and laughed in the faces of conservatives when he stated, "You're afraid of the NRA." because

they hadn't already raised the age to purchase one to 21. Infringing on one amendment wasn't enough for Trump that day, so he went after the Fifth Amendment when he stated that he likes, "taking the guns first." These and other statements were met with smiles and hand wringing by one of the most anti-2A politicians in our lifetime, the late Democrat Senator Diane Fiensteien, who was seated next to Trump. This should have told us everything we needed to know when the President ultimately appointed Bondi United States Attorney General at the onset of his second administration, a position from which she was recently fired after only fourteen months on the job.

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Despite my schadenfreude upon seeing Bondi ejected from the helm of the Department of Justice (DOJ), I'd be remiss not to point out that the termination reportedly had to do with her handling of the Epstein files. Keep in mind that the disagreement did not stem from any desire to release the files unredacted and in their entirety, which would have been an honest and transparent gesture to Americans, but instead arose from Bondi's reluctance to prosecute the President's political enemies. Now that she is done fleecing taxpayers of their hard-earned money, Pam is headed to a cushy private sector job, according to Trump, where I'm sure she'll continue to fail upwards while being on the wrong side of American liberty.

Prior to exiting, however, Bondi left us with one last token of contempt for the Second Amendment, informing Americans that, despite a federal court ruling vacating the Biden-era pistol brace rule, the DOJ and ATF will continue to enforce it at their discretion. This is not in concert with the President's February 7, 2025, Executive Order "Protecting Second Amendment Rights," in which he demanded a full assessment and "plan of action."

(b) In developing such proposed plan of action, the Attorney General shall review, at a minimum:

- (i) All Presidential and agencies' actions from January 2021 through January 2025 that purport to promote safety but may have impinged on the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens;
- (ii) Rules promulgated by the Department of Justice, including by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, from January 2021 through

January 2025 pertaining to firearms and/or Federal firearms licensees;

- (iii) Agencies' plans, orders, and actions regarding the so-called "enhanced regulatory enforcement policy" pertaining to firearms and/or Federal firearms licensees;
- (iv) Reports and related documents issued by the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention;
- (v) The positions taken by the United States in any and all ongoing and potential litigation that affects or could affect the ability of Americans to exercise their Second Amendment rights;
- (vi) Agencies' classifications of firearms and ammunition; and
- (vii) The processing of applications to make, manufacture, transfer, or export firearms.

This report was due 30 days after the order was issued, and its truancy has extended to the present day, more than a year later. Trump hasn't seemed to take issue with that.

Pistol Brace History

The first pistol brace approved for sale by the ATF came in 2012, when the agency's Firearms Technology Branch (FTB) examined the device and determined that it would not render a firearm subject to the National Firearms Act of 1934 (NFA).

"Based on our evaluation, FTB finds that the submitted forearm brace, when attached to a firearm, does not convert that weapon to be fired from the shoulder and would not alter the classification of a pistol

or other firearm. While a firearm so equipped would still be regulated by the Gun Control Act, 18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(3), such a firearm would not be subject to NFA controls."

The old Potomac two-step was still in play, however, as the Biden administration, in 2021, decided to criminalize millions overnight with a new "rule" that effectively banned pistol stabilizing braces. This overreach turned all firearms equipped with braces and barrels shorter than sixteen inches into short-barreled rifles (SBRs), requiring participation in .gov's illegal and unconstitutional registry and scheme to tax Americans out of their rights. At the time, there were an estimated 40 million braces in circulation, all of which had been legal for the better part of a decade.

Prevailing lawsuits, including Gun Owners of America (GOA) backed *Texas v. ATF*, resulted in injunctions blocking the ATF's ability to enforce the so-called rule, leading to a June 2024 ruling in *Mock v. Bondi* (formerly *Mock v. Garland*) that ultimately vacated the infringement, stating the ATF had violated the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) by reclassifying braced pistols as short-barreled rifles without proper procedure.

Fast forward to March 2026, and the Trump DOJ, under Pam Bondi, files a response in *Texas v. ATF*, admitting in full that the agency intends to continue enforcing the rule's principles under its own regulatory authority, a move that might result in ordinary citizens being charged with contempt.

"Plaintiffs also make much of the fact that defendants continue to enforce the NFA's and the GCA's regulation of short-barreled rifles against some brace-equipped pistols, even though the Rule has been universally vacated. However, that should come as no surprise, as that is consistent with how defendants have always explained how things work if a court vacated the Rule or enjoined its enforcement," according to the DOJ.



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The fact that the ATF continues to play gotcha games with the law while misappropriating tax dollars to create felons out of law-abiding Americans rather than focusing its efforts and funding on stopping real crime doesn't come as a surprise at all. This is a criminal element, backed by a larger criminal enterprise,

a lot of people out here, so here's another receipt.

"When we asked the ATF which braced pistols they consider illegal, they refused to answer. In fact, they told one of our colleagues that they will not issue any written guidance classifying braced firearms unless it's in a criminal case against a gun

defending the NFA on multiple fronts. I wrote about this in my article, *One Big Beautiful Update, Part 1*. Continued harassment regarding pistol stabilizing brace-equipped firearms seems par for the anti-gun course, but aside from his disingenuous Executive Order, were specific promises made? You bet they were!

A politician telling bald-faced lies isn't much to write home about, especially when the falsehoods come on the campaign trail while pandering for donations and votes.

the United States government. What used to be a surprise was their open flaunting of that fact, but even that has become commonplace. This absolute corruption is something I like to call "ruling by 'What are you going to do about it?'" I've seen organizations subject to RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) indictments convicted for less.

Keep in mind that the DOJ has spent over a year doing mental gymnastics and is now admitting that it never intended to respect the court's ruling. Even worse, this was all done on the taxpayer's dime. Let that sink in.

Void for Vagueness

The Constitution's void for vagueness doctrine, rooted in due process, holds that a statute is invalid if it is too vague for an average

owner. Think about what that means. You could own a perfectly legal pistol with a brace, have no idea it's been flagged by the ATF, and only find out when you're facing a felony charge. That's not how the rule of law is supposed to work," said Ben Sanderson, GOA's Deputy Director of Federal Affairs.

I can back this up, as I was not able to obtain any additional information from the ATF either by phone or email. Clearly, the lack of detail on what would constitute a violation both offends the void for vagueness doctrine and tips its hat to the ATF's intent, using the DOJ's power to selectively criminalize law-abiding Americans when it suits them.

Telling Lies

With respect to those receipts, here's a big one. President Trump ran a great

"The so-called pistol brace rule, which orders law-abiding citizens to register or surrender guns with certain equipment. You know that. Many of you are forced to do it... And now Biden is trying to ban all private gun transfers in the United States with the stroke of a pen... Under a Trump administration, all of those Biden disasters get ripped up and torn out my first week, but maybe my first day in office, okay? Maybe my first," said Trump in a 2023 speech.

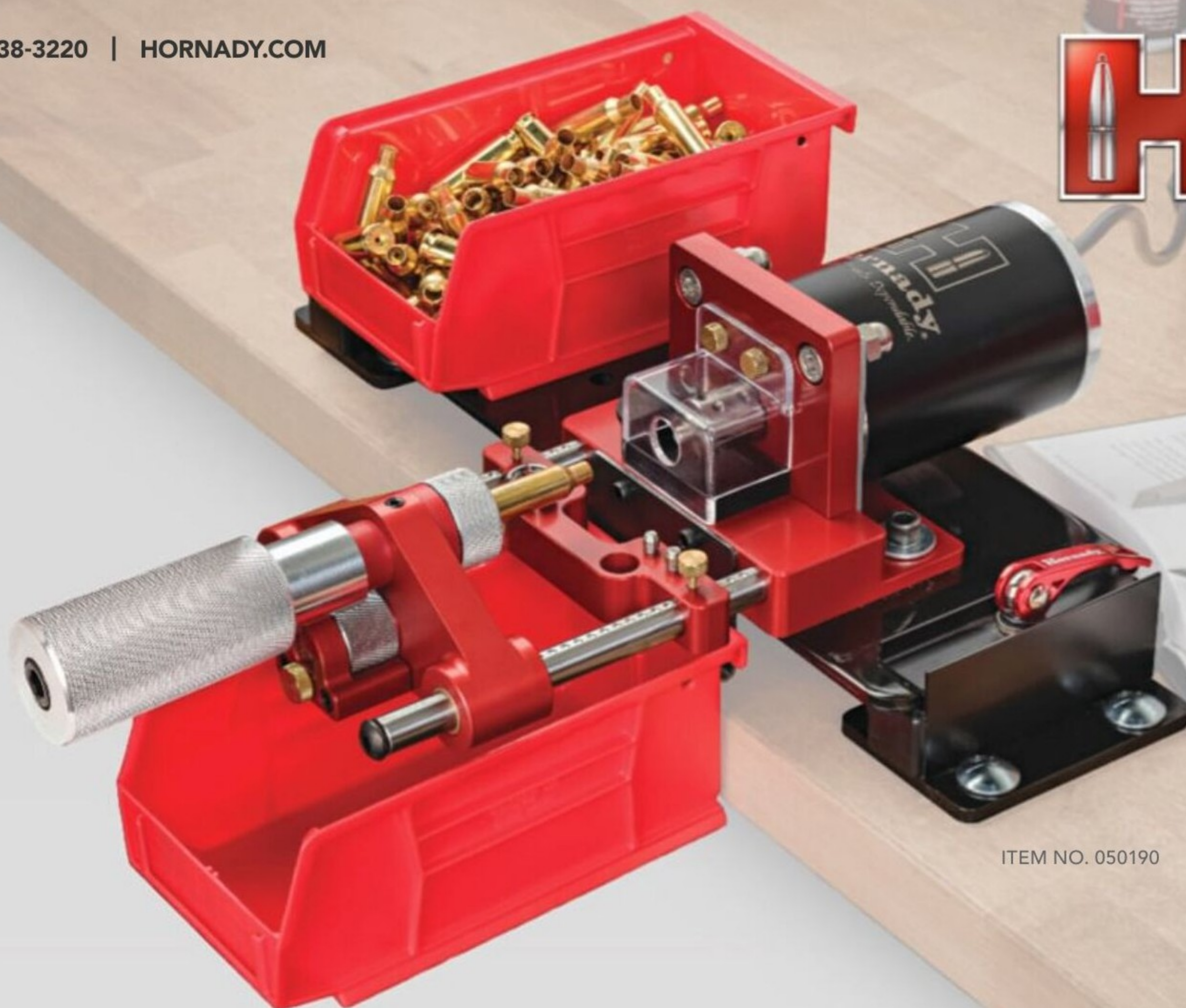
Ouch! He not only made numerous promises to Americans regarding the Second Amendment, but he also specifically referenced the pistol brace rule, going so far as to say he would tear it up immediately upon moving back into the White House. How then have we arrived at the current impasse? Occam's Razor, which recommends that the simplest problem-solving theory is usually the best, would suggest that President

Perhaps it's time we develop the understanding that our elected officials need their feet held to the fire, and that reputations will be tarnished in the same manner our hopes have been.

person to understand what conduct is prohibited. This is intended to ensure fair notice to citizens and to prevent arbitrary enforcement by police or prosecutors. While this is far from the ATF and DOJ's most egregious offense, I'm calling

deal of his campaign on promises to reverse and rectify the corruption and policies of his predecessor. While he has certainly taken diametrically opposed stances on illegal immigration, tariffs, and foreign policy, his Department of Justice is currently

Trump flat-out lied, which makes sense when you look at the timing of his promises. Trump used deception as currency against unwitting Americans, inspiring false hope among gun owners who believed in the rhetoric, the executive distraction, and "fight, fight, fight!"



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Final Thoughts

A politician telling bald-faced lies isn't much to write home about, especially when the falsehoods come on the campaign trail while pandering for donations and votes. The fact that it hardly fazes us these days is the real concern. Blind loyalty to highly flawed individuals has been a blight on American politics for as far back as I can remember, with the public treating elections as if cheerleaders for a show-down between rival gangs. Truthfully, Republicans and Democrats are a lot more harmful to our nation as a whole

than the Bloods and the Crips, but we don't need to play along. Perhaps it's time we develop the understanding that our elected officials need their feet held to the fire, and that reputations will be tarnished in the same manner our hopes have been.

This administration is President Trump's last stop, unless he has something to say about it, but that doesn't mean we should stand down and ignore the broken promises and disingenuous allegiance to the Second Amendment and the people who sent him back to the Oval Office. It's

time we let the President know in no uncertain terms that his legacy will suffer tenfold if he doesn't correct course, and that any endorsement he may have for a successor will result in nothing more than a campaign dead-on-arrival.

—
Darwin Nercesian is a long-time gun rights advocate and shooter of targets far, far away. As a News Field Editor at Firearms News, Darwin writes about the Second Amendment, firearms, and related gear. Follow him on Instagram, X, and YouTube @DToe_Official. 

EDITOR'S NOTE: As this issue was going to press, the BATFE held a press conference regarding new regulations. Although these appear to be favorable to gun owners who use pistol braces on the surface, these are not in many ways. Please check our website at [FirearmsNews.com](https://firearmsnews.com) for the article, *ATF's New Era of Reform... Repealing the Pistol Brace Rule and Why It Means Nothing*.

DISMISSAL OF IMMIGRATION THREAT

WHAT THE GUN PROHIBITIONISTS' WANT

A Response to Cam Edwards' Article 'Should 2A Groups Make Opposition to Legal Immigration an Issue? A Response to David Codrea'

By David Codrea, Politics Field Editor



(ProleR, Shutterstock)

“Should 2A Groups Make Opposition to Legal Immigration an Issue?”

Cam Edwards writes in *Bearing Arms*. “A Response to David Codrea.”

“Codrea argues that immigration, both legal and illegal, benefits Democrats far more than Republicans, and that ‘[a]dding such new

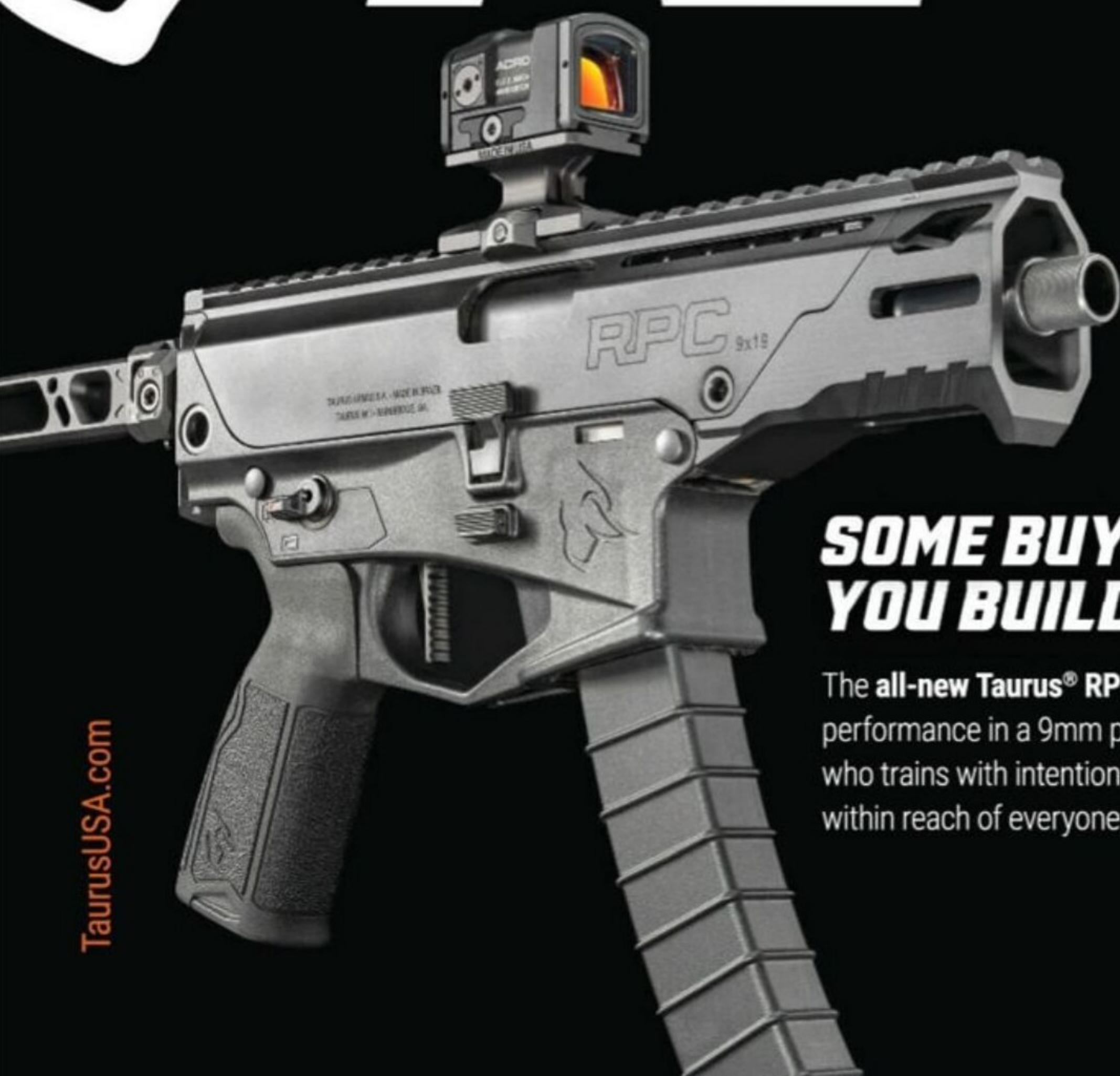
citizens to the voting rolls will result in supermajorities in state and federal legislatures that will then be able to pass all kinds of anti-gun edicts,” Edwards elaborates. “Codrea has encouraged gun owners to ask 2A groups ‘What are you going to do to counter the existential threat both legal and illegal immigration pose to

the Second Amendment, and what reforms will you expect politicians you support to champion?’”

The curious thing is, Edwards admits “I don't disagree with Codrea's premise that more immigration will lead to more Democrat voters, at least in short term. That seems pretty self-evident.”



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It's more than the short term as all credible polls show two and three generations later, naturalized minorities still favor gun control laws by landslide margins. Why it's incumbent on me to define how the gun groups handle the issue is left unexplained—it seems having them acknowledge that the “single issue” excuse they fall back puts our rights at risk should be sufficient. Once the issue is accepted as a significant gun owner concern, they can take measures and allocate resources to mitigate those threats just like they do with others.

“Do you want an outright end to legal immigration?” Edwards then asks. If I'd wanted that I'd have said it. Since when have I ever been afraid to speak my mind?

I acknowledge in the articles that kicked off an internet furor that “An activist who got me started in NRA activism in Los Angeles is an African-born Italian. A frequent contributor to *The War on Guns* (WarOnGuns.com) is of Indian heritage. A Cuban refugee/immigrant is a mentor whose important research I rely on and whose writings I regular-

there's gotta be more in it for us than cheap labor. The government is tasked to protect life, liberty, property, and yes, the American way of life as understood by the people who built the country, (NRA's Ohio gubernatorial endorsee Vivek Ramaswamy saying “The idea of a heritage American is about as loony as anything the woke left has actually put up,” notwithstanding). It needs to establish better filters for who gets let in and for what purposes, and for who is eligible to be considered for citizenship.

It's more than the short term as all credible polls show two and three generations later, **naturalized minorities still favor gun control laws by landslide margins.**

However, Edwards seems to think—and evidently wants his readers to believe—that the guy who spots the problem and warns about it is also the one responsible for solving it. So, okay, I'll bite. I'll answer his questions, even though no one trying to take me to task on this issue has done anything but ignore, deflect, dismiss, and redirect on MY questions.

“What reforms do you want politicians (and Second Amendment organizations) to champion?” he asks.

