Advandura World magazine

WINTER 2020

La Ruta De Los Conquistadores The Hardest Mountain Bike Race in the World

Fotical







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Blister Free Running



Nature's Temperature Regulator





PARTICIPATION IN REVIVAL OF ECO-CHALLENGE A "DREAM COME TRUE"

by Cliff White

For most active adventure racers today, Eco-Challenge – a televised expedition race taking place in some of the most far-flung and exotic places on Earth – was their gateway into the sport. The television spectacle captured the world's attention over seven seasons between 1996 and 2002, earning Emmy Awards and millions of viewers.

Then suddenly it was gone. The show's creator and producer, Mark Burnett, turned his attention to the smash hit TV show Survivor and gave up on Eco-Challenge, which was expensive and a logistical nightmare to produce. Adventure racers made do, moving on to other events such as Primal Quest, the Adventure Race World Series, and the USARA race series. Burnett continued to churn out television gold, following up Survivor with other top-ranked shows including Shark Tank, The Voice and The Apprentice. Up until the summer of 2018, Eco-Challenge seemed gone forever.

Then out of the blue, the local press in Hollywood began to report rumors of an Eco-Challenge revival. Variety ran a scoop that legendary television personality and host of Man vs. Wild Bear Grylls would host. It carried further details that the new show would feature more than 50 teams competing to



finish a 300-mile adventure course. A new website, EcoChallenge.com, popped up and offered more tantalizing details: "The World's Toughest Race: Eco-Challenge Fiji" would film in September 2019 and include teams of four, racing across the tropical South Pacific island nation of Fiji in a variety of disciplines including outrigger paddling, mountain biking, horseback riding, ascending and rappelling, whitewater rafting, and paddle boarding.



When entries opened, I jumped on submitting an application. I had grown up watching Eco-Challenge with my father, Starker, and together we had grown obsessed with the sport of adventure racing. As a high school graduation present, Starker signed us up for our first race in the Spring of 2002, when we conquered the New York City edition of the Hi-Tec Adventure Series. While college and my father's move to Illinois separated us, we continued to race sporadically together whenever possible. After my wife, Kate, and I got married and moved to Madison, Wisconsin, an hour away from my dad, Starker and I convinced Kate to join in on the shenanigans. She loved it - after our first race together she was as hooked as we were. The three of us started racing regularly, racking up more than three dozen finishes of major races, including competing in several national championships. When Eco-Challenge was announced, it became our shared dream to compete.

In January 2019, while out on a cold, dark, snowy run in the Maine woods, I got a call from a Los Angeles area code. It was one of the casting directors for Eco-Challenge. Our application, which consisted of written answers to questions about our team's background and experience in addition to a video, had been accepted. Now all we needed to do was find a babysitter for our two-year-old and get permission to take the time off. It wasn't easy, but once Kate's parents heard the excitement in our voices and saw that they would help to make our dream come true, they agreed to take care of the kiddo, and our bosses eventually approved our time off. We also were lucky enough to find an experienced fourth teammate in Michael Garrison and a veteran AR personality in John McInnes to serve as our required crewperson, or TAC. Finally, the last piece of the puzzle was solved when Eco-Challenge agreed to waive its entry fee and pay each team a stipend for travel, in exchange for agreeing to be filmed during the entirety of the race. The hard part was over – we were Fiji-bound!

Before dawn on September 6th, we landed in Nadi, Fiji, and after a thorough inspection of our massive load of luggage, were quickly whisked away to the luxurious, beachside Pullman Resort. As one of the later teams to arrive, we were thrown into an already-bustling scene, with the country flags of many of the 66 teams from 30 countries displayed proudly on the balconies of the rooms around the central courtyard. Even with our early arrival, the hotel was a mob scene of teams in uniforms, gear and bikes in all corners of the hotel, and seemingly more staff and volunteers than racers. We heard Spanish, French, Dutch, Fijian, Estonian, many variations of English and numerous other languages being spoken.





Over the next three days, we received little information about what the race would entail, but we were able to go food shopping, do our mandatory skills tests, and rebuild our bikes after their trans-Pacific journey. The day before the race, we sighted both Mark Burnett and Bear Grylls making the rounds amongst the teams, and we even got a chance to have a conversation with Burnett. Thoroughly nice, he hinted heavily he foresaw a long run for Eco.

