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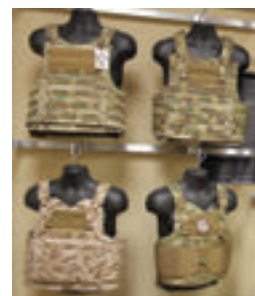
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Velocity Systems and Mayflower R&C Tactical Gear
Armor carriers, ballistic plates, and responsive service.

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SMART HD OPTIC

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GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS



AXTS MI-T556

Formerly a manufacturer of innovative parts, AXTS makes the move to being a gun company with the introduction of this rifle.

BY JASON SWARR & KYLA DOYLE

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Terrorist Attacks: Are You Prepared?

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AS this is written, just a few days have passed since the horrific terrorist attacks in Paris. Predictably, Internet sites and my newsfeed on Facebook filled up with comments—some giving sound advice, others amounting to mere chest thumping. Two recurring themes were that France's restrictive gun laws contributed to the slaughter, and the terrorists would have been stopped quickly in the United States.

Don't kid yourself. It can, and very possibly will, happen here and result in the same kind of carnage. No one goes to a concert expecting a terrorist attack.

Several of the terrorists had on murder vests (more descriptive than "suicide vests") and were throwing grenades into the crowd. Even if you are armed, the likelihood of getting off an aimed shot—while terrified people scramble to get out of harm's way—is doubtful.

If you have a firearm, by all means carry it, but simply possessing a gun is not enough. Not knowing how to *fight* with the gun is akin to competing in NASCAR with a Prius.

Get training from a vetted, qualified instructor—and don't stop with an introductory course. When practicing on your own, use the gear and wear the clothing you use and wear every day. Get out of your comfort zone and shoot from awkward positions and around cover and concealment with your weak hand. In short, try to prepare for the kind of fight you may get—not the kind you want or envision on a safe square range.

There is a very real chance you may be injured. Do you carry an individual first aid kit with a tourniquet? You should.

Another aspect often overlooked is situational awareness. If not asleep, you should always be in Condition Yellow. Avoid large crowds, especially where alcohol is served. Look for possible indicators, such as someone wearing a heavy coat—it may conceal a long gun or even a murder vest.

Your first responsibility is to take care of your loved ones and yourself. Internet heroics aside, if the hairs on the back of your neck tell you something or someone seems out of place, listen to that sixth sense and, to be blunt, unass the area as quickly as you can. The best way to survive an attack is to not be there when it happens.

Last but certainly not least is mindset. Telling yourself you carry a gun to protect your family is fine, but to help cultivate the proper mindset, tell yourself every morning that today might be the day you have to shoot and possibly kill someone.

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

Denny Hansen

SWAT

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MOUSE GUNS

In your November 2015 issue, I was happy to see the article *Mighty Mouse*, extolling the virtues of the 9x18. I love my Makarovs, P-64, P-83, and others that use that ammo. But an accusation is being thrown at the P-64, and I must respond. The trigger pull is easily fixed with an inexpensive Wolff spring kit. For many people, myself included, it is a very accurate weapon. Small and slim, and ideal for concealed carry.

Again thank you for the article, but the P-64 deserves better than the three or four the author rated it.

T. W. Curtis, email

Thanks for taking the time to contact us. We're happy to hear you liked the article and will pass on your information about the Wolff spring kit.

LUBE IT UP

I would like to see an article on lubrication. I know Patrick Rogers likes SLiP 2000 for carbines, but what about pis-

tols? Also how does climate affect lubrication? I have heard of using grease for rainy climates, and mixing oil with gas for cold climates. An overview article of lubrication would be helpful.

I have been a subscriber for about six years, so if I missed it, I'd like to know. Keep up the good work, and always defend the rights of a free people.

J. Pandya, Utah

Thanks for your support and the inquiry. We'll assign this to one of our authors who has a wide range of real-world experience from all over the world, in all climates.

TRAINING DISASTER

I have not attended a large number of firearms courses, but I could hardly believe how atrocious the course Denny Hansen attended was (*NIGHTMARE ON SESAME STREET: Training Gone Wrong*, December 2015 *S.W.A.T.*). I do have a couple of questions.

Why was the actual name of the company not mentioned? As a reader, I want to know where *not* to spend my money.

Also the part when they were zeroing their red dots confused me. If a scope has ½ MOA adjustments for 100 yards, wouldn't the number of clicks needed to zero at 50 yards also be reduced in half?

K. Madison, Kansas

Thank you for your questions. It has been said that any press is good press, and I simply did not believe this company deserved any mention. The company operates in Arizona, and any Arizona readers may contact me directly.

In regard to click values—staying with ½ MOA adjustments—if you decrease the distance from 100 yards to 50 yards, your click value also decreases by half. So, a group one-inch high would need two clicks at 100 yards but would need four clicks at 50 yards.

Denny Hansen

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QUESTIONS FROM CALIFORNIA

Mister Hansen,

I am a recent subscriber to your fine magazine. I am most interested in your article on building your own AR-15 (*QUALITY AR-15 BUILD: Raise Your Standards*, August 2015 S.W.A.T.). I probably cannot do this in California, nonetheless I have a few questions. Perhaps you can accommodate me.

First, where/when/what is the SHOT Show? Is it open to the public?

Where does one get the plans to build an AR-15? As I understand it, there are many pieces. Is there a list, or is it included with the plans? Are any parts legal in California?

For some reason or other, I had the idea that your editorial offices were in southern California, but I now realize you are in Florida. Even so, where do you go to plink?

I am a frequent visitor to Key West, and there is a fairly new range on the key just north of Rockland. I know the owner of the range and have been there many times, but is there a place I can go just to plink?

Last, a not-so-nice question: How

is it that CMMG is not an advertiser in your fine magazine?

A.L. Way, email

First, thank you for your support and we hope you continue to enjoy S.W.A.T. in the future. I'll try to answer your questions in order.

The SHOT Show is normally held the third week of January in different venues, usually in Las Vegas. An industry show, it is not open to the general public but is restricted to firearms-specific media, dealers, wholesalers, and manufacturers.

Assembling an AR-15, especially the lower receiver, is not difficult. Lower parts kits are available from many sources on the Internet, and most include everything except the lower receiver extension (buffer tube), buffer, buffer spring, and stock. When ordering, I would inquire if the kit is "California legal."

Short of attending an armorer's course, I recommend viewing the DVD AR-15 Rifles, Technical Manual & Armorer's Course from the American Gunsmithing Institute. You can rewind

or pause it while you assemble your rifle. The DVD can be found at: www.americangunsmith.com/app/products/view/25/AR-15-Rifles.

The upper receiver is a bit more difficult and requires some special tools, but complete upper receivers are often available for less than what the parts alone cost. Many people prefer to go this route.

Our main offices are indeed in Florida, but I am located in Arizona, so I can't comment on where to plink in Florida. In Arizona, many shooters enjoy their sport on public land, such as in the desert or national forests, assuming there is a safe backstop.

Finally, CMMG has advertised in the past, but as is the case with all companies, advertising is not a prerequisite for editorial coverage here at S.W.A.T.

Denny Hansen ☺

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Yes—stance, sight alignment, sight picture, trigger control, and follow-through all come into play, but everything starts in the holster. Your K-Mart blue light special one-size-fits-most just does not cut it.

Recently I received a Leather Wing™ holster and Modular Accessory Pouch (M.A.P.) from BlackPoint Tactical. From the very first look, I was drawn to these combination Kydex and leather products. BlackPoint makes holsters in numerous colors, and the samples received were Gun Metal Gray, a nice change from black Kydex®, which to



Above: Front of BlackPoint Tactical Leather Wing holster with Springfield XD.

Left: Rear of Leather Wing holster shows construction details.



me has become somewhat humdrum. Of course, one nice thing about Kydex is that maintenance is simple—just wipe it with a damp cloth.

BlackPoint manufactures custom handcrafted holsters built around the ideals of comfort and concealment. For example, the holster I requested was for a full-size Springfield XD. BlackPoint did not have a mold for the XD at that time, but went out of their way to procure one so they could fill my order. *That's* custom. Many manufacturers

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Rear of M.A.P. reveals how elements can be configured. For example: one magazine pouch, two magazine pouches, three magazine pouches, two magazines and a flashlight, etc.



Front of Modular Accessory Pouch, this one set up for two magazines.



Author believes Talon Grips improve his grip on his XD.

would simply say, "Sorry, we don't offer anything for that pistol."

The holster is made from two separate pieces of Kydex. Four screws hold the two parts of the holster that attach the holster to a leather "wing," and a tension screw allows the user to adjust how much pressure he desires to withdraw the pistol.

The belt loop slots are steel and attach to the leather wing. The wing makes wearing the holster very comfortable and aids in concealment. The bottom of the holster is open and has no security devices such as a thumb break, but I believe the adjustable tension screw in the holster is more than adequate for concealed carry. The back side of the holster has a sweat guard to protect clothing or bare skin.

The M.A.P. pouches are made the same way as the holster, with two separate pieces of Kydex making up the front and back, with leather between them for the belt loops. The design allows additional pouches to be added just by removing a few belt loops and screws.

The setup I received was for two XD .45 magazines, but BlackPoint offers pouches that can be attached to the M.A.P. to include tactical lights, an ASP baton, AR magazine, handcuffs, and more. While not practical for the average citizen who carries concealed, an officer working a boat unit, horseback, or other could fashion an entire duty belt.

Overall I found both the holster and mag pouches to be very functional and plan to work them more for off-duty carry.

TALON GRIPS

Earlier I said the perfect shot starts in the holster with a good grip. That grip becomes more critical if shots are fired. Even if you are very strong, a bad grip caused by sweat, blood or mud can make follow-up shots difficult.

I have been using skateboard tape on my XD for years, as I dislike the feel of bare plastic in my hand and, even though textured, the grips can become slippery under certain conditions. The skateboard tape afforded me better weapon control, and my grip didn't slip when firing multiple shots.

Around the time I received the BlackPoint Tactical gear, I also obtained grip wraps from Talon Grips. They are pre-cut and designed to wrap around and cover the entire grip area.

Talon has two different grips: one has a soft rubber feel and the other is more abrasive. I like the abrasive grip. I feel if I have blood or sweat on my hands, I can still maintain control of my weapon. My hands are callused, so the abrasive grip does not bother them. If your hands are soft or sensitive, the rubber grip may be more to your liking, especially during a week-long shooting school with high round counts. ☺

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Cop-Citizen Conflicts

I didn't set out to write a column that will make everyone mad, but I probably did. On the other hand, it would take a microscope to see how little I care about upsetting people. I'm putting out the truth, or at least my petite version thereof, and if that ruffles feathers, sorry about your luck. I sleep just fine.

This column is about interpersonal conflict in the form of cop-citizen interactions, more specifically what to do when you think the police have "done you wrong." With police-community relations so tenuous these days, it seems appropriate to offer a few ideas from the dull side of the badge.

For starters, every cop in the world will tell you a story about being introduced in a social setting and immediately hearing how someone was pulled over for a traffic violation and, "The cop was such a jerk."

Maybe that cop was a jerk. Or quite



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possibly, the person telling the story might be exaggerating a little—or a lot. You see, as a supervisor, I've taken uncounted complaints on officers and one of my favorite things is to review in-car video that not only shows the officer was acting professionally, but that the complainant was a raging ass.

In my obviously biased and thoroughly unscientific estimate, about 95% of complaints that we could indisputably prove via audio, video or third-party witnesses turned out to be

groundless. Yes, I know some readers are openly scoffing, but it happens all the time. I repeat: all the time.

This goes back to the fact that many people, especially in today's society, don't like being forced to conform to all those silly laws and regulations. Yeah, I know you are important and special and wise, but the law is the law, even for you.

Therefore, before complaining about a cop, take a big double-shot of Intro-spection and wash it down with a large swig of Calm Down. Get your panties out of a wad, try to look rationally at the situation from a detached viewpoint, and realize the police have no duty to be nice to you.

There, I said it.

We try to be nice when the situation warrants, but don't expect flowers and sunshine, especially if you are being loud, rude or otherwise uncooperative.



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In my experience, most complaints and hard feelings come down to tender and bruised emotions. The complainant is upset merely because the cop wasn't "respectful" toward them, regardless of their own actions to incite, inflame, or even bait the officer.

Of course I freely admit that sometimes cops are unnecessarily rude or even truly "outside the lines." If you find yourself in such a predicament, the most important thing is to stay calm. I often tell people, "Somebody needs to be an adult—it might as well be you!" and this is especially true when an officer is getting angry or overly aggressive.

At these moments, I suggest it's best to merely "go along with the program," as difficult as it might be, while making mental or recorded notes for a possible formal complaint later. The most important point is that you don't try to figuratively or literally fight the police. Yes, you may eventually "win the war," but the cost to everyone involved will be very high.

Keep in mind that the #1 rule we continually drill into officers is "Always win." This might sound harsh, but if you truly understand our work environment, a pushover cop is not only worth-

less but a danger to themselves and co-workers. So we constantly strive to be in control of every situation, whether it is a traffic stop or a gunfight.

This means trying to fight your way out of a "bad" situation or arrest is an exceptionally dumb idea. I don't know how many cops it will take to stuff your butt into a patrol car, but we've got plenty of help just waiting to try.

If you are truly scared for your safety or it seems things are getting tremendously out of hand, get yourself under control and ask (as nicely as possible) for a supervisor to come to the scene.

While the corporal, sergeant or lieutenant is likewise a cop, they are extremely interested in making sure nothing outside of law and policy occurs, especially while things are under their direct control.

But if you likewise approach the supervisor screaming and shouting, demanding the officer be immediately fired, dropping every politician's name you've ever heard, and otherwise ranting and raving, your credibility is already suffering even if the officer(s) did something obviously improper.

This goes double if you are going to allege serious misconduct or criminal

activity such as excessive use of force. In cases like these, it is best to keep your mouth shut, submit to arrest if necessary, then seek a calm, level-headed third-party (ideally an attorney) to represent your interests in dealing with the police agency.

In the end, cops have one of the toughest, most psychologically dangerous and damaging yet important jobs in the world. Sometimes—far less frequently than the media or social media would have you believe—they screw up and treat people badly. When this happens, feel free to call them out, responsibly, because good cops want nothing more than to weed out the screw-ups and bad apples. On the other hand, if you just got a speeding ticket or were busted for public drunkenness and didn't like it, see paragraph #1. ☺

Brent T. Wheat is a former SWAT officer, canine handler, detective, and patrol supervisor who retired after a 30-year law enforcement career in the Midwest. A prolific freelance writer and photographer, he is the publisher of WildIndiana Magazine, a regionally focused outdoor magazine. He can be reached at btwheat@wildindiana.com.

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Safety While Traveling Abroad

IF I had to describe my past eight years in a simple phrase, it would be “adventure travel.” I’m always searching for the next adventure expedition, volcano to climb, wilderness to explore, or chasing the good light in order to get that perfect picture.

This means traveling via airplanes, trains, tuk-tuks, boats, buses, large ships, bush planes, and even the occasional elephant. Most of this is international travel. With every trip comes a set of goals and with them, some degree of danger, both during the trip and while traveling to the start point. These dangers often come in the form of people, transportation, weather, political unrest, and cultural differences.

MONEY AND PASSPORT SECURITY

Researching the area, carrying some local currency, and speaking the local language are very good ways to improve your travel ability. Proper ways to stash money and documents, some preparedness and emergency items, and proper clothing will help make the best of any trip.

Spotting the dangers in our home city is easy. We know where the bad



An obvious bad part of town in Guerrero, Mexico. Graffiti, gang tagging, and junk cars are clues that an area may not be forgiving to a lost traveler.

part of town is. We may have alternate routes we travel to avoid it. But once we travel to a foreign country, it isn’t as easy to spot what is the norm and what is a potential danger zone for outsiders.

Let’s take a common vacation where we want to see the sights. We don’t want to broadcast that we are tourists with money or expensive gear and we don’t have any idea where anything is located. This puts us at a huge disadvantage and paints a target on us.

On a short train ride from Athens, Greece, I was traveling with a few colleagues and we were all standing on the train facing each other and talking. When we arrived in Piraeus, one of the guys discovered his wallet had been pick pocketed. It was in his back pocket, where many guys carry it. Since then, I’ve always carried my wallet in a cargo pocket situated more toward the front of my body and where others can see it, especially if we are having a conversation.

If I put the wallet in my back pocket, I attach it to my belt loop with a thin metal chain. Crowded buses, trains and ferries are known as places thieves prey upon tourists, so be aware of this wherever you find yourself.

Passport safety should be a high priority. In 2012, I was on a jungle expedition trip where one of the members lost



Athens, Greece is another big city with many potential dangers for travelers. Venture into city crowds and mass transit with caution and common sense.

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Officer guards a convoy outside of Cairo, Egypt. Obey law enforcement and respect local laws in foreign countries.

his passport on the street while riding on a rickshaw buggy. This delayed the group and was costly both in money and time. A neck-carry wallet or secure cargo pocket would have prevented this altogether.

I have often been asked about what to do with your passport when abroad. Some hotels and experienced travelers will say to leave it in the hotel safe; don't carry it on you when walking around town or you might lose it. I have to disagree, because your passport is so valuable. It is your international identification and getting home without it is very difficult.

In Venezuela, I was asked to show my passport to law enforcement and military about 20 times during a three-week trip. In Russia, I couldn't even check into a hostel without showing a passport.

Some people are afraid of losing their passport to a mugger or pick pocket, but this is not as common as a maid, bellboy, or maintenance person lifting it from your hotel room. Besides, most hotels I stay at don't have a safe. Always carry your passport securely!

COMMUNICATING WITH LOCALS

I still remember that, after completing the Jungle Survival program with Randall's Adventure & Training in 2007, Jeff

Randall told all of us students, sitting around a table in Tamshiyacu, Peru, that the most important skill in most "survival" situations is your ability to communicate.

This has stuck with me over the years, and communication is a skill I have been honing ever since. It is amazing how many times a simple wave and a smile have disarmed the local young men in a village as I strayed too far away from the main drag in a third-world country.

A little language goes a long way. There is no better way to blend in and win the locals' respect than learning some of the native language. A handful of phrases shows you care about being there more than if you just ask, "Does anyone here speak English?"

A good way to stay out of trouble anywhere in the world is to avoid discussing religion and politics. Carry local currency, if possible. On my recent trip to Cuba, I arrived in the wee hours

after all the currency exchange places had closed, and I needed to pay for a taxi and hotel. U.S. dollars are not accepted in Cuba.

Try to exchange money in the airport when you arrive in-country, but this is not always an option, and then you have to ask the worst phrase in travel, "Do you take American dollars?" This will definitely earn you some side eye and possibly some unfamiliar phrases that should not be taken as compliments.

Carrying local currency helps you stay under the radar as a Western traveler, whom most countries see as "the rich" or even worse, a potential target for muggings or kidnappings.

Procuring a local guide may be the best way to go. Also listen to the advice of locals and law enforcement on safety in that specific area. On a trip to Mindanao in the southern Philippines, I was urged by locals to take some guides who would act as my protection from Abu Sayyaf, a group of Islamic radicals.



Be respectful of the wishes and privacy of locals while abroad. The author was asked to stop taking photos of locals in Alexandria, Egypt.

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In the South Pacific, evacuation signs are often posted for emergencies. Tsunamis have devastated Hilo, Hawaii in the past.

Kidnapping Americans and Europeans had become all too frequent in that part of the country.

It was the same in 2009, when I was in Guerrero, Mexico, known to this day for drug trafficking and kidnapping. A local guide was my best choice for getting up into the Sierra Madre del Sur mountains and exploring the jungle safely, since I spoke just enough Spanish to get into trouble!

NATURAL DISASTERS

Be aware of the weather patterns and advisories for typhoons, earthquakes, and fires. Many areas that border the ocean will have signs for tsunami evacuation. Areas at higher elevations that are prone to excessive snow may have avalanche zones.

Besides the event, the worst aspect of the aftermath of a natural disaster is that there will be no water, limited water, or too much of it but none of it clean. I recommend traveling with Iodine or chlorine tablets for disinfecting water. Hotels and luxury liner cruise ships also have water in toilets or collection bins. This is considered gray water and needs to be disinfected.

A means of water purification, along with a flashlight, Swiss Army knife, and whistle will help you travel safely through most countries and most conditions, but don't leave your common sense at home! ☺

Reuben Bolieu is an adventurer, writer, photographer, and survival instructor for Randall's Adventure & Training. He has spent most of his life hiking and backpacking through the wildernesses of the world. A lifetime student of survival, he has studied primitive survival techniques from all over the world.



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PROTECTION

AT THE SPEED OF NEED



Velocity Systems and Mayflower Research & Consulting Tactical Gear

BY TODD BURGREN

Velocity Systems produces armor carriers that allow operators to conduct fluid mission roles while staying as ballistically protected as possible.

Multiple companies produce ballistic protection systems today. This was not always the case, with consumers paying the price both literally and figuratively. This business competition has not only spurred R&D but also lowered the cost of armor, making it available to a wider range of clients besides the military.

A leading armor solutions company helping equip DHS, law enforcement, private security contractors (PSC), and military units with body armor is Velocity Systems. While military or law enforcement budgets often fixate on high-end equipment procurement, it is the unspoken rule that trained personnel are the real commodity in any organization.

Though not the most widely known ballistic protection company, Velocity Systems is used by many law enforcement and military units. At the present time, Velocity Systems' niche in the marketplace lies with armor carriers, soft and hard ballistic plates, and extremely responsive service.

SISTER COMPANIES

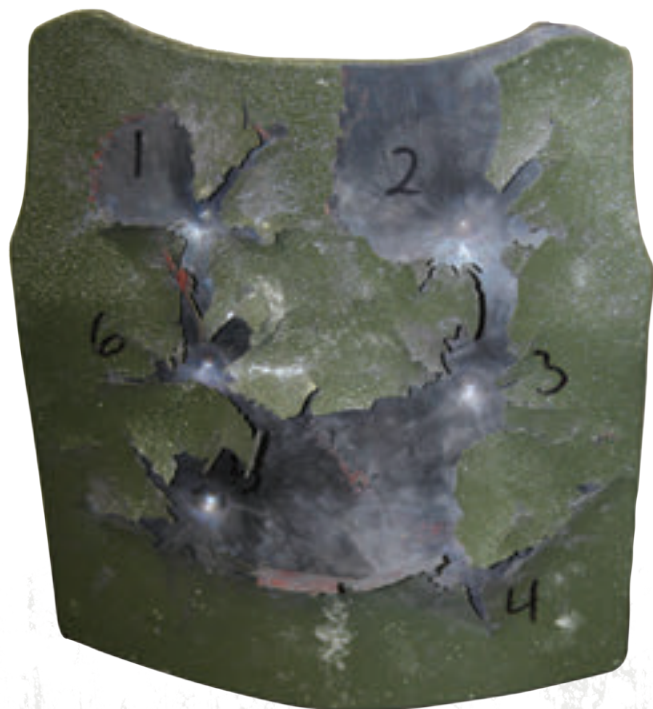
Different operational entities arrive at Velocity with an armor product need in mind. If a Velocity Systems' item is not already available or designed, Velocity can have working prototypes ready within weeks, not months. Velocity's sister company, Mayflower Research & Consulting, is another asset that melds well with Velocity Systems' body armor carriers.

