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# LOAD UP

# DING, DING, DING



Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the main firearms and survival magazine event. Are you ready for the fight of your life? Or do you wanna graze with the sheeple?

Sure that's a bit over the top, but it cuts to the heart (and the covers) of this "Be Hard To Kill" issue. The true-grit American warrior Tim Kennedy is—hands down—the man you want by your side in the foxhole (or octagon) of life during these uncertain times. Here's a truer than true fact: Kennedy has come out on top of more bloody battles fighting as a U.S. Special Forces Green Beret and in the MMA octagon than any man on earth.

Ballistic content creators Robert Jordan and Alex Landeen spent a couple of days at Kennedy's base of operations in Texas. Kennedy rang more than a few bells (see Landeen's piece "How Tim Kennedy Ruined My Life" on page 38) at his Sheepdog Response training facility and shared with us stories and life lessons never before seen in print. The Kennedy content continues on in our "Threads" column, where shooters will learn how to kit up like the champ, and closes with the "Last Blast," where you'll read

some unforgettable Kennedy quotables. When you're done with the issue, head over to ballisticmag.com for video with Kennedy—hope you like coffee, guns and tacos.

On the undercard of this helpful guide for not getting your ass handed to you, we called on MMA fighter Sullivan Cauley to teach us six lifesaving self-defense moves and Sean Utley to show us how to get the most out of your red-dot-wearing fighting pistol. In a gun-free-sheep zone? No problem. Check out Michael D'Angona's "Fencing Vs. Kendo" story (especially the sidebar on page 60). And, don't forget the ultimate fight for our 2A rights! Let Mark Chesnut and the industry experts he interviewed guide you through the current "Gun Law Apocalypse."

On the lighter side we have our partners at Skillset magazine showing us how sometimes fights can be won

with mere words alone. Don't miss their "Dem's Fightin' Words" article that unleashes the silver screen's five all-time greatest verbal beatdowns. Also light, but hard-hitting is Sean Chaffin's "Poker Is War" piece that covers guns/movies/songs and cards in pop culture.

There's a packed arena worth of more content in the pages to come, but we have one bonus zinger from our foxhole partner. We asked him, "If you're in a fight for your life stuck in a foxhole, who are the three people—one from the past, one from the present and one fictional—you would want by your side? After a deep breath, Kennedy punched back, "Past is Vlad The Impaler. Present is Master Sgt. Raul Perez 'Roy' Benavidez. Fictional: Drogon (the dragon from GOT), but Jon Stark, too, so let's call it a draw."

Let us know who all you'd pick for your foxhole partner and why. Shoot us the goods via email to editdesk@athlonoutdoors.com.



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**BALLISTIC®** (ISSN 2573-0290) is published bimonthly by Athlon Sports Communications, Inc., 2451 Atrium Way, Suite 320, Nashville, TN 37214. Single copy price: \$9.95 U.S. and \$10.95 CAN. Subscriptions are six issues for \$32.97 per year in the U.S. Periodicals Postage paid at Nashville, TN, and at other additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send subscription requests to: Athlon Media Group, PO Box 292167, Kettering, OH 45429. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Ballistic, PO Box 292167, Kettering OH 45429. Submissions of manuscripts, illustrations and/or photographs must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The publisher assumes no responsibility for unsolicited material. Copyright © 2021 by Athlon Sports Communications, Inc. All rights reserved under international and Pan American Copyright Conventions. Reproduction in whole or in part, via electronic or any other means, without written permission of the publisher is strictly prohibited. Printed in the U.S.A. Volume 7 Issue 4. Ballistic Magazine adheres to the California Consumer Privacy Act of 2018. For more information about your rights as a California consumer or to opt out of the sale of your personal information, please visit [BallisticMag.com/ccpa](http://BallisticMag.com/ccpa).





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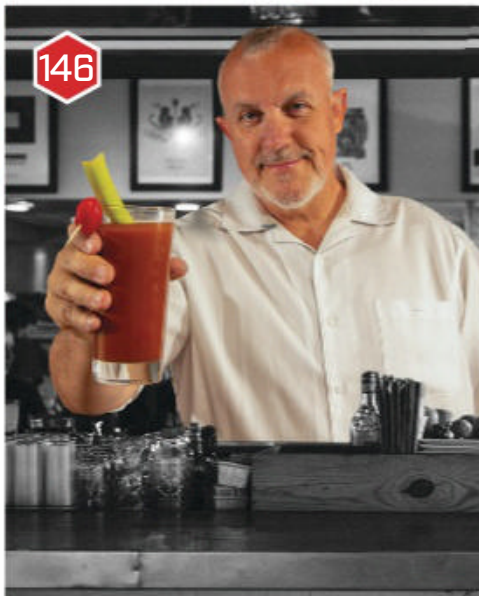
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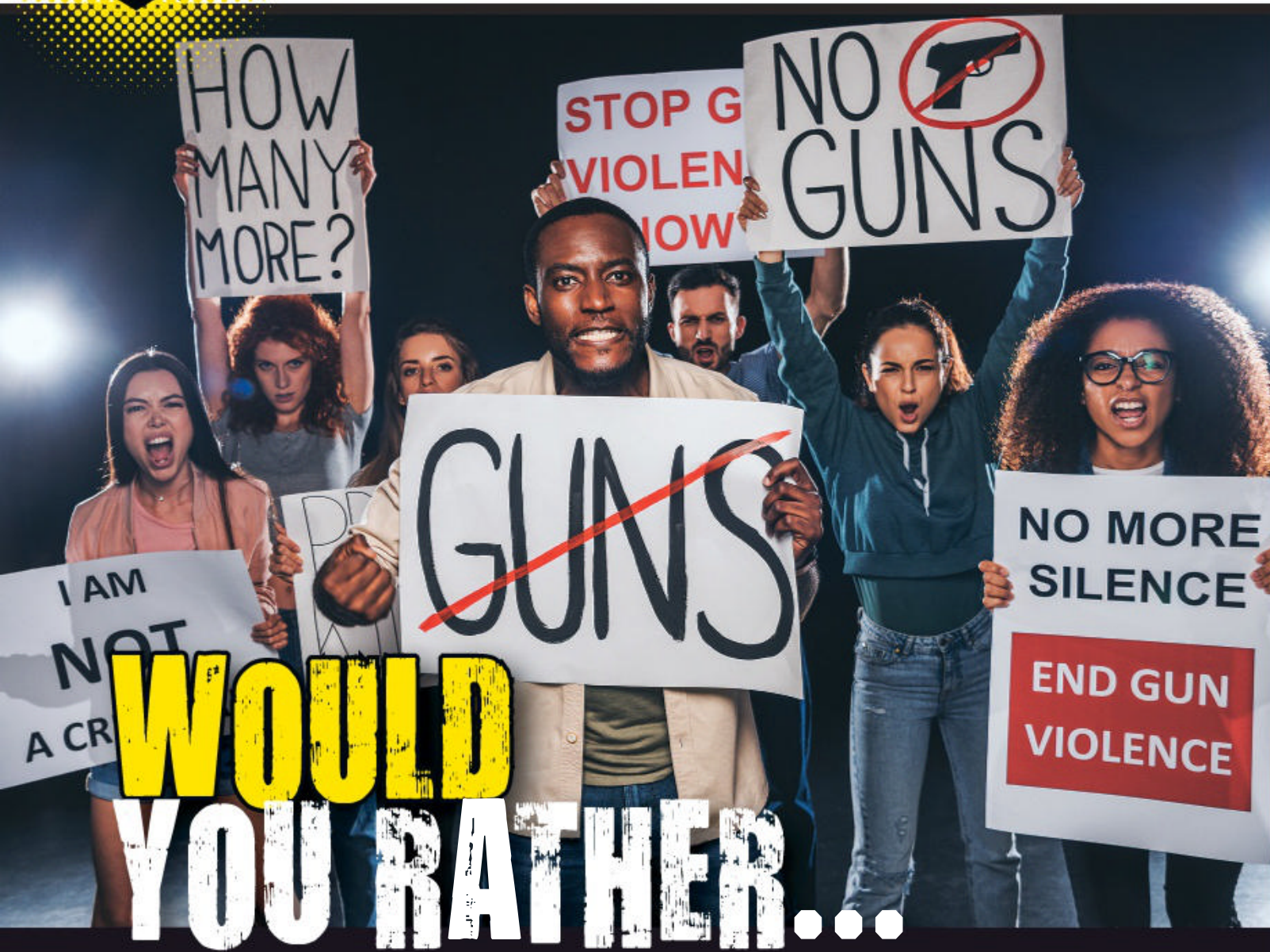


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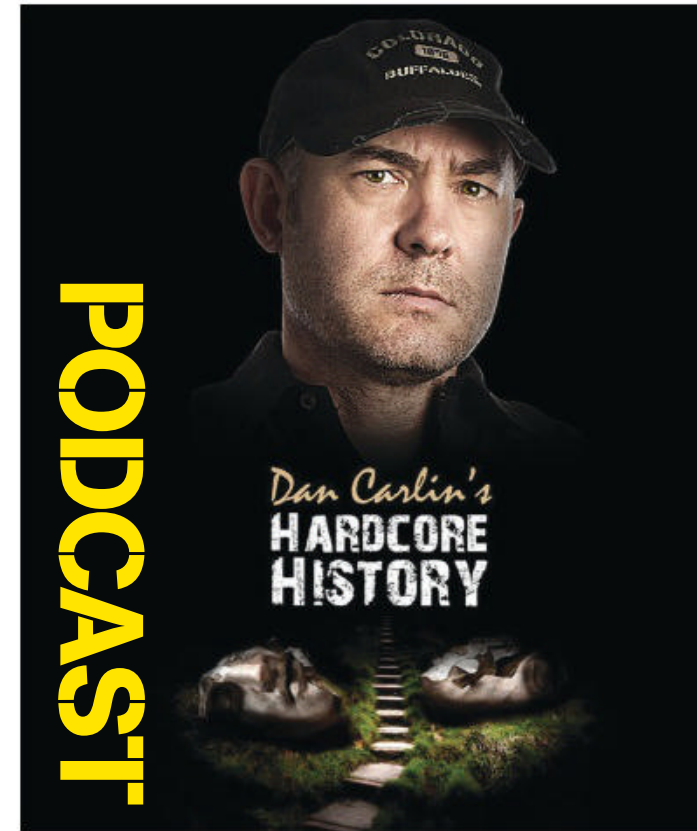
In the midst of “Ammogeddon,” we have all gotten a little desperate on how to get our fix of 9mm and 5.56mm. Rounds of ammo are more precious than bread and milk, and a damn site more expensive. Knowing this, we posed the following question:

**Would you rather lose your entire ammo stockpile or have to listen to a two-hour anti-gun podcast every day for the rest of your life?**

A full 58 percent will listen to morons spreading hate and lies while counting their rounds, while 42 percent were willing to give up their ammo in return for their mental sanity.

I assume the 42 percent have less ammo squirreled away than I do.

**Best comments:** jcd@jagoff17 said, “I can buy more ammo,” and Alexis@ElAmeroAlex replied, “I agree. Working eight hours to buy ammunition is better than torture for two hours a day to death.”



## PODCAST

### WORTH THE WAIT

Most podcasts are the audio equivalent of watching the vapid Kardashians incrementally lowering the nation’s IQ. But not Dan Carlin’s. His *Hardcore History* has a series called *Supernova in the East* about Japan leading up to and through WWII. It takes about six months for the next installment to come out while Carlin painstakingly researches everything. He credits all the books he researched for the podcast so I feel I deserve credit for reading them, too. It is like an audiobook, but he doesn’t read on the show, he just talks while looking at his notes, and his storytelling is beyond gifted. His sixth and final installment of *Supernova in the East* should be out any day. Carlin breaks down events and describes them on a visceral level. I can’t wait for the last installment.



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## FAST, EASY MONEY

I recently found myself in the seedier part of a major metropolitan city where a local delinquent was selling “loosies” in front of the stop and rob. I gave up the evils of tobacco years ago when it was that or sell my body in order to buy a pack of smokes, but as I traipsed by him it did get me thinking. The ammo situation has reached super critical, and a box of 50 rounds costs even more than a pack of cigs. I wonder if I could sell “loosie” rounds of ammo in front of my local shooting range for a marginal profit? “I got your .40, got your .45, got some .44 Mag unfiltered...”

**EDITOR’S NOTE:**  
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## What's It Worth?

### Crafty Brews

Austin remains the dichotomous anomaly of liberal ideas mixed with Texan independence. I love the food, but feel triumph or horror by the “scene” 100 times each day. To slow my roll, I recently sauntered into Red Horn Coffee House and Brewing Co. on the north edge of Austin. A place that specializes in a stimulant and a depressant? They truly embrace, “Keep Austin Weird.”

Breakfast was long past, so I skipped the Joe and ordered a pint of Trail Runner,

their most popular Golden Ale. Nice and cold, it tasted light and a little tart in the middle with a good malt, no bitterness and a bigger body than your typical light beer. This was made for marathon beer drinking sessions on long hot afternoons with friends when recovering from a tough hike or a long week. If you happen in, tell them “The Mac” sent you. They don’t know me so they will have zero idea what that means, but hey, let’s keep Austin weird!



Fine art transcends the medium. I’m not a true car guy, but a fine set of wheels makes me stop and stare. Last week I was dragged into a lighting store and noticed one small hanging light stood out amongst the rest. It was Swarovski and cost over \$6K, proving even a novice recognizes true craftsmanship and beauty.

On a similar note, I just visited Gunsite near Prescott, Arizona, for the grand opening of their new gunsmithing shop. Bobby Tyler (Tyler Gun Works) and Dave Fink (Fink’s Custom Gunsmith) were setting up shop to collaborate on everything from simple repairs to action jobs to full gun makeovers. They had tables laid out with examples of their work. Stunning. I don’t have a classic revolver and I only own one 1911. But when you see one of their creations, you can’t help but stare and appreciate. Built as working masterpieces they hold up to heavy shooting. I always carry concealed, but I would show off one of these guns on my hip like a supermodel on my arm.

### ← GIMME THAT GADGET

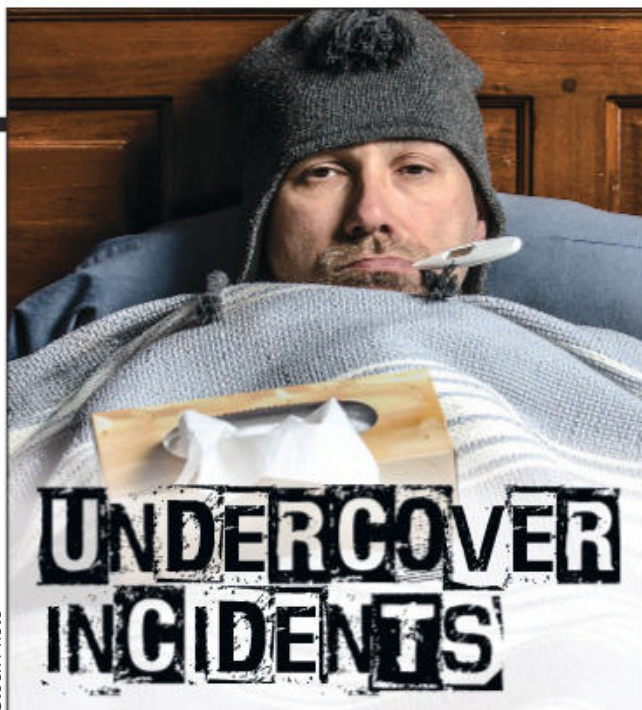


I’ve used electronic ear protection for nearly 20 years. A range officer at a major shooting school told me they now require all students to have them. They’re great for allowing people to talk on the range, but even better during operations. They protect hearing from deafening gunfire indoors, hook up to your radio for critical communication and amplify ambient sound so you can hear people in the next room. Downsides: They’re super expensive and you need two sets—one on your helmet and one for wearing on the range.

Safariland recently introduced several models of their Liberator HP headsets. The base

model retails for \$299, which is less than half what my current tactical headset costs, plus they reduce gunshots better (26 vs 23 decibel reduction), reduce ambient wind noise better, are better designed (no more losing the little foam covers off of the external microphones), are more comfortable and can be switched over from a normal headset to a helmet mount by simply popping it off one and onto the other. In the last few months I’ve worn my Liberators at a couple of shooting schools, competitions and just normal range time. They’re my new favorite piece of kit.





I have always considered myself impervious to everything. It might have been my youth. It might have been copious imbibing of alcohol. It might have been a few hard blows to the cranium I took as a kid. It doesn't matter, but while low confidence wasn't a concern, common sense often was. Which brings me to a little trip I took to Lebanon about 10 years ago.

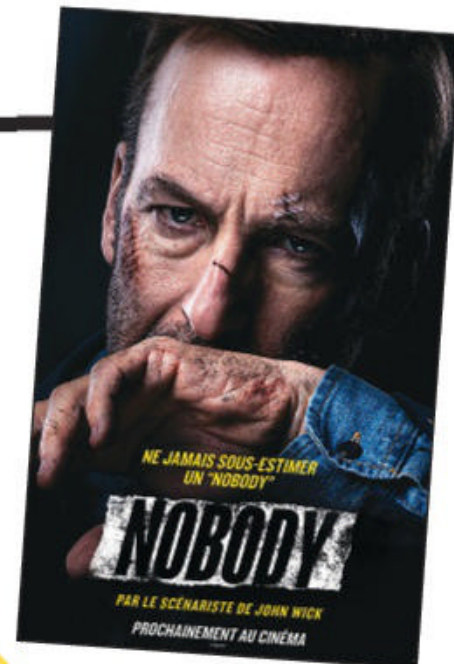
Most people might show fear when told by their government to teach a class with

Muslims, Christians, Druze and a few radical Hezbollah thrown in for good measure. I never wavered. At the end, instructors were taken to a celebratory dinner before departing and a couple of us had been hitting the scotch since about noon. There were several new delicacies we tried including a little bird that we ate bones and all. Finally, a large plate of raw lamb that you mix with some spices was brought to the table. They called it Kibbeh Nayeh, but we will simply refer to it as the parasite platter.

All Americans present declined except for me and my drinking buddy. I remember it tasted pretty good and we were certain our BAC was high enough to stave off anything. Wrong. I mean really wrong. The fever, the cold sweats, the faucet-ass, and going in and out of consciousness for the next few weeks took a serious toll. Doctors stateside eventually asked for fecal samples, which were easily provided. I don't recall the exact lab results, but I do remember the phrase, "We don't normally see this in the United States."

## BIG SCREEN BLAST

As I write this, the movie theaters are still barely open so I rely on my cracked Firestick to indulge my silver screen habit. *Nobody* starring Bob Odenkirk (the lawyer from *Breaking Bad* and *Better Call Saul*) written by Derek Kolstad (the John Wick movies) finally arrived. Sure it has awesome action, good one-liners and lots of over-the-top gunplay. But the part that warms my heart is someone consulted on this movie—like the John Wick films—who actually knows guns. In one scene, Christopher Lloyd grabs the pistol of a bad guy and neatly blocks the hammer with his pinky. It is a simple and effective way to disable a semi-auto pistol. The firearms detail and knowledge makes this cinema gold. Without a doubt, *Nobody* is good enough that I want to find somewhere showing it on the big screen. ●



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## NEW AND NOTEWORTHY EDITORS' GUNS AND GEAR PICKS



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### FEDERAL PUNCH 22 LR

Self-defense isn't one size fits all. Different shooters have different needs, different limitations and different firearms. Yet for all of those variables, the .22 Long Rifle has never been a good option—until now. Introducing Punch .22 LR from Federal Premium. The first-of-its-kind 29-grain, nickel-plated, lead-core bullet is pushed at maximum velocities for the deepest penetration through short-barrel handguns. So, whether you want to carry a .22 LR pistol as a backup gun, don't feel comfortable with centerfire pistols or simply want to get more versatility from your rimfire, Punch makes the .22 LR cartridge a viable choice for the first time ever. [\[federalpremium.com\]](http://federalpremium.com)

### BEAR OPS BOLD ACTION 14

The everyday carry edge market just got bolder. Bear OPS' Bold Action 14 is a compact automatic pocket knife that features an exceptionally smooth action and premium looks. Proudly made in Alabama, the cutting edge is constructed from quality 1.75-inch 14c28n Sandvik metal (Cali-legal) with a slick black coated finish. Deploying the Bold Action 14 is achieved with a firm push of a button. An upgraded safety mechanism helps prevent unintentional deployment. Handles are CNC-machined aluminum and are available in six color options (black, red, orange, blue, teal, and purple). Spec include: 4.25-inch OAL (2.5-inches closed), 1.3 ounces. [\[bearandsoncutlery.com\]](http://bearandsoncutlery.com)



### CHRISTENSEN ARMS MPP

Christensen Arms recently announced the new Modern Precision Pistol (MPP). Weighing in at just 4.4 to 5.8 pounds, this new MPP is geared for backpackers and backcountry hunting. Building upon the success of their Modern Precision Rifle (MPR), the Modern Precision Pistol (MPP) is a purpose-built, bolt-action pistol chassis. It is initially available in four calibers with a muzzle-threaded barrel in lengths ranging from 7.5 to 12.5 inches, creating an ideal suppressor host.

Standard features include: Christensen Arms' carbon fiber barrel, adjustable side-baffle brake, precision-machined action and fluted bolt, oversized bolt knob, 20-MOA optic rail, forward mount rail with an integrated barricade stop, five-round detachable AICS magazine, TriggerTech flat trigger, an ergonomic pistol grip, and QD and M-Lok accessory attachment points. Combine that with a folding SB Tactical stabilizing brace, and the new Modern Precision Pistol is built to take pistol performance to new distances. [\[christensenarms.com\]](http://christensenarms.com)







### FDE FN FIVE-SEVEN & FN 503

FN says flat dark earth (FDE) is the new black. Well, kinda. FN did announce recently that the popular Five-seveN and 503 models will be available at dealers very soon. The original FN Five-seveN, often imitated but hardly duplicated, has two decades of trusted service with allied armies, global law enforcement and civilians. Extending its groundbreaking design is a new, all flat dark earth frame and slide. The latest update to FN's micro compact 9mm pistol, now available in flat dark earth, is inspired by the company's reputation for battle-proven quality. The FN 503 is a discreet and comfortable gun that conceals easily thanks to its slim profile. [\[fnamerica.com\]](http://fnamerica.com)



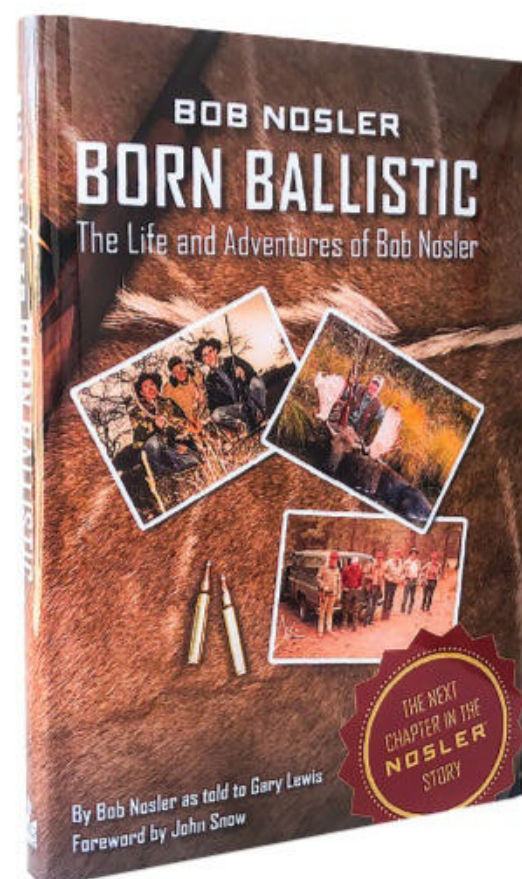
### MEOPTA MEOPRO AIR BINOS

Meopta Sport Optics is now shipping its long-awaited Meopro Air binoculars. Available in 8x42 HD and 10x42 HD, the Air elevates the Meopro line to a new level of performance with its advanced optical system, ergonomic open-hinge design and handsome new body style built to withstand the harshest hunting environments. Featuring high-definition, extra-low dispersion fluoride glass with Meopta's proprietary MeoBright lens coatings, the Air delivers maximum resolution and contrast with bright images and vivid colors throughout the entire field of view. This exceptional low-light performance allows hunters to see fine detail more clearly at dawn and dusk when it matters most. [\[meoptasportsoptics.com\]](http://meoptasportsoptics.com)

### BORN BALLISTIC BOOK

Ballistic geeks who want to get their read on this summer ought to look to Nosler's new release, *Born Ballistic*, the new autobiography of company CEO Bob Nosler and the next saga in the epic tale of one of the American West's great industrial and hunting families. *Bob Nosler: Born Ballistic* picks up the Nosler story where founder John A. Nosler left off in his 2005 autobiography *Going Ballistic*. Told through the eyes of his son, Bob Nosler recounts his life from early childhood alongside his father who invented the legendary Nosler Partition bullet, to navigating adolescence, military service and eventually making the decision to join the family business where he has helped transform an entire industry over the past 50 years.

Filled with over 80 never-before-seen photos, *Born Ballistic* takes readers on several memorable Nosler hunts and gives a rare glimpse into the triumphs and struggles that shaped the company's evolution from a single-bullet manufacturer to a multi-generational shooting sports powerhouse through Bob Nosler's vision and leadership. [\[shop.nosler.com\]](http://shop.nosler.com)



### ALPS MODULAR SPORTSMAN'S BELT

Looking to prep for clay busting or a day in the killing fields? Alps Outdoor's new Modular Sportsman's Belt is worth donning. It is constructed of traditional waxed cotton canvas that not only looks great in the field but is rugged enough to survive years of hard use. The system includes two large shell pockets, a generous game pouch and a water bottle pouch. All compartments secure to a 2-inch-wide webbed waist belt that cinches with a heavy-duty brass SR buckle. Available in coyote brown, the new Sportsman's Belt weighs 2 pounds, 2 ounces. [\[alpsoutdoors.com\]](http://alpsoutdoors.com)





### VUDOO THREE 60

Rimfire fans have something serious to get jazzed about with Vudoo Gun Works' new Three 60, three-lug repeater rifle. The Vudoo Three 60 will be offered alongside the already popular V22 two-lug repeater, V22m magnum repeater and V22s Single Shot Target Rifle.

The Vudoo Three 60 features a three-lug bolt with a 60-degree throw and a 12 o'clock ignition. This combination uses the same internal three-lug geometry of the V22s, ensuring light bolt lift along with smooth and consistent bolt alignment with the bore. Users will enjoy the same accuracy performance known across the entire Vudoo family of rifles. Like all current Vudoo V22 actions, the Three 60 fire control group offers a toolless disassembly by way of a unique bayonet-style locking system between the shroud, bolt body and bolt nose. [\[vudoogunworks.com\]](http://vudoogunworks.com)

### 870 +2 MAG TUBE EXTENSION KIT

Ready to pump new life into your 870? XS Sights can assist with its new 870 +2 Magazine Tube Extension Kit for easy, do-it-yourself installation. This lightweight magazine tube extension increases the capacity of standard Remington 870 shotguns by two shotshells and allows for the mounting of additional tactical upgrades. The kit includes a factory detent removal tool, a Wolff 12-gauge extended spring and the +2 extension tube. Made from 6061 aluminum that is hard coat anodized, this one-piece tube weighs less than traditional steel tubes. The tip of the extension has wrench flats enabling an easier grip while attaching the tube. The flats also offer shooters the ability to use an adjustable wrench to get a snug fitment. Measuring 6 inches in length, the extension will not extend past a 20-inch barrel on a traditional four-round capacity shotgun tube. [\[xssights.com\]](http://xssights.com)

### TESLONG BORESCOPIES

Teslong makes a bewildering variety of endoscopes. Endoscopes are electronic devices that utilize fiber optic technology to let you peek into tiny spaces that might otherwise remain inaccessible. Teslong endoscopes are optimized for a variety of disparate applications. What concerns us today, however, is their 100, 150 and 450 series of borescopes. These fascinating devices come in both rigid and flexible versions and are designed specifically to surveil the bore of your firearm.

The borescope products have two parts: the camera probe and the monitor. Some of Teslong's borescopes (USB and WiFi models) are economical because



they let you supply the monitor by way of your mobile device. The probes come in three varieties: 26-inch rigid, 10-inch rigid or 36-inch flexible. The difference between the USB and WiFi versions exists because of the differences in mobile devices. All Teslong borescopes have a .20-inch diameter so they fit .20 caliber and up. They all come with a set of side-view mirrors to inspect the fluting in the barrel or the gas port, etc. Get your gun geek on! [\[teslong.com\]](http://teslong.com)



### OTIS AR ELITE RANGE BOX

For the AR owner who has it all, the AR Elite Range Box is the gun cleaning kit that has it all and more. This comprehensive gun cleaning kit provides proper breech-to-muzzle cleaning for AR-style rifles and includes tools to pick, scrape, and clean caked on carbon and fouling from the bore, bolt carrier group, chamber, star chamber/locking lugs and more. The AR Elite Range Box boasts over

40 components, including an AR cleaning kit housed in the traditional, portable Otis Technology round case, Ripcord, B.O.N.E. Tool, Star Chamber Tool, sight adjustment tools, and more. An included bench block allows for safe breakdown without fear of marring. All of the contents are contained in a portable range box that doubles as a gun vice for stability while cleaning and performing general maintenance work. [\[otistec.com\]](http://otistec.com)



# THE RIGHT TO HEAR FOR YEARS TO COME

**Left:** SilencerCo Sparrow 22  
patented in 2010

**Right:** Original Maxim silencer  
patented in 1909



**SILENCER<sub>co</sub>**





**CUSTOM  
CHALLENGE**

# HOT DRAG



After full draug treatment by the experts at Odin's Workshop in Michigan, the author's 5.56 AR looks nothing short of amazing.





## ODIN'S WORKSHOP GETS NORSE-FOLKLORE-FREAKY ON A PAIR OF FIREARMS



Whiskey Tango Foxtrot is a draug, and what does it have to do with firearms? Usually absolutely nothing, but in this case... According to Norse folklore a

**draug** (pronounced basically like the word dog) is an animated corpse, not to be confused with a ghost. Draugs are often bodies of deceased royalty who protect their burial mounds, treasure and sometimes even their former palaces. They are considered neither evil nor good, just an undead creature with chaotic neutral energy.

I came to know of draugs by way of Odin's Workshop, located in Michigan, which is owned and operated by brothers Cody and Cole. They are known for their amazing colorful work on Glock and Sig P320 frames. A recent visit to them and discussions about local native American folklore started all of this. I supplied them with my personal 5.56 rifle and what I thought would be a good *Ballistic* magazine theme for it. (No, this gun is not part of the gun giveaway this issue. Keep reading to learn more about the gun we are giving away to

BY LINAS CERNAUSKAS • ANDY GROSSMAN PHOTOS





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**TOP:** Odin's Workshop even gave the draug treatment to the PMag, carrying the theme to its fullest.

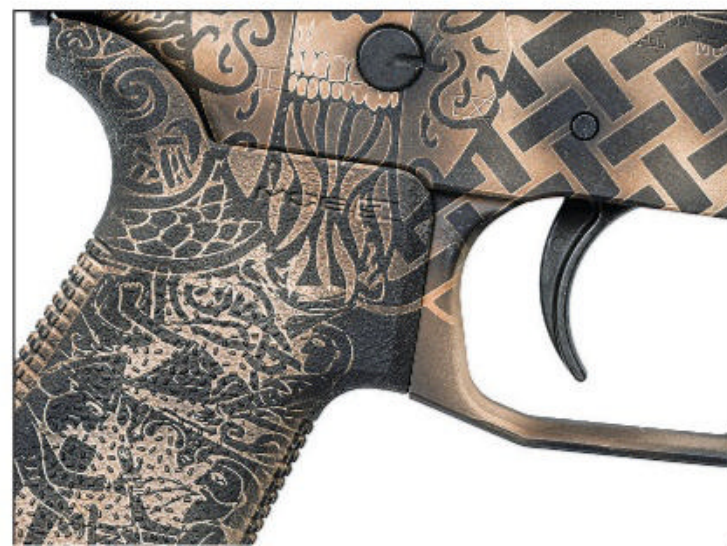
**RIGHT:** Who wouldn't want a black-toothed skull available to gobble up their mags on reloads?



**LEFT:** Knotwork on the top rail is just as impressive as that on the remainder of the rifle.

**RIGHT:** Attention to detail on the right side of the rifle is exquisite, from draug to knotwork.

**BELOW RIGHT:** Don't forget about the pistol grip. The continuation of the art from the receiver to the grip is seamless!





one lucky winner.) Later on that day I got a call from Cody, asking if I trusted him and if he could go in a different direction with the theme. Knowing their talents and unlimited capabilities, I quickly gave them my blessings to go full-freestyle on this *Ballistic Custom Challenge*. They did not disappoint; many a curse word of excitement fell from my mouth when I first laid eyes on my reborn rifle.

## THE DRAUG'S CANVAS

The lower receiver is the Jack Gen 1 from Sharps Bros. The newer Gen 2s still have the same "face," but have lightening cuts done to the back half of the lower. All of the Gen 2s now have threaded bolt catch pins as well. I consider any Sharps Bros. lower a must-have for any project, it just adds that special touch.

The upper receiver and stock come from the now-defunct Para Ordnance USA. The upper has a modified version of the standard AR-15 gas system called the delayed impingement gas system. The buffer spring



The adjustable folding stock from now-defunct Para Ordnance adds a special touch. And it, too, got the full treatment from Odin's Workshop.



has been relocated to the handguard, allowing for a true folding stock. Because of this, the upper is slightly taller and thicker than a standard AR, but not something noticeable at first glance. It's a fun rifle to shoot, even with the stock folded.

## DEVILISH DETAILS

When I asked the Odin brothers why the draug theme, their response was, "Come on! You gave us a Jack, we had no choice." The level of detail and clarity on this paint job is

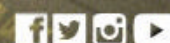
*We never rest  
on our laurels.  
That would mean resting.*

And we can't rest. Because there's always this thought: that somehow, some way, our high-performance ammunition could be...just a little closer to perfect. So we shift this. Tweak that. Sometimes, nothing. But sometimes, *whoa, like that*. And that just lights a fresh fire under our ass.

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nothing short of amazing. The contouring and subtle shading on the Jack skull makes it stand out, to say the least. The faces of the draugs on the left and right side of the receivers are masterfully done. The fight scene on the grip is in classic Norse style. And then there is the Norse knotwork...the details in the handguard...man these guys really outdid themselves!

But Odin's didn't stop there. They also worked their magic on the Magpul PMag. One side features a draug's face, while on the other it looks to be a shield maiden draug. Everything else is filled with beautifully done Norse knotwork.

I asked the brothers how they achieved this level of detail, and they just smiled at me. I pressed them a little more and they told me

they're not saying—it's their secret. At that moment, I could swear I heard a crow caw in the distance.

Again, we really do love all of our *Ballistic* readers, but this gun is not, I repeat not going to belong to anyone other than me. That said, if you're interesting in having Odin's work some of their magic on your personal firearms, please visit [odinsworkshop.com](http://odinsworkshop.com). ●

## NEED A BATTLE AX?

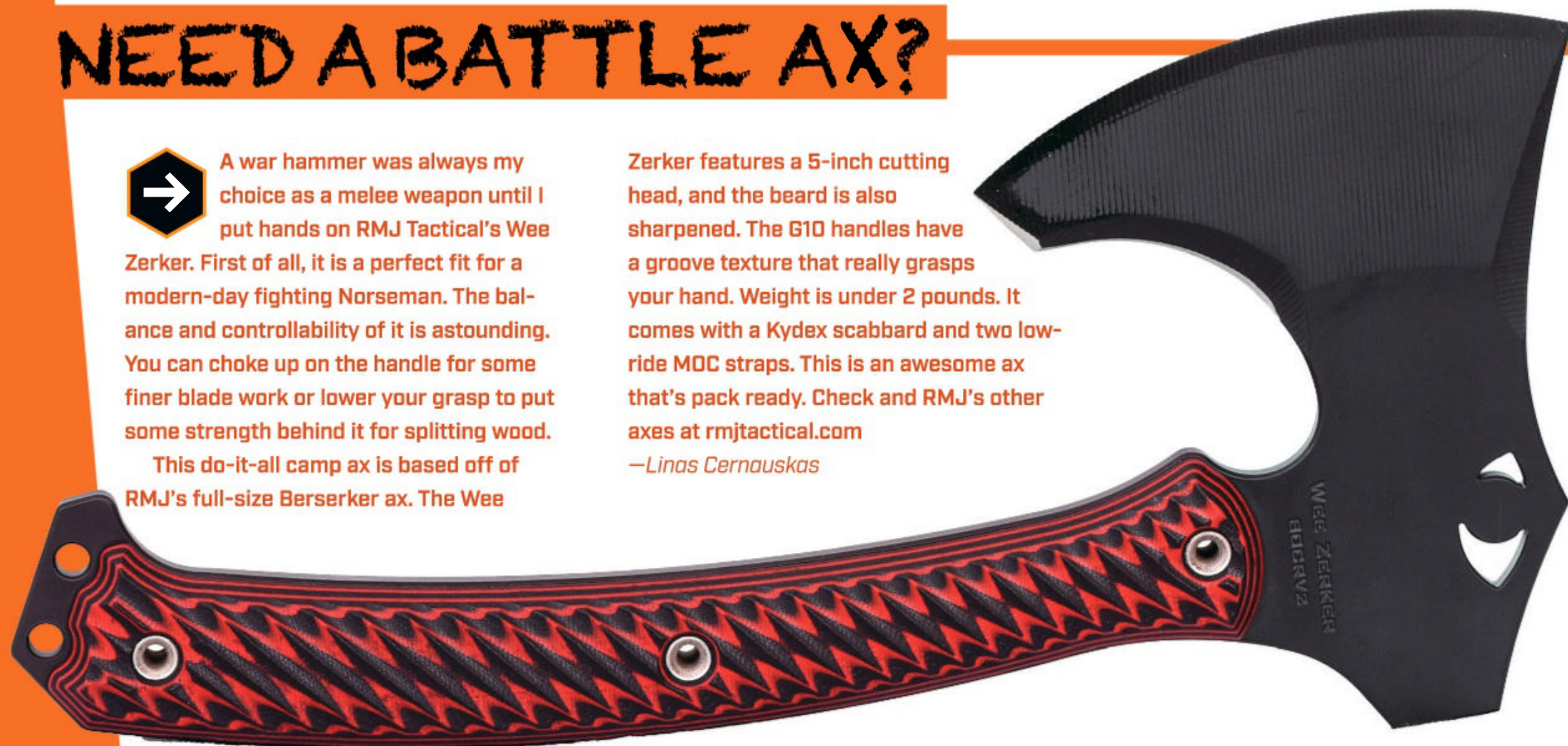


A war hammer was always my choice as a melee weapon until I put hands on RMJ Tactical's Wee Zerker. First of all, it is a perfect fit for a modern-day fighting Norseman. The balance and controllability of it is astounding. You can choke up on the handle for some finer blade work or lower your grasp to put some strength behind it for splitting wood.

