

Adventure World

magazine

WINTER 2021

GRINDER NATIONALS

LAWRENCE, KANSAS



ADVENTURE WORLD MAGAZINE

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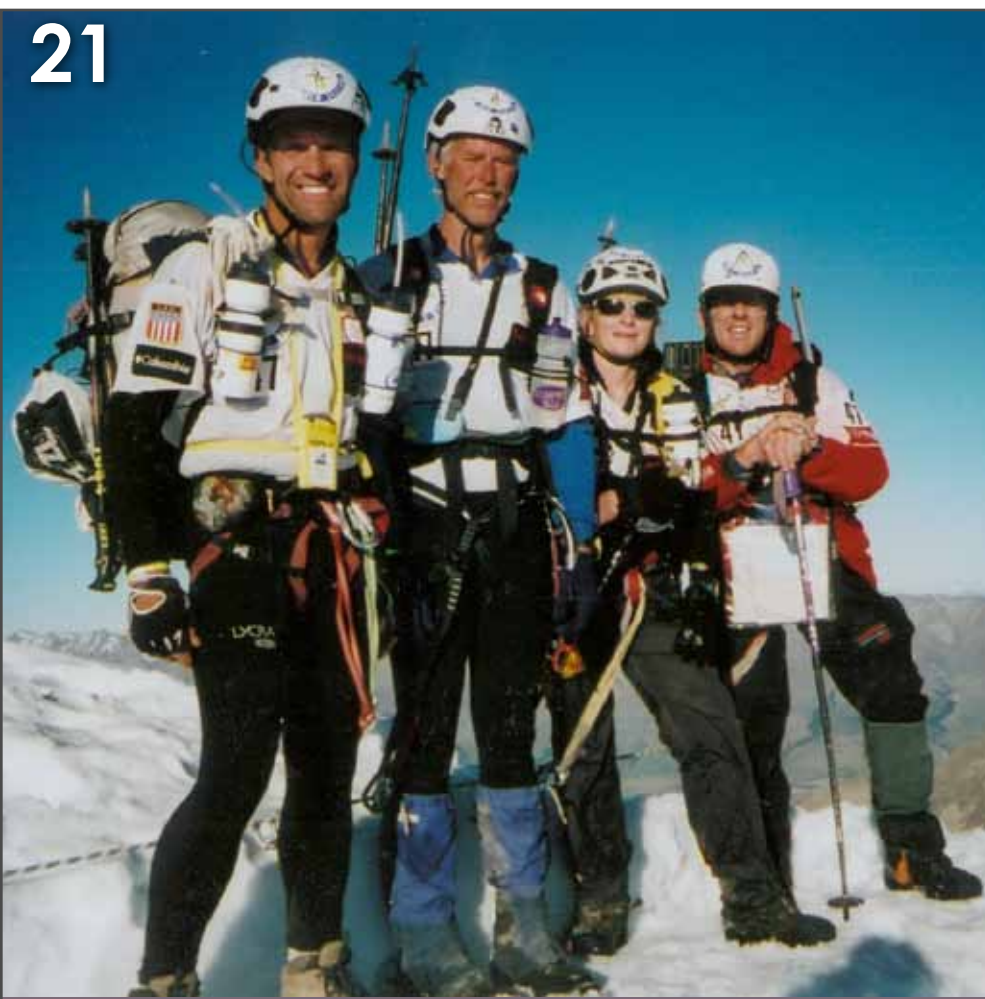
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SNOW DAY!

by Izzy Farrar

I live in central Texas where snowstorms are not a very common event. Although we may get a snow flurry on some winters, storms that dump enough snow to stick only happen about once every 5 years. This year we had a full-blown snow storm followed by those 2 words that every kid hopes to hear – Snow Day!

Although it wasn't a massive blizzard, there was plenty of snow and it was amazing! We spent hours playing outside in the snow. First, we had a snowball fight. Then, we took a walk around the neighborhood to see all of the awesome snow. A few snowball fights broke out during the walk. Next, we built a cowboy snowman. This was followed by more snowball fights with my family. Finally when we got too cold, we headed inside to drink hot chocolate by the fire. Even though our snow wouldn't compare to the snow in Colorado or Alaska, we had a lot of fun and so can you!

You don't have to wait every 5 years to have an awesome "Snow Day." You don't even need snow to have a fun "Snow Day" - all you need is to go outside. Plan a hiking day, a canoeing day, a biking day, or a rain day – just like a snow day but a little wetter. Grab some friends and have a photography day, a beach day or even a tubing down a river day. You can have a fun day in the sunshine, the rain and of course the snow. So, go have your "whatever you can think of that's fun day!" **AW**



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Product Reviews

WINTER 2021

The Vermonter

The Vermonter by Vermont Glove is dubbed the highest-performing work glove on planet earth. These 100% goat leather gloves are hand-stitched with heavy duty nylon thread in Randolph, Vermont. The gloves are well thought out, with double stitched external seams for both comfort and durability. The double walled finger seams are super durable and they are behind the finger tips to allow for dexterity.

There is an added welt at the top of the double walled palm; both provide extra durability in the toughest work conditions. A 2 inch cuff with a double walled vein protector round out the hand protection. These are the softest, most comfortable gloves I have ever tried on, yet they are dexterous and tough as nails. With over 100 years of glove making under their belt, Vermont Glove seems to have perfected their craft. Get a pair of Vermont Glove Vermonters and I guarantee you will never slip on another work glove. vermontglove.com



North St Pioneer 9 Hip Pack

The North St Pioneer 9 Hip Pack with removable belt insures you can take the bare necessities on your next outing. The versatile pack can also function as a handlebar bag by removing the belt and quickly adding the handlebar kit. The tough, hand built 1000 denier CORDURA nylon pack has a water resistant DNR finish and features a soft pack cloth liner to keep all of your valuables safe while providing years of service in the harshest environments. The Pioneer features an internal zipper pocket for stowing small or important items like your wallet or keys. The pack also features an exterior zippered pocket that is perfect for your phone or other quick grab essentials. Sewn loops allow you to wear the pack with any belt and the pack also includes side grab loops which can be used to hang the pack. Available in 3 sizes and 7 colors, there is a North St Pioneer Hip Pack for any occasion. Grab a North St Pioneer 9 Hip Pack and head out on your next adventure. northstbags.com



Rawlogy Laser Series Balls

The Rawlogy Laser Series Balls are a light weight and versatile way to loosen up tight muscles on the go. The Rawlogy set comes with a 2.5 inch (about the size of a tennis ball) and a 1.9 inch (about the size of a golf ball) cork ball. The cork balls are ultra-light making it easy to keep them in your gym bag, bring them on trips, or even take them camping. The durable, water resistant cork balls have cool laser engraved designs and grip well when you are wet with sweat. Be prepared to loosen up those tight muscles with a set of Rawlogy Laser Series Balls. www.rawlogy.com



Rawlogy Compact Cork Massage Roller

The Rawlogy Compact Cork Massage Roller is a small and lightweight alternative that is easy to take on your next outing. The 3.75 x 12 inch lightweight roller is perfect for travel or storing in a small area such as a locker or your office. The dense core provides a deep-tissue massage aiding in injury prevention and rehab. Dynamite comes in small packages, so relieve muscle tension, tight fascia and knots with the lightweight and efficient Rawlogy Compact Cork Massage Roller. www.rawlogy.com



Aero Press Go

The AeroPress Go is a simple and compact solution to taking a coffee press anywhere you go. The Go gives you the ability to quickly make 8 ounces of coffee, 1-3 shots of espresso, latte or cold brew anywhere on the planet with no grit. The Go comes with a plunger, chamber, filter cap, filter holder, scoop, stirrer, lid, mug and 350 filters. The whole kit packs down inside the mug (4.6 inches tall by 3.6 inches wide) and is kept together with the lid, which also serves as a slip resistant bottom to the mug when drinking coffee. The compact and durable polypropylene Go is light weight and top shelf dishwasher safe making it the perfect solution for your next traveling, camping, hiking or paddling adventure. aeropress.com



