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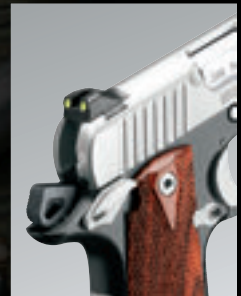
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LWRC IC-A5 is as reliable and accurate as it is good looking.
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BRIEFING ROOM

BY DENNY HANSEN

Pay Attention, People!

Many people in this country are so easily distracted by what's *not* important I'm convinced they have ADD.

Here's just a sampling of recent headlines that should have gotten everyone concerned, but went largely ignored:

- Clintons sell uranium to Russia.
- Tensions rise in Persian Gulf; Navy to escort U.S. ships through Strait of Hormuz.
- Death toll in Nepal earthquake rises above 8,500.
- Five corrections officers injured during prison disturbance in Pennsylvania.
- At least 20 officers injured during Baltimore riots.
- ISIS claims responsibility for shooting at Texas Muhammad cartoon contest.

Instead, as people scroll down on their laptops, tablets and phones, their reaction is, "Oh, look! Kittens!"

I'm not into conspiracy theories, but could this be by design? It certainly would not be the first time the general public was misled and didn't pay attention. Martin Niemöller's famous quote stands in mute testament to that fact.

Actually, however, it goes far beyond not keeping up with the news—it's situational awareness in general that I'm talking about.

A week ago, I watched two uniformed officers eating at a local diner, seated with their backs to the door and the rest of the restaurant. Both were totally absorbed with texting on their cell phones. I have seen the same behavior by normal Earth people at restaurants, gas stations, in parking lots, and other public venues.

An old adage says, "Go looking for trouble and you'll probably find it." On the other hand, if you're not looking for trouble, it may still find you—but when you least expect it. The best strategies are first, avoid a potentially deadly situation, and second, if you do somehow end up in one, escape if at all possible.

Look for secondary exit points, because the one you entered by may be blocked. In Killeen, Texas in 1991, when a crazed gunman crashed his pickup truck into a Luby's Cafeteria and began shooting (ultimately 43 people were shot), only one man thought to crash through a window—and by doing so created an escape route for other people. That man was thinking on his feet and undoubtedly saved lives.

The world is a dangerous place and a bit of situational awareness can—Oh, look! Kittens!

Until next time, stay low and watch your back. ©

Denny Hansen

SWAT

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RIGHT TO REBELLION

Claire Wolfe's article "Right To Rebellion" (*ENEMY AT THE GATE*, April 2015 *S.W.A.T.*) is a colorful political rant based on an argument that self-destructs within the title itself. The author's conclusions about rebellion are clearly based on a misunderstanding of the nature of government and rights. For the sake of helping the author not publish such a mistake again in the future, I submit a short lesson in the fundamentals of politics.

To begin, let's look at the definitions of the words in the title. A "right" is a moral or legal entitlement to have or obtain something or to act in a certain way. "Rebellion" is the act of resistance to the position of an established authority. In short, a right is a legal entitlement, and rebellion is resistance to authority. Therefore, I think the author would agree, "Right To Rebellion" is analogous to saying "legal entitlement to resist authority."

However, this oxymoronic expression is inherently contradictory.

Rights (legal entitlements) by definition stem from the established legal authority. To rebel is, by definition, to work outside of and against the authority. For the author's premise that there is a "right to rebellion" to hold true, it would be necessary for the established authority to grant the right to work outside of the establishment.

Obviously this is impossible, as, by definition, working outside of the authority of the establishment is not a right that can be granted by the authority, as this would inherently invalidate and delegitimize the authority itself.

To put this in very plain terms, the author is essentially declaring that "the established authority gives us the legal entitlement to work outside the established authority."

As one can see, "right to rebellion" is an inherently oxymoronic phrase and a logical impossibility, since if something

is a right, it is granted by the established authority and therefore not rebellious. If something is rebellious, it is working against the established authority, and therefore not a right.

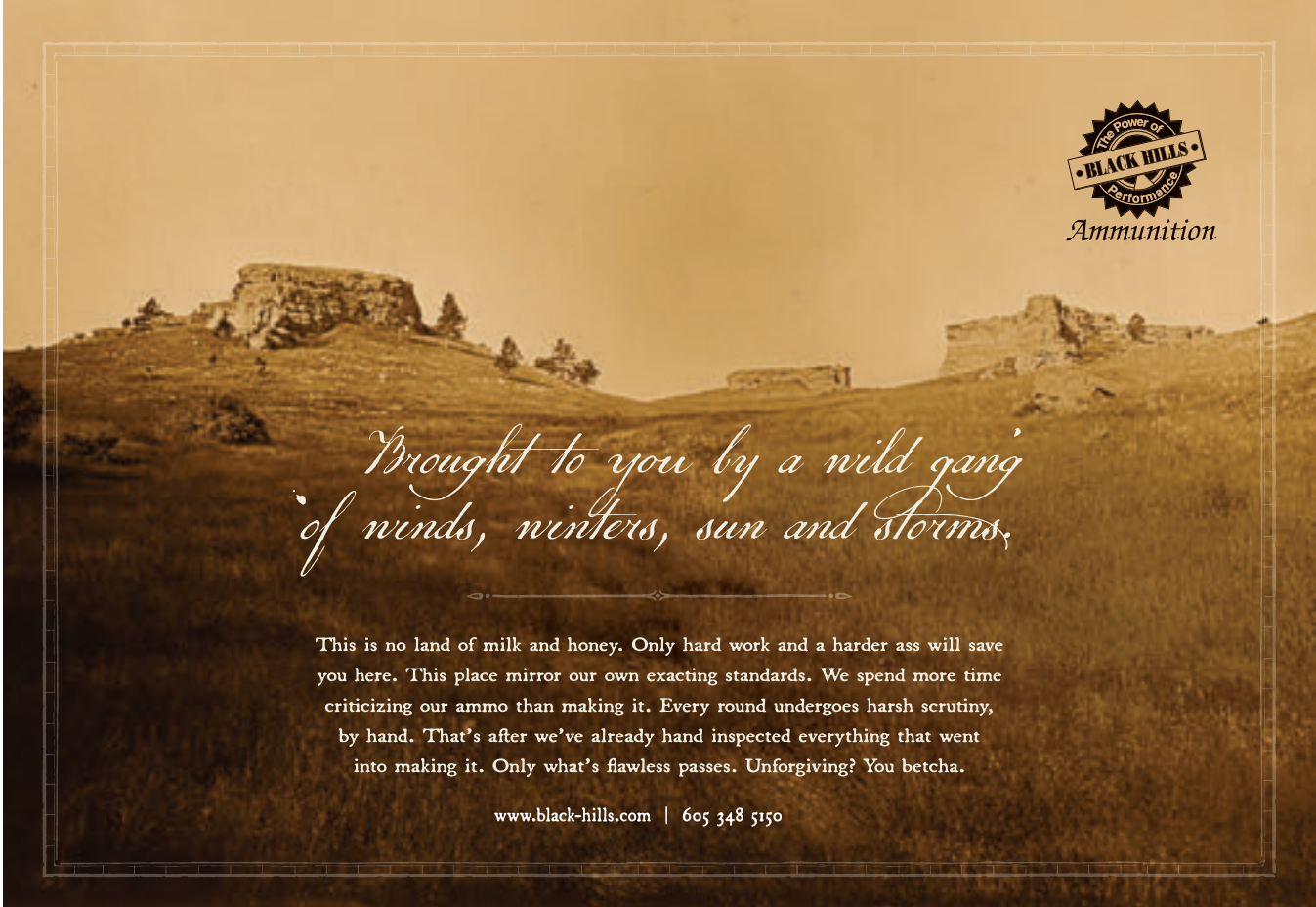
Thank you for considering this factual correction as a service to your readers. Perhaps in the future Claire Wolfe can stick to writing about "Survival Weapons And Tactics" instead of illogically misconstruing political terminology and concepts.

N. Johnson, Kentucky

Ah, but speaking of arguments that internally self-destruct, Mr. Johnson's does exactly that!

In his first paragraph, he states that a right can be a moral or legal "entitlement." Then he goes on as if the word "moral" never appeared—as though rights are solely granted by law.

Dictionary.com defines a right as "a just claim or title, whether legal, prescriptive, or moral" and "a moral, ethi-



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cal, or legal principle considered as an underlying cause of truth, justice, morality, or ethics.”

So the moral aspect of rights is clearly key. And morality is completely separate from and far deeper than law. How, then, did the moral aspect of rights disappear so effortlessly from the rest of Mr. Johnson’s argument?

The notion of rights being granted by government seems to have been created by the left to justify such things as a “right” to housing or medical care. Enlightenment thinkers knew better. Our own Declaration of Independence is quite clear on the matter: all men “are

endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights.”

In other words, rights are built into human nature. And “Whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it ...”

If rights are solely the gift of government, then government at whim can obliterate them. I wouldn’t care to live under such tyranny! And I don’t. No matter how bad government gets, every individual in the world has an inborn, inalienable right not to put up with it.

I thank Mr. Johnson for taking the time to bestow his “factual correction” on

my misconstructions and to cure my woe-ful illogic. However, I believe he needs to remove the beam from his own eye before getting upset over the mote in mine.

Claire Wolfe

ABOVE THE LAW?

I am concerned that the cover and article on the Lone Wolf Pistol (*CALL OF THE WILD: Lone Wolf G9 Pistol*, June 2015 S.W.A.T.) might cause someone to inadvertently break the law. The photos show the pistol being used with the SIG SB15 Stabilizing Brace and fired from the shoulder. BATFE has ruled that using the brace on a pistol and firing from the shoulder turns the pistol into a Short Barreled Rifle (SBR) and requires the proper federal paperwork.

The only way to legally use the brace is if it is attached to the forearm as shown on page 43. This prevents it from being shouldered.

This was such a blatant error that I didn’t even bother reading the article. Are the author and S.W.A.T. poorly informed about the regulations or do you think you’re above the law?

R. Mickelson, Illinois

We received numerous phone calls, emails and Facebook comments about these photos. The truth of the matter is that the author wrote the article before BATFE reversed its ruling about the SIG SB15 Stabilizing Brace. The ruling originally said that using the brace on the pistol and firing it from the shoulder did not constitute the pistol magically transforming itself into an SBR. The author had already returned the pistol to Lone Wolf, so there was no opportunity to reshoot the photos.

If you (all of you who took us to task on this) had taken the time to actually read the article—as opposed to just looking at the photos—you would have noticed I inserted an Editor’s Note in bold print to apprise readers regarding the current regulations on the SB15. So no, we’re neither poorly informed nor do we think we’re above the law.

Do we need to change our tagline to S.W.A.T.: More Than Just Pretty Pictures?

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Fobus IWB Holsters

I have been writing for *S.W.A.T. Magazine* for over 14 years. In that time, I've seen some really cool gear. I've also seen some gear so bad I wouldn't wish it even on the weekend warrior who plays paintball and video games.

Because *S.W.A.T.* always has new readers, and a long-time reader might happen to miss something, I like to go back and re-examine products from time to time.

Years ago I did an article on Fobus Holsters. I wasn't overly impressed with their holsters, but Fobus had just come out with their Roto Holster Universal Home/Auto Mount. I showed it to a friend who was a retired deputy sheriff and currently a magistrate. He ordered two—one for his desk at home and one to keep behind the bench in the courtroom. My Dad has had a Roto Holster Universal Home/Auto Mount in his

truck for many years as well.

I recently decided to revisit the Fobus line and see what improvements they've made to their holsters.

Regular readers know I really like inside-the-waistband (IWB) holsters. I personally feel that IWB is the best option for most people's everyday concealed carry.

Fobus sent me two holsters, the IWBL and the IWBS. They are basically the same, except that the IWBL is for large-framed autos such as Glocks and S&W M&Ps, and the IWBS is for small-framed autos like the Ruger LCP or Colt Mustang.

When I picked up the box, I immediately noticed how light it was. I was even more surprised when I opened it to find not one but two holsters and the Fobus 2015 catalog. Both holsters weigh approximately two ounces.

There are no specific models, as these holsters are one size fits all. Unlike many holsters, whose ability to retain a handgun relies on the holster being made to fit a certain model, the



Fobus IWBL with Smith & Wesson M&P9 (top) and IWBS with Ruger LCP.

Left: Rear backing of holster reveals numerous holes for ventilation.



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new Fobus IWBS and IWBL rely on the tension between the holster and the wearer's body to retain the handgun.

The holster shells are made from high-density injection-molded polymers. The backing of the holster is flexible, with numerous holes to allow maximum ventilation while also increasing retention against the user's body. The flexible backing allows different pistols to be carried in the same holster.

The shell is riveted to the body of the backing in two places on either side of the shell. Both holsters use the same clip, which completely encircles the belt, holding the handgun at waistband height.



New IWB holsters from Fobus are one size fits all. Belt clips hold handgun at waistband height.

Interestingly, I found that due to its being so flat, my 1911 was far too loose in the IWBL but was almost a perfect fit in the IWBS.

Going through the Fobus 2015 catalog, I realized I have been missing out on a lot of items. Fobus offers a wide variety of accessories, including light/magazine combos, handcuffs/cuff case combos, and many different styles of holsters for law enforcement, citizens who carry concealed, and shooters just kicking around the range.

In summary, these IWB holsters from Fobus are very simple, straightforward designs. The IWBL and IWBS universal-fit holsters are lightweight, completely washable, ventilated, durable and comfortable.

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Surviving the Survival Craze

CAN we just stop all this surviving for a minute or two? I've decided that the most overused word in the English language has changed from "tactical" then to "extreme" and now finally to "survival."

As Exhibit A, take a look at the cable television schedule. Every program that isn't about talentless wealthy people having lunch (see *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*) or inbred hillbillies doing wacky hillbilly things seems to be about outdoor survival. I've been in the woods quite a bit lately and you can't swing a dead cat without hitting a survival expert and his film crew.

Out of curiosity and at the urging of several friends, I finally watched one of these programs. What I saw alternately depressed me and made me so angry that I was shouting at the TV screen like a crazed televangelist.

Being intentionally vague to avoid



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one of those unpleasant libel lawsuits, the program I saw focused on an extremely earnest, quasi-mystical host who led unprepared people into the outdoors to learn survival-type skills such as building a fire. Using ominous

music and well-timed video cuts, the show made their initial failure to start a fire seem like an imminent death sentence despite the obviously pleasant weather and the likelihood that everyone was 20 feet from a production trailer.

Speaking as someone who has done a bit of television, the actual greatest concern for the cast and crew was probably that the production caterers might run out of prime rib.

In that regard, I became enraged to the point of spittle flying when the host first pointed out that gathering food typically isn't an important survival activity, then proceeded to lead the group into various hunting and gathering activities that burned far more calories than they provided. In other words, such actions would prove counterproductive in a real-world crisis, but they did make for lively television.

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I understand that the unwashed masses generally won't watch a straight documentary on things like fire-building and lizard-skinning. But conversations with the everyday folks I encounter indicate that too many are taking these shows far too literally, like the people who learned their firearms handling skills at the movie theater from Mel Gibson and Bruce Willis.

I'm not saying the hosts are imposters. Most of those guys have done and lived things that I won't even dream about. But I am certain that due to the vagaries of television, they are presenting a distorted picture of what it takes

to survive outdoor emergencies with minimal resources.

For example, I had a conversation with a friend who is a big fan of a certain survival personality. My buddy is confident that during either a major societal crisis or lost-in-the-wilderness scenario, he will be able to "live off the land" reasonably well after watching all the exploits of his hero.

When I reminded him that the land isn't particularly edible, he confidently rattled off several different plant species the host had eaten. Never mind that my friend had never actually tried to identify, gather, prepare and eat the

mentioned foods himself.

I suppose, using this logic, that I could land a commercial passenger jet safely because I've read two books about it and spent a few hours on the home PC flight simulator.

Then there was the bigger issue that I couldn't envision a realistic set of circumstances in which my friend would find himself adrift in the wilderness. We won't even address his Mad Max, eat-your-shrubbery societal breakdown scenario that I always find ludicrous.

Here's the sharpened point of this rant: television, especially the "reality" version, is entertainment. If you really plan on surviving that "lost in the woods/desert/arctic" situation, shut off the boob tube, do some factual research and, above all, get out there and practice!

While getting dirt under your fingernails, you need to learn from failure when the stakes aren't quite so high. Furthermore, you must quit focusing on ancillary made-for-TV skills like eating live earthworms and concentrate on the truly important matters: shelter, fire, water, and signaling for help.

Wilderness backpacking is a great way to build survival skills. Your first excursion might be plagued with blue skies and mild temperatures, but if you stay with it long enough, there will be days when having the skills to stay warm, dry, hydrated, and located are more than niceties—they are literally life-saving.

In the end, regardless of what you think you might have learned via osmosis from TV, if you haven't actually built a shelter from scratch, gathered wild food, butchered a critter, and drunk water you sanitized yourself, you haven't yet graduated survival kindergarten.

It doesn't matter that you already own the TV host's officially endorsed Huge Macho Knife, Survival Back Pack, Tactical Fire Starter, Milspec Toilet Paper Dispenser, and Multipurpose Survival Underwear ("Now with sequins for ground-to-air signaling!").

In the end, forget all the electronic "infotainment" and remember the critical Rule of Three: You will live three minutes without air, three hours without shelter, three days without water, but at least three weeks without food. If you possess enough well-honed skills to solve the first three problems without much ado, the rest is gravy—even if the catering truck is running late. ☉

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Streamline Your Survival Kit

Writing for *S.W.A.T. Magazine*, I've had the opportunity to try out many pre-packaged survival kits. Most of them feature items that won't help you survive, but rather add bulk and waste valuable space. This does make the end user feel he is getting more for his money, but in reality more unnecessary gear is less.

For camping, backpacking or a long-term outdoor excursion, more gear is needed to meet the demands of day-to-day bush living. But an emergency situation is rarely the long-term affair depicted in movies and TV shows, where the character grows a beard and makes himself one with nature. Survival—real survival—is usually short term.

Kit priorities for a survival situation should be simple and included for

a reason, not because they were free or cheap. The items I believe will aid in immediate survival situations are: compass (general direction), signaling mirror and whistle, fire starters (ferrocerium rod, lighter, matches), water procurement (purifying tablets, water container), and space blanket (shelter and signaling).

Here are some items I feel are *not* crucial in a life-and-death survival situation.

FLASHLIGHT

In an industry as vast as the knife and gun communities, flashlights are highly advertised and sought-after tools. A friend says he prefers collecting flashlights over knives. For years I didn't carry a flashlight in the woods. I would

hike during the day and make camp before it got dark. I wasn't night hiking and I'm not afraid of the boogeyman.

When I did use a light, it was a small, inexpensive click light that I used to light a path about 20 to 30 meters away from my camp when nature called. The amount of light put out by a campfire is more than sufficient for camp tasks as well as providing all the warmth and good will one can only feel in the outdoors by having a campfire. A flashlight may be good for morale, but no more than a campfire. About 99% of the woodsmen I know believe there is no better morale builder than a campfire.

CANDY

I have seen this—usually hard candy—in kits of the sardine-can variety with a



Author uses Mylar space blanket as his shelter during overnight stay in the woods. Mylar's reflectiveness lends itself to emergency signaling as well as shelter.

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Three ways of making a fire: ferrocerium rod, lighter, and matches. All are compact enough for a small, simple survival kit.



Author uses a carabiner-type kit where all items are easily located. This type of kit includes items that address the four most important issues: fire, water purification, navigation, and signaling, plus cutting tools and a sharpener.

seal that must be broken to access the contents. Often just one piece is provided. This is hardly a survival item, but more of a booster. Gum, tea packs, and flavored bouillon cubes are other examples of space wasters. They will do almost nothing for a person in a survival situation.

