

# Survival Firearm

U.S. RSOG cadre have certain criteria that they have to go by to choose a realistic survival firearm. The evaluation is based on the size of the firearm in conjunction with the ruck or butt pack that it will be carried in, the weight that not only the firearm but the ammo will add to the individual soldiers basic load. And the accuracy that this weapon will display at normal hunting distances. The formula may look something like, 10 yards for a shot on a frog, 25 yards on a squirrel, and 50 yards on a deer or coon.

## Caliber Controversy

The .22 long rifle was chosen for one specific reason, the weight and space. What most civilians do not understand is how the U.S. military operates. The average paratrooper weighs 179 lbs. After loading up his base ammo load he is given a L.A.W. or AT-4, frag grenades, flashbangs, smoke grenades, claymore mines, C-4, and then told to load up on what ever extra he wants to carry. Most paratroopers jump into the night over a foreign land carrying a 100-lb. rucksack. Most active duty and prior service personnel are laughing as they read this because they know that they carried more than that. One hundred and fifty rounds of .22 LR weighs less than 50 rounds of 9mm and takes up far less room. Ammo choices in .22 are amazing for all of the different applications that it can be used for.

## Rifles

Again for the weapon to be considered it has to be small. In the rifle category it has to break down to fit into a ruck. The three choices that come to mind are the MARLIN Papoose, the AR-7 and the SPRINGFIELD M-6. The MARLIN and AR-7 are semi-auto and the SPRINGFIELD is single shot but it also shoots .410 shot shells. The SPRINGFIELD is the slimmer of the three but it is the longest. The MARLIN is heavier but very accurate. And the AR-7 is very bulky as it all breaks down and is stored in the buttstock. The weapon of choice for U.S. RSOG cadre ends up being a more concealable piece.

And that firearm is a heavy barreled, match grade, .22 caliber pistol. Barrel lengths vary from 5-10 inches, the longer the barrel the better. These are not the types of pistols that you buy at a pawnshop or at a farm sale. They are tricked out, highly accurate weapons systems. With or without optical sights the pistols have rifle like accuracy. RUGER and Smith & Wesson make the two most common models carried. The preferred finish on the firearm is stainless or after-market weatherproofed camouflaged coating. Many cadre have red dot scoped sites, which increase the abilities of the firearm. Many will shoot a golf ball at 35 yards easily and quickly. If the batteries go dead in the wild places, it is just a turn of a screw and the scope comes off. The batteries are the size of a nickel and way less than a dime. Constant run time is over three days. The standard match grade target sights are already sighted in and ready for the worst. These weapons are not cheap. Many cost more than standard combat handguns after the modification are added on. To add to the package a powerful tactical flashlight is mounted under the barrel (Streamlight or Surefire). Why a flashlight? When a red or amber lens cover is added it becomes a nocturnal game-getter.

Many outdoorsman have misgivings about pistols. And the .22 caliber is often times shrugged off as well. Every mammal on this planet has been taken with a .22 caliber bullet at one time or another. Not to mention the reptiles and some aquatic species as well. A.K.A "ED" rendered a deer to possession with his 5 inch heavy barreled S&W, at 65 yards. The shot was to the neck with a hollow point bullet. Sgt. Chandler killed three snakes sitting side by side with one shot using .22 cal. shot shells. We try to stress to people that a handgun is not shot like a rifle (sight picture is different etc.). And it does take good stance and proper mechanics to shoot rapidly and accurately. This comes with a small amount of training, and a large amount of practice. But, practice is cheap with a .22 cal.

If an individual is going to practice shooting for survival purposes or hunting don't shoot tin cans or paper targets for practice. Shoot balloons that are blown up no bigger than a tennis ball. Even better than that are balloons no bigger than golf balls. To make it even more challenging float them down a creek. The we carry all types of ammunition in our SR (survival ruck). To include 150 - 200 rds. of CCI Mini Mag hollow points for game and defensive purposes. 50 - 100 rds. of CB caps, which are a very quiet, shortened round that moves at approximately 800 - fps. (these are almost silent from a rifle). Plus, 20 rds. of .22 cal. shot shells. As a soldier it is illegal for you to use civilian ammo against the enemy. And it is considered murder in the American military, if you kill an enemy soldier with a non-issued firearm. But, all that is thrown

out of the window when it comes to E & E. Its you against the world in the bad guys back yard.

