

BULLETBLOCKER'S PROFESSIONAL-GRADE PROTECTION FOR CONCERNED CIVILIANS

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repare, Protect, Prevent." The motto of the ballistic armor company, BulletBlocker,

charges the concerned citizen with actions to mitigate the growing threats to our nation's existence.

Most readers of this magazine likely have already prepared themselves with equipment. Some have learned about protection through various self-defense courses, and some might have even learned to take preventative action to secure their person, vehicle, home and workplace.

Yet, no matter how "ready" a person might consider him/herself to be, threats continue to exist, pop up randomly, and seams in our security plans repeatedly expose vulnerabilities.

Luckily, concerned citizens have recognized their weaknesses and have taken the correct actions to close these seams with affordable body armor. This is why the company, BulletBlocker, has been in business over nine years, providing affordable ballistic protection for the average person.

> The BulletBlocker Gabriel vest combines a serious level of protection with a surprisingly comfortable fit.





← Left and middle: The Gabriel Vest conceals perfectly under busi-ness apparel. (Photo: Lauren Harton)

⟨ Left: The Gabriel Vest features dual-side entry zippers for easy on and off. (Photo: Lauren Harton)

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The company has survived among some of the biggest names in the business and has secured large government contracts. It continues to grow, with a loyal customer base and solid reputation for providing custom-made gear in a more personable manner. BulletBlocker provides products worthy of consideration for those serious about up-armoring their person while maintaining discrete concealment.

Think about the number and manner of the majority of firearmrelated crimes in this country. According to FBI statistics, most are carried out with pistols and revolvers—not the "assault rifle" the media would like to have you believe. For this reason, Level IIIA (3A) armor, rated to stop most pistol rounds, is reasonable for everyday carry. Of course, if you live or work in an area where rifle threats are more prevalent, it would be wise to up-armor further or move away.

For the vast majority of the population, handguns are the likely tool of the criminal element. With this knowledge, the wise, concerned citizen must determine how to carry armor in a manner that won't draw unwanted attention. And maintaining "gray man" status is possible with the following products from BulletBlocker.

GABRIEL BALLISTIC BASE LAYER (BBL) COMPRESSION

Body armor is not just for armed professionals in law enforcement and the military. There are many dignitaries, celebrities and business professionals who wear it—unnoticed—as they travel abroad and into hostile territories. And if body armor is appropriate for politicians and the prestigious members of our society, it should be good



) Above: The author used various handguns and ammunition from approximately 3 yards away from the target. He also wore the BulletBlocker Gabriel Vest during testing



During unscientific and informal testing of the BulletBlocker Level IIIA material, I fired a variety of ammunition from assorted pistols and revolvers in different calibers from a distance of 3 yards.

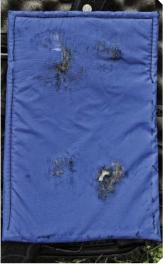
The BulletBlocker Ballistic Clipboard Panel was placed on a plywood backer with multiple wooden stumps as a berm. I examined it after each shot. I marked a point of impact with corresponding caliber for each hole. Each of the six shots fired at the target (.22LR, 38 Special, .357 Magnum, 9mm, 45ACP and 40S&W) was assigned to a section of target in a clockwise direction. The results were impressive and proved that the panel is capable of stopping these common handgun calibers.

HANDGUN	ROUND	RESULT
BROWNING BUCK MARK, 5,5 INCH	CCI STANDARD VELOCITY "22LR, 40 GRAIN	NO PENETRATION
CUSTOM SMITH & WESSON MODEL 66, 4 INCH	PMC .38 SPECIAL 132-GRAIN FMJ	NO PENETRATION
CUSTOM SMITH & WESSON MODEL 66, 4 INCH	FEDERAL HYDRA-SHOK ,357 MAGNUM, 158 GRAIN	NO PENETRATION
SIG SAUER P225-A1	SIG V-CROWN 124-GRAIN FMJ	NO PENETRATION
SMITH & WESSON M&P	AMERICAN EAGLE 165-GRAIN FMJ	NO PENETRATION
HK45	AMERICAN EAGLE 230-GRAIN FMJ	NO PENETRATION

Of the rounds fired, the round that tore the back nylon cover was the .357 Magnum. However, the round never penetrated the Kevlar, and the entire projectile was caught in the material. Every round fired could be felt through the blue nylon cover, and each was either fragmented or mushroomed.

