

**QUESTIONABLE
QUALIFIERS**

Be Careful With
Proficiency Drills

**A BARREL OF
BULL'S-EYES**

How Gun Barrels
Actually Work

Gun Digest

WE KNOW GUNS SO YOU KNOW GUNS

THE MAGAZINE

MARCH 2024
VOLUME 41 • ISSUE 03



DEFENSIVE DOTS

Why Are
Red-Dots
Suddenly
so Popular?

PLUS

Range Tested:

Liberty
Firearms
Lubricants

**Quoth
the Raven:**
Finks GSP
1911

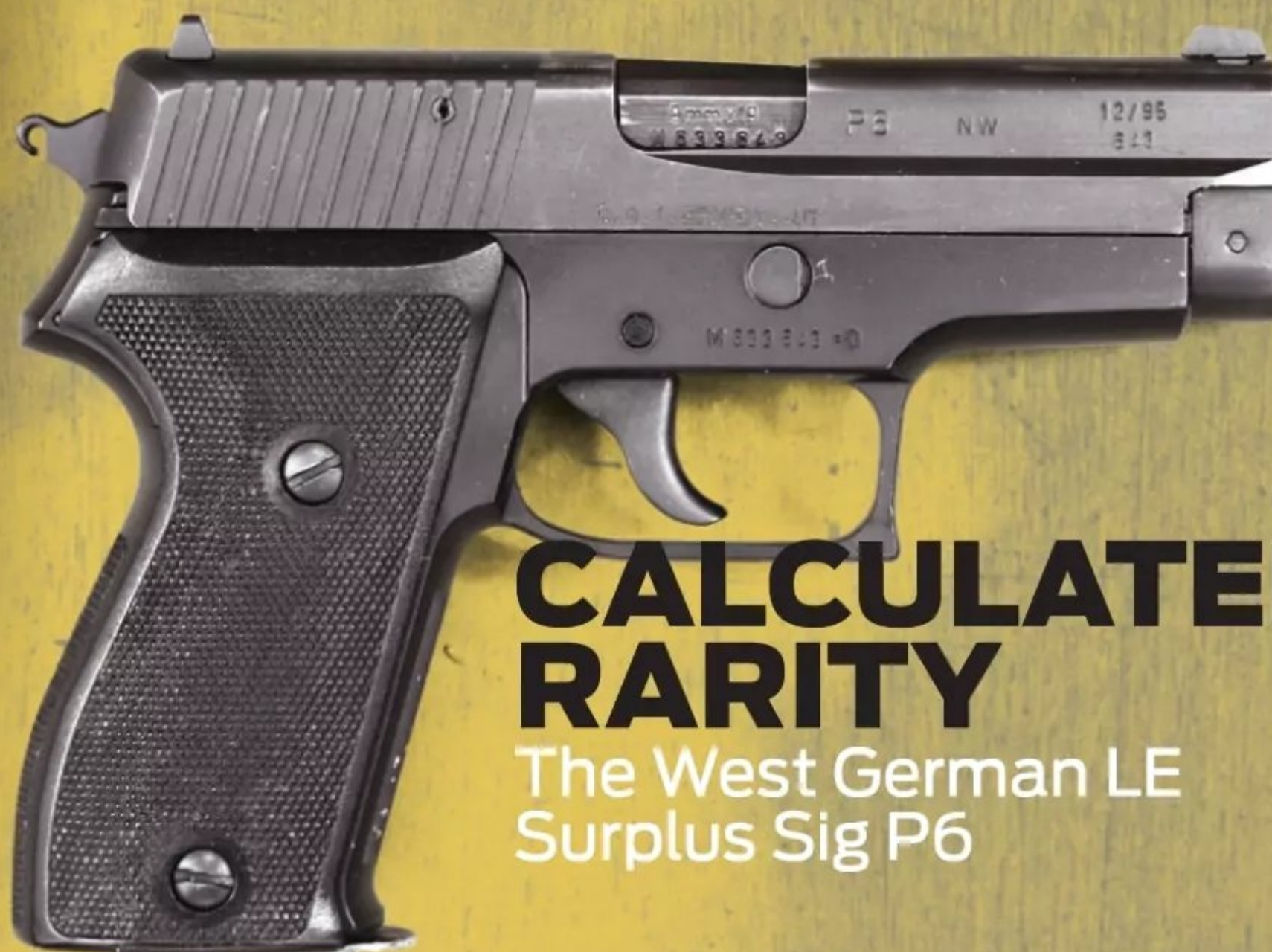
**Reloading
Secrets:**
Overuse
Your
Pencil



GEAR TO GET

Must-Haves for Custom
and Collectible Guns

**Springfield's M1903
Freedom Fighter**



CALCULATED RARITY

The West German LE
Surplus Sig P6

Old Glory



LIFE SAVING TOOLS



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Gun Digest the Magazine (ISSN 1938-5943) is published monthly by Caribou Media dba Gun Digest Media, LLC. Corporate Headquarters is 5583 W. Waterford Ln., Suite D, Appleton, WI 54913. Periodicals postage paid at Appleton, WI 54913 and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to PO Box 182, Williamsport, PA 17703. Copyright © 2024 Gun Digest Media. GUN DIGEST THE MAGAZINE and its logo are registered trademarks. Other names and logos referred to or displayed in editorial or advertising content may be trademarked or copyrighted. The publisher and advertisers are not liable for typographical errors that may appear in prices or descriptions in advertisements.



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EMOTIONAL VALUE

When I first started working for *Gun Digest*, I was having a late-night conversation with our CEO about gun content, and my vision for what this brand could become. It was a challenging and very good chat, during which he asked me, “How do you make potentially mundane gun content interesting?”

As an all-in gun enthusiast, the question initially struck me as damn near offensive. After all, guns, by their very nature, are interesting. How each works is interesting. Learning about how to get that bullet to go exactly where we want it is interesting. They’re guns, *duh!*

But to his point, what can be said about, say, a Glock 19—perhaps the most functionally and visually uninspiring handgun ever created (albeit one of the most popular)—that hasn’t already been said?

Of course, there’s no single answer to that question, and so much of the influence firearms have in our lives is felt, not described. And, just like that, there was my answer: emotional value.

I’ve written in these pages many times

about the Mossberg 500 Bantam .410 bore that my daughter used to tag her first turkey, or the M61 Winchester .22 LR my grandma gave to me when I was a kid. From a monetary perspective, those guns aren’t worth much, but in my eyes, that’s irrelevant; I’d never sell either. I’m too emotionally attached.

Sometimes, the emotional value of a gun doesn’t even need to be “direct” to make that firearm interesting. Take, for example, the Springfield M1903 highlighted on the cover of this issue. The historical role that gun played in the hands of young American men on the gruesome European battlefields is incredible. Those men, and the triggers they pulled, shaped history.

I strive to keep everything *Gun Digest* touches hardware focused: Meaning, it’s all about the guns, ammo and optics ... and how they work. But, as I see it, the emotional value of any gun is as tangible of a feature as how the trigger pulls. **GDTM**

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.30 Remington AR

HISTORICAL NOTES

The .30 Remington AR was designed by Remington as a big-game cartridge specifically for the company's R-15 rifle. It was introduced in 2009. Remington engineers started with the .450 Bushmaster case and went from there. A pointed .30-caliber bullet of reasonable weight is longer than a blunt-nosed .45-caliber bullet, so, to keep overall cartridge length compatible with the standard AR-15 magazine, the case was shortened to 1.525 inches from the original 1.7 inches of the Bushmaster design.

Back at its base, the .30 AR case starts with a diameter of 0.500 inch, and from there it tapers to 0.488 inch at the juncture of the body and shoulder. Neck diameter is 0.341 inch, and the case has a shoulder angle of 25 degrees.

The AR-15 rifle in .450 Bushmaster utilizes the standard .223 Remington bolt, modified by increasing its bolt face diameter to a nominal 0.473 inch (same as the .308 Winchester). When this is done, the counterbore wall, or shroud of the bolt, becomes rather thin. This is considered a safe modification because the cartridge operates at a maximum chamber pressure level of 38,000 psi (same as the .30-30 Winchester).

But, because the .30 AR is loaded to 55,000 psi, Remington opted for additional case rim support. This was accomplished by modifying the larger-diameter AR-10 bolt to fit the AR-15 upper. The face of that bolt is commonly sized for the 0.473-inch rim diameter of the .308 Winchester, but Remington went one step further by opening it up a bit and increasing the rim diameter of the .30 AR case to 0.492 inch.

By the time the job was done, the only thing the .30 AR case had in common with the .450 Bushmaster case was a base diameter of 0.500 inch. Remington went with a case rim diameter larger than that for the .450 Bushmaster to prevent a bolt built for that cartridge from being used in

For AR-15s in the field.



an R-15 upper with a .30 AR barrel.

GENERAL COMMENTS

With a length of 0.305 inch, the neck of the .30 Remington AR is capable of exerting plenty of tension on the bullet, a good thing to have on a cartridge designed to survive the rather violent trip it must take from the magazine to the chamber of an auto-loading rifle. The short, fat case of rebated rim design has a gross capacity of 44 grains, about 10 grains less than in the .308 Winchester case, or approximately the same as in the .30-30 Winchester case.

But because the .30 AR is loaded to higher chamber pressures than the .30-30 Win., it exceeds the maximum velocity of that cartridge. When the 125-grain Core-Lokt factory load is zeroed 3 inches high

at 100 yards, it will strike about 2 inches above point of aim at 200 yards and approximately 7 inches low at 300, where it's still packing upward of 1,000 ft-lb of energy. The .30 AR comes close to duplicating the performance of the .300 Savage when both are loaded with a 125- or 150-grain bullet.

The allure of this cartridge is that it turns the AR-15 platform into a true big-game rifle capable of terminal performance identical to that of the .300 Savage with bullets weighing 150 grains or less. It's suitable for deer, black bear and similarly sized game out to around 300 yards. Also, wildcatters have necked the .30 Remington AR case up and down, further increasing the versatility of the AR-15 platform. **GDTM**

.30 REMINGTON AR LOADING DATA AND FACTORY BALLISTICS

BULLET (GRAINS/TYPE)	POWDER	GRAINS	VELOCITY	ENERGY	SOURCE
110 Barnes Tipped Triple Shock	AA2200	39.2	3,115	2,369	Accurate Powder
110 Hornady SP	Xterminator	41.7	3,058	2,283	Ramshot Powder
125 Nosler Ballistic Tip	H335	40.0	2,880	2,301	Richard Mann
150 Nosler Accubond	AA 2200	35.2	2,600	2,251	Richard Mann
125 Barnes TSXJ	FL	--	2,800	2,141	Remington PHH30AR1
125 Core-Lokt	FL	--	2,800	2,176	Remington R30RAR1
125 Accutip	FL	--	2,800	2,176	Remington PRA30RAR1
150 Core-Lokt	FL	--	2,450	1,998	Remington 29485

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— LONG RANGE —

CHAMBERED IN



AT LAUNCH



The MRADLR™ is a high quality, military tested, off-the-shelf, extreme long-range system with user changeable barrels. Designed to deliver precision typically achieved only by custom-built rifles, this rifle expands the bolt-action MRAD family to include 416 Barrett with additional large caliber options available in the future.

barrett.net

ONE-HUNDRED PERCENT

The dangerous ambiguity of qualification drills.

The military and law enforcement have long used qualification courses to validate a soldier's or cop's shooting skill. Qualification is also a part of most defensive handgun training courses and, in some cases, it's a requirement to obtain a concealed carry permit. The difficulty of these shooting evaluations varies; there's no universal standard, and a passing score is subjectively set by the responsible administering body.

So, what *specifically* does the successful completion of a qualification course really mean?

I'm not exactly sure. This is partly because of the varying requirements, but it's also because of the tendency to rank performance—based on score—with identifiers such as marksman, sharpshooter, expert or master. It's hard to divine any real meaning from these scores or ranks, which are mostly used to incentivize shooters to strive to perform at a higher level. If you're qualified, you're qualified, right?

Beyond that, what else matters?

I'm not exactly sure about that, either.

On my first day of work as a police officer 32 years ago, the range officer took me to qualify with my service revolver, and I shot expert on the department's qualification course. But, in no one's imagination should I have been considered an *expert*—or maybe even qualified—with a handgun in a law enforcement setting. I didn't receive any law enforcement specific training; all I'd managed to do was hit the

required area of the target 90 percent of the time.

This is one of the two things that troubles me the most about qualification courses.

TROUBLING PARAMETERS

The object of shooting is hitting, and a failure to hit what you're shooting at is, by any measure, a failure. Had I only achieved 70 percent of my hits on that course of fire I would've still qualified. How could that be? How could a police officer fire 60 rounds, miss 18 times and still be considered "qualified" to carry, and, more importantly, shoot a handgun in a public setting where real, live, innocent human beings might be walking around Googling their smartphone?

When I went to work as a special agent for the railroad police, I was

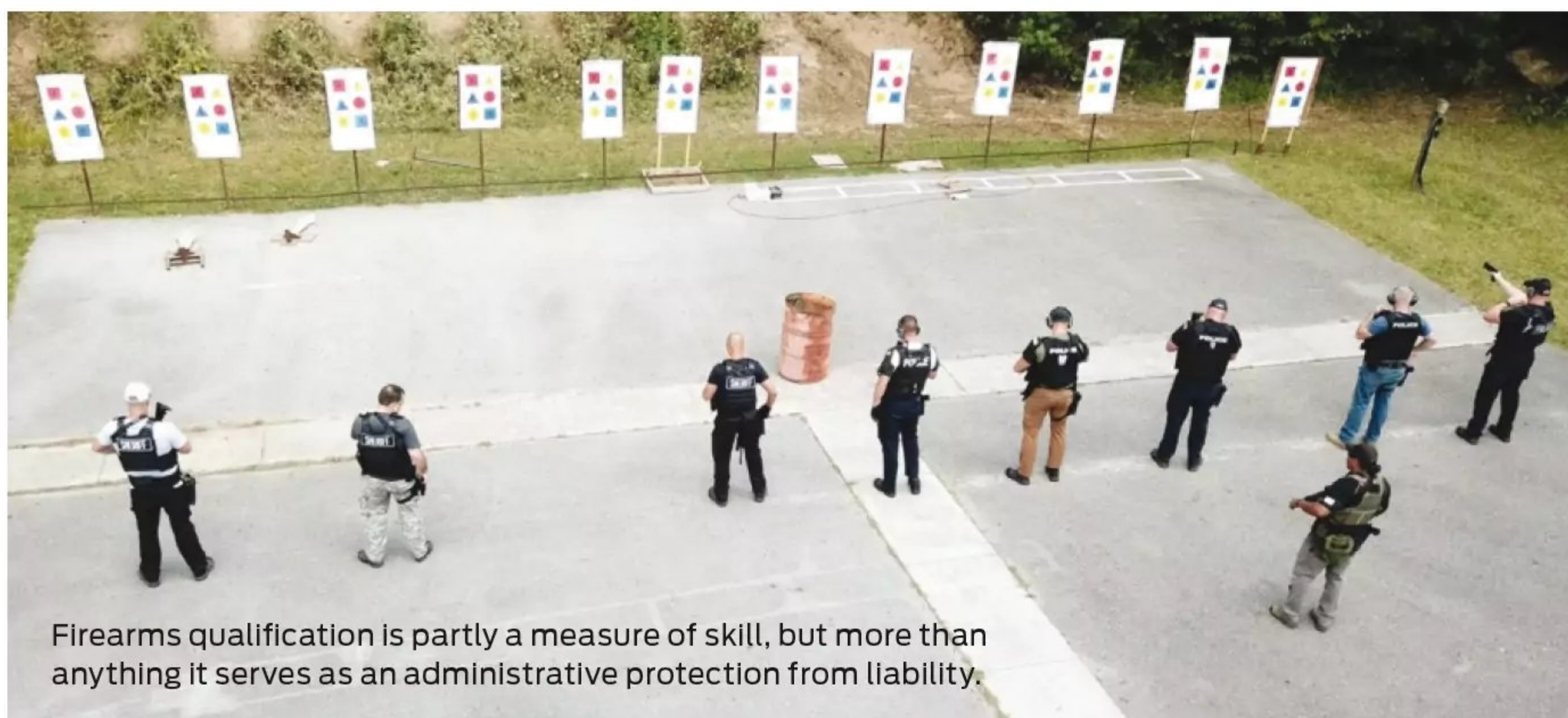
A qualification course can be very simple. The main purpose it serves is to be an administrative record of weapons handling and marksmanship skill.

shocked to discover that, to qualify with my duty handgun, I had to shoot 100 percent—no misses were allowed. This made perfect sense because you're responsible for every bullet you fire. The other surprise was what the qualification course amounted to. Though my memory is now a bit cloudy on the exact details, it went something like this:

You started walking toward the target with your pistol in the holster. At about 5 yards from the target—on the start signal from the instructor—you drew your pistol and had to place multiple shots inside an 8-inch circle in just a couple seconds. Simple, right?

In theory, maybe, but not so much in practice. As a law enforcement firearms instructor, what I ultimately learned was that the shooters who could pass this *simple* qualification course also had the ability to pass most any other qualification course in use by other law





Firearms qualification is partly a measure of skill, but more than anything it serves as an administrative protection from liability.

enforcement agencies.

Interestingly, a few years ago I asked retired Sergeant Major John “The Sheriff of Baghdad” McPhee of SOB Tactical if he could require a shooter to perform a single drill to establish proficiency, what it would be? McPhee said, “That’s one of the most common-sense questions I’ve had in a long time,” and he went on to say he’d use a drill he calls the Placement Test.

THE PLACEMENT TEST

In McPhee’s Placement Test, which is about as minimalist as it gets, you’re required to draw from the holster and put three shots inside a 3-inch circle, at 3 yards, in less than 3 seconds. According to McPhee, if you can do this, you *can* shoot—meaning, you have a solid grasp of the fundamentals. It’s also a very real-world, because as John’s

research in self-defense shootings has shown, in a generic way this drill closely replicates real-life situations. Ironically, the drill is very similar to my often used Forty-Five Drill, which mandates drawing from a concealed holster and putting five shots, into a 5-inch circle, at 5 yards in less than 5 seconds.

Our tests are very similar to the qualification course the railroad police used. What’s most important is that they’re 100 percent pass or fail. Though you could classify performance based on the actual time to successfully complete the drill, it’s unnecessary. These are no-B.S. drills that plainly illustrate whether you can shoot a defensive pistol ... or not.

I know some of you are screaming, “That’s not enough shooting and does nothing to document that you can hit

at greater distances, shoot from behind cover or from other positions!” You’d be correct. But, if you can pass either of these drills, you’re very likely skilled enough with a handgun to do all of those things, especially with a bit of training. And let me repeat that last word with emphasis: *training*!

WHAT REALLY MATTERS?

When we showed up for qualification day with the railroad police, qualifying was the first thing we did. It took about an hour for a bunch of us to do it—one at a time with an audience watching—and then we spent the rest of the day learning and practicing with our pistols to the point where we were challenged with scenarios and drills of ever-increasing difficulty. We did the single most important thing that too many police departments, military units *and civilian gun owners* fail to do. We trained!

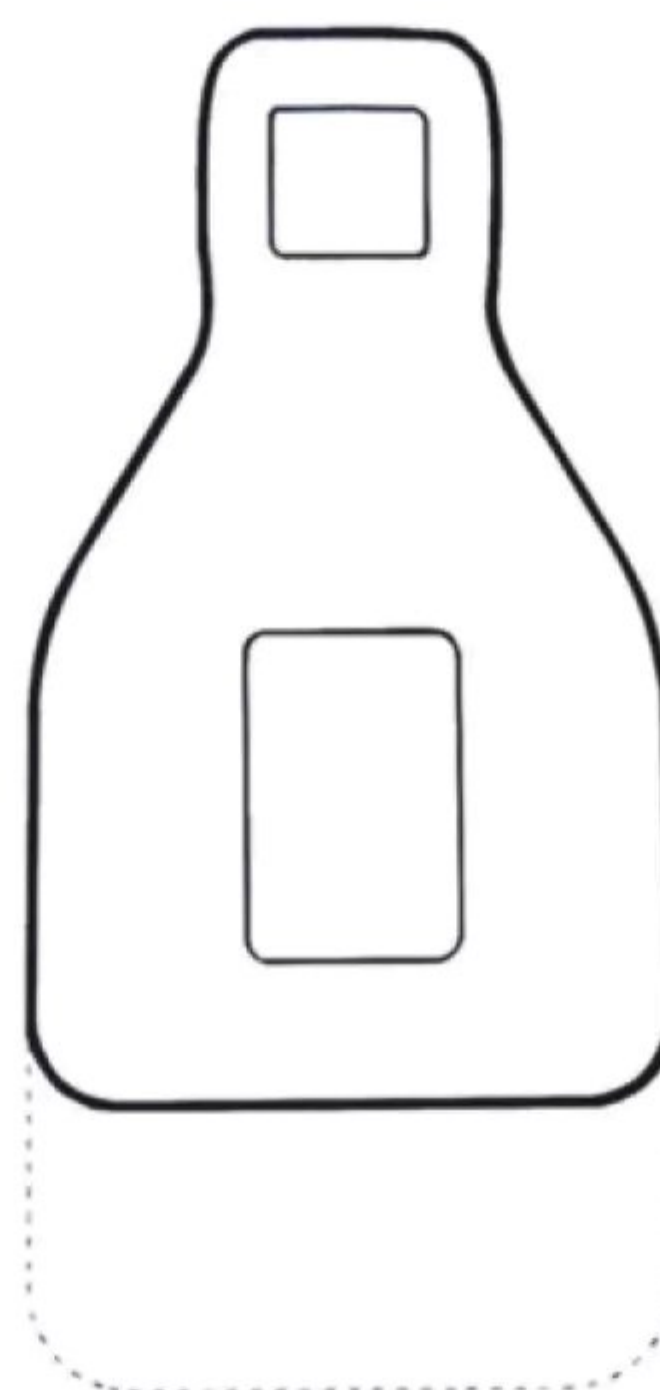
And that’s the second thing that bothers me about qualification courses—especially those that turn out marksmen, experts and masters—which is also the main point of all this pontificating: You should not put too much credence on your ability to qualify on any course. Sure, you might need to shoot a passing score to go to war, work the street or carry a concealed handgun, but qualifications tend to bring with them the illusion that you’re actually *qualified*. And that tends to develop the notion or mindset that no other work, training or practice is necessary.

Being qualified by the government, a school, or some other organization is one thing, but it has no real bearing on the ultimate goal—which is actually being capable of winning a fight with a pistol. The only way to come even close to that is through frequent and continual efforts to learn, train and improve your skill set that challenge you to get better so that you can always hit what you shoot at and never miss. One hundred percent! **GDTM**

FBI Handgun Qualification Course

DISTANCE	DRILL	TIME
25 Yards	Draw and fire 4 rounds standing, drop to kneeling and fire 4 rounds	20 Seconds
15 Yards	From the ready, fire 3 rounds	5 Seconds
15 Yards	Draw and fire 3 rounds	6 Seconds
7 Yards	From the ready, fire 5 rounds	4 Seconds
7 Yards	From the ready, fire 4 rounds, conduct empty gun reload, fire 4 rounds	8 Seconds
7 Yards	Draw and fire 5 rounds	5 Seconds
5 Yards	From the ready, fire 6 rounds	4 Seconds
5 Yards	From the ready, fire 3 rounds	2 Seconds
5 Yards	Draw and fire 3 rounds	3 Seconds
3 Yards	Draw and fire 3 rounds strong hand, switch hands and fire 3 rounds weak hand	6 Seconds

TOTAL SHOTS : 50, QUALIFYING SCORE: 40 HITS



QIT-99 TARGET

TOOLS FOR THE RANGE

Cleaning is important, get some Liberty.

The Liberty kit contains solvent, lube, grease, brushes, patches, pull cables, handled brush and cleaning rod segments ... basically everything but coffee.





The Liberty Lubricants cleaning kit is a zippered, firm-sided case that holds a lot. And it has room for more.

Liberty Lubricants has a slick cleaning kit (see what I did there?). The firm-sided zippered case holds the essentials for cleaning: solvent, oil and grease, patches, brushes and pull cables, as well as a handle and rod segments. Firm-sided? You know, formed textured nylon cases with a zipper around three sides that opens and lies flat. It's firm enough to offer protection to its contents, but not so firm that it can't be forced into a range bag. With it, you can do the cleaning you need at the range.

Using the Liberty cleaning kit, you can clean all of your various pistols and your AR-15, which covers pretty much any day at the range but that "special" one. Which one? There's no knowing, but that's one aspect of the Liberty cleaning kit that I like. The zippered case has enough extra room in it to fit in a few extra tools or supplies, depending on what you most-often shoot.

If you're focused on AR-15s, a carbon-scraping tool would be a good addition, along with a few spares like some gas rings or a Viton O-ring taped to a business card.

If you shoot mostly a 9mm pistol, adding in a section or two for a larger-diameter cleaning rod to knock out a stuck bullet would be a once every few years lifesaver.

I can even see shotgunners adding in an extra bore brush to scrub the plastic from wads out of the bore to clean the muzzle if you get it jammed into the mud out hunting.

Why do this? Because while the zippered case is good, the solvent, lube and grease are excellent. The set makes the Liberty cleaning kit a package worth stuffing into your range bag to rest until it's needed.

I know some of you are thinking "Sweeney is OCD when it comes to cleaning; we've read columns like this

before." Actually, no. People who know me would laugh out loud if you said that. But what I do know is that things happen at the range.

I'm there a lot, and I've lost count of the "oops" and "oh nos" that happen. Like setting up a cool photograph of a pistol and the small-group target it just produced, on the shooting bench, only to have the pistol lemming-like dive off into the sandy mud. Just wiping it off for the photo is fine, but it has to have the bore swabbed out before the next round of shooting.

No cleaning kit? Then, you're done for the day.

You only have to have that happen once to start packing cleaning supplies in the range bag. With the Liberty kit, you're set up with a good basic cleaning kit and can customize it as you need or wish. Getting excellent cleaning solutions and tools to use them with is a bonus ... a big bonus. **GDTM**

WRITE IT DOWN

Whether in an Excel spreadsheet or in a notebook, recording your data is invaluable.

A friend recently purchased a used rifle—a cool, old Remington 700 in the classic .280 Remington—which proved to be particularly finicky. He got his hands on what factory ammunition he could find, and the gun just didn't seem happy. It was struggling to print 1½ MOA, though the previous owner had insisted it was a “tack driver.” Scratching his head, my pal asked the previous owner exactly what ammunition it shot so well, and the older gentleman proudly told him, “My handloads.”

“Um, sir, do you by any chance have that data for the rifle you sold me?” The gentleman proudly nodded in the affirmative and ambled off to find “the book.” Thumbing through the pages, he stopped on a page that contained a rather detailed record of the old timer's load development, culminating in the final choice: a 160-grain Nosler Partition over a load of IMR-4350, all sparked by a CCI-200 large rifle primer. Cartridge overall length was also noted, along with a velocity as suggested by whatever reloading manual the gent had used.