"You don't spend this much for a one-time thing," he told us.

The day before the race, we drove across Fiji's main island, arriving at a remote village with a central square where a tent city had formed. This was the starting location of the race and a huge party was just getting underway. We set up camp and got dressed in our race uniforms, then proceeded over to the village center where Fijian dignitaries, hundreds of racers and race staff and thousands of locals were all settling in to watch a traditional welcoming ceremony involving lots of dancing and cava, the native spirit.



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TIGER BALM Works Where It Hurts Despite the festivities, we managed to get to sleep by 10 p.m., but with a 4 a.m. wake-up call and the jittery excitement of knowing we were about to embark on one of the toughest endeavors any of us had ever attempted, none of us slept very well. In the darkness of the early morning, we woke and put on our race clothes, an extra layer (it was surprisingly chilly in Fiji at night) and sunscreen (unsurprisingly, it was hot during the day). We entered a long, shuffling line of racers heading to the start line, and met up with several friends from veteran U.S. teams, including Bones, BendRacing/YogaSlackers and Checkpoint Zero. We also spotted past Eco-Challenge legends including Mike Kloser, Nathan Fa'avae, Shubi-Silvia Guimares, Masato Tanaka, Mark Macy and Marshall Ullrich. When I started conversing with the racers from other teams around me, I found out that even beyond the faces I recognized, we were in one of the most elite talent pools of adventurous souls ever assembled. On my left was a Spaniard who had just paddle-boarded from Los Angeles to Hawaii; On my right, the third Irishman to ever summit K2; Ahead of me, a professional sailor who had competed for Israel in the Olympics was talking with two 23-year-old Indian twins who had climbed the Seven Summits; In front of me, the Iron Cowboy himself, James Lawrence.

The procession halted in a grassy field with the smell of salty ocean air in the faint morning breeze. There was a stage with a giant board covered in a bright red drape. We heard the buzz of helicopters and five of them flew right overhead. One of them swung low and a figure that could only be Bear Grylls jumped off one of the skids. He ran over the stage, jumped up and ripped the drape off the board to reveal a 640-kilometer course that wrapped itself through and around Fiji's islands, jungles, rivers and mountains.

Bear turned toward the crowd and spoke briefly in his unique, inspirational style. He told us we faced incredible difficulties and hardships ahead of us, but if we trusted our experience and our teammates, there was a chance we



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could make it through. He told us to rely on the closeness of the bonds of our team to get us through tough times. And while the odds may be against us finishing, he said that shouldn't stop us from giving our all in trying.

A non-disclosure agreement mandated by Amazon, which will air "The World's Toughest Race: Eco-Challenge Fiji" in 2020, prohibits me from giving any details about the race, but I can verify the promises made by the race's own publicity campaign: "Fiji delivered stunning terrain including volcanic cliffs, remote villages and turquoise seas. It also provided seemingly impenetrable barriers of dense jungle, rushing rivers, narrow canyons and coral reefs. "

It was indeed a life-changing experience and more than we could ever have expected. As I wrote to myself before the race:

Even if we don't make it to the finish line of Eco-Challenge, it will still have been worth it. To push to the edge of our personal physical and mental limits, to get to do the sports we love, and to experience the world's natural beauty in ways few people get to, and to be able to do it together with people you love, are some of the many reasons we love adventure racing.

Adventure racing is not for everyone, but if you have read this far, it is probably for you. So...come join the tribe!



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LA RUTA DE LOS CONQUISTADORES

by Ron Eaglin

It all started with an idea and a Facebook post - "Anyone want to do La Ruta this year?" A few responses led to a group and soon we were registered and making travel plans. Six of us made it to the start line in Jaco, Costa Rica, for the first day of the "Toughest Mountain Bike Race on the Planet."

Day 1 -

The excitement was electric with loud music, buzzing drones and hundreds of riders lined up on the beach

outside the resort. A short ride through the town of Jaco led us to another location outside town where everyone stopped, regrouped and restarted - this time directly into the mountains. Our group had made friends during our day in Jaco and the atmosphere for the race was incredibly friendly. Legendary racers like Tinker Juarez were giving tips to newer racers and we all knew we would be facing something challenging.

