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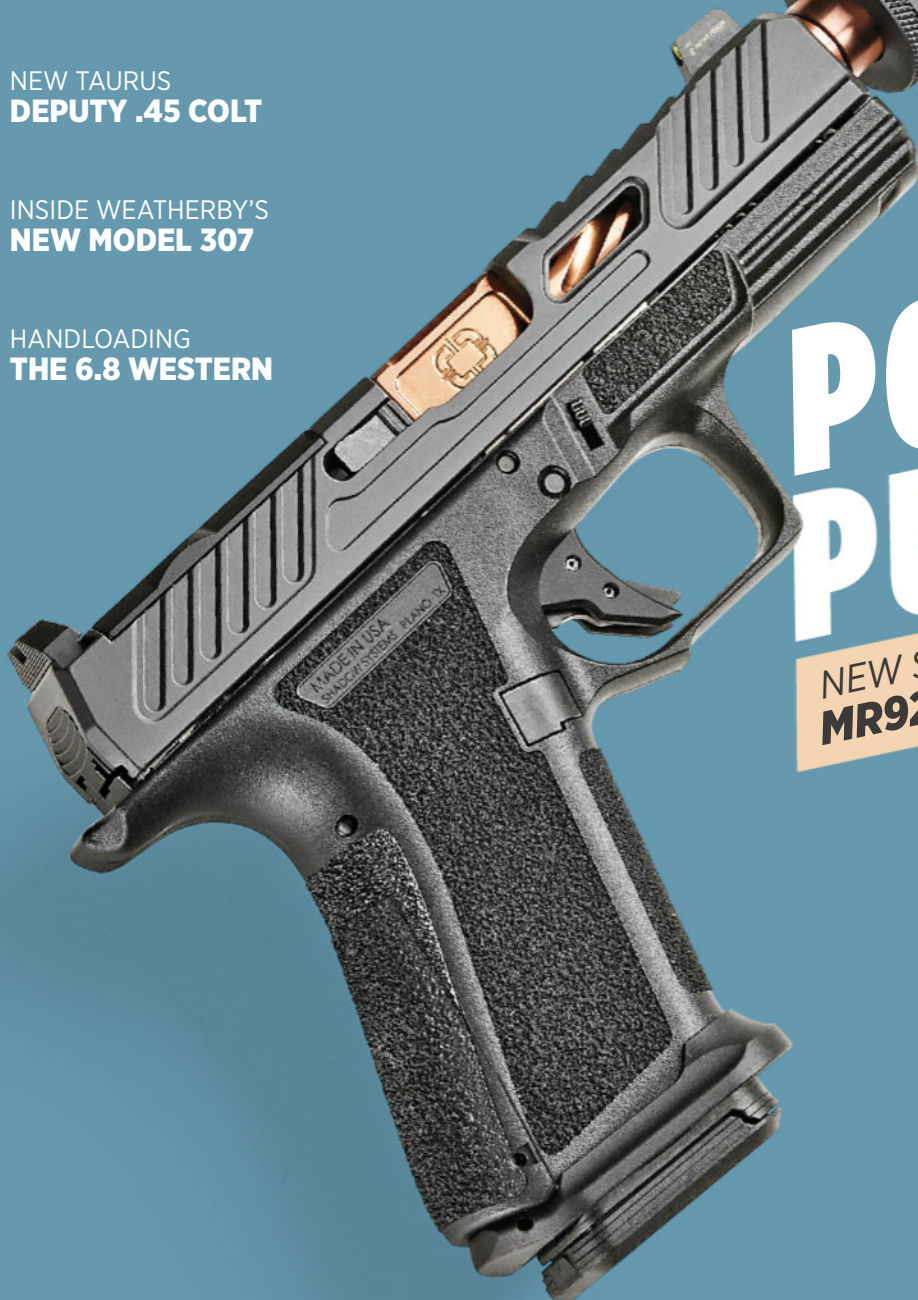
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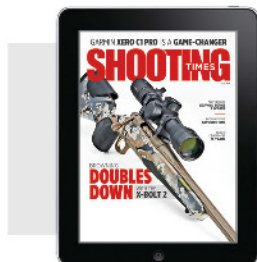
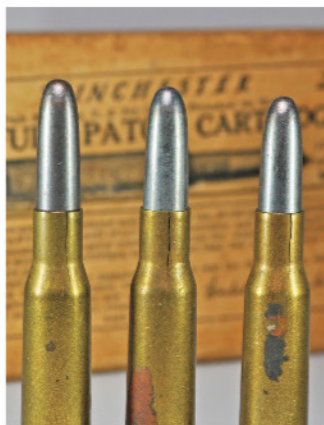
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THEY SAID A
WILDCAT CARTRIDGE
CAN NEVER BE MAINSTREAM.

WE RESPECTFULLY DISAGREE.



HORIZONFIREARMS



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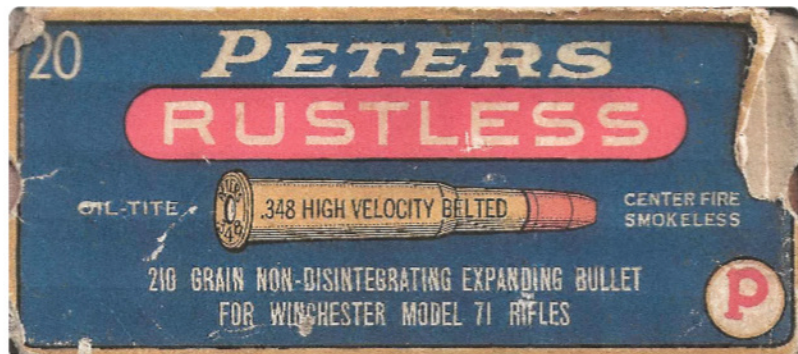


SHOOTER'S UPDATE

READERS SPEAK OUT

NEW GUNS & GEAR

ASK THE EXPERTS



210-Grain .348 Win. Factory Ammo

ALLAN JONES'S COLUMN ON THE .348 WINCHESTER AND .405 WINCHESTER in the April issue repeats a common misconception that the .348 Win. cartridge was offered with only 150-, 200-, and 250-grain bullets in factory-loaded ammunition. As my photograph shows, Peters offered a 210-grain load.

Peter A. Anderson
Bangor, ME

.300 AAC for Deer

I appreciate Layne Simpson's perspective on not having tried the .300 AAC on deer, given his focus on its original subsonic design.

Being trapped behind enemy lines in the People's Republic of Illinois, where we can't have fun and useful stuff like suppressors, I have focused on maximizing energy with supersonic loads. We started with cheap 147-grain FMJ pulled bullets for load development and function testing and then switched to some 150-grain tipped hunting bullets that were factory seconds. My friends and I have shot a large number of deer in southwest Wisconsin where we hunt, and none needed more than one shot with the .300 AAC fired from a 16-inch barrel.

The probable end point for .300 AAC for deer is 125-grain bullets, such as Nosler Ballistic Tips and similar bullets from Hornady. I have projected this to be the maximum energy that I can get, and it should have plenty of mass to punch deeply into a deer. These rounds are loaded and just waiting for a deer to volunteer next November.

Kevin Baxter
Via email

Micro-Compacts

In regard to Layne Simpson's article on micro-compact pistols, I believe the polymer-frame Walther PPS predated the Glock 43 by several years. I purchased one as soon as I saw it at a gun show to replace my Walther PPKs as my deep concealment gun. It is 9mm, has night sights, and is lighter than the PPK. Though thinner, the trigger and trigger reach are similar to

my Glock 19. It is still one of my favorite pistols, despite having reduced capacity in comparison to more recent offerings.

Mark Howard
Via email

9mm Browning Corto

I read with interest Joel Hutchcroft's answer on the different 9mm designations in the April edition's "Ask the Experts" department.

While at my outdoor/gravel pit range I picked up some 9mm brass and .380 brass. I tried to reload the .380 and found that on a few cases the Small Pistol primers wouldn't slip into the primer pockets smoothly. I stopped and looked at the headstamp, and it said "9mm Br.c." and "made by Sellier & Bellot."

Cartridges of the World listed that as 9mm Browning Corto (*corto* is Spanish for short). The technical assistance rep at Magtech said that was the European designation for our .380 ACP, and the primer pockets are smaller but can be reamed out to fit the Small Pistol primers.

Stu Mathison
Via email

An Enlightening Report

The recent "Straight-Pull Benefits" article by Craig Boddington was great. I never had a single straight-pull bolt action come through the doors in the 30-plus years I ran a small rural gunshop in eastern North Carolina prior to 2000—not even a Lee Navy or a Schmidt-Rubin. And I saw a lot of military surplus back in the earlier days. This was an extremely interesting and enlightening article to me.

Thanks, Craig. Keep up the good work!
James Younce
Via email

.30 WCF Accuracy Tips

I enjoyed Allan Jones's column in the May issue titled "An Accurate Cartridge Is." What blew me away was him mentioning the .30 WCF (.30-30 Winchester) as accurate in a better platform than a lever gun. This particular cartridge and I go back to when I started reloading using a Lee Loader at 15

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years of age. Since then it has been a love-hate relationship, but now at 72, I know how to build truly accurate .30-30 ammo.

Actually, I learned this some decades back, so I will mention some of my “tricks.”

First, he is correct regarding the gun platform. While very few bolt guns are in this chambering, a much better option is the Marlin 336. The Marlin does not stretch cases like the '94 Winchester's poor receiver design. An accurized 336 (magazine tube floated, barrel band tension modified, vibration-absorbing material between the receiver and forearm, to mention a few things) will greatly improve matters.

As to the cartridge, I only neck size using a Lee Loader and an arbor press.

This cartridge responds very nicely to all the normal case-prep techniques (primer pocket remachining, flash hole deburring, etc.), which are truly necessary.

As to the neck sizing option, I could write volumes on this. Suffice to say that in a test using a Marlin 336 in .35 Remington using 42 grains of LVR and a Speer 220-grain bullet, we reused the same case, neck sizing only, five times before any difficulty in chambering was experienced. And there was no hint of head separation.

I neglected to mention that bulletseating is done using either a Wilson in-line seater or a Foster benchrest seater, as this keeps run-out to a minimum.

One trick when bench shooting any lever gun is to single load only, as a full magazine, as it is emptied, will create different vibration patterns shot to shot. Hence, mediocre accuracy. I normally shoot around MOA with my modified Marlin and occasionally under, as small as in the 8s. These are three-shot groups at 100 yards. Speer Hot-Cors always seem to shoot the most accurately.

Anyway, thought you would appreciate this info.

Russell Sas

Via email

Comments on Recent Issues

I think S&W missed the boat on the M&P .22 WMR. On a caliber that is easy on the hand—for those who have small hands or arthritis or those who don't shoot much and might be hesitant when squeezing the trigger—a semiautomatic pistol in that caliber would be ideal for self-defense. Why build such a gun that is heavier than the Shield EZ and is wider (if only marginally) and longer (by 0.5 inch)? Who cares about 61 rounds? It's self-defense, not an invasion. If S&W had built this on the same frame as the Shield (although it could be substantially smaller), I'd be the first in the store to buy it.



It was wonderful to see the piece on the new Python. I bought a Colt Diamondback .22 over 30 years ago. It was the first handgun I ever bought. I've never seen bluing as beautiful as on a Colt. I really wanted a 4.0-inch barrel, but my father, who at that time wasn't much interested in handguns, convinced me to buy the 6.0-inch barrel. He saw it as a target gun; I saw it as a really cool plinking gun. With the ventilated rib and the full-barrel underlug, it was not the gun I wanted to carry (“lug” around) on day-long outings to plink with. Nevertheless, I shot the Diamondback quite a bit for a dozen years until life got in the way. After reading the article I pulled the Diamondback out of the safe just to take a few minutes to admire it.

One final note. My subscription to *Shooting Times* was a gift many years ago from my dad who bought subscriptions for my brother and me as well as his grandsons. He renewed them every year until his death in 2020. Aside from the NRA publication he received from that membership, *Shooting Times* was his only other monthly subscription on firearms. He was a lifelong hunter and shooting sportsman as well as a gunsmith and an avid historian. I didn't realize it until after his death that *Shooting Times* covered subjects from the perspective that he found most useful. Keep up the great work.

Bill Rose

Via email

Resurrecting Old Cartridges

Let me begin by saying I have loads of respect for Layne Simpson and Lane Pearce. They, along with others, have taught me a lot over the years. They have me thinking about something, so bear with me.

In the April 2022 issue of *Shooting Times*, Layne Simpson's article about the .218 Bee left me thinking if I ever hit the big lotto someday, I'd want to search for some rifles in .25-20, .32-20, and .218 Bee. Fast forward to the May 2024 issue, which contains Lane Pearce's column comparing .32-caliber cartridges, and I discover that .32-20 brass is not very sturdy, making it hard to handload. So, I must assume the .25-20 and the .218 Bee also have weak brass, being “offspring” of the .32-20 from the blackpowder days.

I'm thinking maybe it's time for Ruger, Marlin, and Hornady to team up and bring the .25-20, the .32-20, and the .218 Bee, and some other cartridges from yesterday, into the 21st century—possibly with help from Simpson, Pearce, Allan Jones, and others. I wonder what you all think.

Vance Lemaster
Burning Fork, KY

Surprising Results

I was surprised at Brad Miller's conclusion that undersized bullets have no effect on accuracy. Quite a few of us have been running that experiment casually for years as we shoot 9mm revolvers that are built with .357 barrels, like the S&W 929, in competition. I have yet to find a 9mm load with .355 bullets that shoots as well as loading 9mm brass with .358 bullets, and I have yet to hear from any of my fellow competitors (or my gunsmith) that their experience disagreed with mine. For example, using Federal 9mm brass, Federal Small Pistol primers, coated lead bullets, and VihtaVuori N310 powder in an S&W 929 6.5-inch barrel, I found the .355 bullet loads averaged 4.5-inch groups over eight shots at 25 yards, and the .358 bullets came in at 2.625 inches. Now, this was over sandbags, not from a Ransom Rest and not as carefully controlled as the published test, but still. Maybe it's jacketed bullets versus coated lead bullets or using 9mm brass, but, as I said, Dr. Miller's results were surprising.

