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SAVAGE GOV'T STYLE
TWO-TONE 1911
More Than Expected

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More Than Expected

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'NAM READING

I am emailing you on behalf of my grandfather. He is a Vietnam vet and we were sitting around looking through some old stuff of his from the war. We came across a photo of him laying on a cot with a GUNS Magazine next to him. He thought it would be a cool thing for you guys to put into your magazine as a historical piece.

Braden Olmstead

Here you go. By the way, the issue is March 1967. Thank your granddad for his service and being a long-time reader! —BW

CLASS III

Regarding Will Dabb's *Shooter's Rx* "Unhinged" (October 2024) — One of the best articles I've seen. It raises the question of LEO qualifications and training. There appear to be at least three classes of officers:

1) Those who are willing and able to exercise this kind of force ... and can control it.

2) Those who are willing and able but can't control it.

3) Those who are not willing or able. Not enough of Group 1. Too many of Groups 2 and 3.

Yes, it is an almost impossible, no-win task. Solutions? Support them, train them, avoid them or cull them out as appropriate. Great article.

Jack Thorne

THE LATE, LAMENTED WEST

More than a few of us mourn the recent demise of *Guns of the Old West* magazine. Would it be asking too much for you to increase your coverage of old west firearms, their more modern clones and a few more stories about "old Hollywood" and old western movies and TV? Please?

Michael Barrett

It's an argument we have daily — how much to cover new, old or really old? And to what percentage? Thanks for adding your vote to the melee! —BW

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RUGER'S .45 COLT SINGLE-ACTIONS

PART I

GAME-CHANGING SIXGUNS

by John Taffin

In 1955 Bill Ruger modernized the centerfire single action with the introduction of his .357 Magnum Blackhawk. Using the virtually unbreakable coil spring action of his 1953 Single-Six .22, Ruger enlarged the frame to the size of the Colt Single Action and chambered it for the most powerful cartridge of the time, the .357 Magnum. He didn't stop there! He also flat-topped the frame and incorporated a fully adjustable Micro rear sight matched up with a ramp front sight. Barrel length of

the original Ruger .357 was an easy packin' 4-5/8" and the grip frame was identical to the Colt Single Action. Bill Ruger had virtually given sixgunners the perfect outdoorsman's revolver.

THICK AS A BRICK

Writing in 1955 Elmer Keith said: "We would have preferred a slightly larger frame and a cylinder a bit larger in diameter, especially for the .45 Colt cartridge, but this .357 Ruger is one honey of a gun and amply heavy for the .357 and .44 Special and will give the standard chamber wall thickness if Bill ever chambers it for

the .45 Colt." Perhaps, the .44 Special would have followed on the heels of the .357, however, in late 1955 the .44 Magnum arrived. Ruger tried to chamber the Blackhawk for the new .44 but when one blew while proof testing, he wisely increased the size of the frame and the diameter of the cylinder. Keith did not have the .45 Colt but he now had the basic platform for building one.

Both the .357 and .44 Magnum Blackhawks are now known to collectors as Flat-Tops. They would be in production until 1963 when what is now known as the Old Models emerged. Since Ruger had brought forth the .44 Magnum Super Blackhawk in 1959, the Flat-Top .44 Magnum was dropped with the advent of the Old Models. The Three-Screw Old Models had two "improvements." The same protective ears found on both sides of the rear sight of the Super Blackhawk were now incorporated into all Ruger single actions and the grip frame was changed from the XR3 "Colt-style" to the XR3-RED, allowing more room between the back of the trigger guard and the front strap. To me this change was totally ill conceived and whenever possible I have fitted the original XR3 to my working Old Model Blackhawks.

The .44 Magnum Flat-Top was now gone, however, the .357 Magnum was joined by the .41 Magnum in 1965, a .30 Carbine in 1968 and finally, the .45 Colt in 1970. At the time, I was attending graduate school in Missoula, Mont. and trying to find any way to keep my sanity while being away from the family. I wandered into the local gun shop and there it was — a Ruger .45 Colt Blackhawk with a 7-1/2" barrel. I didn't even notice the extra .45 ACP cylinder as I made arrangements for it to be shipped to my FFL dealer back in Idaho. The Old Model Blackhawk



Ruger's New Vaquero, center, is slightly smaller than the original Vaqueros.



Target shot with Ruger's 7-1/2" New Vaquero .45 Colt.

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.270 Winchester	150 gr.	SST	2813
7mm-08 Remington	162 gr.	SST	2512
.308 Winchester	165 gr.	SST	2645
.30-06 Springfield	165 gr.	SST	2749



would only be in production for three years, with both 7-1/2" and 4-5/8" versions. Both barrel lengths were offered as Convertibles with the extra ACP cylinder. A few were even made with the Super Blackhawk brass grip frame.

SUPER 'HAWK

Just as Keith had suggested, Ruger did not use the Colt-sized .357 Blackhawk frame and cylinder but wisely went with the .44 Flat-Top/Super Blackhawk platform. This opened whole new vistas for the ancient .45 Colt. For the first time since 1873, we now had a sixgun capable of using the large capacity of the black powder .45 Colt cartridge case. With the coming of smokeless powder in the 1890s the large volume of the .45 Colt case could not be utilized with higher pressures resulting from smokeless powder in the available sixguns of the time. The larger .45 Blackhawk allowed us to shoot 250-grain cast bullets at .44 Magnum muzzle velocities, but more importantly for the handgun hunter we could now very safely drive 300-grain .45 bullets at 1,200 fps.

The original .45 Colt Blackhawk Old Model was only in production from 1970 to 1973 with a total output of just over 23,000 units. In 1973 all Ruger Blackhawks were changed to the New Model. Gone were the three screws in the side of the frame and the half cock-notch on the hammer.

Up to this point, to load any traditional single-action, the loading gate was opened, the hammer was placed on half cock and the time-honored method of "load one-skip one-load four" was employed. If done correctly the hammer could then be brought to the full cock notch and then lowered carefully on an empty chamber. The only safe way to carry any traditional single actions is with an empty chamber under the hammer. If six rounds were loaded and the hammer rested on the firing pin, which rested on the primer or depended upon the so-called "safety," which was anything but, a sharp blow on the hammer could result in the cartridge firing with sometimes disastrous results. **GUNS**

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THE LEGACY OF TOMMY CAMPBELL

HIS CONTRIBUTIONS WENT BEYOND GOOD SHOOTING

Massad Ayoob
Photos: Gail Pepin

I was heartbroken when I learned Tom Campbell passed away in August of 2024. Most famous as a top competitor on the “pro tour” of competitive handgun shooting, he was unerringly accurate and so fast his peers nicknamed him “Tommygun” Campbell. He was a European champion and always one of the men to beat. Fewer people knew Tom had also been an innovative leader in gun, ammunition and holster development.

EARLY DAYS

I first met him when I ran the first IPSC Sectional Championship after the International Practical Shooting Confederation was formed at the Columbia Conference in 1976. It was held in New Hampshire, a spot selected by legendary police gunfighter Jim Cirillo who was head of what was then the Northeastern U.S. Section of the organization. Shooting a 1911 .45, Campbell won the overall. I came in second and asked myself, “Who the hell is this guy?”

I soon found out. Tom went on to become one of The Men To Beat on the “pro tour” of what was then the fledgling sport of combat pistol shooting, whether

the game was IPSC, the forerunner of today’s U.S. Practical Shooting Association, Steel Challenge, or the Bianchi Cup where he twice came in a close second in the “Wimbledon of Practical Shooting.” He was a staple of the U.S. Team in world IPSC competition and Team Smith & Wesson. But Tom Campbell was much, much more than a damn good shot.

THE GUNS CAMPBELL GAVE US

Tom was a Smith & Wesson man through-and-through. He had gone to work for S&W as a young man and quickly rose through the company. He had input into design. No one at the factory had a stronger grasp of what the customers wanted — and not just the target shooters. After winning one historic match with another company’s gun, legend said the bosses at S&W were proud of his accomplishment but would rather he do it with their guns. S&W didn’t make .45 autos at the time but to the horror of some of the engineers, he tossed a chunk of steel into the milling machine that made the aluminum-frame double-stack 9mm autos and created “SuperGun.” It was an all-steel 9mm he converted to single-action with an oversize thumb safety that was no longer a decocker, and with a trigger remarkably like the



Campbell had a major part in developing both the .40 S&W and the .356 TSW cartridges.

Model 52 .38 Special target pistol. This would be the forerunner of the all-steel Model 5906 and double-action-only Model 5946 that would become hugely popular “wonder-nines” among police beginning in the late 1980s. Tom had a big part in the refinement and development of the Third Generation S&W double-action autos.

Recognizing the major/minor scoring in IPSC gave .45s a huge advantage, he created SuperGun II, chambered for .45 ACP and kicked butt with it. Realizing double-action .45 autos were becoming popular among police, he had a major part in S&W producing the Model 645 in that caliber, a second-gen Smith that would flourish in the many variations of the third-gen guns. Tom gets a lot of credit for S&W finally making .45 autos.

The S&W Mountain Guns were very much a Campbell thing, with lots of input from his good friend and fellow star shooter Ross Seyfried. He began with a variation of the stainless Model 629 .44 Magnum and had its barrel tapered like a .44 Special, its butt rounded, and the front edges of the cylinder chamfered to make the gun go more smoothly into a holster. The Mountain Guns would subsequently be offered in other “major calibers.”

Interestingly, Tom’s favorite carry gun was a very early production S&W Centennial Airweight with the original aluminum cylinder, which he loaded with mid-range .38 wadcutters for their low pressure. In this, he predated the many credentialed gun experts who today recommend this load for lightweight .38 Specials.



Tom Campbell and Mas discuss the good old days. WC Ranch in Texas, 2019.

THE AMMO CAMPBELL GAVE US

Working with his close friend and fellow S&W employee Paul Lieberman among others, they amplified Paul's wildcat Centimeter cartridge into the .40 Smith & Wesson. It debuted in 1990 in the S&W 4006 pistol and quickly became the most popular police duty cartridge for the next 20 or 25 years until the sea change to the 9mm. He also had a lot to do with the development of the .356 TSW, a cartridge duplicating .357 SIG ballistics in a 9x21.5mm casing which allowed a couple more rounds in a same-size gun. It would have been more successful if S&W had marketed it as a fighting cartridge instead of something for match shooters. I always thought S&W made a mistake in not making Campbell their CEO. When Safariland made him an offer he couldn't refuse, he went with that company and did much to make them the nation's dominant supplier of police duty gear.

A super shooter, an articulate instructor, and a brilliant innovator,



Bill Rogers, left, and Tom Campbell, both giants at Safariland. Scene is Bill Wilson's ranch in 2019.

Tom Campbell was also a genuinely nice guy. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. "We are diminished" is a phrase you always hear

when a good person dies, and in Tommy Campbell's case, this is absolutely true. RIP, brother.

GUNS

An advertisement for the Ransom International Multi-Caliber Steady Rest. The background is a close-up of an American flag. In the center, a silver handgun is mounted on a black, adjustable rest. The rest is made of metal and has a base with a handle. Text overlays in white circles and boxes provide information about the product.

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A This 8x32 Meopta is relatively compact but has a broad 350-foot field of view, a useful 4mm exit pupil. **B** Swarovski's bright, versatile EL Range 10x42 binocular weighs 31 oz., ranges to 1,500 yards. **C** SIG's Kilo 3000 BDX laser ranging bino can be paired with its Sierra 3BDX rifle-scope via Bluetooth to illuminate a dot on the scope's reticle — your aiming point at that range and in current wind conditions.

Wayne van Zwoll

Binoculars have been around a long time — though rifling is older. In 1608, as the tale goes, Dutch spectacle maker Hans Lipershay idly lined up two lenses on a weathercock far off. The chicken suddenly looked as big as a cow! Lenses in tandem could shrink distance! The next year, Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei built his first telescope. With this and subsequent optics he discovered four of Jupiter's moons.

Fast forward a couple of centuries, after experimenters joined two telescopes. Because the tubes couldn't be kept exactly parallel, these instruments delivered double images. On the eve of the 20th century, Ernst Abbe of the Carl Zeiss company used prisms to fold the light paths in short, twin tubes attached at a co-axial hinge. He called it a "hunting telescope."

BINO BASICS

Now we'd call it a Porro-prism binocular — a nod to Italian optics guru Ignazio Porro, who had also pioneered the design. It's distinguished by a "stepped" profile, the barrels offset from the eyepieces. More popular now: the roof-prism binocular, whose front and rear lenses share an axis. That design dates to 1897 work at M. Hensoldt & Sohne (later absorbed by Zeiss) in Wetzlar, Germany.

Note my use of "binocular." A binocular has two barrels (hence: "bi"). Hunting, I carry just one binocular, though I own several. Because I don't have four eyes, a pair of binoculars would be no more useful on the trail than four shoes.

My first binocular was a second-hand Bausch & Lomb Zephyr, a 7x35 glass lauded by legions of hunters (including Jack O'Connor) in the 1950s and '60s. Delightfully lightweight at 19 oz., it came dear. In 1952, when a Winchester Model 70 listed for \$126.50 and a Savage 99 for \$111.50, that Zephyr fetched \$155! While it's been surpassed optically by top-tier binos with coatings that trim aberrations and yield incrementally brighter images, I doubt I've seen any game with new glass that wouldn't have come to eye as quickly with my old B&L!

As a Porro-prism binocular, that 7x35 is less compact than an equivalent roof-prism model; but in theory the wider objective spacing enhances "binocular vision," which helps us gauge distance.

The late optics authority Walter Mergen told me when he was at Zeiss, top-quality binoculars contain several types of glass. "None are to save cost. All do specific jobs. Flint glass is heavier and more brittle than crown glass so is ill-suited to external lenses. But inside it helps deliver the best images."

Light entering a roof-prism binocular is "split" into color bands. Zeiss was first with lens coating that brings the bands

back "into phase" to prevent color fringing. Now phase correction is common across binocular brands. It is not needed in Porro-prism binoculars.

BOAT ANCHOR OR BINO?

Binoculars are getting heavier. Rubber jackets of some models contribute weight. Ditto batteries in binos with range-finding/electronic functions. Frames, typically of polycarbonate (lightest), magnesium and aluminum are all as light as practicable. Magnesium, stiffer than polycarbonates, is more brittle and 33% lighter than aluminum — and most expensive.

Much of the increasing weight in binoculars lies in bigger lenses and prisms. While in my youth, the most popular binos had 35mm objectives, this standard has bumped to 40mm, and many hunters now carry 50mm glass. The hike in front lens diameter boosts the size and weight of internal components. Enter binocular harnesses to spread the burden.

I still carry a binocular on a single strap, short enough the bino just clears my chin and won't drag the ground when I crawl toward game. When shedding or adding clothes on the trail, I don't have to slip out of and back into a harness.

Unlike rifle scopes, which might be called upon for fast aim, binoculars must seldom be thrown to eye so short eye relief affords a big field of view even with relatively high magnification. A binocular must be powerful enough to find

and identify small fragments of shape and color.

DO THE MATH

While high power begs big objectives to ensure generous exit pupils (lens diameter/power = EP), human eyes impose a practical limit on EP size. A 10x40 binocular has an EP of 4mm, an 8x40 an EP of 8mm. Our eyes dilate to accept more light at the edge of night -- say, to 6mm in the dimmest shooting light. An EP bigger than this won't add brightness to the image you see through a binocular.

An important but much-ignored property of magnification is its help in resolving images in poor light. Expressed as the twilight factor, it's simply the square root of the product of objective diameter and power. So, the TF for an 8x40 binocular is the square root of 320, or 17.9. Boost magnification to 10x, and TF is the square root of 400, or 20 — while the EP shrinks from 5mm to 4mm! The added magnification more



In cover, a bino helps you find shot alleys, tell tines from twigs. Keep power modest for one-hand use.

than offsets the drop in EP. Make front glass 25% bigger (50mm), and TF at 8x leaps to 20. A 10x50 yields a TF of 22.3. That is, in percentages, you need a bigger jump in EP than in magnification to add resolution at dawn and dusk.

My time afield has steadily nudged me toward 7x and 8x binoculars with objective lenses of 30 to 35 mm. Almost all of these scale under 23 oz., sparing me a permanent strap groove on my nape. The good news for hunters who like more power: Many fine 10x32

binoculars have appeared of late, offering superior resolution in daylight (when most game is spotted) and even edging the TF of 8x32s at dawn and dusk! And no matter your preference as to size and weight, the fully multi-coated lenses now standard on most binoculars make images brighter and sharper than when a good binocular cost half again as much as the best rifles.

