

HARDCORE AFFLICTION

THE FREEDOM DEFENDER FLIPPER CQC-7
IS AN EDC TO BE RECKONED WITH

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOSHUA SWANAGON





Ten minutes. A lot can happen in 10 minutes. You can organize your sock drawer, read a good article, cook a pack of ramen noodles, or miss out on a chance to meet UFC Hall of Fame member Randy “The Natural” Couture. I have to admit, that last one stung a bit.

During my rounds at the 2017 SHOT Show in Las Vegas, I headed over to the Emerson Knives booth to take a look at their new products. I was shown the Freedom Defender Flipper CQC-7, done in collaboration with Randy Couture and Affliction Clothing. As I marveled over how nice the knife was and heard the story behind it, I made the immediate decision that it would be the cover knife for this issue. It was at that time I was told that if I had been there just 10 minutes earlier, I could have met

Right: The blade is a chisel grind tanto blade with an almost diamond-cut look, thanks to the hard lines on the grinds and the swedge on the drop point.



Above: The oversized flipper acts as a finger guard when the Freedom Defender is open.



“... AT LEAST I GET TO TELL THE STORY OF THIS AMAZING KNIFE AND THE WORK RANDY IS DOING FOR OUR VETERANS—EASING THEIR PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS THROUGH HIS XTREME COUTURE G.I. FOUNDATION.”

Randy. Darn the bad luck! Oh well, at least I get to tell the story of this amazing knife and the work Randy is doing for our veterans—easing their physical, psychological and financial hardships through his Xtreme Couture G.I. Foundation.

First Impressions

When I was first handed the Freedom Defender Flipper CQC-7, there were many things that immediately stood out to me. Although it had the clearly recognizable Emerson look, it had some elements that really made it pop.

The Freedom Defender sports the familiar textured, black, G-10 epoxy/glass laminate handle scales that you have come to know from the Emerson line of knives, but they're set off beautifully by the red aerospace-grade titanium liners and pocket clip screws. The red liners and screws give it just enough zing to really make the Freedom

Defender come to life. Emerson also pulled out all the stops on this knife when it comes to accessing the blade in a hurry. You have three options for bringing the knife to bear—the Emerson Wave feature, a large flipper that acts as a very comfortable finger guard when open, and the thumb button. Any one of these options would be enough to make the blade very accessible at a moment's notice, but to have all three increases your odds of having your blade out, even under duress. Opening the Freedom Defender is very smooth and catch-free through the whole action, with the blade coming to its final snap open position with a clean audible snap of the liner lock. When closing the blade, you can feel the detent pull the blade back into the closed position, with a nice click, holding the blade firmly in place.

The Freedom Defender CQC-7 sports a 3.3-inch chisel-ground tanto blade,

Top Right: The thumb button can be removed and replaced with an upgraded thumb button from Emerson—to dress it up a bit more—if desired.

Bottom Right: The thumb jimping aids in greater control during slicing tasks.

The Chisel Grind By The Numbers

- 01** One side has the edge bevel, while one side is flat. This allows a slightly keener edge, due to the single-edge bevel.
- 02** Some find it easier to maintain, because you only need to sharpen one side.
- 03** A chisel grind can only be right- or left-handed. Emerson knives typically have a right-handed chisel grind, but they sell left-handed, too.
- 04** Chisel grinds are good for woodworking, food prep and combative applications.
- 05** A drawback of the chisel grind is they tend to pull to one side, so it's hard to cut a straight line in daily applications.



Top: During my testing, I got some very clean slashes on a cantaloupe without knocking it over.



Middle: When stabbing into a phonebook and leather swatch, I pierced right through the phonebook and slightly into the table below.



Bottom: I pressed the blade all the way through to cut off the entire corner of a phonebook at the spine side.

“... THE FLAT SIDE OF THE BLADE IS ADORNED WITH THE ‘AFFLICTION FREEDOM DEFENDER’ FOUNDATION CREST WITH EAGLE, STAR AND FLAG ELEMENTS. EVERY PART OF THIS PROJECT DISPLAYS ALL-AMERICAN PRIDE.”

made of CPM S35VN stainless steel, which has an almost diamond-cut look, made by the gorgeous hard lines of the tanto grind combined with the tasteful swedge on the drop point. The Freedom Defender has a 32-degree edge bevel on the grind side, while the flat side has a micro bevel from stropping off the burrs. On the grind side of the blade, you will find the traditional Emerson logo and model designation with the knife number, while the flat side of the blade is adorned with the “Affliction Freedom Defender” foundation crest with eagle, star and flag elements. Every part of this project displays all-American pride.

The pocket clip, which is emblazoned with the Affliction logo, is tight and holds the Freedom Defender securely in the pocket. The Freedom Defender is made for right pocket, tip up carry only, as there are no other options for clip position—which is common with Emerson knives, due to the chisel grind and Wave feature. Just behind the clip, on the butt, is the nice, full-size, lanyard hole for affixing a lanyard. (This allows a little easier draw of the knife, even when under duress.) You can add one of Emerson’s lanyards, available on their website, or something else of your own liking, as I did.

Through the Paces

During the testing phase of this review, I was quite happy with the way that the Freedom Defender performed. Having carried it for a time now, I really like the way it rides in the pocket—it

rides low enough to not be obtrusive, while having just enough sticking out of the top of the pocket to get a good purchase on the knife for a solid draw utilizing the Wave feature. It has a fairly narrow profile, so it doesn’t take up too much of the pocket, getting in the way of keys and other items you may like to carry in the same side.

