

HANDGUNNER

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HANDGUN
PROFILE:

RUGER'S SECURITY SIX

- ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION
- PRACTICAL HANDGUNNING

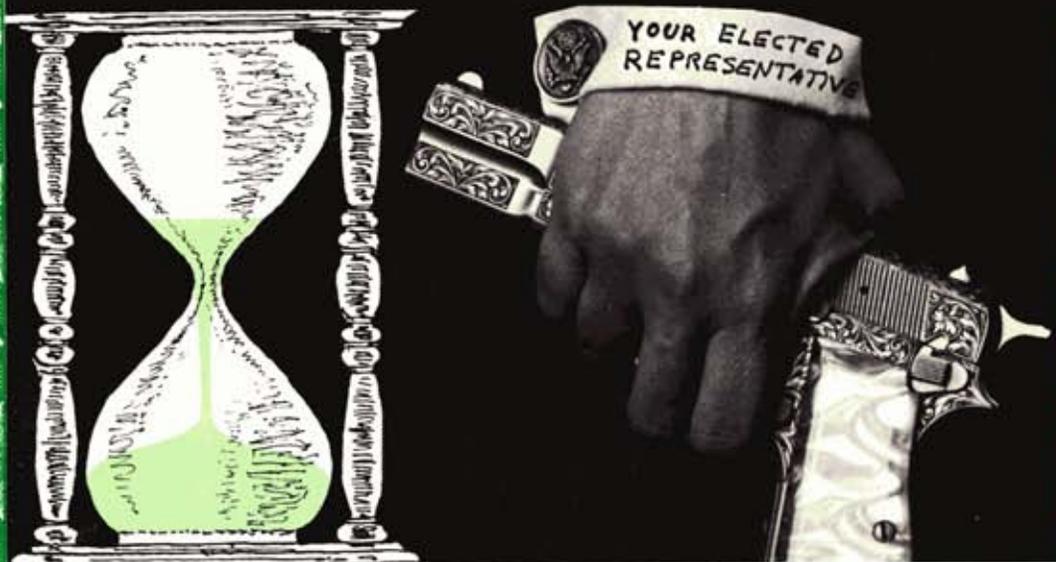
WORLD
COMBAT
CHAMPION

AN IN DEPTH
LOOK AT

RAY CHAPMAN



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After the General Election in November, our politicians will feel free to do whatever they want to do without regard for the voters that elected them or to please the well-financed special interest groups such as the "Committee for Handgun Control" who would reimburse them for their campaign expenses. Therefore our only "ounce of prevention that will be worth a "TON" of cure" will be to elect APRA Endorsed Candidates that we are absolutely sure are solid 100% pro-GUN.

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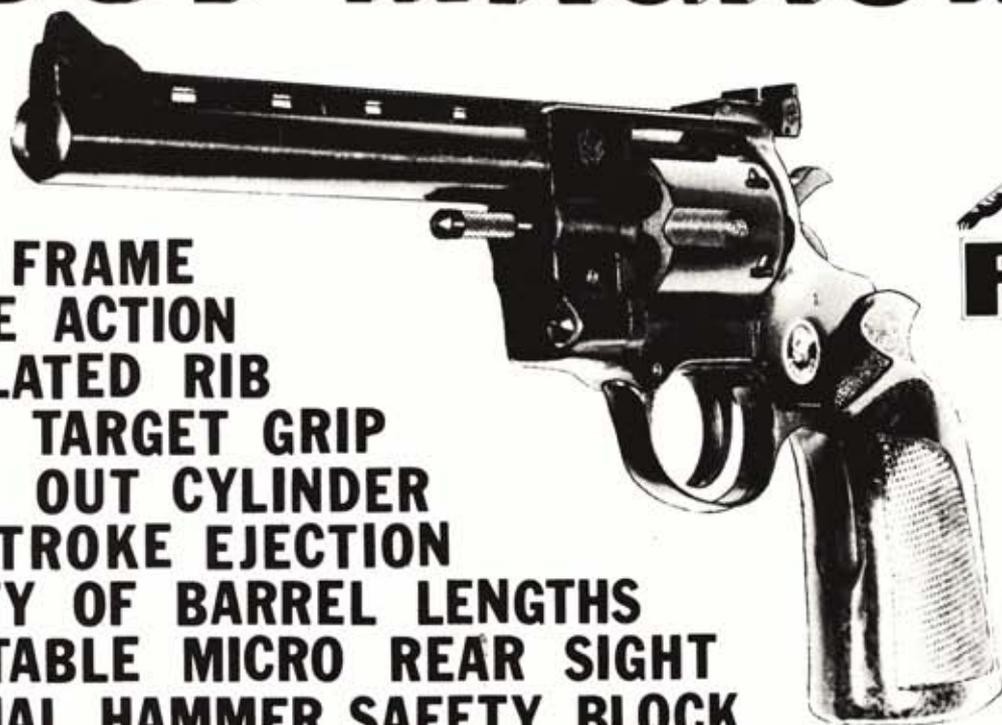
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THE AMERICAN HANDGUNNER

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1976
Vol. 1 No. 2-6

George E. von Rosen
Publisher

CONTENTS FEATURES

THE WINNING .45 ACP COMBO	Mason Williams	17
THE LOWDOWN ON LOADING DOWN	George C. Nonte	20
SMOOTHING OUT THE COMBAT COMMANDER	David C. Hart	24
RAY CHAPMAN: A PROFILE	Dr. Ira Greenberg	26
.44 MAGNUM THUMBUSTERS	Clair Rees	30
HAVE A FINER FIVEGUN	George C. Nonte	33
NOTES ON THE RUGER COLLECTOR'S ASSOCIATION		36

HANDGUN PROFILE BONUS SECTION: RUGER'S SECURITY SIX

ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF THE RUGER SECURITY SIX	James Triggs	38
PRACTICAL HANDGUNNING WITH RUGER'S SECURITY SIX	George C. Nonte	44
TUNING THE DAN WESSON REVOLVER	Mason Williams	46
U.S. vs FRENCH SERVICE SIDEARMS	R. F. Sullivan	48
DOS PISTOLAS ESPANOLAS	Mason Williams	50
TOOLS FOR THE KITCHEN TABLE PISTOLSMITH	George C. Nonte	55

DEPARTMENTS

THE PISTOLSMITH	G. C. Nonte	6	THE COMBAT COURSE	12	
INDUSTRY INSIDER	Massad Ayoob	8	TAKING AIM	Claud Hamilton	14
WORTH REMEMBERING	Lee Echols	10	HANDGUN LEATHER	Jerry Ahern	65

Jerome Rakusan Editor
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Anna Cale Advertising Production
T. A. von Rosen Production Director
Albert Eskinazi Circulation Director
W. R. Lighthall Subscription Manager

SUBSCRIPTION OFFICE: D. Bennett, 8150 N. Central Park, Skokie, Ill. 60076 (312) 675-5611
EDITORIAL OFFICES: Jerome Rakusan, 8150 N. Central Park, Skokie, Ill. 60076 (312) 675-5602
NATIONAL ADV. OFFICES: 8150 N. Central Park Ave., Skokie, Ill. 60076 (312) 675-6010
WEST COAST ADV. REP.: Jess M. Laughlin Co., 711 S. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles, Ca. 90005
(213) 383-7697.
EAST COAST ADV. REPS.: BUCHMAYR ASSOCIATES, DARIEN, CONN. 06820 (203) 655-1639

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THE AMERICAN HANDGUNNER is published bi-monthly by Publishers' Development Corp. 8150 N. Central Park Avenue, Skokie, Illinois 60076. Second class postage paid at Skokie, Illinois and at additional mailing offices. SUBSCRIPTIONS: One year (6 issues) \$7.50. Single monthly copies \$1.50. CHANGE OF ADDRESSES: Four weeks' notice required on all changes. Send old address as well as new. CONTRIBUTORS submitting manuscripts, photographs or drawings do so at their own risk. Material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage. PAYMENT will be made at rates current at time of publication and will cover reproduction in any or all AMERICAN HANDGUNNER Magazine editions. ADVERTISING RATES furnished on request. Reproduction or use of any portion of this magazine in any manner, without written permission, is prohibited. All rights reserved. Title to this publication passes to subscriber only on delivery to his address.

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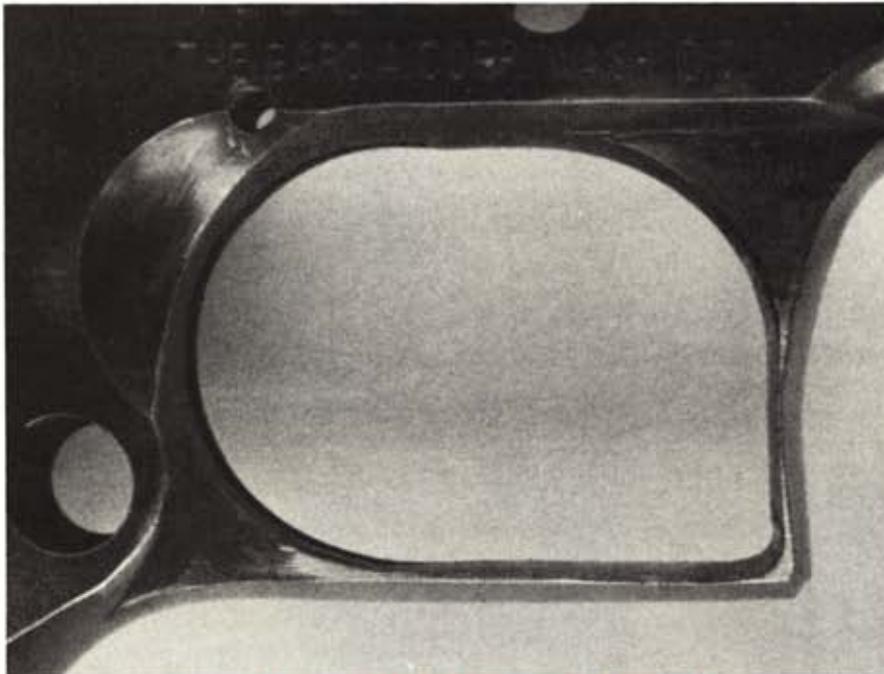
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THE PISTOLSMITH

By GEORGE C. NONTE

SQUARE OR HOOK YOUR TRIGGER GUARD



The finished product before final filing and rebluing. A functional and attractive job that you can do at home.

Big-bore autoloaders are more popular today than at any point in history; further, they are making steady inroads into the law-enforcement field where maximum speed and control of rapid fire is essential. As if that weren't enough, we have a whole new fraternity of autoloader aficionados—disciples of friend, Jeff Cooper, if you will—who shoot the .45 auto almost exclusively in a form of combat shooting often termed “west coast” or “Jeff Cooper” style.

All of which brings us to the squared trigger guard on the Colt GM, which I believe was first introduced on a fairly broad scale by custom pistolsmith, Armand Swenson, and later copied in one form or another by virtually every pistolsmith in the country. The original *functional* purpose of the squared guard is to

provide a secure seat for the forefinger of the non-shooting hand, allowing better control in pulling the gun back into the gun hand and at the same time, recovering from muzzle jump. At first considered ugly by some, the squared trigger guard has become a desirable cosmetic feature as well among many autoloader fanciers.

Whether the squared guard is chosen for aesthetic or practical purposes matters not at all—to have the job done by a custom pistolsmith costs a bundle. You might get the plain job done for as little as \$20-\$25 or you might wind up paying nearly \$40 when other shaping and stippling, checkering, or serrating is added to further improve control or appearance. I can remember, not too many years ago, when with a little luck, I could buy *two, good*, .45 autos for the latter amount of

money. Viewed from another angle, the price of a store-bought, squared trigger guard will allow you to assemble at least 1,000 .45 handloads to further improve your skill. And that brings us to the point of doing the job yourself, with nothing more than common, hand tools, laying around the house, and, at absolutely no cost other than your labors and perhaps a few drops of blood spilled when you carelessly gouge a finger.

It's not a difficult job. Begin by laying out a hacksaw, assorted files, a common propane torch, such as the Bernz-O-Matic (actually, two torches are better), some silver solder and flux, and abrasive cloth. You'll also need a small scrap of steel about 1/4-inch thick and 3/8-inch square.

Disassemble the gun, and completely strip the frame. Remove everything that's loose; everything but the grip screw bushings, ejector, and spring housing on the left side.

Mark the guard as shown with chalk, clamp the frame butt-up in a vise (use lead or wood blocks to protect the frame) and saw through the guard. Make the cut at right angles to the sides of the guard.



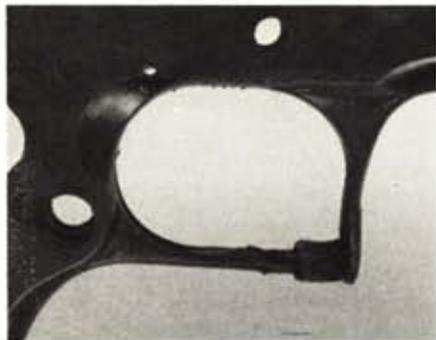
Guard straps are bent straight after initial cut.

The two cut ends must now be bent so that they are straight and form a right angle. They can usually be bent cold with vise-grip pliers on commercial and military guns, but I can't speak for the cast, replacement frames now available. They will straighten easier if heated to a dull red quickly and then clamped in the vise-grips. Before applying the heat, though, clamp the frame solidly in your vise and wrap wet rags around all but the part to be heated. Once you have the cut ends bent straight, they should look as shown, the front leg extending down at *least* as far as the lower edge of the bottom leg, and with a gap of 1/4- to 3/8-inch between their ends.

If you would rather have a *hooked* guard, rather than the square configuration, now is the time to bend the front leg of the guard forward at the bottom in a smooth radius as shown. If you decide to go this route, don't overdo it; only a very slight forward sweep is really worthwhile and an accentuated hook does not, in my opinion, look good.

File the cut edge of the bottom leg smooth and square; make certain the filed surface is flat, not rounded. File flat the rear face of the lower 1/4-inch of the front leg. This will require reducing it to almost half its original thickness because of the radiused surface; you must have this filed surface *flat* to facilitate fitting the spacer and to insure a good solder joint.

Now, take the piece of 1/4-inch steel and file two, opposite, 3/8-inch sides until it will fit snugly—but not too tight—between the two legs of the original guard. For a really first-class job, use layout blue or candle soot on the surfaces and spot them in, until you have uniform contact in both joints. Go slowly and carefully, because the better you fit these joints now, the stronger the final assembly will be. Also,



Filler stock has been soldered into place prior to trimming.

the closer the fit, the less solder will show in the event you want a blue finish. When finally fitted, the spacer should look roughly as shown, with excess metal protruding in all directions for shaping after soldering.

Any type of silver-solder may be used; I've done it with common wire from the local hardware store and with the very excellent fusion, silver-solder pastes available from Brownells. Incidentally, Brownells is an excellent source for the assorted shapes and sizes of files that you need for all sorts of pistolsmithing work. If you'll be using the fusion solder—by far the simplest—remove the spacer and coat all four joint surfaces thinly but uniformly with the soldering paste. Then, pry the front leg of the guard out so that the spacer can be fitted in place without wiping away the solder; then let the leg spring back to hold the spacer snugly in place. If you're using conventional wire solder, simply clean the joint surfaces thoroughly with the flux and replace the spacer. Dribble extra flux over the joints.

Clamp the frame in a vise, positioned so that you may work freely around the joint area with a torch. If possible, have two propane torches at hand inasmuch as this will allow bringing the joint up to temperature much more rapidly and uniform-

(Continued on page 9)

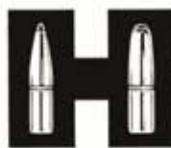
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HANDGUN INDUSTRY INSIDER



H&R's convertible Model 676.

NEWS FROM THE EAST COAST BEAT By MASSAD F. AYOUB

AT CHARTER ARMS, the new .38 Police Bulldog and .357 Target Bulldog are taking off saleswise. Looks as if the .357 version will soon eclipse the .44 Bulldog undercover gun in sales. The .44's popularity, dealers say, has dropped off sharply, not because of any problems with the gun, but because of an ammo shortage in .44 Special caliber. It seems that Remington and Winchester only make a million or so .44 Special rounds apiece each year, and while that was always enough to satisfy the gun buffs with older model S&W and Colt .44 Specials, it doesn't quite cover the cops and defense-minded citizens who have purchased some 160,000 Bulldog .44s.

I honestly can't complain about that: I always figured the .357 made more sense in an ultra-compact belly gun, if only because of the availability of a wide variety of ammo that, in the top loadings, was equal or superior to the mild factory round-nose .44 Spl. Charter has always made a point of stressing that the Bulldog be used with factory fodder only.

Originally, they were going to bring out the 5-shot Bulldog in .357, but early high sales levels of the .44 delayed plans. Dave Ecker of Charter also confides that prototype .357 Bulldogs were fierce in recoil. The controllable Target Bulldog, with 4-inch barrel and larger frame, isn't really a concealment carrying iron in the sense of the .44.

All this may soon change, however: Vice President Bill Horn at FEDERAL CARTRIDGE confirms that the Charter people have just about talked his company into making a .44 Special round. It will probably have an expanding bullet of some type, at healthy velocity. This would breathe new life into the Bulldog .44, and owners of older, big frame guns in this caliber probably won't be bitchin' either. Mike Bullard, Federal's product manager, is talking about mid-'76 to early '77, however, since the company is having a hard

time keeping up with orders from the present catalog. Definitely scheduled is a 158-grain lead hollowpoint at a "+P" velocity of around 1060 fps, to compete with Winchester's highly popular and effective police load of like ballistics.

Ben Nero, formerly of Colt's, has left the top managers' spot at IVER JOHNSON. I-J owner Lou Imperato announces a new development, though: a swing-out cylinder revolver in .22, .22 Mag, .32, and .38 Special. The designers are hoping for a fall '76 introduction but Lou, sage old businessman that he is, won't promise anything before the NSGA show in early '77. Lou is hoping to upgrade the image of the I-J marque with this gun, and plans to match it against the lower priced High Standard and Ruger lines. Prices are tentative now, but will range from around \$100 to almost \$200 for the ultra-fancy jobs.

Lou had some bad news, too. Northeastern combat shooters had been buzzing about the deal that was offing between Louis Seecamp and Lou's "Jovino's Gun Shop" in New York to put the double action 1911 conversion into semi-manufacture. Seecamp's conversions are famed for their smoothness, reliability, and top-drawer workmanship, while Jovino's may be the largest handgun outlet in the world; it would have meant a superb combat handgun at an eminently affordable price, but the joint effort doesn't seem to have materialized, and the Seecamp remains a strictly-custom proposition.

Like Iver Johnson, HARRINGTON & RICHARDSON is upgrading their basic economy line of handguns, and shooter response to their new line of Convertible .22's has been warm. Nice grips and a beautiful case-hardened frame combine with your choice of .22 LR or .22 Magnum cylinders for plinking and small game. The nicest H&R's I've seen, they rely on the traditional double action, but workmanship seems to exceed the run of

the H&R mill. Worth looking into. H&R doesn't plan to follow I-J into .38 Special caliber in their small-frame, low-price defense guns. The I-J Cadet, despite being the lowest-priced .38 Special on the market, was not a success in terms of either esthetics or high performance, and we join Lou Imperato in hoping for top-drawer quality when the new swing-outs are introduced. It's good to know that both of the Massachusetts arms makers, whose low-priced .22s have for years been the mainstay of woodsmen and casual plinkers, are upgrading their products.

COLT'S long-talked-about DA .45 auto in stainless is still in the future, pending time and room and money to get the tooling together. The heavy-barrel Detective Special and its lightweight sisters, the Cobra and the small-gripped Agent, are still selling so fast that production crews are flat out to keep up with demand. Good news: Colt is once more running hammer shrouds for their small-frame guns, which were almost impossible to get for the past few years. A lot of the Agents are leaving the factory wearing them, and the kit will fit any D-frame Colt. It's a worthy addition, making the gun snag-free while retaining single action capability. Since it comes off easily with a screwdriver, cleaning is facilitated; dust and lint build up inside the shroud quickly, as owners of S&W's equivalent, the Bodyguard belly gun with built-in shroud, can attest.

SECURITY INDUSTRIES, 31 Bergen Tpke, Little Ferry, N.J., offers a blue finish for their stainless .38 snubbies, to conform to off-duty gun regulations in places like New York City where shiny guns are verboten for cops, the biggest buyers. Ruger doesn't have this option yet on their stainless, and Smith & Wesson will blue their rustproof models only on special department order, as they did not long ago for Connecticut State Police when that agency converted to the model 66. For many civilian gun buffs, the blued stainless Security will be the ideal combination of esthetic appeal and freedom from annoying reflection, with the ultimate practicality of Stainless.

HKS TOOL COMPANY, producers of what many consider the most reliable speedloaders for revolvers, have come out with a new competition loading case. Packed in a sturdy polyethylene box, this includes a plastic plate in which 60 rounds, enough for a full PPC, can be carried in 6-shot circles the same diameters as a K-frame S&W (or Dan Wesson, or

Colt DS) cylinder. Flip-over design makes it work for either wadcutters, or service loads for the Distinguished Match. It saves a lot of time "reloading your reloaders" when you're being rushed through a combat-shooting relay, and the box keeps you from spilling rounds. The whole package fits into the carrying trays veteran combat competitors favor. Most K-size speed-loaders of other makes can be used with it, too.

Some other newbies are in the offing that are worth longer treatment in this column, or feature articles in AMERICAN HANDGUNNER or GUNS. These include the new generation of S&W 39/59 omm. autos with fully adjustable sights and ambidextrous safeties; Colt's Elliason sight option on the Python; and Ruger's double-action wheelgun  in 9mm. Look for them.

NOTE:

Back in print, in a limited quantity, is George C. Nonte's classic work, **CARTRIDGE CONVERSIONS**. This comprehensive volume is available direct from the author at \$12.95 plus \$1.00 postage. Write: George C. Nonte Associates, 1227 D. West Glen, Peoria, Illinois 61614.

THE PISTOLSMITH...

Continued from page 9

ly, thus insuring a better joint and less time for heat to run into other areas of the frame. If you'll only be using one torch, wrap wet rags around the rest of the frame.

Light both torches, and with one in each hand, apply the hottest part of the flame to opposite sides of the joint. Get the joint up to temperature as quickly as possible; watch for the solder to liquify and don't worry about any particular color in the steel. Depending on the solder you're using, it may liquify before a red heat is reached; don't use any more heat than is actually needed.

As soon as you can see that all of the solder is completely liquified, remove the heat and, if you have wet rags on the frame, just leave it there to cool. If you didn't use wet rags, remove the frame from the vise and slowly immerse it in water from the butt and rear to keep too much heat from running into the rest of the frame. It's not necessary to submerge the soldered joints, but it will do no harm as long as the solder is no longer liquid.

Remove scale and flux residue with a
(Continued on page 11)



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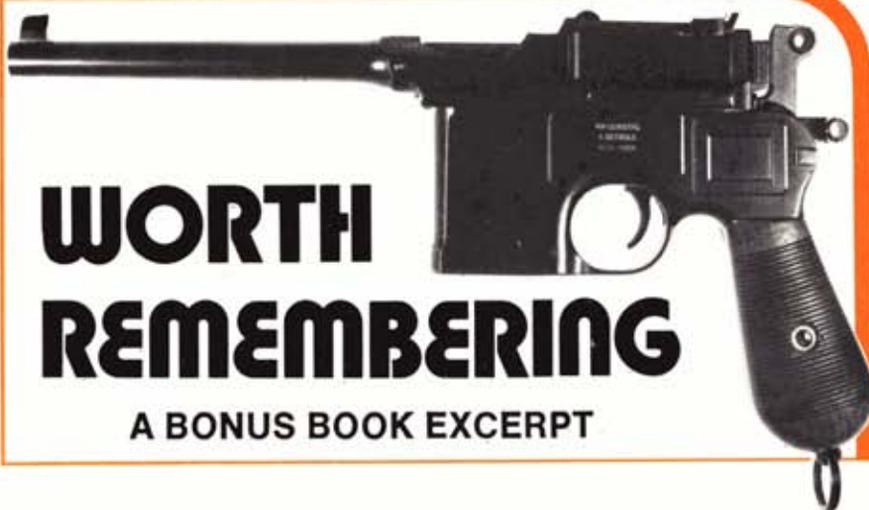
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WORTH REMEMBERING

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Here is a sample excerpt from one of the funniest shooting books around. *Dead Aim*, by Lee Echols, is a nostalgic look at the antics of hell-raising pistol shooters of the 30's. If you want a lot of laughs from a dead serious sport, get a copy today. See the ad in this issue or send \$5.00 (Calif. add 30¢ tax) to: Lee Echols, 157H 4th Avenue, Chula Vista, Calif. 92010.



Big pistol tournaments draw the practical jokers like straddle bugs to a fertilizer plant, and I don't recall ever attending one when somebody didn't get the treatment in one form or another. I have always been a blind worshipper of the throne of persiflage and light raillery and, like most practical jokers, I am a dead cold setup for any one who might try to run one at me.

For humor is a strange possession. It is as variegated as a petunia blossom and any given form of it may make one man laugh until he bloats with the green sickness, while another, seeing and hearing the same piece of foolery will raise himself angrily to his full height, dust off his posterior, adjust his truss and stride purposefully away making clucking sounds between his tongue and his upper plate.

Take me for example. There are brands of humor which certainly must be funny to millions of people but which go over

me like a home run over a right fielder. Jack Benny's program is one of them. I simply can't see anything humorous about the pronunciation of the words "Azusa" or "Cucamonga" and, in fact, have found them both to be fine little California towns. It seems to put studio audiences into deep rumbling laughter to hear every Sunday night that Phil Harris likes to belt the bottle occasionally, but this in itself isn't at all funny to me. My list of acquaintances boasts any number of brisk lads who could be classed in that category; and although some of their antics after they have belted it have almost made me laugh myself into the hospital, the mere fact that they do drink has never struck me as being such a whooping joke.

I have never heard very many Irish dialect jokes that racked me with laughter, nor do I get the call from the odd tricks of speech and spelling of such famous humorists as Artemus Ward and

Josh Billings. For I am a man who likes his funny stuff sudden and startling—like the frightful squawl of a goosy man when he has been prodded by a determined prankster, or the astounded look of disbelief on a shooter's face when he sits down on a fresh hen egg which some light fingered competitor has slipped in his hip pocket.

I like my nonsense strictly for nonsense' sake, and with nothing but this in mind Aaron Quick and I set up what became famous as "The Great Ketchup Deception" at the National Mid-Winter at Tampa in 1939.

In wandering through a New York City trick store earlier in the year, I had come onto a little mouse trap device which looked like a tea coaster. It was so arranged that when a weighty object which had been placed on it was suddenly lifted off it would release this small mouse trap which would in turn explode a cap which sounded like a battery of Jubal Early's artillery going off at Spottsylvania.

Our plan was quite elaborate and we set it up between the clubhouse and the lunch stand with the utmost care and precision. First, we obtained two benches and put them about ten yards apart. Then we set the mouse trap arrangement on one of the benches and placed a .22 High Standard on it. Then Quick put his gun box on the other bench and laid several of his guns out as though cleaning them. I took my stand about twenty feet away from the first bench directly in front of the barrel of the High Standard. We then relaxed and waited our first victim.

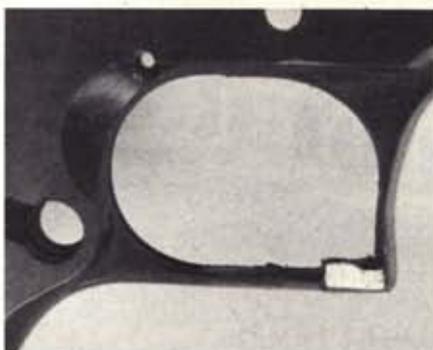
He turned out to be a Cuban Navy officer who had come over to the matches from Havana and who knew only three words of English, one of these being "alibi" and the other two "not ready." He was walking slowly toward the clubhouse probably reflecting on an ill-spent night in Ybor City and laying his poor showing at the day's matches on this when Aaron Quick, timing his play perfectly, asked him in Spanish to please hand him the gun from the bench. The Cuban, apparently surprised and pleased to hear his native tongue spoken in this foreign land, hastened to comply and when he raised the High Standard off the coaster the cap went off with a black powder roar and I went into my part of the great drama.

I don't believe that Barrymore himself during his best days as Hamlet ever executed a death scene with the histrionics that I put on for the quaking Cuban who was standing there with Quick's pistol in his hand and guilt showing all over him. I clutched my chest, bugged my eyes out like a tree lizard with Riggs disease and for the piece de resistance, as I slowly sunk to the ground, let a mouthful of ketchup (which I had got from the lunch stand) run slowly out of my mouth over my chin.

This clinched it. If there was ever any
(Continued on page 13)

wire brush or steel wool. At this point, I find it best to form the inner profile of the spacer, blending it into the front and lower legs of the guard smoothly with files. The extra thickness of the spacer allows you to form a small radius at the corner, improving not only appearance, but strength. Fine-cut, round files of 1/8-inch and smaller diameter are best for forming the radius, while a narrow, safe-edge, pillar file is best for removing the rest of the excess. With the inside shaped, simply take flat files and dress the bottom and front flush with and continuing the lines of the front and bottom legs. Once this is done, dress the sides of the spacer flush with the guard and file a small, neat radius on the outside of the corner. Finish the job by careful polishing with successively finer grits of abrasive cloth or paper until the reworked areas are at least as smooth as the balance of the frame.

At this point, you just might discover some gaps in the solder joints. If you've done all the work properly, there won't be any such gaps, but if there are, they will greatly weaken the assembly. You may



Filler stock is shown with sides filed into true. Inside of the guard must now be filed.

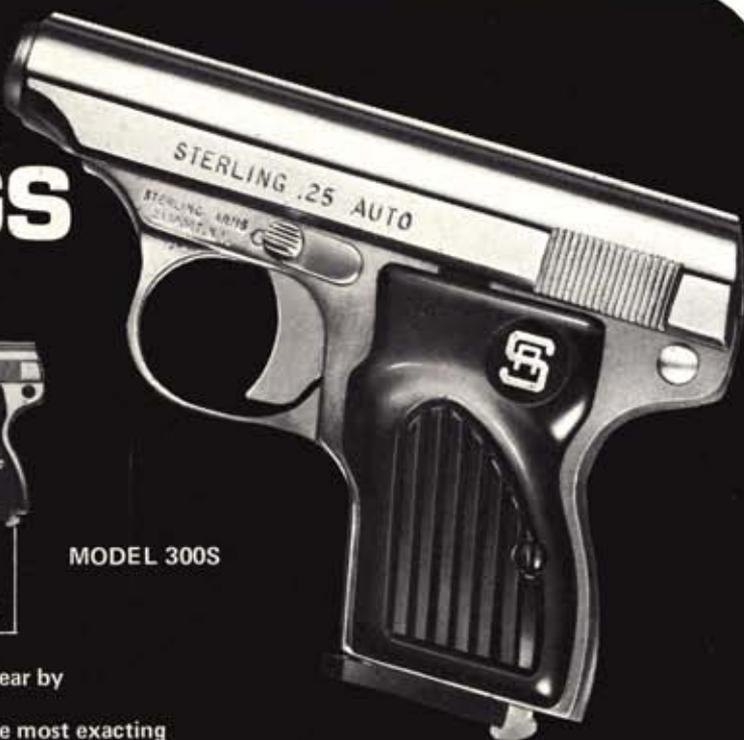
decide to ignore them if they aren't too large, but my advise is to resist that temptation and do the soldering job over. Any visible gaps probably indicate a very poor joint underneath, and that simply won't do. Both joints must be perfect, not only to give the job necessary strength, but to allow a nice finish.

