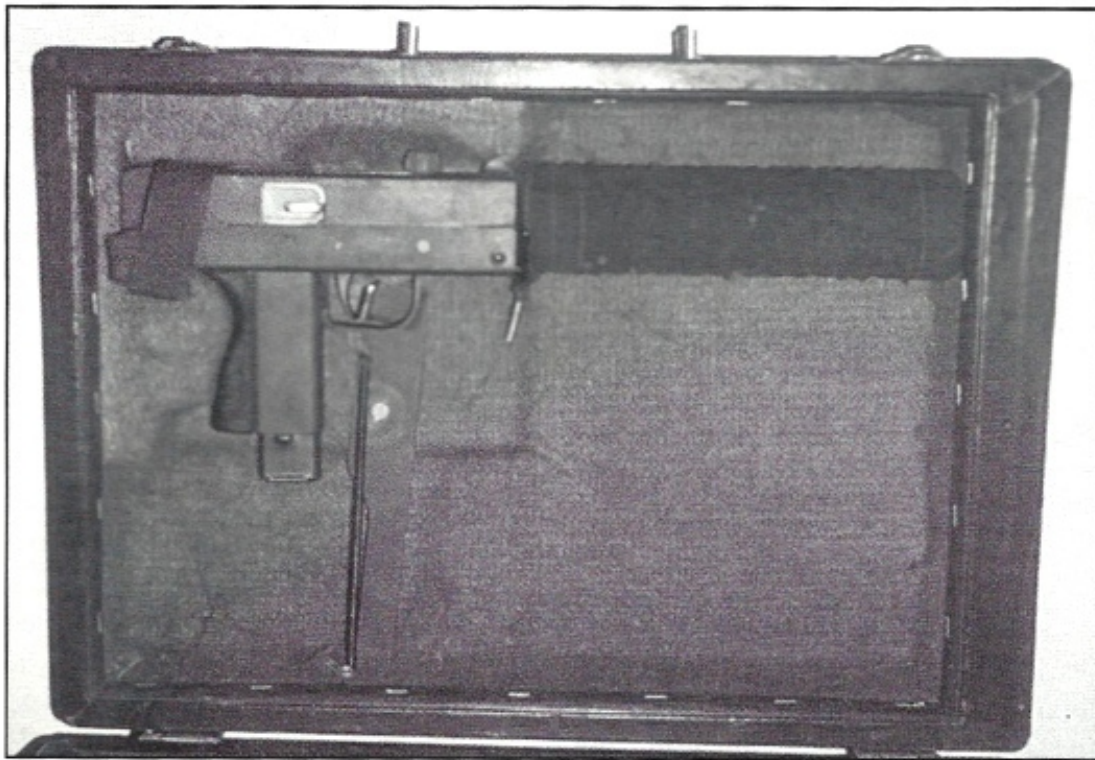


An Overview of Operational Briefcases For MAC-Type Sub-Machine Guns

by William D. Ehringer



Operational briefcases offer law enforcement, undercover, or covert operators high firepower in a very stealthy package. In many instances, the operational briefcase is the only line of defense between the user and a perpetrator. Thus, it is very important that the operational briefcase be reliable, deliver high firepower, be stealthy, and if the situation arises, allow the user to easily extract the weapon to maintain a defensive position. Unfortunately, Class II manufacturers or individuals have not actively pursued the research and development of operational briefcases and very few operational briefcases are available for sale. It is important to clarify that, in this author's opinion, an operational briefcase is defined as a modified briefcase or small piece of luggage that holds *and fires* a gun that is mounted inside of the case. There are many pieces of luggage that can house a gun, but an operational briefcase has the capability to fire the gun that is inside of the case without opening the case or removing the gun. It is also the opinion of this author, that operational briefcases are not "range toys", but functional accessories for law enforcement or covert operators who need stealthy protection. I make this blanket statement because shooting a submachine gun remotely, and without seeing how the gun is behaving, is inherently dangerous and special care and practice with an operational briefcase is a must for safe and efficient use.

Lead Photo: MAC M11/380 operational briefcase showing the M11 and the trigger actuator bar. A Velcro™ strap holds the rear of the M11 and the felt-lined case covers the wooden block which molds around the M11.

