

o Sterling? Uzi? Why not BOTH?²¹

zines – 34 rounds and, as mentioned, slightly curved – incorporate twin rollers in the follower and the magazine spring is coiled, this combination leading to extremely reliable feeding.

Initially, Uzi submachineguns were produced with wooden buttstocks; but soon, folding-stock versions were fielded and these are, by far, the most widely encountered variants. Although other calibers have been offered, the norm is 9x19mm, the same caliber as the great majority of Sterlings. Versions of the Uzi have been made elsewhere, but the most familiar – still made today – are those made in Israel by Israeli Military Industries (IMI). Various magazine capacities have been offered as well, but the 32-round variety is commonly encountered. Whereas the full-sized Uzi submachinegun will have a 10" barrel, Uzi carbines available in the United States have a 16" barrel, US law compelling this, since the carbines have a shoulder stock and are, hence, a rifle. The Sterling submachinegun standardly features a barrel just under 7-3/4". The civilian-legal rifle or carbine version of the Sterling must also have a barrel 16" or longer.

Which brings us to the Centurion UC-9 Carbine, the Sterling Type I Semi-Auto Rifle and Sterling Type II Semi-Auto Rifle, all from Century International Arms (www.centuryarms.com), featuring genuine original parts with US-made barrels and receivers, all firing from closed bolts and, of course, semiauto only. There are two variations of the Centurion UC-9 Carbine, one with folding stock and one with wooden buttstock. The two basic variations of the Sterling differ only in the length of the ventilated barrel shroud, the Type II's running full length, the Type I the original length found in the subgun. A version of the Type I can be had in 7.62x25mm Tokarev. Similarly, a pistol version of the Sterling – known as the Colefire Magnum Semi-Auto Pistol – can be had in either caliber. The pistol has no shoulder stock and a 4-1/2" barrel. Pistol versions of the Uzi have been offered in the past and likely will be offered again, from one source or another.

Two 32-round all steel double column magazines arrive with an Uzi Carbine and two 34-round magazines come with each Sterling Rifle. More magazines are available from Century and other sources.

Typically, overseas designs built around handgun cartridges and dating from decades back will not handle hollow points without some gunsmithing. I bowed to tradition and secured 9mm solids from Atlanta Arms and Ammo (www.atlantaarmsandammo.com), Winchester (www.winchester.com) and Sellier & Bellot (www.sellier-bellot.cz) for the Sterlings and the Uzi, in order to ensure reliable functioning.

Contrary to the movies, almost no one who knows what he or she is doing fires a submachinegun from the hip. Those versions made

specifically as pistols will be fired more or less as pistols for best utility. Those configured as rifles or carbines should be fired from the shoulder. Similarly, just because one has magazine capacity greater than 30 rounds, there is no need to "spray and pray" when shooting. One can always tell a tyro on automatic weapons. He or she will hold the trigger back until the weapon starts climbing wildly or runs out of ammo. At 500 to 600 rounds per minute in full auto, one can burn through a magazine ridiculously quickly and quite possibly hit nothing. I've heard it said that our Islamic terrorist enemies in the Middle East frequently handle their AK-47s by firing from the hip with the stock folded. Sometimes, I suppose, it can be a good thing that more movies don't show accurate firearms handling.

Definitely a right-hander's weapon, the Sterling Type I and Type II Rifles, as is the case with the Sterling SMGs, have a serious advantage over most similar weapons when it comes to marksmanship from the prone position. The magazine feeds from the left side of the receiver, nothing sticking out below the weapon. This very magazine arrangement leads to those who would fire this weapon from the hip or abdomen level using the left hand to hold the magazine, as if it were somehow a secondary stock positioned at a right angle to the receiver. It looks really cool. However, a good friend, who has used Sterlings in combat, pointed out that the repeated practice of this technique makes for a sloppy magazine to magazine well fit.

Both Sterlings and Uzis have manual safeties, but the Uzi also has a grip safety, the Century International Arms guns retaining this feature.

Semiauto versions of submachineguns, enlarged to rifle or carbine proportions, have limited tactical utility in any military role. Gunsmith them to achieve reliable hollow point feeding and, when paired with 9mm service handguns, such firearms can provide greater accuracy at longer ranges and greater firepower at conventional distances, in the law-enforcement context.

In the final analysis, either the Centurion UC-9 Carbine (the Uzi) or the Sterling Semi-Auto Rifles can make outstanding guns for plinking fun, but also do serious service for home defense – how would you like to be looking at something that had the appearance of a submachinegun if you were a burglar or home invader?

Well-made weapons with a proven performance record from a reliable source celebrating 50 years in business – as is Century Arms – are a good deal now or any time. Check them out, if you agree.

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