If you've handled your tools and the torches carefully, only the legs of the guard will have lost their original finish. If the gun was blue to begin with, then application of some good Birchwood-Casey or G-96 bluing solution will make the gun look almost like new. To be sure, there will be two thin lines of solder showing, but they'll be exceedingly narrow if you fitted the joints properly. I don't find them objectionable, but they can be blackened with a commercial, solder-blackening solution also available from Brownells. On the other hand, if the frame was plated, there isn't much you can do except to send it away for stripping and replating. The new plate will completely hide the solder joints so that no one will ever know they exist.

So, in the end, at the expense of a pleasant evening of tinkering, you'll have a squared-off trigger guard that looks and performs just as good as one that would have cost you a double sawbuck or more if you'd sent the gun away and waited many moons to get it back.



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THE COMBAT COURSE

A LOOK AT COMBAT HOLDS

By KEN & RITA LEONARD

“Ready on the right,” bellows from the bullhorn, “Ready on the left!” Thus begins the sequence so familiar to combat pistol shooters. With a rush of adrenalin, each competitor steels his nerves and assumes the form he hopes will assure a prize winning score. The question is, though; are you winning?

Is your sight picture fantastic, but your score mediocre? Have you ever considered that pistol recoil may be spoiling your target group? The solution may simply be that you need a new grip pattern.

Everyone has his favorite style, but the serious shooter understands that only by constant practice and experimentation does he keep up that “trophy edge.” He is always willing to polish his skill by trying out new ideas. If they don’t work—he’ll understand why. If they do work, then he’ll be just that much harder to beat.

The serious shooter not only experiments with new techniques; he also invents some of his own. Any little trick in stance, form, weapon or ammo may make that shaved-edge difference between First Class or just another “good try.” We have tried out many different weapon holds during our shooting days—some unique, some valuable, and some just “different.” The best, we’ve found, are those that utilize a two-handed grip. In this article we would like to describe the three variations we have found to be most helpful, and hope they can help you to improve your score, too. One of these methods may turn out to be exactly what you need, or the principle behind it may prod your ingenuity to create an idea of your own. Whatever the results, watch your sights, and good shooting! The following three methods are written for a right-handed shooting position. For left-handed directions, just reverse the Rights with the Lefts.

The first of the holds utilizes a “door-stop” pattern. Grasp your gun in a stan-

dard right-handed grip. With the left hand, lock your last three fingers over the top of the same fingers on the right hand. Then lock the left thumb over the top of the right thumb. With the left forefinger, point forward and press against the frame of the weapon just under the cylinder, parallel to the trigger guard. The natural motion of pulling the trigger back tends to influence a Right-Left waver which you may not even realize you have, but this method helps to put a stop to this motion.

The second grip might be called the “thumb-prop” position. Grasp the gun in a regular right-handed grip. Place the left hand with the lower three fingers overlapping the lower right three fingers, with forefinger locking into a comfortable grip. Extend the left thumb outward away from the gun. Prop the thumb against the back of the barricade with the back of your left hand against the side of the barricade. Both single and double action can be fired comfortably from this barricade position without loss of sight picture. This may look awkward at first glance, but it can be surprisingly comfortable.

Method three is an entirely new grip used by many advanced shooters. This position utilizes double action shooting at all barricade positions. The proper positioning of your fingers provides a tighter hold which is crucial to stability. First grasp the gun with your right hand. Raise the bottom right-hand finger up. This exposes about one inch of the gun butt. With thumb and forefinger of your left hand, grasp the bottom edge of the gun butt. The remaining three lower left fingers are made into a fist which is pushed against the back of the barricade. The lower right-hand finger is locked over the top of the left forefinger, circling the bottom of the gun butt. The right thumb is braced against the side of the barricade. Keep this same hold and shoot double action in all barricade positions. With your gun braced at the basic weak points, you’ll find this hold an excellent stabilizer.

In conclusion we might offer a few words of caution. With the zeal of the en-

thusiastic “gun nut,” you may want to try out these holds at the very next match. However, make sure that you try them first *in practice*. While new holds may increase your steadiness, there may also be a significant change in your bullet’s point of impact. This can be remedied by a simple sight adjustment, or whatever you decide is necessary. By experimenting at ease on your own time, you can determine for yourself exactly what will happen. With



Three of the holds discussed are pictured above.

this knowledge you can be assured that under the stress of a police combat pistol match you have planned ahead for the best possible moves.

• • •

About the authors: Ken Leonard, an Arson Detective for the city of Portland, Oregon, holds an NRA Master’s classification in police combat shooting. Rita Leonard is a former Portland Police officer. Both have been competitors in NRA police combat pistol matches throughout the northwest for several years.



doubt in his mind that he had fired a lethal bullet through me, the sight of this red coagulated liquid drooling over my chin convinced him, and he ran to Quick babbling in Spanish that he was in a strange land ... didn't even know the language ... had no money for lawyers. . . .

It took us about ten minutes to get him quieted down after I had risen from the dead, like the blessed Saviour, and convinced him I was as good as new.

The Cuban's reactions were so satisfactory that we decided we'd try it again and by this time we had quite an audience. Harlon Carter of the U.S. Immigration Border Patrol came whistling down the path and our audience became engaged in other pursuits so he wouldn't get suspicious. As he passed the first bench, Aaron quietly asked him to hand him the High Standard and the big explosion took place when he lifted it up. Now Harlon had recently killed a Mexican in a gun

fight on the Rio Grande and the subsequent drawn-out court procedure was still mighty fresh in his mind. When I went into my act with death rattles, wailing of eyes and slobbering of ketchup, I could see that his mind was as active as that of a supreme court justice.

Quick told him, "You've shot him, Harlon."

Carter looked quickly behind him and replied, "It wasn't me, Aaron. I heard it come right by me!"

"The Great Ketchup Deception" finally backfired, however, as most practical jokes have a way of doing with me. The first two men of our four-man team had fired the Centerfire Camp Perry Police Course with a 295½ average. Pete Chapman and I were firing in the clean up holes that day and were to go on the line immediately after lunch. I saw Chapman ambling toward the lunch room and hastened to get Aaron Quick and our paraphernalia together. I barely got in

position when Chapman arrived at the first bench. Quick asked for the gun; Chapman picked it up; the cap went off and I went into my act. Chapman grinned in disbelief when Quick told him he'd shot me, but when the ketchup started bubbling out of my mouth he staggered toward me like a delirious man with the breakbone fever. He shouted hoarsely from a dry throat, "My God! He is shot!"

We thought it was quite humorous that he was still in a high state of excitement when they called us to the firing line a short time later but it didn't seem quite so funny to us when he jerked us a measly 256 for a team score over the Police Course. If he'd even shot us a 292, which was much below his average, we'd have broken the record.

I learned something at the tournament. I learned that if you're going to scare somebody half to death, you'd better do it to somebody who isn't on your own team.



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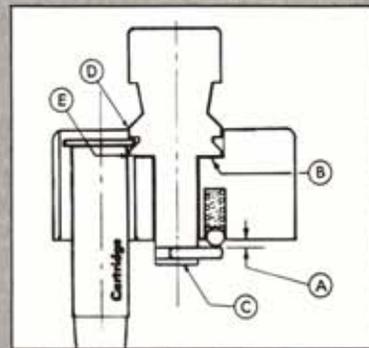


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Cut away view (below) showing how rim of metal on top of cartridge head (D) and metal cam points below (E), positively retain cartridges until knob is turned.



TAKING AIM



THOUGHTS ON LAW ENFORCEMENT HANDGUN STANDARDIZATION

By CLAUD S. HAMILTON

How many of us have read stern lectures over the past twenty years explaining the importance of requiring a particular gun or caliber for use by military or police personnel? Most, I suspect. But handguns—like people—come in all sorts and sizes, and each has its strong and weak points. Why should there be one best handgun for military or police service? I don't believe that there is.

I was one of those fortunate (?) young men to come of age in the early 1940s, and thus was privileged to make the acquaintance of two fine old guns of that era, the M-1 rifle and the Colt .45 auto pistol. My contemporaries and I, and I guess that there were several million of us, frequently found that first encounter with their butt ends to be nearly as traumatic as their other ends were for our German and Japanese enemies. To be honest, I am about average size but I always found the M-1 Rifle to be as heavy and awkward as it was solid and reliable. It was no joy to carry for miles through the rain—except when you passed the machinegun and mortar crews slogging along under their loads, or hiked next to a BAR man! No, the M-1 was a big man's rifle and I doubt that anyone else ever really was comfortable with it.

The .45 is something else again. An undoubted masterpiece of human engineering, it fits even my small hands better than most revolvers. I've never heard a complaint about the "feel" of it, but its weight and recoil—and sometime fondness for biting the web of the hand—seemed to lose it potential friends fast.

The .45 has another characteristic that makes it unique. It is the only gun that I know of that, before the advent of the Series '70 Mk IV at least, serious shooters routinely sent in for accuracy work right

as it came from the factory.

Enough about military arms. I'll admit from the start that in a war situation such as we faced in World War II logistical problems and the drain upon resources make it impossible to consider a selection of handguns for military use. I don't oppose standardization of military handguns if they are needed. To the best of my knowledge, there has been no supportable requirement for a handgun by the U.S. Army since about 1916 when the Cavalry gave up chasing Pancho Villa and fighting from horseback.

In law enforcement and guard work I can see no such justification for imposed standardization. Logistical problems are minimal. If reasonable limits are set, it should cost a large police department little if any more to furnish a selection of handguns for its officers rather than one or two models. This would pay dividends in greater effectiveness.



Above: author Hamilton feels that the autoloader is now displacing the wheelgun as a primary tool of law enforcement. Below: officers can gain accuracy and velocity by using longer barreled sixguns author contends.



I am frankly puzzled by an impression I have formed of Americans in law enforcement. They seem to be an ambivalent lot and to want several more or less mutually exclusive things. The prevailing tenor of what I read condemns the .38 Special as totally inadequate while touting the new .41 Remington Magnum as about ideal. Law officers are also speaking up for the .45 auto these days. For reasons not clear to me, there seems to be prejudice in some quarters against all semi auto pistols and against the .357 Magnum cartridge. Finally, there is a school made up of those dissatisfied with the limited fire power of revolvers and their clumsy reloading characteristics, and more than one large police organization has recently rearmed with either the Smith & Wesson Model 39 or 59 semi-auto pistols in 9mm. This cartridge is not one looked on with much favor by the officers I know.

Why all this noise about heavier calibers and more fire power? Are we Americans supermen? Do all our criminals come seven feet tall? How is it that one never seems to hear or read of this business of man-stopping from European police who seem to have been making do pretty well with calibers like .32 ACP and .380 ACP in what we would call pocket pistols for years? In Europe, the 9 mm Parabellum is considered just that: "for war," a cartridge heavier than needed for police use!

I am not a career law officer and, although I have served as a Military Policeman in the past, certainly do not presume to argue equipment and tactics with the experts. Police friends of mine put across very forcefully their desire to take the fight out of any felon with one quick shot, and I can certainly see their point. For me, however, size and power of cartridge must always be subordinated to my confidence that I can hit with the gun on the first try. Over the years I have owned ten revolvers on the big Smith & Wesson "N" and Colt New Service frames in calibers from .357 through .41, .44 Special, .44 Magnum and .45 ACP. Knowing I had to face a fight, I would not take a one of these guns with me. These are strong words, I know. I do not mean them as criticism of these fine guns, but it is a simple fact I have learned over the years: I just can't handle these large frame revolvers effectively with my small hands and short fingers. I don't believe that I am all that unique; there must be many police officers who share my problem.

I understand that the usual face to face encounter with an armed suspect takes place at a range of five to ten yards. I believe that most law enforcement agencies and the F.B.I. teach that, without cover, the officer should draw fast and fire 2 to 4 quick shots to put his opponent down quickly. This is very similar to the old Army combat pistol course in which the shooter is confronted, without warning, by three targets and is taught to fire quick

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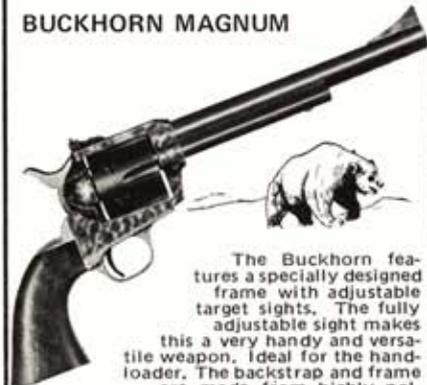
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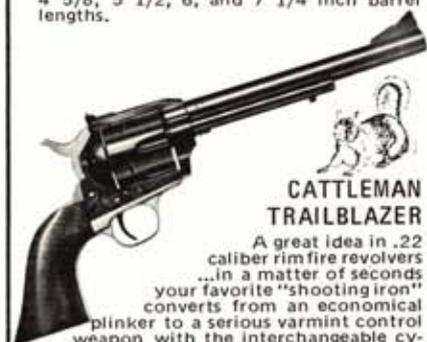


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bursts of two shots each. Tracers were often used in the .45 as an aid in instruction, and were very effective in showing you where your shots were going. This is quick draw, instinctive point shooting and is, I believe, much more easily done with the .45 pistol than with most revolvers which require a strong, aim-disturbing double action pull. Success at this is only achieved by mastery of the gun of your choice and practice.

Anyone can practice but to gain mastery of your gun requires things of you in terms of the size, shape and strength of your hands and fingers, and the angle of the wrist demanded by that gun. To point most revolvers, the wrist must be bent downward. Semi-auto pistols, for the most part, require a slight upward tilt of the wrist, or none at all. One position is comfortable for some shooters but not for others. In an earlier article I discussed in some detail what I like to call the "critical dimensions and characteristics" of handguns (*American Handgunner, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1976*). These included: The distance, web of the hand to the trigger; the volume of this same space; the distance, web of the hand to tip of butt; the distance, web of the hand to axis of the bore; the angle between the web-to-trigger line and the axis of the bore; the presence (or absence) of an overhang of the frame over the web of the hand.

What these should be for comfort and best control of the handgun varies from person to person—and probably even between your right and left hands!

There are other factors that enter into the selection of a handgun by a law officer. Not all combat situations are likely to be limited to five to ten yards range and the officer must have the capability for accurate shooting out to fifty yards if required. The type of force to which he is assigned, and his specific duty assignment also have an influence. For the average State Policeman the need to be able to shoot through an automobile body is of concern. For plain clothes officers the need for concealment is important. Most officers these days are mounted in automobiles so that the size and weight of the gun may have less importance than when most work was done on foot. More use might be made of six inch barrel revolvers which offer better sighting radius, better cartridge performance and, for some at least, a steadier hold. Since no two handguns shoot exactly alike, there is a definite need for adjustable sights when these are available.

The essential thing which must be remembered by those in authority I believe is that most officers are not keenly interested in handguns and the majority will have to use their sidearms only very infrequently during a police career. Some may never draw a gun except to qualify or to clean it! It's highly unlikely that most of these officers will develop that level of skill which we might hope for. Under the

circumstances, it is clearly unwise to impose a handgun upon officers who may not like it or be able to handle it well. To do so is to risk their lives and the safety of the public.

Ideally, how should the selection process work? I have a friend who recently bought a home in a remote area which, unlike most rural locations, does not have a reputation for peace and tranquility. He was not a shooter but felt that he needed a handgun. I found the process he went through interesting. He didn't go about it much differently from what you or I have done but being a methodical sort he reduced it to writing. First he jotted down his reasons for wanting a handgun and weighted them in the order of importance to him. He gave a weight of 6 to personal and home defense; a weight of 2 for plinking and recreation and a weight of 2 for competitive shooting. He then listed the guns that he had been considering and eliminated those he did not feel measured up to his needs; those calibers under .380 were not considered adequate for defense, and the .44 Magnum was eliminated as being just too big for anything but hunting.

Next he took a look at the "interface" as he called it, between himself and the gun—the place where the impressions are formed. Some of the things he thought about while examining each gun were:

1. Confirmation of grip and trigger—how did this relate to his hand size and strength.
2. Noise level and his reaction to it
3. Recoil level and, again, his reaction to it
4. Ammunition versatility through reloading and ease of reloading—how did this relate to his interest in becoming involved with reloading
5. Weight and type of sights—related to his intended means of carrying and interest in competitive shooting
6. Mechanical reliability

Before reaching a final decision my friend tried what he called "accommodation." He was fortunate in having a dealer friend who helped him work with each gun on his list and he found that by training himself he could overcome in some degree the things he had initially disliked about each gun. He then extended the process to the gun side of the equation by trying a reasonable selection of custom grips and by experimenting with handloads to vary the noise and recoil levels and make the cartridge more effective. He followed his process to a logical conclusion and bought the gun of his choice. I wish I could tell you what it was but he moved out to his country home before giving me his final report!

So I say let's come off this standardization kick where law officers are concerned and stop trying to tell each what he must carry to do his job. I propose that departments provide new officers an organized

(Continued on page 53)

HAVE THE WINNING .45 COMBO



Both Models 1917 (top) and 1911-A1 chamber the widely respected .45 ACP cartridge, the former with 3-shot half-moon clips, the latter with 7-round mag.

By MASON WILLIAMS

We are constantly wishing for and trying to find and eagerly grasping cartridges and firearms that provide multi-purpose use. Any center fire, large caliber cartridge that can be used in both a revolver and automatic pistol is a desirable one for many reasons. Any handgun that has been used in two World Wars by American servicemen in a revolver version and in an automatic pistol version should spark definite interest among America's sportsmen and outdoorsmen. Any weapon that weighs only 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ ounces unloaded and yet packs far more wallop than a 41 ounce 357 Magnum should raise some eyebrows. The cartridge it fires has long been ranked among the five most potent production cartridges. Its record of achievement and recognition runs from 1911 to 1976. Try this on your pet cartridge some day. The handgun came into being in 1917 and went out of production about twelve years ago.

What is it? It's the Smith and Wesson Model 1917 caliber .45 ACP revolver. When this revolver went into commercial production for sale to civilians, it became the Model 1950 Army. It

fired not only the .45 ACP cartridge by means of half moon, three shot clips but it also fired the .45 ACP RIM cartridge that permitted the shooter to reload in the conventional manner. Seldom has a single cartridge been better mated to two entirely different handguns than the .45 ACP concept. A more practical revolver/cartridge combination is seldom found.

And yet with all this going for it, Smith and Wesson dropped production due to lack of sales. Why? I really don't know. But let's look into the situation and try and discover if there were logical reasons for dropping this handgun or whether Madison Avenue forced its demise through production of Magnum 357's, 44's and 41's that enable an advertising campaign to better promote the manufacturer. Some of the blame cannot be placed on Madison Avenue because far too many shooters tend to follow the trend of Law Enforcement agencies that have settled decisively upon either .38 special or .357 magnum cartridges. This despite the fact that the Model 1917 is lighter in weight and delivers far more actual impact shock with today's

modern loadings.

Actually, there are two Model 1917 .45 ACP revolvers. There is the Colt and the Smith and Wesson. The Colt is by far the heavier and bulkier of the two. They came into being back in 1917 when the war in Europe created a demand for far more .45 ACP handguns than Colt could produce. Army Ordnance then requested a revolver to fire the .45 ACP cartridge. Out of this came both Model 1917 revolvers plus a unique method of firing the rimless .45 ACP cartridge in a revolver. These revolvers were made with chambers that would permit the pistol cartridge rim to seat solidly against a shoulder in the chamber so that, in an emergency, the cartridge could be fired. However, after firing the cartridge, there could exist a problem in removing the fired case from the chamber. This problem was overcome by fitting three cartridges into a half moon clip. The clip would hold the cartridges securely. Two half moon clips loaded the six chambers of the Model 1917 revolver. After firing the six shots, the cylinder was swung open, the ejector rod punched and there was instantaneous and simultaneous ejection of all six fired cases. Held by two half-moon clips, six more cartridges could then be rapidly dropped into the empty cylinder chambers, the cylinder closed and the revolver would be ready to fire again. This proved an efficient and well thought out method of using regular 45 ACP cartridges in both the Model 1911 pistol and in the 1917 revolvers.

The 40 ounce Model 1911 .45 ACP pistol is basically limited to firing time tested production ammunition or carefully selected handloaded cartridges in order to ensure reliable functioning. Automatic pistols have little leeway when it comes to alter-

ing ammunition characteristics. On the other hand, the Model 1917 revolver with its 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce weight can fire just about any reasonable .45 ACP loading plus handloads that are considerably more powerful than those that may be used in the Model 1911 pistol. This is a characteristic of revolvers. The ammunition does not cycle the weapon therefore variations in ammunition cannot basically affect the handgun's functioning.

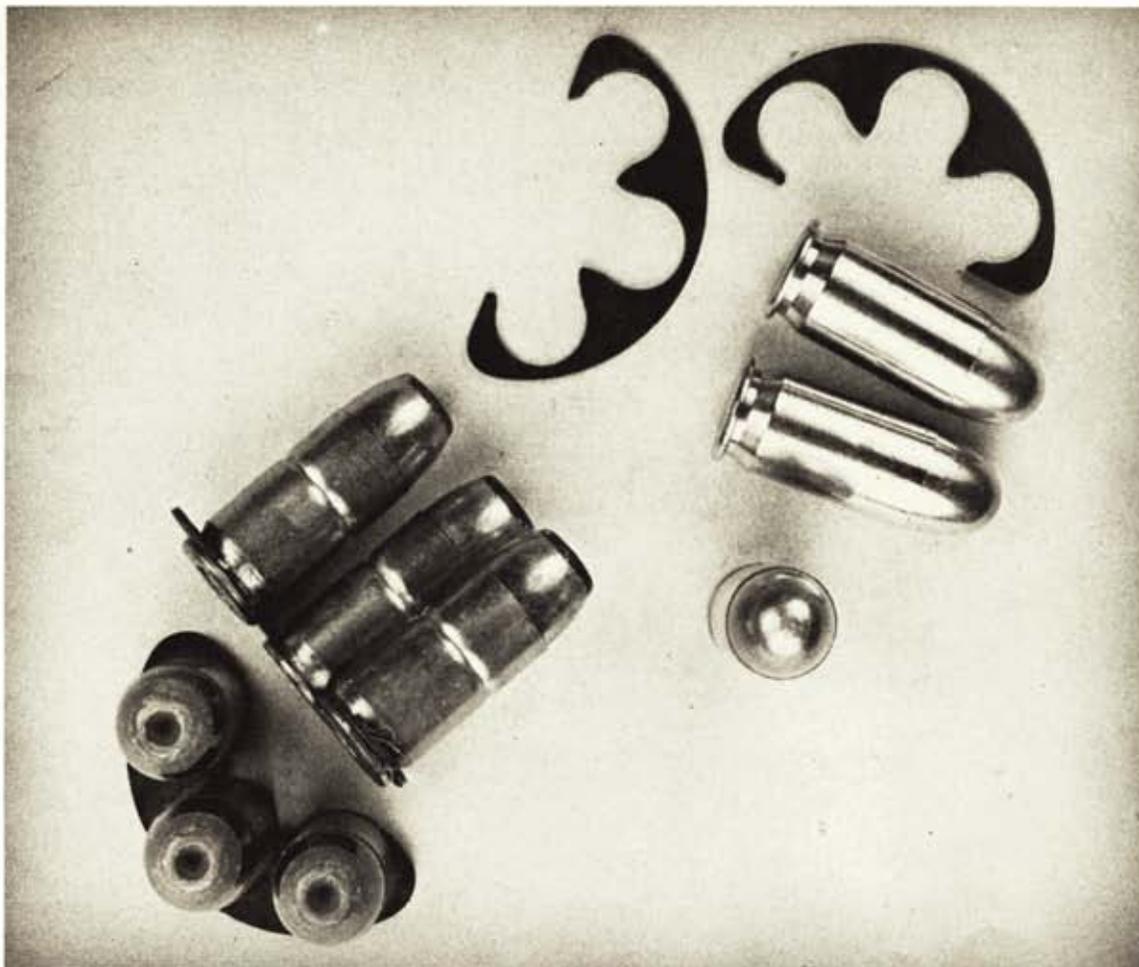
As a result, handloaders for years have been souping up the .45 ACP cartridge to give them far more stopping power than normally obtainable with GI hard ball. The excellent Norma hollow point bullet that will seldom open up in an automatic pistol loading, has proven to be exceptionally good in high velocity revolver loadings. There are many bullets on the market today that permit the handloader to obtain far better ballistics than in the past and, as for the handgun hunter, he can choose from a large number of handloading combinations to obtain the stopping power he needs for the taking of deer, elk, bear and similar big game. As for varmints, he is slightly overgunned for gophers but right in there for woodchucks, coyotes, foxes and porcupines.

Hornady, Speer, Sierra can all furnish excellent bullets of all types. Remington and Winchester, and, I believe, Federal can supply bullets of various weights and types. Factory ammunition today provides a wide range of loadings including Match, full metal jacket, hollow point, sharp should lead and others.

For years people have complained about the Model 1911 automatic pistol. Few people have ever complained about the .45 ACP cartridge. Those who do not like the pistol could always turn to the revolver and fire the .45 ACP cartridge. So, we

The S&W Model 1917 revolver is shown with a variety of grip options and barrels. The two special .45 barrels are catalogued by Numrich Arms Company.





230-grain full metal jacketed service ammunition and Norma's 230-grain jacketed hollow point ammunition are shown with the 3-round half-moon clips. With these clips, rimless ammunition may be used and two clips drop in to completely charge the gun. This feature speeds reloading time considerably.

have had a situation where, if one handgun did not suit a person, they could turn to the other having a versatility seldom encoun-



The .45 Auto-Rim cartridge (left) has a substantial rim which obviates the need for the half-moon clips.

tered in the handgun business. The flexibility and potential of the .45 ACP cartridge nearly matches that of the .22 long rifle.

And, if the shooter did not care for the grips that came on the Model 1917, he could alter them, replace them with custom grips or buy the oversize factory grips and cut them down to his size. In addition, he could buy special barrels from various sources and replace the issue barrel. The result could give him a custom appearing handgun with special barrel and special grips. If he wished, he could cut the barrel just forward of the ejector rod locking assembly and, by installing a new front sight, end up with a light weight, compact potent and reliable revolver that packed enough power to handle any close range emergency.

Even today, half moon clips and .45 ACP ammunition are universally obtainable. There remain large numbers of the Smith and Wesson Model 1917 revolvers. Prices run around \$100.00 to \$150.00 for one of these martial revolvers. Fine, commercial production Model 1950's or the Match 1950 revolvers with their short actions, ribbed barrels, adjustable sights, trigger stops and other refinements will obviously bring a lot more money.

So, with all these advantages, why did the Model 1917 and the Model 1950 go down the drain? I still do not know. As an advocate of the .45 ACP for both sportsmen and law enforcement I am saddened by the passing of these great revolvers. Whatever the cause, I leave it to the reader to think about the situation and then possibly do something about it.





By **GEORGE C. NONTE**

Magnumitis is a terrible malady that began growing by leaps and bounds among the handgunners of this country somewhat short of a score of years ago. Since then, sixgunners have increasingly stuffed massive charges of increasingly expensive powder into their ammunition to extract the greatest handful of velocity out of those short sixgun barrels.

The .357 Magnum of the 1930s initiated the trend, spurred onward by Keith's fabulous .44 Magnum of the 1950s. The overall result has been a never-ending effort to squeeze another few feet-per-second out of the bullet, to shoot harder, to shoot farther, and to blow bigger holes in the target. Makes no difference what the caliber—velocity buffs try to soup up everything from the .25 ACP to the .476 Webley.

The results of all this effort may be plainly seen in loosened guns, strained wrists, and impaired hearing, not to mention astronomical component costs. Yet, seldom can the results of magnumitis be seen on target. Other factors being equal, driving a bullet faster doesn't make it shoot any straighter, and increased blast

and recoil make it less likely that the shooter and the gun will perform to the best of their ability.

In years gone by, in that long-ago when I was just learning the intricacies of hull-stuffing, the handloading pistolero's accomplishments were measured not by the amount of noise and furor he generated, but, rather, the opposite. He was adjudged more competent if he could get his bullets to the target with acceptable accuracy, using the merest smidgen of powder and lead, producing a report no greater than the popping of a champagne cork. Too much powder, lead, and noise was likened to too much hard spirits, the fuss and furor and aftermath of over-indulgence negating the pleasurable accomplishments of lesser amounts.

The gist of these rambling remarks is

simply that there is usually more to be accomplished in loading handgun ammo down—I mean sixguns, really; autos are another matter—than in succumbing to magnumitis and stomping every case as full of powder as possible. Light loads are easier on your gun, far less trouble to shoot well, won't deafen you for days if you've forgotten your ear plugs, and will generally produce better accuracy if they have been properly assembled.

Sure, maximum-power loads do have their uses—to my way of thinking, though, they are justified only for defensive use, long-range shooting, or hunting of the larger game species.

Light loads have other advantages in addition to those we've already mentioned. Cases last almost indefinitely; fewer tools and less involved techniques

PRACTICAL, ECONOMICAL

THE LOW-DOWN



The fine Colt M-1917, hefty Colt New Service in .45 and the snubby Charter Arms .44 Spl. Bulldog can all provide many hours of enjoyable recreational shooting when stoked with easy-kicking mid-range reloads.

couple hundred .38 Special empties for which I had traded grain alcohol to a dip-so Range Sergeant.

Those loads were assembled without any formal tools whatever. Dut to the light powder charge and low pressures, no resizing was necessary. Fired primers were knocked out with a filed-down nail; new primers were seated by placing them anvil-up on a formica'd counter top, then tapping the case down over them with a short piece of $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch dowel and small hammer. Powder charges were dipped from a coffee-cup half filled with Bullseye, using a .22 LR fired case slightly shortened and fitted with a soldered-on brass handle. As I recall, the .22 RF case held 1.1 grains of Bullseye, but the exact charge didn't seem critical as long as it was in that general area.

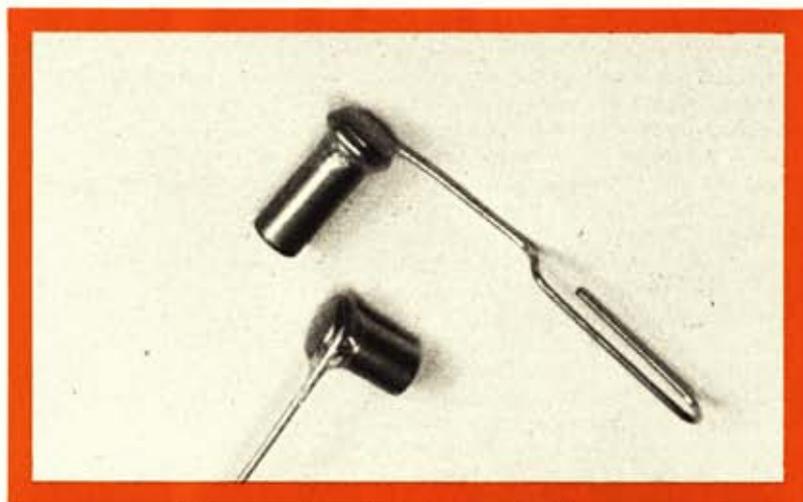
The powder charge was followed by a quarter-sheet of toilet tissue rolled into a loose ball and seated down on the powder with a length of dowel. This was followed by a grease or wax wad formed and seated by simply pressing a thin strip of material over the case mouth. The sheets were formed by melting scrounged beeswax and Vaseline and floating it in a thin layer in a pan of warm water. When the water cooled, I had a thin sheet of lube to be lifted off and cut into manageable strips. Cartridges were completed by thumbing a 00 buckshot into the slightly-belled case mouth, then tapping it gently but firmly with a piece of dowel until exactly half its diameter was within the case. The round ball was sufficiently oversize that this created a tight-enough assembly for normal handling, and when fired, it swaged down nicely as it entered the forcing cone, actually forming in the barrel a short,

AND FUN . . .

