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KAHR'S NEW CM9

A Pocket Full of Pistol!

By Gary Paul Johnston

Discussions of the size and caliber of a “proper” handgun are never ending. While this is a good thing, it often gets out of hand with strong, confusing opinions. Let’s sort this out, while showcasing a brand new pistol designed for personal protection.

To simplify, there are two types of handguns—big ones and small ones. These include revolvers and self-loading pistols and we’ll only deal with small self-loading pistols here. Like revolvers, these come in all calibers from .22 to .45. Generally the big calibers are more suitable for those with experience and of larger stature, as they have more recoil and noise. However, bigger, experienced folks often also want a pistol that’s lighter and easy to conceal. Such a pistol is the new CM9 from Kahr Arms.

Packing substantial punch in an unusually small package, the CM9 is chambered for the 9x19mm (Luger) cartridge, a round that comes to the defensive table with sufficient power to get one out of trouble if properly deployed. This is a good rule when using any handgun defensively.

About the Nine

The 9x19mm (19mm is the length of the casing) cartridge suffers a long history of a bad rap as a poor fight stopper. While this round has a high velocity, its bullet is of relatively light weight (\pm 124 grains, as opposed to 230 grains for a .45). For most of the last century, both of these rounds were offered with only full metal jacket (FMJ) bullets or lead nose bullets, neither of which expanded in the target. The larger, heavier bullets proved to be better

fight stoppers due to simple brute force. Then came the “bullet revolution” in the 1980s, a technical breakthrough to be sure!

The most notable of the new bullets was the Winchester Black Talon, but others soon followed using thin jackets of various materials and alloys along with various weights and velocities. The new technology resulted in more efficient handgun cartridges with less over-penetration and ricochet potential. The rounds that gained the most attention in high performance were the .44s and .45s, along with a new one that happened to come along about the same. This was the .40 S&W cartridge, a shortened version of the 10mm developed largely by Tom Campbell and Ed Hobbie for Smith & Wesson.

Being able to fit into the smaller magazine wells of pistols such as the

Top: In these increasingly uncertain times, when you’re suddenly put in fear like never before, the Kahr CM9 can be the best life insurance policy you’ve ever had.

S&W Model 59 series, the Glock 17, and others, would offer those with smaller hands the option to use a larger bullet in pistol types formerly offered in only 9mm. The huge effort to market a new cartridge with the new bullet technology literally overshadowed the fact that the 9x19mm benefited from that new technology as much as any other caliber. The answer to the question of whether the .40, .44 and .45 caliber bullets continue to out-perform the 9mm (and .38) bullets is probably "yes," but the performance of all these bullets is, today, much closer than it was 30 years ago!

Kahr Arms

The dramatic increase in the performance of the 9x19mm car-



Kahr Arms' new CM9 is about as small as it gets in a pocket 9x19mm pistol and makes little seem big!

tridge has been

almost a "best kept secret," as it has slowly come to light during the last two decades. It has also been largely responsible for the spawning of and the sudden increase in 9x19mm pocket pistols. One of the pioneers in these guns has been Kahr Arms, and their latest masterpiece is the CM9.

The many thousands familiar with Kahr Arms' pistols will find little that is new about the CM9, but in this case "little" is the key word. With a total length of 5.5 inches, the CM9 has a 3-inch barrel, a height of

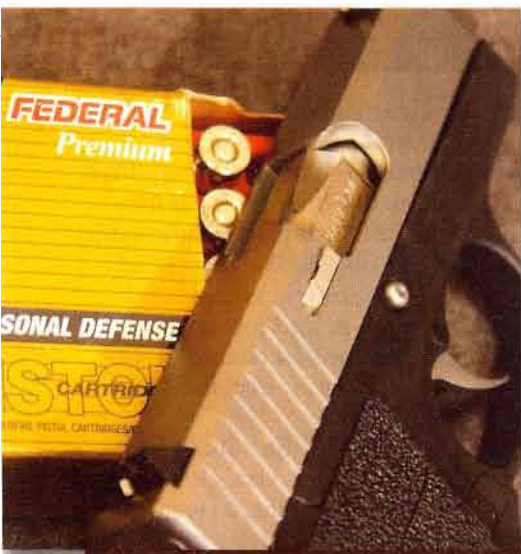
4.24 inches and a width of just an inch. This narrow width is possible because of Kahr's patented offset feed ramp that makes room for the trigger bar. Almost all parts of the CM9 are made of heat-treated stainless steel.

