

Magnum Research

Baby Eagle Compact Polymer & Semi-Compact Polymer

George Hill

When I asked Magnum Research to review a compact Baby Eagle for Concealed Carry Magazine, they pretty much just offered me the buffet. "Which ones?"

After thinking about it a bit, I decided on a compact and a semi-compact, both with the polymer frames and both in 9MM for an easier comparison. My thinking was that these would be the best choices for CCW work considering they are half the weight of the normal Baby Eagle pistols. If you are going to carry a pistol all day long, weight is a consideration to many people. I'm not that concerned about weight myself, but I figured these would be the better fit for CCM readers. I selected 9MM for both not just because the ammunition is the most affordable. I planned on absolutely brutalizing these pistols. More on that in a moment.

Magnum Research is a company that almost everyone knows. At least everyone knows of their flagship product, the famous "Desert Eagle" pistol series. These are the huge automatics use most any action movie or TV show. They are good looking guns that are impressive on the screen. Agent Smith in the Matrix seems to like his. The Desert Eagle is manufactured by IMI out of Israel, a place that knows a thing or two about weapons and fighting and has produced such things as the Uzi, the Merkava main battle tank, and the Tavor rifle. All are excellent weapon systems and the Baby Eagle is no exception.

These plastic Baby Eagles have an outstanding pedigree. Let's take a quick look at the lineage. Their Great Grand Daddy is the world famous CZ-75 pistol out of the Czech Republic. A gun that caused some stir amongst handgun aficionados everywhere. IMI took the design, altered it to fit the needs of the Holy Lands, and dubbed it the Jericho 941. The Jericho was offered as a multi caliber weapon that allowed the owner to switch calibers between 9MM Parabellum and .41 Action Express. All you had to do was swap barrels and use different magazines. The .41AE never caught on, but the concept of a middle caliber sure did. The Jerichos were popular with their owners, but they never really caught on in the main stream and seemed to have faded out quietly. IMI continued to produce them,



Baby Eagles Specifications	Compact Polymer	Semi-Compact Polymer
Length	7.00 in.	7.50 in.
Height	5.00 in.	5.75 in.
Width	1.125 in.	1.125 in.
Sight Radius	5.00 in.	5.25 in.
Barrel Length	3.5 in.	3.5 in.
Magazine Capacity	10	14
Weight (w/ Empty Mag.)	1.0 lbs 11 oz.	1.0 lbs 13.2 oz.
Trigger Reach	3.0 in.	3.0 in.
Trigger Pull Double Action	12-14 lbs. EST.	10-12 lbs. EST.
Trigger Pull Single Action	5.0 lbs.	5.0 lbs.

dropping the .41AE caliber, and released them under two different brands. One is Uzi and it is marketed as the Uzi Eagle pistol and the other by Magnum Research as the Baby Eagle pistol. While you can't find a new one in .41AE, you can get them in 9MM, .40, and even .45ACP. I even remember seeing one in .357 SIG, but that was using an aftermarket barrel. After some years and the rise of plastic popularity, we have these guns available now with polymer frames as is the current fashion. So there you have a much abbreviated background on the two guns before me.

They both arrived with a nice letter stating that they would like them back within 60 days. Magnum Research hooked me up properly and promptly and have been

awesome to work with. I would like to thank them for that. I hope the guns are as good as the people are.

The guns themselves are impressive pieces. In the hand, they radiate ruggedness and competency. Yet people often pass them by as they cruise the pistol cases looking at the Berettas and SIGs or anything else other than the Baby Eagle. Something about the name "Baby" just doesn't sit right as a name for something a serious shooter is going to strap to

his hip. But don't worry about that name. The name Baby is only a nickname for the gun and the word Baby appears nowhere on the gun. The gun says "Desert Eagle Pistol Israeli Military Industries LTD" on the left side. There is another hurdle that people have to get over before they will pick one up, and that's the safety. Most shooters do not favor the slide mounted safety. While they are found on Beretta's and Smith and Wessons, American shooters simply prefer the safety lever on the frame. This is why they are often overlooked. What is interesting is that the polymer frames themselves have a slot molded in for a frame mounted safety, but it is filled with a drop in plug that I didn't notice initially. A frame mounted safety would have been a welcome "factory option", but the system it has now is just fine.

The only real downside are the 10 round Clinton Magazines. Since I received these guns for review the ban restricting capacity has been lifted and 15 round mags are available again. The Compact model remains five rounds shorter even if it appears that the mags should be able to hold at least 12 rounds..

These guns are typical of all CZ-75 clones... meaning they are very good. I like CZ's the best but as far as clones go I must confess that the Jerichos and these Eagles are my favorites. I love the way the muzzle end is beveled back underneath. I think it looks sharp. I don't particularly care for the polymer frames to be honest. But I can see where this would be an advantage if you are packing one of these things 14 hours a day or longer.

