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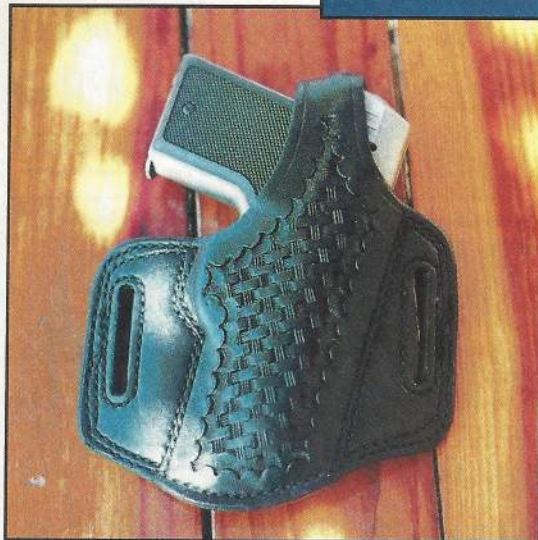
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**GUN
TESTS**

- RUGER P94L
- AMT BACKUP .45ACP
- H&K MP5 w/LAW-17 LIGHT/LASER
- COLT DETECTIVE SPECIAL .38SPL
- CHARCO BULLDOG PUG .44SPL
- CUSTOM REMINGTON 870 12 GAUGE

GUN TEST

After 200+ rounds the new Back-Up .45ACP proved both accurate and reliable with Federal, PMC and CCI ammo. This new pocket auto fit nicely in Tex Shoe-maker pancake holster



BIG BORE BACK-UP

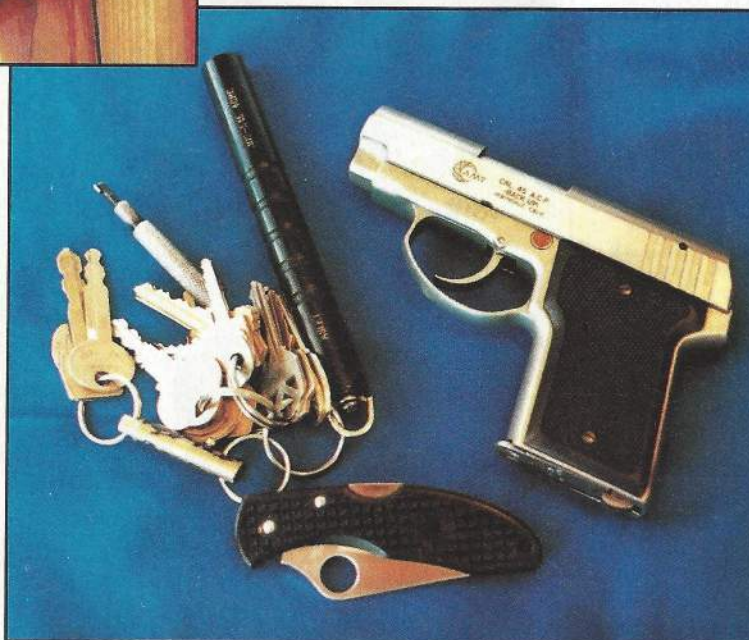
It's the new AMT Back-Up in .45ACP!

By Dan Branscome

It is no secret to those who know me that I favor the .45 ACP round. This is largely due to my misspent youth in one of Uncle Sam's trade schools, prior to the advent of the M-9 Beretta, and the development of high performance 9mm ammo. My preference was reinforced by my Police Reserve Academy at a department with a progressive chief who allowed the 1911A1 as a duty weapon upon qualification (this in the mid-70's).

So it is no surprise that I have always wanted a .45 back up-gun that I could carry in an ankle holster, or stick in a pocket. And like the majority of people who carry guns, I made do with a small frame .38 or some flavor of .380 auto. The .380 I preferred was the original single action A.M.T. Back-Up.

Last year, when I wrote about A.M.T.'s .380 DOA Back-Up, my only lament was that it wasn't a .45. Since it was previewed at the SHOT Show last January, the .45



The small, compact size of the Back-Up is shown by comparison with Spyderco Delica and Persuader keyring.

actually in distribution.