And I thought none would ever trump a B&L 7x35 Zephyr. Silly me!

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RIFLES OLD AND NEW BACK TO THE FUTURE?

Dave Anderson

If someone from 1950 was magically transported to the present day, he would find many things profoundly changed or simply gone forever. Grocery stores, cameras, music systems, automobiles, air travel, telephones, all changed almost beyond recognition.

IT'S ABOUT TIME

But once our time traveler got hold of a hunting rifle, he'd feel right at home. One such time traveler, Mike from Wisconsin, showed up at my farm recently, dazed and confused about suddenly being transported 75 years into the future. Coffee got him functioning again and as hunters will, we began discussing guns and hunting. Mike had recently purchased a new .30-'06 Remington 721 and used it on a successful deer hunt. The 721/722 series evolved into the tremendously successful and popular model 700, which remains a best seller to this day.

When I showed Mike my model 700 stainless SPS, handling it was second nature for him, no surprise as it was basically the same as his 721. Bolt operation,

safety location, loading and unloading; even the trigger pull was much the same. He was puzzled a bit by the cartridge designation — “.243, never heard of it. I suppose the .30-'06 is long since obsolete?” Well no, actually not. “You're still using cartridges with powder and primers? I thought you'd be using ray guns by now.”

“No, ray guns never really caught on, too expensive. Except with the military.”

Mike was surprised. “You do have flying cars though, right?”

“Of course. I'd give you a ride in mine but it's in the shop right now getting the flux capacitor repaired.”

Mike said, “Let's get back to the rifle. Are you saying this current hunting rifle is mechanically identical to my rifle of 75 years ago?”

“Not quite. They added a groove in one of the locking lugs to ride a lip in the receiver for smoother bolt operation. And they changed the trigger about half a dozen times. Go ahead and dry fire it if you want, I don't mind.”

Mike aimed the rifle at a nearby hill and tried the trigger. “Not bad, almost as good as the trigger on my 721. But seriously, you're still using the same basic rifle design from 75 years ago? I know



Bolt face of the Remington 700 rifle showing twin locking lugs and spring-loaded ejector. The extractor is a spring clip in the bolt face so there are no cuts in the ring of steel surrounding the case head.

hunters and shooters are traditionalists by nature but this is ridiculous.”

I started to talk about laser rangefinders, CAD/CAM manufacturing, scopes with dependable and repeatable adjustments. But Mike said nope, those don't count, only changes in the rifle itself.

STEEL RESERVE

The most obvious changes in rifles have been stainless steel replacing blued carbon steel for barrels and receivers, and synthetics replacing wood for stocks. I admit to being a bit slow to adapt. I like the look of blue steel and nice wood, and living in the relatively dry prairie west I haven't had to worry much about rust. But not everyone lives in arid climates. For those who live where humidity is high, especially in ocean salt air, rust-resistance is a blessing.

Wood was the traditional material for rifle stocks for decades. Wood can be readily shaped and checkered, it looks good and in the fanciest grains it is stunningly beautiful. The problem with wood is it never really stops moving. Synthetics first caught on for their strength and stability. True, some inexpensive synthetics are flexible and don't inspire much confidence, but the cheaper wood stocks were not so great either.

I won't claim today's barrels are more accurate, but I will say they are more consistently accurate. Just about any new rifle off the rack will provide



Top is a stainless steel Remington 700 from the mid-1960s re-barreled in .243 Win. Scope is a Redfield 6-18 variable. Beneath it is a 50th anniversary model in 7mm Rem Mag. with Redfield 3-9x40 scope.

at least acceptable accuracy. Makers have learned a lot about steel properties, heat treatment, stress relieving and quality control. Buy a rifle today, even a value-priced model, and you may not get the ultimate in accuracy but it's very unlikely you'll get a bad one.

Bullet makers have developed (often with computer assistance) long, sleek, highly efficient bullets, which retain velocity and resist wind drift better than older designs. These long bullets need a faster twist to stabilize. The Remington 722 of the 1950s had a 1:12 twist in .244 Rem. while its .243 Win. rival customarily had a 1:10 twist. The current Remington 700 SPS stainless has a 1:8 twist in .223 Rem. and .243 Win., better suited for long, high ballistic coefficient bullets.

WEIGHT LOSS

In the 1950s and '60s, it seemed the only way for manufacturers to reduce rifle weight was by slimming or



The Remington 722 was the short action version of the 721. This .244 Rem (later renamed the 6mm Rem) bears a Leupold scope from the 1950s with a 7/8" diameter main tube in Leupold base/rings.

shortening the barrel. Current production uses lighter materials such as carbon fiber, Kevlar and titanium. Makers use methods such as barrel and bolt fluting to reduce weight or they start with a clean sheet and design actions to eliminate excess weight. Rifles in the 6-lb. range are commonplace these days, and under 5 lbs. are available if you want to spend a bit more.

I left Mike in the kitchen studying my computer (no doubt in awe) while I went to get my Kimber Adirondack. When I returned, Mike was gone, back to his time zone. The computer was open to a page listing World Series winners from 1950 on. Apparently he had been memorizing the page. Now why on earth would he want such information? **GUNS**

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THE MARLIN SUPER GOOSE NOT A GUN FOR 98-LB. WEAKLINGS!

Tom Keer

There was always work to be done on our dairy farm, especially around milking time. When I was young, I tried to be like one of the older guys and help out by closing the stanchions around a cow's head. I was too small to do it right, so I figured climbing on the concrete food trough made the most sense. I got a few done right, but that was before I fell in and cracked off half of my front tooth. Anyone who has done that before knows the feeling of inhaled air across nerve endings isn't worth repeating. Off to the dentist we went.

SHOTTY DOC

Unlike my friends, I looked forward to seeing Dr. Biehn. He'd come around to hunt geese when our silage corn fields were planted with winter rye and this I learned to be true — Doc Biehn may have enjoyed his dentistry work,

but he sure loved to kill geese. On the day when I walked into his office to get my tooth fixed, he took a moment to show me his new shotgun. If its registered name was the Marlin 5510, then its call name was The Super Goose. I had never before seen such a beast ...

The Goose Gun series was made a few towns away from our farm, in North Haven, which was the home of the Marlin Firearms Company. Product developers designed the Goose Gun to fill two different shooting needs. The first niche was to create a price-point shotgun every entry-level hunter could afford. The second was to use an action familiar to young shooters. As most kids of the era learned to shoot with a .22 caliber bolt-action rifle, the designers reasoned a similar action used in a shotgun would help sell more units.

In 1954, Marlin introduced the Model 55 Goose Gun in a 12- and 16-gauge. Barrel lengths for those two

models were 36" and to keep costs low, there was no rib but instead a single brass bead. The chambers were for 2 ¾" shells, and a two-round detachable magazine brought the firepower up to a legal three shots.

The Goose Gun had a one-piece American walnut stock with a pistol grip and thumb safety. No checkering appeared anywhere as low cost was an important goal. There was a recoil pad and hunters were thankful costs weren't cut in that department. They also appreciated the sling swivels making the carry of shotgun and dekes much easier.

The Goose Gun was immediately popular and between 1954 and 1965, Marlin sold nearly 120,000 shotguns. The retail cost of \$30 in 1954 dollars is worth \$350 today and is still quite inexpensive. To build on its success, a 10-gauge was added in 1976, which is when I first saw Dr. Biehn's new goose slayer. They were discontinued in 1986.

TOUGH CHORE

I was a robust young kid, capable of bailing hay for about half a day, but try as I might, I could not handle Doc Biehn's Super Goose. The 34" full-choke barrel and overall 56" length came with a 10.5-lb. weight. The 4 ¾" length made it difficult if not impossible to mount, swing and shoot. Working the bolt was cumbersome, too.

I haven't laid my eyes on one since the 1970s, but Tim Carey sees them on a regular basis. Many shotgunners will remember Carey from his long career at Griffin & Howe, but in 2021 he joined the sporting arms division of the Cincinnati-based Cowan's Auctions. Every year he sees a few Super



The Marlin 55 was an affordable shotgun but its overall difficulty of use and weight shortened its shelf life as hunters preferred lighter and lively options.



Hunters loved two features on any of the Marlin Goose Guns and especially the 10-gauge Super Goose — sling swivels to lighten the load and a rubber butt pad to reduce recoil. Photo: Cowan's Auctions

Goose 10 gauges and Goose Gun in other gauges come up for auction.

"Seeing a Marlin Goose gun is like seeing an old friend," Carey said. "They certainly were never expensive, and even now when they come up for sale, they don't command a high price. It was the era when fathers taught their sons to shoot with a small caliber bolt-action rifle before introducing them to a shotgun. Some of the folks who buy a Goose Gun these days are usually doing so because they had one when they were growing up. Others might remember their dad or granddad as having one. These personal stories come up at our auctions and they are a lot of fun."

"Part of the theory for the 34" barrel was it offered a longer sight plane to improve accuracy. Another idea was that the longer barrel would offer better ballistics and kill waterfowl at greater distances. What we know now is barrel length doesn't make shot go faster or farther, and we're thankful for that. Today's shotguns, as well as those that command higher prices at auction, are lighter and livelier. They're more enjoyable to shoot than the Goose Gun, which was a workout."

Because of the low retail price, a number of gunners bought the Marlin Goose Gun as a backup to their primary gun. Ones that come up for auction at venues like Cowan's Auctions typically are in great condition. Whether you pick one up for nostalgia's sake or are adding to a collection of waterfowl shotguns, be sure to do this first: Hit the gym. You'll need to rack a bunch of weight if you're going to carry that shoulder howitzer into the marsh.

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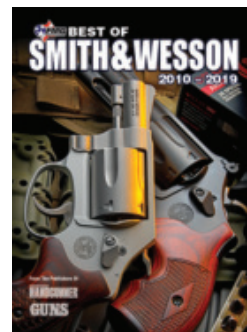
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HANDLOADING THE .270 WINCHESTER

A CENTURY-OLD CARTRIDGE WITH MODERN PERFORMANCE

Alan Garbers

I have been dreaming of an antelope hunt for 40 years, but one thing or another stopped me from committing. I don't know why, as I am surrounded by the speed goats every time I leave the house. After not getting drawn this year, I decided to go outside Arizona and booked a hunt in eastern New Mexico. As you read this, I will either be enjoying the sweet taste of Pronghorn or the bitter taste of unfilled tag soup.

DAYDREAM BELIEVER

As long as I can remember, the .270 Winchester has been the premier Pronghorn cartridge in my dreams. A few years ago, I found a 1968 Winchester Model 70 at a small gun shop. The classic lines tugged at my heartstrings, so it came home with me.

Some may question the wisdom of choosing a hundred-year-old cartridge. If you read the writings of Jack O'Conner, the .270 Winchester was

his favorite cartridge. He took everything from woodchucks to grizzly bears by using an appropriate bullet. Col. Townsend Whelen was also a proponent as was the prolific handloader and writer Ken Waters. Their writings took the .270 past what many factory magnum loads will do.

My rifle had average accuracy with factory ammunition, but I wanted sub-MOA. The first step was to replace the walnut with an H&S Precision synthetic stock with an internal aluminum bed. Accuracy improved, but I felt I could get it tighter.

When I started down this road, the 'Rona was still impacting the reloading component market and I felt fortunate to find anything on the shelf at Sportsman's Warehouse. Lady Luck smiled at me for once because I found a box of Hornady .270 130-grain CX monolithic bullets. Next to it was a box of Hornady .270 145-grain ELD-X bullets. Both came home with me. A box of Berger 140-grain VLD Hunter bullets appeared on the store shelf two weeks



Consistent primer depth means dependable ignition and hand seating with the right tools.

later. Of course, it joined the Hornady bullets on my reloading bench.

Brass was another problem. Again, luck was on my side, as an acquaintance offered a bag of new Winchester brass at less than pre-pandemic prices. I prefer to fire-form the brass before getting serious about working up a load. Once the case is fully expanded to fill the chamber, I bump the shoulder back 0.002" to 0.003" using a headspace comparator as a guide.

TENSION HEADACHES

In 1983, I received my first reloading manual as a gift from my future wife. It was the *Speer Number Ten*, a manual I read from cover to cover. The only place I remember mentioning annealing was in the back glossary. Now, annealing is one of the first steps many reloaders take. Why? For accuracy, consistent neck tension is essential. Accuracy demands the bullet-to-neck tension be the same for every shot; otherwise, pressure will vary wildly.

Unless I see the discoloration from annealing on new cases, I anneal my cases before loading. While I hope to afford an AMP annealer soon, I still perform the deal with a deep-well tool socket chucked up in a battery-powered drill method. After 30 years of soldering HVAC lines, I'm pretty good about judging the heating of brass. Is



The .270 Winchester's popularity means lots of options for handloaders.

Precision loaders generally only bump the shoulder back 0.002" on fired brass after annealing.



my method perfect? Not by a long shot, but I seem to get good results.

In working up my loads I found prudent use of a Lee factory crimp die tightened the groups enough to make it part of my reloading practice.

Some writers claim magnum primers should be used in the long case. I do not. My preferred primer brand is Federal. However, since the summer of 2020, Federal large rifle primers have been as scarce as rooster's eggs. Fiocchi has been the only brand of LRP I can find but they work well. I have used the press-mounted primer system, but I prefer the ease and precision of the Frankford Arsenal Perfect Seat Hand Primer system. It allows the primer depth to be custom set using an adjustable turn wheel.

I used to bleed RCBS Green when it came to reloading equipment including dies, but my allegiance changed after I picked up a Hornady rifle die set. At first, the floating bullet alignment sleeve threw me for a loop, but I was hooked once I realized it held the bullet in perfect alignment. Since I use long secant ogive bullets, I changed to the appropriate Hornady ELD Match seating stem.

HOT & COLD

The temperatures during antelope season can run into the 30s at night to 100 degrees during the day. Some powders are temperature-sensitive that can mean significant shifts in pressure

and velocity and a change in impact downrange. For pressure and velocity stability in all conditions, I chose Hodgdon's H4831 SC, one of their Extreme Powder family. H4831 SC is a stick powder and my favorite for almost all of my hunting rifle loads and I thought it would be perfect for the .270 Winchester.

I started low and worked the loads up using accuracy and velocity as my guide. At 58.5 grains I reached the velocity I was looking for. Of the three bullets, the Hornady 145 ELD-X provided the best SD at 5.38 with an average velocity of 2,988 fps. Groups were less than one MOA sample after sample.

The same powder weight and base-to-ogive measurement were used for the Berger VLD Hunter loads, which had an average velocity of 2,978 and an SD of 13.4. The group sizes opened up to about 1.5 MOA. I bumped the Hornady CX a little higher in powder weight and received an average velocity of 3,031 fps, with an SD of 23.75. The group size averaged around 1.5 MOA. I could experiment more with the Berger bullets, but I am happy enough with the Hornady ELD-X load to buy a custom turret from Kenton Industries.

As always, your rifle may react differently so approach all loads with caution but if you see a .270 Winchester languishing in a pawn shop, be assured it will outperform many of the new wonder cartridges out there if you're willing to put in the work.

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S&W MODEL 48

A POWERED-UP TAKE ON THE LEGENDARY K22

Payton Miller

IN NAME ONLY

My first impression of the Smith & Wesson Model 48 — a long barreled K-Frame weighing in at close to 41 oz. — was that it was way too much revolver for a .22 caliber anything. I'll plead pure ignorance here. Why? My personal rimfire wheelgun frame of reference had been a relatively petite 3" S&W J-Frame Kit Gun.

The "too much gun" feeling lasted until I finished the first 6-shot cylinderful. It was then I understood why serious old-school target shooters swore by the K22. Rimfire target shooters had — and still have — a wide spectrum of autos to choose from including Smith & Wesson, Hi-Standard, Colt, Ruger, Browning and several high-end European models. But for revolver types, the K22 was pretty much it with the possible exception of the .22 version of the Colt Officer's Model Match.

The M48 was basically a K22, which in the mid-1950s had morphed into the M17 chambered for the hotshot Magnum Rimfire. Introduced in 1959 and discontinued in 1986, the Model 48 was eventually resurrected in the S&W catalog as part of the semi-limited Classic Series in 2010, according to S.P. Fjestad's *Blue Book of Gun Values*. However, the specimen we lucked into was a late '70s gun — a 48-4 to be exact. It was blued with a 6" barrel, hand-filling Magna walnut grips and excellent adjustable sights.