This do-it-all camp ax is based off of RMJ's full-size Berserker ax. The Wee

Zerker features a 5-inch cutting head, and the beard is also sharpened. The G10 handles have a groove texture that really grasps your hand. Weight is under 2 pounds. It comes with a Kydex scabbard and two low-ride MOC straps. This is an awesome ax that's pack ready. Check and RMJ's other axes at [rmjtactical.com](http://rmjtactical.com)

—Linas Cernauskas







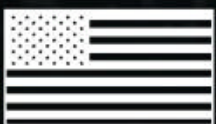
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**CUSTOM  
CHALLENGE**

# ODIN'S WORKSHOP SCCY DVG-1RD

**WANNA  
WIN THIS GUN?**

The *Ballistic* Custom Challenge gun giveaway is back! Check out [ballisticmag.com/sccy-odins](http://ballisticmag.com/sccy-odins) to learn more and see how you can get your hands on this beauty.

## NORSE SCCY FOR YOU

**One lucky winner will be taking home this one-of-a-kind 9**

**THE** Draug 5.56 needed a friend to share battle stories over horns of mead. SCCY Firearms was happy to offer a DVG-1RD for the role. The DVG-1RD is a striker-fired 9mm with an overall length of only 6.01 inches and weighs 15.5 ounces empty. It offers 10+1 rounds of firepower and a Crimson Trace red-dot to help you get and stay on target. It has a MSRP of \$400, but after Odin got through with it, it's valued at \$900 now.

Just like the Draug 5.56, this mini-draug is covered with Norse knotwork. The details of it are just impeccable, especially how the design flows from the frame to the slide. It is a great everyday carry piece that you can proudly show off to your buddies.

I always learn a lot every time I visit Odin's Workshop—everything from firearms to folklore. These guys aren't just Cerakoters, they are a full-fledged gunsmithing shop that turns your dreams into a reality. The brothers gave me a sneak peek on some projects they are working on, and I can't wait till they finish them.

If you want a crack at winning this fine piece of shootable artwork, please visit [ballisticmag.com/sccy-odins](http://ballisticmag.com/sccy-odins) today.

—*Linas Cernauskas*

\*No purchase required. Open to U.S. residents only and void where prohibited. One winner will be chosen. Prizes worth \$900. Sponsored by SCCY Firearms and Odin's Workshop. Starts 6/08/21 and ends 8/9/21. Restrictions apply. Visit [ballisticmag.com/sccy-odins](http://ballisticmag.com/sccy-odins) for details, eligibility and a complete list of official rules.



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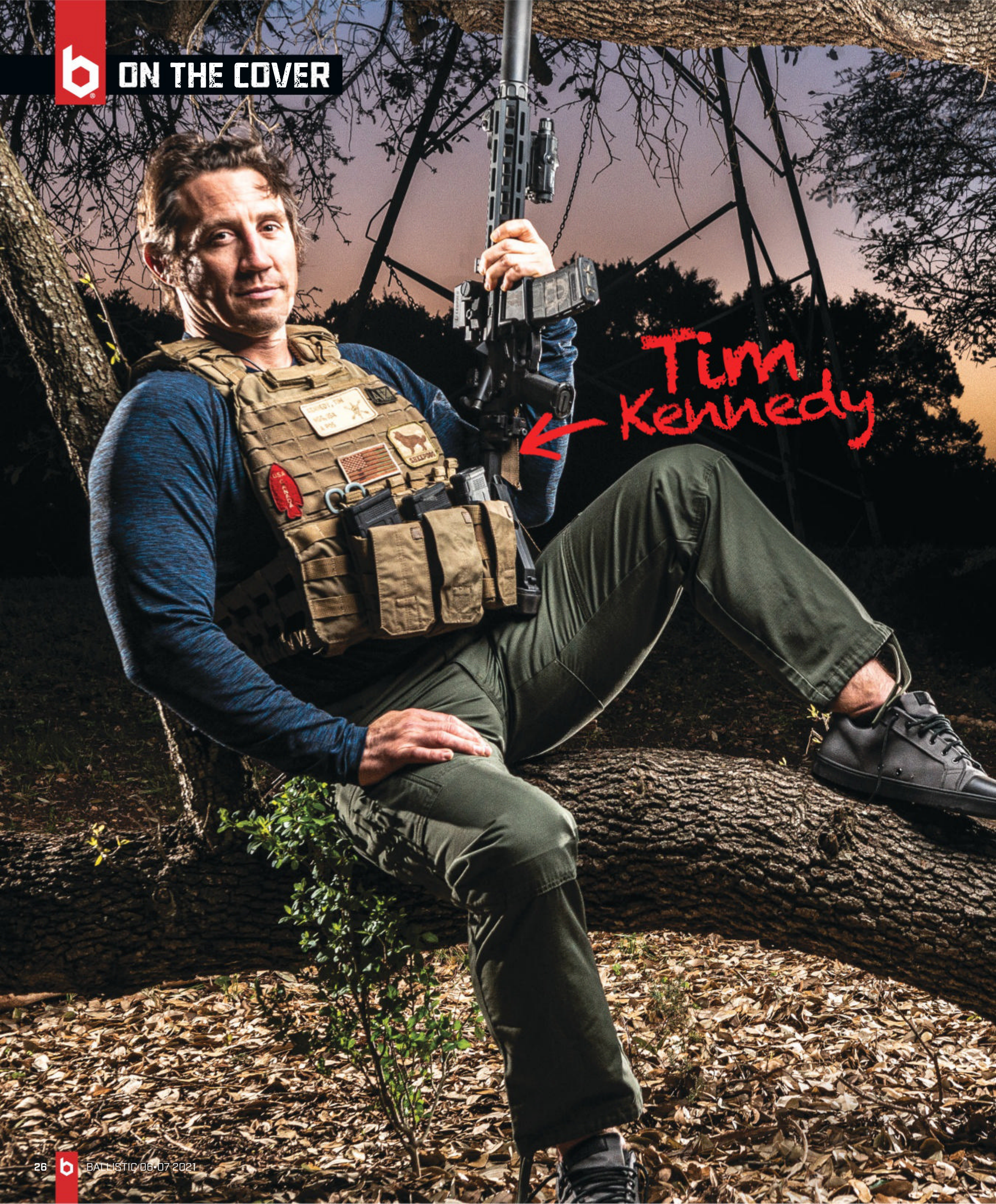
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# ON THE COVER



Tim Kennedy





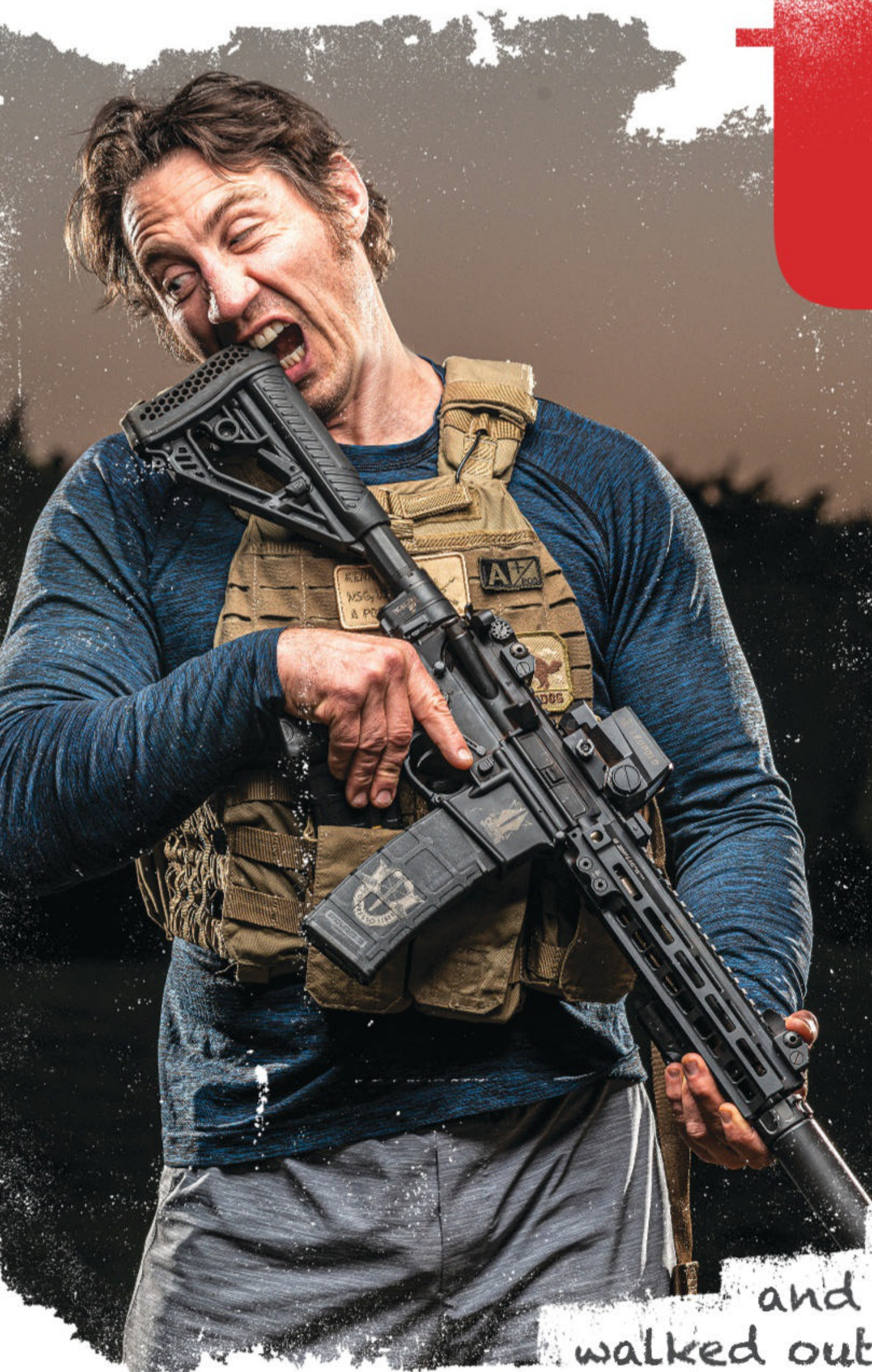
# Be Hard To Kill



**Life lessons from  
the battle-hardened  
warrior philosopher**

BY ROBERT JORDAN • ALEX LANDEEN PHOTOS





## Tim Kennedy

got tossed out of kindergarten for defending a young lady's haircut to a loudmouth bully. Granted, Tim did pop the kid in the mouth and toss him off the top of the jungle gym, but the cause was just, and the die was cast. Tim's total time in public school was measured in weeks, and his poor mother spent the next 10 years homeschooling him and trying to cultivate this hellion by immersing him in culture. The piano, dance and cooking classes turned out to be great places to meet chicks. Tim's dad, a narcotics cop, recognized the boy's talents and enrolled him in boxing and jiu jitsu. Thus the yin and the yang were balanced, and Tim rocketed into a world that he chose to shape as much as it shaped him.

Tim's parents pushed higher education, but a cop's salary doesn't go far in a family of five. A strong work ethic and an unbreakable spirit had him working everything from fast food to being a barback. Excelling at academics, he passed his high school exams at 16 and was off to junior college, then a four-year university. When money got tight, he found out he could lie about his age and enter bare-knuckle fighting contests on the Indian reservations and south of California in Tijuana. A lot of people will pay good money and make big bets when a white boy shows up someplace he doesn't belong. He figured out how he could make thousands of dollars by doing multiple fights per weekend and still pick up shifts at the bar. He was a raw force of nature, untamed and undaunted. But raising hell doesn't necessarily cultivate character. Tim Kennedy only cared about Tim Kennedy. He still had a long road ahead.

"He rolled into a valley an arrogant and impetuous boy and walked out of the same valley a humble and appreciative man."



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## Go Army Rangers

When 9/11 happened, Tim had just turned 23. He finished work that day and drove to the Army recruiter's station and got in line with 1,000 other angry Americans. He was already ranked in the top 10 in the world in professional mixed martial arts, but that didn't matter compared to his base need to find the evil behind the attacks and exterminate it. Tim already had a four-year degree but chose to go enlisted because, "Officers don't do shit."

One year and three months later, he was headed to basic. A smart kid, he schmoozed, cajoled, wormed and manipulated his way from one training to the next. Whether it

was timing, luck or sheer force of will, he managed to survive the crazy attrition rate of Ranger school and then the 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group, the Green Berets. There he was designated an 18 Bravo (weapons specialist) and assigned to the CIF (Commander's In-extremis Force) despite the fact that he was new to the unit, and typically only seasoned, experienced soldiers get assigned to such an elite group. Two months after this assignment, Tim was rolling into Iraq on his first deployment. The CIF was assigned to the Special Operations Task Force charged with finding the al-Qaeda leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

Most men would be proud to have achieved

so much in such a short period of time, but Tim isn't most men. Talking to him, you get the feeling that this wasn't the high point of his life, but one of the lowest. He describes his arrogance and out-of-control ego. He talks about the leaders that tried to teach him the importance of putting the team before self. He laments the fact that it took him so long to learn the lessons and wishes he could go back and apologize to those unsung heroes for his shortcomings. Smart, strong, talented and unstoppable, he was a poster child for what he thought Special Forces should be. But his priorities were still those of a boy. His self-worth trumped the mission and the men around him.

"If you ever get the chance to listen to him, get out your pen and take some notes."





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*"The feel of the trigger resetting after a shot is a really great feature."*

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**3**

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**4**

## EASY INSTALLATION

*"Very quick and simple install."*

*"It installed just as easily as your videos said it would."*

*"Just bought and installed two RISE triggers. I was blown away."*

**5**

## ACCURACY

*"Reduced my 100 yard groups by 25%."*

*"No take up, great reset. Extremely accurate, much more than I am."*

*"The trigger breaks right where I like it (not too light, just hard enough to keep me honest)."*

*"A high quality, precision part that will make me a much better shoot."*

**6**

## MORE TRIGGER FOR THE MONEY

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*"Hands-down the best triggers on the market at the best price."*

*"My only problem is deciding how many more I need!"*



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## Character Building

But Tim's story didn't end here. Fate is a harsh and unforgiving mistress and she had more lessons in store. Some time later, Tim was in Afghanistan assigned to an ISAF force that was rolling through a valley on patrol when it was attacked by hundreds of Taliban guerrilla fighters that had planted IEDs to take out the vehicles, and they held the high ground. The vehicle in front of him exploded, the one behind had an RPG skip off the hood while it was riddled with PKM fire. In a matter of seconds they were being overrun. Tim pulled out a gunner pinned in his overturned turret and came up with a torso cut in half. He tried fruitlessly to engage a wave of men with his sniper rifle. A man who had always controlled the world found himself nearly helpless and facing certain death. At the last moment a machine gunner saved his life by mowing down a line of Al Qaeda as they nearly overran

his position. The fighting went on for three days. They held the location an additional week before reinforcements brought him out to safety.

Kennedy realized he wasn't Superman. He wasn't able to control every situation and bend it to his will. He wasn't able to conquer all odds by himself. But he was a survivor, and a member of a team—a team that was only alive because they risked their lives to save each other. He rolled into a valley an arrogant and impetuous boy and walked out of the same valley a humble and appreciative man. Everything changed. The cost had been horrific, but he would never again look down at the world and those around him. This was a second chance and it would not be wasted.

How do we define character? Is it simply doing the right thing when no one is looking? It is more than that. It is the recognition that we, as an individual, are not the most important thing. Our importance is second to real things



Today, Tim works a lot of jobs but his passion truly shines on the range, where he is dedicated to giving students the very best life-saving instruction available to the public.



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**HERITAGE**

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like our spouse and kids. We also come second to ideas like freedom and country. Putting your team, your God, your family, your ideals first every day isn't a burden, it is a blessing. It creates purpose and the happiness of being a part of something bigger. Tim finally learned that. He embraced it. And quietly, everything in his life shifted into the right place.

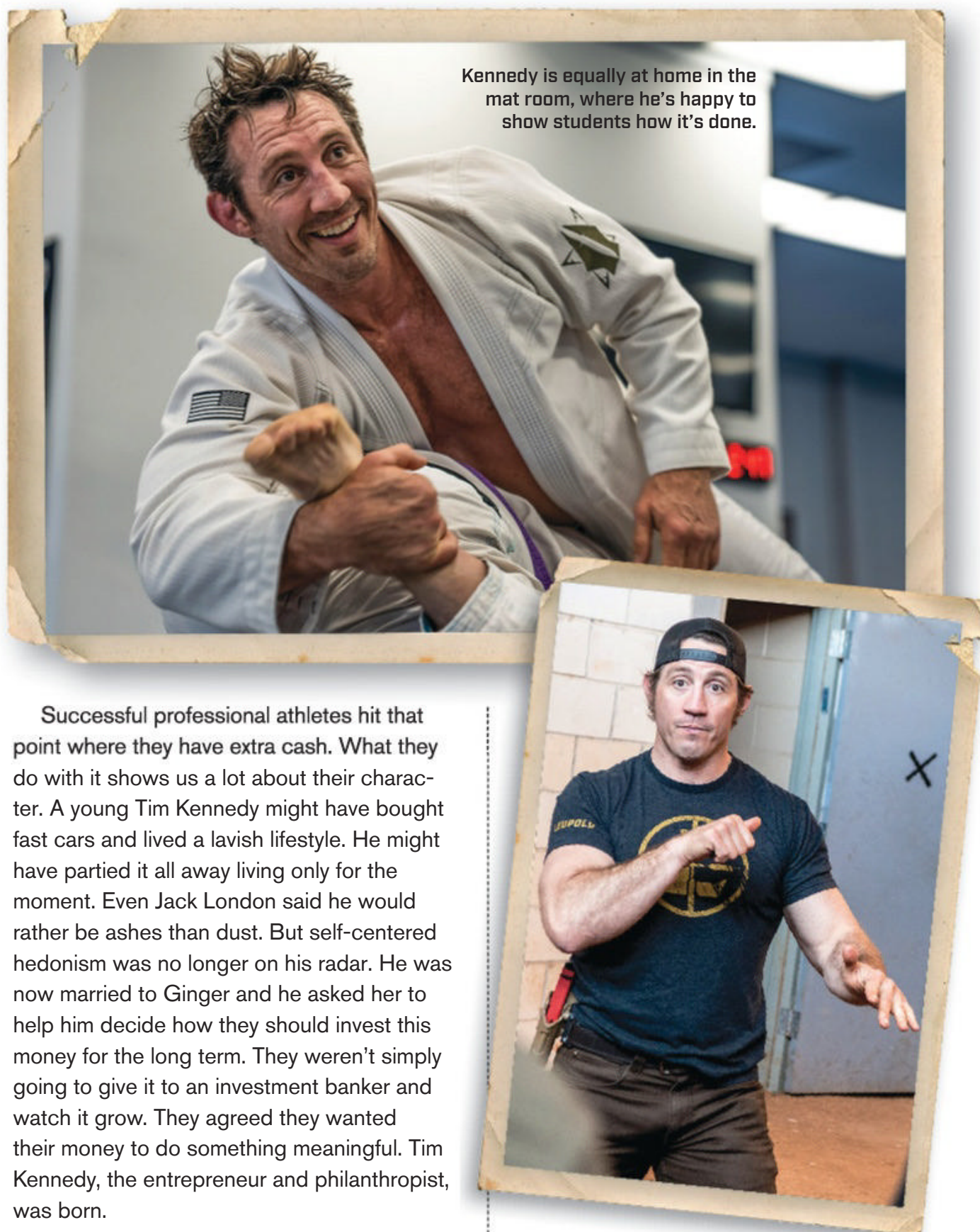
## Shifting Gears

When Tim was back stateside he continued to fight professionally. In 2012 he took leave one weekend to fight in the Inter-Fight League, which was televised on Fox. This was his sixteenth fight while on active duty. He successfully fought Ryan McGiver on Saturday and was standing tall before the man on Monday. The man wasn't happy. The brass had seen the fight and figured out that one of their active-duty special forces soldiers was moonlighting as a cage fighter. They told him it didn't fit in with the motto of "Quiet Professionalism" and he would have to choose one career or the other. Tim offered to become a recruiting tool as a MMA fighter and soldier, but they declined. He had a tough choice to face.

After eight years of active duty, Tim switched over to the National Guard, where he was required to have a job outside of the military. They were happy to let him pursue his fighting career. On top of that, he got to keep his Special Forces tab. Two years later, Army recruiting was in the toilet and Big Army came back and paid him a lot of money to paint his tour bus camouflage and start stumping for the cause. At the same time, he was making runs for titles and getting paid a fair amount to brawl in the octagon. Tim was a professional athlete, a hero, a household name and making more money than he needed to survive.

"Today Tim is retired from professional fighting but you would never know it from his physical training schedule."





Kennedy is equally at home in the mat room, where he's happy to show students how it's done.

Successful professional athletes hit that point where they have extra cash. What they do with it shows us a lot about their character. A young Tim Kennedy might have bought fast cars and lived a lavish lifestyle. He might have partied it all away living only for the moment. Even Jack London said he would rather be ashes than dust. But self-centered hedonism was no longer on his radar. He was now married to Ginger and he asked her to help him decide how they should invest this money for the long term. They weren't simply going to give it to an investment banker and watch it grow. They agreed they wanted their money to do something meaningful. Tim Kennedy, the entrepreneur and philanthropist, was born.

## The Three-Ps Philosophy

The first company Tim and Ginger supported was Ranger Up, a six-month-old apparel company started by an Army veteran that made T-shirts with slogans that every enlisted guy and gal wished they could tell their CO at some time or another. Tim was still on active duty, so he was a quiet money man behind the scenes. The company boomed and after this initial success, Tim and Ginger decided they needed an investment plan. They

decided any venture they would throw in with must have three Ps: a plan, a purpose and the right people.

Lots of people want to make a better mousetrap. Some even have a good product. But most do not have a realistic plan of where they are, where they want to be and how they are going to get there. Secondly, not all products are equal. The Pet Rock might turn into a money maker, but is it helping make the world a better place or is the owner simply filling his pockets? Finally, you need the right people. They needed to

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get to know them and figure out what makes them tick. They wanted people who were passionate about what they were doing. They wanted people with character.

## Non-Stop 24/7/365

Today Tim is retired from professional fighting but you would never know it from his physical training schedule. He is involved in dozens of projects and stays busy from morning until night. He is the face of California's 811 "Call before you dig," Nosler's Project 48 to educate first-time gun owners and tons of other good causes. But his main businesses are Woobie Shoes ([woobieshoes.com](http://woobieshoes.com)); Live Relentless nutrition ([liverelentless.com](http://liverelentless.com)); Apogee Strong education ([apogeestrong.com](http://apogeestrong.com)); Apogee Cedar Park, an Action Academy elementary school ([apogeecedarpark.org](http://apogeecedarpark.org)); TKO Operations Consultants ([timken-nedymma.com](http://timken-nedymma.com)) and Sheepdog Response training ([sheepdogresponse.com](http://sheepdogresponse.com)).

Sheepdog Response takes civilians and puts them through the rigors of firearms, hand-to-hand combat and emergency medical response in much the same way as a military basic training or law enforcement academy. The motto is "Be Hard to Kill." With a quiet nod to Lt. Col Dave Grossman who popularized the idea that each person is a sheep, a wolf or a sheepdog, Tim starts and helps people on the path to self-reliance, self-motivation and the mindset of a warrior. The other companies are important, but Sheepdog Response is where Tim teaches regularly and pushes students to pursue a life of reflection, self-improvement and cultivate character. The goal isn't faster split times. The goal is making the world a better place.

At the heart of every true warrior is the belief in something bigger than himself. That inspires Tim Kennedy to share his time and knowledge with others who can benefit from his varied experiences.

## The Complete Package

So who is Tim Kennedy? A sniper? A Green Beret? An MMA champion? A devoted husband and father? An entrepreneur? An internet sensation? Or maybe a guide for life values? I think he might be all of these things and quite a bit more.

He certainly isn't perfect. He acknowledges his checkered past and frequently comments on his own daily mistakes. But he does it with a laugh and smile, and the recognition that no one grows by being perfect. They grow by getting back up each time they fall down. Tim has been knocked down plenty and he knows he will be knocked down again. But each time he gets up, he polishes off another rough edge, he grows a little more, and he pushes forward on his path of improving himself and everyone around him. If you ever get the chance to listen to him, get out your pen and take some notes. You will walk away a better person for the experience. ●

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*Of course you want more Tim Kennedy. When you're done with this kickass article, visit [ballisticmag.com](http://ballisticmag.com) for exclusive video with Tim Kennedy and Athlon Outdoors content creator Alex Landeen. Catch them talking about the finer points of coffee, guns and tacos.*







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# HOW TIM KENNEDY RUINED MY LIFE

BY ALEX LANDEEN



Okay, that might sound a bit harsh, but please just hear me out.

“Illusory superiority” is a fancy-pants term for people who have a tendency to overestimate their abilities. We are all guilty of this, especially us “manly” men. (Broad brush warning.) Three examples of where this is most prevalent, at least in my experience, are driving, fighting and the art of love making.

I have no interest in judging anyone’s bedroom activities and I have seen ya’ll drive, so not much of a question there (looking at you, SoCal). For the purposes of this sidebar, I will stick to the topic of fighting and why I am currently in the midst of a

self-defense sea change. But first, a little backstory.

The last time I was in what I would consider a real fight was in 8th grade. I am currently 37, so yeah, it was a while ago. I have always been a large person with a reasonably chill demeanor and a tendency to avoid conflict. This has kept me out of trouble. But in the back of my mind, I believed I could take care of business. I worked the door at a bar for a few years in college. I’ve dragged around angry drunkards and avoided beer-bottle-wielding sorority girls. I have experience. I could handle that guy in the parking lot if I needed to. You know, just grab him, take him to the ground, sit on his head. Sure, no problem.

No problem, indeed.

## SHEEPDOGGIN’ IT

Tim Kennedy’s Sheepdog Defense Level One training class is three days of instruction focusing on situational aware-

ness, the fundamentals of marksmanship on the pistol range and defensive tactics, aka Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

I had the pleasure of attending this class while photographing for *Ballistic*. When I read the course description I was excited about the pistol portion because I fancy myself a pretty decent pistol shooter. But the mat training? I was apprehensive. I told myself it was because I was worried about my knee, my funky psoas muscle and that twitchy thing that my neck does when I turn it too fast. But upon reflection, these things were not the real cause of my trepidation. I was scared—scared because I knew I was about to have an experience that would disturb my long-held beliefs that I was a big, strong guy that could handle trouble. I am sure you can see where this is going.

I have watched fighting on TV. I had ideas about how hard

those guys train. I had ideas about the level of strength and violence they possess. It was not until I had a trained killer sitting on my chest manipulating me like a sad meat puppet that I really understood.

Watching big strong men almost brought to tears because they realize that they are not in control will make you understand. Seeing the helpless panic on someone’s face while an instructor uses a plastic knife to simulate slashing all their major arteries will make you understand.

My illusory superiority had been dispelled. In the face of a wolf, I am a lamb. I am weak and untrained. I am not prepared to save my life or the lives of others. This is how Tim Kennedy has ruined my life.

## THE ROAD AHEAD

On the other hand, since coming back from Texas with my fluffy little tail between my legs I have begun the process of finding a local BJJ training center. I have been working out more. I have a different mindset and awareness. I did yoga!

Tim told our class that we should train to be the hardest person to kill anyone ever comes across. I don’t know how far I will get in regards to that sentiment, but if I ever take the Sheepdog Level Two class, it would be great to give the instructors just a little trouble before they turn me into a skin-covered pretzel.

In hindsight, I probably should have titled this sidebar, “How Tim Kennedy Made Me Want To Be A Better Man.” But seriously, nobody would read that nonsense. For more info, visit [sheepdogresponse.com](http://sheepdogresponse.com).



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# THE UNKNOWNNS

## RAISE THE AR

### TWO COMPANIES THAT HELP YOU TAKE YOUR PISTOLS AND RIFLES TO NEW HEIGHTS

BY FRANK MELLONI

#### RAILSCALES

High-end rifles are worthless unless they are controllable. This was the founding idea behind veteran-owned RailScales when they opened shop in 2014. Based out of Oklahoma, Brent McGuire and Derek Shelton merged their knowledge of the AR platform with modern machining methods to produce the company's first and flagship product—the RailScale.

The current market is saturated with cheap plastic covers that flex, break or even melt if you have enough fun on the range. The RailScale solves this problem by offering a solid G-10 variant. G-10 material is praised for its light weight, heat resistance and, of course, its ability to hold extraordinarily “grippy” patterns. RailScales mount directly via MLOK or KeyMod hardware anywhere that you feel can use a little more purchase. Better still, these robust covers are made entirely in the USA, right down to the mounting hardware. Options are available in four different colors including black, flat dark earth, sniper grey and OD green. Several different textures offer the shooter the perfect amount of grip based on their needs, application or just plain preference.

If you are partial to polymer, an alternative to the G-10 line of machined







RailScales is the HTP series. These are available in the identical textures and with the same hardware of the original RailScales and, through the use of heat-stabilized nylon, save the buyer a few bucks. This is a terrific option if you need to outfit a whole safe full of guns, or you run a firearms academy and want to put the most controllable firearms possible in each of your student's hands.

Not to be outdone by itself, RailScales has branched out to include some of the lightest vertical grips and hand stops on the market. The Karve, Anchor, RSB and LDAG bring today's AR lover low-profile control options made out of solid 6061-T6 aluminum. Innovation doesn't end there, as these folks also offer solutions for the high-tech operator running the most advanced lasers, right down to the old-timer looking for a better grip on his 1911. **[railscales.us]**

## WAR DOG INDUSTRIES

When politicians start talking foolishly, the 2A community gets handy. As civil unrest and the threat of gun confiscation loom, the AR market has been thinner than a campaign promise. The best alternative to buying something that you aren't happy with is to build your own, so why not do

it in style? That was the mindset of Justin Endsley and Paul Censoplano when they started War Dog Industries in 2018. The company is best known for its skeletonized receiver set that make for a gun that not only looks cool, but is lightweight and accurate to boot.

Skeletonizing is the simplest approach to weight reduction. By removing as much material as possible, unnecessary mass is eliminated without compromising structural integrity. War Dog Industries receiver sets have lightening cuts across the entire upper, magazine well and, most impressive of all, the fire control area. This yields a set that weighs less than 1 pound yet still uses standard AR-15 parts. For best results, it is recommended to go with an enclosed trigger group like the Rise Armament Rave pictured above right.

As for accuracy, the receiver sets that are churned out of the Florida-based company are fitted by hand to ensure that the upper and lower have zero "wobble" between the two, dramatically increasing accuracy. Remember, when the hammer in the lower strikes the firing pin in the upper, any movement between the two is going to move your sight picture a



split second before the bullet leaves the barrel. Consequently, any movement at all is detrimental. Before their finishing treatment, all surfaces are deburred and all dimensions are checked by hand to produce the highest level of quality control possible. Once it is deemed perfect, it is finished in a scratch-resistant Cerakote in your choice of burnt or midnight bronze, OD green and, of course, black.

For those who like the look and feel of the War Dog receiver set but don't care to get involved with building their own firearm, War Dog has a vast array of pre-built guns that span across both the AR rifle and pistol platforms. Barrels range from 5.5 to 16 inches and are available in either 5.56mm NATO or 300 Blackout. All models include other War Dog original components such as the company's signature skeletonized grip and/or buttstocks. **[wardogindustry.com]** ●





# CZECH-ERO

# FAST

BEGINNER OR EXPERT,  
CZ'S NEW TS 2 CAN HELP  
COMPETITORS REALIZE  
THEIR POTENTIAL

BY MIKE DETTY

ALEX LANDEEN PHOTOS



At the beginning of 2021, CZ announced their new TS 2—a single-action, semi-auto match pistol designed for action and speed shooting competitions. It's an evolution of sorts over their first Tactical Sport model, originally introduced in 2005 and discontinued several years ago. The TS 2 has the same slide profile of the popular Shadow 2 as well as a redesigned frame with improved ergonomics to help minimize muzzle flip. The gun also includes match-ready features like an ambidextrous safety, dual cocking serrations and an extended magazine release. CZ outfits the TS 2 with machined aluminum grips with aggressive checkering as well as a magwell funnel. Additionally, the TS 2 will accept a wide variety of custom parts already developed for the Tactical Sport platform.

CZ designed the TS 2 for the IPSC Standard and USPSA's Limited Divisions. Our test sample was chambered for 9mm, which will be scored in minor caliber for USPSA competition, but CZ-USA will eventually bring out TS 2 pistols chambered for 40 S&W. The Steel

Challenge's Limited Division requires 9mm as the minimum caliber, and there is no minimum power factor.

MADE IN  
CZECH REPUBLIC

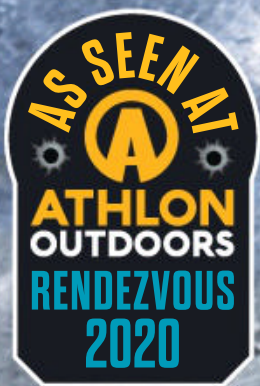
CZ TS 2

9x19



Built from the ground up as a dedicated match gun, the TS 2 boasts an unloaded weight of 48.5 recoil-absorbing ounces!









# CZECH-ERO FAST



An integral beavertail, coarse checkering and a machined aluminum magwell are all standard features on the TS 2.



**RIGHT:** The heavy, full-length dust cover, reverse rail design and low mass of the TS 2 slide help tame the gun's muzzle flip substantially compared to lighter 9mm pistols.

## SPECIFICATIONS

### CZ TS 2

CALIBER:	9mm
BARREL:	5.8 inches
OA LENGTH:	8.86 inches
WEIGHT:	48.5 ounces (empty)
GRIPS:	Machined aluminum
SIGHTS:	Adjustable rear, fiber-optic front
ACTION:	Single-action
FINISH:	Black
CAPACITY:	20+1
MSRP:	\$1,699



## WEIGHTY PROPOSITION

The TS 2 isn't built for carry or tactical use. It is built from the ground up as a dedicated competition pistol. It uses a steel frame and slide and boasts an unloaded weight of 48.5 ounces. Folks, that's 71 percent of a Desert Eagle's weight! Every ounce serves to dampen recoil and muzzle flip for the shooter to get back on target more quickly. But it's not just the TS 2's weight that helps in this endeavor. CZ has gone to great lengths to ensure the shooter gets the highest grip possible on the TS 2. Its frame features an integral beavertail and a coarsely checkered front and back strap that will lock the shooter into his or her grip. The dramatically undercut triggerguard and aggressive arch of the backstrap force the grip into the highest possible hold. Combined with the heavy frame, light slide and low bore axis, the 9mm cartridge makes the TS 2 feel more like a .22 when fired. By defeating muzzle flip, shooters are back on target quicker, a critical aspect of shooting sports like the Steel Challenge or USPSA competition.



# COMPETITION COMPLEMENTS

The TS 2 boasts a number of features that make it ideal for match shooting. The slide has cocking serrations fore and aft and there are bilateral, frame-mounted thumb safeties as well as an extended magazine release that allows even petite shooters to dump a magazine without compromising their firing grip. Reloads with the tapered, dual column magazines are a cinch with the detachable, machined aluminum magazine well funnel.

CZ uses a polymer trigger on the TS 2. It is a flat-faced trigger design with a lip at its bottom to keep the pad of the trigger finger centered on the trigger. The lightweight trigger has an overtravel adjustment, and its weight precludes inertia types of discharge if the gun were dropped. Not important you think? Over the course of many years, I remember quite a few times that guns were dropped at matches, whether on presentation, during reloads or when the shooters fell. Fortunately, none of those instances resulted in a discharge or serious injury (as long as we don't count pride). The polymer trigger tells me that a great deal of thought went into this competition gun. My test



CZ outfits the new TS 2 with a stout, one-piece, machined steel rear sight that is drift adjustable for windage, ensuring you get on target easily.

## PERFORMANCE

### CZ TS 2

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Aguila 124 FMJ (Power Factor 136)	1,100	0.88
Fed. American Eagle 147 (PF 156)	1,067	0.74
Fed. 150 Syntech TSJ Action P. (PF 138)	922	0.70

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

**“Every ounce serves to dampen recoil and muzzle flip for the shooter to get back on target more quickly.”**

gun's pull weight measured 1.25 pounds, and it's a two-stage affair that allows shooters to prep the trigger before breaking the shot. The TS 2 uses a 5.23-inch, cold hammer forged barrel and it possesses an integral feed ramp and is fully supported. In a sport where velocity is crucial, the longer barrel gives powder every chance to burn completely. The longer barrel also gives the gun a healthy sight radius of over 7 inches. Machined from one piece of steel, the rear sight is a stout affair that is drift adjustable for windage and locks in its dovetail with two set screws. It's serrated to reduce glare. The front sight features a red fiber-optic rod, is pinned into the slide and can be easily replaced if your match loads don't print to your point of aim. During my testing of the TS 2 I used ammunition ranging from 115 grains to 150 grains, and all loads printed to point of aim at 25 yards.

## BREAKING SHOTS

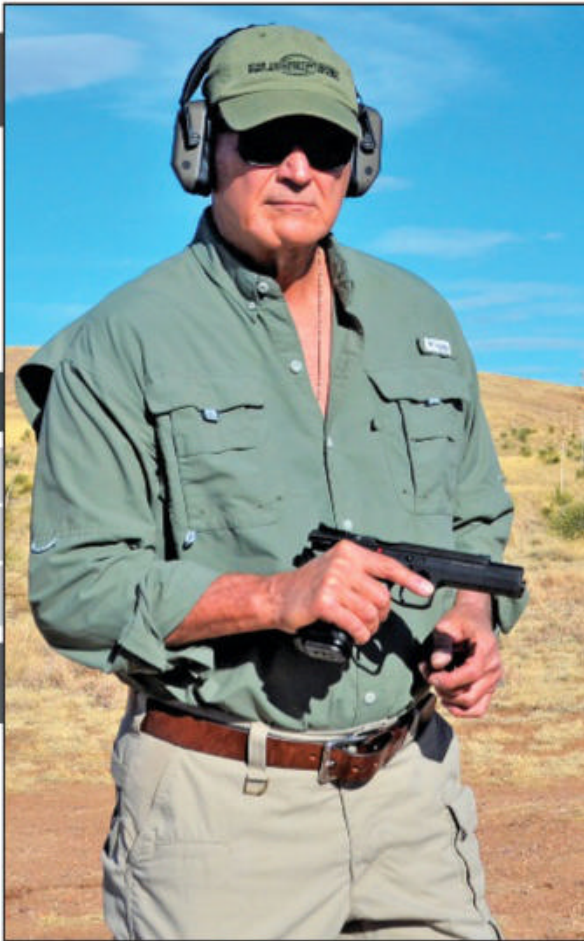
On a cloudless mid-April morning I arrived at my shooting spot, a piece of BLM land less than 20 minutes from our southern border with Mexico. Winds were uncharacteristically calm, and temperatures were in the mid 70s. It was a day made for shooting, and the TS 2 did not disappoint! I used a DOA Tactical portable shooting bench and fired all groups from a seated rest using a Millett BenchMaster to rest the TS2's dust cover on. I fired several groups with each of the listed ammunition, and the numbers in the accuracy chart reflect the best group. I've also listed the power factor for each

of the three loads and you can see they each easily surpassed the minimum 125 power factor required for minor caliber.

