

## Christmas Gift-Giving Ideas For Friends or Even Yourself

by John C. Krull

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I just don't know where the time goes. It seems like just weeks ago that I was writing my Father's Day gift article and not long before that the previous Christmas gift article.

A couple of times I've used words in this Christmas article like "This gift-giving season" or some such. Let's face it. It's Christmas, not the winter school recess. I know there are other religiously-linked holidays that occur at about the same time of year. Hanukkah comes quickly to mind, but there are others. However, I still think it's better to refer to Christmas gifts as Christmas gifts and Hanukkah gifts as Hanukkah gifts, rather than some vague unknown one-size-fits all holiday, like "winter break" which completely eliminates all religious ties.

That said; let's get into my gift suggestions.

### Goggles

Last year I took an 8-week course and became part of a CERT (Community Emergency Response Team). This is something that the President deemed necessary after 9-11 and which is being administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to better prepare citizens and get them involved in their own care during an emergency that is either man-made or natural.

Along with the training they issued us some very basic equipment, like leather gloves, a flashlight, a helmet, and a bag to keep it all in. Also included was a pair of "safety glasses." Well, I wasn't real happy with the quality of the glasses so I started looking to see what would really do the job of protecting my eyes either during a disaster or during disaster relief activities or cleanup—and do it well.



The Revision Eyewear Ltd., Bullet Ant Goggles are better than any others I've found.

At US Cavalry's website I found many good goggles aimed at military or police use. Then, I got a press release about some goggles put out by Revision Eyewear Ltd. (87 Holly Ct., Dept. GWK, Williston, VT 05495; phone: 802-651-9889; on-line: revisioneyewear.com). From the information provided they sounded really good. They are called the Bullet Ant Tactical Goggle. They were designed for the military especially for use in the type of warfare that is being fought today, but I saw them as having several civilian uses.

My eyes are important to me; without them I probably wouldn't be doing this right now, so they are worth protecting. The Bullet Ant Goggles that I have come with three different inserts—one clear, one yellow and the third gray-tinted to fill any need. Also available for them is an insert that your optometrist can fill with your personal eyeglass prescription.



The Gladius flashlight with the Night-Ops box that it comes in. Fancy.

I've used the goggles for several weeks now and for several types of functions. I've used them while using my chain saw, while riding my motorcycle, and just around the house to see how comfortable they were, or were not. Actually I'm wearing them right now. They've passed the tests I've put them through and passed with flying colors. So I consider these goggles multi-purpose and 100% functional for any activity including disaster-type work.

There is one drawback that will prevent some of you from purchasing these goggles and that is the price. They aren't cheap, but you get what you pay for—and what is your vision really worth to you?

The retail price with the three inserts is \$145. There is also a two-insert version that is only \$120. The carrier for the prescription lenses is an additional \$19 and has to be ordered separately. Your optometrist is going to hit you up for about another \$60. For more information you can contact them at the previously listed

address or website.

## Books

Books are always a good gift item. For the past several years the most common items I have asked for as gifts have been books, CDs and DVDs. Here are some of each that I suggest.

A couple years ago while at Rolling Thunder in Washington, DC, over the Memorial Day weekend, I met Marion Sturkey. He is the author of several books that I highly recommend, two of which I have read and own. Sturkey was a Vietnam Marine Corps helicopter pilot, so he's been there and done that.

The first book is the *Warrior Culture of the US Marines*. My version is 207 pages long, but it has been updated since that time to include additional new information. It contains axioms for warriors, Marine quotations, some battle history, and reflections on combat, the Corps legacy, some humor, and much more about the world's warrior elite, as the cover says. Sturkey says this book is politically incorrect and he's proud of it. The price is \$15 plus \$4 shipping.

I gave my son, Henry, who did 9 years in the Corps a copy of this book for his birthday this year.

Sturkey's second book is *Murphy's Laws of Combat*. It is subtitled *The American Warrior's Guide to Staying Alive in Battle*. This book, while containing lots of historic information, is also humorous. I've enjoyed both of them because of the memories they have brought back and the history and facts that I had forgotten. This book is also \$15 plus \$4 shipping.

Both are available from Heritage Press International (PO Box 333, Dept. GWK, Plum Branch, SC 29845; phone: 864-443-5081, on-line: [www.USMCpress.com](http://www.USMCpress.com)). Sturkey will even include a personalized inscription and autograph for the intended recipient. This is a must-have for any Marine's library. I'm going to need a couple of these myself this year as presents.

It was unusual how I discovered this next item. In December, it will be two years that my father died. In the process of doing what you have to do after a relative's death, we were going through some of his books. I found two that were *Uncle John's Bathroom Readers* (The Bathroom Readers Institute, PO Box 1117, Dept. GWK, Ashland, OR 97520; phone: 888-488-4642; on-line: [www.bathroomreader.com](http://www.bathroomreader.com)). These books are full of totally useless information. Well, let's not call it useless. When opening to any page you can find humor, trivia, science and history, some mythology, pop culture and much, much more.