The "real" race started with little hills that quickly became steep. This was steep as in "you will not ride me" steep. After looking at the elevation profile my little group of riders had me believing that it would get easier after PC1 at 18 km. The profile looked like nice rolling hills versus painfully steep – Boy, was I wrong.







Though it was mostly downhill to PC2, it was also the world of mud. The first taste of the mud was a little 6-8 inch slog through some red clay. Tires got coated, but we were out of it on the next uphill, and we (I refer to me and all surrounding riders) used a beautiful stream crossing to wash the mud off so we could keep rolling. We repeated this process a few times and then the mud got real. And then it started getting hot. The bikes started

getting weighted down with pounds of mud on tires, derailleurs, frames, and bodies. We were still moving, but then we found the world of "rutted mud." Motorcycles had carved the trail into deeply rutted mud pits. You couldn't walk on the side without slipping into the furrowed caverns of mud, so you just pushed, coaxed and carried your bikes along - it felt like some kind of joke. Then we came out of the national forest and mud gave way to gravel and rock - and we were happy once again. We rolled into PC2 where the volunteers were awesome - feeding us cookies, fruit, Gatorade, water, coke and making life good once again.



The rest of Day 1 simply reverted to the beginning of Day 1 - Steep up and steep down. Then it rained. Costa Rica is pretty awesome: you can get heat exhaustion at sea level and hypothermia at high altitude and do them both in the span of a few hours. After it was over, we regrouped at the hotel, ate and prepared for Day 2.



Day 2 -

I have to say I really enjoyed the ride on Day 2. Well, ride might be a strong word. We were travelling from 2000 feet to 10,000 feet, back to 6000 feet, then to 10,000 again, and then to sea level. At first, I was not sure the scale on the elevation profile was correct but it was. You pushed, rode, pushed, conserved energy as best you could and went up for most of the morning on Day 2. This was while being surrounded by incredible views. The surface was mostly loose gravel, grass and baby head rocks. You need a good mountain bike and I truly felt for those folks on a hardtail bike. The downhills were awesome, screaming down gravel trails and some pavement at up to 50 mph. We paid our dues on the uphill though. At PC4 before the big downhill I was doing whiskey shots with the locals (it was cold up there





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at 10,000 feet) and then it was fun. For the next two hours I felt like I was flying with my little group of riders. We flew all the way to the finish in Siquirres, where we were greeted warmly and fed well. I loved the food here: rice, beans, chicken, plantains (all are great biking food). We were bussed to different resorts and I ended up at a beautiful Volcano

resort hotel on the side of the mountain where we were told we would be picked up at 4 A.M. the next day if we wanted to do the whitewater rafting. Time to eat and sleep.



Stage 02: La Ruta 2019 (78.2 km/48.6 miles)



Day 3 -

The start of Day 3 was at 1 P.M., which gave us time to fit in some incredible whitewater rafting, which was part of the race package. Some of our riders decided to skip this, too bad - it was awesome. I can only describe the Costa Rican whitewater experience as incredible. The rapids were nicely spaced, a mixture of Class 2 and 3 rapids with a couple that could have been Class 4. Our guide (nicknamed Ninja) was awesome, and we simply had fun playing in the water and enjoying the scenery. It was all over too soon and we were fed some fruit, offered pictures, and bussed to the start at Siquirres. We grabbed some pizza at a local restaurant, hopped on the bikes and were off on the last 25-mile sprint to the finish line. Day 3 was notable for scenery but was mostly flat and rocky with a mixture of single track through banana plantations, rocky roads and dirt. You simply got in a pack and rode hard to get to the party at the finish. The finish party was rocking with food, booze and hot sweaty riders surrounded by families and friends to share stories. It would soon be over, and as we left and headed back to San Jose our group all wore satisfied grins, fond memories and great stories.



Stage: La Ruta 2019 (38.3 km/23.8 miles)



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The Spirit of La Ruta

In 1993, Roman Urbina read of three Spanish Conquistadors, Juan de Cavallón, Perafán de Rivera and Juan Vásquez de Coronado, who in the 1560s began a 20-year journey through the beautiful and treacherous mountains of Costa Rica.