Mpowerd Luci Core

The Mpowerd Luci Core is a lightweight handy light that is perfect for backpacking, RVing or even projects around the house. The Core can be quick charged with the included USB cable in around 1 hour or recharged using the built-in solar panel in around 13 hours. The 40 lumen LED light will last up to 12 hours on a single charge and features 3 power settings, a flashing setting, along with a bendable silicone arm which makes it easy to hang or stand up in just about any position. The compact Core measures 4 inches by 1 inch and is light enough to take on any adventure. Grab a Mpowerd Luci Core and shed some light on your next adventure. mpowerd.com



Tigress XD Flag Pole

The Tigress XD Flag Pole is a great example of a better, wait make that best mouse trap. The Tigress XD makes it simple to fly your boating flags because the gimbal butt fits snugly inside any standard 1-5/8" rod holder. Attach your flags, drop into a rod holder and you are in business – what could be easier. The heavy-duty anodized aluminum flag poles are easy to store and will last a lifetime. Available in a 42-inch pole which holds two 12" sandbar flags or one 20" x 24" dive flag or a 54-inch version which holds two 20" x 24" dive flags or one 36" x 60" sandbar flag. The Tigress XD Flag Pole is a heavy duty, simple solution that is easy to use and will leave you wondering how you ever lived without it. tigressoutriggers.com

A cyclist wearing a red and black jersey and a helmet is riding away from the camera on a wide, light-colored gravel path. The path is flanked by green grassy hills. The cyclist's shadow is cast on the path ahead of them.

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Mpowerd Luci Solar Inflatable Base Light
The Mpowerd Luci Solar Inflatable Base Light is the essential off the grid lantern built for any adventure. The 360-lumen lantern features a matte finish glare-free diffuser, a solar panel, a power bank for charging other devices, a battery level indicator, an adjustable base strap and a fixed top strap. The lightweight lantern (10.1 oz) has an IP67 waterproof rating and 31 LED lights which feature 3 power settings and a flashing setting. Quick charge the Base light in around 6 hours using the included USB cord or 28 hours via the solar panel and get up to 50 hours of light on a single charge. The Mpowerd Luci Solar Inflatable Base Light should be on your must have list and will provide dependable light for all of your adventures. mpowerd.com



Efficient Velo Tools Presta Only Inflator

The EVT Presta Only Inflator is a combination between a durable precision tool and a work of art. When it arrived in the office we just could not put it down, we were drawn to the EVT inflator like moths to a flame. The EVT tool is a high flow inflator making it easy to seat tubeless tires or quickly fill your tires before a ride. Simply slide the chuck onto a Presta stem and hit the lever. The inflator features a super-low-durometer urethane pump washer which provides a tight seal and will last much longer than a rubber washer. The US made inflator is durable, looks great and will provide years of dependable service. As the EVT slogan goes since 1999 until forever and we believe that is how long this awesome tool may last. Transform your garage into a professional shop with an Efficient Velo Tools Presta Only Inflator and become the envy of all your riding buddies. www.efficientvelo.com **AW**

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2020 Grinder Nationals

by Steve Nevels

photos by Roger Williams, Jason Ebberts / TBL Photography

After COVID-19 caused a reschedule from April to October, it looked like the 2020 US Endurance Gravel Grinder National Championship would finally happen. Hosted in Lawrence Kansas, this would be the 4th edition of Grinder Nationals, which has grown every year since its inception in 2017. Grinder Nationals headed into the weekend with over 300 riders registered for the race from 28 different states, telling us that everyone was ready to get back out there and start churning gravel. The October weather turned out to be perfect and the racing was fast right out of the gate.

Enjoy the following images from the event and come join us next year on October 9, 2021 for the 5th running of Grinder Nationals. The Gravelleur's Raid provides 25 & 50 mile non-championship ride options on the same course during the 100 + mile Grinder Nationals. www.GrinderNationals.com **AW**













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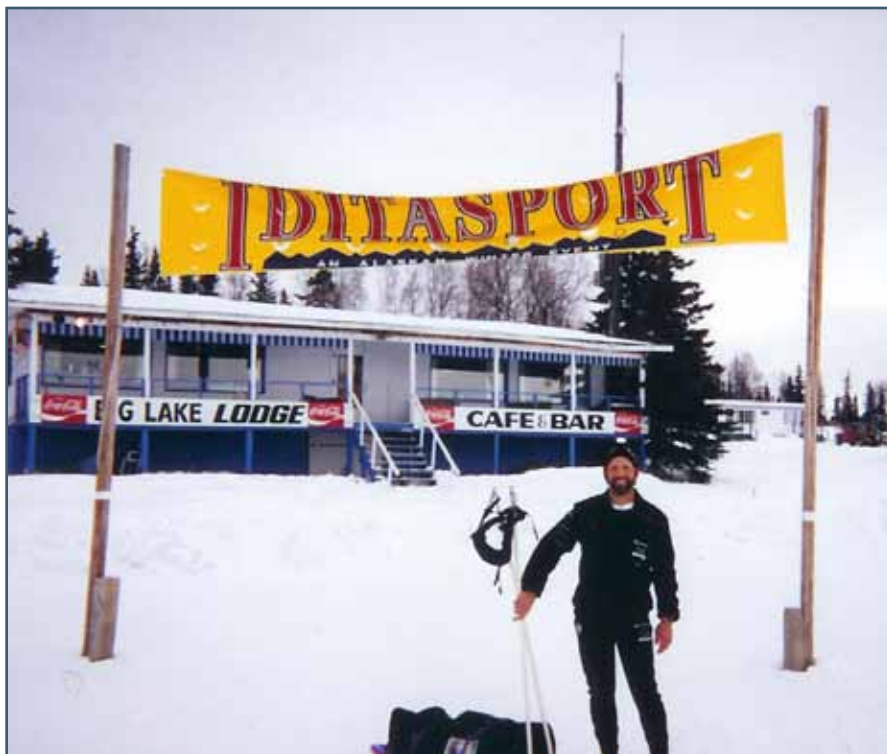
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Marshall Ulrich

by Troy Farrar



Marshall Ulrich is not your ordinary athlete. He is commonly referred to as the running man, a real-life superman and the ultimate endurance athlete. Marshall earned these nick names by running over 130 ultramarathons, competing in 17 expedition-length adventure races, and joining the Seven Summits Club by successfully climbing all 7 summits on his first attempt. We sat down with Marshall to find out what makes him tick, how he approaches these super human feats and what advice he has for others seeking their own adventures.



What are some of the experiences from your childhood / teen life that helped prepare you for your life of adventure?

Growing up on a farm was a huge part of preparing me for my lifetime adventures. Working outdoors and with animals taught me to value, respect, and appreciate nature and all it had and has to offer. It taught me a work ethic that is similar to what is needed when competing in multi day sports such as ultra-running, adventure racing, and mountaineering. In addition, I learned how to take care of myself and persist over the long hauls.

List some of the biggest outdoor adventures/accomplishments in your life.

- Participated in all 10 Eco Challenges
- 425 mile first ever self-supported Circumnavigation of Death Valley in the July August window along with Dave Heckman.
- Record Badwater to the top of Mt. Whitney in just under 34 hours (146 miles)
- Masters and Grand Masters record for running across the US, 3,063 miles in just over 52 days (two marathons and a 10K per day average) at 57 years old.
- The Seven Summits in about 2.5 years reaching the top of each mountain all on my first attempt.
- Leaville 100 and Pikes Peak Marathon on the same weekend
- Quad Badwater (four consecutive crossings).
- Quad Pike's Peak (four times up and down) – two different times.

You have accomplished some amazing feats. How are you able to attack these challenges with the attitude that you can actual succeed?

- I like to dream first of all, which helps me develop ideas about different things I would like to do that no one has done before and then I visualize doing them.
- I've used my successes as building blocks to gain confidence to do the next big project.
- I don't overthink the project, but rather just go out and get started doing them.
- I'm not afraid to fail.



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What led you to compete in the Eco Challenge originally?

It seemed like an exciting change to “just” ultrarunning, since it was multi-disciplined and was a team sport. I got to wander around the desert with my friend Mark Macy, and met Dr. Bob Haugh and Lisa Smith-Batchen: we dubbed ourselves the Stray Dogs. In addition, I’m afraid of heights and water, so the idea of whitewater rafting and roped climbing was a great opportunity to help me overcome those fears.

Why have you competed in every Eco?