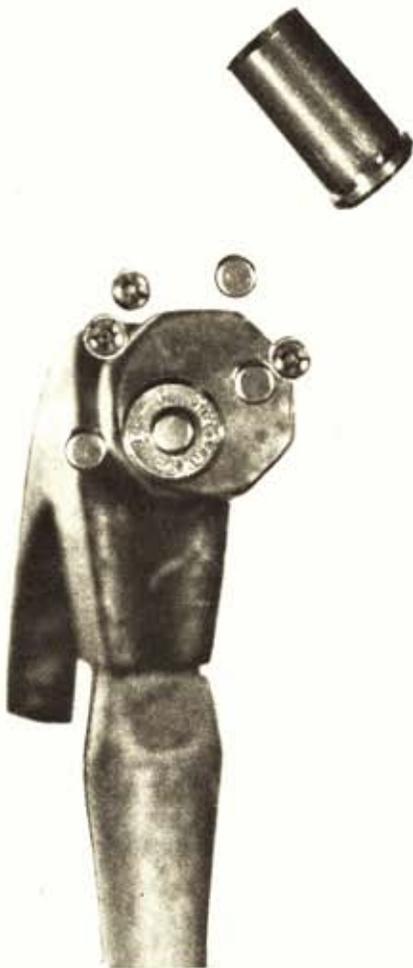
ON LOADING DOWN!

are required; gun service life is extended; per-shot cost is much less; component choice is broader and less critical; report and recoil are negligible; and so on.

The epitome of light loads is represented by the round-ball, .38 Special ammunition I consumed by the thousands in my first *new* revolver. It was a 4-inch, Smith & Wesson, fixed-sight Military and Police Model which consumed $1\frac{1}{2}$ months of my take-home pay as a U.S. Army PFC, more years ago than I care to count. Before spending $\frac{1}{8}$ th of a year's pay (and in those days there was no moonlighting or other secondary income) I had carefully searched out the cheapest way to shoot the gun—so, along with the gun and holster I procured 1,000 primers, an 8-ounce can of Bullseye, and a 5-pound bag of 00 buckshot. I had also squirreled away a



Cheap and easy to make powder dippers.



.45 Auto-Rim case is shown being primed with simple tools. The photo is shot from below, through a slab of very heavy plate glass. A short length of dowel and a gingerly-applied hammer force the thick Auto-Rim case down over the primer.

cylindrical bullet with rounded nose and base.

I discovered that buckshot occasionally ran enough oversize that cartridges so loaded were too large at the mouth to chamber freely. This was corrected by removing the gun's cylinder, then tapping the lead balls through a chamber throat (with my priming dowel) before seating them. This reduced their diameter just enough to allow easy chambering of loaded cases.

So loaded, those piddling round-ball loads shot nowhere near point of aim with the fixed sights of the M&P. Not wanting to deface the gun in any way (that was before the development of my predeliction for hacksawing and filing) I simply learned, by shooting, how much hold-off

was needed to put those leaden spheres exactly where I wanted them. Recoil and report were negligible, the noise level being so low that I shot thousands of them into a cardboard box full of wet sawdust right in the barracks when not too many troops were about. Never a complaint about noise, and I distinctly recall several individuals, who slept right through various shooting sessions.

I used that round-ball load to the exclusion of almost everything else for about a year, rationing myself to 1000 primers per month. As I recall, I averaged over 5000 powder charges per pound of Bullseye, even allowing for some spillage and wastage. Most of those loads were shot in the woods and along a small river, a convenient walk from the barracks, and out to

20-25 yards, it never failed me. It killed countless snakes, turtles, squirrels, and similar small game and provided more shooting fun per dollar than any combination I have used since.

At another point in time, I prepared similar loads for a fine little S&W .32 Hand Ejector revolver, utilizing 0 buckshot projectiles and a .22 Short case full of Bullseye powder as the propelling charge. For all practical purposes, the results were identical—though I always felt I got just a tad more accuracy from the .38.

Later I shot many .44 Special and .45 Colt round-ball loads, using home-cast balls in .435 and .458-inch diameter respectively. A charge of 2.5 to 3.0 grains of Bullseye was used in both calibers, and performance was all that could be desired. At times, balls in the .44 and .45 caliber were seated completely inside the case mouth, with Lyman bullet lubricant smeared over them as an alternative to the grease wad used earlier. When that was done, the tissue wad and grease wad were both eliminated.

Any of those round-ball loads can be duplicated today with equal results. They'll cost more per shot at today's prices, but they still provide maximum shooting for minimum cost, and can be assembled without any tools whatever, providing one begins with new or resized cases which will enter all of the gun's chambers freely.

A slightly more powerful class of light loads uses conical or wadcutter bullets of weight about half way between the round balls and standard form for the caliber. These bullets, being heavier and longer, require slightly heavier powder charges, both to attain adequate velocity and to be spun rapidly enough by rifling to be properly stabilized. Because of its very short length, a round ball is easily stabilized at low velocity, but longer and heavier bullets must be driven a bit more rapidly if adequate accuracy is to be obtained.

Again using the .38 Special as an example, round-nose and wadcutter bullets of 100- to 125-grains weight perform well. Of all those available, I have found the 75-grain, Lyman #358101 wadcutter and the pointed, semi-wadcutter #358242, 112-grains to do quite well.

These bullets should be cast of a hard alloy—I prefer linotype metal—and should be sized to the groove diameter of the particular barrel for best results. Some lubrication is necessary, but not all the grooves need be filled. I'd prefer to set up the lubricator-sizer so that only one groove is filled; while it seems to make no difference which groove it might be, it is usually easier to fill the first above the base than the others. Of course, the cost of a lubricator/sizer can be avoided by using the ages-old, cake-cutter method of lubrication and then shooting the bullets unsized. Accuracy may suffer some, but not too much, in the process.

Bullseye is still the ideal powder

Placing lubricant wad beneath round-balls in the lightened loads is simple: just flatten a portion of bullet lubricant and push the case mouth through it obtaining a full inside diameter wad column.

(Modern W-W 230 may be substituted), and as little as 1.5 to 1.7 grains will produce good, short-range accuracy with the wadcutter, while the longer bullets may require as much as 2.0 grains for adequate stabilization. At this point, though, Hercules Unique may be substituted for Bullseye with apparently equal accuracy, by increasing the charge weight by $\frac{1}{3}$. If you are a real nit-picker, using Unique does increase powder cost minutely—from about $\frac{1}{10}$ -cent to $\frac{1}{6}$ -cent per shot.

Loading becomes more sophisticated with these bullets and a few tools are required. Cases will still not normally require full-length resizing because of the very small amount of expansion produced in firing, but some provision must be made to hold the bullet securely. You may neck-size the cases lightly and thus hold the bullet friction-tight, or the cases may be left unsized then crimped very *lightly* on the bullet. I've obtained equal results with both methods, but prefer light neck-sizing simply because it eliminates the problem of bullets dropping too deep into the case during seating. A Lee Loader or the old Lyman Tong Tool is more than adequate for assembling this type of load; nothing more sophisticated is necessary.

In this load class, I prefer the 75-grain wadcutter and 1.6 grains of Bullseye for short-range, paper-punching—but find the longer, round-nose bullet with 2.0 grains of Bullseye or 2.7 grains of Unique more desirable for woods shooting at random targets.

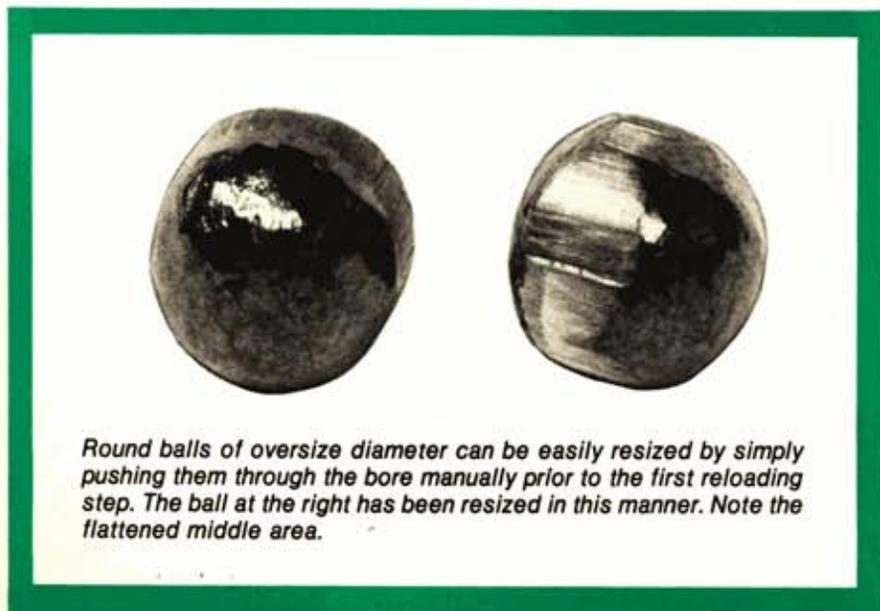
As for other calibers, the 185-grain wadcutter and 3.0 grains of Bullseye perform quite well in .44 Special, and .44 Magnum; and in .45 caliber, the 185-grain, semi-wadcutter (in the absence of a true wadcutter in this size) shoots beautifully with the same powder charge. In fact, the latter has long been my

favored plinking load in .45 Auto-Rim cases, in a fine old M1917 S&W revolver. It also shoots better in a big converted Webley (originally .455) than any other load I've been able to develop.

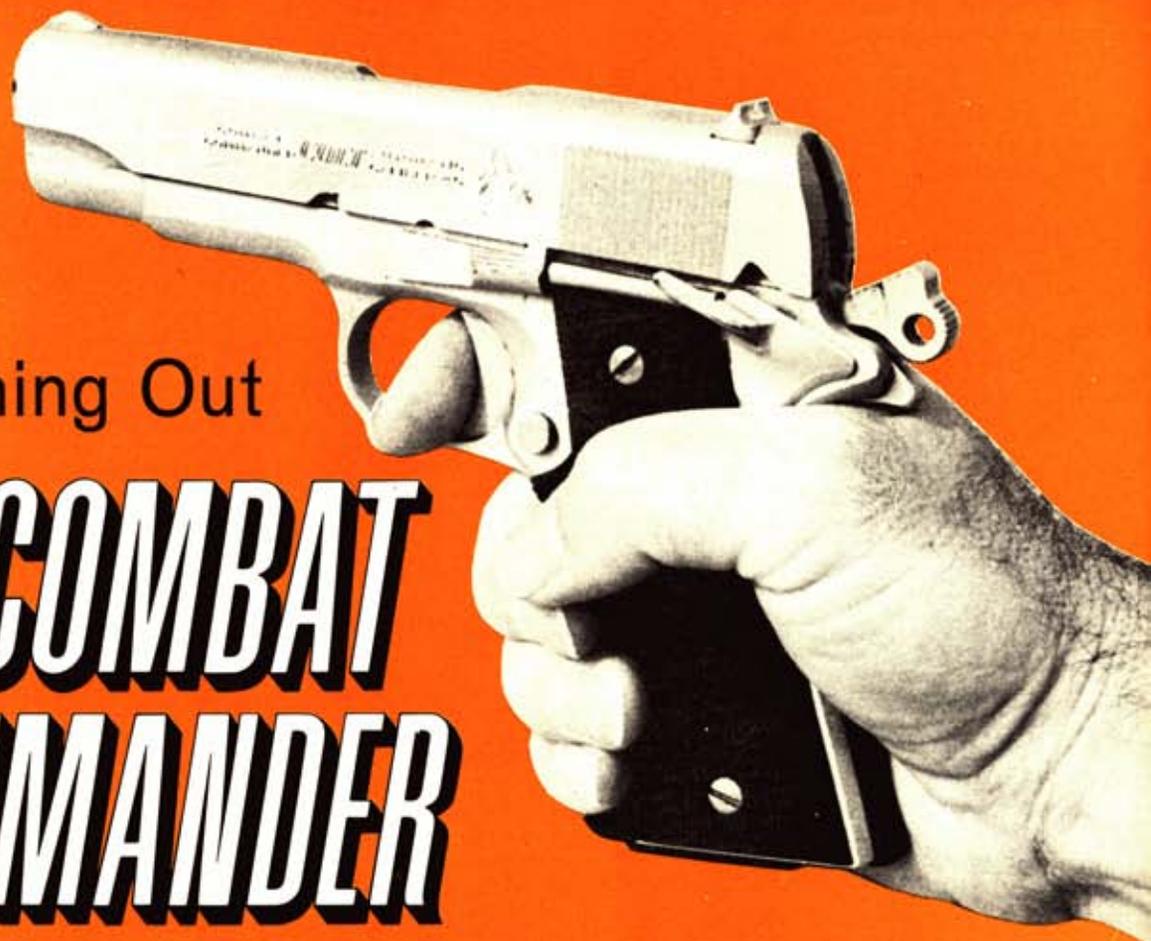
The last class of reduced loads utilizes standard-weight bullets with powder charge and velocity reduced to the minimum that provide acceptable accuracy. Again, Bullseye and Unique are the preferred powders and normal-weight bullets (for the caliber) cast hard and sized properly will perform well. Because the relatively long and heavy bullet requires substantial velocity for stabilization, it is not generally possible to lighten powder by any great amount. The standard, lead-bullet, .38 Special load drives a 158-grain projectile at around 850 fps. Using this same weight of bullet, though I much prefer it in semi-wadcutter form, accuracy begins to suffer considerably if velocity is reduced below about 700 fps. This level can be achieved by 2.7-2.8 grains of Bullseye or 3.6-3.8 grains of Unique in either .38 Special or .357 Magnum cases.

Much the same holds true for the larger calibers, and in .44 and .45, bullets of 240- to 250-grains weight may be driven rapidly enough for good practical accuracy by 3.5-4.0 grains of Bullseye or 5.0

(Continued on page 61)



Round balls of oversize diameter can be easily resized by simply pushing them through the bore manually prior to the first reloading step. The ball at the right has been resized in this manner. Note the flattened middle area.



Smoothing Out

THE COMBAT COMMANDER

Custom Touches for Finer Performance

By DAVID C. HART

The Colt .45 auto, in all its many versions has probably been cussed and discussed more than any other weapon in existence. Most individuals' experiences with the .45 have left much to be desired. In its out-of-the-box state, it is somewhat difficult to master. However, it has excellent potential.

Many police officers and departments are in the process of switching over to the big Colt. The reasons for these changes are many, but they center around a more powerful round, and faster reloading. Fringe benefits include such extras as a terrific psychological impact, excellent reliability, and the fact that it can easily be used on and off duty.

A thriving business is being done on .45 autos in the areas of accurizing and customizing. It is not uncommon to see .45's with Smith & Wesson or Bo-mar adjustable sights, burr hammers, extended thumb safeties, and exotic finishes. These fine custom jobs are works of art, but usually add between \$100 and \$400 to the cost of the weapon. This is fine for the individual that has plenty of money to invest, but it is somewhat unrealistic for the average officer.

As issued, the standard .45 Mark IV Government Model, will shoot a 50 yard machine rest group of four to six inches. This is

plenty fine for a combat weapon. Older model .45s usually average eight inches or worse. This isn't too encouraging.

Colt announced their new steel-framed Commander some years ago, and it has been very popular every since. Many custom pistol smiths used them as starting points for custom modifications. It is a happy medium between the lightweight alloy-framed 26½-ounce Commander, and the full sized 39-ounce Government model. The former tends to suffer when used constantly with heavy loads, while the latter tends to be too large and heavy for 24 hour a day use.

The main advantage, then, of the Commander length weapons is a more compact size, and lighter weight. It also offers the popular burr-style hammer. The lightweight Commander is made on an alloy frame that, in my opinion, is just too light for continual shooting. For a carry gun however, it is one of the finest weapons in existence. A rule of thumb that might be used is whether or not you will fire 1,000 rounds a year through the gun. If this is to be, you might be better served by one of the heavier weapons. The Combat Commander has a steel frame, adding much strength and weight, but still retaining the compactness of the Commander.

The people at Colt have yet to put the new collet bushing and barrel on the Commander-length weapon. Therefore, the Commander models are often overlooked, because of the inconsistent fit between the standard barrel bushing and barrel. However, all is not lost. Due to the demand for an extremely accurate and reliable Combat Commander, stainless steel barrels and finger-type bushings are now available from Mr. Irv Stone of Bar-Sto Precision Products, 633 So. Victory Blvd., Burbank, Calif. 91502.

Mr. Stone turns out an exceedingly fine product, that duly complements the fine Colt auto. The barrels are extremely well machined and finished. They have the added advantage of being "throated" for more reliable feeding with all bullet configurations. With a stock commander, an average group might average 7 to 10" at 50 yards. Add Mr. Stone's new barrel and bushing and presto! Instant accuracy job. The gun will now reliably group between 3 and 4 inches at 50 yards. This unit, in my particular satin finished Combat Commander, produced consistent groups of between 3½ and 4½ inches compared to the previous 8 to 9" groups in the same unaltered version.

With all the added advantages, ranging from increased accuracy, more reliable feeding, and a much longer lasting barrel and bushing, you get a totally rust-free unit. All the inherent ill and loose fitting parts slack is taken up by this unit.

So much for the accuracy problem. Mr. Stone can also supply you with a complete set of stainless steel springs to replace your rustable ones now in use. Neat!

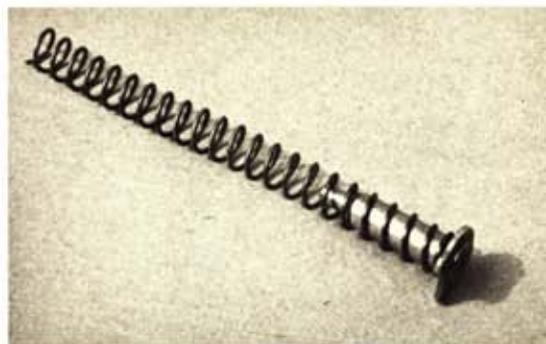
One of the cutest items to come along in a long time is Irv's newest recoil buffer. I really like this particular unit. Because of

the unique construction of this unit, it is virtually impossible to have this unit destruct itself through continued use. This type of buffer has been around for some time now to fit the government models, but Irv now makes one to fit the steel and alloy-framed Commanders. This is really a nice addition to an already fine weapon. It should help to keep your Commander from losing its fine accuracy due to the continual battering of slide and receiver during recoil.

One part of the .45 auto that needs help is the diminutive size of the thumb safety. My hands tend to be larger than most, but I have found that an extended thumb safety in no way handicaps a person with smaller hands, and is almost mandatory for the larger mits. These extensions are usually made by heli-arcing on an extension to the current thumb safety. This modification is very necessary for those individuals with large hands who carry the weapon cocked and locked. For the past 60-odd years, the southpaws in the crowd were forced to either thumb-cock the hammer, or rack the slide. Neither method is advised.

Mr. Armand Swensen, of Fallbrook, Calif., has devised the ambidextrous extended thumb safety for the .45 auto. Oh, what joy he has brought to those .45 buffs who use the wrong hand! This is the slickest unit to come along in years. It is expensive, but extremely worthwhile. The safeties are extended to the proper length on both sides of the weapon. Have heavy hearts no longer, southpaws, Mr. Swenson has just what you need. Installation is simple, provided instructions are followed.

The standard .45's grip is just a little too slick to suit me. Pachmayr Gun Works, Los Angeles, Calif., has designed the best



The Barsto Recoil Buffer aids in reducing muzzle flip and improves the Combat Commander's effectiveness by reducing recovery time.



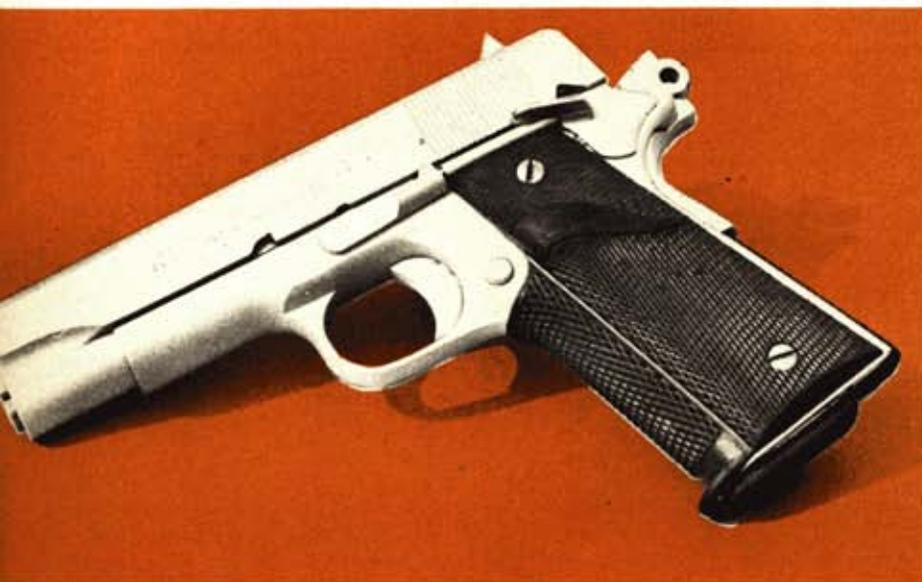
The Barsto stainless barrel and muzzle bushing aid materially in improving the Combat Commander's accuracy potential.

all around grip to appear in years. Called the "Signature" grip, they are made of neoprene rubber over steel grip panels. They are held together by a checkered segment that covers the slick fore-strap on a Colt .45. They make a truly slip-proof hold, excellent for wet or cold weather. All custom gunsmiths roughen, stipple, or checker this area, for \$15 to \$50. Believe me, this grip is really a poor man's answer. To put on the crowning touches, Pachmayr's has now produced a flat main-spring housing that is also rubber coated. This total combination gives the most slip-proof, secure feeling of any grip in existence. It also seems to slightly reduce the apparent recoil. I suppose the rubber is soft enough to give slightly under recoil. Nice!

One minor problem with the .45 auto is the magazine well. When a loaded .45 magazine is inserted into the well, the magazine must be in nearly perfect position. If the angle is off to either side, the lips of the magazine hang up on the edge of the frame. This is no problem to the target man, but is potentially harmful for the combat shooter. The magazine chute can be beveled on about a 30° angle on all sides by hand with files, emery cloth, and a little time. If attention is paid to detail, it will turn out very well. This permits the shooter to insert the magazine into the button a slight angle, and still seat the butt on a slight angle, and still seat the

(Continued on page 61)

Finishing touches on the Combat Commander's 'Smooth-up' are the addition of Pachmayr's wraparound Signature grip and a padded magazine floorplate to protect the mag when ejected during combat.



Close Up On Combat Shooting's Ace:



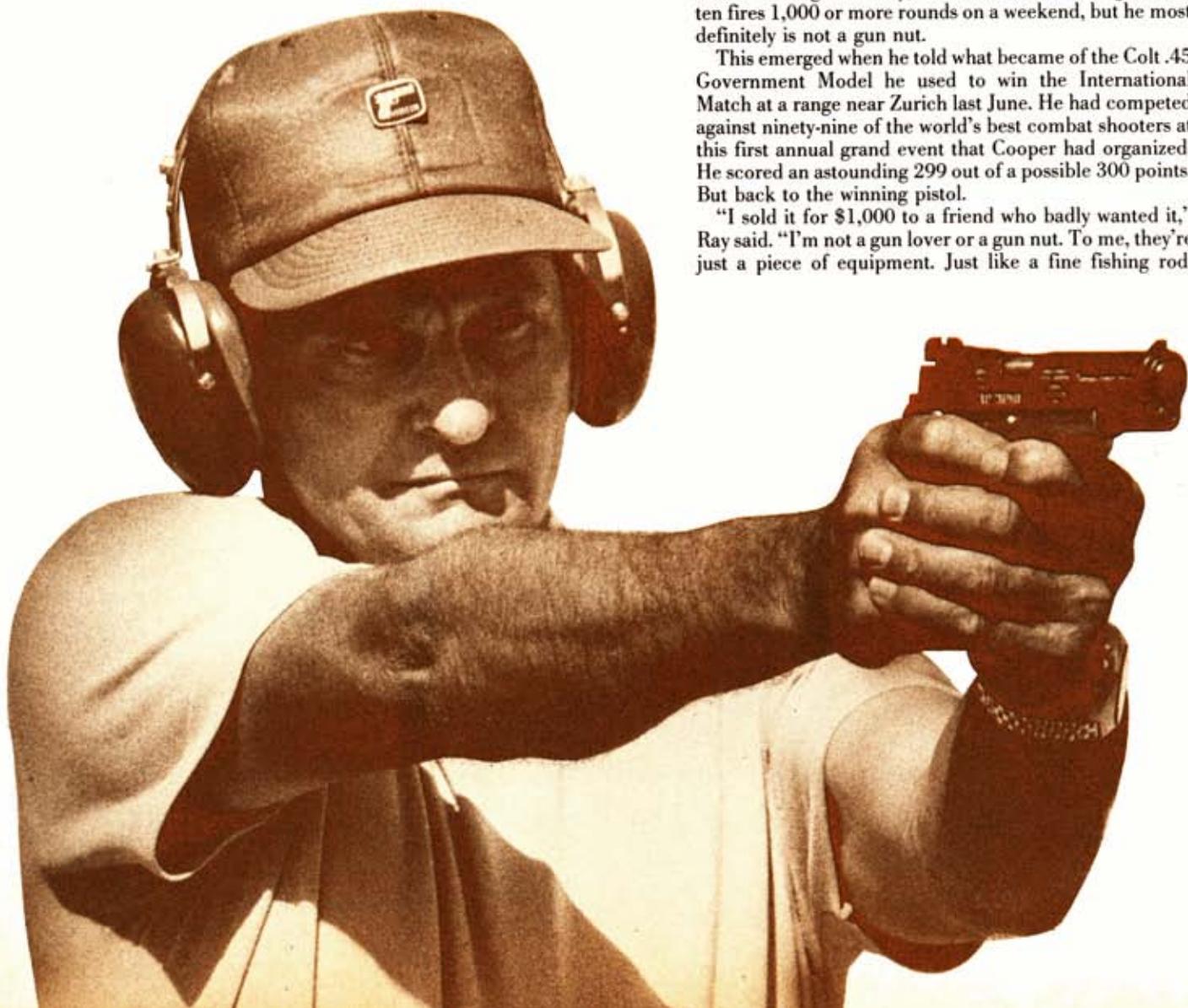
RAY CHAPMAN

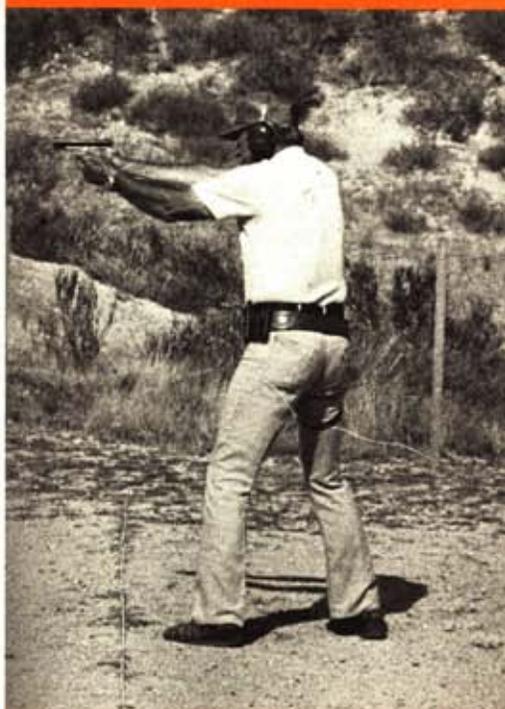
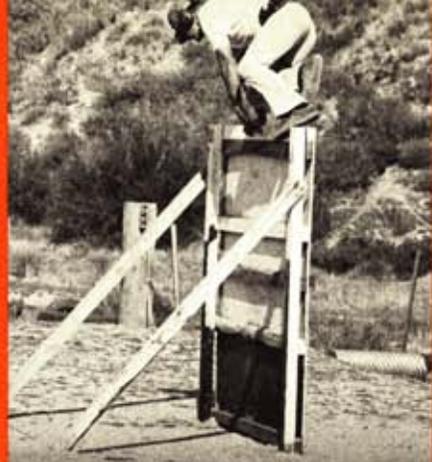
By **IRA GREENBERG**
Photos by Wayne Kelly

Ray Chapman, 1975 World Practical Pistol Champion and, says Jeff Cooper, one of the four or five best shots in handgun history, is dedicated to shooting and often fires 1,000 or more rounds on a weekend, but he most definitely is not a gun nut.

This emerged when he told what became of the Colt .45 Government Model he used to win the International Match at a range near Zurich last June. He had competed against ninety-nine of the world's best combat shooters at this first annual grand event that Cooper had organized. He scored an astounding 299 out of a possible 300 points. But back to the winning pistol.

"I sold it for \$1,000 to a friend who badly wanted it," Ray said. "I'm not a gun lover or a gun nut. To me, they're just a piece of equipment. Just like a fine fishing rod,





A demonstration of the combination of agility, speed, endurance and competitiveness that goes into making Ray Chapman a tough man to equal in any combat shooting course. These sequential photos give you an idea of the rigors involved in being a champion.

they're something you enjoy using. I enjoy the shooting, not the guns themselves. I'm not a collector, I don't have guns I don't actually use."

The working guns he does have at present include a matched pair of single-action .45 revolvers with 7½-inch barrels, a 12-inch Colt single-action Buntline, calibers .243, .300, and .338 Winchester magnum rifles, two 12-gauge pump shotguns, and three Colt .45 Government Model pistols, besides the combat-customized Colt .45 that Frank Pachmay awarded him as first prize in the International Match. Of the three Colt .45 autoloaders he regularly owns, two are always available for competition. "I keep two pistols in top condition all the time," he said. "My Number One is my shooting pistol, Number Two is the backup pistol, and a third is being worked on. When my shooting pistol has had enough rounds and 'gets tired,' I sell it and get another, and move Number Two and Number Three up and the new one goes to the shop, so I always have two pistols and one in the works—it takes a long time to get a pistol ready for competition shooting."

Ray, who lives in Tujunga, California, is a tall, serious, quiet-spoken road engineer for the California Department of Transportation and a man who has been around guns most of his life. However, he didn't own one until 1957 when he bought the first of the .45 Colt single-action revolvers. He began his competitive shooting career with this model because "at that time that's what everyone was shooting—they wouldn't let you shoot any other type of pistol in competition."

He was 28 then and had been a corporal in the Marine Corps, and, following his discharge, a stock clerk in a store, an engineering student at the University of Oregon, a draftsman with North American Aircraft, a survey chief for the Texas highway Department, a surveyor for a dam project in Oregon, and had just completed his first year at the California Department of Transportation.

