

ORIGINAL ARTICLE:

Lamb, K. "A SHOUT-OUT TO AL ZITTA." *Guns & Ammo*, August 2017, pp. 36

Al Zitta is a wildman, motorcycle racer, Harley-Davidson shop owner, shooter, small arms developer and visionary. All of these terms describe the Z-Man. He has had a spectacular life shooting guns, selling guns, modifying guns and developing new guns. He was responsible for the clever LR-300, which had a completely different operating system than conventional AR-type rifles that allowed for a side-folding stock. If his brand was Colt, HK, or FN, the LR-300 would have been more popular than it was when the design was bought by Para USA. Back in 1993, I remember shooting an early LR-300 at work, which proved ahead of its time. Zitta also started modifying STI's 2011 for Special Operations back in the '90s. One particular gun that earned attention was the Strike pistol. The Strike was a heavily modified 2011. There was a striker added to the frame's dust cover that allowed shooters to muzzle thump someone without pushing the slide out of battery. There was a shroud over the hammer to prevent clothing or the web of someone's hand from stopping the firing of the pistol. Of course, there was also a spike protruding from the mainspring housing. Some naysayers said that we'd skewer out hands during a reload. If this happened to someone, they were not the sharpest tool. It isn't easy to drive a dull spike through the heel of a hand. Zitta ran Aldo's Harley-Davidson Shop in Bernardston, Massachusetts, before closing it and moving to Tennessee. He is now my neighbor, shooting buddy and gunsmith. It's pretty cool to know such a living legend.

REVISED by BRITANY VAN BLAKE:

Wildman. Motorcycle racer. Small arms developer. Visionary. All of these terms describe Al Zitta, the Z-Man. He has had a spectacular life shooting, selling, and modifying guns, as well as developing new guns. He was responsible for the clever LR-300, whose operating system was entirely unlike conventional AR-type rifles that allowed for a side-folding stock. I remember shooting an early LR-300 at work in 1993. It proved ahead of its time. If its brand was Colt, HK, or FN, the LR-300 would have been more popular than it was when the design was bought by Para USA.

Zitta also started modifying STI's 2011 for Special Operations back in the '90s. One that caught a lot of attention in particular was the heavily modified Strike pistol. There was a striker added to the frame's dust cover, which allowed shooters to muzzle thump someone without pushing the slide out of battery. A shroud over the hammer prevented clothing or someone's hand from interfering with firing. Of course, the Striker also had a spike protruding from the mainspring housing; naysayers said that we'd skewer out hands during a reload. But it isn't easy to drive a dull spike through the heel of a hand. If this happened to anyone, they weren't the sharpest tools in the shed.

Zitta ran Aldo's Harley-Davidson Shop in Bernardston, Massachusetts, before closing it and moving to Tennessee. He's now my neighbor, shooting buddy, and gunsmith. It's pretty cool to know a living legend.