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JUNE 2024
VOLUME 41 • ISSUE 07

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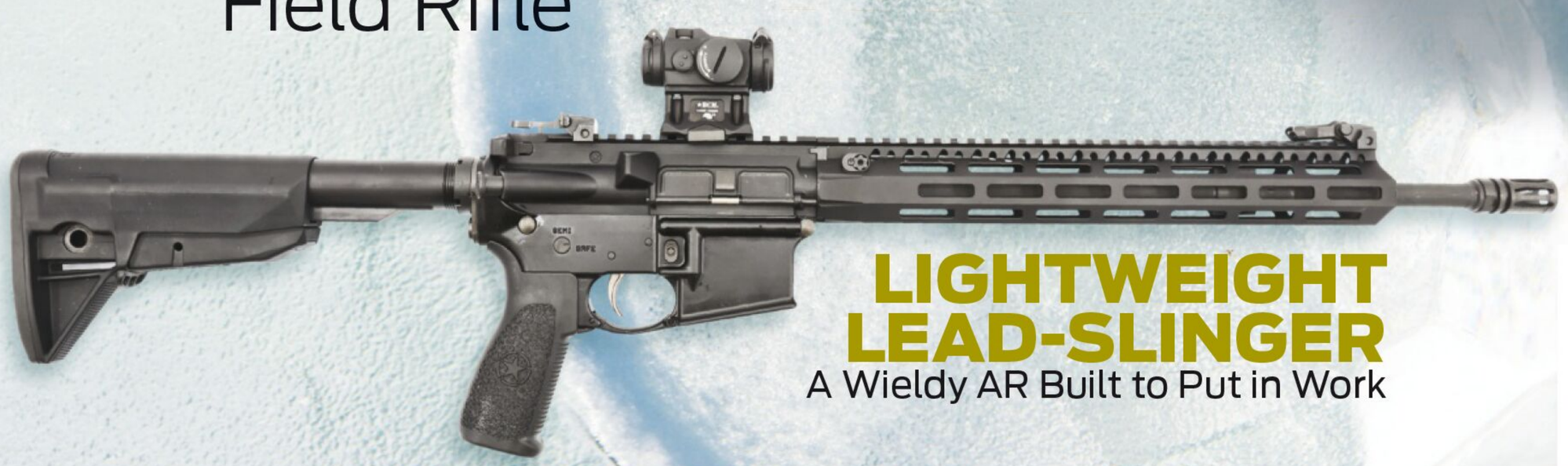
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SAME YET DIFFERENT

It seems like a lot of rifles these days don't look much like they used to.

Blued barreled actions are all but extinct, replaced by the likes of Cerakote and a stable of other coatings that are often difficult to pronounce. And wood? Well, it's anything but gone, although carbon-fiber and synthetics fill more catalog pages these days than America walnut.

And what about hinged floorplates on sporting bolt-actions? You can find them, but not as easily as you can find a box magazine extending from a stock sporting at least one M-Lok accessory point.

None of these changes are absolute—what goes around always seems to come around—and I'll stand firm that not all of these current trends are bad, either.

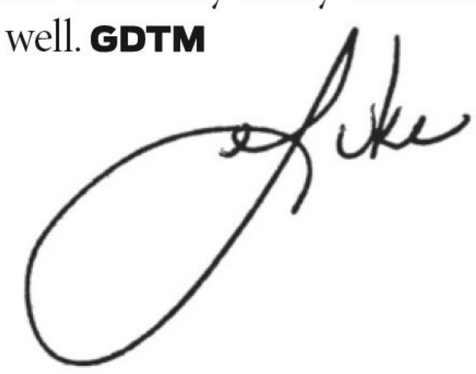
Take the Aero Precision Solus Hunter on the cover of this issue as an example. My grandpa would spend every ounce of energy he had arguing against me, but that is a damn stunning rifle. It's got a tactical feel to it, but it's also sporty. And, generally, I'll fight hard to not carry a camo gun, but it's somehow got a classy look to it as well.

Of course, the Solus also comes in a model that's nestled into a chassis because, well, crossover rifles are a big thing right now. But—you cannot get it in a blued and walnut option.

My point?

I was hunting in South Africa a few months back, with a suppressed 6.5 Creedmoor Bergara B-14 Crest. It looked, at least vaguely, like the Solus on this cover. Now, if there's one place where bluing and walnut should feel safe, it's definitely Africa … for nostalgic reasons if nothing else. But in a land where every rock is barrel-dinging sharp and every plant has stock-scratching thorns, I was damned happy to be toting the carbon-fiber and polymers.

I'll forever be a fan of square-body Chevy trucks (lifted, of course) and classic Model 70s: Some things simply shouldn't be messed with. Ever. However, I can always use a little "tactically classy" influence in my life as well. **GDTM**



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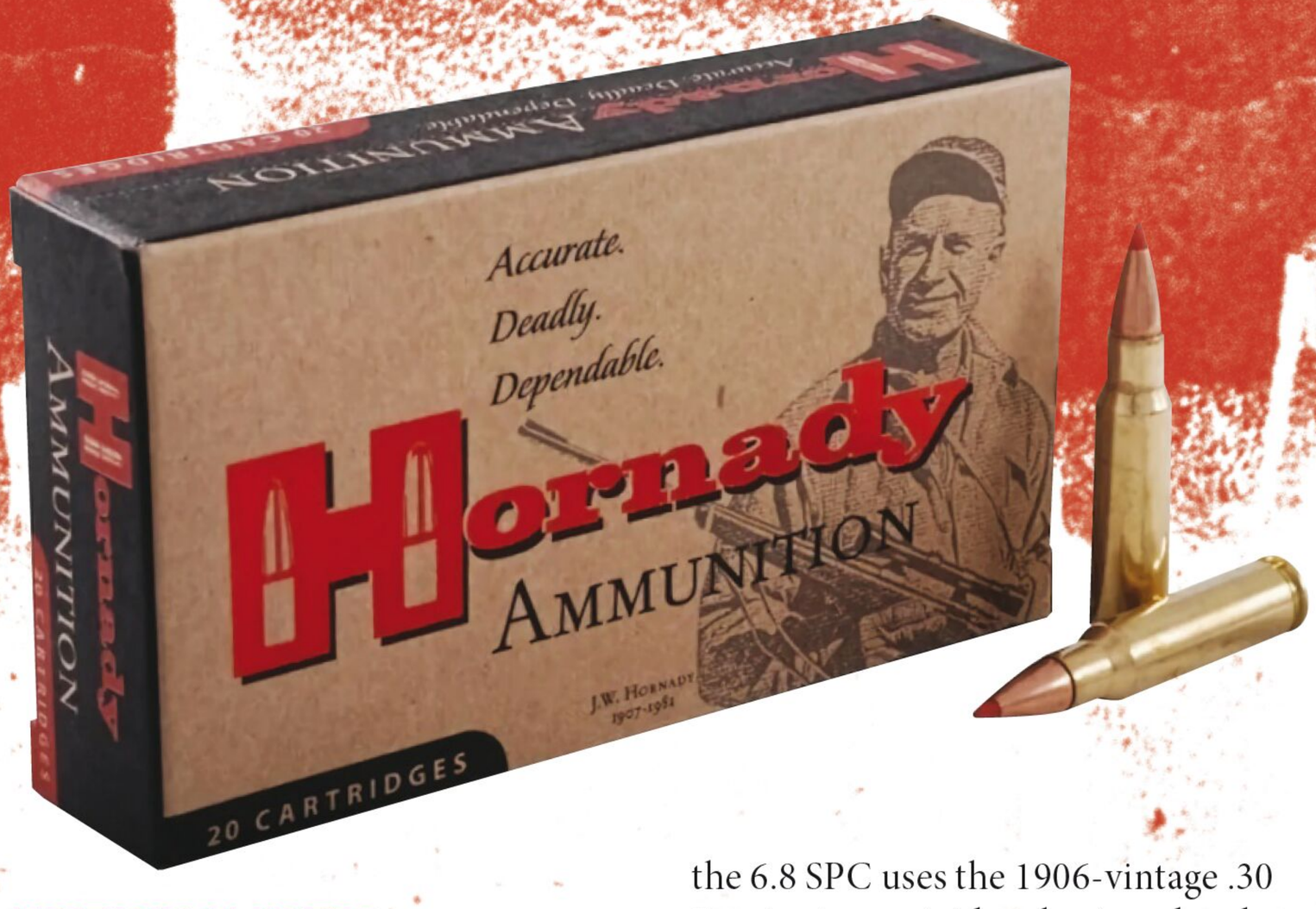
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6.8MM SPECIAL PURPOSE CARTRIDGE

It's gathering momentum, but will the public ever widely accept it?



HISTORICAL NOTES

Anecdotal reports from U.S. Forces involved in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan in recent years indicate the 6-decade-old 7.62x39mm cartridge, and AK-47 rifle, might be more effective in combat than the U.S. M4 carbines firing the 5.56x45mm cartridge.

In 2003, Steve Holland and Cris Murray, individuals associated with special forces and marksmanship units, developed a special-purpose cartridge to improve combat effectiveness in short-barreled (16.5-inch) M4 carbines used for special operations. The resulting 6.8 SPC (Special Purpose Cartridge) achieved favorable results in actual usage … but has not been officially adopted by the U.S. Army.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Intended to launch heavier bullets than the standard U.S. 5.56 NATO round, the 6.8 SPC uses the 1906-vintage .30 Remington cartridge shortened and necked down to accept a .270-caliber (6.8mm) bullet. Holland and Murray selected the .30 Remington as a parent case for two reasons.

First, bolts for the M-16 family of rifles and carbines can readily be manufactured to accept the .30 Remington's case head diameter (.420). Second, standard 20- and 30-round M-16 magazines can accept the 6.8 SPC without change. After extensive test firings into ordnance gel blocks, and on military firing ranges with the .30 Remington cases sized for .30, 7mm, .270, 6.5mm and 6mm bullets, .270-caliber bullets delivered the best balance of velocity, accuracy and terminal performance.

Hornady, Federal, Sellier & Bellot, and Remington offer loaded 6.8 SPC ammunition. The cartridge is chambered by Barrett, LWRC, DPMS, Stag, Daniel Defense, SSK and Precision Reflex, Inc. in AR-15 rifles; by both SSK Industries and Thompson/Center in Contender, G2, and Encore single-shot actions; by Remington and Ruger in bolt-action rifles; and by custom gunsmiths on CZ-527 bolt actions. It also worth noting that the 6.8 SPC is a good white-tailed deer cartridge. **GDTM**

6.8MM SPECIAL PURPOSE CARTRIDGE (6.8 SPC) LOADING DATA AND FACTORY BALLISTICS

BULLET (GRAINS/TYPE)	POWDER	GRAINS	VELOCITY	ENERGY	SOURCE/COMMENTS
110 V-Max	FL		2,550	1,588	Hornady
115 MC	FL		2,800	2,002	Remington
90 Spr HP	H4198	28.6C	3,012	1,812	Hodgdon
110 V-Max	Benchmark	27.0	2,518	1,548	Hodgdon
115 Sierra HPBT	H322	28.2C	2,608	1,736	Hodgdon
85 E-TIP	FL		2,950	1,642	SSA 75015
100 GMX	FL		2,550	1,444	Hornady 8348
115 FMJ	FL		2,625	1,759	Remington L68R2

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WYATT EARP WAS RIGHT

You need to take your time in a hurry.

Countless arguments have occurred, and even more words have been spilled, on the topic of "stopping power." And, yes, I'm going to address it, but I think you'll find my approach a bit different than others you might have read.

In short, Wyatt Earp was right. Of course, you're free to disagree, and I won't think less of you just because you're wrong.

In his 1931 book, *Wyatt Earp: Frontier Marshal*, which was published 2 years after Earp passed, Stuart N. Lake wrote that Earp had said, "Fast is fine but accuracy is final. You need to take your time in a hurry." Now, I don't know if Earp really said those things. Lake might've made it all up. But if he did, it's likely that Earp or another skilled gunman said something similar to Lake, because it's damned good advice: You need to get a good hit, and you need to be quick about it—just not so quick you miss.

But there are other lessons we can take from Earp that qualify as good stopping power advice. The thing is, most who argue about gun-related personal protection topics or stopping power overlook the obvious: Thirty percent of the problem is that no one really knows what stopping power really is. Another 30 percent of the problem is that those who think they know what spotting power is, do not know how to measure it.

But the majority—40 percent—of the problem with stopping power disagreements and discussions is that most folks fail to consider a handgun's least respected ability to make a threat not be a threat anymore.

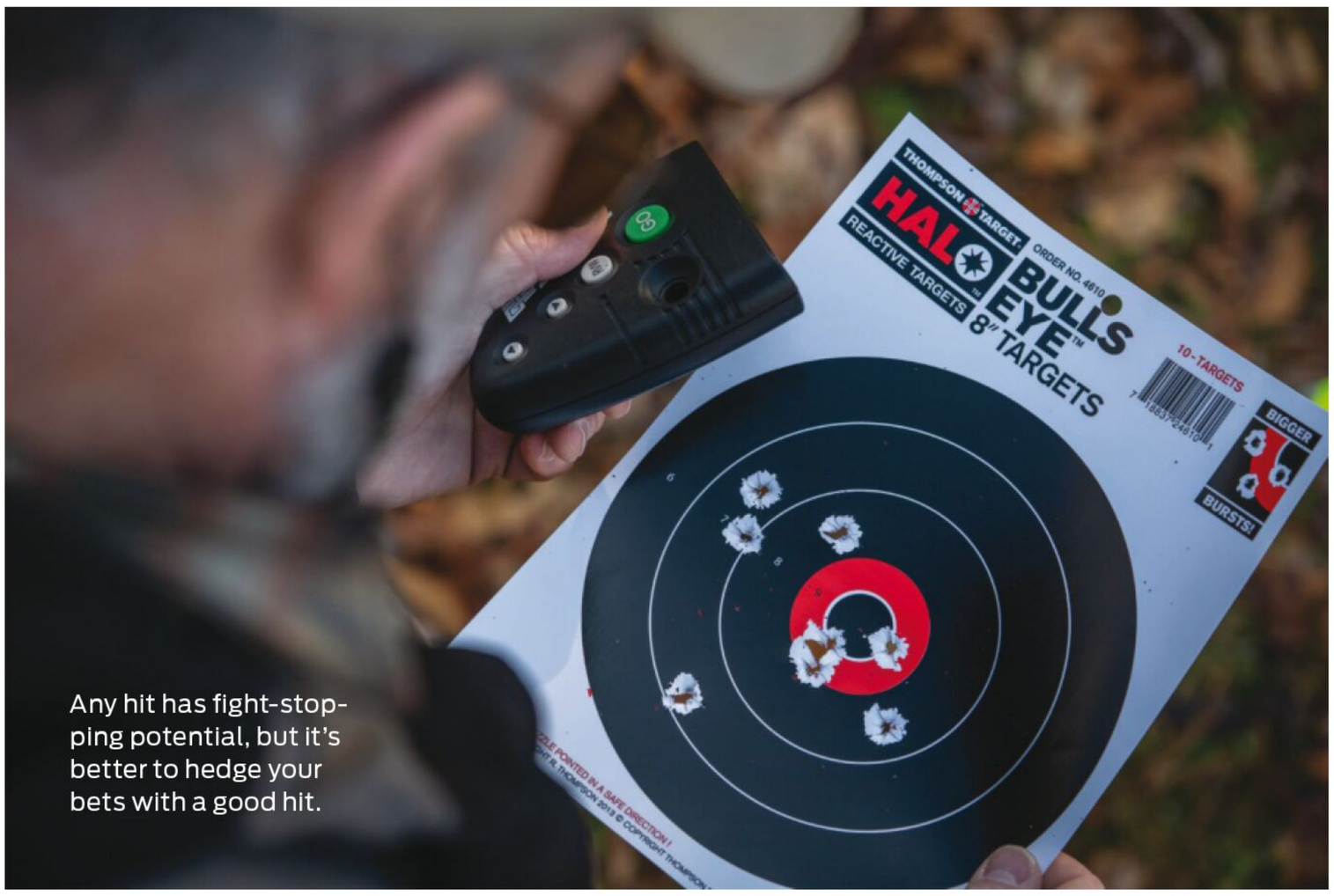
GUNS MATTER MORE THAN BULLETS

During his gunslinging days, Earp was known for always carrying a gun and not being afraid to let an adversary know it. Have you ever wondered how Earp made it through all that he did without getting shot?

I worked as a police officer for 13 years. I worked the street, I worked drug interdiction, I was on the ground 16 days during the aftermath of Katrina, and for most all that time I was a firearms instructor. During that time, I investigated many shootings, and in every case, *the shooting* stopped the threat. But more importantly, I responded to a lot of calls for assistance where a victim of an attempted crime stopped the threat by just interjecting a gun into the equation. They didn't shoot anyone, they just let the bad guy see that they had a gun.

On one occasion, a citizen had just purchased a new handgun and was sitting in their car in front of the local department store. A predator approached the car for unknown reasons and was trying to drag the victim out of his truck. With no other means to fight back, the victim managed to open the plastic box this new gun was in, and when their attacker saw the gun *in the box*, they ran away. The mere sight of the gun stopped the attack.

Over the course of those 13 years, I also pointed my duty handgun at



Any hit has fight-stopping potential, but it's better to hedge your bets with a good hit.



Those who carry concealed are often reluctant to pull a gun for fear it will not be justified. Learn and understand the law as it relates to self-defense in your state.

Earp's advice from nearly a century ago is just as valid now as it was then: Go slow enough to do things right, but do it as quickly as you can.

a lot of bad guys doing bad things. I wasn't hesitant about doing it. (My grandfather had told me when I was young to never pull a pistol unless you were going to use it. But "use" to him did not always mean shooting. It could also mean *using* it as a threat of violence.) When I pointed my duty gun at a bad guy, in most every case their immediate reaction was to stop being a bad guy and reach for the sky … or to run. This happened without me firing a shot and without verbally threatening to do so.

Having a gun, and letting the bad guy know *for sure* that you have a gun, is the best way to stop a threat. Pointing your handgun at a bad guy—when it is legally justified—also lets them know you're serious. No, it might not always work, but experience has shown it works far more often than not.

IF YOU GOTTA SHOOT, SHOOT WELL

Of all the shootings I investigated, there were two common themes. When the bullets landed in the right spot, the threat almost always immediately ceased. You can argue endlessly about how a .45 Auto will stop a fight better than a 9mm Luger, or how a 9mm Luger will stop a fight better than a 380. When you look at all the evidence, the data clearly suggests that if it comes to shooting, well-placed shots stop threats better than bad hits or misses.

This should be common sense, and if you're a hunter, you already knew that. If a hunter makes a poor shot, big-game animals rarely go down quickly. If the big-game animal is dangerous, like an African buffalo, not only does it *not* go down quickly, but things get Western in a hurry. I know this because I've shot poorly on African buffalo, twice, and they're the most vengeful creature on the planet. Maybe you could equate them to a perpetrator high on crack or some other mind-altering substance. If you want to stop them, you shoot them in the right spot.

If you must shoot a bad guy, the chances are high that any hit will cause them to cease their dangerous activity. But if that fails, more than likely your hit was not in the stopping place. This is the simple reason the failure to stop drill—two to the body and one to the head—exists. When the shooting starts, shot placement matters most.

This all might be the most plain and simple hillbilly-like stopping power advice you've ever heard. It doesn't really matter so much whether you're shooting with 155-grain Gold Dots out of a .40 S&W, or something else. Earp did all his fight-stopping shooting with pure lead bullets … which are a far cry from the high-tech bullets we have today. One bullet might work minutely better than the other, but if you don't have your gun, or if you shoot too slowly or miss the mark, none of the minutia that so many folks most often argue about will matter.

