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By Scott Conditt

FIRST SHOT: It's no secret that we here at *Combat Handguns*, along with our readers, love the latest, greatest fighting handguns to hit the market. After all, we never know when we might find that next perfect carry, truck or nightstand gun that changes our entire way of thinking—and carrying.

However, classic handguns from bygone days pique our interest just as much—handguns like the Glock P80 and the Browning Hi-Power. So while we focus on plenty of awesome new handguns in this issue, we also take a look at two

brand-new pistols built on retro themes. Glock's new P80 has most of the features of the original 1st Generation G17, along with a few extras that make it even better than before. Offered by Lipseys, this is a retro Glock that Robert Sadowski took to the range and proved is just as reliable and straight-shooting as later generations of the popular semi-auto.

Not to be outdone, Regent brought to market a Browning Hi-Power clone that breathes new life into this popular fighting pistol of yesteryear. A Browning design created in 1935 at the behest of the

French military, Hi-Powers and their clones have been a favorite of many shooters for decades. And as Mike Detty reports, this new model improves on the original design, both in function and accuracy.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Combat Handguns* and learn a thing or two that might make your training more efficient or even save your life someday. And, please keep your feedback coming by emailing us via editdesk@athlonoutdoors.com, and engaging with us online at personaldefenseworld.com.

—Mark Chesnut



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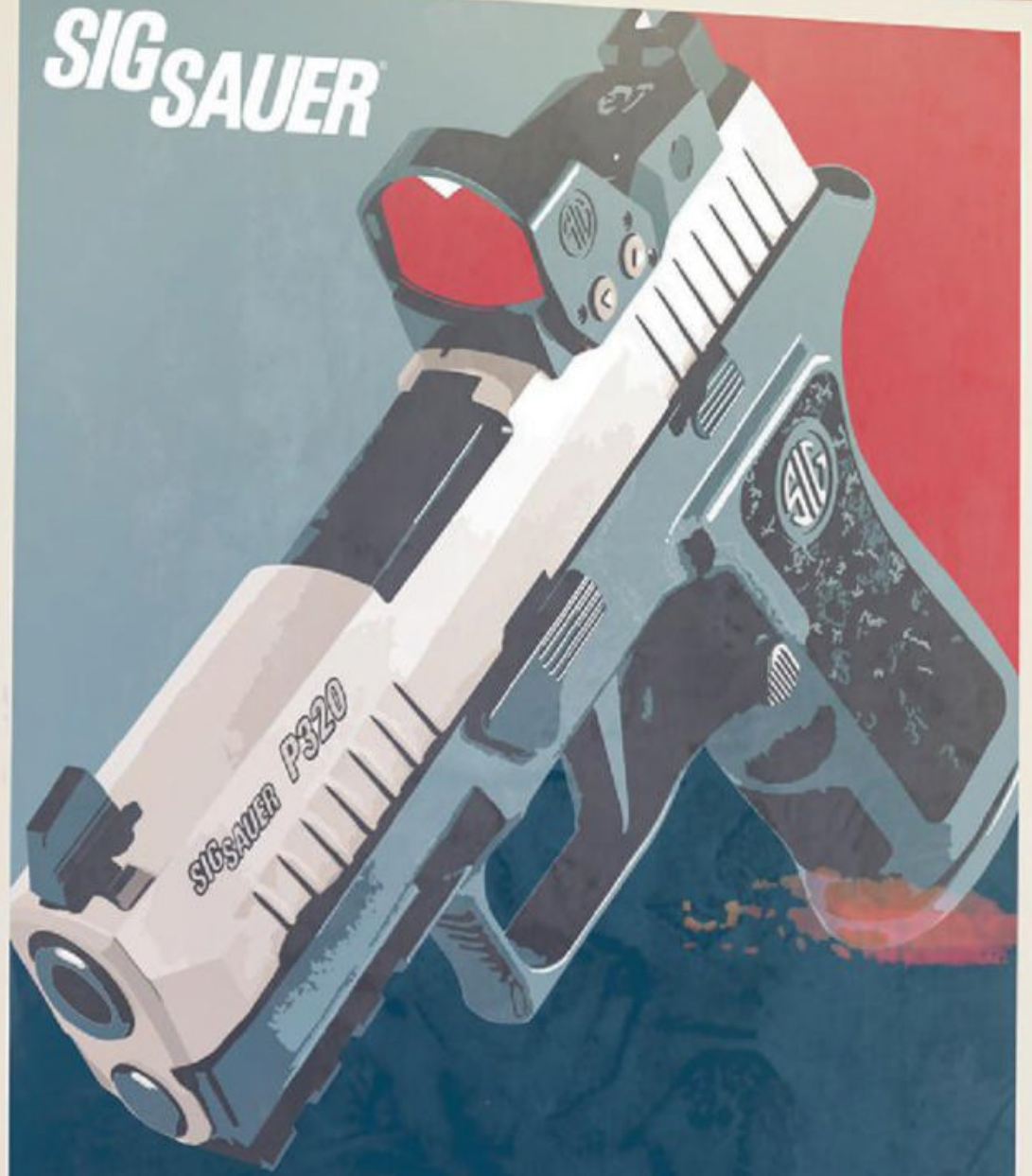


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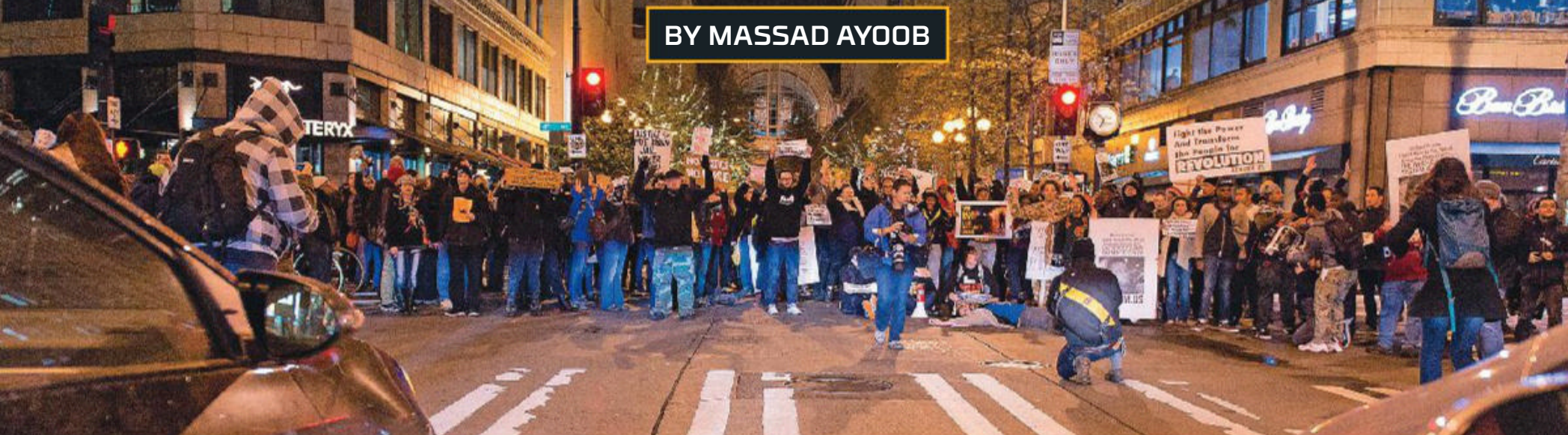
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“PEACEFUL PROTESTERS”

WIDESPREAD MOB DISTURBANCE HAS
CREATED REASONABLE FEAR

BY MASSAD AYOUB



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The world is watching as civil disturbance roils American streets with large-scale protests that often turn into looting and arson. People flash back to the indelible image of what we’ll call **Case One**, the savage beating of Reginald Denny. Solely because he was white, he was dragged from his truck by four raging black men in Los Angeles during the “Rodney King Riot” in 1992. His skull crushed by a cinder block, he was horribly and permanently injured, his attackers serving four years or less after their conviction. Would he have been justified in running over those men with his truck (or shooting them, had he been armed)? The law says, generally, yes...but the situation is more complicated than it looks, and we’ll come back to that shortly. Can deadly force—a vehicle weighing thousands of pounds or a firearm—be used against a mob in self-defense? First, we must define “mob.”

HISTORY OF LAW

Historically, American law has held that when one or more innocent parties are attacked by a mob, every member of the mob shares criminal intent and responsibility, therefore each member of that mob is vulnerable to the deadly force the inno-

cent party or parties might use in lawful self-defense. However, that general rule was developed primarily for lynch mobs.

Consider **Case Two**, the Boston Massacre of 1770. An angry mob of colonists surrounded a group of British soldiers, cursing them, wielding sticks and throwing rocks. The Brits ultimately opened fire, killing five. They were charged with murder. John Adams defended them in court claiming legitimate self-defense, and a jury of colonists acquitted them all.

Fast forward a little over a century to **Case Three**, in the Arizona Territory. A cowboy thug named Michael “Johnny Behind the Deuce” O’Rourke shot to death a popular mining engineer in a mining town. Outraged miners formed a lynch mob to seize him from the custody of the lawmen and hang him. Holding them off with shotguns were Wyatt Earp and his brother Virgil, town marshal Ben Sippy and Sheriff Johnny Behan. They made it clear that the first man (and more) who tried to get past them to kidnap and kill the prisoner would themselves be shot, and the mob wisely dispersed with no one harmed. Had they proceeded, the law would have allowed

the lawmen to shoot them dead.

In the 20th Century, we have many examples of lawful defense against mobs, the one most on point perhaps being **Case Four**. Dr. Ossian Sweet, an African-American physician, had moved into an all-white neighborhood in Detroit. Ten members of his circle were in the home when the building was surrounded by a raging all-white mob. When they began throwing rocks through the windows at the black occupants, shots were fired from inside the house, killing one member of the mob and wounding another. All the occupants were arrested and charged with murder. They were tried together and an all-white jury deadlocked. In the second prosecution, the state decided on separate trials, beginning with Dr. Sweet’s younger brother, Henry, and the NAACP hired the great Clarence Darrow to defend him. Another all-white jury acquitted him. The prosecution gave up and dropped all charges.

DEFINITIONS & IDENTITIES

The dictionaries define a “mob” as a group of people, usually large,



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According to the author, the best way to avoid a shoot-don't shoot situation at a violent riot is to not be there in the first place.

“especially one that is disorderly and intent on causing trouble or violence.” However, the term is fungible. You might read on someplace like HuffPost tomorrow that “The rock star was mobbed by a mob of adoring fans.”

Here’s the key: To justify self-defense by an intended victim, the mob must share a purpose of violent intent with a potentially lethal outcome! This was the case with the violent rioters in Boston, the lynch mob in Arizona and the white racist mob in Detroit.

What we saw in the so-called “George Floyd Riots” of 2020 was something else. It began as a protest against what participants perceived as racially motivated police brutality. In many of these cases, the protesters had obtained permits to march in the streets, and in some cases, the authorities had closed those streets to ordinary motor vehicle traffic. Thus, even those motorists who unintentionally took a wrong turn and wound up among the protesters could be argued to be breaking the law themselves.

In a large midwestern city there is a very wise—and street-wise—police supervisor who writes under the pseudonym of “Spencer Blue.” He has written that the current profile is different from the classic legal perception of a criminal mob in that it is a sea of well-meaning people whose intent is to simply and more or less peacefully protest what they see as a social wrong. However, he adds, swimming in that sea are the true criminals, the rioters and looters and arsonists and potential murderers

who use that ocean of innocent people as camouflage and cover.

And that changes things! In that situation, the crowd is no longer seen as a single amorphous entity with shared evil intent that warrants a lethal force response against any cell within, that is, any individual member. Let’s go back to Case One, Reginald Denny. He himself has emphasized ever since that it was benevolent local black citizens who rescued him from certain death at the hands of his vicious attackers! All strangers, he would have had a hard time distinguishing the good people from the bad in the heat of the melee.

In the current spate of attacks occurring during civil disturbances, there have been multiple cases of *protesters* restraining *rioters*: “Stop! That’s not what we’re all about! You’re making us all look bad!” In a self-defense situation, you must take particular care not to harm those in the crowd who are not trying to harm you.

PRACTICAL ADVICE

Plan A: Stay out of it! Do not intentionally attend politically charged demonstrations. When out and about, use the WAZE app to avoid traffic jams that might be caused by protesters blocking streets and even highways. If you have to run over someone who’s trying to drag you out of your car and beat you to death, you can expect your actions to be compared to malicious auto-pedestrian homicides that have occurred in this type of incident.

One such, **Case Five**, occurred in

Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017. James Fields, a 20-year-old with white supremacy leanings, ran his Dodge Charger at speed into a crowd of protesters, sending them flying like tenpins. Nearly 20 were injured, and one, a young woman named Heather Heyer, was killed. He pled not guilty with the claim that he was fleeing other protesters who had tried to snatch him from the vehicle. The jury didn’t buy it. He was convicted of murder and is serving a sentence of life plus 400-some years in prison.

Another is **Case Six**, in which two white LGBTQ women who were sincerely trying to support a black rights cause in Seattle in July of 2020 were rammed at high speed by a black man in a Jaguar, killing Summer Taylor, 24, and gravely injuring Diaz Love, 32. Dawit Kelete is now awaiting adjudication.

If you are armed and in a situation where you reasonably believe you or your passengers are about to be killed or maimed, don’t shoot until it is certain the passenger compartment has been or is about to be breached. Aim carefully at specific, certain hostiles and use ammo designed not to over-penetrate and strike innocents behind him. Shooting glasses for every passenger are insurance against glass spall from rocks or bullet strikes, including those fired from the inside of the vehicle, which can result in “blowback.” If you try to drive out, turn on your flashers and lay on your horn to give fair warning to innocent bystanders who might be in the way.

And, did we mention, avoidance is Plan A? **CH**



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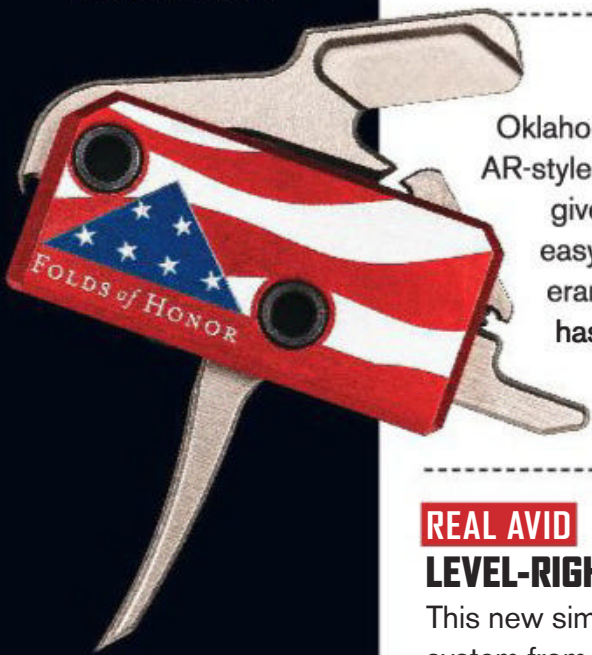


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BY CH STAFF



N8 TACTICAL COMBAT CUT HOLSTERS

N8 Tactical's new OT2 Combat Cut Holster for mid- to full-size pistols is a very comfortable IWB holster that merges the company's Original Holster and Tuckable Holster into an all new platform. Clothing compatible for all-day wear, the design allows for a full grasp on the pistol's grip while drawing. Built on a durable leather form, the OT2 Combat Cut Holster comes with a soft suede backing and a moisture-proof neoprene core situated between the two. (n8tactical.com)



S&W OPTICS-READY M&P9 2.0 COMPACT

The new Optics-Ready M&P9 M2.0 Compact pistol from Smith & Wesson is a 4-inch-barreled model that is an extension of the M&P line. Building on the award-winning M&P9 M2.0 Compact pistol series, the new models are chambered in 9mm and feature a slide cut for optics, co-witness white-dot front and rear sights, and enlarged forward slide serrations. The pistols come standard with seven mounting plates designed to fit popular slide-mounted optics, two 15-round magazines and four interchangeable palm swell grip inserts. (smith-wesson.com)



PTF EQUIPMENT GUIDE

In these dire times when the government has proven that it cannot, and far too often is unwilling to, protect citizens from rampant violence, the Patriot Fire Team model is more important than ever. The *Patriot Fire Team Equipment Guide* from Paul G. Markel and Student of the Gun gives detailed recommendations and guidelines for preparing and equipping a team of like-minded individuals to deal with disasters. (studentofthegun.com)

RISE PATRIOT TRIGGERS

Oklahoma-based Rise Armament's new high-quality drop-in trigger for AR-style pistols and rifles gives great performance, solid value and also gives back to veterans. The Patriot High-Performance trigger is an easy-to-install, accuracy enhancing upgrade that gives back to veterans and their families through Folds of Honor. The Patriot trigger has a crisp, clean release and ultra-short reset for faster follow-up shots and improved accuracy. It also features a light, 3.5-pound pull and straight trigger blade. (risearmament.com)

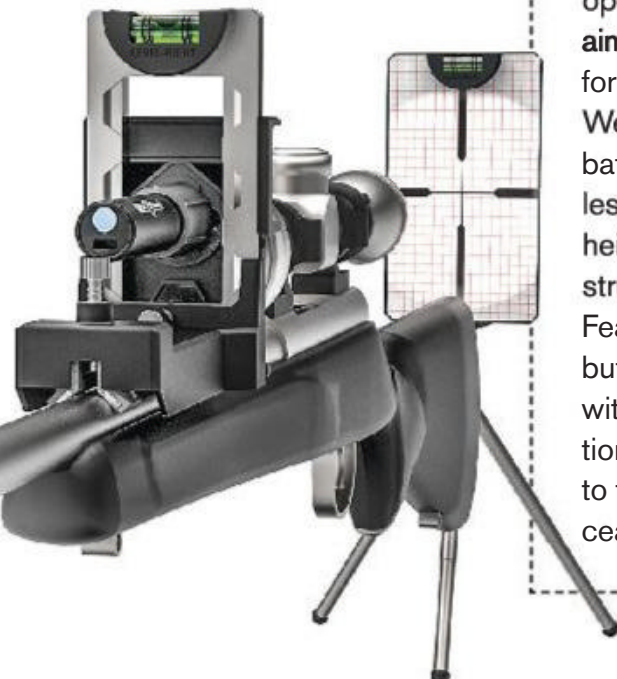


TRIJICON RMRCC

Born from the legendary Trijicon RMR, the thinner, lower profile RMRcc provides fast, both-eyes-open target acquisition, accurate aiming and proven reliability for concealed carry pistols. Weighing just 1 ounce with the battery installed and measuring less than 1 inch in width and height, the RMRcc is constructed of 7075-T6 aluminum. Features include easy-to-use buttons, a common 2032 battery with up to four years of illumination and a wide variety of mounts to fit today's most popular concealed carry pistols. (trijicon.com)

REAL AVID LEVEL-RIGHT PRO

This new simple, highly accurate system from Real Avid ensures proper scope reticle alignment to a rifle's bore axis. Called the Level-Right PRO, this system provides the essential reticle alignment needed for predictable point-of-impact when exceeding a rifle's zeroed distance. Unlike other such products, the Level-Right PRO indexes with the radii of the barrel and the scope objective bell simultaneously to level the entire barreled action and scope assembly. (realavid.com)



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RITON X3 TACTIX MPRD

The X3 Tactix MPRD (Micro Pistol Red Dot) from Riton is a very compact, versatile pistol red-dot sight featuring a 3-MOA dot that is touted to ensure ultimate precision and rapid target acquisition. Designed with a Shield-type footprint, the optic features a 12-hour auto shut-off and 10 levels of brightness, with night-vision compatibility on levels 1 and 2. The unit uses one CR2032 battery with a battery life of 50,000 hours. (ritonoptics.com)

HOLSUN HS507C-X2-ACSS

The HS507C-X2-ACSS from Holosun is a new generation of pistol red-dot sight packed full of features like the multiple reticle system, solar failsafe and shake awake technology to ensure the sight is always ready when you need it. Great for handguns, rifles, PCCs and shotguns, the new red-dot features 7075-T6 aluminum construction, an anodized black finish and multicoated glass for clarity under all conditions. Additionally, the battery is situated where it can be changed without removing the sight. (holosun.com)



BERETTA TACTICAL CLOTHING

Beretta's new Tactical Defense Training Gear includes a fantastic clothing line that will be functional on the range or anywhere else. Combining its proprietary BCMS Layering System with Polartec fabrics, Beretta has delivered a collection that includes performance shirts, BDU pants, waterproof and softshell jackets, shooting protection and other products for advanced performance in any training or defense situation. The entire collection is inspired by the Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) used by military agencies around the world. (berettausa.com)



ZRODELTA/VICTRIX PROFESSIONAL RIFLES

ZRODelta's new partnership with Victrix Armament and Rome will make the company the exclusive distributor of Victrix's new Professional line of rifles now available to American consumers. The Professional line consists of the all-new Pugio (.308 Win.), Gladio (.308 Win., .260 Rem. and 6.5mm), Scorpio (.300 and .338) Tormento (.375 and .408) and Corvo (.50-caliber). In addition, the company will distribute the Rome line of shooting accessories, including optics mounts, suppressors, bipods and more. (victrixarmaments-usa.com)



SIGHTRON SRS-2

Better known for its excellent riflescopes, Sightron has jumped into the handgun realm with the new SRS-2 electronic sight. Designed for use on pistols, shotguns, bows and black rifles, the sight allows shooters to quickly and accurately engage targets with both eyes open, helping them retain their peripheral vision in critical situations. Offering a 2- or 6-MOA illuminated dot, the unit comes with battery, a mount to fit Picatinny rails and needed wrenches. (sightronusa.com) **CD**

STEINEL .45 ACP DEFENSIVE AMMO

Steinel Ammunition has launched a first-of-its-kind premium defensive .45 ACP defensive load with its 185-grain Solid Copper Hollow Point (SCHP). The company says the load is perfectly suited for any .45 ACP pistol, but its performance is optimized for the shorter, subcompact and compact-sized pistols. Loaded in a brass casing, the 45 ACP self-defense round has an expansion rate of greater than .8 inches and penetration of 13 inches. The company also offers 9mm loads with the same copper bullet. (steinel.com)



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guns to a level of mastery most have never seen. He is also an avid competition shooter in the United States Practical Shooting Association (USPSA). While the competition aspect is always intriguing, I found that my discussion with Garcia kept gravitating toward his high-end, custom-crafted 2011 pistols.


Before continuing, if there is any question as to Garcia's competency, I can help put that into perspective. STI International has Garcia review some of their firearm models, reporting on what is good, what isn't and ways to possibly improve the guns before they are released. To me, that is impressive and intriguing, motivating me to learn more about Garcia's company.

EMG Customs' firearms are hand-built one at a time, and this process of building one gun at a time ensures the highest quality. Garcia let me spend some time in his shop showing me one of the firearms he was currently building. Every component of each gun EMG builds is hand-fit with awe-invoking craftsmanship and attention to detail. As

FAST EDDIE

A LOOK AT HOW EMG CUSTOMS' EDDIE GARCIA PACKS FOR RANGE AND RACE DAYS

BY KAREN HUNTER

 *Combat Handguns* understands that our community consists of a wide variety of shooters. The spectrum ranges from professional self-defense trainers to well-known competitive shooters. Going even further, we cannot forget the “everyday shooters” who educate and train themselves with knowledge for self- and home-defense. No matter what category you identify with, one thing we all have in common is the fact that we are all continually learning: There is no such thing as “having arrived”

to an all-knowing level of firearm knowledge.

That is what this column is all about. In each issue, “Ask the Pros” highlights professionals from every facet of the industry, giving you a firsthand look at their personal choices of firearms and gear. These highlights give all of us an opportunity to gain knowledge and ideas for new things to try.