The short recoil-operated CM9 uses the familiar step at the front of the chamber for lock-up and the square chamber portion has tapered flats at the upper right and left front to allow the barrel to pass under the slide during operation. The slide is cut out at the front of the ejection port to allow a loaded 9mm round to be ejected. When loaded, the extractor emerges from the slide to be felt without having to look.

The sights of the CM9 are of the same tough black polymer used in the gun's frame. With a combat blade/white dot front and a "U" notch rear with a vertical white bar, the latter is drift adjustable for windage. Riding on steel rails front and rear makes for a slide that is controlled by steel through its entire length of travel. The stainless steel barrel has 6-groove rifling with a 1-in-10-inch right hand twist.

The CM9's polymer frame, while mostly as smooth as a bar of soap, has very efficient checkering on the front and back straps, where it counts. The trigger guard is undercut where it meets the frame, so the grip sits lower in the hand, and a reverse curve farther forward provides a rest for the support index finger when

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Top left: A loaded chamber indicator is accomplished with the extractor protruding slightly when a cartridge is chambered. If unsure, this can be felt with the index finger for a right-handed user, or the thumb of a lefty. Above: About as simple as it gets, Kahr's new CM9 is like a double-action-only snub nose revolver with 7 rounds of powerful 9x19mm with total reliability!

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using a two-hand hold. This trigger guard shape also prevents trigger pinch. The CM9 tips my scale at a mere hair over 16 ounces.

Disassembling the slide group from the CM9 requires first reading the manual, as it is not easy; but it is also seldom necessary (you will need a plastic-handled "tapping" tool). The strong captive, dual mainspring is the primary culprit here, and requires no small amount of finger muscle, with gloves making it easier.

nity to release it and cancel the shot. Been there—done it. Still, when the balloon goes up and firing is necessary, the Kahr's smooth DA trigger can ensure that the shot will go where it must to save the day.

First and foremost, when called upon, a pistol must go "BANG" every time, and here the Kahr CM9 never missed a hitch. Re-



The Kahr CM9 has equal appeal to gun-toting women as it does for men in need of a firearm for personal protection.



The Kahr CM9 fieldstrips as seen using only a simple tool, but reading the instruction manual first is a must. Disassembly is seldom necessary.

The strong spring is necessary to help tame the recoil of the 9mm in such a small package and it also becomes a partner in the gun's reliability.

So, how does the Kahr CM9 shoot? Darn good! With a surprisingly comfortable grip the gun sits well in the hand. It also points well and the bar-dot sights line up fast in low light. The CM9's long, smooth double-action-only aspect is important beyond shooting pleasure, as it has a secondary function as a last ditch safety. By this I mean that, under high stress, if after starting to pull the trigger the threat stops, there is a short opportu-


coil was manageable and the gun sat well in the hand. It always locked back after the seventh round was fired, no matter what kind of factory 9x19mm ammo was used.

Although 10 to 15 yards is the maximum distance a pistol like the CM9 should ever be called upon to be used at, I wanted to see what it would do at 25 yards. Off-hand standing, using a modified Weaver two-hand hold, I was able to shoot groups of about 6 inches with some loads. Would I want to try a head shot at this distance with this pistol? No, but that's not the role for which

this gun was intended.

The CM9 is a pocket pistol intended for concealed carry until there is no alternative but to bring it into play with fast, well-placed, follow-up shots. Make no mistake; if you find yourself in a gunfight with a handgun, fast, well-placed follow-up shots will give you the best chance to survive. This gun's a *big* deal in a little package!

For more information about this and the rest of Kahr Arm's high quality defensive handguns, as well as their extensive line of holsters and accessories, contact Kahr Arms, 508-795-3919 (Kahrarms.com).

Remember, to keep your Kahr Arms pistol and the rest of your guns, JOIN THE NRA. DO IT NOW! 

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