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By George Harris







#### Generation of the National Rifle Association of America

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

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#### The Sight Alignment Dilemma

Your target is going to tell you how much time you have to get your sights lined up. Getting them lined up properly, when they need to be on-target takes practice. Steve Tarani shows us how our skill level can increase in order to be up to the task of making the shot on time and on target.

#### Thoughts on Home Invasions

A firearm is just part of a home-defense plan that also includes external alarms, your interior decor and having the common sense to be fully aware and wide awake before sending rounds downrange. Sheriff Jim reminds us all that everything should work together to prepare yourself against a home invasion.



#### Pushing The Limits: The Long-Range AR-15

These days, we tend to think of the AR-15 as suitable only for close-in work, and rarely shoot beyond 300 or even 100 yards with our ARs. However, with the right ammo, the right optics and the right gun, your AR-15 can stretch its limits and get hits on-target to 1,000 yards and beyond.



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

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## THE RAIL ADAPTERS SPECIALISTS





# **Out on a Rim**

I enjoyed reading Dick Williams' article, "Rimfire Survival," in the September issue. I would like to add a couple more guns to his list, though. The Smith & Wesson Model 63 revolver would be a good choice for survival, in my opinion. It's an eight-shot, stainless steel DA/SA revolver with excellent balance and adjustable sights. I have mine loaded with ultra-high-velocity rounds for home defense. Another one I like is the Ruger Single-10. It's single-action-only like the Single-Six, but holds 10 rounds. It has adjustable sights and a longer barrel than my Model 63. I'm partial to my .22 LR revolvers for home defense and survival. Packed with a good supply of CCI .22 LR quiet, high-velocity .22 LR and .22-caliber shotshells, I literally have three guns in one.



Dick Williams' article on the .22 LR for survival in the September issue was very good. It got me thinking: Is the .22 LR suitable for survival? Simple answer—yes. My .22 LRs are some of my favorites, and if survival is

David Elosser

Kernersville, NC

necessary, my first choice is one of my Ruger 10/22s. The 10/22 Tactical version comes standard with an AR pistol grip-type stock, which is collapsible and folding. It also has a threaded barrel and can fit in my backpack, much like the Takedown series. I can easily swap out a rifle-scope with night-vision optics and maintain great accuracy. A suppressor and a bipod round out the accessories and make shooting stable, accurate and very quiet.

In regard to ammunition and the amount one can carry, I would take the 35 pounds (about 5,000 rounds) of .22 LR, considering only 1,000 rounds of .40 S&W weighs a bit more and the .22 LR takes up much less space. Add in a maintenance kit for cleaning and oiling along with a .22 handgun, and I am still carrying less than 50 pounds total weight.

Can a .22 LR be used to take larger game? Yes, particularly in a survival situation. I would not hesitate in taking a deer for food with a well-placed shot if that element of survival became necessary. And let's not forget that food need not only include big game—a good rabbit meal can be had from 100 yards with a .22 LR.

*Michael Lantz* via e-mail

#### Wonders of the Wheelgun

Thank you for running the Taurus 856 Executive on the September cover. I'm a firearm trainer (thank you NRA), and I am always praising the attributes of a wheelgun. Now, mind you I'm not some older crotchety gun guy with the obligatory oversize tactical vest. On the contrary, I'm always saying "carry as much firepower as you can." But, there's something to be said about carrying an old-school revolver-not to mention the ease of cleaning and minimal number of things that can go wrong. I do get some converts in my classes, but not many. The students all have their eyes on the latest and greatest semi-automatics. Now here is the interesting part: I hated Taurus firearms back in the day. But slowly, I have grown to like them, as has my expanding collection of revolvers.

> Marcus Trise via e-mail

#### **Squared Circle?**

While I realize that lighting can play tricks on us, the cylinder on the righthand revolver in the image for the September "Fightin' Iron" column looks flat. What's up with that?

> Rick Notkin Gilford, NH

No sir, the light is not playing tricks on

you. The "revolver" on the far-right side of the image is a Colt Camp Perry Model .22 LR Pistol. While the gun resembles a revolver at first glance, it's actually not. The sides of the cylinder are indeed flat, because the Camp Perry Model was designed to function as a single-shot pistol used by competitive shooters who desired only one chamber for loading. As such, the cylinder was designed not to rotate, or revolve.

—Bob Boyd

#### Correspondence is welcomed and encouraged

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hen an uninvited neighbor joined an Independence Day party in Surprise, Ariz., on July 3, the homeowners allowed him to mingle. However, as several people were gathered in the kitchen, the neighbor suddenly pulled out a gun and began firing, first striking the male homeowner in the head. The man's 7-monthpregnant wife, believing him to be dead, grabbed their two daughters and barricaded them and other children in a room deeper in the house, telling them to hide in the closet and "not make a peep if you hear loud noises." Two other women attempted to fight the crazed neighbor and also screamed for the male homeowner, knowing he was a concealed carrier but apparently not knowing the extent of his wounds. The homeowner heard their cries and was able to get up, draw his firearm and shoot the suspect four times in the chest, killing him. The male homeowner suffered a fractured jaw and torn eardrum, plus lost his sense of smell and his entire left eye. Two other partygoers died and three others were injured in the unprovoked attack. "If I didn't have my gun with me, everyone in the house would have died," the homeowner said. "The news vans would've been front and center. But because I did, you never even heard about it," he added. (NRA YouTube video, 9/7/2022; foxnews.com, New York, N.Y., 9/7/2022)

n Lincoln County, Miss., during the early-morning hours of Tuesday, July 19, police received a call about a man threatening people at one residence, but the man had left before officers arrived. However, as they investigated that incident, they received another call about a man breaking into a home and assaulting two men there. When they arrived at that scene, they found that a neighbor there had also been attacked. Again, as they investigated, they received another disturbance call-this time, that a man had attempted to hit someone with his car and had been shot. The man, who was later found to be connected to each of these disturbances, died of his injuries at the hospital. The armed citizen was not charged. (wlbt.com, Jackson, Miss., 7/19/2022)

52-year-old man was at home visiting with A a friend just before 8 a.m. on Aug. 13 when he discovered a male trespasser on his property in Emerald Township, Ohio, and called police. Before deputies could arrive, the trespasser assaulted the homeowner's friend. The homeowner attempted to stop the assault, telling the unknown man multiple times to stop or he would shoot him. The assailant, however, then directed his attack at the homeowner, who shot him in the hip, stopping the attack. The investigation was still ongoing, but the sheriff noted that officers believed the 28-year-old trespasser to have been under the influence of illegal drugs. "The property owner and his friend were presented with a stranger acting erratically and the man eventually became violent by physically assaulting someone," the sheriff noted. "I don't want to see

people being shot, but I wholeheartedly believe people have a right to protect themselves ... and in this case, it appears to be a justified self-defense situation." (hometownstations.com, Lima, Ohio, 8/13/2022)

mother in Milwaukee, Wis., was A showering the morning of Aug. 15 when she heard her children-a 12-year-old and a 14-year-old-start screaming. She raced to her bedroom for her gun and ran, dripping wet, into the hallway to find a male intruder there. Her two dogs had attacked the man, but "he wouldn't stop coming," she told reporters, so she shot him multiple times, killing him. The woman was arrested but released a few hours later, though the investigation is still ongoing. Neighbors lauded her as a hero, with one neighbor noting that "she did what any mother would do: defend her children." (tmj4.com, Milwaukee, Wis., 8/17/2022)

A man in San Antonio, Texas, was arriving home at his apartment complex in the early-morning hours of Friday, Aug. 19, when he noted a silver Toyota Prius circling the parking lot. Before he was able to get into his apartment, three men allegedly got out of the car, demanding he hand over valuables and pointing guns at the man. The resident drew his own firearm and shot one of the men in the neck, causing the others to flee. The robber who'd been shot later died of his injuries; police are still seeking the other two. The armed citizen was not charged with a crime. (foxsanantonio.com, San Antonio, Texas, 8/19/2022)



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#### STANDING GUARD



By Wayne LaPierre Executive Vice President



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### **One Election To Save Freedom**

Just weeks from now, after Americans head to the polls and the last votes are counted, you and I will be facing one of two scenarios: A venomous anti-gun president in the White House with rabid gun-hating majorities in Congress. Or, that same president with pro-Second Amendment majorities in Congress keeping him in check.

Just a few months ago, the Nancy Pelosi-led U.S. House of Representatives passed what would be the biggest and most crushing gun ban in American history. H.R. 1808 would ban millions of lawfully owned semi-automatic rifles, shotguns, pistols and standard-capacity magazines. Nearly every caliber of rifle and pistol would be impacted by this ban—even .22 rifles designed to hold what anti-gun politicians deem to be "too many rounds."

Just hours after the bill passed, President Joe Biden praised it as a "common-sense action" and vowed to "not stop fighting" until H.R. 1808 was on his desk to be signed into law.

Because you're an NRA member, I know I can count on you to get out and vote.

But more than ever, in this election, we need to multiply our votes with the votes of our like-minded family members, friends and colleagues. No one can sit out this election, and if you need any help convincing freedom-minded friends to vote, I can't think of better motivation than the very real and devastating scenario I've laid out above.

Biden's administration is stacked with gun-ban extremists from top to bottom. He has a Congress where every committee, subcommittee and leadership post is run by his anti-gun allies. And, of course, every single day he can rely on a multi-trillion dollar, anti-gun propaganda machine that amazingly, some folks still refer to as "journalists" — who regurgitate his lies and bend over backward to cover for his many disastrous policy failures.

Despite all of it, NRA members like you continue to hold the line for our freedom. I'm proud beyond words because of what you and your fellow NRA members have accomplished since Biden was sworn into office.

That said, the only way we can guarantee Biden never gets the chance to sign H.R. 1808 into law, along with so many other disastrous anti-gun bills that are just waiting in the wings, is to win this election.

That's it. This single election is our best and only insurance policy against losing our freedom. I know you've heard me say this before, but it always bears repeating: This election is the most important election in our lifetimes. I tell you this now, just as I have in the past, because every election *is* the most important in our lifetimes. Because, unfortunately, you and I are always just one lost election away from losing our freedom.

Just imagine if Hillary Clinton had won in 2016 and had the opportunity to put three justices on the U.S. Supreme Court. We not only would've lost the recent *Bruen* decision, which safeguards our right to self-defense outside our homes, but the *Heller* and *McDonald* decisions would be well on their way to being overturned by now.

IN THIS ELECTION, WE NEED TO MULTIPLY OUR VOTES WITH THE VOTES OF OUR LIKE-MINDED FAMILY MEMBERS, FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES. NO ONE CAN SIT OUT THIS ELECTION.

When we win elections, we get good men and women who safeguard our Second Amendment freedom. We get honest judges who uphold our constitutional rights. We get laws that restore lost freedoms and protect our right to purchase, own and carry firearms. We get the votes we need in Congress to make sure gun-ban bills never see the light of day.

But when we lose elections? Then we get judges who work to gut the Second Amendment. We lose our lawful right to self-defense. We get legislation banning guns, magazines and ammo. And a loss in this election would mean that very specific legislation makes its way to Joe Biden's desk.

Every election is a historic, precious opportunity for the heritage of freedom that you and I work so hard to reclaim, safeguard and defend.

This one is the most precious opportunity of all. Let's win it!

Wan La Pin

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#### PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By Charles L. Cotton President

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### "A Good Guy With A Gun" – A Fact, Not A Sound Bite!

good guy with a gun stopping a bad guy with a gun is not a rare event, regardless of what anti-Second Amendment types would have you believe. We rarely hear of these good guys because legacy-media-outlets-turned-propaganda-mills simply don't report such events; it doesn't fit their agenda. This is changing, albeit at glacial speed, with formal and informal journalists using social media like YouTube, email lists, etc., to report the truth. Even when legacymedia outlets feel forced to report on a good guy saving their own and perhaps others' innocent lives, their reports rarely give much detail. If possible, they point to prior military or law enforcement experience, even if it is decades old, to minimize the impact of an "ordinary citizen" using a firearm to save lives.

A recent example of a good guy saving countless innocent lives occurred at the Greenwood Park Mall in Greenwood, Ind., on July 17, 2022. Twenty-two-year-old Elisisha Dicken was a good guy with a gun, and he had a lot more than a gun. He had courage, a love for others and a willingness to put his life on the line for perfect strangers. When a 20-year-old would-be mass murderer opened fire on dozens of innocent people in the mall food court, our hero stopped him in a mere 15 seconds! I'm hardly the only person to call Mr. Dicken a hero for his actions. In fact, Greenwood Police Chief Jim Ison said this about Mr. Dicken: "His actions were nothing short of heroic. He engaged the gunman from quite a distance with a handgun, was very proficient in that, very tactically sound, and as he moved to close in on the suspect, he was also motioning for people to exit behind him."

Mr. Dicken was at the mall with his girlfriend when he heard shots being fired quite some distance away. He directed his girlfriend to safety and then started closing the distance between himself and the murderer. As Chief Ison described, Mr. Dicken directed others to exit behind him as he closed on the threat. As he neared the assailant who was armed with a rifle, Dicken was trying to get others to safety. He could have left with his girlfriend, but he chose to put his life in danger to save others. Apparently, he did so instinctively, because only 15 seconds after the murderer started shooting, he was dead. Mr. Dicken fired 10 rounds, striking the murderer eight times from 40 yards away, under unimaginable stress.

Now let's talk about Mr. Dicken's specialized training and combat experience. It won't take long because he didn't have any! That's right, he was just like countless other American gun owners who have no military or law enforcement experience, but who carry self-defense firearms. (Perhaps this is why the legacy media works so hard not to report on this incident.) When asked about his skill with a handgun, Mr. Dicken said that his grandfather taught him to shoot. That's right: grandpa taught his grandson to shoot and it saved countless lives on July 17, 2022. Remember that, all you moms, dads and grandparents.

So, how did the anti-Second Amendment community respond to Mr. Dicken's heroic acts? The predominant response was no response and I mean church-mouse quiet. Fortunately, some did respond, and in so doing, unintentionally revealed the level of violence they are willing to accept to promote gun control. It is as shocking as it is enlightening, folks, so you better pay attention.

Some anti-Second Amendment types have criticized Mr. Dicken for having his life-saving handgun with him in the mall. They would have preferred that he had not been armed. This necessarily means they would rather have dozens of innocent people murdered than have a "good guy with a gun" save the day! Sure, they might claim otherwise, but there were only two ways that incident was going to end. Either the murderer was killed early on, or dozens of innocent people were going to die. People who prefer the latter scenario exist, folks, and they desperately want to control not only the narrative, but Congress, state legislatures, judicial offices and the media.

What can we learn? First, carry a selfdefense handgun everywhere you can legally do so. I know a Baptist minister who has a great tag line on an internet forum. It reads, 24/7 or guess right." That really sums it up. Secondly, obtain all the firearm self-defense training you can afford. There are more than 100,000 NRA certified instructors, so you can find one in your area. Third, train your kids and grandkids in the safe and responsible use of firearms. On July 17, 2022, dozens of innocent people walked out of the Greenwood Mall and went home to their families because Elisjsha Dicken's grandfather did exactly that. We must all be ready for that day we pray never comes.





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WHAT ALL GUNS SHOULD BE"

#### **POLITICAL REPORT**



By Jason Ouimet Executive Director, NRA-ILA

#### YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE NOT ENOUGH.

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### Your Vote Matters: A Pro-Gun Congress Can Stop Biden's Anti-gun Executive Overreach

n August, a sprawling regulation took effect that fundamentally changes what counts as a regulated "firearm" under federal law. Certain firearm parts, parts kits and even unfinished receiver blanks will now be treated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) as if they were operable guns, with all the bureaucracy and restrictions that implies.

The rule is as audacious as it is indecipherable in its details. ATF is vastly expanding its own law enforcement jurisdiction, simply by unilaterally redefining the main commodity it regulates.

The White House and its collaborators in the media tried to sell the rule to the public as a crackdown on so-called "ghost guns." These guns do not function differently than "normal" guns, and federal law requires that they be just as detectable by X-ray machines or magnetometers as other firearms. But because they are made by unlicensed individuals for personal use, they do not bear the markings and serial numbers of guns produced or imported by federal firearm licensees (FFLs).

The administration claims "ghost guns" are a public safety threat, because they are more difficult for law enforcement officers to trace to an original owner if they are recovered at a crime scene and because their parts can sometimes be obtained without a background check. Those claims are dubious, at best.

Firearm traces can only help police identify a gun's original retail purchaser. The typical firearm recovered at a crime scene, however, was bought years earlier and has changed hands multiple times. Interrogating the original buyer is therefore likely to be a time-consuming dead end.

Meanwhile, criminals easily obtain finished firearms outside channels of regulated commerce. That won't change just because law-abiding people will now have to go through background checks to get receiver blanks or firearms parts kits. Like most gun control, the rule is more about burdening the law-abiding than stopping violent criminals. And the rule gives Biden's ATF unprecedented authority over the U.S. firearm industry, which Biden himself has publicly referred to as "[0]ur enemy."

There is one sure way to counter the runaway Biden administration's executive overreach, however—elect pro-gun majorities to Congress.

Currently, the White House and both chambers of Congress are all held by the same party, which has openly embraced sweeping gun control. The current anti-gun majority in the U.S. House of Representatives has gone further than ever before to restrict Second Amendment rights, including passing the most-extensive gun ban in the nation's history in July by a margin of only four votes.

And, that's not all. The Nancy Pelosi-led House has passed private transfer bans, waiting periods for lawful firearm purchasers and the most-extensive federal red-flag law we've ever seen. This emboldens Joe Biden to push the envelope on executive actions, because he knows he can act with impunity.

The midterm elections this November offer an opportunity to change that and to restore the Constitution's checks on the Biden White House until Biden himself faces accountability in 2024.

A pro-gun House of Representatives does more than simply ensure any legislative proposal to restrict Second Amendment rights is DOA. It serves as a bulwark against the executive himself.

The U.S. House's unique role in America's constitutional framework is to give the people direct representation in the government that is accountable not just to the needs of a state but to individual districts within that state. Each member of the House has to face voters every two years, meaning they must be very attentive and responsive to the needs of their constituents. Members of the Senate, by contrast, serve six-year terms and are more immune to the politics of the moment. Flipping the House after its recent anti-gun actions would send a strong message to the government to keep its hands off our firearms.

Members of the House also wield the power of the purse and can defund specific agency actions or cut entire agency budgets. The huge spending bills that Congress is required to pass to keep the government running originate in the House and have been used to block various firearm-registration schemes and to prevent ATF overreach. Indeed, the Obama administration's brazen attempt to ban M855 ammunition ended in part because the pro-gun chairman of a key House appropriations subcommittee threatened to "step on [ATF's] air hose."

House committees can also hold hearings to expose executive abuse, something that would be extremely helpful to curb ATF's current "zero tolerance" revocation policy for firearms dealers.

There is no doubt a pro-gun House is a firewall against executive actions like ATF's self-serving attempt to redefine the very meaning

of a "firearm." So, be sure to visit **nrapyf.org** to know where the candidates in your district stand, and vote freedom first this November!

