

STARS & STRIPES AMMUNITION

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WHY SHOULD YOU CHOOSE STARS & STRIPES AMMUNITION?

The debate goes round many times for shooters as to why they should choose a premium custom ammunition over factory made, discounted brands, re-milled, or surplus.

To the ill informed, the first thing noted is that custom hand made ammunition costs more than over the counter factory ammunition. While this is true in most cases involving popular calibers and bullet weights, it certainly cannot be applied to certain low production volume magnum calibers using comparable premium bullets. This comparison cannot even begin to be applied to true one off custom ammunition and those production calibers in limited supply and popularity.

The price of your ammunition is of little consequence when compared to the cost of equipment, travel expenses, and licensing on a big game hunt. The bullet is one of the major determining factors when it comes to whether or not you will bag your game or go home empty handed. If you don't know what you are buying and the differences and benefits of custom ammunition over factory ammo, then one could conclude that cheaper is better. Like everything in life, you get what you pay for, and results may not be what you expected.

Few people would even consider going on the hunt of a lifetime with a firearm chosen for the fact it cost less than anything else available even though firearms of superior quality were available, or use a guide of questionable competence just because he was the cheapest guide when other more pricey and more highly qualified guides were available.

Being able to match your ammunition to your particular hunt and game is also a very desirable benefit of custom ammunition. Purchasing ammunition designed for cold weather use will give you a definite advantage over factory ammunition, as it will have more velocity and retained energy downrange. The same goes for ammunition designed for use in very high temperatures, as this ammunition will be much safer and less problematic. This is of extreme concern for those hunting dangerous game in Africa where a failure to extract a fired case from too much pressure resulting from high temperature could cost someone their life!

With little doubt, it only pays to use the highest quality ammunition possible for your hunting, and whenever possible to match it to the specific application. After all, the price of a couple boxes of ammunition is inconsequential to the other costs involved with hunting.

Our production ammunition is aimed at those customers not wanting custom ammunition, but looking for an edge on performance and quality over factory products. This ammunition has more attention to detail placed on its manufacture and therefore can cost slightly more than factory does, but it is a superior product over factory ammunition.

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Our goal is to provide the most accurate, consistent, and cleanest ammunition you can find anywhere. Our ammunition is hand assembled on the best machines available in the industry, and uses only premium components from the best suppliers. Defense handgun and certain rifle ammo also utilizes nickel-plated brass, where available, to eliminate corrosion and increase reliable functioning under adverse conditions. This gives the shooter virtually unlimited options, when it comes to shooting. All of our ammunition is 100% guaranteed for consistency.

Our production ammunition is actually tested in a real firearm after development to verify that it will deliver the desired performance in a real firearm.

I will never talk badly about factory ammo. In my experience the premium factory brands are very good, and they are the benchmark that I use to make my accuracy and consistency comparisons with. I endeavor to exceed all performance levels of factory ammunition before I market anything. Providing a superior product is what handmade and custom ammunition is all about!

However, factory ammo isn't very specialized, and probably never will be due to the demands placed on it by the volume manufactured and the economics involved with that scale of manufacturing. Not all factory ammo is created equally. You get what you pay for, if it is cheap, you can bet it will probably be dirty burning and may provide only so so accuracy. There are more variables which separate Stars & Stripes' ammunition from factory ammo than we could include in this website and keep your attention. If you have any questions about what makes our ammunition or a particular bullet we use tick, email me, I will explain what you need to know.

Accuracy is something every ammunition company goes to great lengths to prove. Accuracy is very important to us as well, and we strive to make the most accurate and cleanest ammunition possible. But also important is consistency, and bullet performance, and these are 2 areas we strive to provide the utmost quality in.

All of our production and custom ammunition is guaranteed for consistency. The only exception is our ammunition for obsolete firearms. Consistency matters! When you have it, you will have accuracy. We don't give accuracy claims as all shooters and guns are of different capability, and how one gun or person shoots may be different than another. Firearms can also have their preferences too, just like people!

Cartridge components make a big deal for topflight performance. We only use premium OEM and name brand components in our ammunition. Only those companies whose products have delivered long track records of proven performance ever get considered when it comes to what we put in our ammunition.

Cartridge cases are one of the key factors to making outstanding ammunition. Premium brass is a must! Good cases will be very uniform in case volume, case wall thickness, and roundness. Consistent internal volume will mean that the propellants will burn at the same rate every shot.

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Consistent wall thickness will mean the bullet will stay centered in the bore when the shot is fired since the brass will stretch the same on each side. Roundness will keep the cartridge centered in the chamber the same way for every shot.

Propellant powders do more than just make the bullet move. The selections to choose from are immense, most are very good, but they all work a little differently in different case sizes and shapes, with different bullet weights and styles. We select every propellant for its consistent internal ballistics for a given cartridge and bullet weight. Consistent internal ballistics leads to consistent external ballistics. Internal ballistics deals with the bullet's flight inside the barrel, external is once it leaves the barrel.

Factory ammunition takes this propellant factor into consideration to a certain degree, but the main deciding factor on what propellant to use is economics; if powder 'A' costs 0.2 cents less per grain used than powder 'B', then guess what powder will get the nod. Two tenths of a cent isn't much, but it adds up over millions of rounds produced by a large factory. As long as powder 'A' gives acceptable performance and accuracy when compared to the competition's product, the cheaper propellant will always get the nod. It may not be the best choice, but it will work well.