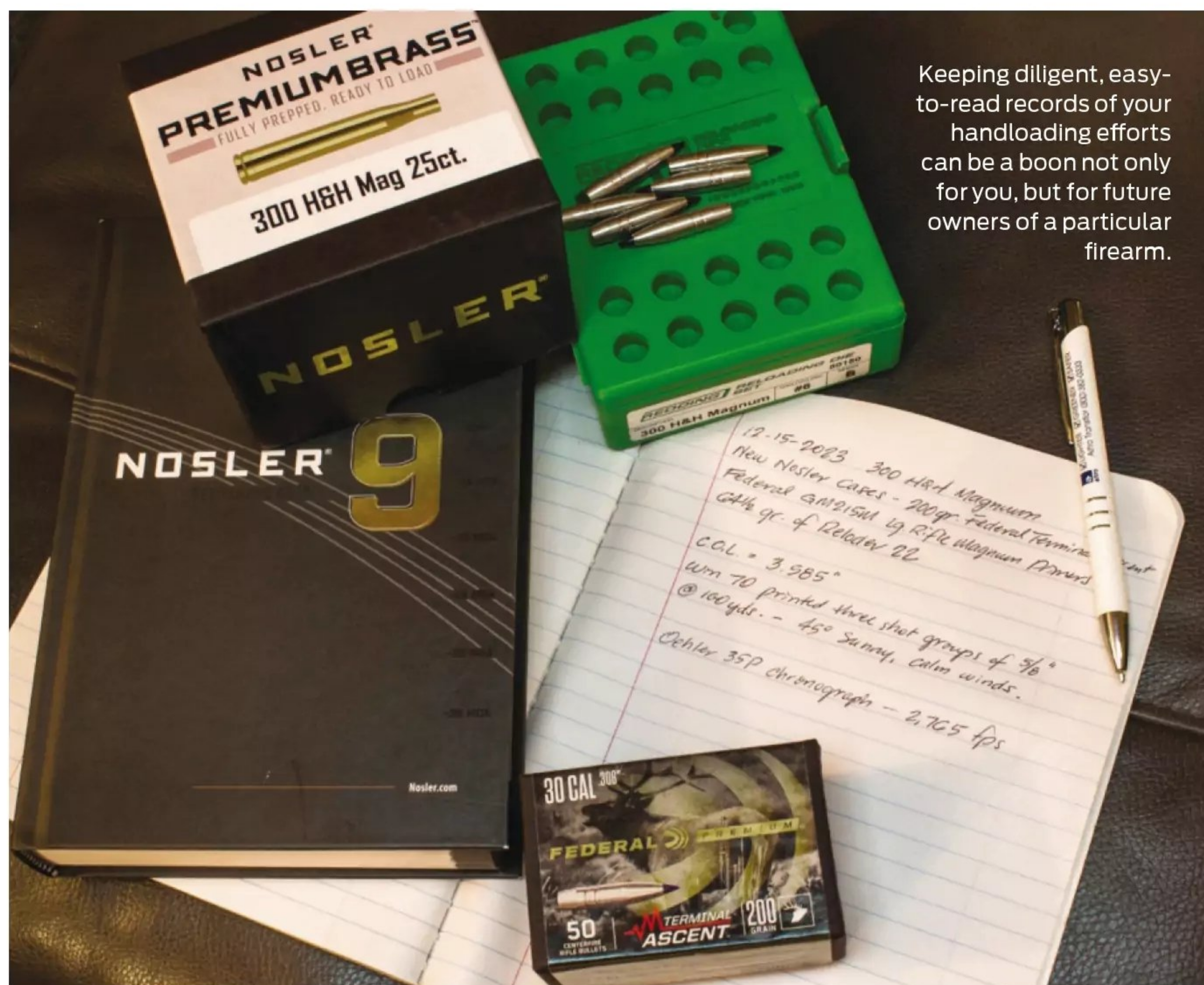
My friend brought that data to my shop. With all those components on-hand, in a matter of a half-hour we had some test loads cobbled together, and I

sent him on his way to the range. When my phone rang about 90 minutes later, my friend's elated voice told me all I needed to know—the rifle was shooting as he wanted it to. Three of those classic Noslers were printing groups measuring less than ⅝-inch at the 100-yard target board, and we had a happy camper on the butt end of the rifle ... all because a reloader had the wisdom to keep diligent records.

BE DILIGENT

Fast-forward to the digital age, where smartphones, voice notes and the evil Excel spreadsheet have all helped to displace handwritten notes, the keeping of records has been both enhanced and diminished equally.

I was raised working as a land surveyor. In that aspect, I have a deep and unwavering respect for keeping detailed and diligent notes, and that undoubted-



Keeping diligent, easy-to-read records of your handloading efforts can be a boon not only for you, but for future owners of a particular firearm.

When loading different projectiles for the same cartridge—such as the 180-grain Scirocco and 220-grain Hornady shown here in the .300 Winchester Magnum—it's good to keep very specific notes regarding all aspects of each load.

With precision tools like the Redding Micrometer Adjustable Crimp die, even more parameters of your handloaded ammo can be recorded.



A proper roll crimp—as shown here on the hard-kicking .500 Jeffery—requires a balance of case length, bullet seating depth and seating die setup; detailed loading notes can help save time in setting up the needed components.

ly carried over to my time as a reloader. Now, with the technological era having firmly taken root—even in the reloading world—there are some wonderful benefits to having these digital tools and the ability to store our data within the machines. However, there are very strong points to be made for keeping a good, old-fashioned notebook for all of your reloading experiences and adventures.

I've often referred to reloading manuals as a simple snapshot in time, or a laboratory report of one particular rifle's interactions with varying combinations of bullet, primer, case brand, and powder type and charge weight. As serious reloaders know, few—if any—loads are universal, as the subtleties involved with the components of the load and the construction of the rifle or handgun can play a huge role in the variations from the listed data in any manual.

So, it's essentially up to the individual reloader to create their own manual for the firearms they own and load for. Keeping detailed records of both successes and failures will not only shed light on the trials and tribulations of load development, but it will save time in future endeavors.

What data should we be keeping records of? I'm glad you've asked.

WHICH NUMBERS MATTER?

Quite obviously, for each cartridge loaded for, you'd want to know the case brand; primer brand and type; powder brand and charge weight; bullet brand, make and weight; and seating depth. I also want to see the number of times these cases have been fired and/or trimmed (if at all), and the depth to which they were trimmed. I want to know whether the bullet has been crimped, whether it was a roll crimp or taper crimp.

For the long-range crowd, the double-rifle shooters or even for the more picayune reloaders, group size and velocity measurements taken at each range session could be recorded, along with the correlative weather conditions, including temperature and humidity, to derive the effects of environmental factors.

For those who make every effort to keep things as consistent as possible, the lot number of the powder used might even be recorded.

Those disciples of the long-range arts are heavily dependent on uniform velocity figures, much more than hunters who spend the vast majority of our time inside of 300 yards. To those "reach-out-and-touch-'em" folks, variations of 25 to 50 fps will make a definite difference out past 1,000 yards.

For the double rifle crowd—who are aiming for a specific velocity to match the ammunition with which the rifle



was regulated—you'll often see a summer load and a winter load developed. The temperature difference can have a measurable effect on accuracy and how well the two barrels throw their shots.

All this information can be entered into a computer program—I do like Excel for its ease of layout—but I only use the electronic means of storing data as a backup. I still prefer to handwrite my notes, as it allows me to record my thoughts and observations without the confines of a box on a spreadsheet.

And, to me, that notebook is sacred: the one that has all the reports of finally finding the perfect combination, or has the red letters, "*DON'T EVER DO THAT AGAIN!*" **GDTM**

01 WOOX Titano

Heirloom looks with state-of-the-art performance, the WOOX Titano stands out in competition stocks. Tailored for Benchrest and F-Class shooters, the stock boasts a stunning American walnut stock and an aircraft-grade aluminum chassis. With a 3-inch fore and wide barrel channel supporting up to 1.20-inch diameter barrels, it accommodates large fire tubes common to comp rifles. Furthermore, WOOX's Suspense weight system allows you to precisely balance the system with six 2.5-ounce weights. The buttstock is fully adjustable for both the length of pull and cheek rise. Other notables include a smooth-bottom bag rider butt and Integrated thumb rests to enhance grip comfort.

MSRP: \$999**02 Taylor's & Company 1875 Outlaw Revolver**

A collaboration with Uberti, Taylor's & Company offers up a faithful reproduction of a classic Remington single-action, but with a modern twist—it's chambered for 9mm. While no Old West outlaws pitch Parabelum, the modernization effort makes it easier on contemporary cowboys' pocket-books. Available in 7.5- and 5.5-inch barrel lengths, the 1875 Outlaw features smooth walnut grips, a forged blued steel frame, a rear frame notch and a fixed front blade sight. Also, the webbed ejector rod helps the wheelgun cut an unmistakable profile. It's enough to make Frank James envious.

MSRP: \$698**03 StopBox Chamber Lock**

New or old, it's wise to stop the unauthorized use of a firearm. That's where the Chamber Lock comes into play. At once, it keeps a firearm safe, yet at hand. Constructed from Type II hard-anodized 6061-T6 aluminum, it features a patented mechanical hand gesture code lock, ensuring intuitive use even in low-light or high-stress situations. The lock offers six configurable combinations, expandable to 16 with the Actuator Accessory Pack, although preset combinations are recommended for optimal security. Compatible with most AR-15s and shotguns.

MSRP: \$150**04 MTM Case-Gard Bull Rifle Rest**

Dialing in a rifle is the key to a solid shooting platform. MTM Case-Gard provides just this with its affordable Bull Rifle Rest. With an adjustable length between 18.3 and 26 inches, it accommodates nearly any long-gun you shoulder. Additionally, the lightweight rest features slip-free rubber feet and a wide stance, for a wobble-free shooting base. And front elevation adjustments are easily made on the rest, thanks to a screw system allowing you to get a rifle or shotgun situated just right.

MSRP: \$43**01 »****02 »****03 »****05 »**

05 Mission First Tactical Leather Hybrid Holsters

What a looker! Too bad it's meant to be kept under wraps. This Kydex and leather gem offers exact tolerances, secure retention and easy re-holstering. Plus, the hanger requires no break-in time compared to its traditional leather cousins. Versatile for AIWB, IWB or OWB use, it accommodates right- and left-hand positioning. Additionally, the American-made hybrids are red-dot compatible and have an audible "CLICK" when you re-holster.

MSRP: \$70

06 Ruger Diamond Anniversary Limited Edition SR1911 Pistol

In celebration of its 75th year, Sturm, Ruger & Company presents its limited-edition 75th Anniversary Ruger SR1911. This iconic pistol features a finely detailed, laser-engraved slide and custom grip panels with intricate scrollwork. Ruger's CNC-controlled machining ensures precision, while the classic 1911 fire control and positive barrel lockup enhance accuracy. You'll have to act fast on these beauties, only 750 units are being produced in 2024, and each pistol bears the special R75 serial number prefix and ships in a marked case with two stainless-steel magazines.

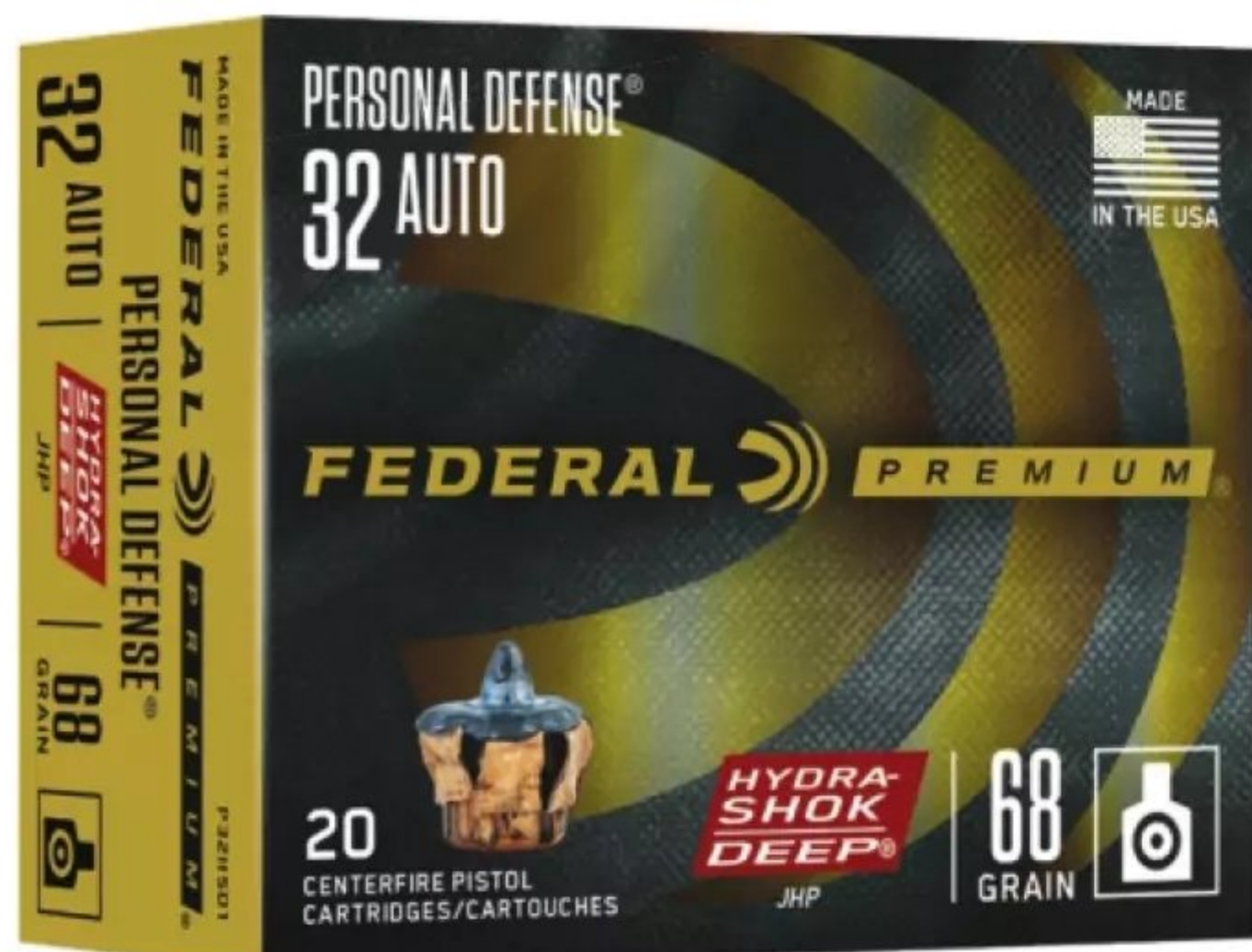
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07 Federal Premium Hydra-Shok Deep .32 Auto

In the day and age of deep carry, good ol' .32 ACP is making a bit of a comeback. Federal Premium is supporting its renaissance with the introduction of Hydra-Shok Deep in the pocket caliber. Rigorous testing and stringent manufacturing processes ensure superb accuracy and consistent ballistic performance of this ammo. Furthermore, the notched copper jacket of the Hydra-Shok bullet ensures consistent controlled expansion and adequate stopping power trigger pull in and out.

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GEAR TO GET





SPRINGFIELD M1903 MARK 1



The M1903 would serve alongside the M1 rifle in WWII, in both the M1903 configuration like the author's rifle or, in the later, mass-produced M1903A3 model.



A historic gem still capable of producing impressive results.

The M1903 Springfield is one of those guns that just about every shooter knows, and for the most part, it needs no introduction on these pages. It's certainly not the last bolt action rifle issued to American forces, though to truly appreciate it you must understand just how advanced this rifle was at the time it was introduced.

What follows here is the story of not just the M1903, but the significant thinking that spawned concepts we now use today. The rifle was on the edge of technological advancement in its day, and it was called to do some incredible things ... including transforming into a semi-automatic, pistol-caliber rifle.

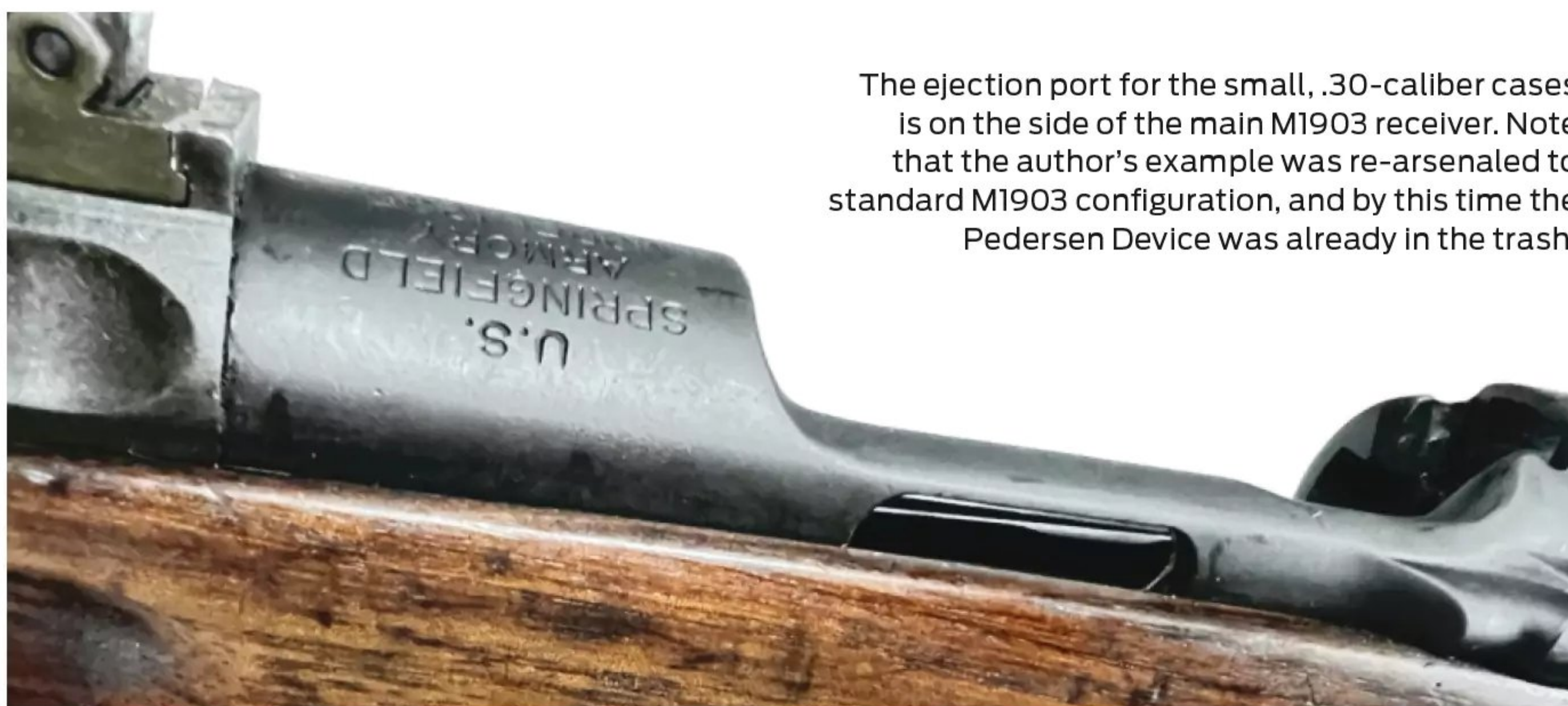
THE PRETENDER TAKES THE THRONE

In the turmoil and uncertainty of the late Industrial Revolution, most of the world's great powers were in an era of colonial expansion. The threats they encountered ranged from hostile natives to forces with similar or better technology. These were the days before tanks, drones, missiles and all sorts of modern horrors. The horse and saber were still in regular use, and forces were just as likely to meet a violent end at the tip of African spears as they were machine gun fire in some places in the world.

The British were dominating entire mounted armies with just a few Maxim guns that cut down thousands of men in mere minutes. America, like the rest, sought to expand its influence into the Philippines and the Gulf of Mexico in

a war against Spain. While American military intervention was likely not the best course of action against a better-prepared foe, our country went anyway and found that boldness was a bandage, not a cure, for their obvious technological shortcomings.

American forces fought against the Spanish in Cuba with the Krag rifle, a gun that was inferior in design. The Germans, Russians and British all had stripper clip-fed magazine rifles, all of which were obviously better than the slow loading, underpowered Krag and its .30-40 cartridge. The American military mind at the time was regressive; many of the officers in charge of procurement had kept the single-shot Trapdoor Springfield in .45-70 until the last minute, while European powers were already fielding belt-fed machine guns.



The ejection port for the small, .30-caliber cases is on the side of the main M1903 receiver. Note that the author's example was re-arsenaled to standard M1903 configuration, and by this time the Pedersen Device was already in the trash.

The Spanish had the Mauser rifle in 7mm—a cartridge that's still theoretically relevant judging by how the 6.8 and 7mm bores are being reevaluated today. The Spanish Mauser was a wake-up call to the American military, and an immediate response was issued that demanded the same performance ... and a more powerful cartridge.

And this is where things get a bit muddy. Instead of designing a totally new rifle or looking at European cartridges, the American government essentially ripped off Mauser and copied the design with a hilariously small amount of alteration. Copying someone else's homework is usually cool with the teacher as long as you don't write it word for word, but the American government simply didn't care and, sure enough, they lost an international lawsuit and had to pay the Mauser company what was a fortune at the time.

To make it worse, the original cartridge, the .30-03, was an immediately

outdated round-nose design, making it inferior to all the European cartridges of the time, which were all "pointed" or spitzer versions. Few .30-03 rifles exist today, and they're very valuable: The government converted all rifles in inventory to the new .30-06 cartridge.

Now, with a suitably advanced bolt action, America was ready for what came next.

The prewar years were easy on the M1903. It was used in military actions, some of questionable legitimacy, in Mexico and in South America. The rifle performed very well, and the design was well known to be very accurate and lethal. This time period saw calvary troopers with bolt-action rifles, lever actions, automatic pistols, revolvers and all sorts of varied attempts to integrate these new systems.

George Patton cut his teeth in these conflicts, as did other famous names like Pancho Villa and Gen. Pershing—all deeply associated with the early

history of the M1903. All this romanticism would soon end, and the era of colonial adventurism would take a sour turn as European brothers turned their new guns toward each other instead of joining forces to continue conquering the world and spreading industrial civilization.

The most "civilized" nations on Earth would rip each other to pieces and send an entire generation of young men to death in the mud. American forces entered this horror with the M1903 in hand, an already outdated rifle but with no good replacement on the horizon. Automatic rifles were the next thing, but that need wouldn't be met until millions of lives had already been lost.

A LEGACY OF ATTEMPTED INNOVATION

What people often fail to realize was that the M1903 was probably the most accurate, reliable and advanced bolt gun of its day, but it struggled because it largely wasn't meant for the terrain and style of fighting that occurred in the war. The armies were uniformly armed with what amounted to target rifles geared for long-range use in open spaces.

Most of the wars fought up until this point, from an American point of view, were dynamic with high levels of movement ... such as in the running battles fought in Mexico. Slow-firing, highly



The M1903 Mark 1 had a characteristic post-WWI swept bolt handle.

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accurate bolt action rifles were ideal for that version fighting, but in the trenches, the rifles were used largely in frontal attacks: large artillery shells and gas were the leading cause of casualties ... next to machine guns. The individual soldier was literally outgunned and had to rely on the bayonet if things got close, and close combat was a norm inside the trenches.

Variations on the M1903 began to pop up, including versions with extended magazines, suppressors and optics. These designs had been tested, and it's believed that there were suppressed M1903 sniper rifles in use as early as 1916 in Mexico. "Periscope" rifles were also developed to safely shoot from inside a trench.

Yet, for all this, the M1903 was still a powerful bolt-action rifle, and the need to increase firepower was of utmost importance. Many designs were in the works, such as the Thompson submachine gun, but they would arrive too late to make a difference. To bridge the gap and provide the individual soldier with an appropriate weapon for all uses, the M1903 was looked at as the base for a wild concept: converting a powerful bolt-action rifle into a semi-auto, pistol-caliber rifle—with the ability to simply switch back and forth.

As strange as it sounds, this is exactly what happened.

THE PEDERSEN DEVICE

While it appears in video games and media occasionally, the Pedersen De-

vice was very rare—even when it was introduced. The concept was supposedly going to be adapted to other rifles, such as the Mosin Nagant (interestingly enough, Mosin rifles were made in America as well as Russia), and it was intended to be included as a complete system for infantry rifles. This never happened, and it's extremely unlikely that the devices ever saw combat.

The idea behind this device was that a group of soldiers could attack and defend with greater effectiveness at close distance, while at the same time being able to fight at longer ranges with full-power cartridges. Because the Springfield rifle is .30 caliber, the device used a special cartridge that originated in America, the 7.62x20mm. It's better known by its metric designation because France actually adopted it after the war and used it well into the Vietnam era.

The idea that soldiers could hold ground better with these underpowered pistol rounds is dubious at best, but it demonstrated that there was a general need for something of an in-between cartridge that was able to be fired in rifles but had a weight savings and capacity advantage. Many attempts would be made over the next decades, until the first true intermediate rounds were developed by the Nazis with the 8x33mm for the STG44, making it the first true "assault rifle" that eventually antiquated many full-size rifles.



The Springfield rear sight is advanced yet simple, affording the shooter four aiming points either as U-notch or peep sight, and it even incorporated spin drift. Outside of an optical sight, this rear sight is about as good as it gets for the era.

The M1903 features a magazine cutoff switch—an interesting idea, but it was a holdover from the old school of thinking. A soldier would load five in the magazine, activate the cutoff, then single feed individual rounds on top of the magazine to save ammunition.



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The M1903 loads from five round stripper clips in the exact same way that Mauser rifles do ... because it's a Mauser.

In the meantime, the concept of the Pedersen and its small .30-caliber cartridge led to the thinking behind the M1 Carbine and its own .30 Carbine cartridge, which proved to be a far more successful product that saw plenty of use ... despite better options existing.

Since the concept was largely unviable, production ended about as soon as it began, and most Pedersen Devices were destroyed or lost to time. Surviving examples are very rare, commanding prices upward of \$60,000. Rifles that were designed to use the Pedersen Device are a separate evolution of the M1903 and carry the designation "MARK 1."

The number of Mark 1 rifles manufactured is up for some debate. Some esti-

mates place them as high as 10 percent of total M1903 production, but in my own research and my two decades as a CMP shooter and collector, I've only come across one of these rifles in original, but re-arsenaled, condition ... and it's in this article.

There are definite discrepancies in the serial number ranges and apparent numbers that are on the market, and more than that, I estimate that 99 percent of these rifles had their altered parts swapped in for standard M1903 parts by the military. In other words, collecting these rifles is a crapshoot. The only real

way to get close is to check for the Mark 1 stamping and, of course, the telltale ejection port cut in the left side of the receiver.

The number of these rifles available today is quite small, and their value is extremely subjective. My rifle retains most of the original parts, including the smooth Mark 1 trigger. That trigger alone is worth a good amount. I replaced it in my gun with a standard serrated M1903 trigger, knowing I was going to shoot it in CMP matches. My rifle was original and even had the original cosmoline, rust-inhibiting wax wrapper.

I bought the rifle for a song because it was encased in a hardened layer of said cosmoline, and the owner thought it was trash. I had to keep a straight face after examining it, because it was worth easily four times what I paid.

