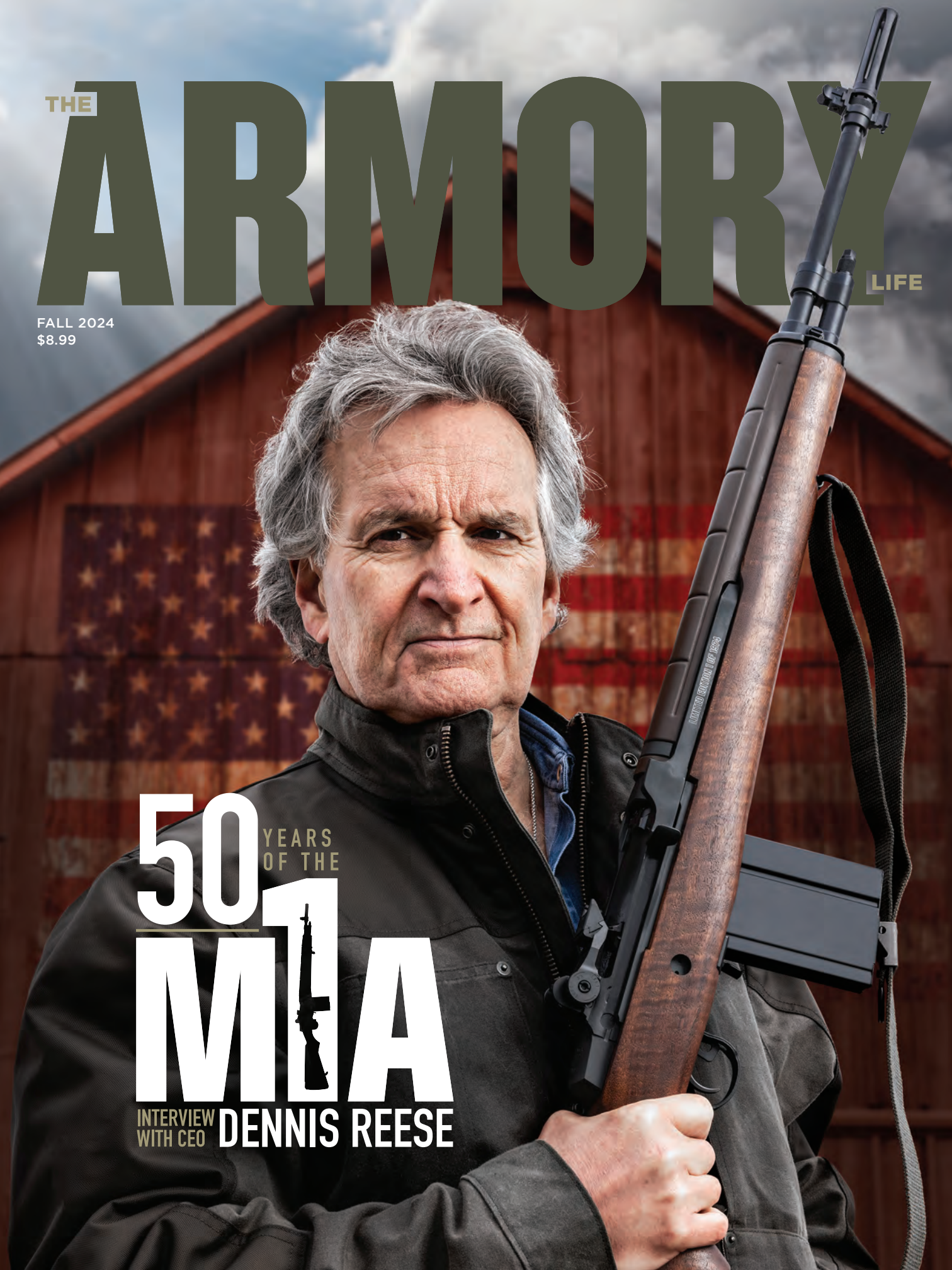

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THE ARMORY LIFE

FALL 2024

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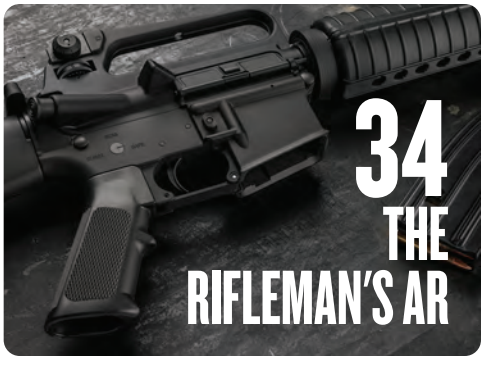
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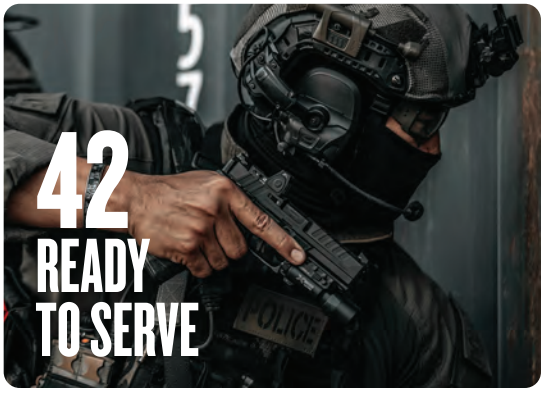


















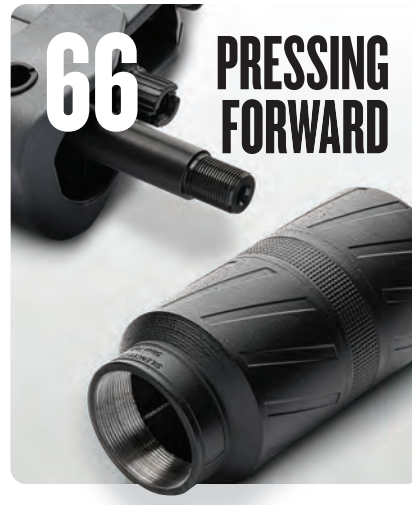




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JAKE MILLER/SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

The Armory Life **(ISSN# 2831-3283)** Vol. 4, No. 3 Published 4 issues per year Spring (April, May June), Summer (July, August, September), Fall (October, November, December) and Winter (January, February, March) by Outdoor Sportsman Group* 1040 6th Ave., 17th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Periodical postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address change (Form 3579) to The Armory Life, P.O. Box 37539, Boone, Iowa 50037-0539.

THE ARMORY LIFE
An Outdoor Sportsman Group® publication

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EDITOR'S NOTE

MIKE HUMPHRIES

WE'RE PROUD to bring to you the Fall 2024 issue of *The Armory Life* print magazine. This issue is packed with great content, from our cover story interview with Springfield Armory CEO and owner Dennis Reese on the fascinating history of the M1A rifle to in-depth product reviews and much more.

The cover features Mr. Reese with a very special version of the classic M1A — the 50th Anniversary Rifle. With only 1,974 made (commemorating its year of introduction), this rare collectible is a must-have for all serious M1A fans. Be sure to read my interview with Mr. Reese on the history behind the iconic M1A rifle, from its launch 50 years ago to the latest variants available today. Turn to page 16 to see for yourself.

Speaking of the anniversary model M1A, we have a full feature article review of it by Dr. Will Dabbs. This limited-edition offering includes not only the rifle, but also a custom wooden display case, a selection of accessories, and a certificate of authenticity signed by Dennis Reese. Turn to page 90 to get the whole story.

Speaking of honoring the past, this issue also tackles some other history-themed topics you should find interesting. If you turn to page 34, you can check out Frank Jardim's review of the SA-16A2, Springfield Armory's new rifle inspired by the M16A2 5.56mm. On page 72, Capt. Dale Dye, USMC (Ret.) commemorates the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Peleliu with an in-depth history based on his own visit to the island.

In addition, this issue also features reviews of Springfield firearms such as the Hellcat Pro Comp, Long-Action Model 2020 Waypoint, 4.25" Garrison 1911 pistol and much more. Round that out with pieces on the Speed K suppressor, Federal's Practice & Defend ammo packs, and the Echelon receiving a coveted LE rating, and you have another must-read issue.

As always, I'm very interested in hearing your thoughts about *The Armory Life*. Reach out to me at support@thearmorylife.com, and let me know what you think about both the magazine as well as the website.

So, welcome to the Fall 2024 issue of *The Armory Life* quarterly magazine. Flip through its pages, read some articles, scan some QR codes, visit the website and enjoy. And be sure to keep an eye out for future issues as well!

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IMAGE: JAKE MILLER/SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

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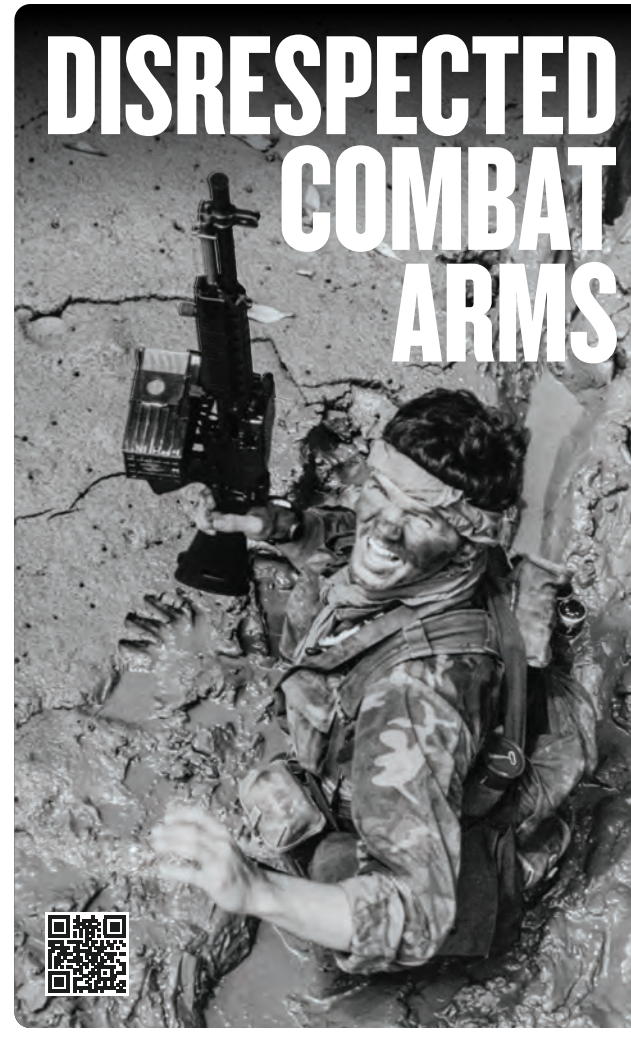
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IMAGE: NATIONAL ARCHIVES (K-84315)



HOME DEFENSE .308?



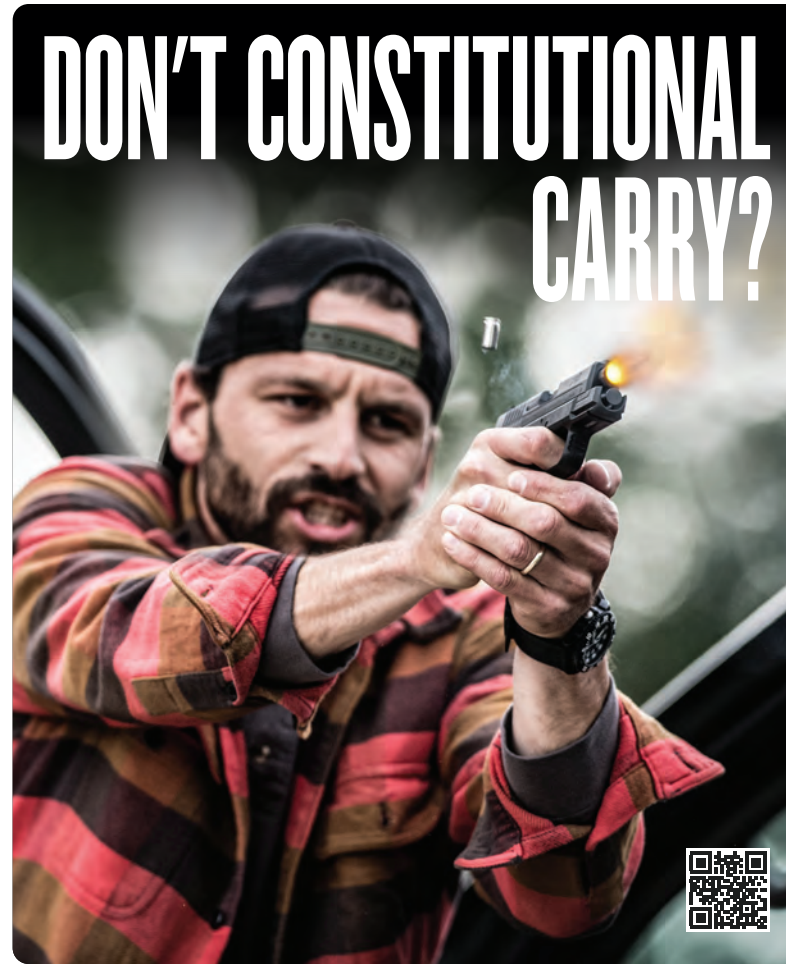
AYOOB: 1911 CARRY MODES



IMAGE: SCOTT CONDITT



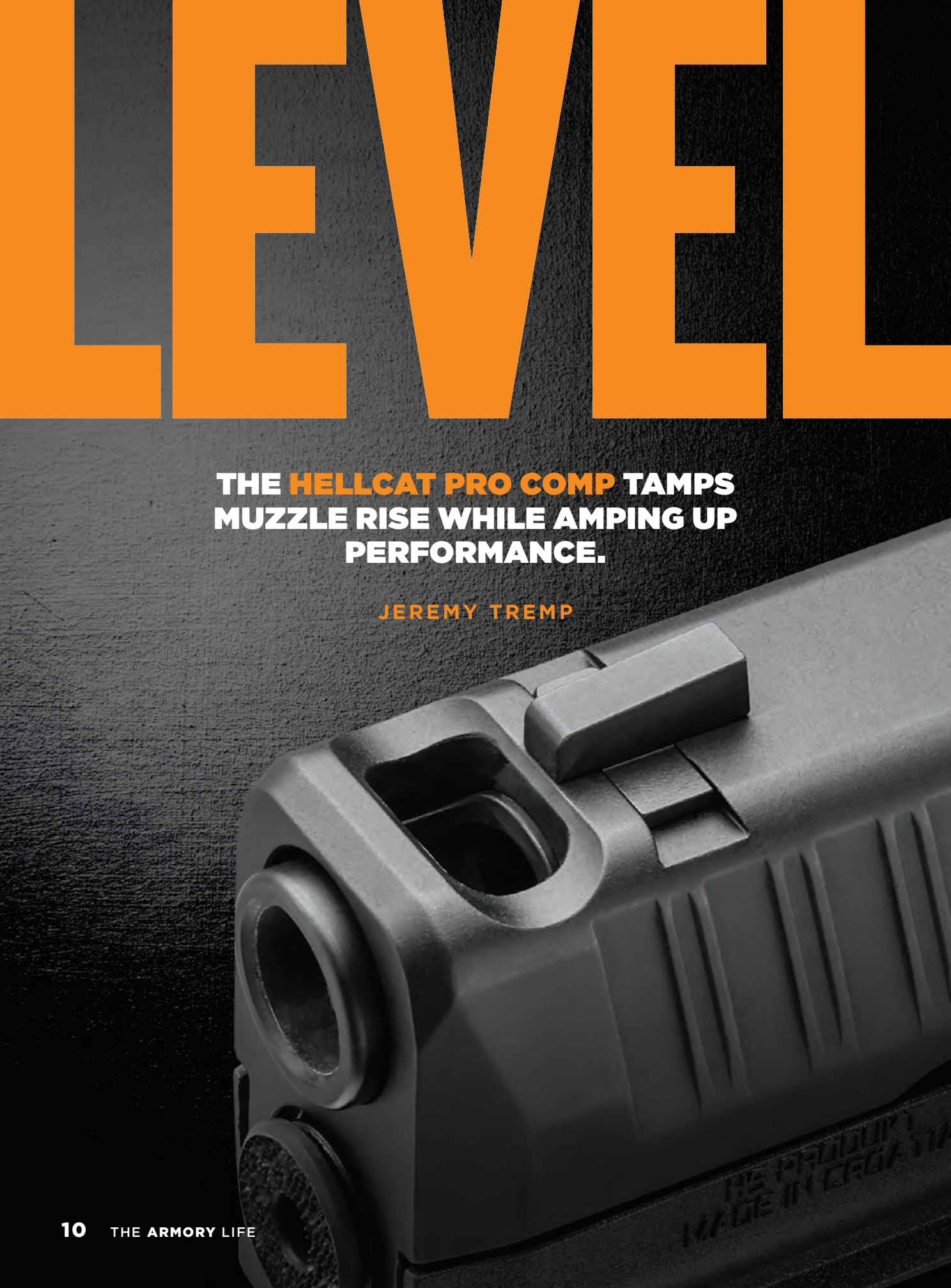
THE 1911 DIGITAL E-MAG



LEVEL

THE HELLCAT PRO COMP TAMPS MUZZLE RISE WHILE AMPING UP PERFORMANCE.

JEREMY TREMP



BEST



WATCH THE VIDEO
RUNNING THE HELLCAT PRO COMP

IMAGE: JAKE MILLER/SPRINGFIELD ARMORY



I BET YOU'VE HEARD THE SAYING, "You can't have your cake and eat it too". Well, with the Springfield Armory Hellcat Pro Comp model, you can eat all the cake you want — metaphorically speaking, of course. Let me explain.

When choosing a pistol, especially one you will utilize for a daily carry, it's often an involved process of weighing size versus capacity, control, concealability, etc. With innovative advances in materials and design in recent years, we've slowly gotten just about everything we could ask for in a CCW pistol with the Hellcat family of pistols.

For those of you who might not be familiar with the Hellcat story, the original Hellcat 9mm pistol burst onto the scene back in 2019 and helped redefine an entire genre of micro-compact pistols. Five years later, we have what might just be the ultimate version of the pistol — the Hellcat Pro Comp.

STEPPING STONES

But let's back up a little bit. While the original Hellcat was a micro-sized 9mm that featured a short 3" barrel and a flush-fit 11-round capacity (13 rounds with the included extended magazine), Springfield Armory soon followed up with the 9mm Hellcat Pro.

The Pro variant bumped the length of the barrel out to 3.7", and extended the grip frame to hold a flush-fit 15-round magazine. The pistol also comes with an extended-base 17-rounder. The Pro is 6.6" long, 4.8" tall and only 1" thick. While only marginally larger than the original Hellcat, the Pro was intended to offer an ideal blend of size, performance and capacity for a carry pistol you can still actually carry.

