

# knife care

Some of today's top knife/sheath maintenance products with their protagonists, clockwise from left: SOG Revolver; Heckler & Koch HK34FTCB tanto folder; WD-40; Renaissance Wax; Clenzoil lubricant; Clenzoil wax; Ron Newton folder; Sentry Solutions Tuf-Cloth; A.G. Barnes Green Beret fighter; and Simichrome Polish.



# Treat Your Knife Right!

BLADE® scans the industry for some of the best products to clean, polish and lubricate blades, handles and sheaths

By David Rhea



*Even in high humidity environments, Clenzoil prevents rust, including on the carbon steel of A.G. Barnes' fixed blade.*

Once heard someone say that if you cannot find anything else with which to condition your knife, you can pull the dipstick out of your car and put a couple of drops of oil it.

That seems like a pretty cool scene for a Steve McQueen movie, but knife enthusiasts know that it just is not reasonable to pollute your knife with car sludge. These days there are so many affordable knife maintenance products that you will never have to settle on secondhand motor oil.

As long as there are guys and gals like us who care to own a knife or three, there will be a need to make sure the knives remain functional and presentable. To this end, *BLADE* scanned the industry for some of the best products to clean, polish and lubricate blades, handles, folder pivots and sheaths.

#### A Hardcore Seller

At or near the top of the list is a tried-and-true product that, according to Ann Sheffield of Sheffield Knifemakers Supply, is pretty much on every knifemaker's top shelf: Renaissance Wax. She stressed that her company carries only conditioning products that are real hardcore sellers, so it is a good idea to look to her for insight into which of the products the knifemakers use.

Sheffield and others indicated that

**Unique Swords and Knives**

Designed and Individually Handmade by Michael Rader, J.S.

Inspired by history and tradition, influenced by many cultures, Rader swords are original creations offering rare styling and performance.

**Michael Rader**  
PO Box 393, Wilkeson, WA 98396 ♦ 253-255-7064 ♦ Free Brochure  
[michael@raderblade.com](mailto:michael@raderblade.com) - [www.raderblade.com](http://www.raderblade.com)

Knife by Scott Sawby  
Engraved by Marian Sawby

**PARAGON SPORTS®**  
New York's Finest Sports Specialty Store  
867 Broadway at 18th Street, NYC 10003 (212) 255-8036  
Also Available Online at [www.paragonsports.com](http://www.paragonsports.com)

## knife care



*Sentry Solutions' Tuf-Glide comes in a bottle with a top that looks like a syringe, ideal for lubricating folder pivots. Originally part of the company's Knife & Tool Care Kit—the Blade Magazine 2001 Accessory Of The Year—the syringe is now sold separately as well, Sentry Solutions' Mark Mrozek told BLADE® at the 2007 SHOT Show. The knife is the Heckler & Koch HK34FTCB tanto folder.*

Renaissance Wax, which is more of a protectant for after a knife is cleaned, is the hands-down favorite for preserving and revitalizing. The semi-synthetic, micro-crystalline wax from England is gentle and free of acids. The great all-around restorer/conditioner is especially good on wood, ivory and stag handles, and also is used widely on blades to protect polished surfaces against the grease/moisture of fingerprints. In addition, it softens and protects leather sheaths.

Knife enthusiasts across the land use Renaissance Wax. The way I see it, if it is good enough for the National Rifle Association's National Firearms Museum and the Smithsonian Institution as its promotional literature claims, you can bet it is good enough for my knife.

**“Clenzoil does not  
cause darkening.”**  
—the author

### Crack Finder

If you want to treat your knife right, another choice is to coat it with Ballistol. Ballistol cleans, lubricates and protects by forming a protective film on the surface of metal, though you may want to rub the knife down after applying the solution to keep the knife from being slippery. According to Ballistol's accompanying literature, “Due to its low surface tension, [Ballistol] is capable of creeping into the finest cracks and openings in metal surfaces. It dissolves traces of lead, copper and tombac [tombac is an alloy of 90 percent copper and 10 percent zinc].”

Ken Jantz is a major distributor of Ballistol through Jantz Supply and Koval Knives. “It's a good product,” he said. “It works great on the sheath and on cleaning knives and keeping them well lubricated and maintained. We've been real happy with it.”

Ballistol is marketed as “The Sportsman's Oil,” but oil cannot lubricate in the presence of water. Ballistol actually emulsifies with water and is capable of lubricating while wet, even if applied to things that are already wet.