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Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and other like-minded members of Congress need only a few seats this election to usher in draconian restrictions on the right to keep and bear arms.

By Jason Ouimet Executive Director, NRA-ILA



# THE FUTURE OF OUR RIGHTS DEPENDS ON YOUR VOTE

RA members shouldn't lack for motivation to vote Nov. 8. In fact, President Joe Biden and his full-spectrum war on Second Amendment rights should have gun owners racing to the polls. The foremost threat is extreme gun-control

legislation. On July 29, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a ban on commonly owned semiautomatic firearms and standard-capacity magazines. Thanks in part to the filibuster, the legislation hasn't passed the U.S. Senate. However, Biden has made clear that if things go his way in November, banning guns is one of his top priorities. On Aug. 25, the president told a crowd in Maryland, "If we elect two more senators, we keep the House—and Democrats, we're going to get a lot of unfinished business we're going to get done ... we'll ban assault weapons."

Obviously, this extreme gun ban is a far cry from the claims that many of these lawmakers made when running for office. The bills passed by the House should put to rest any claim that the current House majority is seeking any type of "reasonable" gun-law reform. (Of course, to those who want to completely eliminate our right to keep and bear arms, any additional burdens on lawful gun owners will be "reasonable.")

In addition to the gun and magazine bans, the House also passed bans on private transfers of firearms, legislation to delay lawful firearm sales, and a bill to create a procedure for the federal government to seize firearms without due process of law. When it came to gun control, no bill was too extreme for the current anti-gun House majority.

But, without a Senate willing to change its rules to enact the Biden-Harris gun-control agenda, the president and Attorney General Merrick Garland spent the first half of his term undermining the Second Amendment by executive fiat. These dubious exercises in executive power came after President Barack Obama's White House correctly acknowledged that they had done everything in the executive branch's authority to target firearms.

In May 2021, Biden's ATF (overseen by Garland's Department of Justice) published a notice of proposed rulemaking 2021R-05F, concerning the "Definition of 'Frame or Receiver' and Identification of Firearms." The rule altered the Code of Federal Regulations to effectively prohibit the sale of unfinished frames or receivers, sometimes called "80%" frames or receivers, that law-abiding gun owners use to make their own firearms. A final version of the rule was published on April 26 and the new regulation went into effect on Aug. 24.

As discussed in more detail in my column this month, this executive measure seeks to make it harder for law-abiding shooters and hobbyists to make their own firearms for personal use, a right Americans have enjoyed that predates the republic. Violent criminals aren't typically known for a strong work ethic, which is why the idea of lawbreakers tinkering away in a workshop when firearms can be accessed by criminal means will strike sensible people as farcical. This is borne out by the data. A Department of Justice survey of state and federal inmates published in 2019 found that among those inmates who possessed a firearm at the time of their offense, 75% obtained the gun "Off the street/underground market," "from a family member or friend, or as a gift," or by theft.

In addition to targeting a timehonored American tradition, the rule contained some lesser-discussed changes to federal regulation. Chief among these involved the ATF's firearm-tracing regime. When purchasing a firearm from a Federal Firearm Licensee (gun dealer or FFL) the buyer must fill out an ATF Form 4473 with personally identifying information. Prior to the rule, FFLs were required to maintain a record of these Form 4473s for 20 years or until they went out of business, at which point the records must be sent to ATF's National Tracing Center (NTC). According to proponents of this scheme, if a gun is recovered at a crime scene, then manufacturer records and the Form 4473 would help track the firearm to the initial retail purchaser, which, in theory, could assist in identifying the perpetrator.

The 20-year limit on required retention of Form 4473s ensured that the ATF could not compile a complete record of retail firearm sales—which would amount to a firearm registry. With the new rule, ATF now requires FFLs to retain Form 4473s indefinitely and to send them to ATF upon ceasing operation. The change dovetails with anti-gun efforts to "modernize" the NTC in a manner that would make it easier for the agency to track retail gun purchases.

This has significant consequences for law-abiding gun owners. While the NTC and its records can be used to trace firearms from a crime scene to a retail purchase, the system can also be used in the reverse—to trace firearms from a manufacturer to a retail purchaser.

Called a forward trace, in 1994, ATF changed the legal classification of certain models of shotguns and used this method to track down the purchasers in an attempt to get them to register their lawfully purchased firearms as "destructive devices" under the National Firearms Act (NFA). With David Chipman calling for the AR-15s to be registered under the NFA, and President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris calling for gun confiscation, it is easy to see how a more-comprehensive tracing regime could be employed to harass gun owners and facilitate confiscation.

Less than a month after announcing the frame or receiver rule, the Biden ATF took aim a popular subset of handguns. In June 2021, Biden's ATF announced rule 2021R-08, "Factoring Criteria for Firearms with Attached 'Stabilizing Braces."

Federal law defines a handgun as a firearm designed to be capable of being fired by one hand. When equipped to an AR-15 platform, or other large format, handgun, a stabilizing brace assists a person's ability to accurately fire the firearm with a single hand. These devices were initially designed to help disabled veterans regain the ability to use these firearms.

Under the proposed rule, nearly all configurations of firearms equipped with a stabilizing brace would be reclassified as short-barreled rifles subject to the NFA taxation and registration requirement. Those seeking to maintain possession of these firearms, that they lawfully built or purchased, would be required to register their property with the federal government or alter their firearm's configuration.

Later in June 2021, the Biden-Harris administration targeted FFLs through a new "zero tolerance" policy. At the time, the White House explained, "ATF will seek to revoke the licenses of dealers the first time that they violate federal law" in relation to certain violations. Some of these violations could include simple paperwork errors, such as minor mistakes on a Form 4473. The new policy has led to speculation that the effort is aimed at reducing the number of gun dealers, thus making it harder for Americans to exercise their Second Amendment rights.

Electing a pro-gun Congress will help to protect gun owners in four distinct ways. First, a pro-gun Congress will put an end to Biden's dreams of gunban legislation.

Second, Congress maintains the power of the purse. Power over federal agency funding is an important tool to ensure federal bureaucrats act in accordance with the law. Congress can defund enforcement of improper agency rulemakings and ensure that the ATF's focus is where it belongs—on violent criminals.

Third, a pro-gun Congress can exercise proper oversight of the government agencies tasked with enforcing gun laws. Opposition party-led House and Senate Oversight Committees might even be able to get to the bottom of federal law enforcement's bizarre treatment of the allegations of illegal gun possession surrounding Hunter Biden.

Fourth, as important as it is to empower our allies to play defense, voting isn't all about protecting the status quo against a lawless presidential administration and a malicious Congress. Just as important in recent years has been how pro-gun senators have helped to create a pro-Second Amendment judiciary.

Think back to February 2016, when U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia unexpectedly passed away. President Obama nominated Garland to replace the author of the landmark *District of Columbia v. Heller* decision, which affirmed the Second Amendment protects the individual right to keep and bear arms. Given Garland's recent conduct, there can be little doubt that the partisan hack would have used his seat on the bench to undermine constitutional rights.

Thankfully, American voters had granted the opposition party control of the U.S. Senate in 2014. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-lowa) ruled out confirming an Obama nominee prior to the 2016 election. With the Supreme Court on the ballot, the American people voted Donald Trump into the White House.

In the following four years, a progun Senate majority helped President Trump to confirm three worthy Supreme Court justices and remake the lower federal courts with a raft of pro-Second Amendment judges.

Voting to elect that pro-gun Senate has paid real dividends for gun owners. On June 23, the Supreme Court issued its decision in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen.* In reaffirming that the Second Amendment protects an individual right to keep and bears arms, the decision threw out New York's 111-year-old discretionary carry-licensing regime—making Right-to-Carry the law of the land.

Moreover, Trump-appointed lower court judges have worked to interpret the Second Amendment and Supreme Court precedent faithfully. On Aug. 23, a Trumpappointed federal district court judge in Texas ruled that the right to bear arms outside the home for self-defense extends to young adults ages 18-20.

Given the dire stakes of this election, NRA members must make their voices heard on Nov. 8. Moreover, NRA members must work to ensure that likeminded family, friends and neighbors understand the threat an unchecked Biden administration poses to Second Amendment rights. A sufficient group of informed, motivated and voting gun owners can keep Biden and Garland in check for the next two years and lay the groundwork for a brighter future in 2024.

# METAL MEETS 2022.

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ou wake up in the morning and walk onto the cabin porch with a steaming cup of coffee. The pine-scented air is crisp, clean and dry. The view is breathtaking. Colorful mesas, grassy plains, pine trees and the beauty of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains grab your attention.

You sip your coffee and catch movement to your left. A herd of pronghorn antelope meander into view. Next, you're treated to two mule deer holding back at the forest's edge. The abundance of wildlife is incredible.

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viewing, hiking, history, camping, or perhaps just getting away from it all, then it's time to put the NRA Whittington Center on your vacation bucket list!

Located a few miles south of Raton, N.M., this 33,000-acre shooting and training complex is the crown jewel of America's shooting ranges.

The moment you drive past the main gate, you enter a place rich in history. First, you'll pull up to the Visitor Center where you can tour the Frank Brownell Museum of the Southwest. Here you'll immerse yourself in the story of the Old West and the firearms that shaped our destiny. Then take a walk outside and pass former NRA president Charlton Heston forever memorialized as a scout in bronze. You can also walk in the wagon ruts of the pioneers who used the Santa Fe Trail as a 19th century highway to tame the Wild West. That's a lot of history!

However, what makes the Center so special is that it is America's top shooting destination. The Center has 23 world-class ranges facing north to south. This means all the ranges lie perpendicular to the sun's arc. So you won't have to worry about glare or direct sunlight spoiling that perfect shot.

But there's more. The Center has sporting clays, skeet, a 1,000-yard range, multiple silhouette ranges, extreme long-range.





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If you like competition shooting, the Center hosts hundreds of events every year. And when it comes to guided and unguided hunts, the Center has it all — the terrain, the scenery, the wildlife and the sheer enjoyment of the great outdoors, with nearly 100% success rates on certain hunts.

The Center can accommodate any budget for families, individuals and competitors, from rustic to luxury cabins to RV parks and competitor housing to tent camping. No doubt about it, the Center has something for you.

No matter where you live in this great country, a visit to the NRA Whittington Center will provide a lifetime of memories that you'll treasure forever. Learn more at NRAWC.org and start planning your next big shooting, hunting or outdoor adventure today.



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It was a perfect late autumn day in the northern Rockies. Not a cloud in the sky, and just enough cool in the air to stir up nostalgic memories of my trip into the backwoods. This year, though, was different. I was going it solo. My two buddies, pleading work responsibilities, backed out at the last minute. So, armed with my trusty knife, I set out for adventure.

Well, what I found was a whole lot of trouble. As in 8 feet and 800-pounds of trouble in the form of a grizzly bear. Seems this grumpy fella was out looking for some adventure too. Mr. Grizzly saw me, stood up to his entire 8 feet of ferocity and let out a roar that made my blood turn to ice and my hair stand up. Unsnapping my leather sheath, I felt for my hefty, trusty knife and felt emboldened. I then showed the massive grizzly over 6 inches of 420 surgical grade stainless steel, raised my hands and yelled, "Whoa bear! Whoa bear!" I must have made my point, as he gave me an almost admiring grunt before turning tail and heading back into the woods.

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I was pretty shaken, but otherwise fine. Once the adrenaline high subsided, I decided I had some work to do back home too. That was more than enough adventure for one day.

Our Grizzly Hunting Knife pays tribute to the call of the wild. Featuring stick-tang construction, you can feel confident in the strength and durability of this knife. And the hand carved, natural bone handle ensures you won't lose your grip even in the most dire of circumstances. I also made certain to give it a great price. After all, you should be able to get your point across without getting stuck with a high price. But we don't stop there. While supplies last, we'll include a pair of \$99 8x21 power compact binoculars FREE when you purchase the Grizzly Hunting Knife.

Make sure to act quickly. The Grizzly Hunting Knife has been such a hit that we're having trouble keeping it in stock. Our first release of more than 1,200 SOLD OUT in TWO DAYS! After months of waiting on our artisans, we've finally gotten some knives back in stock. Only 1,337 are available at this price, and half of them have already sold!

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# **Coming to a Range Near You**

Localized range events sponsored by major players in the firearm industry are bringing products directly to the people.



Whether it's a new shooter getting their first instruction or a seasoned veteran trying out product, localized events are becoming the wave of the future.

PHOTO: SHOOT UNITED

Capacity crowds are gathering at shooting ranges across the nation. Some are there to get behind the trigger of their favorite manufacturer's products, while others are walking up to the firing line for the first time. The response has been overwhelming and we can expect to see more such events during 2023.

Olin, parent company of Winchester Ammunition, announced the launch of Shoot United in late 2021. Events are free, loaner guns are provided, Winchester Ammunition is supplied and venues are first class.

"Shoot United will be inclusive," said Brett Flaugher, president of Winchester Ammunition, during the initial announcement. "We want to bring shooting and responsible firearm ownership to as wide a variety of people as possible, from all walks of life ... Winchester is wholly committed to this initiative, and we have high expectations that it will bring new energy and excitement to the shooting sports."

Shooting Illustrated attended the August event in Polkton, NC, and Brooke Carpenter mother of a five-month-old baby—was one of the more than 200 people on hand, eager to learn more about home defense. She got behind a trigger for the first time and was all grins. We asked about the expert, one-on-one instruction she received while shooting a modern sporting rifle. "All the knowledge I get, I think it will be good," she said before heading to the shotgun and pistol ranges.

Kristen Skibbe, shooting a gun for only the second time in her life, claimed to be nervous with a handgun. "It's the safest way to come and learn," she said after the instructor noted her impressive groups.

"There is a significant need and responsibility to share accurate, helpful information in responsible firearm ownership, safety and all the benefits of the shooting sports," said Jason Gilbertson, director of Marketing for Shoot United. "There are millions of people who have never been exposed to firearm ownership, as well as new firearm owners who are searching for information and opportunities to properly train and learn."

Company-sponsored events that offer an opportunity to try guns and accessoriesfree or for a nominal fee—are also becoming more frequent. Bergara Rifles was one of, if not the, earliest companies to do so. "It seems like last week," said Tony Smotherman, Bergara's head of Influencer Relations. "But, our first Bergara Experience was held August 5th 2017, just south of Raleigh, NC, at Woody's Rifle Club with a premise of having our customers be able to take our rifles for a 'test drive' before making their final purchase decision." Today these events are typically "... booked to full capacity by customers within minutes of opening registration online," he said.

Gunfest took place during the Sturgis, SD, Motorcycle Rally in August. Springfield Armory, Silencer Central and others were there. It's a considerable investment by each firm, although Steve Kramer, vice president of Marketing for Springfield Armory, explained, "While learning about Springfield Armory firearms through reviews you might see online or in print magazines, or from information we provide at springfield-armory.com is helpful, it's hard to replace the importance of simply being able to pick up one of our guns and see how they 'feel' in your hands. And having a chance to shoot them really takes the experience to the next level."

When SIG Sauer held a consumer-focused event at Arizona's Ben Avery Shooting Facility

in May, enthusiasts turned out in heavy numbers. "SIG Freedom Days connected the consumer with the product in a first-of-its-kind range event and exceeded all our expectations," said Tom Taylor, chief marketing officer and executive vice president of Commercial Sales at SIG Sauer. "With the undeniable success of SIG Freedom Days and the demand for more experiential events from SIG we are already planning for the next SIG Freedom Days event ... "

Whether the event is tailored for novices, advanced instruction or test drives, attendance is heavy, crowds are growing and feedback is positive. With that kind of reception, there's no doubt more will be on the schedule for 2023 and likely coming to a range near you.

#### Lifestyle Tailgate in Gunny Style

It's tailgating season and if parking lot BBQs, rooting for the home team and weekly gatherings with family and friends are part of your routine, now you can take an enthusiasm for firearms along—even on less-than-gunfriendly turf. Simply keep those beverages icy cool in a Grizzly 20-quart cooler proudly wearing the Springfield Armory logo.

Its rotationally molded construction features pressure-injected insulation and the cooler wears a stainless steel pinned molded-in hinge. It locks shut tightly every

#### Shooting Off

"In this case, a lawfully armed member of our community prevented a violent crime and ensured their own safety, while being confronted with multiple armed suspects."

--Statement from the Riverside (CA) County Sheriff's Department after four armed criminals attempting to rob his Norco, CA, convenience store pointed a semi-automatic rifle at the 80-year-old owner, but he responded with a shotgun blast They retreated and one entered the hospital in critical condition on July 31.

> time with BearClaw latches that require no hardware and heavy duty handles allow it to take a real load. Non-slip, non-marking feet, full-length drain channels, a two-inch plug for fast draining and more make it a dominating force at any game. Add the lifetime warranty and it's yards ahead of the competition.

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#### Han Solo Blaster Sells for More than \$1 Million

The lone surviving member in the trio of blank-firing BlasTech DL-44 Heavy Blaster pistols created for 1977's "Star Wars: A New Hope" blockbuster sold for \$1,057,500 in heated bidding on Aug. 27. Beneath this "Hero prop," which endeared itself to science fiction fans in the series breathes a C96, or "Broomhandle," Mauser.

Bapty & Co., a London-based prop firm that has created many of Hollywood's most iconic guns, made all three operational blasters. Utilizing blank-firing pistols allowed more realistic recoil during close-ups and ensured soundtrack synchronization.



Carl Schmidt served as armorer on the original Star Wars installment and,

along with serial numbers captured on film, was able to provide detailed

provenance. "Whilst not being in the exact form seen by millions in the film, the end result contains 80 percent of the last remaining pieces of this iconic prop," Rock Island Auction, which handled the sale, explained on the pistol's listing.

For a look at a functioning DL-44 blaster built by *Shooting Illustrated* Senior Associate Editor Bob Boyd, visit ShootingIllustrated.com and search for the Han Solo blaster.

#### **Quick Shots**

Florida's Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office has purchased B&T USA's APC9 Pro platforms equipped with Glock frames, folding stocks, Aimpoint Micro T1 sighting systems, 22 mm B&T quick-detach mounts and Vertx Ready Pack 2.0 carriage systems. These are destined for use within the department's School **Resource Officer** program, Detective Bureau and other specialized units.

AMMO, Inc., owner of gunbroker.com and producer of ammunition and components, announced a plan to separate its ammunition and marketplace businesses into two independent, publicly traded companies.

The U.S. Department of Energy is procuring Zev OZ-9X Combat pistols for use by the National Nuclear Security Administration's Office of Secure Transportation. The 9 mm pistols will be carried by guards escorting nuclear materials nationwide.

The Brevard County Sheriff's office in Florida has ordered 42 KelTec SUB2000 rifles as part of its new uniform and level of preparedness for its School Resource Deputies.





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#### SKILLS CHECK Steve Tarani

# **Single-Hand Stackup**

#### Can you respond to a potential threat single-handedly?

Then it comes to shooting well, there are few training modalities better than breaking a skill set down to its component parts, developing proficiency and then plugging it back into the matrix. One such method is working your strong- and support-hand skills and then overlaying those skills back into your two-handed shooting.

