

HUNTING SPECIAL ISSUE!

FIREARMS NEWS[®]

GUN SALES, REVIEWS & 2A INFORMATION

SEPTEMBER 2024

RUGER AMERICAN STANDARD GEN II IN 6.5 CREEDMOOR

IS THIS THE
MODERN
LIGHTWEIGHT
HUNTING
RIFLE YOU
HAVE BEEN
WAITING FOR?
REVIEW BY
EXECUTIVE EDITOR
DAVID FORTIER

SHAW BARRELS NEW
.400 LEGEND
EXCURSION BOLT-GUN
TAKES ON OHIO WHITETAILS!
REVIEW AND HUNT
BY HUNTING FIELD
EDITOR RIKK RAMBO

ATI'S AFFORDABLE
OVER/UNDER
TURKEY/FOWL SHOTGUN
DIGITAL EDITOR JACK OLLER'S FIELD TEST

STAG ARMS'
STAG 15 PURSUIT RIFLE:
A MASTERPIECE IN .350 LEGEND
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF VINCENT DENIRO
BAGS A BUCK ON OPENING DAY!



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STATE CARTRIDGE FOR WHITETAIL?

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HUNTING AND HANDGUNS

■ **THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS**
USING A MIL RETICLE

■ **IN HUSHED TONES**
SILENCERCO OMEGA
300 SUPPRESSOR

■ **MUSINGS FROM THE
AMMO BUNKER**
IS 7X57MM MAUSER
STILL VIABLE TODAY?

■ **THE WAR GUNS**
MULTI-BARRELED DRILLINGS:
HUNTING LONGARMS USED BY
THE GERMAN LUFTWAFFE

■ **CODREA'S CORNER: DOUBLE HEADER!**
• HOPES AND PRAISE FOR VANCE MUSTN'T
CLOUD GUN OWNER EXPECTATIONS
• TRUMP ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT BRINGS
NEW URGENCY FOR RNC TO AFFIRM 2A

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The Borecam 2.0 will fit 22 caliber and larger barrels and is now equipped with a longer 26" rod. Apps are available for iOS and Android phones and tablets. MSRP: \$199.99. Additional information at LymanProducts.com. Look for Gunsmithing Field Editor Gus Norcross' review in an upcoming issue.



SPOTLIGHT ON A NEW PIN SHOOT CHAMPION – PATRICK SWEENEY

By Anne Marlowe Conrad

The 31st Pin Shoot was held at the Davis Range in Central Lake, Michigan June 8-13, 2024. The event was invented by Richard C. Davis, the original inventor of Soft Concealable Body Armor (Patent #3783449) known as the modern bullet proof vest. His story is fascinating and will take another article to cover, but in the early 1970's he demonstrated his body armor to law enforcement agencies by shooting himself in the chest! While doing a demonstration, he also shot three bowling pins which inspired the competition.

Competitive Pin Shooting

I was new to the idea of pin shooting and thought you might be also. I figure a brief explanation is in order before I introduce our 2024 "Mains" Event Champion Patrick Sweeney.

Shooting bowling pins might seem like an easy thing to do, however, you are shooting at a round object with a hard plastic skin that weighs about three and a half pounds. The objective is to knock the pins to the ground not just tip them over, which takes precision and power. There are a variety of events, that make up the competition, and they are broken into two categories. Main Events and Optional Events.

Main Events

There are six Main Events. The format is straightforward: five pins on a table with penalty pins mixed in. The event is timed from the starting beep to when the last pin hits the ground. Participants shoot six tables, with the best five runs counted. The sixth run serves as the tiebreaker.

There are two "Mains," called Stock Gun and Pin Gun, which are the events



Patrick Sweeney competing in the "Mains" at the Davis Range in Central Lake, Michigan.

Patrick Sweeney handily won this year. These Mains are the oldest in the competition with Stock Gun being the original event and from the beginning, the pre-eminent Main event and whoever wins this is the overall winner of the competition.

In Stock Gun, semi-automatic handguns with iron sights and a maximum barrel length of five inches, or a revolver with iron sights and a maximum barrel length of 8 ¾, are used. Using a stock gun, competitors are limited to eight rounds per gun to start, but reload capacity is unlimited. In Pin Gun, the rules are the same, except there are no barrel length requirements and muzzle brakes and compensators are permitted.

Optional Events

There are 13 optional events including team events, shotguns, pistol caliber carbines, and the Big Push. In the Big Push, shooters face three bowling pins at 21 feet. However, the pins must be knocked at least 14.5 feet! This is the perfect event for the mega-sized handgun fanciers. Shooters are divided into Master Blaster and Ordinary Standard Shooter groups competing in the same events, but not directly against each other.

2024 Pin Shoot "Mains" Champion

Our champion, for the 2024 Pin Shoot, Patrick Sweeney, began his pin shoot obsession in 1984 with two




Patrick Sweeney after winning the 2024 Mains, takes the podium for his award.

pistols, a stock gun and a pin gun, the same pistols he used to win this year.

"Once I learned the pin-shooting ropes, I was a regular in the winning circle, referred to in pin shooting as 'the walk.' That is, the walk up to the prize table, to select a prize. I made the cut to the 'pro' level in 1990, being promoted to Master Blaster." Patrick said.

Patrick told me there is a feeling of family at these events and a big lunch is provided so people can really get to know each other. In the early days of the Pin Shoot, there were over 500 contestants from all over the country and after a several-year hiatus, the sport has grown again to well over 200 contestants and keeps growing as new shooters get involved.

"What brings me back is the adrenaline rush of having to perform on demand, and the camaraderie. Pin shooters are such a family that if your firearm breaks on the line, you will have two, three, or four people offering you theirs, a like firearm, to complete your shooting." He said.

Take a look at Pin Shooting and see if it is something you might enjoy. I know I will be attending one in the future! If you want more information, visit PinShoot.com. 

ARMED JEWISH VOLUNTEERS STOP ANTISEMITIC MOB FROM ENTERING LA SYNAGOGUE

By Yonatan Stern

“Go back to Auschwitz!”

“Hitler didn’t finish the job!”

“We will deal with you much more effectively than the Nazis!”

These were the epithets shouted at the Jewish community of Pico-Robertson according to Ronen, a local resident. On June 23rd, a large group of pro-Palestinian protesters gathered in the center of LA’s largest Jewish neighborhood, blocking the entrance to the Adas Torah Synagogue, while physically assaulting and shouting antisemitic abuse at Jewish residents of the neighborhood. The protesters (many of them masked) brought flags, signs, bullhorns, batons and pepper spray, in a display of what many have described as a pogrom.

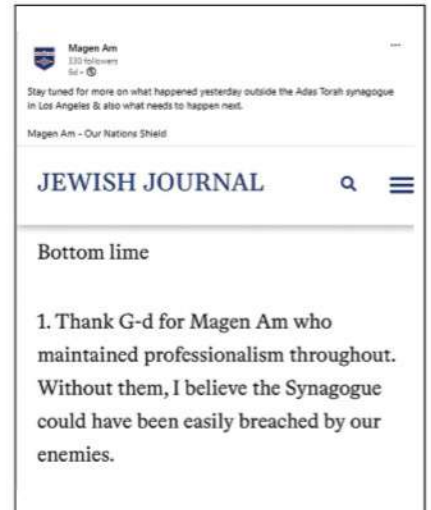
Even Joe Biden condemned the incident. Posting on Twitter, he said, “I’m appalled by the scenes outside of Adas Torah synagogue in Los Angeles. Intimidating Jewish congregants is dangerous, unconscionable, antisemitic, and un-American.”

While the Hamas-supporting mob began rampaging through the neighborhood, Ronen armed himself with a knife and left his home to confront the

antisemitic protesters. Ronen, a former IDF sniper who fought in the Lebanon War, owns a .357 Magnum Smith & Wesson revolver, but due to California’s strict gun control laws, he was unable to legally leave his home with it. Many other local Jews also joined Ronen in the streets to defend their community against the mob; but likewise, California’s draconian gun control laws prohibited these residents from protecting their community with firearms. Ronen believes that if the rioters had targeted a Jewish community in a Red State unconstrained by totalitarian gun control, Jews would have been able to take to the streets open carrying AR-15’s, which would have intimidated the attackers and stopped the violence.

While the mayhem unfolded outside the Synagogue, few noticed the fact that the rioters were unable to achieve what many believe had been their ultimate goal; breaching and rampaging inside the Synagogue itself. And this is thanks in large part to a Jewish armed security team known as Magen Am. Founded by Rabbi and martial artist Yossi Eilfort, Magen Am has provided LA Jews with firearms training and given many of them security guard certification so they can carry firearms openly to defend their Synagogues and other institutions.

WHILE THE PICO-ROBERTSON COMMUNITY REMAINS SHOCKED BY THIS HORRIFIC INCIDENT, MAGEN AM’S PERFORMANCE PROVED THAT AMERICAN JEWS HAVE COME A LONG WAY SINCE THE DARK DAYS OF THE HOLOCAUST. THE 2ND AMENDMENT HAS GIVEN THEM AN EFFECTIVE TOOL IN KEEPING THEIR COMMUNITIES SAFE FROM ALL ENEMIES, BOTH FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC.



This is no easy feat in Democrat-ruled and overtly anti-gun Los Angeles.

In a post on social media published shortly after the incident, Magen Am reposted a quote from the LA Jewish Journal by Rabbi Abraham Cooper, “Bottom line... Thank G-d for Magen Am who maintained professionalism throughout. Without them, I believe the Synagogue could have been easily breached by our enemies.”

While the Pico-Robertson community remains shocked by this horrific incident, Magen Am’s performance proved that American Jews have come a long way since the dark days of the Holocaust. The 2nd Amendment has given them an effective tool in keeping their communities safe from all enemies, both foreign and domestic.

About the author:

Yonatan Stern, a former resident of Pico-Robertson, is an IDF veteran and professional firearms instructor who specializes in training Synagogues and other houses of worship against violent attacks. He is the director of Cherev Gidon Israeli Tactical Training Academy in Honesdale, PA. Yonatan can be reached at: mefaked@cherevgidon.com [Cont. to page 114]



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David Codrea is the winner of multiple journalist awards for investigating/defending the RKBA and a long-time gun owner rights advocate who defiantly challenges the folly of citizen disarmament. In addition to being a regular featured contributor for Firearms News, he blogs at "The War on Guns: Notes from the Resistance," and posts on Twitter: @dcodrea and Facebook.

TRUMP ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT BRINGS NEW URGENCY FOR RNC TO AFFIRM SUPPORT FOR 2ND AMENDMENT

"Fight! Fight! Fight!"

Those words, accompanied by the iconic photographs of former President Donald Trump, ear bleeding and fist pumping defiantly into the air as swarming Secret Service agents rushed him off the Butler, PA rally stage, have set a new tone in the race to the White House.

"Set a new tone" isn't really accurate. It's more like "revealed something those of us paying attention to the deadly rhetoric of the left have been saying for years." Much of that has been led by "celebrities" inciting mobs of fans to join in virtual "two minutes hate" sessions.

Recall how "comedienne" Kathy Griffin staged a photo shoot carrying a prop of his bloody head. Johnny Depp "joked about assassinating him. Micky Rourke said he would "love 30 seconds [to] give him a Louisville Slugger. A Comedy Central host wanted to "smother Trump with "the pillow they used to kill Scalia." Madonna said she "thought an awful lot about blowing up the White House." Robert De Niro said he wanted to punch Trump in the face. And a Snoop Dogg video simulated shooting a Trump double in the head.

"How is it possible to hate a man like this and not hate those he represents?" I asked in a 2017 *GUNS Magazine* article. Actor Corey Stoll, who was playing Roman assassin Brutus at the time, likened Julius Caesar to an "avatar" for Trump.

Trump is the avatar — for every American citizen who supports the political platform he campaigns on.

And the people who hate him, who hate you, want your guns.

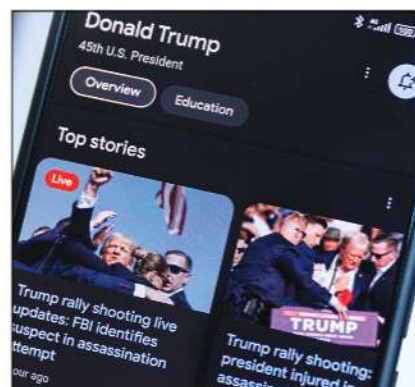
No shortage of comments posted to X from TDS (Trump Derangement Syndrome) trolls bemoaned that the assassination failed. They want him dead. So, if you're planning on voting for him because you want to see the agenda he promises enacted, what must they "think" of you?

It's existential. To answer the question posed by Rodney King in response to the Los Angeles riots, no, we can't all get along. Control freaks and their furious cult followers won't allow it.

Controlled Chaos?

Assuming the facts being reported prove to be as presented, and it's hardly paranoid to speculate on how reliable those are, two questions come immediately to mind: How was the shooter able to escape Secret Service detection while on a rooftop 400 feet away from the podium with a rifle and direct line of sight to Donald Trump? Why, according to videos posted on X that juxtapose sightings of the shooter and warnings to authorities, did it take two minutes before he fired the first shot that elicited their immediate return fire? (New reports that came out while this article was being drafted say "Alleged Trump shooter spotted by law enforcement nearly 30 minutes before shots fired.") Some reports say responders were aware and awaiting order to fire on the sniper — if so, why wasn't Trump immediately rushed off stage?

Is it really due to "abject failure"? Do incompetence allegations that



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Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle is an unqualified DEI appointment explain much of that failure? What about darker allegations? Is it irresponsible to repeat "conspiracy theories" that there was official involvement? Don't political conspiracies exist? Those who call J6 a coup attempt and Trump their leader in sedition say they do.

Is distrust of the "Deep State," to include anti-Trump establishment "uniparty" neocons as well as cultural Marxist Democrat, a rational reaction, especially when politically managed agencies control the information being released and government is now essentially investigating itself? And with a practically non-existent online profile revealed thus far into the background of the shooter (ostensibly a registered Republican who donated to a hardline Democrat PAC), what are we to believe about him, and if he truly acted alone?

How seriously should we take Democrats and their media cheerleaders who every day have been screaming to anyone who would listen that Trump is a threat to Democracy, an insurrectionist, a felon, a racist, a rapist and a tyrant, and who now urge us to "tone

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down the rhetoric”? Will it serve their political purposes if we do? And are there plans for the Justice Department and FBI to tone down calling “white nationalists,” that is, stereotypical MAGA voters, “the greatest threat” against America?

How seriously should we take thoughts and prayers for Donald Trump now offered by leading Democrats feigning sober unity, when the exact same actors have universally ridiculed the idea and demanded more citizen disarmament every time there’s been a gun-free zone shooting to exploit?

Conversely, how seriously should we take Republicans on their often-tepid promises to protect the right of the people to keep and bear arms, now that they’ve stripped all but a passing nod to the Second Amendment from the Republican National Committee platform? Especially with no shortage of Trump haters taking perverse glee in pointing out this is what he gets for not demanding gun bans — along with wishing the bullet had just hit an inch or two closer...?

Is Now the Time to Tone Down Support for 2A?

“Gun control will be in the second term for sure now,” a respected colleague texted me as one of his immediate reactions to the attempt on Donald Trump’s life. I really hope he’s wrong, but the guy has a solid track record of being right.

And that brings up the question we need to not only ask, but demand answers to, even if some may not want to press it so soon after Trump survived taking a bullet: Will this strengthen his resolve to keep his promises to protect “our beautiful Second Amendment” or instead make him receptive to more concessions, like he’s been doing with the abortion issue, and also with immigration, now promising green cards to foreign nationals graduating from U.S. colleges? Add the RNC downplaying the right to keep and bear arms and it looks like the trifecta for dousing fire from his supporters’ bellies.

Make no mistake, the RNC does not issue policy statements without the Trump inner circle’s sanction, and they don’t make a move he objects to. Besides, its co-chair is Lara Trump, the former president’s daughter-in-law. (See the article *Republican Platform Betrays Gun Owners*. <https://www.firearmsnews.com/editorial/republicans-betray-gun-owners/501148>)

Some “pragmatic” influencers within the gun community were quick to make excuses. Trump has made his support for gun owners clear, they argue, and this is simply acknowledging a political reality: Trump and Biden supporters aren’t going to change. He needs to appeal to “independents” who haven’t made up their minds. Theirs will be the votes that mean the difference between Trump winning or losing, with attendant consequences for new laws likely to pass and new judges, especially for the Supreme Court, sure to be nominated. That, and things are different between now and 2016, and threats that needed to be spelled out then are no longer applicable, justifying the new abbreviated RKBA acknowledgment.

“I utterly disagree with that,” I told *Armed American Radio’s* Mark Walters on his nationally broadcast “Daily Defense” program. First, Trump hasn’t been clear. He’s offered general platitudes to rouse the masses, but very few unequivocal specifics to show he truly understands the Second Amendment and “shall not be infringed.” That many of his actions belie that (“Take the guns first, go through due process second,” “I don’t like them [silencers] at all,” “I don’t know why anyone needs an AR-15” as quoted in Emily Miller’s article detailing a report that Trump tried to get support for an assault weapon ban behind the scenes from 2018–19, etc.) is also given a pass, showing the lengths some in the gun owner community are willing to go to shore up an illusion. A recent example is his bump stock ban, now being portrayed by some as a genius 3D chess move to get ATF rules overturned by the Supreme Court — disregarding the risk

that put citizens under who weren’t clued into a secret strategy with no guarantee of outcome. If that’s what he really did (and I call BS on that), he was treating them and their rights as pawns.

With all the new infringements to the Second Amendment being proposed by Democrats and the Biden DOJ/ATF in their non-stop attempts to thwart the *Bruen* decision until such time as Democrats can “win” the numbers to reshape the high court, there’s never been a more urgent time to get in front of the Second Amendment, and not just defend it but advance it. It’s not like the prohibitionists shy away from demanding all sorts of disarmament edicts — just look at the DNC platform. They excel at lying propaganda to scare the bejeebers out of the ignorant and the emotional, happily aided and abetted by big media collaborators.

Giving Trump and the Republicans all the ammo they need to defeat gun grabber arguments is well within the skill set of the newly formed Gun Owners for Trump coalition, of which Walters is one of the prominent national figures. If “independents” haven’t figured out by now that the differences between what Biden and Trump campaign on are existential, they haven’t been paying attention. If talking about the right to keep and bear arms scares them more than talking about taking them away, Republicans avoiding the issue is exactly the wrong thing to do and ensures manipulated ignorance will prevail.

Since when is that preferable to educating the independents? What’s needed is truthful information, because there’s not an argument the Democrats make that can’t be recognized as a lie, exposed as such, and defeated with the truth. Ostensible political leaders who promise they will protect the Second Amendment need to be able to do that, and if they can’t, they need to consult with those who can.

Yet Walters admitted on air that the RNC and Trump campaign never called him or, to his knowledge, any Gun Owners for Trump leaders before

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making the decision to excise the party's commitment to gun rights. He and they have a wealth of resources at their fingertips who argue 2A for a living. That such a decision was made unilaterally, without input from the people held up as the subject matter experts does not speak of the group being any more than disposable props trotted out when needed for limited PR, but then hidden away when inconvenient or embarrassing.

"2020 is Trump's to Blow with Gun Owners," I wrote in *Firearms News* back in 2019. While many gun owners feel like

they have no choice but to vote for him again in November, a growing number are resigning themselves to TINVOWOOT (There is No Voting Our Way Out of This) pessimism (pragmatism?). That and demoralizing your base to not spook the undecideds is no way to win a race, especially when Trump has a bully pulpit to reach them with intellectually and emotionally persuasive counters to all the lies they've been fed. 2024 is his to blow, too.

With all eyes now on Donald Trump, all ears will be, too. If the independents are what will make the difference, why

not explain guns and why there's a historic and practical right to have them in convincing terms instead of treating them as scary things we dare not speak of?

All this, of course, presupposes he will still make it to the election. With the raw and visceral hatred directed against him — and us — the words ending an email from a friend seem a fitting sentiment to sign off with:

"I think that will be all from me today. I feel a need to pray... and after that, to clean and oil the guns."

We live in interesting times. **TN**

HOPES AND PRAISE FOR VANCE MUSTN'T CLOUD GUN OWNER EXPECTATIONS

Assuming Democrat hatred for all things MAGA doesn't incite a more successful attempt than we saw recently in Butler, I'm voting for Donald Trump and JD Vance in November. I urge you to vote for them, too.

I need to stipulate that right up front, because I'm going to document some things we're not hearing from the gun groups singing gushing praise for the VP pick. And every time I've pointed out Trump's warts there's always been no shortage of angry responses ranging from "Would you rather see Biden Kamala win?" to "Fire that idiot and cancel my subscription!"

I don't do this to subvert election chances or to get people mad at me. I do it because by viewing politicians with realistic expectations, gun owners will be in a better position to understand where, when and how they may disappoint us once we help them win power, and to insist the "gun rights leaders" endorsing them do everything they can to make sure it's understood our rights are non-negotiable. It's why I argue that "Gun Owners for Trump" needs to be more than a publicity gimmick

just to generate votes, and actually be a body that has a direct line to advisors who have his ear.

We don't want any more bump stock bans or worse, and we're just one Beslan-style "gun-free zone" school massacre away from finding out who are true friends in the Republican party really are. And if Butler showed us anything, it's that some who hate us will do anything.

The Greatest Thing Since Sliced Bread

Let's start with what we're being told about Vance by those leaders, starting with one from his (and my) home state.

"Buckeye Firearms Association president Linda Walker is thrilled that Donald Trump has tapped Ohio Senator J.D. Vance as his running mate, and shares some of her own firsthand experiences with Vance's support for the Second Amendment," we hear from Cam & Co. on YouTube.

Then there are the national groups.

"NRA applauds President Trump's selection of Senator J.D. Vance as his running mate," the National Rifle Association declares. "President Trump has made an outstanding choice in selecting Senator



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Vance as his vice-presidential pick and running mate in the upcoming election. Senator Vance has been an unwavering supporter of constitutional freedoms, especially the right to keep and bear arms."

Former President Trump's pick of U.S. Sen. J.D. Vance a solid Second Amendment choice," the National Shooting Sports Foundation weighs in. "In naming Sen. Vance his running mate for the 2024 election, former President Trump has tapped a strong Second Amendment stalwart and someone who proudly stands with the firearm industry and law-abiding Americans from coast-to-coast who believe in exercising their Constitutional rights to keep and bear arms."

GOA applauds GOP nomination of Senator Vance for vice president," Gun Owners of America, the "no-compromise gun lobby" echoes.



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“Senator Vance is a friend of the American gun owner, one who will fiercely defend our Second Amendment rights. We are thrilled with his selection and look forward to removing the anti-gunner-in-chief from the White House.”

The endorsements couldn't be stronger, and GOA has a point when it reminds us “Despite his short time in office, Senator Vance has maintained a perfect voting record where other Republican Senators have not.” Still, asserting it's “members can sleep soundly with his nomination for Vice President” invites the argument that you should never do that with any politician, at least without one eye open. And seeing NRA calling Vance “a true Second Amendment champion” reminds those of us old enough to remember that they once said the exact same thing about Harry Reid.

“To his credit, he does appear to have a good understanding of the state of the Second Amendment,” I acknowledged when assessing candidates for the Ohio Senate seat Vance ultimately won. “Vance wrote a pretty good piece that appeared in *The Columbus Dispatch* where he decried the Biden administration and an ‘unholy alliance’ against guns between government and business, criticized the nomination of David Chipman to head ATF, showed he understood both the ‘ghost gun’ and brace issues, and highlighted corporate efforts to financially undermine the right to keep and bear arms.”

A Shred of Doubt

Still, the foundation was showing some cracks, starting with Vance's once virulent opposition to Trump (that he has never adequately explained in light of his doing a 180) and his endorsement of independent candidate Evan McMullin, who talked a good game on guns and immigration but then endorsed open borders, pathway-to-citizenship gun-grabber Joe Biden. It makes it fair to question how much of what he says and does is informed and sincere, and how much is calculated and political.

That doesn't exactly induce sound sleep. Case in point, he's making great hay with gun owners of late with his propos-

al to “Abolish the ATF.” The crowd, that is, gun owners went wild. But aside from the fact that this would require an act of Congress and there are no indications that even with a November win they'd have the votes, there's a more basic reality: Abolishing ATF won't abolish the citizen disarmament functions it performs, and without doing that, just transferring those functions to another agency, say the larger, more powerful FBI, could very well make things worse.

But back to shifting allegiances and principles of conviction or convenience, there's another Vance relationship that falls squarely in the “It's a big club and you ain't in it” category: His wife, once a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice John Roberts, and before that for now-6th U.S. Circuit Judge Amul Thapar and in the D.C. Circuit for Brett Kavanaugh, recently announced “she is resigning from her law firm, Munger, Tolles & Olson, to support her family.

It's curious because that firm is big on DEI/gender inclusion, declaring it “is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment for all visitors and employees.” It also served as pro bono counsel for the Center for Reproductive Rights' amicus brief before the Supreme Court in promoting “constitutional right to abortion.”

OK, but this is *Firearms News*. What's that got to do with guns?

Munger, Tolles & Olson represented family members of Sandy Hook victims to successfully petition the Supreme Court not to review the Connecticut Supreme Court setback for gunmakers in the lawsuit against Remington. Another *Reuters* report called them “Pro Bono Heroes” for their work “fend[ing] off Remington's bid for U.S. Supreme Court review.”