Primer selections are also critical to consistent performance. A primer that can't get the fire lighted easily will deliver poor ammunition consistency and extremely wide velocity spreads, hang fires, or even failures to fire. Certain propellants are harder to light up than others are, particularly the copious amounts of very slow burning compressed propellants used in magnum cartridges on a cold day. We use only premium primers selected for their ability to consistently ignite the propellant being used in the cartridge it is used in under all normal temperature ranges.

Bullet performance is the final deciding factor for any ammunition. It must do very specific things for its intended application, and most premium brands will do it, providing the shooter does their part and uses the bullet within its design limits. Matching the bullet to the application is critical in this area.

Match ammunition must be super accurate and this means bullets must be very exacting in their dimensions. They must also have very aerodynamic shapes to cheat the wind and deliver the flattest trajectories possible with as little wind deflection as possible. Heavy construction is not needed, as the bullet must only be strong enough to resist breaking up at the designed velocity and spin rates it will be shot at. A desirable quality is that the bullet will break up easily if it hits something solid, thus limiting the ricochet potential.

Varmint bullets are constructed in same way match bullets are, but must withstand some incredible velocities and be fragile enough to blow up on impact to give instant kills no matter where they hit the varmint. For this reason most .224 caliber bullets and other calibers of match and varmint bullets are not suitable for big game hunting, since they are designed for instant uncontrolled expansion and will only create ineffective shallow wounds.

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Hunting bullets must be heavily constructed to resist breaking up upon impact with the game animal, even at magnum velocities. They must deliver acceptable accuracy, yet reliably and controllably expand over a broad range of velocity. Full metal jacketed types and true solids are not designed to expand, but must not rivet, rupture, or bend if they are to do their job. Nothing is more critical to hunting than the selection of the correct bullet for the hunting at hand. What works for Whitetail will be a miserable choice for Cape Buffalo and conversely, only premium grade bullets should be used for any kind of hunting. The hunter owes it to his quarry to provide the quickest and cleanest kill possible. OEM bullets are OK for light non-dangerous game, but premium bullets always work better, especially when things go bad or the shot is going to be longer than you anticipated.

OEM bullets are great general-purpose bullets that work well over a broad range of light duty use. They work their best when targets are light and velocities are modest. They are generally best for practice use. They provide an economic means of shooting more and generally provide accuracy on par with any other bullet except match bullets. Premium bullets will deliver more performance, but don't always make sense for plinking or punching paper. Our production ammunition uses OEM type bullets for all non-magnum rifle cartridges. This gives the shooter the opportunity to shoot ammunition that will be close to the accuracy and ballistics of his hunting ammunition. Of course one should practice with the ammo they intend to do business with too.

See the listing on what makes a bullet a winner to find out more about how a bullet works.

In general, I hope that all of my customers come away from their shooting happy and satisfied. Our sport is under tremendous threat from many sources, and it is important for all of us to fully appreciate what we have and to protect it so our future generations can share our experiences. Join the NRA, or another group. They are our strongest means of defending our rights.

There are over 75 million gun owners in this country yet so few of us ever bother to vote, we are a majority, yet we are treated like a minority because we seldom stand and do anything but complain about how our rights are slowly dissolving away. Voting is important, and you do count, it is our only way to be heard loud and clear politically. So get out and vote in our free elections. Make your choice and protect our rights. If you aren't sure of which candidates support our firearms rights, contact the NRA, they will have a complete listing of the friendlies and the hostiles.

And keep in mind that not all people like guns, and some are just undecided. We are all the ambassadors for our sport. Try to make a responsible good impression on those around you, lest the undecided ones decide we should be stripped of our rights. We can't change the minds of those who hate our guns, but we can sure try not to push the middle road people into the other camp! Don't destroy private property, clean up after yourself when you are done shooting, ask permission before shooting on someone's land, don't act like a total ass when shooting, shoot in a safe manner and place (and that means keeping your surplus tracer and incendiary ammo for show only since we don't need any range or forest fires!). And when you get home, lock up your

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firearms in a responsible manner to protect them from theft and unwanted usage by children. Irresponsible careless storage of firearms is one of the most under rated threats to our industry. Every time a kid or thief takes one of our guns and kills someone, it just throws another log on the bonfire in the anti-gun camp.

And most important of all, introduce a non-shooter to our sport, preferably a youngster who can carry on our traditions. Just keep in mind that the new shooter will not appreciate being given their first shooting lesson with a 44 Magnum or 378 Weatherby Magnum, so keep it mild for them, a 22 will go a long way for building their confidence and they will enjoy what they are doing and in all likelihood will move on to bigger things when they are ready. If you don't own a 22, then maybe it is something to consider. Not only are they mild, but they are economical to shoot and encourage a lot of practice, and they are just plain fun on top of all that.

What you consider mild by your familiarization will undoubtedly be fierce to them due to lack of experience and possibly the fear of the unknown. What is even nicer about the 22 is that if that person finds shooting boring and never wants to do it again, they won't be able to spew off to other potential new shooters about how much pain they experienced their first time shooting. It isn't about impressing them with power or how much destruction you can do, Mr. Commando! Just get them started right and they will be with us forever.

Encourage this new shooter to join the NRA, and to enroll in other firearms classes, particularly the safety classes. Safety is everything. Even the seasoned shooter can learn something from one of the NRA classes. With our growing population and shrinking wide-open spaces, it is more important than ever to know and understand the safety issues and the laws that govern us.

Be safe and shoot straight!

Clint "Kola" Huisinga
President, Stars & Stripes Custom Ammunition