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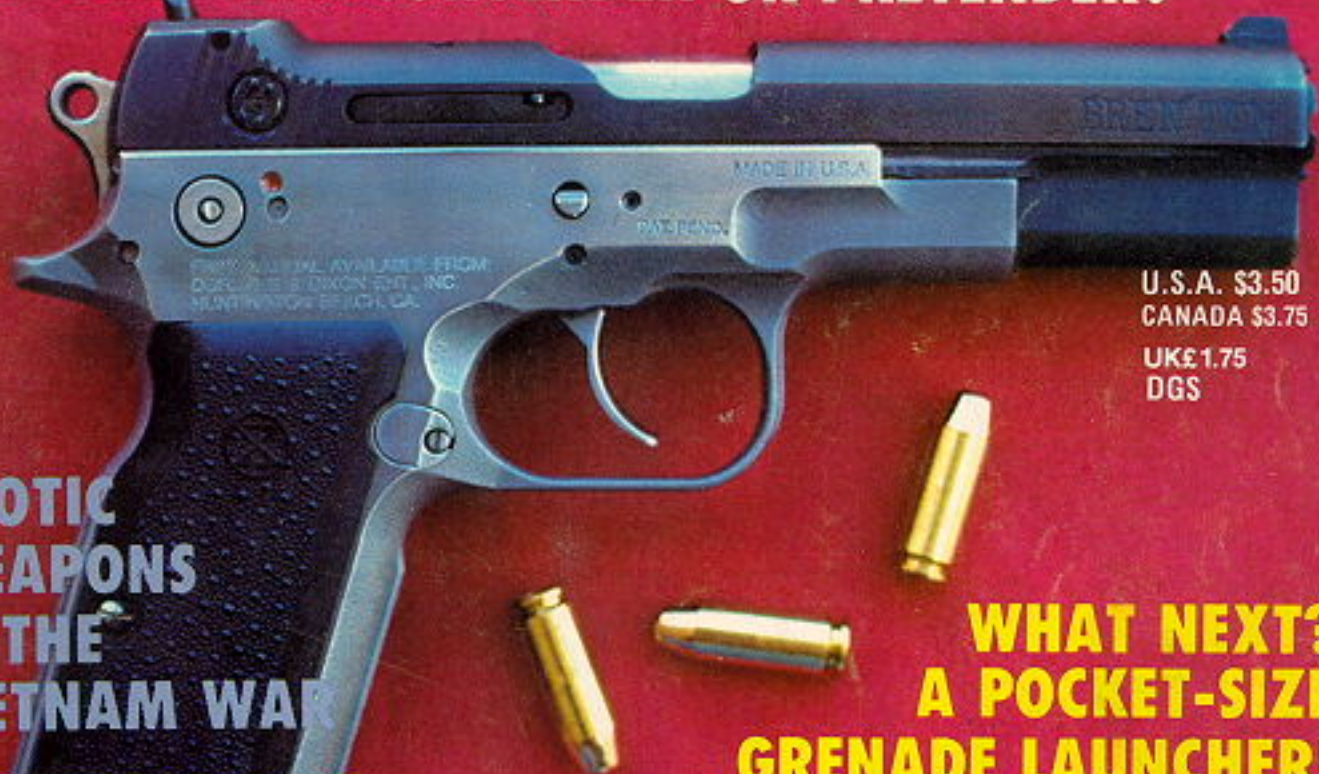
SPECIAL WEAPONS ISSUE



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New Breed

THE BREN TEN: CONTENDER OR PRETENDER?