I also used that desert outing to shoot some steel. I brought along three of my MGM BC C-Zone targets, which approximate the USPSA target with the D zone removed. At 15 yards I could hammer the steel easily. I hesitate to report the times of my splits as it's been 10 years since I've shot a USPSA match and my last classification was just B class. Regardless, I managed to double tap the target with an average split of .14 seconds and managed to do .12 seconds a couple of times. *Ballistic's* ace photographer Alex Landeen, who is 25 years younger than me and born with a quick trigger finger, managed a couple of splits, with hits, in the single digits.

## FINAL SHOTS

The only reason I mention this is the TS 2 is a gun that is only limited by its shooter. It's a gun that's perfect for the beginner shooter or a Master Class shooter. It is match ready straight from the box and doesn't require any upgrades as the user develops, improves and progresses in the sport. It can take a shooter from local matches to the Nationals and literally last a shooter their entire career. The gun is delivered with a foam-lined polymer hard case, and three 20-round magazines are included. Priced at an affordable \$1,699 the CZ TS 2 might represent the best deal for those needing a match-ready competition pistol! For more information, visit [cz-usa.com](http://cz-usa.com).





## Q&amp;A WITH

CZ PRO  
ERIC GRAUFFEL**ERIC, CAN YOU GIVE US A QUICK RECAP OF ANY TITLES OR CHAMPIONSHIPS YOU'VE HELD?**

I am into IPSC 99 percent and, from time to time, USPSA when I can come over to the United States. I have been a World Champion since 1999, five overall titles in Open, one in Production and one in Standard (USPSA Limited) Division. I also won several USPSA Nationals, but no titles since I am not American.

**WHAT SHOOTING SPORT ARE YOU MOST ACTIVE IN? (I ASSUME IT IS IPSC BUT DO YOU ALSO SHOOT STEEL CHALLENGE, 3-GUN OR ANY OTHER ACTION SHOOTING SPORTS?)**

Exactly, IPSC is what I do around the world, however, I have played Steel Challenge and 3-Gun competitions when I am in the United States. In those games, I survive but we don't practice those over here in Europe. But it is great practice for my competition skills, even if I have almost no chance to win.

**WHAT DIVISION DO YOU MOST COMMONLY COMPETE IN AND WHAT IS YOUR CLASS?**

Haha, very good question! Right now, I am more into multi-tasking, meaning that I shoot a bit in every division, but mostly open and production. I think on my USPSA rank I get GM, but that has to be confirmed. I think only Italy in Europe runs classes in their national ranking.

**WERE YOU ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE DESIGN OF THE TS 2?**

No and yes. No, because I joined CZ in 2018, and the gun was already in very well-advanced R&D, and honestly, they had already done a good job upgrading the first generation of the Tactical Sport. And yes, because we



are already thinking of a future evolution, in order to push the limits of the gun. Designing, researching, testing is, for me, the most fun. For 100 percent ideas coming onto the table, only 1 to 2 percent pass the stage of pre-series for testing. So, lots of coffees, lots of talking—it's really cool and rewarding!

**WHAT ARE YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF THE TS 2? WHAT FEATURES MAKE THIS GUN A GREAT CHOICE FOR COMPETITION?**

First, we are on the same base frame as the Shadow 2, which makes the switch from one gun to the other much easier. Same frame/grip angle, same triggerguard. Same slide design, as well, so at the end of the day, you can have pretty much the same configuration on both platforms, and this will help the shooter performance. Now comparing former TS to new TS 2, gun balance is better and feels more neutral. Squared triggerguard, the very few shooters like me having the weak

hand index finger on the triggerguard can only be super happy, as it feels much better, and the improved checkering gives the shooter a better grip.

**WHEN YOU COMPETE WITH A TS 2 ARE THERE ANY MODIFICATIONS YOU MAKE TO YOUR PERSONAL GUN?**

Mine is based on TS 2 Deep Bronze configuration. This variation has a fully adjustable rear sight, extended mag release, extended safety, as mentioned earlier. I use brass grip and magwell for a bit more weight on the back of the gun, that's just my personal preference!

**WHAT TYPE OF HOLSTER, MAGAZINE CARRIER AND BELT DO YOU USE FOR COMPETITION? DOES THE SQUARED TRIGGERGUARD OF THE TS2 PRECLUDE HOLSTERS THAT YOU USED FOR THE SHADOW 2 OR OTHER CZ DA/SA GUNS?**

I use CR Speed, so basically it is the same holster I use for my Shadow 2. New Ultra or Compact from CR Speed will fit your new TS 2, and Shadow 2 by just changing barrel length configuration. Same for belt and pouches—I've used the CR Speed stuff since 2000. They are simple and very functional.

**IS THE TS 2 THE PERFECT BEGINNER'S GUN OR EXPERT'S GUN?**

Yes! The TS 2 entry is at an affordable price, which gives the chance to a beginner not to invest a fortune to get started. However, if the shooter gets really into it, he has the possibility to upgrade bit by bit the gun with various options in order to push the gun in the full racing version. Expert or pro, yes, too. It is configurable so as you can imagine, each top shooter has his own style, configuration, and TS 2 will offer those setup possibilities. So yes, it is also an expert's gun! ●





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SELF-DEFENSE

# BALLISTIC FOR YOUR LIFE

While you shouldn't go around looking for trouble, sometimes it's impossible to avoid. Martial arts training and good weapons training could very well save your life someday. Reading this article won't make you an expert, but these tips for defending yourself in real life attack situations could be the difference between a happy ending and becoming a statistic. For best results practice is everything. Head to your local boxing, MMA or BJJ gym to get practical training in defending yourself.

## GREAT TIPS ON MIXING IT UP TO SURVIVE SIX DIFFERENT ATTACKS

BY SULLIVAN CAULEY • STRAIGHT 8 PHOTOS

### 1 Attacked from behind with a sleeper hold

The rear naked choke, or sleeper hold as it is sometimes referred to, is the most effective choke in any martial arts style or competition. The choke applies pressure directly over the carotid arteries, meaning if it's slapped on perfectly it's only a matter of seconds until sleepy time. Given this fact, it's important to act quickly. The first step is to attack the top arm, the one over your head, not the one actually choking you. It seems counter intuitive, but you'll never be able to get the bottom arm off of your neck if you don't first address the top arm that's locking it in place. Peel the top hand with both of your hands and pull it down toward your chest. Simultaneously start turning your head away from the crook of the elbow of your attacker's bottom arm and fight to get your chin under his forearm bone to give your neck some space. Now, you're not quite out



of the woods yet. Hang on to the top hand with one of your hands, and with your other fight to grab his free arm. Once you've got control of both hands you can turn and face your attacker as



you back away. When you turn and back away, it's important to keep your hands up and create as much space as possible as he's likely to start swinging or try to grab you again.









## FIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE

### 2 Brad or Chad try to sucker punch you

There are a few technical things that can help you better absorb a punch—keeping your chin tucked toward your chest and your jaw clenched for instance. Blocking or moving to avoid the punch are even better, but none of these are possible if you can't see the punch coming in the first place. The number one defense for the sucker punch is not to let it surprise you. In a confrontation, no matter how confident you are you can beat somebody up, never ever let somebody within punching range. I've seen it a thousand times: Somebody is having a verbal altercation with another

guy and they start to crowd each other. The two men stand chest to chest with their arms outstretched and their chins up as if to demonstrate they're so confident they can win they're willing to start from behind by allowing the first punch in. Then suddenly, but quite predictably, one of them smokes the other across the point of said elevated chin, and the guy on the receiving end goes from confident peacock to dropped sack of potatoes in a split second.

Even if you're a skilled fighter you cannot afford to be starting a fight off by taking a clean one on the jaw. If



you're in a confrontation, do yourself a favor and keep the guy at arm's length (at least). Don't stand square, put one foot in front of the other and stretch your lead arm out in front of you before he gets to you to indicate you're

not going to let him get close and, for the love of God, tuck your chin to your chest. If he slaps your arm out of the way and pushes past, consider the fight started and do whatever you can to defend yourself.

### 3 Avoid a baseball bat clubbing

Footwork, footwork, footwork. If someone is going to swing a bat at you, you don't want to be there for it. Blocking in this situation is better than wearing one to the head, but you're likely to break any appendage

you block with, meaning your best option is to be evasive. If you're outside and you think you're faster than the guy, consider turning tail and running away. If you can't split for whatever reason, you've got to figure out a way to get

that bat out of your attacker's hands. Get up on your toes and move laterally circling around your attacker quickly; a moving target is much more difficult to load up on and hit. If you move around him long enough he will get frustrated and making him miss will be easier.

Eventually, you need to allow yourself within range momentarily to provoke an attack. When he swings, quickly bounce backward out of range like a boxer or karate

fighter countering a punch and get him to swing and miss. Once he does, close the distance as fast as you can and either tackle him or take both hands to the bat itself. With a gun or knife in the picture, controlling the weapon is your only option, but you need space to swing a bat so tying up your opponent first and then working on the bat is also an option. If you find yourself in a struggle for the bat where both of you have a grip on it, pull your hands as close to your chest as possible and try to turn violently, putting your body in between him and the bat. If that's not working, bite his thumb off, then try again. Any fight over a deadly weapon like this should basically be considered a fight to the death. Don't be afraid to get mean and dirty to protect yourself.







# JERICHO ENHANCED

The Jericho Enhanced is designed to perform under any and all circumstances. With a new hammer profile, adjustable backstraps, a reprofiled trigger, an enhanced safety lever, and Novak sights, it is well suited for both defense and tactical purposes; while also living up to IWI's exceptionally high standards for reliable performance, accuracy and quality construction.

**IWI.US**

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## FIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE

### 4 Two or more guys are jumping your friend

Even if there are no weapons involved, a couple of guys teaming up to beat on one unlucky guy can end badly. Depending on how malicious they are, the attackers can overwhelm a person to the point they're on the ground completely defenseless and kick them into the ICU or morgue more quickly than many people probably realize. If you see a friend being jumped, you certainly don't have time to call the police so you must act quickly. If you happen to be armed, it might be a good time to at least threaten the attackers with your weapon if not use it, depending on how dire the

situation is for the victim. If you're unarmed, things are more difficult.

First, if there are other people nearby, get their attention by yelling and see if they're willing to help. You're going to need to lead the charge, but if you're lucky they'll follow you into the fray. If nobody is around or willing to help, you're in for a fight. The key to entering into this fight is the element of surprise. All gentlemanly agreements about fair fighting are already off the table. Approach one of the attackers quickly from behind and load up for a big punch, clothesline or elbow to the base of the skull/top of the neck square in the



back or on the side of the neck/jaw. Blows to these areas can be seriously debilitating. Think about the time Ronda Rousey was knocked unconscious by a kick to the neck in the UFC. If they don't see you coming and you put your weight into it, there's a good chance you'll take one man out of the fight right away, and enough force

delivered to these areas can cause permanent damage. After you've hit the first attacker, move quickly to the next, and so on. It's important to keep moving to avoid being surrounded, and it's important not to tie up with, grapple or go to the ground with anybody for the same reason.

### 5 You get jumped by multiple guys

If you're ever unfortunate enough to be jumped by a group of guys, there's a good chance you're going to catch a beating. Given the fact that your attackers outnumber you, grappling is off the table. Taking down or otherwise engaging with one man for any period longer than a second or two will expose your flanks to any number of attacks, and being on the ground means those strikes will be more damaging and plentiful considering the fact you're stationary. For those reasons, footwork and striking are key.

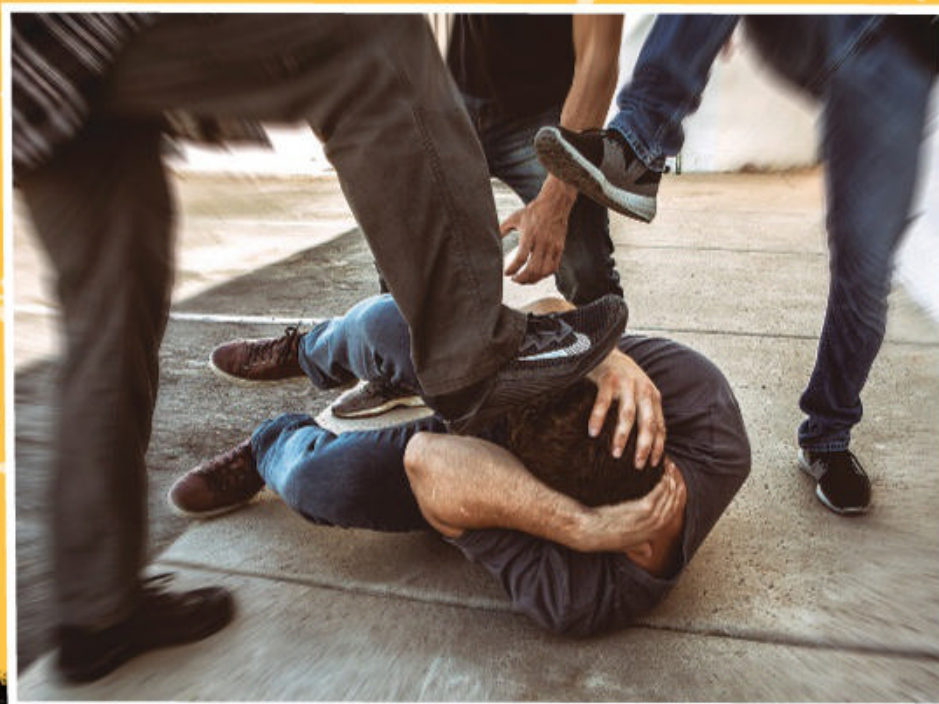
Your number one priority should be keeping all of your

attackers in front of you. This is going to mean constantly moving your feet, and probably a little bit of running. Get up on your toes, make use of

whatever space you have, and when someone gets close make them pay with one or two hard shots before going back to moving your feet. Your odds of winning this fight are low, but good footwork and stiff punches when your attackers get close could buy you enough time for help to arrive. If you



get clipped or otherwise end up on the ground, make a shell with your arms covering your face, neck and the vulnerable back of your head/neck region and shrug your shoulders. If at all possible, try to get up and get moving again while covering your head and neck as best you can. If there's no way to get up, keep your shell with your arms tight, clench your teeth, pull your knees to your chest to cover your organs and try to ride out the beating until someone can help.







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## **G** Someone much bigger than you tries to kidnap you

This one is primarily for kids and ladies. Police will tell you that your odds of survival in a kidnapping situation go down precipitously if you allow yourself to go wherever the kidnappers are taking you. Given your size and strength disadvantage, your odds of knocking your attacker out

with good striking techniques or out grappling them are low. You need to fight dirty. Even if they have a weapon, your attacker most likely doesn't want to kill you in whatever public place you're at. They want to transport you to a secluded place they have planned. You need to risk

damage on the spot to avoid going with them.

Scream as loud as you can, try to run away, or kick and punch before they get to you. Once they grab you, scratch and claw for the eyes and bite anything you can get your teeth on as hard as you can. Almost anybody can bite hard

enough to remove a finger, ear, nose or chunk of facial flesh if they're able to get it in their mouth. While it's going to be difficult to kill or incapacitate your attacker like this, you may very well make yourself such a difficult target that he decides this kidnapping is not worth the trouble.

**Editor's Note:** Want learn more great self-defense moves from the author? Visit [skillsetmag.com](http://skillsetmag.com) for his weekly video series.



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## CLASSIC COMBAT

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The lunge is a fencer's most powerful move where he commits 100 percent to try and win the point, while the Kendoka commits with a forward advance, a kiai and a stomp.



Centuries ago, dedicated warriors fought with swords in hand across both Europe and Asia against those who opposed them, their beliefs and their kings or lords.

Their skills were legendary—each a master of their weapon and the fighting style they honed for decades.

Today, these sword fighters no longer fight to the death or to even draw blood, but instead use their ancient styles to score points in all levels of competition.

On one side you have the fencers, chivalrous and classically taught practitioners that emulate the lightning-fast kills from the European swordsmen of years past. Their quick, yet subtle wrist movements directed the tip of their sword into their opponents' flesh and plunged it deep into their heart, stopping it instantly. Today, the blunt tip of the fencer's sword impacts a protected chest plate and scores a point.

On the other side, and

# Fencing

**TWO ANCIENT  
DUEL-TO-THE-DEATH  
STYLES ANALYZED  
FOR A MODERN-DAY  
SHOWDOWN**

BY MICHAEL D'ANGONA



literally across the world, there stands the Kendo masters. These competitors of today are directly influenced by the Samurai and their fabled, nearly perfect killing weapon, the katana. These Asian swordsmen exuded patience, precision and clarity of mind, giving them the upper hand in battle both mentally and physically. Now, they use the techniques of the past masters to also score points for dominance in their competitive sport.

But what would happen if these two modern sword fighters met today on a neutral battlefield? Which style would have the advantage? The disadvantage? Or would

they be so equally matched that a winner couldn't be decided?

Here, we'll analyze each fighter's weapons and overall fighting styles to determine which swordsman reigns supreme.

## The Objective

While both styles share similar rules, some exceptions must be taken to ensure a fair matchup between these two combatants.

First, it must be stated that there are three distinct styles of fencing. These include foil, epee and saber, each with its own specific weapon and target area. With foil being the most popular style today, I'll use both their weapon, the foil, and their target area, the

chest area from the neck to the groin, for the head-to-head competition. For kendo, only the shinai is used as a weapon and the target areas include the head, chest plate and gauntlets, as well as a thrusting strike to the throat.

The fencer's playground is a "strip" running about forty-five feet long and about five feet wide. Fencers advance and retreat up and down this slender area and are considered out of bounds once they step out from any side. Conversely, a kendo practitioner competes within a square measuring between 30 and 36 feet. Similar to a fencer, a Kendoka would earn a foul if they stepped out of the circle. Again, to keep this hypothetical meeting of the two competitive swordsmen fair, no physical out-of-bounds will be given during the match to allow each participant to fight without being restricted by the other's playing field.

## Weapons In Hand

With no physical contact allowed for either combatant, the only way to score a point is with their respective weapons.

The fencer's foil is, at its maximum length, 43.31 inches long, has a handguard of 4.73 inches round and a total weight of 17.63 ounces. Overall, the metal sword is lightweight, has a rectangular blade and is very flexible, enabling it to bend when it strikes an opponent's body to decrease its impact force, so as not to injure the recipient of the lightning-fast strike.

On the other hand, a Kendo sword, or more specifically a shinai, offers a maximum length of 47 inches, a Tsuba, or handguard, measuring roughly 3.50 inches in diameter and a total maximum weight of around 21 ounces. The shinai is created from four pieces of bamboo that are tied

The gear for both fencing and kendo share similarities like a protective helmet and suit, as well as a "sword" for offense and defense.

# Kendo

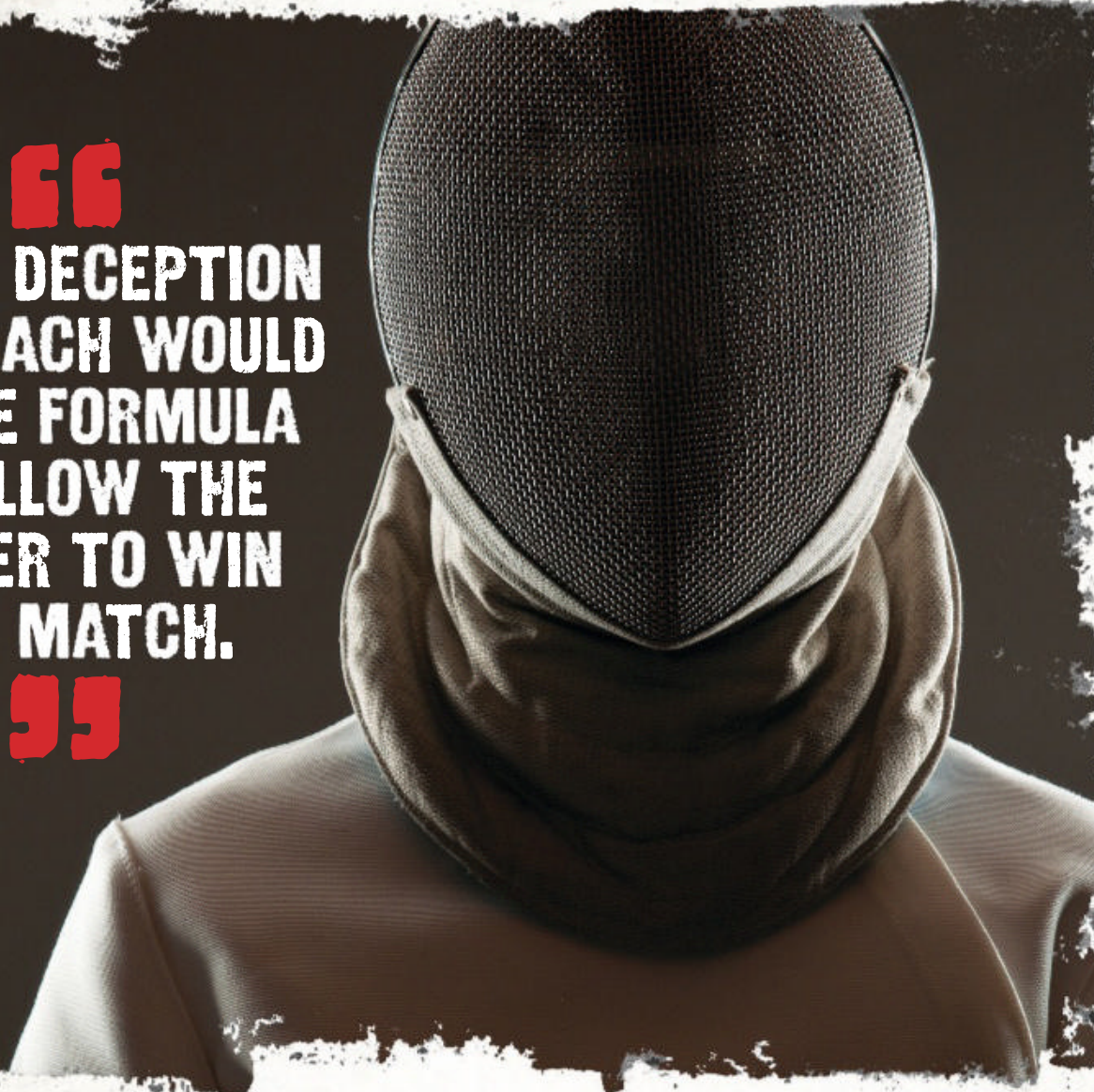
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## FENCING VS. KENDO

**“  
SPEED, DECEPTION  
AND REACH WOULD  
BE THE FORMULA  
TO ALLOW THE  
FENCER TO WIN  
THE MATCH.  
”**



Bigstock Photo

Though at first glance both fighting styles appear similar, the most obvious difference is that Fencing uses one hand, while Kendo practitioners use two.



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together as one unit. However, the pieces have a lot of “give” when striking a target, which prevents any serious injury and makes them relatively harmless, no matter the force of the impact.

Both fencing and kendo evolved from “duels” that were meant to end in death. Today, for competition, injuries are rare, and the focus is solely on the “touch” of the weapon.

### *Diverse Fighting Styles*

Now that the competitors are armed, how do their fighting styles compare?

Fencers are linear, one-handed sword fighters, which is apparent by the very small width allowed on the strip. They continuously advance to attack and retreat when pressed by their opponent. Their body positioning is such that they expose as little of their chest as possible by positioning their sword in front with their lead foot, and with their opposite, empty hand towards the back of their half-body.

With subtle movements of their wrist, they are able to deflect and parry rapid incoming attacks and adjust just as fast to attack back at their opponent. A fencer can use a variety of unconventional movements, such as squatting down very low to catch an oncoming attack or faking out a competitor by “inviting” him in to strike, only for him to be caught by the tip of the blade as he pounced to attack. The fencer’s all-or-nothing move is the lunge in which the fencer extends to his maximum “stretch” with both his body and his weapon hoping to catch his opponent off guard and unable to move back before the powerful strike.

Kendokas, conversely, can attack linearly, but can also sidestep and attack without fear of immediately stepping out of bound. They employ a separated, two-handed grip on the shinai with one hand providing the direction, while the other provides the power behind the strike. Just as fencers are able to employ subtle movements with one hand, the Kendoka can do the same with two hands, which aid in both parrying and striking. Their intended strike to earn a point is accompanied by both a strong shout or kiai, as well as a stomp from the lead foot. This stomp is similar to a fencer’s lunge, except that the Kendoka maintains an upright posture, while the fencer, though well-balanced throughout, is at his or her maximum extension.





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# IMPACT

**SWORDLESS? THESE STEALTH SUBSTITUTES CAN DO THE JOB WHEN THINGS GET NASTY**



**1. Extendable Baton:** This weapon allows for easy carrying yet extends to its full fighting fury in only a fraction of a second. The extendable baton is constructed of heavy-duty metal with a cushioned handle for maximum grip and stability. The cherry on top of this cake is in the form of a solid ball or square at the tip, which when it strikes a person's vital areas (nose, throat, groin, face region, etc.) can cause breaks, bruises and all-around intense pain. This is an ideal weapon when facing a knife-wielding assailant because it gives you the advantage of extra reach over the shorter knife. Use this valuable weapon for both offensive and defensive techniques.

**2. Cane:** Not just for the elderly, this discreet weapon offers superior reach and excellent striking power if you choose a solid wood or heavy-duty plastic variety. The cane can be used to strike an attacker's face, his joints or his weapon-holding hand. Additionally, the cane can be thrustured forcibly into a "bad guy's" groin or chest, and when the curved handle is utilized properly, the assailant's leg can be hooked until he falls hard to the ground. The cane is practiced in the Korean martial art, Hapkido.

**3. Umbrella:** No, a compact pocket-sized umbrella won't be effective, but a heavy-duty, version built for self-defense can. Self-defense umbrellas are constructed of hard metal or polycarbonate plastic. Additionally, some have a curved handle like a cane and can be used similarly. The umbrella is often overlooked by those out to do a person harm, and that in itself is a great advantage for the intended victim. Some umbrellas also have a built-in blade that is removed from the casing using the handle of the umbrella. This is both a functional asset as well as a psychological deterrent for the attacker, who obviously bit off more than he could chew.

**4. Kubaton:** Don't count this little guy out before you put it into action. Though only about a half a foot in length, a kubaton offers a hard striking surface that painfully affects an attacker's vital areas of his face and throat. With some models featuring a pointed tip, the kubaton can be used to strike pressure points in an assailant's arms, hands, neck and midsection. Joint locking is also much more effective when a kubaton is available to offer a "handle" to aid with the technique. Best of all, some kubatons can attach to your keyring, so this vital self-defense weapon is always nearby. —Michael D'Angona

Stock Photos



## The Match

When faced against one another, both competitors have their own advantages, as well as their disadvantages.

First, a fencer would have a difficult time parrying a shinai sword due to its larger size and weight. Also a Kendoka often targets the head, which is a move that a foil fencer never had to face. This overhead strike would definitely cause the fencer to become off-balance and he may or may not succeed to guide the Kendoka's shinai on its intended path.

Conversely, the devastating overhead strike from the kendo practitioner may just be the opening the fencer needs to deliver a chest strike to his shinai-wielding opponent. Just as the Kendoka raises his arms, his chest is exposed and ripe for the fencer to exploit. It all comes down to timing and speed, and whoever has the best of both will get the point.

Additionally, the area of the "battle" may come into play. With less restrictions for the fencer, side-stepping the attacks from the Kendoka may be easier than always maintain-

# BOTH FENCING AND KENDO EVOLVED FROM 'DUELS' THAT WERE MEANT TO END IN DEATH.

ing his normal linear fighting style. This point, however, may be for naught since the Kendoka is already proficient at battling in a free-moving square area.

## The Verdict

This was definitely a tough one to call. I believe the outcome would come down to the weapons used, and how they were used, by both competitors.

In order for the fencer to become victorious, he or she would need to avoid the Kendoka's

shinai at all costs. The fencer would have to focus on the target areas of the Kendoka and try to lure him in, tempting the Kendoka with a head strike opportunity. Only then could the fencer lunge inward and score. Speed, deception and reach would be the formula to allow the fencer to win the match.

On the other hand, the Kendoka should focus mainly on the fencer's weapon. With superior weight and length, the shinai could power through the foil, smashing it downward or anywhere far off its intended course. Once the fencer's weapon was off-line, the Kendoka could come in for their famed, overhead blow and score a well-earned point. Repeated attacks of the fencer's foil should allow the Kendoka to successfully win the match.

It would truly all come down to the practitioner's skill to adapt to his "strange" opponent and detect a weakness. Then he could exploit it and ultimately win the match.

Be sure not to miss the next match-up of two of the deadliest and most skilled combatants throughout history. ●

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# STORM RIDER

The Highland Systems STORM is a radically capable hybrid electric tracked vehicle purpose designed for rugged cross-country mobility in austere environments.



## WHAT YOU GET IF AN ABRAMS TANK AND A STEALTH FIGHTER HAD A BABY WITH THE BATMOBILE BY WILL DABBS, MD



Highland Systems is a producer of high-end survival, military and luxury vehicles based in the UK and the United Arab Emirates.

Their catalog includes an array of armored vehicles, a line of armor-piercing ammunition and submersible yachts that look like spaceships and likely cost as much as my hometown. If ever you've wondered what might be the absolute pinnacle of all-terrain go-anywhere survival vehicles, the Highland Systems STORM is it.

### INTERESTING TIMES

I have a t-shirt that reads, "The Hardest Thing about Preparing for the Zombie Apocalypse is Acting Like I'm Not Excited!" Sadly, there is a fair amount of truth to be found there. It is undeniably cool to imagine the guns, gear and skills you might need to thrive in the face of

unfettered chaos and anarchy. Reality would obviously be a good bit messier than my sanitized imaginings, but the theory is fun to ponder all the same.

Sadly, it's not all that abstract these days. COVID-19 has given us a taste of what the end of the world might actually feel like. Additionally, anarchists behaving badly now incinerate other people's neighborhoods to protest police brutality, social inequality, the exorbitant price of designer coffees and, apparently, the phase of the moon. Given such rampant chaos, the possibility of having to bug out in the face of societal upheaval seems no longer to be the purview of fiction writers.

I am a guy of modest means. I have guns and maintain a little well-reasoned survival gear. My bugout vehicle is a GI-surplus Hummer that is, like me, old, shopworn, reliable

and cheap. That's all I can afford, and I'm good with that. However, it is an entertaining exercise to imagine how I might skin that cat if I had some truly serious resources. My first stop would be Highland Systems.

### THE MACHINE

The Highland Systems STORM is an electrically-driven tracked amphibious armored vehicle that offers some simply breathtaking performance. This isn't your crazy ex-wife's Prius. The STORM's primary electrical drive puts out a whopping 2,500 horsepower. That's more than your typical WWII-era fighter plane. The vehicle is watertight and fully at home both on land and in the water. Propulsion in aquatic environments is via an electric Hamilton water jet drive.

The STORM comes equipped with a 70-kilowatt diesel generator that can be



used to recharge the onboard batteries in the absence of a charging station. Charging is via any standard 220-volt system. The all-up curb weight dependent upon armor, weapons and particulars is around 17,600 pounds.

The STORM is a true multi-role tactical vehicle. It is designed from the outset to incorporate the latest in mine-resistant, ballistic survivability and IED-defeating technology. The STORM can also be configured with a remote control system for autonomous operations. This feature could be critical in high-threat environments or in places where friendlies are in dire need of extraction.

The chassis is rugged and hardened in multiple dimensions. The roof is designed to support the weight of the complete vehicle in the event of a rollover. Unlike some competitors, the individual rubber tracks are capable of being replaced in sections if damaged.

The capabilities and cost of the vehicle are driven by the particulars. For civilian applications, there are remote cameras, built-in night vision and a variety of electronic options. For military and advanced law enforcement roles, the STORM can be configured with a remote weapon station that can be operated while under armor.

THE MISSION

It's not tough to imagine practical applications for such a versatile vehicle. In a built-up area with access to charging support, the STORM could remain ready for riot control or rescue missions. The legit amphibious capability makes the STORM uniquely suited for search and rescue operations in disaster areas or environments corrupted with urban rubble. With appropriate armor protection, the STORM could thrive in the face of the sorts of civil unrest that have become so lamentably prevalent of late.

The capacity to charge on the go via the onboard diesel generator gives the STORM some serious legs. With ample extra fuel the STORM can serve as a mobile power source in austere environments. Operations would need to be planned around the vehicle's range

between charging, but the hybrid drive offers some unique capabilities not available to more conventional petrol or diesel solutions. One of these is stealth.

Conventionally-powered armored vehicles are notoriously loud. You'll not be sneaking up on anybody in the turbine-powered M1 Abrams tank. By contrast, the STORM would facilitate covert insertions and extractions in the kinds of places where you might need to leave a minimalist tactical footprint.

The truly thought-provoking application in my view, however, is for the well-heeled survival prepper. Keeping the STORM nicely provisioned and tucked away in the garage makes you immune to much of life's resplendent ills. The visual impact alone of humming down your cul-de-sac with the kids and family hound in tow in the face of some disaster, either natural or otherwise, would be simply epic.

DENOUEMENT

The Highland Systems STORM certainly isn't for everyone. Conventional, traditionally powered wheeled vehicles will do much of what the STORM might at a more modest price. However, if you're the sort for whom

"almost" is a form of recognized profanity, the STORM is the all-weather green tracked survival vehicle for you. Offering breathtaking power, unrivalled versatility and some simply striking good visuals, the STORM looks like something out of a big-budget Hollywood action movie.

The first prototype STORM was originally produced some two years ago in the Ukraine. Final testing and early production are currently ongoing in the UAE. With world class specs and an aesthetic that would easily stop traffic, the Highland Systems STORM is the multi-mission amphibious tracked vehicle that would be comparably at home on a fishing trip, picking up junior after band practice or crawling up an invasion beach. The STORM is the ultimate environmentally friendly, multi-role survival machine. For more information, visit [highlandsystems.me](http://highlandsystems.me).



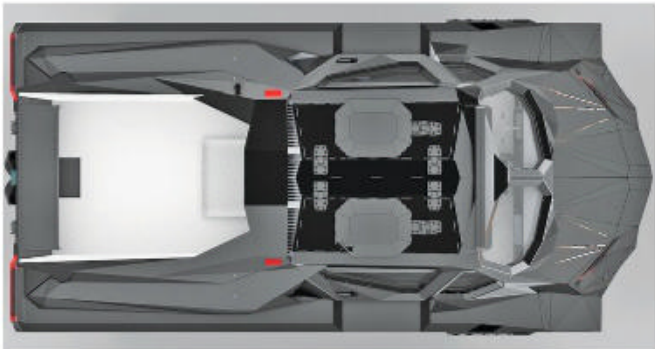
TECHNICAL SPECS

HIGHLAND SYSTEMS STORM MPV

LENGTH:	19.25 feet
WIDTH:	9.4 feet
HEIGHT:	7.7 feet
CURB WEIGHT:	17,600 pounds
PAYLOAD (WATER):	4,400 pounds
SEATING CAPACITY:	6
ARMOR:	STANAG 4569 Level 1 to Level 2
MSRP:	TBD

PERFORMANCE SPECS

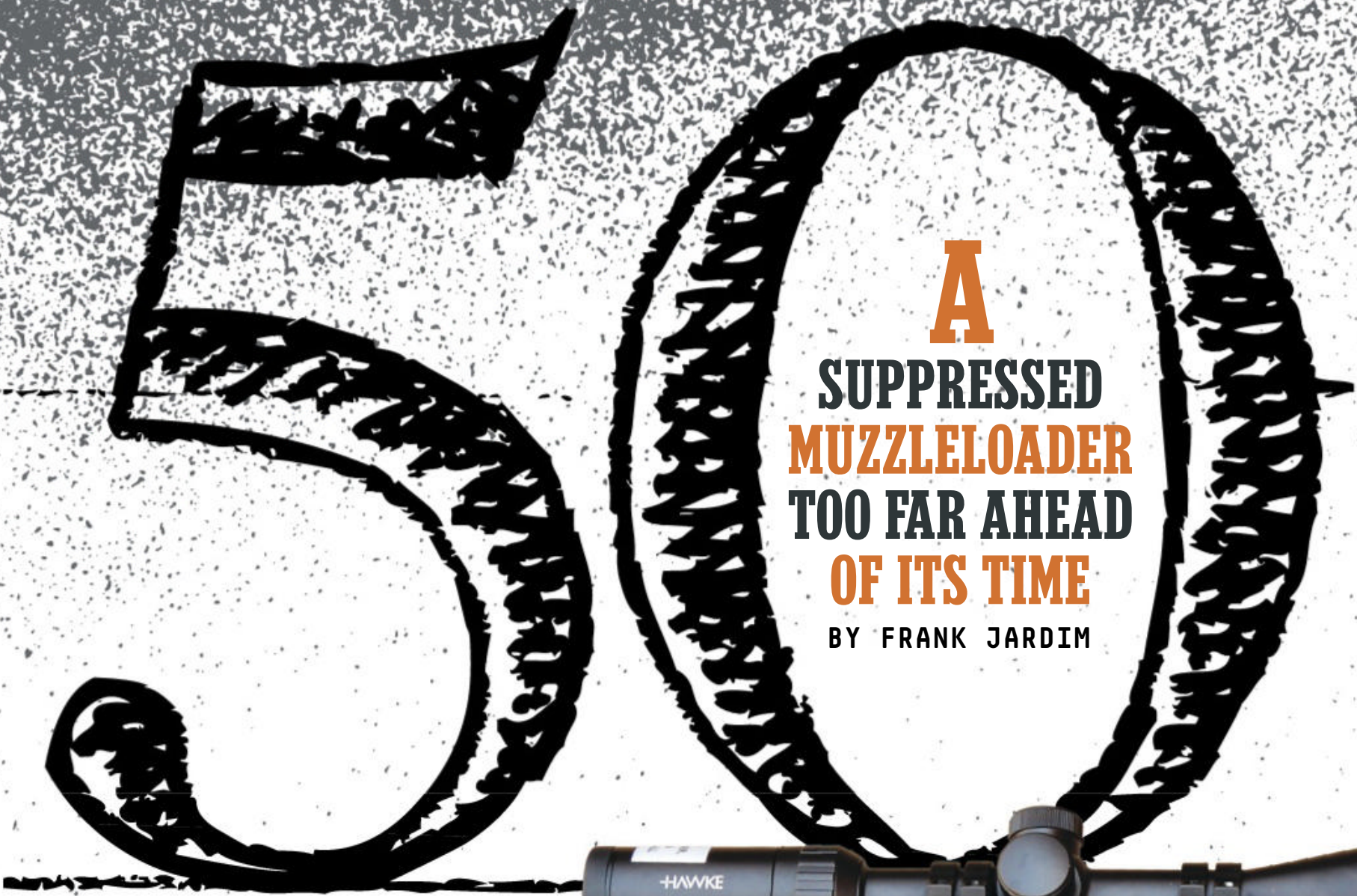
POWER OUTPUT:	2,500 hp
MAX SPEED (FORWARD LAND):	87 mph
MAX SPEED (REVERSE LAND):	12 mph
MAX SPEED (WATER):	19 mph
GROUND CLEARANCE:	1.64 feet
MAXIMUM VERTICAL RISE:	5 feet
CHARGING PERIOD:	2.5 hours
RANGE IN HYBRID MODE:	18-36 hours







# MAXIM

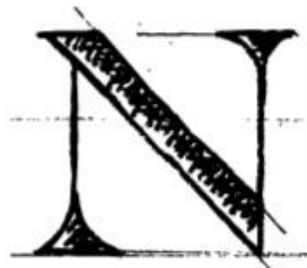


**A**  
**SUPPRESSED**  
**MUZZLELOADER**  
**TOO FAR AHEAD**  
**OF ITS TIME**

BY FRANK JARDIM







early all muzzleloaders, whether of antique or modern design, aren't regulated any more than cigarettes or liquor. If you are old enough, you can just buy them. Ownership of muzzleloaders still remains essentially invisible; and that, in itself, has a certain appeal among those of a mind that the government has no business knowing about their firearm purchasing habits. SilencerCo's Maxim 50, a modern in-line, highly accurate, easily cleaned, big bore, suppressed muzzle-loading rifle, grabbed the attention of those tyranny sensitive, privacy loving and off-the-grid frontier types in a way no other muzzleloader had before. For hunting ranges under the 100 yards typical in wooded terrain, it had a lot to offer. With the right bullets, you could double that range. But, its main attraction was that it was discrete in two important ways. First, a suppressed rifle makes hunting game a lot quieter and less likely to draw attention to the hunter. Second, it can be purchased, owned and transported without the federal reporting requirements of an NFA firearm. Before exploring the Maxim 50's pros and cons, a little background is in order.

