

Lock and Load

There are varying opinions of the origin of the phrase "lock and load." One school thinks it originated with flintlock rifles which also gave us the phrase "lock, stock and barrel." With the hammer down you would load powder and ball from the muzzle and ram down the works. Then lock the hammer in the firing position, flip up the frizzen to add the finer grade priming powder, close the frizzen and you're ready to shoot. Cap and ball rifles use the same procedure where the final act is cocking the hammer and placing a percussion cap on the nipple below the hammer.

In World War II the procedure for loading the M1 rifle was to lock the bolt in the open position, press a clip of ammunition into the feeding well with your thumb while holding the bolt open with the edge of the same hand and then quickly yanking your hand away. Improper technique resulted in another phrase, "M1 thumb."

With the M14 and AR type rifles you lock in the magazine and then rack/release the bolt to lock a round in the chamber. Added confusion comes from those who say it should be "load and lock." The Army taught me the former. Any way you say it you need ammunition to load and manufacturers continue to provide new and innovative products.

Founded by Joyce Hornady in 1949,



The Winchester 12 gauge dwarfs the Aquila Minishell.

Hornady Manufacturing Company has continuously lived up to their slogan, "Accurate. Deadly. Dependable." New for 2016 is their line of Precision Hunter ammunition featuring the state-of-the-art ELD-X Bullet. The initials stand for Extremely Low Drag-eXpanding. Hornady engineers discovered that conventional bullet tip materials in high ballistic coefficient bullets melt and deform due to friction and this effects accuracy at longer ranges above 400 yards.

They developed the patented Heat Shield heat resistant polymer tip to create match grade accuracy and outstanding expansion at every distance. They promise consistency from bullet to bullet and lot to lot. Interestingly during creation of this

bullet the aerodynamics were tested using Doppler radar. Hornady will continue to expand the Precision Hunter line and bullets are available for hand loaders.

Pig hunters will appreciate the power potential of the new Hornady "Full Boar" ammunition. These rounds are loaded with their GMX bullets designed for deep penetration and maximum weight retention. Hornady says these monolithic copper-alloy bullets deliver 95+% weight retention and uniform, controlled expansion for unmatched terminal performance on the toughest game. Over the years I have found it unnecessary to question Hornady.

Of the various loads offered the .30-30 has much to be desired as it features the MonoFlex bullet which combines the GMX solid copper alloy bullet with a flexible tip to be safe to use stacked in a tubular magazine. Check the availability of your favorite caliber at www.hornady.com.

Aguila Ammunition recently introduced a broad shotgun product line to the U.S. market. The 54-year old company has offerings for hunters, clay shooters, home defense and law enforcement. Of interest is that Aquila is the largest ammunition manufacturer in Latin America producing and extensive line of pistol, rifle and shotgun ammunition and headquartered in Cuernavaca, Mexico, a country with some of the world's most strict regulations on ammunition ownership. Still, we get the

benefit of their high quality products.

Their shotshell line includes a competition line for skeet, trap and sporting clays as well as an exclusive pigeon load. The line includes both 7.5, 8 and 9 shot in standard and high velocities and the traditional lineup includes 12, 16, 20 and .410 gauge.

The pigeon load is called the Pichón Plus 1400 series. It was engineered for live bird competitions where they have the need for speed. These 2 3/4 12 gauge shells hold a 1 1/4 ounce load of 7 1/2, 8 or 9 shot that sizzle down the barrel at 1400 feet per second. You don't have to be a pigeon shooter to see how these shells would be big medicine on dove and quail.

A unique item is the Minishell. This 1 3/4 inch Lilliputian provides surprising performance. The shot shell has a 5/8oz. load of 7 1/2 shot that hits 1175fps. That is a fair amount of clay and bird stopping power with a reduction in bark and bite. This makes for a great training round or what you should pick on a day you don't want to get abused.

For defense the Minishell buckshot load sends the 00 pellets out at 1200fps. The slug load fires a 385 grain slug at

1200fps. Remember the basic .45 ACP sends a 230 grain bullet downrange at 850fps. These rounds are best served in a double barrel shotgun or hand loaded one at a time in a pump or auto. The company says you can double the capacity of a pump gun with Minishells, but research this carefully. They would not function in any of my pump guns. Other than that they are well made and value priced. The U.S. distributor is Texas Armament and Technology in Conroe, Texas and the line may be researched at www.aguilaammo.com.


As the old saying goes, "Once you think you've seen it all." Ruger has licensed the ARX line of ammunition created and manufactured by Polycase Ammunition and it carries a bullet unlike anything you have ever seen. It looks like the tip of a drill bit. Everything about it is different from the shape, the method of manufacture and how it performs. The non-expanding bullet is injection molded of a blended metal/polymer matrix designed to penetrate soft targets and tissues, but will break apart on tough barriers to minimize collateral damage. The ARX penetrates straight through clothing until it enters

soft tissue. Then the grooves in the bullet compound the rotational energy of the bullet in a controlled way that delivers terminal performance exceeding most hollow point bullets. Bodily fluids passing through the bullet flutes travel between 1 1/2 to two times the velocity of the bullet increasing the wound cavity.

Their posted example is, "A 9mm ARX® bullet traveling at 1,445 fps will result in fluid flowing through the ARX® flutes at nearly 2,900 fps, resulting in 13" to 16" of penetration into bare 10% ballistics ordnance gelatin and a temporary wound channel in soft tissue that is approximately 3"(W) and 9"(L)." Ugh!

Currently available from Ruger are 9mm, .380 and .45 ACP. The .45 auto round pushes a 118grain ARX at an impressive 1307fps. Visit www.ruger.com for more.


Winchester's offering of 150 year commemorative ammunition has been mentioned before, but it is interesting that their shotgun offering is a 12 gauge 3-inch shell with 1 1/4oz. of #2 shot at 1400fps. It is shown as a size comparison to Aquila's Minishell.

Be safe out there. 




It's all about the bullets in the Ruger ARX and Hornady Precision Hunter.

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