

THE AMERICAN HANDGUNNER

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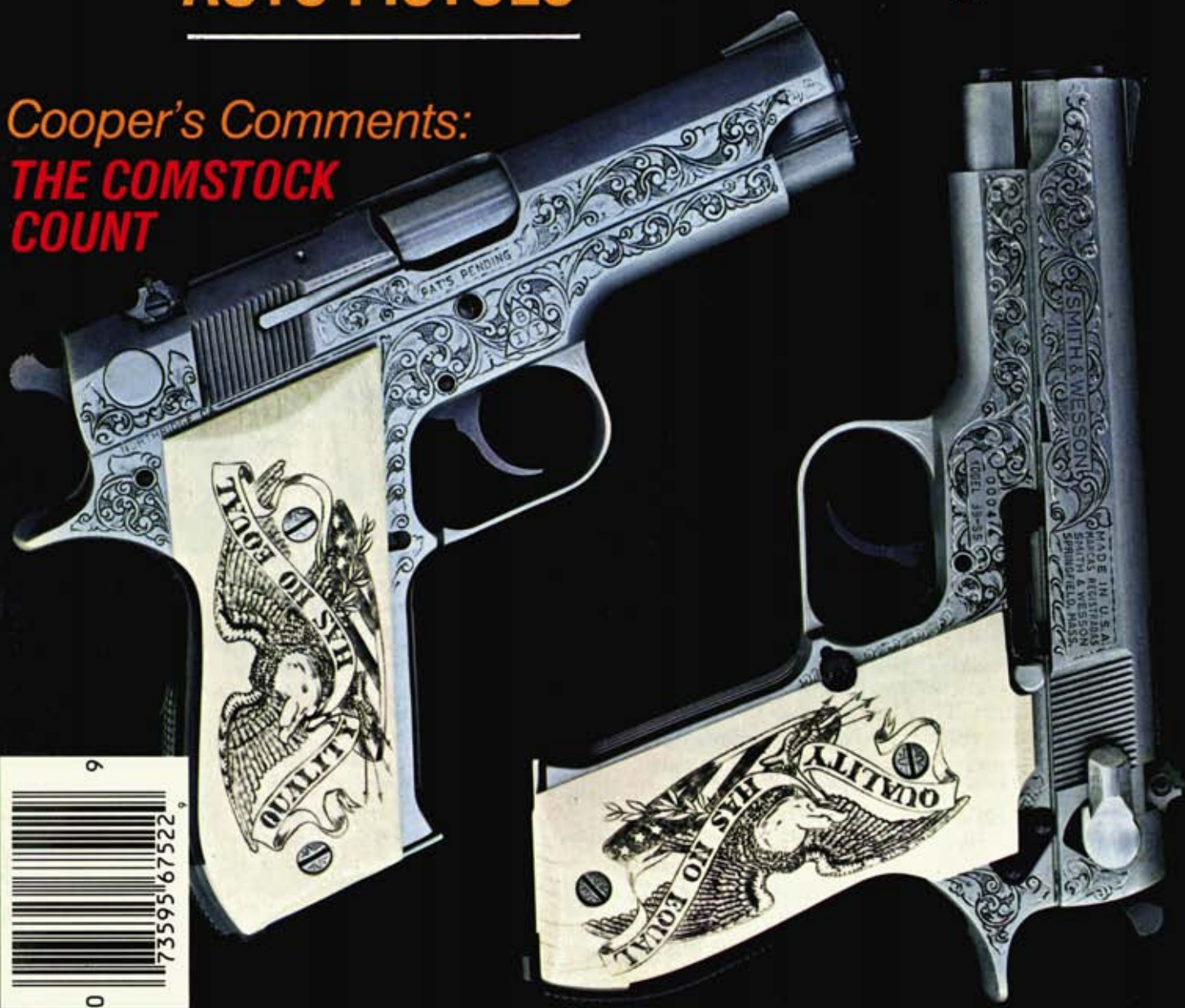
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE OUTSTANDING AMERICAN HANDGUNNER AWARDS FOUNDATION

67522 T&E

SPECIAL: SMITH'S 9mm AUTO PISTOLS

- Evolution of Modern Pistolcraft
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NEWSLETTER

By the time you read this, the NRA Convention will be history, and so will the Annual Outstanding American Handgunner Awards Dinner. At this time, I don't know who this year's winner is, but I am sure that he (or she) is deserving of the award. We'll have full coverage of the Dinner in the next issue.

Since the annual Dinner is about the only time that all of the officers of the OAHA Foundation can get together, I am sure that we'll have some interesting news for our members. There were a lot of projects being talked about during the past year, but it was difficult, if not impossible to get them implemented without a face-to-face meeting. Whatever comes of this meeting will be reported on later.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

If the OAHA is to fulfill its obligations to its members, we must get to know each other. It is important you become acquainted with the officers (though I'm sure most of you are well acquainted with most of them). What is more important is that the officers get to know the membership—perhaps not on a personal basis, but at least on the basis of what you expect from the OAHA.

To accomplish the first of these we will, in coming issues, profile each of the officers of the OAHA; thumbnail sketches, to be sure, but at least some idea of who they are, and what their hopes for the Foundation consist of.

The second part is tougher; getting to know our members. This is something that can be done only with your cooperation and effort. Take a look at your membership, at the organization, and at your particular interests. Then drop us a line telling us exactly what you want the Foundation to be. Criticize if you must; suggest programs and objectives; tell us what you expect from the Foundation that you feel you are not getting; tell us how we can best serve you and all other members with the same interests. Don't wait to think about it; do it now, and don't hold back on any ideas, no matter how far out they seem to be. We'd like feedback from our members on names of people who we should consider for nominees for next year; who they are, and why you feel they should be nominated. We need your ideas on what events we should become involved in. We need members to continue the work of the foundation, but more importantly, we need responsive members who will take the time to become involved. Get your letter off today. We may not be able to reply to every letter but I can assure you that each and every letter will be given careful consideration.

A LOOK AHEAD

Today, more than ever before, there is a need for an organization such as the OAHA Foundation. The handgun shooting sports are growing by leaps and bounds in every known aspect. There are more handgun hunters today than ever before; combat and/or practical pistol shooting is now recognized as a legitimate sport; the fantastic growth of handgun silhouette shooting continues unabated. With all of these sports gaining new recruits every day, there is a need for an organization that recognizes and rewards those who have given of themselves to perpetuate handgunning; on the range, in the field, in literature or in pro-handgun legislation.

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THE AMERICAN HANDGUNNER

JULY/AUGUST, 1978
VOL. 3 NO. 4-12

George E. von Rosen
Publisher

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Cover Photo: A pair of specially engraved S & W 39's.
Photo by Walter Rickell.

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HANDGUN INDUSTRY INSIDER

By MASSAD F. AYOUB

THE big news for '78 in handgunning is going to be ammo rather than firearms, it seems. There has been some evolutionary change in hardware here and there, but little really earth-shattering with the exception of a stainless 9 mm auto. Where change is really evident is in cartridges.

This column has long been calling for Remington to introduce a .380 Auto load in the same jacketed hollowpoint format that has been so successful in their 115-grain weight with the 9 mm Parabellum and in their 185-gr. with the .45 ACP. At long last, our hopes and predictions have been answered. Remington has announced an 88-gr. JHP .380 with a stated muzzle velocity of 990 feet per second and 191 ft-lb muzzle energy.

But mathematical figures tend to be irrelevant when you analyze high performance in this cartridge. Bullet design is everything. What has made Remington's aforementioned 9 mm and .45 hollowpoints the standard for comparison among police is the tapered bullet shape coupled with jacketing that goes over the tip of the hollow cavity. This does two things: it makes the rounds feed as smooth as hardball even in most unaltered guns, and it gives fine expansion in anti-personnel or hunting applications without sacrificing the ability to punch through car doors. Where lead-tipped hollowpoints expand prematurely, the Remington design punches through sheet steel like a cookie cutter and opens up only when it hits the fleshy target.

Whether the .380 will perform as superbly as the 115-gr. 9 mm and the 185-gr. .45 remains to be seen, but informed handgunners consider it a round to watch.

Just a few short years ago, the Plus-P concept of hot .38 Special loads electrified the police community. Startled gunmakers were cautious about endorsing the new loads. Colt, who make amply strong .38 snubbies, chose not to recommend their D-Frame guns for the hot loads; this in turn unnerved some of their good police customers, and the firm quickly turned

around and endorsed the Plus-P for all their .38s, which were "endorsable" to begin with anyway.

Then came the much-discussed "Treasury Load" by Winchester, a 110-gr. JHP .38 Special loaded still closer to .357 Magnum capability. Designated a "Q" load (or special limited-distribution product) by W-W, the Treasury load captured the imagination of police across the country, not to mention performance-oriented civilian gun buffs. Federal recently put a similar load on the special-order market.

Rumbles in the industry are that a new designation may be in the offing. Winchester may call their version the "Plus-P-Plus," and Federal's is likely to be named "Super-Plus-P." We're talking about 24,000 psi pressure compared to 20,000 for the "old" Plus-P round.

In pressure test barrels, that works out to about 1235 foot-seconds for the old Plus-P .38, and 1360 fps for the new one. That compares to roughly 1700 for the .357 Magnum with the same weight bullet and the same test barrel.

Super-Plus-P pressures don't come near what .357 Magnum revolvers are rated for, but they do worry some makers of .38 Specials. Blowups aren't anticipated; rather, their concern is accelerated wear. At the most, you're probably talking about stretched frames that will affect reliability, as opposed to any real danger of injury from a gun mishap, unless you have an old, poor quality, or defective gun.

This is why such loads will be sold only on special order to governmental agencies who understand exactly what they're getting, and can balance increased wear-and-tear on their weapons against the greater stopping power that will be afforded the officer carrying it. The ammo makers themselves are chary about selling it to agencies that issue aluminum frame guns.

The fact that this ultra .38 Special ammo won't be available to the public is little cause for concern. If John Q. Citizen wants to upgrade his firepower, he can simply buy a .357 or .45 and load it

with factory ammo, which will outperform even Plus-P-Plus .38 caliber by a significant margin. But it's a big factor in police sales, because so many departments are restricted, or restrict themselves, to the .38 Special cartridge. Though the ACLU media blitz against Magnums and hollowpoints has pretty much blown over, it has left a lot of police administrators running scared of anything that sounds like Magnum Force.

Speaking of Magnum Force, there's an interesting anecdote that accompanies Federal Cartridge's single handgun ammo entry this year. Their new 180-grain JHP .44 Magnum steps out of a four-inch S&W Model 29 revolver at an impressive 1610 foot seconds, which accelerates to 1800-plus from the 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " version of the same sporting handgun. When Federal exec Mike Bussard reviewed the proofs of the 1978 company catalog, he noted that the cartridge hadn't been listed under rifle rounds (the .44 Mag being popular as a deer carbine in many parts of the country). He contacted his counterpart in the ballistics research section of the company and asked why the new .44 load hadn't been measured for carbine performance. "It was," the ballisticsian told him. "It clocks over 2100 feet per second." "That's incredible!" Bussard exclaimed. "Why didn't you get that figure into the catalog?" The engineer sighed and answered, "Who would have believed it?" Thus, though the round isn't listed as such in the catalog, it is a worthwhile choice to those of you with Ruger and Marlin .44 Magnum carbines.

If you're still waiting for that stainless, high-capacity, double action 9 mm auto from COLT's, you've been holding your breath for ten years now and probably aren't around to read this column anyway. It's still in the engineering department limbo. Nor are you likely to see a stainless steel Smith & Wesson 9 mm anytime soon. But why wait? From an unlikely corner of the industry comes the answer to your desires: muzzleloader mogul Val Forgett of Navy Arms is importing the Mamba pistol from South Africa. "Guns & Ammo" tested a prototype a while back, and production guns were scheduled to hit these shores for the first time about when our deadline hit for this issue. Initial shipments were to be in 9 mm Parabellum 14-shot configuration possibly with ambidextrous safeties, while .45 ACP is slated for late '78 availability. These rustless double action autos, I predict, will have a greater impact on the domestic handgun market than any foreign entry since the Star PD, so long as the import flow doesn't get bottlenecked. Look for a detailed test of one of the first production guns in these pages soon.

No super big news at COLT's, except that yours truly almost wound up on the cover of this month's issue, being trampled by a giant Rampant Colt. The kid

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BALLISTIC SCIENCE FOR THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER by Charles G. Wilber, *Colorado State Univ., Fort Collins.* '77, 324 pp. (6 3/4 x 9 3/4), 86 il., 26 tables, \$23.50

AMERICAN POLICE HANDGUN TRAINING by Charles R. Skillen, *Yellowstone County Sheriff's Dept., Billings, Montana, and Mason Williams, Firearms and Ballistic Consultant, Libby, Montana.* '77, 216 pp., 77 il., \$11.75

COMBAT HANDGUN SHOOTING by James D. Mason, *Consultant, San Diego County Sheriff's Dept., San Diego, California.* Foreword by Bill McMillan. '76, 272 pp. (6 3/4 x 9 3/4), 594 il. (26 in color), 8 tables, \$24.75

THE LAW ENFORCEMENT BOOK OF WEAPONS, AMMUNITION AND TRAINING PROCEDURES: Handguns, Rifles and Shotguns by Mason Williams, *Firearms and Ballistic Consultant, Libby, Montana.* '77, 544 pp. (6 3/4 x 9 3/4), 506 il., 1 table, \$32.50

FIREARMS IDENTIFICATION: The Laboratory Examination of Small Arms, Rifling Characteristics in Hand Guns, and Notes on Automatic Pistols. Volume I (2nd Ptg.) by J. Howard Mathews. Foreword by Julian S. Hatcher. '73, 416 pp. (8 5/8 x 11 1/4), 644 il., \$44.75

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THE SEARCH FOR AN EFFECTIVE POLICE HANDGUN by Allen P. Bristow, *California State Univ., Los Angeles.* '73, 256 pp., 11 il., \$15.75

MANUAL OF BASIC POLICE FIREARMS INSTRUCTIONS AND SAFE HANDLING PRACTICES by Roy Agosta, *Macomb County Community College, Warren, Michigan.* Foreword by Jack Seitzinger. '74, 116 pp. (6 3/4 x 9 3/4), 142 il., \$6.95, paper

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here spelled Firearms Division President Ed Warner's name as "Werner" in the recent HANDGUNNER interview. It turns out that while Warner got some good-natured kidding from other captains of the firearms industry, he also got beaucoup letters from consumers who appreciated the fact that he didn't pull any punches when "HANDGUNNER" asked him tough questions, and who felt that his straightforward answers had renewed their faith in the Colt product. The error was entirely mine, for which I apologize herewith. Fortunately, Warner is not only a very up-front, no-balance administrator, but also a good-natured individual.

What is new at Colt is the renaissance of the Ace pistol, a .22 L.R. on the .45 auto frame. Look for a "HANDGUNNER" test soon. The 6" Diamondback we predicted a few columns back will be introduced this year, in .22 caliber only. It will appear as a commemorative first, as a plain-finish "shootin' iron" later. Nobody has decided yet just what the first long-barrel twenty-two snake will commemorate, but we'd put our money on the anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase.

Finally, the drive to produce a new Colt police service revolver by 1979 has been put into neutral. The company for now will stay with the Mk III series of .38s and .357s.

Smith & Wesson has their 6" Combat

Magnum stainless Model 66 out, just as we promised but somewhat ahead of time; ditto the K-38 version, the Model 68 with shrouded ejector rod. Slated for introduction around July of this year is the Model 63, a stainless-steel .22/32 Kit gun. This long-awaited item will be available only in four-inch barrel, semi-square butt configuration, which is what the trailmen who were clamoring for a stainless version would probably have chosen anyway. Curiously, a stainless K-22 is not being seriously contemplated.

Meanwhile, there have been some executive changes at S&W. Dick McMahon, formerly head of Marketing, is now in charge of International Sales, which account for about a quarter of S&W production. He remains the official company spokesman to the public. Replacing him as V.P. of Marketing is Bob Hass, a non-gun person late of Sony/America, and much praised for his marketing insight and shrewdness. We spoke to him a short time after he took the post, and he made a point of referring all technical questions to the right places. Though some think only gun buffs can do justice to a position like his, this writer talked to Smith insiders, and has a gut feeling that Hass will be good for Smith & Wesson. New blood and new ideas are always a healthy transfusion, especially in an industry noted for super-conservative management and marketing

A New Sierra

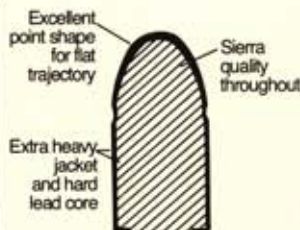
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practices.

We reported on this page a year ago that S&W hoped to boost its production of the coveted (and often black-market-priced) Model 29, .44 Magnum, by 80% to help eliminate the dealer price pirating that has hurt their image so badly among shooters. Final word for fiscal '77: they didn't make the 80% increase, but they came close enough to prove they were seriously trying. The effect is visible in some parts of the country if not all: Model 29 bootleg prices are steadily going down. Smith insists that they'll up 29 output still further in 1978. For this reason, don't look for the Model 25 in .45 Long Colt caliber in a plain-finish, "just for shooters" model as soon as we previously predicted. Our sources at the Springfield plant hadn't reckoned with the fact that Model 29 production really would be accelerated yet again this year, and frankly, demand for a .45 LC still doesn't begin to approach the volume of the market's screams for more .44 Magnums. Still, we're sure that a stock 25 (or whatever they'll call it) in the Long Colt chambering is only a matter of time, now that the tooling is already there after the phenomenal acceptance of the Anniversary Model commemoratives.

"Now It Can Be Told Department:" A year and a half ago, this writer was shown a prototype of S&W Leather's "Pop-up" holster, and sworn to secrecy because the patents had not yet been approved. The rig will be out this year, though, and is worth looking at. It resembles the old MMGR elastic bellyband holster, the best hideout rig ever devised for the snub .38 revolver or .380 auto, but with a difference. It carries the 2" Chief or whatever down the front of the pants, slung off a waist-encircling strap, in perhaps the last area a frisker will grope to find it. A finger-flip from the left hand in the front trouser pocket pushes it up to where you can reach it right-hand crossdraw through the shirtfront. Good for narcs and such. I'm gonna get one, if that tells you anything. Also new from that Smith division will be a new thumb-break series of holsters for both cops and sportsmen: the difference is a new angle on the release latch, which is between the gun and the holster body instead of in toward the edge of the holster as usual. We'll test that one before we comment.

Scuttlebutt this year hints at a significant change in new-gun-product announcements. Formerly, the National Sporting Goods Association show in February was the place to unveil new firearms goodies. It still is, but more makers than ever are holding their surprises for the NRA show in Salt Lake City. We'll be there with bells on . . . if we can't squeak out any "proprietary information" ahead of time for you.



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COOPER'S COLUMN

THE COMSTOCK COUNT

For those of us who take marksmanship as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself, slow-fire exercises are hardly serious. Deliberate shooting, without time pressure, is challenging and, at the higher competitive levels, fearfully difficult—but it is not pertinent. Almost never, if you are shooting at anything other than an artificial mark, do you have time. You must hit *now*, not later, and sooner is better.

This is not news. Timed and rapid fire exercises have been a standard part of conventional target shooting since its inception. However, as conventionally practiced, they still do not suffice as true measures of weaponcraft, because the time limits they impose are arbitrarily fixed, tending to mold the shooter to the test rather than actually to determine how good he is, or might become.

For one example, among the many fine riflemen I have had the honor to command, I remember one in particular. He was not the very best target shot in the outfit, but he was certainly among the best. However, *on any timed course he always finished his string first*. I know some competitors who would say that he was at error in not using all the time allowed—"If you've got it, use it!" Maybe. But of all the men on the line he was the most effective rifleman. This did not show on his scorecard, but he knew it, and I knew it. Sooner is better.

For another, consider the venerable P.P.C. Back in the Dark Ages when this course of fire was conceived, the highest point value of a shot was given to any hit in the "K" zone. Given the very large specified time limits, good shots soon learned to "go clean," producing an increasing number of tied perfect scores. The departmental solution to this was the now-standard Prehle target, which superimposed a number of graduated oblong rings upon the K-zone. This was the wrong solution, for in the sort of situation which the P.P.C. was supposed to simulate, an 8 or a 9 was every bit as useful as a 10, perhaps more so. Certainly a quick

8 would do the hypothetical job far better than a slow 10. The correct answer might have been to retain the ample K-zone but to cut the time limits in half. Fixed time limits, of any duration, are not ideal, but shortening them would at least have been a step in the right direction. Sooner is better.

Well then, if we don't like fixed time limits, how do we work with "un-fixed" time limits?

There are several ways. We can add a point to the score (or two points, or ten) for every second fired under an arbitrary limit. We can deduct points for overtime, or we can do both. These are good ideas but they always depend upon somebody's notion of what "normal" time should be, and who is to say that?

Let us assume that any really good shot will always shoot just as quickly as he can be reasonably sure of hitting. What is reasonable will vary with the situation, but even if he must be *absolutely certain* of a hit, he will still shoot at the instant he feels certain—not later. Therefore a proper test will reward the man who hits first, though certainly not the man who shoots first and misses. Ideally we should not tell a man how long he has to complete his string, only that he should go for hits as fast as he can. Sooner is better. The question is simply how to devise the appropriate scoring system.

About ten years back Walt Comstock, of Hangtown, California (sometimes referred to as "Placerville" by the trepid), put his mind to this and came up with an answer. (It is possible that Professor Alois Rumpelmaier, of Oberpfaffenhofen, reached this same solution some thirteen months earlier. There are people who like to argue about things like that. But Walt was the first as far as I know.) He simply divided score by time. One hundred points scored in ten seconds counted ten. One hundred points scored in twice the time (twenty seconds) counted half as much (five). Take as long as you need, but—yes—sooner is better.

But a Bad Thing intruded here, and we

had to compensate for it. This was called "machine-gunning," and it meant simply flooding the target with sloppily controlled fire. Usually it did not work, but it could, and this had to be avoided. So we did this—we penalized *double* for a complete miss. On the standard I.P.S.C. target, for example, a major caliber usually scores 5, 4, 2. Usually two shots per target are indicated. Two center hits will thus get you ten points. But if you throw two hysterical quickies at that paper you'd better be lucky, for you may well wind up with minus twenty. (Maximum value of one shot is five. Double for a complete miss is minus ten. Minus ten twice is minus twenty.) If you get a center hit, and a miss, you come up with minus five. Sooner is still better, *but only if you hit.*

So the Comstock Count is now accepted as "total numerical score, minus double the maximum possible value of a hit for each miss, divided by time."

$$C = \frac{S-2m}{t}$$

There are drawbacks. They by no means invalidate the system but they must be anticipated.

(1) The Comstock Count requires that each shooter be timed individually for each string. If you've got a line of twenty shooters you need twenty stopwatches, plus people who use them uniformly.

(2) The Comstock Count calls urgently for hand calculators. You may know of a lot of local friendly scorekeepers who can handle a bushel basket full of long division easily, quickly, and accurately, but I don't. On the other hand, pocket calculators are pretty common now.

(3) Comstock scores, in the raw state, cannot be integrated with other types of scores. If you have three stages in a match for instance, you should come up with scores that equalize, or very nearly equalize, the shooters' performance on all three. If a man logs 455 x 500 on Stage One, 87 x 100 on Stage Two, and C 12.75 on Stage Three, you can either (a) rank him on each by placement (10 for first, 7 for second, 5 for third, etcetera) or you can (b) convert all three scores to a uniform base—say 100 points.

To do this with a Comstock score you need to establish a "par" time, which is necessarily arbitrary but need not be abandoned for that. Take "El Presidente"—universally practiced. You fire twelve shots, maximum value five points each. Experience has established par at ten seconds. If you plant all twelve in the x-ring you score (5 x 12) sixty points. If you hit par on the nose, at ten seconds, you get a raw score of six (6). To convert a par performance to a 100 base, therefore, you simply multiply the raw score (6) by a figure that will get 100 points. Thus 16 2/3 becomes the conversion factor by which

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all raw scores are multiplied in this case. Whatever your raw score (i.e. 8 x 5, 3 x 4, 1 x 2, total 54 points, divided by, let us stipulate, a respectable time of 8.8 seconds, to get you a figure of 6.13636+) you multiply it by 16 2/3. In the example given this would produce 102 1/3 points—just a hair better than par. If you placed less than four hits on any of the three targets you would lose 10 points each, before applying the conversion factor, which would bring you well down below 100, as is proper.

(4) Last and most important, the Comstock Count is not properly applicable to long strings involving more movement than shooting. It works fine on "El Presidente," on a short assault course, or on the PPC(!) But when firing points are spaced too far apart it tends to reward running more than shooting. Running, crawling, hurdling and such are all part of practical shooting, but they are intended to stress the contestant rather than to test him. Where shooters are required to run long distances, surmount high obstacles, crawl long tunnels, or jump a series of wide ditches, the contest becomes more of a track meet than a shooting match. This is not to decry track meets, but only to maintain a perspective. Applied to the wrong course of fire, the Comstock Count can equate ten points with one second, and that is not as it should be. This only emphasizes the importance of experience in those who design practical courses of fire.

When we first announced Walt's system it was enthusiastically adopted all over the world. (There is a "Comstock Club" in South Africa.) If we were still awarding the order of Combat Master it could serve well as Walt's "Masterpiece." Due probably to lack of detailed instructions about the double penalty and the correct establishment of conversion

factors, it ran into a bit of trouble here and there. In some areas that double penalty produced a number of "total minus" scores, which upset people. It is somewhat discouraging to enter a contest with high hopes and find that your total score at the day's end is "minus 73." But this only serves to point out—again—that practical shooting contests are not really a good place for duffers.

We are always a bit surprised at the notion that *anybody* is qualified to enter any shooting match. We don't see that in other sports. No one seems to feel that just anybody can enter a rodeo, or a chess tournament, or varsity football, or Indianapolis, and be competitive just because he is warm. All these things take a bit of doing, and without a sound background in the activity the aspirant may well make a complete fool of himself, or worse. Still we find shooters who seem to think that they can take on any sort of challenge without any sort of introduction, training, or practice. We may admire their *chutzpah*, but we need not commiserate much if they wind up with a negative tally. The double penalty is necessary, as has been proven by trial and error. I fear that personal embarrassment is just one of the facts of life and should be accepted as such.

The Comstock Count is not the only way to equate speed with accuracy, but it is a great forward step, if employed intelligently. Naturally it does not work in steel or clay pigeon matches, which are preferably scored by time only (low to win). Nor should it be used with slow-fire targets with meaningless small rings. And, as aforesaid, it is not at its best in track meets. Nevertheless it is bound to be more and more frequently encountered in major competition, and it should be well understood by both organizers and contestants.

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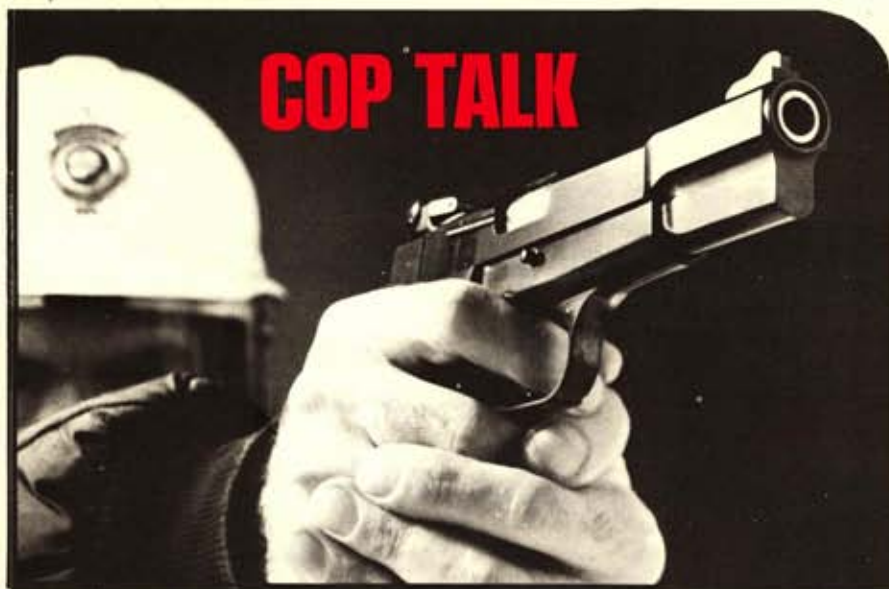
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A DISSENTING VIEW ON MAGAZINE SAFETIES

By MASSAD F. AYOUB

Police departments that issue the Smith & Wesson model 39 or 59 9 mm semiautomatic often cite the magazine disconnecter safety as one reason for their choice of pistol. Gun experts invariably denounce this feature as compromising one of the theoretically great advantages of the police auto over the revolver: if there is a round in the chamber, and you're jumped while changing clips in the heat of a gunfight, you've got a shot ready to fire.

It is safe to say that virtually every gun writer would be in agreement on the tactical undesirability of magazine disconnecter safeties. (To new readers, the function of such a device is to make it impossible for the auto pistol to fire, even if there is a live round in the chamber, once the magazine has been removed. The concept came about decades ago, when the gunmakers realized that a lot of accidental shootings with automatics occurred with novices who thought the gun was safe once they removed the magazine.)

Indeed, for years I felt that way. When I explained to police students or brother officers why I carried a Colt .45 auto on the job, the ability to fire the chambered round while reloading was a point I always brought up. In fact, I wrote in one article on the Smith 9 mm that the officer carrying one should remove the disconnecter and have it fashioned into a tie clip, so it would at least perform some kind of a useful function.

There are many apparently solid arguments against the magazine disconnecters found in guns like the Smith 9's or the Browning Hi-Power auto. If you lose your clip, and only have loose rounds to feed it one at a time, you won't be able to continue firing. And of course, you lose

the ability to shoot if you get pounced on during the reloading process. There is another very real danger with this type of safety; some police departments that have adopted the Smith auto teach their men to remove the magazine and check it in at the booking desk, keeping the now-deactivated gun in the holster, whereas with a sixgun, they'd simply check the whole weapon before they went down into the jail area.

This latter practice is extremely shortsighted and dangerous for several reasons. First, few or none of these departments make the officer check his spare clips too, and checking two or three magazines is more tedious than handing the clerk a single firearm. Second, they assume that none of the officers have read the gun magazines, and removed the magazine disconnecter safety from the pistol.

Let's assume that such an officer checks his magazine at the desk, and escorts the prisoner into the cell area with his model 39 or 59 still in the holster. There is a scuffle. As armed brother officers rush toward the noise, the prisoner emerges, holding the downed officer's auto pistol. The cops have seen the magazine being checked in at the booking desk and assume that the gun can't be fired. Instead of taking cover from the gun pointed at them, they go for their own handguns, or approach confidently to take the supposedly useless gun from the suspect, barehanded.

BANG. Or maybe, BANG BANG BANG.

The suspect may have reloaded with a magazine torn from the officer's belt, or perhaps there will be only one BANG, the single round in the chamber that was turned loose because the officer carrying

that particular gun had modified it the way we gun writers had told him. One "bang" is one too many.

As to the other advantages of autos that don't have magazine safeties, I can only say that I have yet to find a case on record where being able to fire the single round in the chamber while he was reloading would have saved a policeman's life. Oh, the auto pistol buffs cite the four California Highway Patrolmen gunned down en masse in 1970 while trying to reload their revolvers from drop pouches. That argument doesn't translate, though; these men had emptied their guns without hitting anything and it is safe to assume that had they been carrying automatics, they would have emptied those too, and not saved the round in the chamber.

As far as feeding cartridges one at a time, any police officer with an auto-loading service pistol would be carrying his spare ammo in magazines anyway. Should he by some chance have only one clip in the gun and a pocketful of loose rounds, he could simply leave the empty magazine in place (thus bypassing the magazine disconnecter safety) and drop the shells into the chamber one at a time, then hit the slide release and fire at will, round by round.

But I reiterate: I've never heard of any such incident. What I *do* have on record is at least five officers saved by the design of their S&W 9 mm autos, and two of these "saves" were directly attributable to the magazine disconnecter safety.