Okay, to be practical, any "revolver holdout" interested in a target-style K-Frame .22 Magnum most likely isn't going to be a serious bulls-eye competitor but that's okay. What the gun offers is .22 WMR performance in what is probably the premier rimfire revolver platform ever. Although today, the cost differential

between the .22 LR and .22 Mag ammo isn't quite as shocking as it was "back in the day," this is probably more a function of rising ammo costs in general.

Of course, it's incumbent upon us to air out a caveat concerning the performance level. While the .22 WMR can boast some seriously impressive numbers from a rifle, its performance advantage from the M48's 6" barrel, while significant in regard to rimfire handguns, makes it something less than a barn-burner. The three loads tested spanned most of the available bullet weights in magnum persuasion.

They included 30-grain CCI Maxi Mag JHP, 40-grain CCI Maxi Mag FMJ and 45-grain Hornady Critical Defense FTX. The 30- and 40-grain CCI loads averaged 1,468 and 1,268 fps respectively while the 45-grain Hornady stuff registered 1,230 fps. The Hornady load — originally designed as a defensive load for snubie revolvers — had the lowest velocity spread at 75 fps and gave us the tightest 25-yard groups.

The single-action trigger on our vintage M48 broke at slightly under 3 lbs. which is pretty much ideal. The double-action pull was considerably less scintillating, although for a rimfire revolver this is somewhat irrelevant. If you're going to do low-cost combat drills, chances are you're not going to go the magnum route.

By comparison, the listed velocities of all three when fired from a rifle (in ascending order of bullet weight) are 2,200 fps, 1,875 fps and 1,700 fps. If you can live with a lighter bullet weight, there are several hyper-velocity .22 LR loads on the market such as CCI Stinger and Remington Yellow Jacket which, from a handgun, can get mighty close to 22 Mag handgun numbers. But discounting arguments about .22 Magnum handgun performance, it's pretty safe to say the 6" Model 48 is going to exceed most .22 LR loads from a rifle.

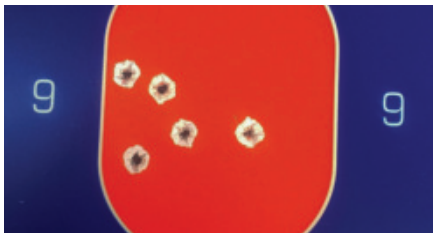
No .22 Magnum handgun will ever supplant one in .22 Long Rifle as a dedicated target piece but the magnum was



Except for its .22 Magnum chambering, the Model 48 .22 Magnum (top) is pretty much a dead ringer for the fabled K22 Masterpiece, which became the Model 17 in the mid-1950s.



Perhaps not the equal of the K22/M17 with competition-grade .22 Long Rifle ammo, the “magnumized” M48 acquitted itself well at 25 yards with Hornady’s excellent 45-grain Critical Defense FTX ammo and 40-grain CCI Maxi-Mag FMJ (below). Either load would be tough to beat for small game and varmints.



never intended to be a precision paper puncher. In terms of varmint and small game hunting though, the Hornady FTX load from the M48’s 6” barrel would be ideal, delivering a heavier-than-usual bullet at very respectable rimfire speed.

After we finished grouping and chronographing, I and a couple of shooting buddies spent some time busting clay birds on the 75-yard berm. Not to say our batting average was perfect but it was fairly respectable. And, ballistics aside, there’s something about the healthy whack of a .22 Mag that’s out-and-out gratifying.

The current Classic Series Model 48 in either barrel length currently lists for \$1,169. If you’re allergic to Smith’s internal lock or you’re on the lookout for a 4” specimen, you can find a vintage original in reasonable shape for a bit less. If you don’t mind straying from the original template, Smith also offers the Model 648, a full lug stainless 6” version

But all things being equal, we’d opt for old M48. Its “K22 heritage” simply seems, well, proper. This .22 Mag classic is a superior hunting or field gun. It looks great and will hit better than you can hold.

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THE .280 ROSS

SIR ROSS' HIGH VELOCITY SCOTCH DEER STALKING RIFLE

Holt Bodinson
Photography: Kalico Willingham

In gun shop parlance, there are “safe queens” and “floor queens.” This is the story of a unique floor queen. It sat there in the floor rack for weeks, untouched and unloved. It wasn’t pricey. It wasn’t that it didn’t have class. Indeed, it looked ever so much like an elegant custom rifle.

The action was a bit odd, being a straight-pull but customers were used to seeing Schmidt-Rubins on the floor. No, what kept this sleek centerfire rooted in place was its odd caliber — the .280 Ross — the world’s first commercial cartridge breaking the 3,000 fps ceiling. I took one look and bought the floor queen, which came mounted with a Weaver K3 scope. The rest of the story defines the term “Gun Nut.” I had no idea what I was getting into.

SIR ROSS

To understand the Ross rifle, you have to understand the man, a complex man at that. Sir Charles Henry Augustus Frederick Lockhart Ross was the Ninth

Baronet of Balnagown, Scotland. A Knight of the Realm, he inherited an estate of 350,000 acres, 3,000 tenants and Balnagown Castle.

Even as a boy, Sir Charles exhibited a strong aptitude for things mechanical and could be found, as often as not, working away in the well-equipped workshop of his family’s castle. Over a lifetime, he proved himself to be a savvy businessman, a prolific inventor of everything from ship propellers to hydro-electric machinery, a soldier, an accomplished sportsman and what we know as a *bon-vivant*. He was married three times.

Attending Easton College in 1893, he had patented his first straight-pull rifle — a complicated design that went nowhere. A more practical design, the Ross Model 1897 Magazine Sporting Rifle, somewhat similar in design to the Model 1890 straight-pull Austrian-Mannlicher, followed. Having moved to Canada in 1897, Sir Charles built a hydro-electric company, invested in a

Cutting down the left side rail of the action (left) aids in venting gas should a cartridge rupture upon firing. In operation, the long bolt throw of the Ross magnum-length action (right) places the end of the bolt very close to the shooter’s face.





While short-lived, Sir Charles "High Velocity Scotch Deer Stalking Rifle" in .280 Ross is elegant, finely machined and beautifully crafted.

trolley company and set up a rifle making company in Hartford, Conn. This business made complete rifles for the North American trade and furnished parts to Charles Lancaster, who built more custom-type Ross straight-pull rifles for the UK sporting clientele.

Canada's involvement in the Boer War was a watershed for Ross. Armed largely with Snider and Martini-Henry rifles, the Canadian contingent was badly outgunned by the Boer's Mausers but Britian refused to set up a factory in Canada to manufacture the newer Lee-Enfield. Seizing the moment, Ross convinced the government to sign a contract for 12,000 Ross straight-pull military models in .303 British. Delivered in 1905, the Ross Mark 1 was plagued by faults and was returned to the factory in Quebec for a new model, the Mark 11, also known as the Model 1905. Both the Mark 1 & Mk 11 bolts carried two solid lug bolts that rode vertically and locked horizontally.

By 1910, Ross had discarded the two, solid lug bolt head in favor of a "triple-threaded, interrupted-screw, double-bearing cam bolt head" opening horizontal and locking vertically.

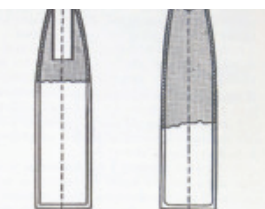
In its day, the 3.5" long Ross .280 cartridge (below) required a Model 10 Ross or Mauser Magnum action to house it.

rotate the bolt a partial locking lugs before drawing the Ross the bolt handle forward, the action rotates in the forward end of the

Sutterlee, the first Ross rifle in the .303 British caliber and was described in Shooter, 1900. established his factory in 1901 thereafter, however, Ross rifles were constructed

manufactured with two different used interrupted-screw in forward end of the bolt 3 solid lugs. In addition, rifles.

ing lists the Ross straight the .303 British cartridge nbered and rifled for ge. Despite the fact few individuals' bered for the .303 F. of the Ross as the 1905 model, and was 1905, 24, and 26 lead front sight mounted muzzle of the barrel and rear sight. Stock was of and magazine capacity priced in 1911 at \$55.00.



Left, the Carpon Tube and, right, the Hollow Point. These bullets had steel jackets.

expanding bullet was 3100 f.s. and energy over 3100 f.s. The "Ross Model" was hand- and it was a very beautiful. One of the author's very good friend, Colonel Wesson, of Smith & Wesson, who was present with this rifle. Barrel on this model was 26 inches. The 28-inch full-jacketed, nine caps, was live. One of the most commonly known Ross rifles was the military target rifle, frequently

The .280 was factory loaded with medium game-level bullets, circa 1910. Hunters did get in trouble using them on dangerous game.

The new action was introduced into the military model line as the Mark 111 and in the sporting line as the Model 1910. Around the same period, Sir Charles Ross retained a renowned ballistician and long-range competitor, Frederick W. Jones, to develop an advanced sporting and match cartridge. The result was the .280 Ross cartridge, produced and catalogued as the "280 Rimless Nitro-Express" and head-stamped simply "280 Ross."

Appearing in the first decade of the 20th Century, the .280 Ross offered the sporting world ballistics never been seen before. Here was a 7mm cartridge, loaded with a 140-grain spitzer soft-point, capable of reaching velocities of over 3,000 fps in the Ross Model 1910 sporter with

a barrel length of 26" to 28". It was the ballistic marvel of its day. Kynoch catalogued the load as having a velocity of 3,010 fps, along with a 150-grain spitzer at 2,920 fps, a 160-grain, round nose HP load at 2,910 fps and a 180-grain target match loading at 2,760 fps.

The new cartridge electrified the sporting world and dominated the long-range rifle matches for years. It wasn't long until a rimmed, or "flanged" version of the .280 Ross appeared for use in double rifles and combination guns with the velocity (and pressure) of the 140-grain loading reduced to 2,850 fps.



DOWN TO CASES

Looking at the .280 Ross case, it's an odd duck. It's a steeply tapered case. In fact, it has more taper than any other commercial case and I'm sure Frederick Jones purposely designed it this way to facilitate extraction with a straight-pull action. By modern standards, the extreme taper is unnecessary and creates excessive pressure on the bolt head. The head diameter of the case measures 0.525," larger than a common H&H Magnum-derived case measuring 0.513". As loaded to an overall length of 3.5", the Ross is a long, snaky cartridge requiring in its day a Ross Model 10 or Magnum Mauser action to contain it.

The other odd aspect of the .280 Ross I was soon to discover is it does not take a common 0.284" diameter bullet. Nope, not this baby. It needs bullets with a diameter of 0.286" to 0.287". This may have been a proprietary marketing move by Ross and interestingly, Holland & Holland adopted the same diameter bullet for its .275 H&H Magnum cartridge.

About this time, I was beginning to break out in a cold sweat, thinking that I was going to have to turn belts off H&H brass, ream necks, you name it, for reforming existing brass into a long, tapered 7mm case. Where could I find .280 Ross brass and its odd-sized 7mm bullets?

Thank the Lord for the Internet. It turned out Graf & Sons (www.grafs.com) stocked .280 Ross brass produced by Quality Cartridge (www.qual-cart.com). The price was choking at \$135 for 20 cartridge cases. No need to hit your calculator — it's \$6.75 per case!

Odd ball 7mm diameter bullets were a bit easier on the pocket book with Buffalo Arms (www.buffaloarms.com) offering a 130-grain soft point spitzer with a proper diameter of 0.287". At \$42.19 per 100, I considered them a bargain. The only remaining lynch-pin was a set of dies.

My rescuer proved to be Lee Precision (www.leeprecision.com) whose custom



Other than powder and primers, the three essential elements needed to handload the .280 Ross are custom dies (left), 0.287" diameter bullets and factory or reformed cases. The cases cost Holt \$135 for 20 — \$6.76 apiece! Two of the popular factory game loads (right), were the 140- to 150-grain soft-point spitzer and the 160-grain round nose hollow point. These are "flanged" examples.

shop is back in operation following some disruptions caused by COVID. Based on the cases and bullets provided to them, Lee Precision will custom-make a die set consisting of their neck-sizing collet die and a seating die for \$100.

Neck sizing cases fired in a bolt-action rifle with the Lee collet die is a unique experience. The case requires no lubrication nor is the case neck affected by pulling an expander button through it. The case neck is simply squeezed down against a precision mandrel. The only trick is to rotate and size the case several times to achieve a uniform neck tension.

On the other hand, I don't favor the Lee seating die because the case neck is not fully supported when seating the bullet. Looking for an alternative, I used the seater die from a set of Hornady match grade dies for the .280 Ackley Improved. Not ideal, but it worked to keep cartridge runout to a minimum.

The only remaining question was whether or not my handloads would break the historic 3,000 fps mark.

HERE WE GO

Fellow scribe, Terry Wieland, had worked with the 280 Ross and had good luck using H-4831 as a

propellant. Starting with a fire-forming load of 60.0 grains and measuring velocities with a Garmin chronograph, I worked up to 63.0 grains of H-4831 that clocked 2,990 fps. Loading five more cases with 63.0 grains, the second round fired passed the magic 3,000 fps ceiling with a velocity of 3,005 fps. All subsequent rounds fired grouped into 1.75" at 100 yards. Success!

And the Ross Rifle Company? Well, the Canadian Mark 111 military model with its finely threaded locking lugs proved to be a disaster in the dirt and mud of the WWI trenches. By September of 1916, all the Mark 111 rifles were withdrawn and the Canadians issued Lee-Enfields. Canada expropriated the Ross factory in March, 1917 paying Sir Charles \$2 million. The machinery was sold off and the building demolished.

And Sir Charles Henry Augustus Frederick Lockhart Ross? Well, his last years were spent in St. Petersburg Beach, Fla. where he enjoyed venturing forth in "a pith helmet, pajama bottom and old slippers."

A remarkable man, a remarkable rifle and cartridge, and if you are lucky enough to own an elegant Ross sporter, you are fortunate indeed.

GUNS

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SAVAGE 1911 GEAR LIST

Ammo: Freedom Munitions
230-grain RN and 200-grain JHP +P

Holster: Comp Tac Warrior

Glasses: Native Eyewear

Steel: Bluegrass Targets – ½ IPSC
and 6" plates

The shootin' end of the Savage 1911 features an 11-degree target crown to protect the rifling of the 5" billet-machined stainless steel barrel.

SAVAGE 1911

GOV'T STYLE TWO-TONE

Surprising Excellence

Frank Jardim • Photos: Robert Jones/The Imagesmith LLC

What's so special about yet another 1911 pistol? How is it possible to differentiate it from the pack? Plenty, in the case of the new Savage 1911!

The 1911 platform is so popular you can pick your favorite from scores of brands at whatever price point you can afford but, naturally, not all are created equal. Fortunately, in the case of the Savage 1911 Government Style Two-Tone with Rail, I've found a gun that delivers a lot more than expected for the price. This pistol is the nicest production 1911 I've seen in a while.

LINE OF SAVAGES

Savage tells me this gun is representative of their whole new 1911 pistol line, the details of which I'll delve into shortly. As a point of reference, the MSRP of the gun I tested is \$1,429. This would put it in the high end of mid-range 1911s. A quick internet search suggests its street price falls between \$900 and \$1,200, in the upper-middle of the mid-range 1911 pack.

Value is a relative thing determined by what a product delivers versus its cost. You can get a lot of value from a crappy \$5 umbrella if you're caught on a city street in a downpour. The mid-range priced Savage 1911 is a great value because it turns out to be a lot more like a high-quality custom 1911 than its mid-range peers.

Right out of the sturdy Savage plastic carrying case, the pistol exhibited excellent fit and finish. Except for frame style and metal finishes, all the Savage 1911 models share the same features. The full-size frames and slides are made of forged stainless steel, finished in black nitride, matte stainless or, as in my case, a mix of both. The frames have either a standard government-style dust cover or a Picatinny rail. The 5" barrels are stainless steel and rebated slightly behind the barrel bushing contact area for smooth cycling. They have 1:16 right-hand rifling protected at the muzzle with an 11-degree target crown. The trigger is aluminum and on this gun, it broke crisply at 4.5 lbs.