There's more.

“In November 2018, we partnered with the Southern Poverty Law Center and pro bono counsel at Munger, Tolles & Olson and Stearns Weaver Miller to represent elementary school students and parents suing Duval County, Florida, over an illegal and dangerous decision to let inadequately

trained staff carry guns in schools,” Giffords announced.

But certainly, it's not fair to hold a firm's actions against one of their lawyers who may not have even ed on those cases, is it? Perhaps not. After all, attorneys handle all kinds of different cases and clients, even guilty ones, and their function is to navigate the law to represent those client's best interests. They can't let personal feelings get in the way of professional obligations, right? Still, to rise to a position of prominence and operate effectively within an organization, team members have to fit in with the culture. They can't have burning moral qualms and glaring ideological differences and emerge successful and undamaged, can they?

Pretty weak tea, some may say. We're not electing her, we're electing him.

True. But who has the most influence on him, what was her role at the firm, and was he good with it? Inquiring minds want to know.

Well, not all. I can hear some of the chatroom belligerent over in the gun forums dismissing such concerns as purity testing, subversive bellyaching and worse. That they didn't know these things before and don't care about it now evokes nothing so much as the Three Wise Monkeys, or alternatively, the noblemen in “The Emperor's New Clothes.”

Operating on the assumption that more truth is better than less, gun owners will be better equipped to monitor the people they elect and do what they can to keep them on course. As stated up front, I'm voting for Donald Trump and JD Vance, but not as a MAGA fanboy, although I support the agenda Trump campaigned on (before he started softening his rhetoric to attract “independents”). It's a defense against the alternative, which is an existential threat. That's assuming they really are an alternative, which the TINVOWOOTERS (There Is No Voting Our Way Out of This) also regularly try to beat me up on.

For that reason, I urge readers to vote for them too. But rather than assuring gun owners we can all sleep soundly now, I instead recommend Ronald Reagan's advice (borrowed from, of all people, the Russians): “Trust but verify.” **TN**

A person wearing a black tactical jacket and tan cargo pants is holding a Tokarev TT12 rifle. The rifle is black and silver, with a magazine and a scope. The person's hands are visible, gripping the rifle. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

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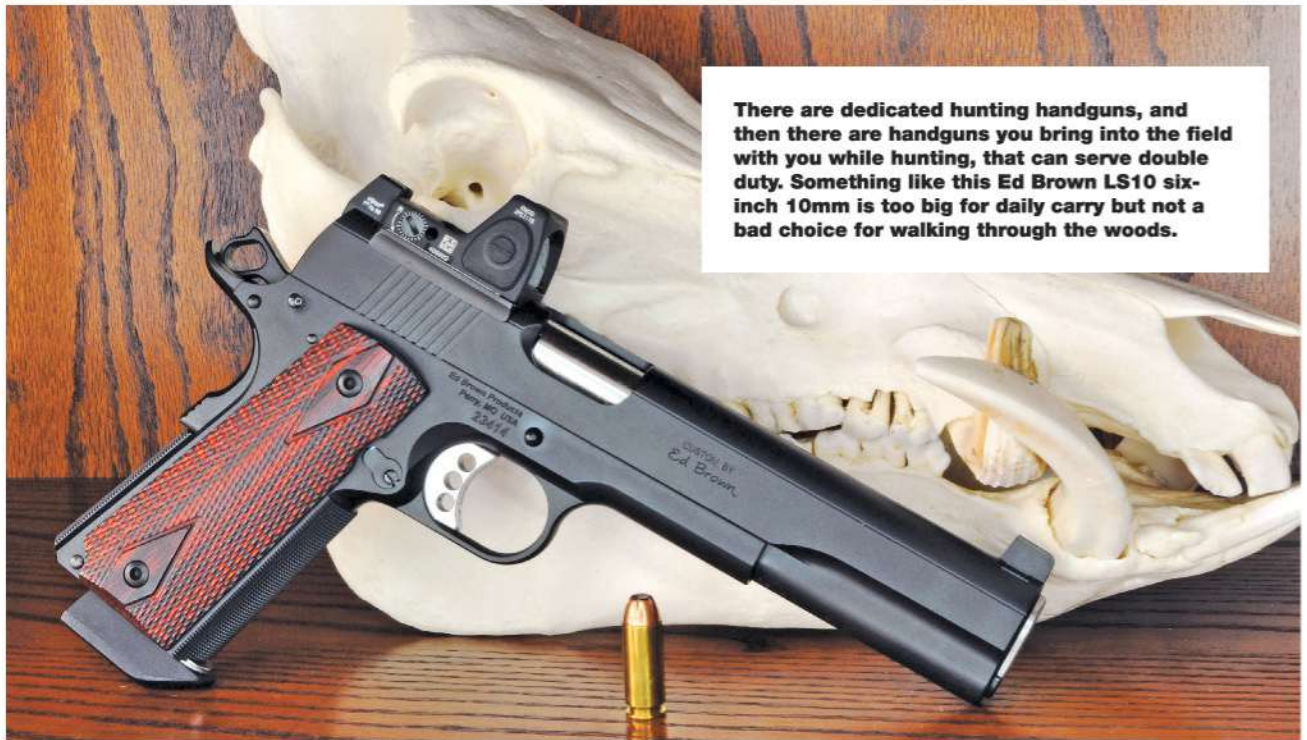
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There are dedicated hunting handguns, and then there are handguns you bring into the field with you while hunting, that can serve double duty. Something like this Ed Brown LS10 six-inch 10mm is too big for daily carry but not a bad choice for walking through the woods.

HUNTING & HANDGUNS

It's getting to be hunting season again. What concern is that to a CCW column? Well, some people hunt using handguns, and some people hunt while also carrying a handgun. As this is a CCW column, what we're talking about here is what handguns would be best suited to carry during hunting season for defense against bears or the like, that can do double duty as pieces suitable for defense against two-legged predators. I'm not going to recommend one specific gun or caliber here, just cover a few general things you should be thinking of about a handgun before venturing out into the woods with one.

I personally know someone who has killed deer with both a .22 LR pistol and a SIG P226 9mm. People have defended themselves quite well against bears using 9mm pistols. But just because something works doesn't

mean it's necessarily the best tool for the job.

First, we need to talk about holsters. Your method of carry while sitting in a tree stand or walking through the woods will likely need to be different than if you're taking a quick run to Buc-ee's convenience store. You'll probably be wearing a lot more clothes, so getting to an IWB pistol that is under three layers of wool and flannel and Carhartt coveralls won't be quick and easy. You'll likely not be so concerned about concealing a pistol if you've got a rifle or a compound bow in your hands, so open or not-so-concealed carry is more popular when in the field. Outside the waistband or across-the-chest holsters tend to be far more popular. These holsters will also allow you to carry a bigger gun than you normally would, so at the

same time you're thinking about what to carry you should be thinking about where/how you'll be carrying it, as those questions impact each other.

Second, optics. I am not a fan of nor proponent of red dots for defensive carry guns, as they introduce complications and aren't any faster at realistic defensive distances against people than iron sights. But red dots do provide certain advantages if you're talking a woods gun. First, that red dot is visible in all lighting conditions—considering how much happens in the field around dawn and dusk, that's huge. Second, red dots are both faster and more accurate at distance, and the farther away the target the more that's true. Bad guys cause trouble at close range, but you don't have to wait for a bear to get within spitting distance to see if he's going to ask for your wallet.



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You likely won't be carrying your defensive handgun out in the woods the same way you would heading to the local gas station. Open rigs, especially chest pieces like this Galco Alaskan chest rig, are very popular.

If we're talking a dedicated hunting handgun, I definitely recommend using a red dot. I've made offhand hits out to 200 yards with just standard carry guns that were topped with red dots.

Traditionally, people think of big-bore revolvers for backups when out in the woods, but if you're not used to shooting magnum wheel guns maybe they're not the best choice for you. Yes, revolvers are chambered in more powerful cartridges, but a good semi-auto will get you most of the way there. The resurgence of the 10mm auto cartridge has a lot to do with its viability as a primary or back-up hunting round. However, if you like, and can shoot

Tarr is not a fan of red dots on carry guns, but for a pistol you're carrying while hunting, which often takes place in low light, and at distances far in excess of normal defensive distances, a red dot is a definite improvement. This is the Ed Brown LS10 10mm.



big bore revolvers, then your options are nearly limitless. In guns, you've got everything from concealable five-shot .44s to massive .454 Casulls and the like. I consider .357 Magnum a good choice, provided it was loaded with the right kind of bullet. What's that?

When choosing a specific cartridge for defense against humans, you want a premium hollow point designed to expand quickly and penetrate a decent amount, but not too much. But compared to just about any wild game, humans are small, soft, squishy, and/or weak. When choosing ammo for a handgun you plan to take hunting in the field, penetration is what you want, especially if what you're worried about is bears. That means a heavy bullet, and probably one meant to expand little, if at all. Hard cast lead bullets are an old-school choice. The modern equivalent are bonded core bullets, but you should also consider the new copper solid bullets

many companies are offering—Black Hills' Honey Badger, LeHigh Defense's Xtreme Penetrator, etc.

Buffalo Bore made their entire reputation by offering handgun ammunition meant for hunting—hard bullets loaded fast, to penetrate deep. They use hard cast lead bullets, JHPs, FMJs, and copper solids, depending.

I didn't think any ammunition manufacturer advertised their ammo as specifically "good against bears," but then I noticed both Winchester's Big Bore and Federal's Solid Core handgun lines have bears on their boxes. Most ammunition manufacturers will tell you which calibers/cartridges are suitable for medium or big game.

Most of this hunting ammo is loaded hot, at the upper end of the SAAMI specs, and isn't what you'd want in a light carry gun, but should be more than controllable in the kind of full-size gun you'd have with you out in the field. **TN**



Caliber is probably less important than bullet type. These are both 9mms—the Hornady Critical Duty Lite is meant to expand fast out of short barrels and has low recoil and a light bullet. The Federal Solid Core, on the other hand, has a heavier bullet made of hard cast lead and is specifically intended for self-defense against...well, look at the box.



A lot of smaller companies make handgun ammo either specifically intended for hunting/game, or which works well for it. From left: Underwood 10mm Xtreme Penetrator, Buffalo Bore 9mm 124-grain +P+, and Double Tap Defense 9mm 124-grain +P Bonded Core.

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7X57MM MAUSER

Is It Still a Viable Hunting Cartridge Today?

In the cover article on Ruger’s American Standard Gen II hunting rifle, I mentioned the 7mm-08 Remington cartridge. This solid-performing design is based on the .308 Winchester but necked down to 7mm. Due to it fitting in a short-action receiver, the 7mm-08 Rem has quietly displaced another fine cartridge in this bore size, the 1892 vintage 7x57mm Mauser.

Unlike most military rifle cartridges, Paul Mauser’s 7x57mm quickly earned an impressive reputation among both soldiers and sportsmen alike. Woe to the soldier that doubted its reach and accuracy. It decisively trounced the U.S. Army’s new .30-40 Government in combat, leading to its early demise. It also came incredibly close to killing off the British Empire’s .303 in combat. Only the start of World War I saved the .303 from being replaced by a .276 Enfield cartridge developed as an answer to the Boer’s 7mm Mausers.

Sportsmen in the early 20th Century took note of its accuracy, flat trajectory, and mild recoil. They also noted its performance on game animals was better than its paper ballistics might lead you to believe. Its exploits in the hands of hunters in Africa and India became legendary. Whether referred to as the 7mm Mauser, 7x57mm or .275 Rigby this cartridge impressed generations of hunters, sportsmen and serious riflemen.

The most famous, are of course, Scottish adventurer Walter Dalrymple Maitland “Karamojo” Bell and Jim Corbett. Bell used mundane 1893-



Designed by Paul Mauser in 1892, the 7x57mm Mauser is not as popular today as it once was but remains an excellent hunting cartridge.

pattern 172.8-grain military ball ammunition to harvest some 800 African elephants. Yes, elephants. Corbett slew the infamous man-eating Leopard of Rudraprayag and a number of other man-eaters in the Indian Himalayas using a .275 Rigby. Famous author and hunter Jack O’Connor and his wife Eleanor both used the 7mm Mauser all over the world. Jack once commented, “I think I have seen more game killed with fewer shots from this modest little cartridge than with any other.”

While the exploits of Bell, Corbett and O’Connor are famous, innumerable American blue collar hunters also embraced the 7mm Mauser. Hunting locally with inexpensive surplus Mauser rifles, often sporterized, they employed it on all manner of North American game. High-quality Mauser military rifles from a wide variety of countries like Spain, Mexico, Chile, Venezuela,

and Brazil made their way to the US surplus market. These were scooped up by American sportsman, often as hunting rifle projects. Stocks were altered or replaced, barrels shortened, bolt handles turned down, receiver sights added or perhaps the receiver was drilled for a scope. The end result might not have rivaled a Rigby in looks, but they put meat in the pot and fed hungry families.

So, what happened? If the 7x57mm Mauser was such a great cartridge which slayed both figurative and literal



The size of the 7x57mm is easily seen in this line-up (L to R): 8x57mm Mauser, 7x57mm Mauser, 6.5x55mm Swedish Mauser and 6.5mm Creedmoor.

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While the 6.5mm bore size has become popular in the US, the 7x57mm Mauser can put a larger diameter and heavier payload on target.



The handloader has a wide variety of modern projectiles to choose from when loading the 7x57mm Mauser.

giants in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, why has it seemingly fallen off the map today? While once considered the equivalent of a lightning bolt thrown by Zeus, today the 7x57mm's original 2,300 fps 173-grain round nose load seems a bit...unimpressive. Has time passed by the old 7x57mm Mauser, or is it actually better than ever thanks to modern bullet designs?

Let's take a quick look at this old classic. It was actually developed by Paul Mauser himself in 1892 and adopted the following year by Spain. Paul Mauser designed it with a base diameter of 0.473 inch and a shoulder diameter of 0.430 inch. Neck diameter is 0.325 inch with a case length of 2.235 inches. Shoulder angle of the 7x57mm Mauser is 22.45 degrees and it has a maximum overall cartridge length listed as 3.071 inches. Bullet diameter is 0.284 inch and case capacity is 60 grains of H₂O. Due to its length it requires a standard length action, rather than a short action like the .308 Win.

Factory hunting ammunition is readily available from most of the major manufacturers with both modern and "traditional" style loads offered. Hunting loads typically run from 139 to 175 grains. While the traditional style 175-grain Round Nose Soft Point from Federal looks a bit old fashioned, it should not be underestimated on big game animals. The projectile has impressive sectional density and this load is known for reliable expansion and deep penetration. If you prefer higher

velocity there are number of modern 140-grain loads available from companies like Federal, Winchester, Sellier & Bellot, Remington, and Nosler. These perform well on white-tail deer and similar sized game.

If you handload, you will be pleased to note loading data, dies and components are all readily available. The 7mm Mauser is not a difficult cartridge to load and a handloader has a wide variety of projectiles to choose from. I have shot handloads with bullets weighing up to 195 grains in this caliber. A variety of powders readily available to handloaders perform quite well in the 7x57mm. These include IMR 4064, IMR 4350, WIN 760, RL-19 and RL-22.

A quick perusal of three popular bullet manufacturers, Berger Bullets, Hornady, and Sierra reveals a number of offerings. All three of these manufacturers offer modern high BC projectiles in bullet weights suitable for use in the 7x57mm. Just to give an idea on what this old caliber is capable of I selected three bullet designs from Hornady to try. I chose their 150-grain ELD-X with a G1 BC of .574, their 162-grain ELD Match with a G1 BC of .670 and lastly for a heavy weight I selected their 180-grain ELD Match with a G1 BC of .796. You will note all three have impressive Ballistic Coefficients but the 162 and 180 designs are really something.

Would the old Mauser be able to push them though? To find out, I used my Ruger Hawkeye African with a

24-inch barrel. Ammunition was loaded using RL-22 powder, Winchester standard primers, Norma cases and a COL of 3.15 inches. The Ruger averaged 2,723 fps with the 150-grain ELD-X, 2,652 fps with the 162-grain ELD Match and 2,468 fps with the heavy 180-grain ELD Match bullet. The exterior ballistics of all three of these loads is quite good. All of them would be quite effective in the field and put a larger diameter and heavier payload on target compared to a 6.5mm Creedmoor.

Why has Paul Mauser's 7x57mm faded away? Some of it has to do with the demise of economical surplus military rifles and cheap surplus ammunition in this caliber. Then there is the 7mm-08 Remington which fits neatly into a modern short-action rifle. The popularity and performance of the mundane .308 Winchester took its toll on the 7x57mm Mauser as well. In more recent times the 6.5 Creedmoor's success has diverted attention away from the 7mm bore size.

Even so, the 7x57mm Mauser remains a fine cartridge with an impressive record in the hunting fields. It's a cartridge I like and enjoy shooting, and I'm sure many of you do as well. If you have never spent time with a 7x57mm Mauser, perhaps it's one to consider. **FN**

A man wearing a black cap, sunglasses, and a headset is holding a Saiga-12 AK-style shotgun. The shotgun has a black receiver and a wooden stock. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

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USING A MIL RETICLE

Sure, Your Scope Has a Mil Reticle, but Do You Know How to Use It?

Today, just about every optic manufacturer under the sun offers a rifle scope fitted with a Mil reticle. While extremely popular, it's safe to say that a large percentage of shooters do not know how to utilize their reticle to its full potential. Many scopes do not come with a well-written manual which plainly explains their use. For the most part, you are just given a mathematical formula and expected to figure the rest out. Not to worry though, as using the Mil system is not rocket science. So, if you're interested in learning how to use a Mil based reticle, follow along. While fairly straight forward, you will need to put in some time practicing.

Developed by the US Marine Corps in the 1970s, the Mil Dot reticle was originally designed to provide snipers with a reliable means of calculating range in the days before laser range-finders. To facilitate this, oval shaped 'dots' were placed on the horizontal and vertical stadia of a duplex style crosshair reticle. Each dot was placed exactly 1 Mil from center to center. The scale delineates 10 Mils vertically and 10 Mils horizontally. Please note that when counting Mils the crosshair intersection is the same as a dot center. This Mil scale allowed a trained sniper to mathematically determine his range to an object of known size.

However, the system is useful for much more than just ranging targets. In addition, it allows a sniper to lead moving targets, hold off for wind/lead, hold under for targets on higher or



Many scopes today, like this Hawke Frontier 3-15x50mm, feature Mil reticles, but to get the most out of them takes understanding the system and practice. (Photo by Ashley Jaderborg)

lower ground and hold over for targets at long range. This system worked so well it was adopted, in slightly modified form, by the US Army in the 1980s.

Not long after, Mil Dot reticles began to be embraced by the commercial market, civilian shooters began to desire additional features. Dedicated long range shooters put the Mil Dot reticle to work and carefully analyzed what features could be changed or added to improve its performance. What followed is a perfect example of the commercial market taking a product designed for military use and evolving it. From the very simple design adopted by the US military the basic concept has been refined into the very complex reticles available today.

The reticle itself is based upon the trigonometric function used to

configure and use the Mil for estimating range. Mil stands for Milliradian, which is a unit of angular measurement. Another perhaps more familiar unit of angular measurement is a Minute of Angle (MOA). Just as 1 MOA is 1.047 inches at 100 yards, and 10.47 inches at 1,000 yards, 1 Mil is 3.6 inches at 100 yards, and 36 inches at 1,000 yards. So, from the center of one Mil mark to the next is 3.6 inches at 100 yards, 7.2 inches at 200 yards, 10.8 inches at 300 yards and so forth.

To range using this system, you must first know the size (height or width) of your target. You then measure the target in relationship to the reticle, being as precise as possible. With this accomplished you can determine the range to the target by performing a mathematical calculation.



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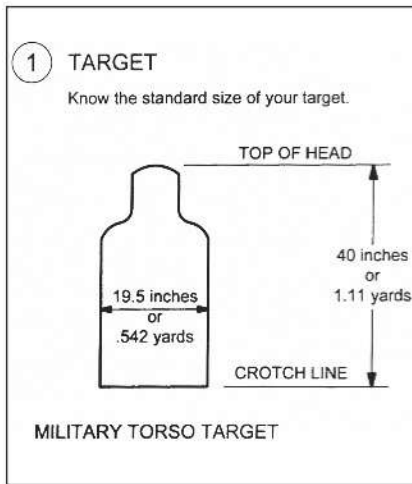
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In order to range with a Mil reticle you must first know the size of your target. (Illustration courtesy Horus Vision)

The formula is:

- Size of Target (height or width) in yards X 1,000 divided by Mil reading = Distance to Target in Yards.

Example: Your target is 2 yards tall and subtends 2.6 Mils when measured with your reticle. $2 \times 1,000$ divided by $2.6 = 769$ yards

If you know the size of your target in inches, but not yards, don't worry. Simply use this formula:

- Size of Target (height or width) in inches X 27.77 divided by Mil Reading = Distance to Target in Yards.

Example: A truck rim next to your target measures 16 inches in diameter. It subtends 1.3 Mils when measured with your reticle. 16×27.77 divided by $1.3 = 341$ yards

To perform the required calculations calls for either pencil/paper or a calculator. This is reality, there is no free lunch. Are there shortcuts? Of course! The first is to simply make Mil charts with different target sizes listed. Then you can simply pick the target size you are trying to range, find the Mil reading on the chart and the range it corresponds with. Laminate these and put them in your rifle's data book. Then work on memorizing them. Or, if you

► **Mil reticles are likely used much more today for ballistic corrections than ranging. In this case the reticle is being used to hold for both elevation and windage/lead. (Illustration courtesy Horus Vision)**

prefer something a bit less analog, you can download a suitable program to your smart phone.

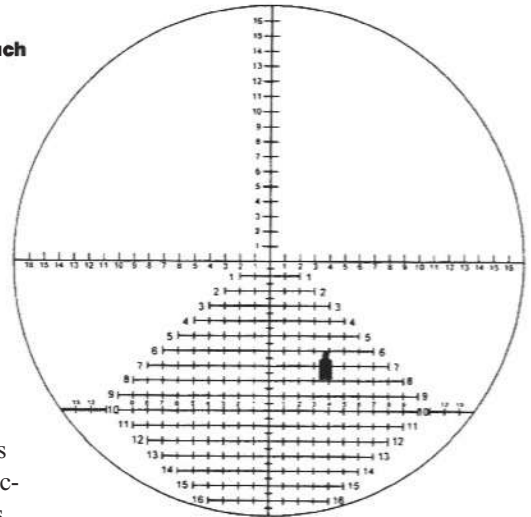
Keep in mind that being able to accurately range targets using the Mil system takes practice, and precise measurements. As the distance to your target increases it becomes extremely important to know its precise dimensions. You must also carefully subdivide your Mil reticle to make the measurements as precise as possible. Remember, at ranges past 600 yards even a seemingly minute mistake can result in a rather large error. You can't be sloppy in this regard.

Many serious long range shooters keep a list of the dimensions of items commonly seen in their area. Here are some examples of items military/LE snipers could Mil to range a target:

- AKM assault rifles
- RPG-7
- Road signs
- Vehicle license plates
- Vehicle wheel rims
- Mail boxes

Competition shooters can do something similar with steel and paper targets they know the dimensions of. Stop and look around you, and see what there is to Mil off of. While laser rangefinders are common today, being able to range with a Mil reticle is still a valuable skill to have.

Is the Mil reticle useful for anything besides estimating range? Yes, as the reticle is precisely delineated it is also highly useful for ballistic corrections. In situations where a rifleman does not have time to dial the correct elevation adjustment into the scope, he can simply hold over (or under) using the



reticle. By knowing your bullet drop you can easily make (and memorize) a chart indicating where to hold on the reticle for specific ranges with different loads.

Using the reticle in this manner allows the rifleman to rapidly engage multiple targets at various distances when he does not have the time to play with his turrets. If most of your shooting will be performed at medium ranges you can zero at 600 yards. You can then use the upper dots to hold under for ranges closer than 600 yards and the bottom dots to hold over for distances further than 600 yards. It just takes knowing your rifle and the load you are shooting.

In a similar manner, the dots on the horizontal stadia may be used for windage and lead corrections. Rather than dialing a windage adjustment into your scope you can simply hold off using the reticle.

In a similar manner, you can lead a moving target by holding off with the reticle. Engaging moving targets takes a bit of practice to get the hang of. However, properly utilized your Mil reticle will be a great aid when making such shots. Keep in mind that a Mil is an angular width and it grows wider over distance. It is paramount that you collect and record range data for elevation, windage and leads using your rifle and your ammunition. **TM**

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Not everyone is looking to put a suppressor on an AR-15, SBR or something-Blackout. What if you wanted to hunt suppressed? As in, with a real, go-hunting cartridge, and a suppressor that can take the blast? OK, how about being able to do all of the above? The Silencerco Omega 300 can do that. It is rated for 5.56 up to and including 300 WM. And not for a lot of weight or money, either.

The Omega 300 is an all-welded (so no rimfires, don't be greedy) and built with a mix of materials. While what parts are made out of which materials is something Silencerco insiders know, the rest of us can only take a guess, but the Omega 300 is composed of Cobalt 6, Inconel, 17-4 stainless steel and titanium. Me, I would bet the Inconel is the first, or blast baffle, as it has to take the hardest hit and is the kind of alloy made for that task. The rest could be the cobalt and stainless, and the tube titanium, because that's the logical way. However, Silencerco does extensive testing (even to destruction) and they might well have found a different arrangement, and stay mum because they don't want the word to get out, at least not easily.