The Hellcat Pro Comp features an integral compensator located forward of the front sight. It's designed to reduce muzzle rise and perceived recoil.

The vast majority of the Hellcat family offerings come optics ready with the OSP (Optical Sight Pistol) system. The only exception is one basic black original Hellcat that is configured for iron sights only. The OSP system has the slide milled to directly accept micro red dot optics with the Shield SMSc/RMSc footprint, and a cover plate is included.

The advantage of this direct-mount system is two-fold. Firstly, it reduces parts and therefore failure points, with no need for adapter plates. Secondly, it positions the optic low enough to allow the excellent U-Dot iron sights of the pistol to co-witness. If you are not familiar with the U-Dot system, it is made up of a tritium-powered, high visibility front sight paired with a Tactical Rack rear sight with a U-shaped notch. The result is easy target acquisition in a wide range of lighting conditions. In addition, all Hellcats come with an accessory rail on the dustcover for accepting the light or laser of your choice.

BALANCING NEEDS

While some might have thought the Hellcat Pro was at the pinnacle of EDC pistol design, the engineering maestros at Springfield Armory decided it was time to kick it up a notch — or down, depending on the context. The result is the new Hellcat Pro Comp, a 9mm EDC pistol with an integral compensator.

If you are unfamiliar with porting and its benefits, I will break it down quickly. Creating a port or opening in the barrel and slide — generally at the 12-o clock position near the muzzle — allows escaping gas to flow upward out of the port before fully exiting the barrel.

So, what's the benefit?

The idea here is the escaping gases venting upwards will counteract muzzle flip by redirecting thrust downward as the pistol fires. In theory, this allows you to have quicker follow-up shots and less sight picture interruption when firing your pistol, especially when firing quickly.

Speaking of sight picture interruption, it was clear the designers at Springfield took this into account with the Hellcat Pro Comp. Rather than a port (or ports) located behind the front sight, the Pro Comp's front sight has been moved and is positioned just behind the compensator port.

Looking at the profile, you could almost miss that this is a new variant of the Hellcat Pro as it looks very similar to a stock Pro. But once you take a closer look at the slide and barrel, you can see the Springfield Armory engineers' handiwork.

FAMILIAR TERRITORY

Being that the Hellcat is made for daily carry, Springfield made every design choice based around reliability, ease of use and intuitive handling. The heart of the pistol is the 3.7" hammer-forged and Melonite-finished barrel that is as durable as it is accurate. The slide has front and rear cocking serrations for ease of manipulation regardless of conditions. The magazine release is also reversible for left-handed shooters if you choose.

HELLCAT PRO COMP

CHAMBERING	9mm
BARREL	3.7"
WEIGHT	21 oz.
OVERALL LENGTH	6.6"
SIGHTS	U-Dot
GRIPS	Integral, polymer
ACTION	Striker-fired
FINISH	Black
CAPACITY	15+1 (one magazine), 17+1 (one magazine)
MSRP	$699



Another nice touch is the addition of a loaded chamber indicator made up of a window cut on the top/rear area of the barrel hood. The result is that, at a glance, you can quickly tell the condition of your pistol.

From a handling standpoint, if you appreciate the design of the Hellcat Pro, you will feel right at home with the Hellcat Pro Comp. Even with the flush-fit magazine installed, you can easily get a tight and full grip on the pistol. Also, I tested it out, and the Hellcat Pro Comp easily fit into all my concealed carry holsters designed for the standard Hellcat Pro. That is going to make accessorizing a breeze.

While we are on the topic of concealed carry, the Springfield Hellcat Pro Comp's grip features the company's Adaptive Grip Texture, which is made up of tiny pyramid shapes of different sizes and flat and pointed tips. These little pyramids help your hands to solidly grip the pistol as you squeeze it, allowing you to keep a positive hold under a wide range of conditions.

WORTH THE EFFORT?

So, getting back to this all this porting business. Does it really make a difference?

I'll be honest, I was excited to try out the pistol, but also a bit skeptical as to whether I would want to switch out my Hellcat Pro for the new ported version. I've shot my fair share of ported pistols, and while some of them blew me away with close to zero muzzle flip, some of them underwhelmed me and even hampered the function of the pistol.

So how would the new Hellcat Pro Comp fare in my hands? What gave me comfort is that this is a stock pistol released by Springfield Armory. If they've put their stamp of approval on it, then it should live up to the reliability and performance I've come to expect.

I hit the range to test out the port versus a stock Hellcat Pro. That way, I had a baseline from which to measure. For my ammo, I utilized basic 124-gr. ball ammo across the board to keep testing consistent.

I decided to shoot the Hellcat Pro Comp first and then the standard Pro so I wouldn't have the bias of what the standard gun felt like first. I wanted a raw first impression without knowing the baseline in advance.



The Hellcat Pro Comp is an EDC-ready 9mm pistol that features both enhanced performance and ease of carry.

The first shots felt good. While this was still the Hellcat Pro I've come to know and love, it felt a tad different. The biggest difference I noticed was my return to target after firing a shot. It felt like I was back on target quicker, without having to try to "strangle" the pistol.

After a couple magazines through the Pro Comp, I switched to the stock Hellcat Pro pistol. Was there a difference? Certainly. But it was a bit more subtle than I expected. The Hellcat Pro is a very controllable pistol in its



IMAGE: CARSON MCDANIEL/SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

own right. I've always appreciated and enjoyed shooting my Pro and training with it as I carry one every day. All that being said, the Comp version adds more controllability to the platform, which is greatly appreciated.

I really noticed a difference on the Pro Comp when firing quick hammer pairs. The pistol was back on target quicker, and keeping an accurate target sight picture was just plain easier. It's a bit hard to explain the feeling that the port provides except to say the pistol feels more controllable — and this perception gets reinforced the more you shoot it.

After a few hours at the range, I was convinced that the Hellcat Pro Comp pistol was a big enough advantage to switch out my stock Hellcat Pro. Digesting it all after the fact, I really enjoyed the amount of reduction in the muzzle flip via the port.

One major thing I was looking out for was if my optic — a Shield SMSc — would be occluded by gas and debris from the compensator. With comps and ports in the past, I've seen them spew gases right into the red dot, ultimately rendering it useless. I am happy to report that the Shield SMSc was as clear as it was prior to shooting any rounds. This is a big deal for a personal-defense pistol.

I also wanted to ensure I wasn't seeing fireballs fly up in front of my optic, which would be problematic for shooting at night. In the day, it's a bit hard to tell, but on camera I could see it wasn't belching flames from the port on every shot. This was a great relief and further proof that the Hellcat Pro Comp is a great option for an EDC pistol.



The author found the pistol to be flat-shooting and easy to control on the range.

In this image you can see the matched port cuts of the barrel and slide. They combine to redirect gasses upward when firing.



CONCLUSION

Keep in mind, when training with a ported pistol you need to be sure to keep body parts clear of the port when practicing certain shooting positions. Since there is concussive force escaping the top of the pistol, you want to ensure no body parts are in the direct path of that hot propellant gas. Practicing with this consideration can help prepare you if, God forbid, you have to defend yourself.

My impressions of the Springfield Armory Hellcat Pro Comp are very positive. The performance improvement when shooting hammer pairs was the most evident. I also appreciate the subtlety of the new design. The pistol was clearly designed to perform under practically all conditions and to be something that could be trusted with your life. I believe Springfield achieved that with the new 9mm Hellcat Pro Comp.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
SPRINGFIELD-ARMORY.COM



Dennis Reese, CEO and owner of Springfield Armory, has played an integral role in the life of the M1A rifle since its release 50 years ago. He is shown here with the special-edition 50th-anniversary model.

BETTING THE FARM

CHARTING THE HALF-CENTURY JOURNEY OF THE FAMED — AND FOUNDATIONAL — M1A RIFLE.

MIKE HUMPHRIES

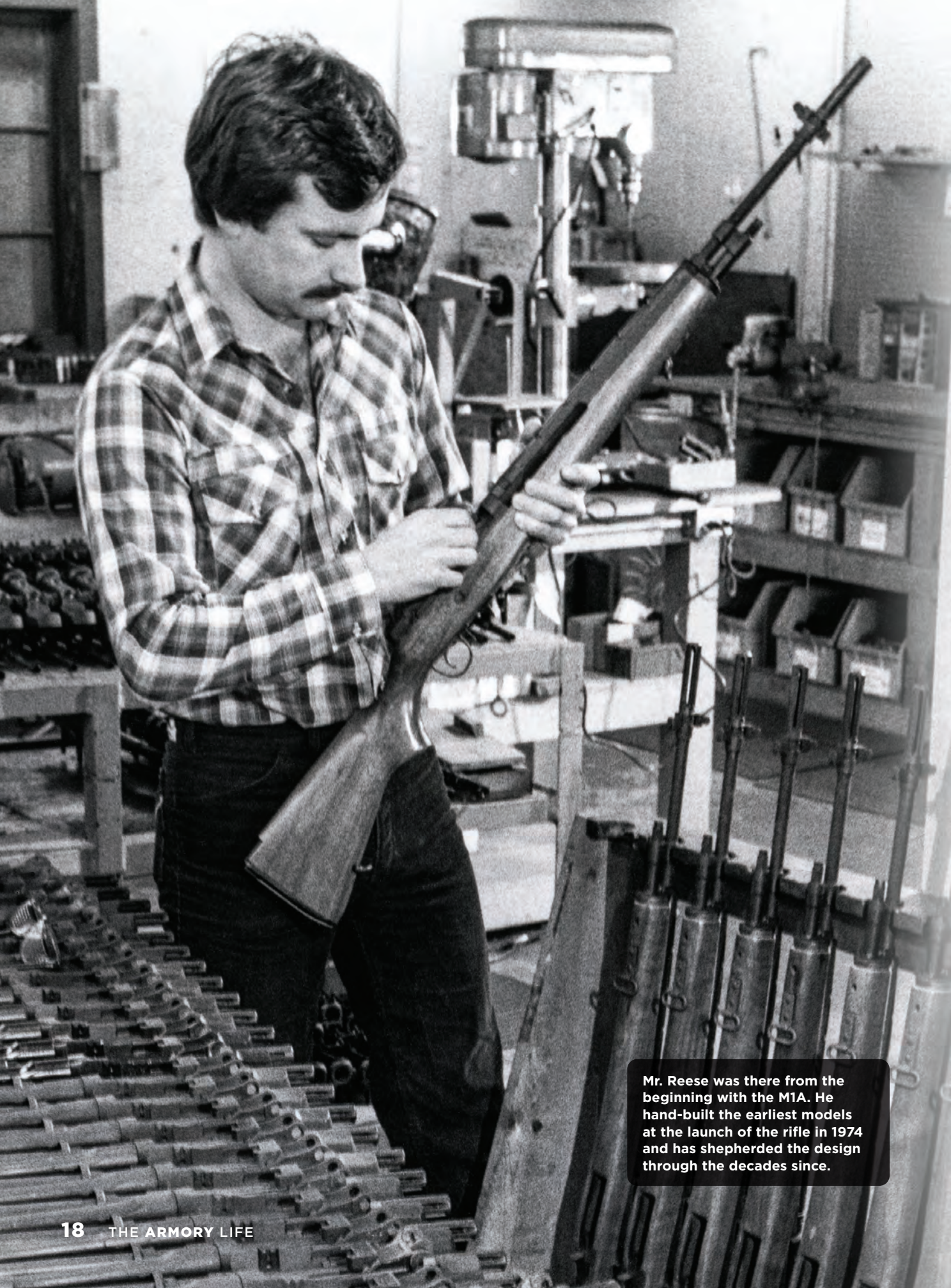
EVERYONE WHO KNOWS the name Springfield Armory knows the M1A. Hailing from an era of manufacturing when rifles were constructed of wood and steel and based upon the revered U.S. Military M14 rifle with a lineage connected to the iconic M1 Garand rifle, the M1A represents a fascinating intersection of modern performance and classic design.

The 7.62x51mm (.308 Win.) M14 rifle was adopted as the United States' primary service rifle in the late 1950s, but was ultimately phased out soon thereafter in the mid-1960s in favor of the then-new M16 in 5.56mm. However, its appeal — and utility — far outlived its short official lifespan.

In fact, the M14 continued to serve in specialized roles well past its official retirement. Its impressive power and downrange performance gave it a new lease on life in the era of the Global War on Terror in far-flung regions of the world in the hands of U.S. soldiers and Marines. In a way, its path was similar to that of another old warhorse, the 1911 pistol, which is still serving in limited roles well past its official retirement.

While the path the select-fire M14 rifle followed in the hands of the U.S. Military is a fascinating one, another version of the design took a different journey.

IMAGE: JAKE MILLER/SPRINGFIELD ARMORY



Mr. Reese was there from the beginning with the M1A. He hand-built the earliest models at the launch of the rifle in 1974 and has shepherded the design through the decades since.

That sibling's path would lead it into the eager hands of civilian shooters who recognized the classic appeal of the wood and steel rifle. Its remarkable journey, which began 50 years ago, would be shepherded by a man named Dennis Reese.

A NEW FOUNDATION

Mr. Reese, CEO and owner of Springfield Armory, has a deep connection with the M1A design. I recently had an opportunity to sit down with him and learn more about the story behind the M1A rifle.

Early into the conversation, I learned that firearms have long been a passion for the entire Reese family.

"My father, Bob Reese, would buy demilitarized surplus firearms that had been torch cut as scrap iron from the Rock Island Arsenal," Dennis Reese explained to me. "Those demilitarized guns still had valuable parts that could be removed and sold to surplus dealers and manufacturers. There were BARs, M1 and M2 Carbines, M1 Garands, Thompson submachine guns, 1911 pistols, 1903 Springfields, and more," he continued.

Reese explained to me that he and his two younger brothers, Dave and Tom, helped their father on these projects. Their work proved to be very successful, with a great deal of demand for these firearms parts. In fact, it grew to the point where their father opened Reese Surplus, Inc., a surplus store in Geneseo, Illinois. As the business grew, he developed connections with dealers and firearms manufacturers around the country — one of which would prove to be extremely fortuitous for fans of the M1A.

DIVERGING PATH

How did selling gun parts lead to producing a civilian-legal, semi-automatic variant of the M14 rifle?

"When I was 19 years old, I had put in two years of college working toward a degree as an electronics engineer. I had decided it was just not for me," he explained to me. "I came home and asked myself, 'Where am I going to go from here?'."

Reese, having grown up around firearms, was fascinated with them. He loved shooting and hunting. So, he spoke with his father about it and decided he wanted to make working with firearms his living.

His father mentioned that there was a company down in Texas that he had done some business with, and they owed him some money. He was going to go down and see about settling up with them and asked Dennis if he wanted to go with him.

Dennis and his father traveled to San Antonio, Texas, to negotiate a trade of product to settle the debt. What they discovered was, in addition to a lot of general surplus parts, a great deal of M14 inventory. The negotiating moved beyond the debt discussion to them seriously considering making an offer to buy all of it.

"I remember my father calling my mother and telling her that he thought the business had some potential. 'Are you comfortable with us going bigger into this?', I heard him ask her. Soon, my father and I were discussing what it would take to purchase the company itself," Dennis Reese explained to me.

The M1A line has grown to include a wide range of variants for practically any application.





Springfield Armory is applying cutting-edge 21st century manufacturing techniques to the classic 20th century M1A design. Mr. Reese is shown here inspecting a newly manufactured receiver.

So, a trip that started as a simple effort to settle a debt turned into a life-changing opportunity for Dennis. In fact, the opportunity was so great that, in order to fund the purchase, Reese's parents chose to mortgage the family farm.

"My parents risked everything on their 19-year-old son and his younger brothers in this new venture," Reese said to me.

Once the purchase was done, Reese and his father filled up two semi-truck trailers with inventory, office and machining equipment, etc., and took it all back home. They set up shop in downtown Geneseo at 218 South State St. in what was formerly the "Sunshine Snack Bar," a little diner that had closed. Reese soon began building semi-automatic M1A rifles from the surplus M14 parts they had acquired in the purchase.

"Dad would come in and work part of the day in addition to his farm duties, and I was there all day working," Reese told me. "My brothers were in high school at the time but would come in and work after school. This was truly a family business and a family effort. My family had literally bet the farm on this effort."

MOVING FORWARD

If the story ended there in the diner, with Dennis Reese and his family building classic M1A rifles cottage industry-style, it would make for a fascinating example of the benefits of hard work and the realization of the American Dream. But, the story did not end there, and is one that continues on through to today.

Let's be frank — the M1A has a naturally "retro" appeal to it. As noted, it's a design from an era when rifles were made of wood and steel. While its manufacturing may have begun with an equally old-fashioned approach, the Springfield Armory M1A of today represents a totally new and modern method of manufacturing and design.

Today, the M1A — along with numerous other Springfield firearms — is manufactured in Springfield Armory's state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Geneseo, Illinois. While the original process of manufacturing the M1A begun 50 years ago produced a very high-quality rifle, it was also done in a system with numerous operations run on a variety of machines — some custom-built and more than 50 years old.

"Throughout the entire manufacturing process, from raw steel to final assembly, we have developed a modern process with a culture of quality to ensure that we uphold the standards set by Mr. Reese back at the launch of the M1A rifle in 1974," said Christopher Baumbach, Engineering Program Manager, Machining. This was part of our discussion of the manufacturing processes of the M1A rifle today, and in particular the receiver.

He went on to explain that Springfield has implemented an automated machining cell that uses the latest manufacturing technology. The cell uses 5-axis machining, a Fanuc Robot on a "7th axis rail," hydraulic fixturing, and advanced tool monitoring. The sophisticated approach reduces the number of machining operations and ensures consistency. Baumbach also noted that Springfield has improved the heat-treating process by going to an advanced vacuum carburizing system.

This was all as bewildering to me as it likely is to any of you other non-engineers out there. When I asked Mr. Baumbach if he could translate this into layman's terms, he explained that they adapted the manufacturing process to take advantage of some of today's most advanced technology. The result is a product that offers the appeal of the classic 20th century design, but with levels of precision and quality that represent 21st century capabilities.

IMAGE: JAKE MILLER/SPRINGFIELD ARMORY



The 50th Anniversary M1A comes with a wood presentation case, M14 Army Operator and Maintenance Manual, M1A cleaning kit, G.I. sling, and a Certificate of Authenticity.

IMAGE: JAKE MILLER/SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

Basically, it makes the M1A a rifle with one foot in the past, and one in the future.

WHERE IT STANDS

Springfield Armory clearly understands the appeal of the M1A rifle, and also the shooters who appreciate it. Today, you can purchase an M1A Standard Issue .308 rifle that is extremely similar to the original M1A rifle the Reese family built in that tiny diner 50 years ago — but one that harnesses five decades of experience and technological advancement in manufacturing.