Be like Earp. Have a gun, don't be afraid to use it—get it between you and the bad guy threatening your life—and shoot as fast as you can get good hits. **GDTM**



ALWAYS ACCOUNTABLE?

Insights on responsible firearms storage from a tragic case.

As a gun owner, you're familiar with the immense responsibility that comes with firearm safety. But what happens when your child uses your gun for tragic purposes? The case of *Estate of Heck v. Stoffer* grapples with this very issue, raising important questions about potential liability for the misuse of your firearm by a third-person.

The case centers around the death of Officer Eryk Heck, who was shot and killed by Timothy Stoffer, a known felon, in 1997. Timothy obtained the handgun from his parents' residence. It was alleged that the Stoffers stored their handgun between the cushions of a chair in their bedroom. Timothy had a well-documented history of criminal activity and drug abuse. Court records detailed arrests for resisting arrest, battery and theft. Despite this troubled past, the Stoffers allegedly kept a handgun in their home, accessible to their son.

With a handgun taken from his parents' home, fugitive felon Timothy shot and killed Allen County Police Officer Eryk Heck. Officer Heck's estate sued Timothy's parents, Raymond and Patricia, and their family business, Stoffer Construction, asserting liability for negligent storage of the firearm in a way that afforded Timothy access to it. The Stoffers argued that they did not show Timothy where the gun was hidden.

The question then focused on whether leaving a loaded handgun in a hidden—but accessible—location was reasonable under these facts.

The trial court and Court of Appeals both held that the plaintiff's complaint did not state a cause of action upon which relief could be granted. These courts ruled that the parents had no legal duty to secure the gun in a way that would prevent their son from accessing it, but the Indiana Supreme Court disagreed and reversed, sending the case back to the trial court.

The high court argued that the Stoffers' knowledge of their son's violent tendencies created a "special relationship" that imposed a duty to act reasonably to prevent him from acquiring the gun. The Indiana legislature eventually passed legislation in response to this case via Indiana Code § 34-30-20-1, which protects gun owners from being sued (held civilly liable) if someone else uses their gun in a crime, but only if the other person obtained the gun unlaw-

"The high court argued that the Stoffers' knowledge of their son's violent tendencies created a 'special relationship' that imposed a duty to act reasonably to prevent him from acquiring the gun."

fully, i.e., through burglary, robbery, theft, etc.

Nevertheless, there are some important lessons to be learned from this fact scenario.

DUTY OF CARE FOR FIREARMS

The case establishes that, in some instances, parents may have a legal duty to secure firearms in a way that prevents them from falling into the hands of unauthorized persons with a propensity for violence. This duty arises primarily from the knowledge of the other person's dangerous tendencies.

GUN SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT

The case underscores the importance of responsible gun ownership. It highlights the potential legal consequences of failing to take reasonable precautions to prevent minors or dangerous individuals from accessing firearms. A more recent example can be found in the cases involving Jennifer and James Crumbley, both of whom were found guilty of involuntary manslaughter for their son's involvement in the 2021 school shooting at Oxford High School in Michigan. These are extreme examples, but they highlight potential legal consequences for unsafe storage of firearms.

FOCUS ON SAFE STORAGE

These sorts of outcomes illustrate the importance of proper gun storage solutions, such as trigger locks, gun safes, and keeping ammunition separate from firearms. Even though I do not advocate laws that require safe storage of firearms, I believe it is essential for responsible gun owners to store their firearms in a way that keeps them out of the hands of unauthorized individuals. The more people act responsibly, the less fodder lawmakers have to enact more gun control laws. Don't make it easy for criminals to contribute to the roughly 340,000 stolen firearms every year.

NOT A BLANKET RULE

It's crucial to understand that *Estate of Heck v. Stoffer* does not establish a universal parental liability for all gun accidents involving the use of your firearm by a third-party. The court's decision hinged on the specific facts of the case, particularly the parents' awareness of their son's violent tendencies. Nevertheless, it highlights the danger of storing firearms in non-secure locations and the potential legal liability that one might face for unsafe storage. These laws will vary state to state, but no matter the law, securing your firearm when not in your possession is essential to responsible gun ownership. **GDTM**

Disclaimer: This article is for informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice. Every state has its own gun laws, and it's recommended that you consult with an attorney to understand the specific legalities around gun storage and parental responsibility in your jurisdiction.

"Nevertheless, it highlights the danger of storing firearms in non-secure locations and the potential legal liability that one might face for unsafe storage. These laws will vary state to state, but no matter the law, securing your firearm when not in your possession is essential to responsible gun ownership."

About the Author

Alex Ooley is an attorney from southern Indiana, who represents the accused in a wide range of cases, including self-defense and gun-related cases. He's also an affiliate attorney with the Armed Citizen's Legal Defense Network and a certified firearms instructor. He's a passionate advocate for liberty and the Second Amendment, and he's helped numerous clients protect and restore their gun rights.

SIGHTS MATTER

Especially when they are correct.



Admittedly odd-looking at first glance, the Otis sight adjustment tool is slick and makes quick work of adjusting the front sight on an AR-15.

The scene was the same in every class. Officers would show up with rifles that were dirty, lacking lube and not zeroed. Not *all*, but enough of them. Applying oil solved the dry and dirty, but the non-zeroed ones had to be sighted-in.

And that's when the cursing would begin—cursing at Stoner and the front-sight design, which is so minimalist that it barely exists.

Getting the plunger depressed and then rotating the front sight got to be such a hassle that we dreaded the task. Special tools, a new approach, extra hands—they were all for naught at times.

Well, Otis has a solution: the M4SAT. The name? M4 Sight Adjustment Tool.

This is a special plastic and brass tool that fits onto and over the front sight, depresses the plunger and rotates the sight post, with tactile clicks as it rotates each quarter-turn. The military manuals will tell you that you can use the tip of a cartridge and it can do the job, but that's often laughable.

So, we end up using small screwdrivers, sections of wire coat hanger or even dental picks, and end up marring the finish or leaving big smears of brass while trying to use a bullet tip.

Well, no more.

Looking underneath the M4SAT, you'll see a slotted rod made of brass inside the housing, and the housing has a nub at one end.

In use, it's simple. Just press the tool down with the nub, compressing the front sight plunger. Once it's fully in place, you can then rotate the cruciform cap to turn the sight. Remember: clockwise raises the point of impact, and counterclockwise lowers it. Once you've done the clicks you need, lift and make sure the plunger rests in a notch in the sight.



The M4SAT nestles down onto the front sight and lets you quickly and accurately rotate it to make adjustments.

OK, this is all very clever, but there may be some problems.

One, the cruciform is tactile—yes, but it's four clicks to a full rotation. Those of you with legacy A1 front sights that are five to a turn will find that the cruciform and the sight don't always agree. That's a small problem, and you'll figure it out.

The second is what's called "dimensional variance" in tech-speak. No, not the newest Marvel superhero, but that some makers of products aren't as good about staying within specs as others.

The front sight flange diameter, the size of the notches in the flange and the clearance for the plunger tip, vary enough that in some instances turning the sight is work. I worked my way down the rack and found one rifle (granted, a real crap-tastic Frankengun) that couldn't fit and turn the sight.

Now, the M4SAT comes in a two-pack, for $18.

Do you need two of these? No, but after your buddy steals one of them (they are that slick), you'll still have one … and a lesson learned. So, get yours and keep one of them hidden so your "friends" will have to buy their own. **GDTM**

The front sight on an AR-15 can vary enough from one to the next that the M4SAT won't work on all of them—but then nothing does.



IT'S A SHOOTER'S WORLD

Bringing European propellants to American shores.

Reloading, as we know, is all about options. Handloaders love nothing more than the options presented by the wide variety of components, but it can be a terrible experience when our favorite products are unavailable.

I have a dozen or so favorite powders that I routinely reach for, though I'm always looking to make a new friend. From the IMR classics like IMR4064, IMR4350 and IMR3031, to the Hodgdon offerings like Varget, H414 and H4831SC, to the Alliant stuff like Reloder 15, 16, 19 and 22, not to mention Unique and Bullseye, to the newer or less-familiar products like Accurate Arms MagPro, AA4350 and 5744, there's plenty to choose from.

Ramshot has great powders, too, as does Norma and VihtaVouri. And the latest powder company I've began to use: Shooters World.

SHOOTERS WORLD

Importing a vast selection of powders from the Czech Republic, Shooters World brings the Lovex brand powders that are popular in Europe to America, and there are plenty of useful choices. Manufactured by Explosia, in their Pardubice-Semtín plant in the Czech Republic, the Shooters World powders are renamed from the European nomenclature to have more Anglicized names, such as Precision Rifle, Match Rifle, Long Rifle, Clean Shot, Heavy Pistol and SW4350.

From handgun cartridges to varmint cartridges—to the bigger centerfire rifle cartridges—Shooters World has a powder for nearly every application. I grabbed four of their rifle powders and headed to the reloading bench to see how they would operate in my rifles. For a broad selection of cartridges, I chose the .22-250 Remington, 6.5 Creedmoor, .308 Winchester and .300 Winchester Magnum. The Shooters World powders chosen were the Match Rifle, Long Rifle, Precision Rifle and SW4350.

MATCH RIFLE POWDER

Starting with the .22-250 Remington, I reached for the Shooters World Match Rifle Powder. A spherical powder with a burn rate similar to Alliant Reloder 15, CFE 223 and IMR4064, this powder is well-suited to the .223 Remington, .308 Winchester and .30-06 Springfield, especially when trying to duplicate military loads. My Ruger M77 .22-250 has always liked spherical powders like H380, H414 and H335, so even though the Match Rifle was a bit faster burning, I had faith.

I sized up some once-fired Remington cases, primed them with some CCI200 large rifle primers and seated a bunch of the Sierra 53-grain flat-based MatchKing bullets. The initial load of 35.5 grains gave 1-MOA accuracy, but I knew the rifle could do better. At 35.8 grains, I brought that three-shot group size down to just over ½ MOA, with the chronograph indicating an average velocity of 3,590 fps. The spherical grain structure is very friendly to electronic powder throwers as well as the volumetric models. I wouldn't hesitate to use Match Rifle in my .308 Winchester, either.

LONG RIFLE POWDER

Shooters World's Long Rifle powder is a stick powder engineered for the 6.5 Creedmoor, with a burn rate roughly on par with Hodgdon's H414 or Winchester 760. It's an extruded stick powder, though the diameter and length of the grains is smaller than many other stick powders, and I found that it metered very well in the RCBS ChargeMaster Link. Consult-



Match Rifle is a spherical rifle powder perfectly suited to the .223 Remington and .22-250 Remington, which meters evenly in a powder thrower or electronic dispenser.





(Far left) The 6.5 Creedmoor liked Shooters World Long Rifle powder under a 135-grain Hornady A-Match bullet.

(Left) Shooters World Precision powder made a great choice for the .308 Winchester and the 168-grain Sierra Tipped GameKing bullet, giving groups averaging 0.70 MOA.

ing the Shooters World digital reloading manual available on their website, I interpolated a load for the 135-grain Hornady A-Match bullets in once-fired Hornady cases sparked by a Federal Gold Medal GM210M primer, and it wasn't long before three of those precise bullets were printing just over ½-MOA groups. Clocking in at an average of 2,685 fps, these sleek, ultra-uniform bullets are a great way say hello to a steel target plate ¾ of a mile away. Long Rifle gave very uniform velocities in my rifle.



Shooters World offers a wide array of powders for rifles and pistols alike.

PRECISION RIFLE POWDER

The .308 Winchester is a rather forgiving cartridge to load for, as it will generally get along with any medium burn-rate powder. I've had wonderful results with Reloder 15, Hodgdon's Varget, IMR4064, IMR4320 and other similar powders. Shooters World Precision Rifle powder comes in a bit slower than the highly popular IMR40464, and closer to the discontinued IMR4320 (which was the factory-chosen powder in the 1950s).

I chose the Sierra 165-grain GameChanger—which is essentially the classic GameKing bullet with a translucent polymer tip—and Kinetic Industries match-grade .308 Winchester cases, along with a Federal Match GM210M large rifle primer for the testing. It took a couple of tweaks to the charge weight to get things where I wanted them, but in the end, three of those GameChangers printed groups measuring just over ⅝ inch, averaging 2,670 fps from a charge of 44.7 grains of Precision Rifle.

SHOOTERS WORLD SW4350

For the slowest-burning rifle powder of the lot—Shooters World SW4350—I reached for the tried-and-true .300 Winchester Magnum. Though there may be modern cartridges that have more sex appeal, the .300 Winnie is an old favorite of mine, and has always been a great choice in the accuracy department, as well as in the terminal ballistics phase. Likewise, the Nosler Partition is one of our most revered hunting bullets, quickly approaching its 80th birthday.

Loading a 180-grain Partition into a .300 Magnum of any variety isn't a bad idea for any hunter; if you need more bullet weight, switch cartridges. Having taken a .300 Winchester Magnum all over the globe, I can tell you that powders in the range of Hodgdon's H4350 or IMR 4350 will work very well with almost all bullet weights. There are a number of variants on the "4350" concept, ranging from Hodgdon to IMR to Accurate Arms, and though they are all similar (though definitely not interchangeable), the Shooters World SW4350 has the slowest burn rate of the entire lot.

Loading 70½ grains of SW4350 in Norma cases, with a CCI250 Large Rifle Magnum for ignition, under a 180-grain Nosler Partition, gave 2,925 fps and just under 1-MOA accuracy, which is fine for all of my hunting needs. Considering all the issues involved with powder availability, it's nice to have a propellant option for the .300 Winchester, .30-06 Springfield, 6.5 Creedmoor, .375 Holland & Holland Magnum, .280 Ackley Improved and more.

So, while you might already be familiar with the Shooters World lineup of propellant products, I remain impressed with their overall offerings and am happy that we have yet another option for reloading our shotguns, rifles and pistols. **GDTM**

01 Ruger LC Carbine In .45 ACP

The LC Carbine has been a hit for Ruger, and it's certainly bound to garner more attention now it's going fat and slow. That's right, the handy little PCC is now available in .45 ACP. Whether for home defense or playing around at the range, the combination of the carbine and the time-tested cartridge is certain to prove potent. Plus, Ruger hasn't messed with the winning formula earning the LC Carbine the reputation as stalwart and shootable. Some of the high points include a 16-inch threaded barrel, Dead-Blow blowback operation, AR-style folding stock and the ability to use Glock and Ruger magazines.

MSRP: $1,000

02 Hydra Weaponry Hydra 10

Hydra Weaponry always seems to have something up its sleeve. Its latest ace is certain to grab the attention of folks who appreciate a full-powered rifle. Meet the Hydra 10, a robust AR-10 that brings plenty to the table. First and foremost, Hydra developed the .308 Winchester around the DPMS-pattern receiver, which in turn opened up the doors to more mods and upgrades. Not that it's necessary, given the Hydra 10 is fairly well decked out—available in 16- and 18-inch barrel configurations, each with ample M-Lok real estate and BLK B5 furniture. The trigger is snappy, too. For those in the market for a deadly serious hunting option or a home-defense gun that can reach out and touch miscreants, the Hydra 10 is just the ticket.

MSRP: $3,000

03 Hornady RAPiD Safe AR Gunlocker

Hornady Security expands its RAPiD safe line with the RAPiD Safe AR Gunlocker, providing secure storage for long-guns in compact spaces. Designed for under-bed, closet or vehicle storage, it's tailored to always be at-hand. Available in two sizes, and accommodating up to three tactical-length shotguns or carbines, it features heavy-duty 16-gauge steel construction with four internal locking lugs. Accessible via RFID wristbands, key fobs or numerical keypad entry, it ensures quick access while maintaining security. With pre-drilled holes and a security cable, mounting options are flexible.

MSRP: Starting at $420

04 Sig Sauer Ranch Rifle

Sig Sauer has gone country. The MCX Regulator is a modern ranch-style rifle with some interesting twists. Available in 5.56 NATO or 7.62x39mm, it's part of the MCX Spear LT family, featuring a gas-operated piston system. Departing from traditional AR-pattern firearms, it opts for a modified lower receiver compatible with traditional buttstocks. This design facilitates accessibility in restrictive states. Backward compatible with other Sig Sauer MCX upper receiver groups, it maintains versatility. Equipped with a two-stage match trigger, cold hammer-forged barrel, and Sig muzzle brake, it offers precision and reliability. The MCX Regulator includes a built-in Arca Rail and ships with a 10-round magazine. Oh yeah, it's California legal.

MSRP: Starting at $3,000



05 »





02 »

04 »

05 Zenith ZF-56

Good things come in small packages. Take the ZF-56 from Zenith. Renowned for its MP5 clones, the company has unveiled modern 5.56-caliber roller-delayed carbines and pistols. Departing from traditional HK-style designs, it integrates AR-like upper and lower receivers, enabling compatibility with AR stocks and folding designs. Equipped with an M-Lok handguard and optics rail, it balances versatility and customization. Featuring HK-like safety and AR-style magazine release, it offers familiarity and ease of use. With a HK-like charging handle and minimal recoil, it promises ergonomic handling and accuracy.

MSRP: Starting at $2,375

06 Smith & Wesson M&P15-22 B5 Edition

Looking for a plinker with a bit more pizzazz? Smith & Wesson has you covered with the M&P15-22 B5 Edition. S&W's almost iconic .22 carbine is now offered bundled with Magpul MBUS folding rear sight and B5 Systems furniture. Although not new, the M&P15-22 remains a top choice for those seeking an AR-15-style .22 LR rifle. Crafted to emulate the AR-15's look and feel, it boasts interchangeable parts with standard AR-15s, ensuring seamless handling and training. The B5 Systems Bravo Stock and P-Grip 23 enhance ergonomics and versatility, favored by AR-15 enthusiasts. Offering reduced recoil and lower ammo costs, the M&P15-22 B5 Edition delivers a premium shooting experience with modern enhancements.

MSRP: $500

07 Bilson Arms BA-15FC Series

Bilson Arms unveils the BA-15FC series, a forward-charging AR-style rifle showcased at SHOT 2024. Cleverly, the charging handle is moved forward onto the forend and operates as a pump-slide on the semi-auto. The advantage here is the carbine is more intuitive and quicker on reloads, freeing up the dominant hand to only worry about magazines. Building on last year's 9mm model, this year's lineup expands to include versatile cartridge options: 5.56 NATO, 6mm ARC, .300 Blackout and .450 Bushmaster. Crafted from billet aluminum, Mil-spec and customizable Cerakote coatings, these are slick shooters.

MSRP: Starting at $1,750

TACTICAL TACK-DRIVERS



06 »



07 »



01 »





03 »

LIGHTWEIGHT LEAD-SLINGER

A lightweight AR build that's designed to be used hard.

Most articles on building a lightweight AR-15 end up veering into some sort of bizarre "what the heck?" universe. The results are often a "rifle" that incorporates exotic materials of fabulous cost, with the various parts having more piercings than a 19-year-old purple-haired coed at a liberal arts college, and a "full up" weight of 3.5 pounds.

And, if you drop it, it breaks.

Yes, I want lightweight, but I expect my tools to work—and to survive at least as much hard use as I myself can withstand. It has been a long time since I willingly jumped out of perfectly serviceable aircraft (at my own expense, not courtesy of Uncle Sam, to be clear), but I still trip and fall now and then. So, at the very least, I expect a rifle I've fallen on to still work.

To that end, I rang up Paul Buffoni at Bravo Company to see what we could do.

BUILDING A LIGHTWEIGHT BRUISER

On the lower, there wasn't much. Short of chopping holes in things, or using polymer (which both of us agreed was out of bounds), a basic AR-15 lower was going to weigh what a lower weighs. For this project, that meant a lower that weighs 35.6 ounces.