Leather sheaths used outdoors on a regular basis tend to become hard and brittle if neglected. Ballistol softens leather by protecting it against just about anything you can drag it through. Also, by neutralizing acid, it protects leather from corrosion due to direct contact with non-stainless steel and nickel. Sheathmaker Kenny Rowe said he mixes a 50/50 concoction of Ballistol and mink



*Marketed as a gun fluid, Clenzoil thoroughly cleans, conditions and protects just about anything knife related, including the pivot of Ron Newton's folder.*



*The Sentry Solutions Tuf-Cloth—used here on the SOG Revolver—is a long-lasting, lint-free rag that provides a fast-drying, water-displacing, micro-bonding crystal barrier against rust, friction and wear.*

**“Knife enthusiasts  
across the land  
use Renaissance  
Wax.”**  
—the author

oil to condition and protect his leather.

**Dry-Film Lubricant**

When it comes to cleaning and lubricating your knife, there is a world of choices beyond old standbys such as WD-40 or 3-In-1 Oil. These days, lubricants are not necessarily oily, which is great because that means every piece of lint in your pocket is not going to get gummed up in your folder’s action. Sentry Solutions’ “Tuf” line of products fills the bill. Jim Lemcke of Texas Knifemakers Supply said that he can tell Sentry Solutions makes good products by the sheer fact

Blade Art Inc.  
14216 SW 186 Street Miami, FL 33186  
**BLADEART.COM**  
Email: [sales@bladeart.com](mailto:sales@bladeart.com)  
Phone (305) 255-8884 Fax: (305) 233-6943  
**Custom Knives**  
**Swords & Daggers**  
The Custom Edge On The Web

**Supergrit®**

**SANDING BELTS FOR SHARPENING**  
Add 10% to Zirc prices for Ceramic belts.

SIZE	A.O. BROWN	ZIRCONIUM BLUE	S.C. BLACK
1"x30"	\$ .80 ea	\$ 1.50 ea	\$ 1.10 ea
1"x42"	.85	1.65	1.40
2"x48"/2"x42"	1.20	2.75	2.20
2"x60"	1.60	3.00	2.30
2"x72"	1.70	3.75	2.50
2"x132"	2.80	Sale 4.00	5.00
3"x132"	4.00	Sale 6.00	7.00
4"x36"	1.70	3.75	2.75
4"x132"	6.00	9.00	9.50
6"x48"	3.70	7.00	4.50

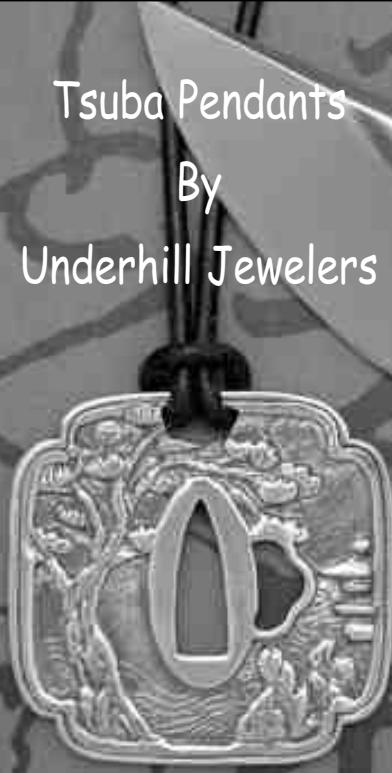
See our internet specials at:  
**www.supergrit.com**  
examples: 2½x48" zirc. belts 36Y Reg. \$3.50; Sale \$2.75 ea.  
3"x132" Norton SG Ceramic 60Y Reg. \$8.50; Sale \$6.00 ea.

**CERAMIC BELTS - NORTON "SG"/CARBO "MEDALLIST"®**  
**NORTON® BLUE "NORZON" ZIRCONIA, CORK BELTS**  
**COTTON BUFFING WHEELS & POLISHING COMPOUNDS**  
**DISCS, FLAP WHEELS, SHOP ROLLS**

RED HILL CORP., P.O. BOX 4234, GETTYSBURG, PA 17325

**(800) 822-4003** **\$8.00 S&H**  
**Free 48p. Catalog**

Tsuba Pendants  
By  
Underhill Jewelers



www.underhilljewelers.com  
206-933-0533

**BURGER KNIVES**  
distinguished craftsmanship  
Est. 1987

RENOWNED WORLDWIDE FOR  
THEIR QUALITY TACTICAL  
WALKING STICKS



AND A  
WIDE RANGE OF  
SUPERIOR HAND MADE KNIVES

www.swordcane.com  
info@swordcane.com  
Tel: 301 393 5423  
(message service)  
PO Box 436 Munster 4278 South Africa

## knife care

that they are good sellers.