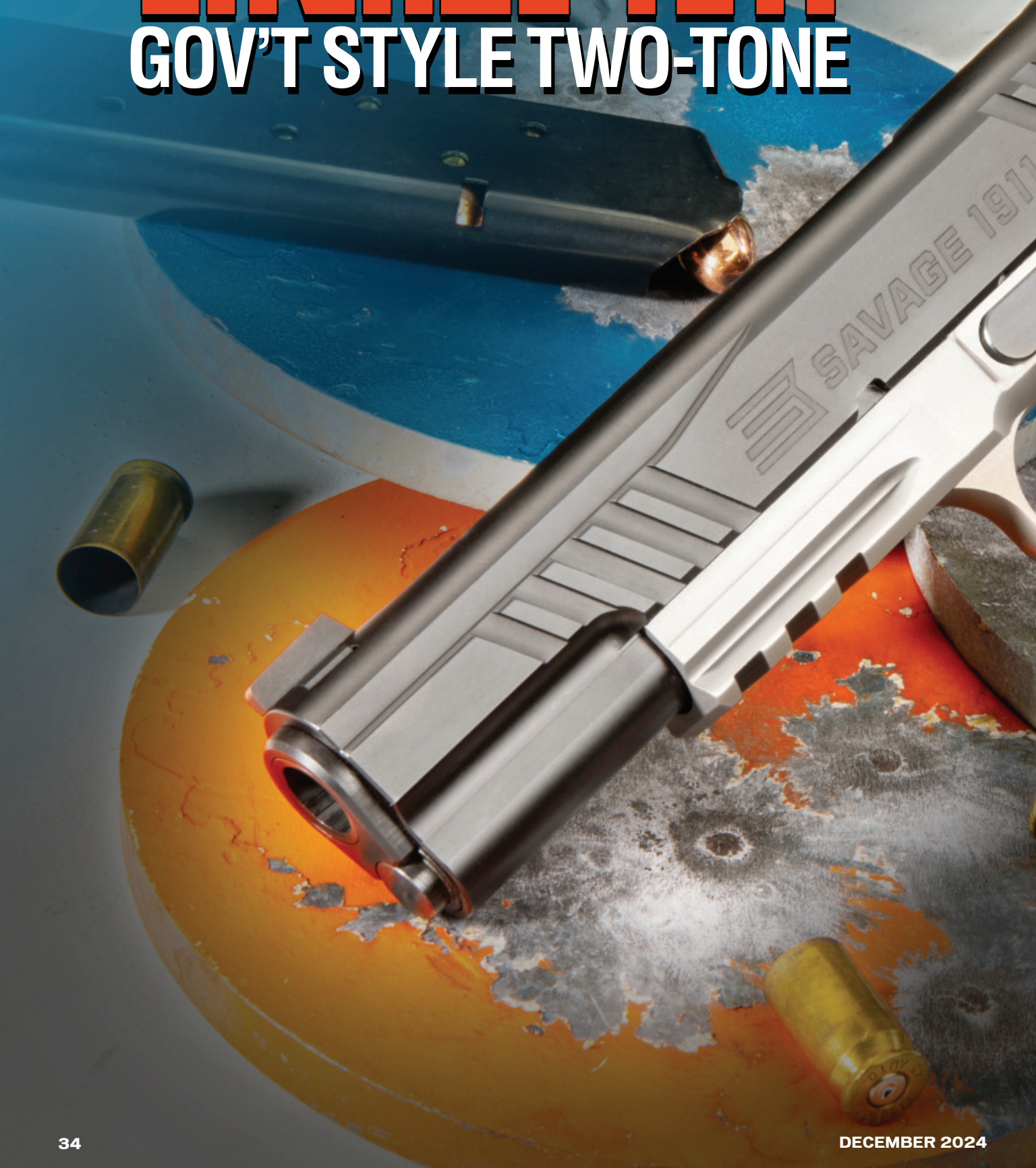
The Savage slide diverges distinctively from the traditional 1911 aesthetic. It is enhanced with deep, broad, forward-angled grasping grooves in the front and rear. The upper front sides are shaved back slightly. Along the line of sighting, the metal surface is subtly lowered and matted with a balanced pattern of softened diamond-shaped scoops. The ejection port is lowered and features a shallow-radius relief cut at the front, right hand, edge and a single deep scoop on the outside surface of the back edge to prevent live rounds from getting hung up when clearing the chamber.

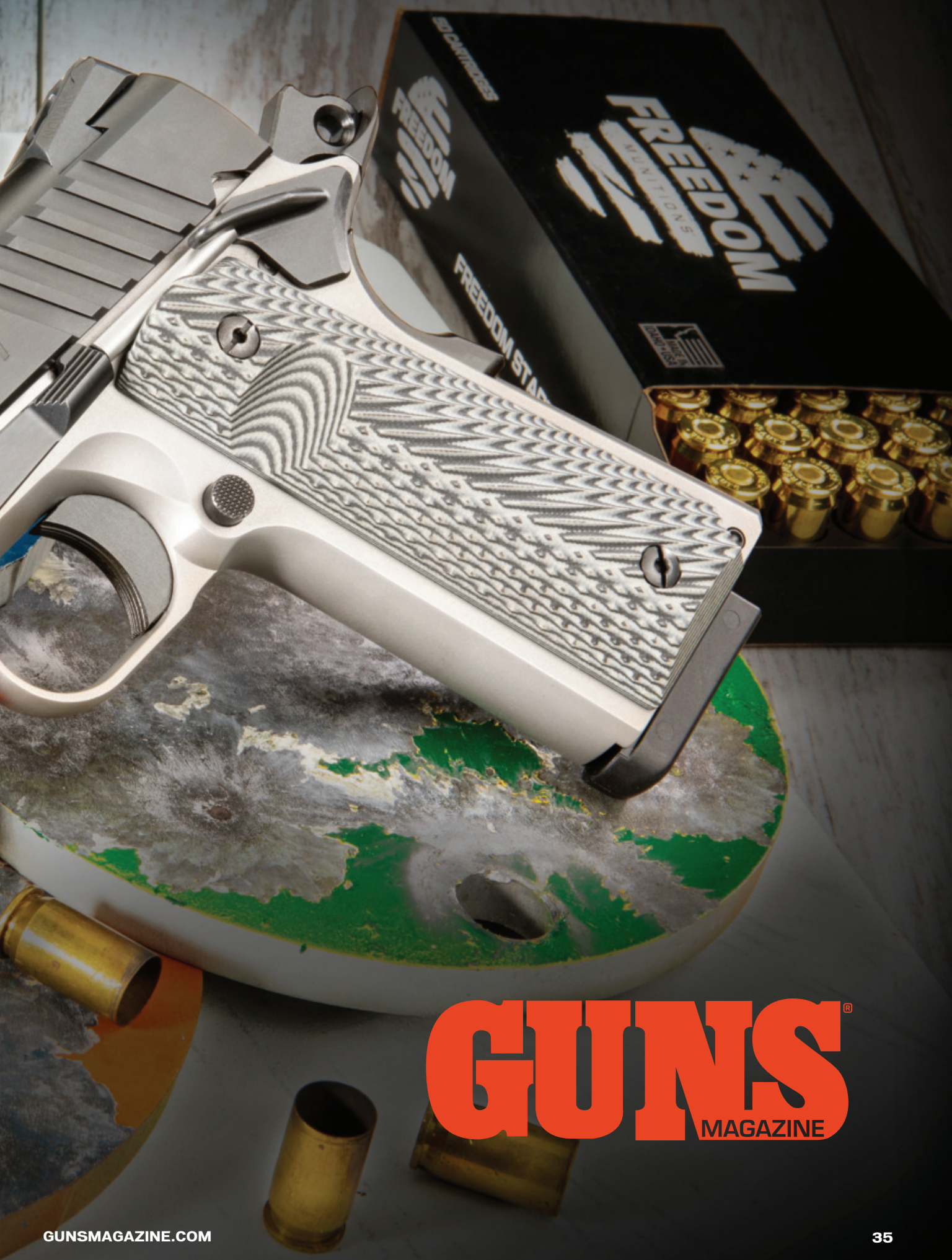
The frames have a slight undercut at the rear of the trigger guard to move your grip slightly higher for better control. On the tactical rail model, the dust cover area is slightly wider than the frame and its rail section widens slightly again. The grips are VZ G10



SAVAGE 1911

GOV'T STYLE TWO-TONE





GUNS[®]

MAGAZINE

A

The gun isn't just a pretty face but has legit combat features. The ejection port is opened up and lowered to make sure there aren't any cases hanging around after extraction.

B**C**

laminate carved with a dual-directional pattern that isn't too aggressive for concealed carry but gives the flesh lots of cavities to press into when you need to hang on.

The left panel is cut with a deep thumb rest behind the traditionally checkered magazine release button. An extended beavertail grip safety, thinned at the top to better accommodate smaller hands, is enlarged at the bottom for more positive engagement. Below it, the flat mainspring housing is textured with long oval scoops providing — like the grips — plenty of contact surface to engage the heel of your palm without scratching up everything else it comes in contact with. The overall combination of layered straight lines and sculpted organic curves gives this pistol a fast, futuristic look. I think it is a very handsome pistol — practical with an understated elegance.

The pistol felt broken-in right out of the box. Its ambidextrous extended safety levers, slide lock release, and magazine ejection button all worked smoothly with the thumb alone. The two 8-round magazines provided have extended polymer floorplates and drop freely from the magazine well when the release button is pressed. I noticed the mouth of the magazine well was beveled just shy of half the thickness of the grip frame, which helped guide fresh magazines home during reloads.

DRAWING A BEAD

Pistols come from the factory with Novak Night Fision sights standard. Made of steel with tritium

A Everything about the Savage 1911 is distinctive, from the forward-slant grip grooves to the scalloped glare-reducing top to help keep your eyes squarely on the Night Fision night sights. **B** The Novak Lo-Mount rear sight features a luminous bar to mate up with the tritium front sight while the stainless hammer positively engages the nitride-coated titanium firing pin. **C** Understated Elegance — Frank notes "... the layered straight lines and sculpted organic curves gives this pistol a fast, futuristic look."



Handsome VZ G10 grip panels provide a sure grip while manipulating the pistol. A beveled mag well keeps reloads moving fast.

inserts for night use and dovetailed into the slide, they're hard to improve upon for general and defensive shooting. The rear is a snag proof Novak Lo-Mount with a tritium insert that appears as a horizontal bar directly beneath the notch. It is screwdriver-adjustable for elevation and drift adjustable for windage, and secured in place with an Allen head screw.

The rectangular post front sight has a round tritium insert encircled by a green plastic ring which, in bright daylight, gives you a big dot to focus on for quick defensive shooting and a nice glowing green dot to work with in the dark. I found these sights worked great for target shooting and quick tactical drills. In the dark, the simplified glowing bar and ball sight picture may offer some advantage over three-dot night sights simply because it's simpler.

As I examined this pistol, it became apparent Savage had gone all-in on old-school quality. Their use of forgings for the slide and frame was what initially got my attention. There are three ways you can make a 1911 frame and slide. You can machine it from a block of steel, cast it in a mold from molten steel and machine it a little less, or you can hammer a red-hot hunk of steel to shape between dies under tons of force in a drop forge. You still have lots of machining to do afterward. The forging method is the most expensive and when properly done, produces parts of superior strength.

There are no Metal Injection Molding (MIM) parts used in the Savage 1911, all parts are machined like what you see in Nighthawk, Ed Brown and other top tier 1911s! In addition, Savage used tool steel to make the sear and disconnect for added toughness.

BUT ...

Features in the new Savage that might cause some contention are its dual recoil spring system (one inside the other, wound in opposite directions, on a GI style steel guide rod) intended to smooth out the recoil impulse; and its lightweight, nitride-coated, titanium firing pin. The latter improves drop safety and, in theory because of its increased speed, slightly reduces the amount of time between the hammer striking the pin and the pin striking the primer. The Savage has a stainless steel hammer that can be counted on to give the pin a solid, unyielding blow to help diminish whatever danger of light primer strikes a titanium pin might potentially cause. No problems related to this appeared during my testing.

Savage told me they spent a good amount of time with their engineering and machining teams to produce a very consistent and tight 1911. My test gun showed tighter than average tolerances overall. So much so I initially had some failures to feed where a round stopped halfway in the chamber, but going fully into battery when I touched the rear of the slide. Realizing the gun was dry, I added a drop of oil to the barrel and bushing, barrel locking lugs and each frame rail. After that the pistol worked flawlessly.

The barrel-to-bushing and bushing-to-slide fit are important to accuracy. The fit of these critical parts was notably tight on the Savage, much like a Colt Gold Cup. I actually needed a bushing wrench to turn the bushing and even then it took more force than I can ever recall using on a 1911. This is good because a tight gun will break-in as the parts wear together, but a loose gun just gets looser with use.

RANGE TIME

On the range, this gun was a pleasure to shoot with less recoil and muzzle flip than I expected, perhaps the work of the dual recoil springs. At 25 yards I shot several five-shot test strings with a 185-, 200- and 230-grain bullet loads from the bench using a Caldwell Pistolero rest. The most accurate of the three was Fiocchi Defense Dynamics 200-grain JHP with groups averaging 1.94" and 897 feet-per-second velocity. Hornady Critical Defense 185-grain FTX JHP averaged 3.07" groups at 1,021 feet per second.

Many groups with this load had four shots tightly clustered within an inch or two of each other with a single shot "spoiling" what would have otherwise been an amazingly tight group. Winchester WIN3GUN Competition Ready 230-grain truncated cone loads averaged 4.5" groups at 780 fps and proved to be the only load of the three this pistol could not bend to its will. Was this due to its velocity being almost 10% lower than standard 230-grain ball? Who knows? Some loads shoot better than others, even in guns of the same brand. However, any 1911 that can consistently corral some loads into 2" to 3" groups at 25 yards is a good-shooting 1911.

In conclusion, Savage — a company that last produced a .45 ACP in 1907 — hit a home run on the first pitch with their new 1911.

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SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

WAYPOINT RIFLE

BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

Jeff “Tank” Hoover

Riflemen are a diverse lot. While some are seduced by the romance of carrying vintage guns from the era they dream about, others take a more modern approach, wanting the latest rifle and equipment. They want the utmost accuracy both rifle, and shooter, can squeeze out.

These die-hard shooters practice weekly — if not more — shooting their pet rifles and loads, keeping meticulous notes, calculations and other dope for every shot taken. It’s this group of riflemen (and women) the Springfield Armory

2020 Waypoint was built for. So, if you’re the type of shooter who constantly dry fires your guns while watching movies, or peers through your scope at flies on the wall, trying to see how long you can keep the crosshairs on them, read on.

In 2020, Springfield Armory released the first of the 2020 Waypoint rifles for short-action cartridges. The year 2024 brings a long-action rifle for those desiring cartridges like the 7mm and .300 PRC cartridges. The PRC (Precision Rifle Cartridge) cartridges were designed by Hornady and based on one of my favorite cartridges, the .375 Ruger. The .300 PRC came out in 2018 and the 7mm PRC followed in 2022. Cartridge overall length for the 300 PRC is 3.7” and requires a Magnum-length action while the 7mm PRC is 3.34” and can use a standard-length action.

CHRISTMAS IN JUNE

For testing purposes, Springfield Armory sent a 300 PRC. Obviously, this action is Magnum length. The dual-lugged bolt is of push-feed design, having a recessed extractor on one of the bolt’s locking lugs. The ejector is spring loaded, much like a Remington 700.

To say the bolt rides smoothly would be like saying ice cream is “just okay” on a hot day. The bolt rides on two rails and the bolt recesses are EDM’d into the lugs, minimizing friction while ensuring a smooth and bind-free ride. Cycling the bolt is pure rifleman nirvana, it’s that smooth!

The 4140 tool steel, spiral-fluted bolt body, handle and knob are treated with an attractive, durable black nitride finish that is applied very smoothly. The spiral flutes lighten



Beauty is in the eye of the beholder! Tank thinks the 2020 long-action Waypoint is beautiful!



weight, while adding a sense of style and flare. But more importantly, the flutes allow complete cycling should any debris drop into the action during a hunt or match by diverting the junk away from the bolt channel. The bolt handle is of large tactical design to assist in cycling and providing better leverage when camming the bolt closed.

ACTION!

