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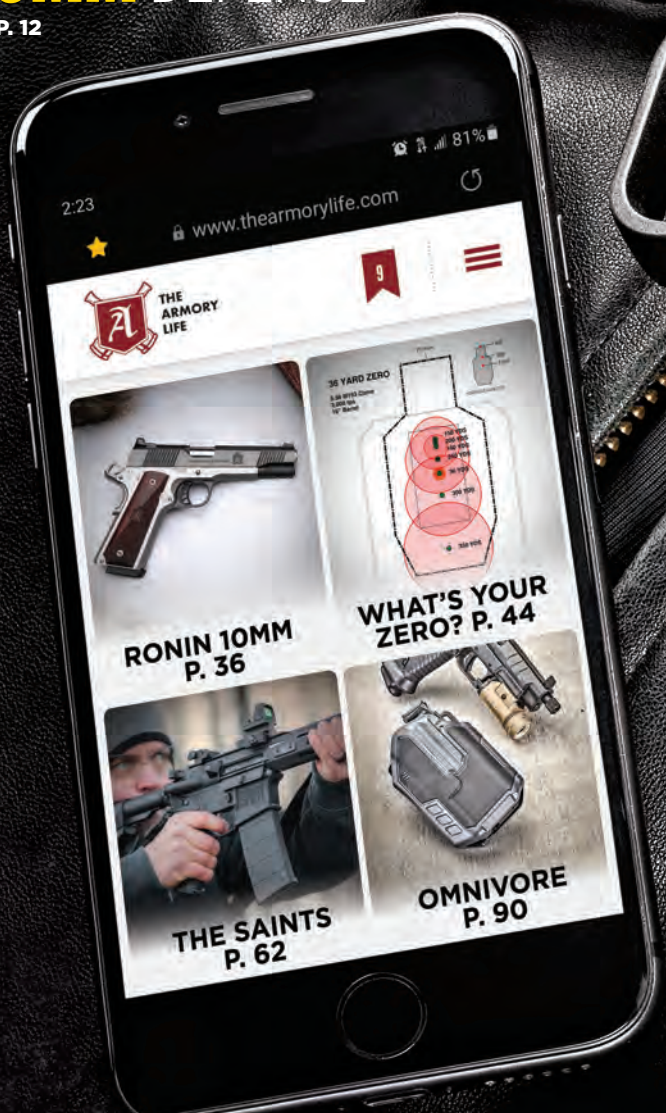
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HELLCAT RDP

9MM RAPID DEFENSE

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HEX WASP RED DOT

SELF INDEXING COMP

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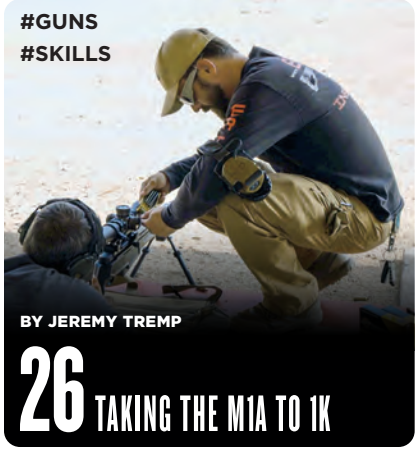
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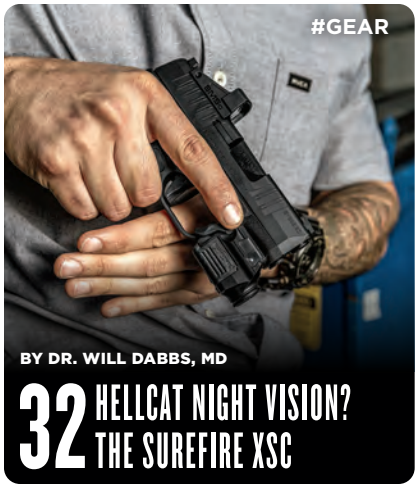
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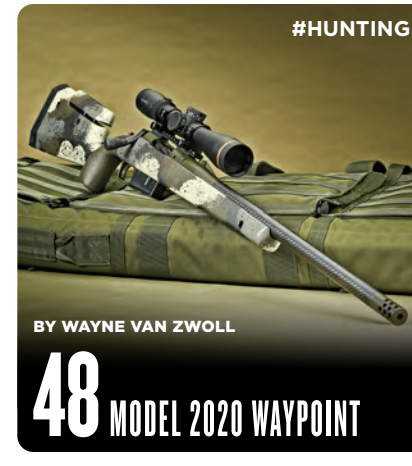
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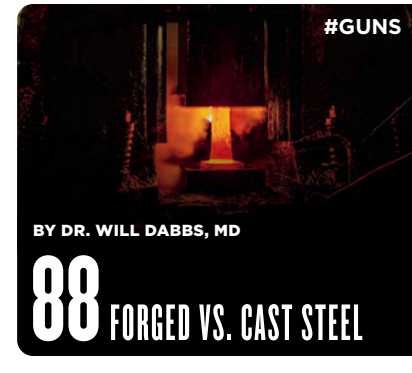
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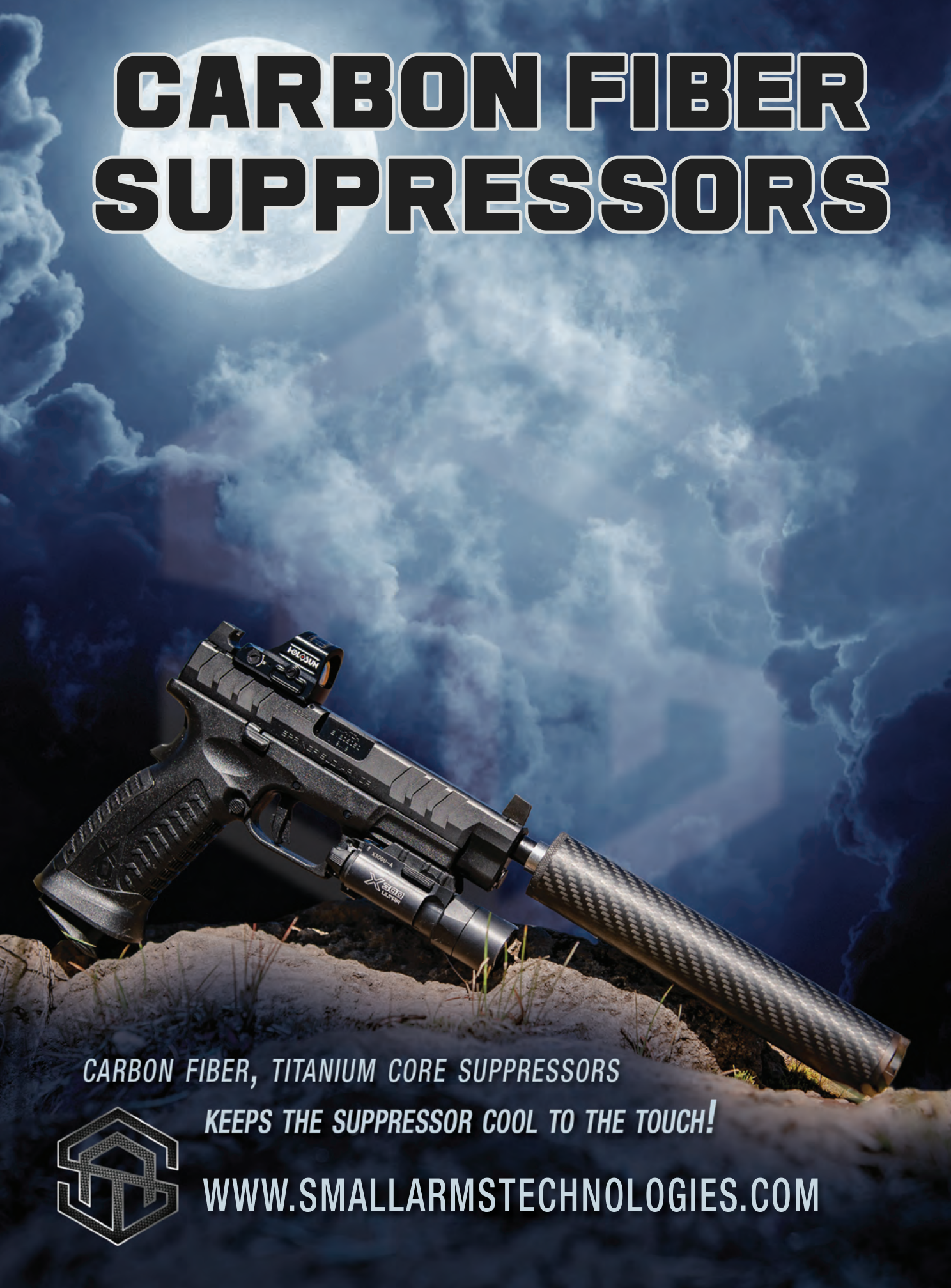
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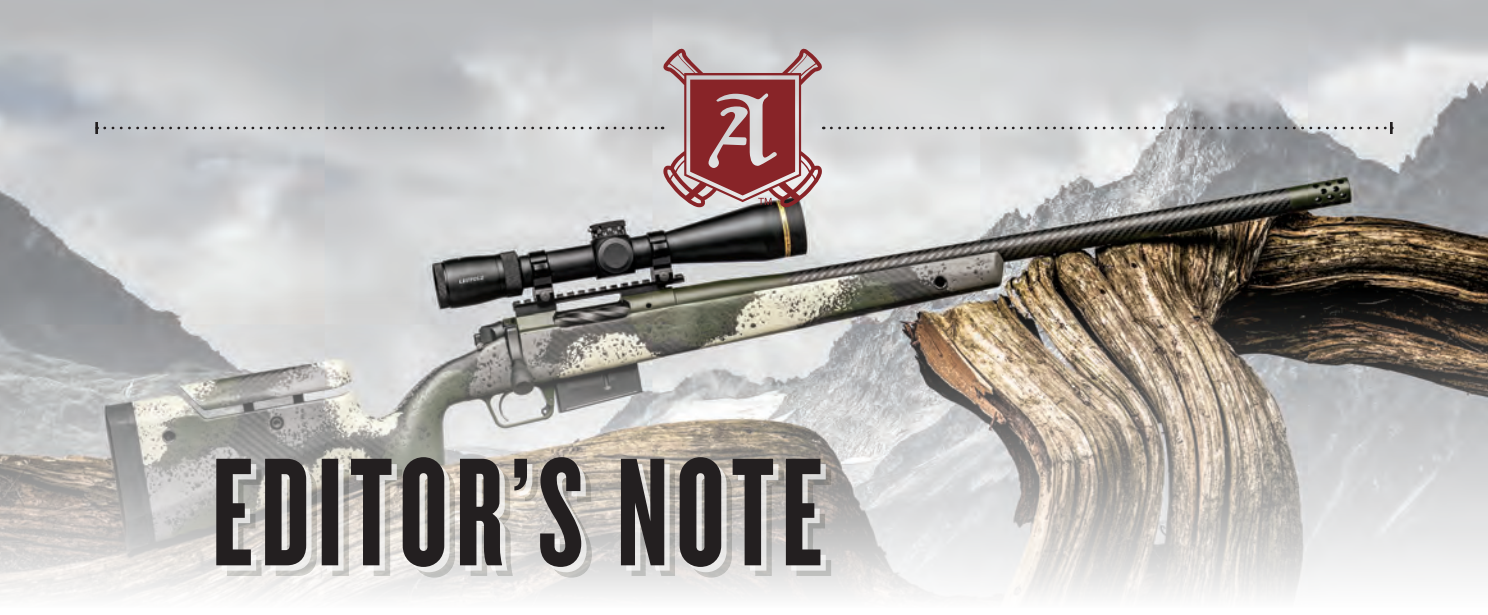
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EDITOR'S NOTE

MIKE HUMPHRIES

WE ARE PROUD TO INTRODUCE the premiere issue of *The Armory Life* quarterly magazine. Developed as a print companion to TheArmoryLife.com website, this magazine is designed to provide you with an additional way to enjoy exciting content from *The Armory Life*.

For those of you who may not be familiar with *The Armory Life* website, it is a firearms lifestyle site designed to provide visitors with a full multimedia experience. Delivering daily firearms-focused content, it features informative text, beautiful photos and engaging video. With hundreds of thousands of members and a free weekly Debrief email with top curated content, TheArmoryLife.com keeps you in the know.

With the new *The Armory Life* magazine, you now have another way to receive top-quality content. Within these pages, you'll find pieces written by some of today's top firearms experts, shooters and trainers. From guns and gear reviews to top tips and tactics, this magazine delivers the content that you want.

On the cover, you'll see the newest addition to the popular Springfield Armory Hellcat series of micro 9mm pistols — the Hellcat RDP (Rapid Defense Package). Fitted out with a compensator and topped off with the HEX Wasp — part of an entirely new line of high-grade optics you can read about starting on page 56 — the Hellcat RDP is put through its paces by Paul Carlson of Safety Solutions Academy in his report, beginning on page 12.

Beyond the introduction of the Hellcat RDP and HEX optics, this magazine also features in-depth reviews of the new Model 2020 Waypoint bolt-action rifle, 10mm Ronin 1911 pistol, Surefire XSC micro weaponlight, Blackhawk Omnivore holster, and much more. Additionally, there are tactics, tips and training pieces covering topics including when a knife might beat gun, and how to zero your carbine.

As you flip through these pages, you will see scannable QR codes in many of the articles. These were designed to make the magazine interactive with the website's content. As a result, there are many instances where there is video or additional content. In these cases, there will be a QR code that will take you to the related content. In fact, there is one at the bottom of this page you can try out now.

In case you are not familiar with how QR codes work, simply open up the camera app on your smartphone and point it at the square-shaped code. With most modern smartphones, your camera will automatically read the QR code and give you a link to click to visit the featured content. If your phone's operating system does not offer this feature in your camera app, please visit your phone's app store and download a compatible QR code scanner.

Dive in and enjoy our first issue of the magazine. We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed putting it together. And keep an eye out for future issues featuring the newest guns and gear, as well as informative tips and tactics, keeping you on the cutting edge!



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WHAT IS THE ARMORY LIFE?

WHILE YOU ARE ENJOYING the content within the pages of *The Armory Life* magazine here, I'd also like to make sure that you are aware of TheArmoryLife.com. In addition to the in-depth, attractively packaged articles in this magazine, *The Armory Life* website offers a full multimedia experience with fresh, daily free content featuring informative text, beautiful photos and engaging videos.

Serving a strong community of several hundred thousand firearms enthusiasts, TheArmoryLife.com provides daily firearms-focused entertainment and education, delivering fresh and engaging commentary and content from some of the most respected experts in the firearms community.

In addition to our daily content, the website also offers *The Armory Life Debrief*, a weekly email sent out for free that features the editor's selection of the site's top content for that week. It is delivered direct to your email every Thursday. Visit TheArmoryLife.com and sign up with your email address to receive it.

DO YOU LIKE FREE STUFF?

In addition to receiving the weekly Debrief email, signing up at TheArmoryLife.com will automatically sign you up for *The Armory Life Monthly Giveaway*, where you will be entered to have a chance at winning top Springfield Armory firearms. You are automatically entered when you sign up for that



The Armory Life website is your go-to source for timely, informative and entertaining multimedia content.



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The Armory Life Presents series of digital e-magazines provides readers with curated content covering specialized topics.



giveaway and all future monthly giveaways. From the new Ronin 10mm 1911 to a SAINT Victor B5 5.56mm Pistol to custom rifles and handguns to much more, this giveaway is yet another reason to join *The Armory Life*.

PICK YOUR PATH

If you visit the website, you will find the day's current content (updated at 10 am Central Time, seven days a week) listed at the top of the page, with the rest of the content arrayed in "tiles" throughout the rest of the page.

Content posted on the site covers a wide array of topics, and if you scroll up to the top of the page you can find a "COLLECTIONS" section that has the content divided up into the following six categories:

EDC
GEAR
GUNS
HUNTING
SKILLS
SURVIVAL

In addition to the daily content, we are also very lucky to publish the work of renowned illustrator Dick Kramer on *The Armory Life*. With his unparalleled skill and incisive humor applied to timely topics in the firearms world, his *The Armory Life Cartoons* are a favorite of the site's visitors. Simply visit and click on our *The Armory Life Cartoons* tile to see a gallery of his works.

ANOTHER OPTION

Looking for some more focused content? Then be sure to check out *The Armory Life Presents* series of digital e-mags, covering specialized topics such as the Springfield Armory Hellcat and SAINT family of firearms, as well as a "Hunting" themed edition featuring the new Model 2020 Waypoint rifle and much more. Simply visit the site and click on our *The Armory Life Presents* tile.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Want to be able to weigh in with your opinion on the latest Springfield Armory firearm, a new training tip, the site's daily post, or just about anything else? Then be sure to visit *The Armory Life Forum*, which you can reach by clicking the "FORUM" button at the top of the website. In addtion, you can click the "GO TO FORUM THREAD" link at the end of our daily articles, or simply visit TheArmoryLife.com/forum/. With thousands of members and tens of thousands of threads and posts, there is definitely a conversation there waiting for you!

CONCLUSION

So there you have it, a quick tour of the digital sibling to the magazine you are reading here today. And we have worked very hard to make this magazine as integrated with the website as possible. As you read the articles and peruse the pages of this magazine, you will see QR codes throughout, linking you to video content and articles on the website that further expand upon the content you are seeing here.

In case you are not familiar with how these work, simply open up the camera app on your smartphone and point it at the QR code (like the one at the bottom of this column that will take you to the site). With most modern smartphones, your camera will automatically read the QR code and give you a link to click to visit the featured content. If your phone does not offer this feature in your camera app, please visit your app store and download a QR code scanner to use.

So, be sure to visit the website, sign up for The Debrief, enter to win a free gun, check out all the free daily content, visit the forum, and much more!

BE SURE TO VISIT:
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THE ARMORY LIFE VAULT

SCAN THE CODES

WELCOME TO *The Armory Life Vault*, where we keep some of the most interesting tidbits and snippets from TheArmoryLife.com. From forgotten pieces of history to impressive feats of shooting to just downright quirky things our contributors come across, this is the place to find them. Check them out by scanning the QR code with each piece here to see for yourself!



IMAGE: U.S. AIR FORCE

1911 VS. A ZERO?

We know the Japanese Zero was light on armor, but could you really take it down with a .45? **One B-24 crew member did — while in a parachute.**

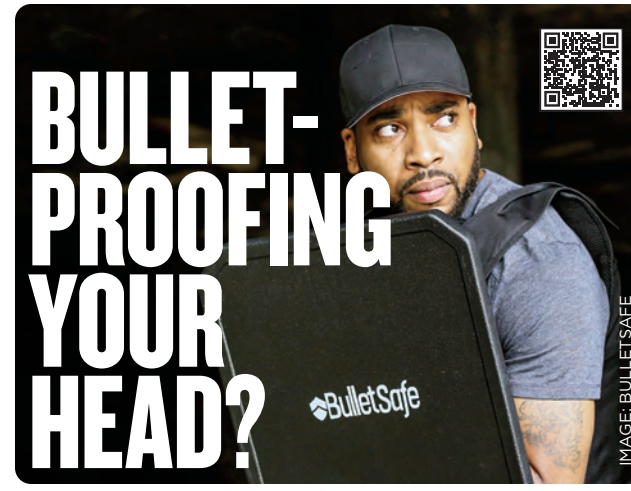


IMAGE: BULLETSAFE



BATMAN WITH AN M60?

Are you enough of a graphic novels nerd to catch this reference by GunSpot in its review of the M60?



IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK/PAVEL TALASHOV



70-YARD PISTOL "HEADSHOT"

This is an impossible shot, right? How about doing it more than once? **Justin Dyal did. Be sure to check out the video.**

THE ARMORY LIFE CARTOONS





THE EMPIRE-BUILDING BLASTECH E-11



TAKING THE XD-M ELITE TO 130 YARDS

Could you hit steel at this distance with a 9mm pistol? **Was GunSpot able to? Check out the video to see if they did.**

HELLCAT EATS 20K ROUNDS

Think a micro 9mm shouldn't be put through a torture test? **How about taking it to 20,000 rounds?**

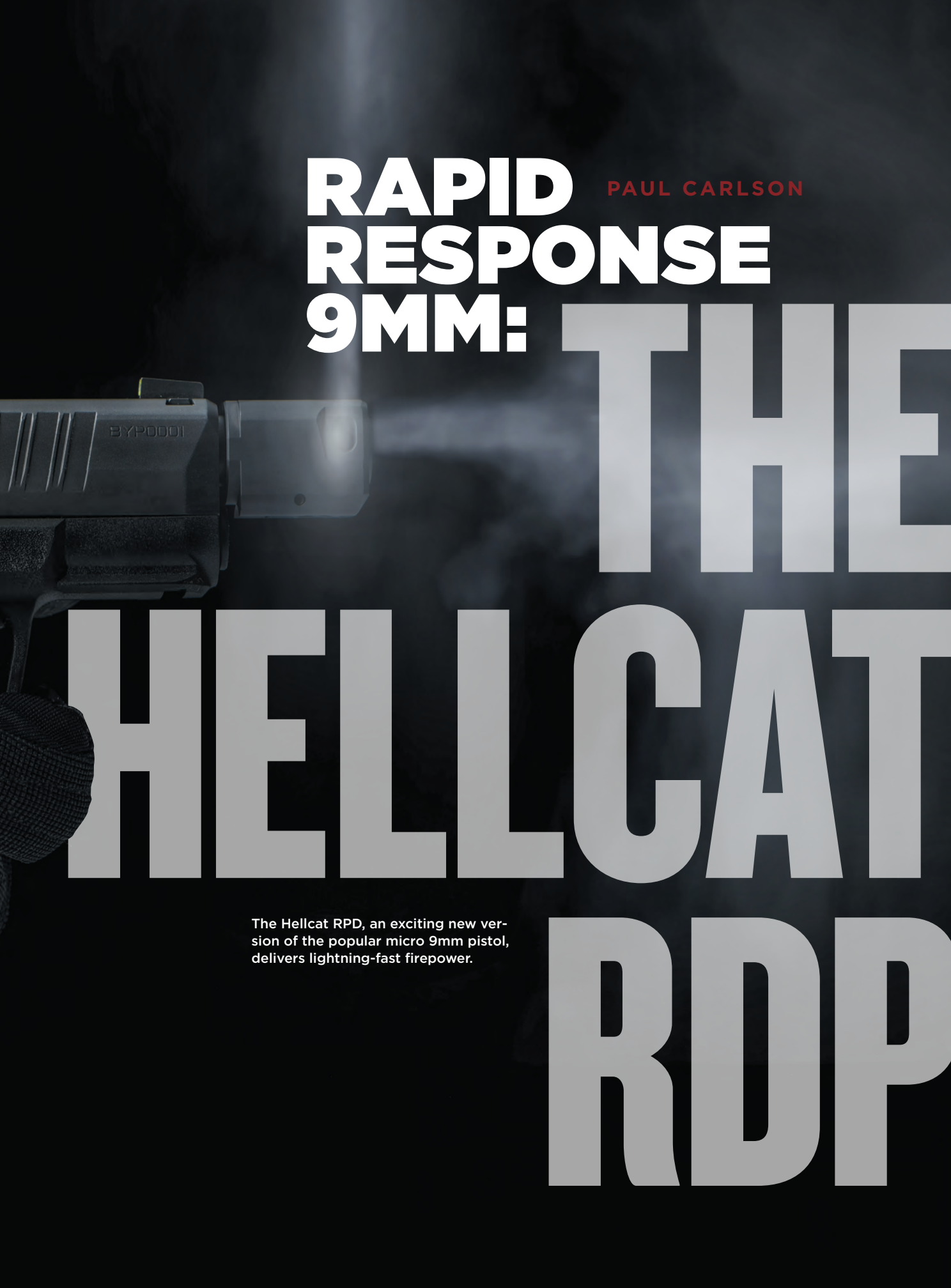




WATCH THE VIDEO
PAUL CARLSON
SHOOTS THE HELLCAT

RAPID RESPONSE 9MM: THE HELLCAT RDP

PAUL CARLSON



The Hellcat RPD, an exciting new version of the popular micro 9mm pistol, delivers lightning-fast firepower.



