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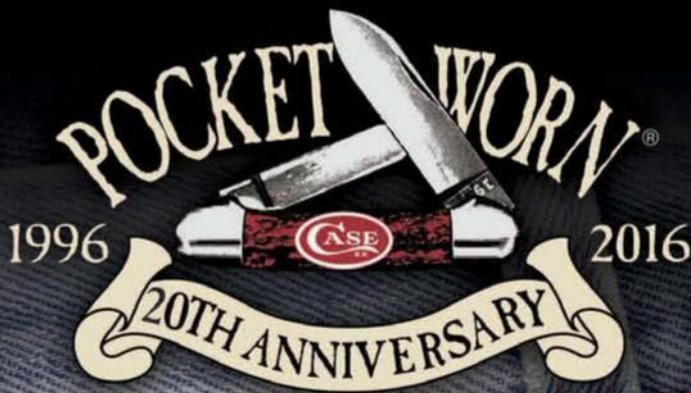
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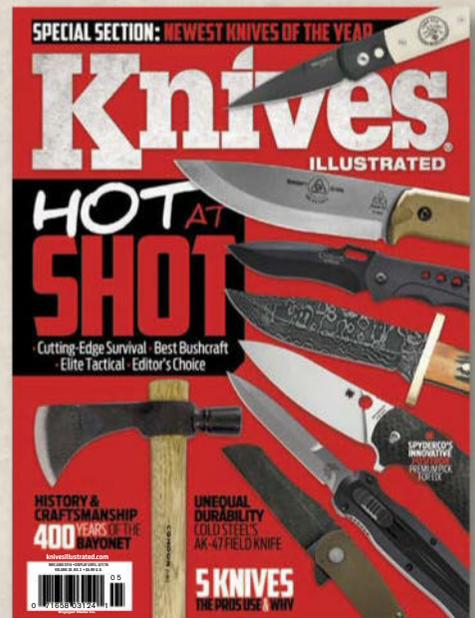
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ON THE COVER  
STORY: HOT AT SHOT  
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[www.knivesillustrated.com](http://www.knivesillustrated.com)  
[facebook.com/knivesillustrated](https://facebook.com/knivesillustrated)  
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**KNIVES ILLUSTRATED** (ISSN 0898-8943) is published 7 times a year, January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, November and December, by Engaged Media, Inc., 22840 Savi Ranch Pkwy., #200, Yorba Linda, CA 92887. Periodical postage paid at Anaheim, CA and additional mailing offices.

**POSTMASTER:** send address changes to **KNIVES ILLUSTRATED** c/o Engaged Media, Inc., VSI, Inc., 905 Kent St., Liberty, MO 64068.  
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 GST#855050365RT001

Canadian Post: Publications Mail Agreement PITNEY BOWES, INC., PO Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2

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## SUBSCRIPTION RATES

\$1795/1 year, \$2795/2 years. Outside the U.S., add \$20.00 per year payable in U.S. funds. Single copy price is \$5.99.  
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Looking down on the floor of the SHOT Show in progress.

## Through New Eyes

JOSHUA SWANAGON

**This year was a very special SHOT Show for me on a few levels. With a new knife design debuting with TOPS Knives and recently being named the new Editor of *Knives Illustrated*, this year held a profound level of excitement and responsibility unmatched by previous years. But the highlight this year was having my son with me.**

This was the first year that he was able to attend the show with me and I got to watch his expression and witness the amazement as he walked into the halls of the Sands Expo Center for the first time. It took me back to my first time attending the SHOT Show. Living vicariously through him, I was almost envious of the fresh perspective he brought with him.

Having attended the show numerous

times before, I had almost let slip the awe of witnessing miles and miles of new gear from leaders in the industry. I had almost forgotten that there are booths that take up as much floor space as my home, yet on the map of the show they look to be no more than small specks in a sea of other similar booths. At these shows, we get so caught up in the list of to-dos that we forget to look around us and take in the magnitude and

scope of what is actually happening here. Every cool new product and every cool new knife that will be hitting shelves within the year are here, together under one roof. It is a fortunate thing to be a part of.

By the end of the week, as my son sat on the floor, head in hand, I could see that he had experienced the show to its fullest. As for me, the opportunity to meet with old friends, speak with the different knife manufacturers about the new designs coming out and knowing that my son got to participate in something unlike anything he has ever seen made for a wildly successful trip.

As for the new knives coming out this year, I can honestly say that you will not be disappointed. We have covered quite a few for you here — believe me when I say there are great things to come in 2016.

Stay sharp and keep it real. **KI**



# Victory Number 1

## Knife Rights Score in Wisconsin

**Starting 2016 on the right foot, the Knife Rights' Wisconsin knife law reform bill passed this January. It repealed the state's ban on switchblade (automatic) knives and removed knives from being a "weapon" or a "dangerous weapon" subject to concealed carry restrictions. It revised state preemption law to include knife law preemption, voiding local knife laws more restrictive than state law, and preventing local jurisdictions from passing future restrictions.**

Also precluded are criminal charges for "disorderly conduct or other inappropriate behavior" for carrying a knife unless carried with "criminal or malicious intent." With knife law preemption, anyone traveling in Wisconsin can be assured that the law is enforced consistently throughout the state.

Wisconsin is the tenth state where Knife Rights passed knife law preemption and the twelfth state where knife restrictions were repealed. Chairman Doug Ritter noted, "Wisconsin is only our first state victory for 2016; check

[www.KnifeRights.org](http://www.KnifeRights.org) to stay abreast of all our legislative efforts." You can also sign up there for their free "News Slice" newsletter or follow them on Twitter at [www.Twitter.com/KnifeRights](https://www.Twitter.com/KnifeRights) or on Facebook at [www.Facebook.com/KnifeRights](https://www.Facebook.com/KnifeRights).

Ritter remarked, "While Knife Rights continues to aggressively work to repeal bad knife laws, there's still no shortage of terrible knife laws waiting to trap the unwary. Knowing the law is the first step in avoiding an unfortunate arrest, loss of your knife or other legal complications." 

### LEGAL APP

The most accurate and current source of knife laws in the U.S. is Knife Rights Foundation's LegalBlade App. As Ritter proudly stated, "since it's our app and we're the ones changing the laws, we make sure it's up to date."

The LegalBlade App "Knife Laws in America" provides guidance at your fingertips to the knife laws of all 50 states as well as over 40 local jurisdictions in the U.S. It's available in the App Store and on Google Play.

### FUNDRAISER

Just because it's become a cliché, doesn't mean it isn't true. "Freedom isn't free" is often used to express gratitude towards military sacrifices and for the cost for defending our freedoms. It's equally true that it represents the cold, hard cash required to carry the fight for these same freedoms to the halls of legislatures. Knife Rights' 20 bills passed in 15 states in 6 years wouldn't be possible without generous support from all segments of the knife community.

Knife Rights has launched its "Fifth Annual Ultimate Steel Knives, Guns & More Spectacular!" at [www.UltimateSteel.org](http://www.UltimateSteel.org). "Spectacular" is an appropriate description for this one-of-a-kind fundraiser. Make a donation now and be eligible to be drawn in two drawings for over \$125,000 in extraordinary prizes, including custom knives, celebrity autographed knives, guns and much more. The first 100 winners drawn in both the Early Bird and Main Drawings get to select their prize from all that remain, so you can win prizes that you really want. Donate \$100 or more and get a free knife valued at \$60 to \$250 depending on the amount donated. A donation of \$60 or more includes an annual membership or renewal. Join us in supporting Knife Rights; check it out today.

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# PURPOSE BUILT

FITTING STEEL WITH FUNCTION

BY LEO ESPINOZA – PHOTOS BY TOPS KNIVES

**My name** is Leo Espinoza, and I have been involved in the knife industry and specifically with TOPS Knives since 1999. I have always done my best to continue growing and learning all that I can to make sure that my knives are the best in the field.

There are a lot of common questions people ask me, such as “Why did you use this grind instead of that grind?” “Why these handles?” “What is this feature for?” And so on.

The most common question is, “Why did you use this type of steel?”

With so many good blade steels to choose from these days, how do you pick the right one? Which is more important, hardness or durability? Which is the better steel, stainless or high carbon? How well does the edge hold up? All of the answers are subjective and the actual steel selected is only one part of the process. Bottom line, there is no “one steel to rule them all.”

Let’s delve into the process.

### Where It Starts

Any knife maker has to find a balance that works for his/her customers. So my steel choices reflect that. I choose steel that is high-quality, but not overly expensive; steel I know I can work well with and will hold up to hard use. I choose steel I trust with my personal knives.

### Types of Steels

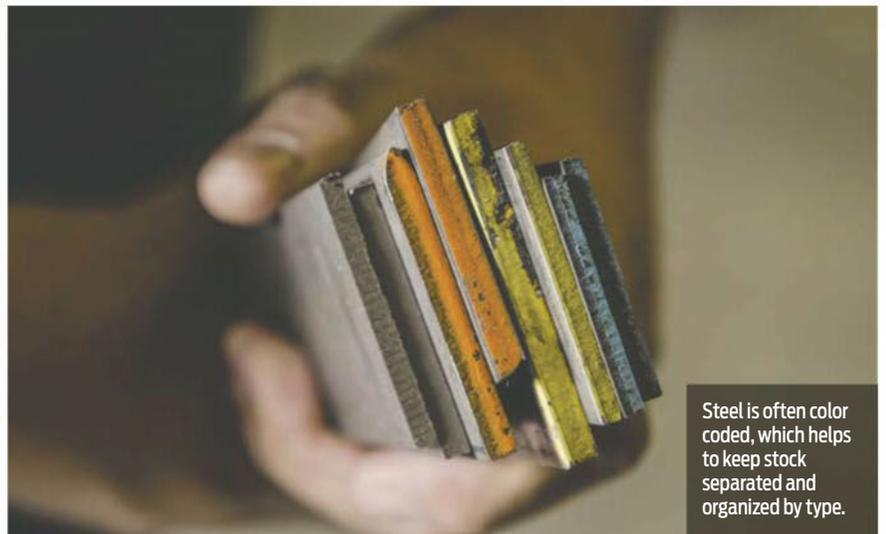
So what types of steels are out there? Most people have no clue how many different types of steel exist (hint: it’s in the thousands). They all have different chemical mixtures to achieve different goals.

Speaking specifically of steels commonly used for knife blades, there is still a large number. There are carbon steels like 1055, 1075, 1095, 5160, 52000, A2, CPM 3V, D2, O1, and many others. There are also stainless steels like 420, 440(A, B, and C), 154cm, 8Cr14MoV, ATS34, AUS-8, N690Co, S30V, S35VN, S90V, VG 10, and many others. Don’t forget about Damascus steel, ceramic used for knife blades, and titanium as well.

Each of these materials has their pros and cons. With so many options, it’s no



Some pieces of 5160 that are cut and ready to be made into Lil Roughnecks.



Steel is often color coded, which helps to keep stock separated and organized by type.



Switching the jig in a CNC for a different model.

## PRICE IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN STEEL SELECTION

Price has to factor in to your decision as a knife maker. I want as many people as possible to enjoy TOPS knives, not just the most avid fans. So again, my choice in steel reflects that. TOPS' price point is in between mass-produced and custom knives. That's because our processes fall in between the two. We use machines for much of the process, but then finish each knife by hand. And we do it all in the Rocky Mountains, USA!

wonder there is so much debate in the knife community about which steel to use and why.

### Elements of Steel

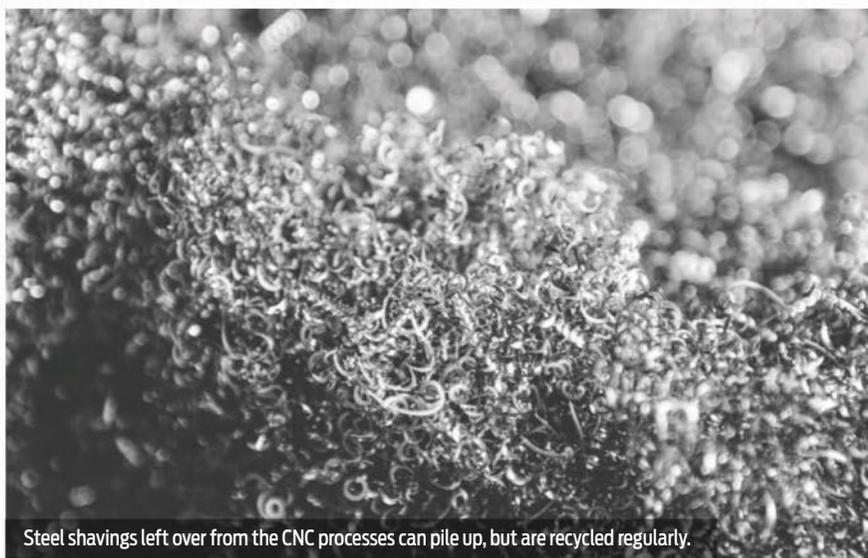
In terms of what is in the various types of steel, iron is the main element. From there, varying amounts of other elements are added to achieve certain properties. Stainless steels typically have more chromium, copper, and/or nickel which help prevent the iron in the steel from reacting with oxygen or water to form rust.

Carbon content in these steels is typically low, but some actually have more carbon than high carbon steels. High carbon steels obviously have carbon also, but typically lack chromium or nickel, at least in high enough amounts to make it stainless. Carbon is good for wear resistance, hardness, and tensile strength, but leaves steel susceptible to rust. So there is always a tradeoff. Some of the elements that are found in stainless steels give them good edge retention and hardness, but make them very difficult to sharpen.

I make blades for people that are going to use them, not necessarily for collectors. After taking all of the variables into account, I prefer working with high carbon steels. When maintained well and with proper coatings, the rust issue becomes irrelevant. So, which carbon steel? I'll compare two of the 10xx steels to explain. 1055 usually has about 0.55% carbon and .75% manganese. 1095 is usually about 0.95% carbon and about .4% manganese. 1055 holds up better than 1095 to impacts, while 1095 holds an edge much, much better (always a



"Bar stock" is cut into shorter pieces that will fit into the CNC machines.



Steel shavings left over from the CNC processes can pile up, but are recycled regularly.



A drum sander is used to smooth the surface of the steel before it's put into the CNC machines.



**“SOME OF THE ELEMENTS THAT ARE FOUND IN STAINLESS STEELS GIVE THEM GOOD EDGE RETENTION AND HARDNESS, BUT MAKE THEM VERY DIFFICULT TO SHARPEN.”**

A storage bay containing various bar stock to draw from.

tradeoff). However, for me, 1095 holds up to impacts well enough for the intended purposes of knives. 1055 makes an incredible sword where 1095 makes an incredible knife.

Why else do I use 1095? It machines and grinds easily, it is proven effective for blades, and it is a true American steel. Anyone that has been out in the field for an extended period of time without a proper sharpening system can appreciate that 1095 re-sharpens more easily than most steels out there. Sure there are steels that will stay sharper longer, but the vast majority are much more difficult to sharpen with small stones and/or primitive sharpening methods.

Some projects require stainless steels for one reason or another, which is why I use 440C, 154cm, and N690co. They're all quality stainless steels that meet as much of my selection criteria as possible.

### The Challenge

With so many different blade steels and user preferences, selecting the right steel can be a big challenge, but once you buy and use a TOPS knife, you'll know why I do what I do.

Since I began making knives for TOPS, our goals have remained essentially the same – to create high-quality, rugged, over-built, functional tools for military, law enforcement, and other service members. Even though we've built a great reputation with survivalists, bushcrafters, hunters, and other blade-loving groups, the same approach still applies. **KI**

### DIFFERENTIAL HEAT TREATING

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# SHOT Show EDITOR'S SELECTIONS

FINDING THE GEMS  
IN THE SHOOTING,  
HUNTING AND OUTDOOR  
TRADE SHOW

BY KI STAFF AND FIELD EDITORS

**Each** January we get the opportunity to visit the Las Vegas strip and be a part of the Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade Show to see what the best in the industry have to offer.

This year, with miles and miles of booths to visit, we achieved the daunting task of rooting out some of the finest new cutlery for 2016. From innovative designs, to new takes on old favorites, we did not leave disappointed.

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Condor continues to produce a steady stream of working tools for the outdoorsman with its 2016 line, making it hard to pick out just a few. With designers like Dual Survival's Matt Graham and survival expert Joe Flowers, it isn't hard to see what makes Condor Tool & Knife a standout at the show.

