

OUT OF THE KITCHEN ONTO THE BATTLEFIELD

THE C.U.M.A. BATTLE CLEAVER IS A
MULTI-PURPOSE POWERHOUSE

STORY BY JOSHUA SWANAGON
PHOTOS BY TANNER SWANAGON AND JOSHUA SWANAGON

THE first time I held the C.U.M.A. Battle Cleaver, my mind was sent racing with possibilities.

One pound, 9.6 ounces of pure hacking mayhem, this hefty blade was designed in conjunction with Combat Ready Knives by Waysun "Johnny" Tsai, founder of the Combined Universal Martial Applications survival school. When Combat Ready contacted me about reviewing the Battle Cleaver, it was an opportunity I couldn't pass up.



**“THE BATTLE CLEAVER
IS DESIGNED WITH ONE
THING IN MIND: HAVOC.”**



The C.U.M.A. Battle Cleaver is available in three handle colors: black, olive green or desert tan.



The Battle Cleaver comes with a nylon sheath with two leg straps, a hook-and-loop retention strap and a large front pocket.

DEFINING FEATURES

- Blade sustains minimal damage even during heavy use against steel and bone
- Rounded G10 scales offer a secure, solid grip
- Blade is easily restored to "like new" condition with cleaning and sharpening

blade, giving it a very ergonomic feel and a natural break to the wrist during chopping. The forward cant of the blade means less energy during heavy use (although I thought the grip dropped a little

low and should have been brought above the edge itself). The G10 scales are as durable as the blade itself and have very natural shaping, including a nice, deep belly to fit the palm.

Bow divots are located on both sides for right- and left-handed use, and on the spine is some nice jimping, recessed just a touch below the handle scales to prevent tearing your thumb up. Just in front of the jimping is a small recess, which could be used as a lashing point. The grip finishes off with a squared pommel with two large, triangular lanyard holes. You can tie a cord through these multiple times for added strength in lashing.

My initial impressions of the Battle Cleaver got me fired up to give it a good, solid run for its money. I was not disappointed.

Steel Versus Steel

When I hear the words "Battle Cleaver," I envision a knife bred for taking abuse and dispatching mayhem to all in its path. I was inspired to find out what special brand of malice the Battle Cleaver could visit upon an unsuspecting car. Fortunately, I live fairly close to a scrap yard, and even though they were slightly disturbed at my strange request to ravage the trunk lid on one of their cars, they were equally intrigued and allowed me to descend



The blade punctured deep, wide gashes into the trunk of a car.

Initial Impressions

When I received the Battle Cleaver, right out of the box the first thing I noticed was the sheath—simple nylon with two leg straps, one hook-and-loop retention strap (which holds the Battle Cleaver securely in place) and a large front pocket to house a mini survival kit or a small fire kit and sharpening stone. The size of the pocket really leaves it open for a lot of options.

That being said, the construction of the sheath could have been just a little better, allowing for better durability and options. I would have made the leg straps removable and used quick-release clips for easier on/off operation. The belt loop is canted from the sheath itself (following the

"THERE ARE NO DRAMATIC LINES ON THE BATTLE CLEAVER TO DRAW ATTENTION OR MAKE IT A SHOWPIECE BY ANY MEANS; BUT IT'S A SOLID WORKHORSE."

angle of the grip), which makes the sheath ride a little strange.

The blade, however, is the star. The Battle Cleaver is a chunk of 5160 spring steel measuring 15 inches overall, with a 9.25-inch blade that is designed with one thing in mind: havoc. The edge sports a 30-degree flat grind and is robust enough for the toughest jobs.

I was a little concerned about the hollow grind on the bevel, and while I might have preferred a flat grind for added

strength, the blade nevertheless held up to my rigorous tests. There are no dramatic lines on the Battle Cleaver to draw attention or make it a showpiece by any means; but it's a solid workhorse.

The grip is where you start to see some form. The grip is angled away from the

CONTACT INFORMATION

COMBAT READY KNIVES
www.CombatReadyKnives.com
info@CombatReadyKnives.com



The handle features durable G10 scales, jimping, and a squared pommel that can be used for lashing a lanyard or paracord.

“WITH A SINGLE STRIKE TO THE DEER’S RIB CAGE, THE BATTLE CLEAVER MADE IT ALMOST HALFWAY THROUGH.”

upon my steel victim with only the stipulation that I stick to the trunk lid and don’t break any windows. Fair enough.