Tom Chesterman
Flagstaff, AZ

The Original Python

Reading the column by Joseph von Benedikt in the June issue reminded me of a conversation I had in the early 1980s with a gunshop owner in California. He told me that he had been told by a representative, maybe from Colt, that the Python was in fact marketed as a target gun. This gunshop

sold several to local law officers who only wanted the Python, but they would trade every four to six years. The representative suggested they would be better served by buying a Trooper and having it tuned. The Trooper was more durable and probably would save the officers some money.

D. Kopf
Nebraska City, NE

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.32-20 Handloads in 1892 Winchester?

Q. IN LANE PEARCE'S MAY 2024 COLUMN ON .32-CALIBER CARTRIDGES, he lists some handloads for the .32-20 that should not be used in older revolvers or the 1873 Winchester rifle. What about the 1892 Winchester lever-action rifle? I have an 1892 Winchester that is in good functional condition that has been checked out by a gunsmith. The serial number indicates it was made in 1918. It is hard to find information about rifle loads for the 1892 Winchester, so would his handloads be safe in my rifle?

Bill Saunders
Via email

A. As you probably can tell from my column, I have a fondness for .32-caliber cartridges, and the 1892 Winchester rifle chambered for .32 WCF (a.k.a. .32-20) is a major reason I like them so much. Your 1918-vintage rifle is likely one of the best production lever actions ever made. It's a much stronger design than the 1873 Winchester and made with modern steel components. I have fired the .32-20 handloads listed in that column in my own vintage 1892 Winchester (circa 1919) without any evidence of them being unsafe, so the quick answer to your question is, yes, they should be safe in your rifle.

You may or may not know that long ago the ammunition companies offered special .32 WCF High Velocity factory loads, with lighter-weight bullets and increased chamber pressures. Those rounds were headstamped "M92 HV" to segregate them from the "regular" .32-20 factory ammo. Because your

original 1918 1892 Winchester has been carefully checked out and okayed by a competent gunsmith, it should be capable of handling handloads topped with cast or jacketed bullets loaded to 30,000 psi, which is about double the current SAAMI specification. That said, just know that you're taking full responsibility for firing handloads that I've shot in my rifle.

Lane Pearce

Trail Boss Availability?

Q. Is Trail Boss powder gone for good?
William S. Nowaski
Via email

A. After receiving your question, I contacted our sources at Hodgdon Powder Co. Here is their official statement: "Trail Boss is still an active SKU in Hodgdon's lineup of powders. Although we have had challenges with sourcing this powder over the last several years of record demand, we remain optimistic we will have this powder available again in the near future."

Joel J. Hutchcroft

9mm Browning Court?

Q. I read the question and answer in the April issue regarding the 9mm Browning Long. I kept waiting to read something about the 9mm Browning Court (.380 Auto). I have several boxes of the 9mm Browning Court ammo and keep wondering if it is okay to shoot in my new Ruger LCP Max. The boxes say "9mm Browning Court .380 AUTO," and the cases are stamped GECO .380 AUTO. Your thoughts?

John Hildebrand
Post Falls, ID

A. According to various reference works, including *Cartridges of the World* by Frank C. Barnes, *Ammo Encyclopedia* by Michael Bussard, and others, alternate names for the .380 ACP cartridge include .380 Auto, 9mm Browning, 9mm Browning Court, 9mm Browning Corto, 9x17mm, 9mm Short, and 9mm Kurtz. All those names refer to the same cartridge.

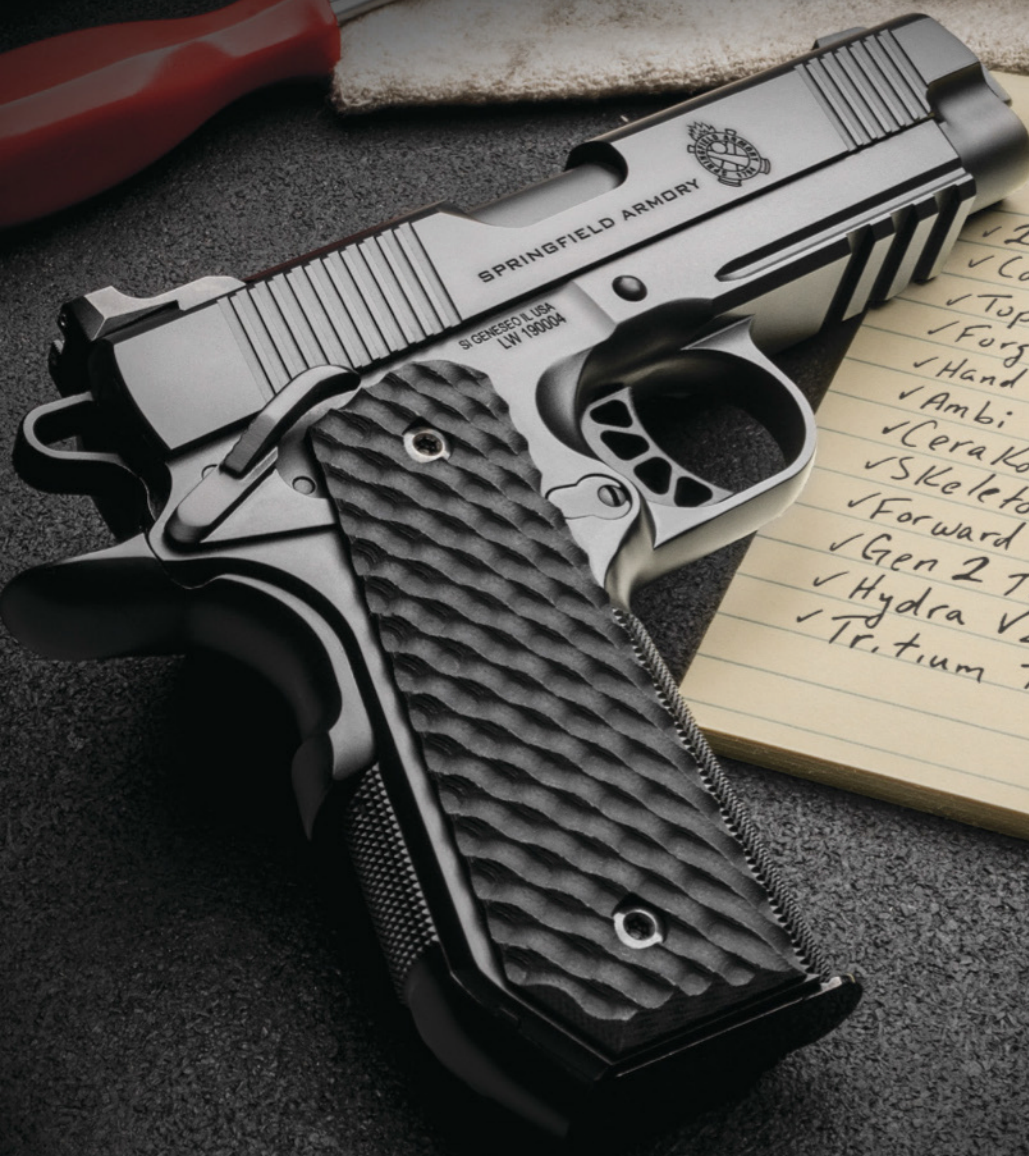
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Lee-Enfield (No. 1) Mk III* .303 British

The Lee-Enfield (No. 1) Mk III* .303 British could have been the greatest bolt-action battle rifle of them all. **BY JOSEPH VON BENEDIKT**

DURING THE DESIGN UPHEAVAL THAT FOLLOWED the invention of smokeless gunpowder, Britain came up with a rifle that many would call the best bolt-action battle rifle ever made. It was the Lee-Enfield (in many variations), and there's some substance behind that claim. As great as the Mauser 98 and Springfield 1903 were, the Lee-Enfield had some undeniable advantages. Introduced in 1895, it held 10 rounds in the magazine; it had a cock-on-close bolt that optimized fast functioning; and its ergonomics made it easy to work at the shoulder without giving up one's sight picture. Case in point: British Sergeant Instructor Snoxall set a world record firing the "mad minute" at 300 yards in 1914 with a Lee-Enfield. He put 38 rounds into a 12-inch target in 60 seconds, and that record still stands in the bolt-action battle rifle category.

The .303 British is a transitional-era cartridge much like the .30-30 Winchester. It has a rim and was designed with a lot of taper in the cartridge body. Early .303 ammo was powered by blackpowder, which gave way to smokeless cordite propellant. Round-nose 215-grain bullets were introduced first, but they proved unsatisfactory when pitted against the faster,

flatter-shooting and lighter-recoiling pointed bullets newly in use by other nations.

In 1910 the Brits went to a rear-weighted 174-grain pointed, flat-base FMJ bullet with the nose filled with aluminum. It technically adhered to the Hague Convention guidelines against bullets that produced "increased suffering," such as hollowpoints and dum-dum bullets. However, because it was so rear-weighted, it tended to tumble and break apart on impact, so in combat its effect was profoundly deadly.

Thanks to its outstanding functional practicality, the Lee-Enfield earned the distinction of being the battle rifle with the second-longest service history ever. Although officially replaced in England in 1957, it soldiered on in several of the Commonwealth countries (Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada) into the 1960s and then on into the 1990s in its L42A1 sniper variant. It continues to serve with the Bangladesh police. Only the Mosin-Nagant has been in use longer.

The name Lee-Enfield is derived from the designer of the action (James Paris Lee) and the designer of the rifling type (the Royal Small Arms Factory at Enfield). The various No.s and Mk.s denote the evolution of

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the fundamental design over a half-century of near-continuous use in conflict around the world.

Most common is the No. 1 Mk III, which is the type that the sporterized rifle showcased here began life as. Designated the Short Magazine Lee-Enfield, it wears the rollmark ShtLE. More commonly in print and vernacular is the abbreviation S.M.L.E., colloquially known as “SMELLY.”

Total production of S.M.L.E.s by the end of World War I was north of five million. It’s believed that more than 17 million Lee-Enfield rifles were built, if you count all the variations. A double handful of factories manufactured S.M.L.E.s, ranging from the Royal Small Arms Factory to Savage Arms.

Mechanicals

The Lee-Enfield is a unique bolt action, loosely based on the Lee-Metford design, with some significant improvements. As the bolt travels forward, the cocking piece engages the sear, and the firing pin spring must be compressed to finish closing the bolt. The locking lugs are near the rear of the bolt, and they engage in lug recesses behind the rear receiver bridge. The right-side locking lug runs nearly the full length of the bolt, and it rotates up to the 12 o’clock position when the bolt is opened. It serves as an antibind bolt guide in the channel in the rear of the receiver.

The face of the bolt is simple. It’s a round cylinder of steel with a hole in the middle for the firing pin. Removing the bolt can be confusing. With the bolt all the way back, pop the big extractor housing lug up to 12 o’clock and draw the bolt out the rear of the action.

To load with a “charger” (a.k.a. stripper clip), the five-round charger is loaded with the cartridge rims in an under-over-under-over-under alignment pattern.

Two chargers can be mashed consecutively into the magazine to achieve the full 10-round payload.

To load without chargers, or to top off the magazine after firing a few rounds, press individual cartridges down in as with any other bolt-action design.

The push-forward-to-fire safety is located on the left side of the stock collar. It’s easy to operate, and when pulled all the way rearward, it engages the safety and locks the bolt closed.

Provenance

Wartime production during World War I forced manufacturers to simplify, and starting in late 1915 the Mk III* was phased in. The asterisk denotes the streamlined, less-complex version. Existing parts were used until supply ran out, so you’ll see a lot of variation. The rifle shown was manufactured in 1916 and wears the asterisk, but it is fitted with a pre-asterisk rear sight that’s adjustable for windage.

This rifle belongs to a friend, who received it as a gift from a family member long ago. It was crudely sporterized at some point, and there are no import marks, so it was most likely a wartime bring-back. It has a number of proof and reproof marks, so I suspect it went through an arsenal rebuild between World War I and World War II. My friend has used it in the wild Alaskan hunting fields, and I estimate its value between \$300 and \$450.

Rangetime

With just one .303 load on hand, my son William and I put bullets on paper to see how the old war-horse shoots. Accuracy appears promising, but point of impact is two feet high at 100 yards. With a target at 25 yards, William—with his fresh, young eyes—fired a three-shot group the size of a small peanut. My groups ranged from about a half-inch to nearly an inch.

The smooth cock-on-close bolt is as slick as grease on glass, and reliability is stellar, even though the stock bolt that runs into the rear of the action was bent during transport from Alaska and the stock now has a lot of “cast.” With a taller front sight, I suspect the rifle would shoot honest 2.5-inch groups at 100 yards, which is plenty good for most hunting situations.

A lot of the old-timers across America and in all the British Commonwealth countries cut their hunting teeth with a sporterized Lee-Enfield rifle much like this one. They’re getting scarcer now, but they’re still as capable as ever—and the S.M.L.E. is one historically cool fightin’ tool. **ST**

LEE-ENFIELD (NO. 1) MK III*

MANUFACTURER	Birmingham Small Arms Co.
TYPE	Bolt-action repeater
CALIBER	.303 British
MAGAZINE CAPACITY	10 rounds
BARREL	25.2 in.
OVERALL LENGTH	44 in.
WEIGHT, EMPTY	7.63 lbs.
STOCK	Walnut
LENGTH OF PULL	13.5 in.
FINISH	Blued steel, oil-finished stock
SIGHTS	Tangent leaf with U-notch rear, post on barrel band ramp front
TRIGGER	6.9-lb. pull (as tested)
SAFETY	Rocker type

LEE-ENFIELD (NO. 1) MK III* ACCURACY & VELOCITY

AMMUNITION	VEL. (FPS)	E.S. (FPS)	S.D. (FPS)	25-YD. ACC. (IN.)
.303 British 25.2-in. Barrel, 1:10 LH Twist				
Federal 180-gr. Power-Shok	2172	51	19	0.52
NOTES: Accuracy is the average of three, three-shot groups fired from a sandbag bench-rest. Velocity is the average of nine rounds measured nine feet from the muzzle using a LabRadar. Ambient temperature: 30 degrees Fahrenheit. Elevation: 5,100 feet.				