BAND-AIDS

Band-Aids have their place in a home, office or car first-aid kit. But once sweat, dirt and moisture are imminent, no Band-Aid will stay on in the outdoors. The small size of a Band-Aid is an indication of how small the injury is in the first place, and the cut is most

likely not life threatening.

Short of an arterial bleed, there aren't too many cuts that can't be dealt with by applying firm, direct pressure. A bandana or any clothing can be used to apply direct pressure, which is more than a Band-Aid can do. Duct tape also works better than a Band-Aid any day.

FISHING KIT

Worry, fear, anxiety, and sleep deprivation often replace hunger. Fishing may be a good activity to keep someone



More compact carabiner survival kit covers basics and employs a Ranger Band to keep everything contained and noise free. These kits are easy to make and can hold tools as well as survival items.



Variety of small whistles are available for adding to an existing kit or making a personalized one. Styles range from durable metal to brightly colored, glow in the dark, and flat.

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busy and help clear his mind a little. But I grew up in the Southwest and rarely found water sources more than a mud puddle or trickle. If you frequent desert country, a fishing kit is pretty worthless.

If I did add something for food procurement, it would most likely be wire for snaring animals. Even so, food is the last of the survival priorities.

PAPER AND PENCIL

Both are combustible items but a far cry from being survival necessities. If making a fire is possible, then charcoal can be used to write on rocks and trees. Sharpened sticks are excellent for writing in mud and wet earth near a water source. With a little creativity, branches, rocks, sticks, pinecones, and garbage can all be used to make signals and messages for possible rescuers and hikers.

CANDLE

A popular item in a survival kit is a candle. Candle wax has many uses, including waterproofing matches and as a lubricant in bow and drill friction fire making.

But a candle requires a flame in order to be lit in the first place, so if a fire source already exists (say from a campfire), a candle is redundant. Even a small campfire will offer more light than a small candle, plus it does many more things than a candle.



Signaling mirror is a must in a survival kit not only for signaling but also because it gives user the ability to check for abrasions in hard-to-see places on the body.

THERMOMETER

Even the smallest keychain or button-style thermometers take up too much room in a survival kit. I like to know the temperature when I'm outdoors in extreme heat or cold, but that knowledge isn't going to keep me alive. I have a thermometer attached to my whistle already and use it purely out of curiosity, but it is *not* a survival kit priority.

MISCELLANEOUS

Never in my life have I stumbled upon a can of food in the desert, jungle, mountains, or at sea. Survival kits sometimes come with a P-38 military-style can opener. This is more of a camping implement than a survival item.

Sewing kits have been a constant in most survival kits and recommended for making your own survival kit. Sewing up a tear in clothing won't save your life, yet a sewing kit can take up a lot of room. A sewing kit may be good to have for a long-term stay in the wilderness, but as far as bare-bones survival goes, I'll deal with a torn shirt.

SUMMARY

If you want something in your kit, put it in. There are no rules in that regard. But consider each item's real usefulness for both long- and short-term use in a survival situation. It is better to have fewer big items that work than to have 50 small items that add clutter and are hard to retrieve without snagging and losing them. Consider multi-use items as much as possible.

If it doesn't keep you hydrated, warm or dry, and doesn't signal for help, it isn't necessary for survival! ☺



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TAVOR



Putting It All Together

BY BOB PILGRIM

ARMORER'S TRAINING



Above: Artist's rendition of American Law Enforcement tactical team affecting forced entry with Tavor bullpup rifles, demonstrating overall compactness of rifle. Rifle-length barrel is contained in SMG-sized package.

THE reintroduction of the Israeli Tavor bullpup rifle to America by the civilian-owned Israeli Weapons Industry (IWI) has created quite a stir in the gun community. New marketing techniques have captured the imagination of many shooters, and the rifle's uniqueness, quality and obvious tactical advantages resulted in the Tavor being named the 2014 NRA Rifle of the Year.

Although 20 countries (including three adversaries) have either adopted or produced bullpup-configured military rifles, carbines, or submachine guns, the back loaders have not caught on with our police or military, which continue to embrace conventional designs in spite of the bullpup's superior long- and short-range capabilities in a more compact package.

This configuration readily lends itself to room combat and fighting from vehicles without sacrificing muzzle velocity, which occurs when the barrels of conventional shoulder weapons are shortened to reduce overall size for increased maneuverability in close quarters battle actions.

FACTORY ARMORER'S COURSE

I recently attended IWI's Level One Armorer's training course held at the Harrisburg Area Community College/Piccola Law Enforcement Complex in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. IWI's American headquarters is located in that city in a large low-profile brick and mortar industrial building.

The mix of law enforcement, military, security contractors, and civilian attendees shared my opinion that bullpup-style individual weapons are the wave of the future for projectile-firing, kinetic-energy firearms.

Also in the eclectic group were representatives from Geissele Automatics triggers, who advised that they have developed a drop-in trigger pack

Instructor Casey Flack points out firing group component to student.



that reduces the Tavor's heavy trigger to approximately four pounds. Academi (formerly Blackwater) trainers were present as well.

IWI is looking for a world-class training organization to contract with to teach the armorer's, carbine, and operator's courses that exploit the fighting capabilities of the Tavor, Uzi, Galil ACE, Jericho pistol, X95, CTAR, and Negev light machine gun.

Israeli commandos periodically provide IDF (Israel Defense Forces) CQB classes and impart battlefield experiences with the Tavor. The Galil ACE will debut in 7.62x39mm but be available in other calibers in the future. The X95 is a more compact select-fire version of the Tavor and available only to law enforcement and the military. Barrel length is 13 inches in a 22.5-inch overall length package. The CTAR is also a select-fire version of the Tavor. The Negev is gas regulated and belt or NATO magazine fed.



Former police officer and IWI USA National Law Enforcement Sales Manager Casey Flack discusses Tavor attributes.

LATEST IMPROVEMENTS

Since the Tavor's March 2014 American debut, engineers in Tel Aviv have paid attention to field reports from end users and made several changes to the rifle. These include the following:

- The 5.45x39mm version has been dropped for the United States.
- A .300 AAC Blackout model is being developed.
- Eliminated firing pin primer dings when round is chambered with multi-directional firing pin.
- Either end of the firing pin spring can be installed. Spring retention is improved.
- Bolt disassembly has been simplified.

ACCOMPLISHED IN ONE DAY

- Safety briefing.
- Familiarization with various models. (Restricted states models exist for California, Maryland, Massachusetts, and New Jersey.)
- Technical specifications reviewed.
- Bullpup advantages (nine attributes).
- Ergonomics.
- Nomenclature.
- Principle of operation.
- Safety check.
- Disassembly/assembly (without tools).
- Field stripping (without tools).
- Bolt carrier stop lever (requires tools).
- Left-hand conversion (requires tools).
- 9x19mm conversion (requires tools).
- Maintenance and lubrication. Tavors require minimal lubrication and are designed to run dry.



Author's bench, tools, and 16.5-inch barreled Tavor he worked on during IWI Armorer's school.



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DURABLE SYSTEM

Parts have a replacement life of 10,000 to 30,000 rounds. The receiver assembly has a service life of 50,000 rounds. The armorer's recommended tool kit contains ten different tools, including Loctite 242. Spare parts can be purchased separately from IWI or in the form of a "survival kit," along with a maintenance kit that includes a sight adjustment tool.

Other available ancillary pieces of equipment include an articulating flashlight mount, flashlight grip adapter, two styles of vertical foregrip, bipod, sling swivels, and Picatinny rail. As an aside, two handsome low-profile gun luggage cases designed to hold weapons, magazines, ammunition, 9mm conversion kit, and tools are also featured products from the IWI store.

While the Tavor will function with most AR magazines and ammunition, a steady diet of lacquered steel-cased ammunition without routine cleaning will result in chamber buildup of the coating and cause stoppages.

CONCLUSIONS

The course is intense but well organized and presented with much one-on-one attention. Instruction is very professional, and many of the instructors have "been there, done that." For example, one young gent barely survived an RPG attack that collapsed the building he and several others were fighting from during a pitched battle in Somalia. An impressive warrior, to say the least.

The Tavor is a cinch to field strip and clean. Because it can be altered to accommodate all shooters and converted to a pistol-caliber submachine gun, it is more complicated than the AR platform and requires competent instruction. Like anything new and innovative, once experienced a few



Student reinstalls cocking handle guide and Picatinny rail.

times, the procedures become second nature.

As the practical realities and advantages of bullpups become known and appreciated, they will win an increasing share of the civilian market. Authorities will hopefully come to share the same enthusiasm that Joe the Shooter has demonstrated and will also acquire the Tavor and enjoy the distinct tactical advantages it offers. ☺



Converting 5.56mm to 9x19mm SMG with bolt carrier and firing group.

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Anti-gunners' Endgame

"WE don't have to vaporize all the guns," writes Andrea Grimes, senior editor for *RH Reality Check*, a lefty journal dedicated to "Reproductive & Sexual Health and Justice." "Let's just vaporize white men's guns." Although she adds that eventually firearms should be taken away from everybody, white men are a good start. "As a bonus," she notes, "we can collect their tears for research and resource purposes while they line up to surrender their weapons."

Within days of Ms. Grimes' pronouncement, one Jamal Thrasher, a columnist at the (central Pennsylvania) *Patriot News* and PennLive.com, stated, "I realize now that guns are selfish and bring nothing productive to the conversation. Therefore, civilian gun ownership should be banned." He goes on, "I guarantee, that if guns are outlawed, murders would decrease." He confidently makes this claim even as he cites a study to the contrary.

More and more anti-gunners are now admitting their endgame. Although the "official" anti-gun line still touts things like "gun safety" or "universal background checks" or "getting guns out of the hands of the mentally ill," street-level hoplophobes are increasingly admitting what they really want. They want all guns gone. Except of course guns in the hands of government agents.

What's most remarkable about these strident, arrogant proclamations against guns and gun owners is their sheer, bloody—and I do mean bloody—cluelessness.

Take Ms. Grimes (please). She apparently believes that white men are so attached to their firearms that they'll weep to lose them. Yet at the same time, she pictures guys quietly lining up to surrender every last AR, AK, and .22—just because somebody passes a law.

For the moment, we'll disregard her racism. According to people on her point of the political fringe, women and minorities can't actually be racist, anyhow, because whatever they do, they're merely victims responding to white racist oppression. And her racism, egregious

though it is, is less stupid than her contradictory belief that a) white men are violent crazies who love their guns more than their children or their body parts and b) that they'll meekly give up those very same guns.

Then there's Mr. Thrasher. Who can barely write a grammatical sentence. Who makes assertions that he doesn't even attempt to support. But who is glowingly confident that if the Constitution were amended to reword the Second Amendment, all guns would just ... go away. Like magic. No black markets. No illegal imports. No homemade firearms. No guns stashed in attics or hidden in PVC pipes in the woods. No angry gun owners saying, "Hell no!" No armed defense of rights. No violent enforcement and no dead enforcers, dead gun owners, or dead bystanders. Just poof! Bye-bye to all guns!

Because, you know, the law would make it so.

I refer Ms. Grimes and Mr. Thrasher to Kit Lange. Not that they would listen to her. But they should. Kit Lange is a rising star and spokesperson for the Washington state "I will not comply" movement. This movement arose—along with similar ones in other blue states—after new restrictions were imposed on gun ownership in the last couple of years.

Now, as various groups battle in the courts over whether Washington's Bloombergian I-594 is a "valid" law or not, Ms. Lange says, in essence, *who gives a damn?* She writes: "They seem to think that if ... I-594 stands, that those affected by it will simply sigh and start complying. Surely, they think, these 'gun nuts and ammosexuals' will start doing as they're told ... and if they don't, we'll just arrest them and imprison them."

"They are wrong.

"The sentence 'we will not comply' is not temporary. It does not have an 'if, then' clause. It does not mean 'We will not comply until you make us understand that it's The Law.'"

She continues: "The real question is not 'will we comply eventually?' It is not even 'How far are patriots willing to go to defend their right to refuse slavery and tyr-



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In real life, every attempt at imposing paradise on earth (see Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, and the Rev. Jim Jones) has ended up a blood-drenched disaster.



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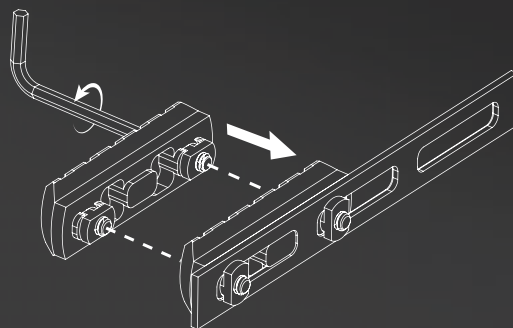


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anny?' The answers to those questions have been answered many times over, both on this blog and in the hearts and minds of those patriots who are standing on the line. The real question, as Mike Vanderboegh has asked, is 'What are your appetites for our liberties?' In essence, what is the government prepared to do? What are the lackeys of tyranny and the enemies of liberty prepared to give up in order to take our unalienable rights from us?"

Amen, Sister Lange!

Kit Lange and Mike Vanderboegh both may speak for only a minority of gun owners. That's a difficult thing to know, though in some blue states passive resistance to new anti-gun laws may be as much as 85 or 90%. But as Mike has repeatedly pointed out, all it takes is 3% willing to resist with arms and you have a revolution on your hands. Just 3% of the gun-owning population. That's still millions of men and women ready to say no and hell no even at the cost of their own lives, and the lives of those who try to take even one more iota of our freedoms.

Ms. Grimes and Mr. Thrasher see none of this. They don't want to see any of it because it's not pretty. Like children, they envision giving up nothing while getting everything. They expect us to surrender silently so they can have their fantasy of peace (and presumably have purple unicorns and free government-supplied lollipops as well). If we surprise them by failing to weep and comply, well then, only cops and soldiers will have to deal with the fallout.

And that's another aspect of homophobic double vision. In the eyes of people like Grimes and Thrasher, cops and soldiers are a) noble, judicious, spectacularly well-trained defenders of law (the only ones fit to be armed) and b) completely disposable human beings whose lives can be sacrificed for someone else's idea of the greater good.

And the "greater good" is defined as whatever fantasy makes the Grimes-Thrashers of the world feel good as they sit down at their keyboards and conjure up Utopia.

Utopias are dandy in theory. In real life, every attempt at imposing paradise on earth (see Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, and the Rev. Jim Jones) has ended up a blood-drenched disaster.

Ms. Grimes and Mr. Thrasher, be careful what you wish for. ☹

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Common Sense Policing

Something has gone out of vogue in recent years, and this is the application of common sense. This can be applied to techniques, patrol procedures, outrageous statements issued by individuals of dubious character, and pretty much life in general.

Everyone seems to have an opinion on everything these days and while some might possess a degree of merit, others patently do not. I grew up in an era of common sense. The 1950s, 60s and yes, even the 70s required that common sense be applied to everyday life.

If you stopped on the tracks of an oncoming train, you knew bad things would happen. If you walked on semi-frozen lake ice, you'd probably go in at one point or another—common sense led one to such a conclusion.



It would be nice to put common sense back into the equation as it regards police work, tactics, and overall patrol procedures.

If you unjustifiably beat a suspect when an air unit is directly overhead, you're probably in deep trouble. Pull off an unjustifiable use of force with a crowd looking on, and common sense dictates you're probably being filmed. Drop evidence where it shouldn't be, then you're deep into it. Lie about your involvement in an incident and I can guarantee you it will be uncovered. Try to cover up mistakes with dishonesty, then no one possessing any degree of credibility can possibly defend you. Common sense is applicable in all such situations.

Dancing around in circles with a firearm pointing in all directions like a frog on a hot plate after each and every shot is fired doesn't make much sense—especially when there is only one suspect. Unless ISIS members are pouring over the walls in great numbers, a single suspect is simply one person. Common sense is one thing—marketing spin is another.

Vociferously stating one's misguided opinions on all things tactical defies common sense when you've only taken two classes. (A little bit of knowledge is indeed dangerous.) Stating that the firearms safety rules don't apply to you after you've improperly violated those very safety protocols and shot someone unjustifiably doesn't make much sense either.

When someone relates that they've performed enough tactical operations in "Black Ops" to fill an encyclopedia, but can't tell you whom they were with or when such fantastical operations occurred, this doesn't pass the common sense test. They're liars. The real ones won't even talk about it.

Common sense application means one realizes that no amount of fancy gadgets (mud flaps and whip antennas) on your weapon can replace solid and practiced fundamentals.

Common sense dictates that if your Facebook page denotes you are the minister of death and destruction, you will most certainly have insurmountable obstacles in the discovery phase of your trial. Website pages replete with skulls and winged merchants of death will not serve you well either. Juries don't look favorably upon such images. Common sense requires that professionalism and not braggadocio should be the rule of thumb.

Common sense means that not every little detail of your life should be filmed, recorded or posted. Humans make mistakes, and innocuous foibles can come back to haunt you. Besides, not everyone cares about every detail of your day.

Common sense dictates that if a member of the opposite sex tells you they're nothing but trouble, they probably are.

Many police officers will completely disregard this rather salient point and plunge headlong into a fiery Kamikaze death spiral of a relationship anyway—although these situations do make for great stories.

Common sense means that if you sense something's wrong, it probably is. Overriding such an instinct will most probably not work out in your favor. An individual with two years' experience does not have the same amount of insight as one with 40 years' experience (all things being equal), so once again, common sense.

If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is, although many will continue to counter this philosophy, which is why scammers, charlatans, and confidence men are so successful at their games.

It would be nice to put common sense back into the equation as it regards police work, tactics, and overall patrol procedures. Ask for the rationale behind certain techniques. Query when and where such a technique or particular item has been employed in the field. It has to have been utilized a number of times in a documented format to bear any sense of validity.

Perhaps if we put common sense back into the equation, many of the recent well-publicized incidents will cease to occur. ☺

Scott Reitz is a 30-year veteran of the Los Angeles Police Department and director of the highly acclaimed International Tactical Training Seminars. Course information and schedules are available at their website at www.internationaltactical.com. Looking Back, a free monthly newsletter, is available by email at itts@gte.net.



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Beretta 1301 Tactical Shotgun

Beretta has a long history of gun production, including fine shotguns. However, when people think of Italian combat shotguns, the first name that comes to mind is likely Benelli rather than Beretta.

Beretta did produce the Model 1200/1201, which saw use with a few law enforcement agencies but never achieved wide usage.

Beretta has recently introduced an updated tactical shotgun that I think will be more successful. Designated the 1301 Tactical, it is designed for reliability, ergonomics, ease of operation, and rapid engagement.

Out of the box, it incorporates features that I (and many others) find desirable on a combat shotgun. For example, it has a large ribbed cocking handle that is no-slip and can be kicked or banged against a tree or post if necessary to remove a stuck shell. Also oversized is the thumb safety located on the receiver toward the front of the trigger guard. It can be reversed for left-handed shooters. The trigger finger easily hits it as it moves toward the trigger.

Applying the safety takes a bit of time, as a finger on the support-side hand has to be used or the shooting hand must reach around under the trigger guard. Since speed is only necessary when releasing the safety, this is not a major issue.

A bolt release is located on the receiver just behind the forearm. It is long enough to be easily reached, but I did not find the positioning optimal. I am used to hitting bolt releases with the palm of my support (left) hand, which I cannot do with this system. That doesn't make it bad, just inconvenient for me. I can release it by running my trigger finger forward, but it takes a fairly heavy push to release.

This bolt release does offer a useful feature in that rounds can be unloaded without having to chamber them by pushing the shell carrier up while pressing on the rear of the bolt carrier release lever.