Operational briefcases are considered AOWs if the case houses any gun other than a machine gun. Individuals who use an operational briefcase to fire any gun other than a machine gun must register the gun to be placed in the case as an AOW, file a Form 1, and pay the \$200 making tax. Of course Class II manufacturers can make operational briefcases for use with other guns rather than machine guns, and then subsequent transfers are only \$5. An operational briefcase without a gun to fit inside it is nothing more than a fancy piece of luggage. An interesting note of caution was issued by Jerry Prasser. He had received a copy of an ATF letter indicating that the possession of an operational briefcase without owning a machine gun which could be used in the case, and a Title I firearm, could be considered intent to build an unregistered AOW. Thus, it would be a good idea if you do own an operational briefcase to either have a machine gun that fits the case, or register the gun you plan to put into the case as an AOW.

Over the years a number of operational briefcases have been made for sub-machine guns. The most frequently encountered is the Heckler and Koch operational briefcase for the HK MP5K. The HK briefcase mounts the HK MP5K using the claw mount and the firing of the weapon is done by a mechanical set of levers that are actuated by an external trigger mounted in the briefcase handle (See

Small Arms Review, Vol. 2 (10), pp 24-30, 1999). In addition to the HK briefcase, an American 180 briefcase was made in limited numbers by a company called BUD. This briefcase was laser aimed, and fired by means of electronic solenoid. Other examples of operational briefcases include a Ruger MKII silenced operational briefcase, and an Uzi operational briefcase (both of unknown manufacturer). To the best of this author's knowledge the only Class II manufacturer, other than H&K, that currently manufactures operational briefcases is DAW/Ozark Armory. The author has made two operational briefcases for his personal MAC-type weapons, which will be discussed below, and the rest of this article will focus on SWD or MAC operational briefcases.

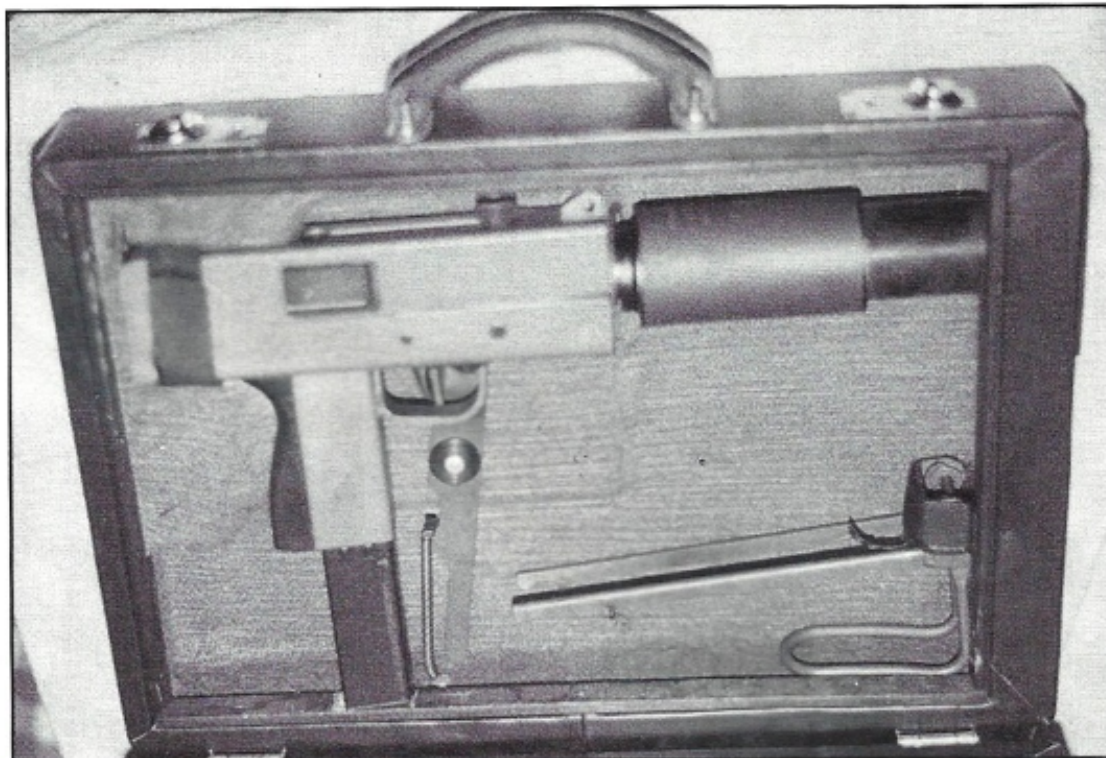
Military Armament Corporation Operational Briefcase for the Model 11

