

FIREARMS NEWS[®]

GUN SALES, REVIEWS & 2A INFORMATION

AUGUST 2025

THE HP-15 RIFLE AND PISTOL

HI-POINT JUMPS INTO THE
AR-15 MARKET!
REVIEWS BY JAMES TARR

DAN WESSON'S
**DWX
PISTOL**

MILITARY ARMAMENT
CORPORATION'S
**MAC 2 TACTICAL
MARINE SHOTGUN**

**THE SCSA
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PUMP-ACTION AR-15
THUNDER FROM DOWN UNDER

GENERAL WESTMORELAND'S
**FIRST CAPTURED
KALASHNIKOV:**
THE STORY OF GREEN BERET
SARIO CARVALHO
WHO CAPTURED IT

**STOEGER'S
THINLINE PISTOL**
THIN IS ALWAYS IN, ESPECIALLY
WITH CARRY PISTOLS!

■ **CARRYING CONCEALED**
CARRY GUN MAINTENANCE

■ **IN HUSHED TONES**
GEMTECH'S LUNAR 9
SUPPRESSOR

■ **MUSINGS FROM THE
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■ **RELOADING**
GETTING STARTED WITH 9MM

■ **THE WAR GUNS**
MADSEN M/47 RIFLE

■ **GUN POLITICS**
SUPPRESSOR AND
SHORT BARREL FIREARM
FIGHT SHOWS MANY
U.S. STATES MORE
PROHIBITIVE THAN SOME
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■ **SPECIAL REPORT:**
SCOTUS FAILS AMERICANS
AGAIN, KICKING GUN RIGHTS
DOWN THE ROAD



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THE HP-15 RIFLE AND PISTOL

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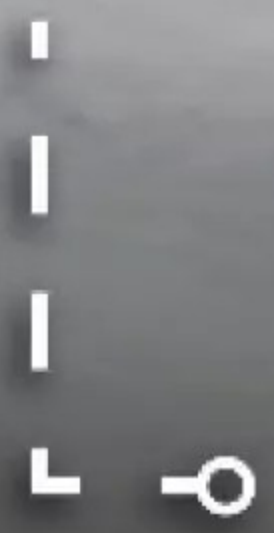
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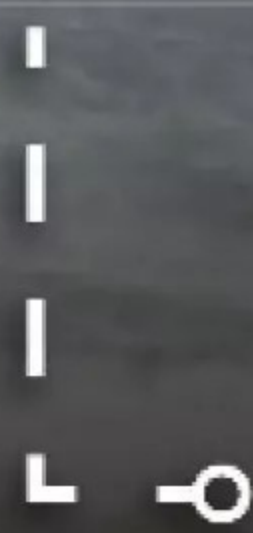
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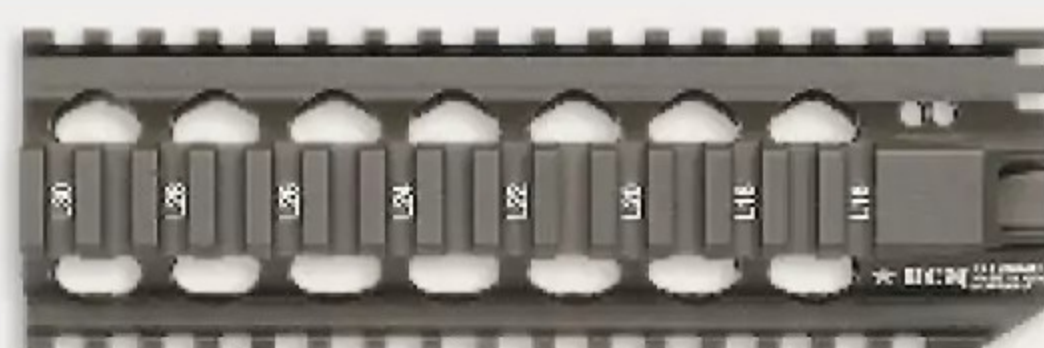
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NEW MEXICO DEPLOYING FOREIGN MERCENARIES TO ENFORCE 2ND AMENDMENT INFRINGEMENTS

Is This a Subtle “Red Dawn” Scenario Crafted by Leftists?

By David Codrea,
Politics Field Editor

“N.M. passes law to allow eligible non-citizens to serve in law enforcement,” Police 1 reports. “On April 7, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed Senate Bill 364, which allows people with work authorization from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to serve as LEOs.”

Sponsors of the bill included Democrats Sen. Cindy Nava and House Speaker Javier Martínez, both endorsed as Moms Demand Action “Gun Sense Candidates,” and Democrat senators Michael Padilla and Joseph Cervantes. They were joined by NRA-endorsed Republican Sen. Craig Brandt.

Reasons given for needing the bill were “fewer recruits entering the profession and more officers retiring or leaving for other opportunities.” Stated another way, that could be characterized as doing the enforcing Americans won’t do.

“SB 364 opens the door for individuals who might otherwise have never considered a career in law enforcement — people who are already working, living and contributing to our communities but were previously excluded from this essential work,” Nava practically gushed.

There are reasons for that, reasons that we sadly no longer expect



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Democrats to care about, but that “law and order” Republicans like Brandt ought to prioritize. That’s because “the supreme Law of the Land,” the Constitution these politicians swore an oath to support, also includes in Article VI a requirement that “all executive ... Officers... of the several States,” including police officers, to “be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution.”

How is that loyalty supposed to work with foreign nationals holding competing allegiances? Consider how few citizen cops are publicly urging their brother officers to honor their oaths when it comes to refusing to follow unlawful orders that infringe on the Second Amendment. This new bill will authorize their foreign supplements/replacements to disarm American citizens on U.S. soil, and New

Mexico under Democrat rule will give them plenty of opportunities.

In response to a criminals being violent, Democrat Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham imposed a temporary “emergency order” that banned all citizens from carrying firearms in public places throughout Bernalillo County, scaled back to Albuquerque parks and playgrounds after lawsuits from “gun rights groups.” While she said she won’t renew it, it’s pretty clear what she’d like to do if she thought she could. Besides, there are other ways the state infringes.

Per Giffords Law Center, New Mexico imposes, among other edicts, “universal background checks,” so-called “extreme risk protection orders” petitioned by the police to disarm people who have been accused (but not charged or convicted) of posing a risk



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to the safety of themselves or others, “a seven-calendar-day waiting period for the sale or purchase of a firearm,” a child access prevention/”safe storage” law, and carry permits with a prior restraint training requirement.

And as expected, the Democrat-dominated legislature is trying for more.

They introduced several gun-related bills in 2025 that didn’t make it to the floor, but you can bet they’ll be back in the next legislative session. Among these were red flag law-related gun seizure bill, tightening firearm dealer regulations, and firearms and ammunition bans, notably SB 279, the oxymoronically named GOSAFE Act, targeting “gas-operated semiautomatic firearms and large-capacity [holding over 10 rounds!] ammunition feeding devices” described by NRA as “a near all-encompassing ban on commonly owned firearms.”

Considering the Democrat/Republican split in the New Mexico legislature (44D-26R in the House, 26D-16R in the Senate), things don’t look hopeful for next year.

And, consistent with the sudden political demand for issuing badges and guns to non-citizens, in April, Lujan Grisham deployed the National Guard in response to another Albuquerque crime “emergency.”

As with all things “progressive,” giving foreign nationals police powers is nothing new. In 2023, *Firearms News* reported on a Nevada bill to authorize hiring green card holders and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, noting Colorado, Vermont, West Virginia, Louisiana, and Maine do not have police citizenship requirements. And per *Police Magazine*, “the Chicago Police Department will allow any

immigrant with a work authorization from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to become an officer. This is also true for many local agencies throughout the state of Hawaii. The Cincinnati Police Department requires only that officers have a pending citizenship application on file with the federal government. Other agencies in the country require potential recruits be legal permanent residents or green-card holders.”

The thought of foreign nationals abridging American’s rights evokes nothing so much as the deployment of Hessian mercenaries to fight patriots in the War for Independence. That these non-citizens will have the power to enforce citizen disarmament edicts makes fair the question, “With police officers like these, who needs blue helmeted UN troops?” **FN**

ATF SEEKS TO CRIMINALIZE ‘PINNED AND WELDED’ MUZZLE DEVICES

Are We Honestly Dealing With Rogue Agents or a Duplicitous Administration?

By Darwin Nercesian, News Field Editor



(Firearms News photo)

If you’ve been keeping score on gun rights for as long as I have, chances are you were thrilled to show Kamala the door last November, but your expectations for a pro-Second Amendment Trump administration were tempered at best, and increasingly dismal the deeper you looked into it. If that’s how you felt, I’d say you have a realistic perspective. Believe me, I wish I could survive on words and promises, but years spent on this earth have taught me that the most reliable model for predicting future behavior is past behavior. Another

relevant life lesson is to avoid getting sidetracked by distractions, positive or negative, while maintaining focus on the bigger picture. That’s why it comes as no surprise that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) is once again targeting gun owners with its “now it’s legal, now it’s not” routine, an all too familiar infringement dance for the firearms community.

We’ve been through this together with bump stocks, pistol braces, FRT triggers, and countless others, but it’s once more into the breach, dear

friends, once more, this time concerning the long-since approved practice of pinning and welding a muzzle device to a barrel to achieve a “permanent” legal length of at least sixteen inches. (Muzzle devices used in pin-and-weld custom gunsmithing include flash hidrs, muzzle brakes, barrel extensions, fake suppressors, etc.) Plans for this new wave of attacks on our Constitutionally protected liberties were uncovered recently due to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request from the Second Amendment advocacy group, Gun Owners of America (GOA).



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What GOA has uncovered may seem like yet another rogue agent working against the promises of United States Attorney General Pam Bondi and her big, beautiful boss, the President, but as a subordinate who can easily be fired, something the Trump administration is known for being quite good at, can we really call these actions rogue if the agent still has a job? Ahhh, therein lies the conflict. Suppose our anti-American, anti-Constitution agent still wears an ATF badge. In that case, this person is acting at the behest of superiors, who start to seem either apathetic or straight-up two-faced at some point.

Well, surprise, surprise, she does continue to report for duty at the ATF, and the treasonous little snake is no stranger when it comes to attacking gun rights or being a complete imbecile. So, don't bother getting up, and please, give a not-so-warm welcome to Eve E. Eisenbice, the subversive reptile behind such hits as claiming a water bottle could be considered a firearm, classifying a cheek rest as a stock in order to charge a gun owner under the National Firearms Act of 1934 (NFA), and testifying in court that possession of pillows and potatoes can potentially count as suppressors. I know my sarcasm and abrasive disposition towards these traitors might make you wonder if I'm simply attributing ridiculous hyperbole to Eisenbice's "career," but I'm not. She did those things, and really is that stupid and dishonest.

So, how did her latest mastery of the perfidious arts come about? Great question! The ATF's Firearms Technology Industry Services Branch (FTISB) was involved in a case concerning a Beretta pistol imported by Amchar Wholesale. The firearm in question used the standard blind pin method to pin and weld the muzzle device to the barrel. This involves installing the device, drilling a small hole in it that penetrates slightly into the barrel's threads, inserting a steel pin to prevent the device from being unscrewed, and then welding over the pin to secure it in place.

What the ATF did in this case was place the pistol in a bench vise, attach a breaker bar, and apply an obscene amount of torque. What this accomplishes causes permanent damage that will require the firearm to be rebarreled to function once again as it was meant to. That is precisely what the agency did. They broke the gun in order to say that the muzzle device did not meet the permanent requirement.

Unfortunately, this is the best and safest method to permanently affix a muzzle device, as welding its circumference directly to the barrel can damage the heat treatment, raising safety concerns due to the likelihood of a catastrophic failure. And let's be clear, any monkey with a breaker bar can destroy a firearm the way the ATF did. It's simple physics. But the fact remains that a pinned and welded muzzle device cannot be removed without modification or destruction of the barrel's integrity.

You may be reading this, wondering if we haven't yet found the right loophole to avoid having a barrel slightly shorter than sixteen inches not count as a short-barreled rifle (SBR) under the NFA, requiring an onerous paperwork and approval process along with an illegal tax stamp on a Constitutional right to the tune of \$200. The problem is that this pin-and-weld method isn't a loophole. It is a lawfully approved and widely used practice, as confirmed by a 2006 letter from the ATF.

If the ATF continues to be allowed to run roughshod over law-abiding gun owners like they have ad nauseam, the results could be quite terrifying. Legally compliant rifles could become illegally possessed NFA items overnight, a charge that carries a hefty prison sentence. This is a horrifying manner of destroying the lives of Americans and their families at the treacherous impulse of dishonest government employees and agencies, and it's all happening under the noses of senior officials like Pam Bondi, Daniel P. Driscoll, acting director of the ATF, and President Trump himself.

What's worse is that the solution is so simple. It involves little more than a flick of the pen and less than a minute of conversation. What is that solution? Fire this loser. And I mean 100% out on her ass. Do not pass go. Do not collect \$200. A fortuitous tax stamp reference, perhaps? No benefits, no pension, just a straight march to the unemployment line and a good riddance salute. So why the crickets from our supposed Second Amendment crusading leaders? That can only be answered one way if they don't take swift action. They are complicit, by order or by turning a blind eye. It doesn't matter which one, because either scenario is a death knell for any more fake talk from the administration and the Department of Justice (DOJ).

My final thoughts on the subject concern the fact that this conversation should never have reached the ears of any American. First of all, the Second Amendment is neither long, convoluted, nor complex. It requires no interpretation from the literate. Second, for a barrel to meet the arbitrary sixteen-inch legal rifle length with a pinned and welded muzzle device, it typically needs to be between 13.9 inches and 14.5 inches. Is 2.1 inches or any such measurement really what we're spending millions to litigate and destroying lives over? The NFA itself is a significant stain on the integrity of the American government and the oaths taken by politicians and judges to preserve and defend the Constitution. As long as it exists, alongside all other gun laws on the books, including the Gun Control Act of 1968 (GCA) and the Hughes Amendment in 1986, these charlatans will continue to soil the sacrifices of so many brave Americans who paid the ultimate price for our freedom and liberty.

—
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. FN

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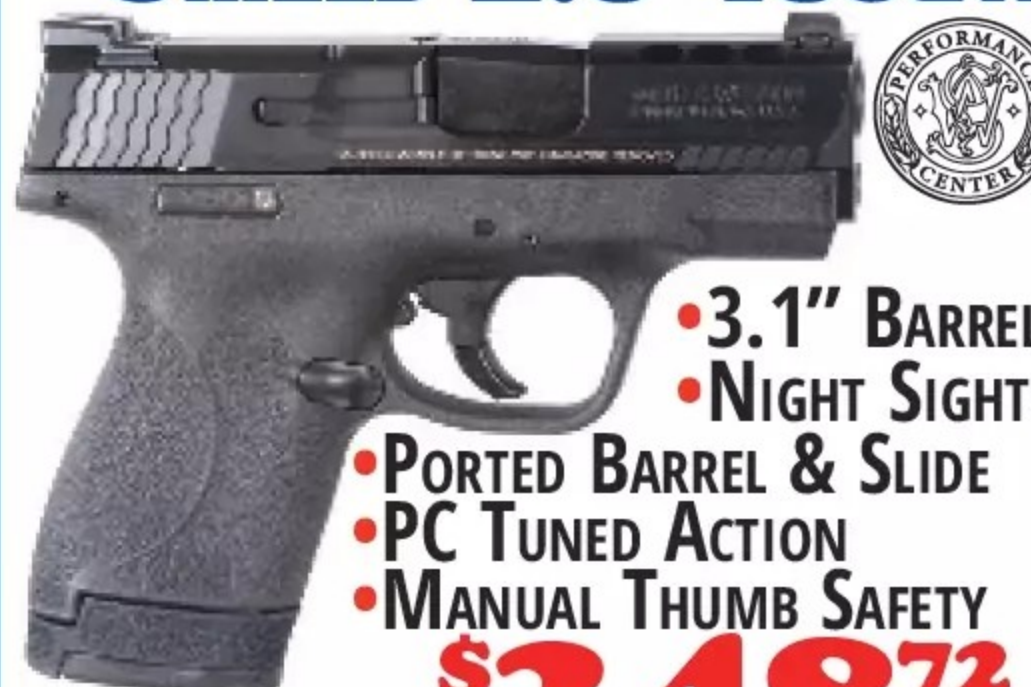
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David Codrea is the winner of multiple journalist awards for investigating/defending the RKBA and a long-time gun owner rights advocate who defiantly challenges the folly of citizen disarmament. In addition to being a regular featured contributor for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

SUPPRESSOR AND SHORT BARREL FIREARM FIGHT

SHOWS MANY U.S. STATES MORE PROHIBITIVE THAN SOME FOREIGN COUNTRIES

And Where Are the Silencer and Short-Barred Rifle Regulations Going?

[Author's Note: This article is being written as developments and new circumstances unknown at this time are still unfolding.]

"Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) will fight to strike a provision making gun silencers more easily accessible from the GOP's 'big, beautiful bill,'" *Axios* is reporting. He intends to stop the House's provision to "remove... silencers from the National Firearms Act, scrapping a \$200 customer and manufacturer tax on firearm silencers and wiping out federal registration requirements." Schumer is fraudulently arguing that "removing silencers from the National Firearm Act violates the requirement that provisions in the bill be budget related," and if he succeeds, that will sink it in the "Byrd bath," named for the late Democrat (and Ku Klux Klan) leader Robert Byrd. To



(Shutterstock/Guy J. Sagi)

liven up the show he's "rally[ing] gun violence victims and gun advocacy groups...to oppose the measure," meaning, unsurprisingly, it's typical gun-grabber sleight of mind designed to overwhelm critical thinking and appeal to emotion. Of course, eliminating a tax is budget related. So, unsurprisingly, gun prohibitionists resort to doing what they do best: Lie. 60 House Democrats, chafing because they couldn't stop it in their chamber, have made the same argument as Schumer in a letter to

Mike Crapo, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, and Chuck Grassley, Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary. They knew that wouldn't work, but it's a media move, designed to fuel scare tactic propaganda so that polls will "prove" Americans agree with them. The uninformed/ignorant ones who can be spooked by serial deceptions about "silencers" clearly do. And the deceptions don't stop there. Sen. Elizabeth Warren was wringing her hands on *X.com*, wailing that removing silencers from the NFA

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will “make it easier for ANYONE—violent criminals included—to get their hands on one of these dangerous silencers,” despite the fact that they would still be regulated by the Gun Control Act of 1968 and nothing has changed that would authorize prohibited persons to obtain them and commit more crimes.

“Mass murderers use silencers so their targeted victims can’t hear the gun shots, and they can kill more people who don’t flee when the shooting begins,” Sen. Chris Murphy absurdly claimed in an orchestrated presser flanked by Schumer, Gabby Giffords’ husband Sen. Mark Kelly, and a gaggle of useful idiots from Giffords, Brady, and Moms Demand Action. “That’s why we MUST stop the Republican effort to pad the profits of the gun industry by ending background checks on silencers.”

export of commercial suppressors will have to be fixed separately. That is something we’ve actively worked on for quite some time and hope to fix it in the near future.”

“Law-abiding Americans should have never been taxed for a safety device that helps prevent irreversible damage to one of their senses while exercising their constitutional rights,” Williams stressed. “It’s time to remove suppressors from the yoke of the punitive NFA tax scheme once and for all!”

Forgetting Something?

All this emphasis on suppressors and it’s fair to ask: What about short-barreled firearms? Wasn’t it supposed to be a package deal?

Of the majors, Gun Owners of America (GunOwners.org) is loudly pushing for inclusion of the “Stop

cover to try for as little as they can get away with.

Does All This Seem Unnecessarily Complicated to You?

“Why is this all being done via the budget reconciliation process?” a gun owner who knows perfectly well what the words “shall not be infringed” mean might ask. Hey, why would you even need standalone bills to remove silencers and short barrel firearms from an NFA that wouldn’t even exist if the Second Amendment were observed by those who swear oaths to support the Constitution?

We deal with where we are, and as things stand, per the legislation tracking website Govtrack, the Hearing Protection Act offered on its own only has a “20%” chance of being enacted, and the SHORT Act (“Stop Harassing Owners of Rifles Today”) is given

“Law-abiding Americans should have never been taxed for a safety device that helps prevent irreversible damage to one of their senses while exercising their constitutional rights,” Williams stressed.

Warren and Murphy offer but two representative examples. Pick any prominent Democrat in politics and you could no doubt come up with more hyperbole, more hysterics, and more flat-out lies, or we could just come to terms with a measured statement grounded in reality.

“If suppressors are removed from the NFA, existing records of suppressors in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record (NFRTR) will be destroyed,” Knox Williams, President & Executive Director of the American Suppressor Association told *Firearms News* in response to a question about procedural changes to be expected. “18 U.S.C. § 922(b)(3) specifies that you can’t sell any firearms other than rifles and shotguns to consumers outside the state in which they reside,” he replied to another query, and when asked about foreign trade added “I believe import/

Harassing Owners of Rifles Today (SHORT) Act, which would eliminate the unconstitutional National Firearms Act (NFA) tax and registry requirements for short-barreled rifles and shotguns,” in addition to the suppressor change.

“In a post praising the suppressor language, Gun Owners of America called on its supporters to ask the Senate to deregulate these other types of firearms as well,” *MeatEater.com* notes in its analysis. “The NRA did not make a similar call in their statement on the bill, which could be due to the other point of conflict: it’s unclear if the Senate will be allowed to deregulate suppressors as part of its reconciliation process.”

It could be, but that doesn’t mean you don’t ask and make your expectations known to people who owe their seats of power to mobilized members. Otherwise, you’re just giving them

a “0%” prognosis. By including such measures in the reconciliation bill, which works on a straight majority and can’t be filibustered, the hope is Democrats will want spending they can horse trade for badly enough to concede on the gun measures (and that gun owners will feel good enough about what they’re getting to concede on the crippling debt it will take to get the bill agreed to by both parties).

Besides, what will Democrats really be giving up?

Because suppressors are illegal in states where they rule, including, per a simple Google AI search, “California, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, [and] the District of Columbia... While suppressors are legal to own in Connecticut and Vermont, they are prohibited for hunting purposes in these states.” Nothing about the budget bill will change that.

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As for short-barreled firearms, querying for which states they are illegal in shows similar results, with the Big Three, California, New York, and Illinois, topping the list, with regulations so strict that “civilian” ownership is effectively blocked.

A World of Difference

“Why are some foreign countries less restrictive on suppressors and short barrel firearms than many ‘blue states’?” is a fair question to ask. While ownership is not unregulated, and mandatory prior restraints are imposed, including licensing with attendant approval requirements, registration, and usage requirements (e.g., for hunting), the fact is citizens in several other nations are allowed to own items denied to millions of Americans in the land of the Second Amendment.

“In many European countries, silencers (also called suppressors or sound moderators) are permitted for hunting and sport shooting, and are sometimes even considered a standard accessory. However, the specific regulations and ease of access vary significantly between countries. For example, in some countries like Finland and Norway, silencers are relatively easy to acquire for licensed firearm owners, while in others, like Italy, they are restricted to government agencies,” Google’s AI overview reports. Among the listed “countries where silencers are generally permitted for certain uses” are the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, and surprisingly, the UK, where “Silencers are treated as controlled components and require an entry on the owner’s firearms license.” Regarding the UK, known for its extremely restricted gun ownership, deer hunters are actually encouraged by the government to hunt with suppressors installed in order to not disturb livestock on nearby farms. Even before the Russian invasion, licensed Ukrainian gun

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Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

OMB No. 1140-0014 (08/31/2012)

Application for Tax Paid Transfer and
Registration of Firearm

FF Control Number

UBMIT in DUPLICATE to: National Firearms Act Division
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, P.O. Box 5015, Portland, OR 97208-5015

Type of Transfer (Check one)
☐ S5 ☐ \$200
submit the appropriate tax payment with the application. The tax may be paid by credit or debit card, check, or money order. Please complete item 20. Upon approval of the application, we will affix and cancel the required National Firearms Act stamp. (See instructions 2b, 2j and 3)

2a. Transferee's Full Legal Name and Address (Include trade name, if any)
☐ Corporate
☐ Individual

1. Transferor's Full Legal Name and Address (Include trade name, if any) (See instruction 2i)
2. Date of Birth
3. State and Zip Code of Residence (for Firearms Business Premises) (See instruction 3a)
4. Signature of Transferor (See instruction 2h)
5. Signature of Transferee (See instruction 2h)
6. Signature of Employer (See instruction 2h)
7. Signature of Agent (See instruction 2h)
8. Signature of Attorney (See instruction 2h)
9. Signature of Notary Public (See instruction 2h)
10. Signature of Other (See instruction 2h)
11. Signature of Other (See instruction 2h)
12. Signature of Other (See instruction 2h)
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17. Signature of Other (See instruction 2h)
18. Signature of Other (See instruction 2h)
19. Signature of Other (See instruction 2h)
20. Signature of Other (See instruction 2h)

d. Model
e. Barrel Length: f. Overall Length
g. Serial Number

Final Description or Data Appearing on Firearm (Attach additional sheet if necessary)

Transferee's Federal Firearms License (if any) or Explosives License or Permit Number
Transferee's Special (Occupational) Tax Status (if any)
a. Employer Identification Number b. Class

(Shutterstock/Guy J. Sagi)

owners could (and still can) buy rifle suppressors over the counter to protect their hearing.

Just when you thought it was not possible to make Chris Murphy and Elizabeth Warren look even more ridiculous, here comes Europe deeming such devices beneficial and therefore legal.

Similar to silencers, a search reveals “Several countries allow civilian ownership of short-barrel firearms, though regulations vary significantly...” One with regulations that puts Democrat states to shame is Panama, where *Money Talks News* reported “Short-barreled rifles and shotguns are legal.”

At this writing, what the Senate will do with the “One Big Beautiful Bill” is undecided. Serious gun owner advocates are striving to create enough pressure can on Republicans to add short barrel firearms into the mix with suppressors. And Republicans are looking to Parliamentarian of the Senate Elizabeth MacDonough to make her determination on if such measures

will survive the “Byrd bath” or become “Byrd droppings.”

If gun owners do end up with any rollback on restrictions, never discount the chronic persistence of Democrats who lose legislatively to then take a complaint to one of their apparatchik district judges for a nationwide injunction. That, of course, would create a whole new series of hurdles to clear while delayed rights continue to be denied.

EDITOR’S NOTE: At the time of publishing, the Big Beautiful Bill went through the Senate without the removal of suppressors, short-barreled rifles, short-barreled shotguns, and AOWs from the unconstitutional National Firearms Act of 1934. The \$200 tax was eliminated (machineguns and destructive devices still require the tax be paid), but excessive penalties for victimless violations (from 10–30 years in prison) of the NFA are still in effect. **FN**

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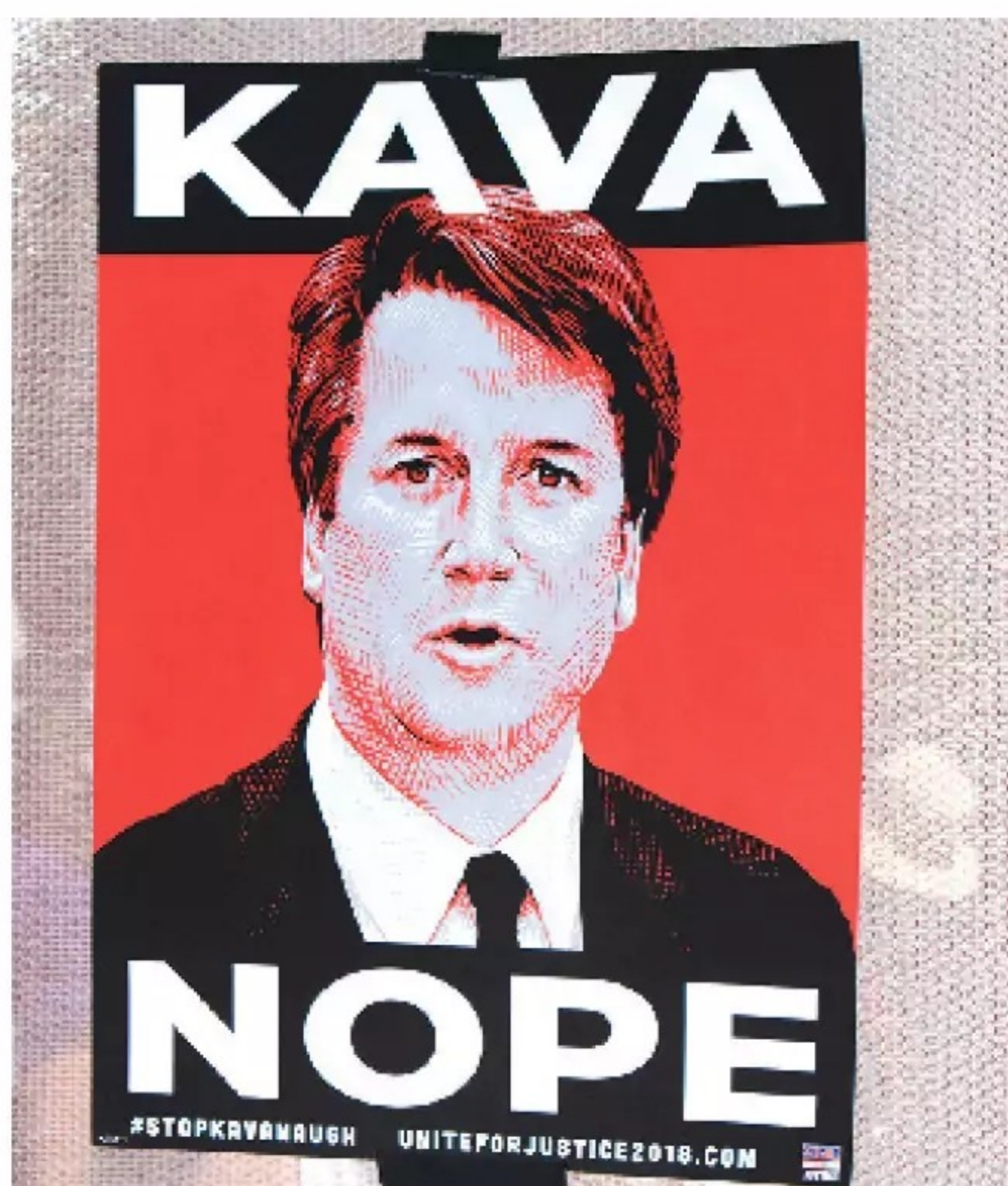
Darwin Nercesian is a long-time gun rights advocate and shooter of targets far, far away. As a News Field Editor at Firearms News, Darwin writes about the Second Amendment, firearms, and related gear. Follow him on Instagram, X, and YouTube @DToe_Official.

SCOTUS FAILS AMERICANS AGAIN, KICKING GUN RIGHTS FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD

The U.S. Supreme Court Has Become an Anti-Second Amendment Outlet for Toothless Opinions

Months have passed as gun owners have waited with bated breath for the United States Supreme Court's decision to either grant or deny certiorari on a pair of pivotal Second Amendment cases. Unfortunately, after being relisted ad nauseam, the Court's leftist majority has chosen not to hear arguments in *Snope v. Brown* and *Ocean State Tactical v. Rhode Island*, a decision that will cost taxpayers unknown millions in future litigation and put law-abiding Americans in the crosshairs of tyrannical state governments operating far outside Constitutional bounds.

Ocean State Tactical v. Rhode Island challenged whether a retrospective and confiscatory ban on the possession of standard-capacity magazines violates the Second Amendment and whether dispossessing citizens of their lawfully acquired property without compensation violates the Fifth Amendment. The case rode the bench to the tune of fifteen relists prior to being denied. *Snope v. Brown* sought to address the Constitutionality of Maryland's ban on semiautomatic rifles, including America's most popular rifle, the AR-15. This case was relisted eleven times before being denied certiorari.



