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# GUNS & AMMO

SEPTEMBER 2020

FIRST LOOK!

## 6mm BARC

WE TEST  
HORNADY'S NEW  
LONG-RANGE  
PRECISION  
CARTRIDGE. P. 40

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BECKSTRAND:  
Do you want an  
Aimpoint ACRO  
on a carbine?



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Update: USSOCOM  
adopts Barrett MRAD  
in .300 and .338!



P. 96  
WOOD  
Science versus  
Africa trophy  
hunting.



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BY TOM BECKSTRAND

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RUGER'S LATEST CHARGER 9mm WANTS TO BE YOUR NEXT SELF-DEFENSE PISTOL.



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COVER PHOTOS MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ AND MARK FINGAR. ABOVE: MARK FINGAR

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BY KEITH WOOD

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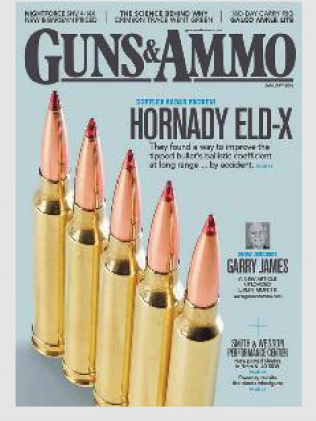
— H., Arvada, CO



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JANUARY '16

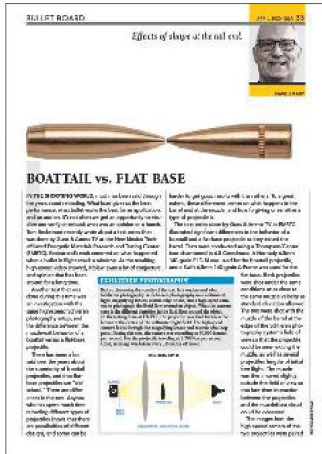
The subscriber cover unveiled the Hornady ELD-X bullet, introduced by Columnist Tom Beckstrand. Doppler radar confirmed changes in ballistic coefficients during a bullet's flight due to the friction that melted the pointed profile of other polymer-tipped bullets. Hornady developed a sophisticated heat-resistant tip that extended the effective range of a bullet that also improved its expansion at longer distances.



of reading about these guns and have come to realize that if this is all the gun community wants, we are sick. I am an NRA member. Shove this magazine ... Dennis Vance Jackson, New Jersey

THANK YOU

I recently had a repair issue with one of Springfield Armory's XD Tactical pistols in .45 ACP. After 14-plus years of service and use, a small crack appeared on the ejector. I notified Springfield Armory's customer service department who paid for shipping the pistol to them and back to me once it was repaired — complete with insurance — at zero cost to me. I currently own two of their handguns and am



MUZZLE BRAKE INFLUENCE

Regarding Dave Emary's column in the April 2020 issue, "Boattail vs. Flat Base," how does a muzzlebrake affect a boat-tail bullet's trajectory? Wouldn't the gas blow-by be reduced by allowing the propellant gasses to escape through the brake's ports? Is this something that Guns & Ammo has tested before? Ted Schaffer Email

All things being equal, a muzzlebrake or porting should improve things. The best solution is a barrel service like the one Mag-na-port offers (magnaport.com). However, this has drawbacks because you will get port erosion and other effects. There are no free lunches here. I also preferred minimum-spec'd barrels with ammunition loaded with fast-burning propellants to limit the

muzzleblast. This is a great suggestion for more research using Schlieren photography. Stay tuned. — D. Emary

"BE CAREFUL" BLOWBACK

Bill Vigrass' letter in the May issue, "Be Careful What You Print!" warned against offering the background and technical information of cartridges, such as the new Hornady .300 PRC that U.S. Special Forces is fielding. Well, it looks like those darned gun writers have done it again, despite Vigrass' warning. On June 3, 2020, I read Tom Beckstrand's "First Look," and watched his video that introduced the 6mm ARC, "U.S. Military Adopts Hornady's New Cartridge." I guess the editors of Guns & Ammo are more interested in being the first to report on the details of cutting-edge products than not letting our enemies know the details of a new cartridge's and rifle's capabilities. Geez, they even showed a graph of range versus velocity. I guess armed combatants who oppose these forces will now have enough sense to keep themselves out of range of the 6 ARC. What's the point of having a longer-range and more accurate cartridge if it can't

reach the target? Anonymous Research Triangle Raleigh, North Carolina

CALIFORNIA BLOWBACK

I am responding to the note in the June issue of Guns & Ammo from "M.A." of San Rafael, California, regarding his state's 10-day waiting period to purchase a firearm. Thank you, sir, for being concerned about the 48,000 or so suicides a year. However, from your letter, it would seem that you consider the only tool used for this endeavor is a firearm. How about a 10-day waiting period to purchase an automobile or cutting-edge tool? Both of these have been used to commit mass murders. (And so has rope!) Please see this for what it is: Harassment to retail sales by the state's legislature. Jay Romine Brookings, Oregon

YOU SICK PEOPLE

I just received my first issue of Guns & Ammo and see that it features the same crap I read about in Shooting Times. I am a hunter, and no one writes about hunting guns anymore. All writers want to review are plastic handguns or black rifles. Such guns are designed for one purpose: to kill people. I am so tired





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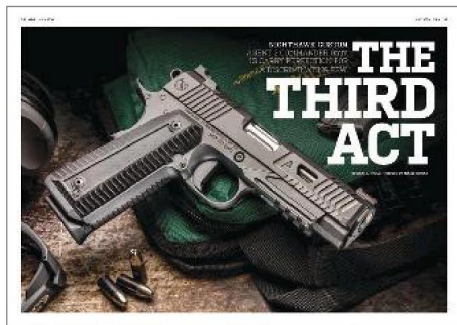


CARRY THE FUTURE™

considering a third in 10mm. There were no questions asked, and the turnaround time was 18 days. Please share my thoughts with other readers. I have had similar results with other companies, including RCBS and Hornady. These brands offer great service! I wish others would follow their lead.  
**Paul Jones**  
 New Marshfield, Ohio

**GENEROUS SERVICE**

Caldwell has great customer service. I broke a stud off of my Caldwell ear protectors while stuffing them into my range bag. I called and a Battenfeld Technologies' representative sent an all-new set of hearing protection. Wow!  
**Roy Kentish**  
 Crystal Lake, Illinois



**WHAT WAS THAT?**

In Eric Poole's article, "The Third Act," featuring the Nighthawk Custom Agent 2 (July 2020), there are a few rounds of ammo shown below the pistol. They look very unique! Thanks for the help in identifying them.  
**Jesse Kuhns**  
 Lancaster, Pennsylvania

*Norma MHP 108-grain cartridges for 9mm. "MHP" stands for "Monolithic Hollow Point." The bullet is all copper and is designed for large expansion due to its cavity profile and*

*1,300-foot-per-second muzzle velocity. The velocity is faster than the typically heavier 115-, 124- and 147-grain loads, which gives this unique design the ability to expand quickly and offer consistent performance regardless of barrel length. This load falls into the premium category with a box of 20 rounds averaging \$25.*  
 — E. Poole

**TOO EXPENSIVE**

Am I the only long-time reader who's feeling tuned out by Guns & Ammo's reviews? In the June and July 2020 issues there was one .22 rifle priced at \$980, three centerfire rifles that averaged \$1,329 and one shotgun priced at \$1,550. Five handguns reviewed averaged an MSRP of

\$2,208, and three optics averaged \$1,909. Pardon me, but "Huh?"  
**Chet Peterson**  
 Lindsborg, Kansas

*Guns & Ammo's editors and contributors survey the industry's new products each month. It is our aim to highlight trending introductions with a balance of nostalgia, adventure and opinion. In recent months we also noted that were more high-end products introduced than affordable options. With the onset of COVID-19 and the postponement of several new product launches, what you saw was what we were left to review at the time. We hope that you enjoyed the August issue offered for*

*all but one of its reviews. We make every effort to democratize our content in order to offer something in each issue that's accessible to the majority of readers. However, at times this can be difficult. Guns & Ammo's interest in firearms remains diverse despite industry trends. Thank you for taking the time to offer your feedback. Comments like yours help steer future issues.*  
 — Eds



**BRING-BACK/MEMORIES**

I really enjoyed reading Garry James' July article, "Prevalence in the Pacific," featuring the Type 99 Arisaka rifle! I have two. One was a gun my stepfather, Raymond L. Johnson, sent back from the South Pacific to his brother "Franny," who was teaching survival to U.S. Navy pilots. Franny needed a Model 99 for his classes, and after the war Fran gave my father this gun. Dad spent some 5 years in the South Pacific. He very seldom talked about the war, but I do remember him telling me that as the Japanese were losing the war, they ground off the Emperor's "crown," as the Japanese thought he had abandoned them. When he was home, Dad had a shoe shop make a new sling for his gun. Unfortunately, he did not keep the original

sling. I have never shot this rifle, but it is excellent shape. Dad told me that his gun was one from the start of the war, and that the Japanese keep cutting corners until the latter ones were evidence of bad workmanship. My second Type 99 is from much later in the war, I believe. There are peep sights, poor wood, a wooden buttplate, and no dust cover; it's just a lesser gun. Dad did tell a few

stories about his time in the Pacific. He was in the Signal Corps and went into each island before the troops. His PT boat was sunk one week before Pres-

ident Kennedy's PT-109. Dad went on to radio back to the military where the Japanese ships were and said he would run like hell because they'd bomb where he had just left. He also said he captured a pistol, most likely a Type 14, but someone stole it out of his Jeep's glove box. He regretted leaving it in there. My stepfather left all his souvenirs from war to me. He filled in extremely well, as I lost my father, Rexford J. Hayes, during the Battle of the Bulge. My father's entire outfit was killed — more than 1,000 men. My father Rex was captured five times in Germany and escaped from POW camps each time. Following the last incident, he spent time in the hospital and was released two weeks before heading to fight in the Bulge.  
**Richard D. Hayes**  
 Edwardsville, Illinois



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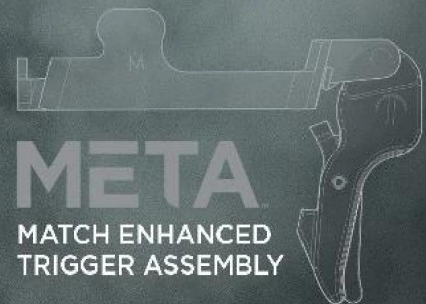
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ERIC R. POOLE

 @GUNSANDAMMOMAG

## IT'S ALIVE!

**PERHAPS I UNDERSTAND** Victor Frankenstein. If you are intimately familiar with the AR-pattern rifle, carbine or pistol, there's a sense of pleasure when you disassemble and reassemble the amalgamation of different parts and pieces — as long as it still works. I've been told that most gun owners who already have at least one AR-15 have turned to building their own than buying a new one; I can believe that. To learn how to do-it-yourself and be self-sufficient describes the current trends. For many of us, AR-15 builds will comprise some new components, while others are cannibalized from former projects. In the end, pleasure usually turns to pride as we cradle something near 7 pounds of modern art, the kind that sends anti-gunners into orbit when they try to understand how making an AR at home is legal or different than a company manufacturing one.

My first formal training in servicing firearms came during Armorer School in 1998 at the U.S. Army's Aberdeen Proving Grounds. There soldiers and Marines spent three months learning the ins-and-outs of small arms troubleshooting, use of manuals, repair and maintenance. Our education culminated in a complete assembly and diagnosis of a firearm or machine gun system, often from a tray of disassembled small parts. After graduation, I couldn't wait to return home and build an AR-15 of my own.

I've lost count of my AR projects. Some, like my Mk 12 Mod. 0/1 and wartime M4 clones are safe queens, but most qualify as take-with-me-everywhere trunk guns. Reactions to my black-rifle creations have ranged from inspired admiration to disgust. Unlike Frankenstein's abomination, I have no remorse about what my ARs turn into. While beauty is subjective, function is undeniable. Hearing an AR repetitively chew through 30-round magazines is my favorite all-time soundtrack.


From 2006 through 2008, I worked for Blackwater

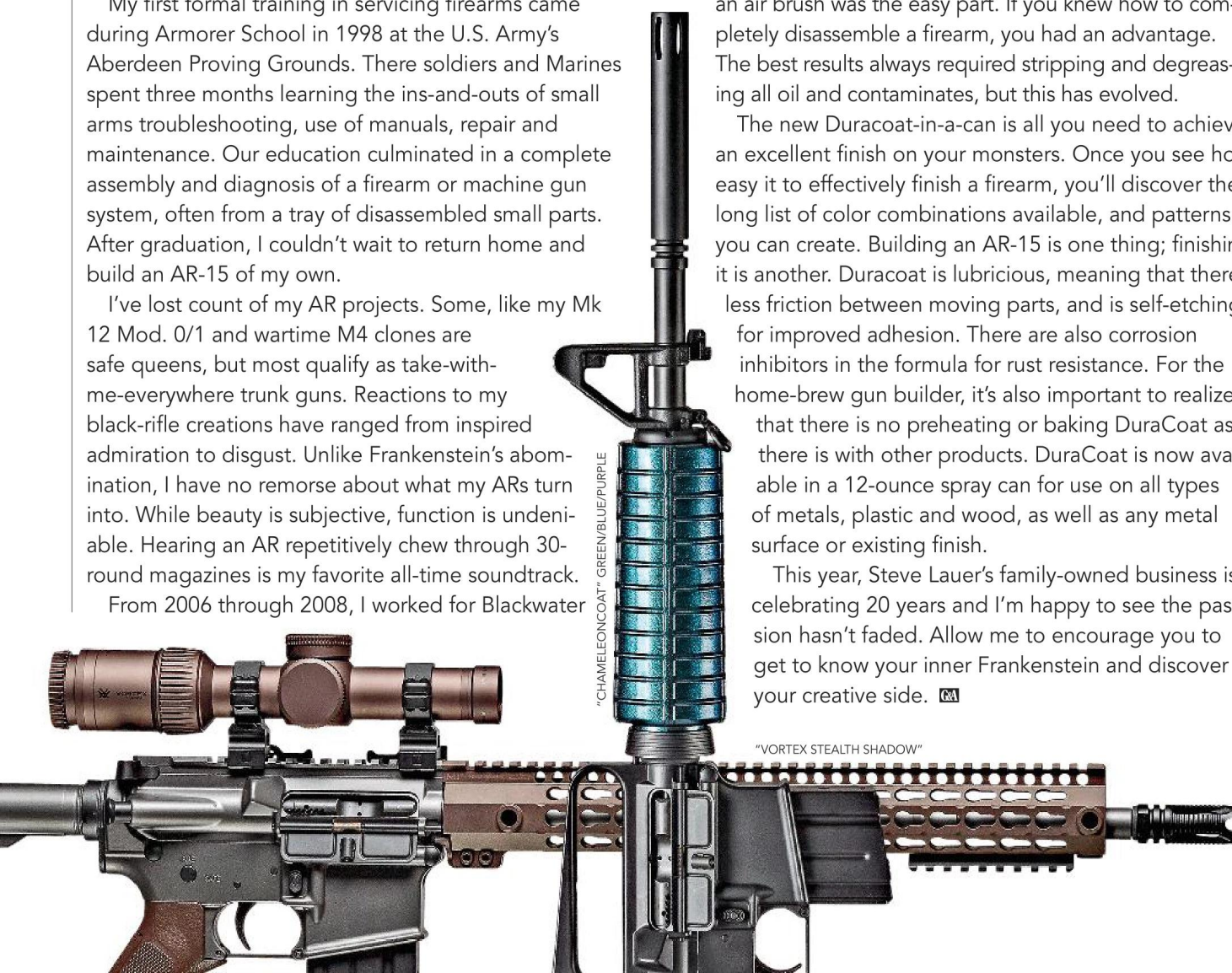
USA as an armorer. Servicing the variety of small arms that were brought to the armory by U.S. Special Operations, law enforcement, three-letter agencies and foreign militaries taught me more about how guns work than I learned while serving eight years in the same job as a U.S. Marine.

In 2007, Blackwater Custom Shop was started, which is when I went to various schools to learn how to enhance the quality and performance of different firearms. This included how to apply hard-use finishes. My early results working with colors were failures as instructors would return loaners with paint flaking off or fading. Once I attended a two-day class on applying DuraCoat taught by Lauer Custom Weaponry, that changed.

The major takeaway was to learn how to properly prepare the surface. Mixing color, hardener and spraying it through an air brush was the easy part. If you knew how to completely disassemble a firearm, you had an advantage. The best results always required stripping and degreasing all oil and contaminants, but this has evolved.

The new Duracoat-in-a-can is all you need to achieve an excellent finish on your monsters. Once you see how easy it to effectively finish a firearm, you'll discover the long list of color combinations available, and patterns you can create. Building an AR-15 is one thing; finishing it is another. Duracoat is lubricious, meaning that there's less friction between moving parts, and is self-etching for improved adhesion. There are also corrosion inhibitors in the formula for rust resistance. For the home-brew gun builder, it's also important to realize that there is no preheating or baking DuraCoat as there is with other products. DuraCoat is now available in a 12-ounce spray can for use on all types of metals, plastic and wood, as well as any metal surface or existing finish.

This year, Steve Lauer's family-owned business is celebrating 20 years and I'm happy to see the passion hasn't faded. Allow me to encourage you to get to know your inner Frankenstein and discover your creative side. 



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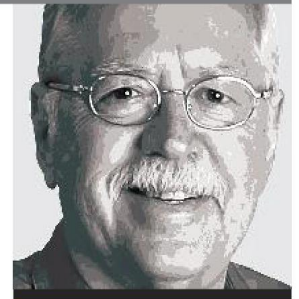
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*"Sounds like you have been doing your homework as much of your data is correct."*

## IDENTIFICATION & VALUES



GARRY JAMES

GARRY.JAMES@  
OUTDOORS.G.COM

COLT MODEL 1911A1, .45 ACP, 98%: \$10,000

### EARLY COLT 1911A1

**Q:** I'm writing on behalf of a friend who received a gift of an unfired .45-caliber Colt U.S. Army Model 1911A1. It was covered in Cosmoline. The only thing done to the piece was the removal of the Cosmoline. The details associated with this Colt are the stampings, which are as follows: serial "N° 719XXX"; "UNITED STATES PROPERTY"; "COLT'S PT F.A. MFG HARTFORD CT USA"; "PATENTED APR.20.1897 SEPT.9.1902 DEC.19.1905"; "FEB.14.1911"; and, "AUG.19.1913". There is a "P" stamped next to the magazine release, and the letters "CSR" are stamped just below the slide stop, behind the trigger. There's another stamping of a "P" on the left side, on top of the triggerguard, and a small inverted equilateral triangle (vertex facing down) below the "P". Inside the triangle there's a stamping of "VP" where the right side of the "V" and left side of the "P" are joined. Unfortunately, this stamping is so small that it wasn't possible to achieve a clear photo without the use of a more sophisticated camera. The number "69" is stamped at the top front of the triggerguard on the right side. I'd like your assessment of the piece in terms of its value, the date of its manufacture and any other pertinent details you can provide.

S.N.

New Providence, New Jersey

**A:** A very interesting piece, and if original, a valuable one, too. From your photos, it appears you have an excellent-condition blued Colt 1911A1 that was manu-

factured in 1940. The "41st Edition Blue Book of Gun Values" ([bluebookofgun-values.com](http://bluebookofgun-values.com)) values a blued 1911A1 in 95- to 98-percent condition between \$7,750

and \$10,000. I consulted with Colt-guru Joe Pittenger, and from what he could see from the photos, Pittenger felt this value to be very likely correct. His only caveat was that the barrel should also probably be checked by someone in-the-know to make sure it is original to the gun.

### REMINGTON MODEL 1903A3

**Q:** I have an excellent-plus 03A3 rifle that I would appreciate an evaluation on. The stock has no dents or scratches. It's marked "RA, FJA & OG". Bluing is excellent. The leather sling is also in excellent condition. Serial number is 3559XXX.

J.T.T.

