

# BREACHING BEASTS

INSTEAD OF KNOCK KNOCK, IT'S BANG BANG! CHECK OUT THE LATEST ENTRY-DEDICATED SHOTGUNS.

Standoff muzzle devices set breaching shotguns apart from the rest. This Mossberg 500 has also been modified with the FLEX interchangeable stock system, a railed forend and a SureFire X300 light for close quarters.

>>>> BY KEVIN R. DAVIS

» In the gray area between the use of rams and Halligan tools of mechanical breaching and the use of high explosives, exists several different techniques, tools and devices. Pneumatic jamb spreaders, cutting saws, torches and even using hooks attached to vehicles to pull security doors off their hinges—all are a part of the breaching toolbox. Another common method in law enforcement and the military is using door-breaching rounds in specially modified 12-gauge shotguns.

This wasn't always the case. The British Special Air Service pioneered the use of shotguns for breaching. Short-barreled semi-auto shotguns with pistol grips were used to breach using standard buckshot fired into door locks and hinges. The problem with this was the over-penetration of buckshot into the room, possibly endangering the hostages or innocents inside and the creation of sec-

ondary missiles, such as pieces of metal or wood. Additionally, standard shotgun barrels could bounce off the wood or metal doors, slowing follow-up shots as well as the possibility of a barrel burst if the end of the barrel was thrust flat against a door.

#### ENTRY ADVANCES

In the U.S., LAPD S.W.A.T. borrowed the use of the shotgun to breach from the SAS in their training build-up for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. LAPD bomb squad personnel developed the first flash-bangs as well as the first specialty breaching slugs during this time.

"Hatton" rounds were similarly developed in the UK to reduce the risk of over-penetration from buckshot and are used by MOE (Method of Entry) men—breach-

ers—assigned to UK police tactical teams as well as members of the British Army.

Modern breaching rounds are made of powdered clay, copper, zinc, or rounds of clay and steel powder combined. The powdered metal or clay compound is encased in a plastic slug that disintegrates on impact with the metal striker or doorjamb, disrupting and blasting apart both as well as the door lock bolt.

The first standoff muzzles were designed and built at the request of the LAPD to reduce the risk of overpressure issues at the shotgun's muzzle and to decrease the tendency of a standard muzzle to bounce off target. Additionally, standoffs direct the muzzle blast and debris away from the operator as well as offering recoil reduction through the venting of gasses.

The aiming point for a breaching shotgun when targeting a door is to aim the shotgun 45 degrees downward and 45 degrees inward, toward the striker plate on the doorjamb. The idea is to dump a maximum amount of destructive power into the striker plate, bolt and jamb to allow the door to be forced open. Multiple shots may be necessary. Specialty rounds are available to defeat everything from standard hollow-core wooden doors all the way up to heavy metal security doors. Breaching shotguns can be used on the primary breach point, such as a front door, or secondary breach requirements within the structure, such as locked office or bedroom doors. Manufacturers of breaching shotguns have increased over the last few years. Let's take a look.

» **MOSSBERG 500 CHAINSAW:** I like Mossberg shotguns. The people in their company that I've met have been some of the nicest folks, and my own home agency fields Mossberg shotguns on the street with our patrol division. Over the years, I've gotten to shoot most of the Mossberg line. Although I've never fired one of their breaching shotguns against a door in training, they offer several designs that make the breaching function easier.

Mossberg makes its own standoff muzzle

device as well as specialty gripping forearm like the 500 Chainsaw with its over-barrel horizontal grip. Since the standoff required for shotgun breaching does not interfere with either buck-shot or slugs, a shotgun so equipped can also be used outside of a breaching scenario on a tactical team or on routine patrol. The problem with that statement is that it is generally not easy to swap out the standard or adjustable buttstock for a recommended pistol grip with which

to breach. Enter the new FLEX system with its TLS (Tool-less Locking System). With a quick lift and turn of the TLS "latch," operators can unlock and remove a standard or tactical stock so equipped with a pistol grip. Simply install, turn and press the latch down and a patrol shotgun now becomes a pistol grip breaching gun. FLEX forearm is easy to remove and replace as well. One FLEX Mossberg shotgun can be used in multiple roles: deadly force via slug or shot, non-deadly with beanbag rounds and breaching with the appropriate frangible breaching folder loaded.