## GROUNDBREAKING

In 2017, SilencerCo brought the Maxim 50 to market. It was the world's first integrally suppressed muzzle-loading rifle. Their main goal was to introduce suppressed shooting to the poor wretched souls residing in states where suppressors were outlawed. Their



Sightmark's Citadel series 3-18x50 LR1 scope has a first focal plane reticle. It's hard to believe you can find a single focal plane scope like this for as little as \$400.

Maxim 50 was basically an excellent Traditions Firearms Vortek, .50-caliber, in-line muzzle-loader with the barrel shortened to 20 inches and a bomb-proof SilencerCo can welded to the muzzle. It got its share of attention, perhaps mostly because SilencerCo claimed 50-state legality and no NFA registration requirement to purchase it. In most cases that meant it could be purchased directly from any retailer (and shipped to the customer's door) with only a driver's license to show proof of age, and no requirement for the customer to complete a federal form 4473 or undergo a NICS background check.

As far as the BATF was concerned, a muzzleloader is classified as an "antique firearm" under federal law, and a permanently attached suppressor does not change that. In fact, a suppressor permanently attached to a "antique firearm" doesn't meet the federal definition of a "firearm" either, by virtue of its permanent attachment to an "antique firearm." Perhaps driving that point home, SilencerCo referred to it as a "sound moderator." Their analysis of the "suppressor-loop-hole" in the federal regulations

was brilliant, but the Maxim 50 was discontinued the following year. However, there are many available on the secondary market.

What went wrong? In short, SilencerCo lost its target market. There was an almost instant backlash to their bold move. Within 48 hours, the attorneys general of California, New Jersey and New York, which outlaw private ownership of suppressors, likewise outlawed the Maxim 50. Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Delaware, Illinois and Hawaii followed suit. In short order, the Maxim 50 could only be sold in the 42 states that already allowed private ownership of suppressors and regulated the Maxim 50 as an ordinary muzzleloader.

## A CLOSER LOOK

From a practical standpoint, the Maxim 50 is capable of 100-yard accuracy under 2 MOA with the right combination of propellant and projectile. I expect it could shoot within minute-of-deer at 200 yards in competent hands, but by design it is not meant for long range. Its heavy bullets could be thrown farther, of course, but hitting a distant target requires



“THEIR MAIN GOAL WAS TO INTRODUCE SUPPRESSED SHOOTING TO THE POOR WRETCHED SOULS RESIDING IN STATES WHERE SUPPRESSORS WERE OUTLAWED.”





# MAXIM 50



## SPECIFICATIONS

### SILENCERCO MAXIM 50

CALIBER:	.50 (non-saboted/ non-skirted bullets only)
BARREL:	20 inches
OA LENGTH:	45 inches
WEIGHT:	7.5 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Black polymer
SIGHTS:	Drilled and tapped for optics
ACTION:	Break-open (209 primers)
FINISH:	Cerakote
CAPACITY:	1
MSRP:	\$999 (now out of production)

precise range estimation since you are essentially trying to connect to the target with the end of a rainbow. SilencerCo never expected the Maxim 50 to have great appeal in the open spaces of the West, where a short-range shot is 200 yards. To keep the rifle a manageable length, they shortened the barrel, but that also limited its range. Vintage muzzleloaders had long barrels so a large black-powder charge could fully burn and generate maximum pressure and velocity. Shorten the barrel and you diminish its potential for efficient use of powder, and reduce potential velocity and range of the bullet.

Compared to unsuppressed muzzleloaders, the Maxim 50 is a pleasure to shoot. The moderator reduces the smoke substantially, possibly by 70 percent, allowing you to keep eyes on your target and reducing the chances of revealing your position. The recoil is noticeably lighter, too. Shooting from the bench was actually pleasant. The extra weight of the can itself and the soft rubber buttpad probably contributed to the perception of softer recoil. It weighs 7.5 pounds, compared to 5.8 pounds for the standard 26-inch-barrel Vortek rifle. Shooting offhand and carrying it, you notice the Maxim 50 is muzzle heavy. Like the standard Traditions Vortek, the rifle has an excellent TAC 2 two-stage trigger that breaks at a crisp 2.5 pounds, and also a removable buttplate concealing a huge storage space inside.

The sound moderator is 9x2.5 inches. Its diameter would block any normal iron



sights making optics a must. I replaced the pawnshop glass with Sightmark's Citadel series 3-18x50 LR1 riflescope. It is crafted out of a single, shockproof, aircraft-grade aluminum 30mm tube and is IP67 waterproof and dustproof. Designed for medium- to long-range shooting, it features a 6x optical system, a fully multi-coated lens, exposed locking turrets and a red illuminated reticle with 11 brightness settings and .25-MOA click adjustment.

Most importantly, the sound moderator reduces the report to ear-safe levels just as advertised. I shot 100-grain powder charges under 223-grain bullets with average velocities at the muzzle in the 1,750 feet-per-second range and the report was less than my Ruger 10-22 shooting .22 LR hi-velocity ammo. It wasn't silent, of course, but it didn't trouble my unprotected ears in any way. The ability to hunt with the full advantage of your sense of hearing is possible with the Maxim 50. I wish I had the foresight to shoot a few rounds with reduced charges to see how quiet it could be at subsonic velocity.



The Maxim 50 originally came as a complete kit including everything needed to shoot except powder, primers and bullets, packed in an exceptionally nice backpack/case. The assembled rifle fit inside with room enough to clear the Sightmark Citadel LR1 scope in the top photo.





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[CHRISTENSENARMS.COM/MPP](https://christensenarms.com/mpp)







1



2



3



4

1. Grease breech plug threads. 2. Make sure the primer vent hole is clear. 3. Screw in breech plug hand tight. 4. Insert brass loading tube in moderator and pour in loose powder charge. 5. Drop bullet in brass loading tube.



5



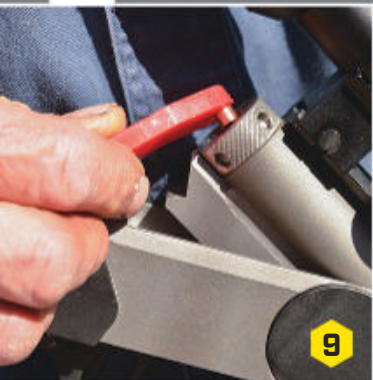
6



7



8



9



10

6. Start bullet in bore with ball starter. 7. Ram ball down bore with ramrod, seating if fully on powder. 8. Remember to remove brass loading tube. 9. Open action and prime with 209 shotgun primer. 10. Cock striker by sliding the thumb switch forward.

## TIPS & TRICKS

Loading and cleaning procedures for the Maxim 50 differ from a standard muzzleloader to prevent powder, bullets or patches from getting lodged in the baffles of the sound moderator. The key component that must not be lost is the brass tube that slides into the muzzle and sits on the face of the crown, held in alignment by the moderator baffles. The tube ensures powder and bullets get in the bore. Lose the tube and you have a real problem. You can still buy these tubes at [silencerco.com](http://silencerco.com).

Cleaning the Maxim 50 right has a few unique aspects. Pack a long, flea-market, hemostat in your kit for the rare occasions you snag a cleaning patch in the moderator. If you brush the powder fouling out of the barrel between shots with the barrel horizontal, residue collects in the baffles and then falls down

the barrel when you turn the muzzle up. If the breech plug is already installed, the detritus will collect on the plug. Prevent this by inserting the brass tube in the moderator before turning the barrel upright. You can also dump the fouling out by elevating the muzzle with the breech plug out, but be careful not to let the gunk fall into the action.

At day's end, after scrubbing out the fouling with hot soapy water and rinsing in the usual manner, I wiped out the baffles with an improvised mop made by pinching two patches between the threaded end of the cleaning jag and the cleaning rod. If available, use compressed air to blow as much water out of the moderator as possible before setting the rifle down horizontally or muzzle down to fully dry. I left the rifle muzzle up after cleaning and noticed the next day a little water had run down the barrel and out the breech-plug vent hole.

## THE DOWN SIDE

In the eyes of the average muzzle-loading hunter, the main downside of the Maxim 50 is it can't use any projectile with a plastic sabot, skirt, patch or wadding because those materials will separate from the bullet and become lodged in the sound moderator baffle. While I initially thought it was a safety issue that might cause the bullet to upset and strike a baffle, SilencerCo told me it was a maintenance issue. Since the can is sealed, it would likely be a real challenge to get the plastic debris out. The perceived problem here is that most of the popular modern projectiles for in-line muzzleloaders use plastic sabots or skirts. SilencerCo recommends only solid bullets like the Hornady FSB and the Federal B.O.R. Lock Z bullet. The latter, in 270-grain weight, over a 100-grain charge of loose powder proved the most accurate in SilencerCo's testing. For the best accuracy, SilencerCo also recommended using loose powder rather than the convenient pellets popular with many hunters.

I really don't think forgoing plastic skirts and sabots is a big deal. In terms of performance, any .50-caliber bullet delivers a lot of energy to the target. They are darned heavy, falling in the 200- to 350-grain range. Properly sized to the bore, a solid bullet can be just as accurate.

The bullet option I want most to explore is shooting hard cast bullets using Lee's 220 grain R.E.A.L. (Rifling Engraved At Loading) mold. Casting in a hard alloy might get me close to the 1,700 feet per second I was getting with a 223-grain jacketed bullet. How fast the bullet can be pushed before it leads the barrel and loses accuracy will be determined by experimentation on the range. If the bullet alloy can't take the speed, switching to the Lee's R.E.A.L. 320-grain bullet is an option to boost energy by increasing bullet mass instead of velocity. There is really no substitute for experimentation if you want to get the most out of a muzzleloader. Factory jacketed bullets usually cost more than a dollar each. By casting your own solids for pennies each, you can experiment much more economically. The ability to cast your own projectiles, like the men on the old frontier did, gives you that much more freedom from reliance on commercial products that might not always be available. The empty ammo shelves in retail stores nowadays illustrates the importance of self-sufficiency. For more info, visit [silencerco.com](http://silencerco.com).





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# RED-DOT

BY  
SEAN  
LUTLEY

# REDEMPTION



# P

## ISTOL RED-DOT OPTICS ARE NOW A PERMANENT FIXTURE IN THE COMBAT/ PERSONAL-DEFENSE PISTOL ARENA.

Once reserved mainly for competition use, it has now trickled down to the EDC loadout of many Americans. Honestly, I initially thought this was a horrible trend.

Before you pound out an email condemning me into the land of “old and stuffy” and accusing me of not embracing new technology and training techniques, just let me put this out there. I’ve had an optic on one of my main shooters since 2007. My M&P 9 had and still has an original Leupold DeltaPoint secured to the slide by expert machining from Bowie Tactical Concepts. In fact, it’s a separate slide that’s optics ready all the time.

Bowie was running dots on pistols in 2004, before anyone would ever think of taking such a feat seriously. After countless training sessions with him and others from Tactical Defense Institute Ohio, he convinced me to take the plunge into pistol optics through his proficient and effective use of them. In those days it wasn’t uncommon to shoot multiple thousands of 9mm rounds in a month. But I could never get used to nor confident enough in my speed with the optic onboard, so I removed the slide and put it away for over a decade. It’s basically only come out for show and tell since then, and an occasional social media photo-op.

While I abandoned the pistol optic a long time ago, there is no getting around the fact that it is effective and fast when used properly and provides benefits over iron sights. They’re also durable and long lasting in design and battery longevity, which wasn’t the case back in my pistol training heyday. Pistols can be custom cut, and many come straight from

There’s more  
to optic-ready  
handguns than  
meets the eye







A.J. Zito, lead instructor for Practical Performance Training, demonstrates how effective and fast an optic mounted pistol can be. His experience makes it look all too easy.

**I KNOW MY WEAKNESSES AND AM NOT DISILLUSIONED BY MY HISTORICAL FRUSTRATIONS WITH PISTOL OPTICS.**

the factory ready to accept a host of optics offerings. My first optic had to be removed from the slide to change the battery. Times have changed.

So is the pistol optic all it's cracked up to be? What's the good, bad and the ugly? I'm always down to dive into such debate and nit-pickery. I believe the pistol "red-dot" is viable and practical now, but I also think it has made the modern-day carry pistol a bit more complicated than it needs to be. Present owners and future buyers should beware of potential pitfalls and unforeseen challenges surrounding pistols with red-dots in order to maximize its potential and effectiveness.

## WHAT IT IS NOT

Let's be clear, the pistol optic is not a magical aiming device that will fix your poor shooting habits and issues. If you have poor pistol presentation and poor trigger management, the dot will only exacerbate that. If you have trouble finding the sights and getting on target, that will not go away. In fact you'll only slow yourself down, become more frustrated and develop potentially worse habits.

Most quality semi-auto pistol makers are now making some of their handgun slides already cut for mounting various red-dot optics to make getting on target easier.

## DIFFERENT APPROACH

How we attack aiming and target acquisition with iron sights is different from how we do it with a red-dot, although it shouldn't be. It should be the same, according to A.J. Zito, lead instructor and owner of Practical Performance Training in Prescott, Arizona. A.J. is an expert on the pistol red-dot and the mechanics of practical pistol shooting. He is also a fulltime gunsmith.

I sought out Zito in an effort to make a positive transition to what I hope will be full-time pistol optics utilization. I know my weaknesses and am not disillusioned by my historic frustrations with pistol optics.

"Here's what guys do, they try and treat shooting a red-dot like shooting iron sights. And if you do that, you're going to fail," Zito explained during our training. "It doesn't work that way, and mainly because you haven't been shooting your iron sights as efficiently as you could have before the red-dot."

The difference between iron sights and dot aiming is that when we use iron sights we do a hard front-sight focus. This means the shooter focuses on the front sight, leaving the target and rear sights out of focus. "If you do this type of focus with the dot, you won't be successful and it negates the benefits of the system," Zito said.







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## BENEFITS OF THE RED-DOT

The greatest benefit of the dot is likely that it lets you stay focused on your threat or target. This allows you to have more information from whatever you are shooting at. With irons, that focus shifts to trying to reach equal alignment, equal height, equal light, etc. With the dot we see far more and only need to superimpose it over the target.

When the red-dot is learned and executed well, the benefits apply to iron sighted shooting. You can target focus with irons, but it's not how we're taught to use them so it has to be trained out. Zito was quick to point out that guys who become excellent red-dot shooters become even better iron sight shooters.

I assumed and asserted to Zito that the transition to proficient and effective red-dot shooting must be a long process—one taking a year or two. I was wrong. “You can do it right now, making the philosophical jump to the dot, the technique, if done properly, works right now,” he said. And Zito proved that to me with an abbreviated training session (a few hours) that took me from spotty, low-confidence optics use to fast and predictable presentation and tracking of the dot under recoil.

## TRAINING IS KEY

Zito countered my claims about going too fast stating, “It's not that you're going too fast, it's that you're not being careful enough for the shot you want to take. I could take four minutes to draw and take a shot and still miss. Did I go too fast? No. You can make shots in one second or less if you are careful in the right spots.”

Zito taught consistent presentation and its effect on use of the red-dot. This included drawing, moving the pistol straight to the target and allowing the dot to “drop from 12 o'clock” into the sight picture. This is possible only when we have the proper amount of pressure on both the strong and support hands, as well as our fingers. He showed me how influential pressure from the pinky finger is during the presentation and shooting process.

In our short time together, Zito covered building of the grip to consistent levels, recoil



Confidence comes with quality training, and Practical Performance's Zito made the author's transition to the optics side a cinch.

management, to what he referred to as gross sight picture, which is used for fast draws and shots at short distances from 3 to 5 yards. He also stressed the importance of learning from each shot and each rep. During training, don't be afraid to abort the shot if you're fishing for the dot. “It's ok to do that [abort],” he said. “This fight through bullshit has a place and this ain't it, not during skill progression it's not the time.”

## POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Having evaluated several OR pistols, I'm amazed by the difference in mounting options and the difficulty and sometimes limiting factors. This means that you might have an optic in mind that you'd like to utilize, but can't due to the footprint of the host weapon.

It's not as simple as buying a red-dot of your liking, then slapping it on a gun. The different optics brands have different footprints, and certain guns accept certain footprints. It's important to be aware of the footprint before you buy your pistol or optic. That said, many manufacturers are getting better at including adapters to fit most of the more popular red-dots. Keep in mind the adapters may mean that

the dot could ride higher on the slide than you might like. So sticking with the specific footprint cut might be optimal.

Set up is another hurdle. While not insurmountable, I've spent an hour setting up a “carry” gun with an optic, only to have to wait to get it zeroed on another day. With irons, it's typically buy now, head straight to the range with ammo options, test fire, then holster and carry. The optic adds an extra layer of preparation to all of this, and you should consider what you'll need to do after the purchase.

Features of the optic are important. These features include operation and layout. Dot size comes to mind, as a large dot can be an issue at distance. So you might want to get a 3-MOA dot versus a 6-MOA dot. Smaller dots might be harder to see depending on your eyesight.

Dot brightness and adjustability are other things to consider. While some optics offer an auto-adjusting feature, some don't. And the auto adjust can be

a bit screwy in certain lighting situations, like shooting from inside a darker area to a brighter area. So as the operator, do you set it for day then set it for night? Are you disciplined enough to be aware of the state of your optic at all times? This is something to consider.

Some dots have power/brightness adjustability switches on the sides of the housing, some on the rear, and some, like the Leupold DeltaPoint Pro, have them just behind the window. Some can make getting to optimal brightness more tedious than others. Not that it's bad, but it is one of those things you don't fully get the gravity of until you've bought it and installed it. Thus you must do your research before buying.

Pistol red-dots might be all the rage right now, but they are only as good as the person utilizing them. Necessary or not, the pistol optic punctuates the need for proper and relevant training such as that from Practical Performance and the importance of continuing to train and practice to achieve proficiency and accuracy. There is a lot to consider when opting to go down the pistol optic route. Navigate it wisely with information and due diligence. For more information, visit [practicalperformance.org](http://practicalperformance.org). ●





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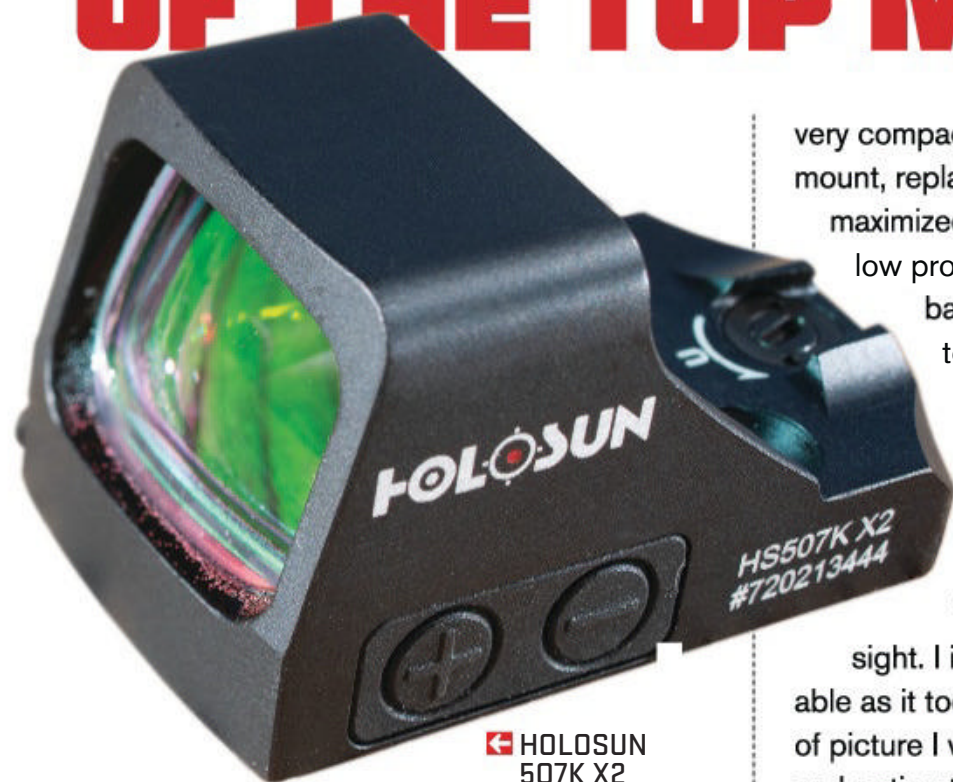


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# OPTIC QUEST: A BREAKDOWN OF THE TOP MAKERS



HOLOSUN  
507K X2

## LEUPOLD

Leupold's DeltaPoint Pro has come a long way from the original DeltaPoint that I ran. The DeltaPoint Pro is rugged and made from aircraft-grade aluminum. I like the window of the DeltaPoint Pro as it is generous without being too large. A large window can be a crutch and contribute to sloppy presentation. The window is protected by a steel sheath.

The battery is accessible through a compartment on top and behind the window. You don't need to re-zero after changing the battery, but I find having to adjust the brightness with my finger in the way of the dot a bit annoying. But it's not a dealbreaker by any stretch.

It features eight levels of brightness and comes in NV and non-NV models. Of course the non-NV model is less expensive. Dot size can be had in 6 MOA and 2.5 MOA, and the adjustments are in 1-MOA increments. The adjustment screws are easy to get to, and the unit can be adjusted with the rim of a spent case. I ran the 2.5-MOA dot for my training with Practical Performance and found it quite capable.

Leupold's DeltaPoint Micro is a new approach to the pistol red-dot. It's a unit that is

very compact overall and attaches via dovetail mount, replacing the rear sight. It's made for maximized concealment and has a very slim, low profile. The dot is 3 MOA, and the battery can be changed with no need to re-zero the optic.

It features a tubular shaped window that the shooter looks through to see the dot. The window is not very large and thus focuses the eye to the front sight. Think of it as a ghost ring-type of sight. I initially found this to be very desirable as it took me back to the front sight type of picture I was used to. But after my training and opting to hard target focus, this might not be ideal.

It's easy to pick up the dot in the tiny window, but tracking it after pressing the trigger is difficult to do. The optic is rugged and carries the same lifetime warranty that the other DeltaPoints have. I think the DeltaPoint Micro will be a good choice for those who want to retain the feel of using a front sight for aiming while still getting some benefit of a red-dot-type optic.

## SIG SAUER

Sig Sauer is fairly new to dot optics when you compare them to other manufacturers, but that didn't stop them from making a significant impact. Their Romeo1 Pro is Sig's large-window optic and reminds me so much of the DeltaPoint Pro.

The lens is glass with no distortion, according to Sig, and features a 3- or 6-MOA dot. I tested the 6-MOA version but wished I had the 3. Body construction is aircraft-grade aluminum, and it features a steel shroud to protect that precious lens.

The battery is housed up top behind the lens, so once it's zeroed, it's zeroed and the adjustment buttons are on the side, making it easy to see the brightness level achieved. It features



SIG SAUER  
ROMEO  
ZERO



LEUPOLD  
DELTAPOINT  
PRO



LEUPOLD  
DELTAPOINT  
MICRO



SHIELD  
RMSw





MOTAC (Motion Activated Illumination System), which turns the optic on and off automatically. I found the dot to be relatively clean in appearance, and such a characteristic is even more impressive on a bigger dot such as this.

For ultra-compact guns, the Romeo Zero is a micro reflex sight and is ideal for daily carry. The compact dimensions should make it easier to live with for EDC.

The construction is WeaponsGrade polymer that Sig claims is optimized for use with polymer pistols. It, too, features their motion-activated technology and has a 10-year battery life.

It also features eight levels of brightness with a dot that is also claimed to be eight times more efficient than conventional red-dots.

## HOLOSUN

Holosun brings some features that other optics don't have, one of those being a reticle that you can change to suit your liking. The 507 series of reflex optical sights allows for either a dot, circle or circle-dot configuration. I personally like this as sometimes I prefer the circle-dot setting. You can have the 507 in red or green reticles.

To keep the buttons from inadvertently being pressed, the 507 series also features a lockout mode that accompanies the auto and manual modes of operation.

The 507C X2 features a solar panel, which they call Solar Failsafe, with up to 50,000 hour battery life (on setting 6). It also has 12 brightness settings, two of which are NV compatible. The battery is easily replaced via a tray system on the side of the optic. The 507K X2 is miniaturized for micro pistols. Construction on both is 7075 aluminum, and both are waterproof.

## SHIELD

Shield is another popular brand in the red-dot game. Many pistols come cut specifically for the Shield footprint. The RMS (Reflex Mini

Sight) and RMSc are tough with lenses made of polymer, which will withstand up to 10 times greater shock impact than glass lenses, according to Shield. The body of the RMS is made of aluminum.

The glass of the shield is clear with no reflective coating to minimize visual signature. The output of the LED is controlled by a variable-intensity drive circuit. Apparently it senses light levels at the target and thus adjusts the LED. Dot sizes are 4 or 8 MOA with a battery life of two to three years. The battery is easily replaced via a drawer on the side, much like that of the Holosun.

## TRIJICON

The RMR just might be the granddaddy of them all. The RMR line is known for its absolute durability, thanks to a housing that diverts energy away from the lens.

Models can be had with automatic and manual adjustable LED, with programmability. The buttons on the RMR are big and easy to use, and a lock-out mode keeps them from being an issue when you least expect it.

Dot sizes include 1, 3.25 and 6.5 MOA, and the sights are waterproof. The windage and elevation adjustments are easily made with the edge of a spent casing. The battery is housed in the underside so the RMR must be removed to change it, so re-zeroing might be necessary.

The SRO (Specialized Reflex Optic) is a bigger brother to the RMR with a massive window for maximized field of view. The SRO is probably my favorite of all of the pistol red-dots due to that window. It makes picking the dot up a breeze, but this could allow for a less disciplined approach to sight picture acquisition.

Like the RMR it's tough, waterproof and shares the same mounting footprint. It is long, though, and the window is situated closer to the pistol's ejection port. Consequently, it might not be ideal for certain guns. ●

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# DEATH BY 1000 CUTS





## WILL THE UNPRECEDENTED PUSH FOR GUN CONTROL KILL OUR SECOND AMENDMENT?

BY MARK CHESNUT

**W**elcome to 2021, a year when our Second Amendment-protected right to keep and bear arms is under attack like never before. Too, strong? Perhaps you think you've run into one of those 2A conspiracy theorist nuts your liberal friends have warned you about? See if you still think so after reading all the way to the end.

### RECIPE FOR DISASTER

President Joe Biden has been no friend to law-abiding gun owners for his entire political life spanning nearly 50 years. As a U.S. Senator, he was instrumental in passage of the 1990s-era Clinton Gun Ban. As Barack Obama's vice president, he was in charge of all the Obama-era gun control proposals after the shooting at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut. As president, he is already giving gun control more than just lip service.

"Today, I am calling on Congress to enact common-sense gun law reforms, including requiring background checks on all gun sales, banning assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, and eliminating immunity for gun manufacturers who knowingly put weapons of war on our streets," Biden said soon after moving into the White House.

Biden's vice president and apparent heir to the throne, Kamala Harris, is even more anti-gun than Biden. During the Democratic presidential campaign, before she was one of the first candidates eliminated, Harris actually publicly chided Biden because he said the Constitution actually means something when it comes to guns.

Mix into the recipe a Democrat-controlled U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate, and you see how things can go downhill fast for law-abiding gun owners. And no, I'm not saying that all Democrats are anti-gun. But I *am* saying that nearly all Democrat politicians at the federal level are, and in D.C. they're dedicated to drastically reducing our right to keep and bear arms.

### SHOTS ACROSS THE BOW

In his first months in the White House, Biden acted quickly to put long-time gun-ban advocates into key positions. First was the nomination of Merrick Garland, a judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, as his attorney general.

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The attorney general oversees more than 100,000 federal employees in about 40 separate component organizations, including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). A man of Garland's anti-gun credentials heading the agency could be problematic, to say the least.

Many will remember Garland as the man Barack Obama nominated for the U.S. Supreme Court after the death of Justice Antonin Scalia. Pro-gun senators nixed that nomination at the time, but now Garland is back in what could be an even more problematic role.

More recently, Biden nominated David Chipman, a longtime gun control lobbyist and gun-ban organization employee, to head the ATF. From his participation in the Branch Davidian debacle in Waco, Texas, to his current job of pushing gun-ban legislation for gun control groups, he's quite likely the very worst man for the job.

"Chipman's nomination is the thank-you card for which gun control groups have been waiting," said Larry Keane, general counsel for the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). "Several groups made it clear they expected President Biden to deliver big for them, because they delivered big for him on the campaign trail... Gun control just got paid back in a big way. They didn't get 'a' man for the job. They got 'their' man."

With the stage set, let's take a look at a handful of the most prominent proposals currently being considered in Congress.

## ENDING PRIVATE SALES (AND EVEN LOANS)

Presented under the banner of "universal background checks," ending private gun sales is a top goal of anti-gun organizations and politicians. Yet private gun sales have been around since the colonial days, just like sales of other privately owned property. Anti-gun advocates like to make big, unprovable boasts like 90 percent of Americans favor background checks on all sales, even though a closer look at most such "studies" show the language used in the questioning pushed people toward saying they were in support.

To sweeten the pot, universal background checks are nearly always combined with the so-called "gun show loophole" when they are discussed or researched in order to gain more support from those who don't understand the topic. Of course, there is no such loophole as the law is the same at gun shows as anywhere else in the country—all sales by FFL holders must undergo a background check. But, the



vast majority of Americans don't understand that because media perpetuates the lie.

The biggest problem with this proposal—besides the incredible strain it would put on an already backed up NICS system—is that the only way to ensure absolutely all gun sales

were made through a background check is to keep a registry of the sales. History tells us that gun registration *a/ways* leads to confiscation. Besides, studies have shown that most criminals get their guns from other criminals on the street rather than buying them at Bass Pro Shop, so law-abiding gun owners would be the only ones affected by such a law.

## BANNING "ASSAULT WEAPONS" & "HIGH-CAPACITY" MAGS

This is another Holy Grail-type goal of the anti-gun crowd. If you listen to gun-ban advocates, you'd think that the vast majority of murders were committed by the AR-style rifles that are so popular nowadays for sport, competition, hunting and even home defense.

A closer look tells a much different story. The latest figures from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) show that less than 5 percent of all murders are committed with any kind of rifle. Since semi-auto sporting rifles are just a small subset of that vast world of rifles, the number is actually even lower than that.

So-called "high-capacity" magazines are also under fire, even though the name given them by the gun-ban crowd isn't accurate. They'd be better called "standard-capacity" magazines, as most semi-auto rifles and many popular semi-auto pistols used for self-defense, sport and competition come standard with mags holding more than 10 rounds. In truth, if such magazines were banned, criminals would have the upper hand, capacity-wise, over law-abiding gun owners since criminals, by definition, do not follow the law.

In the end, neither ban makes much sense. A 2004 U.S. Department of Justice-funded study of the 1994 "assault weapons" ban, which also banned magazines with a capacity greater than 10 rounds, determined, "Should it be renewed, the ban's effects on gun violence are likely to be small at best." That's why Congress allowed the law to sunset.

HISTORY TELLS US  
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Our Aussie friend would approve of our rendition of his "knife." Forged of high grade 420 surgical stainless steel, this knife is an impressive 16" from pommel to point. And, the blade is full tang, meaning it runs the entirety of the knife, even though part of it is under wraps in the natural bone and wood handle.

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This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

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— H., Arvada, CO





## LICENSING, REGISTRATION & INSURANCE

Some in Congress, emboldened by a Democrat majority in both houses and the presidency, are pushing the envelope much further than usual. Texas U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee's measure introduced in Congress this session is a prime example.

First, her legislation requires licensing of all gun owners and registration of all firearms. The measure actually says, "The Attorney General, through the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, shall establish a system for licensing the possession of firearms or ammunition in the United States, and for the registration with the Bureau of each firearm present in the United States."

The legislation would also require a psychological evaluation for anyone wishing to purchase a firearm, and prospective gun owners would have to pass a training course, apparently developed by the AG, who could make such an ownership requirement as difficult as he—or his boss, the president—wishes. The measure even requires gun owners to buy liability insurance from the government at the price of \$800 a year.

Penalties are steep, too, with an unlicensed person possessing a firearm that hasn't been registered subject to be "fined not less than \$75,000 and not more than \$150,000, imprisoned not less than 15 years and not more than 25 years, or both."

## CLOSING THE CHARLESTON LOOPHOLE

Of all the nonexistent "loopholes" anti-gunners want to close, the so-called Charleston loophole is likely the most egregious. That's because it is nothing more than a blatant power grab disguised as a supposed life-saving endeavor.

To understand the loophole, you need to understand the origin of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. When the Brady Bill, which included the background check system, was being debated in Congress, Republican lawmakers realized the



istock Photo

of these'—give me that one. Because I tell you what, there would be a 'come to the Lord' moment these folks would have real quickly. But they're not. They're not. They're exempt."

What Biden is talking about is repealing the Protection of Lawful Commerce In Arms Act (PLCAA), which he falsely says gives gunmakers blanket immunity from being sued. Passed in 2005, the law actually was spawned by gun haters attempting to run gunmakers out of business with constant frivolous lawsuits that forced manufacturers to spend millions of dollars to fight the suits.

Andrew Cuomo, then-President Bill Clinton's secretary of housing and urban development (HUD), actually admitted to the strategy, warning gun makers that if they

did not negotiate with the Clinton administration, they would suffer "death by a thousand cuts" from all the lawsuits. The lawsuits did run some small manufacturers out of business before Congress passed PLCAA and then-President George Bush signed it into law.

The PLCAA simply keeps gunmakers and sellers from being sued for the criminal misuse of their safe, lawfully made products. America's

gunmakers are a critical part of our country's cherished history. Any effort to make them responsible for the behavior of criminals is a misplaced one that should be flatly rejected.

## WRAPPING UP

These are just a handful of the many anti-gun provisions being kicked around in Washington, D.C., and in many blue states around the nation. Others are just as egregious, but we had to draw a line somewhere or we could fill up nearly this entire magazine.

In the end, there's a big storm brewing for the Second Amendment and our essential liberties as free Americans. With the current makeup of Congress, President Biden in the White House and anti-gun advocates in other key bureaucratic positions, the next few years might just knock us back on our heels like never before. Now's the time to find ways to get involved with fighting these provisions at the local, state and federal levels. What a shame it would be for our kids and grandkids if our generation is the one that lets the Second Amendment die. ●

“ONE OF BIDEN'S MOST BELOVED SCHEMES IS TO PUT AS MANY GUNMAKERS OUT OF BUSINESS AS POSSIBLE.”

checks likely wouldn't be "instant." So they passed an amendment that if the background check was not completed within three business days, the seller would have the *option* to proceed with the transfer.

Basically, that three-day provision is what gun-ban activists call the "Charleston loophole." In truth, the three-day proceed-to-sale provision is a safety valve thoughtfully built into the system to ensure that gun purchasers aren't arbitrarily denied their Second Amendment rights.

Like most gun control laws, this proposal is less about guns and more about control. The three-day provision is the only thing that keeps the FBI from delaying any or all background checks as long as they, or an anti-gun president or attorney general, see fit.

## DEATH BY A THOUSAND CUTS

One of Biden's most beloved schemes is to put as many gunmakers out of business as possible. In fact, Biden recently prioritized it this way: "If I get one thing on my list—the Lord came down and said, 'Joe, you get one



## CRYSTAL BALLISTIC

WITH GUN-LAW-POCALYPSE UPON US,  
WHAT'S THE FUTURE FOR GUNS AND GEAR MAKERS?

BY MARK CHESNUT

Since the beginning of our nation, Americans have relied on companies manufacturing a wide variety of firearms, ammunition and accessories to provide us with the very means to practice our Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. Without gun and ammunition companies—which should be considered true heroes—Americans would have no guns, and no ammo to shoot through those guns.

While that might seem overly simplistic and obvious, it's something gun owners often don't consider. With the recent increased sale of both guns and ammo, however, the important role these companies play has once again

been pushed to the forefront.

Consider with me, if you will, what might happen to firearm manufacturers if the multitude of gun control schemes now under consideration in the U.S. Congress were to actually pass and become law.

Nobody knows more about the effect that radical anti-gun laws would have on gun, ammo and accessories manufacturers than Larry Keane, general counsel for the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). Keane's organization is the firearms industry trade association that advocates for the industry, its businesses and the jobs those businesses create.