Velocity and Mayflower operate as two different companies, but at times this close relationship has design cues and material choices creeping across the factory floor to the mutual benefit of both companies. The principal owner of Mayflower is good friends with one of the Velocity owners. In 2008, Velocity was approached to help support the increasing manufacturing needs of Mayflower.

Velocity Systems agreed to OEM manufacture Mayflower chest rigs and other kit. In 2010, Velocity owners acquired a



Velocity Systems patrol belts can be fitted with Level III soft inserts that complement their plate carriers.



minority share of Mayflower and started sharing manufacturing assets, distribution outlets and contacts.

Mayflower Research & Consulting (MRC) was formed in 2007 by a recently retired U.S. Special Forces Warrant Officer, marking a transition period from a 20-year career with six combat deployments as an assaulter and reconnaissance specialist. Mayflower's raison d'être is to take that experience and those hard-learned lessons and contribute to the military and law enforcement communities.

Mayflower realizes that our military and law enforcement personnel have been engaged in and will continue to be engaged in open global conflict and domestic security threats. The design focus of MRC is to build mission-focused equipment that enhances the warfighters' capability by reducing the individual soldier's load as well as continuously adapting to the changing battlefield. Mayflower uses several avenues to accomplish this.

This Velocity Systems plate has been shot six times with no failures. Sides of carrier (not shown) can accommodate smaller plates.



Hard plates with various shapes and ballistic performance help Velocity Systems tailor armor carriers to specified mission profiles. Inset: Velocity Systems plate carriers permit movement during deployment thanks to adjustments inherent in the design. An operator can fit to his individual needs.

SPEC OPS CONNECTIONS

Mayflower's close connection to the Special Operations community allows for a very diverse group of equipment users providing constant feedback from distant battlefields in a variety of operating environments, such as domestic urban areas, mountains, and deserts.

Mayflower is constantly looking at new materials and manufacturing techniques to maintain durability and concurrently reduce weight. This philosophy centers on trimming unnecessary weight off the warfighter's load by analyzing each piece of load carriage equipment for lighter yet durable alternatives. Sometimes changing the base design and manufacturing technique to eliminate excess and unnecessary materials can achieve this. Another alternative is to incorporate hybrid designs.

Mayflower analyzes the type of usage the pouch or pocket is designed for and its expected life cycle. If it is a low-friction or limited-use pouch such as a signal kit or admin pouch, a lighter denier material is chosen to reduce weight. High-friction or high-usage pouches such as magazine or grenade are made with a mid-weight denier to balance out weight and durability.

Rapidly changing technology, with resultant new equipment being fielded, and environmental factors often make a nylon pouch or vest obsolete after one or two deployments. Mayflower's goal is to maintain the necessary agility to continually evaluate the relevance of their items and update and/or replace them as needed.

Mayflower's perception of individual soldiers and law enforcement officers as athletes determines how they seek to refine gear performance through fit, form and function.

Mayflower likes to encourage skills enhancement, team building, and athletic competition by sponsoring select individuals and teams throughout the year in endurance races and team competitions, with the intent of learning more about creating equipment that enhances performance.

ARMOR SOLUTIONS STAT

What separates Velocity Systems from other armor compa-

nies? Velocity Systems' tag line is "At the Speed of Need." It is a specialty house that provides custom armor solutions rapidly, while maintaining no volume constraints.

Velocity's lead designer has over 20 years' experience designing armor carrier platforms and ballistic solutions. A "typical" Velocity procurement process involves meeting with a customer to discuss mission profile for armor. A working prototype is then manufactured, with the customer encouraged to run the kit for a couple of weeks to proof the design criteria in a field environment.

Once feedback is given, Velocity is generally 30 to 45 days in standard production for the final product. People and agencies that have short lead times and are going downrange are put on the fast track.

Velocity's commitment to being a solutions provider also involves their acquiring non-Velocity items to support customers. The relationship between Velocity Systems and Mayflower Research tactical gear is a good example of this mentality.

SWIFTCLIP ATTACHMENT SYSTEM

The adaptability of Velocity Systems body armor is accentuated by the SwiftClip attachment system. With Velocity's SwiftClip, auxiliary equipment such as Mayflower chest rigs, med and E&E bags can quickly clip on or off base component Velocity armor, such as an armor vest, plate carrier, or load bearing vest.

The SwiftClip system allows for a stable load versus the excessive movement of simply wearing an H-harness over your existing armor. The SwiftClip system is a much faster way of adding gear than tediously weaving MOLLE tabs, especially if multiple mission requirements are present during deployment. A Mayflower Research & Consulting UW Chest Rig Gen IV is a good example of how Mayflower chest rigs can be married to a Velocity Systems plate carrier.

The UW Chest Rig is a low-profile mission-focused vest built to be ambidextrous and designed to carry four AR mag-





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Above: Velocity Systems stocks a variety of plate carriers and can custom make anything a client desires.

Right: Armor carriers in different camouflage patterns, sizes, and configurations are available from Velocity Systems.

azines, two pistol magazines, up to two small radios, and two general-purpose pockets. The H-style harness features loops and elastic to route antennas, communication wires, and hydration bladder tubing.

The UW Chest Rig is removable via four one-inch SwiftClip buckles and designed to be mounted to the front of the Velocity Systems armor carrier. The body of the chest rig has a built-in map pocket with Velcro closure. Like the Velocity components, the Mayflower chest rig is 100% made in the USA.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

I have become more familiar with Velocity and Mayflower products from using them the last couple of years in firearms training courses and other activities. I am fortunate to train with people equipped with various armor systems and always ask them about it.

The biggest issue I see is operators competing with their body armor. What does that mean? Armor can hinder or



compete against efficient employment of weapons in terms of stock placement, sling snag, cheek weld, sluggish movement when drawing a pistol, and other motions.

The armor also shifts due to accessory weight and lack of shoulder movement. Velocity Systems has found the cures to these ailments and more, realizing one size does not fit all. Velocity Systems' experience and attention to detail allow them to set up a full armor rig within the confines of an agency or department's uniformity requirements, yet tailor the armor to the individual at the same time.

» Continued on page 88

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Any Ban Is Infringement

About a year ago, a company called X-Products released the “Can Cannon”—an upper receiver for AR-15 rifles that, when installed on a lower receiver and loaded with a blank cartridge, could launch a full unopened soft-drink can a claimed 105 yards. The purpose? Well, there may not be much of one, other than novelty and fun. But what’s wrong with that?

Then last September, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives “changed their minds” and decided that anyone who mounted the Can Cannon on an AR-15 rifle lower receiver would have made a short barreled rifle, subject to all the National Firearms Act restrictions on such firearms.

Mounting it on an AR-15 pistol lower receiver would open a different can of worms, by creating what the BATFE now considers to be an “Any Other

Weapon” (AOW), also subject to all the legal restrictions imposed on NFA-regulated items.

Interestingly, the Can Cannon is not itself considered illegal to own, buy, sell, or possess—it’s fine until assembled onto a lower receiver. That distinction is rather thin comfort, though, since without the lower receiver, very little that is useful (or even fun or novel) can be done with it.

Actually, it’s a bit worse than that, because if one possesses both the Can Cannon and an AR-15 receiver, the BATFE has a penchant for charging the “offender” with “constructive possession” of the banned item, even if the parts are not assembled together. Meanwhile, X-Products is considering several modifications to make their design comply with the BATFE’s ever-shifting standards.

“But,” some might ask, “what’s the big deal—it’s not as if effectively banning something that’s little more than an expensive toy seriously affects the right to keep and bear arms, is it?”

And some might point out that what the Can Cannon launches does not *have to* be a can of soda—someone *could* improvise an explosive or incendiary device that could be launched from the cannon, and would that not make it a dangerous weapon?

The answer to that second question is indisputably affirmative, and that in turn answers the first question. If it could be used to launch explosive or incendiary grenades (even somewhat crude ones), it becomes a weapon with at least some potential for militia use, and a ban thus constitutes an attack on the Constitutionally guaranteed, fundamental human right of the indi-



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vidual to keep and bear arms.

In addition, any “public safety” justification for a ban is undermined by the fact that it is still legal to purchase and own the device. Anyone inclined to make lethal pyrotechnic projectiles to launch from it for purposes of terror and mayhem is not going to be deterred by the fact that assembling the “cannon” to a lower receiver is illegal.

Speaking of “toys” that have inspired at least talk of new restrictions, a couple of companies have started selling civilian-legal flamethrowers. Ion Productions’ XM42 is capable, according to Ion, of shooting a 25-foot tongue of flame for 35 seconds from a package that weighs only about ten pounds. XMatter’s X15 boasts roughly double the XM42’s range, at the cost of a significantly heavier device.

According to *Ars Technica*, the mayor of Warren, Michigan wants them banned because of the damage that could be done by such devices “in the wrong hands.” The mayor is apparently silent on his plans for dealing with the interminable list of *other* legal items that can be used to devastatingly evil effect when in such hands. Another Michigan town, Troy, has introduced

a bill that would outlaw flamethrowers within the city.

There is little room for doubt about the author’s views on the legality of the devices, as he calls it “shocking” that they are not federally regulated, while only two states, California and Maryland, have imposed any restrictions of their own.

The article notes the entirely predictable fact that merely raising the specter of a potential ban has triggered demand for the flamethrowers, with the article quoting Ion’s CEO as saying that, “Business is skyrocketing higher than ever due to the discussion on prohibition.”

Again, some might wonder if a ban or some less stringent regulatory scheme would really be all that objectionable, because again, these probably have more potential for fun than serious work. No one wants to use a flamethrower against the burglar in one’s living room, after all.

But again, flamethrowers, although under provisions of the international Inhumane Weapons Convention are no longer used in an anti-personnel role, have a history of very effective (if quite specialized) use in combat, so it’s impossible to entirely dismiss their

usefulness.

As Tench Coxe noted not long after the birth of this nation, “Congress have no power to disarm the militia. Their swords, and every other terrible implement of the soldier, are the birth-right of an American ... the unlimited power of the sword is not in the hands of either the federal or state governments, but, where I trust in God it will ever remain, in the hands of the people.”

That remains as true today as it was in 1788. The Can Cannon and flamethrowers may more closely resemble expensive toys than “terrible implement[s] of the soldier,” but they are certainly not without *some* potential for the latter role. As such, attempts to restrict the people’s access to them deserve the same kind of righteous outrage that bans of so-called “assault weapons” provoke. ©

A former paratrooper, Kurt Hofmann was paralyzed in a car accident in 2002. The helplessness inherent to confinement to a wheelchair prompted him to explore armed self-defense, only to discover that Illinois denied that right. This inspired him to become active in gun rights advocacy.



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AS a firearms instructor, it never ceases to amaze me how few officers carry a backup gun. On average, in my organization, only one in four officers actually carries a backup. When I ask why, I get answers like, “Never needed one” or “This one [referring to their duty weapon] always works.” Here’s my response to that: Every car I have ever owned has a spare tire. It might be a donut spare or a full size, but they all have a spare.

In late 2003, I’d been a cop for three years. I was also serving in the Army as a Reservist. I had just completed a tour in Iraq and was stationed at Fort Bragg in North Carolina. I was demobilized and allowed to return home. So I left for California with my wife and her trusty police dog in tow.

We decided to see the sights along the way: caverns in Tennessee, the fa-

mous Route 66, and a Native American reservation in New Mexico. The reservation was pretty far off the beaten path—about 50 miles of rough, rock-strewn “roadway” away from the main road. We were the last people to leave that day. About 25 miles down the road, I got a flat. It was near dusk and there was no one in sight.

We had no food, a little water, and not much else. I started imagining a *The Hills Have Eyes* scenario, with the mutant flesh eaters getting ready to come out as soon as the sun went down.

I pulled out the spare from under my truck, took off the flat tire and replaced it with the new one. Problem solved. Sorry, cannibals, you’ll have to find someone else’s brains to eat!

The point of the story is this: I didn’t get a flat tire a block from my house or on a busy interstate with roadside re-

pair just a phone call away. It happened at the worst possible time and place.

So it goes with weapons. It will probably never happen, but if your duty weapon fails, are you prepared for it to happen at the worst possible time? What’s your backup plan if your duty weapon goes down during a gunfight?

Guns, like all things mechanical, are doomed to fail. Firing pins break, ejectors fail to eject, magazines malfunction, and so on. Even the best-made weapon is not reliable 100% of the time. Add in the factor that under stress you are more likely to experience operator-induced malfunctions.

During range qualifications, I’ve seen officers accidentally hit magazine releases, unintentionally dumping fully loaded magazines. I’ve observed stovepipe malfunctions as a result of a weak grip—the kind of grip you might have

Guns, like all things mechanical, are doomed to fail. Even the best-made weapon is not reliable 100% of the time.



Author's backup/off-duty guns.

in a close-quarters fight with a suspect. I've even seen a few cops actually drop their handguns by mistake.

If the stress of a range qualification can cause these types of errors, what's going to happen when you are fighting for your life?

This is even more important when it comes to off-duty carry. For the most part you have no spare, so your off-duty gun is your only defense. But like the backup gun, I know quite a few cops who don't carry one. Many lock their duty gun in their locker at the end of their shift and go home unarmed. Given the current threat level to law enforcement, this isn't a wise idea.

What you choose to carry on and off duty are largely personal choices, but you should consider the following: Probably the best backup gun to carry on the street is the same as your duty weapon. But this might not be practical if you carry a large-frame handgun and don't have anywhere to conceal it. A good alternative is to carry a small-frame version of your duty gun that is of the same caliber and takes the same magazines. Many companies build compact versions of their large-frame

counterparts.

Barring that, a backup gun should be the same caliber as the primary. In an extreme situation, if your primary weapon goes down, you can strip rounds from the magazine and load them into your backup. At a minimum, carry something that goes boom. I knew an officer who carried a five-shot .25 auto in a handcuff case. It's definitely a last resort, but better than nothing.

I believe it's a good idea to carry the same gun off duty as the backup you carry on the street, so you're familiar with how the gun operates. In a high-stress moment when your fingers turn into thumbs, you can rely on muscle memory to ensure the weapon operates correctly.

My department issue weapon is a .40-caliber Glock 22. My backup weapon on the street is a Glock 27 (also .40). I carry it in the trauma plate pouch in my vest with a 12-round Glock 23 magazine. I set it up for reverse (weak hand) draw. In a worst-case scenario if my strong-side arm is injured, I can still access my backup with either hand.

My primary off-duty weapon is my Glock 27. I carry it in either a Blackhawk

CQC holster or CrossBreed inside-the-pants rig. I switch out the Glock 23 magazine for a nine-round Glock 27 magazine for a little additional concealment.

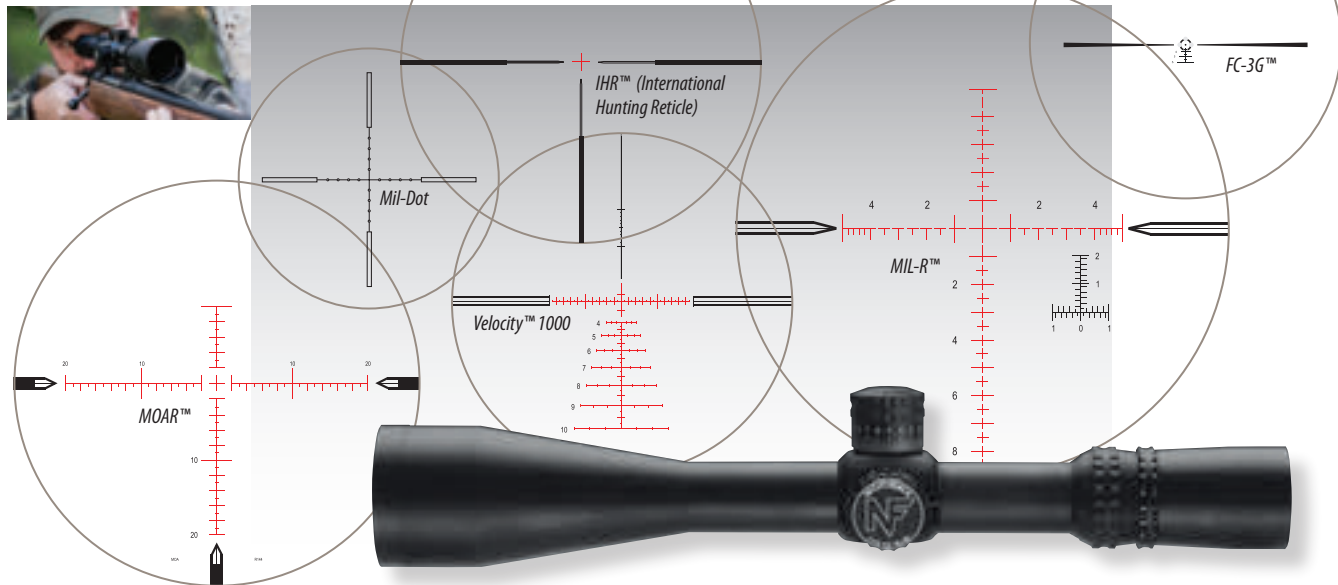
When that isn't practical or my clothing choice (T-shirt/shorts) doesn't do a good job concealing it, I carry a Ruger LCP .380. This is also a gun I have carried in undercover assignments. In the future, I intend to purchase a Glock 42 or 43 (.380 or 9mm) to maintain my Glock continuity.

This isn't a commercial for Glock. If I carried a Springfield XD on duty, I'd opt for a small-frame Springfield as a backup/off-duty gun as well.

When it comes to backup and off-duty guns, don't get caught flat. ☺

Nick Perna is a Sergeant with the Redwood City Police Department in northern California. He has spent much of his career as a gang and narcotics investigator. He has been a member of a multi-jurisdictional SWAT team since 2001 and is currently a Team Leader. He previously served as a paratrooper in the U.S. Army and is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He has a Master's Degree from the University of San Francisco.

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Steyr Scout: Improving With Age

SOON after the Steyr Scout was introduced, I evaluated it in this column. I liked it, especially as a rifle to carry in my truck for a wide array of tasks. But there were some things I felt might be improved.

For one, I thought the 2.5X28mm Leupold Scout Scope, though of high quality, limited the range at which the rifle could be fired with precision. I also found that the butter knife bolt handle so familiar on classic Steyr rifles was a little hard to manipulate. After a while, I also concluded that I would prefer a larger magazine capacity than that of the standard five-round magazine. Later I discovered the Steyr Scout Tactical rifle, which took ten-round magazines, had a bolt handle with a large ball, and allowed mounting a more powerful scope in the conventional position rather than the typical Scout forward mounting position.

A couple of months ago, I decided to revisit the Steyr Scout Tactical for evaluation as a preparedness rifle. Plus



Thompson shoots Steyr Scout Tactical with low-mounted Leupold Scout Scope and Ching Sling to facilitate steady shooting.



Scout Tactical resting on its integral bipod with ten-round magazine in place and spare ten-round magazine in the stock.

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RFLR-OC



Item #: **RFLR-OC** Capacity: **20+1**
Caliber: **308** BBL: **16"**
Sights: **No Sights**

- Black Matte Finish
- 6-Position Telescoping Stock
- GlacierGuard Handguard
- Single Rail Gas Block
- Dust Cover



M4A1



Item #: **0208815126011** Capacity: **30+1**
Caliber: **5.56 NATO|223** BBL: **14.5"**
Sights: **No Sights**

- Brown Cerakote Finish
- DD Telescoping Stock & Pistol Grip
- Chrome Lined Barrel
- Permanently Attached Flash Suppressor



FNH USA

SCAR17S



Item #: **98561** Capacity: **20+1**
Caliber: **308** BBL: **16.25"**
Sights: **Adjustable Folding Combat**

- Black Finish
- Black Synthetic Telescoping, Side Folding Stock
- Hammer Forged Chrome Lined Barrel
- Short Stroke Gas Piston System
- Adjustable Cheekpiece



Tavor SAR-B16



Item #: **TSB16WD** Capacity: **30+1**
Caliber: **5.56 NATO|223** BBL: **16.5"**
Sights: **FT: Tritium Post RR: Integral Folding**

- Woodland Digital Camo Finish
- Magpul Gen III PMAG
- Uses Standard AR15/M16 Magazines
- MilSpec Picatinny Rail



KSG



Item #: **KSG-CK-TTNM** Capacity: **14+1**
Caliber: **12 Gauge 3"** BBL: **18.5"**
Sights: **No Sights**

- Titanium Cerakote Finish
- Black Polymer Bullpup Stock
- Downward Ejection
- Cylinder Bore Choke
- Two Manually Selected 7-Rd Internal Tube Magazines

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Item #: **ARLB/308/SNPR24** Capacity: **20+1**
Caliber: **308** BBL: **24"**
Sights: **No Sights**

- Black Matte Finish
- Magpul PRS Stock, LBC Custom Pistol Grip
- Free Float Handguard
- DuPont S Coating on Barrel
- Geissele 2 Stage Trigger
- Includes Bipod



IC-SPR



Item #: **ICR5B16SPR** Capacity: **30+1**
Caliber: **5.56 NATO|223** BBL: **16.1"**
Sights: **Low Profile Skirmish**

- Black Finish
- LWRC Compact Stock
- MagPul MOE Grip
- Spiral-Fluted Barrel
- Short Stroke Piston Operating System



SR-556 Takedown



Item #: **5901** Capacity: **30+1**
Caliber: **5.56 NATO|223** BBL: **16.1"**
Sights: **Folding Iron**

- Manganese Phosphate Finish
- Black Synthetic Collapsible Stock
- Two-Stage Piston Driven Operating System
- Cold Hammer-Forged Mil-Spec 41V45 Steel Barrel



M400 Enhanced



Item #: **798681476817** Capacity: **30+1**
Caliber: **5.56 NATO|223** BBL: **16"**
Sights: **Magpul MBUS**

- Black Finish
- MagPul MOE Telescoping Stock
- Magpul MOE Forend
- Integral Ambidextrous QD Sling Mounts



UTS-15 Neptune



Item #: **PS1KN2** Capacity: **14+1**
Caliber: **12 Gauge 3"** BBL: **18.5"**
Sights: **No Sights**

- Kryptek Neptune Finish
- Polymer Bullpup Stock
- Side Ejection
- Alternate Feeding or Selectable Magazine Tubes
- Cylinder Bore Screw-In Choke

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there is a new Leupold Scout Scope that I think makes the Steyr much more versatile. Like the original Steyr Scout, the Scout Tactical features a compact size and handiness, spare magazine carrier in the stock, flip-up BUIS, versatile sling mounting points, and forward Scout scope mounting. Let me comment on that last feature.

On the Scout Tactical, I like the standard scope mounting, but for a Scout Rifle that may be used for self-defense or hunting, I like the forward mount, which allows scanning the area with peripheral vision or by moving the head slightly, while retaining the sight picture or quickly re-acquiring it. By the way, though the Scout is offered in other calibers, I chose one in .308.