Our drill this month isolates the dominant (strong) hand and the non-dominant (support) hand into developing rapid target acquisition, stability, alignment and recoil-management proficiency.

#### Here's the Drill

At 10 yards, set up a steel "A-box" plate or a paper target with a designated center mass, primary-strike zone.

#### Support-Hand Stackup Drill – Part One

Starting with your support hand only, begin with the pistol drawn to the lowready position aimed in at the base of the target (where the target base contacts the ground), with a firm grip and finger outside the trigger guard.

On the buzzer or go signal, move the muzzle from the target base to the visual center of your intended target and fire one round when your sights are aligned.

Your timing (purpose of the drill) should be to break the shot at the exact same time your sights align with the visual center of the target. Include follow-through after the shot by recovering (reset visually and mechanically) to visual center again after recoil. Once you can do this successfully four times in a row without error, you are then ready for part two.

#### Support-Hand Stackup Drill – Part Two

The second part of the Support-Hand Stackup Drill is to deliver, rather than a single shot, four consecutive shots from the low-ready position. If you are using a timer to record your shot times, you'll want to work toward reducing your split times (times between breaking each shot) to as low as your skill level will allow that day.

#### Strong-Hand Stackup Drill – Part One

Moving on to your strong hand, start with your pistol holstered and both hands below your gun belt. Facing the target at the 10-yard line, on the buzzer or go signal present the pistol from your holster, stabilize the muzzle as you aim in at the visual center of your intended target and fire one round.

Just like the first drill, your timing (purpose of the drill) should be to break the shot at the precise time your sights align with the visual center of the target and to then recover back to visual center again after recoil. Once you can do this successfully four times in a row without error, then you are ready for part two.

#### Strong-Hand Stackup Drill – Part Two

The second part of the Strong-Hand Stackup Drill is, like with the weak-hand drill, to deliver four consecutive shots after drawing from the holster. If you are using a timer, you'll want to work toward reducing your split times to as low as your skill level will allow that day.

Both single-hand stackup drills can be run from an open holster or from concealment and with or without a timer.

Remember, the objective of these nifty skill-builders is twofold: to develop your timing as to when the shot breaks and to reduce your split times.

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In addition to sporting a one-size-fits-most design, the Magpul Tundra Beanie boasts a Merino wool and acrylic-knit blend paired with a polyester/fleece interior headband lining that will keep your head warm once the mercury begins to fall. There's even a branded suedepatch label on the front for an added a touch of class. Colors include black, charcoal heather and grizzly brown.

#### MSRP: \$34.95; magpul.com

The 100-percent microfleece construction of Tru-Spec's Polar Fleece Jacket offers a handy mid-layer in the cold months and a comfortable jacket in brisk conditions. Microfleece keeps you warm and dry and weighs less than conventional wool. An interior pocket provides space for assorted EDC gear. Elastic cuffs protect from the elements, while sleeve loops allow for use with a parka.

#### MSRP: \$50.95; truspec.com

A company favorite for more than 50 years, the **DeSantis** New York Undercover (DBL PCH) Shoulder Holster is available in right- or left-handed variants and is constructed from top-grain cowhide expertly molded to precisely fit 11 different brands of handguns. Its harness is adjustable, accommodates up to a 54-inch chest, pivots at all four junction points and is shipped fully assembled with a vertically oriented double-magazine pouch. Color options include black and untanned.

#### MSRP: \$209.99; desantisholster.com

Vertx Men's Integrity Shell Pants offer uncompromising protection from water and wind while fitting over standard pants. Its 37.5 Active Particle technology promote moisture evaporation, while zippered inside-thigh vents facilitate enhanced airflow, keeping you cool and dry. A generous fly and ankle zippers allow for easy donning and removal without wrestling with the pants or being forced to take off your boots beforehand.

#### MSRP: \$213.99; vertx.com

At only 4.5 inches tall and weighing a mere 42 ounces, Danner Fullbore Boots are designed for hard use without sacrificing comfort. Their flexible Vibram Fuga outsole contains self-adapting lugs and a Megagrip compound that provide much-needed traction on wet or dry surfaces. The Danner Dry liner delivers a waterproof barrier, allowing moisture to escape without letting any water in.

MSRP: \$210; danner.com

## Parts Changer or **Parts Maker?**

I did something stupid in the interest of economy and reloaded the brass for my 1911 one time too many. The result was a ruptured case that blew the magazine out of the gun and damaged the extractor to the point it will not reliably remove a cartridge, spent or live, from the chamber. My mechanical ability does not extend much further than the use of a hammer and a screwdriver, so I am going to need some help in putting my pistol back into reliable shooting condition. Is my department armorer able to fix my pistol, or do I need to find a gunsmith for a task such as this? I am not sure I know the difference between an armorer and a gunsmith, so perhaps some guidance in that area would help as well.

Morton Alger via social media

Replacing a faulty 1911 extractor can be done by an armorer. Yet, repairing more serious damage will likely require the talents of a skilled gunsmith.

In today's times of component scarcity for ammunition, many shooters are pushing the limits to get the most out of what is available. That is certainly understandable. Erring on the side of caution is still the best consideration and will generally save in the long run.

Without being able to see the gun, it is difficult to determine the extent of mechanical attention it needs to return it to reliable service. Conceivably an armorer could replace the extractor then clean, lubricate, inspect and function-check the pistol for you as long as there is no other obvious major damage. If there is visible damage to the physical integrity of the barrel, slide or frame, such as a crack, bulge or burr, then a gunsmith's service needs to be enlisted.

The difference between an armorer and a gunsmith has been and will continue to be argued as long as there are firearms in need of repair.

Having taught armorers and gunsmiths for longer than I care to discuss, I will offer my perspective, which should help you to understand the difference.

An armorer is a mechanical technician whose job it is to maintain, troubleshoot and repair a specific brand or type of firearm, or multiple firearms, on which they have had training and certification to perform this type of work. An armorer can change parts and, in some cases, do some light fitting to make the parts function properly in addition to inspection and function-checking a firearm for mechanical operability. An armorer usually works for the military, a gun shop or an agency that has an inventory of firearms, such as a police department.

A gunsmith is a mechanical technician who usually has a broader base of training and experience than an armorer, in that they are not limited to a particular brand or type of firearm on which they can perform work. Gunsmiths can often make parts for guns as well as make their own tools specific to the needs of the operations to be performed. Gunsmiths are trained to use machinery such as lathes and milling machines to modify the components of a firearm specifically for the needs of an individual. A gunsmith has an understanding of metallurgy, wood and synthetic materials that surpasses the normal levels of an armorer.

There is plenty of crossover from one title to the other in capability, but one of the biggest differentiators is business related. A gunsmith is usually capable of running a stand-alone business that will provide a good living for his or her family due the scope and breadth of services offered. Conversely, an armorer is usually an employee of a larger organization whose job responsibilities are specific to those firearms related to that agency or business.

Referring back to your pistol, if there is evidence of metal damage to your pistol, other than perhaps the extractor, it should go to a gunsmith. If there is nothing suspect or visibly obvious, an armorer should be able to put you back in business by replacing the extractor and function-checking the pistol to verify its readiness.

#### Correspondence is welcomed and encouraged

Write to: Shooting Illustrated | NRA | 11250 Waples Mill Road, Fairfax, VA 22030-9400 e-mail: shootingillustrated@nrahq.org

# Determining The Drift

#### Are we seeing the next big thing in firearm development?

ost progress within the firearm industry is measured in small increments and spread over years or even decades. Since the early 20th century, advances in materials and manufacturing processes have yielded stronger actions, better barrels and more consistent ammunition that performs a whole host of specialized tasks very well. Likewise, operating-system tweaks and modular enhancements have marched steadily onward. On the accessory front, turning night into day has become affordable and the process of accurate ranging, wind reading and compensating is now less about skill than technological prowess.

But, monumental changes—the kind that affect firearm designs for longer than the average human's lifespan—are relatively rare events. They also happen to be primarily ammo-driven. For example, flintlocks appeared in the 17th century and were the arm *du jour* for more than a century. The percussion-cap systems that replaced them in the 19th century bridged the gap to metallic-cartridge firearms a few short decades later. As the 20th century dawned, smokeless powder and centerfire, brass-cased cartridges had completed a transformation that endures to this day. If some of my contemporaries are right, the newest developments in cartridge-case technology represent a leap forward that will rival those trendsetters of previous centuries.

The melding of different metals into cartridge cases dates back to the beginning of the metallic-cartridge era. In "The Book of Rifles," W.H.B. Smith (1948) notes that the same British Army colonel who gave us the standard Boxer priming system developed a successful, hybrid case made of coiled brass with a soft-iron head. Chamber sealing was the problem being addressed by that mid-1800s design. Various ratios of copper, zinc and other elements were tried before the current recipe for cartridge brass was determined to be the "best-case" solution.

Aluminum cases date back at least to the development of the .30-40 Krag. In recent years, combinations of different metals and synthetic materials have been tested in hopes of finding something superior to standard cartridge brass. While reductions in weight and production cost have driven the majority of modern efforts, the quest to enhance rifle-cartridge performance is the impetus for the most notable advances.

As previously detailed in these pages, the Army's Next Generation Squad Weapon (NGSW) efforts have resulted in multiple, unique 6.8 mm cartridge designs. Each of the companies involved has tried to Designed for the XM5 and XM250 (above), the multi-component 6.8x51 mm round may prove to be the "next big thing" in rifle ammunition.

develop a solution to the Army's reported desire to penetrate modern, peer-level body armor far beyond close-combat ranges. The selections of SIG Sauer's 6.8x51 mm hybridcase ammunition, XM5 carbine and XM250 light machine gun as solutions have been met with both fanfare and skepticism. While the velocities that are reported for the 6.8x51 mm, and its .277 SIG Fury commercial counterpart, seem to generate the most excitement, this cartridge's projectile energy is likely to be the main driver of the DOD's interest.

According to SIG's published numbers, its hybrid steel-and-brass cartridge case allows chamber pressures to reach a whopping 80,000 psi. Subsequently, its 150-grain projectile is reported to leave a 16-inch barrel at 2,830 fps with 2,667 ft.-lbs. of muzzle energy. Running those numbers through a ballistic program shows that SIG's loads should fly flatter and hit much harder than anything used in current battle rifle and light machine gun designs, including 7.62 NATO/.308 Win. loads, out past 1,000 meters.

That's impressive, but what does it mean for those of us who live, breathe and shoot at the pleasure of the commercial market? Nothing at the moment. However, if the performance of the .277 SIG Fury, and the durability of rifles firing this cartridge, bear out over the long term, we should see other, similar products come to market as well. The resulting ammo options could be serious game changers for anyone who wants to maximize the reach and projectile energy of their rifle(s).

For now though, several barriers stand in the way of any substantive commercial use of this technology. The initial problem is



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#### **RIFLES** Determining the Drift

availability. As of this writing, only one .277 SIG Fury load is shown as in-stock with the maker, and it's a conventional, full-brass-case design, not the hybrid-case scorcher. Likewise, barrels for retrofitting select bolt-action platforms and the main semi-auto that SIG plans to chamber in the cartridge appear to be in a sort of perpetual unicorn status.

Cost is another issue. The hybrid case version of this cartridge runs \$4 per round. With DOD being the main customer right now and Lake City Arsenal reportedly still gearing up to fill the Army's needs, I would not expect the ammunition situation to improve anytime soon.

Pushing a bullet faster so that it will fly flatter and hit harder is one thing. Doing it without rapidly burning out barrels or prematurely wearing out other parts has proven difficult with several past attempts to achieve game-changing muzzle velocities. My personal experiences parallel the historical record in showing that the Army's small-arms-acquisition efforts often focus too much on reaching specific "milestones" and too little on solving problems that may pop up.

I'm going to be uncharacteristically optimistic on this point and assume the Army will ensure that this will not be a problem prior to fielding these new weapon systems. If that's the case, our warfighters should be well-positioned to take advantage of all that the 6.8x51 mm cartridge has to offer. Conversely, if the DOD acquisition folks running these programs fumble again, the results could be catastrophic for the men and women who rely on their rifles and light machine guns for success.

One bit of reassurance on barrel wear concerns comes from a reliable source within SIG, who told me the special material technology used in their 6.8 barrels can hold up to this high pressure cartridge. However, that's the extent of my information.

I hope that my reservations about the DOD's new cartridge and smallarms solutions are proven unwarranted. I'd want to have the option of advancing my personal-rifle game with the same technology. However, previous letdowns have increased my usual wariness of hot new cartridges that are pitched as the rifleman's answer to the laws of physics.

SIG's hybrid-case design has become Uncle Sam's solution, but until we civilian shooters get our hands on the ammunition and rifles that use it, the verdict will be out on commercial viability. As with any significant leap in firearms evolution, the words of gunwriters, advertisers and military acquisition officers have little bearing on success. Only hard use over time will tell whether or not hybrid-case technology will markedly advance small-arms progression.



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#### HANDGUNS Tamara Keel

# Is There Still a Place For Single Action?

Just because single-action, semi-automatic technology is more than a century old doesn't necessarily mean it's outdated.



Even in today's age of striker-fired, polymer-frame pistols, there's still a place in every armory for a single-action-only semi-automatic handgun. here was a time in America when one didn't have to use the descriptor "single-action" or "SAO" (Single-Action Only) in reference to semi-automatic pistols of the fightin' persuasion.

For the bulk of the 20th century, the very concept of a serious semi-auto on our shores was more or less synonymous with some variant of Colt's Government Model of 1911. Well, perhaps maybe the Browning Hi Power, if one were an iconoclast or contrarian.

Around the time that armed good guys were transitioning *en masse* from revolvers to semi-autos, there was a brief flourishing of traditional double-action, or DA/SA, pistols in duty holsters and on the covers of gun magazines. From about the middle of the last decade of the 20th century up to the present year, however, the overwhelming majority of pistol toters have instead been carrying striker-fired handguns.

The classic single-action is still around and enjoys significant popularity (and a rabidly loyal fan base, in its 1911 form) but if there was a heyday of the SAO semi-auto in the holsters of the cognoscenti, it was probably in the late 1980s to early 1990s.

This action type is seeing a slight resurgence in interest, though, and even some new offerings. Pistols from Staccato can be found in the holsters of many a clueful shooter, and Wilson Combat sells every EDC X9 it builds. I've just spent the last few months wringing out one of the all-new High Powers introduced by FN America. (See my review on page 44 of this issue.)

So how much sense does the traditional SAO make for carry use in 2022 AD? The best way to answer that question is to break it down into its pros and cons.

The most obvious entry in the "pro" column is that a classic SAO is generally the easiest action type to shoot well. This is because having a manual safety allows the manufacturer to bless these pistols with trigger pulls whose light weight and short travel means that the guns have to compete in their own category in action-shooting sports.

That manual safety also adds a cushion against error when moving about with the drawn pistol. So long as the safety is applied when running around or navigating a cluttered environment, a sudden stumble or fall, or a spastic clench of the strong hand triggered by a startling noise or sympathetic contraction (when suddenly grabbing for something with the support hand, the strong hand will want to clench at the same time) will not cause the pistol to discharge a round when such would be very bad, indeed.

These two pros, however, lead directly to their corresponding cons.

For instance, the light trigger with a very short travel that is such a help when trying to shoot on purpose becomes a massive liability if the safety is not religiously applied before reholstering. It's an axiom that a trigger that is easy to pull on purpose is doubly easy to pull by accident.

It's imperative that the user of an SAO semi-automatic have the application of the safety before reholstering ingrained as an automatic action.

A problem here is that reholstering a hot pistol is something that can happen when less than full attention is being given to the process. In the artificial environment of a training class, it can be easy to get caught up in assessing the string of fire just shot and want to get the gun put away and move on to

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#### HANDGUNS Single Action

the next drill, and somewhere in all that fuss, the added step of applying the safety gets forgotten.

Even worse, in the adrenalinecharged moments after an actual defensive gun usage, people's minds are often racing and their thoughts are on a hundred things other than some "putting the gun away" checklist. That's a classic time for an off-safe pistol to get shoved into a holster, sometimes with noisy results.

The final con against the classic SAO is that if the act of deactivating the safety on the draw isn't ingrained, then in the hurry of having to actually use the pistol for real, the user may forget the safety with predictably bad consequences.

There are a variety of approaches taught for the proper use of the thumb safety on a modern (which is to say "drop safe") single-action semi-automatic.

Of the several different ones I've been taught, the one I've settled on is pretty simple, repeatable and, for me at least, has become habituated after a reasonable amount of repetitions. (And by repetitions, I mean using it this way every time I'm handling the pistol, whether in casual range use, classes, matches, or whatever.)

Basically I take the safety off as the pistol is coming into a firing position. This can mean having it coming up into my sightline during a normal draw, or the muzzle rotating into a horizontal orientation if I'm shooting from a "Hard Two" retention position.

Conversely, any time the pistol comes out of a firing position, the safety is reapplied, whether this is because I'm reholstering, about to move with the pistol in my hand, or just want to bring the gun to a low ready and get a breather before the next string of fire.

"On Target, Safety Off. Off Target, Safety On." Other people teach it other ways, but personally this seems to maximize the advantages of the SAO trigger while minimizing its disadvantages, and keeps the classic single action relevant for me in 2022.

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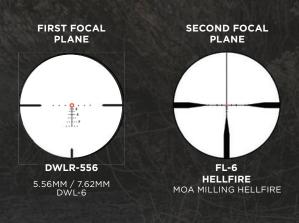
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# Is .410-Bore Up to the **Home-Defense Chore?**

#### Shotguns in .410-bore have less recoil than their 12- or 20-gauge counterparts, but are they enough for defense?

Recently, I've received several letters asking my opinion of a A10-bore shotgun for home defense. First off, the only living beings I've thwarted with a .410-bore are a few rattlesnakes, a passel of rabbits and a small mountain of squirrels. So, anything I opine about this arm for home defense is strictly that: opinion. Nonetheless, here goes, but not without a structured approach.

#### .410 Shotgun as a Defensive Tool

In theory, .410-bore should be a viable tool for self-defense because it's a scaled-down version of a 12-gauge. Obviously, it offers a smaller payload and therefore less overall energy downrange, but it still offers the benefit of a pattern, albeit a small one. Realistically we're talking a few-inch-wide pattern at across-the-room distances, but that's an increase over a single projectile. What's more, recoil is less, as is overall gun weight, a stat rarely mentioned by shotgun advocates, but one that's very real the moment a 12-gauge must be held with one hand while the other hand is busy. Frankly, there are many good reasons for choosing a .410-bore, but before I get to them here are some facts.

#### **Ballistic Data**

Although various .410-bore loads abound, my favorite for home defense are those 3-inch loads that deliver five 000 buckshot (.36-caliber, 68-grain) pellets at around 1,125 fps to produce roughly 950 ft.-lbs. of collective energy at the muzzle. That's roughly half the energy of a 12-gauge, 9-pellet 00 buck load, but about 2.5 times that of a typical 9 mm. (Why 000 pellet size? Since even 00 buck pellets must be stacked single-file in the .410's hull, the 000 load offers more lead and less wasted space.)

