

KNIFE WORLD

\$3.50

PRSR-STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LOUISIANA,
MISSOURI
63353
PERMIT 11

Knife World Publications, PO Box 3395, Knoxville, TN 37927 Vol. 37 No. 12 December 2011 www.knifeworld.com

Where Did All the Knives Go?

Civilian Cutlery During WWII

by Janann Giles

There are surely some readers who remember World War II, but for many of us what we know comes from movies and books, and of course that information centers on soldiers, battles and the equipment used. What was going on back home in the good 'ol U.S.A? Images of rallies for war bonds and posters of Rosie the Riveter come immediately to mind, and perhaps families with stars in the windows of their homes designating a family member at war.

The country was focused

on the War but what has been overlooked by many is that home life still continued. The Census Bureau estimated that during the years 1940-1947, 25 million people in the United States moved (one-fifth of the U.S. population) – for work, military operations and of course many young war brides moved back to the family home. There were a lot of people in the United States supporting the war and at the same time trying to maintain a semblance of normalcy.

It is well known that the government wanted scrap metal for military use, but it is not as well known that

Continued on page 20



Steel mounted Case Tested electrician's knife without "TL-29" military markings, likely produced for domestic use during WWII. Photo courtesy Gary Moore.

Thad and Zac Buchanan

by Stephen Garger

My stamina was tailing off after several hours wandering the aisles during opening day of the 2011 Blade Show in Atlanta. I was trying to get my bearings and locate an exit when I nearly bumped into Oregon knifemaker Thad Buchanan coming the opposite way down the row. Thad's upbeat personality and infectious smile always make me happy. We shook hands and immediately began catching up a little. As we got ready to part, I asked where his table was and promised to stop by the next day. Thad pointed back in a general direction and told me that

his son, Zac, was also a knifemaker and sharing the table and that I would enjoy meeting him. Heading out of the hall smiling, I realized it was just a perfect ending for a fine day spent surrounded by knives and knifemakers.

I initially met Thad and his wife, Melissa, at the 2006 Blade Show West in Portland, Oregon, which happened to be one of the first shows in a few years that Thad had attended outside of Eugene, Oregon, where he resided. He had received the 2005 Blade Handmade Award and a profile was about to appear

Continued on page 14



SharpbyCoop photo

Continued from page 1
 in that magazine – something I'd have never known then if Melissa hadn't mentioned it during our conversation, though even a cursory glance at the knives on his table revealed exceptional craftsmanship. Thad went on to win that show's Best Fixed Blade honor.

"I was always interested in making knives and about 1975 saw a kit knife for a big bowie," Thad recalled. "Back then I had no idea about knifemakers or how to start, so I just let it go." In 1978 Thad began

a career in law enforcement and it was speaking to one of his co-workers that led to Thad's introduction to Oregon knifemaker Bill Harsey. "Bill and I hit it off and in 1986 he invited me to come down to spend time in his shop and I devoted about a year to working there," said Thad. "At the time Bill was hooked into Bob Loveless and that funneled me into the Loveless look." In addition, Thad also started spending time with Bob Lum (d. 2007) and Ron Lake, who both resided in

Eugene when he began making knives around 1986.

"In September, 1987 Loveless invited me into his shop while I happened to be down in California for [law enforcement] training," said Thad. "That was about the time I started putting my own shop together and Loveless got me a full-outfitted Burr King 960 grinder at his cost and had it shipped to my house." As he described setting up his gear, I wondered aloud what Thad's biggest challenge was back



Above: Thad Buchanan with son Zac, who's rapidly becoming a fine knifemaker in his own right. Below, the pair giving their grinders a workout.



Classic Loveless-style Chute Knife with stag handles by Zac Buchanan of Prineville, Oregon.



when he was just starting out as a maker. "Everything seemed like a challenge – probably most difficult was finding the time to get in the shop to learn how to make knives," he related. "I had a full-time career, two young boys and a lack of proper

knifemaking equipment." Despite the significant challenges, Thad earned the 1987 Oregon Knife Collectors Association (OKCA) Show's "Best New Maker Award," his first such prize with many more to follow.

