

ROBAR/RUGER BLACK BEAUTY

It's a specially customized and tamed .357MAG GP100!

Carrying a revolver for defense, you need at least one quick reload. Author favors HKS speedloaders, and the Bulman pouch holds them securely with minimal bulk.



By Denis Prisbrey

From a humble beginning in 1949 with a nifty little .22 autopistol that's still running strong in its 50th year of continuous production, Sturm, Ruger & Company went on to produce some very famous guns. Some of the better known Rugers include the 10/22 rimfire rifle, the Single-Six rimfire single action revolver, the Model 77 series of bolt action rifles, the very strong No. 1 single shot rifles, the Mini 14, the Red Label over/under shotgun, the P series of centerfire autopistols and the big Redhawk .44 Magnum revolvers. Ruger's .357 Magnum GP100 revolvers get occasional mention, but seem to run far behind the rest of the Ruger crowd for



This custom Ruger GP100 makes a good carry gun with its well balanced three-inch Mag-Na-Ported barrel, cushioned factory grips, durable Roguard finish, slick action, effective .357 Magnum chambering, and quality leather gear.

ROBAR/RUGER BLACK BEAUTY

(Continued from page 63)

my civilian police career with as a reserve officer in 1976 turned out to be a very good buy, and now rests honorably on the top shelf in the vault, a little worn around the edges, but still ready to go if needed again.

In the 1980s the novel idea of cops using full-powered duty equivalent ammo for both practice and qualification caught on. We stopped using .38 wadcutters on the range and fullbore magnum rounds on the streets, standardized on the real thing for both, and exposure to a steadier diet of hot magnums accelerated wear on the medium framed revolvers of all brands in police holsters. In 1985 the GP100 was introduced with a slightly modified internal mechanism and a stronger and more durable frame to stand up better to the hot gases and repeated pounding of the 125-grain duty loads. The biggest news in the GP design was a locking latch incorporated into the crane that placed the forward locking point right in front of the cylinder. The ejector rod no longer had to align with the front latchpin at its end, which allowed Ruger engineers to offset the rod lower in the crane to allow for more steel in that section of the frame where the barrel screws into it. The forcing cone walls and topstrap were beefed up to better resist erosion and flamecutting from the hot magnum loads, and the gripframe was also redesigned (and reduced) to an abbreviated extension of the main frame, which serves as a housing for the coil mainspring and leaves more room for a wider variety of grip sizes to fit individual hands. Another plus is that the cylinder locking notches are offset to avoid weakening the thinnest part of the outside chamber walls, one single feature that adds to the overall strength of the GPs.

The Basic Carry Gun

Ruger offers GP100s in 13 different .357 Magnum variations and one .38 Special version. Barrels are available in three, four and six inches, with or without the full-length underbarrel ejector rod housing, and with your choice of fixed or adjustable sights in either blue or stainless steel. Grips are Ruger's unique synthetic rubber with walnut insert panels as standard equipment.

For test purposes I acquired a GPF-331 by catalog designation, which is a three-inch blued six-shot .357 with fixed sights and full-length ejector rod housing. I like this configuration in keeping with my preference for the three-inch barrel on a carry revolver as a good compromise between the decrease in con-



Workmanship on Josh Bulman's FBS holster is first class with exceptional moulding, clean stitching, and burnished edges. Customer's name is even stamped on the back at no extra charge.



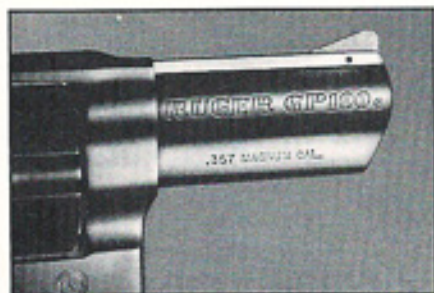
As part of their customization, Robar plated the hammer, trigger, cylinder latch button, extractor star, and other stainless internal parts with NP3.



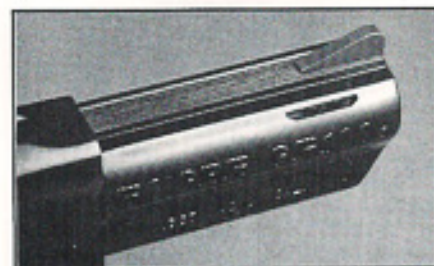
Another feature that adds to the reliability of these guns is the unbreakable coil mainspring (above). Grips are easily removable to begin the field stripping process (top), only a screwdriver is needed for the grip screw.



