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C&S TRIDENT .45 ACP

Tough and reliable 1911 designed with direct input from a U.S. Navy SEAL!



By Rob Garrett

Webster defines synergy as "the interaction between two or more forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual effects." In the case of Cylinder & Slide's Trident 1911, the total pistol far exceeds the sum of the parts. This is not at all by accident but rather, is the result of years of experience by two extraordinary men. The first is Bill Laughridge, founder and owner of Cylinder & Slide. Bill founded C&S some 30 plus years ago and has a better understanding of the 1911 pistol than anyone else I have ever met. The second person involved in the Trident project must remain nameless due to their past and continued service in our country's defense. However, to make this easier to read, I will call him "Bob." Bob had a very distinguished career with US Navy Special Warfare units and continues to serve our country after his "retirement" from the Navy.

Several years ago, Bob took one of Bill's East Coast 1911 courses so he could maintain his own 1911s in far

away places. During that course, Bob shared his experiences with the fine sand, known as "moon dust" that plagues equipment in Iraq, Afghanistan and other unnamed locations. Those discussions sent both Bill and Bob on a search to find a suitable finish for the 1911 that would not attract sand, dirt, or other crud. The discussions also led to a set of specifications for a 1911 that would be reliable in harsh environments with minimum maintenance. To honor NSW warriors, Bill named the pistol the Trident after the three-pronged spear carried by Poseidon, the Greek sea god.

The Trident is not earth shattering and none of the features are new or revolutionary. However, the execution of the Trident is different. What you'll notice immediately is that the Trident has none of the high speed, low drag, bells and whistles that the urban "tacti-cool" crowd or armchair commandos insist on having. The Trident lacks an extended magazine well, trick sights, 8-round magazines, sexy hex screws, or a bayonet lug. Instead, each modification and component has been carefully evaluated with regard to maximum reliability in the world's harshest environments. It is this philosophy, supported by real world experience



The Trident is the result of collaboration between Cylinder & Slide and a retired NSW operator. The pistol features a self-lubricating "Fail Zero" finish. The red dot indicates that the pistol is "off" safe.

■ C&S TRIDENT .45 ACP

that sets the Trident apart from many other 1911s. The result is a solid and reliable fighting platform that can be trusted.

Gun Details

The base gun for the Trident is a Springfield Armory GI 1911 A-1 SKU PW9108LP. Bill is quick to point out that the Springfield GI is the best base pistol on the market for both quality and price. C&S takes the bone stock GI gun and completely rebuilds it into the Trident. The choice speaks volumes about the quality of Springfield products and Bill's confidence in them. When the GI model is received, each part is inspected and many are replaced. The result is a hand-built 1911 that is far superior to those that just have a bunch of plug-and-go parts. The simplest manner to explain this transformation is to explain the process one step at a time.

Slide—The slide is inspected for proper heat treatment and then completely deburred. Critical working surfaces are polished and radiused. Front cocking serrations are machined, forward of the dust cover, to facilitate press checking, especially with gloved hands.

Barrel—Stock Springfield barrels have proven to provide 1.5 inches to 1.75 inches of accuracy at 25 yards when properly fitted. The factory barrel is inspected for proper heat treatment, throated, and the muzzle is re-crowned to 11 degrees. If needed, a long link is installed to ensure proper lock-up.



The Trident is equipped with a redesigned C&S slide stop, ambi safety with status dots, and G-10 stocks. The solid, medium length trigger provides more space for operating with gloves.



Beavertail is expertly fitted and the stock internal fire control parts have been replaced with C&S's hammer, sear, and disconnect. All internal parts are also treated with the "Fail Zero" finish.



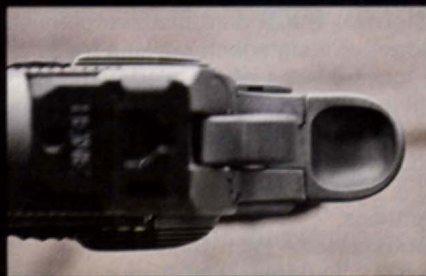
The Trident retains the Springfield factory barrel. Not the expanded ejection port to allow for the safe ejection of an unfired round.



