

BALL  
10 ROUND CLIPS  
LC-10A387-385



THE **WILSON COMBAT VI PRO** IS  
HANDCRAFTED COMBAT EXCELLENCE  
STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOSHUA SWANAGON

PRACTICAL  
**TACTICAL**

**Y**our last line of defense may also likely be your first tool.

Although I have a long history of martial arts, I also consider myself to be a practical person. I have nothing against “fighting” knives in general, I just believe that any knife should have a focus on utility as well.

The truth of the matter is that you will use your knife for common everyday tasks 99.9999% of the time and the odds that you will ever use your knife for actual combat are slim to none. I have spoken with many veterans and special ops guys and almost every time I asked what they used their knives for while deployed—the answer was opening boxes and general utility or field use.

This is where I think the VI PRO by Wilson Combat and Steve Woods of Rock River Iron Works gets it right. It has the

Below: I did the rope press cut test on different parts of the blade with good results.



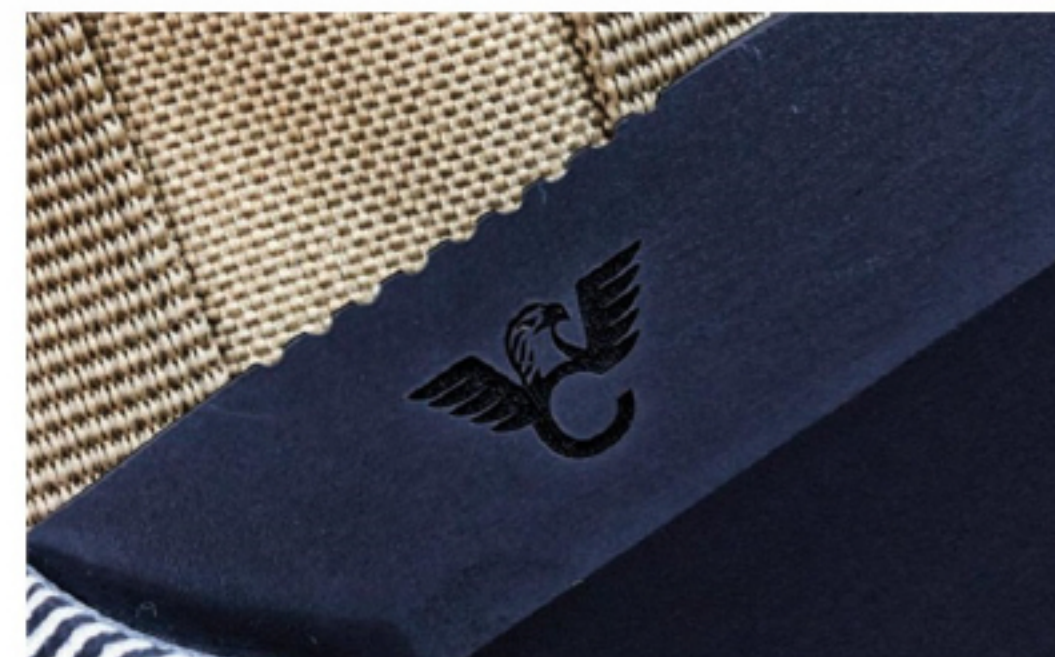
weight, profile and feel of a combat blade, but is still a solid performer when it comes to general use.

### First Impressions

When I first pulled the VI PRO out of the box, I immediately noticed the weight of the 0.205-inch-thick blade. It was very obvious that this is a stout and substantial piece of steel, meant for hard use.

The handle was very well-shaped and ergonomic with a deep forefinger groove, acting as a nice guard, and a swell in the remaining section of the handle. The butt has an exposed tang with lanyard hole for affixing a retention lanyard, providing added security when wet. The handle scales are constructed of G-10 and come in either black, white and black, or green and black—with the two-tone versions

“IT HAS THE WEIGHT, PROFILE AND FEEL OF A COMBAT BLADE, BUT IS STILL A SOLID PERFORMER WHEN IT COMES TO GENERAL USE.”



Left: The jimping on the spine is understated and subtle.

having an almost zebra pattern that is very aesthetically pleasing. Embedded on each side of the handle are the Wilson Combat and Steve Woods Rock River Iron Works medallions, which I thought was a very nice-looking touch.

One note about the grip however, I noticed that the top of the grip is kind of narrow and had hard edges, which



The left side handle features the Steve Woods Rock River Iron Works medallion and the blade is stamped with the Woods mark.

### Steve Woods, Rock River Iron Works

Steve Woods is a custom knifemaker in every sense of the word, with all of his knives being handmade, one at a time. His catalog includes everything from kitchen knives to military fighters, with some of his knives going to military and special operations teams, seeing combat action since 2003. Steve has been making knives for the past 17 years, he's been a journeyman ABS member since 2007.

After having his knives featured in several publications for their design and quality, Steve was approached by Wilson Combat to create a knife specifically for them. Since he's a professional photographer as well, this led to a permanent position with Wilson Combat as their full-time photographer.