The first occurred a few years ago in Salt Lake City, one of the first large metropolitan police agencies to adopt an automatic pistol. A lone officer in the Canyon district was jumped by a couple of thugs, who beat him senseless and snatched his model 39 from its holster. Through a semiconscious haze, that luckless policeman watched in horror as his assailants tried to kill him with his own gun.

The thug who had taken the pistol aimed it at his chest and pulled the trigger. If it had been a revolver, (like the model 64 S&W .38's Salt Lake City is now turning to) he would have died in that instant, but it was a Smith auto with the thumb safety engaged, and the trigger just shuddered harmlessly back and forth.

The would-be cop-killer knew there was a safety to disengage somewhere. He reached awkwardly for the biggest "switch" on the gun. It was the slide release. He pressed it, nothing happened, and he again tried fruitlessly to pull the trigger.

"If at first you don't succeed . . ." the felon reached for the second most conspicuous protrusion on the sleek automatic; it was a button behind the trigger on the left. He pressed it. The magazine fell out and bounced off his foot. Furiously, the punk groped for the third and last lever on the model 39, the flat and inconspicuous safety switch, and flipped

it into the "fire" position. Triumphantly, he aimed it at the helpless officer and pulled the trigger again.

Nothing happened. Even though the gun was now in the "fire" mode with a live round in the chamber, the magazine disconnect safety prevented it from going off.

Thoroughly frustrated, the would-be cop-killer screamed an obscenity and threw the gun down, bouncing it off the officer's prostrate form. He and his companion fled, leaving a battered but alive policeman.

The second incident on file involved an Illinois State Policeman; that department was the first big agency to go to the auto, and remains the largest. The trooper had pulled over a panel truck that was on his wanted sheet, and cautiously approached the driver's door with his model 39 in his hand, the safety off and ready to fire. As he pulled the driver out, a second criminal slipped stealthily from the back of the truck, and jumped the trooper from behind.

The embattled officer was quickly overpowered. A couple of hands were already locked on the gun, and he could feel it being pulled out of his fist. Remembering the lessons taught at the academy, he pressed the magazine release button as the gun was wrenched loose from his hand.

The officer was thrown to the ground, and the first suspect aimed the model 39 at him and pulled the trigger several times. Nothing happened. He pistol-whipped the trooper unconscious with his own gun and he and his partner fled.

Other troopers caught up with them shortly thereafter. They still hadn't figured out that the reason the gun wouldn't work was that the trooper's button-push had dropped the magazine a fraction of an inch, activating the magazine disconnect safety even though the thumb safety was already "off." They left the perplexing Smith & Wesson automatic behind in their truck.

That makes two live police officers, thanks to magazine disconnect safeties. If you doubt these reports, talk to Homer Clark, head of Illinois State Police Ordnance in Springfield, or Lt. Col. Bryant at Salt Lake City Police Headquarters. I don't give you "sea stories" or theories; these are documented police combat situations. Incidentally, the Illinois State Police have three other documented situations where a suspect got the 9 mm S&W away from a trooper but couldn't figure out how to get the safety "off."

If there's an actual incident where a police officer lived because he had an auto pistol without a disconnect safety, and would have died if his gun had been equipped with one, I, and the policemen who read the law enforcement technical journals I write for, would very much like to hear about it. Let me have the details, in care of this magazine.

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In the meantime, I have to reverse my previous position. The magazine disconnector safety is obviously good for something besides an unusual tie tack. The present score as far as I can determine is Disconnector Safeties 2, Non-Disconnector-Safeties 0; and theory or no theory, I've got to go with what is happening on the street.

I've gone so far as to include it in the curriculum of my Weapons and Chemical Agents class at the state college where I'm on the police science staff as an associate professor. Several of my students, all in-service full time police officers, carry automatics; I teach them that when they're caught up in what I call the Onion Field Syndrome, and a street punk has them at gunpoint and demands their weapon and they decide to comply, they should wrap their fingers around the butt, conspicuously avoiding the trigger, and surreptitiously slip the tip of the little finger under the magazine.

They can now easily hit the magazine release button. The little finger catches the magazine before it ejects, and makes sure that it stays in the gun. If it came all the way out, the obvious attempt to unload the piece might enrage and provoke the would-be cop killer holding the officer at gunpoint. This way, the clip comes down just far enough to stay in the gun, and activate the Disconnector Safety.

If the pistol is an unaltered Smith or Browning HP, it won't go off at all. If it's a Colt, the suspect is only going to get one round off, which can still make some difference. Interestingly, there is a good chance that a punk who is going to kill the cop after disarming him will use the cop's own gun, partly as a gesture of contempt and partly to keep his own weapon "clean" evidence-wise.

In a situation like that, the magazine disconnector safety makes a whole lot of sense. And we can't forget the novices this device was created for in the first place. In my state recently, a young man accidentally killed himself while plinking with his newly purchased .45 auto. He wasn't into guns. Some friends of his,

equally unfamiliar with weapons, came up to him while he was shooting. They told him the gun made them nervous, and asked him to empty it. He obligingly pulled out the magazine.

"Are you sure it's empty?" someone asked.

"Sure I'm sure," he answered with the tragic confidence of the uninformed, and to demonstrate, he put the gun to his head and pulled the trigger.

After the police and the medical examiners removed the body and scraped up the last particles of brain matter, they learned that the individual had just bought the gun and had not attempted to get any instruction with it. He apparently thought that pulling the slide back just cocked the hammer, and that the pull of the trigger somehow brought the round up under the firing pin from the magazine. He wouldn't have accidentally blown his brains out with a stock model 39, no matter how careless he was with it, after taking the clip out. But the 1911 .45 auto is a safe weapon only with a trained and conscientious person, which is why the Army doesn't permit soldiers to carry one with a round in the chamber.

Since the average policeman may not have had proper training with his sidearm, the magazine disconnector safety as on the Smith & Wesson 9 mm's makes a lot of sense. It also has its purpose with the expert officer who may be overpowered and have his gun taken away.

I've reversed my position until I see some different evidence. In fact, I wish I could put a magazine disconnector safety into the Colt .45 auto I carry on duty.

For years, I agreed with the rest of the gun writers on this, and the theoretical arguments still hold true. I'm not challenging anyone personally, but there are a couple of field officers out there — one in Utah, one in Illinois, and maybe others who have testimony that beats hell out of all our collective technical expertise.

They're alive, because they carried Smith & Wesson police automatics that had magazine disconnector safeties, and they'd be dead otherwise.

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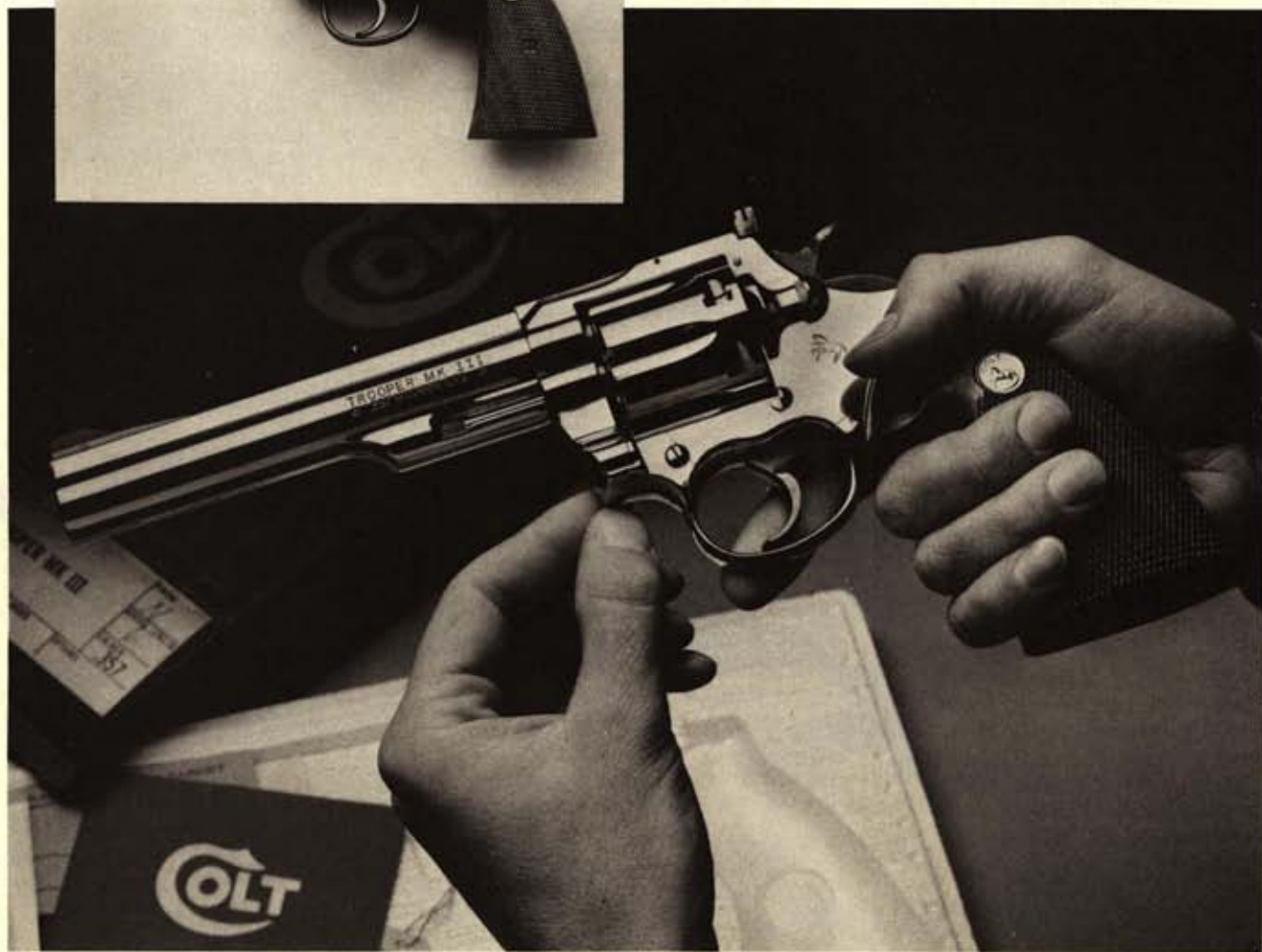
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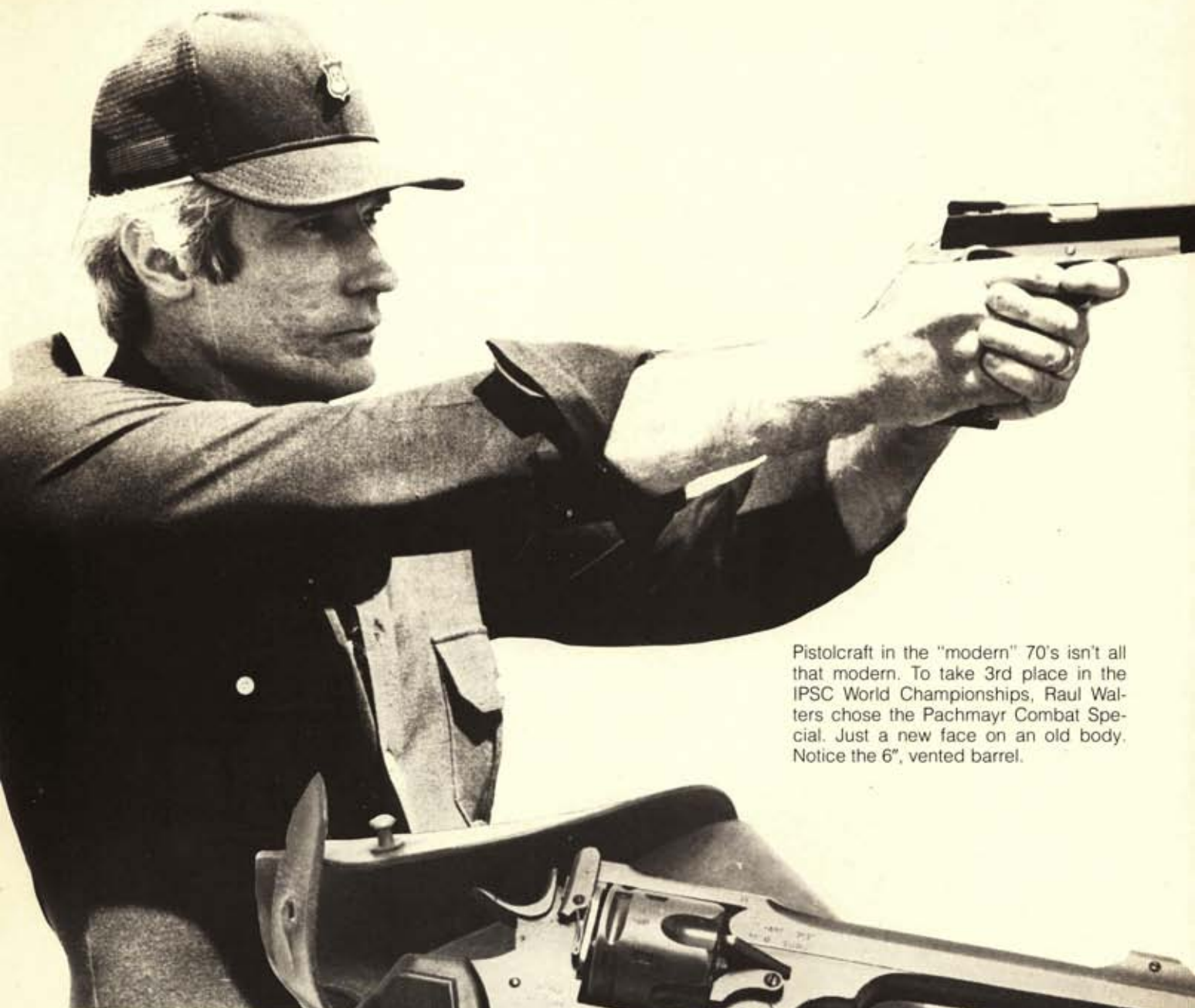
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Pistolcraft in the "modern" 70's isn't all that modern. To take 3rd place in the IPSC World Championships, Raul Walters chose the Pachmayr Combat Special. Just a new face on an old body. Notice the 6", vented barrel.



The rugged old .455 Webley was the British contribution that goes way back to the mid-19th century. U.S. Auto interest was slow.

The Evolution of Modern Pistolcraft

By RICK MILLER

FOR many long centuries the handgun was primarily the weapon of the mounted soldier. Horsemen needed a firearm that could be manipulated and fired with one hand, and the pistol filled this need admirably. It didn't take long for the brighter individuals of the period to see another possible use for the pistol. Since in its smaller versions it was short, handy, and light, the handgun could be worn upon the person against a time of need, whether that individual was looking for a fight or not. The handgun came into this defensive role early on, and has been clearly recognized in that light down to the present time.

One major problem down through the years has been the overwhelming tradition of the horseman's one handed use of the weapon. This has been so deeply and romantically ingrained into the fabric of pistolcraft that until just recently it was considered somehow unmanly to do it any other way!

During the 19th century, technical advances in small arms were nothing short of incredible. With the development of the percussion cap and the introduction of Colt's first successful revolving pistol in 1836, through the development of the trigger cocking action, metallic cartridges, smokeless powder, and up to the 1890's and the first practical selfloading pistols, a remarkable amount of research and development took place. The introduction of the "Broomhandle" Mauser in 1896 put the shooting world on the threshold of the modern age of the defensive sidearm.

The truly amazing thing about this seventy-odd year period of feverish activity is that it did not engender a comparable advance in the art of pistolcraft. To be sure, certain innovations were tried, accepted, and improved upon by thinking shooters of the period. The first holsters suitable for wear upon the person were introduced, and as time went by these were slowly improved upon. Reserve capacity of the early repeating pistols did more to change the theory of defensive pistolcraft than anything else. If the

shooter had not solved his problems with his first shot, he was now capable of trying again four or five more times. This by itself was enough to shatter and realign the concepts of defensive weaponcraft.

Beyond the possible use of a holster and his reserve firepower, our 19th century pistolero used his improved equipment pretty much as his forefathers had used their single shot muzzle loaders. That is to say, they shot one handed, whether mounted or afoot, from eye level, with limp wrist, not very quickly, and with only a sketchy sort of accuracy for the most part.

The above description of the old time gunman's technique might not square with that put out by Hollywood, but it is fairly close to reality. This holds true whether he was a peace officer in New Mexico Territory, or a British officer in colonial India.

Through the early years of the 20th century this situation gradually began to improve, but the process was a slow and painful one. With the spread of such sporting journals as "Arms and the Man" and "Shooting and Fishing Magazine" around the turn of the century, plus a smattering of books on the subject, information and ideas began to circulate a bit more freely. This was all to the good, but progress still tended to be isolated and of a haphazard nature.

As an example of this laggardly and spasmodic development, let's take a look at the acceptance of double action revolvers. The first workable DA revolvers made their appearance only a few short years after Colt had introduced his single action Paterson pistols in 1836. By the late 1850's the concept of a trigger cocking mechanism in combat revolvers had gained wide acceptance in Europe. The shooting fraternity of England, in particular, seems to have embraced the idea wholeheartedly. Such arms makers as Deane, Adams, Beaumont, Tranter, and Webley all marketed sturdy and serviceable double action revolvers in the mid to late 19th century.

In the United States, on the other

hand, birthplace of the practical revolver, the DA concept found little favor or understanding. The single action revolver was firmly entrenched, and the pistolero of the day were not about to give it up. When DA wheelguns began to come on the scene they were shot single action! Only a few people perceived the superiority of the self-cocking mechanism. This amazing situation continued right up to and through the 1950's. Police officers and military personnel, in most organizations, were supplied with good double action revolvers, and then were promptly taught to shoot them single action only!

Ed McGivern did work with various police departments during the 1930's, providing expert instruction in fast double action revolver shooting. His training program, which stressed close, quick DA work on single and multiple targets, drawing from the leather, and shooting from various positions, was quite advanced for its day.

Under McGivern's direction, the FBI developed what was called the Practical Pistol Course. This was the first serious attempt to provide realistic practice and training for law enforcement officers.

Today, forty-odd years later, the PPC is still considered by most police organizations to be the standard medium for training and competition. This course, designed specifically for revolvers (autos are not allowed) is the basic reason why the old wheelgun is still regarded so highly in police circles today.

Such well known handgunners as Ed McGivern, Elmer Keith, and J. H. Fitzgerald, among others, preached the DA concept of weaponcraft through the 1920's and 1930's, and while they made some converts, very little widespread influence of a lasting nature resulted. American shooters, whether police, military, or civilian, by and large, just continued to ignore the DA capabilities of their favorite weapons.

In contrast, the British embraced the double action combat revolver from the mid-1850's. The mainstay of the British military, the .455 Webley revolver, in its



Above: Combat Master Leonard Knight firing in the first IPSC U.S. National Practical Pistol Championships, June, 1977. When the smoke had cleared, Leonard had taken second. Center: Here's Bill North running the wild Surprise Assault Course. Notice his thumb on safety and his trigger finger outside of the trigger guard. Pistolcraft can be exciting. Right: Jeff Cooper, IPSC President, busting turning targets at a fast, 2 seconds each.

various Marks, gave excellent service through innumerable campaigns all over the world. Right up through 1957, when the British finally switched to the Browning P-35 self-loading pistol, they were not about to give up their DA service revolvers.

In similar fashion, it took the self-loading pistol quite a while to catch on in this country. One cannot help but be amazed at the endless condemnation of the autoloading pistol, both aloud and in print, from 1900 right up to the present time. The situation is now improving, but a large segment of the American shooting fraternity still views any self-loading pistol with dark suspicion.

In the early days of the autoloader, say from 1892 till 1900, this criticism is understandable. The early autopistols and their ammunition left a lot to be desired in the way of reliability. But from 1900 on, a continuing list of excellent weapons and improved smokeless ammunition rendered the ridicule of the revolver man pointless and outdated.

In 1920 Captain Hugh B. C. Pollard, an Englishman, in his excellent little book titled "Automatic Pistols," made a very

good case for the superiority of the autoloading pistol over the revolver as a combat arm. From a practical viewpoint, Pollard heavily stressed the idea that "quick work with a swift pistol" should be the accepted goal. Again, he makes the point several times, that the essential nature of all pistols is that of "weapons for quick use at close quarters."

Captain H. W. McBride said much the same thing in 1935 in his entertaining book "A Rifleman Went to War." In the chapter "The Pistol in War," he outlined some advanced ideas on how the handgun should be handled in a combat situation.

McBride emphasized the handiness of the pistol as a defensive tool, and its usefulness in close-in, hand-to-hand fighting. The quick reloading capabilities of the autopistol were pointed out, as were the excellent qualities of the Colt 1911 .45 Auto. McBride also suggests that the proper way to recharge an autoloading pistol in combat is to keep a live round chambered while making the magazine switch! That last point was very innovative for 1935, and is quite familiar to all freestyle practical shooters of today.

Texts dealing with practical shooting, or at least partially dealing with it, seem to have been quite popular during the 1930's. Ed McGivern's book, "Fast and Fancy Revolver Shooting," was published in this period, as was J. H. Fitzgerald's book "Shooting." Both of these works dealt quite extensively with the subject of double action revolver shooting as it related to the defensive use of the weapon.

Interest in practical handgun shooting seems to have gained momentum during

the 1930's, reaching its peak during the years of World War II, and fading again in the late 40's. The next burst of progress didn't occur until the early 1960's, but that's getting ahead of the story.

In 1942, the first classic text of the modern era on practical pistol shooting appeared on the scene. It was authored jointly by Captain William E. Fairbairn and Captain Eric A. Sykes, both formerly of the Shanghai Municipal Police, and was titled "Shooting to Live." This little gem of a book, only 96 pages from front to back, first set forth many of the principles we now think of as "modern" in origin.

Among other things, Fairbairn and Sykes advocated use of the Colt 1911 self-loader in .45 ACP for general police and military service. They also taught two hand eye level shooting, firing two-shot bursts at all man targets, and emphasized the importance of stressing close range speed shooting on surprise targets. Many of these concepts were so far ahead of their time that they have only been generally accepted comparatively recently.

Both Fairbairn and Sykes were eminently qualified to write such a book on pistolcraft. During a 12½ year period when their training techniques were in use, the Shanghai Police engaged in 666 armed encounters with criminals. That's 4.4 shootings per month, with a net result of 260 killed and 193 wounded crooks. At the same time, there were 42 killed and 100 wounded officers, quite a favorable ratio.

One very innovative idea that has been revived today is the indoor surprise reaction range devised by Fairbairn and



Sykes back in the 1930's. This provided very realistic conditions, with dim lighting, bobbing silhouettes, moving targets, and friend or foe situations, plus a healthy measure of mental stress.

During World War II, Rex Applegate set up a very elaborate indoor reaction range, very appropriately called "The House of Horrors," for training U.S. Army personnel. This included blood chilling sound effects and dramatic life-like kill or be killed scenarios.

Jeff Cooper has constructed a modern version at his Gunsite Ranch which he calls "The Fun House." His layout allows firing with full power loads, a 360 degree field of fire, and quickly changeable set ups for variety. The training provided on this type of range is invaluable for the police officer or military man.

Following close on the heels of "Shooting to Live" came another advanced text by then Captain Rex Applegate. His book "Kill or Get Killed," was published in 1943, and included information on unarmed combat, knife fighting, and close combat use of shoulder weapons, as well as much thought-provoking information on practical pistol shooting. Applegate studied under Fairbairn early in World War II, and many of his concepts can be traced back to the methods used by Fairbairn and Sykes in their training programs.

This is approximately where matters stood for the next fifteen years. The late 40's rolled by and then the early 50's. By this time the fast draw game, inspired by the many TV westerns then in vogue, was sweeping the country. This activity, complete with SA revolvers, blanks, wax

bullets, boots, and ten gallon hats did not produce any worthwhile innovations of a practical nature, but it got a man into the act who did.

Jeff Cooper, a retired Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel with combat experience in the South Pacific during World War II, and the Korean War, enters the picture around 1955. At about this time Cooper helped promote a number of quick draw contests near Big Bear Lake, California, with an important difference. In these man against man matches, all weapon types, SA, DA, and auto, were allowed to compete equally, not just single action revolvers. Additionally, full power service ammo was required, not blanks or wax bullets. These shoots were very simple affairs, usually at seven yards, and the targets were inflated toy balloons. All a competitor had to do was draw and burst his balloon ahead of his opponent. The man shooting down all comers walked away with the prize money.

This was a stimulating game, but very limited in scope. It wasn't long before the more adventuresome participants were bored with the routine and looking for something new. With that in mind, Jeff Cooper set out to oblige them.

Soon Cooper was putting together contests of a type and nature that had never been dreamed of before. Some contests were man against man, while others might be scored or timed, but all of them were designed to simulate the realities of close range combat with the handgun. Another important and unheard of innovation was an almost total lack of restrictions on the contestant. As long as he

used a serviceable weapon of adequate power, and approached the problem in a safe manner, he could solve that problem in any fashion he deemed best. Diversity was the name of the game, and the shooter with a good imagination was free to try something new in the name of greater efficiency.

Needless to say, this sort of program generated quite a bit of enthusiasm and interest. Before long clubs sprang into being in different areas of Southern California, all more or less participating in the new sport of freestyle practical pistol shooting. The ideas and concepts of the new sport were still quite sketchy and not widely understood, even though interest was still growing. So, in 1961 Jeff helped found the Southwest Combat Pistol League, later modified to the Southwest Pistol League, to give order and direction to the program.

As things progressed, and a little time went by, the virtues of freestyle combat shooting became apparent. With no set routine to slavishly drill for, each individual slowly became a more rounded and versatile performer, since each match called for a slightly different approach. In like fashion, equipment could not be over specialized, it had to be adaptable enough to meet a variety of situations.

Since few restrictions were placed upon the performer, the more innovative shooters began to experiment with improved equipment and techniques. The classic example in this area, as everyone now knows, is the Weaver Stance. In the mid-1950's everyone shot one handed for almost all pistol problems, this included deliberate fire and speed situations. The

rationale was that the expert didn't need two hands at a distance, and two hand eye level shooting was too slow up close. Prescribed doctrine called for a one hand eye level stance (offhand) for long shots, and unsighted point shooting (between belt and shoulder level) for all close speed situations.

Jack Weaver upset the appletart when he started using the two hand eye level stance for all shooting problems. It took Jack awhile to convince the disbelievers, but convince them he did. One hand shooting simply could not measure up when compared with the newer technique. Whether for deliberate fire or quick speed problems, the Weaver Stance proved superior to all others. This could only have been proven in open unrestricted competition, and only under these uninhibited conditions could such an idea be conceived and tried in the first place.

The Weaver Stance is only one example of how freestyle practical pistol shooting has helped inspire, develop and test new concepts. Forward rake speed holsters, the roll over prone position, the flash sight picture, ambidextrous speed safeties, the superiority of the autoloading pistol, fast grab magazine pouches for autos, and speed loaders for wheelguns are only a few that come to mind; the list is almost endless.

As an interesting side light, speed loaders were provided for the top break

Webley service revolvers years ago. These were small devices made of leather and metal which held six cartridges in much the same fashion as our modern speed loaders. Just another old idea that has been revived and given much wider circulation than at the time of its initial introduction.

While all this development was transpiring, Jeff Cooper carefully began to organize this new information, along with some noteworthy older ideas, into a radically different concept of pistolcraft. Slowly, this growing mass of data was refined as other people came up with important innovations.

Over the years, as these ideas were tested, refined, and proven, Jeff would periodically write them up for the benefit of other shooters. This continual series of magazine articles, plus several books, served to spread and popularize the Cooper doctrine on pistolcraft. Among other efforts, his books, "Fighting Handguns," "Modern Handgunning," "Cooper on Handguns," and "The Principles of Personal Defense," all served to disseminate and make available the emerging principles of modern pistolcraft.


Today, thanks mainly to the tireless writing and teaching of Jeff Cooper, freestyle combat pistol shooting as a sport and training vehicle has spread across the U.S. and around the world.

Twenty years ago it all started in Southern California with a tiny group of

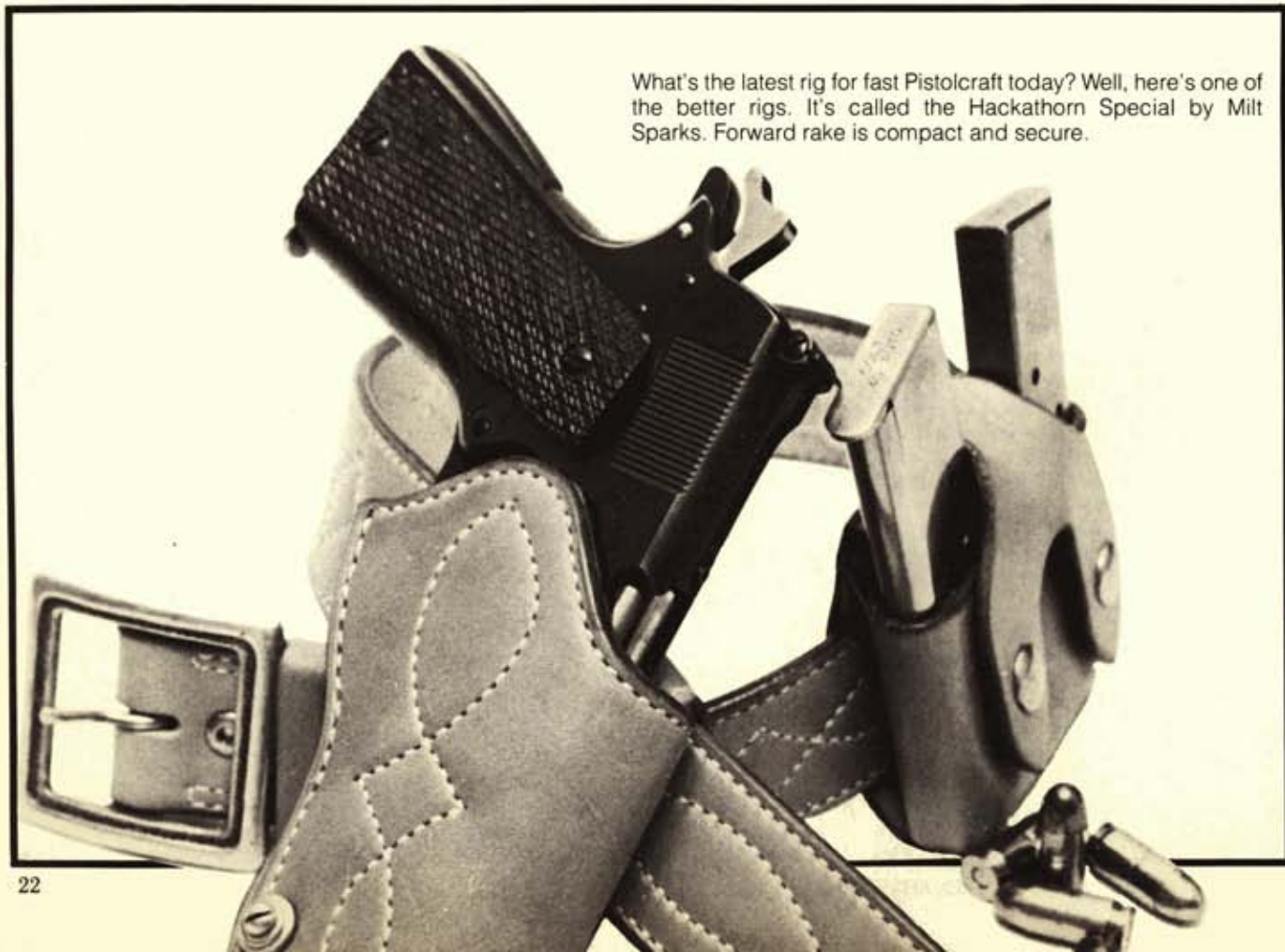
pioneering shooters. Such near-legendary figures as Ray Chapman, Thell Reed, Jack Weaver, John Plahn, and Eldon Carl, Combat Masters all, inspired by the challenge of the radical new concept of freestyle shooting, laid the groundwork for the sport as it stands today.

Already, the next step in this chain of evolution has been forged and is beginning to make its contribution. The International Practical Shooting Confederation was formed in 1976 to give direction to freestyle practical shooting on a worldwide basis. Interest has grown to the extent that a governing body was necessary to make sure that the principles of the sport are not stifled and compromised by the uninformed.