For this issue I had the privilege of spending time with Eddie Garcia, who owns and operates EMG Customs, which builds high-end race



Eddie's EMG Customs 2011

MONGOOSE SILVER

The Mongoose Silver from Korth features all the same features as the classic Nighthawk Mongoose, with a beautiful upgraded Silver DLC finish. The Mongoose Silver models are produced in limited numbers, making these an excellent addition to any collection. The Mongoose Silver is offered in two barrel lengths: a 6" barrel and a 4" barrel. This model is tied together with a set of high-grade Turkish Walnut grips that provide a stunning appearance against the unique finish.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR 6"

Finish: Silver DLC Coated
Caliber: .357 Magnum
Optional (Clipless)
Weight: 2.1 lbs.
Barrel Length: 6"
Overall Length: 11.5"
Width: 1.54"
Height: 6.1"
Barrel Material: 416R



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Garcia gave me an overview of his building process, it became very evident that although many people might have the knowledge and understanding of machining and hand-fitting pistols, Garcia has a natural skill that enables him to do so at a much higher level. EMG pistols not only offer quality, but they bring a level of individuality and unique craftsmanship you would be hard pressed to find anywhere else.

Watching Garcia literally hand-file certain components, I asked him why the smallest details were so important to him, especially when most gun owners would never know the

difference. “I believe guns should never be popping in and out of battery,” he said. “When built right they remain accurate and hold up well. Even after several thousand rounds my guns stay tight, nothing becomes loose and that’s the way it should be.”

BUILT FOR SPEED

I could not wait to see Garcia’s personal competition pistol and all of his other gear. With his permission, I dove right into his range bag, inspecting everything. Garcia’s pistol is, of course, one of his own, an EMG Mid Hybrid Barrel. This handcrafted 2011 con-

sists of an EMG Customs frame and titanium comp, DoubleTap Scope Mount from DoubleTap Sports, C-More RTS2 6-MOA optic, Brazos racker, KKM 5-inch hybrid barrel with EMG barrel porting (EMG’s proprietary porting system was designed by Garcia), Cheely Custom Legacy steel grip and magwell, and internals from EGW. Aesthetically, this is a sleek and sexy race gun, but it is designed for function and is a true tack driver. Garcia states that he benched this gun at 45 yards shooting a group under 0.75 inches. Even after several thousand rounds being fired, Garcia’s

gun remains just as accurate, never exceeding this grouping size. This leaves little question regarding the quality and function of an EMG Customs gun.

DIGGING DEEPER

Garcia’s range bag of choice is the Shooters’ Range Backpack (1) made by Safariland. This backpack provides ample room and compartments to easily store gear while also evenly distributing weight on the shoulders and hips. A reinforced lower compartment provides a great place for heavy ammunition and it even has a removable pistol

sleeve. This bag comes in black, gray, or tan and has an MSRP of \$200.

Rudy Project (2) is Garcia's go-to pick for eye protection. These glasses are state of the art utilizing a graphene compound construction that is lighter than carbon but harder than diamond. They have a vent controller, which provides crystal-clear vision and is designed to adjust airflow to reduce thermal shock, prevent misting and ensure good vision with comfortable ventilation. Adjustable nose pads and temple tips provide each person with a customized fit. The MSRP hits just under \$200.

For hearing protection, Garcia has the Pro Ears Pro 300 (3). Pro Ears offers some of the lightest hearing protection available, and the Pro 300 weigh in at just 7.7 ounces and feature a battery life of up to 250 hours with normal use. Exclusive DLSC Compression Technology offers improved situational awareness, and the Pro Form Leather coupled with the viscoelastic ears seals and padded adjustable headband provide a high level of comfort. This hearing pro comes with four N batteries and has an MSRP of \$159.99.

Garcia's choice of gun belt is the CR Speed Rig (4) complete with holster, belt and magazine pouches. CR Speed offers products with great retention and fast draw, with a large selection of models to choose from. The complete speed rig sets range from \$200 to \$300.

I found that overall Garcia's competition range bag was refreshingly simple, only including a few other


items such as a shot timer, pro grip, extra magazines, ammunition and an EMG Customs towel. His bag is almost a personification of who he is as a gun builder—humble yet complete with the essential needs to execute the job at hand.

PARTING POINTERS

Garcia is a man who truly has a passion for competitive shooting as well as building quality 2011 pistols that are as much pieces of art as they are functional tools. Spending time with him allowed me to

see not only the quality of the guns he makes, but also a bit of his personality. One word that I can honestly use to describe Garcia is humble. There are videos widely available online showcasing his shooting capabilities, proving that he is one of the best shooters in the USPSA with his speed and accuracy. Each time I would try to steer the conversation to his exceptional shooting abilities, though, he would graciously avert that directive. Garcia simply states that competition shooting is a passion and he thoroughly enjoys every

aspect of the sport, especially building relationships with other shooters.

I asked Garcia what his advice would be to the everyday shooter who might be contemplating becoming a competition shooter. "Just start," he advised. "Do not be intimidated by the skill or equipment other shooters may have, just show up with what you have and I guarantee there's a place in this sport for everyone. With time and practice, skill levels build and the guns and equipment will come, but just have the courage to show up and start." 



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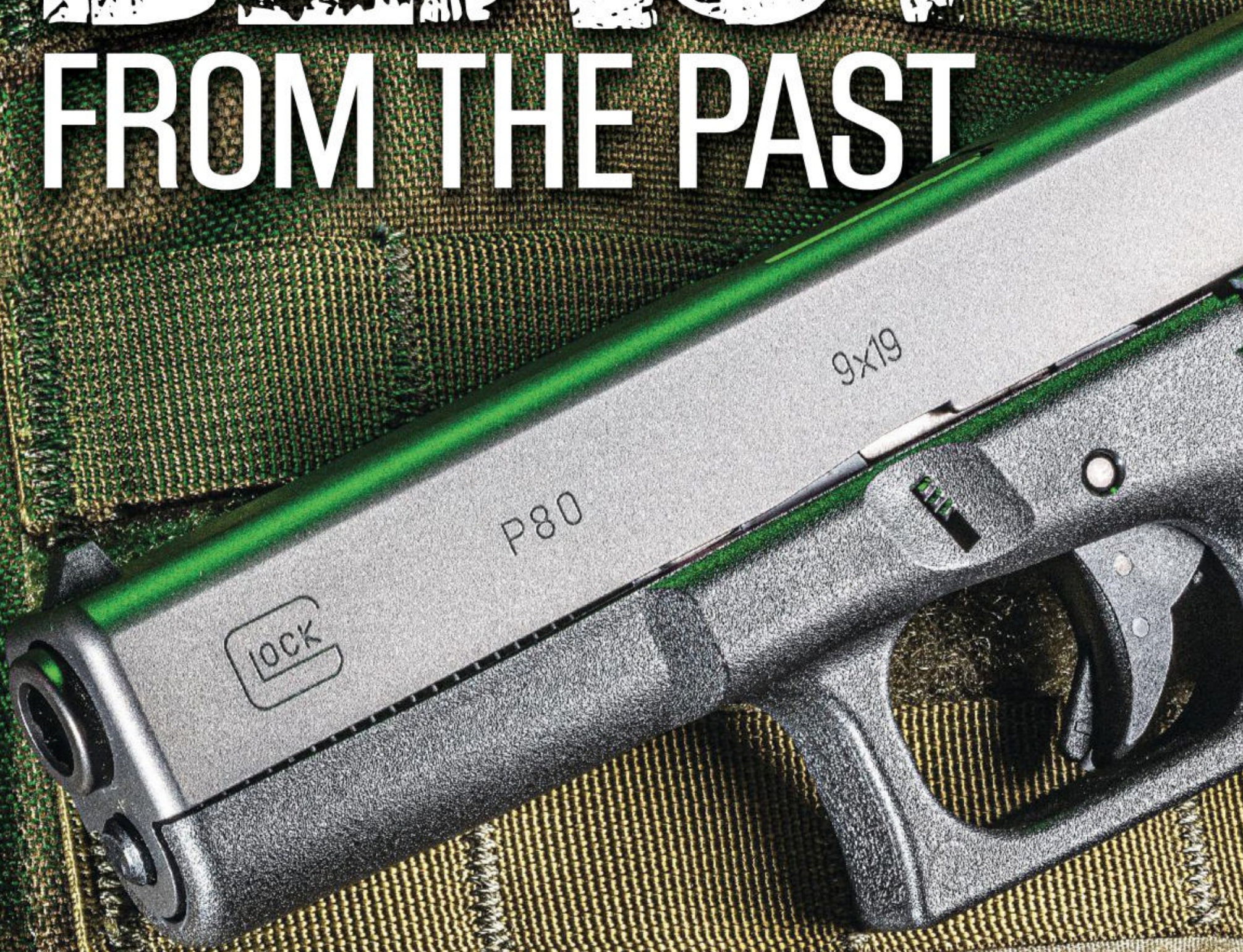
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BLAST FROM THE PAST





GLOCK P80: RE-INTRODUCING GLOCK'S FIRST MILITARY PISTOL

BY ROBERT SADOWSKI • ALEX LANDEEN PHOTOS

The story of P80, or *Pistole 80*, started in the not-to-distance past, around 1980. The Austrian Armed Forces were in dire need of a new sidearm. They were still using the Walther P-38, a pistol design that dated back to World War II. By 1982, some obscure plastic manufacturer in Austria was awarded a contract for 25,000 Glock 17 pistols, which the Austrian military dubbed the *Pistole 80*, or better known as the P80. All the storied European firearms manufacturers like H&K, FN, Sig and others were left collectively scratching their heads and asking themselves: “What just happened?”

The Glock 17 is what just happened, and it totally rewrote the playbook on handgun design and manufacturing. It also made military forces, law enforcement agencies and concealed carry practitioners around the world rethink sidearms. Norway adopted the G17 in 1985 and Sweden in 1988. By the early 1990s, more than 45 countries were lined up to buy Glocks, the United States included.

The new Glock P80 recreates that original military firearm down to the original Tupperware-style storage box. It features many First Generation design characteristics like a Gen1 frame with a mild texture grip and sans accessory rail.

I've always liked the look of the frame without the rail. The Tupperware box gave me flashbacks to the 1980s. In my opinion, the P80 is Glock in its purest form. Lipseys partnered with Glock to recreate this iconic pistol and, to pay tribute to the occasion, the pistol in its Tupperware box is packaged in a commemorative box and certificate.

Like many firearms manufacturers that reintroduce iconic firearms, there is some new engineering to the old design. To pull this off, Glock made a new mold that duplicates the original Gen1 mold, which had been repur-

“Glock has gone to great lengths to recreate the original G17 and in the end created a reliable retro blaster that performs.”

posed in the early '90s. The P80 has improvements over the original P80/G17 pistol. And that is a good thing because while the G17 Gen1 was a cutting-edge design when it was introduced, the pistol has evolved through five generations of design changes and tweaks. It makes perfect sense to incorporate those changes into the reintroduced P80.

You need to understand the Walther P-38 and the birth of the Wonder Nines to understand why the Glock 17 was such a big deal.

The P-38 was a cutting-edge design back in 1938. It was lightweight, accurate, easy to operate, safe, had a 8+1 capacity and was cost effective to manufacture. The P-38 was so successful that nearly every other pistol manufacturer in the world was producing metal frame, DA/SA, single-stack 9mm pistols. By the late 1960s and

1970s, the Wonder Nines came into their own. Manufacturers like Beretta, Smith & Wesson, CZ and many others increased 9mm cartridge capacity from an eight-round single-stack magazine to a 13-, and in some cases up to 15-round

capacity by using a double-stack magazine. The P-38 uses a single-stack eight-round magazine. These Wonder Nine pistols offered added firepower, and many of the world's military forces and law enforcement agencies were scrapping their WWII-era pistols for surplus and upgrading to new equipment.

That's the way pistols were built back in the day. End of story. Or were they? Gaston Glock was a plastics molding engineer who provided the Austrian military with belt buckles, an



SPEC BOX

GLOCK P80

CALIBER:	9mm
BARREL:	4.49 inches
OA LENGTH:	8.03 inches
WEIGHT:	22.5 ounces (empty)
GRIPS:	Textured polymer
SIGHTS:	White dot front, white outline fixed rear
ACTION:	Striker-fired
FINISH:	Matte black nDLC
CAPACITY:	17+1
MSRP:	\$669

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
American Eagle 115 FMJ	1,153	0.57
Blazer 147 FMJ	949	2.59
Hornady Critical Duty 135 FlexLock	994	1.61

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 25 yards.



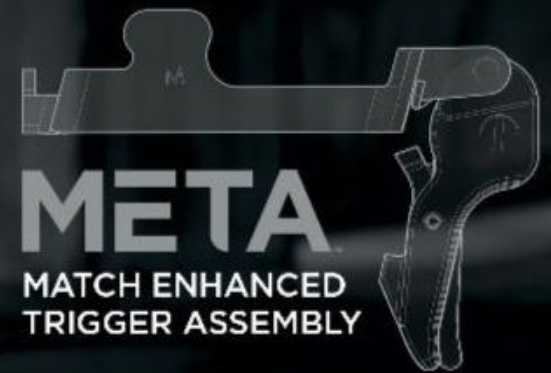
The P80 features a Gen1 frame with a mild-texture grip and no accessory rail underneath.

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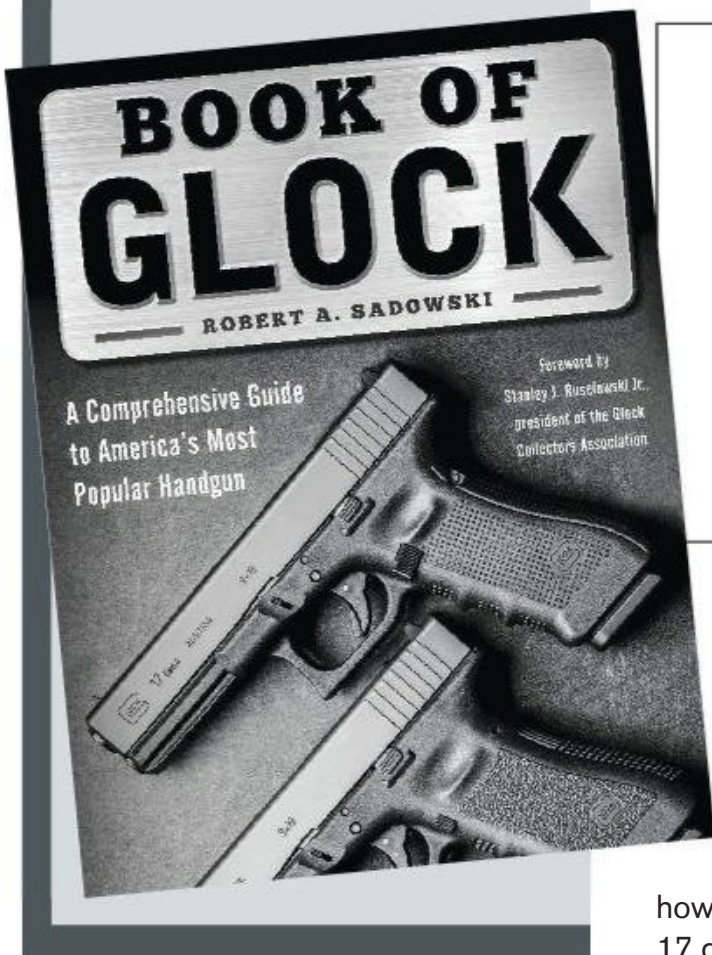
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With Short Magwell

Book Of GLOCK

The journey from the original G17 in the early 1980s to the current models evolved over five generations. The impact of Glock pistols did not impact only law enforcement agencies and military organizations around the world, but everyday culture. *The Book of Glock* debuted as an Amazon #1 new release for a good reason. It includes never before heard backstories on the development of Glock pistols, images of Glock prototypes, and information on first run serial numbers and prefixes. Go to glockcollectors-association.org to get an autographed copy. —Robert Sadowski



← Like many iconic firearms that are reintroduced to consumers, the P80 has some updated engineering, like a captured recoil spring and the beefed-up barrel instead of the Glock 17's original "pencil barrel."



entrenching tool and other small parts. Glock sensed opportunity in the Austrian military's search for a new sidearm. He wasn't a firearm manufacturer, so he had no preconceived notions on how a pistol should be built or how it should look. He did have a list of 17 design criteria the Austrian military

required for their next generation of service pistol. Seizing the opportunity, Glock took the design requirements and assembled a dream team of firearm designers. The result was the Glock 17 and what is commonly referred to by shooters and collectors as a G17 Gen1. The G17 was lighter—due to the polymer frame—and had a magazine capacity

of 17+1, which was much higher than the Wonder Nines. There were many who thought the G17 was a passing fad, convinced a polymer gun would wear out much faster than a metal frame pistol. Torture tests were performed on the G17—dunked in mud, dosed in airplane fuel, frozen in ice, dropped from helicopters—and there were throngs of naysayers convinced they could wear out the Glock. Thousands of rounds later, the Glocks still kept running.

One of the first things I did with the new P80 was compare it to a G17 Gen5. The grip is the obvious difference between a Gen1 and Gen5 pistol. The new P80 slide uses Gen3 components, and the trigger mechanism is the same as the Gen3, which is basically the same as a Gen1 trigger. The slide also uses the hex nut to keep the front sight attached. The recoil guide rod assembly is also captured, meaning it is one piece. Original Gen1 pistol had a separate guide rod and

“Thousands of rounds later, the Glocks still kept running.”

recoil coil spring. The newer, captured assembly makes it infinitely easier to disassemble and reassemble the pistol. The new P80 also stuck with the smaller diameter guide rod similar to Gen1 pistols.

The sights are the same as Gen3 and, in fact, all generations of Glock sights are basically the same. The standard Glock sights consist of a white-dot front sight and an outline notch rear. I personally like the difference between the front sight and rear because the white dot on the front obviously looks different than the white outlined notch of the rear so you can focus on the front sight more easily.

The Tupperware box is actually a Gen3 box and it still brings back that unique Glock experience. The box is made of polymer and holds the pistol

and two magazines, a magazine reloading tool and cleaning rod with brush. It is also plastered with lawyer-required warning labels that were becoming increasingly common in the 1980s. To this day, Glock boxes still have obnoxious warning labels stuck to them. Glock even added the old-style model and serial number label on the side of the box. The Tupperware box is a nice touch.

The P80 will work with any generation of magazine, and it comes with two Gen3 magazines. I tried the P80 magazine in a Gen5 and vice versa. The newer steel-lined magazines were an improvement over the original non-lined Gen1 magazines.

While the P80 had the familiar Glock trigger and grip angle, the smooth texture

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BLAST FROM THE PAST



The grip of the P80 sports the retro smooth texture of Gen1 pistols without finger grooves. Ironically, the Gen5 guns do not have finger grooves, either.



of the Gen1 frame was a departure from the current toothy feel of a Gen5 grip and the finger groove front strap on Gen3 and Gen4 models. My first magazine was off-hand. I used a broken bit of orange clay pigeon as a target in the dirt berm 30 yards away. Experience with the Glock platform breeds familiarity. The first 17 rounds obliterated the clay target and punched a dusty hole in the dry dirt. There is an old-school feel to the P80, yet it still feels new, if that makes sense.

The trigger distance is 2.83 inches, slightly longer than a G17 Gen5, which is 2.76 inches. The grip texture feels almost benign compared to the lusty way your hand adheres to the texture of a Gen5. I'm reminded why skateboard tape was a necessary grip modification back in the day.


Using a rest and targets set at 25 yards, I found the P80 offered good

accuracy at times, depending on the ammo. At 25 yards, inexpensive American Eagle 115-grain FMJs created a small five-shot, 0.57-inch group. The Blazer aluminum case ammo with 147-grain FMJs and the Hornady Critical Duty with 135-grain FlexLock HPs offered smallest groups at 2.59 inches and 1.61 inches, respectively. The P80 uses the polygonal rifling of previous generations. These new P80s do not have the skinny 13.5mm "pencil barrel" like the

very first P80's. Later P80s—around 1986 and later—had the thicker 14mm barrel. Glock also made a new extractor that is flat like the originals for these new P80s. Without question, the P80 is an inherently accurate pistol. Consider the P80 a 2.5-inch shooter at 25 yards using a rest.

Performing reloads and firing at targets at 10 yards, I had no problem punching tight groups. The P80 uses the standard slide-stop lever and the itty bitty magazine release button of a Gen1. I missed the larger, oversized magazine release on the Gen5 guns. I had to pay more attention to my reloading handwork with the P80.

I chewed through 250 rounds in my first session. The P80 ran perfectly and, quite frankly, that was my expectation. I've run a number of Glock pistol models and generations and found Glocks to be very reliable and consistent.

The P80 brings back the Gen1 pistols with evolved internals from newer generation Glocks. Glock has gone to great lengths to recreate the original G17 and in the end created a reliable retro blaster that performs. For more information, visit lipseysguns.com. 

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BROWNING'S

HIT





POWER REBORN



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IT'S A GUN SO ICONIC that it served both the Axis and Allies during WWII and at one time was used by over 50 different militaries. Elite military groups like the British Special Air Services (SAS) and premier law enforcement teams like our own FBI Hostage Rescue Team used the gun because of its large capacity and reputation for reliability. Both licensed and unlicensed copies of the popular gun have been produced in Belgium, Portugal, Israel, China, Argentina, Hungary, India, Nigeria, Indonesia, Bulgaria and now Turkey. This list is not all inclusive, but gives you an idea of just how popular the Browning Hi-Power pistol was. Also known as the Grand Puissance or P-35, the gun's development started with a solicitation by the French military for a new sidearm. Fabrique Nationale (FN) tasked John Browning with its design and this placed him in an unusual position of having to circumvent his own patents on the Colt 1911.

— By Mike Detty • Alex Landeen Photos —

BROWNING'S HI-POWER REBORN



Tisas' BR9 is a faithful reproduction of the old Browning Hi-Power with some modern upgrades like low-profile sights and a stainless steel barrel.

SPEC BOX

REGENT BR9

CALIBER:	9mm
BARREL:	4.6 inches
OA LENGTH:	7.75 inches
WEIGHT:	32.3 ounces (empty)
GRIPS:	Checkered walnut
SIGHTS:	Low-profile 3-dot
ACTION:	Semi-auto
FINISH:	Black Cerakote
CAPACITY:	13+1
MSRP:	\$559



Browning is generally given credit, but it was FN's Dieudonne Saive who designed the tapered, stagger-column magazine.

Browning passed away in 1926 while still working on the Hi-Power and subsequent development was carried out by FN's Dieudonne Saive, a design engineer. In fact, the Hi-Power, as we know it today, is the end result of much of Saive's hard work. According to one account, Saive designed the staggered-column magazine that gives the Hi-Power its large capacity and presented it to Browning. Browning gave the magazine a very critical examination followed by extensive testing before issuing his approval.

Saive continued to refine the gun's design until 1934 when FN decided it was ready for production. France never did adopt the gun, but the Belgian military did and production began in 1935, hence the P35 moniker.

Due to its large capacity, ease of maintenance and reliability, the Hi-Power also became popular with civilians and the gun was long a staple of the Browning lineup. In 2017, after 82 years of continuous production, Browning announced the discontinuation of the gun. In a world flush with striker-fired, polymer-framed, high-capacity handguns, demand for the Hi-Power waned. It was an expensive gun to produce and the machinery used to make the guns was wearing out, so it just didn't make sense to invest in new equipment at a time when demand was at an all-time low. It was the end of an era.

But the Hi-Power had earned its place in history and is no more obsolete than the 1911 pistol. As prices climb for

the now-discontinued gun, it looked as though a whole new generation of shooters would be excluded from enjoying this historic pistol.

Until now!