The receiver is made from stainless steel and treated with Mil-Spec green graphite Cerakote finish. Feeding was smooth from the steel, single stack three-round AccuMag magazine. Extraction was positive with both fired and unfired cartridges, throwing both with aplomb from the rifle.

The trigger is from TriggerTech and adjustable from 2.5 to 5 lbs. My sample measured 3.1 lbs. using a Lyman digital trigger gauge. Lock-time is said to be 1.9 milliseconds, which is pretty darn fast, and it shows on the targets. The faster the lock-time, the less time there is for you to pull the shot should your follow-through need some work.

The safety is two-position, located on right side just behind the bolt like on the Remington 700. On top of the receiver is a Picatinny rail bolted with 6-48 screws. The bolt release lever is flush to the action body and on the left side. Pushing the small, checkered protrusion releases the bolt stop, allowing removal.

WELL-STOCKED

The stock is a modern carbon fiber version making for a stiff, supportive platform to bolt the barreled action onto. While it may look funny to traditional riflemen, it is very ergonomic which is just a fancy way of saying it feels good when holding and shooting the rifle. The pattern is Ridgeline camo, which will accommodate any hunting environment by breaking up the rifle profile with its three different dabbed-on colors.

The stock sports an almost vertical pistol grip with palm swell for a natural and comfortable grip. It feels great! The forearm is wider than most sporting rifles and flat on the bottom, providing added steadiness

The composite stock of the 2020 Waypoint features a 90-degree wrist, deep thumb groove, palm swell and flat spot for the long-action bolt to fully withdraw from the action.



The muzzle brake (above) finishes off the high-tech carbon-fiber barrel. Actually, the fiber surrounds an aluminum spacer that centers the barrel, making the barrel stiff without weight and easier to cool. Bottom view of the trigger guard (below) displaying the American flag and Accu-Mag motif.



when shooting off bags. M-Lok and QD mounts add versatility for slings and bi-pods at various positions of the stock, making it very easy for the shooter to add the accessories of their choice.

The carbon wrapped 24" barrel is free-floated. The first 4.2" of barrel is full diameter steel and treated with Mil-Spec green graphite Cerakote H-264 finish, as is the muzzle brake and trigger guard. The black Carbon fiber wrap is then spun to same 0.945" diameter for a stiffer, lighter, faster cooling barrel. Rate of twist is 1:8.5" making stabilization of the heaviest of .30-caliber bullets possible. The stock sports a soft rubber butt pad which, combined with the Springfield Armory radial brake muzzle-brake, reduces recoil substantially. Weight of rifle empty is 7 lbs., 5 oz. and overall length 46".

My test rifle came with a Leupold VX-5HD 3-15X44 variable scope. Minimal adjustment was needed to zero the rifle close enough for the different ammunition I had on hand. The scope was mounted onto the Picatinny rail with Leupold rings.

SHOOTING/TESTING

For factory fodder, I had two Hornady loads, the first being Hornady Outfitter ammo using their 190-grain CX bullet. The second was their Precision Hunter brand using Hornady's 212-grain ELD-X bullet.

My handloads consisted of using Alliant Reloader 25 powder. I obtained this powder last year from a friend whose neighbor died and the wife wanted to discard it. I've saved this highly-sought-after commodity for just the right project. There's a lesson here. Bullets used were Hornady 212-grain ELS-X. Loads were assembled using Hornady custom dies on a Lee Classic Turret press.



Shooting was done from the bench, using sandbags for both forearm and buttstock of the rifle. Initial testing was at 100 yards. Over the course of a few days, I fired 5 groups of 3 of each load. Targets were fluorescent orange 2" squares, which I turned 90 degrees to provide a diamond-shape target. This allows me to align the reticle with each corner of the diamond shape, ensuring a dead-center hold.

I'd shoot until I noticed groups opening up due to the barrel heating up, then let it cool down. When igniting 80 +/- grains of powder per shot, most barrels get hot after 3-4 shots. With the carbon fiber wrapped barrel, this was extended to around a dozen shots. Barrel cool down also seemed quicker than solid steel barrels by about half the time.

Velocities were as follows — My handloads using 80 grains of ReLoader 25 averaged 2,944 FPS. Accuracy was great, averaging 0.453". The Hornady Outfitter ammo featuring the 190-grain CX bullet averaged 2,997 FPS with groups averaging 0.462". Lastly was the Hornady Precision Hunter using the 212-grain ELD-X bullet. Velocity averaged 2,867 with groups averaging 0.582".

I was very impressed with the accuracy of the rifle, especially since Springfield Armory "only" guarantees 0.75" groups. I know a lot of variables are at play for making an accurate rifle, but Springfield Armory did an outstanding job with this one. The action is very

Some of Tank's better groups (above) with the Waypoint using Hornady ammo and Tank's handloads.

Comparison below of 300 PRC (L) and .300 Winchester Magnum. You can clearly see why a long-action receiver was necessary!



smooth, feeding, extraction and ejection very reliable.

PICKING NITS

Now for the negatives. I had a little trouble loading rounds into the single-stack magazine. The cartridges just barely fit but are obviously able to seat into the magazine. Also, after each shot, the magazine spring would "twang," much like shooting an AR-15 does. I realize these complaints are minuscule but worthy of mentioning.

Overall, this rifle is very accurate, ideal for precision shooting matches or long-range hunting. I would surely be proud to own this rifle on its accuracy merits alone. It is hands down one of the most accurate rifles I have ever shot. The action was also one of the smoothest I have ever worked on a bolt gun.

I can appreciate the rifle for what it is. While a purist may scoff at the modern-day motif, it is a very comfortable and accurate shooting rifle.

While it may not melt many hearts or provide warm fuzzies with its space-age guise, those who care about hitting their target or ending the hunt successfully will absolutely appreciate this rifle for what it is — an accurate shooting machine! I can appreciate both classic vintage guns for what they are while also treasuring a very well-made piece of machinery capable of shooting the wings off of a fly at 100 yards. What can I say? I'm easy! **GUNS**

**Turn down
the noise.**

**Turn up
the party.**



SILENCERCO.COM

HOW TO BUY A SUPPRESSOR



Alan Garbers

I didn't see a need for a silencer a few years ago because Hollywood has twisted our perception of silencers into something used by assassins and those intent on evil. I finally realized, in reality, they are a means to better public health by reducing noise levels.

EYE-OPENING

My first exposure to a suppressed weapon was at a public range. The shooters next to me were having fun shooting a suppressed shoulder-fired weapon. In between my shots, I heard what sounded like the puff of a large air rifle, the plink of the bullet hitting the steel target and their teenage girl-like laughter.

I remember thinking it would be cool if my hunting rifle was this quiet, but I didn't see how it could be.

Fast forward to the present. My military service-spawned tinnitus has worsened as I age, so I will never be without

Suppressors aren't just for Navy SEALs or competitors — This Ruger Ranch Gen2 is paired with a SilencerCo Omega can and Armageddon Gear cover. Photo: Don Wedow

the sound of the ocean or a high-pitched electrical whine. Stopping the progression of hearing loss is essential to me. As I talk with other shooters the use of a suppressor keeps coming up over and over but how it would make a difference with high-power rifles still didn't click.

The light bulb moment came at the NRL Hunter match at Gunsite Academy in Paulden, Ariz. I followed a group of shooters from station to station to learn the sport and was cautious about keeping my hearing protection in place while we were on the line. Somewhere along the way, I forgot to put my hearing protection back on after talking to a competitor and a shot was fired. As I scrambled to get the muffs on, I realized the shot wasn't loud.

I cautiously pulled my earpro away. The shooter racked the action and fired again. To my amazement, the blast



Emma Elizabeth gets a little lead therapy while protecting her hearing. Photo: Tyrell Robertson

THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO BUYING YOUR FIRST 'CAN'



Many new rifles come with a threaded barrel for muzzle brakes or a silencer. There is a reason why!

was not objectionable. As we returned to the waiting area, I asked what cartridge he was shooting. He replied it was a suppressed 6.5 Creedmoor.

The next shooter's rifle was also a 6.5 Creedmoor but it had a muzzle brake. The muzzle blast was unpleasant, even with the hearing protection. The difference was night and day! This moment was when I realized why shooters use a suppressor!

Generally, shooting sports are evolving and many match directors are moving to require suppressors at matches. Most states allow their use for hunting and some big-game guides even require their clients to use a can, especially in Europe.

THE EPIPHANY

I was hooked. The problem was I knew nothing about silencers and my thoughts were awash with questions.

Talking with Silencer Shop dealer Garrett Weiler, he has seen a positive trend in introducing young shooters to hunting and shooting using a silencer. A suppressor makes any type of shooting more pleasant and may even go beyond hearing. The U.S. military has found a link to shooting and concussion-like symptoms after a day at the range, much like the damage caused by contact sports like football. A good suppressor eliminates the shock wave caused by a gun blast.

I had two desires. The first was something for my hunting rifles, a suppressor with the feature to quickly swap from rifle to rifle. The second was something for home defense.

Not long ago, I participated in a CCW class. The instructor delved into something I had

never thought of when it came to home defense — the impact of shooting inside a home. The blast of an unsuppressed handgun inside the confines of a house will deafen everyone in the room. The defender will be stunned and unlikely able to hear if other bad guys are still inside, if loved ones are safe or running towards you, or if law enforcement has arrived. An unsuppressed weapon can worsen a bad situation.

CHOICES

A suppressor is not a cheap accessory so in my simplistic, uneducated thinking, I would get a one-size-fits-all can. Doing research, I realized it was possible but a poor choice. As the saying goes, a jack of all trades is a master of none. The orifice must be close to the bullet diameter to reduce noise so a suppressor to fit my 45 ACP would not effectively reduce the sound of my 7mm Rem Mag, and the length of a suppressor for a high-power rifle may be a poor choice for a handgun.

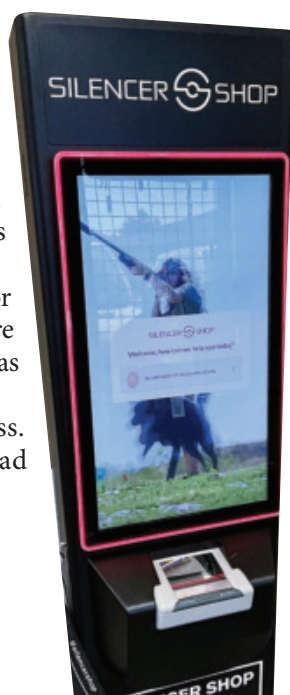
A suppressor is truly purpose-built. Generally, they are broken down into rimfire, handgun, .223/5.56, .30 caliber, and large bore. Those categories can be further broken down by length, weight, and noise reduction. As you can see, the choices can be daunting and almost overwhelming.

Here are some general considerations when shopping for a suppressor:

Length — Longer means more sound reduction, while shorter means more maneuverability.

Mounting — Quick detach (QD) mounts are becoming the norm. Many new firearms come with threads but older guns must be modified by threading the barrel.

Caliber — The closer the suppressor is to your caliber, the better it reduces the sound,



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but a .30 caliber model work well on anything smaller.

Material — Aluminum is light and inexpensive but relegated to less powerful cartridges and slow-fire use. Titanium is very light but expensive and not suited for lengthy rapid-fire use. Stainless steel is the most common as it is strong enough to withstand continued rapid fire or higher pressures but is also heavier than other options.

Decibel Reduction — A suppressor reduces the muzzle blast to eliminate hearing damage. The design and environment will impact the amount of noise reduction. Further, not all manufacturers test their cans the same so noise reduction ratings can be tricky.

Maintenance — Some powders and cartridges deposit carbon faster than others, with rimfire cartridges being the worst. As a suppressor becomes loaded

caliber? These all have a bearing on what suppressor to buy.

The best advice is to find experienced shooters doing what you want to do and ask what they are using.

PULLING THE TRIGGER

The final step is actually buying a suppressor. To the uninitiated, purchasing a suppressor can be intimidating, especially if you don't have a dealer who wants to guide you through the process.

First, find out if you live in one of the 42 states where silencer ownership is allowed. If you're in California, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey or Rhode Island, forget about it.

Companies like Silencer Central make the process simple and do all the heavy lifting. They have the experience and tools to make the process seamless

“ONCE THE ATF APPROVES THE BUYER, THE SILENCER IS ALREADY IN THE DEALER'S INVENTORY SO PURCHASING IS NO DIFFERENT THAN BUYING A FIREARM.”

with carbon deposits, it gets heavier and loses performance. Some cans are made to disassemble for maintenance, and some aren't. If they are not serviceable, the can will need to be sent back to be cut apart for cleaning, which adds expense and downtime.

Before buying, a newbie needs to focus on what they intend to do with the silencer. For me, I wanted a suppressor for my hunting rifles. I have multiple rifles to use it on so a can with quick disconnect (QD) was a good choice. Swapping the can is almost as fast as disconnecting an air hose.

The same goes for weight. As I wander the mountains in Arizona, I'm not particularly eager to carry extra weight if I don't need to. My knees and back remind me every day the additional cost of titanium is a benefit.

Are you going to be using it in competition while running and gunning? What about long-range competition with lots of time between shot sequences? Is it for hunting or home defense? Do you want to burn through a 30-round magazine as fast as you can pull the trigger or will you be using a retina-detaching

and understandable, and most of the steps are done online. The buyer picks out the silencer they want, pays for it, then applies and pays for the NFA stamp. Silencer Central ships the buyer a fingerprint kit. Once the fingerprint card is sent back, the wait is on. Once the buyer is approved, the silencer is sent to their door.

Some companies, such as Silencer Shop, have stocking dealers with kiosks. Garrett Weiler of Uncle Arn's Field Supply is a dealer for Silencer Shop. His kiosk will electronically submit the forms and take the buyer's fingerprints and photos. It can't be any easier. Once the ATF approves the buyer, the silencer is already in the dealer's inventory so purchasing is no different than buying a firearm. With the new radically reduced wait time, the buyer may have their suppressor within days of applying!

I recently purchased my first suppressor. As I learn more about them, I feel it will be the first of many. I am not alone because they just make sense. With ATF wait times dropping to an average of 60 days, there couldn't be a better time to start saving your hearing.

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THE WEAPONS OF **DIE HARD**

Every Gun Nerd's Favorite Christmas Movie!

Will Dabbs, MD

The 1988 Bruce Willis action classic *Die Hard* is every serious gun guy's go-to Christmas film. Forget *A Christmas Story*, *Miracle on 34th Street*, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* and *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Die Hard* included something all those other Christmas staples did not — guns, lots and lots of guns.

In case you've been living underneath a rock, the basic narrative has a New York cop named

John McClane traveling to the West Coast to visit his estranged wife and kids for the Christmas holidays. His wife Holly has a successful career with the Nakitomi Corporation, and the two plan to meet at the annual corporate Christmas party held in their high-rise LA office building on Christmas Eve. Unbeknownst to Officer McClane, on that very evening, a group of bloodthirsty European thieves plans to take over the





Bad guy weapons in the Christmas epic *Die Hard* included the (clockwise from top) the Steyr AUG, HK P7, HK MP5 and Walther PPK.

building and steal \$640 million in negotiable bearer bonds from the Nakitomi vault.

To cover the theft, the criminal ringleader, Hans Gruber — played to perfection by the inimitable Alan Rickman — has his team impersonate terrorists. Knowing that the authorities would relentlessly pursue them once they make their getaway, Gruber plans to blow up the building and kill the hostages to help cover his escape. Combining refinement, class, breeding and ruthlessness, Rickman's Gruber is the perfect villain.



The Steyr AUG was a weird sexy choice for the psychopath Karl in the film. Alexander Godunov, the actor who played Karl, was a ballet dancer by trade.

BACKSTORY

Die Hard was inspired by a 1979 novel titled *Nothing Lasts Forever* written by a private investigator-turned novelist named Roderick Thorp. When the film was first pitched to studio executives it was described as "Rambo in an office building." In the book, the protagonist is a 60-something security consultant. The writer, Jeb Stuart, adapted his character into John McClane and wrote it around Bruce Willis.

The filmmakers took a big risk when they cast Willis for the part. He had already made a name for himself on television in *Moonlighting*, but this was to be only his second big screen foray. It was Rickman's first. Schwarzenegger and Stallone were considered for the part, but they wanted a believable everyman rather than some over-the-top musclebound action hero. Willis and Rickman alongside psychopath Alexander Godunov, conflicted cop Reginald VelJohnson, career-minded police supervisor Paul Gleason, Devoreaux White's Argyll, the lovable limo driver, and James Shigeta's chief executive Joseph Takagi, collectively captured lightning in a bottle.

