

THE AMERICAN

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THE AMERICAN HANDGUNNER

November/December, 1978

Vol. 3 No. 6-13

GEORGE E. VON ROSEN
Publisher

FEATURES

CHIVALRY TO COMBAT, J. Scott Dugan	18
THOUGHTS ON HANDGUN ACCURACY, Claud S. Hamilton	20
COLORADO HANDGUN LAWS . . . GOOD OR BAD?, Hal Swiggett	24
IS THIS THE FUTURE OF HANDGUNNING?, Mason Williams	26
IN SEARCH OF THE PRACTICAL HOLSTER, Rick Miller	29
PISTOL PACKIN' PARTNER, Linda M. Knab	33
THE .41 MAGNUM	
TOP CHOICE Evan P. Marshall	36
NOT QUITE Massad Ayoob	37
HANDLOADING James D. Mason	42
CUSTOM SHOP, Massad Ayoob	46
NEW MODEL RUGER SUPER TRIGGER, Lowell Roberts	48

DEPARTMENTS

INDUSTRY INSIDER, Massad Ayoob	7
SILUETAS, Philip Briggs	10
COOPER'S COLUMN, Jeff Cooper	14
HANDLOADING, Dan Cottieman	16
TROUBLESHOOTING YOUR HANDGUN, J. B. Wood	51
WHAT'S NEW	53
HANDGUN HUNTING, George Bredsten	55
TAKING AIM, Gordon B. Stark	58
KEEP ON SHOOTING	61
PISTOLSMITHING, George C. Nonte	62
AMMO SCENE, Evan P. Marshall	64



This month's cover shows Pistol Packin' Linda Knab on the firing line. Cover and story photographs by Richard Brooks.

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“To ride, shoot straight, and speak the truth—
This was the ancient Law of Youth.
Old times are past, old days are done;
But the Law runs true, O little son!”

—Charles T. Davis



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NEWSLETTER



GETTING TO KNOW YOUR O.A.H.A. OFFICERS

Under the Chairmanship of Larry Kelly, the Foundation's membership has grown almost 500%, in less than three years.

Kelly is active in all phases of handgunning. A devoted hunter, he has sought game throughout North America, and in Africa. In addition to directing the Foundation's affairs, he currently serves as President of the American Big Game Handgunners Association.

Although not personally active in competitive shooting, Kelly lends support to a number of major tournaments. His interest in the welfare of all types of competitive shooting is perhaps best exemplified by his on-going support of the Firearms Industry Super Shoot, a tournament for benchrest rifles.

Professionally, Kelly is best known for his development of the Mag-Na-Port process whereby EDM technology is used to cut precise venting ports into barrels. The porting reduces muzzle lift and perceived recoil substantially, in big bore handguns.

Larry Kelly's contributions to the Outstanding American Handgunner Award Foundation cannot be overstated. He is typical of those dedicated sportsmen who believe in the rights of the law abiding citizen to own and use handguns, and are willing to give generously of themselves to protect those rights.



O.A.H.A. Prexy Larry Kelly



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Industry Insider

By Massad F. Ayoub

SINCE news is slow this time of year, we'll start this month's notes off with a little background on how this column works, and some of the flak it has produced.

Rumor-mongering is rife in any industry. There are always projects that look really hopeful in September and are dead by the following January, for any of several reasons that may have nothing to do with the quality or superiority of the prototype design. Readers have followed this with the tale of the improved Colt service revolver. At Smith & Wesson, what started out as a facelift on the Model 39 and 59 autoloaders has turned quietly into a redesign project that may result in a super-gun that will replace the 39 and 59 as we know them; though the project is in its embryonic stages now and you won't see the "model 47" for a few years, if ever. We can tell you with authority that the prototypes are out of sight, but a lot of prototypes get stillborn.

There are some in the industry who think we are doing the gunmakers a disservice when this column mentions a project far in advance. They feel that it whets the public's appetite for a product that is not available yet, and thus hurts the sales of the present product line. We, respectfully, do not buy that. Most firms can't keep up with the present demand for its handguns, so our announcement of a model of the future doesn't cost them any money on sales to people who read **AMERICAN HANDGUNNER** and choose to wait a few years for the improved version.

A question we're often asked is, "Where do you get your information?" We get it from people in the manufacturing end of the business, and occasionally from top-level favored distributors who are privy to "eyes only" information by virtue of their marketplace contributions to sales of the product line. Our "insiders" range from company presidents to middle-management types, and surprisingly, we get a lot from the blue-collar working stiffs who man the production lines. News from the top office has usually filtered down through the assembly lines before it reaches many of the majority stockholders. You can learn a lot about what's happening at one place by shooting

the breeze with the guys down at the local lounge after the shift changes. I figure what I pick up there is worth my bar tab.