BACK IN ACTION

In 2018, LKCI began importing the Regent BR9 pistol, a clone of the commercial Browning Hi-Power. Manufactured by Tisas in Turkey, the gun is a virtual copy of Browning's pistol, so much so that parts will interchange with the original gun. Tisas uses a 4140 investment cast-steel frame and a slide machined from a billet of the same material. In a departure from the original gun's



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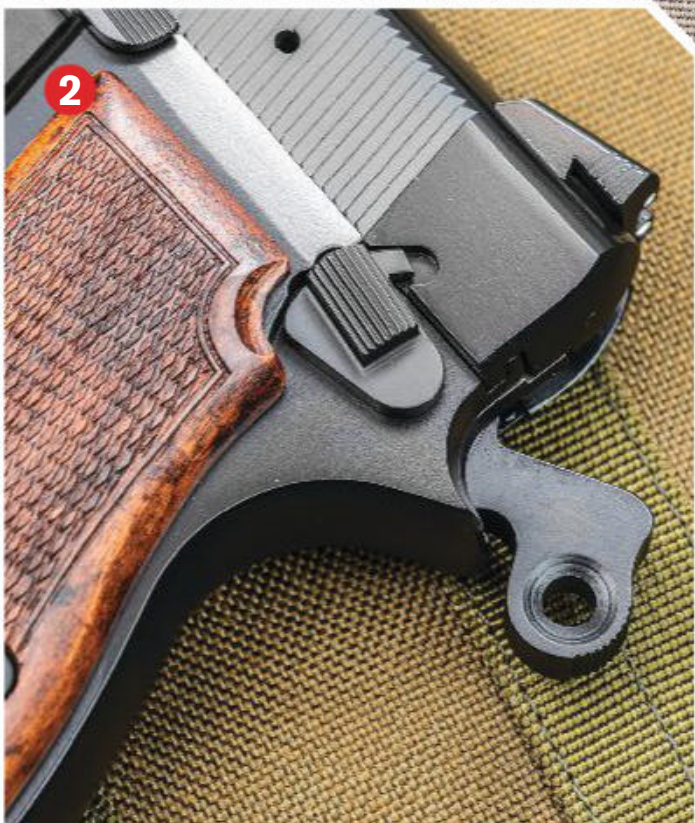
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BROWNING'S HI-POWER REBORN



1. The BR9 disassembles easily without tools, just like Browning's original Hi-Power did.

2. Tisas outfits the TR9 with a rowel hammer, designed to help prevent hammer bite.

3. An external extractor is used on the BR9. The nicely checkered walnut grips give the shooter good purchase, and cuts at the rear of the slide make manipulating the pistol a simple task.

specs, Tisas uses a stainless-steel barrel.

The BR9 is a well-finished gun. Examination of both the frame and slide reveal very few machine marks, and even the inside of the frame's dust cover is well-finished, as is the inside of the slide. Frame to slide fit is exemplary, and with the slide in battery there is virtually no discernible play between the parts. The gun's thumb safety is also well-fit and disengages with about 4 pounds of pressure. Tisas equips the BR9 with low-profile three-dot sights that are dovetailed into the slide.

Our test gun was Cerakoted black and the finish was so well applied that I initially thought the gun had been blued. The BR9 is also available in stainless steel at a slightly higher price.

Development of the Hi-Power started as a military request by the French, and in that solicitation was the requirement for a magazine safety, which would prevent the gun from firing when the magazine is not in the gun. The Regent BR9 is so equipped, making it so that depressing the magazine release drops the magazine approximately 0.375 inches, but it will not fall free from the gun. There are pros and cons to its inclusion, though most Americans favor

a gun without this feature. The spring-loaded magazine safety pushes the trigger lever out of engagement with the slide-mounted sear lever when the magazine is out of the gun. Removing this safety feature will allow the gun to fire without a magazine in place and sometimes results in a better trigger pull. It is not a difficult procedure and can usually be done by the shooter without much trouble.

LKCI's website lists the BR9's trigger pull at 5.5 pounds. My test and evaluation sample registered at 7 pounds with the usual grit and creep associated with the standard Hi-Power. Over the years I've had the chance to shoot numerous commercial and military Hi-Powers, and the BR9's trigger is no better or worse than most of those guns.

RANGE WORKOUT

With that in mind, I tested the gun's accuracy at 25 yards. Using a DOA



While the author initially thought the glossy black finish was blued steel, it is actually a rugged Cerakote finish.

Tactical bench for support and resting the pistol's dust cover on a Millett BenchMaster I was able to keep the sights aligned while I added pressure to the trigger until the shot broke. I like the sights on the BR9 and consider them a huge improvement over the original gun's sights. My T&E gun's sights were well-regulated and shot to point of aim at 25 yards. The groups listed in the accompanying chart are the best of five groups fired.

Despite the gun's heavy trigger pull I was pleasantly surprised with the accuracy. The average group size for the three loads tested was just 1.48 inches! My single best five-shot group was fired with DoubleTap's 77-grain hollow points and measured 0.87 inches, and the average group size for the five groups fired was only 1.14 inches. This DoubleTap load has been a favorite of mine for quite some time. It always performs admirably, producing outstand-

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BROWNING'S HI-POWER REBORN

“**In a world flush with striker-fired, polymer-framed, high-capacity handguns, demand for the Hi-Power waned.**”

ing accuracy and flawless reliability, and with its light projectile produces very little recoil. It accomplishes this without producing too much pressure, and that's a good thing as the BR9 is not rated for +P ammunition.

Throughout my testing the BR9 performed flawlessly. Not once did the gun bobble or choke with any of the loads I tried in it. The Mec-Gar 13-round magazines shipped with the gun locked the slide open on the last shot 100 percent of the time.

Shooting 9mm through a steel-framed gun is a lot of fun. The BR9 weighs 32.3 ounces with an unloaded magazine or 38.3 ounces with 14 rounds of 115-grain ammo. Recoil was minimal, and the



graceful contours of the grip frame make it a natural pointer and help control the gun during rapid fire.

TAKEAWAYS

Tisas made a wise decision to upgrade the BR9 with the external extractor and low-profile sights. The use of a stainless barrel and the post-war, commercial-style external extractor make a lot of sense for today's shooters. The rowel-style hammer prevents hammer bite

that was so common with the spur-style hammer. One thing I wish they would do is include an extended thumb safety on the gun. Being a single-action auto-loader, it should be carried cocked and locked, just like a 1911, but the original style thumb safety is just too small to disengage easily. Fortunately, Cylinder & Slide (cylinder-slide.com) makes an extended safety that should drop in without much trouble and allow shooters to carry the BR9 as a CCW gun. The company also has an extended ambidextrous thumb safety for left-handers or those wanting to use the BR9 as a competition gun. Cylinder and Slide is your one-stop shop for all things Hi-Power related. They make quality parts and are a wonderful resource whether you own a new Regent BR9 or are trying to rehab an old Browning Hi-Power.

My criticisms of the BR9 are few and, by the way, also the same ones I've had with commercial Browning Hi-Powers over the years. The trigger pull is too heavy and gritty, and the thumb safety needs to be replaced with an extended version. Take care of those two things and you'll have a first-class self-defense gun. The BR9 will give shooters the opportunity to experience the Hi-Power for much less than the original classic gun. Priced at \$559, the Regent BR9 is a solid, well-made version of the classic Hi-Power pistol.

For more information, visit lkcillc.com and regentarms.com.



The new Regent BR9 produced accuracy that easily matched and surpassed that of many of the modern polymer-framed, striker-fired pistols that are so popular.



PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY	ENERGY	ACCURACY
Aguila 115 FMJ	1,259	404	1.38
DoubleTap 77 HP	1,542	406	0.87
Sig Sauer 147 FMJ	1,076	378	1.38

Bullet weight in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph, energy in foot-pounds and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 25 yards.



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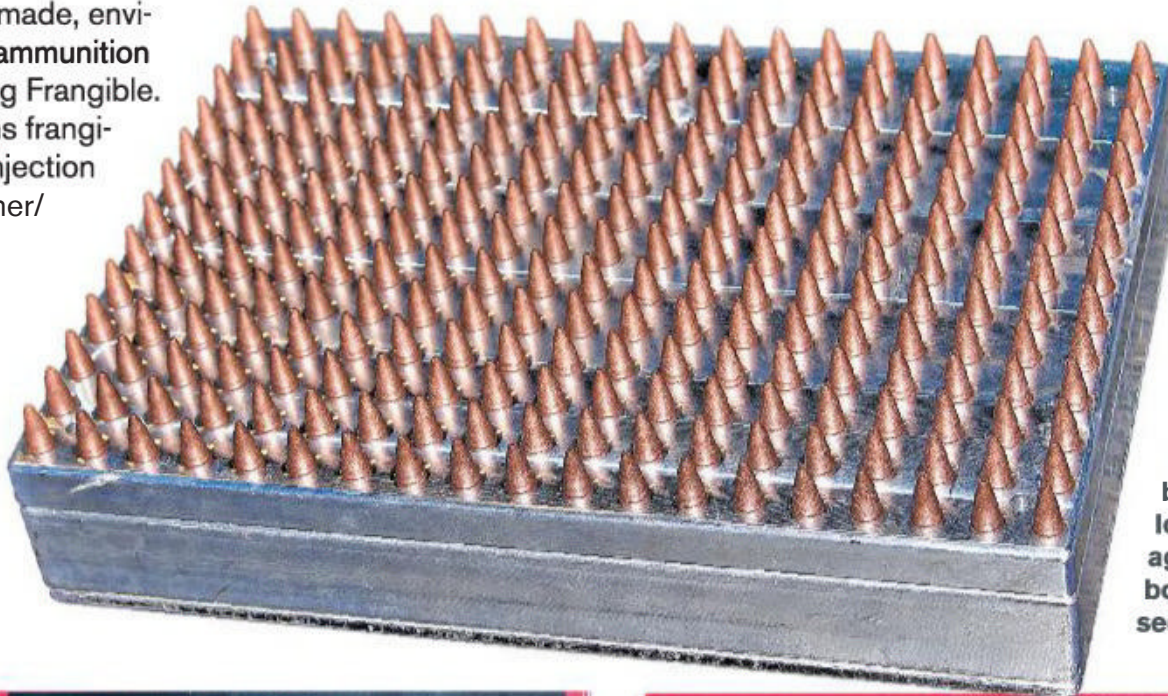
BY DR. MARTIN D. TOPPER



Most Americans know that Norma makes high-quality ammunition in Sweden. However, Norma is part of a much larger company named Ammotec, which is presently owned by Ruag in Switzerland. And, earlier this year Norma introduced an American-made, environmentally friendly ammunition called Range/Training Frangible. This product contains frangible bullets that are injection molded from a polymer/copper composite.

I recently visited Ammotec's Tampa, Florida, plant where Norma Range/Training Frangible is assembled. I also visited Modern Technical Molding and Development

(MTMD/Cavaform) in nearby St. Petersburg, which manufactured the tooling for making the bullets according to Ammotec's specifications. MTMD also maintains and operates the process that produces polymer/copper blend bullets used in this Norma

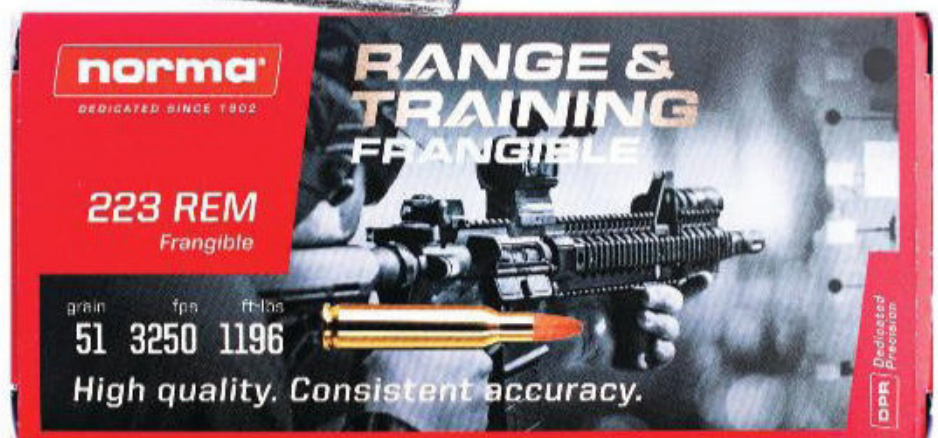


This loading block of 51-grain, .223-caliber polymer blend bullets is ready to be loaded into cases and packaged in Norma's distinctive boxes for shipping to shooters seeking a lead-free alternative.

product. What I learned is good news for the shooting public.

BENEFITS

Shooting ammo containing bullets made of a polymer/copper blend for competition, training and good old-fashioned plinking presents a number of advantages for the shooter and the environment. First, Norma's polymer/copper composite bullets are lead-free and non-toxic, just like the new fourth-generation Sintox primers that are used in the ammo. Lead is toxic, not only to the shooter, but also to wildlife. In humans, chronic exposure to even small amounts of lead can damage the nervous system, skeleton and kidneys. Given this, lead has been increasingly regulated by the



states and the federal government. In some places, lead bullets are outlawed altogether. Unfortunately, bullets made of solid non-toxic metals like solid copper have a potential to ricochet and overpenetrate. They can also be quite expensive due to raw material and machining costs. However, mixing copper with polymer helps keep costs down. Of course, there are significant research and development costs involved in producing bullet molds and creating the right polymer/copper compound, but once the initial investment is made, bullets with polymer/copper projectiles can be produced in large quantities at a very competitive cost.

Avoiding toxic exposure and reducing production costs aren't the only benefits that can come from using polymer/copper projectiles.

One definite benefit is the fact that these bullets are frangible. I enjoy shooting steel, but shooting steel can be hazardous. Even the best steel plates tend to get pock-marked. Steel backstops at firing ranges not only get pockmarked but they also build up lead over time. When this occurs, bullets can deflect in unintended directions.

About 20 years ago, I was shooting at an indoor range when a large fragment of a bullet fired from a Colt Python bounced off the steel backstop and hit me in the forehead. I wound up receiving four stitches and was very thankful that I was wearing protective eyewear. Norma's polymer/copper blend has been specifically reformulated to fracture into smaller pieces than earlier blends. When they strike hard targets like steel plates, concrete or brick walls, Norma's polymer/copper bullets are instantly transformed into a fine dust that falls harmlessly to the ground. This significantly limits collateral damage due to ricochet and overpenetration.

BETTER BULLETS

Two polymer blends are used in Range/Training bullets—one for rifles, one for

handguns. The blends are denser than other polymer/copper blends used in bullets, and they are molded into bullets with an all-electric Injection Molding Machine (IMM) and hot runner mold, providing a greater level of precision than hydraulic



At SHOT Show, the author found the new Norma ammo for both rifles and pistols functioned perfectly and was very accurate.

there has been a tendency for some frangible bullets made of compressed or molded materials to fracture due to the forces involved in firing. The polymer/copper bullets made for Norma are break checked to a force of 2,300 Newton Meters, which is a measure of torque. A considerable amount of torque is applied to a bullet when it engages the rifling. If the polymer/copper blend is not strong enough, pieces of the bullet might be sheared off as it travels down the bore. To be certain these polymer bullets will not break or shear, MTMD pulls random bullets from each batch and pressure tests them to ensure they meet the break-check requirements. Records of these quality checks are kept in a permanent file.

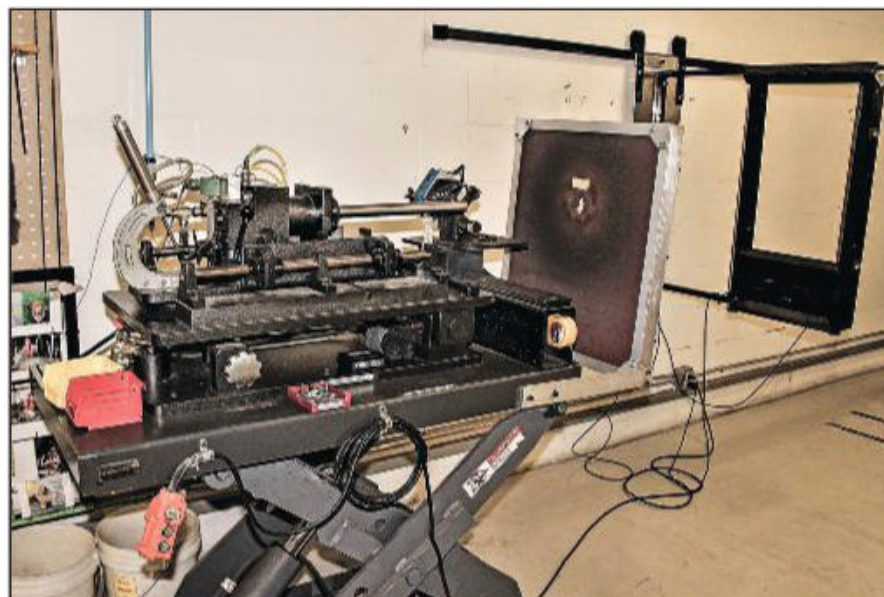
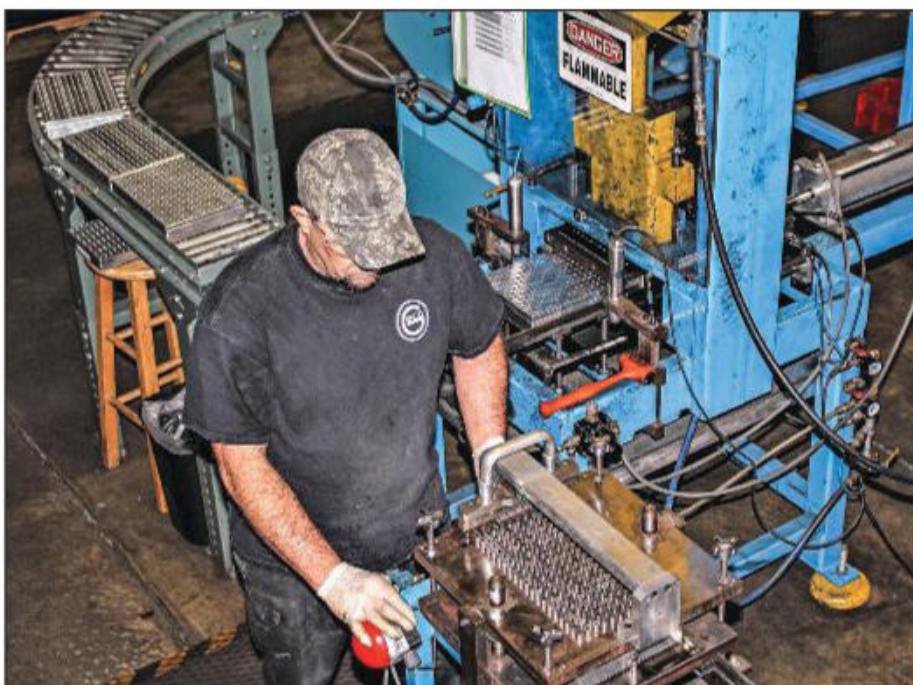
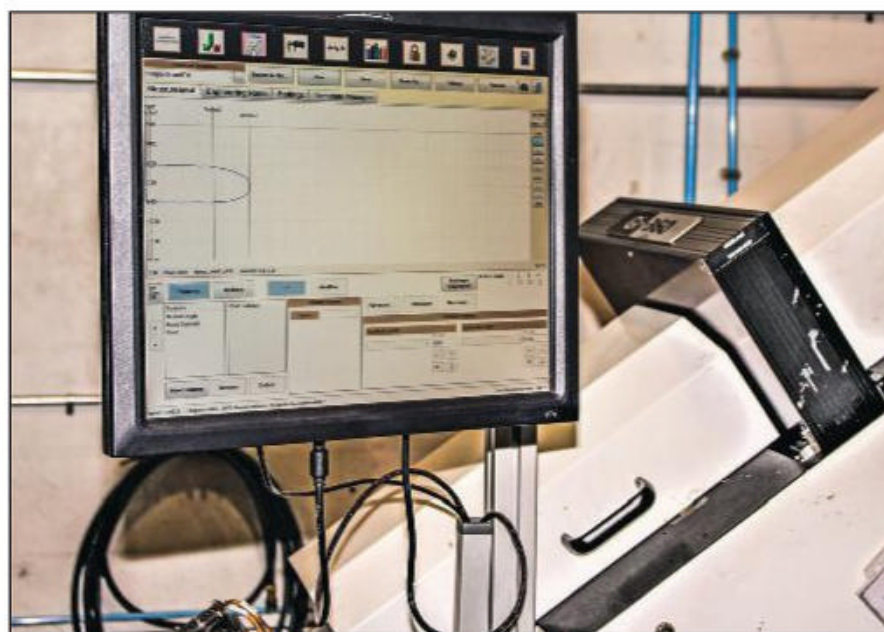
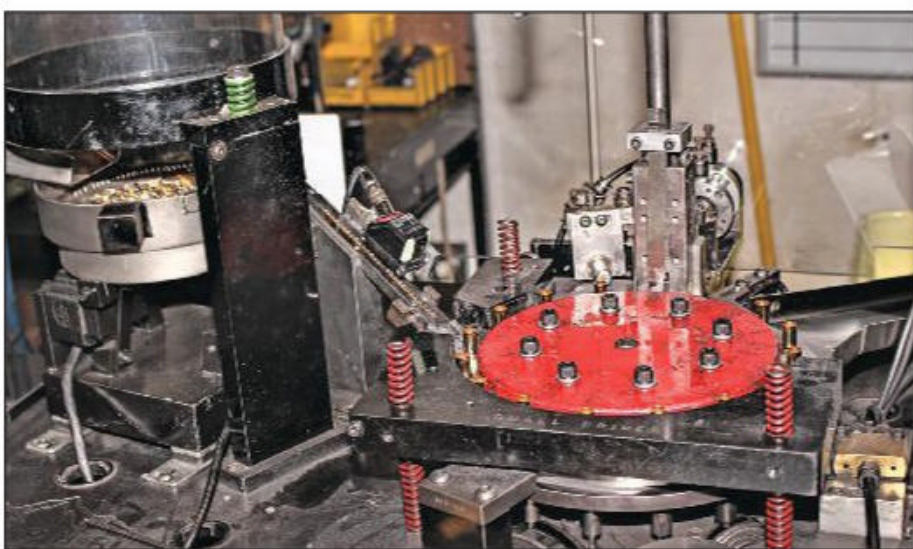
ALL TOGETHER

In addition to the quality checks made during bullet production, special care is taken when loading the ammo. To begin with, Ammotec's facility in Tampa is compliant with all quality assurance and control requirements of ISO 9001. Range/Training Frangible also meets all SAAMI requirements. Because of this, quality checks are conducted at various steps in the assembly process. The first

“This significantly limits collateral damage due to ricochet and overpenetration.”



← Norma's Range and Training ammunition assembly line in Tampa, Florida, employs both hands-on and automated quality checks throughout the loading process and also involves random selection of finished products for detailed testing in Norma's on-site ballistics lab.



and most important check is a fail-safe procedure. Any employee can stop the assembly line immediately if they see a problem at any point in the assembly process. Employees look for problems by performing specific checks as the line is running. Cases are primed separately, and each primer is photographically checked to ensure it is properly seated.

Then cases go through a primer check to ensure they are primed before they are run through the shaker table, which drops the cases into a loading block in the proper orientation and gauges them to ensure proper length. After the powder is dropped into the cases, each is checked to ensure every case contains the proper amount for the particular

load being assembled. While this is in progress, bullets go to a shaker table to ensure each bullet is in proper alignment for loading. Then, the bullets are loaded into the primed, powder-filled cases and are digitally inspected for overall length, width and dents or other defects. Before each round is packed, it is gauged and visually examined.

Besides having excellent quality control at the MTMD facility and on the Norma production line, Ammotec's Tampa facility has its own ballistics lab that pulls random samples of finished cartridges and conducts tests on each lot of ammunition. Quality checks include measuring bullet extraction force, conducting primer function tests, checking chamber pressure using SAAMI test barrels and SAAMI pressure rounds, and checking for velocity and accuracy. The lab also plays an important role in the development of the various loads in the product lineup.

FIRING LINE

After touring the Ammotec facility in Tampa and the MTMD facility in St. Petersburg, I was anxious to shoot some of the Range/Training Frangible ammo. I got my chance to try the first two loads during the Industry Day at the Range event at the 2020 SHOT Show in Las Vegas. The loads are a 65-grain 9mm round that leaves the muzzle at 1,650 fps and produces 393 foot-pounds (fpe) of muzzle energy and a 51-grain .223 Rem. load that moves out at 3,250 fps and generates 1,196 fpe at the muzzle. I also had a chance to observe others firing these loads at the Norma firing line. I saw no problems with feeding, firing or extracting. As far as accuracy is concerned, I didn't have an opportunity to bench test the ammo, however I observed quite a few hits by other shooters.


