



ASP-NEW WAVE IN HANDCUFFS

Finally, something new for old-world restraints that are super-secure!

By Denis Prisbrey

One of the most basic and probably least thought about pieces of equipment in law enforcement today is the humble handcuff. Largely unchanged in design for over 90 years since the swing-through bow was first invented in the very early 1900s, they ride on the duty belt or under the suit jacket largely out of sight and out of mind until they need to be used. Depending on the area where they're worn, that could be twice a year or twice a day. Once they come off the arrestee, they're back in the pouch till the next arrestee comes along. In years gone by, I suspect most cops never gave a thought to maintenance, at least until they were forced to. I can recall three or four occasions when I had to oil mine thoroughly after they'd taken a dunking, or after they were decontaminated, and fortunately the internal design in conventional handcuffs is very forgiving. I always carried nickel-plated cuffs. The blued steel versions weren't quite as weather-resistant, and I never had a set freeze up.

There has been a number of peripheral variations, mostly in sizes, leg irons, chain cuff and rigid cuff offerings, and a high-security model or two, but not much really new in so-called cuffing technology until ASP took a hard look at the field. ASP (Armament Systems and Procedures) is better known for

their expandable baton line, but after several years of requests for an ASP handcuff, the company has entered that field, and the results are a truly superior handcuff. ASP offers four different restraint models: Chain, Hinge,

styles. ASP surveyed street cops who actually use the things everyday, and incorporated their suggestions into the patent-pending designs that resulted.

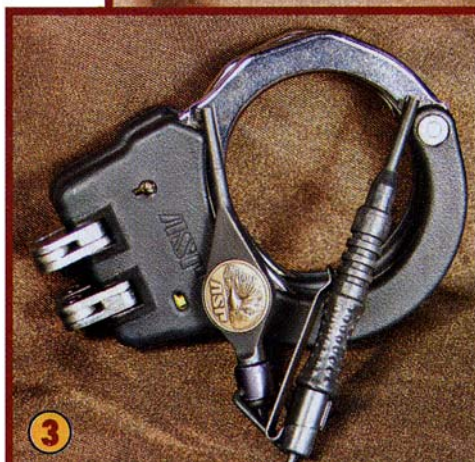
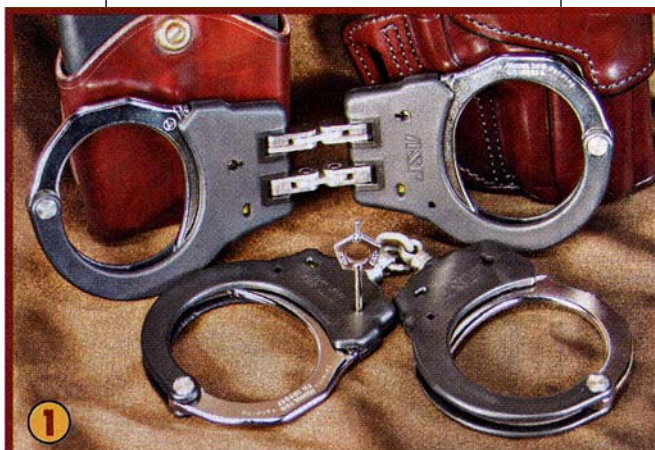
The core of the cuffs is a stainless steel frame. Produced by a thoroughly modern automated system using precision stamping dies at the rate of 8,000 per hour, the heat-treated bodies are then overmolded with a very durable high-strength polymer. The lock mechanism is unitized and replaceable in case of wear or malfunction. The chain swivel is ball bearing mounted and features a reinforcing stainless steel collar where it attaches to the cuff body. The cuffs are lighter in weight than their

all-steel competitors, and use two keyholes, one on each side, beveled to help with key insertion.

The swinging bow is constructed with a flat contact area on the outside for less slippage on the wrist during application,

and all contact edges both inside and outside the bow, are rounded to help prevent handcuff injuries and lawsuits. The swinging bow has been designed to accommodate a wide range of wrist sizes, which allows one set of cuffs to cover oversized wrists as well as the smaller women's wrists.

ASP cuffs are rivetless, which removes the risk of an arrestee peeling the cuff apart that some older types present. They're also very smooth in working the swinging bow; very little



1) ASP Hinge and Chain Cuffs. 2) Keys can be used on both sides

of cuff frames. Note yellow showing to indicate cuffs are not double locked. 3) Two optional ASP keys: LOGO Key at left, KWIK Key at right.

Rigid and Disposable. They were able to send samples of three models for evaluation, and they are impressive.