## 1 INDIAN THROWING TOMAHAWK SERIES

**BLADE MATERIAL:** 1060 high carbon steel

**BLADE LENGTH:** 5.75 inches (Traditional)  
and 7.25 inches (Hammer Poll)

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 19 inches

**WEIGHT:** 1.4 pounds (Traditional) and  
1.6 pounds (Hammer Poll)

**HEAD FINISH:** Condor Classic

**HANDLE:** Burnt American Hickory

**BLADE COVER AND CARRIER:** Leather

**MSRP:** \$84.98 (TRADITIONAL)

AND \$89.98 (HAMMER POLL)





## 2 PRIMITIVE BUSH KNIFE CS AND PRIMITIVE BUSH MACHETE CS

**BLADE MATERIAL:** 1075 high carbon steel

**BLADE LENGTH:** 8 inches (Bush Knife)  
and 12 inches (Bush Machete)

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 13.5 inches (Bush Knife)  
and 18 inches (Bush Machete)

**WEIGHT:** 1.4 pounds (Bush Knife) and  
1.6 pounds (Bush Machete)

**BLADE FINISH:** Blasted satin

**HANDLE:** Two-tone Micarta

**SHEATH:** Leather

**MSRP:** \$124.98 (BUSH KNIFE)

AND \$149.98 (BUSH MACHETE)

## 3 SWAMP ROMPER

**BLADE MATERIAL:** 1075 high carbon steel

**BLADE LENGTH:** 4.5 inches

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 9.5 inches

**WEIGHT:** 0.62 pounds

**BLADE FINISH:** Polished

**HANDLE:** Walnut

**SHEATH:** Leather bushcraft style

**MSRP:** \$69.98



## SOG Specialty Knives & Tools

(425) 771-6230  
www.SOGKnives.com

Known for their rugged multi-tools, SOG Knives & Tools continues to innovate and improve in that category. Always innovating, SOG has found comfort in utility, while providing maximum bang for your buck. But, it isn't all multi-tools this year as SOG still has a healthy selection of new knives as well.

## 4 POWERPLAY

**BLADE MATERIAL:** 5CR13MOV  
**BLADE LENGTH:** 2.75 inches  
**CLOSED LENGTH:** 4.0 inches  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 6.25 inches  
**WEIGHT:** 8.1 ounces  
**FINISH:** Satin  
**HANDLE:** 2CR13  
**MSRP:** \$77.00

## 5 REACTOR

**BLADE MATERIAL:** 8CR13MOV  
**BLADE LENGTH:** 2.5 inches  
**CLOSED LENGTH:** 3.8 inches  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 5.3 inches  
**WEIGHT:** 4.1 ounces  
**FINISH:** Satin polished and hard-cased black  
**HANDLE:** 2CR13  
**MSRP:** \$64.00



## BEAR & SON CUTLERY

(256) 435-2227

[www.BearAndSonCutlery.com](http://www.BearAndSonCutlery.com)

[www.RemingtonCutlery.com](http://www.RemingtonCutlery.com)

This company offers American-made hunting and traditional pocket knives in its Bear & Son line and tactical knives in its Bear OPS line. Bear & Son Cutlery is also the official licensee for producing Remington knives. In celebrating Remington's 200th anniversary, Bear & Son is releasing several Remington commemorative knives this year.

11

### 6 REMINGTON 200TH ANNIVERSARY GREEN JIG BONE BULLET KNIFE, R11036

**BLADE MATERIAL:** 440 stainless steel

**BLADE LENGTH:** 2.875 inches (master blade),  
1.625 inches (pen blade)

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 3.5 inches closed

**Handle:** Green stag bone

**TYPE:** Folding, two-blade pocket knife

**OTHER FEATURES:** Has the classic bullet shield  
embedded in the Green Jig Bone handle, nickel  
silver bolsters and pins and brass liners

**MSRP:** \$115.99



11

### 7 DAMASCUS BABY BOWIE, 500D 1/2

**BLADE MATERIAL:** Damascus

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3 inches

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 6.5 inches

**WEIGHT:** 2.5 ounces

**HANDLE:** India stag bone

**TYPE:** Fixed blade, full tang

**OTHER FEATURES:** Tiny saw-tooth  
carbides on blade, includes leather sheath

**MSRP:** \$189.99

### 8 BEAR OPS CARBON FIBER STILETTO, MC-300-CF-LD

**BLADE MATERIAL:** Damascus, 416-layer  
high definition

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.25 inches, spear point

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 7.625 inches, open

**WEIGHT:** 2.5 ounces

**HANDLE:** Carbon fiber

**TYPE:** Lock-back folder

**OTHER FEATURES:** Bronze phosphorus  
washers and a precision ball bearing  
for smooth one-handed opening,  
includes pocket clip

**MSRP:** \$299.99



## ESEE Knives

(256) 613-0372

[www.ESEKnives.com](http://www.ESEKnives.com)

ESEE continues to offer no-nonsense, American-made knives for survival, tactical, rescue and wilderness applications. These new knives are no exception and they back them with a no-questions-asked transferable warranty. With some new designs by Reuben Bolieu, James Gibson and Cody Rowen, ESEE made a great showing this year.

# 9

## ESEE RB-3



**BLADE MATERIAL:** 1095 Carbon

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.5 inches, scandi grind

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 8.13 inches

**WEIGHT:** 6 ounces

**HANDLE:** Micarta

**TYPE:** Fixed blade, full tang

**OTHER FEATURES:** Designed by Reuben Bolieu, includes black leather pouch sheath

**MSRP:** \$186

# 10

## ESEE JG-3



**BLADE MATERIAL:** 1095 carbon

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.5 inches, flat grind

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 7.63 inches

**WEIGHT:** 4.5 ounces

**HANDLE:** Micarta

**TYPE:** Fixed blade, full tang

**OTHER FEATURES:** Designed by James Gibson, includes black leather pouch sheath

**MSRP:** \$186



9

10

## Columbia River Knife & Tool

(503) 685-5015  
www.CRKT.com

With a stable of world class designers, Columbia River Knife & Tool is never at a loss for innovative designs that capture the imagination. However, this year CRKT is launching a new program called "Forged By War" in which they work with military veterans to produce knives and tools that the vets themselves wish they had on the battlefield. But the coolest part is that 10% of the net profits go to the charity of the designing veteran's choice.

### 11 CLEVER GIRL

**BLADE MATERIAL:** SK5, 54-56 HRC

**BLADE LENGTH:** 4.6 inches

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 10.125 inches

**THICKNESS:** 0.158 inches

**WEIGHT:** 6.3 ounces

**HANDLE:** G10

**FINISH:** Black powder coat

**STYLE:** Fixed blade knife with sheath

**SHEATH MATERIAL:** Glass-reinforced nylon

**SHEATH WEIGHT:** 1.6 ounces

**MSRP:** \$125

### 12 SANGRADOR

**BLADE MATERIAL:** SK5, 54-56 HRC

**BLADE LENGTH:** 5.540 inches

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 10.5 inches

**THICKNESS:** 0.183 inches

**WEIGHT:** 7.4 ounces

**HANDLE:** G10

**FINISH:** Black powder coat

**STYLE:** Fixed blade knife with sheath

**SHEATH MATERIAL:** Nylon with polypropylene insert

**SHEATH WEIGHT:** 2.6 ounces

**MSRP:** \$150



11

12

## Camillus Knives

(877) 412-7467

www.CamillusKnives.com

Making quality knives since 1876 and boasting a pro staff with the likes of Les Stroud, Navy SEALs, Green Berets, hunters, adventurers and other field professionals, it is no wonder that Camillus never ceases to impress at the SHOT Show year after year. With a lot of new offerings this year you will definitely want to keep your eyes on Camillus.

### 13 RAGE

**BLADE MATERIAL:** 440 stainless steel

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3 inches

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 7.25 inches

**FINISH:** Carbonitride titanium nonstick blade

**HANDLE:** Textured glass-filled nylon

**OTHER FEATURES:** Lifetime warranty

**MSRP:** \$21.99

### 14 M-13

**BLADE MATERIAL:** Titanium stainless steel

**BLADE LENGTH:** 13 inches

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 18 inches

**HANDLE:** Glass-filled nylon

**OTHER FEATURES:** Full tang, gut hook, lanyard hole, lifetime warranty

**MSRP:** \$39.99



## Ontario Knife Company

(716) 676-5527

www.OntarioKnife.com

A name with a long history of quality knives, Ontario Knife Company has some of the most recognizable designs on the market today. However, to keep things fresh, Ontario Knife Company has recently undergone a multi-million-dollar expansion to help improve efficiency and bring you great knives even faster. Along with the expansion they also bring you a brand update with a fresh new logo, website and product line.

### 15 OKC CERBERUS

**BLADE MATERIAL:** D2 tool steel

**BLADE LENGTH:** 4.76 inches

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 10.23 inches

**FINISH:** Black oxide coating

**HANDLE:** G10

**SHEATH MATERIAL:** Kydex

**MSRP:** \$265

### 16 DOZIER ARROW

**BLADE MATERIAL:** D2 tool steel

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.6 inches

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 8.2 inches

**BLADE FINISH:** Satin

**HANDLE:** G10

**DEPLOYMENT MECHANISM:** Thumbstud

**LOCK TYPE LINER:** Lock

**MSRP:** \$78.95

### 17 CARTER PRIME

**BLADE MATERIAL:** D2 tool steel

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.4 inches

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 8.0 inches

**BLADE FINISH:** Stonewash

**HANDLE:** Titanium

**DEPLOYMENT MECHANISM:** Flipper

**LOCK TYPE:** Liner lock

**MSRP:** \$144.95



## Spyderco

(800) 828-1925

www.Spyderco.com

Celebrating their 40th anniversary, family-owned Spyderco launches a staggering 30 - 45 new products a year and none of them are easy to pass up. So, to pick only three was a task no less daunting than scaling the Rocky Mountains from which they hail. Classic styling and true quality make Spyderco a brand to fit every collection.

## 18 MONTRA 2 TITANIUM

**BLADE MATERIAL:** CPM M4  
**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.22 inches  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 7.36 inches  
**LENGTH CLOSED:** 4.14 inches  
**BLADE THICKNESS:** 0.118 inches  
**WEIGHT:** 2.8 ounces  
**HANDLE:** Titanium  
**MSRP:** \$279.95



## 19 PROFICIENT

**BLADE MATERIAL:** CPM S90V  
**BLADE LENGTH:** 4.0 inches  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 8.75 inches  
**BLADE THICKNESS:** 0.14 inches  
**WEIGHT:** 6.3 ounces  
**HANDLE MATERIAL:** Carbon fiber  
**MSRP:** \$489.95



## 20 POSITRON

**BLADE MATERIAL:** CPM S30V  
**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.05 inches  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 7.02 inches  
**LENGTH CLOSED:** 3.97 inches  
**BLADE THICKNESS:** 0.118 inches  
**WEIGHT:** 2.6 ounces  
**HANDLE MATERIAL:** Carbon fiber  
**MSRP:** \$279.95



## Benchmade

(800) 800-7427

www.Benchmade.com

In 1988, Benchmade began the journey of providing knives and tools for professional first responders, military and those in special operations. Benchmade categorizes their knife products into three sections, the Blue Class for standard EDC, the Black Class for elite professionals and Gold Class made from higher-end materials for the true connoisseur. For many years, Benchmade has remained a leader in the production of quality knives and tools.

# 22 PAGAN AUTO, SINGLE-EDGE FAMILY



**BLADE MATERIAL:** 154CM (58-61 HRC)

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.96 inches

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 8.98 inches

**BLADE THICKNESS:** 0.1 inches

**WEIGHT:** 5.11 ounces

**HANDLE:** 7075-T6 aluminum

**MECHANISM:** Auto, double-action out-the-front

**MSRP:** \$425



# 21 HK14430

**BLADE MATERIAL:** 8Cr13MoV, satin and black-oxide coating

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.25 inches

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 7.7 inches

**BLADE THICKNESS:** 0.144 inches

**HANDLE MATERIAL:** Steel, black-oxide coating

**WEIGHT:** 3.70 ounces

**MECHANISM:** Auto

**MSRP:** \$160

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## Chris Reeve Knives

(208) 375-0367  
www.ChrisReeve.com

Chris Reeve's attention to detail and innovative knife designs have made his company a worldwide name in cutlery and earned him a place in the Cutlery Hall of Fame. His knives are truly high quality products with folding knives that open smoothly and lock securely. Chris Reeve's all-American Knife line is the higher-end everyday carry knife.

## 24 NYALA

**BLADE MATERIAL:** Crucible S35VN with 58-59 RC hardness  
**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.75 inches  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 8.5 inches  
**BLADE THICKNESS:** 0.18 inches  
**WEIGHT:** 6.2 ounces  
**HANDLE:** Brown canvas Micarta  
**MECHANISM:** Fixed blade  
**MSRP:** \$230

## 25 PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER

**BLADE MATERIAL:** Crucible S35VN with 55-57 RC hardness  
**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.375 inches  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 7.25 inches  
**BLADE THICKNESS:** 0.165 inches  
**WEIGHT:** 3.0 ounces  
**HANDLE:** Skeletal Crucible S35VN with 55-57 RC hardness  
**MECHANISM:** Fixed blade  
**MSRP:** \$190

## 23 INKOSI

**BLADE MATERIAL:** Crucible S35VN with 59-60 RC hardness  
**BLADE LENGTH:** 2.94 inches  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 6.87 inches  
**BLADE THICKNESS:** 0.125 inches  
**WEIGHT:** 3.0 ounces  
**HANDLE:** Crucible S35VN with 59-60 RC hardness  
**MECHANISM:** Manual thumb stud  
**MSRP:** \$375



## Pro-Tech Knives

(562) 860-0678

[www.ProtechKnives.com](http://www.ProtechKnives.com)

Chris Kyle Frog Foundation

[www.ChrisKyleFrogFoundation.org](http://www.ChrisKyleFrogFoundation.org)

Pro-Tech Knives is a family-owned business boasting about 17 auto knives with new ones being added constantly. Being very supportive to our Nation's Heroes, they have produced countless knives with logos of various military units, law enforcement departments, Federal Agencies, as well as Fire and Rescue. In line with this, Pro-Tech is supporting the Chris Kyle Frog Foundation, announcing their support at the 2016 SHOT Show, with all proceeds going to the CKFF. You can pay more but you can't buy a better auto knife than Pro-Tech.

## 26 GODSON

**BLADE MATERIAL:** 154-CM Stainless RC 59 hardness

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.15 inches

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 7.56 inches

**BLADE THICKNESS:** 0.110 inches

**HANDLE MATERIAL:** T6 6061 aluminum, Micarta inlay with emboss

**WEIGHT:** 3.05 ounces

**MECHANISM:** Auto

**MSRP:** \$270

## 27 EMERSON CQC7

**BLADE MATERIAL:** 154-CM stainless steel

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.25 inches

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 7.92 inches

**BLADE THICKNESS:** 0.120 inches

**HANDLE:** T6 6061 aluminum

**WEIGHT:** 4.2 ounces

**MECHANISM:** Auto

**MSRP:** \$240

26



27



28



## 28 TR-4

**BLADE MATERIAL:** 154-CM Stainless RC 59 hardness

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.25 inches

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 7.92 inches

**BLADE THICKNESS:** 0.124 inches

**HANDLE:** T6 6061 aluminum, Micarta inlay with emboss

**WEIGHT:** 4.2 ounces

**MECHANISM:** Auto

**MSRP:** \$310

## TOPS Knives

(208) 542-0113

www.TOPSKnives.com

Founded by Mike Fuller, a former Special Forces American hero, TOPS Knives offers many different variations of quality knives. They are created and built with extensive knowledge and real life experiences of many Operators with backgrounds in Military, Law Enforcement, outdoor skills, and Martial Arts. This means TOPS works closely with designers with professional backgrounds in such service as Navy Seals, Airborne Rangers, Martial Arts, SWAT and even Native American weapons experts.