I want what you should want, Cam. I want politicians to craft immigration laws that adhere to the principles of the Preamble to the Constitution, which essentially sets the framework for laws that merit consent of the governed. If they don't serve to “form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity,” they have no legitimacy to be enacted. I want Second Amendment organizations to make that expectation known as part of the standard by which they will either endorse and grade or oppose a politician.

ly publicize, and I publicly mourned the untimely death of another Cuban colleague and filmmaker whose life's work exposed the evils of communism.”

So clearly, no. What I want to outright end is illegal immigration. Furthermore, if Edwards is going to critique my articles, he needs to not selectively ignore that which I've already written, so it's curious he avoids acknowledging that I already cited specific examples of problems with “legal immigration, which under current law encourages chain migration, ‘birthright citizenship,’ and welfare benefits.”

What I want is for legal immigration to align itself with the goals of the Preamble, and that means, among other reforms, to end mass immigration and to develop more effective ways to ensure those being admitted are not hostile to/taking advantage of the country they are being admitted to visit, live, study, and/or work in. Plus, don't forget that where foreign nationals from hostile and/or Third World cultures are involved, there is no reliable way to vet their backgrounds and their associations.

It should not be about “what our country can do for them.” And

A Plan

So, I advocate limited admissions of foreign nationals and further limiting naturalization eligibility to individuals who understand and appreciate a government of checks and balances, and a Bill of Rights culture. Therefore, I would expect any “gun rights group” representing my interests to:

1. recognize the threat immigration in its current form poses to the Second Amendment and establish an official position,
2. educate its members about it,
3. convey expectations to politicians that, because this impacts the recognized right to keep and bear arms, its actions will have an impact on their level of approval. It does no good if a rep votes the right way on guns but then turns around and supports culturally suicidal immigration policies that will ultimately ensure a politically unchallengeable anti-gun majority.

Here's a case in point: North Carolina Sen. Thom Tillis has been rated A+ by NRA. At the same time, Tillis was pushing for “amnesty,”

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which not only directly undermined every one of his “good” votes but played right into the hands of the gun-grabbing Democrats. Whatever short-term gains his cheap labor backers think this will gain them, it will ultimately spell the death of the Republican Party as a force to be contended with. So, give such politicians more realistic grades and explain why. They’ll still be better than Democrat “F’s,” and this will increase pressure to do the right thing and/or help open a door for primary challengers who can do better on all counts, and it will also make the grades more credible than they are now.

with very little deviation from what they’re already doing.

What Does Cam offer?

NRA and 2A groups shouldn’t get involved, he says, because “they would be working against the interest of many of those individual members.”

Is the Second Amendment getting gutted by an unchallengeable majority not in their interests? So, do nothing? While Democrats will bulldoze an actual superhighway to citizenship a priority as soon as feckless Republicans blow their slim majorities...?

“Care to take my challenge?” I asked him when I responded to his

Show your sources and methodologies for determining this WILL NOT result in supermajorities in state and federal legislatures that will then be able to pass all kinds of anti-gun edicts. Show how this WILL NOT result in nominations and confirmations of judges to the Supreme and federal courts who will uphold those edicts and reverse gains made to date, and don’t forget how legal and illegal foreign nationals directly affect elections through their apportionment impact on congressional seats and electoral college votes. If you can’t disprove any of this, explain why a politician’s position on this issue should not be

I’ve just given you the blueprint to prove me wrong, Cam, in front of everybody with an open mind. All you’ve got to do is refute my contentions with facts.

Loaded Question

I’ve answered Cam’s questions about immigration and gun group expectations, but then he turns to other areas, saying he doesn’t “mean for these to be gotcha questions,” which are then precisely what he asks. Essentially, since they’re also overwhelmingly anti-gun, why am I also not demanding they come out against women and youth voting?

What a ridiculous question. Everything I’ve advocated for is doable. His query is not. Nowhere have I advocated for damn-near impossible Constitutional amendments like he speculates. Still, the trap he thinks he laid illustrates how precariously recognition of the right to keep and bear arms is balanced *with the existing electorate*. Putting millions more on the “pathway to citizenship,” which is the long-stated goal of the Democrats, will irrevocably change that balance. It’ll be “games over” for peaceable political and legal resolution. Obey and submit to infringements or defy and resist.

I’m offering a legal and peaceable way that Second Amendment groups have the ability and resources to do

article. “If you read the piece, you know I said, ‘I don’t disagree with Codrea’s premise that more immigration will lead to more Democrat voters,’” he replied. “So no, I don’t care to take the challenge. I agree with the premise.”

Stop Dancing Around the Issue

If he really agreed with me, he would not have put so much energy into shooting down gun group involvement. I answered your interrogation, Cam, and you really ought to stop deflecting. I’ll repeat myself: I dare you — without equivocation or redirecting, to answer my challenge, because so far, none of its critics will even try:

Audit all credible polls against real world experience in places like California and then produce credible data—not opinion, not anecdotes, not isolated examples, but something that can be independently validated—demonstrating that “amnesty” and a “pathway to citizenship” for MILLIONS of foreign nationals in this country illegally (and legally, with CURRENT culturally suicidal policies) WILL NOT overwhelmingly favor Democrats and anti-gunners.

reflected in grades, endorsements, and “pro-gun” group messaging.

I’ve just given you the blueprint to prove me wrong, Cam, in front of everybody with an open mind. All you’ve got to do is refute my contentions with facts. It’s not a question, as your headline implies, of the gun groups “making it an issue” — it IS an issue and has been for decades, whether they want to admit it or just stick their heads in the sand and let their de facto spokespeople give them cover.

I extend that invitation to the leaders of all the national gun groups, NRA, SAF, GOA, FPC, NAGR, and others. Take the challenge. Otherwise, you’re playing into the hands of the Democrats, and worse, by avoiding and ignoring this, you and they know it.

—
David Codrea is the winner of multiple journalist awards for investigating/defending the RKBA and a long-time gun owner rights advocate who defiantly challenges the folly of citizen disarmament. In addition to being a regular featured contributor for Firearms News, he blogs at “The War on Guns: Notes from the Resistance,” and posts on Twitter: @dcodrea and Facebook. 

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EMPTY-CHAMBER CARRY IS SUICIDAL EDC

What prompted the subject of this column was somebody on social media explaining—or, rather, “explaining,” because their reasoning was nonsensical gobbledygook—why they carry with an empty chamber, and it’s not the only thing people do regarding EDC that is some variation of dumb and/or dangerous. So, I thought a column about what NOT to do was necessary.

First off, empty chamber carry—the ostensible reason people do this is because carrying with a loaded chamber is “dangerous.” Presumably because the gun can accidentally go off? First off, a properly made firearm (and let’s put aside any comments, serious or humorous, about the SIG P320) will not just “go off.” Safeties have to be

► The Israelis practiced racking a round into the chamber as part of their draw-stroke only because, back in the day, the thumb safety on the Hi-Powers they were carrying was too small to reliably hit under stress. (Photo by James Tarr)



have time to chamber a round? What if the gun jams when you’re working the slide, because you’re panicked and/or fighting with someone? I’ve seen two videos of actual shootings where the people who were carrying with empty chambers ended up shot, because they were behind the time curve and/or they induced a malfunction while trying to chamber a round. One of them, unfortunately, was the good guy. If you are carrying with an empty chamber, you are not bringing

meant carrying it cocked-and-locked was a non-starter. It had nothing to do with a cartridge inside the chamber being “unsafe.” So, instead of carrying with the hammer down on a loaded round (probably because there’s no “safe” way to drop the hammer on a loaded round) they carried with an empty chamber and practiced racking the slide as part of their draw, but that was then, this is now. There is no good reason to carry with an empty chamber. Stop it.

There is no good reason to carry with an empty chamber. Stop it!

disengaged, and the trigger has to be pulled. In fact, for people who carry like this, the irrational fear that the gun “is just going to go off” is the real true reason they don’t carry with a round in the chamber. They literally are scared of carrying a loaded gun.

“I can rack the slide real quick when I draw the pistol,” is the usual defense. What if you’re fighting with someone or protecting your spouse/child with your other arm? That happens quite frequently. What if you simply don’t

a loaded gun to a gunfight. If you’re not comfortable carrying a pistol with a loaded chamber, carry something different—like a revolver.

People point to the Israelis as empty chamber carriers, and that was true back in the day. The only reason they were doing it back in the 1950s–1980s is because the only reliable semi-auto 9mms they could use were the single-action-only Browning Hi Power, and its thumb safety was too small to reliably hit with your thumb, which

Related to this is people who carry single-action-only (SAO) semi-autos like the 1911 with the hammer down. Simply because they think carrying it with the hammer cocked is dangerous. It’s not. What’s dangerous—to you and anyone else you intend to protect—is carrying a pistol that you can’t draw and fire one-handed quickly and smoothly.

Yes, that external cocked hammer looks dangerous, but it isn’t—a 1911 has both a thumb safety and a grip

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► Whatever kind of gun you carry, you should be able to draw and fire it one-handed, as your other hand might be busy. (Photo by James Tarr)



Single-action-only semi-autos like the 1911 (left) and the Browning Hi-Power are useless with their hammers down and should not be carried that way. Cocked hammer scare you? Then carry something else. (Photo by James Tarr)

safety, and mechanically is safer from accidental discharge than a Glock. There are lots of SAOs or SAO-capable designs on the market these days (1911s, 2011s, Browning Hi-Power Clones, CZ 75s, CZ P-09s, SIG P226s, etc.) and if you're going to carry them, carry them with the hammer cocked and the thumb safety on. Learn to disengage the thumb safety as part of your draw. Gun comes up/safety goes down. Gun goes down/safety goes up. Same as with an AR-15.

Fear of that cocked hammer is the real issue, but proponents of hammer-down carry sometimes deny/deflect and say that deactivating that thumb safety under stress isn't realistic. And thumb-cocking a hammer is? Please.

Not only can you sweep off a manual safety with your thumb smoothly, automatically, quickly, and one-handed, the advantage of a SAO gun is they provide the lightest, shortest, crispest trigger pull of any pistol type out there. But only if the hammer is cocked, otherwise it's just a really expensive paperweight.

There is no good reason to carry a SAO automatic with the hammer down. Stop it. This brings us to the final piece of bad behavior, open carry. Before you get your pitchforks and torches, hold on—I'm more pro-Second Amendment than you. All gun laws are infringements, and I should be able to walk down to my local hardware store and buy a belt-fed machinegun and 40mm grenade launcher—and HE grenades—without having to show ID or get government approval, as the Founding Fathers intended. If you can get the financing from your local credit union, I fully support you buying that Bradley Fighting Vehicle you always wanted with the 25mm Bushmaster Chain Gun and two deck-mounted M240Bs. You're going to need a bigger garage, though.

I'm not telling you to not open carry, I'm telling you that you're probably doing it in a way which increases the danger to you, which is the exact opposite of what you want. When I was a cop, they taught us that every radio call we went on was a "man with

a gun" call, because we were bringing a gun. That visible gun on our hip was a target of bad guys. That's why uniformed cops all keep their pistols in security holsters, to prevent—or at least slow down—criminals who try to take their pistols and kill them with it. The same is true of anyone carrying a pistol openly. It makes you a target.

Concealed pistols can be in any type of holster, because the only time people should know you have it is when it's coming out in response to a threat. However, pistols carried openly should be in some sort of security holster, because the chances of a bad guy trying to grab that gun are far higher than zero. Private citizens openly carrying unsecured firearms have been shot when bad guys have taken those guns away from them—so if you're going to open carry, put the gun in a security holster, and learn some firearm retention techniques. You owe it to yourself, if not the rest of us. **FN**



The cocked hammer of the 1911 on the left might look scary, but with the thumb safety and grip safety it is actually mechanically safer to carry than the Glock on the right. (Photo by James Tarr)

► Open carry means that gun becomes a target of bad guys with ill intent, which is why cops use security holsters like this Safari-land. If you're carrying openly, you should be using a security holster too. (Photo courtesy of Safari-land)





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9MM PRESSURE TESTING

A Lesson to Remember

Okay, we all want the “best” performance, right? But, what is best in life? (Cue Conan, no, not the comedian.) Accuracy is easy. Meeting the power threshold for competition, easy. Getting the max out of the 9mm with both, now that can be tough, and which bullet you use to accomplish that matters. Sometimes it matters a lot.

The sample I used here is my 9mm bowling pin load. The Pin Shoot 9mm power requirement is that the pin has to leave the table. Otherwise, your score will suffer. The toughest shot is the top shelf, this is where you have to punch the pin back off of the top shelf and still clear the back edge of the bottom shelf, that edge being two feet behind the top shelf.

My initial load was a 147-grain flat-nose at 925–950 fps. I could see and hear the pins clanging off of the back edge of the bottom shelf,

My old parts-built STI, now the 12-pin gun for The Pin Shoot. (Patrick Sweeney)



This is the array of pins at The Pin Shoot for the 9x12 event. Knock the white pins off and leave the two-tone ones standing. They must leave the table, tipping over isn't good enough. (Patrick Sweeney)



like an errant place-kick for a field goal boinging off of the upright. I was testing various lead and coated flat-nosed bullets, but while these were working fine in the handguns, they were really gunking up the SIG MPX. I wanted to go plated or jacketed to ease the mess.

My luck was to find the Rocky Mountain Reloading (RMR) jacketed 147-grain flat-nose. RMR makes them by the truckload, and they sell them at a good price. I tested some, they were plenty accurate, and so I developed a load.

Okay, time out. This is my load. I tested it in my guns, and it works, and it is something I will load a ton of, but you need to start below my loading and work your way up and make sure this works in your pistol. Once we see the pressure listings, I would recommend to only be using this in modern pistols. Don't use this load in your great-uncles P08 Luger brought back from WWII.

The load, with the velocity from my 9x12 Event 9mm pistol, a custom-built STI with a five-inch barrel: ►

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Bullet	Powder Charge (gr.)	Primer	Overall Length (in.)	Crimp (in.)	Velocity (fps)
RMR 147 J-FN	VV-330 3.8	Fiocchi sp	1.070	.371	1,009
THE PRESSURE-TESTING RESULTS OF THIS LOAD?					
MAP (PSI)	Extreme Spread (PSI)	SD (PSI)		Velocity (fps)	
34,280	7,000	1,930		920	

You'll notice that the pressure barrel velocity differs from the pistol velocity. This is simply the real world, where every barrel you'd ever test this load in would have its own, unique, average velocity. They'll all cluster around the same

value, but they will differ. (This is something I plan to demonstrate in a later column.) Great, but what does this mean for anything not an RMR bullet? Glad you asked. Next up, two bare lead bullets and their pressures: ▼

Bullet	Powder Charge (gr.)	Primer	Overall Length (in.)	Crimp (in.)	Velocity (fps)
Oregon Trails 147 LFN	VV-330 3.8	Fiocchi sp	1.075	.371	982
MAP (PSI)	Extreme Spread (PSI)	SD (PSI)		Velocity (fps)	
36,470	6,100	1,846		982	
Bullet	Powder Charge (gr.)	Primer	Overall Length (in.)	Crimp (in.)	Velocity (fps)
Northeast 147 LFN	VV-330 3.8	Fiocchi sp	1.073	.371	982
MAP (PSI)	Extreme Spread (PSI)	SD (PSI)		Velocity (fps)	
38,570	4,400	1,316		982	

I would have bet good money that the lead bullets would have posted lower pressures than the jacketed one, but that was not the case here. They are longer, with boat-tails, and thus decrease the size of the combustion chamber. That increases pressure.

“Big deal” you say? Well, the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers’ Institute (SAAMI) maximum average pressure (MAP) for the 9mm is 35,000 PSI, so both are into the +P territory. To be clear on this load: don’t load these combos. Which is not a problem. Northeast cast bullets back in the 1980s, when I was starting to gear up a .38 Super for USPSA Open Division. I was buying them 50,000 bullets at a time (all my truck could handle, a half-ton cargo load of lead) and I still have a lifetime supply. As far as I know the company left the casting business sometime in the 1990s, so unless you are buying an estate sale reloading stash, you’ll never see these.



My SIG MPX runs just fine with coated bullets, even lead ones, but the cleanup is murder. I wanted jacketed, so I tested some. (Patrick Sweeney)



The bullets before loading, left to right: RMR, Oregon Trails, Northeast, Hornady. Notice that the RMR is shorter due to being a flat-base, not a boat-tail. This matters a lot in the 9mm. (Patrick Sweeney)



The loaded rounds tested, left to right: RMR, old-stock Oregon Trails, Northeast Bullets, Hornady XTP. (Patrick Sweeney)



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There are a lot of choices to be had for a pin gun, including the middle one, a ported Springfield Armory DS, for the Concealed Carry Main event. (Patrick Sweeney)

The Oregon Trail bullets I have date back to when the company was actually in Oregon. The successor company is now in Montana, and I'll have to do a side-by-side comparison in a future column. Now let's deliberately step over the line, and before we continue, let me be clear: I love Hornady

boat-tail, adding length. Jacketed means harder, at least compared to the lead bullets (think friction going down the barrel), and the overall length is different because it needs to be to feed in my pistol. The Hornady specs in my five-inch-barreled STI, and the pressure barrel: ▼

Bullet	Powder Charge (gr.)	Primer	Overall Length (in.)	Crimp (in.)	Velocity (fps)
Hornady 147 XTP	VV-330 3.8	Fiocchi sp	1.050	.371	1,031
THE PRESSURE-TESTING RESULTS OF THIS LOAD?					
MAP (PSI)	Extreme Spread (PSI)	SD (PSI)	Velocity (fps)		
42,430	5,500	1,714	950		

products, and this was a deliberate choice to go in the wrong direction. Don't blame Hornady because I'm demonstrating how not to do this. The results I'm about to show you are in no way their fault.

The XTP is a hollow point, so that makes the bullet longer. It has a

Yes, that's right, simply changing from the previous bullets to a Hornady XTP of the same weight zooms our pressure up out of the +P range and into the lower reaches of a proof load.

Can we mitigate this? Sure, you can back off on the powder charge.

You change your seating stem dimension and increase the overall length, at least until you reach the length limits of your chamber and leade or reliable feeding. Or, you could choose to not load the XTP with this powder, as it is clear the 147-grain XTP and VV-330 are not a happy marriage. Don't blame either Hornady or Vihtavouri, this load's pressure is not their fault.

What can we learn from this? (The first of many to come, by the way.) Simple: bullets are not all bullets. Just because they have the same weight doesn't mean they will have the same velocity and pressure when loaded. Now, if you are well down into the safe zone you can swap pretty much to your heart's content. I have one load pressure-tested (we'll get there, don't worry) that is a soft-feeling 125-grain coated bullet load that musters a paltry 16,000 PSI. I suspect that swapping that one out for any other 9mm 125-grain bullet is not going to get you anywhere near the 9mm MAP red line. However, if you are trying to get maximum performance out of a given bullet weight or powder, then little things can matter.

So, if you want a top-end load, you have a good one: RMR, VV-330 and pay attention to overall length and crimp. I'm loading up a couple of gallons of this load, for use up at The Pin Shoot. **FM**

SOURCES
Fiocchi: FiocchiUSA.com
Hornady Manufacturing: Hornady.com, (800) 338-3220
RMR Bullets: RMRBullets.com, (208) 816-3859
VihtaVuori Powders: VihtaVuori.com

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THE RUGER DEAD AIR RXD 910Ti SUPPRESSOR

It Can Do What?

I was in the Dead Air booth at the SHOT Show, admiring the inventory, when talk shifted to the new collaboration with Ruger. Specifically, the RXD 910Ti. “Yeah, I just logged one of those into the books before flying out here. Titanium. A nice 9mm suppressor, I’m looking forward to testing it when I get home. And it also handles 10mm as well. What?” Thus began the involved engineering and manufacturing discussion of the newest suppressor from Dead Air. Not only is it a collaboration between Dead Air and Ruger, but it is also a new design. They didn’t just spruce up an existing one for this. And that means we all get an even better suppressor.



The RXD comes with instructions and a wrench, the wrench is needed to disassemble it for cleaning or changing rear caps. (Patrick Sweeney)

The basis of the new RXD910Ti (and I’ve got to find a shorter name for it) is the Triskelion baffle system.