Why do they talk to us about it? Especially, why do they tell us potentially damaging stuff like how badly, and why, this or that gunmaker they work for is getting shoddy on quality? Because there are a lot of people who take pride in what they do, and get angry personally when they feel quality is slacking off. They know that if furious consumers get on the company president's back, that will do a lot more to clean up the quality control act than anything they can say to their union steward.

Inevitably, a little rumor-mongering gets into the column. We make every effort to check out the facts before we publish anything, and we haven't been caught with our pants down yet. Sometimes, you get equally authoritative sources telling you yes and no. When that happens, we just print both sides, as we've done in the past.

This brings us to an interesting point. What can you, the reader, do when you get a gun that's a lemon, even though all the gun magazine articles you read said that the piece was a winner? Well, most of us just go back to the dealer. If the dealer bounces you back on the warranty, you just hope for good service. If it doesn't come, your best bet is: SCREAM! Not just to yourself, for "primal therapy," but scream to the company. Send a registered letter to the president of the firm, and a carbon copy to the chairman of the board. Also send carbons to the editors of the various gun magazines, for whatever good that may do. If you're a cop, send carbons to all the police magazines and newsletters you subscribe to, and make sure that those CC's are listed at the bottom of the original letter.

How well do the gun companies take care of you? Most of them are pretty good, actually. Smith & Wesson's service, which used to be legendary, suffered for a while through no fault of their own; a big fire wiped out the better part of their central service facility in Springfield, MA. Things are getting back in order now, though.

The very best as far as complaint response seems to be Dan Wesson Arms

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and Heckler and Koch. Each firm has a rigid policy that any letter of complaint will be answered by a company officer who will telephone the concerned buyer of the product, even if the guy has to stay three hours late in the east coast office to catch the disgruntled gun-owner at home in California. These firms take great pride in their workmanship and top management's edict to company executives is: "If a customer has trouble with our product, you WILL get it squared away with extreme swiftness and make that person HAPPY." Ruger also tends to be pretty responsive in this respect. Not all manufacturers in any field go as far, and these firms are to be commended for their concern for the ultimate users of their products.

Anybody can let a lemon slip through the final inspection at the plant. This is why auto-buyers test drive cars, and why smart gun-buyers shoot hell out of their new handguns before they carry them for serious purposes. The measure of a maker is not *whether* they let bad guns reach the dealers' showcases, but how many bad guns get out and how good the company is about taking care of you when you get a "factory second."

Right now, dealers and distributors tell me, the workmanship situation isn't as bad as it has been in recent years. Curiously, the best frequency of repair ratios are for Iver Johnson and Harrington & Richardson revolvers; dealers and distributors tell me that return by customers for defects is virtually non-existent with both products. There are two schools of thought to explain this happy state of affairs, which do not necessarily contradict each other.

One explanation is that since I.J. and H&R build guns on designs that are for the most part decades-old with the bugs worked out — designs that involve beefy parts with lots of tolerance between the bearing surfaces — there are no fine adjustments to go out of tune. There is something to be said for this. You see H&R's and I.J.'s that have been hard-used for many years by professional out-

doorsmen, that still perk reliably despite a patina of rust on the outside.

The opposite argument is that these are low-priced guns sold to "sometime" shooters as opposed to sophisticated firearms enthusiasts; and that the purchasers of same don't notice burrs in the action, stiff and uneven trigger pulls, and other shortcomings that, if seen on a Colt or Smith, would drive a gun buff to a state of fury resembling a shark in feeding frenzy.

There's an element of truth to both. If the guns didn't go bang every time, there would be complaints, so you know they're pretty much in time and well-tested before they leave the factory. Still, the guy who buys a \$55 H&R instead of a \$600 Hammerli isn't likely to notice roughness in the action, and isn't much going to care about it if he does. He wants something that goes bang and hits the tin can or the trapped beaver or the nearby woodchuck he's holding hard on. If the gun does that, he's happy. Frankly, so am I. I own guns by both makers, and have had good luck with contemporary production runs too. Harrington & Richardson and Iver Johnson are making good, abusable guns that work, guns that you don't have to take care of before you take care of yourself when you come in from a hard day in the field. More power to 'em.

* * *

Bad news/good news: Julio Santiago, maker of the Day-Nite Site (glow-in-the-dark sights for handguns and shotguns) is going public with his product. His long-standing policy of police-only sales has ended. On the one hand, I hate to see anybody but cops having this deadly gun-fighting edge, but on the other, I can see Julio's point. He spent many years of his life and every cent he had promoting his invention, and the majority of police just said, "So what?" Now the product is available to the public at large, and really, that's just as well . . . street punks don't read "Shotgun News" and won't have these super sights put on *their* carrying irons, but *you*, the law-abiding citizen, now can do so. They cost \$40 for a set of

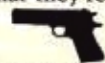
front and rears for an adjustable sight revolver or an S&W Model 39 or 59 auto, and under \$20 for shotguns. If you ever go downstairs to confront a burglar in the dark, this accessory may make the difference whether the bad guy walks out over your body or whether you stand there dictating a report to the detectives while the ambulance attendants take the formerly-armed burglar out in a body-bag. Law enforcement's loss may be your gain. Julio's address is Nite-Site, Inc. PO Box 0, Rosemont, Minnesota 55068.