I also like the Scout Tactical's color choices, including Black, Green and Mud. I have the Mud version. I like the fact that I can carry 20 rounds—one mag seated in the rifle and one in the stock—without any need for mag pouches.

As did my early Scout, the Scout Tactical retains the two-position magazine catch. When inserted to the first position, the magazine does not allow a round to be fed from the magazine into the chamber. In this position, single rounds may be fed directly into the

chamber by hand. Should more rounds be needed quickly, the magazine may be pushed all the way home.

The magazine release is part of the magazine, allowing the magazine to be removed when the release is pressed from both sides. This is a good system, as it is difficult to dump a magazine by accident.

Various aspects of the Scout's stock enhance its usefulness. The flat forearm not only offers a comfortable grip for offhand shooting, but also allows use of an improvised rest. Spacers at the butt permit the rifle's length to be tailored to

the shooter so it is handy and comfortable to shoot. An integral bipod also offers an aid to accurate shooting.

I also like the Scout's roller safety. Located atop the receiver, it may be easily operated by the thumb of the shooting hand. When the safety is rolled to the fire position, a red dot shows. When in the safe position, a white dot shows, and when in safe with the bolt and trigger locked, a white lever shows.

As an additional safety to prevent the safety being moved inadvertently, the lever must be depressed before the safety can be rolled to fire. It's a quick system to



Stock is flat on the bottom, an excellent aid to shooting from a rest.



Scout Tactical's features include folding back-up rear sight, good-sized bolt knob for fast operation, protruding pin indicator that rifle is cocked, and roller safety on safe. Inset: Leupold FireDot Duplex reticle for 1.5-5X33 VX-R Scout Scope.

operate, and very safe. An indicator pin also protrudes, so it may be easily seen or felt to show the rifle is cocked.

As mentioned earlier, I felt that the Scout needed a more versatile scope, and Leupold has fulfilled that need. The Leupold 1.5-5X33 VX-R Scout Scope offers the long eye relief of the earlier fixed-power Scout scopes but gives the options of 1.5X for CQC or 5X for longer range shooting.

In addition, the Duplex reticle with FireDot offers an illuminated red dot for quick target acquisition in low light, and Duplex crosshairs for precise aiming. I use the FireDot sometimes even in bright light to give a precise aiming point at the center of the crosshairs, but others may not.

In any case, on 1.5X with the red dot, engagement of multiple targets is fast and precise. Two-thirds of the Duplex reticle use thick crosshairs, while the one-third at the aiming point is thinner. This helps lead the eye to the target at longer ranges.

All the other touches to be expected from Leupold, including index-matched lens coatings for brightness and DiamondCoat coatings for increased light transmission, are present

as well. The scope is waterproof. Adjustments for elevation and windage are in 1/4 MOA increments. I think it is the perfect scope for the Scout Rifle.

One other accessory I consider important for the Scout Rifle is a good sling. Various slings work well, but traditionally the Ching Sling has been used with the Scout. A three-point sling, for which the Scout has mounting points, the Ching is designed to stabilize the shooting position, and carries the rifle comfortably as well. I use a Ching Sling from Andy's Leather Shop. Andy is very experienced with the Scout Rifle and makes an excellent sling for it.

Every Steyr bolt-action rifle I own or have owned shot really well. Admittedly, many of those have been in the SSG line of sniping rifles, but my Scout Tactical shoots quite well too. In the specs often cited for Scout Rifles in general, accuracy should be at least two MOA. To test this with my new Scout, I chose Black Hills 168-grain Match ammunition, which has proven very accurate in dozens of rifle tests.

The Steyr Scout Tactical easily met the two MOA criteria. At 100 yards, the best group was .75 inch for three shots, with 1.25 to 1.50 being more typical.

At 200 yards, I fired five shots into 2.5 inches.

The Steyr Scout Tactical and latest Leupold Scout Scope make a great combination. An argument could be made that the .308 Scout with ten-round magazine kit could serve as the only rifle one needs.

It's not perfect for self-defense but could certainly do in an attacker near or far. In .308 it could take any game in North America. It would probably be most applicable to someone who lives in a rural or, at least, suburban area as opposed to an urban area.

Mine is in my truck right now. At times I may replace it with a .308 AR, but I am very happy with the Steyr Scout Tactical. ☺

SOURCES

STEYR ARMS

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www.steyrarms.com

ANDY'S LEATHER SHOP

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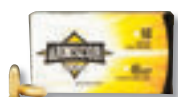
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90 Grain, 20 Rounds Per Box
AMM-5880 ... \$16.59



PMC X-TAC 223/5.56 NATO
FMJBT, 55 Grain,
20 Rounds Per Box
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Colorado Buck 223/5.56 NATO
Varmint Bullet, 55 Grain,
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AMM-2109 ... \$10.39



Armscor USA 9mm
FMJ, 124 Grain,
50 Rounds Per Box
AMM-4120 ... \$10.79



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Tango Copper, 75 Grain,
20 Rounds Per Box
AMM-3193 ... \$20.49



TulAmmo .45 ACP
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50 Rounds Per Box
AMM-5290 ... \$13.59



TulAmmo .223
Hollow Point, 62 Grain,
20 Rounds Per Box
AMM-2918-20 ... \$4.69



PMC Bronze .45 ACP
FMJ, 230 Grain,
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AMM-519 ... \$18.79



Prvi Partizan 9mm
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AMM-4123 ... \$11.69



Silver Bear .308
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Golden Bear .30-06
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X-Sight with provided 850 mW InfraRed illuminator. This markedly increases the distance at which you can identify and engage targets in the dark.

SMART HD OPTIC

I'll begin this report with the one shortcoming of the American Technologies Network (ATN) X-Sight day/night scopes: they do not have an on-board laser rangefinder.

That said, let me explain why I consider this a minor issue. If we get in the "Way Back" machine and plant ourselves a few decades in the past, we'll discover there are lots of ways to closely estimate shooting distances.

If we combine one of those techniques with a qualified rifleman who knows the bullet's trajectory from his firearm and the aiming compensation needed to correct for distances that are shorter or longer than his zero distance, plus any uphill or downhill variations from his shooting position, we will find that it is indeed possible to make an accurate shot without the benefit of a laser rangefinder.

ATN X-Sight HD

BY PAUL HANTKE

One of the easiest and most accurate ways to know (through trying it) is to see how much of your crosshair is covered by an item of known size at a given magnification power at known distances.

Two quick examples are automobile wheels and tires, and doors to a building. Fire hydrants and mailboxes on posts at the curb are two more, and I'll bet you can come up with several other examples that are of standard dimensions.

Of course, laser rangefinders are common equipment nowadays, and I have units from Leica and Bushnell that are accurate to the nearest meter/yard at

ranges well beyond average (or prudent) shooting distances, so I don't consider the lack of one in the X-Sight package to be a major detriment. Also, use of a weapon-mounted laser rangefinder requires you to break one of the basic firearms safety rules—never point a gun at anything you're not willing to destroy.

WHAT THE X-SIGHT DOES HAVE

Now let's take a look at all the valuable features that *are* part of the X-Sight package. First, the X-Sight is a breeze to operate. There is a set of four arrows pointing to 12:00, 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00 on the control pad on top of the scope, along with a select button in the middle

of the directional arrows. The power switch is immediately above this cluster of controls. This makes it very easy to use the controls without lifting your head up from the scope.

Another important feature is that the X-Sight is a day/night instrument, so it is not necessary to mount a night-vision scope to co-index with the normal day-time optics.

Next is the smooth power zoom control to change the magnification when desired. This is done with the up or down (12:00 or 6:00) arrows on the control panel on the top of the scope.

Once calibrated, an onboard electronic compass becomes part of your After Action Report if you are a military sniper and is especially important for the law enforcement officer who must use lethal force.

The compass heading is part of that documentation, which also includes a Geo Tag capability for you. This Geo Tag function is paired with a time/date stamp on still photos or video captured by the X-Sight.

Yes, the X-Sight will help you document the event with still shots or video, which can be captured at 1080p@30FPS (Standard Full HD) or 720p@60FPS (Slow Mode HD). Runtime depends on your available memory.

Still photos can be taken one at a time, or the X-Sight can be programmed to take timed shots in bursts of two to ten with a delay interval of two to 15 seconds between exposures.

The X-Sights also have a microphone if a soundtrack is desired, but it can be turned off if not needed. An altimeter function is valuable as a component in this documentation, in addition to possibly being a factor in calculating needed hold-off for the shot. The night-vision display can be set to black and white or green and white, and a brightness control adjusts the image intensity in either day or night mode.

The X-Sights have nine different reticle displays to choose from in three colors and designs. A crosshair can be had with a plain (open) center or with a center dot, and a familiar Duplex design, with the crosshairs thicker on the outside but stepping down to a fine line presentation in the center, is included.

All selections are available with a reticle in Black or Day-Glo Red or Green. The Duplex is the choice for range estimation because the two line thicknesses lend themselves well to bracketing an object of a known size.



Top view of X-Sight shows control panel for this new digital day/night scope.

Finally, the X-Sights have an image stabilization feature that guarantees good image quality when using the scope, both for the operator and so that the still or video images are sharp and crisp.

Offloading the images can be done by removing and using the SD chip, through onboard USB or HDMI ports, or wirelessly via the wifi function, which is also a quick and easy way to network the image and pertinent data to other receiving/display devices.

I can think of several reasons to in-

clude other real-time viewers (read: higher-ranking personnel, to include the shoot/no shoot decision maker) as the event unfolds and, as above, that is possible with the X-Sight.

TWO MODELS: 3-12X AND 5-18X

The ATN X-Sight is available in two different models: 3-12 power and 5-18 power. They are not quite as trim as a regular scope of those magnifications, but are the smallest and lightest with the features that I have seen to date.

The 5-18X is 10.3x3.5x3.2 inches and



Right side of ATN X-Sight shows battery compartment and access to USB, HDMI, and wifi ports.

weighs 2.7 pounds, while the 3-12X scope I tested comes in at 8x3.25x3.13 inches and weighs 2.3 pounds. These X-Sights have an integral mount that fits Weaver or Picatinny rails thanks to a reversible plug on the underside that changes the spacing between the two lugs of the mount.

I was having a great time watching the coyotes roaming the golf course below my house, but then I got the call I was waiting for, and the deal was on! It's a long drive from coastal southern California to my friend's property across the state line, but worth it because he has several hundred acres of high desert with no neighbors for miles. It's a true shooter's paradise, and I was eager to arrive and get the X-Sight mounted and in use.

I have two very accurate bolt-actions on hand, one in .25-06 and the other in .223, but I chose to go with my new favorite, a reliable and extremely accurate Battle Born AR-15 from Reno Guns out of Reno, Nevada.

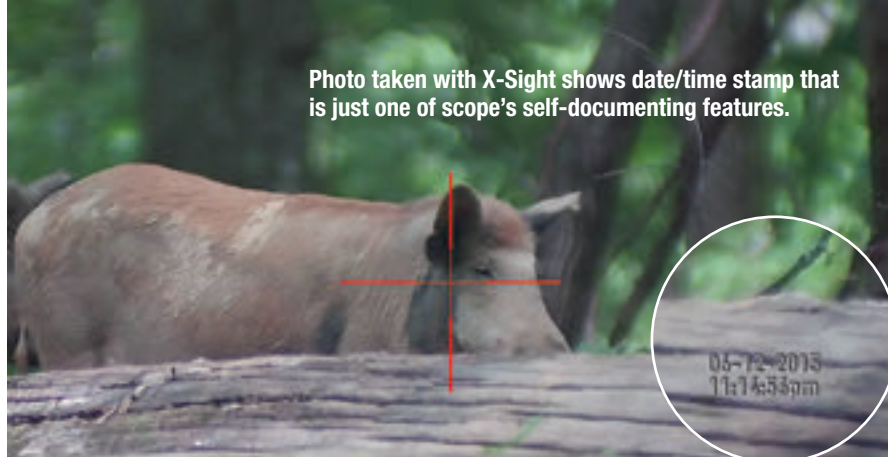


Photo taken with X-Sight shows date/time stamp that is just one of scope's self-documenting features.

This is the newest gun in my safe, but it is already becoming one of my go-to rifles for testing optics or ammunition. It shoots any of the multiple loads from different manufacturers tested very accurately, and it puts Black Hills .223 52-grain moly-coated HP bullets into tiny clusters after launching them at nearly 3,143 feet-per-second out of a 16.5-inch barrel.

TESTING UNDER A FULL MOON

While my buddy's land has a lot of

space, very little of it is level, and the "designated shooting area" is an exercise in logistics in the dark, so I set my target box on a convenient mound some 52 yards away, according to that Leica laser rangefinder, and had at it.

I used a "standing Okie benchrest" (bags on the pickup truck's hood and leaning over the fender to fire) and it took very few rounds to get the rifle zeroed. Once I had it dialed in, I waited for dark and fired four shots for the record, leaving out the fifth round so

RENO GUNS Battle Born AR-15

The well-built and accurate Battle Born AR-15 from Reno Guns is the result of an evolutionary process that began in 2008 and culminated in the product offered today. This is a hand-built rifle with

all made-in-the-USA parts, resulting in a completely reliable AR that is exceptionally accurate with a smorgasbord of loads from many different manufacturers.

My AR liked everything I fed it. The

champ for velocity and accuracy with this gun so far is the 52-grain Moly-Coated HP from Black Hills Ammunition.

Owner Debbie Block is a real getter, and she just sent me some information on Reno Guns' new home: a 24,226-square-foot facility with 20 live-fire lanes stretching out to 25 yards and a 220-square-foot digital range area for reality-based and force-on-force training.

In addition, a large events/training room has private access to a four-lane shooting area for live fire. A 4,500 square-foot retail store offers a variety of products for shooters. Over 100 rental firearms are available, and as many Range Safety Officers as needed for the shooters on the line. Simulator training, reality-based training, CCW qualification and more are offered. Finally, a highly qualified resident gunsmith is on site.

I encourage S.W.A.T. readers to visit Reno Guns & Range at 2325 Market St. when they are passing through or spending time in Reno, Nevada for, ahem, any reason.

ATN X-Sight looks right at home on Battle Born AR-15 from Reno Guns.





Author and his new favorite AR with 3-12X ATN day/night X-Sight.

I didn't screw up a beautiful group. It was a full moon, so I just used ambient light to perforate the Caldwell Insta-View targets.

I had mounted the supplied 850 mW Infra-Red illuminator light. Switching that on showed the system was valuable for precision shooting well out past 100 yards and would easily allow for very accurate fire in a combat/firefight environment out to about 300 yards, or farther as needed.

In closing, I hope I have made it clear how valuable the X-Sights can be for law enforcement and military applications, as well as for private citizens chasing wild hogs or predators in the dark. I'm sure other companies are studying the X-Sights to learn how ATN packed so many features into a device that is barely larger or heavier than a standard optical scope.

Right now, ATN is way ahead of the game with the X-Sights. ☺

SOURCES

AMERICAN TECHNOLOGIES NETWORK CORP.

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Its Parts



AXTS 14.5-inch MI-T556 Carbine with Dueck Defense 45 Degree RTS.

Inset: AXTS Black Nitride BCG. Bolt lugs are CNC machined following heat treatment to insure the greatest possible accuracy.

AXTS MI-T556



When AXTS Weapons Systems introduced its MI-T556, it represented the Oregon brand's first foray into the carbine/AR arena, and AXTS hoped it would become a standout in a crowded market. But the refined engineering behind AXTS' first complete AR offering has had nothing to do with beginner's luck.

Known widely for its Raptor charging handle and for the

design of the field's first truly functional ambidextrous lower/controls, AXTS has been putting out innovative rifle parts that have shaped and set industry standards since 2009.

In spite of that success, AXTS CEO Eric Anderson explains that from its inception, AXTS always had its sights set—so to speak—on being a gun company, not just a parts company. For Anderson and company founder Josh Underwood, turning out its first full rifle has meant taking the time necessary to ensure that, as a whole, it would deliver the same high quality and performance that are expected of each of its individual parts.

In a market that many considered saturated, Anderson still believed there was room for improvement. He cited his own and others' experiences spending hard-earned cash to buy a gun, only to turn around and spend more, whether on a trigger job, new barrel, or layer of Cerakote™.

Even with all the positive feedback they were receiving from customers of the AX556 lower, they were determined to put out a gun that was not only accurate but "complete"—

with all the upgrades and improvements built in—right out of the box.

Since the MI-T556's introduction at the 2015 SHOT Show and after nearly a year of road-testing and prototype refinement, consumers will finally be able to get their hands on this fully ambidextrous carbine that, according to the company, consistently gives sub 1/2 MOA performance with 55-, 62-, and 77-grain ammo, and comes with an impressive package of finish and furniture.

THE STATS

The MI-T556 is a fully ambidextrous rifle featuring AXTS' RH/LH bolt catch, bolt release, and mag release, as well as its Talon 45/90 ambi safety selector. Barrels are Shilen 416R blanks with a 1:8 twist that are custom-profiled, hand polished, and chambered in .223 Wylde, with an option of 10.5- or 14.5-inch lengths.

Featuring a DLC-coated titanium forward assist, the upper receiver matches up seamlessly with its M-LOK hand-guard. Other key features include AXTS' signature Raptor charging handle, Knights Armament 600M Micro Sights, AR-Gold trigger, choice of either the Silencerco Saker Trifecta flash hider or muzzle brake, and Cerakote finish. Suggested retail price is \$2,895.00.

THE ROAD TEST

In January 2015, after completing all of the standard manufacturer's testing, Anderson took the MI-T556 on the road—literally—to stretch its legs and experience its form and function by running it through no fewer than 15 carbine courses with some of the most established trainers and experienced shooters in the industry.

After thousands of rounds downrange and miles down the road, he was happy to see the MI-T556 performing consistently at the top of its class during each outing. And with the benefit of the feedback and experience of real end-users, Anderson was able to incorporate some final cosmetic and functional refinements before

BY JASON SWARR
AND
KYLA DOYLE

PHOTOS BY STRAIGHT 8 PHOTOGRAPHY



Clockwise from top: MI-T556 carbine includes AXTS Talon 45/90 Ambidextrous Safety Selector. AXTS Grey M-LOK Rail with Dueck Defense RTS-1 front sight and B.E. Meyers 249-Saker (249S) 5.56mm flash hider. Carbine features Raptor Ambi Charging Handle with equal length handles (non-window cutouts) and new AXTS DLC Coated Titanium Forward Assist. Buck Doyle, CEO of Follow Through Consulting, conducts 15-round rapid engagement drill at 550 meters in with MI-T556.



its current release.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Right off the bat, I was pleasantly surprised to pick up the MI-T556 and find it is not only lightweight but also well balanced. The rifle is both visually and functionally streamlined. The lack of sharp edges around its controls and handguard shows an attention to detail that can be appreciated by those of us who have sliced up fingers and hands on quad-rails and ejection port covers too many times to count.

Every surface and edge that could be smoothed or refined on this gun has been, providing more comfortable contact and easier manipulation, whether coming on and off barricades or moving against other gear.

Taking our first shots using the AR-Gold trigger felt smooth, clean, and precise. Like the rest of this gun, the M-LOK handguard was smooth and had a good diameter for a comfortable grip. The AXTS Grey Cerakote finish contributes to its overall clean look.

RANGE EVALUATION

While impressed by Eric's extra-mile due diligence, we still couldn't resist the opportunity to give it a run ourselves and see if we could duplicate the MI-T556's performance under our own set of challenging conditions.

Rather than chalking up the typical review stats on the square range, we

wanted to push the limits of this gun and see what it can do in a field environment.

We started by enlisting former Recon Marine and owner and founder of Follow Through Consulting (FTC) Buck Doyle to help us run our evaluation. Situated amidst nearly 2,000 acres of scenic but rugged terrain just outside Utah's Capitol Reef area, FTC's range facility provided the ideal venue, with courses of fire ranging from 100 to 1,000 meters and with the added elements of high altitude and often unpredictable winds.

For this evaluation, Buck set up the MI-T556 in a Scoped Carbine configuration in order to optimize its performance for both the close-in fight and out at the supersonic threshold of 770 meters. We went with a Leupold Mark 6 3-18 with Tremor 2 reticle, Accuracy 1st scope level, and a set of Dueck Defense Rapid Transition Sights™ (RTS). Ammo used was 77-grain Corbon Match.

Both the Mark 6 and the RTS were zeroed at 100 meters in the prone position using a B&T Industries Atlas bipod and rear bag for support. Buck was easily able to acquire sub MOA with the Mark 6 and "even with old eyes" knocked out an MOA with the RTS.

TRUING THE MI-T556

Utilizing a Kestrel Applied Ballistics Meter, we entered the gun, ballistics, and direction of fire, with the atmo-

AX-556 A-DAC Lower is a true fully ambidextrous lower featuring bolt catch, bolt release, and mag release.

Below: Atlas bipod and B.E. Meyers 249-Saker (249S) 5.56mm flash hider.



GREATER

Than the Sum of Its Parts



Buck Doyle trues 14.5-inch MI-T556 at 770 meters using Kestrel Applied Ballistics Meter.

Inset: Results from two shots taken during truing of MI-T556 at 770 meters.

Below: Leupold Mark 6 3X18 Tremor 2 with 30mm Accuracy 1st scope level on AXTS MI-T556 14.5-inch carbine.



spherics being automatically collected by the Kestrel weather instrument. In turn, the Kestrel provided the appropriate range and an estimated hold in mils to true the MI-T556.

After this information was input, the Kestrel gave a suggested range of 770 meters holding 7.8 mils. At the time, we had a 15mph wind at full value. After establishing a good prone shooting position, we began to relieve the scope of any parallax and/or scope shadow. Using the Tremor 2 reticle, we aligned the 7.8 mil line with five wind

dots (representing 15 mph, favoring left into the wind) on the bottom edge of the gong target at 770 meters.

Shooting twice to establish a true, the point of aim/point of impact was with eight mils and five wind dots instead of the predicted 7.8 mils with five wind dots. We entered the eight mils as our actual hold into the Kestrel, pressed enter and trued the MI-T556 at the supersonic threshold. Now the Kestrel could give us our exact holds from 25 meters out to 770 meters.

After truing, Buck took the MI-T556

through a rapid target engagement drill, beginning with a 40-yard run to elevate his heart rate before going prone, then immediately sited in with 4.3 mils elevation and held with 15mph winds before engaging the target as quickly and accurately as possible for 15 rounds in rapid succession.

This is a drill often run by Buck in his courses in order to enforce the fundamentals of marksmanship under duress in practical shooting engagements. The MI-T556 setup allowed him to sustain an MOA grouping at 550 meters, which we were very happy with given all the natural and self-induced variables imposed.

FINAL THOUGHTS

In addition to its consistency, accuracy, and ergonomics, one can't help but gain an appreciation for the engineering and craftsmanship behind the



Carbine sports six-position B5 Enhanced Sopmod Stock as well as B5 P Grip.