Fixed sights on the GP are unlikely to be knocked loose or snag under clothing. Sight adjustments can be made to fit a particular load or bullet weight by having a gunsmith remove material from the front sight blade.



This three-inch barrel has great balance, it retains the standard full length ejector rod for positive ejection.



Mag-Na-Porting (one long vent on each side of the front sight) has pros and cons for a defensive handgun.

cealability with a four-inch barrel and the decrease in muzzle velocity with a two-inch barrel. Three-inch barrels also seem to balance the best for me with double-action revolvers, and the longer ejector rod on a three-inch barrel gives an edge in extraction, especially with the long magnum brass. Fixed sights are generally preferable in a gun that's carried routinely under clothing to avoid wearing holes and snagging on the draw, and they're much less prone to being bumped out of zero with continued service. The full ejector rod housing adds a fraction of an ounce in weight up front over the short version, and on a semi-snub using the hot 125-grain ammo recommended for defensive purposes a little extra out front is fine with me. Ruger sells the GPs with the same rubber/wood grip construction on all models, but there's a difference in contour between the adjustable sight and the fixed sight grips; I find the more rounded "backstrap" on the fixed sight versions is a subtle difference, but fits my hand better.

Mag-Na-Port

If you shoot a .50 Action Express for breakfast, you'll yawn all the way through a session with the .357. However, if you've been raised on a 9mm, or even go back far enough to claim experience with the .38 Special, you may decide after thirty or forty rounds that the .357 has just a bit more bite behind the barrel than you're interested in. Which would be a shame if you're thinking about adopting a revolver as a constant traveling

Continued on page 92



JOHN BENNER
PRESIDENT
CHIEF INSTRUCTOR
26 years experience
law enforcement &
training



- Civilian
- Law Enforcement
- SWAT Teams
- Drug Task Forces
- Military
- Federal Agencies

www.tdiohio.com

TACTICAL DEFENSE INSTITUTE

Providing the most advanced firearms and physical self-defense training available. We'll Match our end-result shooter and tactician against anyone!

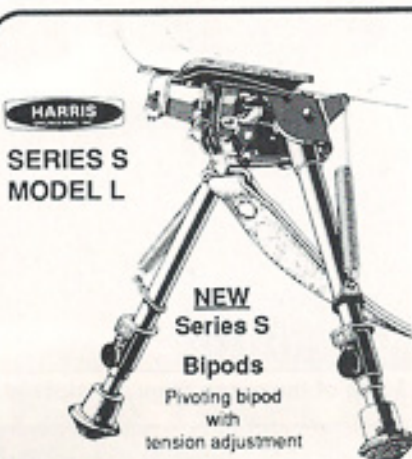
HANDGUN/TACTICAL RIFLE/PRECISION RIFLE/SHOTGUN/PHYSICAL & KNIFE DEFENSE

Located in South Central Ohio. For information & brochure:

2174 Bethany Ridge Road

West Union, Ohio 45693

937-544-7228



HARRIS
SERIES S
MODEL L

NEW
Series S
Bipods

Pivoting bipod
with
tension adjustment

HARRIS BIPODS

• Versatile • Sturdy • Light • Fast
Bipods clamp quickly, securely to most stud-equipped bolt-action rifles. Fits some other guns with adapters. Spring loaded folding legs are quickly adjustable for height. Time proven design and quality manufacture. Black anodize finish.

Thirteen models available plus adapters for various guns.

Harris Engineering Inc.
Barlow, KY 42024

AMERICAN MADE LIFETIME GUARANTEE



Weapons Case **\$62.95**

Two Mag. Pouch **\$32.95**

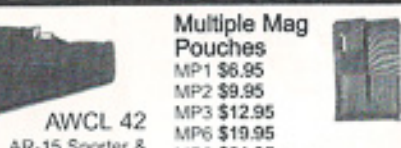


Bonded Thigh Rig Holsters

Single Mag. Pouch **\$30.95**



Dept. CH
2731 Sutton Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63143



Multiple Mag Pouches
MP1 \$8.95
MP2 \$9.95
MP3 \$12.95
MP6 \$19.95
MP8 \$21.95



Pro-Shooter's Bag Padded Medium **\$89.95**

Belt Slide Holster **\$19.95**

visit us on the web
www.bagmaster.com

1-800-950-8181

Shipping & Handling:
Under \$50 add \$6, over \$50 add \$9
COD add additional \$5.00
U.S. Mail & UPS ground USA only.