My own experience in shooting both loads was very satisfactory. I fired the 9mm in a polymer-framed semi-auto. Recoil was very controllable, and the pistol printed the lightweight 65-grain 9mm bullets close to the point of aim on a 12-inch circular steel plate that was approximately 15 yards from the firing line.

“As impressed as I was with the 9mm load, I liked the .223 even more.”

The gun ran perfectly and, given its ability to hit the target with almost monotonous regularity, I'm of the opinion that this would make an excellent load for tactical training, steel matches and other competitive shooting activities.

As impressed as I was with the 9mm load, I liked the .223 even more. Shooting offhand at a half-size silhouette at 100 yards, the gun again ran with flawless reliability. Better yet, I rang the steel with every shot using an AR that was fitted with a Leupold 1x red-dot optical sight.

One really can't ask for more than that.

Norma's Range/Training 9mm and .223 Rem. loads are high-quality products that perform very well and clearly fulfill their intended purpose. But that's not all: Norma is developing additional pistol loads in .380 ACP, 9mm +P, .38 Special, .40 S&W and .45 ACP. There will also be loads in 7.62x39mm, 300 Blackout, .308 Winchester and possibly even .50 BMG in the foreseeable future. For more information, visit norma-ammunition.com. 



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GUN TEST



ME & MY



The sound of laughter and camaraderie, the high-pitched beep of the timer and the satisfying pings of lead on steel. These are the notes of the melody that is played at my local range each Tuesday and Thursday as competitors gather to test their mettle against each other, the timer and themselves. I don't get there as often as I probably should, but when I do I not only enjoy the experience of competition, I also feel like I level up my shooting skills.

Over the last couple of years, I've taken various makes and models of pistols to these events. The pistol that I perform the best with, and that I keep coming back to, is the CZ Shadow 2. So, it's easy for me to understand why CZ pistols dominate the competitive circuit. They're exceptionally accurate, reliable and ergonomically built for a high hold to reduce muzzle flip, and so much more. Even with all the Shadow 2's positive attributes, CZ-USA decided to up the ante and make it even better with the introduction of the new Shadow 2 Optics Ready.

While some enjoy competitive shooting as a sport unto itself, I view it as a way to improve my defensive shooting skills under stress.

And when it comes to the tools of the trade, I'll take every tactical advantage my guns can offer as well. That includes the use of red-dot optics for faster target acquisition. I'll admit that I was slow to get on the red-dot train where pistols are concerned. In fact, I had to be dragged kicking and screaming. But I'm there now, thanks to quality instruction from folks like Aaron Cowan of Sage Dynamics.

CZ has also capitalized on the benefits and the popularity of red-dot sights with one of its latest competition pistols, the Shadow 2 Optics Ready. To the company's credit, this required reconfiguring the Shadow 2's slide profile.

Because of the slide's inverted-rail design, CZ was able to contour the Shadow 2's slide with an upward taper. This reduced the mass on the top of

the slide, thereby keeping the mass more in line with the bore and helping to reduce muzzle flip. The downside of this design is that there isn't much real estate left on top to easily install a red-dot optic. CZ's solution was to not execute the dramatic slide taper behind the ejection port. This left more "meat" in the slide to be milled out for a red-dot mounting plate. While the pistol comes with a standard top plate (with rear sight), the end user will be able to



SHADOW

**CZ'S POPULAR
RACE PISTOL
GETS UPGRADED
WITH A MILLED SLIDE
FOR RED-DOTS**

| BY GARRETT LUCAS |





(Top) The addition of a red-dot on the Shadow 2 allows the shooter to get the very best performance out of the pistol. (Left to right) The extra heft of the Shadow 2, along with its ergonomics, allows the shooter to easily control the pistol during recoil.

order adapter plates from CZ for the more popular red-dots like the RMR, the DeltaPoint Pro and others that have the same footprint.

SHADOW 2 BASICS

All of this is great news, but what's the Shadow 2 all about? The Shadow 2 is an upgraded, competition DA/SA pistol based on the original CZ 75 platform. Like the CZ 75, the Shadow 2 OR can be shot double-action for the first shot or carried cocked and locked like a 1911

for a single-action first shot. An enhancement of the original Shadow, the Shadow 2 features a higher beavertail and an undercut triggerguard for higher hand placement to reduce muzzle flip. Another improvement is the reversible magazine release that can be adjusted to three different heights to suit the shooter's style.

Measuring 8.53 inches overall with a 4.89-inch barrel, the all-steel (except grips) Shadow 2 weighs in at a hefty 46.5 ounces. It features all of the amenities one would expect in a premiere

competition pistol including aggressive checkering on the front and backstraps. The Shadow 2 showcases a fiber-optic front sight along with CZ's blacked-out and serrated HAJO rear sight. In addition to the contoured slide, the Shadow 2 also hosts a full dust cover for additional weight up front to help mitigate recoil.

As mentioned earlier, the Shadow 2 incorporates inverted rails in its slide. Rather than wrapping over the frame rails, the slide rails ride within the Shadow 2's frame. This allows for

a tighter slide-to-frame fit, improves the pistol's accuracy and contributes to the platform's stellar reputation for reliability.

That same level of precision is also found in the trigger assembly. The silky double-action pull measured only 8.25 pounds before the break, and was completely free of any grit or drag during travel. And if you think the double-action pull is nice, the single-action pull will make you clutch your pearls.

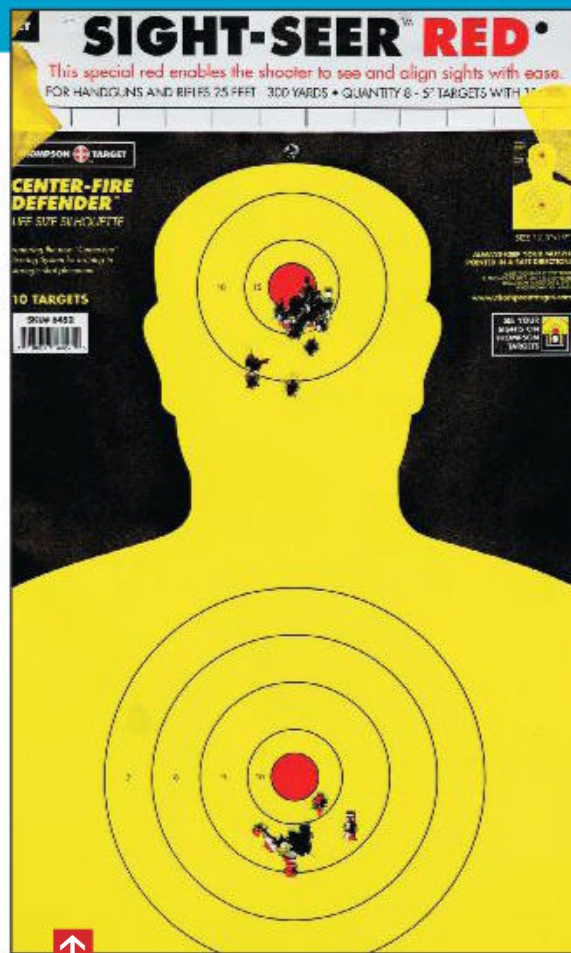
It has an extra-crisp break at just 2.6 pounds on average. There is about a 0.25 inches of take-up before a light press or an angel's breath trips the break. The reset wasn't the shortest I've tried, but it is no slouch either, with just a few millimeters travel before a tactile, audible response occurs. Throw in the three supplied 19-round magazines (also upgraded from the original Shadow), and there's no question CZ means business with its competition pistols.

ME & MY SHADOW

Okay, okay...the Shadow 2 OR wasn't mine, but let a guy pretend for a while. Before I took it out to its first rodeo, I outfitted the Shadow 2 OR with a Trijicon RMR as that was the red-dot I had available that fit the supplied mounting plate. Speaking of which, the review pistol I received came with the mounting plate already installed. There was no rear sight to be found in the package because the rear sight comes off when an RDS is installed. While not ideal for a tactical scenario where backup sights are preferred, this is primarily a competition pistol.

The second reason for the RMR is that it also allowed me to use a holster I

“The pistol that I perform the best with, and that I keep coming back to, is the CZ Shadow 2.”



Doing fast transition drills at 15 yards, the Shadow 2 OR proved to be exceptionally accurate, at least when the author did his part and didn't pull the shots.

already had on hand for the Shadow 2, the Race OWB model from ANR Design (anrdesignkydexholster.com). Not only is ANR a preferred vendor for CZ-USA, the firm also produces company-branded holsters for manufacturers like FN America, Kimber America and Kahr Arms. Simply put, ANR Design makes fantastic Kydex holsters. Alex Costa, the owner, helped me out previously with a holster and mag carriers for a previous Shadow 2 review and that same rig worked equally well for the Optics Ready model.

I've had several opportunities to use holsters made by ANR Design and the work Alex and his crew does is exceptionally clean and precise. No matter which models of pistols and lights I've specified for a holster, the fit is always exceptional and the build quality is rock solid. It's no wonder that ANR Design has been awarded multiple contracts to US SOF and UK SOF units.

DELIVERING THE GOODS

Having previously worked with a Shadow 2 and a Shadow 2 Orange, I pretty much knew what to expect when I hit the line,

and the Optics Ready model did not disappoint. In all honesty, the pistol itself didn't bring anything new to the table, but what the Optics Ready Shadow 2 did was facilitate better performance from the shooter—namely me.

Once I worked through the necessary changes to my presentation for eye alignment with the red-dot, I was able to accurately address the targets more quickly, especially those at distance. Without having to negotiate the three different focal planes of the target, the front sight and the rear sight, the shooting process consequently became faster and felt more natural. This ultimately improved my performance at those Tuesday and Thursday night events.

Of course, all of the Shadow 2's excellent features helped in this regard. The exceptional ergonomics positioned my hand in a high hold for better control, and the aggressive checkering on the grips and the straps securely locked in my grip without being overly abrasive. Additionally, the magazine release was easy to access and engage straight from

SPEC BOX

CZ SHADOW 2 OPTICS READY

CALIBER:	9mm
BARREL:	4.89 inches
OA LENGTH:	8.53 inches
WEIGHT:	46.5 ounces (empty)
GRIPS:	Aluminum
SIGHTS:	Fiber-Optic Front, HAJO rear
ACTION:	DA/SA
FINISH:	Nitride
CAPACITY:	19+1
MSRP:	\$1,549

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Colt 124 National Match	1,100	1.92
Federal Premium 147 HST	985	1.63
Sig Sauer 124 Elite V-Crown	1,160	2.06
Wilson Combat 115 +P XTP	1,266	0.63

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 25 yards.



(Far left) With a red-dot sight installed, the Shadow 2 does not have a rear sight. (Left) The Shadow 2 hosts a fiber-optic front sight, glare-reducing top serrations and cocking serrations for easy slide manipulation.

those writers that claims to regularly shoot sub-1-inch groups without the aid of a locking, mechanical rest. But, when I tried an extra box of Wilson Combat's 115-grain +P XTP loads that I had on hand, all three groups were well under an inch, with an average of only 0.73 inches. That was easily the best three-shot group average I've shot from a pistol (without a magnified optic) in several years.

That just shows that, with the right load, your Shadow 2 can be laser-

the factory, and I didn't need to make any height adjustments to it.

The only complaint I have about the Shadow 2 is the fairly flat and somewhat mushy thumb safety. It does not protrude enough for a fast and intuitive engagement and it doesn't "snap" into position. Maybe I'm being a little picky here, but I'd like to feel a more tactile and positive response when engaging or disengaging the safety. On the other hand, the



(Below) The original Shadow 2 had a fully tapered slide, which increased the difficulty of installing a red-dot sight. (Below right) Like a 1911, the Shadow 2 can be carried cocked and locked for a single-action first trigger pull.

double-action trigger is so good, I doubt I would ever carry it cocked and locked.

Probably the most important traits of any gun, let alone a race gun, are accuracy and reliability. Those characteristics are right in CZ's wheelhouse. Between matches and range practice, I've put close to 1,000 rounds of about eight different brands of 9mm through this particular pistol without a solitary malfunction of any kind. But then, it's a CZ and that's what I've come to expect.

And, with a variety of premium ammunition from Sig, Federal, Hornady and Colt, I was consistently shooting 1- to 1.5-inch groups at 25 yards off a simple rest with ease. I'm not one of

“And if you think the double-action pull is nice, the single-action pull will make you clutch your pearls.”




beam accurate. In fact, I went back to review my accuracy notes from a previous Shadow 2 review, and the results weren't quite as impressive as with this new model. I attribute this to the advantage of easier aiming with the RMR installed. It makes a huge difference for me and my eyes when it comes to precise shot placement.


DOING DOUBLE DUTY

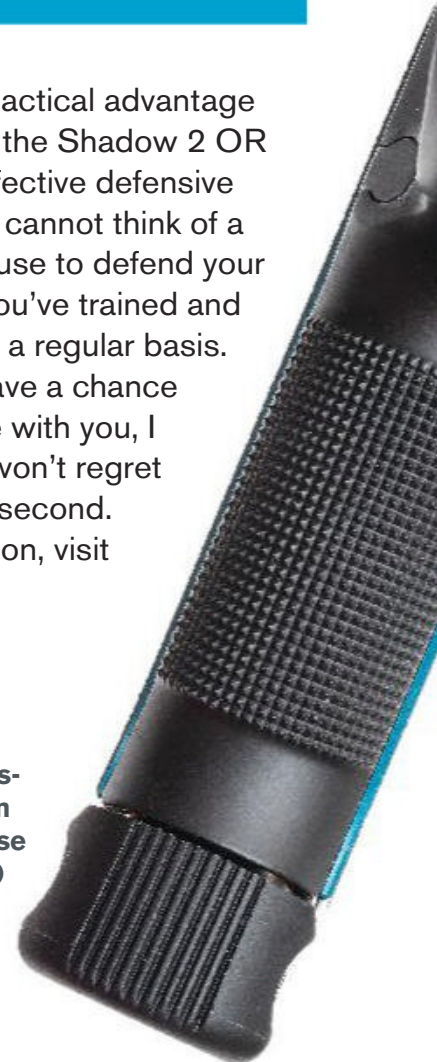
For a training and competition tool, the CZ Shadow 2 OR is about as good as it gets. It's both unerringly reliable and unbelievably accurate. At an MSRP of \$1,549, it's not exactly cheap, but the best rarely ever are. However, the user can take solace in letting the Shadow 2 OR double as a feature-rich defensive weapon, especially at home since its hefty weight will probably preclude it from everyday carry.

With its 19+1 round capacity, controllability and its ability to be



outfitted with the tactical advantage of a red-dot sight, the Shadow 2 OR can be a highly effective defensive weapon. In truth, I cannot think of a better weapon to use to defend your life than the one you've trained and competed with on a regular basis. And, if you ever have a chance to bring one home with you, I promise that you won't regret the decision for a second. For more information, visit cz-usa.com. 

 (Left) The aluminum grip slabs are aggressively textured for an extra-secure purchase on the pistol. (Right) The frontstrap and backstrap are also checkered, providing a robust grip on the Shadow 2.



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TALE OF THE TAPE

WIDTH: 1.39 INCHES

HEIGHT: 4.46 INCHES



**KIMBER
K6S DASA**

CALIBER

.357 Magnum/
.38 Special

BARREL

3 inches

OAL LENGTH

7.62 inches

WEIGHT

25.1 ounces

GRIP

Walnut

SIGHTS

Three-dot,
white

ACTION

DA/SA

FINISH

Stainless

CAPACITY

6

MSRP

\$970

OAL: 7.62 INCHES



TWO DEPENDABLE, CARRY-READY .357 MAG. WHEELGUNS SQUARE OFF AT THE RANGE

BY GARRETT LUCAS



We won't be getting into the revolver versus pistol debate here since that topic has been done to death umpteen times, but there's no denying the power of the .357 Mag. round. Instead, for our head-to-head comparison this issue, we'll

roll with the assumption that some folks still like and appreciate a compact, well-appointed powerhouse of a wheelgun for a carry piece. Whether it's for self-defense in an urban environment or lightweight protection on the trail, that's just what they'll get

with the new Kimber 6s DASA and the Smith & Wesson Performance Center Pro Series Model 60.

SMITH & WESSON

Over the years, there have been a few variants of the

Model 60 produced, and the company's current catalog offers four models. I requested The Pro Series Model 60 to keep the pricing close to the Kimber offering so as to compare "apples to apples" with regard to value. Pro Series guns from Smith & Wesson are basically a step up from the standard models with a few additional features.

The Performance Center Pro Series Model 60 features a 3-inch, slab-sided barrel that is quite stylish and a nice departure from the looks of the standard version. The five-shooter's all-steel construction bears an attractive matte (or satin) finish, which also adds to its aesthetic appeal. Another nice visual upgrade is the ergonomic and very comfortable wood grips,

.357 MAG. REVOLVER SHOOTOUT S&W PC PRO M60 VS. KIMBER K6S DASA

CALIBER

.357 Magnum/
.38 Special

BARREL

3 inches

OAL LENGTH

8.7 inches

WEIGHT

22.9 ounces

GRIP

Wood

SIGHTS

Tritium ramp front,
rear adjustable

ACTION

DA/SA

FINISH

Stainless

CAPACITY

5

MSRP

\$819



which replace the standard version's synthetic grips.

The Pro Series upgrades aren't all about sex appeal, however, as the little heater's front sight blade has also been fitted with a tritium insert to facilitate easier low-light shooting. Other notable features on the PC Pro Series Model 60 include serrations on the topstrap and atop the barrel to reduce glare, a windowed underlug and a fully adjustable rear sight to dial in your favorite load.

The PC Pro Series Model 60 maintains a small enough footprint for easy, all-day carry on the hip, whether concealed or not. While the trigger wasn't tuned by the factory, it still had a clean, smooth double-action pull that measured 10.25 pounds before the break. The

single-action pull was quite nice and very light, with a crisp break at just 2.75 pounds.

All in all, and from initial observation, the PC Pro Series Model 60 appeared to be a well-thought-out and very competent defensive package for its price, though time at the range would truly tell the tale.

KIMBER

It was just a few years ago that Kimber Manufacturing stunned the shooting world with the

introduction of its new K6s revolver. The K6s packed six rounds of .38/.357 ammunition into a frame roughly the size of Smith & Wesson's J-frame models, making it the smallest six-shot .357 Mag. revolver on the market.

The capacity alone was a pretty big splash for an introduction, but it turned out there was a lot more to like about it. The original K6s was a double-action-only revolver with no external hammer, requiring a longer, heavier

trigger pull for each shot. This wasn't really a negative since many folks were reporting on the excellent DA pull. However, Kimber's newest model, the K6s DASA, boasts an external hammer, giving the user the option to cock it for a lighter single-action pull.

It was the K6s DASA that I received for this matchup. I requested the 3-inch barrel version, though Kimber also offers barrel lengths of 2 and 4 inches. Out of the box, the Kimber 6s DASA was notice-



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TALE OF THE TAPE



→ (Above) The fully adjustable sights on the Pro Series Model 60 allow the user to fine-tune the gun's point of aim for the preferred load. The Pro Series Model 60 (Right) features a lower-profile hammer and offered a crisper single-action trigger break than the Kimber. (Below) The Smith & Wesson revolver is topped with an attractive matte-stainless finish.



ably heavier than the Model 60. With its beefy barrel and frame, the diminutive six-shooter tips the scales at 25 ounces, which should obviously help with recoil.

The Kimber K6s DASA features all-steel construction and sports an

attractive brushed-stainless finish. One immediately obvious difference from the Model 60 is the use of a three-dot sight arrangement via a dove-tailed rear sight and a pinned front sight. Though not adjustable for elevation, windage can be adjusted by drifting the rear sight. Another difference is the use of a push-button release for the cylinder. For the Smith, the user has to push the release forward to swing out the cylinder.

There were a couple of features I really liked about the Kimber K6s DASA. First, the checkered hammer was wider than that of the PC Pro Series Model 60, making cocking it a more confident process. Also, the hammer had more of an upsweeping arch to it where the Smith's hammer is a little more low-profile. The Kimber's hammer was quicker and easier to access, though I suppose it might hang up on things easier as well.

The double-action trigger pull was a tad heavier at 10.5 pounds before the break, but I actually liked the feel of the Kimber's DA pull better. It's tough to explain why, but it was just a personal preference. The Kimber's SA pull was also a bit heavier at 3.75 pounds. It was not as crisp as the Smith's SA pull, but still light enough for a precision shot once the hammer was cocked.

While the top had no serrations, the backstrap was serrated more for looks than function, and the semi-checked walnut grips did provide a bit of traction and add a classy bit of flair to the overall package. As classy as it is, the K6s DASA rings in at a price of \$970, a good \$150 more than the Smith—even with the Smith's Pro Series upgrades. It was going to be interesting to see if Kimber's latest

contender could perform well enough to command that higher premium.

SQUARING OFF

Even with the incredible ammo shortage right now, the good folks at Hornady helped out with the matchup by providing a few boxes each of their 125-grain FTX Critical Defense, 135-grain Critical Duty and 158-grain XTP .357 Mag. loads, as

“If things go sideways, that extra round might just make all the difference.”

.357 MAG. REVOLVER SHOOTOUT S&W PC PRO M60 VS. KIMBER K6S DASA



(Right) The extra weight of the Kimber K6s DASA helped mitigate the recoil of full-house .357 Magnum rounds. (Below) The upsweeping arch of the Kimber's hammer made it easier to access and operate. (Below right) A checkered, push-button cylinder release can be found on the Kimber.



well as the company's 110-grain, .38 Special FTX Critical Defense load. To keep things fair and balanced, we also threw in some 125-grain .357 Mag. rounds from both Speer and Sig Sauer. Suffice to say, the little revolvers got quite the workout.

As expected, there was a felt difference between the K6s and the Model 60 during recoil. The extra weight of the K6s made shooting the heavier loads just a bit more manageable, though the end user might prefer the lighter weight of the Smith for all-day carry. I will say that after the first few boxes of the heavier stuff, the Pro Series Model 60 started to take its toll on us, more so than the K6s DASA.

In fact, my shooting buddy lost a little skin on the Smith's cylinder release during recoil, and I lost a bit in the web of my hand from the top corner of the backstrap. With some loads leaving the 3-inch barrels in excess of 1,380 fps, there's only so much you


can do to mitigate the laws of physics.

With both revolvers, we were easily able to shoot 1- to 1.5-inch groups offhand at 7 yards, even turning in a couple of sub-1-inch groups. From a bench at 7 yards, the Smith turned in a 0.75-inch group with Hornady's 125-grain FTX Critical Defense round and the Kimber shot a 0.68-inch group with Hornady's 135-grain Critical Duty load.

The Kimber's biggest advantage, however, was that one extra round. With similar grip materials and all-steel construction, as well as similar trigger pull weights, the extra \$150 premium in the Kimber's price really boils down to that extra round and a little less felt recoil. Who knows? If things go sideways, that extra round might just make all the difference.

These were very similar revolvers from two great companies that offer top-quality firearms. The differences between the

K6s DASA and the Performance Center Pro Series Model 60 are subtle and very subjective. I liked the Kimber's sights and trigger pull better, but I preferred the lighter weight of the Smith for easier carry. My friend preferred the Model 60's trigger pull, but he definitely liked the extra weight of the Kimber to help with the felt recoil.

It's all about finding the right balance of features for price and weighing your priorities. You won't go wrong with either revolver whether you need a home defender, a CCW or a relatively lightweight trail companion. Choose the one that best suits your needs and it will surely serve you well. For more information, visit kimberamerica.com and smith-wesson.com. 

BEDTIME BUDDIES

PRODUCTS DESIGNED TO KEEP US SAFE WHILE WE SLUMBER

BY MIKE DETTY

N8TACTICAL MAGNA ARM →
GUN MOUNT MAGNET



It has been said that President Donald Trump gets by on four hours of sleep each night. No one has ever said that about me. I need a solid eight hours to be at my best. So, with exactly one-third of my life being spent in bed, I needed to find a solution to keep a gun handy and ready to go when I am at my most vulnerable.

