

SI SURVIVING DISASTER: **PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PREPPING**

SHOOTING

Illustrated

SEPTEMBER | 2023



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NRA™ Official Journal of the National Rifle Association of America

The NRA, the foremost guardian of the traditional American right to “keep and bear arms,” believes every law-abiding citizen is entitled to the ownership and legal use of firearms, and that every reputable gun owner should be an NRA member.

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Eric Dean

Photographer

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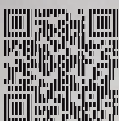
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ERIC CONN



Building A Durable Grip

Establishing a good grip on your pistol is one thing. Keeping that grip, no matter what happens with magazine changes and interacting with your environment, is another. Steve Tarani walks us through the process of building a grip that will keep your sights on target through thick and thin.

JAY GRAZIO



Why Shoot Pistol Drills?

Developing the speed and accuracy needed to deliver the shot when it matters most means knowing what's working and what needs improvement, and that means using some form of repeatable, standardized test to track your progress. Here are four ways to accomplish that goal.

MICHAEL BRANSON



Training Efficiency: Choose the Right Classes and Instructors

Understanding what your needs are and then finding an instructor who can help you improve means doing your research. For example, taking a class that stresses tactical movement inside of a building with a squad of your friends probably isn't the best choice for a new gun owner's first training experience. Choose wisely.

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Guns



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Some of the photographs in this magazine illustrate specific shooting stances or positions in which it was occasionally necessary to position the camera in front of the muzzle for instructional purposes. At no time was a loaded, functioning firearm used in these photographs; special, deactivated guns or solid plastic gun simulators were employed. In some cases the image was taken using a remotely triggered camera.

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Big Gun

I enjoyed Wiley Clapp's July article on the 105 mm howitzer and would like to add a little more perspective based on my service in Vietnam. I served with the 25th Infantry Division in A Battery, 1st Battalion, 8th Field Artillery. Our mission was direct support and reinforcement of infantry units in our area of coverage. We were a six-gun battery of 105s (M102). While it was primarily a towed weapon, it could also be easily airlifted by a CH-47 Chinook helicopter. I served on at least four different fire bases where there was no road access and Chinooks got us there, resupplied us and got us out when our mission was completed. Mr. Clapp was correct about the variety of shell types the 105 can fire. No surprise, but the primary shell that we fired was the standard high explosive, or HE, round. We also fired a lot of white phosphorus and illumination and, on a few occasions, firecracker rounds. As with projectiles, we had an array of fuses specific to the fire mission. Point detonating (fuse quick) was the most common fuse type followed by timed, proximity and delay. All in all, the 105 was an excellent piece of light field artillery. It was accurate, had a high rate of fire, was relatively easy to transport and set up and could be quickly brought into action.

*R. Eugene Bell
Bahama, NC*



Wiley Clapp gave me an immediate "Oooraah!" with the USMC photo in his July "Fightin' Iron" column. I was immediately transferred back to a sandy Chu Lai beach for my first encounter with an M50 Ontos. Perhaps your readers would be interested to know how the 105 became a 106 for the Ontos, but that's for a future column.

*Tom Ross
California City, CA*

Grip Tip Makes It Click

My shots tended to go left of center. Thanks to following the advice of George T. Williams in his article, "Use Your Thumb" in the June issue, I went to the range and my shots found center. Thank you for the best grip advice I've ever seen.

*Barclay Wilson
Las Vegas, NV*

The Riddle of Steel

In his July "Skills Check" column, Steve Tarani offered an interesting skills drill "Trigger Trifecta" to work on trigger press. I'd offered two notes: First, the exercise calls for setting up "three steel or paper targets" at 50 yards, 25 yards and 5 yards. Generally speaking, it is not recommended to shoot at steel at less than 7 yards, especially where shooters might be using a wide range of calibers and bullet styles. Secondly, 50 yards with what will probably be a concealed-carry handgun drawn from a holster is a tough shot for most people—including me! Don't be too discouraged if you miss a lot at that distance. Also, keep in mind that at 50 yards in a self-defense situation, it would almost always be better to escape, evade or retreat, both physically and legally. Sometimes not, but usually.

*Ed Arzouian
Susquehanna, PA*

Smooth Discipline

I enjoyed Jeff Gonzales' article in the July issue, "Discipline and Speed Control." Many years ago, when I started shooting IPSC, we used the mantra "Slow is smooth, and smooth is fast," to teach exactly the same concept. I didn't invent the saying or the concept. Of course, his article seems to lay out the thinking behind the saying, but the single sentence worked well on the range or the match ground.

*Sgt. Jeff Weiss
via e-mail*

Correspondence is welcomed and encouraged

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A pregnant woman in Houston, Texas, decided to take food to her husband at his work on June 27. But, after she'd parked her vehicle and gotten out, two armed men in an SUV that was parked nearby exited their vehicle. The two verbally accosted the woman, who called out to her husband. When he came out, one of the suspects, who was carrying a rifle, got into another nearby vehicle. The other man, however, reportedly approached the husband, pointing his gun at him and repeatedly asking, "Do you want to die tonight?" The couple attempted to ignore him, but the man began pistol-whipping the husband. Fortunately, both the woman and the man were concealed carriers; both drew their firearms and shot the assailant. The couple then held the man at gunpoint until authorities arrived and transported him to the hospital; he faces multiple charges once released. Police also indicated that the suspect was a felon barred from having a firearm. The woman, who was only two weeks from her delivery date, told reporters "Thank God we had our guns. I've never been happier to be a gun carrier." (abc13.com, Houston, Texas, 6/28/23)

During the early-morning hours of April 2, a woman and a man in a club got into an altercation in Carroll County, Miss. The woman and a friend decided to leave the premises to avoid further problems. However, the man followed them to a house down the street, despite being told to stay away. The man following them then reportedly grabbed the woman and a struggle ensued. The woman shot the alleged assailant multiple times during the struggle. The man was airlifted to a hospital and was in stable condition; the woman was held briefly but released quickly since the shooting appeared to be a case of self-defense. (wlbt.com, Jackson, Miss., 4/4/23)

On April 6, a jewelry shop in Glendale, Colo., had just been opened for the day's business when a man came in and started pointing a gun at the employees, demanding they open the jewelry cases. Fortunately, the store's co-owner was on the other end of the store and was able to approach the robber from behind and fatally shoot him, ending the threat to his employees. The store's owner emphasized that it was not his inventory he was concerned about, as that is insured. "He came in with the gun all ready," the armed citizen told reporters. "Three seconds and he had it out, pointed it at one salesperson, then pointed it at another salesperson. The scary part is, he had no mask. Who knows—he might want to kill everybody." The robber had a long criminal history and was out on parole at the time of the incident. (cbsnews.com, Denver, Colo., 4/7/23)

A man in Houston, Texas, was taking money out of a cash machine on April 15 when an armed man suddenly came around a corner and demanded money. The customer was complying, but the robber nonetheless began to pistol-whip him, according to reports. Fortunately, an armed citizen driving by witnessed the incident and quickly engaged the would-be robber with his own firearm, striking him in the leg and foot. The suspect was taken to the hospital and no one else was harmed in the incident. Law-enforcement

officials told reporters the suspect was also wanted for murder in Louisiana. (abc13.com, Houston, Texas, 4/16/23)

On May 6, a woman and man were inside a home in Nacogdoches, Texas, when a man began knocking, then used a large metal object to break down the door. Once inside, the invader continued the attack and broke down the bedroom door, whereupon the man in the residence fatally shot him. The residents immediately called authorities and cooperated fully; no charges were filed against the armed citizen, though the case was still under review. (ketk.com, Tyler, Texas, 5/6/23)

Three suspects in Dallas, Texas, allegedly pointed guns at a man at a gas station on May 10 in an attempted carjacking. However, the car owner was armed and shot at the men, striking two of the three. The suspects fled in another car, apparently with one man's feet still hanging out as they sped off and drove to a hospital, where one suspect died. The other two sustained non-life-threatening injuries and were expected to recover. No one else was injured and the investigation was ongoing. (wfaa.com, Dallas, Texas, 5/10/23)

A man in Cudahy, Wis., returned home on June 19 to find insulation from his attic on the kitchen floor. He thought an animal had gotten in, so he went upstairs to investigate. Instead of an animal, he found a man, who tried to introduce himself. The homeowner drew his firearm and held the man at gunpoint until police arrived. During this time, the intruder reportedly offered him \$300 to let him go. The 36-year-old suspect had been jumping from roof to roof when he apparently fell through in this home and was suffering from a broken leg. Police arrested the suspect and found him to be a felon out on parole, in possession of drugs. They also found a stolen firearm near the home they believe he had been using earlier to take potshots at police officers. (foxnews.com, New York, N.Y., 6/26/23) 

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By Wayne LaPierre
Executive Vice President

NRA Files Suit To Protect Our Members' Freedom

Crime is on the rise and out of control. Even gun-hating residents of our nation's most left-leaning cities are moving out in droves and fleeing for safer ground. President Joe Biden and his anti-gun allies who caused this catastrophe are feeling the heat.

Their pro-criminal policies—from defunding the police, to refusing to prosecute felons, to no-cash bail for hardened criminals—have emboldened our nation's worst and most violent predators to a degree we've never seen.

So, what is the Biden administration's response? Roll back their insanely destructive policies? Get tough on crime and prosecute offenders? Nope. True to form, they've opted to scapegoat the Second Amendment and persecute law-abiding gun owners.

Biden's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) has issued an unconstitutional regulatory edict that bans stabilizing pistol braces—forcing millions of lawful Americans to modify their firearms, destroy them, register them or surrender them to the federal government under threat of criminal prosecution.

Pistol-stabilizing braces allow users to strap their gun to their forearm for more stability. Millions of these devices are used by gun owners across the nation—particularly disabled veterans who need the braces to safely use a pistol. But now, those same gun owners are being subjected to potential prison sentences for the use of an otherwise-legal plastic apparatus on some firearms.

Protecting the rights and freedoms of law-abiding gun owners, and most especially, our fellow NRA members, is the foremost mission of our great association. That's why I'm proud to tell you that your NRA recently filed suit against Biden's ATF and Department of Justice in opposition to this unlawful edict, and to seek permanent injunctive relief for all our members.

Of course, if Biden and Attorney General Merrick Garland really cared about protecting the innocent, they'd get tough on the thugs who use firearms to commit crime. It is an undeniable truth that our criminal justice system already has enough laws on the books to put violent felons—the same repeat offenders that are terrorizing countless communities across the nation—away for a very long time.

If a convicted felon is caught possessing a firearm, even if he or she is not using the firearm to commit a crime, that is an offense punishable by up to 10 years in prison under federal law.

Anyone caught dealing drugs and possessing a firearm can get five years to life without parole under federal law.

Under federal law, any repeat offender, caught with a gun, who has three or more prior violent felony convictions, is subject to a 15-year minimum prison sentence.

And, under federal law, anyone who sells a firearm or ammunition to a known drug user, fugitive, illegal immigrant or felon faces 10 years behind bars.

Yet every year, tens of thousands of these federal gun crimes go unprosecuted. These are repeat offenders—remorseless, violent criminals that could be taken off the streets and put in prison where they belong.

We have a roadmap to address the current violent-crime surge that is plaguing our country. When crime spiked horribly in the 1990s, policies were implemented to focus on arresting, prosecuting and incarcerating the most-violent offenders. Gun criminals were locked up. Those policies worked just as you'd expect they would.

**TO BIDEN, THE HARDENED
CRIMINALS TERRORIZING
NEIGHBORHOODS SHOULD
BE LEFT ALONE.**

From 1993 to 2014, our national homicide rate fell by more than half. Due to programs like Project Exile and Project Safe Neighborhoods, government resources were focused on putting violent criminals behind bars.

If Biden and so many far-left district attorneys really wanted to protect innocent Americans, they would simply prosecute gun criminals and violent offenders. He knows it works. He knows it would clean up our cities. But he doesn't care. He's more interested in getting a pat on the back from the anti-gun lobby than in saving lives.

To Biden, the law-abiding, disabled veterans using pistol braces at the local shooting range deserve federal persecution and prosecution—but the hardened criminals terrorizing neighborhoods should be left alone.

It's sickening. It's maddening. It's unjust. And I promise you, NRA will fight this unconstitutional injustice in court and wherever else necessary.

Wayne LaPierre



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A Celebration And A Wake-Up Call

As I write this, it's the 4th of July and my wife and I just got back home from having lunch—Texas barbecue, of course! Ordinarily, I wouldn't have written my column on a family day, but I am inspired to do it now. Earlier, I walked out of my home office and saw a photo of my dad in his uniform. It was taken shortly after his return from the Pacific after World War II and shortly before his discharge. Veterans Day and Memorial Day are when we traditionally think about and talk about those who served our country in the military. But seeing my dad's picture made me think about him, my uncles (all of whom served during World War II) and my friends who saw combat in Vietnam.

Every time we celebrate the birth of the greatest country the world has ever seen, we need to remember the risks and sacrifices faced by so many people. These include the Founding Fathers who signed the Declaration of Independence to gain our freedom as well as those who fought, and continue to fight, to preserve that independence. Reality demands that we do more than bow our heads in prayers of gratitude for the dedication of others. We must also realize that the country so many worked and fought to build is not the country in which we live today. We, too, have a duty to the country and to our families and friends.

Americans are experiencing an era when the federal government, as well as some state and local governments, are being weaponized to achieve political goals that cannot be obtained by the legislative process. If you can't pass a bill in Congress or a state house, then simply get a regulatory agency to go rogue and do your will. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the actions of the former governor of New York Andrew Cuomo and his co-conspirator Maria Vullo, former superintendent of the New York Department of Financial Services. Together, they tried to deprive the NRA of banking and insurance services. Their conduct was so egregious that it forced the NRA to file suit based upon the First Amendment. Let's not leave out the current New York attorney general who failed in her attempt to dissolve the NRA, but who is now seeking to have one of her henchmen placed in charge of the NRA.

Make no mistake, the NRA is not the real target of such tactics—you are! Those who would destroy American freedom as we have known it since 1776 are not attacking only the NRA. They are using their weaponized government agencies, and even the Office of the President, to attack honest, law-abiding Americans in a way that shocks the conscience. Look no further than the ATF's handling of pistol braces and 80% lower receivers. For more than

10 years, the ATF has taken the position that putting a brace on a pistol with a barrel less than 16 inches is legal; i.e., it doesn't create an NFA-regulated "short-barrel rifle." Then, at the whim of a politician, the ATF changed its position, potentially making felons out of the millions of Americans who had relied on the ATF's prior approval of pistol braces. Let's also look at so-called 80% lower receivers. They are simply blocks of aluminum that require significant machining to make a lower receiver for a firearm, such as an AR-platform rifle. Now, by ATF regulatory fiat, a previously approved pistol brace and a block of aluminum suddenly come under their jurisdiction?

Numerous suits have been filed against the ATF and other federal regulatory agencies, challenging their attempts to preempt Congress' role in making laws. Numerous temporary injunctions have been issued by federal judges protecting the rights of Americans. Some of these have been upheld at the appellate court level, while others are heading to the United States Supreme Court. SCOTUS has already spanked the Environmental Protection Agency for attempting to create laws instead of enforcing laws Congress has passed. Thanks to the work of the NRA and its members, the ATF is expected to suffer the same fate. Remember, the efforts of the NRA on behalf of American gun owners are not based solely on the proper limitation of regulatory authority of federal and state agencies. The fact that trumps all arguments is the *NYSRPA V. Bruen* decision that clearly sets out a standard for determining whether a law or regulation violates Americans' rights under the Second Amendment. This was the NRA's case, and it set a new standard of review that all courts must follow. If a proposed law or regulation was not widely in existence in 1791, then it will be found unconstitutional.

The *Bruen* decision will not cure all the ills our country is facing, though it will help empower Americans to be able to bear arms to defend ourselves during these perilous times. Courts are trying to ignore the *Bruen* holding just as they ignored *Heller* and *McDonald*, but I doubt this SCOTUS will allow a repeat of prior disobedience by lower courts. You can be assured the NRA is fighting for your critical freedoms in those courts, as well as in Congress and state houses. Will you stay in the fight with us? Urge others to join the NRA as well. We must stand on the wall together.



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By Randy Kozuch
Executive Director,
NRA-ILA

YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE NOT ENOUGH.

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Biden's Search For A Coherent Gun-Control Message

Last June, the gun-prohibition lobby Giffords released the results of a poll they commissioned that supposedly substantiates voters in swing states support gun control and their increased support for Joe Biden when they hear about his efforts in that area. The poll highlighted the so-called Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA), which Biden signed into law in 2023. But it also found only 44% of battleground voters "have heard anything about" the BSCA. A follow-up article in *Politico*, "Biden's Unexpected Gun Control Problem," suggested that the BSCA could help get Biden re-elected, if only he could make voters aware of it.

But Biden's real gun-control "problem" isn't that his "successes" in this area are under-appreciated. It's that they're not really successful. And the only way for him to get what he wants—ever-more-draconian gun control—is to ratchet up fear of terrible but thankfully rare events. Thus, Biden finds himself stuck between two competing (and deceptive) narratives: that he is successfully confronting "gun violence" and that "mass shootings" are so common that gun bans are necessary. Whether or not Biden ultimately focuses on the BSCA in his re-election efforts, it's important that gun owners know the facts so they can counter Biden's malarkey messaging with the truth.

Advocacy organizations like Giffords use polling as a form of marketing, not as a scientific search for unknown information. As one political pollster infamously noted, the point is to phrase questions to "get the right answer" for your clients. Thus, rather than describe the BSCA accurately, the Giffords-backed poll focused on making it seem more appealing and groundbreaking than it actually was.