The Military Armament Corporation briefcase was first introduced in 1969 shortly after the development of the Model 11/380. This briefcase has a leather exterior and two exterior modifications: First

Photos by
William D. Ehringer,
Dennis Todd, Jerry
Prasser, and Don Austin
Wagenknecht

Right: MAC 10/9mm operational briefcase is identical in design to the M11/380 with the exception that the suppressor for the M10 is modified to fit the case. There is also a provision for the wire stock.

it has a small 3/4" hole that lies approximately 3" from the top of the case. The hole is surrounded by a leathered pocket that holds a small piece of paper or business card. The card can be painted the same color as the external leather to mask the presence of the hole. This is the business end of the briefcase that allows bullets to pass to the external environment. The other external modification is a small metal lever located on the bottom of the briefcase. The lever protrudes about 1" and is the mechanical link that actuates the M11 trigger. Internally, the briefcase contains a series of wooden blocks covered with green crushed felt. The M11's magazine housing is sandwiched in these blocks. A Velcro strap that is bolted to the briefcase holds the rear of the gun down, while the suppressor end cap fits into a recess in the front of the briefcase. The reciprocating charging handle is allowed free movement by a recess in the top of the briefcase. The mechanical lever that fires the M11 is hinged at a point about 3" below the trigger guard. The top of the mechanical lever is canted and fits into the M11 trigger guard. A spring attached to the mechanical lever is bolted to the bottom of the briefcase to aid in retuning the lever to the unfired position. On the opposite side of the briefcase are two addi-



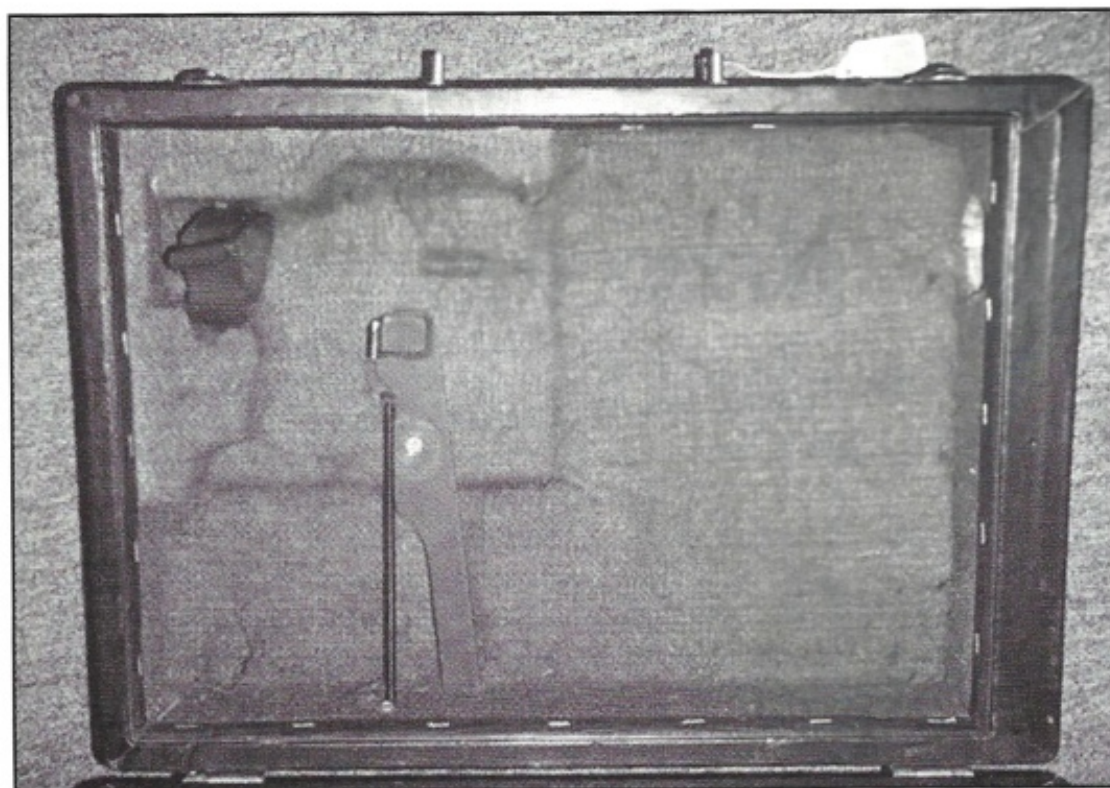
tional magazines that are strapped to the operational briefcase via two-each Velcro straps. In addition, the opposite side has a shell deflector riveted to the case that diverts empty brass to the bottom of the briefcase when the gun fires, thus increasing reliability.