N8TACTICAL MAGNA ARM GUN MOUNT MAGNET

Before I get started here let me first say that I live alone. There are no children or grandchildren that have the run of my house. In fact, I can't remember the last time a youngster was in my home. The exterminator I use has serviced

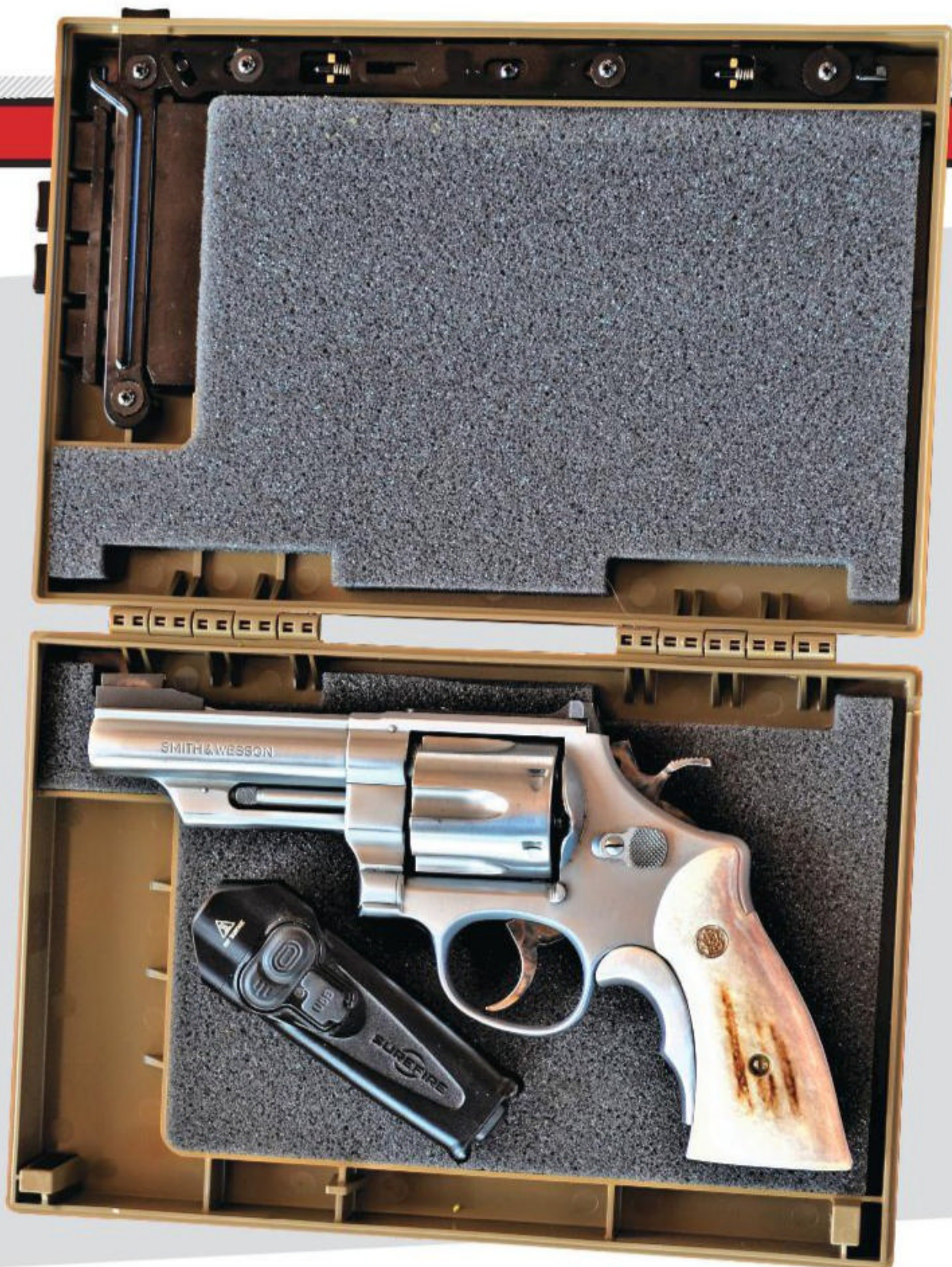
my home for the last 20 years and is completely trustworthy. Despite my clutter I have yet to hire a house cleaner, so there are really no unauthorized people rummaging through my home. Consequently, I can and do often leave house guns where I spend significant amounts of time, like near the love seat where I watch TV and work on my laptop and in the top drawer of the nightstand next to the bed.

N8Tactical offers another solution to having a gun handy, yet out of sight while you slumber. Known primarily for IWB holsters, N8Tactical now offers the Magna Arm Gun Mount Magnet. Designed to be mounted on the back of a headboard or nightstand, the magnet is covered with a protective rubber coating to protect the finish of





STOPBOX USA →
STOPBOX



your handgun. The magnet is so strong that it can hold up to 15 pounds and is completely capable of holding an AR-15 just by attaching the barrel to the mounted magnet. I mounted one at the back of my closet, where my AR carbine is quickly accessible by pushing the clothes out of the way and grabbing it.

In case you're wondering, the Gun Magnet will also hold stainless steel. My nightstand gun, a custom stainless 1911 outfitted with a Crimson Trace light, laser and grips, is now out of sight but quickly accessible by reaching behind the nightstand. The Magna Arm Gun Magnet isn't just limited to the bedroom, though, as you can also put one under your desk at work. SUVs, boats and even tree stands and duck blinds are candidates to keep your gun in

place and ready at a moment's notice. Priced at a very reasonable \$19.95 and backed by a lifetime warranty, buying a handful of these Magnet Mounts would probably make sense! (n8tactical.com)

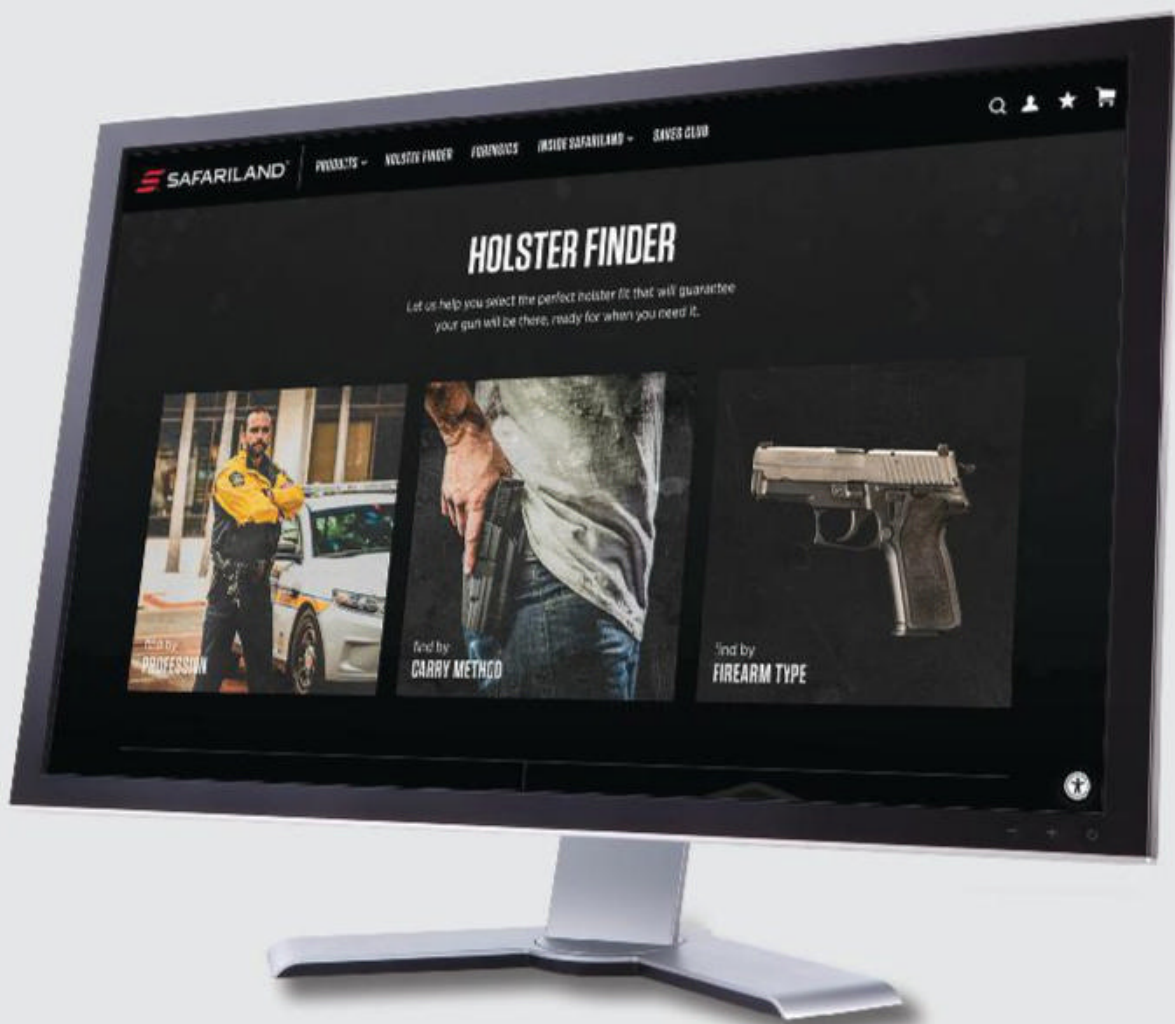
STOPBOX USA

I was scrolling through a popular social media outlet when I discovered StopBox USA—a new, innovative solution to keeping your gun readily accessible yet out of the hands of unauthorized users. The TSA-approved lockbox is constructed from a heavy-duty polycarbonate-ABS and is unusual in that it doesn't use any batteries, keys or electronics of any kind.

Instead, the StopBox uses an all mechanical lock and can be opened,

“
So, with exactly one-third of my life being spent in bed, I needed to find a solution to keep a gun handy and ready to go when I am at my most vulnerable.”

SAFARILAND'S NEW SITE



The Safariland Group recently announced a newly redesigned website, safariland.com. It is an easy-to-navigate site that provides users with an interactive experience, allowing them to match products with their gun and carry needs.

Designed to be intuitive, the new site also provides an in-depth education center. Safariland's Holster Education Center provides a series of relevant and easy-to-understand

resources that guide the user through various considerations for selecting a holster. Holster position, retention and concealability, as well as various shooting disciplines, are all considered.

Safariland's Holster Finder takes the user through a series of visually enhanced questions to quickly assess and match their needs to Safariland products. Selection can be made by profession, carry method and firearm type.

But Safariland is more than just a holster manufacturer! There's a section in the website called "Lives Saved" that includes incident stories of the more than 2,080 individuals whose lives were saved by Safariland Armor. Safariland also features a broad range of safety and survivability products, as well as forensic equipment. Take a cruise around the Safariland website and explore what's new! (safariland.com)




StopBox provides a great way to keep a firearm handy for emergencies yet deny access to unauthorized users.

with practice, in less than a second. There are four keys at the end of the StopBox, and the user can open it by first pushing down on the lid and then pressing the designated keys while using his or her thumb to depress the thumb lock on the side. If the right keys are depressed in the correct sequence, the hinged lid can now be opened. The corner is a natural reference point in the dark so the StopBox can be opened even under stress.

The StopBox is not meant to be a vault. In fact, I'd recommend placing it in your gun safe when you're not at home because it can be defeated with common impact tools found in your garage. That's not the StopBox's purpose, though. It is designed to restrict immediate unintentional access and is not intended to be left unattended. With it, naturally curious kids, ill-mannered workmen or house cleaners will not be able to access your handgun.

THE POCKET CORNER

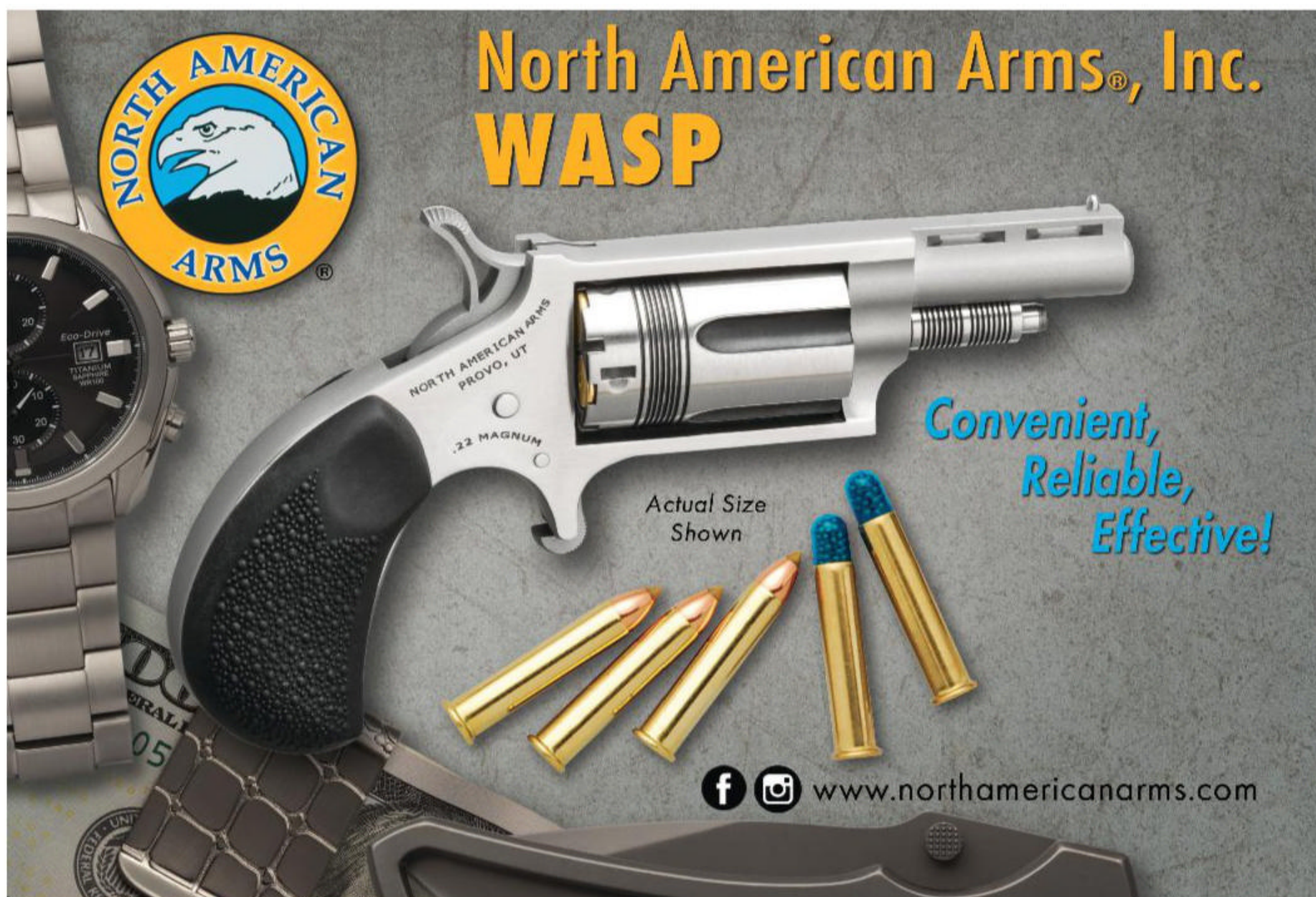
 Many folks like to carry a small semi-auto in their pocket, either as a back-up to their primary gun or as a solo gun in a low-threat environment. DeSantis has a great holster for back pocket carry! Called the Pocket Shot, it breaks up the outline of the pistol and disguises it as a wallet. Not to be confused with the wallet holsters ATF banned a number of years ago, the Pocket Shot is completely legal except in California and does not



cover the slide of the gun. Constructed from premium leather, which sandwiches a block of rigid foam, the Pocket Shot envelops the grip of the pistol with a cut out to allow access to the trigger. There's also a

circular hole under the trigger window that the user's third finger will slide into to remove the gun and holster from the pocket.

DeSantis makes the Pocket Shot for many subcompact .32 and .380s. One of the holsters they sent me fits my Kahr P380 and Springfield Armory 911 .380, while another holster fits my 9mm Kimber Solo and Kahr PM9. Visit the DeSantis website to see if they make a holster for your favorite pocket gun. (desantisholster.com)




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Effective!*

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www.northamericanarms.com

NEW MIGHTY MUFFS

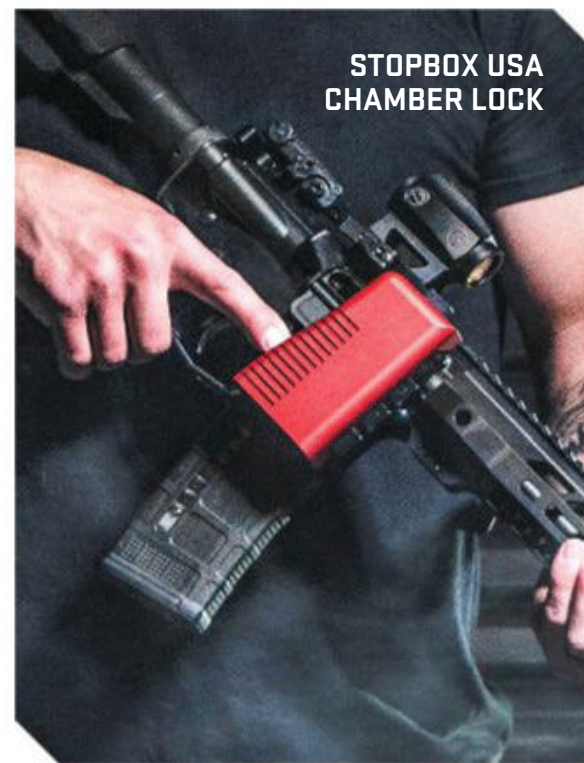
 I recently attended an event at Gunsite and was given a set of electronic hearing muffs. Champion's new Vanquish Pro Elite hearing protection is not only very comfortable to wear—I wore mine for more than a couple hours at a time on the range—but also uses compression technology to reduce any sound over 85db to a safe level. The muffs also use multi-directional microphones to pick up all sounds and amplify them. Range commands and conversations are sharp, crisp and easy to hear, which is a real plus for someone like me whose hearing has been adversely affected by a lifetime of shooting.

The Vanquish Pro Elites are also Bluetooth compatible so you can use your smartphone without removing your hearing protection or listen to your playlist while shooting. The headphones use rechargeable lithium

batteries, and I used my phone charger in my car to recharge the batteries while driving home from the range. Fully charged, the Pro Elites will give you 12-plus hours of run time!

Ed Head, a retired Border Patrol officer and longtime Gunsite instructor, is an advocate of leaving a set of electronic hearing muffs on your nightstand, especially if you use a carbine for home protection. Not only will the


Vanquish Pro Elites amplify any sounds (up to 6x), you'll also be able to contact 911 with your headphones in place and have the protection of their noise-canceling ability should you need to fire. The benefits of using electronic hearing protection for home defense are too numerous to ignore and my Champion Vanquish Pro Elites now reside on my nightstand when I'm not on the range. (championtarget.com)



STOPBOX USA
CHAMBER LOCK

Its interior dimensions, 8.75-by-5.75-by-1.5 inches, will accommodate most service size semi-autos. I was able to fit my custom stainless 1911, outfitted with a light/laser, along with an extra magazine in the StopBox. I was also able to fit my S&W "N" frame Model 25 with a 4-inch barrel in the StopBox, but just barely. Other revolvers, like my Colt 2.5-inch Python and S&W M19 with a 4-inch barrel were easy fits. There's an optional Snapsafe Lockbox coated steel cable available to anchor your StopBox in your vehicle or hotel room.

StopBox USA also offers an AR-15 Chamber Lock utilizing the same technology as the Stop Box. Machined from 6061 T6 aluminum and hard anodized, the patent-pending Chamber Lock features the rapid access finger code lock and is compatible with all 5.56/.223 AR-15s. Like the Stop Box, it doesn't use any electronics or batteries. The Chamber Lock installs instantly and can be removed just as quickly. With the number of people using AR-15s for home defense these days, including me, the Chamber Lock should prove to be extremely popular!

StopBox is a family-owned business with products proudly made in the USA. They are so sure that you'll be happy with your StopBox and/or Chamber Lock that they offer a 30-day, risk-free trial period or return for full refund. (stopboxusa.com) 

You're a sitting duck



in a gun-free zone

Public safety is a critical part of the education campaigns of the Second Amendment Foundation, and with good reason. Without a self-defense option, we are all at greater risk.

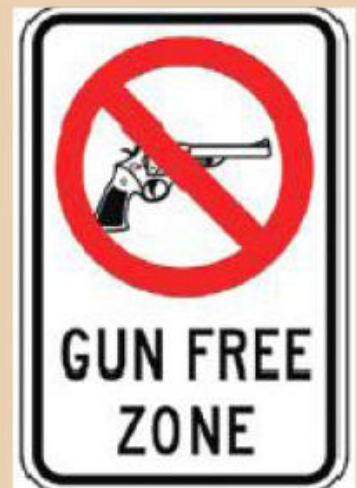
The facts support our concerns about gun-free zones. The Crime Prevention Research Center (CPRC) recently finished updating a list of mass public shootings worldwide.

FACT: Over the course of 18 years, 1998 to 2015, the CPRC found 2,354 attacks and at least 4,880 shooters outside the U.S. and 53 attacks and 57 shooters within this country. The study found the U.S. makes up 1.49 percent of the murders worldwide, 2.20 percent of the attacks, and less than 1.15 percent of the mass public shooters.

FACT: Most gunmen are smart enough to know that they can kill more people if they attack places where victims can't defend themselves; 98 percent of mass public shootings since 1950 have occurred in places where citizens are banned from having guns. In Europe, every mass public shooting in history has occurred in a gun-free zone. And Europe is no stranger to mass public shootings. In the past eight years, it has experienced a per-capita casualty rate 50 percent higher than that of the U.S.

FACT: The U.S. is a relatively safe place from these shooting attacks precisely because so many attacks are thwarted by legally armed good Samaritans.

FACT: The evidence shows that gun-free zones are not the answer. Truth is, they are an added danger because they prevent legally armed citizens from defending themselves and their neighbors. It's time to get rid of gun-free zones. The U.S. has tried them for more than 20 years and evidence shows that gun-free zones actually increase the danger. Nobody wants to be a sitting duck in a maniac's shooting gallery.



The Second Amendment Foundation
12500 NE Tenth Place • Bellevue, WA 98005 • 425-454-7012
www.saf.org

Helluva Helluva

**SPRINGFIELD'S
EDC MICRO
CHANGES IT STRIPES,
AND WE PUT IT
THROUGH ITS PACES**

—| By Richard Johnson |—



Language changes to reflect the culture. Whereas a spiteful woman may have been derided as a hellcat in decades past, the term is transformed in modern society to mean power and performance. Just as Dodge embraced the term for its tire-smoking 717-horsepower Challenger, so has Springfield Armory for its own supercharged micro-pistol.

Few people would dare go up against a driver behind the wheel of a Hellcat. Likewise, few would knowingly challenge anyone carrying a Hellcat. In both cases, the competition is likely to get smoked.

I wanted to see what the new Springfield pistol was all about. I picked up a Hellcat OSP with the FDE finish. To make it the complete high-performance package, I tested it with the new Swampfox Sentinel red-dot sight and the Covert OWB holster from Crucial Concealment. I have to say this gun is the real deal.

PETTING THE CAT

Springfield Armory bills the Hellcat as “the world’s highest capacity micro-compact.” Flush-fitting magazines pack in 11 rounds of 9mm ammunition, edging out the nearest competitor with a 10-percent capacity increase. Even more interesting is the firepower-to-size ratio when compared to similarly sized single-stack pistols.

Consider the comparably sized Smith & Wesson Shield loads seven rounds into a flush-fitting mag, while the Glock 43 only manages six. While the Hellcat magazines are wider than single-stack feeders, the gun’s external width isn’t much—if any—thicker. Perhaps Springfield Armory discovered a way to borrow dimensionally transcendental technology from Dr. Who’s TARDIS—think, bigger on the inside.