Thad retired from police

HALLMARK
Cutlery®

TOLL FREE
1-866-583-3912

FAX
(865) 588-0425

EMAIL:
INFO@HALLMARKCUTLERY.COM

ONLINE AT:
WWW.HALLMARKCUTLERY.COM

P.O. BOX 220
KODAK, TN 37764

DEALER INQUIRIES
INVITED

For the Very Finest in
KNIFE EXOTICA
Visit Us At:
www.adamsknifeworks.com

Unique Offerings From:
 Benchmade, Dalton, Microtech, Case XX,
 Hubertus, Boker, Latama, Protech, Lone
 Wolf, William Henry, Whiskers Allen,
 Bargeon, ZT Zero Tolerance, Vallotton,
 Gerber, AGA Campolin, Weidmannsheil,
 Spyderco, Bill Miller Damascus plus
 Customised models found nowhere else!
www.adamsknifeworks.com



Three-quarter size Boot Knife by Thad Buchanan with desert bighorn sheep handles (8-1/2" overall). Four-inch long double ground blade is of CPM154CM steel, fittings are 416 stainless. SharpByCoop photo.



Zac Buchanan crafted this Jr. Bear model in the Loveless tradition, complete with subhilt and tan canvas micarta handles.



Thad's version of the classic Loveless Semi Skinner with sambar stag handles and stainless steel fittings. Photo by SharpByCoop.

Continued from page 14
 work in 2004 and moved about 150 miles east to the rural town of Prineville, Oregon, where he completed his shop in the summer of 2005 and began his

career as a full-time maker. "I won the Blade Magazine Handmade Award (Hunting/Utility) in 2005 and they did a profile in the magazine," he said.

Continued on page 16

Cattlemans

WESTERN & WORK GEAR
Knives and Tools

ROPER KNIVES

American Buffalo Knife & Tool
 472 Allen Road, Sweetwater, TN 37874
 www.abktinc.com PH 423-337-7423

Continued from page 15
 “I went to the Portland Blade West Show and started going to Chicago, Atlanta and a couple other shows but nothing clicked until the article came out.” Knife purveyor and collector Louis DeSantis also played a role in Thad’s career. “Lou [DeSantis] heard about me from Ron Lake and then told five other people and it grew from there,” said Thad.

“Things just seemed to fall into place for me and I was truly fortunate to be surrounded by the right people.”

Just like when he started out, Thad’s greatest challenge is still related to the time factor, only now it is trying to make enough knives to keep up with the demand. “I’m a student of knifemaking, always will be and I’m constantly amazed at how much there

is to learn for improving my work,” mused Thad. “However, the learning growth increments are smaller and smaller and it can feel like you are in a rut, plus there’s no down time in the shop to play and try different things.” The popularity generated by Thad’s knifemaking success served as the catalyst for working together with his son, Zac. “I was getting busy and needed somebody

to cut steel and drill holes for me and fortunately, Zac wanted to do that,” said Thad smiling. “He had roots in the knife world he wouldn’t have known about since he was always just a little kid around Ron Lake and [Bill] Harsey – and had no idea who they were and how influential they were!”

At the show in Atlanta the morning following our near collision in the aisle, I had no trouble locating the Buchanan table and was not surprised to find that I liked Zac immediately. It also came as no shock that Thad’s knives were sold out, but the good news was that several of Zac’s creations were available. To be concise in my appraisal of his work I will simply state that were the funds at hand, I would have purchased all four of the blades Zac had on display. We all talked for a while and I watched and listened as several experienced knife collectors came by and spoke with Zac and his dad, each seemed to be as taken with Zac’s work as I was and some provided detailed and knowledgeable feedback. As midday approached, and the place began to crowd with show attendees, I bade my good-byes, asking Thad to pass along my warmest regards

to Melissa (Zac’s stepmother). I also let Zac know I would be in contact sometime in the future to discuss his work at greater length.

Some weeks passed, then Zac and I were on the phone together and after exchanging pleasantries, I inquired about the genesis of his interest in knife making. “I was working at a [Eugene, Oregon] restaurant in 2008 and my dad called and asked me to work for him,” said Zac laughing. “It was unexpected since I didn’t realize he even needed any help or could afford it.” Within a couple of months, Zac moved from Eugene to Prineville and for the past three years has been working with Thad. On a more personal note, Zac also told me that he was married one year ago, and proudly noted that his wife Sara (nee Knight) Buchanan, is currently building her own jewelry business as “Knightingale Designs,” available at etsy.com.