Free recoil is a complex equation involving payload weight, velocity of the ejecta and gun weight, so because the aforementioned 000 load weighs about .7 ounce—significantly less than a common 1.25-ounce 12-gauge load—the shell itself produces significantly less recoil. However, you must factor that most .410 guns weigh substantially less Mossberg's 590, available as a standard shotgun and also as a "firearm," is a solid host for a .410-bore defensive scattergun.

than 12-gauges, something that increases the felt recoil of a .410-bore. If we figure the average weight of a loaded 12-gauge is 8 pounds compared with the average weight of a loaded .410 at 6.5 pounds, the calculations are as follows: The .410 produces about 10 ft.-lbs. free-recoil energy (that's about that of a .243 Win.) while the 12 gauge wallops you to the tune of 32 ft.-lbs., or three times the amount. (The 12-gauge is about like shooting a .300 Weatherby Mag. and by most folks' standards, not a lot of fun.) Now, for those shooting a 29-ounce Taurus Judge (let's call it 2 pounds fully loaded) the .410 produces recoil similar, at about 30 ft.-lbs. That's no fun at all from a handgun, and in fact very difficult to control. But, that is why plenty of companies, including Federal, have produced reduced-velocity (low-recoil) loads specifically for the Judge.

#### Reliability

The feeding mechanisms of repeating guns are tricky. In general, long and narrow cartridges feed more poorly than fatter, shorter cartridges. (This is the reason why .22 LRs are generally more reliable than .22 Mag. rounds in semi-automatic actions.) While plenty of .410-bore pumps, leveractions and semi-autos exhibit good reliability, historically they have never been the most reliable, and few could be called "ultra-reliable" when compared to popular pistol rounds or 12- and 20-gauge shotguns. Revolvers, single shots and multi-barrel shotguns, on the other hand, are supremely reliable, of course, but whether you want a non-repeating shotgun as your primary

Continued on page 80

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#### AMMO Richard Mann

# Handloading The .223 Rem.

Precision handloads for the .223 Rem. can really highlight your rifle's potential.



One powder, four projectiles and four recipes make for a variety of uses while simplifying the handloading process.

PHOTO: RICHARD MANN

Because shooters tend to use a rifle for more than one purpose, they tend to have several loads they like for every rifle they own. When they find a load that they like, they'll stock up on the components. Generally, this results in not just multiple bullets, but most often multiple primers and powders. Before long, your loading bench and shelves can look like a chef's spice rack. It doesn't have to be that way, and while working up four very different loads for my .223 Rem. bolt-action rifle, I proved it.

Handloading is like cooking. It's a mixture of various ingredients that are used to create a palatable result. In the case of shooting, "palatable" means effective and accurate. We test food recipes by tasting them and we test handloads by shooting them. But, just as how with food different people have different

Load Data							
Bullet	Powder Charge	Velocity	Accuracy				
50-grain Nosler Ballistic Tip	28.5	3,250	.562				
60-grain Nosler Partition	26.7	3,100	1.110				
70-grain Nosler AccuBond	25.0	2,800	.961				
77-grain Nosler Custom Competition	24.3	2,680	.648				

Powder used was Hodgdon CFE 223. Powder charge measured in grains. Velocity is measured in fps 10 feet from the muzzle using a Caldwell G2 chronograph. Temperature: 75 degrees Fahrenheit. Accuracy measured in inches for five consecutive, three-shot groups at 100 yards from a sandbag rest.

tastes, so too do rifles. What one person or rifle might like, another will not. Still, trends exist, and you can learn from what other shooters have experienced.

I've owned a bolt-action .223 Rem. of one style or another for decades. Recently, I reduced my stable of bolt-action .223s to one, and I wanted it to be compatible with the four different loads I use most often. The problem was that not only did these loads use four different bullets, they also used three different powders and two different primers. To simplify my cooking (handloading), I wanted to be able to create these four loads by using the same powder and primer in each one. After some research and testing, I settled on Federal small rifle primers and Hodgdon CFE 223 powder. Here are my four favorite and now much simpler to stock up for and create—loads for a bolt-action .223 Rem.

#### **50-grain Nosler Ballistic Tip**

Nosler's 50-grain Ballistic Tip is ideal for varmints and predators up to coyote size. Delivering around 10 inches of penetration, it's even a good choice for tactical applications if intermediate barriers are not an issue. Federal loads the 55-grain Nosler Ballistic Tip in its Tactical Law Enforcement TRU line. This bullet creates massive, but moderately shallow, tissue destruction, ideal for vermin and self-defense applications. Hodgdon lists a maximum load of 28.5 grains of CFE 223 for a 50-grain bullet with a velocity of 3,500 fps. Nosler, however, lists a 29.0-grain maximum load at 3,379 fps. (This goes to show you that data from different sources do not always agree.)

#### **60-grain Nosler Partition**

This is an excellent bullet for deer and feral hogs, and from a tactical standpoint it performs very well because of its ability to defeat intermediate barriers. In 10-percent ordnance gelatin or Clear Ballistics, you can expect 20 inches of penetration with the bullet's deformed frontal diameter measuring almost .4 inch. Hodgdon's maximum recommended charge of 26.7 grains of CFE 223 pushed this bullet to 3,100 fps out of my 22-inch barrel. Precision was not on par with the 50-grain Ballistic Tip, but a five-group average of 1.1 inches is totally sufficient for a load I intend to use inside 200 yards. This

Continued on page 81



# A NEW HUNTER AT MAGPUL

The Hunter 110 for right and left-handed Savage<sup>®</sup> 10 & 110 series short actions joins our Hunter stock line this winter. It brings you optimal rifle stabilization, improved comfort, and expanded customization options so you can dial in your unique hunting needs. Find out more at Magpul.com.



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#### STRAIGHT TALK Sheriff Jim Wilson

# Texas Ranger Charlie Miller

The art of self-defense has evolved through a period of trial and error, and so did those who gained notoriety along the way.



ne of the most interesting lawmen of the early 20th century was Texas Ranger Charles E. "Charlie" Miller. Miller first joined the Rangers in 1919 and served as a Texas Ranger or Special Texas Ranger until 1968, with the exception of a few years when he served as a Federal Prohibition officer. Miller was also a particular favorite of Captain Frank Hamer, who knew he could count on Miller to get the job done—no matter what it might be. I was told that Miller had survived about seven or eight gunfights.

Like Hamer, there were always stories and legends associated with Miller. As an example of how times have changed, there was the time that Miller and another Ranger went into a cafe down on the Rio Grande for a cup of coffee. Unfortunately, the folks who ran the cafe didn't like Rangers and wouldn't serve Miller and his partner. After a polite request for coffee was ignored, Miller jerked his 1911 and shot a hole in the coffee urn from which he proceeded to fill his cup. There's no need to describe the sort of trouble that would cause one of today's officers. In fact, such a terribly unsafe act probably caused Miller some trouble, or at least it should have, but that part of the story has been forgotten.

The interesting thing about Ranger Miller and his times is officers of that era were going through some big changes. They were transitioning from horseback lawmen chasing cattle rustlers along the Rio Grande to modern investigators and peace keepers. More and more, their duties found them trying to restore order in the early oil field boomtowns or chasing gangsters and bank robbers of the Depression era.

Keeping up with all the changes, they were also taking a hard look at their equipment. Officers of that era were beginning to replace their single-action revolvers and Winchester lever actions in favor of more modern firearms. Winchester and Remington semi-automatic carbines were gaining a following, as were Remington pump-action rifles and even the Thompson submachine gun. At the same time, double-action revolvers and the Colt 1911 were gaining advocates.

Charlie Miller was one of those who, very early on, developed a preference for the Colt 1911 in .45 ACP. The revolver was still king, but the semi-auto pistol was gaining a foothold.

It is also interesting to note that condition-one, or cocked-and-locked, carry was certainly not the order of the day at that time. Miller carried his 1911 with a round in the chamber and the hammer in the half-cock or condition-two position. To get into action, he cocked the hammer with this shooting thumb as he drew the pistol, much as one would draw and shoot a single-action revolver. While I certainly don't advocate this type of carry for single-action semi-autos, I find it interesting as a part of the evolution of pistolcraft.

Even more interesting is the fact that Miller chose to deactivate his grip safety by wrapping it with rawhide lace. Apparently, in one particular fight Miller had trouble depressing the grip safety of his pistol and was almost killed as a result. After that, Miller tied down the grip safety on any 1911 he carried.

While these practices are uncommon today and, some might say, ill-advised due to safety concerns, they are nonetheless interesting. Cocked-and-locked carry was not invented overnight and the Modern Technique of the Pistol is actually the result of years of gathering fighting approaches that are practical and work. People like Miller, Frank Hamer, Rex Applegate, J.H. FitzGerald and many others led the way to improving the craft.

So, sometime about 1960, it was decided that the Texas Rangers ought to have regular firearm-training sessions. Reeves Jungkind, later well known for his ability to tune Colt Python revolvers, was one of the Highway Patrol range officers assigned to see that the training session came off safely.

Later, he told me that Charlie Miller showed up with his 1911 stuffed in his waistband without a holster. Jungkind noticed the gun being on half cock and the grip safety tied down with rawhide. "Mr. Miller," he said, "Isn't that dangerous?"

"Son," said Miller, "If the damned old thing wasn't dangerous, I wouldn't be wearing it!"

Texas Ranger Charlie Miller was a lawman in an era of transition. He, and those like him, through trial and error, perfected the defensive-shooting skills that we take advantage of today.



How to Win at Love

#### A classic tennis bracelet serves up over 10 carats of sparkle for a guaranteed win

It was the jewelry piece that made the world stop and take notice. In the middle of a long volley during the big American tennis tournament, the chic blonde athlete had to stop play because her delicate diamond bracelet had broken and she had to find it. The tennis star recovered her beloved bracelet, but the world would never be the same.

From that moment on, the tennis bracelet has been on the lips and on the wrists of women in the know. Once called eternity bracelets, these bands of diamonds were known from then on as tennis bracelets, and remain *the* hot ticket item with jewelers.

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*Gems – The Buying Guide*, " praised the technique used in our diamond alternative Diamond*Aura*<sup>®</sup>: "The best diamond simulation to date, and even some jewelers have mistaken these stones for mined diamonds," it raved. For comparison, we found a similarly designed 10 carat tennis bracelet with D Flawless diamonds from another company that costs \$57,000!

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AFFORD THE EXTRAORDINARY

# A Classic Rebooted The manufacturer of

CAL. S

VU03502

The manufacturer of record of the vaunted Hi Power has now introduced the High Power—and more than just the spelling has changed.

et me state this up front: I'm a proud American. I love baseball and apple pie. If you cut me, I bleed red, white and blue. Whichever Detroit automaker you think is best, I think they are, too. And, therefore, I am a loyal fan of John Moses Browning's M1911.

But, with that out of the way, it pains me to admit that the 1911 wasn't Browning's most important or influential pistol design. The 1911 is largely an American obsession, and when the rest of the world thinks about JMB's martial handguns, the one that springs to mind is the Fabrique Nationale GP35, better known as the FN Hi Power. Actually the result of a collaboration between **Browning and his** 

alla b

HIGH POWER

FN COLUMBIA, SC USA

successor at

FN, the great Dieudonné Saive, the Hi Power is one of the most prolific service pistols ever created, being used by the militaries of half a hundred countries.

Though it had some features that made it cheaper and easier to produce than the M1911, such as the fixed, under-barrel cam that replaced the swinging link on the older design, the Hi Power was still expensive to produce compared to newer designs. Even the change to a simpler external extractor in the 1960s wasn't enough to keep it competitive, cost-wise, for budget-conscious militaries, and its double-stack, 13-round mag—a revelation in the 1930s—was by now commonplace.

Browning (an FN subsidiary) finally ended production a few years ago, but it turned out that demand for the Hi Power still existed.

> By Tamara Keel Photos by Eric Dean



EAA began selling a Turkish-made clone recently, and Springfield Armory upped the ante with the SA-35, which offered some minor tweaks to the original design.

Early this year, though, FN America went nuclear on the Hi Power market by offering the all-new, American-made High Power.

Note the spelling change, because this isn't your granddad's Hi Power.

It's a struggle to find the proper analogy here, but let's try this one: If the GP35 is Caesar Romero's Joker from the original "Batman" television series, then Springfield's SA-35 is like Jack Nicholson's Joker. It's true to the original, if a bit edgier and slightly but distinctly updated.

On that scale, FN America's new pistol is Heath Ledger's Joker: It's a darker, grittier reboot, reimagining the whole concept in a new, and very serious, light.

If you were to take the new pistol from FN America and place it against a blank background, gather a few of your gun-nerd friends around and ask them what they thought they were looking at, they'd look at you like you had a screw loose. Those lines are unmistakable!

From the arched backstrap and the single fastening screw on the slightly waspwaisted grip panels to the distinctive radii on the muzzle end of the slide and the keyhole cross-section looking from the wrong end of the barrel, this is quite obviously a Hi Power.

To use another analogy, it's not until you set it beside the original that the differences become apparent. Seen by itself, a current Dodge Challenger Hellcat looks like a finely detailed copy of the original; the lines are all the same, right? But, park them side-by-side and the newer car is obviously a burlier, more serious variation on the same theme.

It's the same with the new High Power. It's not until it's viewed next to the original that the differences become readily apparent.

For starters, when measuring from the bottom of the magazine floorplate to the top of the rear sight, the new pistol is a good half-inch taller than the old one.

This is explainable by the fact that FN wanted the grip to retain its svelte outside dimensions that made it accommodating for a wide range of hand sizes, but needed to find a way to increase the magazine capacity to a more modern 17 rounds, and those 17 cartridges have to fit somewhere, ergo the longer grip.

On the downside, this means that the magazines are not compatible with the classic Hi Power's, and vice versa. On the upside, this juggling of the grip dimensions allowed them to correct one of the most glaring faults of the classic GP35, namely annoying and painful hammer bite.

The old Hi Power was a notorious devourer of the flesh on the web of the shooter's hand. Even the replacement of the classic spurred hammer in commercial Hi Powers with a military GP35-type rowel hammer only mitigated this tendency.

As a result, a cottage industry of gifted pistolsmiths sprang up, able to weld up a protective beavertail on the frame of the Browning. With the new High Power, those talented hands will be idle, as there's no hammer bite to cure. (I even tried to provoke some for science, with little success.)

Another dimension that's enlarged is the overall length, by about a quarter of an inch. Since the barrel lengths are the same, that extra quarter inch is abaft the breechface, and is likely also a result of the slightly rearranged lockwork.

And while the overall width of the new pistol and its progenitor is pretty much a wash, the new High Power is noticeably heavier. FN America's promotional materials say it's 40 ounces, and the test sample clocked in on my postal scale at 38 ounces with an empty magazine inserted.

That's just bare ounces shy of the maximum allowable weight for IDPA's Enhanced Service Pistol division. Surely a coincidence. OK, maybe not.

The extra avoirdupois, more than a third of a pound over the original, absorbs recoil nicely. This a substantial, all-steel pistol and, like a classic Colt Government Model, the heft in the hand constantly reminds you of the fact. It feels a bit muzzle heavy and ... Well, we'll get back to that part when we get to the range.

Whereas the old Hi Power had a smooth frontstrap that was a challenge to add any texture to (too thin to checker easily, most pistolsmiths preferred to stipple them), the new High Power comes with a checkered Accuracy was as good as any recent service pistol I've tested. Even just shooting off a range bag for a rest, I managed a few sub-3-inch groups at 25 yards.

# FN AMERICA I High Power

Load	Velocity	Group Size		
		Smallest	Largest	Average
Federal Syntech 115-grain TSJ	1,174	2.25	3.30	2.65
Aguila 124-grain FMJ	1,073	3.05	4.25	3.62
Winchester Ranger 147-grain JHP	1,000	2.15	3.35	2.79

Velocity measured in fps 9 feet from the muzzle for 10 consecutive shots with an Shooting Chrony Beta chronograph. Temperature: 77 degrees Fahrenheit. Accuracy measured in inches for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 25 yards from a sandbag rest.



#### **SPECIFICATIONS**

Manufacturer: FN America;	
(800) 635-1321, fnamerica.com	
Action Type: Recoil-operated, semi-automatic	
Caliber: 9 mm	
Capacity: 17+1 rounds	
Frame: Steel	
Slide: Steel	
Barrel Length: 4.7 inches	
Sights: Drift-adjustable blackout rear, post front	
Trigger Pull Weight: 4 pounds	
Length: 8 inches	
Width: 1.35 inches	
Height: 5.62 inches	
Weight: 40 ounces	
Accessories: Two magazines, two sets of interchang able grips, lock, manual	e
MSRP: \$1,269	

frontstrap right out of the box. The backstrap is checkered to match. Unlike the original (but like the M1911) the checkered mainspring housing is a separate piece. This simplifies assembly and helps to hold costs down to a manageable level.

While later Hi Powers offered ambidextrous safeties, the new High Power is completely ambidextrous in the fashion that is common to modern service pistols. Both the thumb safety and slide stop are fully mirrored on both sides of the pistol and reachable by the strong-side thumb of the shooter no matter which hand they're using. Also, unlike the original, the magazine release, with its finely checkered round button, is reversible.

Takedown for cleaning has been modernized, as well. Of course, first remove the magazine and triple-check that the gun is empty. Instead of having to remove and reinsert the slide stop like you're LARPing the 1930s, it's as simple as clearing the firearm, locking the slide back with the chamber empty and rotating a small lever on the right side of the frame down through 90 degrees. Controlling the slide against the recoil spring, you thumb the slide stop and guide it forward off the frame, like with a Beretta M9 or classic P-series SIG Sauer. No trigger pulling required. Reassembly is just as easy, but in reverse.

Up top, on the slide, the most noticeable difference is the ejection port. Rather than

the smallish ovoid of the FNH original, the new High Power's ejection port wraps across the top of the slide, allowing the barrel to achieve lockup via a squared edge atop the chamber, rather than the old internal radial locking lugs of the original, which were more machining intensive and often required final hand-fitting.

A keener observer will note that the new pistol has reverted back to the internal extractor of the original GP, rather than the external claw used on Hi Powers since the 1960s, and the cocking serrations are wider and more aggressive in texture.

Less apparent are the sight dovetails, which are the same dimensions as the ones on the FN 509 (which is to say they match the dovetails from a company that rhymes with "Big Tower," rapidly becoming an industry standard.)

The curved trigger has a smooth, rounded face. It has a fairly short, light takeup before a rolling break that measured 4 pounds on the nose using my RCBS trigger scale.

The big question, of course, is "How does it shoot?"

The examples we got to try at the launch event all ran fantastically, but those were likely preproduction guns and we were using Federal American Eagle FMJ ammunition, which is quality stuff with a feedfriendly profile.

When the test sample arrived in my hands, a Flat Dark Earth specimen fresh off the



The new High Power isn't imported; it's American-made • Both the front and rear sights are dovetailed in place, and are "blacked out" with no stripes, outlines or dots. They are, however, serrated to prevent glare. The rear is ledge-style for one-handed emergency racking of the slide • A rowel hammer prevents the hammer bite long associated with Hi Powers.