Regardless of the pseudo-physics explanations for magazine capacity, the pistol remains thin. Officially, the grip is only 1 inch wide. The slide is even thinner: only 0.85 inches by my mea-



→ The engineers at Springfield Armory should be commended for packing so many excellent fighting features into such a compact handgun, including 11+1 and 13+1 magazine capacity.

surement. Though those measurements sound like they belong to a single-stack pistol, the Hellcat presents a relatively wide backstrap to the hand. It fills the hand for, in my opinion, an improved feel. If you suspect this would take some of the bite out of the gun's recoil, multiple trips to the range proved it to be true.

WINNING THE FIGHT

Having extra rounds on tap is similar to having a wealth of ponies under the hood: It sounds good but matters little if you can't use them. For a sports car, you have to get the car to hook and launch to use those horses. Along the same lines, Springfield Armory knows ammo is wasted if it isn't on target. As a result, the Hellcat was designed with winning gunfights in mind.

Micro-compact guns often suffer from miniature sights that are too small to see under stress. Some of them have slick grips that can wiggle around in your hands. Still others have tiny, nearly inaccessible controls.

Not the Hellcat. This gun is intended to win defensive lethal-force encounters.

In contrast to many of the other micro-compact handguns, the Hellcat is fitted with true combat sights, an adaptive grip texture and usable controls. Further, the pistols have accessory rails compatible with many light and laser units on the market. The OSP versions of the Hellcat are fitted with a factory slide cut for a red-dot sight.

In combat, the human body kicks into an alarm response that alters your vision, strength and other characteristics to help you fight or escape danger. In these circumstances, standard pistol sights can be hard to use. I've found that a brightly colored, large front sight combined with training creates the most likely circumstance where you will see the front sight under stress.

Springfield Armory uses a full-sized front sight that combines a tritium vial with a prominent photoluminescent ring. This combination provides a bright aiming point across a broad spectrum of ambient light levels. Plus, the yellow-green color contrasts well against many different targets.

“In contrast to many of the other micro-compact handguns, the Hellcat is fitted with true combat sights, an adaptive grip texture and usable controls.”



The Hellcat has a center-mounted trigger for increased protection against unintentional discharges. In addition to the Adaptive Grip Texture, the included pinky extension for the Hellcat's flush-fitting magazine helps improve the shooter's control of the gun when firing.

SPEC BOX

SPRINGFIELD HELLCAT OSP

CALIBER:	9mm
BARREL:	3 inches
OA LENGTH:	6 inches
WEIGHT:	17.9 oz
GRIPS:	Integral polymer
SIGHTS:	Tritium front, U-notch rear
ACTION:	Striker-fired
FINISH:	FDE
CAPACITY:	11+1, 13+1
MSRP:	\$643

For a rear sight, the Hellcat has a wide and deep U-notch with a simple white outline. The large notch allows you to quickly find the front sight while not distracting from your front sight focus. Furthermore, the leading edge of the rear sight is flat. Called a Tactical Rack sight,

the hard edge allows you to manipulate the slide with only one hand.

RANGE TIME

Eager to hit the range with the pistol, I took the Hellcat out for a few hours of getting acquainted time. I was pleased at how the gun felt very natural in my hand. It did not feel like a typical micro-compact. During recoil, it locked into my hand and the muzzle rise seemed less than some .380 pistols.

The undercut triggerguard allowed me to get a high grip on the pistol, while the pinky extension on the flush-fitting magazine gave me a full hold. Combined with the wide backstrap and adaptive grip texture, the Hellcat spit fire but was tame in my hands.

The factory sights were fantastic to use: quick to find and fast to align. They got shots on target as quickly as any full-size handgun. Likewise, magazine changes were swift. A slight bevel to

HELLUVA HELLCAT

the magazine well guided them home nearly as easily as I could swap mags on a duty pistol.

Even though the pistol ran hard and fast in factory trim, I wanted to see what it could do with a red-dot sight. Enter the Sentinel.

SWAMPFOX SENTINEL

No matter how good the sights are, a red-dot sight offers benefits that include the ability to focus on the threat instead of the front sight post for accurate shots. We've seen what a revolution reflex sights have had in the rifle market. I believe we are now seeing the same kind of shift for handguns.

Ready for the pistol optics pivot, Springfield Armory cuts the OSP slides to fit RMSc-sized optics. There are a small but growing number of reflex sights that use the RMSc footprint. Possibly the best one at the time of this writing is the Swampfox Sentinel.

The Sentinel matches the Hellcat perfectly. Both are duty-grade and built for a lifetime of use. Housed in a CNC-machined 7075-T6 body, the waterproof sight uses a multi-coated glass lens that resists water, fogging and scratching. Call me old-fashioned, but I prefer the rugged aluminum and clarity of glass offered by the Sentinel as compared to other optics that use polymer for the bodies and lenses.

Swampfox offers two versions of the Sentinel: one is a manually adjustable sight, while the second is a constant-on sight that automatically adjusts brightness based on ambient light. I tested the automatic version of the sight and was impressed right out of the box. It seemed as durable as the specs suggested yet was impressively lightweight at about 0.6 ounces.

The Sentinel mounts directly to the slide without the need for an adaptor plate. It is low-profile enough that you can still use the factory sights should the optic ever fail.



PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Liberty Civil Defense 50 JHP +P	1,863	1.92
Sig Sauer V-Crown 147 JHP	962	1.58
Speer Gold Dot 124 JHP	1,053	2.02

Bullets measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 7 yards off-hand.

Accuracy of the Hellcat was very good for a micro-compact pistol. Five-shot groups of 2 inches or less were readily achievable when shooting off-hand from 7 yards, way more than adequate for a small self-defense pistol.



→ With the Swampfox Sentinel red-dot sight mounted, the overall package is not much larger or heavier than without the optic.

← The Crucial Concealment Covert OWB Holster was a perfect fit for the Hellcat. It concealed easily under an untucked shirt or jacket.

I made a second trip to the range as soon as I installed the Sentinel. I was not disappointed. To start with, the Sentinel performed exactly the way it was advertised. The dot was always on and adjusted near-instantaneously to the changing ambient light. It was never so bright that it created visual artifacts, and it was always bright enough to clearly see on the target.

Dialing in the sight was straightforward. Once I had it where I wanted, it did not shift it through 500 rounds of fire.

I find that I am a more precise shooter when using the Hellcat's iron sights. However, I am not training with the Hellcat for a shooting competition. This gun is intended for more serious work, and with the Sentinel in place, I get fast and consistent shot placement on the target. When getting fast hits counts, the Hellcat with a Sentinel red-dot sight gets the job done.

CONCEALED CARRY

Now that I had an idea of how the gun would handle, I spent some time carry-

ing the pistol in a Crucial Concealment Covert OWB rig. The company molds the Kydex shell with a curve to hug the side of your body. Then, the company mates it with flexible polymer belt loops that allow your belt to really snug it into your side for maximum concealability. The result is an outside-the-waistband (OWB) rig that conceals more like an inside-the-waistband (IWB) holster.

Two screws hold each belt loop in place. If you remove the screws, you can adjust the holster for a forward, rear or neutral cant. Additionally, you can adjust the ride height if you select the straight-up draw. A screw forward of the triggerguard adjusts the friction retention of the holster.

I prefer to carry IWB for the concealment qualities. However, I found the Crucial Concealment Covert offered the same level of concealment but with an increased comfort level.

Further, retention was spot on as delivered. The Hellcat locked into place and offered enough resistance that it would not fall out even when I turned it upside down and shook it vigorously. This was

my first experience with Crucial Concealment's work, and it will not be my last.

THE FINISH LINE

The high-performance Hellcat makes for a great defensive pistol. It offers a lot of firepower in a small, but controllable package. Its use of real combat sights enhances its purpose, while the option

for adding a red-dot sight will make a lot of people happy.

Is it the best defensive pistol on the market today? That's for you to decide. As with any personal protection pistol, you need to spend some time with it to see if it will work for you. As for mine, I happily purchased this gun and added it to my stable of working guns. ☑

FOR MORE INFORMATION

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY
springfield-armory.com

SWAMPFOX OPTICS
swampfoxoptics.com

CRUCIAL CONCEALMENT
crucialconcealment.com



BOON KNOWS BATTLE

LEARNING SHOOTING SKILLS FROM A
TOP-TIER AMERICAN HERO OF BENGHAZI

— By Andre' M. Dall'au —



BOON KNOWS BATTLE

The effective use of a firearm requires skill. For any sport or endeavor a skill is a learned strength bettered with practice, after proper instruction, followed by mentored repetitions. Since good instruction can only be obtained from a superior teacher, the best way to obtain useful firearm training is to have a qualified and experienced instructor who can pass on complex and dynamic concepts. That is achieved by providing students with effective drills and practice, and can build confidence to motivate them to be competent, safe and accurate shooters. This was recently demonstrated at a pistol fundamentals skill-building course at the American Police Hall of Fame under a cadre of experienced instructors headed by Dave “Boon” Benton.

“Boon” was a trained, qualified firearm and tactical trainer long before the events in Benghazi, Libya, where he and a team of operators successfully fought off determined assaults by terrorists on a Libyan CIA annex. The attackers had been emboldened by their successful overrunning of the ambassadorial compound, which resulted in the death of the

American Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and Communications Specialist Sean Smith. It ended with Boon and the annex operators rescuing five State Department agents. The events of that powerful series of firefights were retold in the book, and later movie, *13 Hours*, where Boon was (very accurately) portrayed by actor David Denman.

Boon is now considered one of the best firearm instructors in the nation, sharing proven and combat-tested curricula with those who want to take

their self-defense abilities to the next level and even beyond in a time where American shooters have been housebound and sidelined for months. The pistol fundamentals skill-building class is one of many firearm and tactical classes Boon hosts.

DOWN TO BOON BUSINESS

The class started with a discussion of the seven basic skills. Boon piggy-backed on his experience, saying, “There is no secret to good shooting, it

“
Firearms training is not a goal but a mindset and journey.
”





is just the higher-level application of the seven basic fundamentals." He continued, "You cannot bypass them, but there are certain things that affect the fundamentals, and if you apply them, you will get your desired results. However, the degree that a shooter focuses on each individual skill is dependent on the size of the target, how far the target is and how fast you need to break the shot."

Boon and his fellow instructors then discussed how each shooter can understand and correct errors with fundamentals such as stance, trigger control and sight picture based on the variables mentioned. The engaged students took notes and responded to questions by Boon as he enlightened them with thought-provoking and sensible information offered to make them better pistol shooters.

The students ranged from SWAT-qualified LEOs to first-time shooters, from men and women and young to old, each student needed—and got—special attention to his or her needs and gear. Coming from Anniston, Alabama, to take the class was police officer Angela Travis and Calhoun County Investigator Jimmy Woodard. Both are SWAT-qualified police snipers and have been well-trained in firearms with a couple decades of police experience between them.

Angela used a Glock 45 Gen5 MOS with a Trijicon SRO red-dot sight co-witnessed with tall Dawson Precision sights built by South Florida's best gunsmith, Russel Simpson of AWA. The G45 flawlessly digested hundreds of 9mm rounds including Black Hills Full Metal Jacket 115-grain (1,250 fps and 399 ft-lbs) and the aggressive HoneyBadger 100-grain (1,250 fps and 347 ft-lbs). Jimmy went old-school and used a Nighthawk-customized Browning Hi-Power with a stippled frame and slide, and a gold bead front sight. Both Jimmy and Angela left with lots of useful takeaways and a higher level of ability.

STUDENT TAKEAWAYS

"I picked up a lot from the class," Angela said. "Boon elaborated on the seven fundamentals of shooting in a way that

BOON KNOWS BATTLE

has never been explained to me before how each is essential to shooting more efficiently." She continued, "He stressed on evaluating the distance and size of the target and the time you have to react, which really impressed me because it really put into perspective the things I need to focus on to better my shooting. I learned a lot from what was said and the shooting we did!" Jimmy added, "As an experienced instructor myself, the class showed me that focusing on the basics is the best thing to do, and it was a tremendous experience having the instructors that were present provide coaching while we were shooting."

The youngest in the class was William H., not yet halfway into his teens, who was a brand-new shooter and was starting off right by getting the best training possible. He and his mom, also taking the class, absorbed all the nuggets of information passed on by Boon and the other experienced instructors, as well as the instant feedback on the firing line as the instructors helped them adjust their grips, stances, balance and trigger control as they shot. This was William's second class with Boon and both have provided good teachable moments. One was discussed by William.

"The drill where we load just one bullet in the chamber so you fire one shot and then the next one is just a 'click,' made me realize just how much I was flinching and I was able to correct that by the end of the day," he said. Overall, William summed up his experience by saying, "The class was amazing. The instructors and everybody who was there were just the best people possible. I will be back."

BOON TO THE FUTURE

Boon is already moving into the future, looking ahead to offer more training, more information and more weapons and equipment selected by him for their operational usefulness and quality. Starting with his time as a Marine, Boon realized that effective training was the key to success and that firearm proficiency is perishable and requires practice and refreshment. He has made it his primary legacy to help others improve



“BOON” BENTON BACKSTORY



➔ Boon is from a family who has a history of wearing the uniforms of the United States, with his father, uncles and brother serving in the U.S. Navy, Army and, as Boon, the United States Marine Corps. Sergeant Benton was a scout sniper on a Maritime Special Purpose Force that was tasked with direct-action assaults and hostage rescues, as well as serving as a Marine Corps-trained instructor in several dynamic tactical skill sets. After that, Boon served as a SWAT team member, then post-9/11, he worked as a Global Response Staff contract operator for the State Department, ultimately

serving in hotspots all over the world including as part of the GRS team in Libya. He was stationed in the covert CIA annex a short distance from the basically indefensible and inadequately resourced special mission compound that was the temporary resident outpost for the ambassador and other visiting State Department officials.

Boon and the other GRS operators' mission was to provide protection for the various people and activities that the CIA and State Department personnel at the annex required, from providing executive protection to active defense of the facility. During the Benghazi attack

on Sept. 11, 2012, Boon participated in saving the lives of all but two occupants of the special mission compound and the successful defense of the CIA annex, and ended with the evacuation of Americans Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty, who gave their lives there.

After continuing a full career that had even more—but less publicized—kinetic events, Boon left contracting for the ability to pass on his skills to American defenders and shooters. For more information, or to view the classes by Boon or other instructors, visit shootingclasses.com/threat-management-solutions.

their skills one class, one correction and one student at a time.

As Boon said to me, “Firearms training is not a goal but a mindset and journey.” I have talked to shooters who have taken the same training classes over and over and have learned something every time while consistently improving their ability and confidence. As one of the instructors concluded, “Skill building is like putting change in a jar, little by little the steady increase creates great value.”

Boon and many other tactical and firearm instructors can help shooters add to the value of their abilities to shoot and defend themselves, and make their time at the range even more valuable because practice does not make perfect, only perfect practice makes perfect. That can only be achieved by training, and lots of it. For more information on upcoming classes from Boon and many other instructors, visit shootingclasses.com. **CH**



10mm REVOLVER COMEBACK

THE RETURN OF SMITH & WESSON'S
ICONIC MODEL 610

BY DAVID BAHDE



Starting my law enforcement career with a double-action revolver provided a certain appreciation for these simple machines. Serving law enforcement for well over 100 years, revolvers remain useful to this day. Both my Colt Python and Smith & Wesson Model 686 served me well. While semi-autos have come a long way since, they were anything but proven in the 1980s. Offering little outside capacity and weight, they were less accurate and not particularly reliable. Modern self-defense ammunition for the 9mm was not quite perfected so it seemed a rather anemic replacement for the venerable .357 Magnum. Over time I have warmed up to some of the combat plastics, but still carry a revolver on occasion. For much of my career, Colt's Delta Elite 1911 chambered in 10mm was my weapon of choice.

The 10mm was reasonably versatile 20 years ago—nothing like today—but it offered some tangible improvements over the .40 S&W we were issued. Loading the same 180-grain Gold Dot at 1,250 fps turned that bullet into a laser through the obstacles I encountered on the job. Recoil differed little with the Delta, even less with a Glock G20, but you could drop in a .40 S&W barrel if needed. It was more costly to shoot in 10mm for sure, but for defense or duty it was about perfect. It just needed the ability to load lighter, or heavier, 10mm ammo. And while that improved over time in semi-autos, it was perfected with the introduction of the Model 610 from Smith & Wesson in 1992, and more importantly its re-introduction in 1998.

By the 2000s, I was heavily involved in the SWAT team, a firearms instructor for both it and the rest of the department, and a pretty avid USPSA/IPSC competitor. A bit nostalgic for my revolver days, it was time to jump into the revolver class. My limited pistol was chambered in .40 S&W making the 610 perfect. My comp loads were soft shooting in the 2011 and more so in the 610; both made major. It was some of the most fun I ever had competing with a handgun.

“Revolvers tend to be inherently accurate with no slide to move or barrel to unlock. Keep it on target and that’s where it goes.”

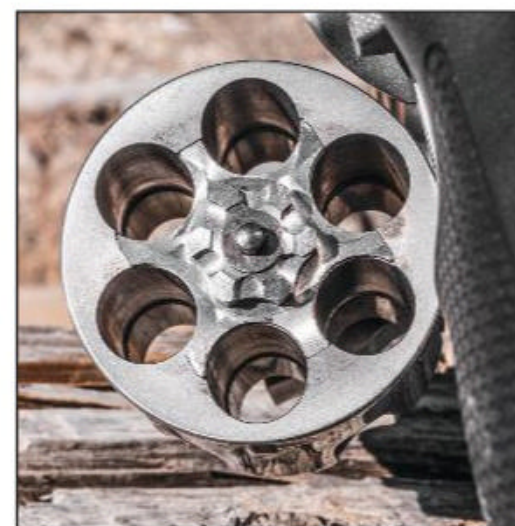
About that same time, Mike McNett from DoubleTap Ammunition wandered into the gun store I was working at. We were the first retail store to offer his ammunition, mostly 10mm, and it added even more versatility. While he offered more traditional 10mm loads in the 180-grain range, he also offered fast loads in 135 to 155 grains and a super-stout hard-cast load for hunting. Some were less than suitable for the Delta, but they all ran like a charm in the model 610 and provided incredible versatility. Home defense, duty, target shooting, action pistol comps and hunting, including some larger game, all were possible with the same pistol. Over time, a couple of 610s were owned and passed on. When it was time to reinvest, the cost was so high it was just not possible, making its reintroduction in 2019 very interesting to me.

THE 2019 MODEL

Much like its predecessor in 1998, the new 610 is offered in both a 4-inch and 6.5-inch barrel. Built on the N-Frame, it is stainless steel, holds six rounds, and is capable of shooting both 10mm and .40 S&W using moon clips. It will chamber 10mm without the clips, it just won’t link up to the extractor. The front sight is an interchangeable pinned blade, while the rear is an adjustable white-outlined square notch.

Both barrels are fully “lugged” and the cylinder is fluted, not solid. The trigger is factory Smith & Wesson with a checkered, wide hammer, checkered cylinder release and the much maligned “revolver lock.” Grips are rubber S&W and cover the backstrap with no finger grooves. It ships in the typical blue hard





↑ You can load singles in 10mm if needed, but moon clips are the norm. Fast and easy to load, they are great for both carry and competition.

case with three moon clips. My test revolver had a 4-inch barrel.

HOLSTERING

On my way to teach during a revolver and lever-action media event at Gunsite Academy, I took the 610 along for some testing. While there, I had the pleasure

SPEC BOX

S&W MODEL 610 REVOLVER

CALIBER:	10mm
BARREL:	4 inches
OA LENGTH:	9.5 inches
WEIGHT:	50.1 ounces (empty)
GRIPS:	Synthetic
SIGHTS:	White outline rear, black blade front
ACTION:	DA/SA
FINISH:	Stainless
CAPACITY:	6
MSRP:	\$969

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Buffalo Bore 220 HC	1,270	1.75
DoubleTap 135 Bonded	1,600	1.40
DoubleTap 155 Barnes	1,500	1.50
DoubleTap 200 HC	1,300	1.60
Hornady 175 Critical Duty	1,200	1.40
Sig Sauer 180 VC JHP	1,300	1.40
Speer 180 Gold Dot	1,100	1.25

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in feet per second and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups from 25 yards.

of meeting Doc Barranti of Barranti Leather. His leather is top notch, built by hand and visually impressive. He offers a legacy line using the S.D Meyers patterns. S.D Meyers started in the late 19th century as a saddle and leather company. Along with some of the finest saddles ever made, the company's gun leather was some of the first used by law enforcement. It was also popular amongst the western movie stars during the heyday of the movie western.

Barranti's versions are true to design using the original Meyers sheet-copper patterns. Lucky for me, he brought a dark brown Threepersons with the Gunsite logo that even had an old-fashioned hammer loop. Many consider this the first modern holster designed for law enforcement. Built around a Tom Threepersons design in the 1920s, it has an exposed triggerguard for a fast draw—yep, they wanted access to that trigger. It was made in a number of configurations with varying retention straps and was the basis for the first FBI holster.

RANGE TIME

Revolvers tend to be inherently accurate with no slide to move or barrel to unlock. Keep it on target and that's where it goes. Using .40 caliber I have put 10 rounds inside an inch at 25 yards with ease using a rest of some sort. Hitting 12-inch steel at 300 yards with flat-shooting rounds from DoubleTap or Buffalo Bore is also pretty easy, you just need to figure out where to hold. Hitting dead center on a silhouette at 100 yards from off hand is more than doable. My best group in 10mm was pro-

duced using Speer 200-Grain Gold Dot at about 1.5 inches with four of five clustered closer to an inch. Making 1,100 fps, it's slow for caliber but incredibly accurate and easy to shoot. Everything fell under 2 inches, even the stout 200- to 230-grain hard-casts at this range. Like most full-size revolvers it is about as accurate as a handgun can get—how accurate is more about you than the revolver.

Running the stout loads you get recoil—no surprise here. It's part of the equation and why you carry a revolver. With 10mm you are somewhere between



.357 Magnum and .41 Magnum, and noticeably less than stout .44 Magnum in the same N-Frame Smith & Wesson. Move to light loads like the DoubleTap 155-grain Bonded Defense and recoil is very manageable, allowing for solid hammers and controlled pairs. Running their 135-grain 1,600 fps load is almost soft shooting, about like a 180-grain .40 S&W. For competition you can load 180-grain well under 1,000 fps and make major with almost no recoil. Run 165s a bit faster and it's even better. Lots of choices are part of the draw of the caliber.

Moon clips are fast, and generally more so with the .40-caliber loads. Tons of support for clips remain and since it headspaces on the cylinder, you can run 10mm without the moon clips, you just don't have a rim for the extractor to pick up. Blade Tech and Sidearmor both make excellent Kydex competition holsters—most any six-shot N-Frame moon clip holder will work—and my Simply Rugged speed loader pouches held two loaded moon clips each.

The Barranti holster was fast, it just does not meet today's liability conscious standards for safety with its exposed triggerguard and looped hammer strap. Still, it sure was fun to run a revolver like they did in the early 20th century. It was a different time; one need



The hammer is easy to access without snagging. Standard sights included an adjustable rear and blade front.

only look closely at a Fitz special to see how different. Regardless of its simple design, it held the revolver solidly under running and gunning, and was incredibly comfortable. Besides, Kydex is just flat out boring sometimes, and shooting guns is supposed to be fun!

As expected, the real strength is the versatility of the 10mm round. Use 135- to 155-grain expanding bullets and you have a controllable defense weapon with excellent terminal ballistics in most any urban environment. For more penetration, the 180- to 200-grain bonded defense bullets work well through glass and other barriers. Those self-defense bullets work just as well for hunting small game, and for larger critters the hard-cast are excellent. Hunters specializing in the 10mm have taken Cape Buffalo with the 200- to

FOR MORE INFORMATION

SMITH & WESSON
smith-wesson.com


BARRANTI LEAHTER
barrantileather.com

DOUBLETAP AMMO
doubletapammo.com

230-grain hard-cast bullets from DoubleTap, so it is very capable. For a revolver as a backup to your long gun in the backcountry, this will do the job nicely.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Most, if not all, accessories for the N-Frame will work with this revolver, including grips. Dress it up with fancy wood,

finger grooves, even various natural materials. Rubber is fine for many, with several choices out there that cover the backstrap, use finger grooves and the like. Holsters are all but prolific in leather, meeting any and all needs, and a few Kydex versions are out there as well. Yep, it's a wheelgun, but for some of us that's not a problem. If that's you, then take a look at the Model 610. It might be just the ticket! 