Respondents to the poll, for example, were told the BSCA made "gun trafficking a federal crime," which unsurprisingly elicited a 90% positive response. But describing the law this way creates the false impression that criminal penalties for firearm traffickers somehow represent a new development.

In fact, every act necessary to commit illicit firearms trafficking was outlawed by the Gun Control Act of 1968. This includes: unlicensed dealing; privately transferring guns interstate; transferring guns knowing they will be used to commit certain crimes; smuggling or attempting to smuggle guns to promote certain crimes; transferring guns to prohibited persons; etc., etc. Longstanding provisions of law also enable the government to initiate forfeiture proceedings against property gained from or used to commit these crimes.

The BSCA's "trafficking" provisions simply expanded upon these existing authorities. It created yet more legal authority to fine "firearm traffickers" and more ways to seek forfeiture of property, plus added to the list of crimes for which firearms may not be transferred or smuggled. It basically just piled more gun control on top of existing, underutilized gun control.

The poll used a similar sleight of hand in describing the BSCA as "[m]aking straw purchasing a federal crime," which elicited 86% approval. Yes, the BSCA created new offenses for buying a firearm on behalf of a person who is prohibited from having it, who intends to use it for certain criminal purposes, or who intends to dispose of the firearm to another such a person.

BIDEN'S GUN-CONTROL "ACHIEVEMENTS" ARE ONLY APPRECIATED IF THEY ARE FABRICATED OR DISTORTED TO MISLEAD THE PUBLIC.

But the significance of these provisions dims when it's understood it was already a felony to buy a gun without truthfully disclosing who the "actual buyer" really is, whether or not that buyer is a prohibited person or wants the gun for a nefarious purpose. In other words, a broader legal tool was already available to target "straw purchasers" before enactment of the BSCA.

Moreover, when the NRA in 2013 pressed then-Vice President Biden on why this tool wasn't used more often, he dismissed the idea as not worth the "time or manpower." According to the government's own research, straw purchases were the method of firearm acquisition for about 25% of firearms used in crimes. Biden's claim it's a waste of time for the federal government, which can hardly be said to have a "manpower" problem, to focus on straw purchasers proves that he has no interest in actually reducing firearm crime.

His real goal is just to punish law-abiding gun owners.

Giffords may wish to claim that Joe Biden's "gun-control problem" is that his "gun-safety" achievements are under-appreciated. But their own polling shows that these "achievements" are only appreciated if they are fabricated or distorted to mislead the public.



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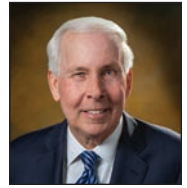
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By Randy Kozuch
Executive Director,
NRA-ILA



It's Election Time Again For Some

This time of year is always a little more exciting, but also makes me a little more anxious. We are about to hit another Election Day, and while this may be my first one as NRA-ILA executive director, I've been deeply involved with elections at NRA for three decades.

In other words, this is far from my first rodeo.

Some readers may be wondering what I am talking about, since the critical 2024 elections are still a year away. Yes, federal races, as well as most state races, are still a bit down the road; although not as far as you may think. But there are a handful of states that hold elections for their state legislatures, as well as some statewide offices, in odd-numbered years.

With that in mind, I wanted to address those states, as well as let one of the most powerful voting blocs in America—NRA members and other supporters of the Second Amendment—know both what is at stake, and what can be done to secure victories for our right to keep and bear arms on Election Day 2023.

Offices, names and dates may change, but what we do each election will be applicable in future elections, so I hope you will take note.

Rather than trying to put states in any sort of order, I'll just start with Virginia. It's where the NRA is headquartered, but it has also been one of the more intriguing states from an electoral perspective for many years.

Considered a swing state, Virginia's top statewide offices are currently held by Republicans who have supported the Second Amendment. Gov. Glenn Youngkin, as well as the others, were elected in 2021, so their offices are not up this year. But control of the Virginia General Assembly—both the House of Delegates and the Senate—is in play.

Right now, control of the General Assembly is split, with Republicans holding control in the House and Democrats controlling the Senate. Both margins are very slim, though. The House, under current

leadership, is pro-gun, while the Senate leans anti-gun. NRA members in Virginia, along with other Virginians who support the Second Amendment, need to do everything they can to add pro-gun lawmakers in the House and Senate.

While publication deadlines keep me from addressing specific Virginia races right now (which also applies to most other races for 2023), that information will be coming in time for you to make an informed, pro-gun decision when it is time to cast your ballot. I can tell you, however, that the Virginia Senate has become slightly more dangerous to our rights, as voters in the Democrat primaries have chosen to replace some of their more middle-of-the-road senators (not truly pro-gun, but not radically anti-gun, either) with candidates who fully support the most-extreme anti-gun policies.

Moving on to Mississippi, things are a little clearer, even though the primary elections have not yet been held as I write this. The state is considered a conservative stronghold, and both chambers of the legislature have strong, pro-gun majorities. NRA will work hard to ensure that continues. Along with the pro-gun legislature, Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves (R), who is running for re-election, has been working to protect the Second Amendment.

I've known Gov. Reeves for several years, and he has always been eager to help NRA promote pro-gun policies. At the height of the recent pandemic, while some governors tried to shut down firearm manufacturers and retailers, Gov. Reeves made sure they remained open as essential services.

In Kentucky, while the state legislature is not up this year, statewide offices will be decided. Current Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron (R) is running for governor, and he has secured his party's nomination. Attorney General Cameron is another avid supporter of law-abiding gun owners that I have known for some time, and he has consistently supported the Second Amendment as Kentucky's chief law-enforcement officer. He has signed onto



**I'M THE NRA
AND I VOTE!**



numerous amicus curiae (friend-of-the-court) briefs that supported legal challenges to unconstitutional laws that violated the protections enshrined in the Second Amendment. That includes, of course, the landmark *NYSRPA v. Bruen* (2022) case, where the United States Supreme Court affirmed, among other things, that the right to self-defense extends outside the home.

Looking to replace Daniel Cameron as Kentucky AG is another supporter of the Second Amendment, Russell Coleman (R). He has also secured his party's nomination and holds a strong belief in the individual right to keep and bear arms.

Down in Louisiana, this year's elections could give us the opportunity to finally enact constitutional carry in the Sportsman's Paradise. NRA-ILA has worked with the pro-gun majorities in the Louisiana State Legislature to pass this critical legislation, only to have it vetoed by current Gov. John Bel Edwards (D). Edwards is term-limited out, so the pro-gun community has the opportunity to elect a new governor who will sign constitutional carry, joining Louisiana with all of its neighboring states to no longer require law-abiding citizens to first seek government permission before they can exercise their right to self-defense.

Jeff Landry (R), the current Louisiana AG, is seeking to become the next governor, and he is yet another supporter of the Second Amendment I know well. Like AG Cameron in Kentucky, AG Landry has signed and authored several amicus briefs in support of the Second Amendment.

Finally, there's New Jersey. While the Garden State has a history of promoting and enacting anti-gun laws, there will be clear opportunities to try to turn the state in a more-favorable direction. We may not have a pro-gun majority in our sights yet, but there will be numerous key races where the votes of law-abiding gun owners can make the difference between victory and defeat.

So, as I mentioned earlier, publication deadlines—not to mention space limitations—make it difficult to offer much detail on specific races. But as we get closer to the elections in the five states mentioned, you will start receiving those details. As all members get each election cycle at the national level, those members in the states

mentioned here will receive postcards, email messages, texts and phone calls announcing official NRA-PVF endorsements.

But I don't want you to just wait for notification about the candidates recommended by NRA-PVF. Voting is, of course, critical to our success, so while it may seem obvious, make sure you are registered to vote. If you haven't voted in a while, or if you've moved since the last time you voted, I want to make sure you don't get turned away at the polls because something in your voter registration isn't up to date. Go to triggerthevote.org/register-to-vote to make sure your vote can be counted.



THE VOTES OF LAW-ABIDING GUN OWNERS CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VICTORY AND DEFEAT.

To make sure we can contact you in the fastest, most efficient way possible, go to nraila.org/sign-up, so we have you in our system for electronic communications.

Those are easy steps you can take, but there's much more that you can do to ensure the Second Amendment is preserved for future generations.

Besides overseeing NRA-ILA's legislative and political programs, I also oversee our vaunted grassroots programs that help make NRA the most effective organization working to defend the Second Amendment. Some of the most important contributors to our grassroots programs are NRA-ILA FrontLines Activist Leaders (FAL). FALs are NRA members who coordinate and implement NRA-ILA's grassroots activities and programs in their areas.

FALs work with NRA staff, NRA members, and pro-gun supporters in their area to provide ground-level support for NRA-ILA programs and activities on a year-round basis. This includes election and legislative efforts. This is a leadership role that requires a high level of organization and an ongoing commitment in support of NRA-ILA's agenda and efforts.

During campaign seasons, like the upcoming one I've been talking about, FALs work directly with their NRA-ILA Campaign Field Representatives (CFR) to organize volunteers for voter contact and get-out-the-vote efforts. In the absence of a CFR in their area, FALs will organize volunteers to directly support the grassroots efforts of NRA-PVF endorsed campaigns.

The role of the FAL doesn't stop with just campaign activities. As the tip of our grassroots spear, FALs work directly with their Grassroots Coordinators to also implement NRA-ILA's Grassroots programs and activate their volunteer networks in support of NRA-ILA's legislative agendas at the federal, state and local levels.

Even if you can spare only an hour a week or a couple of days each month to work with your FAL, he or she needs to hear from you. The power of NRA comes from our members and supporters. And while we can't expect every Second Amendment supporter to do everything, we must work to ensure we all do something!

If you are interested in working with your FAL, go online to nraila.org/grassroots/find-your-frontlines-activist-leader, then fill out the included form or select your state to find their contact information. If your area currently has a FAL vacancy and you are interested in serving in this leadership capacity, please call NRA-ILA's Grassroots Division at 800-392-VOTE (8683) and ask to speak with your state's Grassroots Coordinator.

I know you've heard this over and over again, but it bears repeating: Elections matter! Over the last 30 years, I cannot tell you how many races I have seen decided by a mere handful of votes, and especially at the state level. Now, as much as ever, it is imperative that everyone reading my words lives up to the standard of the legendary bumper sticker this great organization made famous and others have tried to copy: I'm the NRA and I Vote. 🦾

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Air guns are much more than just the Red Ryder in “A Christmas Story.”



Whether for realistic practice at home, reaching out to surprisingly far distances or even harvesting game, air-powered guns are hardly toys.

Mention air guns at the range and shooters nearby will eagerly volunteer the precise day they took ownership of their first Daisy Red Ryder. You can expect a range safety officer to recite Hollywood’s classic and dire “A Christmas Story” warning that, “You’ll shoot your eye out, kid.” The safety and discipline instilled with any BB or pellet gun serves enthusiasts well, but don’t underestimate the performance and utility of modern versions.

The .51-caliber Girardoni air rifles issued to select Austrian troops in 1780 featured interchangeable, buttstock-mounted air canisters and 20-round magazines. Their performance shined in conflicts with Prussia and Turkey—near the end of the 18th century. “These weapons were really accurate and effective,” MAJ John Plaster notes in his book, “The History of Sniping and Sharpshooting.”

In 1804, Lewis and Clark embarked on the Corps of Discovery expedition. Their boats launched in Missouri, mapped a route to Oregon, then made the return trip. Finding food for that 1,228-day trip was a challenge. Hunting provided the answer, and rather than hauling barrels of moisture-susceptible gunpowder in bulk, they carried a Girardoni.

The .51-caliber, 201.5-grain lead balls launched from a Girardoni left the barrel at around 500 fps. That’s 112 ft.-lbs. of energy at the muzzle. Today’s CCI Green Label, 40-grain .22 LR cartridge generates 102—and that load’s no slouch when it comes to putting small game on the table.

Every air gun, regardless of make, is not a toy. All firearm-safety rules apply, and you should never underestimate the performance, particularly in today’s versions.

In 2016 Gamo, a relative newcomer that hit the market in 1958 with its spring-action, .177-caliber Model 45, purchased Daisy, which was established in 1895. Since then, the duo has been pushing the performance envelope.

One of Gamo’s best models illustrates the performance in this new generation of air rifles. “Our top-end, small-game rifle is the Swarm Magnum,” said Lawrence Taylor, Public Relations manager for Daisy/Gamo/BSA Optics. “This powerful air rifle sends a .22-caliber pellet downrange at more than 1,000 fps while providing the accuracy required to take squirrels and rabbits out to 40 to 50 yards.”

Don’t want to have to wrestle with a pellet after every pull of the trigger? “This version of the Magnum has been in our line since 2018 and features Gamo’s industry-leading Swarm 10X Technology, which gives you 10 shots just by breaking the barrel,” Taylor said. “Prior to 2017, all break-barrel air rifles were single shots, so you had to fumble for another pellet between shots.”

Gamo and Daisy don’t hold an exclusive on tiny groups, though. Umarex, founded in 1972, also has a sterling reputation for precision. Justin Biddle, vice president of Marketing at Umarex USA, said one of its top rifles delivers at distances that routinely challenge rimfires. “The Gauntlet 30 has been used to shoot in 100-yard air gun benchrest competitions,” he said. “This may not sound like much distance to a firearm shooter, but wind is much more of a factor on a pellets traveling less than 1,000 fps. With the right pellet for the rifle’s barrel, just like any other gun with a rifled barrel, sub- $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch groups have been reported.”

SIG Sauer introduced its first air pistol in 2015—a P226 lookalike—with an entirely different mission. It, and the models that followed, closely emulate the size, feel and fire controls of its similarly named centerfire siblings. The approach means owners of the latter can use the former to build familiarity from the comfort of home.

There’s more to the company’s entry in the market, though. “It was decided that air guns offer two great opportunities for customers,” explained Tom Taylor, SIG Sauer chief marketing officer and executive vice president of Commercial Sales. “One was that air guns can be used for training. In fact, SIG has been awarded professional contracts for our

air product as a training platform. Second, since SIG products are typically one of the higher-priced products in the market, the company thought air guns were a great opportunity to introduce new customers to SIG products."

There's no denying the simple pleasure of getting behind any trigger, but doing so on a classic-looking platform makes it all the more fun. Biddle explained, "Umarex is known as the 'King of Replicas' worldwide. Its first license agreement was in 1978. Today all of our firearm-branded air guns are very popular sellers such as Beretta, Colt, Glock, H&K, Ruger, Smith & Wesson and Walther, just to name a few. Of course, full-automatic BB guns remain sought after and one should not overlook the Legends offered by Umarex like the M1A1 or M3 Grease Gun, either."

Shooting Off

"Now we see that only armed people can resist the dictatorship. Now there is a small window of opportunity when there is chaos on the streets and the security forces are not in control of the situation."

—Mikhail Khodorkovsky, an exiled Russian oligarch and opposition activist, wrote on his Telegram channel in late June, when members of the Wagner Group private military company staged an abortive coup by marching toward Moscow from the front lines in Ukraine.

Quick Shots

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has officially transitioned to the SIG Sauer P320, giving the new, standard-issue sidearm the C22 designation. The initial delivery of 7,000 pistols was completed in late spring. The contract was awarded in October 2022 and valued at \$3.2 million. Terms include the option of up to an additional 9,500 pistols.

The São Paulo, Brazil, Civilian Police purchased 700 B&T APC9-G PRO model firearms equipped with MBT folding and telescoping stocks, Glock-compatible lower receivers, RQD suppressors and Aimpoint ACRO P2 optics on B&T QD mounts. The acquisition is part of the nation's plan to modernize the equipment of its security forces.

Production capacity at Noptel—an FN Herstal-owned optics company in Finland—has increased with additional technical staff and expanded plant size, with more than €1,150,000 in construction and hiring completed in March. Manufacturing increased roughly 4,850 to 6,670 square feet, providing ample space to meet current needs along with additional workstations to match demand.

Lifestyle | Wear the Wares

Federal Ammunition has recently added a long list of branded gear for sale direct to consumers. The merchandise includes men's and women's apparel, home décor, hunting gear, range gear, educational tools, gifts and more. Several T-shirt and hat designs are new, and each reflects the American spirit and outdoor pursuits.

A rifle-cartridge-holding, American-strong eagle stands prominent on the Federal Eagle



Bullet T-Shirt, for example, leaving little doubt where you stand on the Second Amendment or the freedoms it guarantees. If you're ornithophobic, the company still has your six with its Federal Flag T. MSRP for the Bullet or Ballistic T is \$28 and the Federal Flag T comes in at \$25.

Sizes run from small to 3XL. Beanie-style caps, vests and other outdoor wear are also available. Visit federalpremium.com and select "Merchandise" to view the entire line or to order specific items.

By the Numbers | Criminal-Attack Facts

Deep in the 2021 National Firearm Survey conducted by William English, Ph.D., of the Georgetown University McDonough School of Business, are findings that underscore the importance of situational awareness and self-defense gun capacity. Of the 54,244 people aged 18 or older who participated in the study, 16,708 owned guns. Here are findings among the 31.1 percent in that group who have defended themselves or their property with a firearm. The figures exclude military, law enforcement and security incidents.

