

Para-Ordnance Goes

DOUBLE

The Originators of the High-Capacity .45 Government Model Have Now Come Out With What Promises to Be One of the Best DA Autos Ever.

By Garry James and Jeff John



The authors found the Para-Ordnance LDA P14 to have the lightest double-action pull of any exposed-hammer DA auto they have shot. Accuracy and reliability were superb.

There are legions of firearms aficionados (count the authors as legionaries) who still think John Browning's Government Model is still the auto pistol by which all others are measured.

Of course, this is not to say that some improvements to the old warhorse haven't been made over the years, including some germinal alterations by the Canadian firm of Para-Ordnance.

It might be remembered that not so many years ago, Para-Ord was the first maker to offer a large-capacity version of the 1911 in its now-famous P14 14-shot .45 ACP. Amazingly, the company was able to double the gun's magazine capacity by modifying the magazine and frame, while still keeping the grip relatively slim and manageable.

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**WIN
A NEW
LDA P14**
See details in this story



The P14 was followed in fairly short order by a line of Para-Ord single-action autos of varying sizes, capacities and makeups. They all had the same things in common, though: excellent design, fit, quality control and serviceability. Frankly, unless the company started coming out with new finishes, sights, customized jobs and the like, it seemed as though its guns had reached the apex of perfection. *Wrong.*

A few months ago, under a veil of secrecy, Para-Ordnance's Thanos Polyzos and Ted Szabo invited a group of editors from the