Email

**A:** Some 942,209 Model 1903A3 rifles were manufactured between 1942 and 1944. While some did see combat, the majority were used as secondary standards and most remained stateside. Basically a simplified version of the U.S. Model 1903, 03A3s were built by Remington and Smith-Corona. The "RA" markings on your rifle identify it as a Remington product. "FJA" are the initials of inspector Frank J. Atwood, and "OG" is the mark for Ogden Arsenal, meaning your rifle was sent in for a rebuild at one point. It is not uncommon to find 03A3s in great shape. When I was younger, I bought them in quantity, still in Cosmoline, for \$25 each. I cleaned them up

### THE AUCTION BLOCK

#### Singer Model 1911A1, .45 ACP

A rare and desirable Model 1911A1 pistol produced by the Singer Manufacturing Company realized an impressive \$126,000, including premiums, at the May 29, 2020, Morphy Auctions sale. Only 500 of these 1911A1s were built by Singer during World War II. Singer 1911A1s are among the most sought-after arms of their type, and this particular specimen is in fine condition, all correct, and with about 85 percent of the original blue finish remaining.

Singers are very evasive. It is believed that most went to the United States Army Air Corps (USAAC), and the attrition rate was quite high. For more information about this and future sales, contact Morphy Auctions, [morphyauctions.com](http://morphyauctions.com), or at 877-968-8880.



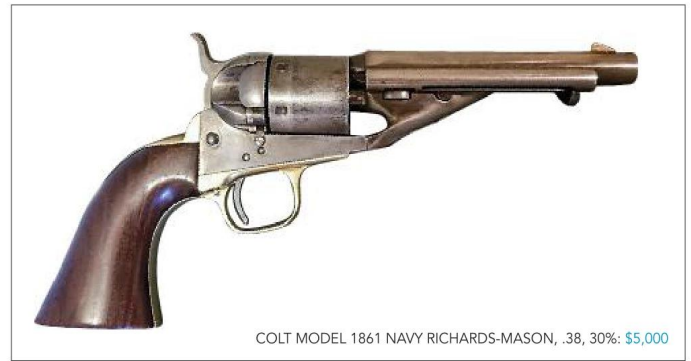
and resold them for \$50 a pop. Prices on these rifles have risen in recent years. If yours is as clean as you say, it's worth in the \$650 to \$800 range, adding another \$50 to \$60 for the sling if military marked. Smith-Coronas have a tendency to bring slightly more than Remington's, as they made less than half the number Remington did. A variant of the O3A3, the O3A4, was the principal U.S. sniper rifle of World War II.

### **SPORTERIZED ROSS RIFLE**

**Q:** I inherited this rifle from my Dad, and for as long as I can remember, it was always in his gun case. (I'm 65 now.) He always said it was a World War I Canadian Army rifle, and I think he used it until he could afford his favorite .30-'06. I've never seen it shoot, but the action is smooth. Can you provide some value for insurance purposes? The bayonet I know nothing about, but thought I might ask if you

do. It does not fit this rifle. **C.O.**  
**Email**

**A:** Your dad's rifle is a sporterized Ross Mark III straight-pull military rifle. Built on the Model 1910 action, it was issued to Canadian troops in World War I, but the action, while reliable under controlled circumstances, was found to be particularly susceptible to jamming due to the muddy conditions encountered in the trenches. The sporterized Ross Mark III was replaced in Canadian service in France by the British Mark III Enfields. The Mark III Ross bolt, if improperly reassembled, would blow back. This situation was corrected by the addition of a rivet in the bolt sleeve, which made it impossible to reassemble the bolt incorrectly. A Mark III, in original shape, is worth \$1,000-plus, however, one that has been heavily altered, such as yours, is worth about a third of that — perhaps a bit less. Your bayonet is a Japanese



COLT MODEL 1861 NAVY RICHARDS-MASON, .38, 30%: \$5,000

Type 30, complete with scabbard and frog. It looks fairly clean. I'd say it's worth in the \$125 to \$150 range.

### **COLT MODEL 1861 NAVY CONVERSION**

**Q:** I have a Colt 1861 Navy of which 38,000 were made. It is marked with Colt's patent and has a four-digit serial number which dates it to 1862. It was originally .36 caliber percussion with a 7½-inch barrel — civilian, no military markings. This Colt is now a .38 caliber with a Richards-Mason conversion of which 2,200 were made, and a correct patent date of 1872 along with a 5-inch barrel. The photos I've included do not suggest screws have been messed with. The bore is perfect. The cylinder locks up super tight and has the last two digits of serial number. All serial numbers match, and the blade on the front site on the barrel appears to be German silver. Colt archives have lost all records of conversions. My questions to you are, do I have the right references and is the preceding information accurate? What can you add? I traded for this Colt many years ago and didn't know anything about it.

**P.P.**  
**Email**

**A:** Sounds like you have been doing your homework, as much of your data is correct. Some 38,843 Colt Model 1861 Navy revolvers were manufactured from 1861 to 1873. This piece has been converted to the Richards-Mason system of which, as you note, some 2,200 were made; 400 in .38 rimfire and 1,800 in .38 centerfire. The barrel should be 7½ inches, so no doubt the one on your gun has been bobbed at some time in the gun's history. From what I can see, it looks like the piece has been selectively cleaned. The barrel assembly appears to have been enthusiastically polished, especially. Also, the grips definitely seem to be replacements. I can't tell for sure from the pics, but the screwheads seem to have been tidied up, as well. Still, it's a nice displayable version of a fairly scarce revolver.

### **.22 MAGNUM M&P?**

**Q:** Almost 30 years ago, I bought this pistol at an auction. I thought it was interesting and would make a good companion to my K-22. I believe it is a .38 M&P, originally with fixed sights, possibly a refinished .38/200 given the over-polishing and the lanyard ring. The serial number of 906XXX

## **HOLLYWOOD HARDWARE**

### **Model 1892 "Henry" Rifle**

Before replica Henry rifles became available in Hollywood, the industry recognized the need for something that at least looked like a Henry, and that's when the tried-and-true-Winchester Model 1892 was pressed into service. By removing the forend and fitting the receiver with a dummy follower stud, a .44-40 '92 made a passable Henry. Often, their receivers were even brass plated, or painted gold. Thus, these altered guns found their way into scads of Western movies and T.V. shows. Interestingly, there was at least one golden-age Western that actually used a real Henry.

In the movie "Arizona" (1940), Jean Arthur gives William Holden an original Henry to take with him on a mission. As original Henrys chambered .44 rimfire rounds, and proper blanks were not available, Holden simply brandishes the piece, never firing it. Arthur also gives him a Blakeslee loading setup to go with it, which, while interesting to see in the film, was incorrect, for the Blakeslee was actually used with the Spencer repeater. Model 92 "Henry" shown here is courtesy of Hollywood Guns and Props at the National Firearms Museum in Fairfax, Virginia.



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GUNS & AMMO

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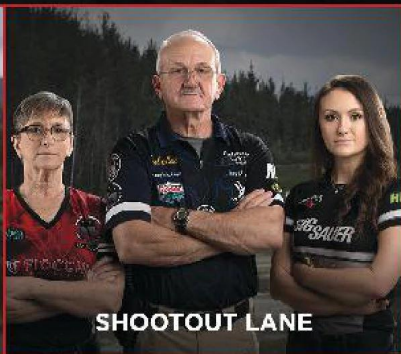
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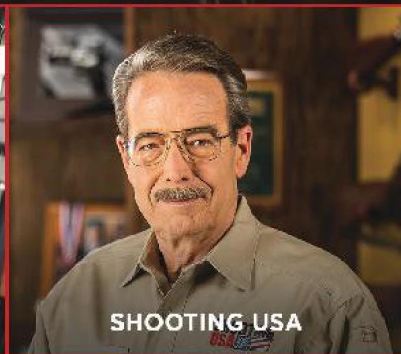
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appears on the butt as well as on the cylinder. All chambers of the cylinder are sleeved down to fit .22 Mag., and each chamber, plus the barrel, have post-1954 Birmingham Nitro proofmarks. The barrel and adjustable rear sight appear to be bespoke. The barrel reads ".22 MAGNUM 1.062", "8 GRs NC, 50" (?) "BULLET". In addition to the Birmingham proofs, the frame contains a crossed sword-type mark with which I am not familiar. I have fired this pistol a few times, but it splits the cartridge case, making ejection very difficult. My question is, what do you think my pistol is?

J.R.  
Spokane, Washington



PISTOLET DE CAVALERIE MODELÉ AN XIII, 17.1mm

**A:** I think you've got it pretty well nailed. It looks like a heavily reworked Smith & Wesson .380/200 (Model K 200) service revolver. The serial number is certainly in the proper range of 700,000 to 1,000,000. This gun was based on the five-screw, square-butt, K-Frame M&P and is basically the same piece as the .38 Special S&W Victory Model, except for some cosmetic differ-

ences. (And the fact it's in .38/200.) Someone went through a lot of trouble to turn this one into a .22 Magnum.

**FRENCH YEAR 13 FLINTLOCK PISTOL**

**Q:** I didn't think you would have an interest in this pistol I purchased in East Berlin in 1969 until I read your comments about R.M.'s "Pirate" pistol in the June 2020 issue. Because

of its inscription, I think my pistol was manufactured in France, and I envision some French soldier losing it on the way to, or from, Russia. There is a number "3" on the brass band holding the barrel. On all of the brass fittings is an "H", and under the "H" marking is a flower within a flower. The scroll/script letters (as near as I can make out) are "1 K", and below that an "M". Below the "M" is "J Sitsike". I hope you've enjoyed reading about this pistol and looking at my pictures as much as I enjoy reading your column every month.


R.L.  
Magnolia, Texas

**A:** Yes, I did enjoy looking at your photos. There is no

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question you have a French model Year 13 Cavalry pistol, officially "Pistolet de Cavalerie Modelé an XIII," so called because it was adopted, as per the French Revolutionary calendar, in the 13th year (1805) following the start of the French Revolution. It was a robust pistol, made in large numbers. Some 301,690 were made between 1806 and 1819. As well, it was copied and/or modified by a number of other nations including Germany, Holland, Italy and Spain. Unfortunately, the name on the lockplate of your pistol doesn't match up with that of any other French or currently identified maker. Some of the numerical and alphabetical markings are quite similar to those employed by the


French, but others used them, as well. Condition of the piece is a bit rough, so it is possible we are misreading the name on the lockplate. To be honest, as I look at a close-up of the marking through the pitting, it appears more and more to me like "Mre imple/ de St Etienne." Impériale de Saint Étienne Arsenal made the largest number of An XIIIs, some 141,355 pistols between 1806 and 1817.

### COMMERCIAL ITHACA 1911A1?

**Q:** I have an old Ithaca 1911A1 (I believe) in .45 ACP with serial number 1277XXX of 1944 that I picked up a few years ago at an online auction. I haven't been able to acquire much information on this

pistol, other than it being a civilian model. Not sure if that fact adds to the value of the pistol, as it hasn't been abused as much as other military pistols. It is in great shape and all parts are original. I became attracted to this handgun because it reminded me of the 1911A1 I carried and used during the Vietnam War. I'd appreciate any information you could provide me on the history of this particular gun, and whether or not there are any differences between the civilian and military models. Also, I'd like to know the estimated value of this pistol. I do not know how to grade such a condition percentage.

**E.S.R**  
Roy, Washington

**A:** Ithaca did not make any commercial 1911A1 pistols during World War II. The serial number of your piece is in the Ithaca military range for 1943. The fact that the piece is in good shape, except for a bright spot on the right side of the frame where it should read "UNITED STATES PROPERTY", which indicates that it was indeed an issue piece. It looks to have had the property mark removed by someone concerned that they might have some sort of illegal pistol. As you note, the serial number on your 1911A1 also appears rather shallow where the frame has been filed. I'd value it at around \$950 to \$1,350, as it's in generally good shape, the filing marks notwithstanding. 

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+0.375" COMB HEIGHT

13.0" LENGTH OF PULL



SHOOTER HEIGHT: 6' 0"

+0.250" COMB HEIGHT

13.25" LENGTH OF PULL



SHOOTER HEIGHT: 5' 10"

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13.50" LENGTH OF PULL

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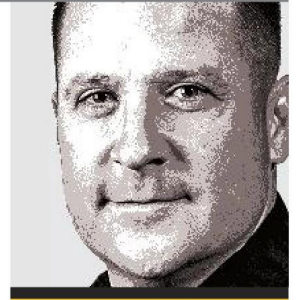


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The SIRT Pro 107 replicates a full-size Smith & Wesson M&P pistol, and the SIRT Pro 110 resembles a Glock 17 or 22, two popular models among law enforcement agencies. Originally colored two-tone red and black, SIRT pistols are offered with red, green, pink or purple metal or polymer slides. These colors help to distinguish them from their live-fire counterparts. A credit to Next Level Training's engineering, SIRT pistol dimensions are so exact that they fit holsters designed for the live-fire pistols. Weight is also similar, which adds to these pistols' realistic handling.

The simulated magazine, also weighted, is removable in the same manner as a live-fire pistol. While SIRT pistols only come with one magazine, additional mags can be purchased separately for about \$22 each, which enables practicing reloads.

In training with them, I've come to appreciate the attention to detail. Front and rear sights closely replicate the sights on a Glock or Smith & Wesson M&P, so the aiming process is familiar. If you desire, you could install after-market sights to accurately depict your firearm's setup. Mirroring functionality continues to the accessory rail, which accepts the same light and laser that you may carry.



The features that set the SIRT pistol apart are the resetting trigger and red or green laser indicators.

The resetting trigger is a benefit to training because the slide doesn't cycle between shots. The trigger's functionality and feel extremely close, meaning dry-fire trigger repetitions will transfer to live-fire shooting.

SIRT pistols have two lasers. The first is a red take-up indicator, which is illuminated by pressure on the trigger. This feature reinforces proper trigger prep and reset. Resist the temptation to use this laser to aim or deactivate it with the flick of a switch.

The second laser is the red- or optional green-shot indicator. This laser is illuminated when the trigger breaks, and it represents where the shot would have impacted. A dot indicates a smooth trigger press while a dash indicates trigger control that needs work. Such feedback is what we're after.

Next Level Training offers excellent articles and videos to expand a SIRT pistol's use including drills. There is also a SIRT AR-15 bolt to experience the same benefits of laser training with an auto-resetting trigger.

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## Why you should consider attaching an Aimpoint ACRO to a carbine.



TOM BECKSTRAND

# MOUNT UP!

**RED DOT SIGHTS** have taken over the optics world for good reason. They are durable, simple, effective, and have evolved so much that there are a couple of red dot categories: full-size and mini.

Mini red dot sights (MRDS) continue to find their way into areas previously unimaginable. When the MRDS first arrived on scene nearly 20 years ago, some saw its immediate application on a pistol's slide. Small enough to ride on top without adding any width to a pistol, such examples were also light enough that they didn't negatively affect the slide's operation, generally.

Placing a small illuminated dot on a target also made accurate shooting much easier (as competition shooters already knew), but especially so for those with aging eyes. An MRDS doesn't require the eye to focus on the front sight. The shooter just has to look through the optic and focus on the target. My tightest groups with a pistol have come from ones equipped with red dot sights.

Traditional MRDS optics never gained much traction on rifles because almost all of these sights use an open emitter. Having an "open emitter" means that the sight's light source is exposed to the elements as it projects the beam of light onto the optic's lens. Many of the small "L" shaped red dot sights on the market today are of the open-emitter design. Anything that drops onto these MRDS can block the emitter, eliminating the dot on the lens and effectively rendering the optic useless. However, there is one MRDS that has a closed emitter, and it makes a ton of sense as a lightweight rifle optic: the Aimpoint ACRO.

While there are many red dot sights available, none have Aimpoint's heritage and performance record. I was issued an Aimpoint CompM2 when I reported to the 82nd Airborne Division in December 1999. I later carried one in Afghanistan and Iraq with 3rd Special Forces Group. I

never once, through four combat deployments, saw any of my unit's issued Aimpoint optics malfunction.

This left an impression on me because combat is hard on equipment. Running men sometimes fall down and land on their rifles. Rifles are also used to physically strike things, and sometimes the optic bears the brunt of the blows. The simple act of getting into and out of vehicles and aircraft often leads to equipment getting bumped and dumped, with little thought given to protecting a rifle's optic.

Regardless of the abuse it takes, it's important for any optic to maintain its shape. As soon as the housing on a sight deforms, it's likely the glass lens(es) will break, or the electronics will become damaged. One of Aimpoint's durability secrets is their use of 7075 aluminum on all of its Comp-series housings. This type of aluminum is a tough material to machine, but it resists deformation when struck, which means that the glass lenses of the red dot sight and the electronics inside are protected.

Most of the closed-emitter red dot sights today are larger than the Aimpoint ACRO. I have purchased a couple of T-1 and T-2 red dot sights simply based on what I saw while serving in the military, and I like them very much. Those sights are slightly larger than the ACRO and have 6061 aluminum housing. I've never seen 6061 fail, but in a worst-case scenario

I'd prefer to have the more durable 7075 housing because I saw the 7075 get beat up pretty good with no functionality issues. Hence, military requirements almost demand this feature. If a someone wants the smallest closed-emitter red dot sight available that's also as durable as anything the military uses, the Aimpoint ACRO is the only game in town.

While the ACRO predominantly sees use mounted on pistols, it is also an excellent option for duty as an AR-15's





Made by B&T for Aimpoint, the OEM quick-detach mount for the ACRO raises the optical axis height to 39mm. **\$118**

**Aimpoint ACRO P-1**

Power: 1X

Objective: 44mm

Size: 1.9 in. (L) x  
1.2 in. (W) x  
1.2 in. (H)

Window: .63 in. x .63 in.

Battery: CR 1225

Reticle: 3.5 MOA dot

Weight: 2.1 oz.

Eye Relief: Unlimited

MSRP: \$599

Manufacturer: Aimpoint,  
877-246-7646,  
aimpoint.us

The Dot Mount for the Aimpoint ACRO is made by Reptilia, weigh 57 grams and features a black or FDE hard-anodized finish. **\$95**

primary red dot sight. It makes an especially compelling selection when paired with today's popular AR pistols that are equipped with arm braces. The AR pistol with an arm brace represents the most usable ballistic horsepower in as small a package as possible.

There are currently two AR-15 pistol mounting options available when using an ACRO as a primary

optic. The first is Aimpoint's quick-detach (QD) mount, which is also the only QD mount currently available for the ACRO. The QD mount puts the optic 39mm above the rail, making it a lower 1/3 co-witness mount. (The lower 1/3 co-witness just means that the iron sights on the AR pistol will be visible in the lower third of the ACRO's window.)

Should the battery die or the optic become inoperable, the shooter can immediately switch to the iron sights still visible through the ACRO. It's a degree of redundancy that's usually a good idea.

The ACRO attaches to the top of the mount with the integral screw built into the optic's housing. There are a series of lugs at the bottom of the ACRO housing that mate with recesses cut into the Aimpoint mount. They prevent the optic from shifting under the heaviest recoil. Aimpoint's mount attaches to both Weaver and Picatinny rails, and has a spring-loaded locking device that ensures the QD arms never unintentionally unlock. The locking arm and mounting hardware are made of steel, and the body of the mount is machined from aluminum.

If you want the most durable mount for the ACRO, this second option is where I would look first.

Reptilia (reptiliacorp.com) is run by the same handful of career firearms-industry professionals that started this small company in order to fill the needs of the Special Operations and intelligence communities. They make premium products for use under the most difficult circumstances. This is also one of those rare times a premium product won't cost a lot of money.

The mount Reptilia offers for the ACRO sits at the 39mm height for the lower-third co-witness and retails for \$95. It is machined out of 7075 aluminum and has nitride steel mounting hardware that provides excellent corrosion, fatigue and wear resistance, especially when compared to untreated steel.