The Rapid Defense Package (RDP) version of the Hellcat delivers a compact and powerful, yet extremely shootable CCW pistol.

When Springfield Armory released the Hellcat, it was clear from the beginning that they had developed a very capable micro 9mm handgun that would have a strong following in the CCW community. With such a success, I would have thought that the engineers would have leaned back, kicked their feet up, taken a deep breath and relaxed. When you have success, it's nice to take some time to reflect on the win.

Apparently, that isn't how Springfield rolls.

Instead of letting off the gas, it seems that Springfield put its ear to the ground, listened to how they could make a great product even better, and got right back to work on development.

The result of Springfield's efforts is the new Hellcat Rapid Defense Package (RDP), and it is a truly unique adaptation of the Hellcat design that adds some exciting new features to the platform.

As a regular contributor to *The Armory Life*, I often get a chance to try out exciting new guns and gear. So, when the editor contacted me and told me he had this new gun for me to try out, I jumped at the chance. And once I had the new Hellcat RDP in my hands, I wasn't disappointed.

OVERVIEW

The Hellcat RDP is a package of custom-grade premium features which provide you with a high-performance, defensive pistol at a fraction of the cost of the typical custom gun.

The foundation of the RDP is of course the small, shootable, light, 11+1 capacity (13+1 with the included extended magazine) 9mm Hellcat. With its small footprint and impressive capacity, the Hellcat has become an extremely popular handgun for concealed carry. The RDP takes the Hellcat to the next level by making the gun even more shootable.

COMPENSATOR

When looking at the Hellcat RDP, the most striking feature is the new Self Indexing Compensator. Comps have been a popular accessory for competitive shooters for years and, more recently, some defensive shooters have investigated the benefits of comps for carry guns. Comps have generally been an aftermarket accessory or a part of a custom-built gun. Springfield Armory has changed the game by offering the compact, Self Indexing Compensator on the Hellcat RDP straight from the factory.

A compensator uses physics to help reduce felt recoil and muzzle rise. It's actually pretty simple. When the pistol is fired, hot gases push the bullet from the case and down the barrel. As the bullet moves down the barrel and escapes out of the muzzle, the gases begin to expand in the compensator. The expansion of the gases exert a force on the gun, driving it forward and down due to the design of the compensator and its porting.

Normally, a gun pushes back and the muzzle upward under recoil. The opposite forces that



Compensators have almost always been aftermarket custom additions. The Hellcat RDP's Self Indexing Compensator helps to limit muzzle rise and felt recoil.

HELLCAT RDP

CHAMBERING	9mm
BARREL	3.8", .5x28 threaded
WEIGHT	19.3 oz. w/ flush mag, 19.6 oz. w/ extended mag
OVERALL LENGTH	7"
SIGHTS	U-Dot
GRIPS	Integral, polymer
ACTION	Striker-fired
FINISH	Black
CAPACITY	11+1 (one), 13+1 (one)
MSRP	$899

the comp produces counteract these physics. The result of this is a softer-shooting and faster-recovering handgun.

The Self Indexing Compensator on the Hellcat RDP really works. I found that it made a measurable difference in both the amount of muzzle rise and the speed of my follow-up shots. Both are improvements that are a win in a defensive handgun like this.

COMPENSATOR A COMPROMISE?

As my buddy Joe Weyer from Alliance Police training likes to say, "There is no free lunch." When it comes to compensators, the tradeoff is typically in terms of weight, size, complexity and expense. Weyer is right that your lunch isn't free, but in the case of the compensator included with the RDP, I think your meal is significantly discounted.

The Self Indexing Compensator is machined from 8082 aluminum and hardcoat-anodized matte black to match the finish of the Hellcat. I found that its aluminum construction added virtually no perceivable weight to the front end of the Hellcat, so no downside there. The compensator itself weighs a mere .7 oz.



The new Gen 2 trigger of the Hellcat has a higher hinge point and enhanced ergonomics to suit the broadest range of hand sizes.

To mount the compensator, the Hellcat RDP features an extended and .5x28 threaded 3.8" hammer-forged barrel. When attached, the compensator adds just a single inch to the overall length of the pistol. While some might argue that added inch might be a negative on a CCW pistol, I actually want a longer pistol for concealed carry. I find a carry gun with a longer slide and a short grip is very easy to carry, doing a better job resisting the inevitable rotation of the grip away from the body. I've been pining for a 4" Hellcat. The RDP delivers.

From a production standpoint, fitting compensators can be difficult, expensive and time consuming. In the past, threaded compensators usually had to be fitted to the pistol to ensure proper alignment and timing.

Springfield has solved this issue with a patent-pending, self-indexing system for the Hellcat RDP. To install, you simply depress a retention lever on the lower portion of the compensator and thread the unit all the way on. Reverse it one-half rotation. Depress the locking lever and rotate forward again until it stops. Rotate again in the reverse direction with the lever released until it locks into place.

An additional new feature offered on the Hellcat RDP (and now all Hellcat pistols as well) is an optional frame-mounted, manual ambidextrous safety. It is a low-profile, unobtrusive design for those who want that option for their Hellcat.



The RDP features the Self Indexing Compensator, which reduce perceived recoil and is easy to remove and install.

— the HEX Wasp. But more on that in a moment.

For those not familiar with the term "OSP," it indicates that the pistol comes from the factory with a slide cut to accept optics. Like the original Hellcat OSP, the RDP features a removable plate on the top of the slide that reveals a mounting interface for micro red dot optics.

These optics direct mount to the slide and sit low enough that you can co-witness the iron sights through the optic.

Speaking of the iron sights, the Hellcat RDP comes with the Hellcat's excellent Tactical Rack U-Dot sights. These are made up of a U-notch rear sight that can be used to rack the slide against a hard surface, and a high-visibility tritium and luminescent front sight.

Remember that new optic I mentioned? Paired with this new version of the Hellcat pistol and making up the second part of the Rapid Defense Package is a new red dot, part of the exciting new



A new optional feature of the Hellcat RDP — and now available on all Hellcats — is a frame-mounted ambidextrous safety.

SOME EXTRA STING

The Hellcat RDP has the word "package" in the name, so you might be wondering what exactly makes up that package. In addition to the new Self Indexing Compensator, the Hellcat RDP is an optical sight pistol (OSP) topped off with an exciting new product

HEX line of optics from Springfield Armory (to learn more about HEX, turn to page 56). That optic is the HEX Wasp.

The Wasp is a micro-sized 3.5 MOA red dot that is a perfect fit on the Hellcat, and it features the "Springfield Micro" footprint (compatible with the Shield RMSc

A PRIDE OF HELLCATS

IN SEPTEMBER of 2019, Springfield Armory introduced the Hellcat to the world. The dimunitive 9mm offered users a CCW-ready micro pistol with a class-leading capacity of 11+1 (or 13+1 with the included extended magazine). The 11-round magazine accepts either a flush-fit or finger-extended floorplate, both of which are included. Additional features included the Adaptive Grip Texture — with a staggered pattern of pyramid shapes that lock the pistol in the hand yet do not abrade your skin, short accessory rail, tritium/luminescent Tactical Rack U-Dot sights, and more.

From the beginning, the Hellcat was actually a pair of pistols. In addition to the "standard" Hellcat, there was also the Hellcat OSP (optical sight pistol), which brought the ability to direct mount electronic sights like the HEX Wasp atop the slide and featuring a removable cover plate.

The Hellcat was designed by capable engineers with the advice of serious operators. The result is an exceptional self-defense handgun. The world has acknowledged the quality and value of the Hellcat and the pistol has been recognized with numerous awards such as Guns & Ammo awarding it the "Handgun of the Year" for 2020.

From the start, the Hellcat family has had plans on growing. At first, it was simply the Hellcat and the Hellcat OSP. Soon to follow was a Hellcat and Hellcat OSP in Flat Dark Earth. And now there is the new Hellcat RDP. Apart from the 3.8"-barreled RDP, all of the Hellcats sport a 3" barrel with a 1:10 twist. All barrels are hammer forged and Melonite coated.

The +P-rated pistols also feature billet-machined, Melonite-coated slides with front and rear serrations, and a reversible magazine release. And, now, all Hellcats are offered with an optional ambidextrous manual safety. Needless to say, there is a Hellcat that's just right for you and your needs.

— Paul Carlson



HELLCAT	
CHAMBERING	9mm
BARREL	3"
WEIGHT	18.3 oz. w/flush mag, 18.6 oz. w/extended mag
OVERALL LENGTH	6"
SIGHTS	Tactical Rack U-Dot
GRIPS	Integral, polymer
ACTION	Striker-fired
FINISH	Black
CAPACITY	11+1 (one), 13+1 (one)
MSRP	$569

footprint). The IPX7 waterproof optic featured a rugged 6061 T6 Hardcoat anodized aluminum body as well as a scratch-resistant, anti-glare glass lens.

The "always-on" optic features auto-dimming of the dot to match ambient light conditions and has a two-year run time on a single CR2032 button battery. No fumbling to turn the optic "on" when you need it — it's always on for you. Personally, since these batteries are so cheap and common, I would recommend changing them out annually to be on the safe side.

The rear of the Wasp's housing is scored with horizontal lines to help reduce glare, and I found the lens to be just the right size to contain the dot for fast follow-up shots. The Wasp is small enough to fit a micro-sized CCW pistol, but with a window big enough to actually be usable. This is a rugged optic that is designed for concealed carry and duty use. And, it's backed by a lifetime warranty.



The Hellcat RDP has a 3.8" threaded muzzle for accepting the Self Indexing Compensator. Shown with included thread protector cap.

THE MOST IMPORTANT INTERFACE

While you can have the coolest accessories and features on your carry gun, there is one, single part that is the most important interface with the shooter — the trigger. As with every product offered, Springfield Armory is constantly considering every product it offers and how it can enhance or refine its designs. To that end, the Hellcat RDP features the new Gen 2 Trigger.

Recontoured for enhanced ergonomics, the Gen 2 trigger is designed to offer the most comfortable shooting experience for the broadest range of shooters.

Designing such a small and compact pistol to fit a broad range of hand sizes can be a challenge, but the Gen 2 trigger features a higher hinge point and a smooth face to allow shooters with shorter or longer fingers to comfortably engage the trigger. The result is an even more comfortable shooting experience.

I really liked the original Hellcat trigger, and the new Gen 2 worked just as well for me. I suspect some folks with different hand sizes may find it to be an improvement.

HOW IT SHOOTS

If you've read this far, you've probably figured out what I'm



FDE HELLCAT

CHAMBERING	9mm
BARREL	3"
WEIGHT	18.3 oz. w/flush mag 18.6 oz. w/ extended mag
OVERALL LENGTH	6"
SIGHTS	Tactical Rack U-Dot
GRIPS	Integral, polymer
ACTION	Striker-fired
FINISH	Desert FDE
CAPACITY	11+1 (one), 13+1 (one)
MSRP	$610



HELLCAT OSP

CHAMBERING	9mm
BARREL	3"
WEIGHT	17.9 oz. w/flush mag, 18.3 oz. w/extended mag
OVERALL LENGTH	6"
SIGHTS	Tactical Rack U-Dot/ Optic mount
GRIPS	Integral, polymer
ACTION	Striker-fired
FINISH	Black
CAPACITY	11+1 (one), 13+1 (one)
MSRP	$599



FDE HELLCAT OSP

CHAMBERING	9mm
BARREL	3"
WEIGHT	17.9 oz. w/flush mag, 18.3 oz. w/extended mag
OVERALL LENGTH	6"
SIGHTS	Tactical Rack U-Dot/ Optic mount
GRIPS	Integral, polymer
ACTION	Striker-fired
FINISH	Desert FDE
CAPACITY	11+1 (one), 13+1 (one)
MSRP	$643



The author found the Hellcat RDP and its HEX Wasp optic to be a pleasure to shoot at the range, and utterly reliable.

going to say here. Yes, the Hellcat RDP shot like a custom Hellcat. On my first range day with the new pistol, I quickly put more than 300 rounds of Federal Premium American Eagle 147-gr. FMJTC through the pistol. As I expected, the gun and the ammo were 100 percent reliable.

The Hex Wasp was a pleasure to use. I found it very easy to pick up the dot on presentation and track the dot in the window from shot to shot. I liked that the sides of the aluminum body were designed as "grasping grooves" to give you more purchase when racking the pistol's slide.

In addition, I noted that the forward face of the optic's body was angled forward to offer additional protection for the lens. Nice. I really liked the serrations on the rear of the housing. It seemed to make the window less of a "window" and just part of my normal vision. The glass was clear and the dot bright.

The Self Indexing Compensator made the Hellcat RDP even more pleasant to shoot than I expected. The Hellcat is a small, light pistol chambered in 9mm that is rated for +P ammunition. It has recoil. That is an unavoidable side-effect of physics. However, the Self Indexing Compensator tames that recoil very effectively.



The HEX Wasp micro red dot features an always-on 3.5 MOA dot that auto-adjusts for ambient lighting conditions.



The HEX Wasp optic direct mounts to the Hellcat's slide, situating it low enough to co-witness with the pistol's excellent U-Dot sights.

In fact, I had a solid 10% reduction in muzzle lift when shooting the RDP with the comp compared to without. My split times between shots also dropped a measurable amount with the Self Indexing Compensator mounted on the Hellcat.

I found that the combination of the HEX Wasp, the Gen 2 trigger and the Self Indexing Compensator allowed me to increase my precision. After getting the gun sighted in, I was able to consistently drill a 2" target at 10 yards with rapid follow-up shots. With practice, I'm sure my skills with the impressive Hellcat RDP will improve even more.

CONCLUSION

If you have been thinking about picking up an optics-ready carry gun, the Hellcat RDP deserves a serious look. For an MSRP of just $899, you're getting a carry gun with custom-grade features and an optic at what is practically a stock gun price.

The Hellcat RDP is available with or without a manual thumb safety, and the package includes the pistol, a HEX Wasp optic, the Self Indexing Compensator and one each of the 13- and 11-round magazines. That is a serious self-defense package.

The HEX Wasp optic is built with a level of durability that outclasses the other micro red dots available in my opinion. The improved trigger makes the Hellcat more accessible to a wider variety of users. The comp allows for faster follow-up shots with no real compromise in cost, weight or size. This is truly an impressive package.

Conceal the next generation carry gun. Conceal the Hellcat RDP.

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2020 HANDGUN OF THE YEAR

THE ARMORY LIFE INTERVIEWS

DR. SEBASTIAN GORKA



Dr. Gorka brings an informed perspective to the topic of firearms rights.

THE ARMORY LIFE recently had the honor of conducting an interview with Dr. Sebastian Gorka, renowned national security expert, national radio host and strong Second Amendment supporter.

Dr. Gorka, who was born abroad and acquired his United States citizenship, can bring a unique perspective on life here in this country. In the course of this interview, we were able to touch on his thoughts regarding the importance of the freedoms we enjoy here in the United States, why the Second Amendment matters, and much more. And we also got to find out what some of his favorite Springfield Armory firearms are, as well.

We want to thank Dr. Gorka for taking the time to do this Q&A session with *The Armory Life*.

The Armory Life (TAL): While many if not most of our readers obviously know you and your background, can you tell us a little about yourself?

Dr. Sebastian Gorka (SG): I was born in the United Kingdom to parents who escaped the Communist dictatorship in Hungary. In college, I joined the British Territorial Army's Intelligence Corps, the UK's version of the reserves, where I served for three years as an interrogator.

After the Berlin Wall fell and the West won the Cold War, I moved to the land of my parents' birth to serve in the first freely elected, post-Communist conservative administration of Hungary. Then the 9/11 terrorist attacks hit, and everything changed. I was approached to serve on the faculty of a counterterrorism program being developed at the Marshall Center, a facility in southern Bavaria.

The route is circuitous, but after four years working there, I moved my family to the United States, serving seven years as professor for the Department of Defense and the Marine Corps teaching Irregular Warfare Counterterrorism to our military and the FBI.

In 2015, a man called Donald Trump asked me to advise him on national security issues during his presidential campaign. Eventually, I would have the honor of serving in the White House as Deputy to the President for Strategy. In addition, he also made me a member of his National Security Education Board.

Now, I have a national radio show called "America First" with millions of listeners all over the nation, with a Second Amendment focus every Friday.

TAL: Clearly, you are a person who understands the importance of freedom and self-determination, from your own upbringing as well as the experiences of your family under communism during the Cold War. Can you expound on that a bit for us?



IMAGES: DR. SEBASTIAN GORKA

SG: My parents were children when the Nazis took over the land of their birth. Then as adults, the communists took control and my father — who resisted the dictatorship — was betrayed, arrested, tortured and imprisoned. After six years in a political prison, he escaped to freedom during the Hungarian Revolution with his future wife (and my mother).

I grew up free, but my father inculcated in me from the earliest age that an armed man is a free man. As a result, he taught me to shoot as soon as I was old enough to safely do so. When, as a child, you see the scars on the wrists of your father that his torturers left there, you know in your soul that evil is real and that it lurks in the hearts of men … and you never forget it.

TAL: While obviously all the freedoms enshrined in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights are important, can you tell us about which parts have particular significance to you?

SG: The Right to Freedom of Conscience and Religious Freedom, and of course, Freedom of Speech, plus the one that protects them all: the Second Amendment. No nation has such a complete set of rights enshrined in its founding documents. That is why we are blessed to be Americans.

TAL: Considering your family's firsthand experiences with authoritarian oppression, how has that affected your view of the freedoms we possess here in the United States, particularly the Second Amendment?

SG: In America, the Second Amendment is the guarantee of all our other civil rights. An unarmed person is not a citizen. They are a subject. President Reagan was right: the extinction of freedom is always but one generation away. We must keep the torch of liberty alive by exercising and protecting the Second Amendment every day we breathe.

TAL: Being someone born abroad who pursued American citizen-



Dr. Sebastian Gorka, renowned national security expert, radio show host and Second Amendment supporter.



Dr. Gorka has worked for President Trump and also served as a member of his National Security Education Board.

OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE PHOTOGRAPH: TIA DUFOUR



Dr. Gorka has in-depth knowledge and experience from working in the upper echelons of United States government.

ship, do you have an "outsider's" perspective on life and politics in the United States that might be helpful to our readers that were born here and who may have never known anything different?

SG: America truly is unique. Practically every other country was founded based upon an ethnic group, a linguistic commonality or a dynasty. Not ours. Our Republic is the only one built upon the principles of individual liberty and freedom. We truly are the greatest experiment in democracy, and part of our robustness is based on the knowledge that of all nations only ours has a Second Amendment, a guarantee given to the people which ensures their sovereignty, even in the face of possible tyranny.

TAL: You have clearly embraced your Second Amendment freedoms as a United States citizen. Can you tell us why you enjoy firearms, what types you like and why owning them matters?

SG: I like them all. Firearms represent so many things to me. They represent ingenuity and excellence in engineering; just look at the toggle mechanism of a Luger or the sheer genius of the designs of John Moses Browning. They can also be beautiful works of art. Of course, they are fun, too. I can spend hours just plinking with a bolt-action .22. And lastly, of course, they are the guarantee of my family's safety and liberty.

As to my favorites … Today I love treating myself to the iconic weapons of the 1980s I ogled as a kid and couldn't afford until now. These include my Bren Ten, my SPAS-12 and the Seventrees 9mm ASP I just found.

Then, of course, I love modern combat and self-defense pieces, like the superb stuff coming out of Springfield Armory. This includes the latest suppressor-ready XD-M Elite Tactical OSP.

I love all the XD pistols, especially my XD-M 10mm — which just happens to be the greatest caliber ever! The new Ronin 1911 pistols I have had the chance to check out truly raise the 1911 bar to semi-custom production quality without the matching price tag.

TAL: You clearly appreciate what Springfield Armory is offering. Any ideas on what you'd like to see new from the company?

SG: Two things: A sub-compact, double-stack XD-M in 10mm, and a full-sized alloy-framed double-stack 1911 in 10mm with a long slide. Oh, and any and all of the SAINT models in .300, also a superb caliber.

TAL: Dr. Gorka, thank you very much for your time and for being a part of *The Armory Life*.

SG: Thank you for having me.