Their expedition started on the pacific coast and finished on the Caribbean Sea.

Urbina, an elite Costa Rican athlete and adventurer known for staging physical challenges to publicize the plight of the country's endangered wildlife, decided to retrace their long trek on his mountain bike. Captivated by the history of the Spanish Explorers, Roman and 17 other current-day Conquistadores on wheels met on the shore of the Pacific in 1993 and began their own quest through and around the lavish rain forests, majestic volcanoes, spectacular mountain ranges and roaring rivers. When it was done, Roman







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emerged more convinced than ever that hard challenges can engender truth, understanding and self-knowledge that can push anyone to greatness. Determined that such a trip had to be turned into an annual epic event, he created La Ruta.

Ruta founder Roman Urbina is fond of saying, "It is more than just a race. It is a personal growth experience." That's because for most it is such an arduous physical and mental challenge that they are happy just to finish. The race is about the journey and all that it entails -learning about yourself, about a different culture and making friends along the way. At La Ruta, the journey is the destination. It's about working with what you've got, giving it all your might and surviving the adversities that you might come upon along the way. This race epitomizes what is so great about mountain biking. To enjoy (and survive!) La Ruta, you have to be flexible in many ways due to the course's ever-changing terrain, climate and unpredictable weather. Sometimes the route changes even while the race is in progress, as rain, floods, and even a train derailment have forced same-day alterations. Patience and perseverance are definitely great virtues to have if you don't want to be fighting your own frustration.

The riders who genuinely enjoy the event and gain the most from it are invariably those who focus on the unforgettable experiences — the natural beauty of this exotic land, the friendliness of the people, and even the relief of crossing through a jungle river that helps you wash 20 pounds of mud off your bike. Yes, La Ruta possesses a spirit of its own. It is not for everyone though. To survive it, beyond a high level of fitness, riders require the mental toughness to fight through pain, an appreciation for being challenged and the inner spirit





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to feed off the beauty surrounding them. Are you the type who sees beauty in physical and mental challenges and can still laugh in the face of adversity? This is the right attitude necessary to survive this epic journey.

This race exists to teach people what they can live through and overcome, in a majestic natural setting.

Just like in life, La Ruta is about taking what you are given and coming out on top.

Every year, hundreds of the very best mountain bikers and endurance racers from around the world come to Central America to test themselves in this unique odyssey of distance, geography, climate and culture. La Ruta, is the only bike race that traverses the American land mass from coast to coas. Traversing from Pacific to Atlantic is no easy day at the beach. Between its sea level start and finish, the 161mile route crosses five mountain ranges that force you to climb a cumulative 29,000 feet! The daunting terrain is so harsh that half a millennium ago it took Spanish conquistadores led by Juan De Cavallón 20 years to cross the land of Costa Rica from the Pacific to the
Caribbean Sea. Today, following almost the same trails they blazed, modern-day explorers racing on mountain bikes can do it in three days.

Be forewarned, La Ruta is not a race for novice mountain bikers. Even professional riders often roll their eyes in disbelief when they recount what they have done. The race is a test of everything you've got – your riding abilities, physical endurance, mental strength and equipment durability. In this struggle of joyful adversity, you may even learn something new about yourself. That's why many who experience the grueling terrain that bedeviled the original Conquistadores nearly five centuries ago often describe it not merely as a "race" but as a personal growth journey.

Just like in life, La Ruta is about taking what you are given and coming out on top.



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Product Reviews

WINTER 2020

Carson TD-050ED Binoculars

The 10 x 50mm Carson TD-050ED Binoculars are part of the 3D/ ED line that combines both HD optical coating technology with premier ED glass to provide clear, sharp images. These nitrogen purged binoculars are waterproof, fog-proof and shock-proof, making them a perfect choice for your next big adventure no matter what the environment. Featuring a rubberized armor coating, sure-grip texturing and thumb groves, these binoculars are tough enough to take anything you can throw their way and still keep working like they were intended. Other features include a 262foot field of view at 1000 vards and an extra-long eve relief with twist-down cups, which is great for users who wear glasses. Weighing in at a scant 1.64 pounds the Carson TD-050ED will become your go to hunting, birding, sporting event,... well, let's just say your "everything" binoculars. You will be amazed with the bright, crisp clarity of the Carson TD-050ED as they are truly a great set of binoculars. The Carson TD-050ED binoculars come with an easy-touse carrying case, neck strap, shoulder harness and lens cloth, all you need to add is the adventure! www.carson.com