Now, that's with the BCM Mod O stock, and this is where I get to cheat a bit if I want to. The Mod O stock, while very comfortable, is heavier than

The complete lightweight Bravo. With optics and steel BUIS, it's still under 6.5 pounds.



The Bravo lower came already assembled, and if I wanted to save some weight, I could swap the Mod O stock for a CAR-15 stock.

needed. So, if I swap that for a plain ol' CAR-15 stock, I can shave off a grand total of 3.9 ounces.

Hmm, for comfort's sake, I'll keep the Mod O *thank you very much*.

The BCM lower came assembled (I like a project, but I'm not a masochist), and that included their PNT trigger assembly, which is made of investment castings in 8620, precision machined, and then after the sear surfaces have been surface ground and polished, it gets a nickel-Teflon coating. It's Mil-spec tough but nearly High Power clean and crisp.

In addition to the Mod O stock, it had a BCM Mod 3 pistol grip. I much prefer the original Mod O grip, but this is how it came, and they're easy enough to swap that I'm not worried. There was nothing to be done with the lower, nor would I want to, so that part was easy.

However, the upper is something we can make some progress on.

Buffoni is justifiably proud of his single-side Mk2 (medium) charging handle, and I can't see adding enough weight to justify a USGI handle, so we're in at one full ounce. A bolt and carrier are the same regardless, but the BCM parts are all Mil-spec, tested and top-notch, so there's 11.5 ounces. That leaves the receiver and handguard.

For a receiver, we went with a flat-top M4 because … well, why not? And if I need iron sights (and I do, we'll cover



The folding BUIS sights from Mission First are out of the way until needed.

The MCMR13 handguard comes with its own barrel nut and anti-rotation steel clip.

that later), I don't want them in a carry handle. So, I went with the flat-top to give me sighting options and the M4 because I want the M4 feedramps. There's another 8.3 ounces.

CHOOSING A BULLET TUBE

OK, now what for a barrel?

Another cheat that people use to minimize weight is to make an AR pistol or an SBR. By foregoing 5 to 7 inches of 4150 steel tube, they can shave off a significant amount of weight. *Yeah, no.* I'm not a real fan of AR pistols, and not everyone can have, or be willing to go through the hassle of getting, an SBR.

So, a carbine it is.

I could go with a 14.5-inch barrel and a pinned and welded flash hider, but the weight savings end up being minimal at best. What to do? Simple: flutes. Bravo offers a 16-inch fluted, lightweight 5.56 barrel that tips the scales at 22 ounces. (By comparison, a 14.5-inch of the same weighs 20.5 ounces. But you still need a flash hider long enough to make it to 16 inches, so there goes most or all of your 1.5 ounces "saved.")

The lightweight barrel is fluted, but it's already such a slim tube that the fluting isn't the "drainage ditch" you might expect. They're shallow, but they do shave some weight off. The overall profile of the barrel is so slim that the gas block doesn't have a shoulder to stop on. And the stop-shoulder at the muzzle for the flash hider? That has to be increased from the barrel diameter, so the flash hider and its washer have enough of a shoulder to actually stop and torque up to.

A low-profile gas block and gas tube add to the ensemble, and they're going to weigh the same regardless of what barrel you use. Lacking a stop shoulder and not enough steel to permit a crosspin, the gas block has to depend on a small dimple and two setscrews.

I'm usually not a fan of set screws for this application. In fact, I'd be really leery, except for one thing: The handguard fully covers the gas block. It can't get impacted, so it can't shift—especially when I use Loctite on the setscrews, and wicking Loctite between the barrel and gas block. I've done it this way before, and—done right—things stay in place.

That leaves the handguard. I could go retro and stick with the plastic carbine or rifle-length ribbed handguards, but if I wanted to mount a light, I'd be out of luck. Plus, that means an A-frame front sight, and those add weight.

So, I went with the Bravo Company





The barrel is where you can get some significant weight savings. Combine a slim barrel with a low-profile gas block and you're down many ounces.

MCMR13, an M-Lok-slotted aluminum handguard that free-floats the barrel and adds only 10.5 ounces to the overall weight. Now, I could opt for the MCMR10, the carbine-length handguard, and shave it back to 9 ounces, but I have long arms and the extra length (sigh, an extra ounce-and-a-half of aluminum) makes things easier. The MCMR uses a proprietary barrel nut (with wrench included) and an anti-rotation steel clip. It also uses a pair of through-bolts to clamp it in place.

How do I know all these weights? I'd like to say I was diligent and weighed them all (I did), but for that I have to give Buffoni credit. Being curious and weight-conscious, he weighs all the gear to keep track. All parts in the mix, he calculated that the weight so far (no sights, sling or magazine) would come to 90.5 ounces … or 5.66 pounds. That's pretty darned light, considering that my XM177E1 clone tips the scales at that same weight. But that weight has no provision for optics or light.

ICING THE CAKE

Buffoni shipped the parts, and I got to work. I could've had it sent as a complete rifle, but where's the fun in that? I know how to assemble an AR-15, and when all the parts come from Bravo, you know they will all play well with each other.

For sighting, I opted for the BCM optics mount, a heck-for-tough steel mount (OK, an extra ounce or two, darn) that's not a QD mount, and an Aimpoint T2. For all of it being steel and tough, the mount weighs less (2.6 ounces) than the Aimpoint (3.4 ounces), or the backup irons I insist on.

Yes, for a lightweight rifle, I'll add the weight of some backup sights, and here I opted for the Mission First Tactical folding BUIS in steel. At 3.1 ounces, they're not heavy, but the extra ounce or so I might have saved by going aluminum or polymer just doesn't interest me. If the situation has gone sideways enough that I need my BUIS, I want something that will survive the experience.

Where does that leave us? With the 5 pounds, 10.5 ounces of our start weight, I added 9.1 ounces of sighting hardware. That puts the bare rifle up to 6 pounds and 3.6 ounces. Add in a sling and a loaded 20-round magazine, and we're under 7 pounds, ready to go.

Admittedly, there's no light mounted, but lights can have weights all over the map. (If you don't mind me mixing my metaphors.) You could go as light as a no-longer-made Insight M3 (I've got a basket of them) for 3.3 ounces, or go up to "signal the mothership illumination" SureFire M640DFT-Pro at 5.5 ounces.

Even with a light, we're barely over 7 pounds, and the racks of gun shops across America are stuffed full of AR-15s that start out heavier than this and as



The Bravo optics mount and the rear peep sight.

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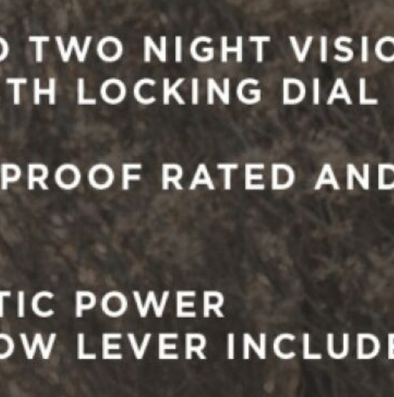
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SIGSAUER

BRAVO CO AR-15

TYPE: Semi-auto carbine

CALIBER: 5.56

CAPACITY: 30+1 rounds (uses AR-15 magazines)

BARREL: 16 inches

LENGTH: 34 inches

WIDTH: 1.3 inches

HEIGHT: 7 inches

WEIGHT: 6 pounds, 4 ounces

TRIGGER: 5 pounds, 1 ounce

SIGHTS: MFT BUIS / Aimpoint T2 in BCM mount

GRIPS: BCM Mod 3

FINISH: Black oxide, anodizing & polymer

MSRP: $1,344

CONTACT: BravoCompanyUSA.com

CHRONOGRAPH DATA

AMMUNITION/TYPE	BULLET WEIGHT (GR.)	VELOCITY	ES	SD	ACCURACY AVG.
Black Hills V-Max	50	3,010	69	37.2	1.5 inches
Black Hills FMJ	55	2,841	80	33.9	1.7 inches
Federal Fusion	62	2,749	17	8.3	1.4 inches
Sig OTM	77	2,362	32	14.1	1.1 inches

Velocities are averages of 10 shots measured on a Labradar chronograph set to read 15 feet from the muzzle. Accuracy average of four, five-shot groups at 100 yards from a shooting rest

bare as the day they were born. Oh, and a sling? I'm a minimalist, so we can count on that adding 2 to 3 ounces at most. Still supermodel skinny and lightweight.

IT'S LIGHTWEIGHT, BUT DOES IT SHOOT?

Test-firing? Really? You have to ask? The trigger makes consistent release a simple task, and the stock is comfortable enough to have a consistent cheek weld. Granted, the light weight means the BCM Lightweight is a bit sporty on the bags, but that's only in the context of the AR-15.

Really, if the recoil of a 5.56 in a just-barely 7-pound rifle is something you find uncomfortable, you really need to eat your Wheaties. And when you consider that you'll spend days, months and even years carrying the weight and minutes experiencing recoil, the trade-off is worth it.

Cost? That one was a puzzler. I had to pore over the Bravo Company catalog, keeping track of the various parts, to determine that … it was worth it. Then, I found out that Bravo could've saved me the trouble, because they make the exact upper I built, ready to go. So, order a basic BCM lower and their Enhanced lightweight fluted complete upper. After that, you'll have to decide on sighting options yourself—but that's the fun part. **GDTM**

There isn't much weight savings to be had once you go to an M4 upper, but the one-sided charging handle does shave some weight off.



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EDITOR'S NOTE

The Aero Precision Solus is available in a variety of configurations. The rifle in this feature is a Hunter model with a Sendero profile fluted barrel. On the cover of this issue is the Hunter model with a carbon-fiber barrel. The Solus is available in a chassis model as well.

THE EXPERIENCED ‘NEW’ GUY

Aero Precision’s Solus Hunter bolt-action rifle revels in precision for the field or range.

Many modern hunting rifles look different than the hunting rifles I grew up with. In fact, a lot of the hunting rifles manufactured today are a great deal different than the hunting rifles manufactured only a decade ago. Influences from the world of long-range shooting and the sniper community have bled into the design and configuration of hunting rifles: This has changed their look and improved shooter interface and precision.

Now, we have what I like to call “hybrid” or “crossover” hunting rifles, and the Solus Hunter from Aero Precision is a perfect example of this modern trend.

THE PLATFORM PIVOT

Though hunters might not have heard of Aero Precision, they’ve been building rifles for quite some time—but most of those rifles were of the AR-15-style and are very well respected, either in their complete form or as upper and/or lower receiver components.

The Solus Hunter is the first bolt-action hunting rifle from Aero Precision, and it’s available in three configurations that include a 20-inch barreled .308 Winchester, a 24-inch barreled 6.5 Creedmoor or a 24-inch barreled 6.5 PRC. All come with a suggested retail price of $2,570.

At that price, you’d expect these rifles to be loaded with features for hunting … and that they’d deliver a high level of precision. I reached out to Aero Precision for a test rifle in .308 Winchester. This was partly because I’m fond of the .308 Winchester for big-game hunting, but also partly because I liked its shorter barrel, which better interfaces with



The adjustable comb on the Solus Hunter's AG Precision Adjustable Hunter Stock is shaped so you can remove the bolt from the action when the comb is raised.

(Below) The three-lug, cock on opening, 60-degree throw bolt of the Aero Precision Solus Hunter.

AERO PRECISION SOLUS HUNTER

CHAMBERINGS: .308 Winchester (tested), 6.5 Creedmoor, 6.5 PRC

ACTION: Three-lug, bolt-action, with 60-degree cock on opening bolt

LENGTH: 39.75 inches

WEIGHT: 8 pounds, 10.1 ounces, with empty magazine installed (actual)

BARREL: 20-inch, fluted, Sendero light profile, 1:10 RH twist, threaded at 5/8-24

ACTION: Bolt action with interchangeable three-lug bolt head and 60-degree throw

TRIGGER: Trigger Tech single stage (3.0 pounds as tested)

CAPACITY: 5+1 (AICS compatible) Ships with one Magpul PMAG

FINISH: Cerakote

STOCK: AG Composites carbon-fiber adjustable hunter stock, with adjustable comb

PRICE: $2,570



SHOOTING RESULTS

LOAD	VEL (FPS)	SVD (FPS)	PRECISION (INCHES)
Remington 172-grain LR Speer Impact	2,644	15.0	1.44
Browning 165-grain LR Sierra GameKing	2,687	16.0	1.19
Lehigh Defense 152-grain Controlled Chaos	2,686	8.00	0.98
			AVERAGE: 1.20

NOTES: Reported average muzzle velocity (VEL), standard velocity deviation (SVD were established by firing 10 shots over a Caldwell G2 chronograph with the screens set 10 feet from the muzzle. Reported precision (PRECISION) was determined by firing three, five-shot groups with each load from a sandbag rest at 100 yards. Conditions at testing: Temperature: 49 degrees, Humidity: 80 percent, Pressure: 30.01 in-Hg, Elevation: 2,200 feet.



The stock configuration on the Aero Precision Solus Hunter is ideally adapted for shooting from the prone position.

a suppressor. After spending several months with this rifle, I'm of the opinion that you'll to get what you pay for.

THE ACTION & BARREL

Aero Precision has designed the action for the Solus Hunter so it has the same footprint as the Remington 700. This is smart because it allows for interface with a wide range of aftermarket stocks. Like the Remington 700, the Solus action is also a push-feed design, but it's a bit different: The bolt has three lugs as opposed to two, and it opens with only a 60-degree twist.

Also, instead of a single-plunger ejector, the Solus action has two. Another unique feature is that the bolt can be easily field stripped, and the bolt head is interchangeable. This means that, if at some point you want to convert your .308 to 6.5 PRC or to one of the short magnum cartridges, a barrel and bolt head swap is all that's required.

Another unique feature of the Solus action is that the scope rail that comes with the action is not screwed to the action. Aero Precision machines the 15-slot Picatinny scope rail onto the action. This means there's zero chance it can come loose. This might not seem all that important, but with the weight of many modern rifle scopes tugging on their moorings during recoil, it happens a lot more often than you might think.

I was at a rifle class not too long ago, and several shooters running heavy optics had scope rails work loose. The integral rail eliminates any worry of this. Aero Precision was also wise to fit an adjustable Trigger Tech single-stage trigger to the action. This trigger was spectacular right out of the box, breaking at 3.0 pounds.



The action on the Aero Precision Solus Hunter was butter smooth to operate.

(Below) You can plainly see the three lugs on the Solus Hunter's bolt, and the dual plunger ejectors.

Aero Precision fits the Solus Hunter with a fluted, light Sendero profile barrel that has a rifling twist rate of 1:10 inches. They also thread the muzzle at ⅝-24, and a thread protector is supplied. Unlike some rifles that comes with threaded barrels and a thread protector, this one was not *thread-locked* in place. It was easy to remove, and the radius of the thread protector is flattened just in case you need to use a wrench. The bore of the barrel is honed and lapped, and like the action, it has an elite Cerakote finish.

The bottom metal for this action is AG Composites Adjustable Hunter Bottom Metal. It's aluminum and includes a trigger guard and a magazine well that will accept AICS short-action magazines. The rifle ships with one, five-round Magpul PMAG, and at the bottom front of the trigger guard there's an ambidextrous paddle-style release that, when pressed, allows the magazine to drop free.



THE STOCK

Many rifle manufacturers have given up on stock manufacturing because so



The adjustable comb on the Solus Hunter allows you to establish a perfect cheek weld while aligning your eye with the centerline of the riflescope.

(Below) Aero Precision optimally configured the Solus Hunter for those wanting a precision shooting hunting rifle that can also pull double-duty on the range for long-range fun.

many other manufacturers make great aftermarket stocks. It just makes more sense to source the stock from a manufacturer that really knows how to make a good stock.

Currently, AG Composites out of Alabama is making some of the best; they currently build the carbon-fiber stocks Wilson Combat uses on their tack driving, sub 5-pound NULA rifles. The Adjustable Hunter Stock on the Solus Hunter rifle is a carbon-fiber stock that's offered in three AG Composites finishes. There's the carbon steel finish, the carbon black/tan finish, and the Kodiak Rouge finish.

This stock weighs about 40 ounces and comes with a 13.675-inch length-of-pull, which is not adjustable, but the comb height is. The adjustable comb is critical for helping you maintain a good cheek weld while having your eye perfectly aligned with the centerline of the riflescope. This stock includes an aluminum block inside the forend, from the tip of the forend to just in front of the recoil lug. Because of that, you can drill the stock to allow for rail installation. Aluminum pillars are standard, and AG cures the stock at 250 degrees for maximum rigidity and stability. It's finished out with three sling swivel studs and a 1-inch Pachmayr Decelerator recoil pad.

The underside of the forend on this stock is flat, allowing it to interface well with shooting bags, and the forend is wide and hand-filling. The near vertical grip—also a feature now often seen on modern hunting rifles—is comfortable and fills the hand well. Though I think it a bit too vertical for fast-action snap shooting, it was very comfortable from the prone position, or when working from a bipod or tripod.

THE SHOOTING

To evaluate the Solus Hunter rifle, I started with a Maven RS 1, 2.5-15x44mm riflescope mounted in Leupold Mark 4 steel rings.

The first order of business was to see what level of precision this rifle was capable of. I tested three hunting loads by firing multiple five-shot groups at 100 yards with each. The overall average for all groups fired was 1.20 inches. That may not seem all that inspiring, but the rifle just did not particularly like Remington's 172-grain load, which averaged 1.44 inches. Together, the other two loads averaged right at an inch, and the smallest five-shot group (Lehigh Defense 152-grain Controlled Chaos load) measured less than a half-inch.

I then switched to a Leupold Mark 5HD 3.6-18x44mm riflescope for a bit more magnification and began working at longer ranges with the rifle. I also mounted a standard adapter from Spartan Precision and did a lot of shooting from prone with a bipod, and from standing with a tripod. I shot fast to simulate hunting situations, and I had



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no trouble repetitively ringing 8- and 12-inch steel plates out to 500 yards. I conducted all the shooting from the bench and from field positions with the incredibly lightweight and compact Silencer Central Banish Backcountry suppressor attached.

THE VERDICT

Weighing 8 pounds, 10.1 ounces naked, the Solus Hunter is a bit heavy for my liking. I prefer lighter-weight hunting rifles. And while the modern hunting rifle trend is starting to transition from heavy hybrid/crossover hunting rifles to lighter versions in similar configurations, many rifles similar to the Solus Hunter currently on the market tip the scales at about 8 pounds.



The best five-shot 100-yard group fired with the Solus hunter measured less than a half-inch.



(Below) Aero Precision's Solus Hunter bolt-action rifle.

All that said, if you do most of your hunting from a stand or blind, the weight shouldn't matter. And, if you want to play the long-range game, you'll appreciate the added stability the weight of this rifle offers when shooting from a supported position or bags.

The other feature of this rifle I did not like was that the two-position safety does not lock the bolt when in the safe position. I guess it goes back to my early days with the early Remington Model 700s that had this feature, as well as all the time I've spent with my New Ultra Light Arms rifles that do as well. On multiple occasions, I've had bolts come open while carrying a rifle slung in the field. I just like a safety that locks the bolt closed.

Other than those two minor gripes, there's very little about this rifle not to like. The action is as smooth to operate as any bolt-action rifle I've worked with at any price range. In fact, it operates so smoothly that, sometimes, it was hard to tell if I was chambering a round. My grandfather would have said it's as slick as snot on a doorknob.

The rifle was also a solid shooter, and I have no doubt that with some additional ammunition experimentation or handloading, you could find a real tack-driving load. And if precision is something you worry about, every Solus Hunter rifle comes with sub-MOA precision guarantee.