- 48.8%** Faced a single attacker
- 30.8%** Were assaulted by a pair of criminals
- 11.9%** Faced a trio of assailants
- 3.9%** Four attackers
- 4.6%** Five or more criminals were involved
- 19.1%** Had to shoot to survive the attack
- 81.9%** Stopped the assault by only making their gun's presence known
- 65.9%** Handguns employed to halt incidents
- 21%** Shotgun put the brakes on the assault
- 1,670,000** The study's estimated number of self-defense uses of a firearm annually, including incidents in which no shots were fired

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target zone of 6 inches. Any shot fired in excess of the par time is an automatic disqualification. Regarding ammunition, load one magazine with only 15 rounds, which will be the total number of rounds fired for the drill. The maximum score is 100 points, with each miss being a penalty of six points.

Here's the drill:

The task will be to fire five rounds at each stage and record your time. The condition will be from the low-ready position (rifle barrel depressed at 45 degrees) starting at the 20-yard line, then the 10 and finish at the 5. There will be a 10-second par time with no more than three misses for an 80-percent hit rate or better.

- At the 20-yard line: From the ready position, on the signal fire five rounds to the body.
- Move to the 10-yard line: From the ready position, on the signal fire five rounds to the body.
- Move to the 5-yard line: From the ready position, on the signal fire five rounds to the body to complete the drill.

The drill's objective is to complete each stage with a descending time with the fewest misses. Tally the time from each distance. Overall time must be below 10 seconds, with no more than three misses. The first stage should be the slowest. The second and third stage are both fast, but not so fast you miss a lot. Let your sights settle back in the target zone and fire. The key is to try not to over-aim or refine your sight picture too much. 

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Drill Practice is isolating an individual part of a skill and focusing intently on improving or mastering. The goal with good drill practice is to maximize your overall improvement while minimizing overall effort. Success equals consistency over time.

It's no secret I'm a huge rifle fan—especially of the AR-15 platform—and when I get a chance to sharpen my rifle skills, I try to add this drill to my practice plan. It can be performed a couple of different ways, but this way seems to be the easiest for most folks who have some range limitations. In this format, you are using a single target and either move to the various distances or, for an indoor range, you move the target to the different distances. The objective is to quickly perform target acquisitions at different distances and meter your speed accordingly. It's all about awareness, and here's a little hint: Let your sights dictate your trigger press.

You will need a silhouette target with an 8-inch scoring zone in the body. The drill starts at the 20-yard line, then moves to the 10 and finishes at the 5. Start as prescribed, but if you can score 80 percent (fewer than three misses) or better, consider scaling up. To scale up, complete the drill using a

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Packed with high-end watch performance and style, minus the high-end price tag. It's everything a high-end watch should be: Sturdy stainless steel and genuine leather construction. Precision timing that's accurate to four seconds a day—that's more precise than a 27-jewel automatic watch priced at over \$6,000. And, good looking—with simple, clean lines and a striking metallic blue face.

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revolutionizing the watch industry to bring you more real value, you can take your own stand against overpriced watches with the *Urban Blue*.

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MSRP: \$429.99; rcbs.com

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MSRP: \$59.99; hornady.com

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MSRP: \$269.95; lymanproducts.com



Solving Cycle-of-Operation Problems

I bought two new, nearly identical pistols made by the same manufacturer. One is chambered in 9 mm., the other is in .45 ACP. The 9 mm fires flawlessly with both ball and hollowpoint ammo. I could not be happier with this gun for a lot of reasons.

On the other hand, the .45 ACP jams almost constantly, no matter what ammunition I try to fire in it. In fact, it is rare to get a full magazine through the gun without some sort of failure. I did a little research online regarding the cycle of operation of a pistol to see if I could determine what could be the cause of the problems I am encountering. So far, I am striking out big time in my search. Hopefully, you can provide some insight into these difficulties, because I am at my wits' end.

There are several symptoms to the problem I am having that occur in no particular order:

After firing several rounds, the slide fails to close all the way, resulting in a partially chambered round. On other occasions, the fired cartridge case is left jammed between the back of the barrel and where the firing pin comes through the slide. Sometimes the fired cartridge case is trapped in the ejection port with the mouth protruding outward to cause a jam.



The gun came with two magazines and jams with both of them in a similar manner. I have cleaned and lubricated the pistol several times both before and during a shooting session, with no evident effect on operation. I even let a different shooter fire the gun with the same results. Your guidance and suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

*Signe Lupoft
St. Louis, MO*

Of the eight steps in the cycle of operation found in semi-automatic firearms, your symptoms could be attributed to how the gun feeds, chambers, ejects and extracts or a combination of all four.

To be perfectly honest, if I had a new gun that exhibited the troubles you are having, I would contact the manufacturer and arrange for it to take a look at the gun. This is for two reasons: First, to get a pistol in your hands that performs similar to its 9 mm stablemate. Second, to give the manufacturer a chance to fix something that apparently was missed by its quality-control department. These things do happen from time to time to every company. Reputable manufacturers will correct the problem(s) to your satisfaction because their reputation in the marketplace depends on it.

In answering your question, however, I would first look at the extractor assembly and how it interfaces with the case rim and extraction groove of the ammunition. There should be enough tension on a live cartridge to hold it in place against the breechface when the

slide is separated from the frame. This can be easily tested by pushing a cartridge up the breechface, under the hook of the extractor until the primer aligns with the firing-pin opening. The hook of the extractor should contact the extraction-groove side of the case rim sufficiently to hold the cartridge in place without additional assistance and with sufficient depth to pull the cartridge out of the chamber as well. It is worthwhile to try several different brands of ammunition, because there are slight differences in case-rim and extraction-groove dimensions from brand to brand. Sometimes it is enough to create a problem similar to what your gun is experiencing.

Although unlikely in a new gun, the characteristics that you describe could be the result of an incorrect recoil spring. Too light in weight could be the reason rounds fail to chamber, as well as insufficient resistance to the movement of the barrel and slide as they move rearward to extract/eject the casing.

The chamber portion of the barrel could also be a contributing factor to the problem if it were rough or poorly finished. This would cause failures to chamber, extract and eject by adding resistance to the movement of the cartridge/case in and out of the chamber.

Even though you have had the same trouble with both magazines, it might be prudent to try another magazine or two just to see if the failures continue. If the magazine feed lips are out of specification, the cartridge presentation from the magazine could cause the feeding and chambering problem. In addition, if the top cartridge in the magazine is a little too prominent, the case rim of the extracted cartridge will encounter the case mouth of the cartridge waiting in the magazine causing the just-fired cartridge to separate from the breechface prematurely and remain in the ejection port.

These are all possibilities and areas to explore, among others, if you prefer to go the extra mile before sending the gun back to the manufacturer. It all depends on how much time, money and ammunition you have to spend in the pursuit of success.

Correspondence is welcomed and encouraged

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Head Down, Follow-Through

Resist the urge to stick your head up—you're a shooter, not a prairie dog.



While we don't recommend actually duct-taping your head to a stock, keeping your shooting form intact without interruption during a course-of-fire is integral to accurate shooting.

At some point in our early shooting lives, most of us were told to “follow-through” by placing our sights back on target immediately after firing each shot. If you failed to develop the habit properly, that advice was probably followed by regular reminders, admonishments and—if a drill sergeant was involved—the occasional boot to some portion of your prone body. In later life, many of us repeat this guidance (minus the boot) when teaching new firearm enthusiasts, though the “why” behind follow-through isn't always fully explained.

The most common reason given for getting back on target is practical in nature. Regardless of whether one is faced with a situation that requires the use of deadly force, confronted by a dangerous animal or hunting to fill the larder, it's a bad idea to assume one shot will automatically have the desired effect. Immediately bringing one's sights back onto target allows for rapid and accurate follow-up shots, if needed. This is good advice and sound practice. However, as golfers, baseball players and anyone else

who uses a tool to rapidly, forcefully and accurately move a “projectile” to a desired spot knows, follow-through is also a critical component of accuracy.

As curious shooters who strive to improve our skills, it's natural to want to know whether or not our intended points-of-impact (POI) have been hit after we hear and feel our shots break. With non-reactive targets, that requires us to either lift our heads to check close targets, or to look through spotting scopes, binoculars or the same riflescopes used for distant shots. Unfortunately, this desire can develop into a habit that prevents us from hitting the things we're aiming at.

I can hear the ballisticians' protests right about now, and they're correct on one point: Follow-through takes place long after a bullet has left the bore. This is fairly easy to demonstrate through numbers. Don't worry, no mathematicians were harmed by the knuckle-dragger math that follows, though my math major/software engineer son cleaned it up for me.

According to the National Institutes for Health, the average eye blink takes about .4 second. Using a 175-grain Sierra Match King .30-caliber projectile with a muzzle velocity of 2,500 fps as an example, we can deduce that it will travel 1,000 feet in the same .4 second that it takes to blink. While the exact rate of acceleration inside the barrel is governed by many internal ballistic factors, some sources indicate that it reaches the speed of sound in the first 2 inches of rifling. If we use a conservative 1,775 fps, which splits the speed of sound (at standard atmospheric) and the 2,500 fps at the muzzle, it would take approximately 11 ten-thousandths of a second (.0011) for our bullet to exit a 24-inch barrel. That's approximately 364 times faster than the average eye blink.

Thus, it's safe to say that if one's body and rifle are stable at the instant that a primer is ignited, one cannot possibly move the rifle faster than the time it takes for the bullet to exit the barrel. The problem is, that's not our problem. Moving the rifle before the bullet starts its trek through the bore is the part of accurate shooting that follow-through actually deals with. Once a shooter succumbs to the desire to check their work immediately upon firing, the habit of “lifting” the firing eye off of the sights is soon to follow. Because this problem is normally progressive, the shooter

typically begins to lift off of their sights (or optic) before firing. Those micro movements of body and rifle yield pulled shots and frustration. Normally imperceptible to the shooter, lifting can be detected by an observer who watches closely from the side or over the firing shoulder.

Apart from duct-taping your head to the rifle's stock, the only way I know of to counter this problem is to force yourself to follow-through after each shot by consciously bringing your sights back onto your point-of-aim. It does not matter that your bullet is long gone. It does matter that by forcing yourself to follow-through back to the point-of-aim, it's possible to break the cycle of prematurely looking for your impacts. Once you're back on target, you can come off the gun, check your last shot, take a nap, whatever.

A third benefit of good follow-through habits is a sort of hybrid of

the first two and limited to specific scenarios. In modern military sniping, it's common for small teams to be spread extremely thin while covering a large area. As a result, having a dedicated spotter is often a luxury. Effective follow-through is required by snipers who must observe their shot impacts through their own riflescopes. Done correctly and at distances beyond about 200 yards/meters, "self-spotting" allows a sniper's reticle to be placed back on the point-of-aim before bullet impact. This permits confirmation of a hit or immediate preparation for a follow-up shot. If it's a miss—and the impact is observable—most modern sniping reticles enable very rapid corrections. During the post-Sept. 11 portion of my time as an active-duty sniper, my teammates and I self-spotted approximately 90 percent of the time, and to good effect. Likewise, rifle shooters who hunt or train over extended

distances and master follow-through can self-spot when no one is around to glass over their shoulders.

Techniques for ensuring follow-through during the firing cycle vary. Mine is to get my reticle (or sights) aligned with my intended POI and then devote about half of my conscious brain to maintaining that image. What's left of my brain takes any "slack" or first stage out of my trigger, controls my breathing cycle and silently screams at me to follow-through as I break the shot. When I do this, and assuming my body position is solid, I shoot well and my sights come right back on target. On the occasions that I mess this up, it's always a result of poor concentration.

If you haven't been a good follower in your own rifle shooting, give it a try and see if it helps tighten things up downrange. If not, at least you'll be ready for follow-up shots (and you won't look like a prairie dog).🌀



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Hammer Time

Hammer-fired actions are clawing their way back into pistol design.



Not all of today's polymer-frame pistols contain striker-fired ignition systems. Hammers can be impactful to both primers and sales.

One of the problems inherent in both being involved with the world of firearms for a long enough time and/or reaching a certain age is you realize you remember a "Before Times" that not everyone around you is able to recall.

For instance, over the last several years I've seen numerous internet gun personalities use the term "striker-fired pistol" as a rough synonym for "modern handgun."

In a way this is understandable. The vast majority of major duty-type sidearm launches from large manufacturers during the last two decades have involved polymer-frame, striker-fired handguns that were more than a little similar to the Austrian "Drastic Plastic." Even former hammer-fired holdouts, titans of the metal-frame traditional DA/SA world like SIG Sauer, CZ and Beretta had bowed to the seemingly inevitable with pistols like the P320, P10 and APX.

The thing is, there's nothing inherently more modern about striker-fired lockwork. Indeed, John Browning's first commercially successful semi-automatic pistol design, the FN Model 1899, was striker-fired. There's nothing new except what's been forgotten.

Here's a thing that you had to be around in the 1980s and '90s to really appreciate: Back when it was new, Glock received nearly as much pushback from traditionalists for the striker-fired action as it did for the polymer frame, and the reason for that is the same reason Glock used a striker in the first place. They're cheap to make.

I was thumbing through a 1992 firearm-buyer's guide annual from some magazine or another the other day, and it was notable just how few pistols used strikers back then. Other than the Glock and H&K's weird platypus P7 series, striker-fired operation was pretty much the sole province of inexpensive zinc-alloy blowback guns from the sort of manufacturers at which brand-conscious buyers would turn up their noses. Because striker-fired pistols are cheap to make.

Glock was just the first manufacturer to crack the code on manufacturing a pistol as inexpensively as possible while still making it rugged and reliable, and they ate everyone else's lunch in the duty-pistol market because of it. The Austrian guns could be sold cheaper than Smith & Wesson or SIG could ever slash their metal, hammer-fired duty pistols and still turn a greater profit, and that's how we ended up where we are now.

Hammer-fired ignition systems still had a couple of advantages, though. The smaller advantage was that they could more reliably ignite harder primers. This isn't much of a factor for the domestic shooter who can choose their ammunition, or even load their own. Anyone who's spent enough time mixing striker-fired pistols and oddball foreign military ball ammo, though, has probably noticed a slightly greater rate of reluctant primers. This is because the striker only has its own momentum, propelled by a little bitty spring in the striker channel of the slide, with which to bust the cap. A hammer-fired ignition system, on the other hand, can stuff a whopping-big spring down in the frame, which then propels a heavy hammer to whack the firing pin.

There's another, bigger advantage to the hammer-operated ignition system, and it's come to completely dominate a certain segment of the handgun market because of it. The reason for this is almost entirely because of George Kellgren.

Pocket pistols tended to fall into two categories: Inexpensive blowback-operated

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ones using striker-fired actions, and expensive blowback-operated ones using hammer-fired actions.

The inexpensive striker-fired ones were bigger and heavier because, in a striker-fired blowback gun, there's nothing resisting the rearward motion of the slide other than the recoil spring and the mass of the slide itself. This put an effective upper-caliber limit on pocket pistols, otherwise the slide would be too bulky to pocket, or the recoil spring would be too heavy for most people to hand-cycle the slide.

For manufacturers willing to add the expense of a hammer-fired action, though, a third braking force was added to slow the slide's rearward travel. Remember how a hammer gun could have a big ol' spring down in the frame, rather than a dinky one in the striker channel? Well, when moving rearward, the slide had to force the hammer back against the tension of this spring. This is why slides of the

Seecamp LWS 32 and Beretta Jetfire were so much less bulky than the ones on, say, a Raven .25 or Davis .32 ACP. (Pistolsmiths who work on 1911s use this fact to tune pistols by tinkering with the bevel on the bottom of the firing pin stop, which affects its leverage against the hammer.)

Kellgren, who'd already exploited the braking forces of a hammer to make very compact .380 ACP and 9 mm pistols, realized he could change the whole paradigm of the pocket semi-auto this way, using nothing but existing technology. Released in 1999, the KelTec P-32 combined an injection-molded polymer frame, like a Glock, with a hammer-fired action and Browning-type short-recoil, tilting-barrel, locked-breech operation to make a very inexpensive, very small pistol chambered in .32 ACP.

Because it was locked breech and hammer fired, it was a fraction of the size of the zinc-alloy, striker-fired

blowback pistols from Davis or Lorcin. Because it was polymer framed, it was a fraction of the weight and cost of a Seecamp LWS 32 or Beretta 3032 Tomcat. They sold like hotcakes, even more so after they got bumped up to .380 ACP, and now bunches of manufacturers have hopped on that still-rolling bandwagon.

That slide-velocity-absorbing property of a hammer-fired action gets used in a lot of pistols now. For instance, the 5.7x28 mm pistols from FN and Ruger use an internal hammer as part of the mechanism to retard the slide against the rearward velocities imparted by that hot, bottlenecked round. Additionally, if the internal hammer is cocked, its braking force is not applied to the slide when hand-cycled. Nowadays, that cocked hammer gets hidden inside the slide and the label "EZ" or similar gets engraved on the outside.

It seems it's hammer time, again. 

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The Skinny On Chokes

Consider this the “Beginner’s Guide to Shotgun Chokes.”



Shotgun chokes can be marked in many ways: hash marks on the muzzle end are common, as are shorthand notations on the side of the choke.

The Bible among disciples of the shotgun—the “NRA Firearms Fact Book”—defines choke as: “Muzzle constriction of the bore of a shotgun or tube that influences shot-pattern density and dispersion.”

In other words, a shotgun choke is like a water hose: By manipulating the nozzle, you can choose a narrow, powerful stream that goes perhaps 10 yards, or a wide stream that goes maybe 10 feet.

