

THE AMERICAN HANDGUNNER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1978 \$1.50

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE OUTSTANDING AMERICAN HANDGUNNER AWARDS FOUNDATION

67522 T&E

Handgun Profile:

DAN WESSON REVOLVERS

*Three Full Length
Feature Articles*

JEFF COOPER

**PETER THE POWER
METER****2nd Annual
MAGNUM
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YOU COULD BE A
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2. Some of the other brands of old style single-action revolvers, particularly those of foreign manufacture, have added various manual "safeties" which may or may not be reliable. Even if it functions properly, a manual safety device is no safer than the person using it. It is useless if it is not used, or if it is used improperly by mistake.

Why Are We Telling You This?

In the last few years, people are apparently becoming more willing to handle firearms, including Ruger single-action revolvers, without *first* receiving proper instruction from a knowledgeable shooter. *No one* should handle any gun without *first* having supervised instruction about the particular type of gun he is using, as well as about gun safety in general. Until very recently everyone, gun users and non-users alike, seemed to be well aware of this obvious rule, and accidents with single-action revolvers, as well as with other types of guns, were limited to those very occasional lapses of common sense against which, unfortunately, there appears to be no real protection. Now, with the growth of consumerism, people who should know better are acting as though guns, like electric toasters, are meant to be foolproof. There is no such thing as a foolproof gun.

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THE AMERICAN HANDGUNNER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 1978
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George E. von Rosen
Publisher



CONTENTS FEATURES

THE SMITH & WESSON "TRIPLE LOCK"	Gordon Stark	22
HANDGUNNING IN AUSTRALIA	John Robinson	24
HANDGUN BUFFALO HUNT	J. D. Jones	28
TEST REPORT: DAISY M-62	Ladd Fanta	32
THE LARAMIE CONVERSION	Byron Boots	34
A CLEAN HANDGUN IS	Mike Barach	50

HANDGUN PROFILE THE DAN WESSON REVOLVER

EVOLUTION & DEVELOPMENT	Mike Barach	36
SHOOTING THE DAN WESSON	Massad Ayoob	42
CUSTOMIZING AND TUNING	Massad Ayoob	46

DEPARTMENTS

INDUSTRY INSIDER ... Massad Ayoob	8	HANDLOADING Dan Cotterman	20
COOPER'S COLUMN Jeff Cooper	12	THE AMMO SCENE Evan Marshal	53
COP TALK Massad Ayoob	14	HANDGUN HUNTING .. Geo. Bredsten	54
KEEP SHOOTIN' 18		TAKING AIM George Nonte	58
PISTOLSMITHING George Nonte		60	

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OUTSTANDING AMERICAN HANDGUNNER AWARDS

FOUNDATION, INC.

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NEWSLETTER

Things have been moving along since last we met. Skip Gordon, a personality and business figure well known in the shooting game (actually he's a rifle shooter on the side), has come aboard as general coordinator, PR man, and jack-of-all-trades so as to tie everything together. Many people work on Association business, but it's on a volunteer basis, and they sometimes have to take off from that and tend to their own living. Skip can maintain continuity under those conditions.

Plans for the 1978 Outstanding American Handgunner Awards Banquet are well under way. The date has been set for Saturday, 15 April, in Salt Lake City, Utah. The affair will be held in conjunction with the NRA Annual Meeting which starts there on 14 April. At present, three hotels are under consideration, and the final selection will be made soon, based on service, location, etc.

As in '77, the '78 ceremony and banquet will be open to the shooting public. Tickets, which include the cocktail party, banquet, and ceremony are priced at \$25 each. Reservations must be made prior to March 1, so we know how much space we'll need in the hall. There should be a few seats available at the door on the big night, but don't count on it. If you really intend to be there, get your tickets now by writing the Outstanding American Handgunner Association (30016 S. River Road, Mt. Clemens, Michigan 48043).

We anticipate that all of the Top Ten candidates for the big award will be present, along with a liberal sprinkling of other top American Handgunners, not to mention the previous award winners. Those of you who have never attended one of these affairs will find it to be the largest single gathering of true pistoleros to be found anywhere. Now is the time to make up your mind to join us in Salt Lake City and attend the most worthwhile NRA meetings as well. It's a time when you can meet, talk to, and rub elbows with the people who have contributed most to handgunning over the years.

We'd like to point out that this "contribution" to handgunning isn't just in the field of competitive shooting. In fact, some of our past award recipients never shot a registered match in their lives. Look over those past winners and you'll see men who have contributed in every manner, from being national champions to designers and manufacturers of the first water. Some have contributed by their journalistic accomplishments; some in the legislative arena; some by making handguns; some in law enforce-

ment. All, of course, have contributed in more than one way. It's the overall effect of a person's many activities over many years that is used to determine whether he stands near the top for this prestigious award. We can't say a young fellow (or gal) couldn't win the award, but it's probably significant that all the winners to date show a half-century or more of ardent handgunning activity of all types. It can't be said of any of them—from Elmer Keith, the first, to Harlan Carter, the fifth—that the award was given for any *single* activity. It's also significant, perhaps, that all of them have been nearly as active in all the other areas of the shooting sports, not just handgunning alone.

Next April we'll be meeting in Salt Lake City to again reward one of our finest and to show the world that handguns are not synonymous with criminality. We'd like you all to be there with us and join in that effort and that celebration. In the meantime, why not join our group and by so doing announce to the world how you feel about handgunning.

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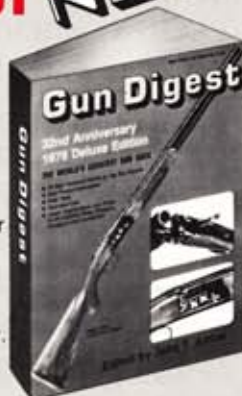
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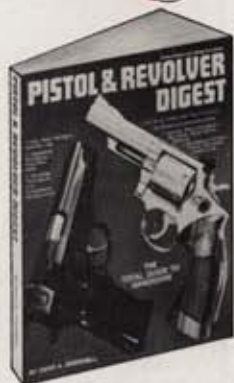


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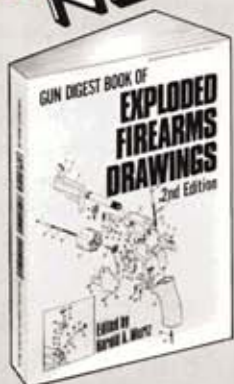
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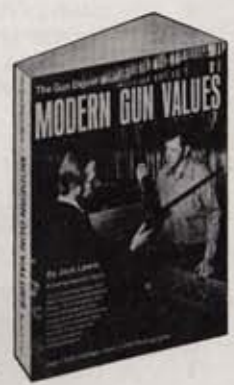


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HANDGUN INDUSTRY INSIDER

By MASSAD F. AYOUB

At Colt's, inside word is that the new double action .38/.357 police revolver won't be out until 1979 at the absolute earliest. Company spokesmen are still telling us that there are no immediate production plans for the double action stainless auto that has existed in prototype since the sixties. Curiously, though, a very reliable source of ours in the US Armed Services insists that Colt's is going to bid the gun in on an upcoming contract for 9 mm service autos.

Better late than never: Clem Conforte at HIGH STANDARD has announced that the newer, smaller, more cost-effective plant is now operating in full swing.

The long-awaited Crusader double action 44 magnums are at last coming off the line. So, among other tried and true H-S models, are the excellent .22 target autos that the paper punchers have been clamoring for. Guns to be phased into production later include the firm's excellent police shotgun, and a "Sentinel police revolver." Welcome back, High Standard. S&W fans are happy about it, too. There are a lot of people in the industry who feel that it isn't coincidental that Smith stepped up production of their Model 29 .44 Mag a few months before the Crusader became available.

MORE RUMOR MONGERING: We

have it unequivocally from the inside that CCI, despite wildfire rumors, is *not* going to acquire a certain firm well known for its quality handguns. At the same time, some reliable voices in the industry tell us that a major producer of rifles and shotguns may soon become available for acquisition. Descriptions of that firm's present financial status range from "kinda sick" to "not reaching full profit potential," depending who you talk to. Nobody's putting a "for sale" sign in front of the factory yet, but it is hinted that certain key people in the parent company would just as soon not have a firearms subsidiary in their stockholders' report next year. Some people in the handgun industry are taking a hard look at the firm, which does offer terrific possibilities. Particularly interested are the honchos of a certain handgun firm noted for its dynamic management team.

THOMPSON/CENTER, long known as one of the most responsive firms where special-purpose handguns were concerned, has come out with a special barrel for their Contender pistol that's designed strictly for metallic silhouette competition. A long heavy barrel is mated with super-precise Lyman sights, and calibers will be those favored by the steelshooters: .41 Magnum, .44 Mag., .30 and .357 Harrett, and perhaps a couple of others. Since they'll be a standard catalog item, the metallic silhouette Contenders will be permissible in Production class. Enthusiasts in the sport are so convinced that the latest Contender will outclass every revolver extant in terms of precision accuracy, that they're trying to get a separate class for Production Singleshots written into the rules of the International Handgun Metallic Silhouette Association...

DAN WESSON ARMS' double action .44 Magnum exists in prototype. We tried the two guns that have been handbuilt, and were extremely impressed. Dick Rosenfeld of DWA swore me to secrecy about the technical details, and says if I go into detail he'll do to me what the Israelis did to the Syrian army. I can say that there are several radical, patented design features, that the action on the prototypes is smoother than ever, and that the guns we tested seemed to be kicking about 40% less than the Model 29 we used as a control gun with the same loads. They've made a serious commitment to the .44 Mag project, and I think they'll make their two-year target date for production.

At RUGER, meanwhile, the double action revolvers continue as a major success story. People in the police equipment business are now talking about Ruger as the number two brand in the traditionally conservative cop gun market. The firm has quietly introduced a series of heavy untapered barrels in all their double actions, which are already available at this writing. There's no extra charge.

In ammunition, CCI's Stinger load in .22 LR is the big news. Stoeger has publicly announced that the hot new round

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should not be used in their imported .22 auto pistols. Tighter and shorter chambers on foreign guns are one reason for concern. Target rifles in .22 LR, which tend to also have shorter and tighter chambers, likewise aren't the guns you should put on a diet of sassy Stingers.

The big three ammo makers are looking very closely at the Stinger's commercial success, which is every bit as dramatic as its ballistic performance. FEDERAL is holding off for a while, to see if there will be any further announcements like the one from Stoeger. REMINGTON has studied the phenomenal round, too, and is also watching and listening before deciding whether to go the Stinger route. WINCHESTER/WESTERN has moved more decisively, and has for some time had their people in the field taking consumer preference polls on names for their Stinger-like round...

The Merrill Sportsman single-shot may turn out to have been the most memorable handgun introduction of recent years. The handsomely-made \$265 pistol, with trim lines that are reminiscent of the old S&W Straight-Line one-shooter, has been winning metallic silhouette matches almost since its inception, and it handles heavy Magnum loads with equanimity. Look for an in-depth write-up in HANDGUNNER or GUNS...

At CHARTER ARMS, word of new goodies comes from a reliable but unofficial source; this is of necessity, since official spokesman Dave Ecker does not number this writer on his list of favorite firearms journalists. But a 2", small-frame .357 Magnum seems a certainty from this maker, and a shoo-in for success. S&W and Colt have avoided little guns in this chambering, but Security Industries proved it could be done, and we predict it will be one of Charter's most popular numbers, especially with the Bulldog grips. Also in the wind at Charter, we hear, is a low-priced, tough, knockabout single-shot scattergun like the Bronco, and there's a possibility that the firm will acquire the tooling to produce the Firearms International model "D" .380 auto. Time will tell, but the Charter catalog seems to be expanding in healthy directions with versatile and desirable offerings. Incidentally, the Backpacker—a limited edition .44 Special Bulldog with MagNaPorted 2" barrel and hard chrome finish—should be an excellent investment, like any special item produced by MagNaPort's Larry Kelly. We'd like to see the front sight put back on, though. The slicked action on the Backpacker we tried was the finest we've felt on any Charter revolver.

Speaking of Larry Kelly, this writer seems to have inadvertently added to some of the misunderstandings about what his MagNaPorting does and doesn't do. In the last HANDGUNNER, I stated that the purpose of the modification was

Not everyone's crazy about the good ol' boys' obsession with bullet performance.



Some would rather not think about handgun bullets that can more than double their diameter on impact. Or handgun primers that make sure those bullets get the perfect send-off.

But the good ol' boys at CCI-Speer have given them a lot of thought, and their pistol primers and bullets show it.

That double-diameter expansion is the result of Speer's unique design for jacketed handgun bullets. They start with a soft lead alloy core. Then put it in a jacket that's thick at the rear of the bullet, and thin at the front. On impact, the jacket's contoured walls peel back uniformly for full impact and good expansion.

Jacketed or solid lead, for plinking, practice or match, no one gives handloaders more bullet choices in all popular calibers than the good ol' boys. And

30 of the 105 bullets they make are made just for handgunners.

Then there's pistol primers. They're a prime concern for the boys at CCI. So there's plenty of fussing to make sure their primer mixes match up just right with the powders handloaders use.

For target and standard velocity loads, the #300 provides perfect ignition for large pistols. And the #500 is just right for small ones.

But for the kind of heat and pressure needed for top velocity and Magnum loads, the #350 is the answer for big handguns. While the #550 does the same job for small ones.

One other thing. These are the exact same bullets you'll find in CCI-Speer's factory-loaded Lawman Ammo. Manufactured to exactly the same strict law enforcement and military standards.

So no wonder they tend to be popular with handloaders. Even though not everyone's crazy about them.



Sporting Equipment Division



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Cal.	Dia.	Weight	Point Type
9mm	.355	88 gr.	Hollow Point
9mm	.355	100 gr.	Hollow Point
9mm	.355	125 gr.	Soft Point
38	.357	110 gr.	Hollow Point
38	.357	125 gr.	Hollow Point
38	.357	125 gr.	Soft Point
38	.357	140 gr.	Hollow Point
38	.357	146 gr.	Hollow Point
38	.357	158 gr.	Hollow Point
38	.357	158 gr.	Soft Point
38	.357	160 gr.	Soft Point
41	.410	200 gr.	Hollow Point
41	.410	220 gr.	Soft Point
44	.429	200 gr.	Magnum Hollow Point
44	.429	225 gr.	Hollow Point
44	.429	240 gr.	Soft Point
44	.429	240 gr.	Magnum Hollow Point
44	.429	240 gr.	Magnum Soft Point
45	.451	200 gr.	Hollow Point
45	.451	225 gr.	Magnum Hollow Point
45	.451	260 gr.	Magnum Hollow Point
LEAD BULLETS			
9mm	.356	125 gr.	Round Nose
38	.358	148 gr.	Bevel Base Wadcutter
38	.358	148 gr.	Hollowbase Wadcutter
38	.358	158 gr.	Semi-Wadcutter
38	.358	158 gr.	Round Nose
44	.430	240 gr.	Semi-Wadcutter
45	.452	200 gr.	Semi-Wadcutter
45	.452	230 gr.	Round Nose
45	.452	250 gr.	Semi-Wadcutter

reduction in muzzle jump, not in recoil. What I should have said was that there is some degree of total recoil reduction, but by far the most noticeable change is the sharp reduction in muzzle upflip. That statement is strictly in reference to handguns. With a rifle or shotgun, due to the nature of recoil transmittal through a long gun's stock, both recoil and muzzle jump are sharply reduced by ManNaPorting.

A remarkably large number of our inquiries from readers involve the ManNaPort process. Accordingly, we'll soon be running a feature story (probably in our sister magazine GUNS) explaining just what ManNaPort does and doesn't do, and how, and why.

The question has been asked of us, "Why does the Industry Insider column list rumors and not always name the source of the information?" Well, a lot of times what looks like a hot project this year is going to be dead *next* year, and the person at the company who gives us the info on the program in its embryonic stage doesn't want to be held personally responsible if and when it is stillborn. Also, when a premature announcement of a new product comes out, it can trigger demand that can't be fulfilled for some time, which in turn creates ill will between producers and customers. Finally, announcement of a new product may make an existing item in the same company's line appear obsolete in the eyes of the reader and hurt cur-

rent sales.

Be assured that we check out rumors before we give them credence by printing them. Some, like the ammo company/handgun company merger we mentioned above, turn out to be so much B.S. Others turn out to have solid bases, so we run them without naming names and hurting images, unless it could burn the readers if we *didn't* name those names.

And, speaking of rumors, we'll close by debunking a final one: No, Illinois State Police is *not* changing from the Model 39 to the Model 59 automatic. That agency, which did more than any other to popularize autos in general and the S&W 9 mm in particular among law officers, is going to stay with the 39. They've got some 1700 guns in stock, plus parts; besides, they tested the 59 and while its performance was impressive, the bigger grip was found to be a problem for members with small hands, especially the women troopers. ISP brass state unequivocally that they're happy with the Model 39 and anticipate no change. Interestingly, though, a recent survey of the line personnel (conducted under the auspices of the Illinois Troopers' Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police) showed that a remarkable number of the troopers would rather carry revolvers on duty.

No other state police or highway patrol agency issues automatics, but ISP, with its

nationwide reputation for innovative management and procedures, has done a lot for the concept of the police service automatic. They don't proselytize, but by their example, municipal and county agencies in that state have gone so heavily to the Smith Nine that there are probably more police autos in Illinois per capita than in any state save California—also, not coincidentally, a state noted for advanced concepts in law enforcement. At the same time, we'd be remiss if we didn't record the fact that a number of police departments that have gone to the automatic in recent years have switched back to the revolver.

The next big wave in police automatics will come when BROWNING gets their double action .45, made for them by SIG/SAUER, on the market. Slated for a June '77 entry, the .45s still haven't shown up. But BDA's in 9 mm and .38 Super have already been put through the wringer. General consensus is that workmanship and human engineering could be better, as could trigger pull, but accuracy and reliability seem to exceed any other double action police auto on the market. The price is steep, but the market's reaction when the gun comes out in .45 will be the real test. Much of the criticism of current DA police autos had centered around the borderline performance of the 9 mm. Parabellum cartridge.



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VENTED TEST BARREL BALLISTICS

CONVENTIONAL REVOLVER BALLISTICS

CALIBER	REM- INGTON Order No.	BULLET		VELOCITY FT. PER SEC.		ENERGY FT. LBS.		MID- RANGE TRAJ.	BARREL	MUZZLE VELOCITY	MUZZLE ENERGY	BARREL
		Wt.-Gr.	Style	Muzzle	50 Yds.	Muzzle	50 Yds.					
38 SPECIAL	R38S1	95	S.J.H.P. +P	1060	970	237	198	1.1"	2"	985	205	2"
	R38S1*	95	S.J.H.P. +P	1175	1044	291	230	0.9"	4"	—	—	—
	R38S2	125	S.J.H.P. +P	945	898	248	224	1.3"	4"	1028	300	6"
	R38S3	148	W.C.	710	634	166	132	2.4"	4"	770	195	6"
	R38S4	158	TGTM.	755	723	200	183	2.0"	4"	885	255	6"
	R38S5	158	LEAD	755	723	200	183	2.0"	4"	885	255	6"
	R38S6	158	S.W.C.	755	723	200	183	2.0"	4"	885	255	6"
	R38S7	158	M.P.	755	723	200	183	2.0"	4"	885	255	6"
	R38S8	158	Lead + P	915	878	294	270	1.4"	4"	1090	415	6"
	R38S9	200	Lead	635	614	179	168	2.8"	4"	730	235	6"
357 MAGNUM	R357M1	125	S.J.H.P.	1450	1240	583	427	0.6"	4"	1675	780	8 3/8"
	R357M2	158	S.P.	1235	1104	535	428	0.8"	4"	1550	845	8 3/8"
	R357M3	158	M.P.	1235	1104	535	428	0.8"	4"	1550	845	8 3/8"
	R357M4	158	S.J.H.P.	1235	1104	535	428	0.8"	4"	1410	695	8 3/8"
	R357M5	158	Lead	1235	1104	535	428	0.8"	4"	1410	695	8 3/8"
41 MAGNUM	R41MG1	210	S.P.	1300	1162	778	630	0.7"	4"	1500	1050	8 3/8"
	R41MG2	210	Lead	965	898	434	376	1.3"	4"	1050	515	8 3/8"
44 REM. MAG.	R44MG1	240	Lead	1350	1186	971	749	0.7"	4"	1470	1150	6 1/2"
	R44MG2	240	S.P.	1180	1081	741	623	0.9"	4"	1470	1150	6 1/2"
	R44MG3	240	S.J.H.P.	1180	1081	741	623	0.9"	4"	1470	1150	6 1/2"
	R44MG4	240	Lead	900	863	432	390	1.4"	4"	1000	533	6 1/2"

*The 95 Grain load, tested in 4" barrels for consistency, is designed specifically for use in shorter barrels.

Ammunition with (+ P) on the case headstamp is loaded to higher pressure. Use only in firearms designated for this cartridge and so recommended by the gun manufacturer.

Until now published ballistics figures for revolver ammunition were all based on the optimum performance of a given cartridge. That's because they were fired from a standard test barrel under laboratory conditions. But as every law-enforcement professional knows, the actual performance of the same cartridge under field conditions could not be expected to match laboratory test results.

But thanks to new equipment development by Remington engineers, you can now have a more precise indication, in advance, of how much performance to expect from a revolver cartridge where it counts—in a revolver, in the field.

The Remington Vented Test Barrel ballistics chart duplicates actual firing conditions—through a 4" barrel (most service revolvers are this length) which is vented to simulate the gap between cylinder face and barrel. Finally, the testing is carried out with the powder distributed evenly and

horizontally within the cartridge case, matching the most typical firing position.

In every case, the cartridges fired are from a common lot, but the new ballistics figures, as you can see, are dramatically different.

Remington's patented *Vented Test Barrel* delivers ballistics information the law-enforcement professional has been waiting for—information that more accurately predicts performance levels to be expected in actual field service. The patents have been released to the public, royalty-free, to encourage wider use of this test method.

It's the latest example of Remington's continuing efforts to best serve the needs of the law-enforcement community.

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COOPER'S COLUMN

THE POWER METER Breakthrough in Practical Pistol Competition

THE two most serious problems in the conduct of practical pistol competition are holster regulation and power requirements.

Defining a "practical" holster in a way that does not inhibit innovative design is so difficult that the combined efforts of a generation of pistoleros have not yet arrived at a satisfactory answer. We keep working on it, but we haven't got it yet.

The power problem, however, while hitherto equally vexatious, seems at last to be within reach of solution. Like so many similar achievements, from the paper clip to the jet engine, it is so simple that one wonders why it wasn't obvious when the question first came up. It is a classic "ballistic pendulum."

Now that we have the answer, perhaps we had better state the question. It goes like this: Since we will assume as self-evident that defensive pistolcraft consists in the quick and accurate control of *power* ("D.V.C."), we must so arrange our exercises that they will measure the shooter's ability to place a *heavy* blow both precisely and rapidly. Conventional target shooting measures accuracy. Our practical courses test both accuracy and speed of

delivery. But since neither accuracy nor speed is very helpful without power, we must devise a procedure that disallows scores printed with trivial cartridges, and recognizes that the precise control of a powerful weapon is a higher skill than the same control of a lesser arm.

For years we have simply said, ".38 caliber" (9mm) and up—full charge only. This is better than nothing, but not much. Do we think that a .38 target wadcutter load is equivalent to a red-lined .357? Do we let in a .380 and rule out a .30 U.S.C.? When an aspirant shows up with a pet handload do we weigh it and chronograph it? And if we do, what do we measure the result against—Hatcher or DiMaio?

Moreover, is control of a .38 to be considered the same as control of a .41? Are squib loads for the .45, which deliver higher specs than a "service" .38, to be classed with .45's, or with .38's? Decisions! Decisions!

Of course, you could drop the subject and join the P.P.C. circuit, but somehow that course did not appeal to many of the big kids. They muttered and grumbled and wracked their brains, and lo! They came up with "Peter the Power Meter."

This gadget was designed and built by Mike Horne, of Bakersfield, California, and while he himself is not set up to produce it for sale, he has arranged for it to be built in 10-unit lots. As soon as he has 10 firm orders a run is commenced. The device is certainly simple enough to be home-made, and those who like to tinker with tools can make their own. However, Horne's version has been de-bugged by trial and error, and at \$70 a copy (plus freight) it may even be cheaper than home-made, for those whose time is valuable. Either way, I think that no pistol range worthy of consideration should henceforth be without one—or preferably two.

Peter is a simple structure of mild steel tubing which swings a small but thick impact plate beneath a cross beam, exactly as with a child's swing. When the plate is struck by a bullet it swings backward in an arc, carrying a pivoted marker needle among the rim of a plain, grade-school protractor. The pendulum returns to vertical, but the needle stays put at maximum swing. That's all. Whatever angle is recorded by a base round constitutes the basic index. More swing is more power, less swing is less. Nobody has to use a theory nor a table of logarithms nor a sky screen nor a calculator. "All ya gotta do is look." Marvelous!

The pendulum can serve various purposes, but the new International Practical Shooting Confederation uses it thus: Nothing less than 9mm Parabellum military ammunition is allowed. A batch of G.I. ammo is selected and fired (on record day) at the plate. An average arc for three rounds—at six meters, center hits—is determined and marked with a grease pencil. To get aboard the contest, your load must move the pendulum that much, or more. Now then, if you wish to have your target scored in the "major caliber" category (usually 5, 4, 3 instead of 5, 3, 1) your load must move the pendulum as much as .45 hardball. This means that a full-house .357 is "major", while a .45 tar-



The .380 scores low.



The .45 ACP with hardball.



The .357 Magnum, 160 gr.

get load is not—which is exactly as it should be. Squib loads in .45 ACP have been bothering us for a long time, as have “.357’s” that were actually more like “Plus P” .38’s. The gadget also takes care of PPC ammunition and .380’s—at least any .380’s I have seen.

Possibly the best thing about Peter is the avoidance of argument. Course officials can handle the whole thing with hardly a word. Just shoot and look. You’re in or you’re out. No conversation is necessary. Anyone who has run any sort of practical contest knows what a blessing this is!

Just what it is that the pendulum measures is somewhat moot, but a term I have been using until a better one is suggested is “available clout” (A.C.). A moving missile has a potential that can be utilized in various ways, depending upon its configuration and construction. It can be designed to carry well in flight, or to penetrate hard objects, or to set things afire, or to disrupt blocks of duxseal, or to disintegrate on impact, or whatever. How it works is a choice the shooter can make by selecting his ammunition, but that will do nothing about increasing the power of his weapon, because kinetics limit what power he has to work with. A bullet of a given weight, moving at a given speed, has a specific power potential, regardless of its shape or material. That is its “available clout,” and that is what Peter measures. It is not necessary for the instruments to be uniformly constructed, for they are used to measure *relative* performance, on the same range, on the same day. Whatever the base load does is par, and the A.C. of other loads is either greater or less—it doesn’t matter what the exact figure is, or in what units it is expressed.

At this point someone is sure to suggest that a well thrown rock could show an A.C. rating better than that of any pistol. This is true, but misleading. Peter compares pistol impacts, not those of rocks; just as a dynamometer measures horsepower, not jet thrust. You can tow a jet airplane backwards all over the field with a truck, as long as you start before the jet picks up any forward motion. Yet we do not suggest that the truck is “more powerful” than the jet. The search for absolutes can lead us up many a blind alley. And, as to that, anyone who wishes to compete in a practical pistol match with a sackful of rocks is welcome. We might even set up a special trophy if we could find three or more entrants.

For example, suppose we were to hold a match for “concealable” weapons, or what the police often call “backup guns.” What is concealable? We can’t very well stipulate a two-inch barrel, can we? A two-and-a-half inch M-19 would be thus proscribed, along with the three-inch Charter Bulldog; as well as various autos that are smaller than a Chief or a Detective Special. How *do* you define a pocket gun? (And let’s not use government edicts as a guide, as we note in passing that it seems



completely impossible for our friendly government regulators accurately to define a “Saturday Night Special,” though that does not stop them from trying to excommunicate it.). Obviously, if we start specifying inches and ounces we begin to sound just like the busybodies we decry. Anytime we say “24 ounces” we cannot

explain why we didn’t say 23, or 24½. What we *might* say is this: “Wear a suit or sport coat. Turn around, slowly. If we can’t see that you are armed, your piece is ‘concealable.’” Then, in order to establish bottom lines, we could fire a “Plus P” 38 out of a Chief at the pendulum to establish a minor caliber base, and a .45 hardball out of a PD to qualify the major calibers.