At seven inches long, and only twelve and a half ounces you'd think that there's no way it could be full-auto rated, but it is. That's why I think the Inconel is in the first baffle, to take the brunt. Not that a hunting suppressor needs to be full-auto rated. F-A rating is good, but there are limits even when good engineering trickery manages to find a way. The Omega 300 has barrel length limitations. So, you can't use a .300



Here's the hardware that comes in the Silencerco box; Your Omega with its Anchor Brake, the QD muzzle device, a direct-thread rear cap, the QD mount, and wrenches galore.



The rear cap here is the direct-thread cap, and it lets you install the Omega on any suitable-caliber rifle with a threaded muzzle.



The Anchor Brake takes the exhaust gases and uses them to dampen felt recoil, as well as to create turbulence to decrease muzzle flash, on the rare times it happens.

Blackout shorter than seven inches, or a 5.56 shorter than 10 inches, a 7.62 NATO shorter than 16 inches, or a 300 WM shorter than 20 inches. Big deal. Obviously, you can use it on smaller bores of those cases, so a 6.5 Creedmoor would work, a 6mm ARC

would work, and so-on. As long as the bullet is .308" or smaller, and the case it rests in is no larger than the ones listed for the barrel length you've got, you're good to go. The list of "it can handle it" includes so many of

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The Silencerco QD muzzle device and the rear cap for it, both come in the box with your Omega, should you wish to set up your rifle for a QD mounting.

the cartridges that are considered hunting cartridges it would be work just to list them.

The Silencerco mount system on the Omega gives you the option of two: you can go with a direct-thread, or you can mount the Silencerco Bravo QD muzzle attachment and have a QD setup. In fact, you can do both, because each Omega 300 comes with both rear caps, and the Bravo muzzle device as well as the wrenches for maintenance and assembly and flat washers. If you plunk down the cash for an extra Bravo mount in a different caliber, you can have your Omega 300 on three different rifles with no problem. More, if you're willing to use the Bravo mount on one rifle, the direct-thread only for all the rest, and wrench it from one to the next. If one of your rifles isn't a .30, you'll need a direct-thread rear cap of the correct thread pitch for that caliber but they are only \$89 each from Silencerco.

On the front end, the Omega 300 comes with the Bravo Anchor Brake, a multi-port brake that replaces the front cap. It does add some length, but it dampens felt recoil and it also takes some of the muzzle flash out of your shooting. Flash doesn't happen a lot, but the Anchor Brake knocks it down even more. Now, if you don't want to have the extra length, again you can replace the Bravo Anchor Brake with a plain front cap which is \$94. Since you've saved so much on the Omega compared to some other brands, extra caps are not a big expense.

The multi-tool has three pegs on it to install or remove the front or rear caps on our Omega. The extra slots also fit various flash hidiers and other muzzle devices, so you have one tool for many tasks.



In the box with the Omega and its owner's manual, you get three wrenches. These are the multi-tool, the Bravo, and Charlie spanner wrenches. The multi-tool lets you wrench on or off flash hidiers and the front and rear direct-thread caps of the Omega. The spanners are for removing the rear cap or installing or removing the Bravo or Charlie mounts. If you do a bunch of shooting, you will find that the hand-tight QD rear cap you put on before you started is now heat and carbon-welded and you do not have sufficient hand strength to remove it. Trust me, you'll need the wrench. Quick note: to remove the Bravo QD to re-install the direct-thread rear cap, do not, I repeat, DO NOT clamp your Omega in a vise. Go to the closest big-box hardware store and get a strap wrench. Then use the spanner on the rear cap and the strap wrench on the Omega tube and unscrew it that way.

Now, when it comes to hunting, I have to admit with some embarrassment that I do not have a slew of hunting rifles with threaded muzzles. In fact, I don't have a lot of "hunting" rifles, but I do have a Remington 700 in .308, in a Magpul stock, with a threaded barrel. So, I installed the Omega and its direct-thread rear cap on the 700, checked it with an alignment rod (an "always, must-do" step in any suppressor installation) and spent an afternoon enjoying myself. No, the .308 isn't a 300 WM, but it is what I have, and should a 300 WM ever appear on my doorstep, I know the Omega is up to the task of dampening the muzzle blast.

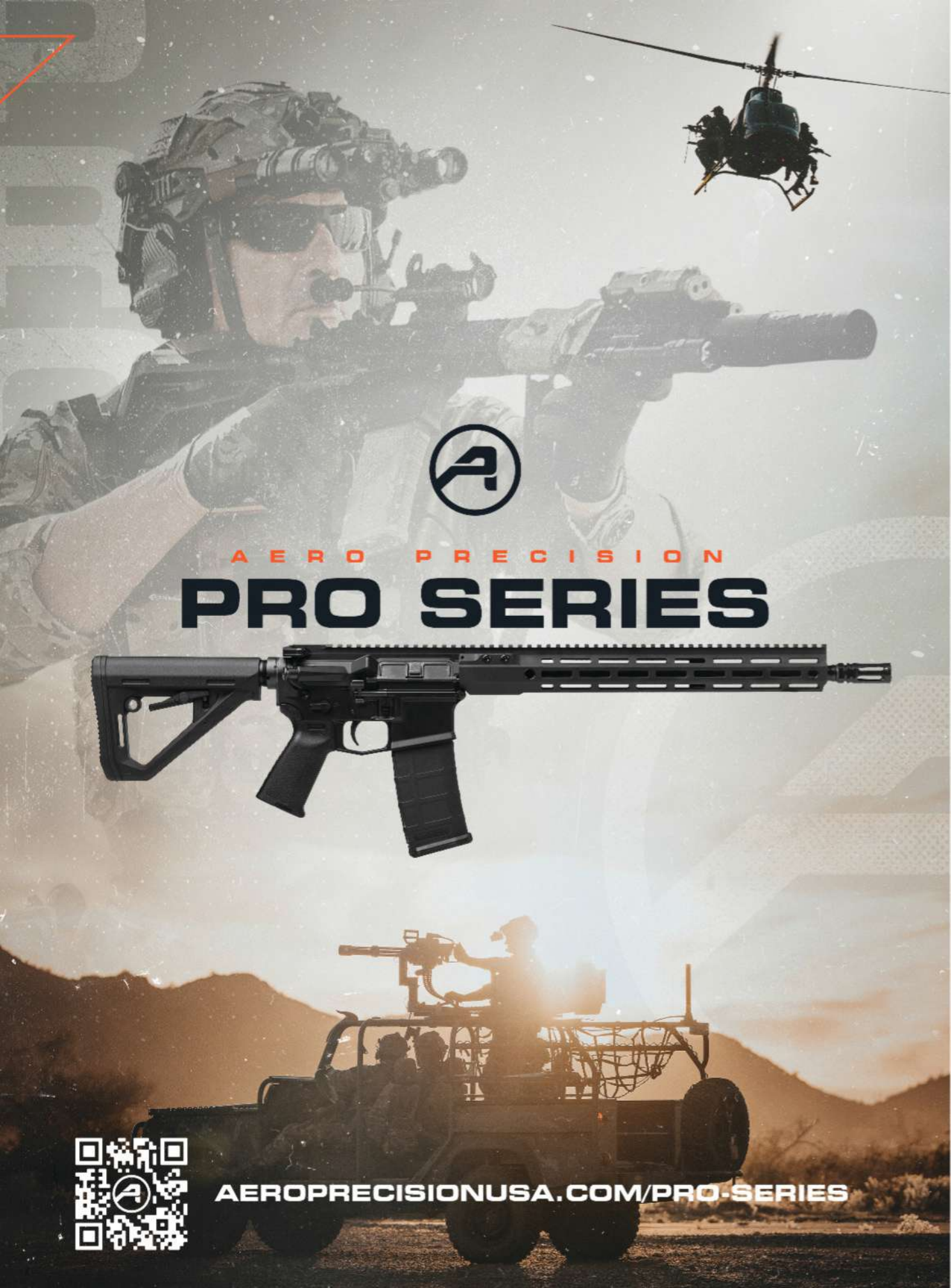
Oh, and the decibel decrease? Silencerco lists it as tamping the blast



The Bravo and Charlie spanners are made so you can easily wrench the front and rear assemblies of your Omega, and you don't have to struggle by using the wrong tool. It's all in the manual.

down to 133 dB. I measured it a couple of dB higher, but that could be the load, atmospheric conditions, phase of the moon (you think I'm kidding) or range layout. Still under the 140 dB "hearing safe" threshold a lot of shooters strive for. For seven Benjamins? A steal. **FN**

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A Model 30 Luftwaffe Drilling.
(Courtesy of *Guns & Ammo* magazine, forwarded by Garry James)

EUROPEAN COMBINATION GUNS THREE, FOUR, OR FIVE BARRELS— YOUR CHOICE

These Expensive Hunting Longarms Were Also
Procured for Survival and Combat Use

While, since the late 19th century, American shooters and hunters have been enamored with the lever action repeating rifle and pump shotgun, our European cousins followed a different drummer. Differing attitudes and traditions towards the hunting sports, the types of game pursued, the methods of hunting, and social norms resulted in combination guns becoming popular.

Combination guns have a long history in Europe, the Middle East, Asia,

and Africa that date back to the early days of metallic cartridge firearms. The advantage of having a single firearm that can fire both rifle and shot cartridges from rifled and smoothbore barrels can be used to hunt a very wide variety of game, from deer to game birds, and the shooter can choose the barrel appropriate for the target in seconds.

In Europe, hunting was often a social activity pursued by the “better” classes and the methods differed from that done in North America. Members of

the nobility, politicians and captains of industry would meet at someone’s country estate for several days of dining, socializing and hunting accompanied by servants, game keepers and loaders.

On the Continent and the British Isles, driven hunting, where “beaters” drove the game towards a line of “guns” (hunters), was popular. This resulted in a wide variety of game, including birds, rabbits, hares, fox, wild boars, and deer, becoming available to the hunters at the same time. As you

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DANGEROUS,



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A traditional Drilling. Note the shotgun style stock, double triggers, barrel selector switch on the wrist of the stock and engraved receiver. (Rock Island Auction Co.)



Traditionally dressed German hunters. Several of them are equipped with Drillings.



When “broken” open all three barrels of the Drilling could be loaded.



A traditional Drilling had side by side shotgun barrels with a rifle barrel underneath.



Another variation was a shotgun barrel (top), large caliber rifle barrel (bottom) and small caliber rifle barrel (side). (Rock Island Auction Co.)

didn't want to try bringing down a partridge with an 8mm rifle, or kill a wild boar with a load of #6 shot, the combination gun was just the ticket.

Being they were so popular in Central Europe, combination guns are usually referred by their Germanic names. A gun with three barrels is called a Drilling (German for “triplet”); while one with four barrels is a Vierling (“quadruplet”); and a five barreled gun is a Fünfling (“quintuplet”).

It appears that 16-gauge was the most popular shotgun caliber, while rifle barrels varied from .22 rimfire and .22 Hornet up to large caliber centerfire cartridges with the various rimmed 8mm cartridges were the choice in Central Europe. Some Vierlings would have two shotgun barrels with a small caliber and larger caliber rifle barrels suitable for whatever game became available.

Many of these combination guns were custom built by German, Austrian, and Swiss gunsmiths to the

customer's exact needs or specifications, while others were produced by well know companies and were available “off the shelf.” Break open style receivers were most common with side by side or O/U shotgun barrels with rifle barrel(s) located above, below, or to the side. The shotgun barrels often had different chokes, one for birdshot and the other for slugs.

Period photographs show that outside hammer guns remained popular well into the early 20th century, but hammerless designs eventually overtook them. The majority of guns featured double triggers while single, selective triggers could be encountered.

On hammerless guns, sliding safeties were located on the barrel tang while barrel selector levers or buttons and cocking indicators were placed alongside the safety or inleted into the wrist of the stock. It goes without saying that their lock work was very complicated requiring long hours of hand fitting by skilled gunsmiths.

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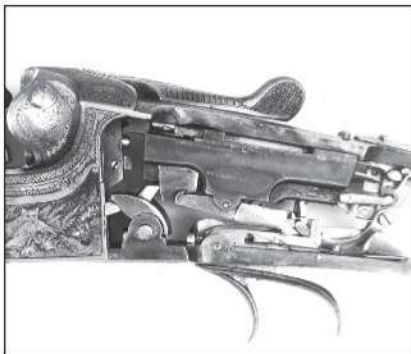
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A four barreled Vierling. (Rock Island Auction Co.)



An Austrian made Fünfling with five barrels.

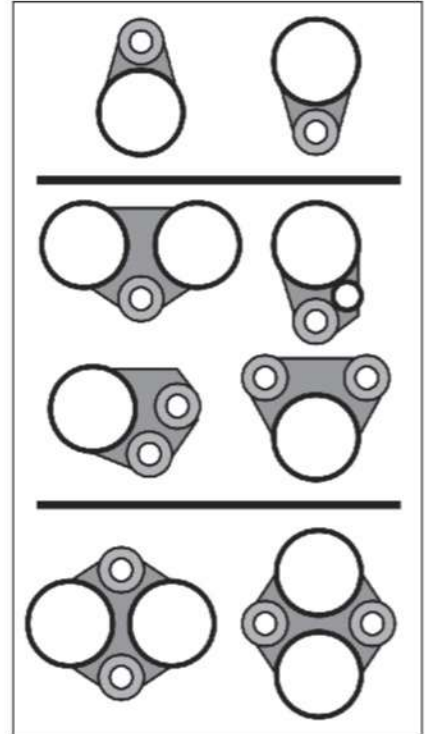


The lock work of European combination guns was very complex and required skilled gunsmiths to assemble.

Checkering, precious metal inlays and engraved hunting scenes or game animal images were common on the better grade gun while some had cutouts with sliding or hinged cover in the heel of the buttstock for spare ammunition. Integral quick-detach scope mounts became common as the popularity of telescopic sights grew.

While many of these guns were utilitarian weapons, others were true examples of the gunsmith's and engravers' art and were very expensive. Such guns were usually reserved for the nobility and wealthy customers and were often used as gifts, trophies, or awards rather than being exposed to the vagaries of Mother Nature on the heath or wald.

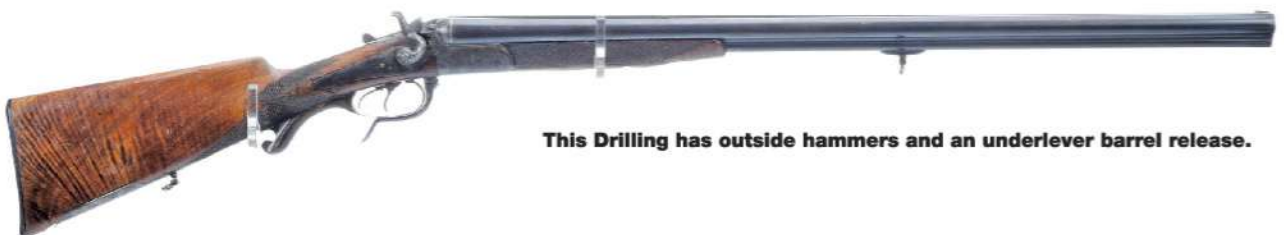
Drillings are still available today from European gunmakers.¹ Colt marketed Drillings made by Sauer & Son from 1973 to 1985.



Diagrams showing the various combination of barrels.

Military Usage: The Luftwaffe's Model 30 Drilling

One of the most unique Drillings is the so-called Luftwaffe Model 30. It was the most finely finished and luxurious survival rifle ever issued by a military force. The commercial quality of the Model 30 Drilling, its limited production and high manufacturing



This Drilling has outside hammers and an underlever barrel release.

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This close up of the Colt's receiver shows the safety, barrel selector switch and three cocking indicator buttons. (Rock Island Auction Co.)



An example of an engraved receiver on a Drilling. (Rock Island Auction Co.)



Some combination guns had cutouts in the heel of the buttstock for extra ammunition.



Many Drillings and Vierlings had q.d. scope mounts.



This Drilling, made by Franz Sodja, is equipped with a telescopic sight. (Rock Island auction Co.)

costs, led many historians and arms collectors to conclude that the Model 30 Luftwaffe Drilling was not routinely issued to Luftwaffe pilots.

The Model 30 Luftwaffe Drilling was possibly ordered by Reichmarschall Hermann Göring the head of the Luftwaffe, to be used as gifts for visiting dignitaries, Knight's Cross holders, Luftwaffe aces,

Wehrmacht generals, Nazi officials, and other guests who were invited to his hunting lodge the Carinhall. Luftwaffe ace, Generalleutnant Adolf Galland, recalled that he and several of his squadron mates were gifted Model 30 Luftwaffe Drillings during hunting trips with Göring at his hunting lodge.²

It saw use by the German Luftwaffe in World War II, primarily during the North African campaign, where it was used as a survival weapon by some Luftwaffe aircrews. It was also used for trap shooting, an exercise used by aircrews to sharpen the eyesight and reflexes of Luftwaffe pilots during training.



This Heym is an example of a modern-day Drilling.

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Colt offered Drillings made by Sauer & Son from 1973 to 1985. (Rock Island Auction Co.)



The Luftwaffe's Model 30 Drilling was made by Sauer & Son. (Courtesy of Guns & Ammo magazine, forwarded by Garry James)



The Model 30 Luftwaffe Drilling was issued with a padded storage box, tools and ammunition.

The original model had been marketed to hunters starting in 1930, and the military version was produced from 1941 to 1942 and were procured outside of normal military channels. They were made to the same standards of fit and finish as the commercial version. The only difference between the Model 30 and the commercial version was a Luftwaffe shrouded Eagle “2” Waffenamt Stempel on the top flat of the forward locking lug, and the Luftwaffe Eagle with Swastika die stamped over the chamber of the right shotgun barrel and on the right side of the buttstock. It had dual triggers and a sliding selector directly behind the breech opening lever. With the selector in the forward position, a 100-meter V-notch rear sight was raised, and the forward trigger engaged.

The Model 30's front trigger fired the gun's right shotgun barrel, with its rear trigger firing the left. Pushing the thumb selector on top of the wrist flips up a rear leaf sight and allows the front trigger to fire the rifle barrel. Both the rifle barrel and left shotgun barrel (for a slug) are sighted out to one hundred meters.

Model 30s Drillings were issued with a padded aluminum case containing the disassembled weapon, a sling and cleaning kit, twenty rounds of 9.3x74mmR ammunition, twenty Brenke 12-gauge slugs, and twenty-five 12-gauge birdshot shells. The whole package weighed 32 pounds and was intended to be retrieved from the aircraft after it crashed rather than taken as the crew bailed out.

I was unable to find any references to Model 30s actually being used as survival weapons or in combat but the aforementioned Generalleutnant Adolph Galland, commander of the Luftwaffe's fighter arm stated, “In 1942 and 1943, the M30 drilling was standard equipment for our fighter aircraft Me-109 and Stuka bombers to operate in the desert (North Africa). The purpose was to shoot animals for survival.”³

While on this side of the Atlantic they are usually considered more as novelties than sporting firearms, Drillings still have very much of a following with our European cousins. **TN**

1 <https://www.germanhuntingguns.com/importers-and-dealers-in-america/>
 2 www.rockislandauction.com/riac-blog/m30-drilling-luftwaffe-shotgun
 3 Kokalis, Peter. “Luftwaffe Drilling”. *Shotgun News*. pp. 26–30. January 19, 2023.

MODEL 30 LUFTWAFFE DRILLING	
Caliber:	12-gauge & 9.3x74mmR
Overall Length:	42 in.
Barrel Length:	26.625 in.
Weight:	7.5 lbs.
Capacity:	3 rounds
Sights:	Front: bead/blade; Rear: folding V notch

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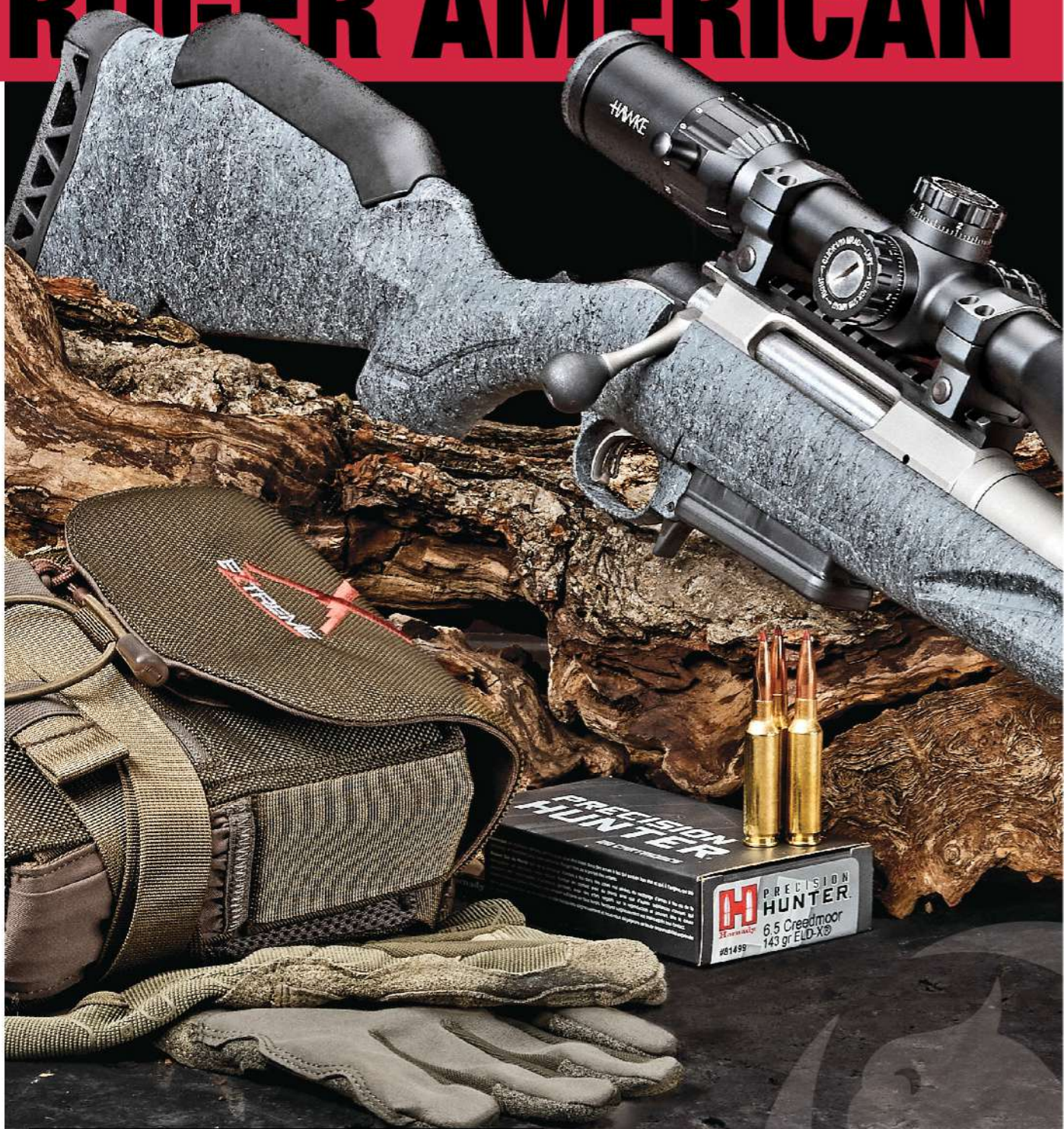
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RUGER AMERICAN




Ruger's new American Standard Generation II is a family of light and compact hunting rifles which offer a lot of performance for the money. (Photo by Michael Anschuetz)

STANDARD GEN II

Is This the Modern Lightweight Hunting Rifle You Have Been Waiting For?

By David M. Fortier, Executive Editor



I will admit, my office chair has seen better days. It's old, dilapidated and has endured the claws of a number of cats seeking attention. It had served an old friend well during his many hours of study. When he purchased a new fancy leather chair, I had adopted it. I suppose that was over 20 years ago, perhaps much longer. Over the decades, it has become an old friend, and I long ago lost count of how many articles were written while comfortably perched in its embrace. Today, though, I was leaning forward staring at a page on Ruger's website. What had caught my attention was the price of the rifle I had been spending time on the range with.

RUGER AMERICAN STANDARD GEN II



The original Generation I Ruger American offered solid performance, but the new Gen II seen here spices up the looks. (Photo by Michael Anschuetz)

After an enjoyable day punching small groups on paper, I expected the price of Ruger's American Standard Gen II 46901 hunting rifle to be, well, more than it actually is. Between the looks of the rifle with its spiral fluted barrel and the way it shot at 100 yards, it just seems like a lot of rifle for an MSRP of \$729. That's a good thing in my book, especially with everything in life today seeming to be so overpriced.

I'm getting ahead of myself though, so let's back-up to where our story starts. Our Editor-in-Chief, Vince DeNiro, is a hunter. and when Ruger announced this new model, he wanted to cover it. He knew this was something which would appeal to our readers. A bit of time went by and the rifle seen on these pages arrived on short-term loan from Ruger for this review. I wasn't sure exactly what would be in the box, but was impressed to find a handy little 6.5-pound hunting rifle with distinctive looks.