Beyond that, the M1A line has not been frozen in time since those early days, with many other variants now also available. For example, there is the M1A SOCOM 16 family of rifles that takes the M1A design and sizes it down with a compact and handy 16.25" barrel with an advanced muzzle brake. For something a little longer but still quick-handling and compact, the M1A Scout Squad packs in an 18" barrel along with a forward scope mount and specially designed muzzle brake.

If you're looking for even more options, there's the M1A Loaded series of rifles. Offered in .308 as well as 6.5 Creedmoor, the Loaded series features medium-weight premium air-gauged National Match barrels, National Match tuned triggers and more. The Loaded Precision variant adds in a customizable Archangel Precision Adjustable stock.

And lastly, there's the recently released M1A 50th Anniversary Rifle, a limited-edition M1A commemorating the half-century mark of production for the revered semi-auto rifle. In fact, you can see that rifle in the hands of Dennis Reese on the cover of this issue, as well as in the lead photo at the beginning of this article. If you'd like to read a full review of the rifle, turn to page 90. Limited to only 1,974 examples, this rifle comes with a beautiful custom wood display crate, a certificate of authenticity signed by Mr. Reese, and a host of accessories.

CONCLUSION

It's hard to overstate how revered a design the M1A is. With half a century of production behind it and a very bright future ahead of it, the M1A was clearly worth the Reese family "betting the farm" on it. I know I'm thankful they did, and I am sure all the M1A enthusiasts out there agree. Here's to the next 50 years!

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DOES THE 4.25" GARRISON DELIVER FULL-THROATED PERFORMANCE IN A COMPACT PACKAGE?

WILL DABBS, MD



P SHORT?

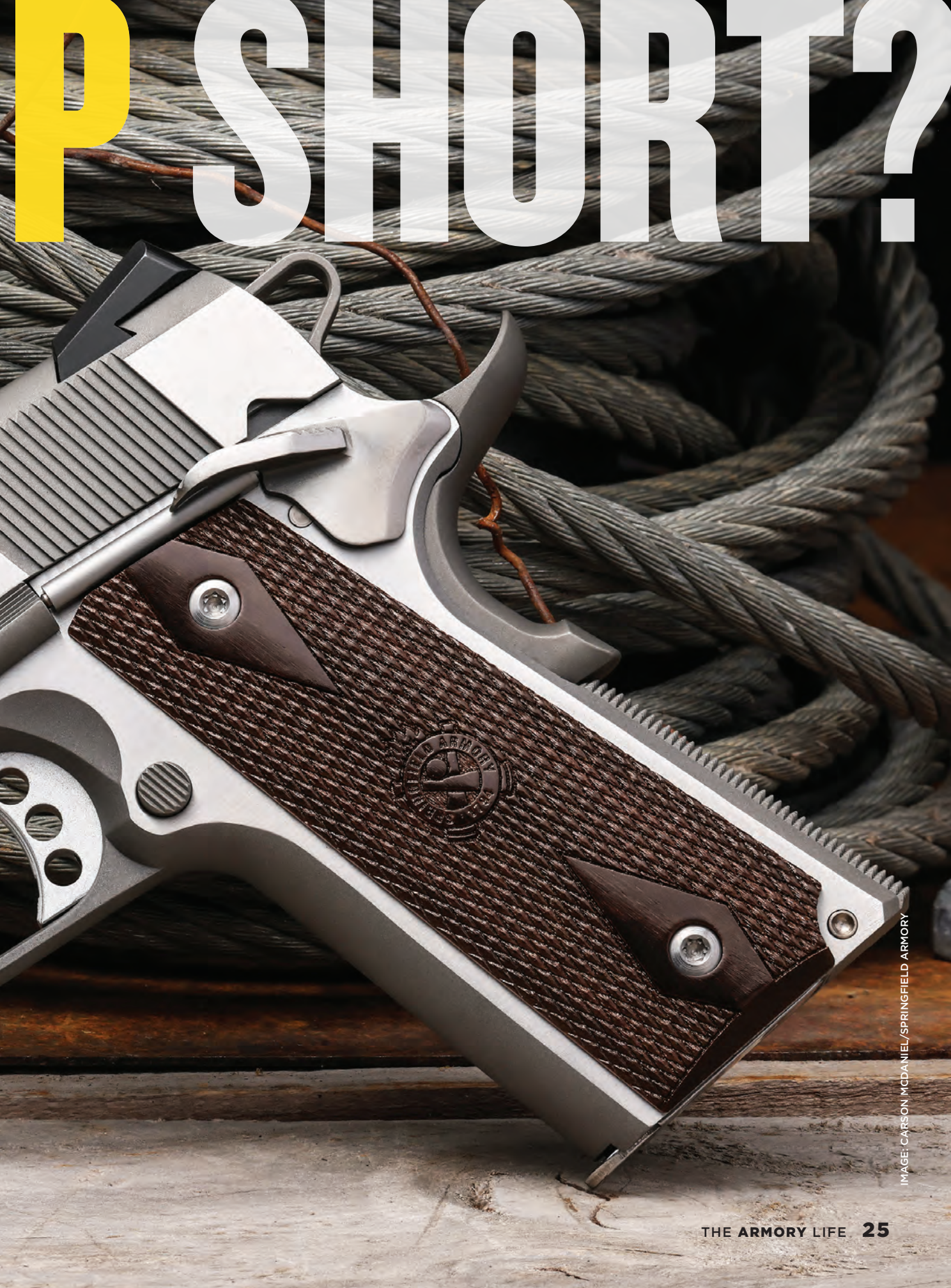


IMAGE: CARSON MCDANIEL/SPRINGFIELD ARMORY



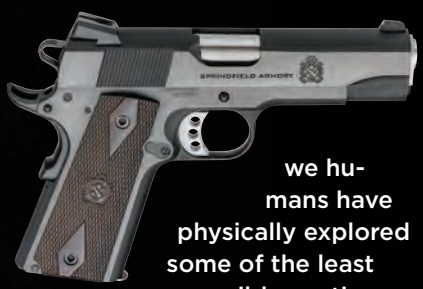
The Springfield Armory 4.25" Garrison 1911 pistol carries easily, shoots straight and hits hard. Blued steel variant shown.

THE 4.25" GARRISON is one of the latest iterations of Springfield Armory's rarefied line of 1911 pistols. Offering classic design and superlative workmanship along with a world-class feature set — and all at a reasonable price — the Garrison occupies a unique niche among the wares at your favorite gun emporium.

The latest 4.25" version we are considering here offers all that classic Garrison appeal in a handier, easy-to-conceal package.

GARRISON 4.25" 1911

CHAMBERING	9mm/.45
BARREL LENGTH	4.25"
WEIGHT	34/33 oz.
OVERALL LENGTH	7.9"
SIGHTS	Low-profile, three-dot
GRIPS	Thinline wood
ACTION	Single-action
FINISH	Blued or stainless
CAPACITY	9+1/7+1 (one magazine included)
MSRP	$868-$917



BUILDING BLOCKS

Mankind came from the factory with an irresistible drive to create. It's buried someplace deep in our DNA. One person's brilliant idea becomes the foundation for the next great advance in science or engineering. In so doing, technology invariably builds on itself. This is the reason you are likely reading this hallowed tome in climate-controlled comfort. Otherwise, you might still be squatting in a cave someplace pondering the best way to use a jagged rock to flay an opossum for dinner.

A cursory historical review of the Information Age demonstrates countless examples wherein some gifted inventor devised a machine that serendipitously changed the world. This is the human way. Driven by the unstoppable engine that is capitalism, this profoundly powerful drive oftentimes charges forward without a great deal of restraint. Think hydrogen bombs or pressurized cheese in a can. With others, however, one simply cannot help but revel in what we have accomplished — and 1911 was a particularly good year for such stuff.

SETTING THE STAGE

On January 26, 1911, Glenn Curtiss flew the first amphibian float plane. His idea to meld a boat with an airplane was simply inspired. This is the sole reason we humans have physically explored some of the least accessible portions of this big blue playground we call Earth.

That same year, James Dole hired Henry Ginaca to craft a device that would automate the processing of pineapples. Prior to that time, pineapples were laboriously cut by hand. In addition to being time-consuming, there was a also great deal of wastage. Afterwards, thanks to the Ginaca Pineapple Processing Machine, the Dole Packaged Foods Company could sell Hawaiian pineapples to the entire planet.

Charles Franklin Kettering was one of the most prolific inventors in human history, going to his grave with 186 patents. Kettering developed the use of Freon as an industrial refrigerant, perfected colored paints for automobiles and invented the first air-to-air missile. The philanthropic foundation that bears his name has played an active part in crafting public policy since 1927.

On February 17, 1911, Charles Kettering installed the first electric starter motor on an automobile engine. Prior to that day if you wanted to crank a car you had to walk around to the front and spin a lever. Nowadays, you can start the nicer sort from inside your office via a button on your remote. Kettering once opined, "The world hates change, but it is the only thing that has brought progress."

So, why all this arcane prattling about such antiquated contrivances? Because, unlike the previous examples, there was one invention introduced in 1911 that has soldiered on nearly unchanged ever since. While the rest of the world evolved through spaceflight to cell phones, John Moses Browning's inimitable 1911 pistol has reliably retained its relevance despite the passage of time.

THE PHENOMENON

John Browning introduced his 1911 pistol three years before the outset of World War I. A lot has happened since then. Cutting-edge handguns like the Springfield Armory Echelon now pack double columns of ammunition in a rugged, reliable, accurate package handy enough to carry all day. The polymer frame weighs just about nothing, and the gun is infinitely customizable.

However, there is just something primal about the way a 1911 pistol interfaces with the human form. The single-stack magazine supports a trim architecture that fits my hand like it was built to be there. Despite more than a century of mechanical evolution, the basic 1911 design remains competitive even today.



Part of that is indeed nostalgia. Ours is a wealthy society, the richest in all of human history. As a result, we enjoy the luxury of investing our resources in the finer things. Whether that is a bespoke timepiece, a classic automobile meticulously restored, or a $12,000 William Fioravanti power suit, the toys do indeed make the man.

In the timeless 1911 pistol we find a curious melding of form, refinement, style and function. This unique little machine entertains you on the range, makes a powerful fashion statement, and can help keep you alive when out where the wild things roam. Nothing else in the vast pantheon of human contrivances really does all that. In my opinion, the ultimate iteration of that apparently perfect machine is the Springfield Armory Garrison.

PERTINENT PARTICULARS

Just like suits, cars and watches, there is a definite spectrum. The Springfield Armory Garrison is the refined 1911 pistol for the common man. It has style, class and function that remains within financial reach of the average joe with a mortgage and an actual life. I have shot a lot of 1911 pistols, and I do love this one.

The standard 5" full-size Garrison has been out for a while. Available in either 9mm or .45 ACP in both blued and stainless finishes, the Garrison offers a superlative feature set at a reasonable price. Forged steel construction makes for a gun that your children's grandchildren will still be shooting, while low-profile no-snag three-dot combat sights keep this delightfully straight-shooting gun, well, shooting straight. It also features a traditional barrel bushing system for simple and easy takedown — as well as classic good looks at the muzzle.

While some 1911 pistols today are made primarily from cast components, the forged steel used in the Garrison is as tough as it gets. Thinline wood grips offer an attractive double-diamond look with the cool Crossed Cannon logo and skin-grabbing texturing. The mainspring housing on the Garrison has just enough checkering to provide a solid interface with flesh without becoming cruel after a long afternoon at the range.

An extended beavertail grip safety with a memory bump keeps you from getting nipped by the lightweight skeletonized hammer. The extended left-sided thumb safety is easily accessible. The G.I.-standard magazine release has been proven effective through well over a century of active service. If it ain't broke, as they say.



HYPERFORMANCE MATCH

Fiocchi's Hyperformance Match cartridges are designed from case head to bullet tip with one mission only—synchronize point-of-aim with point-of-impact at extreme distances...shot after shot. With bullets featuring ± 0.0003 concentricity, weight tolerance to ±0.3 grains, and a profile ensuring a high ballistic coefficient, Hyperformance Match is the new go-to for precision factory target ammunition that stands neck-and-neck with custom handloads.

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Both the stainless and the hot salt-blued versions are simply gorgeous in any light. The synergistic result is a comfortable and powerful defensive handgun that is both fun to shoot and cool to use. In the past, as noted, Springfield Armory has offered the Garrison line with a standard G.I. five-inch barrel. Now you can get all that Garrison awesomeness in something a bit more packable.

LONG ON PERFORMANCE

The newest Garrison has all that cool-guy stuff of the original Garrison along with a stubbier 4.25" barrel and correspondingly short slide. The standard frame maintains the inimitably reliable classic single-stack magazine. That's seven rounds in .45 ACP or nine in 9mm. Chopping three quarters of an inch off of the barrel and slide makes the gun more comfortable to carry and easier to clear cloth-



The author put the Garrison 4.25" pistols to the test on the range, with it delivering impressive reliability and accuracy.

ing during a draw.

The new abbreviated Garrison occupies an interesting niche. This is a steel-framed handgun that weighs just north of two pounds. There are lighter concealed carry options in the Springfield Armory line-up. However, the extra weight mitigates felt recoil and muzzle flip. No matter the whiz-bang technology built into a defensive handgun, mass times velocity in one direction will always equal mass times velocity in the other direction. That's not just a good idea, that's the law.

The author ran a selection of ammunition through the pistols, getting some very tight groups on target.



As a result, the steel-framed Garrison is actually very pleasant to shoot. If it's uncomfortable to run a handgun, that can become a disincentive to train. Tactical shooting is a perishable skill. Your primary defensive pistol demands a little regular attention for safe and effective employment.

I have carried a steel-framed 1911 comfortably underneath my surgical scrubs at work countless times. My daily uniform as a physician is the tactical equivalent of pajamas. I am living proof that, with the right carry gear, you can successfully pack a full-sized, steel-framed 1911 underneath scrubs throughout a long day at work.

Our armed forebears wielded such iron as a matter of course,

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SAFETY TIP
Store firearms securely, inaccessible to children and unauthorized users.

Consult and comply with any and all applicable federal, state, and local: laws, regulations, requirements, and/or restrictions, including but not limited to those regarding the purchase, ownership, use, transport, and carrying of a firearm. Not all products are available in all states or jurisdictions.



The 4.25" Garrison in hot salt blued steel makes for a classic-looking 1911 that still has some modern EDC-ready features.

but they were demonstrably tougher than are we.

The chopped architecture of the Garrison makes CCW even better. When properly secured, the Garrison is also a superb nightstand or truck gun. As a home defense tool, the Garrison is precise, reliable, and powerful.

TRIGGER TIME

After the decision is made to opt-in on one of the handier renditions of the Garrison 1911, the next decision to be made is in regard to caliber. Both 9mm and .45 ACP options are on the menu. Each has its merits, and the respective acolytes espouse their ballistic dogma with near-religious zeal.

When stoked with modern high-tech expanding ammo, the 9mm is a reliable stopper that is comfortable to run. By contrast, the .45 ACP is all that, only more so. Physics is physics. The .45 version offers more vigorous recoil, but also projects more downrange authority. For this evaluation, I had both options on hand.

The slide/frame interface on the Garrison is the place where dreams are made. Right out of the box, the gun's manual cycling is unbelievably smooth. John Browning's single-action trigger set a standard more than a century ago that has yet to be bested. You can tell from the moment you heft this gun that it is a well-made piece of iron.

During the course of my evaluation, the 4.25" Garrison was completely reliable and shot straight. Take your time, and you can expect single jagged holes at typical engagement ranges. I was able to get some extremely tight groups with the pistols in both chamberings on the range, and in particular with the .45 ACP version using a selection of Black Hills, Inceptor and Winchester ammunition.

RUMINATIONS

Any time 1911s are discussed, issues of magazine capacity, weight and mission particulars are all pertinent data points. Personal tastes and available resources also flavor that equation. At the end of the day, however, the new 4.25" Garrison is a classic defensive handgun that offers unimpeachable quality at a decent price. For the discerning firearm enthusiast, it offers class at a reasonable cost.

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THE RIFLEMAN



'90s AR



THE SA-16A2 5.56MM DELIVERS A REFRESHING TAKE ON THE CLASSIC M16A2.

FRANCISCO JARDIM

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY just brought back some memories of the 1980s for me: President Ronald Reagan restoring confidence in America both at home and abroad; the Sony Walkman making our music truly portable; "The Terminator" and "Back to the Future" in movie theaters and tickets only costing around $4; the M1 Abrams tank giving us hope of beating the Russians on the ground in Europe if the Cold War got hot; and the 5.56mm M16 being updated into a true "rifleman's rifle" in the form of the M16A2.



The Springfield SA-16A2 rifle's selector switch includes SAFE, SEMI, and a nonfunctional BURST position. Note the "Property of U.S. Govt" markings as well.

As a gun writer, I often get the opportunity to try out guns before they get released. Needless to say, this is a nice perk of the job.

So, when I was offered the chance to test Springfield Armory's new retro-style SA-16A2, I eagerly accepted.

With all the flat-topped, carbine-style AR's out there today on the market, I thought a classic-style rifle like this would make for a refreshing change — and a fun one to try out.

THE DETAILS

The SA-16A2 looks at first glance like a virtual twin of the M16A2 5.56mm rifle. This impression is further reinforced by the "Property of U.S. Govt" markings on the lower receiver, as well as the "BURST" setting for the safety/selector lever. Yes, you read that second part correctly. But don't get too excited; naturally, the rifle is semi-auto only.

Frankly, Springfield could have stopped at this point and called it a day, and it would be easy to call the retro-pattern rifle a success. However, in addition to following the overall pattern and look of the M16A2, the rifle features three notable enhancements.

First, the upper receiver and barrel extension use M4-pattern relieved feed ramps for improved feeding and function. Second, the magazine well is subtly flared to allow for easier loading of magazines. And lastly, the rifle features Springfield's Accu-Tite nylon-tipped tensioning screw in the lower receiver.

IMAGE: JAKE MILLER/SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

To access the screw, simply remove the pistol grip and make adjustments with an Allen key to remove slack from between the upper and lower receiver. Be sure not to make them so tight you have difficulty driving the receiver pin out. The result is a subtle but significant improvement in the precision fit of the rifle.

ORIGIN STORY

In case you are unfamiliar with the military M16A1 and M16A2 rifles, let me offer a little background to illuminate not only how the A2 came about, but also how it differed from its predecessor. By the 1980s, the M16A1 rifle had provided nearly two decades of American military service and was widely in use by the military forces of free world allies around the globe. Its 5.56mm M193 ball cartridge (based on the .223 Remington) had also become a NATO standard.

