


The Tom Brown Tracker Knife



Operating Instructions

Tracker School 

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This manual applies only to the Tracker Knife made by TOPS Knives.

This manual was converted to PDF format for presentation on the Internet by Walter Muma (<http://wmuma.com/tracker>). The print quality of the photographs in the original manual was relatively poor – hence the poor quality of the photos in this PDF document.



Introduction

The Tom Brown Tracker Knife is a multipurpose tool designed for the serious survivalist. It is made of the finest materials and with exquisite craftsmanship to provide a tool that will last generations.



The Tracker Knife is a tool that performs multiple functions. Each area of the knife is made to execute several functions with ease. There is a chopping blade, a carving blade, a saw blade, and a pounding area.

The Tracker Knife can chop, split, carve, score, scrape, saw, notch, and drill wood, bone, and even antler. It can be used to gut and skin an animal, then scrape the hide. It can be lashed to a pole for use as a spear, and it can be thrown much like a tomahawk. It is an extremely versatile and useful knife.

The Tracker Knife is manufactured in accordance with the strict design specifications established by Tom Brown Jr., and the leading manufacturer of tactical knives, TOPS USA.

The knife is made of 1095 high-carbon steel, 3/16" thick. It is laser cut and hand ground, then heat treated followed by cryo treatment to create a knife with outstanding edge-holding capabilities and hardness. It is then finished with a baked-on epoxy coating to make it impervious to the elements and finally, laser engraved with the logo, signature, and serial number. The result is a knife that will meet the most demanding expectations ...

History

The genesis of the Tracker Knife began during an interview between Tom Brown and a journalist over twenty years ago. In the course of the interview, the reporter asked Tom which knife he considered to be the best for survival. Tom thought about it for a minute and responded that the perfect survival knife did not yet exist. "Why not?" the interviewer asked. "Because I have not yet designed it," replied Tom. The journalist challenged Tom with the statement, "That is one knife I would love to see." Tom decided he would love to see it too.

Seven years and dozens of prototypes later, the basic design of the Tracker Knife was set. Tom looked for a quality manufacturer and chose Ed Lombi to hand make the first versions. Ed made the knives for several years until he decided to pursue other interests. Tom found another manufacturer in Dave Beck. Several refinements were added as Dave began manufacturing the Tracker. After ten years or so, Dave also retired from making the Tracker. For a couple of years the knife was again unavailable.

In 2001, Tom began working as a technical consultant and writer on a feature film being directed by Billy Friedkin and starring Tommy Lee Jones and Benecio Del Torro. The film is titled "The Hunted" and is based loosely on an episode of Tom's life. The Tracker Knife is carried and used by the antagonist, played by Benecio.

Tom began searching for a company that could make the Tracker in sufficient numbers to meet the demand anticipated as this knife gains in notoriety. Tom chose Mike Fuller and TOPS USA, the leading manufacturer of tactical knives that are favored by US Special Operations forces. TOPS has created a work of art that will serve its function as a true survival tool. As the TOPS slogan says, "One Life, One Knife."

Using the Tracker Knife

The Tracker Knife is a serious tool that can be used for many survival tasks. These tasks in themselves are safe, provided they are performed properly. The instructions in this manual are written to help you use the Tracker Knife safely. If you do not adhere to these instructions, you risk both life and limb.

The Tracker Knife, like any knife, can be extremely dangerous if not used properly. There are some fundamental safety rules that must be adhered to when using any knife; the Tracker Knife is no exception.

While using the Tracker Knife:

- Always use great care when removing the knife from the sheath. Do not place fingers or hands on or around the opening of the sheath when removing or replacing the knife in its sheath.
- Always keep your hands and fingers (and any other body part) away from the potential path of the knife. Never chop anything with your hand within the range of the path of the knife, i.e. holding the piece being chopped. Never carve with your fingers in the path of the knife.
- Understand that the Tracker Knife will cut, slice, chop, scrape, or saw any human flesh it comes in contact with. Treat this tool with respect. Recognize its potential to do harm, and be respectful of it.

The Tracker Knife is a tool. Treat it with the same respect you would treat any other tool. As you would not be careless with a chainsaw, do not be careless with this knife.

The Chopping Blade

The Tracker Knife is designed to function as an axe. The forward section of the knife is designed with a curved blade that is configured to handle chopping chores. The forward section of the knife is weighted and beveled to be a powerful chopping tool. It will chop as effectively as a small hand axe.

Chopping and Hand Positions:

The key to effective chopping is leverage. The Tracker Knife has a three position handle that allows the user to vary the amount of leverage on the axe. With the hand in position one, the user can do light chopping chores.



Hand position 1

For heavier chopping chores, the user can switch the hand to position two, which increases the leverage or striking power of the chopping blade.



Hand position 2

To increase striking power even more, change hand to position three. This increases leverage for heavier chopping, but may not be as comfortable for extended periods of chopping as position two.