The cosmo layer only took me an afternoon to remove, and I found that the rifle was in un-issued condition with a 1919-dated



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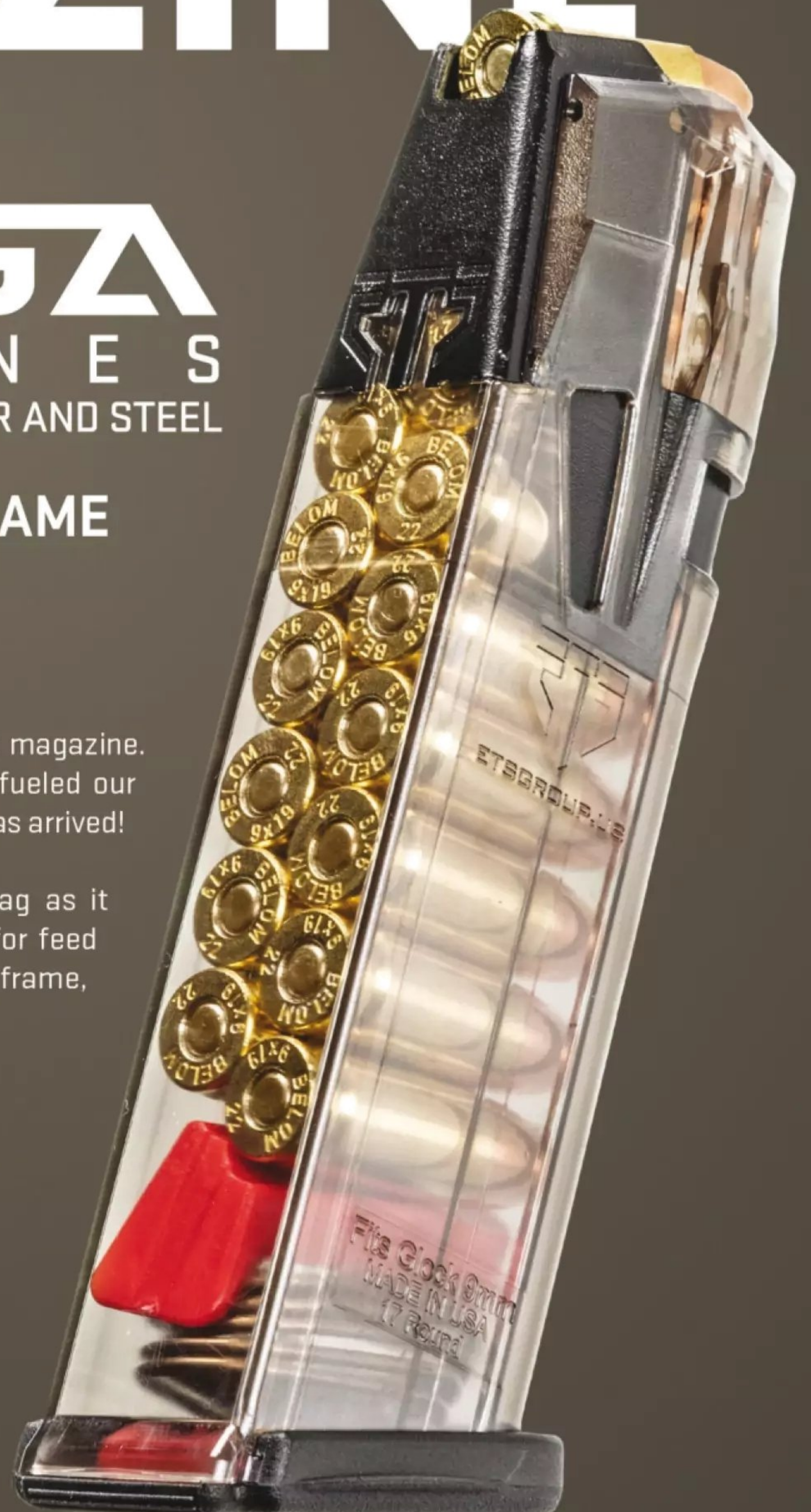
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LOADING THEM LIKE ELMER

I'm a big fan of reading the works of Elmer Keith, as I'm sure many of you are as well. Keith spoke highly of the old .30-06 loads in heavy weights, such as the 220-grain round-nose loaded at around 2,400 feet. He describes this load in many of his books, and it is, in fact, an easy load to replicate today to original specs. I've shot this load a bunch, and I think it's one of the most fun to fire in a period M1903 rifle, much in the same way that firing 160-grain round-nose bullets in a 6.5x55 Swedish Mauser is. Hornady makes a great 220-grain round-nose bullet that's perfect for loading in vintage replica .30-06 loads. There are three powders that really get this load shooting well: Hodgdon H1000 at 60 grains, H4350 at 52 grains, and Varget at 45 grains in Remington brass. (Note: Always use caution and refer to the Hodgdon data when loading—don't take my word for it.)

barrel that corresponded to the serial number, meaning it was likely this barrel was original to the receiver. Of note, the presence of a wrapper on the gun and the fact that mine has a standard "S" stock with correct acceptance stamps (no ejection port cut) proves that it was a re-arsenaled gun.

In my experience, the Mark 1 variants are exceedingly difficult to find. The receiver markings are valuable on their own, even if the rest of the rifle is unoriginal, the special receiver can add as much as \$1,000 on top of the base 1903 value. My rifle in this article would sell for around \$3,000 given that it retains many of the original Mark 1 small parts but has a later Parkerized finish, as op-



Remington UMC 150-grain loads are great for general use in the M1903. Hornady's M1 Garand 168-grain match load is excellent and very accurate. If you want some great, traditional hunting fun, load the 220-grain Hornady bullets with Hodgdon powder.

posed to the glossy black common to truly original guns. A complete rifle with original finish would be valued at somewhere around \$5,000.

Now, could an enterprising man simply buy the correct small parts and add them to his Mark 1 receiver? Sure, and few would know any different because most of these guns were re-arsenaled in the interwar years, much like mine. You should exercise caution at these prices. If you're looking for an original, it should have the straight "S" stock with two crossbolts, correct Mark 1 stamping, ejection port cut and slightly swept bolt handle. Finding rifles with original triggers designed for alternating between bolt action and semi auto are rare, and, as I mentioned, I swapped mine out to prevent it from getting damaged.

THE M1903 MARK 1 IN ACTION

It's extremely likely that I'm the first person outside of the arsenal to fire this rifle. As a result, I'm able to fully assess what a 105-year-old rifle was truly capable of. I found that, off the bench, the Mark 1 rifle was capable of easily holding 1.5-inch groups using modern

Hornady 168-grain M1 Garand match loads. For comparison, my Fulton Armory M1 rifle, essentially a new gun in all respects that matter, is capable of the same accuracy with the same ammunition. I shot both the Fulton M1 and the Mark 1 rifle at the 2023 Camp Perry National Matches and took a silver and bronze, respectively.

Ammunition in the 150-grain class is substantially more comfortable to fire in the Mark 1. My personal favorite is the Remington UMC load; it's affordable and able to print groups around 2 inches for 10 shots at 100 yards. In fact, it's my go-to load for this rifle, being that I really only shoot iron sights out to 300 yards.

I'm extremely impressed with the craftsmanship of the rifle overall, and the ammunition was the limiting factor in the day. A Camp Perry legend and record set in 1921 by Bob Farr was done with an off-the-rack M1903. He shot 71 consecutive bull's-eyes at a staggering 1,000 yards until the coming darkness of night made him stop. This feat has never been bested, and his overall record still stands. **GDTM**



The M1903 Mark 1 rifle. Sling by J. Berlin slings.



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COLLECTIBLE BUT USABLE



The author's two P6s—the one in the blue plastic box dates from January 1980, while the other dates from December 1995.

The West German LE surplus Sig P6

It was the early 1970s, and European police forces had a new problem: terrorists. Those LE officers had a miscellaneous assemblage of .32s and .380s in their armories ... while the bad guys were starting to use 9mm SMGs.

Not good.

So, the West German Federal police

issued a request for a new sidearm, and it was to be in 9mm Parabellum. HK offered up the PSP (which we know as the P7), and Walther offered up a newly built P38 with a shorter barrel, dubbed the “P5.” In-between, the tasking authority dubbed the Sig entry as the P6, the model we know as the P225.

All of the new pistols accepted for use

were single-stack 9mm pistols, and that was considered a big step up by the police forces (compared to packing a .32 Auto, any of them would be). All three were approved, and each law enforcement agency or administrative state was free to purchase and issue any of them. The P5 (P38) wasn't popular, and the P7 (HK) was the more expensive one, so



The special hammer spur, with the notch that lets the police armorers know when a pistol has been dropped on its hammer. Before you laugh, the Germans aren't the only ones with pernickety regulations.

the other two pistols.

One interesting detail found on the P6 pistols, and not on the P225 pistols, is the hammer. The German police standards called for a special hammer, where the rowel of the spur has a notch cut through it. This is the *Deformationssporn*, or “deformation spur.” It exists for one purpose only: to determine if the pistol in question has been dropped and fell on its hammer. If that happened, the spur would be bent and not be bendable back—*uh-oh*. The obsession with pistols being dropped, especially on the hammer, is a mystery, but once something is written into the specs, it's there until the end of time.

The P6 trigger pulls are reported to be heavier than the P225s exported to the U.S., but I don't have a representative sample to check. I also don't know

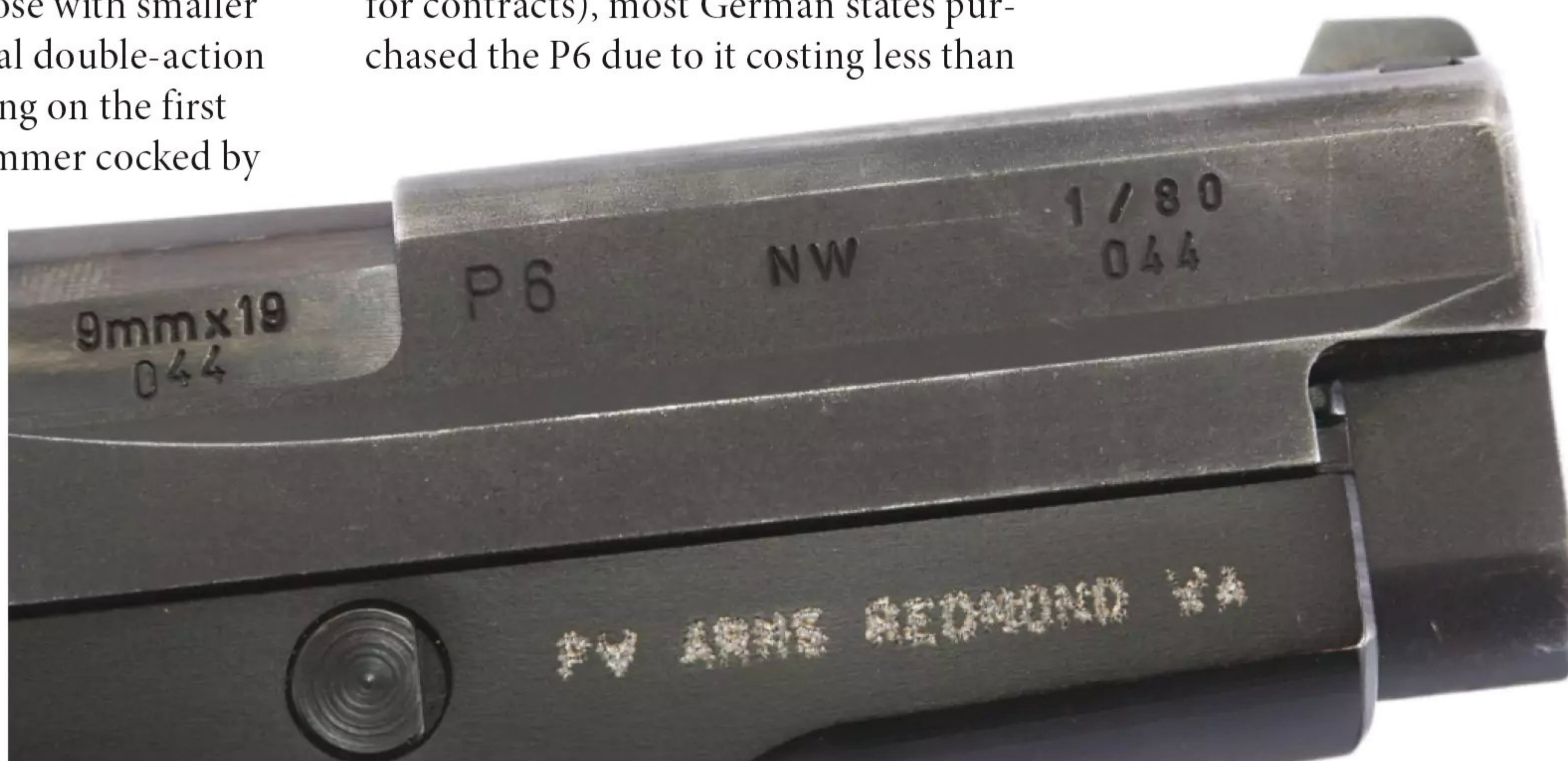
most states bought P6s.

RISE TO THE TOP

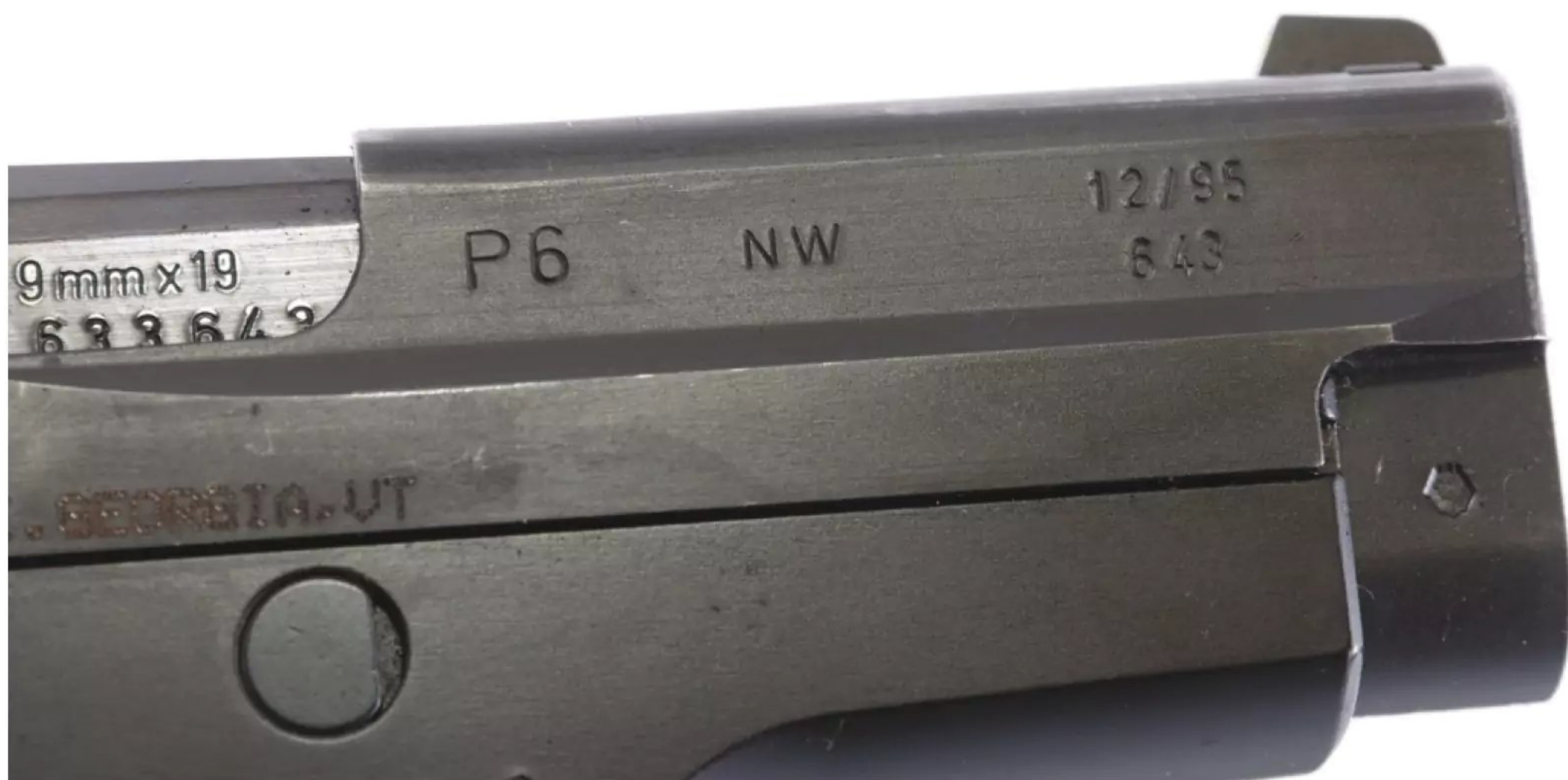
The P6 is basically a pared-down single-stack P226, or a compact P220. It's smaller and lighter than either, and since it has a single-stack magazine, it's easier to grasp for those with smaller hands. It's a traditional double-action system, trigger-cocking on the first shot and with the hammer cocked by

the slide on subsequent shots. There's a hammer-dropping safety lever on the left side, and this safely lowers the hammer after it has been cocked. Manufactured in Eckernförde, Germany, at the J.P. Sauer plant (which Sig bought a controlling interest in so they'd qualify for contracts), most German states purchased the P6 due to it costing less than

The older one, with the slide markings of the German State that bought it, and the acceptance date. Also note the importer and that the barrel is marked with the last three digits of the serial number.



This had to be one of the last P6s the State of Nordrhein-Westfalen, bought in December of 1995.



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Both of the author's guns are marked on the left side with the Sig Sauer name and "Made in Germany". Commercial pistols were marked on the right side with the Sig name and P225.

if this was due to the West German police wanting to reduce ADs, or that they had to deal with harder primers, or Americans wouldn't put up with a heavier trigger pull. Mine isn't bad at all.

One aspect of the Sig design (that created part of the lower cost) was the slide manufacture. The slide was a heavy (really thick gauge) steel stamping, with the muzzle end block welded to it, and the breechblock pinned into it. The earliest P226s are built like this, as well as the early P220. The feed ramp of the barrel was designed to be best-feeding for FMJ ammunition (can't have any of those nasty JHPs now, can we?), and some report that their P6s don't like JHPs. Neither of mine has ever noticed.

TWO, BUT DIFFERENT

I actually have two, and they came in different boxes. One came in a fiber-board box, looking very commercial, and the other in a hinged hard plastic (blue) box, apparently the standard police issue box. This is where collecting can come in. Both boxes had the name of the officer to whom they were issued (last names of Kurio and Schaniejel). And my two came in through two different importers: PW Arms and Century Arms.

They also span most of the period of issue. The older one has a "proofmark," or acceptance date, stamped on it of 1/80, while the other is stamped 12/95. Both came from the German state of Nordrhein-Westfalen, and a lot of the ones you'll see (if you go looking) will

be. It happened to be the most populous state in West Germany (now all of Germany), half again as many people as either of the next two. (No big surprise there. It's the state encompassing the Rhine-Ruhr industrial area.)

And, clearly, they used them; by De-



cember of 1995, the new standard for police pistols had been adopted, and the P6 was on the way out.

The grips are the same between the P6 and the original P225, as are the magazines and internals. They differ only in markings. However, when Sig went and updated the P225 to the P225A1, they changed the magazines and pretty much everything else. The P6/P225 magazine has a reputation of having feed lips that don't like to always be loaded. Over time, they'll wear, and this causes failures to feed.

We Americans expect (and get) magazines that can be left loaded literally for decades and still work. The European police department's usual process is for an officer to be issued his pistol, magazines and ammo when he reports for duty, load up, go to work, finish his shift, unload and turn it all in. In that process, who would notice a problem? A magazine feed lip that doesn't like to be loaded for years? They stay loaded eight hours at a time ... no problem here.

Well, Sig updated the magazine design, and it'll withstand American use, but it's not, alas, compatible with the old P6/P225 (rats!). Grips don't

(Above left) The slide is proofmarked on the bottom of the nose, and the two P6s the author has sport different proof house marks. Why? Who knows.

(Left) The breechblock, a separate machined piece of steel, is pinned into the stamped, heavy-gauge steel slide.

The giveaway for the pinned-in breechblock is the joint on the top of the slide. Later Sig slides, machined from solid, do not have this.

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The older of the author's two guns came in the "proper" LE plastic box, with a spare magazine and the issued officer's name on the lid, hand-written on an adhesive label.

interchange, nor do much of any other parts. So, if you need to repair or want to upgrade, you need to be very careful, as a lot of sellers don't know or care between P225 and P225A1 parts.

The West German P6s were marked as to the state that bought them, and mine are marked with the date of manufacture and the state on the right side of the slide, along with the last three digits of the serial number. They don't have the commercial Sig markings, while the P225 imports do. However, the P6s are marked on the left side of the slide, and the left side of the barrel chamber: "Sig Sauer." They also have the German-law required proof marks, and here things get interesting for my pair.

The slide nose undersurface is the usual place to mark them, and the markings on mine differ. You'd think, with the P6s being built at one plant, and in this case with them being purchased by Nordrhe-

in-Westfalen, that the proofmarks would be the same. Nope. More collectibility variance. The surplus ones will, of course, have markings from the importer, most of which were through Century Arms International, but not all.

CALCULATED RARITY

You may wonder why you don't see (or didn't back when they were coming into the U.S.) many of the P5, P6 and P7 pistols. What I've been told is this: When the standards changed back in the mid 1990s, the states (each German state is like a U.S. State with their own responsibilities and authorizations, etc.) were told by the Federal government they could get new pistols from the new list. And the Federal government would trade them, one-for-one, or whatever they needed, provided they traded the old ones in.

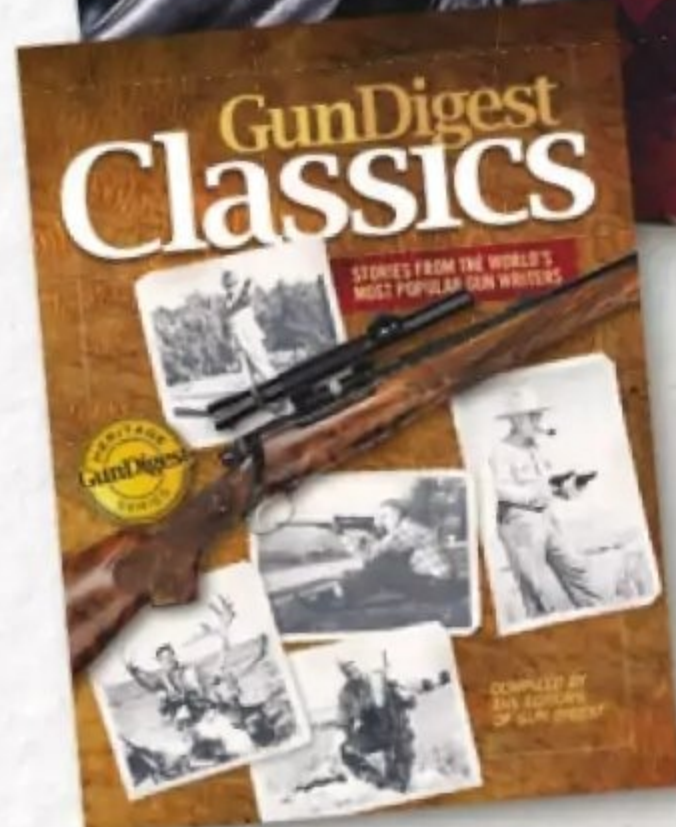
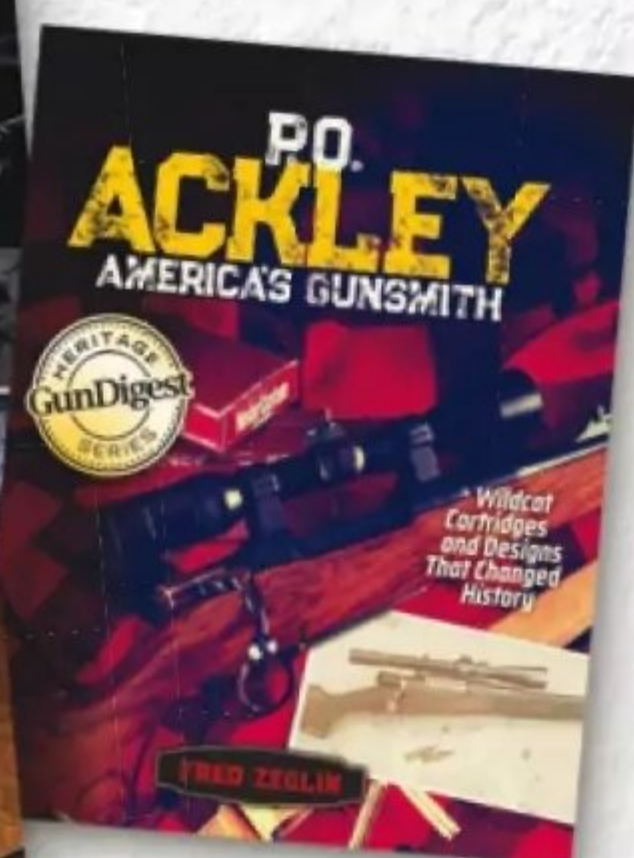
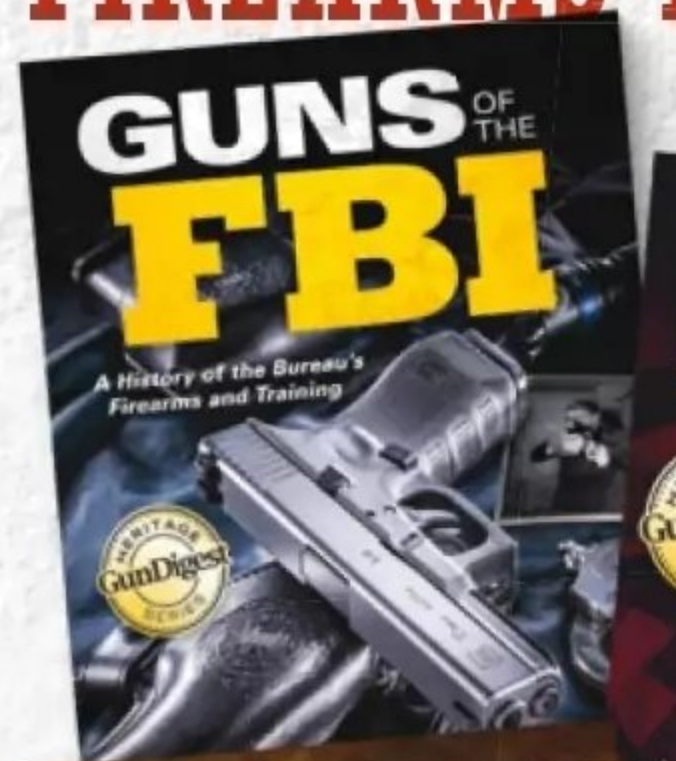
If they didn't trade them in, then

they'd have to purchase new ones out of their own budget, and the old ones would have to be disposed of within the requirements of the very strict German laws concerning firearms. Taking the easy way, they just handed them over and got new ones.

Some states didn't, or they at least tried a few lots of test sales, and that's how we got the ones we got. This amounted to tens of thousands of P6s, but not the whole lot of them. Still, they're common enough and less expensive (curiously) than the P225 or P225A1, so if you want to get into collecting easily and without breaking the bank, this is one place to start.

I tested mine when I first got them and found that they were, not surprisingly, just like all the other Sigs I'd shot up to that point: accurate, reliable, easy to take apart and clean, and resemble a Sig (which is a good look). I seriously

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TYPE: Hammer-fired semi-automatic

CALIBER: 9mm Parabellum

CAPACITY: 8+1 rounds

BARREL: 3.9 inches

OVERALL LENGTH: 6.9 inches

WEIGHT: 31 ounces

FINISH: Blued steel, anodized aluminum

GRIPS: Plastic

SIGHTS: Notch and post

TRIGGER: 8 pounds, 12 ounces DA; 4 pounds, 6 ounces SA



CHRONOGRAPH AND ACCURACY DATA

AMMUNITION	WEIGHT (GR.)	VELOCITY	SD	ACCURACY AVG. (INCHES)
Magtech FMJ	115	1,005	12.7	2.0
Arm Scor FMJ	124	1,094	12.6	2.5
Black Hills FMJ	124	1,098	15.0	2.5
Asym JHP	115	1,009	8.7	2.0
Hornady FTX	115	1,107	17.9	2.0

Accuracy results were to be averages of three, five-shot groups at 50 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

considered using one as an everyday carry pistol, but the background on the magazines was just enough to give me pause. It may be true, or it may take years to happen, but who wants to run

the risk?

I could load up a magazine and leave it loaded for a few years (I have tests like that going on right now; the longest one is up to 14 years), but I can't trust it until I know and that's years away. Plus, if the test magazine does fail, I've just thrashed one of a very few I have.

So, mine are range queens and teaching pistols for new shooters. The grip is big enough to hold, but small enough to be managed by shooters with small hands. While the DA pull is more than I'd want a new shooter to struggle

with, the SA trigger pull is plenty nice enough and yet not too light. And either are accurate enough that a new shooter who pays attention will hit what they've aimed at.

Collectible, but usable, suitable for teaching new shooters, but fun to shoot for the experienced. It uses standard 9mm ammunition (unlike some historical pieces I have in the safe) and doesn't mangle the brass. Made by the Swiss in Germany for Germans, but now here in America. What's not to like? **GDTM**



The later of the author's two guns came in a commercial P225 box, but with the issued officer's name handwritten on the lid. Again, why the difference? Who knows.

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The P365 is a very modular system that can accept a wide number of accessories. Superstition Concealment made the stylish camo holster and mag holder.

DOT WATCHING

The growing demand to equip defensive handguns with red-dot sights.



The rapid proliferation of red-dot sights on pistols has truly been something to watch.

Not many years ago, the first attempts were made (usually by tinkers) to integrate compact optical sights into pistol slides. The Trijicon RMR was probably the first of these “micro” dots that was added to pistol slides directly ... not as part of a frame “race gun” mount. In doing my research, a few people can claim to be among the first to try it, but I couldn’t find any evidence that it was the unique idea of any one individual.

In fact, the RMR models at the time weren’t expressly designed to go on pistols, and some, including my own dual

illuminated model, ended up back at the factory for repairs from being battered. What I can say now is that the trend in the industry is decidedly in favor of dots on handguns.