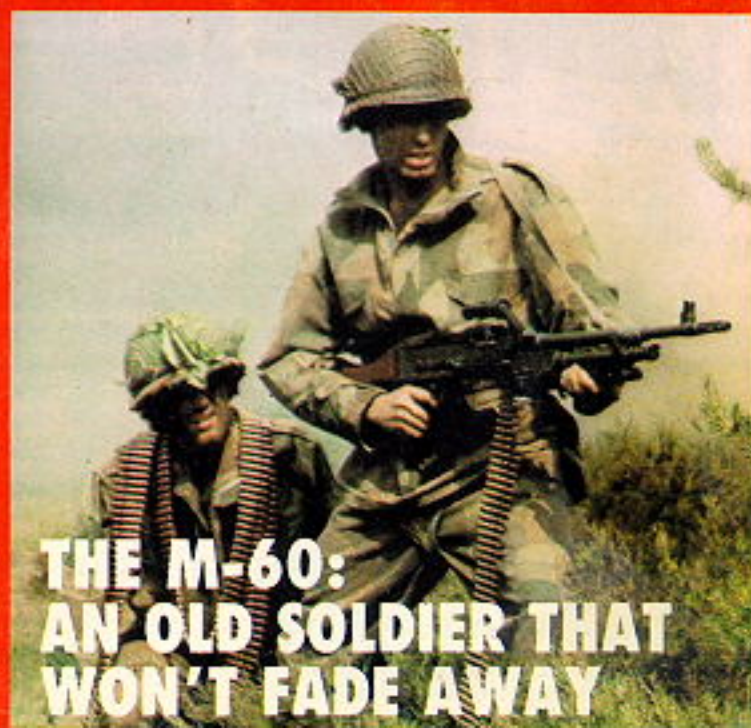


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Bren Ten: CONTENDER OR PRETENDER?

By NORM BAILEY

For a number of years, the author has owned, carried and shot one of the rather rare CZ 75 9mms. He has stated in the past, and reaffirms, that if he could have one big bore handgun it would probably be the CZ 75. It is quite simply, he maintains, that good of a weapon.

It seemed a good idea at the time ... Take the exceptionally fine Czechoslovakian CZ75 9mm semi-automatic handgun, and, since a communist-bloc country is involved, appropriate the design. Develop a brand new cartridge for it, somewhere between the 9mm and the .45 ACP, with the better features of both, and none of the so-called shortcomings.

The best of both worlds?

For a number of years I have owned, carried, and shot one of the rather rare (in this country) CZ 75 9mms. I have stated in the past, and I will reaffirm, if I could have but one big-bore handgun (and I hope that never happens), it would probably be the CZ 75. It is, quite simply, that good.

It has a natural feel like no other handgun. This is obviously a rather subjective thing, and something that is difficult to explain. But it is also something that has been confirmed by most who have spent time with the CZ 75. It feels "righter" in the hand, no matter how small or large the hand be. It seems to consistently find its target easily.

The CZ 75 has the smoothest double-action of any semi-auto pistol I've ever fired, smoother than many revolvers, even some tuned ones. The shift from double-action to single-action is there, but is almost imperceptible.

It is a most comfortable piece to shoot, with the mild recoil and muzzle blast of the 9mm, and mine has been 100 percent reliable.

But enough. It's quite obvious that I think

highly of the CZ 75. What of its "bastard" offspring, the Bren Ten? Is it another CZ 75, only better?

The Bren Ten, at this writing, is scarce, having suffered innumerable delays in shipment. There have been many months of magazine problems. Nevertheless there are a few out there, and I have managed to spend a little time with one.

I should state firstly that I was prepared to like the Bren Ten, that I really wanted to like it. The idea of an American "CZ 75" in a caliber with a bit more stopping power than the 9mm excited me. But, just as candidly, I came away disappointed.

The Bren Ten is *not* another CZ 75. In no way does the Bren Ten have the 'good feel' of the CZ. In no way does it have the smooth trigger. The Bren feels large, 'not-quite-comfortable' (admittedly I do not have a large hand, but this goes unnoticed with the CZ). The trigger-pull is heavy, both double-action and single-action.

