A Big Honkin' Machete! (Puma Waidblatt)

Posted by ApexGS - 19 Aug 2012 17:11

After getting my Wicked Edge kit in I spent some time hunting down all the blades in the vicinity that need a new edge to practice on. I've had this thing in the garage for years, a hold over from the previous owners who left the whole thing full of old tools, hardware and junk when we bought the place. Turns out this one isn't a half bad find!

I did some digging online and it turns out these German made utility blades aren't cheap, and this one is the stag set with dual sheath. The smaller knife was lost, sadly

It needs some nicks removed but nothing serious, and has an unusual secondary edge coming down off the spine toward the tip. Seems like the previous owner used it quite a bit and decided that was a good idea to grind in... The only real rough part of it is that the coating or laminate used at the factory apparently applied by the previous owner is flaking off in droves and will need to be stripped properly.

Here's the challenge: it's big, it's heavy, and the blade has almost a diamond shape from spine to edge, making it very difficult to clamp securely. It tapers from the spine to about half the thickness of the blade, then from there it tapers back down to the edge.

Any good tips would be appreciated, even the venerable foam tape trick isn't quite enough to hold this big lug in one spot to sharpen it!

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Re: A Big Honkin' Machete! (Puma Waidblatt)

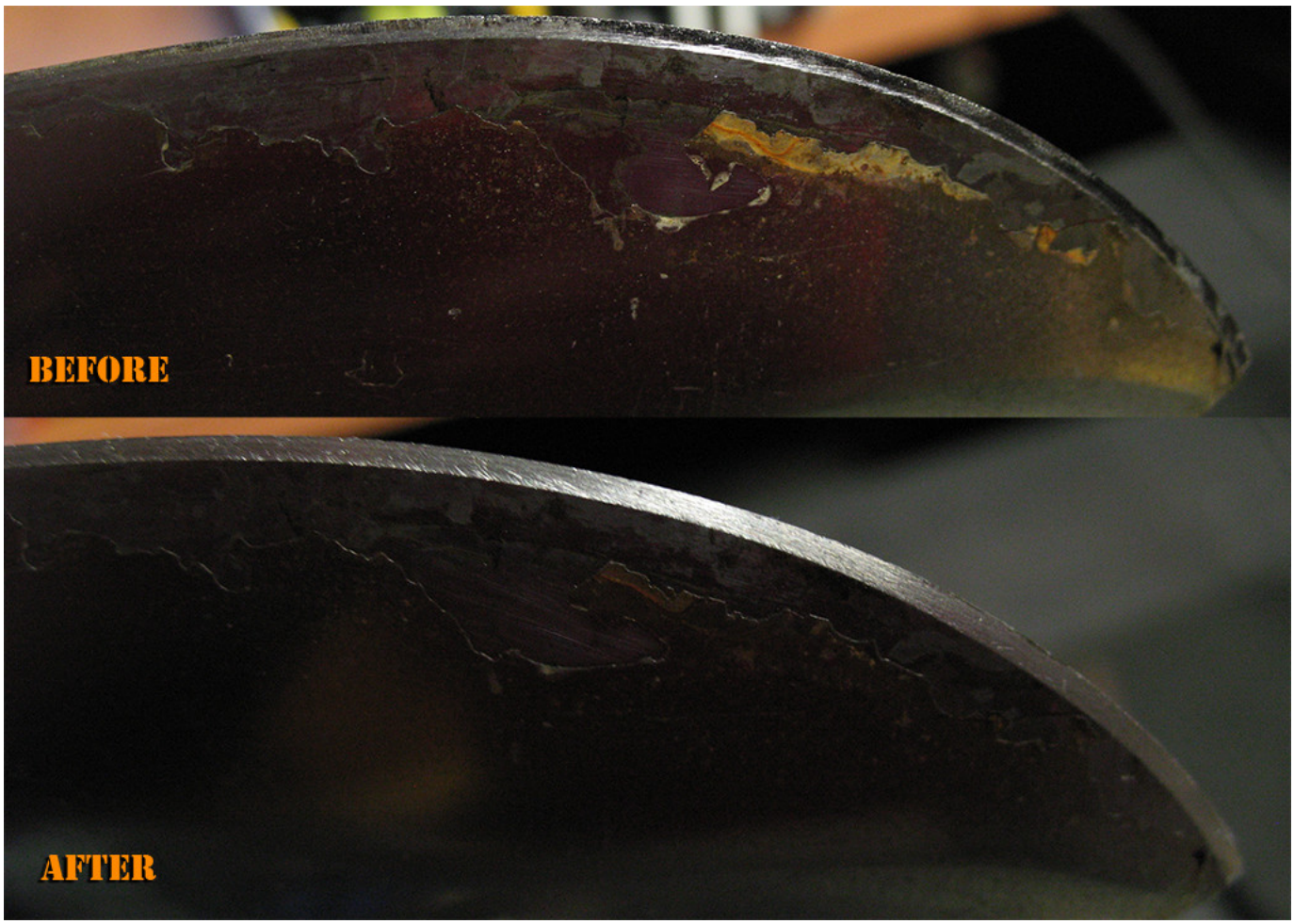
Posted by ApexGS - 23 Aug 2012 09:12

Almost 50 views and no ideas, eh?