I find the 1301 Tactical's sights very usable. The front is a post with white dot insert protected by ears. The rear is an adjustable ghost ring protected by ears. White dots on either side of the ghost ring allow alignment with the white dot in the front post in low light. This is a good sighting system for either buckshot or slugs. A short Picatinny rail atop the receiver allows use of a red dot sight.

The 1301 Tactical cycles very quickly, so the deeply checkered forearm and pistol grip aid in controlling the shotgun when firing. Fast engagement with the 1301 Tactical is attributable to the BLINK operating system, which incorporates a cross-tube gas piston.



Briley two-shot extension tube.

Right side of Beretta 1301 Tactical shows good-sized cocking handle, trigger guard that is large enough to allow wearing gloves, and safety's large head.



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Above: Left side of 1301 shows Mesa Tactical SureShell shotshell carrier and rail. Inset: Ghost ring sight with white dots is very useful for low-light aiming.

Beretta claims the 1301 Tactical cycles 36% faster than any other shotgun on the market. I will say that based on my shooting tests, it is very fast, and I'm used to shooting Benellis, which are known for their cycling speed.

For comfortable shooting, length of pull and drop are adjustable via spacers. The recoil pad is very thin and, while recoil is cushioned to some extent by the semi-auto action, I did find recoil very noticeable with three-inch shells. A thicker recoil pad would be appreciated.

To test the 1301 Tactical, I fired 100 rounds through it using different types of buckshot as well as slugs. The 1301 Tactical does not have interchangeable chokes and is cylinder bore. My best pattern at 15 yards was with Olin 2¾-inch GI 00 buckshot, which gave a seven-inch pattern. For comparison, at 25 yards, Federal three-inch Magnum, #4 Buckshot put its 41 pellets into 19 inches. Using Federal Tactical 2¾-inch slugs, I shot a three-shot, 50-yard group of 2.5 inches.

Firing on plates at varying distances between 15 and 35 yards, handling was fast as advertised, and I found the ghost ring sights let me move among targets quickly. Accuracy was aided by a good trigger pull for a shotgun—four pounds, according to factory literature.

Overall, I like the 1301 Tactical, though I recommend two enhancements.

ACCESSORIES FOR THE 1301

The two upgrades I feel are necessary to maximize the 1301 Tactical's ability to shoot fast are both related to cartridge capacity. Due to import restrictions, the 1301 Tactical comes with a tubular magazine with four-round capacity. Actually, when the buyer receives the shotgun, the magazine is blocked to a two-round magazine capacity to meet hunting regulations.

Removing the limiter is not as easy as on some shotguns but is relatively straightforward. Still, for a self-loading combat shotgun, I prefer a larger magazine capacity. Various aftermarket manufacturers make extension tubes. I've always liked Briley's products, so I installed their two-shot extension tube to gain a 6+1 capacity.

I have mixed feelings about receiver-mounted shell carriers, as they sometimes get in the way when exiting vehicles or moving in confined spaces. I have also banged my hand on them when shooting off of my left shoulder.

But overall, I like the ready availability of extra shells, especially for a self-loader such as the 1301 Tactical that gobbles ammo. I installed the six-round Mesa Tactical SureShell® shotshell carrier, which also has a Picatinny rail that replaces the one standard on the 1301 Tactical.

It is easily installed and fits solidly. By the way, I have found that inserting the shells brass down lets me feed into the tube faster. If I have two types of ammo, I position one type brass up and one type brass down.

The Beretta 1301 Tactical is fast handling, as a self-loading combat shotgun should be. And it is reliable, as *all* combat shotguns should be.

Suggested retail price is \$1,075. ©

SOURCES

BERETTA U.S.A. CORP.

(800) 237-3882
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Homebrewed Loads For The .38 Special



Custom Tailor Your Ammo

BY KEVIN MCPHERSON
PHOTOS BY MARK MITCHELL

.38 Special has always been a good candidate for ballistic improvement via homebrewing. Even with today's advanced ammunition, the cartridge can still be upgraded with careful handloading.



Wadcutters are a solid choice for non-expanding defensive ammunition, especially from the short barrel of a J-frame. Using Alliant Unique, wadcutters can reach 900 fps from the little guns and still maintain standard pressures.

THE .38 Special enjoys a well-deserved reputation as an accurate and pleasant-shooting cartridge. It's just about perfect for building and maintaining skill without punishing your extremities or your guns.

Reloading .38s is an economically sound endeavor—it has permitted me to keep shooting steadily upon retirement even after my stash of issued ammo dried up. It also opened my eyes to the efficiency and usefulness of this old round.

Shooting PPC gave me access to piles of once-fired brass, thanks mostly to some generous *federales*. Using once-fired stuff cuts down on trimming brass, especially when the original load was a target wadcutter. I trim brass when necessary, but avoid it whenever possible because it's a tedious chore with my basic equipment.

MY RELOADING PROCEDURES

My Hornady tumbler can handle 100 to 150 .38 cases at a time. Four to six hours

usually polishes them sufficiently; the tumbler media tapped from cases one at a time as they're removed. Some folks de-prime cases prior to tumbling, but this adds a step, as you have to poke media out of flashholes on most cases tumbled this way.

Once clean, cases are full-length resized and de-primed. I use an RCBS single-stage Rock Chucker for all my reloading. My dies are an old set of Lee Carbide inherited from my dad. They aren't fancy, but they work like a charm.

Primer pockets are inspected and cleaned as needed. Again, scraping with a tool can usually be avoided on once-fired brass. Cases are then belled just enough to reluctantly accept the bullet being used. I use an RCBS hand-priming tool to seat new primers. Hand-priming tools allow you to feel the primer seating, and you can seat them just below flush without crushing them. Running a fingertip over the head of each primed case will insure proper primer height.

I put powder in cases at my kitchen

table with an inexpensive Hornady electronic scale. I own scales that cost more, but the little Hornady is easy to work with and has proven trustworthy. I've found that minimizing all possible scale interference is worth the trouble. Turn off nearby fluorescent lights and the heater/cooler. The dishwasher and clothes washer and dryer should also be left dormant. If it's noticeably windy outside, wait for better conditions. The Hornady scale holds zero and fluctuates very little when these steps are taken. If it varies more than a tenth of a grain, turning it off and back on until it recalibrates usually settles it down.

Bring only one can of powder to the table to avoid confusion. Set the scale on a newspaper with the intended powder charge written on the newspaper with a Sharpie. This gives instant reference in the event of daydreaming or leaving the table to check a kid's homework.

I weigh every powder charge—the consistency of performance provided is worth it. This practice virtually guarantees the proper amount of powder going into each case and eliminates squib loads. I've seen some good powder measures vary the charge thrown more than I'm comfortable with.

The only exception to this rule is when IMR's Trail Boss is the propellant selected. A pre-measured homemade scoop can be used to greatly speed up filling cases. Trail Boss is the go-to powder when I'm building large quantities of practice ammo with cast bullets.

When all cases are full, shining a flashlight on the loading tray confirms they all have powder in quantities that

look equal. On my pilgrimage back to the garage, the loading tray is the only thing I'm carrying. Dropping a whole tray of laboriously loaded cases on the kitchen floor guarantees spousal irritation and generally fouls your good humor.

Once the tray is safely benched, the bullet seating/crimping die goes in the press. It takes more time, but I have much better results when bullets are seated and crimped in two separate steps.

Secure the die a few full turns from where the crimping shoulder will contact the case with the seater plug backed all the way out. Insert a bullet into a charged case and run the ram up all the way. Screw the seater plug down until it contacts the top of the bullet.

Lower the ram and screw the seater plug in a few turns. Repeat until the top of the bullet's crimping groove is barely visible. If you're seating a jacketed bullet, the bullet's cannelure should end up about 2/3 covered by the case mouth. Lock the seater plug down and fill loaded cases with projectiles.

This is the point where it pays to use once-fired brass of the same headstamp and origin. If you're using mixed brass, trimming will help achieve a proper crimp by starting with brass of equal length. Regardless of your methodology, crimping will be more uniform and velocities more consistent (at least in theory) if your cases are the same length.

Back the seater plug all the way out again and raise the ram to bring the cartridge fully into the die. Loosen the die and screw it down until the crimping shoulder contacts the rim of the

case. Pull the ram to remove the case from the die and screw the die in about a quarter turn. Raise the case into the die and check crimp. Repeat this process until the desired crimp is achieved. Seat the crimped case back in the die fully, tighten the locking ring, and crimp the rest of your loaded cases.

After crimping, wipe the loaded rounds off with a clean rag to remove brass, bullet shavings, and excess bullet lube. Clean ammunition is easier to final inspect.

Load the rounds into the cylinder of the revolver you're using to insure proper chambering. Close the loaded cylinder, *carefully* ease the hammer back partway and manually rotate the cylinder 360 degrees to make sure primers are flush with no drag. Loaded rounds should literally fall out of the charge holes when inverted if the revolver is clean.

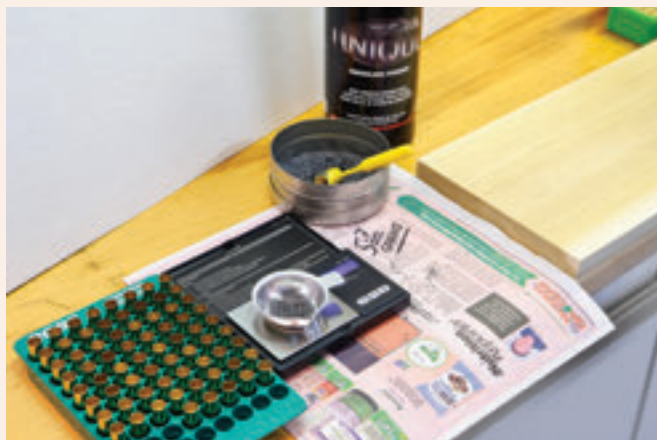
OPTIONS WITH .38 SPECIAL

The .38 Special thrives on lead bullets; I use them for almost everything I do with the cartridge. For practice ammunition, Cowboy action bullets can be had in weights from 90 to 160 grains. Trail Boss powder in appropriate charges with these bullets makes great practice ammunition.

I use Missouri Bullet's 140-grain TCFP on a max charge of Trail Boss. This yields 800-ish fps in most of my guns. The load is accurate and mild mannered with no barrel leading issues. These rounds are built for quantity—mixed brass and cases that have been loaded several times deliver acceptable results.



Expensive high-tech tooling is not required to build quality ammunition. Proven old tools like the RCBS Rock Chucker press and Lee carbide dies produce exceptional handloads.



Simple electronic scales like this one from Hornady work fine to accurately measure powder charges for handgun loads. Author recommends writing chosen powder charge near the scale for instant reference.

Alliant Power Pistol was designed for high-velocity loads in semi-auto cartridges like .40 S&W. It provides superior performance in the old .38 Special too.



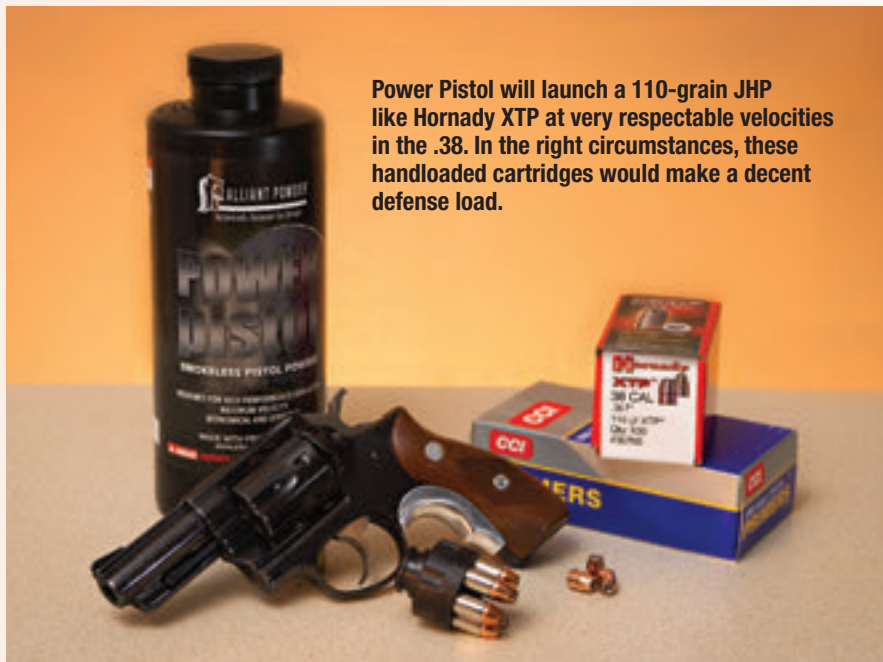
Experimenting with components and powders can dramatically improve accuracy.



Many styles of wadcutters are available, swaged soft or cast to varying hardness. Select hardness (BHN) suitable for the intended velocity and use data for the specific bullet you choose. Speer WC (left) loaded inside case mouth. Harder ACME bullet (right) has a crimp groove to allow seating the bullet farther out of the case. Data should not be considered interchangeable.



Cast bullets are well suited to the .38 Special. Casting bullets allows you to dictate the hardness of the alloy and size bullets to your specific gun. Mold is RCBS 38-150-KT, which produces an excellent all-purpose bullet. Good cast bullets are available commercially if you don't make your own. Cast Performance 160-grain heat-treated WFN PB is one of author's favorites. Missouri Bullet Co. 140-grain TCFP is a great high-volume practice bullet used at low to medium velocity.



Power Pistol will launch a 110-grain JHP like Hornady XTP at very respectable velocities in the .38. In the right circumstances, these handloaded cartridges would make a decent defense load.

Wadcutters are a good bullet to empower a short-barreled J-frame. They were designed for punching paper with low recoil, putting full-value holes into really small groups. They're also a decent choice for a defensive load in the little guns, as no expansion is required to cut a .358 hole in tissue (think hole punch instead of ice pick).

There are many different styles of wadcutters out there. Some have crimp grooves that expose a portion of the bullet. Others are designed to be seated flush with the case mouth. Data should not be considered interchangeable between the two. Use published data on the specific bullet that you're using, and start with minimum powder charges and work up.

COMPARATIVE VELOCITIES

Factory offerings run sedately through my J-frame, averaging 650 to 675 feet-per-second (fps) regardless of manufacturer. With Alliant Unique, 148-grain wadcutters can be driven over 900 fps from short barrels at standard pressure. (The same load clocks 1,051 fps from a four-inch gun but shows some bore leading at that velocity.)

The Powder I have found most compatible with full-power cast bullet loads is Alliant Power Pistol. It's billed as a semi-auto powder, but it shines in the .38 Special.

You can argue that a 9mm is faster than the .38, and I'd agree with you—on the lighter end of the bullet spectrum.

You can certainly best a sanely loaded .38 with the 9mm using 110- and 125-grain bullets, albeit at substantially higher pressures.

Because of the 9mm's limited case volume, it cannot get there with longer, heavier bullets. The Federal 9mm 147-grain TMJ averages 923 fps from my 4¼-inch S&W M&P9. It can be pushed faster, but much past 1,000 fps will get you into +P+ territory.

The .38 Special can drive a 173-grain bullet at that speed and just be nudg-

ing into +P pressures. Using a Lyman 358429 semiwadcutter (SWC) with 5.7 grains of Power Pistol averages 973 fps from a four-inch barrel. That's a very efficient loading of a proven bullet. It's also accurate at longer ranges and penetrates straight and deep.

The 38-150-KT is RCBS' version of a shorter, lighter 358429, otherwise staying pretty true to the Keith design. Cast with 50/50 wheel weights and lino-type and sized to .3594, it weighs 150.1 grains after lube is applied.

Six grains of Power Pistol yields 1,048 fps. This bullet, sized to the chamber throats of my Model 10, has been exceptionally accurate. It hits to the fixed sight's point of aim at 25 yards.

LOOKING TO BUY?

If you don't cast your own bullets, you can buy some really good ones. Cast Performance's 160-grain Wide Flat Nose (WFN) is a solid example. I measure brass for this bullet, only using cases 1.143 inches or shorter to ensure chambering in .38 charge holes. This bullet is good enough that I will actually trim brass (ugh!) to use it. You can get 961 fps out of 5.7 grains of Power Pistol.

Lots of inexpensive 158-grain SWCs out there will work well—just avoid swaged lead and really soft alloys if you plan on pushing them hard. The flat meplats (frontal area) of SWCs and WFNs are vastly superior to round-nosed projectiles for transferring ener-



Handloading allows you to wring maximum performance and accuracy out of the .38 Special. Loads can be custom built for the intended mission—often with better results than factory ammunition. Like snipers, dedicated handloaders tend to keep data books. Accumulated information is a great resource.

gy. The three loads quoted are +P loads but show no pressure signs and don't lead the bores of my revolvers.

A maximum +P charge of Power Pistol propels a 110-grain Hornady XTP at 1,163 fps from a four-inch gun. A hot 9mm will outrun it, but it's a respectable load if you favor light bullets. Consider it a "social" load, like the defensive wadcutter mentioned earlier.

HANDLOADS' BAD RAP

It's become accepted advice that only factory ammo should be carried for defensive purposes because "handloads are unreliable and an unscrupulous attorney's dream."

There is no reason why carefully assembled handloads cannot equal (or surpass) factory ammunition reliability. I can't find a case where an otherwise "good" shooting was tainted by the use of handloads. Current and former prosecutors I have spoken with likewise have no knowledge of handloads reflecting negatively on the user.

Handloading lets you custom tailor ammunition to your particular handgun. You get to choose projectiles specifically suited to the application, and you have the final say in ballistics.

Experimenting with components and powders can dramatically improve accuracy. This makes for a rewarding pursuit and actually provides pride of ownership in what you are sending downrange. Handloading makes a pretty good case for the old .38 Special. ©



Caveat: Since S.W.A.T. has no control over reloading practices or equipment used, this article should be used for information purposes only. S.W.A.T. assumes no liability for accidents or injuries that may occur by using loads in this article.

SOURCES

ALLIANT POWDER

(800) 379-1732
www.alliantpowder.com

CAST PERFORMANCE

(307) 857-2940
www.castperformance.com

MISSOURI BULLET COMPANY

(816) 597-3204
www.missouribullet.com



LWRC IC-A5 carbine can be depended on under all conditions.



I've been the Editor of *S.W.A.T.* for 26 years, and shooting for twice that amount of time. Still, I never tire of testing, evaluating, and writing about new firearms. One of the latest I was able to get my hands on was an IC-A5 from Land Warfare Resources Corporation (LWRC).

LWRC produces numerous weapons based on the AR/M4 system, including rifles, carbines, SBRs, and personal defense weapons. But unlike the majority of firearms built on the M4 family of weapons, LWRC uses a proprietary short-stroke, self-regulating gas piston system and bolt carrier design. Over the years, I have encountered very few problems with the Stoner-designed direct impingement system, assuming the gun is kept properly lubricated. But a piston system does run cleaner and cooler.

THE RIFLE

The IC-A5 is one of the newer models in the IC product line. This carbine has a low-profile two-position adjustable gas block that allows the user to compensate for running a suppressor while getting the added benefit of LWRC's longer modular rail system. The standard color for the IC-A5 is Black, but the test gun was finished in Patriot Brown Cerakote™ ceramic finish (LWRC has a \$150 upcharge for Cerakote).

A spiral-fluted version of LWRC's cold hammer forged barrel is standard on the 14.7- and 16.1-inch (tested here) barrel lengths. The spiral-fluted barrel is approximately 15% lighter

RUNNING THE GUN

LWRC IC-A5 and Gunsite Basic Carbine Course

BY DENNY HANSEN | PHOTOS BY STRAIGHT 8 CUSTOM PHOTOGRAPHY



LWRC IC-A5



Charging handle is ambidextrous.
Flip-up rear sight is adjustable for windage.

than an unfluted barrel of the same diameter. Lighter is always good, but the fluting also lets the barrel cool more quickly. The 5.56 guns have a 1:7 twist, which will provide accuracy from both lighter and heavier weight bullets, and the muzzle is capped with a standard A2-style birdcage flash hider. The one-piece bolt carrier has an oversized rear bearing surface to help reduce bolt bounce.