"Obviously, without the firearms industry to manufacture and sell firearms,



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“...A SUDDEN BAN COULD CUT THAT DEMAND FOR AR-STYLE, SEMI-AUTO RIFLES, AS WELL AS THE STANDARD-CAPACITY MAGAZINES THAT ALSO HAVE BEEN TARGETED.”



ammunition and related products, the Second Amendment right would largely be an illusion,” Keane said in an exclusive interview with *Ballistic*. “So it’s critical for the exercise of the Second Amendment for there to be an industry that can provide those products, which is why the lawful commerce in firearms and ammunition products is protected by the Second Amendment in the same way that media—notwithstanding the fact that it is a commercial enterprise—activities are protected by the First Amendment.”

Keane is especially concerned about President Joe

Biden viewing the firearms industry—which incidentally also proudly provides guns, ammo and accessories for law enforcement and the U.S. military—as the enemy.

“Biden has declared us the enemy,” Keane said. “Chuck Schumer has said the industry is evil. Obviously Americans don’t agree with that as they continue to buy record numbers of firearms for self-protection and other lawful purposes. In truth, we are a highly regulated and law-abiding industry, and we have engaged in many, many initiatives and programs in cooperation with law enforcement to help try to reduce criminal acquisition and misuse of firearms, to reduce accidents and to prevent suicides.”

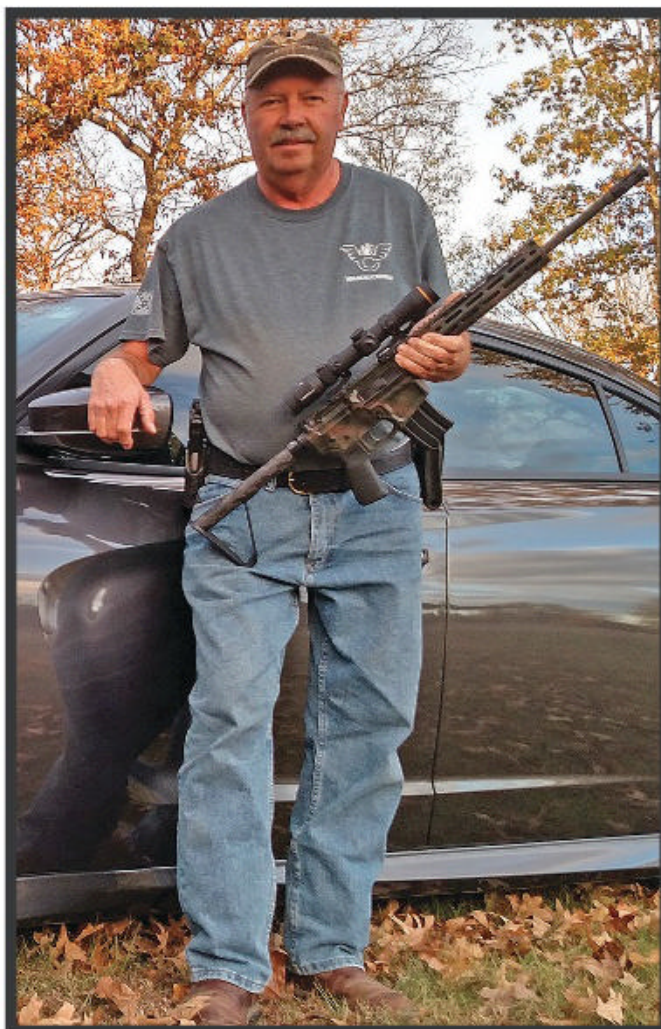


## THE DEMISE OF GUNMAKERS?

Like many 2A supporters, Keane sees the ongoing effort to repeal the Protection of Lawful Commerce In Arms Act (PLCAA) as the most dangerous of the current proposed schemes to gun owners. Most gun owners know that the law doesn't make the industry exempt from lawsuits, but only protects it from frivolous suits based on criminal use of their legal, safe products. In fact, suing a gunmaker for a criminal murdering people with a firearm that company made is no different than suing Ford or Chevy for a drunk driver killing people with vehicles those manufacturers made.

However, Joe Biden has named overturning the law his biggest priority. And, Keane believes doing away with the law would literally kill nearly the entire industry—exactly what we were on the brink of twenty years ago when the law was passed.

"We would see a new wave of lawsuits filed against the industry by cities, counties, perhaps states," Keane said. "We'd see anti-gun Democrat AGs working very closely with all the



major gun control groups and corporate law firms all across the country. We would see an unprecedented wave of lawsuits that would swamp and overwhelm the industry, and would result in achieving their policy object, which would be to destroy the industry and result in judgments against the industry that could not possibly be paid.

"Or, it would drive the industry members to their knees to accept settlement agreements that would impose through court orders all manners of gun control measures not supported by the American public and that Congress has chosen not to enact."

In fact, those on the anti-gun side of the argument know exactly how devastating repealing the PLCAA would truly be to gun manufacturers and the law-abiding gun owners who depend on them to produce the products they want. Despite that, Biden is literally praying for such a repeal, recently stating, "If I get one thing on my list—the Lord came down and said, 'Joe, you get one of these'—give me that one. Because I tell you

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“...THE ONLY WAY FOR US TO GET THOSE IN POWER TO TAKE GUNMAKERS OUT OF THEIR CROSSHAIRS IS TO FLIP CONGRESS—PREFERABLY BOTH HOUSES—IN NEXT YEAR’S MIDTERM ELECTION.”

what, there would be a ‘come to the Lord’ moment these folks would have real quickly. But they’re not. They’re not. They’re exempt.”

## OF BANS & SUCH

As for outright bans of certain classes of firearms and magazines, like those proposed by Biden and Congressional Democrats, they’re a mixed bag. The ongoing threat of such a ban has made demand so high that gunmakers can’t keep up with orders. Many have ramped up production to try to meet the demand, and

profits are, no doubt, high.

But a sudden ban could cut that demand for AR-style, semi-auto rifles, as well as the standard-capacity magazines that also have been targeted. That would leave many manufacturers who specialize in those guns, as well as magazines and accessories for them, in a bad pinch.

Bill Wilson is the owner and president of Wilson Combat, a manufacturer best known for its high-quality 1911 pistols and AR-style rifles. However, his company also

manufactures ammunition, magazines and some firearms accessories, putting it directly in the crosshairs of politicians wanting to ban semi-auto rifles and magazines holding more than 10 rounds.

“Obviously, anytime they start talking about gun control it’s a concern,” Wilson said. “And, it’s a big concern when Biden’s throwing around these executive orders, just trying to see what’s going to stick to the wall.

“The overall biggest concern is repealing the Lawful Commerce act. That’s my big-



gest concern, but I think it's probably one of the hardest ones for him to accomplish."

Wilson said banning semi-auto rifles outright and banning magazines that hold more than 10 rounds pose a threat to his company and others. He's just not so sure anti-gunners can get that done at this time, either.

"They have to go through Congress on these; the president can't do away with them by executive order," he said. "I think there are at least two Democrats that would defect on a gun control vote, and probably no more than a couple of Republicans that would side with the Democrats."

Matt Torres, president of Rise Armament, an Oklahoma-based company that makes many AR parts and components as well as high-quality semi-auto rifles, doesn't like what he's seeing politically, either.

"It seems like the Left has just pushed so hard, and the Right has had enough and feels like it needs to dig in," he said. "It sure does seem like the Left's rhetoric is a lot stronger than the Right's. Maybe [the pro-gun representatives] are saying it, but the media's just not putting it out there. They actually haven't been friendly to conservative politics as a whole over the last decade."

As for the proposed ban on so-called "assault weapons," Torres believes a shift in demand from rifles to parts would likely occur if such a ban became law.

"From a manufacturers perspective, since we're mostly into parts I imagine if they had an assault weapons ban, initially we would probably see a strong demand still be there for components and parts." Should future legislation further cut back on the sale of parts, however, it's anybody's guess how companies specializing in them—like Rise—would fare.

## IS THERE A FUTURE?

In the end, America's gun manufacturers should be considered heroes by all gun owners, just as they have been since the invention of firearms. For us to practice our Second Amendment-protected right to keep and bear arms, there has to be companies to make those arms. At this point in time, the only way for us to get those in power to take gunmakers out of their crosshairs is to flip Congress—preferably both houses—in next year's midterm election.

NSSF's Keane is hopeful in that respect, especially considering the fact that we saw 8.4 million brand new gun owners in 2020—an astounding number of Americans practicing their rights for the first time.

"I think, based on what we saw last year and what we are seeing in the first quarter of this year, the more [Biden] advocates for gun control and the more we have violent crime rising in these large urban centers, you will see Americans increasingly exercise their Second Amendment rights as we did in 2020," he said. "We saw a 58 percent increase in African Americans buying firearms last year over the year before. We



“...KEANE SEES THE ONGOING EFFORT TO REPEAL THE PROTECTION OF LAWFUL COMMERCE IN ARMS ACT (PLCAA) AS THE MOST DANGEROUS OF THE CURRENT PROPOSED SCHEMES...”

saw a 49 percent increase in Hispanic Americans purchasing firearms in 2020 over 2019. We saw a 43 percent increase in Asian Americans purchasing firearms last year. And women are among the fastest growing segment of gun owners—40 percent of the first-time gun owners last year were women. So you're seeing people come off the fence. And this stereotype promoted by the gun control community that the only people buying guns are a small sliver of irrational white men who buy many, many guns is simply a false narrative."

One big question remaining is whether disenfranchised Americans who believe voter fraud cost Donald Trump the presidency will have enough faith in the system to get back out and vote in the midterms. (Hint: You definitely should.) As for those 8.4 million brand new guns owners, will they be engaged enough to tip the scales and help kick enough gun-ban proponents out of Congress next November to end the threat, at least temporarily?

"I think they will. Not all 8.4 million have to in order to make a difference," Keane said, mentioning the many new gun owners who were surprised at how difficult it was to simply buy a gun, especially in states like California. "I think that a number of them will become engaged politically now that they have come off the fence and come down on the side of protecting themselves and exercising their Second Amendment rights. And that will make a difference in the outcome of elections in 2022."

## WRAPPING UP

For his part, Rise's Torres says his company will roll with the punches no matter what restrictive proposals gun-banners in Congress manage to pass and Biden signs into law. He's far more worried about the effect such laws would have on average law-abiding Americans and the overall concept of freedom.

"Some of the legislation that they're looking at is so broad and up for interpretation to the people enforcing it, they could put it into law and it could make felons overnight," he said. "Where does it stop? I'm more concerned for the nation because protecting those inalienable rights is really what we need to be doing as citizens." ●





# FREEDOM FIGHT-

# AR

BY KAREN HUNTER



TRIBUTE  
RIFLE 



While others ban him,  
Kahr salutes 45 with its special  
Commander in Chief 5.56







The Commander in Chief is far more than a “commemorative firearm.” This AR-15 embodies the spirit of patriotism restored during the four years President Donald Trump led our great nation.



Regardless of where you find yourself on the political spectrum or what your opinion is of President Donald J. Trump, there are two facts that cannot be disputed. First and foremost, he was (and still is in the eyes of many) everybody's president whether they liked it or not—the 45th president of the United States of America to be exact. Second, throughout his four years, President Trump amassed one of the largest groups of supporting patriots this country has ever seen. With his heartfelt slogan Make America Great Again (MAGA), he woke a sleeping giant that strived then, and still does now, to restore and continually fight for the principles and values that have made America the greatest nation in the world.

It is also no secret that Auto-Ordnance and the Kahr Firearms family of gunmakers have not hesitated to show their support for President Trump by making several firearms in his honor commemorating his presidency. This is not something new for Auto-Ordnance, as providing their customers with an opportunity to

own a firearm that celebrates freedom is one of their passions. In fact, on the Auto-Ordnance website there is a letter from CEO Justin Moon that explains this further.

“The products made by Auto-Ordnance provide shooters the chance to own a piece of history,” Moon says. “Each firearm is an iconic

## SPECIFICATIONS

### AUTO-ORDNANCE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

CALIBER:	.223/5.56mm
BARREL:	16 inches
OA LENGTH:	32.5 to 36 inches
WEIGHT:	6.4 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Hogue
SIGHTS:	Picatinny rail
ACTION:	Semi-auto
FINISH:	Burnt bronze and black Cerakote
CAPACITY:	30+1
MSRP:	\$2,263

example of the guns that were used by Americans to preserve and defend freedom around the globe. The Thompson, the M1 Carbine and the 1911 all served American warfighters on far flung battlefields. Each is an important symbol of American ingenuity applied to the defense of liberty. These guns preserved freedoms like the Second Amendment, the sentinel, guarding all of the other rights valued by our Founding Fathers. Auto-Ordnance is at home in the Kahr Firearms family of gun makers, bringing to the table an important element of American history and guns of exceptional manufacture. As with all products from Kahr Firearms Group, every Thompson, M1 Carbine, 1911 brings to the customer our strict quality standards. Every gun must be accurate and reliable. It is what the customer needs, what the customer deserves, and what we deliver.”

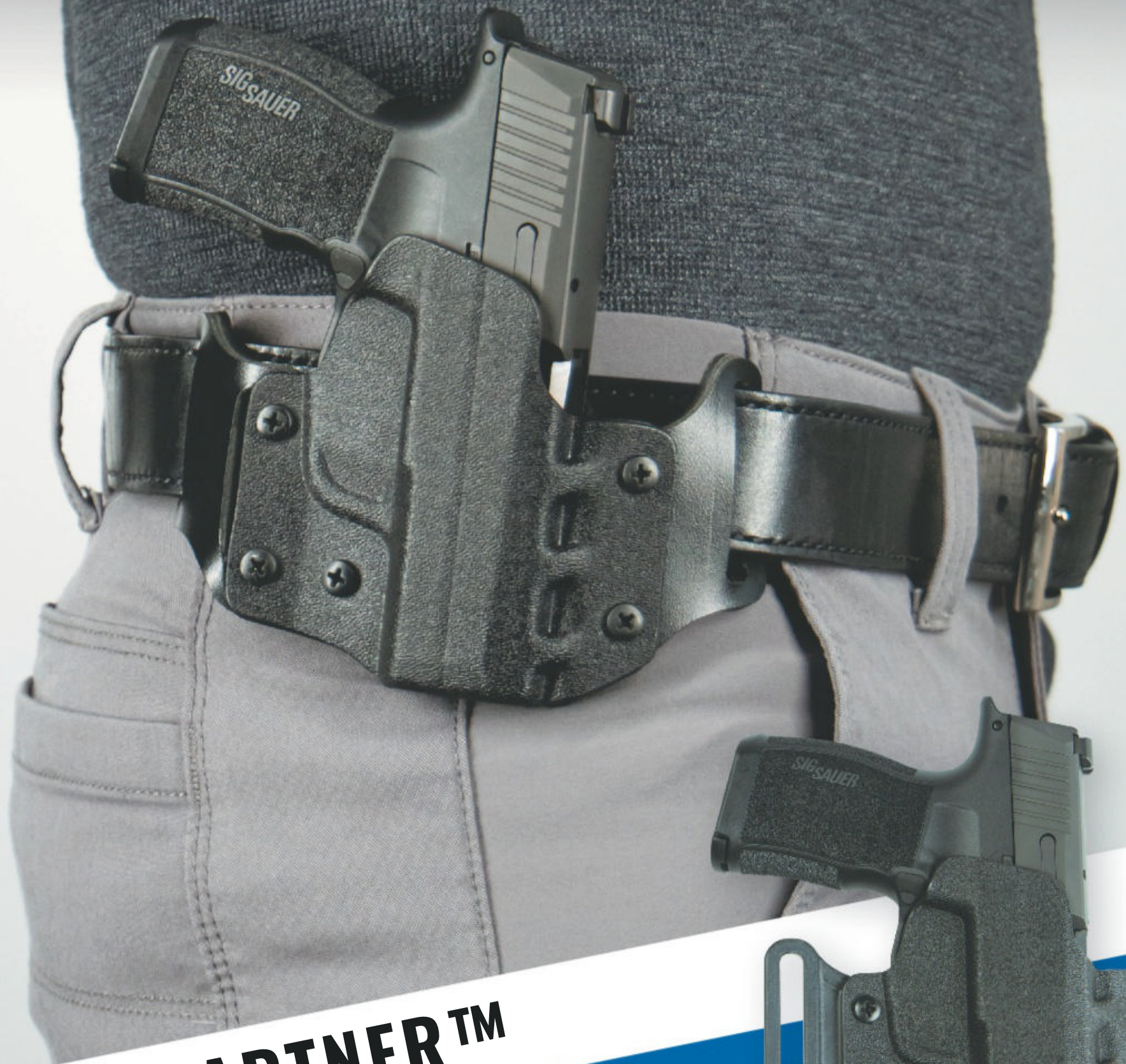


### TRUMP AR-15

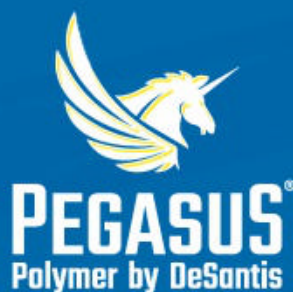
Their newest gun recently added to the Trump lineup is The Commander in Chief. This AR-15 is solely dedicated to the 45th president of the United States of America. The Commander in Chief embodies Moon's



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Auto-Ordnance and Kahr Firearms understand the importance of attention to detail, as can be seen with every inch of the Commander in Chief AR-15.

heartfelt words beautifully. During a time in our nation where we are witnessing a revival of the spirit of patriotism, the release of the Commander in Chief could not have come at a better time. This firearm has been well received by those who possess a love of country, freedom and, of course, President Trump himself.

The Commander in Chief is a beautiful AR-15 adorned with engravings and a custom coating. The gun is designed to honor the patriotism of the 45th President and his determination to "Keep America Great." In fact, this motto is engraved on the right side of the upper receiver, while "United States of America" is found on the aluminum, free-floated M-Lok handguard. This customization is eye catching to say the least and continues around the gun. The left side of the upper receiver is engraved with President Trump's name and the title, "Commander in Chief" of the armed forces. The lower receiver has beautiful relief cuts, along with "45th" notating his position in our nation's long line of presidents. As you would expect, Auto-Ordnance has included a very nicely detailed American flag, as well as the star pattern on the grip and forearm.

The engraving continues with an actual likeness of President Trump in front of the White House on the magazine well, with the Presidential Seal on the right. "In God We Trust" is placed on the forward assist housing. The burnt bronze and black Cerakote finish is more than eye-catching, giving it a beautifully, almost worn effect that is quite appealing. On the more technical side of the rifle's specifications, the Commander in Chief has a nitride-coated 16-inch barrel with a 1-in-8 twist, allowing it to accurately fire a variety of bullet weights. The pistol grip and stock are made by Hogue

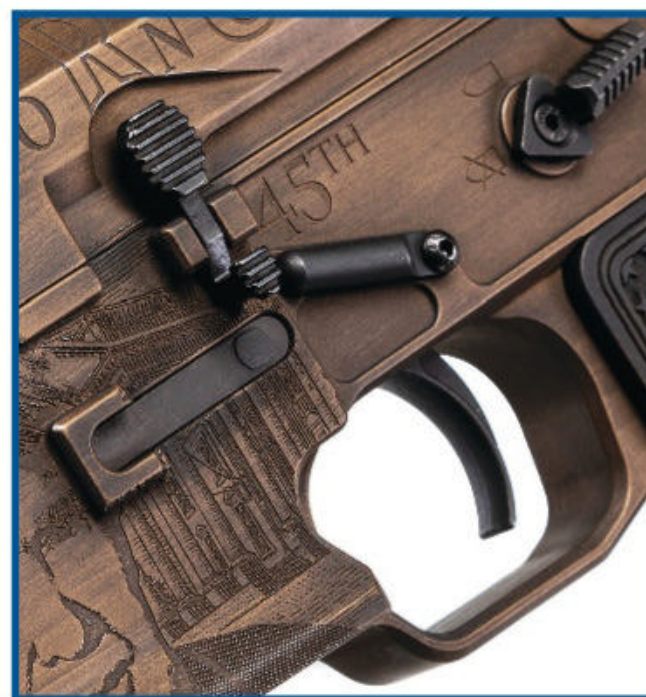
and fit the aesthetic design of the rifle well.

The Commander in Chief is a limited-edition piece, so it is important to note that only 500 production models are available.

These are more than just show pieces designed for display. Each gun is still a hard-core reliable rifle meant for performance. The upper and lower are both billet aluminum and fit each other well, and the gun is chambered in .223/5.56mm. The upper has a Picatinny rail for optics or sights, and the forearm also has a Picatinny rail section near the muzzle for aftermarket front sights. The barrel is topped with a classic A2 birdcage flash hider. Kahr and Auto-Ordnance include one 30-round Magpul P-Mag with each rifle.

### ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★ SHOTS FIRED

Taking the Commander in Chief out on the range to shoot almost felt wrong, as if this beautifully designed, seemingly commemora-



A custom burnt bronze and black Cerakote coating gives the Commander in Chief an almost worn, yet distinctly unique finish, adding to the overall aesthetics exhibited by the final product.







As the author can attest, the Commander in Chief is more than a collector's item. This AR-15 is a great-looking, hard-hitting rifle that can be relied upon to perform at the range.

★★★★★

tive showpiece was meant to be seen rather than fired. Once on the range, that mindset was fleeting as the desire to shoot this rifle subdued any former hesitation. My ammunition choice was Hornady's Frontier .223 Rem. in 55-grain HP. Typically I would shoot varying brands of ammunition for a comparison, but given the current crisis of ammo limitations I decided to stick with one brand.

My range time with the Commander in Chief did not disappoint. Auto-Ordnance and Kahr Firearms have produced a rifle that is not only aesthetically intriguing, but also a serious shooting firearm. The trigger had a crisp break with a nice reset, which allowed for faster follow-up shots. The rifle was ergonomic, comfortable and easy to manage, weighing in at just 6 pounds, 4 ounces. I incorporated the SIG Sauer Romeo 5 red-dot optic, which is by far one of my personal favorites. Together, the combination gave me a very enjoyable shooting experience. I maintained 1-inch groups or less consistently with zero malfunc-

tions shooting approximately 500 rounds. The rifle I received had never been fired, so to me the fact that I had zero issues in any way was very impressive. Additionally, the controls were also exceptionally smooth and easy to operate. Sometimes newer firearms require a "breaking in period," but that was not the case with the Commander in Chief I received. I feel that Auto-Ordnance and Kahr Firearms took the time to engineer this gun to operate at peak performance, giving attention to every detail.

### ★★★★★ PARTING THOUGHTS

There are some people who might not understand why there would be a firearm dedicated to any president, or any person for that matter. To others, firearm ownership can be a very personable thing. To have a firearm that represents an ideal that they hold deep within is very meaningful. The firearm becomes an extension of certain core values they hold within, an expression of a deep, unwavering belief. The Commander in Chief

represents a president that was vastly different than the others, as he was never a politician. For those who connect with President Trump's traditional American ideals and patriotic heart, the Commander in Chief holds more than just ammunition—it holds the heart of their America and the great ideals that allow a sort of kinship to President Trump. Auto-Ordnance and Kahr Firearms understand this concept that perhaps some might scoff at. They relate deeply to their customer base and share these ideals and principles that are the foundation of our great nation.

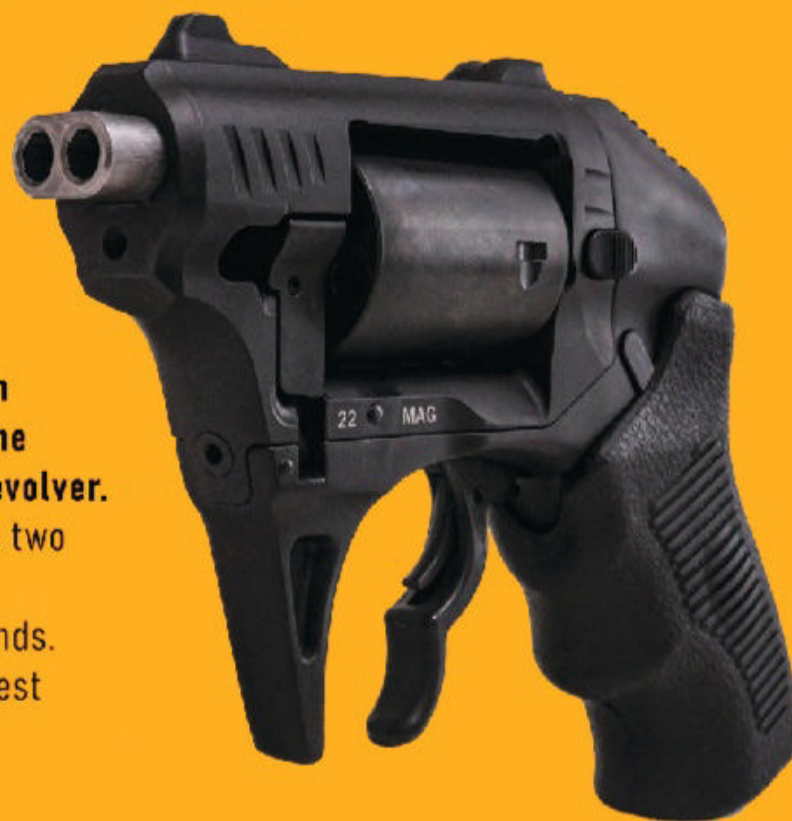
The grassroots enthusiasm for President Trump is a massive movement much larger than anyone could ever truly perceive. The demand for this rifle, as well as the other firearms in the Trump lineup, prove this to be true. For anyone interested in the Commander in Chief or other pieces in the Trump line of guns that are connected to this incredible time in American history, Kahr Firearms and Auto-Ordnance are definitely companies you should consider checking out. For more, visit [auto-ordnance.com](http://auto-ordnance.com).

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# DEEM'S FIGHTIN' WORDS

BY  
JASON  
SWARR

## AH, THE INTERNET!

It's a place where virtual tough guys can hide behind keyboards and talk trash to anyone without even the remotest chance that they will ever be held accountable for their insults and abuses. What a beautiful time we live in. Why should I go to a gym and spend all that time and money training when I can just sucker punch you from my safe space in mom's basement? Death threats? Doxing? Insults to your immediate family? Oh, yeah—we got all that coming for you if you want this smoke. Just don't ask to meet me in public to settle our differences. That would mean that I would have to physically own my words, and if you didn't know, it's 2021, and that's not how things work these days.

So, where is the one place we can all enjoy a good insult and not risk getting banned from Twitter because you hurt someone's feelings? You know, a place where pencil-necked geeks and meathead MMA

fighters can sit side by side and both feel the satisfaction of a good burn? Well, you might have to rewind the memory banks a little, but before riots, looting, impending virus deaths and mind-control vaccines, we all ganged up and experienced vicarious thrills at the verbal smackdowns dropped by big-screen movie bullies on their unsuspecting victims.

Now, a good movie insult can really go a long way. In fact, I use Biff Tannen's famously misspoken one-liner from *Back to the Future*—"Why don't you make like a tree...and get out of here?"—pretty much on a daily basis. Of course, no one gets it, but when I follow it with Jules Winnfield's, "English, motherf\*\*ker, do you speak it?" from *Pulp Fiction*, it tends to rapidly thin the herd at IHOP and my wait time is cut down to minutes.

So, let's take a look at some of my favorite movie insults and the reactions they got (and continue to get via streaming) when blasted on the silver screen!





FIVE CLASSIC  
VERBAL BEATDOWNS  
FROM THE  
SILVER SCREEN





## Full Metal Jacket

**THE INSULT:** "Who the f\*ck said that? Who's the slimy, little, communist sh\*t, twinkle-toed c\*cksucker down here who just signed his own death warrant? Nobody, huh? The fairy f\*\*king godmother said it? Out-f\*\*king-standing!"

Whoa, as a retired Marine, this one hit home! I remember watching this movie in high school right before I signed my life away at the local recruiter's office. I asked the salty sergeant sitting across from me if boot camp was going to be like the movie. He smiled and said, "Of course not!" Well, for once in the history of armed forces recruiting, this recruiter told the truth. It was worse. Marine Corps drill instructors are masters of belittling a human being down



Alamy Photos

to the level of a tiny maggot. And not just your average maggot that feasts on three-day old beef stew, but instead the maggot that lives in pig sh\*t that is covered in other pig sh\*t.

That said, it was, ironically, the best time of my life. I'm not even sure

how that sentence makes sense, but jarheads will understand, and yes, *Full Metal Jacket* is pretty much true to form. (To my high-school-aged daughter: "Sorry, sweetheart, you are going to be verbally decimated on a daily basis. But hey, free college—right?")

## Monty Python And The Holy Grail

**THE INSULT:** "I don't want to talk to you no more, you empty-headed animal-food-trough wiper. I fart in your general direction! Your mother was a hamster, and your father smelt of elderberries!"

Now, no offense to our dentally challenged brothers and sisters across the pond, but British humor is really hard to swallow. But, in all fairness, there were some standouts among the crowd. When *Benny Hill*, *The Young Ones* or *Monty Python* came on the tube, I served up some tea and crumpets and enjoyed their dry-wit comedies.



Alamy Photos

This particular insult has to be one of the more famous one-liners in England's history. In the movie, King Arthur approaches a French castle for refuge, and the verbal battle begins. Eventually, the insults lead to

an attack, only to have it repelled by catapulted livestock. Yeah...I know what you are thinking, but remember, it's British humor. We cow tip in the States, and they apparently throw farm animals.

neg 1256644 em 19658

S-3B BE-2



A person in tactical gear, including a vest and a watch, is holding a ZEV rifle. The rifle is black with a scope and a magazine. The person's hands are visible, gripping the rifle. The background is dark.

# IT'S TIME

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## Bad Santa

**THE INSULT:** "You're an emotional f\*\*king cripple. Your soul is dogsh\*t. Every single f\*\*king thing about you is ugly."

Look, if this flick doesn't rank in your top 10 Christmas movies, you should probably put down this magazine and pick up an issue of *Women's Health*. *Bad Santa* is raw, offensive and definitely not politically correct, but that's what makes it a good comedy! In this particular scene, our serial drunkard mall Santa (Billy Bob Thornton) is getting berated by a 3-foot tall midget (Tony Cox) dressed as an elf in the food court. These two are supposed to be a criminal team, hoping to pull off a Christmas heist, but the fact that our inebriated Kris Kringle is a total F-up only serves to stir up dozens of classic insults from his vertically challenged



friend. Simply put, *Bad Santa* is an utter train wreck that fits perfectly into most American families' holiday movie rotations. My suggestion is to sneak it in right between *Miracle on 34th Street* and *It's a Wonderful Life* so you can watch Aunt Becky's head explode.



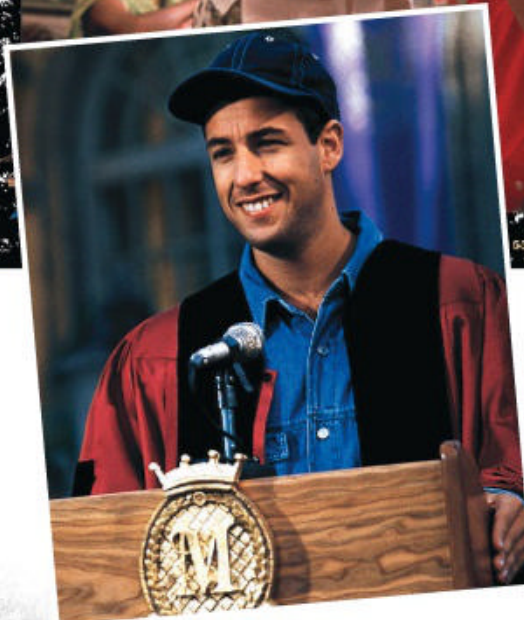
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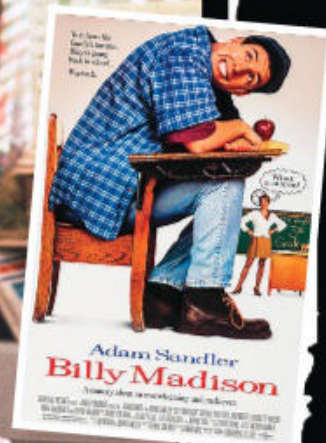
## Billy Madison

**THE INSULT:** "Mr. Madison, what you've just said is one of the most insanely idiotic things I have ever heard. At no point in your rambling, incoherent response were you even close to anything that could be considered a rational thought. Everyone in this room is now dumber for having listened to it. I award you no points, and may God have mercy on your soul."

Like it or not, I'm going to lay down the law here. Adam Sandler only had two funny movies: *Happy Gilmore* and *Billy Madison*. It's the truth, and you freaking know it. While I really enjoyed both these comedies, the insult at the ending Academic Decathlon scene is one of the best in cinematic history. I've used this in the military, at parent-teacher conferences, during traffic stops (not recommended) and even in court (really not recommended).



But, if this insult is properly timed, even the victim of this high-brow put-down will tip his hat at your uncanny ability to memorize ridiculous movie lines. Just don't talk in that annoying Adam Sandler voice; that will definitely result in some broken teeth.



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S-3B BE-2



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# Goodfellas



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The exchange that leads to the insult...

**TOMMY DEVITO:** I said, no more shines. Maybe you didn't hear about it; you've been away a long time. They didn't go up there and tell you. I don't shine shoes anymore.

**BILLY BATTS:** I'm only kidding with you. We're having a party. I just came home and I haven't seen you in a long time, and I'm breaking your balls, and you're getting f\*\*king fresh. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend you.

**TOMMY DEVITO:** I'm sorry too. It's okay. No problem.

**BILLY BATTS:** OK, salud. (Takes a drink.) Now, go home and get your f\*\*kin' shine box.

**TOMMY DEVITO:** Motherf\*\*kin' mutt! You, you f\*\*king piece of shit!

Considering that I married into a large, "traditional" Italian family, it's in my best interest to mention one of the most famous gangster movies of all time, *Goodfellas*. This flick is a staple in anyone's mafia movie library, and this particular scene shows how true gangsters handle their business. Billy Batts, a "made" member of the Gambino crime family, gets out of prison, and in a drunken stupor, insults an up-and-coming gangster named Tommy DeVito. One thing leads to another, and Billy ends up in a car trunk wrapped in blood-soaked tablecloths.

This scene is even more iconic because before they take Billy out into the forest to bury his body, they have to stop by Tommy's mom's house for some late-night Italian pasta. I mean, you can't hack a gangster into pieces and bury him in a shallow grave on an empty stomach, right? That scene was hilarious! Wait...you laughing at me? You think I'm funny? Funny how? Like I'm a clown, I amuse you? How in the f\*\*k am I funny to you? What in the f\*\*k is so funny about me? Huh? Huh? Ah...I'm just kidding, you stuttering pr\*\*ck! I almost had ya!



## Parting Shot

Well, I hope you have enjoyed a look back at some of these classic verbal ass-kickings, and maybe they will spark a little creativity during your next Thanksgiving-dinner dustup with your liberal cousins. And if all else fails, just remember the immortal words of Gunnery Sgt. Hartman: "Were you born a fat, slimy, scumbag puke piece o'sh\*t, Pvt. Pyle, or did you have to work on it?"

S-3B  
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1. The Jack 2. Hellbreaker 3. Livewire 4. Overthrow

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# POKER IS WAR

BY SEAN CHAFFIN



Stock Photo

## Cards and guns from Goodfellas to Johnny Cash's “Boy Named Sue”







Alamy Photos

**P**oker is for tough guys—or at least that's how Hollywood sees it. The game's Old West and frontier history certainly plays a role in that. Real-life gunslingers like Wild Bill Hickok, Doc Holliday, Pat Garrett, Bat Masterson and Luke Short spent many hours at the poker tables in smoky, dimly-lit saloons.

In those days, most players were packing, and gunplay occasionally came with the territory. Hollywood and pop culture have kept that spirit alive. From Westerns to more modern tales, shootouts and fisticuffs seem to play a role in portrayals of the game, whether that's really a part of the modern game or not.

Here's a look at some of those classic scenes and songs—perfect to check out when hosting a nice poker game with a group of friends.

## FILMS

### Goodfellas (1990)

Tending bar turned out poorly for Spider (Michael Imperoli) in this gangster classic. When the mob crew of Jimmy (Robert De Niro), Tommy (Joe Pesci) and Henry (Ray Liotta) met up for some cards, a player might not only lose his shirt but his life as well.

At least that was Spider's experience. The young bartender made the mistake of upsetting the easily-upset Tommy, who



proceeded to shoot him in the foot. Tommy termed the incident an "accident" and even demanded to be dealt in on the next hand.

A second game produced an even worse outcome for Spider. Still upset from the first experience, he doesn't respond well to Tommy. The result? Six shots and the end of Spider's bartending career.

### For a Few Dollars More (1965)

Clint Eastwood plays a bounty hunter in the middle film of his spaghetti Western trilogy that also includes *Fistful of Dollars* (1964) and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966). The man with no name finds himself in a saloon battling it out heads-up—complete with trademark cigar.

After winning with three Aces versus his opponent's three Kings, this unlikely result doesn't set well with Clint's opponent. Guns

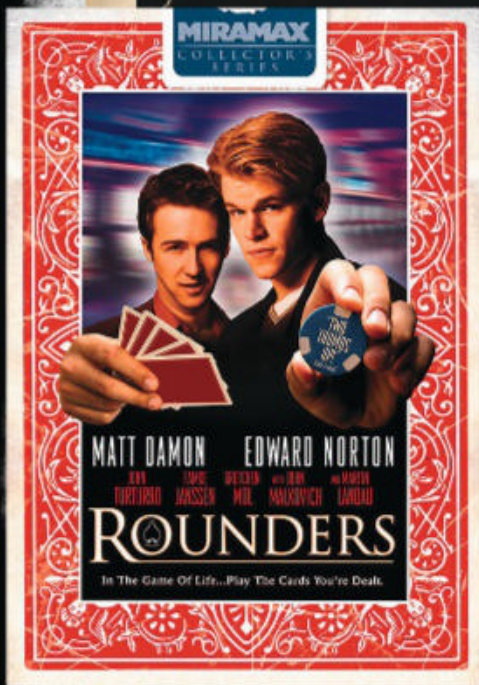
are drawn and fists thrown. The unlucky cardplayer takes a pounding and Clint manages to keep his stogie and poncho in place—even blasting a few baddies who try to get involved. It's classic Clint. He may not have had a name, but he had deadly aim.

### Casino Royale (2006)

With the poker boom in full effect, even James Bond switched from his usual bacarat to Texas Hold'em. 007 faces off against the villain Le Chiffre, with no hoodies allowed at this high-class, high-stakes affair.

Le Chiffre seems to have won with a full house, but Bond pulls the ultimate slow roll when he tables a straight flush. "Ah the luck!" Le Chiffre just has to be thinking. Bond doesn't have to employ his trusty Walther PPK, but Le Chiffre takes yet another bad beat in the end.





### Rounders (1998)

This film set the stage for the growth of Texas Hold'em and modern poker. The plot centers around the New York underground scene as young Mike McDermott (Matt Damon) waffles between life as a poker pro and a possible legal career.