(Shutterstock/Cory Seamer)

Good News First: Thomas & Alito

Justice Thomas and Justice Alito have been the Court's only true conservatives, and both would have granted certiorari on these cases mentioned above. While Justice Thomas is a solid originalist, Justice Alito has described himself as a "practical originalist," believing the Constitution has a fixed meaning by which it would have been understood at the time it was written, emphasizing the importance of interpreting the Constitution rather than distorting, adding to, or subtracting from it. The distinction is certainly

more pronounced when comparing these Justices to the fake conservatives, such as Roberts, Barrett, and Gorsuch, which explains why Justices Thomas and Alito tend to be well aligned when it comes to the Second Amendment.

"Best People" Fantasy

Earlier, I mentioned the Court's leftist majority, which may have had a few people scratching their heads, so let's take a look at the scorecard for a moment because I'm about to obliterate the "best people" fantasy we've been sold about a 6-3 conservative majority. Jackson, Sotomayor, and Kagan are all dyed-in-the-wool far-left activist judges. Nothing new there. Roberts has long been known as the Court's swing vote, which is a nice way of saying that his principles are more compromised than conservative. Barrett has increasingly cemented herself as a staunch member of the Court's liberal wing, recently helping to bring home Democrat wins against homemade guns and siding with lifetime firearm bans for those with misdemeanor or domestic violence convictions.

Gorsuch

Don't let Gorsuch fool you either. I'll confess to having high hopes, but there is zero integrity in his claim to be a

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Constitutional originalist, and he clearly admitted to it during his confirmation hearings. When asked about the Second Amendment, and specifically the National Firearms Act of 1934 (NFA), he never once referenced the plain text of the Constitution, instead leaning only on precedent as if the flawed *Heller* decision that did not frame the true intent of the Second Amendment was tattooed on his tongue. And don't get me started on the *Bondi v. VanDerStok* massacre, where he not only contributed to a 7–2 liberal wing majority, but proudly authored the opinion that granted the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) open season on firearms parts kits and homemade guns, a tradition dating back to the Founding era. While Gorsuch did vote to grant certiorari in *Shope and Ocean State*, this man is confused, at best, about who he is and what he believes in, or he's just putting on a show for conservatives because he knew the majority would deny hearing the cases regardless.

Kavanaugh

Then there's Kavanaugh, a feckless coward who voted against granting certiorari only to turn around and issue a statement “respecting the denial of certiorari” that sounds more like a spineless “apology letter,” cringeworthy enough that I had to read it three times just to believe it was real. “In short, under this Court's precedents, the Fourth Circuit's decision is questionable,” Kavanaugh wrote in his statement.

The 4th Circuit's decision wasn't just “questionable,” it stood in willful defiance of the United States Constitution and the natural rights of Americans, but let's say that it was “questionable.” How then might one describe your laissez-faire attitude towards such a foundational issue, arguably among the core liberties you've sworn to preserve and defend? I'd say that makes your judgeship and indeed your seat on the Supreme Court questionable.

“Although the Court today denies certiorari, a denial of certiorari does

not mean that the Court agrees with a lower-court decision or that the issue is not worthy of review,” Kavanaugh continued. You know what, Brett? That's precisely what it means, you duplicitous Democrat shill. You have some nerve, condescending to Americans with this morally inept vomit and expecting us to lap it up like lambs rushing to slaughter. He wasn't done yet, however, letting his anti-Second Amendment flag soar as he vowed to leave the future of AR-15 possession in the hands of states so unscrupulous that they hardly resemble American territories.

“The AR–15 issue was recently decided by the First Circuit and is currently being considered by several other Courts of Appeals. Opinions from other Courts of Appeals should assist this Court's ultimate decisionmaking on the AR–15 issue,” said Kavanaugh. Anyone want to guess where those “several other Courts of Appeals” are located? California, Connecticut, Illinois, and New Jersey. He's telling it to conservatives in plain English. Those are the opinions Kavanaugh is waiting for to guide him in the future. Let that sink in. And speaking of the future...

“Additional petitions for certiorari will likely be before this Court shortly and, in my view, this Court should and presumably will address the AR–15 issue soon, in the next Term or two,” Kavanaugh concluded. This issue has been at the forefront of political debate for almost 40 years, but Kavanaugh seems eager to allow rogue leftist states to subjugate Americans with additional bad faith legislation before he'll consider hearing arguments on core Constitutional principles. Allow me to put this in perspective. These cases can sometimes take years to progress through the courts and reach the Supreme Court. Those are years that Americans are unable to enjoy the rights guaranteed to them by the Constitution, making any claim that ties freedom and liberty to the United States tantamount to false advertising. Does

the government intend to compensate citizens for those years they'll never get back? I won't hold my breath.

“It shocks me how a President who wants to deport illegal immigrants or wants to cut wasteful and fraudulent government spending can get addressed by the Supreme Court literally two days later, but this issue, which has been kicking around now the better part of two decades, yeah the Supreme Court's not quite ready to get around to it” Washington Gun Law president William Kirk recently expressed on his YouTube channel.

What's more disturbing is that the Supreme Court's denial of certiorari on these cases now empowers leftist “states” to pass and enforce bans, and even confiscation in the meantime, which will likely lead to standoffs, early morning raids, and loss of life as some Americans, undoubtedly, will not be so willing to comply with tyranny, and we all know how quick to the trigger .gov is when it comes to gun owners. That blood is on your hands, Brett, and the rest of your anti-Second Amendment cohorts. Perhaps that's why you wear those black robes, symbolizing the mourning of our Constitution and the Americans you threw to the wolves.

The proof is in the rotten pudding on this one. The Supreme Court is telling us, without any clarification necessary, that the Second Amendment is a second-class right that they may get to in the future, once the anti-Second Amendment lobby gives them their marching orders, of course. They are willing to allow the government to spend countless millions of your tax dollars to litigate your rights away while Americans spend more of their hard-earned money to fight back against the criminals they are being forced to fund. They are willing to stage future violent confrontations and place citizens in imminent danger from rogue states and authorities being used as jack-booted thugs to enforce their subversion of the Constitution. We were sold a lie, and now we suffer the consequences of that deception. **FN**

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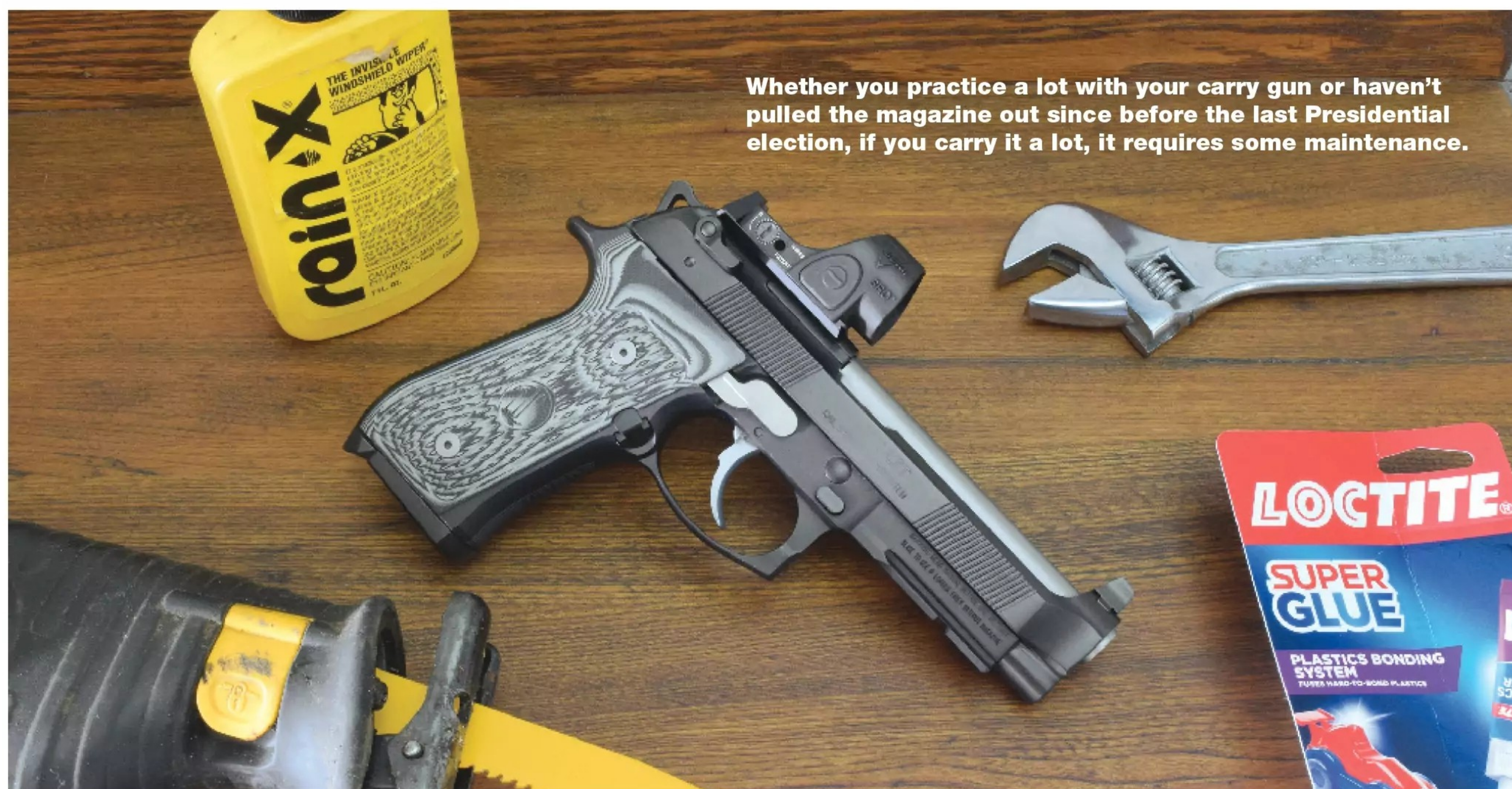
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CARRY GUN MAINTENANCE

Your carry gun is a piece of life-saving equipment, and it requires some regular inspection at a minimum if you carry regularly, even if you rarely shoot it. And not just your gun—also your magazines, your carry ammo, and—if you've decided to go that route—your optic.

First, if you don't know what I'm talking about, chances are you've never really carried a gun for any length of time. Even if you're open carrying as a private citizen or a cop in uniform, your gun will have a little dirt and debris collect on it as it moves through the world. But if you're carrying concealed your pistol will become a lint trap even if the holster covers it from

the muzzle all the way up to the rear sight. Lint, dust, grit, sweat, you name it—it all finds its way onto and into your piece as you live your life. Cracks and corners are natural attractors to lint, and any lube on your pistol anywhere close to the surface will draw gunk like a magnet draws metal filings.

Some covering garments are worse than others. In the summer, when I'm wearing a Hawaiian shirt over it, it takes a few days before a noticeable amount of lint collects in the ejection port of my gun. But in the winter, if I'm wearing a thick soft cotton sweatshirt or plaid flannel? Dust-bunnies can collect in a day and turn parts of my gun gray.

At first, the lint just sticks to your sights and the exterior of your gun, but eventually it works its way inside.



Carry guns get dusty and linty—this is just a couple days under a thin Hawaiian shirt. That dust/lint gets inside your gun, and you will need to clean it out.



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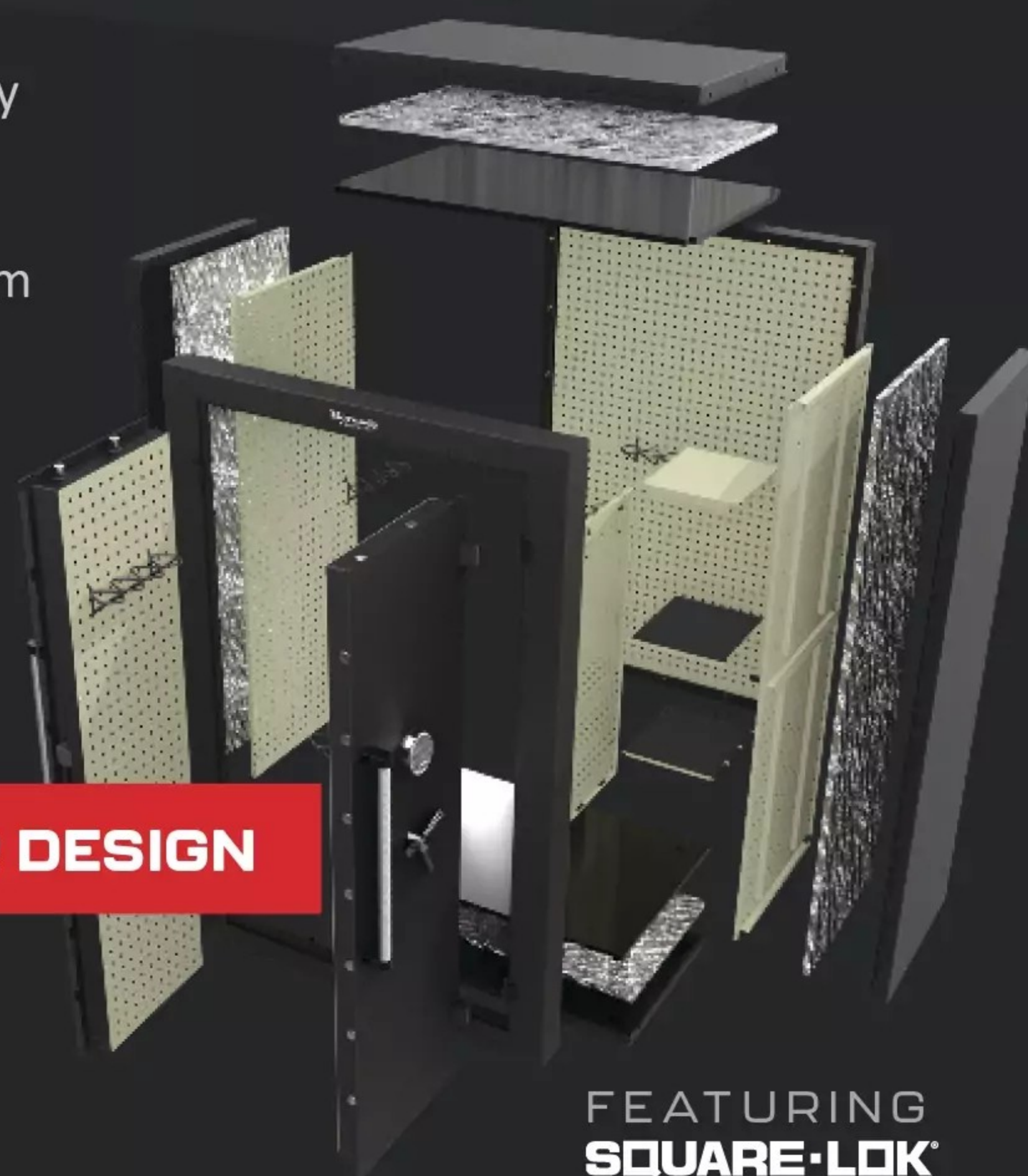
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Tarr carried this 1911 and practiced with it every day for a decade, and his hand wore the bluing down to bare metal. Modern pistols have better finishes, but you still need to check for wear and rust.



Index marks on your optic's screws are a great way to make sure they haven't loosened. LTT used blue Loctite to secure the screws on this custom Glock 43X, and then used the Loctite to make hashmarks—two birds, one stone.

Blow and wipe your carry gun clean every day (especially your sights/optic, I hate when there's lint hanging on my front sight) and once every week or two fieldstrip it, wipe down the inside, and reapply whatever lube is necessary. Dirty guns, and lubed guns, collect more schmutz than clean dry guns, but while some designs seem to work just as well dry, you should keep your pistol lightly lubed. Just be aware that lube loves lint. Or vice versa.

If you've made the decision to mount an optic on your carry gun, that is an additional piece of gear you need to regularly inspect and maintain—more often and more rigorously than your gun, in fact, as it is a comparatively delicate battery-powered piece of electronics. Make sure it is still working, the dot not just on but the controls functioning as designed. Make sure the mount to the slide is still rock solid, and that whatever screws you've got in your setup

are still tight. I recommend witness marks on your screws using a paint pen so you can visually confirm these haven't backed out. That optic is like a car tire—it requires certain conditions for it to perform properly, and just when you stop paying attention to it is the time when you get a flat.

If you don't regularly shoot/practice with your carry gun, first, shame on you. You are such a disappointment to your mother and I. However, for those of you who do, you understand that magazines wear and, occasionally, break, especially if you're practicing magazine changes and dropping them on the floor. Even if you're not doing that, you should be inspecting your mags to make sure the feed lips haven't been bent, or that the basepad isn't cracked. If that magazine has been in your lint-collecting carry gun, that lint will have worked its way down inside the mag as well. Unload it from time to time, check the spring tension, and wipe down the cartridges. Disassembling your magazines isn't a bad idea either. Put a rag or cloth on the end of a cleaning rod and push it through the magazine body, and use that rag to wipe down the spring. But **DO NOT LUBE** the insides of your magazines.

Back in the day when I first started carrying a gun, mine all had blued finishes, which means it didn't take long at all for that bluing to wear and my sweat to start to rust the steel. With modern guns, that really isn't an issue. You've got all of these great metal coatings like nitriding, PVD, DLC, etc., plus most of the frames on modern CCW guns are polymer, but

you should still take your gun out every once in a while, and look it over, just in case. Polymer holsters wear off finishes faster than leather, sometimes down to bare metal, and quite often your sights will not have the same coatings as your slide and you could find a spot of rust there especially if you live in hot humid environs. Surface rust doesn't affect function, but who wants a rusty gun?

Finally, ammo. You should have your carry gun stuffed with the finest hollow-points you can afford. That ammo ain't cheap, but the good news is that, left alone, it will still work years and even decades later provided you don't bake it in an oven or soak it underwater. However, if you cycle those cartridges in and out of your magazine, you might see wear. And if you're cycling rounds in and out of your chamber (taking out your pricey JHPs to practice with bulk FMJ at the range, then reloading your carry gun when you're done) you could experience bullet setback. When chambering cartridges, the bullet nose hits the feed ramp on the way in, and if you do this enough times to the same cartridge you could push the bullet more deeply into the case. This can not just affect feeding reliability but cause a spike in pressure. When you unload your magazine for inspection/maintenance, line your carry ammo up in a row and check to see if any of the cartridges are significantly shorter than the others, or if any cases are dented, etc. Set those aside and replace them with fresh ones. **FN**



Cycling your carry ammo in and out of your chamber will, eventually, cause bullet setback (center). Inspect your ammo, and your magazines, for wear, not just your gun.

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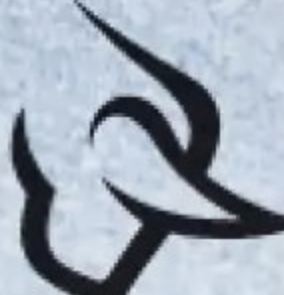
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THE .50 PEACEKEEPER

Looking Back at How J.D. Jones Packed 80% of the .50 BMG's Performance Into a 13-Pound Rifle!

Anti-materiel rifles chambered for the .50 Browning Machine Gun (12.7x99mm NATO) cartridge have long been of interest to both shooters and collectors. While many shooters love the brute power and performance of this big cartridge, it does come at a price. The downside to .50 BMG rifles, like Barrett's M82, besides their recoil and blast, is simply their size and weight. They are physically large and very heavy which makes them less mobile. One person who took note of this over 20 years ago was J.D. Jones of SSK Industries. He responded by developing the little known .50 Peacekeeper cartridge. This was designed to provide 80% of the power of a .50 Browning Machine Gun cartridge while fitting into a conventional size and weight rifle. How about a 650-grain bullet launched at 2,400 fps from a 13-pound rifle?

For this column, I decided to roll back the pages of time and re-examine this interesting design capable of firing heavy armor piercing, armor-piercing incendiary and armor-piercing incendiary tracer projectiles. J.D. based his .50 Peacekeeper cartridge on Roy Weatherby's impressive .460 Weatherby Magnum. Introduced in 1958, Roy's .460 was designed for one purpose, to take over the title of the World's most powerful commercial cartridge. He accomplished this by necking his .378 Weatherby case up to .458. Factory ammunition was advertised at pushing a 500-grain bullet at a bone crushing 2,700 fps generating 8,095 ft-lbs. of muzzle energy. More than enough power to knock the British .600 Nitro Express (which churns up a mere 7,600



Two .50 Peacekeeper cartridges dwarf the .45-70 Government on the left and the 5.56x45mm NATO on the right.

ft-lbs.) from its throne. With a pull of the trigger, Roy's .460 WM handed out judgment on big game animals in a manner not seen outside of Old Testament fire and brimstone.

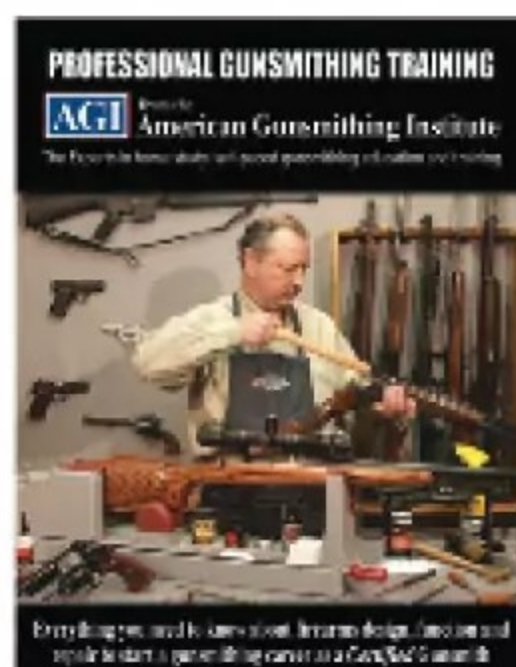
Of course, it wasn't long after the .460 WM's introduction before people began trying to "improve" it or utilize it for purposes other than smiting elephants. Fred Wells is the first person known to have necked the .460 Weatherby Magnum up to .50 caliber. His wildcat cartridge became known as the .510 Wells and it caught the attention of J.D. Jones of SSK Industries. J.D. is of course well-known for his handgun hunting exploits, his line of proprietary Whisper cartridges, and his blunt no nonsense writing.

J.D. began experimenting with the .510 Wells with a military application in mind. However, as he worked with it he decided it wasn't quite what he was looking for. So, he set out to change the dimensions to better suite his needs and performance goals. The first thing he did was open up the throat of the reamer to enable it to handle .50 BMG projectiles. This would allow both .50-caliber hunting bullets and projectiles intended for use in the .50 BMG to be utilized. Next, he tightened the dimensions to improve case life.

The result of his handiwork will drive a 650-grain .50 BMG projectile at 2,400 fps from a short 23-inch barrel. Not only that but it will do

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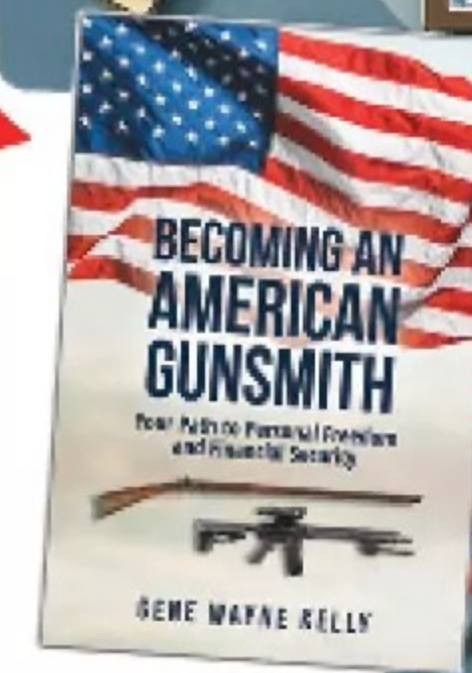
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◀ Downsides to .50 BMG sniper systems include their sheer size and weight, this Barrett is seen in Iraq with Sergeant Dustin Chisholm in July 2007. (Photo by David Fortier)

▶ A look at the size of the .50 Peacekeeper, L to R: 5.56x45mm NATO, .45-70 Government, .50 Peacekeeper APIT, API, .50 BMG AP and 12.7x108mm B-32 API.



it from a conventional 13-pound bolt action rifle. The cartridge is capable of using everything from the 750-grain A-MAX down to surplus 630-grain .50 BMG ball projectiles, and even lighter hunting bullets. Power wise it's similar to the old .5 Vickers (12.7x81mm) round. This obsolete English HMG round fired a 578-grain bullet at approximately 2,624 fps.

When comparing the .50 Peacekeeper to the .50 BMG, barrel length needs to be kept in mind. While a .50 BMG M33 ball round may average 2,950 fps out of a Browning M2's long 45-inch barrel, results are less from shorter tubes. For instance, from a Barrett M82A1's 29-inch barrel M33 ball velocity is a noticeably slower 2,735 fps. That is only about 335 fps faster than the .50 Peacekeeper when it's fired from an even shorter 23-inch barrel. So, the .50 Peacekeeper is not too far behind the shorter barrel .50 BMG rifles.

So, just what was this round originally intended for? It was designed to facilitate a smaller and lighter anti-materiel rifle capable of putting

the full range of .50 BMG projectiles on target. Things like helicopters, lightly armored vehicles, unarmored vehicles or other hard targets a .50 BMG rifle might be utilized for. For some situations, J.D. felt that a conventional size and weight rifle would offer advantages over a much larger, heavier, and less mobile .50 BMG unit. Think about it, 80% of the power of a .50 BMG in a lightweight and easily portable rifle that to the casual observer outwardly resembles a conventional 7.62x51mm/.300 Win Mag Tactical rifle. Now, throw in the fact that the ammunition is smaller and lighter, yet the projectile is the same. It can fire ball, AP, API, APIT or other types of loads. Kind of interesting, eh?

I had a chance to handle and test fire one of J.D.'s shop mules built on a Ruger M77 action in August 2002, and one built by Ed Brown in October 2002. Both were single-shots. The Ed Brown mounted a K&P Match barrel with cut rifling. Twist was one turn in 13 inches and the tapered barrel sported a simple, yet effective, 3.25-inch-long muzzle brake. This had four baffles to reduce recoil down to sane levels. The barreled action was bedded with Marine-Tex into a rugged McMillian A2 synthetic stock.

I tested the rifle off the bench and shot it offhand, kneeling, and prone. I utilized three handloads J.D. provided. These were topped with 650-grain API (Armor Piercing Incendiary) and APIT (Armor Piercing Incendiary Tracer) projectiles. Ed Brown provided a 700-grain AP (Armor Piercing) load. With an overall length of 45.6 inches and a weight of 13.5 pounds (with optics and bipod) the .50 Peacekeeper rifle simply felt like a normal heavy barrel tactical rifle. Balance was just in front of the receiver and the rifle felt good in the hands.



The .50 Peacekeeper can fire the exact same projectiles as the .50 BMG, just at a lower velocity.

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Loading the .50 Peacekeeper is not hard and both military surplus as well as modern commercial match bullets, like these 750-grain Hornady A-MAXs can be used.

Recoil off the bench, especially with the 700-grain AP load, was attention getting. The Peacekeeper was physically moving me backwards some three inches with each pull of the trigger. This is NOT a rifle you want to creep the stock on. It’s certainly not for everyone. However, it didn’t have that quick painful flinch inducing jab of a lightweight magnum. Instead recoil was more like a hard shove that moves, but doesn’t actually hurt you.

Accuracy with the military surplus projectiles was good, but I knew they were the limiting factor. Groups fired at 100 yards ranged from .75 to 1.5 inches depending on the load. Velocity averages ran from a low of 2,208 fps with the 700-grain AP load to a high of 2,402 fps with a 650-grain APIT. The 700-grain AP load averaged three inches for four three-shot groups fired prone

ACCURACY AND VELOCITY CHART .50 PEACEKEEPER				
Load	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Velocity (fps)	100 yards (in.)	400 yards (in.)
Handload with IMR4895, APIT	650	2,255	.75	N/A
Handload with H380, APIT	650	2,402	1.25	N/A
Handload with H335, APIT	650	2,330	1.5	N/A
Handload with AA2520, AP	700	2,208	1	3
Groups are an average of four three-shot groups. Velocity readings taken 12 feet from the muzzle at an ambient temperature of 60 degrees F with an Oehler 35P.				

at 400 yards. I fired one five-shot group at this distance and it measured 3.25 inches with four rounds in 1.5 inches.

The power is indeed impressive. As an example, I pounded a round at a steel plate 75 yards distant. The scope blurred, a ball of fire exploded on the 1/2-inch thick steel plate, and the APIT round pounded through it and a 5/8-inch thick steel plate behind it. While this wasn’t hardened armor plate, it was still impressive. Firing API and APIT loads onto steel targets proved great fun with visually impressive impacts.

Crunching some numbers, with Speer’s 647-grain FMJ-BT with a G1 BC of .701 and a muzzle velocity of 2,400 fps, a .50 Peacekeeper’s performance was about 300 yards behind the same bullet fired from a 29-inch barreled .50 BMG at 2,750 fps. So, the .50 BMG had similar velocity and energy at 300 yards as the .50 Peacekeeper had at the muzzle. At 900 yards, the .50 BMG load had similar retained velocity, energy and exterior

ballistics to the .50 Peacekeeper at 600 yards and so forth.

While the US military was impressed by the .50 Peacekeeper, they had a request. They wanted a detachable box magazine. Unfortunately, this was not possible using an existing off the shelf commercial action as it required too much metal being removed. Plus, the military had no intentions of paying for the R&D work to develop a new action. So, J.D. offered the .50 Peacekeeper to long range shooters and collectors. It didn’t catch on and today few have heard of this interesting .50-caliber cartridge.

Some will argue drones have reduced or eliminated the need for anti-materiel rifles, and perhaps they are correct. I found the .50 Peacekeeper very interesting when I had a chance to test it some 23 years ago. While it offered respectable performance, it never caught on commercially. Even so, it remains a fascinating cartridge from a very interesting man, J.D. Jones. **FN**

.50 PEACEKEEPER WITH 23-INCH BARREL EXTERIOR BALLISTICS								
	Muzzle	100 yd.	300 yd.	600 yd.	800 yd.	1,000 yd.	1,200 yd.	1,500 yd.
Velocity (fps)	2,400	2,285	2,065	1,760	1,576	1,410	1,266	1,105
Energy (ft-lbs.)	8,275	7,501	6,126	4,448	3,566	2,855	2,304	1,753
Drop MOA	0	-5.6	0	11.5	20.9	32	44.9	68.6
Drift MOA	0	0.6	1.7	3.6	5	6.6	8.3	11
.50 BMG WITH 29-INCH BARREL EXTERIOR BALLISTICS								
Velocity (fps)	2,750	2,626	2,388	2,054	1,848	1,656	1,482	1,260
Energy (ft-lbs.)	10,864	9,905	8,191	6,061	4,905	3,940	3,155	2,281
Drop MOA	0	-4	0	8.6	15.5	23.6	33	50.3
Drift MOA	0	0.5	1.4	2.9	4.1	5.3	6.8	9.2

This chart is based on a Speer 647-grain FMJ-BT with a G1 BC of .701 and a 300 yard zero at 1,030 feet above Sea Level. Drift is for a Full Value 10 mph wind. Calculated using Hornady’s Ballistic Calculator.



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GETTING STARTED WITH 9MM

You Have to Start Someplace!

When I started on this journey of shooting and loading, it was a .38 Special and .45 ACP world. Bullseye, IPSC, bowling pins, PPC, name it and you could do it all with just those two. A decade later, it was a .38 Super and .40 S&W world, at least in IPSC. Now, the world is 9mm all the time, everywhere you go. So, if you are going to get into reloading, 9mm is likely to be the one you will start with. What do you need to know? Not the regular book knowledge, but the inside scoop, the stuff that books don't usually tell you, and old hands have often forgotten.

Simple: brass, brass prep, primers, sizing, crimp, bulk and inspection. Brass, getting it? I love the folks at



You will not find it at all difficult to amass a large volume of 9mm brass. It is everywhere. You just have to sort and clean it.



Starline, but I cannot comprehend anyone buying 9mm brass. Any time I need more 9mm brass, I just arrive a bit early for a range day at the club and pick it up. Someone on one of the ranges will have practiced with factory 9mm and just left the brass behind. I get to pick up once-fired brass. Sometimes, they will have raked it to the side, which makes it even easier for me. So, arrive early, or stay late, and scour your gun club range floors to pick up brass. If your club doesn't allow it, maybe you need another club.