If the modern trend of long-range precision/sniper-like hunting rifles appeals to you, and if you want a smooth-operating, good-shooting and good-looking rifle for the field during hunting season and for the range in the off season, the Aero Precision Solus Hunter might just be the right rifle for you. **GDTM**

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SWEET & SALTY



The IWI Carmel is a non-AR rifle worthy of careful consideration.

Have you ever found yourself really, really wanting to like something—a person, event or thing—and despite your best efforts, getting hung up on certain things? That's the situation I found myself facing when I'd had enough time behind the trigger of the IWI Carmel.

Now, right out of the gate, it's worth noting that, functionally, the Carmel works … and it runs very well. But also, from a functionality perspective, there are things that could've been done better. Maybe I'm too picky, and they won't bother you a bit. That call has gotta be yours.

Regardless, here's the great news: Most anything you don't like can be swapped to fit your shooting pleasure.

THE WINNING RECIPE

OK, what's to like about it? Well, it's not an AR-15, which is a good start. It uses your basic AR-15/STANAG magazine or clones, copies or substitutes, and that's just fine. If the AR magazine were any more common, more ubiquitous, you'd be able to buy them at your local 7/11 or gas station mini-mart. (And for all I know, some places you can.)

It's a piston-system rifle with a three-position gas regulator. The barrel is cold hammer forged. There's a 1:7 twist, a 5.56 chamber/leade, and the chamber and bore are chrome-lined. The muzzle is threaded, and there's a compensator installed from the factory.

Lotsa good checkmarks so far.

The receiver has a lot of polymer in it,



On the left, you see the regular controls.

The right side of the IWI Carmel. At first glance it shows a lot of promise, and you can see the ambi controls.

and the handguard has M-Lok slots at the 3, 6 and 9 o'clock positions, so you have options when mounting gear. The controls are all where we'd expect them to be—plus they're ambidextrous, so lefties ought to rejoice. Well, with the exception of the charging handle. That's up over the handguard, set up so you can run the rifle with your left hand and not take your hand off of the pistol grip to do so.

Wait … a bonus feature: You can swap the charging handle from one side to the other. So, everyone ought to rejoice.

The pistol grip is a B5 systems grip—which is not my fave. A lot of people like them, but the receiver at the pistol grip is exactly like that of the AR-15, so you can swap off the IWI Carmel pistol grip and install the one of your choice.

On the back end, the Carmel has a folding stock. And as if that wasn't enough, the stock also has an adjustable cheekpiece, so you can lift it up or lower it, to get your eye directly behind whatever aiming system you have installed. Also, there is no lack of ways to attach a sling. The M-Lok slots up front, of course, then a set of QD sockets at the upper rear of the receiver, then HK-style loops for a sling clip on the stock itself.

In testing, the good stuff keeps on keeping on. The trigger is excellent, and it's a two-stage design so it has a clean take-up and a clean break. That's the good news. The bad news is that the design is not compatible with the AR-15 trigger system, so if you want some other trigger on your Carmel, you can't have it. Were the Carmel trigger other than excellent this would be a real problem, but it's more than good enough, so you won't have to go swapping out fire control systems here.

The ambi controls make running the Carmel easy, regardless of left- or right-handedness, and if you want to swap to fire around a corner, you can easily do so.

The charging handle swap is particularly easy. Lock the bolt back, and then slide the charging handle (it's non-reciprocating) until it lines up with the clearance notch in the handguard. Then, push the charging handle over to the other side. Reach over and tug on it, to ensure it is fully over, and then slide it all the way forward. Done.

The three-position gas regulator is also accessed by way of a relief cut made to the aluminum handguard. The three settings are regular, extreme and suppressor. I suspect that extreme would be used only in … *oh, ah* … extreme circumstances, like arctic cold or to keep it running even though you haven't been able to do any maintenance on it for a week of heavy fighting. Now that's something the IDF would know about, the rest of us not so much. And the suppressor setting should be obvious.

The trigger is very nice, and the ejection is forward, so if you are running the Carmel from your left shoulder you don't have to worry about brass in the face. I tried a magazine from the left shoulder, just to see if there were any face-gas problems, and there weren't. I'm happy on that point.

The stock is length-adjustable as well as cheekpiece-height adjustable, and it was easy enough to get it set up to fit me. The stock folds by pressing a button on the left side and hinging the stock around to the right. It's pitched so it doesn't block the ejection port when folded.

The gas regulator for the piston system can be accessed through the relief cuts in the aluminum handguard.

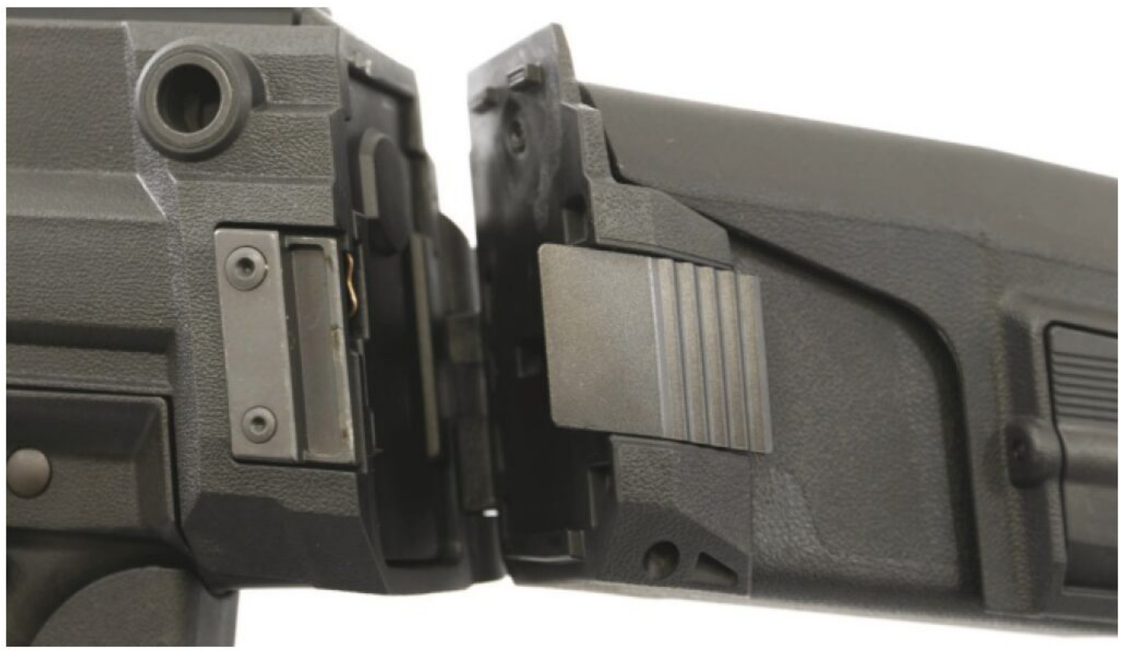
The upper receiver is the firearm, as you can tell with the serial number visible through a slot in the polymer shell molded around the aluminum supports.

The stock latch button is something you will have to press on hard to get the stock to unlock (as in, don't be shy).

Here you see the hinge lock plate pulled out to permit parts removal.











This is as far as you have to go to do most cleaning.

The stock is also the way to disassemble for cleaning. Unload and close the bolt. Hinge the stock folded. In the rear plate that's uncovered is a button. Lean hard on the button and slide the stock-latch clip out to the left. Now, use the charging handle to pop the action open and also open the rear plate. It all comes out in one piece and is easy to clean. The trigger assembly is simple as well: Press the rear takedown pin (there isn't a front one) from right to left (it, too, will fight you like crazy), and then hinge the housing down and out.

In testing, I put a Leupold scope on top and the Carmel proved to be superbly accurate. The nice trigger and the adjustable stock were parts of that, but IWI clearly knows how to make a good barrel.

CERTAIN CONSIDERATIONS

So, with all these good points, what's the deal? Why has it proven so hard to warm up to the Carmel? *Sigh.*

First up is the mode of manufacture. The upper (which is the rifle, that's where the serial number is) is a polymer/aluminum assemblage. The receiver portion is an aluminum-reinforced polymer shell. The handguard is aluminum. What gets hot fast when you shoot? The barrel, and it radiates it to the handguard. So, the handguard is going to heat up faster than the receiver and make it more difficult to hang onto.

To be fair, it works just like an AR-15, by the way, except the polymer receiver of the Carmel isn't going to dissipate heat from the bolt—not that it gets much, since it's a piston system. But a piston system must vent gas someplace, and they do so at … the handguard.

The polymer/aluminum design creates a boxy receiver set. At times, it felt like I was schlepping around a 1980s camcorder. The AR-15 has been undergoing a diet of sorts, becoming slimmer in its outlines, and for the Carmel to not only go backward but back past the blockiest AR-15 ever is something to get used to.

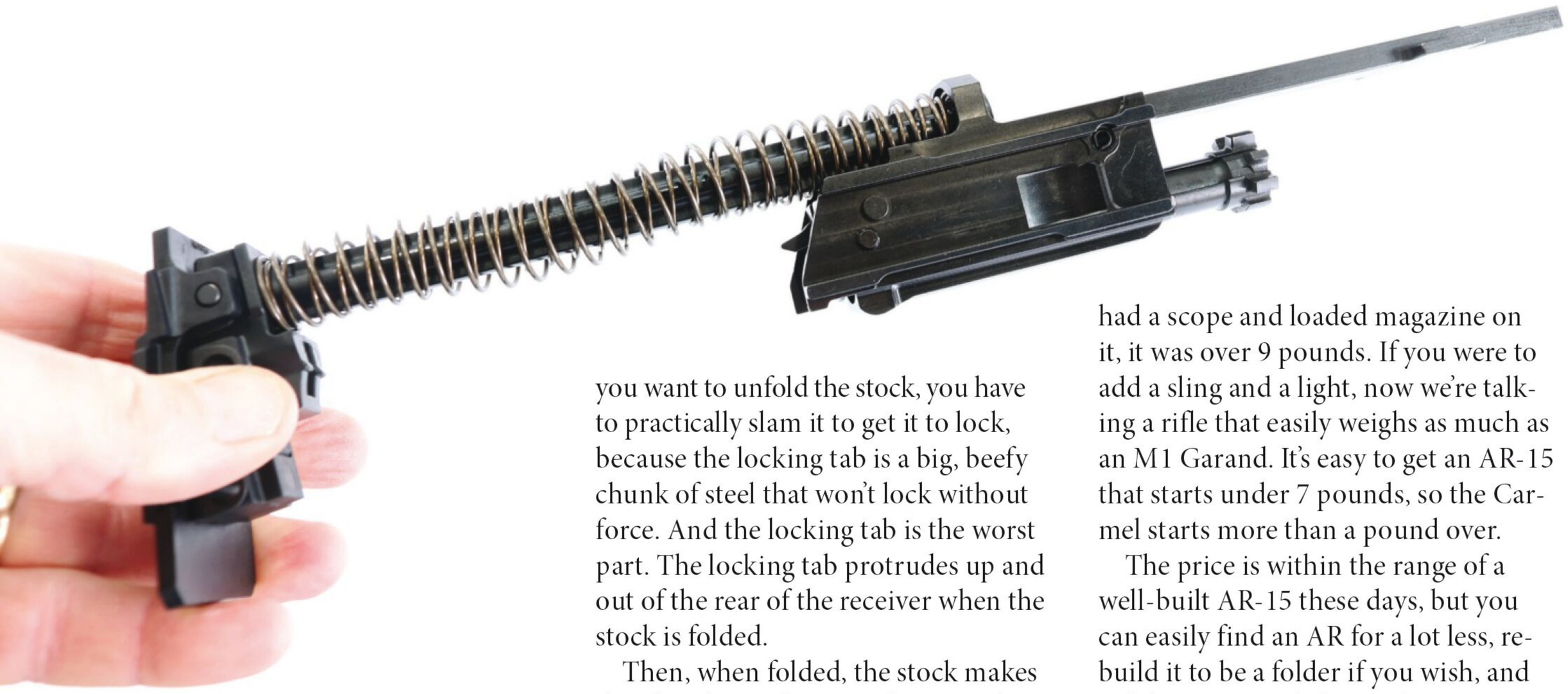
As an example, on the slimmest AR-15 handguards, I can wrap my hand fully around the handguard and have my thumb and fingers touching. A lot of shooters who are taking their cues from the special ops people like to wrap their hand around the handguard with their thumb up on top. That's not possible with the Carmel. Maybe, if the Carmel catches on enough, some aftermarket maker will come up with a slimmer handguard design.

And then there's the stock. Now, the adjustments are easy. Grab the stock buttplate with your fingers inside of the triangular loop, squeeze and it's unlocked. Push or pull to the length you want and let go; it will lock in place at one of the six settings. That's the good part. The cheekpiece has a hinged lever: press in on both sides, and push or pull the cheekpiece to the height you want and let go. It isn't ergonomic; it takes force, and there are four settings.

The button to unlock to hinge? Eat your Wheaties, because you have to have it fully depressed to unlock it, and that's apparently where the spare Buick suspension springs all went. Halfway measures won't do here. Similarly, when



The handguard is boxy, and it isn't possible to wrap your hand around it.



Yes, the action assembly comes out as a unit. You can easily clean and lube it, then reinstall it in the receiver.

The stock length adjustment is easy—grab the stock, press the latch inside to unlock the stock and pull.

you want to unfold the stock, you have to practically slam it to get it to lock, because the locking tab is a big, beefy chunk of steel that won't lock without force. And the locking tab is the worst part. The locking tab protrudes up and out of the rear of the receiver when the stock is folded.

Then, when folded, the stock makes the already portly Carmel into a salesman's case-sized package, and while it's not long, it is fat. Admittedly, no folding rifle is skinny when folded, but the Carmel is particularly egregious in this regard.

Lastly the comp? Well, it does do its job, but the Carmel starts out at a smidge over 8 pounds. By the time I had a scope and loaded magazine on it, it was over 9 pounds. If you were to add a sling and a light, now we're talking a rifle that easily weighs as much as an M1 Garand. It's easy to get an AR-15 that starts under 7 pounds, so the Carmel starts more than a pound over.

The price is within the range of a well-built AR-15 these days, but you can easily find an AR for a lot less, rebuild it to be a folder if you wish, and still have money left over for practice ammo.

But remember, as I said in the beginning: This is not an AR. Maybe these items I find to be hindrances don't bother you a bit. To each his—or her, of course—own. It's gotta be your call.

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CALIBER: 5.56

CAPACITY: 30+1 rounds (uses AR-15 magazines)

BARREL: 16 inches

LENGTH: 26¾ inches stock folded, 33¾ inches stock collapsed, 37¼ inches stock extended

WIDTH: 2.6 inches

HEIGHT: 8.2 inches

WEIGHT: 8 pounds, 3 ounces

TRIGGER: 4 pounds, 9 ounces

SIGHTS: n/a

GRIPS: n/a

FINISH: Black oxide, anodizing and polymer

MSRP: $1,799

CONTACT: iwi.us



The ambi controls, safety/selector, bolt latch and magazine button.

The B5 systems pistol grip works, if not my fave, but you can swap it for any AR-15 pistol grip you want.



If you are enamored with HK sling hooks, you've got loops on the stock for them.



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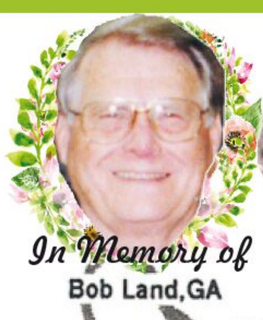

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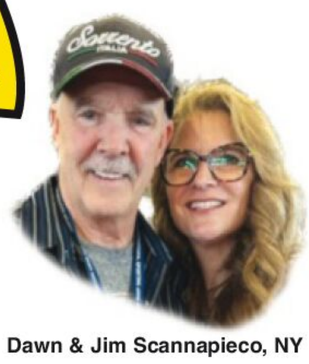

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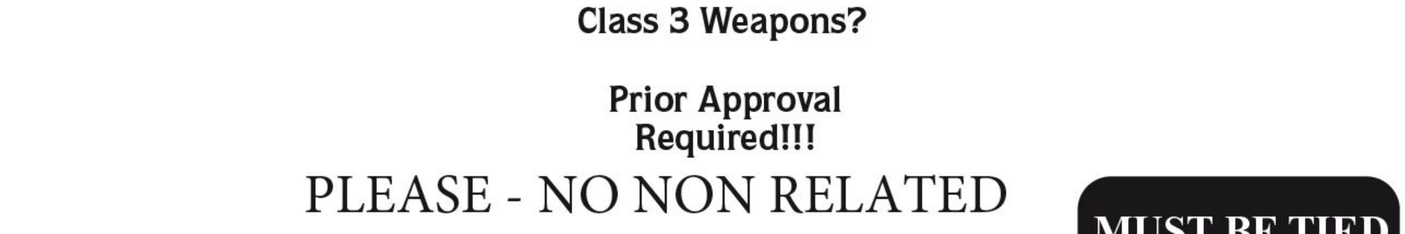
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Saturday 7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.

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SHOW LISTING BY STATE

INDIANA

Oct 5-6 IN, Valparaiso . Gun & Knife Show . Porter County Exp-Center, 215 East Division Road.

NORTH DAKOTA

Sep 6-7 ND, West Fargo. Red River Range Gun Show. Red River Regional Marksmanship Center, 640 16th St NE.

PENNSYLVANIA

Aug 17 PA, Greencastle. Franklin Co. Pa Izaak Walton League Gun Show & Outdoor Extravaganza. Greencastle Sportsman's Assoc. Greencastle, PA, Greencastle Sportsman's Assoc. Grounds.

Jan 18 PA, Greencastle. Franklin Co. Pa- Izaak Walton League- Cabin Fever Gun Show. Greencastle Sportsmans Association, 3260 Sportsman's Road.

TENNESSEE

Jul 20 TN, Knoxville. Knoxville TN : Smoky Mountain Gun Collectors Association Gun Show. Kerbela Shrine Temple, 315 Mimosa Ave.

Jul 21 TN, Knoxville. Knoxville TN : Smoky Mountain Gun Collectors Association Gun Show. Kerbela Shrine Temple, 315 Mimosa Ave.

Aug 3-4 TN, Crossville. Cumberland County Gun and Knife Show. Cumberland County Community Complex, 1398 Livingston Road.

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2505 East Oak Street
Conway, AR
August 17-18
440 Tables: 1-4 $60 ea., 5+ $55 ea., 10+ $50 ea.

Mountain Home
Baxter County Fairgrounds
1507 Fairgrounds Dr
July 13-14
160 Tables: 1-4 $55 ea., 5+ $50 ea., 10+ $45 ea.

OKLAHOMA

Elk City
Civic Center
1016 Airport Industrial Rd.
August 3-4
150 Tables: 1-4 $45 ea., 5+ $40 ea., 10+ $35 ea.

Shawnee
Expo Center
1700 West Independence St
July 27-28
225 Tables: 1-4 $55 ea., 5+ $50 ea., 10+ $45 ea.

TEXAS

Canton
Canton Civic Center
800 Flea Market Rd
August 9-11
200 Tables: 1-4 $55 ea., 5+ $50 ea., 10+ $45 ea.

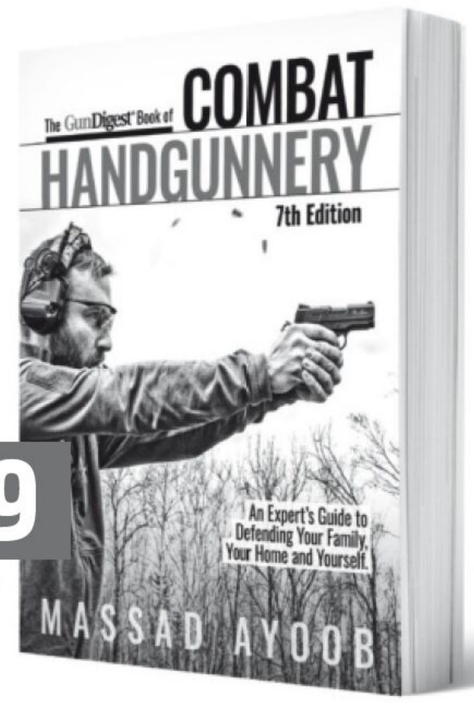
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Civic Center
3805 NW Stallings Drive
June 21-23
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All Tables must be prepaid two weeks in advance.