Quad rails on the handguard are becoming less common, and I for one am happy to see the cheese graters become a part of history. The IC-A5 uses a two-piece handguard/rail system. The top handguard has a full-length Picatinny rail with ample oval-shaped vents at two and ten o'clock for cooling. The front is cut back and not only allows access to the low-profile adjustable gas block, but is also aesthetically pleasing.

The bottom handguard has eight pre-tapped holes at three, six and nine o'clock, so a shooter can place rail sections where he wants them.

The upper receiver is a flat top with a "T" marked Picatinny rail. The charging handle is LWRC's ambidextrous design and is large enough to use with gloves. Moving to the lower receiver, all controls are completely ambidextrous, including the safety,

bolt catch, and magazine release. The trigger guard is oversized and fills the annoying gap usually found between the trigger guard and pistol grip. The pistol grip itself is Magpul's MIAD.

The receiver end plate is LWRC's QD ambi sling mount. The milspec lower receiver extension (buffer tube) was fitted with an LWRC six-position collapsible stock. The rifle was fitted with LWRC's front and rear folding back-up iron sights (BUIS). The rear is adjustable for windage and the front adjustable for elevation.

ADDITIONS

After zeroing the BUIS, I mounted an Aimpoint Patrol Rifle Optic (PRO). Aimpoint launched the PRO in 2011 and it became an instant hit. Based on the Comp M2, the PRO uses Advanced Circuit Efficiency Technology, which lets the sight run for 30,000 hours—almost three years—of continuous use at setting seven. The sight



"Wrong-handed" shooters will appreciate ambidextrous bolt catch and safety.

has a total of ten settings: six daylight, one of which is extra bright, and four that are compatible with all generations of night vision. It is powered by a single DL 1/3N battery. The PRO weighs 7.8 ounces.

Since I was taking the IC-A5 to a course that had a night shoot, I attached a rail section at nine o'clock and mounted a Streamlight TLR-1 HPL. The light is powered by two CR123 batteries and has momentary, constant-on, and strobe modes. It can produce 775 lumens for 1.75 hours. Weight is 5.3 ounces, bringing the total weight of the test carbine to just over eight pounds unloaded.

I attached an LWRC QD rail QD sling mount so I could use a Blue Force Gear Vickers Combat Applications Sling™. I should mention that both of the QD attachments—the receiver end plate and the rail mount—have stops built into them



The IC-A5 ran like the proverbial freight train.

that only permit the sling swivels to rotate about ¼ turn. I really like this feature because it keeps the sling from becoming twisted.

GOING TO SCHOOL

When I evaluate a firearm, I always try to run it hard before I form an opinion. Over the years I've found any problems, including going completely Tango Uniform, will occur in a high-round-count course, so I took the IC-A5 to the 223-Basic Carbine Course at Gunsite: five days and 1,200 rounds. This was my third 223 class. Why another basic course? Because it stresses the foundation that all skill sets are based on, and few people can ever get too much of the basics.

I zeroed the carbine before the class with some nine-year-old Black Hills Match ammo. I had loaded this ammo into stripper clips in preparation for a Pat Rogers/EAG class that I never got around to taking, and I had stored the ammo in an airtight ammo can. After a zero was established, I fired some Black Hills remanufactured Match, and finally some brand new, newly manufactured ammo that arrived only an hour before I left for the range. All loads went into an inch at the same point of aim. Try that with some other manufacturers' ammo from different lots made nine years apart!

For the record, regardless of what you read on the Internet, .223 and 5.56x45mm NATO are *not* the same thing. You can safely fire .223 in a gun chambered for 5.56, but the reverse is not recommended. I lubed the

bolt sparingly with Slip 2000 EWL, but did not clean the carbine.

For the course I used the IC-A5; a Kimber 1911; holster, double pistol and single carbine mag pouch from Rafter L Gunleather; U.S. PALM Defender vest for ammo management; a Vickers Combat Applications Sling™ from Blue Force Gear; and the aforementioned Black Hills 68-grain Match .223 ammo.

TRAINING DAY 1

Rangemaster for the course was Cory Trapp, assisted by Larry Landers and Dave Hartman. Like many open classes, the students were an eclectic group from many walks of life: two Federal agents, an airline pilot, a dermatologist and his wife, a police officer and his wife, a father and son team attending their third Gunsite class, and myself. The day began with the usual administrative details, safety brief, and the terminology of the range commands that would be used in the coming week, and then it was off to the range.

Gunsite has numerous ranges, and for this course our "home range" was the Shot Quad. The class began by zeroing or confirming zeros at 35 yards. The zero I had obtained before the class was from 50 yards, and the difference was so insignificant, I did not make any changes.

After lunch, the class was introduced to the principle of offset (the difference between the bore line and sight line), shooting pairs, dedicated pairs (two quick shots



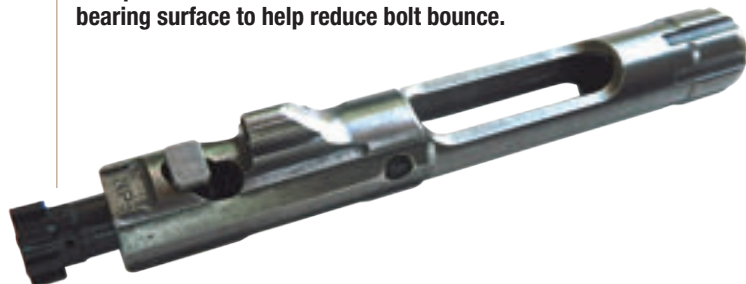
IC-A5 uses LWRC six-position stock and Magpul MIAD pistol grip.



Magazine release is ambidextrous.

LWRC IC-A5

One-piece bolt carrier has oversized rear bearing surface to help reduce bolt bounce.



» SPECIFICATIONS

LWRC IC-A5

MANUFACTURER	LWRC
MODEL	IC-A5
CALIBER	5.56mm NATO
LENGTH	32 to 35.25 inches
BARREL LENGTH	16.1 inches, 1:7 twist
WEIGHT (unloaded)	7.25 pounds
STOCK/PISTOL GRIP	LWRC/Magpul MIAD
SIGHTS	LWRC front and rear folding
MUZZLE DEVICE	A2 birdcage
FINISH (on test gun)	Patriot Brown Cerakote
SUGGESTED RETAIL	Approximately \$2,500

Aimpoint PRO made a good match with the IC-A5.



with two sight pictures), and hammers (two rapid shots with one sight picture).

This was followed by failure drills (two shots to the chest followed by a head shot). Each drill was shot numerous times this day from the high ready position from five to 15 yards.

On TD1, we also covered tactical reloads and the post-shooting sequence that included staying on the target to make sure the threat was down, scanning for more bad guys and returning to the original target to make sure it was still down, bringing the support hand underneath to feel the bolt and make sure it was completely closed, closing the dust cover, and moving the selector back to safe.



Author shoots from Urban Prone on TD3 at Gunsite.

Photo: Ken Campbell

TRAINING DAY 2

The morning began with a review of what we had covered the first day by running numerous drills. This also served as a warm-up. Next we were introduced to malfunctions and the immediate action drills used to clear them.

After lunch we went to the York Range (named after Alvin York of World War I fame), which adjoins the Shot Quad, for position work and to check where our shots were impacting at 100 yards. Many variables exist, including different bullet weights, velocity, and twist rates in rifles, but generally speaking, the rounds should be at or close to their maximum ordinate (the highest point in trajectory before gravity takes effect and they begin dropping) and impact a few inches above the established zero.

Intermediate positions from 50 yards included Braced Kneeling, Speed Kneeling, and Squat. We fired two to three, five-round groups from each position, then went forward and read the targets to determine what

worked best for the individual, and taped them.

Moving back to 100, we shot from Prone and three different sitting positions—Crossed Leg, Crossed Ankles, and Open Leg. Again we fired several five-round groups from each position and then checked our targets. This was a lot of “up-downs” and walking downrange, but it ensured we were not just making small holes in the atmosphere that filled right back in.

The day ended in the classroom with a short ballistics lecture.

TRAINING DAY 3

As on TD2, we gathered at the Shot Quad for a short review and warm-up exercises shooting hammers with a failure drill up close, and dedicated pairs with a failure drill at 15 and 25 yards.

Next up we went to York for some 100-yard prone shooting and then to 200 yards to confirm our zeros were intersecting in the center of the target or just slightly high. This required a small amount of tweaking on the optics of all students. We’d fire a five-round group, walk down and check our targets, then return to the 200-yard line and do it again until all students were happy with the groups they were shooting. Then we broke for lunch.

Back on the York range, we spent most of the afternoon working on the indoor ready position, left and right pivots, and 180-degree turns from the 35-yard line. If a malfunction occurs at close range (inside 25 yards), the best response is not to try to clear the carbine, but transition from the long gun to the handgun. We were instructed on techniques for manipulating the carbine—with and without a sling—and going to the handgun. It was appropriately stressed that the handgun should be topped after shooting to insure.

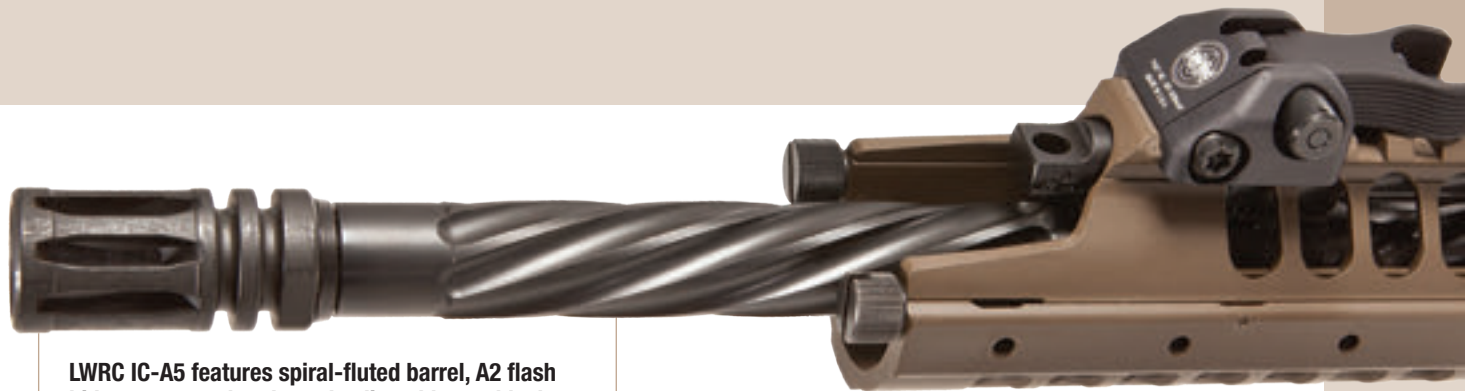
TD3 also had us performing some positions that are rarely taught. In Supine, the shooter lies on his back with the rifle across his chest to take advantage of very low cover, such as a curb. Urban Prone has the dust cover (for a right-handed shooter) turned to Mother Earth, and the shooter gets as low as he can. This position can be used for shooting under a car. SBU Prone is very similar to classic prone except the shooter lies down on his weapon to get very low.

The class was also introduced to the non-standard response (NSR). The standard response is two rounds to the center of the target. An NSR is three or more rounds, fired as multiple hammers. Exactly how many rounds? As many as it takes until the target is no longer a threat. Personally, as a general rule, I fire about five rounds. We concluded TD3 by meeting at one of the indoor simulators for a short basic tactics lecture.

TRAINING DAY 4

We began by splitting the class, with half going to an indoor simulator and the others an outdoor simulator. These were very eye opening for several of my classmates, as it was their first experience off a square range.

The outdoor simulator was fired on the Military Crest



LWRC IC-A5 features spiral-fluted barrel, A2 flash hider, cut-away handguard, adjustable gas block, and flip-up front sight that's adjustable for elevation.

range and consisted of steel plates from around 100 to just under 300 yards. Photographic shoot/don't shoot paper targets were used in the indoor simulator. With most of the targets at bad breath distance, I chose to fire an NSR on most. Two exceptions were a bad guy with a hostage that required me to slow down, remember my offset, and carefully place a head shot; and two bad guys side-by-side, for which I chose to fire a box drill (a hammer on the first, a hammer on the second, then a head shot on each).

We wrapped up the morning by shooting the Scrambler—a course of fire that consists of seven shooting stations, each of which requires the student to engage from a different shooting position and do so as quickly as possible.

In the afternoon we went to the Woodfill range for more position shooting from 100 and 200 yards. After breaking from the range for a few hours, the cadre gave a lecture on different flashlight techniques, both hand-held and weapon mounted. TD4 concluded with a night shoot where we used the techniques that had been demonstrated.

(NON) TRAINING DAY 5

Unfortunately, I became ill on the last day and was not able to finish the class. But as stated above, this was my third Gunsite 223 class, and while no two classes are ever exactly the same, I can basically fill in the blanks. Normally the last day is fairly laid back, with shooting at 200 yards followed by class drills so students can see how they stack up against the par times and have a goal to work toward on their own. This is usually followed by a shoot off and graduation.

What I can say without hesitation is that after the first day, most students think it's going to be a very long, tiring week, and on Friday they wonder where the time went.

SUMMARY

The IC-A5 ran like the proverbial freight train. The only lubrication applied was when I zeroed it before class. Wanting to see how clean and reliable the piston system ran, I didn't lube it again and didn't clean it during the class. Being absent on the last day, I fired approximately 950 rounds downrange.

After class, I opened the gun and was surprised to see how clean it was. The bolt carrier had virtually no grime or carbon build-up, and when I removed the bolt, there was none of the characteristic build-up of carbon on the tail of the bolt or firing pin.

The Cerakote finish was only slightly worn on the inside of the magazine well, after at least 100 times inserting and removing magazines. I liked the ambi bolt catch for clearing the carbine, as I was able to pull back the charging handle with my left hand and lock the bolt using my trigger finger while never losing a firing grip.

My only complaint is that the ambidextrous selector is smaller than normal and thus more difficult to manipulate, albeit very slightly. It was easier to move the selector to safe with the tip of my trigger finger than my weak-side thumb.

The Second Amendment gives us the right to Keep and Bear Arms, however, I believe everyone should receive training from a credible instructor in the use of them. It takes time and money, but the dividends you receive if you ever have to use your firearms cannot be calculated. ☉

SOURCES

LWRC INTERNATIONAL

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Long-range handgunning rarely receives much training effort, and consequently shooters' ability at distance is often erratic. The standard training approach, often thrown in quickly if time allows, is to have the shooter take a knee or go prone. I've seen a great many shooters who actually shoot *worse* from kneeling than they do on their hind legs in their normal stance. I've never had great success in stretching out the range from prone, either.

Talking over the last year with several trainers and very experienced teammates has revealed a similar ambivalence about pistol prone. Issues identified have ranged from zero shift with some shooters, to concerns about real-world utility due to line of sight issues that low to the ground, and generally mediocre results with operational shooters. With this in mind, I started monkeying around with other supported positions to get to the other end of the pistol's trajectory.

SITTING DOWN ON THE JOB

Sitting is the next lowest position to the ground from prone. The position has good contact with the deck for stability and is often able to clear visual obstructions to gain line of sight to the target.

Mobility into and out of position is degraded from kneeling, but similar to prone. Sitting is an extremely effective and useful rifle position for fieldwork, but the traditional open leg and cross leg variations do not translate well to the short gun.

However, if you throw away the "box" and apply similar principles, there are three non-traditional sitting positions to consider: Sitting High Knee (SHK), Sitting Knee Straddle (SKS), and Stacked Feet.

Sitting High Knee is accomplished by sitting down facing to about one o'clock offset from the target. The support-side knee is brought vertical and the firing-side leg is wrapped around the support-side ankle to stabilize the support column the high knee forms. The shooter leans forward to get his center of gravity over the seat and stabilizes the support-side tricep on the high knee, much as he would if firing a rifle from classic kneeling.

In the photo, you will notice the shooter's head and hand positions are nearly identical to when firing standing, where 99% of familiarity and training effort are. Boom!

If the natural point of aim is set correctly, the pistol just hangs right onto target with almost no sway or wobble. For heavy-recoiling loads, the handgun is able to unlock the elbow and roll



SEATED HANDGUN POSITIONS

Sit Down and Shoot Better

BY ETHAN JOHNS





Sitting High Knee position. SHK allows a similar grip and visual relationship with the gun that the shooter uses standing.



Sitting Knee Straddle. Handgun is pulled back into the support-side leg for stability.



Stacked Feet: For shooters preferring to rest the butt for stability, the shoes can be drafted into service.

naturally, making it quite comfortable. This does add a little dwell time to the gun coming back down for a follow-up shot. I've shot the SHK while wearing a pack and with armor, and it works well with either as long as the shooter can lean over the center of gravity. The high knee does restrict air intake slightly, so it is not a great position if the shooter is already winded.

Sitting Knee Straddle is similar to High Knee except that as the position is assumed, the shooter pulls the back of the handgun into the front of the support-side high knee to stabilize it. The shooter will end up leaning back, essentially hanging from the braced pistol and aided by abdominal tension.

If back support is available, the SKS gets even better, allowing the abs to relax, but it is not at all required. The shooter does need to remember to breathe and not dawdle too much or the trunk muscles may start to quiver and affect the shot. If the shooter is wearing a pack or armor with bulky pouches attached to the back, the SKS may allow "built-in" back support.

SKS is pretty fast to assume and not as dependent on getting a solid natural point of aim as SHK. This position works really well with the polymer service pistols and is a great match to 9mm level recoil. The SKS recovers quickly, allowing very fast follow-up shots. Heavy loads and sharp edged guns can be a poor match here, letting the gun bite into the patellar tendon if care isn't taken how the gun is placed. But I've fired heavy .44 Magnum loads from the position with only slight discomfort. The hits were worth it.

Stacked Feet is adapted directly from the similar rifle position I first saw taught by Kyle Lamb in VTAC classes. The shooter sits down with the support-side leg extended straight toward the target. The firing-side boot heel is "stacked" onto the support-side toe and the handgun's butt is then rested onto the shooting-side toe tread. The position does require a little flexibility, but not as much as you may think.

The shooter must take care when assuming SF not to sweep his or her own feet. Similarly the shooter must be aware during recoil, as some combinations of pistol, load, and shoe tread may allow the gun to slip off the "platform" and be very near muzzling the top foot. For these downsides, the shooter gains another viable position that is tailor made for downhill shots. If the shooter



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Strange company: New sitting positions let handgunner shoot to distances where he actually needs a spotting scope and rangefinder.



Four-inch, three-shot group at 120 yards from Sitting High Knee with S&W Model 69.



225-grain .44 Magnum and +P 9mm loads fly an almost identical arc to the target, so shooter can practice the same holds for service and field applications. Left to right: Hornady 225-grain FTX, Winchester Razorback, Black Hills 124-grain +P, Hornady 135-grain +P Critical Duty.

has a good position, the stacked feet can recover the sights pretty quickly.

As with SHK, SF can restrict air supply a bit, requiring the shooter to break position slightly to oxygenate if winded.

GOING HOT

I worked the three sitting positions over several range sessions to demonstrate the potential. Handguns were a Glock 34 9mm to represent the service application and a Smith & Wesson Model 69 .44 Magnum (*HITTING THE SWEET SPOT: Smith & Wesson Model 69 .44 Magnum*, March 2015 S.W.A.T.) to showcase trail gun/hunting scenarios. Ammunition was primarily Hornady 115-grain Critical Defense and 135-grain +P Critical Duty in 9mm and 225-grain Hornady LeverEvolution and Winchester Razorback in .44 Magnum.