Brass Prep

Your free brass will be dirty. Ignore the advice of supposed experts who will tell you that your miracle carbide die will simply scrape the grit off. It won't. I give my brass a quick hot water rinse to remove sand and stuff, dry it, and then use a vibratory cleaner to make it shiny. (Which one? We'll cover all the options in another column, later.) Then I sort it. Not by headstamp (No-one has that much time on their hands) but to get the non-9mm stuff out. I shoot at a club that is a competition and defensive-carry club, and I find a variety lying there: 9mm, .38 Super, .38 SuperComp, .40SW,

even a smattering of .380 now and then. Toss the non-9mm stuff or save it and trade back to whoever shot it.

Another headache you'll run into is primers. Both getting them out and putting them in. Some of the 9mm you'll be picking up will have crimped primers. This is a ring or stabs of brass rudely shoved over the edge of the primer, to keep it from falling out when abused. The crimp can make ejecting the spent primer a bit uncertain. I've had primer pins bend when hitting heavily crimped primers. Others impale the primer, and once it has been punched out it the pin pulls it back into the primer pocket. So, invest in a supply of spare decapping pins, because you will bend or break them and need to



9mm brass used to be so variable it was junk. Not the case today, everyone makes really good brass.

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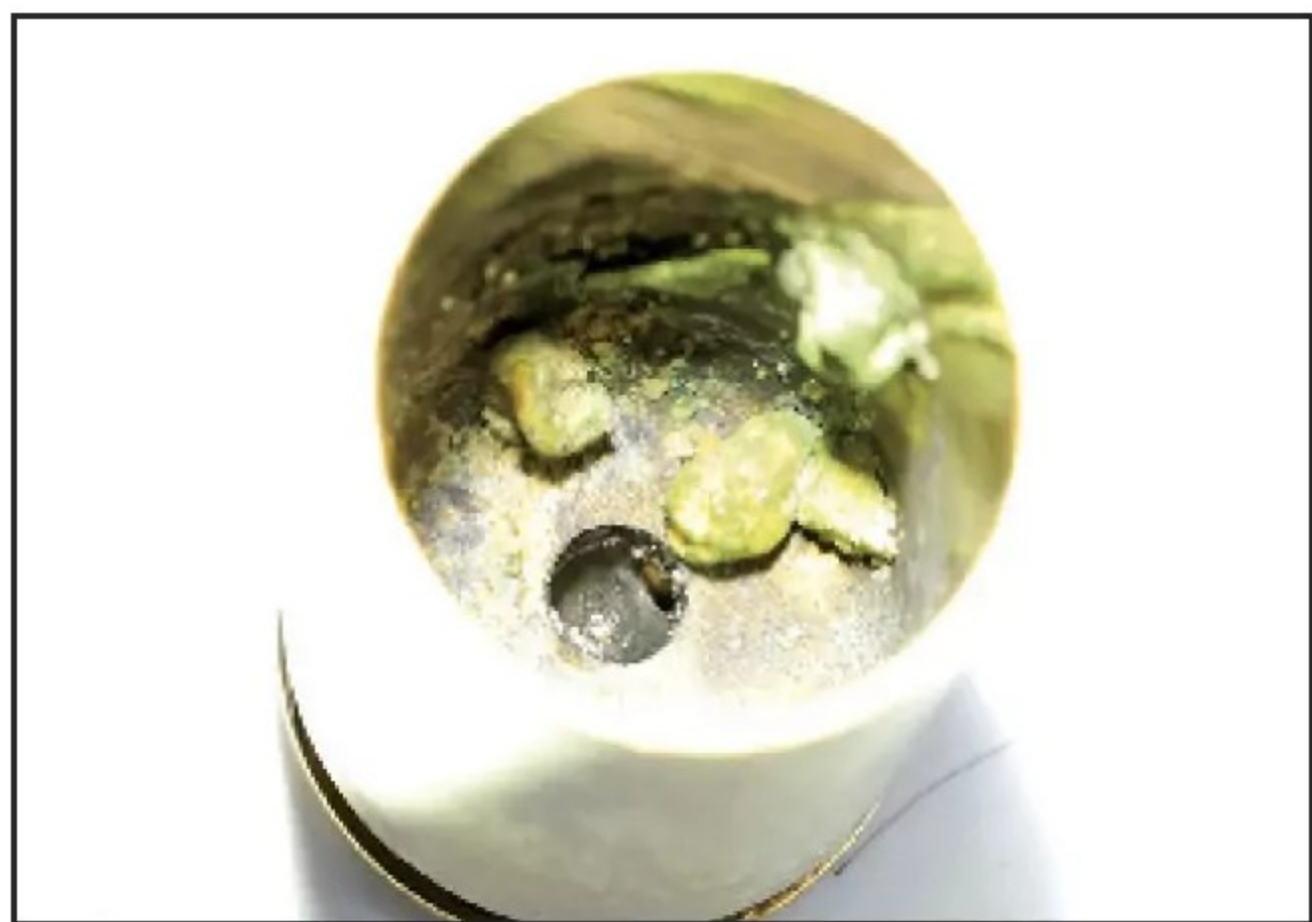
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Why do you clean brass? Because down in this once-muddy empty are three particles of cleaning media glued to the interior. (A deliberately-poorly cleaned 9mm brass to demonstrate the problem.)

replace the busted one in the sizing die. Berdan-primed surplus military ammo is even worse. Avoid it like the plague.

The crimp also makes it impossible to insert the next primer. In all, crimped brass is a real headache, and you might want to take a moment when you first start picking up that free brass. Is the brass crimped? You might want to pass on salvaging that free brass, because the headaches of the crimp are many. I know high-volume reloaders who have a special setup to size and deprime their 9mm brass only and also swage the crimp out of the way. When you are shooting 500–1,000 rounds a week, that's the kind of pre-loading prep that saves a whole lot of time and effort.

When I handle brass to get it from the storage bin to the loading press, I jiggle each handful and listen. You can hear when there's a cracked case in the handful, and you don't want to load those.



On the left is a cracked case (Yes, a .38 Special, I couldn't find any cracked 9mms) and on the right is a case that wasn't belled enough. A crushed 9mm means all is lost: case, primer, bullet and powder charge.

Loaded rounds have to have the case mouth crimped in order to feed properly. To cleanly seat the bullet you need to flare the case mouth, or else suffer crushed cases at the rate of 1-2 per 100 rounds loaded. Lead, coated and plated bullets need a bit more flare than jacketed, but if you don't flare at all, you'll crush rounds. Flare only as much as you need to in order to cleanly and easily seat bullets. Then the flare has to be ironed down, hence the crimp. I only ever use a taper crimp. On everything. Okay, a quick description of crimp. Hold your hands up in front of you, fingers pointed up and palms facing each other. Curl your fingers until they point toward each other. That's a roll crimp. Straighten them out. Now, tip the fingertips towards each other, while keeping your fingers straight. That's a taper crimp.



Jacketed bullets shrug off a too-tight crimp, but coated and plated ones do not. The rule here is "as much as you need, and no more."

Roll crimps provide a firmer crimp and keep heavy bullets in place during heavy recoil, but a roll crimp is a lot more sensitive to case length. If the cases vary in length, the roll will vary, and vary a lot. A taper crimp is a lot less sensitive to case length, and really doesn't care if the cases vary by a few thousandths. On 9mm ammo, the taper crimp should be done just enough, mine bring the case mouth diameter down to 0.374".

Oh, and the crimp doesn't hold the bullet in place. It is there simply to iron out the flare you put in. Too much crimp and you'll score the bullet, which harms accuracy. (Especially with plated bullets.) Too little crimp and it increases drag during chambering and can lead to malfunctions. Bullets are held in place by the tension created by the diameter of the neck expander/powder drop tube. If you lack bullet tension, you'll need a smaller-diameter tube, and you can



The correct 9mm crimp diameter, or at least what has worked for me for decades: 0.374".



Gauge your ammo. A malfunction in practice can be good practice for clearing malfunctions, but not in a competition. Get a gauge, use it, and don't get lazy.

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Coated bullets let you color-code your loads, to keep the match ones separate from the practice ones for example.

get that by carefully polishing down the one that is too large. Or buying a smaller-diameter one.

As far as sizing is concerned, I have one word: carbide (carbide dies eliminate the step of lubricating cases). Okay, two words, adding TiN. Do not entertain the idea of saving money by buying a sizing die that isn't either a carbide die, or one with a TiN (titanium nitride) coating. Lubing handgun cases for resizing is a waste of time I will not entertain. At least not those I plan on loading in volume. I'll lube and resize the 100 8mm Nambu cartridges a year I load up, but only because I've never found a carbide or TiN sizing die for it. I'm not going to lube the 20,000+ 9mms I load up each year. Even if someone gives you a must-lube sizing die for free, buy a carbide or TiN coated one to use. Trust me on this.

Nothing made by the hand of man is perfect. Your ammo is no different. You need to inspect it. Serious competitors will drop each round into a case-checker. If it doesn't fall flush

of its own weight, it becomes practice ammo. It has to then fall out when the gauge is inverted. Failure to do so; ditto, it becomes practice ammo. Once you get good at loading, and your skills sharpen, you might skip inspection for practice ammo. After all, who cares if it causes a slight stoppage in practice? However, for match use, you need to inspect every single one of them.

The last part you have to grasp is one from business class: the economies of scale. Resign yourself to buying in bulk. Do not ever consider buying primers in amounts less than a thousand. Five thousand is better, more is even better. Why? A quick search turns up small pistol primers for sale. The thousand-primer boxes are priced at \$55 to \$65 per thousand, the 5,000-primer carton is \$60 per thousand, but then there is the Hazmat fee. \$20 per shipment, regardless. So, you get dinged for \$20 on 1,000, or for 5,000. Even 10,000. With 10K of primers on hand, you can now relax and keep a regular scan out for sales and prices drops. When the price drops, buy more. Brass you can get for free. Primers you cannot.

The same goes for powder. Once you find a powder that works for you, buy it in eight-pound kegs. You might buy one or two (or three) powders in one-pound bottles to experiment and see if your 9mm

likes it. But once you find what works, buy a bunch.

And bullets? More of the same. When I was a serious competitor, I would meet my bullet supplier at one or another match and pick up my order and drive it home. It saved shipping costs, and when you are buying 50,000 bullets at a time, that matters. (I was driving a Ford Ranger; he was driving a Ford F450 dually. My truck suffered, I'm not sure his noticed.) As a brief aside, I'm really liking the new coated bullets to be had. One detail that is great is that you can color-code your loads by use or power level.

What do you get for all this? Are you saving any money? A quick check of ammo available turns up 9mm blasting ammo at \$230 per thousand rounds. Steel-cased, and thus unreloadable, is only \$200/K. Let's total up the free-brass ammo. Primers, \$65/K. Powder \$38.70/lb, call it \$22/K rounds. Bullets range from \$88/K to \$126/K. So, your reloaded ammo runs from \$145 to \$184 per thousand. So, why reload? The 9mm is the worst cartridge from the point of view of savings. Every other one you might take up to reload will offer much greater savings per shot than the 9mm offers. That's the economies of scale of the manufacturers at work.

Yes, you are saving a bit of money loading your own 9mm, but better yet, you are making the ammunition exactly what you want it to be. Let's take two extremes: Steel Challenge and bowling pins. For steel you only need to ring the plate. So, a 115-grain



You have many options when it comes to bullets. Cast lead (even swaged, but the 9mm is not a fan) coated, plated and jacketed.

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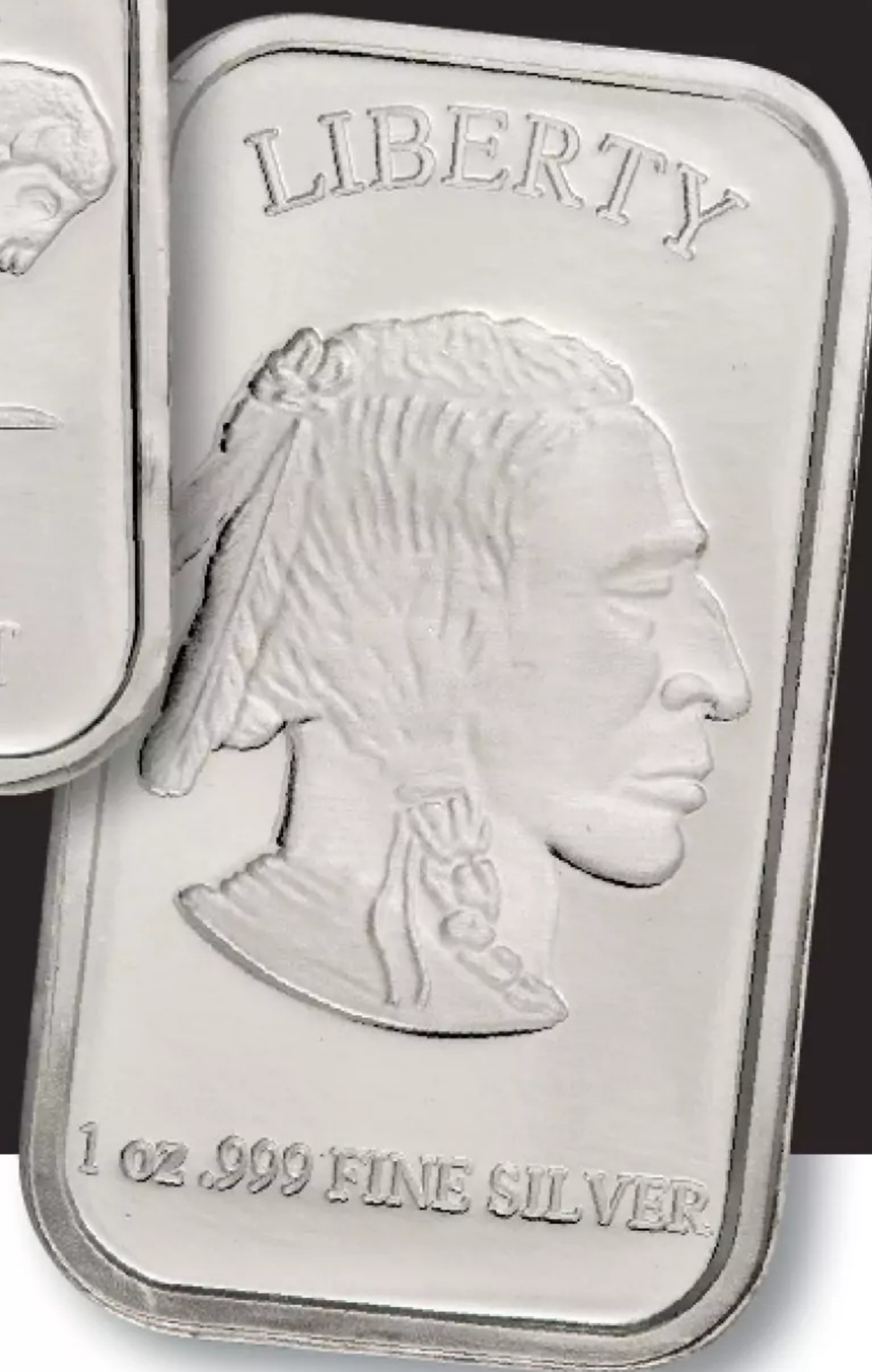
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GOVMINT



◀ One advantage of a progressive press is that you can set up different toolheads for different bullet styles.

bullet doing a miserly 1,000 fps (even 900 fps) is enough. Good luck finding that factory load. For bowling pins, you need a 147-grain bullet going 950 fps. The only way you will get that is in a defensive JHP, perhaps even a +P load, and that will be far too expensive to practice with, but you can craft either one (or even both, in turn) without changing your ammo costs much, if at all. And on a progressive press you can set up different toolheads for each and make life easier when it comes time to switch.

It's the tuning, not the savings, that matter when loading the 9mm. But other cartridges do offer significant savings. More about those in future columns.

Suggested Loads and Extra Info

Despite coming late (only in the mid-1990s) to the 9mm reloading party, I have a bunch of loads I've tried. They fall into two camps: just barely making Minor, for USPSA compe-

You're thinking, "*One-hundred and fifteen grains, they're all alike, who cares?*" Actually, your pistol just might. This will take a bit of mental 3D modeling. Think of a bullet as a balloon. Let's start with a pointy 115 grain round-nose, all lead. With the tip at the maximum overall length (OAL), the base sits at a certain point in the case. This defines the combustion chamber volume. Now, let's give that bullet a jacket. The copper, a metal that is less dense than lead, takes up extra space. It can't go forward, so the extra bullet volume goes to the back, and takes up some of the combustion chamber volume. Less volume, but the same powder charge means a higher pressure and more velocity. Let's make it worse. Now we make our bullet a jacketed-hollow point (JHP). That hollow point lead and copper has to go someplace. You guessed it, to the back.

So, an all-lead bullet and a JHP of the same weight can have different

velocities and pressures. Now let's take that jacketed-round nose (JRN) and make it a jacketed flat point (JFP). The flat-point lead and copper has to come from someplace, and it comes out of the back end. So, the flat point will have less pressure and velocity.

This is a problem at the extremes. If you have developed your just-barely-Minor load with a JHP, and then load lead bullets or flat-points for the match, you'll lose velocity, and you may not make Minor. Your match score will be zero. If you have loaded up your to-the-max load for bowling pins with a flat-point, and then load JRN's because it is "what you have" you may find the pressure to be too much.

In the middle, getting or losing 50 fps by changing bullets doesn't matter, but at the extremes, it can matter a lot. In the loads below, losing 50 fps with any of the Minor loads will drop you below the minimum, and you zero out the match. Adding 50 fps to the pin loads could be harsh on your pistol. Oh, and changing primers is less of a variable than bullet designs. Don't worry about brands, and don't bother using Magnum primers, the 9mm doesn't need them.

So, when you start out, load up 10 test loads, chrono them, write it all down and keep good records before you start cranking out in volume. **FN**

MINOR 9MM LOADS*			
Bullet	Powder & Weight (gr.)	Velocity (fps)	Power factor
115 gr Sierra JRN	AA#2 / 4.8	1,100	126
115 gr Sierra	WW-231 / 4.9	1,121	129
115 gr Sierra JHP	Titegroup / 4.6	1,110	128
125 LRN	Bullseye / 3.8	1,011	126
BOWLING PIN LOADS*			
147 Berrys RN	VV-320 / 3.8	974	143
147 Berrys RN	Action Pistol / 5.2	1,011	148
147 Hornady XTRP	VV-340 / 4.0	1,012	149
Blue Bullets RN	VV-330 / 3.9	974	143
*All the loads listed happened to have been chronographed using Winchester primers.			

SOURCES
Berry's Manufacturing, Inc., BerrysMfg.com, (800) 269-7373
The Blue Bullets, TheBlueBullets.com
Dillon Precision, DillonPrecision.com, (800) 223-4570
Hodgdon Powder Company, Hodgdonpowderco.com
Hornady Ammunition, Hornady.com, (800) 338-3220
Sierra Bullets, SierraBullets.com, (888) 223-3006
VihtaVuori Powders, VihtaVuori.com
Winchester Ammunition, Winchester.com

kurz *adj. Deutsch. 1a. A comparatively short length.*
1b. **Kompakt.**



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What do you want out of a pistol suppressor? Light weight? Modularity? Adaptable to many calibers? Easily mounted on various hosts? Quiet? Not expensive? With the Gemtech Lunar 9 the answers are; Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes and yes.

The Lunar 9 is a pistol suppressor meant, obviously, for use with 9mm firearms. To makes it lightweight, Gemtech makes almost all of it out of aluminum. The first baffle, the blast baffle, is 17-4 stainless, but the rest of the baffles are aluminum. (The Lunar 9 is a departure from the Gemtech G-Core monocoire design.) The baffles also have a notched entry port, there to induce turbulence and decrease sound. The two external tubes are

The Gemtech Lunar 9 fully assembled is ten ounces. Any lighter and you wouldn't need the booster.



aluminum, as are the front cap and most of the rear cap assembly. All this aluminum is Type III hardcoat anodized, so it is tough. To make the Lunar 9 durable, the threads are an insert in the rear cap and the threaded portion is made of stainless steel. So, full-up the Lunar 9 is about ten ounces. Full up? Yes, because the Lunar 9 is made as two assemblies. The two halves can be unscrewed and the front cap swapped from the front section and re-installed on the rear section.

Oh, notice the shape of the front cap clearance hole? Yes, that is a square 3/8" hole, the same size as your ratchet wrench. If you don't clean your Lunar 9 often enough, and thus carbon-weld the cap on, you can use a ratchet wrench to remove it. (Tsk, tsk.) With the front cap installed on the rear section, you now have a compact 9mm suppressor that tips the scales at about seven ounces.

Why? Because the Lunar 9 can be used on more than just pistols. With a



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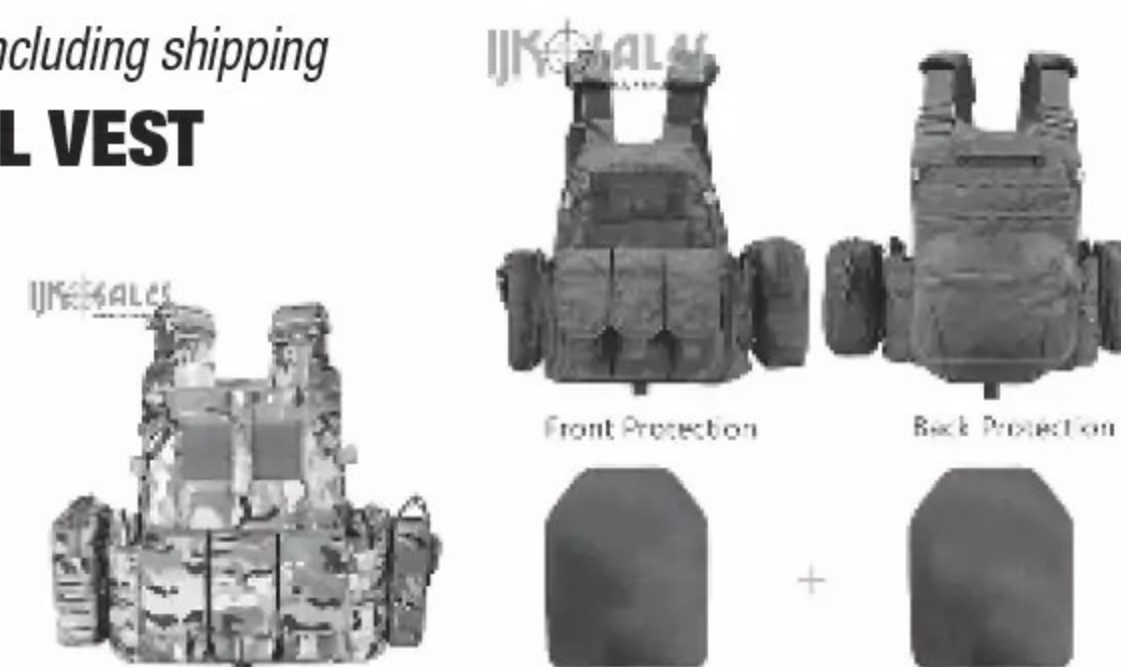
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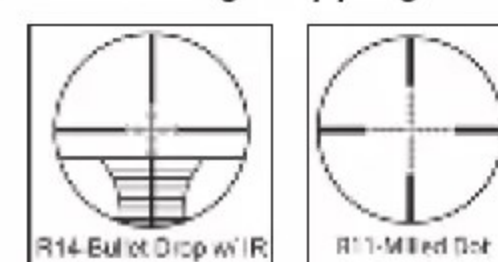
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The booster is threaded ½-28, so it will screw onto pistol barrels designed to accept a suppressor, like this CZ P0-09 C.



The booster rear cap assembly with its body, piston, spring and mount cap.



The front cap can be installed on either of the tubes as the front cap, so you can have the Lunar 9 as a short or long suppressor.

PCC and its longer barrel, you don't need the fully assembled Lunar 9 to be quiet, so the rear half makes your PCC very quiet and doesn't add a lot of length or weight. You can even put the Lunar 9 on a rimfire. Granted, the axial clearance in the bore of the Lunar 9, made for a 9mm bullet, will be greater than on a rimfire suppressor. That means that theoretically it won't be as quiet. But you're getting most of the rimfire suppressor quietness without the cost and paperwork of an extra suppressor.

To that end, and to accommodate the various calibers and mounting systems, the Lunar 9 can be had with a veritable basket of rear caps. On hand, I have the standard booster cap, for use on pistols. This L.I.D. keeps the extra weight of the Lunar 9 from "stalling" the cycle of your pistol. By storing some of the energy and then feeding it back into the system, it boosts the slide to function. I've men-

tioned this before but the effect is to make it feel as if the pistol is recoiling harder than without the suppressor. It is a small thing and you'll soon not notice it.

For the firearms that don't need a booster, Gemtech also offers direct-thread rear caps in all the various sizes: ½-28, ½-32 and ½-36. You'll need the "28" for your rimfire firearms. (Just don't use it to mount the Lunar 9 on a 5.56, that would be bad) On a .300 Blackout with subsonic ammunition only, you'll need a ⅝-24 direct-thread cap. Yes, .300 Blackout subsonic, as long as the barrel is eight inches or longer. The "32" and the "36" are for 9mm pistol-caliber carbines with those thread pitches. The ½-28 is a lot more common now, but back in the old days there were a lot of PCCs made with the 32 or 36 thread pitch (I'm looking at you, Colt.)

For those who have an HK, or something, made to use the mount, Gemtech even makes a rear cap that fits the Lunar 9 onto an HK three-lug mount. If you don't have an HK, but want to three-lug it in style, Gemtech even offers an adapter to convert your threaded muzzle to HK three-lug so you can then use the three-lug rear cap for a QD mount setup.

Back to the modularity for a moment. The front cap of the Lunar 9 fits onto the front of the front section and also the front of the rear section. The threads of the two sections are proportioned such that if you happen to install the baffle stack incorrectly, the front cap won't tighten down flush with the tube. That's your clue that you somehow did something wrong. Gemtech has gone to a lot of trouble to make it as easy as possible, and as easily-cleaned as possible.

The baffles are stepped so they snap together. They are also notched and



The Lunar 9 disassembled. The baffle that looks different is the blast baffle, and it is made of 17-4 stainless. So is the piston. Everything else is anodized aluminum.



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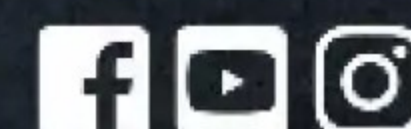


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Each baffle is lugged and notched so you can only fit them together properly, and still screw on the front cap.



Each baffle is also notched on the entry port, to induce turbulence and thus make it quieter.



The setscrew you see is the index for the piston notches so you can shift POI if you need to.



The Lunar 9 can be had with many different rear caps (or even all of them) to let you mount it on almost anything. The row of direct-thread caps covers a lot of bases, and the booster and the HK three-lug add in a bunch more.

lugged so they will only assemble in the proper orientation. If you don't get the notch and lugs lined up, the stack will not let you screw the cap on. The stepped baffles also provide more of a seal to the tube than regular "K" baffles do, so it is easier to disassemble and clean.

The booster assembly also has an interesting detail. Instead of adding more complex machining to lock the aluminum body to the steel threads and piston lugs, Gemtech simply installed a stainless steel setscrew. The purpose of the lugs on the piston are to let you shift the point of impact if you need to. If you find the POI is off of your sights, simply grab the Lunar 9 body and pull it forward on the barrel. Give it a slight rotation and ease it back. You are now locked into a different slot of the lugged piston. Try again. One of the lugs will get you dead-on, or close enough. Fair warning: that setting is just for that pistol. Swap the Lunar 9 to another pistol and it might require a different setting. That's how they all work, nothing personal about the Lunar 9 in that regard.

How quiet is it? The measured reports indicate that a subsonic 9mm load with the full length of the Lunar 9 puts it in the low 120s, decibel-wise. That is low enough that even I, Mr.

Always-Hearing-Protected feel comfortable shooting without muffs or plugs. The full length on a PCC carbine is giggle-worthy. Assembled short the Lunar 9 makes everything subsonic quiet enough that you can shrug off periods of shooting. The supersonic loads all will have the "crack" with them, and if you are shooting steel the impact on steel will be perceived as a lot louder and sharper than the muzzle report. The short answer: the Lunar 9 is amazingly quiet.

I tested it on a CZ P-09 C, and the pair never failed to perform. It also hit to the sights without having to adjust the piston-lug location, so I got lucky there. Which seems to happen often with modern suppressors.

Oh, and is it full-auto rated? Yes, kinda. If you limit yourself to bursts of four to eight rounds, at four- to eight-second intervals, your Lunar 9 will be just fine with that. That's in 9mm, of course. I suspect that if you are using it on a rimfire there's no limit. And if you are using a .300 Blackout subsonic, you'd be best off staying more in the four-round-burst schedule than the eight-round one.

You get all this goodness for a list price that is mid-six hundreds. Actual over-the-counter price will be less, of course. A one-word summary: "Murica!" **FN**

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OAL:	7 in. (4.7 in. in short mode)
Net Added Length:	6.5 in. (4.1 in. in short mode)
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THE M2 CARBINE

Uncle Sam's DIY Machinegun



The M2 Carbine was the selective fire version of the M1 carbine that American forces used to win WW2.

The M1 Carbine was the most-produced American small arm of World War II. Ten primary manufacturers churned out some 6,121,309 copies. At the apogee of production, we were making 65,000 carbines every 24 hours. That first prototype carbine was developed in a mere thirteen days.

The original specifications for the M1 Carbine stipulated that it be

selective fire. However, this feature was dropped at some point during development. By 1944, The Army was ready to revisit that idea.

Skinning the Cat

Those old guys are almost all gone now. However, I once met a WWII vet who claimed to have converted his M1 Carbine to full auto using a boot lace. The details are hardly classified. He

would tie the lace around the charging handle, snake it back through the oiler slot in the stock, and then affix the far end around the trigger. To hear him tell it, if the cord was properly adjusted, you could fire the rifle from the hip by squeezing the cord against the stock and it would cycle automatically.

That seems an insane thing to do to your rifle in combat, but this guy had the cred to support it. I don't know. I wasn't there. However, when the Army decided they needed full auto carbines, they followed a philosophically similar path by converting existing semiauto guns. The selective fire version of the rifle became the M2.

The first 500 factory-converted rifles were designated the T4. These guns worked fine, but the heavier 30-round



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The M2 Carbine incorporated a redesigned rotating safety as well as a beefier magazine catch.

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This is what it takes to convert a GI M1 Carbine into the selective fire M2 sort.

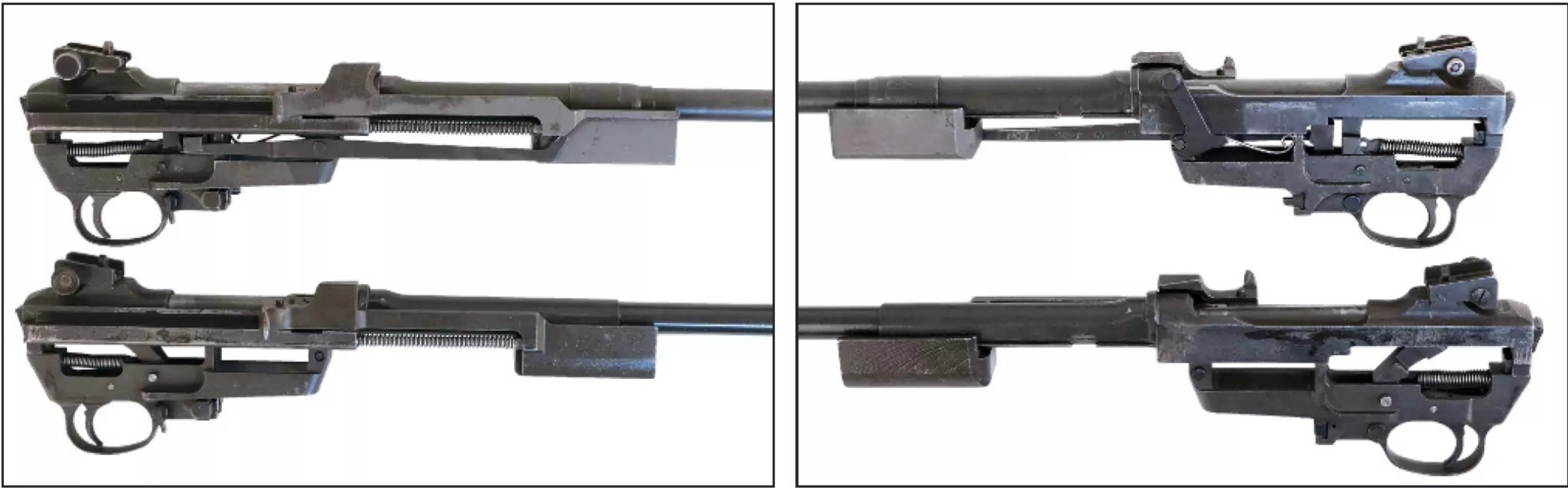
magazines tended to overstress the magazine catches. This resulted in a redesign along with the addition of an adjustable rear sight and a bayonet lug. These guns also used a beefier buttstock and a round bolt rather than the previous flat sort. These round bolts were actually adopted simply because they were easier to make, though the extra mass did slow down the cyclic rate a bit. These last features were eventually incorporated into all M1 Carbines during the arsenal rebuild process. By the time US forces were fully engaged in Korea, the M2 was commonplace.