Keep up with *The Armory Life* for more great interviews, and be sure to check out Dr. Gorka's website, radio show and podcasts at the website listed below.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
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TAKING THE M1A

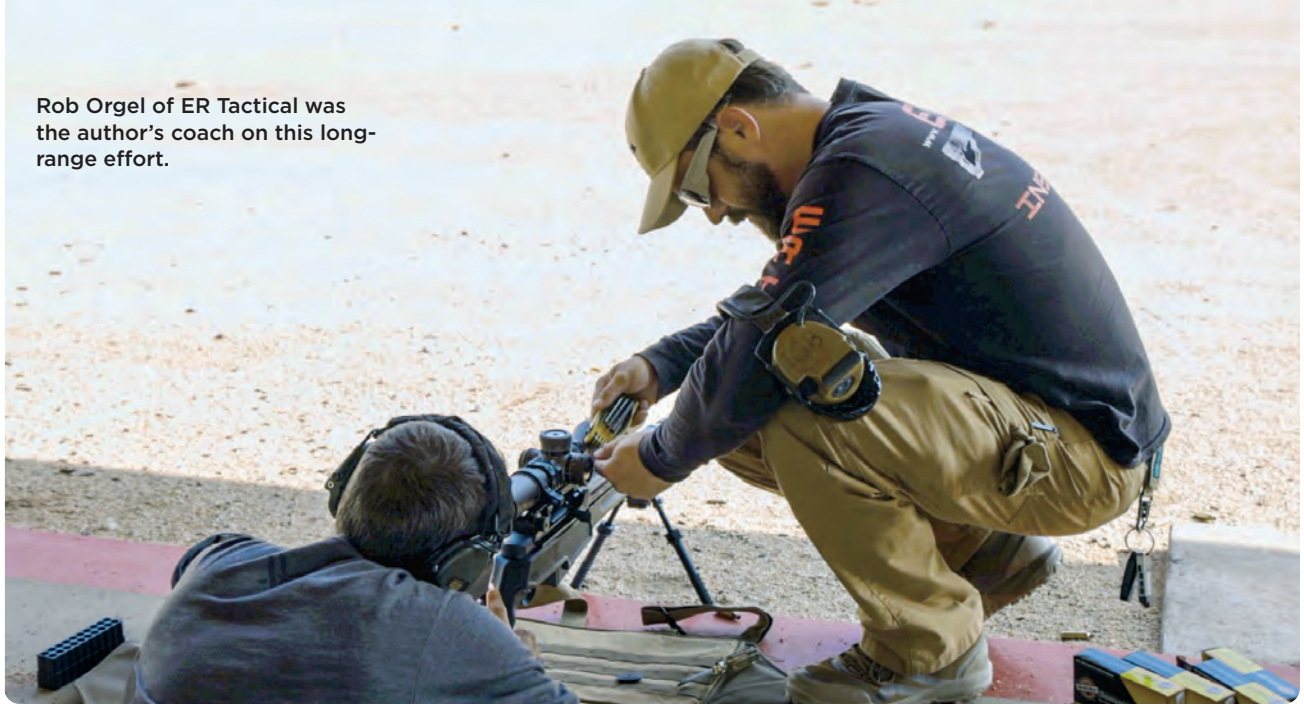


JEREMY TREMP

TO 1K



M1A Loaded Precision in 6.5 Creedmoor with a Vortex Razor HD Gen2 3-18×50. Black Hills Gold 147-gr. ELD-M was the author's ammo of choice.



Rob Orgel of ER Tactical was the author's coach on this long-range effort.

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IN LOVE with the idea of placing shots at extreme distances with pinpoint accuracy, on paper or steel. Little did I know how much knowledge and skill goes into such feats. I have done extensive carbine training and engaged targets out to 300 yards with ease, but I've never had the opportunity to stretch those skills into long-range precision shooting at 1,000 yards. That is, until now.

THE RIGHT TOOLS ...

My firearm of choice for this project was the M1A, a fine firearm from Geneseo, Illinois' Springfield Armory. Based on the U.S. military's M14 rifle that preceded the current M16, the M1A is a civilian-legal, semi-automatic version of that venerable design.

Known for its durability, simplicity and power, the M1A is offered in 16″-, 18″- and a 22″-barreled variants. Being that my goal was to stretch this legendary platform out to 1,000 yards, I opted for the Loaded Precision model in 6.5 Creedmoor.

This rifle seemed to be just about perfect for this project. The flat-shooting 6.5 Creedmoor chambering would give me plenty of long-range reach out to the 1,000-yard target, and the rifle itself had all the features I needed to wring the most performance out of the M1A platform.

First and foremost of these features is the stock. While I agree the walnut stock on the M1A is beautiful, this stock was perfect for my long-range project. The Archangel Precision Adjustable Stock features adjustments for length of pull and comb height to get it fitted just right for your needs. The vertically oriented pistol grip is another helpful feature, and the funneled magwell makes feeding in fresh mags a breeze.

The rifle itself features a tuned 4.5-lb. National Match trigger for wringing out the most accuracy you can, while a match-grade aperture rear sight matches up with a National Match front sight. The 22″ barrel is a National Match medium weight stainless steel barrel with a 1-in-8″ twist and four grooves. While no lightweight at 11 lbs., 4 oz., this is a rifle built for long-range precision.

Aiding me in this journey is my trusted Vortex Razor HD Gen2 3-18×50 with a Spuhr ISMS scope mount. To eliminate as many ballistic variables as possible, I chose Black Hills Gold 147-gr. ELD-M as my precision ammo of choice. For stability on the desert floor, I chose the B&T PSR Atlas Bipod, which is a lightweight and extremely rugged piece.

... AND TEACHER

I approached longtime friend and renowned instructor, Rob Orgel from ER Tactical, who happily obliged my request to deliver a crash course in precision long-range shooting. Since he is a trainer with an impressive and lengthy resume, I was optimistic he could help me achieve my goal.

As a little background, Orgel spent 10 years in the Marine Corps as an infantry rifleman, and then went on to become a combat instructor, which entailed a very



Firing prone, the author used a B&T PSR Atlas bipod on the M1A.



Orgel is calling the shots for the author as he is reaching out to 1,000 yards with the M1A.



Waiting on the answer. The author observes as Orgel analyzes his hits on the target.



The author was very happy with his results downrange, and felt Orgel's guidance was a big part of it.

M1A LOADED PRECISION

CHAMBERING	6.5 CM
BARREL	22"
WEIGHT	11 lbs., 4 oz.
OVERALL LENGTH	45"-46.25"
SIGHTS	Aperture rear, National Match front
STOCK	Archangel Precision Adjustable
ACTION	Semi-auto
FINISH	Black/stainless steel
CAPACITY	10 (one)
MSRP	$2,088

difficult school of formal instruction and evaluation. He trained thousands of Marines in combat skills ranging from throwing hand grenades to shooting machine guns. After his service in the Marine Corps, he became a private military contractor while also instructing fellow contractors in Iraq. He did this job for four years and instructed hundreds of operators.

Since 2012, he has been teaching underneath his logo, Emergency Response (ER) Tactical. At ER Tactical he has taught numerous military and law-enforcement entities as well as civilians.

RANGE TIME

We began the day at the Ben Avery Shooting Facility in Phoenix, Arizona, dialing in the rifle and getting a 100-yard zero. Orgel gave me tips on technique, position, shooter/spotter communication, and what to expect when we moved to the 1,000-yard range.

The clock was ticking as the temperature was rising to a high of 112 degrees that day. I was advised that past 11 am the mirage on the 1,000-yard range would make the shot nearly impossible for even a skilled shooter. Time was not on our side.

From the sighting in and familiarizing period earlier in the morning, it was easy to know what to expect from the M1A. The rifle was extremely smooth with incredible accuracy, the two-stage trigger made it very easy to know where the break was, and the adjustable stock was extremely comfortable when used in the prone position.

WATCH THE VIDEO
TAKING THE M1A TO 1K

I've got to give Orgel most of the credit here with his amazing knowledge in the precision shooting arena. He called out the elevation adjustments and read the wind perfectly. All I had to do was press the trigger and input as little of myself into the rifle as possible to prevent disturbing the shot. As I positioned myself behind the rifle, I cleared my mind and focused on the small blue target in my reticle. "Shooter ready." "Spotter ready." Exhale.

Crwwack. The first shot snaps downrange. A breath later I see the impact directly behind the target, and dust drifts into the blue sky. I'm on the money! "Great calls, Rob." I send four more rounds and hold

my breath as I send the final shot.

At 1,000 yards, even on 18X through the scope, you cannot know how well you did at this distance. Orgel on the spotting scope has an idea, but he keeps quiet until we reach the target downrange. As we pull the target down, to my relief all five are on the paper! For a novice long-range shooter, I was extremely happy with my grouping of about 8″ at 1,000 yards.

CONCLUSION

My takeaway from this experience is that even a novice precision shooter, with expert guidance, quality equipment and a strong desire to learn, can repeatedly hit the 1,000-yard mark. My goal is to attend ER Tactical's five-day precision rifle course to further refine my shooting capabilities with the M1A. There is something beautiful about shooting an iconic piece of history like this classic rifle, and one updated and modernized for long range shooting.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:

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BLACK-HILLS.COM
SPUHRWEBSHOP.COM
VORTEXOPTICS.COM

THE ARMORY LIFE INTERVIEWS ROB ORGEL

WHILE I WAS MEETING with Orgel for the 1,000-yard shoot, I had a chance to do an in-depth interview. Orgel has been a great friend and firearms instructor of mine for a little over a year, and really opened my eyes to how much value there was in firearms training, testing theories and tactics, as well as EDC preparedness mindsets.

This connection has helped me to be a safer, more confident and competent firearms owner. Orgel doesn't just teach what he has been taught or read, he teaches what he has experienced, and he makes it a point to test gear and theories to figure out what holds up and what doesn't. Without further ado, here's the interview:

Jeremy Tremp (JT): Tell me a bit about how your background makes you qualified to be a firearms instructor.

Rob Orgel (RO): What is important about my time as an instructor in the military, as well as my time as a contractor and a private instructor, is that I teach every day. Every day I improve the techniques and skills that I instruct others in and further refine my curriculum. It's important when selecting an instructor to know their background not just in the operational sense, but also in the instructional sense.



Orgel brings an impressive military background to his training with ER Tactical.

JT: Do you have a favorite class to teach, and if so, why?

RO: I love teaching the Long-Range Precision class because understanding the effects on a bullet from the time it leaves your barrel to the time it reaches your target is extremely rewarding to impart on a student. Also, I genuinely enjoy teaching the Women's Pistol Class. This has served as a great vessel for many clients to understand how to increase their survivability and understanding in all circumstances as well as empower women in their self-defense capabilities.

JT: What makes you different from other trainers?

RO: The firearms instruction market is a saturated one. Many people have received credentials via online applications and are teaching others how to shoot. While it is necessary to have many people educating the masses on safe weapons handling and fundamentals, finding a tactical instructor can be difficult. There are many examples of good operational backgrounds that maybe are not so well-suited to be educating people.

It's best to find someone with a deep background in firearms education as well as operational experience. This can often be hard to find and leads us to settle for one of the two; a background in combat or a background in education. I have been lucky — or unlucky, depending upon how you see it — to have a background in both.

I was able to apply my combat experience to the education field as an educator of several thousand Marines followed by several hundred private military contractors and, then again, currently into the private industry.

JT: What is your favorite Springfield Armory firearm?

RO: That's a tough call as they have several of which I am a fan. I have to say for nostalgia I would pick the M1A Loaded. But we can't turn our back on modern advances in pistol technology and design like with the Hellcat 9mm. I will also say that the first pistol I ever personally owned was a Springfield Operator 1911.

Now, all things considered, I am really impressed by the SAINT. I have seen several of these come through my Carbine classes, and not one has failed. In these classes we shoot over 500 rounds per day, and we try to see where our guns will fail. There are few more reliable carbines out of the box than the Springfield SAINT.

JT: Thank you for taking the time to do this interview with us.

— Jeremy Tremp

WATCH THE VIDEO
ROB ORGEL INTERVIEW

HOW TO USE QR CODES

QR codes are a convenient way to access additional information through your smartphone, and you'll find them throughout *The Armory Life* magazine. To use them, simply open the camera on your phone and hold it over the QR code. Then follow the prompt that appears on screen.

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The Surefire XSC was designed from the ground up to complement micro-compact concealed carry pistols like the Springfield Armory Hellcat.



HELLCAT NIGHT VISION?

THE SUREFIRE XSC

DR. WILL DABBS, MD

IMAGES: SUREFIRE



Even with an optic installed, the Surefire XSC and the Hellcat make for a light, compact and handy defensive system.

THE SPRINGFIELD ARMORY HELLCAT shrinks service pistol-grade performance down into a package you can carry comfortably while wearing shorts and a t-shirt. Featuring up to a 13+1-round capacity, a superb trigger, ample automatic safety devices and a sleek snag-free shape, the Hellcat set a new standard for concealed carry handguns.

In fact, the Hellcat is so small most conventional weaponlights seem oversized by comparison. Enter Surefire and its brand new XSC WeaponLight. Conceived from the ground up to complement micro-compact concealed carry pistols like the Hellcat, the 350 lumen XSC is tiny, robust, and extremely powerful.

It features an anodized aluminum housing that is lightweight and all but indestructible. The XSC's parabolic reflector efficiently directs the light's output into a concentrated beam to ensure positive target identification in the darkest spaces.

The sleek chassis is compact enough to fit on the Hellcat's compact rail and flows perfectly into the lines of the pistol so that it doesn't interfere with the gun's superlative concealability.

A bilateral finger switch is comparably accessible regardless of your particular handedness and offers two different illumination modes: momentary and constant. The whole device is gasket-sealed to resist moisture and the elements. This IPX7 rating guarantees reliable performance, even after one-meter submersion underwater for half an hour. Surefire supplies illuminators to the finest military and law enforcement units on earth, so obviously their gear is designed for hard use in the real world.

The XSC WeaponLight is powered by a proprietary rechargeable 3.7-volt lithium polymer battery that exchanges quickly without tools and without dismounting the light from the gun. A battery-mounted fuel gauge helps you keep track of charge status, so you don't run dry at an inopportune time. Despite its tiny footprint, the XSC will provide half an hour of constant use on a single charge. The included charging cradle sports two charging bays to facilitate keeping any spare batteries handy.

To complement the light weight



The Surefire XSC adds a whole new dimension to the tactical efficacy of micro-compact defensive pistols like the Hellcat.



If it's dark, an onboard weapon-light can keep you in the fight when the light is low and the stress-meter is pegged.



Both tiny and powerful, the Surefire XSC is as radically advanced as the Hellcat pistol hosting it.



The XSC measures just under 2" in length and weighs a mere 1.7 oz.



Ambidextrous controls are easy to engage and operate.

of the Hellcat, the XSC weighs a paltry 1.7 ounces. Mounting the unit is painless. Once you have it in place and charged you can forget it is there. The XSC keeps an already small gun compact and portable while hugely enhancing its capabilities.

RUMINATIONS

My right to keep and bear arms is well-exercised, and my trigger finger is nicely conditioned. I shoot all the time. However, most of that shooting is in good light when I am well-rested and comfortable. That's not typically when Very Bad Things happen.

You usually won't need a gun after a good night's sleep and a hearty breakfast. You'll want that piece in the dark corner of some empty parking lot when life has gone utterly sideways. Under those sordid circumstances there may yet be friendlies about as well.

You can't hit what you can't see. Luminous sights are great, and I own several. However, a proper light can be invaluable when your heart is beating out of your chest and your opponent might very well kill you.

Previously, when it came to truly compact handguns, it meant you had a separate flashlight you had to somehow manage with an imaginary third hand while you were busy running your gun. Now, the $329 Surefire XSC Weapon-Light mounts rugged and reliable illumination right onto your micro-compact carry gun with a trivial weight and bulk penalty. It seems the game just changed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
SUREFIRE.COM
SPRINGFIELD-ARMORY.COM

IWAS

PAUL CARLSON



TH

The new Springfield Armory Ronin 1911 is now available in 10mm, packing a ton of power into a familiar platform.


WRONG
ABOUT
IE RONIN
10MM



The author enjoyed testing the Ronin in 9mm, but initially was not sure about the same gun in 10mm.

MORE ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER. In fact, there's often a point of diminishing returns. From my naive viewpoint, I've always kind of looked at the 10mm round that way. It was just too much of a good thing. Too long, too loud, too powerful — too much recoil.

Then again, until last week, I'd never even shot a 10mm. My opinions were based off of gun lore and not personal experience. Would Springfield Armory change my mind about the cartridge with the introduction of the Ronin 1911 in 10mm?

IT'S A LOOKER

I'm not one to judge a book by its cover. At the same time, about six months ago I opened up a Springfield Armory box and, when I saw what was inside, I said, "Ooh la la!" That pistol, a Ronin 9mm, was the beauty in the box. I loved the two-tone look and the beautiful wooden grips. And the new 10mm Ronin didn't disappoint when I glanced at her as well.

Obviously, the 1911 has a classic beauty all its own. Springfield Armory magnifies what John Moses Browning started. Springfield's forged slides and frames are the foundation for their 1911 pistols. (To learn more about forged steel, turn to page 88.)

The stainless steel forged frame is left in the white, and its flat sides are just the right sheen of polish to catch the light just right (and the rounds have a nice matte finish). The hot salt bluing on the forged slide is a great contrast to the frame. The polished slide slabs match the frame flats' sheen and sport both rear and front serrations. The rounds of the slide also have a matte finish, as on the frame.

The look of the Ronin is completed with its laminate wood grips. The 10mm sample I received had an even deeper color to the grips than the 9mm I reviewed.

Springfield allows the Ronin to lead with its beauty. Instead of the typical large markings on today's handguns, the Ronin markings on the slide are understated and elegant. If you're looking for a classy 1911, the Ronin series of pistols definitely fit that bill.

SHOOTABILITY

I knew the 10mm Ronin was a beautiful gun; what I wondered about was how it was going to shoot. Remember, the 9mm was my intro to the Ronin family of pistols. Of course, the 9mm 1911









IMAGES: MARK FINGAR

The Springfield Armory Ronin 1911 pistol features high-visibility fiber optic front sights (top left), a skeletonized Gen 2 Speed Trigger (top right), two-dot Tactical Rack rear sight (above, left) and an extended beavertail grip safety (above, right).



was a dream to shoot. Would adding one little millimeter make that much of a difference from a shooting standpoint?

Frankly, the difference between 9mm and 10mm is significant. It isn't so much the diameter that matters here, it's the overall length of the cartridge. Between the difference in diameter and the length, the 10mm has a lot of room for more powder and heavier projectiles.

Honestly, I expected the 10mm Ronin to be a gun that would show me who was boss. I was ready to actually have to deal with some discomfort, especially from the hotter rounds. However, I was pleasantly surprised. The 10mm Ronin turned out to be very enjoyable to shoot. Don't get me wrong, this pistol is snappy, but it was also incredibly shootable.

The Gen 2 Speed Trigger was crisp and light and, when coupled with the Tactical Rack rear and

RONIN 5" 10MM

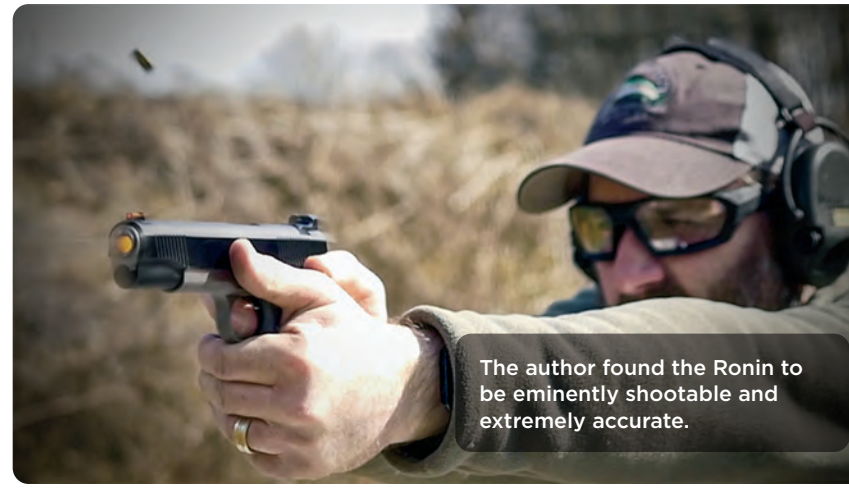
CHAMBERING	10mm
BARREL	5"
WEIGHT	40 oz.
OVERALL LENGTH	8.6"
SIGHTS	Fiber optic front, Tactical Rack rear
GRIPS	Wood laminate
ACTION	Semi-auto
FINISH	Two-tone
CAPACITY	8+1 (one)
MSRP	$849

WATCH THE VIDEO
I WAS WRONG ABOUT THE RONIN 10MM

fiber optic front sight along with the 5″ stainless steel, match-grade, forged barrel, it was easy to get the hits I wanted to get, up close or at distance.

I ran rounds weighing from 180 up to 220 grains and never felt a flinch from the recoil. There is no doubt the mass of the gun helps to absorb the recoil, but it still was surprisingly pleasant to shoot. Plain and simple, this gun is way easier to shoot than a 10mm is supposed to be.

Just like the 9mm Ronin I



The author found the Ronin to be eminently shootable and extremely accurate.

THE RONIN 1911 FAMILY

IN MY OPINION, the Ronin family of 1911 handguns from Springfield Armory represents an amazing value when it comes to a quality-built, feature-rich 1911. I've found the Ronin 1911 pistols to be outstanding handguns with classic features that will satisfy both the new handgun owner and the seasoned 1911 collector.

Currently, there are five offerings in the Ronin 1911 family. Firstly, there is the full-size 5″ gun that is offered in 9mm, .45 or 10mm. In addition to those three offerings, there is also a 4.25″ lightweight model available in 9mm or .45. Each member of the family wears the same MSRP of $849.