No, not the Gamesters of Triskelion, but the triple-spiral as seen in art, heraldry and land art, from the Neolithic through the hellenistic ages.

Dead Air uses additive manufacturing to construct a triple spiral out of Titanium that could not be machined from bar stock, no matter how creative the machinist might be. The baffle (can we even call it a “stack”?) design is optimized to reduce back-pressure, and to aid in this Dead Air also designed in recoil-reducing ports on the front of the suppressor, ports that bleed gas out of the central axis of the titanium stack. So, better gas flow, recoil reduction, and quiet as all get-out. To aid in keeping it lightweight, the outer tube is also made out of titanium, with the front cap made out of aluminum.

The Dead Air/Ruger RXD works like a champ on the Ruger RXM-T pistol. As well it should. (Patrick Sweeney)



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With the front cap off you can see the front end of the Triskelion baffle construct. (Patrick Sweeney)



The RXD as-sent came with a booster as the rear cap, needed to cycle self-loading pistols. You can easily change it to a direct-thread cap. (Patrick Sweeney)



Left, the Ruger RXM and the booster needed to cycle. On the right, the Ruger LC Carbine in 10mm, and the direct-thread cap it needs. (Patrick Sweeney)

On the rear, the RXD910Ti has a HUB thread machined into the core, and you can install one of the many Dead Air mounting options. The RXD910Ti came with two; a PB501 Mojave booster assembly with a 1/2x28 threaded booster, and a HUB-thread rear cap with a 9/16x24 muzzle thread for use on a 10mm. If you didn't want to go up to the 10mm, and just stick with 9mm on a PCC, then you could simply add the PB139 Mojave fixed barrel spacer for that.

While the RXD910Ti is meant to be a really good 9mm suppressor, the bore is machined to clear a 10mm bullet, so you can use it on a 10mm pistol or PCC. At just over eleven

ounces, and under eight inches in length, it is not going to be a hin-

drance to proper handling of either pistol or carbine. The additive-manufactured core means it can handle a lot of calibers. Obviously, 9mm and 10mm, but also 5.7x28, both .38 Special and .357 Magnum, .300 Blackout, and .400 Legend, which includes your 9mm pistol or PCC, your 10mm pistol or PCC, and your lever-action rifles in .38/.357 and .400 Legend, as well as your AR in .300 Blackout subsonic. That has to be half of what's in your gun safe. Plus, a bunch of those are full-auto rated. Of course, there are limits. (There always are.) I talked to my contacts, and apparently the only barrel length restriction is with .400 Legend, and then it is sixteen inches or longer. Works for me.

My first test was with the new Ruger RXM-T, its new model variant with an extended, threaded barrel. Ruger has done this so you don't have to source some off-brand threaded barrel in order to suppress your RXM. While I was at it, I also took advantage of the new Magpul EH9 RG9 full-sized grip, in FDE (flat-dark earth). You realize, when you do this, that you'll need full-length magazines, right? (I happened to be at the gun club when a member showed up with his, and he had not thought of



The RXM with the RXD mounted cycled reliably with a wide variety of 9mm loads. (Patrick Sweeney)

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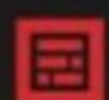
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The Ruger LC Carbine in 10mm delivers a lot of power for a PCC, and the RXD keeps it quite. Well, quiet with subsonics. Put a supersonic lightweight bullet load in there and you'll hear the snap. (Patrick Sweeney)



The front cap is built to knock down muzzle flash, and the flutes are also there for disassembly. (Patrick Sweeney)

that detail.) The booster provides the oomph needed to cycle the RXM even with the added (albeit not a lot, as these things go) weight of the RXD910Ti suppressor added to the barrel. Function was, of course, 100% —and quiet. Then it was an easy swap top change to 10mm. I unscrewed the booster assembly and installed the direct-thread cap and then run the RXD onto a Ruger LC 10mm carbine. The carbine does not need a booster, since the barrel doesn't move. So, there's no need to

have the booster slapping back and forth on its spring.

The LC carbine also functioned 100% (would you really expect anything else from Ruger and Dead Air?) and like the RXM, hit to the sights. And quiet? The 9mm subsonics were well down into the hearing-safe zone, even out of the shorter barrel of the RXM. The 10mm is a tougher beast to quiet, as it runs at the same pressures as the 9mm, but with as much as twice the powder charge. So, more gases to deal with. But even then it was down into hearing-safe as long as I used a subsonic load. The real screamers add in the supersonic shock wave, which no suppressor can manage.

As far as maintenance is concerned, since the RXD910Ti is meant for use with handgun cartridges, it is of course user-serviceable. To give it a thorough cleaning after a range day, Unscrew the front cap. Use the provided wrenches to unscrew the booster assembly. (The owner's manual gives a good run-down on taking the assembly apart.) Unscrew the cover tube from the core and

put all of them into your ultrasonic cleaner with the appropriate solution. You know the rest. **FN**

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In rural Ohio, where jackets are in season most of the year, and with long drives to get to and fro, a shoulder holster is the best option for my EDC. Although shoulder holsters are not as popular as hip holsters, almost everyone drives, and when they do it's in a seated position. Having to pull your pistol from a shoulder holster is much faster and less impeded than drawing from a hip holster especially when the seatbelt is fastened. My father, the editor-in-chief of this magazine, agrees and he used to carry a similar handgun to mine, a Smith & Wesson 669, in a nylon shoulder holster back in the late 1980s.

I've now been carrying my Smith & Wesson 6909 with the Leather Roto-Shoulder Holster (model D120), from Falco, most days for two years. I'm a big fan of Smith & Wesson, and although the S&W series of double-single handguns is now out of production, they can still compete with the more popular CCW handguns made today and can be had at a reasonable price despite the rise of the collectability of these handguns. I prefer the 6909 model, in particular, because it's both compact and lightweight, compared to the full-size models like 5906.



Falco's Roto-Shoulder Holster in brown leather. (Falco)



DeNiro has been carrying the Falco Roto-Shoulder Holster for two years and finds it comfortable and durable. (Vincent L. DeNiro)

The Leather Roto-Shoulder Holster from Falco comes with many options and is available for a plethora of makes and models, so you can most likely get one for whatever you carry. Options include leather and stitching color, letter and even image embossing, and of course more importantly, accommodations for optics, raised sights, extended magazines, and allowing left-handed drawing.

The construction is quite good, with all Falco holsters being handmade in Slovakia, with this particular model being made with Italian leather—what feels like calfskin. The leather is tough where it needs to be, in the holster and magazine pouch, and supple where it should be, on the webbing and harnessings. Falco's website notes that your holster may need "break in liquid." Although I didn't need any, I only applied a standard leather conditioner



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The magazine pouch can be removed from the shoulder rig and has slots that allow it to be attached to a belt. (Vincent L. DeNiro)



This holster has a rotary feature that allows the pistol to rotate easily to a more horizontal position, which produces a smooth draw. (Vincent L. DeNiro)

as I would to all my leather products. The buttons on the holster and magazine pouch however did need some breaking in. My 6909 holds the standard 12-round magazine, which I leave in the gun, but I opted for the larger magazine pouch to hold the 15-round magazine, which I would recommend, as with the 15-round pouch it can also

you feel like switching to an inside-the-pants holster or traditional belt holster, which I sometimes do depending on weather and/or what I am wearing.

As far as drawing the handgun, this holster has a rotary feature that allows the pistol to rotate easily to a more horizontal position (hence the “Roto” name), which aids in smooth

steel or brass fasteners for the holster and instead uses plastic to fix the holster and magazine pouch to the harness. While the plastic feels high-quality and matches the black leather, I would much rather have stainless steel, and the plastic fastenings which were most likely a weight or

**Overall, I really do like my Falco holster.
It's held up as expected for something made of real leather.**

hold the shorter 12-round magazine, and only leaves you with an extra inch or two at the top of the pouch. I load two 17-round Mec-Gar (Mec-Gar.com) magazines for the pouch. Mec-Gar offers 17-round magazines for S&W that are the same length as the S&W 15-round magazines and are made in Italy. Both fit just fine in the pouch designed for the 15-rounders, which gives me a total of 46 rounds all in all in the holster. Another nice feature is that the magazine pouch can be easily detached from the shoulder rig and has slots on the back that allow you to attach it on a belt. This gives you an option if

removal. This feature is activated after disconnecting a leather thumb break, and the holster rotates via a bolt and nut. Although it has worked well, the one issue is that as you remove the gun over and over, the bolt becomes very loose and must be retightened. You actually want this bolt to be loose so that the holster rotates freely, but then you risk losing the bolt if it “walks” out. Possibly, a solution would be to apply Loctite to the bolt and unscrew it until you get the desired level of friction and then let it dry.

In spite of all the customization options, Falco doesn't offer stainless

cost-saving measure don't match with the expectation I'd have for a product handmade in Slovakia with Italian leather. Whatever the increase in cost would be, it would only be a drop in the bucket as the holster already costs upwards of \$259 (plus options).

Overall, I really do like my Falco holster. It's held up as expected for something made of real leather. I really appreciate that their products are still made in Europe and to a high quality. It does look very sharp.

For more information, please visit FalcoHolsters.com. 



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THE FINNISH LAHTI-SALORANTA M/26 LIGHT MACHINE GUN

THE “KOOTUT VIRHEET”

Photos by Mattias Holsti
(unless otherwise noted)

When Finland gained its independence in 1918, the army and civil guard (Suojeluskunta) were equipped with a wide variety of Russian, German, Austrian, French, and American machine guns. The primary light machine guns were the Danish Madsen, 700 of which were purchased in the 1920s, and German MG08/15s, which were left over from WWI.

Development of a new light machine gun began in 1924 after the Finnish Ministry of Defense established the Light Machine Gun Committee to select a new LMG (in Finnish: Pikakivääri) for the Finnish armed forces. They wanted one similar in size and operation to the Madsen LMGs already in service.

In 1926, the task was assigned to Aimo Lahti and Arvo Saloranta who completed work on what would become the Pikakivääri LS/26 (Lahti-Saloranta Light Machine Gun Model 1926).¹ It was among Lahti's first forays into gun design, but wouldn't be his



1944. Finnish soldiers during the Continuation War. The man on the right is firing a M/26 light machine gun. (SA-Kuva. Finnish Army photo)

last. He would go on to be described as the “John Browning of Finland.”

The Lahti's design was a recoil operated, air cooled, selective-fire weapon using a short-recoil operating system. It was composed of finely machined parts and fitted with a rifle style wooden buttstock and pistol grip.

The L/S-26's barrel assembly includes a long, tubular barrel extension, which houses the bolt. The barrel extension has a tilting locking block that is connected on the receiver

guideway via a pivot arm. The locking block will rise and fall according to the barrel extension movement. The barrel extension also includes an accelerator lever that pushes the bolt backwards as the locking piece disengages from the bolt, which assured reliability in Finland's severe winter weather. The accelerator used with the LS/26 also appears on other Lahti designed recoil operated small arms including the L/35 pistol.

The gun has a cyclic rate of 450–550 rpm depending on the ammunition used. The highest rates of fire were usually obtained with captured Soviet silver tipped “LPS” light ball, which was the hottest service ammunition available for this caliber.

It was equipped with a folding bipod and a flash hider, which was considered necessary as its relatively short, heavyweight, fluted 19.7-inch barrel produced excessive muzzle



Finnish soldiers with a Madsen LMG. (SA-Kuva. Finnish Army photo)

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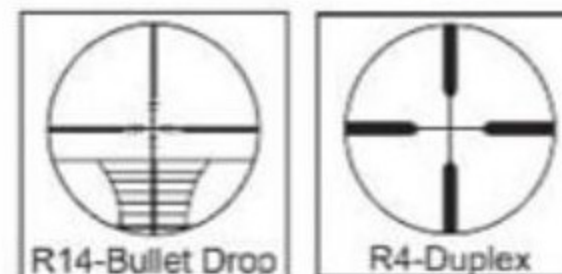


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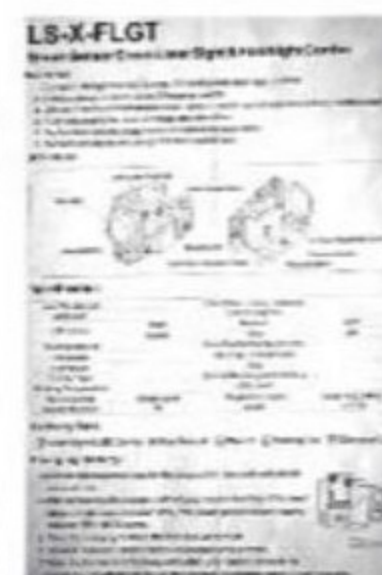


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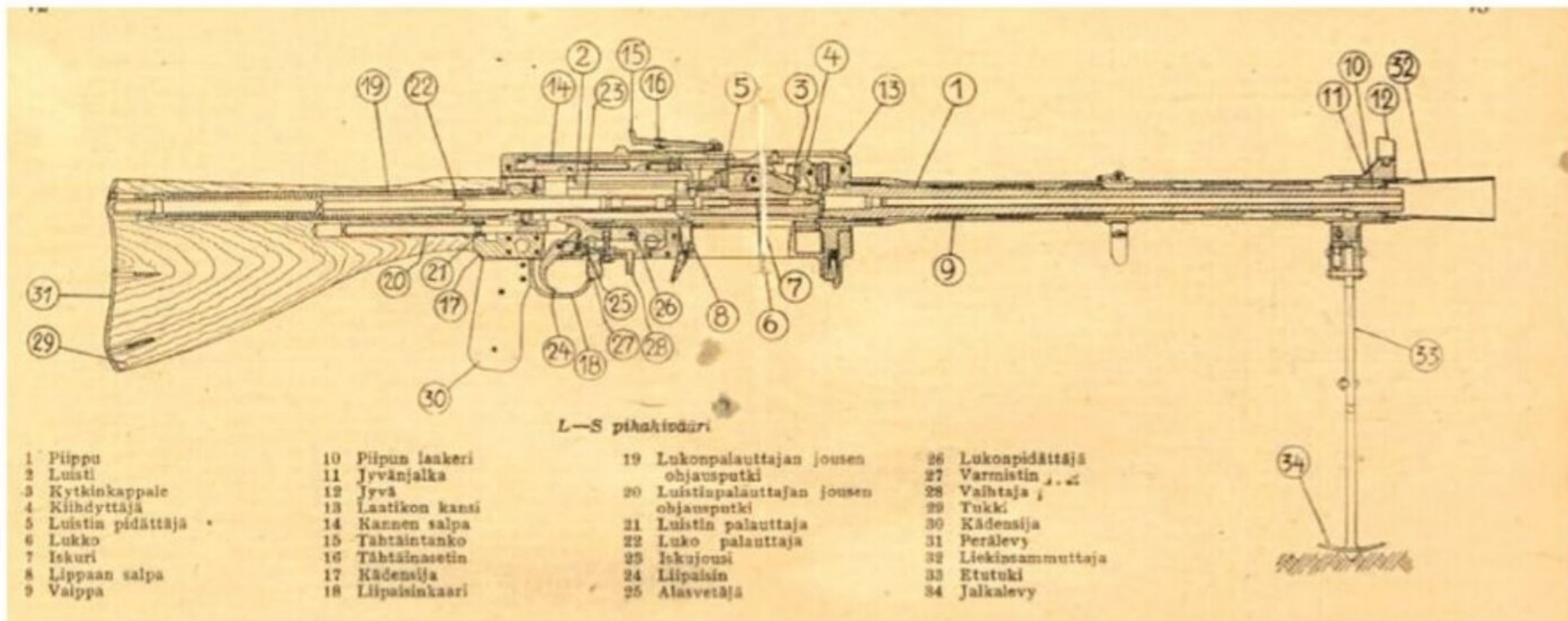
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A Finnish army training poster for the M/26. (Finnish Army photo)

flash. It was a selective-fire weapon with a quick-change barrel that was “supposed” to be switched after thirty seconds of continuous firing. Note: the bolt had to be removed before the barrel could be changed and Army regulations forbade disassembly of the lower receiver for all except trained armorers. A safety switch was located in front of the trigger guard with the selector switch in front of it that had two settings: forward for full-automatic and rear for semiauto-matic fire.

It was fed by a bottom mounted, curved, twenty-round box magazine and its non-reciprocating charging handle, located on the top of the receiver projected outward from the right side. Ejection of spent cases was through a port on the right side of the receiver. To ensure reliable feeding in

Finland’s arctic winters the magazine had a very robust spring and required a special tool to load it to capacity.

Sights are slightly offset to the left because of the wide receiver. The rear sight was mounted on the receiver cover and consisted of a U-notch adjustable by tangent from 300 to 1,500 meters in 100-meter steps. The foresight was mounted on a block attached to the ventilated barrel shroud. Detachable anti-aircraft sights were also developed.

The first prototypes were chambered for the 7,92 x 57 cartridge. Trials in late 1925 saw it beat out the Madsen, Swiss Ferrer MG 25, Colt-made BAR 1918, English Vickers-Berthier, French Hotchkiss, and Italian Breda. It was officially adopted on August 13, 1926, as the “Pikakivääri m/26”, better known as the Lahti-Saloranta 26 or simply, the M/S-26.

Issue guns were chambered for the Finnish service cartridge, the Patruunaa Kal. 7,62mm, which used a rimmed bottle necked case 53mm long whose 148-grain FMJ Spitzer bullet was propelled to 2,800 fps.² In 1941, the Patruunaa Kal. 7,62mm D166 was adopted for machine guns. It used a 200-grain 7,65mm (.311”), boattail, Spitzer bullet moving at 2,600 fps and provided superior long-range accuracy.

Production started in 1927 at the Valtion kivääritehdas (VKT), or State



The M/26 was fired from an integral bipod and was fed from a detachable 20-round magazine. Note the wooden stock and pistol grip. (Courtesy of Mattias Holsti)

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The rear sight was adjustable from 200 to 1,500 meters. Note the extended cocking handle, ejection port and takedown lever. (Courtesy of Mattias Holsti)



◀ The barrel had a full-length, ventilated jacket and the front sight was offset to the left. (Courtesy of Mattias Holsti)

▶ The curved, 20-round magazine's heavy spring made it difficult to load to capacity. (Courtesy of Mattias Holsti)



Rifle Factory, and lasted until 1942 with 4,700 guns being produced. The only other user was China who placed an order for 30,000 (some sources say 40,000) M/26s chambered for 7,92×57mm Mauser in 1937, but only 1,200 of these weapons were delivered before Japanese diplomatic pressure caused production to cease.³

During the war, the M/26 gained very poor reputation among Finnish soldiers, who gave it the nickname *Kootut virheet* “Assorted Mistakes.” The main problem seems to have been recoil spring package inside butt of the weapon—disassembling of which had been specifically forbidden for soldiers. In theory, only specially trained ordnance personnel should have disassembled this part and carefully cleaned storage grease from there before the machineguns were issued, but apparently large number of M/26s were issued to soldiers without removal of grease from the recoil spring package. Besides the grease, the consensus seems to be that the weapon’s tight tolerances made it prone to jam.⁴

A report from an officer on the Karelian front stated: “The gun often

malfunctions and requires a specially experienced soldier, which is often not particularly easy to find among Field Army. No more than 12–15 rounds can be loaded into the magazine, if one wishes it to work reliably. Due to this magazine changes are frequent, which in a combat situation can prove fatal. Frequent magazine changes also easily unnerve the shooter and reduce accuracy of his fire. Using the gun’s sights while wearing a gas mask is practically impossible.”⁵

On the other hand, proficient gunners liked and took full advantage of the exceptional accuracy of the weapon and with proper maintenance it turned out to be very reliable.

It served with Finnish forces during the Winter War (1939–1940), the Continuation War (1941–1944), and the Lapland War (1944–1945) and remained in service into the 1960s.⁶ It also saw limited use by Chinese troops during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945).⁷

Finnish troops often preferred the Degtyarev DP-27/28 light machine gun—thousands of which were captured from the Soviets and used

against their former owners. All in all, in the summer of 1944, only 3,400 M/26s were at the front, compared to over 9,000 Degtyarevs. 