While the regular red dot sight will probably remain more popular on



Both Aimpoint (above, left) and Reptilia (above, right) ACRO mounts present a lower-third co-witness for use with backup sights.

an AR-15 than the ACRO, my AR-15 travel companion currently wears an ACRO on a Reptilia mount. It's a small, yet potent package that represents the best that modern manufacturing offers. The ACRO is durability and reliability in compact a package. **GA**



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Even with the quality of factory ammunition available, it is possible to do simple things to significantly improve the performance. As good as factory ammunition is, it is still a mass-produced product and subject to variability in production. Companies have gone to extreme lengths to control and limit irregularities, but there is always a tolerance range on a number of variables in mass produced ammunition. To be honest, most high-end factory ammunition is extremely consistent and loaded to very tight tolerances. But from time to time, within a Lot of ammunition, things can happen that use all of the tolerance range. In these instances, with some simple tools that you can purchase, the most important of these variables can be measured and either sorted or corrected. In some cases, the changes significantly improve

the ammunition performance. All of these measurements are external measurements of the ammunition. You can't do much about propellant charge weight variation unless you are willing to pull bullets, weigh powder, adjust the charge weight and reload the bullet. This can be done, but

it is very time consuming and will compromise the neck tension, which can introduce other variables in performance.

### Factory Ammunition Variables

**The first variable to consider in factory ammunition is headspace.** Headspace is typically very consistent in factory ammunition. Headspace is defined as the distance from the head of the case to a specific, or datum, diameter on the

shoulder. It is uncommon to encounter factory ammunition that has more than .001-inch to .002-inch variation in headspace. However, there are times during production when tooling breaks or wears and has to be replaced. This can introduce some differences in the headspace dimension, but all cases still fall within the range of allowable headspace. There is nothing technically wrong with this, it is just a variable that is introduced into the ammunition.

Variation in headspace won't cause a lot of variation in ammunition performance as long as it is kept within reasonable limits, say .002 inch. However, if you are trying to get the most from your ammunition, measuring and controlling headspace can provide some small improvements in pressure and therefore velocity uniformity. Variable headspace creates differences in how much the cartridge moves before bottoming on the chamber's shoulder and causes variation in firing-pin strike energy. It also introduces very small variations in case capacity.



HORNADY LOCK-N-LOAD HEADSPACE GAUGE KIT \$40



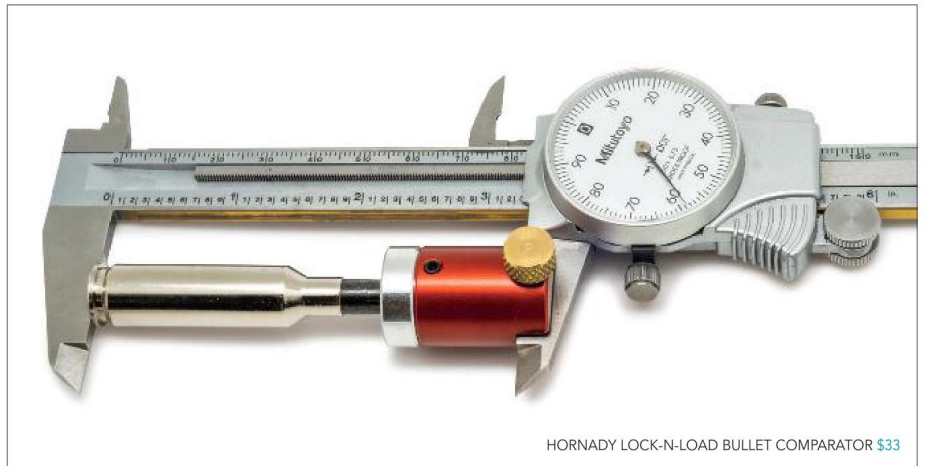
HORNADY LOCK-N-LOAD CARTRIDGE GAUGE \$20

Headspace and variable headspace can contribute to variations in ignition and chamber pressure. This will directly impact the standard deviation (SD) in velocity the ammunition produces. This is usually a very small effect, but I mention it because it can be measured and accounted for.

The next variable that crops up is what I call "bullet seating head height length." This is a measurement from the head of the cartridge case to a diameter on the ogive of the bullet. Usually, the diameter on the ogive would be approximately the bore or rifling diameter of the barrel. It's not terribly important what the diameter of the gauge is as long as it is smaller than bullet diameter and somewhere near the bore diameter. For example, I will measure some 6.5mm Creedmoor ammunition later in this article, but I do not have a 6.5mm gauge in my set so I use a .25-caliber gauge. It gives the same qualitative results, it just contacts the ogive slightly higher.

The length from the base of the case to the ogive on the bullet determines how much the bullet jumps to the rifling. If this length varies, the bullet jumps more or less. This can cause variability in chamber pressure and muzzle velocity. In production, this is caused by slight variations in the bullet ogive's final shape, variability in neck tension or an inside burr on the case mouth. Bullets don't always swage exactly the same when the ogive is swaged, which leads to very small variations in the ogive shape. Slight differences in the case neck anneal during manufacture can lead to differences in neck hardness and tension. When cases are trimmed to length in a mass-production setting, it is done with a high-speed trimmer many times a minute. This process can (and usually does) leave a burr on the case mouth, inside and outside. This burr can vary and create either more or less force required to seat the bullet, which can lead to variations in bullet seating depth. Seating-depth variation causes different jump distances to the rifling, and this in turn leads to variations in pressure and velocity. The bullet seating head height is easy to measure and allows you to sort ammunition for the same bullet head height lengths. If you are a reloader, the same gauge can be used to measure and sort bullets prior to loading.

The last and most significant variation in loaded ammunition is the loaded round's bullet runout. This is a measure of how straight the bullet has been seated in the case rela-



HORNADY LOCK-N-LOAD BULLET COMPARATOR \$33



RCBS CASE MASTER CONCENTRICITY GAUGING TOOL \$144

tive to the axis of the case. The more canted a bullet is on entry and exit of the barrel, the more it will deviate from the aiming point. This is a factor that can vary widely in factory ammunition. I have seen factory ammunition that is incredibly good with .001 inch to .002 inch of runout up to as much as .010 inch, or more. The bigger the runout gets, the bigger the groups. Typically, a runout of .003 inch or less will not appreciably effect group size. At that level, other factors will affect accuracy more than runout.

There are several tools that can measure the runout of ammunition, and some allow you to correct or straighten the ammunition. Doing this can provide a substantial improvement in the accuracy of factory ammunition, as we will soon see.

**Tools for Inspecting Factory Ammunition** There are basically two ways to measure the headspace of a round of ammunition. The first is to drop the cartridge into a caliber-specific headspace gauge and measure with calipers the amount the head of the case that sticks out of the gauge. This method allows a comparison and sorting of ammunition. These types of gauges are available from Forester, Hornady, Lyman and L.E. Wilson. In my opinion, the easiest way to measure headspace is by using the Hornady Lock-N-Load (LNL) headspace gauges. These are gauges that attach to your calipers that have different size inserts that correspond to the datum diameter of different classes of cartridges. This setup allows for extremely quick measurements of headspace.

Bullet head height distance can be measured with the Hornady LNL bullet comparator. It is just like the headspace gauge in that it has a series of inserts that attach to your calipers with different hole sizes corresponding to the caliber of bullet. The gauge stops on the ogive of the bullet, and you can measure and sort ammunition by head height.



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Several tools are available for measuring a loaded round's bullet runout. RCBS offers its Case Master Concentricity Gauging Tool (\$144, rcbs.com) that allows the measurement of runout, but not the correction of it. The Case Master measures a number of other ammunition and case dimensions. Forester also offers its Co-Ax Case and Cartridge Inspector Tool (\$138, forsterproducts.com) that only measures runout. On the other hand, the Hornady LNL Concentricity Tool (\$125, midwayusa.com) allows the measurement of runout as well as the correction of it. With this tool, you can measure and adjust the runout of loaded ammunition to very low and uniform values.



by .006 inch or more. For ammunition of the quality I tested here, it would be good enough to sort out the extreme high or low rounds. To investigate the differences in performance bullet head height might cause, I fired three, five-shot groups with the rounds sorted by head height and all measured the same. As you can see in Table 2, there is no real statistical improvement in accuracy, but the velocity uniformity was substantially improved. The extreme spread (ES) and SD were significantly

**So how does this all work?** To show benefits using the methods I've described, I used a factory load of 6.5 Creedmoor ammunition to investigate what performance improvements can be expected from measuring, sorting and straightening the ammunition. I will not mention the manufacturer of the ammunition, as this test is not about any brand.

After several fouling shots I fired three, five-shot groups out of the box to establish a performance baseline. These results appear in Table 1.

I measured headspace of the loads with the Hornady LNL headspace gauge and found them to all be within .001 inch of the same measurement. This is quite good, and there would be nothing to be gained by trying to do any sorting. If you have a sample of ammunition that has upwards of .005 inch of headspace difference, you might experience an improvement by sorting out the extreme samples.

Next, I checked bullet head height with the LNL bullet comparator. As I mentioned, my set did not have a .26 comparator so I used the .25 comparator. I found a difference of .004 inch in head height with the majority of the rounds being within .001 inch of each other. This is very good ammunition. It is not uncommon to find head bullet height measurements varying

better than the out-of-the-box factory ammunition. This improvement in ES and SD resulted in smaller groups downrange because of less vertical stringing.

The last test I conducted was to fire three, five-shot groups. All were sorted to the same bullet head height and concentricity adjusted to .003 inch or less. I measured the loaded round concentricity of the ammunition out of the box with the Hornady LNL concentricity tool. The rounds varied from .001 inch to .007 inch. This is reasonable for

factory ammunition, but definitely leaves room for improvement. You can see from Table 3 that there was a significant improvement in accuracy with the uniformity adjusted to virtually exactly the same as Table 2.

**Conclusions** The results showed evidence of what can be accomplished by doing a little work to factory ammunition. It is not a big enough test to pound the table and claim absolute statistical proof, but it shows the trends. Definitely, I can say that after nearly 15 years of straightening the runout of factory loads, it consistently pays a big dividend in accuracy.

Factory ammunition these days is of unprecedented quality and performance. However, at times, there is room to do some very simple things to gain even more performance from factory ammunition. Even if you aren't a reloader, by purchasing a couple hundred dollars of tools, you can add a new dimension to your shooting and gain a higher level of performance — and satisfaction in your results.

**6.5 CREEDMOOR**

TABLE 1

UNMODIFIED FACTORY AMMUNITION				
GROUP	VELOCITY (FPS)	ES	SD	GROUP (IN.)
1	2,918	39	16	1.19
2	2,886	60	22	1.31
3	2,900	50	23	1.38
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>2,901</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1.29</b>

**6.5 CREEDMOOR**

TABLE 2

FACTORY RUNOUT ALL SAME HEAD HEIGHT				
GROUP	VELOCITY (FPS)	ES	SD	GROUP (IN.)
1	2,918	35	14	1.44
2	2,927	29	12	0.75
3	2,917	24	9	1.50
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>2,921</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1.23</b>

**6.5 CREEDMOOR**

TABLE 3

RUNOUT ADJUSTED ≤ .003-in. SAME HEAD HEIGHT				
GROUP	VELOCITY (FPS)	ES	SD	GROUP (IN.)
1	2,894	49	19	0.94
2	2,915	22	8	1.03
3	2,935	19	7	1.06
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>2,915</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1.01</b>

Notes: Five-shot groups at 100 yards. Velocities measured with Chrony chronograph. Rifle: T/C Icon with a pillar-bedded, 24-in. Bartlein barrel given a 1:7-in. twist.





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BY TOM BECKSTRAND | PHOTOS BY MARK FINGAR

**RUGER'S** LATEST  
CHARGER 9mm WANTS  
TO BE YOUR NEXT  
SELF-DEFENSE PISTOL.

# PERSONAL SECURITY





SB TACTICAL TF1913 FOLDING ARM BRACE **NOT** INCLUDED.

A QUICK LOOK at the new Ruger PC Charger in 9mm leads some folks to ask the question, “What is that?” Well, it’s a pistol. It’s a pistol that can be outfitted with a red dot, an arm brace, and a standard-capacity magazine to make it a low-cost, but highly effective self-defense firearm.

The PC Charger pistol firmly squares off as a more-affordable alternative to the B&T APC9K (\$2,450), CZ Scorpion EVO 3 S1 pistol (\$884), HK SP5 (\$2,800), Rock River RUK-9 (\$1,100) and SIG Sauer MPX K (\$1,830).

Perhaps one of the most appealing aspects of these are their status as “pistols,” which allows the owner to take them anywhere he can legally carry concealed. Granted, no one is stuffing one of these in their pants, but tossed in a backpack these guns provide a higher hit probability than a regular pistol when properly outfitted.

**Moving the Goal Posts** This unorthodox-looking pistol is part of Ruger’s Charger line that originally appeared in 2015 as a takedown rimfire. However, the new Charger has features to make it an excellent choice for personal defense. The first is the chambering in 9mm. Nine-mil ammunition has seen a ton of development and is now the most common round issued to law enforcement. The caliber is a great selection for self-defense and training, and is common enough that it’s one of the most inexpensive centerfire cartridges on the market.

When I travel, I like to be more heavily armed than when I’m hanging around the house. I prefer firearms that can be shouldered because they are easier to shoot accurately. A pistol that can be put to the shooter’s shoulder for firing features the best of both. Since this is a pistol and pistols are legally allowed to have arm braces, this is a good time to review the legal ins and outs of arm braces when mounted on pistols such as the new PC Charger.

Ruger PC Charger	
Type:	Blowback operated, semiautomatic
Cartridge:	9mm
Capacity:	17+1 rds.
Barrel:	6.5 in., 1:10-in. twist
Overall Length:	16.5 in.
Weight:	5 lbs., 3 oz.
Grips:	Ruger AR-556
Finish:	Anodized (aluminum), blued (steel)
Trigger:	4 lbs.
Sights:	none
MSRP:	\$799
Manufacturer:	Ruger, 336-949-5200, ruger.com



GLOCK 33-ROUND MAGAZINE **NOT** INCLUDED.

The Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) has made multiple rulings on pistols and arm braces, and every time the rules seem to change. In fact, at the time of this article’s writing, the ATF was considering making a fourth ruling that will likely be hostile to

supporters of the Second Amendment. This is one area of the law where the government continuously changes its interpretation of the law, so it’s important to stay educated when attaching arm braces on pistols.

That said, the most current ruling on March 21, 2017, states, “incidental, sporadic, or situational” contact with the shooter’s shoulder does not constitute a redesign of a brace-equipped firearm, so long as the firearm remains in its approved configuration. As long as the consumer doesn’t alter the arm brace or the firearm, it is legal to use. An alteration that could land a person in trouble would be removing the the handstop on this model Charger and replacing it with a vertical foregrip. The law is unclear if this constitutes a “redesign,” so assume it’ll get you in trouble.



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The PC Charger 9mm features an integrated 7075-T6 aluminum rail for mounting Pic-rail arm-brace mounts. SB Tactical's new TF1913 folding arm brace is shown.

**Performance in a Tiny Package** The PC Charger comes with a section of Picatinny rail machined into the back of the receiver. This section of Pic rail allows for the attachment of a stabilizing arm brace. The arm brace evaluated here is SB Tactical's new TF1913 (\$200, sb-tactical.com).

The TF1913 arm brace is only .85-inch wide and lays flat up against the PC charger when folded. The brace can be moved vertically on the rail to get the comb into the height most desirable for the shooter. The lowest setting is where the brace lays flat against the receiver.

The brace opens with a tug and locks into place. The vertical portion of the brace (similar to a butt pad) was rigid enough to provide good support when making "incidental, sporadic, or situational" contact with my shoulder. The length of pull with the brace extended is 12½ inches.

The trigger Ruger put in the PC Charger uses "proven 10/22 components." The PC Charger trigger measured 4 pounds (even), and it had so little creep that most of the time it felt like there was none. If this pistol were mine, I'd leave the trigger alone. The 4-pound pull weight was pleasant for plinking, but heavy enough that I'd consider it appropriate for home defense.

This is a take-down (TD) Charger, so the handguard and barrel readily separate from the receiver. Completely disassembled, the receiver and folding brace seen here measure a scant 11 inches, making it smaller than most laptop computers. All it takes to remove the barrel and handguard is to lock the bolt



The trigger assembly incorporates a number of components found on the 10/22's trigger assembly. G&A's test sample provided a clean 4-pound-average pull measurement.



Easy takedown enables quick separation of the barrel/forend assembly from the action for even more compact transportation.

and depress the tab under the barrel while rotating the handguard. Then, the two pieces separate. It takes seconds to separate the two.

As can be seen by the accuracy table, the PC Charger performed well with five shots at 50 yards averaging 1.31 inches with three loads. I fired the Charger from the bench with a red dot sight mounted and attribute the excellent accuracy to the crisp trigger and tight barrel lock-up.

The removeable barrel has a knurled nut that sits close to the receiver. The nut clicks as it turns, so it's easy for the shooter to repeat any adjustments made. Spinning that nut adjusts how much distance there is between the lug abutments in the receiver and the barrel face that contacts the receiver. The locking lugs on the barrel seating against the receiver's lug abutments ensure headspace is always correct (which is set at the factory), but spinning the nut ensures the barrel can't move under recoil.

It's easy to tell if the barrel is too loose by grabbing it and pushing/pulling it away from and towards the receiver. If there's any movement, the barrel is too loose. Another indi-

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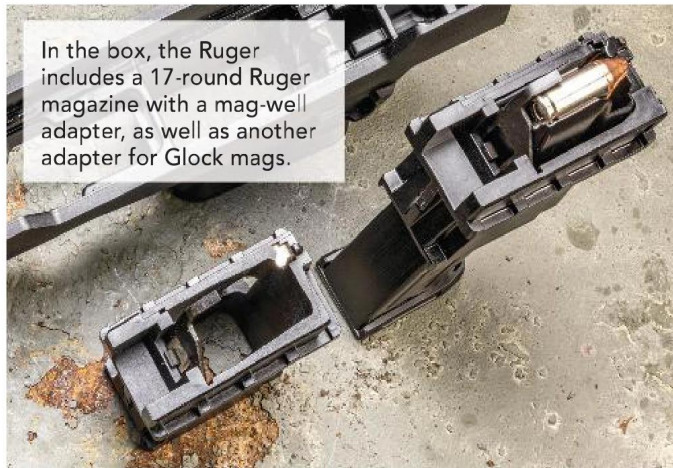
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A knurled nut sets the proper distance between the barrel's breech face and the lug abutments in the receiver.



In the box, the Ruger includes a 17-round Ruger magazine with a mag-well adapter, as well as another adapter for Glock mags.



The charging handle is easily removed and can be repositioned to either side. The barrel is also suppressor ready.

ator the barrel is too loose is poor accuracy. If accuracy is greater than 2 inches for five shots at 50 yards with quality ammunition, the barrel is probably loose. Simply tighten the nut to fix.

**Feeding Options** Perhaps the most popular feature of the PC Charger is the ability to use both Ruger and Glock magazines. The Charger ships to accept Ruger SR-Series and Security-9 magazines, and includes one 17-round magazine. The SR-series magazines are available in 10-, 15- and 17-round capacities. Those magazines retail for around \$40, but can be found online for about \$25 each.

An Easter egg in the box reveals a magazine adaptor for Glock 9mm magazines. These are everywhere and many shooters already have a pile at home. The Charger accepts everything from a 10-rounder to the G19's 15-round mag to the G17's 17- and optional 33-round mags. I did my endurance testing using Glock magazines because I figured if there was going to be a problem feeding, it would be with the Glock magazine. There were no problems.

Being able to use Glock magazines with the PC Charger opens up the pistol to strong aftermarket support that Glock enjoys. There are a number of companies that manufacture magazines and magazine accessories for Glock pistols — everything from clear magazines to aluminum extensions.

**Leaving No Lefty Behind**

The Charger is ambidextrous and can place the charging handle and the magazine release on either side. What isn't ambidextrous is the safety, so left-handed shooters will have to gun-juggle a bit.