Externally, the .45 looks like the .380 DOA on steroids. The familiar utilitarian stainless finish and black lexan grips that mark A.M.T. products seem especially appropriate on the Back-Up models. It shares in common with the .380 a simple, robust action, European style magazine release at the bottom of the mag

well, and inspection port cut in the top of the chamber. It also has the same tunnel sight, which provides reasonable accuracy at combat shooting distances, and is appropriate for its intended purpose.

DOA Back-Up has generated a flood of phone calls to A.M.T., including my own persistent requests for a sample. This was no surprise to the folks at A.M.T. They knew the world's smallest production semi-auto .45 would provoke a lot of interest. But it is Harry Sanford's policy to not release samples to the gun press until the gun is

The biggest difference, of course, is the caliber. It is hard to believe that six rounds of .45 ACP stopping power can come in a

package smaller than a J Frame S&W. The .45 Back-Up is 3/4" shorter in length, 1/2" shorter in height, and narrower by 5/16" than the J Frame Smith. Among the .380's, it is most comparable in size to the Sig Sauer P230. The .45 caliber muzzle looks dramatically larger in proportion to the overall size of the gun.

A.M.T.'s General Manager Larry Grossman began his design with certain dimensions in mind, and felt there was no point in making the gun unless it was small enough to truly be called a pocket pistol.

The caliber also caused Larry to use a modified Browning lock-up for the .45, unlike the fixed barrels of the .380's. The barrel itself is ramped, 3" long with maybe 1/4" of twist. It unlocks on a heart shaped camway in a solid link. It is not coned, as in custom 1911's, but has a (Flange? Bearing? Lug?) integral with the barrel. When disassembled it calls to mind a mortar tube. Disassembly is easier than the .380, in that it doesn't require removing a pinned breech block. It is fairly straight forward for anyone familiar with Browning designs. It requires a small punch to remove the barrel pin. Reassembly was a little harder. These are strong springs compressed in small spaces. The back end of the recoil spring guide prevented the barrel pin from passing through. Having only two hands, I resorted to clamping the front of the recoil spring guide in the vise, to pull the guide forward just a hair, while aligning frame and slide and inserting the pin the remainder of the way.

Magazines (made by Metal Form) are in every respect an abbreviated 1911

mag, including a follower made to activate the non-existent slide stop, and notch for the Colt type magazine catch. (More on this later).

How It Shoots

When I received the gun I was pleased. When I tried the trigger, my enthusiasm was dampened. What I had here was the proverbial "Arrow Stapler". It was just over 20 lbs. by my guesstimation. The next day when I interrupted his morning coffee, Larry assured me it would loosen up.

The proof is in the shooting. I took the test gun to the Ontario Indoor Range to see how it worked.

I have to admit, I haven't been so concerned about recoil since my first boyhood experience with the 12 GA. and .30-06. A hundred rounds of Blazer & generic hardball almost seemed like work. It convinced me anyone accustomed to shooting major caliber handguns can handle the recoil, and that it is capable of adequate combat accuracy at 3 to 15 yards. The trigger pull slowed me down, and caused me to pull slightly to the right, and made me glad I can use my

whole hand to work that stapler.

Function was flawless during firing, but occasionally when chambering the first round from the magazine the slide had to be manually assisted forward because of the drag of the hammer on the bottom of the slide. To repeat, these are strong springs. Contrary to the multiple safety literature packaged with the gun, most people interested in a gun of this type will carry it with the first round chambered, and this will be done administratively, but the lack of a slide stop requires manual operation of the slide when reloading, as in condition three.

A thorough cleaning and lubrication with Firepower FP-10 (recommended by A.M.T.) changed this for the better during my second trip to the range.