Conversion Details

For years, the M1 Carbine was the only semiautomatic rifle commonly available on the American civilian market that could be converted to selective fire simply by swapping out parts. Other weapons like the AR-15, Mini-14, Uzi, and AUG required at least a little machine work. By contrast, converting a semiauto M1 to a selective fire M2 only requires the addition of nine specific parts. The Army packaged these parts up as the T17 and T18 conversion kits and pushed them down to unit armorers so they could convert these rifles in the field.

The BATFE considers six of these parts to be critical to the conversion. Accumulating all six parts, even in the absence of a host rifle, is considered constructive possession of a machine-gun. They are the M2 1) hammer, 2) sear, 3) disconnector, 4) disconnector lever, 5) selector, and 6) slide. The M1 and M2 slides differ in a cut on the side to engage the disconnector lever. The M2 trigger housing, M2 stock, round bolt, and associated springs are also required for the conversion, but they are not included in the BATF’s restricted list.

The disconnector, disconnector lever, and selector are unique to the M2 and serve no purpose in the semiauto rifle. The M2 hammer will function in an M1, but it requires a shim. It’s not unusual to find M1 Carbines, even those sold by the government through the Civilian Marksmanship Program, that contain M2 slides, sears, or trigger housings. Absent the disconnector, disconnector lever, and



The assembled M2 Carbine action is shown here above the standard semiauto M1 sort.



The M2 mechanism, particularly as regards that weird “9” spring, rightfully looks a bit flimsy. However, it typically runs just fine.



The long disconnector lever is the registered component on this M2 Carbine.

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From top to bottom, we have a vintage M1A1 Paratrooper Carbine, the standard M1, and the selective fire M2. The details are important to ensure that the gun remains legal.

selector, an M1 Carbine is still safe in the eyes of the BATF. All of these parts sell freely online, just not from the same place.

M2 Quirks

As a result of this unique mechanical milieu, there were several different ways to register an M2 Carbine back before the 1986 ban. The most obvious was the registered receiver. Uncle Sam produced full-auto carbines with M2-marked receivers. Some of these were marked M2 from the factory, while others were over-stamped during rebuild to reflect the same thing. In keeping with BATF's "once a machinegun, always a machinegun" edict, any M2-marked receiver is considered a machinegun even if it lacks any of the magic parts. This can be an issue for civilian owners. M2-marked receivers turn up innocently on the market from time to time. If you find yourself in possession of such an unregistered gun, there is no legal way to fix that.

While a registered receiver conversion is fairly traditional, transferable M2 Carbines can also be converted

by means of either a registered trigger housing or a registered disconnect lever. Both of these parts can be moved from gun to gun as needed. That way, you could theoretically suffer catastrophic wear to one host rifle and then move the registered conversion part to a fresh host. So long as you don't store the gun at the bottom of the ocean, the trigger housing and disconnect lever should last indefinitely.

The M2 Carbine Market

According to MachinegunPriceGuide.com, original vet-bring back Curio and Relic M2 Carbines were

selling for around \$5,000 back in 2004. By the end of 2024, that price had climbed to around \$17,500. Semi-auto M1 Carbines, manufactured by Iver Johnson, Universal, and others, converted to select-fire ran from \$4,000 to about \$16,000 during the same 20-year timeframe.

The M2 Carbine remains a solid investment in the "Class 3" market. The guns are fun to shoot. Those that are converted using a disconnect or trigger housing should be immortal. Considering every transferable machinegun in America is at least 40 years old nowadays, not having to fret about barrel wear or receiver cracks is a plus.



Externally, this sliding lever is really the only thing that differentiates the selective fire M2 carbine from the semiauto M1. However, that's an awfully expensive little button.

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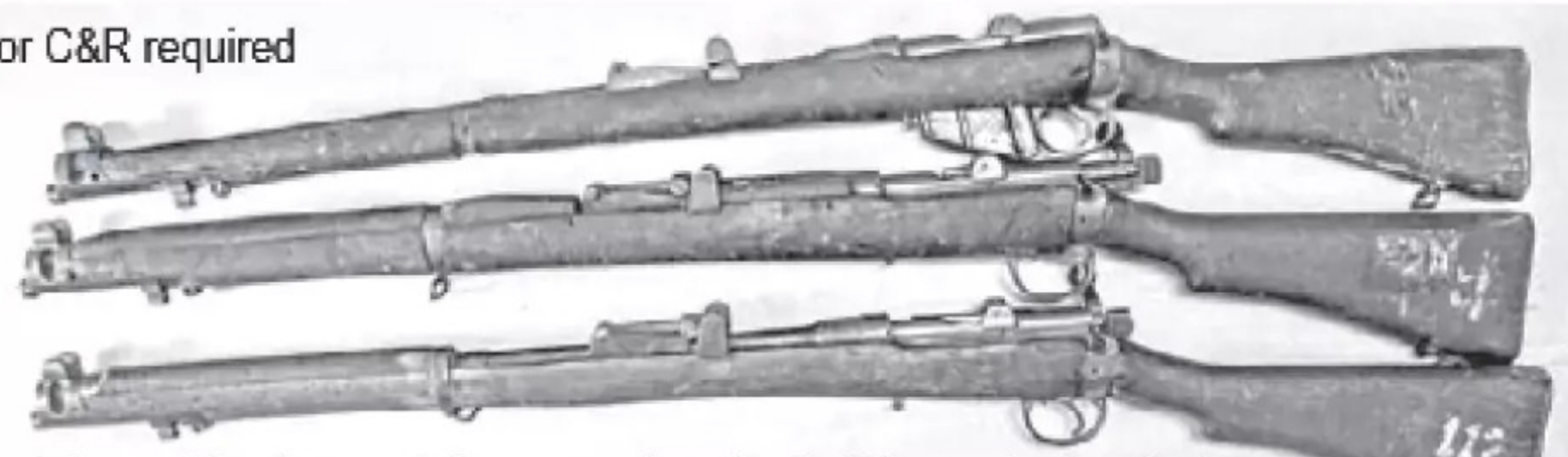


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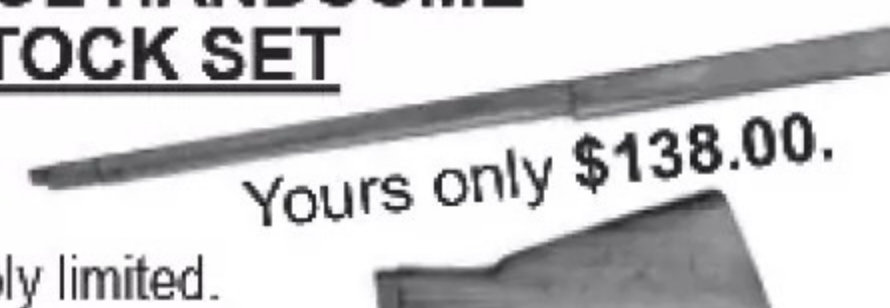
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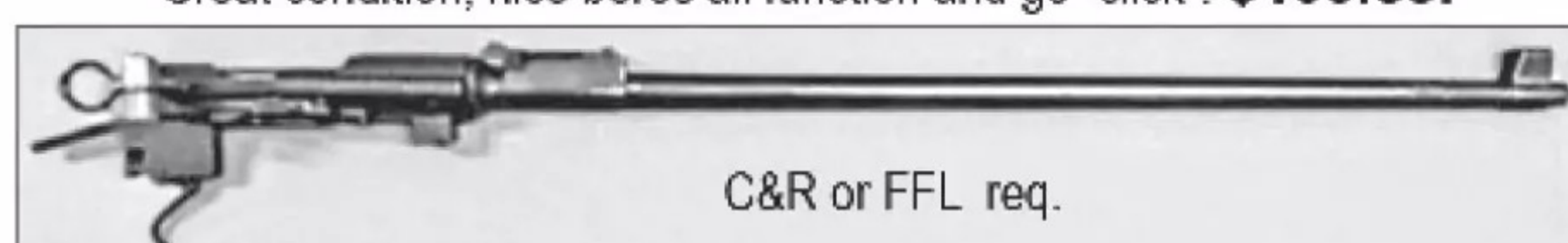
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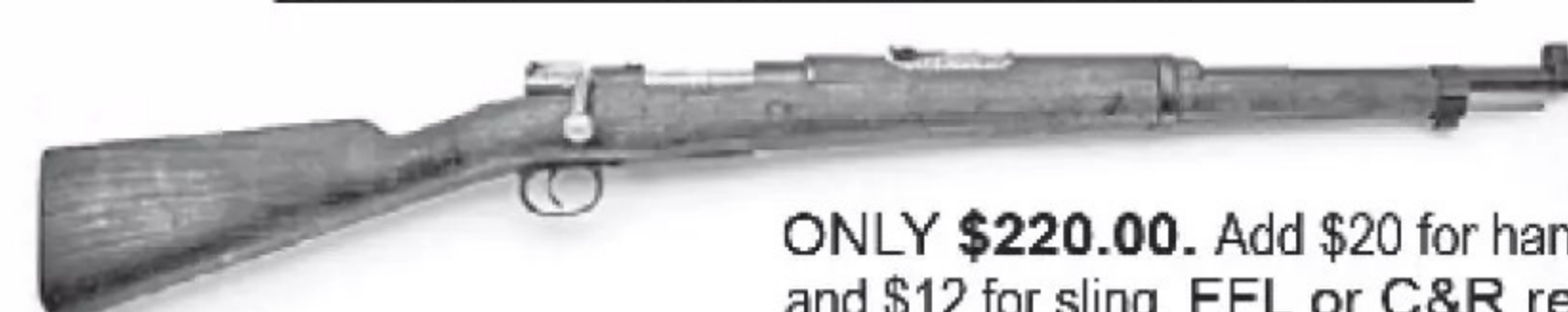
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Ruminations

This M2 began life as a registered disconnecter lever. However, I had some excitement when I took the newly-assembled gun out to the range for test firing. With the safety on and three rounds in the magazine, I jacked the bolt and the rifle launched all three rounds on full auto into the stratosphere without my touching the trigger. Thank the Good Lord the gun was pointed downrange. I tried the rifle several more times, and it always

behaved the same—firing full auto until the magazine was empty without trigger manipulation and with the safety engaged. That was a new one for me.

Over the course of maybe a year, and a lot of conversation with folks way smarter than am I, I eventually shaved just a hair off of the sear and fixed the problem. Now it works great in all modes of fire. I tried two different sears and got the same result, so I suspect the problem resides in



This transferable Saginaw M2 Carbine is available from Rubin Mendiola/ Dealer NFA, Inc. (DealerNFA.com) and features a muzzle brake. Price is \$17,995.

the tolerances in the trigger housing. Regardless, it behooves us to be really careful when testing any self-assembled firearm. It sure would have sucked to have loaded that Bad Boy up indoors.

The M2 Carbine had some functioning problems in the frozen wastes of Korea, but lots of military equipment struggled in that forsaken place. Regardless, if properly maintained, the M2 Carbine is an excellent range toy today. All transferable machine-guns are just stupid expensive, but the M2 is not as bad as some. It yet remains a uniquely capable private machinegun. **FN**

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS	
M2 CARBINE	
Caliber:	.30 Carbine
Length:	35.6 in.
Barrel Length:	17.75 in.
Weight:	5.2 lbs.
Action:	Gas-operated, short-stroke, piston-driven selective fire
Rate of Fire:	750 rpm
Feed:	15- and 30-round box magazines
Sights:	Rear adjustable aperture, front protected post
Value:	\$17,000+

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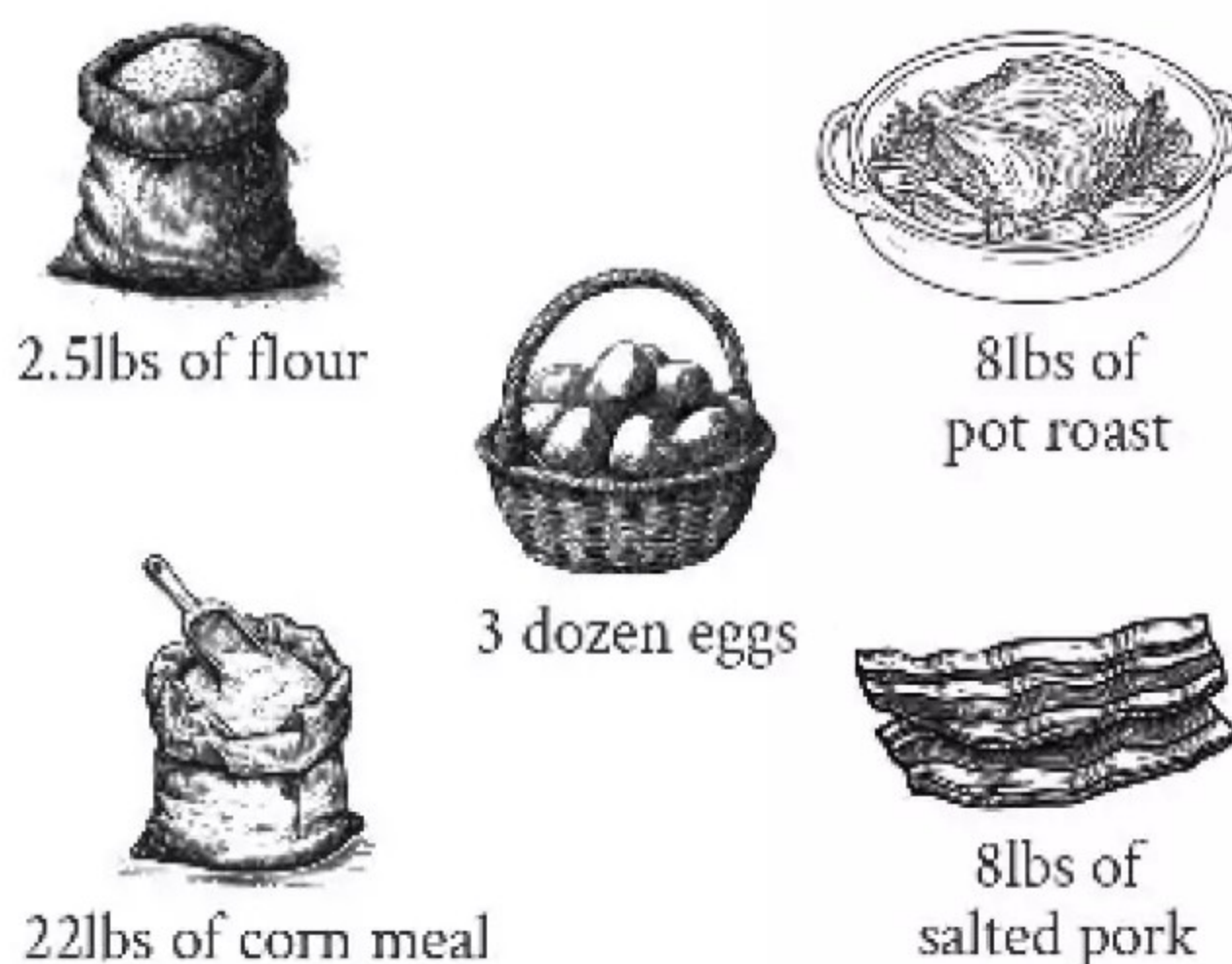
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The Madsen Let Militær Gevær m/47 was the last bolt action rifle purposely designed for military sales. It has a high stock comb, deep pistol grip, and short throw so as to make it more suitable for small statured soldiers of Third World armies. This is a Columbian Fusil Marina Modelo 58.

MADSEN M/47 RIFLE

The Last Bolt-Action for Military-Wide Distribution

Photos by Paul Budde & Becky Leavitt (unless otherwise indicated)



Visible here are the M/47's beech stock with recoil bolt, generous grasping grooves on the forearm and thick rubber recoil pad.

Among students of small arms, it is generally agreed that the bolt action rifle's reign as the predominant military long arm ended circa 1945. While the smokeless powder, bolt action repeating rifle had reigned supreme on the world's battlefields since the 1890s, by the end of World War II the writing was on the wall—the semi-auto battle rifle was the shape of things to come.

While Germany, Russia, and France had used limited numbers of semi-auto rifles during WWI, most were notable for their inability to stand up to the rigors of combat. And while a number of nations had experimented with them during the inter-war years, most attempts to perfect them foundered.

After WWII, every army that could afford to begin reequipping their forces with semiauto rifles, although, in fact, it would be at least one and a half decades before some accomplished complete rearmament. In the case of the armies of smaller (poorer) nations, the bolt action rifle would



The M/47 featured a Mannlicher-like split bridge receiver. Note the half-length bolt guide rib and the notches in the receiver for charger (stripper clip) loading.



◀ The one-piece bolt looks similar to that of the Italian Mo. 1891 Carcano but has rear locking lugs similar to those of the French MAS Mle. 1936.



The bolt turned down in front of the split bridge receiver to provide additional locking.

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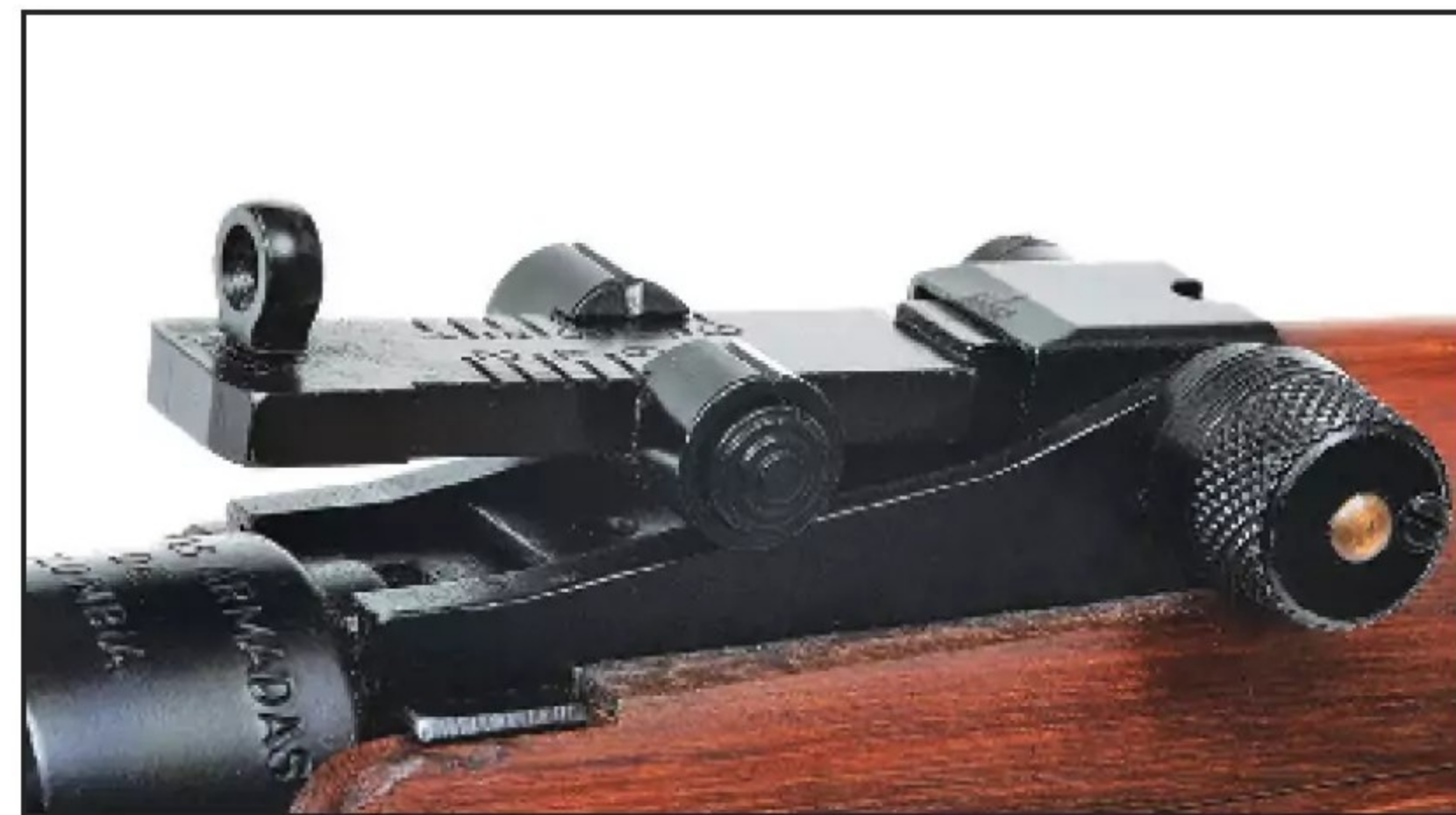
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The M/47's safety is applied by pushing in on the thumb piece catch and rotating the safety up 90 degrees where it prevents the cocking piece from moving forward and obscures the rear sight giving an indication of the rifle's condition.



The aperture rear sight is adjustable from 100 to 900 meters by means of a tangent. Note the large, knurled windage adjustment knob.



◀ ▲ Receiver markings.



The front sight is a hooded post. Note the 36 ports in the muzzle that vent powder gases upwards to ameliorate muzzle flip and the effects of recoil.

continue in service, in some cases, well into the 1980s.

So, there still existed a market for bolt action military rifles, and arms makers such as Fabrique Nationale (FN) in Belgium, Česká Zbrojovka (CZ) in Czechoslovakia, and Kragujevac in Yugoslavia, continued to produce 98-type Mausers to meet this demand.

In addition, vast numbers of rifles left over from the war were peddled on the world arms market, or distributed as military aid to various allies, friends, client nations and “national liberation groups.” Only one established company developed a new bolt action rifle in an attempt to garner a share of this market.

Denmark was in fact the first nation to adopt a semiautomatic rifle for military service. In 1883, a Danish artillery officer, Kaptajn Vilhelm Herman Olaf Madsen, and Rustmester Rasmussen, a weapons technician of the Københavns geværfabrik in Copenhagen, began working on a recoil-operated self-loading rifle. In 1896, they were granted a patent for an automatic weapon.

Leaving government employ, Rasmussen and Madsen organized the Dansk Rekylriffel Syndikat A.S. to manufacture what is considered the world's first successful light machine gun—the *Let Maskingevær Madsen* (Madsen Light Machine Rifle), which was eventually used by the armies of more than thirty-two nations. Production continued during both World Wars and did not end until the 1960s.

In the post-WWII years, the company, renamed the Dansk Industri Syndikat A.S., (let's just use their generic name—Madsen) began to cast about for a new product in an attempt to expand their share of a shrinking market.

Realizing that many customers could not afford the new breed of semi-auto rifles, they developed a bolt action rifle that was inexpensive to

produce, simple to maintain, and with ergonomics specifically intended for soldiers of small stature.

The Let Militær Gevær M/47 (Light Military Rifle Model 47), succeeded in all these areas.

The M/47 displayed features copied from a number of other rifles including the French Fusil MAS Mle. 36, Mauser Karabiner 98k, various Mannlichers, No. 5 Lee-Enfield “Jungle Carbine,” and the Swedish AG42 Ljungman.

The thing you notice first about the M/47 is its split bridge receiver and the forward mounted bolt handle, common to early Mannlicher turn bolt designs. The bolt handle turns down in front of the receiver bridge while a half-length bolt rib prevents bolt wobble and binding.

The M/47's one-piece bolt had dual locking lugs are located on the rear



The thick rubber recoil pad made the M/47 a much more user-friendly weapon than most of its contemporaries.

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The M/47 was issued with knife-style bayonet with an 8.3-inch double-edged blade. (Dennis Ottobre photo)



A post WWII Danish soldier armed with an M1 Garand rifle.

part of the bolt body, a system very similar to that of the Fusil MAS Mle. 36. The rear-locking bolt permitted the use of a simple tubular receiver and barrel without the machining that is necessary when using a bolt with frontal locking lugs.

The bolt consisted of only seven pieces: bolt body, firing pin, spring, extractor, cocking piece, safety lever, and end cap, and can be disassembled easily for cleaning or repairs. The safety is applied by pushing in on the thumb piece catch and rotating the

safety up 90 degrees where it prevents the cocking piece from moving forward and obscures the rear sight giving an indication of the rifle's condition. The ejector is fitted into the lower, rear of the bolt runway alongside the bolt stop. Both are pulled down when the trigger is pulled—which is also the means of removing the bolt from the receiver.

A thumb clearance cut in the left side of the receiver makes it easy to strip rounds down into the magazine, which is little more than a Mauser-style, five-round, charger-loaded box. The magazine can be removed easily for cleaning. After the last round was fired, the magazine follower moved up to block bolt movement.

Stocks and hand guards were made from stained beech and there was a single spring retained barrel band and muzzle/bayonet band.

The M/47's aperture rear sight was mounted on a tangent ramp adjustable from 100 to 900 meters while windage adjustments can be made by means of a knob on the right side of the sight base (a feature similar to the Swedish AG42 Ljungman). The front sight is a simple hooded post while the muzzle end of the barrel is ported with 36 small holes (again similar to the AG42) which vent powder gases upwards to hold down muzzle flip.

This feature, combined with the rifle's short stock, high comb, deep pistol grip and thick rubber recoil pad, was intended to make the M/47 more suitable for use by the small stature soldiers common to many Third World armies. Madsen released their rifle on the international market in 1948 and announced that it could be supplied in 6,5x55, 7x57, 7,65x53, .30-06, 7,9x57 and, later, 7.62mm NATO.

Initial interest in the M/47 was disappointing—and things didn't improve much over the next few years. The post-WWII Danish army was being rearmed with (free!) U.S. M1917 and M1 rifles and saw no reason to purchase the M/47.



The best 100-yard target fired with the Modelo 58 had five rounds in exactly three inches.

While the M/47 was tested by several armies, the only significant sale was 5,000 rifles ordered by the government of Columbia in the mid-1950s. Chambered in .30-06, they were reportedly issued to the Columbian Navy as the Fusil Marina Modelo 58. According to reports it appears that a total of 6,000 M/47 rifles were produced.¹

Test Firing the Madsen M/47

My friend Tim Hawkins was kind enough to supply me with a Columbian Modelo 58 rifle to photograph

and test fire for this article. Tim’s rifle was in excellent condition with unmarred wood, a pristine bore and all metal parts, with the exception of the bolt, are finished with a baked on black enamel paint. “Madsen MG/A...2137-58...Cal. 30” is marked on the left receiver wall while the chamber area bore the legend “FUERZAS ARMADAS DE COLUMBIA” (translated as “Columbian Navy”). Most of the Modelo 58 rifles I have examined over the years have been in very nice condition leading me to believe that they were never issued or only used for ceremonial purposes.

I fired a series of five shot groups from a Caldwell Lead Sled shooting rest on my club’s 100-yard range using 1970s vintage Greek-made .30 M2 Ball and produced a series of groups ranging from three to a tad over four inches in size, printing dead on to point of aim. Thanks to its ported barrel and thick recoil pad, the Modelo 58 was one of the softer shooting bolt action military rifles I had fired in some time. I found the Madsen M/47 58 an interesting design. It was apparently very well made (for an “economy” rifle?), sturdy, was suitably accurate and very easy to shoot.

The Model 47 had the bad luck to be introduced as the day of the bolt action was waning quickly and, with the competition from the millions of inexpensive war surplus rifles flooding the market, the Madsen’s failure was almost a foregone conclusion! **FN**

1 <http://world.guns.ru/rifle/repeating-rifle/dk/madsen-m1947-e.html>

SPECIFICATIONS	
MADSEN LET MILITÆR GEVAER M/47 RIFLE	
Caliber:	7,62mm Skarppatron M/48
Overall Length:	43.3 in.
Barrel Length:	23.4 in.
Weight:	8.5 lbs.
Magazine:	5 or 10 rd. charger loaded box
Sights:	Front: hooded post Rear: aperture adj. by tangent from 100 to 900 meters & for windage
Stock:	Beech
Bayonet:	Knife style with 8.3-in. blade



Test firing was performed at 100 yards.



THE HP-15 RIFLE AND PISTOL

Hi-Point Jumps into the AR-15 Market

By James Tarr

Lead and cover photography by Andy Grossman

Hi-Point Firearms are known for distinctively styled, inexpensively priced handguns and pistol-caliber carbines. They are often considered entry-level or “price point” guns, and their customers tend to be those people who are looking for the absolutely least expensive option on the market. Hi-Point has been very successful in their niche, and they’ve been relatively conservative in their product offerings, mostly just expanding their existing lines with caliber variants and accessory upgrades. Until now.

Announced just a couple of months ago as I write this, Hi-Point is jumping into a much bigger pool—they’re entering the AR-15 market. Currently, you have three choices of HP-15—a 16-inch 5.56x45mm NATO rifle, or a 10.5-inch pistol, chambered in either 5.56 NATO or 300 AAC Blackout.

My immediate reaction was that Hi-Point seems more than a little late to the AR-15 game, but then I realized two things:

1. Sales of all sorts of firearms are down across the board, due to decades of panic buying flooding the market, and currently nobody is worried about anything getting banned (at least on a national level) until the next Presidential election. A “price-point” AR might be the only thing that gets some people to part with their money. The HP-15 rifle has an MSRP of just \$499.99, the pistols are \$539.99.
2. Hi-Point has hundreds of thousands, maybe millions, of existing customers. People who own Hi-Points, who are familiar with the brand/name...but who likely don’t own AR-15s. A Hi-Point AR-15 might be enough to convince them to buy their first AR.



Hi-Point has seriously stepped outside their box by introducing a line of AR-15s. Like all Hi-Point products, they are made in America.

The Hi-Point HP-15 pistols are offered in 5.56 NATO (as seen here) or 300 Black-out. They are identical but for caliber, with 10.5" barrels and adjustable arm braces.



For testing, Hi-Point sent me a sample of their rifle as well as a sample of their 5.56 pistol. Let's start with the rifle first.

HP-15 Rifle

The HP-15 has a 16-inch barrel and a six-position collapsible stock. With the stock fully extended, it is 35¼-inches long, and with the stock collapsed it is 32-inches long. Empty, it is light and handy, and tipped my scale at 6 lbs. 3 oz. I got in one of the earliest production models, serial #107.

You'll see Hi-Point's stylized H logo laser-etched on the magazine well—in white on the right side, and more subdued on the left. You'll also see another name etched on the lower receiver—"STRASSELL'S MACHINE, INC, MANSFIELD OH." Strassell's Machine, Inc., is the manufacturing company. Hi-Point is simply one of their brands.

The 16-inch barrel is 4150 chrome-moly vanadium steel and has a 5.56 NATO chamber. It has an M4-profile, including the M203 cutout under the handguard, which helps keep the weight down. The barrel has a carbine-length gas system and a 1:8 twist. The chambering and twist are laser-etched at the top of the barrel just behind the muzzle device. At the muzzle, you'll see the rifle is tipped with an A2 birdcage flash hider, and under that the barrel is threaded the standard 1/2x28.