DRYGUY Force Dry DX

The DRYGUY Force Dry DX is the granddaddy of boot and glove dryers and was developed utilizing forced air technology that blends ram-air induction with thermal convection. Just turn the dryer on, insert your wet gear and enjoy the results as fresh, warm 105° F air is blown through your gear, removing wetness and warming your boots, shoes or gloves. The Force Dry DX can dry up to four garments simultaneously and helps eliminate odors caused by bacteria in sweat and moisture. The dryer is equipped with a no-heat switch, a three-hour timer and comes with two removable extension tubes for taller boots. From wet hiking boots, soggy soccer cleats or sweaty gloves, purchase a DRYGUY Force Dry DX and never put on a pair of wet or cold shoes again! www.dryguy.com



Product Reviews

Vertiyak

The Vertiyak solves a huge problem for RVers, but also works on regular vehicles and quickly answers the question – How can I bring along my paddle boards or kayaks? The Vertiyak is a vertical hitch mount kayak carrier for kayaks up to 12 feet in length. Just slip the Vertiyak into your receiver hitch, stick one end of your kayak into the 11 1/2" x 17" lower hoop, secure with two ratcheting straps and you are ready to roll. This is a must-have rack for anyone who loves taking their boards or kayaks along on their RV trips or for a vehicle such as a Jeep without a roof rack. Get a Vertiyak and never leave your kayaks or SUP's behind! www.vertiyak.com







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The Pro Hair Tie solves a common problem, the harsh hairpulling removal of a traditional hair tie. The silicone non-stick PRO Hair Tie's easy-release clasp allows you to gently remove your Hair Tie, preventing all pulling, tangling and damaging of hair. Available in a variety of colors, including glow-in-thedark, there is a Pro Hair Tie for every occasion. Cut to fit or combine for thick hair, the Pro Hair Tie will fit any type of hair. www.hairties.com

Product Reviews

WINTER 2020

Vines

Vines sandals are made by women, for women, and have found solid footing in the sandal realm. These unique, light-weight sandals are comfortable and come in a variety of colors and styles. Designed for women's feet, the materials include polyester cord, memory foam heels, stylish charms and even a coconut scent. We tested the Cherry on Top Sandal and loved it! Perfect for a day of shopping in outdoor markets or a night out on the town. Grab a pair of Vines and look great on your next adventure.

www.luvmyvines.com



Solemates Deodorizer

The Solemates Deodorizer is an all-natural spray that eliminates bacteria in shoes. Simply spray the baby powder-scented deodorizer into your shoes and remove all the stinky odors. Solemates dries quickly and is vegan, cruelty-free and parabenfree. Great for athletes, kids, gym bags and any other shoes or gear than gets wet and stinks after use. Get Solemates Deodorizer and get rid of the stink! www.thesolemates.com



ZPURS

ZPURS are an ingenious shoe clip system that keep your dirty and sweaty shoes out of your bag. The ZPURS have interchangeable grips to ensure they will work with just about any shoe out there. Just clip in your ZPURS and then use the included carabiner to hang them to the outside of your bag. No more cramming dirty and sweaty shoes into your bag with clean clothes, ZPURS are the solution. The ZPURS also allow your shoes to dry out properly, extending their life and helping remove the stink from your bag. Grab some ZPURS and keep those stinky, muddy shoes out of your bag. www.zpurs.com

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THE W100

by Troy Farrar

I was lucky enough to attend the W100 this year, which is a ride that former President George W. Bush holds on his ranch for soldiers who were wounded in action. This is always a great event as it gives people a chance to meet and support some real American heroes. The W100 is a program through the Bush Institute's Military Service Initiative where the former president leads the soldiers on two days of mountain bike rides around the trails on his ranch – his way of recognizing and saying thank you for their service. It is awesome to see the soldiers meld into a cohesive team during the weekend, supported by military alumni who have participated in past W100 rides and a group of civilians that volunteer to keep the trails groomed and help administrate the event. It is also a joy to watch the 43rd President interact with the soldiers, as he is relaxed, compassionate and genuine – just "one of the guys" having some of his warriors out to his ranch for a weekend of mountain biking and camaraderie.