What had been truly revolutionary in the 1960s was by the 1980s the accepted norm. At its adoption, the M16 (and later, M16A1) was a truly revolutionary design featuring "space age" materials and construction. But, as with all things, there was still room for improvement.

The M16A2 was developed as an improved M16A1. It began with a request from the United States Marine Corps (U.S.M.C.) whose training doctrine stressed rifle marksmanship even more than the other services. They wanted to enhance the accuracy potential of the rifle and tailor it to their aggressive combat doctrine.

Unsatisfied with the simple dual aperture flip rear sight of the M16A1, the Marines wanted their riflemen to be able to easily make refined windage and elevation adjustments out to 800 meters from the rear sight while in action on the battlefield. In addition, they wanted a round with greater range and penetrating power. That latter goal emerged independent of their efforts to improve the rifle in the form of NATO adoption of the 62-gr., steel core bullet, SS109 cartridge as standard (the M855 in U.S. military nomenclature).

The Marines also wanted a sturdier forend and stiffer barrel forward of the handguard for bayonet fighting. Most controversially, the M16A2 would abandon the M16's full-auto function in favor of a three-round burst setting. Studies on engagements in the Vietnam War led to a conclusion that three rounds were the most efficient number to let loose at an enemy with one pull of the trigger, with anything more generally being wasted.

The earlier M16A1 featured a very slow 1:12" rate of twist designed for lighter bullets than the 62-gr. round, and was not effective at stabilizing the longer or heavier bullets. As a result, the new M16A2 featured a much tighter 1:7" rate of twist.

ROUNDING OUT THE RIFLE

In addition, the new M16A2 featured built-in case deflector just behind the ejection port, designed to help southpaw shooters. The rifle's new A2 flash hider was generally liked, too. Unlike the A1 flash hider that was slotted all around its circumference, the A2 flash hider was solid on the bottom so gas was directed upward only. The improved A2 flash hider provided some muzzle rise compensation and helped prevent a prone rifleman's shots from stirring up the dust below the muzzle and potentially revealing his position to the enemy.

SA-16A2

CHAMBERING	5.56mm
BARREL	20"
WEIGHT	7 lbs., 8 oz.
OVERALL LENGTH	39.5"
SIGHTS	A2
STOCK	Fixed
ACTION	Semi-auto
FINISH	Black
CAPACITY	30 (one magazine included)
MSRP	$1,249





The fixed stock on the SA-16A2 has a hinged trapdoor that allows access to a storage compartment that can hold a cleaning kit, like the one shown (not included).

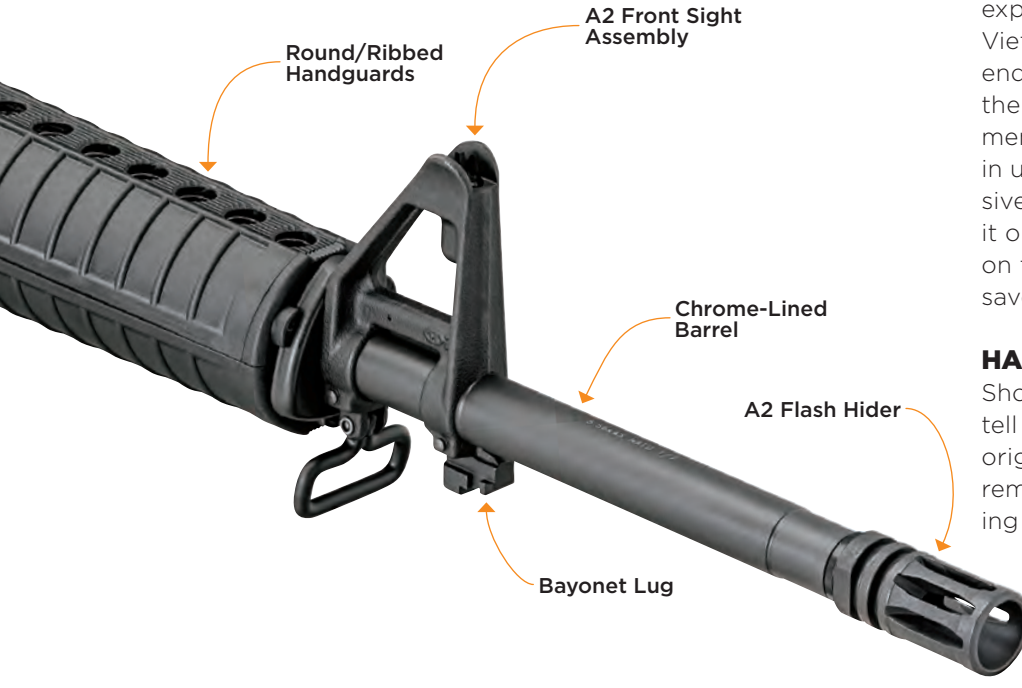


IMAGE: JAKE MILLER/SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

Two other well-received changes were the M16A2's new, easier-to-see square front sight post that replaced the old round one, and new stocks made from a vastly stronger DuPont Zytel glass-filled thermoset polymer to replace the original, crack-prone, cellulose-impregnated phenolic resin plastic from the early 1960s.

The geometry of the new stocks was changed to improve their ergonomics and utility, too. Changes included lengthening the buttstock just over half an inch; adding a finger ridge on the pistol grip to anchor the shooting hand in position for better trigger control; and tougher, smaller-circumference rounded hand-

SA★16



guards that were interchangeable — unlike the old M16A1's fragile triangular handguard.

The shape of the spring-loaded "delta ring" that held the handguards on changed from straight-sided to flared outward toward the receiver, making it much easier to hold onto while drawing it back to remove or install the handguards on the rifle.

Design changes to strengthen the rifle included beefing up the metal around the front hinge pin by sloping its lower edge into the magazine well and reinforcing the thickness of the threaded ring at the rear of the lower receiver where the buffer tube screwed in. The shape of the forward assist's head was also simplified, with a circular head replacing the old complex teardrop shape.

In the end, the U.S.M.C. got what it wanted, adopting the M16A2 first, with the U.S. Army following a few years later.

BURSTING THE BUBBLE

Of all the M16A2's new features, the three-round burst capability and fast click-adjustable rear sight were the most controversial. The new sight was wonderful for serious marksmen and a delight to use on the target range, but the U.S. Army thought it was too complex for the battlefield. It arguably was.

The danger inherent in such a sight was that it might be improperly employed by a less than perfectly trained user resulting in more misses than hits. By contrast, a user with an M16A1 only had to flip the rear sight aperture between close- and long-range positions to be able to adjust elevation to hit a man-sized target.

The burst feature, though well-intentioned, was unpopular with many military personnel with experience in ground combat in Vietnam. When on the receiving end of a close-range ambush in the jungle where the engagement was likely to be won or lost in under a minute, the suppressive value of full-auto fire, even if it only had a psychological effect on the enemy, was seen as a life-saver by many.

HANDS-ON

Shooting the SA-16A2, I couldn't tell I wasn't handling the military original. All the features that I remembered were there, including the M16-style bolt carrier and chrome-lined barrel. I zeroed the rifle easily by bore sighting it at an 11.5" bullseye at 100 yards. A bullseye of that size appears the same thickness as the front sight post at that range. The military training manual TM 9-1005-319-10 indicated the rear sight's elevation clicks equal 3.5 cm (1 3/8 in.) and windage equaled 1.25 cm (1/2 in.) at 100 meters. The SA-16A2's sight seemed to match this.

The single-stage military trigger had a pull weight of 5.3 lbs. and broke crisply. Since the M16A2 adjusts for elevation with a dial, the dual ring rear aperture just gives you a choice of a large ring to allow more visibility around targets inside 300 yards, and a small ring usable for more precision when aiming at more distant targets.

Since my target wasn't shoot-



IMAGE: JAKE MILLER/SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

The SA-16A2 is a very close semi-auto recreation of the M16A2, even down to its ability to accept a bayonet.

ing back, I decided to use the small ring.

More than rifle or ammo, the limiting factor for most shooters using iron sights is likely to be their eyesight.

Mine is not what it was 40 years ago, but shooting from a Caldwell Shooting Supplies "The Rock" rest at the bench I was still able to get some very impressive five-shot group sizes, with one as tight as 0.94" with Black Hills Ammunition 69-gr. Match King JHP ammo.

Overall, with the three loads I tested, the rifle was shooting under 2.5 MOA on average, which in my book is excellent for an iron sights rifle with someone with my eyesight at this stage. Obviously, this is a rifle that shoots better than I can see.

In this photo from 1985, an instructor shows a recruit the proper M16A2 rifle drill technique during basic training.



IMAGE: SGT. R. KILKA/NARA

CLOSING THOUGHTS

If you are looking for a 5.56mm rifle with a lot of retro appeal, but with some modern enhancements as well as impressive accuracy potential, the SA-16A2 priced at an MSRP of $1,249 definitely warrants a look.

I can see this rifle becoming very popular with competition shooters who participate in NRA's National High Power Rifle or Civilian Marksmanship Program matches, as well as those interested in military arms or just simply nostalgic about their time in uniform.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
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RE



The Echelon has what it takes to serve in a serious duty role, and the NTOA's MTR "gold" rating reinforces this fact.

ADY TO SERVE

HOW THE ECHELON EARNED A TOP-TIER RATING FROM A RESPECTED LAW ENFORCEMENT GROUP.

RICHARD JOHNSON

BREAKING A NEW PRODUCT into an established market can be a tough sell — especially when that market is one where the cost of failure can make your kids orphans.

A tough sell is not, however, an impossible one.

When Springfield Armory set out to build a better duty pistol the team knew much of the competition, while established, was lacking in many of the modern features law enforcement officers desire. The company combined its years of experience with more than a fair bit of innovation to deliver the Echelon — a 9mm handgun seemingly purpose-built for the rigors of public service.



With its high levels of adaptability and performance, the Echelon 9mm makes for an outstanding duty-grade pistol.

While the gun is relatively new on the market, early reports show it to be a solid performer and reliable choice, and one which departments can turn to for something that is more than mere marketing hype.

Don't believe me and want some proof? That's easy enough. Recently, the Springfield Armory Echelon 9mm pistol received the top-tier rating from the Member Tested and Recommended (MTR) program of the National Tactical Officers Association (NTOA). Having received an aggregate score of 4.66 out of a possible 5, the Echelon received the highest "Gold" rating offered in the NTOA's MTR program.

This is impressive, and even more so when you understand what the NTOA is and how its evaluation program works.

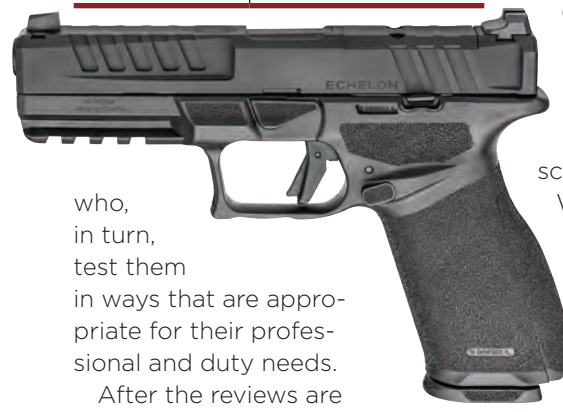
WHAT IS THE NTOA?

A non-profit organization, the NTOA supports its law enforcement members through a selection of highly professional training and resource programs. With more than 40,000 members, the NTOA is a robust entity with a great deal of influence within the public safety community.

As a former police officer and trainer, I've seen the NTOA's training and after-action reporting over the years. I've been positively impressed by the NTOA's willingness to call "balls and strikes" when analyzing incidents, and how it shapes its policies in ways that best serve the public. This is not an organization that overlooks flaws or covers for anyone.

One of the NTOA programs that gets a lot of attention is its MTR program. This initiative allows companies to get fair and independent testing of their products to determine suitability for law enforcement use. Product samples are submitted to NTOA members who, in turn, test them in ways that are appropriate for their professional and duty needs.

ECHELON	
CHAMBERING	9mm
BARREL LENGTH	4.5" (5.28" threaded)
WEIGHT	23.9 oz (24.5 oz. threaded)
OVERALL LENGTH	8" (8.8" threaded)
SIGHTS	U-Dot or tritium three-dot
GRIPS	Modular Grip Module
ACTION	Striker-fired, chassis
FINISH	Black
CAPACITY	17+1 flush, 20+1 extended (two magazines included)
MSRP	$679-$739



After the reviews are complete, the NTOA compiles the data and returns the feedback to the manufacturer. It also provides an aggregate score from the reviewers for an overall rating of the product. The scale runs from 1 to 5, with the top-tier products earning a Gold rating for overall scores of 4.5 or higher.

I want to be clear on this: the rating is not an endorsement by the organization. Rather, it is a rating provided by individual men and women who are currently serving their communities in law enforcement and selected by the NTOA to review the products. These officers and deputies might have to rely on the gear they evaluate, so they have a strong motive to not pull any punches with a sub-par product. That carries a lot of weight with me.

TO THE TEST

The selected NTOA members testing the Echelon gave the gun an impressive 4.66 combined score. Earning the highest rating level from reviewers like these is impressive. Here's how the cumulative score was achieved.

The pistols were graded on more than a dozen different areas including accuracy, durability, quality, performance and maintenance. Each of these areas was assigned a score. These scores were then averaged for an overall score from each reviewer. After tallying the results from all reviewers, the final overall score as noted was 4.66 out of 5.

Some areas of the evaluation and scoring were particularly impressive. For example, accuracy received a perfect score of 5 from all the reviewers. When describing the testing, one officer reported the gun was "extremely accurate," shooting "5-shot groups in one ragged hole."

Another reviewer stated, "I was also impressed by the accuracy. The Echelon shot consistent small groupings at various distances out to 25 yards, with iron sights and with [a] Trijicon reflex sight."

"It felt good in my hand," said one reviewer. "The grip module has interchangeable backstraps for different hand sizes, which helped make the feel perfect. The texture areas throughout the grip module also just felt right … ."

The same evaluator stated the trigger "…had a really nice, consistent pull…" while another reviewer commented on how much he enjoyed shooting the Echelon, saying "…the flat-faced trigger felt great during the trigger pull."

Reliability is key in any defensive pistol, with duty guns demanding even more durability since they are carried in an exposed manner through all kinds of weather. The Echelon's reliability was perfect with all reviewers.

One officer summed it up nicely when he said, "No matter how dirty I got the Echelon, I did not have any failures." An East Coast



officer reinforced the first officer's opinion with his own, stating that during the shooting of 1,000 rounds, "it performed flawlessly, with zero malfunctions."

THE PISTOL

If you are not already familiar with the pistol, let me catch you up. The Springfield Armory Echelon is a full-sized pistol chambered for the 9mm cartridge. It is a modern striker-fired pistol that incorporates all the best modern handgun features, plus adds some new ones.

One of those innovative features is the near-universal Variable Interface System that allows shooters to direct-mount more than 30 different optics directly to the slide without an adapter plate. A citizen or department can buy these without the need to buy new optics or special mounts. It also allows for low enough mounting that you can co-witness the iron sights with many popular red-dot optics.

Additionally, the modular design of the handgun employs a Central Operating Group that can be dropped into any polymer grip module. This chassis is the serial numbered part, so additional differently sized grip modules can be purchased easily. Just find the one that fits your hand best and have it shipped right to your front door.

Springfield's grip modules for the Echelon also have interchangeable backstraps to further customize the gun's ergonomics. From small hands to large, the Echelon will work well for you. The grip modules also incorporate an oversized triggerguard for winter gloves.

Also, the pistol is offered with either U-Dot sights or three-dot tritium sights — both options featuring a Tactical Rack ledge. Additionally, the pistol is offered in an extended threaded barrel model.



The Echelon's Variable Interface System allows for easy direct-mounting of popular red dot optics like the Trijicon RMR shown here.

As another benefit for an agency, the Echelon's controls are fully ambidextrous. Unlike some pistols that have "swappable" controls, the Echelon's magazine release and slide stop can be operated from either side of the gun right out of the box. No waiting for a department armorer to do the work.

Departments are obligated to provide suitable gear for officers of all sizes. Ambidextrous controls and the ability to adjust the size through grip modules and backstraps helps to increase officer success in a violent encounter while also protecting the department from reasonable accommodation complaints. Departments are learning it's in everyone's best interests to match the tool to the officer, and not the officer to the tool.

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

It's obvious that the Springfield Echelon would make for a good duty gun in a law enforcement and security context. It certainly checks many of the boxes individual officers and agencies have when picking a service pistol. So, it was no surprise to me when I learned that Springfield Armory's law enforcement sales manager has been getting many inquiries about the pistol for uniformed carry.

I spoke with Fred Mincks, the Law Enforcement Sales Manager for Springfield Armory. Mincks, a retired law enforcement officer himself, said several law enforcement agencies have adopted the Echelon so far, with more expected to make the switch soon. He also stated other agencies added the Echelon to their lists of approved firearms for individual officer purchases. Across the country, law enforcement agencies are employing the Echelon.

Mincks explained that Springfield Armory performed extensive reliability testing with the Echelons prior to their release. He also stated that some of the durability testing pistols had more than 40,000 rounds through them.

The Echelon is also part of Springfield Armory's FIRSTLINE program. This program not only offers discounted pricing on select Springfield Armory firearms for a wide range of qualified professionals, but also provides three total magazines with each pistol purchased.

COMPLETE PACKAGE

Many people maintain that tactics can win a battle, but logistics wins wars. In a way, this adage applies to the adoption of a new handgun by police departments.

By this, I mean to suggest that departments do not buy duty guns based only on the quality of the firearm itself. Instead, they look at the entire package — from ammunition to accessories — to



The Echelon is equally as suitable in use for uniform patrol duties as it is with a tactical team.

see if the handgun will meet the department's needs.

One of the most important aspects of a handgun's adoption is the availability of a suitable duty holster. Today, the premier security holsters are made by Safariland, and I daresay most departments will not consider a duty holster made by anyone else.

I believe the Safariland 6360 ALS/SLS is one of the best duty holsters available. A lot of police departments issue this rig to their officers, and I understand why. It offers exceptionally good security against gun grabs while remaining fast on the draw. In fact, this holster is available from the Springfield Armory Webstore.

Safariland makes the Model 6360 for the Echelon in a variety of configurations. A department can get the rigs designed for the Echelon used with and without a variety of optics and for a range of weapon-lights. And since the Echelon can mount darn near any red dot and white light around, existing accessories can be used without the burden of buying new equipment.

MY THOUGHTS

Springfield Armory is no stranger to producing high-quality firearms suitable for duty use. With this experience, the team seems to have pulled together all the best features of a modern handgun when designing the Echelon 9mm pistol. It seems clear to me that the company was aiming to create a no-compromise pistol with a combination of features you simply can't get anywhere else.

My own experiences with the Echelon mirror those from the NTOA evaluation.