It’s interesting to see how some of these theoretically hot potatoes perform. A lot of loads that are technically “.357’s” seem to be illusory. A friend in the customs service showed up carrying his “regulation” 2½” M-19 loaded with “regulation” 125’s. This combination moved the plate about 25% less than my wife’s M-60, using our basic business load for a 2” .38. An *honest* .357, on the other hand (even a 4”), will slightly exceed G.I. .45 ACP. But it needs both a big bullet and a big charge to be “honest.”

Various observers have reported that a full jacket may show a slightly higher A.C. on the pendulum than soft lead—say 7%. My own experiments are not conclusive, but it is still a good idea for contest officials to have some lead “factory equivalent” loads made up in advance to handle this point.

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Description:	List:	Dealer:	Special:
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(ejector and plunger tube installed for \$7.50 additional)			
Combat Commander Slides	50.50	40.40	37.88
Combat Commander Barrels	24.85	19.88	18.63
Commander Length Steel Frames	49.95	39.95	5/180.00
Gold Cup NM Slides	61.85	49.48	46.39
Gold Cup NM Barrel & Bushing Kit	39.95	31.16	29.96
1911A1 Stainless Steel Frames	66.00	49.95	5/230.00
Commander Length Stainless Frames	66.00	49.95	5/230.00
(stainless ejector and plunger tube installed for \$10.00 additional)			
1911A1 Stainless Steel Slides	78.00	58.95	5/260.00
(standard dove tail cut for rear sight; specify uncut if you want to install adj.)			
Elliason Rear Sight Assembly	21.55	17.24	13.20
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Birdseye Maple Stocks w/Medallion	15.95	12.76	7.50
Silva Adjustable Hammer	21.95	16.46	16.46
Crown Spring Kit (the 6 .45 springs)	4.00	3.25	3/15.00
Crown Extra Power Recoil Spring	4.00	3.00	3/14.00
Reduced Power Recoil Spring	4.00	3.00	3/14.00
Colt Embroidered Patch	1.75	1.40	2/2.50
Pistol Rug for the .45 Auto	5.00	3.95	2/7.00
“Know Your .45 Auto Pistol” Book	3.95	3.16	2/6.00



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While Peter, in his various manifestations, need not be exactly the same, he should be weighted so as to span the power range most likely to be encountered in evaluation. The protractor should record some small response to a .22 or a .25 ACP, yet should not go off the scale when hit with a .44 Magnum. Most of the time the instrument will be used to:

- (1) Rule squib .38's out of the contest.
- (2) Rule squib .45's into the 38 class.
- (3) Rule squib .357's into the 38 class.
- (4) Settle arguments about hot 9's and .380's.

Thus the usual range will lie between the A.C. of the .38 target wadcutter and that of the .45 Colt.

The designer suggests that Peter be used at a range of about six paces. At that distance precautions must be taken against lead splash. A black patch on a cardboard box may be used to establish the exact point of aim. If Peter is placed on the ground (rather than on a table or pedestal) the suggested firing position is prone. Non-center hits are disregarded, and three-shot averages are recommended if calls are close. At a major contest always be sure to have two meters available in case of breakage.

Devotees of practical pistol competition have long been haunted by the "Spectre of Two Point Five," as we watched so-called "combat" shooters enter competition with loads that would barely toss the bullet all the way to the paper. It may be advanced that such loads (i.e., 2.5 of Bullseye with a 148 WC) do measure marksmanship, but they certainly do not serve as a test of practical ability. That is why practical competitors are now tending to avoid calling their sport "combat" shooting. The "Practical Pistol Course" which is currently used in police "combat" competition, was indeed first conceived to be *practical*, and it was more practical than, say, the National Match Course. But squibbing (among several other things) has pretty well voided this original concept, and now the P.P.C. has been described to me as "simple target shooting conducted in a quaint and curious pattern." That's not to say it's easy. *Anything* a lot of dedicated athletes strive for among themselves is going to be *hard* to achieve, from aerobatics to tiddlywinks. But squib loads invalidate practical pistolcraft, and Peter the Power Meter neatly eliminates squibbing.

Everybody should have one!

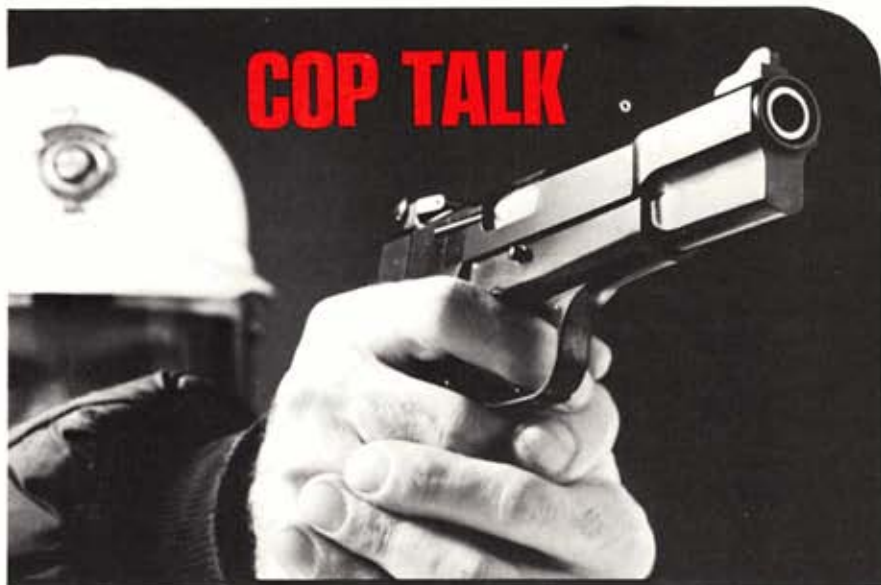


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GETTING COPS TO SHOOT

By MASSAD F. AYOUB

Gun buffs and policemen alike bemoan the fact that the average American cop is a lousy pistol shot. Fortunately, the average American crook is even a sloppier marksman, which is the main reason cops-and-robbers shootouts produce more dead robbers than dead cops. But the roster of dead cops is still too long.

The practiced civilian handgun buff can usually outshoot the typical lawman. Speaking as a police officer, I'll admit that freely. The average policeman will admit it, too, because he could care less about mastering his sidearm. I'll always remem-

examine some ways that a smart police weapons instructor, backed up by an understanding and sympathetic (if penniless) chief of police, can entice his men to develop combat shooting skills on their own.

SHOOTING MEDALS. There is a trend among state police and highway patrol agencies to require each Trooper or Patrolman to wear a shooter's badge over his right breast pocket. A man who could care less whether he's listed as a Marksman (lowest) or Master (highest) in the personnel file, takes the matter a little more seriously when everyone who looks

The average police officer would rather have a deluxe Parker pen than a custom Smith & Wesson

ber the advice Lt. Frank McGee gave around the time I was getting seriously involved in teaching police combat. Frank, who heads weapons training for NYCPD and has probably instructed more cops in guns than any man alive, told me flatly: "The average police officer would rather have a deluxe Parker pen than a custom Smith & Wesson."

He's right. The lousy scores of most cops on the pistol range are due to two factors: police departments can't afford really intensive training programs, and in the absence of that, most lawmen are disciplined to go out and learn these life saving skills on their own time with their own money.

Changing the police training priorities and budgets are beyond the scope of this article. They'd be beyond the scope of a good sized book, for that matter. Let's

at him can see how he rates.

TROPHY PROGRAMS. Savvy departments like Illinois State Police have special awards for top shooters and—especially important—for *most improved* shooters at each qualification shoot. Now, whether or not a man is into the sporting or competitive aspects of shooting, he knows damn well that a trophy on his mantelpiece is a nice thing to have.

You've got to have that "most improved" award, because if it's just a top shooter thing, it'll shake down to one or two or three cops in the department or precinct or district who are really good and trade it off with each other every month, and the *average* cop, the one you're trying to get to with this program, will soon give up hope of ever winning it. In my department, the self-funded pistol team donates a high shooter trophy and a

There's a more effective fear to appeal to. Every cop knows how easy it is to get sued civilly, or charged criminally, for excessive use of force. It's something they worry about, something they want to protect themselves against.

A while back, I worked with a certain police department and a certain chief of police, both of who'll remain nameless. I was called in because the department's firearms instructor knew damn well that his guys couldn't shoot, and he was getting a little concerned about it. He didn't have a required qualification in his department, and nobody showed up for the voluntary qualification shoots he put on. The chief agreed to provide ammo, but stated flatly that he couldn't afford to pay the men to come out and shoot, and didn't feel he could demand them to show up when they weren't being paid to.

I explained to the chief that if one of his guys ever screwed up and shot the wrong person, the chief and the department would be legally liable for their failure to train each officer in the skills of marksmanship and the ramifications of lethal force. The few hundred dollars a year it would cost to put a good training program into effect in his small department, I explained, was a drop in the bucket compared to the six or seven figure damage suit he could expect to lose if, God forbid, one of his guys put a bullet where it didn't belong because he hadn't been trained to know any better. I clinched the argument by showing him a copy of the paper assembled by the Massachusetts State Police, which explains in detail why the "Doctrine of Sovereign Immunity" no longer protects police departments from suits when one of their men misapplies the deadly force of his service gun.


He was convinced. He went to the Po-most improved shooter trophy at each qualification, and we team members disqualify ourselves from receiving either. It's the guys who aren't into shooting on their own who now have the incentive of competing for the trophy, and they know they aren't shooting against "professional marksmen".

SCARE TACTICS. Paranoia is the occupational hazard of law enforcement, abetted by the fact that it's one field of endeavor where a lot of people who meet on the job really are "out to get you," in the reallest possible sense. But it doesn't seem to work when you appeal to their survival instincts. You, the instructor, tell them, "Hey, if you don't learn how to handle that piece you carry, you're gonna get wasted some night." And the patrolman replies, "Ah, that'll never happen to me." Small wonder: the constant danger of law enforcement work has the insidious effect of insulating a man *against* the fear of danger: he forces it to the back of his mind, because he knows that if he dwelt on the subject, he'd become trigger happy or obsessed with violence.

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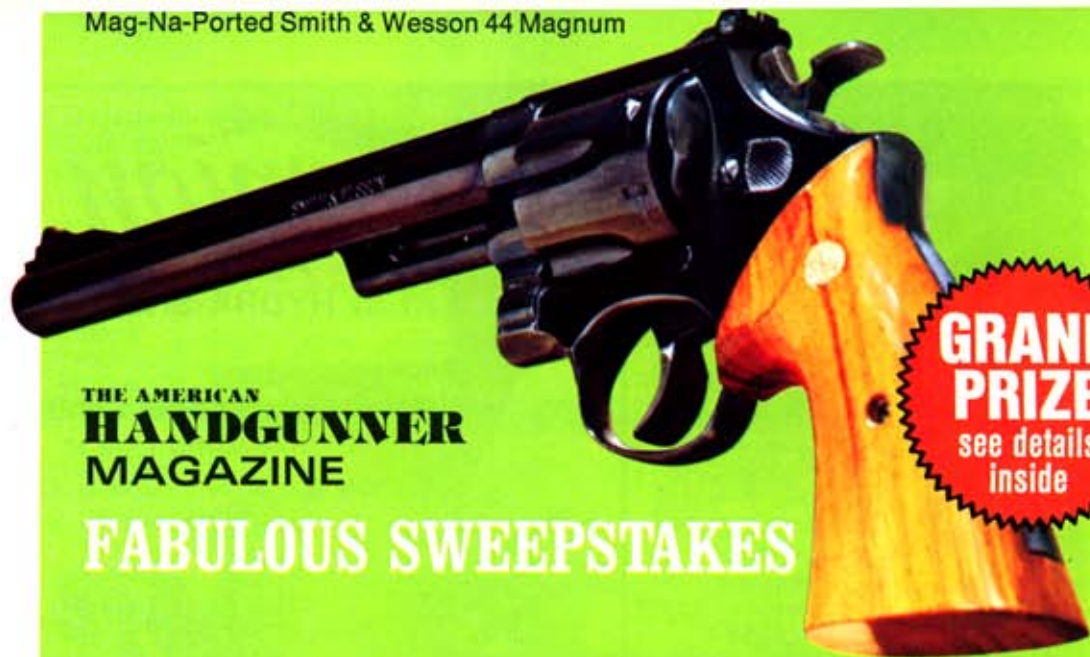
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see details
inside

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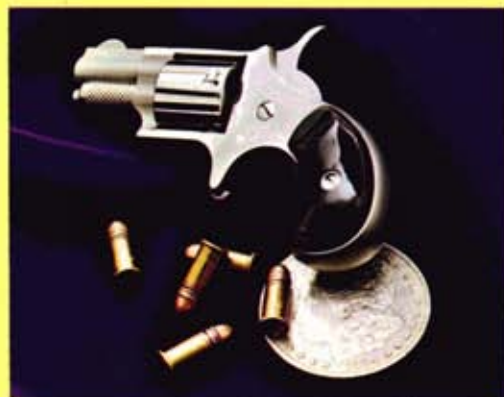
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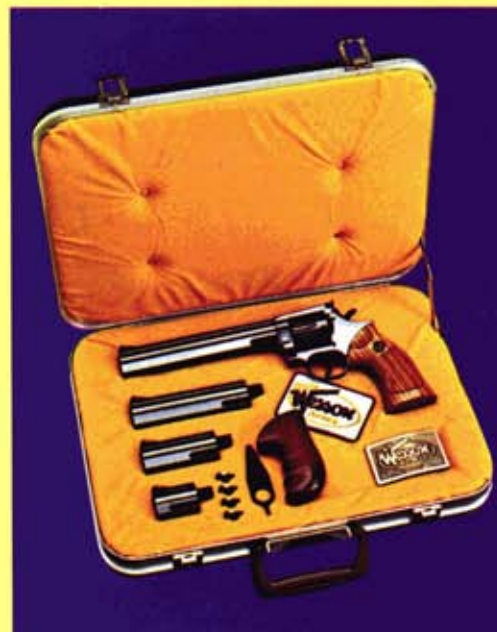
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An exact, non-firing replica of the gun carried by Andrew Jackson in the Battle of New Orleans. A gift of Replica Models, Inc., 800 Slaters Lane, Alexandria, VA 22314.



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This fine double action .380 is presented in solid stainless steel. Safety is the reliable rolling block. Given by Sterling Arms, 4436 Prospect, Gasport, NY 14067.



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.380 with a .22LR conversion kit has a double action trigger and multiple safety features. It combines high firing accuracy with rugged dependability to offer shooters versatility and safety. From Heckler & Koch, Inc., Suite 218, 933 N. Kenmore St., Arlington VA 22201.

lice Commission with a request for additional funds to pay his men to come out and qualify. He was turned down. He then asked the Commissioners if they would give him the authority to require the men to shoot and qualify on their own time. "No way," replied the board of Commissioners, civilians all. "You have no right to make your men perform police related tasks without paying them the money

we're not going to give you to pay them." The danger of the lawsuits was lost on them: after all, it had never happened before in this community, had it?

But the chief, by now, knew he had to cover his own butt if one of his guys fouled up and brought a lawsuit down on everybody's head. He issued a memo to each of his men, stating that firearms training with free ammo and professional

instructors was available if they wanted it.

Because none of them were particularly interested in shooting, only a couple signed up.

In desperation, I counselled the firearms instructor who had brought me into the situation to go to one of the Police Association meetings and explain the situation to the patrolmen. The situation was now this: "If one of you puts a bullet in the wrong place, there's going to be a lawsuit. Normally, you'd be legally invulnerable to civil damage suits, since the fact that you hadn't been trained would place the onus of guilt on the department. However, what has happened now is that the chief has offered you the chance to learn, and there's no statute in this state that requires him to pay you to learn to shoot.

"What this means, guys, is that if somebody out there says you did something wrong, the chief can say, 'It's not my fault he screwed up. I gave him the chance to learn how to use his gun properly and he didn't take it.' That leaves you, personally, vulnerable to charges and suits that can destroy your reputation and wipe you out financially.

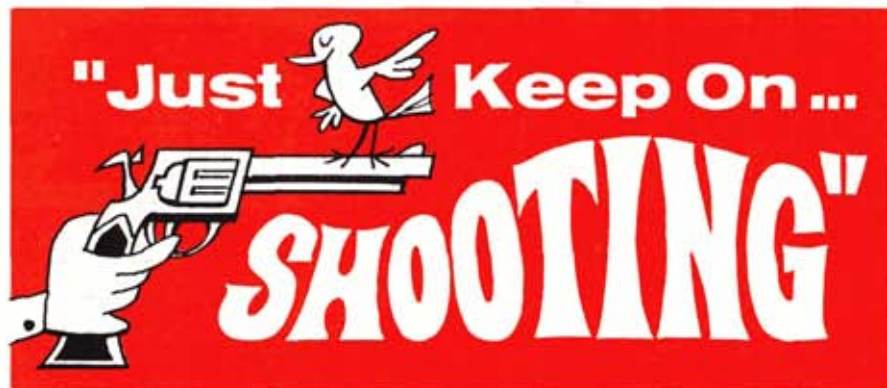
"The volunteer program is still open, and chief will still cough up the ammo, and gentlemen, if you don't take that course, you're leaving yourselves wide open."

The guys thought about it. Soon, the qualification program began filling up. Today, those cops may not worry the Secret Service Pistol Team, but they're a lot better shots than they were, and they've got some good background in firefight strategy and the legalities of lethal force, and they're much better off than they were. Some of them are even getting into shooting seriously.

I didn't like doing it that way. But it had to be done somehow.

GUN CARRYING PRIVILEGES. Jan Stevenson once said that any man who could shoot Expert with the gun of his choice should be allowed to carry it on duty. This type of policy would be an enormous incentive to the rank and file cops in improving their marksmanship skills. Even those officers who aren't into guns know damn well that their .38 revolvers aren't the best tools to help them survive gunfights. If you tell them, "OK, show us that you can shoot good and we'll let you carry a .357 Magnum or a .45 auto or a 14-shot 9 mm that you will feel more secure with," that's a damn good reason to go down to the range and shoot and shoot and shoot, even on their own time, until they become relatively proficient.

You're also getting into a status thing. Telling the men, "A good shot can carry the gun of his choice," is like telling them, "Only the guys good enough to qualify for the Tactical Squad can wear leather jackets on duty." Like the leather jacket, the .45 auto becomes an immediately visible status symbol, something that tells everyone who looks at that cop, "This



Dear J. J.

I was up at Perry last week, you shoulda come this year; the volunteers running it better than the military ever did.

Al Hedden, he's Border Patrol you remember, he had the lead in the .22 aggregate comin up to the last 30 shots. I've seen pistol shooters miss relays by sleeping through them, forgetting to look at those little tickets they give em (you were there the year Jim Camp's sittin back of the firing line saying, "Look at that blank space on Target 10, some dumb so and so missed his relay—damn, that's my target number, that's MY RELAY!" Jim would've been national champ two years earlier, if he hadn't always missed a relay sometime).

But Al tried to miss shooting a brand new way. He'd made himself a new pistol box, covered it with some of that pretty hand carved Texas leather, put four strong hinges on the lid, and a good lock. He remembered that outsider who came to the Mid-Winters last year in Tampa and started helping himself to a few things from boxes sitting back of the line. Al wasn't gonna take any chances at Perry, he locked that box up tight.

Only he forgot and gave his car keys, along with the key to his box, to Slim Jenkins, one of his teammates, to go back to Port Clinton and pick up some more of them liquid groceries, you know how them Border Patrol boys love to "eat" when the shootin's over.

Anyway, here's Al sittin on his gun box, his relay's next, and now it hits him—a locked box and no key. Everybody started helping him go through his pockets, no key. The range officer puts out first call for the relay, Al starts beggin a screwdriver that'd fit those hinge screws, he's cussing and straining, he'd screwed them in to stay.

Finally, he had to set up on the line, you know NRA's tough about presentin yourself within 3 minutes, or you don't shoot. Al was trying to get those 15 screws out and one of his buddies offered to kick it open for him, but Al had worked too hard on that new box, even for the National .22 Championship.

"Commence firing," and Al had four screws to go. If it hadn't been the slow fire match, he'd never made it. Took him another 5 minutes and he fired his 10 shots in about 3 minutes, and got a 97. Course he cleaned timed and rapid like always, and the aggregate was his. First .22 champ to ever walk off the line with his pistol box in 2 pieces.

Nat

man is special: he is a proven and accomplished professional!" Cops respond to that kind of thing.

Many departments would naysay this approach for several reasons. One is uniformity: every member of the force should be identically dressed, many police administrators feel.

What a crock. OK, they should all have the same color coordinations in their uniform so you can identify them as being from the same department. But the only time identical dressing counts for anything is at parades, and your average cop would rather stay home and watch a parade on TV than march in it. So long as you can tell that two or three officers are from the same department, that's all the uniformity you really need on the street.

Some departments take the uniformity thing to ridiculous extremes. The Iowa State Patrol requires all troopers to carry their revolvers in cross draw flap holsters on the left hip: even left handed officers! One southpaw Iowa trooper told me, "Trying to get that gun out of the holster is a joke. I know damn well that in a fast situation, I'd probably drop the damn thing by the time I got through all the gyrations that are necessary to get it out of the leather and into shooting position!" I know another PD where the men are forbidden to change the small factory grips on their S&W model 10s; they can't even install grip adapters. The result is a hundred some cops who can't shoot as well as they could. But their guns all look alike in the holsters. Good God.

If you want uniformity, demand that every officer stand exactly six feet one and weigh exactly two hundred pounds. That's not only laughable, but impractical and unconstitutional. You could say the same about the rules requiring officers to carry identical guns and holsters. If you want a nice looking parade, call the National Guard or the Cub Scouts or the drum and bugle corps. If you want an effective police force, give the men a little latitude in selecting and carrying equipment that they're confident in and will do their best job with.

Some will say that it's essential for police to carry identical guns because they may have to exchange ammunition in a firefight. I'm still waiting for somebody to show me a situation in which an American policeman has ever had to swap ammo with a buddy to survive a shootout.

Giving the man his choice of gun and holster if he can shoot Master gives him a terrific incentive to learn to shoot well and safely, and increases that man's effectiveness as a police officer. Quite apart from the improvement in his firepower, he's now carrying something on his hip that marks him as being better than the rank and file, and that's something he carries proudly and wants to live up to. By enhancing his image of himself as a professional, you're making him a better cop in every way, not just a better shot.

It'd be nice if every department could do like LAPD, and give extra money every month to officers who score over a certain level in handgun qualification. But money is the cruncher that keeps most police departments from putting together really effective police training programs with firearms or other tools of the trade.

The frustrated police weapons instructor is going to have to circumvent department budgets and go for approaches that reach into the guts of the cops themselves and make them want to learn and sharpen the life-saving skills of combat shooting. If he can't use money as a lever, he can use the "carrots" we've outlined above: status

symbols, an increased sense of personal security, and a hedge against crippling lawsuits.

Maybe someday every police department will qualify once a month over a realistic course with a highly effective police handgun, and will pay bonuses to men who can demonstrate that they're more skillful in this area of their profession than are their brother officers. But until then, the instructor is going to have to entice, cajole, or blackmail his men into learning on their own how to best take care of themselves and the citizens they're paid to protect.



WORLD PRACTICAL PISTOL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Salisbury, Rhodesia, August 31, 1977: The results of the World Championships was announced, and the U.S. Team, though beaten by the Rhodesians by 1/2 of 1%, showed that they came well prepared. The results of the individual scoring ran:

1. David Westerhout, Rhodesia
 2. Peter Maunder, Rhodesia
 3. Raul Walters, U.S.A.
 4. Vidar Nakling, Norway
 5. Thomas Campbell, U.S.A.
- A week before the World Cham-

pionships, the South African Nationals were held, and U.S. Team members swept the first four places in this order: Ray Chapman (Sponsored at the matches by The American Handgunner), Raul Walters, Ken Hackathorn and Thomas Campbell.

Watch for the March/April issue of The American Handgunner for full details of the Matches and some interesting comments from Jeff Cooper and Ray Chapman who were on the scene.

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HANDGUN Handloading

PUTTING A CRIMP IN YOUR CASE

By DAN COTTERMAN

SEVERAL factors affect the consistency of performance we seek in handloaded ammunition for pistols and revolvers. In the case of revolvers there are minor variations in chamber and bore dimensions from one gun to another and, more specifically, in chamber-to-chamber dimensional differences within the cylinder of any revolver, no matter how precisely it is made. It also is a fact that the amount of flash gap will differ, not only from one revolver to another, but on the same gun when the measurement is taken with the cylinder in different positions of rotation. It is fortunate that these

variations, if minor, do not significantly influence shot-to-shot pressures and especially fortunate in view of the fact that their existence is generally beyond our control.

We can, however, exercise control when it comes to the amount of crimp used in the fixing of bullets, especially in revolver loads. Here the load-to-load uniformity of crimp is as important as is uniformity of charge weight, bullet weight and ignition intensity.

Careful adjustment of the crimping die is not always good enough because case length, uniformity of trim and case wall

thickness will act individually or in complement to cause variations in the amount of crimp that results when a bullet is seated.

Considering the foregoing, it is important, first of all, to separate cases to be reloaded according to their age (with a thought to the number of times they've been fired), their brand and, if possible, according to manufacturer's lot number. The sorting out will augment or supplant actual measurement of each case wall, the thickness of which will directly effect crimping pressure.

While considering details, we will note the fact that differences in rim thickness also will have a direct effect on crimping, since the case with the thicker rim will be moved further into the die as the shellholder ram reaches the limit of its inward stroke.

Among the several picayunes of uniform crimping is the significance of the amount of chamfering that is performed on the outside of the case mouth. While a relatively fair amount of brass may be cut away from the inside as an aid to better bullet seating, the outside cut should be no more than is absolutely necessary to remove burrs, minor irregularities or the sharp edge that may remain after the trim cut is taken. A case mouth with too much outside chamfer will encounter the crimping cone in the die later (in the stroke of the ram) than will the case whose mouth bears little or no outside chamfer. The difference will be minor, but should be noted, nonetheless.

Consider the cumulative effect of, say, four or five factors that will act to cause a greater amount of crimp to be set. Or, for that matter, a lesser amount. A measurable change in pressure will result. Such a change, though not necessarily dangerous, will adversely affect the uniform performance and accuracy of handloads, irrespective of how much attention has been devoted to precision in other aspects of the process.

Next to die adjustment the most important necessity in crimping uniformity is consistency of case length. Of equal importance is the need to have the case mouth cut parallel to the surface of the head. The latter will be achieved during trimming if the edge of the cutter on the trimming tool is parallel with the case head, a function that will be achieved automatically if the tool has been correctly aligned at the factory, the case itself is true in its dimensional relationship and, of course, if you exercise care in performing the trim operation.

I have emphasized *consistency* of case length because, in using either a taper crimp for autoloaders or a roll crimp for revolvers, the case-to-case consistency of length is considerably more important than compliance with factory specifications with regard to maximum or minimum lengths. There is, of course, a more critical need for compliance with autos

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The situation with rimmed revolver cases is not nearly as demanding. The rimmed case, which has its headspace determined at the forward surface of the rim—instead of at the point at which the mouth abuts a step within the chamber, as



is the case with rimless rounds for auto-loaders—is somewhat less critical in the matter of length. Caution should be used, however, lest rimmed cases be shortened so much that they no longer have sufficient length to meet the crimping cone in the die.

Once consistency of length is achieved, the next most important thing to consider is the amount of crimp necessary in each

loading situation. Generally speaking, there is a direct relationship between the bite that is needed to hold the bullet and the magnitude of the propellant charge: heavy load, heavy crimp; light load, light crimp. The equation is, however, necessarily modified by the type of bullet being loaded. A cast bullet, for example, especially if cast soft, will be subject to deformation through unnecessarily heavy crimping while a jacketed bullet will be less influenced.

A further relationship exists in the matter of the combustion rate of the propellant being loaded. Crimp pressure, along with seating depth, bullet weight and intensity of ignition, has a definite influence in the control of combustion efficiency, especially in situations involving relatively slow-burning propellants. The crimp, as a retarding factor, is, however, significant in any combustion situation where expanding powder gases are momentarily confined.

At times it would seem that precision handloading requires an inordinate devotion to minor points of exactness. However, as handloaders, we seek something better than can be dispensed over the counter. In such a situation we should consider attention to the details of perfection part of what makes handloading worthwhile.



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Universal Sporting Goods, Inc., announces they have reached an amicable settlement of their pending patent and trademark litigation with Mag-Na-Port Arms, Inc., by entering into a trademark license and a consent decree acknowledging the validity of Mag-Na-Port's patent and trademark rights in the field of venting firearm gun barrels. Both parties have stated that they hope to cooperate in the future in the mutual promotion of their respective products and services.