Where will it all end? At this time it is impossible to tell. Events are now moving so rapidly that any estimation of where things will stand ten years from now could only be a wild guess. The first U.S. National Practical Pistol Championships were held under IPSC sanction at Denver in 1977, and the First IPSC sponsored World Championships were held later the same year in Rhodesia.

The crucial requirement now is that we must continue the fight to preserve our right to keep and bear arms as free men. Further, we must at all costs retain the freestyle, unrestricted, diversified, and relevant nature of the sport. Only in this manner will it retain its unique value as a training vehicle, and only in this way will progress continue. 

What's the latest rig for fast Pistolcraft today? Well, here's one of the better rigs. It's called the Hackathorn Special by Milt Sparks. Forward rake is compact and secure.



Charter's .44 Bulldog & Shot Loads

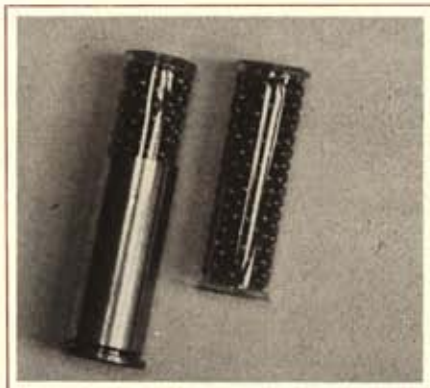
By GEORGE C. NONTE

Many shooters have asked me to recommend good shot loads for their revolvers. Usually they are .38 Specials or .357 Magnums. It isn't only sportsmen who ask; many law officers have asked specifically for an *effective* load to be used in their short-barreled, hideout guns. The trouble is that there simply aren't any truly effective loads for small guns. There are both factory and handloads in .38/.357 size that will kill rats and rattlers at *short range*, but that's about it. There simply aren't any loads effective enough for defense use that can be fired in small-size handguns. Not until now, anyway.

The advent of the Charter Arms .44 Special "Bulldog" revolver changes all this. No bigger or heavier than many snub-nose .38s, the Bulldog combines .44 caliber with a cylinder long enough to handle a sizeable quantity of shot with good effect. So, with a Bulldog in hand, I went back over shot load development of 20-25 years ago to come out with something that really does the job from the three-inch-barrel, pocket-size Bulldog.

Standard .44 Special cases (especially the old balloon-head type) can be loaded with about 1/4-ounce of shot, but more is needed. Plastic shot capsules appear to offer an improvement in the form of a larger shot charge. Unfortunately, it doesn't work out that way because the capsules can't be held in the case tightly enough to withstand recoil. In the light Bulldog, the capsules move forward out of the case to tie up the cylinder, no matter how heavily they are crimped in place. Four shots, at most, usually less, move capsules from unfired rounds forward enough to block cylinder rotation. That certainly isn't acceptable.

The only alternative, then, is to use a longer case which will hold more shot. The .44 Magnum case comes to mind, but it isn't *enough* longer to help much. Even



Appearance can be deceiving. Plastic shot capsules, although easily available, will not hold up under recoil even under an extreme crimp. Result—cylinder locks.

the untrimmed cases I once filched from an ammo plant don't hold enough more shot to be worthwhile.

The .30-40 rim is easily reduced to .44 Special dimensions in a lathe, especially the fine miniature Sherline unit I use is quick, easy, and accurate. At the other end of the scale, you can file them down by hand—no problem if you need only five or 10, but a horrendous chore for 50 or 100.

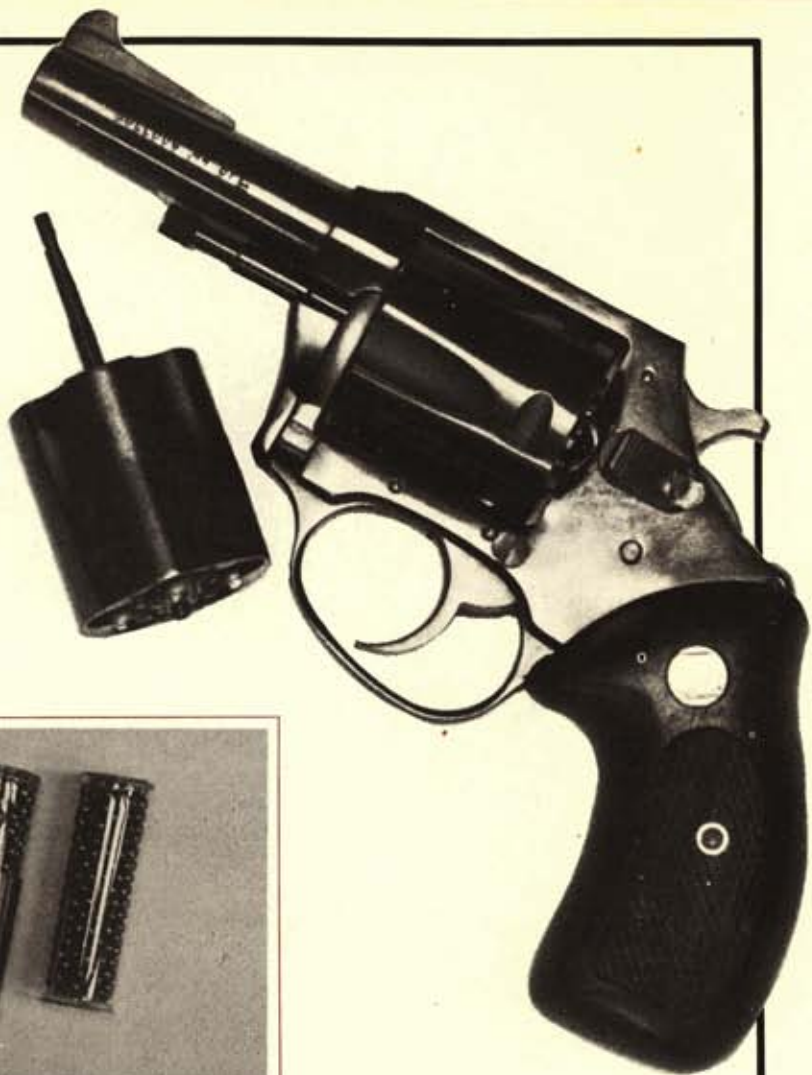
A belt or disc sander, even a bench grinder, with a sanding disc in place, offers the simplest and quickest method. My sander is a small belt unit sold by Brownells for only a bit over \$50. It saved me more than that in sweat and frustration the first week I owned it.

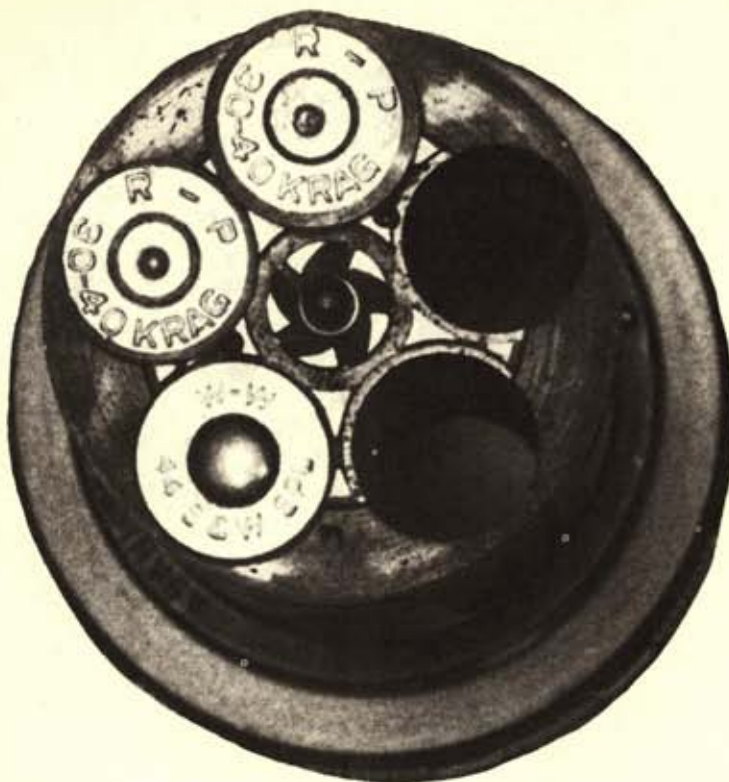
Anyway, take the full-length, .30-40 case (easier to hang onto than after trimming to length) and lay the edge of the rim up next to the speeding, abrasive belt. Use the other hand to steady your wrist. Now smoothly roll the case between thumb and fingers while touching the rim lightly against the belt. With just a little practice, you'll be able to roll it one turn

and take off just the right amount without making the rim egg-shape. Try it. It's not nearly as difficult as you might think.

To reduce rim thickness, hold the case head parallel to the sander, then press it in gently while rotating it smoothly. Hang on tight and don't let the case tip. Two or three light passes will remove the headstamp and probably get the rim down to the correct thickness. Check by trying it in a .44 Special shell holder. When it slips in smoothly, it's probably thin enough to work in the gun—unless your shell holder is oversize. For the technically-minded, the final thickness should be .055" or a wee bit under. You can stop there, but I always bevel the rim edge lightly, rotating the angled case against the sander with a feather-light touch. A 45° bevel, half the rim thickness, looks nice. Afterwards, if the frosted appearance of the sanded rim and head surface offends you, hit it lightly with a soft-cloth, buffing wheel and fine rouge. The altered head will then sparkle, completely devoid of any headstamp.

Now you're telling me I ruined the primer pocket; that it's too shallow by the amount sanded off the head. For *rifle* primers, yes—but I've yet to encounter a .30-40 case, whose pocket was not still deep enough for flush-seating of large





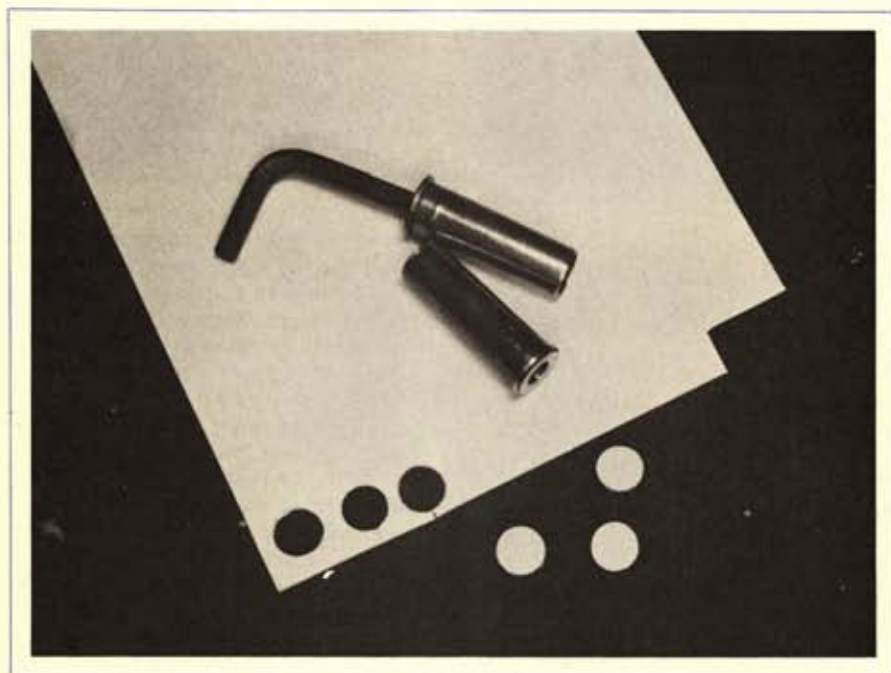
Here we have pictured an unaltered .30-40 case. Rim must be reduced to fit .44 Special diameter perfectly. Note standard .44 Special case at lower left.

Now try these altered cases in the gun. If they do not enter the chambers easily to full depth, run them into your .44 Special, seat-crimp die with the seating screw removed. The crimp shoulder in the die will reduce the case mouth so it enters the chamber throat easily. With all five chambers filled, check to make certain the cylinder rotates freely. If case rims drag on the recoil shield (usually they won't), thin the rims slightly more. Only a tiny bit need be taken off and a file will do the job quickly and easily, rather than going back to the sander.

Now you're ready for initial loading of the cases. Bell case mouths until they will just *barely* enter the chamber throats. A .40 caliber expander plug works well for this, or use a tapered rod and hammer. Prime the cases with standard, large pistol primers. Drop a charge of 5.0 grains of Hercules Unique or 4.0 grains of Bullseye powder in the case. Cut soft cardboard wads about .435-inch diameter. The cardboard must be flexible enough to push through the smaller case mouth. I use the backs off of ruled legal pads. A few wads can be cut with scissors, but a piece of sharpened metal tubing driven through several layers of cardboard at once is much faster for any quantity.

Now insert a piece of 1/4- or 3/8-inch dowel to force two cardboard wads (one at a time) through the case mouth and down solidly on the powder. Roll 1/4 sheet of toilet tissue into a loose ball, then seat it solidly over the card wads. Pour shot (number 9 is best) into the case, up to 1/8-inch from the mouth. Force a bar of soft soap or hard wax down over the case mouth, then remove it with a twisting, sliding, sideward movement—to leave the mouth plugged with a disc of soap or wax.

The cases are now ready for fire-forming, but must be handled gently because the soap wad isn't held securely. Load *one* cartridge in the gun, and fire it. If more than one cartridge is loaded at



You can cut your over-shot wads and filler wads with a shortened and sharpened cartridge case. See article for dowel seating. A nicely machined wad cutter will do.

pistol primers after the alteration. The cups of pistol primers are a bit shorter than for the rifle sizes, so it all works out okay.

You may trim the cases to length by any practical means; tubing cutter, case trimmer, hacksaw and file, etc. Quickest and easiest for me has been to simply drop the cases into the gun's cylinder, then mark around them with a sharp knife at the front of the cylinders. It gives a nice, clear guide line. Then I walk the

cases over to my small belt sander and holding each case by hand, grind off the excess back to the mark. Then I drop the cases into a coffee can of water to cool. Do this quickly and the brass won't get hot enough to burn your fingers. Don't try it with live primers in place. When the cases are cool, touch them gently on the sander to reduce their length to 1.65"; deburr inside and out and that job is finished. You'll be surprised how little time it takes.



Throat opening can be done with case-sizing reamer or any reamer of the correct diameter. This reamer is from Clymer. Some polishing required.

this point, recoil will simply spill soap and shot out. Repeat firing until all your cases are fire-formed to fill the chamber and chamber throat. Cases are now ready for assembly with proper full-charge, shot loads.

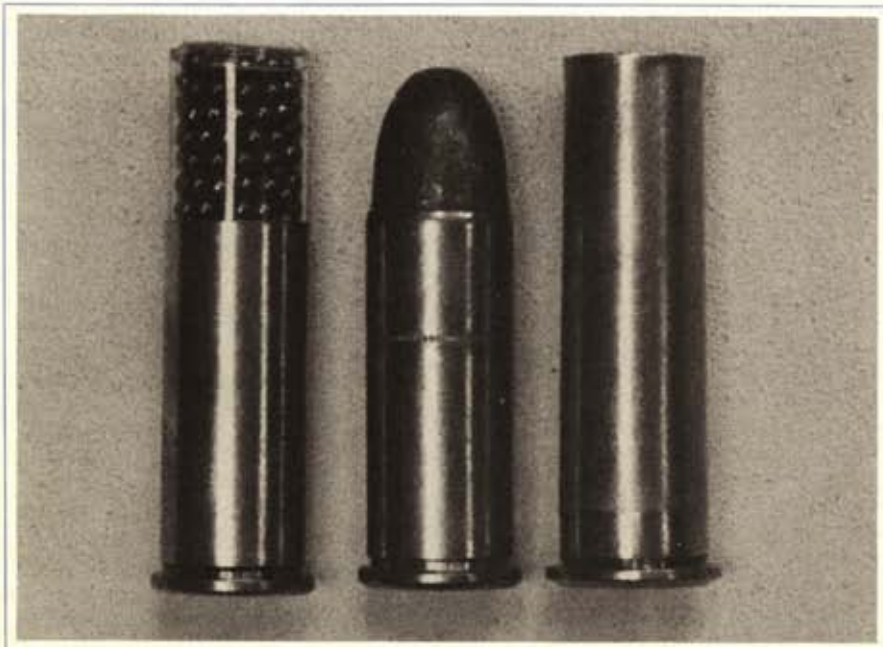
Make certain the fire-formed cases will chamber freely. They should, but if not, resize in a .44 Special, full-length die and try again. If they still won't chamber freely, run the necked-down portion into a .41 Magnum resizing die. That should reduce it enough to enter the throat easily. Decap and reprime (large pistol size, remember).

Now, charge cases with 6.0-6.5 grains of Unique and again seat two cardboard wads over the powder. They'll go easier now, with case mouths fire-formed, but will still be tight. Take care the wads

don't get tipped and flip part of the powder up on top of themselves. You may still use the toilet-tissue filler wad, but better results will be had from a 3/16-inch, thick, composition or felt wad. Felt is the easiest to insert, so I prefer it. Obtain scraps of thick felt from a fabric shop and cut it into discs of about .430-inch diameter. Stack them as necessary to make up the desired thickness, then seat down on the card wads with a dowel. A 1/4-inch, long pin (common, straight pin) protruding from the dowel will help keep the felt wads aligned and together during seating. With all wads down solidly, pour in shot to 1/16-inch from the case mouth. Cut discs from an .020-inch thick styrene sheet (any semi-rigid plastic will do, but this is readily available from model and hobby shops). A hammer and sharpened tubing handles the cutting best; about .405-.410-inch diameter is usually okay, but will depend on your particular batch of cases. In any event, they should be quite snug in the case mouth.

Seat these plastic wads over the shot with a dowel, forcing them slightly below the case mouth; be sure and keep them level. The case mouth must be crimped over the wad to tie everything solidly together. Without a die of some sort made especially for this, it simply can't be done properly. Any maker of loading dies *can* make one for you, but the price will be high and the wait long. A piece of common 3/8" water pipe will do the job with just a little bit of work. Use a 90° (included angle) countersink to funnel the mouth of one end of the pipe (which need be only 2-3 inches long). Run the countersink in until the case mouth will enter the chamber. Polish the chamber smooth. The countersink leaves a fairly rough surface, and roughness will mess up the crimp we need.

Take a short piece of 3/8-inch dowel and slip it inside the pipe. Let its end protrude about 1/16-inch beyond the bottom
(Continued on page 50)



From left to right you will note the .44 Special case loaded with Remco shot capsule, a standard .44 Special factory load, and at far right the cylinder-length case (from .30-40) ready for fire-forming. Not as pretty, but very practical.

COMBATIZING THE BIG

By C. GEORGE CHARLES

There was a time when the fellow who wanted a good .45 autoloader could pick up an excellent military Colt or contract M1911/A1 at a pretty good price. They were inexpensive enough that economically there wasn't any point in buying a new Spanish Star Model P. It's a fact that even doggy militaries cost more than a brand-new Star, when you can find one.

Actually, the Star design is an improvement upon the old Colt/Browning design, with a much more simplified frame and lockwork. It is this very improvement and simplification of frame and lockwork that makes the Star much easier to shorten and lighten for combat use. The parts that give the gunsmith fits in the Colt don't even exist in the Star. Additionally, there is more leeway in the Star for butt modification.

Now let's take a look at what can be done to whittle that massive 37½ ounce, 8½ inch long, 5½ inch high gun down to more manageable and concealable size without detracting from its inherent goodness and reliability.

The hardest part to hide of any gun is the butt and the .45 and .38 Super Star have lots of butt. First off, field strip the gun and remove the grips and magazine. Notice the magazine safety (interruptor) positioned in the groove on the right side of the frame behind the magazine well. Drift it out from the left side and throw it away. A combat gun has no business with a magazine safety. Of course it is useful in a household by a neophyte.

Now look at the bottom half of the butt. Notice it is completely uncluttered with just a metal shell into which the magazine fits. Everything below the mainspring anchor pin could be cut away and not interfere a bit with the functioning but that would be cutting off too much thus making the handle too short for proper control. Removing ½" to ⅝" from the butt is about right and there are two ways to do it.

Simplest for the amateur is to saw and file two lengths of 1/10" by ½" steel strip to fit snugly into the butt cutouts as shown. First, remove all other parts from the frame. Then, clean the joint surfaces



thoroughly. Next flux and apply silver solder. Be sure you heat enough until it flows and a good joint is produced. Make sure these inserts are flush with the sides of the butt inside so a magazine can enter freely. This soldering can be handled with a household propane torch or two although an oxyacetylene torch will do the job more easily.

When cool, clean up the outer surfaces of the inserts. File if necessary. Then you can flush and smooth with the frame butt. Screw the right grip back in place. Locate on the grip a new grip screw hole on line between the two existing and ⅝" above the bottom hole. Level the frame with the right side up on the drill press table. Now you drill through the grip and both sides of the frame in one shot. Remove the grip and tap both frame holes to accept the original grip screws. Clean off the burrs inside and out as well as making certain the screws turn in freely. Mark and drill the screw hole in the left grip too.

Now, with a properly secured seat for the grips provided by the inserts, simply scribe around the butt parallel to the bottom at the cutoff point. With a new high-speed steel blade doused frequently with cutting fluid, you can hacksaw off the

The big star is a modified takeoff of the Browning/Colt .45 Government Model. It can also be done with the 9mm or .38 Super, all steel models.

butt as near to the scribed lines as possible. Just remember to leave enough metal to file and grind it true to the mark. The new butt bottom surface should be flush with the bottom of the silver soldered spacers or perhaps cutting slightly into them. Note that if the spacers had not been installed, the butt would now be a relatively fragile open "U" of steel. The spacers tie it all together and prevent distortion.

Next, with files and your ever handy Dremel Moto-Tool, duplicate the funneling of the original butt around the inner edges of the new surface. These bevels facilitate rapid insertion of a fresh magazine and can well be carried even farther if you like. This is the simplest way.

If you prefer and have welding equipment that you know how to use, you might prefer doing it this way. First, you can saw out a ½" section of the butt between the mainspring anchor pin and the bottom paralleling the bottom line of the

G STAR AUTOLOADER



Now you see it trimmed down to manageable size. Note the smaller butt, the squared off trigger guard, and the combat safety.

butt. Then you can weld the cut off bottom back to the upper part. Remember that great care is required in aligning the two parts so the magazine will remain true. However, you can do this easily enough with a spare magazine body and clamp and shims. A close fitting mandrel would be best, but making one takes more time than a single shortening job can justify.

Regardless of the method you choose to use, it is necessary to clean the inside of the magazine well at the joints. This permits the magazines to enter and eject freely. Get rid of all heat scale and roughness as well as surplus metal. Not only must magazines enter freely but they must fall clear of their own weight when the catch is depressed. After filing, polish the inside of the well with abrasive cloth glued to shaped strips of wood.

Now, with the slide on the frame and the magazine catch in place, put one cartridge in a magazine and then insert it until the catch engages. Scribe around

the magazine body even with the butt and then press the magazine in as far as it will go. Use hand pressure only. Now again scribe around the body while it is held there.

Next remove and disassemble the magazine completely. Make up a hardwood plug to fit inside the body. Insert the plug and clamp the magazine in your vise. Now saw off the bottom $\frac{1}{8}$ " below the second or lowest scribe mark. Then saw through the front of the body just below the first or highest scribe mark just back through the radius to the beginning of the flat sidewalls. Trim out this arch-shaped piece of metal and true up all cut edges with files.

Insert a block of steel or aluminum that is push fit in the magazine body. It can be several thicknesses of strip if necessary. Now clamp tightly in the vise. The vise jaws must be true and the lowest scribe mark must be flush and parallel with them. Quickly bring the overhanging bits of magazine sidewall to red heat, tap over outward at right angles, down on vise jaws with a smooth hammer that forms flanges just like the magazine possessed originally.

Finish this by filing or grinding the

edges of the flanges you've just produced so that the original floor plate will slide smoothly over them. Remove the floor plate and flow low temp silver solder into the seams where it is folded back on itself to form the front tongue. As for the magazine spring, you just need to clip one complete coil off the bottom. Now bend the last half-coil up as it was originally. Assemble the shortened magazine and insert it in the shortened gun butt. Polish the reworked area if necessary for free insertion and removal and make certain the magazine catch engages properly.

If the butt has been shortened by our first method, the floor plate will extend well beyond the front strap. Cut away this excess, flush with the front strap, then radius all edges of the floorplate smoothly so it won't snag hands or clothing. Now, back to the shortened butt. As it is chopped off abruptly in the curve of the backstrap, it probably won't feel right in your hand. Install the grips and saw them off flush with the butt. Test how it feels and do a little shooting, if necessary, to be certain. If it feels okay, you just have to file or grind the sharp edges to a smooth radius and your butt shaping is done.

However, if it doesn't feel right, start filing and grinding on the bulged backstrap until the gun feels and handles right. I prefer to cut the hump off entirely, giving it the shape of a Colt .45 auto with the old flat mainspring housing.

Now if you used the first butt shortening method, you'll find that nearly all the swell at the bottom of the front strap will be cut away. By the second method, it will remain but there will be a step where it joins the rest. There will be a dogleg at the backstrap joint. Personally, I prefer to eliminate this swell in any event. It adds far more weight and bulk than its small amount of handling benefit is worth. Simply grind or file it off, fairing the entire front strap into a straight line. When this is done, the second method will leave a small U-shaped notch where the original funneling cuts through. I like this as it leaves a point of purchase where the front of the floorplate can be grasped if for some reason a magazine becomes stuck. For the same reason, when the first shortening method is used, I go ahead and file a notch at the same point after the strap is straightened.

Once the back and front straps have been pared down and shaped to suit, take a look at the edges of the butt, all around, and the grips as well. Compactness and concealability can be improved by filing away all the sharp metal edges. With the grips in place, you can work around the entire butt of the frame, cutting down the metal edges right along with the grips. You should flow the wood and metal together smoothly and eliminate those steps and shoulders. Next you can smooth the grips down as they are bulkier than need be. Even though only a very small amount of metal and wood is removed in this fashion, it will be a considerable improvement. The sharp edges and ridges will be gone as well as a very small amount of weight.

Now that you have the butt shaped to suit, you may want to stipple, groove or checker the front and backstraps for a more secure hold.

The safety of the Star is excellent and more reliable than the Colt. There aren't any combat style replacements. If you need an extended thumbpiece safety a la Swenson, it must be added to the original. File the thumbpiece carefully to the shape shown. Next shape a piece of 1/16" thick steel to join with it perfectly. Wire or clamp the two together and flow silver solder into the joint. File the extension to the shape that suits you best. If you want it curved, simply bend the front down a bit. Finish by filing longitudinal grooves in the top of the extension or by stippling it for certain thumb purchase. The extra area makes it easier to find in a hurry and the extra length allows it to function more easily because of the increased leverage.

If you like the squared-off trigger guard and the forefinger rest it provides, you can simply saw through the guard at the point indicated and bend the upper portion to point straight down. Now file a piece of 3/32" steel to fit into the gap and fit the two joints very carefully. If fitted closely, you can flow in silver solder that

1.



2.



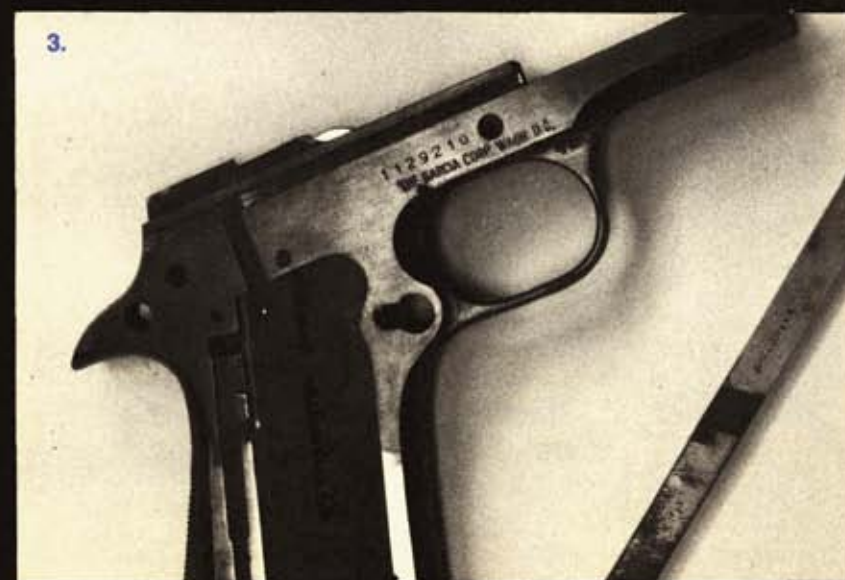
3.



1. Author feels that the magazine safety doesn't belong and should be removed.

2. Here the slide is completely stripped, ready to begin the butt-shortening operation.

3. First, small pieces of steel plate must be filed to fit in the bottom of the sidewall cutouts and then welded, brazed, or silver-soldered securely in place. Here the welded plates show no visible solder line on the butt after the shortening operation.



will be hardly visible after rebluing. As an alternative, you can have the filler piece welded in place. Either way, you can finish by carefully filing the filler piece to match the bottom of the trigger guard and cleaning up the entire reworked area. Checkering or stippling on squared guard is your option and need not be detailed here.

If you feel the need of a trigger stop, now is the time to install it. Drill and tap a 6 x 48 hole in the bottom of the guard. Now you can grind a short taper on the end of a short socket-head 6 x 48 screw (available from B-Square, Box 11281, Ft. Worth, Texas, 76109). Cut back the taper until the tip of the screw arrests trigger movement where you want it. Be sure that the screwhead is flush with the underside of the guard. Once the gun work is complete and the adjustment is finalized, you can degrease both screw and hole and then secure the screw with a drop of Lok-Tite.

If you need a wider or longer trigger, you can simply install the make of a standard shoe you like best. All you have to do is reshape the ends and rear to prevent the interference with the frame and guard.

As for the rest of the gun, you can shorten the barrel and slide or lighten it up. For anything more, you can just follow the same procedures that have been developed for the .45 Colt. Though Star dimensions aren't quite the same as Colt, all their parts are identical in shape, function and design. That is, except for the extractor. The big Star Model P can easily be shortened to Colt Commander length. If you care to, you can cut back nearly 1 1/2" from the muzzle while retaining a high degree of functional reliability.

In any event, properly modified for combat use, the Star .45 is not only a satisfactory substitute for the big Colt, but in some respects is actually superior. And that shouldn't be taken lightly.



1. After welding, the excess butt metal is sawed off, parallel to the original butt line, then the protruding weld bead is filed or ground away on the outside.

2. The Star safety is unique and blocks the hammer solidly. Be careful in removing it, to avoid loss of the detent plunger and spring.