1 While the L/S-26 was the brainchild of Aimo J. Lahti, Saloranta helped Lahti with his government contract.

2 It was dimensionally and ballistically identical to the Soviet 7,62mm patron obr. 1930D.

3 www.jaegerplatoon.net/LMG1.htm

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 <https://smallarmsreview.com/the-lahti-saloranta-26-light-machine-gun/>

7 www.militaryfactory.com/smallarms/detail.php?smallarms_id=1229

8 Very few 75 rd. drum magazines were used usually for anti-aircraft fire.

SPECIFICATIONS LAHTI-SALORANTA M/26

Caliber:	Patruunaa Kal. 7,62mm D166
Overall Length:	43.6 in.
Barrel Length:	19.7 in.
Weight:	20.5 lbs. (unloaded)
Magazine:	20-rd. box & 75-rd. drum magazine ⁸
Sights:	Front: Blade Rear: V notch adj. from 300 to 1,500 meters
ROF:	450 rpm

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BORN FROM A BUZZGUN!

MILITARY ARMAMENT CORPORATION'S MAC IX!

By James Tarr Cover and lead photo by Andy Grossman

My wife has a rule, when trying a new food or dish; always take two bites, because even if you don't think you have any expectations, you do, and those expectations always cloud your perceptions. That first bite may or may not be what you expected, but with that second bite, you know what to expect, and can focus on what it actually is. I was reminded of this good rule of life when I got in the MAC IX to test, because I remember when the guys at SDS Arms (parent company of Military Armament Corporation) brought one of the first guns into the U.S. and showed it to me. And... I simply wasn't interested. A PCC/PDW that was fed by MP5 magazines but wasn't an MP5? What's the point?

I was judging the gun on what I wanted, or expected, rather than what it was. So, I took a second bite.

SDS Arms, with their Military Armament Corporation division, recently started importing MP5-pattern guns

(their MAC 5 series), and they are great, but the MAC IX is something different. MP5-pattern guns and their roller delayed blowback operating system are iconic, and have very soft recoil, but they are expensive and difficult to make, have safeties you can't easily reach, aren't great to mount optics on, and the bolts don't lock back on empty magazines. The MAC IX, on the other hand, has very familiar and ergonomic AR-pattern controls, it uses a straight blowback operating system and machined (not stamped) receivers so it is less expensive to manufacture (and thus priced lower), has a full-length top rail for optics, and the MP5-pattern magazines it uses are slightly modified so that this gun's bolt does lock back on empty magazines.

While they call it a PCC (pistol caliber carbine), MAC sells the MAC IX as a pistol. This 9mm sports a 6.5-inch barrel and overall, it is 14.75 inches long and 7.5 inches tall with no magazine inserted. Empty, with no magazine inserted or



◀ The MAC IX is an interesting 9mm pistol, derived from a Turkish SMG, which combines MP5-pattern magazines with AR-style controls. (Photo by James Tarr)

▶ The upper and lower receiver are machined aluminum, and the MAC IX has modern features including an M-LOK compatible handguard and a bolt that locks back on empty magazines. (Photo by James Tarr)



With the pistol you get everything seen here (plus a hard case), apart from the brace, but that's available separately. (Photo by James Tarr)



▶ The 6.5-inch barrel is threaded 1/2x28 and has the HK-style three lugs for mounting a suppressor. Iron sights come as a standard accessory. (Photo by James Tarr)

sights attached, it is four pounds nine ounces. However, you don't get just the pistol when you buy the gun—you get front and rear sights to attach to the rail, a tool to adjust the front sight, a single-point sling, a cleaning kit, a flash hider, and two 30-round magazines, all in a hard-sized case. MAC is now also selling separately a brace specifically to work with this pistol, and I secured a sample of that as well.

A brief detour about the magazine before we dive back into the gun itself. If four decades ago, HK had bowed to consumer pressure and offered a 9mm MP5 whose bolt locked back on empty magazines, half the police departments in the world would still be using them instead of ARs. I'm not saying they should, just that they would. The MAC IX works with standard MP5 magazines, which are everywhere, so you won't need proprietary magazines for this new gun, but those mags won't lock the bolt back. The MAC IX magazines have MP5 bodies, but there is a spring-loaded angled steel tab that pops out the rear of the magazine which pushes the bolt catch up and locks the bolt back. These magazines will also work in standard MP5-pattern guns.

Now, forget the MP5, because this pistol is closer in design to the AR-180 than it is HK's MP5. The upper and lower receivers are thick machined aluminum. The lower receiver is the serialized part, but because this gun is made

overseas, where they have to put the serial number everywhere, you'll spot it etched into the left side of the barrel underneath the handguard. The two receivers are connected via AR-15-style push pins front and rear. The lower receiver sports (mostly) AR-15-style controls, but there is no buffer tube at the rear of the gun as all the moving parts are contained inside the receiver.

This pistol is made by Akdas in Turkey. Akdas Defense is a large military arms contractor that makes everything from hunting rifles to grenade launchers. While some of their shotguns have made their way into America, they've got a lot of other interesting guns that haven't been seen in America—yet. The MAC IX is the semi-auto pistol version of their SA-9 submachine gun. They also have a short-stroke piston version of this design in 5.56x45mm called the SAM, and SDS/MAC is working to import some semi-auto versions of those as well.

The 6.5-inch barrel is threaded 1/2x28mm, and a thread protector comes standard. The barrel also sports three HK-style lugs, which I've come to appreciate as a great way to quickly attach/detach suppressors. I've got a SilencerCo Omega 9K with a three-lug mount and put it on this gun for some of my testing. MAC also supplies a birdcage-style flash hider which screws onto the barrel if you so desire.

The barrel free floats inside a 4.6-inch aluminum handguard. There is a MIL STD M1913 rail atop the handguard, which also has M-LOK compatible accessory



The MAC IX is a semi-auto pistol variant of the SA-9, a submachine gun made by Akdas in Turkey. You'll note many of the controls are similar to an AR-15's—that's on purpose. (Photo by James Tarr)



While the magazine release is different, the rest of the controls on the MAC IX are the same as on an AR-15. (Photo by James Tarr)

mounting slots on the sides and bottom. The handguard is quite short, barely big enough for one hand, and a hand stop at the front might be a good idea to keep your fingertips from straying in front of the muzzle. Although, that won't be an issue if you mount a suppressor on the gun.

On that note—while it's not out yet and by the time you're reading this, SDS/MAC should have announced their SD version of the MAC IX. This will be available both as a separate handgun or an accessory kit, which swaps out this handguard for a larger/longer one which will accommodate suppressors with a diameter up to 1.9 inches.

Up top, between the handguard and the receiver, you've got nearly a full foot of MIL STD M1913 "Picatinny" rail for mounting whatever optics you'd like. MAC supplies a set of iron sights with the handgun. They have aluminum bodies with protective wings and provide an AR-15-style sight picture. The front sight is a post that is easily click-adjustable for elevation using a provided tool. The rear has two apertures, small and large, that you can flip between. It is click adjustable for windage using a knob. Installing them was a bit more of an experience than I was expecting. First...it's kinda up to you which side you put facing which direction,

as they are almost unidirectional. The way I've got mine set up is the opposite of what MAC has in their owner's manual, but this way it provides the longest sight radius possible.

I mounted the front sight first. Trying to install it, I found that the bottom of the front sight post was impinging on the rail, and I had to elevate the front sight before I could slide the front sight assembly on and install it. Then when it came time to install the rear sight, I was hoping to slide it on from the back...but the steel insert that the charging handle latch locks into precludes that. So, I had to remove the front sight and put the rear sight on from the front, sliding it all the way back, and then reinstall the front sight. You are not going to be popping your iron sights on and off so this isn't a big problem, it was just more involved than I thought it was going to be.

It appears the bottom of the front sight post, when adjusted down, nestles into one of the slots in the rail, so be advised if you ever want to take your front sight assembly off and it's not moving, that's probably because your front sight post is down into that slot, locking it in place.

At the top rear of the upper receiver is a bilateral, AR-style charging handle. It is similar in size, style, and function to an AR charging handle, but isn't the exact



The AR-15-style charging handle has big wings. The latch hooks into a steel insert in the receiver at the back of the rail. The rear sight is click-adjustable for windage using that knob. (Photo by James Tarr)



The MAC IX uses an AR-pattern grip and selector, if you decide you want to swap them out. (Photo by James Tarr)



In front of the trigger guard is a pivoting polymer magazine release that is probably best worked with the thumb of your support hand as you strip out the old mag. You also get a pushbutton mag release. (Photo by James Tarr)

same size, and standard AR pieces won't work on this gun. Length of pull of the handle is short, seeing as this gun is built around the length of the 9mm cartridge.

If you want to disassemble the gun, pop out the rear receiver pin, and the upper receiver will tilt up. You can then pull on the charging handle, and the bolt assembly will come out the rear. It has a recoil spring at the rear around a stainless-steel rod, and there is a polymer buffer at the rear of the spring/rod between it and the rear of the receiver. The MAC IX has a fixed steel ejector mounted in the left side of the upper receiver.

For reassembly, you'll want to make sure the hammer is cocked, and you'll need to push in on the polymer buffer at the back of the bolt assembly before you can swing the upper receiver all the way down into place.

If you look at the lower receiver, inside and out, you'll see a lot of resemblance to the AR-15 design. It uses a standard AR-15 pistol grip and selector. The bolt catch is styled/positioned like that of an AR, but not exactly. The trigger group looks a lot like an AR trigger group, only with a skinnier hammer.

I spoke to Jahred Gamez, the Digital Marketing Manager for SDS Arms, and he told me that while the MAC IX's trigger group has the same geometry and sear engagement as an AR-15, the hammer is sized a bit differently to work with the bolt, and the trigger and hammer springs are routed a little differently. Some aftermarket AR-15 triggers will work with this gun, but there's no guarantee. If you're curious, in the owner's manual they explain that it isn't the hammer width but rather height that is the issue with compatibility, and give you the maximum hammer dimensions if you're wondering if your aftermarket piece will work. They are working with some companies to develop improved and or binary triggers for this gun.

Trigger pull spec for this gun, as listed in the owner's manual is between 5.5 and 12 pounds (25–55 Newtons for those of you in countries which haven't landed on the



◀ The magazine is MP5-pattern, but it adds a spring-loaded tab, as seen here, which activates the bolt stop. Standard MP5 magazines work, they just don't lock the bolt back. (Photo by James Tarr)



The steel tab on the follower is spring-loaded and slides in and out. The polymer follower is an anti-tilt design. (Photo by James Tarr)



The MAC IX disassembles like an AR-15. The bolt assembly is all one piece, with the recoil spring and guide at the rear. The charging handle has AR-15 style, but not quite the same dimensions. (Photo by James Tarr)

moon). That's a big range. Trigger pull on my sample was not great. It was a single stage pull, a little gritty, with a total weight of 6.5 pounds.

Jahred told me that a lot of guys in their office have personal MAC IXs, and some of them have swapped out the pistol grips and selectors for various aftermarket options (Magpul being a favorite). If this was my gun, I would do the same, at least with the selector lever. The MAC IX has a selector with bilateral polymer levers, and the one on the right side pokes my trigger finger, and the movement of my selector was a bit gritty. Your experience, as they say, may differ. I'd grind it down or remove it or swap it out with some model that is shorter and/or flatter. The pistol grip on this gun is just fine, although I prefer models with more meat under the web of the hand—the Magpul MOE is my current favorite, as it has everything I like including an easily-accessed storage space. The bottom of the MAC IX's grip is held in place by two Phillips-head screws.



▲ The MAC IX brace installed and fully collapsed. It adds about four inches in length, but as the weight is in the rear it doesn't really affect handling. (Photo by James Tarr)



▼ The MAC IX brace in the middle position. This is likely too short unless you're running body armor. The brace hook on the back is meant to cup your forearm. (Photo by James Tarr)



◀ Fully extended, the MAC IX brace adds definite functionality to the gun, and it is built tough, but it's not light. (Photo by James Tarr)

Let's talk magazines, and mag releases. As I mentioned, the MAC IX can use any MP5-pattern magazines, they just won't lock the bolt back. Personally, I only trust steel MP5 magazines made in Germany or Turkey. The magazines provided with this gun have steel MP5 bodies and there is a little cutout at the top rear where the steel tab pops out and works the bolt catch. Additional "Bolt Hold Open" magazines are available from them for \$37.99 apiece, and they will work in your standard MP5s. The follower is a big piece of machined polymer that is designed to be non-tilt—it has to be for that tab to pop out when it needs to. When disassembling the magazine, the spring-loaded tab on the follower pushes against the inside of the magazine body, and you'll need a rod to push the follower out of the magazine as it doesn't drop out freely.

On the gun, you have a polymer magazine release at the front of the trigger guard which rotates forward. It can be worked from either side. If your trigger finger is long/strong enough you might be able to work it that way (mine isn't), but the easiest is probably just pushing it in with the thumb of your support hand as you go to strip out the magazine. Like an MP5 the MAC IX also has a push-button magazine release on the right side of the magazine well that will almost never get used.

At the rear of the receiver is a three-slot MIL STD M1913 rail, and underneath it is a

quick-detach (QD) socket for a sling. If you choose to mount a brace or stock on the receiver, there are all sorts of options on the market. Because there is no buffer tube, you can go with a side-folding design if you want, and my favorite side-folding brace is the FSA from Strike Industries. And on that note...

The MAC IX brace, available separately from them for \$184.95, is a three-position collapsible design made of steel and aluminum. It mounts without tools to the rail in back, and when collapsed the steel arms fit into grooves in the sides of the upper receiver, leading me to believe it follows the pattern of the stock found on the Turkish-made SA-9 submachine guns. It provides an additional QD sling swivel socket.

With the brace attached, fully collapsed the gun is 18.8-inches long. With the brace fully extended it is 23.5-inches long. You also have a center position, but it



The MAC IX brace works well and is a good design. (Andy Grossman)



Tarr mounted an EOTech HWS to the MAC IX and attached his Omega 9K for some of the shooting, using the three-lug mount. (Photo by James Tarr)



The brace has a sling swivel socket in it. You'll also see another one at the rear of the receiver, and the single-point sling MAC provides with the pistol has a swivel stud which clicks right in there. (Photo by James Tarr)



(Photo by Andy Grossman)

seems too short to be useful unless you're wearing a bunch of body armor which provides standoff distance on your chest. With the brace, the pistol, wearing sights and with an empty magazine inserted, weighs six pounds and 11.8 ounces, as that brace is no lightweight, which may or may not be what you want—all that weight's in the back, so it doesn't feel like it adds as much weight as it does, but that weight does help reduce recoil a bit. However, if you want to stick the MAC IX in a backpack as a last-ditch PDW, you might prefer something like the Strike Industries side-folding FSA, which is both shorter and significantly lighter.

As I write this, the federal government is once again being capricious/bi-polar/schizophrenic/tyrannical (pick as many adjectives as you like) in its views of pistol arm braces. I don't expect that will last long, but meanwhile the \$200 NFA tax stamps have gone away, so between that and e-file it's never been easier/quicker/cheaper to register your pistol as an SBR, if you so choose. [EDITOR'S NOTE: Be aware that the MAC IX can be carried in most states with a CCW license or via Constitutional carry as it is a pistol. Registering it as a short-barreled rifle will nullify the ability to legally carry it concealed in many states.) The brace blade at the rear is a curved piece meant to press up against your forearm. It mounts on a one-inch diameter extension, which takes Tailhook-style brace blades or stocks. SDS/MAC

plans on offering a buttstock replacement endcap for people who SBR their MAC IX.

When shouldering/improperly using the brace, the MAC IX, the sights are just high enough off the rail to use, but standard optics/mounts meant for flattop ARs work just fine on this gun. I had an EOTech HWS on hand, and since the brace already added so much weight/bulk I didn't think the EOTech a bad choice. I love the circle/dot reticle inside the big window, the only downside to the EOTech is and has always been battery life, but if you're looking to keep the gun as small/light as possible, something like a Trijicon RMR or Aimpoint Acro in a flattop AR mount would be a good optic choice.

Per the owner's manual, the MAC IX is rated for +P ammunition, but you'll also find this note in there—"The MAC IX is a semi-auto, civilian legal version of a military issue firearm. It was designed to cycle with NATO spec ball ammunition. Hollow point and other flat nose ball ammo with large diameter cross sections on the face of the projectile may not feed successfully or consistently in this firearm." And that was exactly what I discovered.

The gun ran all day, no problems whatsoever, with FMJ ammunition. As for JHPs, the mouth of the chamber is slightly beveled for feeding, but not enough for most JHPs. I tried half a dozen different brands/types without success.



◀ **Hornady's Critical Defense was the only JHP that reliably cycled through the MAC IX. It was more than accurate enough, printing 1.5-inch groups like this.** (Photo by James Tarr)

▶ **The MAC IX has military DNA, and while it ran perfectly with FMJ ammo, finding hollow points it liked took some doing.** (Photo by James Tarr)



MILITARY ARMAMENT CORPORATION MAC IX PISTOL

Load	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Velocity (fps)	ES	SD	Avg. / Best Group (in.)
Black Hills FMJ	115	1,241	35	19	2.0 / 1.2
Hornady Critical Defense FTX	115	1,203	25	14	2.2 / 1.5
Winchester 9mm NATO	124	1,302	47	24	3.0 / 1.5
Black Hills JHP+P	124	1,283	23	12	1.6 / 1.0
Hornady Subsonic XTP	147	966	34	14	1.9 / 1.3
Fiocchi FMJ	158	871	20	9	1.3 / 0.9

Accuracy results are the averages of four five-shot groups at 25 yards from a sand-bag rest. Velocities are averages of ten shots measured with a Garmin Xero C1 12 feet from the muzzle.

Two people (including Jahred Gamez) recommended Hornady Critical Defense to me before I had a chance to test it, and I found it worked quite well. The tip of the Hornady JHP (technically their FTX) bullet is narrow, and these rounds have a shorter overall length, which the MAC IX seemed to like. When it comes to ammo, it is as particular a pistol I've tested in a long while.

The MAC IX is so short that several times I accidentally hit the bolt release with my left palm while handling the gun, although I never worried about getting my hand in front of the muzzle. Recoil isn't bad at all, as you might expect, but I could tell the difference between ammo types, and +P ammo had a bit more recoil and blast than, say, the soft 158-grain FMJ from Fiocchi. It was fun to shoot, popping steel and punching paper. Standing and shooting offhand at ten yards it was easy to chew one ragged hole in the target, and you barely have to slow down to do it.

Pistol calibers are inherently less accurate than rifle calibers (the bullet shape is most of the reason why, they're just not shaped to slice through the air well) but with a fixed 6.5-inch barrel and a red dot for aiming you'll find the MAC IX more accurate than a traditional handgun even before you add a brace/stock.

I'm a huge fan of the MP5 design in spite of its negatives, none of which can be found in the MAC IX. I don't like the selector on this gun, but that's an easy fix. Plus, it is priced hundreds of dollars less than MAC's roller-lock MAC 5. The

lack of compatibility with most JHPs was unexpected, however. I understand this is derived from a mil-issue SMG, but still, it's the 21st century, even militaries are using hollowpoints these days, and the American consumer is used to semi-autos which feed nearly everything—including JHPs. You'd only need an additional thirty seconds, or less, in the CNC machine which bevels the chamber mouth, I'm just saying...