I was able to see many of the previous W100 soldiers and hear about what they are doing now in their lives post-military. We decided to share a photo journal of the 2019 W100 ride followed with a couple of articles highlighting the success of a pair of former W100 warriors. Former President Bush commented that one of the things he missed most about being president was getting to salute our servicemen every day – and we agree. To all the brave Americans who have served in the military to protect our freedom, we salute you.











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KEEP FEET WARMER KEEP FEET DRIER INCREASE COMFOR



AMERICAN FREEDOM DISTILLERY HORSE SOLDIER BOURBON

by Troy Farrar

The History

Days after 9/11, the United States responded with a daring insertion of small teams of Green Berets into Northern Afghanistan. Each group raised their own militia of Mujahideen fighters using the idea of finding the enemy of your enemy and making him your friend. The Mujahideen fighters were oppressed by the Taliban and willingly signed on as they bitterly hated the Taliban. The teams made up of 90 Green Berets pulled off the impossible by overthrowing the Taliban in 90 days using locally raised militias, many of which were Horse Soldiers. The Green Beret Horse Soldiers lived up to their motto, "De Oppresso Liber - To Free the Oppressed" during their operation in Afghanistan

Following the victory in Afghanistan, one of the Horse Soldiers, Scott Neil was deployed to Iraq and then Africa. Scott retired from the Green Berets in 2011 and continued to serve his brothers by working at the Green Beret





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businessman, to take a trip out to Yellowstone. John was an experienced and valuable mentor and Scott wanted to spend some time together to explore possibilities for the future. The former Green Berets climbed the Tetons, hiked, fly fished, and even took a horse / pack mule trip through the thoroughfare of Yellowstone. On the way home, they stopped off at the Grand Teton Distillery and after learning about the process, became fascinated with distilling. This soon turned into a tour of other distilleries which culminated in a trip to be trained at the Wolfburn Distillery in Scotland which is run by a former Royal Marine that one of the Horse Soldiers had served with while on active duty. They decided to base their operations in the Tampa area because that is the location of the Special Operations Command Headquarters and where they had retired from the Green Berets. The small team found a new distillery in Kentucky that would let them share the facility while they were building their own distillery in the Tampa/St. Pete area and The American Freedom Distillery was born.

A Family Affair

The American Freedom Distillery and its subsidiary brands, Horse Soldier Bourbon, Rekker Rum and the Urban Stillhouse are a great example of the American Dream come true. The company is veteran owned-and-operated and most of the employees are family members. The wives handle a majority of the branding and many of their children work in the warehouse and distillery.







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Forged By Fire

When designing their bottles, the veterans wanted something unique that would commemorate the lives lost but never forgotten at Ground Zero in New York City. They were able to get some of the structural steel from the World Trade Center which was then used to create the bottle molds for every bottle of Horse Soldier Bourbon. The bottles that hold Horse Soldier Bourbon are literally forged by fire just like every one of the Horse Soldiers was forged by fire. The Horse Soldiers were honored by America's Response Monument, subtitled De Oppresso Liber, which is a bronze statue overlooking the National September 11 Memorial & Museum at Ground Zero. Unofficially known as the Horse Soldier Statue, it is the first publicly accessible monument dedicated to the United States Special Forces and the first monument near Ground Zero to recognize heroes of the September 11 terrorist attacks. The Horse Soldier is depicted on every bottle of Horse Soldier Bourbon as a reminder of the brave teams of Green Berets who were the first response overseas to 9/11.

The Result

Horse Soldier Bourbon has three offerings which include Barrel Strength – a 110 proof Bourbon which is literally straight out of the barrel, Straight – an 86 proof, 3.5 year old Bourbon with a higher rye mash bill and Small Batch

- a 95 proof small batch which has a wheated mash bill. They also offer Commander Select which is a premium bourbon chosen each year from a different distillery and is used for charity functions often fetching upwards of \$15,000 a bottle.