Of course, this test does not take into account the trauma experienced by the wearer or user. While the panel can handle repeated impact, the wearer might not be able to.





> Right: He tested various pistol calibers against the BulletBlocker Clipboard Insert (front). The rear of the target did not show any damage

... LEVEL IIIA (3A) ARMOR, RATED TO STOP MOST PISTOL ROUNDS, IS REASONABLE **FOR EVERYDAY** CARRY.

enough for the rest of us.

According to BulletBlocker Vice President Ed Burke, a Department of Justice (DOJ) employee requested a custom vest that was ultra-concealable and lightweight enough so that it wouldn't hamper what he/she did during work. The resulting product is the Gabriel Vest. This vest is designed to wear like "Under Armor on steroids."

That compression fit commonly found in athletic garments is what makes the Gabriel work with you and not against you. It uses the best DuPont ballistic material instead of imported protective fibers. Each one is built by hand, based on numerous measurements the customer supplies to the company. Rather than settling for a generic size that won't afford the best protection, this custom-fit

process ensures the vest will work with an individual's unique body type and size.

According to Burke, "there is no other competition for this vest out there. It is 33 percent thinner, lighter and more flexible." Two versions are available (with and without the flank panels), weighing in at between 4.5 and 5 pounds.

To test the Gabriel Vest, I wore it to the range underneath normal business attire. The longer vest tail remained tucked inside my pants and kept the vest from riding up. The vest stayed close to my body and didn't get in the way of proper presentation of a holstered firearm. Worn in conjunction with a backpack, the shoulder straps fit perfectly over the vest and rode normally. Unlike a hard plate carrier, this vest wears as if it is part of your body and is almost forgotten.

MSRP: \$1,000



> Below: The backpack insert fits perfectly in most daypacks, including this Jedburgh Pack from Blue Force Gear. An armored pack is perfect for carrying extra pistol magazines, a tomahawk, two-way radios, a flashlight and other gear that could come in handy during an urban crisis.





> Far right: Relative thickness of the 3-Ring Binder Insert in a

> Near right: This middle-schooler holds the BulletBlocker 3-Ring Binder over her vital area, demonstrating the amount of coverage this binder affords. The 3-Ring Binder Insert is light enough for smaller children to carry without an extra burden to their already-heavy schoolbags.



BULLETPROOF BACKPACK INSERT PANEL/NIJ LEVEL IIIA

Sending kids off to school is a recurring lesson in anxiety for some parents. Schools aren't as safe as you are led to believe, and their gun-free status makes them ideal settings for active shooters. Furthermore, as gangs seek out younger generations to fill their ranks, it is not uncommon for violence to find its way into hallways, bus stops and school zones as aspiring thugs seek attention with easily concealed pistols and other weapons.

For less weight than an 8-ounce bottle of water, a BulletBlocker ballistic panel can be easily inserted into any backpack. The panels are made to be concealable and flexible and are light enough for any child to carry without noticing the weight.

Parents can teach their children to shield themselves during a "shelter-in-place" drill and have some extra peace of mind knowing something is better than nothing in response to the actions of a criminal. Because many schools have not taken adequate steps to change policy in the wake of the Sandy Hook murders, many parents have purchased these backpack plates.

Available in standard sizes, as well as custom dimensions and colors, the ballistic backpack panel is an excellent choice for discreet protection.

I carried one of these panels in a Blue Force Gear Jedburgh Pack while on various weekend trips over the course of a month, It didn't take up much space in my pack and actually created a way to separate the contents and divide the main compartment. I also found it great for carefully loading and unloading my handgun in a safe direction indoors. If a round were to go off while pointed at the panel, it would be caught and not penetrate into another room. In a pinch, the backpack panel can be stuffed between the skin and a T-shirt to make an improvised half vest if addressing a threat head on.

MSRP: \$235

BULLETPROOF CLIPBOARD INSERT/ NIJ LEVEL III A

While originally designed to fit inside a clipboard with a flip-open compartment, the BulletBlocker Clipboard Insert can be used as a flexible panel in any slip pocket. The panel weighs just 1 pound and easily works to add protection to laptop bags, courier bags and large purses—or, as intended: inside a clipboard carried by police. It can even be used by hospital staff who are generally not legally able to carry firearms.