3. Final internal fitting of the butt is done with a fine-cut, narrow, flat file. Try the magazine repeatedly as excess metal is filed away. Polish smooth, the inside filed areas.

the Schwarzlose Military Pistol

By GORDON BRUCE

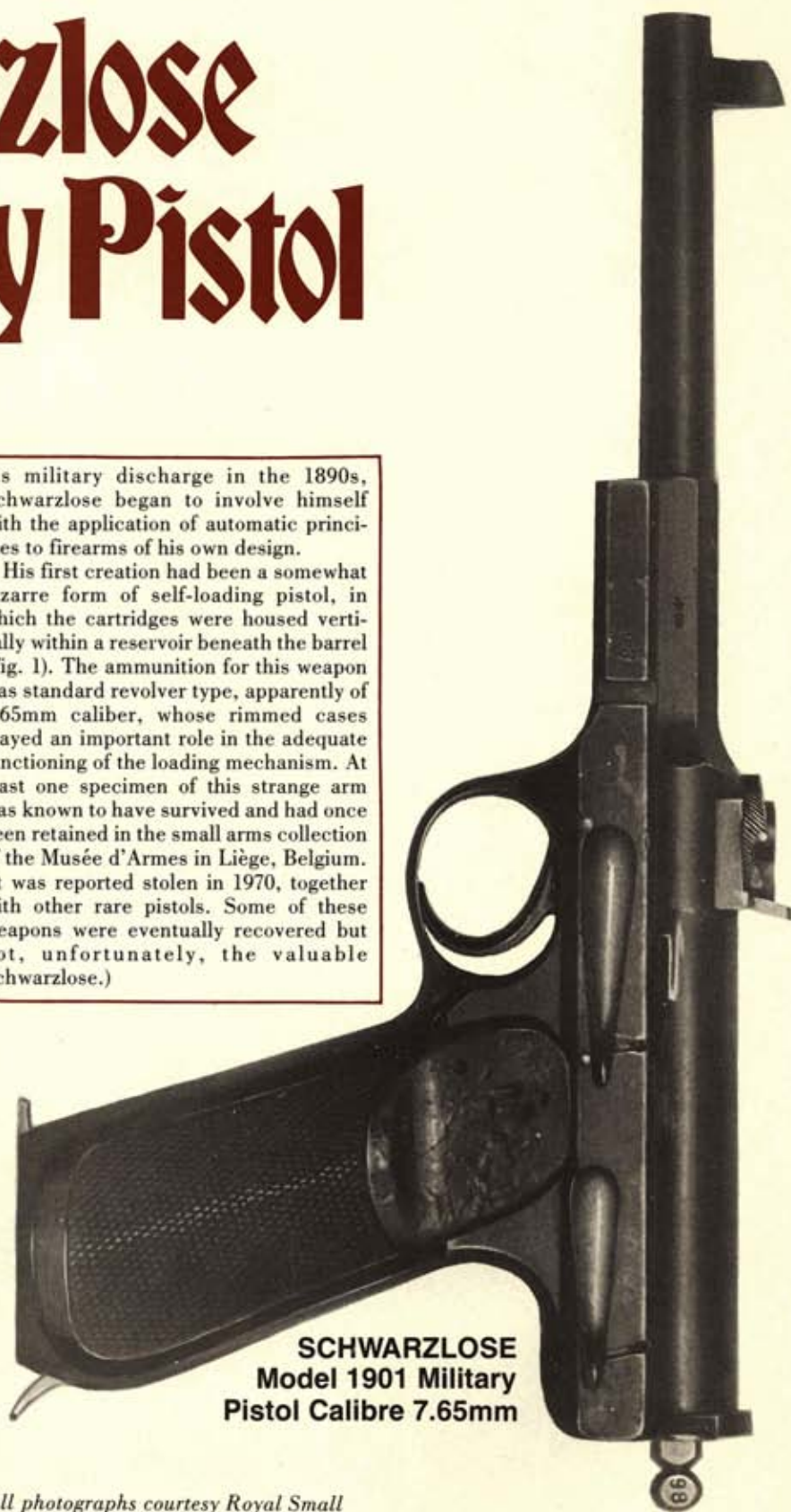
AMONG the pistol-collecting fraternity in the United States, the name of Schwarzlose is generally associated with a rather unique type of German handgun in which the barrel moved away from the breech when the weapon was fired. This 'Blowforward' system pocket pistol was introduced during the year 1907 but achieved only a limited amount of success, mainly due to the unconventional nature of the design. Today, it merely provides an interesting addition to some of the more specialized collections. However, if we revert to the origins of automatic pistol designing in Europe towards the end of the nineteenth century, we can observe that Schwarzlose was certainly among the earliest of patentees in this category. Throughout the period from 1892 until 1897, while still in his twenties, he made a particular study of self-loading handguns and was later to innovate various features which remain at the present time fundamental to good pistol designing.

By the year 1912, Schwarzlose had obtained no less than 58 firearms patents in his native Germany and had also registered specifications with several other countries. Many of these inventions were concerned with larger weapons, since a great deal of his later work involved the development of a heavy caliber machinegun.

Andreas Wilhelm Schwarzlose was born on July 31, 1867 in Wust, Altmark, Northern Germany, and his formative years were spent working on the small farm owned by his father. As a young man, Andreas enlisted for military service with an Austro-Hungarian Artillery regiment, where he first began to cultivate an affinity for small arms. He eventually assumed a special interest in the subject after his admittance to the Ordnance Training School at Suhl. Following

his military discharge in the 1890s, Schwarzlose began to involve himself with the application of automatic principles to firearms of his own design.

His first creation had been a somewhat bizarre form of self-loading pistol, in which the cartridges were housed vertically within a reservoir beneath the barrel (Fig. 1). The ammunition for this weapon was standard revolver type, apparently of 7.65mm caliber, whose rimmed cases played an important role in the adequate functioning of the loading mechanism. At least one specimen of this strange arm was known to have survived and had once been retained in the small arms collection of the Musée d'Armes in Liège, Belgium. (It was reported stolen in 1970, together with other rare pistols. Some of these weapons were eventually recovered but not, unfortunately, the valuable Schwarzlose.)



SCHWARZLOSE
Model 1901 Military
Pistol Calibre 7.65mm

(All photographs courtesy Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield).

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Little is known of his second venture, patented two years later, which involved a more conventional type of recoil-operated pistol with cartridges housed inside the handle (Fig. 2). This particular weapon was striker fired and featured a rotary system of breech locking for the first time. Further improvements were added in October 1895 (Fig. 3) and these designs formed the nucleus of his main work to follow.

Prior to the turn of the last century, Schwarzlose was employed as an armorer in the town of Suhl, which was then considered to be the heart of all Prussian arms industry. As with many other pioneer firearms makers of that time, he had persevered with his own ideas for a new type of self-loading pistol until he finally arrived at a functional design. His fourth development (Fig. 4) was patented in Germany on May 14, 1897 and the technical specifications describe, fairly accurately, the version under study in this article.

Typical of the thoughtful preparation given by Schwarzlose to these early prototypes is apparent in the dual application

of certain components. For example, the striker spring also acted to close the breech bolt, while the trigger spring was utilized to return the barrel after recoil action had taken place.

Andreas Schwarzlose moved from Suhl in 1901 and opened a small workshop in the northwestern section of Berlin to begin serial manufacture of his latest invention. The total number of these particular weapons to be produced at the German capital has never been clearly established but was, presumably, not more than a few hundred. No doubt the intense competition from the excellent 7.65mm pistol designs of Mannlicher, Mauser and Luger had been chiefly responsible for his lack of success in this field. It has been reported that the majority of these Schwarzlose military pistols were acquired by Russia for use during the 1904 war with Japan, while others were employed in the Great October Revolution.

Schwarzlose continued to experiment with other self-loading mechanisms and, in May 1901, he devised a form of linked breech for use with a non-recoiling barrel (Fig. 5). This arrangement was reminiscent of the type employed previously on the famous Borchardt pistol, except that members of the jointed breech were placed side by side instead of one behind the other. It was claimed by the inventor that this not only reduced the length of the breech but also dispensed with any need for a breech casing, thus enabling the breech block to be considerably strengthened without adding to the total weight. Despite the zeal and conviction embodied in the patent specification, it is

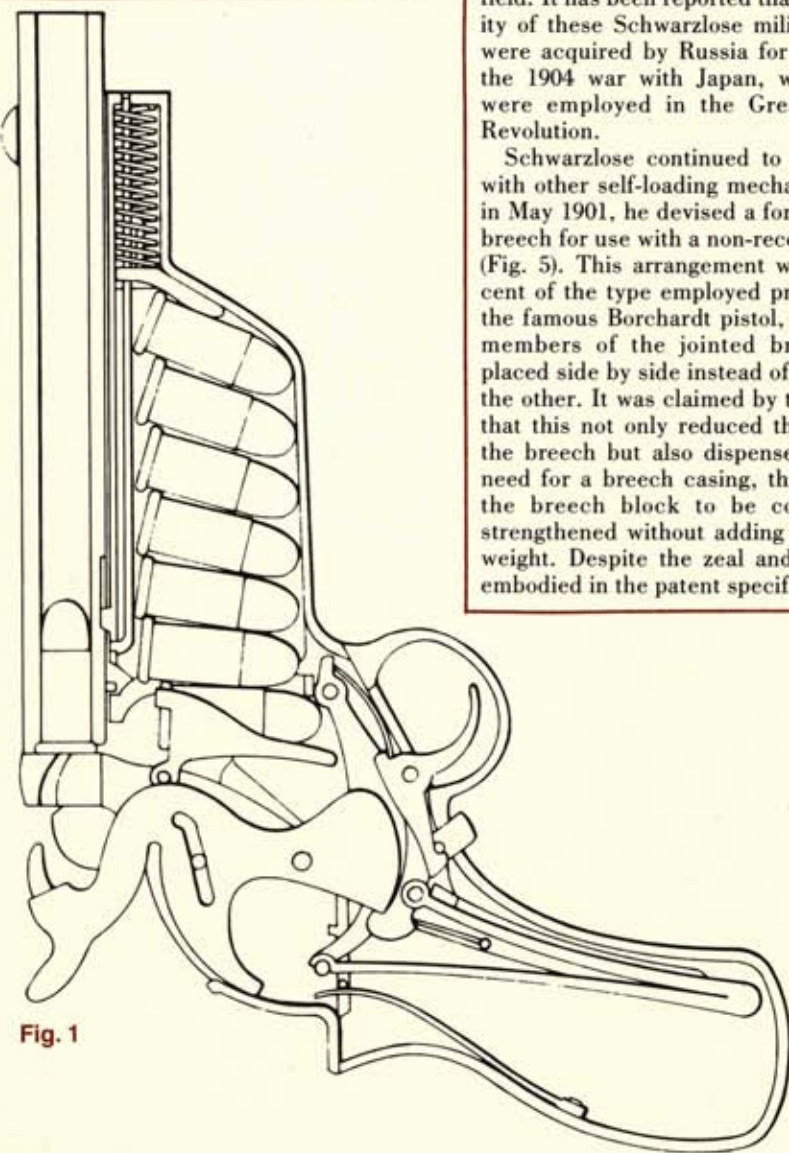


Fig. 1

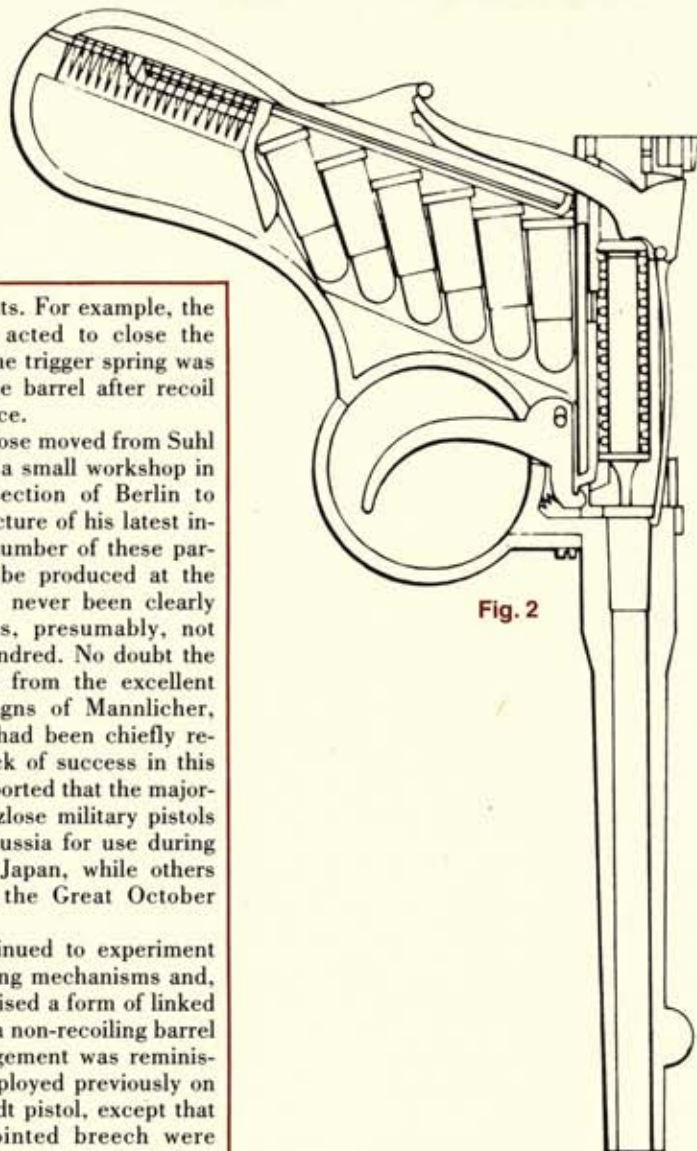


Fig. 2

doubtful if this Schwarzlose pistol ever progressed beyond the experimental stage.

Throughout the years leading up to the beginning of the First World War in 1914, the inventive talents of Andreas Schwarzlose were focused mainly upon the perfection of a new machine gun, for which the linked breech principle was further developed. These attentions were briefly diverted in March 1907 for the designing and construction of his well-known 'Blow-forward' pocket pistol, as mentioned at the start of this article.

Between July 1900 and June 1901, Schwarzlose carried out the final improvements to his basic design. These included the fitting of a special rotary rear sight, which was adjustable in click-stop settings, from 100 to 500 meters. Other alterations were made to the trigger safety and to the breech hold-open arrangement. German patents were granted for all of these improvements.

It is interesting to note that the British War Office, having acquired a specimen of the Schwarzlose military pistol during the First World War, had arranged for the weapon to be carefully examined and

Fig. 4 SCHWARZLOSE Model 1897 Prototype: patented in Germany 14 May 1897. The striker-fired system used with the preceding weapons was retained on the Model 1897, although it had obviously undergone some modification. This was especially noticeable with the new form of combined sear and extractor mechanism, located within the striker body. A more sophisticated breech locking arrangement had also been devised and provisions were made for some very useful safety appliances.

The safety lever, instead of being fitted to the left side of the pistol body, had originally been located at the opposite side—a position which could not have been very convenient for a right-handed shooter. When this safety lever was turned to the upper position, both trigger and barrel unit were locked; in this manner, the breech could not be opened and the weapon could not be fired by a pull on the trigger.

A second lever was mounted on the left side of the body, above the grip plate, to perform a dual role of releasing the magazine from the pistol while still holding the breech back in the open position.

A magazine, specified to contain ten cartridges, was secured within the handle by a small tooth on the lever shaft entering a notch at the top of the magazine casing.

To reload the pistol, it was first necessary to draw back the breech by pulling on a knob at the right-hand side and then to depress the hold-open lever. This action released the magazine from the pistol, while at the same time, locking the breech block in the open position. The magazine could not, therefore, be removed from the handle until the breech had been retracted and the firing chamber safely cleared.

When a freshly-loaded magazine was inserted, the hold-open lever turned upwards automatically to re-engage with the notch in the casing, while the breech block was released and allowed to close. On moving forward, the breech block pushed the topmost cartridge from the magazine into the barrel chamber and the pistol was ready to fire.

The prototype weapon featured a novel type of accelerator device, fitted at the side of the barrel unit, to augment the breech opening. As the barrel moved back during recoil, the lower part of the accelerator lever struck the pistol body, causing the upper part to force open the breech with extra velocity. A similar device was to appear, some years later, on the Finnish Lahti pistol.

Fig. 4

Fig. 3

tested by officials of the Royal Small Arms Factory. This was to comply with their policy of familiarization with all current automatic weapons. The tests took place in the Spring of 1918 at the Enfield firing ranges and a technical appraisal was duly submitted to the Small Arms Committee. The following text includes a summary from the actual test report:

SCHWARZLOSE Model 1901 Military Pistol calibre 7.65mm

The weapon comprises three main unit assemblies, plus a detachable magazine. These are: 1. Barrel unit; with spring, plunger and rear sight; 2. Breech unit; with striker, spring and sear; 3. Frame unit; with trigger, safety catch, breech stop lever, breech guide, ejector and grip plates.

There are five spiral springs; four removable pins; three removable screws; and 23 other components in the complete pistol assembly. Total number of parts being 35.

The barrel unit is a formidable piece of machining, heavily strengthened at the rear to accept four locking recesses, which are cut behind the chamber section. The lower portion is extended to form longitudinal guides, matching the channels along the pistol frame. Between the guides, lie the barrel return spring and trigger plunger.

Instead of occupying a more normal position at the end of the pistol, the V-notch rear sight is mounted high above the barrel chamber and requires a fairly tall front sight as a consequence. Sighting is adjustable, vertically, by means of a spiral cam, upon which are marked 'click-stop' settings. These are divided into 100 meter increments and numbered from one to five.

Four locking lugs are machined out of the solid breech bolt head, while the remainder of the unit is bored to accommodate a large diameter recoil spring. A projection extends from either side of the rear portion, which enables the breech to be easily retracted by hand. Along the bottom of the bolt runs a 7mm wide groove with a helical twist and this allows the complete unit to move over a guide ring on the pistol frame. As the unit moves back, an anti-clockwise rotation is given to the breech bolt, causing it to unlock from the barrel.

The sides of the striker are machined flat to correspond with a special hole in the guide ring at the back of the frame. Although the striker is free to move back and forth with the breech bolt, it is prevented from turning by the flat sides of the hole. Measuring 120mm in length, the striker is a remarkably heavy and sturdy component.

The sear member is carried within a vertical slot at the front of the striker. The unusual, cranked, shape of the sear enables it also to serve as an extractor,

engaging the cartridge case groove from below. When the breech bolt recoils after firing and the empty case is withdrawn from the chamber, a sharp rocking movement of the ejector arm causes the case to be knocked from the extractor claw and expelled from the pistol.

The magazine seems to be capable of holding just six cartridges. In order to accommodate a large diameter magazine spring, the magazine is formed with a rather unusual, 'keyhole-shaped' section. The cartridge platform is retained within by a long bolt passing through the slots at each side and secured by a circular nut. The head of the nut is knurled to offer a better grip for the fingers when lowering the platform during the reloading operation. Located at the base of the handle, the magazine catch tends to be a little obtrusive but, in combination with the toe of the magazine body, permits a most effective releasing action.

The wooden grip plates are specially contoured to fit perfectly within recesses at both sides of the pistol. The top portion of each plate enters a groove in the underside of the breech carriage and is supported, laterally by two shoulders on the handle. A vertical screw holds the item firmly in position at the base of the handle.

Although the Schwarzlose pistol is well made and does not have many components, it is inclined to be rather complicated in construction. Generally speaking, the weapon has good balance, lies quite comfortably in the hand and has excellent pointing characteristics for a military pistol.

Particular care has been taken with the locking and safety arrangements, both of which are considered to be good. Large operating levers, provided at the side of the pistol, are readily accessible and easy to use. A slight disadvantage may be considered in the location of the safety lever, which is liable to be disturbed when inserting or withdrawing the pistol from a holster.

DISMANTLING

Depress the catch at the base of the handle and remove the magazine.

Grasp the two projections at the rear of the breech casing and open the breech to ensure that the firing chamber is empty.

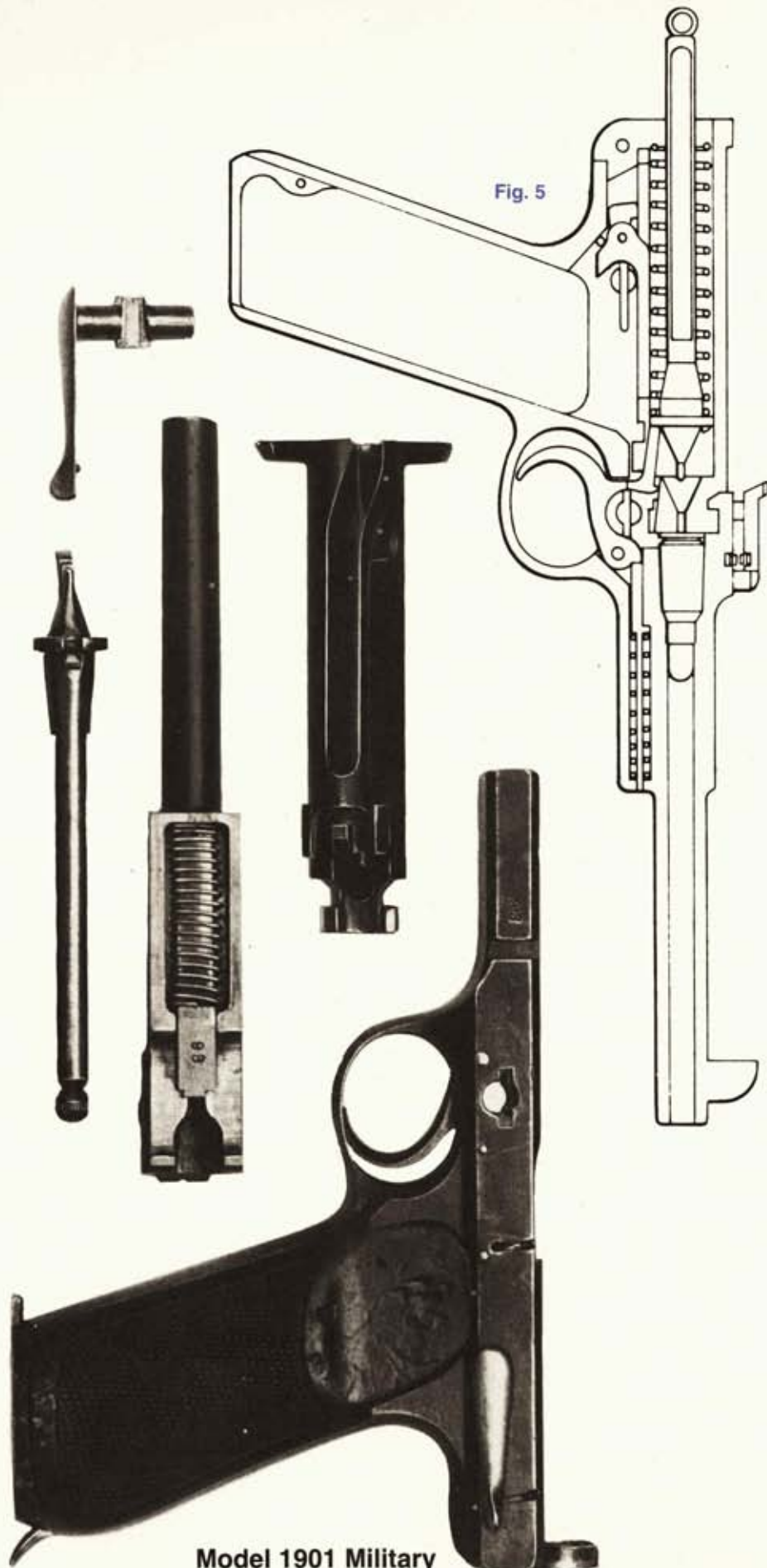
Pull the trigger to release the striker.

The lever mounted at the front left-hand side of the frame must be rotated through 180° counter-clockwise to withdraw the barrel and breech casing. Press the muzzle against a hard surface and at the same time force out the lever axis from the right-hand side of the pistol. Barrel and breech assembly may then be removed from the front of the pistol.

Separate the barrel from the breech by applying a slight twisting motion.

Withdraw the recoil spring and striker

(Continued on page 60)



Model 1901 Military
Disassembled

Trophy Kudu

The Author Learns of Cooper's Hunting Code

By TONY WEEKS

IT was Monday August 12th, 1977, we had just said good-bye to Barry Miller of The Gunshop and his lawyer friend Jeff Fobbs. For eight days we had unsuccessfully looked for a trophy sized kudu on Umfula Ranch, Nuanetsi district in S.E. Rhodesia.

My hunting partner (Jeff Cooper's friend, Clifford Douglas from Los Angeles, California) and I had a few days to go before returning to Salisbury. I suggested that we take a stroll down the Mkumi River—a tributary of the Lundi, which had pools of water every half a mile or so. At the last moment I discarded my pre-war .30-06 M-70 Winchester with 3x-9x Redfield Widefield and decided to take only the 6½" Model 29 S&W .44 Magnum revolver with Pachmayr grips.

Two school boys and two trackers made up a party of six. Soon one schoolboy volunteered to return to the Land Rover and to take it to the boundary where we were heading. Then Clifford and the other schoolboy elected to cross over the Mkumi and comb the other side—once again I had no objection. That left one tracker, Shangani and I and the Model 29!

The Trophy is Sighted

Within ten minutes of very quiet walking—previously impossible due to the number of hunters—there, not more than 75 meters away, was the biggest kudu trophy that I have seen for 15 years. I aimed for the shoulder, shooting from the Weaver stance, and squeezed off.

The beautiful animal did not drop or spook, but strolled out of view behind a bushy ridge. I let it have two more shots as it moved off. Reloading from the belt as I moved slowly forward, I then got another view from the slight ridge that it had strolled over. Three more shots at the shoulder and the trophy was mine.

Apparently the first shot had been just forward of the point of the shoulder and had nicked the spinal column, after which the kudu could only walk slowly. Four of my six shots were well placed on the shoulder, I was not at all displeased with the performance of myself or my pistol. Elmer Keith's load (22 grains of 2400 behind a 429421 S.W.C. weighing 250 grains) had penetrated right through to the opposing shoulder without distortion on two of the four hits. The other two had been Norma factory soft point hollow nose that I had unfortunately reloaded while moving forward to the ridge. These had expanded into the lung cavity with little penetration. Shots two and three could have been misses.

To have succeeded with a pistol within one hour of setting out—when we had failed the previous eight days—only enhanced the indescribable satisfaction that only keen successful hunters using "fair hunting methods" can know.

The trophy horns I measured as 57½" round the curve, but Gerry Gore, who is an official Rowland Ward registration officer, knocked this down to 52¾ inches, just making the Rowland Ward Record of Big Game Trophy Book. Apparently the

correct method is to measure up the front edge of the horns, not following the built in groove that seems designed to take a tape measure!

The kudu bull was an estimated 16 years of age and had actually started to go blue with baldness on the shoulders. He was past his prime, not as heavy as he might have been three years ago, and actually proved to have had seven ribs broken and healed some time in his fighting past.

Cooper's Hunting Code

One of Jeff Cooper's first questions when told of my success was "How big did the front sight appear on the kudu?" After reflection, I said "About one foot across." Now with an 8 inch sight radius, the one eighth inch sight would subtend one foot at exactly 64 yards—which tends to agree with my estimate of 75 meters. The interesting thing is the reason for Jeff's question which was that Jeff only shot a hunting handgun if the vulnerable or kill area was bigger than his foresight. Obviously he had established his own limitation based on proven ability.

So the next step was to establish my own limitation with the .44 Magnum and so a group of ten was fired with my standard load 22/2400/250 K T SWC at 75 meters. You have probably guessed the result—all ten shots were in a 12" circle, proving that I had not broken a good handgunners code. I would like to recommend this system to all handgun hunters.





Story In Three Parts: I History

United States Patent Office

2,846,925

Patented Aug. 12, 1958

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2,846,925

AUTOMATIC FIREARM WITH BREECH BLOCK OPERATED DISCONNECTOR

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Application September 26, 1955, Serial No. 536,487

3 Claims. (Cl. 89-145)

Automatic arms, particularly those utilizing recoil to operate the trigger and

firing

A still further object of the invention is to provide a firing mechanism which prevents the firing pin from striking the hammer or by partial or full engagement of the hammer.

In a broad aspect the invention relates to the type automatically recocked after firing, a firing mechanism including a hammer, releasably engaging the hammer so as to move it from cocked position, a spring urging the hammer engaging position, a trigger bar for connecting the trigger with the hammer, the bar being pivotally supported at one end and the trigger so as to swing between an inoperative position and a position operative to engage the hammer, the bar having an abutment holding the bar in its inoperative position after the trigger is pulled to engage the hammer and release the hammer and after the hammer is recocked so that the rear member may re-engage the hammer to prevent repeated firing of the arm while the trigger remains pulled. Preferably the aforesaid trigger bar is moved from operative to inoperative position by the provision of means on the hammer for engaging the trigger bar when the hammer is released.

In a further aspect involving a firearm with a frame and a breech member slidably mounted on the frame, the firing mechanism is provided with a disconnecter mounted on the frame and having at one end a cam nose in the path of the breech and adapted to move the aforesaid trigger bar in inoperative position when the cam nose is engaged by the breech member during the recoil portion of the recocking cycle thereby to disconnect the trigger bar from the hammer during recoil. For the purpose of simplifying the recocking cycle of the arm is meant to include the rearward recoil movement of the breech member and its forward return to firing position.

In a related aspect of the invention the frame which carries the above described firing mechanism and the breech member is provided with a safety device including a rotatable member mounted on the breech member for adjustment between safe and off position, and means on the frame for engaging the trigger bar and moving the bar to inoperative position when the member is rotated to safe position. Preferably the safety device is used in conjunction with a double firing pin carried in the breech member and having a forwardly facing shoulder at its after end, and the rotatable member comprises a bolt having an opening axially therethrough for receiving

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the after end of the pin and said shoulder, and means on the bolt rotatable with the bolt into engagement with said shoulder thereby to block forward movement of the pin. Preferably the safety bolt is also provided with an abutment movable between the aforesaid pin end and the hammer when the bolt is rotated to safe position thereby to obstruct the path of the hammer and prevent its striking the after end of the firing pin.

In other aspects the invention comprises an improved trigger and bar assembly, an improved sight, and a cooperative safety bolt and extractor structure.

For the purpose of illustration typical embodiments of the invention are shown in the accompanying drawings, in which

Fig. 1 is a side elevation of a double action automatic pistol;

Fig. 2 is a plan view of the pistol on a larger scale;

Fig. 3 is a section on line 3-3 of Fig. 2;

Fig. 4 is a section on line 4-4 of Fig. 3;

Figs. 5 and 6 are sections on line 5-5 of Fig. 3 showing positions of the safety device;

Figs. 7 and 8 are sections on line 7-7 of Fig. 2 showing details of the firing mechanism;

Fig. 9 is a section on line 9-9 of Fig. 2, parts being in modified position;

Fig. 10 of Fig. 2, parts being in modified position;

Fig. 11 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 12 is a plan view of the modified pistol;

Fig. 13 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 14 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 15 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 16 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 17 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 18 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 19 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 20 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 21 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 22 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 23 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 24 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 25 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 26 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 27 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 28 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 29 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 30 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 31 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 32 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 33 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

Fig. 34 is a side elevation of the modified pistol;

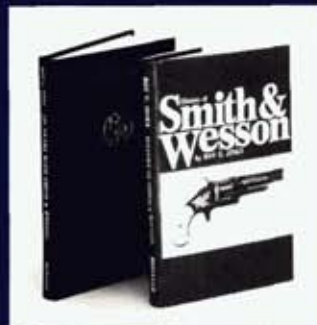
Color photos by Gerry Swart



II Shooting III Law Enforcement

Part I: History

Excerpted from the new book, "History of Smith & Wesson" by Roy G. Jinks. Published by Beinfeld Publishing, Inc., No. Hollywood, CA. Available from American Handgunner; see ad in this issue.