The gas block is a low-profile model tucked under the handguard. It is secured in place with two set screws. The barrel free floats inside a relatively lightweight 15-inch aluminum handguard. It has a continuous MIL STD M1913 "picatinny" top rail, and M-LOK accessory attachment slots at 3, 6, and 9 o'clock. There are QD sling sockets on either side of the handguard at the rear, but the barrel nut extends to just beneath them, blocking them and rendering them non-functional.

One thing many consumers simply aren't aware of is that many AR-15 "manufacturers" don't manufacture some crucial components of their ARs. There aren't a lot of forges in the country, and a handful of them are responsible for 80–90% of the receivers on the market. The same is true when it comes to bolt carrier groups. And most AR-15s have many of their parts made by vendors to the company's specs. Hi-Point is no different.

If you peer at the right side of the upper and lower receivers, you'll see the raised keyhole markings (above the forward assist, and behind the trigger) which indicate the receivers were forged by Cerro Forge and then machined to Hi-Point's specs. Cerro Forge has supplied receivers to



The Hi-Point HP-15 rifle has a 16-inch barrel and standard features and controls, but Hi-Point pricing—the MSRP is just \$499.



The HP-15 pistol is short and light—empty with no optic, it's just 5 lbs. 3 oz. Tarr really liked the handguard chosen for it, which differs in a few ways from the rifle handguard.



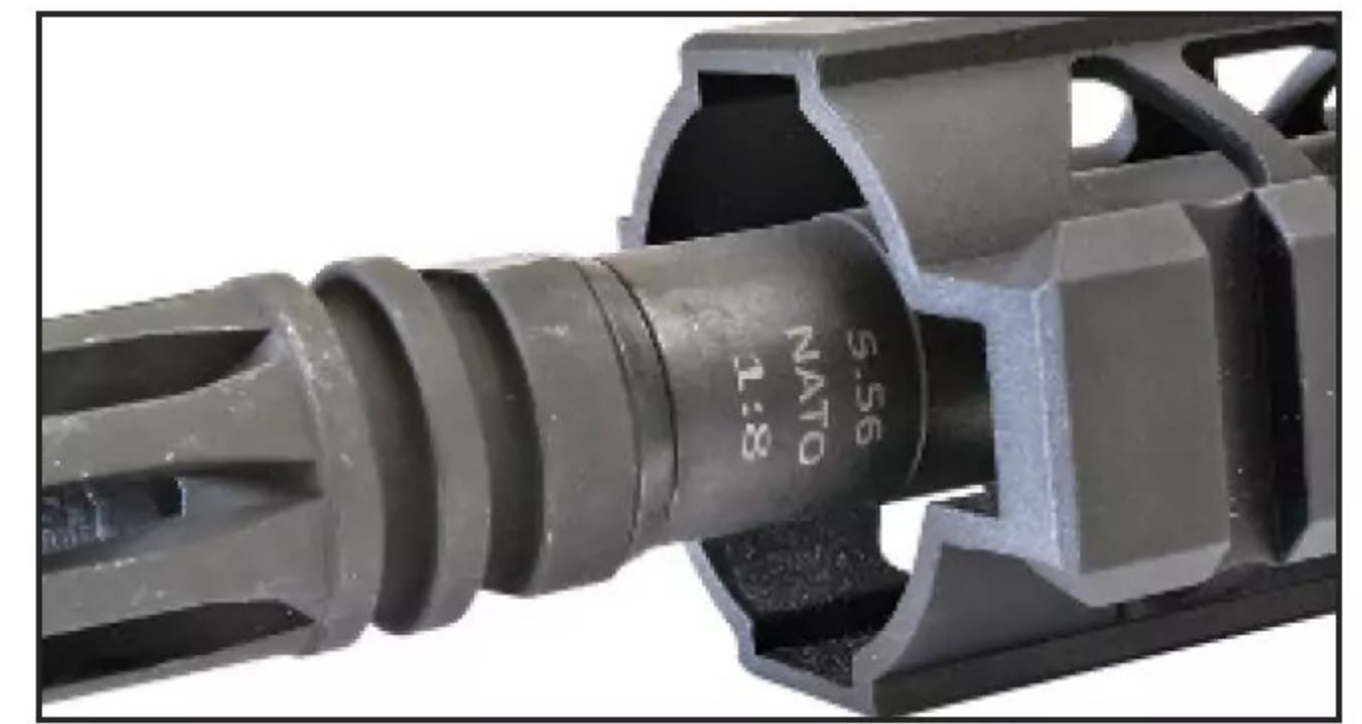
If you spy the raised keyhole marks on the upper and lower receivers that's a sign that they are a product of Cerro Forge, which makes receivers for many big-name AR-15 manufacturers.

many of the big-name AR-15 makers in the market over the years. The upper and lower receiver are 7075 T6 aluminum and hard coat anodized.

The upper and lower receiver sport standard MilSpec features and controls—brass deflector, forward assist, aluminum ejection port cover, traditional magazine release and bolt catch. The upper receiver is the standard flattop design. The selector is a single-sided lever with a 90-degree throw. It was a bit stiff to work, with very positive detents. You get your standard straight aluminum trigger guard with the notoriously sharp corners, and an A2 pistol grip. The charging handle is basic GI.

As an aside, I don't have a problem with any of the “basic” GI-style controls and features on an entry-level AR-15. They have proven themselves, and the people buying a Hi-Point AR either aren't looking for fancy upgrades or aren't even aware they exist.

The bolt carrier group is built to MilSpec, although you will see some flats machined into the side of the carrier, visible through the ejection port, to give it a little style. The carrier is 8620 steel. The bolt is 9310 steel, and the BCG has a nitride coating. The gas key is staked, and the gas rings fit properly. The rifle uses a standard carbine buffer and spring.



Caliber and twist rate are marked on the barrels for clarity. The barrels are made for Hi-Point from an established vendor, and provided average accuracy, which means most people will struggle to shoot up to their potential.

The trigger itself has a flat face and is a hair wider than a standard GI trigger. It provided a typical GI-style trigger pull—single stage, with a bit of a long break but smooth. Total pull weight was 6.75-pounds.

At the rear of the receiver is a standard buffer tube with six detents for the collapsible stock. The stock is an M4-style polymer design with the addition of an aluminum QD sling swivel socket at the front. There's a small "Made in U.S.A." on the right side of the stock. The castle nut holding the buffer tube to the receiver was nicely tightened, but not staked, and that's the only thing I saw, examining the rifle, that I think could be improved. Staking castle nuts is a thing because of their tendency to loosen under recoil.

Hi-Point HP-15s are a budget-priced AR-15 that will likely appeal to current Hi-Point owners who are looking for something different.

Here's a quick way to check if your AR bolt's gas rings are worn and need to be replaced—remove your BCG from your gun, extend the bolt from the carrier, and gently set the bolt face down on a hard surface. If your gas rings are still good, that carrier will not drop. If the carrier drops down on the bolt, it's time for a new set of rings.

The trigger group inside the lower receiver is interesting. You can see the silver color of the trigger from the outside, and when you crack the receivers and peer inside, you'll see both the hammer and trigger are silver. I was wondering if they were nickel boron or hard chrome coated, but in fact they're MIMed (metal injection molded) stainless steel.



You'll see "STRASSEL'S MACHINE INC. MANSFIELD, OH" on the lower receiver. That is the manufacturer, and Hi-Point is (and always has been) one of their companies.

Provided with each HP-15 is a single polymer magazine of a type/brand I have not seen before. It has finger grooves in front, a non-tilt white follower, and no markings other than "Made in the U.S.A." on the side. I was told by my contact at Hi-Point they are made by Pyramid Polymer, an OEM manufacturer. The takedown button on the magazine baseplate is a white triangle (pyramid) which I suppose should have been a clue.

HP-15 Pistol

The 5.56 pistol has a 10.5-inch barrel with a 5.56 NATO chamber and a 1:7 twist. It uses a carbine-length gas system and the standard light-medium "government"-style barrel profile, which helps keep the gun light. Empty, the



Tarr really liked the handguard on the pistol. It's light, doesn't have any sharp corners, and looks very good.



The Shockwave brace on the back is adjustable for length, but very minimalist. To mount a single-point sling to the pistol Tarr wrapped 550 cord around the buffer tube.



The rifle has an M4-style stock with a QD socket, and an A2 pistol grip. Both worked fine and are the smart choice for an entry-level AR.

pistol weighed just 5 lbs. 3 oz. The barrel has an A2 bird-cage flash hider and a phosphate finish. The gas block is secured in place via two set screws.

At the rear of the receiver, instead of a stock on the six-position buffer tube, you get a Shockwave Blade Pistol Stabilizer, a minimalist pistol arm brace. It is polymer, with a pivoting steel latch which allows you to adjust it forward and back. Pull the steel tab backward and the latch pivots down so you can adjust the brace. Interestingly, the forward-most latch point puts the front of the brace about half an inch from the castle nut, but for transport/storage you can collapse the brace all the way forward until it hits the castle nut, it just doesn't engage the latch there.

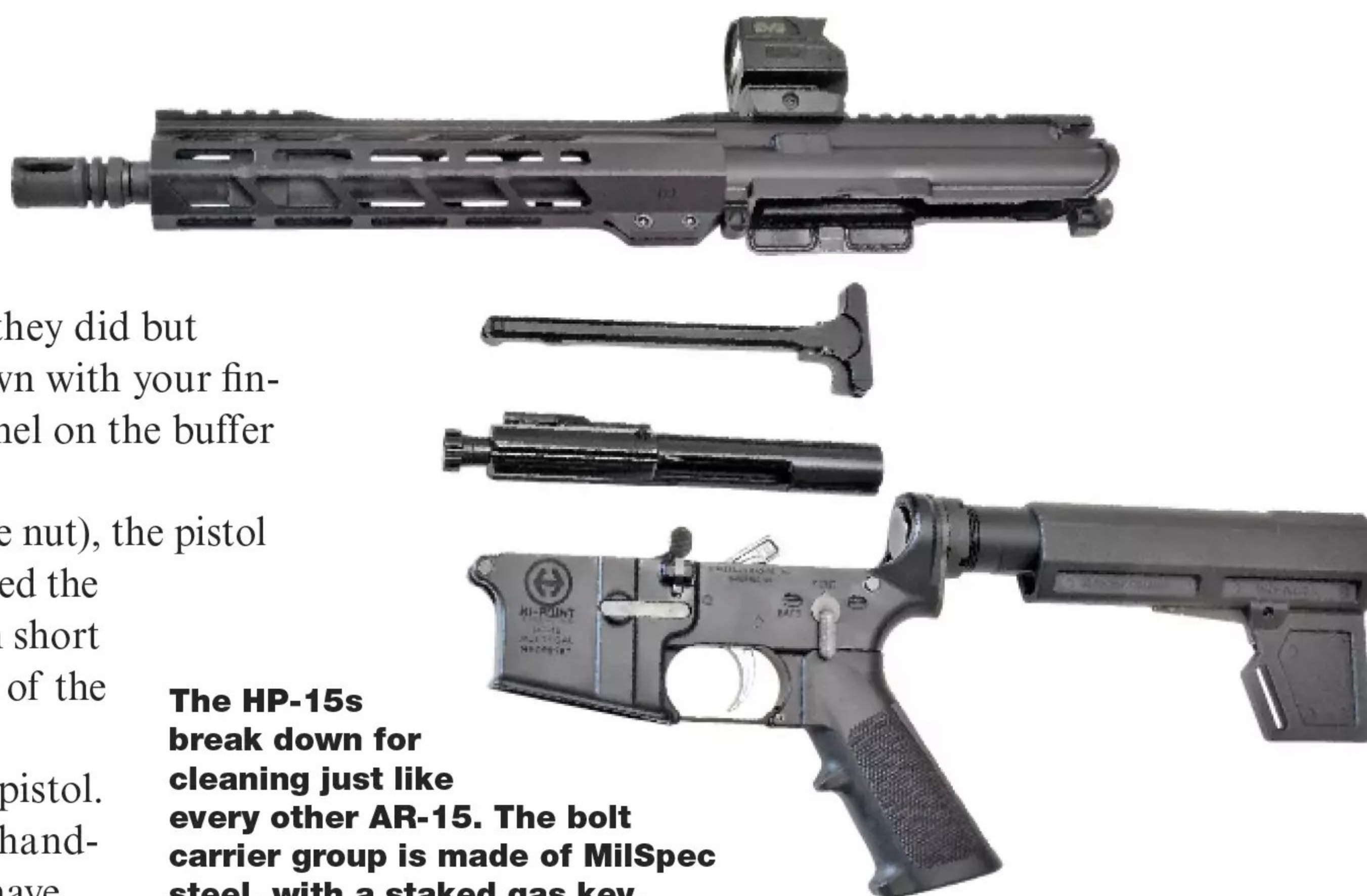
Since I'm talking about the brace, time to point out the one initial negative I experienced—when I pulled the pistol out of the box, the brace slid off the gun and dropped to the floor of my gun store. Turns out the brace had been slid over the buffer tube, but somebody forgot to actually slide it down far enough to actually engage the detents in the buffer tube, or thought they did but didn't. You need to pull the steel latch down with your fingers enough to clear the back of the channel on the buffer tube to remove/install the brace.

With the brace fully forward (at the castle nut), the pistol is 26¼-inches long, and with it fully extended the pistol is 29.5-inches long. The pistol is both short and light, and balances over the front third of the magazine well.

You get a different handguard with the pistol. The barrel free floats inside an aluminum handguard that is 9.5-inches long. It does not have



All the controls and internals on the HP-15 are what you might expect, except for the trigger group. The trigger and hammer are MIM-ed stainless steel.



The HP-15s break down for cleaning just like every other AR-15. The bolt carrier group is made of MilSpec steel, with a staked gas key.



Tarr's first range trip was to an indoor range, testing for reliability. You can see from the handguards he got the HP-15s both hot and dirty, but they kept running.

a continuous top rail, but rather just a 2.5-inch section of MIL STD M1913 "Pic" rail at the front for mounting a front sight if you so desire. There are M-LOK accessory



Hi-Point is best known for unique designs like this .380 ACP YC (Yeet Cannon). The AR-15 is actually a step into the new for them.

slots at 3, 6, and 9 o'clock down the length of the handguard. The corners on the handguard are rounded off, with small regular rounded relief cuts that add a bit of texture for gripping in addition to some style.

I noticed that the lower receiver of the pistol had suffered the same "damage" mark on the magazine well as the rifle...and then realized that the mark on the lower right corner of the white Hi-Point "H" is actually a tiny trademark (™) symbol.

When it comes to the receivers, upper and lower, inside and out, the pistol has the exact same parts and configuration as the rifle. Including the stainless-steel trigger/hammer, which provided a 7.0-lb trigger pull.

The Burndown

Unfortunately, most people who buy a gun for "self-defense" either only shoot it once after they buy it, or never shoot it at all. Hi-Point customers are probably more likely to put fewer rounds through their pistols than the average consumer, simply because so many of them are buying the least expensive gun they can find...and ammo costs money.

That said, a properly constructed AR-15 should last thousands of rounds before seeing any breakage or serious wear, and if not, there's a problem. Prior to bringing the guns to market, Hi-Point did a "burndown" of their guns. They took ten rifles and ten 5.56 pistols to the range and put 300 rounds through each of them as fast as they could, using the provided polymer magazines. Ammo was a mix from Federal, Barnaul, Remington, and Aguila. They noticed at the range the guns were a bit dry, so they lubed them heavily before shooting, but that was it. And had zero problems. Some of the shooting was suppressed.

I realized that 300 rounds through a gun is by no means an exhaustive torture test, but 6,000 rounds spread evenly among 20 guns, without a single problem, seems to indicate Hi-Point got it right. I didn't have the time or the ammo to do a 6,000-round burndown with my test guns, but I did what I could in the limited time I had.

I mounted a Trijicon Credo 1-10X scope atop the rifle for all my testing—and yes, I'm not blind to the irony of mounting a \$2,200 scope (plus the cost of the Trijicon mount) atop a \$499 rifle. I think it's hilarious. For the pistol, for everything but accuracy testing, I chose the new Meprolight MCO, which seems a perfect choice for an AR this size. The MCO (Meprolight Carbine Optic) is small and light with a big window, and you can choose a dot, a circle, or a circle/dot reticle.



Andy Grossman

Taking a cue from Hi-Point itself, I made sure to heavily lube the guns before heading to the range the first time. The rifle was appropriately lubed from the factory, but the pistol was a little dry, so it needed lube anyway. The AR-15 is not one of those designs which runs as well dry as when lubed—with an AR, when in doubt, add more lube to the bolt/carrier. In this case, I just used the lube I happen to have in the kitchen—and yes, when you live with a gunwriter, there's gun lube in the kitchen (among other gun stuff), please don't get my wife started. In this case, it's a small squirt bottle of Gibbs Brand Lubricant I got years ago with a test gun (and apparently stole), marked "COMPLIMENTS OF NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM." Sorry Nighthawk.

I brought the provided polymer magazines to the range, as well as aluminum GI mags with Magpul followers, and Magpul Gen M2 and M3 PMags. Shooting the rifle was unremarkable, which is exactly what you want when doing endurance and accuracy testing. It was relatively soft in recoil, especially with the Trijicon scope atop it. That scope, along with the mount, adds over a pound and a half to the gun, helping to tame the already tame recoil of the 5.56 round. Ejection was strong and consistent at roughly 3 o'clock for both guns.

For no apparent reason, the rifle didn't like one of my aluminum magazines that's never before given me a problem, but that's a magazine issue, not a gun issue. It ran flawlessly with every other magazine, and every type of ammunition. In fact, I was pretty impressed with the provided polymer magazines, they seem well designed. If they're available for sale online, I couldn't find them.

With the pistol, I didn't have a single problem. Shooting it side by side with the rifle, however, the pistol's recoil was noticeably heavier. It appears Hi-Point has erred on the side of caution and given the pistol a generous gas port to ensure reliability. As I said to editor Dave Fortier, "*I'm guessing they overgassed the pistol deliberately, and I think that's smart for a 10.5-inch gun that, knowing Hi-Point customers, is likely to be fed the cheapest, dirtiest, weakest ammo on the market.*" As a result, you get a good amount of recoil. It's still only a 5.56, but it's a hard-recoiling 5.56 in part because even with the optic mounted the gun barely weighs five and a half pounds. The carbine-length gas system put the gas block right under my support hand on the pistol while shooting, and I had a nice black carbon tattoo at the end of every range session—clear sign of a time well-spent.



◀ This 1.39-inch group with American Eagle 62-grain FMJ was the best the rifle did. With most ammo it would do 1.5–2.0 MOA.

▶ This two-incher is the worst group the pistol did with Hornady's American Gunner 55-grain HP load. Tarr thinks this load doesn't get the attention it deserves—it expands as explosively as a V-Max while being quite affordable, which makes it great for varminters or self-defense situations where you're worried about penetration.



Indoors, even with my ears plugged and muffed, the pistol was loud. Outside, it wasn't bad at all. The more I shot the pistol the more I liked the handguard. It looks great, and feels just as good under the hand. Even better, the pistol ran like a champ. I only put about 300 rounds through each gun in the short time I had to test them (including a few rounds shot by other people during the photoshoot for this article), but I had zero problems other than my aluminum mag binding and not feeding rounds upward for no apparent reason. Which still bothers me.

The rifle was softer shooting, but I had a lot more fun shooting the pistol. It's short, it's light, it barks, it has bite. Chihuahuas and dachshunds are some of the most aggressive dog breeds out there—I'm not saying, I'm just saying. The pistol was great fun to use while practicing my shooting on the move.

I didn't notice the slightly heavier than average trigger pulls of the guns while shooting, except when doing accuracy testing. This is a testament to the shootability of crisp single stage triggers. AR-15s with GI-style trigger

pulls are shootable not because they have light pulls (they don't), but because they are usually crisp. At the bench, the increased weight of the rifle, plus the scope, made it a little easier to shoot groups.

Hi-Point isn't making their own barrels, they are sourcing them from a commercial manufacturer, so it should be a surprise that they are as accurate as many other ARs. With ammunition they liked, they would do 1.5–2.0-MOA, which is more than acceptable.

The Verdict

Hi-Point is offering inexpensive, “price point” AR-15s that seem to be built as well if not better than the other inexpensively-priced ARs on the market. If Hi-Point ARs aren't the cheapest on the market, they're darn close, which is impressive considering they use solid commercial barrels and bolt carrier groups made the right way. It's a buyer's market, and things likely won't be this inexpensive for a long time.

I'd recommend a staked castle nut and figuring out how to make that QD socket in the rifle's handguard

HI-POINT HP-15 RIFLE					
Load	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Velocity (fps)	ES	SD	Best Group / Avg. Group (in.)
.223 REM					
Wolf Gold FMJ	55	2,858	50	23	1.84 / 2.63
Hornady Am. Gunner HP	55	2,870	44	30	1.46 / 1.88
Fiocchi Range Dynamics FMJ	62	2,766	42	24	1.50 / 2.03
5.56 NATO					
Winchester 3-Gun FMJ	55	2,906	48	20	1.48 / 1.95
American Eagle FMJ	62	2,888	57	34	1.39 / 1.85
Accuracy results are the averages of four five-shot groups at 100 yards from a sandbag rest. Velocities are averages of ten shots measured with an Oehler Model 35P 12 feet from the muzzle.					
HI-POINT HP-15 PISTOL					
Load	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Velocity (fps)	ES	SD	Best Group / Avg. Group (in.)
.223 REM					
Wolf Gold FMJ	55	2,583	55	24	1.80 / 2.55
Hornady Am. Gunner HP	55	2,498	43	32	1.37 / 1.73
Fiocchi Range Dynamics FMJ	62	2,421	40	29	1.55 / 2.21
5.56 NATO					
Winchester 3-Gun FMJ	55	2,622	50	26	1.79 / 2.15
American Eagle FMJ	62	2,608	55	36	1.33 / 1.68
Accuracy results are the averages of four five-shot groups at 100 yards from a sandbag rest. Velocities are averages of ten shots measured with an Oehler Model 35P 12 feet from the muzzle.					

functional, but those are my only real complaints about Hi-Point’s first entry into the AR market. I would recommend to Hi-Point that they heavily lube their guns before shipping them out to distributors and gun stores, as the average Hi-Point consumer is not going to have kitchen gun lube readily available like yours truly.

I’m aware: 300 rounds through an AR is not a torture test—it’s barely a break-in period. If you put enough rounds through any brand AR eventually it will fail, the only question is when, and how.

Do I think the HP-15s are just as good as my favorite \$2,200 AR? Of course not. But see, here’s the thing—Hi-Point customers are never going to spend \$2,000 for an AR. Heck, they’re probably never going to spend \$700 for an AR. If there was a \$200 AR on the market, they’d buy *that*. What Hi-Point has done is offer their customers an affordable AR that runs, at a price they can

afford and/or are willing to spend. They’re not the only company doing this, but I’m glad to see there’s one more on the market

AR-15s are the most popular rifle in America for a lot of very good reasons, and I want everyone to own one. Hi-Point is now doing their part to make that possible. **FN**



Andy Grossman

HI-POINT HP-15 RIFLE	
Caliber:	5.56mm NATO
Weight:	6 pounds, 3 ounces
Overall Length:	35.25 inches (stock extended) 32.0 inches (stock collapsed)
Upper:	Forged 7075 T6 aluminum
Lower:	Forged 7075 T6 aluminum
Barrel:	16.0 in., 1:8 Twist, carbine-length gas system
Muzzle Device:	A2 flash hider
Sights:	None
Trigger:	Polished stainless steel MIM, 6.75 lbs. (as tested)
Stock:	M4-style
Pistol Grip:	A2
Handguard:	15.0 in. aluminum, free-floating
Includes:	One 30-round magazine, cable lock
MSRP:	\$499
Contact:	Hi-PointFirearms.com, distributed through MKS Supply (MKSSupply.com)
HI-POINT HP-15 PISTOL	
Caliber:	5.56mm NATO (300 Blackout also available)
Weight:	5 pounds, 3 ounces
Overall Length:	29.5 inches (brace extended) 26.25 inches (brace collapsed)
Upper:	Forged 7075 T6 aluminum
Lower:	Forged 7075 T6 aluminum
Barrel:	10.5 in., 1:7 Twist, carbine-length gas system
Muzzle Device:	A2 flash hider
Sights:	None
Trigger:	Polished stainless steel MIM, 7.0 lbs. (as tested)
Brace:	Shockwave Blade Pistol Stabilizer
Pistol Grip:	A2
Handguard:	9.5 in. aluminum, free-floating
Includes:	One 30-round magazine, cable lock
MSRP:	\$539
Contact:	Hi-PointFirearms.com, distributed through MKS Supply (MKSSupply.com)



For mowing down poppers and plates, the DWX will serve you well with any load tested so far.

DAN WESSON'S DWX PISTOL

By Patrick Sweeney

Two Great Tastes!

The late Jeff Cooper didn't have much use for the 9mm cartridge. Not even in subguns. He did, however, appreciate good engineering and proper ergonomics, and he really liked the grip contour of the CZ-75. So much so that he approved of it being borrowed for the Bren Ten concept. However, the CZ-75 trigger wasn't so good a thing back in the 1970s and 1980s. That-era design is a combination traditional double action paired with a cocked-and-locked single action thumb safety. You could



The DWX comes in a zippered range bag along with an extra magazine and the usual other extras.



The DWX is the combination of the CZ-75 and a 1911.



On the right side you can see the ambi safety and the full-length accessory rail.

carry it hammer down as a double-action (DA) pistol, or hammer cocked with the safety on, like the 1911. But the extra parts made the trigger pull not as good as the 1911, which was then (and now) the benchmark of good triggers.

Pistolsmiths and competitors improved on the CZ-75 trigger, and it is now one of, if not the winningest pistol in IPSC competition, but you have to learn the DA trigger dance to use it. Well, that has changed.

The DWX can be described as the love child of the 1911 and the CZ-75. A better description would be “all the good stuff from each, and none of the lesser stuff from either.” The frame is steel, shaped very much like the CZX-75. I’ve got a ’75 on hand, so I compared the feel of the original with the new DWX. Similar? More like twins, with subtle differences that I ascribe in large part to the aggressively-checkered bright-red anodized aluminum grips on the DWX, plus a few sculpting touches to improve the already good ergos of the ’75. The grip of the DWX is every bit as sexy as the original. So, if you were worried about that, don’t.

The steel frame has the marked inset at the backstrap where the web of your hand can really nestle in and lock up to the tang. The bottom of the backstrap curves away from the inset at the right point and correct angle to make it comfortable in your hand and to index properly. The frontstrap is both lifted at the top, to get your hand high on the frame, and bumped out at the bottom to lock your hand in place. Plus, it adds to the mag well opening funnel to speed up reloads. The front and back are checkered, this added to the checkering of the aluminum grips means the DWX sticks to your hand when you grip it. If you find that the checkered aluminum grips are just too aggressive, or the color is too gaudy, then you’ll be pleased to know that the DWX uses the same grips as the CZ-75, and you can swap out the aluminum for something else whenever you like.

The frame has an ambidextrous thumb safety, the 1911 part of the assemblage, and it sits right where it needs to be, given the shape of the tang and the upper backstrap. I had no problems riding the safety when firing, which is



The DWX grip shape is the same as the classic and much-desired CZ-75.



The bright part (just reflection from the lighting) is the trigger parts module, and it is the serial-numbered part, and thus the firearm. All else are only parts.



► The trigger is anodized bright red, like the grips, and the frontstrap is lifted.



the accepted 1911 practice. Ahead of the thumb safety, on the left side, is the slide stop lever. Again, something that is perfectly 1911 normal. Below it the trigger is flat, with the top and bottom ends angled to encourage your trigger finger to find the center. The trigger is aluminum, anodized the same bright red the grips are. Out in front of the squared trigger guard (the originals had a loop, almost circular) is a full-length accessory rail. The rail is not just a place to park a light or laser, it also adds weight to the

DWX, in the location that is most useful: in front of your hand and below the bore axis.

The slide of the DWX is proportioned like that of the 1911, and not that of the CZ-75. The '75 had a narrower slide than that of the DWX, and the front of it had a step in it, much like that of the Hi Power, that brought it down below the width of the rest of the slide. Not here, not on the DWX. The DWX slide is full 1911 profile, and added to that it is full profile all the way out to the end. This again adds weight, and it adds it to the unlocking portion of the cycling mass, which helps control recoil by keeping slide velocity down.

The slide has cocking serrations front and rear, and while they are not deep or particularly sharp-edged, I found them fully up to the task of getting the slide retracted to function. The extractor is not 1911, it is external, on the right side, it is a lengthy hunk of steel, and it has plenty of leverage to require compliance with the directive empties have to leave the vicinity. The ejection port is generous. The top of the slide is flattened, and grooved the length of it to provide a non-glare sighting track, should you opt to

stick with the iron sights. If you do not want to stick with the iron sights (which are a fiber optic front and an adjustable rear with a serrated steel face) then you can take advantage of



▲ The accessory rail is full length, and it is steel like the rest of the frame. This adds weight, which make the 9mm recoil just about nothing.

◀ The front sight is a fiber optic blade, and it glows in the sunlight. Like a nuclear furnace.



▲ The controls are very 1911, and the rear sight is on the optics cover plate.

◀ The frontstrap is checkered for a non-slip grip, and the frame has the CZ-75 shape.

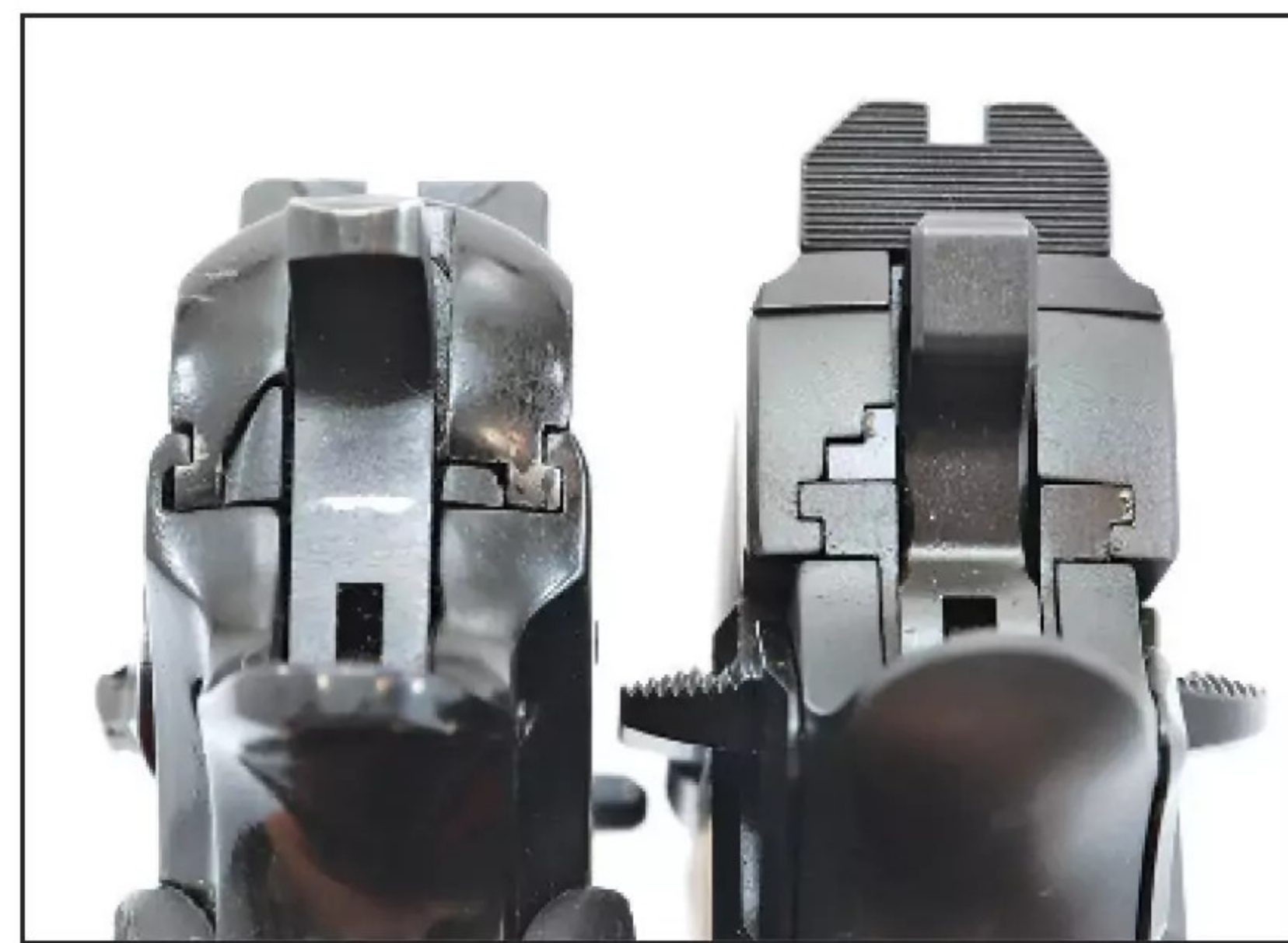
► The grips are anodized aluminum, bright red. However, if you want something else, the classic CZ-75 grips will fit.