HANDGUNS

Bruce Willis' character John McClane packed a Beretta Model 92F throughout the film. In the book, his character carried a Browning Hi-Power. The Beretta used in



The exotic HK P7 was a superb choice to equip the posh Euro-terrorist Hans Gruber.

The HK MP5 submachine gun was really the star of the movie. In 1988 when *Die Hard* came out, we had not seen many MP5s on the big screen.





The MP5s used in *Die Hard* were converted from semiauto HK94 9mm rifles like these. You can tell because there is no muzzle brake mount. Photo: Rock Island Auction

the movie was upgraded with an extended slide release and magazine catch to accommodate the left-handed actor. Willis suffered permanent hearing damage from the scene where McClane kills the terrorist by shooting him from underneath the boardroom table.

The Beretta 92F was an anomalous choice here. In 1979 when the book was written, the 92F was not yet on the commercial market. Additionally, New York cops were not authorized to carry autoloaders until 1993, five years after the movie debuted.

Alan Rickman's uber-villain Hans Gruber packed a sound-suppressed, nickel-plated HK P7M13. This weird squeeze-cocking German pistol was the perfect tool for a classically educated European super-criminal who buys his suits at the same place as does Yasser Arafat. The gun used in the film was internally threaded, so the sound suppressor could be mounted up without that annoying stubby bit of barrel sticking out the end.

Karl was my personal favorite. Exquisitely played by the professional ballet dancer Alexander Godunov, Karl exuded a sinister grace. His long blonde hair somehow enhanced his exotic European persona. When he made entry into the building, Karl terminated the first security guard with a sound-suppressed Walther PPK. He then deployed some kind of weird flash bang grenade that looked suspiciously like a hockey puck before similarly dispatching the second.

SERIOUS HEAT — THE MP5

While the pistols were neat, the long guns were epic. In the book, the protagonist wielded a Thompson submachinegun and, later, an AK47. For the film, the producers opted for the HK MP5.

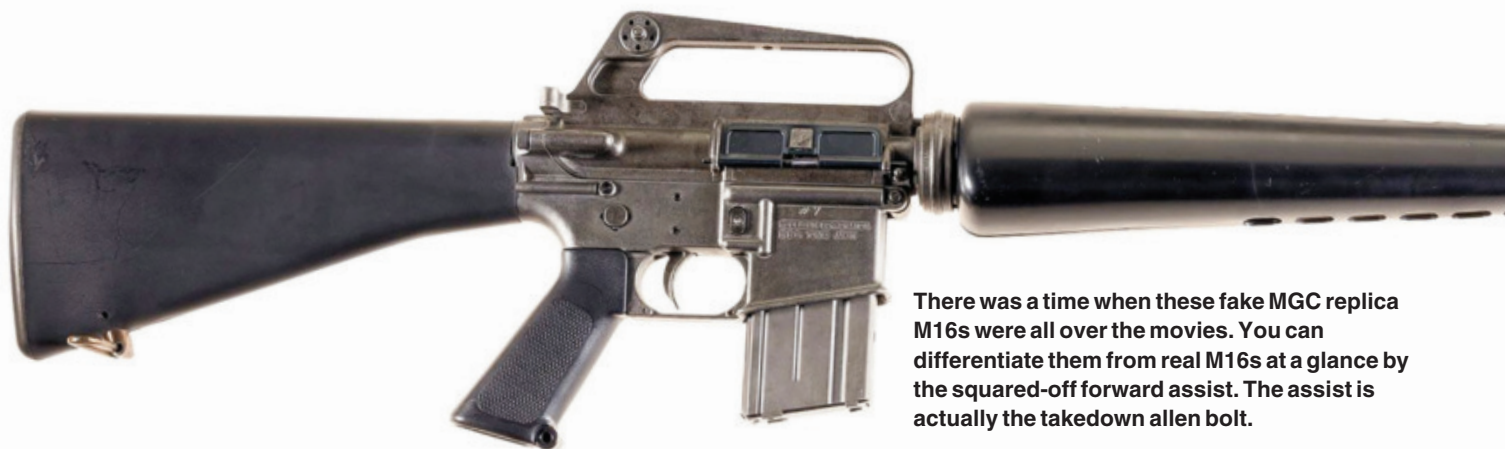
Forget Bruce Willis' snappy comebacks, Alan Rickman' sinister intensity, and Alexander Godunov's epic flowing locks, the real star of the film was the HK

MP5 submachine gun. These 9mm roller-locked German weapons were both exotic and rare back in 1988 when *Die Hard* hit the big screen. The fact they had plenty of them just made Hans Gruber's robbery crew seem all the more professional.

Factory MP5's were unobtainium on this side of the pond back in 1988. Nowadays factory-perfect semiauto MP5 clones are readily available and reasonably priced. The AP5 from Century has my full-throated endorsement. The original semiauto German 9mm HK 94 was first imported in 1983.

Prior to the cursed machinegun ban of 1986, these roller-locked HK rifles were some of the easiest full-auto conversions on the market. The original castrated HK 94 had a lame 16" barrel and a restrictor shelf that prevented installation of a factory full auto fire control group. Legally transforming these weapons into machineguns prior to 1986 involved obtaining an approved BATF Form 1, swapping out the semiauto bolt carrier for the full auto sort and trimming off the front of a GI fire control box with a milling machine or Dremel tool. As swapping out a factory barrel on an MP5 is a massive butt-whooping, most of these converted movie guns just had their 16" tubes pruned back. They can be differentiated at a glance by the lack of a 3-lug suppressor mount on the stubby barrel.

One of the most compelling scenes in the film has McClane commandeering an MP5 from the dead terrorist Tony Vreski played by Andreas Wisniewski. McClane sends Tony's cooling corpse down the elevator to his friends with, "Now I Have a Machinegun. Ho, Ho, Ho" written on his sweatshirt. While this is a lovely mind game to play with the remaining terrorists, in the book he actually writes, "Now We Have a Machinegun" simply to obfuscate the tactical situation yet further.



There was a time when these fake MGC replica M16s were all over the movies. You can differentiate them from real M16s at a glance by the squared-off forward assist. The assist is actually the takedown allen bolt.



The good guys in *Die Hard* used the (top to bottom) Colt SP1 AR15, Beretta 92F and S&W Model 15.

THE STEYR AUG

Karl was a compelling villain. He needed a compelling weapon. The moviemakers settled on the Austrian Steyr AUG.

First launched in 1977, the AUG (*Armee Universal Gewehr* — Army Universal Rifle) represented a quantum advance in small arms design. Stuff like polymer frames, plastic magazines, bullpup architecture and integral optical sights are all *de rigueur* today. All that was initially pioneered in the AUG.

The fire selector was built into the trigger mechanism. A partial pull resulted in semiauto fire, while a full pull was rock and roll. Few other combat weapons have embraced this system.

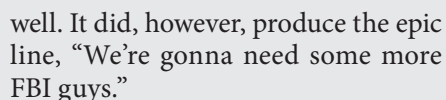
The AUG featured a tool-less quick-change barrel system demonstrated to good effect in the movie. When Karl first retrieved his gun, we see him slide the barrel into position and lock it in place. One side benefit of the bullpup design was its center of gravity resided near the midpoint. As a result, Karl was shown in several cases firing the weapon one-handed. During the climactic

surprise ending, Karl was thought to be dead but rises dramatically, AUG in hand. It does make one wonder why the cops might see fit to stow the terrorist's assault rifle with what they thought was his corpse.

ANCILLARY IRON

The SWAT guys who made the ill-fated assault on the building were armed with fake MGC M16 rifles and live Colt SP1 AR15s. The fake sort-of M16s can be distinguished by a 3-prong flash suppressor and gimpy non-standard forward assist. If you look really close, the hammer and trigger pins are in the wrong place as well. Normal people would never care, but I naturally do.

When the FBI agents, a Caucasian and African-American both named Johnson ("No relation," they helpfully add), were mistakenly firing upon McClane from the orbiting helicopter, they were wielding a Steyr SSG precision rifle equipped with an AN/PVS-3 starlight scope. The Huey's door gunner joined in with a GI-standard M60 belt-fed machinegun. Predictably, none of this ended



The terrorist Alexander opened fire on the cops using an M60E3. This was essentially the same weapon used by Stallone's Rambo in *First Blood Part 2*. Unlimbering his pig signaled a sea change in the negotiation process.

RUMINATIONS

The actors playing the German terrorists in the movie were not actually German. Their guttural jabbering sounded real enough but was actually just nonsense. Additionally, for reasons I cannot fathom, the teddy bear John McClane was bringing to his daughter was the self-same bear used at the end of *Hunt for Red October*.

There is an ongoing dispute online as to whether or not *Die Hard* is a Christmas movie. Let me put that to bed right here — of course it is a Christmas movie. There are Christmas trees, Christmas parties, seasonal decorations and the spectacular rendition of Ode to Joy in D minor from the fourth movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. It all seems pretty Christmas to me.

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The A.G. Russell Powerball 4 sports clean styling and a new locking system designed around the Blackie Collins Bolt Action mechanism.

AG RUSSELL POWERBALL 4 NICE STICKER, NICE PRICE!

Pat Covert

The A.G. Russell Powerball tactical EDC is now in its fourth generation and is by far its slickest version yet. The Powerball 4 is the first version released since Russell passed away in 2018. Given Russell's knack for exploring new mechanisms, this slick new addition is a fitting tribute by the Russell design team.

The Powerball moniker was derived from its blade pivot which rides on caged ball bearings, making for a butter-slick blade action. The Powerball 4 introduces a crossbar-style lock mechanism designed by Blackie Collin's (Gerber's Bolt Action mechanism) and popularized by Benchmade's highly successful Axis Lock.

The Powerball 4 EDC's instant appeal lies in the clean, crisp styling

of its 4.25" frame and is further enhanced by matte stainless-steel bolsters and Blue or Green G10 scales



The Powerball 4 has a tip-up reversible pocket clip and rides high on the base for deep carry concealment. Note also the cool orange anodized accent ring around the pivot. Nice touch!

over stainless liners. The blade is a subtle 3.25" satin finished Clip Point of D2 steel. The Powerball 4 has a tip-up reversible pocket clip, a generous lanyard loop at the base and weighs 3.7 oz. The fit and finish rivals the industry big boys and the orange anodized accent ring around the pivot is a nice touch.

WHY YOU'LL LIKE IT

The Powerball 4's sanitary styling will please those who appreciate clean lines on their EDC both front and back due to the low profile, ambidextrous symmetry of its new locking system. The folder's slim frame along with its deep carry pocket clip makes the Powerball 4 easier to conceal than bulkier counterparts. Finally, you get a lot of folder at a price tag of only \$135. **GUNS**

LYMAN BORECAM 2.0 WIRELESS BORESCOPE

FRANK JARDIM

How's the bore?" It's the quintessential gun show question. Fortunately, armed with the lightweight 26" magic wand of the Lyman BORECAM 2.0, you get to see what's really inside a gun barrel.

The rechargeable wireless scope allows you get to see the condition of your bore right on your iOS or Android smart phone and document it with sharp video or photographs. I use this tool to judge throat erosion, rifling wear, lead or copper fouling buildup, rust pitting and potentially dangerous hidden damage you'd never



be able to evaluate with your calibrated eyeball peeping down the pipe.

The stainless steel rod is ruled every 0.25" to mark insertion depth. The camera can look straight down the bore or be directly at the barrel wall using one of five inspection mirrors. There are five mirrors included which cover most common calibers. The device comes with a USB charging cable and a foam lined protective storage box of sturdy card-board. Not recommended for DIY colonoscopy ...

MSRP: \$199
LymanProducts.com



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FRANK JARDIM

This comprehensive cleaning kit holds everything to support your trip to the range or hunting grounds in one box. It features a top quality American-made OTIS 60-piece universal breech-to-muzzle gun cleaning kit for rifles, pistols, shotguns and inline muzzleloaders from .17 caliber to 12 gauge. The removable upper portion has compartmentalized storage with two inner trays, a hinged lid, and the carrying handle. The bottom portion has plenty of space for ammo, targets and protective gear while serving as the base to support your long guns for cleaning with a pair of rubber padded forked blocks. There is also a magazine well vise block for AR platforms. This set includes the B.O.N.E. Tool AR bolt carrier assembly cleaning tool. Add an OTIS 36" coated stainless steel, one piece cleaning rod and you'll be prepared for just about anything.

MSRP: \$199.99 for Sportsman's Range Box, \$49.99 to \$64.99 for 36" Stainless Steel Cleaning Rods
OtisTec.com

TANGODOWN MK3 RIFLE MAGAZINE

BRENT T. WHEAT

Quality rifle magazines are critical to the successful operation of the AR-platform rifles but "a magazine is a magazine," right? Not if you're talking about the TangoDown MK3 mags.

First off, the dual-polymer design is sealed with no floorplate, keeping dust and cheeseburger crumbs away from the mag innards. There are



also clear sealed status windows on both sides so you can easily determine your ammo status.

My favorite feature is the aggressive ribbed texture on the lower half of the mag, making it much easier to withdraw the magazine from a pouch while maintaining a positive grip, even for a fumble-fingered editor. There is also a unique round bottom that can serve as a more-stable monopod for those so-inclined. I don't use this feature but I liked these TangoDown mags so much I've swapped out all the magazines in my home defense kit to the MK3.

MSRP: \$23.95
TangoDown.com



RITON 5 PRIMAL 15-45x60 SPOTTING SCOPE

BRENT T. WHEAT

I recently replaced my old, beat-up spotting scope with the Riton 5 Primal 15-45x60 and instantly got spoiled. I didn't realize how pitiful the lenses in my old scope were.

High-quality ED glass optics aside, the 5 Primal Spotting Scope brought lots of other nice features to the party. The build quality is obviously better than my old scope as it weighs nearly twice as much. Operating controls are smooth and not as stiff as some competitors. I also like the screw-in lens covers. One minor quibble — I would prefer a larger focus ring as the current version is smaller and easy to miss, especially with gloves on. Aside from this point, if you're considering purchase of a "midrange" spotting scope, the Riton 5 Primal is certainly worthy of consideration. When I'm not shooting, I've found the scope is also wonderful for watching our bird feeders!

MSRP: \$999
RitonOptics.com

THE INTERNATIONAL ARTILLERY MUSEUM

GO FOR THE SCHNITZEL, STAY FOR THE QUAD 50S!

Will Dabbs, MD

St. Joseph, Texas, is on the way to a lot of places. Located about an hour and a half north of the Dallas metroplex, St. Jo is a typical little Texas town. There's a quaint square, a handful of churches and a nice restaurant or three. St. Jo is the sort of place where good Americans are born, raised and live out their lives. As you blow through St. Jo on vacation you might not even notice were it not for the British Chieftain main battle tank sitting on the side of the road.

My attention attracted, I Googled, "Why is there a tank in St. Jo, Texas?" It connected me with the International Artillery Museum. Of all the things I might have expected to find in St. Jo, this wasn't one of them.

ORIGIN STORY

The Artillery Museum showcases the collection of a single man named Craig Olden. A successful businessman in his own right, Craig started in

the 1950s with a WWI-vintage Mauser *Tankgewehr* M1918 antitank rifle. He found this thing for sale for \$100 in the back of a dime novel when he was 13 years old. Ammo was 50 cents per round. He earned the money himself and then talked his dad into ordering it for him.

The M1918 *Tankgewehr* looks like a bolt-action Mauser infantry rifle on steroids. Sporting an oversized bipod and pistol grip, it fired a massive 13.2mm round that supposedly inspired our own .50 BMG cartridge. Craig's original German antitank rifle hangs on the wall in the museum alongside literally thousands of cool military artifacts. It clearly sparked something of a compulsion.

DETAILS

The museum occupies a former lingerie factory. There is, no kidding, a full battery of German WWII-vintage 88mm Flak guns in the back parking lot. The expansive building is filled to bursting with artillery pieces. For a



The International Artillery Museum is a hidden gem in the small Texas town of St. Jo.

proper gun nerd, it can all seem nigh heavenly. Everything is discreetly deactivated to BATF specifications.

Most but not all of the pieces are fairly modern — Vietnam era and later. There is a meticulously restored German 88mm Flak gun, a 20mm magazine-fed Flak 38 cannon, and the only remaining 50mm gun used experimentally in the nose of the Messerschmitt Me-262 jet fighter.