RONIN 5″	
CHAMBERING	9mm, 10mm, .45 ACP
BARREL	5″
WEIGHT	41 oz., 40 oz.
OVERALL LENGTH	8.6″
SIGHTS	Fiber optic front, Tactical Rack rear
GRIPS	Wood laminate
ACTION	Semi-auto
FINISH	Two-tone
CAPACITY	9+1, 8+1 (one)
MSRP	$849

RONIN 4.25″	
CHAMBERING	9mm, .45 ACP
BARREL	4.25″
WEIGHT	31 oz., 29.5 oz.
OVERALL LENGTH	7.9″
SIGHTS	Fiber optic front, Tactical Rack rear
GRIPS	Wood laminate
ACTION	Semi-auto
FINISH	Two-tone
CAPACITY	9+1, 8+1 (one)
MSRP	$849

THE DETAILS

The 5″-barreled Ronin sports a hot salt blued forged slide and a stainless steel forged frame. The smaller, lighter 4.25″-barreled Ronin has a hot salt blued slide along with a forged alloy frame to help reduce weight.

The foundation of all Springfield's 1911 pistols, including the value-packed Ronins, would be the forged frames, slides and barrels. Forging exposes the metal to intense pressure and heat during manufacturing. Forging produces stronger, denser parts that are able to last longer and provide a very long service life. Whether you select a full size 5″ Ronin or a smaller 4.25″ gun, you can be sure it will remain in the family collection for generations to come.

EYE-CATCHING

When you choose a Ronin, it may very well be due to the classic two-tone finish and attractive appearance. All five of the Ronins have a rich, dark, hot salt blue slide which is contrasted by the bright stainless, or silver-colored, alloy frame.

The good looks of the Ronin 1911 do not stop with the frame and slide. The polished, two-tone finish and the bead-blasted rounds of the Ronin are accented by attractive laminate wood stocks, completing the elegant, classic look.

The Ronin 1911 has a positive manual thumb safety and a 1911 grip safety with a memory bump and extended beavertail. The Gen 2 Speed Trigger is clean, light and crisp as you would expect, and accuracy is enhanced with the match grade forged barrel. The tops of the Ronin pistol slides are graced with Tactical Rack rear sights and a fiber optic front that is bright and easy to pick up quickly.

CONCLUSION

Anyone familiar with a Springfield Armory 1911 knows that it is a well-made, quality pistol. And with the new Ronin line, you get an upgraded and enhanced model with forged strength and durability at a very good price. Seems like a pretty good deal to me!

—Paul Carlson


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The Ronin features hybrid smooth/checkered Crossed Cannon wooden grips.



The beavertail grip safety features a "memory bump" at its lower portion to ensure full engagement when gripped.

tested, the 10mm has a 5" barrel, a height of 5.5", a length of 8.6" and a weight right around 40 ounces. The capacity of the 10mm Ronin is 8+1. I was able to stuff a ninth round into the mag, but to avoid the risk of malfunctions my recommendation is stick with the stated 8+1 capacity.

WHERE IT FITS

I'm the type of fella that needs a justification when I pick up a new pistol. Before shooting this Ronin in 10mm, I simply didn't have a justification for it primarily because of my (inaccurate) perception of 10mm recoil.

To be honest, I'm not really recoil shy. In fact, from time to time it can feel good to shoot something that has a good kick. But the kick never materialized the way I thought it would. This gun changed my mind.

I'm lucky to have spent a couple of summers up in the wilds of Alaska fishing like a mad man. Alaska is a land of big critters. Big brown bears, black bears and moose. In the past I took a 12 gauge stoked up with slugs. No doubt that is some serious bear medicine. It's also big, awkward and heavy.

The Ronin in 10mm is just about the perfect tool for a long day (and night) on the river. No stock and long barrel to get tangled up in my fly line. The Ronin is a smaller, lighter and much more elegant solution than my old scattergun.

The other place that the Ronin fits for me is as a deer hunting handgun. The 5" barrel and the red fiber optic sight mean easy target acquisition and hits.

The 1911 pistol has an extended, single-side thumb safety for easy operation.



FINAL THOUGHTS

At times I can become my own victim, falling prey to what I think I know. The 10mm Ronin serves as an excellent example of how I can be wrong and should keep more of an open mind. Simply put, it was a blast. It was beautiful and shootable, and it fills an important niche as a very powerful semi-automatic handgun.

The Ronin is a gorgeous pistol. It shoots much more pleasantly than I ever expected, and there is no doubt I can find a place for the 10mm Ronin in my arsenal. When I factor in the very reasonable MSRP of $849, it becomes even easier to justify picking up this capable blaster.

How about you?

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IMAGES: MARK FINGAR

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Determining the correct zero for your needs will require some thought as well as range time.

IS YOUR CARBINE'S ZERO WRONG?

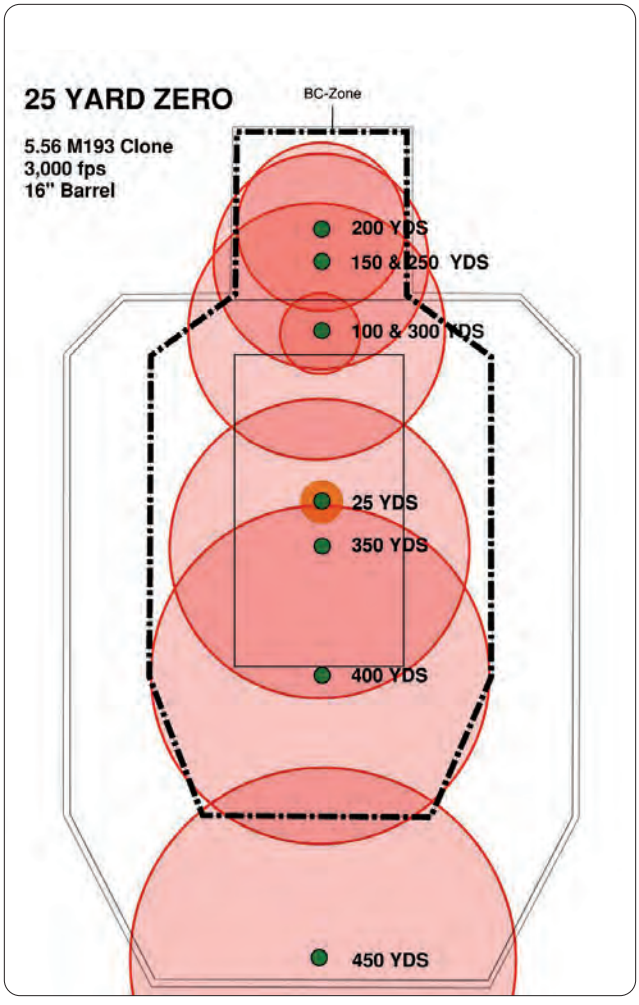
IAN KENNEY

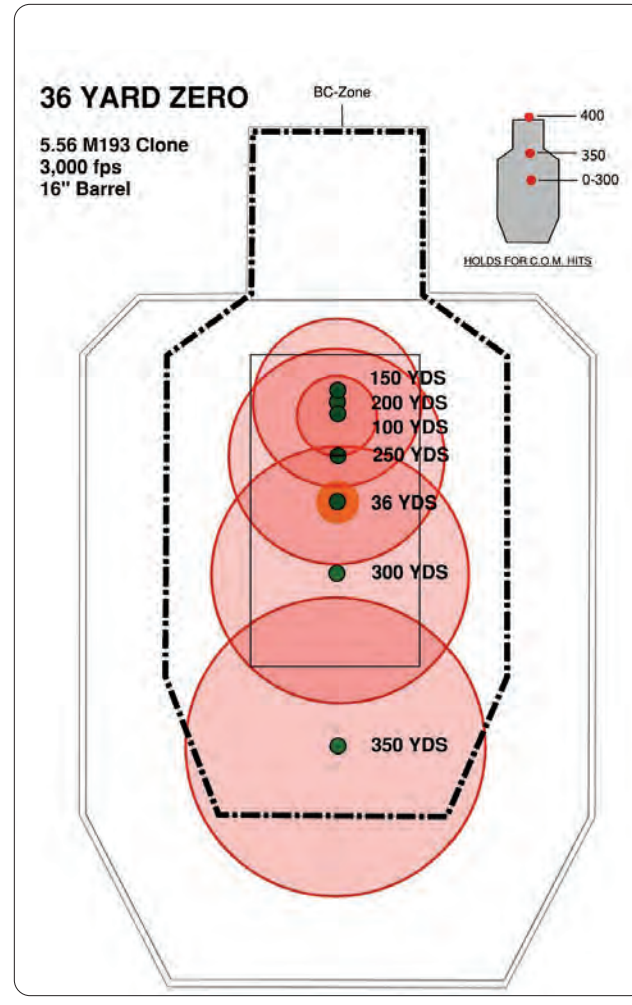
PULL A NEW AR OUT OF THE CASE, peer through the sights, and one of the first questions will invariably be "At what distance should I zero this thing?" I could easily regale you with ballistic charts and simply say that "at X distance you'll be Y inches high and that's why it's better than Z," but that would be a little disingenuous.

Frankly, I don't think one zeroing scheme is better than another. However, for practicality's sake you'll want a zero that is essentially point-and-shoot within your desired effective range. Whether that's 100 yards and in or from zero to 300 yards, there are a few viable options from which you can choose for your needs.

To help keep things on track and provide context, I'm using a SAINT® Victor 5.56 rifle with a 16" barrel shooting some flavor of 55- to 62-gr. FMJ bullet at about 3,000 fps in my examples. Currently, this is probably the most common AR configuration going, shooting the most common ammunition available.

However, let's be honest … in the hands of the average shooter, this combination is probably good for 3 MOA on a good day. Sometimes it may do better, sometimes worse. The overlaid circles in the





included illustrations help to visualize what that 3 MOA extreme spread translates to on a target at a given distance to get beyond arbitrary ballistic figures.

25 YARD ZERO

Even though I don't recommend the 25 yard zero, I'm starting here because it is suggested so often. Two minutes and a ballistic calculator will show you this zero creates an arching trajectory that rises about 9" above the line of sight at 200 yards.

The problem is that it forces you to have to think when to hold under a certain amount on closer targets and when to hold dead on. In the military, we were told to hold low up to 250 meters and then hold dead on for 300 meters. That's all well and good when your target is 20"x40", but it starts to get trickier on smaller targets. I can also tell you from experience that when you're amped up and the lizard brain takes over, you'll really only be thinking point and shoot.

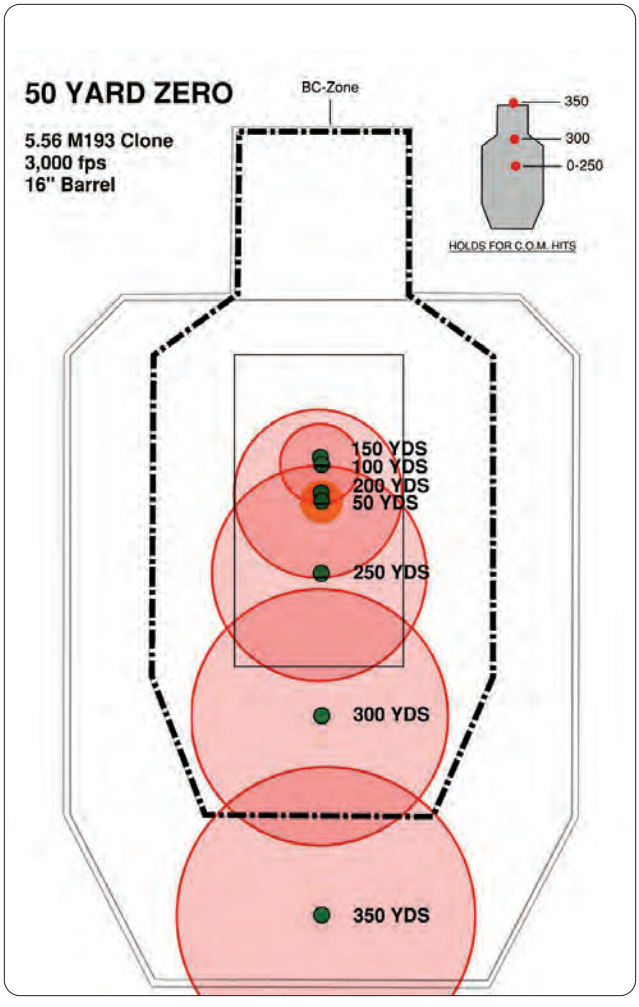
36 AND 50 YARD ZERO

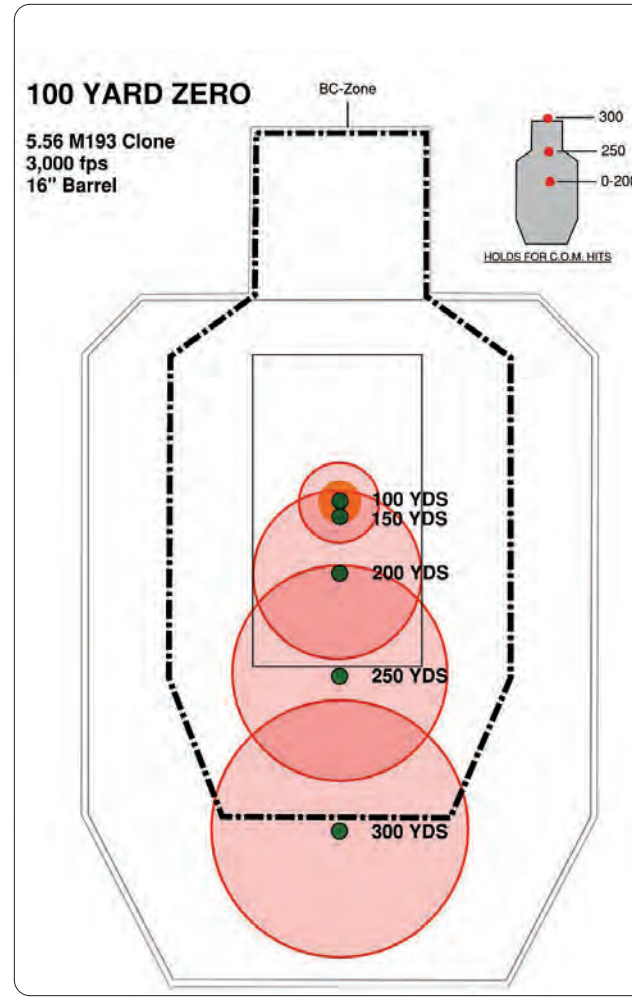
That brings me to these two options, which I'd like to talk about together because they're pretty similar and do well to exploit the advantages of a practical carbine. Now, the arguments that I've read on each of these techniques could put a good, old fashioned Ford vs. Chevy debate to shame.

Like a lot of those situations, though, the points argued are based on personal bias and the actual differences are pretty minimal. To see for myself how these two zeros stack up, I took two similarly set up rifles to the range, one zeroed to 50 yards and the other zeroed to 36 yards.

For better or worse, the 36 yard zero is basically a hybrid that flattens out the St. Louis Arch of a trajectory the 25 yard zero creates while still providing a decent maximum range. Compared to a 50 yard zero, its peak trajectory is slightly taller, about 4" above line of sight between 150-200 yards.

With the rifle zeroed at 36 yards, I can reasonably expect to hit a BC-Zone target out to 300 yards without excessive hold-overs. If





I need to push out a bit farther, I can just hold level with the shoulder line or top of the target for 350 and 400 yards, respectively. To me, the 36 yard zero makes things about as simple as they can get for a multi-purpose rifle that could be used for range, home defense or duty use.

All that being said, the 50 yard zero continues to be one of my favorite zeroing schemes because it's versatile, proven and effective. The rifle zeroed at 50 yards shot a little flatter with a max ordinate of just a few inches above the line of sight. This affords me the ability to be a little more precise on smaller targets out to 200-250 yards without hold-overs. If I need to shoot farther than that I can aim at the shoulder line to push out to 300 yards or hold on top of the head for 350. Logistically, it may also be easier for some shooters to get a 50 yard zero since many ranges may not have the facilities available to set up and shoot 36 yards.

At the range, I ran through some drills to work on accuracy and precision. Failure drills were shot at the 10, 7 and 5 yard lines, while the hostage taker was done at the 10 after running to make a button hook turn. In both exercises I didn't feel I had to work harder to get hits using one zero or the other. So long as I accounted for my height over bore, they both worked about the same.

For all intents and purposes, I don't think you're going to be let down or be at a severe disadvantage if you choose either one over the other.

100 YARD ZERO

Zeroing a carbine with open sights or a red dot at 100 yards isn't intuitive, but the concept has been gaining ground in recent years for certain applications. The chief benefit to using a 100 yard zero is that whether your bullet is going 2,500 fps or 3,000 fps it is the peak trajectory. That means from zero to 100 yards you only need to be concerned with your height over bore when shooting a target.

To me, this fact makes the 100 yard zero a perfect choice for a carbine that will be used in close



A properly zeroed carbine will ensure you can make the hits you need, when you need them.

terrain where long shots will be limited. The 300-yard shots are still doable, but as target distances increase you're going to need to know the specific holds for your set-up out to that distance, so it's important to really know your gun.

Depending on your sighting system and target size this could end up obscuring your target, so keep that in mind if you plan to use this zero. If you're concerned about getting a good zero at 100 yards, you can always start at 50, adjusting so that your impacts are about ¾" low, and then confirming at 100 yards. Chances are you'll be very close, if not dead on.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

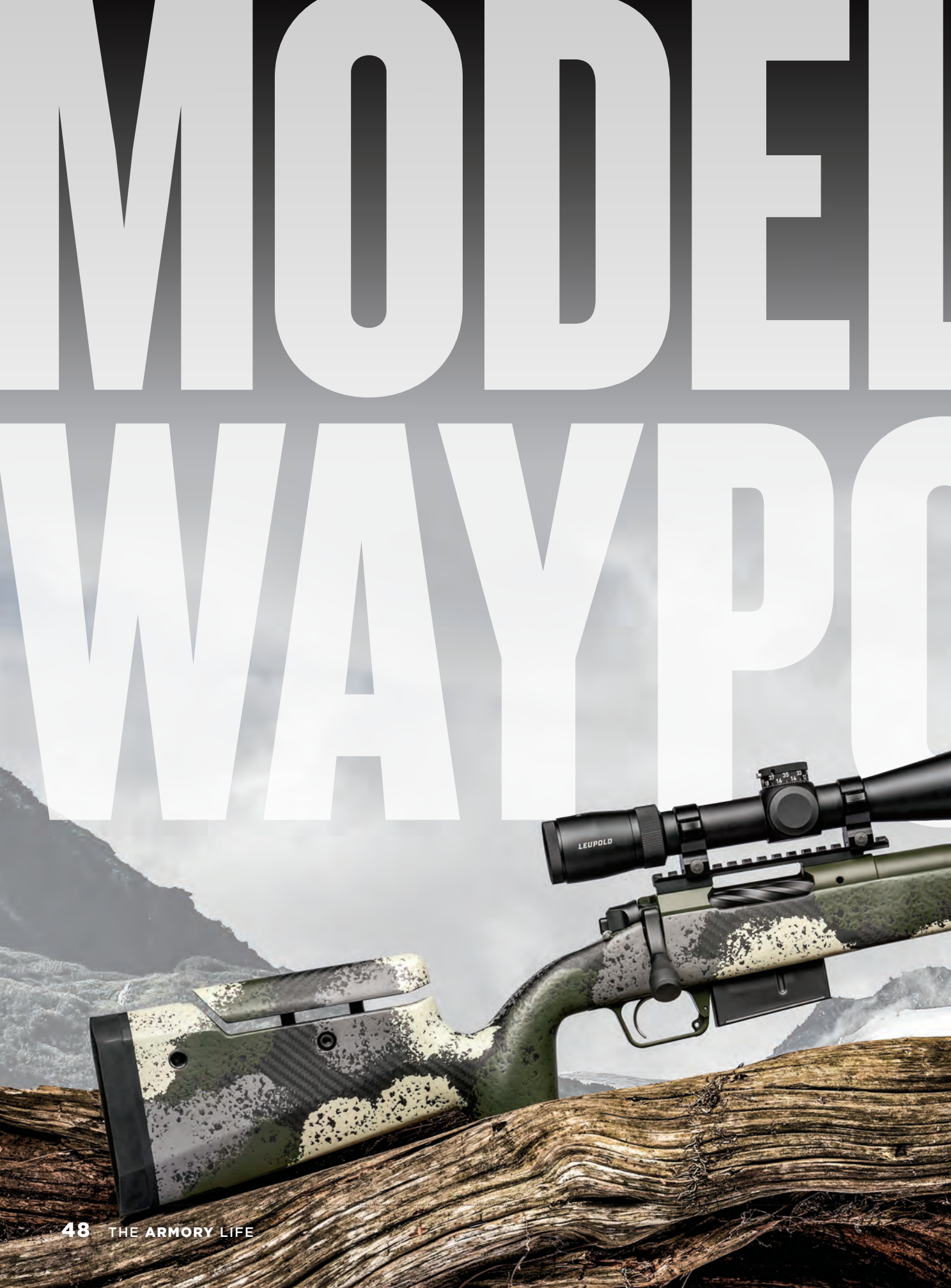
I can't tell you which zero distance is the best one; that's really going to be up to you, your skill level and the set-up of your rifle. If you've read all this and still aren't sure of the answer, start with a 50 yard zero and go from there.



Shown above are the author's results with a 50 (left) and 36 (right) yard zero.

Whichever distance you do zero at, I recommend shooting out to as far as possible so that you know what you, your rifle and your ammunition are capable of doing. I'll leave you with this tip: if you have astigmatism like I do and your red dot looks wonky, flip up the small rear aperture — it will help focus the dot for a better-defined aiming point.

MODEL
WAYPO



L 2020 OINT

SEE THE WAY:

WAYNE VAN ZWOLL



The new Model 2020 Waypoint from Springfield Armory combines old-fashioned quality with cutting-edge design and materials.



The Model 2020 Waypoint is designed to deliver custom rifle performance in the field.

THAT THE NAME "SPRINGFIELD ARMORY" is one rich with tradition and history is beyond dispute. However, that name is most often associated with storied military firearms and modern self-defense rifles and pistols.

Enter the new Model 2020 Waypoint rifle, the first new bolt-action rifle with the Springfield Armory name since cars all sported spoked wheels. And this premium American-made firearm represents the company's move into the competitive field of bolt-action hunting rifles.

A MODERN CLASSIC

Depending on your age, you could call it a "hunting rifle" or a "long-range match rifle." Old-timers can hardly envision a sporter with the Waypoint's hand-laid carbon fiber stock. Its steep grip and tall comb, reinforced M-Lok slots in the forend belly and five QD swivel cavities reflect tastes and priorities of a new generation.