I have tested different models from Ruger's older Gen I American line in the past, and they have all been solid

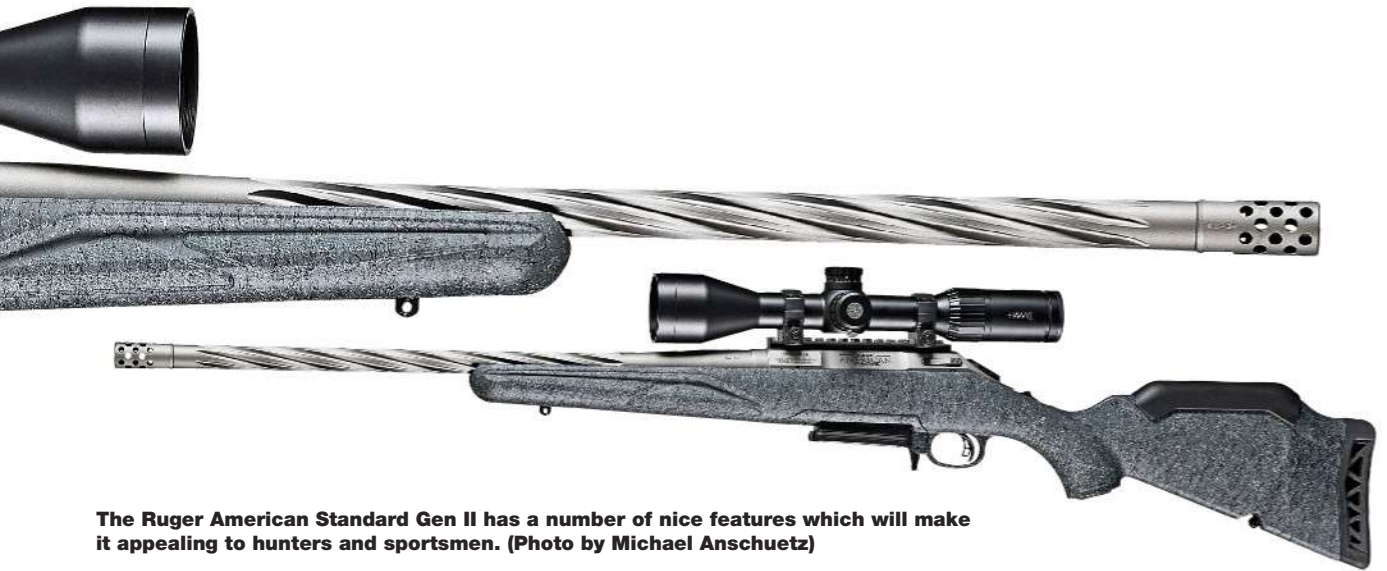
performers. While not the prettiest pieces, all were solid values for the money. While Ruger still offers an extensive line of Gen I models, the rifle seen here is a member of their recently introduced Gen II family of American rifles. This is a much more attractive piece with a number of nice features hunters and riflemen will appreciate.



The Ruger American Standard Gen II would make a good hunting partner. (Photo by Ashley Jaderborg)



At just 6.5 pounds this model carries nicely on long hikes. (Photo by Ashley Jaderborg)



The Ruger American Standard Gen II has a number of nice features which will make it appealing to hunters and sportsmen. (Photo by Michael Anschuetz)

Currently, Ruger offers three main groups of Gen II rifles: Standard, Ranch, and Predator models. The rifle seen here is a member of their Standard family, and is a model 46901 to be specific. This model number indicates it is chambered in 6.5mm Creedmoor, feeds from an Accuracy International (AI)-style three-round magazine and features a 20-inch spiral fluted barrel. In addition to 6.5mm Creedmoor, other calibers available in this model include 350 and 400 Legend, .223 Rem, .22 and 6mm ARC, 6.5mm Grendel, 6mm Creedmoor, .243 and .308 Winchester, 7mm-08 Rem, 450 Bushmaster, .30-'06, .270 Win, .300 Win Mag, 6.5mm and 7mm PRC.

Standard models all share certain features. The most notable being a gunmetal gray Cerakote finish, a dark gray synthetic stock with a black and gray texture and a distinctive spiral fluted barrel. With this in mind, let's delve more deeply into this specific model, the 46901. It is chambered in the very popular 6.5mm Creedmoor cartridge, which was originally developed by Hornady for use by competition shooters. It has proven itself to be very accurate, has

mild recoil and is an effective big game load along the lines of the well-respected 6.5x55mm Swedish Mauser.

Weighing in at 6.5 pounds, the 46901 is light, well-balanced and quick handling. It carries nicely and is swift to the shoulder. It swings fast and is comfortable in the hands. Ruger reduced its weight by fitting it with a 20-inch medium contour barrel which has been cut with spiral fluting. The fluting is visually attractive, increases surface area on the barrel and knocks a bit of weight off, especially towards the front of the rifle.

At the muzzle, you will find a radial port muzzle brake. While effective at reducing felt recoil, it is not large and gaudy. It looks right at home on this model. However, if you choose it can be removed and replaced with a sound suppressor or other muzzle device. The barrel Ruger selected is one of their cold hammer forged tubes with five groove rifling and a one turn in eight inches right hand twist.

The barrel is fitted to a beefy, modern looking action. This is nicely contoured for good looks and features a 1913 rail on its top for easy mounting of optical sights. Riding inside the short-action receiver is a rugged looking one-piece bolt with three locking lugs.



The heart of the rifle is a beefy action. Note the 1913 rail for mounting optics and detachable magazine. (Photo by Michael Anschuetz)



The bolt features three locking lugs, a robust claw extractor and plunger ejector. (Photo by Michael Anschuetz)



The barrel is cold hammer forged and features spiral fluting to reduce weight and a radial muzzle brake to reduce recoil. (Photo by Michael Anschuetz)

The bolt handle is nicely contoured and easy to reach and combined with the 70-degree bolt rotation makes for a fairly fast action. (Photo by Ashley Jaderborg)

Ruger's design features a beefy-looking claw extractor and plunger ejector. It features cock-on-opening, and dual cocking cams are utilized to ease the initial upward bolt stroke. The three-lug bolt features a relatively short 70-degree rotation which enhances speed. An easy-to-reach three-position tang safety is southpaw friendly and out of the way of low-mounted optics. It is easy to manipulate while also allowing safe unloading of the rifle. The receiver features a bolt release on the left rear of the receiver. Depress this and the bolt can easily be removed.

The American Gen II features Ruger's Marksman Adjustable trigger. As its name implies, this design is user adjustable. A safe pull weight of between three and five pounds can be easily achieved. A trigger mounted safety is fitted which must be fully depressed before you can pull the trigger. Rather than a traditional Mauser-style internal box magazine, this model feeds from a three-round AI

style synthetic magazine. The magazine release is an easy to reach ambidextrous paddle at the rear of the magazine well.

The barreled action is dropped into a grey-textured synthetic stock. This features Ruger's Power Bedding integral bedding block system. This is designed to positively locate the receiver and free-float the barrel to enhance accuracy. The stock also helps to reduce weight. Plus, it is adjustable for length of pull via a spacer system. Length of pull can be adjusted from 12 to 13.75 inches. A rubber recoil pad not only reduces felt recoil but it keeps the butt from sliding around when mounted. The top of the pad is contoured to help prevent snagging on your clothing when quickly shouldering the rifle. Another nice feature is that the comb height is easily adjustable using different height combs. Additional butt spacers and comb options are available at ShopRuger.com. The stock features sling studs and the rifle has an overall length of 41.2 inches.

The short 20-inch barrel makes this rifle fairly compact and handy, but it will reduce muzzle velocity a bit. It's a nice



The rifle balances well and has an overall length of just 41.2 inches. (Photo by Ashley Jaderborg)



The length of pull and comb height can both be easily adjusted, also note the tang safety. (Photo by Michael Anschuetz)

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The handle is made from genuine natural bone, and features decorative wood spacers and a hand-carved motif of two overlapping feathers—a reminder for you to respect and connect with the natural world.

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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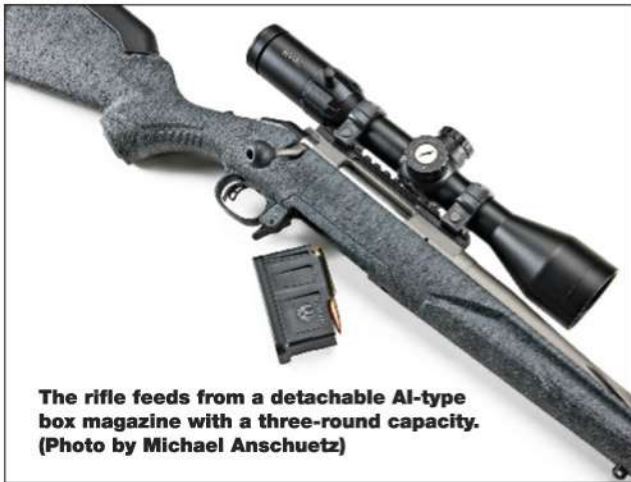
— J., La Crescent, MN

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— H., Arvada, CO

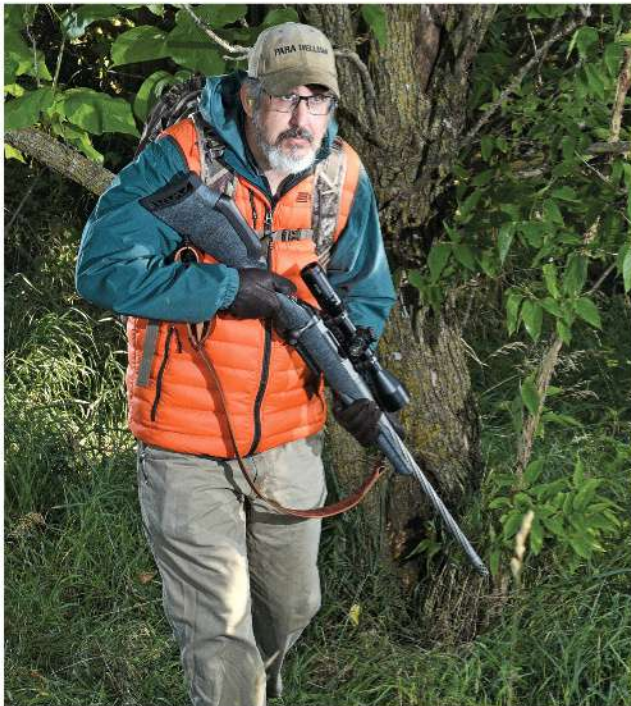




The rifle feeds from a detachable AI-type box magazine with a three-round capacity. (Photo by Michael Anschuetz)

length though for stalking through the woods with, and is a good length if you plan on mounting a sound suppressor. The muzzle features standard 5/8x24 threads, so is suppressor ready once you remove the radial muzzle brake.

I like the bolt's short rotation and it's a fairly smooth and fast action once you get the feel for it. The trigger is also quite good. A single-stage design it exhibited no creep and broke crisply at four pounds with almost no over-travel. The safety is well placed and easily manipulated through its three positions. The bolt handle is nicely shaped, placed in easy reach and offers plenty of leverage.



While our review rifle was chambered in 6.5mm Creedmoor this model is available in a host of popular and classic hunting calibers. (Photo by Ashley Jaderborg)



The stock design is comfortable and it's a fun rifle to shoot from position. (Photo by Ashley Jaderborg)

With no optic mounted, the rifle balances just in front of the magazine well. Getting ready for the range, I mounted a Hawke Frontier FFP 3-15x50mm scope and a sling. Ready for the field, the American Gen II carried nicely. So, I selected a few of my favorite 6.5mm Creedmoor loads, ranging in weight from 130 to 147 grains, and headed to the range.

Testing began by shooting groups off a rest at 100 yards. Four five-shot groups were fired with each load. Now keep in mind, this is a lightweight 6.5 pound hunting rifle with a fluted medium weight barrel. Typically, hunters consider three-shot groups sufficient for a rifle of this type, but I shot my standard five shots anyways. However, I did take note of the first three shots of each group as I went about my work.

The Ruger's three-shot magazine loaded easily and inserted with a simple upward push until it locked into place. Rounds fed smoothly, and empty cases ejected cleanly. The trigger is good and aided accuracy. Despite its 6.5-pound weight, recoil is very mild. Thanks to the radial muzzle brake, and soft recoil pad, this is an extremely comfortable rifle to fire. I did not find the muzzle brake offensive either. It is a very pleasant rifle to spend time behind, and I enjoyed shooting it.

Best accuracy was obtained using Black Hills Ammunition's 147-grain ELD-M load which averaged an impressive 0.75 of an inch and posted a best of 0.68 inch for five shots at 100 yards. Velocity was a bit sedate at just 2,366 fps. What impressed me about this load is the Ruger would consistently put the first three into a tiny



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The rifle is quick to the shoulder and the tang safety is well-placed and easy to manipulate. (Photo by Ashley Jaderborg)



Our review rifle came chambered for the popular 6.5mm Creedmoor and bullet weights ranging from 130 to 147 grains were used during testing. (Photo by Ashley Jaderborg)



The Ruger shot well with all the loads tested but preferred Black Hills 147-grain ELD-M load. (Photos by Ashley Jaderborg)



Ruger's Marksman Adjustable trigger was an aid to accuracy and is user-adjustable from three to five pounds. (Photo by Ashley Jaderborg)

cloverleaf. Switching to Berger's 140-grain Hybrid Target load improved velocity, but the five-shot average opened up. This load averaged 1.1-inch for five-shot groups at 2,577 fps. The first three shots with this load averaged an impressive 0.68 of an inch. Winchester's 140-grain BTHP Match load averaged 1.2 inches at 2,585 fps. The first three rounds fired with each group averaged 0.5 inch with the best measuring 0.3 inch. Lastly, Federal's 130-grain Hybrid Gold Medal Berger load averaged 1.25 inches at 2,668 fps. Again, the first three shots with each group cloverleafed and then group size grew as the barrel heated. If the barrel had been allowed to cool back down between each shot, groups would have been much tighter. But, I didn't think that would be realistic.

Next, I moved to running the Ruger offhand and kneeling at 100 yards. I have a variety of steel targets on my range and I ran some speed drills to see how the American Gen II would perform. Running these drills, the compact Ruger really came into its own. The rifle is quick to the shoulder, and easy to snap-shoot. The 70-degree bolt proved fast and feeding was flawless. The lightweight carbine proved not only quick handling but extremely fun to shoot. Recoil is very mild and the stock is very well-designed. The comb is angled so you feel nothing on your cheek and the pad soaks up what little felt recoil is left after the radial muzzle brake does its thing.

One thing you will notice looking at the accuracy and velocity chart is the reduction in muzzle velocity from the



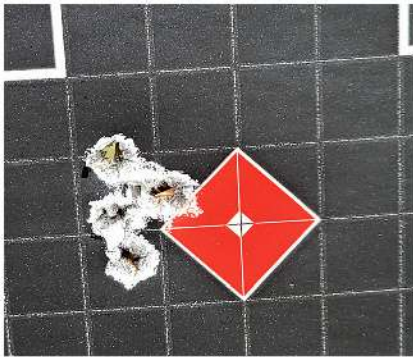
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Here is a nice 100-yard five-shot group fired using Black Hills 147-grain ELD-M load. (Photo by David Fortier)



Here is a five-shot group fired with Winchester's 140-grain Match load, note the first three shots all went into the hole on the right. (Photo by David Fortier)



Here is a three-shot group fired with Berger's 140-grain Hybrid Target load at 100 yards. (Photo by David Fortier)

short barrel. The 6.5mm Creedmoor has become hugely popular in recent years and there is a variety of fine performing modern hunting loads available for it. Teamed with a good modern expanding bullet, the 6.5mm Creedmoor will perform well on whitetail deer and similar size game animals at reasonable distances. Accuracy is excellent and recoil is very mild.

Should you choose the 6.5mm Creedmoor over an identical model chambered in .308 Winchester? For typical eastern USA whitetail hunting where the shots are close, probably not. The .308 Winchester is old and mundane, but it does put a larger diameter and heavier payload on target. It remains a very accurate cartridge and at typical Eastern hunting ranges, like I experienced growing up in Maine, it is hard to beat.

If the 6.5mm Creedmoor is too “hip,” and the .308 Win too “mundane,” seriously consider the classic 7mm-08 Remington. A fantastic old cartridge, it adds a bit of versatility compared to the 6.5mm Creedmoor as there are heavier bullet choices in 0.284-inch and the added diameter certainly doesn't hurt. The 7mm-08 Rem shoots flat, is well proven on a wide variety of big game animals and has mild recoil when running lighter 120-grain bullets. Luckily,

the Ruger American Standard Gen II is available in a wide variety of modern and traditional calibers. So, you have a lot of options to choose from.

I'm delving into other caliber options for this model as I came away impressed with this new offering from Ruger. It's a fun little rifle which would make a steadfast hunting partner. It is good looking, and in my opinion the spiral fluting and radial muzzle brake combined with the Cerakote finish really sets this model apart from the old Gen I models. The synthetic stock is not “expensive” and you can see that in the integral trigger guard. Even so, it's very functional and comfortable.

The three-shot groups this rifle averaged was surprising. For a lightweight hunting rifle, I found the accuracy to be excellent. This is especially true for a rifle in this price range. Keeping in mind the MSRP is \$729, I think Ruger's American Standard Gen II is a solid value for the money. If you are interested in a lightweight modern bolt-action hunting rifle with good looks and performance to match, this is one to consider. **FN**

ACCURACY CHART RUGER AMERICAN STANDARD GEN II 6.5MM CREEDMOOR				
Load	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	SD	Avg. Group (in.)
Federal Hybrid Gold Medal Berger	130	2,668	10.8	1.25
Berger Hybrid Target	140	2,577	13.1	1.1
Winchester HPBT Match	140	2,585	19	1.2
Black Hills ELD-M	147	2,366	21.4	.75

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups fired from a rest at 100 yards. Velocity figures are 10-shot averages recorded with a LabRadar Doppler chronograph at the muzzle at an ambient temperature of 85 degrees F at 1,030 feet above Sea Level.

RUGER AMERICAN STANDARD GEN II	
Action Type:	Manual rotating bolt with push feed
Caliber:	6.5mm Creedmoor
Capacity:	3+1 detachable AI box magazine
Barrel:	20 inch Cold Hammer Forged, 1-8 inch twist
Overall Length:	41.25 inches
Weight:	6.5 pounds with empty magazine
Finish:	Gunmetal Gray Cerakote
Length of Pull:	12 to 13.75 inches
Trigger:	Ruger Marksman Adjustable trigger
Sights:	None, MIL STD 1913 rail
Safety:	Ambidextrous Tang
Price:	\$729.00 MSRP
Contact:	Ruger.com, (603) 865-2442

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AN “EXCURSION” INTO DEER COUNTRY:

Shaw Barrels New .400 Legend Excursion Bolt-Gun Takes on Ohio Whitetails!

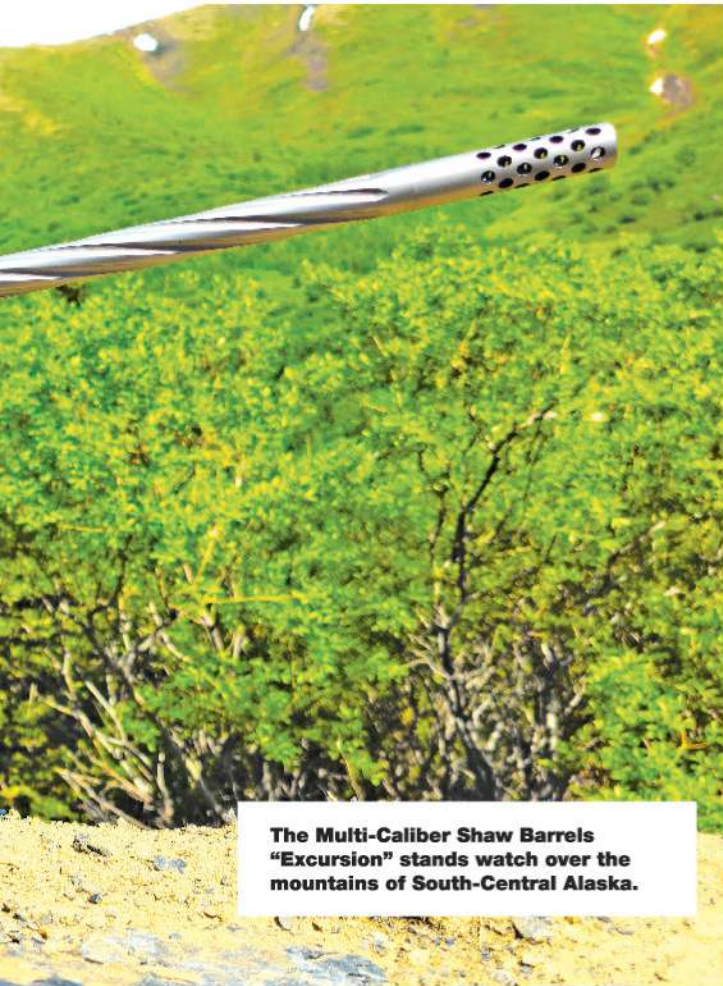
By Rikk Rambo

Nothing makes an East Coast/Midwest deer hunter in the U.S. appreciate a well-engineered straight-wall cartridge chambered rifle more than memories of gun seasons past when shotguns were the only sanctioned modern long arms allowed in the field.

I recently entered the Ohio white tail gun season fray with just such a long gun: The Shaw Barrels “Excursion” in .400

Legend. The Excursion is available in chambers ranging from 17 Remington to .375 Ultra-Mag, but the .400 Legend cartridge would be my Huckleberry for the 2023 buck hunt.

However, before we get to the nuts and bolts of this deer-smiting boom-stick’s engineering, accuracy, and efficacy, it is important to understand what a game-changer a skookum, straight-walled chambered rifle is to hunters



The Multi-Caliber Shaw Barrels "Excursion" stands watch over the mountains of South-Central Alaska.

historically hobbled by those archaic, draconian, "shotgun only" game regulations....

Flashback: Opening Day of White Tail Gun Season... Somewhere in the Windswept Flat-Lands of Northwestern Ohio... December of '91.

It was zero-dark-thirty on the bone-chillingly cold opening morning of white tail gun season. The year was 1991, grunge music was on the rise, the Soviet Union was all but kaput, and Madonna still looked like a glamorous pop-music diva instead of an unhinged geriatric cocktail waitress on an oil-rig.

It was also 23 years before the state of Ohio allowed straight-walled cartridge rifles to be used to harvest deer during gun season. The law of the land dictated that the only modern firearms permissible for gun season were shotguns and handguns. It mattered not if you were a snooty upper-crust rifleman who previously attended a private college and sipped top-shelf brandy from a snifter, or, like the majority of us, were one of the "poor's" who learned a trade or entered the military after high school and went to a state college on the G.I. Bill. Straight-walled rifle cartridges were strictly verboten!



All the "whomp" without the obscene distance: Straight-walled rifle cartridges are ideal for hunting in "flat country!"



Q: What is a young Combat Engineer supposed to do with his lunch hour?
A: Blast some rounds downrange with his Franchi SPAS-12! (Rikk R, Circa 1989!)



The Excursion... light enough for mountain hunting, rugged enough to bounce around the bed of a side-by-side ATV!

AN "EXCURSION" INTO DEER COUNTRY



A boy and his boomstick...Rikk R. about to abscond with his test rifle from the Shaw Barrels sales floor!

I was in my senior year of college and while all of my fellow (and sane) Bowling Green State University undergrad cohorts approximately 50 miles north of my current position were nestled all comfy in their beds with dreams of sugar plums, fake I.D.'s, and Bartles & James wine coolers dancing in their heads, I was sloshing across a shallow spot of the semi-frozen Blanchard River. With a daypack on my back, a homemade climbing tree-stand uncomfortably digging into my left shoulder, a Franchi SPAS-12 Shotgun slung across my right, and the first day

of Ohio white tail gun season ahead of me, I couldn't have been happier. Those spoiled, pusillanimous, Drakkar Noir cologne wearing city-boys snuggled comfortably in their dorms and frat-houses back at BGSU didn't know what they were missing.

The destination of my early morning trek was an oak tree at the corner of an un-harvested cornfield I previously scouted weeks earlier... one that would be a perfect fit for my portable "climbing" deer stand.

When first light arrived, so did a white tail buck that was one of those magnificent specimens that can easily be called a "buck of a lifetime." It was a massive 14-point (7x7 for those of you west of the Mississippi) slammer that likely grew up downriver from a nuclear power plant and benefited from a steady diet of mutation-inducing radioactive run-off and spent cadmium rods. This soy-bean/feed-corn enhanced deer was purpose-built to bring on a hint of buck fever in even the most stalwart of white tail hunters... and he was cautiously making his way along the outside edge of the cornfield towards my cozy little kill-zone.

As he approached the 150-yard mark (I could humanely engage the buck at 100 yards), I disengaged the SPAS-12's twin safeties and prepared to make the shot.

As with most things in life, however, just when you think you are at the top of your game and Lady Luck has finally sent a grin and a peck on the cheek your way, fate steps in with radically different plans and kicks you square in the no-no parts.