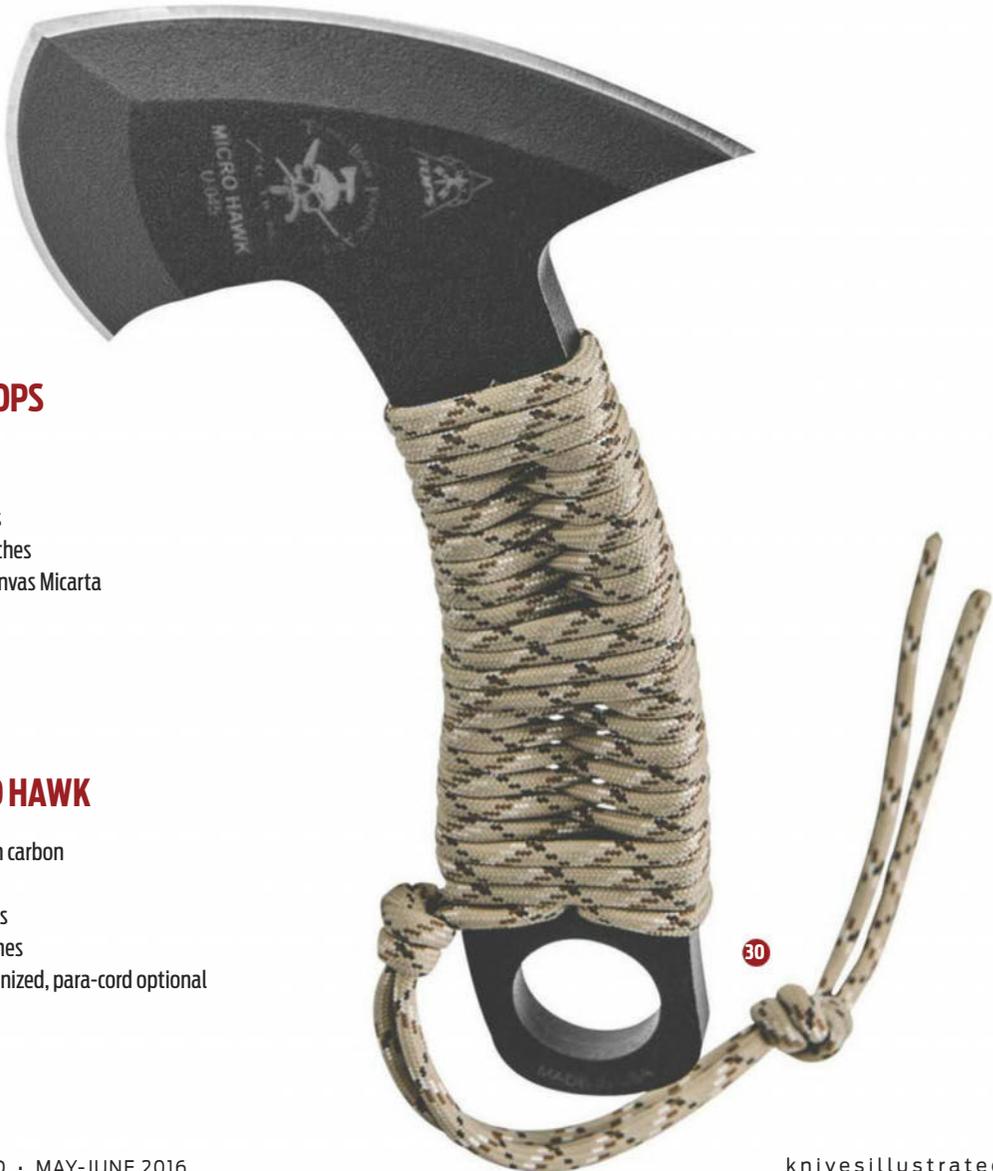


## 29 TAC-TOPS

**BLADE MATERIAL:** 1095  
**BLADE LENGTH:** 7.6 inches  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 11.3 inches  
**BLADE THICKNESS:** 0.1875 inches  
**HANDLE MATERIAL:** Black canvas Micarta  
**MSRP:** TBA

## 30 MICRO HAWK

**BLADE MATERIAL:** 1095 high carbon  
**BLADE LENGTH:** 5.89 inches  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 6.9 inches  
**BLADE THICKNESS:** 0.32 inches  
**HANDLE MATERIAL:** Skeletonized, para-cord optional  
**WEIGHT:** 13 ounces  
**MSRP:** TBA





# 31 BRAKIMO

**BLADE LENGTH:** 5.5 inches  
**BLADE MATERIAL:** 1095 RC 56-58  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 10.0 inches  
**BLADE THICKNESS:** 0.190 inches  
**HANDLE MATERIAL:** Green canvas Micarta  
**WEIGHT:** 9.0 ounces  
**MSRP:** TBA 

31

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# HARDWARE FOR TRENCH WARFARE

A COLLECTION  
SPANNING THE AGES

STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY JOSHUA SWANAGON



Left to Right: British Model 1907 Sword Bayonet, U.S. Springfield M-1903 Sword Bayonet, U.S. Model 1917 Sword Bayonet, Argentine M1909 Sword Bayonet, Persian Model 29 Sword Bayonet.



**Nestled** safely in Mid-Michigan, in the private military memorabilia collection of Curt Scott, lies a collection of old bayonets worthy of any museum. I recently had the opportunity to visit with Curt and peruse his expansive collection, which was a true pleasure experiencing the history and craftsmanship displayed within. Being a big fan of antiques and anything sharp and pointy, I felt like a kid in a candy store being left with only one regret — that I didn't have the space in this article to cover his entire collection, just a small sample.

Curt and I had been talking about this collection for some time but I really didn't know what to expect when I showed up to his house for our meeting. As I pulled in to his drive that early afternoon and was finding the best spot to park, he was coming out the door to greet me. I could tell from the excitement on his face that he really enjoys his collection and takes much pleasure in sharing it and its vast history with people as interested as he is in the topic. Grabbing my camera gear and backpack full of props and backgrounds for the photography, we headed inside.

I noticed right away that his wife had put out some vegetable and sausage trays along with a cut up sub, and I thought to myself that this really wasn't

**“ONE DAY, WHILE LOOKING AT THE 60-OR-SO BAYONETS AND MILITARY KNIVES IN HIS POSSESSION, IT OCCURRED TO HIM THAT HE HAD A COLLECTION.”**



Left to Right: Spanish M-1893  
Mauser Knife Bayonet, Spanish  
M1907 Artillery Bolo Trench  
Knife, Yugo M48 Knife Bayonet,  
British Pattern 1888 Mk. 1  
Bayonet.

## WORLDBAYONETS.COM

I would like to thank Ralph Cobb of WorldBayonets.com for his assistance and consultation on the history of the bayonet. For a very in-depth and detailed history on bayonets, please visit [www.WorldBayonets.com](http://www.WorldBayonets.com).

going to take that long. Continuing on to his living room I could see the historical military accents in the décor, very subtly and tastefully done, it was obvious I was in the right place to see some exquisite historical bayonets.

Wasting no time getting to the main attraction, Curt took out a medium-sized barrel and equally sized chest and began pulling bayonet after bayonet out of each and handing them to me. It seemed like they just kept coming and I slowly started to feel a slight edge of anxiety as I pondered how I was going to photograph a collection of such growing magnitude. A little over an hour into foraging through his collection, without a noticeable end in sight, it occurred to me why his wife set out food for us, she had been here before.

### An Accidental Collection

Perhaps one of the more humorous stories I have heard in regard to any kind of collection is the fact that Curt never set out with the intention of collecting bayonets, it just sort of happened and before he knew it, he had a collection that would turn anyone's head.

Having a love for anything military at a very early age, especially the historical aspects, Curt picked up his first bayonet when he was 14 years old. It wasn't that he automatically fell in love with bayonets, on the contrary, his real love was always mil-surp guns. His love for bayonets was more for the fact that they were cheap in the early '60s. Over the years he would find them in many places including flea-markets, yard sales, gun shows and from time to time through personal conversations with people whose family members brought them home from military service.

One day, while looking at the 60-or-so bayonets and military knives in his possession, it occurred to him that he had a



Left to Right: U.S. Model 1917 Sword Bayonet, French Model 1874 Gras T-Back Sword Bayonet, German M1898 Quillback Sword Bayonet, Japanese Model 30 Sword Bayonet.

**“THE 11.875-INCH STEEL BLADE [OF THE SPANISH M1907 ARTILLERY BOLO TRENCH KNIFE] HAS WHAT ALMOST APPEARS TO BE AN EARLY VERSION OF A RECURVE, WITH AN OVERSIZED BLOOD GROOVE RUNNING NEARLY THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE BLADE.”**



A small sample of Curt's large, eclectic bayonet collection.

## 400 YEARS OF THE BAYONET

Dating back to the early 1600s, it is believed that the bayonet can attribute its beginnings to the region around the town of Bayonne, France — a small coastal town that was known for its cutlery. Originally designed for hunting, the “bayonnette” was “a kind of small, flat, pocket-dagger, furnished with knives; or a great knife to hang at the girdle, like a dagger,” according to Randle Cotgrave’s *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*. Due to the inaccuracy of the single-shot firearms of the day, hunters would carry both a dagger and spear with them when hunting large or dangerous prey.

### Becoming One with the Rifle

While it is still unclear how the dagger first came to be inserted into the bore of the musket for use as a spear, it directly changed everything moving forward. It was this innovation that led to an interest in

the bayonet by the military, allowing for musketeers to convert their musket into a pike once their shot was expended. This made them more mobile and provided armies the ability to decrease the need for pikemen (who held the line as the musketeers reloaded), which allowed them to arm more soldiers with firearms.

### Improved Utility

In an effort to allow the firearm to remain operable while the bayonet was in place, new inventions were developed, starting with the ring bayonet, which was simply a plug bayonet with rings affixed to the handle to slide over the barrel, as opposed to inserted into the barrel of the firearm. Due to its sloppiness and tendency to fall off, the great French Military Engineer Vauban invented the socket bayonet, which was accepted as a standard piece of equipment for firearm-bearing

soldiers sometime in the late 1600s. It was at this time that the bayonet was no longer viewed as merely a defensive weapon to replace the utility of the pike, but was gaining ground as an offensive weapon. Toward the beginning of the 18th century, pikes had been completely decommissioned in all major European armies. Improving the locking mechanism, by 1840 almost all socket bayonets produced were utilizing the medial locking ring, designed by the French in the late 1770s.

### Edged Bayonets

While bayonets were vastly considered a thrusting weapon, the Germans and Prussians developed a mounting system allowing them to affix short swords to their rifles. While the Prussians designed a very rigid mounting system still in use today, in 1882 a German firm, Gebrüder Weyersberg, developed a

coil spring press stud that was housed completely in the pommel, which shielded it from the elements. This alteration meant that soldiers could attach their sword and knife bayonets to their rifles with far less risk of the mechanism rusting and breaking unexpectedly. By the late 1800s, knife bayonets became more commonplace due to their lighter weight and ease of carry.

### Still Going Strong

Although it is not as prominent as it has been over the past 350 years, the bayonet still has its place at the end of military rifles the world over. Even when many of the world’s major powers attempted to produce firearms that would not accept a bayonet after World War II, within five years most redesigned the rifles to accept bayonets or replaced them with rifles that did. Obviously, the bayonet still has a place today.

## BAYONET CHARGES

With the problem of fixed bayonets being resolved and use of the pike decreasing, a formation of infantrymen would utilize the fixed bayonet to overrun enemy strongholds over short distances, rather than risking musket volleys. Due to the gruesome nature of a bayonet attack in a confined area, it was more common for the opposing side to run and avoid mass casualties. For this reason, the bayonet charge was considered a very effective form of capturing ground during a conflict.

collection. I don't want to give the impression that he picked up just anything and threw it on the heap; having spent some time with him and his collection I can attest that this is far from the truth. Although he didn't start out with a collection in mind, it is very clear that these bayonets were a symbol of his love for the genre. Regardless of which piece I picked up, he knew everything about it,



Curt with a French Model 1874 Gras T-Back Sword Bayonet.

**“WHILE IT IS STILL UNCLEAR HOW THE DAGGER FIRST CAME TO BE INSERTED INTO THE BORE OF THE MUSKET FOR USE AS A SPEAR, IT DIRECTLY CHANGED EVERYTHING MOVING FORWARD.”**

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Left to Right: U.S. 1864 N.C.O. Sword, Prussian Jr. Officer's Sword.



Left to Right: British Number 4 MK1 Spike Bayonet, British Number 4 MK1 Bowie Bayonet, U.S. Springfield 1863 Socket Bayonet, Russian Nagant 91/30 Bayonet, French Lebel 1886 Sword Bayonet.

down to the minor nuances and intricacies. Even though he never regarded it as a “collection” he has spent countless hours reading, studying and replacing pieces he already had with ones in better condition, if he could find them. It was and is a true labor of love.

Getting to spend some time with his collection, I was humbled to be handling some very impressive and important history, with pieces ranging from all over the world including the United States, Britain, Persia, Spain, France, Russia, Japan, Argentina, Germany and more. Although the entire collection was outstanding, I was really drawn to a few particular pieces.

The Persian Model 29 Sword Bayonet has beautiful lines throughout its entire 21-inch overall length. The steel pommel houses an integral push-button latching mechanism, while the wood handle scales give the hilt a nice two-tone appeal. The steel crossguard leads to a 15.75-inch steel blade with an oversized blood groove running almost its entire length.

The Spanish M1907 Artillery Bolo Trench

## FAR BEYOND BAYONETS

Although he has a collection of bayonets that would suggest where his focus lies, Curt is a collector of all military memorabilia with a real love for mil-surp firearms. His collection of firearms is an impressive sight, with quite a few of the firearms pairing with the bayonets in his collection. All of his firearms are serviceable and in amazing condition. The firearms items that surprised me most were his small collection of stone Civil War bullets, they are pictured with the swords.

Knife is a very unique piece with an overall length of 17.25 inches. The 11.875-inch steel blade has what almost appears to be an early version of a recurve, with an oversized blood groove running nearly the entire length of the blade. The curved handle is very ergonomic, with steel pommel and crossguard framing the wooden handle scales, which have a carved checker pattern in them.

Due to the historical significance, I was very impressed by the U.S. Springfield 1863 Socket Bayonet. Manufactured somewhere around 1855-1872, it was potentially one of the most-used bayonets in the Civil War. Being a socket bayonet with an overall length of 21 inches, it was designed to fit various U.S. .58 muskets and 50-70 Springfield "Trapdoor" rifles prior to 1873, utilizing a mortise slot and locking ring to affix the 18-inch triangular blade.

Curt has a hard time picking a favorite in his collection, because each one is unique in its own way and all have a history and story of their own. But, I found he tended to lean toward a French Model 1874 Gras T-Back Sword Bayonet; a beautiful piece at a length of 26 inches overall, with solid brass pommel, integral push-button latching mechanism, wood handle scales, steel crossguard and muzzle ring and a hooked quillion lower guard. It has a 20.5-inch triangular steel blade making it a very sturdy thrusting weapon. Maybe it can't be claimed as his favorite, but it is definitely the one that he seems to have a bit of a

soft spot for. And it definitely is worth a bit of favoritism.

## Conclusion

By the time I left his house at around 9:30 in the evening, I was full of good food, good discussions, the parting gift of an immaculate World War II era Camillus MK2 USMC Fighting Knife and a story worth telling about a collection that spans the ages. It is rare that you get the chance to visit with someone with such an expansive collection of such historical significance. It is even rarer that you get to spend so much time with that collection, carefully inspecting each piece and learning its story. I am thankful to people like my friend Curt, for his love of military history, because it is people like him that give us the opportunity to learn, grow and experience the treasures of the past in a tangible and meaningful way. Thank you Curt, for sharing your accidental collection with me — it is this that started the discussion and research into the history of such a game-changing battlefield tool. 