Shortly after the M11 briefcase was introduced, a specially modified MAC-10/45 and MAC-10/9 suppressor was made to accommodate the M10. The MAC M10 operational briefcase was nearly identical to the M11 briefcase. Thus, MAC took a M10 suppressor, reduced the second stage tube length, re-threaded the end and made a specialized shortened suppressor. The briefcase shown in the picture is housing an M10/9, but the M10/45 could also be fitted in the case since the dimensions are

identical. The MAC M10 operational briefcase was operated by pulling the trigger actuator bar located on the bottom of the briefcase. Additional provisions for two magazines, and in the example picture shown a holder for the wire buttstock.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the MAC M11 Operational Briefcase

The major advantage of the MAC M11 and M10 operational briefcase is the use of a sound suppressor. The point of carrying an operational briefcase is to have great firepower in a stealthy package. Once an H&K operational briefcase is fired (or any operational briefcase with no sound suppression), the element of stealth is lost. Another obvious advantage of the MAC operational briefcase is its high cyclic rate of fire. At close to 1800 rounds/minute the M11 puts a lot of lead out in a very short time. In addition, the M11 operational briefcase allows the M11 to be quickly extracted by simply opening the briefcase and pulling the weapon out of its one Velcro binder. The MAC M11 and M10 Operational Briefcase is certainly a collector's item and that is one of its other big advantages. I have only personally seen 2 MAC M11 Operational Briefcases in the 15 years I have been following Class III toys. When one does come up for sale it currently can command at least \$1500.



MAC M11/380 briefcase showing the internal design. You can see the spring attached to the trigger actuator bar which resets the trigger bar.



Left: DAW Operational briefcase internals. The SWD M11/9 is held in place by a front block and a clamp on the magazine well. The box on the lower right (A) holds the battery. There is a button on the side of the box that will turn off the circuits from the inside. Teflon blocks on the right hold three magazines.

A major disadvantage of the MAC M11 operational briefcase is the inability to keep the gun on target while firing in the full-auto mode. The high cyclic rate means the gun will rise off its intended target easy, and that could be very dangerous when innocent bystanders are present. Furthermore, there is no means to aim the MAC M11 briefcase. The operator must either be in very close proximity or "walk" the limited number of rounds onto the intended target. Finally, I am very uneasy about a machine gun firing from within a briefcase that is not really secured. A piece of Velcro and some wooden blocks are by no means

a secure situation, in my opinion. Also the trigger actuator bar is located in the bottom of the briefcase, which means firing the case requires taking the off-hand and placing it on the bottom of the briefcase. This is not a normal means of carrying an operational briefcase and could easily reveal the contents to those on the receiving end.

A Story About The M11 Operational Briefcase

Early in the development and marketing of the MAC operational briefcase, Mitch WerBell III was demonstrating the M11 Operational Briefcase at a California gun range for a visiting John Wayne. By accident, Mitch WerBell picked-up the newly manufactured MAC M11/380 operational briefcase to demonstrate to the crowd when one of the MAC executives noticed that Mitch WerBell had the case pointed in the wrong

direction (at John Wayne). The company executive screamed at WerBell, "Mitch, you have the case pointed the wrong way and you're going to shoot John Wayne." Luckily, no one was hurt in that incident. The point is, operational briefcases are dangerous weapons and the case should always be treated as a loaded weapon and the FRONT of the case always pointed down range.

Don Austin Wagengknecht Dignitary Protection Briefcase for the SWD M11/9

This briefcase was a radical departure from the HK and MAC briefcases that preceded it because it utilized electronic firing controls and it was laser sighted. DAW designed this case from scratch, and it is certainly a one of a kind. This briefcase consists of a Haliburton-style aluminum case, which externally has been modified in several ways. First, the case has a 3/4" hole in the front of the case approximately 2" from the top. This hole is where the exiting bullets escape the case. The hole is covered by a small business card that is painted to match the external aluminum color. The top of the briefcase has one toggle switch and one button. The toggle switch turns on the electronic controls. The button on the top of the case is pushed to actuate the SWD M11/9 trigger. The final external modification is a small 1/8" hole that allows the internally mounted laser to exit the briefcase. Yes, I said laser. Inside of the aluminum briefcase is a laser that is mounted to a front mounting post that is aligned with the 1/8" external hole. When the DAW briefcase is turned on, the laser is energized and shoots a beam that



Left: MAC 10/45 operational briefcase made by the author. This operational briefcase houses a M10/45 which is held in place by two brackets. The trigger is actuated by a wire pulley system which exits the top of the case near the handle. The suppressor end cap is screwed through the case from the outside to help secure the M10.