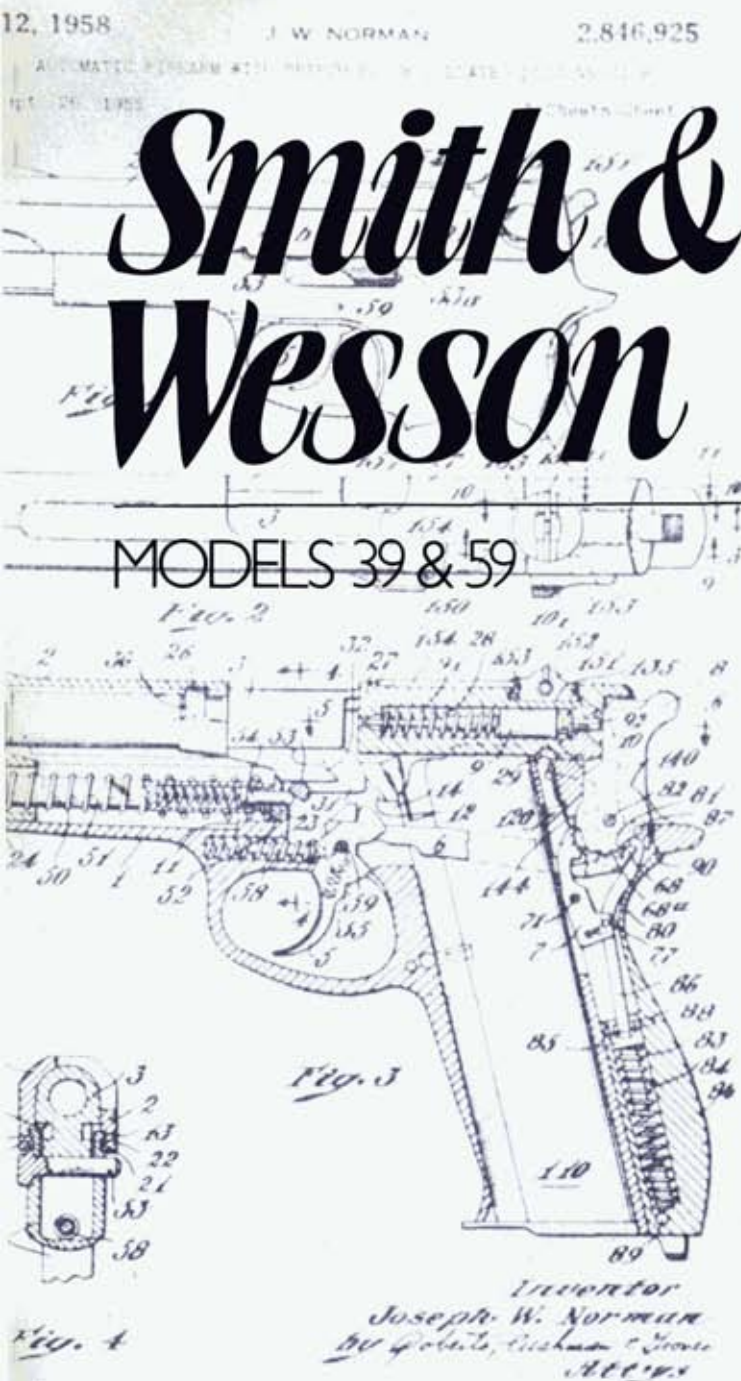


Included in the history of the Smith & Wesson 9MM pistol is the story of two of their rarest auto-loading pistols: the 9MM single action Model 44 and the double action Model 39-1, called the Model 52-A when sold commercially. Both of these models are deeply rooted within the story of the Model 39 and should be included in this section.

In 1946, after C. R. Hellstrom was elected president of Smith & Wesson, he made a commitment to improve production facilities and develop new models. One of the new models he wanted developed was a 9MM semi-automatic pistol featuring the double action first shot design. This type of pistol was manufactured by Walther in Europe prior to World War II. The assignment of this task fell to Joe Norman, Smith & Wesson's chief designer. On October 28, 1948, Joe Norman completed a prototype pistol serial numbered X-46. The factory tested this and other samples and, certain that the gun had good law enforcement and military possibilities, supplied a sample for testing to the Springfield Armory. Early testing by the U.S. Government brought requests for the factory to supply the army with a single action version rather than double action. Thus, on July 11, 1953, Smith & Wesson completed 6 steel-frame, single action, 9mm pistols; 5 of which were supplied to the U.S. Army for testing at its facilities at the Springfield Armory. Interest by the U.S. Army in single and double action 9mms stagnated, and test results were exchanged only between Smith & Wesson and the Springfield Armory. Still, the factory continued its development plans, testing both steel- and aluminum-framed pistols.

In 1954, the decision was made to place the 9mm double action into production as a light-weight alloy-frame pistol. Production parts were assembled December 8, 1954, and the first 10 production Smith & Wesson double action 9mms were completed. Still having some reservations regarding the acceptance of the double action pistol, the factory also planned and produced parts for the single action model. On December 13, 1954, two production-type single action 9MM pistols were completed and sent to various government and police agencies for testing.

Smith & Wesson's marketing plans called for



the production of 10 double action and single action auto-loaders to determine market interest. The production of single action parts continued, and the remaining lightweight single actions were completed between March 1955 and August 1955. During this same period, the factory completed 298 double action models. The factory now had to wait for the results of field tests before determining production schedules and model selections. By late 1955, only mild interest had been shown in both models, with the government requesting price quotes for both single and double action versions. Since interest was shown in both models, the January 1956 Smith & Wesson catalog carried illustrations of the 9mm single action, priced at \$65 and of the double action, priced at \$70. Each was available in blue finish only.

Interest in the single action never did develop; thus, the factory concentrated its ef-

factory literature referred to the single action as the Model 44 from March 1958 until August 1959, when the single action was officially discontinued. Smith & Wesson catalogued the single action for four years in anticipation of receiving a major military or police order that would permit the pistol to be placed into production. These orders never materialized, and no pistols other than the original 10 single actions were ever built.

The single action 9mm was entirely different from the double action model. It incorporated a solid single action trigger and a single action draw bar and sear. The manual safety did not drop the hammer from the cocked position when the safety was placed into the safe mode, as it did in the double action model. There is no question that the factory made the right

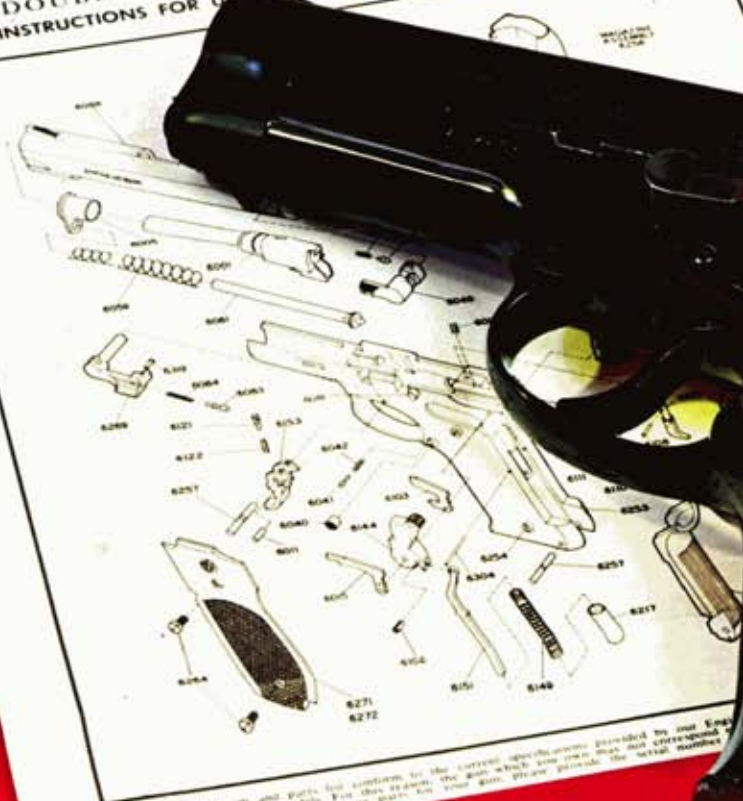
new manual safety lever appears on pistols having serial numbers above 2,200.

During the 1958/59 period, Smith & Wesson began to see a general increase in the sales of the Model 39. In 1960, they received an inquiry from the U.S. Army Marksmanship Training Unit located in Fort Benning, Georgia. The AMTU, impressed with the test performance of the Model 39, requested that Smith & Wesson produce a similar model designed to fire a new .38 cartridge with which they had been experimenting. This new cartridge was a semi-rimless .38 Special cartridge called the .38 AMU. One advantage of the new cartridge was the elimination of the rim, which reduced magazine stacking problems associated with auto-loading pistols designed for the .38 Special cartridge.

Smith & Wesson manufactured three prototypes for army evaluation. These were manufactured on steel frames and were delivered to Fort Benning and Lackland Air Force Base in the summer of 1960. All three pistols carried serial numbers that indicated they were special toolroom samples. These numbers were T1,059, T1,061, and T1,062. In late 1960, the U.S. Army Marksmanship Training Unit requested the company to

SMITH & WESSON 9MM AUTOMATIC PISTOL DOUBLE ACTION MODEL No. 39

PARTS LIST • INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE • MAINTENANCE • SPECIFICATIONS • GUARANTEE



forts on producing the double action model, producing only 797 of this model by the end of 1956. However, they did not lose faith in the single action and continued to illustrate it in the catalog until March 1958. In 1957, when model numbers were assigned to Smith & Wesson handguns, the double action version was called the Model 39 and the single action the Model 44. Though no single action pistols were manufactured with any model number stamped on the frame,

choice when they decided to produce only the double action version. Sales and production of the Model 39 continued slowly; and, in 1957, the factory produced only 426 units. During this year, the factory started stamping the model number on the left side of the frame. This occurs generally in handguns having serial numbers about 2,000. The factory also incorporated a longer safety lever, since the original was too short to operate with the thumb. The

manufacture additional pistols with alloy frames identical to the Model 39 except in caliber. The pistols were

placed into production by early 1961 and the schedule called for a production run of 100. To segregate special parts such as barrels, frames, and slides from the standard Model 39, this variation was designated Model 39-1. As the frames

neared completion, factory management became concerned that confusion might develop between the Model 39 9mm and the 39-1 in a .38 AMU caliber; therefore, a new model number was assigned this version of the Model 39 and the alloy frames were stamped Model 52. A total of 87 pistols was completed, and early in 1961 samples were forwarded to the army for testing. The balance of completed guns was placed in the vault at Smith & Wesson, pending further government orders. AMTU ultimately decided there was little advantage to the lightweight gun in that caliber when compared with the standard 9mm Model 39, and no further orders were received.

In June 1964, with the remaining .38 AMU pistols still inventoried, the factory decided to release the pistols through their normal distribution system. Realizing that the pistols could not be sold as

Model 52s (the number reassigned to its .38 Special Target auto-loading pistol), the guns were unpacked and stamped with an A to officially designate them as the Model 52-A. This model is found in the serial number range of 35,850-35,927. It should be pointed out that the stamping of Model 52 was the only feature these two pistols—the .38 Master and the .38 AMU—had in common. There is no question that the Model 52-A is a rare collector's item today.

In the early production stage of the 9mm program, the factory forged 1,000 steel frames for this model, but these frames were never used during early production except for experimental and military test guns. In 1966, the factory decided that, since the frames were partially completed, the machining should be finished and the guns assembled and sold. By the fall of 1966, the factory com-

pleted 927 of their 9mm Model 39s with steel frames and sales were processed through Smith & Wesson's normal distributor system. The steel-frame Model 39 is found in three serial number groups; the first group serial numbered in the 35,000 range, the second group dispersed between 62,000 and 64,000, and the last group in the 80,000 range. Unfortunately, factory production records were not kept on the exact serial numbers, but invoices do record the numbers; thus allowing the collector to authenticate his steel-frame Model 39.

After the steel frames were completed, the factory was too busy filling orders for the aluminum-framed version of this model to accept any other changes. Many police agencies were now testing and using the Model 39 as a duty sidearm. In 1971, Smith & Wesson improved the ex-

(Continued on page 57)

Part II: Shooting

Shooting the Smith Nines

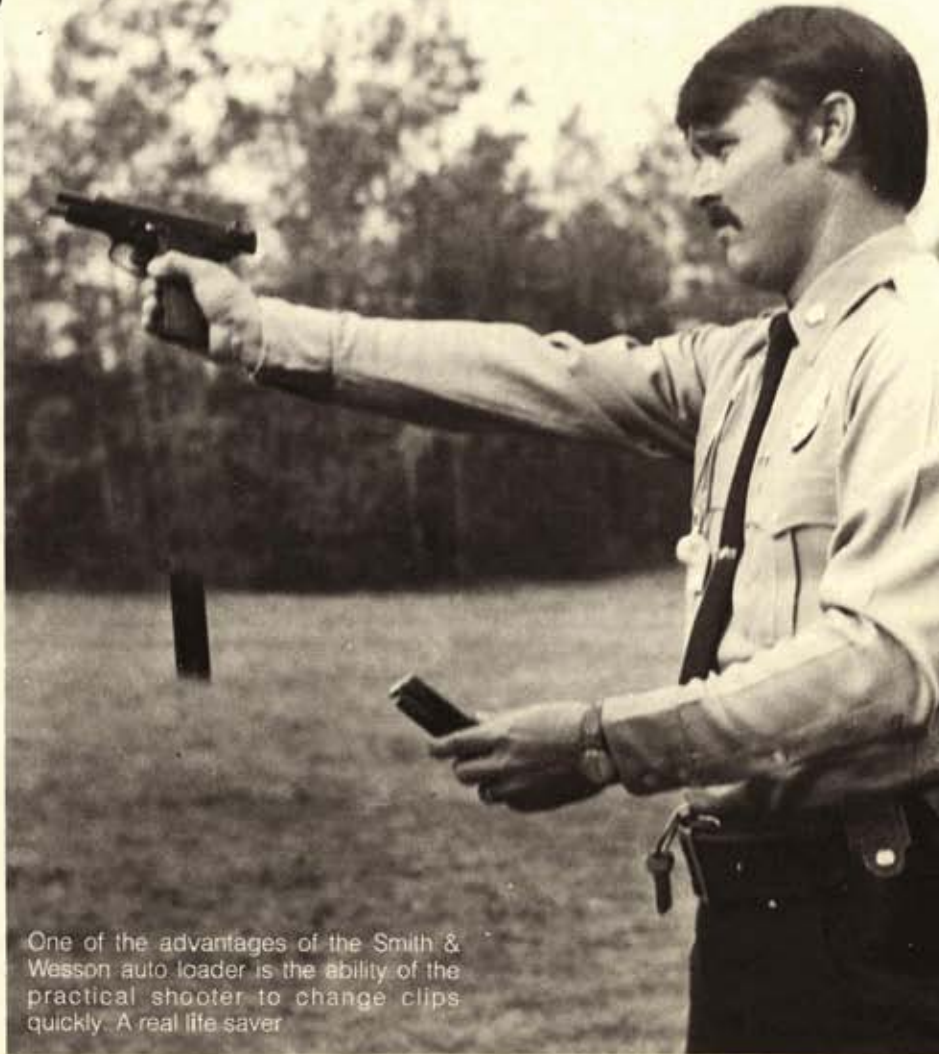
By MASSAD F. AYOOB

THE S&W models 39 and 59 continue to captivate handgunners, and it's easy to see why. Suitable for concealed carry and far superior for that purpose than any .38 snub or .380 auto; offering an immediate first shot without the "condition one paranoia" of carrying a cocked automatic, safety notwithstanding; actually delivering more firepower than the vaunted Browning Hi-Power (in the Model 59), these guns have a lot going for them, even though some gunsmiths cast jaundiced eyes at certain aspects of their design and sometimes their workmanship.

Running down the list of features, there's a lot that people experienced with these guns can tell the first-time owner, and even the one who's had his for a while. Some of the advice is admittedly debatable either way, and I'm sure guys who've owned three and four of the Smith Parabellums will disagree here and there. But when I talk to guys like Homer Clark, head of Illinois State Police Ordnance and shepherd of some 1700 Model 39s used by his department, I tend to place a lot of weight on the opinions such men learn from experience.

To "Safe" or Not to "Safe"?

Smith & Wesson's early sales literature on the Model 39 made the glowing comment that it was the first American-built auto that could be fired instantly, with a double action first shot, like a revolver.



One of the advantages of the Smith & Wesson auto loader is the ability of the practical shooter to change clips quickly. A real life saver

But in the fine print, it mentioned that when you wore the thing it was a good idea to engage the thumb safety.

It still is a good idea. It has long been established that a 39 or 59, if dropped on the muzzle from a height of three feet or more, will go off. Smith Parabellum buffs argue, logically enough, "If it's only going to go off when it hits the muzzle, that means the one accidentally-loosed round will go into the floor, so why worry about it?" It is true that while this accident has happened in some police departments that issue such guns, including Salt Lake City PD and Illinois State Police, no one has been injured. That's because they usually get dropped on the street or in the squadroom. And it's true that the 39 or 59 won't go off if dropped on the hammer. But let's suppose that you've just come home, end gone to the master bedroom to change your clothes and put the gun away. You set it on the night table, and it slides off, muzzle down, and your kids are directly beneath you playing in the rooms below...

Police officers are well advised to keep the safety on, if only for one reason: there is about one chance in five that if they're shot in the line of duty it will be with their own gun, and many a felon has grabbed a 39 or 59 from a patrolman's holster and been unable to shoot him because he didn't know where that inconspicuous, flat, tear-drop lever was.

On the negative side, the Smith safety is relatively awkward to release in a hurry, and requires an upward movement instead of an instinctive downward wipe-off like a Colt or Browning auto. This means that you have to lift your thumb, breaking your hold, at the crucial moment when your fist should be tightening to fire accurately in defense of your life.

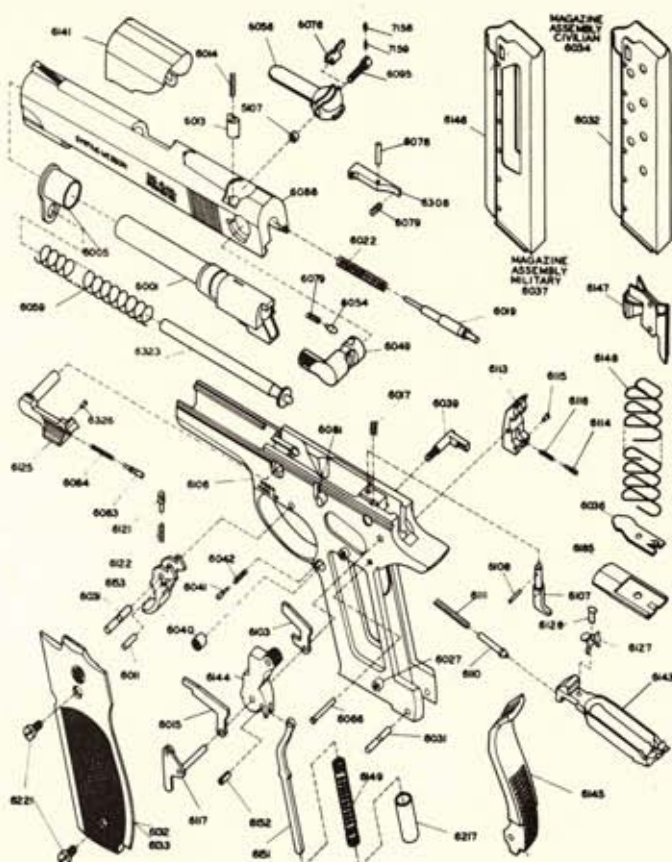
It can be learned, though. I eventually worked out an odd technique for drawing the locked Smith Parabellum. As my right hand scoops the gun from the holster, the right thumb flips the safety up into "fire." The fingertips of my left hand hook at the second joints of my right fingers, and my left thumb sweeps over the hammer, cocking it, and stops down near my right wrist. It is superfast, and avoids the long, muzzle-jerking double action pull for the first shot. The odd placement of the digits keeps the left thumb out of the slide's way.

If you carry a 39/59 as a *concealed* defense gun, though, you'd be better off to carry it with a round in the chamber, safety off, and be prepared for that first double action round with no fooling. Just be really careful about dropping the thing.

The DA/SA Controversy

Many handgunners, most notably Jeff Cooper, denounce the concept of a double-action-first-shot auto like this one because the long stroke of the first DA round requires a different finger position

Smith & Wesson Model 39



- 6107 Rear Sight Windage Nut
- 6001 Barrel
- 6005 Barrel Bushing
- 6011 Trigger Plunger Pin
- 6013 Ejector-depressor Plunger
- 6014 Ejector-depressor Plunger Spring
- 6015 Ejector Magazine Depressor
- 6017 Ejector Spring
- 6019 Firing Pin
- 6022 Firing Pin Spring
- 6027 Frame Stud
- 6031 Insert Pin, Trigger Pin
- 6032 Magazine Tube
- 6034 Magazine Assembly
- 6036 Magazine Butt Plate Catch
- 6037 Magazine Assembly-Military
- 6039 Magazine Catch
- 6040 Magazine Catch Nut
- 6041 Magazine Catch Plunger
- 6042 Magazine Catch Plunger Spring
- 6049 Manual Safety
- 6054 Manual Safety Plunger
- 6058 Rear Sight Leaf
- 6059 Recoil Spring

- 6066 Sear Pin
- 6076 Rear Sight Slide
- 6078 Extractor Pin
- 6079 Manual Safety Plunger Spring, Extractor Spring
- 6081 Slide Stop Button
- 6083 Slide Stop Plunger
- 6084 Slide Stop Plunger Spring
- 6088 Slide
- 6095 Rear Sight Windage Screw
- 6103 Sear Release Lever
- 6106 Frame
- 6107 Disconnect
- 6108 Disconnect Pin
- 6110 Drawbar Plunger
- 6111 Drawbar Plunger Spring
- 6113 Sear
- 6114 Sear Plunger
- 6115 Sear Plunger Pin
- 6116 Sear Plunger Spring
- 6117 Sideplate
- 6121 Trigger Plunger
- 6122 Trigger Plunger Spring
- 6125 Slide Stop

- 6126 Trigger Play Spring Rivet
- 6127 Trigger Play Spring
- 6132 Stock, Right
- 6133 Stock, Left
- 6141 Dust Shield—Military
- 6143 Drawbar
- 6144 Hammer
- 6145 Insert
- 6146 Magazine Tube—Military
- 6147 Magazine Follower
- 6148 Magazine Spring
- 6149 Mainspring
- 6151 Stirrup
- 6152 Stirrup Pin
- 6153 Trigger
- 6185 Magazine Butt Plate
- 6217 Mainspring Plunger
- 6221 Stock Screws (2)
- 6308 Extractor
- 6323 Recoil Spring Guide Assembly
- 6326 Slide Stop Plunger Rivet
- 7158 Rear Sight Windage Screw Plunger Spring
- 7159 Rear Sight Windage Screw Plunger Spring

on the trigger than do the succeeding, short SA pulls. On police practice ranges where Smith Parabellums are used, it is common to see the first shot go high and wide, before succeeding ones settle in to center.

Some people, myself included, don't have this problem. Since the trigger is wide and smooth on a 39, my finger just finds its own position for followup shots after the first DA round is out of the barrel. The tendency to put that first one high, I tend to believe, is largely because the trigger pull is so long. It's difficult to put a good double action trigger in an auto, and any Smith wheelgun (or Colt, Ruger, or Dan Wesson) has a better DA pull than a 39/59.

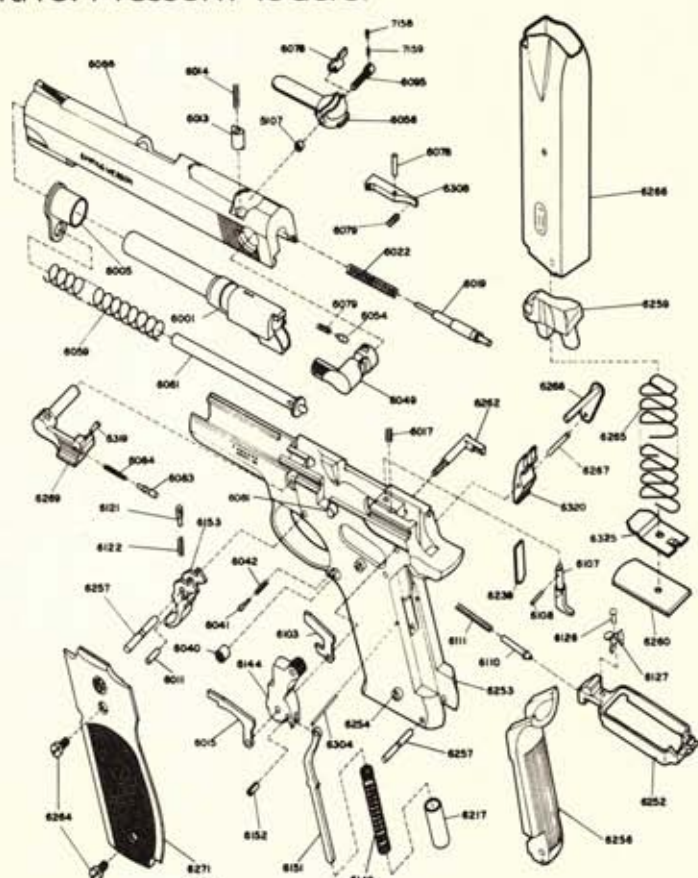
I will admit that when shooting one of

these pistols, a red light goes on in my head after the first shot: "Malfunction! Malfunction! The double action trigger hasn't returned!" It's a legacy, no doubt, of heavy practice in DA revolver shooting. I suspect it's one of the reasons revolver-oriented police have a difficult time adjusting to the 39/59. When you choose to carry a 39 or 59, realize early that you'll have to put in lots of practice.

Pointability

I never liked the pointing characteristics of the 39; it's the only automatic I've ever shot that points high in instinctive shooting. The straighter-gripped 59, in my own subjective hands, is more adaptable to pointed fire. But it's all relative; I know people who think the 39 is a natural pointer, and for them, the 59

Smith & Wesson Model 59



- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--|
| 5107 Rear Sight Windage Nut | 6084 Slide Stop Plunger Spring | 6257 Trigger Pin |
| 6001 Barrel | 6088 Slide | 6259 Magazine Follower |
| 6005 Barrel Bushing | 6095 Rear Sight Windage Screw | 6260 Magazine Butt Plate |
| 6011 Trigger Plunger Pin | 6103 Sear Release Lever | 6262 Magazine Catch |
| 6013 Ejector-depressor Plunger | 6107 Disconnector | 6264 Stock Screws (4) |
| 6014 Ejector-depressor Plunger Spring | 6108 Disconnector Pin | 6265 Magazine Spring |
| 6015 Sear Lever | 6110 Drawbar Plunger | 6266 Magazine Tube |
| 6017 Ejector Spring | 6111 Drawbar Plunger Spring | 6267 Sear Pin |
| 6019 Firing Pin | 6121 Trigger Plunger | 6268 Slideplate |
| 6022 Firing Pin Spring | 6122 Trigger Plunger Spring | 6269 Slide Stop |
| 6040 Magazine Catch Nut | 6126 Trigger Play Spring Rivet | 6271 Stock, Left |
| 6041 Magazine Catch Plunger | 6127 Trigger Play Spring | 6272 Stock, Right |
| 6042 Magazine Catch Plunger Spring | 6144 Hammer | 6304 Sear Spring Retaining Pin |
| 6049 Manual Safety | 6149 Mainspring | 6308 Extractor |
| 6054 Manual Safety Plunger | 6151 Stirrup | 6319 Slide Stop Plunger Rivet |
| 6056 Rear Sight Leaf | 6152 Stirrup Pin | 6320 Sear |
| 6059 Recoil Spring | 6153 Trigger | 6323 Recoil Spring Guide Assembly |
| 6061 Recoil Spring Guide | 6182 Ejector Magazine Depressor | 6325 Magazine Butt Plate Catch |
| 6076 Rear Sight Slide | 6217 Mainspring Plunger | 7158 Rear Sight Windage Screw |
| 6078 Extractor Pin | 6239 Sear Plunger Spring | 7159 Rear Sight Windage Screw Plunger Spring |
| 6079 Manual Safety Plunger Spring, Extractor Spring | 6252 Drawbar | |
| 6081 Slide Stop Button | 6253 Frame | |
| 6083 Slide Stop Plunger | 6254 Frame Stud | |
| | 6256 Insert | |

points low. Try your own *unloaded* gun a few times in front of a mirror: close your eyes, thrust the gun out to where you'd pull the trigger, and then look and see just where it's pointing. In any case, point shooting is not a vital consideration, since any time you can't see to aim you probably can't see to identify your target either.

Jamming

Though it has been known to perk through sand and mud torture tests, the 39/59 has developed a reputation of being significantly less reliable than the Colt or Browning 9mms. The original problems in the feed ramp of the 39 have been corrected, but the gun will still bobble, now and then. It wants a good bright polish on the feed ramp, and maybe a little of

what the custom gunsmiths call "throat-ing." Any good pistolsmith can do it for you for a few bucks, and if you're carrying the 39/59 for defense (and really, what else would you want one for) it gives you much improved reliability with the hollowpoints that are essential if you're going to trust your life to a 9 mm pistol in an anti-personnel confrontation.

When we say things like this, we draw the wrath of 39/59 fans who say indignantly, "I've put thousands of rounds through mine and it *never* jammed!" I don't doubt that. The Smith Parabellum has more variance between individual specimens than any handgun I've ever worked with. One can be superbly put together, and just omnivorous: it'll gobble anything you feed it without a burp. But

another gun from the same production run may have feeding problems. This is why I don't think I'm contradicting myself when I say the 59 is an excellent weapon for the individual officer who knows his guns, but a poor choice for departmental issue. That single cop will have made sure that his personal specimen percolates reliably, but it is safe to assume that out of an order big enough to outfit a department, some of the 59s or 39s are going to have problems.

Sights

S&W has been working for several years on a second generation series of 9 mms that will have fully adjustable sights and ambidextrous safeties. We're still waiting. The sights have been test-produced in small batches and checked out, but proved to be too frail to take the battering of the slide slamming back and forth. (This is not an indictment of the S&W product by any means. Colt's deluxe Gold Cup is infamous for shearing the pin that holds its Eliason sight in place, often causing it to fly off the slide. It's just that a high-pressure auto cartridge slams the slide to and fro so forcibly that an adjustable sight that works on it has to be *super rugged*.)

MMC, 212 E. Spruce, Deming, NM 88030, makes a very good little combat sight for the 39/59. It has a low, snag-free profile, and it gives you the ability to adjust your elevation for the different points of impact between, say, a 90-gr S&W hollowpoint and a 124-gr. Remington "ball" cartridge. The windage adjustments that come on 39/59 sights are adequate.

S&W makes rear sight blades in three different heights to accommodate different loads. They are available to police armorers, but I don't believe they're in the retail catalogs. You might be able to get some from the company's service department, though. Good luck. Try to get a military m/39 magazine and ejection port dust-cover, while you're at it.

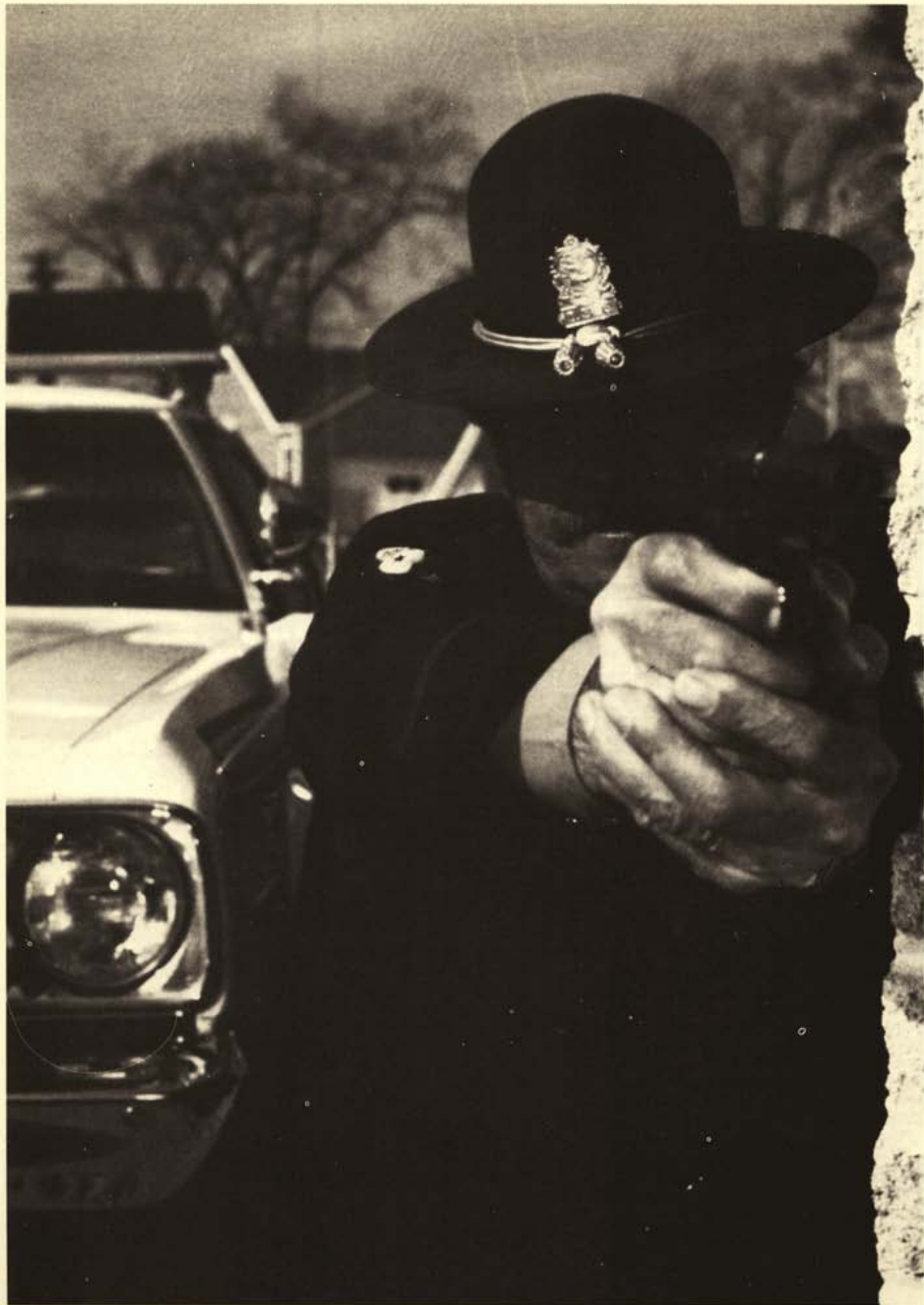
It was said that the 39 was sighted to shoot low when it was first produced, on the theory that in a gunfight, most people would tend to put their first shot high. Most owners simply filed down the front sight to compensate. Today's 59s and 39-2s tend to shoot pretty much on.