Why not? Seriously though, I was fortunate enough to stumble into the first Eco-Challenge, and loved it. When the Stray Dogs became a team, and we continued to get invited back and get sponsorship, we were a bit shocked, but honored. Traveling all around the world to compete was an added bonus.

Your thoughts on competing in the 2020 Eco challenge.

Given my age (68) and the average age of the team overall (almost 66) it was a great opportunity to put together a team of veteran racers – Adrain Crane, Dr. Bob Haugh, and Nancya Bristow – that inspire me, and I thought would inspire other people. The quest for adventure never grows old!



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The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics protects the outdoors by teaching and inspiring people to enjoy it responsibly. Founded in 1994, Leave No Trace strives to minimise the impact that humans make on the natural world, and is active in over 90 countries around the globe. AKASO has partnered with Leave No Trace to launch a special edition of its V50 Pro action camera – a portion of every sale of the V50 Pro SE will go directly to support the Leave No Trace Access Fund. It's a great cause to support, and will help preserve our environment for future generations. ●



World-famous rock climber Tommy Caldwell is an AKASO action camera ambassador

“A portion of every V50 Pro SE sale will go to support the Leave No Trace Access Fund”



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What was your single most challenging moment in an event?

During the Death Valley circumnavigation climbing 5,000 feet in 1.5 miles Dave and I ran out of water and I truly thought I was through. Dave got me through it until we could reach another cache where more water was buried. It felt like it would have been so easy to give up and drift off, but took a lot of willpower to go on.

Do you have a favorite moment from one of your adventures and why?

One of just a few was in 2018, I did my 28th crossing of Death Valley with my wife Heather supporting me. It was special as we were together and connecting along the way. This was much different than when she was crewing me day in and day out for the transcontinental crossing of the US. During that it was like torture, with the daily miles, sleep deprivation, and injuries that we had to overcome during the 52 plus days we were out there.



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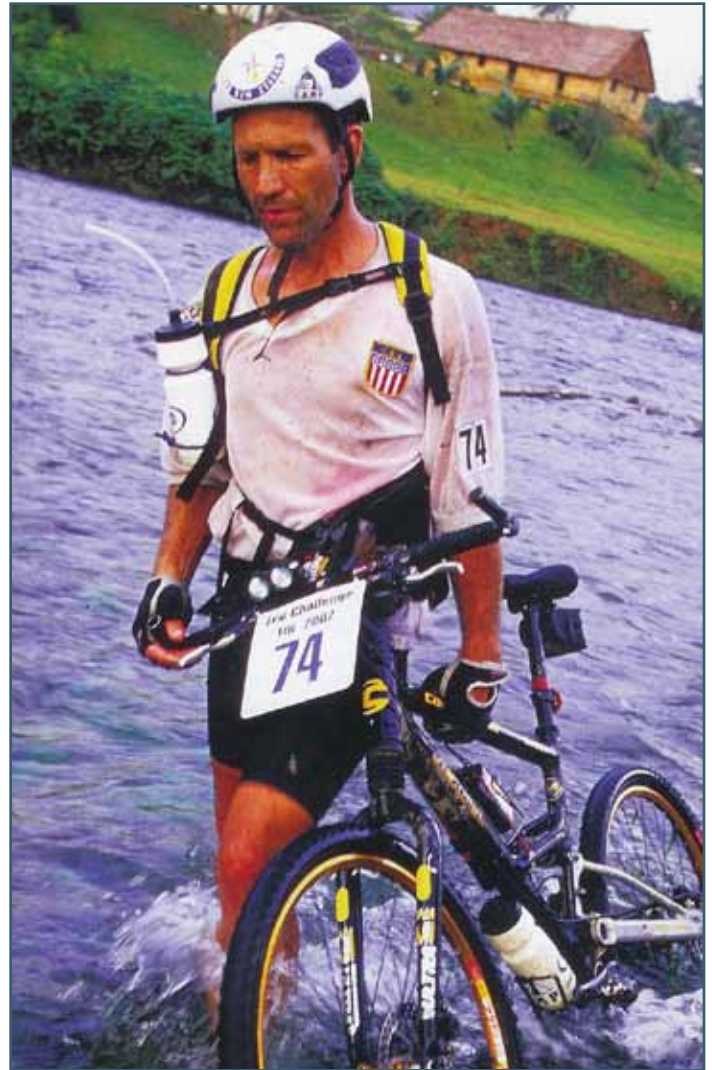
What are some ways that your adventures have made your life better?

Doing difficult things brings me to appreciate the finer (simpler) things in life such as sitting in a chair, flushing a toilet, or just relaxing on the back deck reading a newspaper. It also leads me to appreciate how lucky I have been to have good health and a wonderful wife to share life with.

What words of advice would you share to encourage others to find their own adventures?

Don't wait another minute to start finding adventure in your life. Those adventures will open a whole other world to you. Do not think that anything is impossible, just put yourself in a position to do whatever it is that you want to do. Align yourself with positive people and those who foster positive thoughts and who will support you along the way. Keep in mind we are all in this thing called life together and that we can lean on each other on the road to success.

Read more about Marshall's adventures and learn how to plan your own adventures in his book, *Both Feet on the Ground*. www.marshallulrich.com **AW**





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The Mpowerd Luci Color Solar String Lights bring the party to your next adventure, even if you are off the grid. The lights can be charged with the included USB cable in around 8 hours or recharged using the built-in solar panel in around 16 hours. The string lights are packed full of features such as a built-in external flashlight, USB ports for charging other devices, a solar panel and a battery level indicator. The fun starts with the 18-foot string lights that store inside the unit and have 6 colors (blue, violet, turquoise, green, pink, cool white) plus a color cycle mode. The light weight (11.3 oz) string lights are IPX4 waterproof rated, last 15 hours on a charge and have an included hanging cord. Bring the party to your back yard, your RV, your tree house or your living room with the Mpowerd Luci Color Solar String Lights. mpowerd.com





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AeroPress

The AeroPress is a simple and compact solution to taking a coffee press anywhere you go. The AeroPress gives you the ability to quickly make 10 ounces of coffee, 1-3 shots of espresso, latte or cold brew anywhere on the planet with no grit. The AeroPress comes with a plunger, chamber, filter cap, scoop, stirrer, 350 filter holder, funnel and 350 filters. The plunger packs inside the chamber (5.4 inches tall by 4.2 inches wide) and the whole kit will fit in the travel tote bag. The compact and durable polypropylene AeroPress is light weight and top shelf dishwasher safe making it the perfect solution for your next RV, air travel or sailing adventure. aeropress.com **AW**



The Farthest Journey Down the World's Longest River

by West Hansen

photos by Erich Schlegel

It's been little over eight years since Jeff Wueste, Ian Rolls and I stumbled onto a white sand beach that shared the Atlantic Ocean and the Amazon River; amidst 30-foot rollers and heavy breaking waves that could be the only result of a collision between the world's largest outburst of fresh water into the lunar tide from an unstoppable ocean. At 3:10 a.m. we crossed that magic line where the opposing banks of the 90-mile wide river are greater than 180 degrees from side to side, marking the end of our 4200-mile, 111-day paddle from a spot 14,800 feet high in the frozen Andes Mountains on the other side of South America. Once we hit that invisible mark in the matte black overcast darkness, amidst those horrendous waves, we turned tail and sprinted with whatever waning strength we had to the nearest spot of land we could find. With not one sign of humanity or even the faintest distant light in any direction, we made a bee line for a thin line of white that marked land – any land to get out of the turmoil through which we had been paddling for the last six hours without food or water to reach our goal.



Having been abruptly flooded out of our campsite atop a sand island after two hours of sleep, our first break following 18 hours of non-stop paddling from Belem, we didn't have time to grab food, water or even our PFD's. The famous six-hour tide from the Atlantic was fast, but smooth, so we didn't suspect the personality shift from banal to psychotic until it was too late. We were caught in an endless succession of growing breakers that threatened our stability anytime we let our guard down for even a few seconds. In the flooded mouth that just hours before included many sand islands (now, sand bars) we could see no land; only dark skies and stars disappearing somewhere in the vague horizon. We could head back up river, but the flooded mangroves offered no safe haven.