Right: MAC 10/45 and Colt 0633 SMG. The M10 is the primary weapon which is not easily removed and the opposite side of the case holds the Colt SMG. The Colt SMG can not be fired in the case but is easily removed by releasing two brackets.

has been aligned with the bore of the SWD M11/9. Also inside of the DAW operational briefcase is a box which houses the rechargeable battery (recharger was included with purchase) used to power the solenoid. The solenoid and trigger actuating device is a simple design which pulls the trigger rearward when the fire button is depressed. The 6V solenoid travel is completely adjustable allowing for crisp pulls of the very hard SWD M11/9 trigger pull. The electronic firing mechanism can be turned off using an internal switch. The SWD M11/9 is held in place by a De-St-Aco mounting clamp that holds the magazine housing stationary, while the threads of the M11/9 barrel are screwed into a bushing that aligns the barrel with the opening. The whole internal system is mounted to a piece of aluminum plate providing extra strength. Finally, three magazines are held in place behind the gun with three magazine clamps providing additional ammunition. The DAW briefcase can be locked and has an external combination to secure the gun when not in use. The suggested retail price for the DAW operational briefcase was \$2500 in 1996.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the DAW Operational Briefcase

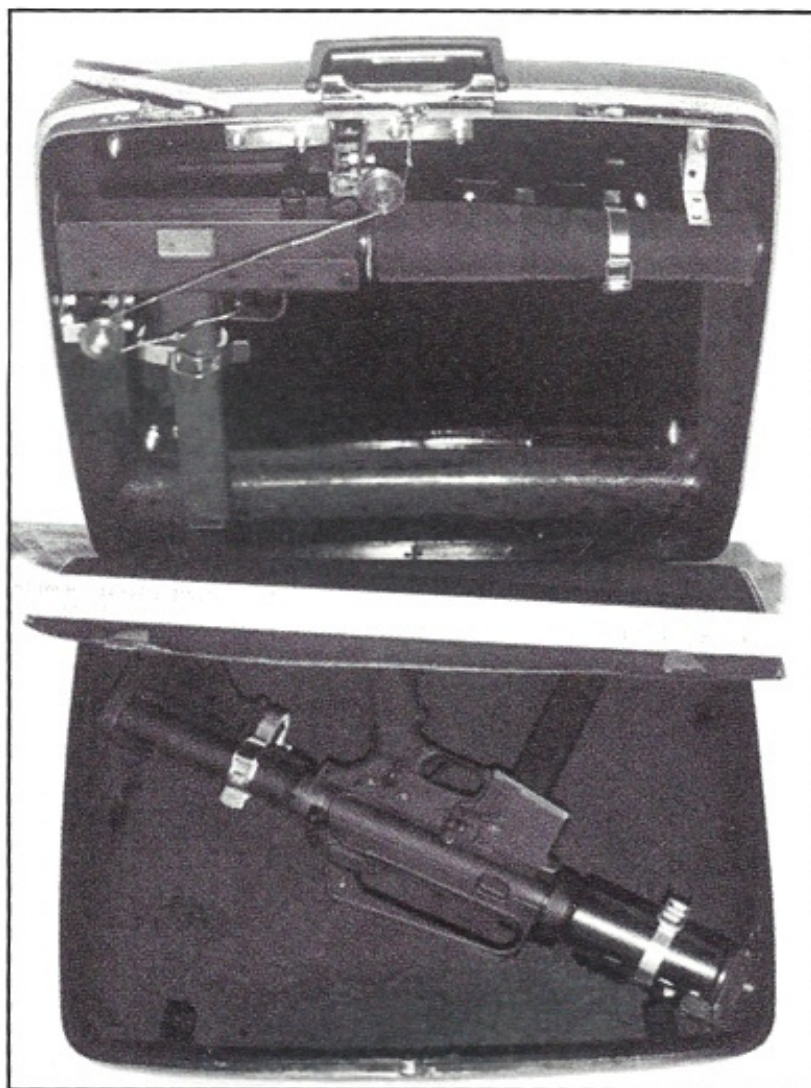
The DAW operational briefcase has many advantages to the limited number (only 21 were made) of individuals who acquired one 5 years ago (Don has informed me that he has 4 cases for sale to interested parties. As an additional aside,