On the other hand, even shooters who recall the Truman Doctrine approve of light weight. The Waypoint's stock scales just 1 lb., 15 oz., with a standard comb, and 2 lbs., 11 oz., with adjustable cheek rest. The carbon fiber stock is pillar bedded, has a 1" Pachmayr Decelerator pad, and is available in Evergreen and Ridgeline Camo finish options.

Springfield Armory's U.S.-made Model 2020 action has the popular Remington 700 footprint, so it will fit scope bases and accept triggers for the 700. However, I doubt you'll want a replacement for the furnished TriggerTech trigger, externally adjustable from 2½ to 5 lbs. of pull. Its free-floating roller helps ensure smooth release.

A low-profile, two-position safety blocks the trigger but permits bolt manipulation when "on." Springfield also shaved lock time, a critical element in field accuracy. The Waypoint's ultra-fast ignition

MODEL 2020 WAYPOINT

CHAMBERING	6mm CM, 6.5 CM, .308 Win, 6.5 PRC (tested)
BARREL	20", 22", 24" (tested)
WEIGHT	6 lbs., 9 oz. (lowest) Overall Length: 41"-45"
SIGHTS	Picatinny rail mount
STOCK	Carbon fiber, fixed or adj. comb
ACTION	Bolt-action
FINISH	Evergreen or Ridgeline camo
CAPACITY	3-5, depending on chambering (one mag)
MSRP	$1,699-$2,399







Effective at reducing recoil, the Cerakoted and removable SA Radial Muzzle Brake also assists with the balance of the rifle.

A carbon-fiber stock and available carbon fiber-sleeved barrel help the rifle be both ruggedly strong and portably light.

makes an eye-blink seem glacial.

A spiral-fluted, two-lug bolt glides in raceways electrical discharge machine (EDM) cut in the stainless receiver. This ensures precise dimensions and slickly smooth surfaces. The bolt and receiver are machined after heat-treating to ensure the dimensions of the finished steel match specifications. Additionally, the bolt is nitrided for wear and corrosion resistance.

Dual cocking cams boost the bolt's already-easy 90-degree lift, and afford tool-free disassembly. The cylindrical bolt knob is removable. The Waypoint's recoil lugs are integral with the receiver ring, and four 6-48 screws and two recoil pins secure the Picatinny top rail.

Receiver, bottom metal, barrel shank and muzzle brake are Cerakote finished. Springfield Armory settled on a detachable AICS-pattern, single-stack magazine, for sure, slick, centerline feeding. It is securely held but easily released by a latch inside the triggerguard.



The Waypoint is available in 6mm Creedmoor, 6.5 Creedmoor, .308 Win. and 6.5 PRC (tested).

PATH TO PRECISION

Chambered in 6mm Creedmoor, 6.5 Creedmoor, 6.5 PRC (Precision Rifle Cartridge) and .308, the Waypoint offers BSF carbon fiber sleeved barrels as well as standard fluted stainless barrels. Twist rates accommodate the long, ballistically efficient bullets popular with hunters and long-range shooters: one turn in 7½" for the 6mm Creedmoor, 1:8" for the 6.5 Creedmoor and 6.5 PRC, and 1:10" for the .308. All barrels are free-floated and threaded ⅝-24 for the included SA Radial Muzzle Brake.

According to Springfield Armory, each BSF barrel is "jacketed in a roll-wrapped carbon fiber sleeve and loaded under tension, [so] 95 percent of the sleeve doesn't contact the barrel, providing cooling air gaps and promoting cold bore to warm bore repeatability." Fluting under that sleeve trims weight and increases surface cooling area. The proof of any barrel, however, lies in the measure of shot dispersion. The Waypoint boasts a .75 MOA guarantee with match-grade factory loads and a skilled shooter.

To test that accuracy guarantee (OK, mostly to get to fire a Springfield rifle without a gas port), I snared one of the first Waypoints to leave Geneseo. It has a 24" carbon fiber barrel in 6.5 PRC and a standard stock in Ridgeline finish. My 2.5-10×45 Leupold cinched to the rail brought weight to an even 8 lbs. — less than a glance might tell you. The trigger measured a clean 3¾ lbs.



The bolt shank had "just the right sweep" for the author. Note the two-position thumb safety and magazine release in the forward portion of the triggerguard.

HANDS-ON

This rifle balances well. While I've warmed to vertical grips about as fast as a hound to spinach, I must concede this one feels good, both at the bench and standing. It's just long enough, the dip to comb just deep enough for my pork-chop hand. It has a pleasing palm-swell, gentle flare below to keep any hand in position. From prone it puts my firing finger a tad too far forward, meaning it will delight practically all of you shooters out there with no path to the NBA.

While M-Loks and QD swivel pockets speak to the times, I think traditional QD studs fore and aft would be helpful to add a Harris bipod or switch a sling with another rifle so fitted. The forend has a pleasing profile. Squarish in cross-section, it marries nicely to a rest and to thumb-and-fingers or open-hand support standing. It has the beginning of a belly up front, to better fit the palm. I like its generous length — 12¾" from the front guard screw.

The stock surface is smooth, with a subtle texture. It feels better than velvet or sandpaper. I also like the Ridgeline Camo, an open patchwork of brown, cream and shades of gray, with dark speckling. The stock is closely inletted around receiver and bottom metal, which stands slightly proud. Its channel lets the barrel float, but without gaps big enough to swallow your car keys.

To my mind, the Waypoint's bolt shank has just the right outward sweep. It drops nicely in front of my trigger finger. The cylindrical knob is well proportioned and properly smooth for fast cycling. The shroud is trim, cleanly shaped. Vertical in form, the striker protrudes slightly when cocked. No unnecessary bulk or colors back there. Bolt travel is piston-slick, with almost no rattle. There's very little end play at full retraction.

Running this rifle is a delight! It slurps cartridges seamlessly from the box and is easy to top-feed with single rounds. The magazine is easy to release and to reinsert. It's secure in the rifle. Encouraged, it has a little play.

Extraction and ejection are fault-free. The extractor is inserted through a slot in the center of the right-hand (lower) locking lug. Beefy shoulders hold it securely and resist breakage, should you

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Enlarging bullet holes with the next shot seemed the Waypoint's habit. This is superb out-of-the-box accuracy.



Offhand as well as at the bench, the author found the vertical grip of the stock comfortable and the rifle easy to control.



Hornady Match loads kept groups well inside the .75-MOA standard Springfield Armory guarantees for the Model 2020 Waypoint.

get too ambitious with handloads and stick a case. The claw itself is 6mm wide across most of its face, 5mm at its leading edge. The face angle makes for easy push-feed engagement. The Waypoint's plunger ejector is peppy and kicks from 4 o'clock.

The barrel-diameter SA Radial Muzzle Brake, Cerakoted to match the action, is very effective. Recoil from Hornady's 6.5 PRC loads thrusting 147-gr. ELD Match bullets at 2,910 fps hardly bumps my cheek or clavicle. The Decelerator pad adds its cushion. The Waypoint's crisp trigger also encourages tight groups.

How tight? My first three shots, after bore-sighting and two to zero, cut a .62 knot. I printed some more groups, which measured .63 and .70. Such accuracy from a rifle that, stripped, scales under 6¾ lbs. should please any shooter! It's also a credit to Hornady's excellent ammunition.

CONCLUSION

Carbon fiber-stocked, carbon fiber-barreled bolt rifles on actions with Remington 700-compatible footprints are popping up like dandelions. The best custom-shop renditions are frightfully expensive, and those coming off assembly lines show their pedestrian pedigree in forgettable components, fit and finish, and accuracy only a sometime thing.

Springfield Armory's Waypoint Model 2020 is notable for its quality of its parts and the workmanship relative to its modest price — under $2,400 for even the most expensive version, and a starting price of $1,699. Inspect the Waypoint's machining, the union of steel and carbon fiber, details like the deep-socket hex-head guard screws, fine ribbing on the bolt release, classy lettering and numbering .... Well, you get the point. Heck, just run the bolt, thumb the safety and dry-fire the trigger. You can do that blind-folded and know you've an exceptional rifle in hand!

In sum, the Waypoint offers features and performance now expected of top-rung multi-purpose rifles, without bleeding budgets. It should impress hunters as well as shooters scrambling in cross-terrain rifle competition and thumping steel at four-figure distance. This new custom-grade Springfield Armory bolt rifle has certainly impressed me!

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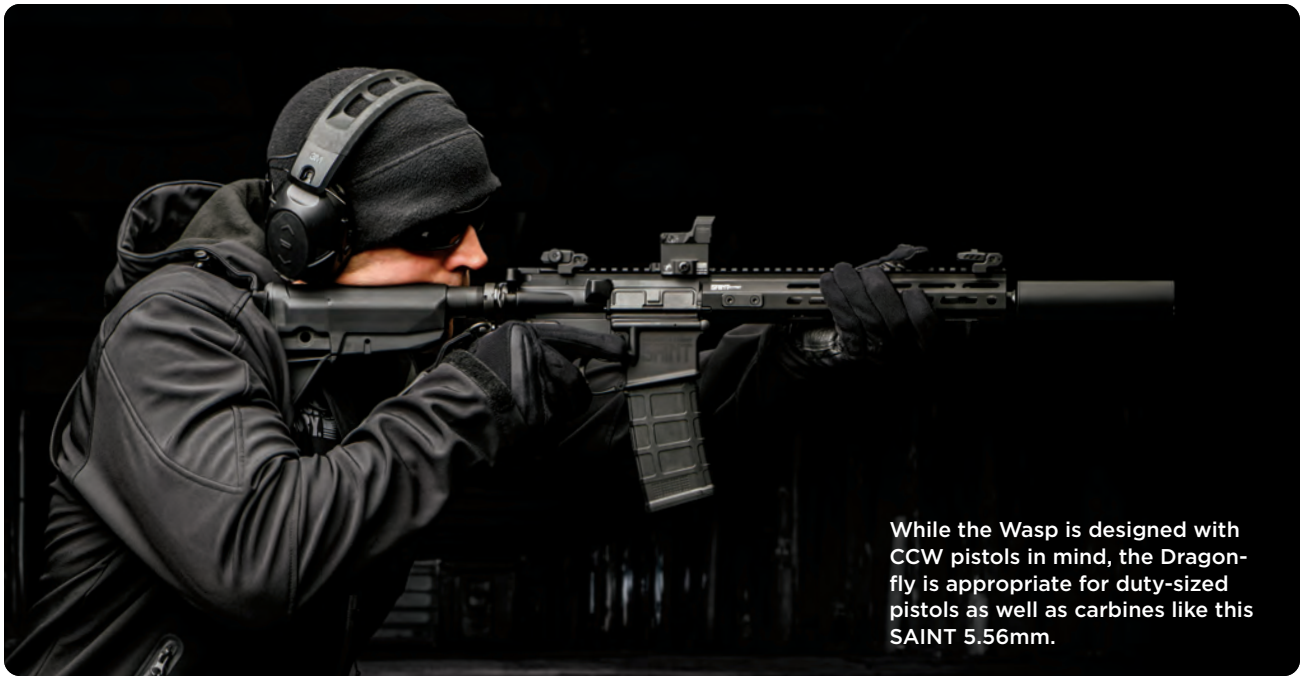


HEX OPTICS

PAUL CARLSON



The new line of HEX optics from Springfield Armory delivers premium materials and rugged durability. HEX Wasp micro red dot shown on Hellcat OSP.



While the Wasp is designed with CCW pistols in mind, the Dragonfly is appropriate for duty-sized pistols as well as carbines like this SAINT 5.56mm.

IT WAS 2012 WHEN I SAID, "Like it or not, red dot optics are going to be a common sight on defensive and duty guns in the next five years." My timing was a bit off, but here we are in 2020, eight years later, and it has become a reality.

The "like it or not" part came from my gut. At the time I leaned toward the "not." Optics were expensive to mount on a pistol. The optics themselves were expensive, and having a pistol slide machined to accept those optics cost even more. Then there was the reliability issue. Living on top of a pistol slide is not a nice, cozy place to be. Most optics weren't up to the abuse of being slammed back and forth on a reciprocating slide.

Finally, there was a learning curve. Being certain you would see your dot when you needed it most took an investment of time. In 2012, there were a lot of hurdles still in the way of optics becoming a common sight on defensive and duty pistols.

We have come a long way since that time. Optics-ready pistols from Springfield Armory like the Hellcat OSP (which stands for "Optical Sight Pistol") and the XD-M Elite Tactical OSP have been instrumental in legitimizing optics on handguns, and they both come from the factory cut to accept optical sights. This has helped reduce the issue of cost. In addition, the ability to co-witness iron sights through a low-mounted red dot has simplified the learning curve for many shooters; they simply start to line up the iron sights as they normally would, bringing the dot in the optic into their view quickly and instinctively.

But, while we have pistols available to accept red dots and the ability to use them well, what optic is "right" for your pistol? In many cases, a good-quality optic can cost nearly as much if not more than the gun upon which you want to mount it. If you try to save money and get a cheaper optic, you likely will have something that cannot stand up to the rigorous demands placed upon these electronic sights. What is the solution?

Enter the new HEX optics line from Springfield Armory.

HEX OPTICS

The HEX line of optics has been more than two years in the making, with the goal being to provide superior optics built from premium materials that would be ideal for optics-ready pistols as well as long guns — and do this all at affordable prices. This isn't an easy task when you are working to include premium design, features and materials. The folks at Springfield laid out an exacting set of standards and went to work.

As of today, the HEX line consists of two very capable but different optics. The micro-sized HEX Wasp is perfectly suited for a pistol like the XD-S Mod.2 OSP or Hellcat (in fact, the HEX Wasp



The standard-sized HEX Dragonfly weighs in at 1.2 ounces and measures 1.90" long. The rugged machined aluminum body helps add to its durability.



The micro HEX Wasp weighs just .7 of an ounce and features a tough machined aluminum housing.

HEX DRAGONFLY

OPTIC TYPE	Standard Red Dot
DOT SIZE	3.5 MOA
MAGNIFICATION	1X
WEIGHT	1.2 oz.
DIMENSIONS	1.90" (L), 1.14" (W), 1.01" (H)
FOOTPRINT	Springfield Standard
BODY	Machined 6061 T6 Hardcoat aluminum, IPX7 waterproof
LENS	Glass, scratch-resistant & anti-glare coating
OPERATION	Manual adjustment, eight settings
BATTERY/LIFE	One CR2032, three years
MSRP	$249

HEX WASP

OPTIC TYPE	Micro Red Dot
DOT SIZE	3.5 MOA
MAGNIFICATION	1X
WEIGHT	.7 oz.
DIMENSIONS	1.60" (L), 0.95" (W), 0.86" (H)
FOOTPRINT	Springfield Micro
BODY	Machined 6061 T6 Hardcoat aluminum, IPX7 waterproof
LENS	Glass, scratch-resistant & anti-glare coating
OPERATION	Always on, auto-adjust
BATTERY/LIFE	One CR2032, two years
MSRP	$299

is included with the new Hellcat RDP, which you can read about on page 12). The standard-size HEX Dragonfly is more suited to double-stack pistols like the XD-M Elite Tactical OSP or a long gun.

Although the sights are different, they share impressive common features. Both the Wasp and the Dragonfly are protected by a machined 6061 aluminum T6 Hardcoat-anodized housing. The housing is light, but ruggedly built and significantly thicker than the housing you would see on many comparable red dot optics. The durability it provides will be welcome. The Wasp and Dragonfly also share scratch-resistant, anti-glare glass lenses, adding to the HEX advantage. Additionally, both optics are IPX7 waterproof. To back all of this up, both sights are covered by a lifetime warranty.

The similarities of the Wasp and the Dragonfly don't end there, but I want to dive into what makes each of these optics special.

THE WASP

I loved the way the Wasp looked mounted on the Hellcat RDP. It only makes sense. It is a small, low-profile, direct-mount optic. Thanks to the Springfield Micro footprint mount, it sits low enough that I can easily use the U-Dot sights on the Hellcat even with the dot in place.

With a width of 0.95", the Wasp just barely exceeds the width of the slide, complementing the sight's hexagonal shape. The machining on the housing creates appealing cocking serrations that match the slide cuts on the Hellcat rather nicely. As a result, you can grip the sides of the optic when racking the slide.

The Wasp is designed as an "always on" optic, so you will have its 3.5 MOA dot every time you present your pistol. Also, it auto adjusts its brightness as needed. The optic is powered by a single, bottom-loading CR2032 battery. The cell should run easily for two years, but I recommend replacing your battery annually just to be on the safe side.

The 3.5 MOA dot of the Wasp is

WATCH THE VIDEO
HEX WASP AND DRAGONFLY OPTICS



Since it can direct mount to the slide of Hellcat pistols, the HEX Wasp sits low enough to allow it to co-witness with the pistol's excellent U-Dot iron sights.



The Dragonfly attaches to the XD-M Elite Tactical OSP via the Springfield mounting plate #1.

easily adjusted for point of impact with a small Allen key and a dial to help discern the amount of adjustment you need. The 90 MOA of adjustment in windage and elevation has no tactile or audible click, but the dial gives you a solid baseline for getting zeroed.

The aluminum housing extends forward of the glass lens to provide added protection for the glass lens. The rear of the unit sports horizontal serrations to help reduce glare and to help the eye focus on the dot. Additionally, it features an integral sight channel for co-witnessing with iron sights. As noted earlier, the Wasp features IPX7 waterproofing standards so rain and moisture will not be an issue. The sight is rated to withstand 30 minutes underwater up to one meter. Oh, and you get all this for an MSRP of $299.

THE DRAGONFLY

As I've already mentioned, the Wasp and the Dragonfly have a lot in common, but also have some important differences as well. The most obvious is size. The Dragonfly is a standard size red dot sight, making it perfect for mounting on full-size pistols as well as rifles and shotguns. The Dragonfly mounts with the Springfield Standard footprint mount that is used by a wide variety of optics. To mount to your Springfield XD-M Elite Tactical OSP pistol, you should use the Springfield mounting plate #1.

The 3.5 MOA red dot has a full 160 MOA of adjustment in windage and elevation, ensuring the ability to zero. The dot is powered by a single bottom-loading CR2032 and boasts three years of regular use. While the Wasp is an auto-brightening and -dimming optic, the Dragonfly is manually adjustable with eight brightness settings — giving you the ability to tailor its brightness exactly to your needs. Battery life is conserved with a 16-hour auto-off feature.

The Dragonfly's housing is larger than the Wasp's, but shares the same durable, machined aluminum construction, a forward shroud to protect the glass lens, and rear serrations to reduce glare. The Dragonfly can be had for an MSRP of just $249.



The Wasp has a sight channel to aid in co-witnessing with iron sights, as well as horizontal grooves on the rear to help reduce glare.



Like the smaller Wasp, the Dragonfly features horizontal grooves on the rear section to help reduce glare.

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT:
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FINAL THOUGHTS

Red dot sights are here to stay, and the reasons are simple. They add a great deal of performance capability to your firearm, and today's technology has made them capable of the demanding requirements placed upon them. And with the efforts of manufacturers like Springfield Armory working to reduce and/or eliminate the obstacles that stand in the way of the success of these optics, their future looks even brighter.

With the new HEX series, Springfield has done a solid job bringing a feature-rich line of optics to the market that provide support for their already capable pistols and long guns. What is equally as impressive is that they have done so at a price that makes the choice easy. Built to exacting standards with reliability and durability in mind, these red dots will be ready when you need them.



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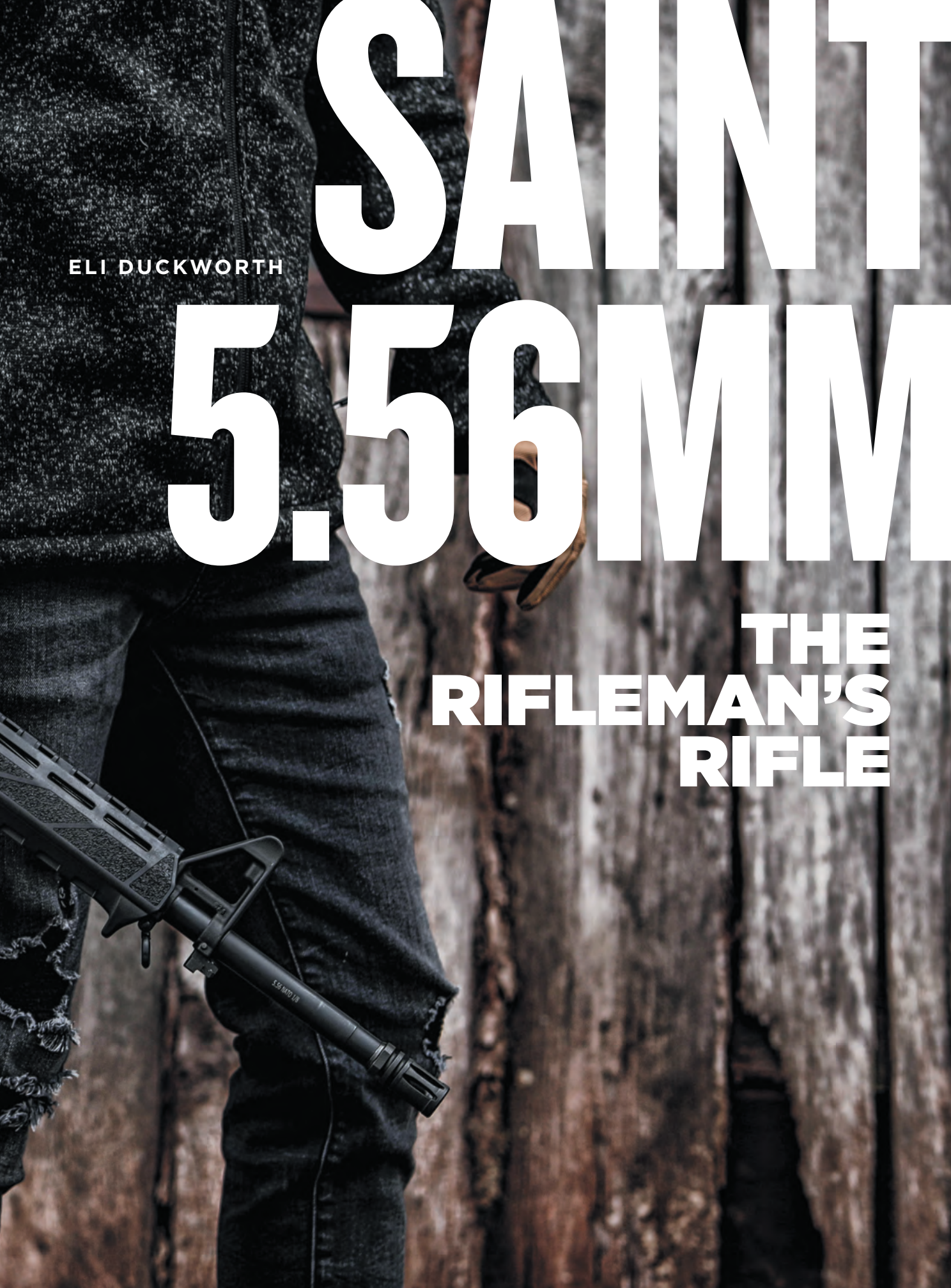
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Light, handy and accurate, the SAINT in 5.56mm offers shooters a great option in the crowded world of AR carbines.