One entire wall is covered in shoulder-fired weapons — Stingers, LAWs, RPGs of various flavors, PIAT guns and dozens more. Towed artillery beyond my capacity to catalog occupies the first expansive room.



The sheer scope of this collection is fairly overwhelming.



This quad 50 mount was for sale but sadly, somebody had already beat Will to it.

There is also the hulk of a surplus jeep recovered from an artillery impact area just to lend some insights into what these weapons are like on the receiving end.

The next huge room is even more extraordinary. A massive Cold War-era 240mm Long Tom is tough to miss as is the enormous Nike anti-aircraft missile. Tracked artillery is interspersed among tube cannon from WWI to the present. You can't crawl on this stuff, but you can get up close and personal with it.

The Artillery Museum also plays host to the Texas Medal of Honor Memorial. This display commemorates the exploits of America's greatest Texas heroes. Like everything else in the museum, this is also done exceptionally well.

Danny Denham is the docent. Danny is a former U.S. Army First Sergeant who used a fair amount of this stuff for real. Friendly, engaging, and eminently knowledgeable, Danny is a great resource into the history behind both the individual pieces and their acquisition.

DIDN'T SEE THIS COMING ...

Once you've soaked up the museum you get to the obligatory gift shop. Most gift shops in decent military

museums sell T-shirts and cheap plastic models along with a book or two. Not so much here. This gift shop offers de-milled ordnance, live ammunition, and stuff like rocket launchers. I have never seen anything like it myself and I have seen a lot of military museums.

The store sports rows of huge shiny brass artillery rounds, demilled submachine guns, and a wall full of bazookas, RPGs, and similar stuff. There's also plenty of live ammo. I left with an AT4 antitank rocket launcher and a case of exotic brass-cased ball ammunition for the British .410-converted SMLE musket. In lieu of T-shirts, this gift shop sells actual BDU shirts with their logo silk-screened on. They even offered a genuine quad 50 antiaircraft mount. Tragically, it was marked, "Sold."

There was a nice art gallery right next door on the square that kept the ladies occupied and a superlative German restaurant in town with some fine schnitzel. I put St. Jo to my stern with a spanking new rocket launcher in the car and a grin on my face. If ever you are anywhere close, you will hate yourself if you don't drop by. The International Artillery Museum is indeed an unexpected treasure. **GUNS**

ArtilleryMuseum.com

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ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES!

THE ELECTIONS ARE OVER, HERE'S WHAT'S NEXT

Dave Workman

Okay, the November election is history and we should know by now how every race in the country turned out. So, while we stand down temporarily to celebrate the holidays, Second Amendment defenders mustn't let their guard down because the gun prohibition movement is not taking time off.

You need to roll up your sleeves and get ready for battle because it's coming.

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

Everything starts over again in January for Congress and state legislatures, where a lot of new faces will be showing up. Old bills and new legislation must all be re-filed or filed anew. Anti-gunners will have their agendas and pro-rights lawmakers should have plans of their own. If there are no proactive gun rights proposals, now is the time to be working on them.

Remember the words of the late Congressman and U.S. House Speaker Thomas "Tip" P. O'Neill: "All politics is local." And remember this also: No matter what you want, there will be someone ready to oppose you.

- Threat: Expect a renewed push for so-called "universal background checks," which Alan Gottlieb at the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms warns is the backdoor path to national gun registration.

- Threat: There will be revived efforts to repeal preemption statutes in some states.

- Threat: Expect proposals to ban so-called "assault weapons" and keep an eye on court cases challenging bans already existent in some states.

- Threat: Watch for more blue state legislatures to consider legislation mandating 10-day waiting periods.

These are not designed to prevent tragedies — they're designed primarily to put weekend gun shows out of business and discourage people from buying firearms.

- Threat: Be particularly watchful for proposals to require permits-to-purchase. Ever since the results of a study done by Tufts University School of Medicine, Dr. Michael



Siegel appeared in the journal *JAMA Network Open* back in August, the anti-gun crowd has been quietly salivating. Siegel, with whom I traded emails at the time, did an analysis of 12 states and reported that states with laws requiring permits-to-purchase in addition to "universal" background checks have lower homicide rates than states with only background check requirements.

Here is a list of challenges for the coming year —

- Challenge: Resist 10-day waiting period bills with all of your energy. In states where such laws already exist, push back to repeal them. Consider legal action because such waiting periods are clearly unconstitutional under guidelines set down on the 2022 Supreme Court *Bruen* decision. The Court said "the government

must demonstrate that the regulation is consistent with this Nation's historical tradition of firearm regulation." There is no historical analogue showing a waiting period requirement existed at the time the Constitution was ratified.

- Challenge: Demand the Biden administration's White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention be scrapped, and pressure Congress to make it happen. Likewise, demand Congress withhold all funding used to finance this office and make sure it never comes back.

- Challenge: Twenty-nine states now have permitless carry — so-called "constitutional carry" — laws. If your state isn't on the list, you should approach friendly lawmakers and put forth legislation. Even if your bill goes nowhere, the mere fact it is being proposed will be enough to raise some eyebrows and divert the attention of anti-gunners away from other efforts.

- Challenge: Retired gun owners have time on their hands. Consider yourselves the "elder statesmen" of the firearms community. Make yourselves known. As you work through the legislative process, remember, "I'm not doing this for me, I'm doing this for my grandchildren. I have enjoyed this country's liberty and I'm here to protect it for future generations."

With the new Congress and new legislative sessions, all legislation must be newly introduced, even if it has been previously submitted. December is the month when we learn about pre-filed bills, so start paying attention to legislative websites, and reports from your state capitol about new measures and who sponsors them.

MODEL CITIZEN

In my home state of Washington, thousands of citizens are members or

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followers of a Facebook page dubbed "Washington 2025 Legislative Action Group — Save Your Civil Rights." If you don't have one of these in your state, start one. The one in Washington has more than 12,000 members so don't think for a minute such a page won't generate much interest.

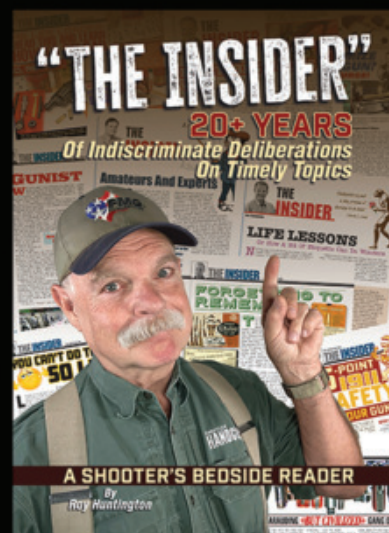
Over the past few years, Evergreen State activists have used their page to advise others about legislation, upcoming public hearings, community meetings and other important activities. Take a lesson from this bunch because they have been successful. Visit the Washington group's Facebook site to see how it's done and pattern your site the same because I can say from experience it works.

Also, study the work of these other groups: Illinois State Rifle Association (ISRA), Florida Carry, Inc., California Rifle & Pistol Association (CRPA), Massachusetts Gun Owner's Action League (GOAL), Arizona Citizens Defense League (AzCDL). They make things happen in their respective states, and in some cases, prevent things from happening.

There's going to be a new president and cabinet, and it all gets rolling with the inauguration on Jan. 20. Watch for the cabinet nominations, learn who will be in leadership positions and pay attention to the talking heads at CNN, MSNBC and Fox to get an idea of what the next several months, if not the next four years, could be like. Plan accordingly.

The new year will bring new gun rights litigation. That much is guaranteed, so whether it is the National Rifle Association, Second Amendment Foundation, National Shooting Sports Foundation, Gun Owners of America, Firearms Policy Coalition, National Association for Gun Rights — or a combination of two or more of these organizations — in conjunction with local groups, open your checkbooks and wallets and give them your support. To quote the Second Amendment Foundation's trademark slogan: "Winning Firearms Freedom, One Lawsuit at a Time." This is what we should all be advocating. **GUNS**

LET THE RUMPUS BEGIN...



Roy Huntington's Insider
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The *Corvus Belt/IWB Holster* from Galco is now available for the S&W M&P Shield with or without a red dot sight. Constructed of Kydex, the *Corvus* quickly and easily converts from a belt holster to an IWB design. With an open top for fast draw, adjustment for cant and ride height, maintenance-free construction and forward molding, the *Corvus* is the holster choice for defensive carry. MSRP: \$106. For more info: (800) 874-2526, GalcoGunleather.com



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To better serve customers, Powder Valley is proud to offer a wide selection of Dillon Precision Products, including the *Dillon Precision XL 750 Progressive Press*. Reloading machines, accessories, conversion kits, dies and more are also available. Dillon Precision produces a wide variety of reloading supplies, ammunition and components, firearms parts, and other shooting gear. MSRP: \$739 for the *Dillon Precision XL 750 Progressive Press*. For more info: (800) 227-4299, PowderValleyInc.com



GOCUBE SOFT COOLERS MAMMOTH

The new *GoCube Soft Coolers* from Mammoth Coolers is compact to carry into the backcountry yet robust to keep contents cool during all-day outings. Constructed of high-density nylon with thick TPU laminated material, the lightweight *GoCube* is both puncture- and tear-resistant for your outdoor adventures. Measuring 13" x 8.5" x 11.5", the 12-quart *GoCube* is equipped. MSRP: \$99.99. For more info: (816) 295-6321, MammothCooler.com



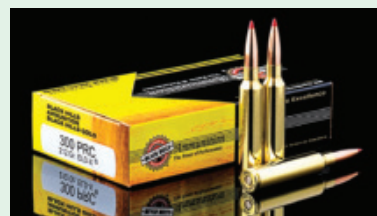
ADVENTURE PRIMALOFT INSULATED JACKET 5.11 TACTICAL

5.11 Tactical introduced its latest line of PrimaLoft Insulation Technical Apparel. This is a collaboration between 5.11 and PrimaLoft, two leading pioneers in the apparel industry. The *Adventure PrimaLoft Insulated Jacket* is built to last using a 100% polyester plain weave face fabric with a DWR finish and a 100% nylon ripstop lining. MSRP: \$130. For more info: (866) 451-1726, 511Tactical.com



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The *Muzlstik Chamber Flag* is used by placing the stem into the chamber of your firearm, making it virtually impossible to discharge. What makes this chamber flag unique is the ability to have a loaded magazine in the firearm while the flag is also inserted. Made of durable BS plastic, it can be used in firearms from .22 caliber and beyond. MSRP: From \$1.69. For more info: Muzlstik.com



6 ARC 90-GRAIN DUAL PERFORMANCE BLACK HILLS AMMUNITION

The new Black Hills *6 ARC (Advanced Rifle Cartridge) 90-Grain Dual Performance* load is designed to shoot flatter to 600 yards compared to the 103 ELD-X introduced last year, plus open immediately upon impact to create a large 7"-diameter wound channel. Velocity is 2,650 fps with over 1400 ft. lbs. of energy. For more info: (605) 348-5150, Black-Hills.com



WIND BRACE PRO JACKET & PANT SCENTLOK

While many hunters choose fleece outerwear for colder days in the stand, most fleece fails to keep you warm when a steady wind rolls in. That's where the *Wind Brace Pro Jacket & Pant* stand above traditional fleece camo. The Wind Brace Pro fuses a windproof barrier and Carbon Alloy technology between two layers of fleece to provide cold-weather comfort and maximum scent control at the same time. MSRP: From \$199.99 (jacket); From \$199.99 (pant). For more info: (231) 767-2824, ScentLok.com

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The *Counteract 15 Backpack* is a reliable off-body carry option for keeping your firearm close at hand. Made of coated, weather- and stain-resistant 500d polyester ripstop chassis, the backpack measures 18" H x 12" W x 5" D. MSRP: \$120. For more info: (800) 597-7179, Viktos.com



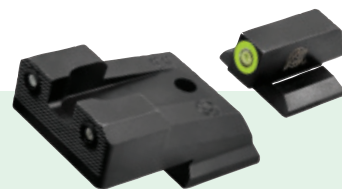
PROTAC RAIL MOUNT HL-X PRO STREAMLIGHT, INC.

Streamlight has introduced the *ProTac Rail Mount HL-X Pro* gun-mounted light. It gives up to 1,000 lumens of light, 50,000 candela, and an extreme beam reach of 447 meters. It features an integrated rail clamp designed to attach to rifles, carbines and sub-machine guns with a MIL-STD 1913 (Picatinny) or, by using the included M-LOK mount to M-LOK or M-LOK compatible rail systems. Fabricated from 6000 series machined aircraft aluminum with Type II MIL-Spec anodized finish. MSRP: From \$210 to \$266. For more info: (800) 523-7488, Streamlight.com



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Cupped Waterfowl introduces the *Guide Bag* to keep waterfowl hunters fully equipped and organized in the field. It features an exterior shell box and thermos holder as well as a waterproof interior cell phone pocket. Neoprene shell loops provide easy access to ammo, and a built-in tree hook allows for keeping gear within arm's reach. Available in Mossy Oak Bottomland and Realtree Max-7. MSRP: \$49.99. For more info: (844) 471-4868, Cupped.com



R3D 2.0 TRITIUM NIGHT SIGHT KITS XS SIGHTS

XS Sights is pleased to offer its popular *R3D 2.0 Tritium Night Sight Kits* for Colt, Kimber, and Springfield Armory 1911 pistols. These new second-generation tritium self-defense sights are brighter, stronger, and even easier to install than the original R3D models. Featuring a notch and post design with two rear tritium dots and a high-contrast green dual-illuminated Glow Dot front sight, the R3D 2.0 is designed to improve your shooting. MSRP: \$148.99. For more info: (888) 744-4880, XSSights.com

TRIJCON RMR TRIJCON

No matter what Trijicon RMR you choose, know that legendary durability comes with it. Not only has this red dot been proven to quite literally withstand the heat in multiple real-life fires, but the Type 2 Adjustable LED Reflex Sight features easy-to-use side buttons for adjusting illumination brightness so you get better accuracy at greater distances, day or night. MSRP: \$742. For more info: (800) 338-0563, Trijicon.com



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The *Nose Jammer Field Spray* is designed to overwhelm the sense of smell of big game animals and predators such as elk, whitetail, pronghorn, hogs and coyotes. Nose Jammer will create a cloud around you, jamming big game's ability to detect and track human odor. These products can be used on hunting clothes, boots, tree stands, blinds, brush, or even your body. MSRP: \$9.99 (4 oz.) and \$14.99 (8 oz.). For more info: (507) 452-9202, NoseJammer.com



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GUNS Magazine
GOM December
2024

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If you are unable to enter online, mail a postcard with your name and address (no envelopes please). Entries must be received by December 31, 2024. Limit one entry per household.

WINNERS CHOSEN BY RANDOM DRAWING. Limit one entry per household. To protect the privacy and security of winners, their names will NOT be made public. Contest void where prohibited by law. Winners must undergo a background check and comply with all other federal, state and local laws. Taxes and fees will be the responsibility of the winner. Contest open to U.S. residents only. Employees and agents of Publishers' Development Corp. are not eligible. No purchase necessary. Attention deployed military: Use stateside address! Giveaway guns and accessories may have evidence of being test fired or exhibit minor handling marks. Factory warranties may apply in some cases. The Gun of the Month package is awarded only to the entrant drawn and will not be awarded if the firearm presented is illegal in the jurisdiction of the winner. An alternate, authorized winner will be selected. No substitutions or transfers to a third party are allowed.



SPRINGFIELD ARMORY 1911 DS PRODIGY COMP PISTOL

Customization: Ed Brown
EdBrown.com
(573) 565-3261

Caliber: 9mm; **Capacity:** 17 and 20

Barrel Length: 4.25"; **OAL:** 7.8"

Weight: Approximately 33 oz.