CLOSED VS. OPEN EMITTER

Many types of dots exist on the market today. For the sake of simplicity, I’m not going to get too technical here and use all the marketing jargon to describe these products. Electronic sights, mini reflex, compact weapon aiming display, space laser, etc.—for our purposes, I’ll refer to them as “dots” from here on out. Basically, it’s what we’re dealing with: All of these sights accomplish the same goal at

the end of the day.

At this point, we have two basic styles of dots.

The mainstay for a long time has been the “open” emitter style. This is a forward lens that has a dot projected onto it. The emitter projecting the dot, usually a small LED or the like, is literally open to the air. Examples of this type of dot include the



A sampling of P365 slide options. Unfortunately, these dots are unable to be moved from slide to slide interchangeably. Different “foot-prints” make it so that you must have a different cut for each type.

RMR. Despite being common and more minimalist in approach, I don’t think they’re the “best” ones out there today, as more technology has become available in this smaller footprint.

The next type is closed emitter. As you can probably deduce, the emitter is enclosed within the body of the sight; front and rear lenses completely protect the internals. Now, this is a relatively new type of sight coming to handguns ... and not everyone is excited about them. For starters, these sights tend to be blocky and large. The RMR is such a common sight on pistols that we have become collectively used to seeing it, and it can be a bit jarring to see something so large and industrial looking on the slide of a handgun. Trijicon recently released the RCR, and while I like it, it’s chunky and a little clunky ... despite being the same footprint as the more svelte RMR.

I’m not really hung up on traditional-

Enclosing a red-dot sight is a sensible option to keep it clean. While blockier, it (center) offers some advantages over open emitter sights. Note that the overall sizes of these dots are similar, but each offers something different for the end user.



ism here, if one could call the open emitter style “classic.” Somehow, my favorite 1911 looks and feels strange with a closed-emitter sight. The blocky appearance doesn’t flow with the lines and it seems out of place; however, we’re talking about an over 100-year-old design that’s also dressed up with a flashlight and suppressor. I leave the aesthetic quandary here to the better qualified, but I may just have to get used to it: Closed-emitter dots are, in general, superior to their open-emitter brethren.

A major and constant issue I have with open-emitter sights is cleanliness and reliability. Functionally, I’ve never had an issue with an RMR. In the field, well, that’s another story. You could argue that the RMR wasn’t designed as a pistol hunting sight—but it is to me and many other people. I find it to have changed my handgun hunting game at 50 yards and in, and the tiny 1 MOA dot I use is both fast and precise.

For concealed carry, I have also moved to an enclosed-emitter sight. In years past, Holosun had a bit of a “cheap” reputation and a somewhat iffy appearance as opposed to the clean, refined lines of the RMR. But that has changed, and there are some significant advances being made, such as cost for features. I like things that work at any price point, and yes, the new

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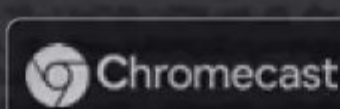
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(Left) The full-size RMR is the author's old buddy and has been used for countless rounds. The 1911 in .45 ACP, especially suppressed, is an easy gun on optics, and it's truly a complement to the gun.



(Left) Holosun offers a large and ever-expanding range of dots for pistols. They're relatively inexpensive, rugged and often have cutting-edge features.



(Below left) Sig's dot sight came from the factory mounted on this slide. It's the least costly at retail and is slightly harder to get used to than the others, offering no physical buttons. The integration of inexpensive dot sights will likely become standard on factory pistols soon.



(Bottom left) The RMRcc is a great little sight. Just as rugged as the full-size model, the CC variant can survive some serious use. The optic cut on this wasn't done at the factory. The RMRcc was unsupported by Sig, so the cut was done on a factory slide by Maple Leaf Firearms of Celina, Texas. They do fine work.

RCR is a staggering \$849 suggested retail price.

The EPS line from Holosun is half the cost across the board, and for general-carry-gun use they are very solid and reliable. Closed emitters in carry guns are excellent choices in that they protect the emitter from sweat and lint, as well as have a better degree of protection against fogging. An added bonus is that the lens surfaces are easy to wipe clean—you don't have to go digging around in the sight to wipe the interior lens or try to get crud out of the emitter so you can see the dot.

DOTS AND LIGHTING

Another real and distinct advantage of a closed emitter is that it's much easier to use in low light. This is subjective, so don't quote me here as gospel. I find that the "tube" style is easier to align and is significantly less prone to washout from external light sources than an open-emitter dot. I also find that, while it does somewhat obscure more of your visual area while aiming, I rarely have to "hunt" for the dot. This all depends on circumstances, but having done a lot of night shooting with artificial lighting I can say that dots can be very finicky.

A main consideration for all dots is washout, and I fervently believe in complementary irons on a self-defense pistol. If you have a bright light on your pistol, in a closed space that light projecting on the wall is enough to wash out your vision, making the dot seemingly disappear. If you have a bright dot for daytime



THE FUTURE OF PISTOL OPTICS

I say this with decent clarity and confidence: In the next five years, we'll see most pistols (and revolvers) not just made to accept dot sights—but also including them as standard from the factory. Classic models like the 1911 will, at some point, be offered with some sort of standardized optics base. Pistol optics are going through a teething phase at this stage, with many brands competing to be the dominant footprint. We saw this a while back with KeyMod versus M-Lok, and the latter prevailed on the mass market. It'll be interesting to see what this "standard" interface will be and what sort of innovation will happen in its confines.

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Old meets ... old? The 1911 platform can look a bit funky with a red-dot mounted, but flashlights and suppressors have been added to the classic warhorse for decades. The Military Arms Corporation pistol (below) is a nearly perfect replica of the Joint Special Operations Command Special Forces 1911s. At the time people were tinkering with them, dot sights just didn't exist in this capacity, so these had custom adjustable sights put on as well as other accuracy modifications. Times do change, but a Black Hills 230-grain FMJ is always a good choice ... no matter how modified your 1911 is.

use, it may be so bright in the dark that it completely obscures your lens. Doing drills with various dots in various light conditions has shown me that they can be a liability when you don't have the right brightness settings or various external lighting conditions.

50,000 ROUNDS OF HARD LESSONS

I've shot the absolute heck out of my pistol dots, and I was an early adopter of this type of pistol sight mostly because I wanted an edge in pistol hunting. It turns out you can stretch these sights pretty far. I've landed hits (but not consistently ... that's a long shot) at 400 and 500 yards with dot pistols. That said, 200 yards on an IDPA silhouette is possible with a decent pistol with a 1-3 MOA dot. You don't have to be a trick shot these days to take advantage of off-the-shelf equipment. In fact, it's stunningly easy to do.

Confidence building is something that dot sights are, without a doubt, great at cultivating. The learning curve of iron sights can be steep, and having a very easily adjustable floating dot in place of irons cuts down the learning curve exponentially.

Younger people are now growing up

with this type of sight as commonplace, which was the same with iron sights a couple generations ago. Virtually all of my friends now carry with dots on their pistols, and many have integrated them into their hunting pistols in place of traditional tube scopes. The 10mm Auto is still gaining popularity as an outdoor chambering, and dot sights are helping to turn people on to look in its direction. Something about a 6-inch 1911 in 10mm with a dot sight zeroed for 100 yards just makes me giddy ... and that's coming from an avowed .45 ACP man. Irons will always have their place, but I can't deny how quickly people gain proficiency on any gun using a simpler aiming system.

TRIJICON RMR

I began using the open-emitter style in the RMR years ago. I have the most rounds on the RMR, and I've owned four: one dual illuminated, two LED versions and one RMRcc. In that time, I've fired a combined total of about 35,000 rounds with them mounted on both pistols and as a piggyback on a rifle. I've carried the RMRcc daily on my P365.

The main RMR use I have under my belt is on the 1911 in .45 ACP, both suppressed and with all sorts of ammo

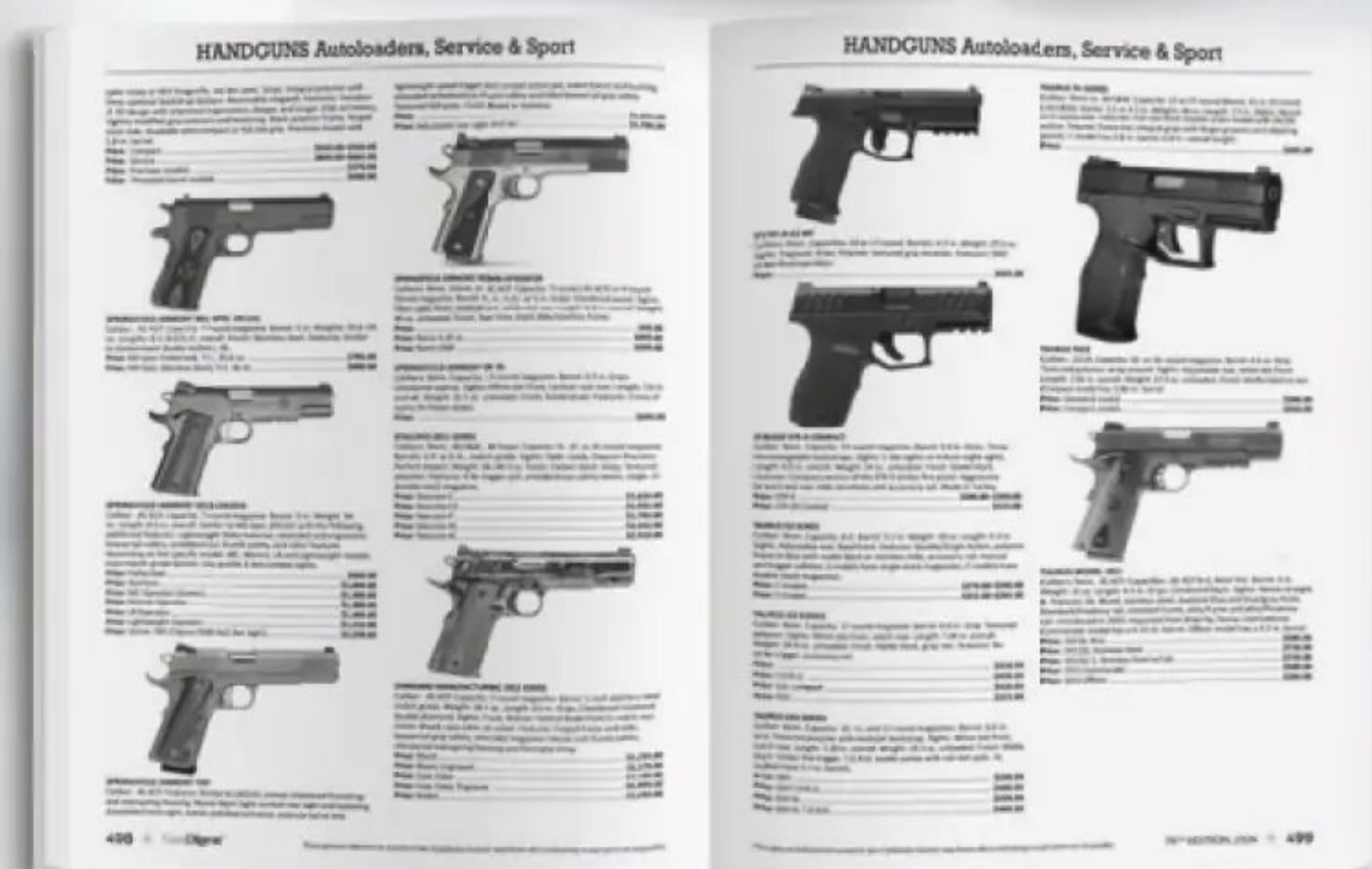
types. In years past, I shot this gun heavily, mostly with handloads. I've had to replace the recoil spring twice, but every other part has held up to the abuse. The RMR has held up to some severe abuse. I've bounced it against rocks and it's worn some mud, got it rained and snowed on, shot it in classes spending 500 rounds a day nonstop—and I've come to completely trust its reliability. The RMR is the real deal, and while it's an open-emitter sight, it's just so damn good that I can't bring myself to say it has any disadvantage, despite it wearing arguably outdated technology as compared to closed-emitter functionality.

SIG ELECTRO-OPTICS ROMEOZERO

Sig Sauer has been pushing the limits on many of their designs these days and have come out with some really nice stuff, but based on some of the features, beware that it's not for everyone. I shot the RomeoZero on a P365 slide as shown in the accompanying photos, and I promptly put 2,000 rounds through. I'm not a fan of the "tap to program" feature, nor do I like the "shake awake" style of

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Suppressor use has doubtlessly increased red-dot acceptance on handguns. Taller sights became standard on many models that were deemed “suppressor ready” and when red dots became popular, people found that these tall irons worked in tandem with the dots. Sometimes things just work out for the best.



activation ... but for some shooters, I realize it's a major asset. I prefer buttons in my car; I'm not a man who enjoys touch screens, and I got the same feel with the RomeoZero. I want to choose the controls manually—I came to realize this really wasn't the sight for me, but it might be for you. At this point I have about 5,000 rounds under it, and it has presented no problems outside of personal preference.

HOLOSUN EPS CARRY

The Holosun EPS Carry is an enclosed emitter sight, and it has become my favorite carry pistol optic. I have it mounted on a True Precision slide, and it's my daily carry sight. The only thing I did to it was replace the factory screws with some that were a bit beefier, but that was a personal choice. So far, I've ran

about 5,000 rounds with this sight, and I practice with it at every range trip to keep my skills up. It is, hands-down, the most easy-to-use micro dot I've shot. On a small gun like the P365, it speeds up my shooting by providing a more tube-like image—my eye is drawn to the center like a big ghost-ring sight. I won't say my groups have improved when shooting fast, but my time to get on target in most lighting situations is dramatically faster, as is my hit rate shooting one-handed or weak-handed. **GDTM**

All types of dot sights can be integrated onto full-size rifle mounts. There are many styles, such as piggybacked, 45-degree offset, integral ring cap mounts and other options. If you have a large rifle and are perhaps preparing for a close shot, these come in handy. Do be aware that weight adds up and the extra optics are another thing to maintain.



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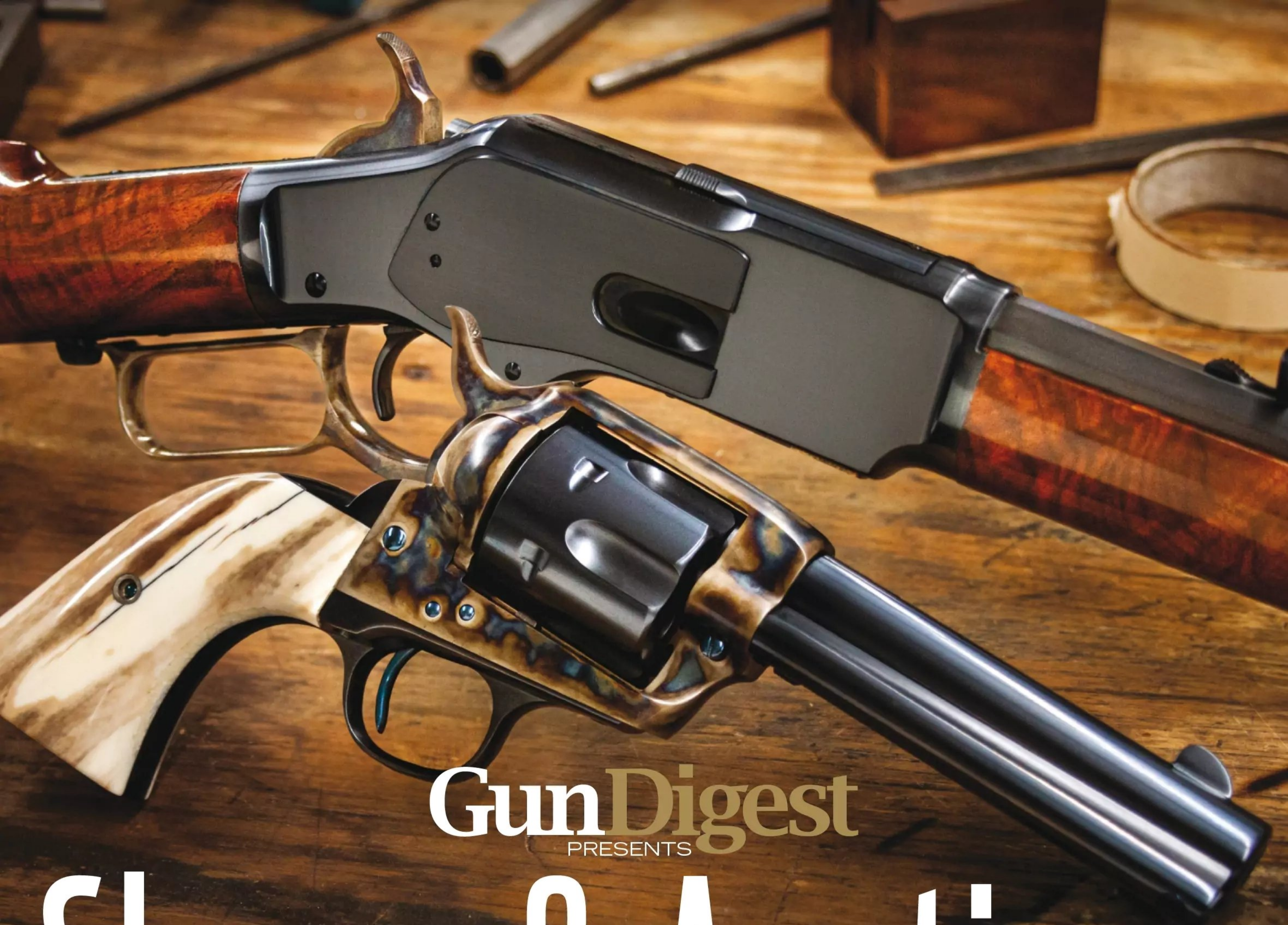


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Mar 8-9 UT, Vernal. Vernal Gun and Knife Show. Uintah Conference Center, 313 East 200 South.

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MARCH

Mar 8-9 UT, Vernal. Vernal Gun and Knife Show. Uintah Conference Center, 313 East 200 South. SH: Fri. 12pm-7pm, Sat. 9am-6pm. A: \$5.00 daily. T: 175. F: \$50.00. Friend of Buckskin Hills Shooting Complex. P.O.Box 790028, Vernal, UT 84079. PH: 438-247-2254. vkknifeshow@gmail.com.

APRIL

Apr 6-7 TN, Crossville. Cumberland County Gun and Knife Show. Cumberland County Community Complex, 1398 Livingston Road. SH: Sat. 9am-5pm, Sun. 9am-3pm. A: Saturday Admission is just \$5.00, youth under 16 Free. Sunday Admission is Free to all attendees.. T: 200. F: \$40 for 6' table with multi table discounts. Cumberland County. 1398 Livingdston Road, Crossville, TN 38571. PH: 931-484-5028. www.gkshow.org.

Apr 12-14 NV, Sparks. Big Reno Show . Nugget Resort Casino, 1100 Nugget Ave. SH: Fri. 9am-5pm, Sat. 9am-5pm, Sun. 9am-3pm. A: \$15 one day. \$24 all three days. \$90 early in with exhibitor set up . T: 700. F: \$165 booths \$435. 1344 Disc Dr suite 800, Sparks, NV 89436. PH: 775-828-2350. Bigrenoshow.com.

AUGUST

Aug 3-4 TN, Crossville. Cumberland County Gun and Knife Show. Cumberland County Community Complex, 1398 Livingston Road. SH: Sat. 9am-5pm, Sun. 9am-3pm. A: Saturday Admission is just \$5.00, youth under 16 Free. Sunday Admission is Free to all attendees.. T: 200. F: \$40 for 6' table with multi table discounts. Cumberland County. 1398 Livingdston Road, Crossville, TN 38571. PH: 931-484-5028. www.gkshow.org.

SEPTEMBER

Sep 6-7 ND, West Fargo. Red River Range Gun Show. Red River Regional Marksmanship Center, 640 16th St NE. SH: Fri. 4pm-8pm, Sat. 8am-4pm. A: \$5.00 per day; 12 years and older. 11 and under free with adult. T: 98. F: \$38. Red River Regional Marksmanship Center. 640 16th St NE, West Fargo, ND 58078. PH: 701-356-0677. rrrmc.com.

OCTOBER

Oct 5-6 IN, Valparaiso. Gun & Knife Show. Porter County Exp-Center, 215 East Division Road. SH: Sat. 8am-5pm, Sun. 9am-3pm. A: \$6.00 children 12 & under free with Adult. T: 350. F: \$60.00 8ft. @ run of show. Dunes Rifle & Pistol Club L.L.C.. P.O. Box 345, 812 West Old Ridge Road, Hobart, IN 46342. PH: 219-942-4514. <https://valpogunshow.com>.

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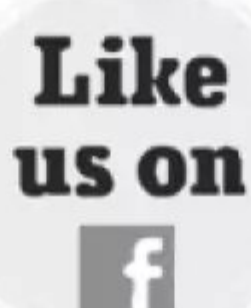
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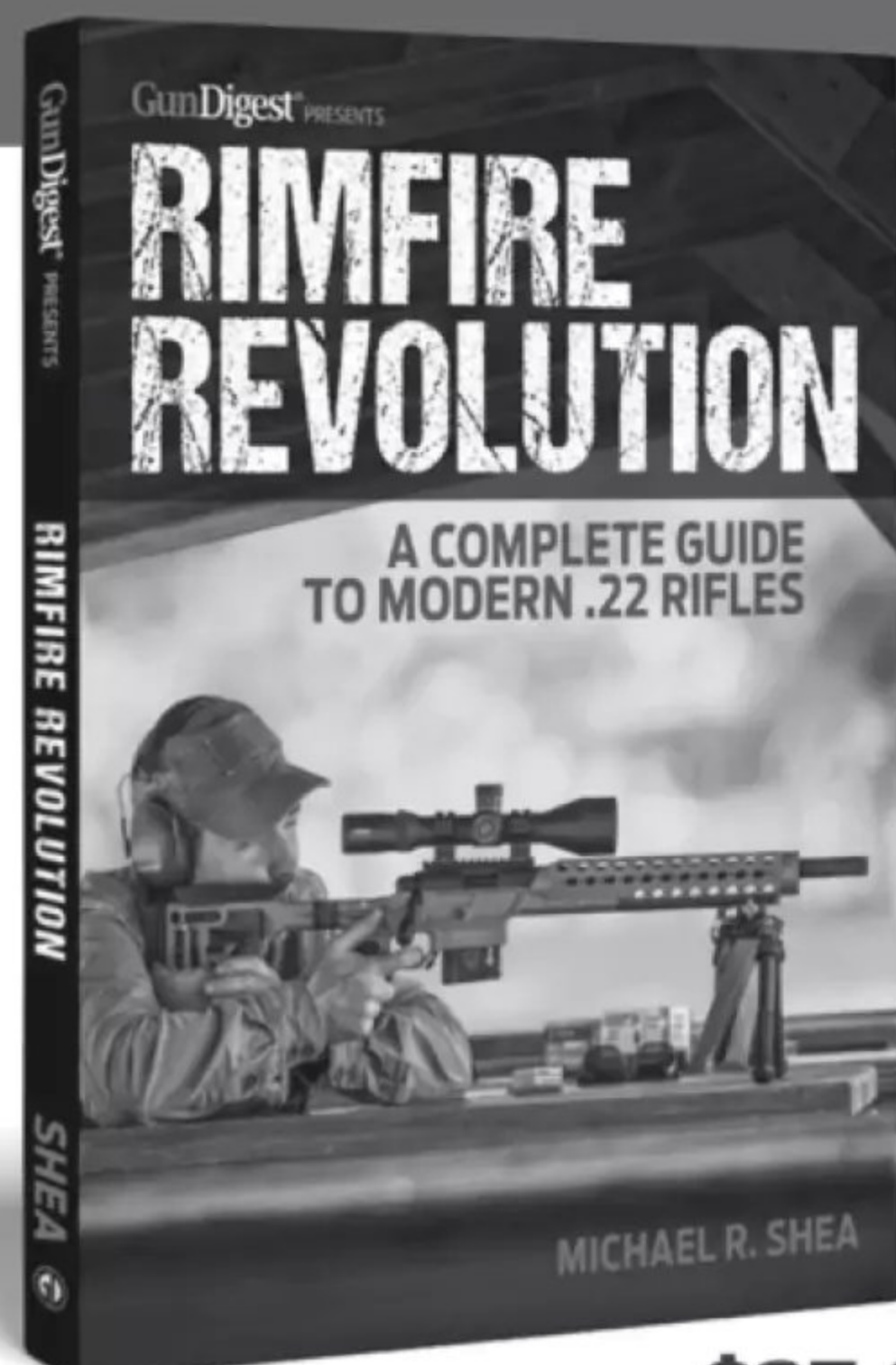
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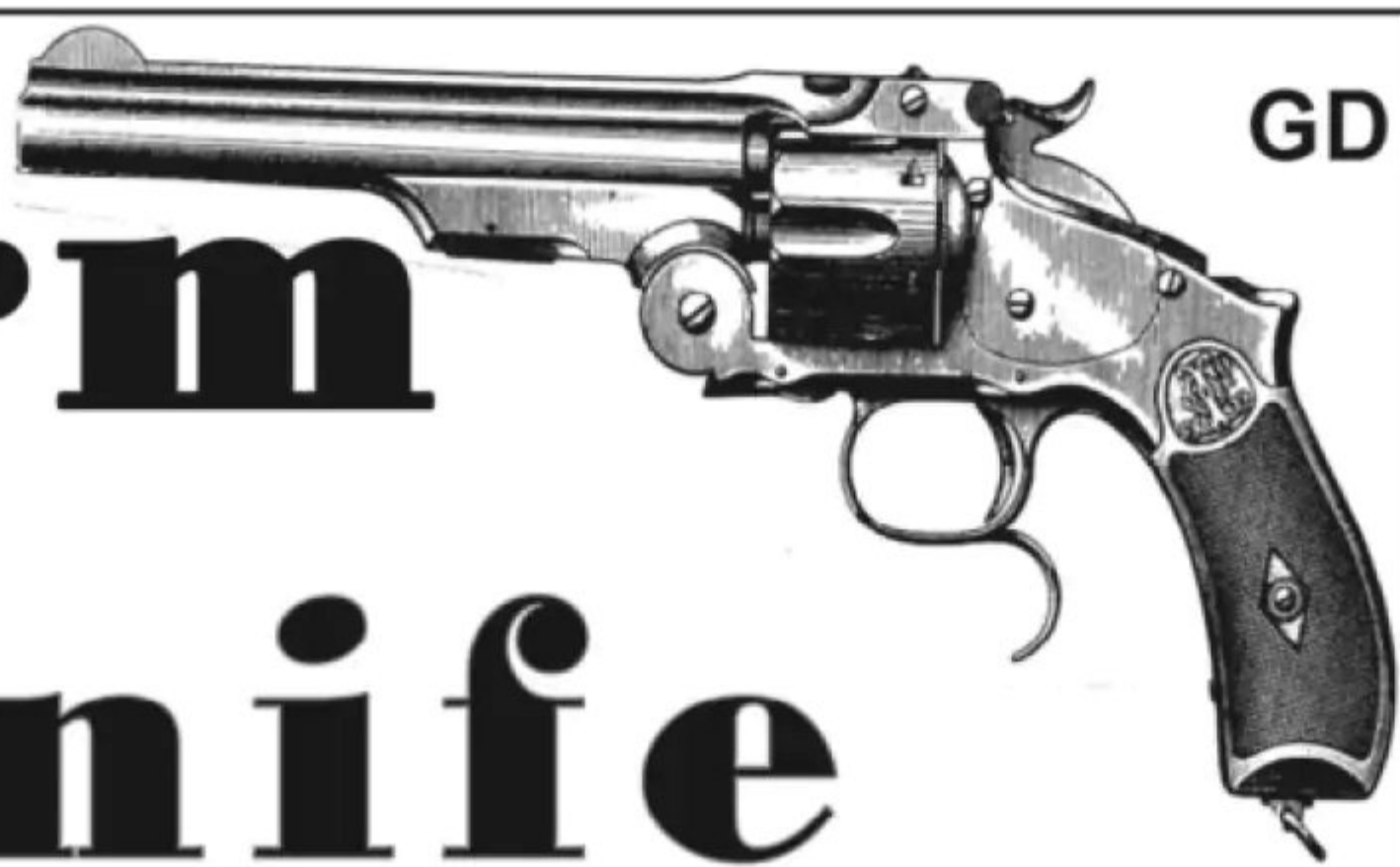
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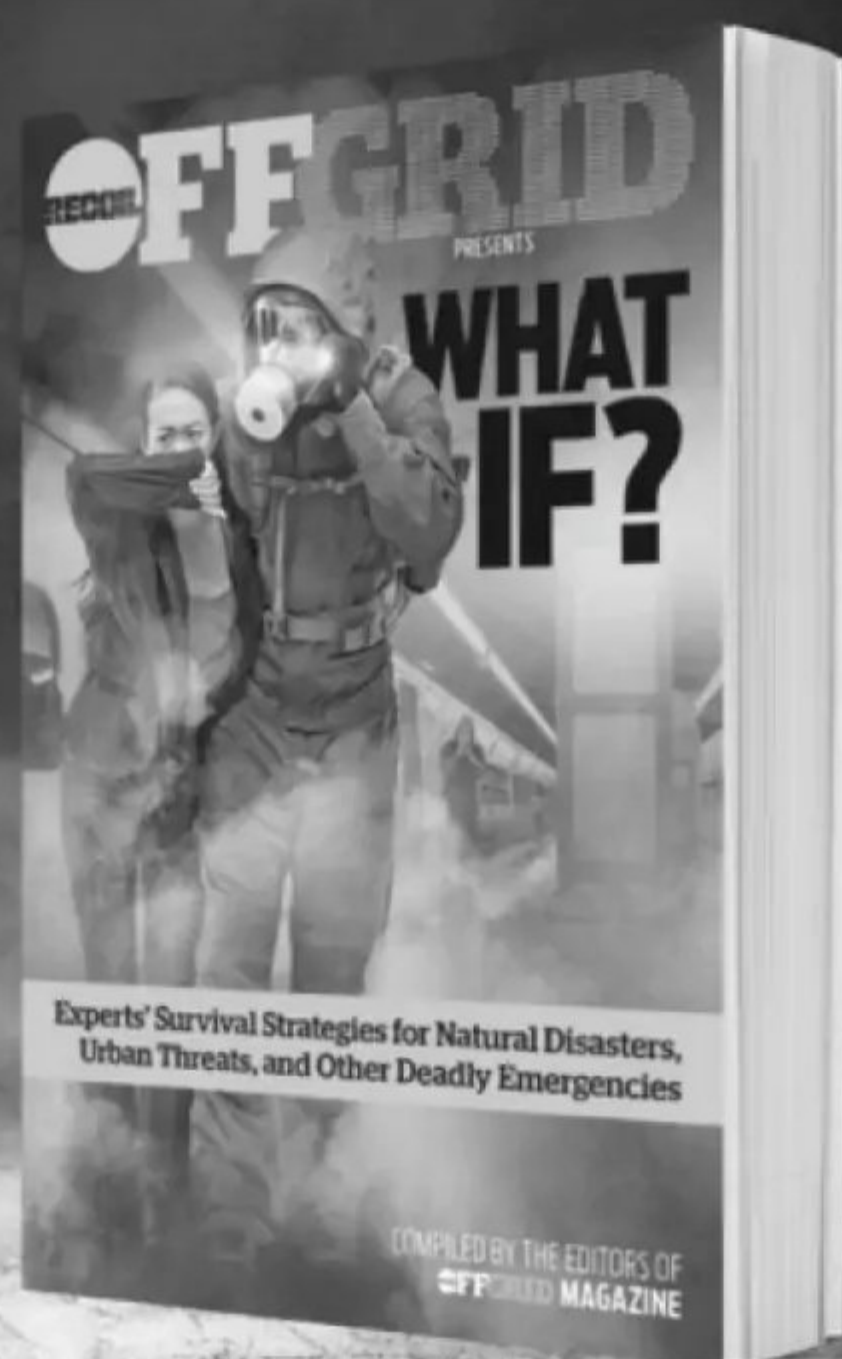