Bill Laughridge's redesigned Strong Front Sight strengthens the blade against the hard knocks of an operator's usage.



Heinie's Ledge provides a durable rear blade, a clean rear sight picture, and the ability to operate the slide against hard objects.



Laughridge increased the hammer recess in the beavertail grip safety to reduce the chance of debris becoming lodged and jamming the pistol.

Bushing—A National Match bushing is installed to a "finger tight" fit, providing maximum accuracy while allowing the pistol to be field stripped without the need for any tools.

Ejection Port—The ejection port is lowered and the leading edge has been relieved to allow the safe ejection of an unfired round.

Recoil Spring System—The original recoil spring plug is punched with a spring retention tab as found on the military issued pistols. The factory recoil spring is replaced with a Wolff 18-pound recoil spring.

Frame—Internally, the frame is completed deburred and critical working sur-

faces such as the feed ramp are polished and radiused. Machine stippling is applied to the frontstrap of the frame. As with the other components, the frame is inspected for proper heat treatment.

Extractor—A C&S machined extractor is inspected for proper heat treatment and then fitted, radiused, and tensioned.

Firing Pin—The stock firing pin is inspected and retained. The firing pin spring is replaced with a Wolf spring.

Magazine Well—The magazine well is beveled to facilitate reloads.

Grip Safety—The factory GI grip safety is replaced with a Smith & Alexander beavertail unit with a palm swell for positive engagement. C&S reshapes the spur of the beavertail and enlarges the hammer recess.

Thumb Safety—A C&S extended/ambidextrous safety is installed and fitted. The width of both paddles is reduced to an optimum size. Status indicators, white-safe/red-fire, have been inserted in the frame.

Ejector—A C&S Extended Ejector is installed and tuned to optimize ejection.

Plunger Tube—The stock plunger tube is inspected for alignment and then double-staked for improved strength and retention.

Grip Screw Bushings—The grip screw bushings are inspected, properly torqued and then staked for positive retention.

Slide Stop—The factory slide stop is replaced with a C&S forged and CNC machined unit that has been specially designed for use with gloves. It is inspected for proper heat treatment and then fitted.

Magazine Catch—The factory part is checked for proper heat treatment and a Wolff extra power magazine catch spring is installed.

SPECIFICATIONS:

CYLINDER & SLIDE TRIDENT

CALIBER:	.45 ACP
BARREL:	5 inches
OA LENGTH:	8.5 inches
WEIGHT:	39 ounces (empty)
GRIPS:	Micarta
SIGHTS:	Heinie "Ledge" rear, C&S Strong Sight dovetail front
ACTION:	SA
FINISH:	Fail Zero
CAPACITY:	Two 7-shot mags
PRICE:	Call for pricing

Mainspring Housing—An Ed Brown flat MSH is installed and fitted with an integral lanyard retainer. The MSH is also machine stippled in the same manner as the frontstrap.

Trigger—The trigger is a solid medium-length alloy shoe with stainless steel bow from C&S. A fixed overtravel stop is fitted at the rear of the trigger to reduce over travel by approximately 50%. This improves the trigger pull while leaving sufficient tolerance to allow continued operation in a dirty environment. The medium length allows for adequate space when wearing gloves.

Sights—The Trident features a Heinie "Ledge" rear sight with cocking ledge on the forward edge of the blade. The front sight is replaced with the new C&S Strong Sight dovetail front sight with supported blade. A Trijicon tritium insert with white ring is installed in the front sight for night operations.

Magazines—Each Trident comes with two C&S Extreme Duty 7-round magazines with a flat follower and Pachmayr bumper basepads.

Finish Options—The standard Trident is coated with the Fail Zero finish, which allows the pistol to operate without lubrication. For those who do not need the added protection of the Fail Zero finish, the Trident is available with the traditional parkerized finish at a corresponding reduction in price. A trident is etched into the left side of the dust cover and on the barrel hood, marking the pistol as a C&S original.

This part-by-part description shows the extent of the rebuild and the attention that is given to using quality parts that are precisely fitted. Many of the parts are inspected for the proper heat treatment. This is something that many shops take for granted or are not equipped to test. C&S recognizes the importance of the heat treatment and tests every part.