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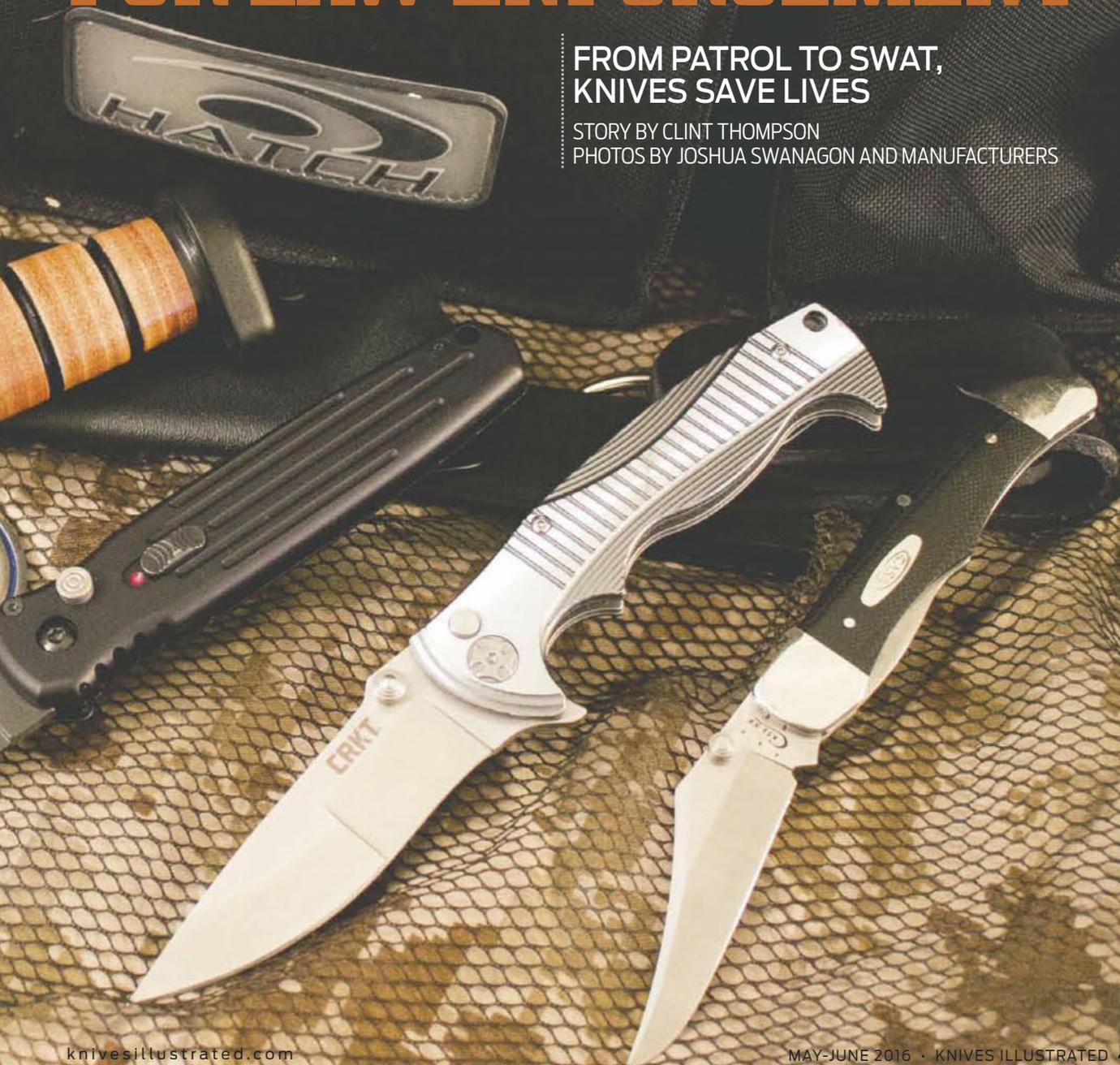
# Five Knives

## FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

FROM PATROL TO SWAT,  
KNIVES SAVE LIVES

STORY BY CLINT THOMPSON

PHOTOS BY JOSHUA SWANAGON AND MANUFACTURERS



**For Law Enforcement professionals, a good knife is as important as any other piece of equipment they may be required to carry.**

As a retired law enforcement officer, I field many questions from citizens and friends that my chosen profession gives me a particular insight into. Should I report an incident? What kind of firearm do you carry? From time to time I am also asked, what knife do you carry? What knife do you recommend I carry? Or, what is the best knife to buy?

The knife I carry is the knife I know will do the job set before me. Normally, my everyday duty knife is a folding pocket knife, but sometimes I carry a secondary fixed blade, which I can conceal from public view. This secondary knife would be used for cutting chores greater in nature and too extensive for my everyday carry folder.

Having been a LEO for many years, I can attest to the fact that most officers carry a \$20-\$40 pocket knife or no knife at all. They normally do not carry higher-end knives. However, a good quality pocket knife can be essential to the day-to-day survival and duties of an officer. Whether you are in law enforcement or not, this year produced some great offerings that are easy on the pocketbook, giving you no excuse to be without a knife.

### **KA-BAR DOG HEAD COMBAT KNIFE**

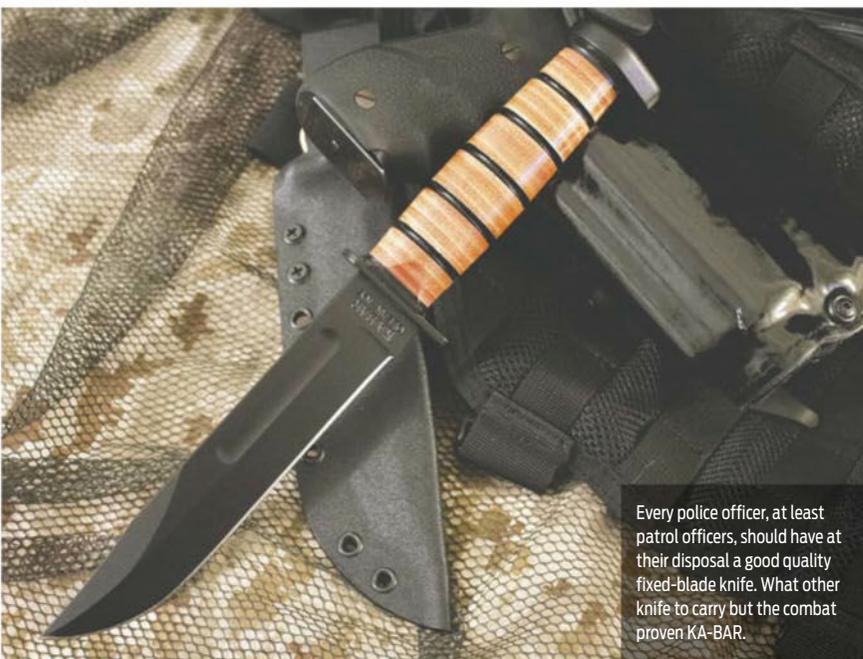
**OVERALL:** 12.0 inches  
**BLADE:** 7.0 inches  
**STEEL:** 1095 Cro-Van, 56-58 RC  
**HANDLES:** Leather  
**WEIGHT:** 10.75 ounces  
**OPENING SYSTEM:** Fixed blade  
**CARRY SYSTEM:** Leather sheath  
Handcrafted in the USA

## **KA-BAR KNIVES**

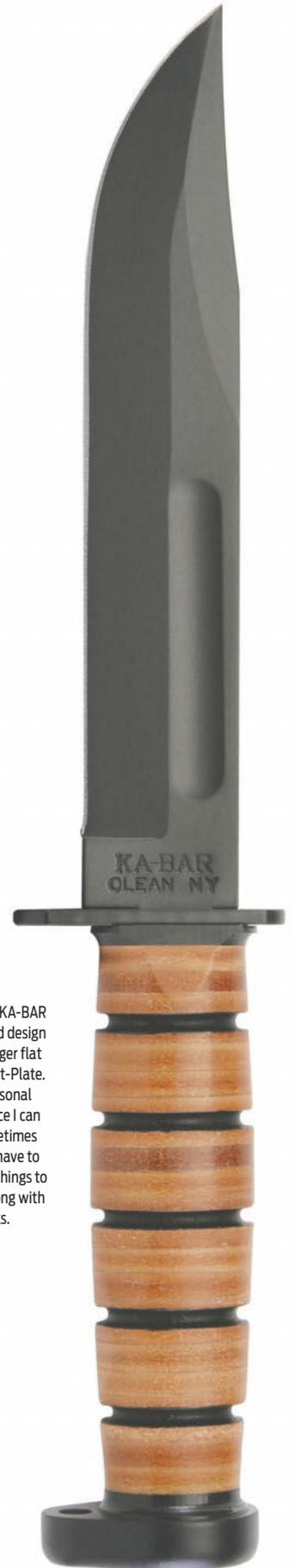
**It is hard to beat a tradition and legend and harder to beat a KA-BAR knife.**

For law enforcement, military and civilians who are looking for an excellent fixed-blade knife, I recommend the KA-BAR Dog Head Utility Knife. For the most part, the Dog Head Utility Knife is much like the USMC KA-BAR Combat knife made famous in 1942 in WW II. The only difference is the cross-guard and butt-plate. The Dog Head has an extended butt-plate and a much stronger cross-guard design. It is my opinion the Dog Head is well suited as a tactical fixed

**“...THE DOG HEAD UTILITY KNIFE IS MUCH LIKE THE USMC KA-BAR COMBAT KNIFE MADE FAMOUS IN 1942 IN WW II.”**



Every police officer, at least patrol officers, should have at their disposal a good quality fixed-blade knife. What other knife to carry but the combat proven KA-BAR.



I like the KA-BAR Dog Head design for its larger flat head Butt-Plate. From personal experience I can say, sometimes you just have to beat on things to move along with your tasks.



## GERBER COVERT AUTO

**OVERALL:** 8.70 inches  
**BLADE:** 3.78 inches  
**STEEL:** CPM-S30V  
**HANDLES:** Type III anodized 6061 aluminum  
**WEIGHT:** 5 ounces  
**OPENING SYSTEM:** Button release auto  
**LOCKING SYSTEM:** Button lock  
**CARRY SYSTEM:** Pocket clip  
Handcrafted in the USA

blade knife for civilian units such as SWAT, as well as any of the military specialized units, while also being the perfect knife for any officer to have in his or her duty bag. I like the Dog Head design for its larger flat head Butt-Plate. From personal experience I can say, sometimes you just have to beat on things to move forward.

**“THE COVERT’S  
NEWER, STRONGER  
SPRING PROPELS  
THE BLADE OPEN  
WITH SOME DECENT  
FORCE...”**

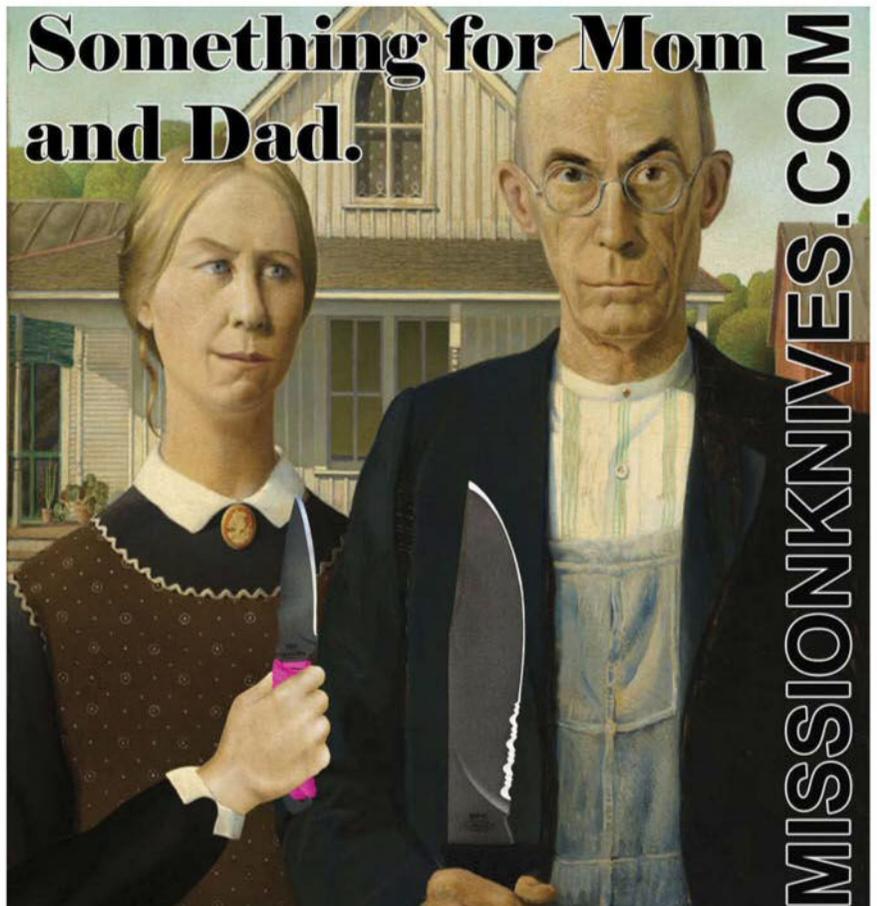
I have the small manual Gerber Covert as well as the Covert Auto, which I carried in Tikrit and Kurdistan. To me the Covert is a great knife for professionals at an affordable price.

My personal KA-BAR Dog Head is carried in a Kydex Sheath designed by JD at The 710 Custom Sheaths, in the Right Hip Right Hand Pull, fold over “Taco” style, black CF Pattern with Kydex lower belt loop, upper leather dangler. The KA-BAR Dog Head and The 710 Sheath are an unbeatable combination, perfect together and suited to my needs. Check out the Dog Head KA-BAR and JD’s Sheaths to find your perfect combination.

## GERBER KNIVES

**Gerber’s Mini Covert Auto is also a great auto knife.**

In many states, law enforcement officers are allowed to carry automatic knives, although currently a few states have no provisions for their officers to carry or possess an automatic (switchblade) knife. States like Colorado consider the carrying of a switchblade knife a Class 5 felony and simple possession of such a misdemeanor. However, Colorado State Law has a provision which allows law enforcement officers, U.S. Military and National Guard (U.S. Military, too) to carry





CRKT TIGHE RADE is as pleasing to the eye as it is finely made. The TIGHE RADE is just one of many products CRKT produces and sells for an affordable price.

a switchblade while on duty in the performance of their duties.

Of Gerber's line of nine automatic knives, their Covert Auto is one of my favorites. The Covert Auto is a high-quality precision tool that never fails to deploy when called into action. The Covert's newer, stronger spring propels the blade open with some decent force when the button is depressed. The signatures on the side of the blade read Applegate-Fairbairn. Colonel Rex Applegate and William E. Fairbairn designed a version of the Fairbairn-Sykes fighting knife called the Applegate-Fairbairn fighting knife. Based on this design, the Gerber Covert Applegate-Fairbairn folder was born. If you can possess and want a good quality auto knife, then check out the Gerber Covert Auto.

## CRKT CRKT adds another winner to their line of affordable knives in the TIGHE RADE

For many knife consumers, CRKT is their go-to company. CRKT offers high-quality products, most of which are manufactured offshore. I own several CRKT products and can say their high standards are well represented in the TIGHE RADE, designed by Brian Tighe. With its button lock and release system, the TIGHE RADE is not an auto, but more like an assisted opening knife. When the knife is closed, the flipper at the blade pivot on the back of the knife is exposed for use. Pressing

### CRKT TIGHE RADE

- OVERALL:** 7.88 inches
- CLOSED LENGTH:** 4.53 inches
- BLADE:** 3.38 inches
- STEEL:** 8Cr13MoV, 58-60 RC
- HANDLES:** 6061 T6 Aluminum
- WEIGHT:** 4.5 ounces
- LOCKING SYSTEM:** Button lock and release
- OPENING SYSTEM:** Flipper, thumb stud
- CARRY SYSTEM:** Pocket clip

the flipper quickly will deploy the superb blade into a locking position. You can release the lock by simply pushing and allowing the blade to fall back into place within the frame. The TIGHE RADE features aluminum handles with contoured, textured deep grooves and a compound ground blade provides for multiple tasks with one blade.

I find the TIGHE RADE to be a knife every law enforcement officer would be proud to carry. The deep textured handle and strong pocket clip make for a super secure fit at the top of their uniform pants pocket. I have lost more than one folder while rolling around on the ground subduing a suspect. For that expensive reason I like the way the TIGHE RADE rides in my pocket, front and back. I know most officers spend \$10-\$40 for a folding knife, but at only \$45, the extra bump up of \$5 is well worth the investment.



When working crime scenes, cutting away seatbelts or other typical daily duties, the CRKT TIGHE RADE is a good quality pocket knife that really comes in handy.





## STEEL WILL

**Steel Will provides a knife and sheath combo that won't break the bank or your duty belt carry system**

Steel Will is the knife brand of Sport Manufacturing Group Inc. (SMG). I chose this brand for their high quality and affordable prices with several styles of fixed and folding knives. They provide Tactical Series, Outdoor Series and Urban Series blades. In the Urban Series, I chose the Censor 1330 fixed blade for its ability to be carried while on duty. The Censor 1330 is a very well-designed, well-made, strong and functional duty knife made in Taiwan. The ergonomics of the Censor 1330 provide for a very natural, comfortable grip during use, alleviating fatigue in the field. The sheath design seems to have an officer's needs in mind, because an officer can remove the sheath and knife without taking their inner belt off. All that is required is a push of the button at the top of the nylon belt loop and it releases. Censor's injected molded nylon sheath secures the knife and adjusts at any angle, allowing you to fit it onto your duty belt without having to adjust your personal or department regulated carry system. The Steel Will Censor 1330 is a good buy at \$60 for those who put their lives on the line, day in and day out.