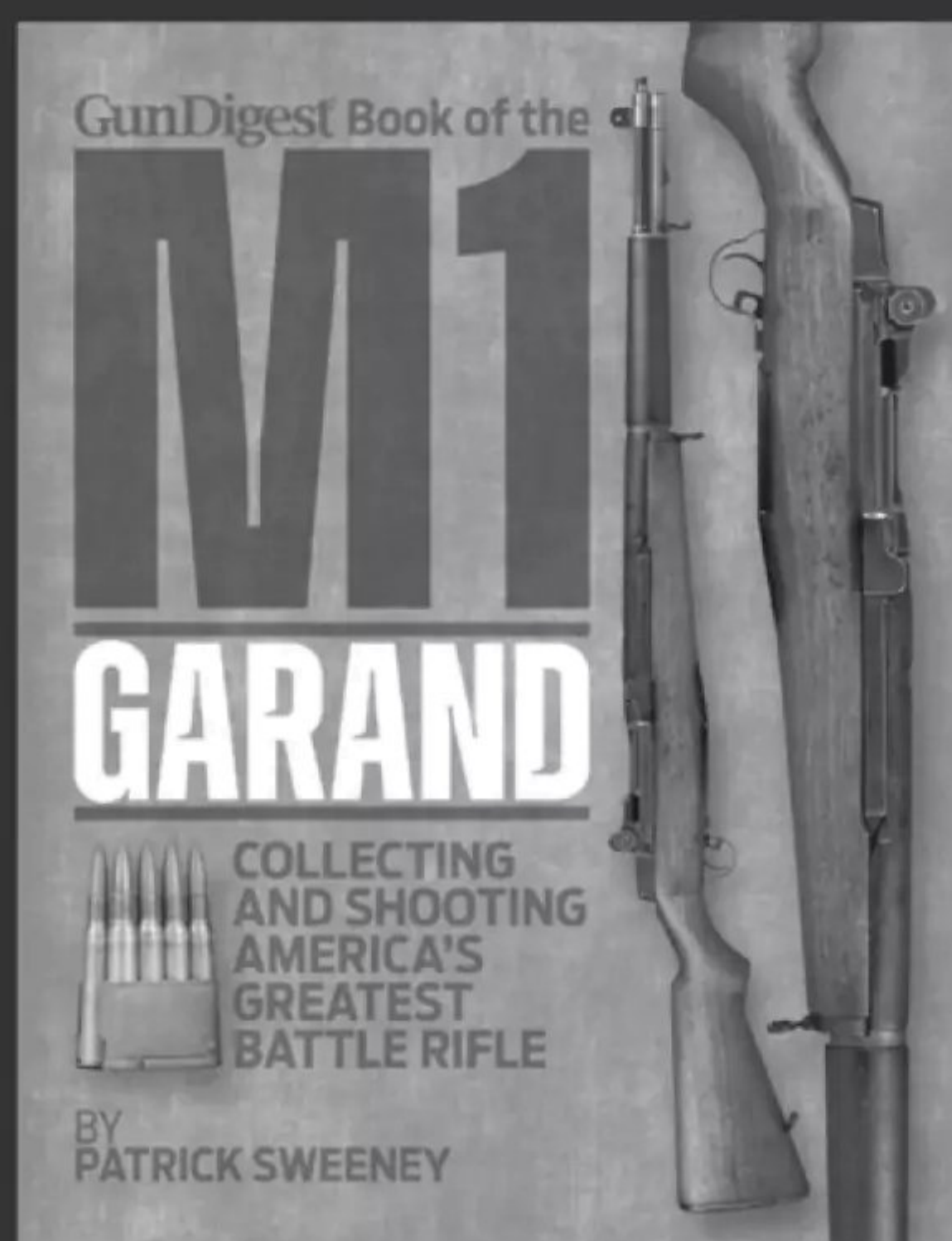
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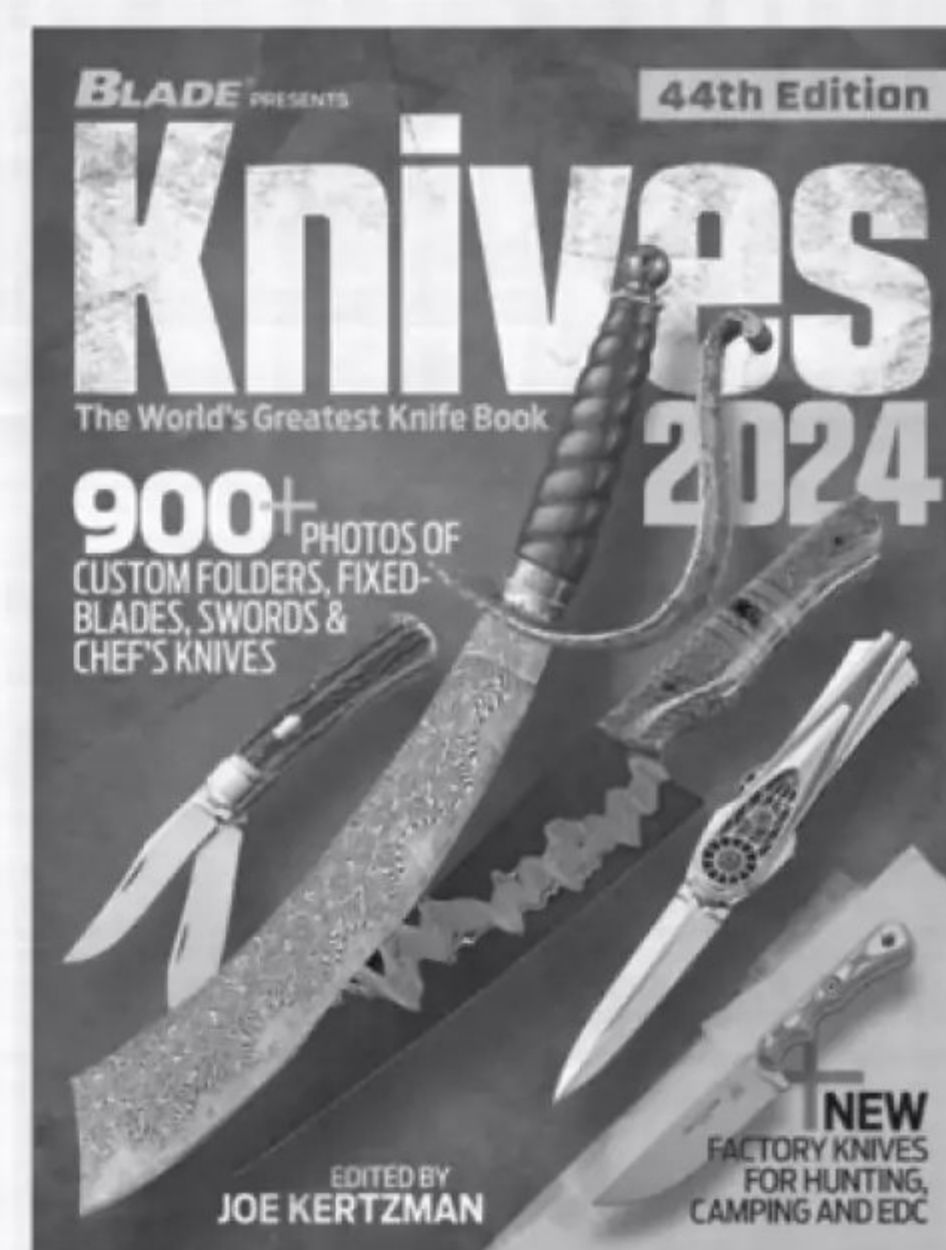
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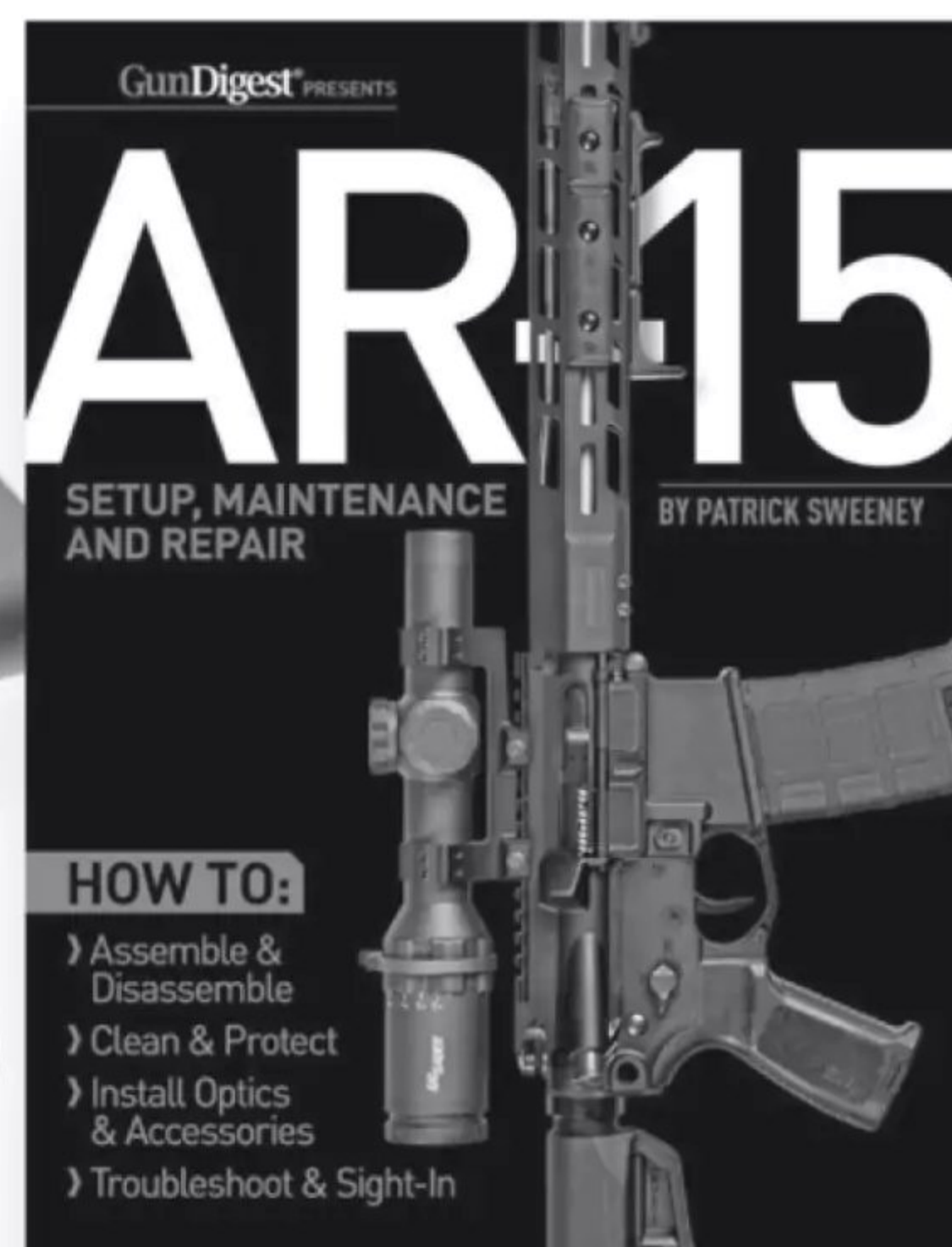
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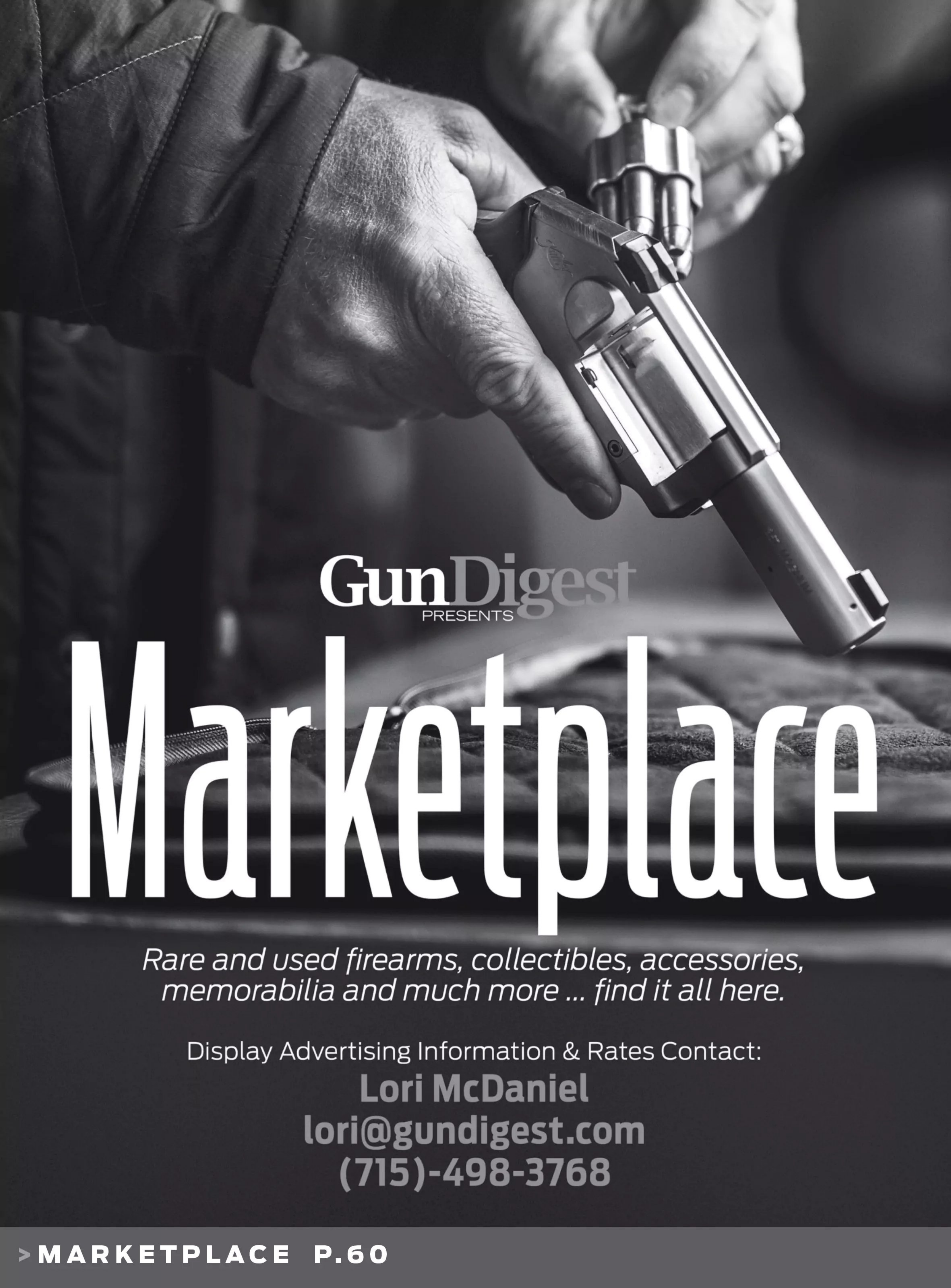
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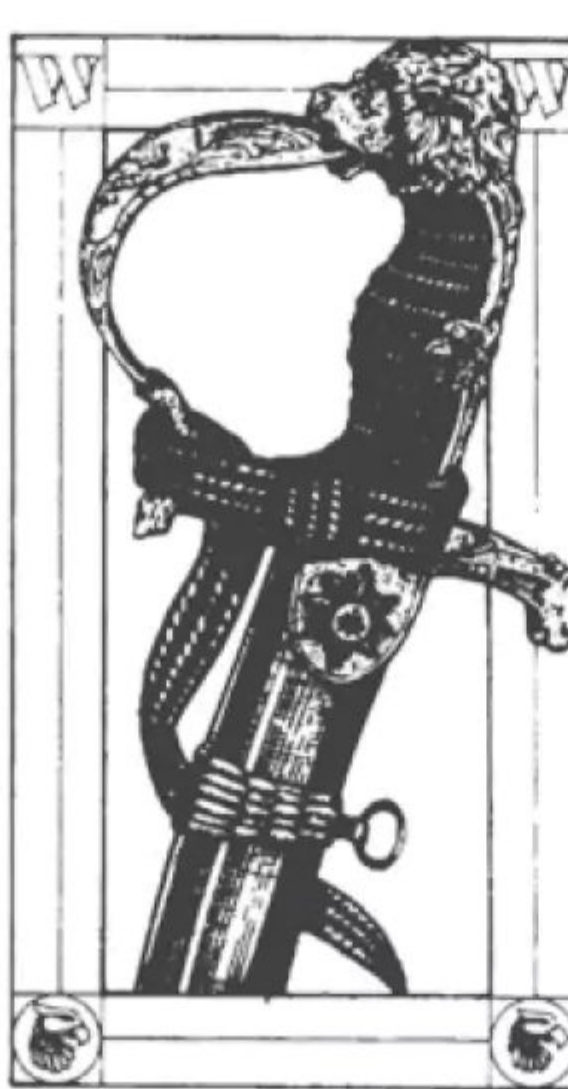
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- 1-C Arminius / Burgo .32 Long Model HW5 Double Action Revolver** 4" barrel with excellent bore, fixed sights, 98% original blue, 7 shot swing out cylinder, hand ejector, brown checkered plastic grips, excellent function, manufactured 1968 (C&R) \$225
- 2-C Astra / Spanish 9mm Para "Model 600/43" Clip Feed Auto Pistol** 5 1/2" barrel with a bright excellent bore, fixed sights, 97%+ original blue, light thinning at muzzle, 98% fire blue extractor, mint checkered walnut grips, matching serialized numbers, including magazine, collector quality, excellent function \$825
- 3-C Browning 9mm Para Model BDM Clip Feed Single/Double Action Auto Pistol** 4 3/4" barrel with mint bore, fixed white dot sights, 98% matte blue finish, black plastic wrap around grips, comes with spare 15 round magazine, original gray plastic hard case with correct matching side label, manufactured 1991-1997 \$875
- 4-C Colt .22 LR Targetsman Clip Feed Auto Pistol** 6 1/4" barrel with excellent bore, 98% original blue, front blade adjustable rear sights, checkered Walnut grips with thumb rest on left side, manufactured 1967-1968 (C&R) \$825
- 5-C Colt .38 S&W Officers Model 38 Target Pre War Revolver** 7 1/2" barrel with bright excellent bore, 98% original blue but shows some peppery pin prick pitting on frame and barrel, adjustable sights, light staining on service hammer, checkered trigger, checkered Walnut grips that are numbered to revolver, bottom of grip edge shows light scratches and small chip missing, excellent function, manufactured 1927 (C&R) \$975
- 6-C CZ 9mm Para "Model 75B" Auto Pistol** 4 1/2" barrel with mint bore, 98% black polycoat, white 3 dot sights, black plastic checkered grips, double and single action, ergonomic grip, excellent function, comes with one 10 round magazine, manufactured 1978-2018 \$585
- 7-C Harrington & Richardson .22 LR Model 199 "Sportsman" Single Action Target 5th Variation Post War Top Break Revolver** 6" oval barrel with mint bore, flat top front and rear adjustable sights, 97%+ original blue with light muzzle wear, light pin prick pitting on finger rest triggerguard and light staining on trigger and hammer, large checkered Walnut one piece grips, excellent function, manufactured 1949 (C&R) \$785
- 8-C Harrington & Richardson .22 LR Model 199 "Sportsman" Single Action Target 3rd Variation Pre War Top Break Revolver** 6" oval barrel with mint bore, adjustable sights, 98% original blue, light drag line on cylinder, cylinder has small print "Pat. date 1904730", large one piece checkered Walnut grips, excellent function, manufactured 1936 (C&R) \$785
- 9-C Harrington & Richardson .22 S, L, & LR Model 922 4th Variation Double Action Revolver** 6" pinned octagon barrel with good bore, 95% original blue with scattered pin prick pitting, high edge wear, 9 round cylinder shows blue to gray and brown, extra long cylinder pin, two piece "Hi Grips" with wear along edges, revolver not functionally correct, passable cylinder ratchets worn a hand worn, good project piece, manufactured 1938-1939 (C&R) \$135
- 10-C Harrington & Richardson .22 LR Model 949 "49er" Double Action Revolver** 5 1/2" pinned barrel with excellent bore, fixed sights, 98% original blue, 8 shot pull pin cylinder, smooth Walnut grips with dings and dents with a crack on left side, needs works to hold hammer back for single action, manufactured 1995-1999 \$225
- 11-C Harrington & Richardson .22 LR Model 999 "Sportsman" Target Double Action Top Break Revolver** 6" ovoid barrel with mint bore, front and rear adjustable sights, 90% original blue, silvering at muzzle, front strap and bottom of triggerguard is gray to brown, Rice frame shows light peppery pin prick pitting, 9 shot fluted cylinder with high edge wear, one piece oversized checkered Walnut target grips, revolver works in double action but hangs up in single action, manufactured 1950 (C&R) \$365
- 12-C High Standard .22 LR "Model HD" Military Clip Feed Auto Pistol** 4 1/2" barrel with good light pitted bore, front blade adjustable rear sight, non professional re-blue finish, left side of barrel shows pin prick pitting, checkered Walnut grips, comes with one magazine and original black cardboard box with clean side label, not serialized to pistol, excellent function, manufactured 1945-1950 (C&R) \$400
- 13-C High Standard .22 LR "USA Model H-D" U.S. Property Marked WW-II Training Auto Pistol** 4 1/2" heavy barrel with mint bore and lightly marked "property of U.S.A." on top, fixed sights, early style blue finish has been re-blued with a slight loss of sharpness on frame legend, still nicely marked "Property of / U.S." on frame, excellent function, excellent hard rubber grips, original 2 tone magazine shows same refinish blue as gun, made in 1942 (C&R) \$695
- 14-C Hy Hunter Inc/Sauer J.P. & Son .45 Colt Frontier Six Shooter Single Action Revolver** 5 1/2" barrel with bright excellent bore, fixed sights, 98% original blue, dark green and black laminated grips, manufactured 1959-1967 (C&R) \$485
- 15-C Mauser 7.65mm (32 ACP) "Model 1914" Clip Feed Auto Pistol** 3 1/2" barrel with good pitted bore, fixed sights, 90% original blue showing peppery pin prick pitting on slide and peppery pin prick pitting and silvering on left side of frame in front of Mauser banner, shows some trace of fire blue on trigger, checkered Walnut one piece grip showing staining on left side, comes with one magazine, manufactured 1934-1945 (C&R) \$395
- 16-C Romanian 7.62x25 Model TTC Tokarev Auto Pistol** 4 1/2" barrel with mint bore, fixed sights, 98% arsenal blue, added safety lever for import, hard black plastic grooved grips with "RPR" around the center star, comes with one magazine, excellent function, dated 1953 (C&R) \$450