My usual concerns when trying out a new gun are limited to reliability and accuracy, but your Conscientious Editor specifically requested chronograph readings for those curious about the performance of the .45 in a 3" barrel, so my second trip to the range included an OEHLER P-35 provided



Close-range practical accuracy of .45 Back-up is demonstrated by this group of 15 rds/Hydra-Shok center mass, 10 rds/PMC head, strong hand only point shooting at range of five yards.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR Dan Branscome is a private security professional specializing in training and executive protection. He is a member of the American Society Of Law Enforcement Trainers and the American Society For Industrial Security. He has just opened his own training facility, Universal Security Training Center, in Highland, California, providing state-licensed training for Security Officers and private citizens in all aspects of the use of force. This is his third contribution to Harris Publications.

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BIG BORE BACK-UP



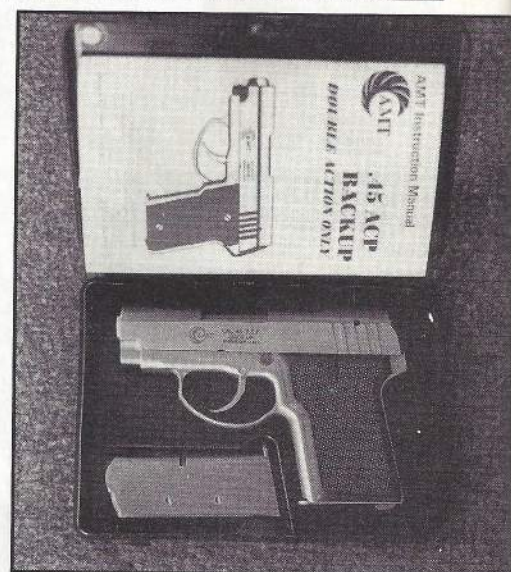
The new AMT Back-Up .45ACP is shown disassembled into components. From the manufacturer the gun comes with instruction manual and spare magazine.

by the courtesy of Bill Krag, of Krag Precision Industries. The table shows the results of C.C.I. Blazer, Federal Hydra-Shok, and P.M.C. —Eldorado Starfire. The "evil" Black Talon has become too expensive for me to use in a test, and I'm anxious to see how the new "Fail-Safe" spins.

After the gun got dirty again (95 Rds), I had to assist the slide forward again twice on the Starfire. The slightly shorter bullet profile caused additional resistance on the feed ramp, but it fed and fired the last 10 Hydra-Shoks subsequently without a hitch. After firing 210 rounds, the slide was moving much smoother over the hammer, and the trigger pull was now a stout 16 lbs. As advised by Larry Grossman, this gun needs a 200-250 round break-in period, but that should be true of any new gun carried for defensive purposes.

Odds And Ends

When I returned the gun to A.M.T., the first thing I discussed with Larry was the trigger pull. He informed me that production guns are leaving the factory with 16 lb.



Wolff Springs, and that the current liability climate, coupled with the adrenaline surge accompanying defensive combat, requires A.M.T. to err on the side of caution as concerns trigger-pull weight. I think accuracy would be better served with a trigger-pull of 10-12 lbs, provided reliable ignition were not compromised. This should prove an easy fix.

I suggested that a magazine catch to

engage the slot in the magazine would be a nice feature, as it would allow re-loading with standard 1911 magazines. I had to agree with him, though, that the

**Chronograph Results Using Oehler
P-35 Chronograph W/Proof Screen**

CARTRIDGE	HIGH	LOW	10 SH. AVG
C.C.I. Blazer	733 FPS	715 FDS	723 FPS
Federal Hydra-Shok	806 FPS	722 FPS	751 FPS
PMC Starfire	765 FPS	723 FPS	744 FPS

last thing this little blaster needs is something protruding under the second finger. Perhaps something similar in concept to the Smith .22's? My only other suggestion would be to offer a magazine with an optional finger rest extension to aid in control. (Please turn to page 68)

Specifications: .45 Back-Up DOA



In top photo new AMT Back-Up .45ACP is compared to its predecessor in .380 just below. Either Back-Up carries easily with spare magazine in Uncle Mike's "Gunrunner" fanny pack.