I was stumped for a while, since the taper of the blade really made clamping difficult. What I ended up doing was mounting it reversed, with the blade facing me. I didn't bother using the depth key at all, because the lower set of holes placed the vise jaws right on the taper toward the spine. I dropped it as far down as it would go, almost touching the bottom vise screw, then braced the handle to keep it from rotating. Clamped at the front, and with the ability to pivot around that clamping point mitigated, I had the chance to finally sharpen the bugger!

This arrangement combined with the damage to the edge meant I had to reprofile the entire length of the blade at 30 degrees, paying extra attention to the curve going into the tip because that's where most of the damage was focused from use. I think in total including the time it took me to sort out a mounting solution I spent about an hour on this guy getting it to a 600 grit finish. Here's a quick before/after from

my desk, you can see the nasty coating flaking off in droves but it doesn't really hurt anything:



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Re: A Big Honkin' Machete! (Puma Waidblatt)

Posted by wickededge - 23 Aug 2012 09:37

Wow, that came out great! Thanks for posting the pics and your technique. I'd meant to jump on before and comment and got swept away into other things. Have you used it since you put that edge on it?

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Re: A Big Honkin' Machete! (Puma Waidblatt)

Posted by ApexGS - 23 Aug 2012 13:17

Not yet, but I intended to today while doing grounds keeping here at the farm. I might take it out this evening when I take the dog for a run and chop some stuff with it though! It's not quite machete sized, more like a large machete-shaped bowie knife almost, but that makes it pretty handy. Sadly the sheath

it originally came with is pretty ratty looking, so that'll need replaced.