MI-T556. There is no doubt that AXTS' practice of machining its own parts in-house leads to a higher level of quality control and results in tight-fitting parts and smooth finish.

The time and effort spent testing and evaluating this gun in the factory and in the real world have resulted in a package and finish that will hold up to hard use, and the MI-T556 has already proven to maintain its performance over the long haul.

Even though the MI-T556 is the first complete rifle we've seen from AXTS, we don't consider them newcomers to the gun-making scene. Until now, we've had to appreciate this company's innovation in parts and pieces. We're looking forward to being able to find everything in one place.

The MI-T556 is an accurate, impressively engineered, and intelligently crafted rifle that is sure to make its mark in competition or defensive shooting. ©

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AXTS WEAPONS SYSTEMS

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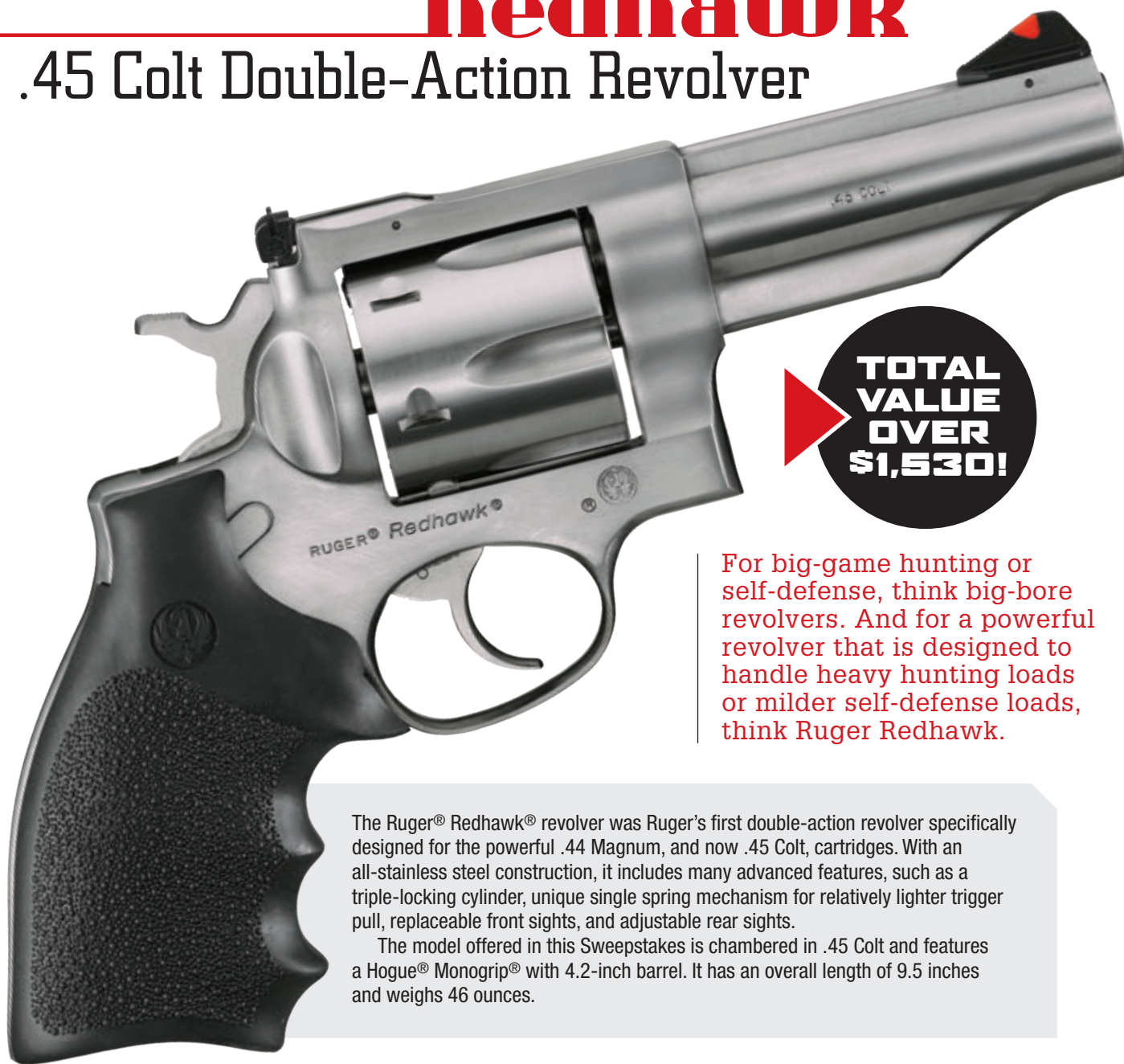
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The Ruger® Redhawk® revolver was Ruger's first double-action revolver specifically designed for the powerful .44 Magnum, and now .45 Colt, cartridges. With an all-stainless steel construction, it includes many advanced features, such as a triple-locking cylinder, unique single spring mechanism for relatively lighter trigger pull, replaceable front sights, and adjustable rear sights.

The model offered in this Sweepstakes is chambered in .45 Colt and features a Hogue® Monogrip® with 4.2-inch barrel. It has an overall length of 9.5 inches and weighs 46 ounces.

SIMPLY RUGGED HOLSTER, GUNBELT & AMMO POUCH

You need a great holster to carry a great gun, so this Sweepstakes includes a Sourdough Pancake from Simply Rugged Holsters. A rugged field or concealment holster, it is made from 8-9 ounce steer shoulder and tightly molded to the gun. It does not require a thumb strap for retention. The back of the trigger guard is exposed, while the trigger remains covered, ensuring a good grip.

The Sweepstakes holster is clad in Cape Buffalo hide. Lion resistant, this Cape Buffalo gear will just get better looking with age. The winner also receives a matching Most Versatile Ammo Pouch, which works well as a dump pouch but also accepts a Quick Strip. All your ammo is in one clip, allowing for a fast two-by-two reload, or top off, of your DA revolver. This pouch wraps around the belt for a flat profile. A heavy-duty gunbelt in the winner's size is also included.



GARRETT CARTRIDGES OF TEXAS

Widely known for their heavy-hitting, deep-penetrating .44 Magnum Hammerhead loads, Garrett Cartridges of Texas has recently introduced three loads suitable for the .45 Colt chambered Redhawk. The Sweepstakes winner receives 50 rounds of each of these truly custom loads. All three loads (265, 365, and 405 grain) feature Hammerhead design bullets that are hand cast from a super hard and tough alloy, gas checked, and then handloaded by the owner, Ashley Emerson. Only the Ruger Redhawk will handle them all. Garrett Cartridges of Texas strives to deliver maximum potential lethality at each level of power.



TOPS TEAM JACKAL SURVIVOR

This Sweepstakes includes a Team Jackal Survivor from TOPS Knives. This knife is made from 1095 high carbon steel, making it simple to resharpen and having excellent edge retention—both great qualities for a field knife. The Coyote Tan powder coat protects the steel from the elements and reduces shine, so your adversaries won't see you coming. Strong and sturdy black G10 handles with TOPS' Rocky Mountain Tread allow for a solid grip in almost any conditions.



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Yamaha Goes Tactical

Off-Road Adventure at Gunsite

BY DICK WILLIAMS

There was a clever commercial many years back where a guy with a chocolate bar accidentally collides with a guy carrying a jar of peanut butter. The peanut butter spilled all over the chocolate and voilà—a new taste sensation was born.

This kind of dynamic pairing occurred recently in the shooting world, but it was no accident. It was carefully planned and executed by the Yamaha ATV Marketing department and the training staff at Gunsite Academy.

Yamaha assembled a group of ATV writers and gun writers at Gunsite to introduce the company's newest Tactical ATVs. Ruger supplied all hands with the new generation of modern sporting rifles and defensive handguns. Gunsite provided an abbreviated training class in both weapons, after which the writers rode out on Yamaha's ATVs and conquered the world, or at least that part of the world on Gunsite property that had recently been invaded by evil steel popper targets.

It was a marvelous three days in which our ATV-mounted tactical horde



Yamaha Vikings weren't just a handy shooting rest. Properly used, they offered some—though minimal—cover for riders.



It's not what it looks like. Author (driving) and Rich Grassi of the *Tactical Wire* are not kidnapping this young lady and trying to escape.

proved victorious and restored safety to the Arizona populace!

It's possible I've overstated our exploits, but sometimes one gets carried away in moments of great excitement. And that excitement began the first morning when we saw the line of Yamaha's new tactical all-black Grizzlies and Vikings outside the Gunsite classroom.

WHEELS

For those not familiar with Yamaha's line of 4-wheel ATVs, the Grizzly is a utility vehicle that seats one person and

steers by means of handlebars much like those on a motorcycle.

The Viking looks like a miniaturized military vehicle on steroids. It seats three persons side-by-side. It has a steering wheel much like a normal car, but to paraphrase the introduction to the original *Star Trek* TV series, the Viking goes "where no car has gone before!"

I'd been on hunts where Yamaha ATVs were put to work and was favorably impressed with their performances as off-road work horses, but the new tactical Yamaha ATVs bring a level of

elegance and some performance upgrades to the party.

The two vehicles share several basic characteristics. The liquid-cooled 4-stroke 686cc engines will take you and all your gear wherever a rational human being would want to go and will do it in almost any kind of weather.

The fuel injection insures an easy start in cold temperatures and smooth running at any elevation. A push button allows the driver to instantly select either 2-wheel drive, 4-wheel drive with limited slip, or locked in 4-wheel drive.

I truly appreciated the 4-wheel hydraulic disc brakes on both vehicles because my off-road driving skills sometimes make stopping quickly more important than anything.

The fully automatic transmissions and power steering greatly simplified driving both ATVs in the rough Arizona terrain. The digital instrument panels in both rigs go far beyond what I expected, giving the driver all the data one normally gets in a car. The Viking even has a 12-volt accessory outlet and cup holders for a travel mug of coffee on those early morning outings. And yes, I have spilled my coffee more than once, even with a lid on.

Both vehicles have electric starters: the Grizzly starts by pushing a button, while you simply turn the ignition key to fire up the Viking. Except for when you leave the pavement, driving the Viking is like driving a car.

And leaving the pavement behind is what ATVs are all about. Over the last decade or so, I've noticed that ranch hands seem to be using ATVs much more than horses for daily chores. I'm not saying ATVs can go places where



No one heads out until Rangemaster Chris Weare goes through abbreviated Gunsite training class on using the modern service pistol.

a horse can't, but given the amount of time I've spent with both ATVs and horses in hunting camps, the edge for hauling gear and tools goes to ATVs.

GRIZZLY AND VIKING SPECS

In terms of capacity, the Grizzly carries 100 pounds on the front rack and slightly less than 200 pounds on the rear rack. The Viking has a dump bed with a release latch on both sides and is rated for a 600-pound load. In addition, the Vi-

king tows 1,500 pounds, while the Grizzly can tow slightly over 1,300 pounds. Throw in one to three human beings, depending on which rig you're driving, and the mechanized pony wins.

Ground clearance is a major issue off-road in rough country, and while the two Yamaha ATVs are vastly different in shape and size, both have roughly 12 inches of ground clearance.

The Grizzly is a much smaller unit, with dimensions of 81.3x46.5x48.8 inches and a wet weight of 648 pounds. The wet weight includes 5.3 gallons of gas under the seat, where there is an additional liquid storage capacity of 4.8 liters. (Maybe a Yamaha engineer felt guilty about not having drink holders on the Grizzly.) The wheel base is 49.2 inches and the turning radius is 126 inches.

The larger Viking carries three people side by side and has a roof. You will appreciate both these features if you get lonely or it rains. The Viking's wet weight is 1,342 pounds with a gas tank that holds 9.7 gallons. Its wheel base is 84.1 inches, and it has a turning radius of 177.56 inches. To clinch the impression that you're in a car and not an ATV,

Ruger SR-762 rifle topped with Burris scope and mounted in gun rack of a Yamaha Grizzly is a formidable weapon that can go anywhere.





Above: Diggin' dirt on a Yamaha Grizzly! Seemed like the older we were, the farther back into our childhood we went when we climbed aboard the Yamahas. **Right:** Class zeros Ruger SR-762 rifles with Burris scopes.



the Viking has seat belts for all three passengers, a parking brake, and hi-lo headlight beams.

Sitting in the plush, padded Viking seats, you won't know you're in an ATV until you bounce over the first rock. On early morning hunts, lucky hunters might actually get in a nap in one of the Viking's passenger seats.



Finally on the trail, author gets a chance to defeat invading bad guys (steel targets).

ATV ACCESSORIES

The accessories are really what define Yamaha's new tactical line of ATVs, and that begins with the classy black paint job. There's an old adage that nothing shows dust and dirt like a black vehicle. That may be true about dust, but having been in different weather conditions with various colored ATVs, I can state that mud doesn't favor or highlight any particular color. You just have to get the hose and go to work.

The good news is that when the mud was gone, those black Grizzlies and Vikings were once again more beautiful and spectacular than any ATVs I've ever seen.

Going beyond the beauty factor, you need to make some important equipment choices regarding accessories. And since we're talking tactical, let's start with how you'll stow and carry your guns.

Yamaha offers a soft black nylon double-capacity gun case that attaches behind the driver and passengers. This case has two compartments inside with openings at each end, allowing access

to the guns from either side of the vehicle. The case is internally padded and can be tightly fastened to the vehicle roll bar so the guns do not bounce around when the ATV goes off-road.

GUNS

At the Gunsite event, we used Ruger SR-762™ Autoloading Rifles. With a collapsible black synthetic stock, weight of 8.6 pounds, and magazine capacity of 20 rounds, the .308 piston-driven SR-762 is a powerful piece of survival gear suitable for both offensive and defensive use.

We also used Ruger SR45™ Centerfire Pistols. Holsters and double magazine carriers were furnished by Blade-Tech. No one lost, dropped or fumbled their handguns while riding their ATVs and ridding the range of evil. Dust accumulated while riding was easily wiped off the Kydex gear.



LET'S RIDE

After sighting in and receiving some training on one of the Gunsite square ranges, writers mounted up and headed off to clear a ravine of hostile steel targets.

To dispel the myth that gun writers are supplied only with hand-picked guns for sponsored events, let me acknowledge that we had problems with both rifles and pistols on Day One. A number of malfunctions with the .45 pistols were instantly field diagnosed by our intrepid band as being magazine related.

When Ruger tore the guns down at the factory that evening, they did find several magazines whose lips were not properly spaced. In addition, they found a couple of pistols with extractors that were not to spec. When these issues were addressed and parts replaced for the second day's shooting, the pistols ran fine.

Likewise on Day One, the SR-762s had problems with a few of the guns failing to extract/eject and locking the action up solid. These only occurred with some steel-case ammo that had been brought to the range. Conventional

brass cases worked through the guns with no issues.

On a post-event range visit with a couple of the rifles and accompanied by Gunsite owner Buz Mills and Ruger Product Manager Brandon Trevino, we learned it wasn't all steel-case ammo causing the problems, but rather one lot number. Other lots of steel cases, along with different brands of conventional brass cases, operated flawlessly. We were told later by the manufacturer that the guilty lot of ammo had been pulled.

Yamaha has rubber-lined "V" clamps that can be mounted on the front luggage rack of the Grizzlies. Although still exposed to the elements, rifles can be placed inside a soft case and the case clamped firmly in place on the rack.

At Gunsite and on previous hunts, I've had no incidents of rifles suddenly departing their vehicles in rough coun-

Above: Ruger SR45 pistol and two spare magazines are nicely decked out in Blade-Tech molded holster with Gunsite Raven. Inset: Vikings and Grizzlies waited to greet writers each morning of the event.

try. If the rifle is not inside a case, the clamps should be positioned so they do not make contact with the gun's optics.

For engaging bad guys in Arizona's more open terrain, the powerful .308 cartridges and full-size .45-caliber duty pistols are excellent choices.

Yamaha added an event where we used Garmin's Tactical Training GPS Watch to locate and engage steel targets at locations known to us by virtue of superior field intelligence, i.e., the Gunsite instructors placed them in safe shooting spots.

The Garmins did a good job of locating the bad guys, but unfortunately their electronics couldn't keep up with the speed of the Yamaha ATVs as our novice drivers raced and giggled across the Arizona terrain. About the time the GPS told us we were almost on the targets, we had already passed them. Hey, working with new gear is always a learning process.

LESSONS LEARNED

All in all, it was a marvelously fun and informative three days. It seems appropriate to comment on lessons learned, particularly given the amount of ink devoted lately to the importance of tactical readiness.

While there have been volumes written in the last few years about every possible tactical product that should be in your bug-out bag, the missing ingredient has been the actual bug-out buggy that will carry you and your wonderful gear out of harm's way to safety.

Yamaha has filled that niche with the tactical models of their go-anywhere ATVs, specifically the three-seat Viking and the "catch me if you can" Grizzly.

Regardless of whether you think bug-out bags are filled with toys or serious survival gear, a ride in one of the Yamaha rigs will have you rewriting your Christmas list with a new #1. ©

Author's note: Being a gun writer, I don't know exactly what all the things in Yamaha's spec sheet are or do. I have touched on the features with which I am familiar and know from first-hand experience are important. If you're a vehicle guy, you'll find the specs for these ATVs on the Yamaha website.

Dick Williams is a graduate of the United States Air Force Academy with seven years' service in the United States Air Force; 36 years' experience in defense/aerospace marketing; and seven years' experience in public relations with manufacturers of outdoor products. He has been the Handgun Editor of Shooting Illustrated Magazine since its inception in 2001.

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Even a quick look at the new SIG Sauer Legion pistol reveals this is not a standard P229.

IN September 2015, a few other writers in the firearms industry and I participated in an online conference with SIG Sauer to introduce their new Legion line of firearms and gear. Before the conference, SIG sent the writers Legion products, chief among them a SIG P229 Legion.

THE LEGION

According to a SIG Sauer press release, "The Legion is a community, a brotherhood of like-minded individuals who push themselves and their gear to the limits. Legion members will receive exclusive product offerings and information from SIG, gain access to premium accessories built specially for the Legion, and find lifestyle items representing their membership in the Legion."

The Legion name has roots reaching back to the Roman armies and elite organizations among the world's military and professional communities. Also appropriate is the logo of the SIG Legion series, which is based on the Lambda that adorned Spartan soldiers' shields to denote the region of Greece they came from: Lakedaemon.

To become a member of the Legion, after customers purchase a Legion product, they simply call SIG Sauer with their serial number to register the product. SIG will then send a complimentary custom Thermo-Mold case cut for their specific firearm, with slots for magazines and a slot for a challenge coin

JOIN THE LEGION!

SIG Sauer P229 Legion Pistol

BY DENNY HANSEN

PHOTOS COURTESY SIG SAUER



Above left: Beavertail on Legion allows a higher grip.

Above: Trigger guard is checkered on bottom and front.

Left: Pistol features Grayguns adjustable trigger.

Below left: Pistol uses solid guide rod.

Below: Checkering on front and back straps increases control.

matched to that firearm (included). A precut slot without the foam is still in place and fits a knife or flashlight.

At the same time, the new member will receive a web account login, which unlocks the Legion portion of the SIG website. Here Legion members can learn more about the privileges of being a member of the Legion, and be among the first to see new Legion products as they become available.

SIG Sauer launched the Legion line with the two most prevalent SIG handguns in the professional community, the P226 and P229. As mentioned, I received the P229.

P229 LEGION

As part of the pre-launch package, in addition to the pistol, I received 100 rounds of SIG 9mm V-Crown 115-grain JHP ammo, custom Thermo-Mold case with P229 Legion challenge coin, and Kydex® holster and mag pouch from Black-Point Tactical, also bearing the Legion logo.

The first thing that jumped out at me about the pistol was the proprietary Legion gray PVD (Physical Vapor Deposition) coating set off by the black stocks, controls, sights, and hammer. Visually stunning may be a bit dramatic, but the pistol is somewhat striking in appearance. Custom G-10 grips are inset with the Legion medallion. All Legion pistols ship with three magazines instead of the standard two mags.

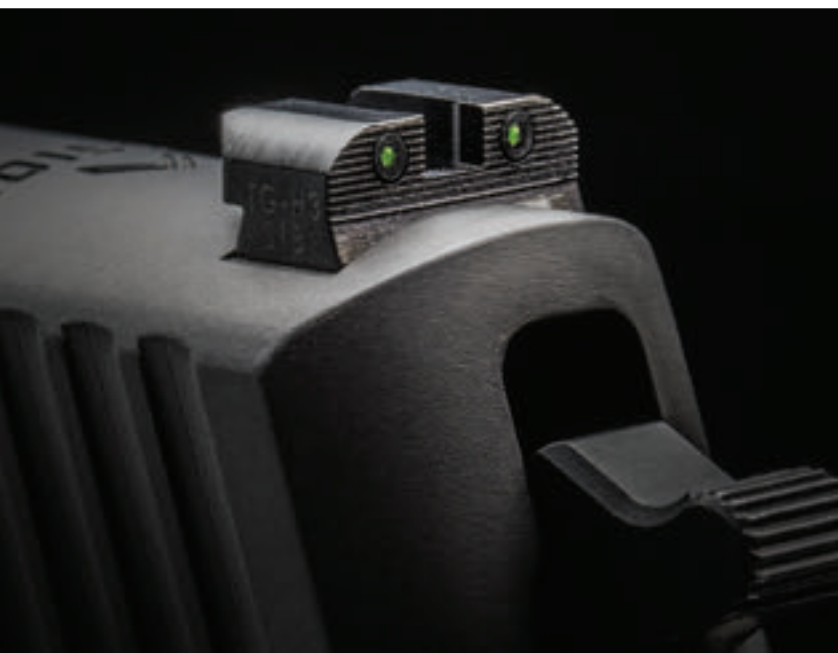
It might be possible to have the extra features of the Legion pistol added to a standard P229 for not much more—or even less—than the dent a Legion will make in your wal-

let. But it would probably be a fairly long wait, as the pistol would have to be sent to more than one shop to accomplish everything. Not having to wait and having everything ready to go from the factory are big pluses to many consumers.

The special features include:

- SIG's new Electro-Optics X-RAY™ high visibility day/night sights. The Legion logo is on the top of the slide in front of the rear sight.
- A reduced and contoured Elite beavertail that allows for a higher grip but a reduced profile, to eliminate printing while carrying concealed.
- An X-Five undercut has been applied to the trigger guard, allowing for a higher grip and greater control.
- More aggressive front strap checkering.
- Additional checkering under the trigger guard to enhance the grip.
- Extra serrations on the front of the slide to provide greater purchase for cycling the action, clearing the firearm, or press checks.
- Enhanced polished action with the SRT™ (Short-Reset Trigger) that is augmented with a Grayguns, Inc, Intermediate Adjustable Trigger.
- Low-profile decocking and slide catch levers to reduce the risk of snagging.
- Solid steel guide rod to add weight at the muzzle for reduced muzzle flip.

