

Test and Evaluation Results
of
Wilson Combat Multi-Comp Bushing Compensator, Full Size, Blue, Part Number 397
by
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Test Pistol: Wilson Combat CQB in .45ACP with Wilson 2-piece guide rod.

Initial Impression: My initial impression upon removing the compensator from its bag was very favorable. I like the fact that it's made from a solid piece of bar stock; it's robust and nicely machined. The comp is nearly free of tool/machining marks, and those that are present are so minor that they hardly warrant mentioning. I also like the comp's dual nature. Serving also as a barrel bushing, it allows the shooter to easily attach and remove it, making it extremely versatile. I feel the three large ports on top, supported by two smaller ports on each side, should provide the shooter maximum performance and stability. It looks right, it feels right, and it certainly appears to have been engineered right. Grade: A.

Installation Instructions: Although essentially adequate, I would like to see them contain more details. They suggest that the comp might be a drop-in part or require minor fitting, in which case one should have to remove no more than .002" of material. My comp was a long way from being a drop-in, and I had to remove .004," twice this amount. It then also required a fair amount of hand work to achieve just the right fit. In order to use this comp, one must either use Wilson's Two-piece guide rod or shorten the existing recoil spring plug, and this is reflected in the instructions.

The instructions lack specific step-by-step installation detail, thereby potentially leading one to believe that the installation process is a simple one. The problem with this is that one with little or no experience in fitting parts of this nature might be tempted to try this on his own and could end up damaging the comp, and no one would be happy about rendering an \$80 item useless. I would like to see the instructions recommend installation by a qualified smith, and then provide detailed instructions for those with experience who wish to install it themselves. Grade: C.

Installing/Removing a Properly Fitted Comp: One of the joys of this bushing comp is that once it has been properly fitted it is a simple process to switch it back and forth with the pistol's original barrel bushing. This is an extremely nice feature because it stores easily in a range bag and in effect provides the shooter with a pistol capable of performing very different tasks at a moment's notice. Grade: A

Appearance: This comp looks darn good on my CQB. The geometry blends beautifully into the slide and the additional length adds a touch of visual excitement. These factors do nothing to enhance performance but are an added bonus nonetheless, particularly when installed on a top-end pistol such as a Wilson. Grade: A

Performance: When I went to the range to test this comp I took 300 rounds of factory 230gr FMJ ammo, figuring that this would be plenty and that I might even return home with a box or two. I certainly made an error in judgment. This comp is such a nice accessory and makes the weapon so incredibly pleasant to shoot that I went through all my rounds before I realized it and was then disappointed that I had not brought more. I was amazed that (once fitted) a drop-in part would be so effective at taming these full power big-bore loads. The reduced amount of felt recoil was so mild that my follow-up shots were faster than ever and I was able to clear the table of bowling pins in nothing flat. I felt as though I was shooting a 9mm. The comp also adds a bit of muzzle weight, which is a feature I like as well. Switching back to the stock bushing was a breeze. This is truly one of those must-have accessories if you want to take your 1911 to new levels of performance. Grade A+

Cleaning/Maintenance: It does not take many rounds until the comp is totally blanketed in carbon and other related debris. This harms nothing; it's the nature of things. When it comes to cleaning my guns, however, I want them spotless. Another great feature of this comp is that it lends itself so well to cleaning. A .22 bore brush with some powder solvent will thoroughly clean the ports on the comp's side, an old .45ACP bore brush squeezed into the top ports will clean them extremely well and a 20 gauge shotgun brush will clean the inner chamber. To clean the exterior, an old toothbrush will rid the nooks and crannies of any unwanted residue. Happiness is a clean compensator and this one is a breeze. Grade: A+

Summation: Wilson's bushing compensator surprised me in a number of ways. It was relatively easy to fit and install, it can be removed and reinstalled in only moments and it's easy to clean. Most importantly, however, is the extreme level of quality and performance it provides. I've used other comps over the years but have never been particularly impressed with them. Wilson's comp does exactly what a comp should do. This is truly a wonderful part that will allow the shooter to enjoy a maximum amount of versatility from his 1911. Overall Grade: A.