For those of you who go into harm's way, as I did, either serving with the military or as a contractor, the easily concealed and quickly deployable Steel Will Censor 1330 is a sensibly priced insurance policy.

### STEEL WILL CENSOR 1330

**OVERALL:** 7.68 inches

**BLADE:** 3.54 inches

**STEEL:** AUS-8

**HANDLES:** Black nylon

**WEIGHT:** 5.1 ounces

**OPENING SYSTEM:** Fixed blade

**CARRY SYSTEM:** Black nylon tactical



The Steel Will Censor 1330 fits perfectly behind your gun belt, making it a good duty fixed blade knife for those departments who allow their officer's to carry a knife as backup.





With a liner lock, pocket clip and thumb stud, Case's Mid-Folding Hunter makes a departure from traditional stylings and offers up a solid tactical knife. As always, Case is crafted and made in the USA.

## CASE KNIVES

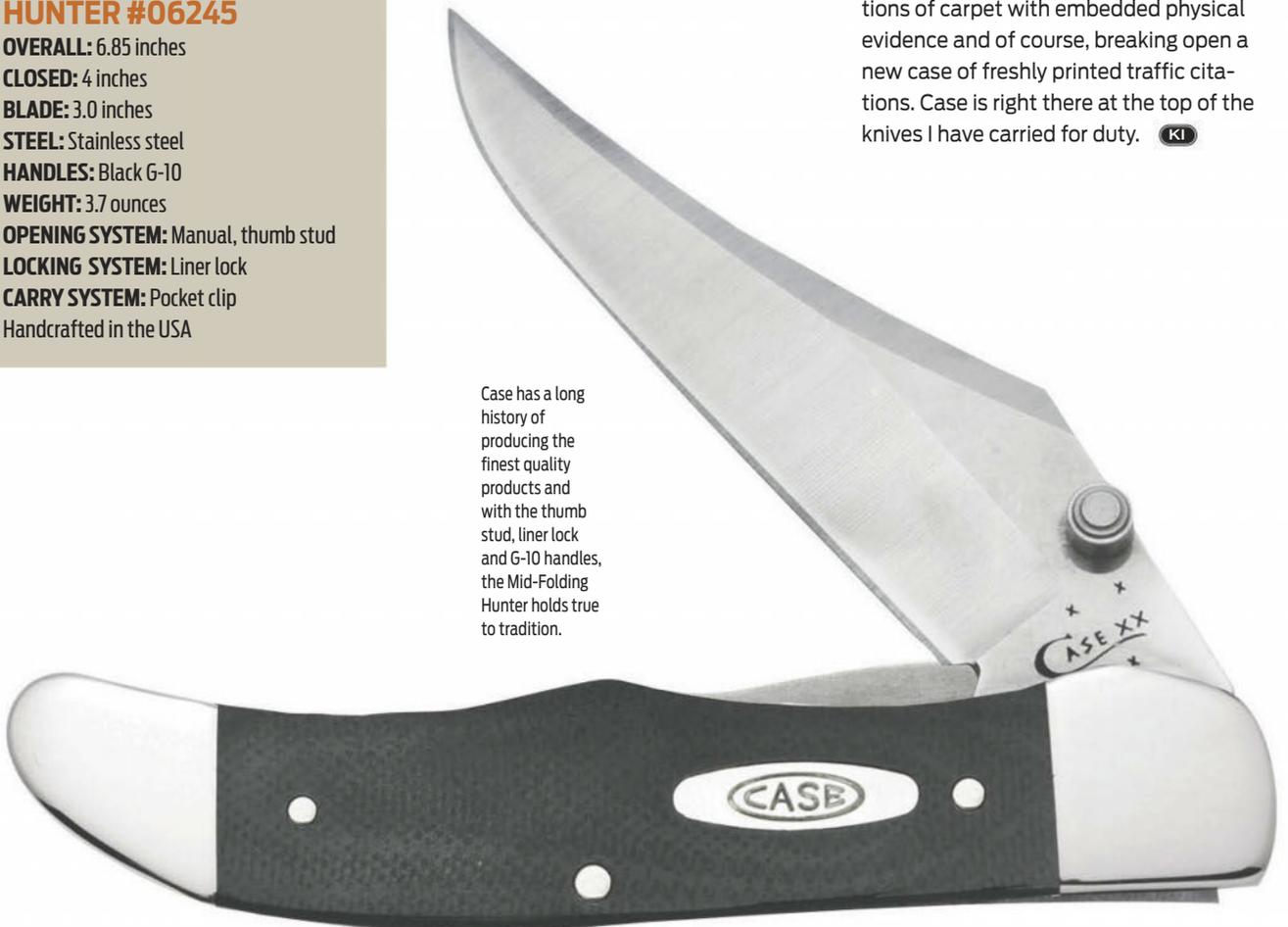
**Case's Mid-Folding Hunter #06245 with its G-10 black handles is a tactical folding pocket knife.**

For those of you who are very traditional in nature and are not swayed by the latest and greatest improvements of the tools you use, Case knives could be a good choice for you. Not long ago, Case added to its product line several different traditional popular pocket knives which I feel are hybrids of traditional and tactical. Case's Mid-Folding Hunter #06245 with its G-10 black handles is a tactical folding pocket knife — the perfect size for the person who uses a pocket knife for tasks light to medium duty. After all, medium-size pocket knives are not made for prying, hacking or chopping. An officer's use of the Case Mid-Folding Hunter could include, opening sealed evidence packages, cutting crime scene tape, cutting out sections of carpet with embedded physical evidence and of course, breaking open a new case of freshly printed traffic citations. Case is right there at the top of the knives I have carried for duty. **KI**

### CASE MID-FOLDING HUNTER #06245

**OVERALL:** 6.85 inches  
**CLOSED:** 4 inches  
**BLADE:** 3.0 inches  
**STEEL:** Stainless steel  
**HANDLES:** Black G-10  
**WEIGHT:** 3.7 ounces  
**OPENING SYSTEM:** Manual, thumb stud  
**LOCKING SYSTEM:** Liner lock  
**CARRY SYSTEM:** Pocket clip  
 Handcrafted in the USA

Case has a long history of producing the finest quality products and with the thumb stud, liner lock and G-10 handles, the Mid-Folding Hunter holds true to tradition.



**“CASE ADDED TO  
ITS PRODUCT LINE  
SEVERAL DIFFERENT  
TRADITIONAL  
POPULAR POCKET  
KNIVES WHICH I  
FEEL ARE HYBRIDS  
OF TRADITIONAL  
AND TACTICAL.”**

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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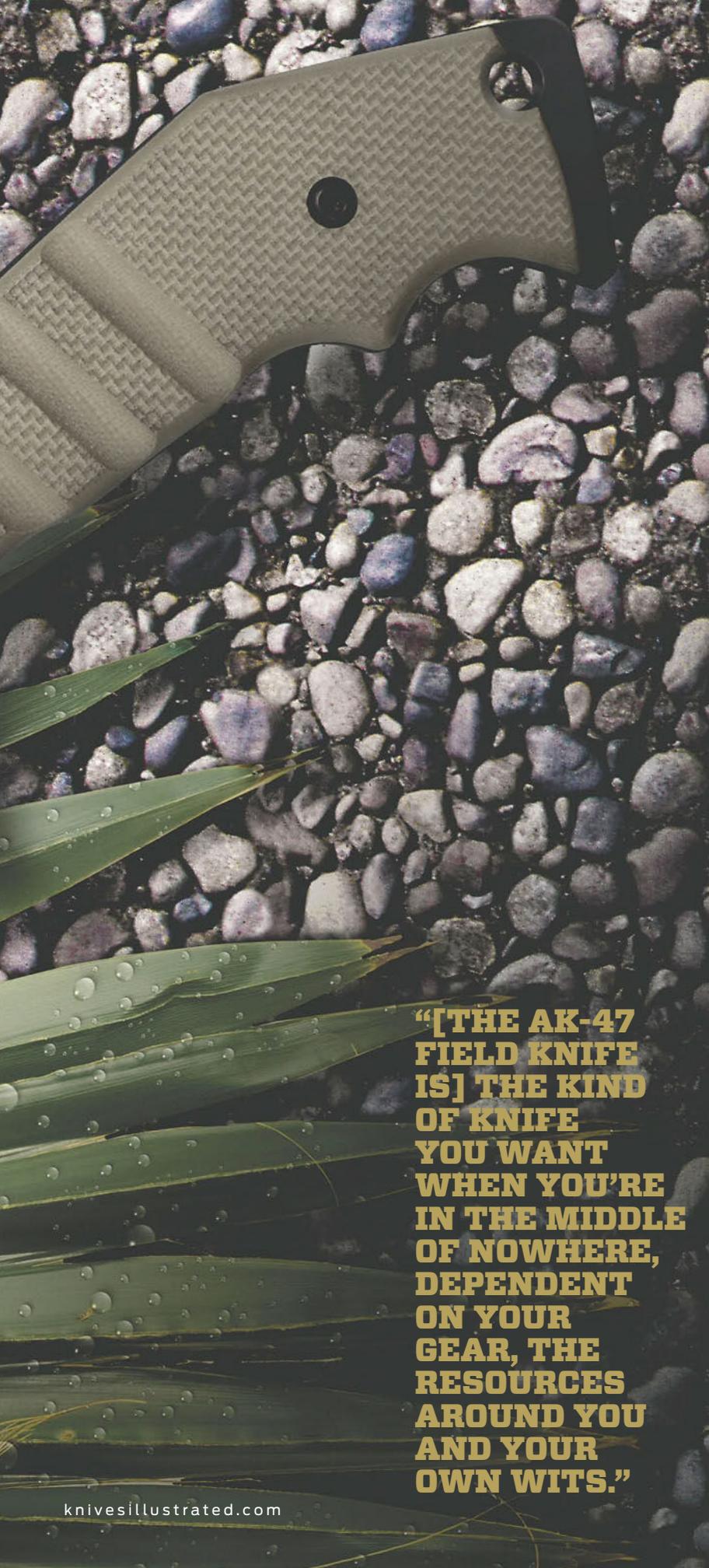
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# NEVER OUT OF "AMMO"

COLD STEEL'S AK-47  
FIELD KNIFE LIVES UP  
TO ITS NAME AS  
A DEPENDABLE,  
DURABLE BLADE FOR  
ANY ENVIRONMENT

TEXT BY STEVEN PAUL BARLOW  
PHOTOS BY STEVEN PAUL BARLOW  
AND COLD STEEL

AK-47<sup>®</sup>  
FIELD



**“[THE AK-47  
FIELD KNIFE  
IS] THE KIND  
OF KNIFE  
YOU WANT  
WHEN YOU’RE  
IN THE MIDDLE  
OF NOWHERE,  
DEPENDENT  
ON YOUR  
GEAR, THE  
RESOURCES  
AROUND YOU  
AND YOUR  
OWN WITS.”**

**I KNOW** what you’re thinking: “Here comes another enthusiastic review of a new knife.” The truth is that I won’t agree to review a knife unless I’m fairly certain in advance that it’s a pretty good knife that will perform well.

I don’t want to waste my time or yours doing a review that’s predictably critical of a lousy blade. I’d rather show you the good stuff. I’ve had excellent experiences with Cold Steel knives long before I started writing about knives. So when I had a chance to test the company’s new AK-47 Field Knife, yes, I was enthusiastic about the prospect.

### **WHAT’S IN A NAME?**

Imagine the confidence Lynn Thompson and his crew at Cold Steel must have had in naming a knife the AK-47 Field Knife. When I think of the AK-47, I think of a firearm proven in battle worldwide, with a record of durability, reliability and effectiveness in any environment.

The AK-47, the firearm, was unfortunately too often in the hands of the enemy. The AK-47, the knife, is something we have the good fortune to have on our side and it will never run out of ammo.

Although Cold Steel already had AK-47 folding knives in their lineup, the new Field Knife adds a full-tang fixed blade to the cadre. It features a 5.5-inch saber grind clip blade, with an overall length of 10.375 inches and a hefty 5mm-thick blade. Why some measurements are in inches and others are in millimeters I can’t fathom. Do the math if you wish, but take my word for it: it’s a nice thick blade.

The steel is CPM3-V high carbon, finished with Cold Steel’s DLC (Diamond Like Coating). With its G10 handle scales, the knife tips the scales at 11.1 ounces.

Where the G10 stops, the metal continues. There is an exposed striking pommel that I have found useful when things needed to be pounded or pulverized. Remember, however, that Cold Steel was founded with martial arts objectives. The inclusion of an impact feature only adds to this tool’s capabilities as a weapon. The sheath is the company’s Secure-Ex



The author believes this knife would be a good choice for anyone who travels to out-of-the-way places.



The AK-47 easily handled cuts through various types and thickness of rope and cord.

design of Kydex and nylon, a sheath that has proven to be sturdy and functional over the years.

### MORE THAN A FIELD KNIFE

This knife is designated as a “field knife,” so what exactly does that mean? Define it how you like — this knife is a multi-purpose, do-everything blade — the kind of knife you want when you’re in the middle of nowhere, dependent on your gear, the resources around you and your own wits.

You might have to gut a deer or clean a rabbit, or possibly mark a trail or clear a shooting lane. There may be a need to fit poles together to build a shelter or a ground blind, or fashion a travois to haul out game or an injured comrade. Perhaps you need to cut rope, process tinder, prepare a meal, repair or repurpose other gear, dig up edible tubers — the list goes on and on.

## COMPARISON SHOPPING

PHOTO ON OPPOSITE PAGE

During the course of this review, I came to appreciate the handling qualities of the Cold Steel AK-47 Field Knife. Still, I wondered how it would stack up against one of my all-time favorite, do-everything knives.

In this instance, it meant comparing Cold Steel against, well, Cold Steel. I bought a Cold Steel SRK (Survival Rescue Knife) years ago and it is still the knife I reach for more often

than not when wandering through remote areas on my own. I liked it so much that I bought a second one, which is why the one in the photo — my backup SRK — looks so new.

I utilized both knives for various cutting chores, alternating them during a recent trek to some nearby woods. The blade of the SRK is a half-inch longer, while the AK-47 Field Knife has

a wider blade. Both would serve well as an all-around knife and it really comes down to personal preference. What is my personal preference? I’m not ready to give up either of them. In the near future, I’ll probably opt more for the AK-47, but only because I want to continue working with it. It has some catching up to do with the years I’ve already logged with the SRK.



The author compared the new AK-47 Field Knife, left, with his old favorite, the SRK, another Cold Steel knife. While he liked the new knife, he wasn't ready to give up the old one either.



The back of the blade provided a good striking surface when using a ferro rod to start a fire.



Slicing cuts through wood were smooth and controlled.

Personal defense is another area to consider. Many companies shy away from the notion while Cold Steel embraces it. That's why so many of their utilitarian knives feature clip points rather than drop points. Clip points penetrate better.

That ability to penetrate would come in handy if I want to lash the knife to a pole to form a lance (I say lance and not spear). I might use a knife on the end of a pole, extending my reach to thrust at a porcupine or other animal I have cornered or run down. But, no, I'm not going to throw my knife, stick attached or not, at

## COLD STEEL UPGRADES ITS STEEL

The Cold Steel knives I've purchased have always performed well. The company, through its rigorous product testing, research into stronger lock designs and collaborations with top designers, has shown it's always looking for ways to improve its product line.

During the past year, Cold Steel has announced its ongoing transition to American materials, specifically some of the newer, better powdered steels. Carpenter CTS XHP and BD1, Crucible CPM 20CV and CPM-S35VN are purported to offer superior edge retention, durability and wear resistance.

These advanced "super steels" come at a cost and the prices of some Cold Steel products are going up. However, if you're like me, paying a few more dollars for a superior product is a worthwhile investment and will likely pay dividends when you're in a critical situation depending on your blade.

**"THE INCLUSION OF AN IMPACT FEATURE ONLY ADDS TO THIS TOOL'S CAPABILITIES AS A WEAPON."**

The 5mm blade thickness of the AK-47 Field Knife helps to make this an effective and sturdy design.



