

FIELD ISSUE

By Jerry Ahern
Photos by Sharon Ahern

Ek Bowie



The Ek Bowie rides at Ahern's side in its sheath made of heavy webbing material, the inside of the sheath plastic-lined for safety.

The Ek Model 5 Bowie is a departure from the typical Ek Commando daggers. Here it is shown with Ahern's Detonics CombatMaster .45 with a special black finish.

Ek Commando Knife Company has a proud tradition, dating from World War II. "A good knife can save a life," said John Ek in 1941. And, he was right. During World War II, aside from FDR keeping one on his desk and Captain Clark Gable making one part of his flight kit, Allied Raiders, Rangers and Commandos used these fighting knives to great effect against the enemies of freedom. Five wars later—or six, depending on how you count the military engagements since September 11th of 2001—Ek Commando Knives are still found in



The Ek Model 5, like all Ek knives, is made from one piece of steel with a full-length, full-width and full-thickness tang.

the heat of battle and not only just as strong and reliable as they were during World War II but made with even better materials.

Called "...the Stradivarius of the blade," John Ek designed his knives as fighters in conjunction with people who knew the rigorous standards that need to be met in the context of close-range individual combat with edged weapons. A hallmark of Ek Knives is their strength.

The tangs on Ek Commando Knives—you can actually see them, because of the handle style—are full-length, full-width, full-thickness. The knife is one piece with solid brass double-quillon crossguards and either Micarta, checkered Walnut or parachute cord wrapped handles. With the Micarta or Walnut scales, attachment is by



The X-head screws allow the handle scales to be removed for cleaning and other purposes. For maximum durability, Ahern chose grooved Micarta scales. Walnut is another option.



This being a classic Bowie pattern, the false edge is sharpened.

means of brass X-head fasteners you can turn out with a dime or the rim of a cartridge case for cleaning or, perhaps, lashing the knife to an improvised spear shaft in a survival situation.

The knife under consideration here is somewhat atypical for an Ek Knife, in that the blade is a Bowie pattern rather than a dagger pattern. The Model 5 features a blade length of 6 3/4 inches, thickness of the HCS 1415 surgical stainless steel slightly greater than the usual .15-inch found with other Ek Knives. Thickness for the Model 5 is .185-inch.

The Model 5, otherwise called "The Ek Bowie," is an ideal compromise for a knife to be used in any



Ahern has drawn the Ek Bowie edge-up.



The Ek Bowie lends itself well to a rapier hold.

tactical context. As with any traditional Bowie pattern blade, the recurving false edge is sharpened. This gives you nearly as much stabbing potential as you would have with a double-edged knife that was

basically designed for anti-personnel tasks only. Yet, you have the day-to-day utility capability of a single-edged knife.

For a knife of this type, it's wise to make sure it is as indestructible as possible. For that reason, I requested the knife to be supplied with grooved Micarta scales for heightened durability and certain tactility under all manner of field conditions, wet or dry.

The shiny blade steel—albeit satin finished—would not be an asset under some circumstances; temporarily darkening a blade by field bluing the steel is nothing new.

The butt of the hilt extends 3/4-inch longer than the length of the handle scales. This is to facilitate its use, if need be, for pounding chores or as an impact weapon against an opponent. This extended butt is drilled through for lanyard/wrist thong use. I know a great many people seem to like this feature in a knife. I have always worried that having a fixed blade knife out of its sheath and on a lanyard was a terrific way to potentially incur a serious self-inflicted wound. If I were taking this knife afield, I'd temporarily remove that para chord lanyard.

The sheaths offered with Ek Commando Knives are well-constructed from seriously heavy webbing of the type used in load-bearing equipment, specifically the type used in web field belts. The sheaths are offered in four different color choices to match the tactical situation. Each sheath is also partially para cord wrapped and features a para cord leg tie-down. The sheath is lined with a plastic-like substance to protect it and facilitate silent withdrawal. The belt loop is wide enough to attach to a pistol belt and the para cord wrapping on the sheath is amply long enough to facilitate any sort of lashing requirements to individual equipment. Each Ek Knife comes with a sheath, and extra sheaths can be ordered, as required.

The Ek Knife legacy is one of pride in one's individual weapon, something of increased importance these

days, since there is so much sameness in equipment. Everything seems to be either black or cammie colored plastic or black or cammie colored metal. Here is something special, steeped in tradition and still a vital combat tool that looks great. Just remember, if you order an Ek Commando Knife, you'll have a few weeks worth of waiting for it to ship. And, if you're a civilian, remember that GIs are always pushed to the head of the line at Ek, as is proper.