Hand position 3



The Scraper

The chopping section of the blade is also useful as a hide scraper. It can be held as shown in the photograph at left, and used to dry scrape an animal hide. A piece of buckskin as a palm pad makes the scraper easier to use for extended periods.

The scraper can also be used to scrape a piece of bow wood down to a single growth ring as shown in photo to the right.

The unique shape of the chopping section of the Tracker Knife was also designed to be useful in scraping out the char from a bowl that is being burned in. The curvature of the blade is perfect for this task.



The Carving Blade

The Carving Blade

The carving section of the blade is designed to accomplish most cutting chores. It is a sharper edge with a flatter bevel that will accomplish most cutting chores with ease.

With the knife gripped in position one, the user has good control for most carving chores. Placing the thumb on the back of the blade gives even greater control for fine carving.



The carving blade can also be used for accurate splitting chores. There are two methods for splitting: the chopping split, and the pounded split. The chopping split is useful for a task such as splitting firewood where exactness of the split is not critical.



For exact splitting, the use of the pounding technique is better. The blade is placed on the wood exactly where the split is desired, and the back of the blade is struck with a hardwood branch or similar hammer, and the blade is driven into the wood. The hammer strikes the back of the blade until the wood splits.

NOTE: It is critical that you never use a steel hammer or other steel tool to beat on the back of your knife. Hitting steel on steel is always dangerous and damaging.

Draw Knife

The Tracker Knife is designed to function as a draw knife that can be used for fast stock removal for making an advanced throwing stick or even a bow.

By placing a piece of buckskin over the saw portion of the blade, or by pounding the tip of the blade into a wooden handle, the carving portion of the blade can be used as a draw knife that will remove stock accurately and quickly. This can be particularly useful in making a bow.



Fast Stock Removal

To remove stock (wood) more quickly than just carving, the user can tap with a hammer stick using the carving section of the blade. Using this method, the user can reduce the amount of time it takes to make an advanced throwing stick from hours to minutes, for example.



The angle the knife is set on the wood and how hard the knife is tapped determines how much wood is removed. Making sure the piece is firmly anchored in place is an important key to getting this to work. Usually the piece is set at a 45° angle between a tree and the ground to hold it firmly in place. Sometimes a stake into the ground holds the piece in place while it is being worked.

The Saw Blade

The saw blade portion of the Tracker Knife is designed to cut through a variety of materials without clogging or dulling. It has been tested and found effective at cutting through the skin of an aircraft, and the metal of a car door. It is also good on wood.

Sawing

The saw blade can successfully cut through small branches with no difficulty. However, because the teeth are not offset, if the user attempts to cut through a large piece of wood, they will find that the saw will eventually bind. This saw is designed for small work, not to replace a chain saw.



Notching

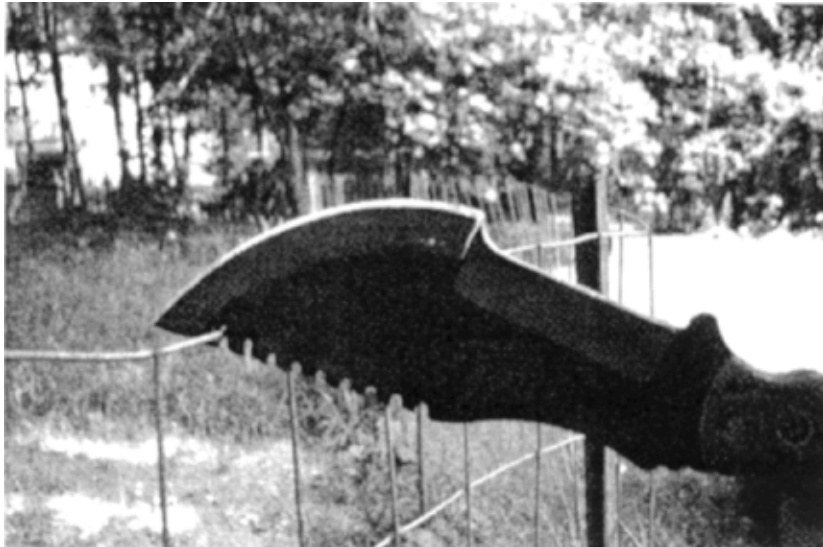
There are many situations where being able to cut a notch quickly is a plus. One of the better uses of the saw blade is for creating notches. For example, one can cut the notches on a figure four trap rapidly and at the proper angle using the saw.

Scoring

When working bone, it is very helpful to score the bone before breaking it so that it breaks along the score line. Angling the saw at a 45° angle allows one to cut a score along or around a piece of bone, and thus make a clean break.

Wire Breaker

The first notch of the saw blade is deeper than the rest. This is the fence breaker. If you place a piece of fence wire under tension into this notch and give it a jerk to one side, that fence wire will break. The wire must be under tension for this to work. It may be necessary to jerk the knife back and forth several times if there is insufficient tension.