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SHOOTER'S GALLERY

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Of Mercuric Primers, Brittle Brass, and U-Boats

Allan's recent column on priming chemistry stirred up interesting letters and follow-up questions from a number of readers. Here are edited versions of two of his responses. **BY ALLAN JONES**

Neck cracks in these circa 1914 rifle cartridges are due to great age and residual stress, not primer composition.

THE FIRST LETTER I RECEIVED AFTER PUBLISHING my column on priming chemistry was from Barry Kelly. He wrote, "You discussed old corrosive military primers and primer cups getting brittle over time. Does embrittlement happen to commercial primers (noncorrosive) as well? If so, at what age should primers be considered too old to use? Also, does cartridge brass get brittle with age and can we detect it?"

Regarding brittleness, most mercury embrittlement of metal arises from firing residues, not unfired

mercury fulminate. Any embrittlement in modern primer cups is almost always a metal-forming issue. Metal embrittlement due to unfired primer mix is, at best, a third-order factor.

Cups are punched from thin brass sheets and folded to shape. The resulting cups retain residual stresses from forming, requiring a low-temp heat-treat operation (stress relief). Over decades, metal lacking proper stress relief tries to return to its prior stressed state; an old primer cup could crack on firing.

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Stress-relief ovens use remote thermocouples for temperature control, but prior to about 1970, even the best sensors were insensitive enough to rarely leave residual stresses in some cups. In old, cracked cups I investigated, all were from lots whose codes showed they were made before about 1968. Replacing old sensors with newer, more sensitive counterparts and making heat distribution in the ovens more uniform virtually has eliminated that failure mode.

Even with old primers, only a tiny number were affected. I recall working only four incidents of primer cup cracks that were enough to etch a firearm's breechface in the 10 years I managed returned product investigations.

Issues with brittle cartridge brass are a bit different. They often require stress relief treatment *between* forming operations as the case morphs from sheet brass to finished product.

Most case cracks I've encountered were in the necks of old cartridges. The case "gets tired" of gripping a bullet for decades. Stresses from bulletseating and long-term gripping cannot be heat-relieved after seating; there's propellant under that bullet! Neither can a case ready to split be nondestructively detected before it happens with any gear in our home or factory shops.

However, my reference collection has a number of 120- to 140-year-old rifle cartridges, and only one has a neck crack. Very rarely does that happen in newer ammo.

When it comes to telling primer age, unfortunately, I can no longer tell you how to decode lot numbers or packaging styles. You will have to call the makers' tech support lines. When buying primers to load ammo for my firearms, my policy is "if it looks old, don't."

Reader Ron Dunn asked a question that ticked my outside interests. I am a bit of a naval history buff, with the U.S. Navy proudly represented on both sides of my family. Although this is not a classic ballistics question, the materials involved have ballistic significance. This is the letter's condensed version:

"Approximately 1,500 tons of mercury was purchased by the Japanese in Italy from 1942 to war's end. This held the highest priority for shipment to Japan by submarine. The cargo manifest of a captured U-boat listed the Japanese Navy as the destination for all the mercury.

"Nobody I have talked to could come up with a reason for Japan needing that much mercury. I know it had been used in primers but did not know until your article that it had been discontinued long ago, at least in America.

"So why did the Japanese need that much mercury? They could have still used it in small arms primers and perhaps even detonators for other explosive weapons. Was there another industrial use for it? Could it have been used in their atomic bomb project?

"On another note, the only mercury I am familiar with is liquid mercury. Was it in some other form when used in primers?"

Jumping to Mr. Dunn's last question about forms of mercury, processing releases liquid metal mercury from a reddish, rocky ore mineral called cinnabar. In old primers, metal mercury was artificially combined with carbon, nitrogen, and oxygen, converting a non-explosive liquid metal to a powder that can seriously ruin your day: mercury fulminate.

Building mercuric percussion primers—cited in most references—surely make sense. However, we now know from postwar research that Japan also used "chlorate" primers. Potassium chlorate can be made from cheaper, common, and less-toxic minerals that might be available on volcanic islands surrounded by seawater.

Likewise, antimony sulfide, a fuel used in some chlorate primers and most modern styphnate primers, was available from certain mines in China in such purity that it could be used with minimal processing. Guess who overran great swaths of China before World War II?

U.S. Ordnance Manual TM 9-1985-4 (1953) lists chemicals that an Allied postwar survey of Japanese technology found were used in its World War II ordnance. It lists mercury fulminate and potassium chlorate as used by the Imperial Army and Navy for "primer cap composition" and by both services for "initiator in fuzes (sic) and blasting caps."

My go-to reference for obscure ballistic materials is Tenney L. Davis's textbook, *The Chemistry of Powders and Explosives*, written during World War II. His historical info is understandably lacking any contemporary Japanese technical information. Still, Davis offers us a hint, listing about a dozen mercury-based compounds considered explosive or "energetic."

I'm not familiar with World War II Japanese efforts toward nuclear power. I found mercury mentioned in a reference to an advanced experimental reactor, but it was built in the U.S. in 1946. It was described as the world's first liquid-metal-cooled reactor; mercury was its coolant. Issues with toxicity plus physical and chemical interactions made mercury a short-lived experiment in reactor cooling, at least in the U.S.

There is certainly room for further research, but until I learn to read surviving Japanese records, that is on hold!

ST

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The Exemplary .300 Savage

The .300 Savage was a great hunting cartridge in 1920 when it was first introduced, and it's just as capable today. **BY LANE PEARCE**

While factory-loaded .300 Savage ammo is sparse, many handloading components for it are available, and top-performing reloads are easy to build.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE .300 SAVAGE IS JUST ONE of many old cartridges that have been relegated to obsolescent status. But that was not the case back when I was a kid in the early 1950s. The .300 Savage was quite popular then, and many hunting rifles were chambered for it. I recently acquired a first-year production Remington Model 760 pump-action rifle chambered for it; it joins my collection of like-chambered rifles, including a Remington Model 81 autoloader, a Remington Model 722 bolt action, and a Savage Model 99 lever action.

The .300 Savage has an exemplary, if not widely known, legacy. During the Great World War (1914–1918), two events occurred that significantly affected Savage's future. In 1915 the company was sold. Along with several other firms seeking to secure contracts with the government for military arms and accessories, Savage engineers developed a bolt-action rifle designed for the .30-06 Springfield cartridge.

Winchester and Remington already had contracts with England and Russia to manufacture Enfield and Mosin-Nagant rifles, so Savage's bid was not successful.

Lever actions were then the most popular choice for the civilian sporting market. However, thousands of "doughboys" returning from Europe had fought with bolt-action rifles. Savage resurrected its plans for the previously unsuccessful military model and designed a Mauser-like bolt rifle to fit the shorter .250-3000 and soon-to-be-introduced (1920) .300 Savage rounds. The .300 Savage's "improved" case with less body taper and a sharper shoulder provided greater powder capacity. Overall length, however, was kept the same to accommodate the Model 99's relatively short action. Savage touted the .300's performance as comparable to the .30-06's ballistics at the time (a 150-grain bullet with a muzzle velocity of 2,700 fps).



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Eventually, Winchester and Remington also offered rifles chambered for the .300 Savage. In fact, at the end of the next worldwide conflagration in 1945, the .300 Savage remained a top choice for hunting deer, black bears, and even elk and moose. By then the cartridge was offered in all types of rifle actions.

Unfortunately, today, factory ammo is relatively scarce; however, Hornady offers ammo, brass, and a special-purpose component bullet. I obtained several boxes of Hornady ammo topped with 150-grain SST bullets and a couple of boxes of the same weight and type component. As you can see from the data provided in the accompanying chart, the .300 Savage delivers more than enough “oomph” to take any deer, black bear, or elk if the hunter puts the right bullet in a lethal spot.

Handloaders have nothing to worry about concerning factory ammo being hard to find. You can readily make excellent .300 Savage cases from .308 Winchester brass. The 7.62x51 NATO/.308 Winchester was actually developed based on the .300 Savage round. The case neck length was increased, and the shoulder angle was reduced. The rim thickness was increased by a few thousandths to help ensure reliable functioning in fully automatic military rifles.

I reformed several dozen .308 commercial cases using a Lee Precision full-length sizer die. I then trimmed to length and deburred the case mouths with RCBS’s powered case-prep tools. Typically, the same components and propellants for the .308 Winchester are suitable to handload the .300 Savage. The Savage case has a bit less capacity, so charge weights are reduced by about 10 percent. Because COL is 2.600 inches (0.2 inch shorter than the .308 Winchester), 150- and 165-grain bullets are recommended. These bullets will fully engage the .300 Savage’s short neck and not intrude too far into the case.

The SST bullet has a cannelure that when seated to 2.600 inches allowed using Lee’s factory crimp die to slightly clamp the case mouth onto the bullet shank. Doing so ensures bullet retention even during violent autoloading of each round in the Model 81 and rapid cycling of the Model 760. I had zero feeding, firing, and extracting malfunctions with my test loads assembled in the reformed cases.

I don’t think any new factory production rifles have been offered in .300 Savage since Remington offered the Model 700 Classic in 2003; however, there must be thousands of vintage rifles still in good shape that should be put to use in the woods! **ST**

.300 SAVAGE ACCURACY & VELOCITY

BULLET	POWDER		CASE	PRIMER	VEL. (FPS)	S.D. (FPS)	50-YD. ACC. (IN.)
	(TYPE)	(GRS.)					
Remington Model 760, 22-in. Barrel							
Hornady 150-gr. SST	2000-MR	45.0	Rem. 9½	Fed.	2654	10	1.38
Hornady 150-gr. SST	IMR 4064	40.0	Rem. 9½	PMC	2467	15	1.74
Hornady 150-gr. SST	Varget	41.0	Rem. 9½	PMC	2601	4	1.56
Speer 150-gr. Gold Dot BLK	IMR 3031	38.0	CCI 200	Rem.	2531	15	1.61
Speer 150-gr. Gold Dot BLK	Reloder 15	42.0	WLR	Horn.	2544	12	1.81
Speer 150-gr. Gold Dot BLK	VV N140	42.0	CCI 200	Fed.	2578	11	1.68
Speer 150-gr. Gold Dot BTSP	IMR 4895	41.0	WLR	Horn.	2586	12	1.6
Hornady 150-gr. SST	Factory load				2690	13	2.35
Savage Model 99, 24-in. Barrel							
Hornady 150-gr. SST	2000-MR	45.0	Rem. 9½	Fed.	2678	11	1.40
Hornady 150-gr. SST	IMR 4064	40.0	Rem. 9½	PMC	2435	13	1.52
Hornady 150-gr. SST	Varget	41.0	Rem. 9½	PMC	2591	17	1.56
Speer 150-gr. Gold Dot BLK	IMR 3031	38.0	CCI 200	Rem.	2526	13	1.67
Speer 150-gr. Gold Dot BLK	Reloder 15	42.0	WLR	Horn.	2544	17	1.28
Speer 150-gr. Gold Dot BLK	VV N140	42.0	CCI 200	Fed.	2599	19	0.89
Speer 150-gr. Gold Dot BTSP	IMR 4895	41.0	WLR	Horn.	2611	9	1.38
Hornady 150-gr. SST	Factory load				2677	16	1.55

NOTES: Accuracy is the average of two, five-shot groups fired from a sandbag benchrest. Velocity is the average of 10 rounds measured six feet from the guns’ muzzles.

All load data should be used with caution. Always start with reduced loads first and make sure they are safe in each of your guns before proceeding to the high test loads listed. Since *Shooting Times* has no control over your choice of components, guns, or actual loadings, neither *Shooting Times* nor the various firearms and components manufacturers assumes any responsibility for the use of this data.



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INSIDE WEATHERBY'S NEW MODEL 307

WEATHERBY HAS AN ALL-NEW RIFLE ACTION CALLED THE MODEL 307—AND THE RIFLE WE TESTED IS READY FOR THE FIELD AND THE RANGE.

BY STEVE GASH

WHEN A GUN COMPANY ANNOUNCES a “new” rifle model, it can mean several things. It could be, of course, that there is really a brand-new gun in the gun stores over which we firearm votaries can swoon. Unfortunately, it also can be a press release for something that the company is thinking about, wants to develop, is developing, or some such. In the computer software industry, this is called “vaporware.” In the case of Weatherby, it really is a new rifle model, and this one has already hit dealers’ shelves.

In spite of the current intense interest in AR-15 rifles of all sizes, shapes, and calibers, there are still a lot of shooters and hunters who want good, solid bolt-action rifles that they can take hunting and rely on in the field. They’re not opposed to “new,” as long as it incorporates desirable features that add value and usefulness to the rifle. A good example of this is the new Model 307 Range XP from Weatherby.

New Is New

The Model 307 is not a rehash of a previous design. It is truly a new model that offers a host of useful features. Weatherby fans don't need to worry, though, the Vanguard and Mark V models are still in the Weatherby line.

At the time of this writing, the new Range XP rifle is but one of four rifles based on the new Model 307 action. All are totally designed and manufactured by Weatherby, and they all have many fine features. But if you just have to have a rifle made to your exact desires, the Model 307 builder's action (\$749) is available, and it is compatible with many aftermarket stocks, triggers, and other accessories for the Remington Model 700 platform. With an MSRP of \$1,199, the Model 307 Range XP rifle is billed as having a custom rifle feel without the custom rifle price. This assessment, of course, is up to the buyer.