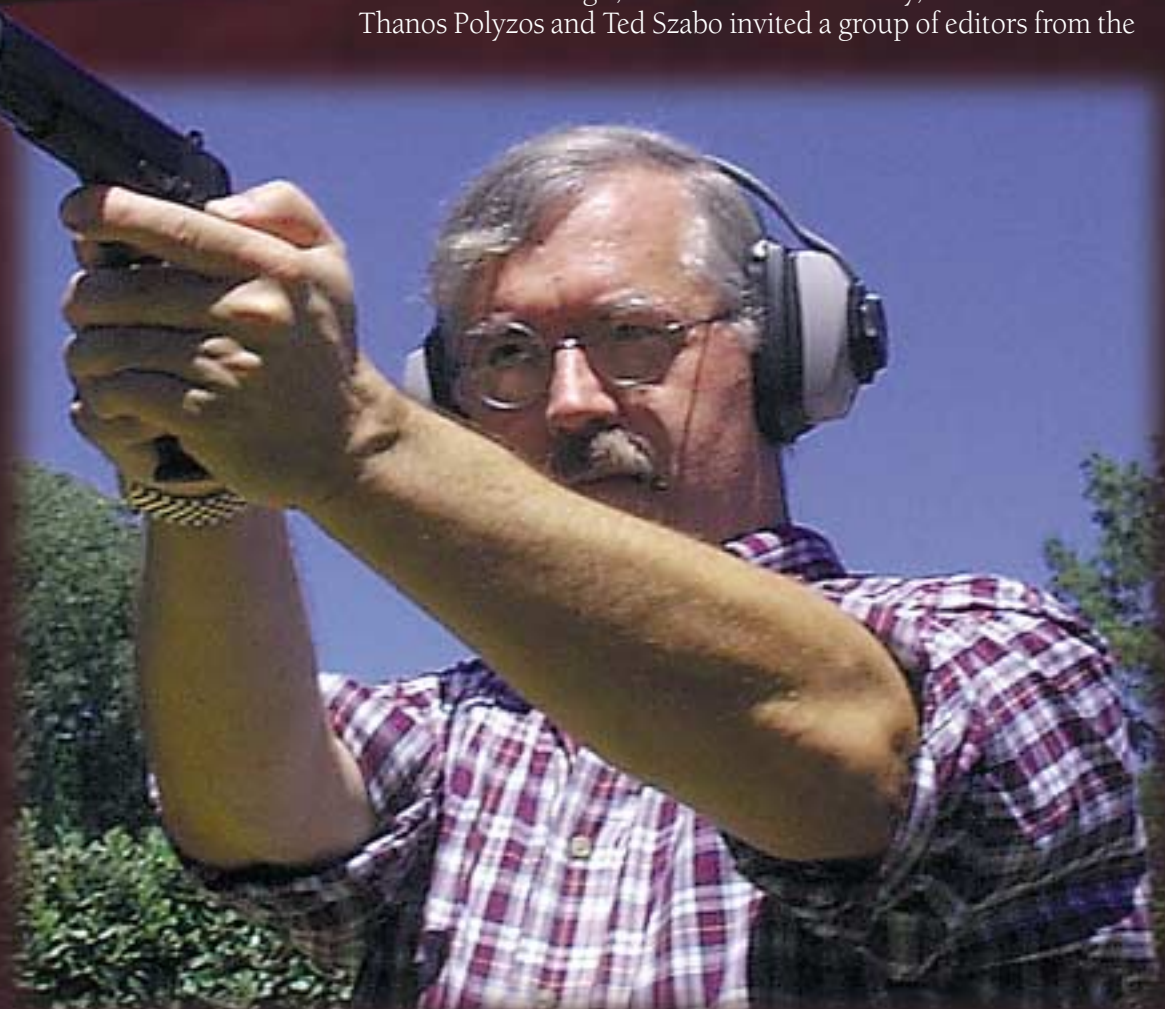


Photo by Jeff John

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Outdoor Group to the LAX Shooting Range in Inglewood, California, to look at their new "mystery gun." Thanos handed us what looked pretty much like a standard P14, racked back the slide and told us to have a go. The first tip off was the non-Colt-like trigger, which was mounted pretty well forward in the guard. Too, the hammer was down. Obviously, we thought, they have finally perfected the double-action .45 they have been promising for a while. In fact, as of this writing, the gun is still so new that it hasn't been named yet, but it is provisionally being called the Light Double Action. In fact, Para-Ord is offering a free LDA to the person who can come up with an appropriate name. (See details in this story.)

Raising the gun to point of aim, we tugged on the trigger. *Blam!* The gun went off considerably sooner than we had expected. Was the trigger really as light as it felt? We continued to empty the magazine, and it was only when we lowered the piece and inspected it that we discovered that all subsequent shots had been double-action also. The pull was so light that it felt like a long SA. We had never experienced anything quite like it. We spent the rest of the afternoon shooting the prototypes. There were no



With the exception of the trigger, the new double-action Para-Ordnance P14 looks pretty much like the company's standard SA 14-shooter.



hangups, and accuracy was on a par with a standard Para-Ordnance P14—which is to say, excellent.

After some wait, we finally received an evaluation model that we could have and hold for a while (the prototypes went back to Canada, over our vociferous protests).

As noted above, excepting the trigger, which gives it the look of the Browning Hi-Power, the new Para-Ordnance LDA looks just like any conventional 1911-style pistol. But, when one removes the slide (just as you would with any other 1911), the differences become dramatic. Approximately 2% of the 3½-inch right-hand slide rail is milled away to accommodate the new drawbar mechanism of the LDA's trigger system. The loss of that

SPECIFICATIONS

PARA-ORDNANCE LDA P14

Maker:	Para-Ordnance Dept. GA 980 Tapscott Road Ontario, Canada M1X 1C3
Caliber:	.45 ACP
Action type:	Semi-auto, locked-breech double action
Barrel length:	Five inches
Overall length:	8½ inches
Weight:	40 ounces
Finish:	Blue
Grips:	Black polymer
Price:	About \$800



A simple drawbar joins the trigger to the hammer. The drawbar also acts as a disconnect when the rear portion is depressed by the rearward motion of the slide.



The Para-Ordnance LDA P14's trigger pull can be made lighter or heavier by the simple replacement of this coil spring. Such alterations are to be done only at the factory.

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much rail may make some quail, but our sample gun came with a 6,000-round provenance and has not lost any tightness

of frame to slide. Other noticeable differences are the lack of mill cuts for the trigger bow of the conventional 1911—not necessary with the pinned trigger—and the lack of a disconnecter mounted in the center of the frame. The disconnecter is still operated by the slide, like that of a

1911, but in the new LDA's case, the disconnecter is part of the drawbar. The slide depresses the drawbar during cycling to disconnect the trigger. A new relief cut is made in the slide next to the firing pin safety to allow the drawbar to rise up to firing position. Pinning the trig-