The mag well is generous and beveled, but the tapered top of the CZ magazine is what makes reloads fast.



The DWX comes with a pair of nineteen-shot magazines.



The CZ-75 on the left has its slide rails inside the frame while the DWX has them outside the frame.

the optics mounting plate. Select which optic you are going to use from the Dan Wesson website and get it ordered, and then use it to mount a red-dot. The DWX rear sight is mounted on the filler plate, so when you install an optic you lose the irons, but that's the way things are some times.

The DWX barrel does not use a bushing, it locks directly to the slide at the muzzle, and the muzzle is deeply crowned. The barrel locks up in the ejection port, and uses the same one-piece lower lug design as many modern pistols to lock and unlock. The barrel is numbered to the frame. Contrasting with the bright-red grips, the slide and frame of the DWX are given a black DLC finish.

The big deal about the DWX is not just that it is a melding of the '75 and the 1911, but how they did it. First, the CZ-75 has a "slide inside" arrangement. That is, the frame rails are exterior to the slide rails. The slide rides *inside* of the frame. This makes the slide lighter than on a 1911, and thus more-suited to the 9mm cartridge. It does mean that there is less slide to grip when working the slide. Also, when we all adopted the .40 S&W for competition back in 1990 (almost overnight) the slide velocity was ferocious. Those using a 75-derived pistol (there were many copies) in .40 soon learned they could not get an adjustable rear sight to survive for very long.

On the DWX, the slide rails are exterior to the frame, as on the 1911. This gives it a bit more mass, to soften recoil, and it provides all of the gripping surface you'd ever need. Also, the firing



You can see that the original CZ-75 magazines are too short to fit into the DWX, the baseplate hits before it can lock in place.



The easiest way to disassemble the DWX is by using the Vulcan-like Glock grip on it.



The barrel on the DWX is numbered to the frame.

The DWX comes apart easily, and cleans up just as easily.





In this world of ultra-light handguns, this might seem a bit heavy. With the right holster, you have easy carry and the weight means recoil is a non-issue.

parts, while you start out disassembling it much like a 1911, ends with the last part, the sear and disconnect, coming out in a single assembly with the hammer already removed. So, those small and easily dropped parts don't have a chance to get dropped and skitter under the workbench.

One detail on disassembly to know ahead of time: the bottom edge of the slide is beveled to remove a sharp edge. This makes the disassembly notch a bit difficult to find. I found that gripping the DWX much like that of a Glock helped me get the notch lined up just right to then press it out of the frame.

The DWX magazines hold nineteen rounds, and both lock the DWX open after the last shot, and drop free of

their own weight when instructed to. The DWX uses the same CZ (and other brand) magazines that also fit the CZ P-10 and CZ P-9. But any magazine that is shorter will not work. The tube is the same shape, but the baseplate on the shorter magazines hits the frame before you can get the magazine in high enough to lock in place.

In testing, the DWX was soft in recoil, very soft. You'd expect that, with the frame a husky hand-filling size (but not too large to grip comfortably) and there's also the weight. The Dan Wesson specs list the DWX at 45 ounces, and a quick check with the scale showed that to be spot-on. A 45 ounce 9mm pistol is just not going to recoil all that much. The trigger was clean and crisp, and fell with monotonous regularity at four pounds, eight ounces. Somebody out there is going to object, *"Two-plus grand, and the trigger isn't a hair trigger?"* In my initial dry-fire testing, the DWX demonstrated the same effect of a clean trigger feeling lighter than it actually is. I've been doing this for decades, and it still works the same: a clean trigger that feels a pound or more less than it actually takes to drop the hammer. If you don't put a trigger weight scale to your DWX, you are unlikely to feel it take as much as four pounds to drop the hammer. Yes, it is that good.

As far as accuracy is concerned, this is another "not worry" subject. In testing, I found that only occasionally did a bullet stray off of the two-inch aiming pasters I use. Commonly, five rounds would fit onto the paster without even touching the edges.



Soft recoil and snappy cycling. The DWX is already closed and sights back on target, while the empty is six inches above the pistol.



For daily carry, C&G makes excellent kydex and other holsters that readily fit the DWX.



◀ OK, Honey Badger don't care fits right in here. This is getting close to bullseye-level accuracy, in a defensive load.

▶ Accuracy? The DWX has got accuracy. Tight clusters at twenty-five yards were the norm.



As expected, the Hornady Critical Duty was easy to control in the DWX and delivered excellent groups.

So, a really nice trigger, great accuracy, a lot of capacity, and optics-ready. What then is the DWX for? Given the weight, my first suggestion would be as a competition pistol. A lot of competitors run pistols that weigh even more than this, for the recoil reduction, the steadiness in aim, and to reduce wear and tear of tens of thousands of rounds a year for years at a time. As a carry gun, the DWX and the two magazines that come with it will gobble up almost an entire box of ammo. A C&G kydex holster would be comfortable for daily carry, fast on the draw, and secure enough to keep the DWX in place during strenuous physical efforts. Add in a pair of mag holders and you can be walking out the door with 39 rounds of 9mm on your person. Yes, 45 ounces is a bit to pack, but with the correct holster it can be very comforting. **FN**



For practice, and to use in competition, the Federal Syntech would be an excellent choice.

DAN WESSON DWX PISTOL CHRONOGRAPH AND ACCURACY DATA					
Ammunition	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Velocity (fps)	ES	SD	Accuracy (Avg. & Best) (in.)
Black Hills Honey Badger	100	1,321	12	5.6	1.8 / 1.6
Fiocchi FMJ	115	1,124	94	35.2	1.9 / 1.7
Hornady Critical Duty	135	1,068	16	6.6	1.6 / 1.4
Federal Syntech	147	1,033	28	11.2	1.7 / 1.5

Accuracy results were to be averages of four, five-shot groups at 25 yards off a Champion shooting rest. Velocities are averages of 10 shots measured on a Labrador chronograph set to read 15 feet from the muzzle.

SOURCES
Black Hills Ammunition, Black-Hills.com, (605)348-5150
C&G Holsters, CandGHolsters.com, (724) 858-2856
Hornady Ammunition, Hornady.com, (800) 338-3220
Federal Ammunition, FederalPremium.com, (800) 831-8100
Fiocchi Ammunition, FiocchiUSA.com, (417) 725-4118

SPECIFICATIONS DAN WESSON DWX PISTOL	
Type:	Hammer-fired semi-automatic
Caliber:	9mm
Capacity:	19+1 rounds
Barrel:	4.95 in.
Overall Length:	8.5 in.
Height:	5.85 in
Weight:	45 oz.
Finish:	DLC
Grips:	Anodized aluminum
Sights:	Fiber optic front & adjustable rear
Trigger:	4 lbs. 2 oz.
MSRP:	\$2,159
Contact:	DanWessonFirearms.com



MILITARY ARMAMENT CORPORATION'S

MAC 2 TACTICAL MARINE

Fast, Slick, Impervious
to the Elements!

SHOTGUN

By Patrick Sweeney

It is no great secret that when it comes time to deal a real thumping at relatively close ranges, I favor a shotgun. The latest big bore to pass through Gun Abuse Central is the MAC 2 Tactical Marine. Oh my! A lot of the attention paid to shotguns of late is because of box magazines, or AR-15-type layouts and handling. Call me old school (actually, some days I think I am the definition of old school), but I find the handling of a classically proportioned shotgun to be just right, and wicked fast. The MAC 2 Tactical Marine fits that bill and adds in a bunch of new that adds to the package.

Okay, first, the MAC 2 and how it works. The MAC 2 is a licensed-from-Benelli, made-in-Turkey shotgun. The

internals are a design that has been around for more than a couple of decades, and yet is still not fully grasped by a lot of shooters. A summary of the Benelli recoil system is simple: you take a thumping. When you discharge a firearm, you eject the payload of bullet (or in this case, slug, shot and wad, whatever) towards the targets. Sir Isaac Newton takes over, and your shoulder has to receive the same momentum in counterforce. The timing of that is what matters. "Gas guns shoot softer." You'll hear it all the time, and yes, and no, it is and isn't true. The total recoil of all of the various designs remains the same, regardless of how they operate. What matters is the timing. The gas gun disconnects, if we can use that term, the cycling mass from



The MAC 2 Tactical Marine, with its traditional layout, is a design that I and a lot of other shotgun shooters still find comfortable and handy.



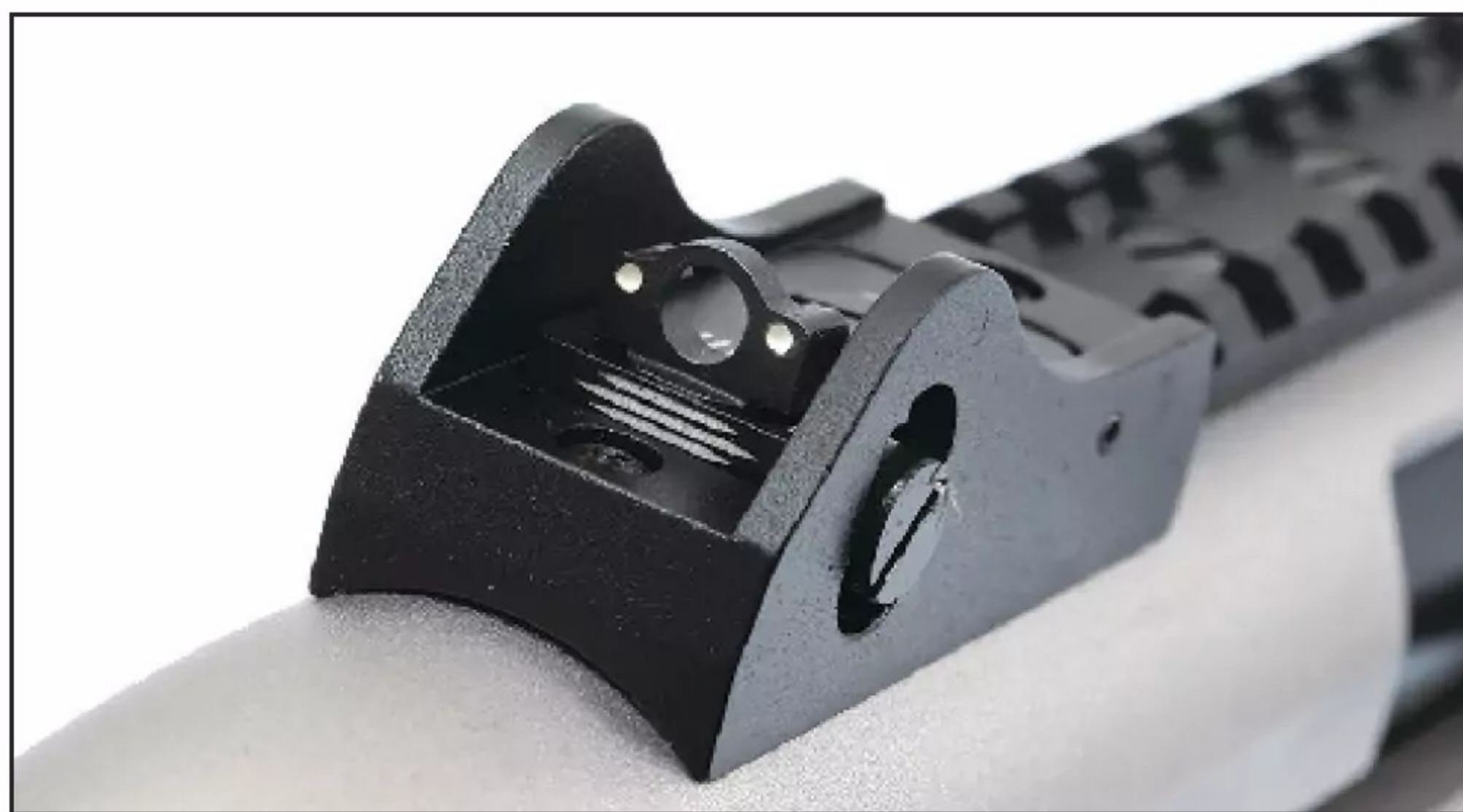
One of the advantages of the traditional layout is the slick package it presents. Nothing here to get hung up on clothing, gear or objects.

the felt recoil for a short time, and then once it bottoms out at the back end, delivers it again. So, you experience the recoil over a longer span of time. That gives the impression of being softer, but it isn't, it helps to think of it as a time-plan for your recoil payment, without interest. (Shooters of the old Browning Auto-5 knew about this for sure.)

Okay, the Benelli system, which is what the MAC 2 uses? First, the parts involved. The bolt is the part that has the extractor and locking lugs. The bolt body is what the bolt rides in. The link connects the bolt body to the recoil spring assembly. When the MAC 2 jolts back in recoil, the whole shotgun drives back at you. However, the bolt body is connected to the bolt head by means of an inertia spring. The inertia of the bolt body keeps it motionless in space as the inertia spring is compressed. (The rest of the shotgun parts assembly moves back, but the bolt body does not. Within the frame of reference of the receiver the bolt body is seen to be driving forward. Physics can be a bit confusing.)

The "forward" movement of the bolt body rotates the bolt by means of the camming surfaces inside of the bolt body. The bolt unlocks, and the residual chamber pressure helps extract the hull, also while compressing the action spring. The hull blows out of the chamber, guided by the extractor, and driven by the earned inertia of the compressed inertia spring, the bolt, etc. (Again, physics can be complicated.) The action spring compresses, ticks the shell stop, bringing a new shell onto the lifter, and then drives forward, chambering and closing.

Got it? Alright, now for the MAC 2 Tactical Marine itself. Tactical? Marine? The Marine part is easy: MAC takes the receiver, barrel, magazine tube and treats them to an electroless nickel finish. Electroless nickel is just what it says: it is not an electrical deposition, or electrical plating method. The Nickel, with Teflon microbeads in the mix, precipitates onto the surface (this requires various complex chemical operations and is not a DIY process) in a smooth even layer, without the buildup on edges the electroplating



The ghost ring rear has white dots for that three-dot aiming that some favor. Me, I never notice them.



The over-sized charging handle, to make manipulation easier.



The small tab that allows you to lock the bolt back.



The handguard is polymer, checkered and shaped to provide a non-slip grip.



The sling loop is part of the magazine tube.



There is a magazine tube clamp, to support the tube during recoil.



The MAC 2 Tactical Marine comes with three choke tubes, one already installed.

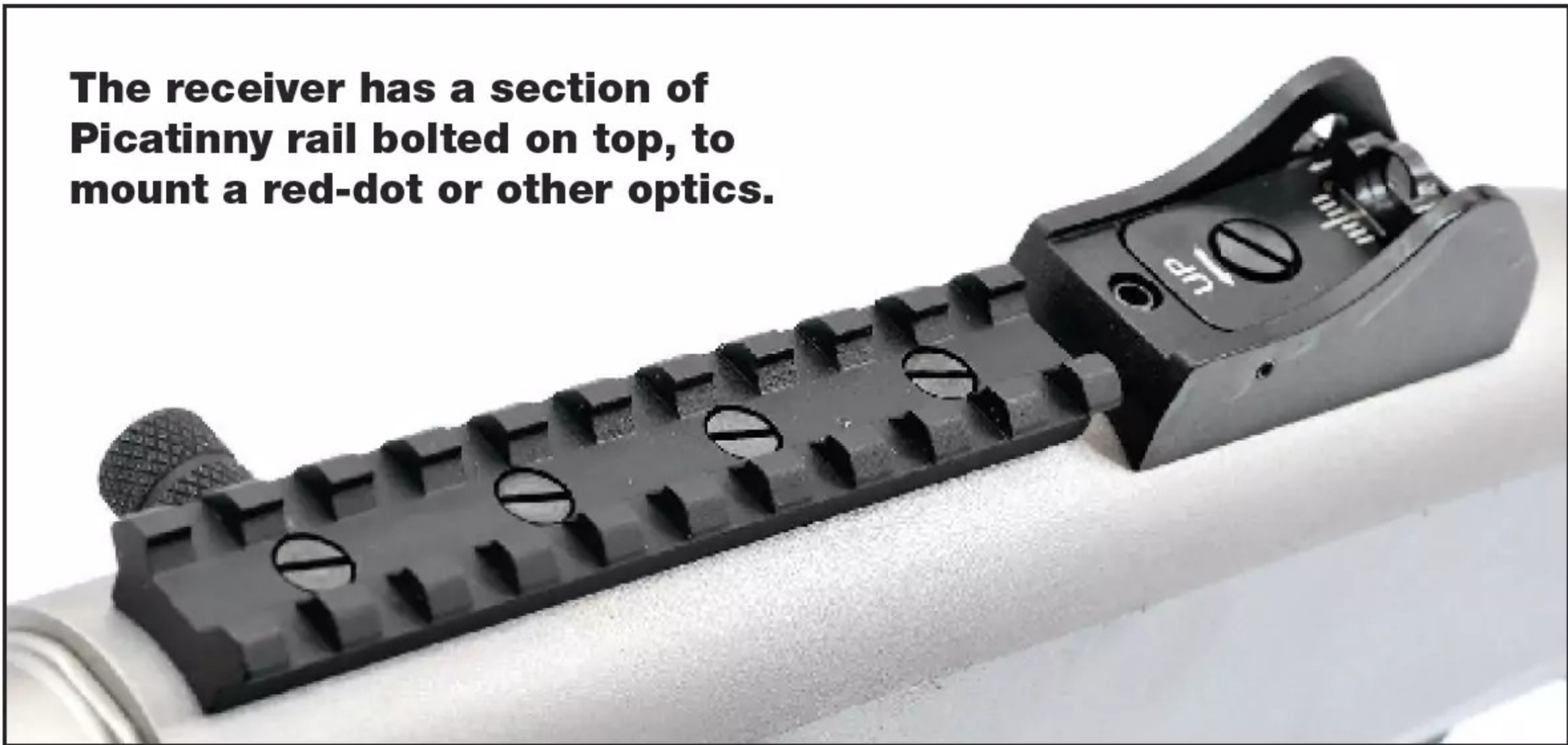


◀ The front sight has its own white dot and is protected by side wings.

can create. The result is a matte, soft and slick to the touch surface that wears well. If the surface of the electroless nickel layer is scuffed, there are still Teflon microbeads below the surface, and they still work to provide lubricity.

The receiver gets a ghost right rear sight, with the front and rear presenting a three-dot sighting system and the

front blade is protected by side wings. This is a very fast system that provides the accuracy you need to deliver slugs right where needed, and yet you can still track clay birds with birdshot. Or buckshot on falling plates or poppers. When I went to Gunsite to shoot in a shotgun class [mumble, mumble], years ago, I used a ghost ring sighting arrangement to earn an E ticket. Wicked fast, plenty accurate, and did I mention that I set the class record for speed on the Dozier Drill? If you are one to use a red-dot optic on a shotgun, which is becoming popular for good reasons then MAC has you covered there as well. The MAC 2 has a section of Picatinny rail on the top of the receiver, a convenient place to clamp on a red-dot sight. The receiver



The receiver has a section of Picatinny rail bolted on top, to mount a red-dot or other optics.



You can see here that the magazine tube is hollow and does not extend capacity. For that, you'll need to order up the plus-four tube from Military Armament.



is drilled and tapped for that pic rail, so if you favor some other mounting solution then you can simply remove it and get to work installing your own setup. It had better be a really good setup, to go to the trouble, because the pic rail is plenty convenient.

The barrel, eighteen and a half inches long, is smooth-bore, but is threaded for the Benelli/Mobil choke system, so you can put in choke tubes of whatever diameter works best for your application.

The Tactical part seems obvious: the extended magazine tube. Alas, the tube may be extended, but its capacity isn't.

It is a five shot tube that makes it a five-plus-one shotgun. But MAC does offer a plus-four extended tube you can add to your Tactical Marine. It, also alas, is not electroless nicked. MAC adds a clamp and sling slot to make the Tactical as convenient as possible. The clamp supports the mag tube, which flexes during recoil, and the sling slot means you can add a sling if you feel the need. Me, I'm not too hot on slings on shotguns, but I can see the utility. Also, part of the Marine, the handguard, is polymer as is the stock, and the stock has a rubber recoil pad on it, which you will come to appreciate. MAC also adds an



◀ **The MAC 2 Tactical Marine has screw-in chokes, in the readily available Benelli/Mobil pattern.**

▶ **The wrist of the stock is molded with a non-slip texture that works very well.**





Federal no-lead buckshot (for indoor practice and indoor simulators) patterns at 10 yards as you expect buckshot to pattern.



Hornady Black 00 buckshot patterns at 10 yards like it hates the cardboard. That big hole you see is the wad.

over-sized charging handle to the MAC 2, so you will find it easy to manipulate. Which is the next step.

The manual of arms with the Benelli system requires knowing a few details. To load, push the safety to the right. It is behind the trigger, on the trigger guard. On the right side of the trigger guard, ahead of the trigger is a small tab. Slide your finger back from the muzzle along the edge of the receiver and engage that tab, so it clicks back. This lets you lock the bolt back. If you do not do this, the bolt will not lock open when you cycle the charging handle. Lock the bolt back. Drop a round into the loading/ejection port, and then press the small button on the right side. This will close the bolt, chambering a round. Now, load the magazine

by shoving shells into the mag tube, pressing the lifter out of the way with each one. That's the straightforward way. There are other ways but read the manual and learn them. It would take the rest of the space I have to detail everything.

One of the advantages of the Benelli system is the speed of cycling. I have photos (a lot of them, actually) of the bolt closing, shoving the next shell ahead of it halfway into the chamber, with the just-fired empty not even inches away from the receiver. You are not going to out-run a Benelli. If it doesn't go bang, the odds are (the very high odds, I have to add) are that you short-stroked the trigger. There's just no beating the system. The downside is the recoil. In order for the Benelli system to work, you have to be a rigid recoil platform. That means you take the hit, and at just under seven pounds the MAC 2 Tactical Marine is going to come back with some enthusiasm. That's life. It isn't any worse than what a pump shotgun will deliver, but there it is, you can't escape. I found this out when the Benelli system was new, and adding weight to tame recoil made it non-functional. There's

CHRONOGRAPH AND ACCURACY DATA MAC 2 TACTICAL MARINE SHOTGUN		
BUCKSHOT (10 YARDS)		
Ammunition	Velocity (fps)	Pattern (in.)
Hornady Critical Defense 00 Buck	1,549	4.5
Federal Force X2 00 Buck	1,251	4.6
Sellier & Bellot 00 Buck	1,217	6.5
Winchester Super X 00 Buck	1,308	5.5
SLUGS (50 YARDS)		
Ammunition	Velocity (fps)	Group (in.)
Federal Truball (1 oz)	1,289	3
Fiocchi Aero Low Recoil (1 oz)	1,199	3
Pattern results were to be averages of four shots at 10 yards off a Champion shooting rest. Velocities are averages of five shots measured on a Labradar chronograph set to read 15 feet from the muzzle. Slug groups 50 yards, from a rest.		



The ghost ring rear is adjustable for windage and elevation.



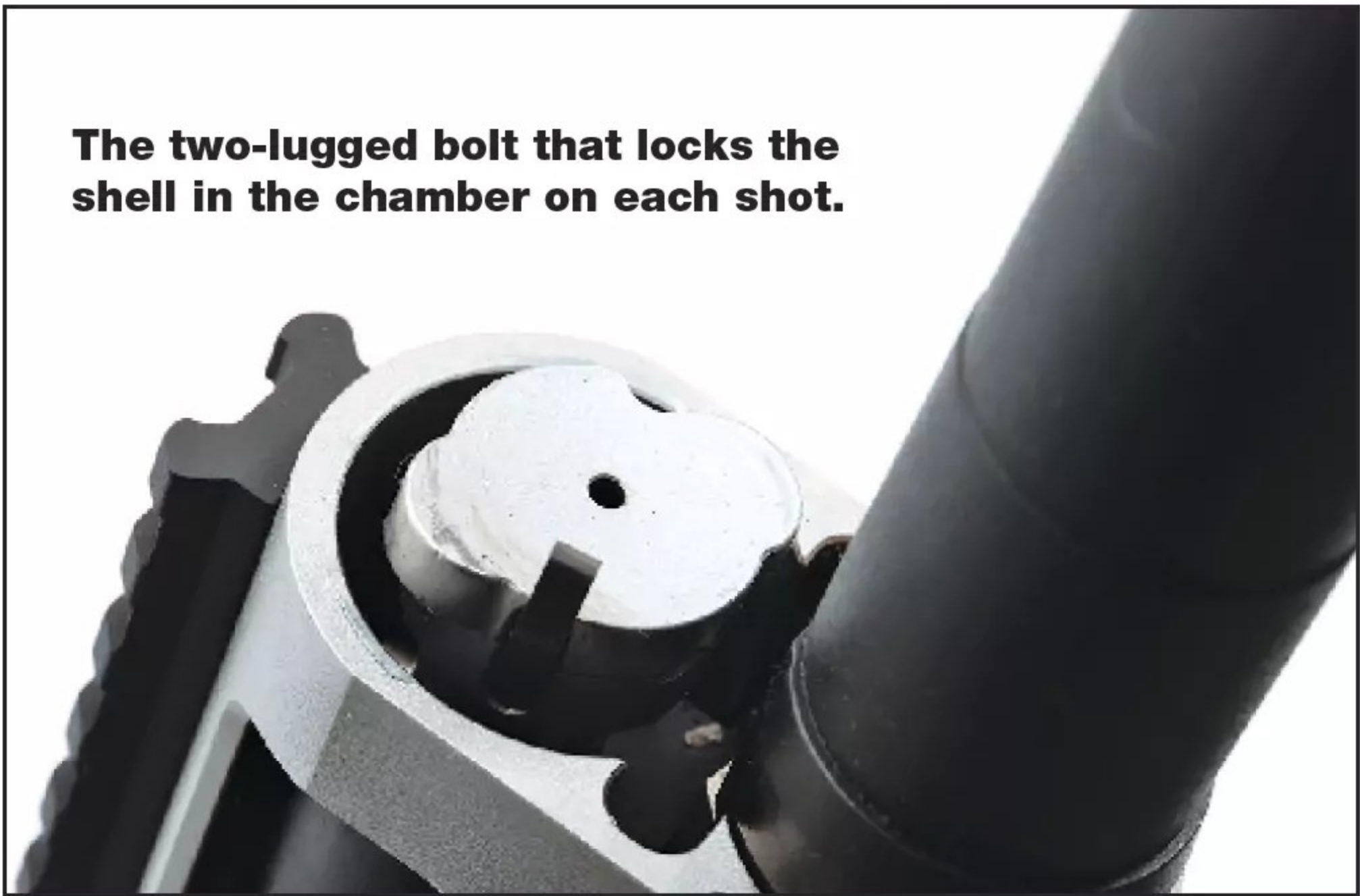
The MAC 2 Tactical Marine disassembled.

only a small amount of porting you can do before the system starts to stall on you. And why doesn't the disconnected bolt soften recoil, as it does on a gas gun? Mass. The Benelli bolt doesn't have much, but your typical gas gun has a lot, relatively speaking.

In testing, I found the MAC 2 Tactical Marine was responsive in handling, and it fit me quite well. The recoil pad made shooting less onerous, if not exactly fun (but then, this is a 12 gauge after all, there's going to be some work involved) and there were no malfunctions. You'll notice I used reduced-recoil shells in testing. I'm not sure there is something I dislike enough to subject my shoulder to the recoil of a one-ounce slug at 1,600 fps.

So, why this shotgun? Why not something 12-gauge else? As long as you can take the hit (and I'd suggest asking around at the gun club to see about trying someone's Benelli-system shotgun, to see) the MAC 2 Tactical Marine is nothing but pluses. It is light, so it won't be a burden to carry. The electroless nickel finish shrugs off corrosion and makes it easy to clean. The polymer handguard and stock are also tough, and you won't shed a tear if it, or they get scratched in use, unlike a nicely-figured set of wood. Plus, if the nickel is too flashy, you can always apply a rattle-can camo paint job. Oh, the paint won't stay under hard use, electroless nickel sheds paint, too, but for your time in the woods hunting, or wherever, the paint will stay on well-enough.

I objected to the recoil back in the day, but I'm getting more used to it, and the MAC 2 Tactical Marine is one reason why. Thumping costs, but the MAC 2 Tactical Marine does it in style.



The two-lugged bolt that locks the shell in the chamber on each shot.

But the best part is this: the price. With a list price right in the middle between four and five Benjamins, and we all know that over the counter at your local gun shop it is going to be less, you can hardly do this well with anything else. Birdshot, buckshot, slugs, the MAC 2 Tactical Marine eats it all, keeps on working, and won't burn a hole through your wallet. That's a tough combo to beat. **FN**

SOURCES
Federal Ammunition, FederalPremium.com, (800) 831-8100
Hornady Ammunition, Hornady.com, (800) 338-3220
Sellier & Bellot, SellierBellot.us
Winchester Ammunition, Winchester.com
Fiocchi Ammunition, Fiocchiusa.com, (417) 725-4118

SPECIFICATIONS	
MAC 2 TACTICAL MARINE SHOTGUN	
Type:	Hammer-fired recoil-operated semi-automatic
Caliber:	12 Gauge, 2-3/4 in. & 3 in.
Capacity:	5+1 rounds
Barrel:	18.5 in.
Overall Length:	34.5 in.
Weight:	8 lbs., 12 oz.
Finish:	Electroless nickel
Furniture:	Polymer, with recoil pad
Sights:	Ghost ring rear, post front, top Picatinny rail
Trigger:	5 lbs., 1 oz.
MSRP:	\$450
Contact:	MilArmamentCorp.com, (865) 604-6894

The Taipan X is a modern sporting rifle you can own most anywhere in America.



The Taipan X from Southern Cross Small Arms is a radical departure from your typical modern sporting rifle. A pump-action, spring-assisted design chambered in 5.56x45mm, the Taipan X is roughly the same size and weight as a typical AR-15 rifle. However, the gun is indeed manually operated. As a result, it is legal in all fifty American states, even the ones with ridiculously draconian gun laws.

For my put-upon brethren who, for whatever reason, live in such freedom-averse locales, that's legitimately great. The Taipan X is accurate, reliable, and fun. However, the gun has appeal in the free spaces as well. Offering sort of an arithmetic mean between a rapid-firing semiauto AR and a traditional pump-action hunting rifle, the Taipan X discourages profligate ammunition expenditure while still offering all the firepower you might reasonably desire. Running the

gun on the range is a fresh, new experience. Curiously, the Taipan X is made by our friends in Australia.

Origin Story

I actually spent some time in Australia back in the 1990's on Uncle Sam's nickel. I got tagged to deploy to a place called Rockhampton on the northeast coast of Queensland as part of Operation Tandem Thrust. Our objective was to conduct joint operations with our Down Under counterparts to vanquish evil or some such. While there, I met some fascinating folks and saw some amazing things.

Everything in Australia wants to kill you. It's just not like the rest of the world. Australia seems not yet quite domesticated. From the dinner plate-sized spiders to the meanest, nastiest, most venomous snakes on Planet Earth,



THE SCSSA TAIPAN X RIFLE

Pump-Action AR-15
Thunder from Down Under

By Will Dabbs, MD

you're seldom more than one step away from something that wants to eat you for dinner. Australia plays home to crocodiles that could pass for dinosaurs and the scariest sharks. Amidst all of that rugged manliness, Australians have curiously castrated themselves as regards gun laws.