The FLEX System is available this year on Mossberg's 500 and 590 pump shotguns and will have a large variety of stocks and forearm. This is a great system that offers the tactical team more options out of one gun. (mossberg.com; 203-230-5300)



**SPECIFICATIONS**

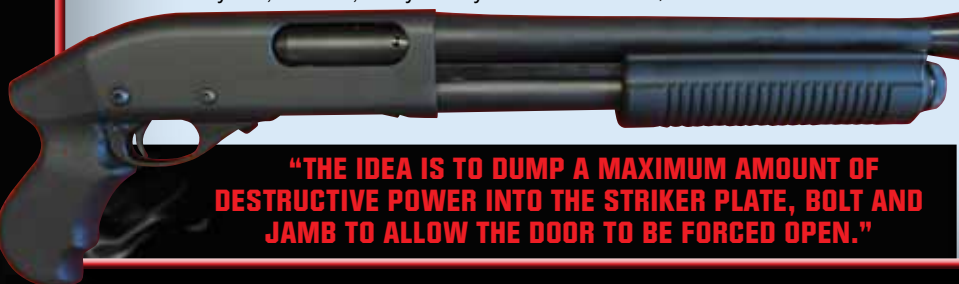
**GAUGE:** 12, 3" chamber • **BARREL:** 18.5 inches • **OA LENGTH:** 28.75 inches  
**WEIGHT:** 5.75 pounds (empty) • **CAPACITY:** 6+1

» **ROYAL ARMS:** Royal Arms is the grandfather of shotgun breaching in the U.S., manufacturing barrel standoffs, and later, breaching rounds at the request of the LAPD S.W.A.T. team. Although Royal Arms sells breaching shotguns, they do not manufacture their own. They can, however, easily modify a

shotgun barrel for breaching. Royal has modified all major shotgun manufacturers' barrels with their standoffs installed via a threading system, including the Kel-Tec KSG. Royal Arms standoff designs include four-, six-, and 12-point designs. The four-point has sharpened "V" cuts, which allow it to be used on

locks and rebar. Breaching rounds from Royal Arms are made of clay and/or a combination for stouter doors. Denoted as TESAR (Tactical Entry Safe Avon Rounds) or TESCRA (Tactical Entry Safe Clayvon Rounds)—which is a combo of clay and steel) and come in different colored caps for different types of doors:

TESAR #1 (orange) for wood doors both solid and hollow-core; TESAR #2 (black) designed for metal doors and hinges or solid oak-style doors with heavy dead-bolts; TESCRA #3 for hollow-core and light steel doors; and TESAR #4 for heavy Class 3 steel doors. (royalarms.com; 805-288-5250)



**"THE IDEA IS TO DUMP A MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF DESTRUCTIVE POWER INTO THE STRIKER PLATE, BOLT AND JAMB TO ALLOW THE DOOR TO BE FORCED OPEN."**

» **SERBU SUPER-SHORTY:** New to me but apparently not new to the firearms industry is Serbu Firearms. On display at a recent trade show were a couple of Serbu's short-barreled shotguns. The Super-Shorty can be delivered on either a Mossberg 500 or Remington 870 receiver. The short-barreled

shotguns sport barrels as short as 6.5 inches, folding vertical foregrips, rear pistol grips, and are what we used to refer to as "whip-it" shotguns due to their ability to be concealed on a cord under a



**SPECIFICATIONS**

**GAUGE:** 12, 3" chamber • **BARREL:** 6.5 inches • **OA LENGTH:** 16.5 inches  
**WEIGHT:** 4.5-5 pounds (empty) • **CAPACITY:** 2+1 (3+1 available)

coat. Both the Mossberg and Remington designs would be perfect for use as a breaching shotgun, so it's no surprise that standoffs were mounted on both Super-Shorty models. (serbu.com; 813-243-8899)

» **TEN-X TACTICAL TX-12 TWS:** There have been various attempts to mount shotguns under the M16 or M4 carbine. Many suffer from the weight/bulk problems inherent with a dual system. The TX-12 system developed and manufactured by Ten-X Tactical has solved that problem by developing a single-shot 12 gauge that can be mounted under the barrel of an M4 carbine on Picatinny rails



**SPECIFICATIONS**

**GAUGE:** 12, 3" chamber • **BARREL:** 7.5 or 10.5 inches • **OA LENGTH:** 14 or 17 inches  
**WEIGHT:** 2 pounds (empty) • **CAPACITY:** 1

or directly to an AR-15/M16 by removing the lower section of the handguard and attaching it at the delta slip ring and barrel by a specialty mount. Weighing in at around 2 pounds, the single-shot, double-action, break-open, ambidextrous design permits fire and loading with the support hand, allowing the gun hand to remain ready. Available with either a 7.5-inch and 10.5-inch barrel, the TX-12 STW (Special Task Weapon) comes complete with a standoff installed. (tenxtactical.com; 909-946-8369)