When I first read about the new Model 307, I was impressed with the features and ordered one. No, it's not polished walnut and blued steel, but it caught my eye because it embodies what we might call the "modern hunting rifle." Once I got one in my hands, I could tell right off that it's ready for business. The Range XP is chambered for 11 popular cartridges, including many old favorites, some of the new "wonder" rounds, and the .257 Weatherby Magnum and the sizzling 6.5 RPM (Rebated Precision Magnum) from Weatherby. The well-designed synthetic stock is adjustable for comb height and also length of pull; it has a great trigger; and, well, it's a Weatherby.

Because the new Model 307 is compatible with many aftermarket parts for the Remington Model 700, it is the most open platform in the Weatherby line. The company proudly notes that the new rifle is built in its Sheridan, Wyoming, facilities, which is smack dab in the heart of "hunting country." I will remember harvesting my first wild turkey on a ranch south of Sheridan with a rifle (legal in Wyoming) back in the early 1970s.

The Model 307 Range XP I received for this report is well made and aesthetically pleasing. The stock has a nice textured feel to it, and the vertical grip positions the shooting hand comfortably. The Model 307 has a cylindrical receiver to which a TriggerTech trigger is attached. Get this: Five trigger pulls averaged a delightful 3 pounds, 1.9 ounces right out of the box! The trigger is externally adjustable, but believe you me, I didn't adjust it—because I didn't need to.

The buttstock has a really nice 1-inch-thick recoil pad, and there is a swivel stud 1.25 inches from the toe of the stock. The fore-end has two swivel studs, so a sling and a bipod can be attached at the same time.

Some synthetic stocks are pretty flimsy, but the fore-end of the Model 307 has stiff crossmembers molded into it that make the stock strong and stiff but don't add a lot of weight. I couldn't press the fore-end tip to touch the barrel, so it won't touch the barrel from recoil when fired. This is a feature that greatly enhances the rifle's accuracy.

The rifle's muzzle is threaded 1/2-28, so it is suppressor ready right out of the box. A 2-inch-long Weatherby Accubrake and a thread protector come with the rifle, too.

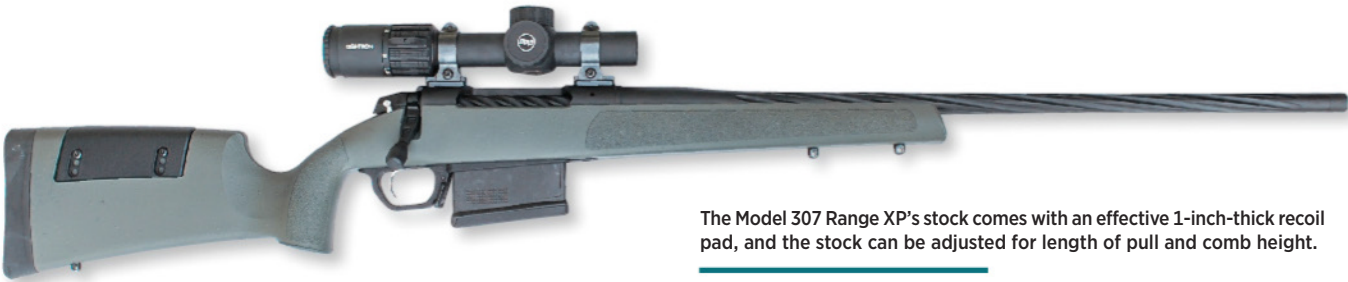
The length of pull is 13.5 inches, which may be a bit short for many folks, but Weatherby includes two 0.25-inch-thick hard plastic spacers that can be installed between the recoil pad and the stock to lengthen the length of pull if desired. I must confess that I had to hunt rather hard to find the screw holes for the recoil pad screws, but after I did, the extra half-inch of LOP made it just right for me.

The barrel contour is described as Mag. Sporter, and the 24-inch tube is free-floated throughout its length. The barrel measures 1.222 inches at its junction with the recoil lug, which is sandwiched between the barrel and the receiver, and the barrel diameter at the muzzle is 0.622 inch. The fluted bolt measures 0.292 inch behind the two locking lugs. The bolt



The all-new Model 307 Range XP rifle features a user-adjustable TriggerTech trigger. Steve's rifle's trigger pull averaged 3.12 pounds right out of the box.

INSIDE WEATHERBY'S NEW MODEL 307



The Model 307 Range XP's stock comes with an effective 1-inch-thick recoil pad, and the stock can be adjusted for length of pull and comb height.



The new model's synthetic stock is strong, stable, and doesn't flex, plus it has aluminum pillar bedding for the fore and aft stock screws.

MODEL 307 RANGE XP	
MANUFACTURER	Weatherby weatherby.com
TYPE	Bolt-action repeater
CALIBER	.30-06
MAGAZINE CAPACITY	5 rounds
BARREL	24 in.
OVERALL LENGTH	43.75 in.
WEIGHT, EMPTY	7.5 lbs.
STOCK	Synthetic
LENGTH OF PULL	13.5 to 14 in.
FINISH	Graphite black Cerakote barrel and receiver, OD green stock
SIGHTS	None, receiver drilled and tapped for scope bases
TRIGGER	3.12-lb. pull (as tested)
SAFETY	Two position
MSRP	\$1,199

has a tool-less disassembly, so it can be stripped in the field if necessary. Oh, and the stock has aluminum pillar bedding for the fore and aft stock screws.

While there are many fine cartridges for hunting big game, in my view, one can hardly ever go wrong with the tried-and-true .30-06 Springfield, and as I said earlier my rifle is chambered for this grand, old cartridge.

For range testing, I installed a Sightron S-TAC 1-6X 24mm IR AR1 scope. I got the proper scope mounts from Talley, and for reference, the 30mm fixed rings are number 300004, and the proper bases are both number 252719. Incidentally, the bottom of the base box is labeled “Nesika Bay.” Be that as it may, these bases are a perfect fit for the Model 307. It is of significance that Weatherby uses the larger and sturdier 8-40 screws for the bases. This mount puts the scope about 1.81 inches above the bore, and while that may seem a bit high, remember that the Model 307’s cheekpiece can be adjusted easily.

About the scope, it has what Sightron calls the ExacTrack erector tube system that provides consistent and repeatable adjustments at any power. The lenses have MC-333 multicoating and boast 91 percent light transmission. The unique reticle

is in the second focal plane, is illuminated, and has 11 intensity levels. It has a central “halo” for fast target acquisition around an illuminated dot and drop bars (the familiar “Christmas tree” look) for holdover and windage corrections. A CR2032 battery powers the illumination.

The 30mm scope tube is aircraft aluminum, and the scope is 10.75 inches long and weighs 21.7 ounces. The click adjustments are 0.25-MOA, and there are 25 minutes of adjustment per revolution, with a total of 60 MOA of adjustment for windage and 100 MOA for elevation. The dials are covered with low-profile caps. The parallax setting is at 100 yards, and the scope is nitrogen filled. It is waterproof, fogproof, and rated for chamberings of considerable recoil.

Range Results

While the Model 307 Range XP is adaptable for a variety of shooting chores, I envision it as an all-around hunting rifle, and in .30-06 with today’s ammo, it is suitable for a wide range of critters. The .30-06 barrel has a 1:10-inch twist, which should stabilize most .30-caliber hunting bullets. Checking the bore with my Gradient Lens Hawkeye borescope revealed that it is smooth and uniform throughout its length.

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Steve fired the new Model 307 Range XP with .30-06 factory-loaded ammo and his favorite handloads topped with these premium component bullets.

A good yardstick for testing a new rifle is a cross-selection of factory loads, and I fired a total of 10 factory loads with bullets ranging from 150 to 180 grains. The rifle's bore was cleaned after every three groups and allowed to cool between groups. A delightful surprise was that the bore did not accumulate much jacket fouling between cleanings.

As the saying goes, bullet holes in paper don't lie, and I am pleased to report that the new rifle plunked bullets into nice, round groups. The overall average group size with factory loads was 0.86 inch. The smallest group was 0.57 inch with the Federal 200-grain Trophy Bonded Bear Claw bullet. Actually, the accuracy of any of the factory loads tested would be quite acceptable for virtually any game, and only two loads grouped slightly over an inch. It is obvious that with minimal experimentation, any hunter can find a suitable load for the next safari.

As my faithful readers know, if it can be reloaded, I am on it. However, I sorta cherry-picked at this point. The number of possible loads is almost incalculable, so I reviewed my records of previous .30-06s I've tested and selected bullets and powders that shot well in them. I have tested many .30-06 rifles, and I am convinced that Superformance and StaBALL 6.5 powders are the top choices for '06 handloads.

I ended up with a dozen loads with suitable powders and premium hunting bullets. All loads were put up in Winchester cases trimmed to 2.484 inches and primed with WLR primers. All powder charges were weighed on an RCBS M-1500 electronic scale, and loads were assembled in Hornady dies in a Redding T-7 turret press.

Before testing, I did my normal break-in routine: load one 20-round box of shells, shoot one shot and clean after each shot for 17 shots, then shoot one three-shot group, clean again, and let the testing begin. Weatherby rifles are well known for having a generous freebore, so I measured the cartridge overall length



Four excellent powders used for the .30-06 handloads fired for this report are H4831, Superformance, StaBALL 6.5, and H4350.

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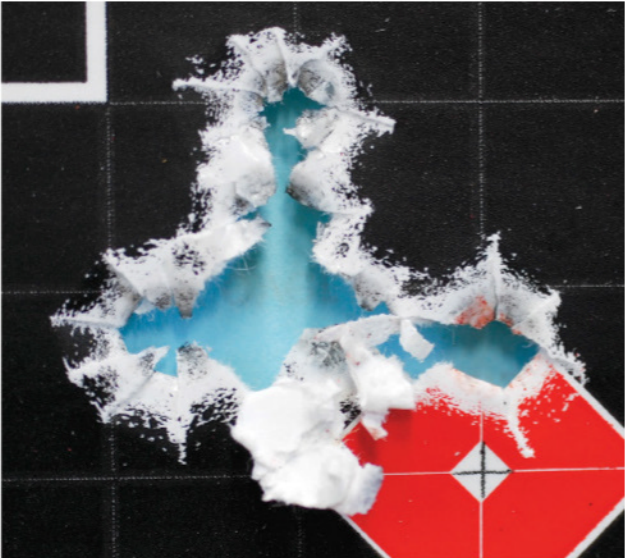
INSIDE WEATHERBY'S NEW MODEL 307

(COL) for each bullet selected for handloads with the Hornady Lock-N-Load Headspace Comparator. This determined the COL of the bullet if it touched the rifling and determined the bullet jump for them.

I seated the bullets so that the case neck made full contact with the bullet shank, as long as the minimum bullet jump was at least 0.010 inch. The longest bullet jump was 0.188 inch with the Hornady 220-grain RN InterLock, and the second longest was 0.130 inch with the Federal 165-grain Trophy Bonded Tip. The bullet jump did not appear to hamper accuracy. All loads would be totally acceptable for hunting, and the overall average group size for the handloads was 1.03 inches.

Some rifle tests are, well, just plain work, but shooting the Model 307 Range XP was like a few days off. It is well designed and well executed. There were no malfunctions of any kind. The trigger was excellent, and the bore didn't foul much at all. And it shot well with just about all loads, factory ammo and handloads.

At this stage of life, I don't *need* another .30-06 rifle, but the Model 307 Range XP sure is tempting. If I were in the market for a new bolt gun, this rifle would be a top choice. If there were only a big-game season open right now, I'd take it hunting. **ST**



The Weatherby Model 307 Range XP rifle chambered in .30-06 proved to be an excellent shooter, both in ergonomics and accuracy. It averaged under 1 inch for five-shot groups at 100 yards with 14 out of 22 loads tested.

WEATHERBY MODEL 307 RANGE XP ACCURACY & VELOCITY									
BULLET	POWDER		CASE	PRIMER	COL (IN.)	VEL. (FPS)	S.D. (FPS)	ENERGY (FT-LBS)	100-YD. ACC. (IN.)
	(TYPE)	(GRS.)							
.30-06, 24-in. Barrel, 1:10 Twist									
Hornady 150-gr. InterBond	Superformance	62.5	Win.	WLR	3.210	3002	23	3002	0.71
Speer 150-gr. Hot-Cor SP	StaBALL 6.5	60.7	Win.	WLR	3.213	3078	11	3156	0.98
Federal 165-gr. Trophy Bonded Tip	Superformance	57.8	Win.	WLR	3.180	2830	12	2935	0.63
Nosler 165-gr. Ballistic Tip	StaBALL 6.5	56.5	Win.	WLR	3.320	2802	12	2877	0.93
Speer 165-gr. Grand Slam	StaBALL 6.5	56.0	Win.	WLR	3.166	2758	10	2788	1.02
Speer 165-gr. Hot-Cor SP	H4831	54.5	Win.	WLR	3.213	2545	14	2374	0.88
Hornady 178-gr. ELD-X	Superformance	56.8	Win.	WLR	3.220	2758	8	3007	1.18
Nosler 180-gr. Partition	StaBALL 6.5	54.9	Win.	WLR	3.210	2727	6	2973	1.17
Speer 180-gr. Grand Slam	H4350	54.7	Win.	WLR	3.170	2645	9	2797	1.27
Hornady 200-gr. ELD-X	Superformance	51.3	Win.	WLR	3.303	2739	11	3332	1.38
Nosler 200-gr. AccuBond	H4350	48.3	Win.	WLR	3.320	2334	18	2420	1.22
Hornady 220-gr. RN InterLock	Superformance	51.7	Win.	WLR	3.438	2381	13	2770	0.98
Hornady Superformance 150-gr. SST	Factory Load				3.216	3076	14	3152	0.66
Remington Express 150-gr. Core-Lokt PSP	Factory Load				3.182	2941	8	2882	1.29
Winchester Power Max 150-gr. PHP	Factory Load				3.164	3015	16	3028	0.63
Federal 165-gr. Trophy Copper	Factory Load				3.193	2823	20	3186	0.96
Hornady Precision Hunter 178-gr. ELD-X	Factory Load				3.349	2645	9	2766	0.87
Hornady Outfitter 180-gr. GMX	Factory Load				3.217	2649	14	2805	0.90
Hornady Superformance 180-gr. SST	Factory Load				3.211	2765	10	3056	0.91
Remington Express 180-gr. Core-Lokt PSP	Factory Load				3.182	2734	11	2988	1.14
Winchester Power Max 180-gr. PHP	Factory Load				3.170	2861	19	3272	0.71
Federal 200-gr. Trophy Bonded Bear Claw	Factory Load				3.165	2633	13	3080	0.57
NOTES: Accuracy is for one, five-shot group fired from a Caldwell Lead Sled rest. Velocity is the average of five rounds measured 10 feet from the gun's muzzle. Range temperature ranged from 43 to 52 degrees Fahrenheit.									
All load data should be used with caution. Always start with reduced loads first and make sure they are safe in each of your guns before proceeding to the high test loads listed. Since <i>Shooting Times</i> has no control over your choice of components, guns, or actual loadings, neither <i>Shooting Times</i> nor the various firearms and components manufacturers assumes any responsibility for the use of this data.									