I shot the handguns extensively at 75, 100, and 120 yards. Targets were an eight-inch plate at 75 yards, paper targets at 100, and a 16-inch steel silhouette at 120 yards. The eight-inch plate was tough, but I had no trouble getting hits with all three positions with either the G34 or Model 69. Much to my frustration, I haven't put together five straight hits yet, but I rang the eight-inch steel four for five on numerous occasions with both guns. Positions used on these runs were both the Sitting High Knee and Knee Straddle.

Paper at 100 was mostly used to verify holds and zero. Groups from the positions hovered around seven inches for the best four out of a five-shot group. Keeping hits in the "C" zone of a silhouette was a simple chore, with most falling into the ten-inch square B8 repair center target.

Actually needing to use a high-quality spotting scope to track hits was kind of funny while sitting in the dirt shooting handguns, challenging the norm.

The 120-yard silhouette looked a *long* way away once I focused on the front sight, but the positions kept the sights hovering neatly on target. From there it was just the discipline to break the shot cleanly. As with the 75-yard head plate, my most common result was four out of five "clang!" sounds drifting back. But I did have several "possibles" with both guns on the longest target.

The best of these 120-yard strings measured eight inches for five center hits with the 9mm and ten inches for the Hornady 225-grain .44 Magnums. The best three of the Magnum group measured an impressive four inches, well centered in the "A" zone! Both of these best groups came using the High Knee variation.

MAX EFFECTIVE RANGE

I intentionally didn't shoot past 120 yards for this article. Beyond that distance, factors converge to rapidly reduce probability. Yes, people hit farther all the time. Someone wins the lottery every day also, but that doesn't make it a predictable outcome for you or me.

In my early experimentation with SHK, I once hit a 200-meter silhouette with four straight shots from a Smith M&P9 Compact and Black Hills 124-grain +Ps—a load that belly gun loves. All factors stacked in my favor that day, but I would be happy with any hit out of four on demand, and not surprised if none connected. Doing something once is an achievement—being able

to do it on demand is a capability.

Many service pistols will plop five premium JHPs into a 2.25-inch average at 25 yards. They will often do this or better with several makes or grain weights. This would make a cone that extends out to 12 inches at 120 yards. Thus, a hit at 120 is entirely within the weapon's envelope.

However, the issued pistol may not do that same 2.25-inch group with the issued ammo or a different lot of the previously good ammo. In this case, a good average for an ammo/pistol mismatch is probably about 3.5-inch groups at 25 yards. This works out to about 17 inches at 120 yards, or just barely on a typical frontal silhouette target.

This also assumes a perfect zero, which is a truly rare bird in the service pistol. Most pistols in the wild are one to three inches off the sights at 25 yards with whatever ammo is in the magazine, leading to bullets wandering off target at long range.

The ability to hold onto the target at a distinct aiming point is another large factor. The minute you have to hold over the target to compensate for bullet drop (or raise the front sight out of the notch), the probability of a hit drops precipitously. At 120 yards, handguns firing high-velocity cartridges sighted for the common six o'clock hold at 25 yards can hold high chest with plenty of target visible to confirm placement and still drop rounds into the good stuff.

The +P 9mm loads and the 225-grain .44 Magnum loads like the Hornady and Winchester fly an almost identical arc, allowing the same holds at most practical distances if the guns are zeroed similarly. Guns sighted for center at 25 yards and low-velocity cartridges sighted at six o'clock lose about 20 yards, maxing out at about 100 before the rounds start to drop off with a standard sight picture.

The best part of these three sitting positions is that they allow nearly the same grip on the handgun and the same relationship with the head as the shooter's accustomed stance. The sitting just adds real stability. The shooter can apply almost all his practice into the long shot.

I have come to expect to be able to shoot groups that rival benched efforts from the sitting positions. However, it is just another tool. Sitting may not adapt to available cover or fit a given situation. But if it does, it allows some great shooting. ©

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Right side of completed rifle. Total assembly time was less than two hours, but resulted in a rifle that will last for years.

QUALITY AR-15 BUILD

Raise Your Standards

BY DENNY HANSEN



OVER the years, I have read or heard many people say that the rifle they put together on their kitchen table is “just as good as any other AR-15.” I also get letters to that effect almost monthly. Often as not, they are comparing a cheap build to one of the Tier 1 manufacturers, building an inexpensive hobby gun that does not even come close to milspec.

The crux of the problem is that the majority of people I have met who have built (I mean, assembled) an AR from parts did so with their overriding concerns being to save money and put it together as cheaply as possible.

There’s absolutely nothing wrong with that. I have made a few inexpensive builds myself. But I have built them knowing they will only be used for occasional plinking and perhaps a low round count, short duration class.

I had a recent phone conversation with a person who called to “inform” me that milspec is nothing special; it only means that parts are made to the lowest standard that is acceptable. While essentially true, it is at least a standard, and why would any-

one opt for something *less* than acceptable? Would you put your child or grandchild into a homemade car seat constructed for pennies with no regard to safety standards?

Although I have top-quality ARs from several manufacturers—Bravo Company, ROBAR, and SIG to name just three—I have been getting the itch to build another. And no, you can never have too many.

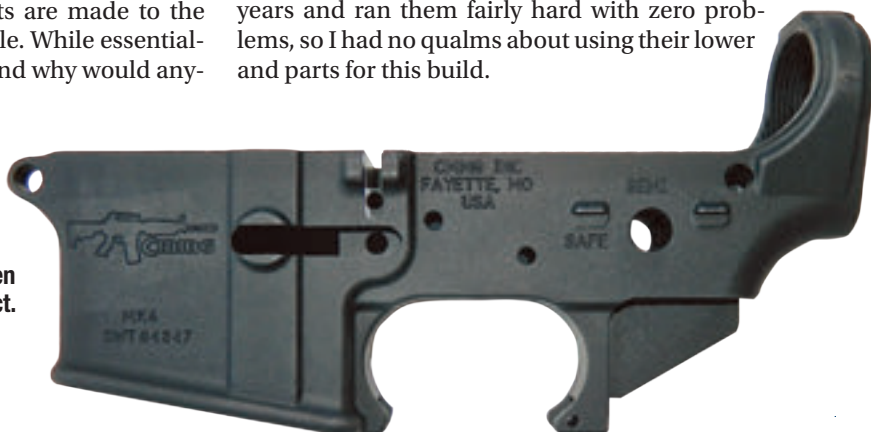
My goal was to assemble a gun from parts I could trust, resulting in a carbine I could run hard in a class or depend on to save my life and the lives of my loved ones.

CMMG

At the SHOT Show, I met with Tim Zick, who represents CMMG’s advertising agency. I mentioned that I had plans to assemble another AR. Tim offered to send me a lower parts kit for the build. A month or so later, the parts kit came in, as well as a stripped lower receiver.

I have reviewed several CMMG rifles over the years and ran them fairly hard with zero problems, so I had no qualms about using their lower and parts for this build.

CMMG lower was chosen for this project.



In the past, I have assembled lower receivers for friends who—in the quest to save \$20—chose to use “just as good as” parts. I have encountered undersized holes, oversized holes, holes drilled at offset angles, burrs, detent pins that didn’t fit, and other problems.

I experienced none of these problems. The lower went together smoothly and easily. CMMG lower parts come in different color bags for specific assembly steps—a nice touch, especially for someone assembling a gun for the first time. I should mention that CMMG lower parts kits are milspec.

BRAVO COMPANY MFG

While I like “black rifles,” I don’t necessarily like them black, so all furniture was in Wolf Gray. For several of the parts in the build, I went with what many feel is the best in the industry—Bravo Company Manufacturing (BCM). It bears noting that many manufacturers use BCM parts in their builds, and I have even seen their parts in other manufacturers’ catalogs. In police work, we called that a clue....

I used an oversized BCM trigger guard and BCMGUNFIGHTER Pistol Grip (Mod 3). The BCMGUNFIGHTER Pistol Grip has an angle that is not as steep as the A2 grip and works better when shooting with a squared-off fighting stance.

The Mod 3 is a “duckfoot” type that covers the gap at the rear of the trigger guard but also works with enhanced trigger guards such as the one used here and similar products. It has a “beavertail” that allows higher hand placement than some other grips and is almost ¼ inch wider than the Mod 0 and Mod 1 grips. The built-in trap door has a rubber gasket that makes it both quiet and water resistant.

I finished the lower receiver off with a BCMGUNFIGHTER™ Stock Kit, which comprises the stock, a BCM milspec receiver extension (buffer tube), locking nut



CMMG lower parts kit comes in different color bags for specific assembly steps.

(castle nut), milspec action spring, carbine buffer, and BCM QD swivel mount end plate. The locking nut was torqued to 40 pounds and staked in place.

This modular stock is totally snag free and has nothing to get hung up on (or in). It fit onto the receiver extension very snugly, with zero rattle. The stock features the VBOST (Vehicle Borne Operations Sling) Tab. This tab, located at the rear of the stock, will secure the shooter’s sling to the stock with a heavy rubber band. The BCMGUNFIGHTER Stock will only fit milspec extensions.

Once installed, I liked this stock so well that I’m seriously considering changing the stocks on some of my other ARs to the BCMGUNFIGHTER Stock. It really is that good.

BATFE considers the serial numbered lower receiver to be the gun. Be that as it may, I have always considered the heart of the AR-15 to be the upper. I went with a BCM BFH™ mid-length lightweight upper receiver group with KMR handguard. I ordered the 14.5-inch barrel with a BattleComp 1.5 compensator permanently attached to bring the barrel to the legal 16-inch length. This model has a full-length Picatinny rail on top and “F” marked



BCMGUNFIGHTER Mod 4 (medium) charging handle and BCM bolt group.



Rear sight was BCM Classic, with same plane aperture.



Front sight is “F” marked and correct for a carbine.

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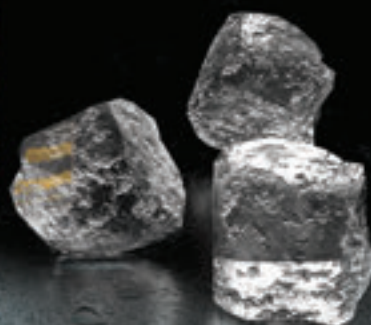
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BCMGUNFIGHTER KeyMod QD sling mount.

front sight—the correct sight for a carbine.

The barrel is chambered for 5.56mm NATO and has an M4 feed ramp barrel extension. BCM barrels are cold hammer forged for a superior barrel and made from high quality steel. An increase in carbon and/or vanadium in the alloy offers increased barrel life and performance. The 1:7 twist rate can handle the spectrum of .223 bullet weights, including the heavier bullets that many shooters prefer.

The exterior of the barrel has a manganese phosphate (Parkerized) finish to protect it from the elements, while the chamber and bore are chrome lined. I have heard it said that chrome-lined barrels are not as accurate as unlined barrels, but in my experience the difference is so small as to make the point moot. A chrome-lined barrel does slightly increase the velocity, but the ultimate reason for the lined barrel is that it resists fouling and corrosion.



BCMGUNFIGHTER QD receiver end plate keeps sling close to the receiver, making it more manageable.

The BCM bolt carrier group has a Parkerized exterior and is chrome lined on the inside of the carrier. The carrier is machined to support automatic fire and has properly hardened parts to insure strong staking and proper gas system function. Machined to USGI specifications, this M16/M4 carrier includes the proper milspec gas key. The gas key is chrome lined and heat treated per GI specifications, secured to the carrier via Grade 8 fasteners, and properly staked per military specifications.

The bolt assembly is machined from the correct milspec steel and shot peened for increased strength. The extractor and ejector are machined from tool steel. It's put together right and uses a BCM extractor spring, black extractor insert, and "O" ring. The bolt is HPT (High Pressure Tested) and MPI (Magnetic Particle Inspected).

To place at the rear of the upper, I chose the superb BCMGUNFIGHTER Mod 4 (medium) charging handle. I also attached a BCMGUNFIGHTER Vertical Grip (Mod 3-KeyMod).

FINISHING IT OFF

I've been looking for a good home for my Aimpoint Carbine Optic (ACO), and this build seemed perfect. The ACO was designed for use on AR-15/M4 type rifles at a price point within the average citizen's budget. The ACO has a two minute-of-angle (2 MOA) red dot to allow fast target acquisition and accuracy at all distances. The ACO is completely waterproof and has a battery life of 1,000 hours—or just over one year—of continuous use on a single 1/3N battery.



Aimpoint Combat Optic was chosen to mount on this build.

You can't legally or morally shoot what you can't identify. For that reason, every carbine used for self-defense—and this one might be—needs a light for positive target identification. Wanting to keep this carbine as light as possible, I went with the Elzetta Mini-CQB Modular Weaponlight, which delivers 315 lumens, plenty bright enough for the distances I envision using it at, namely home defense distances. The light is only four inches long and sits at 11:00 on the KMR handguard. The same light and mount can be used on either KeyMod or M-LOK by simply reversing the nuts.

I believe in the adage, "A sling is to a rifle as a holster is to a pistol," so the last thing I added was a Vickers Combat



BCMGUNFIGHTER™ Stock, Mod 3 pistol grip, and QD receiver end plate with sling attached.

Applications Sling™ (VCAS) from Blue Force Gear. The VCAS has been my favorite sling for several years due to the fact that it can quickly transition from carrying a slung rifle to a firing position. In keeping with the non-black black rifle theme, I ordered it in Wolf Gray with push-button sling swivels. I attached it to the carbine with a KeyMod QD sling mount to the left side of the handguard and the BCM QD swivel mount end plate.

Although today's optics are reliable in the extreme, I still firmly believe in having back-up sights. The BCM upper already had a front sight, but I still needed a rear sight. As mentioned earlier, the upper I chose has an "F" marked front sight. I prefer a fixed front sight because in the unlikely event the main optic goes down, I can use it as a giant ghost ring without having to deploy the front sight.

For the rear sight, I opted for the folding Classic manufactured for BCM by Diamond Head. This sight is adjustable for windage in .5 MOA clicks, and the large and small apertures are on the same plane, meaning that whichever aperture is selected, they will hit to the same point of aim. With a proprietary clamping system—providing secure attachment to all MIL-STD 1913 Picatinny rails—it flips up easily and stows with a single button.

RANGE EVALUATION

I went to the range with a variety of ammunition types for a total of about 500 rounds, and seven different manufacturers' magazines made from aluminum, polymer and steel. The carbine did not experience one hiccup regardless of which ammunition or magazine it was fed with. Holding center at 50 yards on a cardboard IPSC target, with no precise aiming point, resulted in fist-sized groups.

I was interested in how the BattleComp 1.5 would work. Generally my experience

with compensators—outside of competition—has not been positive due to the blast/pressure. I have stood next to one in training, and it was not a pleasant experience.

The BC 1.5 was very efficient at controlling muzzle rise and recoil—not that the 5.56 produces much recoil anyway. What recoil there was pushed straight back into the shoulder. My accuracy and speed shooting hammers and NSRs improved.

It did not produce anywhere near the blast of other compensators I have tried. Shooting it at dusk, it did not seem to produce as much flash as most compensators, though certainly more than a standard A2 "birdcage" flash hider. There is no magic muzzle device, and that includes suppressors. Everything is a trade off. You need to decide if less muzzle rise or less muzzle flash is more important to you.

It is possible to buy some quality guns for less than what it costs to assemble one. Still, there is a certain satisfaction that comes from creating your own one-of-kind smoke pole.

Sometime in the near future, I hope to put together another rifle made with quality parts and chambered for .300 Blackout—because I can. ☉



Permanently attached BattleComp 1.5 compensator brought 14.5-inch barrel up to 16-inch legal requirement.



Due to offset mount design, Elzetta Mini-CQB sits at 11:00 when mounted in 9:00 slots on KMR handguard.

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BRAVO COMPANY MFG.

(877) 272-8626
www.bravocompanymfg.com

CMMG

(660) 248-2293
www.cmmginc.com

AIMPOINT INC.

(703) 263-9795
www.aimpoint.com

BATTLECOMP ENTERPRISES, LLC

(650) 678-0778
www.battlecomp.com

BLUE FORCE GEAR, INC.

(877) 430-2583
www.blueforcegear.com

ELZETTA DESIGN, LLC

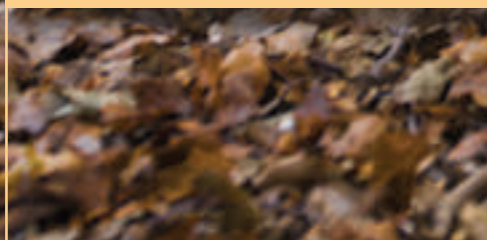
(859) 707-7471
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TACTICAL TRACKING

Ancient Strategies for Modern Manhunts

BY PATRICK PATTEN



*"We don't rise to the occasion but
fall to the level of our training."*

-Archilochus, 680 BC

Does your tactical team really need training in woodland operations?

Good question! With drones, handheld thermals, seismic sensors, and cameras on every street corner, the natural tendency is to think that the woodland tactics of tracking and land navigation are best left in the past. But many times, modern technology fails to deliver when tracking a fugitive in the woodland environment.

Certainly woodland deployments are in a category all their own. Consider the threat assessment: uncontained suspect at large in an unrestricted environment, suspect(s) movement unknown, weather factors, and danger areas too many to number. The result is one of the most high-risk deployments a team can face. Unfortunately, many teams receive little or no training in this type of deployment.

WOODLAND MANHUNTS

How frequent are woodland callouts? If we look at how many incidents daily across the nation begin in an urban environment and transition to wooded areas, the numbers are impressive.

It is in these urban interface areas (where urban meets the woodland) that patrol officers and specialized teams respond to many fleeing felon calls.



National Park Service member at Inter-Mountain
Special Events Tactical Team training.

Tracking is a very versatile skill that greatly expands the capability of the team.

Suspects often choose to flee to wooded areas to escape or find haven.

Most of these incidents do not evolve into a long-duration manhunt, such as the search in Pennsylvania in 2014 for Eric Frein—wanted for the murder of Corporal Bryon K. Dickson II of the Pennsylvania State Police and the alleged attempted murder of Trooper Alex Douglass—and certainly not on the magnitude of the Eric Rudolph manhunt.

Most incidents are resolved within one operational period. Such was the case when U.S. Park Ranger Joe Kolodski was murdered in 1998. Joe, my friend and co-worker, was ambushed and killed along the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina when he responded to a “man with a gun” call. We deployed a five-person woodland operations team to where he was last seen. Containment, based on terrain and time, was set at about a two-mile radius. The tracking team picked up the suspect’s track and located the abandoned murder weapon where the killer had loosed another 15 rounds on responding officers. Shortly after discovering the track, a perimeter team picked up a suspect two miles from the crime scene.

Through the use of visual tracking, we were able to back-track the suspect from the arrest site to the crime scene, finding and casting the suspect’s boot tracks and other evidence along the way. This evidence was later used to convict him of first-degree murder.

The success of this operation was due to the amount of woodland experience inherent in our profession. We were rangers who tracked poachers, fugitives, and lost persons on a daily basis. This is not the composition of most teams assigned to urban areas—thus, the need for woodland operations training.

THE RUDOLPH MANHUNT

A few weeks after Kolodski’s murder, the manhunt for Eric Rudolph was entering the woodland search phase in the Nantahala National Forest. Rudolph, also known as the Olympic Park Bomber, was wanted for a series of anti-abortion and anti-gay motivated bombings across the southern United States between 1996 and 1998, bombings that killed two people and injured 111 others.

