

THE ULTIMA DEFENSE



ATE HOME SYSTEM

BY MICHAEL WARE



SCATTERGUN. STREET HOWITZER. SHOTGUN. Chances are if you own only one weapon in demographics like Iowa, that weapon is a shotgun. Who can blame you? After all, they do so much, with so little cost, they are hard to beat. Few weapons are truly universal, but the venerable pump shotgun is nearly that.

My brother and my dad went in on an 870 together when my brother was a pup. It was a joint ownership according to my brother, but of course it was a great way for my dad to support my brother's

desire to enter the shooting world and give them an activity to perform outdoors together. Dad was able to instruct Paul on basic safety, ethics, morality, and respect for nature using that Remington

870 as a tool and catalyst. To this day, I can see the positive impact that little collaboration had on my brother and I encourage others to consider an approach like this.

There is no shortage of really great shotguns to choose from. New and used weapons alike hold great merit and it is darn hard to find a shotgun that is truly worn out. Whether you're trolling gun shops for a used pump shotgun, or you're

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■ **The Ultimate Home Defense System**



after the high luster semi auto flavor of the season, the choices and selection are wide and far. There are some models that are specialized of course, and you're probably not going to use a long barreled skeet rig for your home defense back up. All in all a properly chosen shotgun will perform many tasks thoroughly.

Let's take a closer look at what I'm referring to. There are weapons like the Browning BPS, Benelli Nova, Ithaca Pump, Winchester 1300, and Mossberg 500, but the reigning 12ga pump king is the Remington 870. Talk about an undisputed heavyweight champion, the 870 has the track record only a few firearms in history can best. Sometimes the stars align for a manufacturer and things take off all by themselves, but when it comes to the 870, Remington did a lot of things right. The action is tough but not heavy or bulky. The lines on the receiver/action itself are smooth and made to a really great size for many different hands with or without gloves. Action stroke and length of travel for the pump forearm is pretty short and with just a little use becomes very smooth. Trigger placement and the trigger guard are slightly swept aft and lend themselves to consistent control. The action bar lock is well placed so you can depress that handy little serrated tang and pop the action right open. The ergonomics don't sound like a big deal on a shotgun, but the lines are so smooth that these little beauties pop right up for most people.

Teardown of this kind of weapon is simple. You merely unscrew the magazine cap and the barrel pops right off. You might need to wiggle around the action a bit, but barrel replacements or swaps are quite simple. If you have trouble, ask somebody to thump your skull, as it doesn't get much easier than this. With the ability to swap barrels out so easily, you really have the bases covered for most of what Iowa offers outdoors and indoors alike. You can sport a 26" field barrel and scare up some pheasant or turkey with various chokes, or toss on a rifled 20" slug barrel with iron sights for deer, and leave the 18.5" smooth bore for home defense should

you choose. Heck, you can actually pick a smooth bore, also known as a field barrel, in something medium in length, and literally do all three pretty well.

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Granted, you won't get ultra-velocity out of your turkey load and you won't have the shortest and most nimble stick for home defense on the block, but you'll get the job done and be able to snag some lead slugs to toss at those mangy ditch goats we all call white tailed deer.

We've built this shotgun model up for customers in just about any configuration you can think of. Honestly, every time I think we've pulled off a modification and/or configuration nobody else has, I learn I'm wrong and pictures pop on up on the net somewhere. While we help people build their own AR15s at our 'build clinics' from time to time, I'm not an advocate of folks just rolling up and tossing guns together. Too many things they know nothing about can crop up and provide big problems. After all, this is a firearm, so throwing caution to the wind is not a viable option. However, in the case of modifications and reconfiguration of most 870s, we're really talking about a handful of 'bolt on' parts. Replacement of the stock is elementary, as is the hand guard/forearm in most cases, and the balance of accessories are well within the ability of somebody who has mechanical inclination and access to YouTube.

Watching a YouTube video has to be taken with a grain of salt. While videos and tutorials are very helpful, try watching a few or stick to those with names you know. When Al Gore invented the internet (insert generous amounts of sarcasm) he forgot to limit the jokers and low information posters from participating. Thus, you'll find two terrible or heavily flawed videos to every one of genuine value. While that may sound like a hassle, the fact is there are some great videos having been posted by some great people and organizations and they are greatly helpful. I have used some from Brownells before and they are thorough and helpful. After all, I try to utilize Iowa companies every chance I get, so they're an obvious choice for me. Heck, you might as well shop there



for your parts, as they have plenty to choose from.

We'll use a home defense weapon as the basis for our build up and walk through it a bit. Imagine you're strolling down the aisles of the gun show and you see a nice little 870 Wingmaster. It is worn a bit and the stock and forearm have seen better days, but the action is smooth, and overall the weapon doesn't appear to be neglected in any obvious fashion. So you snag it and bring it back to your man cave. You lay it out on the work bench and the dreaming begins. This thing is ripe for a shorter barrel, a better stock, a forearm upgrade, and possibly a weapon mounted light. You find an 18.5" barrel with a nice little brass bead front sight on a Facebook gun group, and order up some MAGPUL furniture for it. I dig a shorter barrel for this, as there isn't a lot of room to maneuver around within the confines of a home, and the shorter tube is perfect.

The MAGPUL forearm and stock are a nice and ergonomic addition and since they are polymer, they don't scratch or wear easily. Take extra care when installing the forearm as it isn't uncommon to get the action bars in a twist if you're not mindful of such things. You toss that silly duck plug across the room into the trash can and giggle like a little kid while thinking to yourself "limiting the capacity of your home defense weapon is akin to filling up your family car with a whopping two gallons of gas for a trip across the state." It might be a really good idea to add a side saddle mount shell holder. Why not? They work really well and you have a little extra ammo along the side to pop in should the need arise.

Now for the light... This is actually a tough choice. There are tons of lights and all kinds of configurations available to you, but you have to focus on what you're doing with it 90% of the time. Home defense. So you choose a light that is lit via LED and not a standard bulb, and you also choose a unit of medium brightness rather than the airplane landing light your neighbor has hanging off his Glock 19. Why? You know that most all hallways and rooms in homes are light in color and popping on a weapon light with

the white hot intensity of 10,000 suns will instantly zap your night vision acclimation and you're blind for what seems like hours when you need to be able to see well. For good measure you toss on a bezel mounted light diffuser to spread the light rather than focus it in spot configuration.

You're smart. You've got high self-esteem. Much like Michael Ware, chicks are diggin' ya (shameless self-promotion plug). But something is still bugging you. Are five rounds of hot stuff enough for my home defense rig? After much contemplation you realize it would call into question your man card as well as be thoroughly un-American if you didn't boost the capacity of your boom

stick. Thus, a quick zoom through the catalogs and you have a two shot tube magazine extension and extra strength spring on the way. Upon completion you grab some gun oil off the shelf, which your buddies have affectionately masked and inked over with the phrase "Liberal Tears," and dab a bit on here and there. Test firing your new rig never felt so good and you smile like a kid in a candy store the whole way home from the range.

This is just one example of the many possibilities out there and method in which you can utilize a firearm for multiple roles or specific roles. Not having a trusty workhorse shotgun in your collection is like not having a collection at all, so if you don't have one run, not walk, to snag yours today. If you need help, give me a ring and I'll spend your money for you with no shortage of suggestions on tailoring it to fit your dreams. 🍻

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