So, on we paddled towards a somewhat innocuous dot on the tiny GPS mounted on the bow of my sea kayak. Hell, it was only 12 miles, how long could it take? Six tortuous hours, that's how long. In the face of the Atlantic, this was the slowest progress we made since the uncharted white water in the mountains. Our only solace came when I called out another half-mile increment or adjusted our trajectory. At least we were making some progress, albeit slight. The closer we came to the Atlantic, the taller and more frequent the onslaught of mountainous waves growing out of the darkness and blotting out stars on the black horizon to indicate how high they peaked over our heads. With anxious anticipation and a good helping of dread, we measured the height of each wave by the level of stars it ate up, hoping none would break and that we could race to the top of each one before it pushed us back down into the deep troughs that got deeper with each wave.



Jeff and Ian paddled a tandem Aleut II sea kayak from Valley Sea Kayaks in England. We chose it because it was expedition ready and at 24-feet long, a rarity in the sea kayak world. The extra length provided additional storage, a faster cruising speed and resembled more closely the tandem racing boats to which we were accustomed to paddling in Texas. I was in an Epic 18x solo sea kayak, which also held similar attributes as a racing kayak. The Epic has a more flatted rocker and thinner profile, riding the line between storage and stability. We transferred from white water kayaks and a raft to the sea kayaks about 3800 miles upstream. We made the switch where the Mantaro River met the Apurimac River at the end of 500 miles of white water, to form the Ene River at the start of the dangerous narco-traffic controlled Red Zone. Over the course of the Ene, Tambo, Ucayali, Marañon and Amazon River proper, we got to know our kayaks quite intimately. By the time we hit the Atlantic, I was second only to Freya Hoffmeister when it came to butt-time in an Epic 18x and I could drive it through the eye of a needle in a tornado. Jeff and Ian were equally adept in their missile, so when the dark rolling mountains of water came at us from the ocean and we felt a bit unstable, we knew we weren't in Kansas anymore.

This was December 6th, 2012. Only 9 months earlier and a hemisphere away, did I learn that the expedition I spent four years planning was to take a major turn towards controversy and a rare historic first descent. Out of the blue, kayaker Rocky Contos contacted me





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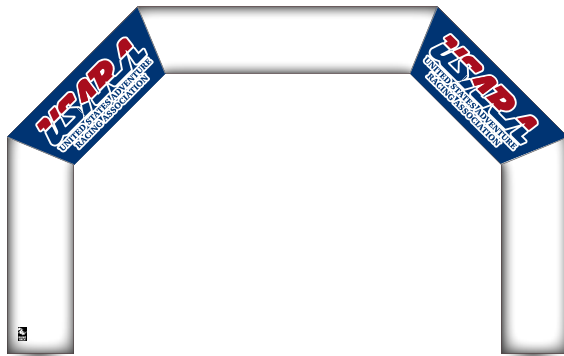
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to join our expedition in exchange for white water support. We made a tentative plan, then a few weeks later he dropped a bombshell. During his research on the five major feeder rivers for the Amazon, all of which he planned to be the first to paddle, the Amazon's

commonly known most distant source wasn't on the Apurimac, but actually at the headwaters of the Mantaro. The difference wasn't a matter of feet but over 50 miles! Based on conjecture and supposition, the Apurimac had always been the assumed most-distant source. Not one person over the course of hundreds of years of exploration bothered to actually measure the Mantaro River. Given satellite imagery and modern mapping techniques available to anyone with a computer and internet, the evidence was overwhelming.

I was trained in white water kayaking back in college, but never had the chance for big water paddling, save for the occasional flood of the Guadalupe River in central Texas. I gave up white water paddling in lieu of ultra-marathon canoe and kayak racing, where I eventually had some decent success. Fast forward twenty or so years later and my whitewater skills were more than just rusty, so I tuned them up by training at the US National Whitewater Center in Charlotte, NC. I also got some rough water under my belt with the tutelage of our expedition mentor, Piotr Chmielinski at Great Falls on the Potomac River near his home. While my skills improved a great deal, I certainly wasn't skilled enough to tackle the roaring, fairly uncharted, rivers in the Andes Mountains. Hitting the internet, I found a group of world-renowned big water kayakers willing to join my expedition and help

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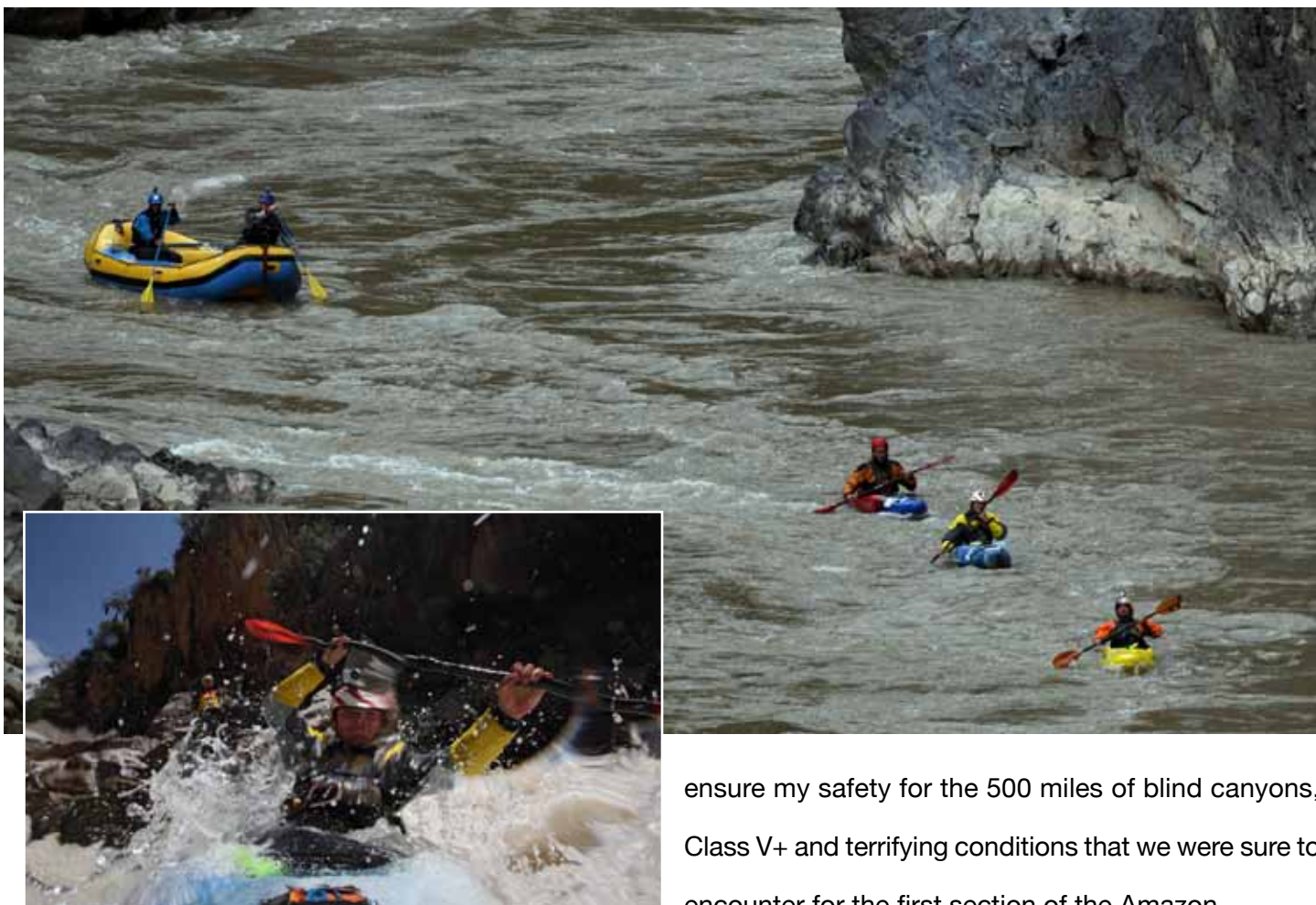
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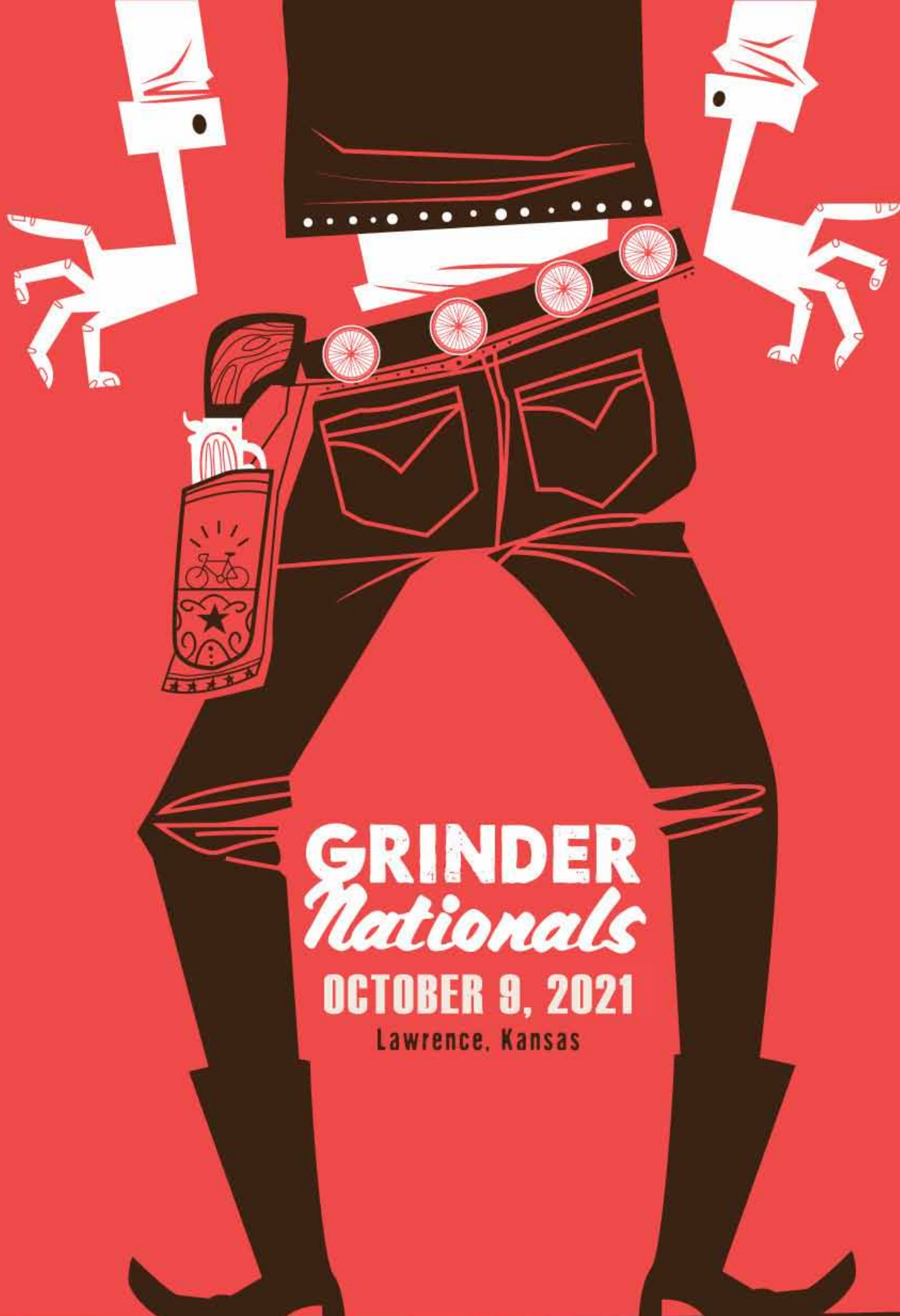


