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CATCH THE NEW

DELTA WAVES

WILSON AND FOX LIMITED EDITION 'SPEC OPS' FOLDERS COMBINE ITALIAN CLASS AND FEEL WITH REAL-WORLD OPERATOR RUGGEDNESS!

BY JOHN LARSEN

For the last month I have had the opportunity to examine and use two of Wilson Tactical's new Delta Wave Spec Ops folders. Many readers may be familiar with Wilson's highly regarded M1911's, but they may not know that Ryan Wilson has been providing high-quality tactical knives for almost 10 years. After using both models, it is my opinion that they would be a fine complement to carry along with a Wilson M1911.

The Delta Spec Ops folders were designed with input from Special Operations personnel and are made by the well-known Fox Knives of Maniago, a town in the Friuli region of northern Italy where they have been making knives going back to the Middle Ages. The Spec Ops folders come in two sizes. Both have spear-pointed blades of N690 stainless steel, with the very popular and effective plain/serrated edge, ambidextrous thumb studs, Ernie Emerson's "Wave" opening feature (licensed), and are coated with black DLC. The DLC coating provides additional corrosion and wear resistance, as well as subduing the signature of the blade.

N690 stainless is made by Bohler in Austria and has proven to be very good steel for tough-use knives. With a composition of Carbon 1.07, Sulphur .40, Manganese 0.40, Chromium 17.0, Molybdenum 1.10, Vanadium 0.10, Cobalt 1.50 and with an HRC of 59-60, it has a good balance between toughness and edge retention.

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Evaluating Spec Ops

When I said I had two of the knives to evaluate, that was incorrect; I actually had four knives as FOX Knives USA (www.foxknivesusa.com) also sent me two knives. The only difference from the Wilson Tac-



Wilson Tactical Delta Wave Spec Ops Folders, designed with input from Spec Ops personnel to bring you one tough Tactical Knife.



STEVE WOODS PHOTOS

Fox's own version of the knife carries the emblem of the Italian paratroops. For those that don't know their history, the Italians made the first combat parachute jumps during WWI.



Two Delta Wave Spec Ops folders from Fox, USA. Note the beret crest insignia of the 9th Regt "COL Moschin" on the left side of the blade.

tical's is that on the left side of the blade is the beret insignia of the 9th Regiment COL Moschin, the Italian Special Operations unit that I twice had the pleasure of working with. They know their job well and have an intensive hand-to-hand training program with strong emphasis on knife fighting. The only other difference is that the large model had a G-10 handle in coyote brown.

It was nice to see that in all four knives the form, fit and function were identical and flawless. The Spec Ops folders utilize a liner-lock, and all the locks engaged the rear of the blade at exactly the correct point. As one would expect on a quality folder, they have a ball-detent to ensure the blade does not come open before it should, and you can switch the pocket clip to either side. With thumb studs on both sides of the blade, it can be opened with either hand, and I had no problem closing the liner lock with my left hand. I did have a slight problem opening the folders with my left hand because of an injury to my left thumb. Not a real problem as both folders have Ernie Emerson's "Wave" opening feature, so I just hooked

the Wave on the edge of my pocket and the blade was open. All four knives were able to cleanly cut Post Its and to shave hair off the back of my hand right out of the box.

Carrying the small Wilson Delta Wave Spec Ops folder, I found the pocket clip, combined with the texture G-10 handle, made for a very secure carry. The same textured grip provided a very good gripping surface for my hand, and I experienced no problems with slippage, even when wet. I left both knives out on my back deck for about 18 hours in heavy and, at times, almost monsoon-type rain. Close examination of the blades revealed no corrosion and the blades continued to open and close smoothly. The back of the folders, from the pivot pin to about 2/3 of the way to the butt, is open, allowing any foreign material that gets into that area to be easily dislodged. The grip of the pocket clip is quite strong, requiring the user to exert a fair amount of force to access the knife. To me, this is much more preferable to reaching for your knife and finding it is no longer in your pocket.

Next up was the large Delta Wave Spec Ops folder and it felt pretty good in my right front trouser pocket, surprisingly, as it is a substantial-sized knife at 5-3/8 inches



Kydex sheath from Blade-Tech allows you to carry the large folder anywhere on your body armor/assault vest with the blade open and available for instant use.



Even with heavy winter gloves, opening and closing either of the two folders presented no problems. Note the Emerson "Wave" feature.

closed. I also carried the large Spec Ops folder clipped to the top of my right cargo pocket in my BDU-type trousers. I think that for my purposes I would consider the smaller Wilson folder as an EDC knife, one that you could easily carry and which would handle just about any task. The larger Wilson folder is something I can see a member of the military carrying or a SWAT/ERT police officer using.

Back to the BDU cargo pocket, for military/SWAT/ERT use: this is a good way to carry your knife. What with body armor and

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SPECIFICATIONS

MODEL	LARGE SPEC OPS FOLDER	SMALL SPEC OPS FOLDER
BLADE LENGTH:	4.250 inches	3.4 inches
BLADE THICKNESS:	.200 inch	.155 inch
HANDLE LENGTH:	5.250 inches	4.250 inches
OVERALL LENGTH:	9.750 inches	7.750 inches
WEIGHT:	8.8 ounces	4.8 ounces
HANDLE MATERIAL:	Black G-10	Black G-10



After about 18 hours of monsoon-type rainstorms, even the skulls were ready to come inside, but both folders continued to open/close without problem. No corrosion was noted.