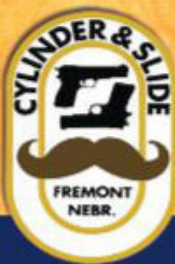
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WAILING 10

CMMG'S BANSHEE FEATURES A REVOLUTIONARY RADIAL-DELAYED BLOWBACK OPERATING SYSTEM

BY GRAHAM BAATES

 Pistol-caliber carbines and their shorter-barreled kin have taken the gun industry by storm. They are less expensive to feed, can be used where a rifle cartridge is a bad idea and are lots of fun to shoot. A drawback has been that the classic blowback operating system can make a 9mm round exhibit more recoil than 5.56x45mm. Additionally, there is a physical limit to what cartridge can safely be fired from a blowback system. CMMG broke both

of these norms with the creation of an entirely new operating system, the Radial Delayed Blowback (RDB).

CMMG DIFFERENCE

Before confusion sets in, we need to clarify that CMMG's Banshee line is not just another AR-platform, blowback-operated personal-defense weapon. The receivers are indeed AR-patterned, but the operating system is something

completely unique to CMMG and makes the Banshee line shoot more like the silky-smooth MP-5 than the classic Colt 9mm SMG. The trick is the entirely new RDB operating system. Oh, and yes, it takes Glock magazines.

What looks like a slightly modified AR-15 bolt and carrier is actually a work of genius. Unlike traditional blowback guns, the Banshee's bolt locks in a similar manner to what you've come to expect from an AR. In contrast, traditional blowback systems rely on the mass of the bolt and a heavy buffer spring to keep everything contained until pressures have dropped to a low enough level for the action to safely open. While traditional blowback is cheaper to manufacture and thus less expensive for the consumer, it also results in a heavier gun with heavier recoil that can be more difficult to charge and more ammunition sensitive.

We parallel the Banshee to the MP-5 because they are both delayed-blowback operated, where cycling of the action is delayed mechanically instead of physically with mass. The Banshee exhibits a lighter bolt carrier and lighter recoil spring, less perceived recoil and less sensitivity to ammunition type. This makes the Banshee more akin to an MP-5 than a regular blowback AR platform. It also means the Banshee can safely handle higher pressure calibers than we'd normally volunteer our shoulder for with traditional blowback. This was proven when CMMG announced that the .45 ACP version could handle .450 S&W. The .45 ACP is generally around a 21,000 psi load, .45 ACP +P reaches 23,000 psi and .45 S&W can produce a whopping 32,000 psi. Firearm enthusiasts begged, "Please push the envelope and bring us 10mm." At 37,500 psi, it seemed only logical that CMMG could do it, and they did.

10MM DEPOT

The 10mm is one of those rounds that stands tall in its brass polished with lore. A gun breaker, only for real men, can be used for bear hunting and plenty of other one-liners are based partially on fact, partially on range talk. Created by the legendary Jeff Cooper, it was to be the round to solve the limitations of semi-auto pistols. Flatter-shooting than .45 ACP and delivering much more energy than 9mm, 10mm was created to put magnum-level



← This is not your average direct blowback action. The bolt locks into a barrel extension much like an AR would. Specially designed cuts on the bolt's locking lugs provide enough resistance to delay opening. The result is a gun that can shoot more powerful loads with the added benefit of reduced recoil.

power into a semi-auto pistol. Since its 1983 introduction, the round has had moments of popularity and moments of obscurity. Cost per round, higher recoil and some instances of increased wear on firearms has prevented 10mm from gaining much popularity until recently. Some ammunition manufacturers have also been loading 10mm to lower pressures to make shooting more pleasant, but that, of course, also comes at the expense of muzzle energy. The Banshee puts 10mm into a package that not only is more comfortable to shoot than a pistol, but also affords a longer barrel for more velocity and more energy. Has CMMG enabled us to finally take advantage of 10mm?

To find out, we gathered a wide variety of 13 different 10mm loads from Armscor, DoubleTap, Freedom Munitions, Hornady, Nosler and Speer. Projectile weights ranged from 155 grains to 200 grains and we chronographed the loads through a 4.25-inch Grand Power P40, 6-inch Rock Island 1911 and the 8-inch Banshee. The results were surprising. There was an increase in energy with the longer barrel, but not as much as expected. It would seem that unlike 9mm, which has been used as a submachine gun round for decades, 10mm simply



← CMMG's patented RDB action (left). Muzzle brakes on PCCs were once considered trivial, but the CMMG SV brake (below) has proven effective.



hasn't been loaded to take advantage of longer barrels. The only load that proved to have any significant gain in the Banshee was Hornady's Custom XTP 155-grain with a 15 percent gain over a 6-inch 1911 and impressive 39 percent gain over a 4.25-inch Grand Power. The biggest difference however was not one a chart can show: shooter experience.

Shooter comfort is greatly enhanced with the CMMG Banshee. Of course, a braced AR-platform pistol is easier to hold and provides more surface area to dissipate recoil, but more importantly the Banshee's RDB operating system makes 10mm recoil soft enough to encourage a second shot or 30th shot, and all with the controllability and ergonomics of the AR. Not only are we able to get more energy out of the cartridge, we're able to spend more time shooting it and actually enjoying that time.

RANGE TIME

Fair warning to anyone who brings a 10mm Banshee to the range: Pack all the ammo you think you'll need, then add that same amount loaded somewhere else in the car. The Banshee is fun! The target might recognize the potential 878 ft-lbs of energy you're throwing at it, but your shoulder will think you're cheating with down-loaded 9mm. Recoil does not feel 10mm at all, and even feels softer than some similar guns chambered in lesser calibers. Even shooting from a bench for accuracy testing was comfortable as we breezed through grouping 13 different loads (top five loads listed).

Transporting the Banshee to and from the range helped highlight just how

handy this platform is. At just over 2 feet long, the Banshee fit nicely in an Elite Survival Systems Covert Operations Rifle Backpack. This bag was intended for an AR with the receivers separated,



↑ Elite Survival Systems' bag easily fits the scoped Banshee and "fun stick" mag.

SPEC BOX

CMMG BANSHEE 10MM

CALIBER:	10mm
BARREL:	8 inches
OA LENGTH:	24.3 inches (collapsed)
WEIGHT:	5.6 pounds (empty)
BRACE:	CMMG RipBrace
SIGHTS:	None
ACTION:	Semi-auto
FINISH:	Cerakote
CAPACITY:	30+1
MSRP:	\$1,650

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Armscor 180 FMJ	1,173	2.25
Freedom 180 XTP	1,164	2.5
Hornady 175 Critical Duty	1,207	2.54
Nosler 180 JHP	1,305	1.98
Speer 200 Gold Dot	1,139	1.26

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 50 yards.

ON TARGET


but proved long and wide enough to fit a scoped Banshee with the 30-round SGM magazine inserted. Should the need have arisen, a quick pull on the bag would yield 10mm power ready for action.

Accuracy testing was done at 50 yards to be fair to both the pistol and the ammunition. The 10mm was not intended to be a rifle round and, although the bullet will certainly reach 100 yards, external factors would have too much opportunity to wreak havoc on results. An Athlon Optics Argos BTR Gen II 1-8x SFP scope held in place by a Warne XSKEL mount provided the aiming solution. The Argos' reticle offers a semi-horseshoe over a central aiming point with holdovers for windage and range. Most importantly, the Argos BTR Gen II's glass was clear and bright enough for accuracy testing in Oregon weather.

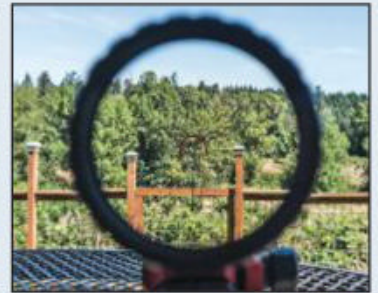
The Banshee didn't appear to be picky about ammunition with only a couple of hiccups experienced with one load, and the best five-groups out of 13 loads tested consisted of five different bullet profiles.

WHY A 10MM?

The Banshee's Radial-Delayed Blowback operating system is revolutionary. It has reduced the recoil of all calibers compared to traditional blowback and the delay in the operation opening also quiets things down. Even with supersonic ammunition, which of course includes 10mm, there is noticeably less pop at the shooter's ear. The significance of having a Banshee in 10mm is that now 10mm can be truly enjoyed. There will be no sore wrists, no sore shoulders; just more energy on your target. In practical application, this makes for an excellent home-defense option. Caliber debates aside, the Banshee has brought 10mm to the mainstream shooter. If you can operate an AR, you can operate a Banshee.

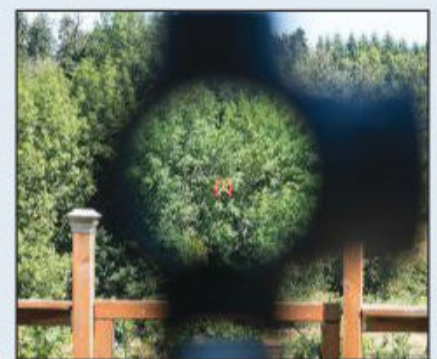
The 10mm as a caliber can be further explored for load development now that a platform exists that not only makes recoil laughable compared to a pistol, but also has the barrel length to stretch out some more velocity. When Cooper first envisioned 10mm as a magnum for semi-autos, he likely had no vision of something like the Banshee. But, it seems that 10mm finally has a suitable home to grow in. Find out more by visiting cmmginc.com. 

The CMMG Banshee 10mm brings us 10mm power beyond what a handgun yields in a compact package that is easy to manage and pleasant to shoot. So what can we do with it? Accuracy with the right loads is more than adequate to take longer shots with 10mm than we might try for with a regular pistol, and that means it's time for an aiming solution. Two options are a low-powered variable optic like the Athlon Optics Argos BTR Gen 2 or a red-dot like the Lucid Optics M7.



ATHLON OPTICS ARGOS BTR GEN 2 1-8X24:

We used this scope for our 50-yard accuracy test and found the glass not only bright enough for Pacific Northwest weather, but also clear enough to see hits on paper. The illuminated reticle highlights a 16.5/19-MOA semi-horseshoe for quick target bracketing and the 1-MOA center aiming point from zero down along a BDC tree. On bright days illumination can be turned up to 11 to satisfy Spinal Tap fans and has off positions in between brightness settings to make for a quick on to a favorite brightness. Maximum brightness does not go high enough to cause color bleed, but may also be difficult to pick up on bright days and low-contrast targets. Fortunately, in those situations the reticle should be easy enough to pick up without illumination. Capped turrets mean your zero won't be bumped in transit or while slung, and the zoom ring turns quickly. The downfall to offering 8 power with a 24mm objective is it means an exit pupil of just 3mm; this translates to limited eye relief and eye box at max power, but chances are if a shot is being taken at max power the shooter will be taking time for a good position anyway. (athlonoptics.com)



RIGHT AT HOME LUCID OPTICS M7

The M7 is a little more than a standard red-dot. Lucid's "M5" reticle has a 4-MOA center dot and 32-MOA semi-circle, but what makes this reticle particularly quick are chevron's pointing like arrows towards the center dot. This pattern has proven particularly effective at driving your eye to the center aiming point while the semi-circle keeps your eye from drifting too far the other way. Combined the reticle's features and optic's larger objective lens make for a quick and accurate aiming device with known size references if you're handy with math. Brightness also harks to Spinal Tap with 11 settings including incredibly low-powered settings that are night-vision compatible. On maximum brightness there is some color bleed, but we have yet to experience a day so bright the reticle wasn't visible. (lucidoptics.com)



CAN I GET A WITNESS?

EAA'S WITNESS ELITE LIMITED CUSTOM IN 10MM IS SOMETHING SPECIAL

BY TODD BURGREN

➔ It is said imitation is the greatest form of flattery. The classic CZ 75 design is a case in point with numerous “clones” in existence. The European American Armory (EAA) imported Tanfoglio Witness model is a prime example of a CZ 75-based handgun, with Tanfoglio’s many different models garnering much attention by pushing the original CZ 75 design to its max, and perhaps even improving upon it. The EAA Witness Elite Limited Custom chambered in 10mm is a perfect example of Tanfoglio’s ability to offer something beyond 9mm.

There is a lot to respect in the CZ 75 design, typified by a steel frame, Browning recoil-operated locked breech, DA/SA trigger with “cocked and locked”

capability (the Witness Elite Limited Custom features a single-action trigger), internal frame rails and high-capacity magazines (14+1 with the 10mm).

STUDENT BECOMES THE MASTER

Tanfoglio handguns started being imported into the United States by EAA in 1999, marketed as the “Witness.” The end of the Cold War combined with rescinding of the ridiculous and misguided U.S. legislation related to high-capacity magazines led to the rebirth/re-emergence of the double-stack magazine handgun.

Tanfoglio has advanced the Witness model to the point where it’s no longer an exact copy of the CZ 75. An exam-

ple of this is the Witness’s trigger with its increased curve and placement farther back in the triggerguard. This often provokes comments that the Witness series is easier to operate and has a better “feel,” even though the frame is larger and the Tanfoglio Witness is slightly, almost imperceptibly, larger than the original CZ design. Tanfoglio made this change in order to accommodate cartridges other than 9mm by only having to change out the slide/barrel to handle the larger .40 S&W, 10mm and .45 ACP cartridges. The EAA Witness Elite Limited Custom chambered in 10mm is visible proof of the soundness of this design tweak.

POWER UPGRADE

Full-power JHP and FMJ 10mm loads from Hornady, Federal and Sig Sauer were tested in the EAA Witness Elite Limited Custom 10mm. Federal Premium 180-grain Trophy Bonded 10mm shows the 10mm potential compared to 9mm and .45 ACP. The Federal load features a 180-grain bullet that leaves the muzzle at 1,275 feet per second and delivers 650 foot-pounds of energy, which puts it roughly between the .357 Mag and .41 Mag. This kind of power offers great flexibility for the user in terms of personal-defense, hunting and other uses.



EAA Witness Elite Limited Custom proved a solid performing weapon—a credit to its design lineage and EAA/Tanfoglio tweaks.



The workmanship, not to mention the color finish, sets the EAA apart from other standard production guns.



The Sig Sauer V-Crown load features a 180-grain JHP bullet. Sig 10mm V-Crown features a low-flash propellant, cannellured shank, V-shaped jacket for controlled, uniform expansion, and nickel cases for enhanced lubricity, superior corrosion resistance, and reliable feeding and extraction.

10mm loads from Hornady consisted of 155-grain XTP and 175-grain FlexLock Critical Duty. These Hornady loads were designed with personal-



1) Do not let the competition aspect of the Limited Custom's intent fool you; the 10mm version is ready for real-world applications. 2) Flared bull barrel on the 10mm Limited Custom is crowned and fitted to lock up tight with the slide. 3) The Witness Elite's slide moves along internal rails machined inside the frame. Proponents point to benefits derived from this such as smoother cycling and finer tolerances, translating into better accuracy potential. Overall workmanship found on the EAA Witness Elite Limited Custom far exceeded its price point, rivaling handguns many times its cost.





(Above) Federal Premium 180-grain Trophy Bonded JSP is a recent addition to the surprisingly healthy 10mm Auto ammunition market. (Left) Accuracy expectation were fully met with the Witness Elite Limited Custom. This is a typical group at 25 yards.

defense in mind. The Critical Duty's FlexLock bullets have a heavy jacket and a harder, high-antimony core designed to defeat barriers. The jackets are locked to the core via the same InterLock process the company uses on its centerfire rifle bullets. Hornady Critical Duty passed all five of the FBI's barrier criteria tests, giving 12 inches plus of ballistic gel penetration no matter if through glass, sheet metal, heavy clothing, drywall or plywood, while still expanding for maximum wound channels.

NEW AGE BREN TEN?

The EAA/Tanfoglio Witness Elite Limited Custom 10mm is a steel-framed, short recoil operated, locked-breech pistol *a la* Browning's system with camming-cut below the barrel. This serves to unlock and lower the barrel during the recoil cycle. The barrel locks into the slide via lugs in front of the ejection port. The slide moves along internal rails machined inside the frame. The SIG 210 was an early design featuring this frame-to-slide interface. Proponents point to benefits derived from this such as smoother cycling and finer tolerances translating into better accuracy potential.

The Elite Limited Custom functions via a single-action-only trigger. The EAA Witness Elite Stock has a 4.75-inch barrel and an overall length of 9 inches. The EAA 10mm weighs 2.56 pounds and comes equipped with adjustable sights. The Witness Elite Limited Custom handgun has a grip design that seems to fit everyone's hand. This, combined with the single-action trigger, creates a handgun that is easy to shoot well. The gun's extended frame safety is placed where anyone familiar with the 1911 can seamlessly adapt to it. The Witness Elite's safety enables you to press check the chamber without taking off the thumb safety. Many thumb safety-style guns require you to take the safety off if you want to pull the slide slightly back. The Witness Elite can also chamber or unload a round while leaving the thumb safety on, making for a safer process.

RANGE TIME

Testing of the EAA Witness Elite Limited Custom was conducted at Echo Valley Training Center (EVTC). The EAA Witness Limited Custom 10mm was tested at the range first by verifying sight zero and then firing several magazines

rapidly at various steel man targets. This quickly shows if any reliability issues exist. Further testing consisted of strings of fire against steel plate racks and steel popper targets at 7, 15 and 25 yards. An informal accuracy test was conducted from a rudimentary bench position. The Limited Custom delivered by constantly keeping a full magazine worth of ammunition at 2.5 inches or better at 25 yards.

The first range session consisted of more than 200 rounds after only lightly

SPEC BOX

EAA WITNESS ELITE LIMITED CUSTOM

CALIBER:	10mm
BARREL:	4.75 inches
OA LENGTH:	9 inches
WEIGHT:	2.56 pounds
GRIPS:	Interchangeable backstraps
SIGHTS:	Adjustable rear target, fiber-optic front
ACTION:	Semi-auto
FINISH:	Tancoat blue
CAPACITY:	14+1
MSRP:	\$1,539

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Federal 180 Trophy	1,280	1.50
Hornady 155 HP XTP	1,385	1.66
Hornady 175 FlexLock Critical Duty	1,168	1.75
Sig Sauer 180 V-Crown	1,295	2.00

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in feet per second and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups from 25 yards.



(Above) The Witness Elite's extended frame safety is placed where anyone familiar with the 1911 will seamlessly adapt to it. The shooter can chamber or unload a round while leaving the thumb safety on, making for a safer process. (Left) A target-style adjustable rear sight is conducive to accurate shot placement. The raised knurled areas below the sight on the side are keenly placed to give the user more purchase when manually operating the slide.

lubricating the EAA Witness Limited Custom. An assortment of bullet configurations were fired from the various ammunition manufacturers mentioned above to verify reliability. The 10mm had some snap but was in no way harsh in the recoil department, even when firing the hottest 10mm loads. Over 550 total rounds were fired through the Limited Custom during multiple range visits without issue.

REAL-WORLD APPLICATIONS

Even though the EAA Witness Elite Limited Custom is more intended as a sporting or competition handgun from the manufacturer's point of view—a Production Division entrant for sure—it is easy to envision it in a more basic role as a personal-defense or hunting gun thanks to its 10mm upgrade in power. The improvements offered by Tanfoglio do not compromise its utility in the "real" world, and it was not difficult to find

holsters for use with the Witness Elite.

The basic CZ 75 design is too well known to attempt any new exposé story, however the EAA Witness Elite Limited Custom tested herein serves as a reminder of why the base design still holds a prominent place in the world. The Witness Elite Limited Custom represents a good balance of features for daily use or competition weapon.


The 10mm was designed specifically as a fighting cartridge and works well in what many feel is the finest service pistol ever created. 10mm chambering in the EAA Witness Elite Limited Custom is a functionally sound combination that still allows a user to indulge oneself by having something not so typical. Find out more at eaacorp.com 



Photo Courtesy of EAA

“10mm chambering in the EAA Witness Elite Limited Custom is a functionally sound combination that still allows a user to indulge oneself by having something not so typical.”



THE NEWEST
KIMBER RAPIDE 1911
SHOOTS EVEN BETTER THAN IT LOOKS

—BY KAREN HUNTER—

.45 ACP

BLACK ICE



The gun community can truly be a place where people come together, help educate one another and build each other up. At the same time, it can also be overly opinionated and unforgiving. This is especially true of “keyboard warriors” who valiantly express their opinions while tucked away safe and sound at home. Lacking true education, this small army has coined slang phrases such as “Fudd” and “Boomer” to describe shooters utilizing firearms and gear that they view as antiquated. One area where people feel the need to “educate” others on what is old and outdated is the 1911 handgun platform, and they go full steam ahead with emotional opinions versus true education and experience.

As a firearm instructor that is heavily immersed in the gun industry, I sometimes hear from people that the 1911 platform is antiquated. Arguments posed range from a low round count to unreliability. While the low round count cannot be disputed, I find it ironic that this would even play a part in the debate, as many strik-

er-fired handguns also have relatively low round counts, and this claim is coming from many shooters who carry micro guns with similar capacities. As far as all 1911s being unreliable, this is simply not the case. There are legitimate reasons that this handgun, designed over 100 years ago, is still highly sought after today, and the 1911 platform is indeed solid. Modern technology is real, and it hasn't let the 1911 fall by the wayside—the 1911 of today isn't the same 1911 from 100 years ago. The same rationale can be applied to the revolver platform. Just as the invention of the 1911 in no way outdated the revolver, the introduction of striker-fired handguns did not outdate the 1911.

Not every platform is right for every shooter, and I believe the disconnect might be in the fact that the 1911 requires good training and a higher level of maintenance. The 1911 requires training because the mechanics and basic principles are different. It also requires a little more time and attention in cleaning, keeping it oiled and well cared for to ensure

proper and reliable function. When these practices are applied, the value of an accurate, precise-shooting pistol is truly appreciated. When ignored, this is where issues begin, and people blame the gun rather than themselves.

I liken this to an expensive pair of sunglasses or a high-end car. I personally opt for cheaper sunglasses as I know I'll end up tossing them into my handbag, so the expensive pair might not be right for me. But for someone willing to care for them, that one pair might be all they will ever need. A very expensive car most times requires tuning and maintenance more often than the average car, and while some would complain about that, very few can argue about the quality of the driving experience in a nice vehicle. It really comes down to what is valued by the person making the choice, and neither choice is right or wrong. Typically, the more expensive something is, the more attention it requires to maintain. In no way does this mean that the 1911 is better than revolvers or striker-fired handguns, it's simply a different animal.

As with any firearm platform, you get what you pay for. In the world of 1911s there are some pistols that rise above the rest. In an increasingly competitive market, companies continuously strive to improve every single design element to create the best pistol possible, with the comfort and convenience of a nice pair of sunglasses, and the memorable experience and precise focus of a fine automobile.

GUN DETAILS

One company that understands this is Kimber. One of its most recent offerings that blows the "antiquated" theory apart is the Kimber Rapide Black Ice. The power and accuracy alone will bury many striker-fired pistols in a head-to-head competition. It's as if Kimber created this gun to draw a line in the sand, separating fact from opinion, giving concrete validity to the 1911.

Kimber's Rapide Black Ice isn't exactly brand new, rather a modified version of the Kimber Rapide. Updates include a striking two-tone KimPro finish, a DLC-coated barrel for extreme



“It's as if Kimber created this gun to draw a line in the sand, separating fact from opinion, giving concrete validity to the 1911.”

durability and G-10 grips with matching accents to improve handling. The Rapide Black Ice is also available in 9mm and 10mm. It might not be an entirely new gun, but it definitely improves on the Rapide and is a completely new look for Kimber. The fact that it also comes in 9mm is a huge plus for many.