SAINT
5.56MM
THE RIFLEMAN'S RIFLE
ELI DUCKWORTH



The Swampfox Arrowhead did quite well on the range atop the SAINT carbine.



The author ran Fiocchi ammo through the SAINT, and it performed extremely well.

AS TECHNOLOGY HAS EVOLVED, so too has the American rifleman. From the lever-actions of the late 19th century to the M14 (and it's civilian-legal sibling, the Springfield Armory M1A), a quality rifle with reach has long been the core tool of the marksman.

However, while those more traditional rifles were made of wood and steel, in the 1950's the American marksman was introduced to a new rifle: the AR. Since its introduction more than six decades ago, the AR-style rifle has become the symbol of the civilian marksman.

One of the most versatile platforms created, the AR is suitable for defense, competition and hunting. The key to unlocking this rifle's full potential lies in quality manufacturing. Rising to the challenge, Springfield Armory has produced the SAINT series of rifles, in chamberings ranging from 5.56mm to .300 BLK all the way up to .308 Win.

I recently had the chance to test out one of these for myself, in particular the 5.56mm SAINT Rifle with Picatinny gas block.

DEVIL'S IN THE DETAILS

I was impressed with the SAINT even before I saw the actual rifle. Springfield ships the SAINT in a very nice rifle bag with two external magazine pouches, making it easy to protect the rifle as I headed to the range. Once the rifle was unsheathed, I was shocked by how light this carbine was compared to many of the other rifles I have worked with. Weighing 6 lbs., 11 oz., the rifle feels solid, and comes to the eye nicely from the low ready.

The furniture is from Bravo Company Manufacturing (BCM) and is very ergonomic. The BCMGunfighter PMCR forearm encompasses M-Lok slots at the three, six and nine o' clock positions, ideal for mounting lights and a vertical foregrip. For the stock, a BCMGunfighter Mod 0 is used, and fits very tightly to the buffer tube. This offers virtually no play when shouldered, unlike many stock options seen on AR carbines from the factory. A BCMGunfighter Mod 3 pistol grip is used, which is fantastic. It has a greatly reduced angle compared to the traditional A2 grip, which forces the elbow upward. The gun was very well fitted and finished.

HEART OF THE MATTER

While ergonomics are important and ensure a solid interface between rifle and shooter, the accuracy capability of a rifle comes from the barrel and trigger group. The barrel of the SAINT is 16" in length, offers a 1:8" twist and is topped off with a traditional A2 flash suppressor.

This barrel twist is great for bullet weights up to 77 grain, but I have also found fantastic accuracy from this gun with more common, lighter weight loads. Springfield's SAINT comes standard with a nickel boron coated trigger group, and it is much smoother than the traditional mil-spec trigger, at just over 6-lbs. of pull.

RANGE CRUSADE

Pulling the SAINT out of its rifle case at the range and after the first course of fire, I couldn't help but to smile. The gun is incredibly soft shooting. As we all know, the AR carbine is an inherently soft-recoiling rifle, but the SAINT is buttery smooth. Upon further investigation of the rifle, I noticed that it had a mid-length gas system and utilized a heavy tungsten buffer. This combination results in a ridiculously smooth rifle, unlike anything else I have shot in this price bracket (it has an MSRP of $995, in case you were wondering).

The SAINT shreds on the range, being fast when transitioning targets and putting rounds exactly where they're needed. The iron sights are flip-up in both the rear and front, and are very capable sights. I was able to quickly move

SAINT M-LOK PIC GAS BLOCK

CHAMBERING	5.56/.223
BARREL	16"
WEIGHT	6 lbs., 11 oz.
OVERALL LENGTH	32.25"-35.5"
SIGHTS	Flip-up
STOCK	BCMGUNFIGHTER Mod 0
ACTION	Semi-auto
FINISH	Black
CAPACITY	30 (one)
MSRP	$995

across short range targets and progress to farther steel targets at 100 yards with ease. Running and gunning with the SAINT was a blast, as its low weight and soft recoil allowed me to push myself harder when running a drill.

While I am no benchrest shooter by any means, I did take the SAINT to a static range where I shot a few five-shot groups. This is not something I tend to do, but while fighting an inconsistent rear bag set up, I was able to get some good groupings using Fiocchi 55- and 77-gr. .223 loads.

I am quite confident that the ammunition and rifle are leaps and bounds more accurate than I; however, after two flyers (cursed bag set up, or just me), the Fiocchi 77-gr. HPBT clustered three shots nicely at one hundred yards. The Fiocchi 55-gr. FMJBT was far more accurate than any of the other FMJ ammo that I brought to the range, and more importantly had far greater consistency.

At 300 yards, hitting a steel target torso with both 55- and 77-gr. Fiocchi became somewhat boring as I scored hit after hit with relative ease. The 77-gr. HPBT was incredibly consistent at 300 yards,



The author fitted out his SAINT with a Swampfox Arrowhead 1-10X and a Surefire M961.

WATCH THE VIDEO
THE RIFLEMAN'S RIFLE — SAINT 5.56MM

as it should be when paired with the SAINT's 1:8" barrel twist.

MY PATRON SAINT

One of my favorite things to come out of the rise of "tacticool" is the modularity associated with the AR carbine. Once I did some initial testing with the gun, I began to outfit the gun to better suit my needs. I added two 1913 Picatinny rail sections at the three and six o' clock positions. At the three o' clock, I have a Surefire M961 that was lying around in my gun room. For a forward grip, I have an older Knight's Armament Company "broomstick" vertical foregrip.

Topping the gun off is a 1-10X Swampfox Arrowhead LPVO (Low Power Variable Optic) scope. This optic ranges from one to 10 power quickly with the help of a throw lever and incorporates an illuminated reticle.

An LPVO like this offers a plethora of advantages, allowing me to engage targets at close distances then quickly transition to identify and engage targets at farther distances than traditional red dot sights or iron sights. The reticle incorporates bullet drop and is quite efficient at distances outside of 100 yards.

The SAINT ships with one 30-round Magpul PMAG, but I also tried out some aluminum "G.I."-style magazines from Okay Industries and Dura-Mag. For a sling, I used the Galco Gunleather SLC Strap.

IN CLOSING

The Springfield SAINT has proven to be a capable rifle in the realm of defensive and sport shooting. While testing the SAINT, I managed to put around 800 rounds downrange without cleaning the rifle and it performed flawlessly.

Throughout our history, the American marksman has been paired with some great firearms. The SAINT is no exception. An AR that performs beyond its price, I can confidently say I would trust the SAINT with my life. Light in weight, accurate and reliable, this carbine continues to impress, making for a fine addition to anyone's Arsenal of Democracy.

THE SAINT SIBLINGS

AS MENTIONED in the main article, the Springfield Armory SAINT series of firearms are offered in chamberings ranging from 5.56mm to .300 BLK all the way up to .308 Win. However, there are also three distinct parts of the SAINT family.

The first is the SAINT, one of which was reviewed by Eli Duckworth in this article. As with all SAINT firearms, the SAINT series of rifles feature upgrades and enhancements over a "stock" rifle, and all at a good price. Three models are offered in the line, each with an MRSP of $995. They feature either fixed or folding front sights, and BCMGUNFIGHTER or B5 Systems furniture on the fixed front sight model. In addition, a SAINT Pistol is offered with either BCMGUNFIGHTER or B5 Systems gear, with both priced at $895 MSRP.

Next up is the SAINT Victor line, a purpose-built line of firearms with premium features right out of the box. With MSRP's ranging from $1,073 to $1,452, the Victors feature nice upgrades such as free-float handguards and pinned low-profile gas blocks. The line features guns chambered in 5.56mm, .350 Legend and .308. Complementing the rifle line is the Victor line of pistols, chambered in 5.56mm, .300 BLK and even .308. The MSRPs of the pistols range from $1,100 to $1,412. Rounding out the line is a Victor SBR in 5.56mm priced at an MSRP of $1,125.



SAINT B5 5.56



SAINT VICTOR 5.56



SAINT EDGE 5.56

Lastly, we have the SAINT Edge family. These have premier components and represent the top of the line within the SAINT series. Features include a modular match trigger, machined billet lower, free-floated handguards and much more. All SAINT Edges are offered in 5.56mm, and the rifle has an MSRP of $1,350. Also offered is a SAINT Edge SBR also at an MSRP of $1,350, and a SAINT Edge Pistol for $1,559. Rounding out the SAINT Edge pistol line is the ultra-compact PDW and the EVAC takedown pistols.

— Mike Humphries

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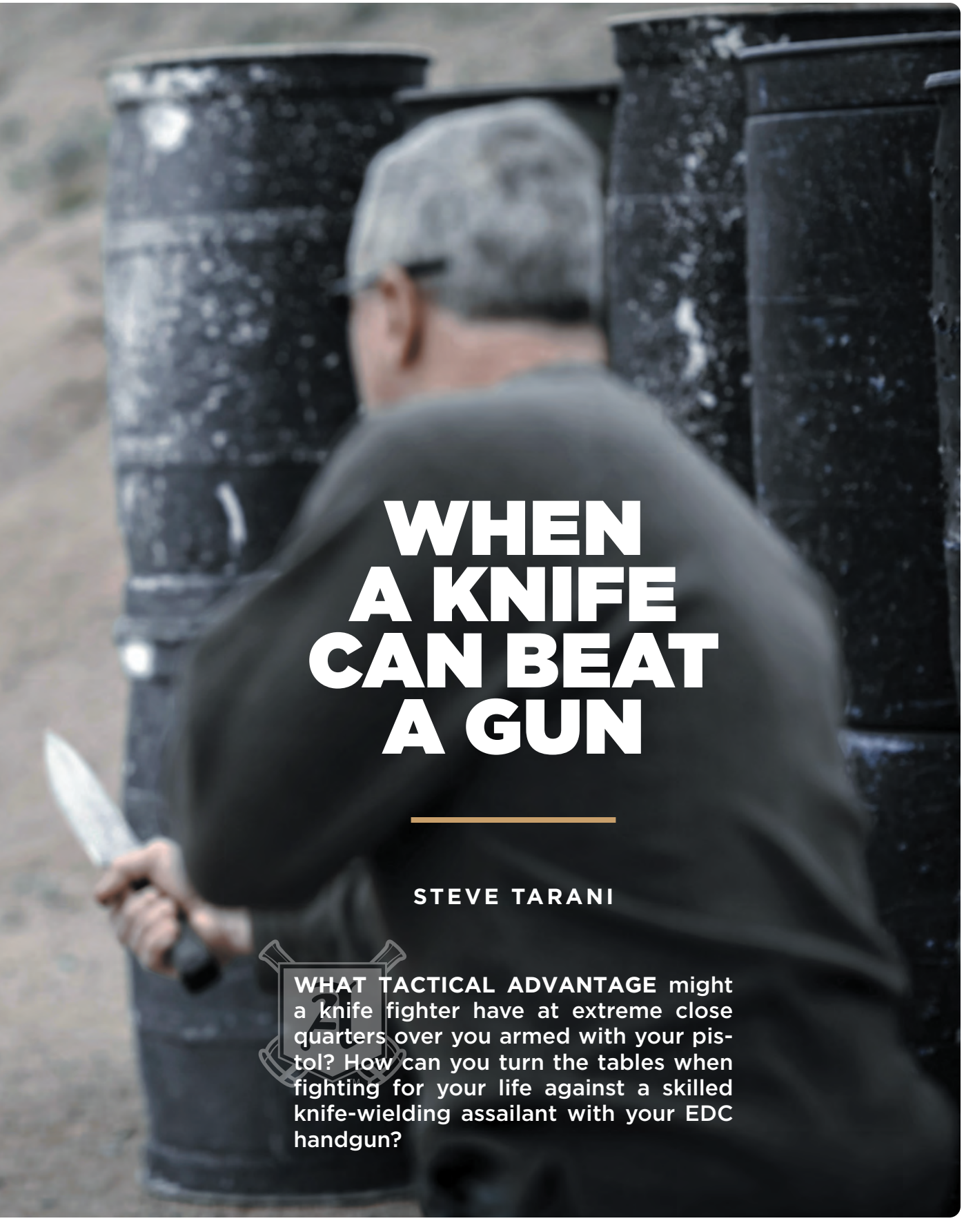
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WHEN A KNIFE CAN BEAT A GUN

STEVE TARANI

WHAT TACTICAL ADVANTAGE might a knife fighter have at extreme close quarters over you armed with your pistol? How can you turn the tables when fighting for your life against a skilled knife-wielding assailant with your EDC handgun?



A highly skilled knife fighter can close the reactionary gap in fractions of a second.

Most of us scoff at the classic movie scene where the bad guy pulls out a knife in a fight and gets shot because obviously, he should not have brought a knife to a gunfight! We also need to keep in mind that it is the movies.

In the real world, there are quite a few dedicated martial arts masters and very highly skilled practitioners who are edged weapons experts. Having studied the bladed arts in places like the Philippines, Indonesia, Japan and here in the United States (Los Angeles and Stockton, CA), it opened my eyes to the unparalleled capability of close quarters combat (CQC) edged weapons deployment at the upper skill levels. It also taught me a great deal of respect for it.

Extensive study in the Filipino martial arts over the years caused my deep appreciation for the vicious effectiveness of an edged weapon. As a government-trained defensive shooter with a professional protection background, and having carried a gun for work, I enjoy a unique familiarity with both sides of the knife-gun combat equation.

First off, put the idea that one weapon is better than another out of your thoughts, because it's pure fallacy. When people ask, "What's the best gun out there; a shotgun, sub-gun, rifle, pistol?" The appropriate answer should be "For what?" If it's for a 1,000-yard shot, odds would be against a pistol. Conversely, a precision rifle would obviously be too cumbersome for use in every-day concealed carry.

BALLISTIC WEAPONS

Because it launches a high-velocity projectile, a firearm is considered a ballistic weapon. The combat effective range of a ballistic weapon is determined by the design of the weapon and the skill of the user. It can be applied anywhere from bad breath range out to two miles, give or take, based on terminal ballistics, the functionality of the weapon system itself, and the skill of the user.

CONTACT WEAPONS

Unlike a firearm and because it may have a sharp point and/or edge, a knife is considered a con-

tact weapon. The combat effective range of a contact weapon may be determined by the length and design of the weapon, plus the skill of the user. To be combat effective, the edge and/or tip of the blade must make positive physical contact with the human body.

You are probably thinking, "what about a throwing knife?" You see that all the time in the movies, right? Yes, there are some skilled knife throwers out there. If you were standing perfectly still and gave them a sufficient amount of time to deploy their throwing knife, then it is possible that you might be hit. However, in any real-world violent physical altercation, combatants are in perpetual motion.

If they consider a knife throw, the situation would need to be to their advantage. If they are moving, you are moving, and they know they have the potential of being shot. Especially at distance, they also know that if they miss, the price tag for failure is extremely high. In this scenario, they might reconsider throwing away their knife. It's possible they may have more than one knife, but how many rounds are seated in your pistol's magazine?

Notwithstanding the unlikely event of a knife throw, you are left with only two combat ranges: contact range (knife) and ballistic range (gun). The combat effectiveness of each weapon deployed at their respective ranges is based on user performance under duress.

WHEN IT COUNTS

A most common thought process is: "If he's got a knife then I'll just shoot him." However, there are contributing factors that impact your performance under duress.



Rapid firearm deployment is critical as time is never on your side in a close quarters fight.



Employing a high-quality pistol like the Springfield Armory XD quickly can mean the difference between life and death.

When faced with a threat like this, you need to decide, "Hey, is that guy with the knife moving straight toward me?". This action costs you a half second.

Your next consideration is, "What's my best course of action? Do I exit the area or is this a shooting solution?" a decision which costs you yet another half second.

You've made your decision. You believe stopping the threat with your concealed handgun would be the absolute best response option. You must then address the usual "sending rounds downrange" considerations: Can you make the shot? Do you have an acceptable backstop? How fast is he moving? What is the target size? What is the penalty for missing? Answering these questions may take at least a second (probably more).

REALISTIC NUMBERS

Before even defeating your cover garment in deployment, you have already burned up at least two seconds, which places you behind the action/reaction power curve.

Another critical factor impacting your shooting performance under duress is distance. Because the average military-age male (between 18 and 32 years of age) can close the distance of 10 yards (30 feet) in less than two seconds, this is a significant factor. Based on your reaction time deficit, you may already be out of time and space and need to buy yourself more of each by moving. However, the earlier you can detect and determine a threat, more time and greater distance permit you to take advantage of ballistic range.

First and foremost is awareness of your surroundings. If your face is buried in your smartphone, then you're not going to see anything in the first place. Even if you do notice, because you might be applying your situational awareness, it takes time, about half a second, to identify and determine, "Hey, is that really a guy with a knife in his hand? Yes!"

The tactical advantage of a knife fighter is to start the fight at contact range. His objective is to negate your ballistic advantage.

You can turn the tables in your favor in an edged weapon altercation with rapid threat detection and distance control — the earlier you can identify and address a threat, the greater your tactical advantage using a ballistic weapon. A firearm is an exceptional life-saving tool to have in a knife fight — when you have the time and space to use it.



LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON?

DR. WILL DABBS, MD

THE INTERIM BETWEEN World War I and World War II was a tumultuous, confusing abyss of martial stagnation and geopolitical intrigue. While the Axis powers shoved their military development and production apparatus into overdrive, over on our side of the pond powerful forces lobbied to keep us out of the inevitable next global conflict. As a result, American weapons did not necessarily represent the state of the art when the 1930's European war turned truly global. There was, however, one gleaming exception.

When the U.S. was dragged kicking and screaming into World War II, the battle rifle that our grunts wielded was light years ahead of practically anything anyone else fielded. The semi-automatic M1 rifle was quite literally a game changer. To comprehend the gravity of this remarkable contrivance, we need to establish some terminology.

We generally call this remarkable weapon the M1 Garand (correctly pronounced, I'm told, as "Gerrund," not "G'rand"). However, the M1 Carbine was the "Carbine," and the M1A1 Thompson was the "Thompson." What we call the Garand was invariably referred to simply as the M1 by the G.I.'s who wielded it.

THE REVOLUTIONARY

French Canadian John Cantius Garand built his eponymous M1 around a fascinating en bloc clip-fed operating system. En bloc is actually a mid-19th century French adverb meaning "all together" or "all at the same time." As it relates to the M1, this means that the gun's action wraps around a spring steel eight-round disposable clip. Once charged into the weapon the clip becomes an integral part of the action.

To run the M1 you pull the bolt to the rear where it locks automatically. Insert an eight-round clip from the top using your thumb. Once the clip is fully seated the bolt closes of its own accord and chambers the first round. While I have never myself gotten my thumb stuck in an M1 action, I intuitively suspect that it would suck.

On the eighth round fired, the action locks open and the empty



Both the M1 Garand (top) and the M14 (semi-auto Springfield Armory M1A below) represented amazing American ingenuity in firearms design.

STANDARD ISSUE M1A

CHAMBERING	.308 Win.
BARREL	22"
WEIGHT	9 lbs., 3 oz.
OVERALL LENGTH	44.33"
SIGHTS	Aperture rear
STOCK	Walnut
ACTION	Semi-auto
FINISH	Black
CAPACITY	10 (one)
MSRP	$1,823

clip springs forth from the bowels of the thing. Repeat as necessary. Much hay has been made over the springy sound the clip makes when it is ejected. However, I have had the misfortune of being in the presence of military gunfire without hearing protection. I can't see anybody noticing that myself.

The M1 in the hands of American grunts at the head of a truly breathtaking logistical chain that kept all four million copies of the gun fed did, indeed, help win World War II. However, military technology veritably exploded during the wartime years, and what was cutting edge in 1940 was becoming cumbersome five short years later. In a landscape now populated with the likes of the StG44 assault rifle, followed soon after by the select-fire AK-47, the M1 needed an upgrade.

BATTLE OF THE RIFLES

The development of the subsequent M14 was an acrimonious slugfest characterized by nepotism, politics and rampant unfiltered bias. There were a few major contestants. Each weapon fired the new 7.62x51mm (.308) round.

The protype that ultimately became the M14 was titled the T44. Its competition, the T48, was an Americanized version of the FN FAL. The T47, also present, was a sort-of M14 lacking such niceties as a bolt roller. The T47 fared poorly in cold and dusty environments and died a natural death.

The T44 engineers purportedly enjoyed an unfair advantage during arctic tests, so their rifle significantly outperformed the T48 and the T44 took home the gold. After a wee tweak or two, the T44 became the definitive M14.

Thanks to improved ball powders developed by Olin, the 7.62x51mm offered comparable performance to the previous 7.62x63mm (.30-06) round fired by the M1. The new rifle fed from a 20-round detachable box magazine and incorporated a streamlined gas system as well as a generous slotted flash suppressor. The new M14 was also selective fire.

In a perfect world, the M14 was supposed to supplant the M1, the M1903 Springfield, the M1917 Enfield, the Carbine, the Thompson, the M3 Grease Gun and the M1918 BAR. Alas, our world is many things, but it is hardly perfect. As a result, the M14 spent a very short time as the U.S. military's primary infantry arm.

