

AUSTRALIAN BEAST

THE HARDCORE HARDWARE AUSTRALIA MILSPEC FOLDER DEMONSTRATES HOW AN “ANIMAL” TAKES CARE OF BUSINESS.

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY JOSHUA SWANAGON

I don't throw the term, “bomb-proof,” around much, but there are times when it is appropriate.

During SHOT Show 2018, I wandered past the Hardcore Hardware Australia booth and stopped to see what new things the company had in store for the coming year. During our conversation, I was informed it had something new in the works that I would really appreciate.

Fast forward to Blade Show 2018, when

I stopped by the Hardcore Hardware Australia booth again to see if there was any more information on that new product. I was introduced to its newest offering: the Milspec Folder.

At that point, it wasn't quite ready for “prime time,” but I was assured that it would be available soon.

That time is now, and I have finally had the opportunity to see if it performs as solidly as it feels.



First Impressions

The first thing I noticed when I took it out of the box is that this is a heavy knife. For a folder, this knife is a beast! You will not forget the Milspec Folder is in your pocket—it weighs in at 7.5 ounces. There is a lot of steel on this knife, and it is overbuilt, with tight fit and finish for serious hardcore use.

Top: This thick leather was cleanly cut, even after putting the Milspec Folder's blade through the ammo can.

Below: The pocket clip is made of robust stainless steel and is configurable for tip-up, tip-down, right- or left-handed carry.

The textured grip on both the G-10 and the stainless steel frame add a serious level of retention while also adding an almost honeycomb aesthetic. The handle has a G-10 handle scale on one side and exposed stainless steel frame on the obverse.

The heavy-duty, stainless steel pocket clip is very tight and will not come out of

your pocket without intent. In some ways, this is a huge plus: It will not accidentally fall out when you don't intend it to or get snagged by a piece of clothing and get pulled out unexpectedly. However, it also has the downside of being a little difficult to retrieve without a solid grasp of the knife and a firm pull. Not that this is always a bad thing, but in a serious situation, when you need to access your

knife quickly, it might not come to bear as quickly as you might like.

The Milspec Folder is designed with four points of attachment for the pocket clip, with options for tip-up, tip-down, right- or left-hand carry. It comes configured in right-hand, tip-up carry out of the box.

The hollow-ground, 3.45-inch blade comes in wharncliffe, tanto, recurve or drop-point profiles and is a stout .19 inch thick of CPM S30V stainless steel—that is really thick for a folder. The folder I was sent for this article is a drop point, which is one of my personal favorite knife profiles because of its versatility.

There is some thumb jimping along the spine, which provides a perfect mix of comfort and grip. The jimping is followed by a spine fin featuring a swedge; it acts as a nice thumb stop. On the spine of the handle, just behind the blade, is a small thumb indent with jimping as well, providing for other grip options.

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The blade features a flipper design, which is quite firm. According to the company website, the tension on the pivot is adjustable via a Torx screw, but when I attempted it, it appeared to be stripped out and I was unable to get any kind of grip to get it to turn. However, with a flick of the wrist during opening, the Milspec Folder quickly came to full lockup via the thick frame lock.

The detent is very tight and will not allow this knife to open unintentionally. I thought this was good, considering that the Milspec Folder is intended for hard use by professional personnel who don't want their knives popping open at inopportune times.

If you prefer thumb stud operation, the Milspec Folder has three holes along the spine of the blade that allow for three different thumb stud positions (for operator choice) and comes complete with thumb studs, should you choose to go that route.

Top: The 3.45-inch blade features a hollow saber grind and includes three holes along the spine for the optional addition of the included thumb stud.



CPM S30V—A Steel as Robust as the Build

Referred to as a true stainless steel, CPM S30V was developed by Dick Barber of Crucible Industries with the help of Chris Reeve. It is known for its excellent corrosion resistance. Due to the use of vanadium carbides, CPM S30V has a very refined grain that helps improve the sharpness and toughness of knives using this steel. Although it can be more difficult to heat treat, knife makers like using CPM S30V because it is easier to grind than other powder steels.

Considered a premium-grade knife steel, CPM S30V tends to increase the cost of custom and production knives, placing any knife that uses this steel into the higher-end category of knives. Before an upgrade by Crucible to CPM S35VN, it had been hailed by some of the best knife makers in the industry as one of the best blade steels—if not the best—around and was considered the ultimate high-end, all-around stainless steel.