EXTREME LITE CARRY 24/7 FOLDER

SMALL ENOUGH FOR EDC, LARGE ENOUGH TO GET 'R DONE!



Don't let the fact that this practical, modest knife is "tac black" and comes from Wilson Combat fool you, this is one great EDC folder. In fact, if someone changed the handle scales to stag and polished the blade, experienced deer hunters would probably be voting it one of the best whitetail knives around. At least, I've proven that point to myself over the last few weeks as I've carried the Wilson ELC 24/7.

SPECS: Like the Delta Spec Ops folders, the ELC is another product of the Italian cutlery company Fox. The DLC coated N690Co stainless drop-point blade is 3.2-inches long and hardened to an Rc of 59-60. The blade is held open by a stainless steel liner-lock and the textured G10 handle provides a reversible carry clip. All knives are opened by means of ambidextrous thumb studs. As for the "Lite" part of the name, the knife weighs 3.8 ounces. Each comes with a nylon lanyard complete with the little metal skull that has become something of a trademark for Wilson knives. The suggested retail price is \$129.95.

FIELDWORTHY: The knife arrived shortly before deer season opened so along with using the ELC for my daily office and homestead chores, I carried it on several trips to the woods after game. Early buck season was, shall we say, "uneventful" for me so I continued to carry the

The Wilson Extreme Lite Carry is the ideal folder for the person whose lifestyle takes him a little farther off the beaten path than the local golf course. John Larsen would like to suggest loosing the skull lanyard if you are trying to keep a low profile!

folder into elk season. As I write this, elk season is half over and I still haven't had a chance to try the knife on anything four legged. Such are the trials of trying to write realistic field tests of hunting gear but there is still a late buck season after elk that I have great hopes for!

Despite my lack of hunting success, I have been very impressed with the knife as an EDC folder. It has opened dozens of packages, cut manila rope for other writing projects, harvested garden produce, cut up corn stalks for the compost, cut low hanging limbs from trails, and a hundred other little chores. The blade has held its edge very well and the general size and shape are ideal for most utility needs. Unlike my fellow evaluator John Larsen, I kind of like the "tac cool" lanyard including the little skull. It actually makes drawing the knife much easier as all you need to do is slip your hand around the lanyard, catch the skull and pull.

Maybe Wilson should consider a more flashy, "urban camo" and or a traditional hunting version of this practical mid-size folder. It is certainly well suited to a wide range of needs from the fields to the streets. —Steven Dick

Continued from page 29

ammo pouches, accessing your front trouser pockets is just about impossible, while your cargo pocket is still readily available. This is especially true while sitting down in a vehicle—your hand just naturally falls even with your cargo pocket.

A Sheath That Shines

FOX Knives sent along a very interesting Kydex sheath for the large Spec Ops folder made by Blade-Tech (www.Blade-Tech.com). It allows you to carry your knife with the blade open, and with its unique fastening system, you can wear this sheath just about anywhere you want. Personally, I would opt for the center chest carry: accessible to either hand, easy to access whether standing or sitting in a vehicle, and in a position where it would be hard for an enemy to grab without your knowing.

Besides the normal usage of a knife, I wanted to see how the Wilson Spec Ops folders performed. I tried slashing heavy cardboard boxes and found both knives easily penetrated the boxes. Finding that too easy, I took three pairs of old blue jeans, folded them up as tight as I could and stuck them inside a double thick cardboard box. I stabbed the box repeatedly with both knives and they easily penetrated right up to the handle. On the telephone book penetration test the smaller Spec Ops folder actually penetrated slightly farther to page 327, while the large folder went to page 305. This is because the smaller folder had less mass to penetrate with, but the large folder would make a bigger wound channel and with a blade of 4.25 inches, makes for a formidable weapon.

Edge Capability

I wanted to test edge retention so I grabbed a wooden branch that had been drying in my garage for several years and cut points into the tough wood. I compared the performance of each knife against a custom-made Finnish puukko and found both folders hung right in there with that puukko. The only difference was the folders' handles were not as comfortable, but that is because of the open area between the handle sides, a positive feature as it allows you to clean the folder easily. After cutting for a significant period of time, the Spec Ops folders would no longer shave hair but continued to cut well, a sign of good blade geometry. A few strokes on my EZE-Lap dual diamond hone and both edges would again shave. In addition to a lanyard hole, both knives came with a braided paracord lanyard, complete with the trademark Wilson skull, and a win-



Both knives penetrated past page 300 of this phone book. The smaller folder penetrated slightly farther but the larger folder would have made a bigger wound channel.



Stabbing the folders into a heavy cardboard box, packed with tightly folded blue jeans demonstrated the penetration potential of these knives. Both continually went in all the way to the handle. Edge retention and blade geometry also proved to be very good. Carving on this tough dried branch, both folders hung right in there with one of the author's favorite puukkos.

dow breaking point on the butt that can also be used as a non-lethal striking surface. A cold snap down into the 20's gave me an opportunity to use the folders while wearing warm gloves, no problems opening or closing the folders were noted, another important feature as both military and police officers are often found wearing gloves.

The bottom line for the Wilson Delta Wave Spec Ops folders is that they are well-made, solid reliable knives. Whether you are looking for a good EDC or a knife to carry on tactical operations, you should check them out. With suggested retail of \$249.95 for the large folder and \$199.95 for the small folder, you are getting a high-quality product, one that will give you years of good service. **TK**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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