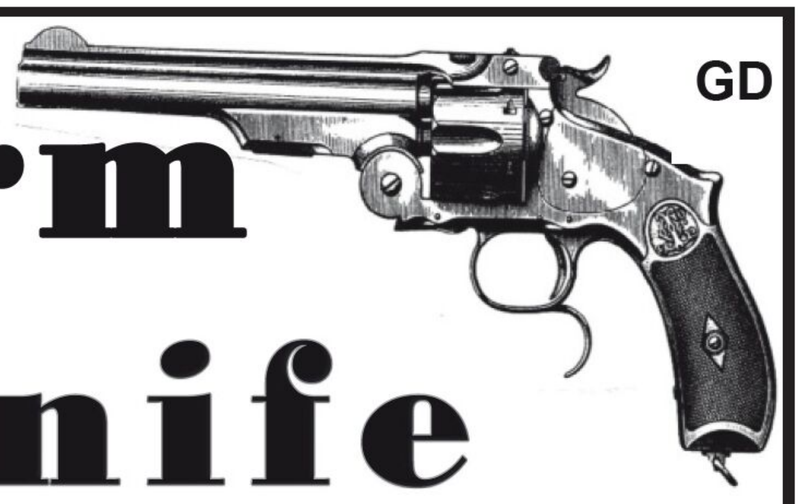
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SHOW LISTING BY DATE

JULY

Jul 20 TN, Knoxville. Knoxville TN : Smoky Mountain Gun Collectors Association Gun Show. Kerbela Shrine Temple, 315 Mimosa Ave. SH: Sat. 9am-5pm. A: $10.00 each day. T: 120. F: $50.00. Smoky Mountain Gun Collectors Association,Inc. . P.O.Box 9251, Knoxville, TN 37940. PH: 865-333-4970. www.smokymountain-guncollectorsassociation.org.

Jul 21 TN, Knoxville. Knoxville TN : Smoky Mountain Gun Collectors Association Gun Show. Kerbela Shrine Temple, 315 Mimosa Ave. SH: Sun. 9am-5pm. A: $10.00 each day. T: 120. F: $50.00. Smoky Mountain Gun Collectors Association,Inc. . P.O.Box 9251, Knoxville, TN 37940. PH: 865-333-4970. www.smokymountain-guncollectorsassociation.org.

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.

Aug 17 PA, Greencastle. Franklin Co. Pa Izaak Walton League Gun Show & Outdoor Extravaganza. Greencastle Sportsman's Assoc. Greencastle, PA, Greencastle Sportsman's Assoc. Grounds, 3260 Sportsmans Road. SH: Sat. 8am-3pm. A: $6.00 adults (Kids 12 & under & New signing NRA memberships admitted free day of show). T: 110. F: $25.00. Franklin Co. PA Chapter Izaak Walton League of America. 106 Greenleaf Rd, Chambersburg, PA 17202-3134. PH: 717-977-9240. None.

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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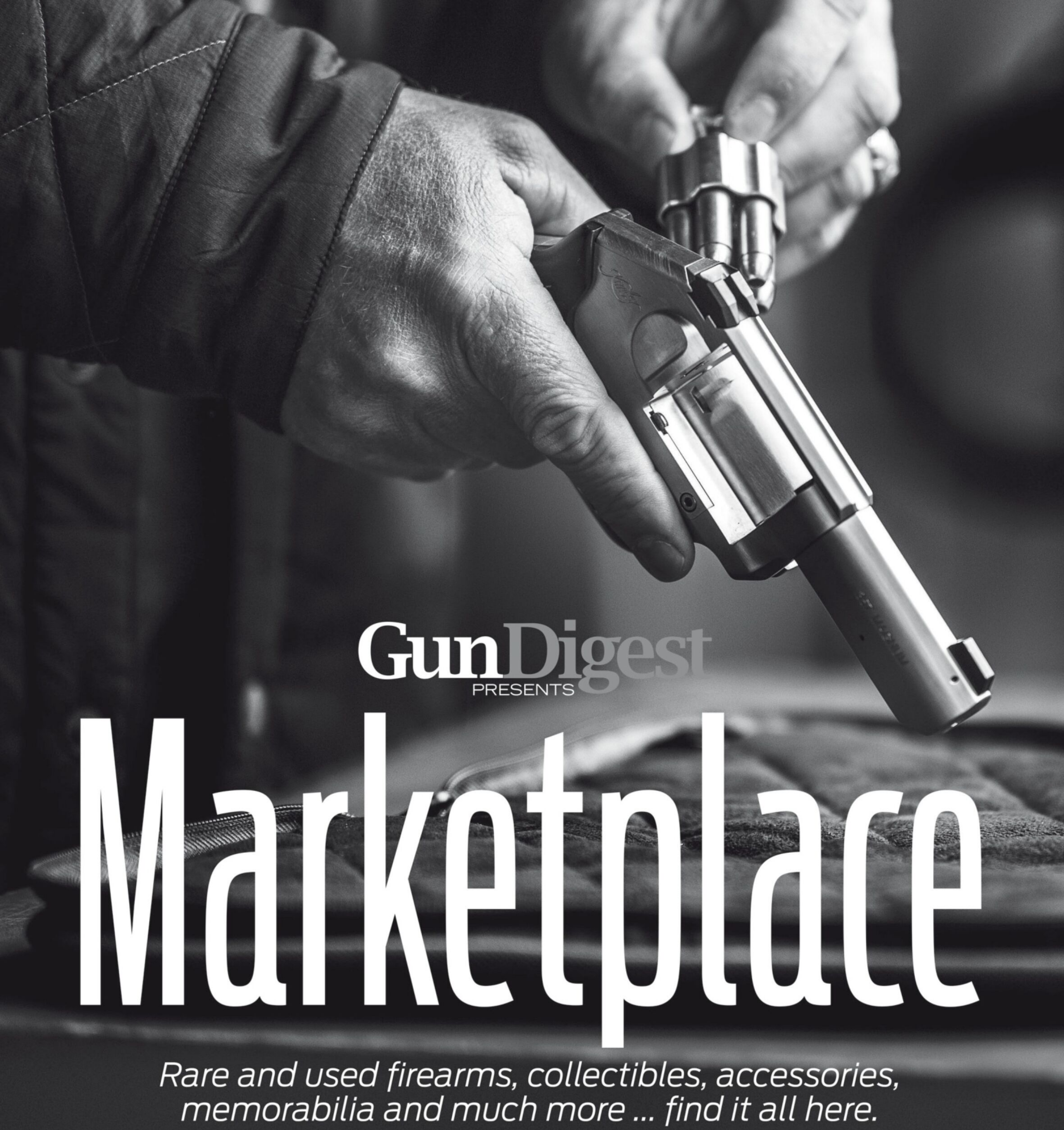
August 17-18, 2024
September 21-22, 2024
November 16-17, 2024

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** * Dealer setup is Friday 11:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.*

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22 LR Pre-Model 17 #30,945 6"Bbl 1948 Red-Bead King Sight 99% $1495

22LR Mdl 17-2 #K652,889 6"BbL mfg 1965 ..... 99.9% LNIB $1495

22LR Model 43 Airweight Kit-Gun 3.5"inch #M38,805 ..... NIB $1695

32 Long Model 31-1 ".32 S&W Long #H-109,996 ..... 100% Blue NIB = $1495

357 Combat Magnum"Pre"-19-Model, 4-Screw, 4"inch Bbl #K260,850 I do not have a S&W Letter Yet ! *Note*= First-Year. This is The "Earliest" Pre 19 I've Ever Owned ! I Estimate This S&W was Shipped in the "Early First Quarter" of 1955 ! Page 185 of my S&W Book; Says The 4 screw K Target Frame Began in 1955 at Serial #K260,001. This S&W also has The (6 Six-Groove Backstrap & Forestap) & The Factory Target Walnut Stocks. The Model 19 was Built "Slightly Larger" than a Standard "K" Frame. Pg.185 THIS "IS" one of the FIRST Block of Serial Numbers. 100% $5995

357 Combat Magnum"PRE-Model"-19-Model, 4-Screw, 4"inch Bbl #K264,619 *NOTE* S&W Letter Shipped 10-11-1956 to Jonas Arms & Aircraft NY,NY. Walnut Target Stocks,*Note*First-Year. The Factory Sold 5,000 Revolvers & used up (the First Block of Serial numbers) = (K260,000 to K265,000) set aside for it's manufacturing with Orders for this model, which were RESERVED in the First 6 Months of 1956. THIS "IS" one of the FIRST Block of Serial Numbers. 99.9% $5995

38 Special U.S. Victory" VIP-England-Conversion by Cosswell & Harrison LTD. 99% $895

38 Special + P" Model 442, 2"inch "Airlite-Titanium" ..... NIB $1995

38 S&W Special Ctg. = 38/44 Heavy Duty"Pre-War" Blue 5 Screw 5"inch 62,207 With Police S&W Letter; Belt, + Holster + more Leather. It has Mint Factory Checkered Walnut Stocks, with seial # 62,207...+ Lanyard ring on Butt of the pistol with # BCP239 etc...The Heavy Duty Production was only 11,111 made.. This 38 Special was Shipped Oct. 25,1940 to Marshall Wells Co., Vancouver, BC. This Revolver was Ordered. for the British Columbia Police Dept. and marked with their Property marking and a number.The S&W Letter also says that The .38/44 Heavy Duty was designed to fire the .38 Special Super Police Loads. ..... 99.8% LNIB $5995

44 SPECIAL PRE-Model 24, Nickle 5 Screw, 6.5"inch S-146,5xx 3T's S&W Letter ..... 100% NIB $4495

44 Special Model 624 3"inch #ALV 15xx First Year Stnls-Steel'Target' Made1985-1988 ..... 100% NIB $2495

44 Special Model 624 3"inch #ALW48xx First Year Stnls-Steel'Target' Made1985-1988 ..... 100% $2295

44 Magnum Pre-29 Blue Early 5 Screw 6.5"inch BBL Red Front & White-Rear Adj. Sights This Beauty Is a Very"Early "First-Year " Production" Serial # S-156,4xx 99.5% $6995

45 ACP Revolver Pre-Model-22 Blue 5.5"Bbl Factory Letter#S-88,357 Shipped 5-2,1952 Rare Mint Condition ..... LNIB $4995

S&W 44 Magnum's "Consecutive Pair" Model 29-6 Blue, Gold, Factory Engraved . Both (Serial # 8 & Serial # 9) are New in their Wood & Glass Display Case's With the Cardboard Sleeve box cover. Both have their own Factory Letters. Only " 137 " Made. This "Consecutive", "Single"-"Digit" Pair of Collectable Firearms is a "True-Rarity". Both shipped to Baron Technology Inc. Turnbull, Ct. 4"inch Light-Tapered Barrel, Blue finish & Goncalo Alves Grips. With "Gold" Embellishments Both Are New in their Boxes ..... $15,000.

Miscellaneous - Pistols:

Astra Model 600/43 SN #44,5xx 9mm Parabelum Only 800 Made 1 of 800 M.R.P Portuguese Navy 95% $1395

COLT 45 ACP = Colt U.S.A.F. Air Force Model 1911 A-1 Mfg = Auto Ordinance Commemorative; Nickle & Gold Embellishments...etc..NIB with Display Case etc ... This USAF Commemorative has the Works =Gold Engraved Left side = M 1911 A 1 & To FLY AND FIGHT with United States Airforce in Blue & Gold Emblem on Both Ivory Grips. Gold clip release button, Screws, Trigger Safety Lever, & 18 SEPT. 1947 ..... NIB $4,995

High-Std 22LR Victor 5.5"Bbl Solid- "SteeL"-Rib ML-Target SN #09,2xx .....NIB $1295

High-Std G-380 "First Year" Production The 603rd Made ! 99% $1095

Reising Target 22 LR SN#1,3xx First Year with Rod & Holster Only 3000 made 99% $1495

Ruger 44 Mag / 44-40 = 2 Cylinders #87-00078 ..... 100% NIB $3795

Ruger 44 Mag = Super BlackHawk #5,54x 99% $1495

Ruger .45 Long.Colt. SN# 48-44,464 Ruger Blackhawk 5.5"inch ..... 99+% $1495

Sig Sauer Pistol 10"Barrel Cal .223/.556 Nato; Model 556 ..... 99+% $1795

Rifles:

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Winchester Model 61 "Deluxe" .22 S, L, LR TakeDown Matching Serial # 215,6xx , Factory Checkered Forearm, Buttstock & Grooved Receiver...Steel checkered Buttplate. etc..... 95% barrel blue 95% $2495

Marlin Model 39 22S,L,LR. 24" Octagon-Barrel, Tube Mag. Open sights, Take-Down mfg 1920-ish "Early Multi-Colored Case-Hardened Receiver, "S"Shaped Pistol Grip; Beautiful Bluing on the Barrel, Forend-Tip, Magazine-Tube, Bolt-Hammer & Screws. Hard Rubber Butt-Plate. *Note* Earlier-Rifles with the " S " Prefix, are Noted for their Superior Workmanship, and Fine Finish. This is one of them & it is; Gorgeous = Serial # S16,377 ..... 99.9% $5,995

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PISTOLS AND REVOLVERS

1-F AMT .380 ACP "Backup" Stainless Auto Pistol 2 ½" barrel with mint bore, fixed sights, 98%+ satin finish stainless steel, mint black checkered 'Lexan" grips, comes with one factory finger rest base magazine, excellent function..... $265

2-F Browning .22 LR "Buckmark Camper SS V FX Model" Auto Pistol 5 ½" stainless target barrel with excellent bore, tactical solutions top strap scope rail with integrated adjustable rear sight, factory top strap with adjustable target rear sight included, satin black frame with gray rubber grip panels and gold trigger, comes with one factory 10 round magazine, box and papers..... $345

3-F Browning (F.N.) 6.35mm/.25 ACP Belgian Baby Auto Pistol 2" barrel with mint bore, fixed sights, 98% original bright blue showing some wear at backstrap and light scratches on slide, black polymer grips with Browning logo, comes with black soft case with red velvet lining and original Browning booklet of operation and care, excellent function, manufactured 1967 (C&R) $750

4-F Colt .38 Special "Detective Special" Double Action Revolver 2 ¼" barrel with an excellent bore, fixed sights, 97% original blue with some muzzle loss and high edge wear, black rubber "Uncle Mikes" boot grips, excellent function, manufactured 1977-1983.... $675

5-F Colt .38 Special "Officers Model Match" Double Action Target Revolver 6" barrel with bright excellent bore, 98% original blue, pinned front sight, and fully adjustable rear sight, checkered Walnut grips with silver medallions, excellent function, collector quality, manufactured 1967 (C&R) $950

6-F Colt .357 Magnum "Python" Nickel Finish Revolver 8" vent rib barrel with mint bore, 99% brilliant nickel original finish with just a flake or two on forward edge of cylinder, blued front and fully adjustable target rear sights, wide spur target hammer beautiful markings, mint Pachmayr checkered factory walnut Target grips with gold Colt medallions, spectacular looking and super smooth function, shows only the lightest use, made in 1980 ..... $2975

7-F Colt .22 LR "The Woodsman" 1st Series Target Clip Feed Auto Pistol 6 5/8" barrel with bright excellent bore, 98% original blue thinning along front and back straps to a gray/blue, shows some high edge wear, adjustable front and rear sights, checkered Walnut grips, comes with one 10 round two tone magazine, excellent function, manufactured 1927 (C&R) $1200

8-F Colt .22 LR 1st Series "The Woodsman" Target Auto Pistol 6 5/8" barrel with mint bore, adjustable sights, 98%+ original blue with light thinning at muzzle and light high edge wear on slide, mint two piece checkered Walnut grips, excellent original two tone magazine, collector quality, manufactured 1936 and looks near new (C&R) (4852) $1450

9-F Colt .22 LR "Woodsman" 2nd Series Target Auto Pistol 6" barrel with mint bore, 98%+ original bright blue, 1/8" patridge blade ramp mounted front sight and fully adjustable factory target rear sight, excellent checkered Walnut thumbrest original grips, 2nd series push button release magazine marked "Colt/Cal. 22 LR" on base, with aluminum follower, excellent function, made in 1953, collector quality (C&R) $1000

10-F Colt .22 LR "Third Model Woodsman" Target Auto Pistol 6" barrel with bright excellent bore, 95% original blue showing muzzle wear, wear along front and back straps, slide shows sharp edge wear along serrations and also a light plum hue, scattered pin prick pitting along frame, checkered Walnut grips with left side thumb rest show wear and dings and dents, pinned front blade sight with adjustable rear sight, comes with one magazine, excellent function, manufactured 1964 (C&R) $675

11-F Colt .22 LR "Woodsman Sport Target Model" Auto Pistol 4 ½:" barrel with mint bore, 98% original blue just thinning a bit on sides of barrel and sharp edges of slide, fixed front and screw adjustable rear sight, minty full checkered Walnut grips, full blue original magazine with "Colt Woodsman" over "Cal. 22 LR" on base plate, made in 1941 but shows little actual use, collector quality (C&R) $1295

12-F Colt .25 ACP "Model 1908" Early Vest Pocket Auto Pistol 2" barrel with good but pitted bore, 95% of an old period refinish blue that is dulling, some pitting along slide, full blue correct magazine, excellent Colt logo checkered hard rubber grips with stylized "C" over rampant horse, made in 1910, excellent function and not bad looking (C&R) $325

13-F Colt .32 ACP Model "M1903 Pocket Hammerless" Auto Pistol 3 ¾" barrel with excellent bright bore showing scattered light pitting and nice rifling, fixed original sights, 97% bright original blue with some scratches and high edge wear, front strap and backstrap safety show an even blue to gray tone, 95%+ original fire blue on slide safety, trigger and extractor, rampant Colt in a circle still shows on left side of slide with little loss, excellent checkered hard rubber grips of a bit later style and type, comes with one magazine with no markings and 7 vision holes on each side, correct to pistol, collector quality, excellent function, manufactured 1908 (C&R) $1800

14-F Erma Werke .22 LR "Model LA-22" Clip Feed Auto Pistol 4 5/8" barrel with bright excellent bore, 95% original blue with front and rear strap of alloy frame showing gray, fixed sights, brown plastic grips, one original magazine, comes with original brown plastic case with matching serialized end label, manufactured 1964-1967 (C&R) $400

15-F Harrington & Richardson .22 LR "Model 22 Special" Top Break Revolver 6" ribbed barrel with bright excellent bore, 97% original blue with some muzzle wear, light peppery pin prick pitting along frame and high edge wear along the 9 shot fluted cylinder, oversized checkered Walnut one piece grips with a chip at base, excellent function, manufactured 1930's (C&R) $300

16-F Harrington & Richardson .22 LR "22 Special" Large Frame 2nd Variation Double Action Top Break Revolver 6" ribbed barrel with bright excellent bore, fixed sights, 98% original blue with little muzzle thinning, 9 shot fluted cylinder, trace of original case colors show on hammer, checkered Walnut two piece "saw handle" style grips showing some varnish loss, comes with two piece blue cardboard box with correct end label, top lid is faded and worn bottom lid shows old water spots on bottom, inside box is an original instructional and loading manual in clear plastic bag, excellent function, manufactured 1928-1930 (C&R) $365