In terms of shotguns, the narrower—or tighter—the choke, the denser the pattern and the more effective it is at longer range. But, the tighter the choke, the narrower the pattern, and so it can be easier to miss. Therefore, for stationary targets at long range, like say, a standing deer at 50 yards, a tight choke is preferred because hunters need to put as many pellets as possible into that deer’s vital zone. Whereas a full choke and quality load might put five out of nine 00-buckshot pellets into the zone, the same load through a cylinder choke might only deliver one or two, with the other pellets hitting the deer in non-vital areas or missing it entirely. Conversely, for close or moving targets such as a home intruder at seven steps, less choke is preferred due to its larger pattern.

In the old days, shotgun barrels were built with “fixed chokes” from the factory, but nowadays most shotguns feature “screw-in” choke tubes that allow the shooter to alter the shotgun’s pattern for its intended use.

Although there are others, five choke sizes are most common. They are (in order of the most constrictive to least): Full, Improved Modified, Modified, Improved Cylinder and Cylinder (no choke). What follows are the

actual measurements of each choke, keeping in mind that an unchoked bore of a 12-gauge shotgun measures .729 inch internally.

Full choke: .036-inch constriction; .693-inch resulting bore size; 70 percent of pellets in a 30-inch circle at 40 yards.

Improved Modified: .022-inch constriction; .707-inch resulting bore size; 60 percent of pellets in a 30-inch circle at 40 yards.

Modified: .011-inch constriction; .718-inch resulting bore size; 50 percent of pellets in a .30-inch circle at 40 yards.

Improved Cylinder: .007-inch constriction; .722-inch resulting bore size; 40 percent of pellets in a 30-inch circle at 40 yards

Cylinder: No constriction; .729-inch bore size; 30 percent of pellets in a 30-inch circle at 40 yards.

Fact is, “scatterguns” are not the street sweepers their Hollywood-driven reputations suggest. An average load of modern 00 buckshot from a cylinder-choked barrel fired down a hallway will typically spread out just 8 to 10 inches at 10 yards, not the 6-foot width of the entire hallway that many people seem to believe. Although a spread of 1-inch per yard of distance is a standard rule of thumb, I generally find cylinder-choke/00 buckshot loads spread slightly less than that, more like 8 inches at 10 yards and 15 inches at 20.

While there are many variables to shotgun spread—the main ones being load choice, pellet material, choke and distance—often individual shotguns will pattern slightly differently than the next even if they are choked the same. So, the key is to first determine your likely shooting scenario. Then, pick a choke accordingly, choose a load, and test that load on paper to see what your pattern actually looks like at various distances. If the pattern is too big and skimpy, so small that it looks more like one massive projectile than a spread of individual pellets or the spread is wildly non-uniform, try another choke and/or load combination.

As a general rule, the more expensive the load, the less it will spread, because more expensive loads tend to use high-tech wads, copper-plated shot and buffer material that mitigate spread and flyers. Often these loads are used for hunting. Take Federal’s Flite Control loads, for example. These expensive loads consistently produce very tight patterns, and therefore are better for longer ranges and not the most desirable for very close shots.

Books have been written on the nuances of chokes and loads for small game and waterfowl. But, because this is *Shooting Illustrated* where we focus on home defense, I’ll leave you with this: For most defensive purposes, in most scenarios where an engagement should be less than 20 yards, shooting 00 buck through Cylinder choke is usually your best bet. If, after testing, it seems a little too open for your liking, try Improved Cylinder.

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I guess I was a little bored. For the past hour, I'd been on the phone with Daniele, the head of my office in Italy, reviewing our latest purchases of Italian gold, Murano glass and Italian-made shoes and handbags.

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FN AMERICA

REFL





FN has a hit on its hands with its cover of The Reflex. Talk about charting with a bullet ...

According to the dictionary, a "Reflex" is an automatic or unthinking response to an external stimulus. That makes the chosen nomenclature of FN America's newest pistol only half true. While it's certainly a response to outside stimuli, it's far from unthinking. We should probably start by delving into the market forces that brought us to this point. If we dig back to the dawn of the modern "Shall-Issue" concealed-carry movement in the mid-1980s to the late 1990s, the 9 mm handguns intended for concealed carry fell into two categories: On the one hand, you had pistols derived from the LE/mil duty side-arms of the era. Take a Glock G17 or SIG Sauer P226 and whack some length off the grip frame and slide and you wound up with the Glock G19/26 or the SIG P228/229, which were perfectly sized for detectives, plainclothes officers—and private citizen CCW toters willing to perform the lifestyle changes required to "dress around the gun."

By Tamara Keel
Photos by Eric Dean

REFLEX



The other variety of 9 mm CCW pistols were designed from the ground up as teeny single-stack guns, and these became favored by people with more need to dress like they weren't hiding a gun, whether undercover LE officers or private citizens in states with penalties for "printing."

This balance of minimum size on the one hand and maximum capacity on the other remained in tension for almost 20 years until SIG Sauer released its P365, which I reviewed in these pages when it debuted some five years back.

A whole new genre of handguns was created: "Micro-Compacts" that could still compete with the tiny single-stacks in the category of size, but managed to cram a double-digit round count into their staggered magazines. In short order, the P365 was joined by the Springfield Armory Hellcat and Smith & Wesson Shield Plus, among many other examples from nearly every handgun manufacturer—and now FN has its Reflex.

The new Reflex from FN America hit the market in the spring of this year with basic

stats similar to the other inhabitants of the category. It's a 9 mm pistol that measures slightly larger than 6 inches in overall length and crams a flush-fit 11-round staggered magazine into a sub-5-inch height. Attentive readers will note that these dimensions drop it roughly into the overall concealment envelope of a J-frame-size revolver, albeit with a width much narrower than that imposed by a wheelgun's cylinder.

At launch, the Reflex is available in two basic variants, regular and MRD (which is FN-speak for "cut to accept a slide-mounted micro red dot"), differing by 60 bucks in the MSRP department.

At first glance, they look like 509s that someone has left in the dryer too long, but a closer examination reveals that these are actually two very different pistols, and they are far from just another "me too" P365/Hellcat clone.

The Reflex ships, like other FN pistols, in a folded cardboard box, but upon opening the box the buyer is greeted with the pistol and accessories lying in a blown plastic tray, rather than the zippered-nylon pouches common to FN handguns over the last several years. If this is an effort to keep prices competitive, it definitely helps, because MSRP for the base model (which includes a Hi-Viz tritium night sight in the front dovetail) comes in at a mere \$599.

I say "base model," because, as mentioned, the Reflex comes in two variants, regular and MRD. Why pistol manufacturers insist on including non-optics-cut models in 2023 is beginning to be a mystery. While the base model saves the buyer 60 bucks versus

FN | Reflex



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Load	Velocity	Group Size		
		Smallest	Largest	Average
TulAmmo 115-grain FMJ	1,120	2.45	3.00	2.74
CCI Blazer Brass 124-grain FMJ	998	1.85	2.65	2.23
Federal 147-grain HST JHP	978	1.50	2.15	1.83

Velocity measured in fps 9 feet from the muzzle for 10 consecutive shots with an Shooting Chrony Beta chronograph. Temperature: 64 degrees Fahrenheit. Accuracy measured in inches for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 15 yards from a pistol rest.

SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer: FN America; (703) 288-3500, fnamerica.com

Action Type: Recoil-operated, semi-automatic

Caliber: 9 mm

Capacity: 15+1 rounds

Frame: Fiberglass-reinforced polymer

Slide: Nitrided stainless steel

Barrel Length: 3.3 inches

Sights: Drift-adjustable U-notch with two dots, rear; post with tritium dot, front

Trigger Pull Weight: 5 pounds, 4 ounces

Length: 6.2 inches

Weight: 18.5 ounces

Accessories: Two magazines (11 and 15 rounds), flush-fit floorplate, lock, manual

MSRP: \$599

the MRD variant, it comes at the expense of a bit of SKU bloat for the gunmaker. Maybe some people just really hate dot cuts. Who's to say?

At any rate, the top of the slide has a sighting plane milled flat between the fore and aft dovetails. If you have the MRD version, there's a cap covering the optics cut secured with a pair of Torx screws. At the rear of the chamber hood, in the top-center of the ejection port, is a small rectangular cutout that serves as a loaded-chamber indicator by providing direct visual observation of a cartridge case.

The nose of the slide is beveled to aid in fumble-free holstering and features three broad, shallow-angled grasping grooves for people who like to walk on the wild side and charge their subcompact semi-automatics by grabbing them up near the loud end. You do you; for the rest of us, there are matching sets of five angled cocking serrations back in the usual place at the rear of the slide.

The most unusual feature of the slide in this current year is that the rear is one solid piece of metal, with no removable slide cover plate. If you want to have some goofy skull or some other logo staring at you while you shoot, you're going to have to draw it there yourself.

Moving down to the frame, we notice a few more differences from the bigger 509 series. For starters, and most likely in the interest of compactness, the Reflex lacks ambidextrous slide-release levers. South-paws will be using their trigger finger to actuate it. Also, rather than use the truly ambidextrous magazine release like that on the 509 series, the Reflex has a more conventional reversible button. As small as the grip on the pistol is, this makes sense, since there would be almost no way to prevent the grip of anyone who wears a size medium or large glove from inadvertently hitting the offside mag release under recoil.

The magazines retained by those buttons are either a flush-fit 11-round version or an extended 15-rounder. The latter features a textured collar that blends with the grip, while the former ships with a pinkie-rest floorplate attached, but included in the box is a flat floorplate, too, allowing for maximum concealability.

The sides of the grip frame have the sort of sandpaper molded-in texture common



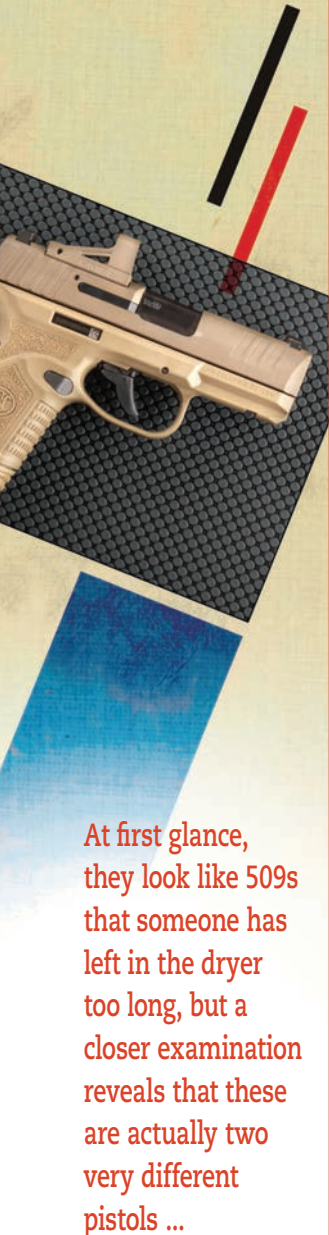
Despite its short length, the Reflex manages to incorporate a single-slot rail in the dustcover • The front sight's dot contains tritium, while the rear features a U-notch and two white dots •



A scallop on the ejection port prevents spent brass from getting dinged • As the safety articulates higher up, the finger contacts a smooth trigger face • A combination of fine stippling and raised squares provides adequate purchase on the rather snappy little pistol • The 11-round, flush-fit magazine is offered with the option of a

rather useful pinky rest, while the 15-round, extended magazine provides an abundance of firepower, albeit with slightly less concealability.





At first glance, they look like 509s that someone has left in the dryer too long, but a closer examination reveals that these are actually two very different pistols ...

on FN handguns these days, while the front- and backstrap have the trademark FN checkering. All in all, it makes for a grippy little package, which is good on a teeny blaster chambered in a service caliber.

On the frame's dustcover is an accessory rail that will take compact lights of the Streamlight TLR-7 Sub or SureFire XSC variety. You don't even need to shop for a special one to fit the Reflex, since FN wisely just went ahead and spec'd the Reflex's accessory rail to match that of the Glock G43X/48.

The trigger features a two-piece hinged design to protect from inertial discharges when dropped, although rather than being hinged in the middle as is familiar to M&P or FN 509 shooters, the entirety of the trigger shoe forms the hinged part. In other words, it feels like a regular trigger to the shooter's fingertip—a nice touch. On the test sample, it broke surprisingly cleanly at 5.25 pounds.

On the left side of the frame (for the shooter), just above the trigger guard, is the disassembly lever. To fieldstrip the pistol, clear it, lock the slide to the rear, drop the mag, ensure the chamber is empty, rotate the lever upward a bit more than a quarter turn, release the slide and release it forward off the frame. No pulling of the trigger is required and, in fact, the pistol can't be disassembled if the trigger has been pulled.

Once the slide is off the frame, the reason behind this is apparent, as is the lack of a slide-cover plate on the rear: Inside the



Takedown of the Reflex is uncomplicated and requires no pulling of the trigger.

frame is a teeny little hammer. By making the Reflex hammer-fired, FN managed to get a great trigger pull, avoids having to pull the trigger to disassemble (something some organizations have grown leery about) and also exploits the slide-braking properties of the hammer to get away with a lighter recoil spring than a pistol this small would otherwise have required. In some circles, there's also institutional reluctance to use striker-fired pistols in roles where deep concealment, such as pocket carry, might be required. A thumb-safety-equipped Reflex is even in the works.

In addition to being hammer-fired, another nice touch on the Reflex is that the optics-ready version doesn't use adaptor plates. Instead, the Reflex MRD ships with a baggie containing a torx wrench and two sets of screws (with thread locker already applied). One set of screws works with the Holosun 507k & SIG Sauer Romeo Zero, and the other is used to mount a Shield RMSc, Riton 3 TACTICS MPRD 2 or Swampfox Sentinel. Slowly but surely, the industry is moving toward a couple standardized dot footprints and a couple standardized sight dovetails and I could not be happier.

So how does it shoot? Well, let's get the ugly part out of the way first. "Brisk but manageable" has been a hoary cliché for recoil in gun writing for so long that it's a running joke on the internet, but there are places where it applies. One of those places would be if one were to use the flat floorplate on the Reflex's 11-rounder for maximum concealability and then load the pistol with +P duty loads—and the Reflex is expressly rated for use with +P 9 mm ammo.



The Reflex is offered in standard and optic-ready variants. The former saves you a bit of coin, but limits sighting options and, perhaps, resale value • A cut-out in the barrel hood serves as a simple loaded-chamber indicator.



The diminutive Reflex is ideal for appendix inside-the-waistband carry.

Grip texture can only do so much when you're hanging on with two fingers to a sub-20-ounce pistol and cutting loose with hot 124-grain +P Gold Dots or HSTs. It's not quite as unpleasant as shooting +P ammo in an Airweight J-frame, but you definitely don't stand around wondering if the gun went off or not.

On the other hand, fit the pinkie-rest floor plate—or use the 15-round magazine—and +P ammo becomes more manageable. With standard-pressure ammo, it's actually plenty controllable. The trigger made accurate work quite easy. Eight-inch plates at 20 yards were a breeze, and off the bench I managed a couple 2-inch and smaller 15-round groups.

The test gun digested 400 rounds of 124-grain Blazer Brass FMJ, as well as another 200 rounds of assorted TulAmmo and Sellier & Bellot ball ammo, and 190 rounds of premium jacketed hollowpoints with no malfunctions of any sort.

Overall, this is a viable addition to an increasingly popular niche. Not only is it a practical backup or deep-concealment piece for those who already carry the larger FN 509 series as their primary duty or CCW pistol, but it's also a great option for shooters with smaller hands who might feel uncomfortable operating a striker-fired pistol. As long as they tailor the load they carry to their recoil comfort level, they likely won't be disappointed. 



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Practical PREPPING

You don't need a fully stocked, blast-proof bunker to be prepared to survive a massive calamity, but you do need to actually prepare.

If you have been paying attention, then you know this world doesn't look to be headed in a good direction. Bad things may be coming, and nobody knows how much time we have to prepare. The cynics say we have very little. We have dodged Armageddon so far, but how many times can that happen? We had a big blip in the 1930s, and it took a calamitous world war to avoid social and economic collapse.

My first realization of the existence of prepping was from reading authors like Mel Tappan back in the Jimmy Carter years, when the economy was stuck in stagflation and things looked bleak. Actually, my grandparents were preppers throughout their lives, although they never heard the term in this context. They grew their own food, kept chickens, butchered livestock and Gramp hunted and fished. He also reloaded ammo and repaired guns. They harvested apples in the fall and made cider to store by the barrel. I can remember exploring their large and fully stocked underground root cellar when I was a kid. It was a mysterious place and an indication that, having lived through the Great Depression, they were never going to be hungry again.

I know a guy who takes this very seriously. He has a huge, underground bunker that is stocked to overflowing with guns, ammo and freeze-dried food. Thing is, he has a lot of money. I, like a lot of people, do not.

So, what can the rest of us do to get ready for bad times? If we can't fund a multi-million-dollar bunker, are we doomed? Nah. We just need to do things a little at a time. I like to think of it as "Poor Man's Prepping."

By Bryce M. Towsley

For part of my six-month plan, I have a large freezer that I keep as full as possible. Much of what's inside is wild game, but not all of it ... We also keep frozen vegetables and even a few small pizzas I can cook in my camp oven.

It's often said that prepping is beans, bullets and bandages. That's simplistic, but it isn't wrong. Let's focus on the beans and bullets for today. The medical side of things is pretty extensive and would require its own article or two. Even on food and security, we will just hit the highlights.

I would like nothing better than to build a huge underground bunker and stock it so full that there are just paths through the stuff, although I would add a few things other than freeze-dried food. No need to eat like you are on an extended camping trip. There are other options. Sadly, it's one of those life goals that didn't work out. I wanted to be rich by now, but life left me a bit short of the private island and personal jet I had planned. So, for those of us struggling sometimes to make the payments on life, there is still a way to prep.