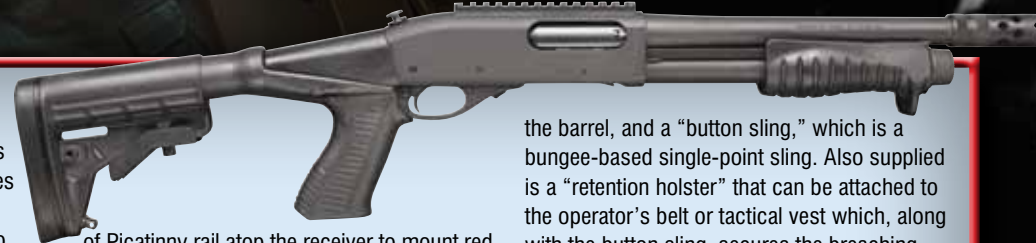
Chris Rohling Photo



Stacked for entry, this S.W.A.T. team practices proper breaching methods. Special loads help operators take care of door locks and hinges without collateral damage.

» **REMINGTON 870P BREACHER SYSTEM:**

Remington has provided a full breacher's kit with this new package. The kit includes an 870 shotgun with a newly designed forearm that features an integral flange to prevent the forward hand from slipping off and getting in front of the muzzle and a cool cutout where you can mount an included LED keychain, pressure-activated light, a section



of Picatinny rail atop the receiver to mount red dots or additional white lights, a spare shell carrier that can be affixed to the side of the receiver with the attached Velcro, a recoil-reducing Knox Stock, stand-off mounted on

the barrel, and a "button sling," which is a bungee-based single-point sling. Also supplied is a "retention holster" that can be attached to the operator's belt or tactical vest which, along with the button sling, secures the breaching shotgun out of the way until it is called upon. The whole kit comes in a black ballistic nylon carry bag. The 870P Breacher System is well-thought-out and provides much of what the modern LE and military breacher looks for in a 12-gauge pump breaching shotgun. (remingtonmilitary.com; 800-852-7634)

**SPECIFICATIONS**

**GAUGE:** 12, 3" chamber • **BARREL:** 11.5 inches • **OA LENGTH:** 31-34 inches  
**WEIGHT:** 6.6 pounds (empty) • **CAPACITY:** 3+1

» **SAFETY HARBOR KEG12:** Safety Harbor has been making their cut-down 12-gauge pump shotguns for years. Based on Remington 870 or Mossberg 500

shotguns, the KEG12 (Kompact Entry Gun 12 gauge) scatterguns offer barrels of either 7.25 or 10 inches. With folding front vertical and rear pistol grips, KEG12s are potent

stoppers and, up until this year, were never equipped for the breaching function. But new for 2012 is a KEG12 based on the 870, which features a standoff on the barrel and a magazine tube extension. This design gives the little old KEG breacher's gun a 3+1 capacity in the 7.25-inch version and 4+1 in the 10-inch barrel version. With a sling strap on top of the rear pistol grip, these little blasters can easily be outfitted with a single-point sling to secure them out of the way when not used for breaching. (safety-harborfirearms.com; 727-726-2500)



**SPECIFICATIONS**

**GAUGE:** 12, 3" chamber • **BARREL:** 7.25 or 10 inches • **OA LENGTH:** 20.5-23.75 inches  
**WEIGHT:** 5.44-6.13 pounds (empty) • **CAPACITY:** 3+1 (7.25"), 4+1 (10")

» **ITHACA MODEL 37:** The Los Angeles Police Department used Model 37 pump shotguns back in the day when it first developed and perfected shotgun breaching.

According to Ithaca Gun Company's Mike Farrell, it's then no surprise that Royal Arms approached them about making a breaching standoff as an option from the factory.

The resultant collaboration makes the Royal Arms breaching barrel extension available to the LE and military consumer of Ithaca's shotguns. Ithaca has recently been displaying these scatterguns at industry shows as well as various options now offered by Ithaca to improve the performance of their shotguns. Tactical buttstocks and pistol grips, as well as front sling mounts and Picatinny rail blocks, can now be affixed to the venerable Model 37 to properly prepare it for use as a breaching gun. (ithacagun.com; 877-648-4222)



**SPECIFICATIONS**

**GAUGE:** 12, 3" chamber • **BARREL:** 20 inches • **OA LENGTH:** 39.5 inches  
**WEIGHT:** 7 pounds (empty) • **CAPACITY:** 8+1