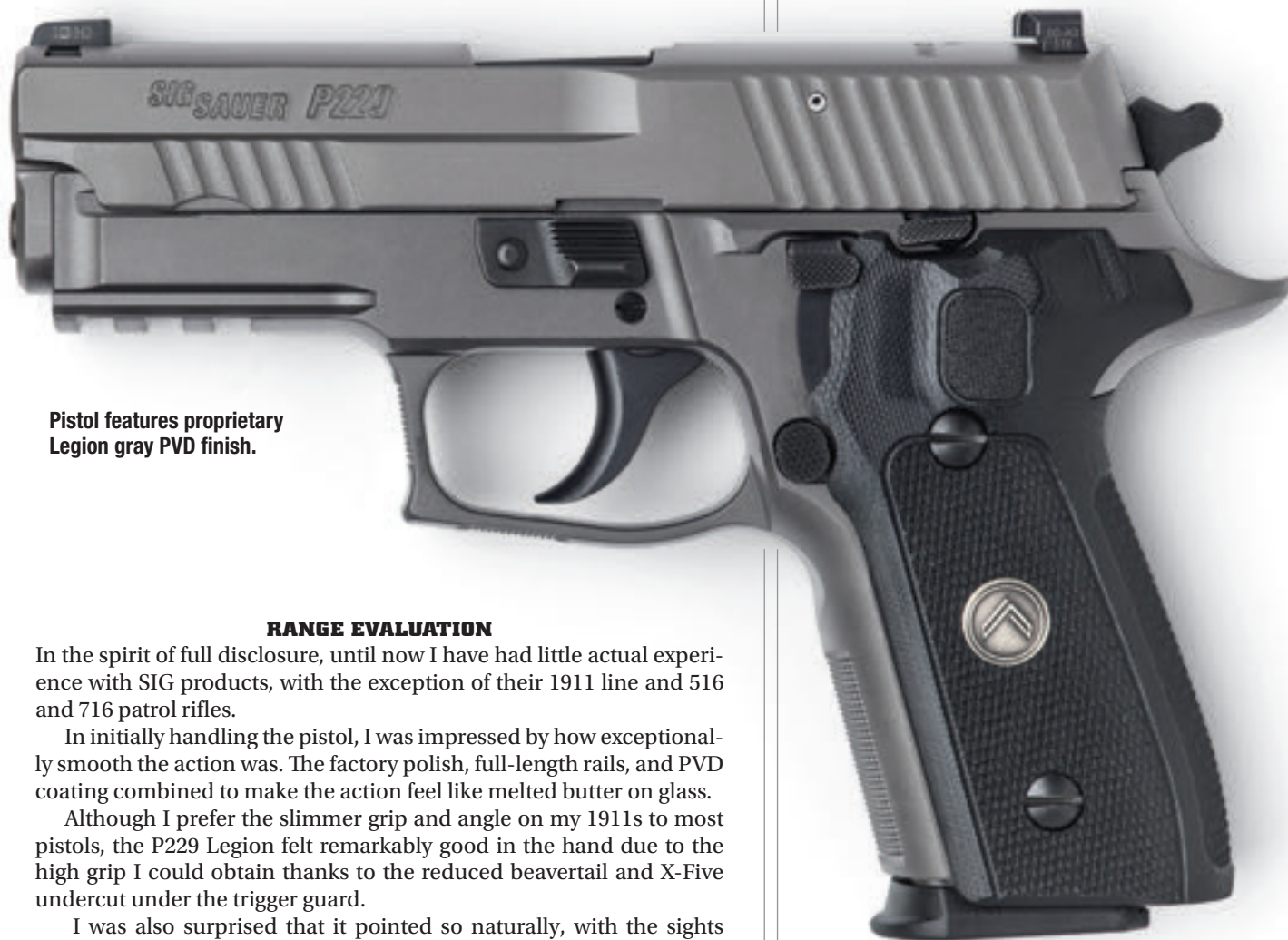
The P229 Legion will also be available in .40 S&W and .357 SIG.



Tritium on rear sight is not as bright as on front sight, so front sight will stand out in darkness. Step on front of sight allows it to be used for one-handed manipulation.



Electro-Optics X-RAY front sight is easy to find in any light conditions.



Pistol features proprietary Legion gray PVD finish.

RANGE EVALUATION

In the spirit of full disclosure, until now I have had little actual experience with SIG products, with the exception of their 1911 line and 516 and 716 patrol rifles.

In initially handling the pistol, I was impressed by how exceptionally smooth the action was. The factory polish, full-length rails, and PVD coating combined to make the action feel like melted butter on glass.

Although I prefer the slimmer grip and angle on my 1911s to most pistols, the P229 Legion felt remarkably good in the hand due to the high grip I could obtain thanks to the reduced beavertail and X-Five undercut under the trigger guard.

I was also surprised that it pointed so naturally, with the sights coming right up on target.

It came as no surprise that it took some time getting used to the double-action (DA) first shot, followed by subsequent single-action (SA) shots.

According to the SIG specs, the DA pull should be ten pounds and the SA pull 4.4 pounds. My trigger pull gauge does not go to ten pounds, but the DA pull seemed lighter than that, probably due to the Grayguns, Inc trigger.

I was able to measure the SA trigger pull and, in that mode, after a short amount of take-up, it broke consistently and crisply at 3.75 pounds with no noticeable overtravel.

I fired the pistol in full sunlight and in low light. The Electro-Optics X-RAY™ sights were easy to acquire under all conditions. The rear sight has a step on it that can be used to manipulate the slide with one hand off the belt, holster, boot heel, etc.

SIG claims the enhancements on the Legion pistols will maximize the user's accuracy poten-

Legion logo is on top of slide in front of rear sight.





Front of frame behind trigger guard has SIG's X-Five undercut, which allows a higher grip on the pistol.



Controls are low profile to reduce snagging.

tial and decrease split times between shots.

Using a PACT Club Timer 3, I pitted the P229 Legion against two other 9mm pistols I had in-house—a Smith & Wesson M&P and a Glock 19.

Using the *El Presidente* drill as a standard to compare the three pistols, average split times with the two polymer pistols hovered right at .5 second for the entire drill, with the P229 coming in slightly faster at .4 second. This is likely due to the fact that perceived recoil is less with the slightly heavier P229 (roughly eight ounces), as well as the checkering on the stocks and front strap. The difference will probably be greater as I become more accustomed to the SIG.

The biggest difference among the three pistols was accuracy.

For some reason that I have not been able to explain, many pistols seem to shoot a bit low for me. Not so with the P229, as it put every shot exactly where I wanted.

Although the decocking and slide catch levers are low profile,

» SPECIFICATIONS

P229 LEGION

MANUFACTURER	SIG Sauer, Inc.
MODEL	P229 Legion
TYPE	DA/SA
CALIBER	9mm
CAPACITY	15+1
OVERALL LENGTH	7.1 inches
OVERALL HEIGHT	5.4 inches
OVERALL WIDTH	1.5 inches
WEIGHT (empty)	29.6 ounces
BARREL LENGTH	3.9 inches
SIGHT RADIUS	5.7 inches
TRIGGER PULL	DA 10 pounds/ SA 4.4 pounds
SUGGESTED RETAIL	\$1,428.00



When a buyer registers to become a Legion member, SIG sends them a complimentary custom Thermo-Mold case cut for their specific firearm and featuring a slot for magazines, slots for a knife or flashlight, and a challenge coin matched to that firearm.



Stocks have an inset Legion medallion inspired by the Spartan Lambda.

I had no problem manipulating them even when wearing gloves.

During the evaluation, I fired the 100 rounds of SIG 9mm V-Crown ammo that SIG provided. I also put down-range another 300 rounds of assorted 9mm fodder I had on hand. I had zero malfunctions of any type with the P229 Legion.

The Legion gray PVD finish proved extremely durable. Kydex offers many advantages, but being kind to a handgun's finish is not one of them. After numerous drawstrokes from the Black-Point Tactical holster, no wear was detected on the P229's finish.

SUMMARY

After almost four decades of carrying the 1911, I have recently been looking to possibly replace it with a 9mm, not because I fully buy into the hype that the 9mm has improved so much in the last few years, but for magazine capacity. We live in dangerous times, and two-legged predators are running in packs larger than we have seen in the past.

Multiple assailants and the very real possibility of missing under stress are very good reasons to have more rounds on tap in the pistol.

I have tried out quite a few 9mms but have generally been underwhelmed with them for a variety of reasons. The SIG P229 Legion is different. It feels great in my hand and is more accu-

rate—for me at least—than most pistols of its type.

There is a misconception that “gun writers” get to keep the firearms they test. I can’t speak for all publications, but at S.W.A.T. we have a strict policy that we either buy the product we test or send it back to the manufacturer. Personally, I return almost all the firearms I evaluate.

As this is written, I have carried the P229 every day for almost two months. My quest is over—I’m keeping this one.

Available only at SIG Sauer dealers, the Legion series of products will grow to include offerings from all of SIG Sauer, including rifles, optics, silencers, and more. Other companies carefully chosen by SIG will carry Legion products, including flashlights and knives.

More information on how you can join the Legion can be found at www.legionseries.com. ©

SOURCES

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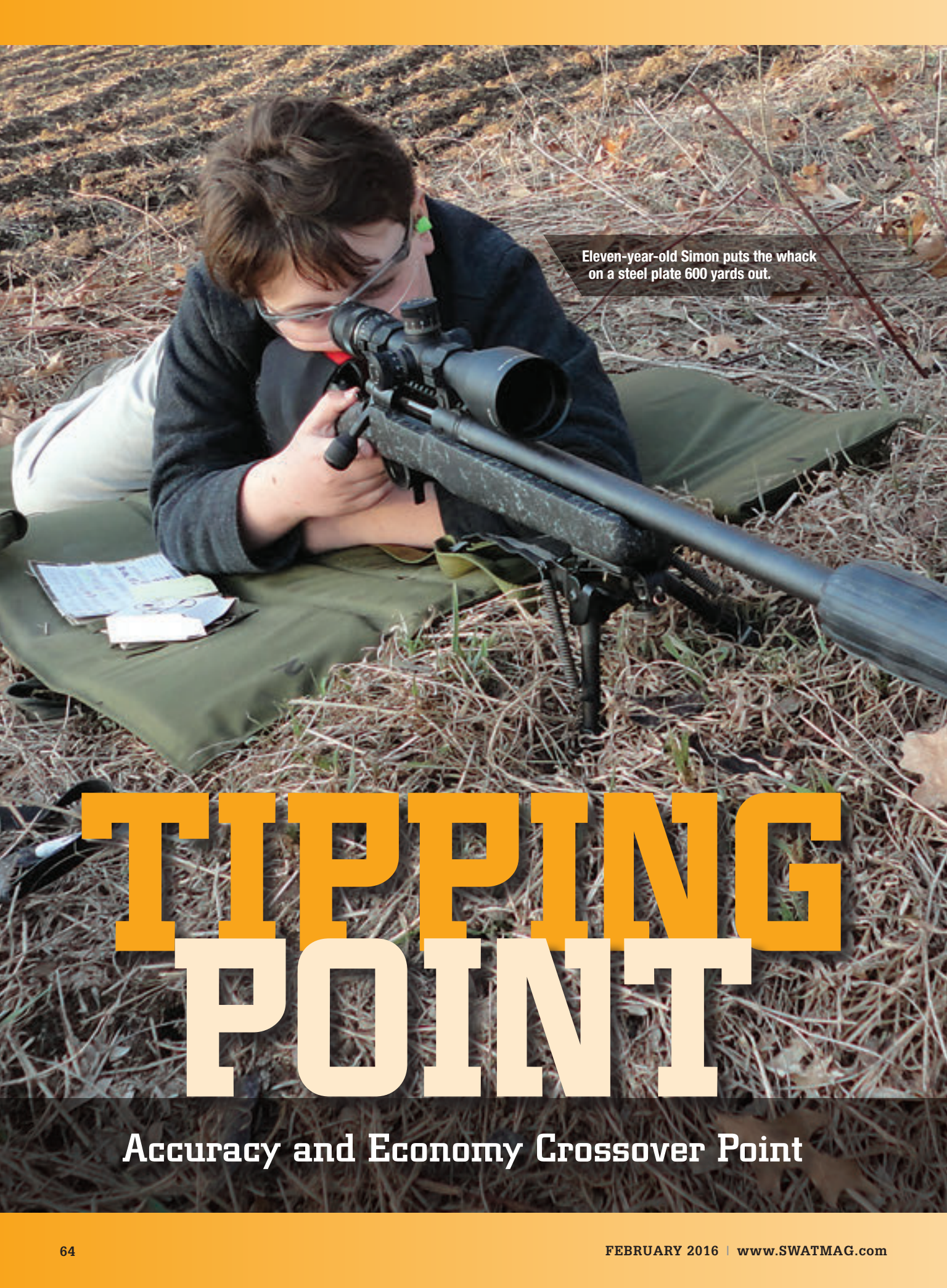
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Eleven-year-old Simon puts the whack on a steel plate 600 yards out.

TIPPING POINT

Accuracy and Economy Crossover Point

MY Marine Colonel shooting pal is into vintage Swiss militaria and has several of the surplus Schmidt-Rubin rifles. They are reasonably priced and unique among contemporary military bolt guns in that they have a straight-pull action. The many I have examined had a tag under the steel buttplate bearing the name and unit of the last citizen to whom it was issued. Most of them have this.

One of the Colonel's Swiss rifles has produced groups down to one inch with attractively priced Swiss surplus ammo. He says the others aren't far behind.

Assuming the shooter is doing his part, this obviously takes a good rifle. But groups like that also require a level of consistency seldom found in military ammo. I set out to see if the surplus Swiss-made 7.5x55mm GP11 really has it. If these old military rifles, well-used and with barrels that are anything but free-floating, can squeeze out good groups, what might a properly tuned Remington be able to do?

But wait, why wouldn't I just shoot my precision .308 bolt gun more? Because every five-shot group with primo factory ammo approaches a heart-rending \$10.

Why don't I use more affordable surplus .308 ammo?

Because it's no fun as it's usually not accurate. And that makes it a waste of money, time, and barrel life.

I had a Remington 700 rifle economically optimized and rechambered to 7.5x55mm using the factory action, barrel, and stock. It shoots very well and every time I squeeze the trigger, a buck-and-change tinkles down from heaven. If this sounds interesting, read on.

The Colonel recently mentioned he had bought another 480-round case of 7.5x55 from AIM Surplus for 51 cents a round. His comment was timely, as I had just bought a case each of .308 Federal Gold Medal Match and ASYM Match, both using the 175-grain Sierra Match King. With shipping, I paid about \$2 a pop.

The time was right to explore what this Swiss ammo might do in a well-built Remington.

REMINGTON BUILD

When it comes to bolt actions, I am a relative dabbler. Uncertain where to go for getting a Remington 700 worked over, I randomly selected Short Action Customs (SAC) in Wellington, Ohio. I told owner Mark Gordon that since the theme was economy, I didn't want a no-holds-barred \$3,500 custom rifle. I wanted something that was "decent-



Swiss GP11 (1992 manufacture in this case) ammo comprises a spire-point 174-grain FMJ boat tail with thickish plated steel jacket, Berdan primed case, and 51 grains of powder. Sectioned bullet has lead core melted out; 7.5 case (right) is .023 inch larger in diameter and 3/16 inch longer than .308 case (left), and approaches .30-06 case capacity.

plus” but not out of reach for the mid-level enthusiast or workin’ Joe.

Using a premium barrel and stock would be cheating, incongruous with the ammo cost, and just plain less interesting to most people. And this was, after all, an experiment—I was going out on a limb with rifle and ammo expenses, based on my friend’s remarks.

My experience with factory Remington heavy barrels has been that they can be coaxied into ¾-ish groups when everything else is right. Mark agreed, but said there would be no accuracy guarantee using a factory barrel. For SAC’s ½ MOA guarantee, a new, known-quantity premium barrel must be fitted.

Mark thought it an interesting experiment and quoted me \$700 for the following on an existing heavy-barreled bolt gun:

- Basic action truing
- Set barrel back and re-chamber
- Re-crown and thread muzzle
- Supply surface ground recoil lug
- Tactical bolt knob conversion
- Trigger job

My project would include some additional steps and expenses in dealing with the unique cartridge. (SAC also does work on Long Actions, and is not limited to Remingtons.)

A note about “short-action” versus “long-action” for those not intimate with the Remington 700 line. There are two action lengths offered: the Short Action accommodates calibers of .308 Winchester length on down to .223 and shorter. Longer cartridges require the greater length



Commercial loads are available from Wolf, Prvi Partizan and wholesaler Graf & Sons, contract-loaded for them by Hornady in PPU brass. Graf ammo was consistent 1- to 1¼-inch performer and not subject to the vexing fliers experienced with surplus GP11 ammo.

and bolt stroke of the Long Action. Remington currently offers the LA in calibers such as .30-06, 7mm Magnum, and .300 Winchester Magnum. The 7.5x55, though only ¼-inch longer than a .308 Winchester, is too long for a short action.

I had no rifle to start with. A friend donated a fire-salvaged Remington 700 receiver, but when Mark checked it out, he declared it a no-go (It was free, I had to try!). Mark had a new receiver in stock, so we started with that. I sent him a 1:12-twist factory heavy .308 take-off barrel I had with 100 rounds through it, and Manson Precision Reamers sent him a 7.5x55 chamber reamer. I had sent a few rounds



Checking and correcting runout in one handy setup with PRI Runout Rig.

to Dave Manson, and between us we decided on some slight deviations from the military chamber that we felt should help with accuracy.

In keeping with the theme of “you can get this done to your existing rifle without buying all-new everything,” I wanted a factory Remington stock such as they provide on their flagship models. These are made for Remington by Bell & Carlson and feature a machined aluminum bedding block built into a foam-filled, laid-up composite stock. Darn good OEM stuff, especially considering it is not impossible to put a grand or more into a high-end tactical stock.

As I anticipated receiving it, I spoke to several people more in tune with bolt guns and learned that SAC is highly regarded in the precision bolt gun arena. A SEAL, a police sniper, and a competitive bolt gun shooter all gave SAC good reports.

THE CARTRIDGE

The 7.5 Swiss cartridge ballistically duplicates the .308, even though its case—at .023 inch larger in diameter and about 0.18 longer—has nearly the case capacity of the .30-06. GP11 ammo uses a .30-caliber, 174-grain boat-tailed FMJ bullet that runs about 2,650 feet-per-second (fps) out of my 25-inch barrel.

The jacket is steel with fine-looking



Round on right has had the crimp removed in an unsuccessful attempt to remedy fliers.

Below: Completed rifle ready for long-range practice.





First groups with the rifle, fired in 15-degree weather, were encouraging. Center group fired from 275 yards, the rest from 100.

cupro-nickel plating. The bullet diameter is actually about a half-thousandth inch smaller than our standard .308. I felt this would not be a problem and was relieved when Frank Green at Bartlein Barrels—makers of some of the best tubes these days—agreed.

AMMO ON THE CHEAP

I have bought a good deal of ammo from AIM Surplus. Usually, if anyone has it, they do, and at the best price or close to it. I've seen the 7.5 Swiss ammo elsewhere at the same price or higher, so for me it's most convenient to default to AIM.

The 7.5 cartridge is still used by the Swiss in their MG51 machine gun and *Sturmgewehr 57* (since supplanted by 5.56mm NATO rifles for front-line service). Bryan at AIM tells me that future availability of 7.5 appears solid, but I bought 6,000 rounds—enough to get a good chunk of the life out of a barrel—at, with shipping, about 55 cents per round. It represents a significant initial investment, but at my rate of consumption, I have about six years' worth of shooting. And in the end, I have saved over \$7000—yes, I said seven thousand dollars—in ammo costs compared to FGMM or ASYM.

But when I say “compared to,” it can't just be about price. Could milsurp ammo, even Swiss-made, be accurate enough for use in augmenting one's precision and long-range shooting skills?

I didn't dare to hope it would match the high-end .308 loads I had bought at nearly four times the cost—and it didn't—but it came close enough to make it useful for training and practice. And it was capable of putting five into just under an inch at 100 yards ... sometimes.

MEXICAN MATCH

Mexican Match is an old term from early, informal silhouette shooting on the southern border, where great ammo wasn't always available but good bullets were. I learned a long time ago that no matter how good the rifle, it can't turn “normal” ammo into “awesome” ammo. In the case of the Swiss GP11, as good as it was, I wondered if a little extra effort might chase those fliers away.

The bullets in factory match ammo are not crimped, since any inconsistency may affect accuracy. For the same reason, high-end target shooters don't crimp their handloads. Crimping is totally appropriate for military and duty ammo, and doesn't necessarily cause accuracy to go all to hell, but when one is seeking the smallest possible groups, crimping is out. I went to a

great deal of trouble to carefully machine out the crimps on 50 rounds. My efforts were not rewarded with any measurable decrease in group size.

Another aspect of precision that match handloaders dote on is bullet runout: is the bullet seated in such a way as to be in perfect alignment with the case's axis, or is there some measurable “wobble”? If there is and the bullet enters the rifling slightly cocked, accuracy can suffer. Precision Reflex, Inc. sent me their Runout Rig—a tool that lets you measure and correct runout in the same setup.

I checked the runout of 100 rounds of GP11. The accuracy standard of anything more than .002 to .003 got culled. The worst I found with GP11 was .006,

with about 60% of them being .004 or less. This 60% was separated into two groups, some with the crimp removed and some with it intact. Straightening to .001 runout was very easy. I now feel I could use this rifle in many kinds of competition; GP11 for staying sharp and MM for matches.

The whole idea of the project was to not have to load my own, but at this point, I simply had to know the limit of this rifle. To that end, my loading bench is currently being held down by a new set of Hornady dies with the in-line bullet seater, several boxes of Sierra Match Kings, and 100 pieces of Norma brass.

I have great expectations, and having 5,000 rounds left of paid-for (and pretty decent) training ammo feels good.

IT WORKS—MOSTLY

Now at about 960 rounds fired, I have shot a good many groups of just under and just over 1 MOA (an inch at 100 yards). Which is not to say there haven't been unexplained fliers opening groups to three inches. Of this I can only say—this GP11 is still the best surplus .30-caliber ammo I have ever experienced.

At 520 rounds, I rebarreled to a 1:10 twist, 20-inch unfired Remington factory barrel to more closely approximate the twist rate the Swiss use. Results were the same, telling me the ammo may not be all I had hoped.

Hornady loads the 7.5 for wholesaler Graf & Sons, using Hornady's 168-grain A-Max and 150-grain SST bullets. The 168s removed any doubt about the rifle itself, going consistently under 1¼ inches at 100 yards from either barrel with no fliers. Wolf 174-grain FMJ loads did not fare quite so well, at about 2½ inches. All three of these loads are in brass reloadable cases by Prvi Partizan, whereas the GP11 brass is Berdan-primed and not easily reloadable.

The rifle, the first custom gun I have had done for myself, has impressed me. I'm not an old hand with custom bolt guns, but I know good work when I see it, hear it, and feel it. It is evident in little touches like the perfect barrel crown and thread protector, Sako-style extractor, and flawless Cerakote™ finish.