All my time in police work was in uniform patrol. I liked the nature of the work and spent much of my career as a field training officer. That meant I had a lot of rookies in the car, and we would typically draw the most and the hottest calls. I refused to use anything less than the best equipment.

I picked up an Echelon shortly after it was released. For me, reliability is mandatory for any duty or defensive firearm. With nearly a year of time with my Echelon, I've experienced no malfunctions. I've lost count of how many rounds I have put through the handgun. It keeps running no matter what kind of 9mm ammo I run through it.

BOTTOM LINE

Is the Echelon ready to serve and protect? Based on what I've seen and experienced, yes. Independent evaluations from officers of the NTOA led to a Gold rating, which makes me think they came to the same conclusion. I suspect we will see a lot of these guns carried by uniformed law enforcement officers in the coming years.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:

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DOUBLIN



The Practice & Defend Combo Pack provides 50 rounds of defensive and 50 rounds of practice ammo for your favorite EDC.

IG DOWN



FEDERAL'S PRACTICE & DEFEND COMBO PACK DELIVERS THE PERFECT BALANCE.

YAMIL SUED

AFTER YOU DECIDE TO CARRY an EDC (Every Day Carry) pistol and have selected the best handgun for this purpose, you have another decision to make — and it can be a tough one. That is, to select the best ammunition for your handgun of choice. I've struggled with this for many years now, and I know I'm not alone.

Based on a great deal of research as well as some expert advice from a friend, my choice for my Hellcat Pro 9mm is Federal's HST 147-gr. HST round. I'm familiar with this load and it's a good choice based strictly on performance. Incidentally, it is also used by my local police department.

THE PROCESS

So, why exactly is this such a tough decision to make? Most premium-grade defensive ammunition is sold in 20- or 25-round boxes. To further complicate the issue, when you select the ammo for your pistol you need to sight in your pistol. It can be very costly to do this process with premium-grade ammunition.

Some might argue you can simply use similar-weight practice "ball" ammo — preferably from the same brand — to ensure that your point of impact will be the same.

I can say from experience that this will not always be the case. This means you would have to go back to your premium ammo to fine-tune your pistol and sight set-up. This whole process ends up being very time-consuming, and even more importantly, very costly.

THE SOLUTION

A couple of years ago, Federal Ammunition released their Practice & Defend Combo Pack featuring 100 rounds of ammunition. It is a combo pack consisting of 50 rounds of Premium HST jacketed hollow point (JHP) ammunition and 50 rounds of Syntech Training Match total synthetic jacket (TSJ) ammunition. These packs are available in 9mm in both 124- and 147-gr. loadings, .40 caliber in 180 grain, and .45 ACP in 230 grain.

You can probably see the advantage here. What Federal is offering is a combo pack that gives you both proven defensive loadings and practice rounds that are ballistically paired to offer you matching velocities, trajectories and point of impacts.

This gives you more than enough ammo to test and load up two 15- to 17-round magazines for your pistol, plus another 50 rounds for either practice or sighting in your pistol.



The combo pack features both defense-oriented HST and range-ready Syntech ammunition for your preferred 9mm CCW.

WHAT YOU GET

First, let's discuss the ammo itself. The defensive-grade ammo in the pack, the Federal HST JHP, is designed to offer superior penetration, weight retention, expansion, and great performance going through barriers. In my experience, it also offers the ultimate in function and reliability in semi-automatic handguns.

On the practice/training side, the Syntech Training Match TSJ offers a lot of great features, including identical point of impact, velocity and trajectory as the equivalent HST loads. The total synthetic jacket of the round also prevents metal fouling while reducing barrel heat and friction, as well as reducing splatter/splash back on hard targets.

In short, you get the best of both worlds in one box of ammo.

HANDS-ON

The best way to ensure you get the performance that you're expecting is to take the pistol and ammo to the range. What's printed on the box is one thing, but how the ammo performs out of your pistol is what really matters.



Federal HST features a nickel-plated case and a high-performance jacketed hollow point projectile. Note the bullet's expansion during testing.



The Syntech Training Match total synthetic jacket (TSJ) round is designed to match the ballistics and point of impact of the paired HST defensive round.

While the 9mm Practice & Defend Combo Packs are available in both 124- and 147-gr. options, I decided to try out the lighter option. This bullet weight is very capable, especially with the 3.7" barrel on the Springfield Armory Hellcat Pro that I planned on using during my testing. Not incidentally, this gun is, in my humble opinion, the best EDC choice.

The first thing to do when sighting in a new pistol/ammo EDC combo is to make sure that your pistol is sighted in at a distance with which you're comfortable. There are several points of view on this subject, but I landed on 10 yards for my own testing.

For this first sight-in, I placed my pistol on a Ransom International Multi Cal Steady Rest, which is strong and very easy to use with a wide variety of handguns and rifles, making it ideal for getting repeatable results. It took me fewer than 10 rounds to make sure my pistol's point of aim and point of impact were as close as I could possibly get them.

So, is the point of impact of the 124-gr. HST the same as the Syntech Training Match? Again,


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IMAGE: JEREMY TREMP

The author employed a Desert FDE Hellcat Pro 9mm pistol for the testing of the Practice & Defend Combo Pack.

the best way to find out is to put it to the test. Using the same set-up, I fired five rounds of the 124-gr. Syntech Training Match ammo on a brand-new target. Then, on a separate target, I shot five rounds of the 124-gr. HST.

The results were that the point of impact of the HST were extremely close to that of the Syntech Training ammo. I say "close" because this is a human being doing the shooting, so there is a variable there. I suspect that in a machine rest, the results would have been exactly overlapping.

My second test of the ammo was with a Garmin Xero C1 Pro chronograph, which is the coolest new chronograph in the market today, in my opinion. The ammo packaging says that the muzzle velocity of both rounds is 1,150 feet per second (fps), with an energy of 364 foot-pounds (ft-lbs).

I decided to test both rounds independently, starting with the Syntech Training Match. The Syntech Training gave me a muzzle velocity of 1,178.5 fps with an energy of 382.4 ft-lbs. Next, I tested the 124-gr. HST, and it gave me a muzzle velocity of 1,150.6 fps with an energy of 364.5 ft-lbs. Clearly, these two Federal loads are very closely matched.

I also took the opportunity to test out the HST round in some Clear Ballistics gelatin I had on hand. I shot several rounds into the gel and found that the HST projectile expands reliably through a variety of barriers and penetrates to ideal depths for self-defense situations. It also shows excellent weight-retention characteristics. The round penetrated about 14.5" into the gel and expanded to .601". Weight retention was an impressive 122.8 grains.

MY CONCLUSIONS

After years of having to sacrifice precious, premium, concealed-carry ammo sighting in a pistol whenever I changed carry guns or added optics, I finally have found a simple and cost-effective way to switch ammo for any EDC pistol.

Not only is the Federal HST and Syntech Training Match TSJ ammo accurate and reliable, the Federal Practice & Defend Combo Packs make prepping an EDC pistol for carry a simple process. Whether you need .45 ACP, .40 or 9mm, there's a Federal Ammunition Practice & Defend Combo Pack that will suit your needs.

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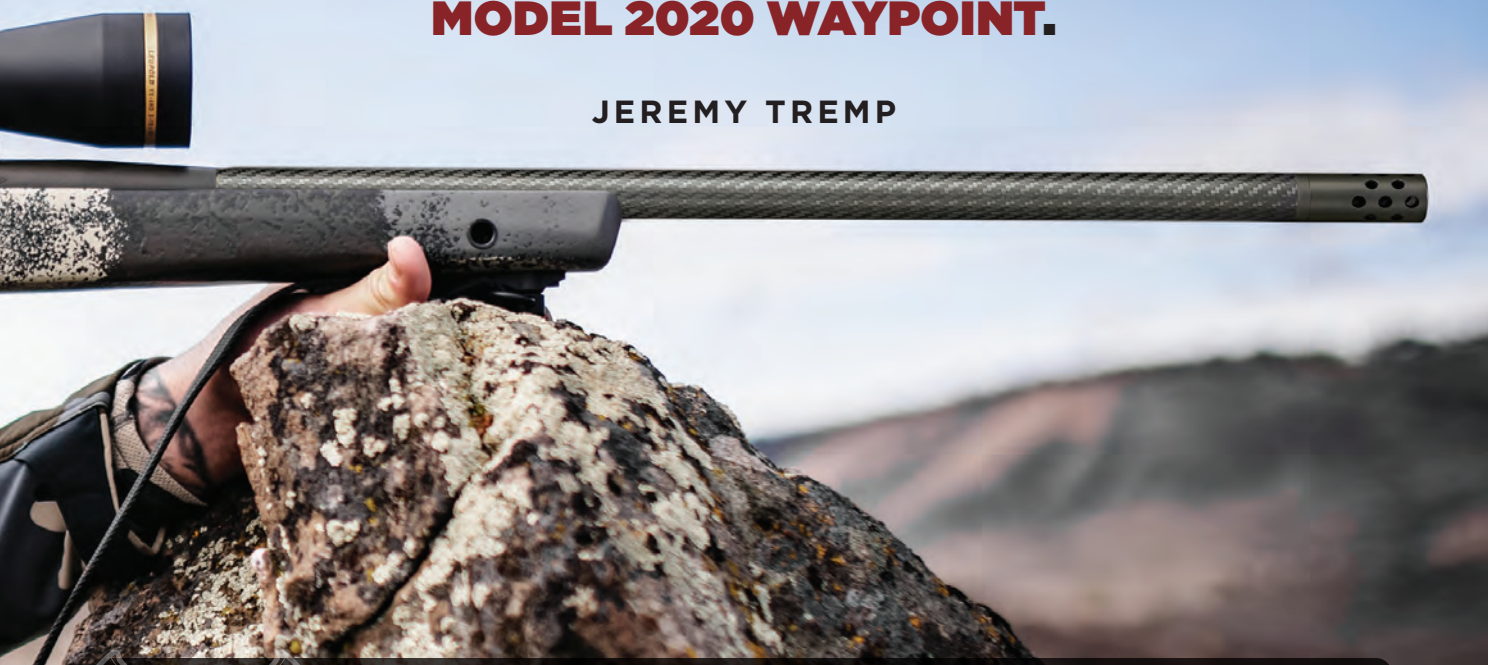
The Model 2020 Waypoint line has been expanded to include long-action variants, delivering even more downrange performance for shooters.

WATCH THE VIDEO:
MODEL 2020 LONG-ACTION WAYPOINT

NGER PATH

NEW LONG-ACTION OFFERINGS ADD ANOTHER DIMENSION TO THE MODEL 2020 WAYPOINT.

JEREMY TREMP



FOR ALL YOU BIG GAME HUNTERS out there who demand the most in performance from their rifles, Springfield Armory now has the perfect platform for you. The popular line-up of Model 2020 Waypoint rifles is now available in long-action variants, channeling the power of cartridges such as the 7mm Rem. Mag., 7mm PRC, .300 Win. Mag., .300 PRC, .270 Win. and .30-06.

The Springfield Armory Model 2020 Waypoint rifles appeared on the scene in September of 2020. Since then, they have impressed with custom-grade performance, reliability, build quality and precision accuracy, despite being production-built rifles.

The initial Model 2020 Waypoint rifles were short actions offered in .308 Win., 6.5 Creedmoor, 6mm Creedmoor and 6.5 PRC. These rifles proved to be workhorses for long-range shooters and hunters alike.

PUSHING FORWARD

Today, the Model 2020 Waypoint rifles expand their caliber options into the big leagues. With the new long-action caliber options, you can expect the same quality, reliability and .75 MOA guarantee that make the Model 2020 Waypoint so desirable — but now in a whole host of new chamberings.

The heart of the Model 2020 Waypoint is the custom-grade Model 700-pattern action. Made from premium materials, it is precision crafted to create a smooth and reliable action. The action is machined

IMAGE: MAX JACOBSEN/@PNW_PEW

after heat treatment to create the tightest tolerances possible. The raceway is cut with Electrical Discharge Machine (EDM) for absolute precision and smooth bolt movement. The bolt also features dual cocking cams. For all you who customize their rifles, you'll be happy to know the bolt knob is removable in case you wanted to replace it with your favorite aftermarket knob.

Ensuring accuracy is the 24" barrel offered in either stainless steel or a BSF barrel jacketed in a roll-wrapped carbon fiber sleeve and loaded under tension. According to Springfield, this ensures that 95 percent of the carbon fiber sleeve doesn't contact the barrel, providing cooling air gaps and promoting consistency between both cold- and hot-bore shots. The barrel under the sleeve is also fluted, which reduces weight and increases surface cooling area. All Waypoint barrels are completely free-floated for maximum accuracy, and their 5/8-24 threaded muzzles are topped off with an SA Radial Muzzle Brake.

Anyone who's trekked around with their rifle over long distances knows that ounces equal pounds, especially when it comes to your rifle. Springfield Armory chose to outfit the Model 2020 Waypoint with a sleek carbon fiber stock available in two colors, Ridgeline Camo or Evergreen Camo. Springfield collaborated with AG Composites to create hand-layered 100-percent carbon fiber and pillar-bedded stocks. These stocks give you rock-solid strength as well as light weight.

Finally, one of the most important features when creating a precision rifle is the trigger. The Model 2020 Waypoint utilizes a TriggerTech trigger that is adjustable from 2.5 to 5 lbs. The trigger features a low-profile, non-snag safety and employs TriggerTech's Frictionless Release Technology. The trigger is repeatable, dependable and intuitive in its break.

HANDS-ON

I've put my personal short-action Model 2020 Waypoint in .308 through its paces through multiple precision rifle classes as well as many range trips. I've shot it in stock configuration, and also highly customized it to my personal preferences. It's one of my go-to rifles for precision and reliability. My only gripe was that I wouldn't be able to hunt larger game if and when I finally drew some big game tags in Arizona.

I awaited the day that the long-action chamberings for the Model 2020 Waypoint would finally be released to satisfy my 7mm PRC dreams. Today is that day. Now I've got the best of both worlds in .308 and 7mm PRC for my Model 2020 Waypoint builds.

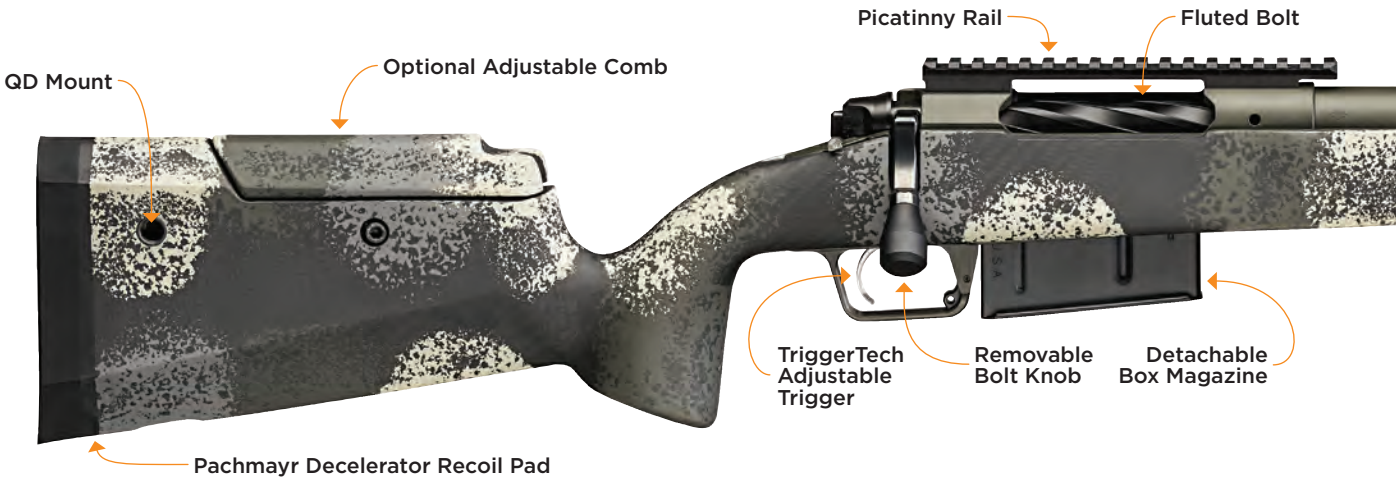
For this 7mm PRC, I am keeping it bone stock with just the addition of a Leupold VX-5HD 3-15X44 CDS-ZL2 scope. Maintaining a lightweight, sleek form while retaining extreme accuracy is very important to me when it comes to a larger-caliber hunting rifle, like the long-action Waypoint.

The very first thing that I do when I get a precision rifle is to throw a bipod on it, my favorite being the B&T Industries Atlas Bipod. The second is accuracy testing, to figure out what this rifle prefers and if it lives up to its .75 MOA guarantee. I hit the range with three flavors of Hornady ammo: Outfitter 7mm PRC 160-gr. CX, Precision Hunter 175-gr. ELD-X, and 180-gr. ELD Match.



Hunters will appreciate that these long-action hunting rifles are available in a wide range of popular game cartridges.

IMAGE: MAX JACOBSEN/@PNW_PEW



The three loads claim a muzzle velocity of right around 3,000 feet per second (fps). I've found over the years that certain rifles prefer some bullets over others, and my initial guess was that the 180-gr. ELD Match would produce a bit tighter groups as it's a match bullet created for maximum accuracy.

To understand the data a little more and to better see what the rifle is doing, I also brought my favorite chronograph, the Xero C1 Pro by Garmin. The size of the Xero makes it a complete game-changer for me. At less than the size of my fist, the Xero can fit into any range bag and easily sets up within seconds.

Admittedly, most of my time behind a bolt gun has been shooting 6.5 Creedmoor and .308, so I am a bit newer to the long-action side

MODEL 2020 WAYPOINT 7MM PRC

CHAMBERING	7mm PRC (other chamberings available)
BARREL	24" (stainless steel or carbon fiber)
WEIGHT	7 lbs., 5 oz. to 8 lbs., 2 oz.
OVERALL LENGTH	46"
SIGHTS	N/A, Picatinny rail
STOCK	Carbon fiber (fixed comb, or adjustable)
ACTION	Bolt-action
FINISH	Cerakote
CAPACITY	3 to 5 (one magazine)
MSRP	$2,173-$2,670

The rifle proved to be a shooter, beating its .75 MOA accuracy guarantee with a .50" group.



IMAGE: JEREMY TREMP

The long-action Model 2020 Waypoints feed from a reliable and durable detachable box magazine for ease of reloads.



IMAGE: JEREMY TREMP



of life. Settling in behind the rifle felt familiar and comfortable, but a nagging thought in the back of my mind was the question of what kind of recoil the 7mm PRC would produce. I aligned the reticle on the target, exhaled and put consistent pressure into the trigger until the shot broke. I was pleasantly surprised that the rifle felt similar to my .308 Model 2020 Waypoint in terms of recoil.