Because the Battle Cleaver has a flat chisel point with sharp corners, I was curious about its penetration power. I was surprised to find it was able to pierce the steel of the trunk lid with ease. After just a few strikes, each one creating a new opening, it was obvious that I would be able to enter the trunk in no time. I also decided to test the chisel point’s scraping abilities and proceeded to scrape the paint down to steel—another chore that proved no problem.

To test how well the flat edge would hold up against steel, I found an edge of the trunk to abuse. I was astounded at



The Battle Cleaver was able to penetrate the trunk with just a few strikes.

DID YOU KNOW?

C.U.M.A. Survival School founder Waysun “Johnny” Tsai (pronounced “tie”) is a lifelong martial arts and combatives student and instructor and has been designing knives and other survival and self-defense related products for many years. Although he has received great recognition for his achievements in the martial arts world, he sees himself as nothing more than the consummate student who enjoys sharing his knowledge with others.

how well the Battle Cleaver went through the steel; I was cutting the edge of the trunk to ribbons like I was cutting... well... ribbons. I have to admit, I was not expecting the results I got. The edge sustained very little damage—just a couple minor nicks and some slight marring on the finish, but otherwise the Battle Cleaver was still in the fight.

As a final test, I decided that a true battle between the blade and vehicle wouldn’t be complete without giving allowing a “team vehicle” to launch its own offensive against the Battle Cleaver. So I ran the chopper over with a Ford F-150. No nicks. No dings. Minor scratches on the scales and the blade came out perfectly straight. That’s what I’m talking about.

Into the Backwoods

I received the Battle Cleaver just in time for the beginning of hunting season, which means flesh and bones were readily available. After the first deer made it to camp for processing, I absconded with one of the legs and went to work.

The Battle Cleaver lived up to its name, making its way through the leg bone with just a few strikes. The blade came through with only a few minor nicks. After the deer was fully stripped and the torso was ready for disposal, we hung it back in the tree and I went to work on the ribs.

Of course, to say that I “went to work” implies that it took effort, which is not quite an accurate description; with a single strike to the rib cage, the Battle Cleaver made it almost halfway through. This caught me off guard, as I was expect-

USER TIP

To eliminate hot spots, you might consider rounding the edges on the belly of the scales with some sandpaper.



The Battle Cleaver’s 5160 carbon steel blade is hollow ground—not a typical first choice for a power chopper, but this one held up to all testing.



The chisel point made a great scraper, easily removing the car’s finish.



I was surprised by how easily I was able to slice ribbons into the car’s bumper.



Even after we drove over the Battle Cleaver in a Ford F-150, it emerged unscathed—still perfectly straight.

SPECIFICATIONS

OVERALL LENGTH: 15 inches

BLADE STEEL: Blackstone-coated 5160 carbon steel

BLADE DIMENSIONS: 9.5 inches long, 3/16 inches thick, 2.25 inches wide

HANDLE: Black, olive green or desert tan G10

SPECIAL FEATURES: Double rivets, lanyard holes

ing some resistance, not to get that deep in one strike. I certainly wouldn't want to be on the receiving end of the trauma the Battle Cleaver would inflict.

You want to make a group of backwoods hunters giddy? Put a C.U.M.A. Battle Cleaver in their midst and tell them to use it however they see fit. During the course of deer camp, the Battle Cleaver chopped wood, split firewood, processed deer (including splitting the pelvic bone), processed various foods (such as jerky, sausage, and stew fixins) and other things I am sure I am not even aware of.


Needless to say, by the end of deer camp everyone wanted a Battle Cleaver of their own.

Taking It Home

After all the torture I put the Battle Cleaver through, it understandably came home with some dings, nicks in the blade and some marring on the finish. Yet even so, it was still able to take an inch-thick limb off of one of my trees with just a couple swings, while still maintaining very clean cuts. The damage done to the blade was so minor, despite the brutal treatment, that after only a minute and a couple swipes on my Ken Onion Work Sharp sharpener, it was good as new.

Undoubtedly, the Battle Cleaver is as tough as its martial-arts expert designer. Although some may find it a bit heavy and cumbersome for backpacking, the Battle Cleaver would easily make itself right at home in your bug-out bag or vehicle.

Bottom line, if you are looking for a solid beater at an affordable price, you'll hardly be able to do better than the C.U.M.A. Battle Cleaver.

Battle hard, my friends. 



Thanks to the weight of its blade, the Battle Cleaver takes a good bite with every stroke.