Along the way, Mike finds himself playing high stakes to help his friend Worm (Ed Norton) pay some heavy debts and avoid loan sharks. One scene has them cleaning up at a game with the New York State Police. The entire police hall is filled with cops, and Worm is caught employing some "card mechanics." The officers don't break out their firearms, but they do send the rounders quite a message—a massive beatdown and confiscating their cash.

### Tombstone (1993)

Val Kilmer steals the show as tuberculosis-addled gambler and gunman Doc Holliday in this retelling of the shootout at the O.K. Corral. Viewers are introduced to Doc in the midst of a big session at the poker table. Plenty of drinks are flowing, and Doc is winning big bucks.



Alamy Photos

After calling a huge bet and showing four Queens, his opponent doesn't respond well, leaping to his feet and telling Doc to get out. Doc answers with his usual sarcasm: "Does this mean we're not friends anymore?" The loser goes for his pistol, but Doc is quicker and flashes his .45s. After dropping his weapons, the angry gambler moves in to attack and Doc knifes him in the gut. Doc and his lady friend make off with the winnings.

## MUSIC

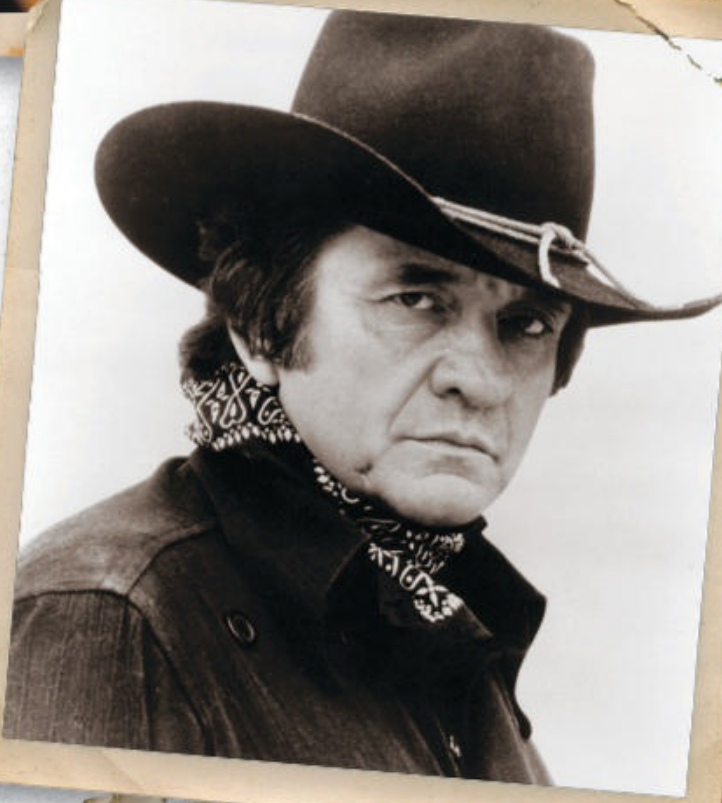
### "The Gambler" (Kenny Rogers, 1978)

Who could forget this tale of life at the poker tables? Indeed you do have to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, and know when to walk away. But why does he need to run?

Maybe an Old West villain with a gun? Who knows, but Kenny was counting plenty of money when his album with the same name reached No. 1 on the country charts and No. 12 overall.

### "That Was a Crazy Game of Poker" (OAR, 2000)

Lead singer Marc Roberge was inspired by Stephen King's *The Stand* to tell this tale of a guy having a rough night at the tables. The song offers a bit of a journey and who hasn't had this kind of night:





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**“Indeed you do have to know when to hold ’em, know when to fold ’em, and know when to walk away.”**



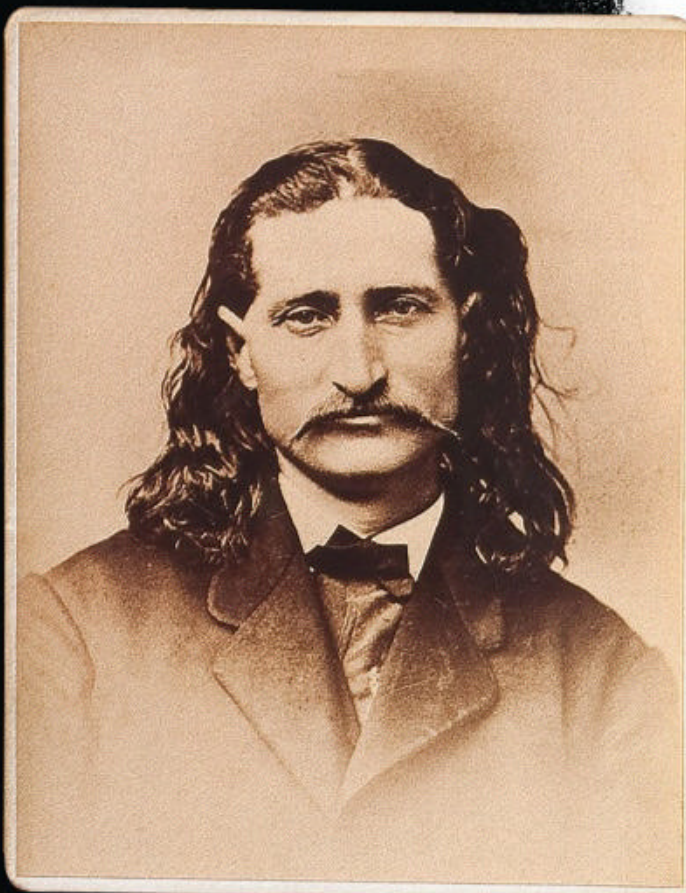
# SPEAKING OF POKER

**O**ld West history brought quite a few poker references to guns and the frontier. Players at a poker table have plenty of time on their hands, and that’s led to some creative terms and names. Many involve gunplay and Western motifs. Have a **pair of Aces in the hole**? Those are bullets.

How about **pocket Kings**? Those are often called Cowboys. Revealing a hand after getting called on the river is often called a showdown. A tournament where each table plays down to a winner of that individual table before advancing is known as a shootout.

The most famous hand in poker also has a backstory related to a real Western shooting. On Aug. 2, 1876, famed lawman, gunslinger and poker player Wild Bill Hickok was playing Five Card Draw at Nuttal and Mann’s Saloon in the town of Deadwood in the Black Hills of the Dakota Territory.

As he played, a gambler named Jack McCall slipped into the saloon. He positioned himself behind Hickok, raised



a pistol to his head and fired. Cards and gold coins flew as Hickok’s body jerked forward. Bits of bone and brain covered the table. Hickok was killed instantly and was reported to have held two black Aces and two black Eights—still known to this day as the **Dead Man’s Hand**.

—Sean Chaffin

*“Who’s up for game two?  
What to do.  
My wallet’s gettin’ thin.  
And I just lost my watch last night.”*

Some interesting characters and some gunplay all make an appearance. It’s a fun song that should get anyone in the mood for some cards with friends.

## **“Boy Named Sue” (Johnny Cash, 1969)**

This crazy tale was written by children’s author Shel Silverstein and made famous by the Man in Black. He sings of an unfortunate man whose father had given him the name Sue. After dad leaves him at age 3, Sue eventually sets out for revenge and finally finds his absentee dad at a stud poker table in Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

*“He was big and bent, and gray  
and old, And I looked at him, and my  
blood ran cold,  
And I said, ‘My name is Sue!  
How do you do?  
Now you gonna die.’”*

A fight ensues, and dear old dad even cuts off a piece of Sue’s ear. Father and son both draw guns, but cooler heads prevail. Dad named him to toughen him up. Sue gains a different point of view, but still hates that stupid name.

## **“The Card Cheat” (The Clash, 1979)**

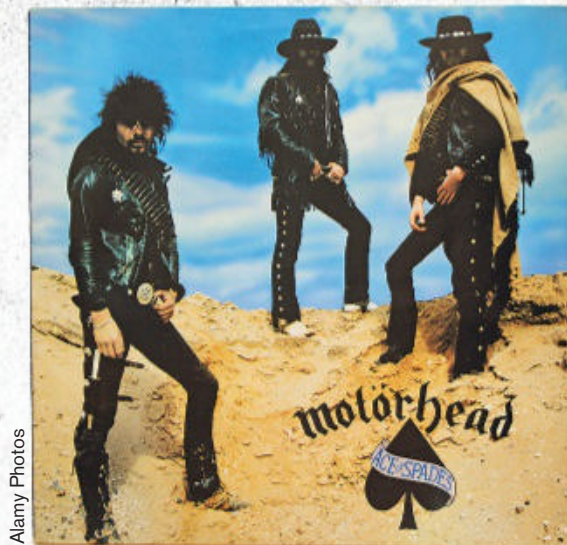
This pulsing song comes from the band’s *London Calling* album and tells the story of a lonely poker player who has a penchant for cheating. His fate ends how many might expect a cheater to be dealt with in the Old West.



*"But the dealer just stares,  
'There's something wrong here,'  
he thinks,  
The gambler is seized and forced  
to his knees,  
And shot dead."*

Cheating has always been a concern in poker. Cards were difficult to come by in the Old West and often had bends and marks after considerable use. Savvy players took advantage. Others tried to work extra cards into the game at opportune times. A poker player himself, Mark Twain observed plenty of card cheats working on Mississippi riverboats in the 19th century.

"There are few things that are so unpardonably neglected in our country as poker," the author noted. "The upper class knows



Alamy Photos

very little about it. Now and then you find ambassadors who have sort of a general knowledge of the game, but the ignorance of the people is fearful. Why, I have known clergymen, good men, kind-hearted, liberal, sincere, and all that, who did not know the

meaning of a 'flush.' It is enough to make one ashamed of one's species."

### "Ace of Spades" (Motörhead, 1980)

Poker game lacking? Need some motivation? This hard-driving tune might not be all about poker but will have any player rocking out at the tables.

There are plenty of poker references to anteing, gambling, Dead Man's Hand and, of course, the Ace of spades. The poker scenes are a bit hard to follow, and lead singer Ian Kilmister even admitted as much noting that when writing the song he "used gambling metaphors, mostly cards and dice—when it comes to that sort of thing, I'm more into the one-arm bandits actually, but you can't really sing about spinning fruit and the wheels coming down." ●

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# GUNS AS ART





# Amazing Engraving



**Bobby Tyler**  
broadens the  
pool of talented  
firearm engravers

BY MIKE DETTY • PHOTOS BY ALEX LANDEEN

When demand outpaces supply for products or services, prices go up and, usually, so do wait times. The firearms community is not immune to these economic fundamentals. No one knows this better than Bobby Tyler, whose business, Tyler Gun Works, turns ordinary guns into extraordinary heirloom pieces. When I first introduced readers to Tyler in the pages of *Ballistic* back in 2019, he had just erected a new building for his business. Just a couple years before he had started his company, specializing in color casing, working out of a second-hand building that a tornado had blown down.

The years have been kind to Tyler. He now color cases firearms for 13 different manufacturers, in addition to his customization business that offers things like fine-tuning guns, fitting bone grips, refinishing and engraving. Business has increased to such a degree that he actually bought a municipal nine-hole golf course, tore the pro shop and cart barn down to “red iron and concrete” and built several thousand square feet of factory space. He even built his family home on the ninth green! With 54 acres, it should be a while before Tyler outgrows his current facility.

TGW caters to ordinary folks who don’t mind spending a little extra money on a gun to leave as a legacy to their family members. One aesthetic touch that many customers like to include on their gun is engraving. Tyler uses the services of two very talented engravers, but







Steve Frickey's *Aranea Morsus-Spider Bite* gun, while not at all traditional, displays near perfect execution.



With only four years of engraving experience, Marianne Kelley engraved her winning submission using the theme of patriotism.

they simply can't handle the demand that he has for quality engraving.

How do you find qualified engravers who you can entrust someone's prized possession to with the understanding that the work performed on it will enhance not only its monetary value, but also its sentimental value? Well, if you're Bobby Tyler, you organize a national competition, put up \$10,000 of prize money and host a gathering of competitors, master class engravers and media.

## Amarillo By Morning

February 6 found me in Amarillo, Texas, along with *Ballistic's* ace photographer Alex Landeen to chronicle the very first Tyler Engraving Extravaganza. As the judges reviewed the engravers' work, I sat in the hallway outside of the banquet room and had a quick conversation with Tyler.

"Engraving is a part of our industry that's dying, and this event will hopefully bring it back to life," Tyler said. "The engraving community ties the firearms industry together. I had a dream and it just wouldn't go away. In the dream I had organized a competition to find some undiscovered engravers. It was so vivid that I just couldn't let it go. We're always looking for new talent, and in this industry, it's hard to find. This just made sense!

"We sent out sixty-some engraving plates (3x5-inch carbon steel plates), with the instructions to show us what you can do. Some were absolute garbage, but others were really good, and, quite honestly, we could have had 20 finalists."

Tyler explained that this competition was completely funded by his company. There are no obligations to work for TGW after the competition.

"Our goal is to give these 10 finalists the publicity and notoriety they deserve," he said. "There are no strings attached—I'm supplying the \$10,000 first-place prize and GRS, a supplier of premium hand engraving tools, is providing the second-place \$1,000 cash and third-place \$500 gift certificate."

The 10 finalists were each given a new Colt Single Action Army (SAA), in the white, and told to engrave it to the best of their ability. That was the extent of instructions. These guns were to be blank canvases for each artist to display their abilities and tech-



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## AMAZING ENGRAVING



### The Contestants; *Tyler Engraving Extravaganza*

**JOE MASON**

Mason Engraving, Braden, Mississippi

**STEVE FRICKEY**

Rigby, Idaho

**JOSHUA FEICHTINGER**

MN Hand Engraving, Burnsville, Minnesota

**TIM HALLORAN**

Blue Grass, Iowa

**JEFFREY LEWIS**

Lewis Engraving, Memphis, Tennessee

**DAN DZIVI**

Dzivi Arms & Engraving, Nocona, Texas

**MICHAEL SIDERIO**

Rio Grande, New Jersey

**DALE BASS**

Bass Engraving, Amarillo, Texas

**ROCKY SHARP**

Rocky Sharp Engraving, Portales, New Mexico

**MARIANNE KELLEY**

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

**“TGW caters to ordinary folks who don't mind spending a little extra money on a gun to leave as a legacy to their family members.”**

niques. Contestants would have 10 months to complete their engraving with a deadline of December 31, 2020.

After the finalists returned their guns, the craftsmen at Tyler Gun Works went to work. For the sake of consistency, each gun's frame was color cased. They each display the colorful mottling of plums, blues, purples and greens. Barrels and cylinders were given Colt-style deep royal blue with nitre blued accents. Each gun was then fitted with red stag grips. Also, wood display stands and felt lined wood cases were made for each gun.

### The Event

The Tyler Engraving Extravaganza formally kicked off at 8 a.m. at the Homewood Suites in Amarillo. While the contestants sat and chatted in the hotel lounge, three master engravers spent the next four hours carefully examining, critiquing and judging the 10

revolvers in a closed banquet room. There was a score sheet for each gun that covered five different categories: creativity, artwork and layout, cut clarity, visual impact and consistency. Judges gave a numerical score for each category, and each gun had the possibility of obtaining 100 points. There was also room for the judges to make comments on the work. For aspiring engravers, these comments would likely be the most helpful and honest criticism they'd ever hear!

### The Judges

Tyler had no problem gathering three judges with impeccable credentials in the engraving world. “I found three master engravers who are well-respected for their abilities and professional acumen to judge our 10 finalists,” he said. “One of them is actually the president of the Firearms Engraving Guild of America (FEGA)! These judges share my vision of trying to grow our pool of talented engravers.”

While votes were being tabulated, I had a chance to speak briefly with each of the three judges. Barry Hands is the president of the FEGA. He is also the administrator of the Art Knife International. Hands hailed from Las Vegas and wore a suit, tie and blue sequined shoes for the event. He exudes professionalism and decisiveness, and his inclusion in the Extravaganza's judging pool added credibility to the event.

When asked what he looks for when evaluating an engraved piece Barry said, “Does it have ‘WOW?’ Regarding this event, at least three contestants have it.”



Extravaganza judges Weldon Lister, Barry Hands and Layne Zuelke spent four hours scoring the 10 guns. They were very impressed with the outstanding work on many of the entries.

He also looked for neatness and consistency, and remarked that clutter will ruin the effect. "This year's winner is pretty clear," he said. "Their work was consistent and resembled that from Colt's Custom Shop. The winner had the broadest appeal. One piece had great scrolls, but no gold inlays." Hands called this journeyman work.

Hands continued, "If you engrave like others, in the common styles, no matter how good you are, you are producing a commodity, the price of which is controlled by the broad commodity market. If you engrave differently, and are able to establish a unique style, you now have a proprietary product, the price of which is determined by your marketing and salesmanship, and will be recognized as unique to yourself. I choose the latter path!"

Weldon Lister is also a master engraver and started studying the craft when he was just 17. His father, also a master engraver, was a tremendous influence and told him, 'I'll show you everything I know—what you pick up is up to you.' Turns out the young Lister was a quick study, and the second Colt he cut was for a Texas Ranger! But engraving, at least at the beginning, didn't pay all of the bills. Lister



spent 30 years as a firefighter and EMT, and engraved in his free time. He found it to be an escape from the stress of the job.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to win generous awards and put a spotlight on hand engraving," Lister said of the Extravaganza. Regarding the 10 contestant guns Lister said, "Lots of thought and effort went into those projects. My preference is for a traditional style, and the Colt SAA is a beautiful blank canvas for the engravers to display their talent." But, he added, "There are two guns that stand above the others and it will be very close!"

Layne Zuelke was the Extravaganza's third judge. He is the vice president of FEGA and

also a master engraver. "Bobby is truly interested in helping the engraving community," Layne said. "The art of engraving has come and gone, but we're experiencing the second renaissance and there has never been a better time to be an engraver."

"This is an opportunity for an engraver to put his or her best foot forward, and there are three that really stand out. The ones that show off all of their various techniques are the ones that will garner the most attention."

When asked what Zuelke looks for when judging an engraver's work, he responded, "First off, we're cutting Colt SAAs. It's a traditional gun, so we're looking for traditional engraving. I expect to see classic scroll work, gold inlays and a traditional theme. Execution needs to be good—if it's worth cutting, it's worth cutting right!"

## Tabulating

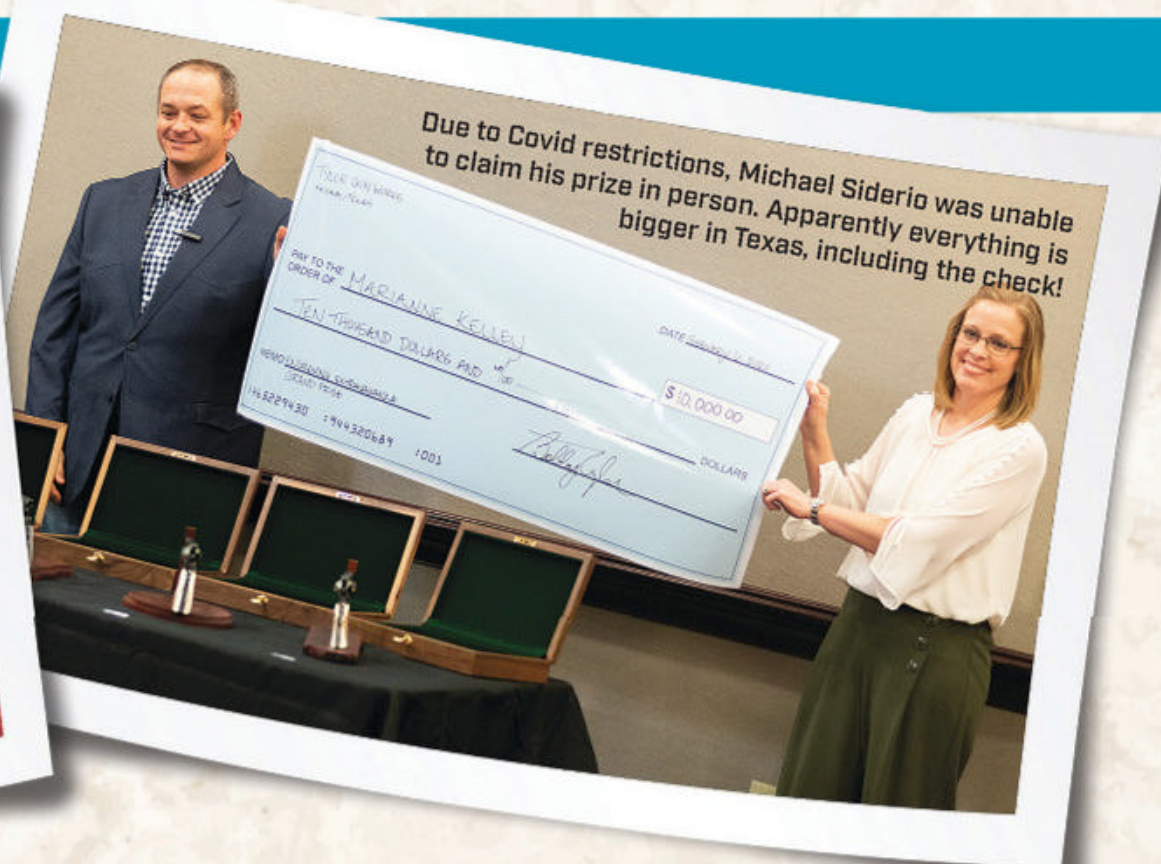
While the judges' score sheets were being tabulated, the public, engravers' families and interested onlookers were able to view the 10 contestant guns. Tyler, with a good idea of who the top three contestants would be, brought two of the engravers over to speak with me.

"[The competition] is a validation of my abilities, in terms of the years and effort I put



Bobby and Paige Tyler along with valued Tyler Gun Works employees Courtney and Matt Grab. Bobby created the competition to highlight engraving talent within the firearms industry.





into it," said Steve Frickey. "I feel like it is recognition of my hard work and talent.

"My family has always been artsy. Combining the love of guns, their mechanical elegance and the ability to create makes engraving a rewarding pastime for me. I'm retired now and engraving is as much full time as I want it to be."

Frickey said he named his gun *Aranea Morsus*—Latin for spider bite. "The design is a result of my doodling," he said. "I started with a lot of scrolls and Oak Leaf. I said to myself, what goes with oak leaves in the wild? Spiders, of course! That's when I decided to add the spiders and web to my design."

My personal preference is for something more conservative and traditional on a Colt SAA. But when I asked photographer Alex Landeen, who is a generation younger than me and is uninhibited by tradition, which was his favorite, he pointed to the Spider Bite gun. "It's cool and reminds me of Anime," Landeen said.

Judge Lister also mentioned to me that initially the spider bite gun did not appeal to his traditional taste. "But after examining the gun, his execution is near-perfect," he said. "If you look at the way he's laid down the lines of the spider web, you'll see his execution is flawless."

Marianne Kelley is a relative newcomer to the world of engraving, and the retired veterinarian seems to have no trouble navigating what most perceive as a male-dominated industry. "I was learning how to make knives and I thought it would be fun to learn how to engrave bolsters," Marianne said. "We had gone to the Dallas Safari show and GRS, a

supplier of premium hand-engraving tools, had a booth there. I sat down, made a couple cuts and before I walked away had signed up for one of their classes. My first class was actually in June of 2015. Then I had the opportunity to take a firearms engraving class at GRS. I thought, 'Let's just try this and see what happens.' I was intrigued!"

Kelley was nominated by someone in the industry who knew her work. She received a plate and returned it, but said, "I did not have high hopes."

So, it was with a degree of surprise and humility that Kelley learned she had become one of the 10 finalists. "When I got the gun, I sat down and made a checklist of things I would like to accomplish and slowly but surely it came together," she said. "With all that was going on in our country at the time, I thought Patriotism would be my theme. When I think about patriotism and what it means to be an American, I think about Lady Liberty, the flag, bald eagle and the Liberty Bell. Of course, the rose is our national flower, and the oak leaves are for our national tree. This was an opportunity for me to use all of my skills and push myself in skills I didn't think I had."

## Grand Finale

While the judges' scores were counted and recounted, contestants, families and their friends mingled, admiring and critiquing the 10 Peacemakers. Shortly after 1 p.m., Tyler introduced each of the contestants and let them say a few words about their work. Then it was time to announce the winner.

Third place was Michael Siderio, who received a \$500 gift certificate to GRS. Second place was Frickey with his Spider gun, and Tyler presented Steve with a \$1,000 check. Even before Tyler made the announcement for the winner, most in the room had figured out that it was Kelley's patriotism gun. After she'd been presented with the \$10,000 check, I asked Kelley what this win meant for her.

"For me it was really a personal experience," she said. "It was about pushing myself. This opportunity proved to me that I can do this, that my work has value beyond my own expectations and that my work will be taken seriously. It also means that I shouldn't be afraid to call myself an engraver. I'm goal oriented, and as I worked on this project I did so with the idea of moving on to master engraver status."

## Tyler Tidbits

The first Tyler Engraving Extravaganza was a tremendous success, and Bobby Tyler tells me he is planning to do it again in 2023 and has already ordered another 10 Colt SAAs. If you're an aspiring engraver and would like to take part in the next Extravaganza, check Tyler Gun Works website frequently and request a sample plate as soon as they are available. Keep your tools sharp and hone your skills. And, if you're interested in creating an heirloom for your family—a legacy of your life and love for shooting—Tyler Gun Works is standing by to build your dream gun! For more information, visit [tylergunworks.com](http://tylergunworks.com). ●



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BROWNING'S BABIES



RISE  
OF THE

MACHINE



# Behind the John M. Browning rifles that formed the backbone of U.S. grunts



It's been a recurrent theme since 1776. Most Americans resist war. Since the advent of the 20th century we have eschewed expeditions of conquest. Protected as we are by two magnificent impregnable oceans, we strove to avoid the internecine quarrels that plagued Europe and Asia. However, when backed into a corner we become a force of nature. Americans may hate war, but when our interests are threatened, we do love to fight.

We didn't start World War II, but we did end it. Behind millions of screaming Russians were 152,000 American trucks and 12,700 tanks. Supporting our British allies were literally countless U.S.-made planes and guns. When the Japanese Empire prepared to fight to the last man, it was a pair of mushroom clouds birthed at Las Alamos, New Mexico, that finally forced a peace. Unlike

## BELOW:

The M1918A2 Browning Automatic Rifle was the general-issue squad automatic weapon for U.S. forces during WWII. As big as a washing machine and about as heavy, the BAR was nonetheless roundly adored by the grunts who used it.

other conquering nations, once we won the war we took our toys and went home, even going so far as to help rebuild our vanquished opponents. Though we have our warts, the United States has been a force for good unprecedented in human history.

The scale is beyond comprehension. In 1941 we fielded seven aircraft carriers. Three years later we had more than 160. Amidst the veritable mountains of weapons, the contributions of one man stand out above all the rest. The esteemed firearms designer John Moses Browning contrived all of the major rifle-caliber automatic weapons used by American forces during WWII. His BAR and M1919A4 formed the backbone of the Infantry.

## WARRIOR WEAPONRY

The rifle is the grunt's most intimate tool. He lives, walks, sweats, suffers and dies clutching that curious little machine. However, it is the machine gun that is actually the true center of gravity for small-unit ground combat. During WWII-era maneuver warfare the riflemen supported the machine gun. Mr. Browning took care of the technical details.

American doctrine held that U.S. troops should have access to two broad categories of automatic support weapons. The Automatic Rifle had to be sufficiently portable and lightweight as to move with the Infantry squad on an assault. It needed to be serviced by a single soldier if need be. However, it also must be adequately rugged and powerful as to lay down a reliable volume of supporting fire that would allow the grunts to move on the battlefield.

# GUNS

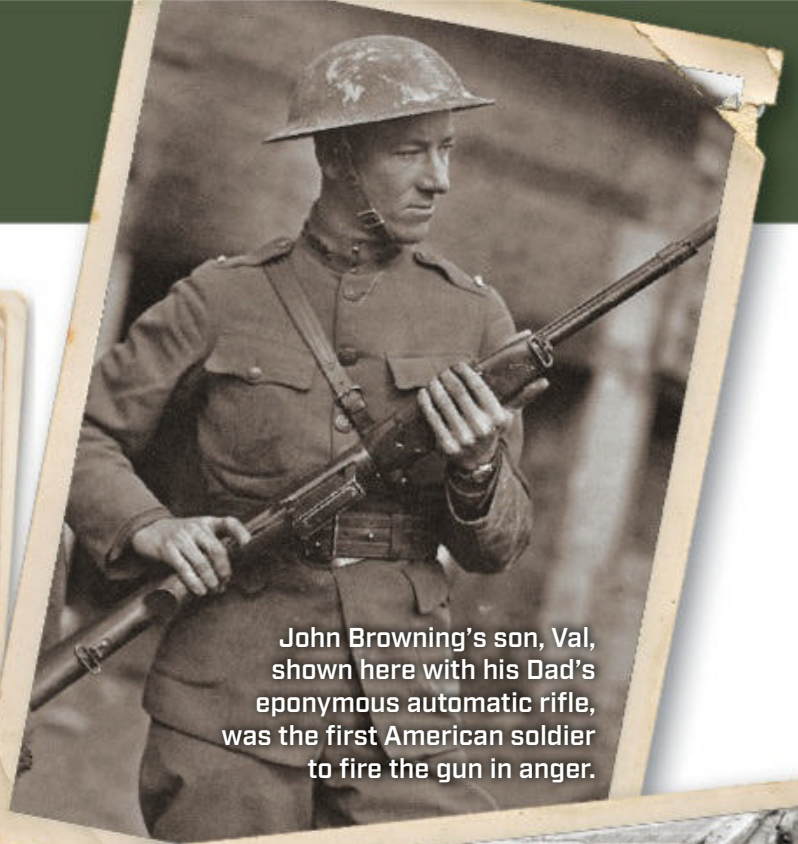
BY WILL DABBS, MD







John Moses Browning was the most prolific arms designer in history.



John Browning's son, Val, shown here with his Dad's eponymous automatic rifle, was the first American soldier to fire the gun in anger.



The BAR, shown here in action in Korea, remained in service into the early years of the Vietnam War.

In addition, U.S. forces required a sustained fire support weapon. This gun should be belt-fed and capable of protracted operation. While originally intended to be employed from fixed positions and vehicles, this crew-served gun still needed to be portable in a pinch. John Browning, who held 128 patents at the time of his death at Liege, Belgium, in 1926, gave us both.

## BROWNING AUTOMATIC RIFLE

The M1918 BAR was purpose-designed in 1917 for use by American Doughboys during WW1. Contrived to be employed by infantrymen in an assault via the discredited concept of "walking fire," the BAR was the tool that was going to get Allied troops up and

out of the trenches. Alas, strolling leisurely into fire-breathing German Maxim guns while running a BAR from the hip didn't work out so well in real life. As is always the case, American grunts improvised and figured it out as they went along.

On September 13, 1918, John Browning's son, Second Lt. Val Browning, was the first American soldier to fire a BAR in anger. Though the war ended soon thereafter, the BAR had an outsized effect beyond its numbers. By WWII, the modified M1918A2 was ready for widespread issue.

The BAR was a massive gas-operated automatic rifle that used a rising bolt locking system. The gun weighed 19 pounds with its clunky bipod and carrying handle, and fired from the open bolt. Fed from 20-round

### SPECIFICATIONS

## M1918A2 BAR

CALIBER:	.30-06
BARREL:	24 inches
OA LENGTH:	47.8 inches
WEIGHT:	19 pounds
ACTION:	Gas-operated rising block
RATE OF FIRE:	400 or 600 rpm
FEED:	20-round box magazine



John Moses Browning designed the Browning Automatic Rifle in the latter days of World War I.





Though technically man portable, the M1919A4 was designed to be fired from its M2 folding tripod.

detachable box magazines, the M1918A2 featured a user-selectable cyclic rate of either 400 or 600 rounds per minute.

The BAR could be fired from either the hip, prone or from the shoulder. Though the abbreviated magazine and lack of a quick-change barrel precluded protracted automatic fire support, the BAR was nevertheless one of the American infantryman's most popular weapons. About a quarter million M1918A2 guns were produced.

## M1919A4

The air-cooled M1919A4 was an evolutionary development of the water-cooled M1917 gun Browning designed during WWI. This recoil-operated weapon fed from either cloth belts or disintegrating linked ammunition and cycled at around 500 rpm. At 31 pounds, the M1919A4 was only marginally portable.

The M1919A4 was intended to be fired off of a tripod. The M2 tripod is a monstrosity of a thing that is impossible to carry comfortably. Once mounted up and fed from a 250-round ammo belt, however, the M1919A4 could be relied upon to sweep the battlefield with heavy .30-06 slugs.

The M1919A4 fired from the closed bolt and ejected out the bottom. Though there were some high-profile users who ran the

gun offhand, its greatest contribution came from employing the weapon from vehicular mounts or fixed positions. The M191A4 was technically man-portable on an assault, but only just barely.

The receiver of the M1919A4 was constructed of heavy steel plates riveted together, and the pistol grip was an aluminum casting. Given the relatively unenlightened era in which it was produced, the M1919A4 demanded separate manual adjustment to the headspace and timing.

## TRIGGER TIME

Apparently humans were larger back in WWII. The BAR at first brush feels like it was designed for giants. The receiver, buttstock and handguards are grossly overbuilt and legitimately massive. However, all this mass combined with the gun's sedate rate of fire conspire to enhance control.

The BAR is full auto only with a two-position user-selectable rate of fire. On the slow rate your ammo lasts longer and recoil isn't such a butt-whooping. The bipod is a massive complicated thing. Many grunts during the war binned the bipod in favor of extra ammo or grenades.

The BAR may theoretically be fired offhand from the shoulder, but it takes a proper man to

## SPECIFICATIONS

### M1919A4

CALIBER:	.30-06
BARREL:	24 inches
OA LENGTH:	38 inches
WEIGHT:	31 pounds
ACTION:	Short-recoil
RATE OF FIRE:	500 rpm
FEED:	250-round belt



The simple action of the Browning M1919A4 is nearly indestructible, a great thing in battle.





do that well. From the hip, the BAR becomes an area weapon system. From the prone, however, the determined operator can use a BAR to take command of a battlefield. The limiting reagent will always be that stubby 20-round magazine. The charging handle is on the left, so you can run the gun, particularly from the prone, without taking your right hand off of the grip.

The M1919A4 is a freaking beast to hump. Imagine something that weighs as much unloaded as four gallons of milk. That thing is nearly a meter long and is festooned with sharp edges and pokey bits. Additionally, the associated 14-pound bipod flops all over the place and is impossible to carry comfortably. Fall on it wrong and the bipod will snip your fingers off. In theory the M1919A4 was intended to be serviced by a crew of five.

Once set up, the M1919A4 did indeed provide an ample source of reliable automatic fire. The gun feeds from the left and ejects out the bottom. It is theoretically possible to grasp the gun by the barrel jacket and run it single handedly on the move. But, the barrel and jacket get hot fast. Some operators improvised a wire bale to slip around the barrel jacket to serve as a handle. The folding

**ABOVE:** The BAR can be fired from the shoulder, but just barely. At 19 pounds you had better have eaten your Wheaties if you want to run this gun offhand.

**RIGHT:** The Browning M1919A4 light machine gun was anything but. At 31 pounds unloaded, this thing is an absolute beast to hump. Nothing about the gun is comfortable.



carrying handle shown on this gun was an accessory added later.

The sedate rate of fire allows the M1919A4 to saturate a target area. Recoil is prodigious, but the gun's immense mass offsets that nicely. The M1919A6 version incorporated a buttstock, bipod and lighter barrel in an effort at making the gun more portable, but it still tipped the scales 1 pound heavier than the M1919A4.

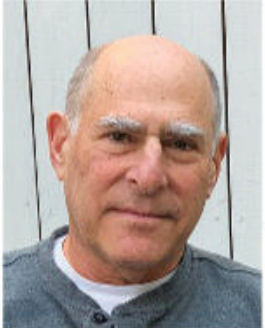
## RUMINATIONS

John Browning gave us the BAR, the M1917, the M1919, the M2 .50-caliber, the M3 aircraft machine gun, the 37mm aircraft cannon

used on the Bell Airacobra and the timeless M1911 pistol. Though he didn't live to see it, his was one of the most extensive individual contributions to the American WWII warfighter. Browning's .50-caliber machine gun soldiers on atop MRAP vehicles and M1A2 tanks today.

Today's weapons are more ergonomic, more versatile and much lighter. Advances in engineering and materials science have had a profound effect on modern gun design. However, at a time when the entire planet was aflame, John Browning's creations helped push back the darkness. His BAR and M1919A4 led the charge. ●





Author  
Nathan Gorenstein

# THE BOOK ON BROWNING

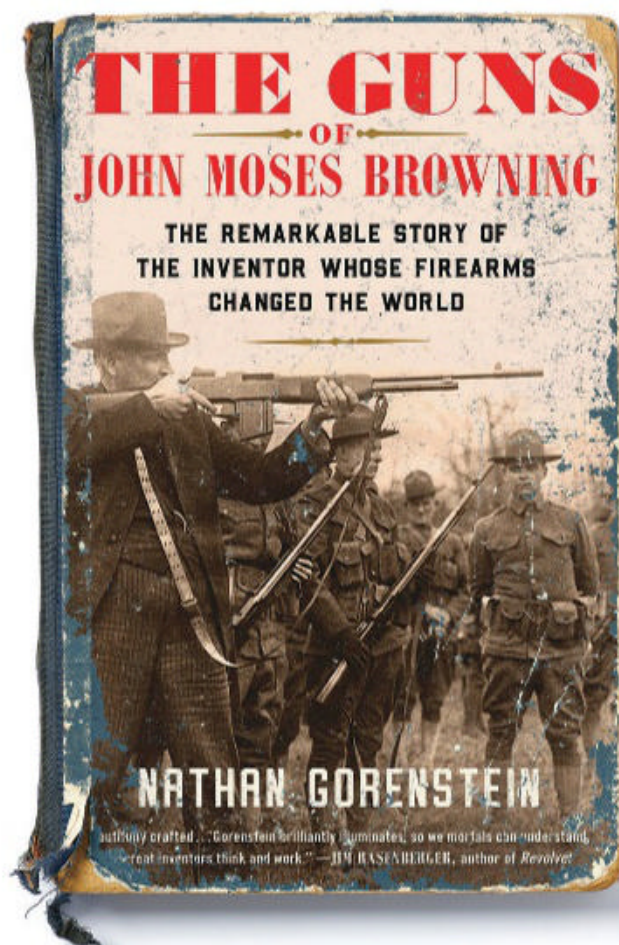


**W**henever the debate over the greatest American inventor comes up, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington Carver, Thomas Edison, Nikola Tesla and even Henry Ford quickly make the shortlist. Rarely, if ever, is the name John Moses Browning included among those visionaries. Even worse, Browning often remains an afterthought to Samuel Colt, who was more businessman than inventor.