THE PARTS AND THE PACKAGE

Economy was the theme, but I was not going to go to this much trouble and then risk the results on questionable mounts and optics. Trijicon helped with the loan of a 5-20X Accupoint scope, removing all doubt in the glass department. It is a solid scope that gives a perfect image. The fiber-optic-lit fine green dot centered in the mil-dot reticle was a big advantage.

As a 1911 guy, I go to Evolution Gun Works for several components critical to a primo custom pistol. EGW also manufactures AR-15 and bolt-gun products. I used their 20-minute rail and rings, finding them very well made, heavy duty but not heavy. In installation and use, they worked perfectly and cost under \$100.

Having no trigger or bottom metal



Mirage band over barrel kept heat mirage out of scope view. Having 6,000 rounds encourages a lot of shooting—and learning.

(trigger guard and magazine housing) caused a slight deviation from the econo theme. Mark installed a Timney trigger and bottom metal from Pacific Tool and Gauge, which uses a detachable magazine. I've never allowed myself to become dependent upon perfect triggers, but even my uneducated finger appreciates the Timney's perfect break.

The stock's comb must be low enough to remove the bolt for cleaning, which made it too low for a good cheek weld. The Pro-Tac adjustable cheekpiece I used was inexpensive, easy to install, and effective. But mostly it was necessary.

I snagged a Blackhawk Stalker drag bag for it all. This bag is the cat's glutes for carry and use as a shooting mat.

I am fortunate to be shooting mates with a suppressor dealer and am able to aid in the testing of many brands and models. A good 90% of the rounds fired through my "Swiss Mischief" passed through a product of Innovative Arms, their LDSP model for .308, this one with their Exoskeleton upgrade, which ups its caliber range to .300 Winchester Magnum. IA has been on my radar for a few years now as a low-key provider of, well, innovative products. Their forte

» Continued on page 88

SOURCES

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QUICK-CHANGE ARTIST



DRD Tactical U556

BY GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

Assembled U556 is of high quality and capable of superb accuracy. It also lends itself to a host of accessories and is available in more than one caliber.

It

is said that there are no new designs, only modifications of old ones.

You can decide how valid this statement is, but it is certainly arguable. Take the concept for the AR (ArmaLite Rifle) platform: springing from Melvin Johnson's rifle, Eugene Stoner's AR-15 was certainly groundbreaking.

Seeing the AR-15 for the first time at the NRA Convention in Los Angeles in 1964 (the last one to ever be seen in California), I marvel that the little rifle is 100 times more popular half a century later. With hundreds of companies offering AR-15 variants in America and roughly 30 in foreign countries, the design could become the most prolific in the world.

Many of today's tactical treasure makers have upgraded or modified their ARs to include such innovations as quick-change barrels and calibers, exotic barrel machining, handguard variations, and much more. But just as often, such improvements amount to little more than pin striping or eye candy that entices one to buy a firearm but may have little utilitarian value. These investment-grade guns are great to appre-



U556 field strips in about 20 seconds without tools, so it can be stowed in a short case or ready to change to another caliber. Reassembly provided a return to zero every time.



ciate, but will they be nearby when the elephant appears?

In reality, the old saying, “beauty is as beauty does” pretty much says it all. A firearm can be an ugly duckling, but if it proves itself when the chips are down, it takes on a beauty all its own—the beauty of utility. Then again, elements exist that not only catch one’s eye but also prove valuable in use.

Having owned, carried, competed with, hunted with, and tested more firearms than I’d care to count since my Dad shipped me that Type 99 Arisaka in 1945, I have fairly strong opinions about

what I like and what I don’t. I like most firearms because of nostalgia, their appearance or, most of all, because they work, and that’s why I like the AR-15 platform.

REVOLUTIONARY

Designed with a system of operation few understand, the AR-15 (and Eugene Stoner’s AR-10 before it) uses an extended gas port in the form of a stainless steel tube to transport gas tapped from the barrel directly into a receptacle, which transfers the gas into the gas cylinder section of the bolt carrier. This

Below: Slick conversion of U556 is SBR upper in .300 Blackout, here assembled onto registered M16 lower and using standard 5.56mm bolt and dedicated .300 BLK magazine from D&H Tactical. Vortex Razor, AAC 7.62 Suppressor with Manta Cover, LaserMax Micro, and RM Equipment Railgrip with SureFire G2 light top off the little carbine.





Sample U556 was equipped with a Trijicon 4X32 ACOG, which made fast hits a cinch out to 100 yards and beyond, many of them using SureFire's 60-round magazine. GripPod tripled the distance and Gemtech TREK-T Suppressor kept things quiet.

Cop's best friend can be a high-quality patrol rifle. DRD U556 Multi-Cal fills a variety of roles.

is a stark difference from the systems of prior direct-gas rifles, in which the gas directly impinges into a dead-end recess in the bolt carrier.

In the AR-15, the gas continues to flow through the gas tube until the bullet has left the barrel and, once inside the carrier, it continues to expand like the gas inside the cylinder of an engine. As this happens, the gas begins to move the bolt carrier (gas cylinder) rearward while pushing equally hard against the back of the bolt, which acts as the piston.

During this millisecond, a channel in the moving carrier begins to rotate the bolt counterclockwise (looking from the rear) while pushing the bolt

to offload the locking lugs. Once unlocked, the bolt travels with the carrier the full length of the receiver (long stroke).

Most of the AR-15's controls were designed to be ergonomic and able to be operated without removing the hand from the pistol grip. The buttstock was also of straight-line design to help control muzzle rise.

During the AR-15's more than 50-year lifespan, I have owned well over a dozen, carried several on duty, and tested several times that many. Some were excellent, most were very good, and some were comparatively dismal. The market has always been "buyer beware," and the bottom feeders among AR-15s should and probably would have gone out of business had it not been for a few panic buying sprees.

Even before the rush to buy one or several of these rifles, the AR-15 train



was full up and it still hasn't left the station. In the fight for sales, accessories are made part of the package. To those in the know, many of these add-ons are of questionable value. Many of the best and most popular accessories are made by several aftermarket companies. A number of gun companies have seen this and now offer such add-ons and parts as manufacturer's original equipment (MOE).

SPECIAL FEATURES

Separate from all the accessories and cosmetics for the AR-15 are real innovations to the rifle. These include quick-change barrels, conventional piston systems, free-float barrels, special sights, lights, sound suppressors, bipods, and more.

Whether you need or want any of these adornments is up to you. As I'm fond of saying, "Being an American

is not just having what you need, but also what you want, as long as you use it properly." With use, you'll weed out what doesn't work.

Two major departures from the AR platform are piston systems and quick-change (QC) barrels and, while conventional short- and long-stroke piston systems may or may not be worth your effort, there is something to be said for so-called quick-change barrels. They do, however, have their pros and cons. Aside from their extra expense, just how quick are they to change, and do they return to zero?

A TAKEDOWN AR!

With several QC barrel systems now available for the AR platform, one of the first questions is whether or not tools are required. If they are, how much do they add to or subtract from the equation? If no tools are required, does the return to zero problem remain, and how long does the quick change take?

As an aside, some years ago an industry person told me a special military element was looking for a quick-change

barrel system for the M16. I told him we already had one. When asked what it was, I replied it was a pre-sighted-in upper receiver group: just push out two pins and replace the whole thing with another upper.

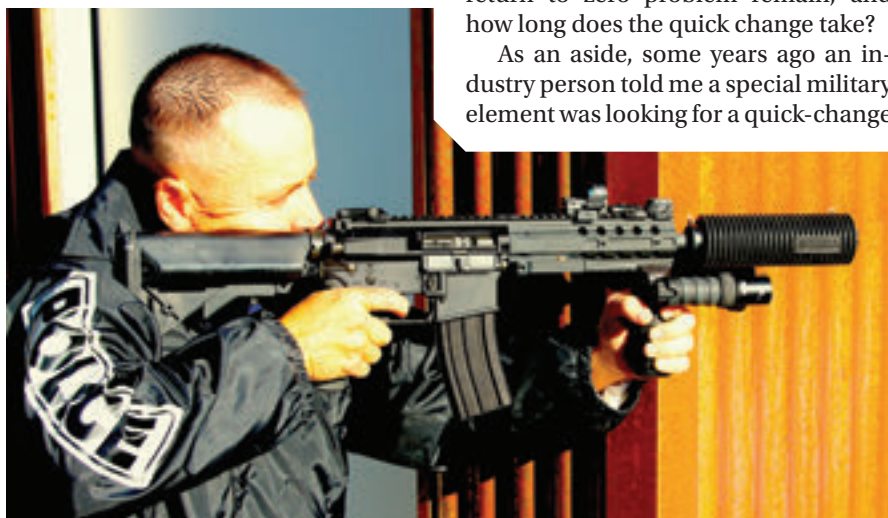
Nonetheless, being able to quickly replace an AR-15-type barrel in the field not only has merit but also remains popular. Beyond that is being able to transport a rifle in the smallest possible package and assemble it quickly. In that regard there is something new, simple and reliable.

U556 MULTI

This new AR-15-type system comes from DRD Tactical of Dallas, Georgia. Its QC barrel design is reminiscent of that used by LMT but is much faster and requires no tools. Called the U556, it is offered either as a complete rifle or an upper receiver conversion unit. It's also compatible with different calibers—more on that below. Here's how it works.

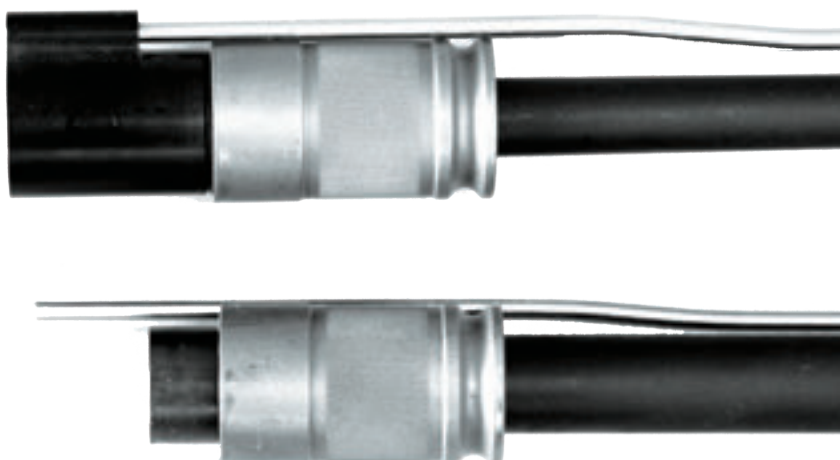
In the U556, everything from the standard AR-15 upper receiver back is retained. Only the barrel nut and handguard differ. To assemble, the handguard and barrel are separated by rotating the adjustable cam lever outward from the right rear of the handguard and then simply pushing out the locking pin in front of it from left to right until it stops. The handguard can then be removed from the front, leaving the knurled barrel nut to be unscrewed by hand. The barrel can then be removed (making sure the bolt is locked to the rear or removed).

To reassemble, carefully insert the



DRD .300 BLK SBR conversion on registered SBR lower is excellent choice for urban plainclothes officers, not to mention home defense where allowed.

Right: U556's knurled barrel nut is screwed onto the upper receiver hand-tight to be locked in place by a front cross pin and a cam that tightens the handguard around the nut, which can be screwed onto a protective cap when stored.



gas tube and barrel into their respective holes in the front of the receiver. If the bolt is forward, just push the barrel back until the bolt rotates and locks in battery. Once the barrel is snugly in place, move the barrel nut to the receiver threads and screw the nut on tightly by hand. Current nuts also have notches for a special wrench for a more permanent installation.

With the barrel in place and the barrel nut on tight, slide the alloy handguard over the muzzle and back until the handguard's top extended portion enters its counterpart at the front of the flat-top upper receiver. Push the handguard's cross pin all the way in and close the cam lever over it.

The cross pin locks the handguard in position and the cam lever tightens and locks the sides of the handguard around the barrel nut, preventing it from unscrewing. A hex bolt on the cam can be tightened, as desired. With the barrel nut hand tight, the entire upper receiver can be disassembled and reassembled in about a minute without tools.

Made by Lothar Walther, the U556's barrel is of match quality, including

its chamber. The muzzle is threaded 1/2x28 for standard suppressors and comes with an A2-type flash hider.

The complete U556 comes in a rugged fitted SKB case.

ACCESSORIES USED AND OTHER CALIBERS

Optics used with the rifle, with several upper units, included Trijicon, Vortex, and Leupold, with the Leupold used for targeting in all calibers.

Magpul and A.R.M.S. folding open sights were used on top rails in addition to the LaserMax Micro Laser. So equipped, the U556 demonstrated excellent application as a multi-caliber carbine for law enforcement, hunting, self-defense, and competition.

For use as a precision rifle, we equipped the U556 with a Leupold 3-9X30mm MR/T optic on an A.R.M.S. #17 Ext-LII 5.56 MKII Mount and Vltor Epod. Shot off the bench at 100 yards, the rifle produced five-shot groups running from 1.03 to 2.36 inches using Black Hills, Cor-Bon, Federal, Hornady, and Winchester commercial match-grade .223-caliber ammunition plus

U.S. 5.56x45mm NATO M193 ball (the largest groups) for an overall average of 1.64 inches.

No change in point of impact or accuracy was noted in removing and replacing the barrel. On the 5.56x45mm, I used Gemtech's 5.56mm TREK-T Titanium Mini Suppressor. The lightest 5.56mm suppressor I've ever had, this one is tough, effective, and ear safe!

The U556 can be had as just the upper conversion in the fitted SKB case using the customer's milspec lower receiver group, or as a complete rifle with or without the case, but that's not all. The SKB case also houses a lower level, and you can get this fitted for a Glock pistol, magazines, and other accessories, or second QD barrel assembly in another caliber with magazines and accessories.

.300 BLACKOUT

DRD makes a 16-inch .300 BLK barrel that can be used in place of the 5.56mm barrel for conversion. After receiving the basic U556, I received another DRD takedown upper receiver group with a 10.5-inch .300 Blackout barrel and matching short handguard. This

» SPECIFICATIONS

DRD U556 MULTI

MANUFACTURER	DRD Tactical
MODEL	U556
CALIBER	.223 Rem
OPERATION	Direct gas transfer
TYPE	Semiautomatic
FEED DEVICE	Any AR-15 magazine
MUZZLE VELOCITY	2,900 fps
BARREL	16-inch Lothar Walther Match, 1:9 twist
LENGTH	32 to 36 inches
SIGHTS	Magpul MBUS flip-up, adjustable for windage and elevation
OPTICAL PLATFORM	Full-length milspec 1913 top rail
FURNITURE	Magpul ACR buttstock and MOE grip
FINISH	Matte black, hard anodized
SPECIAL FEATURES	One-minute assembly/takedown without tools

U556 from DRD Tactical can be had in a rugged SKB carrying case that allows the rifle to be transported in a small package while it can be assembled in less than a minute without tools!





SBR conversion was used with another maker's legally registered selective-fire lower receiver and on another registered as an SBR.

As a tactical gun, the .300 SBR was happy with a Vortex Razor Red Dot Sight and the LaserMax Micro. I also tried an AAC muzzle brake/suppressor mount and AAC QD 7.62 Suppressor. A good variety of .300 BLK and Whisper ammunition was on hand, including new rounds from Gemtech, Hornady, Federal, DoubleTap, and Remington.

DoubleTap offers a new 240-grain bullet subsonic load. The 240-grain .30-caliber bullet is the subsonic load favored by J.D. Jones of SSK Industries, creator of the .300 Whisper, essentially copied as the .300 Blackout. And yes, the two cartridges are interchangeable.

Using the Leupold MR/T, the .300 BLK SBR produced 100-yard five-shot groups measuring from 1.24 to 2.27 inches with an average of 1.41 inches. Sighted in with 115-grain bullet supersonic loads required several inches of holdover to enable the heavier subsonic rounds to achieve a similar point of impact.

For reliable feeding of the heavier bullets, special .300 BLK magazines are offered by SSK and D&H Tactical. The AAC suppressor was used throughout, rendering the subsonic rounds almost completely without sound and supersonic loads ear safe.

6.8x43mm SPC

Being a fan of the 6.8x43mm SPC cartridge, I sent for a match-grade stainless

Leupold 3-9X30mm MR/T Scope and A.R.M.S. Mount were used for all accuracy testing and here are on a 6.8x43mm SPC conversion using a match barrel/bolt and 6.8mm magazine from Precision Reflex Inc. Vltor Epod and SureFire 6.8mm SOCOM Suppressor proved invaluable.

barrel and bolt in this caliber from Precision Reflex Inc, of New Bremen, Ohio, along with their low-profile adjustable gas block. DRD provided a QD barrel nut and I put DRD's takedown upper together in this caliber.

Precision Reflex makes excellent 6.8mm SPC magazines for AR-15-type rifles, and these were used in testing. On

>> Continued on page 88

SOURCES

DRD TACTICAL

(678) 398-9059
www.drdtactical.com

ADVANCED ARMAMENT CORP.

(770) 925-9988
www.advanced-armament.com

A.R.M.S., INC.

(508) 584-7816
www.armsmounts.com

D&H TACTICAL

www.dh-tactical.com

GEMTECH, INC.

(208) 939-7222
www.gem-tech.com

GRIPPOD, INC.

(800) 471-3144
www.grippod.com

LASERMAX

(800) 527-3703
www.lasermx.com

LEUPOLD & STEVENS, INC.

(503) 526-1400
www.leupold.com

MAGPUL INDUSTRIES CORP.

(877) 462-4785
www.magpul.com

MANTA COVERS

(330) 308-6360
www.manta.us

PRECISION REFLEX INC.

(419) 629-3173
www.precisionreflex.com

RM EQUIPMENT

(305) 477-9312
www.40mm.com

SSK INDUSTRIES

(740) 264-0176
www.sskindustries.com

SUREFIRE, LLC

(800) 828-8809
www.surefire.com

TRIJICON, INC.

(800) 338-0563
www.trijicon.com

VLTOR WEAPON SYSTEMS

(520) 408-1944
www.vltor.com

VORTEX OPTICS

(800) 426-0048
www.vortex.com





OFF
THE
GRID

READY FOR ACTION

Everyday Carry Gear

BY RICHARD DUARTE



Everyday carry (EDC) refers to the items, large or small, we carry on a consistent basis. Think of them as your must-have gear to assist in dealing with everyday needs, from the mundane to the extreme. What we carry actually says quite a lot about who we are and how we view the world around us.

Since our individual carrying capacity is always limited by space and weight, the EDC items we choose must be portable, useful (preferably multi-purpose), and practical for the circumstances and our individual needs. While there isn't an all-in-one solution, finding the right balance is well worth the time and effort. Let's explore the various ways in which we can use our limited pocket (or bag) space to the fullest advantage, and increase the odds of having what we need when we need it most.

WHY EDC?

Why do we carry anything at all? If you were to empty your pockets right now, what would you find? A wallet, cell phone, keys, maybe some cash? We carry these items because we need them. It's difficult to imagine getting on with a typical day without these things.

Do you remember that sick feeling you got in the pit of your stomach the last time you arrived at your destination only to discover you had left your wallet or cell phone at home? It was probably a very challenging day as you struggled to adjust to life without money, plastic, and personal communications.

But while these items may be an integral part of our daily routine, what about when the unexpected occurs? Will those everyday items be enough? Not likely. Part of what it means to be prepared is thinking beyond the daily routine, and planning for those times when life throws us a very nasty curve ball.

While anything you throw in your pockets or bag can be considered EDC, a well-thought-out, effective EDC requires advance planning and careful consideration. The best time to start planning your EDC is right now, as you evaluate your needs.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Before you run out and start collecting gear to stuff in your pockets, consider the following: The main focus of EDC is not to include everything you can physically carry, but to include reasonable items that serve an important purpose, and to have the courage and willpower to leave behind everything you don't need.

If the EDC you choose doesn't become part of your routine, there's a very good chance you'll leave it at home. EDC has to be consistent, predictable, and evolve with your changing needs and circumstances.

If we were all the same, it would be easy. There would be a standard EDC list for all of us to follow. But since no two people are exactly alike, and needs and circumstances can differ dramatically from person to person, you should start your evaluation with a review of a typical day.

Where do you work or go to school? Do you commute? If so, how do you reach your destination? Do you spend most of your time indoors or out? Do you live in a rural, suburban, or urban area? Do you have a Get Home Bag (GHB) or Bug-Out Bag (BOB) you can easily reach?

Evaluate your situation and select EDC items that address those needs. Under normal circumstances, EDC can make your day-to-day life easier. Under



Your wallet is an organized place to keep your cash, plastic, ID, and a hard copy of your contact information.

EDC



Modern cell phone affords reliable access to many communication tools and an ever-growing universe of useful apps. Protect your phone with a durable cover.



Choose your EDC handgun carefully and make sure you are well trained in its use.

EDC

extreme circumstances, EDC is meant to be your first line of defense and to help you make the transition to your more substantial supplies, such as a GHB or BOB.

EDC FOR ANY OCCASION

Not only do EDC items vary from person to person, they can also vary from day to day for the same individual. EDC for business/work hours is usually limited by workplace attire and in some instances even the workplace itself. For weekends and casual events, people can wear more relaxed outfits and often can carry larger items.

Your EDC items should be flexible enough to conform to changing circumstances. Carefully consider your needs and experiment with different options. Over time, you'll develop a comfortable and practical setup that works well for you. To get you started, here's an example of what an EDC setup might look like:

■ **WALLET:** It's difficult to imagine leaving the house without the items in a typical wallet: driver's license, car insurance, concealed carry permit, credit cards, etc. These are all essential for life in modern society. A standard leather wallet usually works well. If you're extra careful, you can consider one of the newer RFID blocking wallets to protect your RFID-embedded cards from ID theft. But whatever you use, it should be functional and light-weight.

■ **KEYS:** Car and home keys and vehicle remote.

■ **WATCH:** Many options exist. Consider wearing a watch with a face you can see in low-light conditions.

■ **CELL PHONE:** Smartphones for communications and an array of useful applications. These little devices hold an enormous amount of information and give new meaning to the word multi-function. When connected to the Internet, you have the world at your fingertips. But even if the network you use is down, as long as the device is functional, you can use it for a multitude of purposes. For the amount of space and weight it takes up, a cell phone is an EDC no-brainer.



One of the most important EDC items is a cutting tool. High-quality pocket knives and multi-tools come in many sizes and configurations for just about any situation.

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EDC

■ SMALL POCKET KNIFE:

A small cutting blade can be extremely useful in many different situations. Some work places, however, may not allow you to carry even a small pocket knife.

■ SMALL MULTI-TOOL:

While it's true that a full-size multi-tool would have more to offer, it's often too large, bulky and difficult to carry when wearing business attire. A small multi-tool like the Gerber Dime packs a lot of functionality into a very compact package. It can be inconspicuously carried in just about any pocket and contains a back-up cutting tool/blade in a more discreet package than an actual knife.