BAGMASTER
MFG. INC. • St. Louis, MO

New!

Do You Know the Power of the Blade?

Advanced Folding
Knife Techniques



This program is a graphic look at the awesome power of a 4" blade. You'll see incredible cutting demos with the star of the show "Meat Man." Plus, we examine basic and advanced knife fighting skills - a realistic approach to what happens in a knife fight - what to look for and what to do when a knife is presented towards you, and which knife is most recommended and why most experts do not truly understand the power of this blade. A great reference video!

(75 MINUTES) ITEM #KBY74
ADVANCED KNIFE \$29.95 + \$5.00 S&H

Professionally Produced!



Both Tapes
Just \$39.95!

+ \$5.00 S&H

Mastering the
Samurai Sword

Now, you can see first hand the awesome power of the Samurai sword! Including grip, stance, balance and cutting. You'll learn how to cut through life-like figures and understand why the Samurai sword is the ultimate stopping weapon. Plus, you'll see some of the most amazing cutting demos using full length Samurai swords ever recorded on video. There's lots and lots of cutting on this video with complete how-to instructions.



(75 MINUTES) ITEM #SD174
SAMURAI SWORD \$29.95 + \$5.00 S&H



1-800-942-8273

(858) 569-4000

Fax: (858) 569-0505

Email: GUNVIDEOS@aol.com

Gun Video

Visit our website at: www.gunvideo.com

Or send check/money order to:
4585 Murphy Canyon Rd.
San Diego, California 92123

ROBAR/RUGER BLACK BEAUTY

(Continued from page 65)

companion.

The Ruger factory grips are among the most comfortable under full recoil of any .357 revolver I've shot in a variety of bullet weights ranging from 110 to 180 grains, but the gun can still jump, and that's where our first bit of customization comes in.

The GP was sent off immediately to Mag-Na-Port International in Michigan to have Larry Kelly's vents installed in the barrel, one on each side of the front sight. For \$78.50 plus shipping, your revolver can come back with two longitudinal vents electrically "milled" at angles designed to deflect burning powder gas following the bullet upward and outward. It's simple science applied to your own personal gun, and the gas escaping up through the ports pushes the barrel down in that microsecond between primer detonation and bullet exit from the bore. This porting works with varying degrees of success depending on barrel length and expanding gas intensity, but the main point is that it does work, and for a .357 defensive gun every bit of recoil reduction is beneficial.

Robar Companies

When the GP came back from Michigan (allow about four weeks), it was boxed up again and shipped off to Robar Companies in Phoenix for a new finish. There was nothing wrong with the original Ruger bluing, but no conventional bluing holds up to wear and abrasion as do Robbie Barrkman's proprietary platings. We arranged for the revolver frame and barrel to be plated with Roguard and the hammer, trigger and other internal parts to be plated with NP3. Stainless steel would have been more corrosion resistant than a blued carbon steel revolver, but I wanted this to be a subdued gun, and Roguard is a dull matte black that's very durable as an



Ruger's rubber and walnut grips are among the best on the market for soaking up recoil. Author fired nearly 200 rounds of .357 Magnums through the GP during testing with no hand fatigue or soreness at all.



It's surprising how much difference a well-rounded trigger face can make in shooting comfort. Robar did a fine job in removing the rear trigger edges.

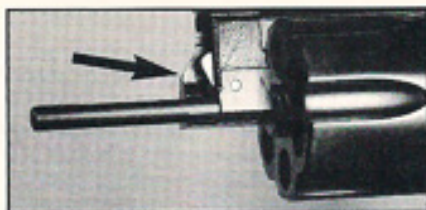


Ruger's well-known transfer bar rises up between the hammer and frame-mounted firing pin as the hammer and trigger come back. When the hammer and trigger are at rest, the transfer bar retracts downward to leave no contact between the hammer and firing pin, which makes it nearly impossible for the gun to fire if dropped on the hammer.

exterior finish. Roguard, incidentally, is what the company calls a molybdenum disulphide-based polymer, which is sprayed on over a chemical pre-treatment of the surface and then baked on at 180 degrees for 60 minutes. Their NP3 process is a combination of Teflon and electroless nickel, which is easy to clean, corrosion resistant and self-lubricating to reduce friction.