After getting the rifle warmed up with the Outfitter and Precision Hunter loads from Hornady, I settled in to really wring it out for accuracy with the Hornady ELD Match load. For my best three-shot group, I got a very tight 0.5" group, and an average velocity of 2,894 fps for the three shots. I also had a buddy shoot the 180-gr. Match bullets to verify my results, and he produced a tight 0.6" group.

This data reflected pretty much what I expected from that load. As far as the Xero data was concerned, each round I chronographed was very close to what was stated on the boxes for the Hornady ammo. I cannot overstate the value of the Xero C1 for precision shooting, especially if you are working on your own loads. The ease of use and value associated with it is undeniable.



The author topped his 7mm PRC rifle off with a Leupold scope and ran a range of Hornady loads through it for testing.

PERFORMANCE (100 YDS.)
MODEL 2020 WAYPOINT 7MM PRC

LOAD	VELOCITY	BEST GROUP
HORNADY 180-GR. ELD MATCH	2,894 fps	0.5"

Group size is measured in inches and is made up of three, three-shot groups and fired from a rest at 100 yards. Velocity in feet per second and is the average of three rounds at 10 ft. fired across a Garmin Xero C1 Pro chronograph. Abbreviations: ELD, (Extremely Low Drag); gr., (grain).

CONCLUSION

If you are in the market for a big boy long-action bolt gun, you can't go wrong with the Springfield Armory Model 2020 Long-Action Waypoint line-up. MSRP of the long-action Model Waypoints ranges from $2,173 to $2,670. They've got something for everyone, from stock configuration, to color and caliber options. I know I'm glad they are now available.

Also, right now there is a great "Gear Up"promotion going on for the Model 2020. If you purchase any new Model 2020 Waypoint, Redline or Boundary rifle from May 1st through December 31st, 2024, you can receive a totally free Model 2020 Rimfire Target .22 LR rifle with a black stock. With an MSRP of $434, this is a really nice bonus. Be sure to visit the Springfield Armory website to learn more.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
SPRINGFIELD-ARMORY.COM
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Adaptable to nearly 300 different handgun types, the N8 Tactical MultiFlex is shown here set up for OWB carry.

IMAGE: N8 TACTICAL

BREAKING THE MOLD

THE N8 TACTICAL MULTIFLEX — A HOLSTER FOR ANY NEED?

MIKE HUMPHRIES

ADAPTABILITY is the name of the game these days. While there is a certain charm to specialization in your EDC tools, there is also something to be said for adaptability. While in the past an adaptability approach could mean a sort of dilettantism with a "master of none" result, things are clearly changing.

Take for example the Springfield Armory Echelon. A duty-grade, full-size 9mm pistol, the Echelon is designed to offer a remarkable amount of adaptability, while not cutting any corners on performance or capability.

For example, it features the Central Operating Group, a serialized chassis system that can be easily swapped between available grip modules offered in a range of sizes and colors. In addition, the Echelon's Variable Interface System allows users to direct mount more than 30 popular optics and features self-locking pins that eliminate variance and left/right movement. The result is a highly adaptable optics system with minimal parts and excellent stability.

THE RIGHT PARTNER?

Obviously, what you pair with your handgun can be every bit as important as the pistol itself. Quality ammunition, for example, will help ensure reliability and performance. Likewise, a well-designed holster will secure your EDC when not needed while offering acceptable comfort for all-day carry.

So, is there is a holster as adaptable as the Echelon, and therefore a potentially good partner for it? What we are considering today is an offering from N8 Tactical, the MultiFlex IWB/OWB Holster. Designed for concealed carry, is the MultiFlex up to the task?

First, let's talk a bit about N8 Tactical itself. The company is a sister company to Crossbreed Holsters, a well-respected and well-known holster maker. Both N8 and Crossbreed are under the MTC Holsters family of brands.

At its most basic, the N8 Tactical MultiFlex is an open-top, concealed carry holster. Its shell is made of polypropylene and is cut to be compatible with red-dot optics. A key feature of the MultiFlex holster is that it is designed to fit a range of different pistols.

In fact, the company claims it fits more than 275 different handguns. The list of fits includes the Springfield XD, XD-E, XD-M and XD-M Elite lines and, of course, the Springfield Echelon pistol.

A notable feature of the rig is that it can be converted from inside-the-waistband (IWB) to outside-the-waistband (OWB), depending on your needs. The IWB belt clips are metal with a single attachment point, which allows a shirt to be tucked in over the pistol, though the size of the gun will likely determine how well it conceals.



The MultiFlex from N8 Tactical is designed to offer a wide range of adaptability for EDC needs. Shown with an Echelon pistol and configured for IWB carry.

IMAGE: N8 TACTICAL



IMAGE: N8 TACTICAL

The MultiFlex has nine total adjustment points for fitting it to your specific EDC firearm choice and carry preferences. Note the red highlight marks indicating the numerous adjustment points.

FITTING CHOICES

"The MultiFlex holster is the result of innovation with purpose," said Nathan Engelking, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at N8 Tactical and CrossBreed Holsters. "Rather than employing a generic shape to fit a lot of different guns, our design allows the user an incredible amount of adjustment so that each firearm has the perfect fit as well as retention to match the user's specific carry needs."

No one could accuse N8 Tactical's ambitious MultiFlex of lacking options. The holster is offered in two primary configurations — basically large and small, with the former for full-size pistols and the latter for compacts. The MultiFlex comes with both IWB clips and OWB loops.

In addition to being adaptable to IWB and OWB carry, the MultiFlex holster has a total of nine adjustment points, with screws spread out around the body of the holster that can be adjusted to find the best fit for your gun. Simply tighten down or loosen the screws to ensure the holster fits your pistol, adjusting it until you get the "audible click" on engagement as well as no side-to-side movement of the pistol.

The holster comes preset with a 12-degree cant — but, as should come as no surprise, this too is adaptable if you prefer a forward cant or a more neutral position. Maneuvering the belt clips or loops adjusts the carry angle. The MultiFlex is also designed to work with any 1½" holster paddle.

REAL-WORLD APPLICATION

Regarding the Echelon, I found cranking down the screws delivered a good level of "friction" for a solid hold. Personally, unless you are planning on swapping out the type of gun you carry in the holster regularly, it might be a good idea to apply a bit of Loctite Threadlocker once you get the fit you want.

The fit of the MultiFlex on the Echelon was good, with no perceptible movement from side-to-side. It did have a trivial amount of front to back movement that did not impair my ability to safely carry or draw the pistol.

Due to the multi-fit nature of the design, the MultiFlex has an open-muzzle design. Just be aware of this as it can allow the front sight to snag on clothing during a draw — particularly in IWB mode.

During my testing, I found the MultiFlex was very comfortable to wear. I personally prefer IWB rigs, and the polypropylene material used in the holster seemed ever so slightly softer to the touch than the many Kydex holsters I have used. This helped raise its comfort level for me.

The MultiFlex is clearly a very ambitious design concept. The N8 Tactical MultiFlex takes on this challenge with aplomb, and does it all at an amazingly reasonable price point of $49.95. The ability to fit a wide range of handguns and simultaneously offer a wide range of adjustment at a sub-$50 price point is remarkable.

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PRESSING

DOES THE BANISH SPEED K REPRESENT A NEW DIRECTION FOR SILENCER CENTRAL?

JOE KURTENBACH

SILENCER CENTRAL is known for two serious contributions to the shooting industry: Reimagining the suppressor purchase process, and its comprehensive line of Banish silencers. Regarding the latter, a recent addition to the family really stands out from the crowd – the Banish Speed K.

The Speed K is different. For starters, it doesn't look like its stablemates. It was engineered and built differently than the rest of the line so that, ultimately, it would perform differently.

Design priorities for most suppressors are noise reduction and cost. The whole point is to quiet the volume of a gun's report, so a viable suppressor simply has to work. In addition, the market for suppressors is highly competitive, so price and value also play a significant role.

Prior to the Speed K, Silencer Central pursued these sound objectives to a tee, and built the Banish line to offer excellent noise reduction and notable versatility at a fair price. Characteristics of the line included traditional stacked-baffle internal configurations as well as durable titanium construction. The result is tough, lightweight suppressors that offer top-tier noise reduction without top-tier costs.

Too, most Banish suppressors are multi-caliber units that utilize interchangeable mounts and adapters to accommodate

FORWARD



The compact and capable Speed K from Silencer Central is designed for .223/5.56mm carbines, and offers drastically reduced backpressure.

IMAGE: JAKE MILLER/SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

different muzzle thread pitches. Some are also modular, allowing users to add or remove baffles for greater suppression or improved portability. One example, the Banish 30, can handle any cartridge from .17-caliber rimfires up to .30-cal. magnums. It can also be run in either a 7″ or 9″ configuration.

For what it's worth, my personal recommendation to first-time suppressor shoppers is to start with a utility .30-cal. can exactly like the Banish 30. Most folks get hooked by the benefits of suppressed shooting — the reduced noise and recoil — and will become repeat shoppers. With offerings from the Banish 22 (.17 HMR, .22 LR, 5.7x28mm, etc.) up to the Banish 46 (.45-70 Gov't, .338 Lapua, and below), Silencer Central has them covered.

To sum up, Banish series suppressors are versatile, lightweight, durable, and, of course, quiet. They are ideal for recreational and hunting pursuits. The Banish Speed K, though, like I said, is different.

PERFORMANCE PRIORITIES

Why depart from a proven recipe and make the Speed K different? The answer stems from its intended use case, its *raison d'etre*. Unlike the rest of the suppressors in the Banish line, the Speed K was designed primarily for use on semi-auto (or even select-fire) carbines chambered for 5.56 NATO/.223 Rem. Further, it was intended to answer law enforcement requests for a new kind of suppressor — yet still provide a benefit that would appeal to civilian shooters.

The issue can be summed up in one word — backpressure. Most people who have fired a suppressed semi-automatic rifle likely remember the blast of hot, pressurized gas that hits as the shot goes off. For a few shots? Not a huge deal. For a sustained string of shots — particularly at a good pace — it can become an issue.

Backpressure reduction now tops the wish list for tactically oriented suppressors, and the solution is fairly simple: Let more gas out the front. The problem is, if you let more gas flow quickly through the suppressor to mitigate backpressure, you are also letting more noise out the front.

Enter the Banish Speed K. In consultation with dozens of professional end-users, Silencer Central set out to design a hybrid flow-



The 5.56mm Hellion — shown here in the optional gray color — features a short "bullpup" design that makes it an ideal platform for the compact Speed K suppressor.

through suppressor that would reduce backpressure, but still provide hearing-safe noise suppression. They also reimagined the external dimensions in order to reduce the silencer's length, ensuring that Speed K-equipped carbines would be portable and maneuverable within tight environments.

CONSTRUCTION & MATERIALS

To pull off this radical departure from the company's previous suppressor designs, Silencer Central employed both a different construction material and a new manufacturing technique.

To achieve a balance of flow-through and noise suppression, the Speed K incorporates a sophisticated array of internal blast chambers, baffles and vents to contain and control the energy and movement of gases. The components each play a role in capturing, slowing, directing and releasing the shot blast's energy and gas.

Such a complex configuration would be difficult, or impossible, to create with traditional reductive manufacturing methods, such as by using a CNC machine. Too, welding machined parts together could create potential weak points, and you can be sure that a suppressor intended for tactical use is going to be stressed. It needed to be built to last.

The company's solution was visionary. The Speed K is entirely made from Inconel through the additive manufacturing process of 3D printing. The use of Inconel 718 alloy is not new to suppressor design, but it is still somewhat exotic. The material is similar in weight and strength to stainless steel, but it is renowned for its heat resistance. In fact, Inconel is probably best known for its use on spacecraft engines because it can withstand the blast from rocket boosters. Using a 3D printer, complex internal designs become easy to achieve as the material is simply added, layer by layer, with no welds required.

It's worth noting here that I did all my testing with the Inconel version of the Speed K which weighs in at 14.1 oz. and has an MSRP of $1,199. The unit is also rated for full-auto fire. However, Silencer Central also offers a lighter weight model, the Speed K Ti, constructed of titanium. That version weighs in at 8.6 oz. and has an MSRP of $1,399. Both feature a black Cerakote finish.

IMAGE: CARSON MCDANIEL/SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

HANDS-ON

The Inconel-built Speed K is an absolute unit. The monolithic, mono-metal suppressor is both surprisingly short and deceptively hefty. With a direct thread adapter installed, the can is about 4.25″ tall and weighs just more than a pound. Its body diameter is right about 2″. In the hand, it reminds me of the size and weight of a smoke grenade.

Unlike their multi-caliber offerings, the Speed K is primarily intended to be a dedicated 5.56/.223 muzzle device. However, it is compatible with a wide range of rifle makes and models because it mounts using industry-standard HUB-pattern adapters. The can has an integral collar below the main body, the inside of which is threaded 1.375x24 to accept thread-specific muzzle adapters. Silencer Central includes one with the purchase of the Speed K and others can be added separately. There are eight thread options to choose from but, given the chambering, 1/2x28 is going to be the most common selection. The mounting adapters



The author ran the Speed K on a gray Hellion 5.56mm, with the two working together without a hiccup.

IMAGE: JOE KURTENBACH



Shown here is the Speed K and a direct thread adapter next to the threaded muzzle of the Hellion rifle.

are made of titanium.

For testing, I figured if we are going to go short, let's really go short, so I affixed the Speed K to a Springfield Armory Hellion. The 16"-barreled Hellion has an overall length of less than 30", so even by adding about 4" for the suppressor, the bullpup is still shorter than a standard length, 16"-barrel unsuppressed AR. That's an appealing package for defensive work in tight terrain.

I shot a variety of .223 and 5.56 ammunition to test functionality, and there were no problems. Happily, there was also no perceptible backpressure. Even shooting rapid strings, it seemed that the Speed K's flow-through design was working perfectly. Too, the added heft at the muzzle helped keep the rifle from rising during recoil, so I had the impression of a very flat-shooting carbine.

One of the nice features of the Hellion is its two-position adjustable gas block, "N" for normal, unsuppressed use, and "S" for suppressed shooting. Between the Hellion's piston-driven operating system and the flow-through qualities of the Speed K, I did not need to make any adjustments. With standard velocity ammunition, the gun cycled reliably without feeling overpressured. It was nice to know, though, that if I wanted to shoot a spicy 75-gr. 5.56 NATO load — or use a less sophisticated suppressor — the gun has a tunable gas system to accommodate.

The Speed K earns high marks for its compact design and the way it handles backpressure, but how does it sound? According to Silencer Central, the suppressor offers 20.9 decibels (Db) of noise reduction. As a result, the Speed K should bring the volume of carbine fire (approximately 160 Db) down to the edge of "hearing safe" (140 Db). I put the latter level in quotes because prolonged exposure to suppressed gunfire can still cause lasting damage to your hearing. Do yourself a favor and wear some ear protection whenever you go shooting, suppressed or not.



The Speed K is very compact, with an overall length of just 4". It is shown next to a .223 round for comparison.

CONCLUSION

Having gone hands-on with the Speed K, I have nothing but admiration for the feat of engineering that it represents. As a dedicated suppressor for defensive-style rifles, the Speed K from Silencer Central is a great option. I couldn't be happier the company is pressing forward in this new direction.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
SILENCERCENTRAL.COM
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IMAGES: CARSON MCDANIEL/SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

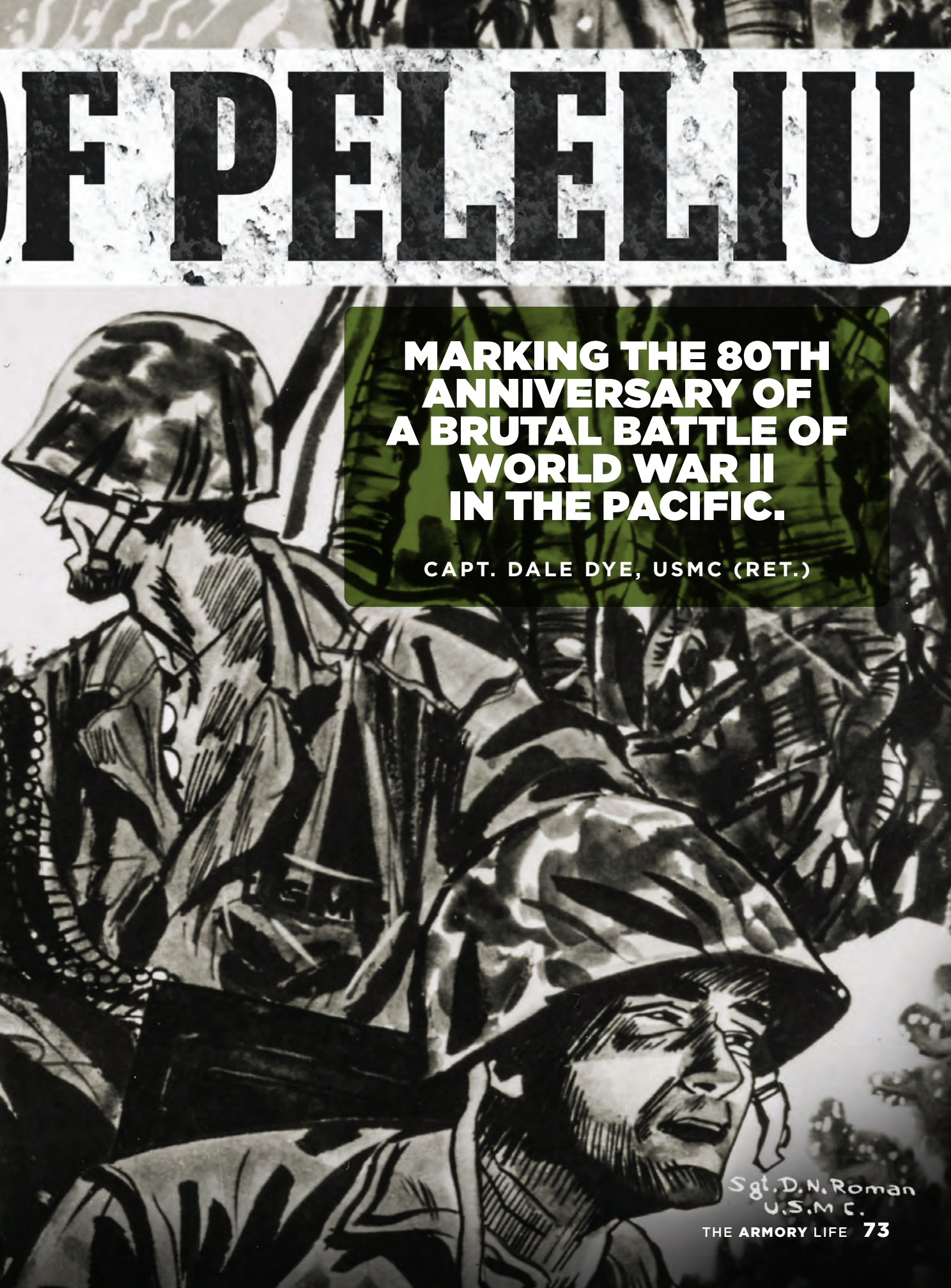
THE BATTLE O



This illustration, pulled from a recruitment poster, represents a group of American Marines fighting in the jungles of Peleliu.