■ SMALL FLASHLIGHT:

I can't imagine going anywhere without a flashlight. Imagine getting stuck in an elevator, a dark stairwell, or any interior public space without a light source. But to be EDC material, a flashlight must be small and powerful. The Brite-Strike EPLI Illumination Tool is about the size of a regular ball-point pen, can clip to a shirt pocket, puts out 160 lumens, and can run up to six hours on the low setting.

■ THREE-DAY SUPPLY OF PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION:

If you were unable to go home at the end of the day and needed to take important daily medication, what would you do without a backup supply? Use a small plastic zip-lock bag for each medication and write the name, dosage, and frequency of use on the outside of the bag. If you have a medical condition or allergies that first responders need to know about, a medical alert bracelet should also be part of your EDC.

■ **CASH:** Many people walk around with no cash, instead relying on debit and credit cards. Cash is an extremely important but often overlooked EDC component. Always carry at least \$100 in small bills. As I write this article, Greek banks are closed and depositors are limited to about \$66 per day in ATM withdrawals. Do not rely solely on plastic. Even a short-term power failure can take down ATMs and credit card terminals. Having cash is always a huge advantage, especially small bills and some coins.



Flashlight is a critical EDC component. Choose your flashlight carefully and test it often to ensure it's working properly.



A 550 Para Cord bracelet can hold seven to eight feet of para cord and comes apart easily if well made. Disposable lighters are inexpensive and reliable.

■ **LIST OF CONTACT INFORMATION:** This can be a small piece of laminated paper or cardboard with the names and contact information for all your most important contacts. I can already hear people saying, “That’s not EDC.” Why not? Many of us have this information in our phones, but what if something happens to that phone? Is your memory really that good? If not, have a hard-copy backup just in case.

■ **550 PARA CORD BRACELET:** Cord can come in very handy in a variety of situations, and 550 cord in particular is an extremely durable and versatile option. A 550 bracelet can be worn on the wrist or on a belt loop or bag. With a plastic snap-clip, it becomes a very handy attachment device. It’s lightweight and an easy way to carry a fair amount of 550 cord.

■ **DISPOSABLE LIGHTER:** These are inexpensive, reliable, lightweight, and hold fuel for a long time.

■ **FIREARM:** Disasters don’t call ahead and announce themselves. A self-defense situation can develop in seconds, with little or no warning. You need to be ready at all times. If possible, carry a firearm on your person, but if you can’t, explore options such as a bag or briefcase. Consider a compact 9mm with an extra magazine. Regardless of what type of firearm you decide to carry, make sure you are well trained. A firearm will do you little good if you can’t connect with your target.

FULL-SIZE EDC

On the weekends, or anytime you can dress in a more casual manner, you can change up your EDC. All the items listed previously remain the same, but with more relaxed attire, you can carry full-sized versions of some of the same tools.

■ FULL-SIZED POCKET KNIFE:

The Benchmade Adamas is big, beefy, heavy, and feels great in the hand. A knife like this takes abuse and keeps coming back for more. While not the knife I would take with me into the wilderness as a first blade, I would trust it for just about any situation.

■ FULL-SIZED MULTI-TOOL:

The Leatherman Wave has a multitude of tools in a very compact and well-designed package that you can carry on your belt or in your pocket. If space is not an issue, go with the more comprehensive tool.

■ **FIREARM:** Whenever possible, carry a larger pistol such as the Glock 19. It’s easier to shoot and has more capacity than a compact pistol. With loose, casual attire, a handgun like the G19 can be more easily concealed.

■ **FLASHLIGHT:** Increased carrying capacity means you can take a more powerful flashlight. The Brite-Strike Tactical Touch Flashlight is waterproof, rechargeable, requires only one hand to operate in all modes, and puts out 800 Lumens.

EDC



If there's a medication you need to take daily, include it in your EDC.

CONCLUSION

Your EDC should be practical, reliable, and functional. Above all, it should be well-thought-out and specific to your individual needs. A good EDC should adapt as your situation changes.

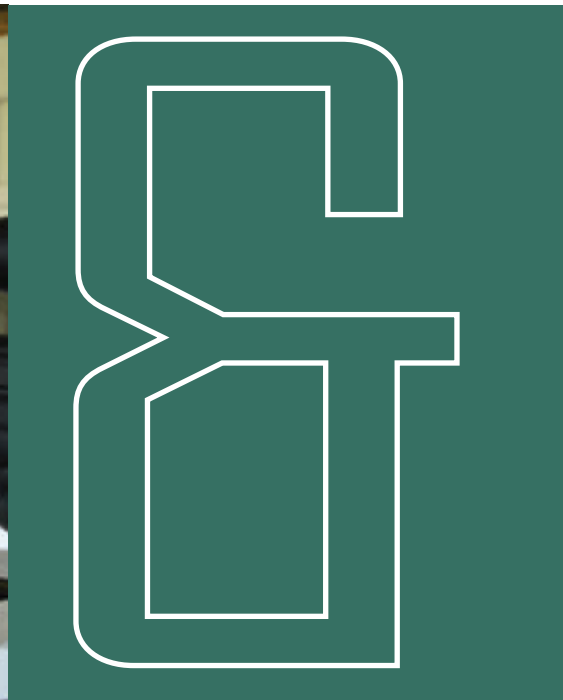
It will likely be a work in progress, as you fine-tune the items you carry to include what you need and leave out what you don't. The “E” in EDC does not stand for “Everything,” and while there will always be compromises, with some time and effort, you should be able to put together a setup that will serve you well when you need it. ☉

Richard Duarte is an urban survival consultant, writer and firearms enthusiast. He's the author of Surviving Doomsday: A Guide for Surviving an Urban Disaster, and the Quick-Start Guide for urban preparedness. For the latest news and updates, connect with Richard on www.quickstart-survival.com

LOCK

I'VE had a long relationship with the M1A/M14. I first came across the rifle when I was five or six and a friend of my Dad brought a plastic one over as a Christmas present. It was life sized with a small battery pack in the buttstock that was hooked to the trigger and muzzle, which would flash when the trigger was pulled. The rifle would also make a bang sound. It was the coolest thing I'd ever seen.

As a member of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Training Unit (MTU) at Ft. Meade, Maryland, in the 1980s, I had



LOAD

Springfield Armory Loaded M1A

BY STEVE SIEBERTS

the opportunity to attend the National Match Armorer's Course at Rock Island Arsenal and was taught how to build the M14 into the National Match rifle and the M21 sniper system.

As part of the course, I built two rifles and they both shot pretty well, printing five-shot groups of about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch with Lake City ball ammo as shot out of the rifle cradle. Rebarreling, trigger work, glass bedding, and other tricks of the trade opened my eyes as to what the rifle was capable of.

I was also able to attend a couple of sniper schools while I was with MTU #1 and got a chance to use the M21 with the ART II scope during the day and the PVS-2 night scope during the night firing portion of both courses.

I earned a healthy respect for the capabilities of the rifle over the years, and



Left: Front sight is .062-inch wide blade. Flash suppressor and front sight assembly are carefully tightened and fitted in a Match rifle.

Below: Loaded M1A rear sight has a non-hooded aperture with fine adjustments for windage and elevation, if the rifle needs to be used with iron sights as a backup.



Below: Springfield Armory Sheffield-style scope base is a sturdy unit that attaches to the side of the receiver and the stripper clip guide. It uses a Picatinny rail to mount any type of scope, here the Leupold Mark 4.



The Loaded M1A weighs about 11 pounds empty. A scope, scope mount, and loaded 20-round magazine increase that considerably.



Forend has a rail system mounted underneath (here with cover on) to attach various accessories or bipods. Bipods can also be attached to bipod stud at front of forend.



Gas system on accurized M1A is a fitted unit to get consistent gas flow through the gun, translating to greater consistency in gun's cycle of operation.

am still impressed by it and its outstanding qualities that persist today.

With this frame of reference, I received the latest version of this excellent battle rifle from Springfield Armory.

LOADED M1A

Springfield Armory offers the M1A in several variations in the stock and barrel. The rifle I chose was their Loaded model, with a Black adjustable stock and 22-inch medium weight stainless National Match barrel. The rifle is also available with a Parkerized carbon-steel barrel and composite standard configuration stock in either Black or Tan.

Loaded M1A is an apt moniker, starting with the most striking aspect of the rifle, the stock, which is completely different from a standard M1A stock. The pistol grip is much straighter than the standard stock, making it comfortable to shoot prone off sandbags, bipod, or from the bench. It also has a nice palm swell—a feature I've always liked on most any rifle I've shot.

The buttplate and cheekpiece are fully adjustable by simply turning a wheel, and those adjustments are positive and repeatable. They are also easy to perform with gloves on. The cheekpiece is a saddle type that is very comfortable from either side of the rifle, and there are a wide range of adjustments, around three inches, which should accommodate virtually any shooter and scope ring height. My son and I shot the rifle at the range and since we are of similar height and reach, we didn't have to make any adjustments to the stock, but it's nice to know it's possible.

The stock comes with a rail section on the forend to allow for attachment of accessories, and also has two sling swivel studs mounted on the buttstock and the tip of the forend. The stock is very sturdy, extremely well made, and should stand up to the use and abuse dished out in a tactical environment. The forend has reinforcing ribs running its length, which will help keep the stock from being squeezed and collapsing. This is very good engineering.

MATCH GRADE BARREL

The barrel on the Loaded M1A is the outstanding medium-weight air-gauged stainless-steel Match Grade barrel. It's 22 inches long and has a 1:11 right-hand six-groove twist. The rifle also can be purchased with a carbon-steel barrel and Parkerized finish. I always opt for stainless-steel barrels when I can, since stainless barrels normally last longer than a carbon-steel barrel, all things being equal.

I mentioned that the barrels are air-

gauged. While many people have heard the term, they may not know what it is. Air-gauging is a very precise way to measure variations in the internal dimensions of any barrel. I had an air-gauge tool when I was in charge of a DoD small arms R&D facility. I used it to measure our 1911 .45 ACP Match barrels for consistency when I received them from the vendor prior to fitting, to ensure we were getting consistent Match Grade barrels from the manufacturer.

The way it works is, you take a mandrel of known diameter that is mounted on a long rod with the rifling ground into it, and run it through the barrel. The gauge forces air through the rod and the mandrel, which has tiny holes in it, and measures the amount of air resistance or back pressure between the mandrel and the barrel. This resistance is translated into a direct measurement of variations in internal bore diameter to ten-thousandths of an inch, which is displayed on the gauge in digital form. It's a very efficient, non-contact way to measure internal diameters.

Everything that's attached to this barrel is National Match, from the gas system to the flash suppressor, front sight and rear sight assembly. The front sight is a .062-inch wide National Match blade type sight, which is mated with a National Match non-hooded rear aperture sight that has a .052-inch opening. The rear sight has ½ MOA adjustments for windage and 1 MOA adjustments for elevation.

The Loaded M1A weighs about 11 pounds empty. A scope, scope mount, and loaded 20-round magazine increase that considerably. The upside to this weight is recoil dampening, and the rifle is really fun and easy to shoot double taps with. Overall length is 46.25 inches with the buttstock extended.

The trigger mechanism is the standard two-stage M1A trigger but is tuned for an excellent 4- to 4.5-pound weight of pull. The pull was consistent from shot to shot and had minimal overtravel and zero creep.

I spent considerable time during my class at Rock Island Arsenal and with the rifleshooters at MTU #1 learning about trigger systems and other accuracy techniques, and the folks at Springfield Armory really get this part right. The triggers are outstanding.

ACCESSORIES

The scope I chose for this rifle was the excellent Leupold Mark 4 LR/T 6.5X20 with Illuminated Mil-Dot reticle. This scope has served me well for many rifle projects and has never disappointed.



Stock on Loaded M1A is fully adjustable at cheekpiece and buttplate and has a wide range of adjustment to accommodate almost any ring height combination.



M1A receiver is a solid unit and with Springfield mount makes an accurate system. Rifle's accuracy could be increased by a very skilled gunsmith, but that doesn't come cheaply. With good ammo, Loaded M1A is more than accurate enough as a tactical rifle.

» SPECIFICATIONS

LOADED M1A

MANUFACTURER	Springfield Armory
MODEL	Loaded M1A
TYPE	Gas-operated semi-automatic
CALIBER	.308 Winchester/7.62x51mm
BARREL	Premium National Match, air gauged, stainless steel medium weight
LENGTH	44 to 46.5 inches
WEIGHT	11.25 pounds (unloaded)
STOCK	Adjustable synthetic
SIGHTS	.062-inch blade Match front/non-hooded adjustable rear, ½ MOA windage, 1 MOA elevation
MAGAZINE	Ships with one ten-round magazine

AMMUNITION RESULTS

BRAND	LOAD	AVERAGE VELOCITY (feet-per-second)	STANDARD DEVIATION (feet-per-second)	100-YARD FIVE-SHOT GROUP (inches)
Applied Ballistics Munitions	175-gr. BTHP	2,653	11	1.053
Black Hills	168-gr. BTHP	2,677	19	1.706
Hornady	168-gr. BTHP	2,688	24	1.358
Nosler	168-gr. BTHP	2,731	22	1.802

The scope mount from Springfield Armory was their side mount that attaches to the side of the receiver and the top stripper clip guide. The scope mount has the standard Picatinny rail system with ample room to mount the scope at the proper position for eye relief. I didn't have time to test the mounting system for repeatability of the mount, but it looks extremely sturdy, and I have no doubt about its serviceability.

I used the Nightforce TS-82 20X70, one of the finest spotting scopes I've ever used, for this test. It weighs 87 ounces and comes with either a 45-degree angled eyepiece or a straight eyepiece. I chose the 45-degree angled eyepiece, but I like both. Nightforce makes an iPhone adapter that lets the iPhone take photos and video through the eyepiece of the scope.

The scope's excellent field of view and clarity make the targets pop. Controls are easy to use even with gloves on. The scope has accessories such as a full body scope cover, hard carrying case, and more available.

RANGE TESTING

Once I had attached the Leupold scope to the rifle with the Mark 4 rings, it was time to head to the range. I had several types and brands of ammo. One of the newest was a couple of boxes from Applied Ballistics Munitions (ABM), a round that is loaded with the excellent Berger 175-grain bullet and is part of ABM's tactical ammunition line.

ABM makes loads specifically designed for either Match shooting or tactical use. Since I was using the M1A as a Match Grade tactical rifle, not as a purely competitive Match rifle, the tactical load was appropriate.

The other rounds I tested all have produced excellent results: Black Hills Match loaded with 168-grain boat-tail



ABM ammo shot just over an inch for five shots at 100 yards.

hollow-point (BTHP), Hornady Match 168-grain BTHP, and the Nosler Match Grade Custom Competition round loaded with 168-grain BTHP.

The ABM round shot the best, but it's also the most expensive. This is a tactical load, so price theoretically shouldn't be a consideration because lives are on the line, but with law enforcement budgets being what they are, price is always important.

At my range, we have a swinging eight-inch steel plate positioned at the 300-yard line. White and red steel plates are mounted above, in front and behind the plate. When the plate is hit, it will swing front to back, and the red and white plates are alternately exposed, showing the plate has been hit, which is not always easy to see at 300 yards.

My son and I banged away at the plate all day long with the precision rifle until it was almost boring. We were wishing the plate were out at 500 or 600 yards for more of a challenge, but even at that yardage I don't think it would have been too difficult with this rifle/scope/ammo combination once we got the scope dialed in.

All in all, the Springfield Loaded M1A carries on the fine tradition of the original M14/M21 system, with some great upgrades.

The rifle's stock is a huge improvement, and the Match grade additions

like the reworked trigger pull, Match Grade barrel, sights, and gas system with operating rod really combine to make this a self-loading tactical rifle that's hard to beat. ☺

Steve Sieberts has over 40 years in the firearms field. He's a former paratrooper and small arms tech with the 82nd Airborne Division and former member of the Army Marksmanship Unit, and earned the Distinguished Pistol Shot Badge, NRA 2600 Club, and President's Hundred tab. He has attended numerous armorer and gunsmith courses.

SOURCES

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

(800) 680-6866
www.springfield-armory.com

APPLIED BALLISTICS MUNITIONS

(480) 240-6792
www.buyabmmammo.com

BLACK HILLS AMMUNITION

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www.bgsllinc.com

FEDERAL PREMIUM AMMUNITION

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www.federalpremium.com

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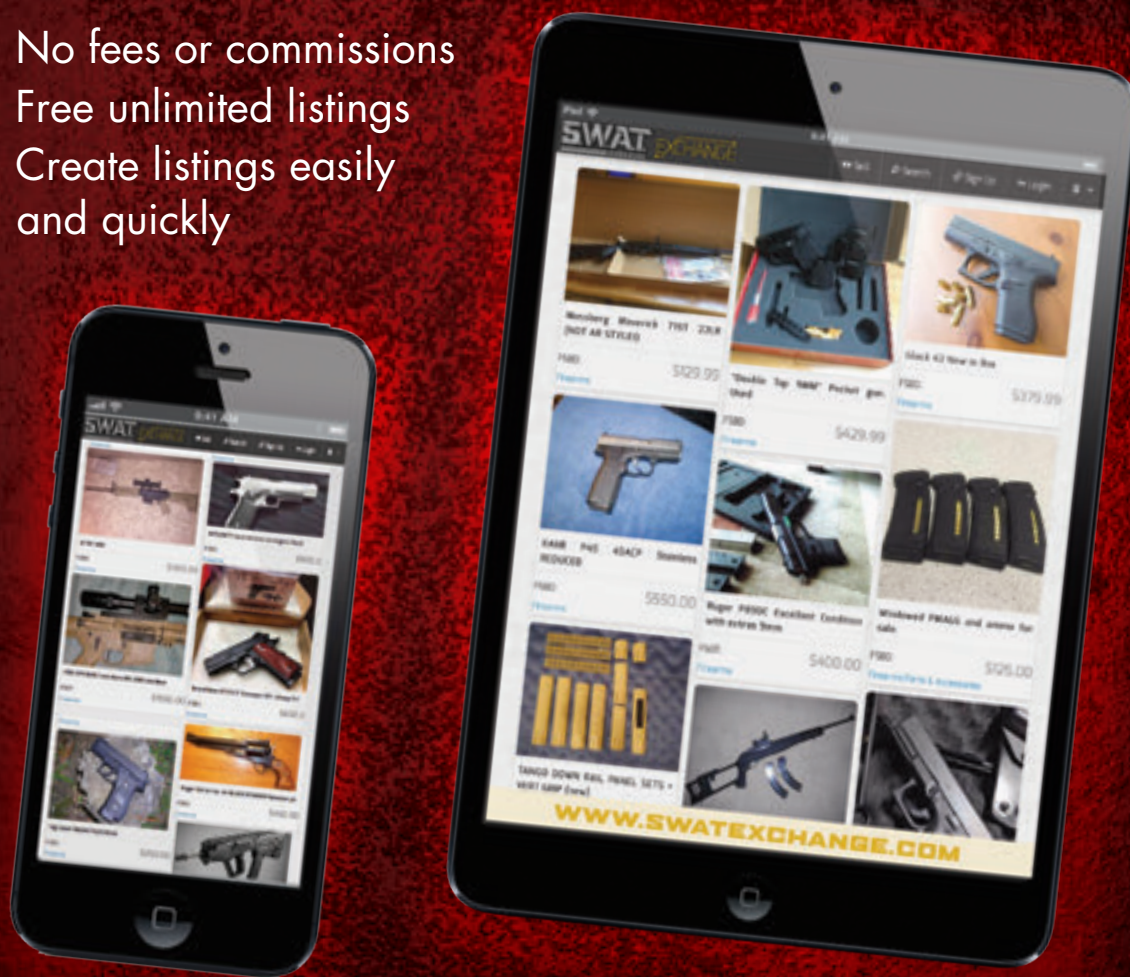
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Protection

+ Continued from page 30

Velocity has the ability to make armor “kit” ready for any mission and accessorize it with minimal changes to suit any environment or specification.

A crucial Velocity Systems advantage is the ongoing innovations in the body armor they create. They have an extensive development program for armor solutions. The combination of R&D on plate performance and Velocity’s employment of professional designers makes for a functional protection system for any shooter on any mission.

BODY ARMOR FOR TODAY’S MISSIONS

Velocity Systems recognizes the mission evolution that has occurred over the last decade. A lowering of one’s presence, regardless of threat level, for a lower “print” relative to smaller team and less obtrusive behavior is the new norm. Velocity has developed the applicable body armor kits to accommodate that type of mission without compromising safety or security.

Velocity Systems is at the forefront of making body armor more comfortable and effective in stopping a wider range of projectiles. The increased comfort eases the operator’s chore of maintaining self-discipline in wearing their armor. The company offers a variety of armor solutions for a wide array of situations—situations that weren’t conceived of 30 years ago. Body armor has become just as crucial a part of an operator’s equipment as a sidearm, rifle, and ammunition.

The most important thing is making sure the body armor is worn for the chance it is needed. As stated earlier, trained personnel are the real commodity in any organization.

Velocity Systems products help ensure personnel wear their armor with the confidence it will perform when needed while being as comfortable as possible considering the weight and mass involved in operating with body armor on. ◎

SOURCES

VELOCITY SYSTEMS

(703) 707-6280
www.velsyst.com

MAYFLOWER RESEARCH & CONSULTING

(703) 435-1131 (fax)
www.mayflower-rc.org

Tipping Point

+ Continued from page 69

is well-thought-out, robust and uncomplicated products centered on sound reduction.

When you are present for and in the middle of 100,000 or so rounds per year of rifle fire, as I am (perhaps 20 times that of some guys who make their entire living at it), you begin to appreciate taking the edge off the sound. No matter how good your ear protection, reducing the sound level is the real start point for preventing hearing damage. Not going deaf and being considerate of others are the real reasons for suppressor use.

CONCLUSIONS

Some accuracy has been sacrificed for economy. But in the process of firing one-sixth of my ammo supply into groups down to 7/8-inch at 100 yards, averaging maybe 1½ inches, but on occasion up to three inches, I have learned a great deal.

I find the ratio of accuracy to price acceptable for reaching toward the next level of rifleman-zen: things like doping the wind while bangin’ a 16-inch plate at 500 yards.

And when I need better, I can reach for the Graf A-Max load. Should I need best, one answer was found in Mexican Match. (See the sidebar on page 68.)

This rifle is pedestrian compared to what SAC’s niche really is: true high-end, precision bolt guns on the tactical side. That they didn’t turn their nose up at my project showed me they are customer-oriented, and I felt the pricing was reasonable. With my savings in ammo, I might have put another \$1,000 into the rifle. But given what it can do as-is, and the volume of practice and training I have ahead with no financial inhibitions, I will gladly exchange half-inch groups and less shooting for one- to two-inch groups and more shooting. ◎

Ned Christiansen is known for his custom 1911 pistols and unique AR-15 armorer tools. A lifelong student of all things related to firearms, he has many years of competition shooting under his belt. He is a police firearms instructor, inventor, and firearms consultant to agencies, industry, and individuals. His AR-15 and 1911 Armorer classes have been well received by clubs and agencies around the country.