- 17-C Ruger .22 LR "Old Model Single Six" Single Action Revolver** 5 1/2" barrel with excellent bore, front half moon blade and drift adjustable rear sights, 98% original blue with the frame showing areas of copper color "Investment cast", two piece checkered chocolate brown grips with black worn phoenix medallions, has transfer bar safety installed, excellent condition, MFG. 1955 (C&R) \$545
- 18-C Ruger .357 Magnum "Model BN34, New Model Blackhawk", Single Action Revolver** 4 5/8" barrel with mint bore, 98% original blue, front factory serrated blade sight, factory adjustable rear sight, 6 shot fluted cylinder with light dragline, two piece Walnut grips with black and silver Ruger phoenix medallions, transfer safety bar, warning roll mark on left side of barrel, comes with yellow and black cardboard box, no side label, instructional manual, manufactured 1981 \$625
- 19-C Sig Sauer 40 S&W Model P229 Clip Feed Auto Pistol** 3 3/4" barrel with mint bore, 3 dot contrast sights, 99% black Nitron finish, E2 enhanced ergonomic grips, tactical rail, one 10 round magazine, manufactured 2015, excellent function \$650
- 20-C Smith & Wesson .22 LR "Combat Masterpiece" (Pre Model 18) 5 Screw Revolver** 4" pinned barrel with mint bore, 99% original satin blue (correct for this 1951 made revolver), 90% faded case color, factory target sights, recessed cylinder, all matching numbers on metal, excellent checkered Walnut diamond center grips show a number from 1953, excellent function, collector quality (C&R) \$1195
- 21-C Smith & Wesson .22 LR K-22 "Model 17 / Target Masterpiece" (5) Screw Revolver** 6" pinned barrel with mint bore, 97% original bright blue and slightly faded case color, blue loss is mostly on sides of barrel at muzzle, all matching numbers except for magna style grips which are correct diamond center checkered Walnut with excellent fit, excellent function, made in 1955, sharp looking (C&R) \$895
- 22-C Smith & Wesson .22 LR "Model K-22 Target Masterpiece" (4) Screw Revolver** 6" pinned barrel with mint bore, 98% original blue just getting a little thin on cylinder, factory target sights, 95% faded case color, all matching numbers on barrel, cylinder and butt, mint but later added S&W checkered Goncalo Alves target style grips with silver S&W medallions, excellent function, made in 1956 (C&R) \$865
- 23-C Smith & Wesson .22 LR "Model 22/32" Heavy Frame 5 Screw Target Hand Ejector Revolver** 6" pinned barrel with bright excellent bore, bore shows one spot toward muzzle with tiny pitting, 90% original blue with thinning along frame, silvering at muzzle, thinning blue to brown on high edges on cylinder, front blade with red paint, adjustable rear sight, service hammer and trigger shows light trace case colors, checkered Walnut diamond grips with gold color S&W medallions and serialized with pencil on inside of grip panel, all matching numbers, manufactured 1911-1941 (C&R) \$825
- 24-C Smith & Wesson .22 Rem Jet / .22 LR Model 53 "The Jet" 4 Screw Double Action Revolver** 6" pinned, ribbed barrel with mint bore, 98% original bright blue finish with light thinning at muzzle and crane, front ramp, rear adjustable sight, serrated trigger and semi target "switch style" hammer show trace case colors, checkered Walnut target grips with speed loader cutout, silver S&W medallions and diamond around screw escutcheon, comes with extra cylinder serialized to revolver, no Remington Jet inserts, excellent function, 1961 made, first year production (C&R) \$1925
- 25-C Smith & Wesson .38 S&W "Model 14-3 K-38 Target Masterpiece" Double Action 3 Screw Revolver** 6" pinned, ribbed barrel with mint bore, 98% original blue, muted case colors on serrated target trigger and target hammer, front partridge sight and adjustable rear sight, mint Walnut checkered target grips with S&W medallions and speedloader cutout, excellent function, manufactured 1973 \$975
- 26-C Smith & Wesson .38 S&W "38 Military & Police Model 1905", 4th Change 5 Screw Double Action Target Revolver** 6" pinned barrel with mint bore, mint early re-blue finish, factory target sights, smooth "blued" trigger and checkered service hammer, square butt K frame mother of pearl grips, left side of frame shows small S&W logo and right side marked "Made in U.S.A." both have gold color filling, all serialized numbers are matching, 1915-1942, excellent function (C&R) \$975
- 27-C Smith & Wesson 9mm "M&P Shield" Auto Pistol** 3.125" barrel with excellent bore, excellent black anodized finish, fiber optic Hi Viz sights, thumb safety, comes with one 7 and one 8 round magazine, as new in box \$275
- 28-C Smith & Wesson 9mm "Model 59" Double Action Auto Pistol** 4" barrel with mint bore, front serrated ramp sight, adjustable rear sight, 98% original blue on steel slide and alloy frame, decocking/safety lever, two piece checkered black nylon grips with S&W logo, serrated front and backstrap, comes with one original 14 round magazine, manufactured 1977-1978 \$695
- 29-C Star 9mm Para Model BM Clip Feed Auto Pistol** 4" barrel with mint bore, fixed sights, 98% original blue light high edge wear, front strap and back strap show thinning, extractor shows crisp straw color, black plastic checkered grips, "Z-1" date code, comes with one original magazine, original importer black plastic case with white label showing model, QR code and serial number, manufactured 1981 \$365
- 30-C Star 9mm Para Model BS Clip Feed Auto Pistol** 5" barrel with bright excellent bore, fixed sights, 95% original blue, shows scratches on left side of slide at muzzle right side of slide, extractor shows pitting and finish wear to gray tone, frame has high edge wear, brown checkered plastic grips, "P-1" date code, one factory magazine, excellent function, comes with black plastic hard case with white label and barcode, manufactured 1971 (C&R) .. \$550

CONTINUED ➡

45-C Japanese / Nagoya 6.5mm Japanese "Type 38" Bolt Carbine 19" barrel with bright excellent bore with scattered pitting, barrel band, bolt both serialized to rifle, ground mum, no dust cover or cleaning rod, 90% arsenal blue finish with slight peppery pin prick pitting, protected "V" front sight, folding rear leaf sight graduated to 2000 meters, knurled safety with small notch indicator, two piece hardwood stock with handguard and finger grooves, cupped buttplate, sling swivels, excellent function (C&R) \$500

46-C Japanese / Nagoya 7.7mm Japanese "Type 99" Last Ditch Bolt Rifle 25 ½" barrel with fair pitted bore, inverted "V" front sight, fixed rear sight, riveted type barrel band/bayonet lug, 90% arsenal blue finish showing thinning, ground mum, plum shaped bolt handle, welded safety indicator, two piece hardwood stock that looks to be refinished, rear sling swivel missing, wood buttplate, top handguard and forward forend wood loose, excellent function (C&R) \$250

47-C Japanese / Tokyo Kogyo 6.5mm "Type 38" School Bolt Rifle 31 ¼" barrel with fair

34-C Auto Ordnance .30 Cal. "Model M-1" Paratrooper Auto Carbine 18" barrel with mint bore, 99% original parkerized finish, protected front post, flip down early style battle sight, Walnut pistol grip stock with wire frame folding stock and forend, comes with one 15 round magazine, comes with brown cardboard box with foam insert and includes cable lock, manufactured 2008 \$1300

receiver and barrel also show proof test marks, early type large safety knob, dust cover is missing and so its the magazine follower, all metal surfaces are a brown and gray patina showing peppery pin prick pitting, two piece buttstock and handguard show dings, dents and scratches, left side of buttstock is carved "killed APR 1st", sling swivels, cleaning rod and buttplate all show same patina (C&R) \$425

48-C Japanese / Tokyo 6.5mm "Type 38" Sportertized Bolt Rifle 21" barrel with fair pitted bore, 97% arsenal blue showing some thinning on mid barrel, bent bolt, receiver shows good un-struck mum, two piece hardwood stock showing heavy cleaning, no handguard, steel buttplate, no dust cover, raised ramp front sight, rear folding leaf sight graduated to 2400 meters, comes with leather sling, excellent function (C&R) \$350

49-C Remington 5mm Magnum "Model 591M" Clip Feed Bolt Rifle 24" barrel with good bore, 95% original blue showing scattered pin prick pitting, original sights, grooved receiver, smooth Walnut Monte Carlo pistol grip stock with grip cap, original buttplate with Remington logo, comes with one magazine, manufactured 1971 (C&R) \$385

50-C Savage .308 Winchester "Model 110-MC" Bolt Rifle 22" tapered barrel with mint bore, 99% original blue, raised front blade with brass bead, folding leaf rear sight, receiver mounted Nikon Buckmaster 3-9x40 scope with long range hunting BDC reticle, excellent clean clear optics, hand checkered Walnut Monte Carlo pistol grip stock with grip cap and alloy serrated savage buttplate, excellent function, manufactured 1959-1969 (C&R) \$650

51-C Spanish / Oviedo 7mm Mauser "Model 1916" Bolt Rifle 22" barrel with good bore showing some pitting, barley corn front sight, older style Lange Vziel rear sight, barrel shows brown tone with gray, bayonet band and sling/handguard band are gray toned, bolt, buttplate, receiver, triggerguard and floorplate are all polished white, all metal has scattered pin prick pitting, receiver marked with a "(crown) /Fabrica de Arms/Oviedo/1921", floorplate triggerguard both serialized to rifle, import mark found under barrel, smooth Walnut straight grip stock and handguard, handguard has crack between sight and receiver, missing cleaning rod, excellent function, manufactured 1921 (C&R) \$250

52-C U.S. Government / Springfield Armory 30/06 "M1 Garand" Auto Rifle 24" "SA" barrel
dated "5-45" with bright excellent bore, 97%+ arsenal parkerized finish with normal edge
wear, protected front post open battle adjustable rear sight with T105 sight drums, features
SA bolt, relief cut operating rod, 2 slot gas cylinder, stamped triggerguard, Walnut pistol grip
stock and handguard shows dings and dents, no marking on stock, steel buttplate, clear
plastic oiler kit in buttstock, excellent function for late WW-II M1 rifle, manufactured 1945
(C&R) \$1895

53-C U.S. Springfield 30/06 Model 9013A3 MKI "Sporterized" Bolt Rifle 27" heavy
replacement barrel with mint bore, mid barrel and receiver mounted scope blocks, non
professional re-blue finish on receiver, bolt handle has been modified to accompany a scope
mount, smooth Walnut target pistol grip cap, brown Bishop rubber buttpad, 1903 floorplate
and triggerguard showing blue to gray, stock not cut at magazine cut off lever leaving it in
operational, other wise excellent function \$750

54-C Winchester 30/06 "Model 70" Pre 64 Standard Grade Bolt Rifle 24" barrel with mint bore, raised front sight missing its hood, rear sight removed and replaced with a slot blank, receiver mounted Redfield 3-9x40 scope with duplex reticle and crisp clean optics, 97% original blue showing some thinning to gray with light high edge wear, Winchester proof marks are crisp, checkered Walnut pistol grip stock with checkered steel widows peek buttplate, stock has QD sling swivel studs, shows finish wear at buttplate and stock, overall excellent 1954 vintage rifle (C&R) \$1100

55-C Winchester 30/30 Model 1894 Lever Rifle 23" barrel with bright excellent bore, front blade, open rear sight with elevator, non professional dovetail slot cut and filled just behind rear sight, Lyman 66A aperture sight mounted to receiver, 50% original blue show on mostly blue to gray finish, front magazine tube band looks to be non professionally soldered, smooth Walnut straight grip stock and forend, stock has a 1 ½" crack on both sides at toe, crescent steel buttplate shows a gray patina, excellent function, manufactured 1917 (C&R)\$975

RIMFIRE RIFLES

56-C Browning .22 LR "T-Bolt" Sporter Clip Feed Bolt Rifle 22" barrel with mint bore, 99%+ original blue finish, gold color finish on trigger, no sights, receiver mounted scope blocks, rear tang safety, checkered Walnut pistol grip stock showing light scratches, small chip on left side of pistol grip, black plastic Browning buttstock, Q.D. sling swivels, excellent function, comes with one 10 shot double helix rotary magazine, manufactured 2008-2019 \$700

57-C Browning .22 LR "T-Bolt" Sporter Clip Feed Bolt Rifle 22" barrel with mint bore, 99%+ original blue finish, gold color finish on trigger, no sights, receiver mounted scope base and rings, blocks, rear tang safety, checkered Walnut pistol grip stock showing light scratches, small chip on left side of pistol grip, black plastic Browning buttstock, Q.D. sling swivels, excellent function, comes with one 10 shot double helix rotary magazine, manufactured 2008-2019 \$700

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58-C Iver Johnson .22 S, L, & LR "Model 2-X" Self Cocking Single Shot Rifle 24" barrel with bright excellent bore, non professional re-blue surfaces showing peppery pin prick pitting, original sights, smooth Walnut stock with a large repaired crack on bottom side, excellent function (C&R)	\$125
59-C Marlin .22 S, L, & LR Model 25 Clip Feed Bolt Rifle 22" barrel with mint bore, 98% original blue, front post sight, rear sight removed, grooved receiver with mounted Lyman 6x All-American Perma center scope, scope has duplex reticle, clean clear optics, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock, black plastic triggerguard and buttplate, comes with one magazine, manufactured 1984	\$450
60-C Marlin .22 S, L, & LR "Model 39A" Takedown Lever Rifle 24" barrel with excellent bore, 95% original blue with slight wear towards muzzle, brass beaded post front sight missing hood, elevator adjustable rear sight, full length magazine tube, factory scope mount, gold trigger, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock with fluted comb, bulls eye and sling swivels, manufactured 1957 (C&R)	\$945
61-C Marlin .22 S, L, & LR Model 39AS "Original Golden" Takedown Lever Rifle 24" barrel with excellent bore, 98% original blue, semi buckhorn folding rear sight, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock with fluted comb with some scratches, bulls eye and sling studs, factory scope mount with Bushnell scope chief 22 3-8x20, manufactured 1989 (C&R)	\$895
62-C Remington .22 S, L, & LR Model 511 "The ScoreMaster" Magazine Feed Bolt Rifle 25" barrel with excellent bore, open sights, 95% original blue, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock with checkered hard rubber buttplate, shows normal dings and dents, excellent function, manufactured 1950 (C&R)	\$255
63-C Savage / Anschutz .22 LR "Model 141" Clip Feed Bolt Rifle 22" barrel with mint bore, 98%+ original blue, hooded front sight, adjustable folding leaf rear sight, grooved receiver, crisp clean barrel and receiver markings, bolt is bright, skipline checkered Monte Carlo pistol grip stock with left side cheek piece, Rosewood forend tip with white line spacer, black Anschutz plastic buttplate with white line spacer, wood shows some spots of staining, light scratches and handling wear, comes with one 5 round magazine, excellent function, manufactured in Germany in 1965 (C&R)	\$565
64-C Savage .22 LR Sporter Clip Feed Bolt Rifle 23" barrel with excellent bore, 97% original blue, open fixed sights, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock with Schnabel forend, steel buttpad, no magazine (C&R)	\$285
65-C Stevens / Springfield .22 S, L, & LR "Model 53-B" Single Shot Bolt Rifle 24" barrel with good bore, showing a bulge ring about 2 1/2" from muzzle, thinning blue to gray with scattered pin prick pitting, replacement front and rear sights, refinished stock showing staining, dings and dents, barrel bolt is a new replacement bolt, black plastic buttplate shows non professional fitment, excellent function, stock shows "FCT" carved into left side (C&R)	\$135
66-C Stoeger /Uberti .22 LR Model 2200 "Silver Boy" Tube Feed Lever Rifle 19" barrel with mint bore, 99% original blue and nickel finish, fixed sights, top receiver drilled and tapped, smooth Walnut straight grip stock and forend wood, original black plastic buttplate, comes with Weaver rail and screws, original cardboard box, box has matching side label to rifle, manufactured 2012	\$525
67-C Weatherby .22 LR "Model XXII" Clip Feed Auto Rifle 24" barrel with bright excellent bore, 98% original blue and black anodized finish, raised front sight and express folding leaf rear sight, hood is missing, grooved receiver with mounted Weatherby 4x Scope, scope has plain crosshairs, clean, clear optics, Walnut Monte Carlo pistol grip stock with skipline checkering, left side cheekpiece, rosewood forend, grip cap both with white line spacers, rubber recoil pad with white and black spacers, Q.D. sling swivel studs, comes with one 5 round magazine, excellent function, stock shows dings and dents, manufactured in Italy by Beretta 1964-1971 (C&R)	\$950
68-C Weatherby / KTG .22 LR "Model XXII" Clip Feed Auto Rifle 24" barrel with mint bore, 97% original blue and black anodized finishes, barrel shows some scratches and thinning at muzzle, front blade, brass bead, missing hood, express rear sight, grooved receiver, Walnut skipline checkered pistol grip stock with rosewood forend tip and grip cap, both with white line spacer, brown rubber Weatherby buttpad with white and black spacer, comes with one 10 round magazine, sling swivels, excellent function, stock shows dings and dents, manufactured 1967-19714 in Japan (C&R)	\$825
69-C Winchester .22 LR "Model 77" Clip Feed Auto Rifle 22" barrel with mint bore, original sights, re-blue finish, barrel address looks clean and crisp but the Winchester proof mark on barrel, grooved receiver show wear and buffing, Walnut pistol grip stock with original buttplate, comes with one unmarked magazine, excellent function, stock shows dings and dents and staining on butt near buttplate, manufactured 1960 (C&R)	\$300
70-C Winchester .22 S, L, & LR "Model 69" Clip Feed Bolt Rifle 25" barrel with excellent bore, 98% original blue, front raised ramp sight missing hood, rear Dockendorf style sight, sweep back Bolt handle shows mostly blue, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock with blued triggerguard, one Winchester marked magazine, original Winchester marked buttplate, excellent function, manufactured 1935-1963 (C&R)	\$450
71-C Winchester .22 S, L & LR "Model 69A" Clip Feed Bolt Rifle 25" barrel with bright excellent bore, original sights, 90% original blue thinning to gray with some light peppery pin prick pitting, push button magazine release with one 5 round Winchester magazine, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock with light scratches, original Winchester buttplate, manufactured 1935-1963 (C&R)	\$295
72-C Winchester .22 S, L, LR "Model XTR 9422" 75th Anniversary, Boy Scouts of America Commemorative Lever Rifle 20 1/2" round barrel with mint bore, 99% original blue, engraved grooved receiver is 99%+ antique pewter colored, factory hooded front sight and adjustable semi buckhorn rear sight. Barrel band and buttplate also 99%+ antique pewter color comes with its original cardboard box with Styrofoam insert. AN1B Mfg 1985, collector quality, checkered walnut straight grip stock forend wood	\$1825
73-C Winchester .22 WRF "Model 90" Tube Feed 3rd Model Takedown Pump Rifle 24" octagon barrel with bright excellent bore, original open sights, metal surfaces are mostly thinning blue to gray with peppery pin prick pitting, Walnut straight grip stock and small grooved forend wood, stock shows dings and dents, crescent steel buttplate also shows gray in color, overall excellent function, manufactured 1932-1941 (C&R)	\$1100

74-C Winchester .22 S, L, & LR Model 60A Single Shot Bolt Rifle 23" barrel with an excellent bore, open sights, 95%+ original blue toning to brown with scattered pin prick pitting, nickel plated bolt, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock with finger groove forend, original Winchester logo buttplate, excellent function, manufactured 1930-1945 (C&R)	\$275
75-C Winchester .22 S, L, & LR Model 67 "Sporting" Single Shot Bolt Rifle 27" barrel with bright excellent bore, 97% original blue, open sights, nickel bolt and trigger, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock, Winchester logo black plastic buttplate, manufactured 1934-1963 (C&R)	\$250

SHOTGUNS

76-C Franchi 20 Gauge "Model Affinity 3" Auto Shotgun 26" vent rib barrel with mint bore, fiber optic front sight, (3) removable chokes, modified, improved cylinder, full, Mossy oak bottomland camo finish throughout, L.O.P. 14.25" spacers included, as new in box with papers and wrench \$795

77-C Harrington & Richardson 20 Gauge "Model 58" Topper Single Shot Shotgun 28" barrel with mint bore, 3" chamber, fixed modified choke, 98% original blue and tiger stripe style case colors on action, single bead front sight, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock and forend wood, plastic H&R logo buttplate, excellent function, shotgun features no transfer safety bar, rebounding hammer, ejector and side lever break open action, manufactured 1974-1976 \$165

78-C High Standard 12 Gauge Flight King Deluxe "Model K121" Pump Shotgun 28" raised vent rib barrel with mint bore, fixed modified choke, 2 3/4" chamber, 97% original blue showing light scratches on receiver, light thinning toward muzzle and wear along magazine tube, press checkered Walnut pistol grip stock and forend, stock shows varnish wear along grip and high luster has been removed from stock, grip cap and brown rubber recoil pad, excellent function, manufactured 1966-1973 \$285

79-C Ithaca / LeFever 12 Gauge "Nitro Special" Boxlock Double Trigger Side by Side Shotgun 28" solid rib barrels, fixed improved and modified cylinders, 2 3/4" chambers, bright excellent bores, single silver bead front sight, 90% thinning blue to gray finish, barrels show scratches and a ding on right side of barrel 5" muzzle, receiver shows 80% original case colors with loss on top and bottom showing gray, barrel lever is right of center, extractors, tang safety both work properly, checkered Walnut pistol grip stock and forend, forend has a 3" nicely repaired crack on right side, stock shows normal dings and dents, black plastic buttplate and grip cap, excellent function, 14" L.O.P., manufactured 1939-1940 (C&R) \$395

80-C Ithaca / Western Arms .410 Gauge "Long Range" Small Bore Boxlock Double Trigger Hammerless Side by Side Shotgun 26" solid raised rib barrel with fixed full and improved modified chokes, 2 1/2" chamber, bright excellent bores, 80% thinning original blue to gray with scattered pin prick pitting along barrels, receiver is mostly gray with areas of light case colors still show, barrel latch is right of center, single brass bead front sight, auto safety lever on tang, smooth Walnut stock and splinter style forend wood, rubber checkered buttplate, excellent function on this 1935 shotgun (C&R) \$1200

81-C New England Firearms 12 Gauge Pardner Model SB1 Single Shot Shotgun 24" barrel with mint bore, 3 1/2" chamber, fixed full choke, single brass bead front sight, 98%+ blue on barrel and matte blue receiver, mossy oak break-up camo on pistol grip stock and forend, black rubber recoil pad, sling swivels with a camo sling, break open action with ejector, transfer safety bar mechanism on hammer, excellent function, manufactured 1987-2008 \$225

82-C Ranger 12 Gauge Boxlock Double Trigger Side by Side Shotgun 30" barrels with solid rib with excellent bores, fixed improved modified and full chokes, 2 3/4" chambers, 97% original blue on barrels showing light scratches some light muzzle wear, 70% cyanide case color hardening showing on receiver with loss muted to gray on bottom of frame, barrel latch is slightly right of center, checkered Walnut pistol grip stock and forend wood, stock shows dings and dents and is loose at tang, red rubber recoil pad looks to have been melted and needs replacing, overall safety, extractors and lock up all appear to function properly (C&R) \$225

83-C Remington 16 Gauge "Model 58" Sportsman Auto Shotgun 28" solid rib barrel with excellent bore, improved cylinder, 2 3/4" chamber, 95% original thinning to even gray tone with light peppery pin prick pitting on engraved game scene receiver, single brass bead front sight, checkered Walnut pistol grip stock and forend wood both showing varnish flaking, scratches and handling wear, excellent function, manufactured 1960 (C&R) \$525

84-C Savage / Springfield 12 Gauge "Model 67" Pump Shotgun 28" plain barrel, fixed full choke, 3" chamber, bright excellent bore, single silver bead front sight, 97% original blue with some thinning along barrel and at muzzle, receiver shows fine scratches, smooth hardwood pistol grip stock and grooved forend show scratches and dings, black rubber buttplate, Q.D. sling swivel stud in toe line, excellent function (C&R) \$260

85-C Sears / Mossberg 12 Gauge "Model 446.511761 / 500 ALS" Slug Gun Pump Shotgun 18" slug barrel with fixed cylinder bore, 2 3/4" chamber with excellent bore, spare 28" plain barrel with fixed modified choke, 2 3/4" chamber with excellent bore, 99% original blue, raised front sight, folding leaf rear sight, tip of receiver has factory drill and taped for scope base, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock with rubber recoil pad, grooved forend wood, excellent function, manufactured 1977-1980 \$425

86-C Smith & Wesson 20 Gauge Model 1000M Auto Shotgun 28" vent rib, 3" chamber, fixed full choke barrel with bright excellent bore, 95% thinning blue to gray, engraved receiver shows some high edge wear and light pin prick pitting, checkered Walnut pistol grip stock and forend, S&W logo black pistol grip cap, S&W logo brown vented rubber recoil pad, manufactured in Japan, excellent function, manufactured 1982-1985 \$575

87-C Winchester 12 Gauge "Model 1400" Auto Shotgun 26" plain barrel with bright excellent bore, 2 3/4" chamber, fixed improved cylinder chamber, 98% original blue, receiver shows dings, scratches mostly on left side, single bead front sight, press basket weave checkered pistol grip stock and forend, black plain grip cap, red rubber recoil Winchester pad, excellent function, manufactured 1964-1981 \$425

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88-C Winchester 12 Gauge "Model 1912 Riot" Pump Shotgun 20" plain barrel with minty bore and marked "nickel steel", "Model 12", "WP" proof and "Cyl" choke, 97% original blue with a little scratchiness on sides of receiver, takedown feature looks like it was never disassembled/assembled, made in late 1917 or early 1918 probably as a post war police or prison gun, no Winchester configuration records available per Cody Firearms records office but money back guarantee by Pack and Postal as authentic original riot configurations, excellent Walnut pistol grip stock with early style graceful shape and mint Winchester logo hard rubber checkered buttplate, original 18 "ring" pump handle in minty condition, entire gun shows very light storage wear but otherwise in excellent+ condition both appearance wise and mechanical function, bright bolt and small single bead front sight, museum quality (C&R) \$2265

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89-C Colt .36 Cal. "Model 1851" 2nd Generation Black Powder Revolver 7 1/2" octagon barrel with mint bore, fixed sights, 98% original blue and case colors on frame, hammer, loading lever, silver plated square back triggerguard and backstrap, one piece Walnut grips, roll engraved battle scene on cylinder, excellent function \$395

90-C Colt .36 Cal. "Model 1851 Navy" 2nd Generation Black Powder Revolver 7 ½" barrel
with mint bore, fixed sights, 98% original blue, 90% case colors with loading lever showing
mostly gray, naval battle scene engraved cylinder, cylinder shows drag line, square back silver
plated triggerguard and backstrap, excellent function, all matching numbers \$595

91-C Colt .44 Cal. "Model 1860" Army 2nd Generation Cap and Ball Revolver 8" barrel with mint bore, 99 ½% original blue and vivid case colors, brass backstrap and triggerguard, as new unfired in original black flip top box with end label and opened literature pockets in lid, revolver has it's original hang tag and is equipped with lugs and butt cutout for a shoulder stock, all matching \$625

92-C Colt .44 Cal. Black Powder 1860 Army Revolver 8" barrel with mint bore, 99% original blue, 98% case color hardened frame and loading lever, engraved ship battle scene on cylinder, brass mustard patina frontstrap/triggerguard, blued backstrap, side mounting screws and notch in butt for stock, excellent smooth hard wood grips, as new in box \$675

93-C Colt .44 Cal. 2nd Generation 2nd Model Dragoon Black Powder Revolver 7 ½" barrel with mint bore, 98% original blue, 98% original crisp case colors, fixed sights, engraved cylinder, brass square back triggerguard, brass back strap, dark mint Walnut one piece grips, all matching numbers, excellent function \$695

94-C E. Remington & Sons 12 Gauge 1873 "Whitmore Hammer Lifter" Grade 3 Double Hammer / Trigger Side by Side Shotgun 30" solid rib Damascus barrels with fair pitted bores, 70% brown and gray in color with heavy pitting at muzzles, grade 3 engraved receiver, locks and hammers that all show gray with scattered pin prick pitting, no triggerguard, bottom tang/trigger mounting screw hole is broken, worn checkered Walnut splinter style forend wood with wedge style lock and straight grip stock with widows peak steel buttplate, wood shows dings and dents, great early shotgun for displaying or a fixer upper \$700

95-C Harrington & Richardson .32 S&W 3rd Variation Premier "Type 9 " Revolver 3" barrel
with good bore with some pitting, 90% blue with some pin prick pitting, 5 shot fluted cylinder,
functions as single and double action, manufactured 1897\$150

96-C Harrington & Richardson .32 S&W 3rd Variation Premier "Type 9 " Revolver 3" barrel with excellent bore, 95% chrome, 85% blue triggerguard case hardened trigger hammer, fixed sights, two piece black hard rubber grips, functions in single and double action, manufactured 1897	\$165
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97-C Italian 6.5 Carcano "Model 1870/87/16 Vetterli WW-I Bolt Rifle 34" barrel with bright excellent bore, front post rear tangent sight, barrel marked "P.B." for Pietro Beretta of Brescia Italy, 95%+ original blue toned to brown, Walnut straight grip stock with light cartouche on right side and rack number on right side, small crack in toe of stock, sling swivels and original sling, manufactured 1886 \$525

98-C Iver Johnson .38 S&W Safety Automatic Top Break Hammerless Revolver 3 1/4" barrel
with mid pitting good bore, nickel finish with pitting throughout, blued triggerguard, multiple
line scratches on cylinder, two piece Owl head black hard rubber grips, fixed sights, 2nd model
2nd variation, manufactured 1897 \$135

99-C Marlin 45/70 Government Model 1881 Lever Rifle 26 7/8" barrel with dim bore and defined rifling, barrel and receiver refinished, cracked wood stock, missing magazine tube and forend, manufactured 1886 \$825