My Boone and Crockett Club candidate was a mere 20 yards from crossing the 100-yard threshold that would initiate my trigger press when he stopped, frantically whipped his head around, and then disappeared into the woods at the speed of a cheetah hot on the tail of a juicy gazelle. As I sat there despondently wondering what old gypsy lady I had wronged, or Egyptian tomb I had desecrated in a former life to foment this travesty, the mystery as to what



The Excursion's fluted bolt outfitted with a "Knurled Hunter" knob.



Shaw Barrels well-done action—buttery-smooth and AICS detachable magazine-fed!



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AN "EXCURSION" INTO DEER COUNTRY

spooked the buck became quite clear. Approximately 150 yards behind the deer, a morbidly obese slob hunter smoking a stogie came clomping out of the corn like a mentally challenged Star Wars Imperial AT-AT walker.

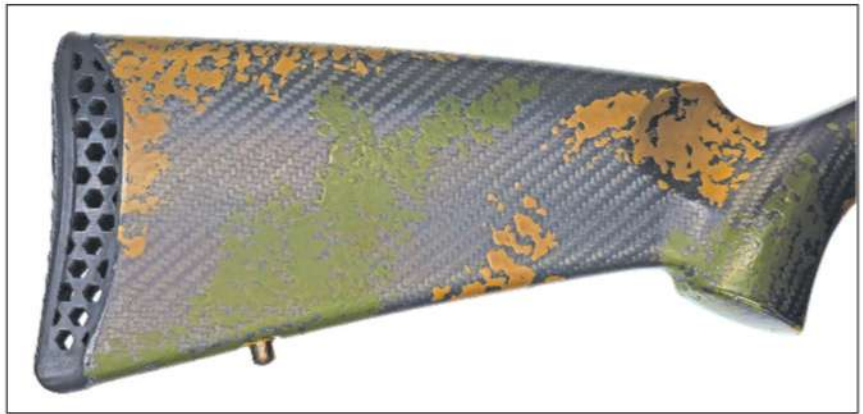
I never laid eyes on that magnificent buck again, but I did learn an important life lesson. An accurate straight-walled cartridge rifle and well-paired optic would have given this tragic tale a much happier ending, and you are about just such a weapon: The Shaw Barrels Excursion in .400 Legend equipped with the Leupold Mark 5HD 2-10x30 rifle scope.

Light, Powerful, and Precise: The Shaw Barrels "Excursion"

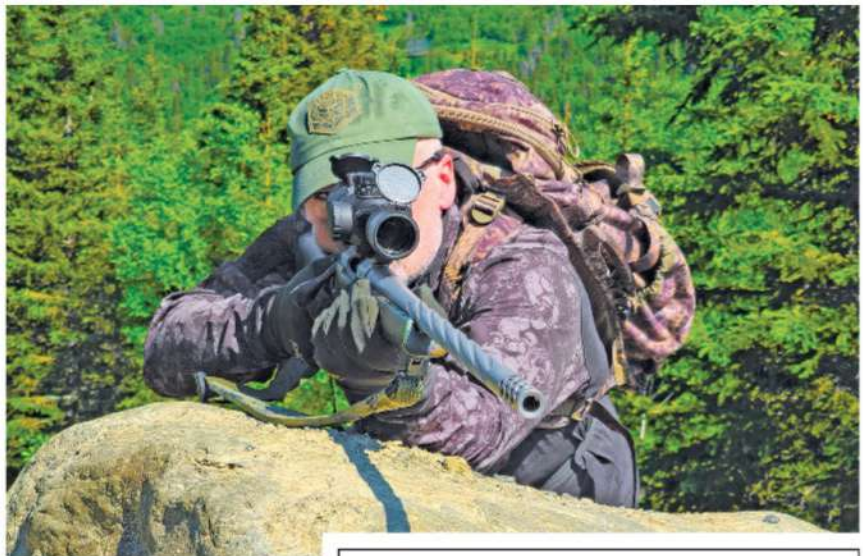
The Excursion is built on a Remington 700-style action and designed to be extremely quick-pointing and light. More precisely, mountain-hunting light. Since the Excursion is offered in a myriad of chamberings (ranging from .17 Remington to .375 H&H Mag and beyond), each caliber/action length comes with its own unique weight profile. Rifles built in common mountain-hunting calibers (.308 Winchester, 6.5 Creedmoor, 6.5 PRC, etc.) can weigh as little as 5.75 lbs. and typically don't exceed 6.75 lbs.

The caliber we chose to test is one of the newest, "Midwest deer hunting legal" straight-walled chamberings to hit the woods: .400 Legend. This straight-walled big brother to the popular .350 Legend takes full advantage of the minimalistic weight advantage of a "short action" bolt gun. The Excursion exploits this attribute to its advantage exceedingly well... so well, in fact, that when Josh (my Shaw Precision Guns contact) handed it to me for the first time, it was so light, I momentarily thought a major component (like the barrel!?) had been inadvertently left out of the production process.

The Excursion's Sub-MOA guarantee is backed by multiple engineering and design features acting in concert. The metallurgy of its receiver is simple and proven: 416 Stainless Steel. This corrosion and oxidation resistant steel



Up close and personal view of the "Green and Brown Sponge" pattern Peak 44 "Blacktooth" stock and "3D Hex" recoil pad.



The Excursion's business end... a fluted, bead-blasted matte stainless barrel and proprietary muzzle brake.



Sitting pretty in deer country: The Leupold 2-10x30mm Mark 5HD.

is also renowned for its low frictional properties. These attributes combine forces to reduce friction and galling (the microscopic transfer of materials between surfaces that, in weapons, contributes to mechanical errors or failures). The action of the .400 Legend test rifle is fed by an



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JUNE 2024

AN "EXCURSION" INTO DEER COUNTRY



Tried and true Winchester Power-Points accompanied by an AICS patterned Accurate-Mag.



That's "one dead deer-sized group" at 100 yards....



...a-a-a-and still a "dead deersized" group at 200 yards (probably wouldn't go well for an adversarial vole or chipmunk at that ranger either)!

SHAW EXCURSION .400 LEGEND WINCHESTER POWER-POINT (215-GRAIN JACKETED SOFT-POINT)		
100 YARDS		
Velocity (fps)	Energy (ft-lbs.)	Accuracy (in.) (Avg. & Best)
1,872	1,673	0.910 / 0.791
200 YARDS		
1,540	1,132	2.104 / 1.488
Group sizes (Three five shot groups)		

AICS-pattern four round Accurate-Mag. A 90° lift drives its fluted nitride bolt, which can be factory-modified with multiple patterns of spiral, stitched, diamond, and chain link design patterns. Shaw also provides several bolt-knob

styles appropriately patterned to match your rifle's intended use (hunting, tactical, target/bench shooting, etc.).

The trigger group options for the Excursion consist of three TriggerTech (TriggerTech.com) models:

- Field (2.5–5.0 lbs.)
- Primary Curved (1.5–4.0 lbs.)
- Primary Flat (1.5–4.0 lbs.)

The trigger on our test rifle was Teflon-smooth and consistently averaged a two-pound, one-ounce pull weight with a predictable breakover/ "sweet spot."

The rifle's stock is a Peak 44 (PeakFortyFour.com) carbon fiber "Blacktooth" that weighs a diminutive 20 ounces and features a 13.25-inch length of pull complimented by a "3D Hex" recoil pad. The stock for our test rifle came in an excellent camo pattern for hardwood forests: "Green & Brown Sponge."



"Deathly Hallows Barbie" gives me a warm welcome to my friend's farm!



My farmhouse roommate "Mr. McTouchesalot" the clown (who, not shockingly, isn't allowed to come within five hundred feet of an elementary school or daycare center).

The barrel of the Excursion is manufactured to the exacting tolerances Shaw is renowned for and is available with multiple options to fit the individual shooter's use-profile. Both 416R Stainless or 4140 Chrome-Moly are on the table as barrel-composition possibilities for the various chamberings across the Excursion multiverse. Every Excursion build offers multiple muzzle treatment options, allowing the shooter to choose brake thread patterns, crown styles, and multiple rifling-size options. Shooters are also afforded multiple finish styles. While bead-blasted matte stainless is the default, Cerakote is also on the table

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Enjoy it while it lasts! A few moments of dazzling sunlight sandwiched between angry weather fronts!

in such colors as "Blackout," "Concrete," "Tungsten Burn Bronze," and "Midnight Bronze."

Bright Glass for a Gloomy Day: The 2-10x30mm Leupold Mark 5HD

The glass chosen to accompany the Excursion to its range sessions and white tail hunt was the rugged, all-business Leupold 2-10x30mm Mark 5HD. During my 20 years on the last frontier, I have smashed, dragged, soaked, and scraped Leupold optics across peaks and valleys during every mountain goat and sheep hunt I've humped out on. Their ability to survive a beating and still "Dot an I" or "Cross a T" are remarkable.

The Mark 5HD we tested features a MIL Dot reticle design utilizing hash marks (better for "finer work") in lieu of traditional dots. The Mark 5's reticle system is fully capable of calculating both windage and elevation, with 1 MIL equaling approximately 3.6 inches at 100 yards. This first focal plane rifle scope takes advantage of Leupold's proprietary glare-reduction lens technology and is custom dial compatible for users who wish to customize their turrets to a specific caliber. It also features a field/tactical-smart zero lock dial and zero stop failsafe function when initiating a "dial back to zero."

One-Trick Pony: Winchester Power-Point... The Only Round In Town!

The ammunition market in the 49th state is geared towards power-house rounds like the .375 H&H Magnum,

.338 Winchester Magnum, and other long-action calibers. Due to this, Alaska-centric atmosphere of magnum caliber snobbery, I was limited to one .400 Legend cartridge type: the tried-and-true Winchester Power-Point!

With a bullet diameter of .4005 of an inch, a shell case length of 1.65 inches, projectile velocity of 2,250 fps with muzzle energy of 2,416 ft.-lbs., Winchester's 215-grain .400 Legend offering is estimated to exert 100% more energy than a 12-gauge slug at the 100-yard line with 55% less recoil. This rivals the 450 Bushmaster in energy displacement with 20% less recoil. True to its lineage and timeline in the burgeoning "Legend" family of cartridges, it is estimated to export 25% more energy than the .350 Legend, combined with significantly greater penetration.

Range-testing demonstrated that the Excursion (with its proprietary muzzle brake and Peak 44 3D Hex recoil pad) is gifted with pleasantly light recoil... an attribute perfect for not inflicting detrimental recoil-sensitivity habits on young adults and newer shooters that are commonly associated with the heavy concussion of large caliber rifles.

The Excursion/Power-Point duo printed consistent and devastatingly tight bullet placement at the 100-yard mark with the best measuring an insane .791-inch group and the average group size collectively registering an equally impressive .910-inch pattern. The rifle's performance continued to make my heartbeat with pride for my Shaw Barrels "hometown team" at 200 yards with an incredible best of 1.488 inches and average group size of 2.104 inches. These statistics were calculated from three five-round groups shot

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Quick ending to a three-day fight against the weather: The "eatin-buck" harvested humanely and instantly with the Excursion/Mark 5HD duo.



Hangin' pretty: The coming year's BBQ-victuals...field dressed and safe in the farm's walk-in cooler!

at the above listed yardages. The weather conditions were fair skies with no appreciable wind.

.400 Legend Excursion: The Period at the End of a White Tail Buck's Sentence!

Deer hunting on my "brother from another mother's" farm is always a high point of my year. Deer season '23 was not an exception. My "closer than kin" buddy is ornery, but his good 'ol mom takes shenanigans to a whole new level in the form of the demonic antique dolls and other creepy Beelzebub-inspired action figures she strategically places around my guest-room in her Victorian-era farm house. This year, she took it to a whole new level: I didn't even make it up the driveway before encountering a "Dante's Inferno Playhouse" Barbie Doll waiting for my arrival.

I love family traditions!!!

Now to get down to the venison and potatoes of the deer hunt. I'd love to spin you a tale rife with exciting stories about spine-tingling encounters with rabid coyotes (or even an overly enthusiastic bobcat in heat) in which the incredible accuracy and reliability of the Excursion saved the day, but the truth of the matter is this: The only adversary Shaw Barrels' finest and I faced during our three days in the field was hunt-dampening wind and rain.

The aforementioned climatic conditions are an absolute

buzz-kill when it comes to hunting deer... especially mature, street-smart bucks. Bedding-down and staying concealed is in chapter one/sentence one of the "White Tail Buck" playbook when the vanes of a vintage windmill are clanging and the dewpoint has reached critical mass. Thankfully, an intermediate-bodied six-point didn't get the memo on what should have been his S.O.P. (standard operating procedure) and paid the price for his dereliction of duty at the muzzle of the .400 Legend Excursion.

I observed the Excursion's victim in the near-dusk hours of every evening spent in the field but passed on him in hopes of harvesting an older, more weathered adversary. Unfortunately, for the six-point-er, my moose hunt was cancelled last year due to a faulty outboard engine and Fortress Rambo was in need of some protein to fill the gaps in its chest freezer.

On the final evening of the hunt, the wind was plying its noisy trade, but the punctual buck arrived on

schedule to feed at the lower corner of a cornfield below my hide. Darkness was rapidly approaching, but I faced a dilemma. When the buck silently exited the woods, he faced directly at me and the only viable, humane shot this angle afforded was a straight-on shot to the cervical vertebrae at the base of his skull as he bent over to graze. I decided to take the shot based on two factors: The .400 Legend cartridge's ballistic capabilities and my trust in the Excursions impressive accuracy.

I'd like to think my six-point went to its "happy grazing grounds" content and with a full belly, because I waited until the last bit of shootable light before pressing the smooth, crisp trigger of the Excursion. When the trigger broke over, the rifle's deceptively light recoil downplayed the power with which the 215-grain Power-Point smashed into the buck's neck. The bullet's impact penetrated the buck's cervical vertebrae and spinal cord and I'm pretty certain he was well on his journey to "White Tail Valhalla" (via whatever version of Valkyries white tail bucks subscribe to) well before his lifeless body collapsed to the ground. An amateur autopsy conducted later, as the deer hung in the barn, confirmed the bullet had severed the deer's cervical vertebrae with panache and continued deep into the chest cavity and right lung of the deer. The .400 Legend Excursion, its Leupold Mark 5HD counterpart, and a

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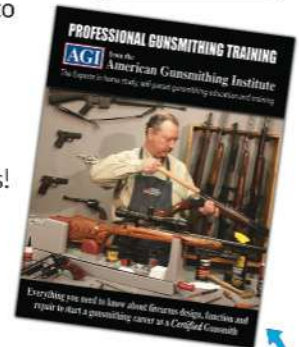
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AN "EXCURSION" INTO DEER COUNTRY

single 215-grain Power-Point were the exact pairing necessary for a humane, instantaneous harvest of a white tail buck with minimal meat damage.

The Shaw Barrels "Excursion": A Lightweight, Extraordinarily Accurate Game-Harvesting Machine

If you have a disdain for obnoxious, ever-complaining "Karens," you will be thrilled at my final take on the capabilities and performance of the Excursion/Mark 5HD/Power-Point trio. The rifle/optic/cartridge combo performed flawlessly and I absolutely did not need to speak with a Shaw Barrels manager!

My 17th (Ohio) and 49th (Alaska) state hunting friends and I unambiguously agreed that the Excursion is an exceptional rifle and is "mountain hunting" light. The "ultra-light" moniker, when attached to hunting rifles, does not always translate well into laser-precision accuracy attributes. The Excursion, bolstered by Shaw Barrels' century-plus experience in weapon machining and barrel-building, along with its Leupold Mark 5HD partner in crime, overcame that hurdle in stellar fashion. The weapon's fluted barrel and bolt are both practical (for weight reduction) and striking in appearance, and said bolt, along with the trigger, will spoil you with their buttery smooth reliability. The rifle's ergonomics are excellent and the muzzle-brake and Peak 44 Blacktooth Stock and 3D Hex Recoil Pad significantly dampens the weapon's felt recoil.



The Excursion in .400 Legend is all business...in fair weather or foul! And even in Alaska!

In relation to field performance, it survived Ohio's rain and wind without a hiccup and also won a bout with Alaska's unforgiving maritime conditions where it served as a secondary weapon during a spring black bear hunt from a saltwater vessel on Prince William Sound.

In the end analysis, the Excursion effortlessly passed muster as a go-to deer hunting rifle in the tested caliber (.400 Legend). The Excursion and Leupold Mark 5HD companion performed with the vim, vigor, and excellence inherent to a weapon I would happily take into the mountains or lowlands of Alaska in one of the many other "49th State Compliant/Big Boy" cartridges Shaw Barrels



Anytime, anywhere: The Excursion will operate with finesse anywhere in North America and beyond!

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ROCKY "LYNX" AND "ARCTIC BEAR CLAW" HUNTING BOOTS



▲ A pair of Rocky "Lynx" drying out during a handgun hunt in eastern Ohio.



◀ Rocky "Arctic Bear Claws" holding a commanding view of the Alaska Range during a moose hunt in the 49th State.

Wet conditions and cold feet are the price a late fall/early winter hunters typically resign themselves to paying...but it doesn't have to be like that! Rocky's "Lynx" 1000G hunting boot proved themselves during both the December white tail hunt with the Shaw Barrels Excursion in Ohio and during late fall/early winter hikes in Alaska's Chugach Mountain Range. These boots are lined with 1,000 grams of Thinsulate, Vapor Pass/Breathable waterproof membranes, and provide footbed protection by way of a fiberglass shank and cushioned EVA midsole.

Rocky's "Nuclear Option" for cold feet and slippery, snow-covered terrain is the "Arctic Bear Claw." I have worn Bear Claws for twelve years and they are, by far, the absolute warmest winter terrain conquering boots I have ever owned. From a 2012 brown bear hunt on Kodiak to Moose Hunting in the Arctic Circle, they are absolutely... BAD-ASS. 1,400 grams of Thinsulate, "bear-claw" traction outsoles, air-port cushion footbeds, and a generous helping of Gore-Tex makes these boots a formidable weapon against cold, wet, abysmal weather conditions and equally troublesome terrain.

Rocky's "Lynx" and "Arctic Bear Claw" boots retail at \$180.00 and \$219.99, respectively. Visit RockyBoots.com for more info. **FN**

SPECIFICATIONS

SHAW BARRELS "EXCURSION" RIFLE

Caliber:	.400 Legend (tested); Also available in numerous popular calibers (Short and Long/Magnum Action) ranging from .17 Remington to .375 Remington Ultra-Mag
Trigger:	TriggerTech Primary; Curved/1.5-4.0 lbs. (As tested...additional TriggerTech variants available)
Barrel:	Shaw Barrels 16 in. 416R Stainless Steel with Bead-blasted Matte Stainless finish; 1:16 in. twist and factory threading (5/8x24 RH and 1/2x28 options available)
Action:	Bolt (Short Action)
Muzzle Device:	Shaw Barrels proprietary muzzle brake
Weight:	5.80 lbs. (unloaded)
Magazine and Capacity:	Accurate-Mag (AICS Compatible) 4-round detachable magazine
Stock:	Peak 44 "Blacktooth" carbon fiber stock with "3D Hex" recoil pad
Sights:	Multiple rail options (Warne Maxima; O and 20 MOA Cutaway and Solid Rails)
MSRP:	Starting at \$2,550
Contact:	ShawCustomBarrels.com, (412) 221-3636

offers. If your future outdoor travels demand an accurate, lightweight hunting rifle, made by an All-American, 100+ year old (and going strong) manufacturing firm that takes pride in their work, the Excursion will get you to your destination! **FN**

SPECIFICATIONS

LEUPOLD MARK 5HD SCOPE

Dimensions:	11.2"x1.6"x1.8"
Magnification/Objective:	2-10x30
Reticle:	First Focal Plane TMR-MK (MIL Dot design using hash marks for increased precision)
Adjustment Range:	48 MIL Elevation, 23 MIL Windage (1 MIL is approximately 3.6 inches at 100 yards)
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STAG 15

With help from Stag Arms, Editor-in-Chief Vincent L. DeNiro bagged a buck on the first day of Ohio's 2023 deer season. (Photo by Matthew DeNiro)



PURSUIT RIFLE

BY STAG ARMS-

A MASTERPIECE IN 350 LEGEND

By Vincent L. DeNiro, Editor-in-Chief

As any older hunter from Ohio, and some other Midwestern states will tell you, the legalization of straight-walled rifle cartridges has made deer hunting much more “normal” when compared to other states. I remember back in the 1970s, dreaming of going on a deer hunt with a Winchester .30-30 or bolt action in .30-06. As a kid from Ohio, that wasn’t happening unless someone could take me to Pennsylvania or West Virginia. So, it was small-game hunting for me.

Many years later, deer hunting was done with a 12-gauge shotgun, and the older I got, the less I looked forward to sighting it in every season with slugs or sabots. The recoil was just horrible firing from a bench. However, before straight-walled rifle cartridges were approved, I did get creative investigating ways to use high-power pistol rounds fired from AR-type pistols, since handgun deer hunting is legal in the Buckeye state. Just before I “pulled the trigger” on a .45 Win. Mag AR pistol build, Ohio became more normal by legalizing straight walls. I ditched the scoped 12 gauge for a 450 Bushmaster-chambered AR-15 and became one happy hunter (see the Windham 450 Bushmaster Thumper rifle article I wrote years ago—it’s on FirearmsNews.com).

My younger son, Matthew, proved to be a better hunter than me with the .450, and this new caliber, which has much less recoil than a 12-gauge shotgun, set my mind at ease since he was hunting from a tree stand. The round is very accurate and wound channels were impressive and

satisfactory, yet the 250-grain bullet still allowed the deer to run 60-plus yards (or more) before dropping. This distance isn’t anything if one hunts on flat farmland, but I am in the hilly and heavily wooded part of Ohio (with deep hollows) within the last ripple of the Appalachian Mountains in the state (most deer are shot within 50 yards around here). Deer start to disappear into the thick woods after about 20 yards. To give you an example, a guy down the road from me paid almost \$3,000 for a professional drone operator to come out his property twice in order to locate a monster buck he shot during archery season last year.

I wanted deer to drop at least within 20 to 30 yards of being shot—dragging a deer out of a hollow 40 yards uphill is not what I call enjoyable exercise (especially with “karate knees”). The answer to my problem was a 300-grain bullet, with a large hollow point cavity, in the form of Federal’s Non-Typical series ammunition. This made all the difference in the world, and deer dropped within 10 yards most of the time.

The DeNiro household was sold on 450 Bushmaster, and we had three rifles over the years: Windham Thumper AR-type rifle, Bushmaster ACR, and an AR upper conversion from Bear Creek Arsenal. About seven years ago, I was introduced to the 350 Legend by the Winchester team during the Roundtable private shooting industry event hosted by Outdoor Sportsman Group (owners of this magazine). I was very skeptical and vocal about this smaller caliber



The STAG 15 Pursuit is built with premium parts, both inside and out.

STAG 15 PURSUIT RIFLE BY STAG ARMS



A Gamma 9mm muzzle brake manufactured by VG6 Precision tops off the 5/8x24 threaded barrel.



A Hanson lightweight barrel with tapered design and a 1:16-inch twist rate was chosen by Stag Arms for the Pursuit.

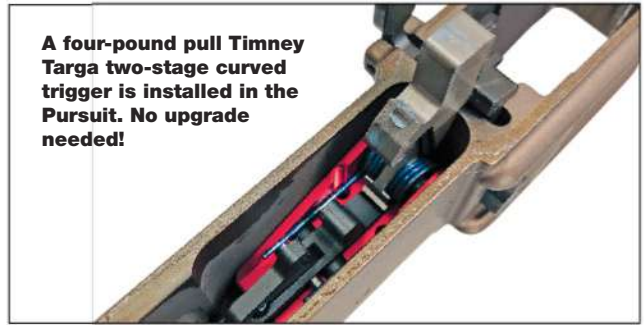
mainly because of my deer-running-downhill-to-die issues. Ohio also had an issue because certain 350 Legend projectiles were under .357 in diameter—the minimum diameter for hunting deer. It seemed that target loads were about that diameter (or a hair larger) but hunting loads were just under. Confusion and debate led to Ohio enacting legislation to allow all .350 ammunition. (I mean, who wants to put people in jail for a couple thousandths of an inch? Don't answer.) I later spoke to *Guns & Ammo* Rifle and Optics Editor Tom Beckstrand about him shooting a deer at around 125 yards with the .350 resulting in a clean kill. Still, I had no interest in changing horses. A couple of years later, I agreed to hunt with a Rock River 350 Legend AR-type rifle. It shot really well, but I had no luck that year, in part to having a cold during most of our extremely short deer gun season. Disappointed with coming up short on deer that year, I had James Tarr do the review (I can do that).

Weird Things Happen, and Sometimes to a Hard-Headed Italian...

Well, I'm half Italian. Anyway, I was back to my ACR in 450 Bushmaster—perfectly content. Then, during the



Premium furniture: Magpul's MOE-K2 with storage and CTR stock. The extra-large trigger guard is a nice touch, along with the ambidextrous safety.



A four-pound pull Timney Targa two-stage curved trigger is installed in the Pursuit. No upgrade needed!

2023 Outdoor Sportsman Group Roundtable, Stag Arms did a presentation on their company and new offerings. Outside of two older-model Stag Arms AR receivers I bought over 10 years earlier, I didn't have any experience with the company or its products.