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ELITE EVERYDAY CARRY

THE NEW MR920 ELITE SEMIAUTOMATIC PISTOL FROM SHADOW SYSTEMS IS METICULOUSLY ENGINEERED, ERGONOMIC, AND PACKED WITH FEATURES THAT TODAY'S SHOOTERS DEMAND.

BY JOEL J. HUTCHCROFT

WE RECEIVE A LOT OF EMAILS AND LETTERS from readers telling us they suffer from 9mm fatigue, which means they have enjoyed a lot of the coverage on such pistols over the last several years, but now they are somewhat tired of 'em. Well, as editor in chief, I really appreciate those comments, and I take them into consideration every month when we determine the editorial lineup of a given issue of this magazine. Your thoughts matter to us here at *Shooting Times*. That said, I think even those readers will find this report about the new Shadow Systems MR920 Elite 9mm pistol interesting. In my opinion, it's a fantastic everyday carry pistol, and as many of you know, I'm a Model 1911 and revolver aficionado.

ELITE EVERYDAY CARRY



MR920 ELITE	
MANUFACTURER	Shadow Systems LLC shadowsystemscorp.com
TYPE	Striker-fired autoloader
CALIBER	9mm Luger
MAGAZINE CAPACITY	15 rounds
BARREL	4.5 in.
OVERALL LENGTH	7.13 in.
WIDTH	1.53 in. (at magwell flare)
HEIGHT	4.75 in.
WEIGHT, EMPTY	20.9 oz.
GRIPS	Integral to polymer frame
FINISH	Black nitride slide, bronze-colored TiCN barrel, black polymer frame
SIGHTS	All-black drift-adjustable rear, green-outlined tritium-dot front
TRIGGER	5.0-lb. pull (as tested)
SAFETY	Trigger lever
MSRP	\$989

The new MR920 Elite's slide is given a lot of special attention. It is contoured, dehorned, weight optimized, and finished in black nitride.

Elite Elements

Shadow Systems pistols are known for their great ergonomics, well-designed optic-ready slides, and excellent accuracy. They are premium pistols that command premium prices, but by all accounts, they are well worth those prices. The new MR920 Elite pistol highlighted in this report has several elite elements.

First, its stainless-steel slide has been given a lot of attention. The company proudly brings notice to the forward-angled cocking grooves at the front and rear of the slide. As our photos show, there are four on each side up front and six on each side at the rear. Each one measures 0.98 inch wide. Shadow Systems says these “front and rear directional serrations are optimized for manipulation under stress and designed for a smoother draw.”

Interestingly, the top flat area of the slide between the front sight and the ejection port also has six stylish and effective angled cocking grooves. I can't think of another everyday carry pistol that has grasping grooves on the top of the slide. It's very unique.



Shadow Systems is known for its innovative approach to gun design, and the company's patent-pending multi-footprint slide optic cut is just one example. It simplifies installation and fits just about every popular handgun reflex sight without the use of mounting plates.

The slide also has “weight-optimizing” (as Shadow Systems puts it) window cuts on both sides. They are readily visible in the accompanying photos because they allow the bronze-colored barrel (more about it later) to be seen. The contrast is striking.

The slide is stylishly thinned in various areas, including where the cocking grooves are located, and this thinned profile is functional as well as aesthetic. It enhances manual operation of the slide.

The slide of the MR920 Elite also features Shadow Systems’s patent-pending multi-footprint optic cut. With this system, the pistol doesn’t need an optic-mounting plate between the optic and the slide. The optic screws directly to the slide, and the cut will accept multiple popular red-dot optics from EOTech, Holosun, Leupold, Shield, SIG, Swampfox, Trijicon, TRUGLO, and Vortex.

Another nice touch on the MR920 Elite is the fact that the slide’s optic cut is low enough that standard-height sights can co-witness with the optic. (Shadow Systems’s other pistols also have this feature.) Readers may know that many optic-ready pistols need higher-than-standard sights in order to co-witness with the optic, and I think it’s quite convenient that Shadow Systems guns don’t. However, due to its high body, the Leupold DeltaPoint Pro will not co-witness with the MR920 Elite’s standard-height sights. Of course, the MR920 Elite’s sights are tall enough to accommodate a suppressor being threaded onto the muzzle of the barrel.

The slide’s finish is black nitride, and the slide’s edges are rounded (some shooters call the treatment “dehorning”). As I said earlier, this pistol is expertly engineered for the utmost in ergonomics.



The MR920 Elite’s 4.5-inch stainless-steel barrel is spiral fluted, and the muzzle is threaded for a suppressor. It is finished in bronze-colored TiCN.

ELITE EVERYDAY CARRY

As for sights, the MR920 Elite's rear sight is dovetailed into the slide behind the optic cut, and it is all black with a 0.152-inch-wide square notch and fine horizontal striations on its face. The back of the sight has coarse striations on it. The pistol's fixed front sight has a green-outlined tritium dot, and the front sight post is 0.140 inch thick and 0.252 inch tall.

The 416R stainless-steel match-grade barrel is special, too. It is 4.5 inches long, and it's spiral fluted and threaded at the muzzle to accept a suppressor. It comes with a thread protector, and as mentioned earlier, it is bronze colored, with the finish being the rugged and durable TiCN.

The polymer frame features a recoil-control ledge formed into the dustcover for the support hand that is designed to help control muzzle flip in rapid fire. The dustcover also features an accessory rail with one cross-slot.

The grip area of the frame features aggressive and effective texturing (strategically located on the sides, frontstrap, and backstrap, as well as on the frame above the trigger guard), but it's not so aggressive that it bites the hand. I found it to be comfortable, and I like the sort of tacky feeling it exhibited.

The pistol is engineered for interchangeable backstraps, and it comes with two extras (for a total of three). They are used to match the grip angle to the individual shooter's natural point of aim, and they are very easy to swap out.

The grip frame also features a flared magwell; an extended, upswept beavertail; and a trigger guard undercut for a high hand hold. The trigger guard is squared, and it has texturing on the front side. The grip circumference straight across from the trigger guard measures 5.63 inches.

The trigger is polymer, and it has a safety lever built into it. The flat, smooth fingerpiece is 0.37 inch wide. The pull feels like a typical trigger on a striker-fired pistol, but I think it's less "spongy" and slightly lighter than the norm. Our sample's trigger pull averaged exactly 5.0 pounds over five measurements with an RCBS trigger pull scale. There is the expected amount of take-up, but let-off is crisp, clean, and consistent. There were just 6 ounces of



The polymer grip frame is strategically textured, and the gun comes with a total of three interchangeable backstraps.



The pistol comes with two Magpul polymer magazines. Each one holds 15 rounds of 9mm ammunition. Note the flared magwell on the pistol's grip frame.

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The smooth, flat-face trigger has a built-in safety lever. Our sample pistol's trigger pull averaged a clean 5.0 pounds.

variation over those five measurements. And I couldn't detect any overtravel.

The magazines hold 15 rounds of 9mm ammunition. They are polymer and made by Magpul. They have removable polymer baseplates and polymer followers. For customers who live in areas where magazine capacity is limited, 10-round versions are also available.

The MR920 Elite comes with the two extra interchangeable backstraps I mentioned earlier, the tool for pushing out the retaining pin, several optic-mounting screws and compression spacers that go in front of and behind the optic (recommended but not mandatory), a tube of Loctite, a padlock-style gun lock, an extra magazine, and an embroidered and zippered soft carrying case with an internal pocket and elastic slots for five magazines. Oh, and the pistol fits holsters for the Gen4 Glock 19.

Elite Performance

After putting the MR920 Elite through our standard shooting evaluation protocols, I can say that it is a darn good shooting

pistol. It was comfortable to shoot, and its accuracy was excellent.

I fired nine different 9mm factory loads through the MR920 Elite, and the results are listed in the accompanying chart. As you can see, bullet weights and styles ranged from Norma's 108-grain MHP to Federal's 150-grain HST, and in terms of accuracy, the pistol preferred the Hornady Critical Duty 135-grain FlexLock ammo, achieving an average of 2.75 inches. That's for three, five-shot groups at 25 yards fired from a sand-bag benchrest. The average velocity for that loading out of the 4.5-inch barrel was 1,113 fps.

The second-best ammunition in the accuracy department was the Black Hills 124-grain JHP. It averaged 2.95 inches, and its average velocity was 1,157 fps.

Tied for third place in terms of accuracy were the HSM 115-grain XTP and the Remington Golden Saber 124-grain JHP. They averaged 3.00 inches, and their average velocities were 1,250 fps and 1,122 fps, respectively.

My current favorite 9mm factory load for pure fun shooting is Federal's 150-grain HST loading because it is so soft

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ELITE EVERYDAY CARRY



The MR920 Elite is packed with excellent features, and it produces excellent accuracy. The review sample averaged 3.27 inches for five-shot groups at 25 yards with nine different factory loads.

shooting. In my experience shooting scads of 9mm pistols of all sizes, the load is not usually the most accurate in any given pistol, and that was the case with the MR920 Elite; however, it was reasonably accurate, averaging 3.25 inches. Its average velocity from the 4.5-inch barrel was 914 fps.

After tallying up all the individual groups and averaging them, the pistol's overall average accuracy was 3.27 inches. I must point out that almost every single five-shot group I fired had at least three shots clustered together in an area measuring between 1 inch and 2 inches. It goes without saying, but I'll say it anyway, my mediocre shooting skills obviously don't do this pistol justice. I simply can't shoot well enough to demonstrate this gun's accuracy. Take it from me, the potential for exceptional accuracy is here. Just to be thorough I also fired the pistol offhand with a bunch of miscellaneous 9mm ammo (loaded randomly into the magazines), and I had zero malfunctions. All rounds fed, fired, and ejected cleanly. An everyday carry pistol that is this well designed, has such elite ergonomics, and produces this kind of excellent accuracy truly is the best of the best.

ST

SHADOW SYSTEMS MR920 ELITE ACCURACY & VELOCITY				
AMMUNITION	VEL. (FPS)	E.S. (FPS)	S.D. (FPS)	25-YD. ACC. (IN.)
9mm, 4.5-in. Barrel				
Norma 108-gr. MHP	1221	43	21	3.25
HSM 115-gr. XTP	1250	25	13	3.00
Winchester 115-gr. Silvertip	1227	32	13	3.50
Black Hills 124-gr. JHP	1157	29	12	2.95
Remington Golden Saber Black Belt 124-gr. JHP +P	1122	75	27	3.00
Hornady Critical Duty 135-gr. FlexLock +P	1113	37	14	2.75
Speer Carry Gun 135-gr. Gold Dot G2	1097	25	15	3.50
SIG SAUER 147-gr. JHP	1001	19	7	4.25
Federal Personal Defense Micro 150-gr. HST	914	31	16	3.25
NOTES: Accuracy is the average of three, five-shot groups fired from a sandbag benchrest. Velocity is the average of five rounds measured 12 feet from the gun's muzzle.				

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GET THE MOST OUT OF THE 6.8 WESTERN

THIS REPORT FOCUSES ON
THE BEST HANDLOADING
PRACTICES, THE BEST-IN-
CLASS PROPELLANTS, THE
BEST BULLET CHOICES,
AND MORE.

BY JOSEPH VON BENEDIKT

RELOADING ANY NEW CARTRIDGE IS CHALLENGING, at least until extensive handload data has been generated and widely published. Winchester and Browning's collaborative 6.8 Western cartridge is no exception. Worse, it's plagued by the absence of new brass—those fresh, empty cartridge cases that handloaders rely on. Winchester offers 50-round bags of unprimed new 6.8 Western brass, but they're scarce as hen's teeth. For most shooters, the only way to get reloadable brass is to buy factory-loaded ammo and shoot it, then use the once-fired cases.

There's one other challenge to handloading the 6.8 Western, and that's the relative lack of the high-BC, heavy-for-caliber 0.277-inch component bullets it's optimized for. This dynamic is slowly shifting, with more options becoming available, but for now there are just a few projectiles that really allow the 6.8 Western to strut its stuff.



Reloading dies for the 6.8 Western are readily available from most reloading suppliers. Joseph has primarily used RCBS and Redding dies.

the cartridge. Lee Precision, Forster, Redding, and RCBS lead the charge. I've used RCBS and Redding 6.8 Western dies with great results.

Factory-loaded ammo is currently available in six or seven different variations. Winchester makes most of it. Browning has one exceptional load. You'll find both brass and nickel-plated cases in that factory ammo. My recommendation is to try a few factory loads, and when you find one that shoots great in your rifle, purchase at least five boxes from the same lot. That way, your brass will be good and consistent.

As always, brass cases are easiest for handloaders to work with. That said, the Browning nickel-plated cases I've been using have worked very well. I have not found the nickel plating flaking off around the case mouth or neck, and it seems quite consistent. That makes sense because the ammo it's a byproduct of is darned good.