"We move a lot of the Sentry Solutions," he said, "a lot of the Tuf-Cloth and the Tuf-Glide. The Tuf-Glide comes in a little bottle with a top that looks like a syringe."

The Blade Magazine 2000 Accessory Of The Year®, Tuf-Glide is a rust-resistant dry-film lubricant that will not wipe or wash off. With its super viscosity and needle-like applicator, Tuf-Glide ensures that knife joints and pivot pins stay clean, dry and slick.

"We are in a major city and we get a certain amount of walk-in traffic where we do clean up and sharpening," Lemcke said. "I like to use the Tuf-Glide, especially when [customers] bring in old folders that are kind of rusty. You can hit [the folders] with the Scotch-Brite® and bring them back, then put a little Tuf-Glide on it—especially on the moving parts. You can put these products on leather, too."

Tuf-Cloth is a long-lasting, lint-free rag that uses state-of-the-art dry-film technology. It provides a fast-drying, water-displacing, micro-bonding crystal barrier against rust, friction and wear, according to Sentry. The dry waterproof shield will not attract dirt and comes in a re-sealable, airtight bag for extended life. Tuf-Cloths last a long time, and when they finally dry out, you can pop one in your pocket while walking the aisles at the BLADE Show and use it as a chamois to wipe your fingerprints off the blades of knives you handle.

### Aromatic Maintenance

Certainly, versatility is the name of the game for modern, hi-tech lubrication and protection. Another great versatile choice is Clenzoil, which is distinguished by its clean, fresh scent and dark green color. Marketed as a gun fluid, Clenzoil thoroughly cleans, conditions and protects just about anything knife related.

For leather, Clenzoil does not cause darkening and prevents drying and cracking. It nourishes and moisturizes leather while preventing rot and mildew. It also cleans and treats wood and other natural products without damaging any finish.

In addition, Clenzoil is a lubricant and rust shield. Even in high humidity environments, it prevents rust. As a cleanser, it removes built-up oils, dirt and other contaminants. Clenzoil offers a strong claim that your knife will "be absolutely clean, fully lubricated and rust-free."

As with Tuf-Glide, Clenzoil has no Teflon® or silicon to become a mucky

glue. Clenzoil literature says its product "never gets gummy, sticky or 'snotty' in cold or wet conditions. It will not harden or evaporate over time and stays effective in heat and cold for years."

### More Recommendations

Other knife/sheath maintenance products that suppliers recommend include:

- For polishing, a super seller and long-time favorite of knifemakers is Simichrome, which Blade Magazine Cutlery Hall-Of-Famer® A.G. Russell calls "the original knife collector's polish ... I have used it for over 30 years and while I have tried every new polish I run into, I've never found one to replace it."

- Flitz is another popular, non-abrasive polish that removes such pollutants as tarnish, rust, water stains, oxidation and fingerprints.

- For cleaning and lubricating, White Lightning is akin to Tuf-Glide in that it

**"I've never found  
one to replace it."**

—A.G. Russell

is a low-friction, waterproof wax lubricant/cleaner. It goes on wet and dries to seal out dirt and water, keeping folding knives super clean and operating super slick.

- Militec 1 is a synthetic weapon lubricant that is especially popular on the balisong Internet discussion forums, mostly held in comparison to Tuf-Glide. Militec is made to bond to heated rifle barrels, so a quick-thinking bali-forumite said to "heat the blade with a hair dryer for a minute or two to make [the lubricant] bond."

These are just a few of the more popular products on the market. There are more out there, and the only way to know what is "best" is to try a bunch and figure out what you like. One of the main rules in the world of knives is that everything is subjective.

"Everybody has their own preferences," Sheffield observed. "Everybody's got their own thing that's the 'best thing.' I just let them have whatever they want, and that's the best thing."

For the contact information for the knife/sheath protective products in the story, see "Where To Get 'Em" on page 112.

**BLADE**