ensure my safety for the 500 miles of blind canyons, Class V+ and terrifying conditions that we were sure to encounter for the first section of the Amazon.

Juanito Ugarte, of Cuzco, Peru, was the leader of the whitewater section. He assembled, Rafa Ortiz (Mexico), Tino Specht (USA), Simon Yerovi (Chile), Daniel Rondon (Peru), Santiago Ibanez (Peru) and Chava Loaya (Peru) for two teams to cover the upper and lower Mantaro River. We manned a raft and four Jackson kayaks to cover the entire distance, with me switching between the raft and a kayak, depending upon the level of severity. I covered the first 180 miles solo in a kayak, which was supposed to be easier than the rest, but had me white knuckling during a majority of the paddle.

Our ground crew along the Mantaro River was led by adventure racing icon, old friend and racing buddy, David Kelly and his wife Jennifer Maxfield-Boucher, along with my wife (Lizet), daughter (Isabella), John Maika, Jeff Wueste, Jimmy Harvey, Ian Rolls, Piotr Chmielinski, Alex Chmielinski and our local fixer, the indomitable, Lucho Hurtado. My friend, Erich Schlegel, contracted with National Geographic (our major sponsor) as the official photographer. We met the crew at the end of most days as we worked our way through the whitewater on what was now an official “first descent” of the Amazon River from its most distant source.

Maika and Wueste were to paddle the entire whitewater section with me, to increase the odds that at least one of us would complete the entire first descent; however, Wueste suffered debilitating altitude sickness and



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Maika's whitewater skills weren't up to the task. Highlights of that first 500 mile section of the Amazon included subfreezing white out blizzards, eating guinea pigs, drinking lots of cheap rum, wallowing through water polluted by household trash and mine tailings and finding 18 couch pillow sized bails of densely packed marijuana floating down the river – worth about \$40,000.00 US. Add in being stalked by a puma at midnight, surviving a near hit by a midnight avalanche, food poisoning, hypothermia, extortion, team drama/politics, barely making it past a water cannon exploding from a dam on the side of the canyon and having a refrigerator size boulder rain down near us as the narrow canyon walls were dynamited to create a new dam. Other than all that, it was pretty smooth sailing. After almost five weeks, we made it to the flat water. I originally counted on two weeks to cover the 500 miles of whitewater and I'm smarter now than I was then. Hell, I'm an ultra-marathon canoe racer that covered 260 miles of the Texas Water Safari, solo, in 40 some-odd hours. How hard was a mere 500 miles in the Andes?

At the flat water, we switched boats, gear and team members. Along with Jeff Wueste and John Maika, who had been with the team all along, Ian Rolls and Pete Binion joined us from Texas. Four guys were in two tandem kayaks and I was in my solo Epic 18x. Jason Jones (Texas), with Marine and Air Force experience, joined the support team to help Erich Schlegel (Texas), along with Cesar Pena (Peru) to photograph our expedition and help carry our gear the next two thousand miles to the Brazilian border. As it turned out, boat motor trouble left us kayakers alone for days on end, but we were well equipped to go unsupported.







Before we got off the Ene and Tambo Rivers, we were held at gunpoint three times. The first of which was by a group of drunken locals who figured we were there to steal their organs – an unusual assumption with our bright white kayaks, National Geographic flags and slow-moving paddles. Our second chance to stare down some barrels happened at a narcotrafficker checkpoint, where it was merely standard procedure to hold shotguns on people as their boats are searched. The third was at another checkpoint, where our support boat had the sobering honor of a warning shot over the bow when they didn't pull over fast enough to be searched.

After meeting up with the Urubamba River, we were on the Ucayali River for the next few weeks, stopping in the metropolis of Pucallpa with its modern buildings, restaurants and hotels, to be guests of honor at the local beauty pageant. The barely clad young women were a bit jarring for those of us who had been on romantic bread and water for the last couple of months. Now and then our photographers/ support Erich, Jason and Cesar disappeared for days on end to carefully study the local bars where Jason did his best to attack a group of unarmed gunboys in a bar after he recognized one who had fired at him on the Tambo River.

Eventually, we pressed through the humid, often stagnant, air and massive body of moving water to Iquitos, Peru. There the team lightened its load of most of the useless gear and two of the flatwater paddlers, Pete and John, for mixed reasons spelled out in my book. With lighter kayaks and less personnel, we really started burning up some river miles. The three-day rest in Iquitos, where my mother, Ann my niece, Monica and our friend Ginsie Stauss, met us with brownies, Twinkies and Jack Daniels, did us well. With renewed energy, Jeff, Ian and I were chomping at the bit to make our way down the mighty Amazon.