Lube, size, and deprime the cases. If you wish, trim them to length as well. I often skip that step, at least for once-fired brass, but I always give the insides of the case mouths a generous chamfer with a low-drag chamfer tool. This enables your component bullets to seat with consistent grip by the case neck without having their sides shaved by sharp inside edges in the case mouth.

After wiping the lube off your sized and deprimed cases, clean the primer pockets with a brush or primer pocket uniforming tool. Prime with either Large Rifle or Large Rifle Magnum primers. The 6.8 Western cartridge is right on the cusp, capacity-wise, so primer selection is up to the individual. I prefer to select the primer depending on the powder type, but in the current market, sometimes one has to use what is available.

If you have Large Rifle and Large Rifle Magnum available, use the old rule of thumb—up to 60 grains in charge weight, go with Large Rifle; above 60 grains, use Large Rifle Magnums.

You'll find that you get a tad more consistent standard deviations (SD) and lower extreme spreads with Large Rifle primers

Sure, you can handload any projectile engineered for the grand old .270 Winchester. They work great in the 6.8 Western. However, by opting to use them, you give up the significant advantages offered by the cartridge's fast rifling twist rate and outstanding capability with modern, super-aerodynamic hunting bullets.

This report focuses on getting the best out of the 6.8 Western and touches on beneficial handloading practices, best-in-class propellant options, component bullet choices for best performance, and so forth. As a result, I'll only briefly touch on the use of common bullets designed for the .270 Win.

Let's start with reloading dies, once-fired cases, and case-prep processes.

Dies, Cases, Primers

We're about three years into the 6.8 Western's life, and by now most of the big reloading tool companies make dies for

GET THE MOST OUT OF THE 6.8 WESTERN



New cartridge cases for the 6.8 Western are offered by Winchester but can be difficult to find, so Joseph suggests shooting factory-loaded ammo and reloading the once-fired brass.



The 6.8 Western cartridge is compatible with both Large Rifle and Large Rifle Magnum primers. Opt for magnum primers if hunting in excessively cold temperatures.

but a tad more velocity with Large Rifle Magnums. Also, and probably more pertinent to hunters than SD or velocity, you'll get more consistent, reliable ignition in extreme cold with the magnum primers.

Since I never know when I'm going to be out in sub-freezing temps with my trusty 6.8 Western rifle, I personally lean toward using Large Rifle Magnum primers.

Either way, strongly consider using match-grade primers, such as CCI's Bench Rest and Federal's Gold Medal primers. They provide more consistent ignition, and since the 6.8 Western is ideally suited for precision hunters, it just makes sense to pair the cartridge with match-grade primers.

Powders

Although it doesn't have the word "Magnum" in its name, the 6.8 Western is on the cusp of being a proper magnum. Humorously, about all that would disqualify it is the fact that it's quite efficient. That said, it does produce significantly more velocity than the .270 Win., which is the only standard-velocity benchmark to compare it to.

Being a short magnum in spirit if not in name, the 6.8 Western is best served with medium-slow to proper slow-burning powders. Winchester's StaBALL 6.5 is popular for light, traditional .270 Win. bullets. Propellants ranging from Hodgdon's H4831SC and H1000 up through Retumbo, Alliant's Reloder 26, and Ramshot's Magnum provide the best performance with the long, heavy-for-caliber bullets the 6.8 Western was designed for.

Generally, spherical powders, such as Magnum, provide top velocities, while extruded stick-type propellants, such as Reloder 26 and H1000, offer more consistent velocity and standard deviations.

Every rifle is individual, of course, and both propellant types can produce outstanding accuracy.

Reloading data isn't yet widely available, but Hodgdon has data for most of the suitable powders within its stable (Hodgdon, IMR, Winchester, Accurate, and Ramshot). Lyman's 51st-edition reloading handbook has a good selection of data for a variety of bullets ranging from traditional 130-grain, 0.277-inch projectiles up through Sierra's 175-grain Tipped MatchKing.

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GET THE MOST OUT OF THE 6.8 WESTERN



Medium-slow to slow-burning propellants work best for handloading the 6.8 Western. MagPro, Magnum, H1000, and Reloder 26 have proved to provide excellent performance in the cartridge.

I found 6.8 Western data for a variety of powders on the Hammer Bullets website, and ballistician Gregg Sloan was kind enough to send me data they've developed for Barnes's new 155-grain LRX that's tailored specifically for the 6.8 Western. Berger has extensive data for its 170-grain EOL (Extreme Outer Limits) hunting bullet.

Presumably, within another year or two Nosler, Speer, Alliant, and all the other big players will publish data for the 6.8 Western.

Bullets

Winchester and Browning launched the 6.8 Western in rifles and ammunition. The two factory loads initially introduced typified what the cartridge is particularly good at—efficient extended-range performance paired with authority that outclasses any 6.5mm cartridge.

On the altar of cartridge birth, Browning laid its Long Range Pro Hunter offering, which pushes a 175-grain tipped boattail bullet at about 2,835 fps. It provides 3,123 ft-lbs of energy at the muzzle. With a modestly admirable ballistic coefficient (BC) of .617, it carries bullet speed and energy quite well. At 500 yards it's still going 2,135 fps and packing 1,771 ft-lbs of punch.

Winchester proffered its Expedition Big Game Long Range load topped with 165-grain Nosler AccuBond Long Range

projectiles. On paper, it's even better. It exits the muzzle at 2,970 fps and clobbers with 3,226 ft-lbs of energy. With a fractionally higher BC of .620, it holds on to 2,251 fps and 1,856 ft-lbs at 500 yards.

As an aside, Nosler's 165-grain AccuBond LR bullets can be handloaded for the 6.8 Western, if you can find them. Supply has been scarce as hen's teeth. I suspect that's because Winchester is probably buying all that Nosler can produce. The 175-grain Long Range Pro bullet in Browning ammo is a proprietary Sierra bullet commissioned by Browning specifically for its 6.8 Western ammo. Sierra's 0.277-inch 175-grain Tipped GameKing available to handloaders is very similar but has a slightly lower BC.

Other factory loads—mostly less expensive offerings—followed from Winchester. There are now several, all heavy for caliber. Browning still has just the one load.

Meanwhile, as the cartridge boomed in popularity during the COVID scare (being brand new it was often the only thing available on ammo shelves), other bullet companies began engineering high-BC, heavy-for-caliber 0.277-inch-diameter bullets for the 6.8 Western. Several great ones were born, and since you can get the Nosler and Sierra projectiles in factory-loaded ammo, the other new ones are those that I've focused on for this article.

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GET THE MOST OUT OF THE 6.8 WESTERN

Let's take a look. I'm going to list these top-shelf 6.8mm bullets in the order that I became familiar with them.

Barnes hit the ground running with a 155-grain LRX bullet specifically designed for the 6.8 Western's fast rifling twist rate and generous cartridge head height. Being made of pure copper and long and streamlined, it requires a twist rate of 1:8, which is exactly what the 6.8 Western is spec'd for. The BC is .540 on the G1 scale, which is admirable in the world of traditional monometal projectiles.

Berger came out with a 170-grain EOL bullet, which sports a very good G1 BC of .662 and has the potential to be the most accurate hunting bullet of them all in the 6.8 Western. Interestingly, being a lead-core bullet, it's not as stretched-out as the Barnes 155, and Berger states that it will stabilize in a 1:9-twist barrel.

Hammer Bullets came out with a 160-grain iteration of the popular Hammer HHT. Like the Barnes, it requires a 1:8 twist barrel. There's no G1 BC listed; instead, the company provides a G7 BC of .284. So as to provide readers with an apples-to-apples comparison, I ran a conversion using the JBM Ballistics resource online. According to it, the 160-grain Hammer HHT should have a G1 BC of about .572. That's very good for a monometal projectile.

It's worth noting that I became aware of this bullet when a listener of the Backcountry Hunting Podcast that I host sent me a photo of a giant kudu bull he'd shot with it, handloaded for his Browning X-Bolt Speed SR in 6.8 Western. Bullet performance, he stated, was absolutely ideal.

The final bullet is one that I candidly have no personal experience with. Badlands Precision offers a 150-grain Super Bulldozer 2 bullet. It's a monometal, mildly wasp-waisted, and aluminum-tipped bullet, and it boasts a G1 BC of .710. This makes it the most aerodynamic bullet in the 6.8 Western world.

Bulldozer 2 bullets have a super-long, aggressive boattail. Noses are sleek and fine and long. Presumably, you'll have to have plenty of room in your magazine or you'll have to single-feed them.

Never having used the 150-grain Bulldozer 2 myself, I can only conjecture. Given the relatively light-for-caliber 150-grain weight, it can likely be pushed to impressive speeds (3,000 fps or so). Combined with the best-in-class BC, that puts it in the theoretical front-runner position. I've ordered some to try, but until I've worked them out to 1,400 yards on my local range, I'm a bit skeptical about that .710 BC. I hope very much that it proves out—it would be absolutely awesome—but I can't help wonder if it's not a bit optimistic. It'll be fun finding out!



In addition to the excellent factory-loaded Browning 175-grain Long Range Pro and Nosler 165-grain AccuBond Long Range, there are several excellent component bullets, including (left to right) Barnes 155-grain LRX, Hammer 160-grain HHT, and Berger 170-grain EOL.

Bulletseating and Crimping

As with any other, optimal bullet base positioning in the 6.8 Western is with the angle where the boattail begins about even with the case angle where the shoulder transitions to the neck. However, because the 6.8 Western is a short-action cartridge, and because it shoots long-for-caliber projectiles, the base usually must protrude down into the powder chamber at least a bit.

If your rifle's magazine length permits, seat thin-jacketed, soft-lead cup-and-core type bullets to just kiss the rifling leade. This tends to enhance accuracy and optimize velocity consistency.

These include the Berger 170-grain EOL, Sierra 175-grain Tipped GameKing, and any classic .270 Win. bullets like the Nosler 150-grain Ballistic Tip and Hornady 145-grain ELD-X.

Bullets with denser, more robust construction must be given a bit of a jump to the rifling in order to avoid pressure spikes. Thankfully, such types usually provide the best accuracy with a bit of jump. Usually, a jump of 0.020 to 0.070 inch holds a sweet spot, and I confess I usually go right to 0.050 inch because it seems to work much of the time.

Should you crimp? That's debatable. I recommend against crimping case mouths around soft cup-and-core bullets because they're easily deformed. Even a trace of deforming changes flight characteristics and degrades accuracy and aerodynamics.

However, velocity consistency and accuracy often seem to benefit from a mild crimp when working with monometal bullets. Hammer specifically states that its bullets often shoot more consistently when crimped. Monometal bullet types are difficult to distort and hold up well as long as a sensible crimp is applied to a cannelure.

As with any cartridge, trimming cases to length is necessary to achieve a properly consistent crimp.



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TOP 6.8 WESTERN HANDLOADS

BULLET	POWDER		VEL. (FPS)	E.S (FPS)	S.D. (FPS)	COL (IN.)	100-YD. ACC. (IN.)
	(TYPE)	(GRS.)					
Browning X-Bolt Pro McMillan, 24-in. Barrel							
Barnes 155-gr. LRX	H1000	65.0	3103	28	10	2.950	1.02
Barnes 155-gr. LRX	Magnum	65.0	2849	40	14	2.940	1.17
Barnes 155-gr. LRX	Reloder 26	62.0	3033	43	12	2.920	1.28
Berger 170-gr. EOL	H1000	62.0	2805	27	11	2.980	1.03
Berger 170-gr. EOL	H1000	64.0	2904	31	10	2.980	0.72
Berger 170-gr. EOL	MagPro	65.0	2806	42	12	2.980	1.08
Berger 170-gr. EOL	Reloder 26	61.0	2856	25	8	2.980	0.65
Hammer 160-gr. HHT	Reloder 26	59.0	2742	28	12	2.965	0.63
Hammer 160-gr. HHT	Reloder 26	61.0	3004	15	6	2.965	0.46

NOTES: Accuracy is the average of three, three-shot groups fired from a bipod. Velocity is the average of 10 rounds measured 12 feet from the gun's muzzle. Browning cases and Federal 215 Gold Medal Large Rifle Magnum primers were used for all handloads. Ambient temperature: 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Elevation: 4,600 feet.

All load data should be used with caution. Always start with reduced loads first and make sure they are safe in each of your guns before proceeding to the high test loads listed. Since *Shooting Times* has no control over your choice of components, guns, or actual loadings, neither *Shooting Times* nor the various firearms and components manufacturers assumes any responsibility for the use of this data.

Rangetime

I've primarily handloaded for just one 6.8 Western rifle: a super nice Browning X-Bolt Pro McMillan with a 24-inch barrel. It shoots Browning's factory-loaded 175-grain Long Range Pro Hunter ammo extremely well. So well, in fact, that I have a hard time matching its accuracy with my handloads.

However, I did find a handload shooting Hammer 160-grain HHTs over Reloder 26 that drives tacks. That's a great bullet, appropriate for any nondangerous game in North America.

It's worth noting that at least in my experience, the 6.8 Western cartridge likes to be driven with near-maximum loads. The accompanying chart shows how an increase of just a couple of grains dramatically benefits accuracy and provides best velocity consistency. Nearly full to lightly compressed propellant charges are likely to credit for the tight extreme spreads and standard deviations.

Each rifle is individual and will show different preferences in bullets and powder types. My Browning shows a distinct liking for Reloder 26 powder and Hammer bullets. It does not like Barnes bullets, much to my dismay, but it shoots Berger's streamlined 170-grain EOL Hunter bullets well when paired with Reloder 26.

Unlike the various 6.5mm, 7mm, and .30-caliber cartridges, the 0.277-inch-diameter rounds just don't have a plethora of

high-performance component bullets for handloaders to choose from. The few that I detailed pretty well make up the cream of the long-range 6.8 Western crop.

On the plus side, that realm is evolving. Hopefully the next few years will bring continued innovation and development and more great bullets for the 6.8 Western. Meanwhile, there's a sparse but excellent selection of bullets for handloaders to work with, and it pretty well covers the spectrum of various hunting needs. We've come a long way. Just five years ago, there was no such thing as a high-BC 0.277-inch-diameter bullet.