Uncle John's CDs will give you hours of entertainment.

So this year when I was informed about the Uncle John's Slightly Irregular Bathroom Reader in audio I had to have it.

This is 6-1/2 hours of total entertainment. You won't believe some of the stuff you hear, but it's all true. This is the company's second audio version, after the first was such a success.



This is a set of six CDs for a total of 390 minutes of entertainment and information. You can play these at home, at work, or in the car and they are great tension and pressure relievers in my opinion. The suggested retail price is \$21.95, but I'm willing to bet that you can probably find them for a little less. This is a great gift for someone of either sex and of almost any age. Listen to them yourself before giving them away.

Next we have a DVD that I entirely enjoyed viewing. Something I really like about DVDs is that at any point that you want to do an instant replay you can. I do this with not only movies, but even more often with hunting DVDs. You just have to see that deer again. Or you have to see that shot again. This was the case with "Coyote Overdose." This is a 115-minute DVD that took me over 2&Mac251; hours to

watch!

Mendel Miller, Paul Drayton, and Merris Miller, known to many as the “Coyote Doctors” have put this collection of 30 awesome hunts and kills together. Anyone who is a predator hunter, or wants to be, will truly enjoy their time with the Coyote Doctors. They entertain, amuse, and educate all at the same time.

These guys can call in those coyotes. Some of the shots ended up being only feet away rather than hundreds of yards. I’ve always been impressed by the long-range shooting that I’ve seen in some videos, but in this one it was also the opposite; the short-range shots were impressive. They’d call the coyotes into 9 feet from the muzzle of the gun.

You can get your copy of “Coyote Overdose” from Rocky Mountain Wildlife Productions (PO Box 999, Dept. GWK, LaPorte, CO 80535; phone: 877-484-2768; on-line: [www.huntingcoyotes.com](http://www.huntingcoyotes.com)). The video is going to cost you \$19.95 plus \$4 for postage. I’d get a few while you’re at it.

## BlackHawk Pouches

Earlier this year I included some equipment from BlackHawk Products Group (4850 Brookside Ct., Dept. GWK, Norfolk, VA 23502; phone: 800-694-5263; on-line: [www.blackhawk.com](http://www.blackhawk.com)) in my articles and will be doing more in the future. They have lots of really fine equipment available. Once again, much of it is geared toward the military or police, but most of it has civilian usage as well.

Much of their gear, if not all of it, is manufactured in Vietnam, which I admit, at first bothered me, but I guess it is time to forgive and forget. Or actually should we Vietnam vets put the blame on Washington rather than on the Vietnamese. Think about it!

The gear is well-made and fills the purpose for which each is meant. I have two items for your gift-giving pleasure.

For years I have been looking for one pouch that would hold both my SOG PowerLock multi-tool and my SureFire Executive Defender flashlight. At times the way I’m dressed, I just don’t have enough pockets to carry all the stuff that I feel I want to have with me. Wherever I go I want to have different items for emergencies. These include the above mentioned items, plus of course at least one handgun and at least one knife.

Now BlackHawk is calling this a duty flashlight and pistol mag combo, but the multi-tool fits just right. It is made of a heavy, durable nylon-type material with hook and loop fasteners to hold the equipment securely. The belt loops also have hook and loop fasteners on them and they can be opened and installed on a BlackHawk duty belt for which they were designed. BlackHawk calls this the BTS system. I’m happy just slipping my black leather through the loops. This pouch retails for \$24.95 and is really worth it.

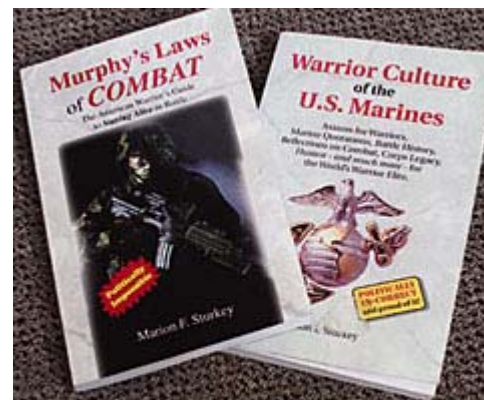


The BlackHawk pouch for the Gladius.

The other BlackHawk pouch that I have been using is called their Night-Ops Accessory pouch. BlackHawk has a division called Night-Ops which we will get to in a moment. This pouch mounts horizontally on your belt and carries six additional SF123A 3-volt batteries for your flashlight. The batteries are carried in loops keeping them secure and separated. Most lights using this type of battery with a high-intensity of light have a short life span, usually about 1-1/2 hours. The retail price of this pouch is \$19.95.