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Collector's Treasure



TRIPLE LOCK

By GORDON R. STARK

AT FIRST GLANCE, the big S&W revolver appears to be a product of the 1930's. More specifically, it looks similar to the now retired 38-44, that marvelous "N" frame .38 Special that preceded the Model 27 .357 Magnum. Upon closer inspection, the viewer finds a somewhat novel locking lug on the cylinder crane which latches firmly to the frame at a point just below the extractor rod. Something new perhaps? Hardly.

From the standpoint of sheer beauty in workmanship and cylinder lockup, the gun is quite possibly the finest Smith & Wesson ever made, the "New Century." Also referred to officially as the "1st Model Hand Ejector" and affectionately referred to as the "Triple Lock," this mas-

terpiece of craftsmanship was a product made in limited number during a brief period spanning 1908 through 1915.

The term, "1st Model Hand Ejector" is a bit puzzling inasmuch as S&W assigned that title to the little swing out cylinder .32 introduced in 1896. The big Triple Lock not only was built on the "N" frame but carried the classy looking extractor rod housing as well. Thus, the confusion. Quite possibly, the Smith people felt that departure from their well established break-tops was reason enough to maintain the title "1st Model" for awhile.

To the best of my knowledge, the Triple Lock was the first S&W produced on the now very familiar "N" frame. Complete with extractor rod shroud, this large re-

volver set a style trend differing very little from today's offerings. Really, addition of modern accessories to the Triple Lock would render a profile barely distinguishable from the large frame Smiths of current manufacture. All of which leads us to the next puzzling item.

Since the small frame swing-out cylinder Smiths were void of extractor rod housings, what would prompt the firm to literally go overboard on its large frame 1st Models? Could it be that the engineering department felt the shroud would offer eye appeal? (Indeed it does.) After all, the .44 American Model, even though a breakup, did come with a somewhat diminished shroud and the oft maligned Merwin & Hulbert revolvers of the late 19th century very definitely had beautifully proportioned housings gracing their .32, .38 and .44 barrels. So, while the concept was not exactly new, that Smith would have employed the shrouds on their 1st Model "N" frames gives us something to think about. To this writer, it appears the 1st and 2nd Models got reversed!

Why all the fuss about the shroud? Simply because some like it while others shun it. Aside from its functional aspect, i.e., protection of the rod, the housing adds a most pleasing esthetic touch. If you doubt this for one moment, I invite you to look at the recent flood of Smith competitors that have added extractor rod housings to their lines.

Meanwhile, back to 1914. Having entered World War I nearly 3 years before we did, the British were most anxious for Smith & Wesson to fill an order of "N" framed models to handle their .455 Mark II, the same cartridge that found its way in to 300,000 Webleys. Apparently the British ordnance was aware of the forthcoming 2nd Model Hand Ejector as that is what they really wanted. However, they did allow S&W to send 5,000 Triple Locks and fill the balance of the order with 2nd Models.



With cylinder open, the third lock—plunger on bottom of ejector rod shroud—is readily apparent. Note British proofs at top of frame.

Thanks to Smith's historian, Mr. R. G. Jinks, we are in an excellent position to recap the pieces manufactured for England. Of the 74,555 revolvers produced, the first 5,000 were Triple Locks and the remaining 69,755 were 2nd Models. At least, that's the way the transaction is recorded. But, there are always those little exceptions and this is but part of the joy of collecting.

The serial number of my prized piece is #5004. According to Mr. Jinks, there was undoubtedly a slight overlap in the contract and my Triple Lock was one of them. As you can well imagine, I'm chomping at the bit wondering how far the overlap extended or if indeed, I may very well have the last of the British Triple Locks, insofar as serial numbers is concerned. I am reasonably sure our good editor would welcome letters from readers helping to establish the top end of the sequence.

Our English cousins expressed dissatisfaction over the Triple Lock because it "weighed too much." Weighed too much? Really! By today's standards, the piece literally floats out of your hand but then, it must be realized, there were no 45-50 ounce "N" frames extant 60 plus years ago. The extra 2 ounces or so that make up the weight of the shroud may very well

indeed have caused an appreciable difference to the heft and feel between 1st and 2nd Models. Be that as it may, the percentage of British ordered Triple Locks from the total order is small enough to make said items dandy for the collector, especially, those that have not been butchered by "alterations."

Actually, *any* Triple Lock in original condition is ideally suited for collectors. A mere 20,000 or so were made, most of which were chambered for the super desirable .44 Special but a few did come off the line in .44-.40 and .45 Long Colt. It stands to reason that if you can grab one of the "5,000" British or 15,000 commercial, you'll have yourself quite a piece.

Unlike many military contract pieces, the British weapons were so similar to the commercials as to require very close inspection. The former came from the factory with the same precision fit, mirror polish blue and checkered grip panels that characterized the commercials. The British contract pieces, of course, do bear distinctive proofs on the left side of the frame and, if in original condition throughout, will chamber only the .455 Mark II cartridges.

The .455 cartridge in factory loaded form sends a ponderous 265 grain slug out at the breath taking speed of 600 fps. Yet, even today, there are many who would readily stake their lives on it as a stopper. Had the British reduced the weight of the bullet and jazzed up the ve-

(Continued on page 65)

Meticulous fit of the sideplate to frame makes the Triple Lock a model of how it should be done.

Handgunning In Australia

Despite Restrictive Legislation, "Down Under" Handgunning is Booming!

UNLIKE the U.S.A., the States in Australia have fairly uniform handgun laws, with the Federal Government taking no part in the administration of these laws except in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

The state laws mentioned above are uniform—uniformly difficult, that is—and sporting handgunning as practiced in America bears little resemblance to that in this part of the world.

The private use of handguns has been very strictly controlled since the 1920's and until 1956, private ownership of handguns for sport was simply out of the question. Any researcher who wishes to get some statistics together to oppose restrictive gun laws, would find a fertile area for research in Australia. The tight restrictions on pistols have been in force for fifty years, yet the majority of armed crime is committed with unlicensed handguns, rather than with rifles or shotguns which are readily available without restriction.

Following appeals from various organizations at the time of the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne, the pistol licensing laws were changed to permit the ownership of pistols for target shooting. At that time there were three I.S.U. (International Shooting Union) matches—Free Pistol, Rapid Fire and Center Fire—and on this basis a pistol shooter was allowed to own three target pistols. This has since been expanded as the I.S.U. matches have been expanded to include Standard Pistol, Ladies Match, Air Pistol and recently Black Powder matches. This, in theory, allows women shooters to own seven pistols and men shooters only six—taking women's liberation too far.

There are some variations from state to state, but the regulations used by New South Wales, the most populous State

with most of the nation's pistol shooters, are representative of the problems faced by Australian handgunners generally.

There are two classes of licenses available to handgunners. The Class 5 license, or 'open' license, allows the licensee to carry the pistol on his person, anywhere in the state. These licenses are only issued to individuals involved in handling large sums of money, and to farmers and graziers.

In years gone by, taxi drivers, doctors and businessmen could get one of these licenses without great difficulty. Since 1975, many such licenses have been revoked and some political problems resulted when the Firearms Registry—administered by the New South Wales Police—attempted to prevent re-issue of licenses to farmers and graziers. Their powerful organization soon put a stop to that.

Handgun hunting is not a valid reason

to obtain such a license. Only rare individuals who have obtained a personal handgun for other business and have a coincidental interest in hunting are able to enjoy the sport. There are no loopholes in the system.

Other recipients of Class 5 licenses are bank officers, security officers and police. The licenses are issued to the organization and it then issues its pistols accordingly. Even Police are not permitted to use these weapons off duty, even for target shooting, without special permission. Hardly a system conducive to encouraging proficiency with their handguns.

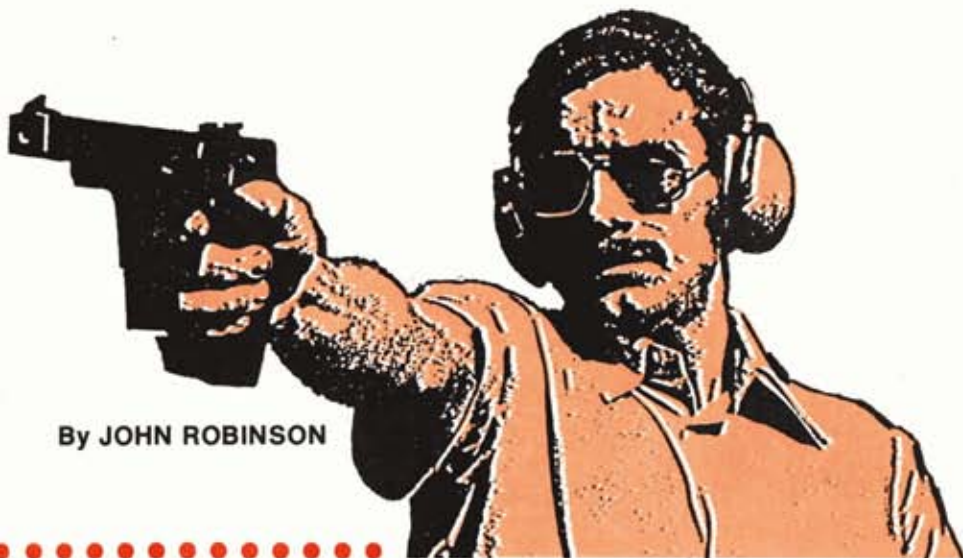
Target pistol shooters are issued only a Class 5A license and American readers should be interested in what can happen when bureaucracy gets the upper hand. Take a deep breath:

The aspiring handgunner must first join a registered pistol club. Joining fees average about \$20, with annual fees about \$40. A probationary period of up to 3 months is mandatory before full membership is granted.

Once the shooter has been admitted to



The Walther GSP chambered for the .32 S&W Long is gaining in Aussie favor.



By JOHN ROBINSON

the club, he is eligible to apply for a license. Each license is specific to a particular pistol and choice of pistol must be made in advance. Now comes the paperwork.

A form must be obtained from the club secretary stating that the applicant is a bona-fide club member. Another form must be then obtained from the dealer, giving details of the pistol, serial number and dealer's license number. These two forms are then taken to the police station nearest to the shooters home. The applicant then fills out a pistol license application form and these three forms, plus a character reference from the Officer-in-Charge of the station, are forwarded to the Central Firearms Registry in Sydney. A new applicant may wait up to 4 weeks while this paperwork is processed and information checked.

The license is eventually posted to the applicant, but because it lacks a cash regis-

ter imprint (for a dollar) the dollar must be enclosed and the license posted back to the Firearms Registry. It's not over yet!

The endorsed license is then sent back to the local police station who advise the licensee of its arrival. He picks the license up from there, and hotfoots it to the dealer, picks up the pistol, and brings the pistol and license back to the police station where serial number is checked against that on the license. The police issue an inspection certificate which is sent to Sydney. That is it!

The reason behind the above system will escape most logical readers, as it is unnecessarily unwieldy.

The license remains in force for 1 year, and a renewal is issued prior to the due date, the only condition being that the pistol is inspected by the local police and an

inspection certificate is issued provided club status is verified.

The target license is conditional on a number of regulations. These are:

Regular attendance at club shoots—normally twelve attendances per year.

The pistol must only be used on a licensed pistol range and can only be transported from the shooter's home to such a range.

Believe it or not, thousands of shooters are prepared to go through this awful procedure. Pistol shooting is one of the fastest growing sports, and very few areas are far away from a pistol club.

International Shooting Union (I.S.U.) matches are the dominant competitive force in the Australian pistol shooting program. European pistols dominate these competitions, as they do on an international level, and the U.S. made Hi-Standards, Smith and Wesson's and Colts are not widely used except in the case of Center Fire, where S&W K-38's are very popular.

1976 saw the introduction of two new matches to this lineup, the Service Pistol Match based on the 90 shot U.S. combat course and the Black Powder Match, the rules for which have not yet been officially formulated at the time of writing. National Championships will be shot in these two matches for the first time in 1977.

Taking each match in turn, and in order of seniority, Free Pistol heads the list, and the pistols used are highly specialized and expensive, and unsuited for use in any other matches.

The most popular Free Pistol observed by the writer at the 1977 National Cham-

The Adelaide Pistol club, shown below, was the sight of the 1976 Australian National Pistol Championships, and boasts excellent facilities.





The Russian MT2 is highly regarded among Australian Free Pistol competitive shooters.



The expensive Hammerli 150 is hampered only by its cost in finding Australian acceptance.



The Hammerli 208 is the top gun among the Aussie Standard Pistol and Ladies' shooters.

pionships is the Russian TOZ35, an extremely accurate and reliable gun which currently holds both Australian and World Records.

At \$400, they cost about half as much as the Swiss Hammerli 150, which they equal in performance. The older Russian MKU1 is still used in fair numbers. The MKU1 has a reputation for having a less robust set trigger than the TOZ35.

A popular pistol for club shooters is the Brno Drulov, made in Czechoslovakia. It lacks the refinements of its more expensive relatives, but has a simple set trigger system and good accuracy.

The Rapid Fire match once again uses very specialized pistols, based on the low velocity .22 Short cartridge. Walther, Hammerli, Unique and I.G.I. Domino

have developed very competitive pistols that will produce world class performance out of the box. All have their barrels drilled through the top, venting propellant gas upward to minimize recoil movement. Orthopedic grips and fully adjustable trigger systems are standard. Russian pistols are popular with a few top Australian shooters. These are Margolin Rapid Fire Pistols, not good performers in standard trim, but extensively modified by their owners to come up to the level of the Western European pistols.

Ammunition used in these pistols includes special Rapidfire ammo made by Winchester's Australian plant, although many shooters consider this ammo too 'hard' and prefer the lower velocity Eley or RWS, each of which the writer has

chronographed at 50 feet per second below the 800 ft/second level of the Winchester rounds.

The Center Fire match is the most popular event on the shooting program. The .38 Special is used by 90% of center fire shooters and S&W K-38s predominate.

S&W's Model 19's, Colt Troopers, Pythons and a few N frame S&W's make up the balance of the revolver ranks.

Surprisingly, S&W Model 52 auto's have never gained much of a following, although the much more expensive SIG-Hammerli 240 is seen in increasing numbers in spite of its \$800 price tag. The .32 caliber has become increasingly used by top shooters in the last few years, and pistols in this caliber have accounted for the major placings at the National Championships for the past three years.

The Russian .32 TOZ 36 revolver, based on the Nagant system, has a cylinder which moves forward when the pistol is cocked. The bullets are seated below the neck of the case, and the case neck moves into the barrel, sealing the joint and aligning each chamber perfectly. These weapons are imported erratically from the U.S.S.R. and are not readily available. Their reputation is very high and they helped put the .32 on the map in this country.

The new Walther .32 S&W Long auto, based on the OSP/GSP rimfire target pistols has rapidly hit the top, winning the World Centerfire Championships in Berne in 1974 in its first major competitive outing. Hammerli has recently introduced a .32 conversion unit for their 240P auto-loader, recognizing the competitive edge of the smaller caliber over the .38.



Still the top-dog with the Center Fire and Combat pistol competitors is the Smith K-38.



Many women participate in the I.S.U. sanctioned matches. These shooters from the Illawarra Pistol Club shoot the Duelling series of a match.

Many club shooters have tried desperately to obtain K-32's and this year (1977) has seen one dealer importing S&W .32 barrels and cylinders to convert existing K-38's, such is the interest in the caliber. The revolvers are much less expensive than the \$400 Walther.

The Standard Pistol Match—almost identical to the N.R.A. course except for its smaller targets—uses similar pistols. Hammerli 208's, Walther GSP's, Domino 602's are the most competitive pistols in this category, followed by Unique DES69's, S&W41's, High Standards and Browning Match 150's which have a good following at club level. Russian Margolins, Rugers, Berettas are usually preferred by casual shooters.

Imperial Metal Industries (I.M.I.) make several types of pistol ammo in Australia, and produce a special very low velocity Long Rifle ammo for low recoil in this match. In the writer's 5½" barreled Domino 602, this ammo averages 830 feet per second compared to just 1000 feet per second with Winchester Leader and 930 feet per second with Eley Tenex.

AIR PISTOLS

Air pistols—considered as dangerous weapons—are subject to the same restrictions as those firing live ammunition. Never the less, this match is very popular, with the larger clubs building excellent indoor facilities to accommodate the match for both day and night shooting.

The German Feinwerkbau M65 is used by 80% of shooters at all levels. Hammerli C02 pistols and Walther LP's make up the balance, and in fact the Walther holds the present Australian record. Many women shooters cannot cock the pneumatic Walthers and this has not helped their acceptance, in spite of their otherwise excellent performance.

The Service Pistol match is still in its formative stages, and most shooters use their conventional centerfire weapons for this match. Those shooters specialize in combat shooting are going more for autoloaders, and S&W 52's and Hammerli 240's are making life difficult for the revolver shooters.

Competitive pistol shooting is very well organized at Club, State and National level, with National coaching programs available, and an active competition program, throughout the year.

This contrasts with those using handguns professionally, especially the police, who's handgun training is virtually nonexistent. In N.S.W., only rudimentary

training is given to law enforcement officers, and according to my contacts in the force, only 20 rounds practice per year for annual 'qualification' is required.

POLICE SITUATION

Each State has a single police force, whose members are shifted around the state according to seniority and local requirements, so every officer is governed by the same regulations and answer to the Police Commissioner in his State. The N.S.W. police have been changing their sidearms from a motley collection of revolvers and .32 autoloaders, to S&W M10 .38 Special revolvers. There are no inter-state service competitions, to the writer's knowledge, organized by the State Police forces, and no official encouragement to do so, so the standard of proficiency with the handgun, for the majority of police officers is low.

The private security services are more active in keeping their operatives trained in handgun use.

Such is the status of handgunning in Australia at the moment. Pressure is being applied for similar restrictions to rifles and shotguns, as are in force for pistol ownership, by anti-gun groups both in and out of politics in N.S.W. The crunch is expected to come in 1977. Shooters are actively trying to prevent such legislation seeing the light of day, but have very little political sway, so the situation is not good. We have no Second Amendment to fall back on—so we have to learn to like it.



The Russian TOZ 35 free pistol is highly regarded by the Australian pistol competitors.



The Italian Domino 602 Standard Pistol is one of the most advanced weapons of its type; highly thought of by the Australians.

TAKING "Tatonka" WITH A HANDGUN

By J. D. JONES

Private individuals were mostly responsible for preserving the remaining buffalo. A few National and State Parks obtained pairs from private sources and began to develop their own herds. Parks such as Custer and Wind Cave in South Dakota; Yellowstone and a few Indian Reservations began providing surplus animals to others in the 20s and 30s. By the 50s and 60s small private herds had sprung into existence nationwide. At present, it's estimated 50-60,000 buffalo exist in the U.S. and Canada.

Buffalo are the largest game animals of North America. A mature cow will weigh 1,000 pounds. Bulls will average 1,500 pounds and many will weigh over a ton. They are relatively docile by nature, although quite unpredictable. It's generally wisest to always give a buffalo plenty of room. The size of buffalo will vary according to his diet. Custer State Park, Hermo-

sa, South Dakota is in the heart of buffalo country and furnishes a habitat as natural as can be found for them. As in almost any Park situation, the large natural predators such as mountain lions, wolves and grizzly are no longer included in the eco-system. They are of course important, but people on the perimeters of parks will simply not tolerate them. Their effectiveness in providing a balance of nature with animals as large as buffalo are also open to question. Wildlife numbers and their effects on range conditions must be carefully monitored. The forage requirements of large numbers of buffalo are staggering.

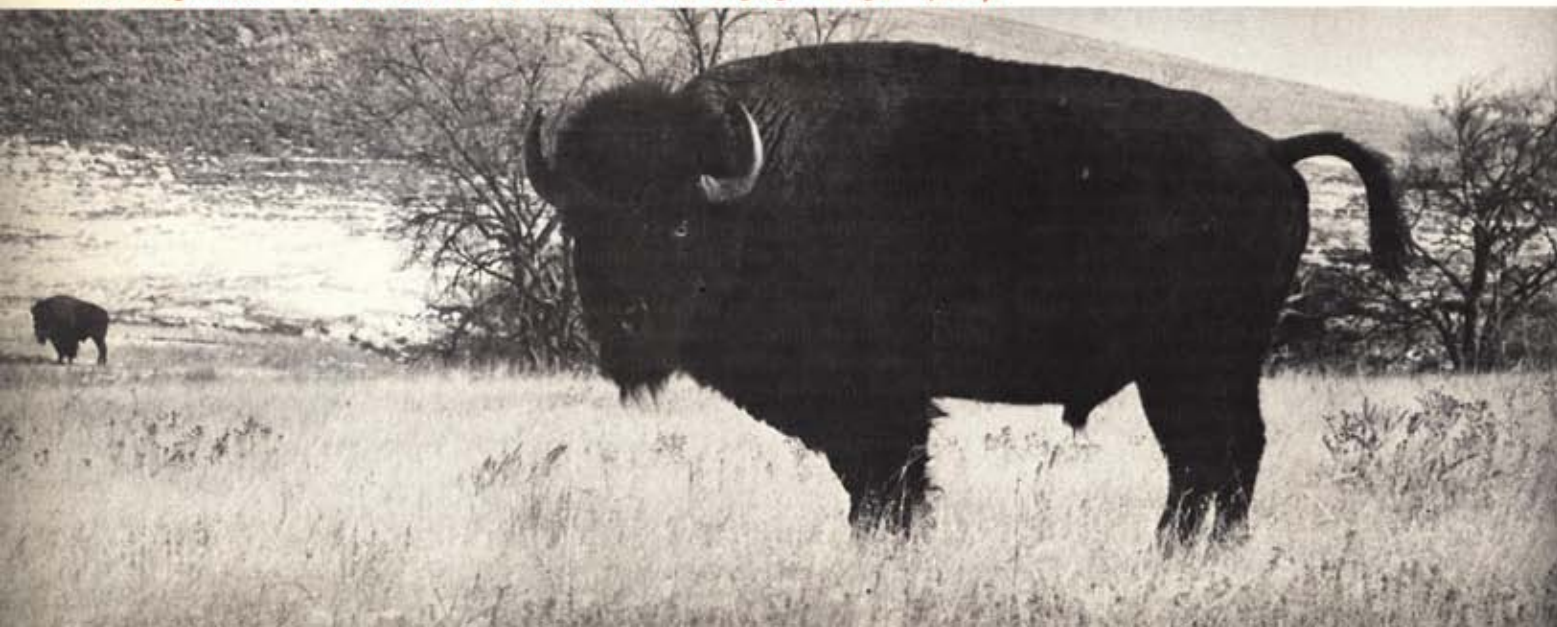
Originally, hunting by private individuals in Custer State Park was forbidden and the culling of surplus animals was performed by park rangers. The meat was sold to the public and revenue from the sale went to the parks operating funds.

Tal Lockwood, Director of Custer State Park, stated; "The original purpose and ultimately the primary function of any

public park is to preserve and protect the areas beauty and its wildlife. When the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks decided to open the gates to controlled hunting in Custer State Park, they did it with an open mind. That is, they did not lose sight of the wildlife's aesthetic values, nor did they ever at any time put hunting as the primary function connected with wildlife. They did however, take into close consideration the lack of big game hunting opportunities in South Dakota. Other than deer and antelope and an occasional token elk season, little was to be offered. Heavy requests by sportsmen to be offered the gold opportunity of hunting trophy sized animals in a public park where they were being culled annually anyway, was too convincing to be denied. Thus in 1965 the first public hunting season was allowed in Custer State Park.

Elk, being a highly sought after game animal, led the way to the Park's first public hunting season. Later, big horn sheep,

The magnificent bull buffalo is the author's challenging handgun quarry.



TATONKA—the food, shelter, clothing, life and culture of the ancient Plains Indians was of course; the Buffalo—the American Bison.

The buffalo came from Asia over the Bering Strait land bridge to North America about 25,000 years ago and probably again about 12,000 years ago when ice free corridors again opened in the glacial mass.

Obviously they were well adapted to the Great Plains as an estimated 30-60 million of them roamed at the time Columbus discovered America.

The various Plains Indians lived well compared to many of their counterparts in other areas of the country and world. The buffalo was second only to the Great Spirit and furnished everything needed to sustain a relatively rich life.

Hunting methods changed from the most basic, primitive methods to the relatively easy methods possible when the Indians acquired the horse in the 16th century.

With the advent of horses the stampede method began. Most simply, if one was available, stampede the buffalo over a cliff and call the tribe out for K.P. Riding beside stampeding buffalo and shooting them with arrows and stabbing them with lances was also effective although downed animals would be widely scattered.

The advancement of civilization and settlement of the Great Plains doomed Tatonka. He was ruthlessly hunted for his tongue and hide and simply killed because he was a nuisance to farmers and ranchers. By the 1880s only a few remained in isolated groups. It's estimated that at one time less than 500 buffalo existed.

pronghorn, wild turkey and buffalo were added to the list. Because of the limited number of permits allowed for each species, the Park's hunting opportunities were limited to South Dakota residents only. Buffalo was one exception, simply because the interest of South Dakotans was not great enough to adequately harvest the annual surplus.

All hunts within the confines of the Park are held under tight controls and are closely guided. Animals harvested are carefully selected through a survey process. At no time does Park administration lose sight of its original goals and objectives. The importance of displaying wildlife in its natural state is always in the foreground of hunting policy and rule making."

I might add that nothing in the Park rules or hunting policies detracts from or interferes with an interesting, challenging hunt.

Hunting with a handgun is a sport that has been rapidly growing. The International Handgun Metallic Silhouette Association is the fastest growing organization around and its competition targets are metallic silhouettes of animals. At the rate it's producing excellent long range handgun shooters, its effect in the hunting areas will soon be felt. (I.H.M.S.A., Post Office Box 1358, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266). As it is now, an amazing number of handgunners are afield with just about every caliber and type handgun imaginable. Quite a controversy exists over what caliber handgun is suitable for what type game and effective ranges.

To add a bit to the controversy, I personally feel the .357 Magnum revolver is strictly for the expert handgun hunter and very marginal on medium game such as deer or boar under field conditions. In general, I feel most of the guys that pick a .357 for a hunting handgun have been reading too much Dick Tracy. In the

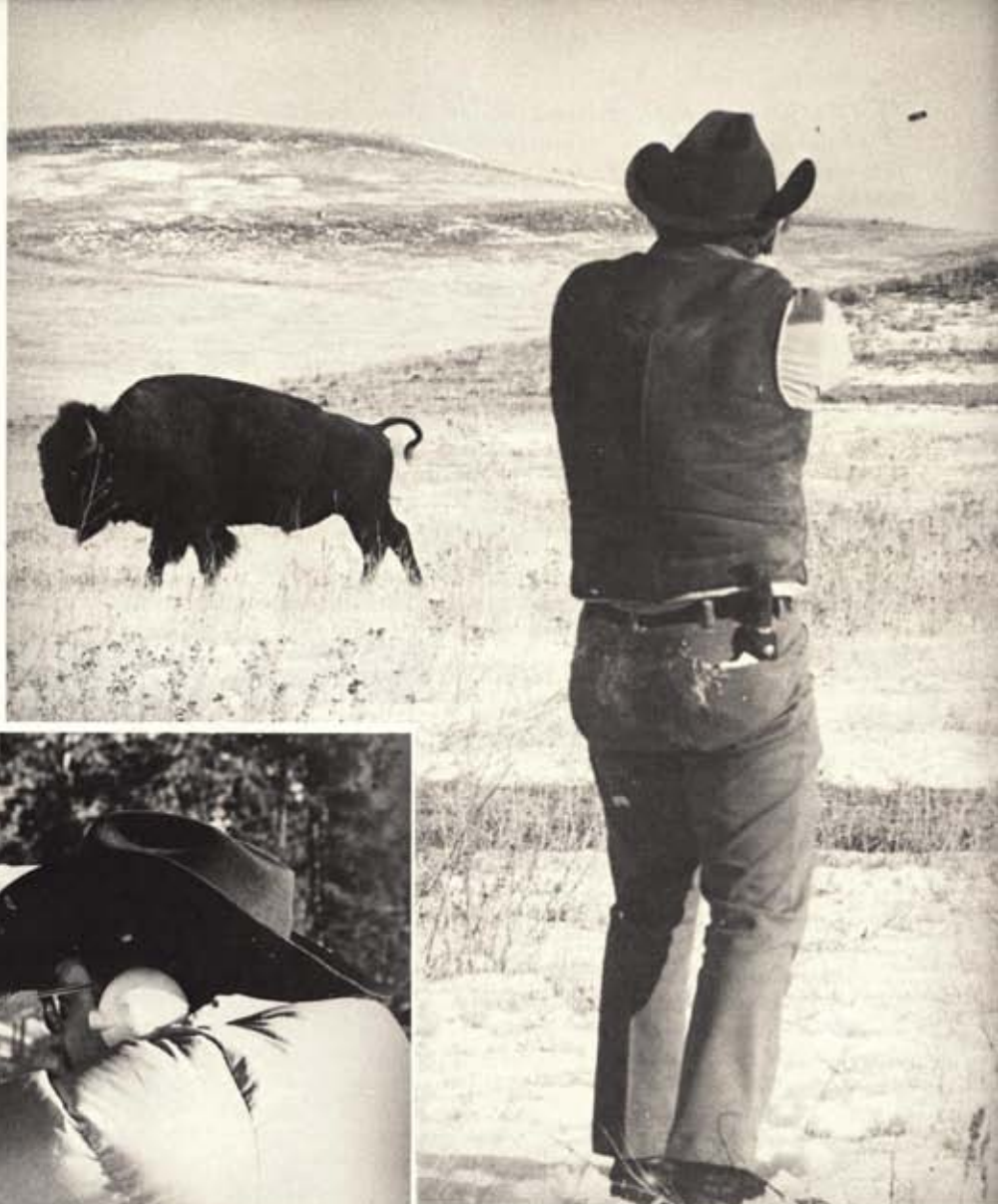


The steady, rested, sitting position, the shot and the big gun comes back in hearty recoil. The buff has taken the shot in mid-spine.

hands of an expert, who is willing to pass up many shots and knows the capability of the .357, it's effective. Few handgunners have this expertise and experience in the field—blowing holes in paper or tin cans doesn't mean much in deciding whether to shoot or not in the woods.