Another worthwhile option on these guns is Julio Santiago's \$40 Nite-Site. Since most of these weapons are used for personal protection or home defense, and since most such applications occur after dark, it could give you a definite edge. The days of black-market pricing of 9 mm S&W autos is pretty much over, and the retail list is quite reasonable, so this kind of accessory is affordable.

Shooting Characteristics

Sgt. Louis Seman (ret.) of Illinois State Police, the guy who turned that department on to the 39, once built his own 9 mm target pistol, kind of a bastard cross

(Continued on page 66)



AT THE time of the Model 39's introduction, no one seriously predicted that it might become a tool for domestic law enforcement. Policework in the fifties was strictly revolver-only, save for the random .45 automatic in the hands of a Texas ranger, Southern sheriff, or metro felony squad detective. The .357 Magnum revolver, after twenty years, was just making inroads to real police acceptance.

By the Sixties, though, things had changed. Armed robbers were becoming more sophisticated and were operating in teams. Ambushes of cops were escalating. The unnerving spectre of the Riot Years had given lawmen an itch for firepower.

And the police began to take a second look at the Model 39.

It burgeoned mostly in California, that bellwether of modern law enforcement, in small communities. The two biggest steps came later. The milestone was in 1967 when, accompanied by headlines in both the gun mags and the law enforcement journals, Illinois State Police adopted the gun for its entire force, which now has an authorized complement of 1700 sworn troops. Salt Lake City PD followed, the first large metro agency to do so, and the two were held up as shining examples of progressive thought by police gun buffs.

The biggest spurt came with the introduction of the 15-shot Model 59. With 250% of the firepower of a service revolver, the 9 mm DA auto was more attractive than ever, and police across the nation began ordering them. Soon, the factory was producing three 59s for every two 39s.

But by 1977, a disturbing trend had emerged: an inordinately high percentage of the agencies that adopted these autos were switching back to the wheelgun. To see why, let's look at some of the agencies that went to the 39 and 59, why some kept it, and some didn't.

Salt Lake City, at this writing, is completing the transition to the Model 64 (fixed sight, stainless) S&W .38 revolver. The reason, their Major Bryant told me, was purely "that the troops weren't happy with the Model 39." They had been demoralized, he said, by several incidents in which the auto went off when dropped on the muzzle, and by jamming

on the practice range. Neither gun nor cartridge ever failed on the street, however. "We only had three shootings with the 39," said Bryant, "but when we did shoot someone with the 9 mm, they went down."

Wrentham, Massachusetts, may have been the first police department to adopt the Model 59. I wrote an article on it for the Massachusetts Police Association edition of SENTINEL magazine, and rightly or wrongly, was attributed some

(Above) Model 39 or 59 has firepower that can be comforting to lawmen such as these Illinois State Troopers. That is, if they are completely confident.

Illinois State Police trooper with 39 (opposite) on firing line with the Model 39. Author believes more training is needed than with a revolver.



Part III: Law Enforcement

S & W Autos for Law Enforcement

Massad Ayooob photograph courtesy of Trooper Magazine, and Organization Services Corporation publication.



Members of a S.W.A.T. training team with their S&W 59's used for close in combat work.

responsibility for accelerated interest in the gun in the Bay State. One police dealer accosted me at a combat shoot and said, "You're the guy who screwed up my police sales projections for the next two years! Since that damn article came out, everybody wants 59s!" Actually, there weren't that many departments that made the total switch.

Wrentham still issues the gun, however, and the men are still happy with it. They've had no shootings yet, according to Chief Paul Schwalbe. In Yarmouth, Mass., however, it was another story. At first thrilled with all that firepower, Chief Ted Reynolds told me, his men were quickly demoralized by jamming on the range. Only about 12% of the guns experienced problems, but that was apparently enough. There were also concerns about stopping power. In one 9 mm shooting, a burglary suspect was shot at point blank range. He surrendered immediately, but remained totally mobile and would have been capable of walking to the ambulance. He recovered completely, and never lost consciousness. In their second shootout, Yarmouth cops did better with the 59: a shotgun-armed assailant who came at an officer was shot 3 times, in the chest and abdomen. He was flung backward by bullet impact, and killed instantly. In both shootings, the issue 90-gr. S&W jacketed HP round was used. The department has since switched to the stainless Combat Magnum revolver.

The Sandwich, Mass. PD had a different experience, according to Chief Bob Whearty. Thirty-eight Model 59s were

purchased, for the firepower and the on-duty/off-duty carryability. There were no malfunction problems worth noting, but the damp salt air soon wrought havoc with the blued guns (curiously, Whearty notes, this had been no particular problem with the blued S&W Model 15s and 36s issued before). Worse, he found, was that once the blue was gone, the aluminum frame itself began to disintegrate: "If a man had had the gun in the holster for a few weeks, you could hold the holster over a desk and shake out the aluminum shavings," the chief told me. S&W reps, he said, blamed the problem on the sea air and the tight fit of the uniform holster.

Most patrolmen, he said, found the grip too awkward for comfort, especially his one female officer. Whearty himself switched to a smaller-gripped 39. He also liked the fact that scores of poor shooters went up dramatically, those of medium shooters went up significantly, and the good shooters stayed the same. Nevertheless, after two years, he dropped the automatics and switched the department to Model 64s for patrol, and Model 60s for off-duty and plainclothes work.

Several southwestern police departments have also gone back to the wheelgun after flirtations with the S&W 9 mm, usually the Model 59, with concern over jamming usually cited as the reason. S&W tacitly recognized the problem with a recent news release that offered to change the slide stop, ejector, and magazine followers for police-owned 59s without charge.

Still, in any consideration of the 39/59

for police use, Illinois State Police remains the classic example. Working on their eleventh year, with as many as 1700 troopers and detectives carrying the Model 39 at one time (present manpower is about 1500), they have more shootings logged with the 9 mm than perhaps all other police departments combined.

I have had a unique opportunity to monitor the ISP experiment, having been for more than two years feature editor of the Illinois edition of *TROOPER* magazine. The story began back in the 60s, and firepower wasn't the reason for the switch. ISP members at that time had to be armed 24 hours, and qualify with their off-duty guns. Scores with their snub .38s were embarrassingly low. These weapons, like their .38 service revolvers, were personally owned. The department assigned Sgt. Louis Seman, their savvy ordnance head and a 2600 shooter, to find a weapon that could be carried both on and off duty without sacrificing performance. After an elaborate series of tests, he settled on the 39.

The on/off-duty capability has been a major reason why many departments have gone to this gun. It is ironic that ISP dropped their always-armed requirement shortly after the 39's adoption. Nevertheless, the gun did the job: poor shooters shot much better with it, average shooters somewhat better, and good shooters dropped some points. This is a pattern you see in virtually every department that goes to the Smith Nine: the good human engineering of the gun; the elimination of the heavy DA pull for every shot, and the absence of recoil twist in the hand, all make it easier for the novice to shoot well. Conversely, a man who has mastered the handgun simply won't find in the S&W auto the intrinsic accuracy that is built into every quality service revolver.

Initial trooper reaction to the 39 was bad. Many were totally unfamiliar with semi-auto pistols and retained a negative gut feeling about it even after extensive training. Some resented giving up their personal guns, and others were just angry that the change was made without their being polled. (This is always a factor

when an automatic is adopted. One reason Wrentham PD stays with the 59 is that the men chose it by vote themselves. Other agencies where the gun was chosen without input from the patrol officers find much the same bad vibes as ISP.)

The first ISP 39s didn't work out at all. The 60°-40° step in the feed ramp caused jams. The bushings and extractors failed rapidly. Since this was the first large-scale use of the weapon, S&W engineers took the advice of the ISP armorers and incorporated beefier parts and made several other changes. As a result, the contemporary Model 39-2 was born. Though I speak of the 39 without the secondary designation, it is generally accepted that only the 39-2, and not the original 39, should be considered for police service. ISP now has all 39-2s or 39s that have been converted to beefier bushings and extractors, and with improved feed ramps.

Even with the bugs worked out, though, there were jamming problems. One was that, even though S&W originally recommended Anderol as lubricant, this turned out to be too thin and would quickly drain out of a holstered gun. Model 39s and 59s don't like to work dry. They demand attention and lubrication, probably more so than, say, the 1911 .45.

Still, they could say, the gun had never jammed on the street. That happy state of affairs ended shortly before Thanksgiving 1976 when Trooper Carl Kobler was shot down by a junkie in a "hasty ambush." His right arm numb from a bullet wound, Kobler fumbled his Model 39 from its cross-draw flap holster left handed, managed to get the safety off, and fired twice at the fleeing car before the pistol jammed. He has since recovered, and his assailant, captured by another trooper, was imprisoned.

This incident gave TROOPER (a publication of the Illinois Troopers Lodge of Fraternal Order of Police, and not an official department magazine) a mandate to poll the men on the controversial weapon. Almost a hundred three-page questionnaires were returned. The results?

72% of the respondents said they'd rather carry a revolver, with the Colt Python heavily favored. Among the 28% who liked automatics, 46% said they'd rather carry a Colt .45, with 30% favoring the Model 59, 23% the Browning 9 mm. Of the 12% who said they'd stay with the 39, many young troopers noted that they said so only because it was the only automatic, or indeed the only handgun, they were familiar with.

Fewer than half rated themselves at all

confident with the gun, only 7% supremely confident. 87% said they were less than totally confident with the Model 39, and a shocking 14% said they felt "totally insecure and unsafe" with it.

Admittedly, that's only 90-some out of 1500 troopers, and the survey response may have been weighted away from those who didn't have any particular opinion of the gun, but even if only those who feel strongly about something respond to a survey, it is significant that not many seemed to be strongly in favor of the 39. In any case, no one doubts that given their choice, the majority of ISP's troopers would rather carry a revolver.

One criticism of the 39 for police use, by the way, is unfounded. Critics of the Smith Nine like to say, "If it's so good, how come the other state police and highway patrol agencies didn't adopt it?" The fact is that New Hampshire's Department of Safety once issued 39s to all motor vehicle inspectors, who were switched to the Model 66 for uniformity when that branch was incorporated into the regular State Police. Connecticut State Police detectives are authorized to carry double action automatics if they choose, and a large percentage have bought their own 39s and 59s. There is

(Continued on page 64)



Search for the Humongous Bear

By J. D. JONES

Five foot black bear taken with the Super Blackhawk shown. Ruger is stock except for Mag-Na-Porting and action job by Phil Crowley.



LARRY KELLY, president of Mag-Na-Port Arms, and Gerry Kraft, president of Magnum Sales Limited, Inc. are the most successful black bear handgun hunters I know. For the past several years they have invited me to go bear hunting with them, but due to business commitments I couldn't make it. Each year I heard the tales of their successful hunt and made up my mind that this year I was going to make it.

In "77" though, the Outstanding American Handgunner Awards were in

conjunction with the N.R.A. show in Cincinnati. Since Kelly is Chairman of the OAHA Foundation, and I'm Vice-President, it was necessary for both of us to be in attendance—during prime bear hunting time.

Larry had severe reservations about the condition of bear hides that late in the spring. He and Gerry were to leave the day after the awards dinner, drive to Montana and let me know how things looked on the following Wednesday or Thursday. Assuming the bears were still

foraging and their hides were in good condition I would fly to Kalispell and we would hunt from there.

Prior to the anticipated departure date, I had decided to use a 10.5 inch scoped .44 Auto Mag on the hunt as it was assumed that fairly long shots in poor light would be likely. I intended to take an iron sighted 8.5 inch barrel assembly along to switch to in the event we hunted in heavy brush. It only takes a few seconds to switch barrels on the Auto Mags.

I had had good results with 28-29 grains

of WW 296 in CDM cases sparked by CCI Magnum primers and the 200 grain Hornady .430 Hollow Point on fairly light game from the 6.5 inch A.M.P. and gave it a good workout from the long barrels. Accuracy from a rest on the truck hood hovered around 1.5-2.0 inches at 100 yards from the scoped 10 inch with the 29.0 grain load and around 4-5 inches from the 8.5 inch barrel. Functioning was perfect with both barrels. The 10.5 inch barrel utilized a Leupold M-8-2X scope in a Maxi-Mount. I figured I was all set.

On the Monday after the N.R.A. show I found out I had to leave on a business trip Tuesday morning. Undaunted, but unwilling to risk one of my valuable LEJ 005 Auto Mags (only 35 complete sets) through several airline flights and motels, I packed a Super Blackhawk .44, a scoped .44 T/C, one box of 236 grain Norma factory loads and several boxes of the original Super Vel 180 grain hollow point ammo.

Sometime Thursday night Kelly phoned in the bad news. They had seen several bears but the hides were rubbed and they weren't shootable. He recommended forgetting it this year. Business finished and being on the west side of the country anyway, I decided to try it regardless.

At about 2 p.m. the next day they met me in Kalispell. First stop was to pick up a license. Since they thought I looked good for bear hunting in a light sport coat, white shirt and light green checked pants they wouldn't stop to let me change clothes. No time for foolish things like that—we're losing valuable time from bear hunting. At least I was able to get my Super Blackhawk out of the suitcase on top of the mess in the rear of the 4 WD carryall—and since I couldn't reach the suitcase with the ammo in it they were kind enough to give me six rounds of the 240 grain Federal ammo they had. They did balk a little bit at my wanting to stop and sight in. They were willing to compromise though and stopped long enough for me to fire two shots and ascertain they were hitting about a foot high at about 100 yards.

Seems as if I recall a few remarks similar to "What the hell you want to sight in for—you gun writers don't need sights, you got typewriters, etc. etc. etc." They then informed me that since I was the guest I had to kill a bear or at least hit one before they would shoot. I protested to no avail; I hadn't seen a bear in ten years and didn't want to shoot a midget. "Don't worry, we'll tell you if it's big enough." Sure, I thought, they'll probably tell me to shoot a cub and blackmail me. In fact I accused them of having that in mind. (It's nice to have confidence in your friends.) I really wasn't concerned with not being sighted in, as I really didn't expect to see anything, much less get a shot at a decent bear that evening.

We saw three crossing an open area



Gerry Kraft doing some informal plinking with custom M-29.

and disappear into the trees. Two of them were year and a half old cubs or better, fully large enough to take care of themselves and a fairly large sow. As we were above them we tried to cut them off for a better look but only caught glimpses of them in the woods.

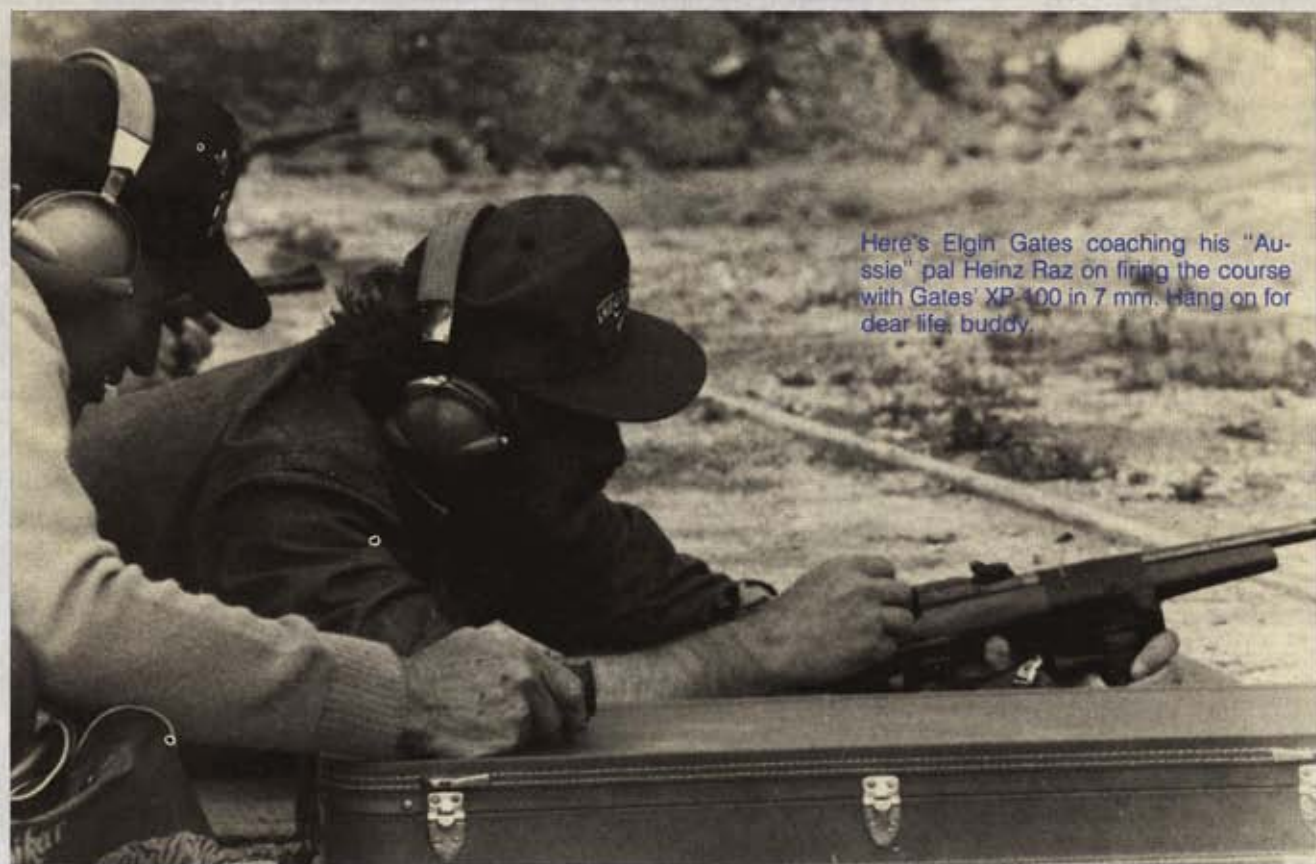
At about 9:30 p.m. light was fading fast on the old grassy logging road we were on. Suddenly, a black shape emerged from the woods and immediately became an indistinct shape in the shadows. We froze. Mr. Bear was very intent on filling up on lush grass after a long hibernation and didn't notice us. He meandered around and finally got into the open long enough for a good look at him.

Larry whispered, "He's good enough,"

(Continued on page 68)

Kelly's custom 5" M-29, Zeiss pocket 8x20's and track folding knife and ammo.





Here's Elgin Gates coaching his "Aussie" pal Heinz Raz on firing the course with Gates' XP-100 in 7 mm. Hang on for dear life, buddy.

Handguns for Silhouettes

By BERT STRINGFELLOW

Editor's note: Future issues of The American Handgunner will cover the exotic production and unlimited handguns, with features on the 14" Contenders, the XP-100 and others.



1½ in. .458 Stephens

1½ in. .308

.30 x .223

7mm x 1¾ in. .308 Talbot

6.5 mm x .222 Mag. Talbot

SEPTEMBER of 1975 saw the beginning of a pistol competition that has fired the imagination of big bore pistol shooters throughout the nation. Lee Juras started it by sponsoring a Magnum Handgun Metallic Silhouette Match in Tucson, Arizona. The match was held in association with his Club de Auto Mag and it was held to promote big bore pistol shooting and the Auto Mag pistol in particular. Many of the shooters, including myself, went to that first match carrying their favorite Auto Mag and the idea that they could win the match. Well, a young fellow named Don Jeter showed us how it should be done, using a .44 Ruger Super Blackhawk and cast bullets. From that original 50 plus competitor match the interest has grown through the formation of the International Handgun Metallic Silhouette Association to the point where the local shoot held in the Los Angeles area in May of 1977 produced 178 competitors for a two-day shoot.

Under the rules of the newly formed IHMSA there are two classes for handguns which may be used in competition: there is the production gun class which is the backbone of the association and the unlimited class for the shooter who enjoys experimenting with his handguns. The production class handgun must be a piece which is commercially available and has had no modifications performed upon it.

The production class shooter may change his stocks, sights, etc., but only to those items which are commercially available to anyone over the counter and which do not require machine tools for their installation.

The unlimited handgun class has only two limitations and they are as follows: The piece may not weigh more than 4.5 lbs. and the sight radius must not be more than 15 inches. The only other limitations on the handguns are: no shoulder stocks and no scopes.

The production class has become dominated in numbers by the Model 29 Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum, usually with the 8¾" barrel, and the Ruger Super Blackhawk .44 Magnum. We see very few Auto Mags at the matches. However, John Adams has worked up a load for his .357 Auto Mag using 180 gr. rifle bullets which he uses very successfully; single shot, of course, because the cartridges are too long for the magazines. Thompson Center Contenders appear at the silhouette matches, but in the heavier calibers, their light weight and heavy recoil abuse the shooters over the 40-shot course until bullet placement begins to suffer from the flinch that inevitably develops. I believe that the 14" bull barrels with click adjustable sights announced by Thompson Center could well be the answer to the production class.

An assortment of other pistols show up at the matches, such as M-27 and M-28 Smith & Wesson .357 Magnums, Ruger Blackhawks in .357 and .45 Colt, Colts in the long barreled Frontier Models and also the Python. In most cases the shooters are proving that the hits are a result primarily of their techniques and secondarily of their pistol. In Fresno, California during the Sierra Pistol Club's first silhouette match in June, Glen Goerzen, a tall, lean, mustached western type from Fresno, stepped up and dropped 23 out of 40 silhouettes shooting a Ruger Blackhawk with a 5½" barrel and chambered for the .45 Colt cartridge. Glen shot that outstanding score from the standing position with a two-hand hold.

The unlimited or modified class guns are of great interest to the handgunning enthusiast because they attempt to achieve the ultimate in a precision handgun and, as such, stir the imagination of the hunting handgunner. To date five wildcat cartridges have been developed and tested which would function very well for varmint or big game hunting; they range from the 6.5mm X .222 Mag. Talbot, which would be great for varmints, up to the 1½" .458 Stephens, which, with its 350 grain bullet going at 1500fps, would be good for bear. These cartridges are capable of being loaded to velocity levels which will damage the steel silhouettes used in the matches, and in some instances holes have been punched completely through the ½-inch thick steel chickens. The loads described to me by some of the shooters at the matches I have attended appear to be so extreme that I am leery of putting them in print for fear that someone might damage his pistol while attempting to duplicate a load. However, the loads these shooters are using are safe for their pistols because they are custom tailored for the *one* gun they are being shot in.

The old Remington XP-100 and the Thompson Center Contender have been the beginnings for most of the modified guns. On occasion an M-29 Smith & Wesson or a Ruger Super Blackhawk shows up at a match with a long bull barrel but the revolvers do not allow the shooter the precise trigger mechanism and selection of sighting equipment available to the shooter of a single shot. Gunsmith Lee Baker of Carson City, Nevada has used rifle sights, such as peep rear sights and hooded front sights with great success. Even so, the highest modified gun score fired to date (August, 1977) is 38 hits out of 40 silhouettes. That score was fired at the May match in Los Angeles by Elgin Gates. All eyes will be on the top modified gun shooters at the up-coming matches to see if the perfect gun which combines accuracy, knock-down power (the rams weigh 40 pounds each) and controllable recoil can reap that perfect score—40 hits with 40 shots.



Although this is "custom" with a 12" bull barrel, the first winner did it with an ordinary .44 Super Blackhawk. This is one owned by Larry Stephens of Carson City.



Here's a "production class" Auto Mag with a 10" barrel chambered for the .357 Auto Mag. John Adams used the 180 grain rifle bullet.



An XP-100 with a .458 bull barrel. This one tips the scales at 4½ pounds, by Lee Baker.



"Custom" Thompson-Center Contender chambered for the 30-223, fires a 133 grain hollow point bullet. The variety seems unlimited.

SHOTLOADS

(Continued from page 25)

of the countersink. The end needs to be flat and smooth, perpendicular to the length of the dowel. Pin or glue the dowel in place. Pinning is best unless you happen to have some "Super Glue" or similar cyanoacrylate adhesive handy. This is your "crimping die," used with a hammer and care. Place a prepared case upright on a smooth, solid surface. Put the die over the case mouth, aligning it carefully. Now rap the top of the die with a plastic hammer. A little practice will teach you how hard to strike. The chamfered edge of the pipe will turn the case mouth over the plastic wad, while the dowel keeps the wad from jumping out or becoming cocked in the process. After crimping, your full-charge, .44 Bulldog, shot load is finished. Depending to some degree on the wads you have used, and the wall thickness of the .30-40 brass, these loads will contain up to 1/2 ounce of number 9 shot—and that is about 285 pellets. This is the shot-charge equivalent of a standard .410 gauge shotshell load.

The short, three-inch, rifled barrel isn't designed to produce optimum patterns with naked shot. There isn't any choke, and the spiral rifling not only deforms shot pellets but tends to swirl them out

into a doughnut-like spread at any great range. Compared to a proper, choked, smoothbore barrel, the results are less than ideal. However, the purpose of a small-gun shot load is serious use at ranges measured more in feet than in yards. Under those conditions, most, if not all, of the shot charge will be on target and will have considerable penetration. At ten feet, this load (in a .44 Bulldog) will put enough of its pellets on a No. 2 tomato can to knock it galley-west and well perforated. And, there's no reason you can't carry a couple of these loads in your Bulldog, along with a trice of standard ball loads.

Actually, shot-load performance can be improved a bit, but it will cost you the price of a new Bulldog cylinder. On the other hand, it will eliminate the need for extra resizing and for that odd crimping die. You can get a spare cylinder (assuming you want to retain the gun's originality) and ream its chambers straight through. Do this with a 7/16-1/2 inch expansion reamer, opening up the chamber throats until they are a straight extension of the chamber. Then, prepare and fire-form cases exactly as before. They'll come out straight, rather than bottle-necked.

Loading proceeds exactly as before, except that there'll be no bottle-neck to interfere with wad-seating and there will

be more room for shot. This time, you may resize full length in a standard .44 Special die. You'll also be able to crimp the over-shot wad in place in a standard .44 Special or .44 Magnum seat/crimp die. Just run the seating screw down to hold the wad in place, then adjust the die upward to produce a proper crimp on the longer case.

If you're worried about not being able to use bullet cartridges in the altered cylinder, don't; you can. Don't use standard cartridges. If you do, the bullet will upset to fill the oversize chamber, and will place excessive stress on the barrel forcing cone as it is swaged down. The result is likely to be a split forcing cone. Instead, just load wadcutter bullets (of usual .44 Special diameter and weight) into the cylinder-length cases. Seat them flush with the case mouth and crimping securely. Lacking wadcutter bullets, simply invert any standard bullet and load in the same manner. Most effective in this sort of load is Lyman number 429422, a hollow-base, semi-wadcutter, cast very soft, and loaded inverted to form a massive, cup-point bullet that opens up in target almost like a grenade.

In short, the Charter Arms Bulldog offers the ideal vehicle for a small-gun/shot-load combination. You have to make the ammo yourself, but after that it's downhill all the way.



PISTOLSMITHING

by George Nonte



One of the world's best known writers sets the stage for this book which, because of even tighter government regulations, becomes more important to handgun owners every day. The acquisition of skills necessary to do everything from the simple work of touching up a blueing job to the more complicated rebuilding and accurizing is made easier with the step-by-step advice. Pistols, revolvers and automatic pistols can be fixed, improved, and maintained properly following directions for welding brazing, soldering, hardening, tempering, revolver tuning and timing, refinishing and more, completely illustrated with photos and drawings.

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"You are producing a superb revolver embodying the tradition of old time workmanship with innovative design."

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"Your service does justice to the quality of your fine arms and proves the value of your warranty."

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PISTOLSMITH REPORT



THE PISTOLSMITH

By GEORGE C. NONTE

Doubtless some of you'll remember Lin Trapper (Trapper Guns, 16746 14-Mile Road, Fraser, Michigan 48026), who I've mentioned before on these pages. Trapper is a top pistolsmith, but delves into other fields as well. He's always looking for ways to do things better or quicker. Obviously, things that will work for him will work for other smiths as well.

So, when Trapper had milling cutter sets made up for installing S&W K- and N-rear sights on other guns, he decided to offer them to other smiths as well. Those of you who have tried to obtain the bastard-size cutters needed to fit those sights

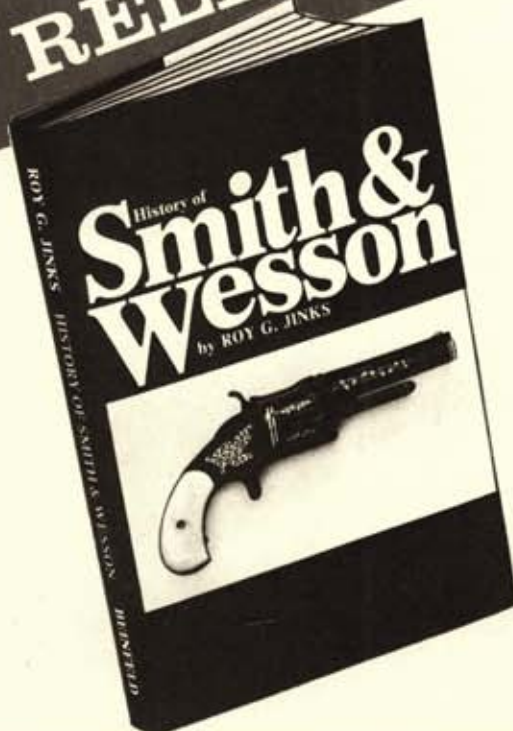
properly will know the problem. About all you can do is find a good, custom-tool shop and have them made to order at a very unpleasant price. Trapper has made it easy, if not cheap, by having complete sets made up of the tools he uses and offering them for sale, complete with layout, setup, and use instructions.

The set consists of a single-end, ball mill and three, specially-ground, double-end milling cutters. Cutter T-2 is for the longitudinal cut to accept the sight base. It is .002" undersize to allow cleaning up the cut with files. This same cutter is used for the crosscut for the sight boss at the rear

of the frame, T-3 is simply a 1/8-inch mill and is used to cut the vertical recess for the elevation screw nut. T-1 is a rather delicate, small cutter for forming the T-slot, at the bottom of the aforementioned hole, to accept the flange on the elevation nut. A 5/16-inch ball mill (T-4) is supplied to make the relief cut for the sight ratchet.

Cutters 1, 2, and 3 are double-ended so that when you eventually break one, the job won't have to wait while you order another. However, if you break one end, you'd better quickly order another, because you're then down to one usable cutter; if it goes, S&W sight jobs stop.

JUST RELEASED!



HISTORY OF SMITH & WESSON

by Roy G. Jinks

Presented for the first time are facts, production information, and data on variations and modifications of all post-1945 SMITH & WESSON firearms, information necessary to every S & W gun collector. Written by SMITH & WESSON authority Roy G. Jinks, this all new book carefully details the evolution of the company and step-by-step, describes the development of each of their firearms from 1852 through and including 1977. Send \$15.95 plus \$1.00 for postage and handling for this renowned standard.