My first impression of the Black Ice was instantaneous awe of its aesthetics. Kimber truly knows how to create a sexy gun, but this is more than that. The design is sleek and almost futuristic, and these attributes give the Black Ice a commanding presence. You can't help but want to run this gun, which is where

the real magic lies; it doesn't just appear powerful and well made, it truly is.

The stepped cocking serrations on the slide and the textured G10 grips provide easy slide manipulation and improved control. The stainless-steel slide and frame both feature a protective KimPro II two-tone finish. The sleek lightning cuts reduce weight and allow for a faster action and quicker follow-up shots. And the stainless steel, match-grade barrel features a DLC coating to ensure extreme durability and years of exceptional accuracy. The V-Cut aluminum trigger is factory set at 4 to 5 pounds and has a clean, short break and a good

reset, and I must admit that the trigger pull feels lighter than spec. Kimber has equipped the Rapide Black Ice with TruGlo TFX Pro Day/Night sights, which allow for quick sight acquisition for most shooters. While I loved these sights and shot well with them, I would have preferred a front sight that was a bit smaller. A smaller front sight allows for more precise shooting, but most shooters wouldn't deem this an issue.

The Rapide Black Ice is a full-size gun with a 5-inch barrel and an overall length of 8.7 inches. It weighs in at a well-balanced 38 ounces, helping to manage any recoil your ammo may throw at you. Incorporated into the slide is a 16-pound recoil spring that ensures this gun will run just about any ammunition you want to feed it. The gun that I received for testing was chambered in .45 ACP.

SHOOTING IMPRESSIONS

One of my favorite aspects of the Black Ice is that it doesn't boast the look of a "safe queen." While sexy and sleek, it offers a level of badass durability unlike anything Kimber has made thus far, and provides performance to match. I ran a total of 500 rounds through mine using three different brands of .45 ACP self-defense ammo. The Federal 230-grain Hydra-Shok, Hornady 185-grain Critical Defense and Hornady 220-grain +P Flexlock all fed and functioned flawlessly, and I believe any serious handgun should be able to run these without hesitation. These are not light loads, and even with

SPEC BOX

KIMBER RAPIDE BLACK ICE

CALIBER:	9mm, .45 ACP, 10mm
BARREL:	5 inches
OA LENGTH:	8.7 inches
WEIGHT:	38 ounces (empty)
GRIPS:	Black Rapide G10
SIGHTS:	Tru-Glo TFX Pro Day Night
ACTION:	Semi-auto
FINISH:	Silver/Gray KimPro II
CAPACITY:	8+1/9+1 (9mm)
MSRP:	\$1,510



As far as performance is concerned, the Kimber Rapide Black Ice shoots as great as it looks, as proven here by shots piled on top of one another.

the serious power they had behind them the recoil on the gun was very manageable. Accuracy-wise I was genuinely impressed, as my first five shots at 10 yards were almost all touching. In fact, most of them were touching in a ragged hole, and that type of performance continued throughout my testing.

The slide-to-frame fitting was great, and the all-important bushing and barrel fit was very good for a production gun. Rarely does a gun shoot this tight right out of the box with no break-in.

Reliability-wise, it ran with zero issues, even during the last drill I performed. This drill is a favorite and is essentially a controlled magazine dump on the head portion of a steel target. This isn't a mere magazine dump or waste of ammo, but a balance of aimed fire and speed shooting. The results of this drill could be seen in a 2.5-inch gray spot on my freshly painted steel where all of the rounds impacted. This thoroughly impressed me because I was really running the trigger.

I expected a much bigger group and was pleased to see this level of performance in a brand-new gun.

I spoke with Kimber to get a firsthand opinion of the Rapide Black Ice. Winslow Potter, director of product marketing for the 1911, said, "The Rapide Black Ice is loaded with features, each one having a specific purpose. The positive feel of the front and rear stair-stepped cocking



serrations, the stippled front strap for a positive grip, the high undercut under the triggerguard to get your hand as high as possible to the bore axis and the flush-fit extended magwell for speed loading all come together for performance. Slight lightening cuts speed up slide lockup, and the DLC-finished match-grade stainless barrels look awesome, clean up easily and function as good as they look."

If you haven't had an opportunity to run this gun, you shouldn't hesitate to do so. The Kimber Rapide Black Ice will leave you feeling anything but "anti-quoted"; instead, it will give you an edge to feel on top of your game. Check it out at kimberamerica.com

BUTTONED UP

WILL HK'S 9-B ITERATION OF THE WILDLY POPULAR PEOPLE'S VP9 REPLACE THE LEGACY GUN?

—BY SCOTT CONDITT—



Heckler & Koch (HK) has incited both ire and amusement in equal measure within the firearms community for two of its staunch marketing slogans, each of which perfectly encapsulates the brand's tongue-in-cheek uber-Germanic persona when addressing the consumer market: "No Compromise," and, "Because you suck, and we hate you." Such mantras may lead you to believe that the chances of HK making concessions or accommodations at the behest of the firearms community would be slim to none, and that requests to grant a longtime consumer desire when it comes to modifying one of its most popular and well-received pistols—the HK VP9—would fall on less-than-receptive ears at HK headquarters.

GRANTING A WISH

HK's VP9, a polymer-framed, striker-fired pistol that featured a newly designed striker system that gave it the feel of a single-stage trigger with an exceptionally clean, crisp break, quickly became one of the most popular models upon its release in 2014. Although hardly a compromise in any sense of the word, it does seem that with the release of the HK VP9-B, the brand is at the very least listening to its fan base and fulfilling a long-standing desire for the model: a push-button-style magazine release instead of the original paddle-style release that had been lamented by many fans.



9 mm x 19

Hopfinger & Koch GmbH
Made in Germany

VP



The VP9-B brings the same quality, design and reliability as its predecessor with one seemingly small but highly significant difference: the push-button mag release located behind the left-side triggerguard.

Not that I minded the paddle-style mag release on the legacy VP9; on the contrary, I found it perfectly acceptable, featuring a smooth release and ambidextrous design that I recalled had also allowed for easy operation by a fellow left-handed shooter who was training alongside me at the time. It also featured sleek contouring that was comfortable

during drills once I'd gotten used to it. To be honest, although having trained primarily with Glocks and other push-button-style mag release pistols in the past, the paddle style wasn't something I'd given much thought to; it slightly lengthened the learning curve and required quick

retraining on hand placement and transitions with slight adaptations.

But as many shooters (mostly American) have expressed on forums across the internet, it is indeed the little things that count. It seemed as though the paddle being the only option available on what many considered to be an oth-

On the surface, the availability of the new option may not seem to be of great significance; after all, the core components and features that made the VP9 such a great pistol in the first place are essentially exactly the same, and the look and feel of the gun is virtually indistinguishable from its predecessor at first glance and feel. From the trademark polygonal-rifled 4.09-inch barrel to the non-radioactive, luminous three-dot sights, both pistols weigh in at 26.5 ounces and still constitute great everyday-carry options. Heck, the existing VP9 magazines on the market are also compatible with both models, so what's the big deal with such a little change-up?

Well, for a large section of the American market, VP9 fans have been

requesting the push-button style of magazine release for some time as opposed to the legacy VP9's more European style of paddle release, and that tiny feature makes a huge difference to the discerning shooter who has spent countless hours building muscle memory and grown accustomed to the button-style placement and release characteristics during his lifetime and training.

IN THE HANDS

I was excited to pick up the HK VP9-B from the gun store in my hometown. Having had a decent amount of experience handling the original VP9 at the range and through a few training courses in the past, I'd become familiar with the paddle-style magazine release and was curious to see just how much of a difference the more familiar push-button mag release option would make to my speed, accuracy, functionality and overall shooting experience.

SPEC BOX

HECKLER & KOCH VP9-B

CALIBER:	9mm
BARREL:	4.09 inches
OA LENGTH:	7.34 inches
WEIGHT:	26.56 ounces (empty)
GRIPS:	Polymer, modular
SIGHTS:	Non-radioactive, luminous three-dot
ACTION:	Striker-fired
FINISH:	Nitro-carburized matte
CAPACITY:	10+1 or 15+1
MSRP:	\$630-\$770



↑ Clean, punchy and familiar: The push-button magazine release delivers on all counts.

erwise exceptionally designed pistol was as disorienting and audacious to some as only offering a great new car here in the U.S. with a right-side driver seat. As the saying goes, “You can please some of the people some of the time...” But when it comes to the VP9—the “VP” portion of which is an acronym for *Volkspistole*, which translates to “the people’s pistol”—I was curious: Had HK now offered something that might just please everybody? (Who am I kidding? There will always be keyboard warriors and trolls.)

As I secured the pistol, I appreciated the fact that HK doesn’t skimp on design even when it comes to packaging and presentation. The VP9-B was delivered in a nice hard-shell case with perfectly molded foam-cut inserts that contained a second magazine, four interchangeable grip backstraps, a speedloader, a custom HK gun lock, some literature and, of course, a snazzy red-on-black HK sticker so you can flaunt your superiority of firearms choice properly. My immediate reaction when first handling the VP9-B out of the box was that the button was easy to access without significantly altering my grip at all and had a very familiar feel. When engaged, the magazine’s release

was highly responsive, ejecting the mag flawlessly with a pronounced punch.

One consideration to note right away, however, is that the legacy model VP9’s paddle release is ambidextrous, with the paddles placed for easy access on both sides of the triggerguard for both left- and right-handed shooters, whereas the VP9-B comes stock with the button enabled on only one side of the pistol—placed for right-handed shooters—although it’s easily changed over to whichever side is desired by the operator with a quick adjustment.

The modular grip side panels and backstrap inserts already installed suited my palm size very well, and the texture, contours and overall ergonomics of the pistol molded to my hand wonderfully.

Experimenting with the modular grips, which allow for 27 unique, customized configurations, was easy and intuitive. The texturing on each grip panel is phenomenally effective and extremely comfortable, while the low-profile finger grooves on the front of the grip contoured quite well to my hand and weren’t overly pronounced or bulky.

A REAL LOOKER

The steel 15-round magazines stamped with “Made in Germany” are high quality and feature small catches and a polymer baseplate, which was easy to remove for inspection and adjustments. Like the original VP9, the slide stop and take-down lever are fairly abbreviated, not protruding far from the frame, and avoid getting hung up. The front of the slide features a sleek, contoured bevel, and the entirety of the slide features elegantly rounded contours, allowing for comfortable, smooth handling and operation.

One feature that is widely recognized as being exceptionally well designed out of the box for the VP9 series is the trigger. The trigger safety that’s integrated into the face of the trigger must be depressed before the trigger can begin its movement rearward; once depressed, there is a distinct wall and a clean break with a light reset. The trigger pull is rated from the factory at 5.4 pounds with 0.24 inches of trigger travel, and for a striker-fired pistol, it really is smooth to operate with a rather crisp engagement.

The VP9-B’s barrel is polygonal, featuring six grooves and a 1-in-9.8-inch right-handed twist. Another nice design feature that’s functional and sharp-looking is the pattern of the rear cocking slide serrations, which make for extremely easy slide operation. Additionally, the charging supports at the rear of the VP9-B slide allow for enhanced leverage, making

“It also struck me that HK did something here that HK rarely does: It listened to its audience and officially made something that ‘the people’ have been asking for.”



↑ Virtually identical twins, you can tell the original VP9 (left) by the paddle-style mag release, compared to the VP9-B's push-button release.

manipulations easy especially for shooters with limited experience or less hand strength. The charging supports can also be removed and fitted with flush-fitting inserts if they are not desired.

The rear slide plate features a red cocked-striker indicator—not to be confused as indicating that a round has been chambered but simply that the striker is primed and in position to be fired. The extended Picatinny bottom-side rail is rated to handle lights, lasers and other accessory loads up to 5.6 ounces with no impact on performance. The nearly matte nitro-carburized finish, aka the HK Hostile Environment Finish, impregnates the steel to provide a clean, sleek, uniform finish overall.

MATTER OF PREFERENCE

Out of the box, the HK VP9-B featured all the trappings I'd enjoyed in the previous iteration of the pistol, and I was immediately pleased with the push-button release. But I wanted a second opinion from a colleague I can always trust to give me an unfiltered opinion, especially when it comes to the pros and cons of a wide variety of pistol configurations and design styles, particularly when reliable function counts most. So, I took a trip to the range and presented the VP9-B to Brian Lott, Phoenix Firearms Training founder and firearms expert.


I knew that Brian had operated the legacy VP9 in the past during training and had expressed some distaste for the paddle-based mag release as opposed to push-button-style releases. He's a die-hard function-over-fashion proponent,

always basing his opinions of a weapon's efficacy and desirability on its functional characteristics over fashionable presentation, and I knew I could count on him to give me a straight opinion on the push-button-variation change.

Going into the side-by-side review, it was clear that the focus was on the overall ergonomics, functionality and ease of operation where the styles of magazine releases were concerned. After Brian put a few boxes of Atlanta Arms Premium 9mm ammo downrange, dropping mags and reinserting throughout, speed seemed slightly faster when operating the push button—but not terribly. Groupings were tight and uniform between the legacy VP9 and the new push button.

Brian's assessment after the brief side-by-side was short, sweet and straight to the point: "Both shoot smooth and fire as HKs do—superbly. But the button may be the better option for shooters like me because of hand size. I can't operate the paddle without changing my grip on the gun; simple as that for me. With the paddle, my trigger finger is too long and firing hand thumb

too short. The mag-release button is placed perfectly for my firing hand to manipulate." It's what wasn't said—that spoke the most truth: In a real-world firefight, this little detail—a button versus a paddle and the microseconds' difference between mag changes based on an individual shooter's preference and training—can make all the difference in the world.

After operating and manipulating both VP9 models side by side, I couldn't agree more with Brian's evaluation. It isn't about better or worse; it's that, ultimately, the little things do make a huge difference for regular shooters, not just in terms of comfort and enjoyment of their overall shooting experience but also when it comes to ensuring ease of access with such a critical feature like the mag release during a serious engagement. It also struck me that HK did something here that HK rarely does: It listened to its audience and officially made something that "the people" have been asking for—and I dare say they nailed it, hitting it right on the button. For more information, visit hk-usa.com. 

“In a real-world firefight, this little detail—a button versus a paddle and the microseconds' difference between mag changes—can make all the difference in the world.”



WAR BELT

BUILD THE PERFECT GRAB-AND-GO SETUP FOR THE RANGE, TRAINING OR EVEN COMPETITION

BY ZACK CARLSON • PHOTOS BY BRIAN BUCHANAN & BILL HANLEY



Have you ever experienced range envy? Because I certainly have. The most recent time it hit me, I was attending a Modern Samurai Project class with a standard belt holster and magazine pouches that I had to don and remove every day. The holsters were close to my body and sat

at my beltline, which wasn't ideal, so the object of my envy was the war-belt setup worn by another student.

BENEFITS

Known also as a battle belt or training belt, the war-belt setup is typically a



The Elite Survival Systems Sidewinder (bottom) and Safariland's competition belt served the author quite well in training classes.

wide, comfortable platform to which all your gear can attach. It can then be easily put on or taken off. In time-is-of-the-essence situations, this would be the belt that would be preconfigured, and you could quickly clip it on and get to work.

In the class I mentioned, the student with the war belt had a few advantages. During breaks, he could just release the buckle and take off the whole setup with gun, mags and dump pouch in one swift motion. I was stuck taking my belt off and unthreading all my gear during break time. The war belt also looked much more comfortable with its padded base and infinitely configurable MOLLE webbing system. The holster was able to



↑ Safariland's ELS system makes attaching and later removing gear like holsters, magazine pouches and a dump pouch for empty mags a very simple process, saving time and effort.

be affixed to a drop bracket, which got the pistol down and away from the body, allowing for lightning-fast draws and reholstering. Needless to say, after that class I made it my mission to acquire a similar setup before my next training class, which happened to be a few months away.

My first stop was the Elite Survival Systems website where I found the Sidewinder system. Offered in both standard and slim models, the Sidewinder is a non-slip padded belt that provides MOLLE or belt attachments. It has a segmented design and you can thread a belt behind or in front of the MOLLE panels. This allows the use of both MOLLE and standard belt-attachment systems in one. For use with the Sidewinder, I opted for the Elite Survival Systems 1.75-inch

Cobra Riggers Belt with a D-Ring. The extra-wide Cobra belt helped to provide the stability needed for the battle belt. The combination proved to be comfortable and easy to deploy thanks to the Cobra buckle.

ACCESSORIZING

Since I now possessed the foundation for my training belt, I needed to figure out what I was going to need on the belt and how it was going to attach. I surmised that Safariland's system was my best bet. The Quick Locking System (QLS) is a fork and receiver system that allows you to quickly move holsters around to different configurations with a squeeze of the fork. The QLS receiver plate gets mounted to a belt adapter—in

my case, a UBL Mid-ride, which is one of Safariland's Universal Belt Loops. Then, your holster, which has the matching QLS fork attached to it, can simply be inserted into the receiver plate and locked into place. If you need to use the holster on a different setup or you need to change guns and run a different holster, it's simple to swap them around with no tools.

Safariland uses a similar system for mag pouches, but it's called the Equipment Locking System (ELS). It's essentially the same as the QLS, just scaled down with smaller plates and forks. I ordered multiple ELS kits along with compatible pistol and AR-15 magazine pouches. My Sidewinder uses MOLLE technology, so I didn't want a belt attachment on the pouches. Safariland also has a solution for this: the Tactical MOLLE Adapter (TMA), which slips into the MOLLE straps on my Sidewinder and allows the ELS receiver plates to be bolted directly to them. This allowed me to attach three mag pouches directly to the Sidewinder with ease.

The holster I went with was also from Safariland—a Grip Lock System (GLS) Pro-Fit model to be exact. The GLS line features universal-fit holsters that utilize a single tension screw to adjust the fit between pistols; I haven't found a polymer-framed pistol in my collection that didn't fit. Since so many pistols pass through my hands for testing and evaluation, I didn't want a model-specific holster.



↑ Safariland's inner belt fits comfortably and provides the surface for the outer belt to attach to via hook-and-loop fasteners.



→ Both belts helped the author obtain his goal—the ability to easily remove his belt and later put it back on quickly.

The GLS came with a standard paddle attachment, but that wasn't going to be the best option for the Sidewinder belt. Safariland uses a standard bolt pattern on their holsters, so I bolted on a QLS fork and it quickly dropped right into the UBL mount with the QLS receiver plate.

Finally, I removed my MOLLE dump pouch from my Elite Survival Systems Loadout range bag and attached it behind the mag pouches on the belt, so I had a place to drop my mags during training. I find a dump pouch invaluable at a training class, as it prevents me from having to bend over to retrieve mags.

WHY STOP AT ONE?

Testing went well after everything was assembled. The belt was supportive, comfortable and very quick to put on, and it sat at the ready for instant deployment if needed. After appreciating the modularity offered by the Safariland system, my mind started racing through the possibilities. So, I browsed Safariland's website a little further, and the epiphany came. I could have a comfortable battle belt at the ready, but I could also use the ELS and QLS components to quickly transition to a competition belt.

Safariland makes a competition-specific belt system that uses hook-and-loop inner and outer belts. The buckleless inner belt goes through your normal

pants' belt loops. Then, the stiff outer belt attaches to the inner belt via hook and loop. A buckle-and-keeper system keeps the outer belt affixed.

The hole spacing in the outer belt provides perfect mounting sites for the ELS receiver plates. Instead of having to mount to the Tactical MOLLE Adapters, the ELS receivers could be bolted directly to the outer belt at an even tighter spacing than what was possible with the TMAs.

I mounted three ELS receivers to my support side along with the dump

pouch. The strong side got an additional Universal Belt Loop with a QLS plate. When I want to use the competition rig, I simply move all the mag pouches and the holster over quickly and easily. Not having to buy duplicates of the pouches or holsters saves money, too. With the modularity of the ELS, I'm able to adapt the mags to the range session. If I'm shooting both rifle and pistol, for example, I can swap one of the pistol mag pouches for an AR-15 pouch.

My next training class was upon me shortly after assembling both belts, so I took that opportunity to test both belts thoroughly. Day 1 of Dave Spaulding's Adaptive Combat Pistol class was spent with the Sidewinder. I found it to be very comfortable and supportive, and the weight was evenly distributed on my hips. As expected, it was quick to remove and clip back on during the breaks. Day 2 was the competition belt's time to shine. It took a bit longer to get on, but once donned, it was fantastic. Its thinness made bending over easy, and it was cooler to wear.

Either setup would serve you well, but with the incredible modularity of the Safariland equipment, it makes sense to have both—the competition belt for the leisurely days when you can take the extra time to put it on and the other ready at a moment's notice. For more information, visit elitesurvival.com and safariland.com.

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LOOSE ROUNDS

STRAIGHT TALK ON CURRENT EVENTS, POLITICS AND MORE

SMALL STATE, BIG SALES

Can you believe that the state with the second most guns purchased through July was Kentucky?

Normally the top states in gun sales are huge states like Texas with a population of 29 million, California with 39.5 million or Florida with 21.48 million residents. Yet Kentucky, with a population of only about 4.5 million, saw nearly 2.3 million guns sold in the state through July, with the highest month being June with 395,188.

Why would such a small state have such high numbers? Look no further than the fact that the police shooting death of Breonna Taylor occurred in Louisville, sparking near constant riots for the past several months. Kentuckians apparently figured out early on that it was time to take their safety into their own hands.



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YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT

I've talked about the presidential election in this spot so often it's hard to believe that when you read this it will be over and settled. Yet as I write, we are still more than a month away from that fateful day.

Whether Donald Trump won a second term and Democrats are already doubling down on gun control or Joe Biden and Kamala Harris were victorious and are starting to pursue their anti-gun agenda, one important truth prevails: You are your own protector.

If you're not training regularly with your everyday-carry gun, home defense guns and other firearms you intend to use in clutch situations, you're not as diligent as you should be. And while ammunition supplies have many sellers asking top dollar for ammo if they even have any available, what price can you put on your safety and that of your family?

TINY IS AS TINY DOES

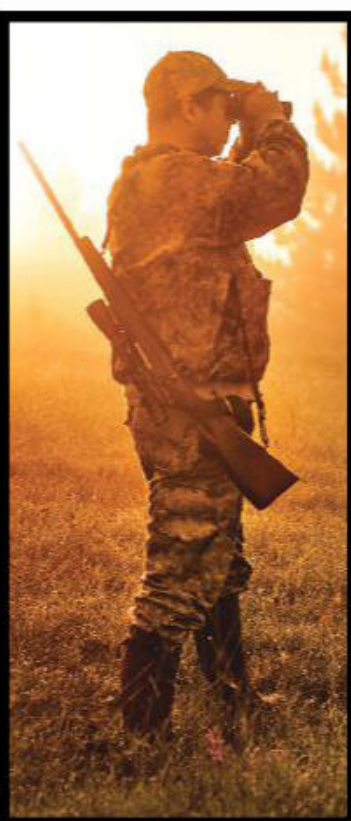


If you haven't yet heard of Trijicon's brand new RMRcc miniature reflex sight, which was just introduced on September 1, listen up. Born from the legendary Trijicon RMR, the thinner, lower profile RMRcc provides fast, both-eyes-open target acquisition and is made to

perfectly fit subcompact concealed carry pistols, alleviating the need to mount an oversized reflex sight on those popular handguns.

Weighing a mere 1 ounce with battery installed and measuring less than 1 inch in width and height, the RMRcc is available with a 3.25- or 6.5-MOA dot and features an automatic brightness mode as well as eight manual positions for custom settings. And Trijicon says a single 2023 battery will run the sight for four years!


I'll be mounting one on a Springfield Hellcat in the next week or so and look forward to evaluating that ultracool combination.



SHARE THE HARVEST

With big-game hunting seasons still in full swing in much of the country, don't forget that most states have programs where hunters can donate extra meat for the homeless and other needy Americans.

In my home state of Oklahoma, it's called Hunters Against Hunger, and over the years my family has donated more than a dozen deer to the program, which grinds and packages the meat, then sends it to organizations that feed those in need. Each year the program takes in more than 30,000 pounds of venison, providing countless thousands of meals for needy individuals.

Check your state fish and game agency's website to learn about similar programs in your area. Then share some of nature's wonderful bounty with those who need it most. 



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