Born and reared in Dallas, Texas, dur-

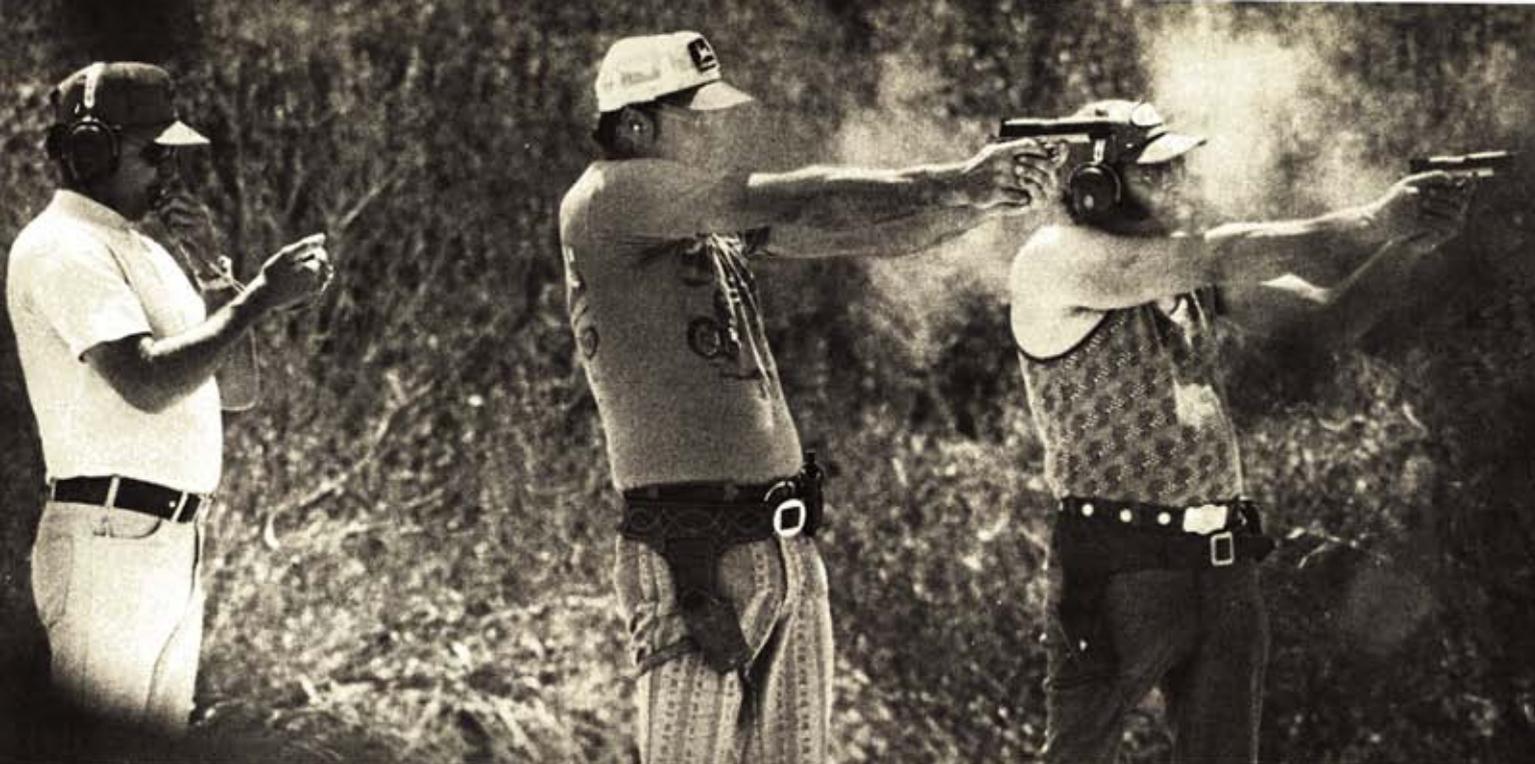
ing the depression, the son of an often out-of-work plumber who would "hunt game for the table," Ray had access to his father's rifles and shotgun and hunted quail and rabbits as his contribution to the family larder. But his real enjoyments then were football, baseball, and fishing. "I used to love to go fishing—mostly for bass and catfish."

A year after buying his Colt single-action, he bought a second to match the first, and used both guns when practicing in order to save re-loading time. For all practical purposes he is self-taught, but he's shot enough NRA targets to hold a Master's Rating. Nevertheless, he is not too enthusiastic about the single-action revolver. "It isn't a good pistol for the type of shooting we do," he explained. "It's too hard to handle, too hard to re-load, a very difficult pistol to shoot—you can't control it properly when using one hand to cock it." Yet he won many matches with it, and then came practical pistol shooting, which Cooper organized in the early 1960's.

Ray's first practical pistol match was in 1960 at Big Bear Lake in California in which Cooper permitted all pistols of .38 caliber or above to compete. It was then that Ray learned the SA revolver was not adequate for these events. "Jeff Cooper, who had been an officer in the Marine Corps and had carried a .45 auto for many years convinced me of this." Ray thereupon traded a Winchester 30-30 lever-action rifle for a commercial grade Colt Government .45 auto, and then he commenced "very slowly and with a lot of hard work and concentration" to learn to use it.

"Each weekend, on Saturday, Sunday, and holidays, I was out on the range shooting over 1,000 rounds." He often worked out with Thell "Mark" Reed, then a teenager and now a Los Angeles car-leasing executive, and they taught each other.

"I want to say that Mark Reed is the fastest gun alive," Ray stated. "He helped me a lot with the fast-draw, and I helped him a lot with technical shooting. I consider Mark Reed the best single-action shooter in the world."



In addition to Chapman's own competition efforts, he also officiates and scores at various matches. Here Chapman times a speed and accuracy event shot by Frank Murphy and Master-class shooter Buck Toddy.

One of the technical points Ray stresses is that when firing the .45 auto he holds his left index finger on the trigger guard, explaining, "The higher you get your support the less muzzle jump, which is why we have checkering." He himself does not have his front trigger guard checkered, "but I do put my finger there."

Besides his career with the California Department of Transportation, where during the past 23 years he has been in survey, design, and traffic, and for the last 10 years an assistant highway engineer, Ray is rangemaster for the Los Alamitos Police Department near Los Angeles.

There he trains recruits and others in the .45 auto after they have received basic revolver training at the Academies of the Los Angeles Police Department or the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

He also makes himself available, free of charge, for one-day consultations with any police force seeking his services and may be contacted through the Los Alamitos Police Department. He does not train people for competitive shooting but only police for practical shooting, as a public service. "However," he adds, "I have started a shooting school in Los Angeles, as it's getting so that the private citizen needs now more than ever before to learn to defend himself and to feel that he *can* defend himself."

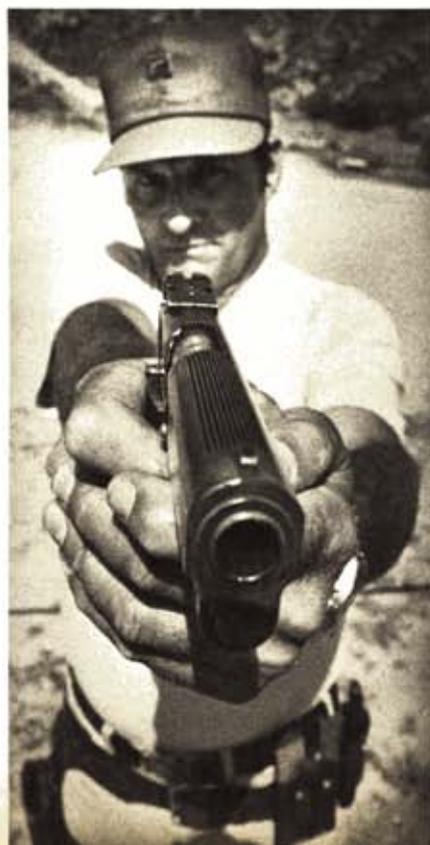
Ray believes in training, and when preparing for an important match he goes about it with care and concentration, which undoubtedly explains the some 200 first-place trophies he has collected, along with numerous awards of cash in lieu of trophies. In order to earn these many victories, Ray figures he has had to enter between 500 and 600 competitions since he began match shooting. And it is only the first-place trophies he keeps because he

lacks storage space for the second and third place awards, which he donates to Boy Scout troops and other organizations for youngsters. For three years, beginning in 1962, he had a second hobby, competing in sports car rallies, "but Corvettes got too expensive, and I couldn't support both hobbies so I gave up sports cars." Therefore, a bachelor with few other distractions, when readying himself for a key match he devotes himself to this with total dedication. Thus, for the international event in Switzerland, as well as for other combat courses, he states:

"I try to find out as much about the match as I can, including such technical things as direction of fire, texture of the range—for example, is it grass, sand, weed, etc., and is it level. I wrote to the sponsoring committee and had my friends write to people who might know the course. I wanted to know the type of targets and everything possible about the match.

"Then, you have to make sure your equipment is okay. Also, you have to have the right clothes and the right pistol and ammunition. If they furnish the ammunition, I find out what it is and sight in my pistols with this type. The correct holster is also important. After checking it all, then I practice the match as best I can.

"I work on the things that are difficult and do it so I peak out a week or 10 days long to fire." But in spite of difficulties and inconveniences, which are found in almost all matches, Ray feels one should always put forth his best efforts, no matter



A view few would envy, Ray Chapman's combat .45 is a study in deadly force controlled by a true master. Note interlocked two handed combat grip.

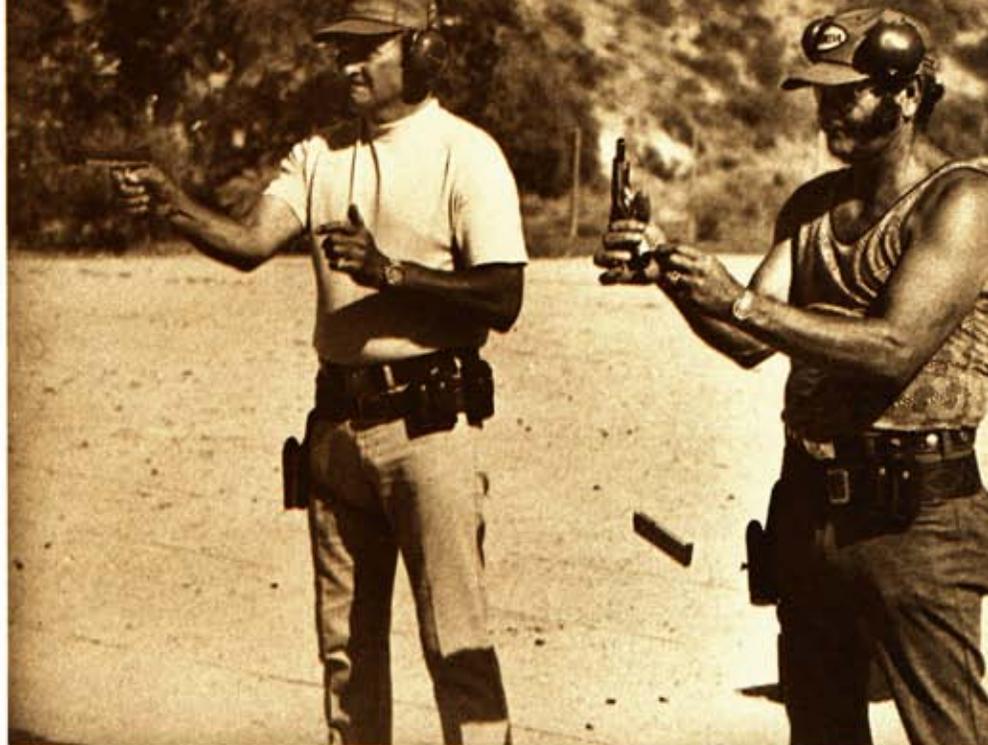
before the match, so I'm not overtrained. That gives me a great mental attitude, knowing I've done all I can and no one's done more.

"If the match calls for special physical effort, I try to prepare for it, but I usually try to keep myself in good condition at all times." The physical fitness program he likes is the Canadian Air Force Basic 5 X (sit-ups, push-ups, back-raise, bends, and running).

The 1975 International Practical Pistol Match of June 21-22 consisted of eight stages from precision fire to fast-draw at ranges of from 6.5 to 25 meters, with everything timed, "hence, a tremendous time-pressure."

Ray fired one point off a perfect score, using only 57 rounds of the 60 permitted, but he did not care too much for the match.

"I didn't consider it a good match for international competition," he said, "as it took too long to administer and took too



Speed, accuracy and firepower are combined as Chapman and Buck Toddy demonstrate their technique. Note Toddy has just ejected an empty magazine and is in the act of inserting a fresh one as Ray's .45 continues to spray lead from the muzzle and brass from the port.



Western actor Steve Benson, himself an expert with the Colt .45 Single Action, receives expert coaching from Chapman as Ron Learch looks on.

how badly things might look at the time.

"In competitive shooting, you never want to give up and quit," he said. "I've won a lot of matches where it looked as if there had been a disaster, but by not giving up and trying to shoot the best score possible, I somehow managed to recover."

Often in the best shooting company and himself acclaimed the best or among the handful of the very best, the question naturally arises as to who he, Ray Chapman, admires as shooters. To which he replies:

"Jeff Cooper. He's a fine pistol shot. He is not in competition shooting any more, he's in teaching and consulting. He was the founder of organized practical pistol competition, not only in the U.S. but internationally.

"I admire for double-action shooting Jack Weaver of the L.A. County Sheriff's Department and Elden Carl of the San Diego County Sheriff's office. These are the two best double-action shooters I ever saw, and I saw a lot of them. I have seen much fine shooting, but these two stand out.

"Of course I admire Mark Reed for his all-around shooting, and as I've said before, he's the finest single-action shooter, bar none.

"For practical pistol course shooting with the service automatic, I would say Al Nichols, current Southwest Pistol League champion, is someone I admire a lot. Another shooter I admire for his all-around ability is Bill McMillan of the Marine Corps, who won the gold medal in the

1960 International Rapid Fire Competition, using a special .22 caliber pistol."

Besides his achievements in competitive shooting, which include matches in North America, Europe, and Africa, Ray is proud of the fact that he twice and gunsmith Jim Hoag of Canoga Park, Calif., once, fired perfect scores (180 points out of 180) in the Mexican Defense Course, a hairy exercise involving rapid-fire while moving that is described in *Cooper on Handguns*. Other records Ray holds include the Advanced Military Pistol Course (500-43X out of a possible 500-45X), the Flying "M" (11.10 seconds), Hogan's Alley (24-14X in 33.8 seconds), Moving Target (24-24X out of 24-24X), Practical Pistol Course, Southwest Pistol League modification (238-22X out of 240-48X), Tricathlon (36-34X out of 36-36X), and the Adams Practical Pistol Match (260-33X out of 265-48X).

Nevertheless, in spite his records and his multitude of first-place showings, Ray is especially pleased with the nine one-shot kills (five javelins and four deer) with two Smith & Wesson Model 29's, the .44 magnum double-action revolvers he owned having 6½ and 8¾-inch barrels. He subsequently sold the SW 29's because "the muzzle blasts hurt my ears."

To prepare as intensively as he does, Ray often fires as many as 500 or 600 rounds a day, and the results are manifested in his guns as well as in his winnings. He went through three barrels with

(Continued on page 57)



.44 Mag. Thumbbusters

Wherein the author discovers the strength, and accuracy of these contemporary hawlegs.

By **CLAIR REES**

The potent .44 Remington Magnum revolver cartridge has been with us for nearly 20 years now, and it still has no peer as a handgun hunting round. As stoked at the factory, the standard 240-grain load exits a 6½-inch barrel at somewhere around 1450 fps, with about 1150 foot-pounds of oomph.

That combination has been powerful enough, over the years, to do in a wide variety of game—up to and including the big bears of Kodiak Island. And while taking on large carnivores with the .44 alone is stretching your luck a bit (the guys who have done this have generally been backed by someone with a cool head and a

large-caliber rifle), this handgun round is more than adequate medicine for deer and other non-dangerous game.

As the load for serious *hunting* handgunners, the .44's popularity has been steadily increasing. When the round was first introduced in 1956, the only wheel-gun chambered to handle it was the then also new Smith & Wesson Model 29.

The M29 remains the only double-action revolver capable of digesting the big magnum (although I understand that may change soon). Unfortunately, this is a relatively high-priced handgun that has been hard to come by in recent years even for those with the requisite cash.

The Ruger Super Blackhawk and the Hawes Chief Marshall (center and right) feature counterbored chambers. The Iver Johnson Cattleman (left) does not have this feature, but boasts the thickest chamber walls of the trio.

However, Bill Ruger brought forth his single-action Super Blackhawk soon after the model 29 S&W appeared on the scene, and a few foreign makers later followed suit with their own .44 "thumb-busters." Now bigbore handgun buffs have a choice between at least three quality wheelguns other than the ever-scarce Smith.

There have actually been a number of imported handguns chambered for the magnum .44, but at the time of this writing, there remained but two foreign models readily available in this country to handle the round—the Cattleman, made by A. Uberti & C. in Italy and imported by Iver Johnson's Arms & Cycle Works, Inc., 109 River Street, Fitchburg, Mass. 01420; and the Hawes, made by J. P. Sauer & Sohn, West Germany, for Hawes Firearms Company, 8224 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90046.

These, together with the aforementioned Ruger, constitute *the* choices for S.A. handgun lovers with a yen for the most powerful handgun cartridge commercially available (that statement ig-



nores the .44 Auto Mag, which is still in the semi-wildcat stage).

All things considered, any one of the trio should make even a discriminating handgunner happy. To make things even better, all three of these guns cost less than the elusive S&W 29, and they're all available right now.

While the double-action Smith is a fine gun, the precise bullet placement required for a successful hunt pretty well dictates single-action firing for utmost ac-

curacy, and the considerable recoil generated by full-house factory loads tends to make controlled, rapid double-action repeat shots all but impossible, anyhow. So as far as I'm concerned, a hunter choosing a single-action .44 over the more "modern" double-action variety isn't handicapping himself all that much.

Let's take a look at the single-action .44's. First, the Italian-made Cattleman sold by Iver Johnson's is available in three basic models and a trio of barrel lengths. The standard Cattleman sells for around \$175 with fixed sights, while the "Buckhorn" model has a rear sight adjustable for both windage and elevation, and retails for \$191.20. Both of these models come with your choice of 4³/₄, 6- and 7¹/₂-inch barrels, and there's an 18-inch Buntline model also available.

As I'm talking primarily about handguns for serious hunting, I requested adjustable sights on all three of the test guns I obtained for this article. My Cattleman was the Buckhorn model, with a 6-inch barrel.

Iver Johnson's Cattleman is a good-looking handgun, looking very much like the Colt S.A. (which unfortunately is not chambered for the big Remington magnum round). The trigger guard and backstrap are brass, which contrasts nicely with the case-hardened receiver and deep-blued barrel. The oiled walnut grips on my sample have a pleasing grain, and are closely fitted.

The Cattleman felt very good in my hand, and pointed naturally for me. Functioning was good throughout the tests, which were carried out with a variety of full factory loads. Empty, the gun weighed



Author Rees fires the Super Blackhawk from a sandbag rest. All guns tested showed good accuracy potential, with the Ruger having a slight edge.

2 pounds, 9 ounces, and the trigger broke cleanly at an even three pounds.

Like all three of the single actions tested, the Cattleman tended to pivot in my hand when fired, with the barrel coming back and up. With the two-hand hold I used (with my wrists resting solidly on sandbags), the heel of the grip tended to punish the supporting palm of my left hand. I eventually had to wear a glove on that hand to avoid developing a good case of "flinch" before the three-gun test was over.

Using Federal factory ammo throwing 240-grain hollowpoints, the Cattleman produced five-shot groups averaging around 4 inches, center-to-center at 25 yards.

The West-German manufactured Hawes I tested also sported a 6-inch barrel and adjustable sights, although it, too, is available in a wide variety of models and barrel lengths. The standard fixed-sight "Western Marshall" model presently retails for \$180.20, while the deluxe "Chief Marshall" model with its fully adjustable rear sight goes for \$217.60.

When my sample arrived, it turned out to be a handsome piece—the laminated rosewood grips were lacquered to a high, glossy finish, while the barrel, cylinder and frame were well finished and blued. The backstrap and trigger guard were of anodized aluminum.

The gun was well finished, although the wooden grips were a trifle oversize and didn't quite mate with the trigger guard extension. The grips also extended farther at the bottom than those on the other two handguns, and flared wider at the butt. I have relatively small hands, and this exaggerated grip made control a little more difficult—someone with larger extremi-

ties would probably find the arrangement just fine.

The Hawes tipped the scales at 2 pounds, 8 ounces, and had a crisp, 2½-pound trigger pull that was the best of the bunch. The excellent trigger pull no doubt contributed to the gun's fine accuracy—with 240-grain Federal ammunition, the Anglicized Sauer printed groups that were just shy of fantastic for a hot-loaded .44 magnum. At 25 yards, I had no difficulty keeping 5 consecutive rounds in a tight 1¼-inch cluster! This in spite of the fact that I had a hard time holding onto the somewhat slippery, reverse-taper grips.

While all three of my test guns had excellent sighting equipment that gave clear, sharply defined sight pictures, the Hawes was unique in that its rear sight was protected by a pair of solid-steel "ears" molded into the top of the receiver.

Unlike the other S.A.'s tested, the Ruger Super Blackhawk is available in one configuration only—this with adjustable sights and a 7½-inch barrel. And while you don't have a large variety of (in fact, *any*) options when you buy a Super Blackhawk, the one model available has everything you could ask for in a hunting handgun—a fairly long barrel for optimum velocity and extended sighting plane, and a first-class set of micro-adjustable sights. The price is a surprisingly low \$157.50.

My sample Super Blackhawk was one of the first .44's made with Ruger's new transfer-bar safety system. Most handgunning buffs are familiar with the system by now, so I'll just point out that this handy innovation makes the Ruger the *only* single-action handgun I know of that can be toted *safely* with the hammer resting on a loaded chamber. In addition to mak-



Accuracy with the Super Blackhawk was excellent, with groups like this one being typical from a rested, two-handed grip.

ing the new Ruger a true six-shooter (I'd carry any other single-action with the hammer down on an *empty* chamber, and most knowledgeable handgunners follow the same procedure), the transfer-bar arrangement requires some readjustment in other S.A. habits—for instance, the cylinder is loaded with the hammer in the down position, rather than on half-cock (and that position has therefore been eliminated on this model). The loading gate won't open, either, unless the hammer is all the way down.

My Ruger weighed 2 pounds 14 ounces with its longer barrel. The all-steel handgun (except for the ejector housing, which is aluminum) exhibited a fine outer finish, with all parts smoothly polished and blued. The American walnut grips were oiled and fit the backstrap well, although a tad short of perfection.

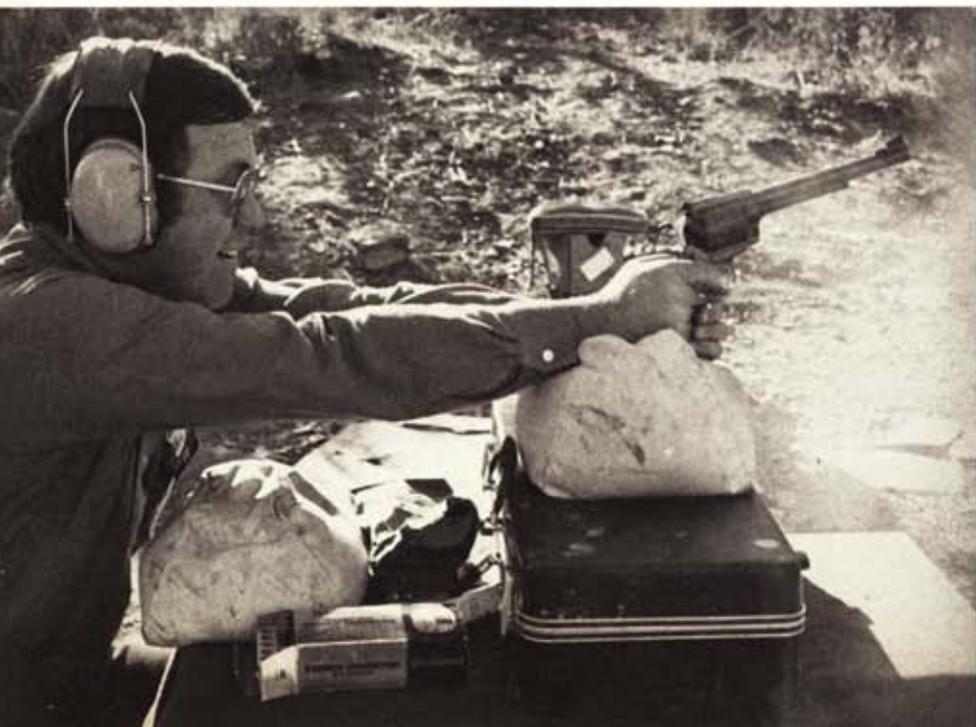
Unlike the more traditionally styled imports, the Ruger featured a *non*-fluted cylinder (long a trademark of the Super Blackhawk), and a squared-off trigger guard.

While the single-action Ruger is a first-class piece of shooting machinery, it comes from the factory with one flaw that makes decent shooting entirely more difficult than necessary—namely, a creepy, too-heavy trigger. In plain language, the trigger pull on a fresh-from-the-carton Super Blackhawk is generally lousy—and I, for one, have a tough enough time trying to connect with a handgun without a draggy, overweight trigger to contend with.

Fortunately, this is a problem that can be dealt with handily—provided you have access to a pistolsmith who's up to the job. I know I visited three separate 'smiths' before I found one who'd even tackle the project (the others said it "couldn't be done"). The hombre who finally civilized the trigger on my Super Blackhawk is a gun named Tom Bach—he runs a custom gunsmith service in a shop just west of Guns Unlimited, 6th South and 3rd East in Salt Lake City. He knows his stuff, and my Ruger now sports a manageable 4½-pound trigger that

(Continued on page 62)

Author Rees absorbs the full recoil from full charge .44 Magnum factory load in Ruger's Super Blackhawk. Note that recoil has forced the grip down in Clair's hand despite the firmly rested two-hand clasp.

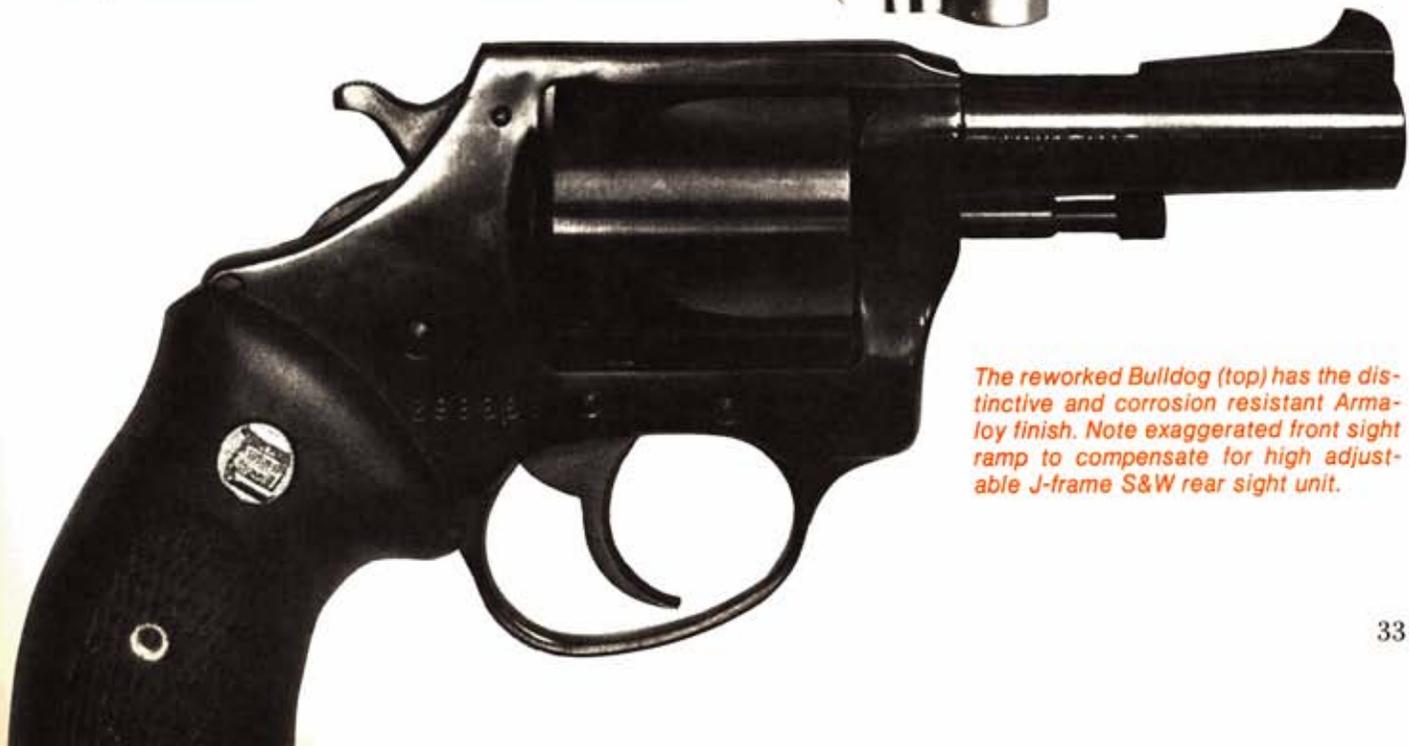
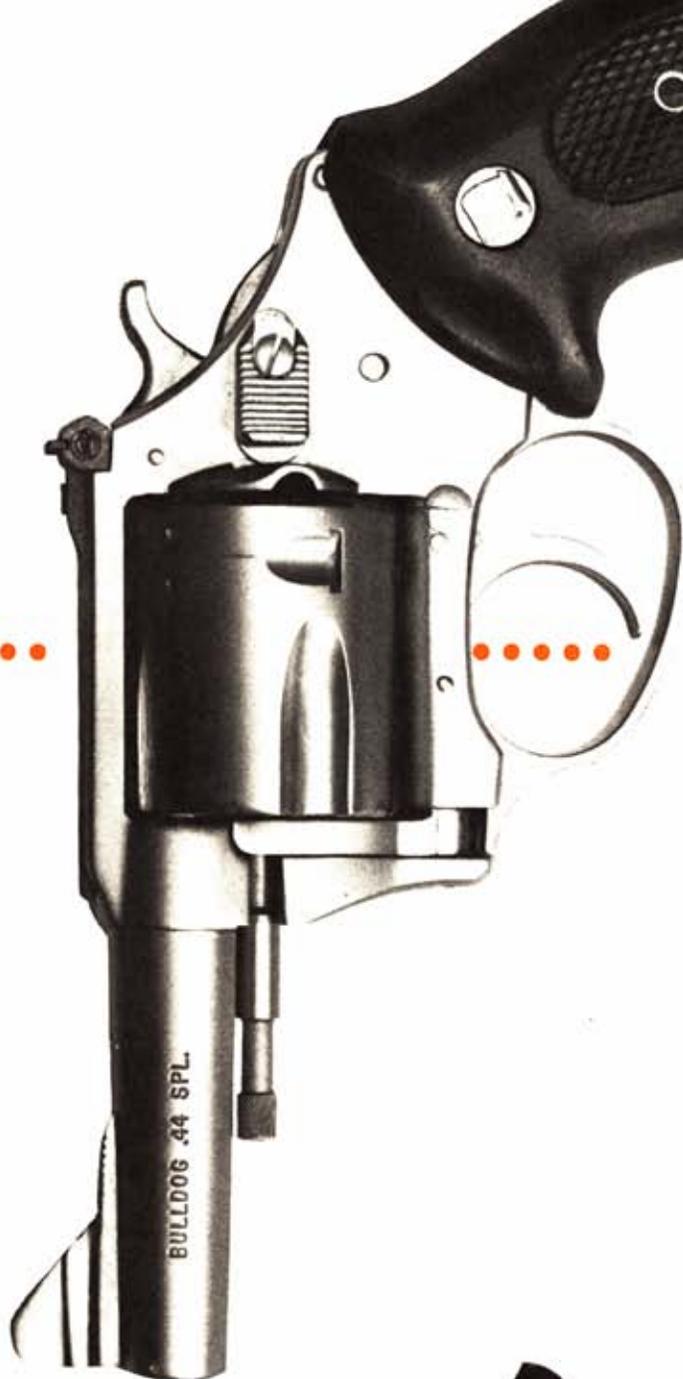


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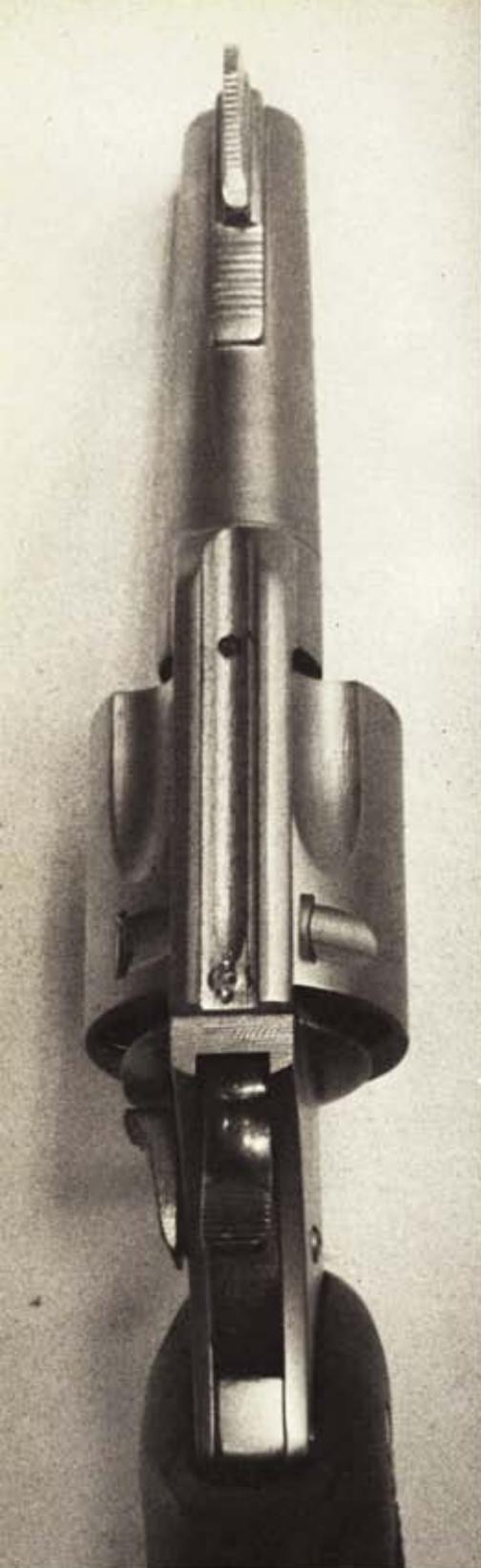
By **GEORGE C. NONTE**

When it first became available some time back (I quit counting years), the Charter .44 Bulldog impressed me greatly. Granted, it's not as slick or neat as a pre-1950 S&W .44, but it is unique among big-bore revolvers, and is uniquely useful to those who carry a gun professionally. It is the smallest, lightest, and most compact big-bore handgun ever offered in modern times. Technically, some of the turn-of-the-century .44 and .45 revolvers from Europe may have been as small, but they are neither available nor modern.