For my first test, I wanted to check the slashing power of the chisel grind, so I took two water bottles and stood them up, one at a time, taking a couple slashes at each. Although the 3.3-inch blade was not as long as the bottles were wide (preventing me from getting all the way through from front to back), I was able to cut very cleanly without knocking the bottles down. Next, I took a cantaloupe, stood it on end and proceeded to deliver a battery of slashes, all of which cleanly sliced through the cantaloupe without knocking it over.

Next, I wanted to test the penetration power of the tanto point, so I placed a

Using the tip, I sliced through two thick layers of cardboard (and even into the table) with no signs of wear on the blade.



piece of leather onto a phonebook, and with one stabbing motion, I was able to pierce cleanly all the way through the phonebook, with the tip protruding out the other side and a bit into my table. I believe that the Freedom Defender will have no issues with being able to penetrate any subject matter you may put before it.

Finally, I wanted to test its slicing capabilities, so I started with the same phonebook, where I simply pressed

The Emerson Wave Feature

The patented Wave Feature is basically a remote-opening feature that allows you to open the knife as you are drawing it. Virtually converting your folding knife into a fixed blade, where it counts, on the draw. The Wave feature is designed to snag the pocket as you draw the knife and force it into the open position by the time the draw is complete.



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the blade down through the corner on the binding side and cut it off cleanly. I followed this with another test by laying down double-layered cardboard and slicing it into pieces. It wasn't until I moved the pieces out of the way

Top: I cut a mountain bike tire (after cutting the metal bead with wire cutters) cleanly and quickly.

Left Circle: The pocket clip is adorned with the Affliction logo and holds the Freedom Defender firmly in the pocket.

Right Circle: The flat side of the blade includes the Affliction Freedom Defender foundation crest.

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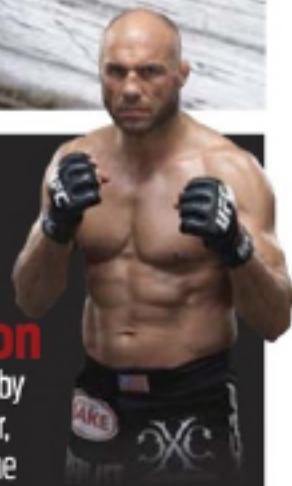
that I realized I was not only cutting the cardboard but the table as well, with no damage to the edge. I then cut a mountain bike tire (after cutting the metal bead with a wire cutter so I wouldn't damage the blade) and it sliced right through it like there was a prize on the inside. Finally, I performed my typical rope press-cut test, where I simply try to press the knife through a piece of 1/2-inch climbing rope. As I had expected, due to the geometry of

Xtreme Couture G.I. Foundation

Founded in 2009 by retired UFC fighter, Randy Couture, the Xtreme Couture G.I. Foundation was a way to honor the veterans of America's armed forces. It is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, and it was formed to raise money and awareness for our soldiers wounded in action and for their families.

What makes this foundation so outstanding is that they are a small non-profit with a completely unpaid volunteer staff, which means that 100% of all proceeds go directly into the hands of our wounded vets who need an extra boost. But it doesn't stop there, Randy visits military hospitals each year and personally donates the checks. Partnering with Affliction Clothing for the Freedom Defender series and Emerson Knives with the Freedom Defender CQC-7 has only added to the success of the G.I. Foundation.

Contact
Xtreme Couture G.I. Foundation
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JOSH HEDGES/ZUFFA LLC/ZUFFA LLC VIA GETTY IMAGES

“WITH ITS SLEEK STYLING AND AGGRESSIVE FUNCTIONALITY, THIS KNIFE IS A MUST-HAVE FOR ANY EMERSON FAN OR ANYONE LOOKING FOR AN EDC BLADE THAT IS ALL BUSINESS.”

a chisel grind, I was not able to press through the rope, so I proceeded to slice through and was able to get clean slices with no issue.

By the end of my testing, I found that the knife was quite comfortable and the edge held up very well and was still able to cleanly cut paper. All in all, the Freedom Defender held up well and was very comfortable in the hand.

All Business EDC

Perhaps it's my background in martial arts and combatives, but Emerson Knives have always had my attention, ever since my first Emerson Karambit that I purchased many years ago, and still have today. The Freedom Defender CQC-7 is no exception.

With its sleek styling and aggressive functionality, this knife is a must-have for any Emerson fan or anyone looking for an EDC blade that is all business. What's more, when you purchase the Freedom Defender you can rest with the fact that you are taking part in something bigger by partnering with Randy Couture, Affliction Clothing and Emerson Knives to help our veterans when they need it the most. God bless America and those that defend her. **KI**

The Freedom Defender Flipper CQC-7 is a solid EDC with hardcore action in mind.

1:1
ACTUAL
SIZE



+ SPECS

Blade Length: 3.3 inches
Blade Material: CPM S35VN
Blade Thickness: 0.125 inch
Overall Length: 8 inches
Closed Length: 4.65 inches
Weight: 5 ounces
Lock: Aerospace-grade Titanium Liner lock
MSRP: \$299.95

Special Note: Each Freedom Defender Flipper comes with a Special Edition Freedom Defender T-Shirt by Affliction Clothing.

A portion of the sale of each knife/shirt package will go to the Xtreme Couture G.I. Foundation.

EXOTICS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Are you searching for unique exotic handle material? Go online to choose from our extensive inventory!

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- Gemsbok Horn
- Cape Buffalo
- Zebra Bone
- Mammoth Tooth
- Impala Bone
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