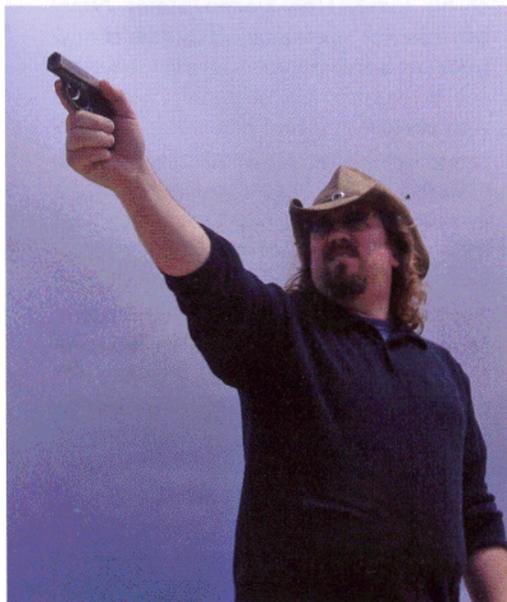


# SEARCHING FOR THE ULTIMATE CONCEALED CARRY PISTOL

## PART TWO: NORTH AMERICAN ARMS GUARDIAN .380



NAA GUARDIAN .380 SPECS

Height	3.53 in.
Width	0.93 in.
Overall Length	4.75 in.
Barrel Length	2.49 in.
Material	17-4 pH Stainless Steel
Weight - Empty	18.72 oz.
Operation	DAO
Magazine Capacity	6+1
M.S.R.P.	\$449.00 US

*The basic Guardian is a handsome piece of stainless. It has good lines, a simple clean look, and it carries easily. A perfect foundation for some custom work.*



The NAA Guardian has long been one of my favorite little pistols. I have no specific reason to validate that bias. There are pistols out there that are a bit smaller, some that are lighter, some that are more powerful. In a race for first place, the Guardian doesn't win any category firsts. Yet when you take in all the score averages, in my book it comes in with the most points.

Some guys might not like it because they think it might be too heavy, or the trigger pull too long and too weighty. The slide might be too hard to pull back. The sights might be too hard to see. You know what? They are right. However, the Guardian has a way of turning negatives into positives. Let me explain. The sights are just about useless. They are too small and narrow to be effective. But this does not matter because within the intended purpose of the weapon, they

are not even going to be used. The slide is hard to cycle by hand because the gun uses a blow-back action. It isn't an elegant system, but it is very reliable. As long as the ammo works, the gun is going to work. The trigger is long because it is a double action only design which gives the gun added safety and simplicity of use. It doesn't need a safety lever. It is as simple to run as a revolver.

Overall the Guardian is greater than the sum of its parts. Late at night, when you are walking from your office out to your car and the parking lot looks spooky, you can feel that reassuring weight in your pocket letting you know that you are prepared. As you walk, you casually slip your hands in your pockets and your right hand slides over and around the grips. In your mind the cool steel whispers in a comforting voice, "You will be okay." Should a

goblin appear, the snag free profile draws quickly and easily from the pocket holster. You don't have to think about working the action or dropping the safety because the gun is always there for you, always ready. You might be scared and stressed. Maybe your finger is already on the trigger while you cover the potential assailant. Under such stress a lighter trigger might be pulled all the way resulting in a negligent discharge. This happens to members of law enforcement sometimes... it could happen to anyone. With the Guardian's longer pull this isn't so much of a danger.

Should you have to fire, the .380 ACP cartridge is going to bark and snap and send out a 90 grain jacketed hollow point to deliver your cease and desist order. While a .380 isn't the most powerful round out there, the Guardian's 6+ 1 capacity will certainly make a convincing

argument to the goblin that it picked the wrong victim. By this time the Goblin could be laying on the ground bleeding out and you could be using your other hand to call 911 on your cell phone. The Guardian's magazine release is in the standard American position on the side of the frame, behind the trigger. If you practice, you can reload the pistol quickly. Of course all the above is a worst case scenario. But that is what we are all about. We hope for the best, but plan for the worst. A concealed carry gun like the Guardian is such a simple thing, like a seatbelt or a parachute. It can only do its job if you strap it on before you take off.

My last gun review mentioned the shooting at Trolley Square in Salt Lake City. Since then we have had the shooting at Virginia Tech. Unlike at Trolley Square, there was no one at the scene armed with a concealed weapon. Had there been, the outcome could have been different. The body count could have been a lot less. Here is the clincher, there were people who had concealed carry permits, but didn't have the weapons on them. That was because of the Virginia Tech no weapons policy. That is the thing that bothers me the most. Thirty victims died after the police were already on the campus. I'm not going to disrespect the police here, but I am going to say this: Personal Security is a Personal Responsibility. Remember that.

