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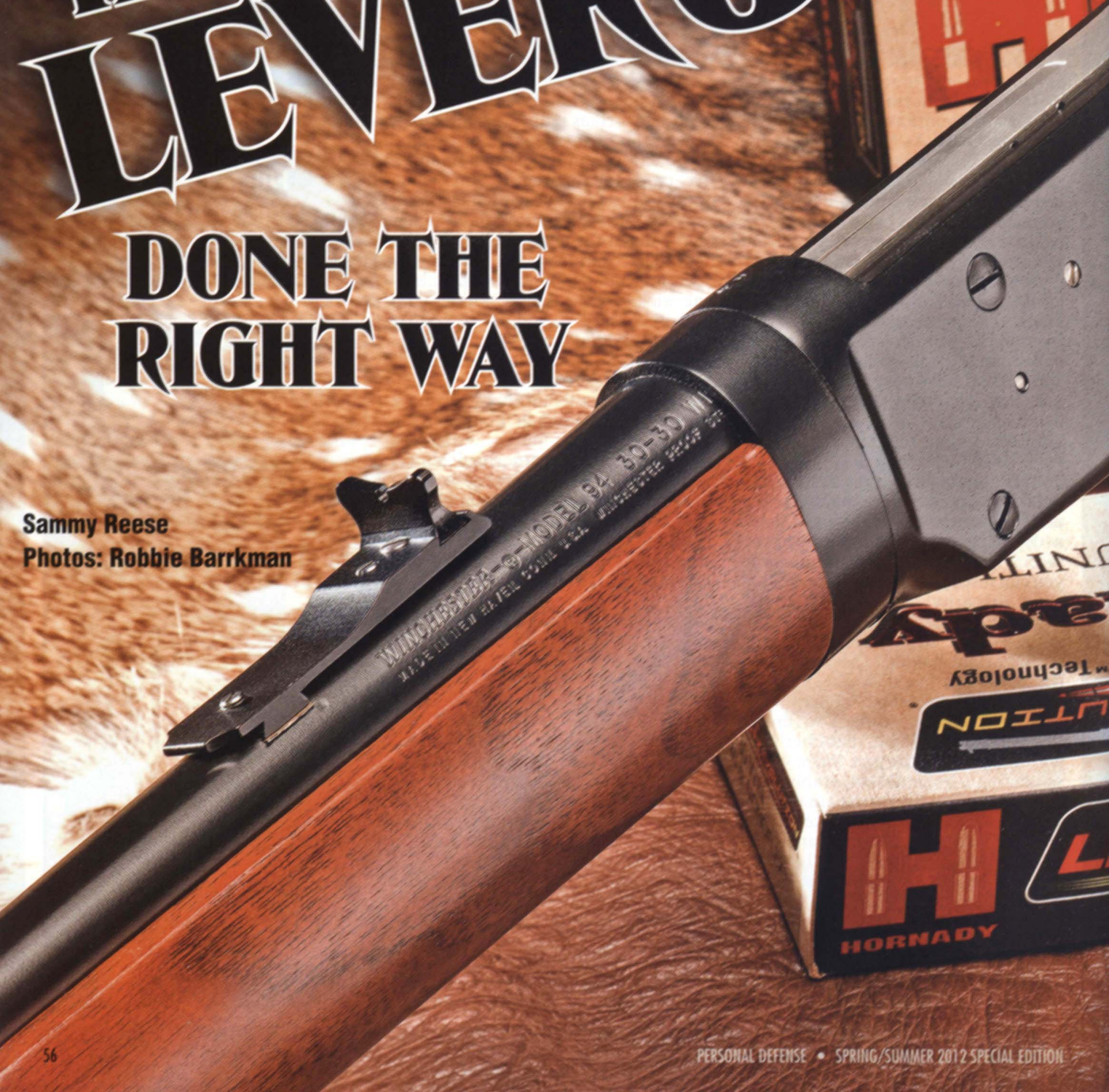
SPECIAL EDITION SPRING/SUMMER 2012



HOME-DEFENSE LEVERGUN

DONE THE RIGHT WAY

Sammy Reese
Photos: Robbie Barrkman





I don't know exactly when my fascination with leverguns started, but I'd bet it had something to do with the Daisy Red Rider I put a billion and one BBs through as a kid. Or my first real levergun that followed, which was a Marlin .22 — I wish I still had it. If I had a nickel for every round I put through that gun, I'd have a dump truck full of nickels. Combine those two guns with the hundreds of Western movies and Louis L'amore books I've read, and there you have it — a levergun junkie.



Before Roy Huntington moved to free America, his garage shop was one of my favorite places to pass the time and work on projects. One day, Roy pulled from his gun safe his version of the perfect carbine. It was a .30-30 Winchester model 94 with a 16-1/2" barrel. "This was the original patrol rifle," he said. Long before the AR platform became the king of the patrol rifle, the levergun in various calibers had been doing the job. Even though

it wasn't department approved, Roy confessed he heard of a few guys who kept a cased .30-30 in the trunk of their patrol cars — just in case.