You don't need to do it all at once—let your prepping grow and expand. It sounds like a lot, but it doesn't have to be. When you do your weekly shopping, toss a few extra things in the cart. You probably won't even notice at checkout. When you get home, put them away for a rainy day. It's amazing what you will collect rather quickly without any significant financial burden.

Think about what you are storing in the context that you may have to eat it for a very long time. Most freeze-dried food actually tastes pretty good. The downside is that it's expensive and it's loaded with salt. That said,

if you watch the prepping sites and even Amazon, you can find some pretty good deals at times. I also like to check outdoor retail stores at the end of the hunting and hiking seasons. Sometimes, they put the left-over stock on sale.

I eat freeze-dried food often during hunting season, and we sometimes have it for a quick and easy dinner here at Camp Towsley. It gives us a chance to see which meals we like and which ones we don't. After Armageddon is a poor time to find out you don't like the stacks of food you piled up for survival. While there are some freeze-dried foods that are very good, there are none that I will eat willingly for the rest of my life. All that salt is not healthy long term, either.

I like to say you need three plans after a catastrophic event: The first three days, the next six months and then the rest of your life. The first days are going to be hectic and busy. Freeze-dried food is handy when you are occupied. It can also help get through the six months when you probably don't have a good way to replenish your food supply. But, for the long term, it's not the way. You will need healthier food and a way to replenish your stocks. However, even long term, it's good to have some freeze-dried food stashed for those times you are too busy or too sick to cook.

All that said, freeze-dried food should be part of any prepping plan. It stores well, is very easy to prepare—even under difficult

PHOTOS BY BYCE M. TOWSLEY



Freeze-dried and other long-lasting foods are a key component of any disaster-prep plan. They can be purchased over time and used as their expiration dates approach, replacing eaten items with new ones • Portioning meat and freezing it in a dedicated freezer can help it last longer, and it, too, can be consumed and replaced as needed • A portable generator is key for prepping, since it can keep freezers and refrigerators running should the power grid fail. Since they run on gasoline, you'll need access to fuel or fuel stabilizers in an emergency. They must be run outside, so you'll also need extension cords to hook appliances up to them.

conditions—and it's light enough for a bug-out situation. I keep three days' worth of freeze-dried food in my bug-out bag along with a backpacker's stove and a water filter.

It's also important to stock up on other, healthier foods. Most of them are cheaper than freeze-dried food, so you can get a lot more bang for your buck. For part of my six-month plan, I have a large freezer that I keep as full as possible. Much of what's inside is wild game, but not all of it. For example, I bartered for half a side of beef recently. We also keep frozen vegetables and even a few small pizzas I can cook in my camp oven. No point in suffering needlessly.

In addition to our main generator, I have a small generator to keep the freezer cold, and I store enough stabilized gasoline to run it for those six months. I rotate the gas, dumping it in my truck and refilling the cans every six months. If I cover the freezer with sleeping bags, blankets and other insulation, I can get by running the generator a few hours a day.

Other foods should be chosen for long-term storage. Most anything dried is good—various beans, peas, legumes, rice, pasta or anything along those lines. Also useful are staples like sugar, flour and some spices. Many grains are good for long-term storage, although some will require a grinder to process for use later. Buy a hand-crank, not electric, since you might not have power.

All of these foods should be stored in airtight containers along with the correct number of oxygen absorbers, which are available online. This keeps any oxygen out of the container and prevents (or at least greatly retards) spoilage. You can also put flour and dried grains in the freezer for a while first to kill off any bugs and eggs. After freezing, bring everything back to room temperature and let any condensation evaporate. Then, put them in an airtight container with oxygen absorbers. Store everything in a cool, dry place and out of the light.

There are commercial products available for storage; Mylar bags, buckets that seal tight and even cans that can be sealed. But, they can be expensive and the cost adds up fast. Canning jars are a little less expensive. We are currently experimenting with some recyclable bottles. Those marked "PETE 1" with a sealable top are safe to use. I sterilize 1- and 2-quart bottles, fill them and add an oxygen absorber. Another advantage of this



PHOTOS BY BRYCE M. TOWSLEY

According to the author, the two most important guns for a prepper are an AR-pattern carbine in 5.56 NATO and a 9 mm handgun • Ammo will be a key item in any disaster, both for its uses and as a bartering item.



system is that these smaller bottles hold the right portion for us to use—if we open a 5-gallon bucket of rice, it can spoil before we use it all. If we part it out into these smaller containers, the smaller portions work well. The downside is they don't block light, so they should be stored in the dark.

Canned goods can last a long time. If you buy stuff you use anyway and rotate the stock, it will be as fresh as possible when you don't have alternatives. Tuna, soup or baked beans, for example, are good sources of nutrition. I like ramen noodles now and then for lunch. They are cheap and they store well. I buy them several cases at a time. I eat from one case and when it's empty, I shift everything forward on the shelf and replace the back case.

You should limit the processed food though, as eating a lot of it is not good for you. Plan to have plenty of rice, beans, pasta, grains and the like to eat as well. Think about things like powdered milk, honey and maple syrup. All of them store well. One thing I will not abide is going without coffee. I have several bags of coffee beans stored in the freezer, but I also bought several large jars of freeze-dried instant. It's not good coffee, but it's coffee.

You need to sample any food you plan to store. It's important to learn how to cook it

In addition to food, you should be storing as much ammo as you can afford and find. Not just for the obvious reasons, but consider that it will make great bartering fodder in a barter economy.

When you do your weekly shopping, toss a few extra things in the cart. You probably won't even notice at checkout. When you get home, put them away for a rainy day.

before the crisis. For example, freeze-dried food is simple to prepare, but whole wheat berries are not.

Having a good store of emergency food is great, but if you can't protect your food in lawless times, you and everybody you love could end up starving regardless of how much food you keep. Therefore, you need to be able to defend your stockpile, which means you'll need guns.

What guns are appropriate for prepping? That is a vast and complicated arena. If you are reading this magazine, then you already have an interest in guns. You may even have what you need. For those who do not, however, here is the entire subject boiled down to the two most important firearms.

Each person in your household should have at least two basic firearms for protection. The first is a magazine-fed, semi-automatic rifle. It should be in 5.56 NATO. In addition to being the most popular in its class with civilians, this is still the standard chambering of Western military rifles and most law enforcement rifles, too. That means the chances for finding ammo are high. The guns should probably be AR-15 platforms, since the popularity of "America's Rifle" pretty much ensures there will be a supply of magazines and parts available.

Each person should also have a personal handgun in 9 mm. Again, this is a NATO cartridge that is the most popular handgun chambering among the tens of millions of

civilians who own and carry a pistol. When I wrote my book on the subject in 2016, I picked a Glock, and it's still a great choice. I might amend that to include the SIG Sauer P320, as it is becoming quite popular itself. The military's M17 is functionally identical, so the magazines are interchangeable. Several larger-capacity magazines for each firearm are also a must-have.

In addition to food, you should be storing as much ammo as you can afford and find, not just for the obvious reasons, but consider that it will make great bargaining fodder in a barter economy. If things go bad, ammo will become the currency of the land.

Remember, you may be staking your life on this ammo, so for personal use, buy the good stuff. Get high-quality defensive ammo with expanding bullets. That's what you will be protecting your food and family with. You also may want to build up a supply of cheaper ammo simply because you get more for the dollar spent. Just like with food, buy an extra box of each on every trip to the gun store. Again, it will build up over weeks and months. If things go really bad, a box of ammo can be traded for enough food to feed your family for days, and the less expensive stuff can be just as valuable in such times. In a pinch, you can fight with it as well.

Practical prepping is long term and a little at a time. But you must start now. Don't wait until it is too late—it's called preparing for a reason. 🌀

PHOTOS BY BRYCE M. TOWSLEY



AR-pattern rifles are the most popular in the country, making it easy to find or trade for spare parts in an extended emergency • Likewise, Glock handguns are nearly as popular as ARs, meaning magazines and parts will be readily available • Ammo can be stored for long periods in ready-made containers that help organize calibers, save space and make what you need for survival or bartering easy to find with minimal effort or time.



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Alone in a Crowd

Here's what to do if you're faced with a violent encounter in a public space.

By Jeff Gonzales

While violent encounters in public spaces are rare, they can and do occur. If you should find yourself in the middle of such an event, the rationale behind the actor or actors is not important. What is important is that you are prepared, aware and capable. I have studied events like these closely, once making my living gathering and interpreting intelligence related to various types of violent attacks all over the world. I was looking for patterns to exploit that would lead to the creation of updated measures for force protection. I'll admit, not everyone liked what I had to say, but that didn't make it any less true. In the end, you are responsible for your own safety and the safety of your loved ones. We all need to plan accordingly.



While we generally think of defensive events as happening within 10 yards, being able to hit a target at 15, 20 and even 25 yards is certainly advantageous.

What we can do as responsible gun owners starts by being prepared. Ask yourself how you have planned to confront this type of attack. Outside of the tools, what have you done to mentally prepare yourself? One of the best tactics you can employ is committing to an armed lifestyle. Like any other defensive gun use that happens outside of the home, they are virtually an unknown, unknowable event. This puts a terrible burden on the individual to carry as often as possible. As I mentioned earlier, there are no more safe spaces. Every location has the potential to go from a peaceful outing to a deadly force event in the blink of an eye. Committing to carrying regularly is a great first start.

Part of preparation is creating an emergency-action plan that covers a series of actions that happen immediately and without questioning when the severity of the situation is known. There are so many variables to consider such as are you alone, or with friends or family members? Are you together or separated at the scene of the attack? Does everyone have the means to move on their own? Do you have means of communicating with your group and the outside world, preferably hands-free? How will you link up if separated, where should you meet and how long should you wait before moving farther away? These are just a

few questions to consider with the intention of getting you thinking. The mind is the greatest weapon, and when you combine that with thinking through these situations beforehand, you will be better prepared.

Even with the best laid plans, rehearsals and even role playing, they all become less effective if you are caught unaware. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of staying alert to your surroundings when in public. I used to downplay this to some extent; my level of alertness and awareness in a combat zone or non-permissive environment is obviously different from when I'm shopping at my favorite grocery store. As we've all witnessed, the world is becoming more and more dangerous. While I recognize my home state is not the same as a third-world country, I have found myself staying alert and vigilant like being deployed overseas. It is an exhausting activity, scanning and assessing. You are evaluating every piece of information available. I know the term "profiling" is unfavorable in many circles, but when you are maintaining a high state of alertness, that is exactly what you are doing. Every piece of information is used to make informed decisions to better predict and prepare for potential dangers.

This type of alertness does not just mean assessing people, but places as well. The ability to see the terrain in a manner that

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Avoiding violent crowds is usually the best means of protecting yourself in such situations.

allows you to exploit the tactical advantage is a learned skill. For instance, where is my next piece of cover? Should I be alerted to danger, where can I hide or be protected from bullets? Much like a safety brief on an airplane, your safest exit may be behind you. As you move around the world, look nearby for the next piece of cover. Also, remember the location of the last piece of cover; knowing that it could be better to fall back rather than advance is a huge advantage. The other key terrain feature you are looking for is an exit or escape. Think outside the box and don't just consider the obvious exit points, but consider options like where the back doors are located. As cliché as it sounds, never walk into a place you don't know how to walk out from.

As we see more and more Americans choosing to carry concealed, we need to acknowledge there are more "good guys with guns" across the country than just a few years ago. This is unquestionably a good thing, but there is a potential downside to it. Quite simply, it greatly increases the importance of properly identifying the actual threat. More important now than ever, just seeing someone with a firearm is not automatic grounds to consider them a bad actor. Is that truly a violent criminal, or a father protecting his family or a mother protecting her child? This will make target discrimination more challenging, but there is no other option. Our target-discrimination process starts big, taking in the whole person: What are they doing, what are they wearing, where is their attention, what is their demeanor? Pay attention to their demeanor and look for pre-attack cues they may give off. Micro-expressions are easy to spot, but often overlooked, such as wide, non-blinking eyes, pursed lips, furrowed brow, clenched teeth, to name a few. From there, we narrow in on their hands. Where are their hands, and what are they holding?



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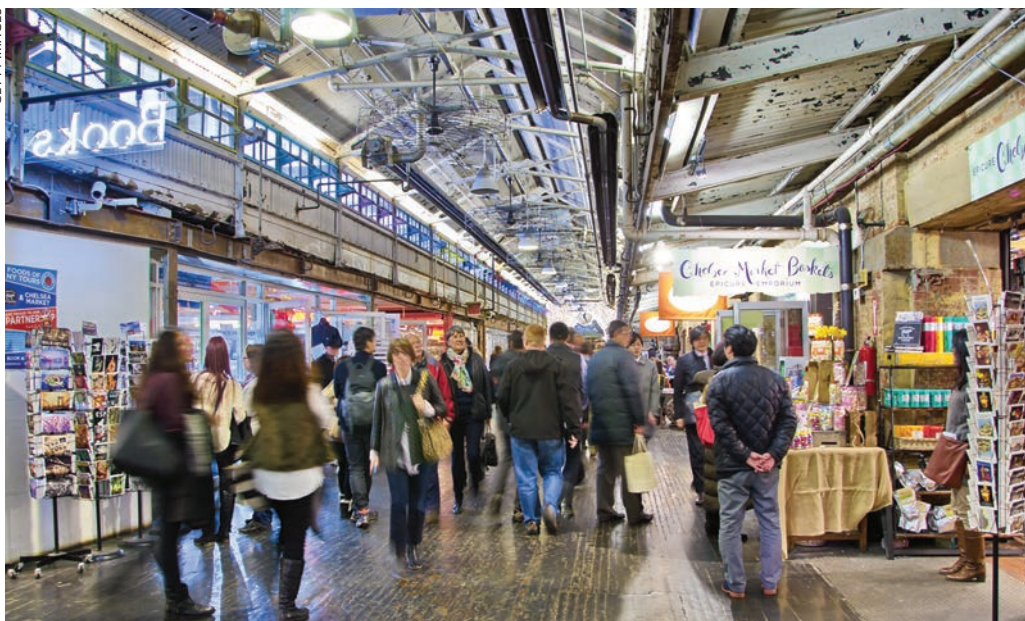
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When in an indoor shopping area like a mall or large box store, knowing exits and other areas of egress, in addition to objects or locations that can provide cover, will help shape your plans in case of a violent attack.

As much as we all would prefer, the danger of violent attacks in public is unlikely to go away. The hard part is understanding what that means for us at the individual level.

If you cannot see their hands that is a huge red flag, especially if you picked up on some of the other listed cues. It may be necessary to deconflict good guy from good guy and realize you are both on the same team. It goes without saying we are responsible for our actions and especially our use of deadly force, so be positive of your target and what's beyond it.

Violent attacks in public spaces represent a different type of threat and one that must be better understood. A violent crime committed against a person such as robbery, assault, rape, murder and kidnapping have different outcomes, but what they all share is proximity. For these crimes to be committed, the violent criminal actor must be in proximity. Violent attacks in public spaces depart from this model slightly, in that the goal—if there is one—is to cause as much mayhem and confusion as possible. Victims, intended or incidental, don't have to be in such close proximity to the brutal actor(s), often merely being in their general vicinity is enough. This means you may be required to engage the bad actor from distances outside the normal distances we see in other violent crimes. There was a period in the training industry where teaching students to shoot at distance was considered a waste of time, that an instructor who emphasized distance-shooting did not understand the real dangers the average person faces. I knew then and know now this was poor

judgment. It is our responsibility to best prepare the student for the unknown, unknowable event.

While we generally think of defensive events as happening within 10 yards, being able to hit a target at 15, 20 and even 25 yards is certainly advantageous. Aside from helping to diagnosis shooting errors, it provides a necessary skill, being able to maximize your distance from an attacker or attackers. Jack Wilson stopped a shooting at a church in Texas at a distance of 15 yards. Elisjsa Dicken engaged a shooter in a mall at an initial distance of 40 yards. Now, we could easily go down a rabbit hole by saying well, if 25 yards is good, then 50 yards must be better. I'm not saying that is wrong thinking, but I am saying we need to ensure marksmanship fundamentals are well understood. In my mind, shooting at distance or close range is not too different. I still need to apply each of the five fundamentals, but depending on the situation I can take certain liberties with my speed or accuracy. This is the biggest take away; you need to balance these two variables constantly depending on the situation.

At close range, you have neither the time nor the required level of precision. You can be less exact with your sight picture and trigger control. As you increase the distance, you will need to be more precise with your aiming and trigger press, with the ability to meter your focus being key. The act of

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Even events like a local, county or state fair are not immune to outbreaks of violence, so being vigilant is always the best policy.

quickly judging how exact your aim needs to be along with how defined your trigger control is a learned skill often overlooked. An acceptable level of aim will be based off the time, distance and exposure of the target. I use two levels of precision while aiming: fine and rough. When my aiming is rough, I know there are imperfections, but based off the situation I'm good with them and they are acceptable. My front sight might not be perfectly aligned with my rear sight, or the sight system might not be perfectly centered on the point-of-impact of the target. This produces a good enough outcome with regard to accuracy. Then there is fine, and when my aiming is fine there are very little if any imperfections in my sights or aiming on the target. This produces the very best outcome with accuracy. If you are in a situation where the only available target is smaller than a normal target, having the ability to refine your aiming process will be necessary. Not only is the smaller target harder to hit, but it implies it is easy to miss. Should you miss, your act could endanger or injure (or worse) an innocent bystander. Training to adjust the

level of refinement needed for your aiming is an incredibly important skill to develop.