After Jason returned to the US, Erich and Cesar followed us in a motor boat for four days to the Brazilian border, then turned back. For the first time in almost 2000 miles, we were truly on our own. It took a few days to establish a rhythm and routine, but once we did the miles ticked off little by little. We spent the days with trivia questions, singing songs and paddling for hours without a single word. This was the first time the three of us travelled at a natural speed for so long, unmotored and going only as fast as our muscles and nature would



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carry us. The occasional storm washed off some of our stink and in spite of being thousands of miles inland, we encountered daily horizon lines on this massive river – where we could not see land past the curve of the planet.

The Amazon River is not only the longest river on the planet, about 200 miles longer than the Nile, but is also the largest volume of fresh water moving on the planet by tenfold. For example, it would take 30 Mississippi Rivers to equal the amount of water the Amazon pushes past Manaus, Brazil – the huge, modern industrial shipping port almost 2000 miles from the ocean. The cuts we took between the gargantuan hairpin turns were larger than the Mississippi River. Paddling our miniscule carbon fiber kayaks next to fast moving super tankers



and ocean-going cargo ships, with plenty of river to spare, was one of the most humbling experiences of my life. At one point, we surfed the one-story tall wake of a liquid natural gas tanker going our direction and I watched our speed zip up to almost 15 mph on my GPS.

Each day we pulled off the river on some beautiful flat sand beach about an hour before sunset and went through our well-oiled routine of pitching our mosquito net tents, filtering water, eating as much as possible, then laying in our tent floors on the silicon dioxide that spent the day heating up under the sun. It wasn't until midnight that we were able to cool off, but we had to be in the tents before the mosquito hour – never to come back out until morning, lest we lose all our blood to those tiny buggers. I spent evenings alone in my tent journaling the day's events on my computer and doctoring my painful jungle rotted feet with foot powder.

Our watch alarms beeped us awake two hours before sunup for our first daily rituals: boiling water for coffee and oatmeal, doctoring wounds, neatly packing our gear and stretching. As soon as the two-hour mark beeped, we were on the water just as the sun rose. If we deviated one bit from our routine, we suffered. If we waited a few minutes too long to get off the river, then we were eaten by mosquitos. If we slept too long, we didn't get the cool morning conditions for starting the daily miles. We quickly learned that the tortoise had something going for him, so we stuck to the routine.

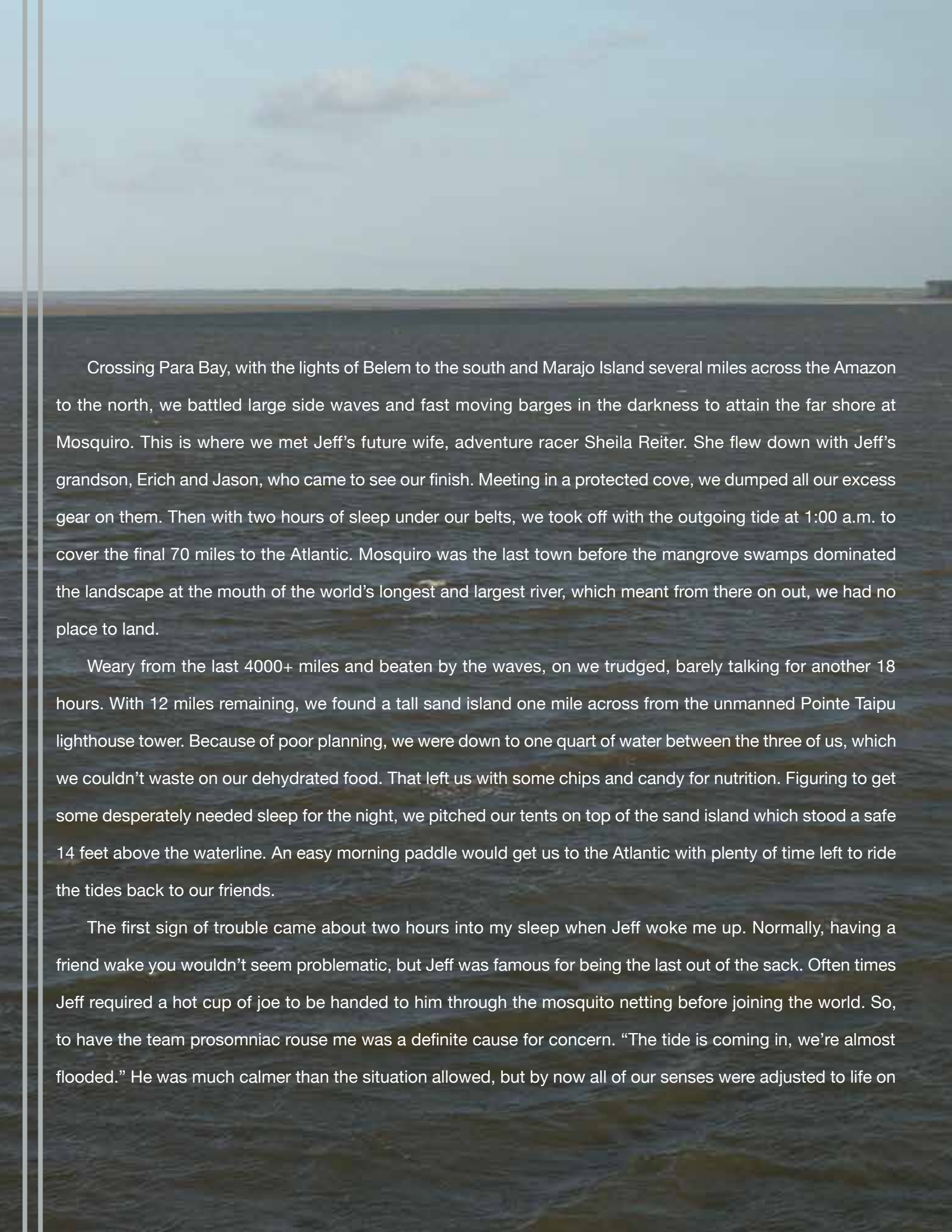
For the last 800 miles, we could smell the barn and wanted more than ever to finish. Ian and I missed our respective daughters something terrible. Jeff's girlfriend met us at Manaus for two nights, so he had some reprieve, but I really missed my wife. The daily sat phone calls to my sister, Barbara, who took on the role as Expedition Manager, were really nice but didn't fill the hole in my heart that lay in the bed back home in Texas, next to my wife. For a brief moment, in the "Riviera of the Amazon", Santarem, we thought we found a small slice of home in a Mexican food restaurant. That was until we tasted the cardboard food and after accosting the manager, learned that they simply found pictures of Mexican food on the internet and did what they could do to copy the look of the dishes. When asked if the owner had ever actually been to Mexico he responded, "People here really love the food!", as if us three Texans were the ones with the mistaken palettes. Just as we were about to burn the place down so no other homesick Texan or Mexican would be lured into this trap, a band started playing some really good Portuguese country and western, so we drowned our sorrows in beer and mojitos to cleanse the cardboard and ketchup traces from our mouths.

For the final push, we hired a chase boat with an off-duty narcotics officer to escort us through the furos between Garupa and Belem, where the Amazon splits into hundreds of narrow routes through mangrove swamps. The tiny water routes, igarapes, were ideal for bandits to remain unseen, then zip out in small motorboats to rob and terrorize tug boats and passenger ships making their way through the lush, green maze. The hoods weren't above kidnapping and murder before ducking back into the hundreds of square labyrinthine miles of desolate swampland and we were sitting ducks. Throughout the two weeks we spent weaving our way through, before spilling out into Para Bay, Sargent Dias sat around and did pretty much nothing. That is until some boat showed interest in our flotilla, then he calmly got up and held his pistol and shotgun aloft, which was enough to cause a change in direction for the unwelcome visitors. Our gunman didn't carry much more firepower than the average soccer mom in our home state, but when in the middle of nowhere it doesn't take much to change hearts and minds.

About 80 miles from the Atlantic Ocean on a small island near the town of Belem, Captain Beto fulfilled his

10-day obligation to our contract and dropped us off. This used up the last of the expedition money and now he planned to motor back upriver to Santarem. No matter what we offered, he wasn't interested in escorting us the remaining distance to the finish. The closer we got to our goal over the past few weeks, the stronger the tide came in to slow us down. Every six hours the tide rushed in, then out, reducing our progress to zero. Adjusting to our conditions, we took to pulling over to sleep whenever the tide bore down, then climbing back into our kayaks once it pivoted back out towards the east, indicating a shift in the tides to our favor. Whatever sleep we got was short and erratic. Without our support boat, we were once again carrying all of our gear, which didn't slow us down too much, but meant more effort behind each stroke.






