

## BRILEY VERSATILITY UPDATE

As we've noted previously, we continue to use a Briley Versatility as one of our test-bed guns, but we continue to shoot and critique the gun based on our long-term use.

One of the areas we decided to upgrade was the gun's trigger pull. While the trigger broke at 4 pounds when the gun was clean, the trigger became unpredictable after hard use. Also, the feel of the trigger was more suitable to Bullseye competition than IPSC. That is, there was little take up and only one stage. For practical shooting, a take up followed by a feeling of successive smaller breakdowns is preferred. Also, we were looking for a trigger pull break between 2 and 3 pounds, standard fare on an IPSC gun.

Initially, Briley didn't want to perform the work we wanted because of liability issues. In part because the gun was destined to be used only for competition, we successfully pushed for the changes we wanted.

Shortly thereafter, we learned the changes to the gun's "Match" trigger involved installing new Briley "Match Grade" parts—the difference being the Match trigger and sear parts are cast, and the Match Grade trigger and skeletonized hammer (below right), which comes with the Versatility Plus model, is EDM produced and will afford more exact tolerances. This semantic upgrade from "Match" to "Match Grade" set us back \$156. After the work, the trigger broke consistently at 2.75 pounds. However, we believe the original parts could have produced the desired results for under \$100.

After testing the Waki Kombat sight last month, we decided to leave the sight on the gun. The screw that holds the sight on the slide began to interfere with the operation of the firing pin. If your gun was previously set up for a BoMar rear sight, this screw uses this same hole. But, as per the instructions supplied by Waki, if you use the original BoMar elevation screw, it must be shortened to prevent it from entering the firing-pin channel. The Waki sight came with a screw that was shorter, but it didn't have the necessary thread size. The BoMar screw was ground down but not enough to prevent us from overtightening the screw and forcing it into the firing pin.



Also, we like the way the Briley, built with a McCormick frame and slide, sits low in the shooter's hand. However, this performance attribute has a trade-off. We found the grip safety was hard to disengage each time we drew the gun. Nor does it seem to disengage all at once. If you have it half way, this will produce a creep in the trigger. Solution: A cheap fix is simply pinning or taping the safety down. However, this solution should only be employed on a competition gun where the grip safety isn't used anyway. **Deactivating the safety on a carry gun is dangerous—don't do it.**

Thus, adding a \$75 mag well (November 1997 Performance Shooter, page 8) and trigger upgrade brought the total cost of the Briley Versatility to well over \$1,000—approaching the realm of hand-built guns. A friend of ours bought a stock Springfield for \$450 and sent it to Clark Custom Guns. Five months and \$850 later, the shooter had a true Match Grade pistol. As it sits, the Briley is still \$300 cheaper, and we were able to buy it off the shelf. Still, the work we've performed to date points out that the Versatility is a good general-purpose gun, but it needs tweaking to make it competition ready.