An abbreviated beavertail works in conjunction with the rowel hammer to spare the web of the shooter's hand. Below it, the mainspring housing is checkered The thumb-safety is easy and ergonomic to actuate, but not obtrusively large • Like the aforementioned mainspring housing, the frontstrap is checkered, saving buyers the hassle and cost of aftermarket stippling.

FN America's new pistol is Heath Ledger's Joker: It's a darker, grittier reboot, reimagining the whole concept in a new, and very serious, light.

#### production line, I wanted to see how it would do under slightly less laboratory-grade conditions, especially since this is essentially an all-new pistol evolved from a classic.

Therefore, I contacted my friends at Lucky Gunner with a rather unusual request:

"Hey, can I get 2,000 rounds of 9 mm? And I don't mean two cases of FMJ, but a variety of ammo, no more than a couple boxes of each kind. Like everything from lightweight frangibles to 147-grain subsonics, and premium hollowpoints from domestic manufacturers to off-brand FMJ from some Central-Asian manufacturer I've never heard of."

When the ammunition arrived, I gave the pistol a healthy dose of Lucas Extreme Duty Gun Oil and spent the next few weeks making daily range trips to burn it up, 100 or 200 rounds at a lick.

I am pleased to report that the pistol ate it all with aplomb, no matter how dirty it got. Whether nice, clean Federal Syntech or gnarly, steelcased TulAmmo, the High Power chewed through it like a champ.

Accuracy was as good as any recent service pistol I've tested. Even just shooting off a range bag for a rest, I managed a few sub-3-inch groups at 25 yards. Steadier hands or a Ransom Rest—would likely put up some pretty good numbers. I credit the trigger as well as the very usable iron sights.

FEATURE

Muzzle flip was negligible. Even with a less-than-Captains-of-Crush grip, the nose-heavy feel of the High Power manifests itself in the remarkably flat nature of the way it shoots. You need a compensator on a polymer pistol to see this little muzzle flip; the sights lift and settle extremely predictably.

The only issue over the entire test was when I replaced the textured plastic grip panels with some of the G10 ones (also sold by FN America.) The slightly thicker G10 grips hold onto the shooter's hand so well that they try and unscrew from the frame without a dollop of thread locker to keep them in place. The thinner stocks didn't exhibit this tendency.

FN America has very successfully re-booted the franchise with the new High Power, at least in this writer's opinion. If you can carry a full-size 1911, you can tote a High Power and get twice the capacity in the same size and weight. If you're a fan of very shootable single-action triggers in classic all-steel pistols, it's certainly worth checking out.









LOW LIGHT



Shop Sights

# 2022 Holiday Gift Guide

Looking for the perfect gift for a fellow firearm fan? Maybe you'd like to gently suggest a gift idea for yourself? We've got you covered, whether your budget jiggles, folds or involves a call to your Swiss banker. One of the following products will be the perfect choice this holiday season.

A Shooting Illustrated Staff Report

## Gifts from \$9 to \$30

#### **1** Desperate Enterprises S&W Revolvers Tin Sign

Add a little bit of rustic charm to your home with this tin sign detailing some classic wheelguns from one of America's bestknown revolver manufacturers. desperate.com; \$13.95

#### 2 Magpul

#### **DAKA** Takeout

Who couldn't use a nigh invulnerable bag to store pretty much whatever you want in? Magpul's DAKA Takeout bag is perfect for use as a medical bag, to carry range supplies or for travel gear—and more. With 3.5 liters of storage space, the Takeout can also be attached to other packs for even more utility. magpul.com; \$29.95

#### 3 NRA Store

#### **Christmas Tree Ornament**

Trim your tree this season with 2A support as well as holiday spirit with the official 2022 NRA Christmas Tree ornament. nrastore.com; \$24.95

#### 4 | Primary Weapons Systems

#### **Bottle Opener KeyChain**

Keep your keys organized and keep a tactical beverage-entry tool handy with this

#### 5 Elastic Precision Model PPK Rubber Band Gun

Gun. Rubber-band Gun. Role-playing as 007 has never been easier than with the Elastic Precision Model PPK rubber-band gun. Firing up to five bands (semi-auto, it's one band per trigger pull), those "friendly" inter-office competitions can now include spycraft. elasticprecision.com; \$24.99

#### 6 Alien Gear

**Gun Mat Second Amendment Shape Shift** Don't run the risk of spilling cleaning chemicals on the kitchen table. Use an Alien Gear gun mat to protect your table, with a nonslip back to hold it in place and a raised edge to keep small parts from rolling away. aliengearholsters.com; \$15.88

#### 7 Buck Knives

#### **Diamond Pocket Knife Sharpener**

Dull knives are a drag, and discovering that your knife has lost that razor's edge when out and about is even worse. Buck's Diamond Pocket Knife Sharpener gives you the ability to sharpen any blade in a package the size of a pen.

buckknives.com; \$13.99

#### 8 Hoppes No. 9 Air Freshener 3-Pack

Who doesn't love the smell of Hoppes No. 9? Now you can have that distinctive scent anywhere you want with this three-pack of hanging air fresheners infused with the smell of firearm cleanliness. hoppes.com; \$11.45

#### 9 Mission First Tactical **16-Ounce Flip-Top Bottle**

Staying hydrated, whether on the range or while on the go, is quite important. Do it with some style with this stainless steel flip-top water bottle that looks like (but isn't) a smoke grenade.

missionfirsttactical.com; \$24.95

#### 10 Eagle Fist

#### Coffee of the Brave

Add some patriotic pep to your mornings from the folks who brought us Clinger Holsters. This whole-bean, medium-roast delivers a smooth flavor with just the right amount of boldness. eaglefist.com; \$15.99



# Gifts \$34 to \$50

#### 1 | CMMG Mk47 Hawaiian Shirt

There's being seen, and then there's being seen. CMMG's Mk47 Hawaiian shirt looks like it walked out of a Parrothead community populated by firearm enthusiasts. Whether as a cover garment or just as a standout casual shirt, show your 2A support ... discreetly. cmmg.com; \$39.99

#### 2 | National Rifle Association Annual Membership

Membership comes with a slew of benefits, including a membership card, a choice of monthly magazine (*Shooting Illustrated*, naturally) and the knowledge you're fighting to protect your Second Amendment rights. **membership.nra.org; \$45** 

#### 3 | Fisher Space Pen Trekker

Durable, ergonomic and there when you need it, the Trekker uses a pressurized ink supply so it's ready to write no matter what position you're in. It can attach anywhere you hang a carabiner and is a favorite of first responders.

spacepen.com; \$48

#### 4 | CMC Products Railed Power Mag

Dual-walled feed rails are built twice as strong as traditional 1911 magazines to eliminate malfunctions attributed to bent, thin or warped feed lips and provide the smoothest-possible feeding surface. cmproducts.com; \$39.95

#### 5 | SneakyPete

#### Second Amendment Phone Case

Show your support for the right to keep and bear arms every time you answer your cell phone with this nylon case. A belt loop keeps your phone close, and fits are available for most current and past smartphones. sneakypeteholsters.com; \$36.95

#### 6 | Brass Goat

#### **AR Brass Catcher**

Here's a treat for the handloader on your list. Brass Goat's AR Brass catcher snaps over the ejection port of most AR-15-style rifles to capture the spent brass without causing malfunctions. brassgoat.com; \$39.99

#### 7 | Full Forge Gear Storm Range Bag

Made from durable 600-denier fabric, these bags are built to withstand hauling guns and ammunition. Features include a wide-mouth opening to minimize rummaging and lots of accessory pouches and internal pockets. fullforgegear.com; \$34.95

#### 8 | True

#### TI Pocket Multi-Tool

Having the right tool on your person is easy with the True TI Pocket Multi-Tool. Pliers, wire cutters, screwdrivers, bottle- and can-openers, a saw blade and a standard knife blade are all available, with most tools locking in place with a stout lever. true.acgbrands.com; \$49.99

#### 9 | GoatGuns

#### Mini AR-15 - Black

If the firearm enthusiast on your list also likes modeling, the GoatGuns Mini AR-15 is just the thing. With an included base, removable magazine and three (inert) rounds, the  $\gamma_3$ -scale AR-15 looks just like a miniaturized version of the one in your safe. goatguns.com; \$39.99



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# Gifts \$55 to \$100

#### 1 Bone-Dri

#### Rust Prevention Shotgun & Rifle Case

Other than politicians, rust is a firearm's biggest enemy. Putting a gun away wet allows rust to impede operation, ruin finishes and cause damage. Bone-Dri's case uses Absorbits moisture-wicking technology to dry your long gun before rust can set in. **bone-dri.com; \$99.99** 

#### 2 Hornady Security Alpha Elite Lock Box

With features ranging from its 16-gauge steel housing with pry-resistant security band and barrel-key lock, to its patentpending dual-crossbar latch mechanism, the Alpha Elite provides security for your bedside handgun.

hornadysecurity.com; \$57.99

#### 3 | Remington

#### UMC Retro Ammo Box

This retro-styled ammunition box is perfect for adding a touch of antique charm to almost any room in your home, and you can actually put ammunition in it, among other things.

remington.com; \$59.99

#### 4 XS Sights

#### Armorer's Block for AR Platforms Gen 2

Have a bench-mounted vice? Then all you'll need to work on the upper and lower receivers of your AR-platform firearm is this armorer's block from XS Sights. The American-made tool is crafted from 6061 T6 aluminum and works on AR-15/M4, AR-10, SR-25 or DMPS GII guns. xssights.com; \$83

#### 5 | Real Avid Sight Pusher for Glock

Customize your pistol to your liking while protecting your sights and your gun with this easy-to-use tool for swapping sights on a Glock handgun. realavid.com; \$99.99

#### 6 Infinity X1

#### Hybrid Power Flashlight 5000 Lumen

Offering 5,000 lumens, two power options, 200 meters of beam throw and up to five hours of run time, the Infinity X1 flashlight is loaded. There are three power settings, an internal rechargeable battery and nine AA batteries are included. infinityx1.com; \$89

#### 7 | Silencer Central Devour Cover

Minimize heat distortion in your optic and protect yourself from accidental injuries with one of these rugged suppressor covers from the easiest place to purchase a can. silencercentral.com; \$69.99

#### 8 | The Bradford Exchange Home of The Brave Hoodie with Patriotic Eagle Art

With a flag patch on the front and a back emblazoned with an eagle and the words "Land of the Free, Home of the Brave," this hoodie couldn't get more patriotic. Still, it's warm enough to keep from reminding you of Valley Forge. Comfort, style and pride, all in one garment.

bradfordexchange.com; \$99.95

#### 9 Badlands Gear Switch Pack

Outdoor enthusiast on your list? The Switch Pack offers Badlands' SWAP system, which allows additional packs and bags to be attached to the pack with an easy-to-use, grid-like setup. A laptop sleeve, abrasionresistant mesh and waterproofing add to the pack's utility.

badlandsgear.com; \$99.99



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GL

COMBAT Commander®



## Gifts \$105 to \$170

#### 1 Cold Steel

#### 1911 Pistol Grip Sword Cane

This innocent-looking walking stick conceals a 19-inch, stainless steel blade inside its aluminum shaft, while the handle not only looks a 1911 grip frame, it can also accept many aftermarket 1911 grips. coldsteel.com; \$109.99

#### 2 Leupold

#### Bridger Sunglasses

Scratch-resistant, polarized ballistic lenses protect your eyes against the sun and debris, while a new frame design ensures you'll look cool at the range or the beach. leupold.com; \$159.99

#### 3 | Camp Chef Portable BBQ Grill

Whether tailgating or cooking up burgers after a long day at the range, the Camp Chef Portable BBQ grill provides big-grill power in a take-anywhere size. Running on standard disposable propane tanks, it offers more than 200 square inches of cooking space and weighs 22 pounds.

campchef.com; \$149.99

#### 4 | TACRIG FLEX IWB/OWB Package

Lightweight, durable and breathable, the TACRIG is a modular holster system with a base to which can be attached different gun shells for maximum versatility. It can be set up as either an OWB rig or an IWB rig for most any carry gun (with additional shells). tacrig.com; \$169.99

#### 5 | Wilson Combat

Omni H Tactical Scope Mount 30 mm Machined from aluminum billet and built to handle the toughest recoil and abuse, this one-piece scope mount is among the best ways to connect a scope to your modern sporting rifle.

wilsoncombat.com; \$134.95

#### 6 WorkSharp Professional Electric

#### Kitchen Knife Sharpener

Keep kitchen knives, scissors and serrated steak knives in perfect working order with this easy-to-use, powered sharpener. worksharptools.com; \$169.95

#### 7 | Dark Energy Poseidon Pro

Submersible, armored and just tough to kill, the Poseidon Pro battery charger is so durable it is used by the U.S. Army. It's capable of retaining 75 to 80 percent of its power for more than 3 years. Furthermore, it can charge small devices multiple times, and also power larger devices like tablets or laptops.

darkenergy.com; \$119.99

#### 8 | Ontario Knife Company Ti 22 Equinox

Perfect for everyday carry, a bronze-colored, titanium handle conceals a S35VN, 3-inch blade in this ultra-lightweight folding knife that tips the scales at a mere 2.4 ounces. ontarioknife.com; \$137.95



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# 

# Gifts <sup>\$</sup>180 and Up

#### 1 RTS Tactical

#### **Bulletproof Memory Foam Pillow**

Offering Level IIIA bullet protection, the RTS Tactical memory foam pillow adds yet another layer to your home-defense strategy. With a 13x20-inch ballistic plate on the inside and a bamboo pillowcase on the outside, sleeping well now includes peace of mind as well as comfort. rtstactical.com; \$399.99

#### 2 Oryx Chassis Sportsman Rifle Chassis

Customize your long-range precision rifle with AR-15 grips, M-Lok attachment points, adjustable length-of-pull and Arca rails, along with the ease of a detachable magazine. Oryx Chassis' Sportsman is available for a wide variety of bolt-action rifles and the Ruger 10/22. oryxchassis.com; \$429.95

#### 3 Fix-It Sticks

#### **Field Tool Kit for Glock**

Everything you need to clean or repair your handgun fits in a compact case. Included in the kit are a ratcheting "T" handle, minitorque driver, cleaning tools and driver bits. store.fixitsticks.com; \$184

#### 4 Springfield Armory **XD OSP Slide Assembly**

Own an older XD and wish you could add red-dot capability? With Springfield Armory's new OSP slide assembly, it's as easy as field-stripping your pistol to add a red-dot-ready slide. One plate for the RMSc footprint is included, and other plates for different optics are available separately. springfield-armory.com; \$270

#### 5 Axil

#### GS Extreme 2.0

Boasting better than double the audio quality of its predecessor, the GS Extreme 2.0 offers the convenience of earbuds with Bluetooth compatibility and 29 dB of noise-reduction technology in a compact package that fits in any range bag. goaxil.com; \$199.99

#### 6 Rise Armament **Iconic Trigger**

In response to the clamor for a two-stage version of Rise's lauded triggers, the lconic is now here. It's smooth, crisp and predictable, with an easy first stage that brings you to a low wall before cleanly breaking. risearmament.com; \$299.99

#### 7 Mantis

Blackbeard Auto-Resetting AR-15 Trigger Give the gift of dry-practice this holiday! Mantis' drop-in trigger allows repeated dry firing without needing to cycle the action each time, yielding more practice time for the AR enthusiast on your list. mantisx.com: \$219

#### 8 Recover Tactical P-IX

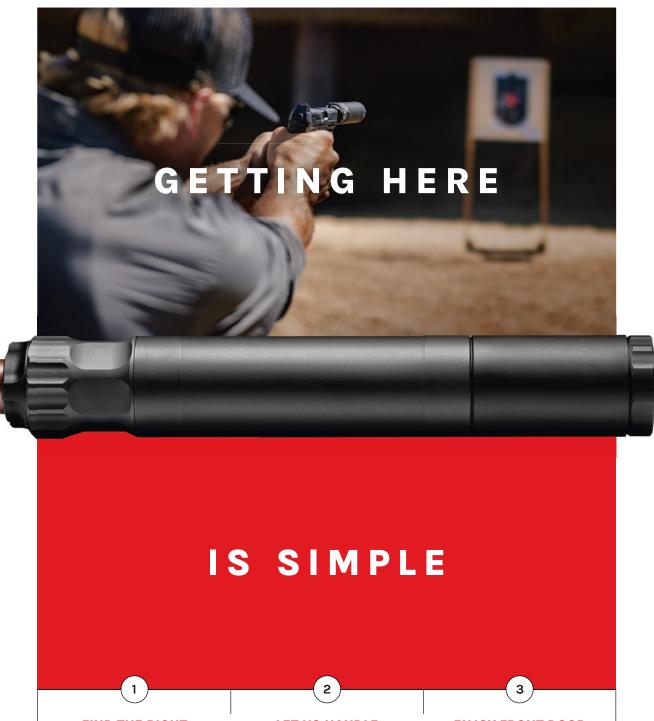
The P-IX clamshell helps improve your long-range accuracy and lets you take your Glock pistol to another level of cool. With simple, drop-in installation, anyone can transform their trusty sidearm. recovertactical.com; \$199

#### 9 Exothermic Technologies **PulseFire UBF**

There is nothing to say about this incredible product apart from the fact that it is a flamethrower that mounts to a Picatinny rail. A real-life, honest-to-goodness flamethrower. And yes, it is perfectly legal in most jurisdictions. A flamethrower. That you can own.

exothermic.tech; \$689.99





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# Springfield Armory's

Has the combination of firepower and accuracy ever fallen out of fashion?

SIGNAUTE)

By Richard Mann Photos by Eric Dean he last part of the 20th century was the age of the high-end 1911. But, with the new century we entered the era of the ever-shrinking 9 mm pistol. Springfield Armory capably filled that demand with its 18-ounce Hellcat. Last year the company introduced an excellent rendition of the Browning Hi Power—the SA-35—and it sold like face masks at a COVID convention. Springfield Armory has now made another bold, retro-like move. Again, bucking the little-pistol trend, it has introduced a double-stack, increasedcapacity, 9 mm 1911 the manufacturer is calling the Prodigy.



The Prodigy takes me back to when I lusted for a Para-Ordnance 1911, and the comparison cannot be ignored. Though now defunct and lost within the integration and bankruptcy of Remington, Para-Ordnance was the king of the large-capacity 1911. Ironically, the company was founded in 1985 at the same time a very popular science fiction movie starring Michael J. Fox was released. This leaves me wondering if Springfield Armory is trying to take us "Back to the Future." After several weeks of shooting two Prodigy pistols, I might be ready to go.

Simply put, the Prodigy is an increasedcapacity, steel-frame 1911 compatible with modern aiming solutions, and is also equipped with a polymer grip module. Finding a place to start a more detailed description is difficult because with the Prodigy, Springfield Armory enhanced every major component of the 1911. Less elegantly, you might say the Prodigy is the result of a long courtship between a 1911 race gun and a 1911 carry gun.