Finally, the Charger has an integral Picatinny rail atop the receiver and a threaded barrel. These are two features that



**PERFORMANCE**

LOAD	VELOCITY (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVG. GROUP (IN.)
SIG Sauer V-Crown 124-gr. JHP	1,301	23	8.8	.72	1.16
Hornady Crit. Duty 135-gr. FLX	1,041	22	8.7	1.06	1.41
Federal HST 147-gr. JHP	1,024	23	8.9	1.13	1.35

Notes: Accuracy is the average of five, five-shot groups at 50 yards. Velocity is the average of five shots across a LabRadar chronograph placed adjacent to the muzzle.

eliminate some of the stress associated with shooting, but for different reasons.

The integral optic rail guarantees the scope base will never come loose. Once the optic mount is torqued to the optic and tightened to the receiver, there is nothing to

work loose. A periodic check of optic-to-mount and mount-to-receiver is all that's required. Scope bases can and do work loose on occasion, and the screws holding them in place often require scope removal to check.

I could make the argument that threaded barrels should be mandatory these days thanks to the availability of suppressors. Suppressor remove all blast and make shooting more enjoyable.

The PC Charger 9mm pistol allows the owner to have a gun that excels at everything from plinking to self-defense. Ammunition is still available and inexpensive. To reiterate, because it's a pistol it can be carried concealed in a backpack for those times a little more firepower would be comforting. I can think of few companions I'd enjoy traveling with more. **G&A**



The optic rail on top of the receiver is integral and reassuring for its strength. The charging handle is reversible for preferred use.





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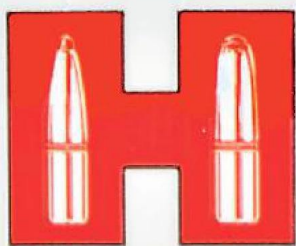


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# THE SWEET SPOT

A FIRST LOOK AT **HORNADY'S** 6mm ARC,  
AND IT'S ALREADY BEEN ADOPTED BY THE U.S. MILITARY.

BY ERIC R. POOLE | PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ

**RIFLE & OPTICS EDITOR** Tom Beckstrand introduced Hornady's 6mm Advanced Rifle Cartridge (ARC) to the Guns & Ammo's digital audience with a YouTube video that immediately went viral on June 3, 2020. This was a carefully kept secret as the cartridge had been developed, standardized and adopted by a notable unit within the Special Operations community. This occurred before the existence of the cartridge was made public. For that unnamed unit, we've only been told that "the 6 ARC is a replacement for the 7.62 NATO for combat operations." This is the second time that the announcement of a new cartridge was preceded by the military's adoption; The first was Hornady's .300 PRC announced on October 16, 2018.

**The Why** Our enemies in the War on Terror have learned that they can escape the effective range of the 5.56 NATO round if they keep a 500- to 600-meter buffer, which isn't difficult in the arid desert terrain of the Middle East or the jagged mountain ranges across Afghanistan. To meet these challenges, a number of military units have employed 7.62/.308-based rifles such as the FN Mk 17, HK 417, Knight's Armament Mk 11 and M110 series, as well as a few others. However, we must not forget that the weight penalty of carrying these heavier guns and a combat load of ammo is a burden on our troops. Minimizing the weight they carry is always a focus of procurement specialists, which also makes logistics more economical and efficient.



**Why didn't the Department of Defense (DoD) select another cartridge already in existence? For example, the 6.5 Creedmoor is the most popular rifle cartridge sold commercially and is easily capable of ranges beyond 600 meters.**

The 6.5 Creedmoor is based on the 7.62/.308 case, which means semiautomatic-rifle platforms would still be the same size as the AR-10/SR-25 platforms, and ammo weight would be similar. The same answer applies to other cartridges such as the .260 Remington. Plus, the velocity of the Creedmoors are faster, which means they have a shorter barrel life than the 6mm ARC. A 6.5 Creedmoor barrel typically lasts between 2,000 and 3,000 rounds, while the 6mm Creedmoor experiences serious velocity drops starting between 1,500 and 1,800 rounds. You can expect the barrel life of the 6 ARC to last 5,000 rounds (similar to a 7.62 NATO), in part because it's burning less powder.

**How does the 6 ARC best the 6.8 SPC or 6.8 SPC II?** The 6.8 SPC was an improvement over the 5.56 NATO developed in 2002, and was introduced to SAAMI by Remington. Though the 6.8 achieved better terminal ballistics at close-quarter distances than the 5.56 NATO, it was never effective out to 1,000 yards. At close ranges, the 6.8 SPC is great for hunting and personal defense, but few major companies still support the cartridge due to a lack of demand.

**Why wasn't the .220 Russian or 6 PPC selected?** Invented in the 1950s, the 5.6x39mm is a 7.62x39mm cartridge necked down to accept a 5.6mm bullet. SAKO and Lapua introduced it to the U.S. as the .220 Russian in 1965. It became the parent case for several cartridges, including 6mm PPC and the 6.5 Grendel, the latter of which the 6mm

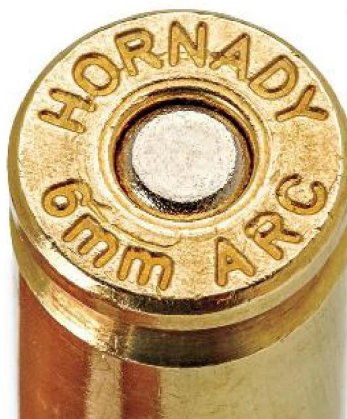
ARC was designed on.

Since it was introduced as a competition cartridge in 1975, the 6mm PPC has developed a reputation for being one of the most accurate and successful short-range benchrest cartridges. Unfortunately, the 6 PPC, and other benchrest cartridges such as the 6 BR and 6 Dasher, are short-range wildcats for competition use. With such non-standard wildcats, dimensions vary.

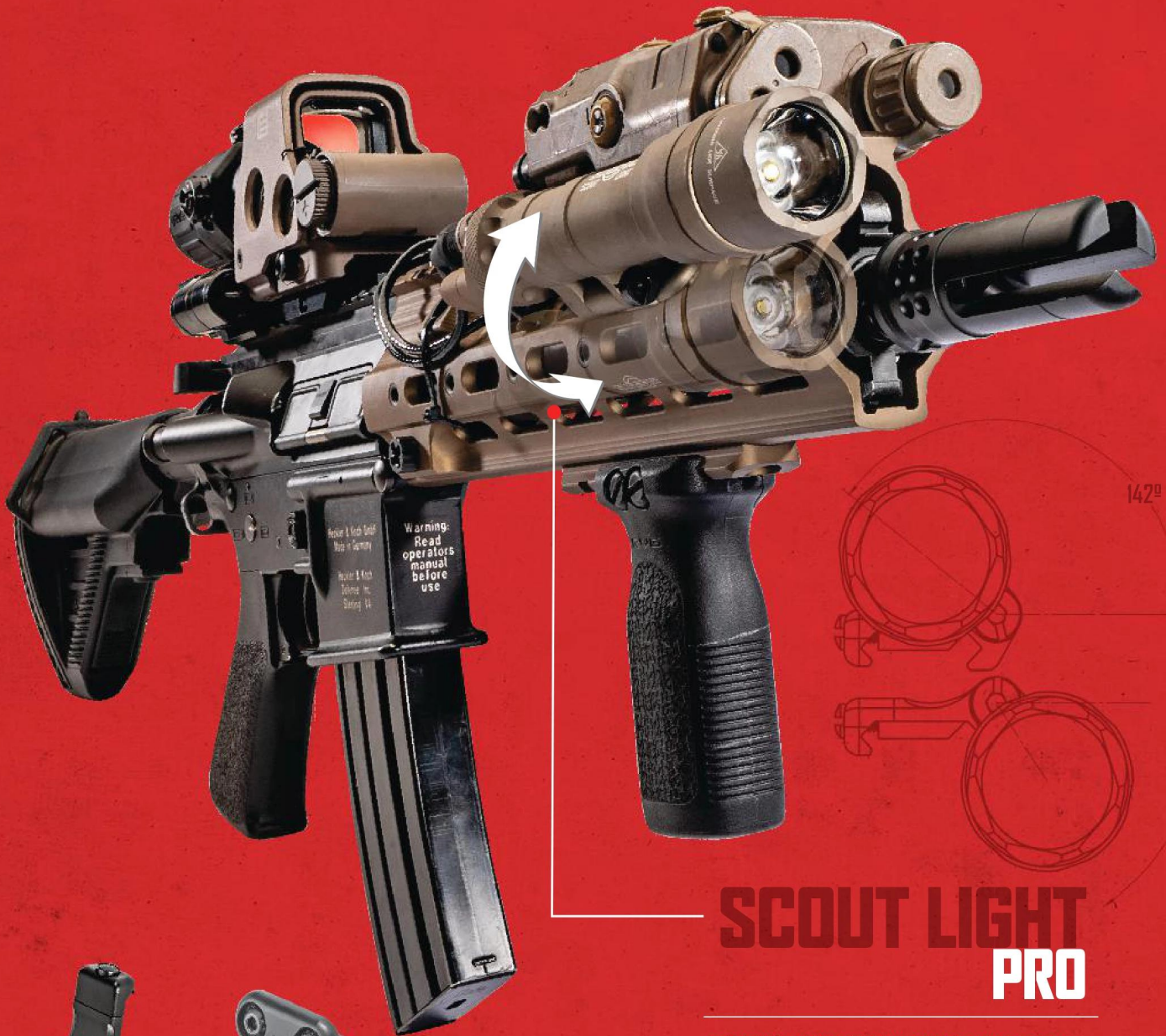
**And the .24 Nosler?** The .24 Nosler, when loaded with a longer bullet like a 105-grain boattail, exceeds the overall length limitations of an AR-15 magazine. The 6mm ARC will accept 108-grain bullets, as well as heavier ones such as 110s without the same magazine compatibility issue.

**Why not the .224 Valkyrie?** Federal necked down a 6.8 SPC case to accept a .22-caliber bullet in 2017 to create the .224 Valkyrie. It managed to fit cartridges loaded with very fast 60-grain Nosler Ballistic Tips to 90-grain MatchKings with high ballistic coefficients (BC) in an AR-15-pattern rifle. However, the .224 Valkyrie experienced feeding and reliability issues. To add, the 6 ARC is easier to see hits and misses at distance than the .22-caliber bullet. The .224 Valkyrie offers many bullet options for varmints, but many states require a minimum of 6mm to hunt bigger game such as deer.

**What about the 6.5 Grendel?** In fact, the 6mm ARC is based on a 6.5 Grendel case, but there are differences. The 6 ARC is built on a necked-down Grendel case, but the shoulder of the case has been pulled back .0030 inch. These new dimensions mean that the 6mm ARC is better qualified to optimize Very Low Drag (VLD) projectiles that already exist for improved stability and range.

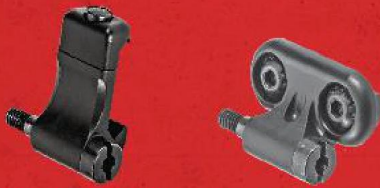


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**Benefiting from the Grendel** Basing the 6 ARC on the Grendel case meant that the accuracy potential could harness the benefits of the 6mm projectiles, but it also allows the use of readily available AR-15 bolts and magazines. Using the Grendel case as a basis for the 6 ARC's design meant that there wouldn't be feeding, extraction or ejection issues as there typically are when trying to get a new cartridge to run reliably in an AR-15 platform.

The 6.5 Grendel typically uses a heavier 123-grain projectile with a velocity of 2,580 feet per second (fps) out of a 24-inch barrel. (There are even 150-grain-class projectiles for the Grendel, but there's a significant loss in velocity.) Hornady's Match ELD-M bullet offers a BC of .506 (G1) and .255 (G7). I own an Alexander Arms DMR rifle in 6.5 Grendel and regularly see velocities using this bullet average 2,465 fps. Its maximum-effective range tops out near 800 yards. The 7.62 NATO projectile slows to subsonic at a little more than 1,050 yards, while the 6.5 Grendel is subsonic just before 1,000 yards. The 6mm ARC doesn't go subsonic until 1,100 to 1,200 yards when shot out of an 18-inch barrel, and 1,300 yards when fired from a 24-inch barrel.

The 6mm ARC was developed around a 108-grain bullet, specifically Hornady's Match ELD-M. The BC for this bullet is .536 (G1) and .270 (G7), so it has the potential to maintain energy, velocity and wind resistance at long distance very well. The SAAMI chart indicates that the muzzle velocity is 2,700 fps, while Hornady produced 2,750 fps out of a 24-inch barrel. The lighter 103-grain ELD-X bullet in Hornady's Precision Hunter load increases that velocity in the same barrel slightly to 2,800 fps. However, the 6mm ARC will service the military and civilian shooters more often in AR-15-type rifles, meaning barrel lengths will likely be closer to 18 inches. Guns & Ammo's first sample rifle chambered in 6mm ARC was a Ruger AR-556 MPR with an 18-inch barrel. Using a LabRadar chronograph to measure velocities, we saw an average of 2,559 fps using the 108-grain Match load and 2,633 fps with the 103-grain ELD-X. The Match load lost 191 fps, and the Precision Hunter load lost 167 fps in a 6-inch-shorter barrel. During a separate test using



LabRadar, Tom Beckstrand recorded a velocity of 2,698 fps out of a Seekins Precision DMR with a 20-inch barrel while shooting the 108-grain Match load.

SAAMI indicates that chamber pressure is set at 52,000 psi, which is mild and extends the potential barrel life, as well as the life of a rifle's components. Beckstrand believes this has to do with the AR-15 bolt used to shoot the 6.5 Grendel. "The 5.56 bolt face is pretty beefy around the perimeter," Beckstrand said. He added, "The 6.5 Grendel bolt face doesn't have as much mass beneath the lugs, which means the two lugs flanking the extractor are going to be vulnerable to breakage if you hot-rod the cartridge." The max pressure that SAAMI has set for the 6mm ARC will ensure that rifles and components last.

Troops will be able to engage the enemy in close quarters and engage threats with greater effectiveness out to 700 meters, and the cartridge doesn't fall below subsonic velocities until beyond 1,000 meters.

**At The Range** Since its introduction, the 6mm ARC has benefited from a lot of marketing and conversation. One of the first concerns was what guns were going to become available, but it quickly became obvious that Hornady had been collaborating with a long list of gun makers since it was SAAMI approved on January 20, 2020. Among them are Barrett, Brownells, Christensen Arms, Geissele, Howa, Mossberg, Proof Research, Uintah Precision and Wilson Combat. To evaluate the 6mm ARC in time for the public launch on June 3, Tom Beckstrand obtained a Seekins Precision DMR, and I ordered a new Ruger AR-556.

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Beckstrand's review of Seekins' DMR rifle in 6mm ARC is forthcoming, but I was joined by Associate Editor John Oller to develop performance data at 100, 200, 500 and 1,000 yards with Ruger's AR.

The Ruger AR-556 featured a wonderful sub-4-pound trigger and an 18-inch cold-hammer-forged (CHF) barrel. Ruger selected a 1:7.7-inch twist rate for the 6mm ARC, the same as used in their barrels chambered for 6mm Creedmoor. At 550 feet above sea level during a 72-degree clear day, Oller and I observed slower-than-expected velocities averaging 2,560 fps for 108-grain ELD-M and 2,630 fps for the ELD-X. With a new Leupold Mark 5HD 5-25x56mm scope providing a clear view of our targets, we each managed several five-shot groups that measured near .75 inch at 100 yards. Unexpectedly, the 103-grain ELD-X hunting load shot tighter groups than the ELD-M! The best group was fired by Oller and measured .46 inch, while my best was .52 inch. I reasonably believe that Ruger's AR-556 is capable of half-minute accuracy when paired with the right load. It's a nice rifle.

However, there were a number of groups with flyers that opened some up to 1 and 1.25 inches. Usually four rounds would be tight with a fifth flyer elsewhere on the target. At 200 yards, groups averaged between 2 and 3½ inches. We attributed this to the ammunition's inconsistent velocity observed earlier. Despite our previous experiences testing Hornady Match ammunition, the LabRadar measured an extreme spread (ES) of 63 fps and a standard deviation (SD) of 19.6 for 10

rounds, twice the variance we expect. The Precision Hunter load produced an ES of 41 fps and an SD of 14.2, which explained why we saw better groups downrange. We have ordered new lots of each load for further testing and have reported our findings to Hornady. If the velocity spread can be reduced, I suspect that flyers would be eliminated.

Still, the Ruger shot well and Oller continued to impress at 500 and 1,000 yards. I plugged in the velocity information to the Hornady 4DOF app on my iPhone and determined that we needed to come up 13.27 MOA (3.86 MRAD) at 500 yards and 43.42 MOA (12.63 MRAD) at a grand. For comparison, my Alexander Arms DMR in 6.5 Grendel with same-length barrel uses almost the same come-ups at 500 yards, but required a total of 45.76 MOA (13.31 MRAD) to touch steel at 1,000. Our best four-shot group at 500 yards measured 3.4 inches, while 1,000 yards yielded a 5.25-inch group. A fourth shot was attempted that struck the bullseye, but opened the group up to 12 inches. We are eager to revisit long-range shooting when we have a more consistent lot of ammunition on hand.

Ruger AR-556 MRP	
Type:	Direct impingement, semiautomatic
Cartridge:	6mm ARC
Capacity:	27 rds.
Barrel:	18 in., 1:7.7-in. twist
Overall Length:	35 in. to 38.25 in.
Weight:	6.8 lbs.
Handguard:	15 in., free-float, M-Lok
Stock:	Magpul MOE SL, 6-position adj.
Grip:	Magpul MOE
Finish:	Type III Hardcoat anodized (aluminum); Melonite (steel)
Trigger:	3 lbs., 13.8 oz. (tested)
Safety:	Two-position, lever
Sights:	None
MSRP:	\$899
Manufacturer:	Ruger, ruger.com

**Projections** There is still a lot of testing we need to complete, but our first look has everyone involved excited. The 6mm ARC looks extremely promising, so much so that we've already

ordered several other rifles and additional loads for testing. Though the 6mm ARC was developed to run in a gas gun, almost everyone wants to know how it shoots in a bolt gun. Though I believe 100-yard accuracy out of a gas gun will average between .75 and 1.25 inches for most, I see the 6mm ARC delivering half-minute groups from a small bolt-action given a sweet barrel. Regardless of platform, I'm willing to bet that the 6mm ARC will soon be formidable competition between 400 and 800 yards versus other cartridges. **G&A**



Three shots grouped 5.25 inches at 1,000 yards using Hornady Match 108-grain ELD-M.

**PERFORMANCE**

LOAD	VEL. (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVG. GROUP (IN.)
Hornady Precision Hunter 103-gr. ELD-X	2,633	41	14.2	.46	.87
Hornady Match 108-gr. ELD-M	2,559	63	19.6	.75	1.02

Notes: Accuracy is the average of five, five-shot groups from 100 yards on a benchrest. Velocity is the average of 10 shots recorded by a Labradar adjacent to the muzzle.



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# ENTII



# STATED

THE **BARRETT MRAD** WAS DESIGNATED TO BE THE U.S. ARMY'S AND MARINE CORPS' NEXT STANDARD-ISSUE SNIPER RIFLE.

BY SGM KYLE E. LAMB (RET.) | PHOTOS BY LUKAS LAMB





**WHEN U.S. MILITARY TROOPS** are taught to communicate, they are told to give the “BLUF,” an acronym for “Bottom Line, Up Front.” Roger that. In March 2020, the U.S. Army and Marine Corps officially announced that they will procure a multi-caliber variant of the Barrett Multi-Role Advanced Design (MRAD) as their standard sniper rifle in 2021.

Currently, snipers employ multiple rifle platforms in varying calibers to fulfill a variety of missions. The MRAD will become the central platform that will accept various cartridges as each mission dictates.

**The Timeline** The Barrett MRAD is the result of a 2009 Precision Sniper Rifle (PSR) solicitation from the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). It was engineered from Barrett’s 98B with features such as a folding and adjustable stock to allow the rifle to be transported more easily. The most significant change was a military requirement for the PSR to feature user-changeable barrels to accept multiple calibers. On the MRAD, this is achieved by loosening two Torx screws in the receiver to allow the barrel to be removed from the front of the monolithic receiver and handguard. To complete the conversion, the user had to change the bolt face and the magazine with certain cartridges. Time to change a barrel or caliber? Two minutes or less.