After seeing Roy's creation, I had to have one. It took a few weeks to find a used Model 94, but once I did, I couldn't wait to get started. We first cut the barrel and crowned it at 16-1/2". I know I could have gone down to 16", but I wanted to add in some fudge factor. Cutting the barrel meant we

had to cut the mag tube as well. Roy taught me how to silver solder the new front sight. I drilled five holes under the stock and affixed a leather strap with snap to retain some spare ammo. After attaching the sling, all that was left was to see if it would shoot. With Hornady LEVERevolution ammo, the little carbine was consistently shooting under 1-1/2" at 100 yards. I was more than happy with the results — it fit the role of truck gun perfectly



— and officially added this rifle to my personal-defense battery.

Why A Levergun?

I was proud that I had done the work on this rifle, and wasn't shy about showing it off to my buddies at the range. Some gave me strange looks and another told me I was nuts. "The AR is the way to go ... why mess with an old deer rifle for personal defense?" I held up a .30-30 cartridge next to a

.556 to make my point. 55 grains or 160 grains. And remember boys; this is at in-house distances, not 100 yards. If the zombie hords were coming my way, sure the AR or M1A would be my first choice, but for a homeowner, you certainly wouldn't be under-gunned with "only" a levergun, regardless of caliber. Sure loading isn't as fast magazine-fed weapons, but with some practice you can get pretty quick. If you are like me and live in the Kali-

fornia, the levergun is an easy choice for a home-defense rifle.

I was perfectly happy with the rifle the way it was, until I had lunch with Cylinder & Slide head-honcho Mr. Bill Laughridge and the topic of leverguns came up. Bill asked me if he could turn my 94 into a takedown version — deal!

When my phone rang a few days after shipping the rifle to Bill, he told me to sit down — he had some bad



MODERN LEVERGUN AMMO

Hornady LEVERevolution ammunition changed the way hunters looked at the levergun forever. The tubular, magazine-fed leverguns were plagued for years by having to use only flat-tipped bullets. The flat tip meant less accuracy, distance and sometimes expansion. LEVERevolution bullets are a flex-tip design. The flexible tip makes them safe in tubular magazines, makes for flatter trajectories and ensures controlled expansion. This ammo takes the levergun from shooting what were once "brush gun" distances to being a long-range contender.

The only LEVERevolution ammo currently advertised as self-defense ammo is the new .30-30 160-grain Z-Max (Zombie fighting ammo), but I'll let you in on a little secret — all the LEVERevolution ammo works as self-defense ammo. As of this writing, there are currently 11 different calibers of LEVERevolution ammo available in the standard FTX, and a few with the new Monoflex. The Monoflex uses the new Gilding Metal GMX technology, combined with the FTX technology, to make a deep-penetrating bullet that retains over 95 percent of its weight and, as a bonus for hunters who have to shoot lead-free ammo, the Monoflex is 100-percent lead free. I said currently only 11, because the crew at Hornady is always coming up with new stuff. Check out all of the Hornady line of ammunition at www.hornady.com.



news and some good news. Bad first: "This is the ugliest damn rifle I've ever seen. You and Roy should be taken behind the wood shed for what you did to this rifle ... If you two worked for me I'd fire you both. Good news: I can make it look like it's supposed to ... for rookies, you didn't do too bad a job." Bill told me to trust him, and he would do some other modifications to make the gun a real shooter. We recruited Robbie Barrkman at Robar to complete the finish on the rifle after Bill worked his magic.



Bill, at Cylinder & Slide, converted the rifle to a take-down, added new sights (the right way), (properly) crowned the barrel, cut the stock and fitted a Kick-EEZ recoil pad. Robbie, at Robar, NP3 treated all the internal parts, lever and hammer, then Rogard-finished the entire rifle. Ralph Holzhaue of The Wilderness provided a Giles Modular Sling for installation. Robbie, being the perfectionist he is, had the stocks redone as well. He told me there was no way he was letting the gun out of his shop with new finish and dinged up wood.

As you can see from the photos, the combination of Cylinder & Slide and Robar made this little carbine look way too good for me to use as a truck gun and home defense rifle. Yah right! I'm going to be showing it off more now than before. It shoots just like it did before I sent it off to Bill. I'd be confident putting food on the table, or dealing with both 2- and 4-legged varmints. I have to say, I wasn't so hot on the idea of a fiber-optic sight, but the addition of the red fiber optic sight makes acquiring the sights much faster than traditional iron sights.

The saying "wheel guns are real guns" applies to leverguns as well. Ask any guide who travels in dangerous game country what rifle they carry. My bet is it will probably be the big brother to my rifle — a lever-action .45-70. Leverguns have been the go-to gun for so long for good reason — they are reliable! 🦖

FOR MORE INFO:

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*Special thanks to Terry Wright
for refinishing the wood stocks.*