Now that I've been nice to the guns, it's time to get nasty. I had planned on being mean to them, and I was. I emptied out my

bucket of loose ammo. All different kinds, all different bullet types in all different loadings. From match target to +P+ and a few rounds that I remembered was "SMG" ammo from Germany. I didn't try to sort them... I just grabbed them and loaded them into the mags. Some of these rounds were as old as 8 years by my best guess. There are the rounds that I used to collect when I had a box of ammo that only had a few rounds left, I'd just dump them in this bucket. Kinda like a loose change jar.

Well, all the rounds ran through the Compact without a single failure of any sort. My initial impression that these guns would good shooters has at least been verified in the Compact Baby Eagle. It is a dang good shooter! Accurate too. My shot groups did have some vertical stringing but that is from all the different velocities going on. Had I used all the same lot of ammo, I am sure it would have been nice and tight. I had five of the same rounds loaded together in the first mag and all those shots went right into the same little tiny area that could have been covered by a quarter. Not bad performance at all, but this was not a test of accuracy... I just wanted to get it out and do some banging. Even the hottest rounds felt good... felt easy... Like from a full sized HK USP or Beretta. And this was from the Compact. Recoil is not an issue.

The next range trip, I ran another 200 rounds through the Compact and 200 rounds though the Semi-Compact. All the rounds went very near right where I was wanting them to go on paper targets and I was able to bounce Mt Dew empties with boring regularity. I'm impressed with the accuracy from both guns.

Not a single malfunction of any sort. These guns just like to shoot. Very comfortable for long range sessions but the Compact's mags are tough to get round #10 loaded up. This is something that will probably loosen up after awhile.

The sights are spot on and easy to shoot with. I like them. The rear sight is not the snag free "Novak" style ramps that are popular. To be honest, why they are popular at all baffles me. I dislike them. The sights on these Eagles are just fine and allow for easier one hand slide manipulation by simply hooking the rear sight on your belt or holster and pushing the

gun down on it. With a no snag sight, such a maneuver is not possible. I like the snag, I need the snag, and I've never had a problem with it snagging anything I didn't want it to snag on. Just because something is popular or widely used, doesn't mean that it's necessarily a good thing. Much like Microsoft Windows, but I digress.

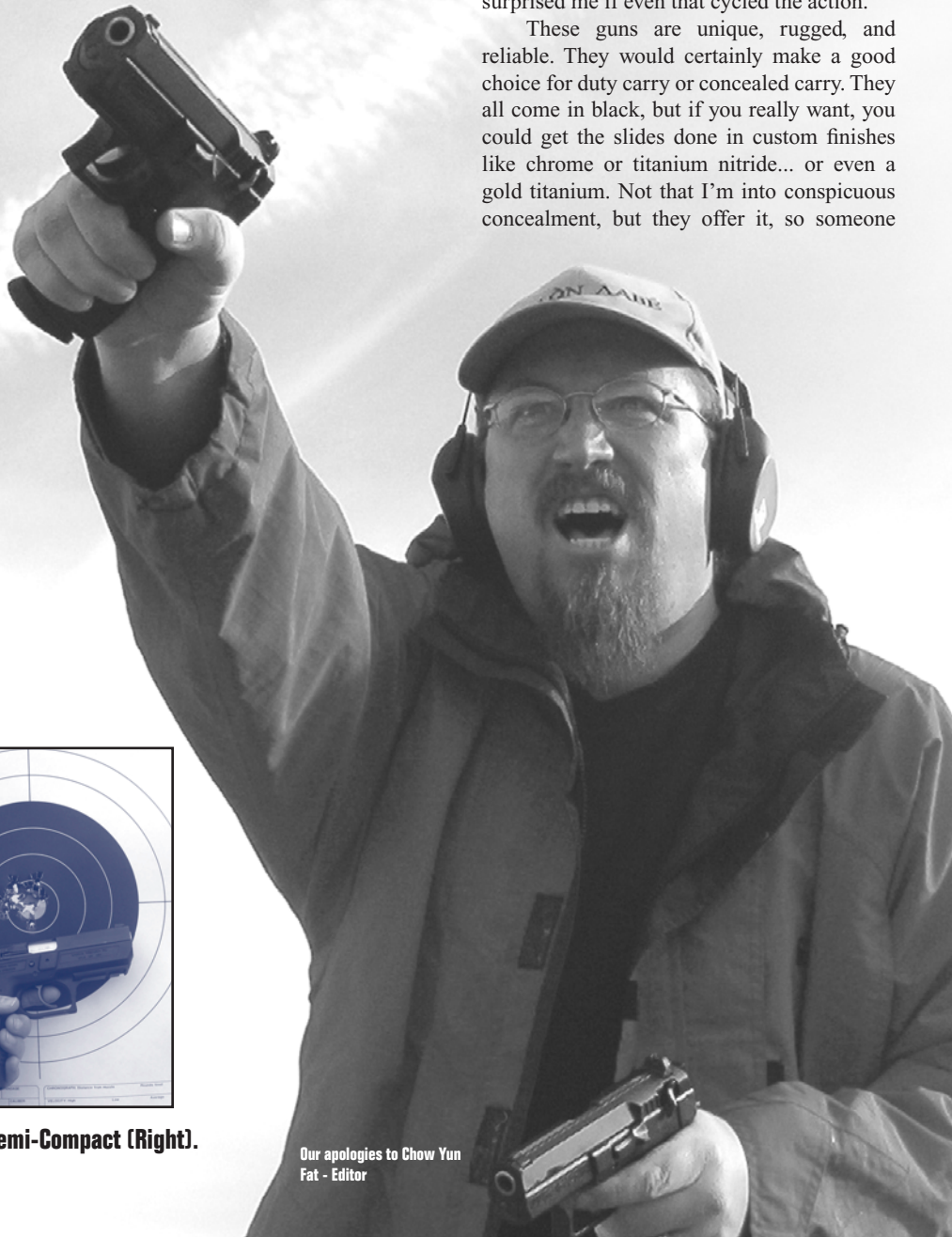
The trigger is wide and serrated like a S&W target gun making it easy to control the pull all the way to the bang. At least in single action mode. The trigger pull in DA mode is extremely horrible. One of the worst I've ever felt. Seriously... the Compact's trigger makes an AMT DAO Backup's trigger a work of art and the CZ-100's trigger an absolute dream. The pull is off the scale... it's gotta be like 18 - 20 pounds or something, with a unique roughness only appreciated by someone who has ever had to scrape barnacles off the bottom of a tug boat. It made me want to sing some sea chanties. Luckily the pull in SA mode is different. It's... well... sort of stacking and squishy at the same time, with a