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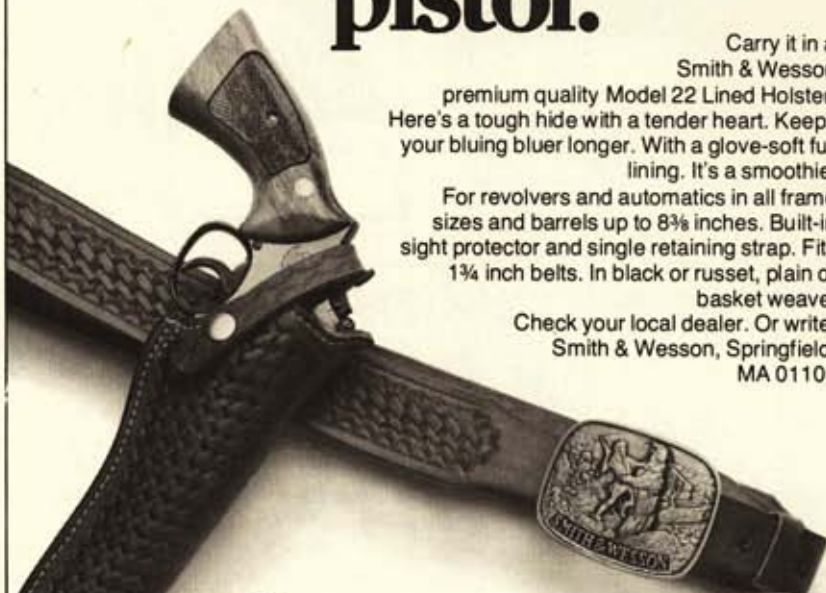
Cutter T-1 is the most delicate of the lot, and I've been told by some 'smiths that they break similar cutters (for the elevation nut T-slot) with distressing regularity. In this regard, Trapper assures me that the cutter he furnishes is of the best quality and that he obtains dozens of jobs from each end. But, he tells us, a good, solid set-up and very careful use is necessary to obtain that life. Slow feed, 700-900 rpm, keep the chips cleaned out, and watch what you're doing. Trapper has fitted several sights for me with these cutters, and all the cuts look and work fine.

Price of the four-cutter set, each in its own compartment in a wood box, is \$64.50 net. Sets and replacement cutters are in stock for rapid delivery. If you've been turning down those \$50 sight jobs for lack of proper cutters, now is the time to change. It won't take very many such jobs to wipe out the cost of the cutter set.

Trapper also now offers a kit for installing colored inserts in front sights. It consists of material for dozens of inserts in different colors, a special dovetail milling cutter, and an instruction sheet. The cut to be made is light, so even a drill press and compound table will allow you to install front-sight inserts; a milling machine isn't needed. This cutter, too, is double-ended for long life, but the probability of breakage is very low with a proper setup.



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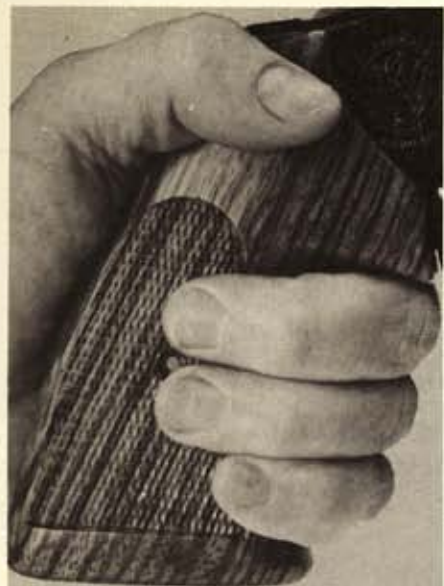
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By GEORGE BREDSTEN

RECORD CLASS BIG GAME AND HANDGUN HUNTER AWARDS

IN the November/December 1977 issue of *The American Handgunner*, this column mentioned various ABGHA requirements and standards regarding the recognition of record class big game taken with a handgun. Because the subject of huntable exotic big game was still undergoing review, primary consideration was given to indigenous species. Sufficient information has since been received and studied to permit ABGHA's Records Committee to determine the policy and procedure to be used regarding exotic big game taken with a handgun.

While credit for continuous and sincere efforts to promote greater hunter acceptance of and participation in exotic big game hunting properly belongs to several groups and many individuals, it can also be said that Texotic Wildlife, Inc., in general, and Thompson B. Temple, in particular, established a milestone in the area of exotic big game hunting with the publication of "Records of Exotics, Volume I." For the first time, it became possible for big game hunters to have information available—in one source—which, among other things, describes the recognized exotic big game species, gives the minimum scores needed for possible records inclusion, and shows the comparative rank of the top exotic trophies thus far recorded.

Initially, ABGHA's Records Committee considered using its own method to recognize certain exotic species as big game, and to establish the minimum scores needed for records inclusion. However, this would have probably resulted in conflict with and/or duplication of what has already been set forth in the "Records of Exotics." Consequently, ABGHA's decision is to recognize the same species and minimum scores as listed in the most recent edition of the "Records of Exotics," provided any and all listed trophies taken with a handgun are so indicated.

At the time this was written, the "Rec-

ords of Exotics, Volume II" had not yet been published, but compiler John P. Ingram (P.O. Box 832 - Ingram, Texas 78025) advised this writer that the following recognized exotic species and the minimum scores would be listed therein:

SPECIES	MINIMUM SCORE
Blackbuck Antelope	50
Axis Deer	120
Fallow Deer	80
Red Deer	190
Sika Deer	75
Catalina Goat	75
Ibex	80
Aoudad	85
Corsican Sheep	80
Mouflon	80

Mr. Ingram also mentioned that, should sufficient interest develop in hunting exotics with a handgun, a separate yearly award for the most outstanding exotic trophy will be made. Depending upon the amount of handgunner participation, this could be either a single award for the most outstanding trophy regardless of the species, or it could very well be multiple awards; i.e., an award for the most outstanding trophy of each recognized exotic species.

Coincidentally, while Mr. Ingram was considering the foregoing, ABGHA decided to start an Outstanding Handgun Hunter Awards Program. The purpose of this program is to give recognition to those handgun hunters who have taken an exceptionally fine record class big game animal and have at the same time participated in an extremely challenging and/or unusual hunt! Additionally, this and similar type awards can be helpful in promoting a greater awareness and acceptance by the general public of the fact that handguns are used, much more often than not, for a variety of legitimate reasons—handgun hunting is one such reason.

The first recipient of ABGHA's Out-

standing Handgun Hunter Award is Dan Brainard. Dan is the first sport hunter in modern times to legally take a muskox with a handgun—a Smith & Wesson, M-29, .44 Magnum using handloaded ammunition. Not only did Dan take a muskox with a handgun, his trophy is also record class—by both ABGHA and Boone & Crockett standards.

To furnish the reader a basis for greater appreciation and understanding of Dan's achievement, a brief background regarding muskox hunting in Alaska is perhaps in order. One should first realize that by the mid-1800's Alaska muskox had been eradicated, and that remained the situation until 1935-36 when thirty-one Greenland muskox were transplanted to Nunivak Island. From that time until around 1950 the population growth of these animals was slow; thereafter it increased rather fast—500 muskox by 1965. By 1968 the Nunivak muskox population had reached 750 animals—this increase in spite of the fact that some animals were removed for domestication experiments and others were transplanted to Nelson Island. Concern was then voiced by various game biologists that something had to be done or else many of these animals would be lost to disease and/or starvation.

As a result, the Alaska Board of Fish & Game approved (1968) hunting as one means to manage the surplus population, but political opposition delayed the implementation of sport hunting until 1975. Whenever the preservationist's views prevail, it is usually to the detriment of the wildlife to be "saved." The Nunivak muskox herd was to be no exception. Because the animal population was allowed to exceed the winter carrying capacity of the land, the end result was over one hundred and fifty dead muskox.

By 1975 the muskox population had increased to the extent that the first permit hunts were held in the fall; however, only a token number of ten muskox were taken. The second hunt was held during February-March 1976 and forty hunters, nineteen of which were nonresidents, were successful in taking muskox. In 1977 another sixty permits were granted, thirty in the spring and thirty in the fall, and from the latter group it was Dan Brainard who became the first hunter to choose and use the handgun as his primary hunting arm.

If one considers the fact that a muskox trophy tag costs the resident \$500.00 and the nonresident \$1000.00 (not refundable), together with the additional expenses for a hunting license, air transportation, guide service (not mandatory but recommended), and trophy processing if successful; it is not surprising that very few hunters would consider and even less would deliberately choose to use a handgun in preference to a rifle.

Other factors being relatively equal,

there is a greater challenge in successfully hunting big game with a handgun than with a rifle. It should be stressed that the actual degree of challenge is what enables the ethical sportsman to differentiate between a slaughter and a hunt. The game hogs, poachers and/or other maladjusted persons, who are interested only in the slaughter, cannot comprehend the idea, let alone the significance of the challenge in a hunt! Dan's decision to hunt muskox with a handgun was undoubtedly based on other factors, but the increased challenge of a handgun hunt would have been





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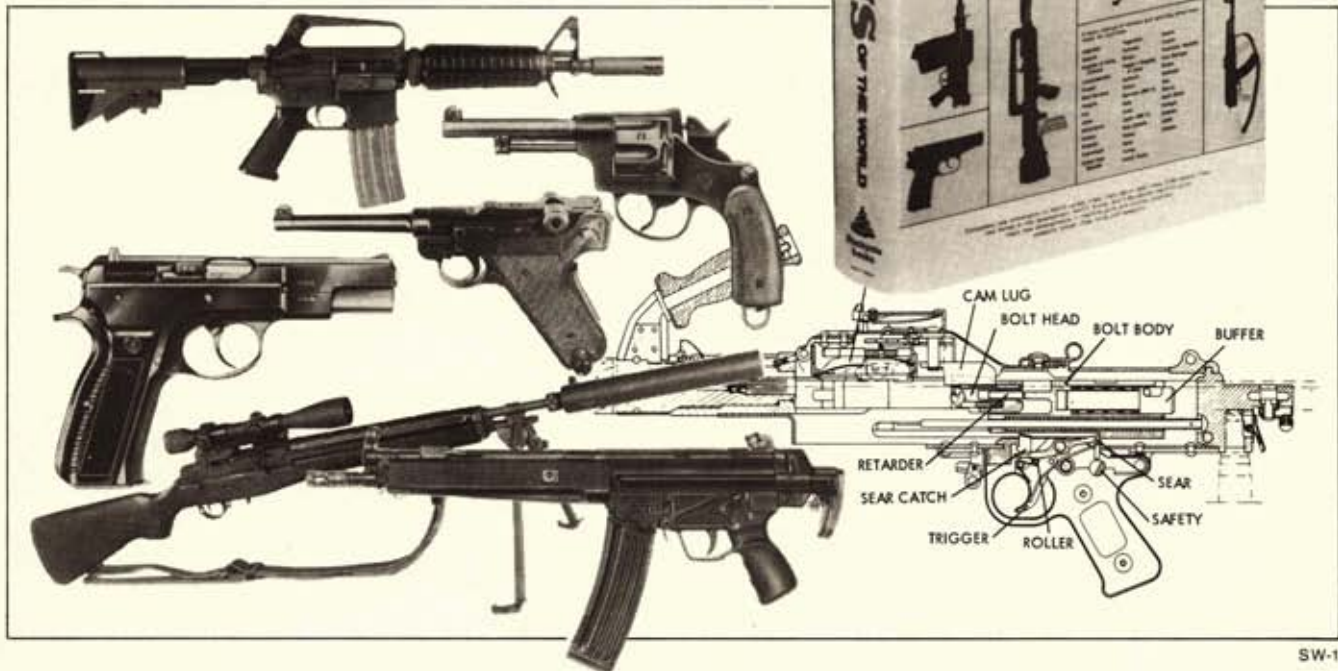
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INTRODUCTION TO 39/59

(Continued from page 39)

tractor on its Model 39. The original extractor was a wide spring bar that extended from the manual safety hole to the bolt face. This spring bar would occasionally break when exposed to extensive use. The factory installed a small narrow extractor that incorporated a coil spring to apply the appropriate tension to hold the cartridge case against the bolt face. The factory indicated this engineering change by adding -2 beside the model number.

MODEL 59

The development of a fourteen shot 9MM semi-automatic pistol began in August 1964, when Smith & Wesson manufactured two experimental models. The factory needed a handgun with increased firepower for military and police use. The 9MM cartridge was easily adapted to this concept by using a staggered box magazine. After completing these experimental models, they were set aside; the factory had other projects that demanded its attention.

In 1968, when the U.S. Navy requested Smith & Wesson to build a small quantity of fourteen shot pistols, the experimental models were taken from the cabinets and dusted off. They were examined by the Navy, but they desired handguns made of stainless steel and equipped with other special features. The company accepted the order, but the factory did not have the tooling needed for these specialized pistols; thus, the first fourteen shot pistols were produced in the Experimental Department and delivered in June 1969.

Plans were made to expand Smith & Wesson's 9mm line with the introduction of a fourteen shot aluminum-frame pistol designated as the Model 59. On June 8, 1971, the first commercial Model 59s were released for evaluation with serial numbers beginning at A170,000 of the Automatic serial number series. Test and field comments indicated that the front and back of the grip straps should be serrated rather than smooth. The first 200 pistols completed had incorporated a smooth front grip strap and back strap insert. The factory modified the inserts by serrating them, and a few guns were shipped having only the back strap serrated and a smooth front strap. Wherever possible, the factory reworked the Model 59 so that both the front and back grip straps were serrated. Only the initial test guns, of which less than 100 were distributed, have the smooth front and back strap. These early configurations are rarely seen.

The Model 59 is similar in design to the Model 39, except for the large grip necessary to accommodate the fourteen shot magazine.



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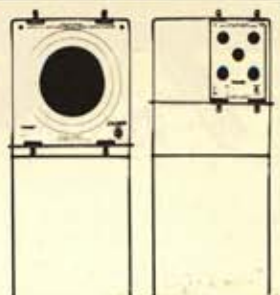
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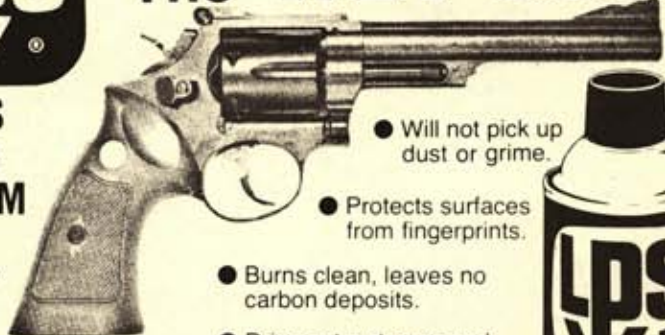
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HANDGUN Handloading

HOW "SPECIAL" IS THE .38?

By DAN COTTERMAN

It is a fact that one of our most popular handgun cartridges, the .38 Special, is better known than it is understood. Under these circumstances, it is often a victim of the contempt that is bred through familiarity, and, in a few rare instances,

has been built up beyond reality. In truth, despite the bad-mouthing and big-mouthing that has taken place over the years, the .38 Special, if properly handloaded, can be made to take its place among today's more effective handgun rounds.

Let me state from the outset that no solution to improved .38 Special effectiveness is, in my opinion, to be found through seeking higher velocities with bullets weighing less than 140 grains. In my experience, loads of this type have not proved effective. Initial velocity drops off rapidly and the all-important element of accuracy is generally left wanting.

Other aspects worth considering are those of the bullet's design, composition and construction. The overall make-up of a bullet will determine its effectiveness, especially in hunting and self-defense handloads. The elements of design, composition, construction and weight combine so that the potential of such a handload can be assessed in terms of what might be thought of as the "Energy Transfer Factor."

A given bullet's potential for expansion and stability as well as its ability to expend maximum energy within the target is a matter of infinite variation. So being, the value of ETF will forever remain too nebulous to nail down on any table of numbers. It exists, nonetheless, and becomes apparent in the extremes of the hard-coated, round-nosed versus the half-jacketed, hollow-point designs. The narrower difference will be noted between, for example, wadcutter and semi-wadcutter designs.

As far as stoking the .38 Special is concerned, the handloader will discover that there is ample room for any of the prescribed propellants. In fact, what was once a spacious incinerator for bulky black powder is no more than surplus space when it comes to loading modern smokeless mixes.

Before we get on with the business of handloading the .38 Special at its nominal factory case length of 1.155 inches, the

results of an experiment should be mentioned. Some years ago the writer, being aware of the excess length just noted, set about determining a length to which the .38 Special case could be shortened for best results with smokeless propellants. The result was a case roughly a quarter of an inch shorter than is commonly handloaded. For purposes of comparison it is sufficient to say that the new hull was trimmed to nine-tenths of an inch.

It was necessary to shorten a regular crimping die so as to accommodate the reduced case length. Then, with the use of two revolvers, a Smith & Wesson K-38 with six-inch barrel and the Combat Masterpiece with a four-inch barrel, work began to learn what, if anything, had been gained.

A series of velocity and penetration test shots reflected a marked improvement in performance, the smaller case (tentatively named the .357 Short) showed a 20 to 25-percent increase in effectiveness with equal loads when fired from either barrel length. Curiously, the performance gain nearly matched the shortening of the case, percentage-wise, for the case had been shortened just over 19 percent.

The outcome is not astonishing when you remember the power gain possible through raising the compression of an internal combustion engine; the combustion space had been lowered; therefore, better fuel efficiency was realized.

On the practical side of the issue, it became possible to get equal results with less powder and more from similar powder weights. For safety's sake, the .357 Short was about an eighth of an inch too long for some of the weak, gimcrack revolvers once turned out for the century-old .38 S&W cartridge. Still, the .357 Short was lengthy enough to allow the use of bullets normally loaded in the .38 Special. There was even some thought as to the possibilities of new, shorter-framed, more compact and lighter revolvers for the .357 Short.

The experiment caused a few ripples, but that was nearly twenty years ago and nowadays nobody's holding their breath. We still have the .38 Special, just as it came out of the box back around the turn of the century.

Nonetheless, as has been suggested, handloading the .38 Special can be a rewarding experience; that is, provided more care is devoted to choosing the right bullet. This, of course, will depend upon the purpose for which the load was made up.

One of the best dual-purpose bullets I have found is the lead hollow-base wadcutter. My experiments with this bullet began many years ago with the old Northridge bullets. This bullet, which weighed 147 grains and had a six-percent antimony content, could be turned around (hollow-base forward) to become one of the most effective projectiles available for the .38 Special.

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There also was some experimentation with the widely available Speer 148-grain hollow-base wadcutter. It proved superior whether loaded button-forward or with its hollow base forward. As the included loading and performance table shows, there is a slight velocity gain with the bullet inverted. This, as with the case-length shortening experiment, is due to a change in the internal combustion space.

Velocity is of only minor importance with the inverted hollow-base. Tests involving law enforcement agencies in which the writer has participated have shown this bullet to be capable of expanding dramatically in flesh at velocities of less than 700 feet per second. Bullet speeds of this nature are easily attained within safe pressure limits for even light, or alloy-framed revolvers.

The inverted-bullet loading is definitely special-purpose; although in my experience, it has performed well enough as an accurate load. Scattered reports from lawmen throughout the country have indicated that the load has, when the need arose, performed with profound effectiveness.

Attempts to render the .38 Special truly special in the area of combat loadings also have included tests with multi-stage swaged bullets wherein three small projectiles would be stacked for a "scattergun" effect. There have been water-cavity bullet experiments, too, as well as half-jacketed models swaged from soft lead wire with a wadcutter-type cavity up front. All have achieved varying degrees of effectiveness and have been praised enthusiastically by their originators. However, little space has been devoted to

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.38 SPECIAL

Test Gun: S&W K-38, 6-inch barrel, flash-gap .002-inch, average. All six chambers fired to obtain velocity averages.

BULLET: Remington B-22938, 158-grain Soft-Jacketed Hollow-Point.

Powder	Grains	Velocity, f% ^s	Energy, f% ^p
HS-5	5.0	848	252
231	4.3	865	262
R-1	4.0	890	278
630	8.1	902	285
Blue Dot	7.1	915	292
HS-6	6.5	933	305

BULLET: Speer 148-grain Hollow-Based Wadcutter, button forward.

R-1	2.5	790	204
231	3.1	802	211
700X	2.7	810	214
Red Dot	3.0	815	218
HP-38	3.5	848	236
HS-5	5.0	860	243
Green Dot	4.0	868	247
HS-6	6.0	895	263
Unique	4.7	910	271
630	8.3	1004	331

Bullet; speer 148-grain Hollow-Based Wadcutter, inverted.

R-1	2.5	804	212
231	3.1	813	216
700X	2.7	825	223
Red Dot	3.0	832	227
HP-38	3.5	860	243
HS-5	5.0	872	250
Green Dot	4.0	884	257
HS-6	6.0	909	270
Unique	4.7	922	278
630	8.3	1017	340

BULLET: Speer 140-grain Jacketed Hollow-Point.

HS-5	5.2	883	242
HP-38	4.0	888	245
R-1	4.2	922	263
Unique	4.8	947	278
HS-6	6.2	958	291
231	3.8	987	302
630	10.5	1029	328

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mentioning the fact that, with the exception of the swaged single-bullet loading, these off-beat bullets present difficulty during the handloading operation. The hollow-based wadcutter on the other hand, is easily turned around and seated. The standard wadcutter seating stem works well, and there is if anything, less trouble involved in seating the bullet backwards than may at times be encountered when you're attempting to introduce the skirted end into a case mouth.

A good balance between expansion and the all-important matter of sufficient bullet weight is found in the 158-grain jacketed soft-nosed, hollow-pointed bullet such as made by Hornady, Remington and Speer. Most recent handloading experiments have involved the use of Remington's version, their number 2938. The energy transfer capability is nearly as great as with the inverted hollow-based bullets and the extra ten grains of heft speaks for itself. There is some gain in penetration and also on the plus side, barrel leading is reduced because of the copper jacket. The 158-grainer, loaded to a velocity of around 900 feet per second will prove itself effective in the .38 Special, whether your quest is small game or metallic silhouettes.

If speaking of metallic silhouette shooting, you're seeking no more than to knock over members of that magnetic menagerie, and if, perchance, you choose to try your luck with a favorite .38 Special in the production class competition, it is well to consider the 200-grain round-nosed bullet. It is significant here that this heavier bullet, because of its inherently better flight properties, will retain more wallop out where the turkeys and rams are lurking. For most any other purpose however, the 200-grain round-nose is not as effective.

You can listen to someone else and get another story as far as bullet weights and effectiveness in the .38 Special goes. Join the light-bullet, high-velocity culture if you've a mind to, then devote a few years to experimenting with loads and observing the results. There's every chance you'll abandon the lightweights and come back to those with greater substance before you find the practical performance you seek.

My minimum weight recommendation is 140 grains in the .38 Special. Speer's jacketed hollow-point can be loaded to speeds in excess of 900 to 1000 feet per second and slightly more without reaching dangerous pressure levels. The bullet thus reaches respectable energy levels and more important, is well rated when it comes to transferring its energy effectively. The 140 also boasts an ability to maintain stability somewhat better than those that weigh less.

Revolver handloads for the .38 Special are assembled with greater ease and perhaps fewer eccentricities than any

other handgun around. There is still the need to take some facts into account. For example, the Speer people caution that they do not recommend heavier loads with hollow-base bullets due to the possibility of bullet deformation which could result in gun damage. The admonition should be honored. However, it does not apply to the same bullet when it is inverted. There also is a recommendation to avoid low-velocity loads with 146 and 160-grain half-jacketed bullets due to the likelihood of having the jacket separate from the lead and remain in the barrel. It is appropriate then, to heed the warnings and avoid light loads with the bullets mentioned. I have never had a jacket separation, at least within the barrel, with a swaged, half-jacketed bullet. It could happen nonetheless, and you know what they say about an ounce of caution.

As anyone who has ever handloaded the .38 Special for revolver use knows, new or once-fired cases can be counted on for several re-uses, especially if light-to-moderate charges are loaded. There is, as usual, a recommendation to avoid over-working the brass through too much mouth expansion and full-length resizing. As far as trim length is concerned, only consistency of length is of much importance, the length being critical primarily to the amount of crimp that is set from round to round.

As far as primers are concerned, those used in these test firings were Remington number 1½ for small pistol and revolver handloads. I have determined no material advantage in the use of magnum primers with the propellants listed since they burn as cleanly and efficiently with standard primers.

The propellants themselves are all of the small-granule, free-metering type, a property that is important when charge weight variations can make a big difference in load performance.

The question of effectiveness with the .38 Special cartridge—whether the hull is shortened or loaded at standard length—has resolved itself to the amount of thought the handloader devotes to choosing the right bullet. Properly fed, the old .38 can amount to something special.





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SCHWARZLOSE

(Continued from page 33)

from the rear of the breech casing. The sear may also be removed from beneath the striker head.

The trigger spring is located under the barrel unit. To remove the spring, the slide piece must be drawn back, under pressure from the spring, until the rear portion is clear of the grooves. Pull the slide down at the rear and then back to withdraw.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

The breech bolt return spring also acts as spring for the striker. The barrel return spring also acts as spring for the trigger. In the event of a misfire, the striker may be re-cocked by hand without opening the breech.

The end of the striker protrudes from the rear of the breech bolt to indicate that the weapon is cocked.

DATA & DIMENSIONS:

Overall length 10.8" (274mm)
Overall depth 5.5" (137mm)
Barrel length 6.5" (164mm)
Weight 32 ounces
Barrel Bore3" (7.62mm)
Four concentric grooves; Right-hand twist; 1 in 8.78 or 29.26 calibers.
Trigger pull-off 5-6 pounds
Magazine capacity 6 cartridges

TO PREPARE FOR FIRING:

The safety catch should be moved up to the SAFE position. The magazine, loaded with six cartridges, is inserted within the handle and the first round chambered by pulling the breech bolt to the rear and then releasing it. On depressing the safety catch, the weapon is ready to fire.

FIRING SEQUENCE:

When the trigger is pressed, the sear member is forced off the projection on the axis of the safety lever and the striker is driven forward by the breech bolt spring to fire the cartridge.

As the bullet leaves the muzzle, both barrel and breech recoil, locked together for a distance of about .1". From this point, the breech bolt is rotated to the left, through an angle of 30° and unlocked from the barrel by a guide ring fixed to the frame. The guide ring acts in a helical groove under the breech bolt, while the barrel and bolt recoil a further .65". The barrel is then stopped by the safety catch axis, while the bolt continues moving to the rear. The barrel moves forward a distance of .1" and is retained in this position by the detent lever, the front end of which

is raised by the bottom arm of the ejector. A stud on the underside of the breech bolt draws back the hold-open stop, to which the ejector is pivoted, while the top arm of the ejector is thrown upwards to expel the empty case. Rearward travel of the breech bolt, after separating from the barrel, is 1.8". Rearward travel of the breech bolt, locked to the barrel is .75".

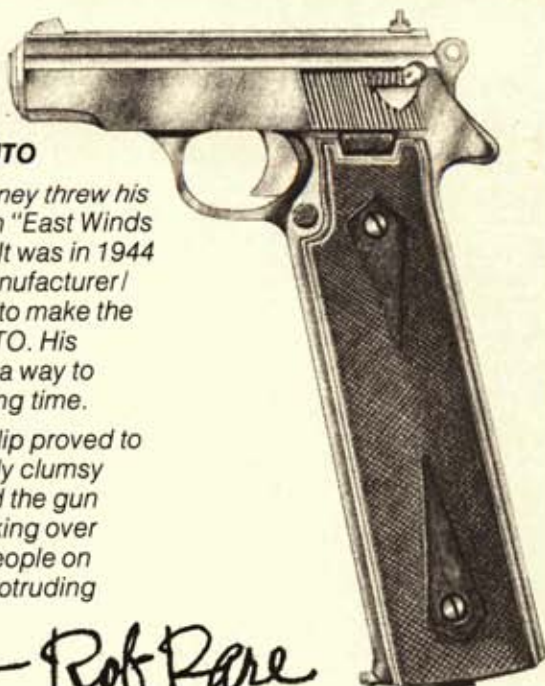
When the breech bolt reaches the rearmost position, it is stopped by the solid neck of the guide ring contacting the front end of the helical slot. The compressed recoil spring then moves the bolt forward and the next cartridge from the magazine is carried, by the sear member, into the firing chamber.

On contact with the barrel, the detent lever is free to rise into a recess at the rear of the breech bolt and so releases the front end from the barrel. The barrel and breech bolt then move forward together, during which time the bolt is rotated to the right and once again locked with the barrel. Both units are then stopped by the safety catch, leaving the sear member and striker engaged by a projection on the safety axis.

This action is repeated by each pull of the trigger until the last cartridge is fired, whereupon the magazine platform rises in front of the hold-open stop to prevent the breech from closing and indicating that the weapon is empty.



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Holstering of the 40-Clip proved to be its downfall. Already clumsy private eyes who used the gun were constantly knocking over lamps and bruising people on trolley cars with the protruding clip handle.

-Rob Rare

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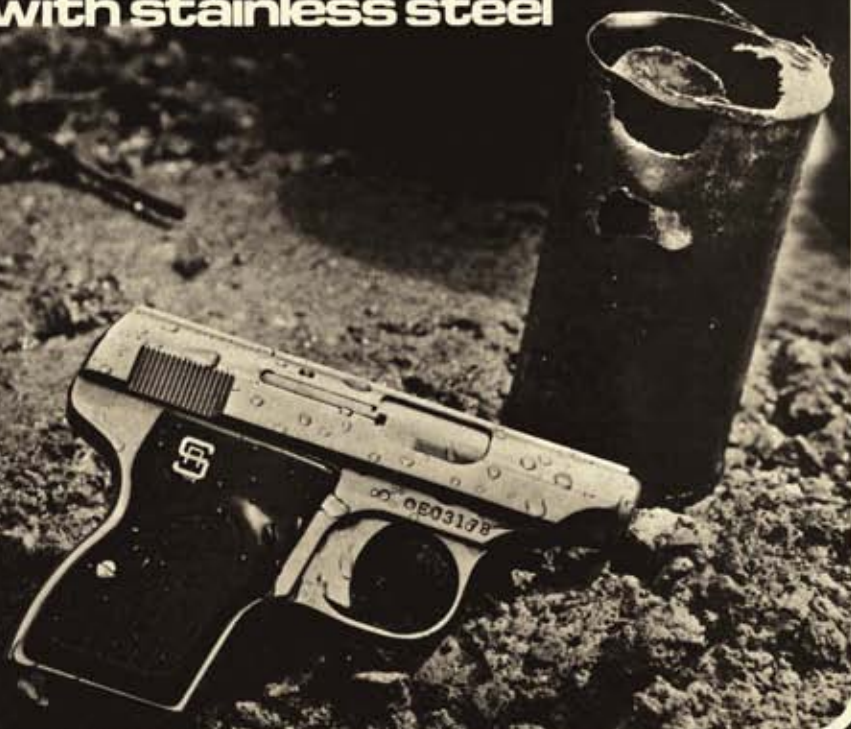
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VIEWING THE Ammo Scene

The .357 Magnum

By EVAN P. MARSHALL

THE .357 Magnum was developed by Major D. B. Wesson of Smith & Wesson in 1935. Phil Sharpe, the handloading pioneer, developed the original loads. Winchester, however, produced the first commercial loads for it.

The .357 Mag. was an instant success, and its popularity hasn't lessened in subsequent years. It's a highly popular weapon in law enforcement circles, being the most common replacement for the traditional .38 Special. It allows officers to carry a considerably more powerful weapon, while inexpensive .38 wadcutters can be used for practice.

The .357 Mag. however, does have some drawbacks for urban law enforcement use. First of all, it has a tendency to overpenetrate with most loads. For approximately a year and a half before being promoted to the rank of Sergeant, I was assigned to a unit that investigated all shootings by and of police officers. During that period of time, I was unable to find a single shooting where the .357 Mag. did not produce a through and through wound. Furthermore, the closest that I've come to being killed, was when an armed felon ran twenty feet towards me trying to draw a weapon after taking a .357 Mag. slug through both lungs and the heart!

Another problem with the .357 Mag. is that it relies on the expanding bullet for stopping power. While the .357 Mag. provides adequate velocity for reliable expansion, this can cause some real problems. Virtually every manufacturer of .357 Mag. ammunition offers high performance .38 Special also, and most of them load the same bullet in both calibers. A bullet fragile enough to produce expansion at .38 Special velocities will explode at .357 Mag. velocities. I have several incidents in my files where .357 Mag. slugs exploded on impact, and failed to produce the desired results.