The avid outdoorsman and father of two enjoys using his time off to make high quality cutlery for Wilson Combat.



The VI PRO was able to slice the corner off this phone book cleanly.



Left: The thick stock of the VI PRO makes it a very robust workhorse while the dual-colored handle scales make it aesthetically pleasing.

Right: I drove the tip into the old ammo can with little tip damage.

Bottom Left: The tip of the VI PRO went 2 inches into this ammo can with just a couple of hits.

Bottom Right: The tip had no damage, breakage, chipping or curling of the edge and showed little wear on the coating.

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**“I BATONED THE TIP INTO AN OLD AMMO CAN I FOUND ON-THE-CHEAP AT A MILITARY SURPLUS.”**

started biting into my palm a bit as I used it, causing a hot spot. I think I would have given it just a little more girth and rounded it off just a touch more for comfort.

The 6-inch blade has Wilson Combat's tough Black Armor-Tuff coating and has the Wilson Combat stamp on one side and Woods stamp on the other. The blade sports a hollow grind, which normally isn't recommended for a hard use knife, but the thick stock and good heat treating more than make up for it and keep it quite durable. On the spine is some very subtle jimping, which I did not find overbearing. However, I felt it was placed a little far forward for comfortable use; I think I would have brought it back about 0.75 inch.

The full 11.25 inches is sheathed in a sturdy nylon sheath made by Spec.-Ops. Brand and features two belt loops for increased strength and maneuverability. Both belt loops are secured with a snap and hook-and-loop material for added security. The front has a small pouch that would be perfect for a small field sharpener, so you can touch up your edge when necessary in the field.

**Through the Paces**

Due to the nature of this knife, I wanted to do some pretty hard-use tests to see what it can really do. Needless to say, I had some fun with this one. Right off the bat, I wanted to test the sharpness of the edge out of the box. When I test a knife I never sharpen it or touch up the edge, because I feel that it is my job to report on the knife exactly how it will come to you.

So, my first test was to cut the corner off a phone book. At first, I tried to simply press the knife through—as I do with many different knives—being a

**A True Handcrafted Piece of Art**

Each VI PRO is handcrafted, by acclaimed knifemaker Steve Woods. Because each knife is handmade, you know that you are getting a high-quality knife that has been scrutinized each step of the way by the craftsman. However, this also means that quantities are limited, so if you want one, you will want to get one while the getting is good.

hard-use knife, I really wasn't surprised to find that it wouldn't push through, because the edge profile is more robust to be able to handle extreme conditions. However, the edge was sharp enough that it was able to slice right through the phone book with just a couple slices. The cut was clean and thorough.

Next, I cut up an old tire from a mountain bike. First, I used the VI PRO to remove the metal bead by sticking the