Remington’s Modular Sniper Rifle (MSR) was selected as the winner of the PSR competition in 2013 and designated the Mk 21 PSR. However, USSOCOM decided that the Mk 21 did not conform to the requirements in 2018 and restarted the program. In 2019, USSOCOM awarded Barrett Manufacturing a \$50 million contract for the MRAD in .338 Norma Magnum (NM)

#### Barrett MRAD

**Type:** Bolt Action

**Cartridge:** 6.5 Creedmoor, .308 Win., .300 WM, .300 PRC (tested), .300 NM, .338 LM, .338 NM

**Capacity:** 10 rds.

**Barrel:** 20 in. and 24 in.; 26 in. (.300 PRC, .338 LM)

**Overall Length:** 45.4 in. to 49.4 in.

**Weight:** 12 lbs., 15 oz. to 14 lbs., 8 oz.

**Stock:** Barrett; folding, adjustable length of pull and comb

**Grip:** Magpul MOE

**Optic Rail:** M1913, 22 in., 20 MOA, integral

**Materials:** 7000-series aluminum

**Finish:** Cerakote; Black, Tungsten Grey, FDE, Burnt Bronze, OD Green

**Trigger:** 3 lbs., 8 oz.; adjustable module

**Sights:** None

**MSRP:** \$6,154

**Manufacturer:** Barrett Manufacturing, 615-896-2938, barrett.net

and named it the Mk 22 Advanced Sniper Rifle (ASR). The kit issued to troops included barrels and bolts for .308 Winchester/7.62 NATO, .300 NM and .338 NM. In March 2020, the Army indicated that it would purchase 536 MRAD sniper systems for \$10.13 million, while the Marine Corps said it would purchase 250 MRAD systems for \$4 million to “replace all current bolt-action sniper rifles” currently in service. Hence, the Mk 22 ASR will replace the Remington M2020 Enhanced Sniper Rifle (ESR), the semi-automatic Barrett M107 in .50 BMG and the Remington Mk 13 series.

**My Take** The MRAD is amazing. There you have it folks, need I say more?

At first glance, the MRAD may remind you of one of the many large-framed rifles that Barrett has brought to market since being founded in a garage by Ronnie Barrett in 1982. Barrett’s guns have enjoyed a reputation for ruggedness that have withstood the rigors of the battlefield since deploying to the Persian Gulf in 1990.

When I first saw the MRAD, I didn’t even give it a second look. As a U.S. Army Special Forces sniper and a sniper instructor with 1st Special Forces Group, I’m just a guy who can appreciate the application of fire from extended distances. Why wasn’t it love at first sight? I’m not sure, but perhaps I thought that the gun looked heavy and clunky.

When I finally visited Barrett Manufacturing’s headquarters in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, I walked into my old buddy Bryan James’ office. (He’s now Barrett’s vice president of sales.) There, I had the opportunity to discuss many of the projects they are working on, one of which happened to be the MRAD for

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The MRAD stock folds on the right side, reducing overall length for a minimum footprint and greater ease of transport. When folded, it encapsulates the bolt knob.

the solicitation. He gave me a quick run-down when two impressions were made. First, the MRAD isn't as heavy as it looks.

It checks in at about 13.4 pounds which isn't anorexic, but the gun I was looking at was chambered for the .300 PRC that has a maximum overall length (OAL) of 3.7 inches and requires a magnum rifle action. A sniper doesn't want a lightweight rifle chambered in an extended long-range howitzer-of-a-cartridge like the .300 PRC.

Another detail I wouldn't have noticed without handling this fine example of ballistic hardware, was how smooth the bolt action cycled. I'm used to large sniper rifles having a bolt that requires some work to unlock, cycle and lock. The MRAD is as smooth as a custom rifle, but one with a polymer sleeve that fits around the entire length of the bolt while cycled. BLUF: Amazing.

I must have had intrigue written on my face because James nodded and asked, "You wanna shoot one?" I morphed into a little kid.

**Rounds Downrange** In my excitement, I rapid fired questions off to James. "Is there elevation built into the full-length rail? Can the user easily change barrels? What tools do I need to adjust the stock? What feedback has the military given of the rifle?"

My last question threw my host off. Barrett had already started shipping a good quantity of these rifles off to the U.S. Navy's SEAL community. USSOCOM was also finishing up their testing



The U.S. Army selected a Mark 5HD 5-25x56 scope in a proprietary FDE coating with the Mil-Grid reticle for the Mk 22.

of the ASR candidates in 2019, which included Accuracy International's ASR. Remington Defense had partnered with Christensen Arms on a proposal (using Christensen's carbon-fiber-wrapped barrel), but withdrew before having to submit a sample once they concluded they couldn't win. If you have shot the MRAD, it may not be a shock as to why Barrett won the coveted ASR contract with the military-spec version of the MRAD.

Back to my other questions: Yes, there is 20 MOA built into the one-piece mil-spec optic rail. (Early MRADs had a 30 MOA slope.) This feature accommodates snipers who might need to extend the optic's adjustment range for extremely long distances that the new cartridges are capable of. The single rail atop the receiver and handguard also allows the use of in-line systems to be added in front of the scope such as night vision (NV) and thermal devices. Full-length top rails have become a standard expectation for military sniper systems.

Changing the barrel and bolt face is simpler than I thought it would be. From my experience, I can't see snipers changing barrels in the field, but if they needed too, they could. More than likely, this feature would help a shooter who needed to change a barrel and bolt to feed a particular load for a mission-specific target set or perhaps to accommodate ammunition available for training. The important takeaway is that it can be done at the operator level.



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The Mk 22 ASR features an interchangeable barrel system that allows users to convert to one of eight different calibers or multiple barrel lengths. (1) Loosen two bolts using the provided Torx wrench; (2) unlock the bolt and remove the barrel. Changing between certain cartridges requires partial disassembly and a bolt head change, which is accomplished by separating the receivers (3–4); removing the bolt and sleeves (5–6); and disassembling the bolt (7–9). The trigger module can also be removed for adjustment (10–11).

The stock is adjustable for length of pull and has a cheek riser. Both can be tuned to a shooter without any tools. There is a hand-tightened star nut securing the comb and a button located at the top of the stock that engages two notched shafts. Unlike a lot of others, Barrett's stock design has survived the military's drop tests.

The stock also folds to the right side, while pivoting on a pair of robust hinge points. A folding stock is a great feature for troops who may have to jump into combat situations. When the stock is folded, it also locks the bolt handle in the down position through a hole designed just in front of the recoil pad. The bolt handle does not lock in the down position when the safety is on, however. With other weapon systems, this could be an issue that results in a lost bolt in the field. The MRAD's captured bolt system also won't allow it to come out without disassembling the upper from the lower receiver, another combat-worthy detail.

On the topic of safeties, the MRAD has a thumb safety that is similar to the ergonomics that so many of us have become accustomed to on the AR-15 and M4 platforms. The differ-

ence is that the MRAD only requires a 45-degree rotation of the safety to put the lever into its fire position. The example I evaluated did not feature an ambidextrous lever.

The pistol grip attachment is the standard AR-15 pattern, which allows the end user to readily change the grip if they don't like the Magpul MOE grip that Barrett delivers on this setup.

To evaluate the MRAD, I was supplied with a 26-inch barrel in .300 PRC with 1-in-8-inch twist rate. There is also a lighter barrel option (carbon wrapped by Proof Research) for the MRAD as appears on the lesser-known Department of Defense (DoD) variant of the Mk 22. I was also provided a 24-inch barrel in 6.5 Creedmoor for this review.

In March 2020, Leupold also announced that it had been selected to provide the Mark 5HD 5-25x56mm as the day optic for the ASR program. (The Mark 5HD 3.6-18x44mm with the Mil-Grid reticle was chosen for the Army's M110 sniper rifles, also.) It is finished in a proprietary coating of Flat Dark Earth (FDE) color, and incorporates the U.S. Army's patented Mil-



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Grid reticle. It will be mounted on USSOCOM's Mk 22 Mod. 0 rifles in Leupold's Mark IMS mount. Hence, this is the same optic configuration that I evaluated the MRAD with, sans the FDE color. Leupold President and CEO Bruce Pettet commented, "Our optics face strenuous durability testing, and fully meet the extremely high performance standards that the military demands."

I pulled a round of Hornady's .300 PRC 225-grain ELD-M out of the box and thought about how this bad beast would recoil. Barrett's series of M82 and M107 sniper rifles in .50 BMG can seem like they'll loosen teeth, but when you shoot it them, the recoil isn't that bad.

With the optic mounted, I boresighted the MRAD at 100 yards to get on paper before taking care of Guns & Ammo's standard testing protocol. The results were amazing with three shots touch at 100 yards. Of course, accuracy was a significant reason SOCOM selected the MRAD.

Using Barrett's specially designed muzzlebrake makes the .300 PRC completely manageable to shoot repeatedly. I shot it out to 200 yards and then headed to the long range with my shooting partner Al Zitta, another clever arms designer. (Shout out.)

We easily dialed in dope for 300, 400 and 500 yards. When we got to the 600-yard target, I dialed the solution that Hornady's 4DOF Kestrel suggested and struck



the steel silhouette close to center — but not perfect. With a slight correction, I sent a second round that hit perfectly where the Mil-Grid reticle was aimed.

As most of us do, we get a little cocky when shooting with our friends. This was just such a day, so I turned to Zitta and said, "Let's go for 6-inch head box." "Giddy up," was his answer.

I quickly and easily grouped five rounds into the small target area. When I looked at my friend, it was as though he had seen a ghost. "Holy sh . . .," he said with his New England accent. "Your turn Z-Man," I replied.

I stood up and stepped back. Zitta rubbed his hands together and slid into position. He had already shot the rifle, so he knew what to expect in terms of recoil and the MRAD's accuracy potential. In the end, he went five for five. Sure, at this range you can still miss with the MRAD in the caliber, but you have to try pretty hard. Cocky, you say? Believe me; your confidence and cockiness will hit an all new high if you can get behind the Barrett MRAD. The MRAD paired with Hornady's .300 PRC ammunition is a perfect marriage. Thinking back to the battlefield, I sure am glad those Special Operations guys are now carrying this new sniper system. America's enemies should be afraid. BLUF: They already are. **G&A**

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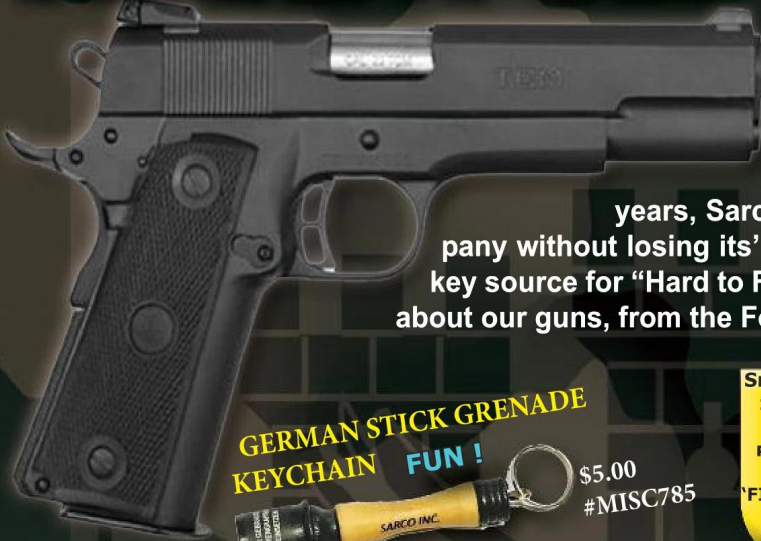


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The CZ 457 series continues the rimfire legacy of the discontinued CZ 452 and 455. Many configurations are available, but all offer: a separate bolt-removal control; the ability to remove the bolt even with the safety engaged; an adjustable trigger; 60-degree bolt lift; a new type of bedding; more ergonomic stocks; lighter striker; and a match chamber in several models.

## NEW 457 MODELS EXPAND ON CZ'S "EVERYMAN" RIMFIRE RIFLE LINE.

BY TOM BECKSTRAND | PHOTOS BY MARK FINGAR

# UBIQUITOUS

**CZ HAS BEEN MAKING** popular rimfire rifles for several decades. Since the introduction of the CZ 452 in 1954, the CZ 455 introduced in 2010, and the CZ 457 introduced last year, CZ continues to refine their rimfire rifles today.

The CZ 457 is the best rimfire rifle that CZ has ever made, as it incorporates every lesson CZ has learned along the way. The improvements made on the CZ 455 to create the CZ 457 include shortening the action, cutting flats in the receiver sides, a new safety, an adjustable trigger and a 60-degree bolt throw. The last two are the most important, in my opinion.

**Trigger Talk** The CZ 455 had a good trigger, but it wasn't adjustable. The only way to change its pull weight was to swap out trigger springs, which I have done before to reduce it. Making these changes allowed for trigger let-off as light as 1½ pounds. However, both sear engagement and overtravel were set at the factory. In contrast, the new CZ 457's trigger is adjustable for pull weight, sear engagement and overtravel. However, if the shooter grabs a set of Allen keys and starts spinning screws, it is possible to adjust the trigger to the point that it won't work. If you decide to tune your own trigger, just remember to adjust one screw at a time and check for safe operation along the way. Unlike a lot of so-called "adjustable" triggers, the CZ 457's trigger adjusts as advertised. The rifle ships with the trigger set at around 3 pounds (or a little over) and, after a few minutes work, I had Guns & Ammo's test-rifles' triggers down to 1 pound, 10 ounces. That's about as light as they go.

Adjustment of sear engagement on the 457 is highly desirable, but should be done in small increments. If there's too little engagement when running the bolt

fast, it won't cock the firing pin. Even when a quick bolt-cycling will cock the firing pin, the owner should smack the empty rifle on its butt (with the muzzle in the air) to see if the sear slips off. If jarring the rifle won't cause it to fire, there's probably enough sear engagement to guarantee its safe operation. Minimizing sear engagement gives the trigger a zero-creep break, but too little engagement will cause the rifle to fire when the bolt closes, or possibly when someone jars the rifle.

**Bolt Throw** The other significant improvement CZ made with the 457 is the 60-degree bolt throw. Normally, I think the difference between a 90-degree and 60-degree bolt throw is negligible. The downsides of each are that 60-degree throws usually have a heavier bolt lift, but a 90-degree throw feels slower when you're in a hurry. However, in the case of the 457, the 60-degree bolt lift offers a real advantage.

Rimfire actions are smaller than centerfire actions, which means that receivers have smaller diameters and bolt handles get shorter. Putting a 90-degree bolt throw on the CZ 455 often placed the bolt handle so close to the scope's ocular housing that it was hard not to scrape your fingers when cycling the bolt, especially when the scope had lots of magnification and a large ocular housing. The CZ 457 has a 60-degree throw giving the bolt handle plenty of clearance when cycling the action.

**Mag Changes** What CZ hasn't done on the 457 is change the magazine, and for that I'm thankful. In fact, the magazine hasn't changed since CZ developed it for the CZ 452 all those years ago. The single-stack, 5- and 10-round magazines work well, too. Both polymer and steel mags are available between \$27 and \$36.





The CZ 457 MTR is a precision rifle configuration with a premium walnut stock. The match-grade barrel is thick walled and cold-hammer-forged. CZ guarantees 15mm (.59-in.) groups at 50m (54.68 yds).

CZ 457 VARMINT MTR	
Type:	Bolt action
Cartridge:	.22 LR
Capacity:	5 rds. or 10 rds.
Barrel:	20.5 in.; 1:16-in. twist
Overall Length:	38 in.
Weight:	7 lbs., 8 oz.
Stock:	Turkish walnut, target
Length of Pull:	13.75 in.
Finish:	Matte blue (steel)
Trigger:	3 lbs., adj.
Sights:	None
Safety:	Two-position lever
MSRP:	\$752
Importer:	CZ-USA, 913-321-1811, cz-usa.com



**CZ 457 Varmint MTR** The big story for 2020 is the Match Target Rifle (MTR). In the MTR, CZ used the absolute minimum CIP-allowable dimensions for the rifle's chamber. ("CIP" is the European equivalent of SAAMI). The headspace is considerably shorter than the rest of the CZ 457 models, so bullets are engraved with rifling by touching the lands when the action closes. The advantage of having the bullet engrave when the bolt closes is the measure of consistency that lengthier chambers don't allow. Once the bullet touches the lands, it retains that orientation as it moves through the bore when fired. The longer chambers that don't engrave the bullet can allow the bullet to yaw

prior to engaging the lands. Any yaw will manifest in larger group sizes, but the effects are amplified as distance to the target increases. The 457 MTR I tested engraved all bullets when the bolt closed, but it didn't grab them so tightly that a live round wouldn't extract reliably.


Live rounds cycled through the MTR without any issues. Chambers that are too tight will cause the extractor to slip off the case rim when a live round is in need of extraction. Our test rifle did not have this issue, so CZ managed to make the chamber tight, but not too tight.

**PERFORMANCE**

.22 LR	VELOCITY (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVG. GROUP (IN.)
SK Rifle Match 40-gr. LRN	1,057	16	6	.26	.34
Eley Tenex 40-gr. LFN	1,093	13	5	.43	.49
RWS R50 40-gr. LRN	1,074	10	4	.55	.58

Notes: Accuracy is the average of five, five-shot groups at 50 yards. Velocity is the average of five shots measured by a LabRadar chronograph adjacent to the muzzle.

Accuracy testing for our 457 MTR turned in a best group sized at .26 inches for five shots at 50 yards using SK Rifle Match ammunition. SK Rifle Match is nowhere near the most expensive rimfire ammunition available, but the MTR happened to like it best.



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CZ 457 PROVARMINT	
Type:	Bolt action
Cartridge:	.17 HMR (tested) or .22 LR
Capacity:	5 rds. or 10 rds.
Barrel:	16.5 in.; 1:16-in. twist
Overall Length:	42.5 in.
Weight:	7 lbs., 2oz.
Stock:	Boyd's Pro Varmint, black
Length of Pull:	13.75 in.
Finish:	Matte blue (steel)
Trigger:	3 lbs., adj.
Sights:	None
Safety:	Two-position lever
MSRP:	\$588
Importer:	CZ-USA, 913-321-1811, cz-usa.com



Borrowing its name from Boyd's Pro Varmint stock, this CZ 457 model is among the most popular. The laminate stock is painted black, and incorporates several features of a more expensive target rifle. To reduce its profile and weight, CZ shortened the action by almost 1 inch and slab-sided the receiver.



**CZ 457 ProVarmint** The feature I like best about the 457 ProVarmint is the Boyd's gunstock that comes on it. Boyd's (boydsgunstocks.com) makes their stocks out of laminated wood. Laminated wood is affordable (Boyd's offers this stock for \$152), hard to ding up, almost impossible to break and an excellent choice for general use. It isn't quite as light as a fiberglass or carbon-fiber stock, but it is as durable. Imagine thin slabs of wood, each with adhesive between them, put under enormous pressure

until the wood and glue become one solid piece. Then cut it into the shape of the stock and inlet for the CZ 457, and coat the stock in a thick layer of durable textured black paint. Notably, this stock also has a high comb that pairs well with most optics and a flat toe that rides

rear bags well. If a someone wants to shoot from the prone or off a bench, the new 457 ProVarmint works for both.

The forend on the 457 ProVarmint is roundish on the bottom and about 1½-inches wide, so it sits comfortably in the support hand and plants still when placed across a pack or bag.

There are two sling-swivel studs on the forend to allow simultaneous mounting of a bipod and sling. The CZ 457 ProVarmint can be comfortably carried afield just as easily as it can shoot from the prone thanks to Boyd's stock.

