

ON THE COVER

ALPHA ONE

Reports for Duty!

BY SEBASTIAN LUCKE



Pohl Force's new folder is built rock-solidly with German ruggedness and input from battle-proven special operators!

The Alpha One is one of the first exiting new models developed by the equally new Pohl Force Knife Company. Behind Pohl Force Company is the managing director and well-known designer Dietmar Pohl, who has spent almost 15 years working in the Solingen knife industry. During this time he designed and developed more than 100 different knives in intensive cooperation with professional users.

For a tactical knife to have practical value for professional users, it needs to be designed with the input of experienced field operatives. The Alpha One project indeed was created with the help of many different experts and users from all kinds of special organizations including U.S. and German Special Forces. Currently, the knife is available in two different versions, an all black tactical and a polished civilian version.

STEVE WOODS PHOTO



The serrations are perfect for cutting belts and robes.

The Specs

The 440C (58-59 HRC) 4.5-inch bladed Alpha One weighs in at 9.9 ounces. The pre-fabricated parts of the tactical version have a black titan aluminium nitrate (TiAlN) vacuum coat (PVD). The prefabricated parts of the outdoor version are bead blasted. The Alpha One comes with a detailed instruction manual giving its many potential uses. On the certificate you can find a serial number and control date with the signature of managing director Dietmar Pohl. Before leaving the shop, he personally examines each knife for defects.

The handle is made out of two stainless steel liners, which have large cutouts to reduce weight. On top of the liners there are massive .16-inch thick molded recesses made of glass fiber-reinforced Zytel, chosen because of its resistance to impacts and ability to handle variations in temperature and humidity. The handle's texture feels a bit like a low-grit sandpaper.

Two impressive hollow pivots give added stability to the handle. All screws have slotted screw heads. If one of the threaded sleeves is damaged, it can be changed



A U.S. Marine Sniper is using his H3 Alpha One Tactical to clear the brush in front of his scope.



The tactical version has a nice black titanium nitride (TiAlN) vacuum-coated (PVD) blade. It's tough as nails!

without a problem. Ever try to find a torx-head screwdriver in a combat zone? The pivots can also be adjusted with a quarter, thus making it uncomplicated to adjust the blade movement in the field.

The Alpha One functions on a classic rocker-bar lockback. Its spring is really strong, so you need to have enough power in your thumb to release it. After opening the blade, there is a very satisfying "klack!" as it locks up rock solid. The user is given no doubt about the lock's ability as there is no vertical or horizontal blade movement.

The clip of the Alpha One is 2.4 inches long, gets screwed into one of the pivots and can be set in four different positions (right or left side; tip-up/tip-down). The clamping is tight but can be adjusted with pliers. The folder can be disassembled without any special skills and, more importantly, you can put all parts together again with total functional efficiency.

Recurved Spear Point

The blade shape is a basic spear with a light recurve. Thanks to the .20-inch thick blade, you can also use it to do light chopping. This is a very important detail if the Alpha One is to be effective in survival situations. Out of the box, the blade was razor-sharp and the cutting edge was symmetric. Despite all the new buzzword steels on the market, Pohl Force deliberately uses 440 C stainless steel for the Alpha One blade. If 440 C is heat-treated well, you will have good cutting efficiency and easy re-sharpening.

The tactical variant of the Alpha One sports almost 1.5 inches of serrations. The serrated section is on the right side of the blade, not very good for catalogue illustrations, but very practical for most users. The serrated area is perfect for cutting belts and ropes. Added to the serrated area, you have just shy

of 2.5 inches of normal blade for cutting, which gives you a good, practical advantage.

Another requirement of the experts was that the Alpha One must be deployable with one hand. Especially in rescue operations, it is very important that you have one hand free.

The knife is delivered without an assembled thumb stud because in some countries like Germany and the UK, it is no longer legal to use them. For military or law enforcement use, a thumb stud is included and can be screwed onto the blade. The large profile of the stud makes opening the knife, even with gloves on, easy.

Many knives have a very indifferent feel in the hand if you are using them with gloves on. The Alpha One is different. It has deep finger grooves, which means you are never in danger of slipping onto the blade with your fingers. Deepened areas on the backside also give you a safe and ergonomic hold for your thumb.

Four Grip Positions

Depending on the mission or operation, you can hold the Alpha One in four different gripping positions. For example, use the hammer grip to do chopping work or the fencing grip for powerful cutting. Or hold the knife very short with the thumb on the deepened area on the blade back when doing fine cutting jobs. All gripping positions are equally safe with or without gloves. The knife has very good balance



The folder could also be used with gloves.



The Alpha One comes with a description, certificate and an upholstered collector's bag. Dietmar Pohl says: "The knife has to be delivered as I would wish it for myself."



The 75 Tactical Holster: especially designed for the Alpha One. The secure clip is completely removable and the holster also has a little pocket for the clip or other gadgets.

and the handle feels like a natural extension of the user's hand.

Because of the high edge grind, the .20-inch thick blade still cuts very efficiently. I found no play on the Alpha One after using it to chop and carve wood as well as baton through small logs. Because of the surface structure the knife will not slip even if you have wet hands.

Because the knife is not really small, the



The new holster is available in sand, olive-green and black. Holster is compatible to PALS-webbing.

question of carry options comes in. A belt holster would be good for this size knife, but which one will fit perfectly? There are many variants on the market made of different materials, sizing and qualities. Pohl Force has a special holster made especially for the Alpha One by a German company called 75 Tactical. The holster is available in black, OD green and desert tan.

Overall Impressions

Pohl Force's H3 Alpha One is a first-class knife with a wide range of potential uses. All parts are clean and the construction is really thorough. Dietmar Pohl has put his years of experience into creating the perfect handhold on this knife. Also, the structure of the Zytel scales gives the knife a very "tactical" appearance. The knife is manufactured to Pohl Force specifications in Taiwan.

For a suggested retail price of under \$200, you can have a high quality and resilient folder with an outstanding cost-to-performance ratio. **TK**



Two modern weapon systems: The G-36K from the German company Heckler & Koch and the H3 Alpha One designed by German knife expert Dietmar Pohl.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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