IMAGE: NATIONAL ARCHIVES (74241368, 127-GR-59-A46016)

OF PELELIU



MARKING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF A BRUTAL BATTLE OF WORLD WAR II IN THE PACIFIC.

CAPT. DALE DYE, USMC (RET.)



Pacific Fleet craft launch a rocket attack against the beaches prior to landings by the 1st Marine Division on September 15, 1944.

IMAGE: NATIONAL ARCHIVES (80-G-59500)

Editor's Note: Eight decades ago on Sept. 15th, 1944, the battle for the island of Peleliu began. Spearheaded by the 1st Marine Division, Operation Stalemate II was forecasted to take less than a week. Instead, entrenched Japanese defenders made the battle a lengthy — and costly — one. Capt. Dale Dye, USMC (Ret.) takes us with him on his personal tour of the battlefield in this article.

Like most newly minted Marines, I was forced by boot camp curriculum to become an amateur historian. It was part of the drill. You learned about the founding of the Corps and early recruiting efforts at Philadelphia's Tun Tavern — born in a bar; how cool is that? — and then went on to memorize dates and places significant to the Marine ethos right up to our own time wearing the eagle, globe and anchor. Most of my fellow boots promptly forgot the gritty details when they left Parris Island or San Diego. Not me.

Hooked on the colorful stories of past glories, I kept digging into Marine Corps history like a prospector mining for gold, searching for nuggets that revealed more than dates and generalities. What I thirsted for were insights, first-person accounts from PFCs in the rear ranks. Since there were no living veterans of operations against the Barbary Pirates or the Boxer Rebellion around to interview, my focus fell on the infamous battles of World War II in the Pacific. There was still a significant number of old codgers around who had heard the owl and seen the elephant at places like Guadalcanal, Saipan, Okinawa, and Iwo Jima.

I hit a vein of pure historical gold one night in a musty, off-base bar when I struck up a conversation with a retired Master Gunnery Sergeant with service as a PFC rifleman with the 1st Marine Division in the Pacific. He served in the 1st Marines under the legendary Col. L.B. "Chesty" Puller, which gave him a certain panache as he revealed some eye-opening details about the deprivations of Guadalcanal in the Solomons and the follow-on fight at Cape Gloucester.

He was salty and sagacious, with a sharp memory for detail. Most importantly, he was willing to answer my probing questions from the perspective of a man who had observed those fights mostly through the peep sight of an M1 rifle. We met several times when I could get away from regular duties at Camp Pendleton, and I got a feel for what it must have been like for an 18-year-old from a farming community in Kansas to steam around the Pacific aboard aging, vulnerable amphibs, island-hopping over coral-ringed beaches and crawling through the jungles facing fanatical Japanese defenders.

It was like listening to your grandad or a favorite uncle reminiscing around a campfire, dropping fascinating family gems. Until I mentioned Peleliu. The Master Gunny just shook his head. It took at least three more beers to find out he'd fought with King Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines on Peleliu

and wound up barely surviving hotspots like The Point on White Beach 1, the Horseshoe, the Five Sisters and the Umurbrogol massif.

He could only go so far in his descriptions of action on Peleliu, and then he just developed a thousand-yard stare across a 20-foot barroom. "Ain't no way to describe it," the Master Gunny whispered. "If you wasn't there on Peleliu, ain't no way you could understand that rat-bastard of a fight. By D plus four I wasn't no human being no more. No buddies left. I fired at anything that moved in front of me. I just wanted to kill."

At that point, I vowed — somehow, someday — I would stand on that infamous island myself and explore Peleliu.

MY PILGRIMAGE

It was 50 years later, long after the old Master Gunny had made his last muster, when I got my chance. As Military Advisor for the HBO feature "The Pacific," I was given the welcome assignment to recon some of the island battles we would depict in the TV mini-series to be shot on various Australian locations.

It was a long, complicated flight from Los Angeles through Guam in the Marianas to Koror in the Palau Islands. It's no stretch to say the Palau Islands — particularly Peleliu, where I was headed — is a bit off the standard tourist map. The Palau group is in the Micronesia area of the Western Pacific. It's an archipelago of some 500 large and small islands. For reference, Guam is 730 miles to the northeast, and the Philippines are 600 miles to the west.

We flew from Guam to the capital on Koror and got overnight accommodation on the largest island of Babelthuap (Bobbletop) while negotiating for a boat to take us 25 miles southwest to Peleliu where I would spend a week exploring battle sites.



IMAGE: USMC ARCHIVES (COLL/3948)

After the beachhead had been established on Peleliu, the inland drive for the Marines was underway.

The internet wasn't as much of a thing in 2010 and even less of a thing on Babelthuap where trans-oceanic phone lines were rare and restricted. I broke out the reference library — mostly Marine Corps historical monographs — that I carried with me and went to work studying the broad brushstrokes of the Palau campaign.

PLANS FOR BATTLE

The assault on Peleliu was designed to protect the right flank of MacArthur's scheduled return to the enemy-occupied Philippines by seizing deep-water ports and airfields that the Japanese might use to disrupt that drive. Palaus had both in abundance, and the Allies were particularly worried about a pair of airfields on Peleliu and Ngesebus ("N'yesbus" in blended Polynesian and Melanesian), a smaller island located just a few hundred meters north.

Admiral Chester Nimitz, with his Navy and Marine staff, cobbled together Operation Stalemate, which would send elements of Marine General Roy Geiger's III Amphibious Corps to seize major targets in the Palaus with emphasis on Peleliu and Angaur, located seven miles southwest of Peleliu. D-Day on Peleliu was set for 8 September 1944, but flash reports from Admiral Bull Halsey nearly canceled the whole show.

Halsey had been sailing his 3rd Fleet throughout the southern Philippines area, launching repeated air strikes from his carriers. He became convinced that the PI was not as heavily defended as planners anticipated. He recommended that the forces slated for Operation Stalemate II would be better employed in the Philippine operations and urged that Stalemate be scrubbed, thus safely isolating the 14,000 Japanese occupying the Palaus on Babelthuap, Koror, Angaur and Peleliu with the majority of Japanese General Murai Kenjiro's forces dug in heavily on the latter.



IMAGE: NATIONAL ARCHIVES (176250432; 127-GW-742-96674)

A flag officer and his staff talk to a shirtless Col. Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller during the Battle of Peleliu.

Nimitz and staffers dithered, but it was really too late to cancel such a major operation with forces including the Pacific War veteran 1st Marine Division (Peleliu/Ngesebus) and the Army's untested 81st Infantry Division Wildcats (Angaur/Corps reserve for Peleliu) already afloat in the area. Nimitz decided to proceed with Stalemate II, moving D-Day eight days later than originally planned, to 15 September.

FINDING A FOOTHOLD

From the air, Peleliu most resembles a big lobster claw with pincers pointed northeast. From a boat cruising just beyond the island's fringe reef, I got a landing force perspective of the actual beaches on the southwest end of Peleliu. Those beaches were designated in 1944 as White 1 and 2 on the left or northern end and Orange 1, 2, and 3 to the right or south. Windswept rows of tall coconut palms crowded the sandy stretch of just over 2,000 meters, where the 1st MarDiv came ashore with three regimental combat teams in line abreast.

The 1st Marines (Puller) would land on the left flank over White Beaches 1 and 2. The 5th Marines (Col. Bucky Harris) would land in the center sector over Orange Beaches 1 and 2. The 7th Marines (Col. Herman Hanneken) were on the right flank landing over Orange Beach 3. The basic scheme of maneuver was simple and fairly straightforward. Come ashore, establish a beachhead, advance to take the airfields a short distance inland, then wheel left or north, driving Japanese forces from all positions along the way. As usual, the Marines would find it much simpler said than done.

The landing on Peleliu plan and basic scheme of maneuver were approved by 1st MarDiv CG Major General William Rupertus, who believed the Peleliu operation would be a relative cakewalk lasting no more than a few days or a week at most. Glassing Peleliu to the north of the landing beaches, I found it hard to believe any commander would have made that kind of prediction. Looming over the island like the spiky spine of some mythical dragon was the Umurbrogol Mountain range, a coral and

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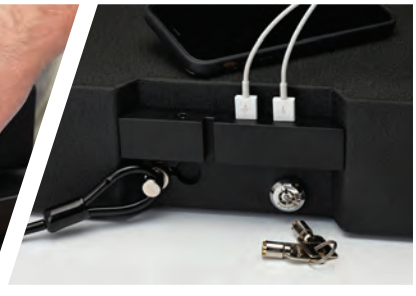
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limestone massif where Japanese defenders had created hardpoint defenses like termites infesting a rotted tree stump.

The native skipper nosed our boat ashore on White Beach 1 where I wanted to get a close look at the murderous coral formation Puller's 1st Marines called "The Point." That little promontory overlooking the otherwise ruler-straight landing area had allowed Japanese gunners to pour enfilading fire up and down the landing beaches. It was a memory that brought shudders to my friend the Master Gunny when he talked about it. I wanted to stand on that ground where K/3/1 had nearly been wiped out on D-Day in September 1944.

Stepping ashore on pristine white sand, which reflected tropical sunlight in stifling waves of damp heat, it was quickly obvious why water would have been such a precious commodity on Peleliu. Several reports indicated that what water came ashore to refill Marine canteens arrived in cans and barrels previously used to carry aviation fuel. It was tainted, nearly unpotable, and that added to the misery of the men slugging it out on the island.

But Peleliu, to a post-war visitor, presented a sleepy, peaceful scene unlike what the landing forces would have encountered when fringing palms were shattered by fire from battleships and cruisers offshore. The crystal-clear air here was then full of choking, blinding smoke and flame as Marines came ashore from LVTs, blindly advancing under fire.

On this day all these years later, we could see for what looked like miles up and down the western coastal road, through the palms to the ruins of the Japanese airfield, intersected by a spikey finger of the Umurbrogol pointing at high ground to the right and bloody sites like the China Wall, the Five Brothers and Five Sisters, and Death Valley. Those were places I wanted to observe closely, trying to put myself in the mindset of the men who had to assault and reduce them.

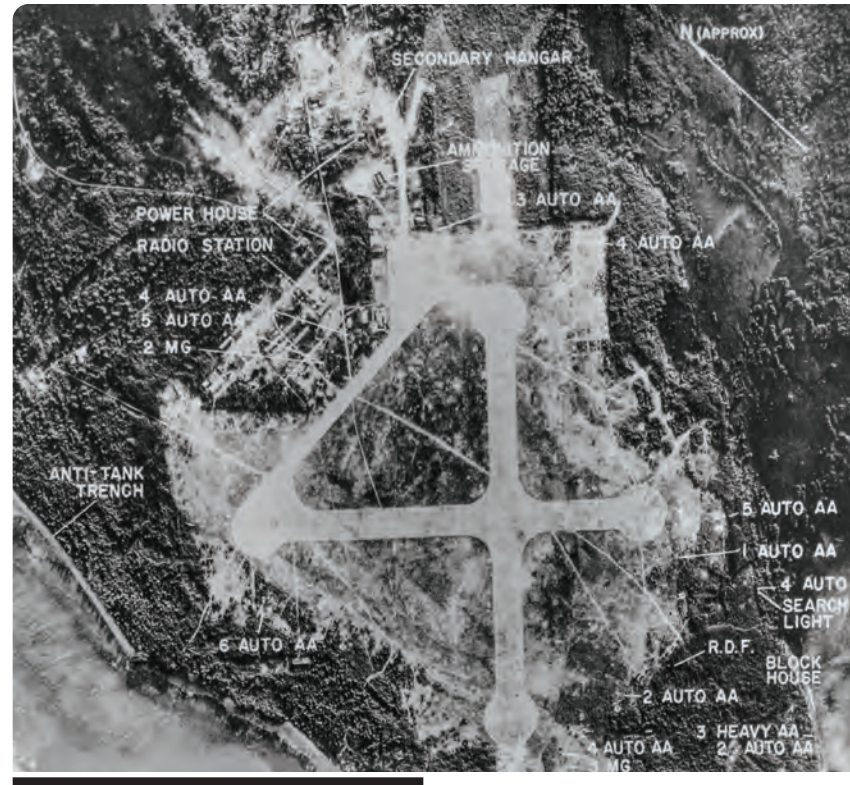


IMAGE: NATIONAL ARCHIVES (204969977, 342-FH-3A37989-54245AC)

The heavily fortified airfield at Peleliu Island was captured by Marines during the second day's fighting of the assault. This annotated photo shows important defensive positions.

But first, as an homage to my old friend the Master Gunny, I explored The Point on the far north end of the landing beaches. With his buddies from King Company 3/1, he'd held out here against savage Japanese attack and counterattack for 30 long, bloody hours after H-hour on Operation Stalemate II. The point today is simply a rugged coral ridge rising some 30 feet above the level of the adjacent landing beaches. In 1944, it was honeycombed with Japanese caves, firing points, defensive blockhouses and pillboxes.

Standing atop the ridge in the ruins and concrete rubble of a casement that once housed a 25mm automatic cannon, I could see why The Point had to be taken and held. Firing from here, Japanese defenders could sweep everything close offshore and all across the landing beaches with deadly fire. Looking at The Point from a slightly higher perspective, the way counterattacking Japanese would have seen the besieged strongpoint, it was easy to understand why only 18 men from the King Company element defending the point were still standing when they were finally relieved.

The first week of fighting on Peleliu was tough on attackers and defenders alike, but Puller's 1st Marines were particularly hard hit. Caught in a meat-grinder as they struggled for a toehold to begin clearing the Umurbrogol, and under constant pressure from the Division CG to "continue the momentum," by D+6 the 1st Marines were a sagging skeleton,


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The remains of a Sherman tank used in the assault on positions in Death Valley, a Japanese strongpoint in the Umurbrogol Pocket on Peleliu.

a regiment in name only, having suffered nearly 1,800 casualties, or 70 percent of their strength either KIA or WIA.

When III AC Commander Major General Roy Geiger visited the struggling 1st MarDiv, he was more than a little upset and demanded that what was left of Puller's regiment be relieved and evacuated to a rest camp on Pavuvu in the Solomons. Much to General Rupertus' displeasure, the Army's 321st Regimental Combat Team of the 81st Infantry Division was brought to Peleliu from Angaur to replace the 1st Marines as the Allies struggled up into the Umurbrogol mountains, steadily pushing north against stubborn Japanese defenders.

SURVEYING THE FIELD

While the scars of war on Peleliu are overgrown by a dense carpet of tropical vegetation, there are still plenty of relics lying around untouched by natives who earn a few dollars from vets, history buffs or SCUBA divers who infrequently visit the island.

Late in our stay, I was exploring Ngesebus just north of Peleliu and the site of a secondary Japanese airfield when I literally bumped into a complete LVT, rusting where it was disabled or abandoned, but still mounting a pair of M1919 .30-caliber machine guns in pintle mounts.

By D+14, Marine aircraft, primarily F-4U Corsairs, were operating from Peleliu's captured airfield. When 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines staged a textbook amphibious assault led by tanks and LVTs from Peleliu across about 350 meters of water to reach Ngesebus, they were covered by aircraft from Marine Fighter Squadron (VMF)-114, marking the first time in the war that a U.S. Marine amphibious landing was supported entirely by Marine aviation. The flight time from Peleliu to Ngesebus was so short that the pilots didn't even bother to raise their landing gear before rolling in on targets.

Back on Peleliu, it was low tide when we ducked into a large cave in the Umurbrogol foothills. Rocks surrounding the entrance still bore scorch marks from a backpack flamethrower or perhaps one mounted in a tank or LVT.

Marine demolition squads were in heavy demand on Peleliu, armed with satchel charges and backed by flamethrowers. They operated by a simple if dangerous creed: Blast 'em, burn 'em and then blast 'em again to seal the deal with rockslides.

Other than flame weapons and high explosive charges, the preferred method of reducing the rabbit warren of enemy bunkers and fortifications on Peleliu was with direct fire, flat-trajectory weapons such as the 2.36" bazooka, rifle grenades or the ill-conceived T-20 60mm mortar projector, which stood some chance of putting a round through a firing slit or embrasure. High-angle fire from standard mortars or howitzers was less effective against coral and concrete reinforced positions. And there were hundreds of those on Peleliu.

Another cave complex near the Five Sisters area of the Umurbrogol was long, cramped and circuitous, with a low overhead composed mostly of squirming bats that hung from the limestone. The damp coral floor was littered with cartridge cases, rotting Japanese equipment and other detritus, including a case of grenades and a knee mortar that looked as if would still fire if someone was interested in chipping away the rust.

Most of the caves we explored were similar. In just a few hours, I picked up a fairly intact Japanese gas mask in its issue bag, several canteens and a couple of Nambu machine gun magazines. How such relics resist the elements on Peleliu I'll never know, but they do if you're willing to explore in depth.

Native Palauans don't mess with this stuff for the most part. Still, there is a mildewed, one-room museum fronted by the remnants of a Type 95 Ha-Go light tank towed to the site from where it was destroyed during a Japanese tank battalion's suicidal assault on the landing forces in the late after-

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noon of D-Day on Peleliu.

That doomed counterattack, with infantrymen hanging on to the tank turrets, was not typical of Japanese tactics here. After-action reports note American surprise at the lack of fanatical banzai charges on Peleliu. When Japanese forces attacked this late in the war, they did it methodically, using professional fire and maneuver tactics rather than the all-out suicidal charges they engaged in during earlier battles in the Pacific.

We spent more days on Peleliu exploring the remnants of the old Japanese airfield and the hangars and structures that still remain there as a testament to the Korean, Okinawan and native laborers who built them in sufficient strength to resist artillery, naval gunfire and airstrikes that pounded them relentlessly for weeks during Operation Stalemate II.

A day prior to leaving Peleliu, I spent a few hours in the prone position overlooking the Five Brothers. I'd come up there on a long, hot hike to pay my respects to the men of my old 1st Marine Division at a monument atop the Five Brothers, but I spent a good deal of time just lying prone amidst the coral and scrub letting my imagination run, eyeing dark splotches that marked cave entrances, wondering how anyone survived brutal eyeball-range combat in such ugly conditions. No close combat is ever pleasant, as I learned in my own crucible experiences in Vietnam, but this stuff on Peleliu … this stuff must have been a frightening agony. How did anyone survive?