As much as we all would prefer, the danger of violent attacks in public is unlikely to go away. The hard part is understanding what that means for us at the individual level. The odds are still very low you will ever be in a violent encounter in a public space, but preparation is always key. Have you thought about an emergency family plan, talked it over with family members and even rehearsed what to do in case of an emergency? Regardless of the type of event, we could all benefit from paying more attention to our surroundings. Minimize distractions from mobile devices and keep your attention on things that don't belong or that stand out. If you are called to defend yourself or your family, realize the situation will be outside the norm. You may have to contend with distance or reduced targets, which will require a shift in your training and skill. The hope, of course, is that you never find yourself in such an event, but hope is not a tactic—planning and preparation are. 🌀



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You are not Getting Any Younger!

By George Harris



The Problem

You just started collecting Social Security and are now fully retired from the day-to-day rat race of making a living. This is the time in life you had been looking forward to, which equates to unlimited range days with your favorite pistols. Unfortunately, having spent more than six decades working with your hands, your strength is not what it once was. General manipulation of your 9 mm everyday-carry gun as well as some of the other semi-automatics in your collection has become difficult and troublesome—especially racking the slide. Other than reverting to revolvers, you are looking for options in the semi-automatic category that are easier to handle and perhaps easier on the old hands during recoil. You did not work this hard for this long only to experience this disappointment. Your hope is for answers that will keep you shooting into the next decade, that is if it is still legal by then in your home state of California.

The Solution

There are options available that should keep you shooting as long as you want to, even in California.

When addressing a conundrum such as this from someone whom I have never met, I prefer to keep my suggestions simple and easily attainable with the equipment they already have before suggesting a change in firearm or caliber.

In sticking with the guns you have, you may want to consider installing more prominent sights, which will give you something against which to rest the web of your support hand when racking the slide.

Since Father Time is creeping up on you, you might want to consider a red-dot sight for your guns to help with the vision changes that we all experience later in life. Such sights will also give you a handhold to make racking the slide a little easier.

A technique that might be helpful is to hold the gun in close to the body's center at an angle across the body with the strong hand, being aware of where the muzzle is pointing, followed by gripping the slide with the support hand in the serrations machined into the slide. Pushing with the strong hand and pulling with the support hand will double your leverage and make the process of operating the slide a little easier for you.

Using this method to lock the slide open for safety or general manipulation—once familiar with the technique—will prolong the usage of your preferred guns. Always practice good muzzle management and trigger-finger discipline, and you will experience both safety and success.

Another option is to replace your 9 mm with a .380 ACP pistol similar

in size to your current everyday carry gun. There are several things to remember if replacement of the 9 mm becomes a consideration.

Since you live in California, the options may be narrowed because of the draconian and absurd laws in that state.

The size and brand of the gun should be similar to what you are currently carrying, if possible, which will make an easy transition from one pistol to another for familiarity and handling purposes. Maintaining a similar gun size will result in less felt recoil due to the slightly less powerful, but certainly viable .380 ACP cartridge, and will ensure the handgun fits your hand—meaning that all fingers rest comfortably on the grip of the gun and the gun points naturally, with the natural extension and pointing of the hands toward a target.

An important point that must not be overlooked is how the gun operates regarding locked-breech or blowback-operated actions.

A locked-breech gun means the barrel and slide are locked together at the moment of firing. These guns use a much lighter recoil spring than blowback-operated guns, which makes racking the slide and locking it open significantly easier.

Do not fall into the mindset that a pistol chambered in the .380 ACP cartridge must be a small, easily concealed pistol because of the reduced power of the cartridge. There is no free lunch here. The smaller the gun, the more difficult it is to handle with less than optimum hand strength and dexterity. Less weight means more felt recoil as well.

As we get older, ease of handling and minimizing recoil keep us shooting longer because it allows us to maintain our effectiveness in personal defense and hitting our target. Added to that, it is just more fun to shoot a pistol that fits one's specific needs. 🌱



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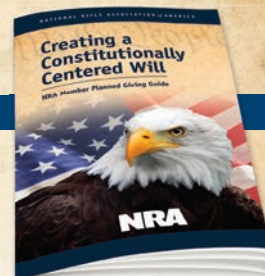
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How Short is Too Short?

You do know that shorter barrels mean slower velocities, right?



RICHARD MANN

Barrel length—and its impact on terminal performance—needs to be taken into consideration when selecting a self-defense handgun and the ammunition you will carry in it.

Defensive-handgun ammunition is designed and manufactured to deliver an acceptable level of terminal performance over a range of impact velocities. If the bullet impacts with too much velocity, it will lose its integrity and not penetrate to a desirable depth. If the bullet impacts at too slow a velocity, it will not upset at all, damage minimal tissue and penetrate too deeply, maybe even over-penetrating. Most quality self-defense loads are well engineered, but the barrel length from which you shoot them can influence velocity and terminal performance. It's incumbent upon you to know if your carry load is delivering the type of performance you want from the handgun you're carrying.

I was recently working with three Springfield Armory 1911s chambered in 9 mm. The purpose of my range work was to determine how detrimental the lighter and

shorter-barreled 1911s would be to fast and accurate shooting. For example, Springfield's 5-inch-barreled Ronin 1911 weighs about 34 percent more than the 3-inch-barreled version. But, during the shooting I became curious about the variance in muzzle velocity between these three pistols and how that might affect terminal performance. There's no question that a smaller, lighter 1911 is easier to carry, but what if the smaller, lighter 1911 is less terminally effective? Is the trade-off worth it?

The first thing I did was select a respected self-defense load for 9 mm and then chronograph the load out of the 3-, 4- and 5-inch Springfield Ronin 1911s. The load was Federal's 124-grain Law Enforcement Tactical Hydra-Shok, with an advertised muzzle velocity of 1,120 fps. For a 10-shot string, the average velocity out of the 3-inch gun was 1,046 fps. Out of the 4-inch gun the average velocity was 1,105 fps, which amounted to a 59 fps (5.6 percent) increase in velocity for a 33 percent increase in barrel length. Out of the 5-inch Ronin the load averaged 1,144 fps. This was a 9 percent increase in velocity due to a 66 percent increase in barrel length. On average, the muzzle velocity increased by 49 fps per inch of barrel.

That does not sound like much of a difference at all, given that 49 fps is only 4.4 percent of the advertised muzzle velocity of the load tested. I think most shooters would assume that 50 to 100 fps would not matter that much when it comes to terminal performance. We'll get to that in a minute, but first let's look at how velocity changes with distance to the target. Table 1 details the velocity this load had when fired out of each of these guns, from the muzzle out to 50 yards. The main takeaway is that the 5-inch gun will have the same velocity at 50 yards as the 3-inch gun has at the muzzle, and the same velocity at 20 yards as the 4-inch gun has at the muzzle.

When it comes to terminal performance, velocity and energy matter, but the key to how a bullet will upset, penetrate and damage tissue depends on how the bullet is designed and the speed at which it impacts. The common standard for making these comparisons is 10-percent ordnance gelatin as suggested by the FBI. Ideally, the FBI looks for between 12 and 18 inches of penetration with bullet upset equaling about 1.5 times the original bullet

Table 1: Downrange Velocity Comparison

Barrel Length	Muzzle	Yards				
		10	20	30	40	50
		(VEL/ENG)	(VEL/ENG)	(VEL/ENG)	(VEL/ENG)	(VEL/ENG)
3-inch	1,046/301	1,030/292	1,014/283	1,000/275	987/268	974/261
4-inch	1,105/336	1,084/324	1,066/313	1,048/303	1,032/293	1,016/285
5-inch	1,144/360	1,121/346	1,099/333	1,079/321	1,061/310	1,044/300

Results reported in fps for velocity (VEL) and ft.-lbs. for muzzle energy (ENG). Muzzle velocities for each barrel length established by firing 10 shots over a Caldwell G2 chronograph with the screens positioned 10 feet from the muzzle. Downrange data calculated using a ballistics program based on a bullet ballistic coefficient of .15. Temperature: 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Table 2: Terminal Performance Comparison

Barrel Length	PEN	RBD	RBW	CC
3-inch	17.16	.436	122.5	2.56
4-inch	16.25	.473	122.2	2.85
5-inch	13.66	.528	122.1	2.99

Average reported penetration depth (PEN) and recovered-bullet diameter (RBD) measured in inches. Recovered-bullet weight (RBW) measured in grains. Crush cavity (CC) measured in cubic inches. RBD and RBW established by firing three shots from each length barrel into blocks of Clear Ballistics at 10 feet. CC calculated by using PEN and RBD to establish the cubic-inch volume of a cylinder—the expected volume of the hole created by the bullet.

diameter. I tested this by firing three shots out of each handgun/barrel length into Clear Ballistics, which is a synthetic ordnance-gelatin approximation. No, the results are never identical, but they are close, and even if they do not exactly represent bullet performance in 10-percent ordnance gelatin, Clear Ballistics does offer a medium for comparison. Table 2 details the results of this test.

What is certain is that when this load is fired from a 3-inch barrel, it will deliver the same terminal performance at the muzzle as it would at 50 yards if it was fired from a 5-inch barrel. Out of a 4-inch barrel and at the muzzle, the load would terminally perform the same as it would out of a 5-inch barrel at 20 yards. While a 50 to 100 fps change in velocity might not seem like much, from a terminal performance standpoint it does make a difference.

As a side note, at the 10-foot testing distance, this load performed decently

out of all three barrel lengths, which speaks well to the engineering behind it. Regarding the FBI's suggested penetration depth, this load met the 12- to 18-inch standard when fired from a 3-, 4- or 5-inch barrel. However, in terms of bullet upset, the only bullets that came close to the suggested 1.5X increase in diameter were those fired from the 5-inch gun.

How all this correlates to a difference in terminal effectiveness we can only guess. Give identical bullet-impact location and path of penetration, the difference is probably minimal. But, in some instances, the deeper penetrating bullet—slower moving—might be the better option. The slower impacting bullet from the 3-inch gun has a penetration advantage of 20 percent. On the other hand, the shallowest-penetrating bullet from the 5-inch gun can create a crush cavity (hole) that is about 17-percent larger. Two things are for certain: As velocity drops, the

extent of bullet upset will degrade regardless of barrel length. However, out of the 5-inch gun, bullet upset will never fall below that demonstrated with the 3-inch gun until the range extends beyond 50 yards. Additionally, out of the 3-inch barrel, as bullet upset continues to decrease as the distance to the target increases, penetration will eventually extend beyond that 18-inch recommended depth.

All of this is the reason most ammo manufacturers offer short-barrel loads that have been specifically designed for handguns with shorter barrels. By altering the bullet construction with these loads, they can more closely match the bullet upset and penetration qualities of standard loads when fired from longer barrels. Barrel length is a gun thing, but it does dictate how ammunition will perform. It's for sure something to keep in mind when selecting your self-defense handgun and defensive ammunition. 

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Street Safety

The rules of firearm safety apply on the street as well as at the range.



The fundamental firearm safety rules we all rely upon when on the range or in training can also help keep you safe when defending yourself from a criminal attack.

My favorite firearms safety rules were the four that Col. Jeff Cooper gave us. To review, they are:

- #1. All guns are always loaded.
- #2. Never let the muzzle cover anything which you are not willing to destroy.
- #3. Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target.
- #4. Always be sure of your target.

We are reminded of these rules on the range and in every practice and training session. They obviously apply to every time and every reason that we might handle a firearm. But, I think we also need to be reminded that they apply to the use of the firearm in actual defensive situations. While this should be obvious, giving thought to these simple safety rules expands to our general use of firearms in a deadly situation.

For example: "All guns are always loaded." This reminds me of the time, years ago, that I set out to confront a burglar with an unloaded gun. Unknown to me, a family member had taken it upon herself to unload my .38 Spl. Colt revolver. The thinking was along the lines of "Loaded guns are dangerous, you know."

To this day, that incident has caused me to add to Rule 1 to the extent that whenever a gun is out of my care, custody and control, I check it to make sure it is still loaded. When it has been out of my sight, I check it. When I dress in the morning, I check it before I put it on. It has become a habit, and good habits can be important.

Some of us have come to call Rule 3 the Golden Rule. In an actual gunfight, all sorts of things can be going on. There can be pushing, shoving, running and falling down. In addition, there is something called "sympathetic reflex." That is, when the support hand does something—sudden gripping, for instance—the gun hand may do the same. All of this aggressive activity, plus the stress involved, can cause a negligent discharge if the trigger finger is anywhere near the trigger, possibly resulting in the bullet finding an unintended target. We continue to see this sort of occurrence referred to as an accident when, in fact, it is a failure to manage the firearm safely during the stressful situation.

We can extend this rule to cover the fact that the actual management of the firearm during a criminal attack must almost become second nature. During a violent incident, we are most concerned with identifying the threat. How many are attacking? How are they armed? Where is the closest cover? How can I move to improve my situation? Clearly, the most important considerations involve the attackers and what I am going to be able to do about it.

Any time spent consciously managing the gun may well be valuable time that is wasted. Checking to see if the gun is loaded, checking to see if the safety is on or checking to see if the electronic sight is on or off are all tasks that take you away from what should be your primary focus, which should be defeating bad guys in the most efficient manner.

This is the main reason that we discourage armed citizens from continually switching to different kinds of carry guns. "Old Tried and True" may not be the latest thing in defensive

firearms, but if you can run it without consciously thinking about its operation, you may well be ahead of the problem. While the decision to fire a shot should always be a conscious decision, the management of the gun itself should be second nature.

And when I think of Rule 4, I immediately think of violent encounters in public. The problem is not just the criminal; it is also all of the people running every which way trying to get out of the way. I may have a clear shot at the shooter, but I have to

► **“Old Tried and True” may not be the latest thing in defensive firearms, but if you can run it without consciously thinking about its operation, you may well be ahead of the problem.** ◀

always consider the people who may suddenly appear behind him, or run between us in their attempt to escape or bump into me when I am about to break the shot. And, I have to remember that I own every bullet I fire. It simply means I have to be careful—almighty careful—and may mean that I can't fire at all.

So, I suggest that armed citizens should take their chosen safety rules, whatever those might be, and give thought to how they will apply in an actual gunfight. One can examine videos of actual gunfights and shootings online to get an idea of what can occur and how to deal with them in the safest manner. What were the obvious mistakes? What were the choices that the armed citizen or police officer had? What might have been done better for the safety of all concerned?

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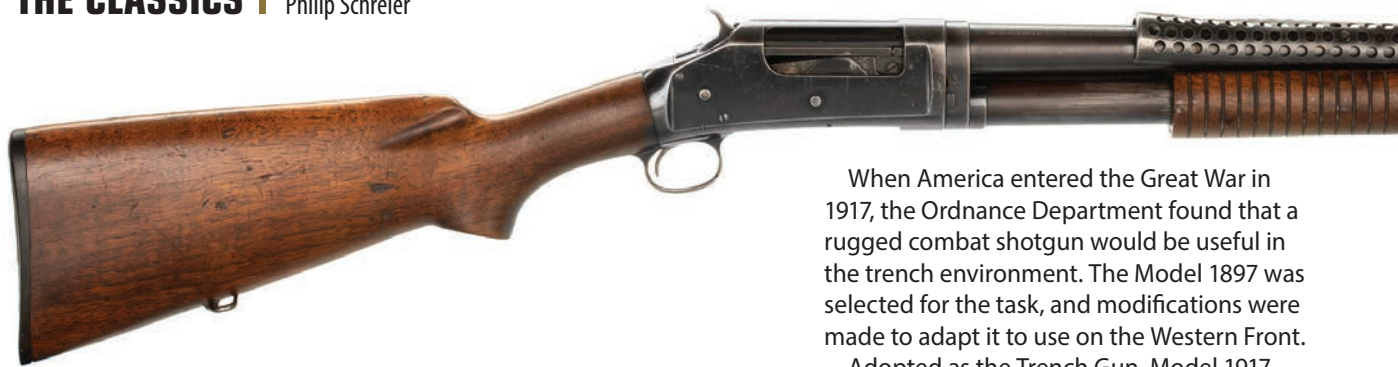
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The Winchester Model 1897 Trench Gun

Don't hit 'em with the 9, hit 'em with the gauge.

"If they move, kill 'em."—Pike Bishop (William Holden, "The Wild Bunch," 1969)

William Holden's face filled the screen as he uttered those words during the opening-credit roll of Sam Peckinpah's classic western "The Wild Bunch." The camera cuts to Bo Hopkins as Crazy Lee who, while gripping a Winchester, replies, "I'll hold 'em here 'til Hell freezes over or you say different." Such was my introduction to the classic trench broom, and in love I have been with it these oh so many decades since.

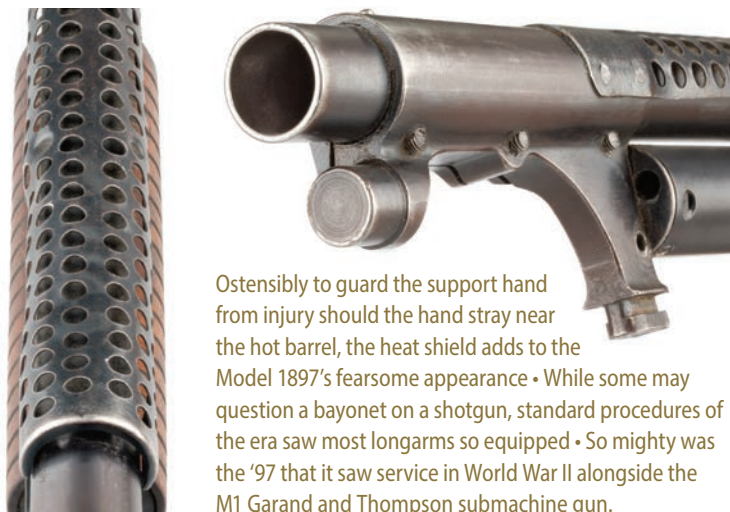
Part of my fascination with it is that it looks wicked, very wicked. It has a ventilated handguard and a bayonet lug. It takes solid-brass shells dispensing 00 buckshot that is absolutely devastating at close range. What's not to like?