Several other rangers and I were assigned to the Southeast Bomb Task Force in July and employed as trackers and search advisors. Having been assigned to the position of Lead Tracker, I had direct planning input into the search strategy and tactics for upwards of 15 tactical tracking teams and a host of then high-tech surveillance resources. It also meant that for the next ten months I served as tracker for some of the most elite tactical teams in the country. During this time, I patrolled over 600 miles with the various teams and had ample opportunity to study their readiness in woodland operations.

This experience reinforced my opinion as to the importance of having op-



Eric Rudolph’s camp near Murphy, North Carolina. He was captured about half a mile from this camp.

erators with woodland skill sets on specialized teams. I noticed a stark difference in the effectiveness of teams who had ex-military and/or hunters as team members versus those who did not. These members brought with them the skills of navigation and tracking—both of which are critical elements of successful woodland deployments.

LAND NAVIGATION: ARE WE THERE YET?

Generally, when a team is called up on a woodland mission, it performs one of the following tasks or a combination thereof: establishment of perimeter, grid search, surveillance, sweeps, blocking or tracking. All of these functions rely heavily on a team being able to effectively navigate and record this navigation for the purposes of command and control. Implementing a system of redundancy within navigation is essential to this effort. Map, compass, GPS, and other route recording devices should be regularly included in training so they can be implemented as the team is inserted.

Without accurately recorded route patterns and search areas that are not defined, and communicated to command, the fugitive or his hide might be missed, putting officers' lives into more danger than already exists.

Lacking this information can also skew the Probability of Detection models and result in poor management of the perimeter. A host of pitfalls can be avoided if a tactical team has a qualified navigator to report accurate data to the team and to command. I have heard too many stories where teams are inserted at the wrong location or bumped by other teams that weren't "supposed" to be in the sector. The ramifications of these types of navigation errors can be monumental.

As a former instructor in woodland operations for the Department of Homeland Security and now privately, I have observed that knowledge of tactical land navigation is an inherent deficiency among many teams. Interestingly enough, it is also the skill set that disqualifies many candidates from Special Forces training.

WHICH WAY DID HE GO?

Another valuable skill for the team to possess is visual tracking, a craft where-



Photo used in prosecution of subject who killed U.S. Park Ranger Joe Kolodski. These tracks were followed the day of his capture.

by a tracker follows a line of sign or disturbance in the forest to move the team along the fugitive's course of travel. The integration of qualified trackers into operations and planning is essential to the success of any woodland manhunt.

By qualified, I refer to a person who has spent purposeful time looking at the ground and following tracks. The tracker must also possess an intimate knowledge of all aspects of the woods, such as flora and wildlife, in addition to being able to stay on track. I have trained several teams that call upon local game wardens and rangers to serve as trackers.



Below: Team navigator must know the team's position at all times. This is accomplished by knowing the terrain the team has passed through, the terrain the team currently occupies, and the terrain that lies ahead. Navigator also conducts map recon to determine choke points, natural lines of drift for the fugitive, and possible ambush locations.



Tracking is not an easily mastered skill. Officers attend courses that begin with the spoor pit before moving to the woodland environment. As the saying goes, “There is a story on the ground to be read, and it is the tracker’s job to read it.”

Tracking is a very versatile skill that greatly expands the capability of the team. It goes beyond just closing the fugitive’s time/distance gap. Tracking can also expand the crime scene, leading to recovery of otherwise missed evidence. Many times a qualified tracker can identify and reconstruct crime scenes that would have gone unnoticed by an untrained operator.

A qualified tracker on the team can determine the fugitive’s direction of travel, resulting in positioning of takedown teams. Case in point: While searching for an alleged child molester in a 20,000-acre area of our park, our woodland operations team used elimination tracking techniques to locate and arrest the suspect within 30 hours. Elimination tracking is simply using tracking to determine where someone has *not* traveled. This greatly reduces the search area and allows for repositioning of takedown teams.

HOW READY IS YOUR TEAM?

How does a team need to train for deployment to a woodland manhunt? As with any team, the strength comes from the composition of the individual team members. Recruitment of individuals with the above-mentioned woods skills is essential to increasing the effectiveness and skill diversity

of the team on woodland missions.

Developing these individual team members in tactical land navigation and tracking skills can greatly enhance a team’s safety and effectiveness in woodland manhunts.

Lastly, providing annual training in woodland skills for the entire team should be a fundamental curriculum requirement. A growing number of fine schools around the country provide this type of specialized training.

While serving as a tactical advisor on the Eric Frein manhunt in Pennsylvania, I had the opportunity once again to observe specialized teams involved in a woodland manhunt. There appeared to me to be a marked improvement in overall strategy, tactics, and readiness of these urban teams from what I had seen on previous manhunts. This can be the result of only one thing—they trained.

Thus, the words of Archilochus ring true: “We don’t rise to the occasion but fall to the level of our training.” ☉

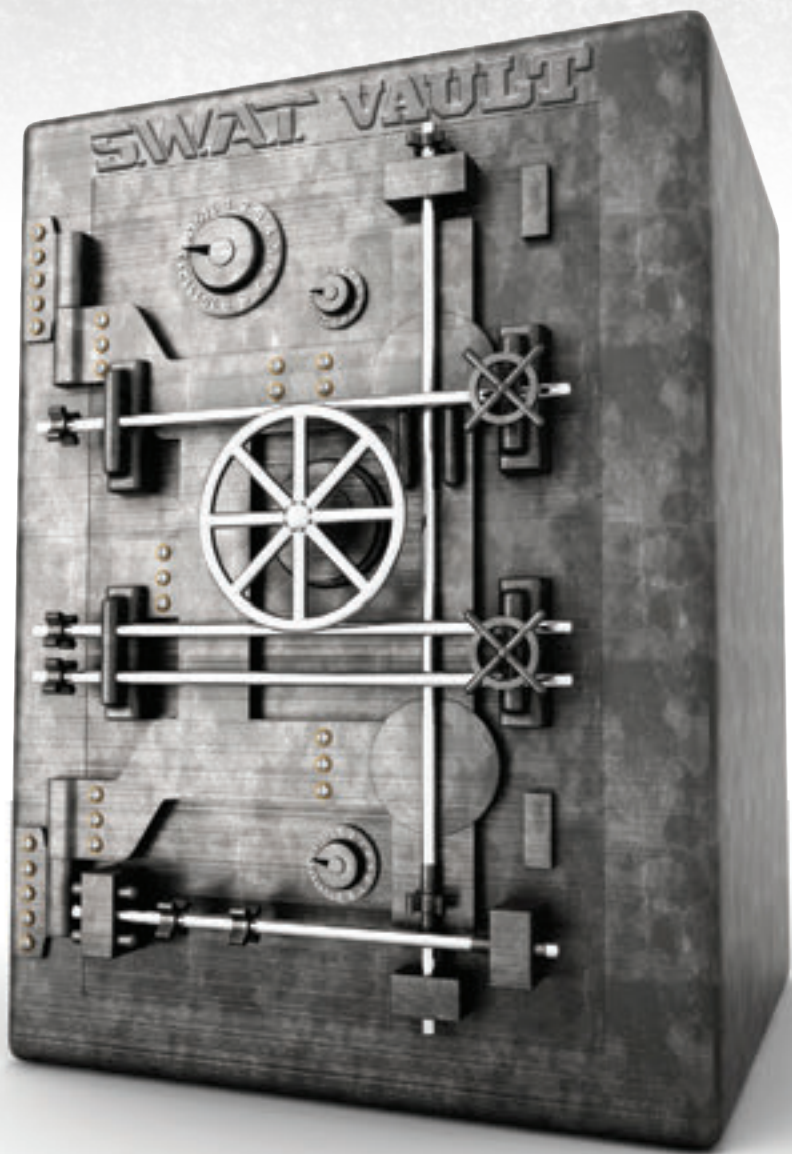
Patrick Patten has been developing and instructing woodland operations training since the early 1990s. He has trained numerous federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies including the FBI, ATF, USFS, NPS, BLM, USFWS, DOD, BIA, Tribal Police, USMS, NC Highway Patrol, U.S. Army Special Forces, Kansas State Patrol, and Texas Fish & Game. He currently runs the Tactical Woodland Operations School, www.woodlandoperations.com.



Tracking during special operations work along the southern border to interdict drug smuggling.

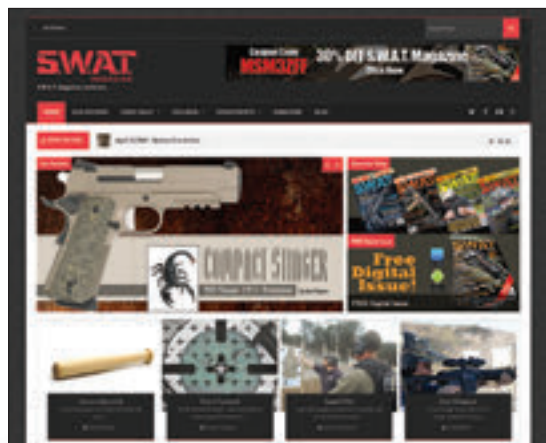
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POWERFUL PRECISION PERFORMER

THE modern SWAT tactical marksman has at his disposal a wide variety of products, tools and equipment that allows him to perform his job at a very high level. But most departments have to strike a balance between needs and wants. Back when I was building precision rifles for the DoD, the rifles typically took about 40 hours to complete and cost north of \$4K, including range

testing, finishing, scope, sling, bipod, and a hard case with accessories.

Most police departments around the country don't have the kind of money to sink into a custom rifle like that, nor do they need to, even though they may want to. A precision rifle only has to be reliable, functional, and shoot one MOA at 100 yards with a variety of ammunition under the widest possible adverse conditions.



Fortunately, a rifle I think fits that description very well is the latest effort from Savage Arms. I had earlier reviewed the Savage M10 Precision Carbine in .223 with excellent results, and I was anxious to see what the rifle could do in .308.

SAVAGE M10 IN .308

The Savage M10 FCP rifle starts out with a McMillan A-5 stock in basic black. The stock does not come with the adjustable saddle cheekpiece, which I feel it should, and even though it would add to the cost of the rifle, it would still make a nice option if offered.

It would also make the rifle easier to adjust to fit a variety of different shooters and/or if the rifle were equipped with a scope having a large objective bell. This ability to personalize the rifle to an individual shooter would make it easier to shoot well.

I like the A-5 style, which is close to the A-2 style we used on most of our tactical systems back in the day. The A-5 has a little flatter forearm, being not as deep, but it is wider than the A-2. I think having a wider forearm is an advantage when shooting off a rest or other supported position. A wider forend just seems to be more stable when firing off

hasty rests and when shooting off sandbags or, like I was, off a front pedestal rest.

All things being equal, a wider forend is much more stable during shooting and rides the bags very well. The stock is not the Accustock model, and as such does not have the aluminum rail running through the forend and does not need it.

The stock has twin swivel studs in the forend for mounting a sling and bipod, with one mounted on the corporal line of the stock about two inches in front of the toe of the stock in front of the recoil pad.

The stock has a nice textured surface on the pistol grip and forend, which works very well with gloved or ungloved hands. The pistol grip of the stock is a little more vertical than most and is very comfortable to shoot in all positions. Drop measurements of the stock are pretty straight, with only about .4 of an inch drop at both the nose and heel of the comb. The stock is fitted with a black one-inch-thick rubber recoil pad.

BARREL AND ACTION

The rifle itself is a heavy barreled version of the standard Savage 10 short action. Chambered in .308 Winchester,

Savage Arms Model 10 FCP Rifle

BY STEVE SIEBERTS

Above: Author achieved decent groups of just over 1½ inches with Black Hills Ammo.

Right: Savage AccuTrigger takes a little getting used to if you haven't used one, but once you do, it's a very effective trigger system that lets shooter adjust trigger down to 1.5 pounds.



SAVAGE ARMS

the barrel is 24 inches in length and is button-rifled with a 1:10 right-hand twist.

The barrel measures .840 inch at the muzzle and has a recessed step-type crown to protect the rifling at the muzzle. These types of crowns do a very good job of protecting the critical last few hundredths of an inch of the muzzle on a tactical rifle since they are more recessed than an 11-degree target-type crown. Tactical rifles normally get rougher handling than a typical target rifle, and the recessed step-type crowns are a practical way to protect the rifling at the muzzle.

The action has a flush-fit detachable staggered-column magazine that holds four rounds. The magazine release is conveniently located in front of the magazine in the center of the stock and is easily manipulated with gloves. I like this style of magazine release because it's very convenient, and since it fits below flush with the stock, there is little to no chance of the button being inadvertently pressed.

The stock is cut out around the magazine release to allow for easy manipulation even with gloves, and the spring has the right amount of tension so that it takes a good press to release the magazine.



Turret knobs of Leupold Mk4 scope. Clicks are sharp and distinct, even with gloves.

The action and barrel have a matte black finish, and the bolt is Savage's tactical style, with an easy-to-manipulate oversized bolt handle. The stock is attached to the rifle's action via two Allen-head stock screws, which makes it convenient to set the torque on the screws for best results.

There are different torque settings depending on whether or not the rifle

has a wood stock, a wood stock that has been pillar bedded, a composite stock, or a composite stock that has been pillar bedded.

On a factory rifle such as the Savage that has a composite stock but has not been pillar bedded, the action screws should not be torqued to greater than about 50 inch-pounds. A rifle that has been pillar bedded can go up to 65 to 70



MODEL 10 FCP

inch-pounds on the action screws. The advantage of being able to torque the action screws is that the rifle will have consistent contact between the stock and the barreled action. This keeps stresses out of the system and contributes to maintaining overall accuracy.

Action screws and the large keeper nuts on scope mounts such as the Mk4 mounts from Leupold also need to be torqued for consistent results.

TRIGGER

The trigger on the rifle is the Savage AccuTrigger. Most shooters are familiar with the trigger but to recap, the trigger has a lever in the center of the trigger that acts as a separate safety mechanism. This lever must be depressed before the rifle will fire.

The AccuTrigger permits very safe, yet low weight-of-pull settings without the chance of the sear being bumped out of engagement with the trigger itself if the rifle receives a bump or shock. I like AccuTriggers because the weight can be set to two pounds or less. Admittedly that is probably a little too low for a law enforcement rifle: 2.5 or 3 pounds would be better.

Where I think Savage could improve the trigger would be to make the trigger adjustable for overtravel. I'd like to be

able to set the overtravel screw to where the trigger stops, just past the point of disengagement. If Savage doesn't want to make this user-adjustable, then they should give it a fixed setting from the factory but closer than what it is now. The trigger pull on the test rifle came in at 2.5 pounds on my Lyman Electronic Trigger Pull Gauge.

LEUPOLD SCOPE

For this rifle, I chose the Leupold Mk4 ER/T in 4.5-14X50 with standard mil-dot reticle. This scope gives a wide field of view at the lower powers and can be cranked up for the ranges that the typical law enforcement rifle will be deployed at. Most actual law enforcement shootings with the tactical rifle occur at short ranges, in the neighborhood of 10 to 100 yards.

But like their military counterparts, much of what the law enforcement marksman does is not actual shooting but intelligence gathering and observ-



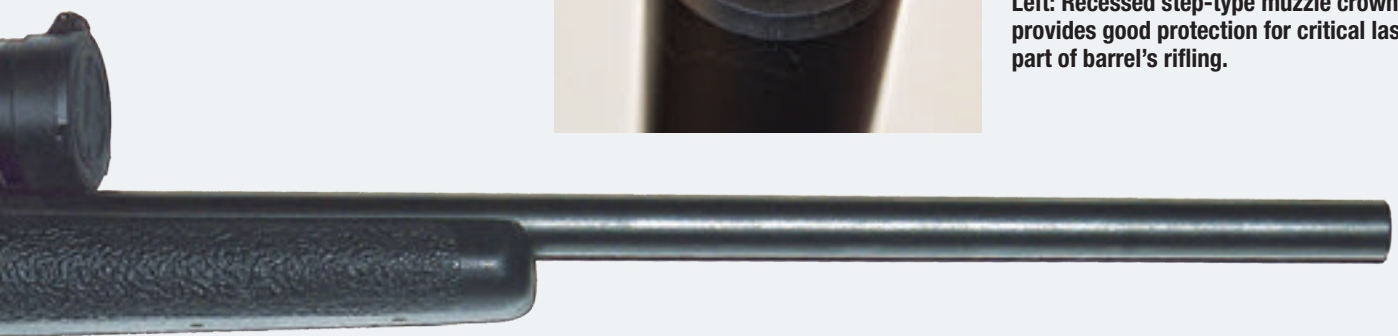
A5 stock has straight pistol grip, fairly high straight comb, and is McMillan's most popular design for good reason.

ing. Being able to zoom in and observe a situation in detail with a 14X scope can give a tactical advantage.

The Leupold scope 4.5-14 gives a great field of view at various ranges. The scope has a FOV of a little over 20 feet at the low setting, and eight feet at the high setting at 100 yards. Eye relief is a standard four inches, and weight is just less than 1½ pounds. This scope is a great choice as it is very bright and clear at all powers and all ranges we tested. I accuracy tested the rifle/scope



Left: Recessed step-type muzzle crown provides good protection for critical last part of barrel's rifling.



Savage Model 10 FCP with Leupold Mk4 ER/T 4.5-14 scope shot superbly with the right ammunition, illustrating why testing is crucial with different brands and types of ammunition.

SAVAGE ARMS

combo at 100 but also did some shooting at 300, and it was nice to be able to crank up the glass to maintain the precise aiming point.

My son and I did some more shooting later in the evening as the sun was dropping. The light-gathering coatings and Xtended Twilight Lens System on the Leupold scope really helped.

The scope was mated to a pair of Mk4 two-piece bases and rings. I lapped the rings in with my scope ring lapping tool from Brownells, mounted the scope, torqueing the keeper nuts on the rings to 65 inch-pounds, and headed out to my local range.

RANGE RESULTS

I set up my Oehler 35P chronograph and went to work. Velocities were about what I expected from factory .308 ammunition from various manufacturers. The American Eagle and Speer Gold Dot gave the highest velocities, about 2,900 feet-per-second (fps), but at 150 grains, that's what I expected. The



Hornady ammo shot best group of the day with this particular rifle. Always test any rifle with various ammunition manufactures to find the best combination.

Below: Author's son, Kyle, gets Savage rifle dialed in on front pedestal at Bluegrass Sportsman's League rifle range.



MODEL 10 FCP

Right: Chronograph is indispensable for evaluating ammunition. Author, setting up skyscreen diffusers, believes Oehler 35P is best tool in the business.

Below: McMillan A5 stock has a fairly straight pistol grip with an effective textured surface that really helps in obtaining a consistent grip.

168-grain weights from Hornady, Federal and Black Hills turned in velocities in the 2,700 fps range.

Time constraints kept me from fully testing the rifle farther than 100 yards, but the results were a little surprising. This Savage rifle did not like this particular lot of American Eagle ammunition, but since I've tested that ammo in other rifles, I know it can shoot better than the 2.95 inches that it did.

On the other hand, the rifle absolutely liked the Hornady and the Federal 168-grain Match. I thought the Federal Match might shoot the best based on past experience, but the rifle preferred the Hornady, which came in with the best group of the day, a five-shot group of .546 inch. The 168-grain Federal shot a group of .972 with a called flyer. The Black Hills also shot well, and I wish I



had time to do more testing with that ammo, since I've had excellent prior results with Black Hills.

One piece of equipment that really helped out at the range was the Bushnell Elite Tactical 8X30 Spotting Scope. With a 50mm objective lens, it was bright and clear at every power setting and range we used.

The Savage rifle combined with the Leupold Mk4 ER/T makes an excellent precision rifle that will perform with distinction in any situation. ©

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www.savagearms.com

BLACK HILLS AMMUNITION

(605) 348-5150
www.black-hills.com

BLUEGRASS SPORTSMAN'S LEAGUE

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ADRENALINE DUMPS

Fight or Flight?

