



Gunleather for the New Old West

MERNICKLE EVIL ROY "WILD BUNCH" 1911 HOLSTER & MAG POUCH

Reviewed by Peter Caroline

A while back, I had an opportunity to review and subsequently purchase a Guncrafters Industries .50GI pistol (see August 2010 *Blue Press*). A handgun of this quality deserves equally impressive leather and, while reading the latest *Blue Press*, I found what appeared to be the perfect solution: Mernickle Holsters had created a 1911 holster for the recently created "Wild Bunch" competition category. It was an ideal match, a marriage of classic Hollywood Western history and what I considered to be the ultimate iteration of John M. Browning's finest handgun design.

Now, it just so happens that I am a member of a minority group that is frequently subject to discrimination. I'm left-handed. And because the vast majority of shooters are right-handed, that market determines what kind of holsters Dillon keeps in stock. So I went directly to Mernickle and explained my situation. No problem. They were happy to turn out a portside rig for me or any other sinistrally-inclined customer.

When the holster and mag pouch arrived, I was delighted at the quality of the workmanship. The fit and finish are impeccable. Although this is a rig built for competition and hard use, it has the distinction of being built for a species of competition in which the participants are often being

judged on appearance as well as performance. To take off from Billy Crystal's Fernando character, "It is just as important to *look* marvelous as to shoot marvelous!" While the rig has an authentic turn-of-the-century appearance, complete with US-oval stamping, the ergonomics and speed of draw are everything a modern Cowboy Action Shooting competitor could ask for. It is hard-molded for years of heavy use, will easily accommodate a heavy 2" gunbelt, and the T-nut lock system keeps the holster securely in place. Also included is a removable rawhide safety strap for those who fancy such things.

It should be obvious that someone intimately associated with Fast Draw competition created this holster/mag pouch combo. Bob Mernickle started shooting Fast Draw in Canada back in the late 1960s. As his skills advanced, he started analyzing the holsters that worked best for him, added his own improvements and created his first rig. In the mid-1970s, after several competitions and subsequent improvements, he went to his first sanctioned World Fast Draw Association contest, and set a world speed record in one of the events. Another competitor witnessed this feat, asked Bob where he got the holster and then asked, "Can you make one for me?" Bob agreed, and as the word spread, he was in business.