Other Details

Before the plating was done, I also asked them to deburr the hammer spur, round off the trigger face a little beyond what the factory does, de-sharpen the rear edges of the trigger and replace the front sight blade. The outside edges on GP hammer spurs are very aggressively checkered and the rear trigger edges are sharp enough to pinch if you're not careful, my only two routine criticisms of these guns. The factory sight blade appeared to be a casting, which I normally wouldn't have a problem with, but



One Ruger innovation that adds to the superior strength of their DA revolvers is the offset ejector rod and front crane latch (shown by arrow).

the ramp serrations left something to be desired on this one, and I wanted them sharp to break up sunlight. If you send a similar GP for the same treatment, again allow about four weeks, and expect a bill in the vicinity of \$285 plus shipping.

How It Shoots

With a mixed bag of nine different factory .357 Magnum rounds and one .38 Special load I fired the little GP over a shotbag rest at black bulls at 25 yards. Unlike some previous encounters with hard-kicking short-barreled revolvers, the excellent design of the Ruger grips was not in the slightest unpleasant or painful in any way. The smooth rubber itself is softer and grabbier in the hand than most other rubber designs, which means that it stays in place much better during recoil even without moulded

checking.

The grips are included with the gun, but here's where the Mag-Na-Porting comes in. My four-inch GP has never bothered my hand, even during extended shooting sessions with it, but the two ports in the black three-inch GP noticeably helped in reducing muzzle jump at the bench. Recoil generally tends to be more intense at the bench, and less noticeable while standing up. Recoil, by the way, for our purposes here, needs to be broken down into two elements—rearward shove and muzzle jump.

In shooting for slowfire accuracy, muzzle jump is only an inconvenience; in a defensive situation it can be much more serious when you're attempting rapid controlled pairs, for example. In a defensive gun, you want an effective caliber, but you also want a controllable handgun, and the Mag-Na-Port muzzle vents help achieve that. In firing 135-grain full bore magnum rounds and 15 +P .38 Specials for accuracy, I had no sore spots anywhere, and no noticeable fatigue in my shooting hand at all. Mag-Na-Porting doesn't remove recoil, it just

Performance: CUSTOM RUGER GP100

Manufacturer	Load	Muzzle Flash	Accuracy
Remington .357	125 Golden Saber JHP	Medium	2 5/8
Remington .357	125 Semi Jacketed HP	Low	2
Winchester .357	145 Silver Tip JHP	Low	2 1/8
Federal .357	180 Castcore Lead Flat Point	Very low	1 9/16
Federal .357	158 Hydra-Shok JHP	Low	2 5/8
UMC .357	125 JSP	Low to medium	3 1/8
Speer .357	125 Gold DOT JHP	High	2 5/8
Blackhills .357	125 JHP	Medium	1 1/16
Eldorado .357	150 Starfire JHP	High	1 5/8
Federal .38 Special	125 NYCLAD +P JHP	Low to medium	2 3/8

Bullet weight measured in grains, accuracy in inches for best 6-shot group from bench at 25 yards.

Dillon Leather

...MEANS 'Practical Holsters'

"Conceal Your Auto" with Dillon's C.Y.A. — a high-quality, affordable small-of-the-back holster, reinforced for easy one-handed reholstering.

The "C.Y.A." Holster

Colt Government Model	\$50.95
Colt Commander Model	#17040
Colt Officers Model	#17041
Beretta 92	#17042
Glock 17, 22	#17442
Glock 19, 23	#17045
Glock 20, 21	#17044
Glock 26, 27	#17590
Glock 29, 30	#17043
SIG 220, 226	#17443
SIG 225	#17046
SIG 228	#17445
SIG 229	#17446
SIG 239 (9mm)	#17447
S&W Sigma 9mm/.40, Full-Size	#17444
S&W Sigma 9mm/.40, Compact	#17449
	#17448



To Order, Call (800) 223-4570
FREE Catalog, Call (800) 762-3844

Ask your local Dillon dealer for this and other quality Dillon products!

Dillon
Precision
Products, Inc.

8009 E. Dillon's Way
Scottsdale, AZ 85260
(480) 948-0009
FAX (480) 998-2786
www.dillonprecision.com

....STILL THE BEST IN ITS CLASS....

When Chris Reeve made his first one piece knife over 15 years ago, it was acknowledged as one of the best survival knives available. The basic design has not changed much although the method of making the knives has been improved (and continues to be improved). The range now consists of 10 blade shapes in four different blade lengths.....and they are still acknowledged as the best of their kind.

Shadow IV
(5.5 inch blade)



Send for our brochure (\$2) to see the full range as well as our folding knife, the Sebenza.