At the heart of the pistol is a forged, carbon-steel slide and frame. Unlike most every other factory 1911 on the market, the Prodigy does not have a barrel bushing; it's fitted with a 4.25-inch, forged, stainless steel, match-grade, bushingless bull barrel, and a full-length guide rod. The guide rod does complicate full disassembly—you'll need to use the supplied hex wrench—but barrel lockup at both ends is rock solid, and the slide cycles butter-smooth. Also, because of the guide rod, the recoil spring is contained when the slide is removed. This makes a guick wipe down and lube job easy.

SHOOTING RESULTS Load **Group Size** Velocity Smallest Largest Average Federal 124-grain HST 1,071 .59 1.16 SIG Sauer 124-grain V-Crown +P 1,145 .48 1.80 Wilson Combat 135-grain HBFN 892 .53 1.57

Velocity measured in fps 10 feet from the muzzle with a Caldwell G2 chronograph. Temperature: 76 degrees Fahrenheit. Accuracy measured in inches for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 10 yards from a sandbag rest.

#### **SPECIFICATIONS**

- Manufacturer: Springfield Armory; (800) 680-6866, springfield-armory.com
- Action Type: Single-action only, semi-automatic

#### Caliber: 9 mm

Capacity: 20+1 rounds

Frame: Forged carbon steel with polymer grip module

Slide: Forged carbon steel Barrel Length: 4.25 inches

Sights: Fiber-optic front, black serrated rear/ optics ready

.68

.99

.99

Trigger Pull Weight: 4 pounds, 12 ounces

Length: 7.8 inches Width: 1.44 inches

#### Height: 5.5 inches

Weight: 34.2 ounces

Accessories: Zippered storage pouch, one 17-round magazine, one 20-round magazine, AOS optics plate, lock, manual MSRP: \$1,499

system to the Prodigy, which includes a









serrated, black rear sight on the plate cover • Slightly beveled to facilitate rapid reloads, the mag well is rather cavernous • Both a flush-fit 17-round magazine and a slightly extended 20-round version

come with the pistol •

Despite its capacious-

average-size in width.

ness, the Prodigy is

The slide features cocking serrations front and rear and comes with a high-profile, fiber-optic front sight. The AOS acronym in the pistol's name references the Agency Optics System reflex-sight compatibility. The slide has a cutout running from behind the ejection port to the end of the slide. A cover plate dovetailed for a high-profile rear sight that has a serrated and dot-less face fills this cutout. The Prodigy also comes with a mounting plate compatible with the Hex Dragonfly foot-print. The optics plate is also dovetailed and features a high-profile rear sight similar to the one on the cover plate. But, because the AOS plate and rear sight are integral, and because the rear sight is matched to the reflex sight the plate is designed for, your open sights will perfectly co-witness with the reflex sight.

The other acronym in the Prodigy name is DS. This refers to the pistol's double-stack magazine compatibility. Each Prodigy is shipped with a flush-fitting 17-round and an extended 20-round magazine. A 26-round extended magazine is also available, and all the magazines will retail for about \$60. To make the Prodigy work with these widebody mags, a uniquely engineered wide-body, polymer-grip module is solidly attached to the forged-steel frame. This grip module includes the squared trigger guard, and it has a very comfortable and not overly aggressive stippling treatment in all the right places.

The frame is fitted with an ambidextrous thumb safety and an extended grip safety with a memory pad bump to help with safety deactivation. The takedown lever is recessed into the frame on the left side, and the takedown pin is tastefully recessed on the right side. The dustcover section of the frame forward of the trigger guard is railed, with a single slot that allows for accessory attachment. Because of the shape of the frame, the Prodigy is not compatible with holsters designed for standard 1911s.

I'd describe the trigger on the Prodigy as of medium length; I wear XL gloves and it fit me perfectly. I'd also rate the trigger pull on the Prodigy with a seven out of 10. After a bit of take-up, there was a minimal amount of creep before sear release, which occurred at about 4.75 pounds. Overall, I'd say the trigger was better than average when compared with most other factory-stock 1911 handguns I've tested.

The Prodigy is only offered in 9 mm and it weighs 34.2 ounces unloaded. As heavy as this might seem, Springfield Armory's 4.25-inch Ronin 1911 in 9 mm weighs 31 ounces and has a standard capacity of only nine rounds. Three ounces is a small price to pay for double the capacity. The very comfortable, but wide, polymer grip on the Prodigy just makes the pistol look heavier than it is. Of course, when you shove a loaded 17-round magazine in the gun, it gains 10 ounces. A fully loaded 26-round magazine and an RMR will add almost a pound.

The Prodigy has a black Cerakote finish, and while very utilitarian in appearance, it also has a sleek-looking, tactical vibe. Fit and finish were as you would expect from Springfield Armory, and just looking at and manipulating the pistol, you get the impression it's more of a custom creation than a factory-stock product.

Just prior to reviewing the Prodigy, I'd conducted an experiment with a lightweight 27-ounce, 4.25-inch-barrel 1911 in 9 mm. With all that data on hand, I figured exposing the Prodigy to the same drills used in that test would provide some insight into how much easier a 7-ounce heavier, Commander-size 1911 would perform. Since numbers tend to convey performance better than opinion, according to my shot timer, average split times with the Prodigy were 15 percent faster,











In addition to the crowned, bushingless barrel, the muzzle end of the Prodigy contains an accessory rail • The Prodigy's hammer is skeletonized and nicely fit to the extended beavertail • Serrated to reduce glare and devoid of markings, the rear sight complements the fiber-optic front pipe nicely • A 26-round magazine is available as an aftermarket option.

transition times (the time it took to switch targets) were 31 percent faster and overall, the engagement times with the Prodigy were 19 percent faster. The ability to deliver more rounds on target faster is the advantage of a heavier gun. But, I would be remiss if I left the comparison there.

All these drills were run from the low ready without reloads to eliminate as much human error as possible. However, I did manage to locate a holster that fit the Prodigy well enough to allow some presentation work. Not only does the pistol have a good user interface when it comes to establishing a shooting grip, reloads are speedy, too. This is partly because of the big and easy-to-grasp modular grip and magazines, but also partly

because with the taper at the feeding end of the magazines, they easily slid into the wide opening of the Prodigy's grip module. After years of testing ultra-compact 9 mm handguns that have become the rage, it's hard to convey how nice and soft-shooting a full-size pistol like the Prodigy is. But, not only can you do everything faster with a Prodigy, you can also do it with more precision.

When I began precision testing from the bench, I installed an AOS plate and a Trijicon RMR. (Additional AOS plates for various reflexsight footprints are available for \$60 each from Springfield Armory.) The pistol was devilishly precise, with the average for all 15 groups an impressive .95 inch.

When testing began, the second and third rounds out of the first 17-round magazine failed to fully chamber. A little slap to the back of the slide sorted this out, and no more stoppages were experienced until I began bench testing after more than 300 rounds had been fired. At this point, there were some additional failures to fully go into battery. So, I fieldstripped the pistol and applied some EDC CLP. This fixed the issue, and another 200 rounds were fired without a single stoppage. Even so, I'd rate reliability as good. You must remember this is a match-grade 1911 with tight tolerances. As such, and like all 1911s, the gun needs lubrication. This is not a bad thing; a 1911 is a machine and machines need oil.

The Prodigy is much larger than what has come to be known as a practical concealedcarry gun for the 21st century. But, let's go back to 1985, when carrying a Commander- or even full-size 1911 or Glock G17 for personal protection was common. There were some smaller guns available then, too, but it seemed the emphasis at the time was on shootability and precision.

You could say Springfield Armory's Prodigy is a Para-Ordnance-like 1911 that's been thoroughly refined and zapped into the future. It offers extreme precision, generous capacity and a smooth and sensible, well-engineered melding of steel and polymer. Yeah, it might be more gun than you want to carry every day, but when it comes time for shooting for seriousness or fun—a miniscule 9 mm that's hardly larger than your hand cannot compare to the Prodigy. This pistol was explicitly developed to deliver bullets where you want them, and to do it in a hurry. Let's also not forget that size is not an issue for a home-defense handgun

After several weeks with the Prodigy, I'm finding myself ready to take that backto-the-future trip—I never did get that Para-Ordnance I so badly wanted. The only question for me and anyone else who might be interested in a tack-driving, soft-shooting, increased-capacity 9 mm, is if the ride is worth the \$1,500 it will take to get there.



Adding the red-dot sight of your choice is simple and always co-witnesses with iron sights • Small touches like the "Prodigy" engraved on the side of the slide abound • Squared and generously sized, the trigger guard is also undercut slightly • Takedown requires a hex wrench but otherwise is straightforward • Agency's AOS system allows iron sights and optics to be exchanged while maintaining zero • An 11-degree crown protects the muzzle from inadvertent damage • All plates contain a tall rear sight and are sold separately from Springfield Armory.





Fit and finish were as you would expect from Springfield Armory, and just looking at and manipulating the pistol, you get the impression it's more of a custom creation than a factory-stock product.

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#### HANDBOOK

# How to Define a eginner

Learn how to assess and maintain your defensive-marksmanship skills so they are more than adequate.

enjoy the challenges presented when trying to master a skill. Not everyone may see the same value that I do, but the challenges provide me with problems to solve. So, I guess you could say I enjoy solving problems. Over the years I've tried to place something tangible within answers I provide to students' questions about "intangibles." A common question I get is: How long it will take before I'm "good"? I typically respond with a question of my own: How do you define "good"? When I must dive into the weeds about defining good enough, I will often break it down into three categories: initial investment, routine maintenance and future vision.

> Good can mean a lot of things and at the very bottom is "good enough." How good is good enough? To be honest I don't think we will ever get a sufficient answer, but I do like pondering the question. The reason I enjoy this question has to

do with how difficult it is to quantify the question in the first place. There are so many variables and conditions, it would be almost impossible to define. We are basically training for an unknown, unknowable event more than likely against an untrained adversary. Some will spout percentages from current events to help defend a viewpoint for or against a skill or technique. Lately, I've been pushing back against this mentality.

The big reason is most will use this as an excuse to do the bare minimum. I don't know what skills or to what level they will need to be honed. What I do know is the amount of work involved, work that will span a lifetime more than likely. Imagine what you perceive to be good enough. It will probably take you longer to achieve the level you have in your head right now than you may think. Maybe that is a bit dramatic, but we tend to underestimate the challenges and overestimate our commitment. This is where some people can check out from the art of shooting. When the details of the work start to surface it may be more than the average person is willing to invest.

How long is the hard part? I believe it will take the average person an

> By Jeff Gonzales Photos By Eric Dean

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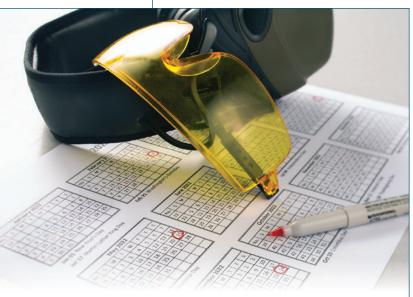
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#### HANDBOOK

When folks struggle to meet their goals or see their performance deteriorate, a lot of the time it is due to a lack of some form of regular practice. Keeping an eye on the ultimate prize provides us with the motivation to stay the course. investment of 80 hours of formalized instruction to move from the beginner to basic level. I define formalized instruction as firearm-specific training, private firearm instruction, organized practice and continued education. Another way to look at the investment is attending five 16-hour firearm-training courses. If you were to squeeze in two per year, then in about 2.5 years you may have reached the basic level. Of course, some will achieve their goal sooner or with fewer hours, but this is what I have observed over the last couple of decades. The skill competency that would signal one has met the standard to advance to the next level is not too complex. Their knowledge base has increased, but it is still closely attached to practice. They tend to need close guidance on just about everything. Practicing in isolation is also necessary to develop the foundation that will lead to practical application.

Once the idea of 80 hours is digested, most will try to figure out a way to circumvent the system. This right here is another big problem and the reason it can take up to 80 hours or more. Rather than commit to a consistent training and practice program, they look for shortcuts. Again, there are no shortcuts. There is a point where it becomes somewhat easier, but that is due to your efforts. The more practice one achieves, the faster one can develop the skill. If someone were to press me on the shortcut question I might respond with consistency as an



Enrolling in regular training courses is necessary to keep your skills honed, while simultaneously adding to your new tactics and techniques.

			Training Hours								
	_		_			7					
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40		
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	<b>48</b>	49	50		
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60		
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70		
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80		
Basic Defensive/Marksmanship Skillset											

Eighty hours of firearm training establishes a basic foundation upon which a student works to improve their defensive-marksmanship skills.

answer. If you are consistent, then maybe you can reach your goal sooner. It is when you are inconsistent that your skill level degrades. Then, you must put in more time to recoup your losses before you can reach new levels. You start to appreciate the importance of consistency.

There is an old saying, "it is easier to keep up than to catch up." You can interpret this saying as relating to being consistent or conducting routine maintenance on your skills. In between immersion-type training, such as a 16-hour firearm course, you would want to spend some quality time on the range applying your newly learned skill to help cement it into memory. Routine practice is nothing more than a fixed interval. If you can dedicate a couple of hours each month to organized practice sessions, you will help retain the information allowing you to better apply your skills in the future.

When folks react to my comment about 80 hours there is an initial shock. I will explain the main reason it takes this long is not that you cannot learn this skill quicker if you are disciplined, but that life gets in the way. It is normal to overestimate the time it takes to accomplish a task; in fact it is so normal there is a name associated with it called planning fallacy. It is human nature to take an unrealistically best-case scenario and substitute it for your situation. Meaning, you start out overly optimistic rather than rational. It is common to overestimate the benefits and underestimate the costs. While

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keeping your eye on your goal is important, if you made some miscalculations in the beginning it can create frustration which can affect your commitment.

When I talk about the 80 hours of formalized instruction to achieve the basic level, it is because I have seen so many who started out only to be discouraged and either take much longer to reach their goal or give up on it entirely. By the same token, I enjoy sharing my observations of those who have advanced to the next skill level. Many of these students have successfully navigated some of the pitfalls I describe. Most adjust their initial goals, but through commitment to an 80-hour structure they achieved their goal.

I'm a big proponent of having a future vision. They are like a goal sometimes can be used interchangeably. When we look at why people fail to meet goals, there are several reasons this can happen. In my experience, there are three within the firearmtraining field. It starts out by setting unrealistic or undefined goals. If you start your conversation by stating you want to be just as good as your favorite internet celebrity, then you might not have realistic goals. If you don't know how to define successfully meeting your goal, it is almost as bad. Failing to anticipate obstacles is another big one. The 80 hours helps manage the crazy lives we all live. While it may be a goal to achieve a basic level, you may have other, more important, challenges competing for your time, talent and treasure. The last failure point for goal setting is failing to set a deadline. When I can encourage someone to shift their focus away from a timetable measured in months or years and instead focus on hours it can help manage some of the other issues described above. It helps to manage those instances where we did not plan well or maybe shifted our focus to a new job or child. The 80-hour model helps move something from the intangible to the tangible.

The 80-hour model tends to be more successful as far as achieving your goal because of the smaller chunks. With smaller chunks it is easier to stay the course. If you are only



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VANQUISH PRO ELITE

I believe it will take the average person an investment of 80 hours of formalized instruction to move from the beginner to basic level.

#### **OWN THE RANGE**

# HANDBOOK



Supplementing formal training courses with regular practice sessions will help retain vital skills until your next course.

able to fit in a couple of hours per month, you have a much higher chance of success over time as you are tracking your progress and seeing results. It makes your goal more attainable by being consistent at the micro level.

My goal is success for everyone, no matter their skill level or interest. If I can further define a nebulous concept for a new shooter interested in skill-building, they are more likely to be successful. This is a difficult subject to precisely define, but over the years I have come close. If a person can understand the requirements for achieving a certain level of performance, they are more likely to succeed. It all starts with the initial investment. Everyone will move at their own pace and when you have a general idea that it will take so many hours, it takes something intangible and makes it tangible. From the initial investment the routine maintenance will begin. When folks struggle to meet their goals or see their performance deteriorate, a lot of the time it is due to a lack of some form of regular practice. Keeping an eye on the ultimate prize provides the motivation to stay the course. It gives the shooter the ability to incrementally make progress, and what might have been a lofty goal is chunked down into smaller pieces spread out over a longer duration.

Being a beginning shooter is not a bad thing. If you want to advance to basic level, I hope this provided you with some food for thought on how to achieve your goal.

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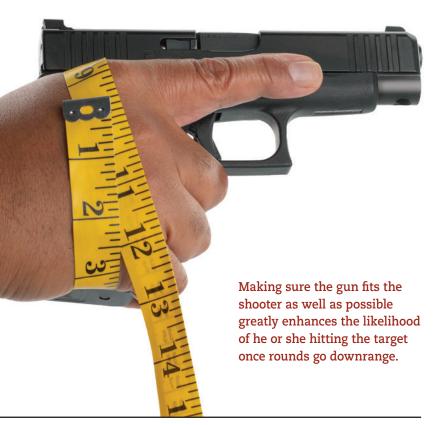


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# Which Comes First? Handling the Gun or Hitting the Target?

By George Harris



### **The Problem**

You have decided to get serious about your personal-defense training in light of the continued social unrest in your locale. The dilemma you face is whether to focus your efforts on marksmanship training or to spend the most of your time and money learning the finer points of putting the gun into operation and keeping it in operation until it is time for maintenance and storage. There seems to be as much to learn about the handling of the gun as there is to learn about marksmanship. Both are important in your opinion, but which, initially, needs the bulk of your focus?

### **The Solution**

This is much like the age-old question of which came first, the chicken or the egg?

For most people, the objective of shooting is to hit what they are attempting to hit, so marksmanship would be seem to be the logical answer. However, there needs to be a foundation of skills already present to be able to hit a target.

Gun handling covers a broad scope of techniques and skills required to put the gun into operation.

Starting at the beginning, understanding the nomenclature of the gun that is to be used before it is even touched is necessary for safe handling. Knowing where the muzzle is and where to point it when the gun is being handled is essential to the safety of yourself and those around you. Later on, when marksmanship is considered, hitting the target is important. The trigger falls into a similar category as to when it should and should not be touched for safety and success.

Gun handling includes learning the names and function of all the levers and buttons on the gun and being able to successfully operate each one. Opening the action of a revolver or a pistol is essential to verifying the gun is clear, empty and safe. How to load a magazine and then insert it in the pistol—or load the cylinder of a revolver—prior to shooting is part of the progression of gun handling. Once the gun is loaded, the task then comes of how to safely unload it, whether the gun was fired or not. This should be followed by rendering the firearm clear, empty and safe through a visual as well as physical inspection.

Prior to firing, gun fit to the individual should be given consideration, increasing the likelihood of student success in handling and marksmanship, which will follow once good handling habits have been established. Without going into too much detail, gun fit allows the shooter to comfortably hold the gun with one hand, point the gun in the direction of a target as if they were pointing their index finger at the target, and reach the face of the trigger with the index finger while pointing the gun. This will help in determining the size and weight of the gun best suited for the shooter, whether the gun will be used with one hand or both hands together. However, there's another factor to consider.

