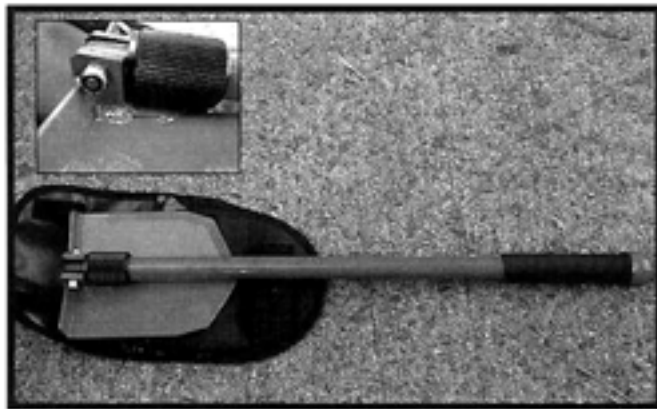


Photo Courtesy Library on Congress

Predator 45AS-Tiger



You may remember that a few issues back, our troops in Iraq field tested the Predator Tiger folding digger with amazing results. Although criticisms were few, designer and builder George Lesche listened. The result is the 45-AS Tiger, an improved version of an already amazing tool.

I've always favored a military style e-tool for relic hunting, and have worn out or broken at least half a dozen GI tools in the last 35 years. Not a bad average, but to break government issued military gear requires hard use. Yes, I am rather tough on digging tools.

My biggest complaints on these e-tools were that the wood handles were too short and would sometimes break, and folding the tool into the pick position required wrestling a metal nut that was usually frozen in place by dirt. After using the 45-AS Tiger, I can say these problems are no more.

The first Tiger had addressed the nut problems, but this model is even better with an easier to grip surface and rubber O-ring which keeps dirt out. This also prevents the machined hard-coat anodized aluminum nut from loosening while digging. Even the machined washer and 5/16" Grade 8 bolt are top of the line, plus the blade mount ears have been machined. Once it's locked in place, it's as rigid as a solid unit.

The handle is 1" steel with a tough foam grip and rounded knob (to prevent your hands from slipping off), and I can see no way it could break under use. The length is perfect for me, a full 31 1/4" when opened, eliminating the excessive stooping needed with the old GI shovels.



When field testing this model, I had occasion to tackle some roots of formidable size. Spending only a few seconds to change the tool into pick mode, I was amazed to discover the roots were severed with only a few strokes of the tool. Designer George Lesche explained that the weight of the Tiger is distributed towards the digging end, giving it added force and momentum for such tasks.

Predator 45 -AS Tiger

Length: 24 3/4" closed, 31 1/4" open

Type: Folding shovel/pick combination

Material: Virgin Chrome-moly 4130 Aircraft Quality steel handle and blade, precision machined anodized aluminum nut

Wt: 3 lbs, 6 oz

Available from www.predatortools.com, or call 856-455-3790

The blade is 7 1/4" long by 5 1/4" wide, sharpened on the front and one side with a very comfortable 3/4" foot step. The handle and blade are both made from virgin Chrome-moly 4130 Aircraft Quality steel that has been heat treated and tempered.

Having spent 20 years in the metal industry, and 35 years digging in the dirt, I will go out on a limb and say that this is the best digging tool I've ever used. And, unless I lose it like the previous military tool I owned, this will be the last digging tool I'll ever need!

Review by Butch Holcombe