It began as it always does. In 1996, a perennial loser whose name doesn't deserve to be spoken opened fire on tourists at an historic site at Port Arthur, Tasmania, with an AR-15 and an L1A1 FAL. When the smoke cleared, 35 innocent people were dead and a further 23 injured. Of course, all of that could have been avoided by a single good guy with a gun. However, this horrific event understandably left a deep scar on the Australian national consciousness.

Prior to that time, the Australian gun culture was not fundamentally dissimilar from our own. Semiauto sporting

weapons were freely available, and Australians living in the great expanses of wilderness that make up their sprawling nation were fairly well-armed. Then they passed the National Firearms Agreement (NFA), and everything changed.

After the passage of the Australian NFA, semiautomatic rifles and shotguns, as well as all fully automatic weapons, were banned with few exceptions. All firearms were licensed. Anyone applying for a firearms license had to complete firearms safety training courses. Applicants had to demonstrate a legitimate reason for possessing a firearm, such as club membership or hunting. There was also a 28-day waiting period built into all gun purchases along with fairly strict secure storage requirements.

Prior to this time, gun ownership in Australia was quite widespread. Most of the Australian Army officers with

THE SCSA **TAIPAN X** RIFLE

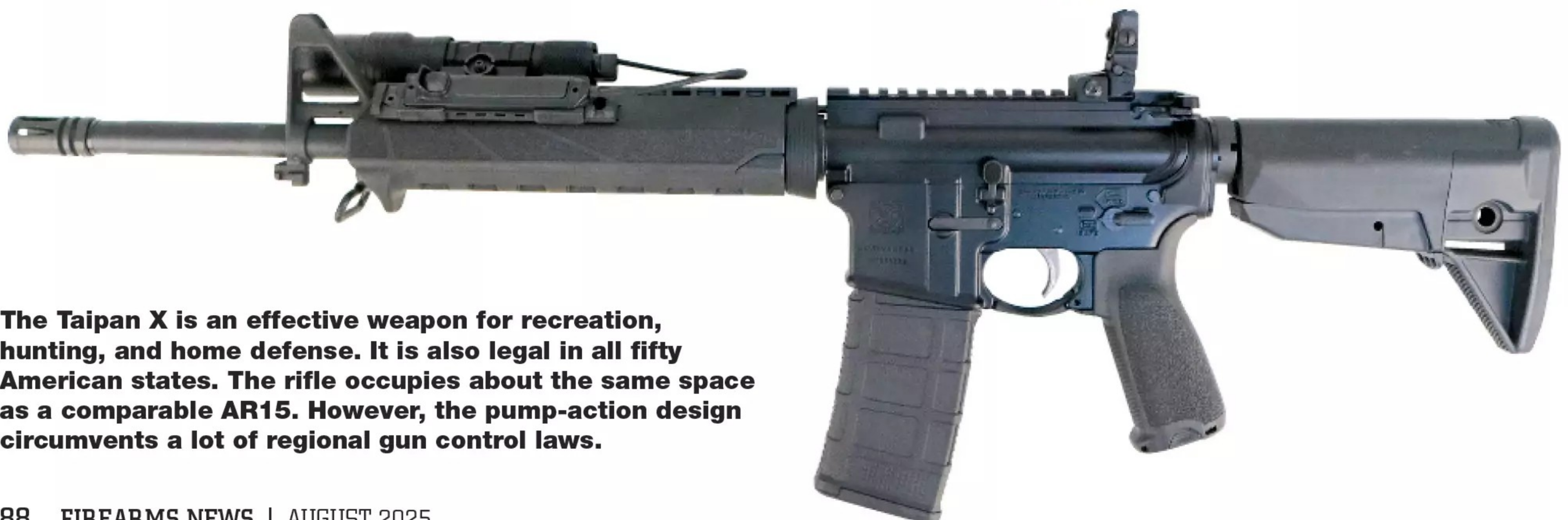


The Taipan X from Southern Cross Small Arms is a reliably different pump-action .223 modern sporting rifle imported from Australia.



whom I served had owned firearms. Following the implementation of the NFA, Australia carried out a massive mandatory buyback program wherein the government confiscated banned weapons from their owners in exchange for a stipend. The Australian government

removed some 650,000 firearms from the civilian population. [EDITOR'S NOTE: Australia destroyed many of the firearms with a program whereby an enclosed trailer, pulled by car or truck, would show up in Australian neighborhoods on a given day. Inside the truck were metal



The Taipan X is an effective weapon for recreation, hunting, and home defense. It is also legal in all fifty American states. The rifle occupies about the same space as a comparable AR15. However, the pump-action design circumvents a lot of regional gun control laws.

► I spent a little time down under back in 1997 courtesy the US government. I arrived right after the dust settled on the new Australian gun confiscation scheme.



The .223 Wylde chambering lets you shoot .223 and 5.56x45mm ammunition interchangeably.

politicians make restrictive new rules, and gun manufacturers design products that remain in compliance. In Australia, the end result was the Taipan X. This radically unconventional repeating rifle will find a welcome home in places like California, Illinois, and New Jersey that eschew personal freedom in our own great country. It remains simply great fun in the free states as well.

The Taipan X makes use of the latest manufacturing techniques.

cutting disc tools which a government worker would use to cut the banned firearms in half. Residents would line up on the street to have their firearms destroyed.]

I was in Australia in 1997. I recall driving by several recently-closed gun shops. This legislative initiative toppled the sitting Australian government, but the damage was done. The guns were gone. Some three decades later, the Australian state of Victoria just recently passed legislation outlawing machetes. It really never stops.

The success of this disarmament movement has been widely touted by American gun control advocates as a template for use on our side of the pond. However, there is a minor issue of scale. There are currently 26.6 million people living in Australia. There are 340 million Americans. We own more than 400 million guns. We buy 1.4 million new weapons per month on a slow year. Red-blooded Americans purchase more guns in two weeks than were confiscated in the entirety of Australia.

As a result of the Australian NFA, the market adapted as it always does. Like some bizarre game of whack-a-mole,



The controls on the Taipan X are intuitive.



The Taipan X will accept any standard M4 magazine.

Details

The Taipan X is built around an anodized aluminum frame. The stainless steel barrel is chambered in .223 Wylde and rifled 1-in-8 twist rate to stabilize most any bullet weight. The bolt and bolt carrier assembly are also environmentally-resistant stainless. There is a full-length Picatinny rail up top for optics and plenty of M-LOK space for accessories. The Taipan X features a familiar M4-style rotating safety lever and feeds from standard M4 magazines. The gun comes with an adjustable cheek riser. In general layout, the rifle feels quite a lot like an AR.



The buttstock on the Taipan X is fixed, but it has an adjustable cheek riser.



The pump action includes a generous spring-assist feature. That means you can manually cycle the action open, and the return spring will close it automatically. This makes the gun lightning fast in action. No kidding, it's not semiauto AR fast, but you can see it from here.

In addition to the manual polymer pump forearm, there is also an optional charging handle that can be installed on the left side of the rifle. Thusly configured, the gun becomes a straight-pull manual action. That is handy when running the gun off of a bipod for precision work.

There is a nifty crossbolt built into the back of the receiver that locks the action open for servicing. The manual claims that disassembly for cleaning is neither necessary nor recommended. The Taipan X comes with a ten-round Magpul M4 magazine that secures the bolt to the rear on the last shot fired. The bolt then flies forward of its own accord once the mag is removed. Any standard M4 feeding device to include 100-round Beta mags will run just fine.



It takes about 30 seconds to master the pump action on the Taipan X.



◀ Mounting up this handy knurled knob turns the Taipan X into a manually operated straight-pull repeater.

▶ This crossbolt locks the action open for inspection.



Accessorizing

The Taipan X accepts the same sorts of cool-guy stuff any AR might. I mounted up a top-end Trijicon MRO (Miniaturized Rifle Optic) along with a corresponding 3X pivoting magnifier. The MRO is available in a wide variety of finishes and configurations.

There are certainly cheaper options. However, what you get with the MRO is some preternaturally perfect glass along with that legendary military-grade Trijicon toughness. The MRO will run for more than two years on a standard CR2032 button cell. It is also made in America and has a Bible verse on the side. If that doesn't resonate with you, then you might want to hand over your man card for a while.

The tactical light comes from Streamlight. The Protac rail-mount HP-X Pro long gun light comes with a remote pressure switch as well as a their unique Jack-Cap tail switch with TEN-TAP programming. The Protac can be readily configured in three different operating programs and reliably controlled even in hard dark. The thing runs

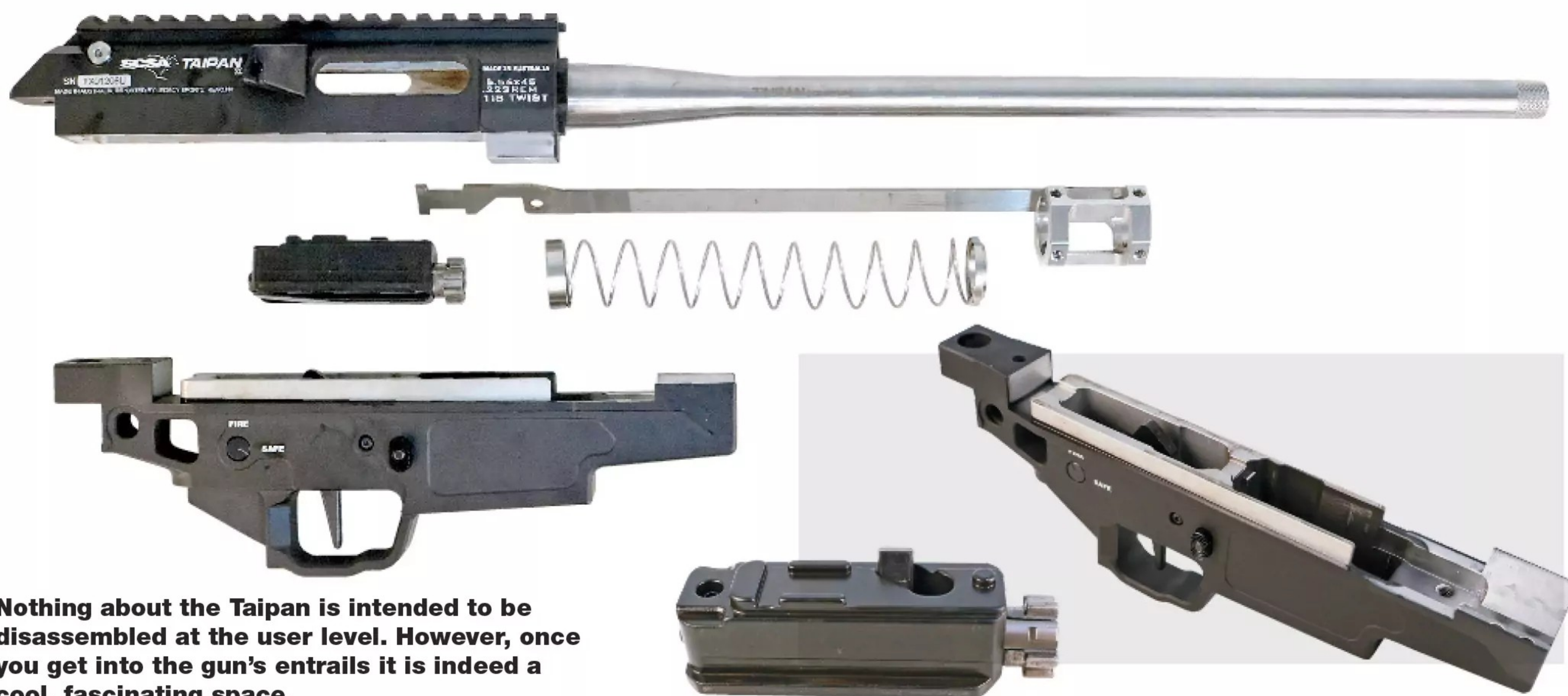
off of a rechargeable lithium ion battery pack or a pair of CR123A disposable batteries. It will all but burn your face off it is so bright.

SilencerCo quiets everything down. The Velos LBP (Low Back Pressure) can is 3D-printed out of Inconel and unkillable. This advanced design helps minimize gas blow-back and is widely customizable. SilencerCo offers mounts and endcaps to suit both your mission and your mood. The Velos LBP is sealed and welded for legit hard use. In a crowded field of rifle-rated sound suppressors, this is as good as it gets.

Trigger Time

Running the Taipan X is a fascinating experience. All tricked out the gun is portly, so recoil is a non-event. Follow up shots are quick and intuitive. The spring-assisted action keeps things spunky. It's a manually operated firearm, so it was naturally reliable with everything we shoved through it.

Accuracy is comparable to any high-end AR. Do your part, and this gun shoots plenty straight. The trigger is exceptionally crisp and diaphanous. I would put it in the same league with a high-end aftermarket AR trigger.



Nothing about the Taipan is intended to be disassembled at the user level. However, once you get into the gun's entrails it is indeed a cool, fascinating space.

THE SCSA TAIPAN X RIFLE



The Trijicon MRO with its associated pivoting magnifier represents the top of the heap in rugged military-grade red dot sights.



The Streamlight Protac HP-X Pro is tough, lightweight, and blindingly bright.

Magazine changes are similar to those of your favorite M4, except that you drive the action manually. The Velos LBP sound suppressor excises the muzzle chaos, while the Trijicon MRO drops your rounds right where you want them from across-the-room distances out to the limits of the cartridge. The Streamlight Protac keeps your prickly at 0200 when you hear glass breaking downstairs unexpectedly.

Ruminations

When I was in Australia, I was walking through a military motor pool and encountered a small innocuous-looking snake. My Digger buddy suggested we give the little guy a wide berth. He said that, in addition to packing a most deadly neurotoxin, this little reptile had an exceptionally aggressive and unpleasant disposition. Australia is full to bursting with malevolent creatures of that sort. One of the nastiest is the Taipan.

The Taipan snake grows to a whopping nine and a half feet and features a neurotoxic venom that clots your blood and disables your nervous system. The taipan is considered one of the deadliest snakes in the world. It seems a proper name for a sleek black pump-action repeating rifle that you can legally own most anyplace.

California has some of the most restrictive gun laws in the country. However, Californians still buy a bit north of a million guns a year. Roughly 14% of the population is armed. Anyplace traditional semiauto AR rifles are banned, the Taipan X offers nearly the same performance



The SilencerCo Velos LBP offers superior suppression while minimizing gas blowback into the rifle.



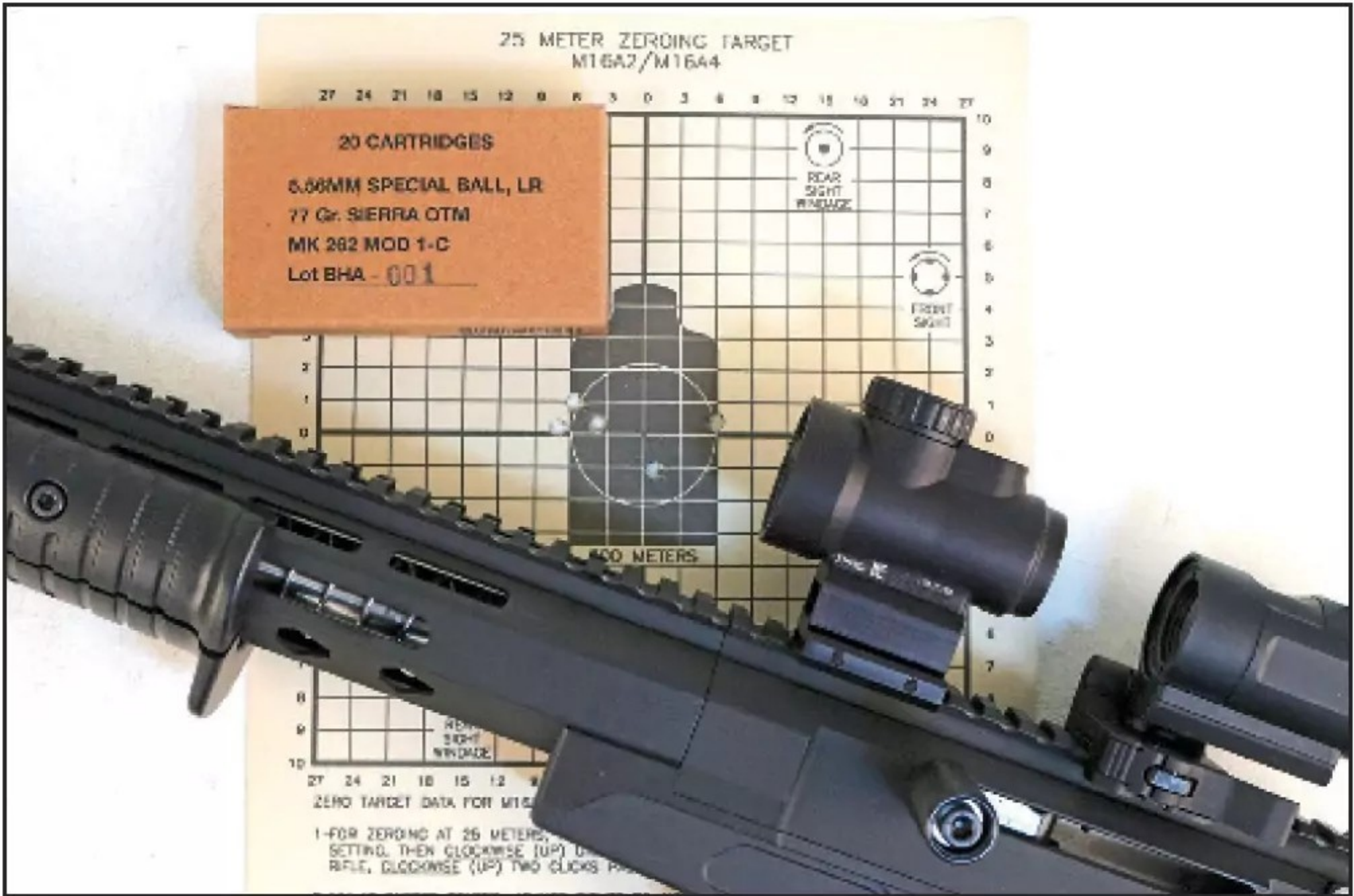
The Taipan X moves just as fast and shoots just as straight as a high-end AR-15.

without all of the Imperial entanglements, to paraphrase *Star Wars*.

Even if you live in one of the blessedly free states, the Taipan X remains a splendid sporting rifle. For hunting, target shooting, or recreation, a pump-action, magazine-fed, functionally-recoilless varmint gun has a natural niche. There is also a need for this type of rifle for those who live in free states. If you live in a free state and like to travel by car or RV, having a Taipan rifle is a great way to take along a defensive rifle you can go anywhere with —



I shot these 35-meter groups to get-acquainted groups off of a simple rest.



Take your time at 100 yards, and the Taipan X will group beautifully.

PERFORMANCE SPECIFICATIONS TAIPAN X PUMP-ACTION RIFLE			
Load	Group Size (in., Best/Avg.)	Velocity (fps)	SD
Winchester 55-gr. FMJ	2.0 / 2.8	3,084	27.1
Hornady 62-gr. FMJ	1.2 / 1.6	2,766	30.5
Black Hills 77-gr. OTM	1.9 / 2.4	2,680	10.9
Federal Gold Medal 77-gr. OTM	2.1 / 3.2	2,514	7.2
Group Size is taken from 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.			

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS SOUTHERN CROSS SMALL ARMS TAIPAN X RIFLE	
Type:	Manual Pump Action
Caliber:	.223 Wylde
Barrel:	16.5 in.
Overall Length:	41 in.
Weight (Gun/Gun with Mount):	7.5 lbs. (rifle only) / 10.6 lbs. as tested
Finish:	Black Anodized
Sights:	Trijicon MRO
MSRP:	\$1,299 (rifle only)
Contact:	LegacySports.com, (800) 5-LEGACY

even ban states (but first check with transportation laws in those liberal states). Even for a guy with a calloused trigger finger like mine, the Taipan X is a fun new shooting experience. It's the thunder from down under. **FN**

SOURCES
Trijicon, Trijicon.com, (800) 338-0563
Streamlight, Streamlight.com, (800) 523-7488
SilencerCo, SilencerCo.com, (801) 417-5384



The Taipan X is a refreshingly different sporting rifle.



This is my buddy Sario Carvalho back when he was a Special Forces Lieutenant in Vietnam. Sario and his Montagnards captured what were likely some of the first AK rifles encountered in theater. (Sario Carvalho photo)

GENERAL WESTMORELAND'S FIRST CAPTURED KALASHNIKOV AND THE STORY OF GREEN BERET SARIO CARVALHO WHO CAPTURED IT

By Will Dabbs, MD

The year was 1965, and the war in Vietnam was just getting properly energized. American Special Forces A-Teams deployed to remote regions of South Vietnam to organize indigenous forces into functioning military units. In short order, these dedicated local militias were conducting vigorous combat patrols alongside their special forces (SF) advisors throughout their designated areas of operations.

My buddy, Major Sario Carvalho, was one of the first Green Berets in country. In fact, Sario was actually one of the earliest Special Forces operators in the Army. He enlisted in 1955 and assessed into SF directly out of Basic Training.

Back then, there was no formalized SF Qualification course. Early SF training was conducted by experienced senior NCOs who had learned their trade in both World War II and Korea. These pioneering special operators then perfected their craft once they got downrange. Sario deployed to Vietnam directly from Fort Bragg as a Second Lieutenant with the 5th Special Forces Group.

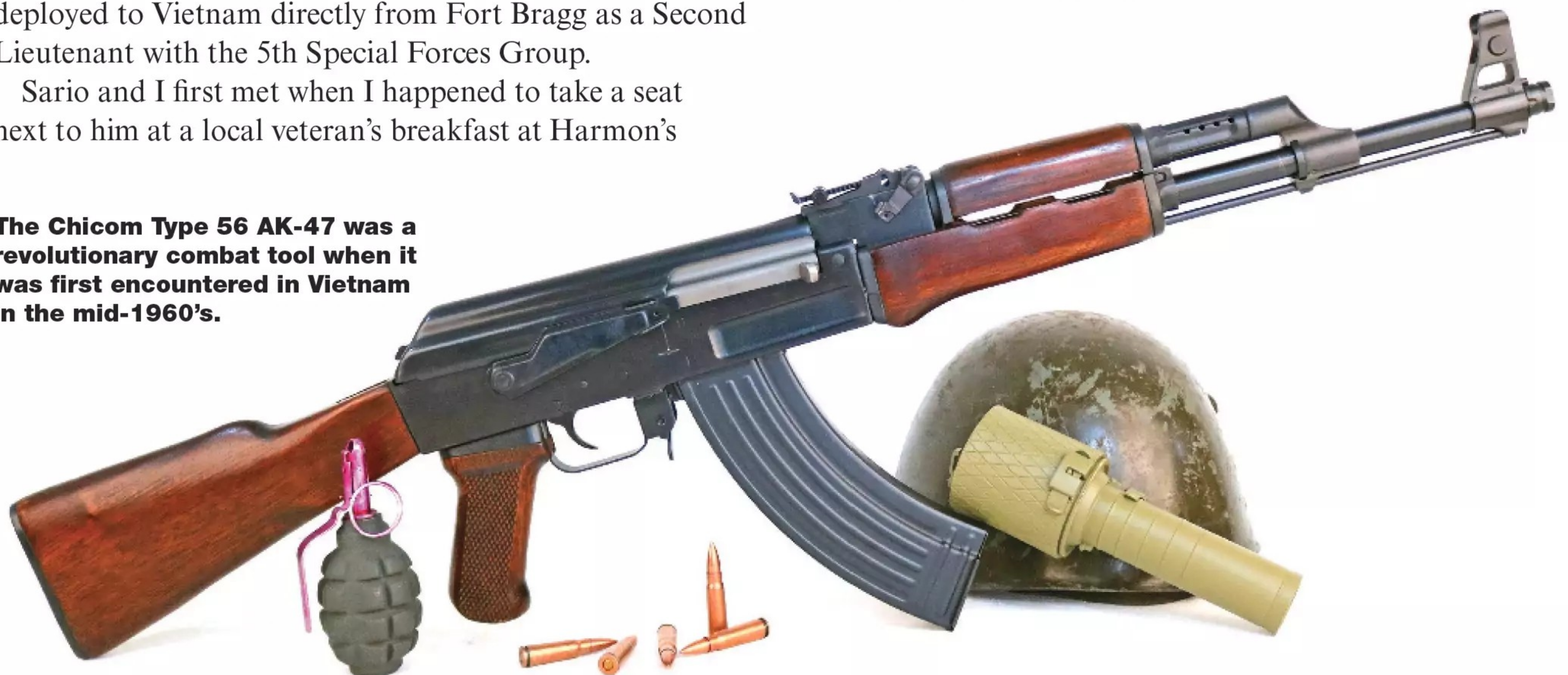
Sario and I first met when I happened to take a seat next to him at a local veteran's breakfast at Harmon's

Restaurant in Paris, Mississippi. The owner of Harmon's, Mack Thweatt, along with his buddy, former Infantry First Sergeant Justin Hill, host the get-together the first Saturday of every month just because they are such great Americans. That first conversation blossomed into an enduring friendship.

► **Sario Carvalho was one of the Army's first Green Berets. He ultimately did three combat tours in Vietnam. (Sario Carvalho photo)**



The Chicom Type 56 AK-47 was a revolutionary combat tool when it was first encountered in Vietnam in the mid-1960's.





This is a picture of Sario and his team on a clandestine mission into Iran in 1962. Sario is third from the left in the back row. CPT Larry Thorne, formerly of the Waffen SS, is top right. (Sario Carvalho photo)

Foundations

In 1962, Sario took part in a covert special forces mission into Iran to retrieve the bodies of an American aircrew lost when their spy plane crashed at 14,500 feet in the Zagros Mountains. This operation was led by a pair of SF officers, one of whom was Larry Thorne—a Green Beret legend. CPT Thorne was a Finn who earned the Iron Cross fighting the Soviets for the Germans during WWII. After the war, Thorne smuggled himself into the US, joined the American Army, and assessed into Special Forces. He was later killed in action in Vietnam. Thorne is the only member of the Waffen SS to be buried at Arlington. He penned Sario's letter of recommendation to Officer Candidate School.

Sario ultimately did three combat tours in Vietnam. His service in that terribly-conflicted space spanned the spectrum from the opening salvos to turning out the lights. The first time he met an AK rifle was a significant emotional event.

The Mission

Sario's first deployment to Vietnam saw him assigned to one of nine A-Teams deployed as the advance contingent for the 5th SF Group. They operated out of the austere Special Forces camp at An Khe. These guys hit the ground running.

This particular patrol consisted of a pair of SF operators and some fifty indigenous Montagnards. Allied forces were equipped with WWII-surplus weapons at this early stage in the fight. That typically meant M1 Garands, M2 Carbines, Thompsons, Grease Guns, and BARs. Sario told me they had M1919A4 and A6 Brownings as well, but that they had not yet been issued M16s or M60s.



Sario deployed to Vietnam before the M16 and M60 saw any significant action. They used WWII-vintage small arms like these until the "Big Army" caught up with state-of-the-art gear.

The operation was a search and destroy mission staged into a valley between An Khe and Pleiku. The route of march had the patrol following the track of a narrow paved road which connected Pleiku in the west with An



NVA troops were fierce fighters. (Public domain)



Sario and his guys were eventually issued M16 rifles like this 602 model he is holding. However, at the time of his first engagement, they were still using WWII-vintage ordnance.

Khe in the east. All went well until they encountered a well-worn trail moving perpendicularly across the little motorway. It was here that the NVA (North Vietnamese Army) troops staged their ambush.

The incoming enemy fire was initially suffocating. However, these Montagnards and their two Green Beret advisors were hard, battle-tested men who retained cohesion

and control despite the chaos. They ultimately returned an adequate volume of fire to break the back of the ambush and assaulted through their attackers.

The NVA soldiers who survived melted back into the jungle, taking many of their dead and wounded with them. As the Montagnard troops swept the abandoned enemy positions, they found discarded equipment and abandoned weapons along with several NVA bodies. Among this detritus of war were some unique new rifles.

Sario's guys returned to An Khe with three SKS carbines and a pair of Kalashnikov assault rifles. He said that all five of the guns looked to be brand spanking new. The heat and humidity of the Vietnamese jungle were hard on firearms. Weapons did not appear new for long. These were indeed quite freshly issued. Now hold that thought...

The Guns

The convoluted tale of the Kalashnikov rifle is foundational dogma for gun nerds like us. In the three quarters of a century since its inception, the story has taken on a life of its own. Some of what resulted is no doubt embellished to feed an insatiable Cold War propaganda machine. However, there is yet still embedded deep within an undeniable kernel of truth.

Mikhail Timofeyevich Kalashnikov first drew breath in 1919 in the Russian village of Kurya in present-day Altai Krai. He was the 17th of 19 children born to Russian peasant parents Aleksandra Frolovna and Timofey Aleksandrovich Kalashnikov. Young Mikhail left school after Seventh Grade to work as a tractor mechanic. In 1938 at the age of eighteen, he was drafted into the Red Army. Based upon his experience maintaining diesel tractors, the young soldier was assigned to the 24th Tank Regiment of the 108th Tank Division crewing T-34 tanks.

Kalashnikov supposedly developed the idea for his extraordinary assault rifle while recovering from wounds incurred fighting the Germans during the Battle of Bryansk in October of 1941. While his first effort to craft a new pistol-caliber submachine gun was rejected, that basic design eventually evolved into the most-produced firearm in human history. The Avtomat Kalashnikova Model 1947 was standardized for issue in 1949.

That first AK was actually built around a stamped steel receiver that was deemed insufficiently robust for general military use. The subsequent milled receiver version, what we call a Type 3 AK-47 on this side of the pond, saw widespread service around the globe. This was the primary version



▲ Sario's troops captured a handful of SKS (top) and AK-47 rifles during this particular combat patrol.

◀ The milled receiver Type 3 AK-47 was the most commonly encountered Kalashnikov rifle in Vietnam. Most examples were originally produced in either Russia or China.