SDS's Gamez told me their employees like running their MAC IXs in competition, and that sounds like a

lot of fun. With a thirty-round magazine, red dot, a white light mounted on the handguard, and a brace or stock on the back, the MAC IX wouldn't just be fun to shoot but a great home-defense gun even before you add a suppressor. I think PCCs (or equivalent PDWs like this) are the best choice for home defense for the average person. **71**

MILITARY ARMAMENT CORPORATION MAC IX PISTOL

Caliber:	9mm
Weight:	4 lbs. 9 oz. (unloaded, no magazine)
Overall Length:	14.75 in.
Receiver:	7075 aluminum
Barrel:	6.5 in., 42CrMo4 Chromium-molybdenum, Melonited, HK-style 3-lug, threaded 1/2x28
Pistol Grip:	MAC (AR compatible)
Handguard:	Aluminum, M-LOK compatible
Trigger:	Single-stage, 5.5-12 lbs. (6.5-lbs as tested)
Sights:	Post front adjustable for elevation, Two aperture rear, fully adjustable for windage
Accessories	Two 30-round magazines, cleaning kit, sling, hard case
MSRP:	\$797.00
Contact:	SDSArms.com

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Owning an L85 is a dream for the gun collector. However, Aly & Kaufman make that dream a reality for a fraction of the price. (Will Dabbs)

MINING UNOBTAINIUM:

ALY & KAUFMAN'S AKB-23

By Will Dabbs, MD

Building a British L85-Type Service Rifle at Home

The AKB-23 from Aly & Kaufman is an inspired conversion kit that transforms a Brownells BRN-180 upper receiver into a very close replica of the 1980's-vintage British L85 service rifle from the SA80 (Small Arms for the 1980s) family of weapons. The engineering behind this unique firearm is truly extraordinary, and the execution sublime. If you can change the tire on a car, you are lyrically overqualified to build this rare gun up at home.



The Aly & Kaufman AKB-23 is a remarkably well executed replica of the elusive British L85 service rifle. The gun runs as well as it looks. (Will Dabbs)



Here, we see the British L85 during a joint familiarization exercise with Allied troops. (US Army photo)

The end result is just neat as can be. The unique lines conjure up images of Tommies on patrol or the Troubles in Northern Ireland. I write for gun magazines and live in this space. It's tough to impress me these days. I was legitimately stoked about this project.



Unobtainium

Forbidden fruit. It's a concept as old as the species. Per the Genesis account, Adam and Eve could eat absolutely anything they could find in the Garden of Eden with one gleaming exception. They were specifically directed by God Himself to leave the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil alone. Their being human, from that point forward they naturally could think of little else. You all know the story. Tradition holds that it was an apple, but that is extra-canonical. It could just as well have been a pomegranate, a mango, or a kumquat. The old serpent worked his magic, and Eve took a bite. She then shared the fruit with her husband, and everything went pretty much off the rails from there. The next thing you know, folks are ripping the tags off of mattresses and Hitler is invading Russia. There's just no putting that back in the box.

How is that germane to the storied firearms publication you seem currently to be clutching, might you ask? Well, ever since it debuted in 1985, I have coveted a British SA80 rifle in the worst way. However, none were available except some post-sample full auto imports restricted to dealers and government.

Firearms News Editor-in-Chief Vincent L. DeNiro, who has spent over four decades in the gun industry, has seen a few over the years. He told me that while attending the 1989 SHOT Show, there were rumors of a semi-auto L85 rifle becoming available—there were also rumors of the George H.W. Bush imported “assault weapons” ban during that show as well. Due to the ban in 1989, which is still in effect, that project ended. DeNiro later met one of



▲ I coveted one of these exotic rifles so badly simply because they were not available at any price. (Will Dabbs)

◀ Martial arts great, the late Michael DePasquale Jr, holding an original L85 on the set of *The Cutoff* (1997) at Screen Gems Studios. *Firearms News* Editor-in-Chief Vincent L. DeNiro was the theatrical armorer for this movie. (Vincent L. DeNiro collection)



Firearms News Editor-in-Chief Vincent L. DeNiro with one of the college professors at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom in Shrivenham, England in 2007. DeNiro is holding an L86 Light Support Weapon. (Vincent L. DeNiro collection)



The SA80 rifle series replaced the L1A1 inch pattern FN FAL in British military service. (Will Dabbs)

The L86 Light Support Weapon sports a bipod and extended barrel and is used as a squad automatic weapon in the same manner as the Combloc RPK. (British Ministry of Defence)

the people involved with the project at the 2001 Soldier of Fortune Convention. This individual had one L85 sample and one L86 sample, the latter being the LSW (light support weapon) with longer barrel, bipod, and additional grip. At that time, 25 years ago, DeNiro recalls that he wanted around \$20,000 per gun. As a theatrical armorer, DeNiro would later provide an original L85 to the karate action movie *The Cutoff*, which was filmed at Screen Gems Studios in 1997. The gun was imported by CTS, Inc. back in the early 1990s from a Section 5 arms company in England called Arkley Arms. As the owner of CTS didn't want the pinned flash hider to be removed so that the L85 could be adapted to blank fire, the gun was only going to fire a single blank



Here we see the L98 Cadet rifle in action with a British Sea Cadet. This version of the SA80 lacks an optical sight and gas system making it a manually operated single-shot weapon. (Public domain)

in one scene. However, due to a change in the shooting schedule, the L85 was never used. In 2007, while working for Beretta, DeNiro was part of a team sent to demonstrate weapons to British SAS and other military officials in England. While there, he was given a private tour of the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom in Shrivenham where he got to see many SA80 variants including the L86 and a compact PDW-sized L85 designated as the L22 A2.

Despite some pervasive negative press, that sexy-cool smoke pole always seemed incongruously captivating. Now, thanks to the mad geniuses at Aly & Kaufman, American gun nerds serious about their craft can bodge up a spot-on replica at home. Doing that up right isn't exactly cheap, but the end result is certainly worth the effort.

Origin Story

The SA80 weapons series had a rocky start, to put it mildly. Development of this radically-advanced bullpup combat weapon began in 1976. The intent was to create a compact, lightweight 5.56mm service rifle to replace the L1A1. The L1A1 was the British inch version of the FN FAL that served with the British Army from 1954 into the 1990's. Production of the L85 kicked off in 1985 with the rifle first seeing active service two years later. Those early guns were veritably infested with problems.

Much like the M16 that came before it, those early rifles suffered some well-publicized teething troubles. Polymer bits broke, and the pressed steel receivers were deemed insufficiently substantial for hard combat use. Synthetic furniture melted when exposed to insect repellent, and the



This PDW version of the L85 was on display at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom in Shrivenham, England in 2007. (Vincent L. DeNiro)



The original GI L85 used essentially the same short-stroke gas system as did the ArmaLite AR-18. (Will Dabbs)



British Radway Green magazines were themselves a bit sketchy. They seem somewhat flimsy in action. (Will Dabbs)



This American Marine is demonstrating the proper method of charging the L85 during a joint firing exercise with the British MOD. (USMC photo)



The curious tubular bayonet wraps around the flash suppressor. (US military photo)

ferrous components rusted badly. All this eventually led to a massive rebuild program that began in the early 2000's.

With the British public clamoring for satisfaction, the MOD (Ministry of Defence) farmed out the upgrades to the storied German Heckler and Koch company. That project led to the A2 and A3 upgrades. The SA80A3 remains in active service today.

The SA80 family of guns includes the standard service rifle, the L86 long-barreled Light Support Weapon (LSW), the stubby L22 carbine used for aircrew and personal defense, and the L98 Cadet rifle that is a straight-pull design—not semi-auto. The SA80 was the last weapon produced by the Royal Small Arms Factory. This same facility began manufacturing firearms in support of the British Empire in 1816.

Details

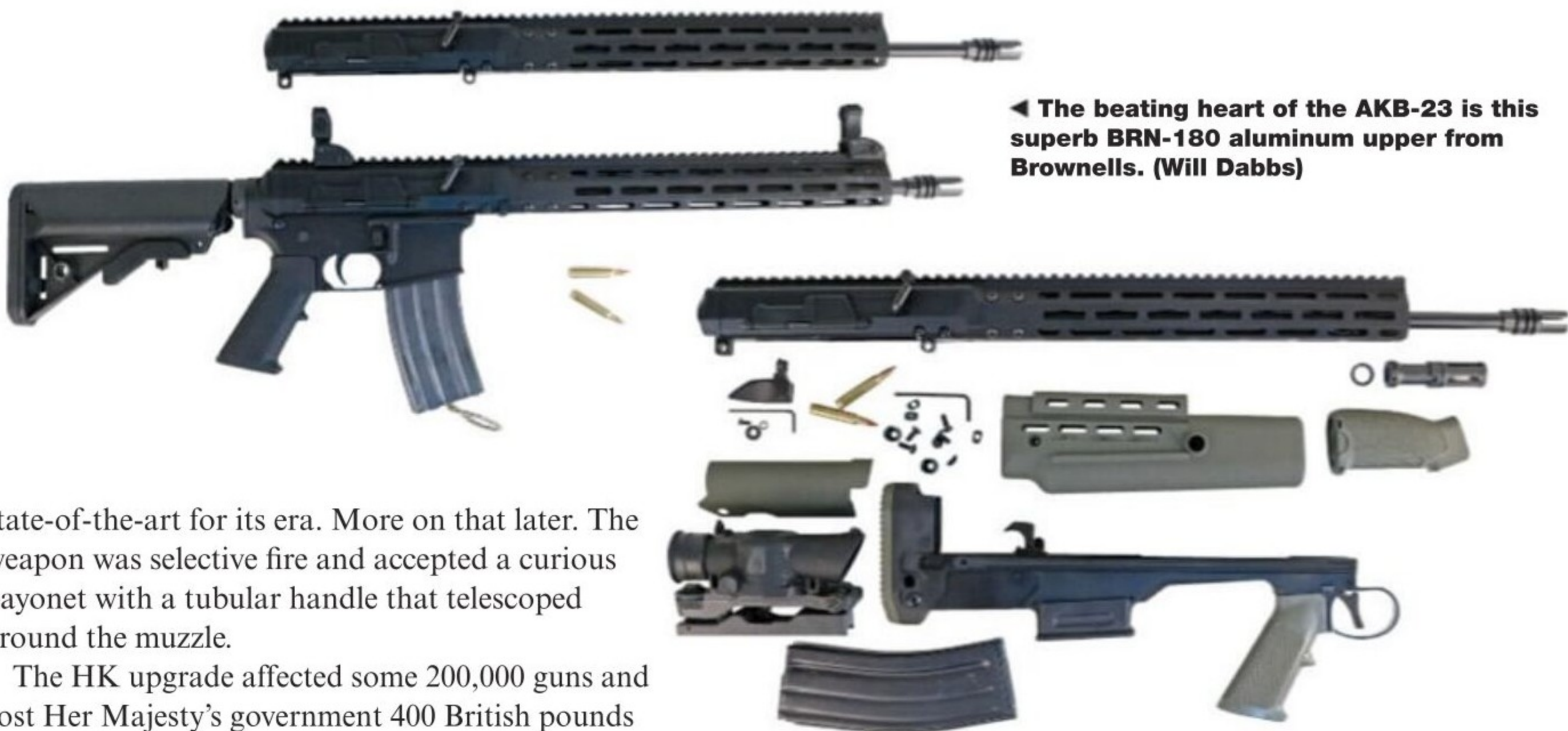
The basic design orbited around a stamped steel receiver and a short-stroke gas piston-driven action aped off of that of the ArmaLite AR-18. In fact, the prototypes were manufactured mostly with AR-18 parts including the barreled-upper receiver. The gun fed from the same

STANAG 30-round magazines that fit the M16. The Brits made their own aluminum versions at a place called Radway Green that also suffered quite a few problems early on.

Ejection was right side-only, and the gun was designed from the outset to accept a superb SUSAT sight that was



Before Aly & Kaufman worked their magic, American gun nerds were simply not going to land an SA80. (Will Dabbs)



◀ The beating heart of the AKB-23 is this superb BRN-180 aluminum upper from Brownells. (Will Dabbs)

state-of-the-art for its era. More on that later. The weapon was selective fire and accepted a curious bayonet with a tubular handle that telescoped around the muzzle.

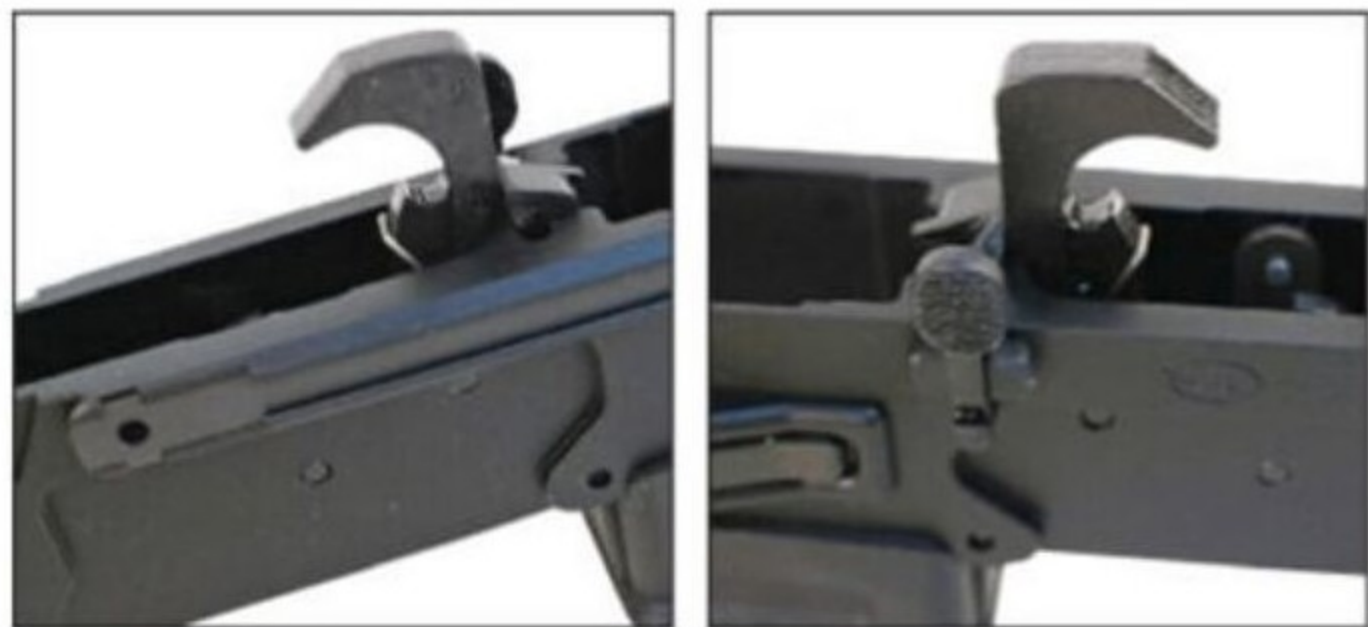
The HK upgrade affected some 200,000 guns and cost Her Majesty’s government 400 British pounds apiece. The conversions included a redesigned cocking handle, bolt modifications, an overhauled extractor, and a newly-timed fire control system. These renovated weapons were markedly more reliable than the previous sort.

The Aly & Kaufman AKB-23 conversion kit is beautifully executed and easy to assemble. (Will Dabbs)

Despite the standard rifle’s compact 30.9-inch overall length, these guns included a relatively long 20.4-inch barrel. Given that the effectiveness of the zippy little 5.56mm round is a function of velocity that is itself dependent upon barrel length, the SA80 remained markedly spunkier downrange than a comparable American M4 with its 14.5-inch tube. However, full-up with a SUSAT sight and loaded magazine, the standard SA80 weighed a whopping 11 pounds.



The AKB-23 chassis is a serialized firearm that must transfer via an FFL. (Will Dabbs)



The AKB-23 incorporates a handful of standard M4 parts and sports an exceptionally nice trigger. (Will Dabbs)



The AKB-23 furniture feels 3D printed. It took a wee bit of shaving with a Dremel tool to obtain a perfect fit. (Will Dabbs)



The custom Aly & Kaufman extended flash suppressor creates the perfect SA80 aesthetic with a Brownells 18.5-inch barrel. (Will Dabbs)



The charging handle from Aly & Kaufman mimics that of the GI SA80 and is a drop-in fit. (Will Dabbs)



When built using the 18.5-inch barreled upper, the AKB-23 transfers like any other rifle. Shorter tubes run afoul of overall length requirements. (Will Dabbs)



How Do You Get One?

I have heard rumors for years of a handful of enigmatic factory semi-auto SA80's that actually made it into the country prior to the sundry bans starting in 1989. My editor saw one as mentioned earlier. Despite a lifetime of searching, I have yet to actually encounter one in the wild. I did once see a post-sample full auto SA80 that sold on GunBroker for north of \$20,000. One of the reasons I have found the SA80 so tantalizing was that it just wasn't available. We corn-fed Americans don't care much for being told we can't have stuff. Aly & Kaufman fixed all of that.

The conversion kit orbits around a superb Brownells BRN-180 upper. These drop-in upper receivers fit on any standard AR-15 lower and incorporate a facsimile of the AR-180 short-stroke piston-driven gas system and bolt. They utilize a machined aluminum frame rather than the pressed steel sort of the original ArmaLite and SA80 rifles. I picked one of these up right after they came out several years ago, and have found it to be rugged, accurate, and cool.

Brownells offers their BRN-180 uppers in 10-, 10.5-, 13.9-, 14.5-, 16-, and 18.5-inch versions. They can be had in .223 Wylde, 7.62x39mm, 300 BLK, and 350 Legend chamberings. As the original SA80 had that long 20-inch barrel, everything except the 18.5-inch version looks a bit off in the AKB-23 kit.

The Aly & Kaufman AKB-23 kit includes their custom bullpup lower assembly along with appropriate furniture and a unique charging handle that mimics the GI original. The lower is a serialized firearm that has to transfer through an FFL. The kit comes with an OD green M16A2 pistol grip. However, they offer an OD version from Bravo Company that looks a bit better. If you want a grip that is shaped more like one from the SA80 series, then AR180Parts.com has one for \$40. Aly & Kaufman also sells a replica SA80 flash suppressor that makes the 18.5-inch barrel look spot-on as well as the basic carrying handle sight system used on the Cadet rifle. The company will also sell you an original SA80 sling should you so desire.

Legal Considerations

We tend to rightfully fixate on the barrel length restrictions when it comes to stubby guns. However, a standard unregistered rifle has to be at least 26 inches in overall length as well. If assembled with a 16-inch BRN-180 upper, the AKB-23 kit falls just a wee bit short. Aly & Kaufman sell a custom butt pad with a little bulge at the back that brings the overall length into compliance. Use an 18.5-inch barrel, and everything is fine as-is.

So long as the length issues are taken into consideration, the resulting gun transfers like any other uncontrolled rifle. Amidst a veritable sea of inane firearms rules, that overall length restriction is one of the dumbest. However, that's not changing, so we might as well just suck it up.

The Optic

Most folks will equip their faux SA80 with some handy modern tactical glass. Later versions of the British service rifle rocked a standard Picatinny rail and something like an ACOG or ELCAN optic. However, I was going for a been-there, done-that 1980's vibe. That meant a genuine SUSAT.



My SUSAT shipped from England with its original Styrofoam box. (Will Dabbs)



The single-point reticle on the SUSAT is unconventional but effective. The sight accepts a tritium insert for low-light operation. (Will Dabbs)

SUSAT stands for Sight Unit Small Arms, Trilux. The SUSAT was a tritium-illuminated, 4X fixed-magnification optical sight that really was lightyears ahead of its time back in the mid-1980's. Featuring a curious single-point, obelisk-shaped aiming reticle and built-in tritium-powered low-light illumination, the SUSAT represented a significant improvement over the iron sights of the day. The Brits used the SUSAT on their FN Minimi light machine-guns as well. The Minimi was the precursor to our 5.56mm M249 SAW.

Good luck finding one of these bad boys on this side of the pond. Lord knows I tried. You see them from time to time available overseas on eBay, but that is still hit or miss as well. Kono Arms outside of London hooked me up.