DAW has moved to a new location that has full-machine shop capabilities, bluing, and a variety of gunsmithing services). First, it has the capability of being aimed that insures target acquisition. This, in my opinion, is a very important attribute of an operational briefcase because a situation could arise where innocent personnel could be hit by an operational briefcase which is not aimed. Another important attribute of the DAW operational briefcase was the ease of extraction of the SWD M11/9. Once the gun is fired it may be necessary to extract the weapon and continue using it, and the DAW briefcase is designed for ease of extraction. It also has a well-designed mounting system that locks the gun in the briefcase and keeps it from potentially coming loose. The only disadvantage of the DAW briefcase, in that it has no sound suppression capability. DAW mentioned that it was on option but the briefcase shown has no provision for sound suppression. Another minor disadvantage, which I find with this briefcase, is the use of electronics for fire

control. In my opinion electronic fire controls are "neat" but if your battery goes dead or you have a short in the wiring you're stuck with a non-firing briefcase. However, I must mention that the DAW operational briefcase that I have witnessed fired flawlessly. Thus you can take or leave my opinion regarding electronic fire controls.

Some Operational Briefcase Tinkering

Each one of these briefcases has many positive attributes, but there are also several things that I found needed a little improvement. For example, all of the afore-



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mentioned briefcases are designed to shoot either 9mm FMJ or .380 FMJ. Neither of these rounds is considered "big street stoppers" and the lethality of these rounds are more a factor of multiple hits rather than single hits. Users of the MAC and HK briefcases, which lack any method of aiming the briefcase, must rely upon short shooting distances or walking the rounds onto target, which can result in unnecessary ammunition expenditure, or worse, friendly "hits". Another big problem is the lack of sound suppression. The purpose of the operational briefcase is stealth.

However, only the MAC operational briefcase houses a suppressed weapon (the DAW briefcase can be made into a suppressed version), and therefore retains its stealth once fired. The other operational briefcases require the end user to extract the weapon from the case or have a back-up weapon that is readily handy. Removing the HK MP5K from the HK briefcase is relatively straightforward. The same is true of the DAW designed Dignitary Protection Briefcase. And finally, an important aspect of operational briefcases is size and weight. The smallest (in terms of di-

mensions) of the operational briefcases is the HK briefcase, while the DAW and MAC cases run a close second. The stealth of an operational briefcase can be easily given away if the case weighs too much or its dimensions are not considered "typical" for a briefcase. Another problem is the external appearance of the briefcase. Aluminum briefcases are not common and stand out, although they make an excellent mounting platform for shooting a machine gun. The MAC M11 briefcase looks like an ordinary briefcase, but to fire it you have to reach under the briefcase, and that may remove its stealth advantage (along with the protruding actuator).

I made and designed an operational briefcase for the SWD M11/9 SMG that was featured in *Small Arms Review* Volume 2 (10): 24-30. The article described, in some detail, how to make your own operational briefcase for the SWD M11/9 SMG. This operational briefcase utilized electronic firing controls to actuate the trigger and the gun was not suppressed. The case was laser sighted and keeping bullets on target was not all that difficult. However, since the SWD M11/9 was not suppressed, firing the weapon removed the stealth associated with the case. In an effort to make the case safe, I designed the case so that the M11/9 was securely fastened and could not accidentally come loose in the briefcase while firing. While this design did secure the gun to the case, it also prevented the gun from being easily extracted and that coupled to the lack of stealth from a non-suppressed SMG means you better have a secondary weapon within easy grasp. Also, I was unnerved by the use of electronic firing controls that could malfunction, perhaps at the wrong time. I also experienced a great deal of problems getting the solenoids to pull the very heavy SWD M11/9 trigger. Further, the electronic firing controls added unnecessary weight to the case, the battery(s) must be kept charged, and moisture could affect the operation of the case.