break that is something like a green twig. But you can get used to it quickly and then it ain't bad. If you put forth the effort to learn it, it's very usable. If I was to carry one of these guns regularly, I'd practice thumb cocking it with the non firing hand. After that first shot double action shot, these guns come into their own. They become serious shooting machines.

Overall impression is very favorable. I like them. Not sure which one I like the most yet. For CCW work the Compact is certainly the better choice. For duty or range work, the Semi-Compact would be better... that thing shoots like a Lincoln Navigator.

I've poured all my extra funds into ammunition for these guns. Hundreds and hundreds of rounds and through it all I've noticed a couple things. First, the actions have slicked up a bit and what was once stiff, was now just right. What took some getting used to was now naturalized. Most importantly neither gun had a jam. Not once. If I had wanted a jam, I'd have had to have loaded an empty brass case. Even then, it wouldn't have surprised me if even that cycled the action.

These guns are unique, rugged, and reliable. They would certainly make a good choice for duty carry or concealed carry. They all come in black, but if you really want, you could get the slides done in custom finishes like chrome or titanium nitride... or even a gold titanium. Not that I'm into conspicuous concealment, but they offer it, so someone



Targets from Baby Eagle Compact (Left) and Semi-Compact (Right).



must be buying it. I'll take mine in regular black, and let my bullets be the shiny bits, thanks.

The Semi-Compact is almost a full sized handgun, with a molded in light rail and full length grip. It would be more at home in an Officer's retention holster. While the machining and finish is first rate, it's somehow not an elegant weapon with the appearance of refinement befitting polite company. This gun would rather be out working. Hard.

The smaller Compact version is only slightly smaller. The slide is only half a front sight post shorter and the grip is only a half inch shorter, and the light rail is gone... somehow it works and I don't know why. One seems small and tidy, and the other huge and brutal... yet they are really so close to being the same that holding both of them together is like looking an MC Escher drawing. It shouldn't work out like it does... but it does.

The Compact really is perfect for concealed carry work when you need a handgun of serious capability. Packing it under a light jacket, I had no problem keeping it concealed and unnoticed. And here is the kicker. While shooting groups at 15 yards into paper targets I found this Compact is actually more accurate than its bigger brother. This is also something that on the surface should not be. But the smaller group sizes prove that out. Thinking this to be a fluke, I repeated this performance several times with the same results each time.

Don't overlook the Baby Eagles next time you are browsing your local gun counter. They merit a closer look and a second consideration. One just might be the gun you

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