## Flashlights

Night-Ops has only one product: the Gladius flashlight. I have never seen another light that compares to the Gladius. The whole flashlight is just 6.23 inches in length, has a diameter of 1.25 inches, and weighs less than 7 ounces with the batteries and a lanyard attached. So it is compact. The Gladius uses the SF123A-type 3-volt battery. While these batteries can be costly and do have a shorter life span, if you really look around you can buy them in quantity quite reasonably.



I highly recommend both of these books especially for anyone who has done military time or a member of the Marine Corps.

I'm on a DAT (Disaster Action Team) for the Red Cross. What we primarily do here in the Buffalo-area is respond to fires that have displaced the residents and we help them out as best we can. A few weeks ago I responded to a fire in the middle of the night. I'm only on call at night from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., so most of my calls are in the dark at houses where the power has been turned off. So carrying a flashlight is a must.

We always work in teams and this night the guy I partnered with laughed at my little bitty flashlight. He showed me his great big one that we were going to need. When we got inside the house and I turned my Gladius on, it outshined his light. He said something like "Wow, man, turn that thing down." He was impressed.

The Gladius is unique. The switching has two components: a thumb push-button tail cap and a rotary dial. There are three channels of operation. The first is "momentary," pushing the tailpiece in the correct rotary position only momentarily activates the light. The second is a "strobe" and does just what you think of a strobe light doing. This is used for closing a gap or temporarily blinding a suspect. The third is "constant on" which is adjustable in intensity.



The double BlackHawk pouch holds an SOG multi-tool and SureFire flashlight easily.

This light does get very hot during prolonged operation so the Gladius does have a built in censor to protect the LED light. There is also a low-power censor that will generate two noticeable consecutive pulses every 15 seconds until the batteries are replaced. This only works in the momentary and constant modes.

Now, the shocker: The Gladius has a suggested retail price of \$250, but as I've said about other products, "you get what you pay for" and this is worth it, especially for first responders. This is the flashlight that fits the above BlackHawk pouch. The Gladius is the only flashlight that I have ever seen come in its own plastic case. Their motto, "removing any shadow of doubt," is very appropriate.

## Streamlight



The Streamlight Stylus Lights

While there are many occasions when you need a lot of light, there are those other times when you can have too much light or don't need the amount that something like the Gladius puts out.

Streamlight (30 Eagleville Rd., Dept. GWK, Eagleville, PA 19403; phone: 610-631-0600; on-line: [www.streamlight.com](http://www.streamlight.com)) has a wide variety of flashlights. Some high-intensity, some pencil thin, and others meant to be worn on your head. Recently they combined two of their

stylus-type lights into a combo pack. Both lights have an LED light, which will never need replacement. They both operate on three AAAA batteries. The cases are made of aircraft aluminum and each has a pocket clip. Each light has a momentary on function by holding down the tail piece or a constant on by rotating the end cap clockwise for on and vice versa to turn it off. Each unit also has its own serial number.

Where these two units differ is in their sizes. The one light is simply 6&Mac186; inches in length, while the second flashlight has a 6-inch aluminum body and 8-inch flexible neck. I can think of several times when one of my conventional flashlights wouldn't project light exactly where I needed it to, but this Streamlight will do just that. I've been carrying the flexible neck light unit on my bike along with a set of extra batteries. I always like to have a backup ready just in case. You know the batteries are going to go dead just at the wrong time. This Stylus Reach will help you see into places you couldn't see before.

Streamlight products are made in the USA. The retail price of this combo is \$44.95. Streamlight has a "No Excuses" warranty. Of course this doesn't cover bulbs, batteries, or abuse of the unit. How can you go wrong?

## Rifle Slings

Anyone who has a long gun needs a sling. You have many choices on the market in the material that a sling is made of. Many are more decorative than useful. Here I'm talking about one that is going to be useful and



additionally compliments the appearance of your firearms.

Vero Vellini/Pioneer Research (97 Foster Rd., Dept. GWK, Moorestown, NY 08057; phone: 800-257-7742; on-line: [www.pioneer-research.com](http://www.pioneer-research.com)) has an assortment of slings from which to choose. One of them, probably more, will be right for your use.

The feature I like the best of the sample that I received was that the sling is rubber backed. This prevents the firearms from sliding off your shoulder at the most inopportune time.

Vero Vellini has several different options in their slings. You can choose one that you install onto your own sling swivels or they will supply the sling swivels. One that I really like is the shotgun sling that has slip loops to attach the sling on firearms that don't have sling swivel studs installed on them. I bet we all could use a couple of those.

Vero Vellini also has extra wide slings to better distribute the weight of the firearms and, with their air cushion feature, to act as a shock absorber. Vero Vellini slings retail between \$29.99 and \$45.99.

That's it for this year. I hope that I have given you some good ideas not only for yourself, but for those close to you. Remember, when contacting any of these manufacturers to tell them that John at Gun Week sent you. Merry Christmas!

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