Value: \$2,395

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY 1911 DS PRODIGY COMP “FUELED BY ED BROWN” PACKAGE

If you win this giveaway, Lady Luck has truly smiled on you. Why? Because you will be the recipient of prizes worth over \$3,244. Not only that, the gun of the month, the *Springfield Armory 1911 DS Prodigy Comp “Fueled by Ed Brown,”* is a prize catch! Equipped with an integral compensator with a single port on the top of the slide and barrel to redirect gas upwards,

reducing muzzle flip, enhancing control and allowing for more accurate follow-up shots. The Fueled Prodigy Comp has the following Ed Brown Customizations: Beavertail grip safety, amb thumb safety, EDM trigger components, trigger job, reliability package including our extractor, barrel throatening and test fire, flattened/serrated top of slide, recessed barrel crown, dehorn, and



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Value: Over \$500 for
500 rounds

black Gen4 coating. The 9mm pistol has a 4.25" barrel, polymer grips, fiber optic front and black serrated rear sights and a 2-piece full-length guide rod. It comes with a 17-round and 20-round magazine.

Carry your new Springfield Armory 1911 DS Prodigy Comp Pistol in the *Ed Brown "Pro Light Rail" Holster*. Made of cowhide and shark with a 15-degree forward cant, this holster is made exclusively for Ed Brown.

The *Ed Brown/VZ G10 Dagger* is machined from a solid piece of G-10. It's a great tool you can take and hide on you anywhere. The Snakeskin texture offers a superior grip surface to ensure control in even the most challenging situations. Makes an excellent addition to

your EDC kit and includes a handmade leather sheath.

Load your Springfield Armory 1911 DS Prodigy Comp Pistol with Nosler's 115-grain JHP Assured Stopping Power engineered for reliable expansion at a range of impact velocities. Five hundred rounds of this ammo will also be yours if you win this giveaway.

The Springfield Armory 1911 DS Prodigy Comp Pistol "Fueled by Ed Brown," an Ed Brown holster and knife plus the Nosler ammo are all waiting to be yours. All you need to do is join the giveaway. Go to GUNSMagazine.com/giveaways or mail a postcard. —Jazz Jimenez

GUNS

CUSTOMIZED CZ 550 500 JEFFERY

LITTLE TWEAKS FOR A BIG THUMPER!

Jeff “Tank” Hoover

“Who in their right mind needs a .500 Jeffery rifle anyway?” was the question I asked myself over and over. Yet here I was, searching for one in all the usual online auction houses. I got lucky and ended up getting one from a friend for a reasonable price. It was a CZ 550 Magnum.

After watching Tim Sundles whack two Cape Buffalo with his custom .500 Jeffery, it just made sense. Everyone needs a dangerous game rifle capable of “stopping” near 2,000-lb. mean critters dead in their tracks — with one shot from said rifle!

Besides, it’s always interesting handloading new and exciting cartridges, especially one with history. The .500 Jeffery had both — and it was my first name.

HISTORY

The 500 Jeffery was originally introduced by the August Schuler Co., a



Ken eye-balling the front sight placement onto the barrel. He was dead-on!

German firm, calling it the 12.7x70mm Schuler, or .500 Schuler around 1920. Schuler wanted the most powerful cartridge a standard-sized ’98 Mauser could handle, and the .500 Schuler fit the bill.

When famous British company, W.J. Jeffery & Co offered the gargantuan cartridge, they renamed it, calling it — what else — the .500 Jeffery. Remember, this was after WWI and English sporting men weren’t real keen on anything German so a more English-sounding name would be better for sales than the German .500 Schuler.

CZ? EASY!

It was fall and I had a hankering for fried perch, spicy chili and a cold lager beer. The best I’ve experienced is 8 hours away in a little bar in Michigan called the Adair Inn. Master gunsmith and friend Ken Kelly of Mag-na-port introduced me to this hole-in-the-wall hangout in Michigan’s big woods. The walls are adorned with deer heads, perch, bass and walleye, a true outdoorsman’s place to refuel, tell tales and warm up from a day’s hunt or fishing trip.

Of course I brought the CZ 550 with me for Ken is one of only a few men I’d trust to do the work my gun needed. In factory form, CZ seemed to think 25” barrels were necessary for their Magnum rifles. Sure, the long tom barrel ramps up velocity but it also makes the gun



A happy Tank holds his “new” .500 Jeffery dangerous game rifle in Ken Kelly’s shop! He knows fried perch and chili are next on the agenda!



Making the first cut for Tank's customized .500 Jeffery CZ Magnum (left), shortening the barrel to a more-manageable 21". No turning back now! Tank's handloads using 570-grain Hornady DGS bullets (right). Sure is a big cartridge!



cumbersome and unwieldy, especially in tight quarters.

I wanted the barrel cut-down to 21". A simple job, but I wanted to keep the nifty and traditional barrel-banded front sight the rifle came with. Ken would work his magic to make this possible.

First things first, Ken performed a severe circumcision of sorts, cutting off the last 4" of barrel. Ouch! I cringed as the band saw blade quickly cut through the barrel. No turning back now! He then applied heat from a torch to loosen the soldered front sight and its barrel band. Thankfully, the whole slid off without a hitch. Ken then went to the Bridgeport milling machine to administer a perfect barrel crown for the newly made carbine.

Next, Ken honed out the barrel band so it would slip snugly in place onto the thicker portion of the tapered barrel. Once this was accomplished, he skillfully centered the front sight, marking where he would drill and tap a hole so the barrel band could be screwed onto the barrel.

The hole was hidden under the front sight. Combined with JB Weld and the barrel band design, the front sight is now locked solid and the barrel didn't need to be re-blued, saving time and money.

NECG

I replace the front sight with a gold-faced patridge style sight from New England Custom Gun. A little file work was necessary on my part to make it fit. Matched with one of their aperture "peep" sights mounted onto the recessed

scope dovetail, I have faster target acquisition, especially with the shortened barrel and longer sight radius.

I removed the stylish fold-down rear sights, which were dovetailed into the bridge of the rifle barrel. Now I needed a slot blank to give the rifle a finished look.

I thought of Special Editor Roy Huntington. He's a master at shaping metal things and I sent a detailed drawing on a napkin, via texted photo, along with the folding rear sight assembly so he could make an appropriately sized blank.

A few days later I received a package in the mail with my perfectly sized blank. A few coats of cold blue and the metal matched the rifle. The blank was installed with just enough resistance to provide me confidence it will never work free, even from the raucous recoil of the 500 Jeffery.

TRIAL BY FIRE

I'd assembled handloads to test fire and sight-in my modified marauder. Using RCBS dies, Hornady .510" 570-grain DGS bullets, Varget powder and a Winchester Magnum primer, I assembled a dozen cartridges. The first shot showed windage was dead-on but shooting low. A few turns of the aperture screw, and we were dead-on at 50 yards.

Now I have a proper dangerous gun, tweaked for my needs and preferences with the satisfaction of having a hand in the works. Now I just need to introduce my Custom CZ to something big and dangerous.

GUNS

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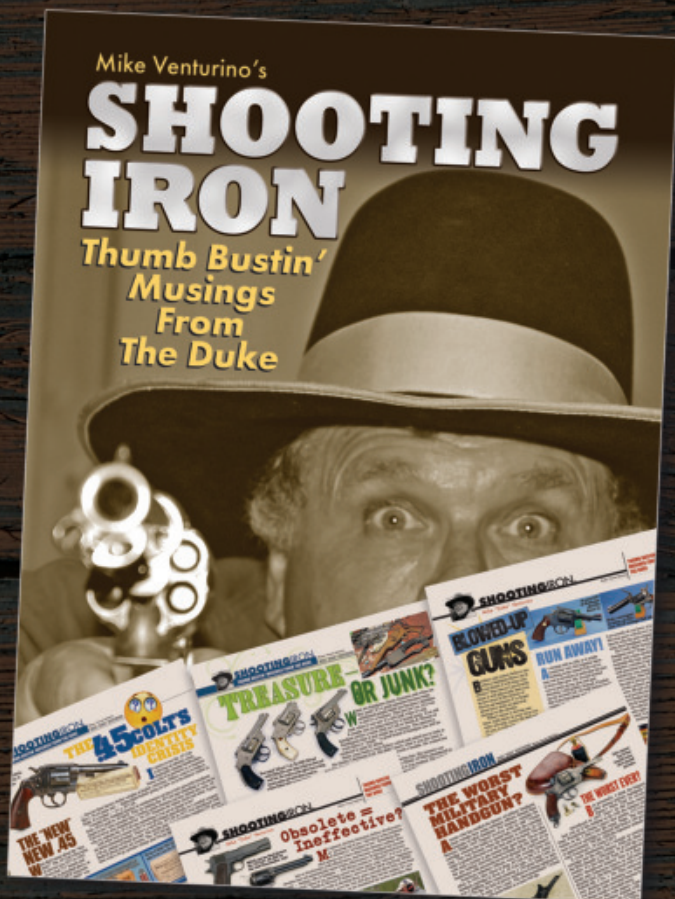
Enjoy Extra Time With Duke

A complete collection of Mike "Duke" Venturino's Shooting Iron columns originally published in *American Handgunner* Magazine from 2005 through 2024 is available now. Venturino's extensive gun knowledge and easy-reading writing style entertained and informed a generation of readers. Enjoy this collection and think about the kind man who wrote it all.

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GUNS INSIDER

continued from page 66

handful of free-range cats, sterilized them and then released them back into “the wild” (our backyards) as a “humane, colony-living alternative” to euthanasia. What we ended up enduring daily — *we*, as in “people who didn’t volunteer for this” — was a bunch of chronically sick and injured felines which continued to wildly procreate despite the mostly unsuccessful trapping and surgical efforts. The reproduction continue unabated whenever the cats weren’t too busy leaving their pungent tar-like droppings in our yards and flower beds, spraying various objects with ferociously stinky urine and hunting daily at our bird feeders. I don’t know the total number of songbirds dead at the paws of the colony but the cats racked up an impressive kill count. Rabbits were non-existent.

We were all fed up but the local authorities wouldn’t do anything because they know cat people are very vocal and don’t tolerate criticism, so a different solution was needed. I have no idea what happened but amazingly, the cat colony became extinct about the same time our backyard privacy fence went up. With no proof whatsoever, the neighborhood “gun guy” privately got the credit from relieved residents.

Then, a few days ago I was standing in the front yard of our home when an elderly neighbor walked by with her dog. We chatted amiably when she suddenly turned serious. Looking around, she lowered her voice and said “You know, I’ve got a strange cat hanging around my house. It’s leaving messes, killing birds ... it’ll probably have kittens before you know it.”

“Hmm, that’s too bad” I answered in a wholly non-committal way.

“It would be a shame if something happened to the cat,” she said wistfully, staring off in the distance.

I stayed quiet. The silence went on a few seconds.

“Yep, it would be a tragedy if the cat just disappeared. Yessir, too bad ...

and I wouldn’t say a thing,” she added before walking away.

I suddenly realized we had been euphemistically discussing “a hit” on the cat, much like characters in *The Sopranos*. If this continued, I could see myself getting a cool nickname like “Jimmy The Weasel” or something. The idea had merit but I also didn’t want the whole reputation thing to get out of hand — I could imagine detectives leaning hard on me anytime a local cat broke its leg or came down with mange.

So, I didn’t do anything. Yet, despite my inaction and wholly peaceful nature, the scroungy disease-ridden new arrival disappeared a few days later. What could have happened? Neighborhood residents are still stumped.

One unrelated note — a certain major gun manufacturer recently came out with a new highly-accurate .22 bolt-action. It will be reviewed, as soon as I clean it.

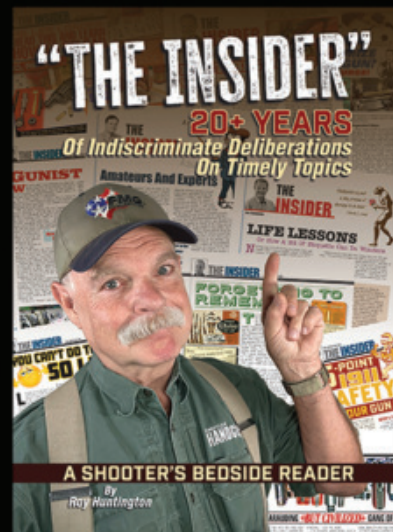
THE (UN)NECESSARY DISCLAIMER

I don’t hate cats — truly — but also think they shouldn’t be allowed to destroy billions of birds and mammals just so people can enjoy infrequent moments of amity and a chronically hair-covered sofa. If you love cats, you’re welcome to your opinion — so long as you keep Fluff out of my yard, away from our flower beds and do something to stop this wholesale slaughter of wildlife. As a society we don’t tolerate free-roaming packs of pitbulls so I’m not sure why we’re supposed to be OK with “Admiral Yeowington” fouling other people’s property and killing the songbirds by the bushel.

This is such an important topic yet too many writers are afraid to touch it, for good reason, but I don’t apologize for my position. However, if you are wildly upset and want to dispute my facts and conclusions, I urge you to write down your innermost feelings and concerns and send them in. The address is:

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MISS KITTY AND TOM CAT

A FRANK TALK ABOUT A SERIOUS PROBLEM

Brent T. Wheat

Today, I'm going to break a long-standing taboo in the publishing industry. It's literally a third-rail, a "DO NOT TOUCH"-type of topic no sane writer would ever consider mentioning.

But since I've never been accused of operating with a full deck of cards, I'm going to forge ahead and dive into this journalistic quagmire. This is important for two reasons: First, it needs to be earnestly and openly discussed in a public forum with the hope of someday resolving this genuine problem and secondly, there's a deadline looming and I'm fresh out of potty jokes.

cats — love them or hate them — kill a lot of small animals.

I'll agree it's not the cat's "fault." Hunting and killing things is part of their genetic makeup. Sometimes it's OK, such as when we're talking mice, rats, gophers and other destructive pests. However, cats are indiscriminate and quite efficient at killing songbirds or any other small animal they can run down. Making it worse, domestic cats generally don't eat their prey or even hunt because of hunger. Thus, we're losing a lot of small animals and birds simply because somebody let "Mr. Fluffkins" out the door when they went to work.

If humans were wreaking this kind

outside of the newspaper. I still remember their poorly worded attempt at sarcasm, something about "thank your (sic) studly outdoor writer for protecting us all from those dangerous kitties" and other such drivel. I had expected better quality loathing from a national organization.

The newspaper *loved* the notoriety because circulation actually went up briefly. People were buying issues from news racks (remember those?) to see the latest shots fired in this ongoing battle. The editor even commissioned an artist to draw special cartoons. Several folks got really worked up. There was a great hue and cry. Petitions were started. Somebody even called my mom.

In the end, things settled down and no lasting damage was done. However, I learned one of the most important rules of journalism: "Never, ever mess with 'cat people.'"

Another example involved our sister publication *American Handgunner* many years ago. A writer whose name escapes me wrote a story about a .22 rifle and off-handedly mentioned it would be useful to dispatch "varmints, pests and feral cats around the farm."

As related by former Editor Roy Huntington, literal sacks full of hate mail began arriving at the office. Then, more bags of "pro-shoot" mail began showing up and the whole thing turned into a month's-long nightmare of postal service arguments. For its part, the magazine didn't care what the writer said but the whole thing got to be a major drudge.

This is another prime example of why beginning writers are told to never, ever mess with kitty! You'll regret it.

However, since I don't follow rules very well, I'll relate a recent anecdote...

THE HITMAN

Before we moved in to our house, our neighborhood had been plagued by a feral cat colony. A misguided but well-meaning group live-trapped a

continued on page 65



So, after taking a deep breath, I'm going to wade into this highly polarizing topic and give my frank and honest thoughts on: cats. More specifically, feral cats.

There, I said it. (Insert sound of dozens of pitchforks being sharpened and torches lit!)

THE ACTUAL SCIENCE

I have experienced first-hand the grave danger of writing anything less than enthusiastic and fervent praise for cats. About 30 years ago, I was the outdoor writer for my local newspaper and had received a press release talking about the terrific devastation wrought by domestic cats on songbird and small animal populations. In this case, the University of Wisconsin did a study and determined rural cats were killing up to 219 million birds annually in the state. Since then, research has borne out that

of devastation on any animal population, you can rest assured there would be an entire new federal administration beaucracy devoted to "stamping out this scourge." But since we're talking cats, everybody looks the other way because it's safer.

OFF WITH HIS HEAD!

Regardless, I had the temerity to write a short column about the cat problem. I didn't call for the immediate registration or confiscation of felines but simply suggested if people cared about wildlife and tweety birds, it would be helpful if they kept kitty indoors or at least put a wee little bell around her precious neck.

Oh my goodness, did I awaken a sleeping giant!

The mail started immediately and became a deluge. I learned new words for bodily functions. PETA even got involved and threatened to stage a protest

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