ST



Many of the author's handload combinations performed well, with the Hammer 160-grain HHT bullet over Reloder 26 powder producing exceptional accuracy.

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AT HOME ON THE RANGE

THE NEW .45 COLT DEPUTY SINGLE-ACTION SIXGUN FROM TAURUS HAS CLASSIC FEATURES AND SLEEK LINES, GREAT FIT AND FINISH, AND UNIVERSAL APPEAL. PLUS, IT PRODUCES EXCELLENT ACCURACY.

A brown leather holster with yellow stitching is positioned in the upper left corner. A silver revolver is partially visible in the lower left corner. The background is a rustic wooden surface.

BY JOEL J. HUTCHCROFT

TAURUS HAS A NEW REVOLVER, AND THIS ONE is a classic-styled single-action sixgun. I don't have to tell longtime readers that when it comes to revolvers, Taurus is most famous for its extensive line of double-action wheelguns. In this day and age, the Taurus Judge DA revolvers are probably the most recognizable. Of course, there have been many other Taurus DA revolver lines, including small-frame, medium-frame, and large-frame models chambered in just about every cartridge from .22 LR to .500 S&W Magnum. The new SA model is called the Deputy, and at this writing it is chambered for .45 Colt and .357 Magnum. It's offered with 4.75-inch and 5.5-inch barrels.

The new-for-2024 Deputy isn't the first single-action revolver made by Taurus. The company brought out the Gaucho in 2006. Chambered for .357 Magnum, .44-40, and .45 Colt, those guns were discontinued sometime around 2008. I for one am happy to see the company produce a single-action revolver again. Those first ones were good guns, and the new Deputy is even better.

AT HOME ON THE RANGE



DEPUTY	
MANUFACTURER	Taurus taurususa.com
TYPE	Single-action revolver
CALIBER	.45 Colt
CYLINDER CAPACITY	6 rounds
BARREL	5.5 in.
OVERALL LENGTH	11.04 in.
HEIGHT	5.11 in.
WIDTH	1.65 in.
WEIGHT, EMPTY	38.2 oz.
GRIPS	Black plastic
FINISH	Polished black
SIGHTS	Groove in topstrap rear, fixed blade front
TRIGGER	5.13-lb. pull (as tested)
SAFETY	Transfer-bar firing mechanism
MSRP	\$606.99

Deputy Details

As you can see from the accompanying photographs, our sample Deputy has the 5.5-inch barrel. It wears a polished black finish, except for the hammer and trigger, which have matte black finishes. The hammerspur measures 0.301 inch wide, and it is checkered. The trigger measures 0.248 inch wide, and it is smooth. According to six measurements with an RCBS trigger pull gauge, our sample revolver's trigger pull averages 5 pounds, 2 ounces. It is crisp, smooth, and fairly consistent, with 10 ounces of variation over those measurements.



The new Taurus Deputy single-action revolver loads the traditional way: with the hammer in the halfcock position, open the loading gate, insert a round, and then manually rotate the cylinder to load the next round.



The Deputy is offered with 4.75-inch and 5.5-inch barrels. The 5.5-inch version shown here weighs 38.2 ounces.

A key feature of the new Deputy is its transfer-bar firing mechanism. That means the firing pin is frame mounted, rather than being mounted on the hammer nose as on the classic Colt Single Action Army revolver. This means the Deputy is safer than the old-style Colt, and Taurus says it's totally acceptable to carry the revolver fully loaded with six rounds and the hammer down on a loaded round. As most readers probably know, the safe way to carry a loaded Colt SAA is with five rounds loaded and the hammer down on an empty chamber.

As I just indicated, the Deputy has a six-round cylinder. It's fluted, and it rotates clockwise when the hammer is cocked. The swing-out loading gate is located on the right side, and the cylinder is removed the traditional way. With the hammer in the halfcock position, and the loading gate open, depress the cylinder base pin catch located on the frame ahead of the cylinder, slide the cylinder base pin forward, and remove the cylinder to the right. By the way, when you cock the Deputy's hammer, you hear four clicks. In the good old days, people used to say those four clicks meant C-O-L-T. Obviously, the

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The two-piece grips are checkered black plastic and sport the Taurus bull logo. They're held in place with a single slot-head screw.



Unlike old, traditional Colt SA revolvers, the Deputy has a transfer-bar firing mechanism with a frame-mounted firing pin.

name Taurus has too many letters to apply to the four clicks, so maybe somebody needs to come up with something clever for them, but that's beyond my abilities.

With the cylinder removed, I measured the Deputy's .45-caliber chamber mouth throats. Some readers know that these can vary quite a bit and can sometimes affect an SA's accuracy. According to my calipers, they measured 0.452 inch and 0.453 inch. In fact, three chamber throats measured 0.452 inch, and three measured 0.453 inch. That's pretty darn consistent. As best as I could measure the barrel's forcing cone, it measured 0.459 inch tapering to 0.453 inch. The cylinder is 1.59 inches long and 1.65 inches thick. With the cylinder in place, the barrel-cylinder gap is 0.0025 inch, as measured with a feeler gauge.

The ejector rod is accessed from the left side, and the ejector rod housing is fitted nice and tight to the barrel. There is absolutely no gap there. The left side of the barrel bears the model's name and chambering. The left side of the frame bears the company's name (Taurus International) and the factory's location, which is Bainbridge, Georgia. The corporate name (Taurus Armas) and "Made in Brazil" are located on the right side of the frame. The serial number is located underneath the frame ahead of the trigger guard.

Speaking of the trigger guard, it has the same polished black finish as the barrel, cylinder, and frame. And I must say the fit and finish on our sample are excellent.

The two-piece grips are black plastic. They are checkered and have the Taurus bull logo on both sides. They are held in place with a slot-head screw. Grip circumference over the screw location measures 4.5 inches, and it flares out at the bottom like the Colt SAA, with the circumference there measuring right at 6.0 inches. Removing the grips reveals the leaf-type mainspring, and it's nice and robust. This SA revolver has the classic feel that is one of the great attributes of other traditional single-action sixguns.

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AT HOME ON THE RANGE

Also similar to traditional single actions are the Deputy's front sight and rear sight. The rear sight is the classic groove in the topstrap, but it has a nice square notch at the bottom that fosters a more precise sight picture. The front sight is the traditional shark-fin blade. It is 0.102 inch thick and 0.311 inch tall, according to my measurements. As with a setup of this very traditional style, when the revolver's hammer is cocked,

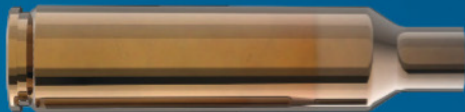
the sights line up perfectly; however, when the gun is fired and the hammer falls, theammerspur obscures the sight picture. That's not a criticism per se, it's just a detail that needs to be mentioned. I don't think it had any negative effect on this gun's accuracy during my shooting session with it, and as you can see from the accompanying chart, our Deputy turned in very good accuracy.



The sights are very traditional, consisting of a groove in the topstrap for the rear sight and a shark-fin blade for the front sight.



NEW LAPUA Cases for 2024



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Spring of 2024, Lapua will showcase our legendary quality and consistency with the introduction of 300 WSM cartridge cases. Made of the finest materials and manufacturing processes, you can expect brass that offers exceptional longevity, even in the most demanding circumstances of hunting and competitive shooting.



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Fall of 2024, Lapua will begin our support of the wildly popular 6mm GT cartridge. Optimized internal geometry based upon the 6.5x47 Lapua parent case will set our cases apart from the rest -- shooters will experience improved propellant efficiency and increased longevity along with the superb quality and consistency you would expect with a Lapua headstamp.



PASSION FOR PRECISION



The fit and finish of the sample Taurus Deputy was excellent. The accuracy it achieved with five .45 Colt factory loads and one .45 Schofield load was excellent, too.

TAURUS DEPUTY ACCURACY & VELOCITY					
AMMUNITION	VEL. (FPS)	E.S. (FPS)	S.D. (FPS)	25-YD. ACC. (IN.) 12 SHOTS	GROUP AVG.
.45 Colt, 5.5-in. Barrel, 1:16.5-in. Twist					
Hornady Critical Defense 185-gr. FTX	970	30	16	3.00	2.50
American Eagle 225-gr. JSP	800	33	18	3.75	3.00
Winchester 225-gr. Silvertip	815	39	14	3.50	2.50
SIG SAUER 230-gr. JHP	802	28	17	3.00	2.25
Winchester 250-gr. LFN	709	34	15	4.00	3.50
.45 Schofield, 5.5-in. Barrel, 1:16.5-in. Twist					
Black Hills 180-gr. Cast RNFP	775	22	13	3.75	2.50
NOTES: The group average figures are the averages of three, five-shot groups fired from a sandbag benchrest. Velocity is the average of five rounds measured 12 feet from the gun's muzzle.					

A1 Accuracy

Serious handgunners know that a quality-built single action can be just as accurate as a quality double-action revolver or semiautomatic pistol. Some exceptional ones are even more accurate than those other types. The Taurus Deputy I fired for this report did not disappoint. With all five of the .45 Colt factory loads fired, the overall average 25-yard accuracy for a total of 15 five-shot groups was 2.75 inches. The most accurate load averaged 2.25 inches for its three, five-shot groups.

I also had some old Black Hills .45 Schofield ammunition on hand, so I fired three, five-shot groups at 25 yards with it, too. Overall average accuracy for that load was 2.50 inches. For any reader who doesn't already know it, the .45 Schofield cartridge (also known as .45 Smith & Wesson) is similar to the .45 Colt cartridge except it has a shorter case and a slightly wider rim. Generally, the lower-velocity .45 Schofield can be fired in revolvers chambered for the .45 Colt, but .45 Colt ammo cannot be fired in guns chambered for the .45 Schofield because it won't fit. Developed in the early to mid-1870s and originally loaded

with blackpowder, the .45 Schofield was the official cartridge of the U.S. Army from 1875 to 1892.

Back when cowboy action shooting was extremely popular, *Shooting Times* devoted a lot of coverage to the guns and loads those competitors were using. At that time Mike Venturino was reporting on the ins and outs of that shooting game for the magazine, and I learned a technique from him. He regularly shot 12-shot groups with the single-action revolvers he was reviewing. He believed twice around the cylinder into one group was a better indication of a revolver's accuracy potential. So, I fired a 12-shot string with each load from the sandbag benchrest just to see what that turned up. The results turned out to be darn close to the averages for the five-shot groups for just about all of the loads. Those results are listed in the accompanying chart.

I'm quite pleased with the results of this shootout. The Taurus Deputy has nice, sleek lines and great fit and finish. It produced excellent accuracy. And it has a reasonable retail price (MSRP: \$606.99). I'd sure like to see it stay in production longer than the last time Taurus offered a classic-styled single-action revolver.



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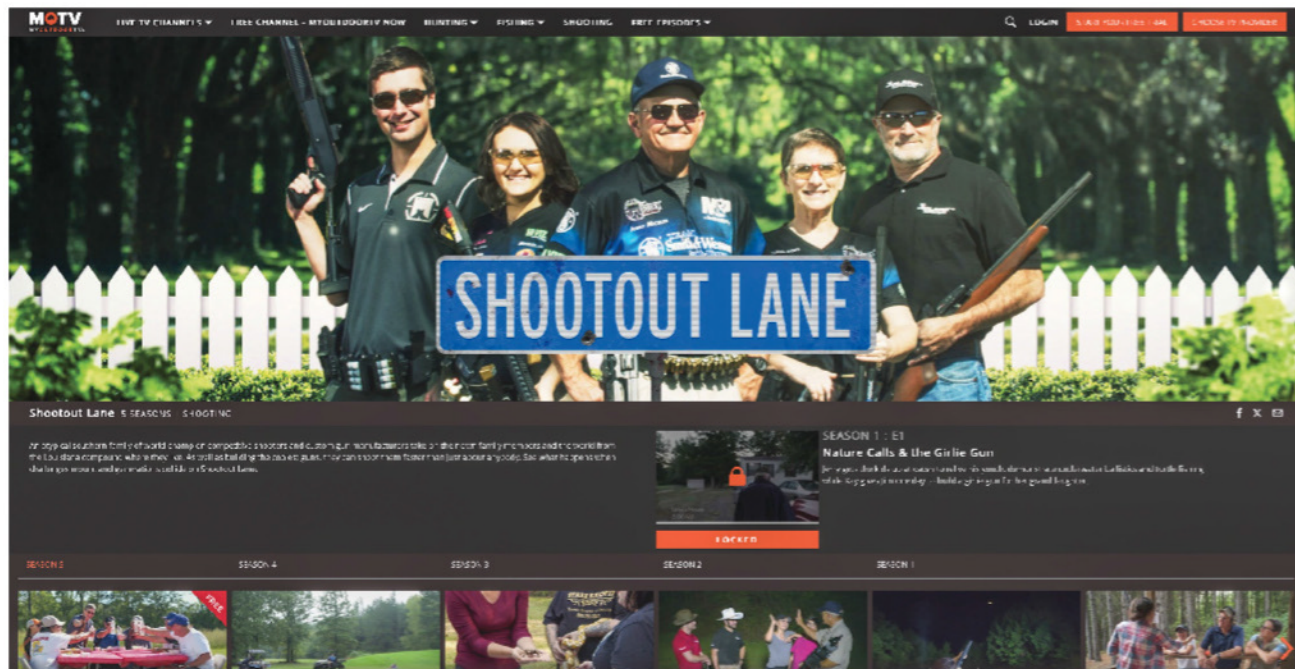


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IF YOU ENJOY GOOD OLD SHOOTING FUN, THEN YOU'LL WANT TO check out one of our more colorful shows available on MyOutdoorTV.com. I'm talking about "Shootout Lane."