I asked one of the founding Horse Soldiers, Scott Neil what he loved about Horse Soldier Bourbon and he replied with three things: First, we are all American from the workers to the glass bottles and everything in between. Second, we are authentic. Horse Soldiers started this business and they, along with their families, run the business. Third, we are proud of our hard work and are winning awards that validate that work and reinforce the fact that Horse Soldier Bourbon is a great American product.

The American Freedom Distillery and Horse Soldier Bourbon are truly an American success story. Men forged by fire from their roots as patriotic soldiers willing to risk everything to defend the freedoms we enjoy. Now hard-working veterans willing to put forth the effort to learn a new trade and excel at that venture. For your past and present deeds, we salute you.





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UNGUIDED CUSTOM CALLS

by Troy Farrar

Brian Knapp came from a military family. One grandfather served in the Air Force and the other grandfather served in the Army. Brian's dad was in the National Guard and Brian has several cousins who also served in the military – it was in his blood. He had a desire to serve for as long as he could remember and relayed a story of a visit to Niagara Falls when he was an early teen. Brian was wearing an American Eagle shirt, and upon seeing the shirt a group of Middle Eastern teenagers pretended to shoulder mount an RPG and fire it at him. He recalled how that moment really struck a chord with him, igniting his desire to serve and protect the United States.



After high school Brian's dad would not sign his enlistment papers, stating that if Brian wanted to enlist he could make that decision when he turned 18. Brian enrolled in the local community college and started pursuing a degree. Then one day in 2006, Brian walked out of his English class and headed down to the recruiter's office to enlist – he would follow in his families footsteps as a Marine.

Brian wanted to be a parachute packer in the Marines but after boot camp was assigned to become a logistic embarkation specialist. The job is to prepare aircraft load plans so supplies and equipment can be embarked (shipped) to the troops. Brian was soon on his way to Afghanistan as part of the Marine Special Operations Raider Battalion. While serving in Afghanistan, Brian was wounded by an IED (improvised explosive device) while driving a Humvee. He stayed in the country for two months and then came back to the U.S. where he started the long journey of cognitive and physical therapy.

Once Brian got out of the military, he returned to college to finish his degree. He realized how much he missed the comradery of the military, so he started a veteran's club at his college. One of his buddies from the veteran's club took him waterfowl hunting and he was hooked. His friend had given him a broken goose call, so Brian did some research and repaired the call. He was fascinated by the waterfowl calls and wanted to learn everything he could about them. Soon Brian was selling calls for two local companies which only furthered his desire to design and develop his own waterfowl calls.





Brian attended an entrepreneur boot camp put on by Syracuse University for veterans with disabilities and walked away with the confidence to start his own duck and goose call company. He bought a lathe from Harbor Freight, grabbed some firewood that was laying around and Unguided Custom Calls was born. Brian kept turning and learning, crediting the call-making community for their desire to share and mentor young call makers. He recalls lots of trial-and-error in the beginning, but it was all part of the process of becoming a good waterfowl call designer.

Brian is now employed full time as a Sales Force Business Analyst, and he spends an additional 20-25 hours per week designing and building waterfowl calls. He puts in around 2.5 hours to build a goose call and between 3.5-5.5 hours for every duck call. But working on the calls comes easy – he calls it his therapy. It is just him in the shop working on something he loves. A friend commented that he is really lucky because he gets paid for his therapy, but luck has had nothing to do with Brian's success. Brian took the training he received in the military and transferred it

to his new venture. He worked hard to learn the trade and that hard work has paid dividends. There has not been a time in the past several years when he has not had a back log of custom orders on the books – which is a great problem to have. As Brian heads into his sixth year with Unguided Custom Calls the plans are to keep at it part-time, sharing the fruits of his "therapy" with others.