Yet, Browning's contributions to *his* field are actually as impressive, and possibly even more so given that many of his inventions remain unchanged more than 100 years after being introduced. While the light bulb and automobile have evolved, and subsequent engineers have been able to improve upon what the inventors created, in the case of Browning many of his designs were so perfect that little innovation was ever required.

Even among shooting enthusiasts today who might know of John Browning's firearms, few can admit to actually knowing much about the man who designed them, and who in the process became the most prolific designer in his field.

Author Nathan Gorenstein now tells the full story of this unique firearms inventor and his inventions in his new book *The Guns of John Moses Browning: The Remarkable Story of the Inventor Whose Firearms Changed the World* (Simon and Schuster). This is not a history of the Colt 1911 .45 pistol, the



Browning Automatic Rifle or any number of other firearms. There are plenty of books on those guns, but this one is about the man.

It still goes into detail on the development of each of these weapons, but it really is the history of Browning from his Mormon upbringing to how he became a self-educated designer and self-made businessman. What is notable is that he was driven to succeed yet didn't seek the limelight like an Edison, and by all accounts wasn't a tyrannical business leader like some of today's Silicon Valley

CEOs. As Gorenstein explains it, Browning never used blueprints, becoming more of a tinkerer than a craftsman.

The book also describes how he developed a "knack" for visualizing parts and seeing them in operation during the long years spent repairing firearms in his father's shop. He developed a simple form of "spatial thinking" that allowed him to focus on the smallest details in his designs.

It is clear in reading the history of John Browning and his brother Matthew, who he worked closely with, that they came along at just the right moment in history. Born a few decades earlier they would have been ahead of their time, yet had they been born later, other designers might have taken firearms in a completely different direction.

Moreover, Gorenstein's work also highlights why Browning isn't more famous among those who *don't* know guns, like a Colt or even a Gatling. John Browning was highly successful, yet as this book explains despite his countless deals with FN, Colt, Winchester and Remington, he wasn't extremely wealthy. He was certainly well to do, but Browning never achieved the wealth of Henry Ford or Thomas Edison. In fact, it almost seems as if Browning didn't set out to be rich or even famous/infamous, but it was the love of the design that drove him. Kudos to Gorenstein for allowing this facet of one of America's greatest inventors to be told. —Peter Suci







## FOR ALL

BY FRANK JARDIM  
ALEX LANDEEN PHOTOS

Jim Wilkinson, President of Veritek EMP, Inc., holds more than 100 patents. With education in chemistry, engineering, physics and computer science,

he's spent most of his professional life developing products for other companies. In 2015, he created Wilkinson Tactical to develop and make his own product, the CR-12 Modular Advanced Weapons System (MAWS). The CR-12 is the embodiment of two universal shooting truths: Americans love their AR platform guns, and there are circumstances when you really, really, really want the wallop of a 12-gauge shotgun.

Of course, you don't need multiple degrees to know that. It shows in the abundance of AR-looking, box magazine-fed 12 gauges that recently came on the market. All were imports, some were decent. But all, save perhaps one, lacked the AR platform's principal virtue—versatility.

**MEET THE MAW**

Wilkinson set about to change that utilizing the AR-10 platform as the basis for a 12-gauge shotgun, .308 tactical rifle, and a .308 or 6.5mm Creedmoor long-range precision rifle. The MAWS was planned as a truly integrated system to engage threats

near, far and in-between by changing uppers in the seconds it takes to pull and push a pair of pins. Wilkinson Tactical would make it all, so the fit and function would be assured.

An AR-10-based shotgun wasn't a completely new idea. Though Wilkinson was working on the CR-12 since 2011, the Turkish firm UTAS beat him to market with a gas-piston-driven 12-gauge upper compatible with AR-10 lowers made by DPMS. Though the UTAS was first to market, Wilkinson felt its flaws as a shotgun were substantial and serious.

Wilkinson rejected the complexity and additional weight of the UTAS gas piston for the simplicity and reliability of the original Stoner direct-impingement operating system. He designed his upper and lower receivers for ambidextrous controls, patented a new gas key that would engage a standard design AR-10 charging handle, simplified the bolt, and designed a new magazine with a powerful clock spring and hybrid carbon-fiber and metal body. Rather than easily chipped duracoat or a similar hardened paint finish, Wilkinson wanted military tough anodizing (black hardcoat and nanomatte C-blast MIL-A-8625 type III class 22) enhanced with a dry film lubricant treatment (MIL-PRF-46010). The dry film lubricant, also used by the military,

gives the anodizing additional slickness for increased durability and lubricity, and allows the gun to run dry. After 25,000 rounds, the inside of Wilkinson's test shotgun upper looks smooth and shiny, like black glass. On the steels, he chose nitride treatment. A custom Cerakote finish is available on special order.

Of necessity, the CR-12's 12-gauge upper receiver is unique, standing about a quarter inch taller than the normal AR-10 upper to accommodate the larger barrel nut. The aluminum free float handguard has an indexing tab on the top rail that mates with a slot on the top of the receiver and mounts to the long nose of the barrel nut solidly with screws at 3, 6 and 9 o'clock. A polymer heat shield is fitted to the end of the handguard that covers the barrel nut and protects the supporting hand from burns. You need it because the chamber area gets hot fast.

The bolt carrier groups, originally nickel-boron plated, are now nitride treated. Wilkinson said, "Nickel boron is great, but the black nitride is comparably durable and lubricious and doesn't act like a signal mirror revealing your position when the dust cover

HANDS DOWN, YOU GET MUCH, MUCH MORE  
WITH WILKINSON'S MAWS





Wilkinson Tactical's American-made CR-12 is a true AR-10-based auto-loading 12-gauge tactical shotgun that converts in seconds to a .308 Win. tactical rifle or long-range precision rifle in .308 or 6.5 Creedmoor.





is open.” Unlike the rifle uppers, the 12-gauge upper doesn’t have a dust cover. On the AR, the front of the receiver isn’t a natural hold for the supporting hand, but the ejection port is marked with a warning to keep your fingers clear of the port. The bolt could seriously injure your fingers if you somehow allowed them to wander.

## INTERCHANGEABILITY

Wilkinson’s plans called for all the CR-12 rifle-caliber uppers to use identical, conventional AR-10 receivers. Keep in mind that, unlike the AR-15, the AR-10 receiver’s dimensions are not standardized and parts interchangeability between manufacturers varies. Therefore, to ensure the versatility of the MAWS CR-12 platform and guarantee trou-

ble-free, no-tools, conversion between shotgun and rifle uppers, Wilkinson had to build his own uppers and lowers. Going further, he is steadily bringing in more and more of the CR-12 parts manufacturing in-house. He states, “Maintaining the quality control needed for the high performance level our military and law-enforcement customers demand is more efficient when it’s under one roof—my roof.”

Because part of the AR platform’s appeal is its easy customization, Wilkinson chose to use standard components for the fire-control group, controls, charging handle and stocks, expecting buyers would install their preferred brands. The handguard slots are M-Lok. The receivers are cut for the PDIQ ambi-bolt release. Guns are shipped without sights.

As of this writing, the various upper receiv-

ers used in the MAWS tend to be slightly different, but they are all fully interchangeable. This will change in short order as Wilkinson transitions from milled-billet receivers to forgings for all upper and lower components. The change will also allow the guns to be full-color anodized, including camouflage patterns that will appeal to hunters.

The shotgun’s 18.5-inch barrel is threaded for common Winchester screw-in choke tubes and comes fitted with a cylinder bore choke (from Carlson Choke Tubes) with a breaching muzzle brake permanently attached. Its sharp teeth help to hold it solid against the door, and, as an added bonus, it reduces recoil by about 20 percent. The rifle uppers come fitted with caliber-specific commercial muzzle brakes that attenuate recoil to a comfortable level without hurting long-range accuracy, the latter being the key criteria in Wilkinson’s testing.

## FACING RECOIL

To further reduce recoil in all chamberings, the CR-12 employs a KynSHOT hydraulic buffer. Compared to a standard buffer, the hydraulic buffer can cut the felt recoil and muzzle rise significantly by absorbing and redirecting recoil forces. (KynSHOT claims around a 50 percent reduction.) With a standard buffer, the recoiling bolt carrier group throws it against the back of the buffer tube where it bounces against the bottom, somewhat like a rubber ball, until the excess recoil energy is absorbed and the spring can move forward. By contrast, the hydraulic buffer’s piston absorbs additional recoil energy and then applies it to the closing stroke of the bolt, reducing vibrations and bolt



## SPECIFICATIONS

# WILKINSON TACTICAL CR-12 MAWS

GAUGE/CALIBER:	12, .308 Win, 6.5 Creedmoor
BARREL:	18.5 inches (shotgun), 16 inches (tactical rifle), 22 or 24 inches (long-range rifle)
OA LENGTH:	38.5 inches (shotgun)
WEIGHT:	8 pounds (shotgun, empty)
STOCK:	Six-position buttstock
SIGHTS:	None
ACTION:	Gas, direct impingement
FINISH:	Black Mil-Spec hardcoat anodized
CAPACITY:	5 +1 (shotgun), 10 +1 (rifles)
MSRP:	\$1,995 (complete shotgun), \$1,100 for .308 tactical rifle complete upper







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customers free of charge as soon as they are delivered. He also warrants the CR-12 MAWS system for life.

**RAINING LEAD**

On the range, I got fine performance from the rifles equipped as they were with heavy-profile Criterion hand-lapped, match-grade barrels (1-10 twist for the 24-inch .308 and 1-8 twist for the 22-inch 6.5mm Creedmoor). The .308 tactical rifle I tested was an older model with a 18.5-inch, 1-10 twist, Criterion heavy barrel. The new production tactical rifles have 16-inch Shaw barrels with a slim profile to reduce weight.

As advertised, the CR-12 converts quickly and smoothly using pins with oversized heads on the right for easy grasping and some protrusion on the left side allowing them to be started out with the fingertip. Even with the creepy, 7.5-pound pull of the stock military single-stage trigger, I was able to get sub-MOA accuracy at 100 yards in both calibers tested.

Black Hills Ammunition 155-grain ELD-M averaged 2,580 feet per second (fps) and five-shot groups of 0.92 inches with a rather chunky reticle at 8X magnification. Winchester .308 Match 168-grain Matchking HPBT averaged 2,500 fps and groups of 1.26 inches. Bargain Winchester white box 7.62x51mm averaged 2,722 fps and 2.44-inch groups.

In 6.5mm Creedmoor, the HSM Tipping Point 130-grain Sierra Gamechanger averaged 2,708 fps and 0.58-inch groups at 24X through a Shepherd optic with as fine a reticle as one could hope for. Hornady 140-grain ELD Match averaged 2,579 fps and 0.79-inch groups. Winchester Deer Season XP 125-grain Extreme Point averaged 2,816 fps and 0.88-inch groups.

**RANGER READY?**

The CR-12 shotgun—which stands for Colorado Ranger, reflecting Wilkinson's long involvement with the reserve law enforcement organization—and the associated MAWS system appear to be the high-quality, American-made and supported tactical weapons system a lot of law enforcement agencies have been waiting for. As of this writing, the Secret Service and UK Ministry of Defense awarded Wilkinson Tactical a purchase order for test shotguns. This is a company to watch. For more information, visit wilkinsontactical.com. ●



Hydraulic buffer and a muzzle brake make the CR-12 comparatively soft shooting. This steel mag [upper right] will be replaced for free with a new carbon-fiber composite type designed by Wilkinson.

**PERFORMANCE**

**WILKINSON TACTICAL SR-12 MAWS**

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
<b>6.5 CREEDMOOR</b>	▼	▼
Hornady Match 140 ELD Match	2,579	0.78
HSM Tipping Point 130 Sierra Gamechanger	2,708	0.49
Winchester Deer Season XP 125 Extreme Point	2,816	0.80
<b>.308 WIN</b>	▼	▼
Black Hills Ammunition 155 ELD-M	2,580	0.92
Winchester Match 168 Matchking HPBT	2,500	1.26
Winchester White Box 147 FMJ	2,722	2.44

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in feet per second by chronograph and accuracy in inches for best five-shot group at 100 yards from a benchrest.

cycle time, and smoothing out the operation of the action. The result is a weapon easier to control and get back on target. Also equipped with muzzle brakes, the MAWS rifles I tested were noticeably softer shooting than guns not so equipped. The shotgun made the biggest impression on me.

Heavy 12-gauge loads get brutal on the shoulder quick with a pump shotgun. I could shoot the CR-12 all day and be no worse for the wear. It's light, slim in the handguard and quick handling at 8.6 pounds loaded with five rounds in the old-style heavy steel magazine. This shotgun gets on target fast and amazingly stays there in rapid fire with heavy buckshot and slug loads. Be warned, the CR-12 is ammunition sensitive, generally preferring Winchester, Federal and Aguila in that order,

and heavy loads to lighter. It will shoot 2¾- or 3-inch shells, but my testing was limited to the 2¾-inch shells on hand. The failures to feed I experienced were clearly linked to the old-style magazine included with the gun, a stop gap made from a heavily reworked Turkish model. The delivery delays that necessitated a stopgap in the first place were very frustrating for Wilkinson, who designed a new magazine specifically for the CR-12 around a powerful clock-spring and a carbon fiber and metal composite body to reduce weight and address the reliability issues that seem to plague other box magazine-fed auto-loading shotguns. Wilkinson states he will not allow early adopters of the American-made CR-12 to be penalized for their confidence in his product. He plans to provide the new magazines to





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# NEW BOLT GUN







# FEELIN' THE IMPULSE?

BY  
FRANK  
MELLONI

**SAVAGE ARMS TAKES A DARING  
NEW TURN WITH A  
EURO-STYLE STRAIGHT-PULL**



Leave it to Savage. In a year when most firearm companies are concentrating on higher output of traditional designs, these guys put the most unique rifle on the table that the industry has seen in decades. While new to us, the Savage Impulse is based on an old design—the straight pull. Straight-pull bolt actions are uber-popular in Europe, however, in the states few American options are affordable and up to the accuracy standards that Americans demand. Savage sought to change that and after a few days on the range, we believe they nailed it.

## WHY A STRAIGHT-PULL?

That is typically the first question that is asked when a shooter is introduced to this platform. Before we answer that, let's ask, "Why not?" This will help us better understand what Savage has done to make the Impulse stand out to us. The first is lack of extraction power. Because straight-pull actions don't cam a fired case out of the chamber, they need to have fewer flaws and better polish for reliable extraction. As Savage is no stranger to striking the balance between production and hand-fitting, they got the combination just right to ensure reliability. The second is stopping point, and the inability of straight-pull bolt guns to handle magnum cartridges. Through a patent-pending system called the "HexLock," the firing pressure pushes out a group of ball bearings to keep everything together. Through its use, the new line of rifles can be chambered in rounds as large as .300 Win Mag.

So why should you buy this over a traditional bolt or a semi-auto? It's pretty simple really, it bridges the gap between the two. Nothing is more reliable than a bolt action and nothing is faster than a semi-auto, so this is a way to get the best of both worlds. For those whose rights are infringed and can't hunt with a semi-auto, this is twice as fast to cycle as a standard bolt action. No lifting, no locking down into place; just pull and push in between shots. For those who still enjoy freedom, this rifle will suppress better than a semi, as





SPECIFICATIONS

SAVAGE  
IMPULSE PREDATOR

CALIBER:	6.5 Creedmoor
BARREL:	20 inches
OA LENGTH:	41.5 inches
WEIGHT:	8.7 pounds (empty)
STOCK:	Camo synthetic
SIGHTS:	Picatinny rail
ACTION:	Straight-pull bolt
FINISH:	Matte
CAPACITY:	10+1
MSRP:	\$1,377

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	ACCURACY
Barnes 120 TTSX	1.24
Black Hills 143 ELD-X	0.72
Federal 130 Terminal Ascent	0.94

Bullet weight measured in grains and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 100 yards.

the closed system doesn't allow for as much report to escape out of the receiver and it is free of mechanical noise when firing. Lastly, each model is ambidextrous, making it a lefties dream off of a bipod, and equally swift offhand with the bolt flipped to the other side. This also makes a terrific gun if it is to be shared between two shooters of different dexterity.

RIFLE DETAILS

My time with the Savage Impulse started in my workshop where I got to first handle the Predator model of the series. I used this time to glance over some of the features and get it set up with glass and some other accessories. Naturally, the first area of the inspection was the bolt itself. Savage flattened the learning curve a bit by putting the bolt handle exactly where you would reach; this makes chambering a round while induced with "buck fever" a no-brainer. To open it, a slight upward rotation is required, and to close it a forward one. The bolt handle is angled in such a way that these

rotations happen automatically under the pressure from pulling and pushing the bolt—simple geometry at work here. If you wish to open the action before pulling the trigger, a push-button release located on the rear of the bolt must be held to unlock the bolt. This is similar to the release on a pump-action shotgun and operates under the same principle.

After familiarizing myself with the moving parts, I turned my attention to the receiver. At this point, I noticed the two-position safety where Savage would normally put a three-position one. Honestly, I've always been mixed on three-position safeties. On one hand, I like that you have a failsafe if you need to cycle out ammunition. But on the other hand, I like the KISS approach for anything safety related. Moving forward, I was excited to see the integral Picatinny rail. For starters, it's one less piece that you need to buy, and second, it can never loosen up on you. Savage thought this through and built it with 20 MOA worth of cant, getting you well on your way for long-range shooting.



One-handed operation allows for easy depression of the bolt release while cycling it to the rear for unloading.

Rugged 10-round magazines make this Impulse ideal for predator hunting, yielding plenty of ammunition for follow-up shots.







The stock of the Impulse utilizes the AccuFit system, which includes interchangeable cheek risers and stock extensions to make the gun fit each shooter's unique physical features. This is terrific if you are buying the gun for a young hunter and want something that can grow with them. Other comfort features include the oversized rubber butt pad and inlaid rubber texturing on both the grip and forend. A pair of sling studs completed the package, allowing for a two-point sling or a bipod to be employed. I chose the latter and clipped on a Champion pivot bipod for our testing and a bit of field shooting.

I finished up my benchwork by mounting a Trijicon AccuPoint 3-18x optic with a pair of Weaver rings to give me a highly magnified sighting system for lightning-fast target acquisition. In other words, I set this rifle up to mimic something that you would take out for coyote or feral hog hunting. Since both are scarce on Long Island, I was going to have to settle for punching groups on paper and keeping a set of steel gongs in the air.

## AT THE RANGE

I found myself sitting on everything that I needed to test this gun for several weeks as my home range was under several feet of snow, thanks to the worst winter in years. As I grew ever wearier, I couldn't take the suspense any longer and traveled to northeastern Pennsylvania to get some long-awaited rounds through this gun. As my test gun was chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor, finding an array of hunting ammo wasn't an issue. My ammunition samples included Barnes' VOR-TX, Black Hills' ELD-X and Federal's Terminal Ascent. Complementing my paper targets was a set of Allen's 4-inch AR-500 gongs that I strapped up to a Newbold Target stand to see how many hits I could get before any one target stopped swinging.

I zeroed the rifle quickly using the Barnes' Vor-TX ammunition and punched some



## TRIJICON ACCUPOINT

Trijicon is a pioneer in the battery-free optics market, with its ACOG at the helm. Using similar technology it offers several hunting options like the one used in this article. Illuminated with both Tritium and fiber-optic material, the AccuPoint is always "on" regardless of lighting conditions. The AccuPoint model I tested featured a singular triangular-post reticle that was just plain clean. The absence of subtensions and crosshairs left me with an unobstructed field of view, which allowed me to quickly pick up moving targets and lay down fast strings of fire with unparalleled precision. For more, visit [trijicon.com](http://trijicon.com). —Frank Melloni

The Savage Impulse comes with everything you need to make it fit like a tailored suit.



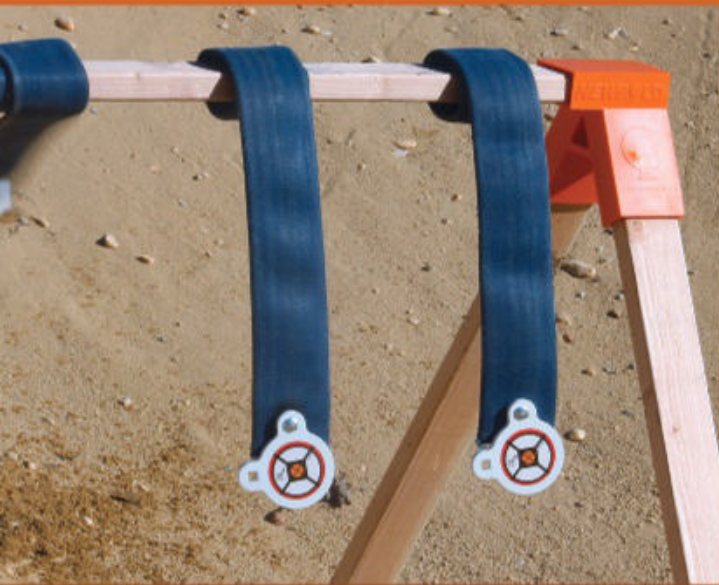
The Impulse's bolt locks via a ball bearing system, instead of traditional locking lugs.

“...THIS IS TWICE AS FAST TO CYCLE AS A STANDARD BOLT ACTION.”





## FEELIN' THE IMPULSE?



### ALLEN'S GONG SET

Allen Company has been offering affordable hunting and shooting products to the masses for decades and continues this tradition through its steel targets. I picked up a pack of these solid AR-500 gongs that took a high-velocity beating for an entire afternoon with no signs of damage. Allen offers these alongside 8- and 10-inch multipacks to make building your own target rack simple and affordable. For more, visit [byallen.com](http://byallen.com). —Frank Melloni

impressive groups that were approaching MOA accuracy. The lightweight Barnes 120-grain bullet loaded into this round produced very little recoil, and watching impacts took zero effort, even in unconventional shooting positions. Moving on, we beat out the MOA accuracy benchmark with both the Black Hills and Federal offerings, with the best group and average going to the Black Hill's loading. While I get the credit for putting the rounds together, I have to share it with the Savage AccuTrigger, which is the reason I bought my first long-range rifle. The Impulse's AccuTrigger retains that same user adjustability and now features a skeletonized trigger bow. Every shot broke clean, and I swear these things get lighter each year.

As for the Allen gong set, it didn't stand a chance. I dumped magazine after magazine into the rack and had them swinging until eventually all three were wrapped up along the support

beam. As this was the Predator version, it fed from a detachable 10-round box magazine, thus keeping rounds downrange was no task at all. My only regret was that I didn't have a spare on my range day. But hey, I guess the barrel has to cool down sometime.

The overall function was downright impressive, with extraction and ejection surprisingly being the highlights. I found the ejection to be so remarkable that I took out a tape measure to measure a whopping 21-foot fling from the action to the center of my brass pile. Savage certainly figured out that issue, that's for sure. The Impulse Predator was pretty gentle on the shoulder, too, even without a muzzle brake, which I easily could have installed on the pre-threaded barrel. I also liked that Savage idiot-proofed the action a bit, as I attempted to lift the bolt handle for my first dozen shots or so. If you go to lift, the bolt handle's angle



Outstanding accuracy and effortless extraction were the norms for our range day, making the Impulse a fine choice for anyone looking for a new bolt-action rifle.



forces your effort into a pull so you'll still cycle the action when you make that error.

### FINAL NOTES

When Savage sent out the Impulse it came with a note stating, "Not for sale afterward," as if they already knew that I'd want to purchase it. As it turns out, they were right. I did, indeed, want to purchase this sample, but alas I must wait for another opportunity. Pennsylvania is one of the last states where semi-autos are still banned for some hunting seasons, and this would be a perfect rifle for my hunts there. Aside from that, its medium contour barrel and sub-MOA accuracy make it great for some target work. Hats off to Savage for bringing an affordable straight-pull to the American market. This one is eventually destined for a spot in my safe. For more information, visit [savagearms.com](http://savagearms.com). ●





# STICKING THE LANDING

**CHRIS LARUE SHARES HIS SECRETS  
TO JUGGLING PRO SKATEBOARDING  
AND KNIFE CREATING**

BY MICHAEL D'ANGONA



Skateboarding and knife making are two diverse fields that few people would say have a distinct connection. That is until the name Chris LaRue comes up in the conversation.

LaRue, born and raised in San Diego, California, is both a pro skateboarder and an intricate cog in the knife-making world, specifically for Half Face Blades, a highly reputable, custom knife-making company.

At 33 years old and as a pro skateboarder for Lurkville Skateboards, Chris has incurred the hard hits and dangerous falls of skateboarding, as well as the beneficial accolades that pro skating has to offer. Now, with some time under his belt as a custom knife maker, Chris faces new challenges. He is currently working through the ranks of the seasoned professionals at Half Face Blades and gaining new insights, techniques and methods of creating production and custom blades. It's definitely a challenge, but one that Chris accepts fully, as his thirst for learning drives him, culminating in numerous sweat-filled hours inside the shop.

*Ballistic* recently caught up to Chris long enough for him to put on the brakes and discuss the ups and downs of pro skateboarding, entering into the knife-making world as a virtual newbie and why skateboarding was like Mario Kart during his youth.

**WHAT WAS LIFE LIKE FOR A CHILD  
CHRIS LARUE? HOW ABOUT FOR  
THE TEENAGE VERSION?**

I grew up in east county San Diego. Pretty standard childhood. Nothing too crazy, didn't lose a sibling or limb. Teenage Chris, the phrase "teen angst" would be an understatement for me then and possibly to this day.

**DO YOU RECALL WHEN YOU FIRST  
PICKED UP A SKATEBOARD?**

The first time I picked up a skateboard I think I was eight and we might have been riding down all the neighborhood hills. It was like us playing our version of Mario Kart on a skateboard.





# STICKING THE LANDING

**PLAYING AROUND ON A SKATEBOARD IS ONE THING, DEDICATION TO IT IS ANOTHER. AT WHAT POINT IN YOUR LIFE DID THAT OCCUR, AND HOW DID IT COME ABOUT?**

There was never a point for me where I had to decide to dedicate my time to skateboarding to be a pro skateboarder. I just have always skateboarded. It's my life, been doing it now for over 22 years. I've only been a pro skateboarder for three years. I don't think anything would drastically change in my life if I weren't a pro. It's always been what I do.

**WHEN YOU BECAME A PRO, DID FAMILY AND FRIENDS SUPPORT YOUR CHOICE?**

Ha ha, my family hasn't been against it completely or for it completely. But I will say once I turned pro, they seemed to be more interested in it, which was cool.

**LIKE LIFE IN GENERAL, DID YOUR YEARS SKATEBOARDING HAVE ITS UPS AND DOWNS?**

Yes. Just like life, in skateboarding you have to be ready to ride that wave or ramp. Like in anything, you battle stuff, mentally and physically, and learn to take control of that or you give it up because your body just can't take it.

**FROM SKATEBOARDER TO KNIFE MAKER IS A SOMEWHAT STRANGE TRANSITION. HOW DID THAT COME ABOUT?**

It is a strange transition, but believe it or not Andrew Arrabito (founder of Half Face Blades) can skate and most of the other dudes from Half Face come from similar backgrounds as myself. Basically I've known all these guys from Half Face for way longer than I've worked for them. Partying, skating, life. I used to do woodwork with my old skateboards. Like make succulent pots that I would turn on the lathe after pressing and gluing boards. They knew I needed a job and that was a wrap. I've always just been into knives.

**HOW WERE YOU RECEIVED BY THE SEASONED KNIFE CREATORS AND DESIGNERS AT HALF FACE?**

Actually I'm not even the only pro skateboarder that works at the shop. James Brockman—look him up! The guy is out of his mind; I love him. He's a great knife maker and a dope skateboarder. I got lucky coming in as a new guy because I knew everyone for the most part. The guys that start fresh, not knowing anyone, good luck. Just kidding, it's not that bad.

And let me be clear, I don't design knives at this point. I'm running two Tormachs, milling out the knives on a CNC router table to cut out the grips. Andrew Arrabito designs all of them.

**DO YOU HAVE A "WISH" LIST FOR THE KNIVES SWIRLING WITHIN YOUR MIND OR ON PAPER?**

I have ideas that I want to create for sure. Mostly in the customs area, but definitely have the green light. I just don't have the time. Venturing out on my own is the goal. Not sure how long down the road that is, but it's down there. But who knows if it will be in the knife world.

**WHAT KNIFE PROJECTS ARE YOU WORKING ON AT THIS TIME?**

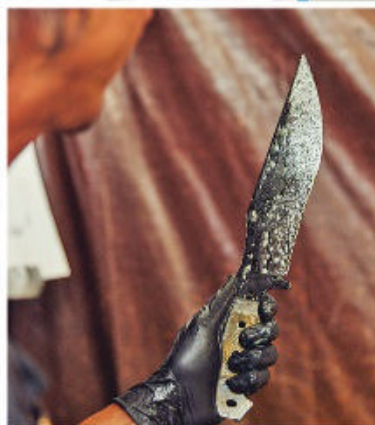
Right now at the shop on the production side of things, we are trying to finish up a project for F.O.G., Forward Observations Group. We're



➔ Half Face Blades was founded by Andrew Arrabito, a retired Navy SEAL and all-around outdoorsman who enjoys such activities as hunting, fishing and camping. After high school, Andrew joined the U.S. Navy and served on the SEAL teams. Afterward, he focused his attention on learning blade-smithing. His goal was to make simple designs for those who demand high-quality and longevity in their blades.

"I wanted each person to have a usable tool, embodied with a warrior's spirit, that will perform to their needs during their walk of life," he said. Half Face Blades takes that message to heart by creating unique blade designs for those who appreciate only the finest products available. For more information, visit [halffaceblades.com](http://halffaceblades.com).

—Michael D'Angona





doing their knives, too. But at the same time we are still always running our own blades, including Crow scouts, Crow junior and Disaster junior.

**WHAT ASPECT(S) OF KNIFE MAKING DO YOU FIND THE MOST CHALLENGING? THE EASIEST?**

When I was on the customs side, consistency was the most challenging part. At Half Face we usually do knives in groups of five if it's not a custom order. Differences really stand out when there are five of the same thing. On the production side, trouble-shooting the machines is always stressful. Easiest isn't really something in knife making.

**HOW DO YOU DIVIDE YOUR TIME BETWEEN SKATEBOARDING, WORKING ON KNIVES AND EVERYTHING ELSE IN YOUR LIFE?**

I spread my time pretty thin. I usually work 54 hours a week, spread out into six days. So any time after work, if I have the itch to skate then I get out there and scratch that itch. But Saturdays, that's my skate day. I find that I value my skate time a lot more when there's not much of it. It's like, don't waste time, get out and get some because you only have today before the week starts over.

**WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUNGSTERS INTERESTED IN THE WORLD OF PRO SKATEBOARDING?**

Trying is cool, don't be scared to get out there and go for it. Also learn how to fall.

**WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO THOSE WHO WANT TO ENTER THE KNIFE-CREATING WORLD?**

Honestly, it's the same. Don't be scared to make mistakes, learn to fix mistakes and learn how to use a belt grinder.

**FROM SKATEBOARDER, TO KNIFE MAKER, TO WHAT NEXT? IS THERE ANOTHER FIELD OF INTEREST YOU MAY TACKLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE?**

Yes, this year I'm learning the laser engraver.

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS? THE NEXT 15?**

The next five years. Ha, I don't plan that far ahead. In the next year I hope to own a laser engraver. I find that machine to be really fun and would like to get into it this year. ●



## LARUE'S TIPS FOR GOING PRO

- ➔ **Practice:** Like any other hobby, sport or activity, practice is an absolute must. In order to get to a high level of skill, basic fundamentals must be reinforced regularly, as well as constantly improving form, balance and fluidity on the board.
- ➔ **Set Yourself Apart:** Skateboarders, sorry to say, are a dime a dozen, so you need something or several somethings to set you apart from the others. It could be a signature move or a variation on a traditional stunt. Either way, you need to do something innovative or you're just a cookie cutter skateboarder.
- ➔ **Market Yourself:** It's no good if you have the necessary skills, but no one knows who you are. That's where a marketing plan comes into play. Using social media, a personal website or showing your "stuff" at local or state community functions and tournaments, you'll gain a following, and that's exactly what you need for the next step.
- ➔ **Explore Companies for Sponsorship:** Once you have your name out there and have a sound marketing plan, it's time to search out sponsorship from Skateboard-centric companies. You might get a door slammed in your face—maybe two, 10 or 100—but persistency wins out, so don't give up.
- ➔ **Accept the Tough Odds of Success:** Your road to being a professional skateboarder might be an easy one, but more often than not it will be challenging on all fronts. For those in it for the love of the sport, it will be an enlightening journey. Those in it for the cold, hard cash might find only disappointment when the pot at the end of the rainbow is far from their reach.



# THE REAL BURGER

# KINGS



**FORGET PLAIN OLD  
CHEESEBURGERS.  
TRY THESE FOUR  
UPPER-CRUST  
RECIPES**

BY JON R. SUNDRA



Alamy Photo

**N**ext to pasta, America's favorite food is the hamburger. There is no shortage of individuals and countries who claim to be the progenitor of what we now refer to as just plain "burgers." That's because many adjectival forms have evolved such as cheeseburger, bacon burger, sausage burger, chili burger, Angus burgers, Carolina burgers and so on. In fact, there are more than 30 recognized iterations of this iconic viand.

The idea of shaving or chopping meat and forming it into some kind of patty and eating it raw or cooked goes back to Genghis Khan. And surely inventive people

all over the rest of the world were doing the same. Starting in the 1850s, German immigrants sailing out of Hamburg and arriving in New York brought with them "Hamburg steaks," which were normally prepared and served as such, not as a sandwich. However, by the mid-1880s hamburgers were being served between slices of bread at state fairs and restaurants throughout the eastern United States. It was not until the 1920s that hamburgers here became synonymous with buns rather than slices of bread. As such, America can arguably claim to be the home of the hamburger as we know it today, not only here, but around the world.

To celebrate this once lowly repast that has since achieved gourmet status in countless homes and restaurants nationwide, I humbly submit the following four gourmet variations that are sure to please.



## RiBeYe BriE BURGER

Just as I believe a ribeye steak needs nothing other than salt and pepper to make it as good as it can be, as a burger it should be treated the same, other than perhaps topping it with a slice of cheese, which in this case I recommend Brie.

Simply pick out a nice, well-marbled boneless ribeye and ask the butcher to put it through the grinder. If it's a typical Choice or Prime steak you'll have about an 80/20 grind, which the consensus tells us is the right meat/fat mix for the perfect burger. You can, of course, grill your burger, but if you're going to add cheese it's best to use a skillet, preferably cast iron, so that after you flip it and add the cheese, you can cover it, which will melt the cheese fast enough that you don't overcook the burger in the process.

Eight-ounce wheels of Brie are available just about everywhere these days, so it's no problem if you want to follow this recipe, simple as it is. Taking a 1/8-inch slice is easiest if you have a filet knife because its thin blade has less resistance. Adding vegetable oil to the blade as you progress also helps. As for the bun, I chose a Brioche; it adds another level of class to this already classy burger.

## BACON/EGG BURGER

Nope, this isn't simply grilling up a burger and slapping a fried egg on top. Far from it. Want to impress your at-home dinner date with a simple yet undeniably outstanding dish? Hell, you can even use knife and fork with this one. Here's all you'll need to make it happen:

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. 80/20 ground beef
- 12 oz. crisp, finely-chopped bacon
- ½ cup diced onion
- 3 cloves finely-chopped garlic
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup Parmesan
- 2 tbs. Worcestershire sauce
- ½ cup chopped Parsley
- ½ cup Panko breadcrumbs
- 1 slice cheese, your choice







## MIRACULOUS MEATBALL SUB

Okay, so a meatball isn't exactly a burger, but the ingredients to make either are essentially the same; it's just in a different form. In fact, take the ingredients from the preceding recipe, eliminate the fried egg, the bacon and the slice of cheese and you've got this one nailed. The twist here is that the meatballs are stuffed with chunks of Mozzarella that oozes out on the first bite. The only addition is that it's built on a sub bun and laced with Pesto.

Once the meat mixture is ready, cut chunks of Mozzarella into 0.75-inch cubes. Take a small handful of meat and form a meatball about 1.75 inches in diameter. Obviously, you can make your meatballs larger or smaller, but the ratio should be close to what I've described. Once you've formed the meatball, press your thumb into the center to make a cavity for the cheese, then slowly form the meat around it until it's completely encircled. You'll have a meatball of about 2 inches that you'll put into a 400-degree oven for about 15 to 20 minutes, depending on how large the meatballs and what degree of doneness you prefer. For the size I've described, about 15 minutes will get you to medium rare.

As for the Pesto, there are so many excellent bottled versions readily available, especially those imported from Italy, that making your own isn't worth the effort. I do, however, make my own Pesto on occasion, and I use Pistachios instead of the traditional pine nuts. For me a three-ball sub topped with a little crushed red pepper and Parmesan, and I'm ready for a football game.



Mix together all the ingredients except one egg and the slice of cheese and form into patties. I like mine about 1 inch thick and slightly larger than the bun to allow for shrinkage, the goal being having a burger the exact same size as the bun. (I'm anal when it comes to stuff like that!) Here again, I'm using cheese, in this case a Muenster, so the patty goes into a cast iron skillet with the same MO—adding the cheese and covering it after the flip to hasten melting.

Meanwhile, in a non-stick frying pan melt a little butter and fry the other egg over low heat so as not to develop any browned edges. I always use a lid—or cover, whichever term you choose—whenever I'm frying eggs. That, and a low-heat setting (I use 2 1/2 on my 10-setting induction cooktop) combine for perfectly cooked eggs every

time. I then use a 3-inch cookie cutter to form the egg into a perfect circle (told you I was anal). I usually use Kaiser buns for my burgers, and that's what I chose to use here. Mate the burger with the bun, top it with that perfect egg, salt and pepper to taste, and have at it. You and your date won't be disappointed.

## ITALIAN STALLION

Sure the name of this one is cliché, but this is one of my favorite burgers, even though it's made with sausage rather than beef, sitting on a bed of sausage-flavored tomato sauce and topped with Mozzarella. What makes Italian sausage Italian is that the ground pork is seasoned with crushed red pepper and Fennel. There is of course Hot Italian sausage, but there's never enough of



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those two ingredients to suit me, so I start with the mild version and season it to my liking. If you want other seasonings, by all means have at it, but I stay with just the red pepper and Fennel.

You'll need a sausage bun, which is just a hot dog bun on steroids, or you can section a French baguette. I prefer the former and shape my patty accordingly, but slightly larger to make up for shrinkage. I like cast iron frying pan—they're extremely efficient on induction cooktops, but the pan is black and the cook top is black, so it's terrible for taking photographs!