Jeff Cooper, who I know and have a lot of respect for, considers an animal weight of about 800 pounds about tops for a handgun. I respect Jeff's opinion and have never had the opportunity to discuss it with him, but I would certainly like to.

In any event, several years ago I decided to try to take a buffalo with a handgun. Not many of these opportunities exist, and my investigation showed the most likely place to get a prime large buffalo was Custer State Park. The hunt was set up through Tal Lockwood, Park Director. The Park reserves the right to OK the



With the empty hull from his first shot caught in mid-air above his shoulder, the author gets on for a follow-up shot.

Sighting in the .44 AMP Grizzly. The heavy bull barrel provides a steady hold and helps to dampen the recoil effect.

guns used. If they are not convinced it will be effective they will not permit its use. They also recommend shooting in the head or neck.

The permit fee for a buffalo is \$1000.00.

Doc Porter, a friend and hunting companion decided to try the buffalo with a .270, his favorite hunting cartridge. I had originally intended to use a 10.5" scoped .44 Auto Mag of my own but a conversation with Lee Jurras ended with Lee going along to take photos and furnishing a Custom 10.5" Bull Barreled scoped "Grizzly" model Auto Mag and ammo to

try out on the buffalo. For obvious reasons, it was decided to use commercially available components in the whole rig. Lee ended up doing the load development which turned out to be 29.0 grains of WW 680 behind the Hornady 265 grain .44 bullet. Velocity from that particular barrel was 1770 f.p.s. A Leupold M8-2X scope topped the rig in Maxi-Mounts. One hundred yard accuracy from the sandbags was on the order of consistent 2-2½ inch groups. That's not really anything to brag about and I feel accuracy suffered somewhat due to crushing the bullet noses a bit in seating them to a workable overall

length on top of that powder charge. I've never tried the load in any of my Auto Mags but it was not excessive in that one; however if anyone is inclined to try it in a 10 incher, back off a couple of grains to begin and see how it behaves.

All I'm willing to say about Doc's rifle load is that he doesn't have any trouble with it in a very nice Custom .270 and it drives a 150 grain bullet at a bit over 3200 f.p.s.

After pushing Doc's three quarter ton Chevy from the eastern border of Ohio to Hermosa, South Dakota through snow, sleet, and freezing rain and forgetting the

name of the motel where we were to meet Lee; I knew I was off to my usual start.

This time I was wrong, as we had three uninterrupted days of sunshine and mild (relatively) temperatures.

We checked into the Park, and discussed the hunt with Harold Lundie who filled us in on all essential information. A late afternoon drive through the Park revealed several things. The Park itself is big and beautiful. It's one hundred square miles vary from the typical rolling hills of the high plains to some fairly respectable hills and canyons. Mount Rushmore is only a thirty minute ride and Harney Peak, (el. 7242) the highest point east of the Rockies is very close to the Park. Big game in the Park consists of buffalo, elk, deer, mountain goats, big horn sheep and antelope. In three days we failed to see either the sheep or goats. Buffalo abound and the problem in hunting them is not finding them—it's a problem of finding which one to shoot. For someone unfamiliar with them they all look big but not many are really worth a \$1,000 trophy fee. Here is the place to listen to the Ranger who accompanies you.

During our first afternoon we just looked. We saw several hundred buffalo but only a few that looked to us to be outstanding in size. The hides of all of them appeared to be in terrific shape. We were hunting in the second week of December and most of the country had experienced some decidedly cool temperatures.

One bull, on the fringes of a herd of about 30 animals, appeared to be quite unique. He was big—considerably larger than any of the others; the bases of his

horns were badly eroded and the tips worn down. From the looks of the number of girdled and dead trees in the Park the buffalo give them a rough time.

Early the next morning we found a spot to try out the .44 AMP Grizzly before hunting. Lee had sighted it in with the 265 grain load just about an inch high at 100 yards. The Grizzly is a massive handgun. Its 10.5" barrel is .850 inches in diameter. It has no iron sights and carries the 2X Leupold in a black anodized aluminum Maxi-Mount. It is custom tuned and the stainless barrel and extension are presentation polished. Grips were handmade of white micarta. Mag-Na-Porting is pretty much standard on Lee's Custom Auto Mags, but this gun wasn't quite finished and wasn't yet ported. I had some reservations about what the recoil might be with the loads intended for buffalo but was quite pleasantly surprised at how the bull barrel dampened recoil. After setting up an empty cigarette pack at 80 paces I rested the gun across the hood of the four wheeler and squeezed off with the intersection of the cross-hairs under the bottom of the target. The cigarette pack went flying from a hit near its top. There was a resultant splatter of bark and ice as the 265-grainer dug into frozen wood. A few more shots from the resting position convinced me the sights were on. Several rapid aimed three shot bursts off-hand quickly showed the gun pointed well; recovery time from shot to shot was quite acceptable and much faster than my own 10.5" plain barrel .357 AMP with a scope on it. (For additional info on the custom AMP's drop a card to L. E. Jurras, P.O. Box F,



Recoiling from the author's fifth shot, the big bison begins to come down. The blur at the left is the .44 AMP Grizzly auto in full recoil.

Hagerman, NM 88232)

A short time later we were glassing buffalo with our guide Harvey. After having spent about three hours looking for exceptionally good buffalo, Harvey spotted a small band of bulls and after looking them over with the Bushnell 20-45X spotting scope, we decided to check them out at close range. Surprise #1; it wasn't as easy as it looked and the buffalo were difficult to approach as they simply melted into the shadows at the edge of the timber. They did look big though, and Harvey allowed as how he didn't think we would do any better. The buffalo weren't really spooked and we didn't feel they would move through the woods very rapidly. Lee, Doc and I circled around and above them and set up in a meadow. Doc would shoot if a shot was presented and Lee and I photograph. Harvey would wait awhile, then move in behind the buffalo and try to keep them coming in the right direction.

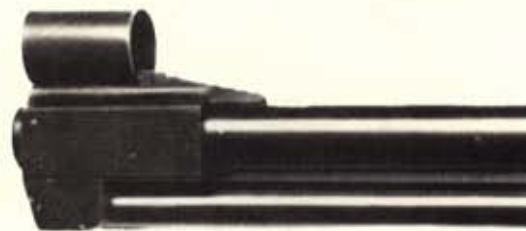
The buffalo suddenly burst through the timber and into the open; massive fast moving animals throwing snow with their hooves. They obviously knew where they wanted to go and crossed a corner of the meadow and into the timber again. The band went through a couple hundred yards of timber and started grazing in the next meadow.

(Continued on page 67)

The Jurras .44 AMP Grizzly with highly polished 10 inch heavy barrel used by the author to down his big trophy buff.



DAISY Model 62 Target Pistol



A strong, accurate gun with refinements one expects only on more expensive models

By LADD FANTA

Is there an all-around air pistol? Like the nebulous all-around shotgun or rifle, it all depends on how much one wishes to, or can, adapt. The key to any kind of flexibility always lies in accommodation and imagination.

A "Target" model can be rewarding as an all-purpose choice when it comes to deciding between Match, Target, Sport or Utility grade pellet guns. One such fulfilling air pistol is made by El Gamo (Spain), and called the Daisy Model 62 Target Pistol; distributed in the Power Line series of guns designed for adults. Daisy also distributes the very sophisticated Feinwerk-bau (F65, F67) pistols. These recoilless match grade arms are universally acclaimed for serious competition and, understandably enough, an ultimate goal for many informal air gunners as well. The only catch is the high price. To supply a more affordable air pistol, Daisy has introduced the D62. Let's take a closer look and see what makes it tick.

At first encounter, it was easy to recognize the rear sight and identify El Gamo manufacture. I'll admit being turned off somewhat at sight of the non-metallic, swing-out loading block; envisioning wear and power leakage problems. However, hasty impressions can be wrong, and after much use and closer scrutiny, it's clear that the design is simple and practical.

SIGHTS

The D62 has a 14" sight radius with removable F/S blade in a hooded ramp. The metal, numbered wheel, click stop rear

sight has a generous width to prevent canting and plenty of adjustment swing horizontally and vertically. A comfortably wide square notch in the rear sight blade helps to cancel or reduce astigmatic fuzziness and blurring such as may appear when the rear notch is too narrow, or tight. The .115" wide square post front sight appears dead black under the tunnel shielding it.

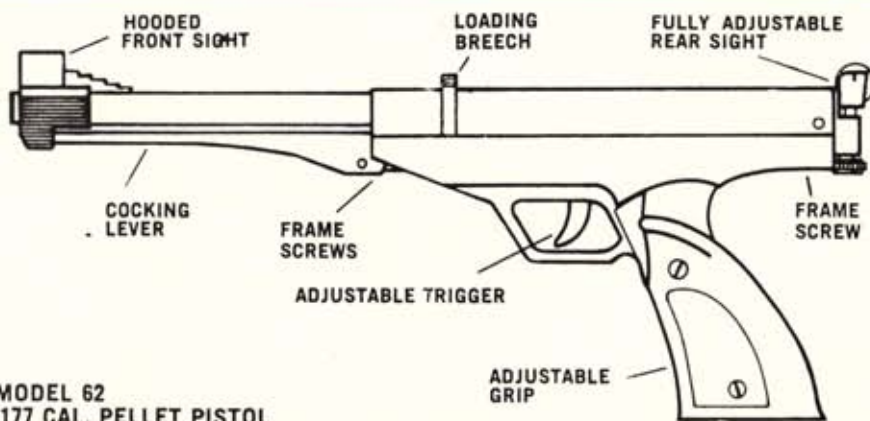
TRIGGER

The trigger release mechanism is one area which invariably separates the refined, match grade piece from the plainer, "field" or "sporting" grade gun. Normally, proficiency is harder to achieve with a pistol than rifle, which makes good trigger control most important in mastering the pistol. Spring powered air arms require skillful engineering to design an easy trigger let-off while holding the

powerful mainspring in cocked position. Needless to say, some air guns have much to be desired in this respect. Among the finest spring pistol triggers ever developed is that on the F-65, and when my expert friend from Tennessee wrote that his D62 has a comparably nice feel, I thought he'd succumbed to mountain dew between experiments. However, he was right. Out of the box, my first D62 does indeed have a delectable trigger pull. Contributing greatly to this easy two-stage trigger is the soft first stage. Many current spring guns with two stage pulls have a relatively stiff, or hard, first stage, which adds to the total required let-off pressure. While a light pull may not be advisable for everybody, I do my best with the 1 1/2 pound setting now on my D62.

The well made solidity of the D62 is reflected in the trigger area, where the various linkages are formed to operate in such ways that swiveling parts have two bearing surfaces for maximum non-changing alignment and reciprocity.

Pistol D62 has only one trigger adjust-



MODEL 62
.177 CAL. PELLET PISTOL

DRAWING NO. 1



stol

ing screw. Turning the adjusting screw counter-clockwise (out) makes the trigger harder to pull; turning clockwise (in) lessens the pull necessary to fire the gun.

The trigger may become too sensitive and therefore unsafe if tightened down (clockwise) below one turn. In this condition the gun could fire in normal handling or if jarred. Always make trigger adjustments in very small increments and test thoroughly until satisfied that no borderline condition exists. Another good safety habit to remember with *any* air gun is to always cock (or pump) first and **LOAD LAST**. Some new-gun instruction manuals do not follow this safe procedure. The well written D62 operation manual does.

PISTOL GRIP

An articulating pistol grip is not new, (for example, the Spanish "Astra" revolvers some years ago) but certainly unusual and a handy feature for many shooters. To some extent, it can be used as a means to adjust for finger length besides the pri-

mary function of adjusting grip angle. To do this, you loosen the locking screw in butt by turning counterclockwise approximately 2 turns. Change angle of the grip until it feels comfortable and retighten locking screw. The grip has a pronounced thumb rest and is definitely for the right hander. Material is man-made and so well done that one publication described it as wood. Left hand model carries the number 162.

Spring-gun stock screws are notorious for loosening from firing vibration. The D62 incorporates a novel way for securing the three frame screws by having a tough, nylon ring under the head of each. This washer-like ring fits tightly over the threads while the O.D. of the ring fits tightly into a countersunk screw head recess. The result is positive, reusable screw securement.

COCKING ACTION

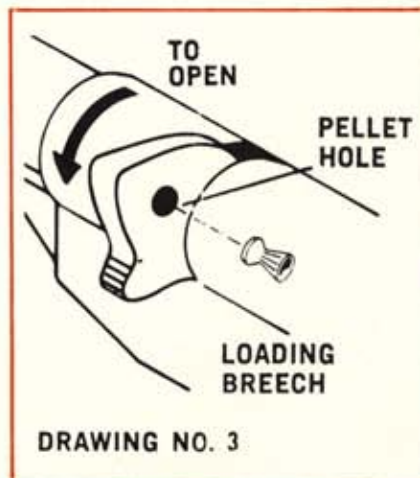
The vast majority of spring powered pellet pistols (and rifles) are of barrel-cocking style. Those employing a lever on

the side for cocking are called "side-levers." There are several makes of rifles with a cocking lever under the barrel, hence called "underlevers." The D62 is unique in being the first underlever cocking spring pellet pistol. (See Drawing No. 2) The design has a mechanical advantage of 4 to 1 which makes cocking easy. Unlike some cumbersome releases and pulls on existing U/L rifles, the D 62 has a spring loaded ball-detent arrangement in the cocking lever tip, requiring little thought or effort to negotiate. This may seem a minor point, but I bring it up because during extensive shooting sessions, all the preparatory motions add up when repeated hundreds of times.

LOADING SYSTEM

To load the D62, you pull out the loading breech (See Drawing No. 3) until the pellet hole is fully exposed. Insert pellet nose first, as shown, so that pellet is fully inside the loading breech and not protruding either at front or rear. This is very important. Next swing the loading breech all the way back into firing position. The loading breech pellet hole containing pellet must be in good alignment with barrel bore when the gun is fired. This vital area should be checked occasionally to make sure no accumulation of lead particles, grease or debris is present to prevent full closure. The snug-fitting loading breech is made of a nylon-like material and does

(Continued on page 65)



THE LARAMIE CONVERSION

*A Clemens Smith/Colt Made Especially
for the N.S.L. Money Shoot.*

By BYRON BOOTS



THERE'S a shoot next September that's for a fair amount of cash money, and is specialized enough that some shooters have had custom wheelguns designed just for one purpose: to win at Laramie.

First, one must plunk down \$100 for the pleasure of attempting to qualify for the National Shooters League competition. Then if you qualify in the "Top 40" it's on to the Sept. 3, run-shoot-run-shoot-puff-puff (etc.) 216-yard multiple target competition that separates the men from the boys.

And a pack of cigarettes makes the smaller of the two targets look anemic.

One such enthusiast is Frank Cress, Oroville, Ca., who called

on pistolsmith Charles Clemens, (North Valley Gun Shop, 179 East Ave., Chico, Ca., 95926) to finish a .45 Long Colt (Smith N frame) for Laramie.

Clemens took a Model 28 Smith and Wesson .357 magnum, commonly called the "Highway Patrolman," and punched it out to the Old West caliber (with interchangeable .45 ACP cylinder).

Using an Apex barrel blank, the snout grew to 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches with an O.D. of $\frac{13}{16}$ -inch. The drain-pipe-sized barrel was given a recessed target crown and 4-inch flats on both sides at the middle.

Clemens made a full-length ventilated, sandblasted rib, and followed that with Elliason Sights. The internal workings were



Left Clemens as seen through the ragged hole he shot in the X ring of the Laramie target at 16 yds.

stoned, the trigger return spring cut down, a combat (smooth) trigger installed, and the cylinder release latch was narrowed to accommodate speed loaders. The left grip panel was also relieved for the same reason. Herrett Skip-Checked Shooting Stars adorn the hindermost parts.

A custom-built Hoyt Holster (break-front) was designed for the long and heavy barrel now on the N frame, with an inside thumb break. It is a jacket model.

Dade large pistol speedloaders are used, and John May, of Chico, is developing high performance .45 Colt loads—using a chronograph—for the best velocity/accuracy combination. May is experimenting with both lead and jacketed bullets in a variety of weights.

The Laramie course was designed by the founder of the National Shooters League (504 Lyons, Laramie, Wyo. 82070), Robert O. Burgess, M.D. The co-director of the competition is Gifford C. Burgess. In the last two years, purses totalling over \$28,000 have been awarded.

The course of 216 yards must be covered in less than 3½ minutes, with two rounds being fired at each of the 10 targets. Seven targets are fired with the right hand and three from the port side. The targets vary in distance from 15 to 60 yards.

All shooting is done while standing, and rests are allowed only where provided. The caliber must be .38-9mm or larger.

Rule changes for this year include a maximum of three runs to qualify to shoot for the big bread, and only open sights will be allowed (no covered ramp sights, no globe front sights, and no peep sights).

In 3½ minutes, a shooter must:

—shoot two rounds at 16 yards at a target about half the size of a pack of long cigarettes;

—then turn to a target at 33 yards;

—run 33 yards and shoot 50 yards;

—jog a short ways and fire from the port side at a 25-yarder;

—scramble a quick 15 for a 15-yard leftie;

—then a stone's lob puts the contestant at the 56-yard target;

—the seventh is nearby and a "short" 22 yards;

—number eight is a 20-yarder;

—nine is a 30-pacer;

—and ten is a fat 60.

But then the finish line is still 51 yards away!

And because Laramie is about a mile high in elevation, only the strong-hearted should attempt it. Some competitors train nearly year-round for this, perhaps the most testing competition of its sort in the world. (June 15 is the deadline for the entry fee, \$100.)

The physical difficulties of the course are not unintentional. Dr. Burgess, a physical fitness advocate, feels strongly that professional shooters are professional ath-

letes. As in any other professional sport, they must be able to demonstrate superior physical ability as well as a steady hand. His message cannot be overlooked by the competitors.

The 1975 Champion was Bill Belt of Englewood, Colo., and in '76 it was Frank Green of Montrose, Colo. That should tell you something.



Frank Cress demonstrates reduced muzzle jump of the heavy barrel.



Two shots in the black at 16 yards and the size of the smaller target compared to a pack of cigarettes.



Left: With sideplate removed, the inner workings of the N frame are revealed to show much stoning and smoothing of action working parts.



HANDGUN
PROFILE

PART ONE

Evolution of the Dan Wesson Revolver

By MIKE BARACH

THE design of a firearm as well as the time and money expended for development are, for the most part, unimportant to the firearms enthusiast. Since we pay for the development and production of a gun in the purchase price, we have a tendency to be unaware of the demands that must be met to successfully market the firearm. As with all products, a basic design is necessary, followed by the capital to tool-up and

Three Full-Length
Features Focus On The



QUICK-SHIFT REVOLVER

E VOLUTION of the Dan Wesson from an ugly duckling to a respected name in handgunning. . . . *By Michael Barach*

S HOOTING the Dan Wesson with a look at its potentials for hunting, target and combat. . . . *By Massad Ayoob*

CUSTOMIZING the Dan Wesson which has been factory modified through evolution so that little remains to make it a top notch competitor. . . . *By Massad Ayoob*

Color photo by John Hanusin

produce a working prototype. Then comes the costly, time consuming job of refinement and modification to eliminate the imperfections in the gun's overall make-up. Testing, further refinements, and re-testing to insure proper functioning and performance are necessary before full scale production runs begin. The continuous improvements in both quality and design are a never-ending process if a gun company is to

stay alive in the business.

Probably no one is more aware of this than Dan Wesson Arms, Inc. The Dan Wesson firm is very young and relatively small in comparison to some of their competitors. They do, however, have one of the best handgun designers in the world as both part owner and president of the company. Dan, the fourth generation of the gunmaking Wesson family, has devoted most of his life

to the design and manufacture of high-quality handguns. In light of all Dan's experience with the handgun it was natural for him to develop a totally new revolver design, one aimed at true interchangeability of barrels and working parts by the shooter rather than the factory. Until this time, switching barrel lengths and action parts such as the hammer, strut, sear, trigger and firing pin connector, required sending the

gun back to the factory for a long wait and a parts and labor bill to boot. The Dan Wesson concept did away with this, as well as offering strength in design and a high degree of accuracy. All for a modest price.

The basic design of the revolver had been on the boards and prototyped for two years prior to its introduction in August of 1970. The gun was labeled as the Model 11 Service and the Model 12 Target. The guns were the same except for the 11 having a satin blue finish with the high ramp front and dovetailed rear sight and the 12 offering a bright blue finish with the fully adjustable sight set-up. Both were offered with interchangeable barrels in the choices of 2½", 4", and 6" lengths, and either combat or target-style grips. A few were produced in nickel, but these never went into full scale production. Retail was a reasonable \$110.00 with extra barrel assemblies available at \$25.00 each.

I remember seeing the Wesson Model 12 for the first time at the local gunshop. It was, in my estimation, the ugliest damn thing I'd ever seen! Of course, looks are secondary to performance, but we humans are attracted more to things of beauty. I did check the gun out pretty well at the time and I wasn't very impressed with it. The overly large sights, rough action and squared off corners did not impress me. However, I was very enthused by the interchangeability of barrels and inherent accuracy of the Dan Wesson gun.

EARLY PROBLEMS

The basic design of the Dan Wesson revolver was innovative to say the least, but mechanical problems began to appear. After the gun had been on the market for a time and been put to use in the field, problems with the firing-pin were encountered, prompting redesign. The original had a straight shank measuring .075" in diameter. This wasn't strong enough to take repeated blows from the hammer, resulting in a crack or break along the shaft. A new, tapered firing-pin was made, mea-



What was once a schoolhouse is the present home of Dan Wesson Arms in Monson, Massachusetts.

suring .100" at the base of the shank, tapering to .075" at the tip. A larger tapered firing-pin spring was implemented to create a stronger ignition system. Likewise the firing-pin hole, located in the frame, had to be enlarged to accept the new firing-pin. The re-design of the above proved satisfactory with no subsequent failures.

Reports from the field further indicated that the owners had also been experiencing misfires. It was determined that insufficient force exerted by the mainspring and the very short hammer fall were the cause. By increasing the spring pressure to the hammer and re-designing the structure of the trigger, hammer and strut, misfires disappeared.

FIRST MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS

In September of 1971, the Models 11 and 12 were replaced by the Model 14 Service (fixed sights) and the Model 15 Target (adjustable sights). The external muzzle nut was dropped and replaced with a recessed nut. The flat muzzle

looked better and, in theory, contributed to better accuracy. The 14 series of revolvers was offered in either satin blue or matte nickel finish, with the 15 series available in bright blue or nickel finishes.

Because of the difficulties experienced in the short hammer throw, an improved longer hammer fall began to be phased into production. This occurred in about April of 1973. To lengthen the throw of the hammer, the rear portion of the trigger had to be lengthened and similar modifications made to the strut. It might be of interest to note that the design of the Dan Wesson action is such that modifications to the action parts can be performed by changing their structure without a full-scale change in the revolver's basic design. Even with the improvements made to the hammer fall, the Dan Wesson continued to boast the shortest throw available.

Continuously striving to improve both functioning and styling, the 14 and 15 were closely examined to improve upon any parts of the gun that would upgrade both quality and performance. Aware of the lack of general enthusiasm, and appeal to the shooters, the Dan Wesson people began to implement changes in the revolver. The Models 14-1 and 15-1 replaced the 14 and 15 series marking the beginning of a slow but almost total revamp of the gun's appearance and external parts. The Model 14-1 Service revolver was equipped with a low profile ramp front and milled rear sight, replacing the larger fixed sights of the earlier Service guns. The 15-1 sights were likewise switched from the large adjustable set-up to a lower ramp front and adjustable rear.

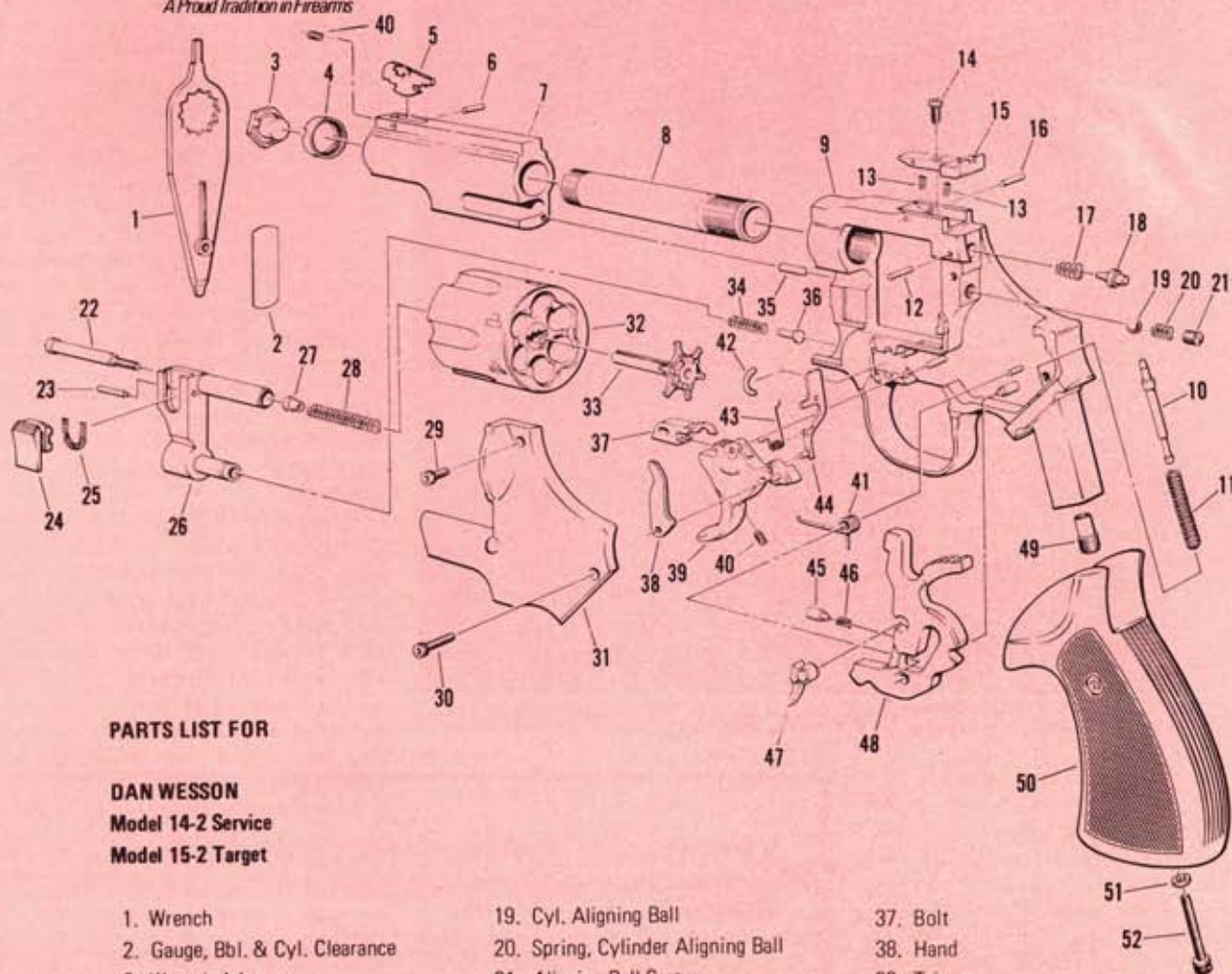
The configuration of the extractor rod (22) on the older model revolvers was criticized by many shooters. Complaints stated that ejecting spent cases, by striking the rod tip with the palm of the hand, resulted in a sore spot or cut on the palm. This would be especially bothersome in any type of competition shooting that re-

Two of the earlier Dan Wessons are shown here; the Model 11 (left) and Model 12.





