

# The write stuff



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■ BY DAVE RICIGLIANO

Like most cops, I always have an eye out for products that can make my job both easier and safer. I was recently made aware of an item that accomplishes both tasks quite well and should be of great interest to law enforcement and security professionals alike.

The “Tactical Pen” is a new twist on an old item. A number of quality manufacturers have teamed up with prominent self defense experts to produce a new category of personal defense tool designed with the law enforcement and military communities in mind. The Tactical Pen is essentially a high quality writing instrument that, due to its unique design and construction characteristics, can be called upon to perform a number of additional tasks.

Keeping in mind that the best personal defense item in the world is of no use if it cannot be readily deployed when needed, the pen, as a daily carry item, provides the perfect platform for such an upgrade. Both uniform and executive personnel alike will appreciate the non-threatening, high-end look of the tested products, allowing these tools to essentially “hide in plain sight” until needed, even to a well trained eye.

While a number of companies are now jumping on the Tactical Pen bandwagon with offerings of varying quality, I selected four models to test that I consider being of the highest quality in the areas of design, workmanship, form and function. These four manufacturers are established industry leaders and stand behind their offerings, they are;

Benchmade, Mil-Tac Knives & Tools, Tuff-Writer and Wilson Combat.

All four tested products offer some common features such as:

- Aerospace grade aluminum construction with traction areas
- Functions as a PDA stylus and glass breaker
- Anodized low profile, rust proof outer coating
- Bolted on stainless steel pocket clip
- No moving parts to break
- Available with high quality black or blue ink cartridges

Some notable features are;

Benchmade, well known for high quality knives, provided their model 1100-2 in gray. This model is 5.25 in length and has a snap-on cap, 6061-T6 aluminum construction and uses the well known and



readily available Fisher Space Pen refill. Benchmade also offers a large range of tactical pens including a steel version and many color options such as black red, gray and gold to suit any need and environment.

Mil-Tac Knives & Tools sent along their model TDP-1 in flat black. This pen was designed by noted knife maker and martial artist Allen Elishewitz. Constructed of aircraft grade aluminum, the Mil-Tac is available in black, green, blue, gray and orange. The TDP-1, like the Benchmade, is 5.25 inches in length and is very pen-like in appearance making for an extremely discreet carry and presentation. The TDP-1 uses refills by both Fisher and Schmidt Technologies. Mil-Tac also offers a “Write in the rain” all-weather notepad.

The Tuff-Writer Frontline series is the largest of the group. The sniper gray model tested measures a full 6.5 inches long making it easy to “reach out and touch someone”. Featuring 6061-T6 aluminum construction and using the Fisher Space Pen refill. The cap screws on and off and has a hole to attach a lanyard. Other options include a standard length model, a polished executive model and an unmarked “sterile” version. A kydex neck sheath is available for off-duty carry. Colors include stealth black and desert brown.

Wilson Combat provided their Tac-Pen in a nice matte black Armor-tuff finish. The unique traction scallops machined into the 7075-T6 aluminum alloy body offers a great tactile feel without the worry of fraying pockets. Wilson also uses the

excellent Schmidt Technology pressurized ink cartridge that allows for writing at all angles.

During the evaluation period, I was able to carry all four pens in the top pocket of my uniform shirt without any comments or strange looks. As for function, all I can say is that they all transition nicely from high quality writing instruments to easily piercing a ½ inch sheetrock wall.

Of course, to best utilize the self defense aspects of these tactical pens, training in kubaton and other impact weapon use is recommended and available from numerous sources. An internet search also produces a number of instructional videos regarding tactical pen deployment and tactics.

While not to be considered a first line of defense, these pens offer a discreet last-ditch self defense option, and when push comes to shove, it's nice to have options!

Contacts;

- [www.benchmade.com](http://www.benchmade.com)
- [www.mil-tac.com](http://www.mil-tac.com)
- [www.tuffwriter.com](http://www.tuffwriter.com)
- [www.wilsoncombat.com](http://www.wilsoncombat.com)

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