The Winchester Model 1897 was John Browning's second pump-action shotgun, following closely behind his first, the Winchester Model 1893. The Model '93 was designed for blackpowder shells and needed some modifications to handle the new smokeless powder fodder, hence the model 1897. Eventually, the U.S. Army purchased the '97 for use in the Philippines at the close of the 19th century, where it proved quite effective against the Filipino insurrectionists.

When America entered the Great War in 1917, the Ordnance Department found that a rugged combat shotgun would be useful in the trench environment. The Model 1897 was selected for the task, and modifications were made to adapt it to use on the Western Front.

Adopted as the Trench Gun, Model 1917 in 12 gauge, the gun held five shells in the tubular magazine and could chamber a sixth round. The trigger did not have a disconnect, allowing the user to hold the trigger back and pump-fire the gun rapidly until he decided to stop (or ran out of ammunition). As with any shotgun, the barrel was prone to heating up, so a vented handguard with six rows of perforations worked as a heat shield to prevent serious burns if the barrel was touched while used in combat.

The standard ammo for the Model 1897 was 2.5-inch commercial paper shells loaded with 00 buckshot. However, the damp and often soaking-wet conditions of the front could cause the paper shells to deteriorate and compress under the tension of the magazine-tube springs, making them impossible to load even under the best of conditions. This problem was quickly solved with the issue of solid-brass shells that were impervious to the humidity and moisture conditions of the trenches. A bayonet lug that accepted the Model 1917 Enfield rifle bayonet was fitted on the heat guard. The bayonet was also manufactured by Winchester (and a host of others). The shotgun was equipped with sling attachments and was issued with either



Ostensibly to guard the support hand from injury should the hand stray near the hot barrel, the heat shield adds to the Model 1897's fearsome appearance • While some may question a bayonet on a shotgun, standard procedures of the era saw most longarms so equipped • So mighty was the '97 that it saw service in World War II alongside the M1 Garand and Thompson submachine gun.



BRUCE CANFIELD



an M-1907 leather sling or a canvas Kerr sling.

The shotgun proved to be quite the effective tool on the Western Front. Some soldiers made sport of downing enemy carrier pigeons, and there are somewhat dubious stories of front-line troops attempting to shoot enemy hand grenades from the air as they were thrown over no-man's-land.

So effective were the scatterguns on the front, the German government lodged an official complaint about the use of the "barbaric" weapon and threatened to summarily execute any Soldier captured with one in their possession. Our government replied in the strongest language that we would not tolerate any such "executions" and that retribution would be swift and severe. The matter was quickly dismissed and German threats proved to be empty. There is some thought that the use of the '97 by the U.S. Marine Corps during the famed Belleau Wood campaign in June of 1918 is what earned the Corps the moniker "Teufelhunden," or Devil Dogs.

By the close of the war in 1918, some 25,000 Winchester Model 1897s had been procured by the Ordnance Department, 20,000 in standard "trench gun" configuration and an additional 5,000 or more sporting (civilian) models that were converted by the addition of the handguard, sling and bayonet attachment.

The trench gun also saw service during the Second World War, again with some slight modifications. The World War II versions were equipped with a new-style handguard that only had four rows of perforations versus the World War I version that had six. There were also 25,000 units of the World War II-version '97 trench gun manufactured, making a total of 50,000 World War I and II Models of 1897 trench guns that entered into service. Today they are highly sought-after by collectors and history buffs who appreciate the '97's legacy. 🏹

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Henry Homesteader 9 mm Carbine

There's a new semi-automatic, pistol-caliber carbine from—Henry?

I know, I know. This one took me by surprise as well. Henry, known for decades for lever-action rifles in rimfire and centerfire chamberings, has offered the Homesteader carbine, a semi-automatic 9 mm that feeds from removable-box magazines. Yes, that Henry. Now, Henry is not exactly a novice when it comes to removable-magazine-fed, semi-automatic rifles; the company has offered its take on the .22 LR Survival Rifle—first pioneered by ArmaLite—since the late 1990s.

The Homesteader, though, represents a new direction for Henry, and one the company has adopted with the style and grace you would expect. Rather than a polymer-stocked, rail-festooned carbine or AR-15-style PCC, the Homesteader maintains the wooden stock and fore-end found on Henry's lever-action rifles, but mated to a blowback-operated, semi-automatic action and a removable magazine. Three variants exist: one that takes proprietary five- and 10-round magazines, one that takes Glock magazines and one that can take magazines from

either the SIG Sauer P320 or Smith & Wesson M&P. The last two use replacement mag wells similar to the Ruger PC Carbine, although the single unit for both SIG and M&P magazines is unique. The unit we received for testing used the proprietary Henry magazines, so we have no data on how the interchangeable mag wells function.

Why the Homesteader? Well, there's a variety of reasons. Having lived in the state of Massachusetts, which extended the 1994 Assault Weapons Ban in perpetuity upon its Federal sunset in 2004, I appreciate a carbine with a removable-box magazine that does not fall under those guidelines—this is a home-defense carbine that homes in many restrictive areas can own. Then, there's aesthetics. Not everyone is a fan of the super utilitarian, post-modern façade of the AR-15 and its PCC variants. There are many fans of classic, wood-stocked rifles who might appreciate a handy carbine for home defense. Of course, the age-old "because it's neat and I want one" is an absolutely valid reason, too.



SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer: Henry; (866) 200-2354, henryusa.com	Sights: Ghost-ring rear; screw-in front post
Action Type: Blowback-operated, semi-automatic	Trigger Pull Weight: 7 pounds, 12 ounces
Caliber: 9 mm	Stock: American walnut
Capacity: 10 rounds	Length: 35.75 inches
Finish: Hard-anodized black	Weight: 6 pounds, 10 ounces
Barrel Length: 16.37 inches	Accessories: One five-round magazine and one 10-round magazine, thread protector, swivel studs, manual
Rifling: 6 grooves; 1:10-inch RH twist	MSRP: \$928

SHOOTING RESULTS

Load	Velocity	Smallest	Group Size Largest	Average
Hornady Critical Defense 115-grain FTX	1,307	1.76	3.83	2.99
American Eagle 124-grain FMJ	1,180	2.81	4.99	3.57
Winchester Super Suppressed 147-grain FMJ	974	2.19	3.62	2.78

Velocity measured in fps at the muzzle for 10 consecutive shots with an Oehler Model 36 chronograph. Temperature: 77 degrees Fahrenheit. Accuracy measured in inches for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 50 yards from a sandbag rest.

ON TARGET

Stylish and simple

OFF TARGET

Optics rail not included



While the Homesteader is drilled and tapped for a Weaver rail, one is not included with the carbine • The ghost-ring rear sight helps with speedy acquisition • It's a good thing the front sight can be replaced, as the flat-black sight provided little contrast on the range • Both a flush-fit five-round magazine and an extended 10-round variant come standard • Threaded to accept sound suppressors, the included thread protector did need to be tightened during testing.



Located on the tang, the safety was easy to engage and disengage. For southpaws, the charging handle can be swapped to the left-hand side of the rifle. Showing clear is easy with levers forward of the trigger guard that lock the bolt back in the absence of a magazine.

In operation, Henry's new carbine is a study in simplicity and efficiency. Operating on a blowback system, the Homesteader has been engineered to be as simple and ambidextrous as possible—the bolt handle can be swapped to the left side of the rifle for left-handed shooters, while the safety is mounted on the tang for easy access by either hand. The magazine release is located in front of the magazine well, accessible to either hand. Obviously, the ejection port will still be on the wrong side for lefties, but the Homesteader is about as left-hand friendly as one can find in a non-lefty-specific carbine.

Up top, the Henry is drilled and tapped for a Weaver rail, and comes standard with a ghost-ring rear sight and screw-on front sight. Ghost-ring setups are valued for offering a good mix of speed and accuracy, while the ability to add a red-dot option or magnified scope opens up more possibilities. To help mitigate recoil, both a generous rubber buttpad and a reciprocating mass in the fore-end have been added to the Henry carbine to make the Homesteader easy to

control for a wide variety of shooters. It's clear the Homesteader is the result of careful planning and painstaking attention to detail to make it as shooter-friendly as possible, whether for southpaws, new shooters or those averse to recoil.

In excess of 200 rounds were fired through the Homesteader with no failures of any sort. The ghost-ring sight provided rapid target acquisition, but left a little to be desired for 50-yard accuracy; a red-dot sight would shrink groups appreciably. Everything from subsonic FMJ to complex hollowpoints fed, fired and ejected without incident.

When it comes to home-defense carbines, the Homesteader adds another option, which is always a good thing. Whether you want to keep the classic lines clean with the Henry five-round magazine or add a bit more capacity with a Glock 33-round magazine (magazine well sold separately), the Homesteader can accommodate. More pistol-caliber carbines are always welcome, even more so when they are in a classic, attractive package. 



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PISTOL BRACE UPDATE

LATEST
LEGISLATIVE
NEWS FROM
INSIDE THE NRA
INSTITUTE FOR
LEGISLATIVE
ACTION

On July 3, NRA announced it filed a lawsuit against the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), ATF Director Steven Dettelbach and U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland in opposition to the unlawful pistol-brace rule.

"The NRA has ramped up its offense on this arbitrary and unconstitutional rule," said NRA Executive Vice President and CEO Wayne LaPierre. "We are confident in our ability to confront the ATF and DOJ—and preserve freedom for NRA members."

Filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District, Dallas Division, the lawsuit is the NRA's latest challenge to the rule regarding stabilizing braces. On June 30, 2023, the same court denied the NRA's motion to intervene in another legal action, while recognizing the NRA was positioned to pursue its own lawsuit—a course it now adopts in support of its millions of law-abiding members.

As noted in the complaint, the NRA argues the rule is unconstitutional, as the ATF reversed its long-standing position that pistol braces do not transform pistols into rifles subject to onerous registration and taxation requirements under the National Firearms Act.

NRA's complaint explains that many of its members are being irreparably harmed by the Final Rule because they are forced to modify

their firearms, destroy them, register them or surrender them

to the federal government under threat of criminal prosecution. Pistol-stabilizing braces allow users to strap their gun to their forearm for more stability. Millions of these devices are used by gun owners across the nation, and particularly by disabled veterans who need braces to safely use a pistol.

In late May, the court entered orders enjoining defendants from enforcing the Final Rule against another gun-rights group and its members. However, the scope of the injunctive relief granted applies only to those plaintiffs.

The NRA backs and supports another lawsuit challenging ATF's unlawful rule. The lawsuit, filed Feb. 9, 2023, is captioned *Firearms Regulatory Accountability Coalition, Inc., v. Merrick Garland and* was filed in the United States District Court for the District of North Dakota. Plaintiffs include SB Tactical, B&T USA, wounded warrior Richard Cicero, and a coalition of 25 states led by West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey and North Dakota Attorney General Drew Wrigley.

We will continue to update you on developments on the Biden administration's unconstitutional pistol-brace rule.

Massachusetts Introduces Radical Anti-Gun Legislation

For years, gun-grabbing politicians in Massachusetts have been chipping away at the Second Amendment, imposing some of the harshest gun-control regulations in the country. Now, it appears they want to do away with your constitutional rights altogether.

In early July, Massachusetts politicians put forth HD 4420, "an act modernizing firearm laws." This massive piece of legislation re-writes gun laws in the Commonwealth and

imposes unprecedented gun control.

HD 4420 leaves no stone unturned when it comes to restricting your Second Amendment rights. Among other things, it would institute a new, broad "Assault Weapons Ban," including firearms already owned by law-abiding citizens. It also proposes banning all currently legal, federally tax-stamped automatic firearms. While the state already has a difficult-to-obtain "may-issue" carry-permit

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Photo by NRA

system, lawmakers seek to make the permit less useful even to those who have the means or connections to obtain one by imposing new restrictions on the possession of any gun, loaded or unloaded, in several new areas.

The bill also seeks to mandate: "safe" storage laws; new training requirements, including costly written exams and live-fire training; registration of all guns and feeding devices; reporting of any modifications or new parts to a gun; serializing all firearm parts; banning anyone under 21 from acquiring or carrying any semi-automatic rifle or shotgun; banning anyone under 15 from taking part in shooting sports and training; and placing new mandates, protocols and training requirements on retailers.

These are just some of the numerous provisions anti-gun politicians are proposing, and NRA began working with our Massachusetts members and other supporters of the Second Amendment to oppose this draconian legislation the moment it was introduced.

Rhode Island Spared New Gun Control This Year

Ocean State gun owners got a reprieve this year as the legislature recessed its regular 2023 session in June without a significant gun bill passing. After passing a magazine ban last year, anti-gun politicians were more determined than ever to pass a semi-automatic "assault-weapon" ban this year. One of the other bad bills being pushed by gun grabbers was a bill to require mandatory storage. Neither bill advanced. In the wake of last year's *Bruen* decision, courts across the country have been flooded with Second Amendment challenges to these type of anti-gun laws passed by anti-gun states. Despite the good news in Providence, we fully expect that the gun-control zealots will be back again next session.

Thank you to all the NRA members who contacted their legislators and made trips to the Statehouse. 🍀

IN MEMORY NRA-ILA CONTRIBUTIONS

June 1 - 30, 2023

Michael Smith (from: Hamburg Rod & Gun Club);

Dale Gibson (from: St. Joseph Rifle & Pistol Club).



Photo by The Valley Music Co.

Darryl Worley was born and raised in Tennessee, the son of a Methodist minister and a mother who sang in the church choir; his grandfather was well-schooled in country and bluegrass. Darryl grew up with the usual country life of hunting, fishing and going to church, with maybe a little scrap now and then. Worley later attended the University of North Alabama, where he studied biology and chemistry while playing off-campus honkytonks in his spare time. In 1994, he got a deal with EMI Publishing, which took him to Nashville. His music puts a touch of modern sheen on songs rooted in the traditionalist movement. He enjoyed a major hit in 2003 with the patriotic anthem "Have You Forgotten?" Darryl had taken part in a USO tour to entertain American troops in Kuwait and Afghanistan, which inspired him to write the song. He has now given it a fresh perspective in a new version. NRA Country's Lisa Supernauth had a chance to catch Darryl in between shows to ask him a few questions. Check out his new music and tour dates at darrylworley.com and on all social-media platforms—you won't be disappointed!

LS: What was your introduction to firearms?

DW: My introduction to firearms was going with my mom and dad to shoot guns or going with other family members that my dad trusted. There were rigid guidelines and rules, and if we didn't stay within the lines, we would have to miss the next adventure. Safety is so important!

LS: You've been hunting since you were a young boy; do you pass that love on to your daughter, Savannah?

DW: Yes! We eat the meat, so hunting has been a big part of Savannah's life always. Just like my parents did with me, we took her out shooting to learn how to properly handle a gun with all the same rigid rules so that she learned safety first. Then from a young age I would take her in the deer stand with me or out hunting turkeys. As she got older, she was able to get in her own stand, and a few years ago, killed her first deer. She was so excited! I'm so thankful to share the love of the outdoors with my daughter.

LS: How does it feel to have written a theme song for Americans when we were at our most vulnerable after the 9/11 attack?

DW: "Have You Forgotten?" clearly struck a nerve—it was unifying; it was more the voice of the people than even I thought it would be! The response was overwhelming and felt divinely driven. It feels like a gift from God. It is such a blessing that He spoke to me and Wynn Varble and used our words and my voice to try to bring our nation together after such an evil, horrible attack. That song was about honoring and appreciating those on the frontline at home and overseas and remembering those we lost, and their families left behind. It reminded us as a nation that God uses all things for the good of those who love him. I was blessed to be the messenger and I'm eternally thankful!

LS: What inspired you to rewrite the song and choose the title "Have We Forgotten?"

DW: A friend of mine suggested we should write a new lyric for the 20th anniversary. Wynn Varble and I felt there was again a message that needed to be conveyed—that we as a people here in America need to help with the problem of division. If everyone that hears this song makes an effort, it will make a huge difference in our nation. United we stand. We are better in every way when we are pulling together.

LS: As a patriot, what does freedom mean to you?

DW: I love the fact that we have freedom of worship, freedom of speech, freedom to go where we please and live where we please, and also freedom to keep and bear arms to protect ourselves and our families. So many would love to chop our constitution into pieces and make it whatever they would like it to be, but that would totally defeat the purpose of it being there in the first place. I pray that we all can see how blessed we are to be a free people and do whatever it takes to keep that freedom intact. I love my country and I believe in our constitution. We would be very wise to continue to hold these things dear.

NRA Country is a lifestyle and a bond between the country music community and hard-working Americans everywhere. It's powered by pride, freedom, love of country, respect for the military and the responsibilities of protecting the great American life. For more information, visit nracountry.com, follow on Twitter @NRACountry, and NRA_Country on Instagram.

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Public and private officers interested in becoming law enforcement firearm instructors should attend one of NRA's Law Enforcement Firearms Instructor Development Schools. NRA Police Pistol Combat competition is intended to be used as an extension of an officer's training.



