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Famous Grip Safeties

This Issue: Ed Brown Products

When shooters get together and talk about beavertail grip safeties one name comes up on a regular basis; the name of Ed Brown. Ed didn't invent the beavertail grip safety, but his design certainly brought together a whole lot of features that made shooting the 1911 Auto a lot more enjoyable.

Ed officially started his career in gunsmithing on March 30, 1968, when he received his first Federal Firearms License. Actually, he had been working on guns in his father's machine shop since high school.

Ed considered himself a general gunsmith but soon found himself building an abundance of 1911 Autos for customers that shot Bullseye. By 1980, he had become involved in a relatively new style of shooting sport that was gaining popularity called combat or practical shooting. In 1984, Ed had to quit practical shooting altogether because his work as a custom pistolsmith kept him so busy.

After many requests from his fellow shooters and from his own observations as a U.S.P.S.A. Master Class Shooter, he started playing with a beavertail design that would drop the pistol deeper into the shooter's hand, lessen felt recoil and provide a faster sight recovery time. Remember, back in 1986, compensators were not as efficient as they are today, and red dot scopes were not used for IPSC competition, so any improvement that reduced sight recovery time was very important indeed. In addition to making the gun more efficient, the design also had to prevent hammer bite and work with a Commander hammer that was, and still is, the first choice of competitive shooters.

Ed had an extensive background as a CAD programmer and in CNC machining. His first step was to model the entire 1911 Auto frame on a CAD system to see just how low he could get the frame into the hand before things would cease to function correctly. His final design dropped the pistol so low that the upswept portion of the beavertail had to be countersunk to accommodate the spur of a Commander-style hammer. Another consideration that Ed felt was important was the ease of installation. He designed his safety to rotate on a single, .250" radius, that way the frame tangs could be modified easily without having to cut a compound radius. Because Ed built many pistols for law enforcement officers and civilians that used their guns in a concealed carry capacity, Ed also felt that the "tail" of the safety had to be completely rounded and contoured to prevent snagging on loose clothing.

After the prototypes were made and tested, Ed was positive that he had a real winner. The only thing left to do was to commit to the large investment required to make a mold. Ed was certain that casting was the only way the beavertail could be produced in sufficient quantities and at a price everyone could afford. Despite advice to the contrary, Ed decided to take the big plunge and buy a mold and contract with a foundry to produce the **Ed Brown Beavertail Grip Safety**.

His first grip safety was sold in September of 1987. The success was not instant, but as word spread about this new design more shooters realized that the new safety had a lot of features that could help them shoot faster and more accurately than they could do with the factory safety.

At that time the beavertail grip safety was the only aftermarket accessory or part that Ed produced for the 1911 Auto. Brownells picked up the new grip safety and it made its debut in the #41 Catalog. It was available to fit the Series 70

pistols, in blue only. The rest, as they say, is history. It was not long before Ed's safety was available to fit both Series 70 and Series 80, and in either blue or stainless steel.

ED BROWN BEAVERTAIL GRIP SAFETIES

#087-045-070	Series 70, Blue
#087-045-080	Series 80, Blue
#087-045-071	Series 70, S/S
#087-045-081	Series 80, S/S

Ed added a new safety in 1993 called the "Memory Groove". A raised portion or "pad" was added to the lower tip of the safety and grooves were made across the width of the pad. This pad gave shooters that use a high thumb hold a more positive contact, plus the memory grooves provided a tactile means of recognizing correct grip placement when the gun was gripped and ready to draw.

The **Memory Groove Beavertail Grip Safety**. It is available in both blue and stainless steel to fit either Series 70 or Series 80 pistols. Brownells is proud to stock all eight models and they are available immediately.

ED BROWN MEMORY GROOVE BEAVERTAIL GRIP SAFETY

#087-867-000	Series 70, Blue
#087-867-100	Series 80, Blue
#087-868-000	Series 70, S/S
#087-868-100	Series 80, S/S