Don't let the would-be survivor be fooled, high-speed .22 cal. pistols are an unbelievable equalizer against the Reaper. Feed yourself and protect yourself is the golden rule. Long heavy barreled pistols with a red dot or traditional optic sight are deadly serious for survival applications. All of the U.S. RSOG cadre do not use .22 cal. rifles as their main stay for hunting any more. The pistols have taken over for the .22 rifle applications. And if that doesn't get it done, out comes the .22 magnum rifle. Here is a list of the wild game taken for the cooking pot (during organized survival training on military bases, not sport hunting) by U.S. RSOG instructor cadre, with .22 cal. pistols. Coon, deer, turtles, fish, quail, squirrel, turkey, rabbits, possum, frogs, snakes, ducks, geese, fox, muskrat, birds, beaver and that's just in North America. And here is the best part from our cadres standpoint. Six small game snares, 2 medium snares, scent lures, fishing kit, 2 butane lighters, purification tabs, spaces blanket, 550 cord, signal mirror and the pistol and ammo, all fit into a kit as small as most peoples fanny pack survival kits ! The weight of the kit changes but so do the odds (in your favor).

## Firearm Specs

To be more specific on the modifications of the pistols or "race dragons", as they are known around here, make and model would be the best place to start. There are many good quality .22 cal. pistols and revolvers on the market today. Most of our cadre carry Ruger Mark II or Smith & Wesson 22A. Again stainless finish with heavy barrel is preferred. Many are "slab sided" barrels, which is a rounded heavy barrel with flat sides. A Weaver type base is screwed on the Ruger or special scope mounts can be found that lock around the receiver of the pistol.

The Smiths have flat top rails already factory mounted to accept scope rings. Both models come factory with match grade sights. Some have match grade grips. Because all of our cadre train to shoot ambidextrous the match grade grips are replaced with HOGUE rap-a-round grips. HOGUE makes a great product that lasts for years and is almost sticky feeling in the worst weather. This is a good thing of course. Most rings used on our pistols are BURRIS, MILLET and some WEAVER. The best are the 4x4s, which is slang for rings that use 4 Allen set screws to hold the top of the ring to the lower portion of the ring. As opposed to hooking the top strap on one side of the lower ring and screwing it down on the other side of the lower base ring. Many red dot scopes already have scope bases attached from the factory and do not need rings. The BSA for example, although a small amount of filing on one corner is need to fit it snugly to a Smith 22A.

As for optics the top is the AIMPOINT which is the only waterproof scope. It has a 3 MOA, the smaller the MOA the better. TASCOS makes the Propoint and the Accu Dot, which are good scopes and less expensive than AIMPOINT, but not waterproof. Of course SIMMONS has a red dot scope too. And then there is the BSA line, which are reasonably good optics as well but again not waterproof. On the upper end there is the TASCOS Pro Point Optima 2000 and The BUSHNELL Holo sight.

None of them are any better than the others with the exception of the AIMPOINT, it is the top dog. All of these makes and models are carried by our cadre. A large "tube" is recommended, from a 42mm to 50mm. It just makes it easier to pick up running game or other moving targets. Rabbit hunting in the snow is a favorite of our people with the race dragons. The faster they run the faster you have to shoot. Most the high dollar scopes only come in 30mm to 32mm, which is not a bad thing at all. Traditional optics are a very good choice as well. Pistol scopes usually run in the \$200-400 range. The red dot scopes are sighted in at 25 yards for a 1-inch group of three shots. The traditional scopes are scoped in at 50 yards for an inch group. Both are shot off of a sand bagged bench rest. If an individual already carries a 1911 or Glock, a .22 conversion kit can be had for less than \$200. CIENER builds a complete line of them, they are a great product. This way duty ammo can be used for defense situations and .22 ammo will fill the "game getter" role. Optics can be mounted on the full sized handguns as well. This is a wise way to go. Once an individual builds and successfully takes game with it, it becomes the weapon of choice.