GUN SHOWS

gunshows.nra.org

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Questions? Email to refuse@nrahq.org or by calling (800) 861-1166.



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By Joseph P.
DeBergalis, Jr.
Executive Director,
General Operations



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Furthering Hunting's Cultural Acceptance

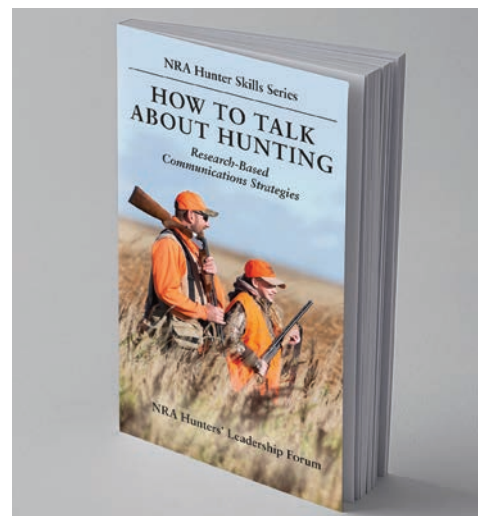
A recent decrease in hunting participation after experiencing growth during the COVID-19 pandemic has some in the hunting community worrying that the national R3 (Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation) movement is not enough to save this cherished American pastime.

While the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports reported that hunting-license sales in 2020 jumped 5% over 2019, hunter participation has now returned to pre-pandemic levels. And a recent study by the national outdoor survey research firm Responsive Management shows that public acceptance of hunting has decreased in all nine categories measured—including for the purposes of wildlife management, protection of property and obtaining locally sourced food.

To reverse this trend and secure hunting's future, we must do two things: (1) bolster efforts to promote the critical role that hunters and recreational shooters play in sustaining our renewable wildlife resources and (2) build cultural support for hunting.

Recognizing that ongoing public support of hunting is essential, in 2014, the NRA launched the NRA Hunters' Leadership Forum (HLF) to address the escalating cultural, political, demographic and social challenges to hunting in the 21st century. In 2016, the NRA HLF hired Responsive Management to conduct the nation's first-ever groundbreaking study regarding Americans' attitudes toward hunters, hunting, animal rights and animal welfare. Surveys and focus groups examined public opinions on hunting, sport shooting, firearms and the use of animals; gauged support for hunting based on species and hunting method; and tested the effectiveness of pro-hunting messages, to name just a few topics. The NRA then released the research-based book, *How to Talk about Hunting: Research-Based Communications Strategies*. The goal: to teach hunters, hunter-backed conservation organizations and wildlife professionals to be communicators whose messages resonate even with non-hunters and counter the misinformation espoused by animal-rights extremists.

The research also shed light on a critical point: Programs to improve hunting's cultural acceptance should not be confused with programs such as R3, aimed at increasing hunting's participation. The former must precede the latter for R3 to work. Fortunately, promoting hunting in the court of public opinion is not a matter of changing Americans' values but of reaffirming them. The research shows most Americans (about 78% in 2016 and 74% in 2023) do not have a negative image of hunting and hunters. Maintaining this



support is critical, especially when considering hunting-related ballot initiatives nationwide.

In standing with hunters—as the nation's leader in hunter safety, education and training, and through its support of critical programs such as Hunters for the Hungry—the NRA will remain on the frontlines. However, we cannot do it alone. A national campaign to promote hunting's cultural acceptance involves planning and funding. Perhaps a lesson can be learned from the fishing and boating side of our outdoor industry, as seen through the Dingell-Johnson (DJ) Sport Fish Restoration Act. The equivalent to our Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937—commonly known as the Pittman-Robertson (PR) Act—DJ garnered \$399 million in excise tax receipts in 2022. The DJ funds, like PR funds, are administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The USFWS recently announced a cooperative agreement with the nonprofit Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation. It will set aside \$70 million over a five-year period to fund the National Outreach and Communication Program to increase participation in those activities, enhance public communications and support aquatic conservation.

While PR excise taxes in 2022 exceeded \$1.5 billion—considerably more than what was collected through DJ—the hunting community lacks a nationally funded campaign. Imagine the ground we would cover if we followed suit and paired R3 efforts with such a campaign! By being as passionate about increasing cultural support for hunting as we are about going hunting, we will ensure legal, regulated hunting remains safe on our watch and into the future.

In Memoriam: Bart Skelton 1960-2023

Veteran law-enforcement officer, gun writer and past NRA Director Bart Skelton died on April 25, 2023. Born in Hereford, Texas, in 1960, Skelton was the son of Charles "Skeeter" and Sally Skelton. Skeeter was one of the most well-known and followed writers of his day. Following in his father's footsteps, Bart Skelton also became a lawman and a gun writer.

Skelton was a sworn law-enforcement officer for 31 years, earning numerous awards for his hard work and investigations, starting off with the New Mexico State Police. In 1989, he became an officer in the U.S. Customs Service, including being agent in charge in Deming, N.M. He ended his law-enforcement career in 2014, as the assistant special agent in charge for the Department of Homeland Security and Homeland Security Investigations in New Mexico.

Skelton enjoyed hunting and fishing, as well as rodeo. But he had a second calling as a gun writer. He contributed not only gun reviews, but also monthly columns to first *Shooting Times* and later *Guns & Ammo* magazines, eventually authoring the back page of the latter. He also authored the book, *Down on the Border: A Western Lawman's Journal*. Skelton authored more than 200 articles or columns during his writing career, including those done for NRA Official Journals *American Rifleman* and *Shooting Illustrated*.

Skelton served on the NRA Board of Directors from 2016 until 2022. During his tenure as a director, he was on the Finance, Hunting & Wildlife Conservation, Law Enforcement Assistance, Sport Shooting and the Jeanne E. Bray Memorial Scholarship committees, as well as the NRA Special Committee on Security. Skelton is survived by his son Jacob, daughter Evan Ann and sister Melody.



Photo by Peter Fountain

NRA World Shoot—Sponsored by Walther Arms—Is Back

The NRA World Shooting Championship will take place at Camp Atterbury, Ind., April 4-6, 2024. This ultimate all-encompassing tournament crowns the undisputed "World Shooting Champion" from a pool of both amateur and professional shooters. More than \$250,000 in cash and prizes will be up for grabs.

"NRA's storied history of organizing and executing premier shooting competitions will continue next spring as top shooters convene in Indiana for the NRA World Shooting Championship," Joseph P. DeBergalis Jr., executive director of NRA General Operations, said. "Competitors of every background and skill level, whether a professional or amateur shooter, will be challenged through a variety of shooting disciplines

with the goal of being declared the 'World's Greatest Shooter.'"

"The Indiana State Rifle & Pistol Association is proud to be a part of the NRA World Shooting Championship, which is one of the greatest competitive shooting events in the world," said Charlie Hiltunen, Indiana State Rifle & Pistol Association president and NRA director. "NRA and ISRPA, the state affiliate of the NRA, working with the State of Indiana, Indiana National Guard, and our amazing shooting competition and youth shooting-sports community are laying the foundation for establishing Indiana as the Shooting Sports Capital of the World."

"Walther is involved in a wide array of competitive shooting sports, and we are thrilled to support this event

and the range of competitions which it represents," Rob McCanna, president and CEO of Walther Arms Inc., said. "Support for the shooting community and support for the NRA go hand-in-hand and we look forward to the return of this one-of-a-kind competition."

All firearms, optics and ammunition are provided to the competitors for this unique competition. Participants will compete in 12 stages of fire spanning multiple shooting-sport disciplines. Registration will open at 1:00 p.m. EST, Dec. 6, 2023. Competitors who are planning to shoot this match are encouraged to secure their spot as soon as registration opens, as this match has filled up within moments in past years. For more information, visit wsc.nra.org.

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shooting six-shot groups close to a half-inch at 25 yards. In theory, shooting at four times the distance should produce groups four times the size. That is exactly what happened when I moved the target out to 100 yards. The gun (and Pro Load ammo) produced a 1.96-inch group.

One interesting aspect of this long-range handgunning is the sport of International Handgun Metallic Silhouette Association (IHMSA). Originally developed some 50 years ago, this style of shooting at 50, 100, 150 and 200 meters involves knocking down the silhouettes of various game animals. Although this game has evolved toward an equipment race of sorts, it still requires a high level of skill with a handgun. Somehow, IHMSA shooters have managed to keep their sport open to nearly anyone, and there is an unending camaraderie to the matches. A lot of good Americans have had a lot of enjoyment in this unusual sport in the half-century of its existence.

In the tactical sense, it is clearly possible to use today's military and police service pistols for some pretty long shots. It should be obvious that there is a point at which a handgun bullet surrenders its forward drive to the force of gravity and the bullet drops to the ground. At a couple hundred yards, you have a better chance of making the shot with a long-barreled magnum revolver than with the best of semi-automatics. That longer barrel gives you a longer sight radius for improved aiming. It also gives you a bit more velocity for a longer possible range. But, the longer tube means the bullet is in the barrel longer, so your follow-through is of critical importance. In some instances, a shorter barrel can sometimes be more accurate than a longer one. MG Julian Hatcher proved this a long time back.

There are quite a few tricks and techniques to this aspect of tactical handgunning. And, back in the day, I saw it done to superb effect—with real fightin' iron. 🦅

How Far?

Handguns aren't necessarily just for close range.



Indicative of his prowess with handgun and rifle, Capt. Bob Martin was a two-time winner of the Lauchheimer Trophy, awarded to the Marine with the highest score in both rifle and pistol competition in Marine Corps matches.

USMC PHOTO/LANCE CPL. JACQUELINE R. SMITH

When Capt. Bob Martin walked through the company-office door that first time, the silence was deafening. In a perfectly tailored green uniform, topped with four rows of campaign ribbons, he was an imposing Marine and Company K's new Commanding Officer. Below the ribbons identifying combat service in World War II and Korea, there were three shooting medals—gold shooting medals. In those days (1958), gold medals signified competition-proven Distinguished Rifleman and Distinguished Pistol Shot. They are rarely seen, but the third gold was even more rare. It was the Lauchheimer Trophy, awarded to the highest combined score with both rifle and pistol at the annual Marine Corps matches. Capt. Martin was an experienced professional officer with multiple skills—heavy on marksmanship and weaponry.

In the following months, I served under this impressive officer and learned a great deal from Capt. Martin. Much of what I learned had to do with our standard firearms—

Browning's Light Machine gun and Automatic Rifle, plus the M1 Garand rifle. These three arms fired the standard .30-caliber cartridge, commonly dubbed the .30-'06 Sprg. This legendary round had a maximum effective range in the hundreds of yards. I was more interested in what the Marine Corps had ordained to be my issued arm—the M1911A1 .45 ACP pistol. While official competitive shooting involved slow-fire work at 50 yards, annual qualification never put the bullseye target beyond 25 yards.

I was interested in how far the plain M1911A1 could be employed. At an open range on the east side of Okinawa one afternoon, I saw Capt. Martin get three consecutive hits on a silhouette target waaaaay out there. He took the gun right out of my holster (so I'd have to clean it) and he needed one ranging shot to get on. With no means of measuring the distance, we had to estimate a conservative 150 yards. The pistol was not a match gun and the ammo was G.I. ball. The shooter was the key—two-time winner of the Lauchheimer.

It may be unlikely that such a shot would ever be required in a battle situation, but that long-ago demonstration of precision pistoleering has long been a preoccupation with me. Certainly, better guns (with better sights) and premium ammunition might have extended Martin's range, but the shooter is the key. The main advance of the handgun is its portability. At likely distances, most uniformed personnel can develop reasonable skill with a firearm that can be carried on their person. When the range to the target is extended, a rifle is a far better firearm for the job. But, what happens when you don't have a rifle? With a thorough understanding of the handgun's trajectories and management, most shooters can learn to make some really long shots.

First, let's look at what modern handguns are capable of doing. For many years as a gunwriter, I have relied upon the Ransom Rest—properly set up and operated. Usually, the distance is 25 yards, sometimes as much as 50 yards. But the nature of the device—holding a handgun with near-perfect, shot-to-shot consistency—is the same at any range. I recall a shoot with a premium revolver, a Dan Wesson .44 Mag., that was

Continued on page 71

Popular CoQ10 Pills Leave Millions Suffering

Could this newly-discovered brain fuel solve America's worsening memory crisis?

PALM BEACH, FLORIDA — Millions of Americans take the supplement known as CoQ10. It's the coenzyme that supercharges the "energy factories" in your cells known as *mitochondria*. But there's a serious flaw that's leaving millions unsatisfied.

As you age, your mitochondria break down and fail to produce energy. In a revealing study, a team of researchers showed that 95 percent of the mitochondria in a 90-year-old man were damaged, compared to almost no damage in the mitochondria of a 5-year-old.

Taking CoQ10 alone is not enough to solve this problem. Because as powerful as CoQ10 is, there's one critical thing it fails to do: it can't create new mitochondria to replace the ones you lost.

And that's bad news for Americans all over the country. The loss of cellular energy is a problem for the memory concerns people face as they get older.

"We had no way of replacing lost mitochondria until a recent discovery changed everything," says Dr. Al Sears, founder and medical director of the Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine in Palm Beach, Florida. "Researchers discovered the only nutrient known to modern science that has the power to trigger the growth of new mitochondria."

Why Taking CoQ10 is Not Enough

Dr. Sears explains, "This new discovery is so powerful, it can multiply your mitochondria by 55 percent in just a few weeks. That's the equivalent of restoring decades of lost brain power."

This exciting nutrient — called PQQ (*pyrroloquinoline quinone*) — is the driving force behind a revolution in aging. When paired with CoQ10, this dynamic duo has the power to reverse the age-related memory losses you may have thought were beyond your control.

Dr. Sears pioneered a new formula — called **Ultra Accel II** — that combines both CoQ10 and PQQ to support maximum cellular energy and the normal growth of new mitochondria. **Ultra Accel II** is the first of its kind to address both problems and is already creating huge demand.

Over 47 million doses have been shipped to men and women across the country and sales continue to climb for this much sought-after brain fuel. In fact, demand has been so overwhelming that inventories repeatedly sell out. But a closer look at **Ultra Accel II** reveals there are good reasons why sales are booming.

Science Confirms the Many Benefits of PQQ

The medical journal *Biochemical Pharmacology* reports that PQQ is up to 5,000 times more efficient in sustaining energy production than common antioxidants. With the ability to keep every cell in your body operating at full strength, **Ultra Accel II** delivers more than just added brain power and a faster memory.

People feel more energetic, more alert, and don't need naps in the afternoon. The boost in cellular energy generates more power to your heart, lungs, muscles, and more.

"With the PQQ in Ultra Accel, I have energy I never thought possible at my age," says Colleen R., one of Dr. Sears's patients. "I'm in my 70s but feel 40 again. I think clearly, move with real energy and sleep like a baby."

The response has been overwhelmingly positive, and Dr. Sears receives countless emails from his patients and readers. "My patients tell me they feel better than they have in years. This is ideal for people who are feeling old and run down, or for those who feel more forgetful. It surprises many that you can add healthy and productive years to your life simply by taking **Ultra Accel II** every day."

You may have seen Dr. Sears on television or read one of his 12 best-selling books. Or you may have seen him speak at the 2016 WPBF 25 Health and Wellness Festival in South Florida, featuring Dr. Oz and special guest Suzanne Somers. Thousands of people attended Dr. Sears's lecture on anti-aging breakthroughs and waited in line for hours during his book signing at the event.

Will Ultra Accel II Multiply Your Energy?

Ultra Accel II is turning everything we thought we knew about youthful energy on its head. Especially for people over age 50. In less than 30 seconds every morning, you can harness the power of this breakthrough discovery to restore peak energy and your "spark for life."

So, if you've noticed less energy as you've gotten older, and you want an easy way to reclaim your youthful edge, this new opportunity will feel like blessed relief.

The secret is the "energy multiplying" molecule that activates a dormant gene in your body that declines with age, which then instructs your cells to pump out fresh energy from the inside-out. This growth of new "energy factories" in your



MEMORY-BUILDING SENSATION: Top doctors are now recommending new **Ultra Accel II** because it restores decades of lost brain power without a doctor's visit.

cells is called mitochondrial biogenesis.

Instead of falling victim to that afternoon slump, you enjoy sharp-as-a-tack focus, memory, and concentration from sunup to sundown. And you get more done in a day than most do in a week. Regardless of how exhausting the world is now.

Dr. Sears reports, "The most rewarding aspect of practicing medicine is watching my patients get the joy back in their lives. **Ultra Accel II** sends a wake-up call to every cell in their bodies... And they actually feel young again."

And his patients agree. "I noticed a difference within a few days," says Jerry from Ft. Pierce, Florida. "My endurance has almost doubled, and I feel it mentally, too. There's a clarity and sense of well-being in my life that I've never experienced before."

How To Get Ultra Accel II

This is the official nationwide release of **Ultra Accel II** in the United States. And so, the company is offering a special discount supply to anyone who calls during the official launch.

An Order Hotline has been set up for local readers to call. This gives everyone an equal chance to try **Ultra Accel II**. And your order is backed up by a no-hassle, 90-day money back guarantee. No questions asked.

Starting at 7:00 AM today, the discount offer will be available for a limited time only. All you have to do is call TOLL FREE **1-800-435-0298** right now and use promo code **SIUA823** to secure your own supply.

Important: Due to **Ultra Accel II** recent media exposure, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not immediately get through, please be patient and call back.

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