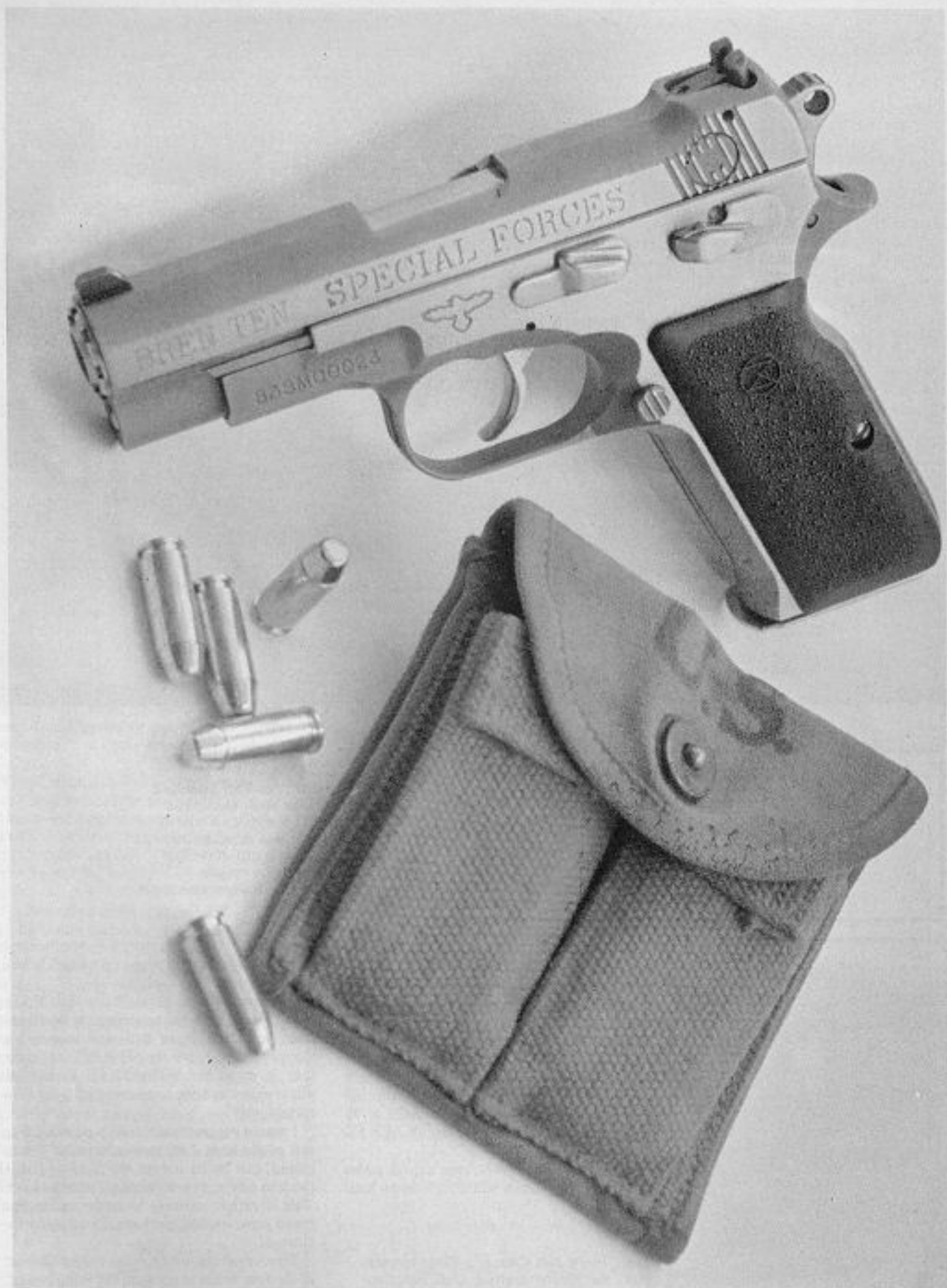
I will not speak of reliability, since there was insufficient testing. Therefore, for the purposes of this article we shall assume total reliability.

The finish of the Bren is inferior to the CZ 75. (I understand the factory is aware of this and is taking steps to correct same.)

There is a crossbolt firing pin block safety on the slide just above the thumb safety that, to my mind, is both easily and inadvertently activated, particularly in the stress of combat, effectively putting the weapon out of action.



The author also has a high regard for Smith & Wesson's discontinued M27 .357 shown above next to a pair of ear protectors to compare size. Right, The Bren Ten Special Forces. The finish of the Bren Ten is inferior to the CZ 75. As for stopping power, one expert claims that the Bren Ten 10mm will knock down steel plates that the .45 ACP won't, while another expert states the reverse.





Extreme left, the Bren Ten Standard Model is a full size semi-automatic defensive combat pistol. Left, the Bren Ten Pocket Model is a compact heavy duty pistol. It is not a cut-down full size model but rather a totally separate design that incorporates most of the full size model.