Although not as long and heavy as some "survival" knives, the 5.5-inch AK-47 showed it was still up to performing chopping tasks.



### SPECIFICATIONS

**MANUFACTURER:** Cold Steel  
**MODEL:** AK-47 Field Knife  
**TYPE:** Fixed blade, full tang  
**STEEL:** U.S. CPM3-V high carbon with DLC coating  
**BLADE LENGTH:** 5.5 inches  
**BLADE THICKNESS:** 5mm  
**HANDLE:** 4.875 inches with G-10 scales  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 10.375 inches  
**WEIGHT:** 11.1 ounces  
**SHEATH:** Secure-Ex® Kydex sheath  
**MSRP:** \$284.99

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Due to the thickness of the blade, the AK-47 acted like a wedge and was able to easily split branches.

anything. I don't want to lose or break one of the most important tools I carry.

So without getting into a debate about whether this is a survival knife, a bushcraft knife, both or neither, let me just say that the AK-47 Field Knife is smaller than many larger survival-type knives, and larger than the smaller bushcraft knives that the more intrepid of you out there might use to whittle a spoon and matching tea set.

### IN THE FIELD

I tried the AK-47 Field Knife on a variety of cutting chores and found it performed very well. It was sharp out of the box and it stayed that way through my testing.

To evaluate a knife, I don't believe you have to abuse it until it breaks. I performed tasks that would reasonably be asked of it, and its blade and handle geometry proved to be of good design. It made cuts easily, while the grip was secure and comfortable in extended use and the knife showed no sign of failing to perform any task I demanded of it.

### IT'S A WINNER

The Cold Steel AK-47 Field Knife has a suggested retail price of \$284.99, but we all know the real-world prices on most products are much less. This knife is available at a price lower than many lesser blades. It's a knife that I believe can help you to get there and back, and do whatever needs to be done along the way. How's that for an enthusiastic review? **KI**

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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# For Distinguished Gentlemen

**THE SPYDERCO  
POSITRON  
OFFERS EFFICIENT  
FUNCTION  
WITH STYLE**

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
GARRETT LUCAS

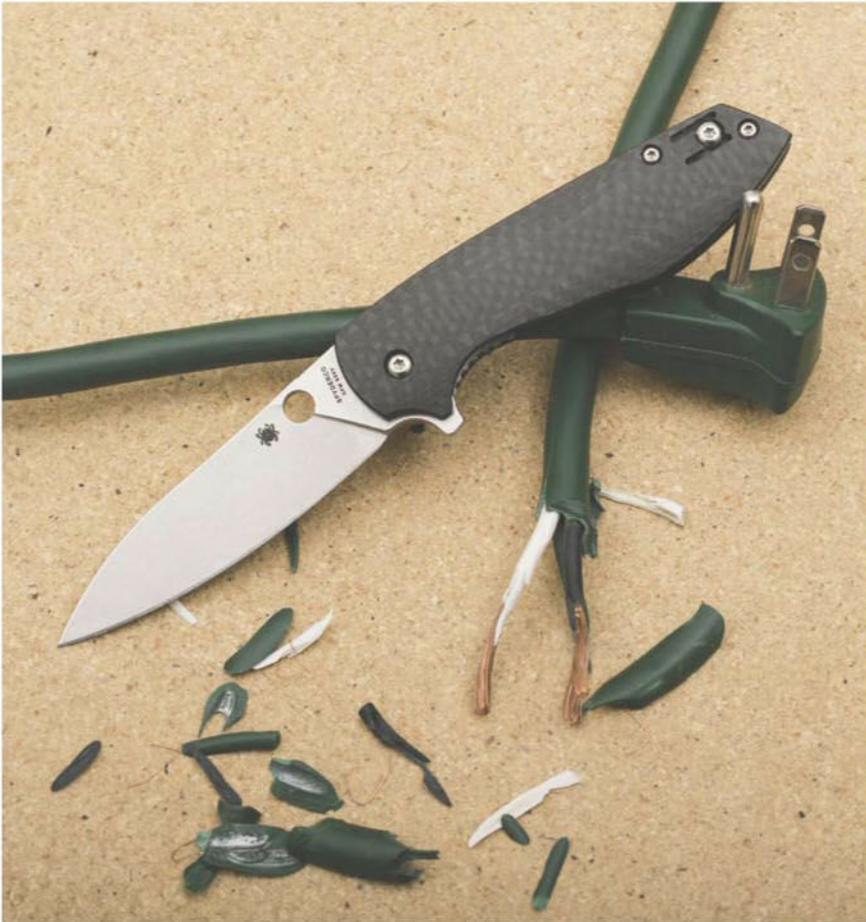
**Have** you ever heard of the “clothes horse” description? It’s an individual who prides himself on his wardrobe and makes sure he has the latest garments to fit whatever occasion arises. That’s not me, but if you took a look at my knife collection, you might pin a similar moniker on me.

However, I tend to be a one-size-fits-all when it comes to the folding knives I carry. I typically find something that works well in the field, and carry it everywhere. I don’t suppose it’s a bad way to

work, but sometimes, you just might want a knife that’s a little more upscale, not as aggressive looking, and would go well with a suit and tie.

## **Enter the Spyderco Positron.**

A recent addition to their 2016 lineup, the Positron embodies style and class while still maintaining a good working-steel blade, if some heavy-duty work comes your way. An initial assessment of the knife would include the compact size, carbon fiber scales, and the flipper-style



The Positron does not ride deep into the pocket, nor is it obtrusive. It rides in a medium position for easy access.

The short blade length and almost surgical edge of the Positron makes it an excellent choice for fine tasks that require a delicate touch.

opening mechanism.

I'll be honest, I've worked with a lot of knives over the years, but it's just been the last couple of years that I've worked closely with flipper knives. Some designs are excellent, and some aren't. You have to take into account the context for which the knife was designed before you can make that decision.

The Positron is designed for everyday carry, but meant for more common work, even though its appearance is anything but common. The reason I say that has to do with the construction of the knife. First, as seen in the picture, the flipper is relatively small compared to tactical models. Tactical flippers generally need to open quickly, so a larger flipper is usually de rigueur. Additionally, a lot of the tactical flippers I've seen have an assisted-opening mechanism.

### Automatic or Manual?

An assisted-opening knife is sometimes wrongly called an automatic knife. An automatic knife requires only the push

of a button or switch to mechanically open the entire knife. An assisted-opener, on the other hand, requires at least some manual engagement of the blade by the user to get the knife open to a certain point where an internal spring takes over to quickly open the knife the rest of the way.

The Spyderco Positron does not have an assisted-opening mechanism, so simply engaging the small flipper protrusion does not open the blade fully. Now, this is not a negative attribute when you consider the context for which the knife was designed.

Despite its technologically enhanced parts, such as the handle material and blade steel, it's really an every-man (or woman) folding knife to be used for routine tasks. However, with just the slightest bit of practice, the Positron can be quickly deployed even without an assisted-opening device, and despite the diminutive size of the flipper.

As the user draws the knife out of the pocket, the flipper on the spine of the

handle should be engaged at approximately the same time as the user gives the whole knife a slight flip or snap of the hand. The flipper will open the blade partially, and the snap of the hand will facilitate the rest of opening the blade and locking it fully into place. It's an easy process to learn and allows the user to open the blade more quickly if it's needed for a more urgent matter.

### Some Particulars

Before we get into performance and ease of carry, we need to better understand what the Positron is, and that can be accomplished by looking at its specifications. The overall length of the Positron is 7.02 inches, with a closed length of just 3.97 inches. Taking these dimensions into account along with the 3.05-inch blade length and weight of only 2.6 ounces, it's easy to see the Positron was crafted to be a small, light and out-of-your-way knife that a user could carry even in the lightest of attire.

With the advent of the latest super



steels, the construction of the blade with CPM S30V steel is a great balancing point. Since the Positron is not designed for extreme, long-term use in the field, higher-grade steel would be wasted on the knife. But, CPM S30V is a recent enough innovation that it still holds an advantage over intermediate and less expensive steels in the market when it comes to corrosion-resistance and edge-holding capabilities.

The beautifully sculpted carbon-fiber handle not only provides a smooth and comfortable purchase on the knife, it also adds a bit of elegance to its overall appearance as well. The handle incorporates a liner-lock which is more than strong enough for whatever task you might perform with the Positron.

To facilitate operation, the handle also

## SPECIFICATIONS

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 7.02 inches

**CLOSED LENGTH:** 3.97 inches

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.05 inches

**WEIGHT:** 2.6 ounces

**BLADE THICKNESS:** 0.118 inch

**HANDLE MATERIAL:** Carbon fiber

**BLADE MATERIAL:** CPM S30V

**“... THE POSITRON EMBODIES STYLE AND CLASS WHILE STILL MAINTAINING A GOOD WORKING-STEEL BLADE IF SOME HEAVY-DUTY WORK COMES YOUR WAY.”**

**1)** At just 3.97 inches when closed, the Positron was built to be a gentleman's knife and not for tactical work. This is evidenced by the diminutive flipper protruding from the spine of the handle.

**2)** Pictured here is the position on the opposite side of the handle where the clip can be attached. Out of the box, the Positron has the same keen edge you'll find on any knife from Spyderco.

**3)** The Positron's carefully sculpted carbon-fiber handle adds a touch of class to its appearance. Additionally, the wire clip is reversible, making it accessible by either right- or left-handed users.

**4)** The Spyderco Positron has a sleek profile including the blade, which has a full, flat grind for efficient slicing.



One of the toughest trials on a knife's edge is cutting cardboard. The Positron's flat grind and efficient edge profile zipped through a box, not only cutting it into long pieces, but making cuts on pieces over and over until the remains looked like confetti.

includes ball bearing washers, which allow the blade to pivot smoothly while opening or closing. Another positive attribute of the handle is the inclusion of dual positions for the reversible wire clip that makes the Positron accessible to both right- and left-handed users.

### The User Experience

As with any other Spyderco knife I pull out of the box, the Positron had an extremely keen edge. On occasion, I have the disappointment of pulling a new knife out of the packaging and encountering a not-so-sharp blade. That's never been my experience with Spyderco products.

Another positive, at least from my perspective, is that the Positron has a full flat

grind. This has become my favorite blade profile for everyday folders. A flat grind is an extremely efficient slicer, because there are no shoulders higher on the blade to halt the blade's progress into thicker material. However, a full flat grind's edge is not as long-lasting as some others, but since it's one of the easier grinds to sharpen and touch up, it's an easy process to get the edge back to shaving sharpness.

Sometimes, a knife can be so small that it feels a bit awkward to hold and use — especially when putting any amount of elbow grease behind it. The Positron's flipper acts as a suitable handguard to keep the user's hand from moving forward onto the blade. Also, the recurved handle helps fill the palm a little more, and pro-

vides a positive grip. These two features work in tandem to make the Positron a relatively safe knife to work with, despite its diminutive size.

Overall, the carbon fiber handle is nicely sculpted and feels very comfortable in the hand. There's no rough texturing present; the handle has a sleek and cozy feel to it, which is what one would expect from a gentleman's knife. However, if the Positron is pressed into more aggressive service, the two corners at the bottom of the handle do tend to dig in and create slight hot spots. This issue is easily remedied by radiusing the corners a bit with some fine-grit emery cloth — though, you'll want to be careful with your approach so as not to damage the sides of the grip.



The only issue encountered was when the author put the Positron to more aggressive work. Because of its size, the two corners at the bottom of the handle can dig into the palm when pressing down into the work. This is probably a non-issue, because this type of exertion should be handled by the right tool for the job.

I don't consider the handle corners as a real problem for this kind of knife. The Positron was not designed for rugged work cutting carpet, or for slicing up cardboard all day. That's where good judgement comes into play by picking the right tool for the job.

### Occasional knife

One should consider the Positron as an occasional knife. It's the kind of knife you can have on you during special occasions because of its styling characteristics and its non-aggressive appearance. And, since it was designed to be more of a gentleman's knife, it will most likely only be used "occasionally." Though, it's nice to know that it can be used for more hardcore work if the occasion requires it. The premium CPM S30V steel of the blade and Spyderco's stainless steel, skeletonized frame makes the Positron much more capable than its size and 2.6-ounce weight might suggest.

Modeled after Brad Southard's "lon" folder, the Positron offers a nice suite of

features that are a definite benefit when considering the type of carry for which it was intended. It's an extremely lightweight offering that's well suited for light summer attire or even for after-dinner gatherings. The 3.05-inch blade will handle all of the reasonable tasks brought to bear in everyday situations, and the blade material strikes the right balance between edge holding and easy sharpening for even the newly initiated aficionado.

### Vote for This Candidate

If you're looking for an elegant knife that still retains quality and strength in a small package, the Spyderco is definitely a must-try candidate. It's appealing, exudes a resolute bearing about it and lives up to Spyderco's well-earned reputation for innovative, quality knives. **KI**

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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# THE NEXT LEVEL

L.T. WRIGHT'S  
BUSHCRAFTER HC  
AND OVERLAND  
MACHETE  
EXCEL IN  
THE WILD

STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY REUBEN BOLIEU



When left out overnight in Georgia's high humidity, some mild rust set in, but the two-step patina kept it to surface rust only, which was easy to remove. The pair makes a great team in the field.

### It was apparent from knife number one.

From his first knife-making experience (making a kit knife for his father) through many successful years as part of Blind Horse knives, L.T. Wright has always created beautiful, artisan working pieces. Simple, elegant, functional tools for the outdoorsmen of today — with years of knowledge and experience behind them.

In 2013, he revived L.T. Wright Handcrafted Knives. The first LTWK was the Genesis, which debuted in January of 2014, and it has been the company's most popular knife since then. With many new knives on the horizon for LTWK, I was able to procure two models from the Blade Show, which are sure to be a big hit, but first they had to make it out of the South! They are the Bushcrafter HC and the Overland machete.

#### The Bushcrafter HC

The Bushcrafter HC uses 1075 high carbon steel with a maximum 3/32-inch thickness. It has an overall length of 8 1/4

inches, and a cutting edge of 3 5/8 inches and also features a two-step patina to reduce rusting issues. Tim chose tan Micarta scales for the handle. The knife features a spear point blade and rounded butt that will facilitate in making a fire board, boring a hole for an Ojibwa bird trap, or any other task in which you need to do some drilling. LTWK included a beautifully handcrafted leather sheath, dangler style, with a firesteel loop, although the knife can be purchased without a sheath.

While bushbumming on a friend's property in the Georgia backwoods, which has been our testing grounds for lots of tools over the years, I had the chance to put the Bushcrafter HC through the ringer for the first time. I was then able to put it to the test in Alabama, where I let a few students use it for a survival class.

For a knife to be a good survival, woodcraft, bushcraft, outdoors knife, it must be able to aid in fire, camp craft and food preparation. A true woodsman will

## SPECS

### BUSHCRAFTER HC

**OVERALL LENGTH:**

8.25 inches

**SHARPENED EDGE:**

3.625 inches

**STEEL:**

1075 high carbon steel

**GRIND:**

Convex

**HANDLE:**

Natural Micarta

### OVERLAND MACHETE

**OVERALL LENGTH:**

18 inches

**SHARPENED EDGE:**

12 inches

**STEEL:**

1075 high carbon steel

**GRIND:**

Convex

**HANDLE:**

Natural Micarta



The Bushcrafter HC made fuzz sticks out of broomstick-thick damp wood for a fire. The handle was large enough for a comfortable grip.



At 3 5/8-inches long, the Bushcrafter HC blade is nimble in the hand. The 3/32-inch thickness along with the full flat/convex edge made carving green and dry wood a breeze.

look for the smartest way to get his fire going. He'll look for thin, dry twigs from a conifer tree and dry standing or downed wood from a poplar. Then, the knife can be used to make fuzz sticks on wood no thicker than a broomstick to get his fire going. Anything larger than that is fuel to be thrown on the fire whole, however misshapen or awkward in length. Using your brain, that is true bushcraft!

In our case, there was a steady rain in Georgia as we made our fire for camp. Sticks had to be shaved down to their driest state in order to be used as passable tinder and kindling. In a driving rain or early snow storm, thin, dry sticks are the first casualties and must be used accordingly. This means they need to be split or shaved to expose the dry inner wood. What better tool than a thin, sharp knife? This is where the Bushcrafter HC meets survival and excels! As most people would hurry to baton the knife through a piece of wood, a thin, sharp knife can just as easily shave the wood



Bushcrafter HC excelled at camp crafts like making a simple bush roasting grill. Tapping it with a small baton stick made it easy to shear off the correct size sticks for the job.