293 MAIN STREET
MONSON, MASS. 01057
(413) 267-4081



PARTS LIST FOR

DAN WESSON
Model 14-2 Service
Model 15-2 Target

1. Wrench
2. Gauge, Bbl. & Cyl. Clearance
3. Wrench Adapter
4. Barrel Nut
5. Front Sight
6. Front Sight Pin
7. Shroud
8. Barrel
9. Frame
10. Main Spring Guide
11. Main Spring
12. Firing Pin Retaining Pin
13. Rear Sight Elevation Tension Spring
14. Rear Sight Elevation Screw
15. Rear Sight Body
16. Rear Sight Retaining Pin
17. Firing Pin Spring
18. Firing Pin

19. Cyl. Aligning Ball
20. Spring, Cylinder Aligning Ball
21. Aligning Ball Screw
22. Ejector Rod
23. Latch Retaining Pin
24. Latch
25. Latch Spring
26. Crane
27. Ejector Rod Bushing
28. Ejector Spring
29. Short Side Plate Screw
30. Long Side Plate Screw
31. Side Plate
32. Cylinder
33. Extractor
34. Bolt Spring
35. Shroud Locating Pin
36. Bolt Plunger

37. Bolt
38. Hand
39. Trigger
40. Trigger Stop Screw and Adjustable Front Sight Retaining Screw
41. Trigger Return Spring
42. Crane Lock
43. Hand Spring
44. Connector
45. Strut Plunger
46. Strut Spring
47. Strut
48. Hammer
49. Mainspring Seat
50. Grip
51. Grip Screw Washer
52. Grip Screw



Nearby range offered author an opportunity to test a Model 15-2.

quires many rounds of ammo to be fired. The possibilities of a replacement rod were examined, with a larger button-tipped rod being selected to replace the smaller knurled one. The button-tip offered more of a surface to push on with the palm, relieving the soreness encountered with the previous type.

The lock-up of the crane and cylinder by a latch, near the barre/cylinder gap, was, in the earlier models, accomplished by using a thin, oval spring placed under the latch. The spring exerted upward pressure on the latch to lock it into the frame. However, the lock-up was unsatisfactory. A round spring replaced the oval type, correcting the problem to an extent. A bit of play was noticeable and another course was taken. A longer spring (25) inserted under the latch in a U fashion was tried and found to exert sufficient pressure to insure the tightness desired. The U spring has since been utilized on all Dan Wesson revolvers.

The original cylinder latch (24) was rather large and saucer shaped, with serrations in the dip or curve. This configuration tended to imply that it should be pushed in, rather than down. The newly designed latch is smaller, with the serra-

tions placed on the top edge, making its movement more obvious. The placement of the latch was disliked by some and cursed by others, but aware of the frailties of the conventional revolver design, Dan stuck to his guns by continuing to locate the latch forward of the cylinder.

There were no major changes to the external styling at this point. The side-plate was modified slightly for production reasons but of no real advantage to the shooter. The side-plate was originally of a one piece casting with the cylinder lug being an integral part. The new side-plates were being made with a recess or hole incorporated into the casting. The cylinder lug was then placed in the side-plate at the plant by a press-fit.

For a short time the Dan Wesson had a replacement grip made of Powerwood, a plastic of some sort with the look and feel of wood. While at the plant I put a pair of these on a gun and was amazed at its almost identical resemblance to wood. They felt pretty good, with the exception of the sharp-pointed checkering that dug into my finger tips. The Powerwood grips were used as a standard grip for a time, but eventually were dropped and replaced with the real thing.

An oversight in the design of the hand-spring (43) caused it to break off at the point where it entered the back of the hand. This breaking was due to too small a diameter of wire with an insufficient number of coils. A larger diameter of wire and additional coils to the spring cleared up the difficulty. While in the process of correcting the above, a solution to the correct amount of pressure delivered to the trigger by the return spring (41) was also found. By increasing the strength of the handspring the trigger return spring had to likewise be strengthened slightly to balance the springs out to the point of proper operation. With this accomplished, the springs functioned more favorably, improving action performance.

While the 14-1 and 15-1 revolvers were under refinement, steps were being taken to remodel the appearance of the entire gun. The present Models 14-2 and 15-2 were the result. Development of the latest series began in the winter of 1974, but didn't make their debut until early in 1975. The styling was modified to enhance its appearance, yet the Dan Wesson still retains a somewhat distinctive styling of its own.

In order to fill the needs and whims of the shooting public, the barrel shrouds were made in four styles: a standard weight with solid rib, a bull barrel type with solid rib, the standard weight ventilated rib and a bull barrel with the vent rib. All new shrouds come equipped with an interchangeable front sight with a choice of red, white or yellow inserts. The new rear sight is fully adjustable with a white outline.

In redesigning the shroud (7), the foot (on the older version it reached over the front of the crane (26) to retain it) was eliminated, consequently retainment of the crane had to be accomplished within the frame. A piece of steel wire (42) resembling the letter C was used to lock the lower crane leg into the frame. The forward section of the frame, nearest the crane, had to be modified by including a recess to accept the crane lock.

By eliminating the foot on the shroud, the metal used could now be purchased in a cold drawn form. It also made the production of an eight-inch (and longer) shroud more practical. While broadening the available barrel lengths, the new style shroud also enhanced the gun's appearance by eliminating the squared corner just ahead of the trigger guard.

Refinements in the styling were accompanied by further improvements to the action and related parts. The hammer strut, previously made of powder metal, was changed to cold drawn metal. This strengthened the structure of the strut, minimizing wear and possible failure. The crane and latch were likewise previously cast of powder metal but are now made of 8620 bar stock for added strength and also improved bluing qualities of the

metal. The same applies to the locking bolt.

ONGOING REFINEMENTS

As can be seen, the Dan Wesson revolver is continuously being improved. There will be additional improvements to the 14-2 and 15-2 in the very near future. The modifications should be phased into production guns as this article appears in print. The top of the hammer will be lowered to eliminate the possibility of its striking the rear sight. The length of the hammer spur will also be increased to aid in cocking by offering a larger surface area. Unnecessary metal, on the bottom of the hammer, will be eliminated and relocated to the upper portion of the hammer. Increasing the mass at the top of the hammer results in less bounce, better ignition, and greater accuracy capabilities. The upper width of the trigger will be raised nearer the frame to avoid cuts to the trigger finger during extended shooting. The cam shape of the trigger will also be modified to offer a smoother double action pull. The upper crane leg (that which the cylinder rests upon) has been redesigned to prevent the gas ring from cutting into the frame when opening and closing. The gas ring will be taken from the face of the cylinder and placed on the upper crane leg. This change gives the cylinder a full 360 degree bearing surface on the shoulder of the upper crane leg, minimizing wear and maintenance. The conventional place-



The Master himself, Dan Wesson, gives the author a basic course in firearms design and function.

One of several barrel options offered by Dan Wesson, in a wide variety of lengths to meet just about every shooting situation.



ment of the gas ring on the cylinder offered only a partial bearing surface, which had a tendency to increase headspace as the cylinder pounded against the frame and crane during recoil. It would eventually become serious enough to cause misfires, making an overhaul necessary. The ratchet stem and blank (combined form the extractor) have been modified to eliminate the chances of pushing the stem through the blank due to a stuck case(s). The blank has been beefed-up at the rear, providing more metal between its face and the stem tip. A new wrench will be offered, combining the adapter and wrench into a one-piece rig. This will totally eliminate the disastrous effects of leaving the adapter in the muzzle and shooting.

(Continued on page 57)



PART TWO Shooting The Dan Wesson

By MASSAD F. AYOOB

I've been shooting the Dan Wesson since it came out, and grow more partial to it with each passing year. Of course, spending that much time with the piece, I've found not only more to praise, but more to criticize. Fortunately, most of those criticisms can be squared away. Here, by and large, is how.

SIGHTS

My biggest bitch with the gun—and Dan's, for that matter—is the spongy rear sight. You just can't feel the clicks. People who compete with the DW have to count how many flats of the hex screw go around as they make their adjustments. What's needed, of course, is a positive click.

With a little milling, you can get one of the fine Elliason sights into a DW. BoMar has brought out one of their ribs for it; I have one of the first, and it's super. It requires removal of the rear sight for installation, but mounted on a barrel shroud, again allows the quick change back to service, hunting, or carrying configurations. Unfortunately, only a few of the

BoMar ribs have been made at this writing, though the demand has been extraordinary ever since one of the first ones appeared on the cover of *Police Marksman* magazine.

Apart from the lack of positive adjustments, I like the DW sight. Indeed, I love it to pieces. It's big and blocky and easy to pick up, and the rear sight slants back at the proper angle to shade it from annoying glare.

Front sights? Dan went a long way when he put in the quick-change sight blades. Not that you'll change them every day, mind you. But I, for example, might want the red or yellow insert for carrying in the field, yet favor the white insert for better contrast against the black silhouette in combat competition within fifty yards, and if I want a head hold on that same target at 50 yards, or a 6 o'clock on a bullseye, I can switch to plain black. I like that versatility. I also like the fact that I can install a new insert myself for 80¢. On a Smith, that'd run me several bucks. On a Colt or Ruger, I'd have to send one check to Omega and another to a custom gunsmith.

Indeed, Fred Hill of DWA came up

with a novel approach for us PPC shooters who like the gun but want more precise sight adjustments. One simply takes two Patridge front blades and adjusts the sights so one of them is dead on with the rear sight at 25 yards. Then, install an oversize front blade, and without changing the rear sight position at all, file the front one for the hold you want at 50. Technically, it should be allowed on the competition line, since "sight adjustments" don't specify that you can't swap front blades. Of course not. The people who made the rule books never anticipated the Dan Wesson gun. The same concept has great potential for metallic silhouette handgunners.

That's not the whole answer, of course, because you might still want lateral sight changes during a match, for instance, if you shoot in early morning or late afternoon with strong sidelight and need to move two or three clicks over to compensate.

One solution is Austin Behlert's excellent replacement sight. He sells these units primarily for S&W owners, but now has one for Dan Wesson (\$32 plain, \$35 with white outline). His original intention

was to sell it to DWA, but the two firms haven't been able to get together on price. For the serious competition shooter, I personally think the price isn't out of line, though my own inclination might be to go all the way, spend another \$15, and get a BoMar sight rib. More specifics on this aspect will be found in the accompanying article on "Customizing the Dan Wesson".

I'd like to at least see DWA offer the Behlert sight in the catalog as an extra cost option, as Colt does with the Elliason sight for the Python. People who buy premium guns don't mind another \$20 or \$30 to go Cabin One to the last degree with precision sights, and by being in the catalog, the Behlert-sighted DW would become a factory gun and hence eligible for the Distinguished stage of PPC competition. That doesn't account for many customers—maybe two or three days Dan Wesson production a year at current levels—but discriminating non-competitive shooters would pick up on the option, too.

With the sight that comes on the gun, you can still make positive corrections without sweating the clicks, and maybe even be more positive than the best factory gunsight if you've got a careful touch. Just measure the space between the bottom of the adjustable DW sight and the top edge of the frame with a feeler gauge, and write the measurement down in a notebook for the hold you want at each range you'll be shooting. Then use the gauge on the range, turning the sight down gently and consistently. This is an

old hi-power rifle competitors' trick.

In a fixed sight revolver, if you've got an early Model 11 with the dovetail rear sight, you've got something special. It's the only weapon in its class that qualifies as a fixed-sight gun, yet can be adjusted to exact point of aim/point of impact with the load you want by drifting the blade for windage or filing it on top for elevation. This is why the early DWs were prized by combat shooters in matches that required fixed sight "service" or "off-duty" guns. For the latter, Dan made a special, small production run (of about 20 barrels) in the 2" length instead of the catalog 2½", to meet the match requirements. If you have one, and it's for sale, let me know what you want for it.

HOLSTERS

The Dan Wesson has a cylinder the size of the K-frame Smith, but a frame a bit more like the .41-size Colt. This means that much of the time, you can squeeze a DW into a K-Smith holster of equivalent barrel length without much problem. Personally, though, I'd rather go with a Colt holster, and you'll need the Python size if your Dan Wesson has a heavy barrel. Oddly enough, S&W leather suggests N-frame size holsters for the Dan Wesson, though I frequently carry my DW's in K-size S&W scabbards.

One thing you should avoid: if you're a cop, *don't carry a Dan Wesson in a break-front holster*. The forward movement through the stiff, leather-covered springs can force the cylinder latch down into the

"release" position. Result: you whip your gun out and up . . . and the cylinder falls out. Whattya bet your opponent can stop laughing long enough to shoot you before you get your gun closed and working again?

I like fast, high-security holsters with any police revolver, and this problem with breakfront holsters is no reason for someone who feels like me not to carry a Dan Wesson on duty. I favor S&W Leather's Security Plus holster, which is every bit as snatchproof, extremely fast, and drawn through the top so there's no worry at all about slipping the action open.

With certain shoulder holsters with strong spring clips, I'd worry about the same thing happening when I put the gun *in*. Most like a good conventional holster with the Dan Wesson, and between mid-size Smith holsters and Python holsters you'll find one that's ideal. Safariland makes leather specifically for the Dan Wesson gun.

GRIPS

At this writing, nobody makes grips to fit a Dan Wesson but Dan Wesson (or rather their subcontractors, who only sell to the factory). Pachmayr's rubber version should be out soon, and I for one am eager to literally get my hands on it.

When the gun first came out, the grip stud permitted a vast spectrum of shape options that Dan took full advantage of. There was an almost hot-dog shaped grip at first, which helped the rest of the gun look unconventional and ugly. Dan soon



Interchangeability of the Dan Wessons carries over into the grips. Shown here are the Sacramento, Target and Combat versions that are available; in addition to a smooth target and do-it-yourself blank.

went to the Sacramento style as optional, and thus earned the distinction of offering the finest stock ever to leave a revolver factory. The Sacramento followed the taper-to-the-bottom, finger-grooved, style made famous by Hurst and later Farrant. Also offered was the birds-head Combat grip, unusually long, thicker throughout, and with less pronounced finger grooves.

A lot of DW buffs haven't noticed it, but the dimensions of these grips have changed subtly over the years. The first Sacramentos were a little wide between palm and middle finger joint #2 for some of us, but were trimmed when DW went to the plastic "Powerwood." At that time, wrap-around checkering was introduced. Later, when DW went back to wood, they kept the best of those dimensions and in some models, notably the Combat, trimmed down still more.

It's all subjective. For me, the Powerwoods were just right dimensionally, and I liked that all-round checkering. I'll allow that it did chafe the hand just a trifle when fired with magnums, especially in the Sacramento style, but I thought it was just fine with .38 wadcutters in a match, and the fact that the sharp checkering helped it stay put in magnum combat fire made up for a lot.

It's subjective, but I like the Sacramentos best for all-round carry. They're unequaled for one-hand shooting, and very

good to excellent with a two-hand hold. The longer Combat is ideal for two-hand shooting, but I personally find it a bit too long and straight-angled for offhand and instinct work, and the new ones place the palm lower, emphasizing recoil flip. That may not mean much, however; the Combat dramatically outsells the Sacramento, according to factory sales records, so there's lots of people with different hands than mine, and theirs might be closer to yours. Dan Wesson's "traditional" and "oversize target," now furnished on the guns as standard, duplicate everything that's wrong with conventional revolver grips, and the company knows it and doesn't like it, but that's what the buying public has demonstrated it wants, so that's what comes out of the box. It is to be hoped that our readers are a special segment of the overall market who are into function instead of tradition; you are probably the people who account for the sales of the Combats and Sacramentos in the first place.

From the beginning, Dan has offered an inletted blank to let you carve to your heart's content, and the shape of the DW's grip stud lets your imagination run wild. Paul Brothers of DWA carves a design for his big hands that some might want to consider: he puts a sharp flange over the web of the hand to totally eliminate recoil movement in the fist during rapid hot-

load firing. This also moves the recoil "impact" down away from the sensitive joints that abut the web of the hand, and into the meaty absorptive muscles of the palm.

For concealment, incidentally, you'll be hard put to beat those Sacramento handles; they taper toward the bottom and are thin overall, and reduce bulge dramatically while still increasing control. Remember, these grips cost \$16.65; to put the same style on your Colt or S&W would cost you \$35 for the wood *plus* having to cut away steel on your revolver's frame.

WORKING THE ACTION

This magazine and its sister publication have run a couple of articles on the topic of smoothing the DW action; basically it follows much the same procedure as most other revolvers. All I can say is that this is one of the last guns on which you want to mess with the mainspring. It's especially sensitive to such surgery. Better you should give the present mainspring more room to move in by grinding $\frac{1}{8}$ " or a bit less off the inside of the mainspring housing, giving the coil a little more room to "stretch and get comfortable".

Hammer bobbing ain't a good idea on a Dan Wesson, unless you're going for a DA-only PPC gun that won't be firing anything but wadcutters that you've practiced



a lot with before the match. It takes about a pound off the hammer's impact, which means that for reliable functioning with Magnum loads you'll have to add a pound to the mainspring pressure to balance out. Better you shouldn't bother.

Just put a fine, light polish on the contact surfaces, and on the inside of the frame, where parts will often touch on this piece. Take an eensy bit off the trigger if you like, but for Heaven's sake use a light touch.

When you put a file to the trigger of an S&W, you know you have X-thousandths of case hardening, and if you go all the way through it, you'll hit the soft metal and will have ruined the part. On the Dan Wesson, it's a little more arcane. The trigger is made of sintered (powdered) metal, though it's high density and double pressed for toughness. Instead of true case hardening, the trigger is "carburized," and the sintered metal "soaks up the hardening" like a sugar cube soaking up coffee, 'cause it's porous. Therefore, there's no way to determine just how far the "hardening case" goes. You can't even test it for hardness on the Rockwell scale; sintered metal parts are evaluated on an "apparent hardness" basis.

Since you don't know how much metal you can take off before you're compromising the parts, you'd be better off to have the bearing surfaces of the parts "flash-chromed", which will bring them up to a confidence-inspiring Rockwell C hardness of 74 or so. Armalloy, Metalife, and the Behlert process worked out nicely on guns I've seen and used. You want *hard* chrome, not a purely cosmetic plating.

BARRELS

No question about it, the "QuickShift" barrel feature is a major plus in Dan Wesson desirability. Maybe the biggest single factor. Unless you've got a decent shop and plenty of gunsmithing background, changing tubes yourself on any other gun and still getting the barrel-cylinder gap right would be a *very* tricky thing. This procedure can be done by the rankest novice on his kitchen table in about a minute with a Dan Wesson, and it comes out perfect.

It *has* been slightly oversold, though. There are people who tell you that you can change from four or five barrel groups and not have to touch your rear sight to still be in the black.

Folks, I've been shooting a lot of Dan Wessons for a long time, and I've never found two barrels of any length that would shoot to the same point of impact without



The Dan Wesson may not be the most concealable gun but it fits well in a number of holsters. This is the Bucheimer Concealer made for the S&W 19. Heavy barrel or ribbed models require Python holsters.

changing the sights. I *do* find that if I take a barrel off, for cleaning or whatever, and put the same one back on, my zero is still rock-solid where it was before. On a new gun, you can change your point of impact an inch or two by taking the tube off and then replacing it, but once the parts have been seated (a box of Magnums should do it, or a couple hundred rounds of .38), the variance will be a fraction of an inch or less.

It would be nice if you could change the barrels without having to change the

sights. But why should you? It's not like you had a 35mm SLR camera system where you might use three or four lenses for every roll of film you took. If you carry your DW on duty with a 4", you'll sight in for that and leave it. If you slap on a 6" or 8" for hunting, why, you'll resight in just as you would when changing guns and loads with another brand. I work off four Dan Wesson frames, and I use the guns a lot, and I switch barrels maybe four times a year, if that. I always sight in again when

(Continued on page 56)

Paul Brothers, chief engineer at Dan Wesson, tries out a scoped version for long range accuracy.

PART THREE

Customizing The Dan Wesson

By MASSAD F. AYOUB

CUSTOMIZING a Dan Wesson .357 is going to center on a handful of things: action design, sights, and finish. Though the guns were very briefly made with a satin nickel finish. (If you have one, for God's sake get it insured and hang onto it), almost all of them have come out in blue, and Dan Wesson would rather die than make one in stainless. After some of the problems the other manufacturers have had with that material, we can understand him, if not totally agree.

Since we're talking about finish, let's stay with that, because the DW revolver is perhaps the prime candidate for a sophisticated gloss. Not on the outside, because the DW has one of the more finely polished finishes in the industry, but some people think that because certain action parts are sintered (powdered) metal, they're too soft to hold their configuration, and need to be hard-plated to stand up. In fact, almost as many Dan Wesson buffs feel that way as don't.

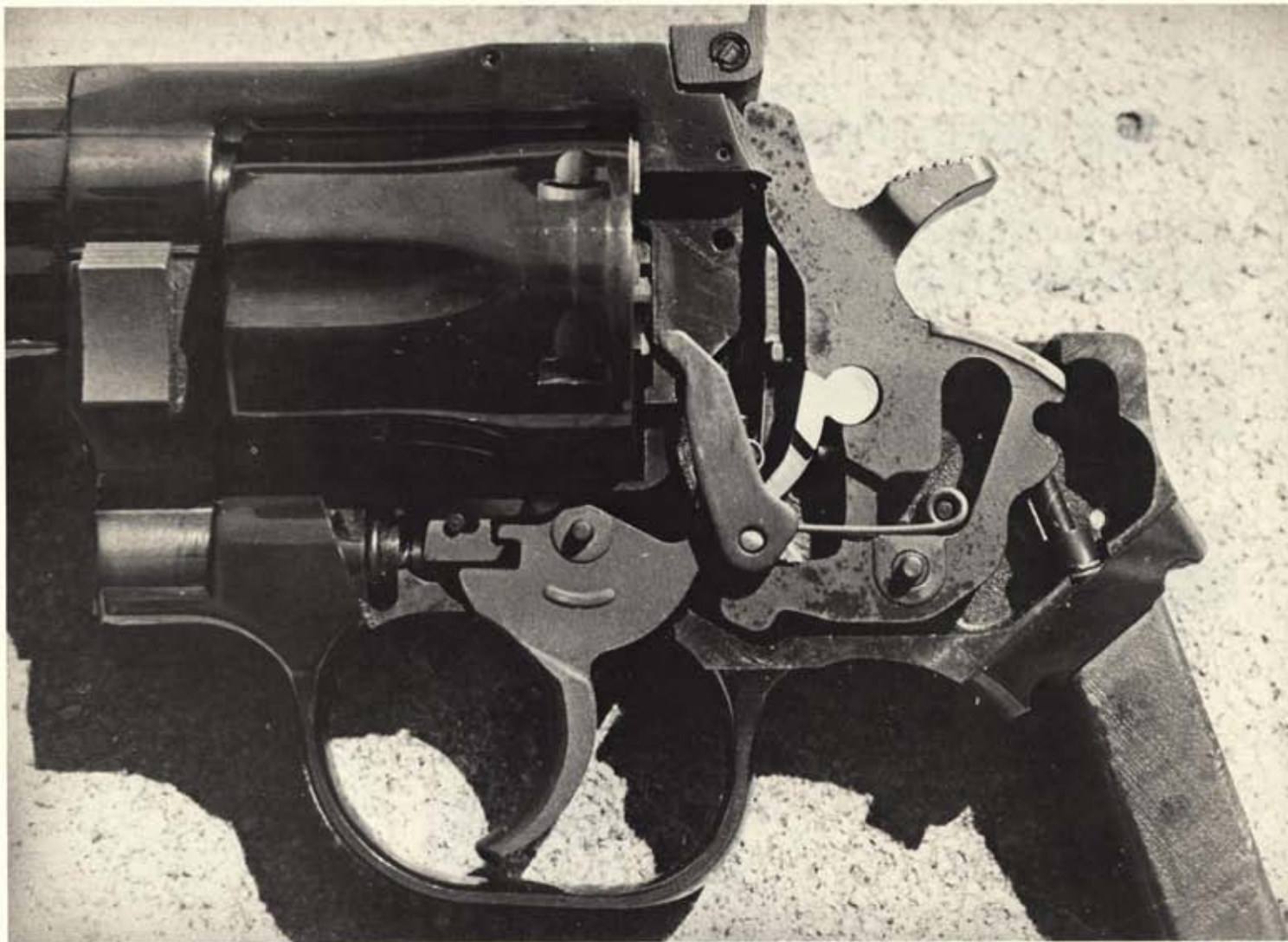
I'm a fence-sitter. I've had some Dan Wessons that did me fine as they came out

of the box through heavy shooting, but I also have to admit that the two DWs I shoot the most have Armalloyed or Metalified innards.

Let's take a rundown on the people around the country who are now doing custom work on the Dan Wesson gun. From their judgments and experiences, perhaps you can mix your own needs in to determine who'll do the best job for you.

Jim Cirillo used to do the best Dan Wesson actions anywhere. He told me that he isn't available commercially anymore. I have one of his guns that I waited a year for, and it was worth it. He is perhaps the only 'smith who has mastered a technique for cutting down Dan Wesson springs without losing Magnum reliability, and it shows in his actions, which are ultra-light and go down into the five-pound range double action. My Cirillo Dan Wesson, a 4" fixed sight, will bust .357 caps all day, yet has a pull like a PPC gun. The internal parts are plated; it has Cirillo's carefully-cut trigger return spring and mainspring; and Jimmy trimmed the hand and rounded the left edge of each ratchet to change the two-step feel of the Dan Wes-





Close-up of Model 15-2 action. During the years, just about every action part has undergone modification for a smoother, more reliable operation.

son action into a one-stage pull that you can still "trigger-brake" if you have a subtle experienced index finger. Jim is mainly a Smith man, and his Dan Wesson comes out distinctly "Smith & Wesson-y", but you should remember that Jim took one of the first Distinguished Police Combat awards, and earned himself a reputation as America's top snubby shooter, with Dan Wesson's he customized to this formula.

When a shooter wants the S&W-like straight through pull, with only a click instead of a felt hesitation when the hammer reaches the "let's go" point, there are other ways to get it. Paul Brothers of DWA would rather flatten the top of the hand. He says it does the same as Jimmy's version, but doesn't sacrifice the solid-pre-timing of the cylinder. Of course, since Paul doesn't like to mess with the main-

springs, his approach won't quite give you the minimum trigger pull, either.

When we say "pre-time," we mean that the cylinder is locked into position before the hammer begins to fall during double action shooting. The Colt Python, by contrast, doesn't usually pre-time: the Smith & Wesson may or may not depending on the production run. The Dan Wesson almost always pre-times out of the box.

What this means is that the last, crucial few ounces of pressure on the double action trigger don't do anything but drop the hammer, and you don't have to worry that a sudden "stacking" of pressure to finish turning the cylinder will make you put too heavy a pull on the trigger and jerk the shot. Amateurs criticize the Dan Wesson because, they say, "There's a little hitch there just before it goes off." Double action combat masters, who don't jerk their triggers back all at once, recognize this as a two stage trigger that allows you to rotate the cylinder with the first part of the pull, then finish the squeeze as if the gun had

been cocked. It makes for ultra-precise DA shooting.

Ironically, there are some who say the Dan Wesson is great single action, but blah in the DA mode. It does indeed have a nice, crisp SA pull, but anyone who thinks it isn't controllable double action has spent too much time with automatics to understand how the DW works. That, or they've been working with very early DWs, which had most of the pressure at the beginning of the ultrashort pull, and "whiplashed" wildly. A complete set of new parts will fix up those old guns.

There are several custom gunsmiths who will do a fine action job on the Dan Wesson, and maybe add some goodies besides.

Austin Behlert (717 Lehigh, Cranston, N.J. 07016), is partial to the Dan Wesson, and so, he says, are many of his customers. "It's basically a fine design. I would say it's one of the guns to beat in the field right now. The variations of barrel length are an unstoppable feature. They're going

Jim Cirillo with his customized Model 12 that won him the N.J. State Championship. Note painted sights, protective front wings.



Model 14-2 Service revolver in .357 Magnum with fixed sights. Four barrel lengths are offered.

20 clicks per revolution in elevation, 16 per revolution in windage, for an ultra-precise lock on the farthest target. A Behlert sight on a Smith gives you an amazing 237 clicks of elevation; it's somewhat less on the Dan Wesson because the elevation screw is so placed that to get that much height, the screw would have to go down into the cylinder. On a Smith, that screw is well back into the beefy part of the frame.