Anyway, frying a pork patty is no different than frying a beef burger. I use the five setting on my burner, flip the patty only once, and when it's 2 to 3 minutes before being done add the Mozzarella and



cover. Any longer and most of the cheese will have run off the burger. But please, just because it's pork, don't overcook it! The National Pork Board recommends that pork be cooked at 145 to 160 degrees internal temperature, which represents Medium Rare to Done. I never cook any form of pork to more than 150 degrees and monitor the temp with an instant-read digital thermometer.

While my burger's cooking, I hollow out the bottom half of the bun so that it holds more sauce. You can use your fingers to do it, but I find tongs do a better job. All that's left is to sauce the bun, and here again I take a shortcut and use a bottled tomato sauce. There's plenty of good sauces out there, but I like Bertolli's Italian Sausage. Top it off with a little Parmesan and Oregano, and you're good to go. Buon appetito! ●

# MOUNTAIN PRIMAL

## FRESH, RANCH-RAISED MEAT DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR

BY MATT HOGAN



It's 2021. Thanks to the wonders of the Internet, you can have pretty much anything delivered to your doorstep, and that "anything" obviously extends to food. No, we're not talking about pizza and fast food. We're talking about meat. And no, we're not talking about expiring meat found in the depths of your local grocery store. We're talking about fresh, ranch-raised meat found in Colorado's Roaring Fork Valley. Yes, that's wildly specific. But the Internet, despite many of its shortcomings, can be a wondrous place. That brings us to Mountain Primal Meat Co.

### Mountain Primal Meat Co.

You might be surprised at the myriad of meat delivery services available. It's a laundry list, and I've sampled some in the past that have been hit or miss. Somehow, one of Mountain Primal's steaks landed on my Instagram feed and immediately caught my attention. This led me to the Mountain Primal Instagram page, which is #Meat-Porn in its highest form. So I reached out for some high-grade meat.

Found at the base of the Crown Mountain near Basalt, Colorado, the company ships thousands of pounds of prime meat across the United States each year. It uses specialized cold-storage packaging to get the meat safely to the awaiting grill master.

Mountain Primal specializes in American Highland beef and American Berkshire pork. That might not mean a whole lot to most of you, so take it from the ranchers themselves: "The American Highlander has a modern beef carcass that yields lean yet well-marbled meat, ensuring tenderness and succulence with a distinctive flavor. Highland beef is healthy and nutritious with lower levels of fat and cholesterol and higher levels of protein and iron than commercial beef.

"Berkshire Pork is redder than commercial pork, sweeter, and laced with intramuscular fat. Modern lean hogs have been bred to have very little fat and taste, which is why pork is more akin to chicken



"Found at the base of the Crown Mountain near Basalt, Colorado, the company ships thousands of pounds of prime meat across the United States each year."





these days. Berkshire Pork is simply the best pork money can buy!"

We don't expect you to take them at their word—that's where we come in.

### Our Grilling Session

We received our order from Mountain Primal in mid-February, maybe one week after ordering. However, we didn't get a chance to grill until the first weekend of April, thanks to a lingering winter in the Northeast. When we finally got to it, we had all of the following at our disposal: One package of breakfast sausage, one package of jalapeño cheese bratwurst, four pork chops and one top sirloin.

For cooking, we grilled everything over wood charcoal on a Vision Kamado Grill. As for rubs, spices and sauces, everyone is different. Personally, I like to let the meat do the talking the first time around, so we didn't go overboard. We used a small dash of seasoning from the good people over at Meat Church BBQ. Aside from that, the meat was "naked."

We started with the breakfast sausage and jalapeño cheese bratwurst as an appetizer of sorts. We're sure there are a few of you whining, "But breakfast sausage for dinner?" Yes, we're adults and we'll eat what we want when we want.

Both had a perfect char on the outside while retaining an absurd amount of flavor

on in the inside. But the jalapeño cheese bratwurst was everyone's favorite.

### The Main Course

After that, we threw the four pork chops and sirloin on the grill. We grilled the pork chops hot and fast. The grill was at more than 500 degrees when the pork and steak hit. We didn't document the exact temperature because a mountain lion snuck in the yard and distracted us while we were grilling and, uh ... yeah, that's a lie. Actually, we forgot to document the temperature because we were more focused on our beers—it happens.

Five minutes on each side did the trick for the pork. I wouldn't suggest more than that because you don't want to dry them out. The Honey Hog seasoning from Meat Church BBQ was perfect for the chops, but they honestly would've been fine without anything at all; it's the dealer's choice. Again, like the sausage and brats, the pork had plenty of flavor on the inside.

The steak saw about 14 minutes on the grill total. It was a thick cut, so we put it on there for about seven minutes per side. The result was a nice medium, almost medium rare. You're welcome to leave it on the grill longer if you're more of a well done-type person. If you are one of those people, please also report yourself to the proper authorities, because you're sick.

Kidding aside, the steak was fantastic. It was tender and flavorful like everything else that preceded it. Next time might call for some pan-searing with butter and herbs, but the wood charcoal perfectly gave off the flavor we all wanted. Again, like the pork chop, the steak would've been just fine without any seasoning at all, which is the mark of a good cut. Maybe add some salt and pepper, and then call it a day.

### Final Flames

There's definitely some innuendo here about not being able to beat Mountain Primal's meat, but we're not children so we won't finish that innuendo...though it looks as if we already did. Sue us. We don't want to bash other meat delivery companies or meat subscription services. Instead, we'll sing some praise for Mountain Primal Meat Co. Overall, it's the best we've had via delivery. Period.

Mountain Primal features a wild variety of offerings. We've already started prepping our next order list; the porterhouse and point brisket are near the top of said list. Our first experience with Mountain Primal certainly lived up to the hype we had built up in our brains before the meat arrived. We suggest trying it out for yourself. For even more information, visit [mountainprimal.com](http://mountainprimal.com). ●



# THERE WILL BE BLOODY



TIME TO GO SIX ROUNDS  
WITH THE TASTIEST  
HANGOVER BEATERS

*By Fred Mastison*



**P**erhaps you survived an evening of hand-to-bottle combat and are a bit worse for the wear. An age-old philosophy that has been adopted by many is having “some of the hair of the dog that bit you.” In simpler terms, it is having a drink as a way to take the edge off that almost incapacitating hangover. There have been many concoctions brewed up over the years, but the gold standard is those using tomato juice as the base—for the vitamins, of course. While your first thought might go to the classic Bloody Mary, you need to know that Mary is not the only one offering to help you with your wrecked head. In fact, there are several that would stand up and fight for your attention and consumption. So, without further ado, let's drag our contenders into the ring and see who comes out on the top of your list.

## BLOODY MARY

Our first fighter is Mary; AKA, Bloody Mary. The Bloody Mary is a delicious concoction that uses tomato juice as a base. The folklore states that it is designed to settle the stomach. It also has salt to replenish electrolytes and alcohol, of course, to numb the pain. So, this is obviously a health food drink. The drink is traditionally served in a highball glass with vodka as its alcohol. While tomato juice and vodka anchor this classic, it has seen a wide variety of add-ons. These include celery, Tabasco sauce, celery salt and other more exotic choices. To some bartenders, the Bloody Mary is but a canvas to be dressed up with garnishes ranging from strawberries to bacon. A quick search shows that there are a variety of recipes out there, but the

most common one is as follows. Give this a try and make sure to tell Mary I sent you.

### YOU'LL NEED:

- Celery salt
- lemon wedge
- 1 lime wedge
- 2 ounces vodka
- 4 ounces tomato juice
- 2 teaspoons prepared horseradish
- 2 dashes Tabasco sauce
- 2 dashes Worcestershire sauce
- 1 pinch ground black pepper
- 1 pinch smoked paprika
- Garnish: parsley sprig
- Garnish: green olives
- Garnish: lime wedge
- Garnish: celery stalk

### Directions

- Pour some celery salt onto a small plate.
- Rub the juicy side of the lemon or lime wedge along the lip of a pint glass.
- Roll the outer edge of the glass in celery salt until fully coated, then fill the glass with ice and set aside.
- Squeeze the lemon and lime wedges

into a shaker and drop them in.

- Add the vodka, tomato juice, horseradish, Tabasco, Worcestershire, black pepper, paprika, plus a pinch of celery salt along with ice and shake gently.
- Strain into the prepared glass.
- Garnish with parsley sprig, two speared green olives, a lime wedge and a celery stalk.

## BLOODY CAESAR

Next up in our libation death match is Bloody Caesar. Caesar joins us from the great white north of Calgary, Canada. It has a similar mixing body with vodka and tomato juice, but adds in the odd-sounding clam broth. I am certain that many of you who were unaware of said concoction immediately tilted your head as said, “Clam broth?” It is tastier than the description might lead you to believe. The story goes that in 1968, the owners of the Calgary Inn asked their barkeep to create a signature drink for the new Italian restaurant. He accepted the challenge and took some vodka, a bit of Worcestershire and a little tabasco, added a mix of clam and tomato juices and dubbed it the “Bloody Caesar.”







BLOODY CAESAR

The drink was a hit then and it has never stopped. It is pretty much the national drink of Canada and has many fans around the world, as well. If you want to stray off the bloody path, it may be time to say hello to Caesar.

## YOU'LL NEED:

- Celery salt, to rim glass
- 1 ½ ounces vodka
- 4 ounces Clamato juice
- 2 dashes Worcestershire sauce
- 2 dashes Tabasco sauce
- Prepared horseradish, to taste (optional)
- Garnish: cucumber spear
- Garnish: lime wedge
- Garnish: celery stalk

## Directions

- Coat the rim of a tall glass with celery salt, fill with ice and set aside.
- Add the vodka, Clamato juice, Worcestershire sauce, Tabasco and horseradish into a mixing glass with ice.
- Pour back and forth into another mixing glass a few times to combine.
- Strain into the prepared glass.
- Garnish with a cucumber spear, lime wedge and celery stalk.



BLOODY JOSEPH

## BLOODY JOSEPH

Round three of our battle brings in Bloody Joseph. This version of our tomato juice cocktail strays from the beaten path by ignoring vodka and injecting Scotch. Of all our bloody beverages, the Joseph is certainly designed to bring a little punch to the drink. The origins of the first Bloody Joseph are a bit vague, so I will just say it was invented by Connor McDundis of Edinburgh in 1875. That claim has as much veracity as the other versions I have found in my research. And at least mine offers a tip of the hat to the Scotch holy land. One suggestion on this medicinal cocktail from a serious Scotch drinker: Do not use your secret stash of 25-year-old single malt to make this. Mixing a splendid scotch in a cocktail like this is technically against the Geneva convention, so grab something a little less expensive yet tasty.

## YOU'LL NEED:

- 1 ½ ounces Scotch
- 4 ounces tomato juice
- 4 ounces lemon juice
- 2 dashes Worcestershire sauce
- 3 dashes Tabasco sauce
- Celery salt
- Prepared horseradish, to taste (optional)



BLOODY BEER

- Garnish: lime wedge
- Garnish: celery stalk

## Directions

- Coat the rim of a tall glass with celery salt, fill with ice and set aside.
- Add the Scotch, tomato juice and Worcestershire sauce, Tabasco and horseradish into a mixing glass with ice.
- Pour back and forth into another mixing glass a few times to combine.
- Strain into the prepared glass.
- Garnish with a cucumber spear, lime wedge and celery stalk.

## BLOODY BEER

Challenger number four is what I will refer to simply as bloody. It is the well-known Bloody Beer and has been in the lineup for eons. This is a simple beverage that has all the “medicinal” qualities of our other drinks, but without some of the frills. This drink lives around the country under several aliases such as Red Beer, Tomato Beer and even Red Rooster. Regardless of the name, this drink has graced tables and tailgates since people started mixing drinks. The most important part



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**BLOODY MARIA**

of making this drink is to choose a simple beer. Avoid any over-the-top craft IPAs brewed with essence of twig and a palate of roasted coffee. Stick with a crisp, clean lager for best results. Feel free to use your favorite regional summer-sitting-on-the-porch beer, as well. If you are looking for something a little more simple, Bloody Beer may be your winner.

### YOU'LL NEED:

- 1 6-ounce can tomato juice
- 2 12-ounce cans or bottles lager beer

### Directions

- Shake the can of tomato juice and divide evenly between two pint glasses.
- Pour beer into the tomato juice in each glass to combine. Drink up.

## BLOODY MARIA

Number five in our parade of challengers comes a Senorita with a south-of-the-border taste. Say hello to Bloody Maria. Maria has convinced us to ditch vodka and mix in tequila to give us a more dynamic drink. Like the Bloody Joseph, the Bloody Maria has no known origin date or location, and it is likely



**VIRGIN MARY**

that it has existed in some form for decades. The Bloody Maria recipe I will share today has a base laced with tomato juice, two brands of hot sauce, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, celery salt and black pepper, and it gains an additional kick from a hefty dose of horseradish. For those that believe garnishes make the drink, I will throw in a salad-like medley of garnishes, including a cucumber spear, jalapeño slices and queso fresco. That should make it as much of a snack as it is a drink. Many a night has gone awry when tequila gets involved, so it is only fitting that Maria offers us some damage control.

### YOU'LL NEED:

- 2 ounces tequila
- 4 ounces tomato juice
- ½ ounce lemon juice, freshly squeezed
- ½ tablespoon prepared horseradish,
- 4 dashes Worcestershire sauce
- 2 dashes Tabasco sauce
- 2 dashes Tapatio hot sauce
- 1 pinch celery salt
- 1 pinch ground black pepper
- Garnish: lime wedge
- Garnish: lemon wedge
- Garnish: cucumber spear
- Garnish: sweet pepper slices

- Garnish: jalapeño pepper slices
- Garnish: queso fresco

### Directions

- Add the tequila, tomato juice, lemon juice, horseradish, Worcestershire sauce, Tabasco, Tapatio, celery salt and black pepper to a shaker and fill with ice.
- Shake briefly and strain into a pint glass filled with fresh ice.
- Garnish with a lime wedge, a lemon wedge, a cucumber spear and a skewer of sweet pepper slices, jalapeño slices and queso fresco.

## VIRGIN MARY

The last challenger in the lineup is one we find in every group. She is the responsible one, the one who never overindulges. She is the Virgin Mary. This tasty drink has all our regular ingredients, save one...alcohol. Thus, the other name this cocktail is known as is "The Bloody Shame." I cannot personally understand why someone would leave out the life blood of these drinks, but to each his own. If you want to have the taste of the bloody drink without the pain relief aspect, here is a good recipe.

### YOU'LL NEED:

- 6 ounces tomato juice
- ½ ounce lemon juice
- 2 dashes Worcestershire sauce
- 3 drops Tabasco sauce
- 1 dash celery salt
- ½ teaspoon sugar (optional)
- ice
- salt and pepper, to taste
- celery stalk

### Directions

Combine the tomato juice, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, Tabasco, celery salt, and sugar in a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake well to combine and chill. Strain the drink into a chilled glass (ice optional). Season as desired with salt and pepper. Serve with a celery stalk as garnish. If desired, rim the glass with black pepper before serving.

So, these are your challengers. Consider your choice carefully and choose your winner. My personal suggestion is to sample them all just to make sure that you can decide which one is your favorite. Sláinte! ●





# PULSAR

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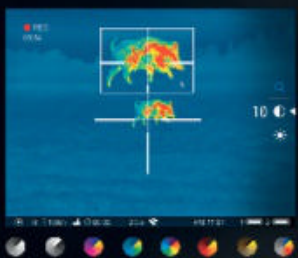
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Prescription protective eyewear, like these Magpul Defiant glasses, make a huge difference on the pistol range and behind a scope.

# RANGE Rx EYEWEAR

**TAKE THIS SOUND BUYER'S ADVICE AND GET BACK ON THE BULL IN NO TIME**

BY DAVID MACCAR



A few months ago I accepted the fact that my eyes were no longer up to snuff for iron sights without assistance, especially handgun sights. The front sight was no longer lining up in the rear notch no matter how hard I tried to focus on it, and my accuracy went to hell. There was no choice. It was finally time to get some eye pro with prescription lenses.

Of course, if you wear contact lenses, you bypass the need for Rx shooting glasses and can just use your regular range shades with protective lenses. But I have no practice sticking a synthetic lens to my eyeball with my fingertip, and I might be too old to learn. It still freaks me out every time I see my wife put her contacts in with near supernatural deftness.



So, I looked at two companies I've relied on in the past for non-Rx shooting glasses. Let's be honest, if a pair of shooting glasses is tinted, they always end up doubling as everyday sunglasses, so looks do matter, as does proper fit. I also decided to try out a new company making some waves in the outdoor world and was happily surprised.

## GETTING INFO ON YOUR EYES

It goes without saying that you need a prescription to get prescription eye protection. The script will be two sets of three numbers, usually labeled SPH, CYL and Axis. The sets will be labeled OD and OS, one for each eye.

But these aren't the only numbers needed to create a pair of glasses. You will also need to know your pupillary distance (PD), that is, the distance from the center of the nose to the center of each eye when looking straight ahead. This will usually appear as two measurements in inches, again one for each eye.

Back in the day, the place you regularly bought glasses would just give you this information. Often, your eye doctor would have it all on hand. These days, you might find that's not the case, especially if your doctor and the place that orders and sells you your glasses are one in the same.

I got new everyday glasses back in December and used an independent, non-chain, all-in-one place near my neighborhood

for the first time. The experience was pleasant enough, until I gave them a call a few weeks later to get my prescription information for some shooting glasses.

I was put on hold for a while, then someone told me they don't give out PD because it can change over time. No. Once your skull stops growing, no, it can't. I asked if they could at least email me a copy of my prescription because I couldn't reliably make out the doctor's chicken scratch (some things never change). Back on hold.

Eventually, a co-owner got on and gave me a speech that had clearly been delivered before. He said PD measurements aren't part of the prescription, as they are taken by one of the people in polo shirts in the store and not by the doctor. Therefore, he said, those numbers were the store's property.

It was a little jarring, but not totally unexpected. Online prescription eyewear vendors

have been taking a huge chunk of business away from brick-and-mortar stores for years, and it's easy to see why. Even with insurance coverage, I paid about \$200 for my new glasses, and they were one of the cheapest options in the store. On those sites, I can get a similar pair for \$30 to \$40. For people on a budget, it's not even a choice.

I explained that I was going to be ordering glasses that they certainly didn't carry, so it wouldn't be biting into their business. He offered to sell me a \$400 pair of prescription Oakleys. I hung up, and bought a \$7 device off Amazon that allowed me to measure my own PD in a mirror. It's not exactly rocket science, and you can even do it with a steady hand, a piece of paper and a regular ruler. Months after wearing glasses created with the measurement I took in the mirror I'm doing just fine with several pairs of glasses ordered online.

Cleve Gordon, owner and operator of Breakline Sunglasses, says he's heard about similar difficulties plenty of times as a direct-to-consumer operation. This is simply a roadblock you'll likely have to deal with when buying Rx glasses online, and he'll explain exactly how to take your own PD if you can't figure it out.

Once you get all your info, ordering the glasses is usually a pretty straightforward process, but one that differs from company to company. Here are three I did business with.

## BREAKLINE

Breakline is a fairly new eyewear brand that has been making waves in angler circles the past couple years with their excellent and affordable polarized shades. They offer all of their sunglasses (save for a couple models with wire frames) with prescription Trivex lenses that have an ANSI certification rating of Z87.1. While these shades might have been built for the water, they are also excellent for the range.

However, there's no way to actually order Rx Breakline shades on their site. Just shoot an email to [info@breaklineoptics.com](mailto:info@breaklineoptics.com) to get the ball rolling.

After asking what models fit me best in the past, Breakline sent me some frames to test out before making my final choice. I settled on the Oversoul model. A couple of weeks later,



Breakline glasses might be designed with anglers in mind, but they're also great performers on the range.



**“...ORDERING CUSTOM PRESCRIPTION BALLISTIC EYE PRO IS EASIER AND MORE AFFORDABLE NOW THAN EVER.”**



MAGPUL  
EXPLORER



WILEY X  
ROGUE



MAGPUL  
TERRAIN

I had my prescription shades in hand, tinted for sunny days at the range with a mirror finish.

I was immediately impressed by how lightweight the Oversouls are. Trivex was originally developed for military aircraft canopies in the 1990s. When made into lenses, it's thicker than polycarbonate, but about 10 percent lighter and extremely durable, while having glass-like clarity. The quality of the made-in-Italy frames is stellar, and the lenses are perfect. They quickly became my go-to shades at the range and behind the wheel. Check them out at [breaklineoptics.com](http://breaklineoptics.com).

## MAGPUL

Since they introduced their ballistic eyewear line in 2018, Magpul has become one of the more popular brands of shooting glasses. They're extremely rugged and have a way of looking tactical while also blending into a crowd.

While you can't order Rx shades directly from the Magpul site, the company has partnered with [TacticalRX.com](http://TacticalRX.com) to produce and sell prescription versions of their Helix, Radius, Summit, Terrain, Explorer and

Explorer XL models. Prices range from \$109 to \$119. Just check out the selection on the site and give Tactical RX a call at 888-807-5165 to start your order. Glance at what Magpul has to offer at [magpul.com](http://magpul.com).

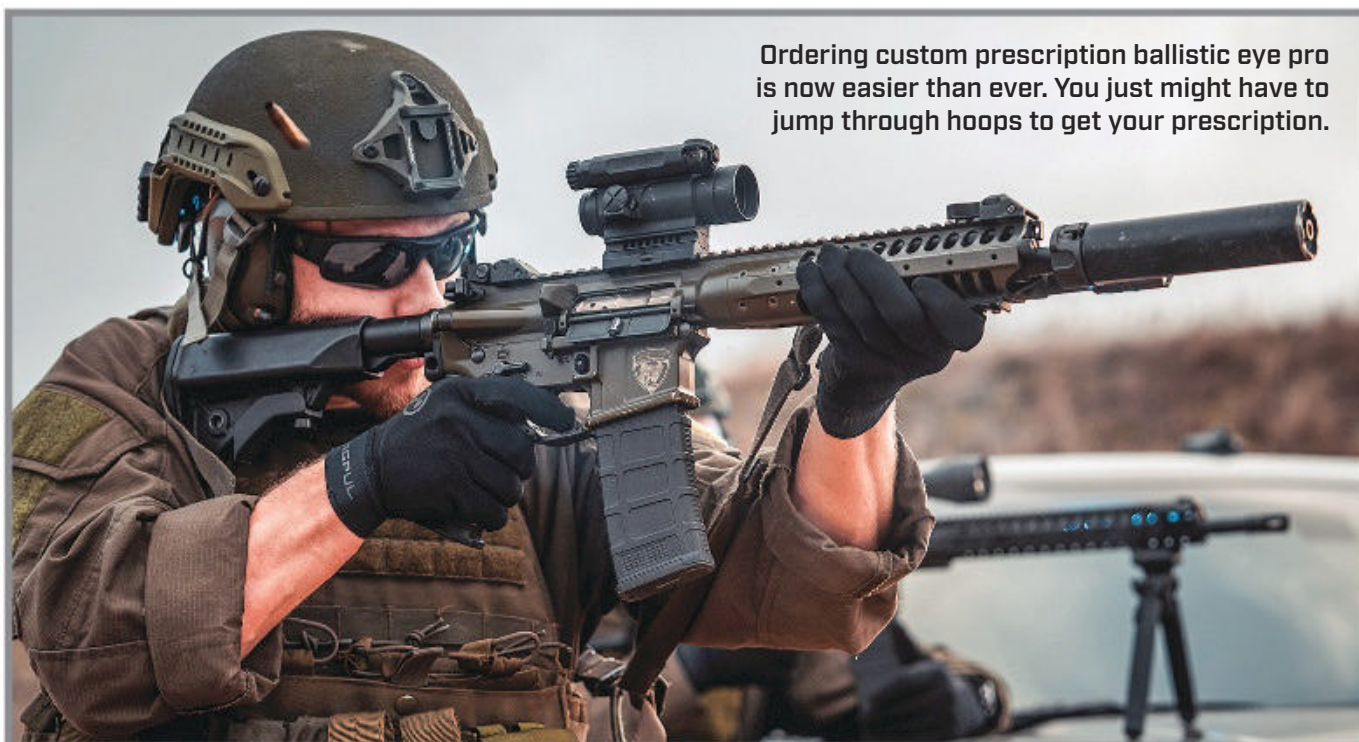
## WILEY X

Wiley X has been making ballistic and protective eyewear for the U.S. military, law enforcement officers, fire and EMS professionals for three decades. These days, Wiley X offers more than 40 of its eyewear models with optional prescription lenses via its website. You can input all your Rx information right on their site as you choose from standard, polarized, captive polarized and photochromic lenses. While frame color options are reduced for some models when ordering the Rx version, most have a bevy of lens color options. There are also optional anti-fog and anti-scratch coatings.

In addition to their sunglasses models, Wiley X also produces several eyewear models with clear lenses that can easily serve as both inconspicuous everyday glasses and protective glasses. See more at [wileyx.com](http://wileyx.com).

## WRAPPING IT UP

Despite a couple of hoops to jump through, ordering custom prescription ballistic eye pro is easier and more affordable now than ever. You're going to spend more than you would for a regular pair of ballistic glasses, but the first time you go to the range with your new Rx eyewear you'll be kicking yourself for not getting a pair sooner. I know I was—especially when, like the flip of a switch, my handgun groups tightened back up to where they should be. ●



Ordering custom prescription ballistic eye pro is now easier than ever. You just might have to jump through hoops to get your prescription.





Karen James is a noted journalist and expert in sex and relationships.

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Ask The Expert

Love, Marriage, and  
**Sex After 50!**

# The Amazing Sex Secret Of A 78 Year-Old 'Italian Stallion!'

## A Secret Any Man Can Use...

This month I got a letter from a reader in Texas about a "little secret" that has renewed her sex life with her husband!

### Tina writes: Dear Karen,

For years my husband and I had a wonderful love life, but when he reached his 50s, he lost some of his old spark, especially in the bedroom. He tried every product available, but nothing worked. For the past few years, it's felt like we were roommates, not husband and wife.

Well, last month he came home from a business trip in Europe and shocked me with more energy and passion than he's had in years. He took me in the bedroom like we were newlyweds and gave me a night I'll never forget. It was just incredible, and our love life has been like that ever since. So here we are, closer than ever and enjoying the best sex of our lives... in our 50's!

On his trip, my husband stayed in a hotel room next to an Italian nutritionist and his wife and heard them passionately making love every night. He figured they must be in their twenties, but one morning he encountered them in the hallway and it turns out, they were in their 70s!

Instead of being embarrassed that they'd been found out, they were positively glowing and happy to share their "secret." The man pulled out a small pack from his satchel, gave it to my husband and said "These tablets come from a small town up north and are made from naturally pure extracts, packed with densely rich sexual nutrients. They will give you powerful erections and you will perform in the bedroom even better than you did as a young man. Then he laughed and said, "You will become an Italian Stallion, like me!"



***"My husband shocked me with more passion than he's had in years. He took me in the bedroom like we were newlyweds and gave me a night I'll never forget!"***

Karen, my husband has been taking one tablet each morning with breakfast, but the pack is almost empty and we both desperately want more. Do you know about these European tablets and how to get some in the States?

Sincerely,

**Tina D., Fort Worth, TX**

Tina, you're in luck, I do know about them. Ever wonder why older men from Italy and all over Europe are famous for staying energized, passionate, and sexually active well into their golden years? For decades, these men have relied on a unique blossom seed extract to enhance their bedroom power and performance.

Milled on the fertile northern plains, and sold under the brand name Provarin, these pure plant extracts have a legendary reputation throughout Europe for naturally fueling extremely hard erections. As Giovanni from Milan put it, "It's like bedroom rocket fuel - especially for us older guys!"

All-natural and safe to take, Provarin is a well-kept secret for those in the know. An old-school, family business, they still harvest product by hand and don't do any advertising. Long-time customers and word of mouth ensures their limited stock is sold out every year.

They do have a distributor here in the U.S. and Provarin is surprisingly inexpensive. A spokesman told me they were proud to produce the highest quality product for men and couples. He went on to say that if any of my readers call and mention this article, they'll get a special one time double-discount, plus free shipping and a bonus pack of 30 tablets free!

Wow, so there you go, Tina - and the rest of you readers! The offer is only good while supplies last so give them a call today. The number is **1-800-585-7545.**

Aren't you glad you asked?

*Karen*

These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. Dramatic portrayal. Results atypical. Your results may vary. In order to assure confidentiality, identifying details, scenarios have been changed, modified or fictionalized. Always consult your health care provider before taking any supplement. Offer not available to Iowa residents.





## CAN'T-MISS GEAR FOR THE RANGE AND EVERYDAY DEFENSE

BY ALEX LANDEEN



Entrepreneur, BJJ black belt, UFC fighter, Green Beret, sniper, TV host and speaker Tim Kennedy does many things, but shooting is one of his favorite.

I recently had the pleasure of taking a week of Kennedy's Sheepdog Response training courses. It included days of fundamentals of marksmanship, rifle training, jiu jitsu and self-defense training, pistol training, and their Singleton Security class designed to teach the fundamentals of home protection, single-person room clearing, situational planning and more.

This opportunity reinforced my notion that having reliable, high-quality gear is of the utmost priority when it comes to saving your life and the lives of others. (Not to mention great instructors.)

So in this installment of "Threads," it is my pleasure to bring you a list of high-quality, Tim Kennedy-approved gear to get you ready to train and fight effectively.

# KIT UP

# LIKE KENNEDY



## ANR DESIGN

### NIDHOGG Drop Leg Holster with QLS and Vastus System

Your holster is the second most important part of your kit other than your firearm. Buying quality built holsters and mounting accessories not only keeps your gun safe, but you as well. The NIDHOGG holster shells are vacuum-formed, CNC cut for precision and fit G-Code RTI hanger, and also fits the Blade Tech Tek Lok and other mounting from Blade Tech. NIDHOGG holsters are optics cut and support suppressor-height sights up to .450 inches, as well as threaded barrels.

I set this holster up with a 1.75-inch short-drop Tactical Belt Mount, Safariland Quick Locking System and a Vastus System. The Vastus system is a lightweight band mod that lowers the attachment point for your thigh strap that prevents the strap from riding up the leg, creating a more comfortable crotch situation. The whole setup is fast, comfortable and super high quality. ANR holsters are available in dozens of colors and patterns. **[MSRP: \$128; [anrdesignkydexholster.com](http://anrdesignkydexholster.com)]**

## 5.11

### Defender Flex Urban and Range Pants

5.11's line of Defender Flex pants are all-around great choices for work and play. They have a casual look, but with reinforced belt loops and hand pockets for durability. The Range Pant is mostly cotton, with a 3 percent elastane canvas, where the Urban pant is a 68/32 percent polyester and cotton Flex-Tac twill, giving it a little more stretch. The Urban pant is also finished with a Teflon rinse wash to aid in stain and dirt resistance. Whether shooting drills or dressing up for a casual office party, there is a Defender Flex pant that will fit right in. **[MSRP: \$70; [511tactical.com](http://511tactical.com)]**

## 5.11

### Maverick Assaulters Belt

Your belt is the heart of your kit. It keeps your pants up and all your gear securely attached. The Maverick Assaulters is a 1.75 riggers belt with a fast Austrian pin buckle and front web loop. Its solid construction makes it a perfect choice with or without a padded belt.

**[MSRP: \$90; [511tactical.com](http://511tactical.com)]**

## ROKA

### AT-1 Tactical Glasses

Launched in 2013 in Austin, Texas, Roka has built an industry-leading, award-winning in-house design team that engineers some of the most technical eyewear on the planet. The AT-1 Tactical sunglasses are ultra-light (31grams), ANSI Z87+ ballistic rated and designed to be used with ear protection and helmets. The C3i lenses are coated for scratch, chemical and fingerprint resistance. The frames are made with ultra-durable TR-90 nylon and have titanium core wires that allow the user to adjust the temple fit. **[MSRP: \$195; [roka.com](http://roka.com)]**

## SHEEPDOG RESPONSE

### Logo Windbreaker

Training never stops, rain or shine! When the day is only half over and the weather comes in, grab your SDR windbreaker. At only 2.5 ounces, this 100 percent polyester jacket has a three-panel hood, mesh pockets, elastic cuffs and a tightening toggle at the waistband. The obvious cool factor will cut down your split times, guaranteed! **[MSRP: \$40; [sheepdogresponse.com](http://sheepdogresponse.com)]**

## 5.11

### Norris Sneaker

These are my favorite range shoes. Available now in four new colors—black, storm, dark coyote and coyote—the Norris Sneaker might look like just another casual shoe, but these shoes are built for work. ASTM-certified for puncture resistance, the Vibram Marbrani outsole with XS Trek is designed for both flexibility and wet traction, and is non-marking. The full-length Ortholite footbed keeps your feet comfortable. These shoes are form-fitting, so if you think you might need a wide version, get it. **[MSRP: \$100; [511tactical.com](http://511tactical.com)]**



## FN

509 LS Edge  
Tim Kennedy Special

➔ Anyone who follows Kennedy on social media knows his love and admiration for his FN 509 LS Edge—especially since he helped design it! This workhorse tactical 5-inch pistol features a snappy, flat-faced trigger with a 90-degree break, integrated factory aluminum magwell and a low-profile optics mounting system that allows co-witnessing when using red-dot optics. Anyone who has spent years abusing electronic devices knows it's seriously important to have a mechanical backup. The target-crowned barrel combined with a new conical striker that reduces the trigger pull by about 1 pound makes the LS Edge a tack driver, and the green fiber-optic front sight stands out for fast acquisition. **[MSRP: \$1,499; fnamerica.com]**

## LEUPOLD

## DeltaPoint Pro

➔ The shooting world is really starting to take advantage of the benefits of running a red-dot sight. The DeltaPoint Pro has precise 2.5-MOA dot and a large, clear field of view for fast shooting in high-pressure situations. The easy-access battery compartment allows users to change the CR2032 battery without removing the sight. The strong aircraft aluminum housing is built for abuse and only adds 2 ounces to the overall platform. Plus, the industry-leading glare reduction means you can find your aiming point in the harshest lighting conditions. **[MSRP: \$400; leupold.com]**

## STREAMLIGHT

## TLR-1 HL

➔ Adding a light to a pistol not only adds to low-light target identification while maintaining a two-handed grip, it also increases the forward non-cycling weight, helping the pistol remain flatter between shots. The 1,000-Lumen TLR-1 HL has a 1.5-hour run time on two CR123A batteries. The engineered wide beam pattern gives you good coverage for clearing dark spaces, and the rail clamp system attaches/detaches quickly and safely since you don't have to put your hand in front of the muzzle. **[MSRP: \$150; streamlight.com]**







## GERBER Center-Drive MULTITOOL

➔ Those who have dealt with everyone's favorite AR malfunction—the brass over bolt, otherwise known as bolt override—knows that sometimes no matter how much pushing, pulling, tapping or banging, that thing is just stuck. Enter the multitool—a Center-Drive Plus from Gerber. Optimized for weapons maintenance, the center axis driver opens like a real screwdriver. The one-handed-opening, spring-loaded sliding jaws allow you to keep your other hand occupied (holding your messed up rifle). The 30-percent-larger outboard blade acts like a real knife, versus the smaller blades of the competition. The rest of the goodies include Carbide wire cutters and strippers, pry bar with a nail puller and bottle opener, awl, file, magnetic flathead and Phillips bits, spring-loaded scissors, and a belt or MOLLE-compatible sheath.

## Strongarm

➔ I am a fan of knives, and the more the better. Various blades occupy my pockets, man purse, truck, range bag, camera bag, etc. I even found one in the refrigerator once (not sure how that happened). So,

when it was time to add one to my battle belt, I went with a proven winner—the Gerber Strongarm. Coming in at a respectable 9.8 inches, this full tang 429HC blade with striking pommel is ready for work. The MOLLE/belt-compatible multi-mount sheath is perfect for running vertical or horizontal. **[MSRP: \$70; gerbergear.com]**



## NORTH AMERICAN RESCUE

### Tactical Operator Response Kit

➔ A good individual first aid kit (IFAK) is a crucial piece of gear for any kit. The T.O.R.K. kits range from basic to advanced and carry all the necessary equipment to address the top leading causes of potentially preventable death in tactical environments. All the kits include nitrile gloves, chest seals, combat application tourniquet (CAT), gauze, trauma dressing, shears and eye shield. The more advanced kits can include combat gauze, as well as a Nasopharyngeal Airway 28F, or ARS

Needle Decompression Kit. These more advanced kits require Medical Device Authorization to purchase. (I always recommend enrolling in professional training, especially for tourniquet application.) These compact kits easily attach to MOLLE/PALS connectors and have a rapid opener tab for fast, one-pull opening of the kit. **[MSRP: \$141; narescue.com]**



## HIGH SPEED GEAR

### TACO Pouches

➔ HSG TACOs are the best. Not only do they work with most pistol magazines, they hold multitools, knives, flashlights, etc. The larger tacos fit both .308 and .556 AR mags and will hold larger accessories like a



phone. They hold magazines securely and are quiet and lightweight. They come in a MOLLE version with HSGI clips or a belt-mounted version for belts up to 2.25 inches. **[MSRP: Double Pistol TACO, \$55/ Double Decker TACO, \$46; highspeedgear.com]**





# THE QUOTABLE SOLDIER

**TIM KENNEDY** Shares Some Parting One-Liners To Live By

“It’s a mistake to push a man to violence, when violence is what that man has dedicated his life to perfecting.”

“IN THE QUIET OF THE STORM IS WHEN WE GET A GLIMPSE OF WHO WE REALLY ARE.”

“You want a crappy kid, be a crappy parent. You want an amazing kid, be an amazing parent.”

When ISIS was trying to find him, he went on Fox news and said, ***“They can send whoever they want, as long as they know they are not going to get them back.”***

“THERE IS GOD, FAMILY AND COUNTRY. VERY CLOSE BEHIND THOSE ARE COFFEE, GUNS AND TACOS.”

“BE THE HARDEST PERSON SOMEBODY TRIES TO KILL.”

“Be afraid of the calmest person in the room...”

**“WE TRAIN LIKE WE DO SO ON OUR WORST DAY WE’LL DESTROY THEM ON THEIR BEST DAY.”**





**COLION NOIR,**  
Firearms Enthusiast

The acquisition, ownership and use of firearms is heavily regulated.  
Some models may not be legally available in your state or locale. Know the law and shoot safely.

**9MM  
LUGER**

Caliber

**10+1  
12+1**

Capacity

**3.20"**

Barrel Length

**18.4  
OZ.**

Weight

# <sup>AI</sup> **RUGER** **MAX-9**

The MAX-9™ is Your Next Handgun™.

Whether you're new to firearms ownership, or you've been an enthusiast for years, the versatile MAX-9™ is sure to meet your personal protection needs.

Comfortable enough to conceal in an inside the waistband holster or pocket holster, this micro-sized pistol has it all - without compromising on capacity or features. Rugged, reliable, affordable - the Ruger® MAX-9™.



**RUGER**

[RUGER.COM/MAX-9](http://RUGER.COM/MAX-9)