17-F Harrington & Richardson .32 ACP "2nd Issue" Self Loading Auto Pistol 3 ½" barrel with bright excellent bore showing some very tiny spots of pitting, half moon front blade with "V" notch rear sight, 95% original blue showing thinning and pin prick pitting along front and back straps, thinning toward muzzle, 16 slide serrations, loaded indicator at rear and magazine disconnect, excellent hard rubber grips showing very nice H&R logo in a circle, comes with one nickel plated original magazine, manufactured 1910-1920 (C&R) $385

18-F Heckler & Koch 9mm "VP 9" Clip Feed Auto Pistol 4" barrel with mint bore, matte black finish on steel slide and mint black polymer frame with ambidextrous controls, Picatiny accessory rail, customizable grip, loaded indicator on both rear and extractor, tritium night sights, comes with (3) 10 round magazines, original black plastic hard case, original papers and cable lock, like new..... $765

19-F High Standard .22 LR "Model 106 Supermatic Citation" Target Auto Pistol 7 ¼" fluted barrel with mint bore, 99% original blue and case color, ramp blade front and bridge type fully adjustable target rear sights, comes with as new muzzle brake, (2) round barrel weights, original red bottom logo magazine and minty checkered Walnut thumbrest grips in military style, excellent function, looks near new overall, made in 1967, collector quality (C&R) ... $725

20-F High Standard .22 LR "Supermatic" 1st Model Target Auto Pistol 6 ¾" interchangeable lever style takedown barrel with filler strip in bottom (No weights included), mint bore, barrel has serrated full length rib, dovetail front blade, adjustable "Davis" rear sight, 97% original blue showing light scratches, high edge wear along slide and barrel, light scratched on left side are initials "JD54", brown polymer thumbrest grips, original magazine, excellent function, manufactured 1953 (C&R) $695

21-F High Standard .22 LR "R-101 / Sentinel" Cased Double Action Revolver 2 3/8" barrel with mint bore, dual tone colors of gold and nickel both with 98% finish, fixed sights, mint smooth imitation Ivory plastic one piece grips are excellent, made in 1956, excellent function, comes in its original Mahogany colored wood case with light gray interior, original warranty card, instruction sheet, "10 commandments of safety" and key, collector quality in one of High Standards rarer finish combinations (C&R) $875

22-F Iver Johnson .22 LR "Model 1900" Double Action Revolver 4 3/8" octagon barrel with a fair pitted bore, fixed sights, 90%+ original blue thinning along high edge wear, trigger and hammer show very light trace case color, black hard rubber extended "IJ" grips with decorative scroll and checkering, functions properly, manufactured 1910 (C&R) $185

23-F Japanese 8mm Nambu "Type 14" Large Trigger Guard Clip Feed Auto Pistol 4 ½" barrel with fair pitted bore, nice arsenal refinish blue, fixed sights, very good serrated hardwood grips, one aluminum base magazine, magazine latch is worn and needs to be replaced otherwise functions normally, matching numbers Chuo Kogyo Arsenal, manufactured 1939 shows "14.9" manufacturing date(C&R) $785

24-F Japanese 8mm Nambu "Nambu Rifle Manufacturing Co. / Chou Kogyo" Made "Type 14" Small Trigger Guard Auto Pistol 4 ¾" barrel with bright good bore showing scattered pitting, 95%+ arsenal blue finish with scattered pin prick pitting, front and back strap shows light blue to gray tones, left side of frame shows scratch mark from safety, still shows nice straw color on trigger and safety, comes with one alloy base nickel magazine that shows matching serial number to pistol, grooved mahogany 25 serration grips rate excellent, "13.4" dating this to 1938, excellent function (C&R) $1000

25-F Japanese 8mm Nambu "Type 14 / Nagoya Kokbunji Made" Auto Pistol 4 ¾" barrel with excellent bore, front blade with dovetail base, rear sight is dovetail shape notch milled into frame, 98% arsenal blue, 70% straw color on safety lever and trigger, early knurled cocking knob, Mahogany grips with 25 serrations, nickel plated magazine with aluminum base, small triggerguard, dated "14.4" 1939 (C&R) $1025

26-F Llama .380 ACP "Model III A" Auto Pistol 3 ¾" barrel with bright excellent bore, vent top rib with front blade rear adjustable rear sights, 95% original blue showing some high edge wear, smooth Rosewood aftermarket grips, comes with one aftermarket magazine, excellent function, "S1" date code, manufactured 1974 (C&R) $425

27-F Mauser 9mm Kurz/.380 Auto "Model HSc Post War" Auto Pistol 3" barrel with mint bore, fixed sights, 98% original bright blue, mint checkered Walnut grips, one original magazine, "Mauser" marked with finger rest base plate, comes with original manual, excellent function, Interarms import, manufactured 1983-1985 ..... $585

28-F Remington .41 Rimfire Model 95 "First Variation" Over/Under Derringer 3" barrels with excellent bores, fixed sights, 70% thinning blue to brown, scattered pin prick pitting on metal surfaces, left side barrel hinge shows a small crack, black hard rubber checkered grips, left side of backstrap where grips meets frame shows dings and dents, excellent function, manufactured 1911, no "L" serial prefix (C&R) $695

29-F Remington .380 ACP "Model 51" Pocket Auto Pistol 3 3/8" barrel with excellent bore, 98% original blue with a few spots of light peppery pitting, fixed sights, custom carved Walnut grips with an oak leaf pattern, excellent function (C&R) $625

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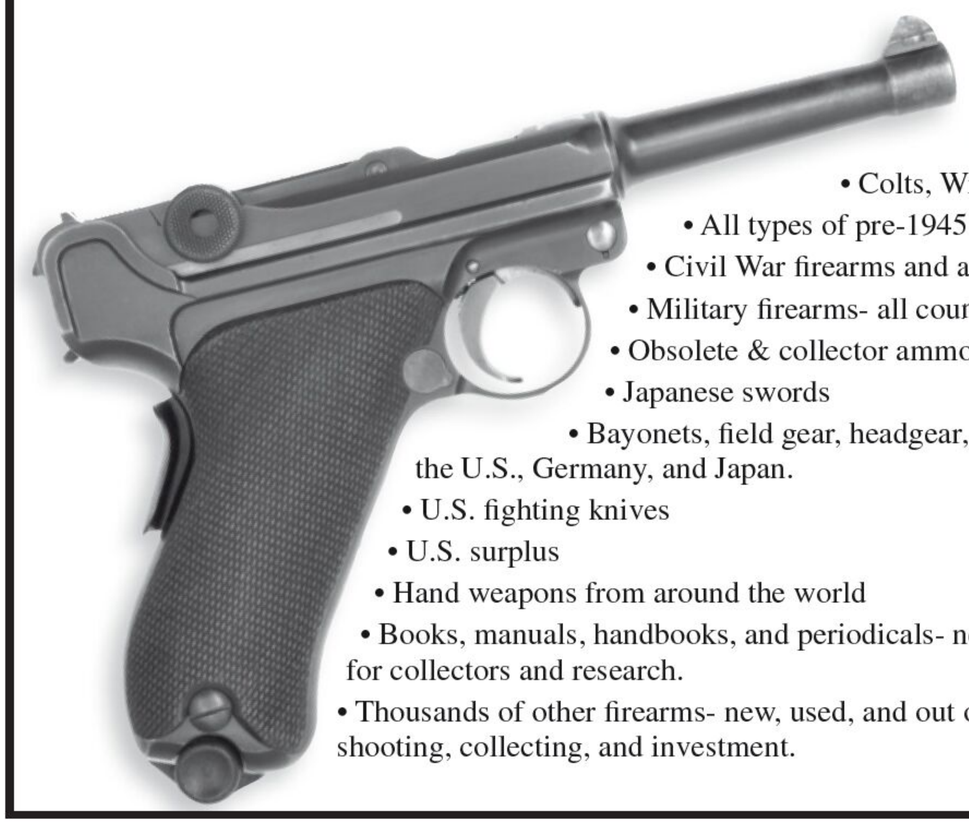
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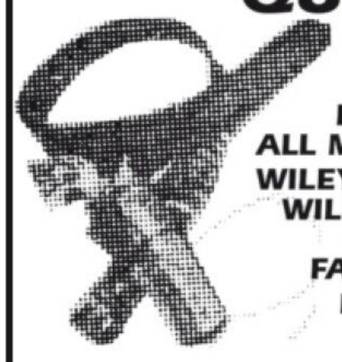
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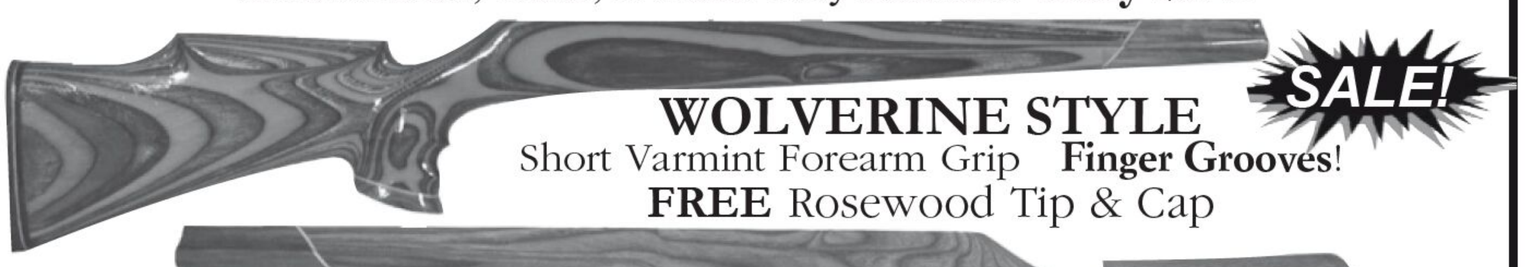
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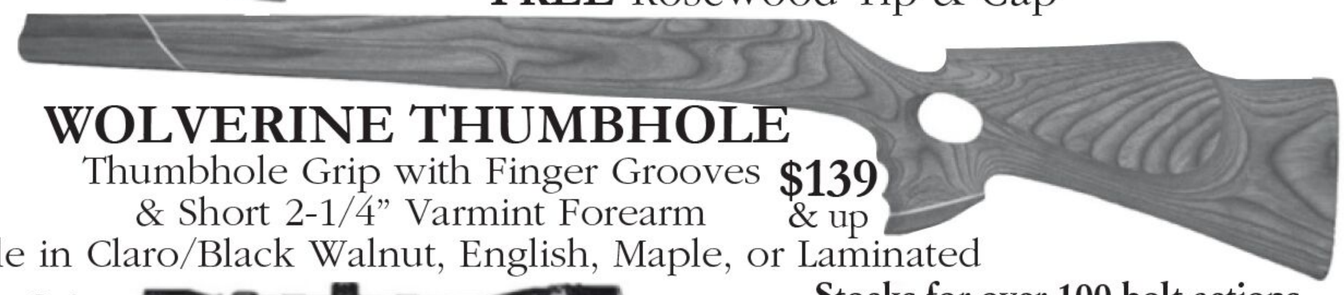
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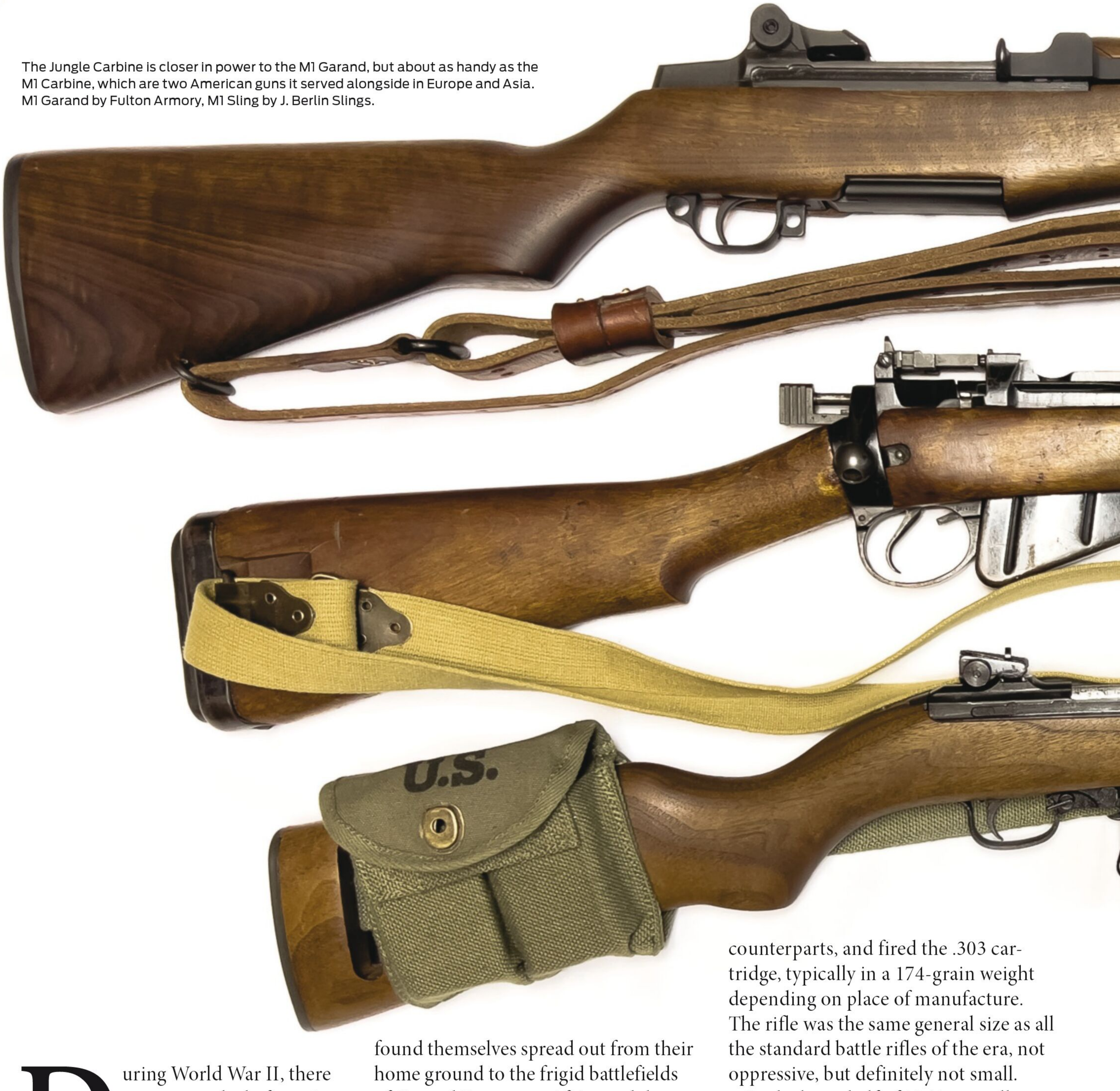
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There are many like it, but finding a true original takes some investigative work.



The receiver lines are classic and still hold up today.

from service, largely due to a condition that the British government referred to as "wandering zero," which has since become a commonly repeated statement among military collectors. The alleged problems with the carbine stated that, at a point in a rifle's lifespan, unpredictable to anyone, the guns simply stopped holding zero … and the British had to give up on the carbine.

The reasoning behind why the rifles mysteriously began to collectively lose zero is largely unknown, because like many people who have owned and shot these carbines over the years could tell you, that issue seemed to have resolved itself upon their import to America. Yet, we Americans have our own rumors, such as receiver stretch in Enfields—again an unqualified bit of lore that likely stems from people installing improper bolt heads, which can cause headspace issues.

At any rate, the Jungle Carbine saw limited use as compared to other Enfield variants, but real examples of this carbine have become hot commodities.

So, what are these "real" examples?



The correct wrist markings, showing "ENGLAND" and the date of manufacture. This is a genuine WWII carbine.

FAKE IT 'TIL YOU MAKE IT

Supply has a way of running out before demand can be filled when it comes to military collectibles. See, the collector market never knows when a given type of gun will suddenly take off in popularity, and sometimes the values go through the roof due to that demand. Likely because regimes lacked foresight that collectors would want the weapons they used to oppress and destroy their neighbors, world militaries stopped making certain versions of their guns before enough had been made to fill enthusiast demand.

Due to the failure of government, various enterprising salesmen and importers began trying to replicate these popular models themselves, and there is likely no more faked military rifle than the Jungle Carbine.

True examples of this carbine, like the one featured in this article, are very rare. This particular one is completely original and was "won" off a British soldier. It was a "bringback" and has no import markings, and I have verification from the seller that this rifle, and story, are as original as it gets.

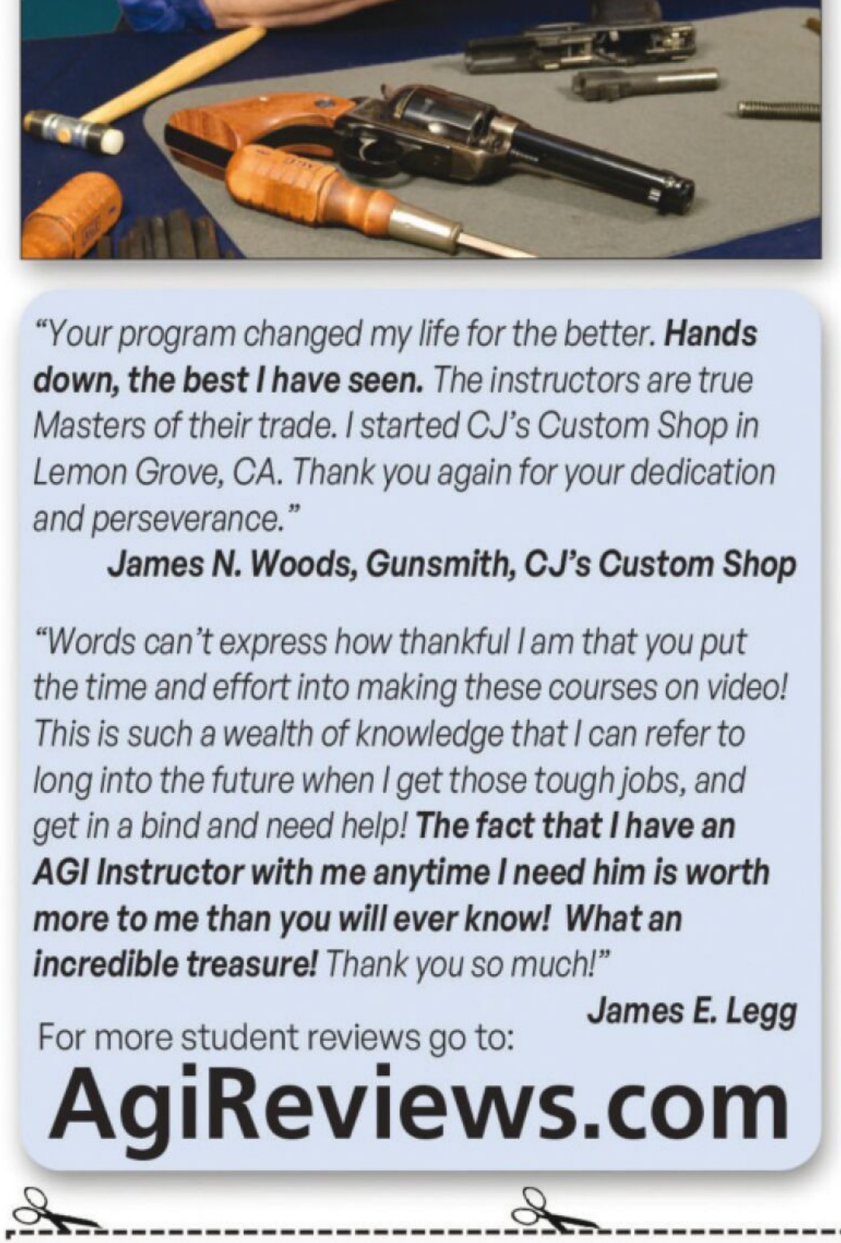
A carbine like this can go for as much as $1,800 if it bears all the proper features. This rifle is in good shape, but I've seen better as in regard to overall

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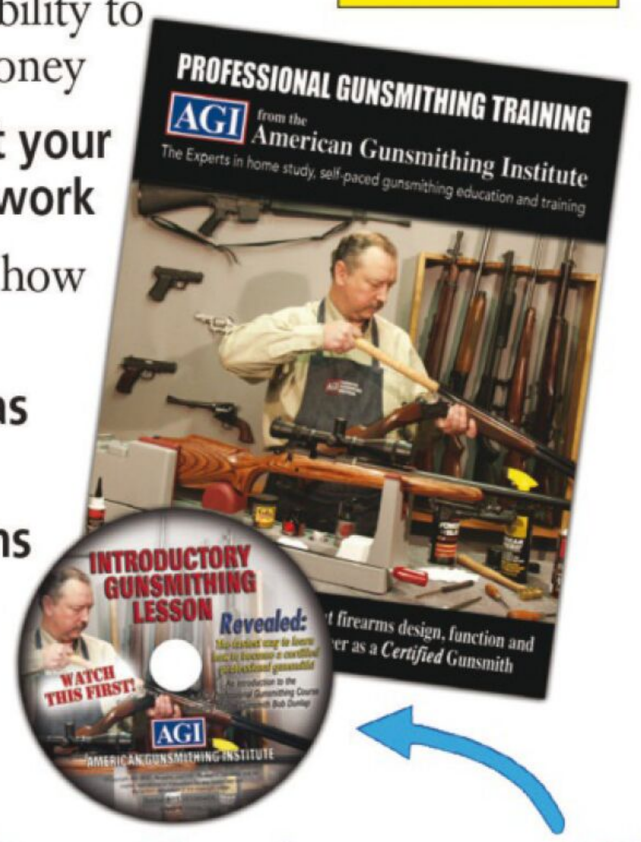
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condition. As you can imagine, with such a popular and distinct profile, there's money to be made if one were to get creative with a supply of existing full-size Enfield rifles.