Andy Cannon, PO Box 632, Center Harbor, N.H. 03226 is the only guy I've run across who offers a full PPC conversion of the Dan Wesson. In addition to slicking the action (\$25), he'll put protective wings on a Patridge front sight (\$10), and for another \$5, he'll add a "trigger-ease" of soft material at the back of the trigger guard, an option that's strictly for DA-only gunners. His whole "Cannon PPC Dan Wesson" package goes for \$40 ... a bargain.

Included in the action job is a general honing, and a smoothing of the edges on the trigger. Like the S&W Ranger trigger, which resembles it, the one on the DW can pinch a bit.

Andy has his own approach to the mainsprings. The trigger return is modified for lightness. As to the mainspring, Andy takes one of the experimental production

for quality."

Austin believes he can improve on that, though, in several ways. He does a complete action job for \$28, which he says will make the DW as smooth as any Smith. Though Austin is not famous for quick deliveries, he says the DW job is so easy he can turn the gun around in a short time. For refinishing, which he's pushing right now, it'll be four to six weeks before you get it back.

Austin has two new finishes, applicable to any gun but especially nice in the Dan Wesson, which responds so well to plated parts. His stainless chromalloy process gives the entire gun the appearance and rust-resistance of stainless steel, tightens tolerances very slightly, and gives the parts a slicker feel. The process is \$75.00. To that, Austin likes to add his new microfinish, "a clean, ultrasonic mechanical hone that removes no material. With the combination of the stainless chromalloy and the microfinish, I can reduce trigger pull a third or better by reducing friction between parts," Austin promises. Microfinishing of all internal parts plus bore and cylinder goes another \$60.00.

Of major interest is the sight we mentioned before. The Behlert sight give you



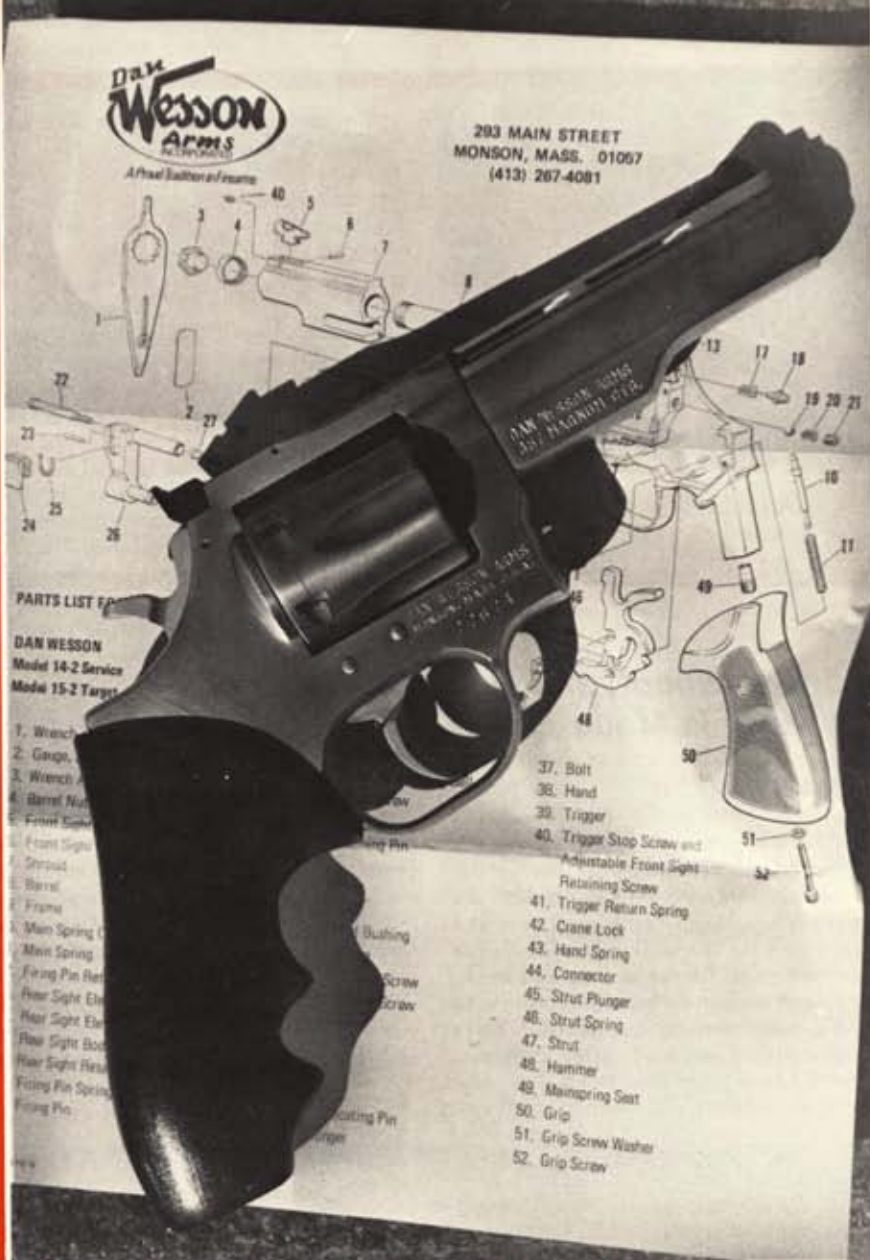
For a slicker action, author recommends nothing more than a little honing and application of molybdenum disulphide between the parts.

run the factory did a couple of years ago that turned out to be too light for reliability, and adapts it by altering the spring guide and putting the hole higher, tightening the spring for adequate compression with much lighter tension. This is for the PPC guns only, of course. Figure 10 days to 2 weeks, and allow \$5 or \$6 for parts.

Gregg Roberts, very well known on the West Coast for his PPC S&Ws, does only basic slicking on the Dan Wesson. A job goes in the \$20 price range, turnaround time is quick, and though I haven't tried one, he's said to be excellent. His address is Professional Police Firearms Service, Box 1017, 305 Soquel Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 16343.

The people at Dan Wesson are mixed as to who does the best custom action on their gun. Dan himself has very nice things to say about the Cirillo job. Dick Rosenfeld, vice president of the firm, says the best he's seen is that by Cleveland Bluing, 1024 E. 185th St., Cleveland, OH 44119. DW exec Fred Hill, an ex-cop and PPC shooter, vows that the best available custom job is from Jim Clark, 7424 Broadacres Rd., Shreveport, LA 71109.

Which would I choose? I'm very partial to my Cirillo Dan Wesson, but Jim says he's not able to do them on a commercial basis, so your best chance would be to corner him at a PPC match (he makes most of the big ones, especially in the north-east) and beg him on bended knee to take your DW home with him. If he does, specify whether you'll use the gun with hard-primer loads, or with wadcutter exclusively.



Factory does not offer plated guns and those who want something other than blue must have it done. This is the hard chrome Metalife finish.



Paul Butters carved this recoil-absorbing grip from walnut blank.

I've shot the Cannon PPC Dan Wesson, and it shoots like a dream. Andy, like Jim, seems to have licked the spring problem (at least in a wadcutting gun) and made an easy-to-shoot gun easier to shoot well.

I haven't tried the Roberts or Cleveland Bluing actions, but both come highly recommended. Jim Clark is well nigh incapable of making a bad gun, and if his S&W and Ruger custom revolvers are any indication, you won't go wrong trusting your Dan Wesson to him.

Of course, you can always tune it yourself. Just go very easy on messing with the springs. Flash-chroming the parts with a hard, slick surface can only help. How necessary it is, I'm not sure: some smiths do tell you that the powdered metal parts are too soft and let the gun go out of time too easily. When a Dan Wesson is out of time, I usually find it's because the top left sideplate screw has backed out a little. 8

or 9 times out of ten, a quick turn with the Allen wrench puts ratchet and hand back into a perfect, pre-timing relationship. And for a "home-slick" action, a little molybdenum disulphide between the parts along with very conservative honing is generally all that's required.

The Dan Wesson is an easy gun to get to know, inside and out. The beginning revolversmith could scarcely ask for a more forgiving "teacher" to learn with, though it does get a little pettish if you mess with its springs and take too many liberties with files.

The Dan Wesson is a fine, highly accurate weapon with performance at the top of its class in everything you'll use a DA .357 for. There are few people who'll find anything on it to improve. Those sophisticated shooters who would like custom touches would do well to contact the people described above.

The CLEAN Handgun Is...



A Joy to Shoot, and Now the Chore of Cleaning is Made Easier

By MIKE BARACH

TAKING the time to properly clean my battery of handguns has always left me with nightmarish effects. I guess you could say I'm basically a lazy person, as I always look for the easiest solution. It has become normal for me and my buddies to lug every handgun we have out to the strip mining fields here in eastern Ohio for a day of shooting and load testing. I remem-

ber many mornings we left at noon and pulled into my driveway at 10:00 that night! After ten long hours of shooting, cleaning those nasty lookin' handguns could be compared to pulling teeth without novocaine! I usually ended up piling them up in my loading room and closing the door. That helped very little as they didn't clean themselves through the night. So the next morning I was faced with the tedious, time consuming job of

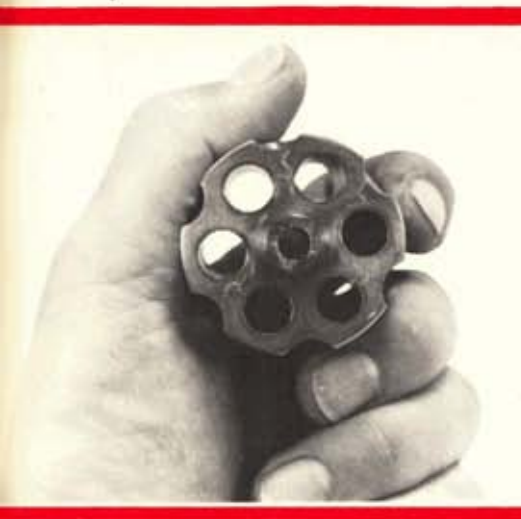
scrubbing the bores and giving them a good overall cleaning. This has gone on week-end after week-end until one day I called Jerry Rakusan, editor of *The American Handgunner* to discuss some prospective ideas on future articles. He'd received a new cleaning kit that he wanted tested so he sent it down along with a letter containing a couple of other products he wished for me to try out for use with this article.

BLACK SWAN AGC

Upon opening the carton I received from Jerry, I was a little bewildered when

Black Swan Automatic Gun Cleaner is a simple, economical and efficient handgun cleaning tool.





I pulled out a plastic bag (poly-vinyl), formed as a pocket, designed to hold any handgun with a barrel length of up to eight inches. Along with it came an electric agitator or aerator as I call it, a harness to fit over the top strap of a revolver, and a section of hose. I had a general idea of what these parts, once assembled, would do but I decided I'd better read the instructions to be sure. The outfit is called the Black Swan Automatic Gun Cleaner, and that's exactly what it is—automatic.

Preparing the handgun to be cleaned is quite easy. First remove the grips and slip the gun in the pocket. Fold any excess sleeve up until the muzzle is just about flush with the bottom and using the clip provided, secure it in place. Next, remove the gun and slip the harness over the top strap of the revolver just ahead of the front of the cylinder. Insert the gun into the bag, feed the section of hose through the hole located in the rear of the bag and hook it onto the plastic connector. Fill the bag with just enough solvent, I used Hoppe's #9, to cover the gun's recoil shield and seal the zipper. Finally, connect the loose end of the hose to the agitator and plug it in. The air is pumped through the hose to the harness which has four small openings. Air is released through these holes forming bubbles in the Hoppe's #9 which scrub the chambers and action parts. Turning the cylinder at least once during the cleaning process will insure that the chamber over the barrel will also be cleaned. To clean the barrel, merely insert the hose into the muzzle. The Automatic Gun Cleaner will thoroughly clean a dirtied handgun in approximately twelve to thirteen hours. This may

Aerator pumps air through a hose to agitate the solvent solution. Scrubbing bubbles do the work to remove metal and powder residue.

sound like a long time, but remember you're not lifting a finger once the agitator is plugged in and it may be left safely unattended. After the gun has been cleaned, it takes but a few minutes to remove it from the bag, wipe off the excess Hoppe's, and check the bore and chamber for any remaining lead deposits.

I use a six-inch Dan Wesson .357 Mag. revolver practically every time I go out to shoot and it gets filthy from cast bullet loads. The A.G.C. kit will thoroughly clean the Wesson wheelgun in approx. 14 hours. All but the most stubborn lead deposits will be removed. A quick & effective means of removing any remaining deposits will be taken up later in the article.

The cleaning kit will also work just as well on stainless steel handguns. A bottle of Gun Powder Liquefying Solution is supplied to remove the powder stain on the cylinder face & muzzle, common to stainless handguns. After cleaning my stainless Ruger Blackhawk in the A.G.C. kit, the stains remained around the front of the cylinder. Using the solution left the cylinder with a like new appearance. A word of caution on the solution—don't try using it on blued firearms as it will remove the bluing from the surface.

The manufacturer cautions the operators of the Automatic Gun Cleaner to clean nickel or chrome plated guns at their own risk. The kit was designed to clean blued steel & stainless steel handguns only. Although I don't own a plated gun, I'd take them at their word on it.

I've used the Automatic Gun Cleaning Kit for three or four months and have found it to be an effective means of clean-



The Lps Ultrasonic cleaner is a bit expensive, but it does a professional job in a shorter time.

ing handguns with a minimum amount of attention and fuss. The kit comes complete with all necessary equipment & instructions, excluding the Hoppe's #9 Solvent. It retails at \$19.50. For more information on the Black Swan Automatic Gun Cleaning Kit contact: Black Swan Enterprises, P.O. Box 3667, Dept. AH, San Bernardino, California 92413.

LPS ULTRA-SONIC

When it comes to the "Cadillac" of automatic gun cleaners, I'd have to cast my vote for the LPS ultra-sonic cleaning tank. Measuring 12³/₈" x 10³/₈" x 8¹/₂" high, the 8 quart tank is made of stainless steel for a lifetime of durability. A transducer sends ultrasonic waves through the LPS #1 solution cleaning the handgun(s)





With grips removed, handgun is placed in LPS tank, solution is added and, with a flip of the on button, pulsating waves do the job.

of accumulated powder residue and lead deposits. The Ultra-Sonic is the fastest, most convenient way of cleaning a handgun that I've seen yet. A grimy revolver or auto will be cleaned of all powder residue, bullet lube, and approximately 90% of the leading in no longer than one hour. A host of handguns may be cleaned before the LPS #1 must be filtered. The Ultra-Sonic may be safely used to clean any precision instrument and is harmless to all non-metallic materials used in handguns. It's most definitely not for those who shoot once a month as the asking price is \$350 without the tank cover and parts basket. Including them, tack on another \$25.00. If, on the other hand, you're an avid handgunner shooting three or four times a week or more, this outfit would be invaluable in saving time that could be spent reloading ammo. I used an Ultra-Sonic tank for a month or so and cleaned every handgun I own plus some T/C barrels. The best part about it was I just had to dump the gun in the tank, turn it on, and proceed to do what I pleased. An hour or so later the timer shuts the unit off automatically. All that's left to do is remove the gun, wipe off the excess LPS #1, and run a patch through the bore. Some lead deposits remained in my guns, but the majority of the bore, cylinder, & action were as clean as a sergeant's dress boots!

The Lewis Lead Remover may not be automatic but it sure does get the lead out and it costs less than 8 bucks.

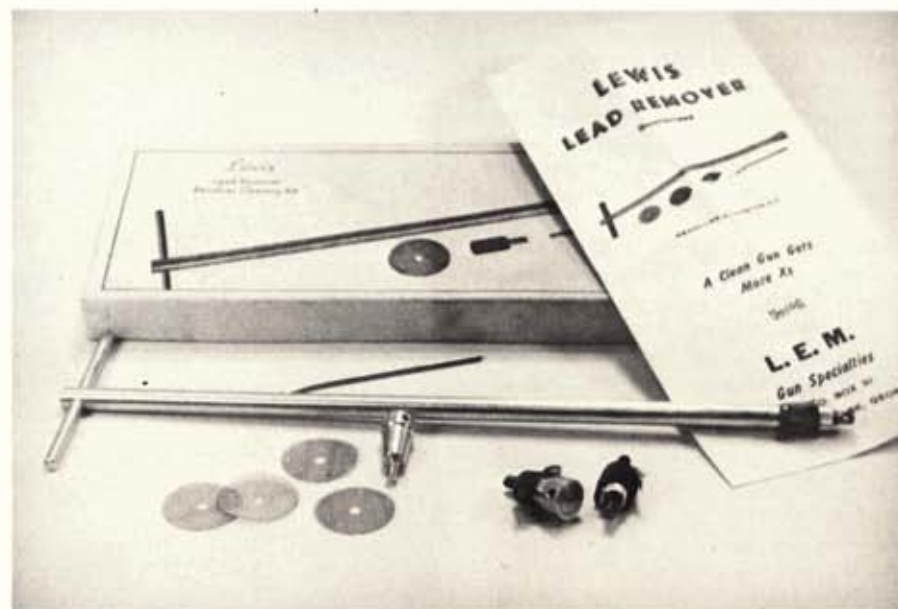
The tank is well made and there's no doubt in my mind that it'll last a lot longer than I will. It's an ideal way to effortlessly clean those handguns. The Ultra-Sonic carries an unconditional factory warranty covering parts and labor for 90 days. For more detailed information on the Ultra-Sonic write: LPS Research, Laboratories, 2050 Cotner Ave., Dept. AH, Los Angeles, Calif. 90025.

LEWIS LEAD REMOVER

There are a number of ways to remove leading in the bore and chambers of a

handgun. The old bristle brush and solvent is probably the most popular method or at least the most practiced. I used the above for many years until I discovered that the Lewis Lead Remover was faster and more efficient than scrubbing the hell out of the bore with a bristle brush. The Lewis Lead Remover has been on the market for quite a few years, but for those that are not familiar with it, here's how it works. The kit comes complete in a variety of calibers. Included in the kit are: A T-handle rod; cone tip for removing lead from the forcing cone; rubber tip for removing lead from the chambers and bore, and a supply of brass cloth patches. The use of solvent with this outfit is unnecessary other than for cleaning the bore & chambers of bullet lube or powder residue. The basic idea of the Lewis Lead Remover is to remove the leading with a constant pressure applied to the brass patches. This is accomplished by using the rubber tip. The patch is placed on the tip and bent backwards over the rubber. The tip is screwed onto the rod after it's run through the bore. The tip is pulled back into the bore just enough to start it through and a knurled nut on the rubber tip is tightened firmly against the rubber, then backed off a half-turn. The rod is then pulled straight through the bore. This operation is repeated until all leading is removed. The same procedure is used to clean the chambers except that the knurled nut on the rubber tip is left tightened against the rubber.

(Continued on page 66)





VIEWING THE Ammo Scene

By EVAN MARSHALL

INTRODUCTION

THE purpose of this series is to provide the handgunner with the opportunity to compare the various high performance loads currently available. The variety of rounds produced by the ammunition manufacturers can make an intelligent choice extremely difficult.

Factory provided performance data doesn't give a realistic picture of a load's actual performance. Factory test barrels are generally considerably longer than those found on most handguns. Furthermore, these pressure barrels lack the gap

found between the cylinder and barrel on revolvers. The result is that factory quoted velocities are considerably higher than those obtainable from the handgun.

The loads tested here are readily available from retail sources. They were checked for both velocity and expansion. An Oehler Chronograph with skyscreens (P.O. Box 9135, Austin, Texas 78756) was used to determine velocity. It's a highly accurate instrument that is simple and foolproof to operate.

Expansion was checked by firing into blocks of oil base clay. This material was chosen because the blocks can be easily

sectioned to compare wound channels.

It should be pointed out that all of the various ammunition manufacturers are doing their best to produce loads that are top notch performers. They load these rounds within certain pressure limitations, and small differences in things such as bullet diameter or jacket thickness can allow substantially higher velocities at the same pressure rating. The idea that some manufacturers are dumping junk ammunition on the public to make a quick buck is absurd. These are established firms and if their ammo doesn't perform as promised, it won't remain a secret for long.

THE .38 SPECIAL

The .38 Special was introduced in 1902 as a replacement for the .38 Long Colt that had failed so miserably during the Philippine Insurrection. The Military, however, remained generally unimpressed and issued "obsolete" single action .45s that had been in storage.

In order to recoup their investment, Smith & Wesson turned to the civilian and police market. It soon became a popular caliber in both circles. Actually it's good in all areas but one. Unfortunately, that area is a critical one—stopping power.

The traditional .38 Special load has proven to be totally inadequate for its intended task. The stories of failure with this load are legion. I know of one instance where a cop killer was shot thirteen times with this load, but lived to stand trial!

Unfortunately, those who make the rules and regulations for our police are only sometimes swayed by logic. Most seem to be more concerned about negative public reaction or their budget.

For decades those who carried the .38 Special for law enforcement or defensive purposes were forced to handload if they wanted effective ammunition. The .38/.44 loads that preceded the .357 Magnum retained the round nose shape. The benefits of the increased velocity were largely lost because of the inefficient bullet shape.

This is how things stood when a young man from Shelbyville, Indiana, introduced a radical new load for the .38 Special. That man was Lee Jurras, and the ammunition was Super Vel.

Lee reasoned that since most police departments were either unwilling or unable to change calibers, the best approach was to upgrade the efficiency of the .38 Special. This way, the officer could substantially increase his chances of survival merely by buying a box of ammunition.

Jurras chose to increase the stopping power of the .38 by radically decreasing the weight of the bullet and increasing its velo-

city so that it would produce reliable expansion. Super Vel bullets consisted of dead soft lead cores with thin copper jackets. They were consistent expanders out of the longer barrels, but performance out of the snub was somewhat erratic.

Super Vel ceased production in 1974, primarily because of insurmountable problems with suppliers. By the time Jurras loaded the last Super Vel round, however, virtually every handgun ammunition manufacturer was producing similar loads.

Today, there is a bewildering assortment of high performance loads on the market for the handgunner. Speer alone makes seven high performance loads for the .38 Special.

The .38 Special requires a bullet that reliably expands to even approach reliable stopping power. While velocity is an important factor in determining expansion, it is not the only factor, as the accompanying data will show. Superior bullet design can produce reliable expansion at velocities considerably below 1,000 fps.

It should be pointed out that individual lots of ammunition will vary, as will the velocities obtained in different guns of the same barrel length. However, the top performers in each category remained in that position regardless of what gun they were fired in.

The revolvers used in the testing were a Colt Detective Special with two inch barrel and a S&W Model 66 with four inch barrel. Five rounds of each load were fired through both, and their average velocity determined with a electronic calculator. Recovered diameter was measured with a precision micrometer.

These loads were separated into categories by the same weight, so that the various loads by each manufacturer can be easily compared.

Both Remington and Smith & Wesson offer loads specifically

To page 64...

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By **GEORGE BREDSTEN**

HANDGUN CARTRIDGES FOR BIG GAME—PART I

AT one time or another, most of the many different handgun cartridges—from the 2.7 mm Kolibri to the 15 mm Gevelot & Gaupillat—have probably been used to take some type of big game. It follows that persons could likely be found who would recommend/reject any handgun cartridge for big game hunting. Many such recommendations/rejections are purported to be based upon objective evaluations of the cartridge's performance afield, but are instead the end product of subjective conjecture. It might seem that successful big game handgun hunters would be eminently qualified to make categorical recommendations or rejections. However, and based on the information gleaned from correspondence and/or discussions of other handgun hunters, this is not necessarily true.

A number of big game handgun hunters appear to have extensive yet rather narrow experience. When queried, most of the successful handgun hunters admitted their experience was gained hunting one species; e.g., whitetail deer. These same handgun hunters also indicated one handgun cartridge (load) was used to the virtual exclusion of all others. Consequently, such handgun hunters are apt to have some biased and distorted opinions regarding the field effectiveness of other (untried) handgun cartridges.

Considering the differences in species size, structure, and temperament, the generic term "big game" is a bit ambiguous—it can and often does mean different animals to different handgun hunters. It is believed appropriate to first provide a working definition of the term "big game."

This has been done by grouping animals according to certain common or shared characteristics.

CATEGORY I: Non-dangerous

A. Thin skinned; relatively light muscle and skeletal structure; highly susceptible to the effects of bullet shock; minimum

chance of aggressive or dangerous behavior against the hunter.

Examples: Pronghorn, reedbuck and whitetail deer

B. Thick skinned; heavy muscle and skeletal structure; low to moderate susceptibility to the effects of bullet shock; minimum to moderate chance of aggressive or dangerous behavior against the hunter.

Examples: Elk, moose and sable
CATEGORY II: Dangerous

A. Thin skinned; moderate muscle and skeletal structure; low to moderate susceptibility to the effects of bullet shock; greater chance of aggressive or dangerous behavior against the hunter.

Examples: Leopard and wild pig

B. Thin skinned; heavy muscle and skeletal structure; low susceptibility to the effects of bullet shock; greater chance of aggressive or dangerous behavior against the hunter.

Examples: Grizzly bear and African lion

C. Thick skinned; extremely heavy muscle and skeletal structure; very low susceptibility to the effects of bullet shock; greater chance of aggressive or dangerous behavior against the hunter.

Examples: African Cape buffalo and Guar

D. Thick skinned; massive muscle and skeletal structure; low susceptibility to the effects of bullet shock; greater chance of aggressive or dangerous behavior against the hunter.

Examples: Elephant and rhinoceros

Although not generally known, the fact remains that both Arthur Jones and Bill Carpenter took African elephant using 44 Magnum revolvers. Other experienced handgunners, such as Elmer Keith, Lee Jurras, and Bob Zwirz have taken large species and/or have made rather long range handgun kills of big game. While the foregoing is true, it would be a manifestation of fallacious reasoning to recommend—directly or indirectly—such en-

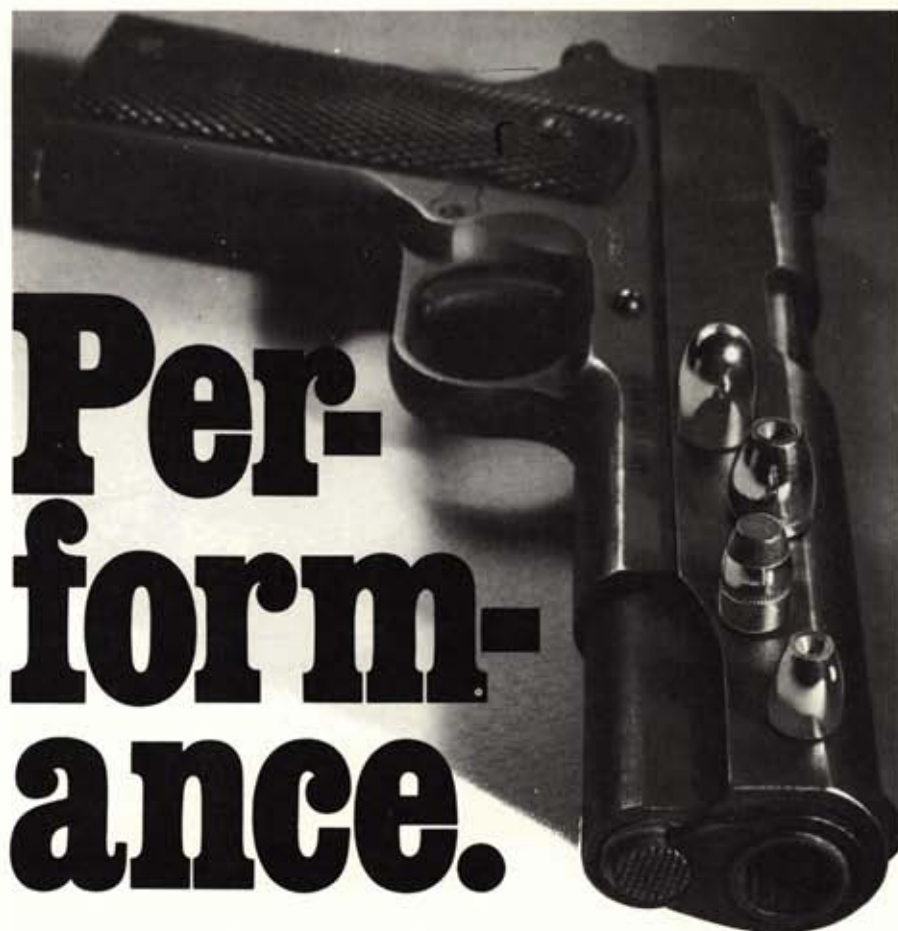
deavors be undertaken by the neophyte handgun hunter. As it is, whether by choice or circumstances, most handgun hunters hunt big game of Category I:A. With this in mind, the following is offered for use as a guide in determining handgun cartridge adequacy for such big game.