In addition to having an extraordinary collection of eclectic gun parts and obscure optics, Kono Arms will still ship to the states. Most such establishments will not in light of the tariffs and general Trump-related acrimony. The guy on the end of the Kono Arms email goes by



The AKB-23 trigger and fire controls are among the best I have encountered on a bullpup rifle. (Will Dabbs)



It takes an adaptor to mount the SUSAT to a standard Pic rail. Aly & Kaufman can hook you up with a guy to make one at reasonable cost. (Will Dabbs)

Neo, and he is the nicest, most helpful bloke you'd ever want to meet.

These original optics are spendy. I have no idea how Neo sources the things. However, it seems he can track down most anything given a little time. Neo can score you an original SA80 bayonet and vintage Radway Green British magazines as well. (Be sure to follow all import laws and regulations.)

The original SUSAT did not mount via a Pic rail. To make it fit properly required a custom-made adaptor. The good folks at Aly & Kaufman can point you in the right direction to have one made. Mine set me back eighty bucks shipped to my door.

It's Alive!

Assembly is basically plug and play. You have to wrangle a handful of Allen screws, but that's no great chore. I also had to shave just a bit back on the inside of the cheekpiece with my Dremel tool for a perfect fit. If you don't feel so inclined, Aly & Kaufman will sell you a complete rifle. However, they are a small shop. Expect a bit of a wait. My conversion kit took maybe three months to arrive. They build them in batches.

The safety is a pushbutton crossbolt located just behind the trigger. Curiously, I think this is the nicest bullpup trigger I have ever squeezed. There is no mush or flex that so commonly manifests in bullpup triggers. I hadn't seen that coming.

The manual of arms is a bit more convoluted than the same enterprise with your favorite tricked-out M4, but I expected that. Like all bullpup designs, the gun is exceptionally compact. The gun charges on the right just like the originals.

Accuracy is exceptional for a rifle of this sort. So long as I took my time and fired from a stable rest, I could keep



The AKB-23 is an exceptionally accurate rifle thanks to its Brownells BRN-180 basis. (Will Dabbs)



PERFORMANCE SPECIFICATIONS A&K AKB-23 RIFLE

Load	Velocity (fps)	ES	SD	Group Size Avg. & Best (in.)
PMC 55-gr. FMJ	2,937	91	27.7	2.3/1.8
Winchester 55-gr. FMJ	3,222	57	23.1	2.1/1.7
Black Hills 77-gr. OTM	2,789	34	9.8	1.4/0.9
Federal 77-gr. OTM	2,607	54	20.5	1.5/1.0

Group Size is the average of three five-shot groups fired off of a sandbag rest at 100 yards. Velocity is the average of fifteen rounds measured by a Garmin Xero C1 chronograph.



This isn't something you see every day. Aly & Kaufman now lets enterprising American gun geeks add a spot-on SA80 replica to their collections. (Will Dabbs)

my rounds in a juice can lid at a football field. Muzzle velocities were considerably higher with this rifle than might be the case with something sporting a shorter tube.

The ergonomics are right hand-only. The right-sided charging handle is less efficient than that of an M4 or an AUG. The left-sided bolt release runs like that of an M4. However, the AKB-23 still moves quickly and hits hard. Rocking a British SA80 will also reliably set you apart at the local range.

Ruminations

You never get a second chance to make a first impression. The SA80 had a rough start back in the 1980's. That taint has followed the gun to a certain degree to this very day.

Though I have not myself had the opportunity to wring out a GI version, those who have tell me it is a mature and reliable weapon system today. Most folks either love or hate a bullpup. 85% of the human population is right-handed and will do just fine. Left-handed folks are just screwed, but they should be used to that by now.

This AKB-23 from Aly & Kaufman was a bit of a bucket list thing for me. I always figured I would die of old age before I might ever land an SA80 of my own. While not absolutely true to



The AKB-23 is cool in a weird, difficult-to-describe way. Part of that is simply because the gun is otherwise unobtainable. (Will Dabbs)

the original, it will easily pass for the real steel in dim light. Additionally, as it orbits around a superlative Brownells BRN180 gas piston-driven upper, it is also a reliable sporting carbine for defense, competition, or fun. Using a British SA80 for home defense certainly wasn't on my dance ticket before Aly & Kaufman worked their magic, yet here we are.



The AKB-23 is a great addition to any gun collection especially if the collector collects Enfield rifles or any other British arm. (Will Dabbs)



The AKB-23 is a neat addition to any well-seasoned bullpup collection. (Will Dabbs)

All up if you want the gun to be historically correct, you are looking at a pretty hefty chunk of change. The finished rifle runs around \$1,900, and the SUSAT is about half that. However, the AKB-23 isn't out of line compared to other high-end black rifles. You just have to ask yourself had bad that itch is. Nowadays, Aly & Kaufman can finally help us scratch it. 

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS	
ALLY & KAUFMAN AKB-23	
Type:	Gas-operated Short Stroke Piston-Driven
Caliber:	.223 Wylde
Barrel:	18.5 in.
Overall Length:	30.9 in
Weight (with optic):	9.4 lbs.
Finish:	Black Anodized
Sights:	SUSAT
MSRP:	\$1,920 (rifle)/£850 (SUSAT sight)
Contact:	AandK.llc

SOURCES
Black Hills Ammunition: Black-Hills.com , (605) 348-5150
Federal Premium: FederalPremium.com , (800) 831-8100
Kono Arms: KonoArms.com , +44 7774409147
PMC Ammunition: PMCAmmo.com , (281) 407-5655
Winchester Ammunition: Winchester.com , (800) 945-5237

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Don't Wait — They'll Go Fast!



Minimal silhouette with a plethora of firepower: The P365 X-Macro Comp. (Rikk Rambo)

MINIMAL FOOTPRINT, MAXIMUM FIREPOWER: THE SIG SAUER P365 X-MACRO COMP

By Rikk Rambo

Alaska: The Land of Brown Bear, Black Bear, Magnum Wheel Guns, 10mms, and... Wonder-Nines?

There's a first time for everything, and if you are reading this, you have a front row seat to my stab at subject matter I've never been asked to tackle during my seven years as *Firearms News*' hunting field editor.

In this article, I will be testing and evaluating a compact carry handgun: the SIG Sauer P365 X-Macro Comp. In the spirit of transparency, there is something you should know before getting started. During my nearly three-decade long law enforcement career, my three years of service as a patrol officer with Pittsburgh Police was the only period in which my primary duty gun and backup weapon were of calibers that didn't start with a "4" (Pittsburgh PD gave us only two duty weapon choice...the 9mm Glock 17 and Glock 19).

What I'm trying to get at here is that I have a reputation as a "heavy caliber man" to maintain. So, there may be a FedEx package of Copper River sockeye in it for you if you don't drop a dime on me to any of my law enforcement or 49th state brethren regarding my shooting, and maybe sometimes carrying, (it's SO hard to say) ... a 9mm!

With Great Fashion Comes Great Responsibility... and a Goodly Amount of Planning to Effectively Carry a Concealable Handgun!

If you've ever lived in Alaska for an extended period of time, you would already be savvy to our practical way of life and the "Official Dress Code of the Last Frontier." If you haven't spent a significant amount of time on "the last frontier," I'll boil it down for you:

- **High School Graduation Ceremony:** Jeans and optional hoody or Carhartt shirt
- **Church:** Jeans and optional hoody or Carhartt shirt
- **Wedding:** Jeans and optional hoody or Carhartt shirt
- **Funeral:** New jeans and optional hoody or Carhartt shirt.

You see, one of the spectacular things about Alaska, in addition to its other-worldly scenery and wildlife, is how every acceptable ensemble worn in our great state can accommodate and conceal a handgun up to and including a S&W X-Frame revolver. Unfortunately, my retirement job requires me to travel to regions of the U.S. with more genteel and froufrou fashion requirements from time to



Clothing-related concealability issues usually aren't a concern in the 49th whether your weapon of choice is a large caliber handgun or a flamethrower! (Rikk Rambo)

time. While I will never order a coffee drink with a four-part name that includes “soy,” “macchiato,” “chai,” or “Hello Kitty,” in the end analysis, it is business etiquette that dictates the garments I must wear.

My fashion/haute couture marching orders, when attending meetings south of the Canadian border, were clear: business casual. After a quick Google search to identify what GQ/Men's fashion magazine horrors were in my future, I realized I was going to have to downsize from my FN-510 Tactical 10mm and my S&W Performance Center Model 629 .44 magnum...at least when on travel status down south.

After an intensive search, I found a compact but capable “away-team” handgun for the lower '48 at my favorite little local gun store. This weapon was the compact, ergonomic, optic capable pistol with the magazine capacity of a full-size duty gun: the P365 X-Macro Comp.

What Came First, the Pistol or the Magazine? Anatomy of the P365 X-Macro Comp

There were five standout features of the P365 X-Macro Comp that captured my attention: The minimalist but

extremely comfortable grip, cornucopia-like 17 round factory magazines, X-Ray3 Day/Night tritium sights, M-1913 rail, and optic-ready upper. While I was intrigued by the integral compensator, I didn't consider it a key factor in my decision to purchase the pistol...which was a mistake, but we'll discuss that later!

Our tour of the striker-fired P365 X-Macro Comp will begin at the grip and move forward to the business end. The first thing you will notice about the weapon when you get it in your mitts is that its grip is not commensurate with its generous magazine

capacity. On the day I purchased this iteration of the P365 from an iconic, old-time gun store in Anchorage, I became embroiled in a lengthy dialogue regarding its magazine with a sales associate friend. I'm not sure if what he related to me is a myth, but if it is, it's believable given the X-Macro's magazine design. He told me a reliable and credible source informed him the X-Macro's magazine was a true “what came first” origin of causation paradox, similar to the “chicken or the egg” or “A-10 Thunderbolt II or its 30mm GAU-8 Avenger” conundrums.

His source alleged that just like the A-10 “Warthog,” who's airframe was designed around its massively destructive 30mm GAU-8 Avenger Gatling-style auto-cannon, the P365 X-Macro Comp's frame and grips were designed around it's diminutive, yet generous 17-round magazine. While I wasn't able to vet his source's veracity, I decided to buy this origin story hook, line and sinker, primarily because it makes for a cooler backstory than the standard, mind-numbingly boring “engineered to the strictest industry standards utilizing both time-honored techniques and computer aided design” boilerplate version.



Custom leather holster options for the X-Macro abounds... including (L-R) the Falco IWB/A123, C603L, and C601LR (FalcoHolster.com). (Rikk Rambo)



The X-Macro Comp doesn't look compact from this angle! (Rikk Rambo)



◀ ▲ Lateral views of the X-Macro's X-Ray3 tritium sights, light-rail, & optics-ready upper. (Rikk Rambo)

► Something to get stoked about...the X-Macro Comp's up-engineered 17-round magazine. (Rikk Rambo)



One gander at the ammunition-count windows at the rear of an X-Macro's magazine will make you scratch your head in wonderment at the metallurgy involved in fabricating a spring strong enough to reliably feed 17 rounds of 9mm into its host. When fully loaded, the 17th round is so close to the baseplate that it seems implausible that anything larger than a paperclip turned sideways could fit into the remaining space. The corresponding reduction in magazine size translates into a slimmer and more concealable grip.

Before moving on to the trigger group, I do have one final "attaboy" aimed at the X-Macro's grips: Their 360-degree texturing. This texturing, while comfortable, remains aggressive enough to maintain positive weapon retention when the going gets wet.

The trigger group and slide were engineered to take a beating. The Fire Control Unit (FCU) is manufactured from S7 stainless steel and the slide from Nitron-coated stainless steel. The P365's trigger pull is standard fare for a striker-fired pistol and registered an average four pounds, 11 ounces on my Wheeler trigger gauge.

On the subject of barrel and recoil spring lifespans, I'll just say this: Don't worry about it. Go sling lead with wild

abandon. Springs and barrels have a way of letting you know when it's their time to dine in the halls of Valhalla, and these are their indicators.

Symptoms of a failing spring:

- Failure of the slide to return to full battery
- Increased ease of manipulation when actuating the slide
- Failure to eject spent casings reliably
- Jarring slide strikes while cycling.

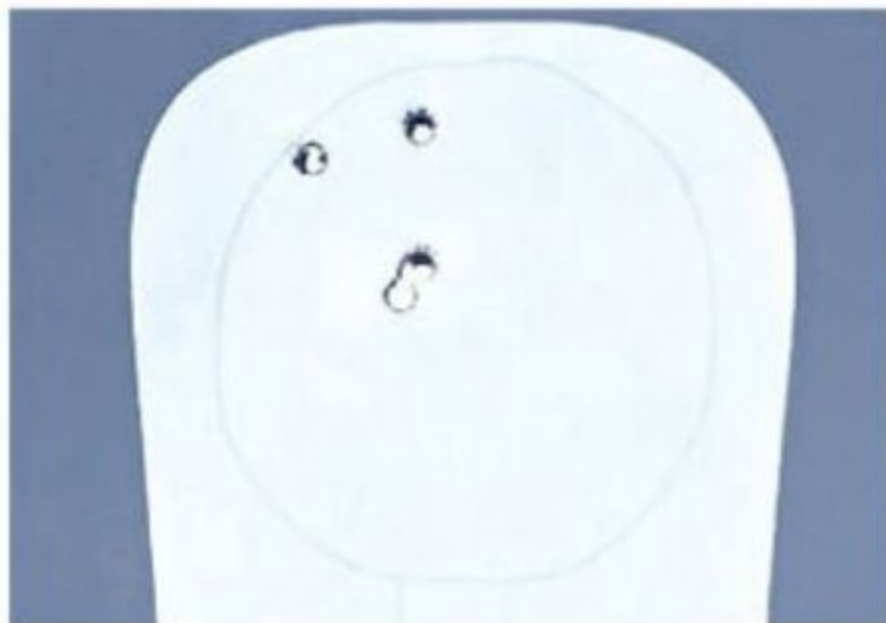
Likewise, a barrel will foreshadow its demise with the following warning signs:

- Decreased accuracy and in extreme circumstances, bullets that exhibit "keyhole" patterns on target
- Increased sound, smoke patterns, or barrel fouling
- Noticeable, visible wear in the bore or at the muzzle.

My experience with SIG Sauer handguns never included any of the above maladies. I carried their P220

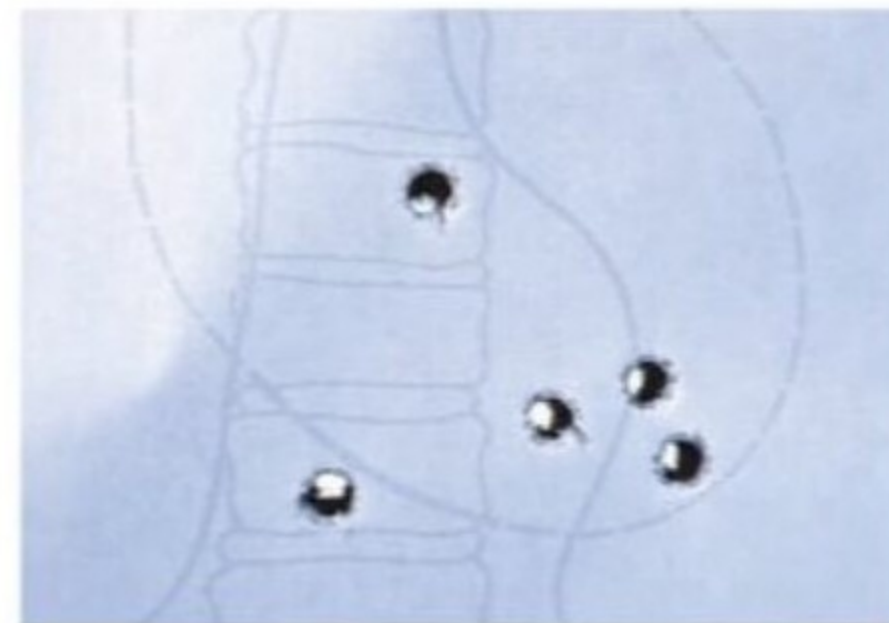


The aggressive, but comfortable grip texture and high-visibility Xray3 sights are standouts. (Rikk Rambo)



◀ It's not a smiley face, but I'll take it! A 1.364-inch group by the X-Macro's pet load: The 124 Grain Speer +P Gold Dot Personal Protection cartridge. (Rikk Rambo)

▶ Alexa...please cancel that pacemaker order! Courtesy of a 2.37-inch group of 147-grain Speer Lawman goodness. (Rikk Rambo)



SIG P365 X-MACRO COMP PISTOL ACCURACY CHART

Manufacturer	Weight (grains)	Type	Velocity (fps)	Energy (ft. lbs.)	Average / Best (in.)
20 YARDS - THREE FIVE-SHOT GROUPS					
Speer Gold Dot Personal Protection +P	124	HP	1,220	410	2.13 / 1.36
Speer Lawman Training	147	TMJ	985	317	2.50 / 2.37

on my hip for the bulk of my 25-year DEA career and it ate untold thousands of rounds of ammunition with no appreciable barrel or spring wear symptoms. Out of an abundance of caution, I did change my P220's recoil springs every three to four years and was never disappointed with the weapon's performance.

The final attribute in the winning column for the P365 X-Macro is its integrated compensator that reduces felt recoil by approximately 12–19% (depending on ammunition type). Oh, and don't listen to any of those Karen-esque influencers who poo-poo it. Compared to a Glock 43x, the recoil of the X-Macro is significantly less sharp thanks to this integral design bonus.

Downrange Performance

Range day was cold, bleak, and uneventful by Alaska standards, and the X-Macro performed flawlessly with two types of ammunition: 147-grain Speer "Lawman" training and 124-grain +P Speer Gold Dot personal protection cartridges. Group averages were compiled from three five-round groups for each ammunition type and shot from the standing position at 20 yards. When the X-Macro's slide locked back for

the final time, it was the +P 124 Grain Personal Protection round that proved to be the pet-load of the day.

Making the Cut: My New "Away-Team" Concealed Carry Pistol

With range testing complete, the P365 X-Macro Comp easily carved out its niche as my "lower 48" carry pistol. The "cons" identified during testing were of the "first world" variety. Loading the X-Macro's magazines, especially in freezing weather, may prove a digit-buster for some users, but never fear, SIG includes a mag-loader in the carrying case. Trigger creep was another minor distraction but take this gripe with a grain of salt from a guy who's been enjoying a champagne diet on a beer income with a finely tuned 1911 for the last few years.

In addition to the list of positives (17 round factory magazines, X-Ray3 Day/Night tritium sights, and optic-ready

▶ The "Away-Team" gat at a "No-Tell-Motel" somewhere in Miami! (Rikk Rambo)

Ice-cold American excellence: A rugged Kydex OWB holster and mag-carrier courtesy of Eclipse Holsters (EclipseHolsters.com). (Rikk Rambo)



TYRANT “INTELLIFIRE” TRIGGER AND WILSON COMBAT’S WCP365 GRIP MODULE

If you get the urge to make a great gun even better, Tyrant CNC’s P365 “Intellifire” trigger and Wilson Combat’s Grip Module are add-ons to be reckoned with. The Tyrant “Intellifire” provides 30% less pre-travel, but it was also the first aftermarket offering to feature a trigger safety system. Its MSRP is \$94.95, from TyrantCNC.com.

Wilson Combat has also jumped into the X-Macro fray with their WCP365 grip module. This aftermarket polymer grip



Tyrant CNC’s “Intellifire” trigger.
(Courtesy of Tyrant CNC)



Wilson Combat’s X-Macro frame. (Courtesy of Wilson Combat)

module’s ergonomics and shape are designed to improve weapon retention and supplement the X-Macro’s integral compensator by providing additional recoil control. Visit WilsonCombat.com to get one for 67 bucks. **FN**

slide) mentioned earlier, honorable mention goes to the X-Macro’s integral compensator. A few years ago, I purchased a 9mm Glock 43X for my good ‘ol mom as a self-defense weapon. While my mom is one tough bird, the sharp, “jolt, not a shove” recoil of the little Glock was too much for her AARP-eligible wrists. I shot it, taking her age into consideration, and realized it had a bit of a sting...especially with +P ammunition. Conversely, the P365 X-Macro’s compensator provided noticeable recoil reduction with standard and +P loads.