Truthfully, way too many did not. When the butcher's bill was totted up at the end of the Palau campaign, the Marines had lost 1,050 killed and 5,450 wounded. The Army's 81st Division lost 1,393 on Peleliu and another 260 killed on Angaur. The Japanese defenders at Peleliu lost an estimated 10,900 killed in action, many of them still resting in those caves near me in the Umurbrogol Pocket. Only 202 prisoners were taken on Peleliu, and of those, only 19 were Japanese. The rest were Korean or Okinawan laborers.



Veterans and families of the 1st Division Marines who fought on Peleliu erected this monument in the Five Brothers area of the Umurbrogol massif.

Their bodies were never positively identified, but most historians — American and Japanese — believe both General Murai Kenjiro, who commanded the IJA 14th Infantry Division, and his Peleliu subordinate, who commanded the reinforced 2nd Infantry Regiment, died somewhere in the fighting for the Umurbrogol Pocket.

As for the American CG of the 1st Marine Division on Peleliu, the man who predicted the whole thing would be over in a few days with light casualties? Major General William Rupertus was relieved of command at the end of the battle and sent home to run a schools command. He died of a heart attack before the war ended.

CONCLUSION

I learned a lot exploring Pacific battlefields, and some of that found its way into the HBO miniseries that featured a couple of episodes set on Peleliu. I came to understand why my late friend, the old Master Gunny, did not want to talk about that particular battle.

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READY

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY'S "LOCK & LOAD" GIVEAWAY WILL HAVE YOU PREPPED FOR AN AMAZING OFF-ROAD ADVENTURE.

JEREMY TREMP

YOU SUDDENLY WAKE UP with a start in the middle of the night. Moments before, you were ripping down the backcountry in a tricked-out, Kolpin-equipped Polaris Ranger XP 1000. You were flying along in a UTV packed full of rifles, suppressors and enough ammo to shoot to your heart's content. The wind was whipping, the sun was shining and you were living the dream.

This dream could be your reality — the dream of a giveaway of such epic proportions you can hardly imagine receiving the message, "You've won!".

Who would give away a Polaris Ranger outfitted with Kolpin accessories, five rifles, four suppressors and a boatload of ammo?

Springfield Armory — with the support of partners Kolpin Outdoors, Silencer Central and Federal — of course! Springfield has worked up one of the biggest giveaways you could hope for, and one lucky winner will take home all the spoils in an amazing UTV. So, let's dive into what exactly we have going on here with this exciting Lock & Load giveaway.

YOUR CHARIOT

Let's start by discussing the means of conveyance for all this amazing Kolpin gear, as well as the guns, suppressors and ammo — a side-by-side 2024 Polaris Ranger XP 1000.

The Ranger three-seater is powered by an 82-horsepower ProStar engine that absolutely rips. The Ranger can tow 2,500 lbs., and the rear box can carry up to 1,000 lbs. When hitting the trails, you can do so in confi-



TO ROLL



Want to win a top-tier UTV outfitted with the best Kolpin accessories, these Springfield Armory rifles (optics and case not included), some Silencer Central suppressors and a boatload of Federal ammo?

WATCH THE VIDEO:
THE ULTIMATE OFFROAD RIG?

dence with 13″ ground clearance and 11″ suspension travel. Giving you that ground clearance is the 27″ 8-ply Pro Armor X-Terrain tires and 14″ wheels.

The Ranger has three modes for throttle control: work, standard and — my favorite — performance. Additionally, the drive system can be paired with the kind of driving you are doing. You can switch between High Performance On-Demand AWD, 2WD and VersaTrac Turf Mode.

I spent my time testing the Ranger in Northern Arizona where we have a lot of dirt roads and some more rocky off-the-beaten-track trails. Driving up and down the dirt roads for scouting locations was a blast; the Ranger had the power to get up and go, and the stability was also surprisingly comfortable. I also noted that the interior of the Ranger was comfortable and quite elegant for such a workhorse of a vehicle.

STEPPING UP

Now, if all that gets your blood pumping, let me tell you how Kolpin Outdoors helped make this Ranger as good as it can get.

A side-by-side is an amazing tool to get around, get work done or have a great time outdoors. It's made even better by companies like Kolpin, that make great accessories for safety, comfort and utility. Kolpin partnered with Springfield to outfit this Ranger with some of the coolest accessories and upgrades to give you the best experience possible.

The Ranger was outfitted with Kolpin's glass windshield with manual wiper blade, Rear windshield panel, Rhino Grips for rifle storage, overbed cargo rack, side mirrors, winch kit, 40L Guardian storage box, steel roof, roof foam liner insulation, heavy-duty steel half doors with upper soft doors, front stitched door bags, and a chainsaw mount.

Needless to say, Kolpin was able to take a solid foundation with the Ranger and really turn it into something special. All these accessories really added to the UTV's performance and comfort. I noticed a huge benefit from the doors, roof and windshields in the Arizona terrain where dust, heat and rocks can be brutal. I also really appreciated the little closable vents at the bottom of the Kolpin windshield as it allowed just enough air to come into the cab to cool me off when driving.

The soft upper doors with the steel doors include a window that can be zipped up or down depending on the weather. The steel roof is great for added security and comfort. Best of all was the insulation that was installed. Having a dark-colored steel roof on a vehicle in the extreme heat can really turn a vehicle like this into an oven. That was not the case with the Kolpin-equipped Ranger.

On the interior of the doors were the Kolpin front door bags, made from durable materials and stitched with a bold orange string, giving them a very stylish appearance. The zippered compartments easily store documents or other small items.

The rear box was outfitted with dual Rhino Grips on the side and an overbed cargo rack with more Rhino Grips installed for horizontal rifle storage. They also included a nice water- and dust-resistant 40L Guardian storage box. The cargo rack has mounting points all over it to be configured specifically for your needs, and it also almost doubles the space of your box to give you more surface area to pack gear. Finally, the winch is an absolute must for any off-road utility vehicle to either get you out of a sticky situation, assist someone in need, or simply give you more options to get tasks done.

I love the Kolpin Rhino Grips.



This impressive UTV comes fully kitted out with all the gears, guns and ammo you could need for an incredible offroad adventure.

I've used them on E-bikes, Quads and UTVs. The freedom to store and stow your rifles to and from camp or hunting locations is quick and easy. I've even used them as makeshift rests for improvised shooting positions with a rifle. The ability to swivel and hold the gun stable is perfect for the task.

Rounding out the Kolpin gear package are Stronghold gun boots, Stronghold auto-latch mounts, a Cargo Spider strap system, and a dust/rain cover for the UTV.

ADDED FIREPOWER

So, we've got a tricked out UTV that has mounting solutions for some cool rifles and enough storage for piles of ammunition. Guess we need some guns, right?

How about a Model 2020



The Ranger XP 1000 UTV proved to be a beast on the trail, with exceptional performance and capabilities.

Redline, 5.56mm Hellion bullpup, 5.56mm SAINT Victor AR, Model 2020 Rimfire in .22 LR, and a 7.62mm SOCOM 16 CQB M1A? Five of the coolest rifles on the market today, loaded up on the Ranger.

The Redline is a lightweight, compact backcountry bolt-action hunting rifle outfitted with a Grayboe Trekker stock, carbon fiber barrel and TriggerTech Trigger. The Redline guarantees a .75 MOA three-shot group with factory match ammo and a skilled shooter.

The short-stroke piston-operated Hellion bullpup 5.56mm is a unique rifle where the trigger is located forward of the magazine, giving you a 16"-barreled rifle with a total length of only 28.25" at the shortest.

The SAINT Victor 5.56mm is a fantastic rifle with a 15" M-Lok free-float handguard, nickel-boron coated flat trigger, mid-length gas system, pinned gas block and flip-up sights. A collapsible buttstock rounds out the package.

No collection is complete without a nice .22-caliber rifle, and Springfield has you covered with the Model 2020 Rimfire .22 LR rifle. The Rimfire Target model has a heavy-profile threaded barrel for consistency and accuracy, an extended mag release for easy reloads, and a comfortable synthetic stock that takes notes from its older brother, the Waypoint.

Finally, there's the heavy-hitting M1A SOCOM 16 CQB .308 rifle. You can't hear the name Springfield Armory without thinking of the legendary M1A rifle and its variants. The SOCOM 16 CQB is a 16" rifle with an Archangel CQB adjustable stock and an excellent two-stage trigger.

THE NEXT LEVEL

To recap, if you win, you'll get a UTV, a boatload of Kolpin accessories and five Springfield Armory rifles. How about some suppressors for them?

Silencer Central, known for their incredibly easy purchase and transfer process, is throwing in four of its state-of-the-art suppressors to this massive prize package. A Banish Backcountry for the Redline, Banish 22 for the Rimfire, and two Banish Speed Ks for the Victor and the Hellion. The Backcountry is incredibly light and short, making it ideal for a hunting rifle. The Banish 22 is lightweight and nearly silent for your rimfire rifle. The brand-new Speed K suppressor combines compact dimensions with reduced backpressure, making it perfect for rifles like the Hellion and the Victor.

With all this fantastic gear, it would be a shame if you didn't get any ammo to feed all these guns. That's where Federal comes in, generously providing a case of ammunition for each chambering to ensure you'll get to hit the range right away to get some trigger time on all these amazing firearms.

CONCLUSION

I'm jealous of whoever ends up winning this amazing Lock & Load giveaway package, which is worth more than $39,000.

Be sure to get signed up for your chance to win. There's a QR code here at the end of this article you can use to go directly to the sign-up page. Good luck!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:

SPRINGFIELD-ARMORY.COM
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M1A

THE NEW 50TH ANNIVERSARY commemorative Springfield Armory M1A rifle is more than just a temporal milestone. Sporting a high-end stock with a unique commemorative coin, a military-style wooden crate, a classic OD green cotton sling and all the bells and whistles, this M1A signifies something truly special.

The M1A first drew breath in 1974, and there will only be 1,974 copies of this bespoke rifle released to the public. In addition to all that cool-guy stuff, this M1A also comes with a GI bayonet lug, just like Uncle Sam and John Garand intended.

AGING GRACEFULLY

I'll admit I used to think that any 50-year-old anything was absolutely ancient. That is, after all, fully half a century. And then my own personal Hobbs meter screamed past that point, and 50 years suddenly just seemed like a decent start.

I was eight years old when Springfield Armory sold their first M1A. As a young buck utterly

50TH ANNIVERSARY

U.S. RIFLE 7.62 MM

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY 1974-2024

WILL DABBS, MD

addicted to firearms myself, I remember them in the gun periodicals of the day. At a time when my yard-mowing money struggled to keep me in cap gun ammunition, the possibility that I might someday own an M1A myself seemed lyrically impractical.

A tricked-out M1A actually very nearly ended my burgeoning marriage. I had $400 meticulously horded over many birthdays and Christmases as a gun buddy and I hit the big regional gun show. I also packed a decent Italian tactical shotgun to use as barter. When I saw that tricked-out Springfield Armory M1A sitting on the table, I thought I could hear angels singing.

I struck a deal to swap my cash, the scattergun, and $300 on the plastic for that optimized M1A rifle. I got my buddy to drive home so I could drool over the gorgeous thing. Once back, I eagerly showed the new addition to my young bride. She knew nothing of firearms, but she recognized quality. She knew immediately I did not get that rifle for $400 and a high-mileage shotgun. I was wrapping up my last year in engineering school, and she was the sole breadwinner. I was doomed.

If you're wondering, everything turned out OK. I still have both the rifle and the awesome wife.

ORIGIN STORY

The selective-fire M14 from which the semi-auto M1A spawned did not long serve as Uncle Sam's official service rifle. Adopted in 1957, the M14 does still remain a special-issue weapon serving downrange with selected marksmen, even today.

The M14 was technically born in the 1930s. A French-Canadian named John Garand (pronounced, I'm reliably informed, with the emphasis on the second syllable, like "Errand"), designed the first T1E2 rifle that was ultimately designated the "Semi-automatic Rifle, Caliber 30, M1." While the M1 Garand might seem bulky, heavy and slow by today's standards, that bad boy absolutely dominated back in the day.

The M1 rifle was laboriously loaded from the top via awkward eight-round en-bloc clips. En-bloc meant that the clip became part of the action while firing. American planners were already scheming out a replacement by the onset of World War II. However, WWII was a come-as-you-are party.

American G.I.s freed the world behind their amazing M1 rifles. We made nearly 5.5 million copies. They adored every single one.

TACTICAL CRED

My wife's grandfather fought in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy all the



way until V-E day. I asked his opinions of the weapons they used. He respected the M1 Carbine but said you often had to hit a man several times with it. By contrast, he said if you could connect with anything substantial with an M1, that enemy soldier was just done.

Once the guns fell silent in 1945, Earle Harvey and Colonel Rene Studler were transferred to the original Springfield Armory to resume work on the M1's replacement. The new rifle would eventually become the T44 in the new 7.62x51mm round.

The T44 was everything the WWII-vintage M1 could have been. Using the same basic action but now offering selective-fire operation and a readily detachable



The limited-edition 50th Anniversary M1A Rifle, featuring an attractive eastern white pine custom display case, gives you a chance to own your own part of the rifle's iconic history.

20-round box magazine, the T44 was 44″ long and weighed 9.2 lbs., empty. Despite the smaller footprint and lighter weight of the 7.62x51mm round, the rifle offered ballistic performance comparable to that of the larger .30-06 of the M1 Garand. Harvey, Studler and the rest of their team had clearly captured lightning in a bottle.

DETAILS

The T44 was truly remarkable. It clearly hewed to what made the M1 so great, but modernized the design where needed. It included a bolt roller to minimize frictional effects. The abbreviated gas system and long flash suppressor cut a dashing figure.

The sights included a readily adjustable, user-friendly rear sight. Windage and elevation adjustments required nothing more than a standard set of human fingers.

Magazines had to be hooked in the front and rocked into place, but this made the rifle easy to load with the bolt closed. The safety was the same pivoting tab located in the front of the trigger guard that was pioneered in the previous M1.

The T44 would gain the formal appellation M14, and this sexy beast subsequently endeared itself to generations of G.I.s.

THE M14 GOES TO WAR

A dear friend who served in Vietnam as a Navy SEAL in 1970 packed an M14 rifle and as many magazines as he could carry every time he ventured downrange. Like my wife's grandfather before him, that beefy .30-cal. round made the extra weight burden worthwhile for him. This argument remains valid even today.

And so, the M14 soldiered on for the next nearly seven decades. The M14 at one point or another was modified into a squad automatic weapon, a close combat tool, and a designated marksman rifle. The old girl just won't quit. And then in 1974, Springfield Armory began making these magnificent rifles in Geneseo, just for us.

IMPRESSIONS

There's something vaguely sultry about the way that big, exposed bolt cycles back and forth on the M1A. The synergistic combination of steel and walnut just touches something primal in the gun nerd's soul.

This is a serious rifle firing a serious cartridge designed to do serious things. Recoil is present without being objectionable, and the gun fits my anatomy like a second skin. When fed most any decent ammo, the M1A is as reliable as a mother's love. It will also shoot way straighter and farther than my aging eyes are capable of managing.

M1A 50TH ANNIVERSARY RIFLE

CHAMBERING	.308 Win./7.62 NATO
BARREL	22″
WEIGHT	9 lbs., 8 oz.
OVERALL LENGTH	44.33″
SIGHTS	Aperture rear, National Match front
STOCK	Upgraded walnut with inlet medallion
ACTION	Semi-auto
FINISH	Parkerized
CAPACITY	10 (one magazine included)
MSRP	$2,499



GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

The M1A is an innately attractive firearm. The 50th Anniversary version is all the more so. Featuring all of the rugged secret sauce that makes the rack grade M1A such an unstoppable force on the range, this special-edition rifle is all that and pretty to boot.

The package starts with an M1A. Each copy is marked 1 of 1974 on the op rod. Custom serial numbers run from M1A0001 through M1A1974. Then there is the gorgeous upgraded walnut stock with a 50th Anniversary Gold Medallion inlay.

The gun comes with an eastern white pine custom wooden crate sporting 50th Anniversary markings in the interior along with an M14 Army Operator and Maintenance Manual, M1A cleaning kit, G.I. sling, and Certificate of Authenticity. The rifle ships in the expected superlative Springfield Armory padded range bag.

I must say, the whole package is truly remarkable. The rifle displayed in the open wooden crate is truly a great conversation piece, and captures the unique appeal of the M14 design — a military rifle that represents a time when guns were made of wood and steel. Combine that with the attractive markings on the crate along with all the cool gear you get with it, and you have a rare and appealing addition to any gun enthusiast's collection.



The anniversary rifle comes with a host of accessories and documentation, in addition to the rifle and its presentation case.

While the end result is undeniably attractive, I will point out this is still a working firearm. You could conceivably use this 50th Anniversary M1A for hunting, target shooting, recreational blasting, and home defense. This rifle has all the expected Springfield Armory utility in a sweet, attractive package. The MSRP for the whole shebang is $2,499.

RUMINATIONS

Everybody likes nice things. In the 50th Anniversary Springfield Armory M1A, we see a timeless design transformed into a piece of ballistic art. Unlike the sort that just hangs inert on your wall, this is the *objet d'art* that thrives on both the rifle range or secured behind the closet door for those times when the dog just won't shut up at two o'clock in the morning.

I will admit to harboring unvarnished affection for the M1A rifle. As I said at the beginning, this gun and I go way back. The M1A 50th Anniversary Rifle embodies the spirit of this classic old warrior. Just like yours truly, it is proof positive that the timeless M1A is really only just getting started.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
SPRINGFIELD-ARMORY.COM



NEW PRODUCTS



THUNDERCLAP

Part of the Galco Masterbilt series, this outside-the-waistband holster for 1911 pistols features premium steerhide construction and a soft, full-grain leather lining. MSRP is $249.
galcogunleather.com



CONCERT TEE

The "Concert Tee" on the Springfield Armory Web-store features a 60/40 cotton poly-blend for comfort and channels a retro-80's, pro-gun vibe. The price is $24.99.
store.springfield-armory.com



BOUNDARY

Featuring sleek lines with premium features and a custom-grade action, the Model 2020 Boundary is available in short- and long-action variants. MSRP is $2,173 to $2,599.
springfield-armory.com



RAIDER

The Raider 1X Micro Prism optic from Swampfox, featuring a T2 footprint, is available with two reticle options in either red or green. MSRP is $279.
swampfoxoptics.com



M3 TANKER

The M3 Tanker Holster from 1791 Gunleather on the Springfield Armory Webstore is a reproduction of the classic WWII design. It fits non-railed 5" 1911 pistols. The price is $99.99.
store.springfield-armory.com

IMAGE: CARSON MCDANIEL/SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

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