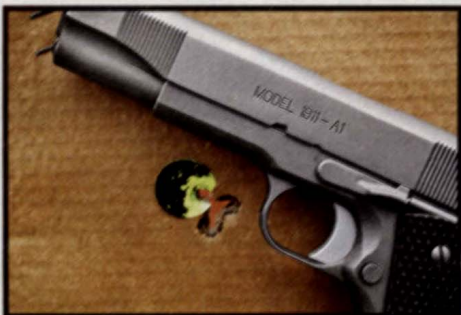
Several items merit a closer explanation, first being the finish. Dust and dirt are the enemy of all firearms and 1911s are notorious for not running well without proper lubrication on the rails, barrel hood, and muzzle. Fail Zero has changed this. It is a PVD nickel boron finish that offers excep-



The only change the author considered was the addition of Crimson Trace Lasergrips. This installation requires the right side thumb safety to be shortened in order to clear the laser housing.



On the range, the Trident ate every load the author could find. His first choice of defense ammo is the 230-gr. Winchester's new bonded Personal Protection 230-gr. SXT load.



The Tridents sights offer a very clean sight picture that is easy to align in various lighting conditions. This group was fired from seven yards.

tional lubrication and anti-corrosion properties. In addition, carbon deposits and fouling do not stick to the finish making cleaning significantly easier. I understood the problem a little better after Bob forwarded me a photo of his Sig Sauer P226 that was covered, inside and out, by moon dust during a helicopter exfiltration in Iraq. This is a very real problem for operators and Fail Zero goes a long way toward mitigating the dust issues. In a non-dust environment, Bob advised he would run the Trident with a very light coating of lubrication. However, the finish allows the gun to be bone dry and reliable.

One question that has been raised on several web postings that preceded this article concerned the choice of stippling for the frontstrap and mainspring housing. Proper stippling provides a positive gripping surface at a significant price reduction when compared to checkering. In addition, checkering tends to trap dirt, skin, and blood and is hard to clean. Over time, it will also abrade gear and can be dented or broken. Stippling also allows enough surface area for skateboard tape or other gripping material to be applied at the user's discretion.

The front sight is a new design specially engineered by C&S for the Trident. The front sight blade is one of the most fragile external parts on any pistol. More than one front sight has been broken, bent, or lost during training evolutions and deployments. The base of the Strong Sight Front Sight has been widened at the base, eliminating the 90-degree weak point found on traditional

designs. This provides a stronger design for hard use environments. C&S receives these sights as unfinished blanks. The sights are cut to the proper height and then sent out to Trijicon to have a tritium insert installed. Bill's choice of Trijicon is based on the quality of their operation and exceptional customer service. The insert is ringed with a white circle for a more positive acquisition during a variety of conditions.

Bill and Bob both prefer a solid trigger on duty pistols. The three-hole trigger, that continues to be *en vogue*, were originally designed for competition to lighten the trigger and allowed for a faster reset. However, these same holes may trap debris and lead to a malfunction. In addition, most three-hole triggers also have an allen screw over-travel stop that is adjusted through the face of the trigger. This screw can work loose and lock the pistol. The Trident has a medium-length solid trigger with a fixed over-travel stop on the back of the trigger that must be filed for a proper fit.

The standard S&A beavertail grip safety is well designed and the speed bump allows for positive disengagement, even when a poor grip is utilized. However, it does have one potentially fatal flaw. The top of the tail is designed with a recess for the hammer spur to sit down when the slide cycles to the rear. Should a small rock or a piece of debris become lodged in this recess, the pistol would fail to cycle properly. Bill takes the S&A unit and substantially increases the size of the recess. This is another one of those modifications that made me ask, "Why hasn't someone done this before?"

Once the Trident build is completed, the pistol is test fired at 15 yards to check for both function and reliability. It is here that the front sight blade is cut down for the proper zero with 230-grain FMJ ammunition. The front sight is then removed and sent to Trijicon for the white circle/tritium insert. During this time, the pistol is sent to Fail Zero for coating. When it is returned, it is a mottled finish. C&S then lightly blasts the pistol to give it the satin gray color on the finished pistol. The pistol is then reassembled and the sights are re-installed. The pistol is test fired a second time for a final function check and the zero is confirmed. The test firing is done with the two 7-round magazines that are shipped with the pistol. As with the pistol, the magazines have been treated with Fail Zero. During the process a minimum of 56 rounds are fired through each pistol.