The Quarter Rounder

The quarter rounder portion of the blade serves several functions. It can be used to round the edge of a bow, to carve out a bow drill spindle, or to open the body cavity of large game.



The quarter rounder can be drawn towards the body in draw knife fashion (beware of the fingers, hold stock behind blade), or it can be used as a regular carving knife as shown above. In this photo, the edges of a bow stave are being rounded.

To use the quarter rounder as a gut hook, create an opening with a small knife and pull the hide away from the muscle. Insert the gut hook into the body cavity, and draw the knife downwards, holding it at a slight angle. Keeping your index finger next to the blade sometimes helps lift the hide away from the muscle and keeps the knife moving smoothly.



When using the gut hook, the user should make a quick slit in the hide to determine how thick the hide is and how much fat lies underneath. This makes it easier to determine how deep to make the opening cut.

In addition to opening the hide, the Tracker Knife will easily handle the bone cutting and splitting chores of removing the legs and splitting the pelvis and sternum. Most smaller knives have a difficult time with these more rugged chores.

The Knife Point

The point of the Tracker Knife is designed to be exceptionally tough. It is very powerful as a thrusting tool and in testing has been thrust through a car door. It is also possible to use the knife tip as a drill, and as an engraving tool on bone or antler.

To use the knife as a thrusting spear, lash the knife to a spear handle. If the handle is tough enough, the spear can be used for slashing as well as thrusting. A stealthy hunter could use this tool to take a deer or other game from a camouflaged position.



The knife point can be used as a drill. For example, to burn a bow drill spindle into the fire board requires a starting hole. The point can be used to drill a perfect hole for the spindle.



The point can be used as an engraver or point for doing scrimshaw on bone or antler. It is held as a pencil with the saw blade against the hand.



The Tracker Sheath

The Tracker Sheath comes in several configurations. It can be ordered with a belt loop, or with rotating metal clips. The belt loop is designed to be worn on the belt, so that the knife hangs down on the hip.

The second configuration sheath has rotating metal clips which allow the Tracker to be worn in various configurations, especially across the belt in the small of the back, Scout style. It can be ordered in both left and right hand draw.



The Scout Companion



The Tracker Knife can also be ordered with the Scout Companion knife. It is a small drop point knife also made of 1095 high carbon steel with the same epoxy finish. It is inscribed with Tom's signature and the name "The Scout." It is designed for some of the finer and simpler camp chores.

The Scout Companion knife is designed so that it can be worn either as a stand-alone knife or piggyback on the Tracker Sheath.

The sheath has a rotating metal clip on the back that allows for a number of wear options.

There is a removable clip on the Tracker sheath that is designed to provide an attachment point for the Scout Companion knife sheath.



Caring for the Tracker Knife

The Tracker Knife is manufactured using 1095 high carbon steel. High carbon steel offers superior flexibility and is much less prone to breakage than stainless steel. It sharpens easier and holds that edge longer than stainless. The one drawback of high carbon steel is its tendency to stain or oxidize.

To prevent that from occurring, the Tracker Knife is coated with a baked-on epoxy coating. This coating makes the knife impervious to rust. The only part of the blade that can rust is the actual edge. To prevent that from happening, oil of any type should be carefully applied to the edge. A small bottle of oil is included with your knife.

Free Sharpening and Refinishing Service

A free sharpening service is offered by the manufacturer which includes both blade edges and saw teeth. Should the working surface of your knife become marred or scored from heavy usage we will refinish it for you at no charge. However, all shipping and handling charges are the responsibility of the owner.

The sheath provided for your Tracker Knife is made of Kydex. It is waterproof and will provide a lifetime of service if it is kept clean and away from high heat. Please make sure that you do not hold the sheath near the opening when drawing the knife.

There is a floating bolt near the sheath opening that makes it much less likely that you can cut yourself drawing the knife. Please do not remove this bolt. Doing so invalidates your warranty and puts your fingers at serious risk.

If your sheath has rotating clips, please follow the manufacturer's directions regarding rotating that clip (rotate only in a clockwise direction).

Tracker Knife Warranty

The Tracker Knife is guaranteed to be free from defects in materials and workmanship for the lifetime of the original purchaser. The Tracker Sheaths are guaranteed to be free from defects in materials and workmanship for a period of two years from the date of original purchase. This warranty becomes null and void if the knife is abused. Knives are high quality tools and as such are able to withstand rugged field use and conditions. However, it is incumbent upon the owner to ensure that the knife is kept free of contaminants or corrosive substances and that the use of the knife is restricted to prudent and applicable functions. Any misuse of this knife other than to fulfill normal "knife-like" functions such as those outlined in this text will result in voiding of this warranty. TOPS USA reserves the right to make the final decision as to what is considered "fair use" or "abuse."

Return knives for sharpening, refinishing, or warranty replacement to:
TOPS USA
PO Box 2544
Idaho Falls, ID 83403
USA
(208) 542-0113