**PERFORMANCE**

.17 HMR	VELOCITY (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVG. GROUP (IN.)
CCI Gamepoint 20-gr. JSP	2,416	87	38	.31	.43
Win. Varmint 15.5-gr. PT NTX	2,666	146	58	.35	.49
Browning BPR 17-gr. PT	2,641	93	39	.56	.67

Notes: Accuracy is the average of five, five-shot groups at 100 yards. Velocity is the average of five shots across a LabRadar chronograph placed adjacent to the muzzle.



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CZ's Training Rifle is famous as a rimfire competition rifle around the world. It is also an excellent rifle for introducing youth and new shooters to riflery. Previous models lacked the American-style push-to-fire safety lever, but that was addressed when designing the CZ 457.

**CZ 457 TRAINING RIFLE**

Type:	Bolt action
Cartridge:	.22 LR
Capacity:	5 rds. or 10 rds.
Barrel:	24.8 in.; 1:16-in. twist
Overall Length:	42.5 in.
Weight:	6 lbs., 2 oz.
Stock:	Beechwood, Schnabel forend
Length of Pull:	13.75 in.
Finish:	Matte blue (steel)
Trigger:	3 lbs., adj.
Sights:	Tangent, adj. (rear); hooded post (front)
Safety:	Two-position lever
MSRP:	\$449
Importer:	CZ-USA, (913) 321-1811, cz-usa.com



**CZ 457 Training Rifle** The Training Rifle is the best 457 for general use, and you won't feel bad about using it hard. It is the most inexpensive 457 model available with a retail price of \$449. That reasonable sum gets the same receiver and adjustable trigger as every other 457, but includes iron sights and a hardwood stock.

The 457 Training Rifle is a good choice for just that — training. This rifle has simple sights that almost anyone can use, especially new shooters

who can really benefit from learning on iron sights. (Iron sights used to be common on most .22 rifles, but are now

harder to find.) This 457 comes with a tangent adjustable rear-blade sight and a hooded front post.

The stock 457 Training Rifle features a distinctly European shape with a Schnabel forend. The stock also has a lot of drop due to its arched comb, which makes it comfortable to shoot offhand. This combination puts the shooter's head in the ideal spot to make good use of the adjustable sights. While the looks aren't for some, the rifle's comfort is undeniable.



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Precision rimfire rifle competitions continue to grow in participation and popularity. The Precision Chassis is given a heavy-barreled 457 action with a fully adjustable stock and many M-Lok slots.



**CZ 457 Varmint Precision Chassis** The world of precision rimfire is hot right now with a couple of different national circuits including the Precision Rifle Series (PRS) and National Rifle League (NRL), offering a few .22 LR competitions. These matches involve lots of shooting from improvised and field positions that require quick reloads and almost mandate the use of a bipod or tripod. The Varmint Precision Chassis Rifle is CZ's competitive entry.

The barreled action on the Varmint Precision Chassis rifle is the same as the one featured on the Varmint model, with the exception of the chassis rifle's threaded muzzle, which is threaded

1/2-28 to accommodate just about any rimfire suppressor. Since it is one of the few chassis designed for the 457 from the start, the magazine floorplate on the five-round magazine protrudes from the bottom of the magazine well. This makes magazine changes fast and easy. Many of the aftermarket chassis put the five-round magazine up and inside the magazine well, which can make it difficult to grab.

The forend on the Varmint Precision's chassis extends 13½ inches in front of the magazine well, giving plenty of room for the shooter's support hand. The long forend is also flat on the bottom and outfitted with M-Lok slots, so attaching an ARCA rail is possible. The ARCA rail allows for bipod or tripod attachment anywhere along its length. ARCA accessories are popular in both competitive

CZ 457 PRECISION CHASSIS	
Type:	Bolt action
Cartridge:	.22 LR
Capacity:	5 rds. or 10 rds.
Barrel:	16.5 in. or 24 in.; 1:16 twist
Overall length:	31.5 in. (16-in. bbl.) or 39 in.
Weight:	7 lbs., 3 oz. (tested)
Stock:	Aluminum chassis; Luth-AR
Length of Pull:	11.25 in to 14.5 in. (tested)
Finish:	Blued (steel)
Trigger:	3 lbs., adj.
Sights:	None
Safety:	Two-position lever
MSRP:	\$999
Importer:	CZ-USA, (913) 321-1811, cz-usa.com



rifle circuits. The buttstock on the Varmint Precision is made by Luth-AR and attaches to the chassis by way of an AR-15 lower receiver extension or buffer tube. The Luth-AR stock has a unique appearance, but adjusts for both length of pull and comb height. The toe is flat to ride rear bags, but also sports a Picatinny rail for attaching a rear monopod.

**Options & Performance** These four models feature only a handful of the options CZ has to offer within the 457 lineup. No matter whether a shooter desires a classic wood-and-steel plinker or a cutting-edge chassis rifle for precision target work, there's a CZ 457 in .17 HMR, .22 LR or .22 Win. Mag. that'll surely fit your needs. **GA**



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# THE BEST STATES FOR CONCEALED CARRY IN 2020

BY KEITH WOOD

Each year, Guns & Ammo has ranked the best states for gun owners by evaluating the nation's gun laws and firearm culture. For the first time since 2015, G&A is also publishing its 2020 rankings for the states with the best (and worst) concealed carry laws. And a lot has changed.

Today, many of the U.S. states have permitless-carry gun laws in place, leaping ahead of those who are losing ground by not moving their "constitutional-carry" efforts forward. The 2020 "Best States for Concealed Carry" survey will show you "Who's Who."

**IN THIS YEAR'S EDITION**, Guns & Ammo's staff has reviewed several aspects of each U.S. state's concealed carry (CCW) statutes (or the lack thereof) to determine which are most friendly to those who choose to carry a firearm for self-defense. Each state was ranked in the following categories: Issuance, reciprocity/recognition, training requirements, fees, the existence and strength of its Castle Doctrine, rankings from our "Best States for Gun Owners" survey, duty-to-inform-law enforcement, firearm law preemption, and non-resident permit issuance. As always, these evaluations were designed to remain objective, but some G&A-based opinions have been made.

Also good to note: This article addresses concealed carry, rather than open carry, though we do note where open carry is legal. In fact, open carry is one of the factors we employed to break ties between states, along with the states' list of prohibited carry locations.

**Permitless/Unrestricted:** Also commonly known as "constitutional carry," individuals can carry a concealed firearm without obtaining a license or permit. Of these states, Vermont is the only one that does not issue a permit.

**Shall-Issue:** These permits are required to carry a concealed handgun, but the granting authority has no discretion over the issuance of these permits. The granting authority "shall-issue" a permit if an applicant meets the distinct criteria outlined in the law.

**May-Issue:** The granting authority "may issue" a permit at their discretion and usually requires "good cause," or "significant reason" to carry a firearm from the applicant. Obtaining permits to carry in these states can vary from being a simple process to a nearly impossible one.

**No-Issue/Restricted:** Individuals cannot obtain a license to legally carry a concealed firearm. Currently, no state actually fits into this category, though Hawaii comes very close.

**Permit Issuance:** States are awarded up to 25 points, depending on their method of issuance.

Permitless/Unrestricted = 25 points  
Shall-Issue = 20 points  
May-Issue = 5 points  
No-Issue/Restricted = 0 points

**Reciprocity:** The number of U.S. states that honor the permits from issuing states have been counted and assigned a maximum of 10 points. The number of states where the issuing state's permit is honored were also counted then assigned

a maximum of 10 points. The two totals were added together for a maximum of 20 points.

Number of permits honored in the issuing state:

0 states = 0 points  
1-10 states = 2 points  
11-20 states = 4 points  
21-30 states = 6 points  
31-40 states = 8 points  
41-50 states = 10 points

Number of states where the issuing state's permit is honored:

0 states = 0 points  
1-10 states = 2 points  
11-20 states = 4 points  
21-30 states = 6 points  
31-40 states = 8 points  
41-50 states = 10 points

**Training Time:** State-by-state concealed-carry training times are based on the minimum number of statutory training hours required for a maximum of 10 points. States with unrestricted carry automatically earned the maximum number of points.

0 hours = 10 points  
1-3 hours = 9 points  
4-6 hours = 8 points  
7-9 hours = 7 points  
10-12 hours = 6 points  
13-15 hours = 5 points  
16+ hours = 0 points

**Permit Application Fee:** States were given a maximum score of 5 points in this category, and are based on the statutory annual cost civilians pay to their state of residence in order to obtain a permit. Fees are not scored based on renewal, out-of-state permit costs, military/law enforcement/veteran rates, or

senior-citizen discounts. Fees also do not include the cost of any necessary training course(s), and may not include fees for fingerprints and photos. States with unrestricted carry automatically earned the maximum number of points.

\$0-\$5 = 5 points  
\$10-\$15 = 4 points  
\$15-\$20 = 3 points  
\$20-\$25 = 2 points  
\$25-\$30 = 1 point  
\$30+ = 0 points

#### **Stand Your Ground/Castle Doctrine:**

A state's score is based on how strong their self-defense laws are. Best scoring scenarios are the states where gun owners are immune from civil liability and criminal prosecution in self-defense situations. Scores reflect the same point values as those of the "2019 Best States for Gun Owners" survey, unless the laws have since changed. A maximum of 10 points were given.

#### **Best States for Gun Owners in 2019:**

For a maximum of 10 points, states were awarded an overall ranking in the "Best States for Gun Owners in 2019" category.

Ranks 1-10 = 10 points  
Ranks 11-20 = 8 points  
Ranks 21-30 = 6 points  
Ranks 31-40 = 4 points  
Ranks 41-51 = 2 points

**Duty to Inform:** The number of points awarded in this category are based on a whether or not a state's law requires that upon initial contact, a individual legally carrying must immediately inform law enforcement when they are carrying.

5 points = Not required to immediately inform a law enforcement officer.  
0 points = Required to immediately inform a law enforcement officer.

**Preemption of Home-Rule:** States were awarded points if their state laws preempt local governing bodies from crafting other concealed-carry legislation. In most states, preemption does not include local laws regarding the discharge of firearms within city limits.

5 points = State laws do preempt local governing bodies from crafting their own laws.



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0 points = Local governing bodies can make their own laws and are not subject to state preemption.

**Permits Issued to Non-Residents:** States earned their points based on their method of permit issuance to non-residents.

5 points = Permits are issued on a Shall-Issue basis to non-residents, or a permitless carry law applies equally to non-residents.

2 Points = Permits are issued on a May-Issue basis to non-residents.

0 Points = Permits are not issued to non-residents.

#### ▲ 51. Hawaii

Hawaii uses a very restrictive May-Issue permit system. “Sufficient indication of urgency” must be shown to the chief of police in order to meet the threshold for obtaining a permit. As far as we know, Hawaii has not issued any permits in recent years, which would, in turn, only

be valid within the county of issue. These scarce permits cost \$10 and are valid for one year. Hawaii does not recognize permits from other jurisdictions, though Hawaii’s are recognized by 28 states. Hawaii loses additional points for its gun laws and only receives two points in the “Best States” category. This is the only state where G&A overrode the raw score, since permits can actually be obtained in much of California, but not in Hawaii.

#### ▲ 50. California

California’s Carry Concealed Weapon (CCW) licenses are issued on a May-Issue basis by county sheriffs, and requirements for obtaining such a permit vary by county. In 2018, California instituted minimum training standards that mandate between eight and 16 hours of classroom and live-fire instruction. Permits last up to 2 years, after which a 4-hour refresher course is required. California permits are honored in 28 states, though California does not honor permits from any other jurisdiction. California is one of a few states where per-

mit numbers are on the decline, thanks in no doubt to the difficulty of obtaining one.

#### ■ 49. New Jersey

New Jersey’s May-Issue permits are issued to both residents and non-residents by either the chief of police or State Police. Applicants must demonstrate “a justifiable need” to apply for a permit, as well as evidence of good character and competency. According to the United States Concealed Carry Association (USCCA), only .01 percent of Garden State residents have a permit to carry. New Jersey permits are valid for 2 years and are recognized in 28 states. The annual permit fee is \$10, and New Jersey has statewide preemption. Magazine capacity in this state is limited to 10 rounds and hollowpoint ammunition is illegal. Training is mandatory, though a specific duration isn’t in statute. Permittees must qualify with the handgun they intend to carry.

#### ▼ 48. New York

New York is not an easy state to obtain a

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permit in, but it's far from the worst. New York claims to have issued more than 200,000 permits to its residents and part-time residents (all of whom can apply), which is roughly 1 percent of the Empire State's population. New York permits are not valid in New York City, and New York City permits are not honored by New York. State-issued permit costs are low, but the additional fees for fingerprints and photos push that number up to \$100. (A New York City permit can cost more than \$300.) New York does not recognize permits from any other states, but New Yorkers with state-issued permits can carry in 26 other states. It also imposes a duty to retreat, which cost it a point in our rankings. There is no duty-to-inform law enforcement in New York when carrying.

#### ▲ 47. Maryland

"Wear and Carry" permits are all but impossible to get in Maryland, despite the years of effort to the contrary. Permits are issued through Maryland's State Police, and the applicant must show that getting one would be a "reasonable precaution against apprehended danger." Out of 6 million Maryland residents, only 24,000 permits have been issued. State law requires 16 hours of instruction in order to obtain a permit, and 8 additional hours of training every 2 years in order to renew it. Maryland does not recognize permits from any other jurisdiction, but 27 other states do recognize Maryland's.

#### ■ 46. Washington, D.C.

When we last examined District of Columbia's conceal carry laws, a May Issue permit system was in place. This meant that in order to qualify for a Concealed Carry License (CCL), the applicant had to prove that he or she was the subject of a "serious threat of death, or serious bodily harm, any attacks on his or her person, or any theft of property from his or her person." Subsequently, D.C.'s Circuit Court of Appeals forced the U.S. capitol into a shall-issue system, which has resulted in CCL permits actually being issued on such a basis. The district has 90 days to process an application, the \$75 application fee, and the \$35 for fingerprints — all non-refundable. Permit

applicants must complete 18 hours of training that includes 2 hours of live-fire. Permits are valid for 2 years. The list of D.C.'s prohibited conceal-carry locations is extensive, and its law limits permit holders to carrying no more than one reload, 20 rounds total. Washington, D.C. does not recognize permits from any other jurisdiction, but does issue CCL permits to its non-residents. Preemption isn't an issue, as D.C. is its own municipality.

#### ▼ 45. Massachusetts

Massachusetts state law imposes a May-Issue permit system where a Class A Firearms license serves as both a "permit to purchase" and as a "carry a concealed firearm" permit. Permits are obtained through the local police department, while non-resident permits are issued through the state police. Permits are valid for 1 year. Massachusetts does not recognize permits from other states, but holders

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of Massachusetts permits can carry in 28 states. There is a duty to inform if a permittee is carrying when stopped by law enforcement. There is no state-wide preemption, so individual municipalities can impose more stringent requirements, if they choose.

**▼ 44. Connecticut**

With 7½ percent of its population concealed carry permit holders, Connecticut's numbers are higher than the national average. This is partly due to the fact that the same permit issued to purchase a handgun in Connecticut also allows the permit holder to carry a gun, either concealed or openly. Connecticut permits are considered May-Issue, but are often approved if the applicant qualifies under the law. Connecticut does issue permits to non-residents, but does not recognize permits from other jurisdictions. Connecticut permits are recognized by 27 states, and the only enumerated prohibited location are its schools.

**▲ 43. Delaware**

Only 2 percent of Delaware residents have a Concealed Deadly Weapon Permits. Delaware's May-Issue permits are given by the courts, which also require extensive documentation of good character. The price of a permit is low at just over \$20 per year, however, training and newspaper publication requirements increase the total cost of the permit. Delaware has decent reciprocity, honoring 21 other states' permits, and 29 states recognize Delaware permits. Reasonably strong self-defense state laws and firearms preemption laws make Delaware an acceptable state to carry in if you can get a permit. One

state law passed several years ago that allows municipalities to regulate open carry in some areas, but concealed carry is exempt. Delaware's list of prohibited locations is relatively short.

**▲ 42. Illinois**

In 2013, Illinois became the last U.S. state to pass a concealed carry law, and it did so only by court order. Since, Illinois has issued more than 300,000 concealed carry licenses (CCL). It is a Shall-Issue state with some discretion allowed. Permits cost \$150 and are valid for 5 years. Non-resident permits can be obtained for \$300. The training requirement in Illinois is extensive (as far as Right-To-Carry states go), but it does have strong self-defense laws. Illinois state law also has a preemption element to it, so its cities are not allowed to opt-out. Illinois-resident permits are recognized in 29 U.S. states.

**▲ 41. New Mexico**

Those with a New Mexico Concealed Handgun License (CHL) can carry, but only a single firearm per state law. Concealed carry permits are issued to New Mexico residents on a Shall-Issue basis by the Department of Public Safety and are valid for 4 years. Initial training and refresher training are both required with a permit, and the annual \$25 fee is higher than the national average. Thirty-four U.S. states honor New Mexico permits, while 23 states recognize New Mexico permits as valid.

**▲ 40. Nebraska**

In 2006, and after more than 10 years of pro-gun lobbyist and firearm-advocate efforts, Nebraska became one of the

# STATE SCORING AT A GLANCE

STATE	ISSUANCE	RECIPROcity	TRAINING	FEE	CASTLE	BEST STATES	INFORM	PREEMPTION	NR	2015 RANK	TOTAL POINTS	2020 RANK
DC	20	6	0	0	4	2	0	N/A	2	46	32	46
NY	5	6	6	0	3	2	5	0	2	51	29	48
NJ	5	6	0	4	3	2	5	0	2	49	27	49
MA	5	6	8	2	5	2	5	0	2	50	35	45
CA	5	6	0	0	6	2	5	0	0	47	24	50
HI	5	6	0	4	4	2	5	0	0	48	26	51
CT	5	6	7	4	7	2	5	0	2	45	38	44
IL	20	6	0	0	9	2	5	5	2	41	49	42
MD	5	6	0	0	5	2	5	5	2	44	30	47
RI	20	6	9	4	6	2	5	5	5	43	62	38
DE	5	6	6	2	8	2	5	5	2	42	41	43
WA	20	8	10	4	10	4	5	5	5	38	71	30
MN	20	10	8	1	6	4	5	5	5	39	64	37
IA	20	18	8	4	9	4	5	5	5	35	78	24
CO	20	16	7	3	6	4	5	5	0	40	66	35
NM	20	14	5	1	5	4	5	5	0	36	59	41
OH	20	18	5	3	9	6	0	5	0	23	66	34
NE	20	16	8	2	5	4	0	5	0	34	60	40
MI	20	18	7	0	10	6	0	5	0	27	66	33
ID	25	18	10	5	10	10	5	5	5	2	90	3
AR	20	18	10	1	9	8	0	5	0	19	71	28
OK	25	18	7	5	10	10	0	5	5	5	85	9
ME	25	16	7	5	5	6	5	5	5	30	79	20
OR	20	4	8	3	8	6	5	5	2	33	61	39
SD	25	18	10	5	8	6	5	5	5	29	87	7
ND	22	16	9	4	8	8	5	5	5	14	82	16
WI	20	14	8	4	10	6	5	5	0	21	72	27
VA	20	16	7	4	10	4	2	2	5	31	70	31
TN	20	18	7	5	10	8	5	5	0	13	78	23
NV	20	14	7	3	8	6	5	5	5	25	73	26
WV	25	18	10	5	8	8	5	5	5	15	86	10
PA	20	14	10	5	8	4	5	5	5	32	76	25
NC	20	18	7	2	9	6	0	5	0	26	67	32
MS	25	18	10	5	9	8	5	5	0	16	85	11
LA	20	16	7	0	10	6	0	5	0	28	64	36
IN	20	18	10	4	8	8	5	5	5	20	83	15
TX	20	18	8	0	9	10	5	5	5	10	80	19
SC	20	14	7	4	10	6	0	5	5	22	71	29
GA	20	16	10	4	10	8	5	5	5	11	83	14
FL	20	16	7	4	10	6	5	5	5	24	78	22
MT	22	18	7	3	10	10	5	5	0	9	80	18
NH	25	16	10	5	10	8	5	5	5	17	89	5
MO	25	18	10	5	10	8	5	5	0	12	83	13
KS	25	18	10	5	10	10	5	5	5	4	93	2
AL	20	18	10	2	10	8	5	5	0	18	78	21
WY	25	16	10	5	10	10	5	5	0	8	86	8
KY	25	18	10	5	10	10	5	5	5	6	90	4
UT	20	16	8	4	10	10	5	5	5	7	83	12
AK	25	18	10	5	10	10	0	5	5	3	88	6
VT	25	14	10	5	9	4	5	5	5	37	82	17
AZ	25	18	10	5	10	10	5	5	5	1	93	1

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simply by posting a sign. Minnesota has training requirements and does issue permits to non-residents. Reciprocity isn't great, with only 15 states' permits honored. There is no duty to inform law enforcement when carrying, unless asked. A Duty-To-Retreat law in self-defense situations has cost this state points in G&A's current rankings.