Not unexpectedly, many of the same people who influenced his father also have had a major role in Zac’s development as a knifemaker. “Dad was doing a lot of work with Harsey, Ron Lake and Bob Lum and I liked talking

Continued on page 17



Thad made this sleek knife he calls an “extended clip point.” Handles are bighorn sheep, the guard stainless, the tubular “pins” and thong hole 14K gold. Note the handle’s sleek curves and the tang’s strong taper. SharpByCoop photo.

ROCK CREEK KNIVES

Bushbuck
KH2519
MSRP: \$99

Sitka
KH2527
MSRP: \$176

Don't Let Your Blade Let You Down.

Our Handmade knives are built to handle the toughest situations you can throw at them, and look good doing it.

www.cashanwei.com | 800.635.9366



The Mini-Wilderness is one of Zac’s favorite patterns. Dressed here in natural textured buffalo horn, it’s easy to see why. Photo by PointSeven.

with them about knives a lot and grew up playing with Bob and Bill's [Harsey] kids," he recalled. "They've seen my knives and given me a lot of pointers – every trick my dad tells me is a Ron Lake trick or a Harsey trick." Aside from having so many accomplished knifemakers in his background, I queried Zac about specific effects he thinks his father's reputation has on his fledgling career. "People are more willing to buy my knives at a higher price because they know my dad, admire him, and some of that transfers over to me," he replied thoughtfully. "There are a lot of good, really [his emphasis] good, new makers but a lot of people come by and talk with me at shows because I am dad's son and it makes it a little easier for me to get out there because of his

name."

I asked Zac to detail some of the problems he encounters as a new maker. "The most difficult thing for me was learning how to use the grinder because it is not like anything I'd used before I moved out here to Prineville," he replied. "Terminating the grinds, master bevels and sharpening the knives is kind of hard and I just generally try to remember the steps and then the order they go in. I tend to get ahead of myself because I'm so anxious!" Continuing along those lines, Zac chuckled and described the knife he most enjoys making at this point: "It's the Mini-wilderness, which has a short blade so you do not have to pull the knife a foot across the grinder like, for example, the Big Bear."

I observed that, not sur-



Another classic Loveless design, this Hideout is 9" overall with a 4-1/4" blade. The striking handles are pre-ban bark ivory, and once again the mounts are stainless steel. SharpByCoop photo.

prisingly, there are resemblances between his father and Zac's work and wondered if perhaps he is

thinking about that in terms of his own development as a maker. "Since he's teaching me we have a

lot of similarities because I do things how he taught me to do them – for exam-

Continued on page 28



Above: Zac at work on the grinder. Below: Thad solders the guard on a large double ground knife.



BEAR & SON CUTLERY
Everyone Respects a Bear®

C3116HB
Yellow Delrin®
3 3/4" Hawkbill

GS07
Genuine India Stag Horn
3 1/2" Mini Trapper

GS54 1/2
Genuine India Stag Horn
3" Little Trapper

For more information about this or other BEAR & SON CUTLERY® knives, ask your local dealer or visit us on the web at:
www.bearandsoncutlery.com

BUY AMERICAN MADE PRODUCTS!



Thad Buchanan fighter with mammoth ivory handles. The 6-3/8" blade is of CPM154CM stainless steel, the mounts 416 stainless. Overall length 11-3/8". SharpByCoop photo.



Small Utility with sheep horn handles by Zac Buchanan. Again, the blade is ground from CPM154CM stainless steel and the mounts are 416 stainless.