100-C Navy Arms .36 Cal. Black Powder "Model 1858" Revolver 6 ½" barrel with excellent bore, 95% original blue with some loss by muzzle due to slight pitting cleaning, brass triggerguard, smooth Walnut grips \$275

101-C Pietta .36 Cal. Black Powder "1858 Navy" Revolver 6 5/8" barrel with excellent bore, 95% original blue, brass triggerguard, smooth Walnut grips \$275

102-C Ruger .44 Cal. "Model Old Army Single Action" Black Powder Revolver 7 1/2" barrel with excellent bore, 95% original blue, factory adjustable sights, factory wood grips with medallions, excellent function \$795

103-C Ruger .44 Black Powder "Old Army" Revolver 7.5" barrel with excellent bore, adjustable rear sight, front sight painted orange/yellow, 98% stainless quick change cylinder kit installed, smooth wood grips with silver Ruger medallion, manufactured 1981\$750

104-C Ruger .45 Cal. "Old Army" Black Powder Revolver 7 1/2" barrel with good bore, adjustable sights, smooth wood grips with silver Ruger medallions, 95% blue with some light scratching at primer notch \$685

105-C Smith & Wesson .38 S&W "Baby Russian" 1st Model Single Action Top Break Revolver 4" barrel with good bore some pitting, 90% original nickel, fixed sights, S&W diamond hard rubber grips, all matching numbers, manufactured 1876-1877 \$550

106-C Western Arms / Uberti .44 Cal. "Model 1858 Remington Black Powder Revolving Carbine 18" octagon barrel with mint bore, 98% original blue showing light scratches, cylinder shows dragline, smooth Walnut straight grip stock, crescent brass buttplate and triggerguard, excellent function, manufactured 1970 \$625

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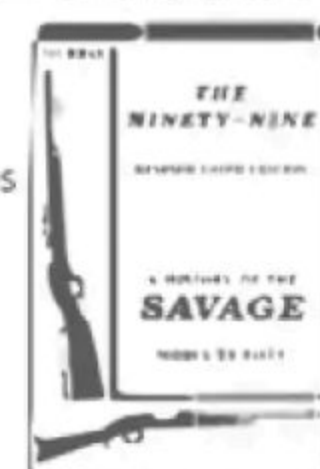
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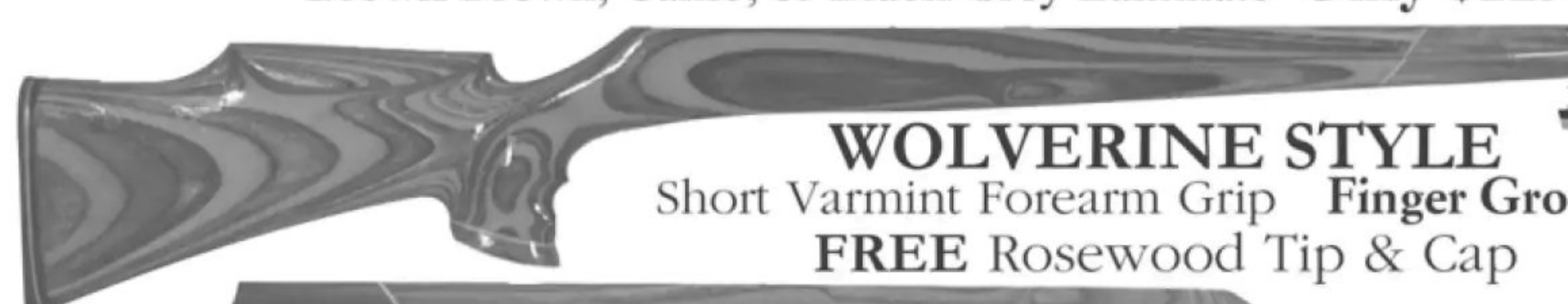
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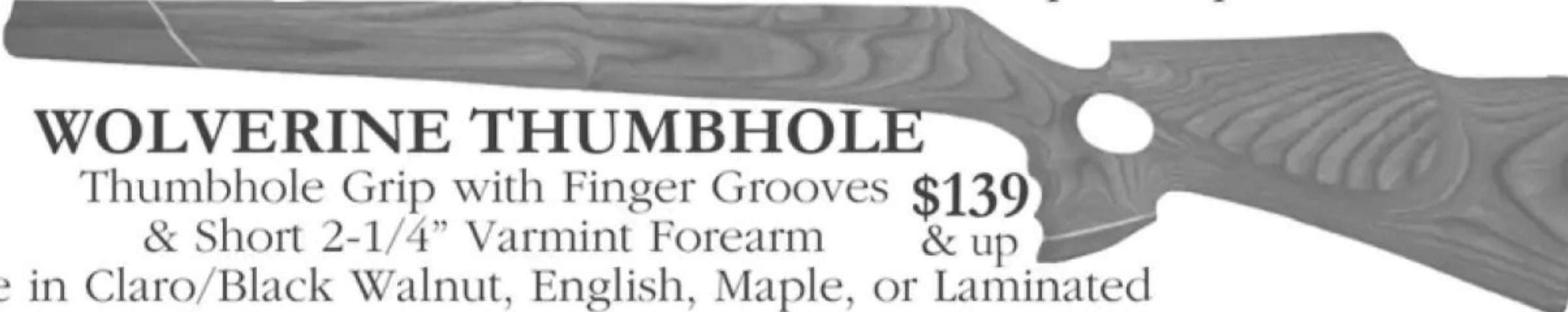
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QUOTH THE RAVEN

The Finks GSP 1911.

How is it possible that a handgun design that's more than a century old is still one of the most popular? The answer is simple: The 1911 is still with us because it still works. Of course, modern 1911s are a bit different from the original, and over the years a collection of custom modifications are now mostly standard. Some might wonder which of these modifications are important. Well, the oldest and largest civilian firearms training academy in the world has answered that question with the return of the Gunsite Service Pistol (GSP).

ORIGIN & HISTORY

In 1976, Jeff Cooper, Marine, international firearms trainer and founding president of the International Practical

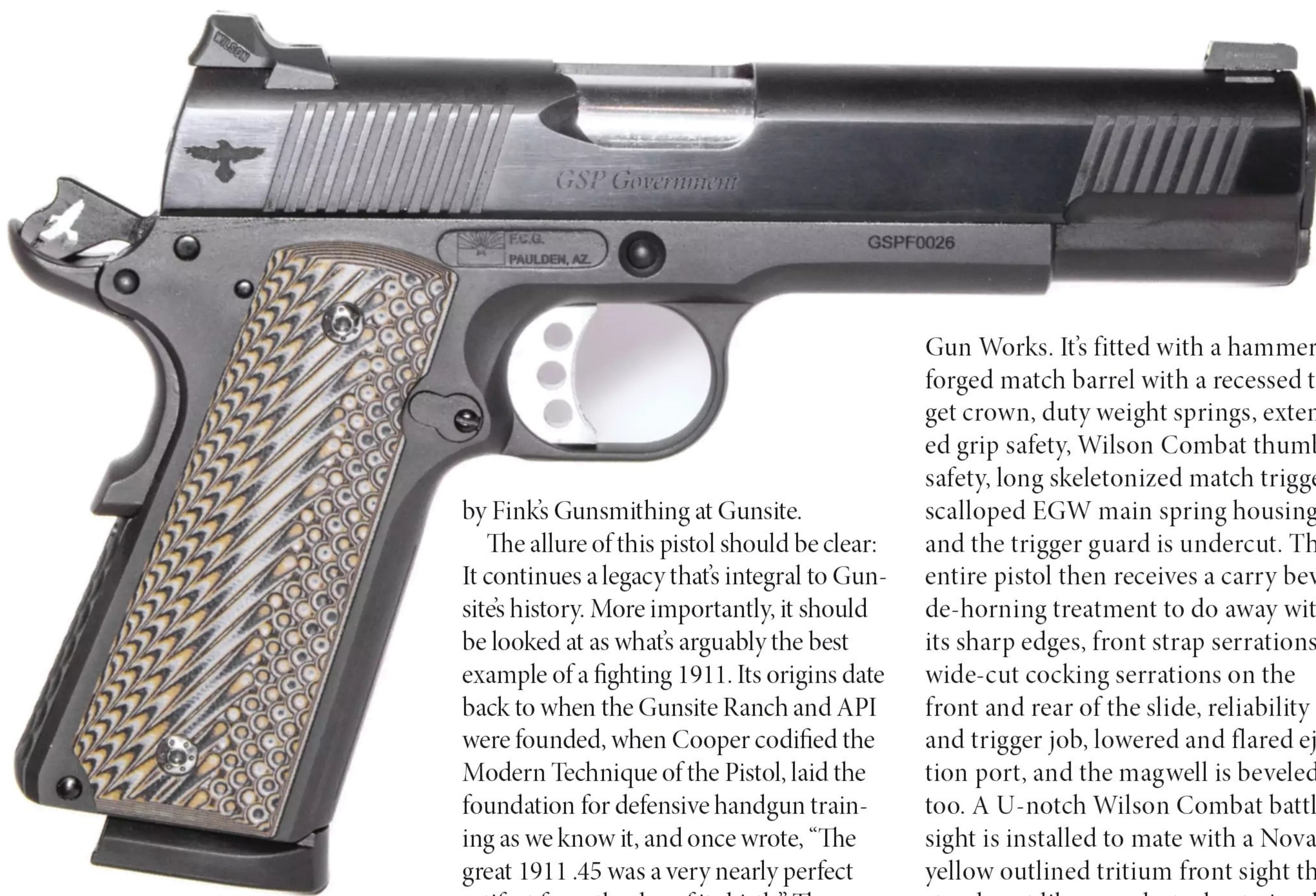
Shooting Confederation (IPSC), took a ranch in Arizona and turned it into a shooting school. The American Pistol Institute (API) is where Cooper taught upstanding Americans to defend themselves with a handgun. Now known as Gunsite Academy, which also trains military and law enforcement, it's the world's oldest and largest civilian firearms training school.

As participation there grew, students would often get their handguns tweaked to Cooper standards by the Gunsite Smithy, and it wasn't long until Gunsite began offering custom pistols. Up until about 2002, you could order a custom 1911 from Gunsite, but over the years the particulars of these pistols varied. However, Gunsite smithy Robbie Barrkman of ROBAR fame did offer a hand-tuned 1911, which was referred

to as the Gunsite Service Pistol (GSP).

When Buz Mills purchased Gunsite in 1999, he decided it shouldn't be in the gun-building business but did offer Gunsite "approved" 1911s through their Pro Shop, which were manufactured exclusively—to Gunsite standards—by Colt. The idea was that these pistols—now known as the Colt Gunsite Service Pistol (GSP)—would be an embodiment of what Cooper felt 1911 perfection to be. Unfortunately, through the years, the Colt GSP has been only sporadically available.

When Mike Moore retired as the Gunsite Smithy a few years back, Finks Gunsmithing of Chino Valley, Arizona, and Tyler Gunworks of Friona, Texas, began filling in. They completely renovated the shop to best service Gunsite clientele, and since then the talented



by Fink's Gunsmithing at Gunsite.

The allure of this pistol should be clear: It continues a legacy that's integral to Gunsite's history. More importantly, it should be looked at as what's arguably the best example of a fighting 1911. Its origins date back to when the Gunsite Ranch and API were founded, when Cooper codified the Modern Technique of the Pistol, laid the foundation for defensive handgun training as we know it, and once wrote, "The great 1911 .45 was a very nearly perfect artifact from the day of its birth." The new GSP from Finks is an expertly crafted amalgamation of nearly 50 years of lessons learned at Gunsite Academy. No other pistol on Earth can claim that.

THE DETAILS

Finks starts with a 70 series, forged steel frame and slide sourced through Tyler

Gun Works. It's fitted with a hammer-forged match barrel with a recessed target crown, duty weight springs, extended grip safety, Wilson Combat thumb safety, long skeletonized match trigger, scalloped EGW main spring housing, and the trigger guard is undercut. The entire pistol then receives a carry bevel/de-horning treatment to do away with its sharp edges, front strap serrations, wide-cut cocking serrations on the front and rear of the slide, reliability and trigger job, lowered and flared ejection port, and the magwell is beveled too. A U-notch Wilson Combat battle-sight is installed to mate with a Novak yellow outlined tritium front sight that stands out like a ready-to-bust pimple on a fashion model's nose. The pistol then receives a satin blue finish, and G10 Super Scoop grips are installed with chromed hex head screws.

Other features include a most unique Commander-style hammer with a cut-out in the shape of the Gunsite raven. Also, on the right side of the slide just

smiths at Finks have repaired the guns that break during training classes while also offering full custom work. With a master class smithy once again on-site, retired Sheriff Ken Campbell, Gunsite's CEO, decided it was time for the GSP to ride again. The result is the latest version of the GSP, and it's 100-percent hand-built

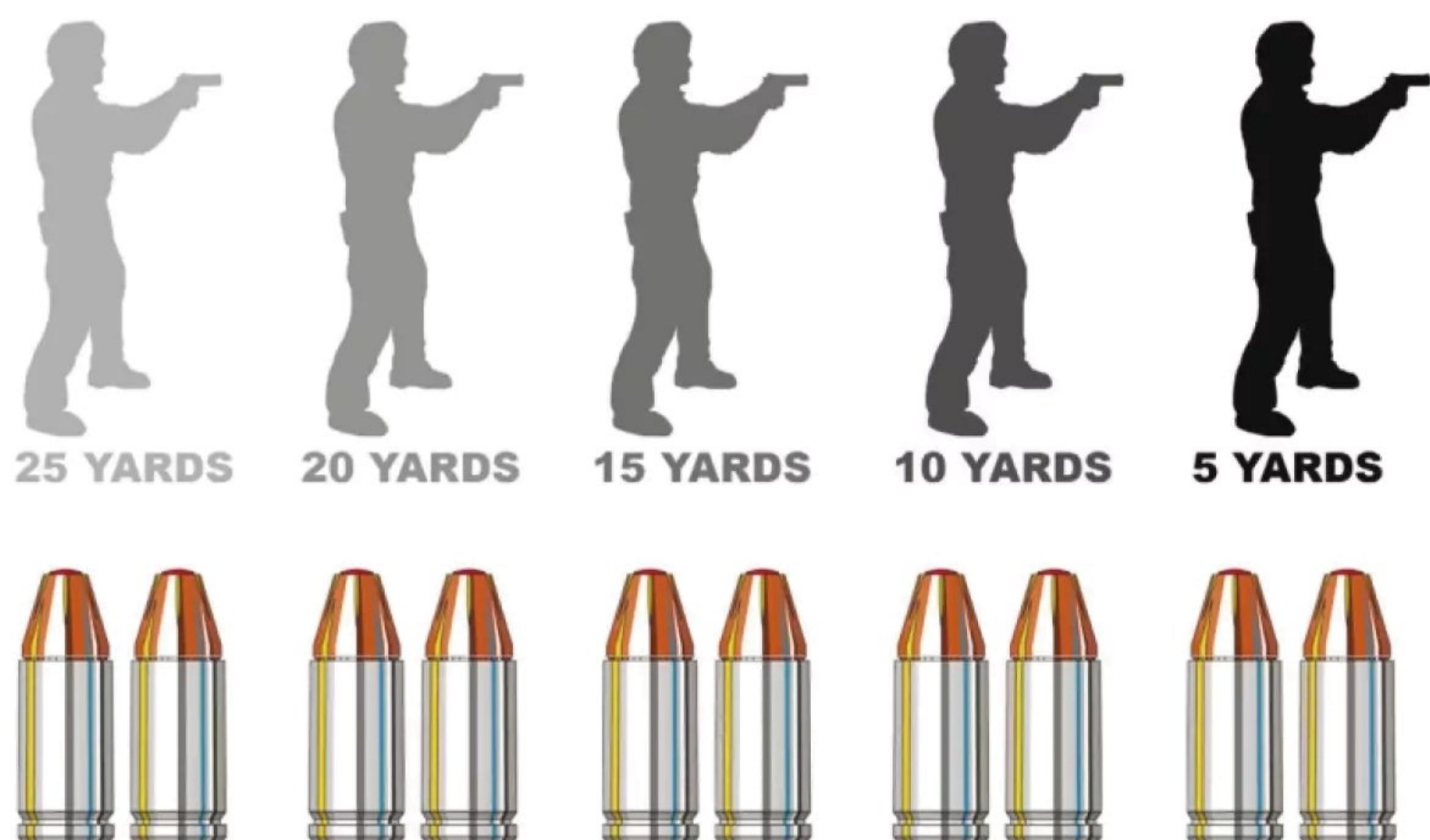
(Above) The Finks GSP is a 1911, optimally configured for training and fighting.

(Right) There's a lot to look at in this picture, but notice the keen carry bevel on the bottom edge of the slide.

(Far right) The magazine well on the Finks GSP is expertly beveled to assist with magazine insertion.



STEP BACK DRILL



**8
INCH
TARGET**

**TWO SHOTS FROM HOLSTER AT
EACH DISTANCE
TIME SEPERATELY
10 HITS IN LESS THAN 20
SECONDS**

behind the rear cocking serrations is an engraved Gunsite raven. Just under the ejection port, “GSP Government” is engraved and “Gunsite Service Pistol” is engraved on the left side of the slide. Additional customization is optional, but limited if you want the pistol to retain its GSP identity.

I consider myself somewhat of a 1911 snob: I’ve been carrying 1911s for protection, training and competition, for more than a quarter century. The only thing I would change on this pistol is for the slide stop to receive just a touch more de-horning along its forward edge to keep it from eating into the holster. And I’d also moderately smooth the texturing on the front edge of the left grip scale where your fingers rest. Yeah, as 1911s go, this pistol is that perfect.

RANGE TIME

This is a pretty pistol to look at; it checks all the boxes most often associated with a custom 1911, but there are a lot of modernized 1911s that are very similar. For a pistol like this to be worth the money or suitable for carry or training, the thing has to shoot where it’s pointed, and it needs to go bang every time the trigger is pulled. Time on the range is the only way to sort this out, and I put 300 rounds through the new GSP. After some familiarization fire, I ran an 8-inch plate rack at 25 yards, which quickly established that the pistol shot better than I’m capable of. The next thing I did was expose the

pistol to the two shooting drills that I use with every pistol I test.

The first is the Forty-Five Drill, and the goal is to draw from concealment and put five rounds into a 5-inch circle, at 5 yards in 5 seconds. Using Black

Hills 200-grain SWC load, I ran this drill five times and cleaned it on all but the first run, where I hammered the first shot and hit a bit low. My average time for this drill was 3.88 seconds, which is about a half-second slower than I can



FORTY-FIVE DRILL



5 YARDS



**5
INCH
TARGET**

**FROM THE HOLSTER
FIVE SHOTS
FROM FIVE YARDS
INTO A FIVE INCH CIRCLE
IN LESS THAN FIVE SECONDS**





Tested as a fighting handgun, the Finks GSP is accurate, reliable and trustworthy.

FINKS
CUSTOM
GUNS
(GSP)



- CHAMBERING:** .45 Auto
- BARREL:** 5-inch, hammer forged, match barrel
- SLIDE:** Forged steel
- FRAME:** Forged steel
- FINISH:** Satin blue
- SIGHTS:** Wilson Combat Battlesight rear, Novak yellow outlined tritium front
- TRIGGER:** Long, skeletonized (4.25-pounds, as tested)
- GRIP SCALES:** G10 Super Scoop
- WEIGHT:** 35.9 ounces, without magazine
- ACCESSORIES:** Hard case, two eight-round Mec-Gar magazines, test target, user manual, cleaning brush, cleaning rod, trigger lock
- WARRANTY:** Lifetime of original owner
- PRICE:** \$1,799

LOAD TESTED	VEL	SD	ENG	PRECISION
Buffalo Bore 185-grain FMJ FN	870	15	325	0.59
Black Hills 200-grain SWC	886	14	349	1.30
Federal 230-grain FMJ RN	882	5	397	1.29
Federal 230-grain PUNCH	900	18	414	0.93
				AVERAGE: 1.03



run the drill with my Wilson Combat, commander-sized EDC X9 in 9mm.

The second drill is the Step Back Drill, which I think is one of the best drills to establish shooter proficiency with a pistol. For this drill, you draw and engage an 8-inch steel plate with

two shots at 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 yards, but each two-shot string is timed separately. To pass, you must get all 10 hits in less than 20 seconds. I ran this drill with standard velocity 230-grain ball five times. On the first run, I missed a shot at 20 yards and both shots at 25. On the second run, I missed one shot at 20 and one at 25. Realizing I needed to hold near the bottom of the plate at 20 and 25 yards, I cleaned the drill on the last three attempts with an average time of 18.68 seconds.

Of course, this isn't intended as a pistol to just be used on the range; it's a fighting handgun, and fighting handguns need to be reliable with hollow-point ammunition. Mostly playing with the plate rack and running a quasi-El Prez Drill on life-size steel silhouette targets, I put a good mix of hollow-point ammo through the pistol. Every time I pulled the trigger, with every load tried, the pistol went bang, ejected the empty, and loaded the next round until the magazine was empty and the slide locked back.

Clearly capable of delivering more precision than I can extract from a pistol, four loads were tested at 10 yards from a sandbag rest. The average for 12, five-shot groups—three each, with each load—was an impressive 1.03 inches. The pistol really liked the standard pressure 185-grain Buffalo Bore flat nose FMJ load. It averaged right at a half-inch for three five-shot groups. There are some other good-looking 1911s out there that are reliable and cost less, but they won't shoot that good.

DESERVING

In 2003, Cooper wrote, "People who write about the 'comeback of the 1911' do not seem to be aware that it has never been away." Two decades later, those words are still true. Countless manufacturers are turning out all manner of 1911s, priced from less than \$500 to more than 10 times that much. Kimber and Springfield Armory 1911s are a great example of what the modern 1911 has become, and both offer several



This ivory-stocked 1911 Government Model belonged to Jeff Cooper.



This early staghorn-stocked 1911 Government Model belonged to Jeff Cooper.



A decade-old 1911 crafted for Gunsite by Springfield Armory.

versions approaching or near the price point of the Finks GSP. I've shot most of those pistols a good bit, and I can confidently tell you, they're not in the same class as the GSP. Though I cannot speak to its longevity, the GSP does come with a warranty for the lifetime of the original owner, and I think it's worth the asking price if not more.

This pistol is deserving of the Gunsite and GSP name it carries. As a multi-course Gunsite Academy graduate, where the only diploma on my

wall—of the many I've earned at many schools—is the one from my first Gunsite 250 Pistol Course, I can proudly say this pistol carries the Gunsite and GSP names. But you don't have to be a Gunsite alumni to appreciate a 1911 this good, you just need to understand what a trusted and reliable 1911 designed to train and fight with should be. How can you get yours? Call the Gunsite Academy Pro Shop. They have them in stock just waiting for an American patriot like you. **GDTM**



THE BARREL

The barrel is the rifle's delivery system, the steel guidance mechanism that sends the projectile spinning toward the target. Barrel technology has come leaps and bounds in the last century, to the point where the accuracy has become both highly predictable, as well as repeatable. It's important to know how barrels work in order to better understand how a bullet will perform within its confines.

THE THROAT

Starting at the breech end, your barrel has three or four main parts, depending on the type of firearm. For rifles, as well as semi-automatic pistols, there is a chamber, throat or leade, and the rifling itself, all terminating at the crown.

The chamber is a mirror image of the cartridge to be fired and is sealed by the breech bolt or block to ensure all the burning gas pushes things toward the muzzle end of the barrel. The throat, or leade, is the area between the chamber of the barrel and the point where the rifling begins. The length of the throat can vary greatly, from less than $\frac{1}{16}$ inch, to as much as $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, depending on the cartridge and manufacturer. The throat is exposed to burning powder and hot

gas, and when shooting a high-velocity cartridge is often the first part of the firearm to show wear and erosion. Some of the fastest cartridges, like the .300 Remington Ultra Magnum and .264 Winchester Magnum, can show throat wear in as little as 1,500 rounds. I make a conscious effort not to heat my barrels excessively, to help keep wear and tear to a minimum. Some companies (Weatherby for example) purposely extend the throat of their barrels to give room for the bullet to jump. This is known as free-bore, and can help increase accuracy. You never want a modern cartridge to have the projectile touching the rifling; dangerous pressures can easily develop. At the end of the throat, the rifling begins.

RIFLING

Rifling is the set of twisted ridges you'll see when you look down the bore of the firearm. It imparts a spin on the bullet, keeping it stable in flight. Those ridges, properly called lands, engrave their imprint into your bullet, and are machined at a smaller diameter than the bullet itself. The corresponding valleys, or grooves, are designed to be at caliber dimension to properly seal the gas and build pressure. The number of

lands and grooves can vary, from the two-groove U.S. Army Springfield rifles of the early 20th century, to the Marlin MicroGroove barrel that used 16 or more, and all sorts in between. (Note: some handgun companies today employ polygonal rifling, which is a bit of a different geometry, yet works fine for their purposes.) Almost all common barrels use a static twist rate, meaning that the grooves are cut in a specific manner to maintain a consistent spin on the bullet. When researching rifles, note the barrel specs listed as 1:10 or 1:7 twist rate. This is simply a means of telling you how fast or slow the barrel will cause the bullet to spin. The example twist rates given above work like this: a barrel with a 1:10 twist rate will have a bore in which the lands make a complete revolution in 10 inches of barrel ("1 in 10"), while the 1:7 barrel will make that same complete revolution in just 7 inches of barrel, therefore imparting more spin on the bullet. The higher the sectional density figure of a particular bullet (read that as a longer bullet), the faster it must be spun in order to maintain gyroscopic stability throughout its flight. While the numbers may be deceiving, a 1:10 barrel is called a slower twist than is 1:7, and with many of today's

bullets becoming longer and heavier for caliber, the fast twist rate barrels are becoming more desirable to take advantage of these bullets.

One of my favorite varmint rifles is a Ruger Model 77 MkII, chambered in .22-250 Remington. This big case is the old .250-3000 Savage necked down to hold .224-inch diameter bullets, and there is plenty of powder capacity to push the bullets to high velocity. However, because the .22-250 uses a relatively slow twist rate—either 1:12 or 1:14—the heaviest bullet I can use in this rifle is a 55-grain slug. While there are plenty of good, heavy bullets for hunting and/or target work available in this caliber right up to 80 grains and more, my rifle can’t stabilize them with that slower twist rate. My dad’s .223 Remington, with its 1:8 twist rate, can shoot most of the heavier designs without issue, even though it has much less case capacity. My .22-250 serves me well, and can really reach out and touch the coyotes and woodchucks, but I’d love to be able to utilize the longer bullets.

For years, I used a .308 Winchester exclusively as my big game rifle here in Upstate New York. I shot a .308 be-



Rifling in a .45 Colt barrel.

cause Dad shot a .308, and we always discussed the reasons that we couldn’t use the heavy, 220-grain round-nosed slugs common in the .30-06 Springfield. He insisted it was a case capacity issue, but I found out that the .308 Winchester was originally released with a 1:12 twist, as opposed to the Springfield’s 1:10, so it couldn’t stabilize bullets heavier than 200 grains. (The .30-06 Springfield, normally supplying a 1:10 twist, can stabilize the heavy 220-grain bullets, but the .308 Winchester with a 1:12 cannot.) To prove my point, I borrowed a .308 Winchester with the faster twist rate, and loaded up some 220-grain pills. Much to my father’s chagrin, they worked just fine.