BY JIM DAVIS

PHOTOS BY JOHN PAVONCELLO

The decision to use force can often be more frightening than the prospect of being injured.



Tunnel vision is a fact of life for those whose occupations elicit adrenaline dumps.



THOSE who work in law enforcement and emergency services deal with the almost mystical substance known as adrenaline. A lot. Of course, all humans have experience with this bodily produced drug, some more than others. Let's take a look at the effects it can have on our bodies.

But first, why does it exist?

Adrenaline is inside us as a natural protectant. In times of crisis, it is there to help us achieve peak performance, so we can prevail in the event of combat or if we're under attack.

Some people believe that in modern times, we don't need adrenaline as much as we did back in our "caveman" days, but that isn't the case. While many peoples' lives today are relatively tame compared to when we hunted wild animals (or they hunted us), life can still reach out and touch us. Traffic accidents, assaults, athletic events, rescues, and arrests are but a few of the times when adrenaline comes in very handy to help us out.

During emergency situations I was involved in throughout my career working in corrections, I've experienced every facet of the adrenaline dump that we're going to look at. Simply gearing up for work gives many people a mild rush. Strapping on a protective vest, duty belt, uniform, gun, and other gear reminds us where we work and what we're preparing to do. And that's just a "normal" day!

AUDITORY EXCLUSION

Auditory exclusion occurs because our mind shuts out what it believes is extraneous information that we don't need at the time in order to survive. As a result, we often do not hear what is going on around us. Even loud noises such as gunshots, explosions, and shouted orders may be blocked out or muted so they sound as if they're coming from a far-off place. In an emergency, this can pose a prob-

lem because we may miss vital information such as shouted orders or radio calls.

TACHYPSYCHIA

Tachypsychia is our perception of the altering of time. Specifically, the feeling that the unfolding events are occurring in slow motion, sometimes as though it is a sort of surreal dream state. The mind can race wildly and a ridiculous volume of thoughts can be compressed into a tiny span of time. This effect can sometimes be achieved by taking drugs. Adrenaline is simply a drug produced by the body. As such, our thinking and perceptions are altered when we're under the influence of adrenaline.

VISION

Adrenaline causes the pupils to dilate, letting in more light, which can be helpful during an emergency. Many people report not being able to see their sights during gunfights—this is likely an effect of adrenaline.

TUNNEL VISION

The mind focuses on what it perceives to be the immediate threat and excludes what it believes is unnecessary at the time. We may see the threat only, and peripheral vision is blocked out, as if we're literally looking down a tunnel. This can be a serious issue because we may not see threats approaching from our sides or behind.

We try to overcome this during our training, but it's difficult to replicate the effects of adrenaline during training, and since adrenaline alters our thinking, sometimes we have major difficulty accessing our training while under the effects of adrenaline. It becomes a Catch-22.

PAIN

As part of our body's self-protection, adrenaline often dulls

our sensation of pain. I've talked with hundreds of survivors of incidents in which they've received wounds (usually from bullets and edged weapons), and there is an overwhelming trend: A large percentage of them did not realize at the time that they had been shot, stabbed, or otherwise wounded—and many were seriously injured. Many felt no pain for from several minutes to hours after their wounding, even after discovering their wounds.

Some *did* feel immediate pain, but from my very informal survey, those who did were solidly in the minority. It seems that our bodies often do an effective job of masking the pain until after the life-threatening emergency is concluded.

Blood moves from our extremities to our internal organs for two reasons:

- When our core is oxygenated, we can perform better.
- Less blood in our extremities means that if we are cut, shot, or wounded in an extremity, we experience less blood loss and can perform longer.

The problem with that leads us to our next order of business ...

LOSS OF FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Reduced blood flow to extremities is the likely cause of our having less ability to perform complex fine tasks, especially with our fingers. A good friend and outstanding tactical instructor, Robert Desrosiers, described it as, "Your hands suddenly become flippers!" I think that sums it up rather nicely.

Some people are seriously affected in this area. It can be next to impossible to do tasks we take for granted—dialing a phone, flipping a firearm's safety on or off, or accessing keys to lock or unlock doors. The list goes on, but it's serious stuff, especially when fractions of a second count!



Firefighters routinely deal with harrowing events.

INCREASED STRENGTH

This can be a big help for us. Not so much, though, when the bad guys experience it (let's not forget crooks have adrenal glands too).

We've all heard accounts of a mother using super-human strength to lift a car off her child. Myriad examples of such feats exist, and I've seen a couple: an inmate snapping leather restraints, and a video in which a bank robber was shot through the heart, ran outside the bank and made it quite far down the block before collapsing and dying.

Just because a person is mortally wounded, don't think he can't still harm you!

MEMORY LOSS

During a few incidents I've been involved in, I forgot details of what happened until I spoke to witnesses or participants afterward and they mentioned details that unlocked a door in my brain. "Oh yeah, I forgot about that!" This is part of what makes law enforcement and military debriefings, or after-action reports, important.

As mentioned, adrenaline is a drug, and it affects how we think, including our memory. This is likely another example of the mind discarding what it considers to be unnecessary information that is not directly related to the fight/flight crisis at hand.

For example, before one very violent incident I was involved in on duty, I'd been having a conversation with a coworker. The incident kicked off and, until I spoke to that same coworker the following day and he reminded me that we'd been talking, I had completely put it out of my mind.

When he mentioned it, it was as though a floodgate in my mind opened, but up until then, it was as if my mind had compartmentalized it into a "This doesn't really matter" folder.



Obscured vision adds to the confusion and difficulty with target identification. This can up the ante.

TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

People occasionally ask me how they can train for traumatic events such as those we may face on duty. That's a tough one to answer. Ideally, we'd put ourselves into conditions that cause an actual adrenaline dump, but in which our lives aren't in danger. The problem is that this is very difficult to do because our minds are pretty good at deciphering whether or not we're really in danger and whether adrenaline is called for or not.

Various units are enjoying decent results with force-on-force training where Simunition or Airsoft trainers are used, because real humans are trying to shoot us—albeit with munitions that hurt far less than real bullets. The idea is to train under adrenal stress so we can learn how to function under it.

Mundane, calm classroom training does not allow this, and this is why we often see individuals who are trained in the classroom-only atmosphere freeze when the chips are down. They are simply not accustomed to operating with adrenaline coursing through their veins.

In both the prison where I formerly worked and the one I work in now, training is largely of the on-the-job type. Over the years, I experienced many adrenaline-charged events. Each time, I became a bit more used to operating under the influence of adrenaline, and the more experienced I became, generally the better I could function during emergencies.

And it wasn't just me. That's why rookies often do not perform as well as veterans, regardless of what profession we're talking about, but especially where violent events are concerned.

THE FREEZE RESPONSE

Sometimes when we're in an adrenalized state, we "freeze," or become immobilized. This can occur because our brain is overloaded with thoughts and we can't choose a course of action. I've heard it referred to as "paralysis by analysis."

This phenomenon actually happens more often than most people admit. It's simply the mind's inability to process so many thoughts and decide on a course of action in such a compressed time frame. It's happened at one time or another to most people who respond to emergencies.

There is another "freeze" that sometimes occurs, but this one takes place after the event. It's called PTSD, which stands for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. PTSD can freeze a person's progress in dealing with the aftermath of traumatic events. Symptoms may include anxiety, depression, and flashbacks that can play out in a person's mind uncontrollably and at random, often inconvenient times.

The flashbacks are rather like nightmares, but they occur while a person is awake and can be quite vivid. Of course, nightmares during sleep can also occur, disrupting sleep.

RACING THOUGHTS

It wasn't until the first stabbing I was involved in while working in the prison that I grasped just how many thoughts could race through my head in an incredibly short time frame. I swear, in the span of one second, the following thoughts rushed through my mind:

"Oh my God, he just stabbed the guy next to me, he's really close, that knife is *huge*, doesn't he see me standing here, they're not supposed to stab each other right in front of the guards, he must be planning on killing me next, here he comes, will my training really work..."

And on the thoughts went! I was terrified and fairly con-

vinced I was about to be killed or seriously injured. But I happened to be faster than the large man with the huge knife, and my footwork allowed me to evade his attack.

I don't care who you are or how much experience you have. During such an incident, you will experience a big mental shock. It will take a certain amount of time to process exactly what is happening to you.

Consider that many of us who work in violent prisons walk around our work site basically expecting trouble. It's just a matter of time before something happens, and those with enough experience realize that. So we anticipate it. We expect it.

Here is the key: even those of us *expecting* trouble are still usually surprised, if only for an instant, when it happens. Imagine how much more time it will take the average person, who is not in such an environment and *not* expecting that sort of trouble, to process it and react. You can begin to understand how important mindset and experience truly are when put into this context.

NO MAGICAL FORMULA

In conclusion, I do not believe there is any magical formula to dealing with adrenal stress. Training is certainly a worthwhile endeavor, and the more realistic one can make that training, the better and more worthwhile it will likely be.

Seek out people who have "seen the elephant" and are experienced in the particular field you need information on. However, keep in mind that simply having "been there, done that" is not necessarily a sterling endorsement of one's teaching ability.

Does this make it tough to find good trainers? You bet! But everyone reading this understands why we should try to get the best we can afford and obtain.

Stay vigilant and hang tough! ☉

Jim Davis has worked for the Department of Corrections in his state for the past 24 years, including in one of the largest prisons in the country for 21 years, 17 of those as a corrections officer. He served ten years in special operations on CERT, including sniper duty. He is an adjunct instructor at his agency's state training academy and an instructor in various subjects for in-service training for his agency. He has been involved in numerous violent encounters on duty.



Fear must be overridden, no matter how intense.

BY WILL DABBS, M.D.

PHOTOS BY SARAH DABBS

THE M14 rifle served as our front-line service rifle for no more than a decade some 55 years ago. From a design perspective, the M14 was little more than a product-improved M1 Garand chambered for 7.62x51mm NATO ammunition and feeding from a removable 20-round box magazine.

Heavy, reliable, and hard-hitting, the M14 was the ultimate iteration of the American .30-caliber battle rifle. Despite its replacement in the mid-1960s by the small-caliber M16, M14 variants continue in combat service as Designated Marksman Rifles to this very day. One of the most effective iterations of the M14 was a dedicated sniper platform type classified the M21.

The M21 in military service started life as an accurized M14 action mated to a Leatherwood Automatic Ranging Telescope (ART). The appeal of the M21 as a precision rifle lay in its semiautomatic magazine-fed action. The sniper armed with an M21 could carry more on-board ammunition and take faster follow-up shots than a comparable operator with a bolt gun. I have owned the civilian equivalent of the M21 produced by Springfield Armory for years and it is indeed a splendid piece of iron.



FULL-BORE AWESOME, SMALL-CALIBER PRICE

Archangel Mini-21



Archangel Mini-21 clone is a slightly scaled-down version of the .30-caliber big brother. Commensurately lighter and cheaper both to build and shoot, Mini-21 looks awesome and is more fun than a barrel of monkeys.

My rifle has been nestled within an Archangel stock system ever since they hit the market. The Archangel stock is adjustable for both comb and length of pull, sports a gear compartment in the pistol grip and sling sockets aplenty, and is functionally indestructible. Its synthetic carbon-fiber construction means it will not warp or twist when wet. I have shot mine for years and love it.

My old expensive custom-made glass-bedded walnut stock looks great, but now occupies a place of honor in the attic alongside the Christmas decorations.

Archangel has come out with a slightly smaller version of their classic sniper stock scaled to fit the Ruger Mini-14, itself a .223-caliber baby brother to the classic .30-caliber M14. With a few carefully chosen accessories, this rig is cute as a button and an absolute blast to shoot.

GENEALOGY

The Ruger Mini-14 is a long-term player in the American gun scene. Marketed initially in 1973 and still in production today, the classic Mini-14 was for years the only low-cost alternative to the AR series of small-caliber rifles. Walmart sold Mini-14s for decades across the country at a little more than \$400 apiece.

Second only to the AR-15, the Ruger Mini-14 has been accessorized to within an inch of its life. Aftermarket scope mounts, magazines, stock sets, ditzels, and widgets of every imaginable variety are available to any American gun owner blessed with an internet connection and a credit card.

The humble Mini-14 action can be configured as a bullpup suitable for the set of a science-fiction movie or a dual



Tree-covered 65-foot bluff wrapped like an amphitheater around a farm pond creates the rare shooting area where it's safe to shoot into the water. Plethora of old tree stumps makes splendid natural targets at various ranges.



Clockwise from right: Archangel stocks are adjustable for both length of pull and height of comb. Two designs are identical except that Mini-14 version is scaled slightly smaller overall.

Adjustment wheels are large and easily thumb-adjustable. This feature lets operator customize stock for any stature or anatomy.

Like its bigger brother, Archangel Mini-14 stock sports a spare gear compartment in the pistol grip.

Archangel stocks are festooned with sling sockets and swivels. If you cannot find an acceptable combination, you are just too picky.





Left: Author's Mini-21 had fairly humble beginnings. This inexpensive beater gun show special Ruger Mini-14 needed an Archangel stock, Choate flash suppressor, and Accu-Strut gas cylinder to pass for a scaled-down M21 sniper rifle.



Both Archangel stocks include generous forearm rail to accommodate a bipod, handgrip, or tactical light.

crank-operated tripod-mounted affair to do Arnold Schwarzenegger proud. But Archangel recently kicked the bar up a few notches.

I admit that this build centered as much on aesthetics as functionality. I wanted a ringer for the M21 big brother and invested a little effort to get there. But make no mistake, the resulting Mini-21 is robust as a tank and tough enough to hang your life on.

The base rifle is the standard Mini-14 from Ruger. I picked the gun up used at a gun show at a very reasonable price. The Mini-14 is a proven, reliable platform, but in a shooting world awash with tricked-out M4 clones, the archaic lines of the classic Mini no longer turn

heads as perhaps was once the case. As a result, they are readily available on the used gun market and cheap to boot.

FLASH SUPPRESSOR AND GAS CYLINDER

The M14-style flash suppressor comes from Choate, an Arkansas-based company that cut its teeth on stocks and gun accessories. They have a reputation for quality such that the Germans at HK selected their side-folding stock for the MP5K Personal Defense Weapon (PDW). While the landscape is littered with aftermarket muzzle accessories for the Ruger Mini-14, the Choate flash suppressor most closely mimics the long M14 original, and Choate has a storied reputation for quality.

Installation requires a drill, preferably a drill press, but I knocked mine out in a jiffy with hand tools. The instructions are more than adequate and the installation wasn't difficult.

For starters, the original Ruger front sight has to go, but anybody who knows which end of a punch to smack can pull this off with aplomb. Just tap out the retaining pin and gently tap the front sight off with a hammer. Use a piece of brass or aluminum if you want to avoid marring the old part. I didn't need it,



Accu-Strut M14 barrel clamp is a ringer for gas cylinder on full-scale M14. While device is intended to improve rigidity of thin Mini-14 barrel, in this case it just looks cool.



Choate Mini-14 flash suppressor can pass for the full-bore real deal in dim light. It lacks a bayonet lug, but so do current production M1A rifles. Anyone planning to do any serious bayonet training with this rifle is out of luck. You both know who you are.

so I just used a small hammer, but still didn't leave a mark.

The newest versions of the Mini-14 from Ruger sport a redesigned front-sight assembly that does not readily interface with the Choate flash suppressor. As my gun show trade Mini-14 was fairly old, that was not a problem, but you might want to check the Choate website for guidance if you're thinking of using a modern Mini.

The faux gas cylinder is from Accu-Strut. The appliqué SOCOM Accu-Strut affixes below the barrel and mimics the gas piston of the larger M14. While the Accu-Strut is designed to improve barrel rigidity and subsequent accuracy, I chose one simply because it made my Mini-14 look more like an M14.

One of the shortcomings of the stock Mini-14 is its lightweight barrel. The longer two-clamp version of the Accu-Strut is an inspired solution to enhancing barrel rigidity and a proven performer. The accuracy enhancement of the short version is admittedly minimal, but it sure looks cool. Installation of this little jewel required nothing more than the included Allen wrenches and a little Loctite®, conveniently included with the parts.

A proper scope and mount complete the charade.

KILLER RANGE CANDY

The resulting miniaturized M21 is more fun than a barrel of monkeys. Ammo costs about half what the full-sized 7.62x51mm rounds fired by the originals cost. Recoil with the superbly designed Archangel stock is functionally



While not identical, family resemblance is unequivocal. Ruger offering includes some investment castings and stamped parts to ease manufacture and lower costs, but its M14 parentage is self-evident.

non-existent. The manual of arms is identical to that of the larger rifle, and accuracy on the range was typical for a standard Mini-14. To put it in highly technical terms, the rifle shot minute-of-Coke-can out to 100 meters with minimal effort on my part.

I did get a bit crazy with the details just to make it look awesome, but one cannot readily put a price on true haute fashion. The 7.62mm big brother looks just killer cool and shoots straight farther out than I do, but it is pretty heavy and quite long. The new .223 version has the same sort of cool in an easy-to-tote package.

The completed rifle is just about indestructible and maneuvers much more readily than its larger brother. Trigger time with the small-caliber, low-recoiling round is simply nirvana.

If you have a Mini-14 in your collec-

tion and want to breathe new life into it, the Archangel stock will bring out the absolute best in the platform. If you've had your eye on a full-sized M1A but the impressive sticker price left you tepid, this will get you into a sweet-shooting facsimile of the original at a fraction of the cost. Unlike some other aftermarket manufacturers, Archangel makes serious gear for serious shooters and I have yet to see a piece of their kit that was not well reasoned and as tough as an armored fighting vehicle.

The new Mini-14 tactical stock system from Archangel is both functional and cool in equal measures. Tack on an M14 flash suppressor from the good folks at Choate and a faux gas cylinder from Accu-Strut and you have a ringer for the full-bore sniper rig that dominated battlefields from Vietnam to the Hindu Kush.

If you start with a used rifle, the required investment is quite reasonable, and the resulting build is just cool as a cucumber. I was smitten at first sight. ©



Available at much lower cost, .223 rounds fired by smaller Mini-21 clone also weigh a fraction of what full-sized .30-caliber rounds do. This makes for easier portage and more practice for the same money.

SOURCES

ARCHANGEL MANUFACTURING

(800) 438-2547
www.archangelmanufacturing.com

ACCU-STRUT

www.accu-strut.com

STURM, RUGER & CO., INC.

(203) 259-7843
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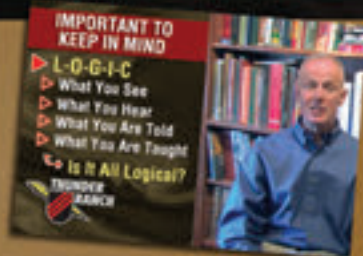
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TOPS Knives C.A.T.

THE TOPS Knives Covert Anti-Terrorism (C.A.T.) series includes some of the earliest models TOPS ever produced. Military and law enforcement personnel all over the world carry them.

Like all TOPS Knives, the C.A.T. is a straightforward, no-frills blade intended for hard use. At the 2015 S.H.O.T. Show, TOPS Knives debuted their new C.A.T. S-series. Developed as a low-profile, easily concealed knife that can be deployed quickly when needed, the design allows for good penetration as well as slashing cuts.

The blade is made from 1095 high carbon steel. A plain carbon steel, 1095 does not have excellent edge retention and also has fairly low resistance to corrosion. But it is very easy to sharpen and achieve an exceptionally sharp edge—an important consideration in the field.

Overall length is 7¼ inches with a 3¼-inch blade. At its thickest point, the blade is 5/32-inch thick. Weight is 7.5 ounces. The C.A.T. is available with either a Hunter or Tanto point. Like many other TOPS Knives, the blade has an integral oxygen wrench as well as a hole for a lanyard. The lanyard hole is beveled, so any abrasion to the lanyard will be kept to an absolute minimum.