And that's exactly what happened.

The odds of finding a completely original Jungle Carbine are slim. There was only about 250,000 made, and after spending a great deal of time on research, I came to some conclusions:

1. A large number of the real-deal carbines were left in British colonial territories and used by local and government forces in various small-scale conflicts through the next 80 years, most eventually lost to time and circumstance.
2. Roughly 10,000 of these guns *might* have made it to the United States between 1946 and 1960, but it's impossible to determine how many remained colonial service.
3. Many were destroyed or had receivers replaced to remedy the wandering zero issue.
4. More still were disregarded as original due to local-level alterations, such as installing a standard Enfield stock, replacing handguards, and removing or replacing the conical flash hiders.



The front sight and flash hider assembly is one of the more iconic features of the already sought-after Jungle Carbine.

With originals so few, it comes with an easy understanding that these guns were simply faked for the American market. The vast majority of Jungle Carbines stateside are copies, at an estimated 20:1 ratio—or higher. Importers were given a fairly wide range of options in the post-war era, and many types of guns were assembled here in the States after quantities of leftover parts were bought as surplus. One primary importer created all the confusion: Golden State Arms/Santa Fe. This company is responsible for altering countless Enfield rifles.

The main thing you must look for on a fake is the markings. If it has solid receiver stamping, or has any "US PROPERTY" or actual British model markings, it's a fake. No manufacturer on this side of the Atlantic, or any other British factory except BSA and Fazakerly, made true No.5 carbines … and they didn't stamp them with a model number. The Brits were in an understandable hurry and literally stenciled "No.5 Mk1/2" on the side of the receiver, or nothing at all. The visible stamping on the receiver wrist should read ENGLAND, and a year.

Another telltale feature for identifying an original is one often hidden: Under the handguard, the barrel has deep flutes cut around the chamber area. This was a standard model feature for the No. 5 and is virtually non-existent on fakes, unless they use an original barrel, which is possible. No versions



The Jungle Carbine can load either by individual rounds, or by five-round stripper clips.

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of this gun were ever made in .308/7.62 caliber at the Ishapore factory, yet I've seen a hefty share of "Ishapore Jungle Carbines" over the years. If you see that, know immediately that it's a fake. The only correct chambering for a No.5 is .303 British.

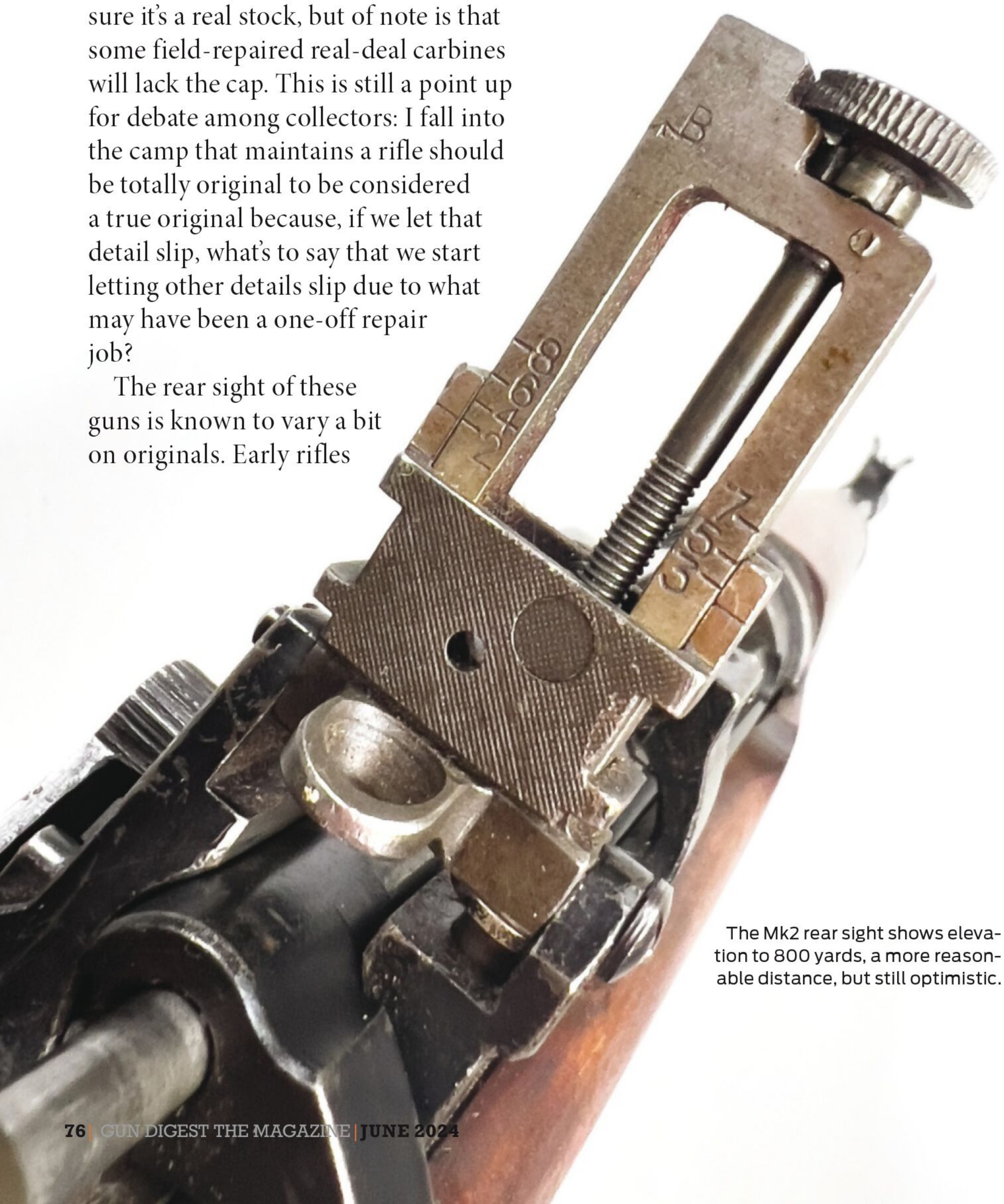
The stock is also an interesting point of inspection on these guns. I've rarely seen a fake that did away with the No.5 buttplate; it's such a distinctive part of the gun that it's usually added to make it more convincing. Brass buttplates common to other Enfield variants are incorrect even as a replacement, but it isn't hard to get a correct version should you find an otherwise original carbine.

Curiously, the stock grip's endcap is a heated point of discussion. True No.5 carbines can have either a metal endcap or a sporter-style rounded endcap. If you have a metal endcap, you can be sure it's a real stock, but of note is that some field-repaired real-deal carbines will lack the cap. This is still a point up for debate among collectors: I fall into the camp that maintains a rifle should be totally original to be considered a true original because, if we let that detail slip, what's to say that we start letting other details slip due to what may have been a one-off repair job?

The rear sight of these guns is known to vary a bit on originals. Early rifles had elevation adjustments out to 1,300 yards, and later on models, the sight was altered max out at 800, as shown on the rifle in this article. Both are technically correct for the Mk1 carbine, so don't get too caught up on this detail.



The carbine was formidable with a 10-round, detachable magazine.



The Mk2 rear sight shows elevation to 800 yards, a more reasonable distance, but still optimistic.

That said, all Mk2 carbines should have the reduced-range sight, as is the case on my carbine here.

There isn't much ado about the front sight/flash hider assembly. True examples will have a bayonet lug, and be on the lookout for any that lack this, as they are incorrect.

HOW TO FIND A REAL JUNGLE CARBINE

I'd love to share some special knowledge I have on exactly how to find these, but there is no magic. I bought this particular rifle at a local gun shop. I will say that gun shows are not the best place to go if you want an original. If you want an altered rifle, or just one to have fun with, be my guest and demand a price less than $500. The minute a military rifle is sporterized, it loses all general value, and don't be convinced to pay more for a chopped-up Frankenstein.

For your best bet on locating that needle in a haystack, pay attention to specialty gun stores that deal in military surplus, or surprisingly, your local Class 3 dealer. Guys who deal in machine guns are often tight with military collectors. It's helpful to leave a note explaining that you aren't looking for a knockoff, and give them this list: *Stenciled No.5 marking/no marking on receiver, .303 chamber, ENGLAND wrist stamping, milled flutes under the handguard, painted/enamel finish, stock endcap,*

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The critical flutes cut near the chamber. Some are "dished" out, others have more of an angular appearance. The later models have much cruder cuts.

The buttplate is distinguished by its hard rubber insert. Not much for recoil control, but it does stop the stock from slipping under recoil.

GOODBYE, OL' CHAP

Collecting Enfield rifles used to be easy. Unfortunate for us today, the good times are over … but the guns have stagnated in price for standard models. So, it's a bit of a wash.

Unlike Mosin Nagants, which have increased in value almost 600 percent (in 2008, brand-new M44 carbines could be had for as little as $60 in some sports stores, but now can run upward of $700), Enfield variants have largely held steady in value. If anything, they are decreasing as inflation rises.

These rifles have sat around $500-700 for the past 10 years, making them a known loss if you see your guns as investments. You can, with relative ease, find great examples of these rifles at most gun shows, and even online if you look in the right places. That said, the supply is slowly drying up despite prices not rising; an ominous sign that demand for these guns is slowing to a drip.

Today's average Enfield is ugly and handled. The common issue is that these guns were not finished like American rifles, and virtually all Enfield variants look like they were spray painted with engine enamel and dragged behind a car … which is actually not that far from the truth. These guns were commonly mistreated and shipped all over for use by conscripts across the Empire, so if you're lucky, you'll find a good one in decent shape.

In other words, don't expect what you can find today to be pretty: All of those are taken. If you can find a shooter, you're in for a treat. I've had Enfields shoot 1.5-MOA with factory Remington .303 ammo, and I even shot a silver at Camp Perry with an Enfield I bought sight-unseen from a gun show last year.

Good luck and happy hunting, Old Chap!

and 1300/800 yard rear sight.

These are the minor details you'll want, and the rest you can visually determine, like the correct buttplate and bayonet lug. These guns do pop up from time to time, with a realistic price ranging from $800 for a beat-up example to $1,800 for perfect specimen. So you can compare, mine, as in the gun featured in the images in this article, would likely sell at $1,000-1,500 … depending on the demand at the time. **GDTM**







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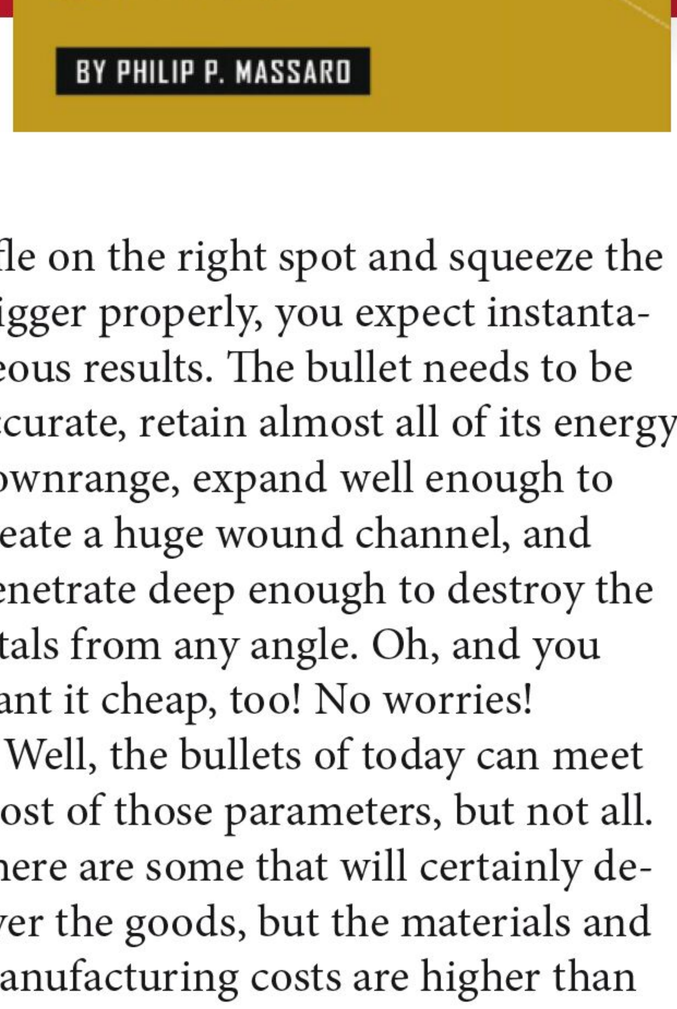
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TERMINAL BALLISTICS OVERVIEW

The following articles are excerpts from 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."



That little blob of metal, so content in its metallic case, has been sent screaming down the barrel, spinning until it's dizzier than a 2-year-old on sugar, sailing through the air faster than, well I was going to say a speeding bullet, but, it's going pretty damned fast. Then, instantly, violently, the journey ends. At the gun range it just rips paper and meets its untimely demise in a sand bank or dirt berm. Perhaps it smashed through hide, bone and vital tissue, putting dinner on the table for a family all winter. Or maybe it was built like a race car and got to fly long and high, only to end in the sweet ringing of steel. Best of all, that bullet may have saved someone's life. Whatever the case, the end of a bullet's life is an important part of our study, or what we call terminal ballistics—what happens when it makes impact.

Whether in a defensive situation or on a dangerous game hunt, there are times when the construction and terminal performance of a bullet means life or death. In the case of hunting bullets, you want a quick, humane kill—after all, the bullet's job is to reach the vital organs to destroy tissue. No matter how many trajectory charts you've memorized, no matter how many lines-per-inch the checkering on your AAA Circassian walnut features, it is the bullet, and only the bullet, that touches a game animal and delivers the death blow.

At this stage of the game you've managed to place the shot where it belongs, and now you need to consider what's going to happen after impact. Will the bullet penetrate sufficiently? Will it expand properly? Was it of suitable construction to handle the task at hand? Did you choose the proper type of bullet to meet the requirements you need? All these questions and more fall under the heading of terminal ballistics.

In this section, the handgun will receive much more attention than it has previously. While the exterior ballistics of handgun bullets aren't nearly as complex as that of rifles, the terminal ballistics of a handgun are very interesting. Handgun hunting bullets have come an awful long way, and there are some absolutely incredible personal defense choices out there, too. Their performance needs to be analyzed to best choose a handgun caliber, as well as settle some old arguments.

Rifle bullets have changed for the better as well, having many new designs available. Some of these designs are a far cry from the cup-and-core bullet of our grandfathers' era and deliver some outstanding performance, almost forcing us to rethink the old cartridge and caliber recommendations. These innovations implore you to take a new look at how much cartridge/bullet is really needed to get the job done. I am always intrigued about new bullet designs, and I've had the opportunity to test some of these around the globe on animals small, medium and large.

There is much demand placed upon the rifle bullets of today. You expect your modern rifle bullet to be a death-ray. If you do our part in holding the rifle on the right spot and squeeze the trigger properly, you expect instantaneous results. The bullet needs to be accurate, retain almost all of its energy downrange, expand well enough to create a huge wound channel, and penetrate deep enough to destroy the vitals from any angle. Oh, and you want it cheap, too! No worries!

Well, the bullets of today can meet most of those parameters, but not all. There are some that will certainly deliver the goods, but the materials and manufacturing costs are higher than the bullets of yesteryear. While some of the tried-and-true hardcast lead and cup-and-core bullets still perform wonderfully in certain situations, there are those times when the cost of a hunt or the scarcity of a coveted tag warrant the investment in the best projectile money can buy, no matter which of the attributes listed above is most important.

The birth of the premium bullet industry hearkens back to 1948 in



Expanded handgun bullets have come a long way today. All three of these examples exhibit excellent expansion.

THE HISTORY OF TERMINAL BALLISTICS

The first projectiles for the firearm were round lead balls, slightly smaller than bore diameter, to be "patched" for a tight seal. Lead was the chosen material, not for its durability upon impact, but for its malleability in forming the projectiles. Lead is easy to work and shape, melts at a relatively low temperature and is plentiful. This was perfect for the early users of the cartridge guns, as many firearms were sold with a set of molds of appropriate caliber and bullet weight for that firearm. Think of the buffalo hunters on the Great Plains, hunting all day and sitting by their campfire at night, melting lead and casting their own lead bullets for the next hunt. However, lead has several shortcomings, especially with modern firearms and propellants.

Your goal as a hunter (we'll get to the self-defense bullets soon enough), is to deliver a quick, humane kill to minimize the suffering of the game animal. For most of your hunting, with the exception of solid bullets or a shot column from a shotgun, you depend on the bullet to create massive hemorrhaging by destroying as much vital tissue as possible. The expansion of a bullet—if it is designed to expand—creates hydraulic shock, which destroys tissue as well. Now, when a material as soft as lead impacts hide, bone and water-rich

Canada, when John Nosler experienced terrible bullet failure while trying to relieve a large-bodied moose of its life with a .300 Holland & Holland Magnum. The cup-and-core bullets that Nosler was using simply weren't strong enough to handle the high impact velocity of the Super .30 and had prematurely expanded on the moose's shoulder, giving poor penetration. His idea of a dual-core bullet separated by a copper partition really set the hunting world on its ear and created an entire market for premium projectiles. Fast-forward to the 21st century, and you have monometal bullet designs that would certainly make my grandfather cock an eyebrow. Some of these newcomers use a funky sort of nipple at the front end to cause trauma via a cavitation bubble, delivering straight-line penetration and a cylindrical core of trauma. Some designs, like the aforementioned Nosler Partition, have been with us for decades and have their devout followers.