Crossing Para Bay, with the lights of Belem to the south and Marajo Island several miles across the Amazon to the north, we battled large side waves and fast moving barges in the darkness to attain the far shore at Mosquiro. This is where we met Jeff's future wife, adventure racer Sheila Reiter. She flew down with Jeff's grandson, Erich and Jason, who came to see our finish. Meeting in a protected cove, we dumped all our excess gear on them. Then with two hours of sleep under our belts, we took off with the outgoing tide at 1:00 a.m. to cover the final 70 miles to the Atlantic. Mosquiro was the last town before the mangrove swamps dominated the landscape at the mouth of the world's longest and largest river, which meant from there on out, we had no place to land.

Weary from the last 4000+ miles and beaten by the waves, on we trudged, barely talking for another 18 hours. With 12 miles remaining, we found a tall sand island one mile across from the unmanned Pointe Taipu lighthouse tower. Because of poor planning, we were down to one quart of water between the three of us, which we couldn't waste on our dehydrated food. That left us with some chips and candy for nutrition. Figuring to get some desperately needed sleep for the night, we pitched our tents on top of the sand island which stood a safe 14 feet above the waterline. An easy morning paddle would get us to the Atlantic with plenty of time left to ride the tides back to our friends.

The first sign of trouble came about two hours into my sleep when Jeff woke me up. Normally, having a friend wake you wouldn't seem problematic, but Jeff was famous for being the last out of the sack. Often times Jeff required a hot cup of joe to be handed to him through the mosquito netting before joining the world. So, to have the team prosomniac rouse me was a definite cause for concern. "The tide is coming in, we're almost flooded." He was much calmer than the situation allowed, but by now all of our senses were adjusted to life on



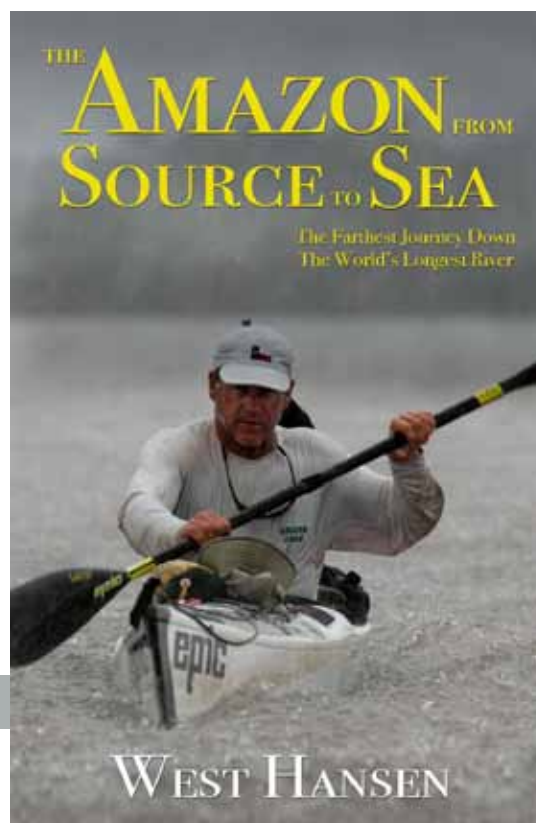
the Amazon. I spilled out of my tent and stepped into ankle deep water. A tiny patch of dry sand on which our two tents were perched was the only piece of earth we could see in the darkness. For miles and miles around, the black water steadily crept in from the Atlantic, composed but incessant. Without one word and foregoing our normal routine, we hurriedly stuffed our tents and gear into kayak hatches just as the water enveloped the last of the sand. In shin deep water, we climbed into our kayaks, not bothering with PFDs or positioning our food and water for easy reach. The only plan was to get in our kayaks in the face of the rising water. After securing ourselves afloat, we spent a minute discussing our options which were scant. Eventually, it was clear that we should proceed to our finish line, so without a shoreline by which to guide ourselves, I set a bee-line on the GPS for our finish line and we paddled off into the bleak darkness to make history.





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To order the book, “The Amazon from Source to Sea: The Farthest Journey Down the World’s Longest River” go to Amazon.com or for an autographed copy go to westhansen.com. To download a copy of the documentary, “Peeled Faces on the Amazon: The Story of the Amazon Express”, go to Vimeo or find a link at westhansen.com



West Hansen is an ultramarathon canoe/kayak racer with speed records for the Texas Water Safari and the MR340. Not only was West the first to paddle the 4200-mile Amazon River from its most distant source, but he and Jeff Wueste were the first to kayak the entire 2100-mile Volga River (Europe’s longest) in Russia. Their next expedition is the 1900-mile Arctic Cowboys Northwest Passage Kayak Expedition, which will take place in 2021. **AW**



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by Troy Farrar

Shoot Steel is a target only manufacturer - not a fab shop that also makes some targets on the side. They have built a reputation by focusing on the right methods and the right materials that enable them to produce the best targets possible. We caught up with Max Roszkowski from Shoot Steel to find out how their targets are different from everything else out there.

What is different about Shoot Steel targets?

Shoot Steel only uses AR400 and AR550 steel which is an abrasion resistant heat-treated material used for high wear applications. Typically, you can find steel like this being used in mining operations or other high wear material handling operations, but it is also exceptionally durable when used for steel targets. AR550 steel is actually quite different than the usual Cold Rolled and Hot Rolled varieties that you may find at your local hardware store. AR550 steel is specifically alloyed to yield the properties that make it useful for targets. In addition, each sheet goes through a heat treatment process to bring the hardness up to 550BHN. Hot and Cold rolled steels are shipped as-rolled and are NOT heat treated.

Why use AR Steel?

The "AR" in AR500 steel actually stands for Abrasion Resistant, while the number, in this case 500, indicates the Brinell Hardness Number (BHN) which falls within 460-544 for most AR500 steel. While AR500 has exhibited excellent resistance to high impact stresses, we have found it to be lacking when it comes to the ability to mitigate the "pitting" effect many people experience when shooting AR500 with high velocity rifles, most notably .223/5.56 NATO. For this reason, we decided to begin exploring the idea of using AR550 steel for all of our rifle rated targets, with the exclusion of our 50 BMG target line. For pistol use, there will be no noticeable difference between AR500 and AR550. In fact, all of our targets that are intended for use with pistols only are cut from AR400 steel which is a slightly softer material, but a more economical option. When it comes to pistol targets, the amount of energy and the velocity of the rounds is so much less that the hardness becomes less of a factor. However, the high velocity and energy exerted by rifle rounds make the hardness of the material much more of a key factor. We were all very surprised to see just how much better the AR550 steel performed when testing with high velocity rounds such as 5.56 and .308, so much so that we decided to make the switch. While we still rate the targets for the same distances that we did for our old AR500 line of targets, we know that our customers will be extremely pleased to see their targets no longer "pitting" like they once did. Even at distances inside of 100 yards, the AR550 steel exhibited an extremely high level of impact resistance, meaning our targets will last longer than the competition even in the off chance that they are shot within the recommended distances.

Does it matter how the targets are cut?

When steel is cut heat is generated and heat is the enemy of hardness. You are essentially annealing the edges of the plate when heated under cutting temperatures, this area is called the heat affected zone (HAZ). The less heat that is induced into the part, the smaller the HAZ. Laser cutting uses a highly focused beam of energy to cut through the steel, this introduces very little heat into the part, creating a very small HAZ.

Laser cutting also has low setup costs, often making it more economical than waterjet cutting. Waterjet cutting is also an acceptable method for cutting AR500 grade steel. The heat generated in waterjet cutting is minimal due to the large amounts of water flowing over the material.

You may also see other companies using water submerged plasma. This is an economical form of cutting designed for metals such as abrasion resistant steels. Water submerged plasma does generate a HAZ that is greater than any of the previously mentioned methods.