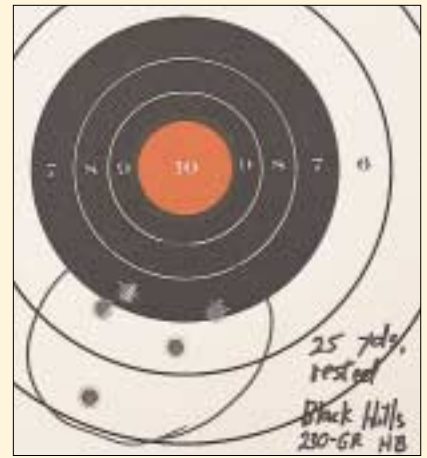
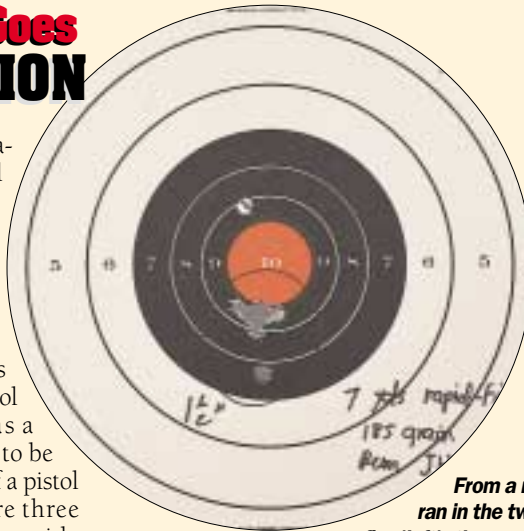


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ger at its pivot point allows Para-Ordnance to adjust trigger-pull weight up or down with the simple replacement of the trigger spring to satisfy the requirements of the various police departments for which it is partially intended.

Often, modern gun designers try way too hard to make their pistol designs operate as simply as a revolver. There is great comfort to be had in freezing the mechanism of a pistol with a manual safety. There are three safeties on the Para-Ord LDA: a wide beavertail 1911 grip safety, which prevents discharge of the pistol without a firing grip; a frame-mounted safety that, in the LDA's case, blocks the hammer from moving as well as locking the slide closed; and a firing-pin safety to prevent movement of the inertial firing pin until there is a blow from the hammer. The frame-mounted safety operates on the down stroke just like its single-action brother in a quick and natural movement of the thumb.

Initial takedown of the Para-Ord LDA is the same as a conventional 1911. First, remove the magazine and make sure the pistol is unloaded. Then, lock the slide closed with the safety, and depress the



From a rest, the gun shot extremely well. Most groups ran in the two- to three-inch range as shown above. Rapid-fire (left), the gun was also a spectacular performer.

recoil spring plunger until you can turn the barrel bushing to the left far enough to remove the recoil spring and its plunger. Be careful, for the recoil spring is under tension. Next, depress the safety and move the slide far enough back to align the relief cut in the slide with the corresponding tab of the slide stop. Remove the slide stop from the frame. Then, remove the slide to the front of the frame. Finally, turn the barrel bushing to the right until it stops, remove the barrel bushing, and pull the barrel out the front of the slide. No further disassembly is recommended for routine service.

Assemble in reverse order.

From the factory, the trigger came in at just 5½ pounds—unquestionably the lightest DA pull we have ever experienced on any exposed-hammer auto pistol. Add to this an inherent smoothness, and you have a gun perfect for target shooting and self-defense. It is a dream for deliberate shooting in that it's difficult to anticipate when the hammer is going to drop.

The action was responsive and trouble-free during the evaluation. The Para-Ord LDA fed and shucked everything we ran through it, which included Black Hills 230-grain FMJs, Remington 185-grain JHPs, Norma 200-grain JHP +Ps and Cor-Bon 230-grain JHP +Ps.

Accuracy was very good with 25-yard rested shots coming in at an average of 2¼ inches. Seven-yard off-hand rapid-fire groups generally came in at about an inch or so, with many tight four-shot clusters. I'm inclined to think the gun can shoot better than we can.

Each new P14 LDA comes with a pre-ban 14-round magazine and a certificate to purchase two more. Of course, for those who want them, politically correct 10-rounders are also available.

Without question, the new Para-Ordnance P14 LDA will garner much interest with law enforcement and even the military. From our experience, we would encourage them to do so. This looks like a real winner.

Win a Para-Ordnance P14 LDA: Name This Hot, New Double Action.

While Para-Ordnance has assigned its new .45 the provisional name "Light Double Action," the company feels the gun is an important-enough contribution to the firearms field that it would like to give readers of *Guns & Ammo* the chance to give the gun a real name and win one of these great new autos. Come up with an appropriate title, and send it to Para-Ordnance's judging panel at Para-Ordnance Manufacturing Inc., Name the Double Action, 980 Tapscott Road, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada M1X 1C3. Entries must be received by December 15, 1998. All entries become the property of Para-Ordnance Manufacturing Inc. In case of duplicate names, the winner will be decided by a draw. The winning entry will be announced in the pages of *Guns & Ammo*. Get those names in!



A simple steel riser acts against a frame-mounted plunger to block the firing pin.



Sights on the new Para-Ord P14 LDA are the basic three-dot, square-notch and blade style.