▲ **36. Louisiana**

Louisiana is a Shall-Issue state where more than 5 percent of residents have concealed handgun permits. Louisiana received good points for having both reciprocity and a strong Stand-Your-Ground statute, but permit fees are high and are only issued to its residents and Louisiana-based military. When law enforcement contact is made, there is the duty to inform when carrying. Louisiana's list of prohibited concealed carry locations is fairly broad and includes churches, parades and bars. Open carry is legal, but not in every jurisdiction. To prohibit carrying under the influence, Louisiana is one of the few states to add specific blood-alcohol-concentration levels (BAC) in its statute, which is .005 percent.

▼ **35. Colorado**

Nearly 9 percent of Colorado residents have Concealed Handgun Permits (CHP). Fees remain low at just over \$10 per year, and Colorado has strong reciprocity with other states. Currently, Colorado has very few prohibited places listed in its state laws. Schools and public buildings with security screening are the only restricted areas. Colorado's 15-round magazine limit hurt its ranking in an G&A's 2019 "Best States" survey where it was placed at number 40.

▲ **34. Ohio**

The Buckeye State has a Shall-Issue system with good permit reciprocity among other states. Nearly 6 percent of Ohioans have carry permits. Folks carrying in Ohio have a duty to inform law enforcement when carrying, and such permits are only issued to Ohio residents, not non-residents. Ohio has some of the most broad reciprocity laws in the nation, recognizing permits from all issuing jurisdictions. Thirty-eight states honor Ohio permits. Annual permit fees are \$13.40.

last four states to adopt a concealed carry statute. I was proud to have stood over Governor Heineman's shoulder as the bill was signed into law. Nebraska's Concealed Handgun Permits (CHP) have an annual fee of \$20 and are issued through the Nebraska State Patrol. Permits are not available to non-residents, but Nebraska does honor the permits of 38 other states. G&A gave the "Cornhusker State" only 5 points for its lukewarm self-defense laws, but the state did gain points for its reasonable training standards. Nebraska law is preemptive of local ordinances in places like Omaha and Lincoln, but there is a statewide duty in place to inform law enforcement when carrying.

▲ **39. Oregon**

Oregon's Concealed Handgun License (CHL) is issued to its residents on a Shall-Issue basis. Currently, 6.6 percent of Oregonians have one and such licenses may also be issued to non-residents. Reciprocity isn't great with only 26 states recognizing Oregon's CHL permits, and no other out-of-state permits are honored in Oregon. Annual permit fees are \$12.50, and other than courthouses and schools, the only prohibited concealed carry locations are those set by federal law. Oregon does have a preemption statute, so permits are valid statewide. Open carry is legal in Oregon.

▼ **38. Rhode Island**

Rhode Island's Shall-Issue permits are issued to both residents and non-residents through the state's Attorney General, though less than 1 percent of Rhode Islanders have permits. Annual 4-year permit fees are only \$10, and a handgun can be carried anywhere not prohibited by federal law. Rhode Island permits are good in 26 states, but Rhode Island does not recognize permits from any other states. Up a few slots at No. 38, the Ocean State previously ranked 43rd in G&A's 2019 "Best States for Gun Owners."

▼ **37. Minnesota**

Minnesota sheriffs issue Permit to Carry a Pistol (PCP) on a shall-issue basis. State law doesn't enumerate many prohibited locations, but it does allow just about any business to ban concealed carry

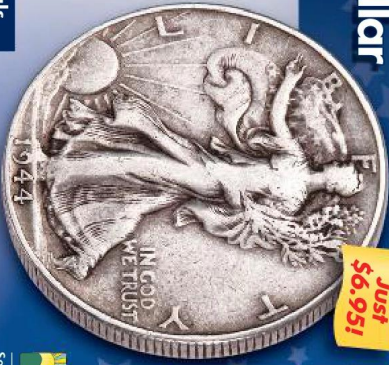
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▲ **33. Michigan**

Michigan has a Shall-Issue Concealed Pistol License (CPL) law with broad reciprocity. It also gets high marks for strong use-of-force laws. Michigan's permit fees are rather high, and that's about the only area this state lost points. Michigan's prohibited concealed-carry locations include hospitals, casinos, large sporting events, and most restaurants. Parents dropping their kids off at school are allowed to carry legally while in their automobiles. Interestingly, more prohibited locations apply to concealed carry than to open carry, which is legal in Michigan without a permit.

▲ **32. North Carolina**

Like the rest of the southern states, North Carolina has a Shall-Issue permit system. Reciprocity is very good and its use-of-force laws are strong. Permits are issued to North Carolina residents by the county sheriff and compute to \$16 per year. Non-resident permits are only given to military troops stationed at one of North Carolina's many military bases. There is a duty to inform law enforcement when carrying if encountered.

■ **31. Virginia**

Republicans lost majorities in both houses of the Virginia General Assembly, so things seem to be getting worse for Virginia's gun owners, not better. Changes have not been made to the state's concealed carry laws (yet), though a bill has passed that will partially gut the Commonwealth's long-standing preemption statute. The good news is Virginia has strong reciprocity and Stand-Your-Ground laws, and gives its non-residents the ability to apply for permits. Prohibited locations for carry are few. Whether carrying openly or concealed, both are allowed in restaurants and bars, so long as no alcohol is consumed. Most municipalities will no doubtedly regulate carry in places such as parks now that they have the ability to do so.

▼ **30. Washington**

More than 8 percent of Washington state residents are licensed to carry a firearm under this state's Shall-Issue system. Annual permit fees are a reasonable \$7, and are available to non-residents.

Washington also received max points for its strong us-of-force laws. Training requirements for permits are minimal in Washington, but reciprocity in the Evergreen State isn't great; permits from only 10 U.S. states are honored.

▲ **29. South Carolina**

Overall, South Carolina is a pro-gun state, but as southern states go, its reciprocity is poor. Nine percent of South Carolinians

have Concealed Weapon Permits (CWP), but open carry is illegal. South Carolina only issues concealed carry permits to its residents, landowners and locally stationed military members. South Carolina has a strong Stand-Your-Ground statute and maintains low permit fees, both of which have helped this state earn maximum points in 2020's survey. However, South Carolina's list of prohibited-carry locations is long.

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#### ▲ 28. Arkansas

The Arkansas General Assembly has shown support for the rights of its gun owners by eliminating many of Arkansas' prohibited-carry locations. One example was giving their K-12 schools the ability to establish their own concealed carry policies. Arkansas has a strong self-defense law, earning it 9 points, but the annual \$28.30 permit fee is higher than the national average. Individuals carrying a firearm in Arkansas have the duty to inform law enforcement when they are armed. Arkansas does not issue permits to non-residents, but with the exception of locally-based military troops. Military spouses also qualify for permits. Reciprocity is strong with 37 states honoring its permits, and permits from all other jurisdictions are valid within Arkansas.

#### ▲ 27. Wisconsin

In late 2019, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers called a special session to enact gun control laws. Fortunately, the legislature rejected his efforts. Wisconsin has a strong Shall-Issue law on the books and enjoys decent reciprocity. It also has a strong Castle Doctrine law. Concealed Carry Weapon (CCW) permits are only issued to Wisconsin residents, but it does recognize 40 other states' permits. A little more than 6 percent of Wisconsin residents have CCWs, and the list of prohibited-carry locations is limited to government-type facilities, with respective parking lots exempt from such prohibitions. Permit fees are modest by comparison.

#### ▲ 26. Nevada

Last ranked number 25 in G&A's 2019 "Best States for Guns Owners" review, Nevada moved down a spot in the 2020 "Best States for Concealed Carry" survey. This state issues Concealed Firearm Permits (CFP) on a Shall-Issue basis to both residents and non-residents. Nevada's list of prohibited locations for carry is short and consists mainly of public buildings. Nevada's training standards are reasonable, which earned it 7 points in this category. Like Michigan, open carry is legal in more locations than concealed carry. There is no duty-to-inform law in Nevada. A statewide preemption law is in place, also.

#### ▼ 25. Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania is a Shall-Issue jurisdiction where legal carry permits have gone to more than 10 percent of its residents. Permits are issued either by local sheriffs or the chief of police. Pennsylvania has decent reciprocity laws, as long as you don't drive north, south, or east. (Seriously.) Pennsylvania's deadly force laws also scored well this year, and its list of prohibited locations is a short one. Public buildings in Pennsylvania must provide lockers for citizens to secure their handguns. Open carry is legal everywhere except in Philadelphia.

#### ▼ 24. Iowa

More than 11 percent of Iowa's 3.2 million residents have PCWs, which are valid for 5 years. Iowa also has great reciprocity and its permit fees are low. Training time in Iowa is minimal, and non-resident permits are issued here. Iowa has strong use-of-force laws and a relatively short list of prohibited locations.

#### ▲ 23. Tennessee

Under the leadership of Governor Bill Lee, Tennessee is poised to become the latest state to allow permitless carry. Unfortunately, as of press time, this bill has stalled due to the U.S. COVID-19 government shutdown. Almost 10 percent of Tennesseans are licensed to carry under the state's current Shall-Issue program, and while carrying in restaurants is legal, establishments can prohibit carry with proper signage. Eight-year permits are issued to Tennessee residents (and certain non-residents) for an annual fee of \$12.50. Reciprocity in Tennessee is excellent; it's a state that recognizes permits from all other states. The Volunteer State also has strong self-defense laws, earning it max points in this year's survey.

#### ▼ 22. Florida

For a state of its population, Florida is tough to beat in terms of concealed carry laws. Florida has been a Shall-Issue state since 1987, and has since continued to lower fees. It issues Concealed Weapon Licenses (CWL) to non-residents, extended the length of time between permit renewals, and expanded its reciprocity. The Sunshine State honors the

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permits of 35 other states, making it one of the most popular U.S. states for gun owners who want broader reciprocity. There is a preemption law on the books, and its use-of-force statutes are a good model for the nation.

▲ **21. Alabama**

There is an effort in “Sweet Home Alabama” to pass a lifetime-carry permit bill, but due to the current COVID-19 pan-

demie, it’s unclear whether this bill will cross the finish line. Alabama did well in G&A’s 2019 “Best States for Gun Owners” survey, which earned them full points for its Castle Doctrine statute. Permit fees in Alabama are at the discretion of the issuing authority, but on average cost \$20 per year. There is no training requirement for obtaining a permit in Alabama, and it’s a state that recognizes permits issued by all other states.

▼ **20. Maine**

When G&A did its last review in 2015, Maine had just become a permitless-carry state, which is a big deal in northeastern United States. Unchanged since, Concealed Handgun Permits (CHP) continue to be issued to those that desire them for \$10 a year. Though Maine is a Shall-Issue state, the statute dictates that an applicant’s permit application can be denied. Reasons for Maine’s denial of a permit are based on an applicant’s non-criminal activity and/or other “reckless or negligent behavior.” Maine’s reciprocity numbers have increased significantly and it now recognizes the permits of all other U.S. states. Those with Maine permits can carry in 29 states. Maine has very few prohibited locations, which are essentially limited to schools.

▲ **19. Texas**

Texas is a Shall-Issue state where a License to Carry a Handgun (LTC) permit makes it legal to carry both concealed and open. Permits in Texas are issued by the Department of Public Safety to both non-residents and residents. To date, nearly 1½ million permits have been issued. Texas colleges and universities are no longer automatically considered prohibited locations. Texas cities are restricted from enforcing certain prohibitions, including where citizens can carry. Texas gets high marks with G&A in nearly every category.

▲ **18. Montana**

Although Montana isn’t technically a permitless-carry state, permitless carry is allowed outside of the cities. For residents, this means that permits are not required in more than 99 percent of Montana’s geography. Open carry is legal, but it is unlawful to carry concealed in Montana establishments where alcohol is served, regardless of whether or not the person carrying is drinking. Montana also got high scores for its laws in reciprocity and its Castle Doctrine, praise that’s reflected in this year’s “Best States for Gun Owners.” At \$12.50, Montana’s annual permit fee is below the national average.

▼ **17. Vermont**

Vermont remains the only state with permitless carry, a law imposed by the state’s

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Supreme Court rather than by statute. Vermont doesn't issue permits, and nor should it. Issuing permits would no doubt lead to them being required — there's nowhere to go from there but down. If one is legally allowed to possess a firearm in Vermont, a gun can be legally carried almost anywhere. This no-permit law hurts reciprocity in the Green Mountain State, as other U.S. states can't honor a permit that doesn't exist. (Even though the list of permitless-carry states has expanded significantly.) If a Vermonter wants wide reciprocity, a non-resident permit from another state is the answer.

#### ▲ 16. North Dakota

North Dakota is a permitless-carry state, but only for its residents. It's also a Shall-Issue permit state with annual fees set at a reasonable \$9. Most U.S. states recognize permits from North Dakota. (Especially Class 1 permits.) This state has a solid Stand-Your-Ground law that provides civil liability protection. North Dakota permits are valid for 5 years and are issued to residents and non-residents alike.

#### ▼ 15. Indiana

Indiana scored well across the board in all of G&A's "Best States for Gun Owners" categories. Almost 14 percent of Indiana residents have a License to Carry a Handgun (LCH), and it's a state that also has good reciprocity. Indiana permits are recognized in 32 states, and Indiana recognizes every U.S. state's permit. Another reason this state made the No. 15 spot is its permit application process. Residents and non-residents can apply for an Indiana permit, and training

isn't required to obtain one. Permit fees are low at only \$10 per year.

#### ▲ 14. Georgia

Almost 10 percent of Georgians have a Weapons Carry License (WCL). Such permits can be issued to active-duty military applicants 18 years or older, and to non-military residents 21 years old or older. The Peach State has strong use-of-force laws and a solid preemption statute. Prohibited locations are very few in Georgia; WCL licensees can even carry in government buildings. This is a state with relatively strong carry laws, and reciprocity numbers are on the increase. Georgia's annual permit fees are right at the national median at \$15.

#### ▲ 13. Missouri

Missouri is a permitless- and Shall-Issue carry state with good use-of-force laws. The Show Me State also has excellent reciprocity, which earned it 18 points. Missouri's annual permit fee is \$33 and well above the national average. Permits are only issued to residents. (Non-residents can carry without a permit, but must be at least 19 years of age and not otherwise prohibited from possessing a firearm.) There is no duty or law to inform law enforcement when carrying a firearm in Missouri.

#### ▲ 12. Utah

Utah did really well in G&A's 2020 lineup, especially for a state that still requires Concealed Firearm Permits (CFP). Utah has consistently, and across the board, scored at the top of G&A's "Best of" lists for its strong laws. Utah's CFP is valid for both concealed and open carry, and permits are widely recognized

across the U.S. Utah accepts permits from all issuing U.S. states. At less than \$10 a year, permits are inexpensive. Annual permit renewals are even less at only \$3. Carrying is prohibited in Utah's "secure locations," but the list is short and such prohibitions require posted notice.

▼ **11. Mississippi**

Mississippi is both a permitless- and Shall-Issue carry state. There is strong reciprocity in Mississippi and open carry is legal in most locations, other than schools and bars. Annual permit fees are \$20, but as no permit is required, full points were awarded Mississippi in this category. It also has strong use-of-force laws, which earned this state another 9 points.

▼ **10. West Virginia**

As of 2016, West Virginia has been a permitless-carry and Shall-Issue state, earning it maximum G&A survey points for its issuance. West Virginia has good reciprocity and recognition, which added another 18 points for its gun friendliness. West Virginia has strong self-defense laws, and county sheriffs issue permits in the Mountain State. The list of prohibited places to carry is short.

▲ **9. Oklahoma**

Oklahoma is a permitless-carry state that issues permits to those who desire them. This state received 18 G&A points in 2020 for its reciprocity. Currently, Oklahoma recognizes permits from all U.S. states. Oklahoma's permit is honored in 37 states. The only categories where Oklahoma lacked were in its higher-than-average permit fee and its duty to inform law enforcement when carrying. Oklahoma received full points for its model use of force law and for allowing Oklahomans to legally keep their firearms locked in their cars while parked in employer-owned parking lots. Oklahoma requires .45 caliber as a maximum-bore diameter for concealed carry, so leave the .50-calibers at home.

■ **8. Wyoming**

Wyoming is a permitless-carry state and has Shall-Issue jurisdiction. Wyoming Concealed Firearm Permits (CFP) are



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issued by the Attorney General's office and have reciprocity with 36 other states. Permits are valid for 5 years. Wyoming's list of prohibited locations is short, namely consisting of public buildings, schools and bars. Wyoming's strong use-of-force law protects individuals from both criminal and civil liability.

#### ▼ 7. South Dakota

Since the last "Best States," South Dakota joined the ranks of the permitless-carry states. Permits that include "enhanced permits" are still issued in South Dakota on a Shall-Issue basis. Open carry is legal. Fees for permits in South Dakota are among the lowest in the country and can be issued to individuals as young as 18. Reciprocity is very good. South Dakota's self-defense laws have improved significantly in recent years, also.

#### ▲ 6. Alaska

Alaska was the first state to offer the best of both worlds: permitless- and Shall-Issue carry. Its permits are recognized by 38 states, and the lack of non-resident permits have become moot as permits have never been required. Alaska has a strong use-of-force law, earning it full points. The only area where this state lost points was in its requirement to inform local law enforcement when carrying.

#### ▼ 5. New Hampshire

New Hampshire recently became a permitless-carry state that also issues permits on a shall-issue basis. This must be working out OK, as New Hampshire has one of the lowest homicide rates in the nation. Reciprocity is decent with 29 states recognizing New Hampshire permits, and the only place specified by state law where a carry gun is not allowed is in a New Hampshire courthouse. This state also has excellent use-of-force laws. The fee for a New Hampshire permit is less than \$3 a year.

#### ▼ 4. Kentucky

Since our last survey, Kentucky has become one of the many states that have gone to a permitless-carry system. Kentucky Concealed Carry Firearms or Deadly Weapons (CCDW) permits are still available, and if you have served in

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the military, no training is necessary to obtain one. Bars, schools, and government buildings are virtually the only places where carry is prohibited.

**▲ 3. Idaho**

Idaho became a permitless-carry state in 2016 and today still issues a Concealed Weapons License (CWL) to those who want them. Idaho has strong reciprocity, recognizing permits from all other states. It does issue non-resident licenses. This state has two classifications of CWL permits: "standard" and "enhanced." The enhanced permit has specific training requirements and gives the holder greater reciprocity, and with some exceptions, the ability to carry on the campuses of colleges and universities. Idaho has improved its use-of-force laws, no longer imposes a statutory duty-to-retreat outside of one's home or business.

**▼ 2. Kansas**

Kansas has been one of the "most improved" states for gun owners in this 2020 review, passing its shall-issue Concealed Carry Handgun License (CCHL) law in 2006 (over the governor's veto) and in 2015 going to permitless carry. Reciprocity is as good as it gets. Kansas does not issue non-resident permits, but you can carry without a permit, so the state gets full points. Kansas earned a 10 for its Castle Doctrine law, which was passed back in 2006. Open carry is legal.