The most commonly carried .357 Mag. is the four inch barreled version. On the rare occasion when I rely on a .357 Mag. for on-duty use, however, I carry a S&W Model 19 with six inch barrel. The additional two inches offer a substantial increase in stopping power, and the increased sighting radius also makes the gun easier to shoot. It should be pointed out that S&W will soon produce the Model 66 with a six inch barrel, and I'll be testing it in a future issue of American Handgunner.

The weapon used in testing the .357 Mag. loads, was the above-mentioned S&W Model 19 with six inch barrel. The weapon is unaltered except for a pair of grips from Schiebent Enterprises (1661 Tenth St., Los Osos, California 93402). Proper grip design is a subtle art, and these grips tame even the heaviest Magnum loads.

The Oehler Model 11 with skyscreens was used to check velocity, and twenty pound blocks of oil base clay were used for expansion testing. Ten rounds of each load were chronographed and an average velocity obtained through the use of an electronic calculator. Five rounds of each load were checked for expansion and diameters were measured with a precision micrometer.

The lightest weight available in the .357 Mag. is the

S&W 90 grain jacketed soft point load. I can't recommend it too highly, however, since both S&W's 110 and 125 grain offerings produce higher velocities in the six inch barrel length.

90 Grain	Type	Velocity	Expansion
A. S&W	jsp	1299fps	.672"

The 110 grain bullet weight is the one chosen by Lee Jurras when he developed the Super Vel .357 Mag. loads. Frankly, I think the 110 grain loads are better suited for those who hunt small game or who carry a .357 Mag. snub. I've seen these light weight loads blow up on windshields without harming the felons inside the vehicle.

110 Grain	Type	Velocity	Expansion
A. W-W	jhp	1392fps	.802"
b. Speer	jhp	1472fps	.812"
c. S&W	jhp	1312fps	.761"
d. Federal	jhp	1342fps	.783"
e. Super Vel	jsp	1485fps	.721"

The 125 grain weight is also highly popular, but I have the same reservations about it as I do about the 110 grain loads. For the shooter who prefers the light bullet approach in the .357 Mag. however, it does offer better results than the lighter bullet loads.

125 Grain	Type	Velocity	Expansion
a. W-W	jhp	1483fps	.827"
b. Speer	jsp	1501fps	.756"
c. S&W	jhp	1391fps	.791"
d. Federal	jhp	1421fps	.742"
e. Remington	jhp	1522fps	.722"

Speer is the only manufacturer who produces a load in the 140 grain weight. It offers an excellent compromise between the 110 and 158 grain loads.

140 Grain	Type	Velocity	Expansion
a. Speer	jhp	1406fps	.762"

H&H Cartridge Corporation, the current manufacturers of Super Vel ammunition, offers a 150 grain load for the .357 Magnum.

150 Grain	Type	Velocity	Expansion
a. Super Vel	jhp	1324fps	.722"

The 158 grain bullet weight is the traditional offering in this caliber. The lead semi-wadcutters loads produce leading at higher velocities, but offer acceptable accuracy for law enforcement purposes.

158 Grain	Type	Velocity	Expansion
A. W-W	swc	1466fps	.701"
b. W-W	jhp	1322fps	.762"
c. W-W	jsp	1306fps	.716"
d. Speer	jsp	1267fps	.674"
e. S&W	jhp	1226fps	.682"

f. S&W	jsp	1247fps	.645"
g. S&W	swc	1232fps	.621"
h. S&W	swc-hp	1226fps	.687"
i. Federal	jsp	1245fps	.669"
j. Federal	swc	1216fps	.618"
k. Remington	jhp	1299fps	.718"
l. Remington	jsp	1287fps	.667"
m. Remington	swc	1218fps	.618"

Which is best? Once again, that depends upon the shooter's intended purpose. For small game hunting or snub use, the 110 or 125 grain loads are probably the best choice. They're also excellent for home defense loads, because their violent expansion limits penetration. For those who prefer the light weight loads for law enforcement use, I would suggest carrying three hollow points followed by three soft points. The light weight soft points offer good expansion with much better penetration on cars, windows, doors, etc.

Quite frankly, the Speer 140 grain jhp load is the lightest bullet weight I'd care to rely on when carrying a .357 Magnum. It offers both excellent expansion and penetration from the six inch barrel, and even offers good expansion at snub velocities.

Personally, however, I long ago decided on the 158 grain weight. The jacketed hollow point loads in this weight offer adequate expansion with good penetration. They offer good accuracy, and the most decisive stopping power of any of the .357 loads available.

As I mentioned previously, the .357 Mag. is not without some serious problems as a law enforcement weapon. However, it's still the best weapon for at least 75% of today's law enforcement personnel. It offers greatly increased stopping power compared to the .38 Special, with recoil levels that can be managed with practice. It's also an excellent choice for small game. Whether your quarry has two legs or four, the .357 Magnum should be equal to the task.

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POLICE S&W NINES

(Continued from page 45)

said to be strong sentiment among the CSP troopers to follow suit, especially after early problems with their blued Model 66 revolvers. And I know of at least one state police department that issues the Model 39 to its narcotics people.

Let's look at the *real* problems, one by one.

Jamming. Though rumors of jammed Smith Nines are around, it is rare to find one documentable, like Kobler's. His failure to eject has been attributed variously to (a) inadequate lubrication, (b) shooting from an unlocked wrist, and (c) a bad round. Kobler, a master shooter, insists his gun was lubed with WD-40, but ISP Ordnance says the gun was bone-dry when they examined it. (b) is a possibility, especially since S&W 9 mms have an interesting idiosyncrasy: some will jam when the shooting wrist is not locked, just as surely as will an accurized target .45, while others can be shot limply without a bobble. No one knows quite why this is, but it is something most who have worked intensively with the guns have observed. It is a detriment to the 39/59 for police work, since a wounded officer like Kobler may well have to fire from an awkward position where he cannot lock the wrist.

Another documented report involves a city policeman who drew his 39 to find that he couldn't fire it: the magazine release button had been activated by pressing against his holster, thus loosening the "clip" and engaging the magazine disconnect safety, another controversial m/39 feature discussed elsewhere in this bonus feature. S&W subsequently made the mag release button shorter in the 39-2 and 59, and some holster-makers like Bucheimer, put mag release cutouts on their m/39 holsters.

Safeties. Here we find one of the strongest cases for the 39/59: the average criminal who gets one out of a police holster will need some time to figure how to make it go off. In one ISP incident, this went on for several minutes, with the gunman actually jacking the slide in exasperation, ejecting a live round. Salt Lake City documented a classic case of this, and Illinois State Police has four troopers alive because assailants got their guns and couldn't make them work.

The firepower question. A main reason for choosing the Smith Nine, especially in m/59 configuration, over the revolver is firepower. The trend today is toward teams of heavily armed offenders in robbery situations, and the officer with a six-shooter is worse off than ever in such a confrontation. Fifteen shots under your trigger finger, with 28 more a couple of seconds away in dual belt pouches, can be awfully comforting. (Curiously, Illinois

State Police, the only such agency in the country with autos, is also the only one with no provision for spare ammo to be carried in the belt, at least at this time.)

Still, some have theorized that an officer in the emotional grip of a shootout might be likely to spray his shots. This has not necessarily proven to be the case, though it does appear that if he has more, he'll fire more. One basic truth of police gunfights is that, especially if it is his first, an officer is likely to empty his gun in a single burst. With the 39/59, you just have a longer burst and maybe even some rounds left. (One policeman who killed a gunman who shot at him with a .38 told me, "I thought I had fired maybe three times, but I looked down and saw my Model 39's slide locked back. I figured at first it was jammed, but I had shot the guy all eight times.")

The firepower advantage is largely a tactical one; for instance, an officer with a 59 and spare clips can afford to run from one cover point to another, firing all the way to keep his opponent from delivering effective fire while the officer is exposed and vulnerable. It is a clear advantage over a .38 revolver, even one backed up with speedloaders, yet no 59-equipped police department I know of puts such exercises into the training course. Most shoot a modified PPC that may or may not have more shooting; several run five- and six-shot strings with their eight- and fourteen-shot guns.

Speaking of firepower, most departments with the Model 39 carry it with seven in the clip and an eighth in the chamber, instead of 8-and-1 listed in the catalog. It improves reliability. Some 39s won't even take that ninth cartridge. The 59, into which you can occasionally stuff 16 rounds, works better with only fifteen and some say certainty of feed is enhanced with only 14 cartridges in the gun.

Recoil. Blast and recoil are greater with any 9 mm round strong enough to work the action, than with .38 practice wadcutters. This is hardly a bad point; instead of the common sight of police training with mild loads and ill-equipped to handle the full +P .38 or Magnum rounds they carry on the job, the cop with a 9 mm knows when he leaves the range that he can be effective with what he'll be using for real. It is a solid advantage of the 39/59, indeed, of any police automatic.

Stopping Power. In any consideration of the 9 mm police pistol, it is the cartridge that probably takes more heat than the gun itself. Illinois State Police for years issued only a full-jacketed round. Loaded hot on special order by Winchester Western, and supposedly with only a thin jacket over the nose, it still was found wanting. Many agencies still issue ball ammo with their S&W 9 mms; Wrentham is one that comes to mind.

The reason for this is that ball is the only ammo that perks reliability in an un-

altered S&W 9 mm; at least, it used to be. Though many hollowpoint rounds have been made available in 9 mm Parabellum, the consensus of police armorers is that only one, Remington's 115-gr. jacketed hollowpoint, feeds as reliably as the full metal jacket stuff. This is the round I personally recommend to agencies with S&W 9 mms. Not only is functioning excellent, but expansion is usually close to that of a similar weight semi-jacketed HP out of a .38 Special revolver. Penetration of auto bodies is excellent, too; because the jacket goes over the edge of the cavity, leaving no soft lead to deform on the feed ramp, the projectile bites into steel with a "cookie cutter" effect, punching through and opening only when it hits meat. Most other 9 mm hollowpoints will have a greater or lesser tendency to break up on car doors.

Because the ACLU-inspired hollowpoint controversy has made many departments, including ISP, leery of such bullets, softnoses have come into vogue in many places. In 1976, ISP adopted W-W's 100-gr Power Point (exposed lead at the round nose, with a series of slits around the jacket to promote mushrooming). In street gunfights, however, it did not live up to expectations.

Federal Cartridge, at this writing, is making a new load for the Illinois troopers. It comprises a 95-grain jacketed soft point, with the jacket covering the lead around all edges to reduce feeding problems, and loaded to 1400+ feet per second. In tests, 800 rounds fed perfectly through an assortment of ISP 39s, and the slugs expanded to as much as .60 caliber in ordnance gelatin. Functioning in all the department's guns is something yet to be proven, however; it is generally recognized that when you go to anything much lighter than a 115-gr. pill in the 9 mm cartridge, you wind up with a round too short overall to feed perfectly. Remember, the gun was originally designed for the military, where the standard cartridge is a long 124-grainer.

The Confidence Factor. In our TROOPER magazine sampling, virtually all had experienced some malfunctions with their Model 39s. Even those whose guns had only jammed once or twice with practice reloads were chary of the pistol, because so many identical guns belonging to their brother officers had jammed even with service loads. "If it happens to them," they thought, "it can happen to

me." (It is worth noting that few 9 mm-equipped departments, with the notable exception of Wrentham, gave their men hands-on training in clearing a jammed automatic. When this is done, the confidence factor is actually enhanced, since while a jammed automatic can usually be cleared swiftly by a trained man, the jammed revolvers that we're seeing so much more of today can usually be fixed only with gunsmith tools. When Sandwich PD went from their Model 59s to the revolvers, seven or eight of their almost

40 new revolvers would not function out of the box.)

Many police departments have adopted the 9 mm automatic, though the real groundswell is away from the .38 and toward the .357 Magnum with hollowpoint loads that overcome that gun's reputation for excessive penetration in urban police use. A disturbingly high percentage of departments that went with the S&W 9 mm have since gone back to revolvers (almost all of them going with stainless steel). The only police gun that equals or



Dear Mr. Carter:

It's been a right smart while since I troubled you NRA people with a problem and if I had my druthers I would not bother you with this one, but feel it is my bounden duty to let you know what people are a thinkin.

You will recollect that Tidwell Nesh was recordin scores at the police nationals this year. Wiley Arsdell, of our Lake Spring P.D., is a mite put out at Tidwell. Fact, Wiley says he's comin to Wash. D.C. next week and a man can't get more desperate than that. I don't want to sit idle and see the NRA lose a good friend like Wiley, without you listening to the complaint.

Tidwell took 10 points off Wiley's scorecard in the 60 shot PPC. You know how it is with experts like Tidwell. He'd read the match rules, calculated and computed, looked at his armband that said "Scorer" and ruled one of Wiley's 9's had a' in front of it and that made it an illegal scorecard figure. I'm not sayin Tidwell didn't have the legal right to cancel that scorebox cause it didn't have a 10, 9, 8, 7, 0 in it, but that just aint been reasonable.

Wiley swears it was just a figure 9, when he handed it in to the feller in the scorin area. And did you ever try to write primer handwritin while holdin on to the target, using a blunt pencil (pencils were required this year), people talkin at you, with that little scorecard already punched full of slots and holes so's it can be fed into or out of the computer? What with it goin through at least 3 hands before gettin up to Tidwell in your official match office, Wiley thinks one of them coulda checked that little mark in front of the 9. Next year he says he'll take a plastic evidence bag to preserve his scorecard.

Please ask one of those bright young people in the competitions division to take this complaint under advisement.

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exceeds this record of rejection-after-adoption is the .41 Magnum service revolver, whose uncontrollable recoil took away more than it made up for with its increased stopping power.

Is the 39/59 a *bad* police gun? Not necessarily. It has particular value for detectives. Its ability to deliver a high rate of controlled accurate fire is coupled with shock power that, though inferior to a patrolman's four-inch .357, is markedly superior to a plainclothesman's .38 snubby. In view of the fact that a huge percentage of felony arrests are made by "the dicks," it is understandable that they appreciate the Smith Nine more than their brothers in uniform. ISP detectives, though they still have mixed feelings about their 39s, like it better by and large than the road troopers. The fondness their Connecticut counterparts hold for the gun stems in part from a highly publicized shootout in which lead .38 slugs from the detectives' snubnoses bounced off a gunman's car, which was then brought to a bullet-riddled halt by a clipful of 9 mm ball from a city cop's Model 39. It was about that time that the S&W Nine became popular with that

agency. Several other departments have partially equipped their detectives and sometimes their SWAT people with 59s, leaving the "regular" cops with revolvers; that arrangement usually works out to the greater satisfaction of all concerned.

A good 39 or 59—a specimen that exhibits good workmanship, is proven to be reliable, and functions with hollow-points—is a fine police weapon. A large quantity of these guns, ordered for general issue, seldom works out as well. Departments that issue them, like ISP, need a staff of top-quality gunsmith/armors; while the Illinois State Police can afford this, few smaller agencies can. The automatic's inherent advantage of easier parts replacement is offset if the gun brings in a lot more mechanical problems with its very adoption.

Thus, while a proven, individual Model 39 or Model 59 may be a superb choice for an individual officer who knows how to take care of it, collective police experience with these guns as standard sidearms should make any law enforcement agency take a long, hard look before ordering them in quantity, for the whole department.



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SHOOTING 39/59

(Continued from page 41)

between the 39 and its steel-framed, superaccurate sister gun, the Model 52 .38 Master target auto. He swore he got even better than Model 52 accuracy because the shorter 9 mm case allowed the powder to burn more evenly and consistently than the squib loads stuffed into the .38 Special wadcutters rounds the standard 52 feeds on.

Air Force weapons specialist Jack Robbins recently completed a project which involved testing the Model 59 for adoption. Since out-of-the-box accuracy was found wanting, Jack became the first gun expert to really "accrize" the 59, something that even the factory had hitherto admitted was virtually impossible, given the design features one has to work with. He made it shoot like a 52 and still function. This, unfortunately, involved lots of custom tuning, and a special lot of barrels produced by S&W to his chosen dimensions. These parts will probably never be made available to the public.

Out of the box, the 39 or 59 can charitably be described as having "adequate combat accuracy." It's a rare police department that issues these guns and has the men qualify at 50 yards. This is because the accuracy simply isn't there. I've seen 39s and 59s that would not stay on a humanoid silhouette target at that distance, and which at 7 yards couldn't even keep them all in the same hole, which any snubnose .38 revolver is capable of. Yet I've seen other specimens that would stay inside the X-ring of a Colt (but never a Prehle B-27) silhouette target all day at 25 yards. The problem is that the lockup just isn't there. Any good Colt Commander, let alone Mk IV, will generally outshoot a Model 39 or 59, assuming

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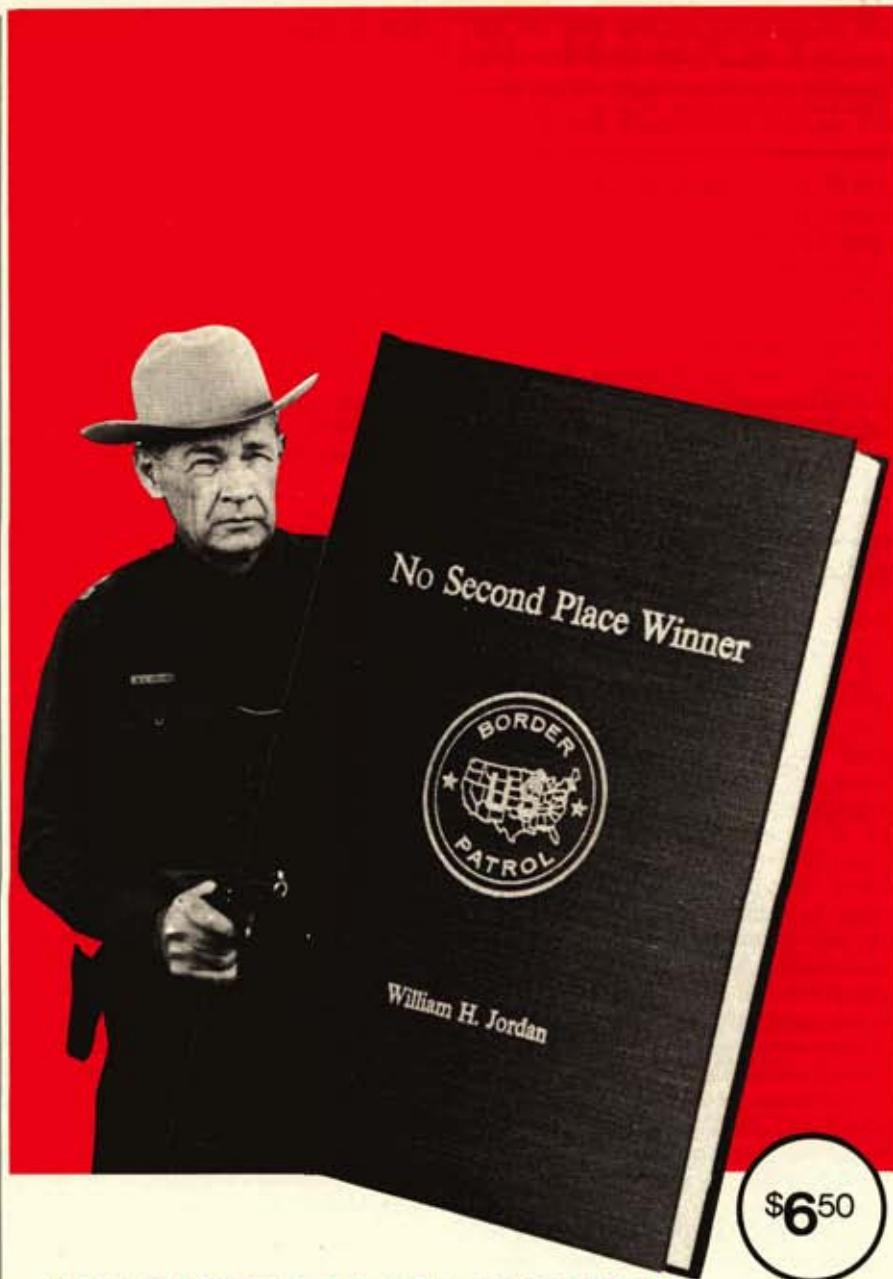
If you're a civilian, don't worry about it. You will seldom have to shoot much beyond 25 yards in any defensive situation. Police officers, who must pursue and capture people when violent confrontations go down, find it entirely possible to get into running gun battles at 50 yards or farther, on Interstate highways for instance. While the 39 has been known to do the job in long range shoot-outs, it would hardly be the first choice for such an encounter.

Customizing the 39/59

Jack Robbins won't accurize Smith Parabellums commercially, and I know of no one else who will, either. The best you can do is find a competent smith who'll slick the thing up for you. There isn't much that can be done for the trigger beyond a good polish job; you'll still have a second rate DA pull compared to a good revolver, and a creepy single action with a mushy letoff. The latter, it should be said in fairness, is just as well; being a defensive gun, the S&W engineers contemplated the fact that the owner might be pointing it cocked at someone in a tense situation, and they wanted to make sure that a discharge would be deliberate and not nervously accidental. Considering the weapon's purpose, I really think the single action pull should be left as it is.

Austin Behlert (725 Lehigh Ave., Union, NJ 07083) and others do chop-and-channel jobs on the 39 or 59, the Bobcat type conversion that used to be so popular on the 1911 .45 auto. It makes sense on the aluminum framed, DA Smith Parabellum, since you have a gun that is both light enough and safe enough to carry in your pocket. It won't pull your pants down from its weight, nor do you have to worry about the safety being brushed "off" from contact with your pocket lining, inviting an accidental discharge. I'm sending one of my 39s down to Austin for his mini-combat conversion, and I have high hopes for it (we'll write it up afterwards for you). He'll do the same for the 59, but thinks it's rather pointless because of the thickness of the butt. Even the Mini-Combat 39 is a trifle wide amidships, but once you've put the other dimensions down to those of the Walther PPK, it's something you can find easy to live with.

Several people grind off that nasty, sharp hammer spur that likes to tear up your coat lining. Since you can drop the hammer safely via the safety catch, and



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will probably fire the first shot DA anyway, the hammer spur is a bit extraneous. Yes, there are those who'll tell you about this or that defective 39 that went off when someone activated the safety hammer drop, but I have yet to document one myself. IPSC (free style combat shooting) rules mandate that with these guns, competitors must let the hammer down by hand rather than trusting the safety. I personally think it's a lot more likely for the thumb to slip than for the hammer bar system to fail, and I always drop my 39 and 59 hammers via the safety catch, *always making certain that the muzzle is in a safe direction.*

Model 39 or 59?

Lots of folks thought the 59 would make the 39 obsolete, but it didn't and won't. Many people find the 59's thick grip just too awkward for handling or concealment carry, and others figure that they'll never be in a situation where they need 15 or 16 shots. I personally think that if I'm going to drop down to 9 mm stopping power, I want to make up for it with more firepower, and thus favor the 59.

Reliability, it seems at this writing, favors the 39. This will probably change once S&W has instituted its design changes on the 59. The 59 should theoret-

ically perk better, since the cartridges have a straighter angle of feed into the chamber. But it varies from specimen to specimen. I prefer to buy a Smith Parabellum used, because then the dealer will let me test-fire it before I plunk down my bucks. It saves going through the hassle of sending it back to the factory if it's a new model. Fact is, that ain't a bad idea for *any* model handgun you're thinking about acquiring.

A good Smith & Wesson Model 39 or 59 is a joy to own. But you want to pick and choose and test, and make absolutely sure that it will do what you want, before you make it your #1 companion weapon.



HUMONGOUS BEAR

(Continued from page 47)

and I proceeded to put on one of my very best sneaks—white shirt and all. The wind was right and was no problem. Going slow, stopping when the bear was in position to see me and utilizing every bit of cover I could, I managed to get about 75 yards closer than where we were when we spotted him. Occasionally, when he came out of the deep shadows his pelt appeared OK. He moved off of the overgrown road into a ditch and I quickly moved forward a few steps trying to use bulldozed logs as cover. He was out of sight and after waiting a few seconds, I started around the edge of the logs—just as he started out of the ditch. He saw me, raised half erect and froze. I eased the Ruger between two upright logs and used them to steady my arms. The bear wasn't scared—just alerted by that white shirt. I held low, allowing about a foot to try for a high chest shot to traverse the thorax. At the shot he dropped out of sight. I ran toward him and after quite a few steps remembered to start counting them. At 99 I was standing on the edge of the ditch above him. He had dropped and rolled to the bottom of the six foot deep ditch and was biting a stick as he died.

We hauled him out of the ditch and found he had an excellent hide. The 240 grain Federal hollow point had taken him in the base of the throat and exited between his shoulder blades. He was about five feet, give or take a few inches. I'll find out exactly when I get the taxidermy bill. Not a particularly big bear, but a good average specimen.

Gerry got the 4 WD and in the meantime Larry was generous enough to loan me a knife to field dress him. At that point, with the need for concentration behind me, I realized it was cold and damn near dark. No doubt about it, I'm an expert at shooting at dusk on the wrong side of the mountain. Two years ago I did it in the Palo Duro Canyon

in Texas and spent two hours getting out—with at least an hour of it on my hands and knees. At least this time through some skillful driving and a little luck Gerry drove right to us.

Northwestern Montana is beautiful country and particularly nice in the spring. The days are long and it's normally light enough to shoot on a clear day at 10:00 p.m. The weather was generally warm—at least no heavy clothing was required, with intermittent snow and rain showers at higher altitudes.

Logging is a large and old industry in this area and vast areas are accessible by vehicle. Normally, a good way to see the country and hunt bear at the same time is to simply drive around until you see bear sign on the road and then start glassing overgrown clear cuts and walking old overgrown log roads. This affords a good chance of a successful hunt and a golden opportunity to see some fantastic country. In addition, it's a great way to scout general areas for a fall hunt. In the course of hunting for Humongous for seven days we were privileged to see elk, moose, whitetail and mule deer and, to cap it off, Rocky Mountain Bighorns and two mountain goats within easy pistol range. Treasure Lake Taxidermy Studios near Troy gave us a couple of tips on where to look for Humongous and the hunt started in earnest.

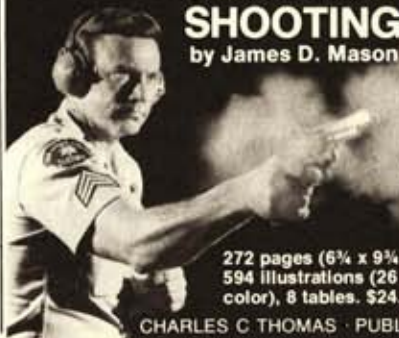
A couple of years ago, Gerry was lucky enough to get a six foot six incher with a

six inch M-29 using Super Vel 180 hollow points. From the description, it must have been quite a thrilling hunt. The bear was in the edge of a clear cut. Gerry fired from about 80 yards. The bear went down—obviously hit hard; only to bounce up and highball it over logs and stumps into the timber. Gerry wasted a couple of shots on it before it disappeared. He then ran to the timber, scrambling over piled up logs, and suddenly found himself in the semi-darkness of the timber, practically blind from the drastic change in light, face to face with a fully upright, slightly irate bear at a distance of about twenty feet. Two quick DA shots through the chest dropped Mr. Bear in a heap. One shot, obviously the first, penetrated the heart and the second dead centered the spine on the way out, ending the confrontation instantly.

It was a rough job getting the bear out and there was no way to get the vehicle any closer than about a mile. They didn't really realize how big the bear was until they got him out into good light. Its hide was prime and he was over fifteen years old. Not a Humongous, but the next thing to it.

Since then they have hunted for a Humongous unsuccessfully. The week following the day I killed my bear it was Larry's shot. The long days were spent haunting likely spots to find bears. One evening, while crossing a clear cut Gerry quietly whispered, "There he is." I had

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looked at him, discarded the object as not being a bear and was looking in another direction. The Zeiss 8 X 20s proved Gerry right—he looked like a Humongous motionless in the shadows. Before we could react he started across the clear cut paralleling the timber and about 50 yards away from it. The terrain was rough, crisscrossed with ditches, logs, stumps, weeds, etc. Visibility was just plain lousy. Gerry stayed where he was and Larry and I attempted a parallel course at maximum attainable speed about 100 yards to the side of the bear to catch up with, flank and cut him off. He wasn't alarmed; just travelling. After about 300 yards we got up even with him just as he started fooling around at the edge of the timber. The wind was no problem—there just wasn't any. As we stalked closer, Larry passed on the opportunity to shoot on several occasions as the exertion of the fast stalk made it impossible to place a shot positively, and we never did get a really good look at the bear. At a range of about 40 yards he disappeared into the timber and deep shadows. As we slowly edged our way closer we heard him crashing through the brush, just as I felt a chill on my back as a stray puff of wind betrayed us.

On numerous occasions we stalked to within pathetically easy handgun ranges of ravenously hungry bears feeding on grass. They were all quite intent on catching up on their calories after hibernation and were not at all cautious. Frequently, we were completely in the open and it was only necessary to "freeze" when Mr. Bear raised his head for a quick look see. A couple of them seemed to sense something was amiss and when we were within 40 yards or so would raise their head, look about for quite awhile, start to graze and suddenly jerk their head up for a look in our direction. Usually, upon discovering two or three red eyed smelly monsters in their close proximity they would exit in sheer panic.

Kelly passed shooting at least four bears I felt were fully as large if not larger than the one I took. My luck at finding bears where it was possible to get decent photos was on a par with Kelly's trying to locate Humongous. Typically, bright sunlight on a logging trail with a black bear in deep shadows was what was offered to photograph. We saw about 32 bears that all three of us observed. After several long days and short nights all of us could have been sharper both mentally and physically. It's hard to guess how many bears we overlooked but I'm convinced it was quite a few.

It's a dirty shame that we didn't find Humongous, but Kelly and Gerry wouldn't settle for anything less. From the way things looked when we parted company it would be Larry's turn to shoot until he got one. As for myself, I'm plenty satisfied with both the shot and the bear.



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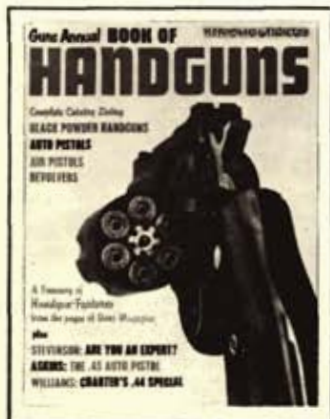
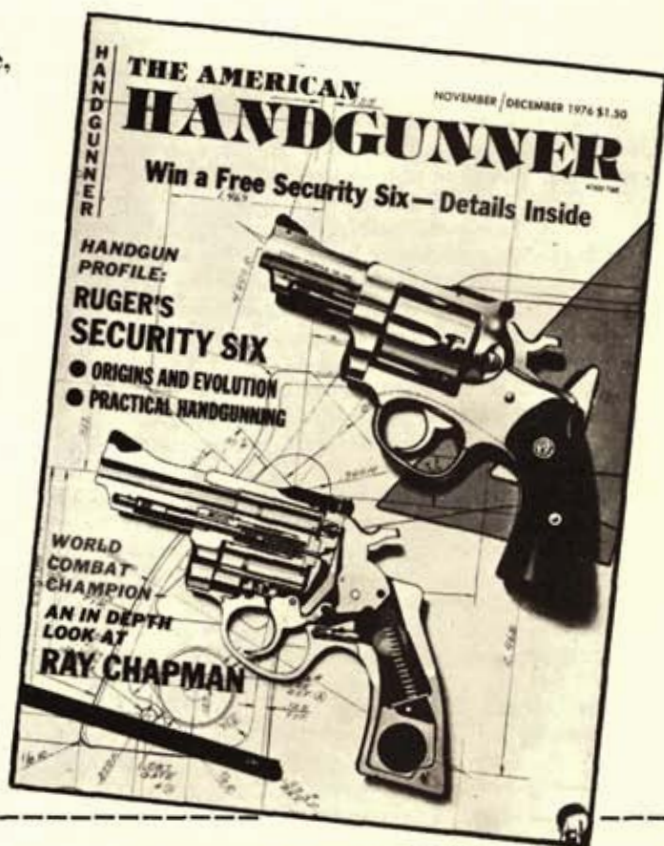
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