Whatever the case, there is now a proper tool for the job at hand. You, as the hunter, shooter and consumer, need to be honest with yourself about the requirements of your shooting situation to choose a bullet that will give you the results you're after. We will start the study of terminal ballistics by dealing with a bit of bullet history and how bullet performance so heavily influenced the reputation of the cartridges themselves. We'll then examine how the projectiles of the 21st century could and should change the way we think about cartridge requirements. **GDTM**



The Nosler Partition is still the benchmark by which all modern bullets are measured.

John A. Nosler pioneered bullet construction and is perhaps best known for the tough Partition bullet. Photo courtesy Nosler.com



flesh at an appreciable velocity, you can have very rapid expansion. Your projectile will certainly meet enough resistance to flatten a round ball or rapidly deform the meplat of a lead bullet. So the lead ball or bullet must be of sufficient weight and diameter to properly penetrate into an animal's vitals in order to guarantee a quick kill, and the velocity must be kept to a reasonable level, say below 2,200 fps. Even then, the bullet can exhibit penetration problems if the shot is too close.

The stories of Frederick Courteney Selous from the late 19th century are illuminating. Selous would hunt elephants with a muzzleloading four-bore rifle stoked with a lead ball weighing ¼ pound, propelled by over 500 grains of blackpowder. That gives you an idea of how the early projectile directly affected the choice of bore diameter; you simply needed to compensate for a lack of penetration with sheer mass.

At moderate velocity typical of the .30-30 Winchester or .45-70 Government, or most of the classic handgun cartridges like the .38 Special and .45 Colt, a lead projectile will work well, giving a good blend of expansion and penetration. Many of these cartridges are still loaded with lead projectiles today, and they perform superbly. For some of the faster cartridges like the .44 Magnum, lead bullets can be hardened by adding a specific amount of antimony to the molten lead while casting, resulting in a harder alloy and better terminal ballistics.

In light of the velocity increases that smokeless powder brought to the table, there needed to be an advance in the construction of projectiles. It was Lt. Col. Eduard Rubin of Switzerland who, in 1882, had the ingenious idea of jacketing the lead bullets in a layer of copper—a metal hard enough to avoid the issues associated with heavy lead deposits in the barrel, yet soft enough to work perfectly with the steel rifling of the barrel. Rubin completely covered the spitzer projectile, leaving no exposed lead, creating the first "full metal jacket" or FMJ as we all know it today.

The lead bullets that had previously been used in combat had such a terrible effect on soldier's bodies. Think about the photos and accounts from the Civil War and how some of those large-caliber lead bullets and balls would not only inflict horrible flesh wounds, but would sometimes tear limbs off at the bone. The advent of the FMJ made total sense as a weapon of war. Indeed, many countries of the world felt that the horrific wounds of injured soldiers could be minimized by the use of the non-expanding projectiles. The Hague Convention of 1899, in Declaration III, specifically prohibited the use of any expanding projectiles in international warfare, though many incorrectly attribute this prohibition to the Geneva Convention. For the record, the United States did not agree to the treaty. This decision included so-called Dum-Dum bullets: those FMJs that had any exposed lead, or a cross-slot cut into the nose for expansion. (An interesting note is that Dum-Dum bullets were named after the British military facility near Dum-Dum, West Bengal, India. It was here that Captain Neville Bertie-Clay developed the Dum-Dum bullet, an expanding projectile designed for the .303 British cartridge, with a radical hollowpoint. The expansion of this bullet could be best described as violent, and I can only imagine the devastating result of using this projectile in combat.)

The result of adding a copper jacket to the traditional lead projectile completely changed the hunting world as well. Not only could these new projectiles be driven to much higher velocity and with fantastic accuracy, but by manipulating the amount of exposed lead at the nose, or meplat of the bullet, the amount of expansion could be controlled. This allowed ammunition manufacturers to tune the bullet to the velocity of the cartridge and better control the expansion/penetration ratio. The method of drawing a copper cup around the lead core results in what I have referred to elsewhere in this book as a cup-and-core bullet.

There were failures early on. The copper cup would often separate from the lead core upon impacting a game animal, and penetration was severely affected. Attempts were made to better keep the bullets together during the terminal ballistics phase. Remington's 1939 Core-Lokt bullet used a cannelure that stepped the copper jacket into the lead core to better keep the bullet in one piece. A tapering copper jacket, thicker toward the rear, made an appreciable difference in controlling—that is, slowing—the amount of expansion so that the necessary penetration could be obtained.

In the first half of the 20th century, hunters pretty much had two choices, especially for the dangerous game of Africa: a soft-point bullet with a bit of exposed lead at the nose with a copper jacket that covered the remainder of the bullet, or a full metal jacket bullet—commonly referred to as a solid—which offered no expansion whatsoever, but would provide fantastic penetration against those animals with extremely thick hides and huge, tough bones. There were volumes of material written about the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of the waves of new cartridges being released by British, German and American ammunition and firearms companies. If you are a fan of firearms and cartridge development (and by picking up this book I would assume you are), there are plenty of articles and books available that give a good glimpse into the situation at various points throughout the first half of the 20th century. People like Elmer Keith, Jack O'Connor, John "Pondoro" Taylor, W.D.M. Bell and John Hunter authored many of these works, and these gentlemen all had huge amounts of hands-on experience with the tools of their day. In reading their works, one can get a definite feel for the opinions they garnered through trial and error, and these opinions are still heralded today.

However, the reader must also appreciate the fact that many of the opinions generated by these now-famous

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authors were directly influenced by the terminal performance of the projectiles of their era. One of my favorite volumes, written by John "Pondoro" Taylor—an Irishman who tramped all over southern and eastern Africa—is *African Rifles and Cartridges*, a treatise on firearms and cartridges commonly used throughout the Dark Continent from 1920 until 1948 or thereabouts. Taylor had, according to his own accounts, used the vast majority of popular cartridges, from the .22 Long Rifle up to and including the behemoth .600 Nitro Express. He recounted his experiences with those cartridges on all sorts of African game, from the diminutive antelope up to the gigantic elephant. While few may have the opportunity to hunt Africa, this cross-section of game taken by Taylor includes many that are similar to our North American species.

Jack O'Connor was a fantastic author, known for championing the .270 Winchester, and was a proponent of the lighter calibers using bullets at higher velocities. Elmer Keith, an Idaho rancher with an extensive background in firearms, was responsible for the development of several highly popular handgun cartridges, as well as participating in the development of rifle cartridges that went on to influence future developments. These two gentlemen were both very well respected, yet had diametrically opposed views on what made a suitable hunting cartridge for various species. Keith believed in much heavier bullets than did O'Connor. But I firmly believe that their respective points of view were inarguably based on the terminal performance of the projectiles from their era much more than the potential of the cartridges by which they so strongly swore.

Walter Dalrymple Maitland Bell, a Scotsman whose adventures in early 20th century Africa are heralded to this day, was a proponent of the use of small-bore rifles (the 7x57mm Mauser being the most used) for big game, especially on the 1,000-plus elephants he took in his hunting career. Bell, who was an excellent shot, especially under the pressure of being in close proximity of truly dangerous game, made the claim that his "barrel had never been polluted by a soft-point bullet." He came to rely solely on full metal jacketed bullets, which had the nose portion strengthened by steel, placed under the layer of copper gilding metal. While I don't think that any Professional Hunter alive today would recommend or even accept the 7x57mm Mauser as an appropriate dangerous game cartridge, Bell was not a hunting client in today's sense. He had no legal requirements regarding rifle caliber and was literally in uncharted waters with respect to ballistic boundaries. Bell found that 173 grains of bullet properly placed would work just as effectively as 500 grains. If either bullet were placed incorrectly, Bell contended, they were equally ineffective. We can agree that a cartridge as small as the 7mm Mauser is not the best choice for dangerous game, but Bell's point was that a bullet, if properly constructed, could amaze a hunter as to its actual capabilities. In a very short period of time, the four-bore lead cannonball weighing in at ¼ pound had effectively been matched with a 173-grain steel and copper jacketed 7mm slug. The terminal ballistics experimentation of Bell (who also used a 6.5x54mm Mannlicher-Schoenaur and a .318 Westley Richards) gave quite a bit of insight into the importance of bullet construction and its correlation to terminal ballistics.

All of these hunters had an irrefutable effect on the reputations of our favorite cartridges on both ends of the spectrum. And many of those endorsements, based on the projectiles available to them at the time, carry on to this day. Today, however, some of these viewpoints need to be revised.

The cup-and-core bullets of the first half of the 20th century were tweaked in many different ways to achieve the consummate blend of expansion and penetration. The Remington Bronze Point was an early release that used a hollowpoint design, capped with a sharp, bronze tip that would not only prevent the meplat of the bullet from being battered under recoil, but would act as a wedge to initiate expansion. It was met with mixed reviews. Some hunters found it to work wonderfully, giving great expansion and hydraulic shock. Others reported that the bullet failed to give any expansion at all—acting just like a solid and giving caliber-size entry and exit wounds. Most folks just used the standard cup-and-core bullets, with varying levels of satisfaction.

All that changed in 1948 when John Nosler went moose hunting. His chosen rifle (and a fine one at that) was the .300 Holland & Holland Magnum, a perfect choice for the distances at which moose may be taken, and a caliber with an excellent reputation for big game. I'm not sure which brand of projectile Nosler was using, but the story as I've heard it goes as follows. Nosler had a moose at relatively close range, and while he placed his shots well, right on the beast's shoulder, the bullets just wouldn't penetrate. His cup-and-core bullets, driven to a muzzle velocity of just over 3,000 fps, simply were breaking up on the tough muscles and shoulder bones of the huge moose. This left him perplexed.



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He knew he had done his part, and that there must be a better solution to the problem of bullet construction. Once he got home, he put on his thinking cap and came up with an idea: a bullet divided in two, separated by a partition of copper, which would be made integral with the copper jacket. He took a copper rod of proper dimension, drilled out either end, inserted a lead core and fashioned the front portion into a spitzer profile. The idea was to allow the front portion of the bullet to expand for the tissue destruction necessary for a quick kill, yet keep the rear portion intact for deep penetration. The idea worked perfectly, and the Nosler Partition was born. It did exactly what Nosler intended, giving nearly the penetration of a solid, yet the front expanded properly. Naturally, the performance of this bullet caused it to catch on quickly, and to this day the Nosler Partition remains a favorite of hunters around the globe.

What John Nosler really did was single-handedly kick-start what would become the premium bullet industry. The premium bullet designs that have come onto the market have been nothing short of amazing. In the post-WWII years, many premium or boutique bullet companies popped up, once the raw materials became available once again. There were huge surpluses of powder, and some eager entrepreneurs began to show their wares, resulting in what are household names today: Joyce Hornady, Vernon Speer, Sierra Bullet Company, just to name a few. They gave us the projectiles that, while of standard construction, allowed hunters to develop their own handloaded ammunition with reliable and predictable results. Over the decades, these companies would hone their crafts and continue to push the boundaries of bullet technology.

The Barnes Bullet company dates back to the 1930s, when Fred Barnes was making his own custom bullets in his basement. He sold the company three decades later and, following a succession of sales, the company ended up in the hands of Randy and Coni Brooks. The Brooks' kept Barnes on for a bit as a consultant, but it was they who had the revolutionary idea. Randy Brooks had experienced bullet failure in the past, and while he was sitting on a high perch in Alaska glassing for spring brown bear and thoughts wandering, he had an epiphany. As he explained it to me, he thought, why not take out the lead. The result: He had designed the all-copper expanding X-Bullet, which solved the problem of jacket/core separation, and led to an entire school of thought known as the monometal expanding bullet. This was a huge development in terminal ballistics. The scored hollowpoint would open upon impact to form an X. The retained weight of the bullet was unprecedented. Brooks also developed a monometal solid for the African heavyweights that remains one of the best on the market even today.

Swift Bullets, hailing from Kansas, has also set an impressive benchmark in the terminal ballistics world. Improving, if you will, on the partitioned bullet design, Bill Hober's company uses a thicker jacket for their A-Frame bullet, as well as chemically bonding the jacket to the front lead core, further slowing expansion. The A-Frame is a great choice for thick-skinned animals and is ideal for any critter smaller than elephant. When recovered from game animals, it proves to hold its weight very well—often in the 90 to 95 percent range—and shows good expansion on the front end, displaying the classic A-Frame rivet just behind the partition. I've often described the Swift A-Frame as "meat-resistant," meaning the more meat you hit, the greater the resistance to the bullet, the more the A-Frame will expand. On big game, such as bison and Cape buffalo, it will expand to around twice its caliber, yet on smaller game that number diminishes, often whistling clear through … still killing, yet not leaving you with a whole bunch of bloodshot meat. I especially like this bullet when using a big-bore rifle, say a .375 or one of the .40 calibers, for hunting plains game in a dangerous game block, or when chasing elk or moose in an area known to be inhabited by grizzly. Swift makes this bullet not just for the bolt-action rifles (in a semi-spitzer design), but in a flat meplat designed for use in the popular lever-action cartridges, as well as for the hunting revolver cartridges. Were I to choose just one bullet for all of my hunting beside the elephant, it would be the Swift A-Frame. I've used it on dozens of different species, and its terminal ballistics make it my personal favorite, even though I know I'm giving up a little bit of ballistic coefficient.

There are now many different bullet designs on the market that feature a sharp polymer tip, serving to act much like the Remington Bronze Tip I discussed earlier. The polymer tip of the bullet is designed to increase the ballistic coefficient, yet upon impact the tip acts like a wedge, initiating expansion. The polymer tip has been incorporated into many different bullet designs: The Barnes TTSX, the all-copper hollowpoint with a tip to promote expansion; the Swift Scirocco II, a heavy jacketed boattail bullet with a bonded core; and the Hornady SST, a standard cup-and-core design. Nosler alone has three tipped models, the Ballistic Tip, AccuBond and E-Tip, and all three are constructed differently.

There are specially designed varmint bullets engineered to give an almost explosive terminal performance. These feature very thin jackets and soft lead cores, and are as frangible as can be, delivering all sorts of hydraulic shock. Some are hollowpoints, while others are polymer tipped, but all have come a long way toward their specific goal: creating the red mist that varmint hunters are after.

Lastly, the most recent developments in big game rifle bullet technology are some real eye openers. The Woodleigh Bullet Company of Australia has released their Hydrostatically Stabilized Solid, a non-expanding monometal with a small cup at the

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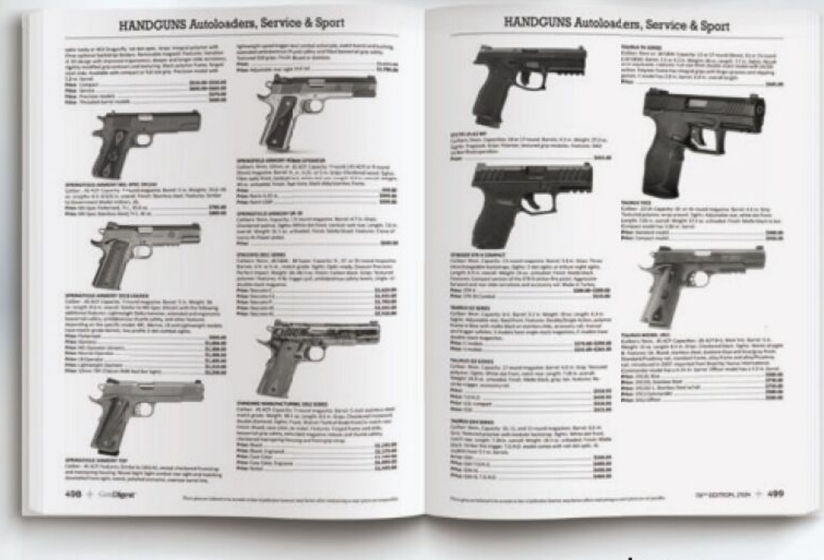
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nose. This bullet creates a supercavitation bubble, destroying tissue along the way, yet exiting at caliber dimension. This design worked perfect for me in Africa on game from impala to elephant, offering all the penetration anyone would want, in addition to quick, humane kills.

The Pennsylvania-based company Cutting Edge Bullets produces monometal projectiles (either all-copper or all-brass) that are turned on a lathe for extremely tight tolerances. Their Raptor bullets are a hollowpoint design, available either with or without a polymer tip, and the ogive of the bullet is skived, so upon impact the front half breaks into little blades that cause the initial trauma in a star-shaped pattern. It's a very interesting concept, and one that has proven itself around the world for me.

Peregrine Bullets, hailing from South Africa, are producing a fine monometal bullet too, in several different configurations. One I find most interesting is the Bush Master bullet, which uses a bronze plunger in the hollowpoint with a slight bit of air space underneath it. The plunger sits flush with the meplat of the bullet and, upon impact, forces the bullet to expand as the air trapped inside the hollowpoint can't be compressed, resulting in force that opens up the nose of the bullet. Designed with a thick wall and an almost flat nose, the Bush Master imparts its energy much like a flat-nose or round-nose, yet retains almost all of its weight, making it a great design for truly big game like moose, bear or any buffalo.

As you can see, the rifle bullet has had a long and complex journey when it comes to terminal ballistics, and we haven't yet cracked the surface.

Revolver and pistol bullets have gone through much the same development, and many of the designs I've described are offered in a handgun configuration. Bonded cores, thick jackets, monometals, skived hollowpoints—they've all made their way into the handgun bullet market. The lead pistol bullet of yesteryear still gives good performance, but today's designers have imparted their wisdom to the handgun projectile so as to give some rather stunning results. The idea of jacketing a handgun bullet is as old as the jacketed rifle bullet itself. The same Hague Convention decree applied to handgun bullets, so the full metal jacket bullet is certainly a popular configuration, and its terminal ballistics have been proven in a pair of World Wars. The still-popular ball ammunition offers no expansion whatsoever, but provides fantastic penetration. Ballistic engineers have long sought the consummate balance between bullet expansion and penetration, seeking to give just enough penetration to neutralize a threat, yet not too much, which could injure or kill unintended parties.

There are some great pistol bullets that fit this bill using a hollowpoint design and varying jacket types. Some have the jacket locked in with a cannelure, others lock the copper jacket around the mouth of the hollowpoint. Some of these designs include the Hornady XTP and XTP Mag, Speer Gold Dot, and the Federal Hydro-Shok, Guard Dog and HST.

Monometal bullets have been adapted to a self-defense role. The Cutting Edge Bullets line of Personal Home Defense ammunition comes immediately to mind, offering many of the same benefits of the rifle bullets of same design: lighter throw weight and correlative higher velocity, stout construction and reliable expansion. When it comes to a self-defense handgun projectile, a flat trajectory is not a major concern, but accuracy and terminal ballistics are paramount.

On the hunting side of things, the evolution of the bullet has led to some impressive terminal performance. Yes, hardcast lead bullets, usually in a flat-point configuration will still make a dependable choice at most hunting handgun ranges, especially in the heavy-for-caliber weights, but the premium bullets will truly allow the hunting revolver to shine. The Swift A-Frame, with its copper partition and front bonded core, gives fantastic terminal performance. With weight retention often above 85 percent—even at the high velocities associated with the speedy .454 Casull and bone-crushing .460 Smith & Wesson—the hollowpoint front core will expand to a diameter of just around 1.5 times caliber dimension. Barnes has also adapted their X-bullet technology, resulting in their XPB handgun bullet. Being an all-copper, hollowpoint design, the XPB gives the terminal performance handgun hunters desire: good expansion, with the deep penetration associated with the monometal bullets.

It's time for a detailed look into the terminal performance of different bullet types. When we're done, don't be surprised if you feel the need to rethink some old opinions—I know I did! **GDTM**



The Barnes TSX is an update of the original model and is an all-copper hollow-point.













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