IMAGES: MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ



The author's old Springfield Armory M1 has a fair amount of mileage. That's why he loves it.

The shortened gas system of the M14/M1A was simplified over that of the M1.



The 1987-era Springfield Armory M1A receiver heel is shown at left, while the author's M1 Garand is on the right.



IMAGE: MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ

The later 7.62x51mm M14 fed from a 20-round detachable box magazines, while the earlier .30-06 M1 Garand used an eight-round en bloc clip.

TIMELESS POWER

Uncle Sam got himself sorted out eventually, and the M16 which supplanted the M14 has gone on to become the longest-serving infantry rifle in American history. However, as we discovered in the vast barren wastes of Afghanistan, there yet remains a need for a man-portable rifle capable of projecting a bit more authority than the .22-caliber Eugene Stoner gun.

Even with more than half a century under its belt, the argument can be made that the M14 still fills that particular niche better than anything else. And if you want to own your own version of a rifle inspired by the classic M14, the semi-automatic Springfield Armory M1A is a great way to get as close to an original 1959-era masterpiece as possible without an email address that ends in .gov.

MODERN TREATMENT

I've long been a fan of the Garand, and my WWII-era Springfield Armory M1 has seen some fairly serious mileage. The finish is worn, and the cracked front handguard has been skillfully repaired by ripping slots crossways and gluing in wood scraps. As a result, the old girl just reeks character.

The purist might look down his nose at my hard-use battle rifle. However, I'm crazy about mine just for the scars. Hopefully my wife feels the same about me.

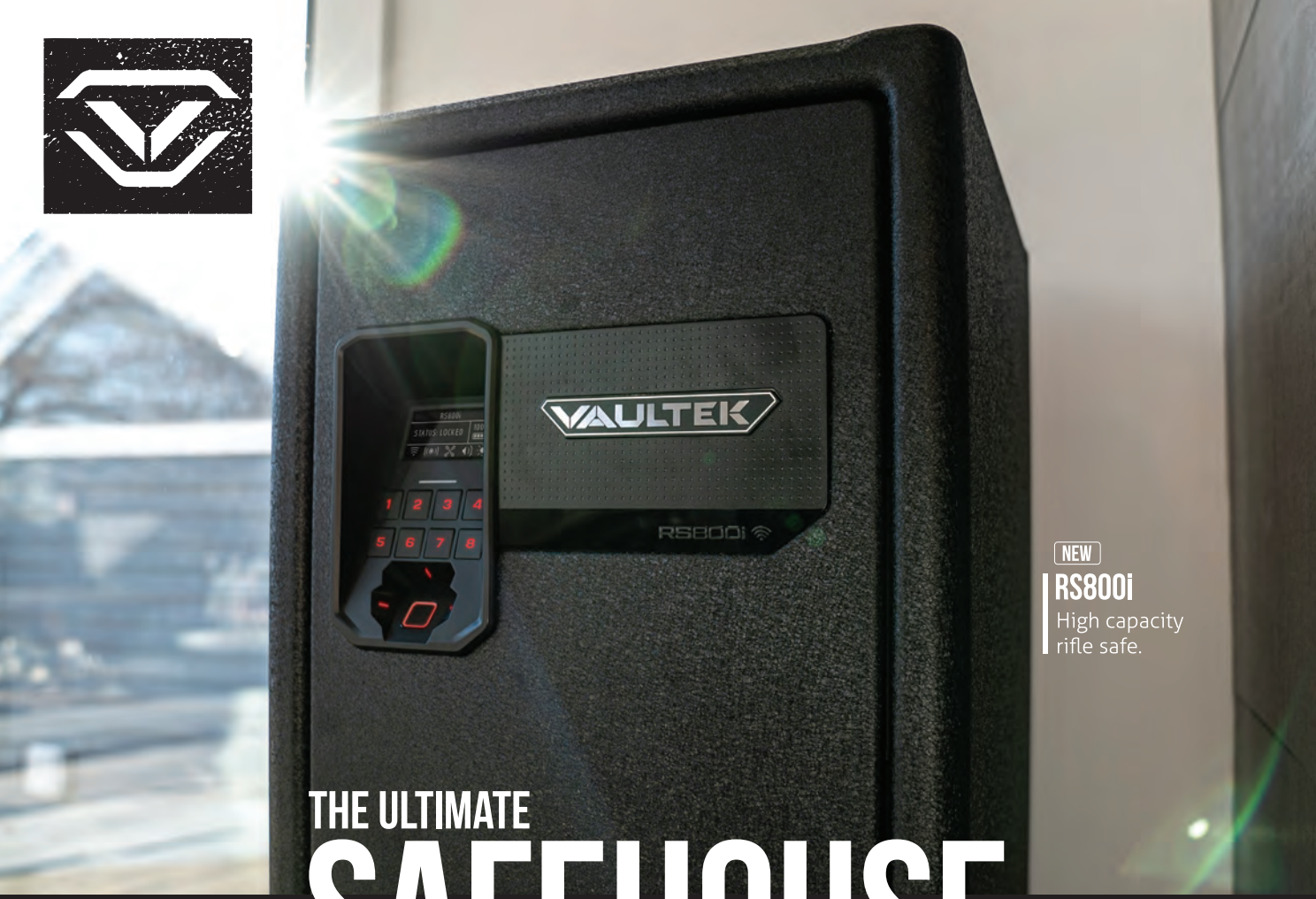
I bought my Springfield Armory M1A back in 1987. It has ridden within a high-tech polymer Archangel stock and sported some very nice precision glass. However, when the dust settles, I always seem ultimately to bed her rugged, reliable action down within that inimitable stained walnut.

That semi-automatic M1A rifle is a dead ringer for its military sibling, the M14. However, an obvious change is the lack of a full-auto switch. However, the rest is hard to distinguish from the original classic rifle.

From its beautiful walnut stock with flip-up steel buttplate to its Garand-style receiver to its evenly applied and attractive gray Parkerized finish on the steel, this rifle is truly eye-catching. And sitting next to my M1 Garand, it's easy to see the familial connection between the two. Both rifles are treasured parts of my collection, and I am glad that I have them.

These days, local gun emporia are littered with black rifles conjured from CNC-cut aluminum and plastic molded in some antiseptic lab — and they can be great guns. I own many like those. However, I will forever have a soft spot for that manly .30-caliber action and the intoxicating sensation of aged walnut against my sweaty cheek.

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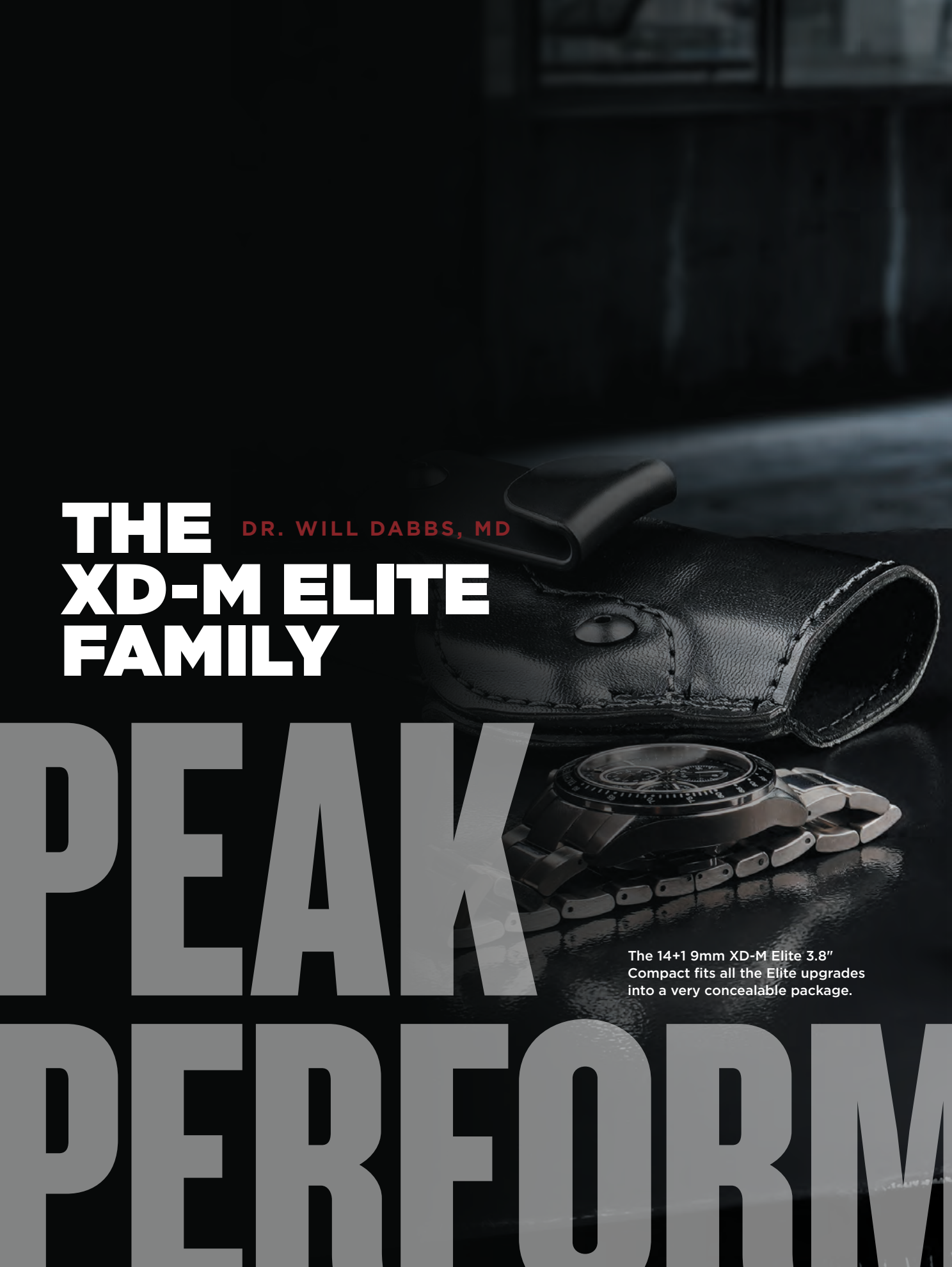
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THE XD-M ELITE FAMILY

DR. WILL DABBS, MD



The 14+1 9mm XD-M Elite 3.8" Compact fits all the Elite upgrades into a very concealable package.

PEAK PERFORM



IANCE



The XD-M Elite family of 9mm pistols takes the ever-popular XD-M pistol to the next level. XD-M Elite Tactical OSP shown.

ANYONE WHO HAS SPENT ANY TIME squeezing triggers will recognize the storied line of XD-M semi-automatic pistols from Springfield Armory. Featuring unparalleled human engineering, superlative manufacturing quality and unrivaled safety, the XD-M set a new standard for everything a modern combat pistol should be.

Never satisfied to just sit on their laurels, however, Springfield Armory has introduced an enhanced family of XD-M 9mm guns that takes everything about the XD-M and amps it up to the next level. They call this new warrior clan the XD-M Elite.

WHERE IT COUNTS

Springfield Armory's new line of 9mm XD-M Elite pistols actually consists of five separate handguns. Each pistol is optimized for a specific mission or role, though there is a great deal of overlap. There are certain common characteristics to be found in all four guns.

Each member of the 9mm XD-M Elite family sports enlarged cocking grooves on the slide, a dedicated loaded chamber indicator, a true bi-lateral push button magazine catch, and an ambidextrous slide stop. In fact, the enhanced slide serrations and ambi slide stop are two new upgrades specific to the Elite line.



The META "Match Enhanced Trigger Assembly" is the heart of the new XD-M Elite family.

There is the expected Picatinny rail on the dust cover and a striker status indicator on the back of the slide. Each of the guns also includes interchangeable backstraps and a generous extended and flared magwell funnel. That detachable magwell, also one of the new upgrades to the Elite line, comes in two different versions — "standard" and "short." More on that in just a bit, and how it relates to an upgrade to the magazines as well.

These XD-M variants include three separate mechanical safety systems. The flat-faced trigger incorporates a blade safety, and there is an internal drop safety built into the entrails. Additionally, this new line of XD-M handguns features that recognizable grip safety. The grip safety sports a memory bump to ensure engagement when gripped and adds a whole new layer of security to the gun that requires no conscious thought to operate.

The grip-to-frame angle replicates that of the esteemed 1911. The grip also remains remarkably thin given the guns' prodigious magazine capacities. Each of these five handguns also features



XD-M ELITE 3.8" COMPACT

CHAMBERING	9mm
BARREL	3.8"
WEIGHT	27 oz.
SIGHTS	Fiber optic front, U-Dot rear
GRIPS	Integral, polymer
ACTION	Striker-fired
FINISH	Black
CAPACITY	14+1 (two)
MSRP	$590



XD-M ELITE 3.8"

CHAMBERING	9mm
BARREL	3.8"
WEIGHT	28 oz.
SIGHTS	Fiber optic front, U-Dot rear
GRIPS	Integral, polymer
ACTION	Striker-fired
FINISH	Black
CAPACITY	20+1 (two)
MSRP	$590

Springfield Armory's revolutionary META trigger system.

META stands for "Match Enhanced Trigger Assembly." The Springfield folks have taken lessons learned from building world-class match guns and folded them into these new optimized tactical and defense pistols. The META trigger offers a brief, clean take-up, a delightfully crisp break, and that abbreviated reset we all seem to covet so badly these days. A flat-faced trigger and integral overtravel stop round out the package. The end result is arguably the nicest striker-fired trigger to be found on a production handgun anywhere.



All Elites — except for the Tactical OSP with suppressor-height sights — feature fiber optic front sights.

THE SIBLINGS

The smallest version is the XD-M Elite 3.8" Compact and features a 3.8" barrel, abbreviated slide and a compact frame. This is the variant intended for serious concealed carry. The short slide is topped off with a fiber optic front sight and a Tactical Rack U-Dot rear sight. The compact frame features a removable "short" extended and flared magwell for ultra-fast reloads, but minimal bulk.

Want things even more streamlined? You can remove the magwell for an even more compact package. Matching up with that system is a potent 14+1 capacity with the two included magazines. Rounding out the package are the aforementioned enhanced grasping grooves on the slide, META trigger, fully ambi controls and "memory bump" on the grip safety.

Next up is the XD-M Elite 3.8", similar to the above but with a full-size grip frame. Make no mistake, this is not a pocket gun. Springfield Armory has other handguns for that mission like the Compact mentioned just before. The 3.8" XD-M Elite is the EDC concealable howitzer for those who wander about where the Wild Things roam.

The stubby slide makes the gun quick to retrieve and easy to hide underneath baggy clothes. The full-figured grip facilitates proper control and a breathtaking 20+1 magazine capacity. This magazine meshes up with a removable "short" magwell and has a +1 extension over the previously standard 19-round XD-M magazine. The gun comes boxed with two mags.

Imagine an EDC loadout wherein you could conceivably pack a stubby pistol with a single spare magazine and have a whopping 41 rounds on tap. Sights are the fiber optic front and Tactical Rack U-Dot rear.

Next in line is what I would call the "service" pistol, the XD-M Elite 4.5" with — you guessed it — a 4.5" tube. This is the gun that would hang from a cop's duty belt or live in your nightstand or the glovebox to your vehicle. This gun also comes with two 20-round magazines and features the removable "short" magwell. For general defensive usage around the home, in the car or on the farm, the 4.5" XD-M Elite pistol strikes



XD-M ELITE 4.5″

CHAMBERING	9mm
BARREL	4.5″
WEIGHT	29 oz.
SIGHTS	Fiber optic front, U-Dot rear
GRIPS	Integral, polymer
ACTION	Striker-fired
FINISH	Black
CAPACITY	20+1 (two)
MSRP	$590



XD-M ELITE TACTICAL OSP

CHAMBERING	9mm
BARREL	5.28″, threaded
WEIGHT	30 oz.
SIGHTS	Co-witness, suppressor-height
GRIPS	Integral, polymer
ACTION	Striker-fired
FINISH	Black or FDE
CAPACITY	22+1 (two)
MSRP	$709



XD-M ELITE 5.25″ PRECISION

CHAMBERING	9mm
BARREL	5.25″
WEIGHT	30 oz.
SIGHTS	Fiber optic front, fully adjustable rear
GRIPS	Integral, polymer
ACTION	Striker-fired
FINISH	Black
CAPACITY	22+1 (three)
MSRP	$653

an elegant balance between portability and firepower. As with the 3.8″ pistols, the 4.5″ also sports a fiber optic front sight and "U-Dot" Tactical Rack rear sight assembly.

The fourth variant is the XD-M Elite 5.25″ Precision. This longslide monster sports a 5.25″ barrel and elongated slide. The slide features a generous lightening cut in the top. The rear sight on the Precision model is readily adjustable for both windage and elevation using nothing more than a small screwdriver and mates up with a fiber optic front. The XD-M Elite 5.25″ Precision comes with two 22-round magazines. Yes, you read that capacity correctly. These magazines feature a +3 extension and match up with the XD-M Elite's "standard" removable magwell system, a longer version of the more compact "short" variant. The Precision is the gun for match work, recreational target shooting or precision defensive applications.

The apex predator is the XD-M Elite Tactical OSP (Optical Sight Pistol). This gun features a 5.28″ extended/threaded barrel, suppressor-height sights and optional black or FDE finishes. The Tactical variant also carries an astounding 22 rounds in its magazine along with the removable "standard" extended and flared magwell. The XD-M Elite Tactical OSP is ideal for serious tactical applications.

The rear slide deck of the XD-M Elite Tactical OSP is cut to accept a standard red dot like the Hex Optics Dragonfly, and the muzzle is threaded .5×28 for any common 9mm sound suppressor. The symbiotic combination of all that unfettered awesome makes the XD-M Elite Tactical OSP the top of the tactical heap. If Rambo were going to HALO into the Hindu Kush to put the holy smackdown on the enemies of freedom, this is the gun he would pack.

CONCLUSION

Sleek, straight-shooting, reliable, voracious and cool, the XD-M Elite line of combat pistols raises the bar on just about everything. And with a variant for just about any conceivable role or application, there is a 9mm XD-M Elite that is just right for you.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
SPRINGFIELD-ARMORY.COM



THE ULTIMATE SOURCE

MIKE HUMPHRIES

WHILE YOU MOST LIKELY know of Springfield Armory as the source for high-quality firearms, you may not know about the Springfield Armory Store. I recently had a chance to reach out to Allen Remley, Accessory Product Manager for Springfield Armory, and get some information on the store and what it offers.

FITTING CHOICES

"One of the biggest advantages of the Springfield Armory Store for Springfield Armory fans is that we have a strong focus on Springfield products," explained Remley. "Our store offers every single magazine for Springfield's current line of firearm offerings — and numerous older models as well. So, it's 'one-stop shopping' for anyone looking for Springfield Armory magazines."

But, the online store offers much more than simply extra magazines, as Remley went on to explain. "We recognized that for every new gun sold, there was likely a need for a holster to match it. As a result, the Springfield Armory Store has dramatically expanded its holster offerings. For example, one very unique custom collaboration we developed is having Mitch Rosen Gunleather offerings on the site. We now have a full range of their holsters for the 1911, Hellcat and 911 pistols — as well as spare magazine carriers," he said.

"In addition to the Mitch Rosen holsters, the store also offers Crucial Concealment/Blackpoint Tactical Kydex holsters as well as DeSantis Holsters offerings for all of our handguns," he said. "And for those customers looking for something very unique, the Springfield Armory Store partnered with Burdette Custom Holsters to craft a top-of-the-line leather holster for the Hellcat," he continued.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE

As I perused the store's site, I found just about everything you could want for Springfield Armory firearms and more. Replacement grips, iron sights, optics, lights, lasers, knives, cases, bags, tools and much more were available on the site.

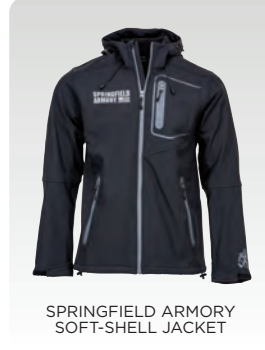
"Our goal with the Springfield Armory Store is to make it a world-class shop that offers not only a wide range of Springfield Armory-themed products, but also truly unique and specialized gear that shooters want," said Remley. "And, we are always working to add new and exciting products to the store, so keep an eye out for these as we release them."



13 RD. HELLCAT MAGAZINE



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The new XD-S Mod.2 OSP is an optics-ready version of the popular and rugged 9mm single-stack pistol.



THE OPTICS-READY XD-S MOD.2 OSP 9MM

PAUL CARLSON

A NEW LOOK



With a 3.3" barrel and slim, single-stack magazine, the new XD-S is a great CCW option.

WHEN IT COMES TO SHOOTING SMALL PISTOLS, I need as much help as I can get. The attraction to smaller guns is, well, they are small. This often makes them easier to conceal and to carry comfortably. Just like everything else in life, selecting a concealed carry handgun requires a series of trade-offs. With the gains that smaller size provides, there is also a downside. Smaller guns tend to have a more substantial felt recoil due to their small size and light weight. In addition, that small size results in a shorter sight radius that can make it difficult to make precise hits on small targets or at distance.

With the introduction of the XD-S Mod.2 OSP, Springfield Armory has taken their reliable, 9mm, single-stack handgun to the next level. The XD-S Mod.2 9mm has always been a shootable gun. Its overall design delivers the sensation of shooting a larger and heavier gun in a slim, single-stack package. And with the new OSP (optical sight pistol) version, as its name implies, this new pistol is an optics-ready gun. This new offering brings the popular XD-S series of pistols into the world of red dots.

WHY RED-DOT OPTICS?

Before we get into the specifics of Springfield's new handgun, I think it makes sense to talk about why adding an optics option to a pistol is a big deal. Since the 1990's, optics have been available for pistols. They first showed up in the competition world where athletes were pushing the limits. They were big, heavy and delicate. As time progressed, the dots got smaller and lighter.

Ever since, shooters and manufacturers have been pressing forward looking to find the perfect balance of the pistol, the mount and the optic. The result is a massive influx of dots and dot-ready pistols over the past few years. What is important to understand is the reasoning behind the trend.

SPEED AND ACCURACY

Speed and accuracy were why competitive shooters were pushing the envelope with red dot sights. They wanted to win, and to win in



The pistol comes standard with a 7-round magazine and an extended 9-round magazine.