The author made stakes for anchoring down roasting and cooking sticks, tarps, and a variable pot holder with the Bushcrafter HC. The knife remained comfortable throughout all the crafting.

## THIN KNIVES ARE BACK IN!

From the Frontier days of the mighty Mountain Men to the modern Mora knives of Sweden, the physical characteristics of a good outdoors knife is the same — placing cutting efficiency at the forefront. I remember, sometime around the middle '90s, picking up a popular knife magazine and seeing these hunks of steel, black-coated and at least 3/16-inch to 1/4-inch thick knives. Instantly, I wanted one! As the hollow-handle knives were slowly losing their real-world appeal, this new standard was the cutlery worlds' new proximity infatuation.

Sure, these hunks of steel could chop and baton wood, as well as look tactical, but how well did they really cut? I, for one, am happy that thin knives are starting to gain popularity and prove to the world once again that thin knives slice and carve better than thicker ones. It is simple science; thinner steel has less resistance moving through material than thicker steel. That is my personal, scientific explanation without getting too John Nash. The L.T. Wright Bushcrafter HC and the Overland machete excel at carving and chopping.

until it gets to the dry inner section. This exposes the damp wood on the outside and helps it dry faster, while the dry wood is shaved, curled and ready for a fire.

The thick, rounded handle was comfortable for prolonged use splitting and shaving dry wood down to the core. No thick knife I have ever owned would have fit the bill for this task. I went on to fashion a quick roasting grill out of green wood. The Bushcrafter HC was used for the fine splitting of finger-thick green sticks for the cross-bars of the grill, as well as cutting all the grill parts with the help of a small baton for quick, precise cuts. The knife excelled at slicing canned meat, a task made for thin knives, in my opinion. Additionally, I made a variable pot holder and some tarp stakes out of green wood with the Bushcrafter HC with absolute ease, due to the barrel shaped handle and thin edge. It felt like I was cheating!

In the survival class, the students used the Bushcrafter HC once they had



Hard Dogwood is being chopped with the Overland Machete. The user is gripping back on the handle for added leverage.



With the Overland Machete stuck in a stump, fuzz sticks are easily made by drawing the wood back against the blade.

exhausted the use of their thick beveled knives. They made survival gigging (frog/fish) spears during the survival class in Alabama. One student, particularly, was in need of a good knife, so I gave him the Bushcrafter HC to keep. He was grateful and said he had never owned a good knife before.

### The Overland Machete

Designed to go along with the Genesis family of knives, this machete was intended to be kept in your vehicle as you are traveling or overlanding. It may be pulled out to clear an area to change a tire or help you get through overgrown areas. It has a similar style handle as the Genesis, with the thumb scallops. It is made from 3/32-inch thick 1075 high carbon steel, similar to the Bushcrafter HC, with an overall length of 18 inches and a 12-inch blade.

At first glance, the Overland machete resembles a Roman sword. I was overwhelmed with its lightness when I picked it up for the first time.

In the South, there are lots of hardwoods like hickory, white and red oak, sourwood, sweetgum, sycamore and dogwood — all of



The author used three poles to suspend a kettle over the fire. The Overland Machete was the star of this camp, making life a little bit easier in the humid woods of Georgia.



The Kydex sheath has an elastic retention and open-top style. The author found it tricky to get back inside the sheath.



A high-quality leather sheath can be had with the Bushcrafter HC or it can be obtained without a sheath. It's brown leather with a firesteel loop and dangler style, which is a favorite for bushcrafters.

## DESIGN INFLUENCE

Pick up a knife or survival magazine and chances are you will see the name Tim Stetzer. Tim is the author of many magazine articles (both online and print), law enforcement officer and general outdoors enthusiast. Tim is a guy who knows his stuff. After many conversations with Tim about the outdoors, traveling and knives, I jumped at the chance to review his newest knife design from L.T. Wright. We definitely share the same thoughts on practical knives, especially thin ones.

"The Bushcrafter HC is basically a Dadley spear point blade, with a handle borrowed heavily from the DeWeese pattern except lengthened, a rounder butt (for palming it to drill with) and a fatter handle. The original intent was just to make a knife that took the things I liked out of the old trade knives and tweak it for my use. I did indeed draw on knives from that era, but the DeWeese and Dadley were more where I was looking," said Tim when asked about his design influence.

which are tough on cutting tools. I took the new machete out to the woods where we made a little day camp and it easily dispatched some dogwood (some of the hardest hardwood in Georgia) to make a tripod to hang our kettle. The Overland was also used to clear green vegetation and small saplings to make a fire. Green wood is abrasive on any knife blade, no matter what it's made of (stainless or carbon), and when chopping it seems even harsher on a tool's cutting edge. While clearing the ground, there were some rocks, as was to be expected. Using a machete is like using a shovel, it will contact rocks, but remember it's a tool first and foremost. It chopped well and split wood for our fire with no issues; I enjoy doing small work, such as fire preparation, with a large blade. But I wanted to really push it out of its comfort zone.

Once the wind and rain kicked in, it was time to secure the half-erect tarp. The Overland had to be able to fashion tarp stakes as well as keep the fire going during a rain spell. Making the necessary notches for stakes was easy with the Overland because it is lightweight and despite the 12-inch blade, it never felt cumbersome and clumsy when doing small, detailed work. For making fine wood shavings with a machete, I stuck the Overland in a stump with the front of the blade sticking up slightly. I supported the back of the blade (spine) with one hand (pinching it) while my right hand drew the wood back against the blade. This is the easiest, safest way to use a big blade for shaving bark or making fuzz sticks.

Summertime in the South is so humid that just standing around having a conversation is harsh on tools, it seems. I left the tools out overnight to test the patina and found rust sprouts, bright and orange. The two-step patina kept rust at bay, holding it to just the surface, which was easy enough to wipe off, or ignore altogether, especially on the machete. Chopping and clearing the ground for a fire or camp will usually be enough use to get rid of it.

The Overland Machete sheath was strange. It was made of Kydex and used

the elastic lanyard as the retention safety while in the sheath. I found it hard to put back and would have preferred a simple, conventional sheath, but I'm just not good with moving parts.

### Winning Pair

Whether you are overlanding or bushcrafting in a camp, L.T. Wright Handcrafted Knives have a winning pair for the bush. **KI**

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PHOTO BY CHUCK WARD

Joel Chamblin TWO BLADE TRAPPER

# 20 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

**PRECISION AND QUALITY ARE THE FOUNDATION OF JOEL CHAMBLIN'S KNIVES**

STORY BY LES ROBERTSON

**I don't really know what caught my eye. In a sea of booths, there was just something about this that made me walk over. I extended and my hand and met Joel Chamblin.**

That was in Augusta, Georgia in 1994. While he had primarily hunting type knives, the quality of his work was evident.

A year later, while at the Flint River Show outside of Atlanta, Georgia, I saw one of Joel's folders. I was so impressed that when Bob Neal and I started LDC Custom Knives, we selected Joel to make the very first knife for that series.

Joel's work was so well received he was one of only two makers who found his knives in the second set of LDC Knives in 1998.

## JOEL CHAMBLIN TWO BLADE TRAPPER

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.5 inches  
**BLADE STYLES:** Clip and Spay  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 8 inches  
**CLOSED LENGTH:** 4.5 inches  
**BLADE STEEL:** CPM 1564  
**BLADE FINISH:** Satin  
**BOLSTERS AND LINERS:** Stainless steel  
**FRAME FINISH:** Satin  
**HANDLE MATERIAL:** Blue mammoth ivory  
**ENGRAVER:** Jim Small

### Slip Joint and Multi-Blade Folders

Joel continued to make a variety of styles — both folders and fixed blades. Early in the new century, Joel found a niche he excelled at.

With Tony Bose having popularized the slip joint and multi-blade folders, it opened the door for several exceptional folder makers, including Joel.

Quality and precision are the hallmarks of a Joel Chamblin knife. So these styles of knives were a perfect medium for Joel's artistic side. Joel became a popular maker to the collectors of these knives, and his precision was only one aspect. It was his ability to build a multitude of styles, incorporate design elements and work

## JOEL CHAMBLIN TWO BLADE TRAPPER

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.25 inches  
**BLADE STYLES:** Drop Point and Wharncliffe  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 7.5 inches  
**CLOSED LENGTH:** 4.25 inches  
**BLADE STEEL:** CPM 1564  
**BLADE FINISH:** Satin  
**BOLSTERS:** Damasteel  
**FRAME MATERIAL:** Stainless steel  
**FRAME FINISH:** Satin  
**HANDLE MATERIAL:** File-worked black-lip pearl and 24K gold pins



PHOTO BY CHUCK WARD

Joel Chamblin TWO BLADE TRAPPER



Joel Chamblin VERSION

PHOTO BY JOEL CHAMBLIN



Joel Chamblin UPRISING

with a variety of materials.

Of particular note are his 3- and 5-blade folders. Talk to any maker who either builds or has attempted to build one of these knives, and the first thing you will notice is some kind of facial expression. A sly grin or a look up to the ceiling letting you know without a word; these knives are no easy task. Nor are they for those who are not an exacting artisan who lacks patience. Imagine trying to build basically

3 to 5 folders at the same time that all need to fit and work together.

With the quality of his work, on anyone's list, Joel was always in the top 10.

### Variety and Price Point

In addition to working to exacting specifications, he offered variety ... in knife style, materials and how he worked them. He also works with different types of ivory which, when worked, the phrase "low and slow" is highly recommended. Low refers to the speed of the equipment, and slow refers to the maker working the ivory.

As you look at the shield and the pin in the photo within this article, understand that steel and ivory cannot be worked at the same speed or with the same pressure. Imagine the precision it takes to get the stainless steel pins and shield flush with the ivory. The holes have to be drilled for the pins and the pocket for the shield; low and slow.

Pearl is a little more forgiving but not by much. Notice the gold pins in the folder with the file-worked black-lip pearl. Each hole has to be drilled to the exact same specifications so the pins will mirror every other pin in that handle. Too much

## JOEL CHAMBLIN UPRISING

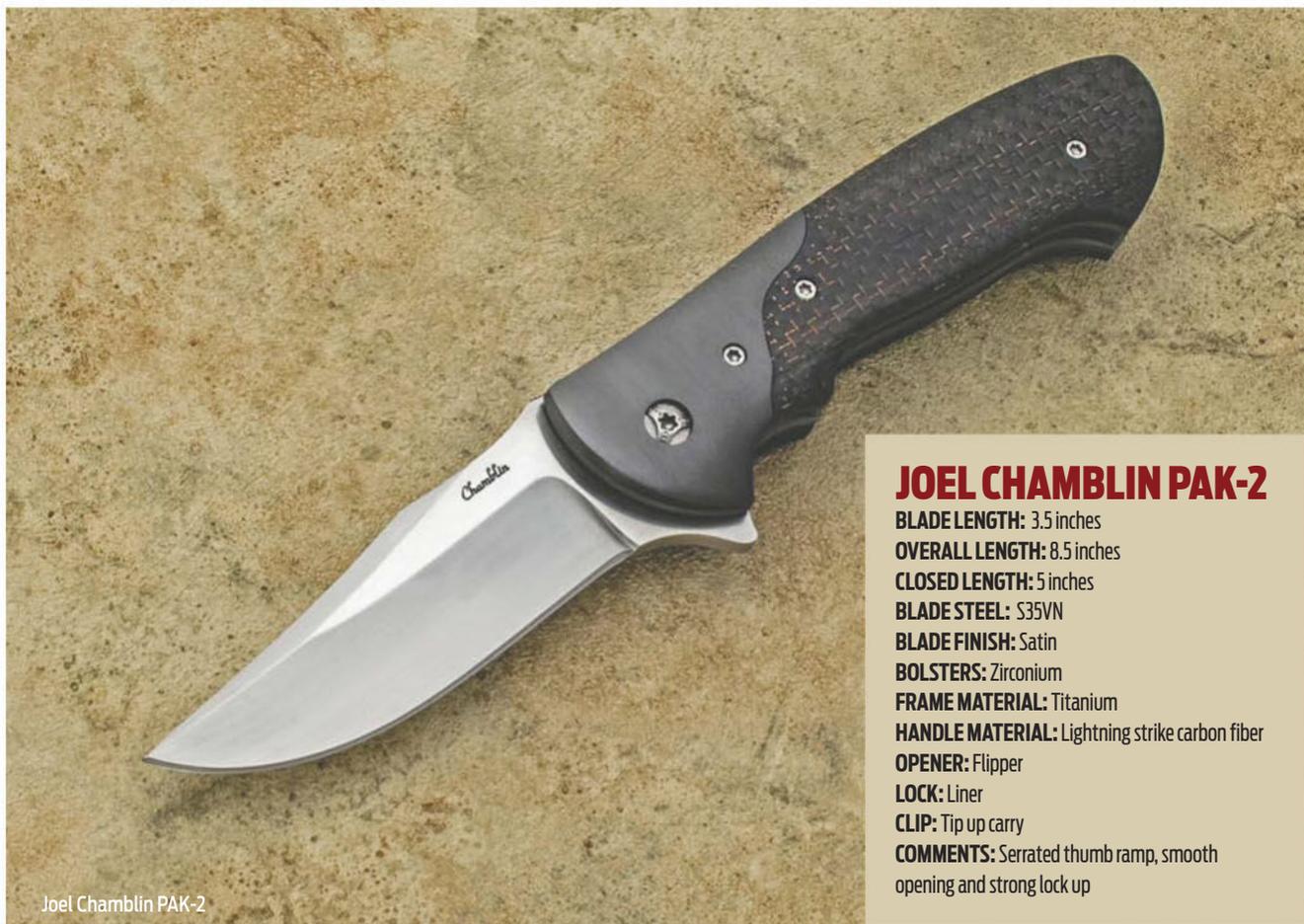
**DESIGN:** VanOtterloo  
**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.375 inches  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 8.75 inches  
**CLOSED LENGTH:** 5 inches  
**BLADE STEEL:** CPM154 satin finish  
**BOLSTERS:** Zirconium  
**FRAME MATERIAL:** Anodized titanium liners  
**HANDLE MATERIAL:** VooDoo Resins  
**OPENER:** Flipper  
**LOCK:** Liner  
**CLIP:** Tip up carry  
**COMMENTS:** Zirconium clip and backspacer

pressure or speed using the file to work the pearl and you are throwing away the piece as soon as the crack appears. There is no fix for cracked pearl or ivory on these knives.

With all of that, what made his knives even more desirable were his prices. Joel's knives have always been a bargain. Those who appreciate the time and talent it takes to create one of the works of art are all smiles when Joel puts their knife in its pouch and hands it to them.

## JOEL CHAMBLIN VERSION

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.375 inches  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 8 inches  
**CLOSED LENGTH:** 4.625 inches  
**BLADE STEEL:** Chad Nichols Damascus  
**BOLSTERS:** Zirconium  
**FRAME MATERIAL:** Anodized gold titanium liners  
**HANDLE MATERIAL:** Shred carbon fiber  
**OPENER:** Flipper  
**LOCK:** Liner  
**CLIP:** Tip up carry  
**COMMENTS:** Clip and backspacer with striped treatment



Joel Chamblin PAK-2

## JOEL CHAMBLIN PAK-2

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.5 inches  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 8.5 inches  
**CLOSED LENGTH:** 5 inches  
**BLADE STEEL:** S35VN  
**BLADE FINISH:** Satin  
**BOLSTERS:** Zirconium  
**FRAME MATERIAL:** Titanium  
**HANDLE MATERIAL:** Lightning strike carbon fiber  
**OPENER:** Flipper  
**LOCK:** Liner  
**CLIP:** Tip up carry  
**COMMENTS:** Serrated thumb ramp, smooth opening and strong lock up

### Tactical folders

The variety he makes includes tactical, which he actually began making 20 years ago. As the slip joint/multi-blade market matured, another market sector emerged (again) — the tactical folder. Joel has moved seamlessly from one genre to another.