One objection to the Bulldog .44 arose as soon as we started handloading more potent and lethal ammunition for it. It doesn't shoot where it looks with anything but the .44 Special blooper factory load. Though that load has a fair rep as a manstopper, its 246-grain, RN, lead bullet at barely 700 fps from a short barrel is



The reworked Bulldog (top) has the distinctive and corrosion resistant Arma-loy finish. Note exaggerated front sight ramp to compensate for high adjustable J-frame S&W rear sight unit.



Left: the underside of the J-frame S&W rear sight unit before fitting. Note the notches cut into the end of the elevation screw for click adjustments. Right: a top view of the sight unit reveals that the J-frame sight depends solely on a simple pressure screw for elevation adjustments, avoiding the need for complex machinery within the narrow confines of the frame proper.

the least effective of all our over-.38-caliber cartridges. Yet, of necessity, the Bulldog is factory-targeted for this load. Stuff the cylinder with something more potent, and the bullet's path diverges more or less from the line-of-sight. And, the most you can do about it is to file down the front blade to raise the point of impact; not always satisfactory or even adequate.

I first toyed with the idea of fitting the S&W, K-frame, target, rear sight (and a matching higher front blade), but disliked the expense and difficulty of machining the intricate recess for the elevation screw nut in the frame. It's a good system, right enough, but the machining is difficult and hard on tools. Most pistolsmiths have to charge \$50 or more for the job.

I wanted something less costly, and preferably simpler. In talking about the problem to Len Trapper (Trapper Guns, 16746—14 Mile Rd., Fraser, Michigan 48026), he suggested we try the current J-frame, S&W sight, which dispenses with the intricate undercut and separate nut.

While the two sights look alike on the gun, they are quite different. In the K- and N-frame sights, the spring-like base curves upward at the rear when free, and elevation adjustment is produced by pulling the rear of the sight down toward the frame. This is accomplished by a screw passing through sight and part of the frame to engage a T-nut set in an undercut in the frame. The J-frame sight base curves downward, and elevation is established by a simple screw that bears against the top of the frame. Both manufacture and installation of the latter are simpler and cheaper. Most important, the J-frame sight can be installed without making that bastardly undercut in the frame.

The idea sounded good, so I asked Trapper to go ahead and do the job on a Bulldog .44 to see how it worked.

After a bit of fixturing, he got the machining down to three simple cuts. First, a

crosscut at the rear top of the frame to accommodate the enlarged boss at the rear of the sight assembly; second, a longitudinal cut down the center of the top strap, .255" wide and .070" deep to accept the sight base; third, a 1/8" wide, longitudinal cut through the front sight base to remove the original blade and leave a 1/16" deep slot to accept the necessary higher replacement blade. On my gun, the front of the first cut falls 2.380" back from the front of the barrel ring; and it is .135" deep.

The sight base is then clamped in the cut; the mounting-screw hole is punched, drilled, and tapped through the top strap. The proper thread is 3/16.

In order to reproduce the elevation clicks of the S&W J-frame installation, it is then necessary to dimple the bottom of the base recess groove to accept a tiny bearing ball, 1/32 to 1/16 its diameter. This can be done with a drill bit or pointed punch. The dimple should be centered laterally and should fall right at the outer edge of the elevation screw hole in the sight base. With the sight installed, a ball in this dimple will detent the screw at each 1/4 revolution by seating in the four grooves in the end of the screw. Audible clicks will be produced, and the resistance of the ball can be felt when the elevation screw is turned. Note that this screw has a left-hand thread and is flanged on the bottom so it cannot be backed completely out of the sight and lost.

That completes the rear sight installation. If carefully done, hardly any bright metal will be seen and no refinishing is necessary.

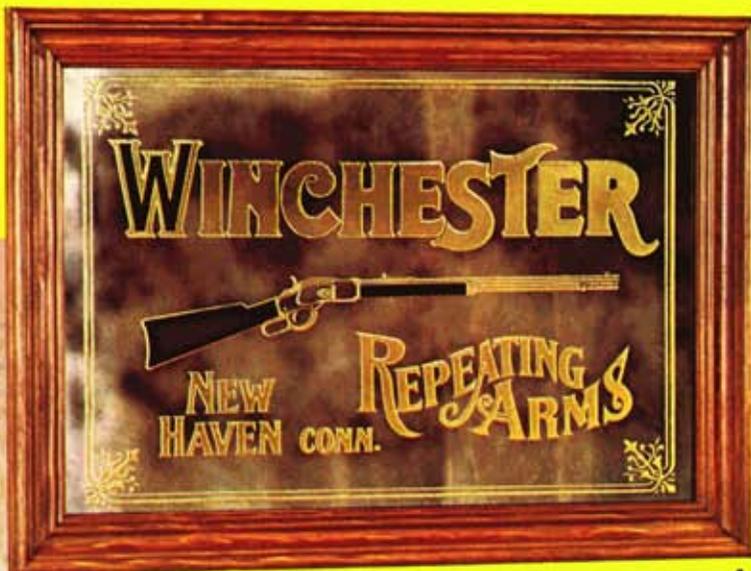
A new, front, sight blade is filed and ground to shape from 1/8" steel. If the gun is to be refinished, it is then simply silver-soldered into the slot in the original base. If the gun is *not* to be refinished, the base is first slotted deeper (about 1/8" deep),

(Continued on page 68)

Longitudinal and lateral machine cuts have been made for the J-frame sight and ramp. Note that a dimple has been punched at the rear of the slot to accommodate the click-adjustable detent ball of the sight unit.



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NOTES ON THE RUGER COLLECTORS' ASSOCIATION

The precisely drafted portrait and cutaway of Ruger's Security Six revolver was painted by James M. Triggs, Advertising Director of Sturm, Ruger Inc. and current Vice President of the Ruger Collectors' Association. This colorful and meticulously rendered painting was executed in acrylics on prepared masonite panel. The original measures eighteen by twenty inches and was painted specifically for the Ruger Collectors' Association.



With the numbers of arms collectors increasing dramatically since the end of World War II, one might well wonder what arms are left to collect. Rare Colt revolvers have increased in value many times over since 1945. Fine Colts, Winchesters, Remingtons and Smith & Wessons are today priced so high that the new collector of modest means cannot possibly afford to collect them. Take heart! Here's a collectors' field where the prices haven't gone sky-high . . . yet!

Sturm, Ruger & Company of Southport, Connecticut and Newport, New Hampshire has manufactured a number of interesting guns in its relatively short history. These are fine quality arms that are much in demand by shooters and they are all eminently collectible. Even among the comparatively small group of avid Ruger collectors, certain variations and rarities in early Ruger arms are selling for many times their original retail price today. However, most collectible Ruger firearms are priced well within the reach of the average collector.

In 1975, the Colorado Centennial-Bicentennial Committee selected a specially designed, presentation cased Ruger Super Single-Six Convertible Revolver as its only officially designated centennial handgun. This special Ruger offering is a "natural" for collectors since it is sure to appreciate in value considerably because of its official bicentennial connection. The fantastic increase of prices for the many Colt Commemorative issues are a prime illustration of collector demand for special issue guns.

The Ruger Collectors' Association was formed early in 1975 and made its first appearance at the 104th Annual Meetings of the National Rifle Association at San Diego, California. The R. C. A. booth exhibited handguns, rifles, and memorabilia from Sturm, Ruger & Company's first 27 years in business. This new association was organized to provide its members with accurate information about Ruger firearms and their variations, and to work closely with the factory in matters relating to production dates, serial numbers, identification of legitimate factory variations, etc.

At the Annual Meetings of the National Rifle Association, held in Indianapolis in April, 1976, the Ruger Collectors' Association presented an outstanding display featuring the Ruger Standard Automatic Pistols, including Bill Ruger's original hand-made prototype of the Standard Auto.

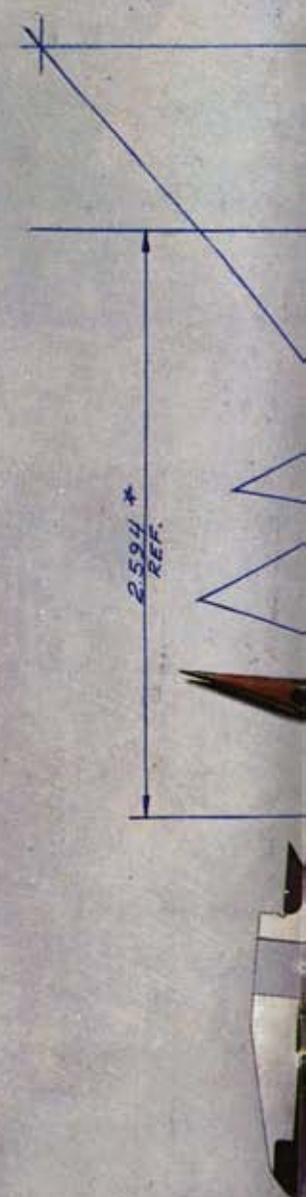
The Ruger Collectors' Association publishes a series of information bulletins for its members, written by knowledgeable gun writers, and has established a program to provide informative Ruger-related articles covering this exciting new collectors' field for all of the major gun publications.

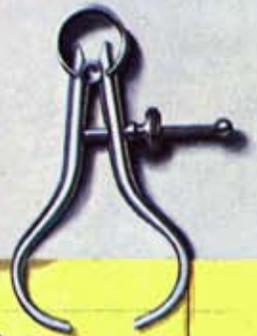
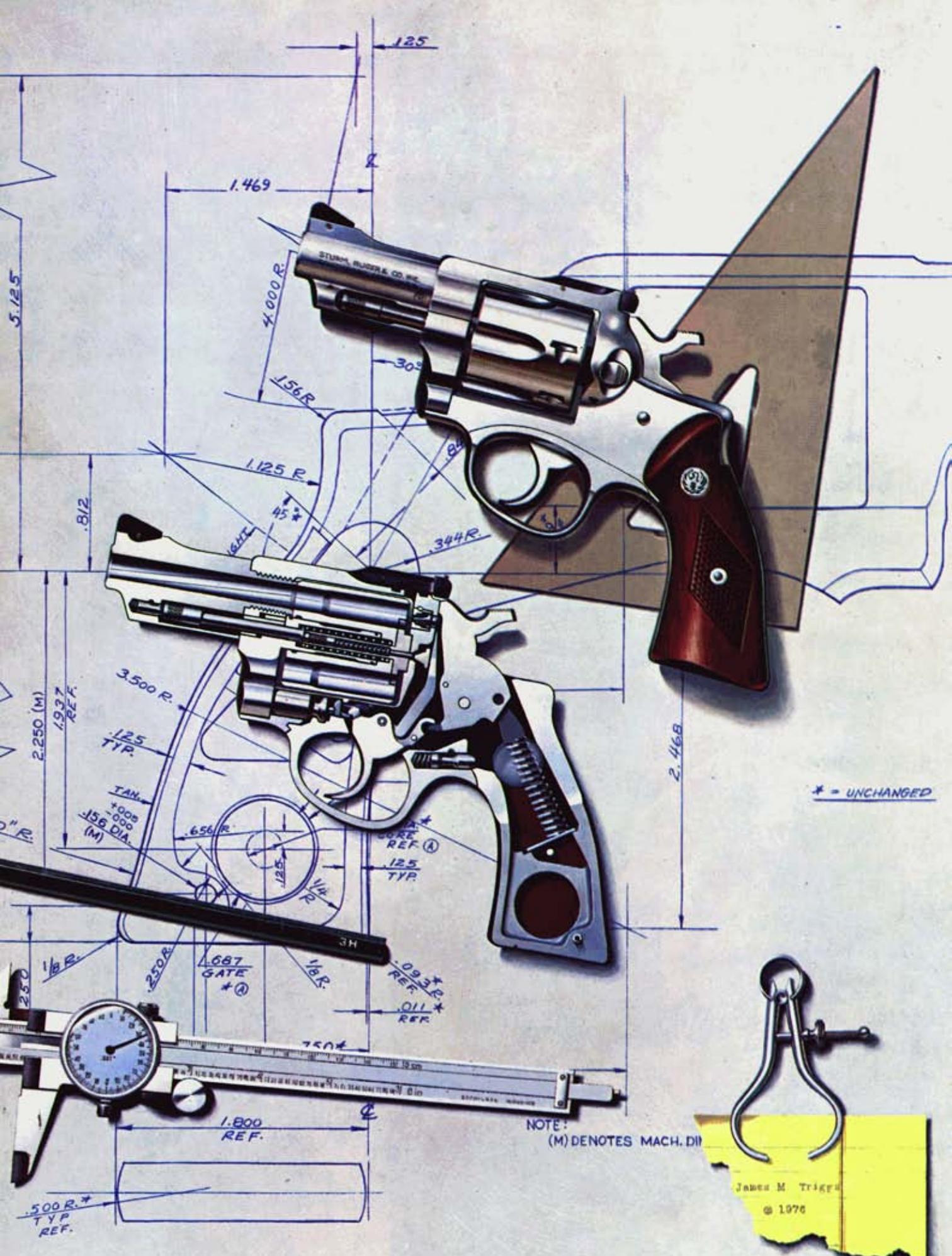
For membership information, write to Col. Leonard O. Friesz, President, Ruger Collectors' Association, P.O. Box 290, Southport, Connecticut 06490.



ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES:

TWO FEATURE-LENGTH ILLUSTRATED ARTICLES ON
RUGER'S SECURITY SIX





James M. Trigg
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James M. Trigg

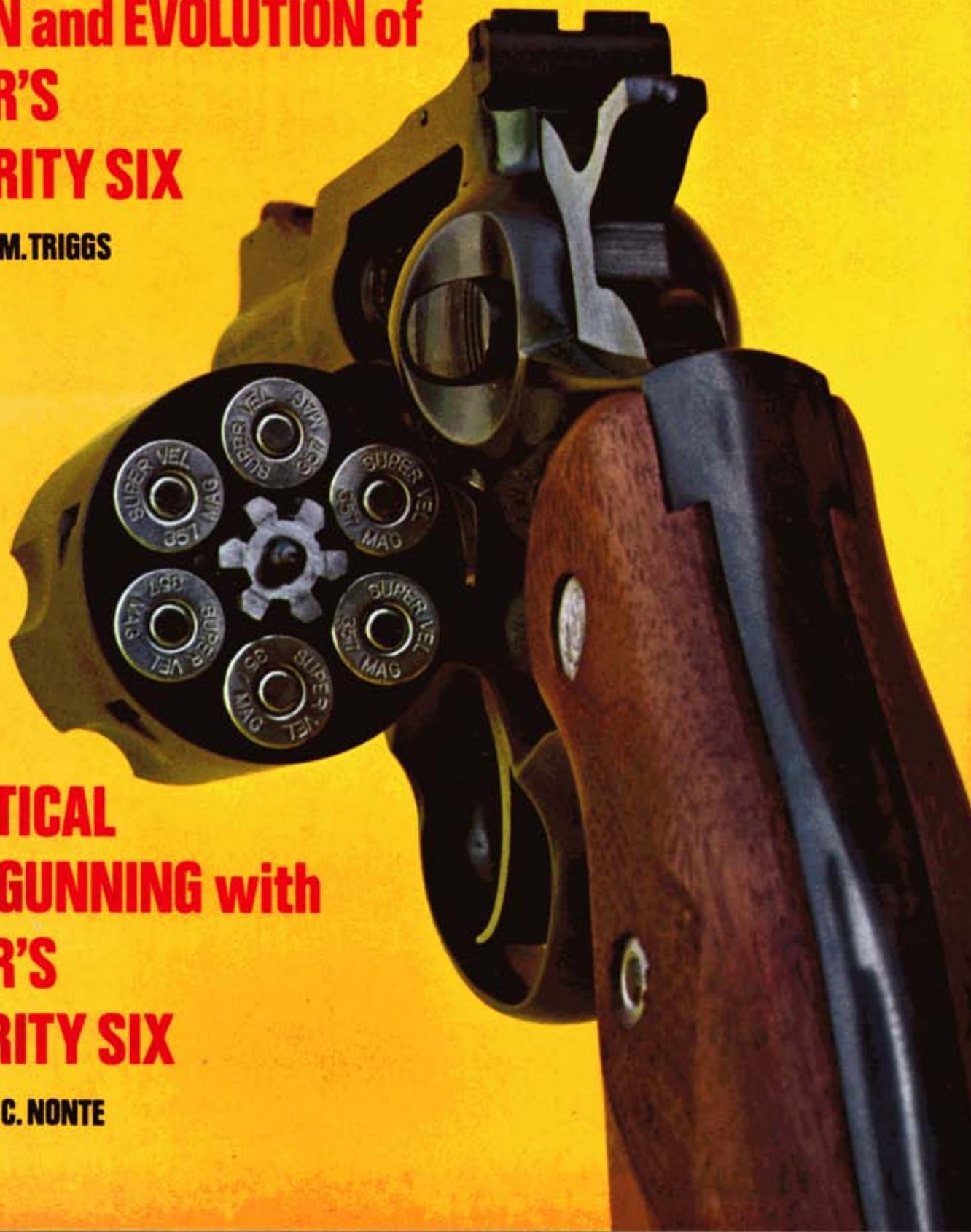
HANDGUN PROFILE

RUGER'S SECURITY SIX

2 Feature Length Illustrated Articles

ORIGIN and EVOLUTION of RUGER'S SECURITY SIX

By JAMES M. TRIGGS



PRACTICAL HANDGUNNING with RUGER'S SECURITY SIX

By GEORGE C. NONTE



SECURITY SIX

ORIGIN and EVOLUTION

By JAMES M. TRIGGS

After having established a remarkable record in the design and manufacture of automatic pistols, single action revolvers and rifles, Sturm, Ruger and Company introduced their first double action revolver in 1970. Ruger advertising states that the new line "can be considered to be the first fundamental improvement in double action revolver design in more than a half century," a statement that's eminently true. The Security-Six, Police Service-Six and Speed-Six models are based on a unique Ruger design for a rugged middle weight defense weapon that's singularly strong, simple and well made—and engineered to sell at a competitive price as well. Available in both .38 Special and .357 Magnum calibers, with adjustable target sights and police service type fixed sights, acceptance of these new Ruger double action revolvers has been so widespread in both civilian and law-enforcement markets worldwide, that in 1975 Sturm, Ruger & Company introduced all three basic models in stainless steel.

Here, at last is real competition for the Colt and Smith & Wesson double action revolvers which have been for so many years the first choice of law-enforcement agencies and the military all over the world.

It seems to be a hallmark of Sturm, Ruger & Company that president Bill Ruger finds a market that's not being adequately filled by the competition—and fills it, making a product that's invariably superior to that of his competitors, and at more than a competitive price! Ruger engineering is always innovative—"innovation" is the name of the game at Southport. Back when hide-bound gunmakers up the Connecticut River were resisting innovation in any form and doing things in the same old way, Bill Ruger was pioneering in the development of precision investment casting of chrome molybdenum steel parts and proved to the industry that he could make a revolver frame better and stronger by casting, leading the way to the development of better arms at reasonable cost.

In the new Ruger double action models, frame, trigger guard, crane, hammer, trigger and a number of smaller parts are all machined from precision investment castings of tough chrome moly steel (or stain-

less steel for the latest models), all heat treated for greater strength. Barrels are made from chrome moly forgings and the cylinders machined from solid chrome moly bar stock. Virtually unbreakable coil type music wire or stainless steel springs are employed throughout. The frame casting has a thick, beefed-up top strap and heavy recoil shield behind the cylinder that's reminiscent of the classic single action models. Patented integral steel ribs on the top strap protect the rear sight assembly.

Typical of Ruger engineering is the idea of a group of integrated subassemblies that contribute to trouble-free functioning and ease of maintenance. The entire lock mechanism, except for the hammer and mainspring, is contained in the trigger guard assembly, eliminating the traditional sideplate common to both Colt and Smith & Wesson double action revolvers. This results in a truly rugged frame with solid walls.

Of special interest is the unique, fast takedown possible without the use of special tools (or any tools at all). Factory literature states that "the Security-six can be taken down and reassembled

A detail of the Security Six's top strap reveals the massive, sturdy adjustable rear sight unit. Adjusting screws at top and side are for elevation and windage respectively.



**SEE PAGE 53 TO WIN A
FREE SECURITY SIX!**

An exploded view of the main component assemblies of the Security Six reveals the economy and simplicity of the all steel construction of the gun.

parent when the revolver is disassembled. The only screws in this revolver are in the rear sight assembly and the grip screw, which has been slotted to fit the rim of the .38 Special or .357 Magnum cartridge case (or a dime). Although the cylinder release pivot is threaded, it is not properly a screw and is not removed in normal field stripping.

Basic operation of the Ruger Security-Six is much the same as other American made double action revolvers. Depressing the cylinder release button in the left hand recoil shield releases the cylinder which swings out to the left (the cylinder revolves to the left). A spring loaded front latch in the integral ejector housing engages a detent at the front of the ejector rod and provides positive front end support for the ejector when the cylinder is closed. Empty cartridge cases are ejected simultaneously from the cylinder when the front end of the ejector rod is pressed in smartly. The ejector star returns to its seat in the rear of the cylinder when the ejector rod is released. In Ruger revolvers chambered for the 9mm Parabellum cartridge, a unique (U.S. and foreign patents pending) spring wire ring, contained in the ejector assembly, grips the extractor groove of the rimless case, eliminating the need for a halfmoon clip or other adapter like those used in older revolvers chambered for automatic pistol cartridges.

Of prime importance are the safety features built into this revolver. Unlike many older double action designs, the hammer cannot contact the firing pin contained in the frame unless the trigger is pulled all the way back. With the trigger in its rearmost position, the transfer bar is raised to a position where it is interposed between the firing pin and the hammer and transmits the blow from the falling hammer directly to the firing pin. This is a positive safety feature since the cocked revolver can only fire if the trigger is pulled and held back. It is perfectly safe to carry this revolver with all six chambers loaded and the hammer down. If a cocked revolver were to be dropped accidentally, even directly on the hammer spur, and "jar off", the trigger will return to its forward position, lowering the transfer bar before the hammer can strike it. The hammer blow cannot be transmitted to the firing pin with the transfer bar down. There is no half-cock hammer position in this design. In addition, the design provides that the hammer cannot be cocked when the cylinder has been swung out, nor can the cylinder be unlatched or swung out if the hammer is cocked.

The tough little chrome-moly cylinder latch which lies in position between the trigger guard assembly and frame is offset to the right side of the frame so that

with only a coin. It can be reduced to its basic components in less than a minute." And it's all true. This is the first American made double action revolver which permits such speed and facility in field stripping, making routine cleaning and maintenance very easy—a feature that's of considerable value to law enforcement officers and sportsmen whose revolvers have been exposed to rough field conditions.

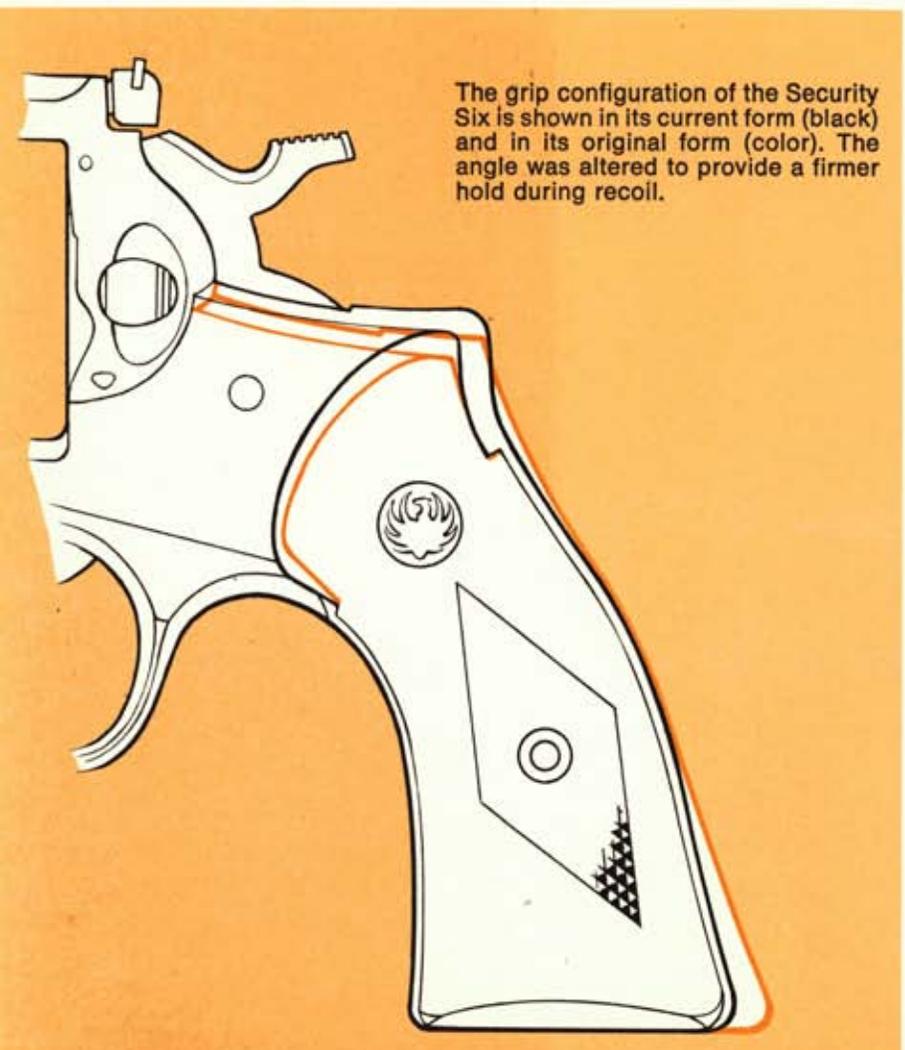
The utter simplicity of the Security-Six design is readily ap-

parent when the revolver is disassembled. The only screws in this revolver are in the rear sight assembly and the grip screw, which has been slotted to fit the rim of the .38 Special or .357 Magnum cartridge case (or a dime). Although the cylinder release pivot is threaded, it is not properly a screw and is not removed in normal field stripping.

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The tough little chrome-moly cylinder latch which lies in position between the trigger guard assembly and frame is offset to the right side of the frame so that



The grip configuration of the Security Six is shown in its current form (black) and in its original form (color). The angle was altered to provide a firmer hold during recoil.

the locking cuts in the cylinder can be located where there's plenty of metal, rather than in the thinner part of cylinder wall adjacent to the chambers.

The wide, flat hammer spur of all models is deeply serrated to provide a secure, non-slip surface for the thumb when cocking the revolver single action. The spurless hammer available as an extra cost option for the Speed-Six has a small serrated surface at the top for easy cocking. The broad trigger has deep longitudinal grooves.

Sights for these revolvers are rugged and well thought-out. The elevated front sight rib is serrated along its full length to cut glare and reflection. This rib with barrel and ejector rod housing are a one piece design. The Baughman type 1/8" front sight blade is securely fastened to the raised ramp on top of the rib by a transverse steel roll pin. The Ruger-designed rear target sight is adjustable for windage and elevation. Adjustment clicks from the staked-in ball detents are pronounced and crisp and make sight adjustments effortless. Adjustable target sights are available only in the Security-Six model 117 and 717. Police-Service and Speed-Six models are provided with the simple fixed sights.

Grip panels for the Security-Six, Police Service-Six and Speed-Six models are nicely made of oil-finished American walnut and closely fitted to the metal. A secure grip is assured by panels of deeply cut diamond checkering.

The original design of the grip portion of the frame had a low, sloping arched backstrap which made all models somewhat difficult to control when firing the .357 Magnum cartridge. Comments on this characteristic were generally uncomplimentary and, in short, it was a beast to shoot with heavy .357 Magnum loads. Happily, the Ruger outfit responds to the suggestions of its customers and a subtle change in grip contour was made to correct this fault. The upper part of the improved backstrap (the new backstrap is standard on all revolvers above serial no. 151-00000) has been raised somewhat and drops straight down

to form a pronounced recoil shoulder. The lower portion of the grip is less flared at the butt and provides a grip which is comfortable and certainly easier to hang onto when shooting Magnum loads.