The three steel restraints use a common design, aside from the connecting

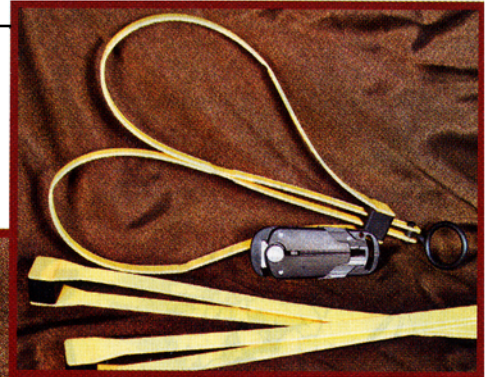
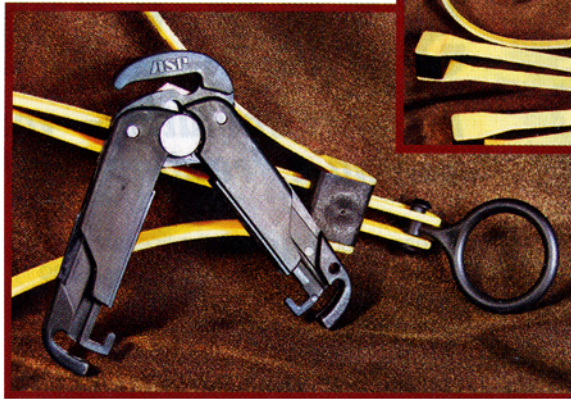
force is needed to tighten it down, and the heat-treated ratchet teeth on both the arm and lock bar mechanism are highly wear resistant.

LOCK SET

The lock set on the ASP cuffs needs a further look.

On traditional styles, the double lock is activated by pushing in a small pin on the outside of the main frame. When it's time to remove the cuffs, the key has to be turned one way to unlock the double lock, and then back around the other way to unlock the ratchet. Not on the ASPs. The double lock is activated by sliding an internal yellow locking bar to the right by inserting the pin on the key head through a hole in the face of the frame on either side of the frame. When removing the cuffs, the key is turned in one direction only, and first unlocks the double lock bar and then the main lock bar to release the swinging bow arm. This is extremely handy. Aside from making it quicker to get the cuffs off, the setup also makes tight-

(Right) Tri-Fold strips with Scarab Cutter and Tri-Fold Ring. (Below) Scarab Cutter opens up to expose steel cutting blade, Tri-Fold Ring snaps into holes at ends of strips to pull them for tightening.



arrestee escape or officer injury.

Having a keyhole on both sides of the cuff body can make it easier for a restrained person in chain cuffs who may have a key or picking tool to get at the hole

ness adjustments much easier. With the key in the keyhole, you can unlock both locking bars by turning the key in one direction, re-set the swinging bow tighter or looser, then turn the key fully back to lock both bars as you remove it. Less fumbling in working the locking mechanism means less risk of either

than with a properly applied single-hole type, but it also adds convenience in getting cuffs off from various angles. Since the primary locking bar is narrower than the swinging bow, it's almost impossible to shim a double locked ASP cuff.

Each ASP cuff is serial numbered, NIJ certified, (Please turn to page 93)

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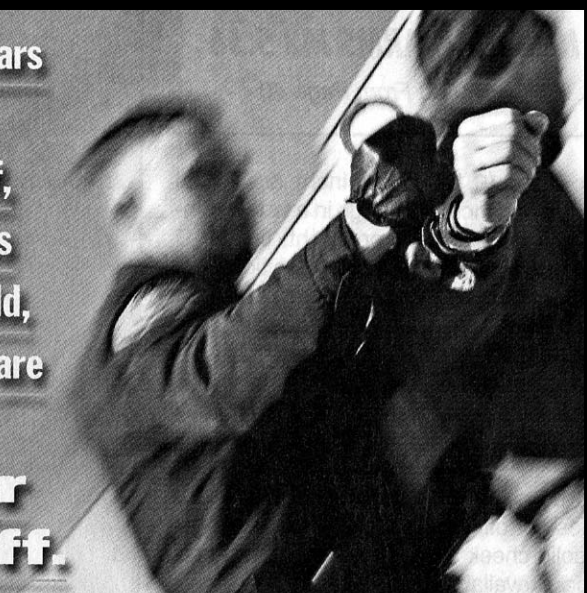
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and can be special ordered in colors other than the standard black and high-visibility yellow to indicate varying security risk levels or to differentiate between local departments. Also, the interchangeable lockset makes it possible to have a variety of locksets available, and this is being looked at as a future development. Each cuff comes with one regular key (other standard cuff keys will also fit), and ASP also offers several specialty keys such as the KWIK Key with extended "pen" body for clipping in a shirt pocket, and the LOGO Key for keyrings, which can be ordered with your state seal and other personalized inserts.

ASP TRI-FOLDS

For occasions where multiple arrests are likely, ASP's disposable single-use Tri-Folds are an inexpensive, lightweight and strong alternative to traditional steel. Made of a stable injection molded thermoplastic specifically for law enforcement use, each set features two bright yellow 21-inch straps, half an inch wide, attached together

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at one end at the locking mechanism. The Tri-Fold is carried folded in three spots for compact storage, when used the "loose" ends are looped and pulled through the Roller Loc Retention System and tightened by an included Tri-Fold Ring. The lock is a reliable "one-way" ratchet type, and each strap features a flat area for marker identification. When it's time to remove the Tri-Fold for booking or other processing, the

ASP Scarab Cutter is a lightweight and efficient means of easily and safely cutting through the straps, and it can be carried in a uniform pocket, clipped on a keyring, or attached to a duty bag.

For more info on options and group pricing, talk to ASP at 2511 E Capitol Dr, Dept. GW/LE, Appleton, WI 54911; 800-236-6243; or check the website at www.asp-net.com