For that purpose you have to have your weapon on you at all times. You can't leave it at home. You can't leave it in your vehicle. You can't leave it in your purse back at your desk. You have to have it on your person, and where you can access it without drawing attention to yourself. This is where the Guardian comes into play. Carried in a pocket holster, the gun is invisible and you can look cool as a jewel as you stand there with your hands in your pockets, in about as non-threatening a pose as you can be, yet ready to instantly respond to a threat. In an inside-the-waistband holster tucked in behind your hip the Guardian is easily

forgotten and unnoticeable, but it is always going to be there for you.

In the first part of this series on the Ultimate Concealed Carry Gun, I laid out some reasons for our selection of the Guardian as our gun of choice. Let's review: We wanted a gun that was small. We wanted a gun that was solid. We wanted at least a .380 caliber. We wanted the highest quality while avoiding high premiums. We wanted reliability. After filtering all the gun industry's products, the result was the North American Arms Guardian. Let's take a look at the internals. The Guardian doesn't break down in the usual way. There is a small take down button on one side. Hitting that button allows you to lift the rear of the slide up and off the frame and then slide it forward off the barrel. Here is the interesting thing about the Guardian; the frame and barrel are both one part. So you have the frame/ barrel, the slide, and the recoil springs with that little weird spring plug. I took my example apart and was struck by the bigger hammer approach that NAA used in the design. Even in the small parts there is a large dose of rugged built in. This is a sturdy little fellow. If the Guardian was a character from Lord of the Rings, it would be Gimli the dwarf. Small, tough, and full of attitude.

It was also a little rough. I used a new product called Ultra Blue by Microton. The color is like the blue milk that Luke Skywalker drank in episode 3. Strange or not, it's some really slick stuff. With a little bit of that blue stuff and some hand cycling, the Guardian smoothed out a lot.

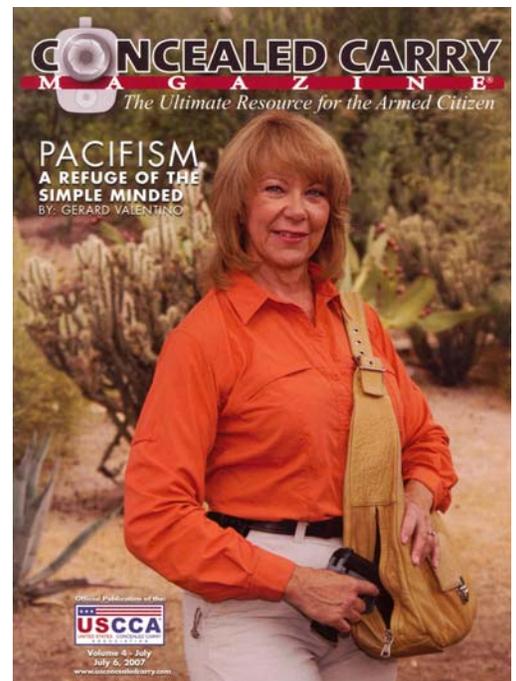
During test firing, I ran through four boxes of shells with no problems. The reliability is there. As the saying goes, "accuracy is fine, but reliability is final." I would have no problem packing this gun as a daily carry item. Even if it isn't my main gun, it can always ride as a backup. In a pocket or on the ankle, the Guardian can always be there for me.

There are some things about the Guardian that I would change. Oh sure, the gun is fine as it is, but I want it to be better. I want NAA to deck it

out as the "Vee Dub" commercials say "Pimp zee Auto." I want it to be slicker. I want the edges to be melted a bit. And as always I want tritium in the front sight post. I would also like something a bit more in the looks department. Dress it up a bit for me. Nice wood grips maybe. Those don't contribute anything but pure cosmetics, but it would still be nice. Even if it is a concealed carry gun, I want it to look cool. I don't care if no one ever sees it. Like a tattoo under your clothes... you know it's there.

The Guardian is a great starting platform for The Ultimate Concealed Carry Pistol. Let's see what we can do with it and how it turns out.

*George Hill is an NRA Certified Pistol and Personal Protection instructor and the writer and publisher of MadOgre.com. Visit his website for more information on Mad Ogre. [www.madogre.com](http://www.madogre.com) Photography by George.*



**From Concealed Carry Magazine  
Volume 4, July 6, 2007  
[www.usconcealedcarry.com](http://www.usconcealedcarry.com)**