Other factors may be considered, but a realistic evaluation of any handgun cartridge must consider accuracy and terminal 'wound' ballistics. While the definition of accuracy is understood by most shooters, the fact remains that accuracy can be of two types; i.e., inherent or practical. The two are not synonymous! Inherent accuracy concerns the degree of accuracy obtainable from the system being tested—without the affect of human vagaries. Whereas, practical accuracy concerns the degree of accuracy the shooter can obtain under field conditions. Obviously the handgun hunter is or should be vitally concerned with the latter.

Thus, if a handgunner using a given handgun/cartridge combination is not able to hit the proverbial "barn door," the fact that the combination produces minute-of-angle (MOA) groups from a machine rest is useful only as a conversational gambit. Conversely, if the same handgunner can use another handgun/cartridge combination and keep the shots (bullets) in a big game animal's vital area, the fact that the latter combination produces machine rest groups measuring six MOA is irrelevant. For that person, the inherently less accurate combination is undeniably choice. As important, if not more so, is the handgun hunter's condition of readiness. This refers to what the handgunner can do on demand—not what he can do on occasion or what he once did. For example, instead of shooting four inch groups one day and twelve inch groups on another day, it would be much better if the handgunner could consistently shoot eight inch groups.

Although the esoteric aspects of wound ballistics have little import for most hunters, it would demonstrate utter naivety to consider such knowledge to be of an extraneous nature. Still, actual/comparative bullet performance (wound ballistics) in big game—unlike actual/comparative accuracy—can seldom be objectively determined by an individual. When one considers the quantity of game that would have to be taken together with the myriad variety of handgun cartridges (loads) that could be used, it is quite evident that no individual is likely to have the necessary time, money, inclination and opportunity to accomplish much. Granted, some individuals achieve considerable more than others, but the statistical significance of any one person's efforts in taking big game is relatively minor.

As a result, there are those who contend that cartridges can be test fired into certain inanimate media (gelatin blocks, dux-seal, wet-lap, or wet pack), and the data



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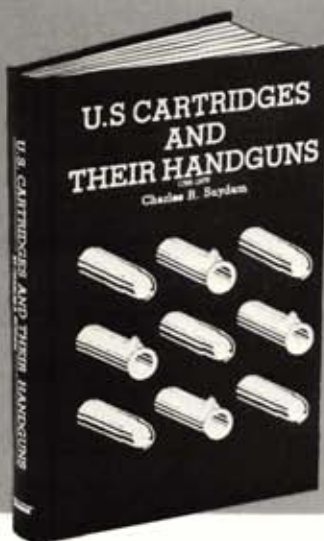
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derived therefrom can be used to indicate probable bullet performance in big game. However, many 'media testers' tend to obfuscate the primary purpose of such tests, and discerning individuals view much of this data as being either misleading or meaningless. This can be attributed to the fact that few, if any, attempts are made to correlate bullet performance in the test medium with the known/recorded bullet performance in big game. Yet, the 'media testers' quite often become disconcerted and act obtrusively whenever their analyses are challenged. If any person

would be so impertinent as to dispute their data with mere facts gained from field experience, intolerance and a condescending manner become the 'media testers' mainstay. The discriminating handgun hunter will consider bullet performance in an inanimate medium to be an adjunct, not a substitute for bullet performance in big game!

Part II will consider the subjects of handgun cartridge adequacy and some of the more common handgun cartridges used to take big game.



SHOOTING THE DAN WESSON

(Continued from page 45)

I do, and I would for peace of mind even if I didn't have to.

There is a way around that, however; the interchangeable Dan Wesson front sight blades. Find a sight setting that's just right with the loads and distances you work your favorite barrel with and on the rest of the tubes, file the sight blade on the top and the side until it puts the rounds where you want them with the same rear sight adjustment as you use on your #1 barrel/shroud.

Selection of barrels is totally subjective. The most interesting Dan Wesson Pistol Pac is the one that they give to their sales reps: each barrel is not only a different length, but a different design: skinny and heavy, vent-ribbed and solid. Frankly, I'd like to be able to order a Pistol Pac that way, instead of all barrels having the same general configuration.

My only use for the 2 1/2" (indeed, for any snub .357 on this big a frame) is snub-nose combat match shooting. I like the heavy, unvented tube best for this. In a 4", I like the vent heavy or the straight heavy for balance, but the standard skinny barrel is good enough in this respect, and fits more concealment holsters better. In a 6", I'm partial again to the heavy solid barrel shrouds, but when I get up to 8" or 12", the slim vented tubes seem to have better balance. This is especially true when you get all the way up to the 15" length.

I have no use for the latter. It's too long for metallic silhouette handgun matches (the 12" tube just about hits the maximum sight radius according to that game's rules).

I have a number of DW tubes. I'll use the 12" vent-heavy barrel occasionally in production class of metallic silhouette competition, because the long sight radius makes it shoot like a rifle. I use the 6" solid-heavy in Distinguished class PPC shooting, and it's the one I prefer to mount a BoMar rib on, though this is ac-

ademic because BoMar designs their product so that even if you have a vented shroud the bolts will lock into the supported areas.

I'd like to see DW come out with optional 1-in-14 or 1-in-16 rifling twists in all barrel lengths. These have been produced in the long-barrel guns, so the technology exists at the plant to put them into the standard-length tubes. I'm certain the change would enhance accuracy beyond the already high levels.

How high is that? Damn high. The company bills it as the most accurate. .38/357 revolver around, and I think they may possibly be right. The combination of the tight cylinder lockup (latch directly in front of the frame, hard-sprung ball bearing locking the rear) and the barrel that is uncrowned and under slight tension from both ends, makes for dynamite precision shooting. People in the field tell me consistently of 2" groups from factory Dan Wessons at 50 yards. Only the Colt Python regularly equals that, probably because of the ultra-tight cylinder lockup with that gun's "second hand," and the 1-in-16" twist of the Python, which better stabilizes the match .38 wadcutters most testers use.

The Dan Wesson .357? I love it. It's super accurate. It gives you a latitude in grip design and barrel length and shape, and over-all balance that no other wheelgun can equal. The action is decent, and can be made super. Where before they competed against low price guns, they're now going against the cream of the crop... and in workmanship and every other category, they stack up well.

Of course, you can always make a good gun better, and the article that follows this will tell you how to get a custom Dan Wesson that don't take a back seat to nuthin' and might, with its personalized features, combine with the intrinsically unique design facets of the Dan Wesson to give you the best .357 anywhere.



EVOLUTION OF THE DAN WESSON

(Continued from page 41)

The grip styles offered by the Dan Wesson company have been changed time and again. Naturally the company has to offer a happy medium and currently offers four choices: oversize target, traditional, combat, or Sacramento. The last two are of the finger-groove type and vary in thickness. The Dan Wesson will see yet another grip offering in the Pistol-Pac only. It will be made of Zebrawood in the oversize target style with either checkering or a smooth finish. The Zebrawood grip will become the standard offering in the Pistol-Pac with the other grips as optional.

Finally, for the .44 Magnum fans, the Dan Wesson firm will — within the next four to five years — introduce an innovative revolver design. The information I gained at the Wesson plant was rather vague as to overall design, but it will be offered with the interchangeable barrel feature, even though it will be different from the current Dan Wesson design. The gun has yet to be prototyped, but according to Dick Rosenfeld, partner and marketing manager, the gun will incorporate major advantages and changes to make it the most innovative design yet to be marketed. It will, no doubt, also be offered in two other big-bore calibers. Keep your eyes open for this one. It should be well worth the wait!

Through the course of six years, the Dan Wesson revolver has been refined from a relatively mediocre handgun to a stylish looking, smooth operating revolver. The process was slow, yet each advancement brought it closer to the gun Dan Wesson wanted and originally envisioned it to be.

In summing things up, the Dan Wesson has come a long way. It's well-made, ruggedly designed and suitable for target, combat, competition, police or hunting use. There has yet to be a gun made that is perfect in all respects, but the Dan Wesson firm is constantly striving to maintain high-quality and improvements in their revolver. The enthusiastic attitude of the company along with the continuous improvements may enable them to change the "Big Two" to the "Big Three."



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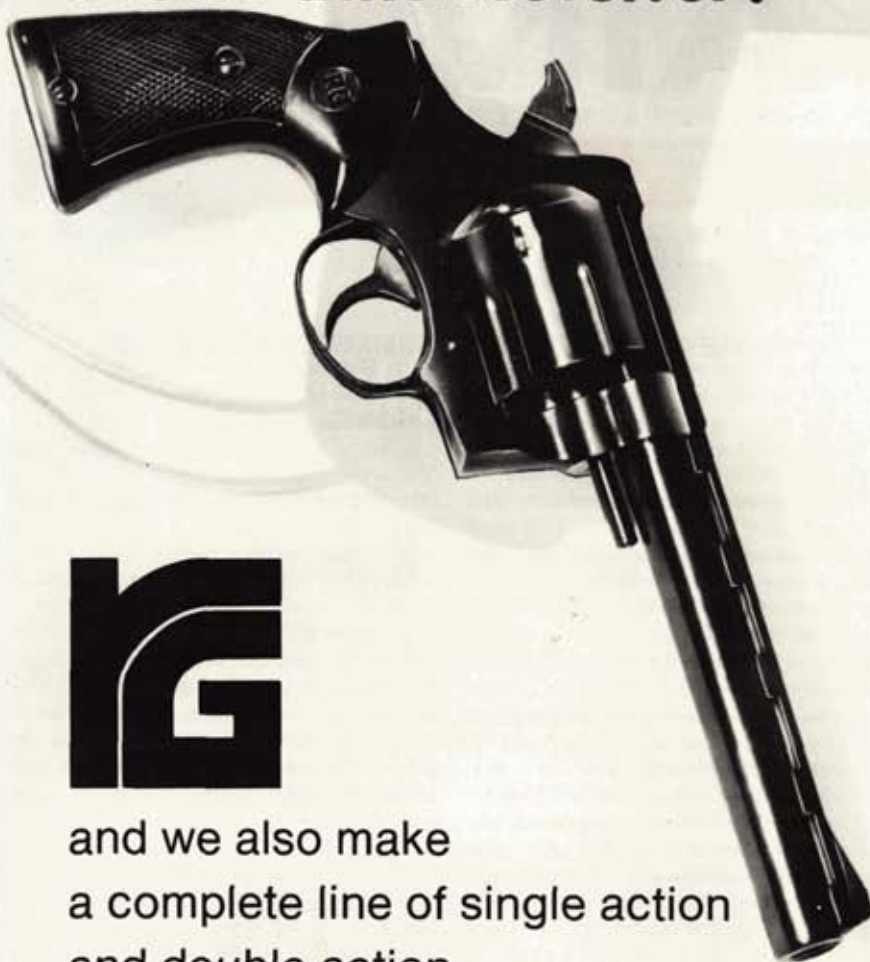
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TAKING AIM



THOSE @*!/+&***##?#@*! MAGAZINE SAFETIES

By GEORGE NONTE

EVER since I encountered my first magazine safety in an autoloading pistol, I've had a profound dislike for them. Maybe the nature of the encounter had something to do with it. As a youngster I'd swapped for a very beat-up Colt .25, with a half-box of dubious cartridges, but no magazines. There I was with seven bucks worth of swapping goods in a gun I couldn't shoot—and all because of that damned magazine safety.

Now I'll admit that in nearly a lifetime of carrying handguns for more or less serious purposes, I've never been in a shooting situation where the presence of a magazine safety would have caused me any trouble. But, the blasted things bother me. I can visualize a half-dozen perfectly legitimate probable situations in which a magazine safety could prevent firing a shot at a critical moment, or possibly having the gun out of action for a longer period of time. Magazines do become damaged or lost, especially during hurried reloading.

Anyway, quite a few makes and models of autos are sold with magazine safeties installed. Safety is always a good selling point, and it gains "factoring criteria" points for imported guns.

The big Star Models, A, B, and P, as well as the Super SM .380 have such safeties. In the A, B, & P, it normally takes the form of a spring lever set into the frame under the right grip at the rear of the magazine well cut-out. There are variations, but the most recent is a spring lever simply slipped into a shallow vertical dovetail; it may be drifted upward with a soft punch and hammer until it comes free. When the magazine is in place, the

lever is held outward and the gun is free to fire; with the magazine out, the lever moves inward and a lug on its upper end blocks sear movement, so the gun cannot be fired.

The Star SM .380 differs in that a separate lateral plunger similar to and above the magazine catch functions to block trigger movement when the magazine is removed; when the magazine enters, the catch is forced to the right, clearing a path for trigger movement to fire the gun.

Plunger removal is exactly as for the magazine catch, after which simply filing or grinding the interfering shoulder $\frac{1}{32}$ -inch or a bit more to the right removes the obstruction, and the gun can be fired with the magazine removed. This plunger *can* be removed entirely, but should not be, because it also functions as a latch for the dismount lever.

The Smith & Wesson M39 and M59 pistols contain an unusual magazine safety in the form of a spring-loaded vertical plunger in the slide beneath the rear sight. With no magazine in the gun, this plunger forces down the pivoted ejector which, in turn, forces the disconnecter down and prevents the trigger from moving the sear. When a magazine is in place, it holds the ejector up, against the safety spring, so the disconnecter can rise normally and allow the gun to be fired.

Removal of this magazine safety is the simplest of all. Just pry up the front of the rear sight base, rotate it 90 degrees counter-clockwise and lift it out of the slide; invert the slide and shake out the safety plunger and spring. Reinstall the rear sight, and the gun may be fired without a magazine in place.

The tiny, and very nice, little Budischowsky TP-70, double-action pocket gun contains a very simple magazine safety. A spring lever is screwed to the right side of the frame. An inward projection lays over the trigger bar at an angle. With no magazine in the gun, it moves inward far enough that the angular projection cams the trigger bar out of engagement with hammer and sear. Insert a magazine, and it forces the lever outward, allowing the trigger bar to re-engage the hammer and sear for normal DA or SA firing.



Star SM auto pistol in .380 has magazine safety as a plunger in frame at upper front corner of right grip; remove by rotating slotted head.



In big frame Star auto pistols, the magazine safety is the vertical leaf spring in frame behind magazine.



Budischowsky safety is spring finger held by large head screw beneath grip panel above magazine well.

To get rid of the Budischowsky magazine safety, simply turn out the screw holding it in place, and remove it. Thereafter the gun will fire normally, magazine or no magazine.

The well known Browning High-Power auto has an unusual magazine safety. It consists of a T-shape, spring-loaded shoe attached to the trigger. It intrudes into the front of the magazine well, and pivots the trigger lever out of engagement with the sear lever; ergo, pulling the trigger cannot move the sear to fire the gun. When a magazine is inserted, it forces the shoe forward, allowing the trigger lever to re-engage the sear lever, and the gun may be fired.

To deactivate this beauty, field strip the gun, drift out the trigger pin, and lift the trigger assembly up out of the frame. Locate the pin holding the safety to the trigger and simply drift it out; remove the safety and spring, reassemble the gun, and the job is done.

The Browning/FN M1910/1922 series pistols in .32 and .380 caliber have a magazine-safety lever pivoted at the upper rear of the magazine well. Some war time (WWII) production guns made for the Wehrmacht do not contain this safety; it

was eliminated to speed production, and save a few DM.

The safety is the oddly T-shape part just below the sear. With the magazine removed, you can see its curved upper portion intrude into the magazine well. After stripping the gun, drift out the pin securing the magazine safety, but don't lose the little safety spring. Grind or file off the slender "tail" to the rear of the safety, then reinstall the altered part. From this point no more magazine-safety function.

Magazine safeties exist in many other old and new models of autoloaders. They are easy to detect—cock the gun, remove the magazine, and pull the trigger. Assuming good mechanical condition, if the gun will not fire, a magazine safety is present.

In most instances, close inspection of the magazine well will disclose the safety; there will be a button, finger, or lever protruding slightly into the well. With the slide and grips off, it can be seen in good light. Once the part is identified, a little study of the mechanism will disclose a simple method of deactivating or removing it. Examine parts and functioning carefully to determine whether the safety has any other function; it might form a link in the normal functioning chain. If it

does not, just remove it; if it does, file or grind the appropriate area so that it will no longer prevent firing with the magazine removed.

Once a magazine safety is removed or deactivated, that gun no longer meets catalog or reference specifications. That's no problem so long as you own the gun—you know it's been altered. But, if you decide to dispose of it, be sure and tell the buyer. Better yet, replace the safety, or at least attach it to the gun in an envelope with a tag clearly marked to show the safety has been removed. In the case of an altered safety, such as in the Star Super SM, attach a tag stating clearly "Magazine safety deactivated, gun will fire with magazine removed."

Remember, a neophyte pistolero given to reading factory specs will expect the gun to contain a functional magazine safety if those specs say it has one. If you've deactivated it and don't tell the buyer, you might be preparing an accident to happen. The courts being what they are these days, you might even find yourself being held liable for a fatal or disabling accident at some time in the future.



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THE PISTOLSMITH

By GEORGE C. NONTE

REPLACING A REVOLVER BARREL

There are many reasons for replacing a revolver barrel. You may want a different barrel length; the barrel/cylinder gap has gotten too wide in the gun; you want a heavier barrel or ribbed barrel; perhaps the old barrel has been bulged or otherwise damaged; or the original tube is just too worn, rusted, or pitted to do the job anymore. Regardless of the reason, removing the old and installing a new barrel is not beyond the capability of the average pistolero, providing he's cautious, handy with the files, and possessed, of a sturdy bench vise tied down solidly somewhere. Doing the job yourself may not save a great deal of money, but considering the delivery times quoted by many pistolsmiths these days, you may be able to get the job done many months sooner at home. Of course, parts availability being what it is today (with all of the major manufacturers) it may take six months to a year to obtain the replacement barrel before you can even start.

The procedures we're going to describe

are generally applicable to replacing a barrel in any modern, solid-frame revolver—with the single exception that we're not going to cover the substitution of snub-nose barrels for longer ones, which usually requires replacement or alteration of the extractor rod. We don't have space to get into that at this time.

The first thing to do is to choose the replacement barrel. Don't try to upgrade the gun by installing a Python barrel on a Colt Official Police, or a K-38 barrel on a S&W M10. The frames aren't contoured to match up with those heavy ribbed barrels, and though they may be installed, there'll be a gap between rib and frame, and it won't look right. Stick with a duplicate of the original barrel style, or one which is made for that particular frame.

This first step is to completely disassemble the gun, removing all internal parts and the cylinder, then re-install the side plate but leave the grips and crane/cylinder off. Look closely, and if there is a barrel-retaining pin as on all

Smith & Wessons, carefully drift it out *without* damaging the frame around the hole. Next, wrap reinforced tape around the top strap and the bottom of the frame cutout to protect the finish. Almost any tape will do, but reinforced filament tape is the toughest, and offers the greatest protection.

Take a couple of wood blocks and gouges or chisels (a rotary file in your Dremel Moto-tool will also do the job) and roughly carve a groove in each so they can be clamped tightly over the barrel. For plain round barrels, fit the grooves as snugly to the barrel as possible; for those with ribs and underlugs, a looser fit is practical inasmuch as those protrusions will help prevent rotation under load. It will do no harm if you sprinkle a bit of powdered rosin in the grooves to give the wood a better grip. I don't suppose spoiling the finish by slippage on the original barrel will be any catastrophe, but we want to make damn sure that doesn't happen with the new barrel. Make up a hardwood lever at least a foot long that will fit into the cylinder recess in the frame. For years I've used a common hickory hammer handle, but a square section lever will actually work better by distributing its pressure more evenly and closer to the barrel tenon. Any hardwood will do, but if using metal, make it lightweight, preferably aluminum. A bar of rectangular section approximately 1 inch by 1/2 inch will work well in all sizes of frames.

Place the barrel between the wood blocks, clear up to the frame shoulder, and clamp it tightly in the vise, with the frame in such a position that there is clearance for it to be rotated a full 360 degrees. Bear down on that vise handle; clamp the barrel as tight as possible, then a bit tighter.

Insert one end of the lever into the cylinder recess, up against the barrel breech, so that pressure may be exerted counterclockwise; then rap the end of the lever smartly but not too heavily with a hammer to break the frame loose from the barrel. A sharp but moderate blow will break the threads loose much easier than slow pressure. Though it may seem odd, you're more likely to bend the frame by applying slow pressure than by a sharp blow. Due to the relatively narrow shoulder, threads usually break loose easily, after which the frame may be turned off the barrel by hand. The first two or three turns may require some help from the lever, but after that it should spin off easily.

That gets rid of the old barrel, but don't throw it away unless it's completely ruined. As long as it's serviceable on the outside, it might still be useful some day for relining or rebaring.

Clean the threads inside the frame with a stiff bore brush and solvent, and if there's any rust there, scrub it out with steel wool or a stiff wire brush. If there are



Before even thinking about removing a barrel, always examine the frame for any pins or retaining devices; this S&W barrel is held by a pin.

any burrs or irregularities on the front of the frame where it meets the barrel shoulder, scrape, stone, or needle-file them off. Do the same to the threads and shoulder of the new barrel, then lightly oil both sets of threads.

Turn the new barrel into the frame by hand as far as it will go, making certain it's a free fit. If the threads are too tight for hand-turning (and this will happen only seldom) wire-brush the threads heavily to burnish them a bit, and the fit will ease up. If this doesn't help, recheck to make absolutely certain that you have a barrel whose threads fit those in the frame. It could happen, you know.

Clamp the new barrel as tightly as possible between the wood blocks, making any changes in the grooves that might be necessary if the new one is larger or different



This S&W 1917 barrel required use of a file on shoulder before it would turn up far enough.

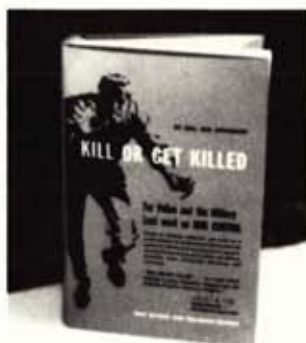
in profile. It's even more important at this time that the barrel be held as tightly as possible; any slippage whatever will spoil the finish.

Turn the frame on the barrel by hand as far as it will go, then snug it up against the barrel shoulder with the lever. Make it as tight as hand pressure on the end of the lever will allow, then check vertical alignment by eye. Look over the rear sight at the front sight (taking it out of the vise, naturally) and determine how near to vertical it is. Viewed from the rear, the front sight should lack about 1/8th turn of coming to vertical. (If it has reached vertical or gone past, then we've got a problem, but we'll get to that in a moment.) Clamp the barrel back in the vise, insert the lever, and tap the end with a hammer until the threads and shoulder "crush in" sufficiently that the front sight can be brought to vertical alignment. If there's any doubt in your own mind about what is true vertical, have a couple of friends eyeball it as well. This last 1/8th turn of "draw" provides the necessary tightness of assembly.

If the barrel will not turn in initially to within 1/4 to 1/2 turn of vertical, then it will be necessary to very carefully file forward the barrel shoulder with a small, fine-cut, safe-edge file. Do this in very small stages; be particularly careful that the same amount of metal is removed all the way around, and that the shoulder remains

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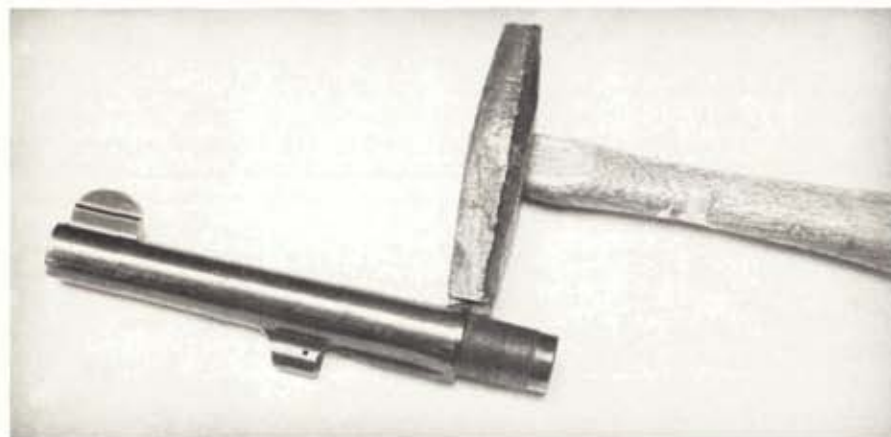
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perpendicular to the bore centerline. File and fit until the barrel turns up as described. Then, finish the job as before.

If the barrel turns in too far, the problem is different—you must move the shoulder rearward, so that it contacts the frame sooner, and allows a tight draw to proper alignment.

If the shoulder needs to be moved rearward more than about .005 inch, the simplest and neatest method is to carefully cut and file a washer out of steel shim stock whose thickness will allow the barrel to turn up within 1/4 turn of vertical; this can be determined with a feeler gauge between barrel shoulder and frame. The shim washer should be very carefully trimmed to match the outer edge of the barrel shoulder, finished smooth, and then blued before the barrel is installed. When a lesser amount is required, the outer edge of the shoulder is very carefully peened to move it rearward. This is done with a light, smooth-face hammer striking lightly

barrel tenon, and observe approximately how much metal must be removed. With the top strap masked so you won't mar the finish, file the rear surface of the barrel tenon forward, taking care that it remains perpendicular to the bore center line, and that the metal is removed uniformly all around. Use a fine-cut file and apply chalk to its teeth if necessary to eliminate chatter; we don't want a rippled surface. Alternately file a couple of strokes and try the cylinder until it will just barely close all the way. Then, get out your feeler gauges, and continue filing very carefully until a uniform gap exists between barrel and cylinder of at least .003 inch, but no more than .006 inch when the cylinder is held fully forward. Don't make the mistake of letting the feeler gauge crowd the cylinder to the rear; it will likely have more than .003 inch end play, and thus when it moves forward in normal functioning, it will drag across the barrel tenon. This is avoided by holding the cylinder fully for-



When the barrel shoulder needs to be moved to the rear only a few thousandths of an inch, peening with a light hammer is the simplest way.

and uniformly with overlapping strokes around the outer edges of the shoulder. If this is done very carefully with many light blows heavily overlapped, the surface will not get noticeably marred. Get too heavy-handed, though, and the surface will look like a cobblestone street. Peen the surface until the barrel will turn up initially to within 1/4 turn or a bit more of vertical.

Then, whether peened or shimmed, draw the barrel up as described until it is properly aligned. If there is a barrel pin, run a drill or pin reamer one size larger through the original hole to true it up. Then, cut a tight-fitting pin from drill rod, polish its ends to a radius, and drift into place. Avoid damaging the frame around the hole.

If it sounds as if the job is finished, you're mistaken. The barrel tenon is probably too long to allow the cylinder to be swung into place. This is deliberate, so that the barrel/cylinder gap may be properly regulated. Assemble the cylinder and crane, and swing it until it strikes the

ward to the limit of its end play when measuring the gap. Once you've established the proper gap, scrape or file off any burrs, and the job is finished, with the exception of an optional bit of polishing with an Arkansas stone on the barrel face.

Nothing remains now but to remove the cylinder, crane, and sideplate along with the masking tape, then thoroughly scrub everything with solvent to remove filings and old oil and grease. Reassemble everything with proper lubricant and preservative, and you're ready to shoot with a new barrel.



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AMERICAN HANDGUNNER EVALUATION

SPEER 260 GRAIN

.45 ACP BULLET

I DO NOT consider the GI 230 grain full jacketed ball cartridge to be suitable for the taking of large game. It has excessive penetration and a complete lack of expansion. The light weight 185 grain high velocity hollow point jacketed bullets have a tendency to go to pieces and often fail to achieve adequate penetration. When these light weight bullets work, they do an excellent job, however, it has always appeared to me that they lack consistency.

Speer has brought out a new 260 grain, soft nose, hollow point bullet caliber 0.451. Personally, I would have settled for a 230 grain bullet but this new one should prove to be extremely practical for big game hunting in the big Government Model pistol and in the .45 ACP revolvers. Being an automatic pistol man I will discuss the pistol rather than the revolver, however, those readers who have the Model 1917 revolver or the new Smith and Wesson Model 25 revolver should be able to equal or even better the results listed below.

The first thing that struck me about the new bullet was the large exposed mass of lead at the nose with the hollow point. I instantly assumed that I would have constant feeding problems. I did not! At no time did I experience any functioning problems of any kind with this bullet in my Colt Mark IV pistol. This statement covers the firing of about four hundred rounds both in the Ransom Machine Rest and hand held at varying targets on my ranges.