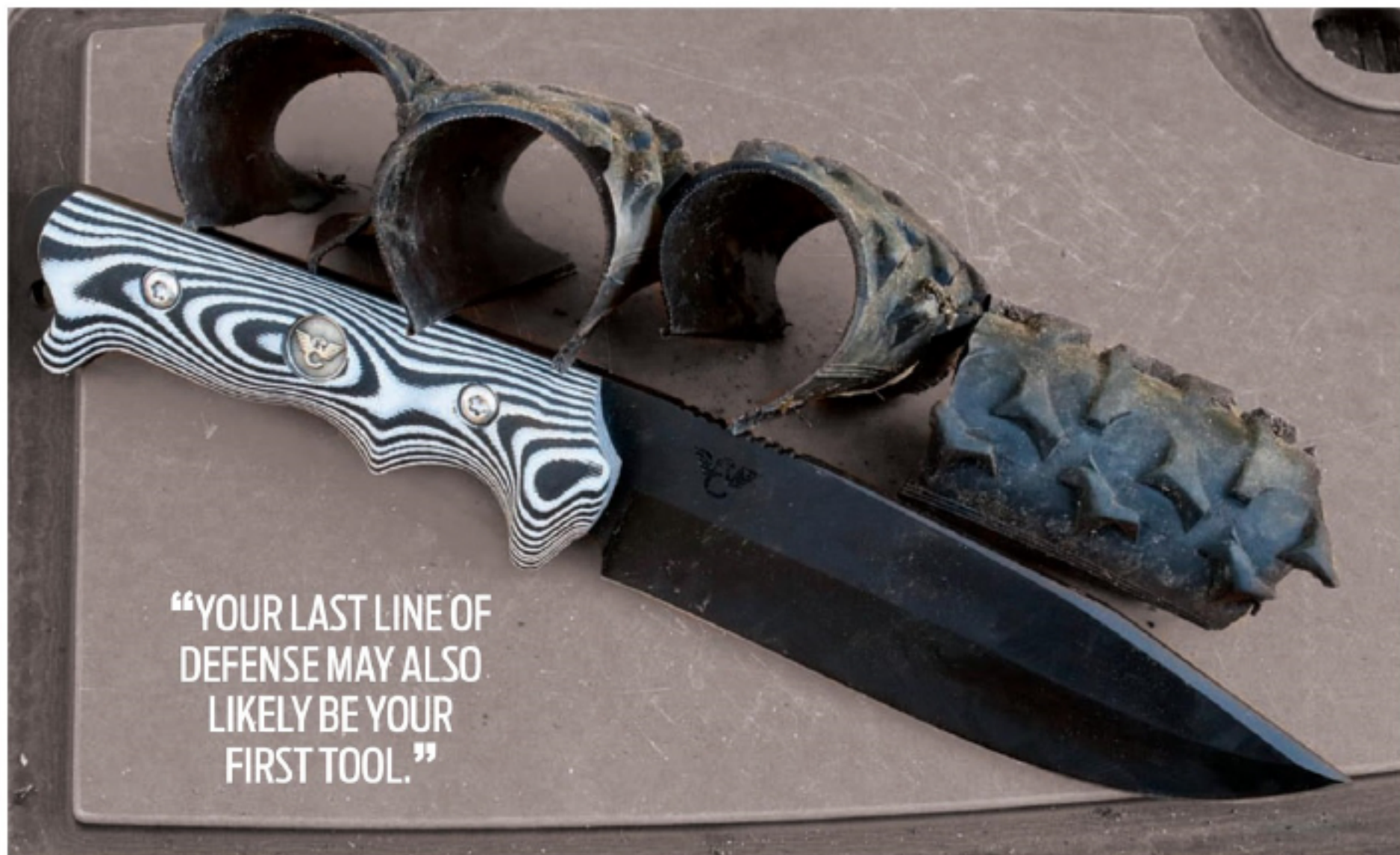
**OLD TIMER**

**WE DON'T DO FRILLS BECAUSE FRILLS DON'T DO WORK.**

**OLD TIMER KNIVES.** Your day starts before sun-up and doesn't end until the work is done. That's why you need a no-nonsense knife that's built to last. That's why Old Timer knives are **Built for Generations.**

Sharpfinger Full-Tang Fixed Blade

FROM THE **SCHRADE** FAMILY



“YOUR LAST LINE OF DEFENSE MAY ALSO LIKELY BE YOUR FIRST TOOL.”

blade in next to the bead and running the edge along the bead until it was fully removed, which it completed with the same ease as running a zipper. Next, I folded the tire in half and used the chest lever grip to cut through the tire.

With the placement of the forefinger groove the handle kind of stuck into the palm a little at the rise behind the finger groove, but the blade sliced right through the tire with zero resistance. I repeated this step a few more times, mostly because it was fun.

I then moved on to some stout nylon webbing, that I purchased at a military surplus, and proceeded to cut it up.

This was very thick webbing, so I was unable to just pull through it with a chest lever grip and had to place it on the table and slice through it—it handled the task perfectly and cleanly.

I finished out the edge test with my usual rope-press-cut test. I performed this test on a few different sections of the edge and found that the closer I was to the handle, the better it performed. But it was able to press through the rope in all sections of the

Using the chest lever grip, I was able to reduce this mountain bike tire to its least common denominator.

edge, some just did better than others.

Now I got to the fun part. I batoned the tip into an old ammo can I found on-the-cheap at a military surplus. With the stout 0.205-inch stock and deep swedge I was able to drive the tip 2 inches into the ammo can with just a couple of strikes on the butt. The tip penetrated the thick steel of the ammo can with very little damage to the coating and mild dulling of the edge. The tip remained very pointy and there was no sign of breakage, chipping or rolling. This was a good testament to the heat treating on the VI PRO.

Just to test the field applications of the VI PRO, I decided to make an expedient feather stick and found that it did a decent job, considering that the edge geometry is not particularly suited for this type of use. Although the curls weren't thin and feathery, they were sufficient to assist in fire starting.

Finally, just to see how the edge held up to the testing I put it through, I sliced some paper. The edge sliced cleanly through the paper all the way until 2 inches from the tip. But, I sort of expected that as I just stuck the tip

into an ammo can. I was pleased with the results.

## Solid Workhorse

Although the higher price point may be a little hard for some to swallow, the quality is definitely commensurate with the cost, especially considering that each knife is handmade by Steve Wood. This is a robust blade that would be a solid workhorse in any environment, with the stainless steel helping resist rust in even wet surroundings. The VI PRO would easily make a good addition to any battle rattle or bug-out bag and be a knife you can rely on when you need it most. KI

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# SPECS

### WILSON COMBAT VI PRO

**Blade Material:** USA CPM 154 stainless steel, HRC 58-59

**Blade Length:** 6 inches

**Blade Thickness:** 0.205 inch

**Handle Material:** 3D machined G-10 (black, black/green or black/gray)

**Handle Length:** 5.25 inches

**Overall Length:** 11.25 inches

**Weight:** 12.7 ounces

**Sheath:** Nylon by Spec.-Ops. Brand

**MSRP:** \$499.95