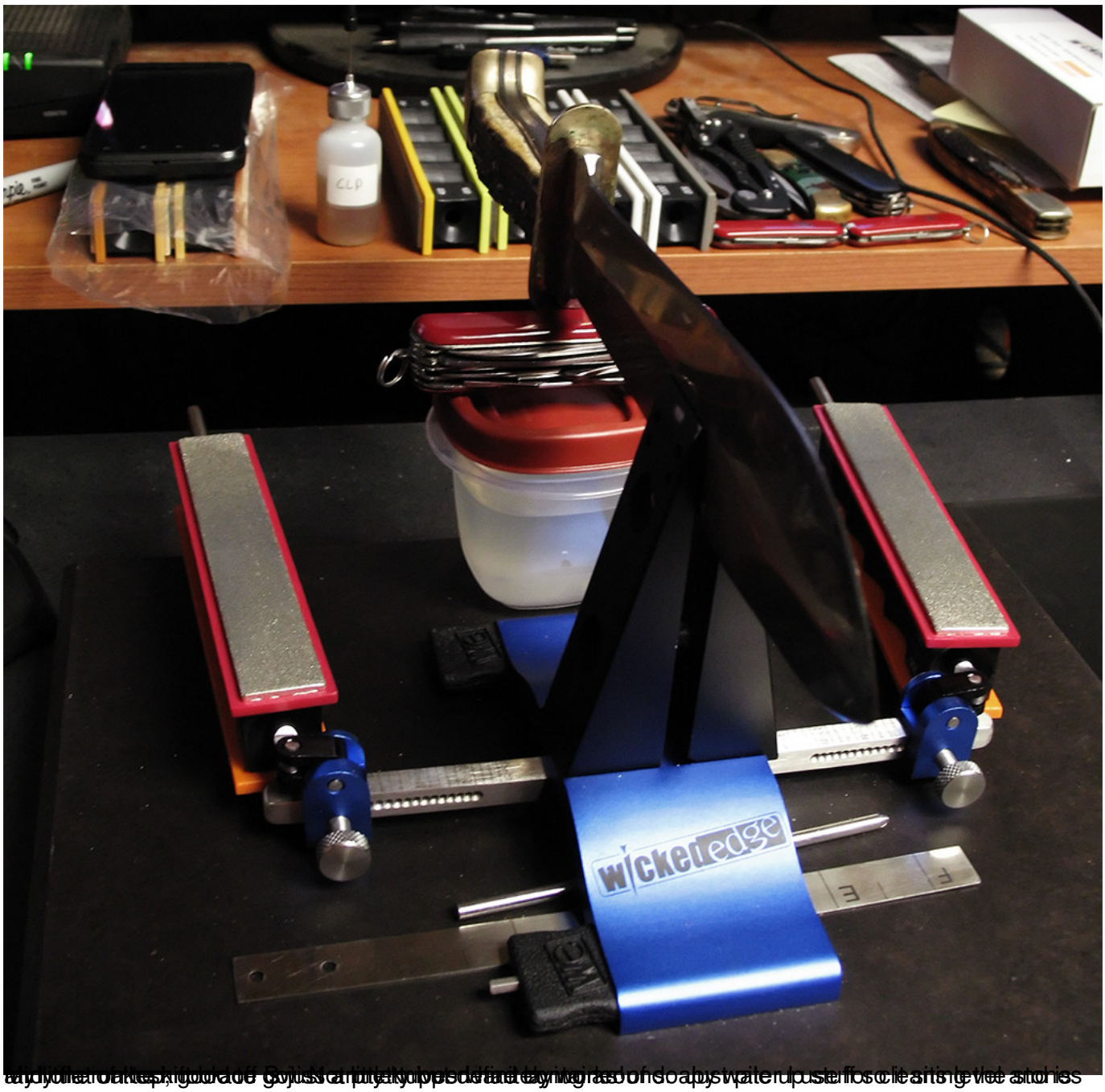
I took a fine file to the weird second edge the previous owner put on the spine near the tip, it's not really necessary and is probably a safety hazard if anything. The rest of it at 600 grit is plenty sharp! It took a lot of profiling to fix it up, I was sort of wishing for those 50/80 stones!

Moral of the story I guess is don't be afraid of the big blades! They're very doable with just the basic kit (or field and sport as well) if you're a little inventive with the clamping setup. I'll take a picture of the thing in the clamp next time I touch it up, maybe this evening after I test it out.

EDIT:

After a quick test run, I'm fairly happy with it but want to try some other grits to see how a coarser edge or finer edge might work out. I quickly got it clamped back up, double checked my bevels with the sharpie and a couple swipes, and it turns out my method here is very repeatable. I also put a couple dots on the blade with the sharpie to spot the edges of the vise, to help get it back in the same spot next time. Once it's finished for good I'll strip that flaking junk off there and polish the blade.

Some of our native foliage here in the backwoods of PA is pretty tough, even for a chunky blade like this. Plenty to go around for future testing though!


CLP
wickededge

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