Shooting Impressions

When Bill shipped me a Fail Zero Trident for test and evaluation, I passed the gun around to several 1911 enthusiasts to get some valid first impressions. The most consistent comment was how smooth the gun felt with the carry bevel and the

C&S TRIDENT .45 ACP

(Continued from page 59)

Fail Zero finish. The Trident is one of those pistols that you will handle, lay it down, and almost sub-consciously, pick it back up again, and again, and again. Shooters appreciated the speed in which the white outline front sight aligned with the Heinie rear sight. The new slide stop design drew a lot of comments when manually locking the slide to the rear or releasing the slide during reloads. The larger ledge provides a more positive purchase during both operations, especially when wearing gloves.

When I received the Trident, it had less than 200 rounds through it. I field stripped it and found that it was bone dry. The only request Bill had was not to lubricate the pistol. On the range, the Trident ran with every load I could stuff in it. This included light weight frangible loads, Winchester 185-grain Silver Tips, Winchester Ranger Talon 230-grain SXT in both standard and +P loads, Federal 230-grain +P HST, Remington 185-grain and 230-grain Golden Sabers, and CorBon's hot 185-grain +P DPX load. The Trident never missed a beat.

I am not one to subject most pistols, much less a custom 1911, to a torture test. However, Bill wanted me to test the Fail Zero finish. Since my travel funds didn't allow me to run over to Afghanistan, I had to look for a suitable substitute to "moon dust." I decided to give the Trident a heavy dusting of talc, since it was the finest substance I could come up with. After loading the Trident and placing it in condition one, I gave it a good dusting, paying particular attention to the slide and the frame gap, the rear of the trigger, the ejection port, and the hammer and fire control areas. The Trident shook it all off and continued to run. Not to be deterred, I gave it a second helping with the same outcome. The end result was a ragged hole from 10 yards and a pistol that smelled like a bathhouse.

I then walked out to the parking lot and dusted the Trident with a couple of handfuls of typical South Georgia sand. I did not bury the pistol but attempted to simulate the debris that would result from dropping the pistol in the heat of battle. The Trident continued to run with no issues. Clearing the pistol, I could feel and hear the grit that had accumulated inside the Trident. Well, one big handful of sand is good, two should be even better. Every pistol has its limits and, on the second round of sand, the Trident failed to go completely into battery on two rounds.

Returning from the range, I first field stripped the Trident and found that the talc and sand had gotten into almost every crack and crevice. Even cocking the hammer resulted in a crunch from the grit. I detail stripped the Trident and cleaned every part using only a toothbrush, dry rag, and a cotton swab. I intentionally used no solvents or lubricants and was surprised



The author dumped a large quantity of talc on the Trident to simulate fine dust. Even after two helpings, the Trident kept running with no malfunctions. It was only after two handfuls of a dirt and sand mixture that the pistol had a problem.



Silencerco's Osprey suppressor provides covert capabilities with the addition of an extended and threaded barrel on the Trident.

breach face of the slide came reasonably clean with a dry rag. After putting the Trident back together, it operated smooth as silk. The Trident has made me a believer in the Fail Zero finish.

Final Notes

While the Trident is built to a particular set of specifications, I would consider one possible change. Over the years, I have become a firm believer in Crimson Trace Lasergrips. They have established a solid reputation in both the law enforcement and military community and would give the Trident added flexibility. CTC offers both visible and, for government agencies, IR lasers. The IR unit allows rapid target acquisition and engagement when using night vision goggles while the visible unit provides rapid target acquisition and a psychological deterrent. The CTC stocks require right side thumb safety to be shortened to clear the laser housing. This is a minor modification considering the benefits the stocks offer.

The fact that a custom 1911 is still the first choice of many of today's warriors is a tribute to John Moses Browning. In truth, the Trident is not significantly different than a World War II 1911. However, when you start with a quality Springfield pistol and then make some common sense modifications and upgrades, the Trident has become something exceptional. While there are more expensive 1911s on the market, I am not sure that there is a more reliable one.