Both recoil and muzzle blast are substantial, and thus we again approach the perennial problem of 'going beyond' the .45 ACP. It would seem that, with proper training, most can do reasonably well with the .45 ACP, but that 'going beyond' (.41 Mag., .44 Mag., etc.) results in a weapon for the few. Even the staunchest advocates of the 10mm admit that recoil is sharper than the .45 ACP. (The Bren Ten people do make a .45 conversion. No, thank you. In .45 ACP I'll stay with my Colt.)

As to stopping power, one expert states "the Bren Ten 10mm will knock down steel

Bren Ten's Jeff Cooper's Commemorative. Its nicely crafted, full functional, full size, and sports a beautiful finish.

plates that the .45 ACP won't." Another expert states quite the reverse. And this takes us to the cartridge itself.

On paper it looks good. It has the velocity, as does the 9mm, to penetrate body armor, yet it has more bulk and thus more stopping power, *ala the .45 APC*. But then that is on paper. (The 22 Hi Power of yesteryear was once considered an *awesome* cartridge!)

I would suggest that the *only possible true test* of the Bren Ten, particularly the 10mm round, can be its *use on the field of battle* (such as alleys, streets, parks, and the like). This is rather unlikely to occur, as things stand now, except, perhaps, in isolated incidents.

The American military has joined the rest of the free world in going to the 9mm round. The handgun of choice is the Beretta 92 series. Hence, that avenue of test and use ap-



Crossbolt firing pin block safety on the slide just above safety is both easily and inadvertently activated, particularly in the stress of combat, effectively putting the weapon out of action. Both muzzle blast and recoil of the Bren Ten are substantial.

appears closed. And if history is any judge it will be a very long time before new handgun/cartridges consideration comes up again.

Other militaries are not likely, either. The Bren Ten salesman would necessarily go calling in a 9mm world, and beyond that there seems to be a certain pecking order to arms manufacturers.

It is unlikely that many, if any, police agencies will adopt the Bren Ten 10mm. First off, it is a rather expensive gun (the 1984 price list shows a wholesale of \$375.00 and a retail of \$500.00 for the Standard Model—the distributor price on the good old S&W M10 M&P .38 Special is around \$160.00). Then there is the matter of recoil and muzzle blast. Even professional law-enforcement officers have problems with such. There would probably be cries of "over-penetration," as there have been with the .357.

Where, then, can this test by combat take place? It would seem that only some individuals, and perhaps occasional soldiers and police officers, will use the Bren Ten. And this is not enough. The jury is still out on the Bren Ten. And it is likely to remain out.

It still seems a good idea: my CZ 75 with just a bit better cartridge. But until it comes along, a gun that feels and shoots *as good* as my CZ 75, with a cartridge that I'm sure is better, I'll stay with my CZ 9mm. The 9mm isn't a perfect cartridge, certainly not a 100 percent stopper. But then no cartridge is, including the untried 10mm.

And if I didn't have my CZ 75, there is nothing wrong with the Colt .45 ACP, the Browning Hi Power, and some of S&W's best. They're not perfect either, but they've been around a long time, we know pretty well what they'll do, and they do it reasonably well.

New isn't necessarily better, just like old isn't necessarily bad.



SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer	..... Dornaus & Dixon Enterprises, Inc.
Model	..... Bren Ten Special Forces Model (SF)
Type	..... Autoloading pistol
Operation	..... Double/single action
Function	..... Browning short recoil
Caliber	..... 10mm Auto
Barrel length	..... 4.00 inches
Overall length	..... 7.37 inches
Height	..... 5.50 inches
Width	..... 1.25 inches
Weight (empty)	..... 33 ounces
Safeties	..... Thumb (reversible), and firing pin block
Sight radius	..... 6.00 inches
Sights	..... Adjustable/replaceable, 3-dot combat
Rifling	..... "Power-Seal," 5 grooves RH twist, 1 in 15
Stocks	..... Textured black nylon (genuine Hogue combat grips)
Cartridge capacity	..... 11 rounds
Dark finish (Model-D)	..... Parkerized black slide/ black oxide Stainless frame
Light finish (Model-L)	..... Nickel slide/ Stainless frame