The London Knife Book

an A-Z Guide to London Cutlers (1820-1945)

by Ron Flook

This important new reference book documents London's unheralded makers of the past in words and superb color photographs. More than 1000 London cutlers and retailers are documented with information on their marks, dates & addresses, most of it previously unpublished. Hardbound, 240 pp. with 260 color images + 32 b&w Retail \$87.50 **Reduced Price \$24.95**

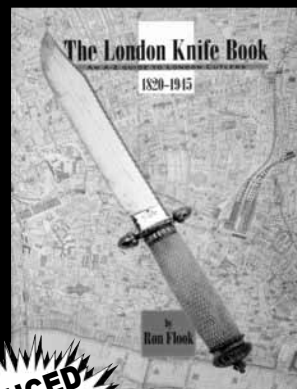
Pocket Fruit Knives

A Synopsis of their History from the UK, France, Northern Europe & USA

by Simon Moore

The first detailed study of folding fruit knives presents collectors with information on their evolution as well as the means to identify examples using duty marks, hallmarks and cutlers' marks. Contains over 600 first-rate photographs from one of the finest collections in the world. Hardbound, 296 pp. with 574 color images + 55 b&w Retail \$87.50 **Reduced Price \$24.95**

(See page 31 for shipping and handling)



REDUCED PRICE

Pocket Fruit Knives



Simon Moore

Continued from page 17
ple we both like a high mirror polish and such," said Zac. "On the other hand, I want to get into integrals and folders and those don't seem to appeal to my dad." I asked Zac to expand on his stated interests. "If I could spend some time in a couple of people's shops it would be Ron Lake and [German knifemaker] Dietmar Kressler – especially [Kressler for] integrals – there's just something about them – a challenge, which I like," Zac said. "I'm working on an integral right now and my dad hasn't done one so he can't show me and I'm just doing what I can to figure it out."

I probed for some other knifemaking preferences Zac was acquiring as he gained experience. "I really like doing the double grinds and hope to be able to make a Big Bear, probably my favorite knife," he began. "Just recently I made a knife with mammoth ivory and liked working with that – the finished look was really nice." At this writing Zac was also working on a damascus knife: "I'd say for steel if I could just use damascus I probably would but if I'm going to do a high mirror polish on the blade, I'm going to use the CPM154CM powder steel."

Zac works out of his father's shop, but he has specific plans for one of his own not too far down the road. "By 2012 I would like to move back to Eugene, I miss my friends and the place, and then put together a shop with money I'm trying to raise this year," he informed me. "Right now I'm piecing the shop equipment together here while putting the big stuff, like the grinder, on hold." Zac would also like to learn more about the business aspect of knifemaking while over the long term he definitely wants to continually improve his making. "I want to better my lifestyle as well – for example by getting out of a duplex and into a house," he said. "I also like to enter competitions – really like doing that." In point of fact, Zac's Loveless-style stag-handled small utility blade won Best Utility Hunter at the April 2011 OKCA Show in Eugene, the same show

where Thad won his first award twenty-four years previously.

The affection that exists between father and son is hard to miss and I think it is enhanced by the mutual respect they have for one another professionally. "Zac is a lot more creative than I am and I'm trying to teach him that he doesn't have to go down the same road as me but go in the direction where he feels drawn," said Thad. "He's the trapeze artist and I'm the net – if he needs me I'm there to show him what I think he has to know and how to do things, but I'm not trying to lock him into that mode of operation." I asked Zac what he regards as the best piece of advice that he's received from his father about knifemaking. "Being deliberate in my actions," he responded without hesitation. "For a long time I was cautious and not wanting to make a mistake but it just took too long – after he told me to be deliberate, now I'm working the knife instead of being scared of the knife."

"I really like to try to do things that my dad hasn't done yet because it makes me feel more capable – like I'm a knifemaker and not just acting like one," Zac continued. "I admire my dad and the work that he does, then I see Ron Lake and Dietmar Kressler and admire their work too and want to do something like that. I want to be a knifemaker and not held down by what specific knife I'm making."

I recalled a quote by the late screen actor Alan Ladd in regards to his boy, David, along the lines of 'Not every father gets to start his son off in his own footsteps.' I mentioned that to Thad, who agreed, then paused for a second and said: "Probably the biggest reward for me is that I get to pass something along to my son, and it's made us a lot closer; regardless of how the knifemaking thing works out."

The Buchanans can be found at 915 NW Perennial Way, Prineville, OR 97754; Zac's phone number is 541-416-2556 and Thad's is 541-815-2078. Thad's website is located at www.buchananblades.com. □

KNIFE WORLD BOOKS

PO Box 3395, Knoxville, TN 37927

1-800-828-7751 or Fax 865-397-1969 or www.knifeworld.com