Hand strength has more of an effect on gun handling than many realize. Once the size and weight of the gun are determined for starters, being able to pull the trigger without changing the shooter's original grip on the gun is essential for acceptable marksmanship. In semi-automatic pistols, locking the slide rearward, inserting and releasing magazines as well as manipulating any external safeties are non-negotiable requirements for handling before going to the range to focus on marksmanship.

In addition to the aforementioned, the caliber of the gun to be handled and fired should be considered with respect to its size and weight. This corresponds directly to the recoil generated upon firing and the hand strength necessary to comfortably control the gun.

Once the basic essentials of handling are embedded in the shooter's skillset without ammunition, then it is time to refocus one's efforts on developing good habits in marksmanship. Stabilizing the muzzle on the target and learning to operate the trigger without affecting the muzzle's stability is what is needed to provide success in hitting the target.

With success in being able to hit targets consistently, handling can again be the focus to skill improvement in personal defense. Learning to perform multiple methods of loading and unloading, multiple methods of stoppage clearance, one-hand and support-hand firing techniques are all facets of gun handling that increase proficiency and confidence in operation from a defensive posture.

Beyond that, handling could include shooting while moving, improvised positions, using flashlights and lasers and venturing into reality-based training scenarios.

Marksmanship is important, but without gun-handling skills, your endeavors in the area of personal defense will be left lacking. The emphasis that you put on either is determined by the manner and speed of your progression. WORLD FAMOUS CHIP MCCORMICK

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# Poland's Pride, The VIS 35

The history of Poland's pre-war pistol has some familiar elements.

hen you think of the great arms centers of 20th century Europe, names like Liège, Oberndorf, Zella-Mehlis, and Birmingham immediately jump to mind. The name Fabryka Broni is not one that is popularly recognizable, nor is it even easily pronounced. Located 65 miles directly south of Warsaw is the city of Radom, the home of the Polish Arms Factory (Fabryka



With tiny sights, the Radom was clearly not a precision handgun • Levers on the left side of the gun included a decocking lever, distinguishing the Radom from the 1911 • Like the 1911, the Radom has a grip safety, below which is a slot for a stock • Polish resistance fighters used the Radom against the Nazis.

Broni, or FB for short) since 1922. I try to make the most of every opportunity that comes my way, and I was asked by Bob Bell, the author of numerous books on Mausers, to help the widow of one of his friends evaluate her late husband's collection. David Stefanye was the chief scientist of the U.S. Army Research and Development Command at Fort Belvoir, VA, and the leading expert on early Mausers. He had an extensive collection of European arms, and I received guite the education while I researched and examined every item in his inventory.

I opened one box that held nearly a dozen semi-automatic pistols with which I had zero



familiarity: the Polish VIS 35. Each one represented a different configuration that could be found during its short decade of production. Not only was I enthralled by them, but once I acquired one for myself a few years later, it instantly became my favorite 9 mm.

There is a fair bit of confusion over the exact nomenclature to use in describing this 9 mm semi-clone of the 1911. The slide of the pistol is inscribed "F.B. RADOM VIS Mod 35." The FB moniker, as previously mentioned, stands for Fabryka Broni, or "arms factory" in Polish. For most of its production, "FB" was cast into the left grip panel and "VIS" into the right. The word VIS appears on the earliest examples of the slide, and can be a source of confusion.

The pistol was designed by Polish smallarms designers Piotr Wilniewczyc and Jan Skrzypiński. The combination of the initials of their last names would be WS, or in Polish, WIS, where the "I" translates to the word "and." Pronouncing the letter "W" in Polish would sound like you were saying the letter "V," which isn't to be found in the Polish alphabet. Others have postulated that "vis" is the Latin word for strength and that was the name of the model. No matter how you say or write it, the correct name is the VIS Model 35. English-speaking collectors have taken to calling it after the town in which they were made: Radom.

The story of how the VIS Model 35 came into being the standard sidearm of the Polish military is fairly humorous and is similar to how Eli Whitney and Samuel Colt found themselves with large military arms contracts in the 19th century. In 1929, the Polish military entered into negotiations with CZ to license and manufacture a version of the vz-24 pistol in .380 ACP. Wilniewczyc and Skrzypiński found out about this arrangement after the contracts had been signed, and petitioned the Polish military to halt the process and consider their home-grown pistol, which they said would be better, cheaper to produce and a pure product of Poland. (Sounds familiar, doesn't it?) They forwarded a hurried shop drawing of a 9 mm copy of the Browningdesigned 1911 and succeeded in getting their pistol considered.

After nearly five years of trials and tests, their pistol—the VIS—was adopted by the Polish military in 1935, hence the "Mod 35" as written on its slide. It has a short-recoil

operating system and bears numerous design elements found in Browning's earlier 1911 and Hi Power pistols. It holds eight rounds in the magazine and handles just like the 1911. The two pistols are so close in resemblance and design that some minor parts can actually be interchanged between the two.

Production began in 1936 and continued until the German invasion of Poland in September of 1939. About 50,000 pre-war pistols were manufactured at FB, which was one of the first factories in all of Europe to incorporate employee-friendly amenities like today's tech giants. The 4,000 workers had a theater, store, decent housing, sports leagues and even an orchestra. The pre-war VIS has a Polish eagle engraved on the slide along with the year of manufacture.

The invading Germans quickly took control of the factory and resumed production of the pistol for the rest of the war, producing some 350,000 pistols. Known as 9 mm Pistole 645(p), by the Germans, it was favored by the Kriegsmarine and *Fallschirmjägers*. Wartime expediencies necessitated various modifications to the production of the pistol that included a phosphate finish that replaced the original polished blue, elimination of the shoulder stock slot, plain wood grips and the removal of the takedown latch.

In an effort to prevent the Polish factory workers from stealing pistols from the factory to supply them to Polish resistance forces, the Germans arraigned for the manufacture of the barrels and final assembly of the pistols to take place at the Steyr factory in Austria. Eventually, as the Red Army advanced, the entire VIS production was moved to Austria.

Production was resumed in 1997 for a special run of two dozen VIS Model 35s, and now they are again in production at the original FB factory in Radom, along with a number of other Polish military weapons currently in use.

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# CZ Scorpion 3 **Plus Micro**

### Both the pistol itself and CZ's tweaks demonstrate it's the little things that matter.

Z's new Scorpion 3 Plus Micro represents something less dramatic—but also less traumatic—than an all-new design. It's an established, much-loved platform that has wisely been gently tweaked to make it even better. The large-format Scorpion EVO 3 pistol has been a best-seller for the Czech-based company. The Micro shrinks it down, but also includes all the little niceties customers requested in a well-executed, thoughtfully packaged product.

Riding the crest of the large-format-pistol trend, the 3 Plus Micro is vaguely reminiscent in appearance of the squat, abbreviated machinepistols so popular in movies of the 1980s and '90s. Of course, the CZ is semi-automatic and not NFA-restricted. Also, its lines are more graceful and it looks, well, more purposeful and better thought out. It has a pistol grip, an angled trigger guard, beveled mag well ahead of the trigger guard and a stubby fore-end surrounding a 4.2-inch threaded barrel and muzzle device. Up top, there is a full-length Picatinny rail on which are already installed surprisingly excellent iron sights.

There is a non-reciprocating charging handle along the left side of the pistol. When the bolt is locked back, you can use the ambidextrous bolt-release levers located between the trigger guard and mag well or you can slap the charging handle, HK MP5/ SP5-style. Ambidextrous also describes the safety levers (as do "big" and "ergonomic"), which are located above and just forward



### **SPECIFICATIONS**

- Manufacturer: Česká zbrojovka a.s. Uherský Brod, Czech Republic Importer: CZ-USA; (800) 955-4486, cz-usa.com Action Type: Recoil-operated, semi-automatic Caliber: 9 mm Capacity: 20+1 rounds Frame: Fiber-reinforced polymer Barrel Length: 4.2 inches
- Sights: Multi-aperture ghost ring rear, elevation-adjustable post front Trigger Pull Weight: 8 pounds, 4 ounces Length: 14.63 inches Width: 2.4 inches Height: 8.9 inches Weight: 75.2 ounces Accessories: Two magazines, Allen wrench, sight-adjustment tool, cleaning kit, manual

MSRP: \$1,299

### SHOOTING RESULTS

Load	Velocity	Smallest	Group Size Largest	Average
RNP Inceptor 65-grain Frangible	1,695	.9	2.6	1.3
Hornady Custom 124-grain XTP	1,099	1.2	2.6	1.8
Super Vel 147-grain FMJ Subsonic	849	1.6	2.5	2.0

Velocity measured in fps 5 feet from the muzzle for 10 consecutive shots with an Oehler Model 36 chronograph. Temperature: 75 degrees Fahrenheit. Accuracy measured in inches for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 25 yards from a sandbag rest.

#### **ON TARGET**

Tweaked rather than overhauled

### OFF TARGET

Heavy trigger pull



The charging handle is a bit difficult to retract without having anything to brace the pistol against • With each protected by aluminum "ears," both the adjustable front and rear sights should prove durable • Ambidextrous bolt-release levers bracket the front of the trigger guard, giving you the choice of using them or the far cooler option of slapping the charging handle • Brace-ready, the Scorpion 3 Plus Micro would benefit from the addition • The full-length Picatinny top rail offers a lot of real estate for optics. of the pistol grip, similarly to an ARplatform gun.

One of the 3 Plus Micro's enhancements is a grip that can be slid forward or back to adjust your finger position on the trigger. Loosen a single Allen-head screw, slide the grip into whatever position gives you best trigger-finger placement, tighten the screw and you're good to go. Moreover, the strategically stippled and grooved grip is more vertical than previous Scorpion grips, with the less-radical angle offering greater shooter comfort.

Narrow but adequate areas of effective stippling are also present on the fore-end, sandwiching M-Lok slots for attaching accessories. There are also slots on the underside of the pistol and CZ has wisely attached a hand stop to the forward one.

The aluminum "iron" sights are refreshingly fully realized. While some manufacturers affix sights that are little more than placeholders for whatever red-dot the consumer will be subsequently installing, CZ has included useful, fully adjustable units. The rear is a protected ghost-ring incorporating a choice of four apertures. The protected front post is adjustable for elevation. Granted, they are less than optimal in low light, but are all you need on the range.

The two 20-round magazines included with the 3 Plus Micro will work with earlier generations of Scorpion pistols, though older magazines will unfortunately not work with the new gun.

Handling the 3 Plus Micro is a mixed bag. It's quite well-balanced. You can shoot it with one hand on the grip and the other around the fore-end, but you can also place both hands on the grip and shoot it like a conventional pistol with surprising ease. In fact, it's the former that is most awkward. Without an arm brace or even a single-point sling, you are holding the gun out in space with nothing to pull against (a brace) or push against (sling) and tensioning your arms becomes problematic.

The only other problem I had with the CZ was the trigger. There was some take-up before hitting a wall. It then seemed you had to cross the rather wide top of that wall before the trigger broke at more than 8 pounds.

Accuracy testing from a rest required the removal of the handstop using the included wrench. Muzzle rise was minimal.

CZ's Scorpion 3 Plus Micro is a compact, well-considered improvement beyond what was already a solid and justifiably popular gun. It would serve well as a compact personal protection gun for a vehicle, a home defense arm or just a fun gun for the range, though a stabilizing arm brace would obviously enhance its shootability in any of those roles.

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## GUN LOCKER Jay Grazio

# Heritage Manufacturing Rough Rider Tactical Cowboy Revolver

## It's important to remember that shooting is fun; this is just the pistol to remind us.

Self- and home defense is serious business; there's no arguing that. Practicing and training to improve your skillset so you can protect yourself in a worst-case scenario is laudable and something we stress heavily, devoting time and ink with tips, hardware and drills. Sometimes, though, I think we often lose sight of another aspect of shooting: fun. Having a fun .22 LR revolver to bring with you, like the Heritage Rough Rider Tactical Cowboy, just adds to the enjoyment.

Right off the bat, you'll notice the threaded barrel. Insert "record scratch" noise here. Wait, you say, you can't suppress a revolver; the gap between the forcing cone and the cylinder will obviate a lot of the

sound reduction. Ah, one might counter, who says a suppressor is the only item one might wish to add to the barrel of a revolver? Perhaps a muzzle brake might be desired to tame the recoil of the ... .22 LR? OK, I can't even type that with a straight face. No, it's not going to work terribly well to suppress the Heritage, nor is a muzzle brake needed.

But, it sure can be fun. Ditto the length of Picatinny rail that doubles as the rear sight (there's a small notch in the base of the rail into which the fiber-optic front sight can be bracketed for aiming). But, isn't it more fun to toss a red-dot sight up top? It's odd enough to see a Trijicon RMR atop a Smith & Wesson fighting revolver; why not an Aimpoint Acro on a single-action cowboy gun? Have fun with it. Life is short.

OK, though, but even at the quite reasonable MSRP of \$212.88, having a gun that serves little purpose other than as a conversation piece is a little, well, frivolous, right? Yes and



Manufacturer: Heritage Manufacturing; (229) 515-2666, heritagemfg.com Action Type: Single-action-only revolver Caliber: .22 LR Capacity: 6 rounds Frame: Zamak 5 Barrel Length: 6.5 inches

### SHOOTING RESULTS

			Group Size	
Load	Velocity	Smallest	Largest	Average
Remington 22 Viper 36-grain CP FN	1,062	2.46	4.68	3.30
CCI Mini-Mag 40-grain segmented HP	1,001	1.72	3.83	3.11
Winchester M22 40-grain CP RN	928	2.43	3.69	3.03

Velocity measured in fps 5 feet from the muzzle for 10 consecutive shots with an Oehler Model 36 chronograph. Temperature: 71 degrees Fahrenheit. Accuracy measured in inches for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 25 yards from a rest.

**OFF TARGET** 

Grip fit could be better

### **ON TARGET**

Silly, affordable fun

fiber-optic front Trigger Pull Weight: 4 pounds, 9 ounces Length: 11.79 inches Width: 1.44 inches Height: 4.85 inches Weight: 33.2 ounces Accessories: Cable lock, manual MSRP: \$212.88

Sights: Picatinny rail with notch for rear;



Loading the Tactical Cowboy follows standard single-action protocol: With the hammer at half-cock, open the loading gate and load rounds one at a time • Should the cylinder need to be removed, simply depress the release button and pull out the cylinder pin • A standard ½x28 tpi thread allows the addition of muzzle devices or a sound suppressor if desired • Drawing the eye to the front sight is a bright-orange fiber-optic pipe • Empty cases are removed via the spring-loaded ejector, one at a time.

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no—there's another niche the Tactical Cowboy can fulfill: it's a great "first gun" with which to train new shooters. The single-action operating system is slow and deliberate. One must load six rounds, one at a time, into the cylinder through the loading gate, then close the loading gate. Now, the hammer has to be cocked, and before the novice can fire, the safety must be disengaged.

Wait. Did you just say "safety?" On a single-action revolver? You're telling me the Heritage Manufacturing Rough Rider Tactical Cowboy is a single-action-only revolver with a threaded barrel, Picatinny rail for optics and a manual safety? Yes.

Once one has painstakingly loaded the revolver—one round at a time got it on target, cocked the hammer and then released the safety, then the revolver can be fired. Once. Again, think of this as something for a new shooter—after that first shot touches off, they have to make the very deliberate action of cocking the hammer before it can be fired again.

Of course, here's the part where we do the serious gun stuff and tell you how it shot. Well, it's a single-action revolver. It's slow. While Cowboy Action shooters can shoot singleaction guns crazy-fast, it's not something I'd recommend with the Tactical Cowboy, given the Zamak 5 frame. After about 200 rounds, the cylinder starts getting a bit dirty and needs a guick scrubbing. This is something I've noticed with just about every .22 LR revolver I own (and I have a few). I don't count it as a knock on the Tactical Cowboy. Believe me, you'll know when it's time for a quick scrub—it'll be hard to get the empties out, first; then the cylinder will require more force to rotate.

Trigger pull is decent; it's nothing to write home about, but it's not terrible, either. Accuracy is pretty much the same; with a Bushnell RXS-250 red-dot sight on the Picatinny rail, I ran targets out to 25 yards and was pleasantly surprised by groups close to 3 inches. The Tactical Cowboy is a perfectly adequate rimfire revolver that just happens to be a stupidly fun range gun. About the only complaint I had was with the fit of the "carbon fiber" grips (although the manufacturer lists the grips as carbon fiber, I'm pretty sure they're just regular plastic with a carbon-fiber pattern)—there's a not-insignificant amount of overlap between grip and frame. If it were a centerfire pistol, it'd hurt. Since it's a .22 LR, it's not a big deal.

It's important to remember that, too. Heritage's Rough Rider Tactical Cowboy isn't a family heirloom. It's not a tack-driver destined to win rimfire steel challenges. Rather than focus on what it's not; let's focus on what it is: Silly, affordable fun. I think we could all use a little more of that in our lives.



home-defense arm is another question altogether.

### **Shell Options**

Nominal .410-bore loads include 2½- and 3-inch birdshot (No. 6, 7, 8, or 9), 000 buck, quarter-ounce slug and buck and slug duplex loads, such as Hornady's Triple Defense. But, like most shotgun shells, you can find all types of novelty loads, and if you are unsatisfied with those on the market, you can always load your own.

So now that we've looked at the specs, what are my final thoughts on the .410-bore for self-defense? Even fired through a full choke—which is what most .410 shotguns are choked from the factory—that pattern of four or five 000 pellets is more devastating than any common pistol round, and will increase your margin for error for when you're rubbing the sleep from your eyes in the middle of the night. If I chose a .410, I'd definitely choose the  ... my favorite for home defense are those 3-inch loads that deliver five
 000 buckshot (.36-caliber,
 68-grain) pellets at around
 1,125 fps to produce roughly
 950 ft.-lbs. of collective energy at the muzzle.

000-buck load because the birdshot pattern is both thin as a whole and lacking in individual pellet energy when each splits from the swarm. Although a slug load would certainly do the job, if you choose a slug you might as well choose a much more accurate and reliable carbine or rifle, and I say this when talking about 12 gauges, too. Reliability isn't stellar.

In my view, trimmer gun weight and lower recoil are the two main reasons for choosing the little .410. For people who want the power and assuredness of a shotgun without the massive recoil and bulk of a full-size 12-gauge, a 6.5-pound, historically reliable .410 like a Mossberg 590 pump is a bona fide option. (Remember, if recoil is the main reason for you choosing a .410, don't negate its advantage by choosing an ultra-lightweight gun.)

But, here's what I really think: For most Americans, if you're thinking about a defensive shotgun, you should first look at the 12-gauge; if you need something smaller with less recoil, strongly consider a 20-gauge because it's a huge leap in performance from the little .410. I'm not knocking it or saying it can't be a viable defender of the home, because it certainly can. Rather, I think the number one reason for specifically choosing the .410-bore to protect your door is ... it's what you have. And that's enough reason for me.



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bullet does not have a reputation for delivering extreme precision.