This soft panel adds a layer of Level IIIA protection to anything in which it is used. Because the panels do not have any ballistic labels on them, they blend into the daily loadout.

> Above: In a pinch, the Backpack Insert can be worn against the skin under a T-shirt that is tucked into the pants to create a half vest for protection. (Photo: Lauren Harton)

... THE BACKPACK **PANEL CAN BE** STUFFED **BETWEEN THE** SKIN AND A T-SHIRT TO MAKE **AN IMPROVISED** HALF VEST IF ADDRESSING A THREAT HEAD ON.

The clipboard can be held between the user and the threat as a preventative layer. Like a millwall brick, the clipboard can also be used to strike and distract while a more formidable weapon is drawn.

In evaluating this panel, I found that the added 16 ounces of weight improves the improvised weapon function of the clipboard edges and flat surface as an impact weapon. The panel is soft, flexible and durable, making it ideal for taking abuse or dishing it out.

MSRP: \$175

BODY ARMOR LEGALITY



A common misunderstanding about body armor is whether it is legal to possess in the United States. Internationally, this will vary greatly, and anyone traveling abroad should do their research—or be prepared to face criminal charges in a country less familiar or friendly than the United States.

In general, in the United States, it is illegal to possess body armor if you are a convicted felon. Other than Connecticut, where it is illegal to purchase body armor unless done face to face, and Louisiana, where it is illegal to wear body armor at a school function or on school grounds, other states openly allow the sale, purchase and possession of body armor and ballistic panels by private citizens ... for now.

In January 2015, a bill (H.R.378) was entered into the

U.S. House of Representatives to restrict the legal ownership of enhanced body armor. The last action tracked on this bill has it in the Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations Subcommittee.

At the time of writing this article, possession remains legal. It would be wise to acquire it legally before you can't. Law enforcement and military purchases are generally without issue, and some states might require specific information from citizens.

Of course, this article is not a substitute for proper legal research and consultation of the local laws in your jurisdiction. However, let it serve as a starting point to begin your investigation and understanding of what you can and cannot purchase and own. If you want body armor before the time comes when you can't, purchase it *now*.

> Right: The Clipboard and 3-Ring Binder inserts fit perfectly into any sleeve pocket.

BULLETPROOF 3-RING BINDER INSERT/NIJLEVEL IIIA

Similar to the Clipboard Insert is the BulletBlocker 3-Ring Binder Insert. It is great for teachers, students and professionals who carry binders with them on a daily basis. This product is about the size of a standard spiral-ring notebook: 80 square inches. The ¼-inch-thick panel disappears inside a 1-inch binder, with plenty of room to spare for an actual notebook, folders and loose-leaf paper.

If carrying a backpack is not an option (because some schools and companies

require bags to be checked or stored), the individual can still carry this means of protecting their vital area and go unnoticed. Both the 3-Ring Binder Insert and Clipboard Insert easily pass through metal detectors and do not set off Garrett detection wands. To test how well they blend in, I deliberately left them out while sitting down at various coffee places in busy areas where other patrons could not help but notice them. Not once did anyone ask what they were when these inserts were placed next to my notebooks or laptop.

My niece remarked, "Who doesn't have a 3-ring binder?" thus reinforcing the concept of blending in with the masses. If discretion is important, the BulletBlocker



Clipboard and 3-Ring Binder inserts are excellent choices. MSRP: \$125

As previously stated, BulletBlocker is a growing company built on solidly crafted products and a reputation for great customer service. BulletBlocker doesn't attend trade shows, and most of its customers come directly to this company because they know what they're looking for. This does not mean the company is without press; it has been featured on many major cable news stations, large national newspapers and internationally in the news.

According to Burke, "Because we're small, we've always wanted to make our products affordable for the average person. Our prices are not outrageous. You can't buy products like ours from larger companies."

It is impossible to prevent all of life's unexpected threats from harming us, but with the line of products available through BulletBlocker, one can prepare and protect while closing those dangerous seams. **ASG**

SOURCE

BulletBlocker (978) 224-1172 www.BulletBlocker.com