Several months ago I set out to design another operational briefcase that blended the best features of all of the operational briefcases made to date, and also added several new twists. While designing this new operational briefcase, I decided early on in the project that the briefcase must have the following features:

- 1. The gun must have potent firepower
- 2. The gun must be suppressed



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- *3. The gun must be capable of being aimed
- *4. The gun (or secondary gun) must be easily extractable (less than 3 second extraction time)
- *5. The gun must be fired by a mechanical lever, and not by electronics

The case I built to satisfy all of these requirements is shown in Figure 7. This operational briefcase holds a suppressed MAC 10/45, which is laser aimed, and mechanically fired by use of a reliable cable and pulley system. The potent .45 round satisfies the lethal firepower component, and at the same time when it is suppressed makes for a very stealthy package since the .45 is naturally subsonic. When the gun is fired from within the case, the MAC-10/45 makes virtually no sound since the closed briefcase dampens the ejection port noise. The use of a .45 round in an operational briefcase makes this case one of the most powerful operational briefcases ever designed. Furthermore, the diminutive size of the MAC 10/45 makes the overall length of the case acceptable and not obvious. But that is only half of the equation. On the other side of the case, is a Colt 9mm RO633 SMG that can be removed in less than 3 seconds. The Colt

SMG is not capable of being fired from within the briefcase, and its placement in the briefcase is to allow the operator an easy access secondary gun that is accurate and selective fire.

The MAC-10/45 Operational Briefcase

The operational briefcase I chose was composed of aluminum and fiberglass. The case before modification weighed in at 6 lbs. The operational briefcase once modified weighs in at 23 lbs with both guns loaded. The dimensions of the case are 21"L x 16"H x 6" deep. The length of this case allows the MAC 10/45 to fit perfectly within this space. The overall size and weight of this case is larger than any of the operational briefcases made to date, which is certainly somewhat of a detractor. However, when carried, the case appears just to be a large briefcase, and nothing really suggests that the contents are anything but paper and pencils.

The inside of the briefcase is reinforced with a piece of 10 gauge sheet metal with dimensions of 18" x 12". Four 1" carriage bolts hold the sheet metal to the case. The gun is attached to the case via two modified fire extinguisher brackets.

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Two pulleys are attached to the sheet metal at two points using modified 1/8" steel L-brackets. The L-bracket near the top of the case consists of three brackets welded together and attached to the sheet metal inside of the case. The L-bracket nearest the magazine well consists of two L-brackets, one attached to the sheet metal and one attached to the inside upright of the briefcase. Each L-bracket has a metal pulley attached to it. The pulley was obtained from a sliding door replacement kit. A piece of stainless steel wire is attached to a piece of 1/8" tool steel rod bent to easily fit around the MAC 10/45 trigger. The



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wire then threads through the pulley nearest the magazine well and then to the pulley nearest the top of the case. The wire exits the case near a centrally located hole underneath or near the handle. A small key ring is then wound around the wire, and the wire is drawn tight so that slack is removed from the system. A hole is milled out of the end of the briefcase that allows the suppressor end cap to fit through, but still retains the outside flange of the suppressor end cap. This allows the suppressor end cap to thread into the suppressor and at the same time keep the gun located in the hole and also exit the gases from the

briefcase. A laser intended for mounting on a pistol's trigger guard is mounted to a piece of 3/4" aluminum bar stock that is mounted right above the suppressor. A hole is then drilled in the outside of the case for the laser beam to escape. A small micropressure switch located on the briefcase handle actuates the laser. The fired brass remains in the case and hits the separator panel between the two briefcase halves.

The other side of the operational briefcase consists of two modified fire extinguisher brackets mounted to the case only (no sheet metal reinforcement was used).

The brackets were attached to the briefcase shell using four 8-32x 1/2" bolts. The steel brackets (on both sides of the case) were lined with furniture felt (the kind used on the bottom of chairs to prevent marring of wood or textiles). The brackets hold the Colt RO633 SMG in place. The RO633 (often referred to as the DOE gun) was chosen because it is compact, front sight folds, has selective fire capability, is shoulder fired, and is accurate. The two mounting brackets can be released easily and the gun can be extracted from the briefcase in under 3 seconds.

To mask the modification of the case and its possible contents, all the bolts facing the outside of the case were painted to match the color of the briefcase exterior. Placing a business card holder directly over the suppressor end cap hides the lethal end of the operational briefcase.

Firing the MAC-10/45 Operational Briefcase

To fire the operational briefcase, the MAC 10/45 is placed inside of the case and secured. The case should be pointed down range and while training with the operational briefcase it might be advisable to use a piece of orange masking tape to





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identify the front of the case (where the bullets exit the case). A loaded magazine is inserted into the magazine housing but not engaged by the magazine release. The magazine should not be fully inserted until the case is ready to fire! The trigger actuator bar is attached to the trigger and the wire is then wound around the pulleys. The bolt is then retracted and a cursory check is performed to see that the trigger, cables, and pulley are working safely. The magazine is then fully inserted and the briefcase is closed. The laser is actuated by the micropressure switch, and the key ring is pulled using the middle finger. I fire the case with the rear of the briefcase resting against my right leg, which helps stabilize the case during firing.