So, there you have it. While the P365 X-Macro Comp has been out since late 2022, it remains a strong contender if you are on the prowl for a high-capacity concealed-carry pistol with trappings of a top-notch duty weapon. I’ll always be a large-caliber aficionado, but when forced to dress like a respectable business professional down yonder in the continental U.S., the versatile P365 X-Macro Comp is now my partner in crime...just don’t tell my friends! **FN**



The X-Macro Comp getting fancy (and accurate) with the SIG Sauer Romeo-X Compact Red-Dot. (Rikk Rambo)

SIG SAUER P365 X-MACRO COMP SPECIFICATIONS	
Caliber:	9mm Luger
Trigger:	Flat (Striker-Fired)
Barrel:	3.1 inches (78.74mm); Carbon steel
Muzzle Device:	Integral compensator (Est. 12-19% recoil reduction)
Grips:	Textured polymer
Weight:	22 ounces (with magazine)
Upper Receiver:	Nitron-coated stainless steel
Magazine:	17 Round Steel (two included with weapon)
Sights:	Optic ready with XRAY3 Day/Night Tritium iron sights
Sight Radius:	5.1 inches (130 mm)
Country of Manufacture:	The GOOD ‘OL USA!
MSRP:	\$820 (Average US retail price)
Contact:	SigSauer.com

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The L1A1 is a man's rifle, at almost four feet long, and it thumps when you call on it. (Patrick Sweeney)

A D.S. ARMS—BUILT L1A1 RIFLE

Good Things
Take Time!

By Patrick Sweeney

The British had a problem. They had invested a great deal of work in medium-bore bullpup rifle designs post-war, and then we Americans just yanked the rug out from under them. Gone was the idea of their EM-2 .280 caliber bullpup with medium power, and now they had to ditch that, still retire all the SMLEs, and then buy or build something in this new 7.62NATO cartridge.

The Belgians weren't much-better off. The new rifle Dieudonné Saive had designed, one capable of being built in a host of medium-bore cartridges, was too small. He had to beef it up, thus creating the FAL.

Churchill got an agreement, (or so he thought) that if Britain adopted the 7.62 cartridge, the U.S. would adopt the FAL alongside Britain. They did, we didn't. However, Britain, being Britain, was not going to make their own FALs in that stupid European metric system. The blueprints were converted to Imperial, and thus the L1A1, one of the "Inch" pattern FALs, came about. That was 1954.

In the mid-1980s, the L1A1 was on the way out. The British were finally going to get their bullpup, and they got it all right; the execrable L85 in 5.56x45, the Enfield. It was a rifle so bad that decades later the Ministry of Defense (MOD) had to buy HK and then hand the rifles over to them to be de-bugged. At some point, a bunch of L1A1s were surplus to the US. Well, surplus as parts kits and not rifles, because despite what you might have read, the L1A1 is a select-fire rifle. Don't believe me? I asked one of the staff at the UK National Museums about this, and his answer was, "*Yes. Install the right parts, and it rips right along.*" That is why my parts kit came



An EM-2 rifle on display at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom in Shrivenham, England in 2007. (Photo by Vincent L. DeNiro)



The L1A1 is a piston-driven rifle chambered in 7.62 NATO and meant to own the battlefields of the 1950s and beyond. (Patrick Sweeney)

The L1A1 carry handle folds down, not that many ever carried one like luggage. (Patrick Sweeney)

with the receiver lopped into pieces. I was happy, I could finally build an FAL. Well, I could have, except for one thing: Inch pattern. In the 1980s, the only receivers to be had were coming out of Brazil, via Imbel, and they were all metric. Inch mags don't fit metric receivers, and metric mags sometimes (but not always) worked kinda-sorta in inch receivers. Sigh. Even if I sourced metric mags (cheap at the time), every single part that fit to the Imbel receiver

would have to be hand-fitted and dimensionally adjusted. Nope. It got worse. The FAL charging handle is non-reciprocating on the left side of the receiver. The L1A1 rifles have a folding latch, the metrics have a non-folding one. The L1A1 receivers have to have the front end of the slot machined away to clear the folding handle. Again, sigh. So, the box goes on a shelf in the shop, to be forgotten about for a long time.



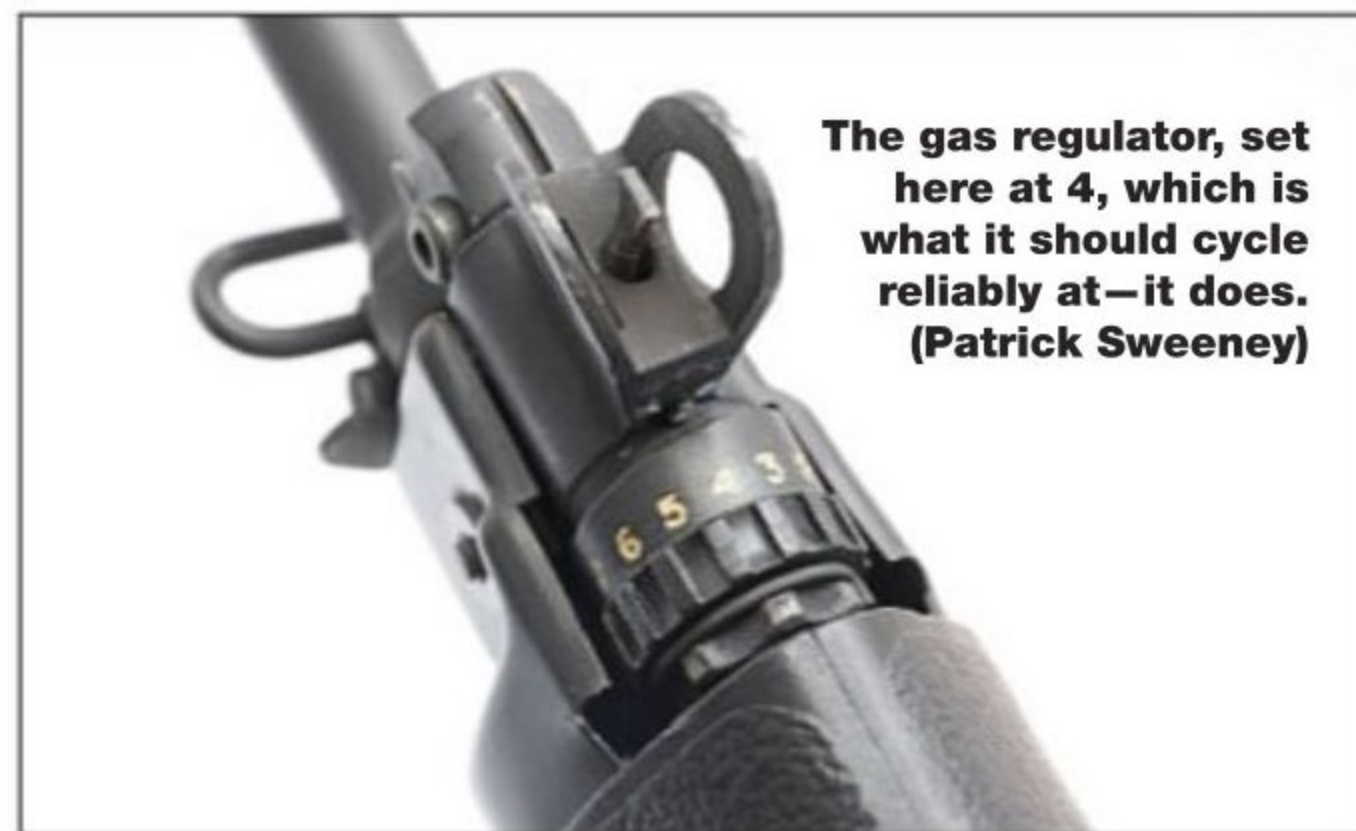
DSA made the inch-pattern receiver on which to build my parts kit. (Patrick Sweeney)



The L1A1 uses a folding charging handle, and so the end of the receiver slot has to be machined to accommodate that. (Patrick Sweeney)



The stock also holds the recoil spring, in a long tube, and on the L1A1 made out of a tough plastic. (Patrick Sweeney)



The gas regulator, set here at 4, which is what it should cycle reliably at—it does. (Patrick Sweeney)



The carrier has “sand cuts” the angled grooves you see. They are there to scrape crud out when the L1A1 cycles. (Patrick Sweeney)

Three moves and a few decades later I was talking to Marc Christensen of DS Arms at the SHOT show about that parts kit, and he said they were planning on making another short run of Inch-pattern L1A1 receivers. “Another? You made some?” “Yes, but they are all gone now.” Sigh. So, it was wait again, which took longer than expected, but they finally did make another batch. I sent the parts kit in, and in the fullness of time, it returned. Cool.

The L1A1 is an Imperial-dimensioned FAL, and so a lot of the parts will interchange with metric rifles, some with more work than others to make them fit. Some have to be slightly altered if you are going to make an inch-pattern parts set fit a metric receiver, but this one is all-Inch. The FAL/L1A1 is a piston-driven tilting bolt rifle chambered in 7.62 NATO, and it was the issued rifle from 1954 in Britain until the mid-1980s. The L1A1 rifle is composed of two assemblies, the upper and lower receivers. Unlike the AR-15, the L1A1 (and FAL) upper receiver is the serial-numbered part of *the* rifle. The lower simply holds the firing mechanism, pistol grip and stock assembly. The stock also contains the recoil spring, inside of a long tube extending down into the stock. Oh, and as-was de rigueur in the 1950s, there’s a carry handle on the upper.

The piston that drives the rifle comes with an adjustable gas system. When you fire a round, the gas bleeds out of the bore through the gas port to the piston, but excess gas is also bled out of the gas block via a vent. As part of the front sight assembly, the gas adjustment involves a rotating sleeve with an angled edge. As you rotate the sleeve you



In order to keep it as original as possible, the internals were swapped for US-made parts, keeping the handguards. (Patrick Sweeney)



The bolt hold-open is in there, but the magazine won’t work it. You have to do it by hand. (Patrick Sweeney)



The sand cuts on the bolt carrier, to scrub gunk and crud out of the action rails. (Patrick Sweeney)

► The metric mag (left) has a simple punched tab as a locking ledge. The L1A1 (right) has a robust brazed-on steel shelf, suitable for use in a BREN gun. (Patrick Sweeney)



open or close the vent port, changing how much gas you bleed out of the system. This was to allow the rifle to be adjusted to work with any power level more-or-less-NATO-spec ammo it was being fed. (Personally, I find the attitude incredibly pessimistic.)

The adjustment process is simple for metric FALs, but unlike them the L1A1 has no bolt hold open. Yes, that’s right, the British felt that a bolt that locked open allowed



One of the L1A1 things that are not interchangeable with the metric FAL is the pistol grip and its parts. (Patrick Sweeney)

► One of the US-made parts that count to 922(r) compliance is the magazine baseplate. (Patrick Sweeney)



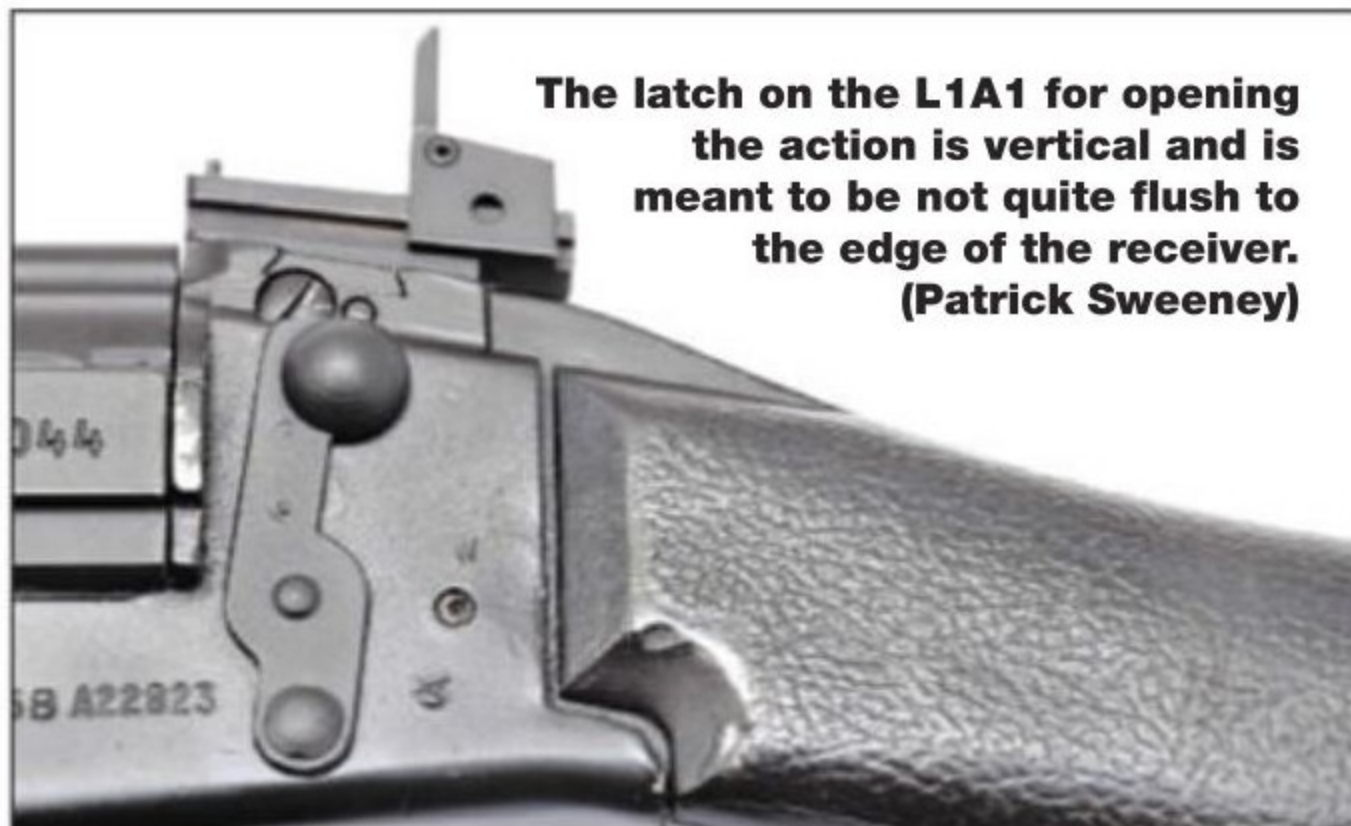
too much crud to get in, and so the L1A1 won't lock open when empty. The parts are there, you can manually lock the bolt back, but not by firing the last round, and the British did this while incorporating "sand cuts" in the carrier. (The Germans did the same thing with the G3, but they left the parts out entirely. Again, such pessimism.) These are angled slots cut into the sides of the carrier, to scrape out gunk and to give the gunk someplace to be, while being out of the way. So, to set the gas regulator, dial it to the lowest number. (Fully-blocked venting.) Insert a loaded magazine and chamber a round. Fire a round. Did it chamber the next round? Cool. Adjust the regulator by two numbers and try again. Repeat until it doesn't chamber a round. Back up one click. The UK L1A1 armorers manual standard is that it must cycle on the "4" setting.

The L1A1 (and all FALs) comes apart for cleaning mostly without the use of any tools. Well, you need a screwdriver. (Patrick Sweeney)



As seen in the movie *The Wild Geese*, the L1A1 was all over Africa, since so many locales had been British colonies. (MovieStillsDB.com)

The latch on the L1A1 for opening the action is vertical and is meant to be not quite flush to the edge of the receiver. (Patrick Sweeney)



► The rear sight is a simple aperture, and the range adjustments are notches on an angled base. Not at all target-suitable. (Patrick Sweeney)



► One of the un-ergonomic aspects of the FAL/L1A1 are the controls. That tab right behind the magazine? The bolt hold-open. The ridged one is the magazine release. A crowded place, and not all of them finger identifiable. (Patrick Sweeney)



The flash hider, which does kill flash, makes the L1A1 really long. (Patrick Sweeney)



◀ Not bad for Radway Green ball ammo rapidly approaching retirement age. Patrick Sweeney

▶ Match ammo is good, but this Black Hills is wasted on this L1A1. Feed it anything and it shoots 2 MOA. Patrick Sweeney



DSA L1A1 RIFLE CHRONOGRAPH AND ACCURACY DATA					
Ammunition	Bullet Weight (gr.) & Type	Velocity (fps)	ES	SD	Accuracy Avg./Best (in.)
Radway Green 69	147 FMJ	2,599	54.7	20.9	2.5 / 2.25
Winchester 308	147 FMJ	2,777	32.7	13.2	2.25 / 2
Federal XM80CL	149 FMJ	2,663	19.1	8.1	2.25 / 1.8
Speer Gold Dot	150 SP	2,636	24.2	9.1	2.5 / 1.9
Black Hills	168 BTHP	2,549	21.1	9.3	2 / 1.8
Federal Gold Medal	168 BTHP	2,436	74.1	28.1	2.1 / 1.8

Accuracy results were to be averages of four, five-shot groups at 100 yards off a Champion shooting rest. Velocities are averages of 10 shots measured on a Garmin Xero chronograph.



The boring regularity of the “average” accuracy is something to value, not overlook. (Patrick Sweeney)

You can use an adjustment wrench from Sarco for this, if your regulator is too stiff to be moved by hand.

The magazines? Twenty rounds each, steel, and tough enough to be used as impromptu impact weapons, but again, metric and Inch differ. The metric mags have a punched-out tab on the front. The Inch mags do not have a punched tab. They have a brazed-on steel lug. This is much sturdier than the tab. But why? Simple: the British were not going to give up their BREN machine guns; they were simply going to rebuild them as 7.62 NATO LMGs. I suspect that a single afternoon of testing the metric mags in prototype 7.62 BRENS showed that those mags wouldn't hold up. There was no point in two different

magazines, so they made them all BREN-worthy. To load an FAL/L1A1, you rock and lock the mag just like an AK, M1A/M14, and so many others.

Now for the gory details of Federal law. The relevant section is 18 U.S.C. 922(r), and the simple summary is that they list twenty parts, and only ten of them can be of imported origin in your U.S.-assembled or imported rifle. If your rifle doesn't contain all twenty, then the US-required count goes down. The FAL? It has seventeen of the listed parts, which means you have to replace seven of them with U.S.-made parts to be kosher. (The new receiver is one of them, so you need to replace six others.) DSA has purchased the surplus inventory of more than one military organization, so they have all the parts they need to use as patterns when making U.S. replacements. If you are building your own, the easy ones to source are the piston, flash hider/muzzle brake, and magazine floorplate. (On all of your magazines, by the way.) Then it is whatever combo of trigger/hammer/sear or the furniture parts you want/need to bring the extras count up to six. As part of the authentic exterior, DSA kept the impossible long flash hider on the barrel, one of those “What was FN thinking?” details.

The L1A1 that returned retained the original furniture, since it was a complete and authentic L1A1 parts kit, something that was apparently a bit rare in the US FAL world. A lot of the parts kits that arrived in the early 21st century were salvaged/assemblages of parts, and not entirely all one model, or metric. Since this one could be, it was left to be as complete as 922(r) allowed, externally.

Before going to the range, I dug into the ammo bunker and came up with ammunition that was entirely appro-



Rain or shine, snow or heat, day or night, the L1A1 was designed to work. (Patrick Sweeney)

priate for my L1A1. Loaded in the Radway Green arsenal in 1969, it is real-deal military surplus from Britain that I had acquired back in my big-bore days, gotten for a pittance. (Even by the standards of the 1980s.) I haven't shot it since then because my M1A didn't like it. It was a bit under-powered by my M1A's tastes. So, the L1A1 adjustable gas system to the rescue. I added in some M80 Ball, because that's what the L1A1 and other 7.62NATO rifles were designed to use. You have to be careful with .308 ammunition these days, as a lot of it is loaded with powders that are not entirely appropriate to the gas systems of surplus rifles. Yes, the L1A1 gas regulator can account for some of that, but not all of the pressure differences.