Jimpping on the top of the blade just forward of the scales (handles) allows the user to choke up for fine, precise cuts.



C.A.T. fits the hand well and is equally at home in an EDC kit or backpack.

The model reviewed here is the TOPS Coyote Tan powder-coated version with Hunter point, green canvas Micarta scales, and Coyote Tan Kydex® sheath.

The scales on the knife are TOPS' new Rocky Mountain Bull's-eye design. Made from canvas Micarta, the handle tread can best be described as numer-

ous oval-shaped divots that run in opposite directions—your hand will *not* slip off these handles. Scales attach to the full tang with 3/32-inch Allen-head screws that have thread lock applied to them—something you don't notice until the handles come loose in the middle of nowhere and you don't have an Allen wrench with you. That



TOPS Knives C.A.T. S-Series with Coyote Tan powder-coat finish. Rocky Mountain Bull's-eye scales ensure a good grip.

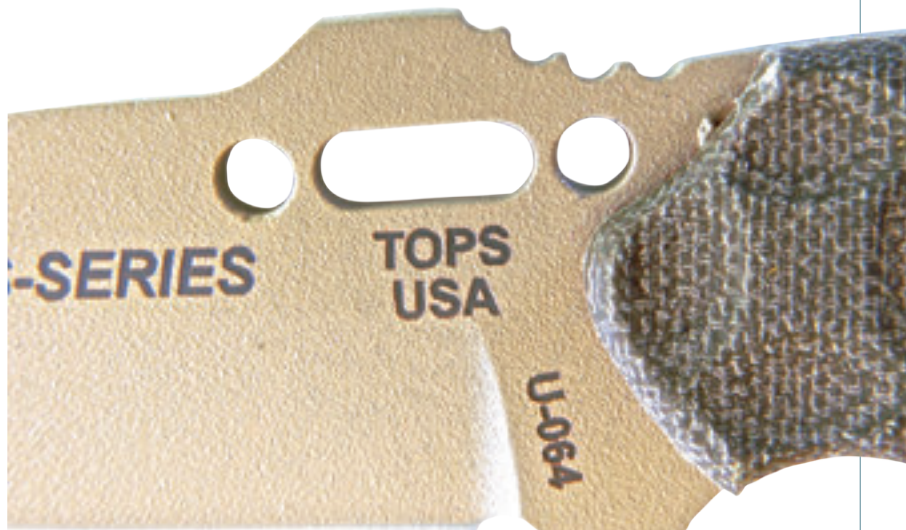
won't happen with this knife.

The Coyote Tan Kydex sheath is brand new to the TOPS line. It is molded to the exact lines of the C.A.T. and held in place via friction fit. When the knife is placed in the sheath, it locks in place with an audible click.

I like the innovative spring metal clip on the back of the sheath. It can be rotated to permit a variety of carry positions. Rotating the sheath requires a deliberate motion—it will stay in position until the user decides to move it. It did not become loose throughout the course of this evaluation.



Sheath is molded to exact lines of the C.A.T. and is held in place via friction fit.



Blade has integral oxygen wrench. Jimping on top of blade allows user to choke up for fine, precise cuts.

The clip will almost—but not quite—fit into loops on MOLLE gear, but three holes in the sheath will let you strap it to a vest or pack with paracord.

I spent three weeks with the C.A.T. as my constant companion and used it

for anything that required a knife. I cut rope and leather, opened boxes, and cut targets out of cardboard, a material that will quickly dull almost all knives. When necessary, the C.A.T. was easy to resharpen with my Spyderco Triangle Sharpmaker.

Here in Arizona, humidity is not a huge concern except during the summer monsoon season, and the powder-coat finish all but negated the low corrosion resistance of the 1095 steel. To be on the safe side, I did coat the unfinished edge with Weapon Shield CLP.

In summary, this is a relatively small but strong and highly versatile knife. While the original purpose of the C.A.T. was specifically tactical, it will be equally at home with hunters, backpackers, and campers. Considering the genesis of this design, it is also an excellent choice for inclusion with an armed citizen's EDC equipment.

Suggested retail price is \$120. ©



Spring steel clip can be rotated for a variety of carry options.

SOURCES

TOPS KNIVES

(208) 542-0113
www.topsknives.com

SPYDERCO

(800) 525-7770
www.spyderco.com

Caldwell AR-15 Mag Charger

Loading magazines for a day at the range can be a heck of a chore. It need not be. Over the years, *S.W.A.T.* has taken a look at a number of magazine loaders that can save time and your fingers.

There is another plus to using mag loaders. Feeding problems and jams in the AR platform can often be attributed to bent or malformed magazine feed lips. Loading magazines by hand without a loading tool places unnecessary stress on the feed lips. A loading tool minimizes damage to the magazine feed lips from the loading process and prolongs the service life of your magazines.

Caldwell® Shooting Supplies (a Battenfield® Technologies brand) has come out with an innovative patent-pending speed loader designed to load AR magazines in seconds. AK owners have not been left out, as Caldwell also has a version of the Mag Charger for 7.62x39mm AK magazines.

The Caldwell AR-15 Mag Charger was awarded the prestigious 2015 Golden Bullseye Award by the NRA as the *American Rifleman* Accessory of the Year. To be eligible for consideration for this award, a product must exhibit “outstanding performance, innovative design and value.”

Always looking for a better or easier way to do things, I requested an AR-15 Mag Charger from Caldwell Shooting Supplies to check it out myself.

The AR-15 Mag Charger is designed to hold 50 rounds directly from any common 50-round retail packaged ammo box, as well as aftermarket 50-round plastic storage boxes such as those available from Caldwell and many others.

An ammo transfer tray is included with the Mag Charger to invert ammo that is positioned in ammo boxes with the bullet tips down. The transfer tray may also be used to stage bulk ammo. The AR-15 Mag Charger accepts .223 Rem,



Caldwell AR-15 Mag Charger is designed to accept ammo directly from most 50-count packed ammo and to load magazines in seconds. It received the NRA 2015 Golden Bullseye Award.

5.56mm NATO or .204 Ruger ammo.

You are probably wondering whether or not the Mag Charger can be used to load .300 AAC Blackout (.300 BLK). I wondered about this too, so I asked a rep from Customer Service at Battenfield Technologies about it. I was told that they do not recommend it. There are too many variables in the .300 BLK round and, as a result, some rounds may have issues.

To load the Mag Charger, simply align the bullet tips and dump the box of ammo directly into the ammo carrier tray. Indexing tabs in the ammo carrier tray automatically align the ammo. Sometimes there may be a few stray rounds that need to be placed in the ammo carrier tray, but generally you don't need to touch any of the rounds. Ammo can be hand loaded into the carrier tray if desired, although this slows the process considerably.

Once the ammo carrier is full, insert an AR magazine into the Mag Charger in the same manner that you would insert it into the mag well of an AR, and actuate the loading plunger back and forth. Each push of the loading plunger loads five rounds into the magazine. The ammo carrier is spring-loaded and automatically advances to the next row of ammo after each stroke.

A 30-round magazine can be loaded literally in seconds. The AR-15 Mag Charger is compatible with all AR-15



A transfer tray is included with the Mag Charger to invert ammo that is positioned in ammo boxes with the bullet tips down or to stage bulk ammo for dumping into the Mag Charger.

magazines. If it works in your AR, it should work in the Mag Charger.

The Mag Charger is a well-made unit. It is constructed of polycarbonate and appears to be quite durable, although only time will tell. So far it has worked exactly as advertised. It is easy to fill,

easy to use, and a real timesaver when loading from 50-round boxes of ammo.

Although 50-round boxes of factory ammo are not as common as they once were, .223/5.56 factory ammo in 50-round boxes is available from Black Hills Ammunition, CorBon, Double Tap, Fiocchi, Hornady, HPR Ammo, Lapua, Ultramax, and The Hunting Shack. There may be others that I am unaware of.

The Caldwell AR-15 Mag Charger (Item Number: 397488) has a suggested retail price of \$89.99. Street prices will be lower. It comes with a one-year warranty against defects in material and workmanship from the date of original purchase. ©



AR-15 Mag Charger is designed to hold 50 rounds directly from any common 50-round retail packaged ammo box, as well as aftermarket 50-round plastic storage boxes.

SOURCES

BATTENFIELD TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

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"Ounces are pounds and pounds are pain." At just over five pounds, the ROBAR PolymAR-15L is the lightest sub-MOA guaranteed AR carbine on the market. The PolymAR-15L uses the exclusive KSP polymer upper and lower receiver, BCM stock, grip, vertical foregrip, Gunfighter QD receiver end plate, and KMR13 forend. It utilizes a Faxon 14.5- or 16-inch pencil barrel, chambered for 5.56mm NATO, 1:8 twist, with a QPQ (Tenifer/Melonite) finish and a mid-length direct gas impingement. ROBAR NP3 is plated on the milspec bolt carrier group and internal components, making the PolymAR-15L a carbine with one of the lowest coefficients of friction, which translates to reliability with little or no lubrication, and ease of cleaning. Suggested retail price is \$1,695.



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American Built Arms Mission Critical Kit

American Built Arms Company (A*B Arms), a veteran-owned Type 07 U.S. manufacturer of firearms and firearms parts and accessories to the civilian, law enforcement and defense industries, has launched the A*B Arms Mission Critical Kit™—a collection of critical replacement parts for your AR-15/M-4 that are there in your time of need.

The Mission Critical Kit™ contains:

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- One A*B Arms latex barrel cover



- 5.56 broken shell extractor
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Black Hills Ammunition 70-Grain Hornady GMX

Black Hills has added a special-purpose load to its growing 5.56mm lineup. This load, utilizing the 70-grain Hornady GMX® projectile, is designed as a “barrier blind” round, meaning performance is only minimally affected by barriers. It’s not armor piercing but significantly out-performs conventional bullets in law enforcement situations where officers may be required to engage deadly threats in vehicles or behind light cover. It’s also optimal for hunting that requires great expansion combined with deep penetration and nearly 100% weight retention. This loading is designed for rifles with a rifling twist of 1:7 or 1:8. Penetration in ballistic gelatin consistently runs 17 to 22 inches, with a wound diameter in the five-inch range. Recovered bullet diameter averages nearly .50 caliber.

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Delta Grip for Ruger LCR and LCRx

In response to overwhelming consumer demand, Ergo Grip® introduces their radical new Delta Grip for Ruger LCR and LCRx revolvers. This innovative injection-molded handgun grip is the first truly ergonomic grip engineered for the most important part of the revolver—the shooter. The unconventional shape gives the shooter a more natural point of aim, more gripping surface area, and better control while maintaining the ability to conceal and carry the revolver.

The grip angle aligns the shooter’s hand, wrist and arm in a straighter line for a more natural point of aim and better recoil control. The Delta Grip is a single-piece design made from Sarlink TPV with Ergo’s XT texture molded over a rigid polymer core. This textured material provides a secure, comfortable grip, helps absorb recoil, and is chemical resistant. Suggested retail price is \$29.99.

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Stop That Car!

It was broad daylight on a sunny April day in the parking lot of a Smyrna, Georgia car wash when witnesses heard a woman scream. A van with four occupants had been scoping the lot, and one of the van's passengers had slid out the side door and into a woman's white Honda, putting it in gear and backing out of the parking space. Seeing her car getting stolen, the woman leapt onto the hood and screamed for help, clinging for dear life as the carjacker accelerated toward the exit.

A bystander saw the car gaining speed with the woman on the hood, drew his pistol and jogged across the parking lot to get a clear shot at the thief. Opening fire before the car could exit onto busy Highlands Parkway, the Good Samaritan hit the carjacker in the shoulder, causing the vehicle to come to a stop and the woman to jump to safety. The carjacker was arrested, but his accomplices fled. "If that guy didn't shoot, she probably would end up losing her life," an eyewitness told reporters.

SOURCE: WSB-TV, Atlanta, Georgia, 4/3/15

Repeat Offenders

An Indianapolis woman stopped to get groceries on the way home from her night shift job, so it was 1AM on a Friday in early April when she finally arrived at her home. As she was unloading her vehicle, she heard one of a trio of men say, "Shut up, be quiet, don't say anything," as he produced a gun and aimed it at her.

Instead of complying, she leaned into her truck and grabbed her own pistol, which her father had encouraged her to get licensed to carry. She came out firing, hitting one of her assailants and forcing the others to beat a hasty re-

treat. The wounded man was captured by police, and when his vehicle was searched, items were found that matched a robbery at a nearby apartment complex earlier that night.

SOURCE: WTHR-TV, Indianapolis, Indiana, 4/10/15

Über Gunner

Legal concealed carry in Chicago, Illinois is still a relatively new thing, but it's perhaps unsurprising to learn that a driver for the smartphone-powered taxi service Über was an early adopter. The driver in question was sitting in his car in the Logan Square area of Chicago just before midnight on a Friday night when he was startled to see a man across the street from him produce a pistol and open fire on a group of pedestrians in front of his parked cab.

The driver pulled out his own handgun (a Taurus Judge, according to some reports) and returned fire at the shooter, hitting him multiple times. The shooter crumpled to the ground, where he was arrested by responding officers and is being held without bail. The 47-year-old Über driver showed police his valid concealed-carry permit and Illinois Firearm Owner's ID card and is not being charged.

SOURCE: *The Chicago Tribune*, Chicago, Illinois, 4/20/15

She's Not Gonna Take It

A rash of burglaries had plagued west Tulsa, Oklahoma in the wake of the recent tornado. Homes and churches had been hit by the crooks, but one woman decided she'd had enough.

Despite being 92 years old and legally blind, when she heard someone trying to force entry by beating on and kicking her back door, she didn't cower in fear. Instead she grabbed her pistol and shouted to the intruders that if they broke into her house, the police wouldn't take them away, the morgue would. The would-be invaders fled.

SOURCE: KOTV-DT, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 4/3/15 ©



Sometimes Grandpa's old war trophy is all you have.

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Bad Habits

OF all the bad habits one can incur, poor battle strategy and tactics will guarantee a dinner date with the Grim Reaper faster than any others. While it's an unwritten law that any battle plan will inevitably fall apart two minutes after the physical fight commences, many fights are lost before they start because of inefficient pre-planning.

You have two basic pre-fight choices: go with the Be Prepared credo of the Boy Scout, or employ the Custer technique of entering a battle of wits armed only with a giant ego. If you go on the Boy Scout principle, you're in with half a chance; if you're some vainglorious idiot, have the common courtesy not to sacrifice your cavalry, brigade, family, or team members with you.

For the soldier, police officer, or any other operator professionally engaged in the art of fighting, strategy and prior planning are prerequisites for every potential known-in-advance impending encounter. For the Average Joe, however, the primary objective of pre-planning is avoidance. Yes, you still practice with your weapons of choice and study tactics for the last-ditch eventuality that you might have to use them, but unless you're psychotic or *non compos mentis*, your day-to-day urban existence should also include paying cerebral homage to techniques on avoiding physical violence.

Two of the major causes of having "victim" stamped on one's forehead are daily driving habits and techniques. Not participating in stupid behavior—such as exhibiting hand signals not included in the driver's license instruction manual—will certainly aid in de-escalating retaliatory aggression, but that is not the subject under discussion. The crux of the problem is how to modify the typical urbanite's rat-race driving habits so as not to become motorized prey for someone hunting an easy lunch. This predator is already out and about looking for trouble, whatever his intent: murder, robbery, rape, or carjacking. The base idea is not to be the victim by using the same *modus operandi* day after day, because once you set up a pattern of operations, the bad guys will break the code—and possibly your neck as well.

So Rule Number One is to vary your daily departure and arrival times from and to your domicile—but you knew that.

Rule Number Two is to vary your daily travel route—but you knew that.

Rule Number Three is to leave at least one car length between yourself and the vehicle in front of you when stopped at an intersection, to allow an escape route in the event of a vehicle ambush. But you knew that too. And you also know that in city traffic, this is a Utopian concept at best, because in reality you can't do this without raising the ire of other motorists and law enforcement officers alike.

So you practice vehicular defense drills on the training range, sagely nodding your head as your omniscient instructor—who has never been ambushed as a lone citizen in a vehicle—dazzles you with techniques on how to unbuckle a seatbelt with one hand and simultaneously return fire with a concealed pistol with your other hand. All this is carried out in the blink of an eye while you're lowering the vehicle's

Two of the major causes of having "victim" stamped on one's forehead are daily driving habits and techniques.

side window with your third hand and signing a contract with Cirque du Soleil with your left foot.

Here's some information to stop the printing press:

Unless you've seen the situation building and have premature warning, it's just not going to happen like that. Hate to pee on your parade, but that's the way it is. Buy an umbrella if you don't want wet yellow hair.

So what can you do to enhance your self-preservation, over and above bemoaning the fact that the law favors criminals?

For one, you can attach a firearm to your vehicle in a readily accessible location. Obviously that means accessible to you only. Not to your four-year-old carpet muncher, car wash attendant, or auto mechanic. Accessible also means that you can get the gun into your grubby little paw and deploy it without having to deal with buckled seatbelts, armrests, and the ever-present curse of mankind—the ubiquitous cellphone.

Oh, yes, just to further brighten your day, did I mention that the weapon had better be stashed in compliance with your local/state/federal laws? And that it should be removed from its resting place each and every time you exit the vehicle so Mister Car Thief doesn't try to use it on the first on-scene arresting police officer?

Darn it, this is too complicated and paranoid. I'll just hope for the best and head home, hit the electronic door beeper on my way up the driveway, and gun it into the garage, where I'm safe and sound. Of course now you're night-blind from the headlights bouncing off the gloss-white painted walls, and the crook has snuck in behind you before the garage door closed. Or he's been lying in wait for hours after opening the door with his own beeper because you didn't bother to have it recoded from factory stock when you had the unit installed.

Try having halogen back-up lamps fitted to your vehicle and reversing up your driveway. Then you won't be night-blind, can fight a frontal attack rather than one coming from the rear and, better yet, you have a faster means of escape from your house if necessary. Reverse park, reverse park, reverse park. Always, if possible.

And why did you have to flee your house? Because the killer/burglar/mugger used his own beeper to enter through the garage and then cheerfully walked into your house through the interleading door—which nobody ever locks.

Hope he isn't a smoking, drinking, poorly attired monk. Too many bad habits can get you killed. ☉

[This column first appeared in the August 2006 issue of S.W.A.T.]

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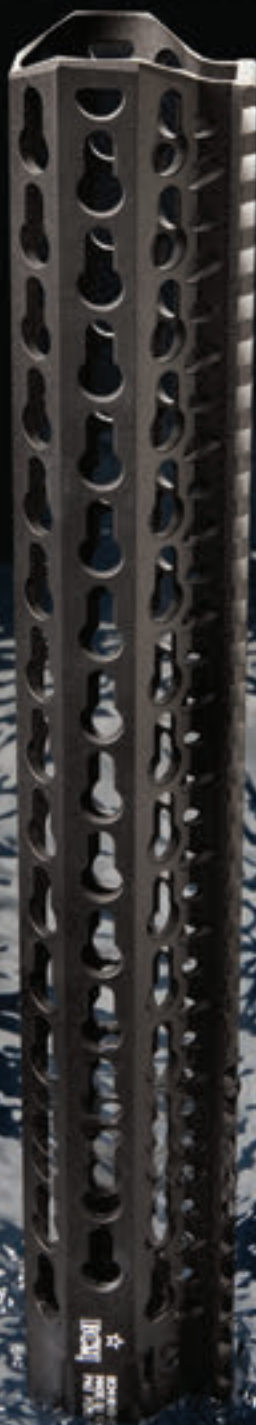
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