XD-S MOD.2 OSP

CHAMBERING	9mm
BARREL	3.3″
WEIGHT	21.5 oz. with flush mag
OVERALL LENGTH	6.3″
SIGHTS	White-dot front, serrated rear
GRIPS	Integral, polymer
ACTION	Striker-fired
FINISH	Black
CAPACITY	7+1 (one), 9+1 (one)
MSRP	$425, $549 with optional CTS-1500

action pistol sports you have to be fast and accurate. One without the other, and you are with the losers. Compete with both and you increase the odds of winning.

Red-dot optics increased shooters' abilities to very quickly obtain a sight picture on a target. The bright red dot is easy to see even when it overlays a distant target. As soon as the dot is on target, the trigger can be pressed. Nothing complex to line up. It is, literally, point and shoot. You can focus on the target rather than your sights.



The direct-mount design of the OSP cut allows you to co-witness the iron sights through an optic.

IMPROVED LEARNING

The magic doesn't stop with placing the sights on the target. The dot remains visible during the trigger press and after the shot breaks. The visibility of the dot allows a shooter to quickly understand — and as a result, mitigate — errors in both trigger press and recoil management. With a red dot, the learning cycle of an attentive shooter can be shortened significantly.

It reminds me of switching from shooting a film camera to a digital camera. With film cameras, I would spend a few hours shooting without feedback. Only after the film was developed did I find out if I got it right. This meant slow progress.

When I switched to a digital camera, I was able to see an approximation of my efforts immediately after pressing the shutter button. I could immediately correct a host of errors and increase the likelihood of making the shot.

It's the same way shooting with a dot. Seeing the red dot during the trigger press and recoil can help the shooter to identify their errors instead of having to wait to see the results after the fact on the target downrange.

HUMAN VISION

In addition to increasing speed and accuracy and shortening the learning cycle, red-dot sights function with human vision much more efficiently than iron sights. Human eyes are only able to focus at one distance at a time. Traditional iron sights require attention at three different distances at the same time. We need to see our target, our front sight and our rear sight — all at the same time. The problem is, only one can be in focus.

Traditionally we are taught that the front sight needs to be in focus. However, our brain naturally wants the target to be in focus (especially when it comes to self-defense). You can see the conflict. A red-dot sight solves the issue. The human eye assumes the dot is on the same plane as the target. When your eye naturally focuses on the target, the dot also appears in focus … Magic!

WATCH THE VIDEO
OPTICS-READY XD-S MOD.2 OSP 9MM



The pistol is offered from the factory with or without the CTS-1500 red-dot optic.

Due to the location of the OSP cut, the loaded chamber indicator of the XD-S Mod.2 OSP was changed to a witness hole design. Note the removable slide cover plate.

Running the XD-S Mod.2 OSP with Atlanta Arms 115-gr. Elite JHP provided very good results.



THE PISTOL

Springfield Armory understands why red dot progress is important, and I would imagine that the folks that designed the XD-S Mod.2 OSP 9mm were thinking about the advantages of the dot and wanting to bring those advantages to the XD-S crowd.

The XD-S Mod.2 OSP 9mm retains the size, weight, capacity, shootability and reliability of the XD-S Mod.2 9mm that came before it. The only addition is a slide that is cut at the factory to accommodate a red-dot sight. Springfield decided to use the same "Springfield Armory Micro" footprint as on the Hellcat for the cut, opening up a variety of sighting options that present a value to the shooter — including the Crimson Trace CTS-1500 sight that is available with the OSP as a package.

The slide cut is well executed. The system allows you to direct mount the optic to the slide, and as a result, it sits low on the gun. So low, in fact, that you are able to use the standard-height iron sights with the optic mounted for co-witnessing. There is no need to invest in a set of tall sights as a back-up to your dot.

The location of this cut required Springfield Armory to redesign the loaded chamber indicator from a pivoting lever as found on the original XD-S Mod.2 to a witness hole. Also, the pistol comes with a polymer cover to fill in the recess when an optic is not in use. The end result is a small, light, reliable, red-dot pistol with a 7+1 or 9+1 capacity depending on which magazine you decide to carry — it includes both, by the way.

The XD-S Mod.2 OSP 9mm is available in two configurations. The basic pistol has an MSRP of $425, or you can pick it up with the Crimson Trace dot as a package for $549.

SHOOTABILITY

When it comes to small guns, shootability is where the rubber meets the road. A defensive handgun needs to be easy to shoot. The red dot helps you make the hits, and the XD-S makes it easy. The XD-S Mod.2 has a stellar trigger right out of the box. The trigger is light, crisp and short, minimizing the likelihood that you will disturb the dot while pressing the trigger.

When it comes to recoil, I have to say I am really impressed. This little pistol shoots like it is a full-size gun. The recoil impulse is light and — even more surprising — it is very flat. The CTS-1500 red dot doesn't have a huge window,



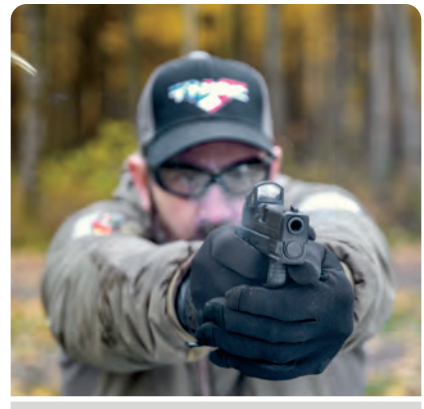
The new 9mm XD-S Mod.2 OSP takes everything great about the original and offers the ability to add an optic.

yet I was easily able to keep the dot in the window and make fast follow-up shots regardless of the ammo used.

I shot the XD-S Mod.2 OSP 9mm with 147-gr., 124-gr. and 115-gr. 9mm rounds, and all were exceedingly easy to shoot. The most impressive were the Atlanta Arms 115-gr. Elite hollow-point match rounds. These were accurate and fast. The felt recoil was minimal and I was able to make fast follow-up shots without feeling like I was pushing the limits.

The gun ran flawlessly throughout more than 300 rounds of various 9mm rounds, as expected. Also, the optic performed well, even though it is not waterproof and I was shooting in a misty rain.

The XD-S Mod.2 OSP 9mm shot well beyond my expectations of such a small pistol. Pressing the trigger put a smile on my face.


The author found that adding a dot to the XD-S Mod.2 improved his speed and accuracy with the already great shooting pistol.

CONCLUSION

I am very much of the opinion that your decision making, mindset and skills are going to be the primary factors to your success when it comes to defending yourself and those that you love. At the same time, selecting quality equipment is one of the factors that you can control before you ever get involved in an unavoidable defensive gun use.

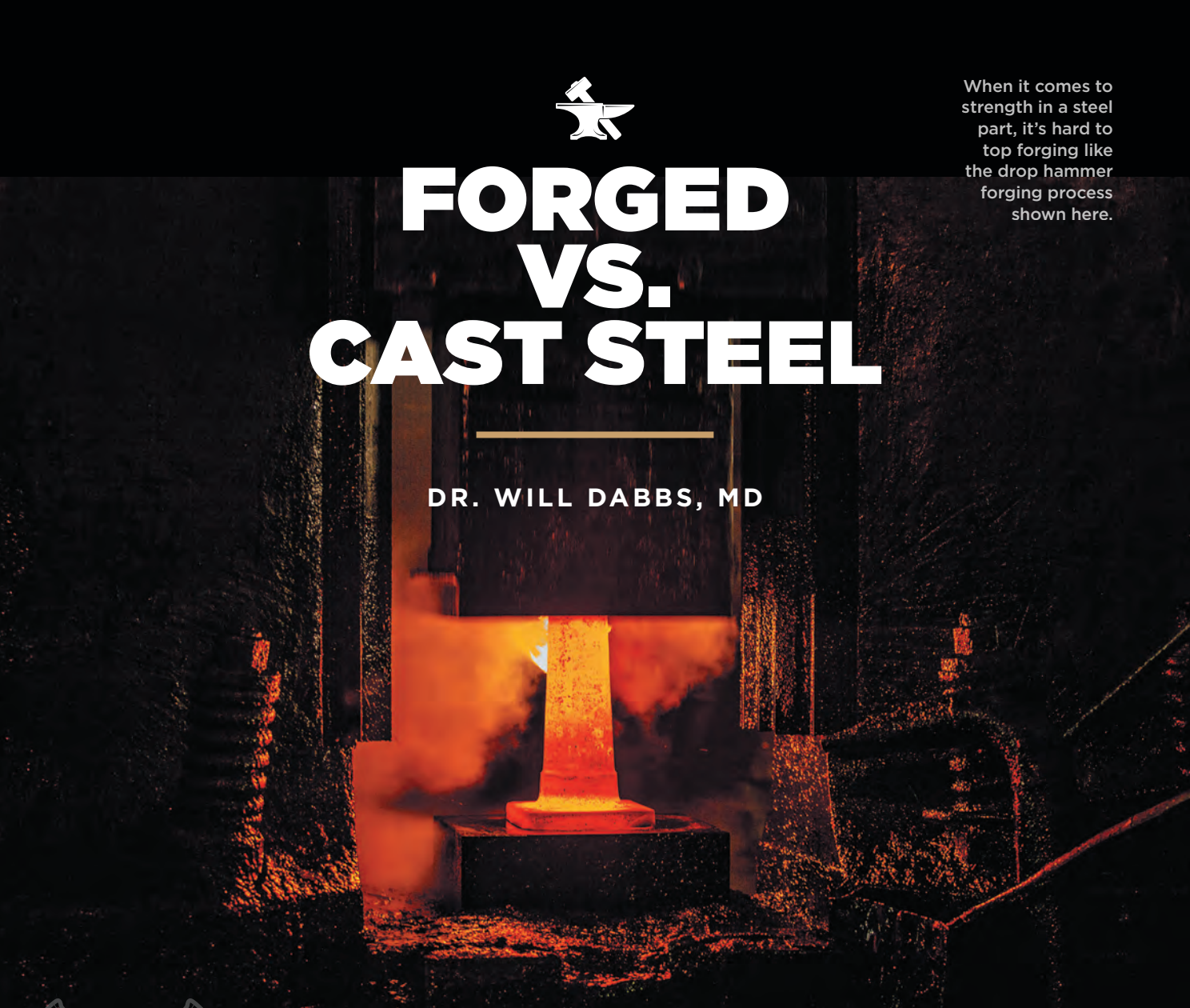
As a result, it makes sense to me to upgrade gear, like defensive handguns, when improvements merit the upgrade. Adding a red-dot sight to the top of an already capable handgun increases the efficiency of the tool and the circumstances in which it can be effectively used.

If you ask me, the XD-S Mod.2 OSP 9mm is a sensible upgrade if you are looking for a small, reliable, shootable, red dot-equipped defensive handgun. And at this price, it's hard to beat!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
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CRIMSONTRACE.COM
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FORGED VS. CAST STEEL

DR. WILL DABBS, MD



When it comes to strength in a steel part, it's hard to top forging like the drop hammer forging process shown here.

EVER WONDERED WHAT IT MEANS when you read about gun parts being "cast" or "forged?" Metal is metal, so it shouldn't matter, right? Wrong. The quality of the materials and construction of your firearm is of the utmost importance. So, let's dive into this subject and see if we can make sense of it.

You may have heard of cast versus forged steel, and wondered what the difference is. Steel is not the amorphous, homogenous stuff it appears to be on the outside. Steel, actually, has a complicated internal microcrystalline structure that has been exhaustively studied. This microstructure determines such characteristics as strength, ductility and wear resistance. Optimizing these properties is critical to producing quality gun parts that will last. Frequently, manufacturing processes come down to balancing function and durability against cost.

Steel casting involves pouring molten steel into a mold and allowing it to harden as it cools. Casting is amenable to the manufacture of complex shapes and particularly large parts. However, cast parts end up with a random crystalline microstructure that makes them potentially weaker than forgings. Castings can also include microscopic porosities from little gas bubbles or other impurities retained within the metallic structure that can cause potential weak spots.

IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK/PRABHJIT S. KALS



All Springfield Armory 1911s, like the TRP, feature forged slides and frames for strength and durability.

Investment casting dates back at least 5,000 years and involves using some type of solid 3-D pattern made from something such as wax within a ceramic mold. Filling the mold with molten steel vaporizes and displaces the filler. So long as care is exercised, cast parts can be produced in quantity, require minimal surface finishing and are more than suitable for a wide range of uses. However, forgings will have more potential strength.



A Springfield Armory 1911's slide and frame forgings, ready to be machined through a series of processes into their final forms.

THE BETTER OPTION

Forging involves the application of thermal and mechanical energy to steel billets causing the material to change shape while remaining in the solid state. Advantages to forgings include retention of uniformity of composition and crystalline structure within the material. The thermal cycle and organized deformation associated with the forging process result in grain refinement and controlled metallurgical recrystallization. As a result, forgings are generally stronger and tougher than castings or plate steels as the critical internal grain flows of the material conform to the shape of the part.

Sound complicated? Sure. But the point of the discussion is quite simple. The result of forging is a piece of steel without internal irregularities or weak points. That means your forged part will be stronger and more durable.

THE SOURCE

So, it would make sense that firearms made with forged components like slides, barrels and frames would be stronger, right? As a result, Springfield Armory uses forged components exclusively for a majority of their firearms components. From the Ronin to the Hellcat, critical parts, including slides and barrels, are made from top-quality steel forgings. This results in a firearm you can count on despite egregious operational abuse, and still expect to hand down to your grandchildren's children.

Using the 1911 Ronin as an example, the slide is made from forged carbon steel. The barrel and frame are machined from forged stainless steel. After forging, these critical components are precision machined to their final shape and retain the desired microstructural properties necessary to maximize wear resistance and toughness. The end result of these processes is a remarkably durable and long-lasting 1911 handgun.

Remember how I mentioned that forged parts are generally more expensive than cast ones? Well, thanks to Springfield Armory's expertise in manufacturing, they can offer forged components in many guns at very reasonable price points. Remember that Ronin I was mentioning? Like all Springfield 1911s, it has a forged frame and slide, but it also has an MSRP of just $849. You'd be hard-pressed to find a gun with comparable features, even one with cast parts, for that price. So, you get more for less. Pretty good deal, right?

RUMINATIONS

In many cases, a cast part may be just fine. But, if you can get something made with a potentially stronger part and not have to pay a premium for it, why not? This is particularly true when it comes to defensive firearms.

Choosing a defensive firearm can be one of the most important decisions a person will make. Should you ever have to seriously use that gun it will suddenly become more valuable than your house and 401(k), combined.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
SPRINGFIELD-ARMORY.COM



Blackhawk Omnivore holster shown with XD-M Elite Tactical OSP fitted out with a HEX Dragonfly red dot and Streamlight TLR-1 HL weapon light.

WATCH THE VIDEO
IT EATS POLYMER & STEEL

BLACKHAWK OMNIVORE: IT EATS POLYMER AND STEEL

MIKE MILLS

TAKE A TRIP BACK to grade school with me and let's talk about what an omnivore is. For those of us who remember our lessons, an omnivore is an animal that eats plants and meats.

Well, the Blackhawk Omnivore Multifit Holster is kind of the same, only with inorganics. It will pretty much eat everything from steel-framed guns to striker-fired polymer pistols. But how does it accomplish this astounding adaptability?



The Omnivore's thumb-release retention system, with height adjustable pad, proved fast and easy to use with a little practice.

IMAGES: MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ

WHAT'S THE CATCH?

Technically, the catch is a small piece of polymer inside the holster that locks onto your chosen weapon-mounted light, be it a Surefire X300 or Streamlight TLR-1 or TLR-2. The Omnivore itself is a durably constructed synthetic holster that can fit more than 150 semi-auto-style pistols with an accessory rail, and it employs a Level 2 retention system that locks the pistol in place.

How does it achieve this? The difference in the Omnivore is where and how its retention system locks onto the firearm. Unlike most active retention holsters that either lock onto the slide or have a closing hood, the Omnivore engages the pistol-mounted light for retention.

WHAT YOU NEED

All you need is your current duty-style pistol — in my case a Springfield Armory XD-M Elite Tactical OSP and a Springfield 1911 Range Officer with a Recover Tactical Grip & Rail System — equipped with a rail-mounted light. Models of the Omnivore are designed to work with either Streamlight's TLR-1 and TLR-2 gun lights or the Surefire X300.

Basically, if you have a gun with a rail and you can get one of the aforementioned lights on the rail, you will likely be able to use this holster. There is a list on Blackhawk's website of over 150 pistols that currently have been test fitted in this holster design.

The holster is offered in black, black and tan, or black and gray. For my evaluation I tried out the latter option configured for the Streamlights to accomodate my TLR-1 HL and came away very impressed. It locked up tightly, released the pistol quickly, and was a pleasure to use on the range.

SKELETON KEY HOLSTER

Look, I get that it's cool to have a lot of different guns and accessories. I do myself. However, I also like saving money when and where I can. That's what's so great about the Blackhawk Omnivore. No more swapping holsters every time to go to the range with a different pistol. Bring all of your toys and in moments go from one pistol to the next in the same holster. Just buy that one holster — which has an MSRP of $59.95 — and you are good to go.

You'll need to spend some time getting used to the thumb retention, but after a trip or two to the range you will have it down and be drawing your pistol fluidly. And, you'll have a solid holster that will eat just about anything you throw at it.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
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Magpul only makes things that work, even something as difficult as a drum magazine.

MAGPUL BEATS THE DRUM

TRAVIS PIKE

WHEN MAGPUL GOT INTO THE DRUM GAME, there must have been a record scratch. Drums don't work, right? But Magpul only makes stuff that works. What the heck? Magpul only gets into the game if they can make a quality product. That's why their name carries so much respect.



The 5.56mm 60-round D-60 is shown at left, and the 7.62mm 50-round D-50 at right.

DRUM ROLL, PLEASE ...

And Magpul didn't just dive in, they dove in with both feet. Not only did they develop a 5.56mm drum for the AR/M4-style rifles, they also developed a drum for 7.62mm AR rifles as well. The former of those is the 5.56mm D-60, and the latter is the D-50 7.62mm drum — and I had a chance to test them both out for myself.

Magpul released the D-60 drum first and followed it up shortly with the D-50 drum. Capacity of the drums is no mystery — it's right there in the names. The D-50 holds an astounding 50 rounds of 7.62mm, and the D-60 packs in 60 rounds of 5.56mm.



The drums are easy to disassemble for cleaning and maintenance — which is only recommended every 1,000 rounds.



A witness window on the rear of the drums shows if there are still rounds left to go.



Both magazines are designed to flawlessly feed rounds from the drum into the host firearm.

WEIGHTY CONCERNS

Speaking of weight, that's the downside to these drums — and any other. They can add several pounds to your firearm when fully loaded. The D-60 weighs 2.87 lbs. loaded, and the D-50 weighs 4.6 lbs. with 50 rounds of 7.62.

The Magpul drums are made from the same high-impact polymer as the company's Gen M3 model rifle magazines. This polymer is incredibly strong and quite durable. It's well-proven, and plenty of police and military forces are using the Gen M3 magazines.

Loading these drums isn't difficult, and a built-in loading lever does make it somewhat easy — at least up until the last few rounds. For those last few rounds, you may have to ratchet the loading lever more than once for a single round.

HANDS-ON

Once loaded, the fun part starts and you can start slinging lead. This is the make it or break it moment for these drums. Traditionally, drums are not very reliable, and can be incredibly picky. They can stutter and fail and be somewhat frustrating.

The good news is that this doesn't seem to be the case here. Both the D-60 and D-50 worked without a problem in my SAINT Victor rifles in 5.56 and .308, respectively. In particular, I had a wider variety of 5.56 ammo to test with the D-60 drum and it ate everything from Lake City 62-gr. rounds to cheap steel Russian ammunition of dubious quality. The D-50 only ate brass-cased ammo because that's all I had on hand. It chewed through it all with zero malfunctions.

Even when the drums are placed in odd positions, or when pressure is applied to the bottom and sides, they both ran great. I also tested them via reloading methods that basically involve me dropping the drum and letting them hit the ground. Call it durability testing; I call it a good time. Regardless of the position I put the drums in or how much I dropped them, they continued to run.

Lastly, maintaining these drums is easy. You need a flathead tool to take them apart, and once apart you can clean them as necessary. Magpul suggests doing this every 1,000 rounds, and that's a relatively low maintenance schedule. They do seem well sealed from their environment, without any dirt, debris or moisture getting inside mine.

CONCLUSION

The Magpul D-60 and D-50 drums are two well-made drum magazines that seemingly defy the reputation we have come to expect from drums. They function flawlessly, are well built and are very low maintenance. When it comes to drums, I don't see how you can beat Magpul. Looks like they did it again!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
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SPEER GOLD DOT CARRY GUN 135-GR. 9MM

Designed to wring the most performance out of compact carry guns, Speer's Gold Dot Carry Gun 9mm features the company's proven G2 bullet. Instead of a large hollow-point cavity, it has a shallow "dish" filled with elastomer that is forced upon impact into engineered internal fissures for reliable expansion. MSRP is $31.99. speer.com



DESANTIS VEILED PARTNER OWB HOLSTER

A Kydex outside the waistband (OWB) holster, the Veiled Partner from DeSantis features a curvature to its design that provides for maximum concealment. Available in left- and right-hand versions, the holster can be adjusted for both height and cant and is designed to be optics-compatible for pistols such as the micro 9mm Hellcat OSP. MSRP is $59.99. desantisholster.com.



HORNADY RAPID SAFE COMPACT READY VAULT

Offering secure storage of long guns and handguns along with ultra-fast access, the Hornady RAPiD Safe Compact Ready Vault employs patented RFID technology. Heavy-duty steel construction and back-up digital keypad/mechanical key access ensure your firearm is safe and secure, yet quickly accessible. MSRP is $411.52. hornady.com



LEUPOLD VX-3HD 1.5-5X20MM SCOPE

Intended for close- to mid-range shots, the second focal plane Leupold VX-3HD 1.5-5x20mm scope features Leupold's Duplex reticle. Weighing in at a light 9.7 oz., the scope features the low-profile, one-revolution CDS ZeroLock dial, which allows you to unlock to adjust and then lock it back solidly in place. MSRP is $499.99. leupold.com

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