Chris Reeve

KNIVES



Chris Reeve Knives
11624 W. President Dr. #B
Boise, ID 83713
Tel: 208-375-0367
Fax: 208-375-0368

ROBAR/RUGER BLACK BEAUTY

(Continued from page 93)

re-directs part of it from the upward muzzle flip into more of a straight back shove, and combined with well designed grips, it can make a tremendous difference.

After the bench shoot, I set up two rows of the same bullseye targets and ran another fifty rounds of 125-grain magnums through the short Ruger making quick doubletaps in random patterns on the target board at ten feet. This is where the controllability factor is exercised, and I was surprised at how well the GP performed. I am far from the fastest shooter you'll ever see, but when I took the time to use the sights on the bulls, rather than go for speed in point shooting like I usually do at close-up silhouettes, bullet impacts varied from two to four inches between holes and stayed in the black at what I thought were moderate speeds. The gun held still in my hand, didn't try to burrow farther into my grip under recoil and wasn't difficult to hang onto at all.

As usual, the Remington 125-grain Golden Sabers were among the most pleasant to fire. Winchester's 145-grain Silvertips had a stiff recoil, and Federal's 180-grain Castcore lead hunting load was not much different in the hand than the hot 125s.

Accuracy

The GP is not a target revolver, which bothers me not. At the 25-yard bench firing three strings of five shots with each of the ten rounds evaluated, only five strings out of thirty went over four inches, the gun averaged slightly under three inches across the board and the GP produced three groups that measured under two inches. This was my first experience with the Federal 180-grain Castcore, and the hard lead flatpoint would not be appropriate for self-defense because of overpenetration concerns, but it did very well in the Ruger and would be a good choice for hunting or other high country uses. The Black Hills 125-grain JHP produced a four-shot one hole group measuring exactly one-half inch center to center before I zipped when the gun zagged on the last round and opened it up to 1 1/16 inches with a flyer, and the Eldorado 150-grain Starfire produced a 1 5/8-inch group that was quite respectable. The one .38 Special load, Federal's 125-grain +P Nyclud JHP, was very mild in the Ruger and accuracy was pretty much on par with the magnum rounds. Best groups for all are listed in the chart, and as shown the black revolver is very capable of meeting the combat accuracy standard of four inches

at 25 yards.

With any fixed sight gun you'll encounter a difference in point of impact relative to point of aim when you switch bullet weights. At 25 yards the average bullet impact was about 3-4 inches low with the 125s, 1-2 inches high with the 150 and 158 grainers and 4 inches high with the 180 grainers. Most rounds also shot 2-3 inches to the right.

Finishing Touches

After the range session, I dropped the GP off with Steve Barlow at Barlow's Custom Guns for a final action tune and a sight adjustment. When I first unboxed the Ruger before starting it on its travels, it had a rough spot in the action which the people at Robar subsequently smoothed out while they had it and the pull was much smoother when they sent it back to me. Steve worked on it further, reduced it to a light 2 3/4 pound single-action break with a very slick DA pull, took a little off the top and a little off the left side of the front sight, which Robar had left unplated to allow for some adjustment if necessary, and the GP was right where I wanted it to be. Steve's action tune-up on Rugers is a bargain at \$66, by the way.

Leather Shopping

Josh Bullman sent me a catalog of his concealment holsters while the GP was in the middle of its makeover, and put together an FBS (Full Belt Slide) model in a dark mahogany shade, along with a single speedloader pouch to match, when I got back to him. Josh has recently gone into his leatherwork full time, and after seeing and using what he sent me, I think you'll be hearing more about him. Workmanship on my sample holster showed exceptional moulding, clean stitching and very nicely polished edges. The speedloader pouch, made to fit an HKS loader, was cut and finished every bit as well as the holster, takes up minimal bulk and does not flop around on the belt. It's one of the best concealment speedloader pouches I've seen. Having spent quite a few hours with the combination over the past few days, at the range and around town, I can say both holster and pouch are very comfortable to wear. This is pro quality.

In Closing

My little black "Town" GP is a well balanced and very shootable revolver in an effective caliber for defensive applications. The Roguard finish will hold up to sweat and holster wear, Robar did a fine job on de-horning the hammer spur for less snag and rounding off the trigger both front and rear for greater shooting comfort, the Mag-Na-Ports combined with the Ruger grips make it controllable

and comfortable and the Barlow action job is a great improvement over the factory trigger pull.

There are some cautions, though.