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Sea to Sea	02/27/20	St. Augustine, FL
Physically Strong Adventure Race	03/21/20	Quincy, IL
Brake The Habit 15 Hour Adventure Race	03/28/20	Appomattox, VA
Break Up AR	03/28/20	Milford Lake, KS
Stubborn Fool	04/04/20	Ontario, WI
Earthday	04/18/20	Tallahassee, FL
The Berryman	04/18/20	Rolla, <mark>MS</mark>
Howl at the Moon	May 2020	ТВА
Chasin the Bone	05/02/20	Greenbush, WI
MISSION Adventure Race	05/09/20	St. Croix, IN
Bryce Conquer the Mountain	05/16/20	Bryce, VA
Rib Mountain Adventure Challenge 18 Hour	05/23/20	Wausau, WI
Rib Mountain Adventure Challenge 8 Hour	05/23/20	Wausau, WI
Two Rivers Adventure Race	05/23/20	Morris, PA
No Sleep Adventure	06/06/20	Equality, IL
Kulshan Quest	06/20/20	Bellingham, WA
Courtland Adventure	06/20/20	Courtland, NE
Maine Summer AR	06/20/20	Portland, ME
The Stubborn Mule	06/27/20	Washburn, <mark>WI</mark>
The Gold Rush	07/18/20	Sonora, CA
Surley Pika	07/19/20	Pinedale, WY
The Nomad	07/26/20	Colorado Springs, CO
The Longest Day	08/01/20	Warren, PA
The Bitter Pill	08/08/20	Lyndonville, VT
Never Summer	08/15/20	Grand County, CO
TCX Palos	08/29/20	Willow Springs, IL
CIA-Central Indiana Adventure	Sep 2020	Cloverdale, IN
Tahoe Big Blue	09/20/20	Lake Tahoe, CA
CIA - Central Indiana Adventure	10/03/20	West Lafayette, IN
Coosa River Challenge	10/03/20	Wetumpka, AL
Off Road Rage	10/24/20	Warsaw, MO
MAFF	10/31/20	Delafield, WI
Raid the Rock	Nov 2020	Little Rock, AR

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Hollands Game-Getter

by: Troy Farrar



Hollands Game-Getter

The Hollands Game-Getter is the most functional optic I have ever used. It is obvious this optic was designed by an experienced shooter who knew the features that other shooters would want in an optic. The FIT-TO-HIT reticle technology takes the optic to a whole other stratosphere and leaves me with one simple thought - Darrell Holland "The Long Range Guru" has done it again!

Starting with the foundation, the Holland's Game-Getter is a 2.5 – 15 x 50 second focal plane optic with a 30mm main tube. The optic has multi-coated matched indexed lenses that provide a crisp and clear site picture. The optic has a 30 MOA elevation dial with a zero stop, easy-to-read numbers and positive tactile clicks in .5 MOA increments. The windage dial has large easy-to-read numbers with right/left indicators, a zero stop and positive tactile clicks in .25 MOA increments. The Game-Getter also includes a large removable parallax dial that starts at 10 yards and ends at infinity, which is easy to turn, even with heavy gloves on a cold day. A removable four inch sunshade is included with the Holland's Game-Getter optic.



Fit to Hit Reticle Technology

Now for the icing on the proverbial cake – the FIT-TO-HIT Reticle Technology. This is the fastest, simplest and easiest to use ranging/firing solution reticle in existence. I always joke with my buddies when I say, "I don't want to do math, I just want to shoot!" Well, this optic lets me do exactly that!

The Holland Game-Getter optic is designed for distances from zero to 400 yards. The reticle starts with the "FIT" numbers which are located above the center dot and are used to range the animal. The shooter places the lower number on the animal's brisket based on the target size (15" for antelope-sized animals, 18" for mule deer-sized animals and 24" for elk-sized animals). The shooter then reads the "FIT" number that is on the top of the animal's back. Finally, the shooter uses the "FIT" number to determine which "HIT" number is utilized. The "HIT" number is simply the hold over that would be used (a 3 "FIT" number means utilize the 3 "HIT" number). The reticle provides an instant ranging and firing solution with no math required! It literally takes one second to range an animal and have the firing solution without even breaking weld from the stock. The optic also has the MOA firing solutions displayed for hunters who want to use a separate range finder (6=400 yards, 5=350 yards, 4=300 yards, 3=250 yards). Anything less than a 3 uses the center dot for the firing solution. The FIT-TO-HIT reticle will eliminate math and guessing to determine hold over and will provide your firing solution almost immediately so you will not miss your chance at that once-in-a-lifetime trophy.



The Holland Game-Getter Optic with the FIT-TO-HIT reticle is a Game-Changer. Quickly range and acquire a firing solution for any sized game. No more math, just FIT and HIT! www.hollandguns.com