



Two "worn out" and damaged older generation Glocks have been revamped into concealed carry workhorses.

Refurbish that old piece of tactical Tupperware.

By Darryl Bolke ★ Photos by Hiro Saga

There was a time when I was one of those guys who came from the “Don’t Mess with a Glock” school of “If It Ain’t Broke, Don’t Fix It.” I carry Glock 9mm’s almost exclusively as a pure service pistol. With that mindset, I would recommend a quality set of fixed steel night sights, and that was that. In all honesty, that’s still pretty good advice.

The problem is that I have several high-mileage Glock 17s and 19s that have been absolutely trouble-free. However, they eventually hit the round-count number where I normally retire guns or sell them off to fellow officers who don’t shoot more than the bare minimum number of rounds required for qualification shoots. But, as a bit of an experiment, when my latest

gian’s promise after many years of wear and hard use. Don also performed an action job. This is where I had to really trust him. Every problem-plagued abortion of a Glock I’ve ever seen was the result of some knucklehead having made “improvements” to it, most notably, a super-whiz-bang action job.

Don assured me that he shared my exact sentiments. What Don does different is he uses all stock Glock factory parts. He basically does the hand finishing that is normally absent from modern automated production and machining operations. This is just like the hand fitting and polish work that used to be done by the legendary craftsmen of the great American gun companies in the good old days.

As a police officer who was responsible for firearms

New Life FOR Old Glocks

Glock went over the retirement line, I decided to try something different.

“Something different” came in the form of a gentleman named Don Ellis, who can rejuvenate a worn-out Glock and give it a new lease on life. For old guns like a beat-up dog you might find at a gun show, Don restores the Austrian polymer pistol without a single negative effect on reliability.

I first became familiar with Don when I wrote a book review on the *Complete Glock Reference Guide*. Don was one of the authors of this worthy tome. Since I’m a multiple-graduate of the Glock factory armorer’s school, as well as their instructor school, I thought I was really on top of working on Glocks. I was wrong. I found that manual to be an excellent resource guide.

During my conversations with Don, he coaxed me out of my “never modify a Glock” stance. I had a G17 to which I’d already done my “universal Glock modification,” which consists of taking the über-reliable G17 and having the grip cut down to take G19 magazines. This particular gun was actually cut to take even the older non-drop-free magazines. The gun had already surpassed the 50,000-round mark, so I figured “what the heck” and sent it to Don.

Don did a stippling job around the entire grip frame that made the fairly slick frame easier to hang on to. Many of the older guns can get as smooth as a politi-

inspections and work-ups for my agency after officer-involved shootings, it was critical for my gun to have 100 percent stock parts in it and a stock trigger pull weight. Don stated that most of his customers are law enforcement officers, so his guns are done with this same caution in mind. The only deviation from stock was the recoil spring guide rod. In this case, my stock one was shot. Don used a stainless-steel rod with a brand-new factory stock G17 spring.

When that first Glock came back home, I was very pleasantly surprised. The first thing that stuck was the grip frame. This gun was smooth from many tough years and was now solidly anchored in my hand to the point of being almost painful. Don laid on the stipple treatment heavily, intending the user to be wearing Nomex gloves. It held in a gloved hand like a fly in Super Glue. It was perfect for tactical applications.

Later, after retiring and not having to shoot in duty gear any more, I simply sanded the grips a bit to knock off the sharp points and make it easier on a bare hand. My presentations from the holster were rock solid with the new grip treatment.

The modified trigger was also an eye opener. It was a huge improvement. The internal parts all had a mirror polish on them. During the process, Don set the trigger up to have a very smooth take-up, with a little more resistance on the initial pull and a very short reset. I



physically reset the sear between shots during my follow-through, so this was a modification that worked very well for how I shoot.

I want a longer initial take-up for my first shot. After that first shot, I want as short of a reset as possible for the follow-on rounds. This trigger is perfect for that, and is still at the factory 5 lb. weight. Many trigger jobs end up just lightening the trigger pull weight. This is a recipe for disaster on a street gun used for defensive purposes.

The only other modification I did was install a Vickers magazine-release button marketed by TangoDown from the same material used by Glock for the stock release. This button is a perfect size between Glock's standard nubbin and the extended buttons that are available from the factory. This particular gun already had Heinie tritium Slant Pro sights on it, so at this point it was good to go.

Eating Crow

I have literally shot the heck out of this gun since it was, after all, my "what the heck" gun. I really wanted to make a liar out of Don to justify my prior admonitions to anyone who would listen about not modifying Glocks. It didn't work, and I now know firsthand exactly what crow tastes like.

The gun just goes bang. I have not been able to get it to fail in any possible way. It just runs. I also shoot it better. After a bunch of testing on typical combat training courses, I ponied up the money and took it to the ultimate handgun shooter test that I have found to date, a Larry Vickers Combat Marksmanship course. I originally intended to

The texturing on this "Universal Glock" G-17— cut down to take every G-19, 17, and 18 mag ever made— allows for a very solid purchase.





My dog ate my homework... no, really. This poor G-19 was gnawed on by a rambunctious puppy. Don Ellis trimmed the frame, textured it and made it into an outstanding deep-concealment pistol.

take this class with my Vickers 1911, but I decided that this was too rare of a chance to really wring out this “improved” Glock.

This particular Vickers class is unique in its approach. The class is generally very small, it is very difficult, and it is usually attended by very accomplished shooters trying to really perfect their shooting skills. Many folks take Larry’s classes to learn to run a 1911 in today’s Glock world. Of course, I had to take the opposite approach.

The class I took would have been far better with a good 1911. A short review is that you are simply mentally and physically punished for two days by a little bull’s-eye target and Larry’s evil timer. Every single shot fired needs to be perfect from start to finish, and under very short time constraints. It’s basically doing a bull’s-eye course at combat speed, and from less



The author working his Universal Glock, on its way to another 50,000 rounds.

than optimal shooting positions.

The basics of sight alignment and picture, the trigger press, the follow-through, and your grip need to be perfect— “close” stands out like a sore thumb in this class— every single time. By the end of that class, I loved the trigger and grip treatment on my Don Ellis Glock. Even the guy known for his 1911 expertise, Larry Vickers himself said, “This is one of the best Glock trigger jobs I’ve ever felt.” Larry likened the trigger to a very short, light double-action revolver trigger. This was a compliment of the highest order, especially coming from a guy who doesn’t sugar coat anything.

Several other very squared-away pistol experts in the class echoed this sentiment. I was so impressed at this point that every single Glock 9mm I carry has now been to Ellis. Most of my guns are carried concealed and against bare skin, so I only have the full grip treatment done to the original gun. It’s too abrasive for constant skin contact, but a great advantage for any gun carried in a duty or tactical holster.

The trigger treatment is now a must, along with the Vickers magazine release and good night sights. I’ve found a few interesting things out with this process. The triggers on older Glocks actually come out better than those on new production pistols. This seems to be because the older frames are possibly more rigid.

Don Ellis can be reached at www.tggincorporated.com. I highly recommend his work, and I think it’s especially worthwhile for anyone with an older police trade-in gun. It actually makes them closer to “perfection” than when they were new.