Once the MAC 10/45 is fired and/or ammunition is spent, the Colt 9mm SMG can be removed by lowering the divider panel which separates the two halves of the case. The two quick release straps are released and the Colt SMG is then removed. In my particular case, the Colt SMG has a loaded magazine inserted into the weapon, but the weapon is not locked and loaded. In my opinion, the Colt SMG can be quickly cocked as part of the removal process which may add a few tenths of a second to egress, but makes the operation of the case more safe.

Conclusions

Operational briefcases can be an important tool in law enforcement. However, choosing the correct operational briefcase can be critical. Some of the deciding factors that should be considered are size, weight, stealth, firepower, sound suppression and mode of operation. It should be stressed that operational briefcases are inherently dangerous because the direction of the muzzle of the machine gun can be confused and mounting blocks, solenoids and mechanical levers can fail potentially leading to catastrophic results. However, in terms of firepower and stealth, a properly designed and used operational briefcase could make a difference when an obvious show of force is not warranted.

(Dan's Note: There were also a number of other operational briefcases made, most notably one for the American 180 22lr machine gun, that allowed suppression and used a laser, and the Russian "Krinkov" case, that the operator carried and when needed, simply pulled a trigger and the briefcase fell away from the handle

leaving the operator with a full auto 7.62x39 Krink in his hands. LMO had 10 of them back in 1992 or so)

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J. David Truby

Clandestine Weapons

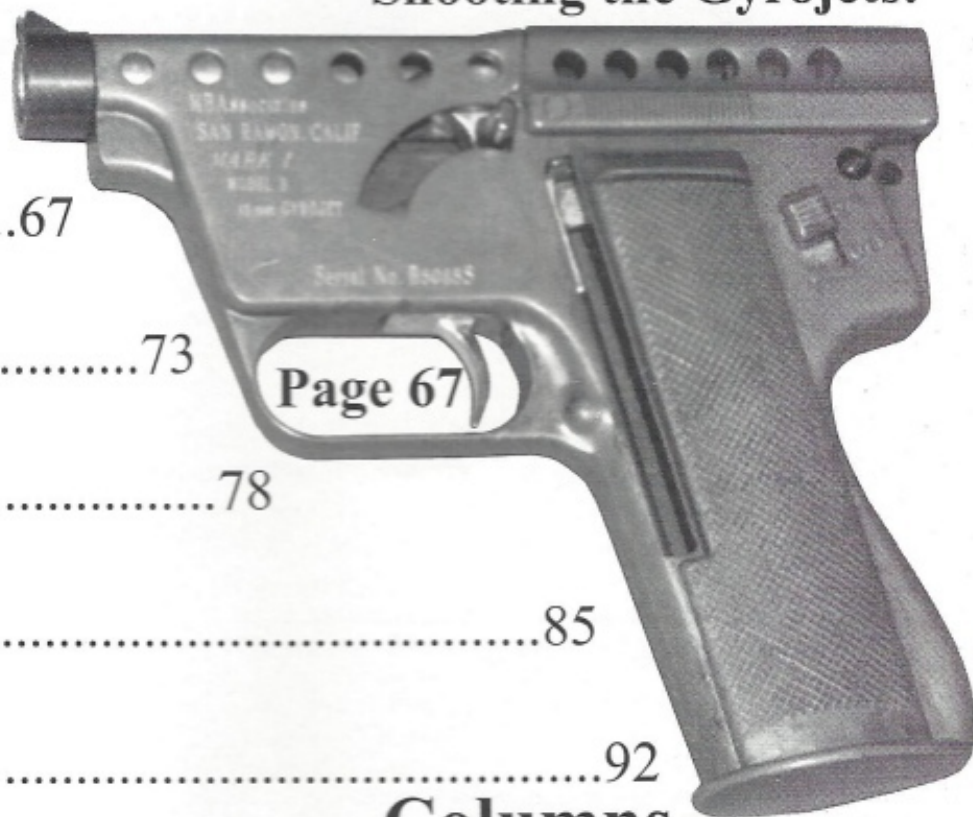
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On The Cover

Super Secret Squirrel Spy D.K. Whelan lurks in the shadows in his quest to save America from any future terrorist threat. *Photo by Phil Dater, M.D.*

Shooting the Gyrojets!



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