"Shootout Lane" follows the family of Jerry Miculek and Kay Clark-Miculek. They don't really need an introduction here, but I'll remind readers that Jerry is world famous for his speed-shooting skills and holds 20 sanctioned and unsanctioned shooting records, including rapid-firing 12 shots with a quick reload from a revolver in 2.99 seconds as well as a 1,000-yard offhand shot with a revolver. Kay is a champion shooter in her own right. She won two IPSC Handgun World Shoot gold medals and one silver medal. Plus, she won two gold medals from the IPSC US Handgun Championships, eight gold medals and one silver from the USPSA Handgun Nationals, and seven top woman in the Steel Challenge World Speed Shooting Championships. She also is a three-time Steel Challenge World Speed Shooting Champion, and she is the daughter of renowned Bullseye pistol shooter/pistolsmith Jim Clark Sr. In fact, the Clark Custom Guns family business that was started by her father in Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1950 has been located on Shootout Lane in Princeton, Louisiana, for several decades.

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The description for the shows is as follows: An atypical Southern family of world-champion competitive shooters and custom gun manufacturers take on their own family members and the world from the Louisiana compound where they live. As well as building the coolest guns, they can shoot them faster than just about anybody. See what happens when challenges mount and generations collide on Shootout Lane.

Currently, five seasons of "Shootout Lane" are offered on MyOutdoorsTV.com, with each season presenting six to nine episodes. For a limited time, use the promo code SHOOTING30 and get a 30-day free trial of MyOutdoorTV. Cannot be combined with other offers.

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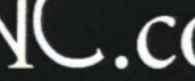
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Carbon Fiber Dazzle

When choosing material for a stock, there are two major qualities to consider—looks and utility—and any good stock should have both. **BY TERRY WIELAND**

The bolt-action Christensen Arms Model 14 Modern Precision Rifle shown here has a folding carbon-fiber stock that Terry says is interesting to look at, to play with, and to shoot.

IT'S GOING MUCH TOO FAR TO SUGGEST THAT carbon fiber is the new French walnut, but maybe we could call it the new mesquite. That was the rather gaudy stock wood Roy Weatherby favored as a means of drawing attention to his then-new Mark V rifles in the 1960s and setting them apart from boring old walnut. And truth to tell, mesquite worked well and looked great.

Devotees of wood stocks will find several points to dispute in that paragraph, but you get my point. When choosing material for a stock, there are two major qualities to consider—looks and utility—and any good stock should have both.

My main objections to fiberglass stocks when they first appeared 30-some years ago were that they were ugly and gave a rifle the feel of a kid's toy. They were clanky, cheap, and homely, and the more they tried to make them like wood, the homelier they got.

Apologists for early fiberglass and other composites made a loud point of not caring about looks. "I want accuracy!" they would bellow, or "I use my guns hard! I need a stock that'll take it." The implication was that the rest of us were pantywaists who sat in our parlors sipping sherry, admiring pretty walnut, while they were up in the mountains chasing elk through blinding snowstorms.

There are all kinds of arguments in favor of gunstocks that look good as well as perform well, but they can best be summed up this way. If a rifle looks like a piece of junk, it will be treated like one. This is one reason so many fine duelling pistols have survived for 200 years, while plainer sea-service and horse pistols are not so plentiful, at least relative to the numbers made.

Makers of higher-end rifles realize you can sell a lot of rifles based solely on utility—accuracy and

durability—but that there is also a segment of the market that demands good looks, and this segment includes most of the people with the money to pay really high prices. For that reason, a number of them—Blaser and J.P. Sauer particularly—have made great efforts to come up with stocks that combine those qualities with both ergonomics and an arresting appearance. Their newer thumbhole stocks, and use of carbon fiber, are all those things. And for lack of a better term, they are interesting, too.

One of the most intriguing rifles that has come my way lately is from Christensen Arms in Utah. Roland Christensen is an aerospace engineer who got into carbon fiber in 1993, first for wrapping stainless-steel barrels and later for making stocks. The rifle they sent me is a bolt-action Model 14 Modern Precision Rifle (MPR) chambered in 6mm Creedmoor.

What really intrigued me was the stock. As you can see from the photo, it's somewhat flamboyant in appearance, but not overly so. It has a folding buttstock, which allows you to carry it in a backpack, leaving both hands free for scaling mountains and such.

The stock is fully adjustable in the usual ways—length, comb height—but these settings are solidly locked in place using an Allen key. There are no springs or buttons that cause accidental maladjustments at the worst possible time. The folding feature is, for me, more useful than the telescoping arrangement one finds on AR-platform rifles. It's either folded or it's not.

Not surprisingly, it does not have the pillowy comfort of a dished walnut Monte Carlo, like the old Mannlicher Model 1956, but it makes up for it with other virtues. The rifle easily meets its accuracy guarantees, which have the usual caveats (proper break-in, match ammunition, etc.), but having learned long ago that such guarantees are generally meaningless, I was not too concerned.

If I had to summarize my objections to all the old, original, fiberglass and composite stocks from years past, it would be this. They just are not interesting.

This is, most emphatically, not true of the Christensen stock. The stock is interesting to look at, to play with, and to shoot. One can't ask for much more than that.

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in October 1913. He retired from the military on July 15, 1921, at the rank of Major, and he returned to the market gardener profession. He passed away on September 9, 1956.

The Mad Minute was a pre-World War I bolt-action rifle speed-shooting exercise used by British Army riflemen, fired with the Lee-Enfield service rifle. It was used to grade a soldier as a marksman, first-class, or second-class shot, depending on the score. The exercise required the rifleman to fire 15 rounds at a "Second Class Figure" target at 300 yards (270 meters). Here's how it was accomplished. The shooter was lying with four rounds loaded in the magazine before the target appeared. Then loading would be from the pouch or bandolier. One minute was allowed for the exercise.

The second-class figure target was 48 inches square, with 24-inch inner and 36-inch magpie circles. The aiming mark was a 12-inch silhouette figure that represented the outline of the head of a man aiming a rifle from a trench. Points were scored by a hit anywhere on the target.

Mad Minute also referred to a regular demonstration by instructors at the School of Musketry at Hythe, Kent, that was intended to show officer trainees the maximum rate of accurate fire that could be achieved by an expert with a service rifle.

The first Mad Minute record was set by Sergeant Wallingford in 1908, scoring 36 hits on the 48-inch target. Snoxall set his Mad Minute record of 38 hits in 1914. Joseph reported that those 38 hits were within the 12-inch area on the target, but other sources have all hits within the 24-inch area of the target. Even more interesting is that records indicate Snoxall had broken the ulna of his right arm below the wrist five months prior to his record-setting shooting feat. Unfortunately, no official records exist, so accounts differ. But remember this: The time limit under which those shooting records were fired was one minute. That's some fast shooting, and I understand why they called Wallingford the human machine gun. I don't think I can even work the bolt of a rifle 38 times in a minute, let alone hit a target at 300 yards each and every time. **ST**



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Will This Strange Antarctic Squid Solve America's Memory Crisis?

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Half a mile beneath the icy waters off the coast of Argentina lives one of the most remarkable creatures in the world.

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But despite their small size, this strange little squid can have a bigger positive impact on your brain health than any other species on the planet.

They are the single richest source of a vital "brain food" that 250 million Americans are starving for, according to a study published in the British Medical Journal.

It's a safe, natural compound called DHA — one of the building blocks of your brain. It helps children grow their brains significantly bigger during development. And in adults, it protects brain cells from dying as they get older.

Because DHA is so important, lacking enough of it is not only dangerous to your overall health but could be directly related to your brain shrinking with age.

With more than 16 million Americans suffering from age-associated cognitive impairment, it's clear to a top US doctor that's where the problem lies.

Regenerative medicine specialist Dr. Al Sears, says thankfully, "there's still hope for seniors. Getting more of this vital brain food can make a life changing difference for your mental clarity, focus, and memory."

Dr. Sears, a highly-acclaimed, board-certified doctor—who has published more than 500 studies and written 4 bestselling books — says we should be able to get enough DHA in our diets... but we don't anymore.

"For thousands of years, fish were a great natural source of DHA. But due to industrial fish farming practices, the fish we eat and the fish oils you see at the store are no longer as nutrient-dense as they once were," he explains.

DHA is backed by hundreds of studies for supporting razor sharp focus, extraordinary mental clarity, and a lightning quick memory... especially in seniors.

So, if you're struggling with focus, mental clarity, or memory as you get older...

Dr. Sears recommends a different approach.

THE SECRET TO A LASTING MEMORY

Research has shown that our paleo ancestors were able to grow bigger and smarter brains by eating foods rich in one ingredient — DHA.

"Our hippocampus thrives off DHA and grows because of it," explains Dr. Sears. "Without DHA, our brains would shrink, and our memories would quickly fade."

A groundbreaking study from the University of Alberta confirmed this. Animals given a diet rich in DHA saw a 29% boost in their hippocampus — the part of the brain responsible for learning and memory. As a result, these animals became smarter.

Another study on more than 1,500 seniors found that those whose brains were deficient in DHA had significantly smaller brains — a characteristic of accelerated aging and weakened memory.

PEOPLE'S BRAINS ARE SHRINKING AND THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW IT

Dr. Sears uncovered that sometime during the 1990s, fish farmers stopped giving their animals a natural, DHA-rich diet and began feeding them a diet that was 70% vegetarian.

"It became expensive for farmers to feed fish what they'd eat in the wild," explains Dr. Sears. "But in order to produce DHA, fish need to eat a natural, marine diet, like the one they'd eat in the wild."

"Since fish farmers are depriving these animals of their natural diet, DHA is almost nonexistent in the oils they produce."

"And since more than 80% of fish oil comes from farms, it's no wonder the country is experiencing a memory crisis. Most people's brains are shrinking and they don't even know it."

So, what can people do to improve their memory and brain



MEMORY-RESTORING SENSATION: The memory-saving oil in this Antarctic squid restores decades of lost brain power starting in just 24 hours.

function in the most effective way possible?

Dr. Sears says, "Find a quality DHA supplement that doesn't come from a farmed source. That will protect your brain cells and the functions they serve well into old age."

Dr. Sears and his team worked tirelessly for over 2 years developing a unique brain-boosting formula called **Omega Rejuvenol**.

It's made from the most powerful source of DHA in the ocean, squid and krill — two species that cannot be farmed.

According to Dr. Sears, these are the purest and most potent sources of DHA in the world, because they haven't been tampered with. "**Omega Rejuvenol** is sourced from the most sustainable fishery in Antarctica. You won't find this oil in any stores."

MORE IMPRESSIVE RESULTS

Already, the formula has sold more than 850,000 bottles. And for a good reason, too. Satisfied customers can't stop raving about the memory-boosting benefits of quality-sourced DHA oil.

"The first time I took it, I was amazed. The brain fog I struggled with for years was gone within 24 hours. The next day, I woke up with the energy and mental clarity of a new man," says Owen R.

"I remember what it was like before I started taking **Omega Rejuvenol**... the lack of focus... the dull moods... the slippery memory... but now my mind is as clear as it's ever been," says

Estelle H.

"My mood and focus are at an all-time high. I've always had trouble concentrating, and now I think I know why," raves Bernice J. "The difference that **Omega Rejuvenol** makes couldn't be more noticeable."

And 70-year-old Mark K. says, "My focus and memory are back to age-30 levels."

These are just a handful of the thousands of reviews Dr. Sears regularly receives thanks to his breakthrough memory formula, **Omega Rejuvenol**.

WHERE TO FIND OMEGA REJUVENOL

To secure bottles of this brain-booster, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-307-9814**. "It takes time to manufacture these bottles," says Dr. Sears. "The Hotline allows us to ship the product directly to customers who need it most."

Dr. Sears feels so strongly about this product, he is offering a 100%, money-back guarantee on every order. "Send back any used or unused bottles within 90 days and I'll rush you a refund," says Dr. Sears.

The Hotline is taking orders for the next 48 hours. After that, the phone number may be shut down to allow for inventory restocking.

Call **1-800-307-9814** to secure your limited supply of **Omega Rejuvenol**. Readers of this publication immediately qualify for a steep discount, but supplies are limited. To take advantage of this great offer use Promo Code **OMST624** when you call.



The Soldier Who Beat the Prince of Riflemen

While some speculation persists, many researchers agree that British Sergeant Instructor Frank Snoxell beat Sergeant Major Jesse Wallingford's Mad Minute shooting record. **BY JOEL J. HUTCHCROFT**

The British Mad Minute military bolt-action rifle speed-shooting demonstration was fired on a 48-inch target placed at 300 yards. The target had a 12-inch aiming point and 24-inch inner and 36-inch magpie circles.

AS JOSEPH VON BENEDIKT REFERRED TO IN HIS "The Shootist" column on the Lee-Enfield S.M.L.E. beginning on page 16 of this issue of the magazine, Sergeant Instructor Snoxall [sic] is credited with firing 38 shots in 60 seconds at a target placed at 300 yards using the Lee-Enfield bolt-action rifle. In doing so, he beat the first Mad Minute record set by Major Jesse A. Wallingford, who was commonly referred to as "The Prince of Riflemen," "The Human Machine Gun," and "The Best Shot in the British Army." Snoxall is somewhat of an enigma. Some confusion remains about his incredible shooting feat, as well as the proper spelling of his name, but according to the definitive source, the shooter who beat Wallingford's record was most likely Sergeant Instructor Frank Snoxell.

Frank Snoxell was born in Totternhoe, Bedfordshire. Interestingly, he used two different dates of birth throughout his life. When he enlisted in the British military, he used October 27, 1885, claiming he was 18 years old at the time, but civilian records show he was born on February 10, 1887, making him too young to enlist. Later in life after his 21-year career in the military, he used the 1887 date. Before enlistment, as a teenager, he worked as a florist/gardener and for an engraver/printmaker. During his two decades in the military, he served as a Lance Corporal, a Lance Sergeant, a Sergeant, and a Sergeant Instructor. He served overseas in India and also received instruction at the Branch School of Musketry at Satara. He was appointed to the School of Musketry at Hythe, Kent,



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*TRIJICON OPTIC AND SUREFIRE LIGHT NOT INCLUDED.



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