The cheapest and one of the worst ways to cut AR500 grade steel is Plasma. Plasma cutting generates large amounts of heat that is deposited into the target, softening it's edges. The HAZ generated by plasma cutting is the largest out of the most commonly used methods for cutting abrasion resistant steel. You might ask why any shop would use Plasma cutting on AR500 grade steel, the main reason is cost as Plasma cutters are cheap and relatively compact compared to other methods.

Shoot Steel cuts all of our targets with a laser for a single reason, it allows us to provide you with the finest steel targets possible.

3/8 Inch AR550 12 x 20 Target Package

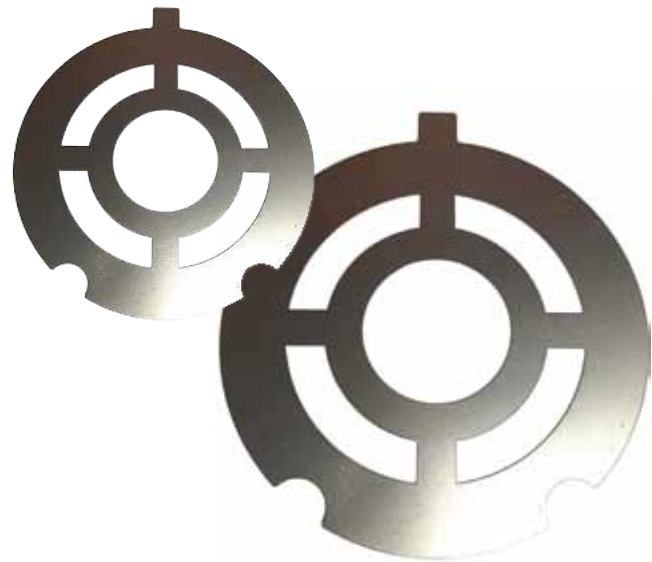
The Shoot Steel 3/8 Inch AR550 12 x 20 Target Package is a complete static target package including all hardware, you only need a 2 x 4 to complete the stand. The package comes with a heavy-duty bolt together stand, a static target hanger with a 1/2 inch carriage bolt, a compression spring, a locking nut and the 12 x 20 unpainted target. The sturdy stand is 23.5 inches long x 18.5 inches wide and has holes on all 4 corners so it can be staked. You can assemble the complete stand and get to shooting steel in only a few minutes. The CNC cut 3/8 Inch AR550 12 x 20 Target is designed and rated for pistol calibers up to .45 ACP and should be shot at a minimum of 10 yards. You can also use the targets for short action rifle calibers up to .308 and rifles should be shot at a minimum of 100 yards. The Shoot Steel static target package is a rock solid system that will provide a sturdy target for years of practice.



When searching for unique items for our home range, several heavy-duty reusable stencils produced by Shoot Steel caught our attention. These stencils are must have items for your range and will add fun and focus while improving both your consistency and your accuracy.

Universal XL Bullseye and Bullseye Stencil

The Universal Bullseye and XL Bullseye Stencils are the perfect stencils to enhance your training by providing precise focal areas on your target. These durable steel stencils will last a lifetime and come with a bendable tab which makes it easy to accurately apply the stencil to a target. The Bullseye features a 6.5 inch outer diameter with a 4-inch outer circle and a 2-inch inner circle. The XL Bullseye features a 10-inch outer diameter and provides a 7-inch outer circle and a 3.5-inch center circle which work great for 10-16 inch targets. Use the Shoot Steel Bullseye Stencils to help micro focus your aim on both gong and static targets of any shape.



T Box Stencil

The T Box Stencil is designed to enhance your training on silhouette targets. These durable steel stencils will last a lifetime and come with a bendable tab which makes it easy to accurately apply the stencil to a target. The cutout on this stencil is 3.2 inches by 1.5 inches and the T Box stencil can be used alone or in combination with the bullseye stencil. Maximize the effectiveness of your range time by adding a couple of Shoot Steel Stencils to your home range.



12 x 20 Inch Vitals Stencil

The 12 x 20 Inch Vitals Stencil is specifically made for the Shoot Steel 12 x 20 inch silhouette target. These durable steel stencils will last a lifetime and come with a bendable tab which makes it easy to accurately apply the stencil to a target. The stencil was cleverly designed so it could be applied to both static and gong style silhouette targets without removing any mounting hardware. The stencil provides a large 5 x 8 inch center mass A-Zone rectangle and a 3.2 x 1.5 inch T Box cutout on the head. Practice with precision by using a Shoot Steel Vitals Stencil. **AW**



Shooting Reviews

WINTER 2021



Muzzy Shank

The Muzzy Shank is a 2-blade expandable broadhead that will produce consistent clean and ethical kills. The 100 grain Shank features a stainless-steel trocar tip and a machined aluminum ferrule with .035" thick blades. The Shank has an aerodynamic 3/4inch in-flight diameter and flew true during all of our testing. The trocar tip is strong enough to break bones and the two razor sharp over the top expanding blades produce a 1 3/4 inch entry wound. The Shank comes in a 5 pack and will yield the results you have come to expect from a Muzzy broadhead. www.feradyne.com



Rage X-TREME NC Crossbow

The Rage X-TREME NC Crossbow has 2 important letters in the name "NC" which stands for no collar. Rage's new blade locking system provides reliable blade retention without a collar simplifying the use for the archer. The 100 Grain two bladed expanding broadhead features a 6061-T6 Aircraft Grade Anodized Aluminum Ferrule and a leading-edge tip blade which provides maximum penetration. The X-TREME NC Crossbow broadhead has a 3/4 inch in flight diameter providing consistent accuracy. The razor sharp .039 inch stainless steel blades expand to provide a massive 2.3 inch entry wound resulting in easy to follow blood trails and facilitating quicker ethical kills. The Rage X-TREME NC Crossbow comes with 2 expandable broadheads and will become your go to crossbow broadhead for any large game. www.feradyne.com



Adaptiv Technologies Farkle Fingers

Adaptiv Technologies Farkle Fingers make all gloves touch screen friendly. Simply slip the Farkle Finger sleeve over the tip of your glove and you are in business. No more taking your glove off in the stand everytime you need to turn the page on your Kindle. Say goodbye to removing your glove on the lift to change the song on your MP3 player. Farkle Fingers come with 4 pieces and the stretchable one size fits all material will keep them in place even when riding a motorcycle or snowmobile. Try Farkle Fingers and keep your hands in your gloves when operating devices. www.adaptivtech.com/



Guntec USA 9MM A2 BIRDCAGE FLASH HIDER

The Guntec USA 9mm A2 birdcage flash hider is a great mil-spec muzzle device for your 9mm rifle. The US made flash hider has the classic look and is super durable due to the all steel construction. Featuring a 1/2 x 36 thread pitch, Guntec USA 9mm A2 birdcage flash hider is the perfect addition to your next 9mm build. www.guntecusa.com



Guntec USA Micro Slip Over Barrel Shroud with Multi Port Muzzle Brake

The Guntec USA Micro Slip Over Barrel Shroud With Multi Port Muzzle Brake is a unique muzzle device. The US made muzzle brake slips over the barrel and tightens using a reverse thread from the inside. Designed for 9mm, the dual-purpose device is both a barrel shroud and a muzzle compensator. The Guntec USA 3-inch, T6 aluminum brake has an anodized black finish and will reduce felt recoil by 70 percent. For a great looking, multipurpose muzzle device, look no further than the Guntec USA Micro Slip Over Barrel Shroud with Multi Port Muzzle Brake. www.guntecusa.com



Trufire Thrufire

The Trufire Thrufire is a breakthrough in archery releases that will improve your accuracy right out of the box. The pull through wrist strap release attaches with nylon webbing and TruFire's TrapTab buckle system that allows the strap to be adjusted with 1 hand. The Thrufire features an adjustable trigger travel and a 5-30 pound adjustable trigger. The secret lies in the index finger actuated release aid, whose hidden trigger system virtually eliminates the archer's ability punch the release. The release shoots like a rifle trigger with some pull required, if the archer does not cleanly pull through the shot, the release will not activate. The result is a full surprise release which eliminates punching and produces greater accuracy and consistency. Available in an adult and youth version so you can train your young archer and eliminate bad habits. Slip into a Trufire Thrufire and say goodbye to punching the shot and hello to consistent accuracy. www.feradyne.com **AW**