Quick-Change Artist

+ Continued from page 75

the 6.8mm barrel, I installed SureFire’s new QD 6.8mm SPC SOCOM muzzle brake mount and matching 6.8mm SPC SOCOM Suppressor. A variety of 6.8mm SPC ammunition was tested from Federal/ATK, Hornady, Remington, and DoubleTap.

Again using the Leupold 3-10X30mm MR/T scope, the match 6.8mm barrel produced 100-yard five-shot groups of from 0.66 to 1.54 inches with an average of 1.18 inches. The only malfunctions were several failures to feed from an early lot of round-nose 6.8mm FMJ bullet loads that are no longer offered.

A match-grade trigger would no doubt improve accuracy from all calibers tested. Will a 7.62x39mm conversion be next?

WHY SUPPRESSORS?

The short answer is, why not? The long answer is, because if you can legally own one where you live, I believe you will agree a good sound suppressor is one of the best investments you can make for a rifle.

You will enjoy shooting far more with a “gun muffler” and, although it will not eliminate all sound, it will allow you to shoot in comfort while not disturbing others. Three brands of sound suppressors were featured here, but many more exist. A .30-caliber suppressor can also be used with smaller calibers to lower their report. A suppressor cover is also advisable. The one from Manta is the best I have ever used.

DRD also offers its .308 Winchester caliber Peratus and other takedown .308 AR-10 type rifles, and their new semi-auto Kivaari .338 Lapua Long Range Precision Takedown, which should be available as you read this.

DRD’s high-quality U556 Multi is a fast, simple and foolproof takedown AR system that can fill a wide range of needs from law enforcement and hunting to home defense and competition. ◎

Having shot guns since the age of five, Gary Paul Johnston was a police officer for 28 years, commanding a SWAT team for the last 15. The author of some 2,000 published articles on firearms, tactics and history, Johnston has written two books including co-authoring The World’s Assault Rifles, and is finishing three more.

"The best example of good training is never having to use it."

~Clint Smith

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Gerber Short Stack AR Multi-Tool

THE Gerber Short Stack is an ingenious new modular AR multi-tool sized to stow away in Magpul® MOE® and MIAD® pistol grip compartments. The Short Stack is equipped with 15 different tools designed to simplify weapons maintenance and take the chore out of cleaning your AR-15/M4/M16 weapon system. It is compatible with Magpul M-LOK® accessories.

In designing the Short Stack, the goal was for it to fit into a Magpul MOE/MIAD grip, ensuring it would always be available when needed and to also include as many tools as possible. This required a completely modular assembly that avoided the bulky pivots common to most multi-tools.

The Short Stack features an innovative three-piece design with 15 differ-

ent functions for cleaning and maintenance. Each part of the three-piece design is magnetic for easy, secure assembly. The parts lock together to make a host of different wrenches and drivers. Closed length is only 2.9 inches and it adds only 2.8 ounces to the pistol grip. You won't even know it's there.

The Short Stack allows for multiple wrench configurations, including a 4mm wrench/bit driver, 7mm wrench for M-LOK® Fasteners, ½-, 3/8-, and ¼-inch wrenches, and two double-sided hex bits (#0 Cross Driver, T10, 1/8-inch Hex, 4mm Hex) that provide the necessary torque to let the user tighten and loosen the lower receiver extension, buffer tube, flash hider, and other parts on your AR. It also has an A2 front sight adjustment tool.

The 7mm M-LOK wrench is a welcome addition. M-LOK is a freely licensed modular locking accessory mounting system developed by Magpul. An evolution of the MOE slot system that has been used since 2007, it is becoming very popular with manufacturers and the shooting public.

Of course, field cleaning and maintenance are at the heart of any AR multi-tool. Contrary to its detractors, the AR platform is an inherently reliable system and does not have to be kept meticulously clean for reliable functioning when properly lubed. However, carbon fouling can cause malfunctions. Weak extractor and buffer springs and lightweight buffers contribute to most so-called fouling-related issues, but that's a topic for an-



Gerber Short Stack is a modular AR multi-tool designed to stow away in Magpul MOE and MIAD pistol grip compartments. It performs 15 different functions.



Above: Short Stack is a perfect fit for MOE and MIAD grips. It adds only 2.8 ounces to the pistol grip.

Right: Short Stack parts lock together to make a host of different wrenches and drivers essential for cleaning and maintenance.



other time. We can all agree that having a clean gun is not a bad thing.

The Short Stack's field cleaning options are all-inclusive. It acts as a pull-through handle for any standard 8-32 female threaded cable or rod, such as the excellent Otis Technology Memory-Flex® cleaning cable that allows for proper breech to muzzle cleaning. It also acts as multiple scraping surfaces for your weapon's firing pin, bolt, and bolt carrier to remove carbon buildup and keep your AR running at its best.

The Short Stack is cut from 420HC stainless steel and features a black oxide finish. Also known as 420C, 420HC is a higher carbon content 420 stainless. The HC stands for "high carbon." The steel has .4 to .5% carbon and about 13% chromium. It can be brought to a higher hardness than 420 and should not be mistaken for it. An outstanding choice for a tool of this type, 420HC has good toughness and very good corrosion resistance.

If you are looking for a compact multi-tool for the AR platform that will handle nearly all routine maintenance tasks, look no further than the Short Stack. It is an excellent addition to any cleaning kit and will take much of the chore out of cleaning and maintenance. If you have an AR equipped with an MOE or MIAD grip, it's a no-brainer.

The Gerber Short Stack has an MSRP of \$54. It is designed and made in the USA at Gerber's Portland, Oregon facility. The double-sided bits are made in China. It comes with a full lifetime warranty in North America and 25-year warranty outside North America. ©

SOURCES

GERBER

(800) 950-6161
www.gerbergear.com

MAGPUL INDUSTRIES

(877) 462-4785
www.magpul.com

OTIS TECHNOLOGY

(800) 684-7486
www.otistec.com

Feeding the Beast

WHEN talking about semiautomatic firearms, it has been said that the heart of the gun is the action and barrel. If this is true, then the magazines are the circulatory

system. The accuracy of any gun is irrelevant if a round can't get into the chamber. The following are some magazines I recently evaluated that may be of interest to *S.W.A.T.* readers.

BROWNELLS AR 20-ROUND .308 MAGAZINE

First up is a new 20-round magazine for .308 ARs from Brownells. Designed specifically for DPMS LR-308 and Knight's SR-25 pattern rifles, it is built to the same quality standards as AR-15/M4 mags. Brownells sent me two of the magazines for evaluation.

Resembling an AR-15 20-round mag on steroids, the straight body magazines have a gray hard-anodized finish impregnated with a dry film lubricant. A follower that keeps even pressure on the cartridges sits on top of a stainless steel spring. The floorplate, which the user can slide off for cleaning, is of the familiar GI type.

I used my SIG Sauer 716 for the evaluation. Loaded to capacity, the magazine would not lock in place under a closed bolt, but it would when downloaded to 19 rounds. The magazine fell freely from the magazine well when the mag release was pressed. With 100 rounds fired, functioning was 100% through the two magazines.

Suggested retail price is \$19.99 per magazine.



GI lineage of Brownells .308 magazine is evident. SIG Sauer 716 Patrol was employed to run Brownells AR 20-round magazines.



Both FAB Defense magazines have multi-textured surfaces and round-level indicator windows.

FAB DEFENSE ULTIMAGS

FAB Defense sent me six each of their Ultimags for the AR-15 and AK/AKM variants. All Ultimags share the following features:

- 30-round capacity.
- Durable, lightweight, impact- and crush-resistant reinforced polymer body.
- Multi-textured surface for enhanced grip when handling and reloading. AK mag has texturing on all four sides. AR mag is textured on both sides and the front, while the rear is smooth.
- Hybrid AK-style spring design prevents tilt and is designed for extended duration in loaded storage.
- Low-friction follower for increased reliability.
- Round-level windows and indicators on both sides show from 10 to 30 rounds remaining.
- Extended floorplate for improved magazine handling is easily removed for cleaning.
- Compatible with double and triple mag pouches.
- Available in Black, Olive Drab Green, or Flat Dark Earth.
- Suggested retail price of \$24.95.

ULTIMAG 30R

To evaluate the Ultimag 30R, I used all six magazines through a Bravo Company Mfg M4 Mod 2, a ROBAR PolymAR-15, a CMMG lower receiver with Bravo Company upper, an SLR15 Rifles Excalibur, and a Mag Tactical AIR 15.

The Ultimag 30R mags easily inserted into each carbine and locked solidly into place. They dropped free from all five carbines with the exception of the SLR15, which was not surprising as the magazine well on this particular lower is slightly undersized.

Loaded to full capacity, the magazines seated easily under a closed bolt. The bottom of the follower corresponds with rounds remaining in the magazine. Small slots at the top rear of the magazine allow using a GI stripper clip “spoon.” Functioning was perfect through the 300-round evaluation.

Five carbines were chosen to test Ultimag 30R mags. From top: Bravo Company Mfg M4 Mod 2, ROBAR PolymAR-15, CMMG/Bravo Company build, Mag Tactical AIR 15, and SLR15 Excalibur.



ULTIMAG AK 30R

For the Ultimag AK 30R, I used the only AK-type rifle in-house—a Kalashnikov-USA Modern Rifle. These magazines rocked into place easily and securely. All six were repeatedly inserted to see if I could observe any wear on the polymer locking tabs—I could not.

The texturing on the Ultimag 30R made grasping them while performing tactical reloads (reload with retention) positive with no slippage with or without gloves. This was especially true with the slightly bulkier Ultimag AK 30R. The top of the follower corresponds with rounds remaining.

I had zero malfunctions after 180 rounds. This is admittedly an evaluation with a limited sample quantity, but all magazines tested performed perfectly. ☺



Kalashnikov-USA Modern Rifle with Ultimag AK 30R magazine in place.

SOURCES

BROWNELLS INC.

(800) 741-0015
www.brownells.com

FAB LTD.

00 972-3-9603399
www.fab-defense.com

AMERICAN SPIRIT ARMS

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Inspired by pocket folding knives that can be clipped to a pocket, the thermoplastic SNAGMAG pocket magazine holder is designed to be worn in your frontal support-side pocket, clipped against the outside seam with bullets down and facing forward.

Drawing involves placing your index finger inside your pocket along the front of the magazine and locating your thumb along the exposed rear of the reservoir. A hook-like "snag" grabs the loose cloth in the pocket and hold the device while the magazine parts company with the SNAGMAG. In turn, when the magazine disengages, the SNAGMAG rises partially out of the pocket. Should the device and magazine leave the pocket together, just hook the snag against the edge of your belt and continue to march. The SNAGMAG is available from .380 caliber up to .45 ACP pistols, and can be used to carry inside the waistband. SNAGMAGs retail for \$34.95.

SNAGMAG | www.snagmag.com

Command Arms AK-47 Stock Tube

CAA USA announces the CAA ambidextrous side-folding six-position polymer collapsible stock tube (AK47SF-SP), which allows the installation of M4-style stocks on most AK-type rifles with Saiga stamped receivers. The CAA stock tube gives rifle enthusiasts and professionals CQB and covert carry capabilities and easily converts from left- to right-hand folding positions. An oversized ridged push button makes it easy to locate and fold the stock, even under stress.

This tube accepts all commercial AR-15/M4 collapsible stocks, including CAA's skeletonized (SKBS) and collapsible (CBS) buttstocks. Available in black with an unconditional lifetime warranty, the CAA AK47SFSP tube for AK-47s has an MSRP of \$124.99.

CAA USA
(215) 949-9944
www.commandarms.com

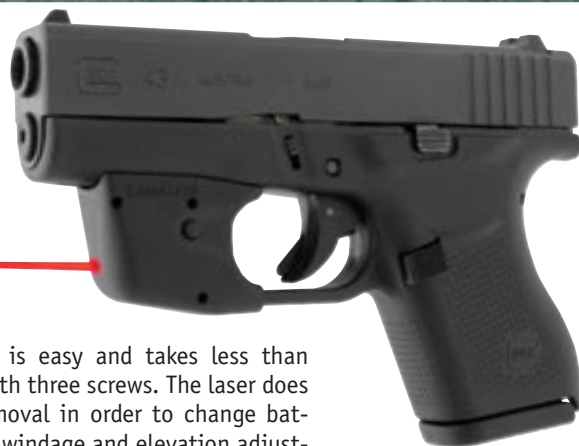


Glock 43 Laser Sight

LaserLyte, innovators in firearms laser technologies, now offers a custom-fitting Trigger Guard Laser (TGL) for the Glock 43 pistol. Featuring ambidextrous activation, the Master Module laser operates in constant-on or pulse modes, with a six-minute auto-off function.

Each TGL package comes with two laser housings and fits four Glock pistols for the price of one laser. The UTA-YY is available as a complete package that's compatible with Glock 26, 27, 42 and 43 pistols. Customers who have previously purchased the UTA-YY laser and it did not include the body for your Glock can contact LaserLyte to receive a free laser housing to fit any G26/27/42/43 you already own.

Installation is easy and takes less than five minutes with three screws. The laser does not require removal in order to change batteries. Exterior windage and elevation adjustments enable precise aiming and zeroing at any distance.



LASERLYTE
(928) 649-3201
www.laserlyte.com

Spyderco Bradley Bowie

The Spyderco Bradley Bowie™ is an extremely versatile all-purpose fixed-blade knife design that incorporates the performance advantages of state-of-the-art spray-formed tool steel. Designed by Gayle Bradley, a custom knifemaker and former competitive cutting champion, the iconic Bowie-style blade of this knife is precision machined from PSF27—an incredibly tough spray-formed tool steel with an ultra-fine, extremely homogenous grain structure. To take full advantage of the superior performance characteristics of this steel, the stout .156-inch thick blade is full-flat ground to produce a thin, strong edge and superior cross-sectional geometry.

This grind, together with a straight swedge (unsharpened bevel) on the spine, reduces cutting friction and ensures excellent point utility. The Bradley Bowie's

handle features ergonomically contoured polished G-10 scales secured to the full tang with tubular rivets. For ease of carry, the Bradley Bowie comes complete with a custom-molded Boltaron® sheath with fully configurable G-Clip attachment. Suggested retail price is \$429.95.

SPYDERCO
(303) 278-2229
www.spyderco.com



Mission First Tactical Free Float KeyMod™ Rail



Mission First Tactical, LLC (MFT™), a leader in USA-made rifle/carbine accessories, has released its latest product: the TEKKO™ Metal AR Free Float 7" KeyMod™ Rail System (TMARFF7KRS).

This all-metal free-float seven-inch rail system allows secure mounting for MIL-STD 1913 Picatinny rails and tactical accessories like vertical grips, bipods, lights, and lasers. The KeyMod™ system allows for universal modularity among numerous manufacturers of accessories and accessory rails.

The rail was designed to accommodate most suppressor installations. It comes with a patent-pending mounting, indexing and lock-up system. It has a monolithic-style top rail that eliminates the gap between the receiver and rail. Minor assembly is required. The rail utilizes the standard barrel nut and allows a standard front sight post, low-profile gas block, or Picatinny rail gas block.

MISSION FIRST TACTICAL
(267) 704-0001
www.missionfirsttactical.com

Mesa Tactical Urbino Stock

Mesa Tactical announces a joint project with Beretta USA: their Urbino® stock has been selected for use on Beretta's 1301 tactical shotgun. The Urbino shotgun stock has become an industry standard for tactical shotguns and is being developed at the request of Beretta.

Designed as a tactical stock, the Urbino's features make it a definitive upgrade over standard stocks. Made from injection-molded glass-filled nylon, the Urbino has a short length of pull for improved weapon control and use with body armor, an optional field-adjustable cheek riser for improved cheek weld with optics, optional Limb-saver® buttpad for greater shooting comfort during long training, shock-absorbing rubber grip sleeve to reduce shooter fatigue, and a variety of standard and proprietary sling mounting options.

Engineered to be ultra-reliable, easy to use and safe, it has all the features a modern tactical shotgun should offer, and more.



MESA TACTICAL
(714) 545-3332
www.mesatactical.com

False Flag Attack

A father and son from Grand Rapids, Michigan drove down to the nearby city of Battle Creek to look at a car for sale in a Craigslist advertisement. When they arrived at the meeting place they'd agreed to online, instead of finding the automotive deal they were expecting, they were instead ambushed by three attackers who'd set up the fake ad as a lure.

In the face of this surprise assault, the son drew a concealed revolver and opened fire on the ambushers. Though all three attackers fled, police found two within blocks, each of whom had been hit once in the chest. These two attackers were arrested and taken to the hospital, while police looked for the third fugitive.

SOURCE: *USA Today*, 10/6/15

Scattered, Smothered, & Covered

On an October morning, the pre-dawn breakfast ritual at a Charleston, South Carolina Waffle House was interrupted by an armed robber who burst in waving a gun and demanding the money from the till. This was too much for one patron, who happened to be carrying a concealed handgun.

While the robber's attention was directed toward the cash register, the customer drew his weapon and opened fire, hitting the robber. Police were called and the holdup man was taken to the hospital, where he died of his wounds. Regarding the armed patron, one Waffle House employee told reporters, "He saved us, that's what he did."

SOURCE: *The Post and Courier*, Charleston, South Carolina, 10/10/15

Late-Night Holdup

A Houston, Texas man was walking down the sidewalk just after midnight when his stroll was interrupted by a pair of would-be robbers. The crooks, however, had made a crucial error in the victim-selection process.

Their intended target was licensed by the state of Texas to carry a concealed firearm, and he produced it and turned the tables on his attackers. His defensive fire hit both of his assailants, killing one and wounding the other. The wounded suspect was treated at a hospital. No word as of this writing on what charges will be filed.

SOURCE: KTRK-TV, Houston, Texas, 10/09/15

Behind Closed Doors

Fort Wayne, Indiana police responded to reports of a home invasion and shooting just after 0600 hours on a Monday in October. The caller reported that two armed intruders had forced entry into their upstairs apartment and the three adult residents had attempted to seek shelter by barricading themselves in a back bedroom.

One of the attackers, armed with a shotgun, had fired a blast through the closed door, nearly hitting the resident who had been trying to hold it closed against the intruders. At this point the man who had been holding the door grabbed a firearm of his own and loosed a fusillade at the two intruders as they forced their way into the bedroom. One attacker collapsed on the spot and was later transported to a hospital in critical condition, while the other fled and is being sought by police.

SOURCE: *Frost Illustrated*, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 10/19/15 ©



A long gun can be an effective tool when defending your home.

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MARCH ISSUE ON SALE FEBRUARY 2nd

**SWAT
MAGAZINE**

Flashlight Technique Hysteria

“YOU can’t use that flashlight technique. The enemy will fire at the light source and hit you by mistake.”

Let me guess: been reading too many detective novels?

Face facts: the bad guys don’t hit the good guys “by mistake.” They miss by mistake, so let’s get our priorities straight. You may eat bullets because your enemy is a better fighter than you, or a better marksman, more cunning, nefarious or dedicated, but you’re not going to get lead poisoning because he “made a mistake.” You may in fact die merely because of plain bad luck—or because your enemy didn’t make a mistake.

Or you could be taken out by poor use of a flashlight in a dim-light environment. But shuffling off your mortal coil simply because you use a mechanical technique that isn’t in accordance with an instructor’s ego isn’t likely.

All too often, people tend to get wrapped around the axle about the use of flashlights in conjunction with guns. Like a martial artist in a dojo, much of what works—or seems like a good idea in a sterile environment like a shooting range—doesn’t pan out in a for-real fight.

Take, for example, the “enemy will fire at the light source” theory. Let me see ... he’s night blind, can’t pinpoint your location until he has an audible or visual on you, and couldn’t care less if he kills you along with 13 nuns and a busload of school kids in the background. Yes, I think there’s a vague possibility he might drain his weapon in the general direction of the light source.

Let’s be honest: Any flashlight technique places the light source either directly in front of, or in close proximity to, your beak anyway. The base idea is to smoke him before he smokes you—that’s why it’s called a gunfight.

The underlying criterion of flashlight technique hysteria is whether the enemy is trying for one surgical round or not. If he’s on rock ‘n’ roll, it doesn’t matter what technique you use unless it’s to afford more cover for your-

self than would be achieved by using something else. In other words, it’s situational—and that’s why you need to be capable of shooting well utilizing more than one technique.

Obviously the objective isn’t to walk across an open football field with a flashlight taped to your forehead like Diogenes looking for an honest man—all you’ll find under these circumstances is a projectile-launching dishonest man. The general idea is to use the illumination from the flashlight to identify possible targets, and if need be to dispatch said targets by means of gunfire, with the light remaining on target until the last round has exited the muzzle of the weapon to guarantee optical follow-through on the front sight of the weapon.

While most firearms—especially slide-action rifles and shotguns—are more easily deployed with a dedicated light attached to the weapon, handheld flashlights are much more predominant for a variety of reasons. Apart from the financial aspect (not forgetting that some handhelds can run you a couple thousand dollars), unless you know what you’re walking into, or have military or law enforcement issue equipment, odds are you’ll have a pistol in one paw and a handheld light in your support hand.

Having said that, if your dedicated light dies in mid-fight, you’d better have a handheld flashlight for back-up. You’re the good guy, remember? If you can’t identify, you can’t shoot.

While dedicated lights have been around since the late 1800s, it was only in the last quarter of the 20th century that SureFire began a concerted effort to produce quality high-intensity fighting lights. (In the for-what-it’s-worth department, this author personally feels that everybody else is a day late and a dollar short. Yes, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, but when you emulate somebody, you wind up being an emu that is late—no more, no less.)

Having procured a quality flashlight, what technique do you use when deploying said light in conjunction with

a pistol? Whatever your little heart desires is what you use. It’s like the incessant “what’s the best bullet” discussions. The last one you fired that stopped the fight—that’s the best bullet.

Though Mike Harries’ technique has been documented as successful over and over, some people physically cannot use it. Similarly, while people often scoff at the one-handed FBI technique, it has solved the problem on occasions when the shootists couldn’t visually acquire their target using other techniques. The same pros and cons apply to the Chapman, Rogers, SureFire, Ayoob, and I-invented-it-and-named-it-after-myself techniques.

Scenario One: Police officer, southern California. Gunfight. FBI technique. Crook puts one round through bezel, barrel, and rear end of SL20 flashlight. Cop uninjured, kills crook. Draw your own conclusions as to officer’s opinion of FBI technique.

Scenario Two: Yours truly sets up multiple moving target crowd scene for night shoot SWAT trainees, who are armed with pistols with dedicated lights. After much movement, foul language, and time-consuming attempts to illuminate the single target appearing and disappearing in and out of the changing foreground and background (caused by the shadow effect of the “innocent” moving targets fore and aft), Officer Einstein finally rips the dedicated light off his pistol, uses a field-expedient handheld technique, and gets the job done.

After the high-fives and accolades from his seven team members, they ask for my miserable inconsequential input. My question? “What’s that tubular thing on your vest, gentlemen?” All eight are packing a nine-volt SureFire as issue gear. Sometimes we don’t see the forest for the trees....

There are myriad flashlight techniques. Learn them all—one of them could save your life in that one-in-a-million out-of-the-ordinary situation. ☺

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