The single action pull is smooth at about 3 pounds, or a little under and there's very little creep. Double action function is excellent, without undue increase in weight of pull as the hammer comes back. While there are modifications that will "tune" this action to peak performance, function is very good just as the gun comes from the factory.

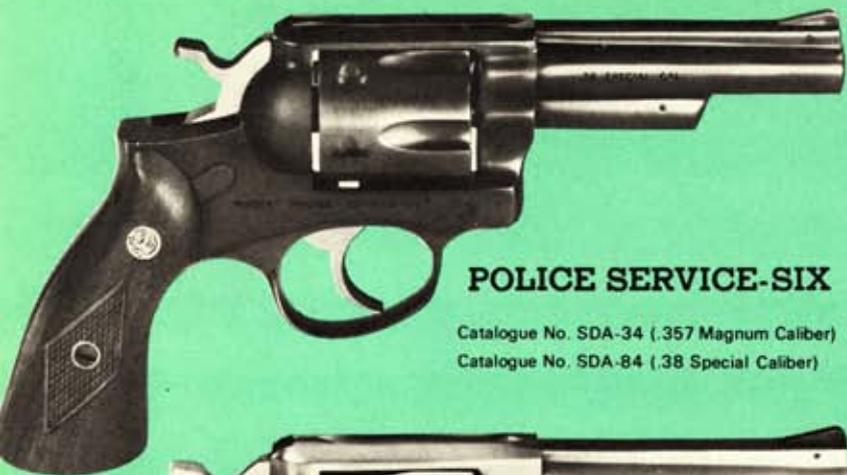
All regular blued models are nicely polished, with an excellent fit of metal to wood and a satin-like non-glare blued finish. The sides of both hammer and trigger are polished bright. The stainless steel models are polished to an attractive brushed satin finish that is both pleasing to the eye and much less light reflective than a mirror finished surface.

Field stripping and reassembly of the Security-Six, Police Service-Six and Speed-Six are super-simple. No tools or special skills are necessary. The following step-by-step instructions outline the procedure. Refer to the exploded drawing numbers and cross-section drawing to identify the various components.

1. Make sure the revolver is unloaded and close the cylinder. Remove grip screw (13) with coin or cartridge case and take off both grips (10).

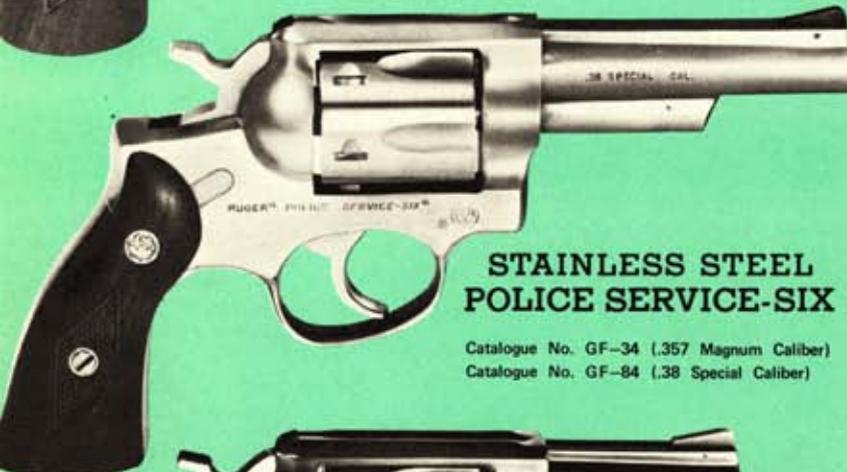


The newly introduced Service Six revolver in 9 MM Luger has a unique spring steel wire insert to allow the rimless Parabellum round to chamber and headspace properly. The stainless Service Six in .357 Magnum is also shown.



POLICE SERVICE-SIX

Catalogue No. SDA-34 (.357 Magnum Caliber)
Catalogue No. SDA-84 (.38 Special Caliber)



STAINLESS STEEL POLICE SERVICE-SIX

Catalogue No. GF-34 (.357 Magnum Caliber)
Catalogue No. GF-84 (.38 Special Caliber)



SPEED-SIX

Catalogue No. SS-32 (.357 Magnum Caliber)
Catalogue No. SS-82 (.38 Special Caliber)

2. Cock hammer. Insert disassembly pin (64) about half its length into hole at bottom end of hammer strut (15) (See Figure A). In early models, the disassembly pin is fitted into a hole in the right grip. In current models this pin fits into the grip panel dowel (14). Pull trigger and remove the compressed mainspring assembly. Do not attempt to remove the disassembly pin from the highly compressed mainspring assembly.

3. Pull trigger to rear and remove hammer pivot (16) from right side of frame. Lift hammer (40) out top of frame while holding trigger back. (See Figure B).

4. Use hammer strut assembly to depress trigger guard lock plunger (46) located inside frame at rear of trigger guard (3). (a punch or small screwdriver blade can also be used). (See Figure C). Simultaneously pull downward on trigger guard assembly and remove from frame (2).

5. Press in cylinder release button (9) and swing cylinder out

to the left. Pull cylinder and crane/crane pivot assembly (47) forward out of frame. Drop cylinder latch (45) out bottom of frame (See Figure D).

Further disassembly of the Security-Six is not required for normal cleaning or maintenance and is not recommended.

To reassemble the revolver, proceed in reverse order:

1. Replace cylinder latch (45) in frame and replace cylinder and crane/crane pivot assembly (47) in frame and close cylinder. Rotate cylinder until cylinder latch engages a locking notch.

2. Hook front of trigger guard (3) into its recess in frame and align pawl (7) in its recess in frame. Be sure that the transfer bar (17) is in correct position behind the firing pin (21). Snap trigger guard assembly up into frame. Note: If solid resistance is felt or trigger guard will not close readily, check to be sure that pawl and transfer bar are in correct position. After trigger guard assembly locks into position, pull trigger several times to check its function to rotate and lock cylinder.

3. Hold trigger back and replace hammer and hammer pivot (16).

4. With hammer forward, replace mainspring and hammer strut assembly. Place the notches in the mainspring seat (5) in position on the matching projections in the grip portion of the frame. Cock hammer to compress mainspring and withdraw disassembly pin (64). Replace one grip and replace disassembly pin inside grip panel dowel (14). Replace other grip and grip screw (13). This completes reassembly of the revolver.

2. Cock hammer. Insert disassembly pin (64) about half its length into hole at bottom end of hammer strut (15) (See Figure A). In early models, the disassembly pin is fitted into a hole in the right grip. In current models this pin fits into the grip panel dowel (14). Pull trigger and remove the compressed mainspring assembly. Do not attempt to remove the disassembly pin from the highly compressed mainspring assembly.

Noted competitive shooter and pistolsmith James E. Clark of Louisiana is a specialist in customizing the Security-Six as a competitive combat gun for the popular police matches (See Bill Jordan's article in GUNS, March, 1976). Jim adds a heavy barrel from a Douglas Premium blank with a full length BoMar rib, lessens the tension of trigger return spring and mainspring, adds a trigger stop and smoothes the action. A double stage trigger pull is available as an option.

The Security-Six, Police Service-Six and Speed-Six revolvers are manufactured in the big new Ruger plant at Newport, New Hampshire, where all double action Ruger revolvers should be sent for service or repairs. Parts orders or requests for information should be directed to the Product Service Department, Sturm, Ruger & Company, Inc., Southport, Connecticut 06490.



Model 717, catalog # GA-34 is shown.

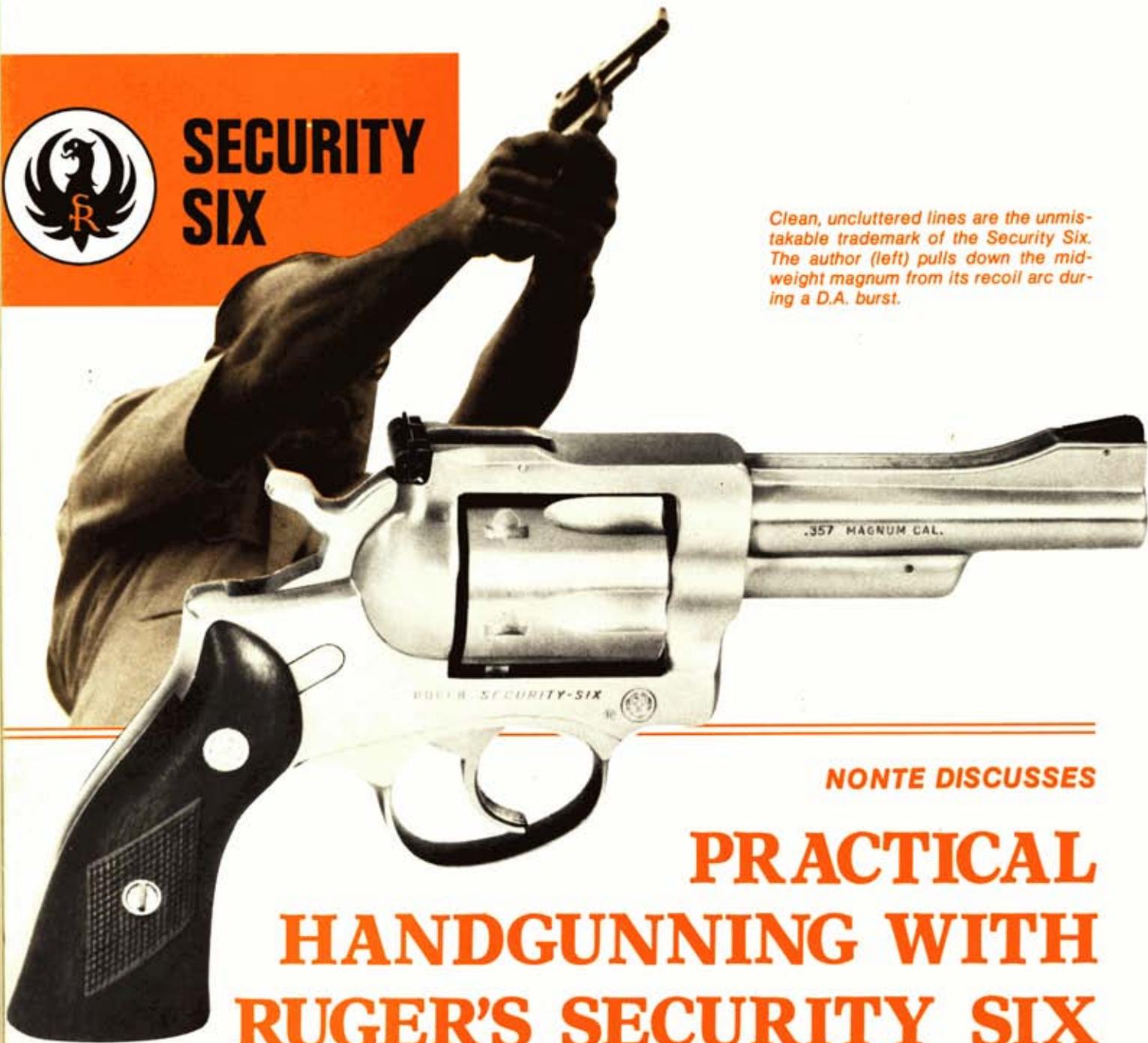


James H. Briggs



SECURITY SIX

Clean, uncluttered lines are the unmistakable trademark of the Security Six. The author (left) pulls down the mid-weight magnum from its recoil arc during a D.A. burst.



NONTE DISCUSSES

PRACTICAL HANDGUNNING WITH RUGER'S SECURITY SIX

By GEORGE C. NONTE

My first Ruger Security Six was obtained from the earliest production run, after I'd visited the plant and seen tons of parts ready to go together. I had just time enough to break it in good before taking it along on a wide-swinging varmint shoot through Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and other western parts. It was pretty much a constant companion on that trip and was blooded along the Snake River. I was ensconced there one day with a long-range rifle, right on the canyon rim, potting rock chucks nearly 400 feet below, where they sunned themselves on canyon-floor rock piles. A flicker of movement to my left along the rim caught my

eye, and the Ruger S-S was eased out slowly. The curious chuck poked his head and shoulders up about 30 yards away. The Ruger .357 spoke from my right hand as I lay there, rifle still cradled, and the chuck back-flipped out of sight, hit squarely in his brisket by the fast-stepping bullet. Another chuck fell to the Ruger later that day, and after a while we traveled on to good jack-rabbit country. There the Ruger did itself proud, dropping the galloping speedsters running out to 50-75 yards.

That gun went on to serve well. It was used to test lots of ammunition and went on a shark-hunting trip in the Florida Keys that was to be its downfall. It hit quite a few sharks, but never killed one outright. All the good kills were made with a companion Ruger .44 Magnum

Blackhawk and a Ruger No. 1 .45-70 rifle. Nevertheless, it did itself proud on smaller pests and edible game among the mangrove-cluttered keys not so distant from Ernest Hemingway's fabulous tower-house rising out of the sea on gargantuan steel legs.

The Keys were that gun's downfall, through no fault of its own. An unnoticed seawater bath and a prolonged trip home turned it into a sorry, red, pitted mess by the time it was unpacked back home. I regretted its loss and blamed only myself. Up to its demise, it had gobbled up perhaps 4,000 rounds, most full-charge .357 Magnum loads, with nary a bobble. Its accuracy was impeccable, its reliability 100 percent. The only targets we ever shot at that it didn't hit, at least most of the time,

were airborne flying fish. We didn't feel bad about that, for I've yet to meet the man/sixgun combination who can accomplish that feat from the rocking deck of a 20-foot boat.

I've used other Security-Sixes and variations thereof since—and have yet to find a valid complaint. Currently I'm shooting a four-inch, square-butt, target-sighted, stainless-steel model. To date it has performed as well through several hundred rounds as any that went before it. Its stainless and identical predecessor went to South Africa with me where it took countless marmots and other small game, including guinea fowl for the pot. Unfortunately, it was stolen, along with my other guns and gear on the way home. Perhaps it serves some new owner yet somewhere.

Since the initial production of blued, four-inch, square-butt guns with either fixed or target sights, there have been quite a few other variations to meet assorted shooting needs. First came the six-inch and 2-3/4-inch basic guns, then the round-butt version in the shorter barrel lengths. Then there was the Speed-Six, a 2-3/4-inch gun with round butt and dehorned hammer for purely double-action work in a hurry. Later came the stainless-steel version I have today. It can be had in all three barrel lengths as Security-Six with target sights, and as Service Six with fixed sights. It is also available in Speed-Six form.

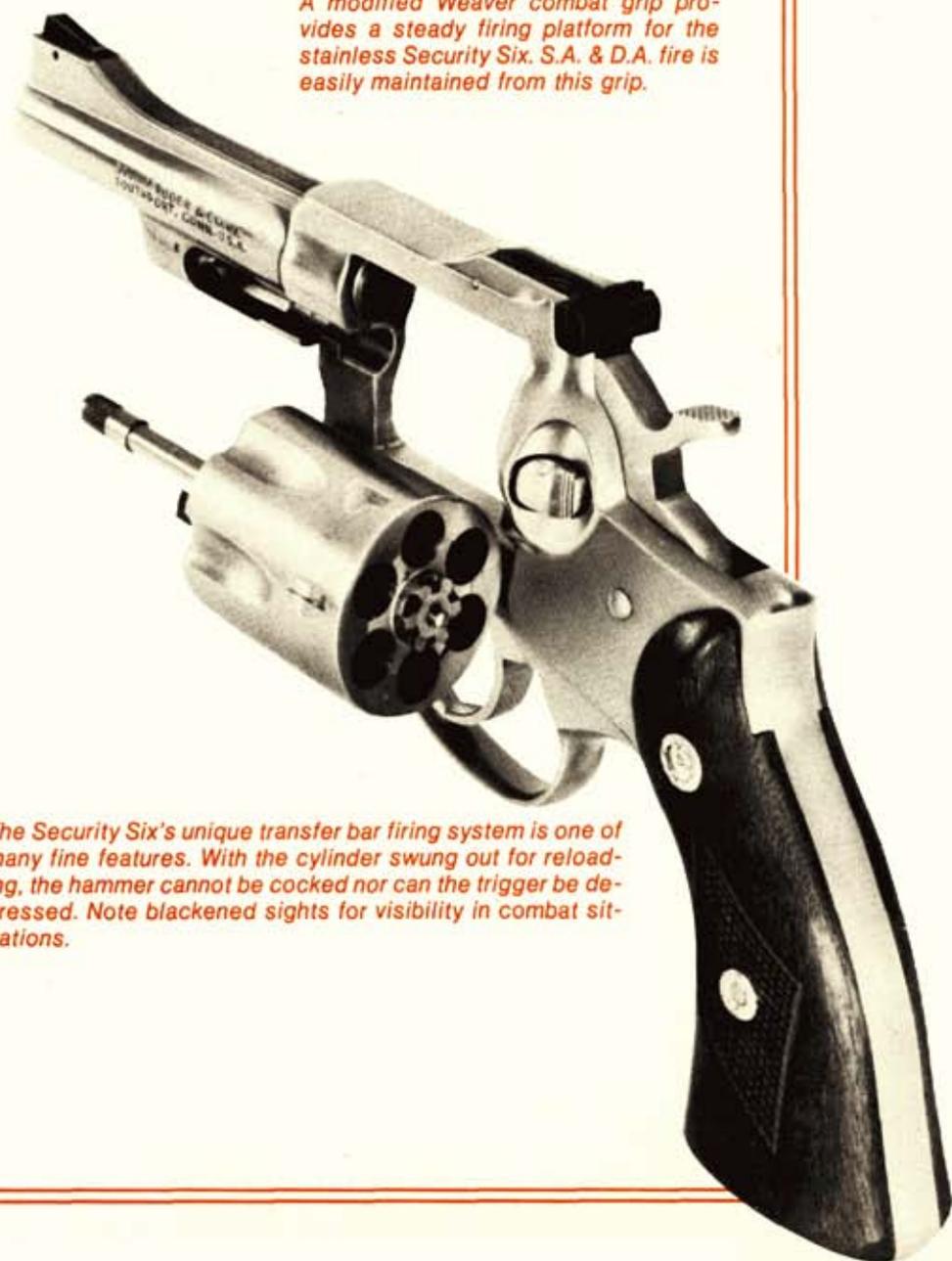
During its short life of less than a decade, Bill Ruger's D-A .357 Magnum design has proliferated into nearly as many variations as the S&W M10 or Colt OP. It is made in sufficient variations to suit almost any real or imagined need for a .38 or .357 revolver. In its latest form, you may even have it chambered for the ubiquitous 9mm Parabellum (Luger) cartridge. A special extractor design handles the rimless cases well, and by head-spacing on the chamber shoulder, their ignition is as good as in the auto pistols designed for them sixty-odd years ago. Someone carrying a sixgun abroad where .38 or .357 ammunition might be less available than 9mm would be well served by a Security-Six with two cylinders, one .357 and one 9mm.

Of course, we don't claim the Security-Six is perfect, and I doubt that Ruger does. There are those who would prefer it heavier or lighter; the standard grips and grip frame certainly don't suit everyone; and while workmanship and finish are fine for the price, it lacks the gloss of some competitive models costing a bit more. Its double-action trigger pull is heavier and less smooth than one or two others available, but is by no means objectionable. While I've heard of a few malfunctions and one or two accuracy complaints, I've never personally had any among the half-dozen or so Security-Sixes that have passed through my hands since the initial introduction.

(Continued on page 62)



A modified Weaver combat grip provides a steady firing platform for the stainless Security Six. S.A. & D.A. fire is easily maintained from this grip.



The Security Six's unique transfer bar firing system is one of many fine features. With the cylinder swung out for reloading, the hammer cannot be cocked nor can the trigger be depressed. Note blackened sights for visibility in combat situations.



SIMPLE STEPS IN ...

Tuning The Dan Wesson

By Mason Williams

Over the years true revolver buffs have never really been satisfied with revolver actions as they come from the factory. They have spent hours polishing, honing, working with a fine stone, to get two flat bearing surfaces highly polished in order to reduce friction. They have labored gently to put the last superb touch on a trigger return mechanism. In the past it has required lots of time and patience and I personally have spent days poring over and examining and working on revolver mechanisms.

Since the advent of the Dan Wesson revolver, I have spent quite a bit of time shooting one. They have a smooth yet rather unusual feel to the double action mechanism. Many shooters have asked me what to do about touching up the action. Is it simple? Is it difficult? Just what is the situation? Actually, I believe the Dan Wesson revolver mechanism is one of the easiest to smooth out.

Take a look at the mechanism. There are only a few parts. The simplicity is surprising. Rather than follow slavishly in the footsteps of conventional design, Dan Wesson has broken with tradition. His parts are investment cast and so designed and fitted into the mechanism that they bear on specially created



The Dremel Moto-Tool can be used to good effect in tight areas inside the frame.

bearing surfaces. No attempt has been made to use, as an example, the entire side of a trigger or of a hammer as a bearing surface. The bearing surface is a small, raised area designed and incorporated into the original casting. This design reduces bearing surface to a minimum yet places it where it will do the most good.

The ideal time to polish a mechanism is not when the revolver comes from the factory but after several weeks of constant firing. Specific bearing surface marks are then clearly visible indicating the points where the metal must be polished. Note that I say polished! Do not under any circumstances attempt to remove metal. If you do not have polishing tips for use with a Dremel Moto Tool or a similar type of tool, then do not use this tool. Use a fine Arkansas stone. It will take longer but rather than destroy the tolerances built into the revolver mechanism, either leave it alone or turn to an Arkansas stone. If you do use a Dremel Moto Tool, then be sure that you have at least three and preferably four grades of polishing tips. I use the kits put out by Cratex of Burlingame, California. Kit #777 comes with four different grades of rubberized abrasive wheels and points and may be bought in just about any hardware store that stocks power tools. Arkansas stones may be bought directly from A. G. Russell, Fayetteville, Arkansas in many various grades and shapes. Dremel has just brought out a flexible shaft machine that is ideal for close precision work and I can recommend both this and their variable speed Motor Tool. I have gone into detail on these items because nothing can ruin a fine revolver mechanism faster than improper tools, cutting wheels or stones. The purpose of this article is to explain how to IMPROVE your revolver

mechanism—not destroy it!

First, remove the grips from your Dan Wesson revolver using the Allen wrench. Now, look at your sights. They are large, square and with sharp corners. If you carry your revolver under a suit coat, sweater, shirt, etc. these sharp corners can badly wear the material in your clothes. I highly recommend putting a radius on all of these sharp corners.

Next, using the second Allen wrench that comes with your revolver, remove the side plate screws, turn the revolver so that the side plate is facing down and rap the frame sharply with a leather or plastic hammer. This will usually drop the side plate off of the frame. Check the wear marks on the side plate. These are the spots that must be smoothed.

Now, examine the mechanism. Learn where each part fits. Note the positions of the springs. Grasp the trigger and pull up. It will come right out. Note that it is tied into the safety bar by means of a small pin that fits into a hole in the end of the trigger. Remove this safety bar. Note the half moon bearing surface on the trigger along with the raised portion above it that fits around the trigger pin in the frame. Both these points and *only* these points need polishing.

Using a small drift pin, press down on the hammer spring plunger and pull up on the hammer. Disengage the hammer spring plunger from its recess in the hammer and, using a small screw driver, force the trigger return spring up. Both hammer and trigger return spring should then come off their respective frame pins. Note the two bearing surfaces on the hammer indicated by the dental probes in the photos. These are the only surfaces that need be polished on each side of the hammer.



Note rounded sight leaves.

Remove the cylinder lock by pressing in against the plunger and lowering the cylinder lock out of the frame and pulling it out and off its frame pin. Now check the wear marks on the inside of the frame. These spots must also be polished.

I have discovered that the Dan Wesson revolver has a tendency to allow the cylinder lock at the rear of the cylinder to ease up on spring tension. This tension is controlled by a screw directly below the firing pin assembly. Keep this screw in far enough so that it takes a definite push to snap the cylinder out of the frame. The actual lock is a ball bearing under spring pressure and it should firmly and solidly lock the rear of the cylinder.

Polishing should never be hurried. Take your time. Examine and study what has to be done before going ahead. Be sure to wear safety goggles and have plenty of light so you can see what you are doing. Use a VERY LIGHT pressure. Remember, you are not removing metal. You are only polishing the surface of the bearing surfaces.

There is nothing to be gained by polish-
(Continued on page 62)



Pointers show the two bearing areas on the hammer.



Hammer bearing surfaces after polishing.



Trigger after bearing surfaces have been polished.



The MAB P-15 pistol is a generic development of the French MAC-1950 service gun.

COMBAT COMPARISON:

U.S. vs FRENCH

By R. F. SULLIVAN

Sharon E. Best, Captain in the US Army and the third ranked US woman in international pistol competition, stepped confidently up to the firing line at Fort Benning, Georgia, where she is stationed with the US Army Marksmanship Unit. The petite captain offered to make a shooting comparison between the French and the US service pistols.

For starters, she fired seven rounds of match cartridges with an issue service Colt .45 pistol, the M1911A1, the familiar mainstay of US Armed Forces since its standardization in 1926. Captain Best continued by firing the French challenger, a 9mm semiautomatic, which is dubbed the M50 and which externally resembles the Swiss SIG pistol. Another seven rounds, this of commercial 9mm Parabellum, plunked into the American standard 25 yard pistol targets down range. The two targets, one for the .45 and one for the French M50, were replaced and the process repeated.

"How was it?"

The fatigue-clad captain from Jefferson City, Missouri, smiled as she later sat along the firing line and stared at the French M50 pistol beside her. Then she ticked off her opinion of the strictly standard Colt .45 she had just fired. It had been randomly selected for this shoot-off from the arms room of a Fort Benning unit.

"The .45 had a very heavy trigger pull," she shook her head. "Must have been 10 or 11 pounds of trigger drag." Conversely, the pointing characteristics, sight picture and weight of the well

known M1911A1 pistol received her nod of acceptance and satisfaction.

"In comparison, the French service pistol has a much lighter trigger pull," Captain Best offered. The lady shooter immediately caveated the impression that the French M50 had the superior trigger pull. "But," she frowned, "the French trigger seems to be pivoted slightly. When you squeeze it, it feels as if it is rotating downward, not straight back as with the trigger of the .45. I didn't notice my sight picture changing but the trigger movement is distracting."

"The French M50 has natural pointing characteristics which beat those of the .45," she continued. "The pitch and heft of the M50 are better. But it certainly needs checkering over the entire grip surface, to give it less of a slick feeling." The French M50 has plastic grips which are smooth except for 22 large, horizontal serrations on both grips.

"On the sight picture, the French pistol has the advantage. Its sight picture is much clearer and distinct than is that of the .45." The US .45 has a blade front sight and a square-bottomed notch in the rear sight. The French M50 is slightly different: a tapered post front sight and a U notch in the rear sight.

"Of course, the weight of the M50 (loaded weight is 1.8 lbs) feels better than the 2.4 lbs of the loaded .45. And the recoil of the M50 is noticeably lighter," she nodded for emphasis as she hefted the French pistol.

"The recoil from our .45 is so violent that my elbow lock is broken each time I fire a round from the .45. So I must relock my arm and start over again with my sight picture. In the case of

the M50, the recoil is much less. Your arm lock is not broken and you can maintain your sight picture, even in rapid fire."

Captain Best had just returned from the World Pistol Championships held in Thun (near Berne), Switzerland. There she had been the high female scorer on one US team as well as the low scorer on a US team which brought home a silver medal. "I'd rather be the low scorer on a winning team," she confided with another smile.

As yet unmentioned, but the most important comparison, was that of the accuracy of the two pistols. "I fired the French pistol more accurately, despite its unfamiliarity, than I did the US service pistol," she mused. On the first two targets fired (seven rounds each), without practice and with one hand, Captain Best's results were:

US .45 Service Pistol	French M50 Service Pistol
4 rds in 7 ring (28)	1 rd in bullseye (X)
3 rds in 6 ring (18)	2 rds in 9 ring (18)
	1 rd in 8 ring (8)
	2 rds in 7 ring (14)
	1 rd in 6 ring (6)
(46)	(46) X 1

On the second targets fired, Captain Best moved her initial shot patterns into the black of the 25 yard targets, whose bullseyes measure 1.7 inches in diameter. She again had made better scores with the M50 than with the .45 pistol. The WAC Captain conceded it would be easier to teach a new shooter to fire the M50.

"The 9mm caliber gives most shooters more and earlier con-

slide to the rear and lock it in place with the stop, punch, then pry the stop from the receiver recess, ease the slide forward, remove the spring and barrel, and lift out the hammer/sear assembly from the grip.

In summary, the French M50 service pistol is easier to shoot accurately, and simpler to disassemble, thus maintain. If the US ever decides to replace the doughty .45, a design similar to the French M50 should certainly be a candidate.



Captain Sharon Best of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit test fires the French MAC-1950 service pistol.

SERVICE SIDEARMS

fidence with the pistol. But the reliability of the US service pistol is well known. It," she nodded toward the .45, "can go through thick and thin, yet still be depended upon to fire. I imagine that the M50, though superior in some respects, lacks the 'road testing' that the .45 service pistol has been through. And dependability is important."

The more tangible characteristics of the two service pistols are compared in the table reproduced here.

The French M50 service pistol was originally developed as the "SE-MAS" pistol of 1948, and was finally adopted by French forces as standard. The M50 has been called the best manufactured and the most lethal of French service pistols. In loading and functioning, the M50 is very similar to the US .45, originally developed by John Browning.

One of the features of the French M50 is ease of disassembly and assembly. It has no barrel bushing and recoil spring plug as does the .45. The recoil spring of the M50 is self-enclosed, thus easier to get in and out. The hammer and sear of the M50 are an integral unit which can be easily lifted out of the grip after removal of the slide.

Another interesting feature of the M50 is its single, positive safety which can be rotated into place to prevent the hammer from striking the firing pin. There is no grip safety on the French model, as on the M1911A1 .45 pistol. Another feature, although of dubious value, is that the M50 has a magazine disconnector safety.

Already mentioned as easier, the disassembly steps with the M50 are to: remove the magazine and clear the pistol, pull the



Comparison of taken-down pistols reveals fewer modular components in the French design (left). The 1911-A1 on the right is a bit more complicated and has a larger number of parts to malfunction or lose.



DOS PISTOLAS ESPANOLAS

By MASON WILLIAMS

*... A Close Look At
Two Spanish Autoloaders*

In the old days about the only good things that came out of Spain were sultry women and music. Today we get their "American Westerns" and some pretty good firearms that are a far cry from the junk that was formerly dumped on the American market. Europe was turning out top quality automatic pistols while the Americans were still galloping over the plains chasing Indians so it is not surprising that both the Constable and the Starlight from Garcia Corp. are well worth a long second look.

The Constable is a small, compact caliber .380 ACP pistol. This calls for clarification because, in Europe, this pistol is termed the 9 m/m Kurtz or the 9 m/m C and is so marked to often mislead the American purchaser. These markings merely show that the caliber is 9m/m—the cartridge is the 9 m/m SHORT or, as we know it, the .380 ACP. Too many people have purchased these little pistols in the belief that they are buying a 9 m/m Luger pistol. This is not the case.

The Constable appears to be an all steel pistol with a double action mechanism that is simple and reliable and, while basically resembling other double action pistol mechanisms, remains strictly an Astra development. Astra is one of the largest and one of the best of the Spanish handgun manufacturers.