Some people have a problem with rubber grips on a concealment gun grabbing the inside of a shirt or jacket, which can be revealing. This is less of a problem with a good holster that snugs the gun in tight against the body, and it wasn't a problem at all for me, but could be for you. When fired in the dark, the .357 Magnum has a reputation of being all but defeating on night vision. Most of the ammunition companies have incorporated flash retardants in calibers used by law enforcement in recent years, and this is no longer an issue with most of the rounds tested. The Speer Gold Dot and the Eldorado Starfire, unfortunately, did pretty much live up to the .357's rep during an informal night shoot; muzzle flash with the rest was not bright enough to be considered a major problem. And, those two rounds were the only ones which flashed intensely enough to actually show the two "fans of flame" coming from the ports that you see in those nice dramatic advertisement photos for ported guns. Whether you see the gasses or not, however, they do come out above the bore line, along with particles of shaved copper jacket, and I'm telling you here and now not to try either a Speed Rock or other close quarter defensive firing position with a ported gun held against your side, unless you practice rotating the gun so the ports vent away from your body.

With those cautions in mind, for die-hard revolver fans, this little custom Ruger has definite possibilities.

For more information contact:

Sturm, Ruger, 200 Ruger Road, Dept CH, Prescott, AZ 86301; 520-778-6555, fax: 520-778-6633

Robar Companies, Inc., 21438 North 7th Avenue, Suite B, Dept CH, Phoenix, Arizona 85027; 623-581-2648, fax: 623-582-0059; www.robar-guns.com

Mag-Na-Port International, Inc., 41302 Executive Drive, Dept CH, Harrison Township, Michigan 48045; 810-469-6727, fax: 810-469-0425; www.magnaport.com

Barlow's Custom Guns, 2698 South Redwood Road, Dept CH, West Valley City, Utah 84119; 801-973-4788, fax: 801-973-4795

Bulman Gunleather, Box 361, Dept CH, Newry, Pennsylvania 16665; 814-696-8615, fax: 814-695-1465; jbolsters@aol.com

"WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR COWBOY SINGLE ACTION TO LOOK LIKE?"

You can count on the experts at AJAX to outfit your single actions with the finest "cowboy grips." AJAX has specialized in single action grips for over twenty-five years. AJAX can give you the look and feel of the Old West and all made here in the USA.

- **IVORY POLYMER™** from \$29.95
- **BUFFALO POLYMER™** from \$29.95
- **WHITE OR BLACK PEARLITE™** from \$34.95
- **EXOTIC MICARTA WOODS** from \$34.95
- **GENUINE INDIAN STAG** from \$99.95



"CUSTOM FITTING AVAILABLE"

We can custom make and fit any of our materials to your Uberti, Cimarron, EMF, Navy Arms or any of the clone single actions.

SEND \$2.00 FOR YOUR FORTY PAGE COLOR CATALOG.



AJAX CUSTOM GRIPS, INC.

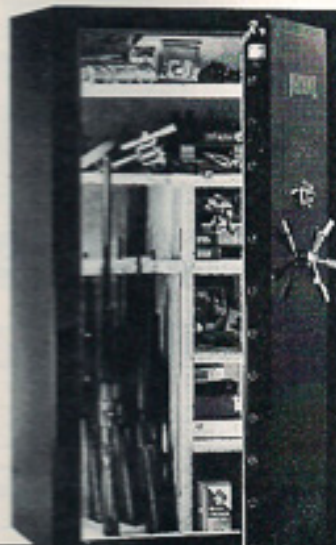
P.O. Box 560129 • Dallas, Texas 75356

214-630-8893 • Fax 214-630-4942

www.AJAXGRIPS.com

JUST COMPARE... NOTHING EVEN COMES CLOSE!

FORT KNOX
SECURITY PRODUCTS



- UL Listed
- Certified 1680/90 Minute Fire Protection
- Rack & Pinion Locking
- Patented Star Corner Bolts
- Ball bearing hard plate
- Drill deflector plates
- Concealed hinges
- Quadrated Door Frame
- Sergeant & Greenleaf Lock
- Maintenance free
- Modular interiors
- E.O.I.L. relocking system
- 7 luxurious based-on colors
- Large Selection of options & accessories
- Lifetime Warranty
- Competitive Prices
- Over 25 Models



"Go With America's Best! I did, now I leave home with a safe feeling."
General Chuck Yeager

Free Brochure! 1-800-821-5216

1051 North Industrial Park Road, Orem, UT 84057 www.ftknox.com