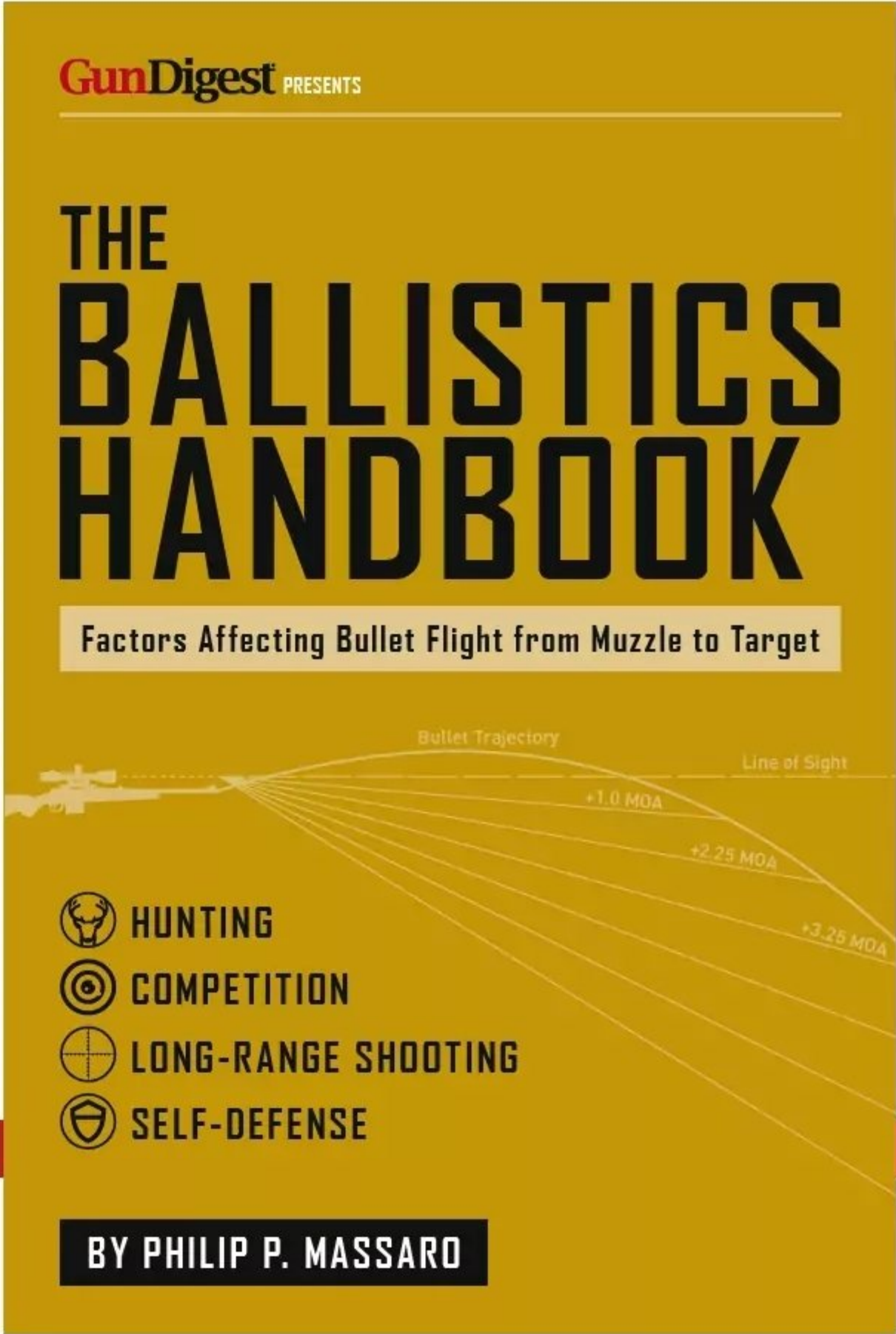
Here’s a chart of many common twist rates, from popular manufacturers. Of course, there may be some variations, but this should give you a good starting point.

COMMON TWIST RATES FOR RIFLE CALIBERS

.17 Mach II	1:9
.17 Hornady Magnum Rimfire.....	1:9
.17 Winchester Super Magnum.....	1:9
.17 Hornet	1:9
.17 Remington	1:9
.204 Ruger	1:12
.22 Long Rifle.....	1:16
.22 Winchester Magnum Rimfire.	1:16
.22 Hornet	1:14
.222 Remington.....	1:14
.223 Remington.....	1:7, 1:8, 1:9, 1:12
.223 WSSM.....	1:10
.22 ARC	1:7
.224 Valkyrie.....	1:7
.22-250 Remington	1:12, 1:14
.220 Swift.....	1:12, 1:14
6mm Remington/.244 Rem....	1:9, 1:12
.243 Winchester	1:10
.243 WSSM.....	1:10
.240 Weatherby Magnum	1:9.5
6 Norma BR	1:8
6mm ARC	1:7
6mm Creedmoor	1:7.7, 1:8
.25-'06 Remington	1:10
.257 Roberts	1:9.5, 1:10
.250/3000 Savage.....	1:10, 1:14
.25 WSSM.....	1:10

This article is but an excerpt from a single chapter in the *The Ballistics Handbook*, which is an invaluable guide to understanding the various factors that affect bullet flight, from the muzzle to the target.

To arm yourself with EVERYTHING you need to know about rifle and handgun ballistics—for hunting, target shooting, competition, long-range and self-defense—visit **GunDigestStore.com** and search “Ballistics Handbook.”



.257 Weatherby Magnum.....	1:9.5
.260 Remington.....	1:8, 1:9
6.5 Grendel.....	1:8
6.5 Creedmoor	1:8
6.5x55 Swedish Mauser.....	1:7.5
6.5-284 Norma	1:8, 1:9
6.5 PRC	1:8
.264 Winchester Magnum.....	1:8, 1:9
.26 Nosler	1:8
6.5-300 Weatherby Magnum.....	1:8
.270 Winchester	1:10
.270 Winchester Short Magnum...	1:10
.270 Weatherby Magnum	1:10
6.8 SPC.....	1:9.5, 1:11, 1:12
6.8 Western	1:7.5, 1:8
.27 Nosler	1:8.5
7x57 Mauser.....	1:8, 1:9, 1:10
7-30 Waters	1:9
7mm-08 Remington.....	1:9.25
.280 Remington.....	1:9.25
7x64 Brenneke.....	1:9
.284 Winchester	1:9
7mm Winchester Short Magnum	1:9.5
7mm Weatherby Magnum	1:9.25, 1:10
.28 Nosler	1:9
7mm PRC	1:8
7mm Remington Ultra Magnum	1:9.25

7mm STW	1:9.25, 1:10
.30 Carbine.....	1:16
.30-30 WCF.....	1:12
.30 T/C	1:10
.30/40 Krag.....	1:10
.308 Winchester	1:10, 1:12
.300 Savage.....	1:10
.30-'06 Springfield.....	1:10
.30 Nosler	1:10
.300 Winchester Magnum.....	1:10
.300 Winchester Short Magnum...	1:10
.300 Remington Ultra Magnum ...	1:10
.300 Weatherby Magnum.....	1:10
.30-378 Weatherby Magnum	1:10
.300 Holland & Holland Magnum	1:10
.308 Norma Magnum	1:10
.300 Remington SAUM	1:10
.300 PRC.....	1:8
.300 Norma	1:8
.303 British.....	1:10
7.62x39mm.....	1:10
.32 Winchester Special.....	1:16
.325 Winchester Short Magnum...	1:10
8x57mm Mauser	1:9.25
8mm Remington Magnum	1:10
8x68S.....	1:11
.338-06 A-Square	1:10
.338 Federal.....	1:10
.338 Winchester Magnum.....	1:10
.338 Remington Ultra Magnum....	1:10
.338/378 Weatherby Magnum	1:10
.340 Weatherby Magnum.....	1:10
.33 Winchester	1:12
.338 Lapua	1:9
.35 Remington.....	1:16
.358 Winchester	1:14, 1:16
.35 Whelen	1:14, 1:16
.358 Norma Magnum.....	1:12
.350 Remington Magnum	1:16
.357 Magnum (rifle)	1:16
9.3x62mm.....	1:10, 1:14
9.3x64mm	1:14
9.3x74mmR.....	1:10, 1:14
.375 Holland & Holland Mag	1:12, 1:14
.375 Ruger.....	1:12
.375 Remington Ultra Magnum....	1:12
.375 Weatherby Magnum	1:12
.378 Weatherby Magnum	1:12, 1:14
.375 Dakota	1:12
.375 Winchester.....	1:12
.405 Winchester	1:14
.450/400 3" NE	1:15
.404 Jeffery	1:14, 1:16.5
.416 Rigby.....	1:14

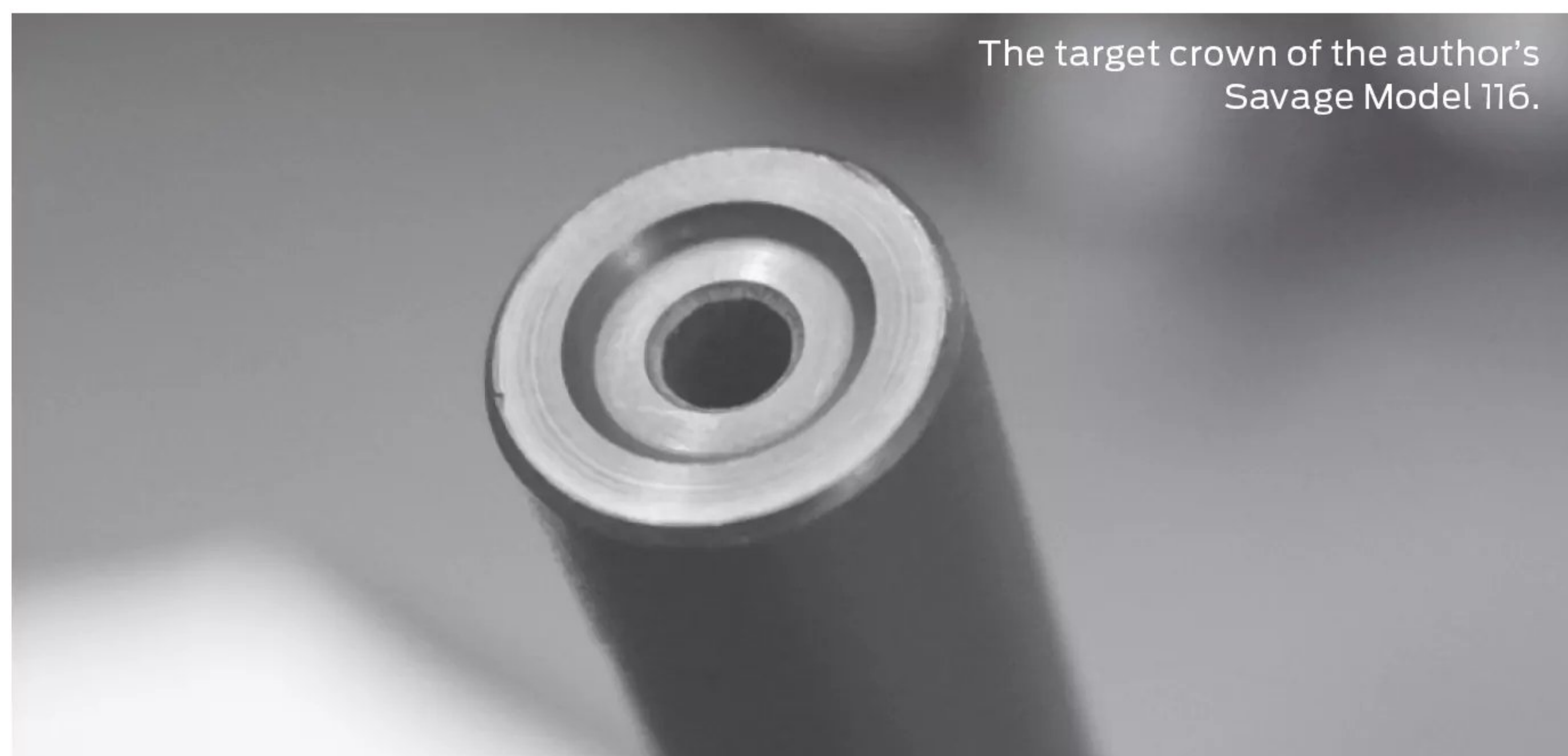
.416 Ruger.....	1:14
.416 Weatherby Magnum	1:14
.416 Remington Magnum...	1:14, 1:16.5
.416 Barrett.....	1:11
.500/416 NE.....	1:14
.44 Magnum (rifle).....	1:20, 1:38
.444 Marlin	1:20
.45-70 Gov't.....	1:20
.458 Winchester Magnum.....	1:14
.458 Lott.....	1:14, 1:16
.450 3 1/4" NE	1:16
.450 Rigby.....	1:10
.458 SOCOM	1:14, 1:18
.450 Marlin.....	1:20
.460 Weatherby Magnum.....	1:16
.470 NE	1:21
.50 BMG.....	1:15
.500 NE.....	1:15
.500 Jeffery	1:17
.505 Gibbs.....	1:1

So, it's important to know what the twist rate of your barrel so you can choose the proper ammunition for your gun. There's an easy way to observe or verify the twist rate of your barrel. Using a cleaning rod, affix a tight patch and get it started down the bore. With a magic marker make a small mark at the base of the rod at the top, and another one where it meets the breech (or the muzzle in the case of a lever gun, slide, etc.). Push the rod down the bore until the mark makes one complete revolution, and make another mark at the same reference point (breech or muzzle). Measure the distance between the marks to determine how many inches it took to make one revolution, and *voilà!* you've got the twist rate.

If you look at some of the long-range bullets, like the Nosler AccuBond Long Range, or some of the Berger offerings, they will indicate the required twist rate needed to stabilize their particular bullet. If you want a bit more information, or should the bullet be marginal for your twist rate, you can consult the Berger website (BergerBullets.com/twist-rate-calculator/) and plug in all of your information. Based upon the Miller Twist Rule (more about that in the exterior ballistics section), the Berger calculator will provide you with the level of stability (or instability) of your particular barrel/cartridge/bullet combination. It's a very useful tool, which can help you optimize your setup.

THE CROWN

The final point of the barrel, where the bullet exits, is referred to as the crown. A uniform, even crown is invaluable for good accuracy, as it is the very last thing that your bullet will touch before embarking on its journey through the atmosphere. You'll need to know about the varying types of crowns and how they affect the flight of the bullet. Looking at the end of your barrel, you may see a simple, rounded end and be able to feel the lands and grooves with the pad of your finger. Or you may see a square-cut, recessed affair, known as a target crown. In any instance, you'll definitely want to be careful with the crown of your firearm; it plays a very important role in its accuracy. I've seen my fair share of well-worn lever-action



The target crown of the author's Savage Model 116.

“It’s important to know how barrels work, to better understand how a bullet will perform within its confines.”

rifles, which need to be cleaned from the muzzle end, sporting worn or nearly eroded crowns from years of swabbing with a filthy aluminum rod. I’m sure if their owners, who were tough as nails and certainly knew how to shoot those guns, saw us today with our polymer bore guides and ball-bearing-handled, nylon-coated cleaning rods, they’d certainly have a chuckle. However, if they could see the difference in accuracy between a healthy crown and a worn one, they’d have no choice but to admit that our methods preserve rifle accuracy better.

An imperfect crown can be the demise of accuracy. I went mildly insane trying to figure out what was wrong with that .22-250 Remington of mine, as I simply couldn’t figure out why it wouldn’t shoot boat-tail bullets. I mean, I tried factory ammunition, handloads, you name it. Because it is a flat-shooting cartridge, I wanted the 53- and 55-grain boat-tail match bullets to work. My pal Donnie Thorne, better known as Col. Le Frogg, weighed in on the matter, and found the cure in one simple sentence: “Try some flat-base match bullets.”

Long story short, once I switched to flat-base bullets, the rifle was printing 1/3 MOA groups out to 200 yards, which makes up a huge portion of my shots with this rifle, unless the coyotes are posing across the hay lots. The crown of this Ruger rifle is less than perfect, and the escaping gas was being pushed on one side or the other of the exiting boat-tail. Switching to a flat-base bullet improved the accuracy immensely and was not a handicap as far as wind deflection and trajectory were concerned. To be honest, the combination of the imperfect crown and slow twist rate should warrant re-barreling the rifle. But I love the way it handles, so I’ll

wait a while until I feel it’s time to do so.

TWIST DIRECTION

Most of today’s barrels use a right-hand twist; that is, the bullet is spun in a clockwise motion. However, you can come across a left-hand twist barrel, spinning bullets in a counterclockwise motion, and when the distances get out beyond 500 yards or so, the spin direction of the barrel comes into play. A right-hand twist barrel will cause the bullet to drift a measurable degree to the right when the time of flight increases. Conversely, the opposite is true for a left-hand twist barrel, and these considerations must be accounted for when trying to accurately place your bullets on a distant target. Many of the ballistic calculators incorporate twist direction as one of the parameters for long range dope, so it’s important to know. One glance down your barrel and you can easily verify the direction of twist.

BARREL CONSTRUCTION

Steel has long been the chosen material for barrels. It is rigid enough to withstand the intense pressures generated by modern cartridges, yet flexible enough to allow the bullet down the barrel without cracking or shattering. The two most popular types of steel barrels produced are chrome-moly (a chrome-molybdenum alloy steel) and stainless steel. I’ve had excellent results with both, and I honestly feel that either will make a suitable choice for a barrel. Both give long life and are equally accurate, at least in my experiences. Stainless is a bit less susceptible to rust (though not impervious), and chrome-moly can be a bit lighter, but I own and like both types. More important to me is the construction method used to create the barrel.

Cut vs. Hammer-Forged vs. Button-Rifled

Most factory barrels in production today are hammer-forged, cut or button-rifled. All three methods have positive and negative attributes. Personally, I’ve found good and bad in all three types along the way, and as long as a barrel does its job, I’m good with it. The cut

barrels are probably the most labor intensive, as the rifling is cut one groove at a time in a reamed bore. Krieger, who made the barrel for my .318 Westley-Richards, makes cut barrels. The button-rifled barrels are made in a similar fashion, in that a drilled bore at less than caliber size is utilized to guide the cutting button down the bore. Button rifling is popular with many custom rifle companies like Shilen, as well as Savage rifles—both of which have an impeccable reputation for accuracy. So, with both cut and button rifling, a smaller-than-caliber hole is drilled through the centerline of the bore, and a tool is used to put the finishing touches on the barrel.

Hammer-forged barrels work in the opposite manner. They start with a barrel blank that gets reamed to a dimension larger than the desired caliber, and then a mandrel that is a perfect mirror of the desired bore dimension is inserted into the reamed hole. At that stage, a series of hammers are used to forcefully mold the steel around the mandrel, so that the resulting bore comes out perfect. Undoubtedly, hammer-forged barrels are both cost-effective and accurate, yet some folks feel that they are the least accurate type of barrel. I’ve had some of the best—and worst—accuracy with a hammer-forged barrel, yet I feel it’s due to the fact that they represent such a large portion of the barrels produced each year. My Heym Express .404 Jeffery uses a hammer-forged Krupp barrel, and yet it gives sub-MOA accuracy consistently. Likewise, I’ve got a trio of Winchester Model 70s (.300 Win. Mag., .375 H&H and a .416 Remington Magnum) and all have exhibited excellent accuracy, accompanying me on hunts all over the world. Likewise, my favorite revolver, a Ruger Blackhawk in .45 Colt, uses a 7.5-inch hammer-forged barrel that allows me to hit targets as far as I can hold accurately. The hammer-forged method occasionally gets a bad rap because it is associated with mass production, but that’s not fair. Heym rifles, makers of some of the finest safari guns available, make approximately 6,000

hammer-forged barrels annually, but only consume about 2,000 for their own in-house use. The remainder are sold to other fine rifle companies, and I've yet to meet a Krupp barrel from Heym that didn't perform very well.

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

When the cartridge is fired, the primer sends a shower of sparks into the powder charge, which is burned. The resulting expanding gas creates lots of pressure. This sends the bullet in the path of least resistance: down the barrel. It's also when things get interesting, as the entire situation changes in an instant. Once the bullet passes the throat and engages the rifling, the torque creates a wave of distortion that causes the barrel to swell just in front of the bullet. The barrel will—although minutely—swell and return to original shape as the bullet passes down the bore. In addition, the barrel will “whip,” as if you were holding a fishing pole in your hand and quickly shook your wrist. Barrel flexure is minimized with a larger diameter barrel of shorter length, but those shapes come at the cost of velocity loss and increased weight. In addition, if your barrel is not free floating, meaning that it is touching the stock at some point, accuracy can be affected. Like all things in life, there are no absolutes, and

I've seen rifles with Mannlicher stocks where the stock extended to the muzzle and touched almost all the way exhibit excellent accuracy. Many military rifles such as the M1 Garand or M98 Mauser have stocks that extend much farther than do our common hunting and target rifles. Yet, these have shown some amazing capabilities in competition shooting ... in no small part to the men behind the trigger. That aside, I prefer my rifles to have barrels free floated so they can swell and torque and whip without interference. That keeps things as accurate as possible. You can test your rifle's barrel channel by placing a dollar bill under the barrel, and run it up along the stock toward the receiver as a feeler gauge to see if the stock is touching the barrel at any point. If it is, remove a small amount of material from the barrel channel in order to let the barrel move freely during the shot.

The idea of reducing barrel whip by using a stiffer (larger diameter) barrel isn't a new one, but it definitely works. It not only dissipates heat better, but reduces the amount of flexure to give a more repeatable result, promoting accuracy. The bull barrel is a staple of the target community, as well as being a popular choice among varmint hunters who must hit distant, tiny targets. However, they are heavy to carry, and can be very unwieldy to shoot offhand. Now, I don't mind a barrel on the heavier side of things, particularly the semi-bull barrels that make a good blend of portability and stability, but I don't want a bull barrel on the mountain hunts of the Adirondacks and Catskills, nor do I want one when in the African game fields, where the daily walks are measured in miles. There is a way to get the best of both worlds using a light, rigid, carbon fiber. Starting out with a featherweight steel barrel, carbon fiber is wrapped around it, until it achieves the diameter of a bull barrel approaching one inch or more in diameter. This combination is lightweight like a slim steel barrel, but has the rigidity of a bull barrel. The carbon also dissipates heat very well,

and it keeps your barrel cooler, longer.

When a barrel gets too hot, it'll tend to print a bit higher on the target. This occurs because the steel expands and the bore diameter is slightly reduced, creating a higher pressure and thereby more velocity. Heating your barrel to the point that it is impossible to touch without pulling your hand away is never a good idea, as it will lead to premature barrel wear and throat erosion. Allow things to cool, and a barrel should give nearly a lifetime worth of service.

HARMONICS

The manner in which a barrel whips, torques and contorts is referred to as barrel harmonics. The idea of accuracy is simply a set of repeatable barrel harmonics. If you use the centerline of the bore as the baseline for your observations, you would see a wave in which the barrel would rise and fall, equally above and beyond the baseline. The thinner and longer a barrel is, the further from the baseline the barrel will whip. Again, a short, thick barrel will have a much smaller deviation from the baseline. Accuracy is optimized when harmonics are repeatable, and when the various pressure waves align in such a fashion that the muzzle diameter is kept at a uniform dimension. Um, what? How can the muzzle diameter change? Allow me to explain a complicated theory in simple terms.

I ran across a theory, presented by radio communications engineer Chris Long, which makes a whole lot of sense and explains some ideas I knew to be true, but had no idea how to nail down scientifically. It also changed the way I look at my own handloaded ammunition. Long purports that a series of crossing waves can, will and do have a great effect on the barrel and its ability to produce a repeatable point of impact (known to us as a tight group). While I am not a scientist (cue Star Trek music: “Dammit Jim, I'm a surveyor not an engineer!”), Long's theory boils down to this: the ignition of the powder charge creates pressure that sends a



The “standard” crown of a Winchester Model 70.

shockwave down the barrel, to the muzzle and back again, in a repeating fashion much like the plucking of a guitar string. This ignition stress shockwave can and will move the steel enough to cause a distortion in the bore diameter. Subsequently, when the bullet engages the rifling, a second force—the swelling of the barrel ahead of the bullet—starts to travel toward the muzzle. According to Long's sound theory, if those two waves collide when the first wave is affecting the muzzle, the groups will open up as if the crown were out of round, much like my .22-250 Remington was behaving. If you can find the load with which the two waves are separated, the group size will indeed shrink.

Now, there are many variables in Long's equation, including the amount of powder and the load density, as well as the seating depth of the bullet, and while this isn't a book on reloading ammunition, this theory makes perfect sense to me as a handloader. It can easily explain how changing the powder charge a mere 0.1 or 0.2 grains would so dramatically affect group size, as I've seen for decades in my own handloaded ammo. In addition, the Chris Long theory also explains why some barrels like a particular brand of ammunition, yet others can't get it to work at all. I think it also explains the drastic changes in group size that can occur when changing seating depth and cartridge overall length. (Which incidentally has been a little trick of mine for years, though I didn't understand exactly why it worked, I just knew that it did.) The variations in seating depth will definitely affect the barrel harmonics and their timing.

BARREL LENGTH AND ITS EFFECTS

For years, it was a common assumption that longer barrels were more accurate than shorter ones. It's an arguable point, but I've seen evidence that points to the fact that both can be equally accurate. I do believe that when discussing iron-sighted guns, a longer

sighting radius will usually result in an ability to place the shot better, but in a scientific world—say using a machine rest—I'm not certain that the longer barrel will always come out on top.

There is a definite increase in velocity when using a longer barrel, as the longer pipe will build more pressure. The generally accepted velocity loss/gain when comparing barrel lengths is 25 fps per 1 inch of barrel length. While I've never had the opportunity to actually measure the velocity loss of one particular barrel by cutting off an inch at a time, I've seen studies where this test was performed and that rule was more or less proven. For example, my 6.5-284 Norma is a popular choice among F-Class shooters, and many of those rifles take advantage of the case capacity by using a barrel length of 28 or even 30 inches. My own Savage Model 116 with a 25-inch barrel doesn't quite match some of the advertised velocities because of the shorter tube, and I'm OK with that. It's a hunting rifle, and while I normally don't mind longer barrels, toting a 28-inch barrel through the woods and fields seems a bit excessive to me. So, when I ordered the rifle, I figured the 25-inch length would make a good balance of velocity and portability. The choice is ultimately up to you, whether you want a compact rifle for ease of carry, or the long barrel for additional velocity, but it's important to know that the measured velocity of Brand X ammunition in your gun may not equal advertised velocities due to the difference in the test gun's barrel length and the length of your barrel.

When I first started to handload ammunition, I didn't understand why a particular load prescribed by the reloading manual didn't obtain the velocity shown in the data. I followed the recipe exactly. Used the test data's primer, powder charge, case, and bullet and seating depth. But I was still 125 fps below the manual. Then I glanced at the test rifle information. This company had used a universal receiver and a 26-inch barrel to arrive at their data, and my rifle sported a 22-inch barrel. Barrel

length was the factor.

Pistol barrels can and will have a similar effect on the performance of ammunition. Many of the micro-carry, or pocket pistols, give lower velocities than their full-sized counterparts due to the decreased barrel length. Ammunition companies have made an effort to optimize the cartridges for best performance in the shorter barrels. Federal Premium HST ammo has a "Micro" line that is designed to function properly in the shorter barrels of concealed carry pistols, and it works very well. My own carry gun—a Smith & Wesson Model 36 in .38 Special—has the 1⅞-inch snubnose barrel and, while the velocities certainly aren't what you'd get from a 4- or 6-inch target gun, I knew that when I purchased it.

These are things to keep in mind when purchasing a rifle or pistol. Does a .308 Winchester need a 26-inch barrel? Probably not, because the case capacity can be utilized in a 20- or 22-inch barrel, and if it's made properly, should offer fine accuracy. Can you get the most from a 7mm Remington Magnum with a 22-inch pipe? Not likely. This is an example of a cartridge needing a bit more barrel length to achieve optimum results, due to the increased case capacity. Will a short-barreled handgun be as accurate as a longer barreled one? Maybe, but it has more to do with balance and the ability to aim the firearm than actual function of the barrel and its length. Will a 20-inch barreled Winchester 94 carbine, in .30-30 WCF, perform as well as the 26-inch octagon-barreled rifle of your grandfather's era? For the distances at which a .30-30 is most commonly shot, I'd vote yes, but again, that longer sighting radius of the bigger rifle may cause it to appear more accurate than the carbine, so it would take a machine rest to verify the results. For a hunting application, either is more than acceptable if you practice diligently with an iron-sighted gun (which seems to be a lost art these days), so if you appreciate the compact design of the carbine, have at it. **GDTM**



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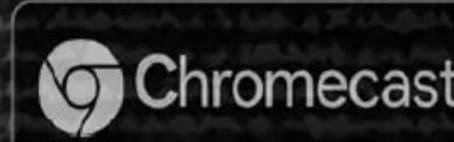
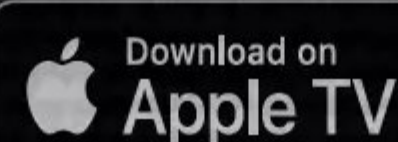
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