### 70-grain Nosler AccuBond

I've killed more big-game animals with AccuBonds than any other bullet, mostly because they deliver an ideal balance of penetration and tissue damage. They also only need to impact at about 1,800 fps for measurable bullet upset. Nosler is the only company offering a factory 70-grain AccuBond load for the .223 Rem., but it can be hard to find. In its latest load manual, Nosler does not list CFE 223 for bullets between 70 and 85 grains, but Hodgdon lists a maximum load of 24.7 grains. With this bullet's BC of .37, it's still traveling 2,000 fps at 300 yards. This, combined with the precision it delivered, makes it an ideal multipurpose load. In tactical applications, the bonding helps with intermediate barriers, and you can expect 17 inches of penetration.

### **Nosler 77-grain Custom Competition**

Because of its light recoil, ringing steel and punching paper are joyous pursuits with the .223 Rem. For that you need a bullet that's accurate and will fly reasonably flat. Nosler offers a factory load for the .223 Rem. that uses its 77-grain Custom Competition bullet, but it retails for more than \$40 per box of 20. It's advertised at 2,600 fps, and with Hodgdon's maximum load of 24.3 grains I got 2,680 fps out of my rifle.

### **Seating Depth**

Nosler offers its 77-grain Custom Competition bullet with and without a cannelure. I used the cannelured version, but seated it out rather far to an overall length of 2.40 inches. However, the cannelure is posited perfectly for the .223 Rem.'s standard overall length of 2.26 inches. My handloads exceeded 2.26 inches, which is why the overall lengths (OALs) are not listed. Most .223 Rem. rifles will not chamber cartridges with an OAL beyond about 2.30 inches.

This brings up the topic of seating depth. My rifle was built by New Ultra Light Arms, which has a proprietary throat that permits bullets to be seated out further than normal, and the magazine box is 2.5 inches long. You'll have to adjust the seating depth for your rifle, but the good news is that with the CFE 223 powder, you'll have room to do so without encroaching on powder space, no matter the bullet or its companion charge weight.

I now have four loads that will allow me to do everything I want to do with a .223. The best part is that they all use the same powder and primer, so I don't have to keep a variety of components on hand. This is cooking simplified, and it works mostly because of the excellent CFE 223 powder which shoots very clean and meters extremely well.

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# Law And Order Midterms?

In the country approaches the midterm elections. A closely related concern is softon-crime policies, with large percentages of respondents agreeing that such policies do nothing to improve public safety.

# California County Shows Serious Problem with "\$0 Cash" Bail

Yolo County in California evaluated the impact of a "\$0 cash" bail rule and discovered that more than 70% of offenders released under that program were later rearrested, with a shocking 29% being rearrested for a crime of violence.

In April 2020, the California Judicial Council imposed a "statewide Emergency Bail Schedule" during the state of emergency during the COVID-19 pandemic. This mandatory directive ended cash bail requirements for most offenses, with the default being "bail for all misdemeanor and felony offenses must be set at \$0." Individual counties had the option of continuing to follow the rule after it was rescinded in June 2020.

According to Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig, the county decided to follow the rule until May 31, 2021, with the district attorney's office "tracking the individuals released ... and rearrested within Yolo County" between April 2020 and May 2021.

Analysis found seven out of 10 individuals benefitting from the \$0 bail rule reoffended after being released: "Of the 595 individuals released, 420 were rearrested (70.6%) and 123 (20% of the overall number or 29% of those rearrested) were arrested for a crime of violence."

Regarding the time between release and subsequent arrest: "five people ... were arrested again on the same day as release, 14 people arrested within one day, 46 people arrested within one week, [and] 104 people [were] arrested within 30 days."

Commenting on the results, DA Reisig concluded, "When over 70% of the people released under mandated \$0 bail policies go on to commit additional crime(s), including violent offenses such as robbery and murder, there is simply no rational public-safety-related basis to continue such a practice post-pandemic, especially in light of the increasing violent crime rates across California."

#### Chicago Can't Respond to 911 Calls

After violent unrest and looting in 2020 that Chicago mayor Lori Lightfoot admitted had "spread like wildfire" throughout parts of Chicago, the mayor, nonetheless, urged Chicagoans not to "take matters into [their] own hands" in the concealed-carry state. "Do not pick up arms and try to be the police," she continued. "If there's a problem, call 911. We will respond."

Chicago residents, it seems, have little reason to believe her.

Residents who called 911 for police help last year were reportedly left waiting in more than half of "high priority" (Priority Level 1 and 2) calls. Priority Level 1 calls, the most urgent, include incidents where there is "an imminent threat to life, bodily injury, or major property damage/loss," while Priority Level 2 are those where "timely police action...has the potential to affect the outcome of an incident."

Analysts using data obtained from the Chicago Police Department found that "in 2021 there were 406,829 incidents of high-priority emergency service calls for which there were no police available to respond. That was 52% of the 788,000 high-priority 911 service calls dispatched in 2021." The calls involved serious crimes like in-progress assaults or batteries, persons shot or stabbed, robberies, domestic violence, and violations of court protective orders.

According to the source, while the overall number of 911 calls remained roughly the same between 2019 and 2021, the amount of dispatched calls that had to be backlogged for a response—"radio assignments pending" or RAP calls—skyrocketed, "from 5,077 in 2019 to 11,721 in 2021, up more than 130%." Significantly, a RAP is "a range of time in which no dispatchable resources are available in the [police] District/dispatch group" as a whole, rather than a single unresponsive contact after a dispatched call.

Although the researchers were unable to obtain information on the average duration of a RAP backlog, an audio recording the article includes features a dispatcher for the 11th Police District reeling off a list of 36 incidents with apparently hours-long response delays.

One factor to consider is a drop in police officer staffing. According to one source, hundreds of sworn police personnel in Chicago have left the force each year since 2019, resulting in personnel levels at "a new low not seen in more than half a century."

With police understaffed and otherwise unable to respond to countless 911 calls, it is not unreasonable for law-abiding Chicagoans to consider exercising their Second Amendment rights as an option to defend themselves against violent criminals.

If America hopes to restore our standing as a nation of law and order—which includes ending the assault on the Second Amendment that stands as a firewall against diminishing our right to self-defense when law and order breaks down—we must do everything we can to ensure pro-freedom candidates are elected to office on Nov. 8!

#### IN MEMORY NRA-ILA CONTRIBUTIONS August 1 - 31, 2022

Jack Ferrell III, Summerville, SC (from: Palmetto Gun Club); Ernesto Smith, John Island, SC (from: Palmetto Gun Club); Philip Stouffer, Cottageville, SC (from: Palmetto Gun Club); Michael R. Ludtke, Carson City, NV (from: anonymous); Billy R. Plyler, Lancaster, SC (from: Linda Plyer); Joy Schrunk, Brooklyn Park, MN (from: Calvin Schrunk); Dr. Rick Bennett, Coolidge, TX (from: Charles & Mae Dale Sigrist); George Alves (from: Warren & Vickie Alves).

# Whey Jennings Is NRA COUNTRY

hey Jennings grew up in a family of country-music legends; in fact, his grandparents, Waylon Jennings and Jessi Colter are "outlaw country" icons! The values, patriotism and talent Whey inherited from his grandparents inspired him, and he has begun to make his own name in Nashville. Even though Whey is part of country music's royalty, he grew up working on the farm, and he loves fishing and the outdoors. His new song titled "Farm Life" reminds us the importance of the forgotten farmer and that "hard work never done no harm." Another song, titled "The Gun," shows the world through the eyes of a gun and the tradition of a gun being handed down from generation to generation. Whey shows his love of the Second Amendment and the right to keep and bear arms, and he won't compromise when it comes to the right to protect his family and his loved ones. He always makes time for active military, veterans, law enforcement and first responders to tip his hat and say a guick "Thank y'all" for what they do for our community and the nation. NRA Country's Lisa Supernaugh caught up with him in between working his farm and performing to ask him a few questions.

LS: If there was one person in history that you could go back in time and meet, who would it be? WJ: lesus Christ.

LS: How do you share your love for the outdoors with your family? WJ: We go camping, kayaking, tubing, hunting, on walks, gardening and playing music around a campfire.

LS: Who got you into the outdoors?

WJ: My mom loved camping, and I used to hunt with my uncle and boss years ago.

LS: If you could only have one firearm for the rest of your life, which it would be?

WJ: Colt 1911-A1 .45 ACP.

Sabrina Schmidt

#### LS: What does freedom mean to you?

**WJ:** The Bill of Rights and the Constitution of The United States of America and the ability to raise my family with my wife as we see fit.

LS: Even though you found the love of music early in your life, you remained a farmer for quite some time. Do you still do both or did you have to choose with a busy touring schedule?

WJ: Ultimately, I had to choose music, but I still have a love for farming and always will.

# LS: Even though you are part of country-music "royalty," folks still want to ask, who was your greatest influence?

WJ: Musically, I'd definitely have to say my grandfather, Jamey Johnson and Lynyrd Skynyrd.

If you're looking for music that brings you back to your roots, check out Whey Jennings at **wheyjennings.com** for music, tour dates, and other info.

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

# **NRA** Online Regional Report

# To search for events in your area, go to

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### **GUN SHOWS** gunshows.nra.org

Dates and locations of gun shows are subject to change. Please contact the show before traveling. Discounted NRA memberships are sold through NRA recruiters. Some shows may offer free admission to people who sign up for new memberships or renewals. To become an NRA Recruiter contact NRA Recruiting Programs at recruiter@nrahq.org.



**AREA SHOOTS** ssusa.org/coming-events

For more information, send an email to Shelly Kramer at mkramer@nraha.org or call (703) 267-1459.



### FRIENDS OF NRA friendsofnra.ora

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### TRAINING refuse.nra.org | nrainstructors.org

The NRA's Refuse To Be A Victim® program provides information on crime prevention and personal safety. To learn more about the program, visit refuse.nra.org. The most up-to-date seminar and instructor training schedule is available on the Internet by visiting **nrainstructors.org**, or online training is available at **nraonlinetraining.org**. Questions? Email to **refuse@nrahq.org** or by calling (800) 861-1166.



### STATE ASSOCIATIONS stateassociations.nra.org

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The "NRA Regional Report," a service for NRA members, is an up-to-date listing of NRA conducted and/or sponsored events scheduled in your region for the current month. Call to verify event dates and locations before traveling.



### APRIL 14-16, 2023

For hotel accommodations at the NRA Annual Meetings, visit mraam.org



### **PROGRAMS & SERVICES**



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



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#### GET INVOLVED TODAY! GO VISIT stateassociations.nra.org

# **Support Your NRA State Association**

Join your local State Association and help it grow and prosper

his month, I'm encouraging all NRA members to get involved with their local State Associations, which are independent organizations affiliated with and recognized by the National Rifle Association. Most State Associations need your help and support. From the mountains to the coasts, NRA and State Associations work hand-in-hand to provide vital services to shooters, hunters, gun owners and Second Amendment activists across all 50 states and Puerto Rico. With our precious liberties currently under assault by extremists, the National Rifle Association of America considers its partnerships with individual State Associations a solid foundation for the defense of our Second Amendment rights.

Although affiliated with the NRA, State Associations are independent and self-sufficient—each representing the collective voice of the community it serves. Every State Association also serves as a valuable resource of information regarding NRA activities carried on at the state level. NRA provides assistance and support, but outside of a few guidelines, State Associations forge their own paths according to the needs of their members. Additionally, State Associations are encouraged to tap into NRA's vast resources to achieve success.

One of the best ways to get involved is to become a member of your State Association—it's never too early to join. How else can you get

Indiana State Association Pistol Team at Camp Atterbury.

involved? It can be a simple as working as a range officer at a State Association match or volunteering with a Hunter Safety program. Perhaps you have experience dealing with range issues at your local club and your expertise could help other clubs in your state that are encountering problems. Or, you want to share your marksmanship skills by joining a State Team at the NRA National Matches at Camp Atterbury. Many State Associations will have at least one committee or program that could benefit from your assistance.

Support your State Association and make a difference in your local community. Interested in shaping firearm policy? It all starts at the grassroots level with support from NRA-ILA. Consider becoming an officer or joining a committee. You never know where such a path may lead you—State Associations often serve as a training ground for individuals seeking future national leadership responsibilities.

In fact, we are privileged to count a number of State Association leaders among the esteemed members of the NRA Board of Directors: Ted Carter of Florida, Charles Hiltunen of Indiana, Jim Wallace of Massachusetts, Scott Bach of New Jersey, Tom King of New York and Mark Vaughan of Oklahoma.

If you're not a member already, join your State Association today. To find out more about NRA State Associations, go to stateassociations.nra.org.



# NRA Online Hunter Education Program Reaches More Than 100,000 Course Completions

ore than 100,000 hunters have completed the National Rifle Association of America's free, award-winning NRA Hunter Education online courses since the program's inception in 2017.

Designed and provided by the organization that built the first-ever hunter education program in the United States in 1949, the free NRA Hunter Education online course offers a fresh and fully comprehensive approach to hunter education. The 15-chapter sequence features attention-grabbing videos, eye-catching graphics and diagrams, interactive modules, audio recordings and dozens of action photos presented in appealing, easy-to-access online components that provide the best method for teaching future hunters. "One of the purposes and objectives of the NRA is to promote and support hunter safety in America," said Joseph P. DeBergalis Jr., executive director of NRA General Operations. "This free, online course was developed to make it easier for new hunters to get into the field. We are thrilled with the partnerships we have fostered with state wildlife agencies across our nation and the more than 100,000 of our fellow hunters who have completed this no-cost program."

This free offering has saved American hunters approximately \$2.5 million when compared to the fees associated with other online hunter-education providers. Additionally, with a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) ruling in 2019, state wildlife agencies now may claim a dollar value of the NRA's online Hunter Education course as in-kind match dollars to access federal Pittman-Robertson (P-R) grant funds. Had every state that offers the NRA online course utilized that match opportunity, it would have resulted in more than \$7 million going back to the state agencies for other hunter education programs and/or range building/improvement opportunities. This is a giant step forward in bolstering states' hunter recruitment efforts and the national NRA-backed R3 movement: Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation.

To take the NRA Hunter Education online course or learn more, visit NRAHE.org. Not available in your area? Contact your State Department of Fish and Game Agency to request NRA's online Hunter Education be accepted in your state: fws.gov/offices/statelinks.html



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(Name of Board member), NRA Office of the Secretary, 11250 Waples Mill Road, Fairfax, VA 22030; or nrabod@nrahq.org; or (703) 267-1021. Please include your name, contact information and NRA membership I.D. number, as only communications from NRA members will be forwarded.

### FIGHTIN' IRON CONTINUED FROM PAGE 88

His favorite revolver was one of the Smith & Wesson Safety Hammerless models chambered in .38 S&W with a 2-inch barrel. I have handled the gun, which is quite important in fightinghandgun history. He carried the gun in an unusual holster from S.D. Myers named the Detective Wonder Holster. It held the gun in a muzzle-up position and was very fast to draw from under an untucked shirt. As you might have guessed, he had need of the gun one particular time, and we are about to look closely at what happened. There have been several accounts of the fight published recently and I would like to add his version, as told to me in his study one evening before he passed away.

On an evening in the late 1940s, Applegate went out to dinner with an officer in the Mexican Army who was in uniform and carrying a .45 ACP 1911 in a flap holster. Applegate was packing the Smith & Wesson Hammerless in the Myers rig. Their meal concluded, the two officers were in the lobby at the front of the restaurant, about to leave. The front door burst open and a man attacked them with a machete, coming right at them with an upraised blade. Applegate did not hesitate. He drew the little Smith & Wesson and began shooting. Applegate fired five consecutive shots and hit his assailant five consecutive times. This failed to stop him, but the army officer finally got his 1911 out and working. The unidentified attacker went down to 230 grains of jacketed lead. Nobody ever figured out why the man behaved as he did.

It is clear the ammunition—.38 S&W lead round nose—failed utterly. And, shortly thereafter, Rex Applegate and his friend W.H.B. Smith (author of "Small Arms Of the World") were conversing with Carl Hellstrom of Smith & Wesson. The result was a revolver that took more powerful .38 Spl. ammo and had the internalhammer feature. Since then, they have made it work with .357 Mags.

In other words, proper fightin' iron.

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# **Centennial Story**

Sometimes life-changing events and a gun's shortcomings bring about firearm evolution.



While the Smith & Wesson New Departure Safety Hammerless' anemic .38 S&W chambering provided insufficient terminal performance for Rex Applegate, the encounter resulted in the firm's creation of the .38 Spl. J-frame revolver. andgunners whose work requires them to habitually go heeled may have problems in selecting a gun. But, those who must carry, and can reasonably expect to use the gun, face even greater ones. If the easy-to-carry, easy-to-draw, easy-to-shoot gun lacks on-target stopping power, the guy who made the choice just might be the victim of a poor choice. This is the story of a legendary American soldier and the gun that functioned perfectly, but didn't stop the fight—as well as the gun that grew out of it and stopped many fights.

We need to start at that point in history when the gunmakers were starting to build small, lightweight guns. It was the middle of the frontier era, where Smith & Wesson's main fighting handgun was the Model 3 series (American, Russian, Schofield and Number Three). These might be called "holster" guns because they would best be carried in a sturdy leather holster. In the 1880s, the company introduced a compact pocket revolver that was small enough to fit in most of the pockets of men's clothing. A hinged-frame, five-shot revolver offered in .32 and .38 calibers, the gun was officially known as the New Departure Safety Hammerless and unofficially as the "Lemon Squeezer." It had a completely covered, spurless hammer activated by a double-action-only trigger system. For safety, the gun had a grip safety on the backstrap and could only be fired by the firm pressure of an adult hand.

This little gun was—in its day—a popular style of revolver, with similar models made by many other gunmakers, both here and abroad. Smith & Wesson made them in a variety of barrel lengths, with the most popular ones having shorter barrels. The manufacturer advertised the 2-incher as the "Bicycle Gun" for its use by bicyclists against attacking dogs. Introduced in the 1880s, this remarkable little gun was still in the catalog in 1940. While Smith & Wesson and Colt also made 2-inch, self-defense-oriented, solidframe revolvers, the more compact Safety Hammerless was still competitive. Prototypes exist of a larger-frame hammerless revolver in .44 Russian, and I often wonder what might have happened if that variant had been produced in quantity.

One well-known user of the Safety Hammerless was COL Rex Applegate. The son of a prominent pioneer family, Applegate grew up in rural Oregon as a hunter and fisherman. He was strongly associated with firearms by virtue of an uncle who was as an exhibition shooter for Peters Cartridge. Applegate graduated from college just before World War II began and found himself in the Military Police. In those times, only tall men served in the MPs, and Applegate was 6 feet, 3 inches. Still a lieutenant, he was called to Washington for an interview with a general officer named Donovan. William J. Donovan commanded the OSS, which ran a wide variety of covert operations throughout World War II.

Applegate's orders were simple: Learn all there was to know about close combat. There followed a frantic, but fruitful, period of intense study of how to cut throats and shoot hearts. He also participated in several commando operations during the war.

The post-war period found Applegate running a sporting-goods-import operation in Mexico. This business found him traveling in Central America and Mexico a great deal, and he routinely went armed.

Continued on page 87

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