Once again combining style, materials and a price point that makes him one of

## JOEL CHAMBLIN VERSION

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.5 inches  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 8 inches  
**CLOSED LENGTH:** 4.6 inches  
**BLADE STEEL:** S35VN  
**BLADE FINISH:** Satin  
**BOLSTERS:** Zirconium  
**FRAME MATERIAL:** Titanium  
**HANDLE MATERIAL:** Lightning strike carbon fiber  
**OPENER:** Flipper  
**LOCK:** Liner  
**CLIP:** Tip up carry (zirconium)



Joel Chamblin VERSION

the best tactical folder makers in the market, at an affordable price. His knives incorporate the most in-demand materials expected in tactical folders today.

Blade steels are primarily S35VN, CPM 154 and Damascus, while the bolsters are offered in titanium, zirconium, Damascus, Timascus or Mokuti. Frames are made from titanium and scales are offered in Lightning strike carbon fiber, standard carbon fiber, synthetics like G-10 or Micarta, and your choice of natural handle materials.

The knives primarily feature flipper openers and liner locks and the clips are, of course, tip up. Joel's design elements are again on display in the curved bolster on the PAK-2 and the V design in the bolster on the Version. He is producing some of the smoothest, best built EDC folders available today.

Depending on materials, Joel's tactical folders run between \$700 and \$1,200. Should you want premium materials such as Timascus or Mokuti, you will need to speak with Joel.

Currently, the Blade Show in Atlanta is the only show Joel is slated to attend this year, but that could change based on the availability of his schedule.

### Stand Out from the Crowd

Joel Chamblin's ability to work a wide variety of materials in a seemingly unending variety of styles will surely allow you to find a knife that catches your eye. Joel understands what "quality for the money" means and incorporates it into each knife he builds.

In today's tactical folder environment of hype, over pricing, outsourced work and cookie-cutter styles, Joel's knives stand out from that crowd; one man building one knife. **KI**

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BEHIND the  
SCENES

# BARK RIVER KNIVES

CARVING A NAME IN  
MICHIGAN'S UPPER  
PENINSULA

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JAMES E. HOUSE



**“BLADE DESIGNS OF BARK RIVER KNIVES RANGE IN SIZE FROM A 2-INCH EPK TO THE 12-INCH GRASSO BOLO III, BOTH OF WHICH ARE IN THE BUSHCRAFT SERIES.”**



The Ultra Lite Bushcrafter is a small, general purpose knife.

**Since 2001, Escanaba, Michigan has been home to The Bark River Knife and Tool Company, a producer of elegant knives.**

Owned and operated as a family enterprise by Mike Stewart, his wife Leslie and their son Jim and daughter Jackie, Bark River Knives is also the home of Blackjack Classics, Scagel and Northwoods Knives, so most of what follows also applies to all of these brands. Beginning in early 2015, knives carrying the Ambush and American Knife Company labels have been produced at the Bark River facility.

Mike Stewart has a long history of producing knives and has worked with companies such as Blackjack (in Effingham, Illinois) and Marbles (in Gladstone, Michigan). As a result of several changes in the knife industry, Mike started making Bark River Knives in a dairy barn that was renovated for that purpose in 2001. The company has grown from a couple of employees in the barn into a company having 32 employees and producing approximately 35,000 knives per year. The present home of Bark River Knives is a single building, including their own

in-house photo studio providing all of the photography for their website, but expansion is forthcoming. Current production is limited to fixed blade knives, but production of folding knives may be in the future because even though fixed blade knives are very popular, folding knives currently out sell fixed blade models by a large margin.

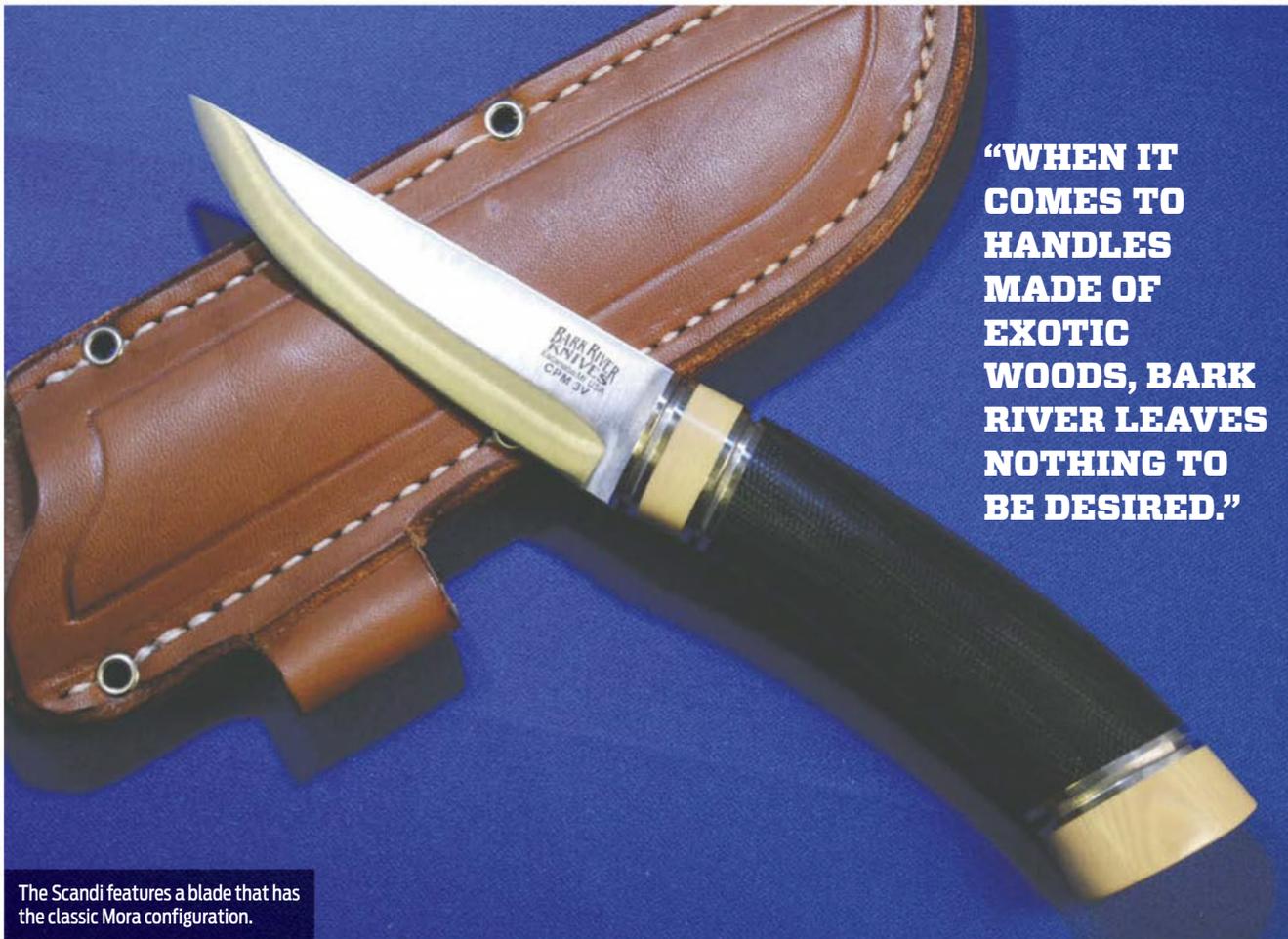
The phenomenal growth of Bark River Knives has resulted in a persistent problem; there are currently backorders that amount to over \$1M in products. This comes following an increase in production of 40% over the last five years. The plant has just recently expanded manufacturing space by 5,200 square feet and new employees are being added to help alleviate the issue.

### Production Methods

Bark River Knives are produced by labor-intensive techniques that form the basis of the custom knife industry. Blades for Bark River knives are rough cut to shape by the water jet method in which a high velocity jet of water containing a suspended abrasive material is directed onto the steel. This method produces blades



In this operation, a handle is being ground to shape with a belt sander.



**“WHEN IT COMES TO HANDLES MADE OF EXOTIC WOODS, BARK RIVER LEAVES NOTHING TO BE DESIRED.”**

The Scandi features a blade that has the classic Mora configuration.

having reproducible dimensions and avoids the heating caused by mechanical or plasma cutting, which can affect the heat treatment of the steel. After being cut to shape, the blades are subjected to surface grinding in the primary machining step and then hand ground. Grinding, shaping and polishing operations are learned and perfected by experience, and they are expertly carried out by the employees at Bark River.

Bark River knives are given a convex grind and honed to give a fine edge. This configuration gives a sharper edge as well as one that is retained longer and is easier

to sharpen. It is impressive to watch the testing of the sharpness of a knife as it is used to cut half-inch strips from a sheet of paper being held by one corner.

Bark River utilizes high quality knife steels for their blade materials. These include the widely used A-2 steel and several of the Crucible Particle Metallurgy (CPM™) series. One of the most popular knife steels is CPM 3V, which has extreme toughness and results in a blade with superior impact resistance. Other steels in the CPM series used by Bark River include 154CM, M4, 20CV and S35VN. The type of steel is stamped clearly on the blade.

## **BARK RIVER KNIVES GRIND IN**

A Grind In is a unique opportunity offered by Bark River Knives that is held three times each year. These events allow customers to come to the plant to make a personal knife with the guidance of Bark River personnel and the 8-10 custom knife makers who come to help. Knives made may follow a Bark River pattern or may be individually designed. These informal and memorable events usually draw 50-60 participants and end with a banquet.

The handle on this knife shows the effect produced by the adsorption of dye followed by impregnating the wood with resin.



## THE CONVEX GRIND

Knife blades are said to have a particular “grind” based on the shape that would result if the blade were cut in two. The end of one of the blade pieces would reveal the type of grind. In the case of a convex grind, the blade is thickest at the top and there is a gentle curvature from the top edge of the blade as it tapers toward the cutting edge. This type of grind results in a blade that has no thin, weaker sections.

### Eye Popping Designs and High Quality Materials

Blade designs of Bark River knives range in size from a 2-inch EPK to the 12-inch Grasso Bolo III, both of which are in the Bushcraft series. All currently produced knives have full-length tangs and fine edges. Traditional styling is readily apparent, and there are no serrations on the blades. Blade thickness varies from approximately 0.090 inches for some of the smaller knives up to 0.22 inches for large knives.

Handle materials for Bark River knives span the range from stag to Micarta to exotic woods in an array of colors. Synthetic materials include Micarta, which is the name given to a broad range of composite materials composed of some form of fibrous material such as canvas, linen, or cotton impregnated with a thermosetting resin. When subjected to heat and pressure, the laminate produced is impervious to almost everything and it is very strong. Moreover, it is possible to produce Micarta in a variety of colors and textures for use in making attractive and durable knife handles. Another material used in knife handles is known as G-10, a laminate composed of fiberglass and a resin. A strong, impervious composite is the result after pressing and baking the laminated material.

When it comes to handles made of exotic woods, Bark River leaves nothing to be desired. Cocobolo, Curly Maple, Desert Ironwood, Osage Orange, Ebony, Rosewood, Bamboo, and Lacewood are some



Each knife is meticulously inspected and polished.



A blade is being shaped by a worker using a belt sander.



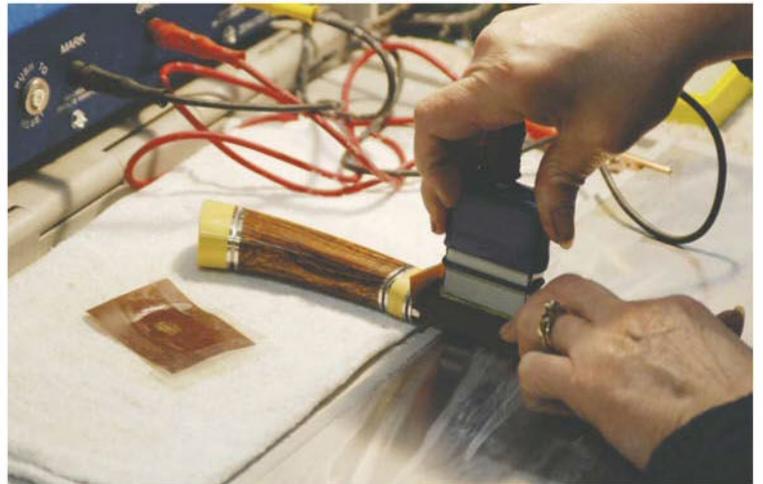
By holding the knife in exactly the correct orientation, a convex grind is produced. The blade is cooled frequently during this operation.



Bark River also produces the Blackjack Classics including this Model 125.



Although wood is used extensively as a handle material, many others are available that include Micarta, G-10, and Stag.



An embossing tool is utilized to imprint the Bark River logo on the blade.

## THE BARK RIVER COLLECTOR'S CLUB

Knife lovers with an affection for Bark River products have an organization consisting of like-minded individuals. For a \$30 per year membership fee, members receive a membership card, a lapel pin, and an opportunity to purchase a special club knife. The association also publishes a newsletter periodically. Contact Bark River Knives to join or visit the Collector's Club website at [www.BRKCA.com](http://www.BRKCA.com).

## HANDLE COMFORT

Regardless of blade design, how well the knife can be gripped and maneuvered is very important. It is the handle that connects the blade to the user. The handle should be shaped in such a way that it fits the hand and the handle surface should prevent the knife from slipping or turning. Micarta handles have a slight texture that allows the user to get a secure grip.

of the choices available. For some woods, a vat dying process is followed by a special operation to impregnate the wood with epoxy producing a durable handle. After the handle is polished to a high luster, it has a marbled appearance. Handles made of other natural materials including impala horn, stag, and buffalo horn are also available. All are exquisitely polished and finished to produce a knife that is not only highly functional but also a work of art.

Sheaths for Bark River knives are currently produced by another manufacturer, but plans are well underway to bring that operation on board at the central location. All sheaths are made of high quality leather that is well-shaped and stitched. Sheaths for some of the larger knives have snap closers on the keepers whereas sheaths for some smaller models are of the pouch style.

### Community

Although Bark River does not sell knives directly to consumers or dealers, but rather works through several distributors in the U.S. and in foreign countries, a

novel activity of Bark River is that two or three times each year, a "Grind In" is sponsored at the factory. Up to 50 individuals go through the operations of making knives of their own design.

Bark River is not only the name of a small town in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan near a small stream of the same name, it is also the label on some truly elegant knives. **KI**

### CONTACT INFO

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Escanaba, MI 49829  
(906) 789-1801  
[www.BarkRiverKnives.com](http://www.BarkRiverKnives.com)

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# Driven To Perfection

HANDCRAFTED IN THE USA, THE KNIVES OF COMPLIANCE EDGE ARE EARNING INDUSTRY ATTENTION

STORY BY JOSHUA SWANAGON – PHOTOS BY COMPLIANCE EDGE



**Taking time away from jiu-jitsu after an eye surgery gave San Jose native Yoni Wunderman the opportunity to begin a hobby that eventually grew to an industrious career.**

With an eye for detail and exacting standards it is no wonder that Compliance Edge is getting some well-earned attention from his peers and knife lovers far and wide. Compliance Edge's purpose built knives are worth taking a look at.

## **1** Humble Beginnings

During the time off from his eye surgery, Compliance Edge got its start in the back room of the jiu-jitsu academy where he trained.

## **2** The Challenges

As with most custom makers, Yoni struggles to find the balance between time and quality. The more detail, the less time.

## **3** His Philosophy

All of the knives he creates must exceed his standards or he will discard them.

## **4** Finding Inspiration

Being drawn to the hard use steels they were using, Yoni was inspired by Strider Knives.

## **5** Material Preference

Yoni prefers to utilize CPM steels due to their ability to hold an edge and likes G10 for his handle scales for its durability, great looks and ease to work with.

## **6** Favorite Design

Yoni's favorite model to make is the Infidel, a 9-inch fixed blade, purpose-built knife with the durability of a tank. He is very happy with the ergonomics of this design and never tires of making them, finding satisfaction in each one.

## **7** The Process

Yoni hand-draws each design, with most of them coming from tweaks to previous designs, before taking them to his fiancé for approval saying, "Almost everything in the business goes through her because she is somehow always right." Once approved, he draws them in CAD (a computer aided design program) and has the prototypes and blanks waterjet cut, where he takes them and finishes them by hand.

## **8** Ordering

Although from time to time he will let a customer pick the handle color when he does a batch, normally he places each finished knife on his website immediately as "ready to ship." This keeps waiting periods down, unless a customer is requesting custom handle colors, which he tries to keep to under a month. **KI**

**Website:**

[www.ComplianceEdgeKnives.com](http://www.ComplianceEdgeKnives.com)



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