While at one of the event's range days, I walked over to the Stag Arms display and took a look at its rifles. You can guess what the first thing out of my big mouth was: "*When are you going to do one in 450 Bushmaster?*" The rep said that they are thinking about it, but that people really like their 350 Legend ARs. I picked one up and that's when things started to change. The rifle I had in my hand was in Midnight Bronze finish—I knew that because I asked, "*Wow, this is really nice, what do you call this finish?*" Now, I'm not big on painted guns, other than a home-job spray-painted AR-180 in a grass-green color I saw at a gun show back in the early 1980s (really cool, but then again, I'm an AR-180 addict). My first AR-15 was a Colt SP1 that I got in 1978 (not 1987, it wasn't a typo)—black has always been just fine with me for military-styled semi-autos. But this was different—very different. Maybe it was the way the light hit it, or the way the brown leather cheek piece contrasted with the metal. Lightweight too. Fondling it a little more, I really liked the dual charging handle design, and I dry-fired it as well—fantastic trigger! So, I tried to hide my excitement and remain cool, "*Go ahead and send me one, and I'll try to nail a deer with it this fall.*"

I've Owned Dozens of ARs Since the Late 1970s, So Why Am I Excited?

And I've built and repaired hundreds including M16s (that was my first job in the gun business back in 1982).



A custom leather cheek piece affixed to the top of the Magpul stock with clearance for the charging handle. Classy and practical.

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STAG 15 PURSUIT RIFLE BY STAG ARMS



The high-quality ambidextrous charging handle is manufactured by Aero Precision. (AeroPrecisionUSA.com)



The new Stag Arms logo graces the mag well and really ties this in as a hunting AR-type rifle, especially with the Midnight Bronze finish. A five-round magazine is included (which DeNiro had to block to two rounds, per Ohio's "three-rounds maximum" deer-hunting regulations).

Dozens of brands, surplus parts, factory select-fire M16s, and I really like this one. Here's why.

Starting at the front of the STAG 15 Pursuit, we have a Gamma 9mm muzzle brake by VG6 Precision, which is the cherry on top of the 16-inch Hanson lightweight nitride barrel with a 5/8x24 RH male thread. This Hanson barrel, with a 1:16-inch twist rate, is a bit unique, as it was engineered to give the stability of a heavy (or heavier) barrel by use of a tapered design. So, you get the accuracy benefits of a heavy barrel without the negative harmonics of a lightweight barrel, which would affect accuracy. The other premium part is the Timney Targa two-stage curved trigger, which breaks nicely at four pounds with almost no creep or slop. I'm stopping here for a moment. The trigger and barrel are like the chef at a restaurant, and the cosmetic look of a rifle is like the décor of a restaurant. Many restaurant owners put all their money into the décor and furnishings of their building and then use whatever change is left over for their chef. Those restaurants don't last long (you guessed it; the place looks great but the food sucks). Rifle companies should put the majority of their money into the barrels and triggers, as that is what matters, not just into the handguards, furniture, and finish. So far, Stag Arms did

both. This premium barrel is shrouded with a 15-inch free-float 6061 aluminum handguard with M-LOK slots.

In the back, the grip and stock are from Magpul. What's not to like? I am more of a standard M16-grip kind of guy (I'm used to them after 46 years), but I really like the angle of the MOE-K2 grip as well how it fills my large hands—and it even has storage for the survivalist in me! The six-position retractable stock is the CTR carbine model. I have a pile of these on other rifles and they are so much nicer than a standard M4 stock, especially with its quick-detach sling socket and protected adjustment lever. The difference between this CTR stock and ones offered by Magpul is that Stag added a custom leather cheek piece affixed to the top of it with clearance for the charging handle. Not only does it look awesome on this hunting-style AR-type rifle, but it keeps your cheek from freezing when it's cold out. Nice touch! Also, I weighed the buffer when I field stripped it—5⅝ ounces.

In the middle, I already mentioned the awesome Timney trigger assembly but need to add that it is protected by an extra-large trigger guard. The ambidextrous charging handle is manufactured by



The STAG 15 Pursuit basically comes apart like any AR-15-type rifle, with the exception of the free-float handguard, which may lock up differently than one you are used to.

Aero Precision, and it definitely belongs on the list of premium parts. A standard forward assist and brass deflector, as well as P-rail, grace the upper. There is also a nice ambidextrous safety, made by Stag Arms, which rotates smoothly. Many may say that this is not needed in a hunting rifle, but my son Matthew would disagree. Many years ago, he was hunting in a tree stand when a deer ran to his four o'clock and he had to become a lefty quick to get the shot (he hunted with my ACR, which has an ambi-safety). The upper

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Hi-Lux sent DeNiro their CMR8 1-8x24mm scope which features a red dot.

and lower receivers are VERY tight. So tight that it took a punch and some light taps with a Brownells gunsmithing hammer just to get the take down pins disengaged. This is a good thing, and in all my years buying and building AR-type rifles, this was probably the tightest match between uppers. For decades, AR-15 accessory companies have come up with shims and other small parts to tighten up the uppers and lowers, but Stag Arms built this like the premium rifle they tout it to be. You aren't going to win a timed field stripping contest with this rifle, but that's okay—use your well-worn, vanilla M4 for that.

Out of the box, it's really ready to go, and I had nothing I would replace—just add sights and an optic as well as a small section of P-rail. The sights I had on hand were from Midwest Industries (I love their stuff), and I would tell you the models, but these have been discontinued (go to MidwestIndustriesInc.com to find yourself another set). For an optic, Hi-Lux (Hi-LuxOptics.com) just sent me its CMR8 1-8x24mm scope (30mm tube), which features a bright and sharp red dot. Although this optic has a bullet drop compensated reticule calibrated to 5.56x45mm (also available in .308), I asked them about making one for 350 Legend and 450 Bushmaster—maybe we will see that one day. After attaching it to a UTG AIR32234 mount (Leapers.com), I bore-sited it and then dialed it in for 50 yards, which again is about the average shot around here.



I like the optic, and the glass is clear with no fish-bowl effect at one power. Hunting ammo chosen was Winchester 160-grain bonded protected hollow points and my best group was just under .70 of an inch (Winchester.com for more info). The muzzle brake seemed to do a very good job.

During bench shooting that day, something happened that made me start looking forward to the 350

Legend deer hunt. After I got the Pursuit sighted in, I decided to sight in my younger son's Bear Creek Arsenal 450 Bushmaster (we change scopes on guns seemingly as often as changing underwear around here). Not long before, with assistance from Digital Editor Jack Oller, I got two rifle bench sleds from Caldwell (CaldwellShooting.com) and I used their 24-pound "Lead Sled DFT 2", for the STAG 15 Pursuit bench session. I then wanted to try out the AR version sled called the "Stinger" when I sighted in my son's .450 (he likes to hunt with a Trijicon ACOG—too many years of Call of Duty). This sled has no buttstock stop (or whatever it's called) like on most rests I have used, so it's all shoulder. No problem, as for most of my life bench shooting has been all sandbags and shoulders. Well, I did a dumb thing. I got used to the buttstock stop thingy on the Lead Sled DFT 2 and left space between the stock and my shoulder. RAP MUSIC LYRIC WARNING: "Four-fifty to the head, on the sled, may put you to bed, or make you almost dead"—I got my bell rung with an ACOG between the eyes at the base of my forehead. Even with the heavy barrel and muzzle brake on the Bear Creek, a 450 Bushmaster can be brutal on the bench. An ice pack was my little friend for the next 24 hours. According to Winchester, the 300 Legend has about one third the recoil as 450 Bushmaster.

A Hunting We Will Go! (A Couple of Weeks Later)

So, around here in the hilly and heavily wooded part of Ohio, I have some diverse options as far as deer hunting location: sitting on a log on the top of a hollow, or deep in

◀ The one DeNiro wanted, a six or seven pointer.

▶ The legendary .30-30, 350 Legend, 450 Bushmaster, and .45-70.



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The STAG 15 Pursuit resting on the Caldwell Lead Sled DFT 2, which is on a Knothole Designs bench. DeNiro used a Burris Tactical Fullfield 30 4.5-14x42mm scope for his accuracy testing. Three types of Winchester ammunition were on hand.

the woods, or hunkered down in the bottom of a hollow, sometimes in a tree stand, or in the most luxurious deer blind—my family room. Sometimes even on the front porch, and opening day 2023, it was the front porch. I have had over 26 deer (herd) in my “front yard” at times, so it can be a great spot, sometimes.

I had been watching a few bucks via my Browning Spec Ops Advantage trail camera daily and there was one big one I wanted, a six- or seven-point (check out my review of this camera at FirearmsNews.com—just use the search bar). However, reality sets in on opening day. The gun shots start at sunrise, and by 9 a.m. it can sound like a war zone around here (especially if an army of Amish hunters get dropped off right outside my AO). The fact is, if I want to live up to my promise to the Stag Arms head honcho of bagging a deer, preferably a buck, I had better take the first one I see. This is real out-in-the-woods hunting, not guided hunting lodge/preserve hunting—if you don’t get a buck on the first day, chances are slim that you will, as by the second day, you will typically see 50–75% fewer deer, and gunshots will only be heard every other hour. By the third or fourth day, you will hear only a handful of shots throughout the day, and you’ll be lucky if a doe comes around at dusk. By the way, as far as adult modern gun deer hunting, we Ohioans only get one week of deer gun season, and a Saturday and Sunday hunt two weeks later.

It was around 1:15 p.m. when I spotted a large four-point buck exiting the woods and entering the southwestern part of my property, which is mowed grass. I had seen this guy before on my trail camera, and in person.

A few weeks earlier, while refilling my feeder and setting out buck lure, I noticed out of the corner of my eye, this four-point buck about 100 feet away from me. He was just looking right at me. So, I took a good look at him and said something to myself like, “*Man, if this was deer season buddy...*” So, I figured he would trot off and I went back to

what I was doing. Except he didn’t trot off. He was now like 75 feet away. Okay, I have heard stories like this, so I started to get a bit concerned and yelled at him to take a hike. He then came closer, “*Does he have chronic wasting disease? Rabies? Alzheimer’s?*” I thought. Well, not wanting to get horned (or anything else for that matter), I pulled out my pistol thinking, “*What a waste of deer corn and time, and I won’t even be able to keep the damn thing.*” I started walking backwards toward the house. The buck came closer, but then, he became less interested in me and more interested in the lure (Wildlife Research Center brand) I put out—if filmed, this could have been a commercial for the stuff! He then went into the woods. Back to opening day.

So, I’m looking through the scope at this buck, which was about 40 yards away, down a mildly sloping hill, near a hollow, and contemplating whether or not I want to take this hooligan of a buck. Since I was reviewing the STAG 15 Pursuit, and didn’t want to chance coming up short, I took the shot after putting the crosshairs of the Hi-Lux over his heart. It appeared that he jumped and ran into the woods. “*Dammit!*” I thought, “*He is going into the hollow!*” I start imagining him tangled in thorn bushes at the very bottom—oh what a mess and pain in the ass this will be.

My younger son Matthew, who is our family deer-hunting champion, heard the shot and was already putting his boots on when I came into the house. I gave him a walkie talkie as he left to go looking for it while I retrieved my hunting bag with my favorite field-dressing knife, a Cold Steel Finn Bear. There were a few nice blood spots where the buck was hit, but I couldn’t follow where it ran into the woods as that area is way too thick with “jaggerz” (that’s Ohioan and Western Pennsylvanian for thorn bushes). My son called out that he found the deer, so I rounded around to the far side of the hollow to enter another way. When I got about 20 yards from my son and the rogue buck, I saw a ton of blood everywhere along the way. The buck was thoroughly dead. He had

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The Stag 15 Pursuit rifle proved to be a fantastic example of a premium AR-15-type rifle in 350 Legend.

run about 50 to 60 yards total and fell halfway up the far side of the hollow (thank goodness). I was impressed with the wound channel, and it was similar to some of the 450 Bushmaster entry and exit wounds we had seen previously. Now, I could relax a bit for the rest of the season.

Thoughts on the 350 Legend in Actual Use

I will say that the results from the 160-grain 350 Legend shot on this deer were about the same as 250-grain 450 Bushmaster rounds on harvested deer here. Also, the distance the deer ran, and that is downhill and uphill through thick woods, was very similar to multiple deer taken with 250-grain 450 Bushmaster. That is why we switched to 300-grain .450 projectiles, which made a big difference with deer dropping after about 10 yards, as stated earlier. However, I like the much milder recoil and report of the .350, which is known to being quite accurate at longer distances. I have shot one-inch groups with the .450 at 100 yards (thanks, Hornady), so now is the time to do more accuracy testing with the .350 and see where it ends up.

Before getting to the range, let's take a quick look at where the 350 Legend stands. Muzzle energy is about 1,671 ft-lbs. for a 160-grain projectile traveling at 2,170

fps (the round I used). Compared to the 450 Bushmaster with a 250-grain bullet at the muzzle with 2,700 ft-lbs. of energy traveling at 2,200 fps, the .350 is quite a bit less, but like I said, the kill results were almost identical on other deer shot with the 250-grain .450. Looking at the (real) legendary .30-30, with a 160-grain projectile, it is pegged at 2,300 fps with 1,879 ft.-lbs. of energy; the .350 is similar at the muzzle but the .30-30 easily wins the race. The .30-30 will have a six- to seven-inch drop at 200 yards, whereas the 350 Legend will drop about eight inches with the same grain bullet. Energy for the .30-30. at 200 yards is 1,050 ft-lbs., while energy at the same distance for the 350 (other) Legend is 766 ft-lbs., big difference. The reason I picked 200 yards is that it is about the maximum distance I would shoot a large deer with either of the straight-walled cartridges mentioned, and only if it was on vast wide-open flat land, on the last day of the hunt. I have shot 450 Bushmaster at 200 yards, and even lobbed them out to 300 on steel, but even with this much more powerful round, I wouldn't really want to shoot a large deer at more than 175 yards with it unless I felt I had to. So, for me, 150 yards would be the max for the .350 where I would feel pretty good about taking the shot.



◀ This Caldwell target stand has a great portable design and keeps targets stable.

▶ Winchester's 160-grain Power Max hunting load had a best five-shot group at 100 yards of 1.47 inches. Without the flier, it measured .95 of an inch.





My test optic over the years has been a Burris Fullfield 30 4.5-14x42mm scope set at 14 power supported by a Geissele mount (Geissele.com). I used Caldwell Orange Peel targets affixed to the “Ultimate Target Stand” by the same company. The weather was clear, 85 degrees F, with a zero-to five-mile-an-hour wind. Unfortunately, I had much less ammo than originally expected, so I had to cut my five-shot groups down to two per bullet type.


First up at 50 yards was Winchester Target 145-grain FMJ. My first group was 1.79 inches, and without the outside shot, it measured in at 1.34 inches. The second group was a bit better at 1.5 inches, 1.48 without the “flier” (or outside shot). If you want to plink around with your .350, this is the load. Brass began piling up about seven feet from the bench at my 4 o’clock. Next up was Winchester Power Max 160-grain Bonded JHP. This is my hunting load, and it was designed for maximum expansion. First group came in at 1.32 inches and only .80 of an inch without the outside shot. Second group was 1.23 inches and only .91 of an inch minus the outside shot. Nice! I had three more rounds left so I sent them down range. That three-shot was .85 of an inch. Last up, Winchester Super Suppressed (subsonic) 255-grain Open Tip. I really wished

I had a suppressor to pair with the rifle. First five-shot group was 1.36 inches and .98 without the flier. The second group came in at 1.54 inches and 1.09 inches without the outside shot. Felt recoil was substantially lower.

Since the hunting load won, I took it out to 100 yards with some rounds I scrounged up. The 160-grain Power Max gave me a 1.47-inch group, and .95 without the flier for round one. My last five-shot group came in at 1.54 inches and 1.09 inches without the flier. For under 100 yards, one should have little issue with heart shots on deer.

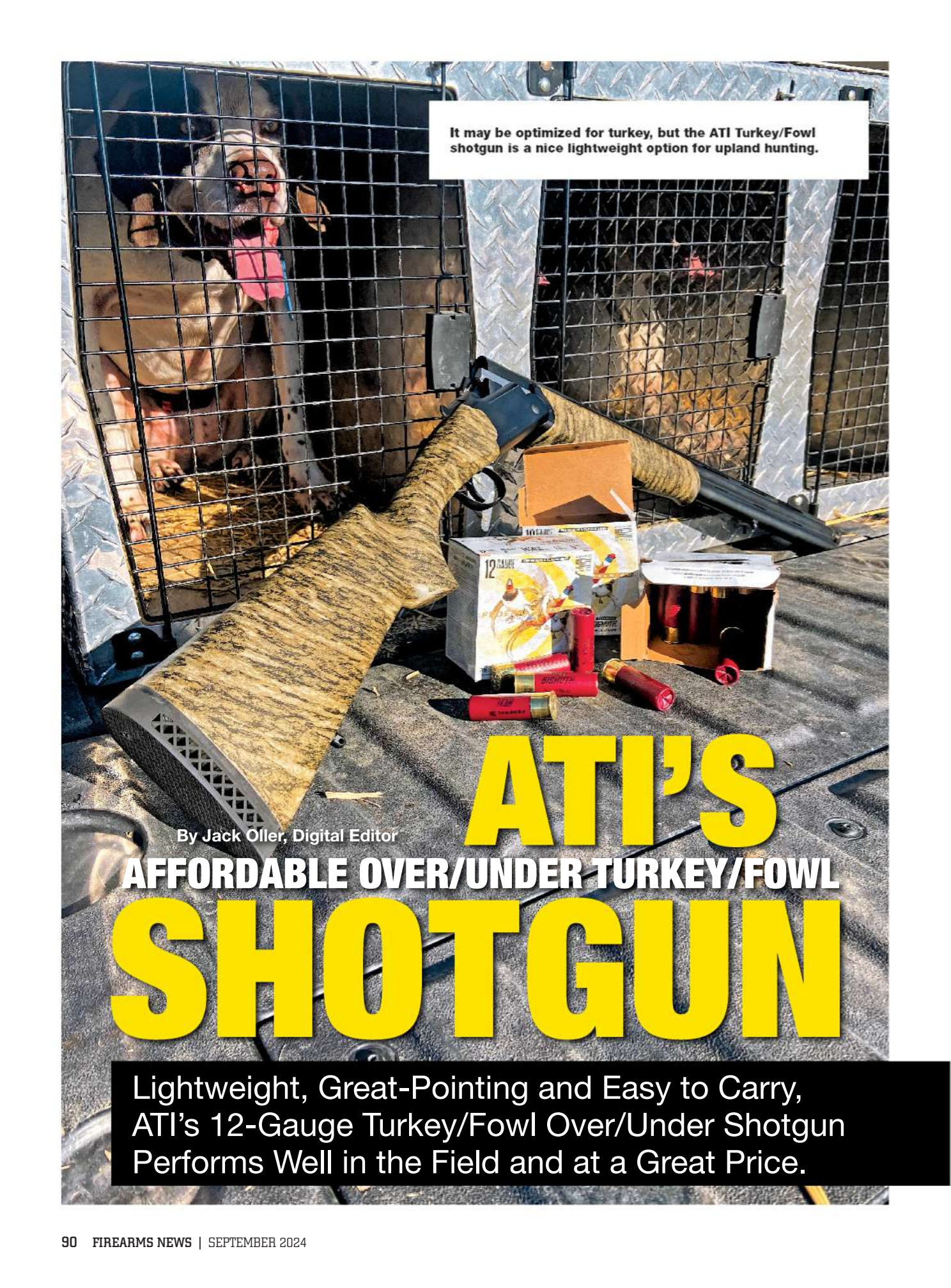
Final Thoughts

Stag Arms built a fantastic direct-gas impingement AR-type rifle in which there is nothing to complain about. I think that the price is right (especially with a lifetime transferable warranty), and the performance is there. It is a reliable, accurate rifle with premium parts right out of the box.

As far as the 350 Legend, well, I like it for an option. It is an accurate caliber as straight-walled cartridges go, and for shooting on flat-open farmland under 150 yards, I think it’s a fantastic round in restricted deer hunting states. For other game, well, in Ohio we can hunt animals like coyotes, wild boar, groundhogs, and other vermin with a 5.56 AR-15 and 100-round Beta Mag inserted if we want—no caliber restrictions either, and that includes .50 BMG. So, although the .350 would be great for hogs and coyotes within a limited distance, I would just grab one of my many semi-auto rifles (AR-15 type, AR-10, FAL, AK, ACR, AR-180, HK93, etc.) for the nuisance animals. The low-recoil aspect to the .350 is certainly a benefit. I’m 6’ 2”, 215 pounds, and I lift weights, but 60 years old is right around the bend for me, and I don’t like getting beat up with recoil, especially when sighting in on a bench. Would I hunt with it again? Sure. Would I love to test a STAG 15 in 450 Bushmaster, or maybe the 400 Legend as a nice in between? Oh yes! Maybe I’ll get my wish. 

STAG ARMS STAG 15 PURSUIT RIFLE				
350 LEGEND				
Manufacturer	Weight (grains)	Bullet Type	Avg. (in.)	Best (in.)
50 Yards: Two Five-Shot Groups				
Winchester Target	145	FMJ	1.65	1.50
Winchester Power Max	160	BPHP	1.28	1.23
Winchester Super Suppressed	255	OT	1.51	1.36
Above 50-Yard Groups Without the Flier				
Winchester Target	145	FMJ	1.36	1.23
Winchester Power Max	160	BPHP	0.86	0.80
Winchester Super Suppressed	255	OT	0.80	0.61
100 Yards: Two Five-Shot Groups				
Winchester Power Max	160	BPHP	1.51	1.36
Above 100-Yard Groups Without the Flier				
Winchester Power Max	160	BPHP	1.02	0.95
<i>Burris Fullfield 30 scope set to 14x for all shots. Fired from bench with a Caldwell rest. Conditions: 0-5 MPH wind, 85 degrees.</i>				

STAG ARMS PURSUIT RIFLE	
Caliber:	350 Legend
Capacity:	5-round detachable magazine
Barrel:	16-inch Hanson lightweight tapered, 4150 CMV, 1:16 twist rate
Barrel Thread:	5/8x24 RH
Muzzle Device:	VG6 Gamma Brake
Handguard:	15 in., 6061 aluminum, M-LOK with P-rail at 12 o’clock
Stock:	6-position Magpul CTR
Trigger Pull:	4 lbs.
Overall Length:	35.5 in. (ext.), 32 in. (collapsed)
MSRP:	\$1,599.99 (lifetime transferable warranty)
Contact:	(307) 269-0061, StagArms.com

A photograph of a dog in a wire crate on the back of a truck. In the foreground, a turkey/fowl shotgun with a wood-grain stock and a black receiver lies on a grey surface. Next to it are several boxes and loose shotgun shells. One box is labeled '12 GAUGE' and 'TURKEY/FOWL'. Another box is labeled 'BENTON'. Several red shotgun shells are scattered around. The background shows the metal side of the truck and another wire crate.

It may be optimized for turkey, but the ATI Turkey/Fowl shotgun is a nice lightweight option for upland hunting.

By Jack Oller, Digital Editor

ATI'S AFFORDABLE OVER/UNDER TURKEY/FOWL SHOTGUN

Lightweight, Great-Pointing and Easy to Carry, ATI's 12-Gauge Turkey/Fowl Over/Under Shotgun Performs Well in the Field and at a Great Price.



Compact and feature-packed, this is a great o/u shotgun at a great price.



The green fiber-optic front sight is easy to see and provides a fine aiming point.



The rubber buttpad works as advertised, but it still has plenty of kick with heavy turkey loads.



The tang safety is a standard affair. Left for the top-first shot, and bottom for right first.

Growing up in the Midwest, I've always been an avid turkey hunter. Turkey hunting is so much more interactive than most other North American game, and much of the hunt revolves around trying to call a bird in and maneuvering into an optimal position for a clean shot. The idea of maneuvering is what led me to consider an over/under shotgun for turkey hunting, in this case, an American Tactical Turkey/Fowl Over/Under model in the Mossy Oak Bottomland camo finish. I've always hunted with a pump or semi-auto shotgun, but an over/under offers a unique advantage to turkey hunters—two barrels. Well, *duh*, of course they do, but that also means you can use two different chokes, which you can set up for close-range or farther shots on a bird.

If you're a turkey hunter who likes to move around a lot to get on a bird, you know that they can be incredibly quiet when they want to, so they can often pop out of seemingly nowhere. Sometimes, they suddenly appear across a field, and sometimes they're just a few yards away as you come over a hill. Having one barrel set up with a full choke and the other barrel with a modified choke gives you the ability

to rapidly switch between a close or far shot on a turkey. It's a unique advantage over a single-barrel pump or semi-auto.

Shotgun Breakdown

Now, I hate to suddenly change gears, but I actually received this gun in December of 2023, well before turkey season in my home state of Missouri. Since the ATI shotgun is modeled as a turkey and fowl gun, I thought I'd take it on my family's annual Christmas pheasant hunt. Before we get to the pheasant shoot, let's break down what I like about ATI's Turkey/Fowl Over/Under (o/u) shotgun. The first thing you'll notice is that the gun is remarkably well balanced for a sub-\$800 o/u shotgun, and it doesn't feel heavy at all. In fact, it weighs in at just a tad over six pounds, according to my scale. The gun looks and is substantially shorter than my other o/u shotguns; the barrel is only 22 inches long. However, that's ideal if you find yourself working through dense woods looking for a bird. I found that it points incredibly well, as can be confirmed by the mess of pheasant we took. With the shorter barrel combined with the green fiber-optic front sight, getting on target is incredibly fast.