Bullet expansion commences at around 800 fps. I did not have the Speer loading data to guide me so I started with 5.0 grains of Unique. This is much too light a loading. Seven grains of Unique is too heavy a load for my Mark IV but it should be ideal for the large revolvers. I settled on 6.5 grains of Unique. This produced the excellent expansion shown in the accompanying pictures. Bullet

diameter went from 0.451 to 0.650. Six and one-half grains of Unique, the Federal large pistol primer and Remington once fired cases gave me a velocity average of 849 fps on my Oehler chronograph. Over a ten shot string for record, maximum velocity variation ran 21 fps.

Accuracy is a very personal thing. My Mark IV has been fired many thousands of rounds and has never been accurized or altered. As a result, I consider that the final ten shot group fired for record from my Ransom Machine Rest and measured center to center outside shots is more than adequate for big game hunting at ranges up to fifty yards. The group size ran $5\frac{7}{8}$ " horizontal and $3\frac{5}{8}$ " vertical.

One of the problems of loading for an automatic pistol is powder residue. I tried and worked up various loads with several powders other than Unique. A couple gave me excellent accuracy and extremely high velocities but powder residue combined with unburned powder jammed the mechanism to prevent complete closing of the slide in battery and also allowed the hammer to repeatedly fall to half cock. With one powder this

took place after only a dozen or so shots. The entire interior of the pistol and the chamber would be coated with unburned powder despite the fact that this specific loading had been highly recommended in several loading manuals. Unique burned clean and once I settled on the 6.5 grains of Unique I did not clean the pistol until the firing tests had been completed. I had no problems of any kind.

I suggest that when the reader buys these new bullets that he also obtain a copy of Speer's loading data for this specific bullet. It was not available when I received my bullets.

It would appear that this loading should be ideal for bear, deer and other similar size animals. I noticed in my expansion tests with Duxseal that the bullets drove deeply into the Duxseal despite the excellent expansion which bears out my long standing demand for a .45 ACP bullet with sufficient bullet inertia to drive in deeply and yet expand. An ideal design for this big, heavy and much needed bullet. I can highly recommend it!—Mason Williams

Holsters by Alessi

ALESSI turns out an excellent shoulder holster that is spartan in its design and ultimately practical. There is no excess leather or gimmicks. The design is close to ideal. Mine is for the Browning Model 1935 9mm pistol and has a pouch for a spare magazine. It is light, cool, comfortable and holds the pistol in the right place all the time. Also, the magazine pouch is so designed that it takes the magazine one way only, the right way, so that if you must reload in a hurry the hand grasps the magazine the right way enabling you to slam it into the pistol butt without any extra fiddling or handling.

Note that the shoulder holster has the retaining snap inside the trigger guard using a pull through snap. This eliminates all the flaps and extensions that normally go with a pull through snap located out at the butt of the pistol. This is excellent design.

Construction is tops with sufficient sewing to do the job right and yet without turning a clean, light weight piece of good leather into a heavy, clumsy rig. The straps that run across the back are

thin, soft, light in weight and perfectly designed and executed. Once the fit is right for the individual, then the strap ends are locked into place with solid brass screws. There are no elastic inserts or gussets or similar compensations.

Alessi's Between the Pants and the Belt holster has turned out to be my favorite belt holster due to the manner in which it lies—close to the body, held securely by body pressure against the belt. There are no straps, snaps or anything to hold the handgun in. Body vs. belt pressure plus hand-formed fitting of the holster to the handgun do the job. It may be worn anywhere around the body. I prefer the right side just ahead of the right hip or else as a cross draw if I am to be in and out of planes, vehicles, etc. I am really impressed with this particular holster. Again, it is well stitched, superbly designed and light in weight.

Alessi's address is 2465 Niagara Falls Boulevard, Tonawanda, New York 14150. All holsters are custom-made, and you may have to wait a bit for your order.—Mason Williams

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Traditional .38 Special load was inadequate performer, producing narrow wound channel in medium.

designed to be used in short-barreled .38s. They offer substantially better performance than the traditional round nose lead bullet load. Their performance is listed below:

Snub Loads		2" expansion
1. R-P 95 gr. jhp	1003 fps	.503"
2. S&W 90 grain jsp	983 fps	.467"

By way of comparison, it should be pointed out that the 158 grain round nose lead .38 Special load only averages 652 feet per second out of the two inch barrel. This load will not expand at all in any test medium available.

The next category is the 110 grain loads. This is the bullet weight originally chosen by Lee Jurras as ideal for this caliber. Surprisingly enough, some of them offer higher velocities than those specifically designed for the snub.

110 grain loads		2"	4"
1. Norma	jhp	1120fps-.567"	1312fps-.622"
2. Super Vel	jhp	1025fps-.532"	1187fps-.589"
3. Winchester	jhp	967fps-.506"	1045fps-.543"
4. Smith & Wesson	jhp	1035fps-.512"	1146fps-.556"
5. Speer	jhp	901fps-.499"	982fps-.522"
6. Federal	jhp	945fps-.504"	1068fps-.572"

The Norma load offers outstanding performance in this bullet weight. It also, however, has the brightest muzzle flash and heavier recoil. This, of course, is the price one must generally pay for this type of performance. The Speer load is not a +P, and is designed for extensive use in airweight snubs. The Super Vel load is of current manufacture, being produced by H&H Cartridge Corporation (P.O. Box 294, Greensburg, Indiana 47240).

The 125 grain loads seem to be a better compromise between velocity and bullet weight than most of the 110 grain loads. They shoot closer to point of aim with fixed sight guns and offer greater muzzle energy in most cases.

125 grain load		2"	4"
1. Remington	jhp	901fps-.512"	1065fps-.563"
2. Speer	jhp	895fps-.500"	1045fps-.545"
3. Winchester	jhp	882fps-.501"	965fps-.566"
4. Smith & Wesson	jhp	1020fps-.545"	1198fps-.622"
5. Federal	jhp	899fps-.552"	992fps-.618"

The S&W 125 grain jhp load is the top performer in this category, although the Federal and Winchester loads offer good expansion because of excellent bullet design.

Only one manufacturer offers a load with the 140 grain bullet weight, but this offering from Speer seems to provide an excellent compromise between expansion and penetration.

140 grain loads	2"	4"
1. Speer 140 grain jhp	901fps-.512"	1012fps-.542"

The 158 grain bullet is the traditional weight in this caliber, and frankly it's my first choice. The lead hollow point loads by Winchester and Federal offer reliable expansion in spite of relatively low velocities. These loads also have moderate muzzle flash and blast.

158 grain loads		2"	4"
1. Winchester	lhp	825fps-.537"	1012fps-.577"
2. Federal	lhp	802fps-.523"	965fps-.556"
3. S&W	lhp	718fps-.425"	912fps-.502"
4. Winchester	swc	747fps-.389"	934fps-.465"
5. Federal	swc	657fps-.358"	801fps-.405"
6. Speer	jsp	732fps-.438"	921fps-.487"
7. S&W	jhp	801fps-.449"	918fps-.537"
8. Federal	rnl-hv	843fps-.365"	922fps-.401"
9. Remington	rnl-sv	652fps-.358"	718fps-.358"

glossary:

lhp=lead hollow point, swc=semiwadcutter, jhp=jacketed hollow point, jsp=jacketed soft point, rnl-hv= round nose lead-high velocity, rnl-sv=round nose lead-standard velocity.

The last load listed is the traditional police service cartridge, and can be used to compare the effectiveness of the various loads tested. The Federal semi-wadcutter load is not a +P, which accounts for its low velocity. Its more efficient bullet shape, however, would make it a better choice than the round nose slug at the same velocity. The lead hollow points expand well because of their relatively soft lead alloy, and their deep hollow cavities.

All of these loads offer the handgunner noticeable gains over the standard velocity .38 round. Which is best? The answer to that question depends upon your intended use.

For personal defense or snub use, I prefer the Winchester or Federal lead hollow point loads. They don't have a copper jacket that must rupture before substantial expansion can take place. They're a good choice for home defense because the moderate velocity minimizes the danger of overpenetration.

For police duty or hunting, I prefer the light weight-high velocity hollow points. Their speed gives them the ability to penetrate barriers and still provide good stopping power. For cops who are not allowed to use hollow points, the S&W and Speer 125 grain jsp loads are probably the best choice. For those departments that require a lead bullet, the Winchester semi-wadcutter is clearly the best choice.

The .38 Special has long been a traditional favorite with handgunners. With the proper load they also make it a caliber that can be depended upon to do what it's inventor originally designed it for.



S&W 125 grain jhp at just under 1200 fps from a 4" barrel literally destroyed the clay block.

(Continued from page 33)

not depend on direct metal contact to seal power. Rather, there are concentric recesses for synthetic breech seals; one in the barrel breech face and one in the opposite standing breech face. If ever needed, these are easily replaceable. The loading breech block can be removed (one screw) for replacement, cleaning or treatment.

A combination friction-proofing and wear compensation treatment is outlined in the instructions. This procedure calls for applying Molykote M-88 on the loading breech to build up a low-friction, low-wear surface. For those not familiar with M-88, I'd like to explain that it is a paint-like mixture of finely ground MOS 2 (molybdenum disulphide—"moly" for short) in a fast air-dry volatile carrier. The material can be brushed on or the small parts dipped. There is also an aerosol can dispensed MOS 2 called "Spraykote" for similar applications. Both of these are products of Alpha-Molykote, a division of Dow Corning.

AMMUNITION

The D62 swing-out loading breech is really the heart of the gun. Carelessness or misunderstanding of a few common sense precautions could spell the difference between short and long term service. Enlightened owners should stick with pellet ammunition that fits the loading breech properly and avoid certain types which will ruin the seals. For example: The pointed, Japanese Mt. Star "Silver Jet" pellets should not be used in the D62 because their length is nominally .2575" whereas the loading breech is but .247" thick. This means that about .010" of the pellet protrudes and will rub across the seals every time loading breech is closed. Despite uniform appearance, these pellets are somewhat undersize by British and W. German standards. The regular "Jet" pellets, which are the same pellet minus the point, are closer to conventional length and do not protrude, but are also of minimal diameter. The pistol should be held as close to horizontal as possible when load-

ing under-size ammo and then close the breech carefully without tilting. On the other hand, a few brands of pellets have an over-size flare in the tail section and unless fully seated into the loading breech, these will wear on the rear seal with each breech closing. Ideally, the pellet should fall into the loading breech port hole and remain there without either end protruding while the pistol is held in a safe, muzzle-down, loading position. Daisy "Bullseye" and RWS "Hobby" and "Meisterkugeln" pellets fit perfectly, as do many others. Advisedly, new air gun owners should always do some individual testing and selecting to determine most suitable ammo for their particular piece.

GENERAL

Spring powered, single shot, .177 caliber and rated at 390 fps M/V, I find my D62 shooting a bit over 400. Weight is 2 lbs. 14 oz. but seems lighter because of good balance and anatomically tailored grip. Finish is blue steel barrel-receiver and black crackle frame. Over-all length is 14 7/8". The fixed, steel barrel is 7.2 inches long, rifled 12 grooves, right hand twist, 1 turn in 16 inches. Packaging is in molded polystyrene case. Included with the pistol are oil bottle, cleaning rod, brush, tin of 250 pellets and concise, well-written instruction manual. A good feature common only to El Gamo air arms is a small oil-hole provision midway along the top of receiver. When any underlever or barrel-cocking spring-piston pellet gun is being cocked, considerable thrust is exerted upward by the piston as it rubs along the inside, top of receiver. In my years of experience, I've had several guns seize and gall from the friction. A coating of MOS 2 can prevent this, of course, but few manufacturers make initial application. Generally, it takes an undesirable amount of oil applied via underneath slot or front vent hole to lubricate the rather inaccessible upper rear (top) piston travel portion. Thus, the small oil hole provides a means for safe, easy maintenance.

The D62 is a gutsy gun; with refinements one expects only in more expensive air pistols. Strong, accurate, it lines up as a good all-purpose arm equally at home in the hands of the target marksman or the sporting shot.



THE BEST OF THE SMITHS— The New Century Triple Lock

(Continued from page 23)

locity a bit, the performance could easily have paralleled that of the .45 ACP. However, since the caliber is obsolete and can be found only in remote places, reloading makes little sense. Clearly, a .455 Triple Lock should be left alone unless it has already had its collector's value diminished, in which case rechambering for the .45 Long Colt is a fairly good idea.

Inasmuch as my personal prize is original from top to bottom, I have no intention whatever of rechambering for any caliber. The fact that hundreds of other pieces have been altered serves only to enhance the value of one that remains original.

Photos simply cannot begin to capture the true beauty of this delightful relic. De-

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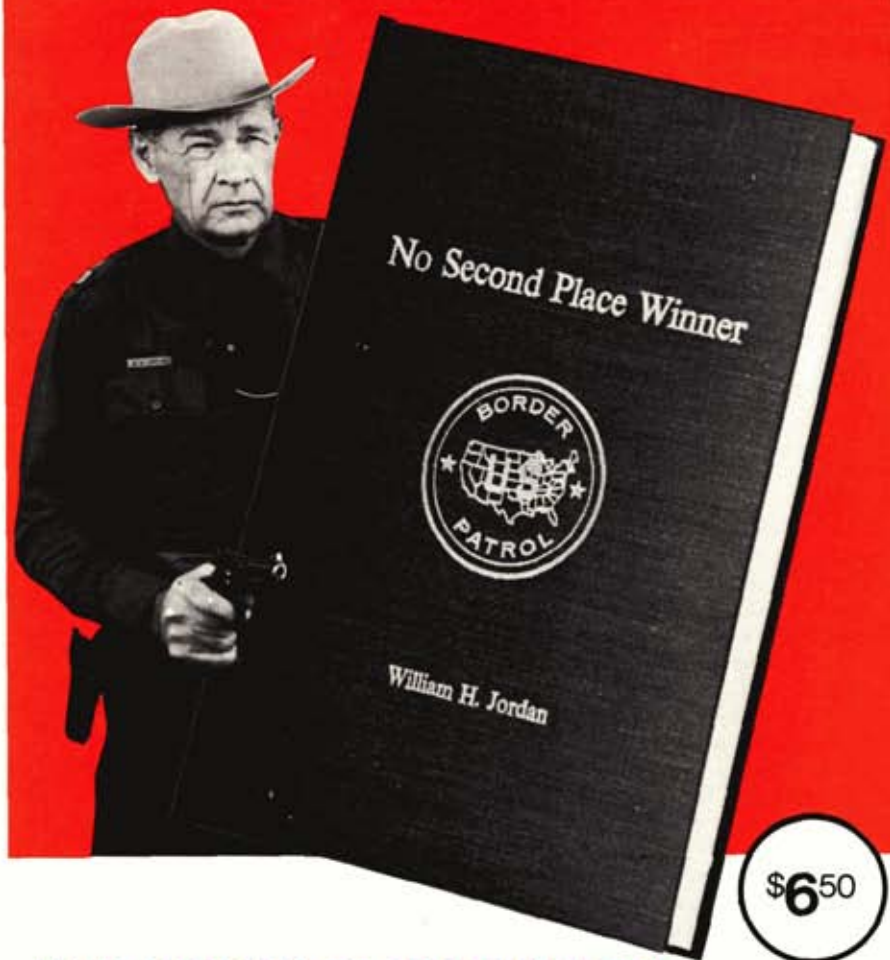
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spite some mild scratches and slight points of holster wear, the overall appearance is sufficient to demonstrate remarkable fit and finish to the most discriminating viewer. I would well imagine that the majority of machinists would shake their heads in disbelief at the utterly incredible hairline plate fit and fit at points of yoke lock up.

I have reason to believe good old #5004 has been handled quite a bit but fired very few times, if at all. There is no scorching whatever on the face of the cylinder and the bore of the beautifully tapered 6½" barrel could easily pass for mint. It is truly a fine piece and one you can bet I'll treasure. As a heritage weapon, it will be passed on for many years to come.

So, the next time you have the pleasant opportunity to visit a gun show or your favorite dealer, see if you can find an unaltered Triple Lock. If you can, grab it; it simply is not just another Smith & Wesson. Rather, it is a product reflecting the height of pride in workmanship and a gun you'll always find difficult to put down.



CLEANING TOOLS

(Continued from page 52)

In order to clean the forcing cone, the rod is inserted through the muzzle. A brass patch is placed on the cone tip and bent back along the cone's taper. The cone is inserted into the forcing cone and screwed on the rod. Insert the key (supplied) into the hole in the cone tip and turn the handle clockwise to lock the patch between the cone tip and rod. Pull the rod back through the bore as far as possible and while keeping a constant pressure, turn the rod clockwise a half-dozen times. This should be sufficient to remove all lead from the forcing cone.

The Lewis Lead Remover is available in .38/.357, .41 Mag., .44, and .45 caliber kits at \$7.95 each. Extra brass patches, adapter kits, and tips are also available. Besides being modestly priced, the Lewis Lead Remover is a must for those who shoot cast bullet loads. It may be ordered from your local gunshop or direct. Place inquiries and orders to: L.E.M. Gun Specialities, P.O. Box 31, Dept. AH, College Park, Georgia, 30337.

Although a necessary evil, cleaning handguns is essential to reliable performance on the range, in the field, or for defense purposes. The products covered in this article do make the cleaning of handguns much easier and cover the price ranges almost everyone can afford. Modern firearms have come a long way and I for one am happy to see the modernization of handgun cleaning equipment.



(Continued from page 31)

Doc fired from the edge of the woods. His first hit with the .270 didn't even produce a flinch. At his third hit the buffalos front feet came off of the ground. Doc got his fourth shot in the thorax with no reaction to impact from the buffalo. The other bulls began to get excited, pawing the blood in the snow and smashing their massive skulls into it—tails held high. Doc's buffalo went down in an upright position and the other bulls moved in on him from both sides. We were running to scare them off, yelling and waving our hats as they butted him from both sides. They moved off a bit, still obviously excited and Harvey told Doc to give him another one behind the ear. Doc did and the other bulls did not react at all. They had moved off 40-50 yards and were still obviously excited. Doc and Harvey left to get the vehicles and Lee and I stayed with the bull as Harvey said the others would tear him up. The other bulls made several approaches and we finally drove them away by running at them, yelling and jumping around like maniacs. They weren't scared—just seemed to be somewhat puzzled and a little irritated.

Doc's trophy was a mature bull about five years old. His hide and horns were perfect. After the shooting is over the work begins. On 2200 pounds or so of buffalo it's a lot of work but the Rangers are well equipped to handle it. They prefer you don't shoot after 1-2:00 P.M. and only shoot where it is relatively easy to get to the animal. It makes sense. After the buffalo was loaded on the Rangers truck via a hoist we spent the rest of the day looking for another one.

We found the band the old boy had been with but couldn't find any sign of him. Frankly, we didn't see any others that would match Doc's that day but did look over some terrific whitetail racks.

The next morning we looked for him again without success. We located three bulls that looked good on a hillside and Harvey and I approached close enough to get a good look at them. One was about as

good as Doc's but I passed in favor of taking another look for the old one. These three hadn't been disturbed and wouldn't move far. Thirty minutes later Harvey spotted a solitary bull up high. The spotting scope revealed it was him or another with the same horn configuration. We got close enough so I could positively identify him before he melted into the woods and left the hill. He put on quite a show for Lee and Doc at the bottom of the hill, pawing dirt, rolling and making "false charges" before heading into the timber and up the next hill.

Lee, one of the other Rangers and I went up the hill after him and somewhere near the top I could have shot but I was afraid I'd hit him! Getting him down from there piece by piece wasn't really my idea of how to spend the next couple of days. At one point he cut into the edge of some pines and waited, pawing and stamping the ground until we came into sight. He then continued through the edge of the woods, out of sight until a raise in the ground covered him, and then came out of the woods and headed in his original direction. In a matter of a couple of days he had been rejected by the herd or kicked out by another bull and had become a solitary renegade.

I would estimate we were on him for 1 1/2-2 miles before he attempted to join a small group of bulls and we made our approach. A fight was clearly about to start when they spotted us and the old bull tried to integrate himself with them. They reacted much as the others did when we approached to take pictures; they simply become immobile—except that the eye never leaves you.

I had previously decided to try to hit the bull 4-5 times before he went down if possible. Very little experience has been obtained with animals this size with handguns. Performance of the guns and ammunition are largely unknown. Likewise, little is known of the reaction of large animals when hit with heavy handgun loads. In general, it is a pretty well established

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fact that the so called shock effect of any sporting arm is largely ineffective on large animals. After all, a projectile weighing half an ounce or so can't really produce much effect against a target weighing a ton. At best, the brain or spinal column can be interrupted and the animal dropped on the spot. Few, if any animals can last more than a minute or so if the heart or lungs are penetrated by a reasonably sized projectile. Granted, most animals can go quite a distance in a minute, or if dangerous, can certainly kill the hunter within a minute. Obviously, an animal wounded in a non-vital area can last a long time. I simply do not believe the tales of lung shot deer traveling miles before they are either felled or lost. Gut shot, yes, lung shot, *no*.

The optimum planned shooting was to try for one through the heart, two or three through the lungs and a spine shot to see if the penetration and tissue damage to vital organs was great enough to warrant this type of shot on large game.

I approached the old bull using the other scattered animals as cover. Lee stayed behind me with a telephoto lens focused on the bull. The effect made the distance between me and the bull appear unrealistically close in the photos. Movement of the other animals was minimal as was that of the old bull. At a distance of about 75 yards I sat in the snow. I had carefully located the heart, lungs, and spine while examining Doc's bull and waited for a clear shot. The bull moved only slightly and never kept his left foreleg ahead of the heart long enough for an open shot at the heart. About the time the cold started getting through, I sensed he was going to bolt and shot him through the left front leg into the heart. He immediately broke into a run without showing any other sign of a hit. I jumped to my feet and angled three shots through his lungs before another bull got in the way. I could see he was blowing blood and the entire group was running together. They started to swing around into a "U" heading downhill toward a creek bottom. As I had loaded only five rounds and had fired four, I changed magazines as I ran to cut them off. They turned and for a short time were headed directly at me—and what a sight that was. They turned aside slightly. The hit bull was blowing blood profusely and began to wobble. As they passed in front of me a clear shot presented itself and I shot him through the spine ahead of the hips where I could see it. He collapsed at the shot and was dead when we got to him. The other bulls passed ahead of him as he fell and although they showed concern, were not nearly as hard to drive off as they were from the first bull.

I paced off how far he went. The first signs of blood were found about three feet ahead of where his hooves dug in at impact of the first bullet. By fifty paces the blood trail was greater than any I had previously seen. At 255 paces he was

down and dead. I would estimate the total time from first shot until it was all over not to exceed 30-35 seconds at most.

The final shot had penetrated the leg, grazing the bone and dead centered the heart. The jacket of this round was found inside the heart. Two of the lung shots were side by side about four inches apart. The third was a high shot as I was going for the high lungs or spine at about 110-120 yards. It landed about eight inches above the other two. All three were angled from/through the diaphragm toward the back of the off shoulder. Two were found under the hide on the off side. The last shot penetrated the spine without

spinal cord itself immediately put him down and may have been immediately fatal.

4. Individual bullet damage by the .44 equaled or exceeded individual bullet damage by the 150 grain .270 bullets and the .44 penetrated considerably further. The .44 bullet did *not* blow up on the spine whereas one .270 bullet completely blew on a rib.

5. Several of the .44s penetrated 3-4 feet of ribs and tissue. Penetration is impossible to measure on an animal of this size.

6. As expected, no commercially made .44 bullet is designed for this tough usage.



severing the spinal cord and was found under the hide on the off side.

Wound evaluations indicated:

1. The first shot had penetrated the heart seriously impairing its function although I doubt if its function ceased entirely for 150-200 paces from the appearance of the animal and blood trail.

2. Lung damage was very massive.

3. The spine shot penetrated the spine completely but missed the spinal cord itself. Shattering of the vertebrae/shock to

I was surprised that 265 grain Hornadys performed as well as they did. All of them shed their jackets but the bullets cores retained practically all of their weight and penetrated in a straight line without tumbling. Bullet performance was excellent even with the loss of jackets considered. I feel certain any of these shots would have completely penetrated an elk or moose.

7. I tend to feel the .44 AMP or for that matter a .44 Magnum with this bullet would provide sufficient penetration and

tissue damage for any non-dangerous game. If the ability to penetrate shoulders etc. is necessary, the KTW bullet made of architectural bronze teflon coated should be considered. It, perhaps, could benefit from being drilled and having a lead core inserted in its base for this usage although it would be superfluous for its intended usage of metal penetrating.

I'm convinced that it is reasonable to expect quick clean kills on animals of this size with conventionally available guns and ammunition. It would certainly be possible to get immediate one shot kills with several calibers by shooting the brain or spinal column through the neck or behind the shoulder.

I consider a scoped gun a definite asset in shot placement in open country if the scope does not negatively affect the balance of the gun.

The facilities at the Park for processing the meat are excellent. They quarter and chill them. Hides are salted and rolled.

We were in a 3/4 ton Chevy pick-up with a high cab and air shocks. The two buffalo completely filled it and it was a real job getting it loaded. As I recall, it was necessary to fill the air shocks to capacity and run 80 PSI in the tires for the trip home. Two buffalo would tax an ordinary 3/4 ton pick-up to over maximum and would be entirely too much for a half ton.

By weighing the quarters and applying a percentage factor, the Rangers figured Doc's bull about a hundred pounds heavier than mine and put its weight at 2200 pounds.

We haven't gotten the heads back from the taxidermist yet and there was a problem obtaining forms large enough for them. The hides are prime and large enough to completely cover a queen size bed; to the floor on each side. The meat is excellent and there was about 900 pounds from each animal. Contrary to what I've read, the meat from the hump is my least favorite of any part of it. Buffalo is richer in protein than beef and seemingly is more filling than beef. At a buck and a quarter or so a pound including processing it's reasonably priced without the hunt included.

From what I've read on buffalo hunting, today's hunt at Custer State Park is more challenging than those hunts in the 1800s. Today's hunt is certainly more convenient as travel is by vehicle instead of horseback but I can't see that setting up on the edge of a herd with a 3 1/4" X .50 Sharps and punching them through the lungs as they milled around was anything but meat and hide hunting on a grand scale.

The terrain and vastness of Custer make a hunt for a trophy buffalo there at least as challenging as many other hunts I've been on. Park personnel are courteous and professional; you couldn't ask for better treatment and a hell of a lot of guides and outfitters could take some lessons from them.



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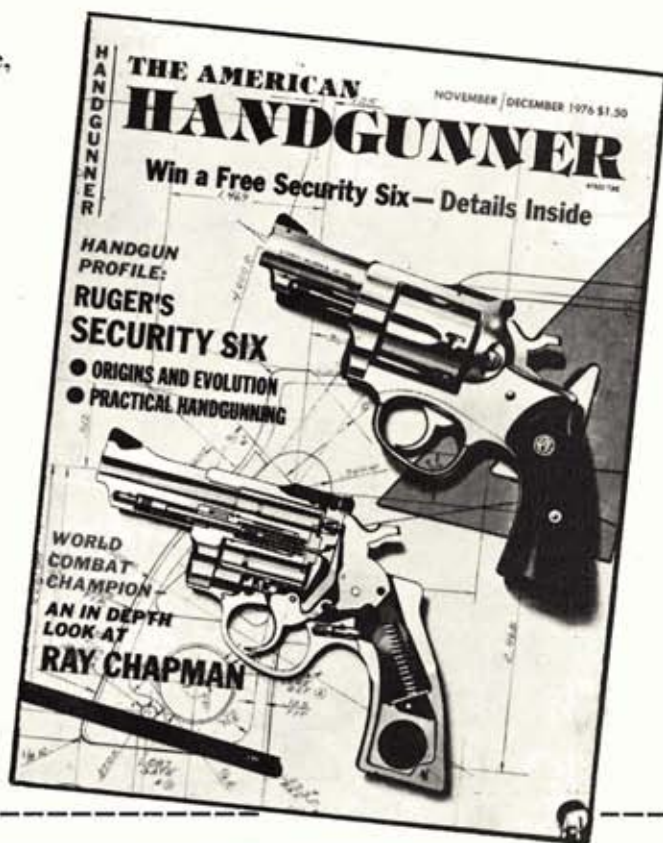
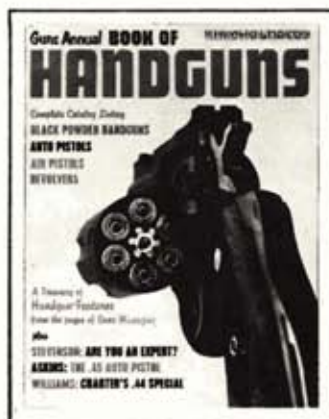
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