**■ 1. Arizona**

Arizona issues permits though it doesn't require them for concealed carry if you are over 21. Open carry is legal at the age of 18. Arizona managed to score top marks in every category we used for this evaluation, and also does well in the intangible categories such as locations where carry is prohibited. Permits, when they are desired, cost \$60 for the first 5 years and \$43 for subsequent renewals. Since it does not require a permit, it gets a full 5 points in the fee category regardless of the permit's cost. Guns locked out of sight in privately owned vehicles, including motorcycles, cannot be prohibited by property owners or employers, whether public or private. As far as CCW goes, AZ is about as good as it gets. **CA**



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*Winchester Model 1894 Deluxe Short Rifle***COWBOY CULTURED**

**JUST HOW POPULAR** is the Winchester Model '94 rifle? Serial number 1,000,000 was presented to President Calvin Coolidge in 1927, while President Harry Truman received rifle number 1,500,000 in 1948 and President Dwight D. Eisenhower was given number 2,000,000 in 1953. Consider these numbers: Through the last 126 years of production, Winchester has sold more than 7½ million '94s. That equates to some 160 rifles sold each day through a century. So many '94s have been produced that one in every 44 Americans could own one.

Part of the Model 94's mass appeal was its accessibility. Designed by John Browning, the Winchester '94 was the first American sporting rifle built for smokeless powder cartridges. Initial offerings included .32-40 and .38-55, but by the spring of 1895 it was offered in the then-new .30-30 cartridge making the combination an immediate success.

Launched at the 2020 SHOT Show, Winchester announced a limited run of the Model 1894 Deluxe

Short Rifle reviewed here, a collectible shooter.

**A Touch of Class** A feature that sets the new Model 1894 Deluxe Short Rifle apart from the more pedestrian versions of the '94 is the color-case hardened finish covering the steel receiver, lever and forearm cap. Each of these guns bears a rich pattern of blues, yellows and browns on the metal, and that makes each of these guns distinct. And the color-case hardened finish is complimented by a Grade V/VI walnut straight grip stock and forearm. The wood is exceptional, with bold grain patterns and a deep oil finish. The bolt slide, trigger and barrel are polished blued.

As beautiful as Model 1894 Deluxe Short Rifle is, it's also still a '94, meaning its beauty is tied to functionality. Eighteen line-per-inch (lpi)-cut checkering covers the forearm and small of the stock, which adds class and practicality that isn't often found on modern guns. It's just enough texture to ensure a comfortable grip without being overly aggressive.

Absent of features besides action screws and pins, the '94 receiver and lever make for an excellent canvas to highlight this model's unique, color-case-hardened finish.



The contemporary "W" logo for "Winchester Repeating Arms" is subtly engraved on the link, while the serial number is tasteful out of sight underneath the receiver. When the lever is pulled down, the link drops down and allows the next cartridge to be moved back onto the carrier in the receiver.



**Winchester Model 1894 Deluxe Short Rifle**

Type: Lever action

Cartridge: .30-30 Win. (tested) or .38-55 Win.

Capacity: 7

Barrel: 20 in., button rifled

Overall Length: 38 in.

Weight: 6 lbs., 13 oz.

Length of Pull: 13.5 in.

Stock: Walnut Grade V/VI; oil finish; 18 lpi checkering

Finish: Color case hardened/polished blued

Sights: Buckhorn (rear); gold bead (front)

MSRP: \$1,850

Manufacturer: Winchester Repeating Arms, 800-333-3288, winchesterguns.com



The walnut forearm is given a steel endcap that complements the organic wood grain with beautiful color-case hardening.



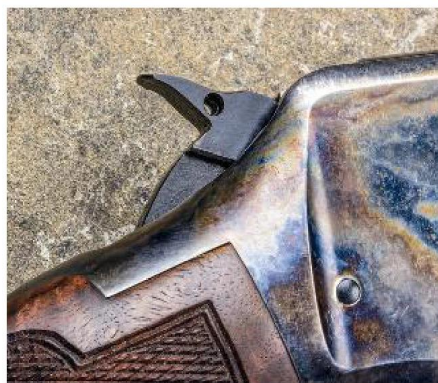
Though laser cut, the 18 lines-per-inch diamond checkering is both classic and functionally tactile.

If you've ever handled a Model '94, you already know just how good this gun feels. It's a rifle that's ready to spring to the shoulder.

It was balanced to swing evenly. Guns & Ammo's test sample weighed 6 pounds, 13 ounces, which is only 1 ounce heavier than Winchester's specifications, and more likely due to variations in wood density. The 20-inch button-rifled barrel gives the Deluxe Short Rifle a balance point that's perfectly centered at the front of the action.

The '94 Deluxe Short rifle forgoes a modern rubber pad and wears a more traditional buttplate that's fitted flush all around to the stock. The hard buttplate design stands in stark contrast to contemporary hunting rifles often featuring cushy recoil pads, but it adds to this gun's classic look.

This limited production levergun is chambered in .30-30 Winchester or .38-55 Win., neither of which are particu-



Wood-to-metal fit is tight and smooth on this rifle. The blued hammer spur is also bored and threaded to accept a cocking extension.

larly punishing in terms of recoil. The .30-30 barrel features a 1:12-inch twist rate, while the .38-55 has a 1:15-inch twist inside the bore.

In terms of the action, the Deluxe Short Rifle is largely unchanged in terms of its function and design. Dropping the lever releases a cartridge from the tubular magazine, and a lifter assembly elevates the cartridge behind the chamber. Simultaneously, the top portion of the receiver and bolt slide rearward. An extractor on the top of the locking bolt pulls the

cartridge's rim, and an ejector mounted at the bottom of the bolt face sends the spent case hurling through the cut-out portion at the top of the receiver. The rearward movement of the bolt also cocks the hammer. Returning the lever up closes the bolt and, when the safety catch is pushed up, the gun is ready to fire the next round.

The '94 Deluxe Short Rifle has a capacity of seven

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The uncompromising quality of Winchester's choice of Black Walnut lands between Grades 5 and 6, which is exceptional.



As Browning intended it, the new '94 features top ejection. This isn't ideal for mounting a scope, but the receiver is threaded anyways.

rounds, and the cartridges are loaded into the tubular magazine through the side gate on the right side. It's a smooth design that always works. It was durable enough to stand up to the earliest smokeless powder cartridges, and was far stronger than earlier Model 1873 with its toggle-link action design.

There are a few features on '94 Deluxe Short Rifle that weren't present as part of Browning's patented design. The hammer spur on this '94 is drilled to accept an extension, and a scope can be mounted on the gun's receiver.

Mounting an optic on a top-eject '94s requires some careful work, and many would say that it detracts from this model's classic styling. A peep sight is another possible option for those who don't want to significantly alter the look or feel of the gun, but the buckhorn sights (a feature that remains from the original intent) still works well for most applications if you have the vision to align the narrow channel at the base with the gold bead sight at the front.

The modern '94 also has a tang-mounted safety. Sliding the safety forward on this '94 reveals a red dot indicating that the rifle can be fired. This replaced the half-cock feature on the original '94 rifles and, thankfully, the crossbolt safety that was standard on production Model '94s made between 1992 and 2002. The current tang safety is less obtrusive and doesn't illicit the same hate from traditionalists. There is also a tab that projects from the bottom of the pistol grip that prevents the rifle from firing unless the lever is closed.

The sub-7-pound '94 Deluxe Short Rifle has an overall length of 38-inches and a length of pull that measures 13½ inches, making it suitable for a broad range of shooters.



In classic form, the front sight is a post with a gold aiming bead dovetailed into the barrel. The rear buckhorn sight is also adjustable.



Always a point of controversy, the Model 94 Deluxe Short Rifle features a tang safety, which most will agree is better than a crossbolt.

The manufacturer's suggested retail price is \$1,849 for either chambering, which isn't cheap, but the Deluxe Short Rifle's wood, fit and finish explains this model's higher price.

**At The Range** If you're accustomed to shooting bolt guns with 2-pound triggers, the Winchester Model 94's trigger will take some getting used to. There's some take-up before the trigger comes

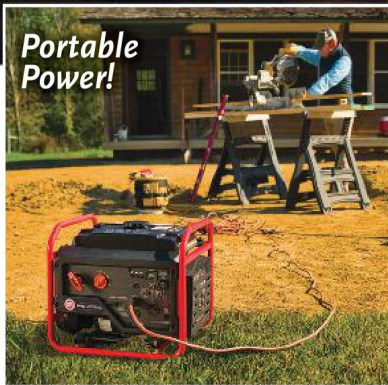
tight, and while the trigger break wasn't excessively heavy — 5 pounds, 8 ounces, on average — it's not a target trigger. However, for most of the tasks for which the '94 is suited, the trigger is perfectly fine. It wasn't so heavy that the trigger made shooting groups from the bench challenging, but trigger feel certainly factors into a rifle's accuracy potential. At the range, G&A tested five different loads at 100 yards from the bench, and the average group sizes measured between 3 and 4 inches. The best group measured 2.85 inches, and most of those groups were in



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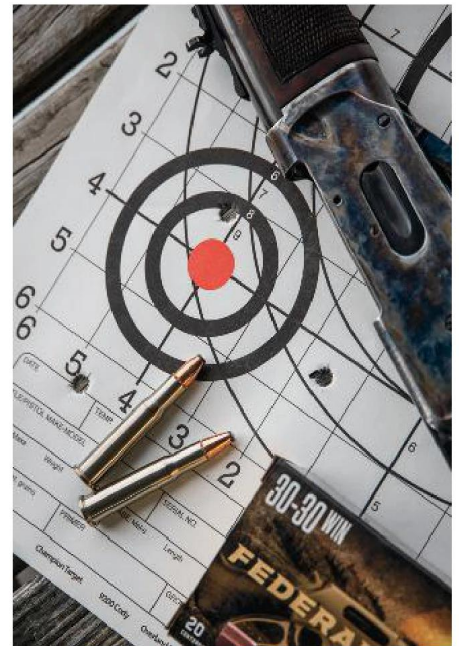
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the 3½-inch range. To shooters brought up firing bolt-action or benchrest rifles at that distance, these numbers will seem unimpressive, but when you're working with buckhorn sights (and your own proclivity with buckhorn sights), those groups are perfectly expected from a '94 of similar configuration. The average whitetail has a vital zone of roughly 6 to 8 inches so consistent 3½-inch groups will produce clean kills of deer at 100 paces, so long as you are steady.

We also fired a group at 200 yards for comparison. At that distance, the average was 8 inches for three shots. The maximum effective range of this rifle on deer-sized game is probably limited to 150 yards or so. The buckhorn sights on the '94 do adjust using a classic ladder design that can elevate or lower the rear sight based upon which "step" supports it. It's a rudimentary design, but one that can be adjusted in the field without tools.

This '94 may not be as versatile for hog hunting as many rifles designed since, but it is a better tool to carry when sneaking into a sounder of pigs than the average bolt gun. Split times improve when you learn to grip and pull the short rifle against the shoulder with the forend and grip without breaking the sight plane. Having two anchor points on this rifle and allowing the shooting hand to operate the lever allows for quick shooting as many hunters, ranchers and pioneers would attest. Though a '94 may never match the accuracy of a match rifle off the bench, there are few centerfire rifles that allow quick close-range shots off-hand, or follow-ups.

Not only does the Model '94 have an impressive reputation on hunting game, but its handling characteristics also make it a suitable home-defense option. A recent



**PERFORMANCE**

LOAD	VEL. (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVG. GROUP (IN.)
Federal Trophy Copper 150-gr. PT	2,304	56	15	3.21	3.66
Winchester Power Max 170-gr. PHP	2,167	22	7	3.21	2.85
Hornady Monoflex 140-gr. FTX	2,343	43	14	3.43	3.2
Federal Hammer Down 150-gr. SP	2,357	42	12	3.5	3.36
Browning BXR 155-gr. PT	2,294	60	19	3.81	3.45

Notes: Accuracy is the average of three, five-shot groups at 100 yards from a fixed rest. Velocity is the average of 10 shots recorded by a Shooting Chrony digital chronograph placed 10 feet in front of the muzzle.

Guns & Ammo study highlighted the cartridges most in demand during the COVID-19 pandemic. Interestingly, reserves of the .30-30 were almost depleted across the country, so we're clearly not the only ones who think the .30-30 is effective for personal protection.

While the Winchester '94 is well over a century old in its development, the design has held up remarkably well and is making a comeback (perhaps because it isn't a black-colored semiautomatic). It's a product of the firearm era of when ambitions were aimed at getting as close to game as possible before firing, instead of seeing how far away one could shoot. We're glad that Winchester feels this all-American design deserved special treatment in the form of the Deluxe Short Rifle because it serves as an excellent reminder that these leverguns are fun and versatile. No gun collection is complete without at least one Model '94. Seven-point-five million gun owners can't be wrong.



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KEITH WOOD

## *A scientific view of hunting in Africa.*

# TROPHY HUNTING

**AS EVIDENCED BY** the “Cecil the lion” incident in Zimbabwe on July 2, 2015, there are few policies that evoke the reaction and controversy than hunters pursuing African game. Trophy photos on social media often spark outrage, boycotts, vitriol and sometimes death threats. Like many areas of debate today, emotional sentiment usually upstages fact.

No matter where you stand on the issue of hunting, most can agree that the goal of wildlife policy regulations should promote the biodiverse and sustainable populations of indigenous species, and support conservation and habitat improvements. Originally, the Conserving Ecosystems by Ceasing the Importation of Large (CECIL) Animals Trophies Act (H.R. 2245) aimed to ban U.S. importation of sport-hunted trophies from three African countries: Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia. Today, the bill still exists to both discourage and end hunting in those areas.

We are told not to ignore science when determining public policy — and I often agree. The August 30, 2019, issue of “Science” ([sciencemag.org](http://sciencemag.org)), a publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), took an empirical look at the issue of trophy hunting and the potential effects of banning it. The policy letter titled “Trophy Hunting Bans Imperil Biodiversity,” was written by five authors with 128 signatories. Their findings make for a well-researched argument for reforming sport hunting in Africa rather than banning it.

According to the authors, which include Oxford’s Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU) researchers, such laws might have the opposite effect on the conservation of African wildlife than the CECIL bill’s sponsors claim. “Calls for hunting bans usually cite conservation concerns,” the Science report states. It adds, “However, there is compelling evidence that banning trophy hunting would negatively affect conservation.”

The publication also lists the tangible benefits of trophy hunting, both to the species and local economies. Habitat loss is the number one enemy of Africa’s wildlife, according to WildCRU. More land has been conserved for trophy hunting in these countries than exists in the scarcely funded

national parks. Africa’s economic health is part of the problem. “Trophy hunting can provide income for marginalized and impoverished rural communities,” the Science authors concluded. “Viable alternatives are often lacking; opponents

of hunting promote the substitution of photo-tourism, but many hunting areas are too remote or unappealing to attract sufficient visitors.” I found this to be the case during a hunt in Zimbabwe, where the remote location and spartan amenities of the hunting area made it unsuitable for traditional tourism.


Lions are among the most controversial animals to hunt, but they can benefit from the practice, too, according to the study. “Species such as lions fare worst in areas without photo-tourism or trophy hunting, where unregulated killing can be far more



CECIL THE HWANGE LION

prevalent than in hunting zones, with serious repercussions for conservation and animal welfare. Focusing on trophy hunting also distracts attention from the major threats to wildlife.” The Dande Anti-Poaching Unit (DAPU, [dapuzim.com](http://dapuzim.com)) in Zimbabwe, is entirely funded by the owners of Charlton McCallum Safaris and a long list of private donors and hunters, amounting to \$60,000 annually. My own experience revealed that private safari operations often do a better job of combating poachers than the authorities.

A big threat to lion populations come from conflicts with domestic animals such as cattle and livestock, which often results in lions being shot or poisoned by farmers. However, in a safari area, those animals have tangible value. When animals have value, the locals (and their government) have a vested interest in protecting and managing them.

In the end, the letter makes it clear that the authors are not a group of trophy hunters: “As African countries call for a ‘New Deal’ for rural communities that allows them to achieve the self-determination to sustainably manage wildlife and reduce poverty, it is incumbent on the international community not to undermine that. Some people find trophy hunting repugnant (including many of us), but conservation policy that is not based on science threatens habitat and biodiversity and risks disempowering and impoverishing rural communities.” That’s a welcome dose of honesty in an otherwise irrational debate. 



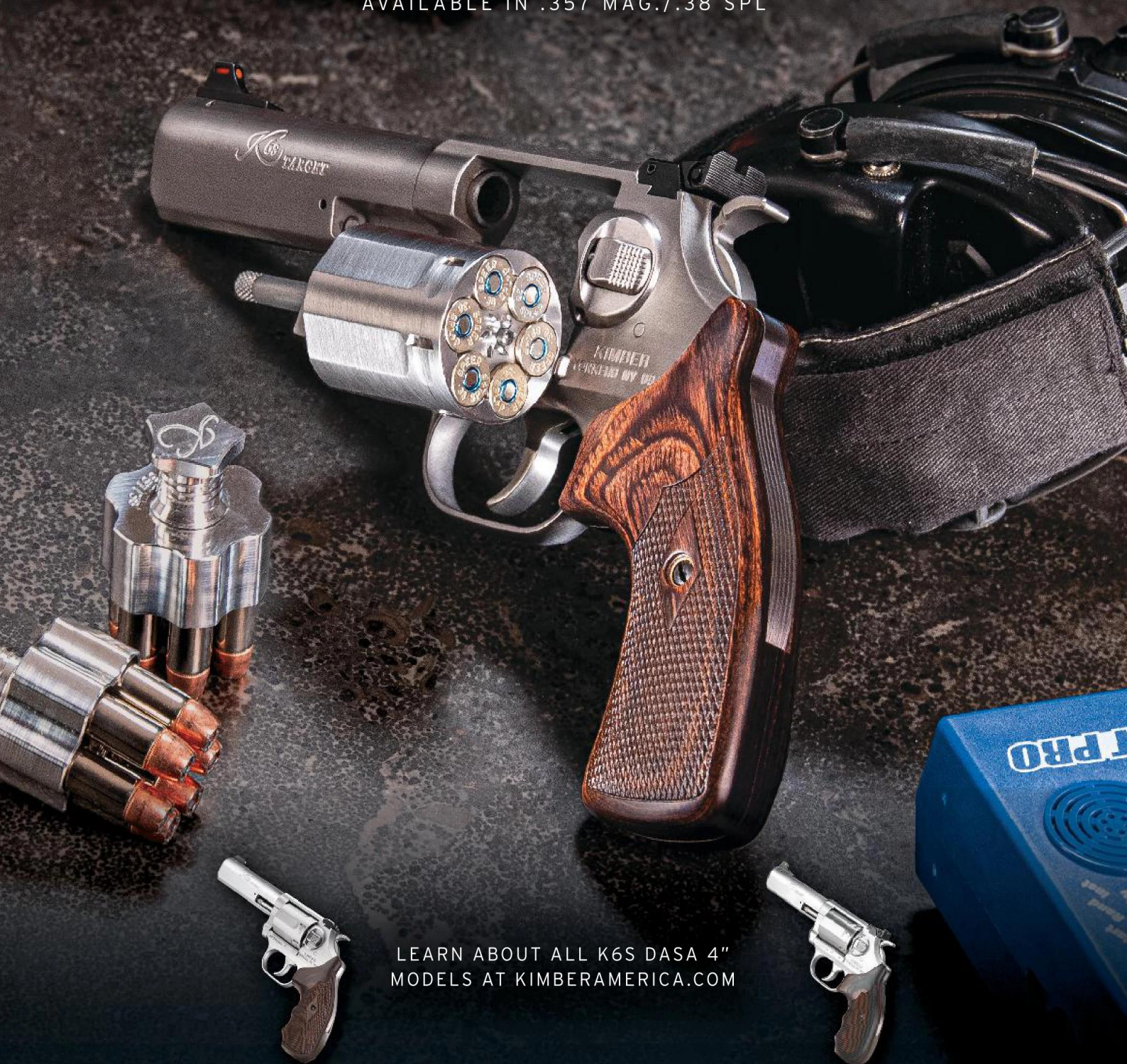
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