Retailing at about \$175, this pistol has several features that are lacking on pistols selling for more money. First of all, the sights have been made big, bold and blunt. True, this type of pistol is commonly used for snap shooting or for instinct shooting but a good set of sights is still important. The sights are set into a serrated ramp with both sides of the slide on either side of the ramp heavily sand blasted. This cuts down light reflection and glare.

The slide hold open lock is correctly positioned to allow the thumb to snap it down and release the slide to feed a cartridge into the chamber. Similarly, the magazine release button is located at the rear of the trigger guard in the frame so that it could



The bevelled and polished opening of the Astra and Star magazine wells allow for the rapid replacement of empty clips with freshly charged magazines. This is a worthwhile feature which should be emulated by U.S. firearms manufacturers.

be easily reached. Unfortunately, and I don't know why the Europeans do this, the plastic grip has a large thumb rest on the left side that serves no useful purpose and blocks the thumb from reaching the magazine release button. Eliminating this thumb rest would simplify matters considerably.

Astra has bevelled the inside corners of the butt so that the magazine may be rammed in even though slightly off center thus speeding up and simplifying reloading which is an important factor with any automatic pistol. A bevelled opening should be standard manufacturing practice in the industry but it isn't and I am glad to find it on this little handgun. Unfortunately Astra fails to polish their magazines, shipping them out with a dull, soft, parkerized finish rather than highly polished to help them slide into or out of the pistol butt. This is no great problem and five minutes with a Dremel tool and a couple of Cratex polishing tips will take care of this. The magazine snaps out of the pistol butt the moment the release button is pressed.

Takedown is simple. At the top of the front of the trigger guard is a floating, spring loaded block that is pulled down with the fingers of the left hand as the right hand pulls back the slide all the way to the rear and then raises the rear of the slide to remove it from the frame. The slide then moves forward and up and off

the barrel. Reassembly is equally simple. I was particularly interested in discovering if this pistol would function reliably with various makes of American ammunition. It not only functioned flawlessly but turned in some excellent groups at fifteen yards considering that it is not a target handgun. I fired a minimum of three clips of each of the various types of ammunition.

It would appear that this Astra Constable pistol in .380 ACP is a good buy, particularly for the person who wants this small size yet relatively powerful handgun for protection or for sport. It will certainly last for and provide a lifetime of service.

The Star Starlight 9 m/m pistol is made in Eibar, Spain and the slide is marked Cal. 9 m/m P. Again, this can be confusing. This is one of the European designations for the 9 m/m Luger cartridge that is commonly known in Europe as the 9 m/m Parabellum thus the 9 m/m P stamp on the slide. This cartridge is the big brother of the little .380 ACP.

Star has not, unfortunately, opened up the rear sight notch sufficiently. The big front sight is excellent but completely fills the cut in the rear sight however this presents no problems because the sight notch may be widened and, once this has been done, the combination of front and rear sight gives the shooter an excellent sight picture.

The first thing that impressed me about this pistol is the small size and, I believe, it could be the smallest thinnest and most

compact 9 m/m pistol on the market thus making it ideal for the outdoorsman. Having an aluminum receiver cuts down on the weight giving the sportsman another important plus factor.

The Starlight has several good features for the outdoorsman. I keep mentioning the "outdoorsman" because back packers, hunters, trappers need power without excessive weight and size and this pistol has all this but it would also be an excellent choice as a backup arm for Police and for home and store protection.

The grip spur below the hammer protects the top of the web of the hand eliminating cutting and pinching the flesh during firing. This spur is wide enough to provide real protection. The hammer is short, wide and checkered and there is sufficient room between the rear of the hammer and the top of the spur to prevent pinching any but the most fleshy of hands. This is excellent human engineering.

Next Star has installed a wide, short, manual safety that wipes off fast as the thumb hits it. The positioning and size are near-perfect.

The magazine safety prevents firing the pistol unless the magazine is inserted into the grip. This means that the shooter can chamber a cartridge, leave the hammer at full cock, put the manual safety in the ON position, remove the magazine and the pistol cannot be fired. The moment he inserts the magazine into the pistol butt he can then wipe off the manual safety and

(Continued on page 69)



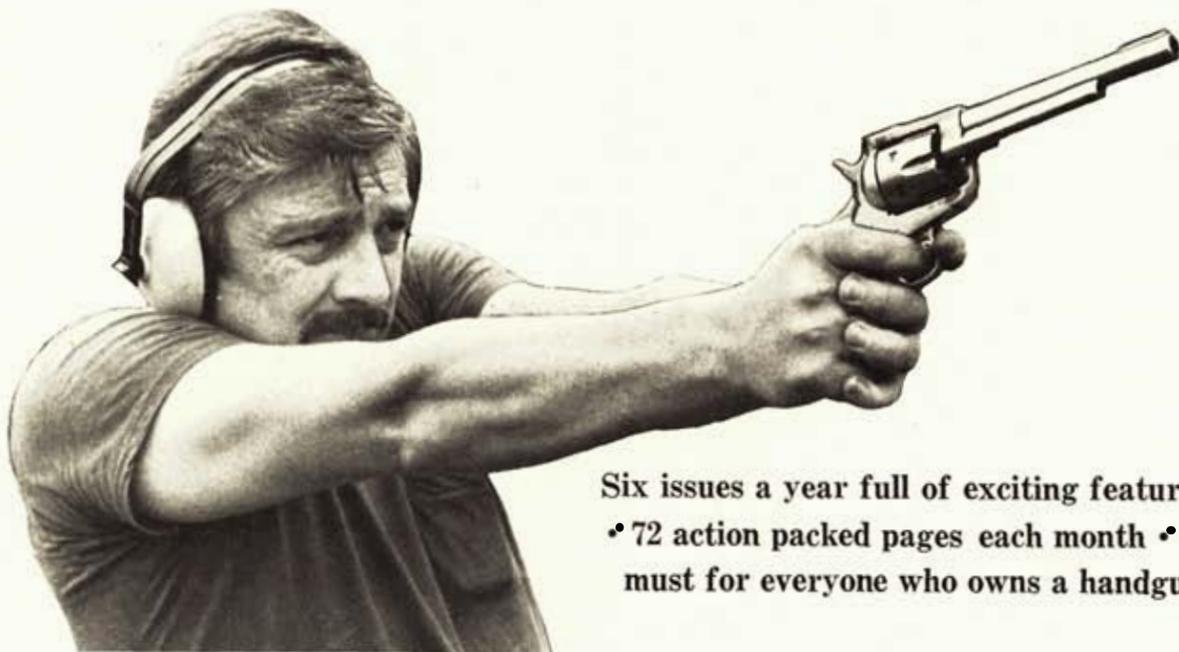
The BKS and the Constable surrounded by test ammo.

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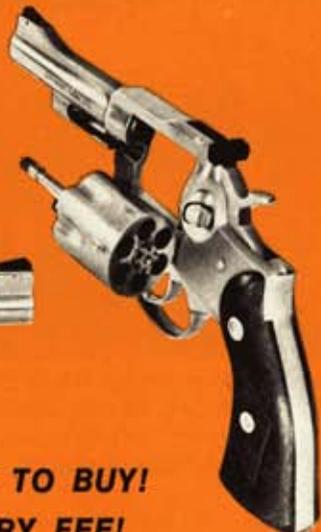
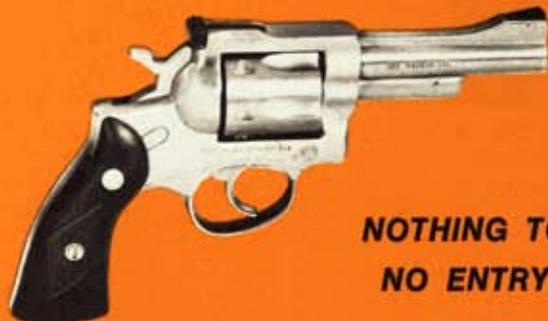
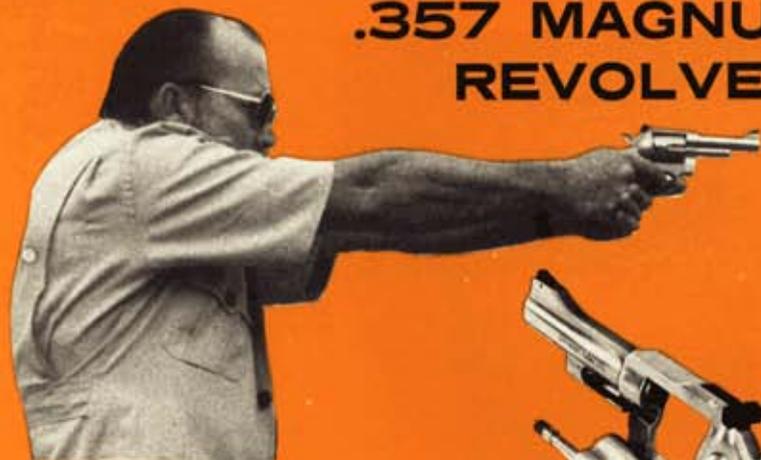
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STANDARDIZATION...

Continued from page 16

program early in their careers during which each will evaluate a selection of acceptable handguns and make his own choice. This might involve two hours at the range twice a week for a month during which the new officer fires and becomes familiar with each gun in the selection, to include the use of representative acceptable custom grips and handloads. His final selection would not, of course, be permanent. With training and experience he might well change to a heavier caliber. A change in duty assignment might well require a change in gun, also.

Above I've used the term "acceptable" selection would not, of course, be permanent. With training and experience he naturally, limit to some degree what can be afforded. Obviously, no gun unsuitable to police work should be included.

"Acceptable" custom grips should be limited to those which do not require a special holster, limit the gun to use in one hand or hamper rapid reloading. Acceptable handloads are harder to define but might simply be limited to those which function the pistol properly, for semi autos, and to those which are not overly "hot" or light for all arms.

In this Bicentennial Year, isn't it time we had a Declaration of Handgun Independence for law officers nationwide? Let's free them from rigidly imposed ideas of "what is best" and give them a better chance to develop into effective shots better able to protect themselves and the public they serve.



TOOLS FOR THE KITCHEN TABLE

By **GEORGE C. NONTE**

There is hardly a handgun owner alive in the land who doesn't at the very least attempt to completely disassemble his gun; a very large percentage of those owners also want to perform various, minor repairs and alterations. I know this, not only from voluminous correspondence and conversations with pistoleros throughout the country, but from the physical evidence that is readily visible on a very high percentage of the used guns floating around.

That evidence is in the form of chewed-up screwheads, gouged surfaces, too-weak springs, ruined sights, bent sideplates, etc., the list is almost endless. All too often an inexperienced handgunner will knock 10 to 20 percent off his nearly-new gun's resale value in his first attempt at disassembly alone. That's not an opinion, but a fact. Invariably, when shopping for another gun, I look for just such evidence and use it as a basis for beating the price down.

Probably the single factor that contributes most to this inadvertent damage is attempting to do the job without proper tools. Of course, improper use of tools also plays a big part, but there is nowhere enough space here to go into that; though you might try a look at my book, "Pistol-smithing" (GUNS Book Club, \$14.95) for detailed information. Instead, though, we're going to cover the essential, worthwhile, and nice-to-have tools that will enable you to maintain, repair, and sometimes modify handguns in such fashion that their value is maintained or increased rather than lowered.

SCREWDRIVERS

In spite of all that has been said about the use of poorly fitted and too-soft or too-weak screwdrivers, more new guns are still marred by this tool than all the others combined. Handgun screws have thin, parallel-sided slots that are usually not very deep. Removal or installation requires a driver with a parallel-sided bit that fills the slot from top to bottom, side to side, and from end to end. The bit must also be tough, rather than soft or brittle. If too hard, it may break under the strain, and when that happens, nothing can keep the broken, jagged end from slipping out of the slot and deeply gouging sur-



Hammers are essential. Right, the machinist's hammer is used for heavy work and peening. Center, the octagonal brass rod can be used for both brass hammer and as a large, soft drift. Left, the plastic hammer has uses where finish damage is possible.

rounding metal or wood. On the other hand, if the bit is too soft, it will simply twist and then is just as likely to slip out of the slot under load and mar the adjacent surface.

Typical hardware-store, household screwdrivers are not only usually too thick of bit to enter the slot, the bit sides are not parallel; they taper to form a wedge which causes the driver to jump out of the slot under pressure with catastrophic results. Many is the time I've seen an individual attempt to use such screwdrivers by simply filing their bits narrower at the point, actually increasing the angle in the

process and making it *more* likely that the driver will slip out.

In the end, you'll be far better off if you spend the money for a proper set of gunsmith screwdrivers. One badly-marred revolver sideplate or frame will cost you more in refinishing than the price of a basic set of good drivers.

There are several makes of gunsmith screwdrivers available, but the two that have given me the best service are Bonanza (Rt. 4, Faribault, Minn. 55021) and Brownell's (303 E. Main, Montezuma, Iowa 92629). The Bonanza drivers have shanks far longer than neces-

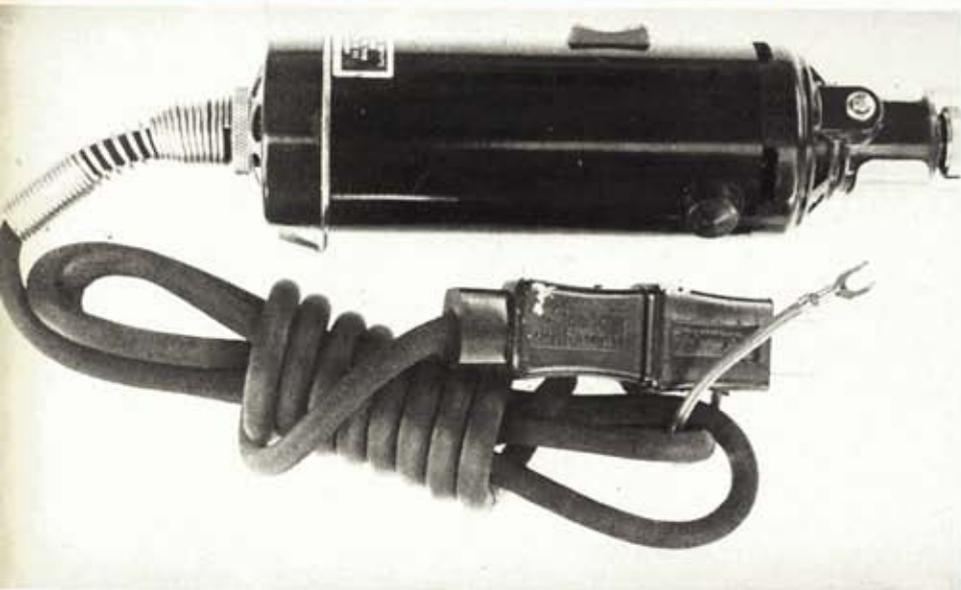
Arkansas stones are useful in deburring, polishing and smoothing of internal parts. They are found in a variety of shapes and sizes.



Flexible files are plastic strips to which abrasive grit has been bonded. They can be bent or cut to suit all types of pistolsmithing requirements.



STOLSMITH



The variable speed Dremel Moto-Tool is the author's first choice in hand held power grinders. Interchangeable tool heads can perform an immense variety of pistolsmithing functions. Author feels this type of tool should be one of the beginner's purchases.

sary for handgun work, but have excellent bit shape and are well heat-treated. In addition, I believe Bonanza offers a wider variety of the smaller sizes needed for handgun work than most other makers. I sometimes cut the Bonanza shanks off to a length of about 2½, then epoxy them into plain, wood handles for the much better control that short shanks give.

The Brownell set is much different—it consists of a magnetic handle and holder accompanied by a wide assortment of short, hexagonal-shanked bits, which pop in and out of the holder. They, too, have excellent bit shape and are very strong.

Extra bits are economical when needed for special jobs.

Even with the wide variety of small bit sizes offered by both of the above makers, I find it necessary to modify them to fit as different jobs come up. This means that often I narrow the broadest dimension of the bit so that it fills a screwhead slot from side to side exactly. It also means that the narrow dimension of the bit is sometimes filed or ground thinner to fit a particularly narrow slot. When thinning a bit in this fashion, thin it no farther than necessary for it to barely enter the slot's full depth, and also take particular care to keep the



The power router assembly for the Dremel Moto-Tool is useful in inletting of pistol grip panels and other chores.

sides parallel. When reducing the wider dimension of the bit, radius the outer edges to avoid leaving a sharp corner which may actually cut into the side of the screw counterbore. I find needle files far better for trimming screw driver bits than any other methods I've tried. If the bit is too hard to be cut with a file, it's too hard for the job and will probably break under pressure.

FILES

Unless you're getting into refinishing or restoration of badly pitted guns, you'll
(Continued on page 63)

Needle files are essential to the home pistolsmith. A wide variety is not needed. Author recommends a small assortment like the one shown for most types of pistol work.

A selection of good punches and drifts are essential handgun tools. Author favors the Brownell's line, featuring interchangeable tips and short, easy to control, length.

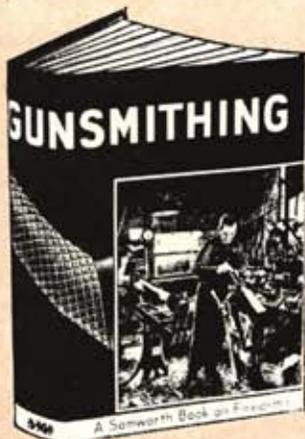


Gunsmithing



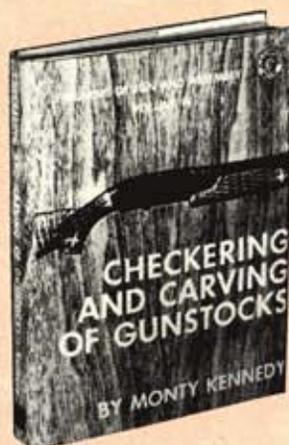
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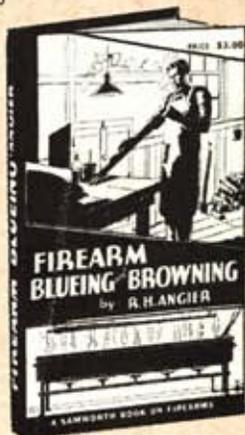
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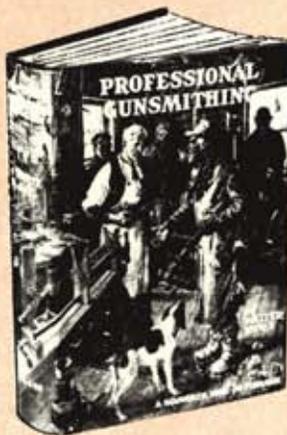
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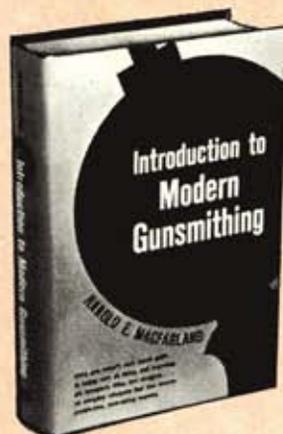
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Continued from page 29

one Colt .45 autoloader, firing a total of 200,000 rounds through it before selling it. "The barrels were very well made, but one was soft and wore out after only 50,000 rounds."

He replaced the barrel and sold that gun to a friend who has been shooting it a year and a half with no trouble. "A good pistol is long lasting, and well maintained, it will not wear out," Ray declares. He replaces his guns "when I feel I want to make a change, often after having the pistol three to five years, and I then get a Government Model and have it rebuilt."

Ray understandably does his own re-loading of ammunition and "very seldom do I shoot factory ammunition, unless it's required in a match." As to why?, he replies seriously and with no braggadacio whatsoever, "I firmly believe that my reloads are more accurate and more dependable than factory ammunition," and his explanation for this is, "Care, good components, and quality control."

Why does Ray compete and what is required of a good shooter?

"I compete because I like to shoot. I consider it a sport, and I get satisfaction out of competing and out of winning. Also, it's a very valuable practical ability to have, so that you'll be able to protect yourself, your family, and your property.

"As to what makes a good competitive shooter, I think the main thing is internal concentration on what you're trying to do. If you can hold your concentration and not let yourself be distracted by noises, etc., that are always present at a match site, and of course if you are well trained, your subconscious will allow you to do the things that are necessary to be done automatically—sort of as in hypnosis—and then you can concentrate on what you're trying to do, the problem you're trying to solve.

"A very good example is in a fast-draw match, where you have nothing to do but draw your pistol and hit that target, so you concentrate on that target and let your subconscious handle everything else. If you can keep yourself under control right up to the point where you're about to lose control—no matter how fast you have to think or move—then you're in the best mental state to accomplish what you want."

The challenge of competing in and winning competitive shooting matches calls for the best effort than one can muster. To reach the point "where you're about to lose control" and to surpass that point expands the limits to which the shooter is capable. The striving for, and the occasional attaining of perfection, is what being a champion is all about.



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CHAPMAN SECOND IN INTERNATIONAL MEET

Ray Chapman, using the Pachmayr custom .45 he won in the first international combat meet, placed second in the latest shoot held near Salzburg, Austria. Here are the preliminary results:

1st Place—Jan Foes of Norway, shooting a 9mm Sig 210. Score, 397

2nd Place—Ray Chapman. Score 375

3rd Place—Lionel Smith of South Africa, using a customized .45 ACP. Score 374

4th Place—David Westerhaut of Rhodesia, shooting a Browning 9mm Hi-Power.

In the team competition, Rhodesia placed first, the team from Norway placed second and the U.S. team placed third.

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PACHMAYR expands its offering of Presentation Grips to include compact grips for small frame revolvers. The new grips are designated for S&W Chiefs Special-Colt Detective Special and Charter Arms Revolvers. Made of neoprene molded over a light weight steel insert, these grips, say Pachmayr, provide "Grip-Security" in any kind of weather, in any kind of combat situation. Ease of concealment was a major design consideration. Pachmayr, 1220 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90015.

SILHOUETTE TARGETS from steel plate more durable than NRA standards dictate are on the market for the first time. You can order shapes to resemble any animal in any quantity in virtually any size, plate thickness up to 9 inches. Targets are flame cut with a computer controlled optical scanner from carefully designed templates to insure consistency. Each target comes attached to a steel base. Buffalo, bears, sheep, chickens, whatever comes to mind. Laughery Valley Arms & Antiques, P.O. Box 85, 10 E. Pearl St., Batesville, IN 47006.



HANDSOME, fully shootable Tower Pistol kit from CVA gives Revolutionary War buffs the chance to build their own replica of the famous "horse pistol." Both flint-lock and percussion models are 95% inletted, requiring only final fitting and finishing. The bore has been reduced from the original .69 to the more manageable .45 caliber. Available nationally through dealers from \$38.95. For CVA's complete line, write Connecticut Valley Arms, Inc., Saybrook Rd., Haddam, CT 06438.



THE CATTLEMAN Trailblazer .22 rim-fire revolver converts in seconds from an economical plinker to a potent .22 Magnum pest control design. The forged steel frame is deep color case-hardened, cylinder and barrel blued, grips are genuine oil finished walnut. Both 5 1/2" and 6 1/2" barrel models complete with adjustable sights are priced at \$132.00. Iver Johnson, 109 River St., Fitchburg, MA 01420.

BEAUTIFULLY handcrafted Presentation Stocks carved from fancy American and exotic woods to fit any pistol butt, any hand. This one man shop has been filling custom pistol grip orders for sixteen years. Quality workmanship and woods result in more expensive stocks than the mass-produced type, but the beauty and fit will add much to your shooting pleasure. Write Robert H. Newell, 55 Coyote St., Los Alamos, NM 87544.



A HIGH ride paddle holster for revolvers designed to be worn inside the trouser is now available from Bucheimer-Clark Co. The suede covered metal paddle can be contoured to fit the individual's body. An adjustable lock post allows the gun to be worn either in a conventional draw or cross-draw position. The shape of the front welt prevents cross-draw hang-ups. In russet or black, plain or weave from Bucheimer-Clark Co., Valencia, CA 91355.



TITANIUM CARBIDE, a remarkably strong material, is now being used by Redding in a new line of pistol dies. Titanium Carbide is harder than conventional carbides and presents a slippery surface which eliminates the need to lubricate the cases. The inserts of these dies are tapered and not brittle like other carbides. Available in most popular pistol calibers from Redding Reloading Equipment, Starr Road, Cortland, NY 13045.



AN ADULT .177 caliber pellet pistol from Daisy features a long under lever for easy cocking, a fixed rifled barrel for greater accuracy, adjustable contour grips, a hooded ramp front sight and a 2-way adjustable rear. This high velocity pellet pistol offers right or left hand grips. Daisy, Rogers, AR 72756.



THE POPULAR Sterling Model 400 .380 now comes in solid stainless steel for those who demand the best in weather-resistant qualities from their handguns. Like the 400, the 400S is a six-shot, double-action automatic pistol that fires either cocked or hammer-down. Its rolling block safety which locks the firing pin is a fine feature. Contact Sterling Arms, 4436 Prospect St., Gasport, NY 14067.



THE "HUGGER" is the name of a new belt holster from Smith & Wesson. Model 44 rides high on the belt and close to the body in the favored "FBI tilt" position. Includes a trigger guard and features thumb-break release which guards hammer, protecting clothing from wear. Individually molded to fit more than 30 S&W handguns, the Hugger also holds other revolvers and automatics. Comes in black or russet leather, plain or basket weave, and in plain black low gloss Clarino. Smith & Wesson, P.O. Box 2208, Springfield, MA 01101.



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magazine, without any hang-ups.

Another area that needs attention is the magazine. When inserted, the bottom of the magazine is perfectly flush with the bottom of the frame. This means that after the magazine is inserted and pushed into place with the palm, that you must once again push up on the magazine with your thumb. This is done to insure proper seating. The easiest way to correct the problem is to glue a small piece of 3/16" thick leather to the bottom of the magazine. After the glue is dry, trimming is easily accomplished with either a sander, or a pocket knife. Burnishing the raw edges will finish the project. The added length on the magazine also acts as a cushion for the magazine when it is dropped from the weapon while reloading.

The sights on an issue .45 are a bit small for me, but can be improved with the help of a little paint. Some people like red, orange, or yellow, while I prefer white. Most of my work is at night. White paint has more light reflecting qualities than the others. After getting used to the totally white sights, it is difficult to do without them. Try it, you just might like it.

The trigger pull on an as-issued .45

averages a clean 12 pounds on most weapons. This is an area that needs attention. Unless you are extremely well versed in the correct fit between the hammer and sear, make a smart move by letting an experienced gunsmith clean it up. Untold numbers of weapons have been ruined by well meaning amateurs. If a gunsmith is a true professional, he should be able to achieve a good 4 pound clean-breaking trigger.

We now have a weapon that is very reliable, accurate, and much easier to shoot. Loaded with the new Remington hollow-point round, the venerable .45 auto takes on new life. For uniform duty, Safariland's new Model 254 is impossible to beat. Check it out, and I'm sure you will agree. For concealment use, Bucheimer-Clark's new model belt-slide holster is the best going. It holds the weapon securely in one place, yet is very quick to draw from. With these two holsters, the .45 auto makes a very fine all around weapon.

If an officer has to shoot a felon, he doesn't want to necessarily kill him, but he absolutely must stop him. With this combination, an officer will have the odds in his favor.



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Though light loads of standard-weight bullets do not demonstrate quite the reduction in recoil and report found in other types, they still offer a substantial improvement in pleasure and economy. They do require a full set of conventional loading equipment, mainly because regular, full-length case resizing is required.

However, careful use of a charge cup can eliminate the requirement for either a powder scale or measure, and the other tools and equipment need not be costly or sophisticated type. Again, a Lee Loader or the old Lyman Tong Tool will give most excellent results.

If you'll make an honest appraisal of the results obtained from the foregoing light loads, you'll be forced to admit that as a practical matter one or more of them will probably serve 90 percent or more of your handgun shooting needs. With that in mind, it figures to be a considerable waste of money to succumb to magnumitis and insist on those cylinder-bulging loads which cost several times more than the powder-puff variety which has given me so much shooting pleasure over the years.



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TUNING THE WESSON...

Continued from page 47

ing the entire metal surface of the hammer, trigger, frame, side plate, etc. You would be merely wasting your time. It would look nice, of course, but would contribute nothing to smooth functioning. Stick to the built in bearing surfaces.

When you have completed polishing the mechanism, reassemble. You will note that the cylinder arm is held by one end of the safety block spring. When you engage the spring end in the cut in the cylinder arm, the arm will not lie in place under spring tension. With your finger, hold the arm lightly in place, fit the side plate nearly into place and then remove the finger that is holding the cylinder arm and spring in place and snap the side plate into its cut. Immediately replace and tighten the side plate screws. Once these are in place it is then possible to pull the trigger and test the mechanism. If you attempt to test the mechanism before tightening down the side plate screws the cylinder arm will jump out of place.

A simple smoothing of bearing surfaces will definitely improve the feel of the mechanism. Do NOT cut the hammer spring. Leave it and all the other springs alone. Remember to basically polish all wear marks and bearing surfaces. That's all that has to be done to the Dan Wesson revolver mechanism. If you round off the sides of the rear sight and leaf, then touch up the areas with a cold blue. After a final clean-up with an oily patch, your Dan Wesson, with its slicker lockwork, will one more be ready for action.



SECURITY SIX

Continued from page 45

The question might well be asked "Who likes and who buys the Security-Six?" Considering the quantity produced and the fact that the gun is in short supply, a general answer would be "Almost everybody."

Actually, the Security-Six is essentially a civilian gun, though more and more law-enforcement agencies are beginning to acquire it or at least authorize its use. In a broad sense, it is comparable to the S&W M19 (Combat Magnum) and appeals to the people who like that gun. The fixed-sight version is comparable to the S&W M10 or Colt OP, by far the guns most widely used in law-enforcement—so, logically, it has strong law-enforcement appeal. Abroad it is making new friends every day and more than a few foreign departments and agencies have adopted it. The tool-less disassembly feature and its robust parts suit it particularly well to areas and societies where armorers and gunsmiths aren't often handy. No other revolver can claim disassembly with only a cartridge for a tool, and that appeals strongly to quasi-military police agencies and those military groups having a requirement for a revolver.

In short, people from every segment of revolver-land like the Security-Six; civilians, cops, soldiers; ordinary shooters to whom it is a mere tool, as well as gun buffs to whom it is an art form and a treasured possession.

It seems everybody likes it, so it just can't be anything but good.



THUMBUSTERS...

Continued from page 32

breaks cleanly with no perceptible drag or pull.

At the range, my "altered" Ruger showed its stuff with 5-round groups that measured 1½ inches, center-to-center, with Remington 240-grain soft-points. It felt good, pointed good, and shot *damned* good.

While I consider any of the three guns I tested excellent choices for the hunting handgunner, let me take a minute to point out a few more of the differences—and similarities—between them.

First, like all single-action revolvers, the three guns loaded through gated ports on the right rear of the receiver. Empties were popped through the same port with the aid of a spring-loaded ejector rod housed alongside and underneath each barrel.

While all three guns sported western-style trigger guards barely large enough to accommodate a heavily gloved finger, the triggers themselves were a narrow 1/8-inch in width on the two imports, while the Ruger featured a generously proportioned trigger that was more than twice as wide.