GENERAL WESTMORELAND'S FIRST CAPTURED KALASHNIKOV



Mikhail Kalashnikov's eponymous rifle went on to become the most-produced firearm in history. (Mil.ru photo)



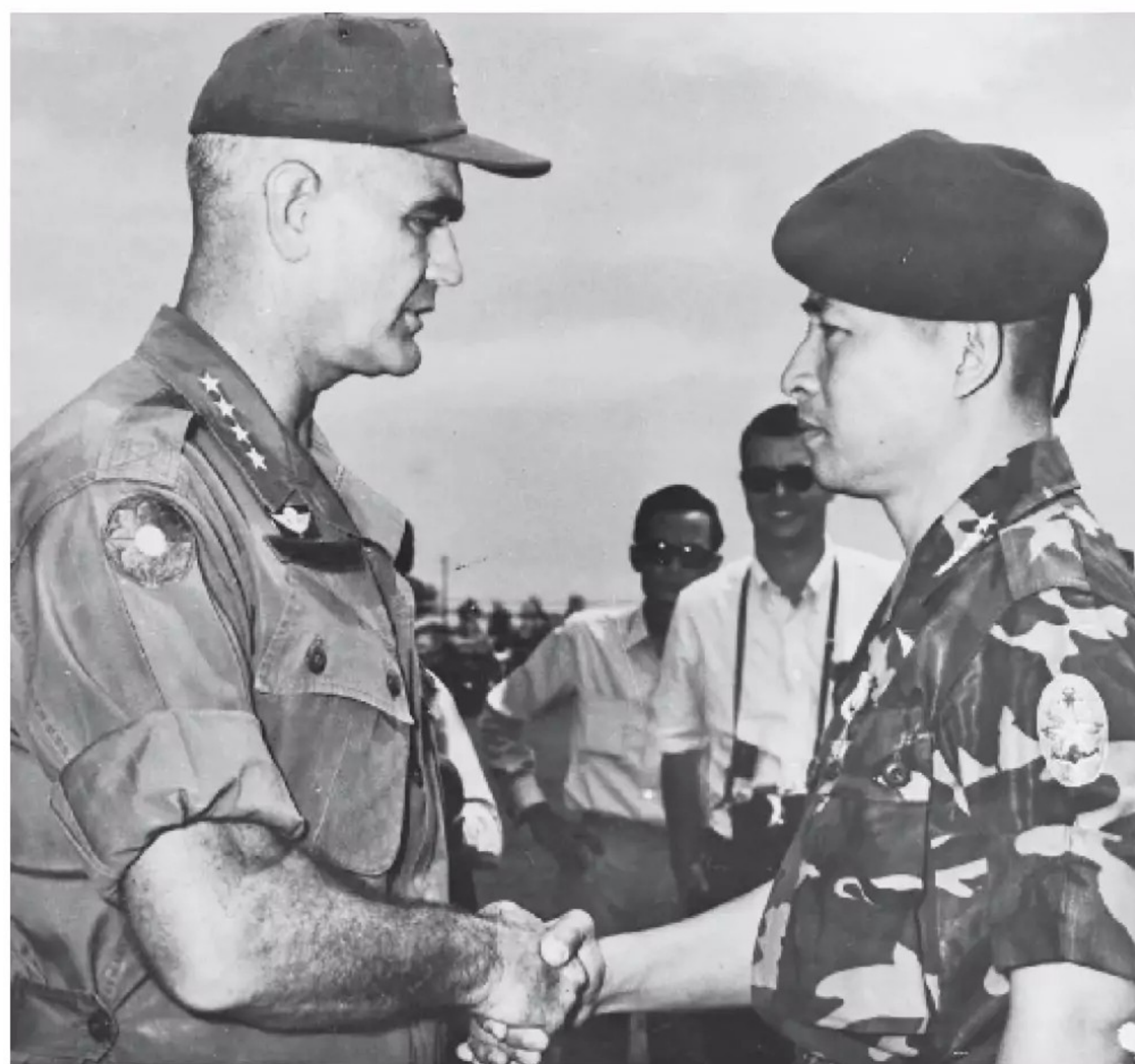
What most in the popular media call an AK-47 (top) is actually an AKM (bottom). The differences between the two receivers are obvious at a glance once you know what to look for.

encountered in Vietnam. That rifle evolved into the AKM or Avtomat Kalashnikova modernizirovanny in 1959 with its now-perfected pressed steel receiver. All of these weapons fired the same revolutionary M43 7.62x39mm cartridge.



The AK-47 eventually became ubiquitous across Vietnam. However, in early 1965, they were still both mysterious and rare.

That AKM eventually begat the AK-74 family of weapons chambered for 5.45x39mm. Variations on that theme still serve widely on both sides in the ongoing kinetic action in Ukraine. Mikhail Kalashnikov died in 2013 at age 94 as a Lieutenant General in the Russian Army. Curiously, he also made time to pen half a dozen books of poetry. Kalashnikov's eponymous rifle went on to become one of humanity's most influential inventions.



Once it became common knowledge that Sario and his guys had bagged a couple of these mysterious new communist rifles, the supreme commander, General William Westmoreland (left), choppered in to take a look. (U.S. Navy photo)



Westmoreland's aide claimed they just wanted to borrow the captured AKs so they could tear them down and learn their secrets. Naturally, Sario and his buddies never saw the guns again.

The CIA first got wind of the AK-47 in 1953. They stole their first copy a year later. The spooks landed a folding stock version in 1961. However, little of that filtered down to the earth pigs of the US Army who were actually going to face the things in combat.

Background

Vietnam has a long history of both colonialism and insurrection. Back then, the place was veritably awash in guns. However, like the Allied troops they faced, most of the weapons carried by NVA and VC (Viet Cong) troops at this point were fairly antiquated. Much of this ordnance was captured from the French after they beat their hasty retreat or consisted of WWII-surplus equipment supplied by the Russians and Chinese. A surprisingly large number of WWII-vintage German weapons made their way into this soggy Southeast Asian war zone as well.

Vietnam always was a proxy fight between the forces of freedom and those of communism. The Americans sent

massive volumes of weapons, gear, and infrastructure support along with tens of thousands of combat troops. The Russians and Chinese mostly just sent guns—lots and lots of guns. These SKS and AK rifles were fresh, unexpected additions to the evolving battlefield.

Unwanted Adult Supervision

Sario's men duly catalogued the gear they had captured and reported it up the chain of command. Most fascinating were the radically-advanced communist infantry rifles that fired the weird, cut-down 7.62x39mm intermediate cartridge. Once word got out that American troops had actually gotten their hands on a few copies of these revolutionary weapons, everyone took an interest.

In short order, a modest contingent of helicopters arrived carrying none other than General William Westmoreland along with his entourage. Westmoreland was the Supreme Commander of allied forces in Vietnam from 1964 through 1968. He had heard rumors about these strange new rifles and wanted to see them up close for himself.

Westmoreland and his staff pawed over the weapons and then headed back to their waiting helicopters. One of the General's aides gathered up the five rifles and made for the idling aircraft. When Sario's team leader protested, the officer assured him they would make a detailed technical assessment of the guns and then send them back. Of course, Sario and his fellow Green Berets never saw them again.



An AK-47-type rifle, shown here alongside semi-auto versions of the M16A1 and XM177E2 carbine. The AK is an iconic part of the war in Vietnam.

Denouement

These two rifles were purportedly some of the very first of their type brought into South Vietnam by the North Vietnamese. In the Spring and Summer of 1965, Sario and his teams captured more of these distinctive weapons, demonstrating the ever-increasing levels of NVA activity in the South as well



The Type 56 AK-47 was the best rifle in the world when it was introduced. Compact, maneuverable, and inimitably reliable, the AK was arguably the perfect insurgency weapon.

as growing support by outside actors. By war's end, AKs were ubiquitous.

It was a big deal to capture the first AK rifles encountered in combat in Vietnam. As souvenirs go, that one

would be pretty cherry. Were it properly documented, registered during the brief 30-day amnesty in 1968, and then sold at auction, one of those AKs would make a pretty decent retirement nest egg today.



Today, Sario is still fit and hard even at 87. It is a privilege to call him a friend.

AK and SKS rifles were both introduced in Soviet service around the same time in the late 1940's. The first inkling we had in the West of the new Kalashnikov rifle was a hand-drawn rendition by a CIA operative of a "mysterious submachinegun" carried by a Soviet soldier outside Leningrad in April of 1953. Those two examples my buddy Sario and his fellow Green Berets captured back in 1965 were obviously the first of many more to come.

Today, Sario is 87 years old, fit, and healthy. He can even still hear, something that is fairly rare among those of us of a certain age who once wore the uniform. Listening to him relate first-person stories such as these is like touching history. We do indeed stand on the shoulders of giants, my friends.

There are an estimated 100 million Kalashnikov rifles in service with sundry armies, warlords, terrorists, criminals, and militarized children around the globe. Nowadays, these things are absolutely everywhere. However, my buddy Sario was there for some of the first. **FN**



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The ThinLine cycles briskly. The empty is barely away and the ThinLine is already closed and back on target.

STOEGER'S THINLINE PISTOL

Thin Is Always in, Especially
With Carry Pistols! **By Patrick Sweeney**

It is amazing what the marketplace can accomplish. If you had told us, even just a few years ago, that it would be possible to have a compact double-stack 9mm pistol that held an abundance of 9mm rounds and that the whole package would be one-inch thick, we'd have scoffed. Only single-stack pistols could be that thin, but here we are. The Stoeger ThinLine is just that.

The big deal with the ThinLine is that Stoeger took the best features of two of their popular pistols and combined

them. From the Micro Compact they grafted on the slim profile, the one-inch-thick grip and slide combo. Then they complimented it with the extended grip of the Compact, to give you more ammo. And while they were at it, they added in even more, plus the expected great features of the Stoeger line as well as the amazing cost they've always delivered.

Okay, up top. There is a squared steel slide, with cocking serrations fore and aft. They don't skimp on making the



The Stoeger ThinLine in its case with all the extras.



From the side you wouldn't be able to tell just how thin the ThinLine is.



The sparse controls tell you right away that the ThinLine is a striker-fired pistol.

serrations work for you, they are wide, edgy and many. The sights are a solid ramped rear and a blade front, both in transverse dovetails. So, if you find that for you the ThinLine is just a bit off left or right, you can readily move one or both to get your hits on-center or replace them if you simply must have something else. Most of you won't, as the three-dot night sights are large enough, clear enough and suited to the task. These sights glow in the dark, so you'd have to work hard to upgrade from the ones they

install. The top of the slide also has an optics cover plate. The machined recess is cut to the pattern for an RMSc red dot, and you can install one of those directly with no need for an adapter plate. If you want to mount a red dot, you simply unbolt the plate and do the usual assembly and locking down DIY pistolsmithing. Another bonus: the plate is forward of the rear sight, so you don't have to choose between irons or a dot. While you're there, you may notice the loaded chamber indicator. This is a notch in the



The front of the slide shows all the extras: the night sights, the aggressive serrations, the ports for the comp.



On the rear of the slide, the cover plate keeps the striker parts in place. The night sights, three-dot, are clearly visible.

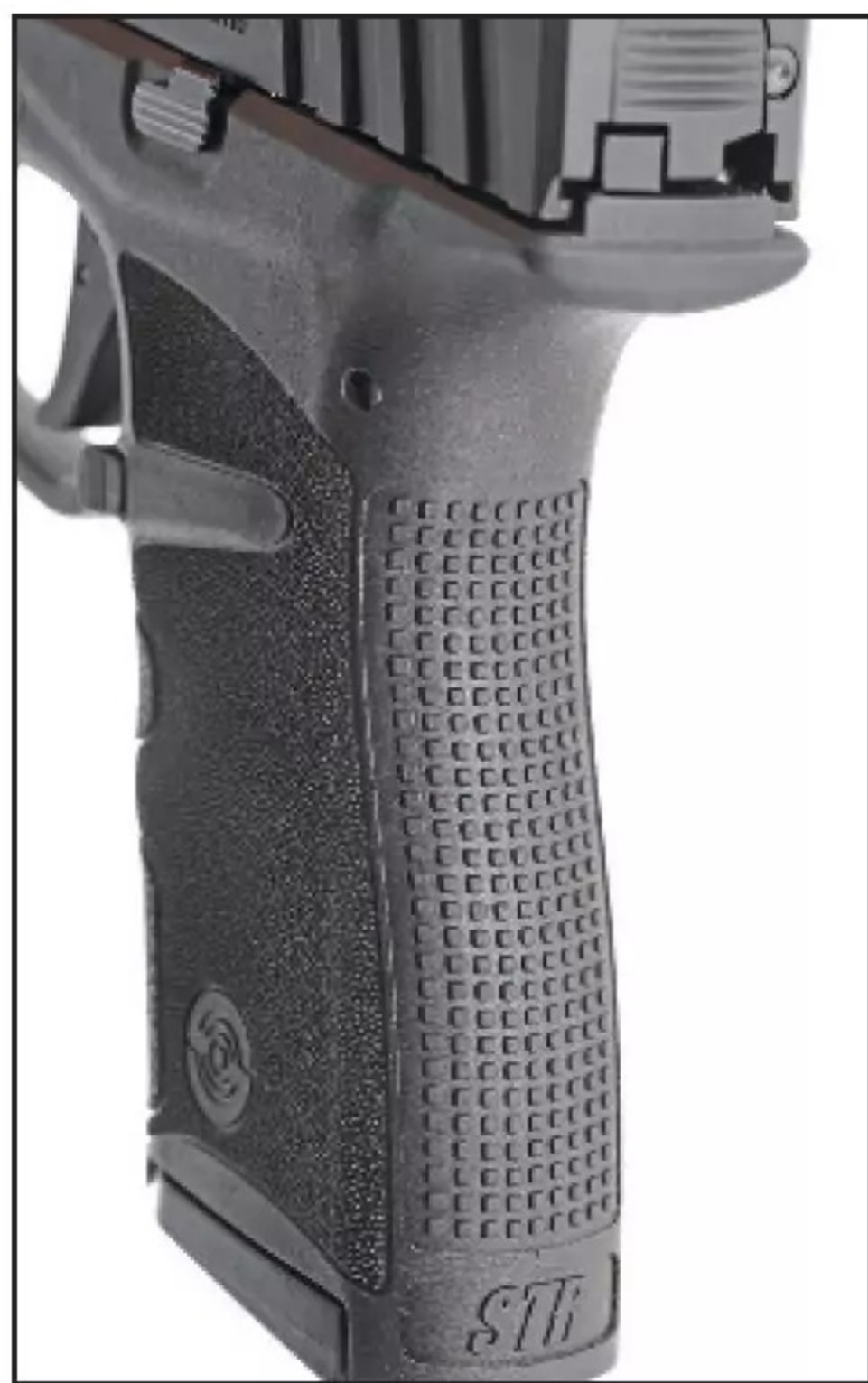


The dustcover has a rail for accessories, and it is also where the serial number plate is.

STOEGER'S THINLINE PISTOL



The very slim grip has three different patterns of texturing on it.



The ThinLine does not have a replaceable backstrap, but most of us don't need one.



The trigger guard and frontstrap ride up to the magazine release to give you a higher grip.

rear center of the barrel hood, and you can see if there's a chambered round in there by peering down into the notch.

The next big deal with the ThinLine is the barrel. Well, the barrel and comp/port. The barrel stops short of the front end of the slide. The slide has transverse slots machined through it on the upper half, forward of the muzzle. When the bullet exits the muzzle, it passes through the forward part of the slide and out the clearance hole machined for the barrel. The ports divert some of the gases up, to dampen muzzle rise. Some gases also impact the inside faces of the slots, and thus dampen recoil that would otherwise be directly back. When the slide cycles, it passes over the crown of the barrel, and once fully rearward the muzzle protrudes from the slide by a small amount. There are a number of ways to divert muzzle gases to dampen felt recoil and this one that the engineers at Stoeger have chosen is compact and effective.

The barrel locks up in the ejection port opening and on the right side behind the ejection port is the extractor. All the normal and effective engineering we have come to expect from Stoeger.

The frame is a polymer construction and with the frame Stoeger has chosen to not include a replaceable backstrap. While this means those shooters who simply must have the option are prevented from doing so, it does mean less cost. No need for the extra molds to create the other sizes, nor the extra space on the frame needed to provide a secure mounting method for replaceable backstraps. We all got along for over a century without replaceable backstraps, and the vast majority of us still can.

There is, of course, an accessory rail, because it is now as essential as sights are. At a recent competition, I noticed that half the pistols used, all daily carry 9mms, had lights mounted on them. The ThinLine does not let you down in this regard. The dust cover is also where you'll find one of the many serial numbers on the ThinLine. Frame, barrel

► **Inside the slide, the barrel ends about where the front sight is. The slots are the comp.**



▼ **When the ThinLine cycles, the barrel passes out of the slide.**

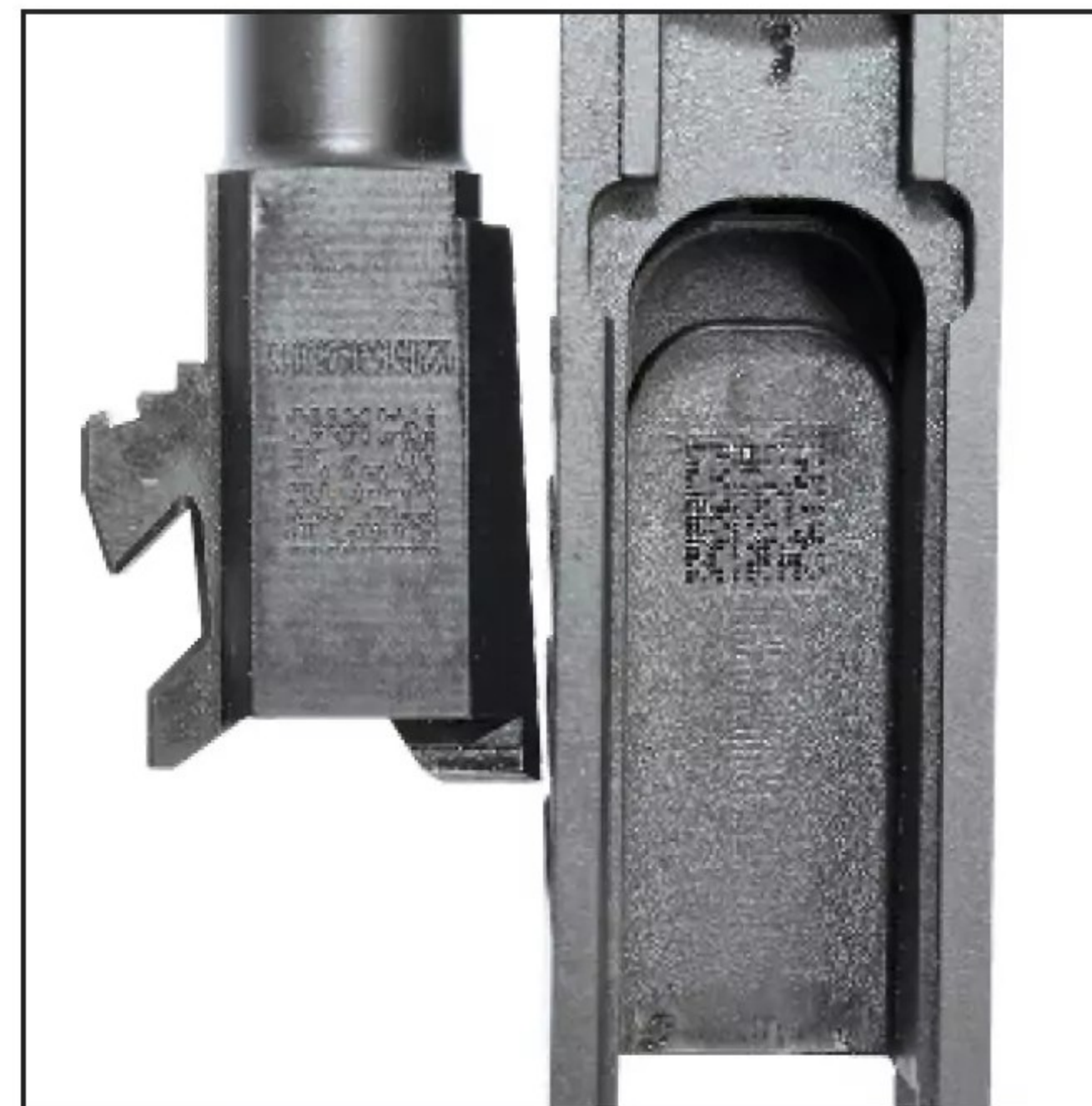


The optics plate is forward of the rear sight, so you don't lose the rear sight when you go dot.





► Not only does the ThinLine have serial numbers on major parts, there is a 2D code on the barrel and slide. This is serious production tracking.



The ThinLine comes apart exactly like a Glock does, so if you know that, you know the ThinLine.

and slide are numbered. Plus, there are 2D codes on slide and barrel. (And I thought *I* labeled everything.) Behind the dustcover, Stoeger has created a textured oval as an indexing point for your trigger finger when it is out of the trigger guard. Kudos, Stoeger. The trigger guard curves up to meet the lifted frontstrap, so your hand can get higher

on the frame. The frame is extensively textured to provide a non-slip grip, with three different patterns of texture: one on the frontstrap, one on the backstrap and a third on the sides of the frame.

The straight trigger has a safety blade in the middle of it, because this is a striker-fired pistol with internal safeties as well. One nice extra is the magazine release, which is reversible. So left-handed shooters can swap the button if they wish. The grip has a swell, or rib, or blade, streaking back from the magazine release, which does two things. One, it gives your hand an index on the frame, and it also



The ThinLine comp works to dampen felt recoil, and for such a compact and lightweight gun, it helps a lot.

STOEGER'S THINLINE PISTOL



◀ The ThinLine is easy to shoot, and the accuracy testing demonstrated that.

► The ThinLine really liked the Honey Badger load, and if this was your choice for daily carry you'd be doing good.

► The last shot for this group was the one upper left. Of course. If I'd stopped at four it would be a real bragging group.



CHRONOGRAPH AND ACCURACY DATA STOEGER THINLINE PISTOL					
Ammunition	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Velocity (fps)	ES	SD	Accuracy (Avg. & Best) (in.)
Black Hills Honey Badger	100	1,197	24	9.9	1.9 / 2.2
Hornady FTX	115	1,118	20	7.5	2 / 2.2
Fiocchi FMJ	115	1,169	71	33.8	2.2 / 2.5
Federal Syntech	147	958	15	6.2	2.2 / 2.4
Accuracy results were to be averages of four, five-shot groups at 25 yards off a Champion shooting rest. Velocities are averages of 10 shots measured on a Labrador chronograph set to read 15 feet from the muzzle.					

acts to protect the magazine release from inadvertent activation. The ThinLine is so slim that it almost gives the impression of being a single-stack pistol. The rib behind the magazine release reduces the chance that those of you with big hands will inadvertently press it and drop the magazine.

The frame length is another big deal as it means anyone with a hand larger than medium can still get four fingers on the frame. The three (yes, three!) magazines that come with the ThinLine are stoutly built. The basic magazine holds fourteen rounds. You get one of those with a flush basepad. You also get another fourteen-round magazine with a fingertab base plate on it. So, you can carry the flush one for deep concealment, and use the fingertab as your reload. But wait, there's more. There is also a sixteen-round magazine in the box (along with a magazine loading tool, which you'll need) that uses the basic magazine tube but with an extended baseplate. Your loadout options now just got more interesting. Carry the flush pad and two reloads? Or start with the "big stick" sixteen-round magazine? However, you do it, you can leave the house each morning with 43 rounds of

majority of striker-fired pistols all come apart the same way, no need to repeat it.

In testing, I was expecting the ThinLine to be a bit more vigorous in recoil than it ended up being. At 22 ounces it is pretty light, but the grip offers a lot of recoil control, and the comped barrel/slide combo did its job. The tang comes over the web of your hand to a point where it begins to lose leverage and can't really jump around on you much. The short slide cycles briskly and comes right back onto the target. Part of the brisk cycle and not-oppressive recoil has to be due to the recoil spring. This is a captured assembly, and it is strong. You might be surprised by how much effort it takes to work the slide to load it. That's a small downside. On the upside, it means that for its compact size and light weigh the ThinLine is well-behaved and thus easy to shoot. Accuracy was quite good as well. For being such a compact and lightweight pistol, the ThinLine behaves more like a bigger and heavier competition pistol. No, it would not be my first choice in a match, but the best match pistol often ends up being large and heavy enough to preclude the match pistol being a serious choice for daily carry.



As compact as the ThinLine is, it would make a great daily-carry pistol. For that you need a compact holster, like these from 1791 Gun-leather. In the middle of the two holsters is the Snagmag spare magazine carrier. It clips inside your pocket and looks like just another pocketknife.

For daily carry options, I contacted the 1791 Gun-leather company. For those who prefer the IWB choice, the Smooth Concealment holster, size 4 would be just the ticket. The steel clip would make it an easy on-off holster. If a clip-on isn't your style, then the BH2.1 belt holster will serve you well. And for your spare magazine (should you choose to carry just one), 1791 sent along their Snagmag.

The Stoeger ThinLine has a list price of \$529, so you can likely expect to see it in the counter of your local gun shop for under five hundred, maybe even four-fifty. The ThinLine with all of its features, hard case, three double-stack magazines and magazine loader and lock, for under five bills? Again, had you said only a few years ago that was what you could get, we'd have laughed.

In this world of compact every-day 9mm pistols, it can be hard to stand out.

This is a magazine carrier that clips inside of your trouser pocket. There is a clip on it, so it rides just like the folding knife that is no-doubt already in one of your pockets. The Snagmag rides low enough that it is just another thing clipped in your pocket, and in a lot of situations would pass un-noticed. They make them for right and left-handed shooters, so be sure to order the correct one.

SPECIFICATIONS STOEGER THINLINE 9MM	
Type:	Striker-fired semi-automatic
Caliber:	9mm
Capacity:	14+1 rounds
Barrel:	3.3 in.
Overall Length:	6.8 in.
Height:	4.8 in.
Weight:	22.4 oz.
Finish:	Nitrided black steel
Grips:	n/a
Sights:	Notch and post iron sights, optics-cut slide
Trigger:	5 lbs., 2 oz.
MSRP:	\$529
Contact:	StoegerIndustries.com

In this world of compact every-day 9mm pistols, it can be hard to stand out. Conversely, it can also be hard to stay hidden. The Stoeger ThinLine manages to do both, and at a very attractive price as well. Considering the bonuses it brings to the table, Stoeger should be a name you ask about when next you visit your local gun shop.

Oh, and I have a small confession to make. When the folks of Stoeger first showed me the ThinLine at the SHOT Show, I mis-heard it. Hey, the show is a noisy place, and as good as my hearing is, I've still fired something on the order of a million and a half rounds. So, I had to make double-sure every time I went to save this review that I did a search for the misnaming I had originally given it, and correct it to ThinLine. (You don't need to know what I heard, just that once it was locked in, it was hard to dislodge.)

Just so don't you do the same: ThinLine. *ThinLine*. THINLINE. You want to make sure you have the correct name when you go to buy one. **FN**

SOURCES
Black Hills Ammunition, Black-Hills.com, (605) 348-5150
Hornady Ammunition, Hornady.com, (800) 338-3220
Federal Ammunition, FederalPremium.com, (800) 831-8100
Fiocchi Ammunition, FiocchiUSA.com, (417) 725-4118
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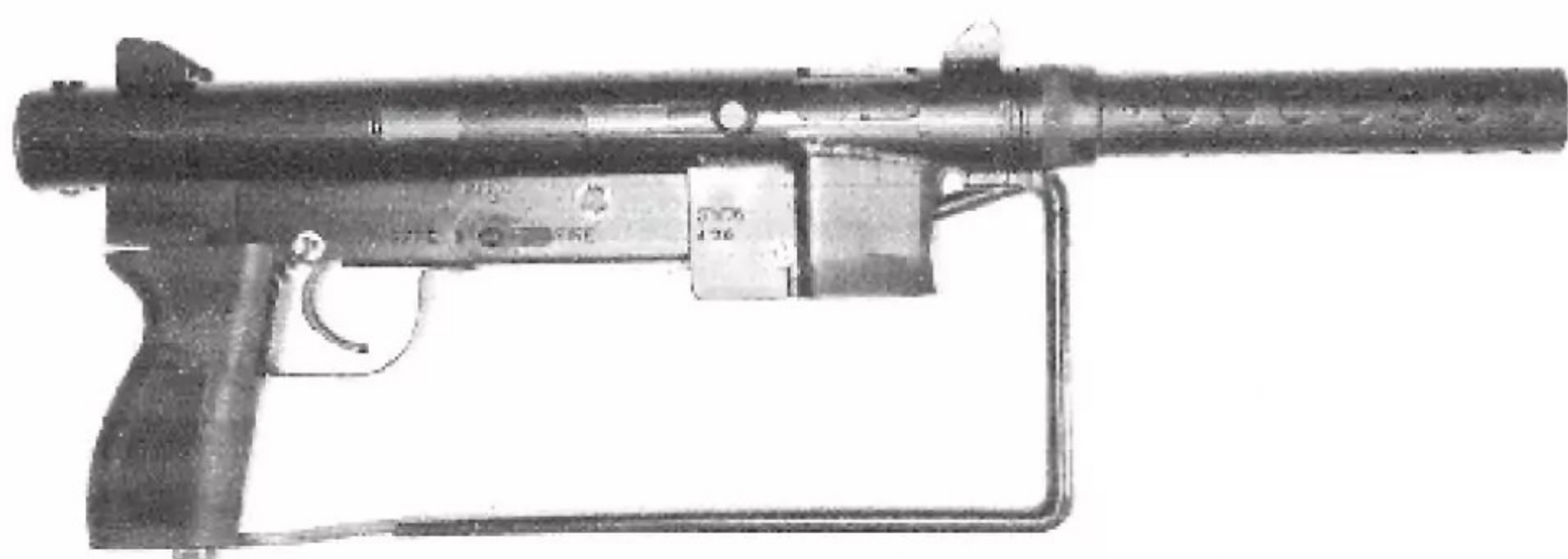
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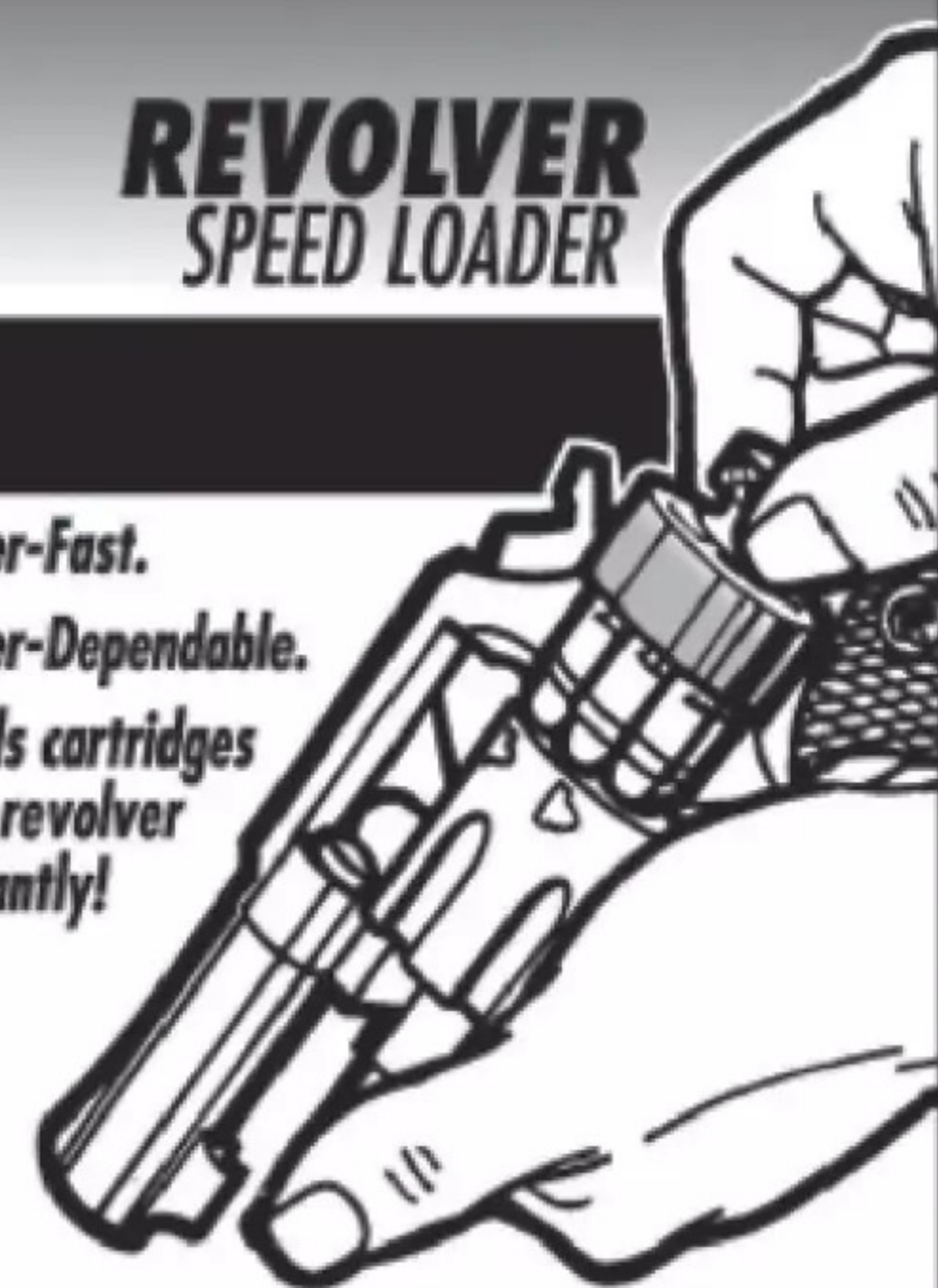
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