ATI'S AFFORDABLE OVER/UNDER TURKEY/FOWL SHOTGUN



The action is tight but smooth to open. It ejects shells well for quick reloads.



The handguard fills the hand well and has some simple checkering for grip.

On top of the barrel, you'll find a 10mm rib, which also boasts mounting points for a small section of Picatinny rail. I cannot recommend a red-dot sight for turkey hunting enough. It is definitely a game-changer, especially on longer shots. Combined with a premium turkey load like Federal Premium's Heavyweight TSS load, taking a bird beyond 50 or 60 yards is perfectly ethical with a red dot to give you a precise aiming point. Moving on to the stock and receiver, you'll find that it and the handguard are finished in the Mossy Oak Bottomland camo pattern, which is a solid

choice to break up the pattern of your gun. I don't typically like camo on my guns, but turkey can see incredibly well, so turkey guns are the exception to that preference. The stock itself is synthetic, which helps keep the gun at the 6-pound weight, and synthetic is a good choice for hunting in rough conditions. I've been rained on many times while chasing birds, and wooden stocks simply don't care for water.

The 12-gauge model that I received uses a three-inch chamber, which is to be expected in a turkey gun, and the receiver itself is constructed from aluminum. It uses a standard tang safety, but you can also quickly and easily move the safety left or right to choose whether the top or the bottom barrel shoots first. I found the trigger to be quite nice with no grittiness and a nice clean break. This shotgun comes with three extended chokes made by Truloc. Two are extra full chokes and one is modified, which is perfect for the type of turkey hunting this gun is optimized for. All-in-all, this gun is perfect for turkey hunters, whether they like to sit in a blind or move around. Interestingly, ATI also advertises this as a fowl o/u shotgun, too.

In the Field

It was a perfect cold day in late December for a pheasant shoot, which has become a fun family tradition we have on my wife's side of the family every Christmas. We were joined by two fine English pointers from Oak Grove Wildlife in central Illinois, and the owner always brings out some excellent birds. The ATI Turkey Fowl o/u quickly became the conversation piece compared to the longer shotguns that everyone else had brought. I said, "*Well, it's supposed to be a turkey and fowl shotgun, so let's see if that's true!*"

To be clear, this shotgun is obviously set up primarily as a turkey gun, but I can attest you that it is capable of an upland hunt. I brought a case of Federal Premium's HEVI-Bismuth 12-gauge ammo for everyone to use, and it was quickly raining pheasant. I have to add that I'm



The ATI breaks down like any other over/under. Simply pull the handguard release, remove it from the barrels, then it breaks apart like normal.

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ATI'S AFFORDABLE OVER/UNDER TURKEY/FOWL SHOTGUN



The light weight of the ATI shotgun makes it an ease to carry in the field.

definitely a new convert when it comes to bismuth. Like steel, it's non-toxic, making it legal for waterfowl and upland hunting, but it's about 22 percent denser than steel. It has superb downrange energy, and you typically get a higher pellet count than a comparable steel load.

Most of the birds I shot were within 20 yards, but I had at least two reach the 50-yard mark, yet I had no problem dropping them. I mentioned that the shotgun points incredibly well, and that became even more apparent with a few birds that took flight from right beneath my feet. They were lively and moved quick, but I was able to get the fiber-optic bead on them fast. Reloads are quick, too. The break action is smooth and ejects the shells well, so I could reload much faster than everyone else using pump and semi-auto shotguns. The gun is also a pleasure to carry. It's not just light weight, but it is incredibly well balanced as stated earlier, so covering a lot of ground doesn't feel exhausting. That light weight does come with some cost, though. Those Federal HEVI-Bismuth loads are hot, and they're rated at about 1,450 feet per second (fps). You'll definitely feel it when shooting a lot, and those shells are light compared to Federal's TSS turkey shotshells. With that being said, I consider it an acceptable tradeoff. This isn't a trap gun that will see thousands of shells, and you'll spend a lot more time walking than shooting on pretty much any bird hunt. I'll take a bit more kick for an easy carry when I know I have to cover a lot of ground. Once I had a vest full of birds, I let my wife's cousin have a turn on the ATI shotgun, and he was also able to bag a number of birds from between 10 and about 40 yards. It may be a turkey optimized shotgun, but it certainly lives up to the fowl part of its name, too.

Pattern Board

With a successful pheasant hunt behind me, I'd hoped to have a turkey to match for this article. Unfortunately, my



Federal Premium's HEVI-Bismuth load proved incredibly effective on shots ranging from 10 to 50 yards.



Watching the dogs work is a lot of fun, and it's even more fun to see them flush a bird.

spring of 2024 turkey season did not work out that way, so we'll have to settle for some standard patterns. In addition to the Federal's HEVI-Bismuth load, I also patterned Remington's Premier Magnum Turkey #4 shotshells and Winchester's SuperX #5 shot turkey load. Patterning the gun went smoothly, but this is where I found my only complaint of note with the ATI shotgun. Overall, I wasn't too impressed with the included chokes with the shotgun. As I stated earlier, it comes with two extra-full turkey chokes, as well as a modified choke, but I found that there was a fair amount of difference in the patterns between the two extra-full chokes.

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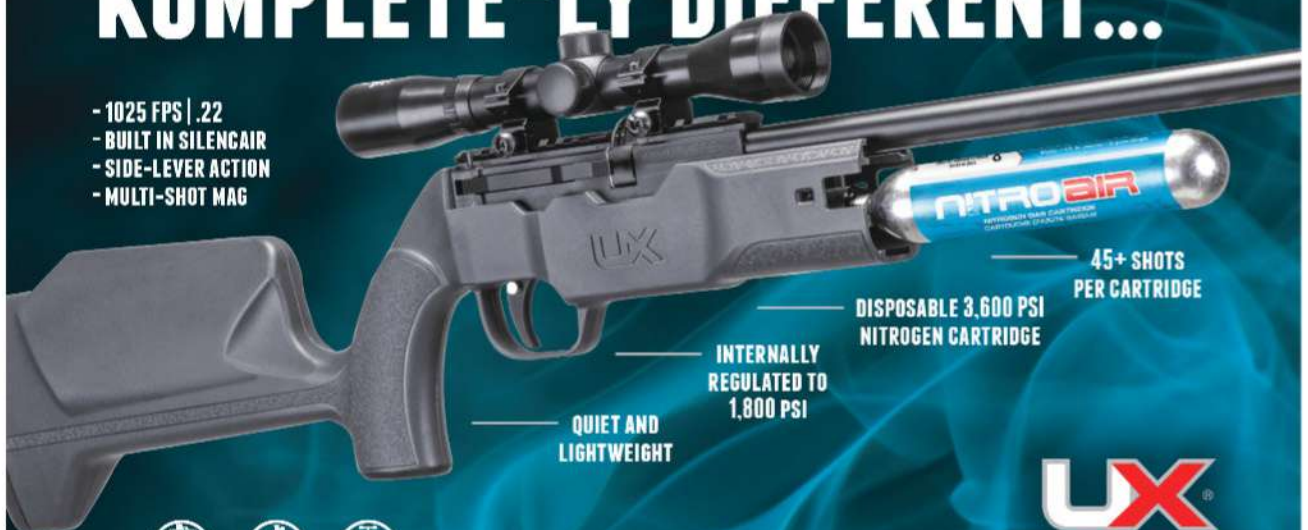
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This shot wasn't too far, but this bird was moving quick with the wind behind him. The compact design of the ATI shotgun makes it a quick-pointing gun.

Patterned Loads

- Federal Premium HEVI-Bismuth Waterfowl & Upland #5 Shot, 3-inch Shell, 1,450 fps, 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ oz.
- Remington Premier Magnum Turkey #4 Shot, 3-inch Shell, 1,300 fps, 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz.
- Winchester SuperX Turkey Load #5 Shot, 3-inch Shell, 1,210 fps, 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ oz.



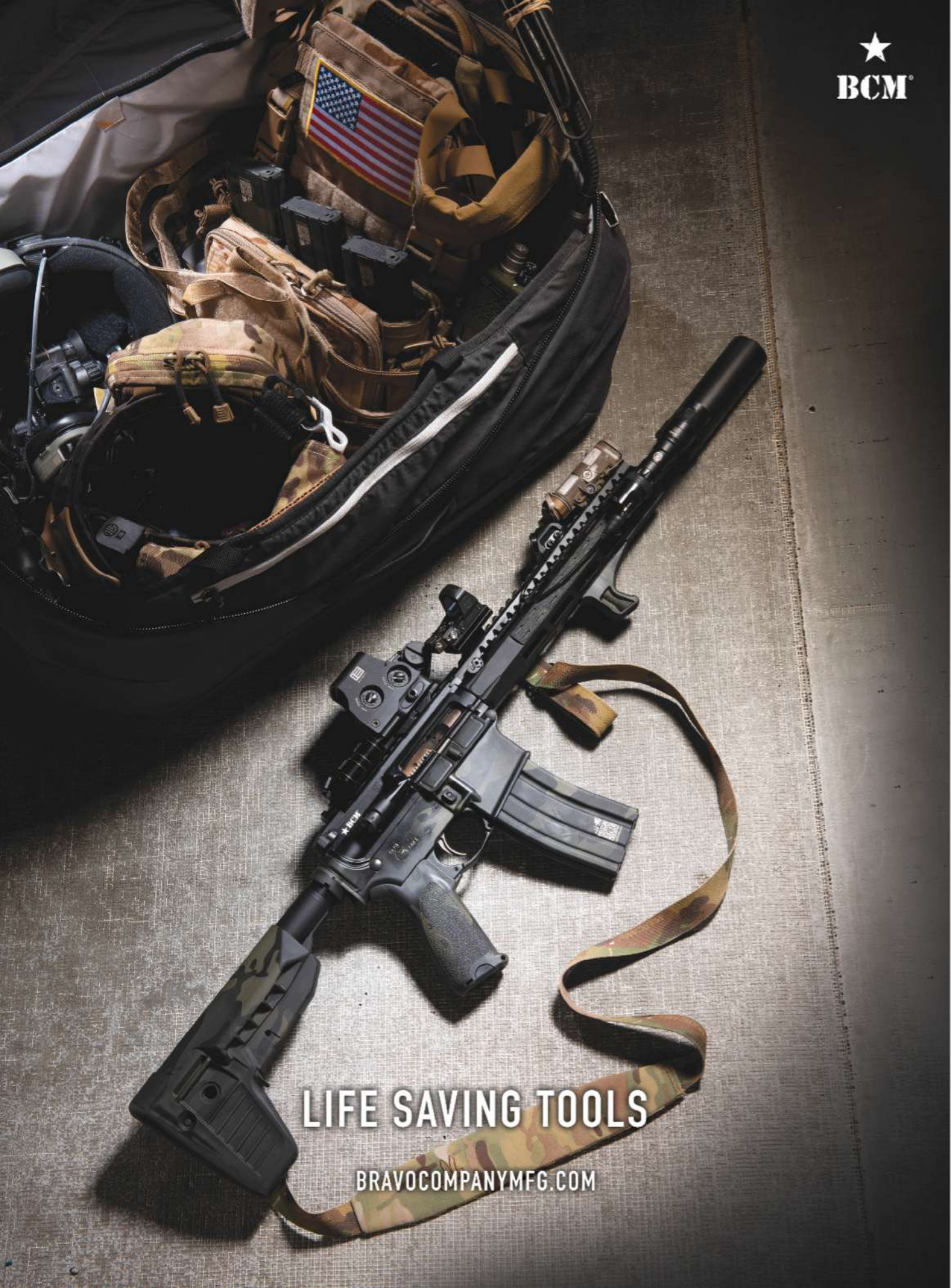
Real credit to our shoot goes to the fine English pointers that joined us.

The first extra-full choke was not that tight at all, and while the second was a lot better, neither patterned as I'd expect with extra-full chokes. Now, if you look closely at the shot targets, there is enough shot in each target's kill zone for dead birds, but there was a lot more shot outside than I'd prefer. Here's the silver lining, though. There are a lot of aftermarket shotgun chokes available, and it's one of the easiest and most affordable parts of a shotgun to swap out. While I'm fully confident one could kill turkey with the included chokes, I do recommend you consider upgrading to some aftermarket models, especially if you know you'll be shooting at birds beyond 40 yards. So, while I wasn't too impressed with the chokes, the rest of the gun performed admirably.

Final Thoughts

The ATI Turkey/Fowl may not have put up some pretty patterns, but it did perform well in the field during my annual Christmas pheasant hunt. It was a pleasure to carry due to its light weight, and I'm still impressed with how easy it is to point and swing. Keep in mind that there's no escaping the recoil with heavy turkey loads, so don't miss! If you're in

The ATI shotgun also includes a choke case and wrench. The included three chokes are two extra-full and one modified.



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ATI'S AFFORDABLE OVER/UNDER TURKEY/FOWL SHOTGUN



Shot at 35 yards, I expected to have a tighter pattern out of an extra-full choke, even though it's an upload shotshell load.

the market for a new turkey gun, you should strongly consider a look at an over/under model like ATI's Turkey/Fowl shotgun featured here. They are also available in 20-gauge and .410 bore, and if I could do it again, I'd probably spring for the 20-gauge over the 12. The ATI Turkey/Fowl has an



The second extra-full choke proved tighter than the first.



Again at 35 yards, the first extra-full choke proved anything but.



The second choke provided a much tighter pattern, with plenty of pellets in the kill zone.



I pulled the shot high on this target, but the pattern is still solid if you look closely above the turkey target.



A successful family shoot with many fine birds on the table!

MSRP of \$699.95, but I've seen them going online for less than \$600. I call that a more than fair deal for what you get out of the box. All-in-all, this is a great general-purpose over/under shotgun with turkey in mind. **TN**

ATI TURKEY/FOWL O/U SHOTGUN

Type:	Break-action, over/under
Gauge	12 (tested), 20, .410 bore
Chamber:	3 in.
Barrel:	22 in., mounting point for Pic rail section
Chokes:	Truloc, 2 extra full, 1 modified included
Stock:	Synthetic, Mossy Oak Bottomland camo
Sights:	Green fiber-optic front, middle bead (10mm rib)
Weight:	6 lbs., 1 oz.
MSRP:	\$699.95
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The author's 10-point Illinois buck is the largest he's ever taken. The .360 Buckhammer proved incredibly effective for Illinois' first whitetail rifle season. It's hard to see in the photo, but the buck has a double throat patch, which is quite rare in this region of Illinois.

THE **.360** BUCKHAMMER: ULTIMATE STRAIGHT-WALL STATE WHITETAIL CARTRIDGE?

We've Seen an Explosion in New Straight-Wall Cartridges for Midwest Deer Hunting, So How Does the New .360 Buckhammer Compare to the Rest?

By Jack Oller, Digital Editor

One of the last holdouts to legalize rifle hunting for whitetail, Illinois' first deer rifle season in the fall of 2023 proved to be a huge success. It was especially successful for me, as I tagged out with the biggest buck I'd ever shot. Not only was I fortunate to be one of the first to take a whitetail deer in the first Illinois rifle season, but I did so with a brand-new straight-wall cartridge from Remington (Remington.com) and Federal (FederalPremium.com) — the .360 Buckhammer. The new .360 Buckhammer is one of several new straight-wall cartridges designed

for use in the Midwest states that have only quite recently started allowing rifle hunting. Credit where credit is due, it was the .350 Legend from Winchester that really kicked things off in this department, and the .360 Buckhammer is Remington and Federal's response to tap into this emerging market. There are other emerging straight-wall options like the .400 Legend, too, plus the resurgence of interest in older straight-wall cartridges like the .450 Bushmaster and the .45-70 Gov't. So, what makes the .360 Buckhammer special among all of these whitetail-optimized loads?

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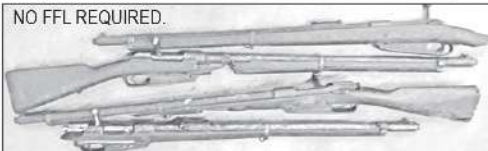


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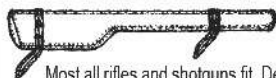
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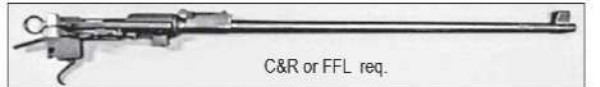


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The Performance Outdoors lodge is your classic deer camp. A quick glance at the wall proves they know what they're doing when it comes to big deer in Illinois.

Straight-Wall Mania

Before we get into the weeds on the .360 Buckhammer, let's back up a bit and ask where all of these straight-wall cartridges are coming from? In the last few years, Midwest states like Iowa, Ohio, Michigan and now even Illinois finally introduced whitetail rifle seasons. Before that, those states only allowed archery, muzzleloader and shotgun hunting for deer. However, pretty much all of these new-rifle-deer-season states had some stipulations to go along with these new seasons, namely the straight-wall-ammo-only requirement. Generally, legal ammo has to be a straight-wall cartridge at least .30 caliber or larger with established load data showing it has sufficient energy to ethically take deer. There are a number of variations

from state to state, of course. Illinois took it one step further, and in its anti-gun nature, also added the stipulation that only single-shot rifles are legal to use, which will be important shortly. Truthfully, if all of these Midwest states allowed established cartridges like the .308 or .30-30 in the new rifle seasons, odds are the .360 Buckhammer and .350 Legend would've never seen the light of day. However, niche situations breed niche



From left to right: .350 Legend, .450 Bushmaster, .360 Legend. (Photo by Michael Anschuetz)



A unique feature at Performance Outdoors is the ability to use all the Quiet Kat E-bikes made available to hunters.

products, and the .360 Buckhammer performs well in its intended role, as its name would indicate.

The .360 Buckhammer's parent case is the .30-30 Winchester, which has been necked out to accommodate the .358-inch diameter bullet. Since the .30-30 is the parent case, the .360 Buckhammer is a rimmed cartridge, which is the most marked distinction between its closest competitors, the .350 Legend and the .450 Bushmaster. The .360 Buckhammer is optimized for lever-action and single-shot rifles, unlike the rimless .350 Legend and .450 Bushmaster, which are designed primarily for use in the semi-auto AR platform. So, if you're a lever gun hunter, you get the advantage of a cartridge that was actually designed for use in lever guns. The .360 Buckhammer will also be a good pick for single-shot rifles.

Now, you're probably thinking that single-shot rifles don't care about rimmed or rimless cartridges, which is true. They all go bang in a single-shot. Of all the straight-walled deer cartridges that are available in single-shot rifles, the .360 Buckhammer has the advantage in its lethality, recoil management, and ballistics ratio, though.

“Nothing I Can Do!” Pt 2

If you're agog at what's happening in this country, you can't help it — you want to DO SOMETHING about it. (I assume you are a normal, everyday American, right?)

Last time I suggested you ACT by hosting a backyard cook-out — nothing fancy, for Heaven's sake — simply hot dogs, chips and soft drinks.

Invite neighbors, friends, co-workers. Nothing wrong with that. Completely informal, friendly atmosphere, just a bunch of Americans having a good time.

I guarantee not one of them will know anything about the origins of this country.

And that ignorance of our country's foundation can kill us all.

If you don't know your heritage, how do you even know to defend it?

Your cookout aim: to wake up your fellow Americans, build some bonds, and thereby start to clean up your corner of the county.

All for the price of a few hotdogs, bags of chips, and soft drinks. How's that for doing it on the cheap?

Stay away from any current politics. That's a sterile, and maybe divisive, sidetrack.

Instead, tell the story of the beginning of the country — the first day of the Revolutionary War, April 19th, 1775, when your forebears took up smooth-bore, single-shot muskets and took on the mighty British Empire.

Don't know the history? There's a book on 4/19/1775 right there in your local library. If you don't know the story already, you need to learn it. (Note: If you're lucky, and have an Appleseed instructor in your town/city/county, you can invite 'em as a guest; they'll be happy to tell the story, if there's food involved 🍷)

Here's a good way you can break the ice and start: Ask your attendees “Did you know that, at one point in our country's history, the ENTIRE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY revolved around — A SINGLE RIFLE SHOT?”

Wow! You'd have to be dead not to be astounded and interested to know all about that answer! (I'll cover that story in a future ad.)

Then lead into the 4/19 story by asking “How many of you know the story of April 19th, 1775? “ (Don't worry; everyone will claim ignorance...)

It's a powerful story, and one every American should hear.

If you're like most people, you'll feel you can't possibly tell the story of 4/19 adequately.

Listen to me: The story needs to be heard by our fellow Americans. A simple recitation of the facts of 4/19 — the basic outline — is enough. And if you don't tell it, who else will tell it to them? I'll take you thru the basics in the next few columns. And make you an expert on 4/19! Promise!

Understand: The purpose of telling the story is NOT to encourage people to take up arms today. (Understand even more: If we can't win “the soft war”, the easy one, we're unlikely to win any “hard war”.) The purpose is to inspire them by the examples of the founding generation's dedication to liberty. To make them aware of a debt they owe those founders, a debt they can never completely repay.

But they — and you — can make a start — by remembering and honoring the effort and sacrifice of that founding generation, the one which gave us liberty!

Now, for a little no-holds-barred man-talk. (You sensitive souls will want to skip this part.)

It's not manly to sit around and gripe while the ship sinks under your feet. No point in standing on the deck, pointing out all the icebergs out there! (And there are plenty of them!)

No! You get out of that deck chair and take action to save the ship!

You take action that counts, which is waking up your fellow Americans to a history and heritage they know nothing about, and, learning about it, likely will not want to see it disappear on their watch.

You can see the effects of what you are teaching them directly, right in front of you. Clean up your corner of America, and you and your family will be better off.

To do nothing, to stay on the couch, complaining “there's nothing I can do” is the sign of a weakling, of the opposite of a man. A real man.

And a real man in this country should aspire to become a Rifleman. Put that on your list with the word “immediately” next to it.

How otherwise can you claim to be a man? If you can't connect on a target, you are little better than an unarmed man, and we know what you are, right? “An unarmed man is a serf...”

Stay tuned. Meantime, check out Project Appleseed to hear the Story yourself!

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THE .360 BUCKHAMMER



The .360 Buckhammer's parent case is the .30-30 Winchester.

At the time of this publication, most of the load offerings for the .360 Buckhammer come from either Remington Ammo or Federal, and the available bullet weights range from 180 grains to 220 grains. This puts the .360 Buckhammer right in the middle of the heaviest 170-grain .350 Legend offerings available and the light end of the .450 Bushmaster's bullet weight offerings. Muzzle velocity for the .360 Buckhammer is going to be in the 2,200 feet per second (fps) range. Put this together and you'll see that the .360 Buckhammer will have greater down-range lethality potential than the .350 Legend, but it's going to recoil a lot less than the .450 Bushmaster.

This puts it right in the sweet spot, especially for Illinois whitetail hunters. Remember, Illinois only allows single-shot rifles for its new rifle season, and the .360 Buckhammer is arguably the best option out of a single-shot rifle. Technically, it is legal to modify an existing semi-auto rifle in a legal caliber to be a single-shot platform for an Illinois hunt, but in my experience, it's a lot easier to keep guns in their intended roles. If you're looking to take advantage of Illinois' new rifle season, I recommend just getting a good single-shot rifle and keep it dedicated for Illinois whitetail hunts. The .360 Buckhammer isn't just lethal in Illinois, though. If you simply prefer single-shot rifles for deer hunting, the .360 Buckhammer is going to be just as effective downrange in other states, too.

The Hunt

Of course, Illinois introduced a whitetail rifle season only after I moved out of the state. It sure would've been nice to have growing up! Fortunately, I was invited to a media hunt during Illinois' first rifle season, which took place at Performance Outdoors outfitters (performanceoutdoors.com) near Macomb, IL. They're a fantastic outfitter, but they're definitely not a hold-your-hand guide business, which I prefer. They download your hunting spots onto your phone, then they give you a Quiet Kat E-bike (QuietKat.com) and send you on your way. That made it a truly exciting experience! With the Quiet Kat bike, I could



While only single-shot rifles like the Henry are legal to use in Illinois, a handy cartridge cuff like this one from Simply Rugged makes reloading surprisingly quick. The built-in riser is also a nice feature.



The Henry Single-Shot Rifle features fine American Walnut stock that looks far nicer than its \$597 price tag should afford.

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THE .360 BUCKHAMMER



At the time of this publication, most of the .360 Buckhammer cartridge offerings come from Remington (Remington.com) or Federal (FederalPremium.com).

quickly cover the mile-plus trip from my parking spot to my blind, all without spooking deer or leaving any scents. Hunting with an E-bike is a game-changer, and a Quiet Kat E-bike is now at the top of my wish list.

For the hunt, we were set up with the then-new Henry Single-Shot rifle in .360 Buckhammer (HenryUSA.com), outfitted with a Bushnell Trophy 1-6X low-powered variable optic (LPVO). This is a great Illinois whitetail setup. The Henry rifle features a 22-inch barrel with a blued finish and fine American Walnut furniture. It looks much nic-

er than its \$597 price tag should afford. To make shooting with a scope easier on this rifle, it was also outfitted with a Simply Rugged Cartridge Cuff and Riser (SimplyRugged.com), which really ties the who setup together.