Reliability? Really, you need to ask? The FAL and the L1A1 were manufactured by the millions for export (by Fabrique Nationale) and made in-country (the various Commonwealth countries) for use by the armies of same. FALs and L1A1s were all over Africa, for example, except where the colonies had been founded by non-British explorers. They stayed in use in a lot of locales long after the rest of the world moved on to 5.56, simply because they were built to last, and changing rifles cost money. If you want parts as spares (the FAL/L1A1 is so robust springs are about all you'll need) you can contact many places, but Sarco has a slew of them. Just be aware, as I'll have to be, and make sure you get L1A1 parts, or metric parts that will work on an L1A1.

As for accuracy? Well, the 1950s militaries were not interested in super-accurate Battle Rifles. Accuracy was for sniper rifles. But the L1A1 was entirely up to the task of delivering minute-of-commie accuracy, which is what it was designed for. Regular, consistent, utterly average accuracy. But in 7.62 and with iron sights, a "mere" 2 MOA rifle is not to be disdained. Someone is going to look at the trigger pull weight and complain. Hey, in the 1950s that was normal. And it also was not a hindrance. I too was surprised by the measurement, because I had pegged it at more than a pound lighter, based on dry-firing. So much for a "calibrated" trigger finger.

If you want to get into L1A1 gear, again, Sarco. They have stripper clip guides, and magazine pouches for your L1A1, including Rhodesian chest rigs. For a few years in the early part of the 21st century there were scads of FAL/



If you want to get into the spirit, Sarco can sell you a Rhodesian chest rig to use with your L1A1. (Sarco)

L1A1 parts kits brought in, but those have pretty much been built-up now. There are still some to be had. I found some, and they were all metric as far as I could tell. So, an L1A1 for you might not be in the cards, but if you do find a parts kit, (running from \$900 to \$1,100 or so) that are all or mostly complete, you can contact DSA to see about having it built up by the pros. Or build it yourself, but fair warning: it isn't nearly as easy as assembling an AR-15. You'll need some specialized tools, and some details are not obvious.

You should contact them to see if your parts kit is going to work, but I can tell you right now do not bother if it is an Indian parts kit. DSA did one of those for me some years ago, and the horror story was epic. Maybe someday I can recount it for you. **FN**

SPECIFICATIONS D.S. ARMS L1A1 RIFLE

Type:	Hammer-fired semi-automatic
Caliber:	7.62 NATO
Capacity:	20+1 rounds
Barrel:	21.8 in.
Overall Length:	45 in.
Weight:	9 lbs. 9 oz.
Finish:	Matte black over phosphated steel
Sights:	Aperture and post
Trigger:	6 lbs. 10 oz.
MSRP:	\$1,700 (new duplicate or \$1,250 on your parts kit)
Manufacturer	DSArms.com, (847) 277-7258

SOURCES

Black Hills Ammunition:	Black-Hills.com, (605) 348-5150
Federal Ammunition:	FederalPremium.com, (800) 831-8100
Sarco, Inc.:	SarcoInc.com
Speer:	Speer.com, (877) 426-7849
Winchester Ammunition:	Winchester.com



(ironwas/Shutterstock)

SHOT SHOW

Cover Me, I'm Going In!

2026

By Patrick Sweeney

The annual SHOT Show is an event, a party, and an ordeal. With something like fifteen miles of aisles, trying to walk it all is a serious trek, but your earnest reporters here at *Firearms News* gave it a try once again and here's the result.

FIREARMS AND GEAR

I'm breaking the SHOT Show report into two sections for a simple reason: everyone makes a suppressor now, so I'm putting them all into their own section because otherwise I couldn't keep track. First up, the firearms and gear.

Beretta A300 Ultima Patrol 20 Gauge ([Beretta.com](https://www.beretta.com))

Beretta has been in business for 500 years, and to recognize that they had a slew of updated and improved firearms. However, the fun one for me wasn't a 9mm. (Not that 9s aren't fun, mind you.)

For those of you who favor the smoothbores but find the 12 gauge to be a bit spicy in recoil, Beretta now offers the excellent A300 in 20 gauge. The Ultima Patrol 20 is short, light, handy, and serious. With a nineteen-inch barrel and thirty-eight inches overall, it weighs a slight six pounds. We spent an inordinate amount of time on the line with it,



The Beretta lineup now includes a 20 gauge version of the A300. Good news for those who favor 20 instead of 12 gauge, and in a cool camo pattern. (Patrick Sweeney)



Yes, a yellow hull coming out of a serious shotgun. That's the Beretta A300 Ultima Patrol in 20 gauge. Buckets of shells fired, many giggles created, a review coming in the future.

sluicing buckets of 20 gauge ammo downrange, without a failure. This is a must-have.

Mimic Arms Speed 9 (MimicFirearms.com)

How does a 60-round magazine of 9mm for your PCC sound? Good, right? What if it was the same size and shape as an AR-15 magazine? How'd they do that? Back-to-back magazines. As clever as that is, I was impressed by the engineering they put into the AR platform. Things like a steel insert that held the feed ramp, and the bolt hold-open so those impacts aren't borne by aluminum. This is a new company, so it might take a bit of time to lay hands on one for testing, but when I do I plan to run it like I stole it.



The Mimic Arms Speed9 magazine holding 60 rounds in two 30-round back-to-back sections. (Patrick Sweeney)

Shadow Systems AXIO (ShadowSystemsCorp.com)

The striker-fired pistol has evolved and grown up. Shadow Systems offers their AXIO pistol and what they've done has solved the usual problems of the striker system. Mainly, the "meh" trigger. The first reaction I heard to the AXIO was, "*Oh, they put it in a steel frame.*" Well, yes, but that's not all. Shadow Systems went back to square one and looked at ergonomics, cyclic dynamics, and trigger system geometry. They also re-engineered the slide-frame-barrel geometry to increase slide travel and dwell time. (Oh, I was geeking out during the discussion.) Optics ready, of course.



Polymer is okay, but for a lot of applications metal is better. So, Shadow Systems did that with their new AXIO pistol. (Patrick Sweeney)

TANDEMKROSS Manticore X Stock (Tandemkross.com)

As if the Ruger 10/22 hadn't been modified enough, TANDEMKROSS comes along and upsets the applecart. The Manticore X isn't just a folding stock for your 10/22, it replaces the trigger housing as an anchor for the stock. Instead of the combo of barreled receiver, trigger housing, and stock, you have just the two assemblies. The rear of it



TANDEMKROSS improves on the usual "change the stock of a 10/22" with the new Manticore X. (Patrick Sweeney)



The Manticore X stock replaces the trigger housing, and that makes it stronger and more rigid. (Patrick Sweeney)

is a section of Picatinny rail, so you can clamp on any kind of arm brace, stock, whatever you want. (Local laws and all that approving, of course.) It has gotten to the point that you could assemble a “10/22” without any single part of it having seen the inside of a Ruger facility. America the beautiful!

Zenith Firearms ZF-10 (ZenithFirearms.com)

The 10mm is hot, and Zenith is gearing up to make a roller-locked 10mm pistol-caliber carbine (PCC). With a barrel made out of cold hammer-forged 4150 CMV that’s just under nine inches long, and tipping the scales at four and a half pounds, we’re going to have fun. The lower will be ambidextrous, and it will take a 30-round magazine. My only complaint is that the magazine will be a Glock mag, but I think they’ve had enough time to prove themselves reliable, if ugly.



The 10mm is hot (in performance and sales) and Zenith is going to be offering a 10mm PCC. Get yours while the getting is good. (Patrick Sweeney)

EMF Python (EMF-Company.com)

EMF is planning on importing a Pietta-made early-model Python. Years in the making, it will be as close a copy of the originals as can be made. This means that spare parts for Pythons not currently working could be available. I handled the sample, and the trigger pull and cylinder carry-up and timing were correct for a Python.



You needn’t sell off one of the kids just to afford a Python, because EMF is going to be bringing in exact copies at EMF prices. Just take my money, now! (Patrick Sweeney)

Woo-hoo! The sample was with a six-inch barrel and blued, no word on four-inchers or nickel. Planned to be available in 2026, and for a lot less than the original early ones, this is something to be looking for.

Canik Prime Radian (Canik.com)

Starting with the METE MC9 Prime, this excellent EDC pistol gets the addition of Radian barrel and comp, backstrap and magwell, to improve shootability and comfort. This collaboration combines the existing Canik non-slip grip, flat trigger and optics-ready slide, and adds in the Radian parts as well as Night Fusion tritium sights. A complete package ready for EDC.



Canik teams up with Radian to offer an even-better Canik pistol. Compact, comped and ready for optics, with a great trigger, all for your EDC needs. (Patrick Sweeney)

Hi-Lux Thermals (Hi-LuxOptics.com)

Offering three different thermal sights, with a hand-held monocular and two rifle-mount optics, Hi-Lux is known for durability along with value-for-money optical aiming choices.



The Hi-Lux Bellator, a thermal optic with all the options in color presentation and reticle choices. (Patrick Sweeney)

Magne-Tech Scope Mounts (Magne-Tech.com)

Yes, magnets to hold on your scope. I too was really leery of this at first, but every time I thought of a problem, I could see there was a built-in solution to it. Strong magnets, with return-to-zero indexing, a secondary latch just in case, and recoil lugs built into the mounts to take the brunt of recoil forces. It is a few seconds to swap from an LPVO to a high-magnification target scope and back again, and not lose zero either way. You bet I plan on heinously abusing a setup to see if I can make it fail. My suspicion is that I can't.



Magne-Tech magnetic scope mounts solve a problem we didn't know we had, and do it elegantly. (Patrick Sweeney)

Century Arms AP5 (CenturyArms.com)

If you are a die-hard *Die Hard* fan, then the only proper color for an MP5, clone, copy or faithful reproduction is black. If you are living in the 21st century, that isn't the only option. Well, it was for roller-locked until now. Century Arms is offering their AP5 variants in FDE, and the magazines that come with them, as well. No longer are you stuck with basic black, as if you are buying a Ford automobile before the Great Depression.



John McClane, meet the 21st century. Now you can have your AP5 in FDE, like the rest of us in the year 2026. (Patrick Sweeney)

SUPPRESSORS

Hang on to your hats, because everyone is now, or soon will be, making suppressors.

Banish (BanishSuppressors.com)

Banish never disappoints. First, they offered their new 5.56 suppressor, the 5.56 is built for hard use. The Inconel core and stainless blast chamber means you probably can't afford enough ammo to make it call quits. HUB rear threads, of course, so you can attach it pretty much any way you wish. On the shotgun front, they added the Banish 20 and Banish 410 to the Banish 12 model. I know what you're thinking, "20 gauge?" ".410?" If the task is vermin control and staying un-noticed, then a .410 with a Banish 410 is about as quiet as it gets, and still eliminates vermin.



So you want to suppress your shotgun, but it isn't a 12 gauge? No problem. Banish now makes suppressors for 20 gauge and 410. Quiet fun abounds, and vermin beware. (Patrick Sweeney)

Ambient Arms (AmbientArms.com)

For over a century, the basic design of a suppressor has been a tube with openings at each end. Ambient Arms decided there was a need for more. So, the Ambient Arms Exo came to being. The idea is simple: using intake ports at locations that draw in outside air, they can keep a suppressor cooler, longer. They claim 75% decrease in temps, and still deliver 35 dB in quiet. (This we're going to have



Ambient Arms has found a way to make suppressors run cooler, and we get to gain that benefit. The new Exo runs cooler and is still quiet. (Patrick Sweeney)

to test, for sure.) Plus, the 5.56 can be had in a hard-use Inconel mini, or a larger one in titanium for lighter weight.

Gemtech 5.7 Nebula (Gemtech.com)

The 5.7x28 cartridge has a lot going for it. One thing it also brings is that it is a lot harder on suppressors than the .22LR is, and you need a suppressor rated for the task if you want to use it with 5.7 ammo. Gemtech took that up as a challenge and combined the materials needed to finish the job. The Nebula has a stainless steel blast baffle, a 3D-printed titanium core, and a tube made out of 17-4PH stainless. Durable? You bet, and you can use it with lesser cartridge like the .17HMR, .22WMR and of course, .22LR.



Easy to clean, easy to use, easy on the wallet, the nebula is rated for 5.7x28, and anything less. (Patrick Sweeney)

Thunderbeast Arms (ThunderbeastArms.com)

I made my annual stop at Thunderbeast to talk with Zak Smith and bathe in discussions of statistics, calculus, pressure curves and materials science, as well as to learn about their 5.56 SPIRO suppressor. They engineered a low back-pressure suppressor that still keeps the dBs down below 140. They also did the pressure testing graphing to demonstrate it and tested for cyclic rate. So, a hard-use 5.56 suppressor, made out of Haynes 282 (as prone to cracking as an auditor's heart) that stands up to heat like nobody's business. A cyclic rate increase in a MK18 of only 5% over bare, and still just under 135 dB, and ready to go onto a 10.5-inch barrel, no problem.



Thunderbeast never fails to deliver the best to be had, and have all the tech info to go with it. Here, the SPIRO on the end of an SBR, showing its compact size. (Patrick Sweeney)

Dead Air Nomad Ti OTB (DeadAirSilencers.com)

The OTB of the name means over-the-barrel, as in a reflex suppressor. The idea is simple, but not easy to pull off: you make the suppressor tube go back over the barrel, make it hollow, and increase the volume of the blast chamber. Made out of titanium, the Nomad Ti OTB only adds 4.6 inches of length to your barrel, and only 10.5 ounces of weight. 3D printed, the Nomad Ti OTB is meant to be a lightweight and handy hunting suppressor, not one you would spend the day doing mag-dumps and such, which should be obvious since it is a .30 suppressor rated up to .300 RUM and 7mm Backcountry.



The Dead Air Nomad Ti OTB. Here you can see how much of it fits over the barrel, decreasing OAL once mounted, and still delivering quiet. (Patrick Sweeney)

EchoCore (EchocoreSuppressors.com)

EchoCore is a new company, but it is run by someone who has been in the suppressor business, Chris Mudgett. Its line starts at .22 LR (the Topo 22) and goes up to .36 caliber, the Radius 36, can handle everything from .22LR, to 9mm, to centerfire rifles up to .35 caliber. EchoCore's proprietary cross-chamber regulation promotes flow-through while staying quiet. In fact, its 3D printed Inconel (no welds) 5.56 suppressors placed 1st and 2nd at the 2025 Silencer Summit. Winning on quiet, for a new company, that's impressive. Oh, and the exterior? A topo map adapted to a tube, not flat.



Echocore offers a full lineup of suppressors, to cover your every need and want. (Patrick Sweeney)

Canik Suppressors (Canik.com)

Canik has a line of three suppressors, the Void-7.62, Void-556, and Void-556K. They are all stainless steel with continuous-welded baffle stacks and they are all HUB-threaded rear. So, you can mount them with a direct-thread cap or adapt any QD system you might have to the Void of your choice. Then, Canik adds value. The front caps can be unscrewed, and you can change to either a low back-pressure cap, or a solid cap designed for maximum dB reduction. Why? Well, if you are putting your Void onto a bolt-action rifle, the idea of back pressure is a non-starter. So, go for max dB reduction.



Canik is offering a line of suppressors. Three are shown here with the top one mounted on an AR-15. (Patrick Sweeney)

Rugged Suppressors (RuggedSuppressors.com)

The Rugged Suppressors' SUB 9 is designed for subguns and PCCs. With the idea in mind of delivering the quietest 9mm suppressor, combined with low back pressure, Rugged has also made the SUB 9 as compact as possible. Just under seven inches long, it is machined to the standard HUB thread rear, so you have all the choices for mounting. If you want the best in quick-detach, the Rugged 3-lug mount is compatible with all the HK Spec 3-lug adapters. As an added bonus, they engrave the serial number on the thickest part of the SUB 9. If yours is damaged, it is easier to repair, and no need to change serial numbers.



The Rugged Suppressors SUB9 is meant to tame the muzzle blast of your PCC or 9mm SBR. Direct-thread of HK 3-lug mount, whatever, Rugged has you covered. (Patrick Sweeney)

FN (FNAmerica.com)

New this year, FN is offering 7.62 and 5.56 suppressors that tick all the boxes. 3D printed from Inconel, with a stainless steel blast baffle and done up in hi-temp Cera-kote. You have your choice of the FN QD mount or direct thread, and the front cap is designed for flow-through and to vent the gases out the front and not back towards you. FN being FN, they ran the prototypes through the US-SOCOM SURG test, but did it with a ten-inch barrel. All this durability means it is a bit on the heavy side, but the listed 20.9 ounces (5.56) means it is only a few more than like-performing suppressors. If even that. All thoroughly tested on the new and improved SCAR.

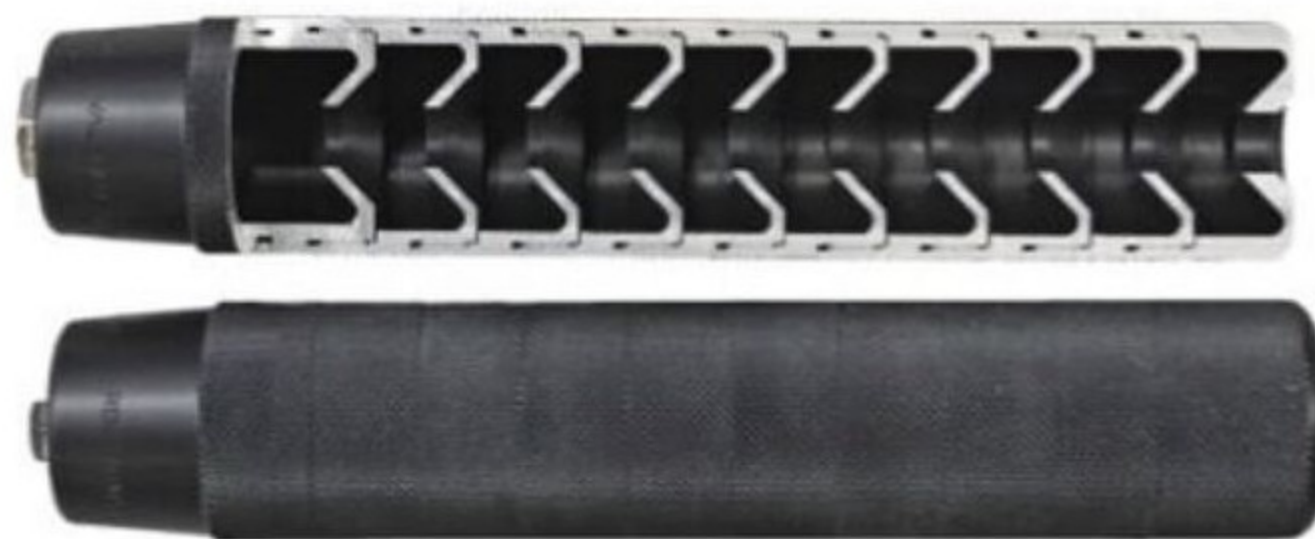


Of course FN makes suppressors, and now we can get them, either 5.56 or 7.62. (Patrick Sweeney)

Lyman Sonicore (LymanProducts.com)

Lyman? Yes, Lyman has partnered with a European suppressor manufacturer to use their design but made here in the USA. Lyman is looking to offer value-for-money suppressors. The designs are not space-age, but these work. The method of construction consists of threaded baffles, which means these are user-serviceable suppressors—easy to clean! Eleven models across four platforms, for rim-fire, pistol, hunting, and ARs—all listed at under \$300 each. Made of aluminum and stainless steel, they are not full-auto rated. The older baffle design might mean you can't scavenge those last few dBs off of the muzzle blast, but for less than \$300, does two or three dBs really matter?

Well, I hope to see all of you at SHOT Show 2027! 



Simple baffle design and construction yes, but that keeps cost and weight down, and still provides a durable suppressor that's easy to clean. (Patrick Sweeney)

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