The Ruger and the Hawes both used floating firing pins (with the Super Blackhawk featuring the added refinement of a transfer-bar safety system), while the Cattleman's firing pin was attached directly to the hammer. The German- and American-made guns (the Ruger is manufactured in Southport, Connecticut) likewise featured half-inch-wide thumbrests on the cocking piece, while the Italian-made Cattleman had a narrower, 3/16-inch thumb-piece. All were either serrated or checkered.

The Ruger and the Hawes also shared counterbored chambers, while the Cattleman featured chambers flush with the cylinder face. The super Blackhawk has a coil mainspring, while both imports use flat, leaf springs.

All three guns functioned well throughout the testing, and no loose parts were apparent after more than 150 rounds of full factory .44 magnum loads had been run through each sample.

These single-action .44's are all well-made firearms, and a hunter wouldn't go wrong in choosing any of them, in my opinion. With the Hawes, the Cattleman or the Ruger stoked with full-house factory ammo or its equivalent, an experienced handgunner would be well armed to hunt nearly any North-American game. And with a little time and patience, *anyone* can become proficient enough with a handgun to put meat in the freezer.



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need nothing more than a few good-quality needle files (with handles) and perhaps a small, six-inch, fine-cut pillar file for truing up sights and maybe for removing an external burr that can't be peened entirely back into place. If you try hard enough, you can probably find a use for every shape needle file. However, I don't keep nearly that many at hand, and have found that a tapered round, flat, oval, diamond, and "slitting" patterns will handle 98 percent of the small filing jobs that arise. The slitting file is especially important because with it battered screwhead slots may be trued up or opened up to accept thicker and therefore stronger screwdriver bits.

Get good needle files—if of best quality and cared for properly, they'll last you for many years. The best I've found to date are the hard, chrome-plated variety available from Brookstone (Dept. C, 3 River Rd., Worthington, Mass. 01098). Generally, though, the needle files sold by Brownell's and other gunsmithing supply houses are first-class and will do the job well at lower cost. Larger and coarser files will be found useful if you intend making or modifying wood or plastic grips. Regular hardware store quality will do nicely for this, so just buy them when needed.

PUNCHES AND DRIFTS

You can buy an expensive set of small-size machinist's punches, but they aren't needed. You'll need only about three sizes from 1/16" diameter through 1/8", and the most practical I've found is the replaceable-tip set sold by Brownells. It consists of a single handle or holder and the necessary replacement tips which are quite hard. You don't need all the length they have for handgun work, so I take a cutoff disc in a hand-grinder and shorten the new tips to 1 1/4". With the ends then polished very smooth and slightly cupped, these punches do a superb job. One caution, though—don't attempt to use this type of punch without checking to make sure the replaceable tip is clamped *tightly* in the holder. If it's a bit loose, it may skid or break, and I once punched a hole completely through my thumb to prove this. The foregoing punches are *only* for driving out pins. For moving sights in their dovetails or for any other purpose, you need soft brass or hard fibre rod about 1/4" in diameter and 3" long. Brass is the traditional material, and it works well, but I prefer fibre. Fibre doesn'tpeen out or "rivet" as badly as brass, and it will not leave minute particles imbedded in the surface of the metal as brass sometimes does. In my tool box, I have a steel handle or holder supplied with interchangeable brass and fibre drift tips—but

to the best of my knowledge this item has never been placed on the market. It's an ideal companion to the replaceable-tip Brownell punch already described.

Though not strictly a drift or a punch, a 6" length of 1/4" or 3/8" brass or fibre rod is also a very handy tool for prying out mainsprings and the like where use of a screwdriver shank or steel punch or rod might mar some portion of the gun.

A small center-punch will also be needed for staking loose dovetail sights securely in place, as well as for marking holes to be drilled.

STONES

Nothing polishes the load-bearing, rubbing surfaces in a handgun's lockwork as well as slender strips of both hard and soft Arkansas stone. Though offered in many sizes and shapes, I find that very seldom do I use anything other than a knife-edge, square, or round. The soft Arkansas is for fairly quick removal of deep surface irregularities (as in polishing an autoloader feed ramp) while the hard stone is simply for polishing a surface that is already fairly

smooth. Again, Arkansas stones are available from several sources, but I've always been quite pleased with the quality of those obtained from A. G. Russell (P.O. Box 474, Fayetteville, Ark. 72701).

Neither stone nor file, there is also the "Flexible File," which is extremely useful. This is simply a narrow strip of thin, tough, semi-rigid plastic with a bonded coating of abrasive particles, usually aluminum oxide. They are available in several degrees of roughness, and one source is Brownells.

HAMMER

The old saw "if it won't work, get a bigger hammer" is sometimes true, but seldom in regard to handguns. I prefer a small, machinist's hammer (ballpeen to many) for use on punches and for peening out nicks and burrs, as well as other peening operations that might arise. For driving tight-fitting pins back into place, a small brass hammer can't be beat—providing you stop in time to finish seating the pin with a proper drift. For loosening frozen parts, for driving a tight slide back

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and forth to loosen it up, and for popping a tight sideplate loose without bending it, you need a medium-size plastic or rawhide hammer.

Keep the faces of the soft hammers dressed smooth with file and sandpaper. If allowed to get chewed up and rough, they'll collect small fragments of metal and grit which will mar surfaces when struck. The striking face of the machinist's hammer should also be kept polished very smooth with abrasive cloth (filing if necessary) or it will leave an irregular imprint on anything struck; this is especially important when peening.

VISE

Lack of a good method of holding a gun solidly contributes greatly to the marring produced by screwdrivers. More often than not I see a fellow try to disassemble a revolver, operating the screwdriver with one hand while trying to hold the gun tightly against a table top with the other. This is not only quite likely to cause gun damage, it often results in the screwdriver jumping out of the slot and removing a sizeable hunk of hide or meat from the holding hand. It hurts.

Handguns, revolvers in particular, are quite irregular in shape and therefore somewhat difficult to hold solidly. A good-sized, heavy, bench vise is never a mistake—but it does require that you use padded jaws and shaped blocks of wood in order to hold handguns solidly without damage. A heavy vise is also a necessity when drifting sights or when replacing screwed-in barrels. Aside from that, though, it's usually possible to get by quite well with a smaller, sturdy, swivel vise. By that I mean a vise such as the "Pana-Vise" (South Gate, CA. 90280), whose jaw section is assembled to the base by means of a substantial ball-and-socket joint and thus may be tilted at almost any angle and rotated through 360 degrees. A clamping system holds it securely in whatever position you choose to present the work. Don't, though, try to get by with one of the miniature, swivel vises or one of the smaller, suction-cup outfits. They simply won't hold the work steady enough for most work, though they are very handy for holding small parts that require filing, polishing, or other work. Even the best swivel vise won't do the job properly unless it's fairly large—and you still need assorted padding and shaped wood blocks to hold parts securely without damage. Jaws of copper, brass or lead will not mar the gun, and wood blocks will provide security.

HAND GRINDER

Personally, I consider this tool as essential as screwdrivers. With it you will be able to do many shaping, cutting, and drilling operations not possible unless you own heavy power tools, and it also will

enable you to do things that even extensive machine tools wouldn't handle as well. Get one of good quality—though there are several available, I have been more pleased with the Variable-Speed Dremel Moto Tool than any other I've handled. You'll be better off to buy one of the kits containing a wide variety of mounted stones, cutoff wheels, polishing bobs, etc. than simply buying the tool and adding the other items later. Unless you keep an assortment of mounted tools available, you'll find that you *don't* have the one you need, and it is probably evening or Sunday and the stores are closed—meaning that you'll probably attempt the job with the wrong tool and possibly botch it.

A wide variety of accessories for the hand grinder is available and some will be useful, depending upon how extensive your work might be. One I've found indispensable is a bench stand or clamp which will hold the grinder rigid; another that can be very helpful is a drill-press attachment which allows most of the hole-drilling you might require in handgun work. For this, though, don't make the mistake of buying plain carbon-steel drills; get only first-class, high-speed steel. A third item of limited usefulness is the router attachment. It won't help you on metal work, but can be a tremendous help in inletting and profiling new stocks or grips from either wood or plastic. Another side benefit of the hand grinder is that if you are fortunate enough to own a lathe of any sort, it may be set up as a tool post grinder if the need arises—but that type of use is really beyond the scope of this dissertation.

MINIATURE LATHE

Virtually every gun buff with any inclination to repair or modify aspires to the ownership of a full-size lathe. While in many respects this would be ideal, a properly equipped, new lathe costs many hundreds of dollars and is far out of the reach of the average individual—while purchasing a "cheap," used one generally leads to more grief than pleasure (unless one is a machinist) and in the end also costs far too much. The solution to this dilemma is the miniature lathe of approximately 3" capacity which can be had in basic form for less than \$200 and can be equipped for almost any machining operation you might envision for another \$150 or so. Though small and most often associated with model makers and even sometimes considered a toy, a good-quality, 3" lathe will do any lathe-oriented operation needed in handgun work and will do it with more than adequate accuracy.

The miniature lathe I'm currently using is the Sherline, distributed by Martin Enterprises (Box 407, San Marcos, CA. 92069) and manufactured in England by Ronald Sher Pty. Ltd. With a limited

number of accessories, I have used it for the following operations: turning straight and headed pins; making new barrel bushings; truing up shortened barrels; correcting autoloader headspace by deepening and bushing chambers; machining replacement sights and milling their seats in barrels and slides; drilling, reaming, and tapping holes; making new S&W frame lugs to correct headspace and end play; facing off .455 cylinders to accommodate .45 AR cartridges; making chamber bushings and barrel liners for caliber conversions; and numerous other small parts- and tool-making operations. In reality, with appropriate accessories (which are readily available), this miniature Sherline lathe is fully as versatile as a larger bench lathe; its only limitation is in the size of work it will produce. That's no problem for the handgunner, inasmuch as he is concerned only with small pieces and small work.

Another principle advantage of the miniature lathe is that it occupies very little space and is highly portable. When the Sherline unit is installed upon a simple mounting board, it can be stored on a bookshelf or even in a deep bureau drawer and simply C-clamped to the kitchen table for use. Virtually all of the accessories you might ever want for it can be contained in an old boot box or a small drawer. Once you've become proficient with handtools, there'll certainly be work you'll want to do with a lathe, and for this purpose, a miniature lathe is by far the most practical tool.

Certainly there are other tools, both hand and power, that you'll find some occasion to use as you delve into the more complex and difficult pistolsmithing operations. However, unless you are unusually ambitious, it will be a long time before you need them. Eventually, though, you'll want a bench grinder with both grinding and polishing wheels, a drill press, and perhaps a belt sander. When we get into items of that sort, there's no need for recommending sources. Your local hardware store or department store will have good, serviceable makes and models at quite reasonable prices. Seek you there for those goodies.

Whether you simply want to true up a battered sight or correct a lousy trigger pull, the problem will be made far simpler if you have the proper tools at hand. Hardware store screwdrivers and the household claw hammer will spoil your chances of doing even the simplest job correctly. On the other hand, the proper tools of good quality will go a long way toward insuring success and will certainly make the work more pleasant.



SAFARILAND

(1941 S. Walker St., Monrovia, Cal. 91016)

Next among the makers is Safariland, also one of the largest and most versatile of the companies. Safariland introduced the radical use of Velcro fasteners with so much success. Velcro consists of two elements, male hook-like affairs to female pile, the result being an opening and closing which is good for over 32,000 times, far above the life of the average metal snap. The Velcro closure is very secure. The only difficulty for use in safety straps on belt holsters is that if the male and female parts inadvertently come together after opening, they will adhere, unlike a snap which must be deliberately shut. For other applications, such as safety straps on shoulder holsters or for belt closure, it is ideal.

For speed holsters, Safariland selected their Model #13, police duty holster for 4" barreled revolvers. The forward cant of the muzzle allows for fluid draw and firing without shifting position of the wrist. A thumb break release is positioned to open as part of the draw. Many Safariland holsters feature the patented sight-track construction, this device providing a channel in the front of the holster in which the front sight rides, preventing drag, protecting the sight and adding to holster life. Nylon stitching is used exclusively, as is top-grade cowhide. The design of the #13 is unique in that it allows not only comfort but improved accessibility when seated, an invaluable feature for the officer in a patrol car. It is available for Colt, Smith & Wesson and Ruger revolvers and revolvers of similar dimensions, and also for large frame semi-autos.



HANDGUNNER LEATHER

For protection holsters, Safariland picked its model #58B revolver holster, featuring a 1/4-flap design giving complete protection to the handgun without impairing accessibility by the wearer. Along with the sight track design, the #58B includes a soft suede lining as standard to protect

finish. The unique quarter flap is contoured to expose almost the entire trigger, the snap located to the rear of the holster allowing for speedy opening during the natural draw.

Holsters designed to guard access selected by Safariland were two, the first

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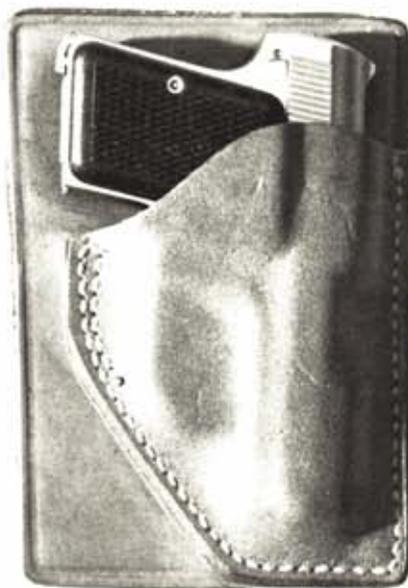


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being the Model 229, the second the Model #254, both essentially the same design, the first for revolvers with 4" barrels, the second for large frame semi-autos. These are two of Safariland President Neale Perkins' newest designs. Aside from the standard quality features and workmanship, these holsters, available in plain or basket weave, do not have the thumb break snap anchored to the belt loop, as in the standard border patrol design, but anchored to the holster itself, completely prohibiting a sideways jerk during a scuffle allowing the gun to be ripped out by anyone but the wearer.

In the concealment area, Safariland has designs truly unique. One of the most interesting holsters marketed in recent years is their Model #252 for the High Standard Derringer and most small .25 autos, such as the Bauer. It simply consists of a molded holster with a leather back panel, allowing the holstered gun to be carried in the pocket without the shape of the gun being visible, looking like a wallet or notebook instead. The holster is suitable for carry in trouser or jacket pocket and the



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only production holster of its type currently available.

A more conventional—but none-the-less unique—design is the Safariland Model #53. A shoulder holster featuring harness of Orthopedic elk and holster of the same material, it allows close contouring of the holster to the gun and the rig to the wearer's body due to its softness, yet provides complete protection and is—and I speak personally—so comfortable that one hardly remembers the gun is there. The gun is carried almost diagonally and secured with a sturdy Velcro safety strap, the strap opened easily with practice during the draw. The pistol glides easily into the hand in a natural angle. It is available for snub barreled revolvers and small and medium frame automatics. The nylon off-shoulder strap, once adjusted, can have the buckle removed and be sewn together, completely eliminating betraying outlines under a medium weight coat or heavy shirt. For those liking the idea but preferring a stiffer holster of heavier leather, the Model #7, using the same principles but with heavier leather holster is also available.



Belt rig for medium frame sixguns.

HANDGUNNER LEATHER COVERS DON HUME AND GEORGE LAWRENCE RIGS IN THE NEXT ISSUE!

notes on handgun associations . . .

THE NATIONAL AUTOMATIC PISTOL COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

was formed to afford members an opportunity to exchange information about automatic pistols. Members receive a monthly newsletter filled with articles about rare auto pistols and letters from members with tid-bits of information.

The NAPCA is represented at gun shows, the latest being at the St. Louis Gun Show, June 5th & 6th. Members have tables displaying their collections and offering items for sale and barter.

Membership dues are \$12.00 per year. For full information, contact Ernie Lang, P.O. Box 272, Cayce, S. C. 29033.

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**BUILDING A
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Continued from page 34

the sight fitted and clamped, and two, 1/16" holes drilled laterally through both base and blade. The blade is then blued or blacked, put back into the base, and secured with two, 1/16" roll pins 1/4" long. If carefully done, no bright metal will show, and the original finish remains intact. Neat.

While the rear sight installation is smooth and unobtrusive, the new front sight blade must be made rather high. Trapper's unit measures .897" above the bore centerline. That's quite high, and looks awkward—however, there's simply no way to avoid it, if heavy handloads are to be used in the .44 Bulldog. It's part of the price you pay for the gun/cartridge advantages.

I've found Trapper's sight job quite satisfactory and very useful; well worth the

cost. My gun has the soldered, front sight and was refinished in Armoloy as part of the job. Trapper's price for sights and refinishing is \$79. If refinishing is *not* included, there's a bit more work on the front sight, but the cost of the refinishing comes off the top. The price that way is much less, substantially less than the same installation with a K-frame sight.

Suppose you don't want to ship the gun off for someone else to do the work. If you are careful, patient, and reasonably handy with files, the entire job can be done on the kitchen table with hand tools. It really doesn't take very long to make the rear sight cuts with assorted, small, safe-edge files; a hacksaw and needle files take care of the front sight groove; the same tools can shape the new blade. The sight mounting hole *should* be done on a drill press, but it *can* be done with a portable, electric drill if you're careful. Tread very lightly when tapping this same hole—a broken tap can ruin your whole day. Use a T-handle and plenty of tapping fluid, and go slowly. Go the pin route on the front sight and you won't need any refinishing work or soldering equipment.

Anyway you look at it, first-class, adjustable sights greatly improve the versatility of the Charter .44 Bulldog; for more potent handloads, they are almost a necessity. Done by Trapper, yourself, or someone else, this conversion is decidedly worthwhile.



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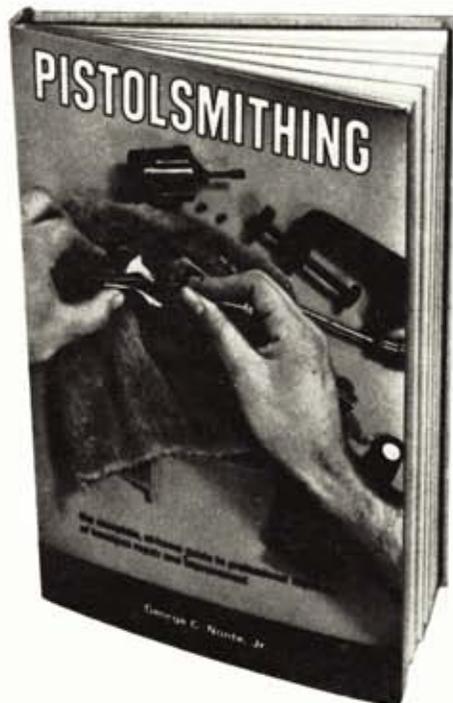
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Continued from page 52

pull the trigger and the pistol will fire. This can prove useful to an outdoorsman who wishes to carry his pistol perhaps on the side of his pack or even shoved into the pack. By removing the magazine and carrying it in his pocket he renders the pistol safe yet instantly ready for use. An excellent arrangement when working or hiking with other people.

The magazine release is in the frame behind the trigger guard, right where it should be and it can be reached with the thumb. The grips are ideal and, in my opinion, are the type that should be fitted to the Constable. Again, the Spanish are way ahead of the Americans because this pistol also has a bevelled butt to aid the magazine to line up when it is being rammed into the butt.

The Starlight does not have a double action mechanism. It has a simple, classic design that resembles that of the Colt Model 1911. Disassembly is fast and easy.

Pull back the slide and lock it open with the manual safety. Press on the right end of the barrel locking pin and pull it out to the left. Release the slide and let it go forward and off to the front. Remove the recoil spring, the barrel bushing and slide out the barrel. Internally, the resemblance to the Colt is strong particularly as regards the barrel with its double lugs and corresponding cuts in the slide. All this adds up to a small, rugged, pistol that functioned perfectly with everything I ran through it. Recoil is "soft" like the Walther P-38 and lacks any tendency to beat up the hand.

This Starlight retails for about \$195.00 and, everything considered, it represents a darn good buy. This pistol and the Constable incorporate some of Spain's best design and workmanship and are well worth looking into if you are in the market for a small, tough, moderately priced pistol. The Starlight is particularly important if you want minimum size plus maximum power.



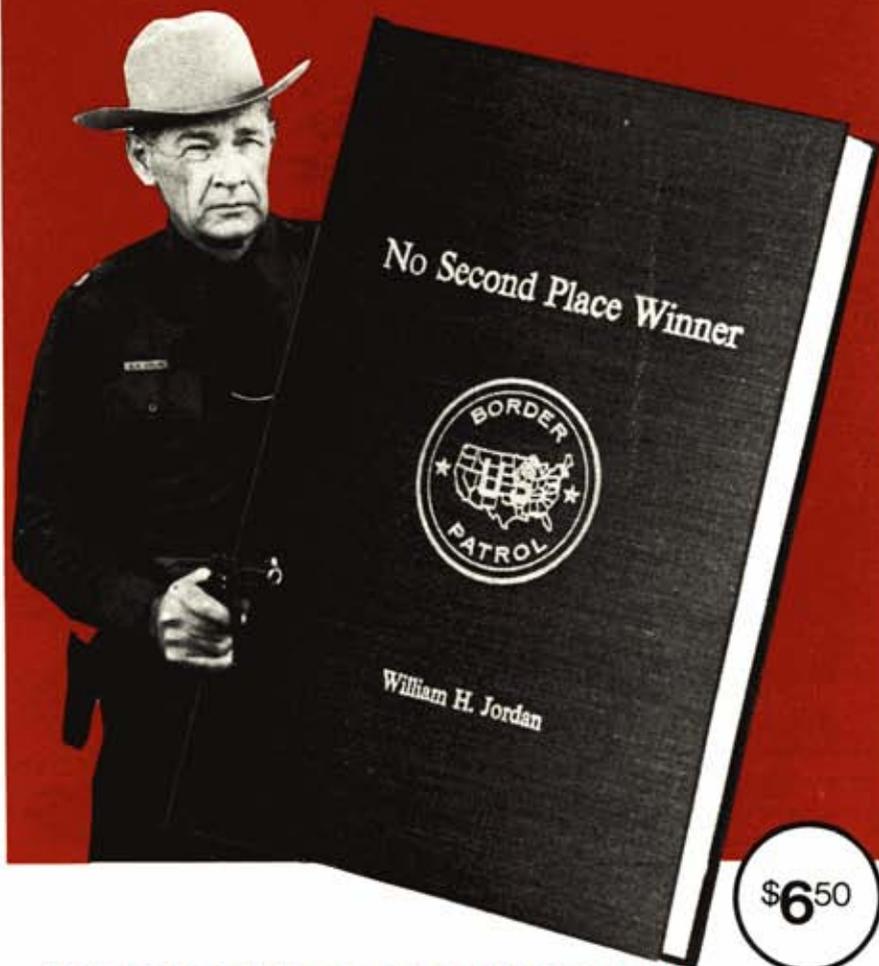
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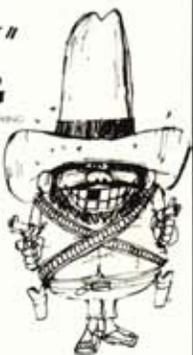
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While hunting for bear this year Kelly had to cover 400 yards to get within 60 yards of his fourth bear. He bagged it using a S & W Model 20 with a 5" barrel. Jerry Kraft accompanied Kelly on the hunt and bagged a nice brown bear, using a S & W Model 29 with a 6½" barrel.

Kelly is official measurer for the American Big Game Handgunners Association and also is on the Board of Directors for the Outstanding American Handgunner Awards. Both of the above organizations are dedicated to the sport of handgun hunting.

Kelly urges all handgun hunters and people interested in handgun hunting to join these organizations. They can help in showing that handguns are sporting weapons.

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notes on handgun associations. . . .

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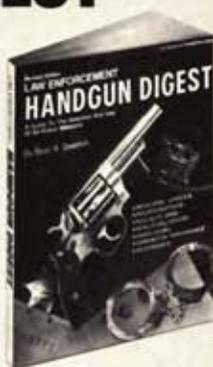
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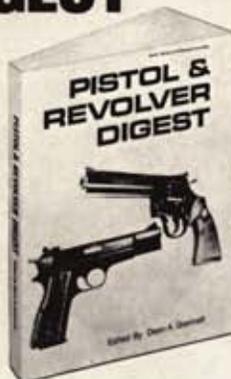
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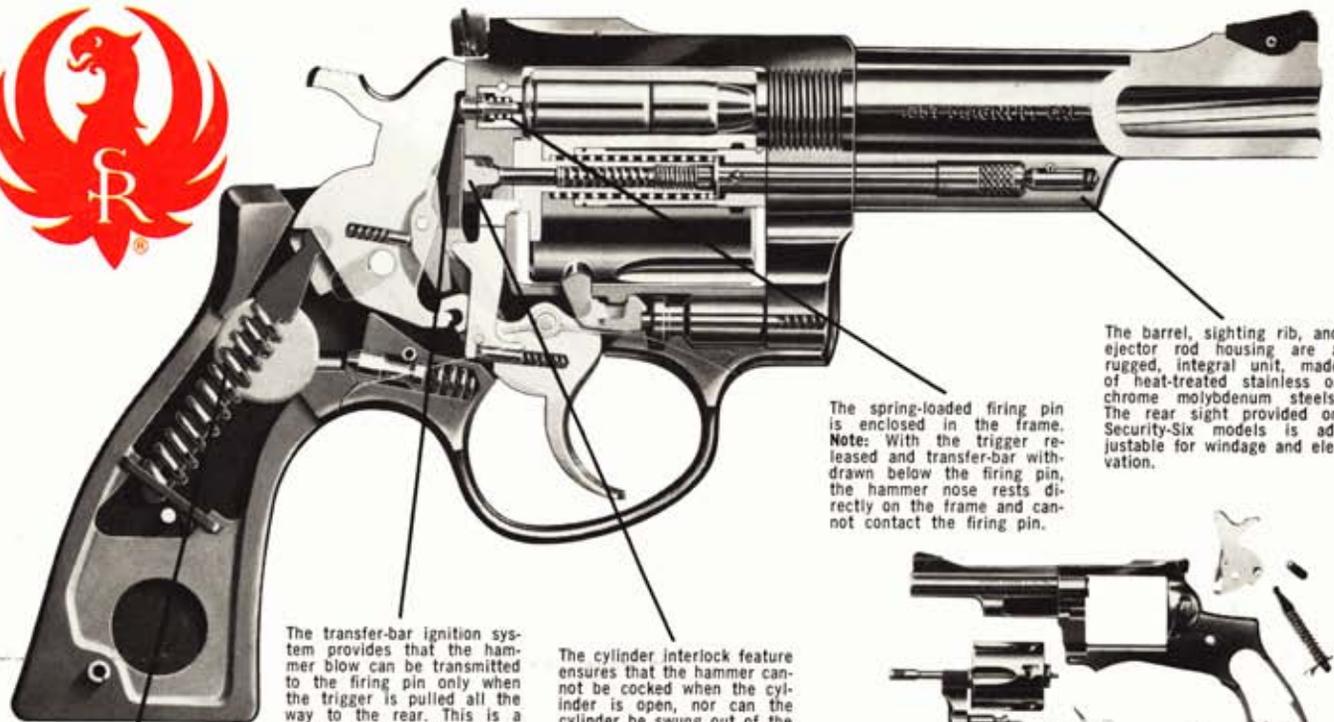
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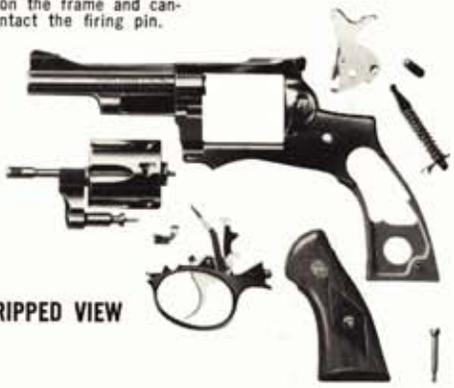
The barrel, sighting rib, and ejector rod housing are a rugged, integral unit, made of heat-treated stainless or chrome molybdenum steels. The rear sight provided on Security-Six models is adjustable for windage and elevation.

The spring-loaded firing pin is enclosed in the frame. Note: With the trigger released and transfer-bar withdrawn below the firing pin, the hammer nose rests directly on the frame and cannot contact the firing pin.

The transfer-bar ignition system provides that the hammer blow can be transmitted to the firing pin only when the trigger is pulled all the way to the rear. This is a positive internal safety feature designed to prevent firing if the revolver is dropped accidentally, or if the hammer spur receives a sharp blow.

The cylinder interlock feature ensures that the hammer cannot be cocked when the cylinder is open, nor can the cylinder be swung out of the frame when the hammer is cocked.

Music wire or stainless steel coil springs are used throughout the Ruger double action revolvers.



FIELD STRIPPED VIEW

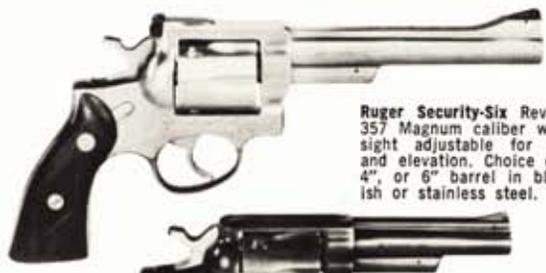
RUGER® Double Action Revolvers

These are the revolvers created by Ruger engineers who started with a fresh sheet of paper and an unlimited budget! There is nothing in the design of these Ruger double action revolvers which is there simply because "it has always been done that way"; nothing which reflects a commitment to outmoded production methods or obsolescent factory facilities. Representing a significant improvement in design, these revolvers incorporate creative Ruger engineering, sophisticated manufacturing techniques, and superior materials.

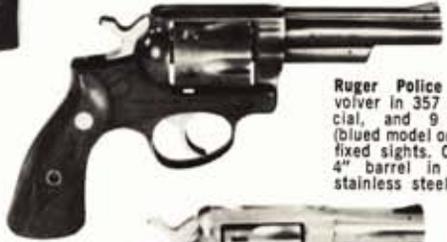
The Ruger design philosophy of strength, simplicity, and ease of maintenance has been applied throughout the design of these revolvers. Composed of a series of integrated subassemblies, the Ruger double action revolver can be field stripped to its basic components in seconds, without the use of tools. The entire lock mechanism is installed through the bottom of the grip frame as a unit, permitting the use of solid frame side-walls which contribute to the great strength of these revolvers. The complex milled-out frames and delicately fitted side-plates of other double action revolvers, and the difficulties of maintenance and weaknesses inherent in older designs are eliminated entirely.

The finest materials are used in Ruger double action revolvers. Music wire or stainless steel coil springs are used throughout and frames, cranes, cylinders, and barrels are of heat-treated stainless or chrome molybdenum steels. Most of the small internal parts of all models of Ruger double action revolvers are made of stainless steel.

In addition to traditional Ruger quality and dependable performance, the shooter enjoys the advantages of the durable stainless steel mechanism parts, even in standard blued models.



Ruger Security-Six Revolver in 357 Magnum caliber with rear sight adjustable for windage and elevation. Choice of 2 3/4", 4", or 6" barrel in blued finish or stainless steel.



Ruger Police Service-Six Revolver in 357 Magnum, 38 Special, and 9 mm parabelum (blued model only) calibers with fixed sights. Choice of 2 3/4" or 4" barrel in blued finish or stainless steel.



Ruger Speed-Six Revolver with compact round butt in 357 Magnum, 38 Special, and 9 mm parabelum (blued model only) calibers with fixed sights. Choice of 2 3/4" or 4" barrel in blued finish or stainless steel.

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