After some time behind the gun, accuracy was right where I expected it to be, and good groups were right around two inches at 100 yards. This is no Western-hunting long-range cartridge, and the farthest I'd feel comfortable taking an ethical shot would maybe be 250 yards. That's perfectly fine for its intended Midwest role where



Performance Outdoors is not a hold-your-hand outfitter. They download your hunting spots onto your phone, give you a Quiet Kat E-bike, then send you on your way.

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BUSHNELL'S AFFORDABLE HUNTING OPTICS

You don't need to break the bank to take home a trophy animal. Don't get me wrong, I love my expensive gear, too, but don't think spending thousands will guarantee you a trophy animal. Add up everything I used on my hunt (rifle, optics, ammo, etc.), and you're looking at less than \$1,500 if you bought everything new, yet I tagged out the biggest buck I've ever had the chance to shoot. Here are the optics I used on my hunt and why I like them. They're all highly affordable, but they still come with a lot of great features.

BUSHNELL BONE COLLECTOR RANGEFINDER

I love having a rangefinder nearby. I'm one of those weirdos that keeps one in my truck everyday should I get the notion to figure out how far away something is as I travel. The advantages of a rangefinder for hunting are pretty obvious by now, and with their greater prevalence in hunting, they've become incredibly affordable. Bushnell's new Bone Collector 1000 Laser Rangefinder has



The Bone Collector edition laser rangefinder is affordable yet effective.

an MSRP of only \$150, but it's accurate, easy-to-use and works great. Image quality is solid, and it does feature angle range compensation technology for a true horizontal distance-to-target reading. It can measure reflective targets to 1,000 yards, and you can accurately read animals to about 350 yards. This may not be enough for Western hunters, but it's more than you'd need for Midwest and Eastern hunting.

BUSHNELL TROPHY 1-6X24MM LPVO

I honestly don't know why optics manufacturers still bother making 3-9X hunting scopes. They were the




An LPVO is the way to go for general Midwest hunting. They're effective at extreme close range, and you can reach out several hundred yards.

gold standard for whitetail hunting for a long time, but a good, modern 1-6X or 1-8X low-powered variable optic (LPVO) is far superior. The Bushnell Trophy 1-6X LPVO I used on my hunt comes in at an affordable \$205, and it's a great option for general hunting purposes in the Midwest. It features an illuminated center dot aiming point with a BDC reticle, and it even has fully multi-coated lenses. The magnification adjustment has an integral knob for quick magnification adjustments, and it has many other great features we expect to see in modern optics. This is a great, affordable option for whitetail hunting within 300 yards, but it also has a lot of potential on a turkey shotgun.

BUSHNELL FORGE 10X42MM BINOS

With an MSRP of \$460, the Bushnell Forge 10x42mm Binocular is the most expensive optic I used on my hunt, but that's still not highly expensive in the world of hunting optics. I spent a lot of time looking through these binos on my hunt, and I found the image quality to be excellent, especially for the price. The feature ED prime glass, which is also fully coated to get such solid image quality. They weigh in at 30.8 ounces, measure 6.7 inches long and are completely waterproof. These also live in my truck next to my rangefinder, and they're a fantastic option if you're

looking for an affordable pair of binos for your next hunt.

For more information, visit Bushnell.com. 



You always need a good set of binos nearby, and the Bushnell Forge 10x42mm binos proved incredibly effective in the field.



The Henry Single-Shot Rifle is safe, reliable, easy to operate and a fine option that meets Illinois' single-shot rifle regulations (HenryUSA.com).

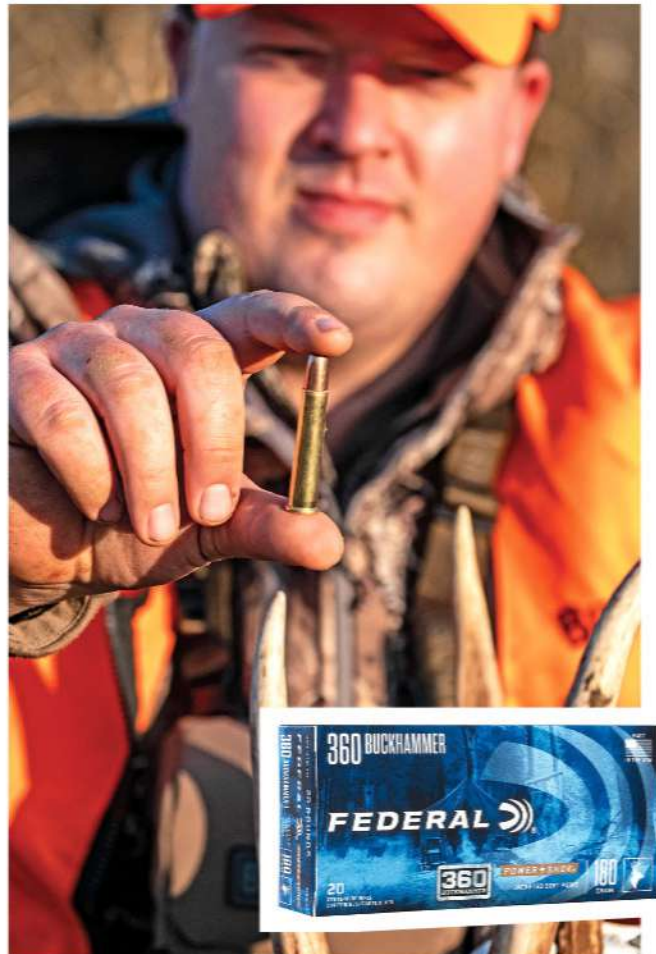
shots on deer are rarely beyond 100 yards. Two inches is perfectly within “minute of deer.” Recoil was very manageable, too. As you’d expect with the .30-30 parent case, recoil was essentially the same as a .30-30 rifle.

The first three days of the hunt were pretty miserable. It was cold and raining heavily, and I only saw a few does

over the first three days. The fourth day was a lot nicer with only a light dusting of snow on and off throughout the day. I was in a stand, overlooking a large turnip field, when I finally started seeing a lot more deer. Again, it was mostly does with a few smaller bucks passing through. Getting to late afternoon with no shooter bucks making an appearance, I decided to sight up one of the big does that was about 100 yards away. I didn’t want to go home empty handed on my first Illinois rifle season! I sighted up the biggest doe and put a shot perfectly in the vital zone. The .360 Buckhammer hit hard! The doe went maybe 20



The author outfitted for the hunt. An E-bike is definitely going on the wishlist.



The author used a 180-grain Power-Shok load from Federal on his Illinois hunt.



Here is a better view of the deer's double throat patch on the right. This was a big, mature buck at least four years old.

yards before dying right at the edge of the turnip field. It was a good, clean hit.

I still had some good light, so I decided to stay in the stand until last legal shooting light. Patience paid off, and a big brute of a 10-point showed up at the farthest edge of the field away from me. I had maybe 20 minutes of light left, and I gave him about 10 minutes hoping he'd work his way a bit closer. No luck, but he was big, and I had to take a shot. I ranged him right at 200 yards and held with the BDC reticle. I held a bit high, though, so it turned out to be a spine shot. I hate doing that, but at least he didn't go anywhere. I might have set a 200-yard dash record in heavy winter gear covering that field. One more shot put him down quickly, and I looked to see the biggest buck I'd ever taken.

Between my two deer and the deer taken by the other hunters in camp using the .360 Buckhammer, I can definitely say it's absolutely lethal. No one in camp had to go

far to get their deer. The 180-grain Federal Power-Shok did its job well, as you'd expect with a name like Buckhammer. There are a lot of great straight-wall options to take advantage of the states with new deer rifle seasons, but if you see yourself using a lever-action or single-shot rifle, I'd say the .360 Buckhammer is the safe way to go. **FN**

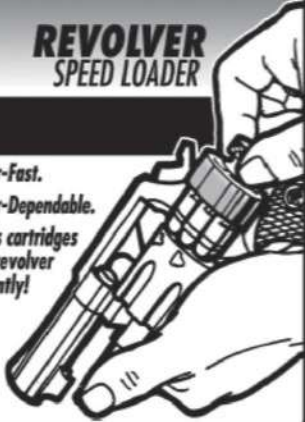
.360 BUCKHAMMER AMMUNITION SPECS

Type:	Straight-wall, centerfire cartridge
Case:	1.8 in. (.30-30 Win. parent case)
COL:	2.35–2.5 in.
Bullet Diameter:	.358
Muzzle Velocity:	2,200–2,400 fps
Muzzle Energy:	2,180–2,300 ft.-Lbs.
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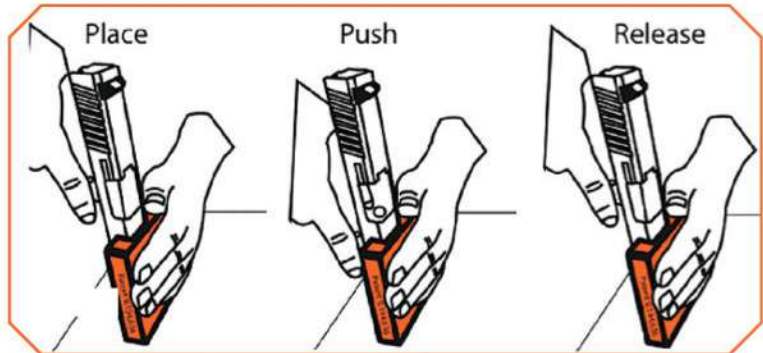


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GREG McHALE'S "WILD YUKON" (SEASON 6 / EPISODE 2 / PART 2)



By Rikk Rambo, Hunting Field Editor

It was August 2006, and I was alone, wet, cold, hungry, and quaking violently from the onset of hypothermia on an unnamed Brooks Range Mountain peak nearly 180 miles north of the Arctic Circle. An unfortunate choice of rain gear, combined with a hastily-planned three-mile dash across two whitewater streams and up a steep mountain face from my spike-camp in pursuit of a band of Dall sheep rams had led me to this predicament... and things were looking grim.

While I was successful in my cross-country race to intercept and harvest a mature full-curl ram, freezing rain and heavy winds simultaneously placed me in jeopardy of succumbing to one of Alaska's most insidious, yet effective killers: Hypothermia. Many recriminations and deep thoughts passed through my head that long, sleepless night spent suspended above the rocky ground on my frame pack under the limited shelter of my mountain tent's rain-fly, but not one of them involved a glimpse eighteen years into the future where I would be reviewing and critiquing the saga of another hunter's experiences in Alaska's challenging alpine. If it had, I would have discounted it, because I firmly believed no outdoor show could capture this epic but dangerous brand of hunting.

I survived that night and ultimately departed the Brooks Range with a belief that any attempt by a hunting/outdoor show to accurately capture the

true nature of mountain hunting and the challenges facing those stalking the last frontier's magnificent white rams would require a Herculean effort. Further, I didn't have high hopes that those bold enough to undertake this task would also have the class and principles to avoid cheap dramatics and treat both the sheep and the high-country they reside in with the respect and reverence they deserve.



Rikk Rambo during a 2006 Brooks Range sheep hunt in Arctic Alaska.

Greg McHale's *Wild Yukon* series on MOTV demolished this skepticism completely and with great efficacy in Season 6's *Less Than Easy: A Dall's Sheep Hunt*.

Wild Yukon's minimalist but stunning filmography fit the bill perfectly in its bid to realistically capture the true-life experience of a sheep hunt. We've all seen outdoor shows where a virtual army of film-crew and a rockstar-like entourage follows a hunter into the field. *Wild Yukon* is not one of them. Greg and his small team were fully successful in trekking

into the high mountain environment of Alaska's wary, predator-savvy Dall sheep to capture the very essence of sheep hunting: stealth, strategy, patience, resilience, and well-honed fieldcraft. Of equal importance was the reverence and respect Greg held for the majestic mountain denizens he pursued. The show also illustrates the fitness levels necessary for mountain hunting and the ability to read wind, terrain, and animal behavior to achieve success. Greg's "after-action" debriefings following significant events are also insightful and spot-on.

If you are interested in mountain hunting, *Less Than Easy: A Dall's Sheep Hunt*, with its stunning videography and Greg McHale's life-long accumulation of sportsman-specific KSA's will take you into the high-alpine and return you safely home with an accurate, entertaining, and informative picture of both the setbacks and triumphs you can expect when tackling the high-country. **FN**



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REPUBLICAN PLATFORM BETRAYS GUN OWNERS

By Luis Valdes

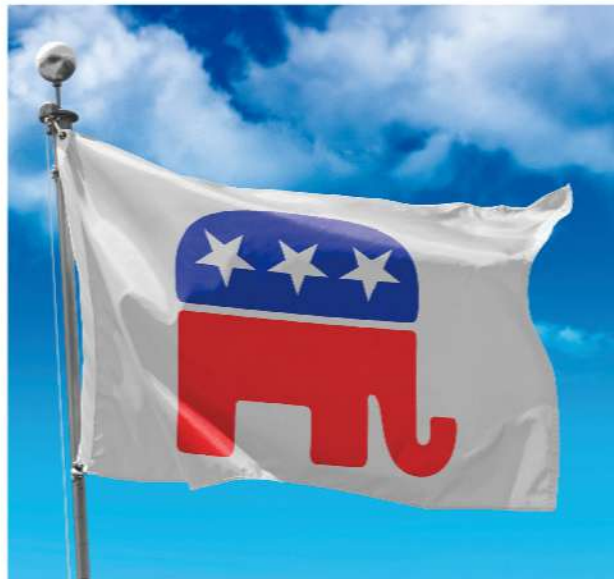
When Americans head to the polls this November, many will cast their vote with the intention of defending, protecting, and further expanding the Second Amendment for all. Naturally, these pro-gun voters are overwhelmingly likely to do so by voting Republican. After all, Republicans constantly campaign that they're pro-gun, and they're the only thing standing in the way between the American people and complete disarmament by the Democrats.

Unfortunately for those blowhards, actions speak louder than words, and the 2024 Platform just adopted at the RNC is wholly muted in terms of gun rights. This week, when the party released its new platform, gun owners realized the party gutted one of the core tenants that made Republicans, well, Republicans.

For the past eight years, the Republican Party had a detailed plan on restoring and expanding gun rights. It covered a wide range of issues tied to the Second Amendment. Previous platforms discussed the importance of landmark precedents like *Heller* and *McDonald*, and they conveyed the seriousness of appointing solidly pro-constitutional judges to the bench. They also laid bare how anti-gun jurisdictions are purposefully ignoring court rulings and how they must be stopped. They advocated for national reciprocity and the abolishment of magazine and firearm bans, including those targeting the AR-15. Heck, that was even classified as a priority! They condemned frivolous lawsuits against gun manufacturers and the harassment of firearms dealers. They even congratulated and promoted the

passage of Constitutional carry legislation across the several states.

In summary, past platforms were clear and concise. They weren't pages upon pages of written material, but solid principles that told voters where the Republican Party stood on the Second Amendment. Even more importantly, these platforms set a national directive to state and county level parties, and many acted.



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Platforms served as a tool that the politically active could use to beat back weak-kneed Republicans at the local and state level. Plus, they aided gun owners across the country in advancing pro-gun legislation in their states. Look to the recent success for gun owners in Texas, South Carolina, Florida, and Georgia for example. These states finally used their Republican supermajorities to advance permitless carry legislation, after years of delays and outright failure under old Republican leadership.

Gun owners used the national party's platform as a cudgel to politically browbeat those in office in those states.

They hammered the point that if state lawmakers were voting against or blocking pro-gun legislation, they were going against the very core foundation of the party's identity.

That's the importance of the RNC's platform and the words within it, and why it's so damning that this year's platform nearly fully omitted this fundamental right. Gone is the clear and concise wording. Now, all that exists is a tiny blurb:

"DEFEND OUR CONSTITUTION, OUR BILL OF RIGHTS, AND OUR FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING FREEDOM OF SPEECH, FREEDOM OF RELIGION, AND THE RIGHT TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS"

To the politically illiterate, such a statement seems good. But the truth of the matter is it isn't.

Plenty of anti-gun Democrats have said the same thing. And looking further into the meat and potatoes of the new platform for the RNC, it appears that the Republican Party is adopting the 1990s-era Democrat Party

platform. Look at the wording regarding government entitlement programs and healthcare too. Gone is the push for slashing the ponzi scheme that is Social Security or repealing ObamaCare.

This sends a loud message to voters: what defined Republicans for close to a decade is now dead. In terms of gun rights, party leaders probably are foolish enough to expect blind loyalty from gun owners. They would be wise to reconsider.

Gun owners need to send a loud message to the RNC.

We are not to be taken for granted.

Our votes aren't automatically theirs.

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This platform speaks volumes, and we expect changes.

Again, the current wording and stance of the party today, is reminiscent of Democrats of the 1990s. Democrat politicians claimed to be “pro-gun” by saying they’re in favor of Americans owning a deer rifle or a shotgun for duck hunting. But they were against the ownership of AR-15s, suppressors, or standard capacity magazines. Plus, they have always hated the idea of people

carrying guns. Democrats would say we have “the right to keep and bear arms” — if they weren’t icky guns, and we didn’t use those firearms to do things that they don’t like.

There’s been plenty of case studies where Republicans neutered or wholly blocked pro-gun legislation, and this platform gives them cover. Earlier this year, the Republican governor of Wyoming vetoed a repeal of several gun free zones. Last year, Florida lawmak-

ers passed a watered-down permitless carry bill and even blocked a pro-gun amendment that would have repealed a gun-free zone.

Gun owners need to be loud and proud and tell the RNC, and the GOP as a whole, that we will not be taken advantage of. We won’t accept political table scraps instead of the juicy steak that we deserve.

Luis Valdes is a National Spokesman, and the Florida State Director, for Gun Owners of America. FN

MED SCHOOL RESEARCHERS CONCLUDE GUN CONTROL HAS NO IMPACT ON HOMICIDE RATES

By John Richardson

Gun control laws have no impact on homicide rates. Those in the gun rights community have always known that. Now, a recent study led by researchers at the Duke University School of Medicine has substantiated it.

The study looked at suicide and homicide rates involving children under the age of 18 for the period of 2009 through 2020. Using mortality data from the CDC and a database of state-level firearms laws maintained by the Rand Corporation, they examined the impact of 36 different gun control laws. These laws included regulations for background checks, mandatory waiting periods, “stand your ground” laws, safe storage provisions, and so-called Red Flag laws.

During this 12-year study period, they found 6,735 suicides and 10,278 homicides reported that involved a firearm. The authors stated that they examined “suicide deaths by all firearms, including intentional self-harm by handguns only, intentional self-harm by rifles, shotguns, or large firearms only, and intentional self-harm by other or unspecified firearms, as well as homicide deaths for the same firearm types in each state.”

They concluded that child access prevention and/or negligent storage laws showed a relationship with suicide rates. However, when one examines their reported statistics, the difference between the states with and without these types of laws is marginal. They reported a standard deviation of .25 which indicates low variability. The study also found no significant reductions in suicide death rates in states with laws setting a minimum age for possession or purchase of firearms.

The study went on to conclude that they could not find any “notable distinctions between states with and without the identified laws” when it came to deaths by homicide.

The lead author of the study is Krista Haines, D.O. who is an Assistant Professor of Surgery at the Duke University School of Medicine. In a news release on the study put out by Duke Health, she says, “It was surprising to me that no laws appear to be impacting the rates of homicide in children, not even safe access. It’s sad and shocking.” Nonetheless, she goes on to say, “Our study clearly points to a need for more laws and controlled access to these guns, especially given the high rates of death among children in the United States.”



Duke University School of Medicine – Public Domain

The study was published in the July 11, 2024 issue of the Journal of the American College of Surgeons.

About the Author

John Richardson is a certified financial planner (ret.) and blogger who has written about gun rights and Second Amendment issues since 2010 at No Lawyers – Only Guns and Money. His blogging earned him the Second Amendment Foundation’s Ray Carter Blogger of the Year Award in 2017. He is an NRA Certified Basic Pistol Instructor and has held a Curious and Relics FFL for over 20 years. FN

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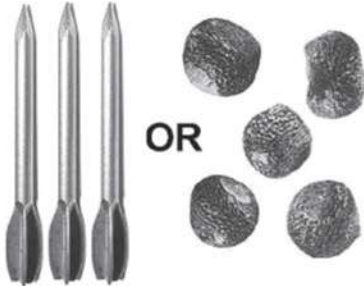
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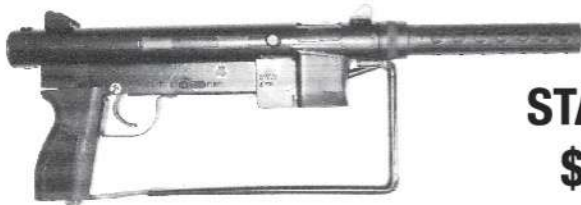


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 Unfired Primed LC 223 from ammo 500-
 79.99, 1000-149.99; 223 LC military 60m,
 45 Auto, Tumbled 1000-89.99, 308 LC Primed
 Unfired Brass, from ammo, 500-140.00;
 See web for other Military-Commercial
 Brass: New and Fired
BULLETS: 308 IMI M-80 147gr. FMJ-
 500-89.00, Sierra 224-77gr. Special match
 500-118.00, WOLF 224 55 FMJ 1000-79.99,
 Hornady 224 55gr. PSP-FMJ 94.99m,
 Federal 223 55 FMJ m193 - 94.99m;
 223 M855 62 FMJ -124.99; 223-M856
 tracer, Military Surplus-99.00m; 50 API
 Silver Unsize 289m, Sized 339m, 50 Tracer
 279.00, sized 329.00 See web for complete 50
 Bullet List, plus WW-Remington-Hornady
 Commercial Bullets:
 see web for current Prices:
 Brian McDonald
 74880 Johnson Run Rd.
 Kimbolton, OH 43749
 9AM-5PM,
 330-833-4360
 Fax No. 740-492-0063
 Web: PatsReloading.com

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SEPT 21 & 22

SAT 9-5 **500 TABLES** SUN 9-3

FINE COLLECTIBLE FIREARMS-CUSTOM KNIVES
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SYRACUSE GUN SHOW™

SEPTEMBER 14-15, 2024

CENTER OF PROGRESS BUILDING

NEW YORK STATE FAIRGROUNDS - Syracuse, N.Y.



1,000 TABLES

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

SATURDAY 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

SUNDAY 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.



DAILY ADMISSION \$10.00 PER PERSON

Children under 12 free - Must be accompanied by Adult • Senior Citizens \$8.00

**Show
Manager:**

Marc Loveland

Marc@nyssassociation.com



**PLEASE NOTE:
UPCOMING SHOWS**

DATES

Albany, NY

JAN. 25-26, 2025

Syracuse, NY

APRIL 12-13, 2025

The Onondaga County Sheriffs
Pistol License Unit will be in
attendance both days.

Eight Foot Tables - \$75.00 Each (Members),
\$85.00 Each (Non-Members)

Exhibitors only may set up 4:00 - 8:00 P.M.

Friday Night; 8:00 - 9:00 A.M. Saturday

**DEALERS MUST HAVE VALID N.Y.S. SALES TAX NUMBER.
GUARDS ON DUTY 24 HOURS DAILY.
FOOD AVAILABLE AT SHOW — PLENTY OF FREE PARKING.**

All Firearm Laws WILL Be Observed.

All cartridge guns entering, within, or leaving the show must be
tied in such a way that they cannot be loaded!

New York State law requires that a National Instant Background Check must be completed
prior to all firearm sales or transfers, including sales or transfers of rifles or shotguns.
The sale or transfer of a firearm, rifle or shotgun at a Gun Show without first conducting a
Background Check is a crime. It is also a crime to offer or agree to sell a firearm, rifle or
shotgun at a Gun Show and then transfer it at another location for the purpose of avoiding
a National Instant Criminal Background check.

Sellers of all modern firearms must provide a gun locking device suitable
for said firearm, with written instructions, at time of sale.

PAYMENT AND SIGNED CONTRACT MUST ACCOMPANY RESERVATION

PAYABLE TO: New York State Sportsmen Association, LLC.

SEND TO: Marc Loveland, 564 Leon Drive, Endicott, N.Y. 13760

PHONE: (607) 223-8486

1:00 - 5:00 PM WEEKDAYS

Reloading Components For Sale \$5800

SARCO, INC. - FLECHETTE DARTS:

1 inch long military flechettes in stock.

Sold in 2 oz. (#MISC288) and

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Original USGI. Sarco Inc.,

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related stuff **WANTED!** Attention Estates,
Gun Shops, Collectors! Sell me your no
longer used reloading equipment, casting,
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dies, molds, Stocks, grips and Misc. parts too.
I buy the items left over after others buy the
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**SARCO, INC.- FRENCH 73MM
BAZOOKA:** LRAC-50 bazooka as used by
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Never on the market before. Comes with
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(INERT) (#RL005):** Original Vietnam
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replacement inert head installed. Great for
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SETS:** SCR528 (#RAD04), SCR506
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**CENTRAL WISCONSIN
GUN SHOW**

Friday & Saturday,

October 25th & 26th, 2024,

Oak Avenue Community Center,
201 S. Oak Ave., Marshfield, WI 54449,

B2 Shooters, Open to the public

Fri. 3 - 8 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.,

Exhibitor tables 8' - \$15.00.

Admission \$5.00, children 12 and under free
with an adult.

Info. Bruce 715-687-4741.

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