Although Crucible made the update to CPM S35VN, CPM S30V is still in the top of its class and is used regularly in some of the top knives in the industry.





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Through the Paces

Considering that this knife is intended for hardcore use by hardcore professionals, I wanted to make sure I tested it on myriad subject matter while ensuring I included a hardcore test on the edge-retention capabilities and the durability of the coating and lockup.

I started out by testing both the slicing ability and edge retention. I pulled out an old, heavy-duty military surplus ALICE pistol belt and cut it into several pieces. As a result of the thick stock of the blade and robust edge grind, there was a lot of “meat” behind the edge, which added some resistance to the cuts. However, it was a sharp blade, and even though the cuts were not as clean as a thinner blade with a keener edge would have made, it was able to cut off several pieces with zero effect to the edge.

Next, I moved on to some thick cardboard I had laying around. Again, due to the thickness of the blade, it crushed its way through a lot of the cuts. I found that the edge was sharp enough to slice cleanly with fast enough cuts, but I was unable to make slow, precision cuts without the cardboard folding and tearing during the process.

Between the pistol belt and the cardboard, I have found that this knife is meant more for heavy-duty cutting tasks and not as much for intricate work. Nevertheless, it handles heavy-duty tasks like an animal.

+ SPECS

Blade Material: CPM S30V
Blade Length: 3.45 inches
Overall Length: 8.375 inches
Closed Length: 4.84 inches
Handle/Frame Material: 6-10 and 420 stainless steel
Blade Thickness: 0.19 inch
Weight: 7.5 ounces
Lock: Frame lock
MSRP: \$279

I moved from there to driving the blade once into an old ammo can to test the edge retention and tip strength. This was followed by cutting a thick, plastic cat litter bucket, multiple chunks of thick leather and reducing a mountain bike tire to many pieces. Even after being driven into the ammo can, the edge showed no signs of dulling, rolling or chipping, and the MilSpec Folder cut right through the three other test subjects with little issue.

I finished up my round of testing by taking a rubber mallet and driving the folder into the ammo can another six times to give one final test to the edge, lockup and coating.

The coating held up quite well, although it understandably showed some signs of wear, but it was



The MilSpec Folder has a closed length of 4.84 inches and features a flipper for increased opening speed.



1:1
ACTUAL SIZE

The lockup is very solid via the heavy-duty frame lock and held up to rigorous testing.

The MilSpec Folder features an overall length of 8.375 inches.



Left: The Milspec Folder was able to cut many slices off this old, military surplus ALICE pistol belt with little trouble.



Right: The author then hammered the blade into the ammo can six more times. The edge held up without any signs of damage, the coating showed little wear, and the lockup stayed firm.

“THE HOLLOW-GROUND, 3.45-INCH BLADE COMES IN WHARNCLIFFE, TANTO, RECURVE OR DROP-POINT PROFILES AND IS A STOUT .19 INCH THICK OF CPM S30V STAINLESS STEEL ...”



Left: After piercing the ammo can, the author was able to cleanly slice this heavy-duty cat litter bucket.

Contact

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minimal, considering the brutality of the test. The lockup held tight and didn't fold at any point during the test. The tip was still as pointy as when it came out of the box, and the edge was still able to cut paper with a good portion of the blade—although it stopped cutting and tore the paper at about .75 inch before the tip.

After all the testing, the edge of the Milspec Folder would take little maintenance to bring it back to service. And, with a little extra work, you could reprofile the edge if you were looking for a little better slicing capability. Just remember that there is a trade-off, and your edge will not be quite as robust as it is out of the box.

Confident Performance

During my testing, I tried to consider the Milspec Folder's intended demographic and tested it in ways that would give me a clear idea of whether or not it would be able to perform hard duty in harsh environments.

After carrying it and using it for regular daily chores and then putting it through its paces, I feel confident the Milspec Folder would be a solid choice for a duty knife. Although it isn't a slicer out of the box, I feel it performed exactly as it was intended—taking its targeted audience into account—and would hold up to serious hard use in the field. **KI**



SPYDERCO WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE 1.2 MILLION MEN AND WOMEN WHO FIGHT THE **BEAST** EVERY DAY

Spyderco