Caliber: .45ACP
Operation: Short Recoil
Type Of Fire: Double Action Only, Semi-Automatic
Capacity: 5 + 1
Barrel Length: 3"
Overall Length: 5 3/4"
Height: 4"
Width: 15/16"
Weight: (empty) 23 oz.
Sights: Square Tunnel
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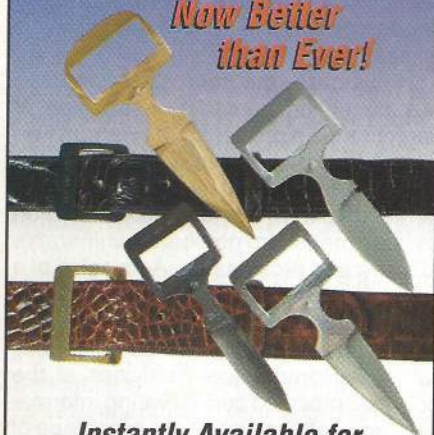
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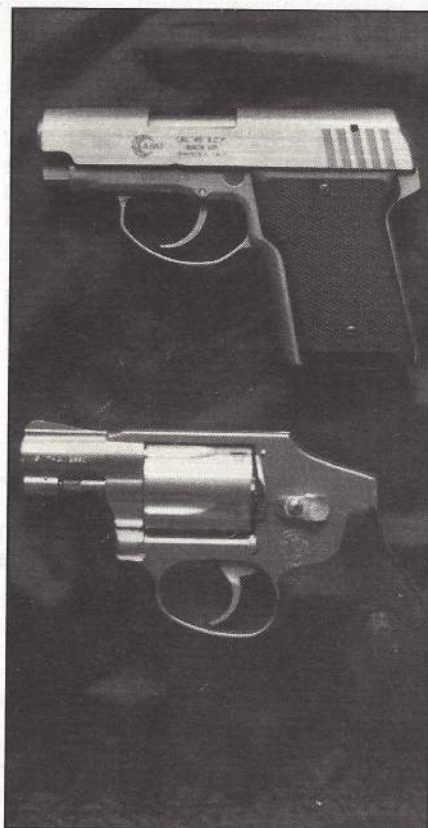
BIG BORE BACK-UP

Continued from page 65

Holsters should be forthcoming from many manufacturers. Interest has been expressed by Galco and Aker, with others sure to follow.

Conclusion

What we have here is nearly my idea of the perfect back-up gun, Major power, mousegun size. Aimed primarily at the law enforcement market, this gun will catch the eye of anyone who has ever wished for .45 stopping power in a .380 package.



**.Ultimate pocket pistol? Take your
choice--the AMT Back-Up .45ACP or the
classic J-frame S&W M640 .38SPL.**

Tex Shoemaker & Son, Inc. Leather Goods

Tex Shoemaker's has always been a family owned and operated business. As most readers of this magazine are aware, Tex passed on to his long reward last January. The company continues under the able direction of his daughter, Sharon, who has assumed the Presidency of the company, and his son Randy, who continues as Vice-President in charge of operations.

Tex Shoemaker's offers a full line of leather goods, from chaps and saddlebags for either motorcycle or horseback use, to hay aprons, but they are best known for their extensive line of law enforcement equipment. Whatever the gun, or its intended use, Shoemaker's probably offers a top quality holster and accessories to suit your needs.

The Shoemaker shop works exclusively in leather, however, they also distribute nylon police equipment from Ranshar Industries.

According to Randy Shoemaker, his biggest challenge is to keep up with the constant introduction of new guns, although it was worse during S&W's "Gun Of The Week" period. He is currently working on prototypes of a totally new break-front security holster for automatic pistols.

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Seeing a .45 this compact led me to ask about intermediate calibers in the future, and I learned that before me on Larry's desk were the first run of 9mm barrels, and that a .40 will be next, possibly sporting a second safety warning on the slide.

Yes, I did return the gun. My wife, (the Speaker of the House), reminded me of my promise to not keep every sample that comes my way. (She's also Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee). Not being above bald-faced bribery, I mentioned that my Smith 640 could be available for her exclusive use, so I may have my new .45 Back-Up sooner than I thought.

Product Index

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