In the unmitigated bad news department, the manufacturers of stainless-steel frames for S&W model 39 and 59 autoloading, has folded. It's a shame. They made a fine product; S&W executives and engineers told me privately that factory examination showed the frame to be excellent. The Illinois State Police rangemasters, who are responsible for 1700 Model 39s on the street, told me they were thoroughly impressed with the frame, even though they couldn't order it for adoption. When ISP rangemasters endorse a Model 39-related product, that's like Parnelli Jones' chief mechanic telling you over a beer what motor oil he personally likes: you better believe you're getting the straight stuff.

GETTING A GRIP ON PLASTIC: Rogers/Alpha, 10601 Theresa Dr., Jacksonville, Fla. 32216 is marketing a plastic composition revolver grip that is a spitting image of the superb Hogue design, but for a lot less. I just put a set on my Power Custom PPC gun. The Hogue grips I had on before are probably the pinnacle of the handgun stockmaker's art, but too nice to subject to the bump-around rigors of heavy duty shooting and carrying. The Rogers job feels about the same, though it's a trifle slicker and slipperier. I predict a great future for this grip on police duty guns: your hand just slides naturally into a perfect double-action position when making a fast draw, and they are cut out for speedloaders. The slickness is actually a good feature for flat-out fast work with heavy loads; your hand can make last-instant adjustments on the grip, but the checkering still bites in and, coupled with the finger-grooves and the sharp outcropping over the hand web, prevents your losing control during recoil since the gun can't roll up in your hand with even the hottest Magnum handloads.

* * *

Keep those letters coming, folks, and if you've got a lemon handgun and write to the manufacturer in protest, put me down (in care of this magazine) on your list of people getting carbon copies of the complaint. Who knows, maybe by this time next year we can have an ombudsman thing going, where we at AMERICAN HANDGUNNER take your complaint to the gunmakers and find out what they're going to do about it.



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Siluetas

By Phillip C. Briggs

Pistol Pickin'

Silhouettes. Iron animals, torched from thick plate. Balanced on small feet, set out at ridiculously long ranges. Small targets for pistols — hard to hit. Still, knock enough of 'em down and you win. Simple as that. Maybe that's why it's so popular.

You'd have to be sharing a cave with a grizzly someplace in Idaho not to be aware of the birth and explosive growth of handgun metallic silhouette shooting. From the first national championship shoot in Tucson in 1975, the sport has been getting extensive coverage in the gun press. But, if you've been a big reader, and haven't attended or competed in a shoot, you've probably come to the conclusion the game has already slipped beyond the reach of the average shooter. The articles dwell on the Star War-ish unlimited guns, the interbred multiplicity of strange bottlenecked wildcat pistol cartridges. To all appearances, a game for a select few, with money to burn.

Not so. In actual fact, production, or conventional, pistol shooters make up 80-90 percent of the shooters in matches

conducted under the rules established by the sport's first sanctioning body, the International Handgun Metallic Silhouette Association. Depending on your locale, the percentage may well be higher. So dust off that maggie — there's a place for you in siluetas.

"Whoops — not so fast," you say. "Where — how — do I fit in?" Well, let's take a look at the rules and see. Those of you that aren't equipped yet — pay attention. By the time we're done you can dash out and buy the piece that will put you on top of the heap (Oh — if only it were that easy!).

The IHMSA rules, and those recently adopted by the NRA, are quite similar as to the guns and shooting positions allowed in competition. Classes are established by shooter proficiency, for combinations of guns, and positions.

Production (conventional in NRA terminology) guns are basically that. From the box, stock as a stove pistol — as built by the manufacturer — with no *visible* modifications except handgun stocks. And only readily available accessory

stocks are allowed — without custom touches. Obviously, these rules leave a big loophole for manufacturers, and Thompson/Center was the first to drive through it with their Super 14. Like a fox in the hen house; this pistol wrecked havoc in the production classes, and it wasn't long before shooters were screaming to have one, or screaming because they didn't. The obvious inequity was removed this spring when both groups amended their rules to limit barrel length to 10¾ inches. A weight limit of 4 pounds was selected to preclude similar exotics — within the length limit.

Two positions are allowed — standing and anything else. Kneeling, sitting, belly down prone, laid back leaner, sideways — anything. Freestyle, in a word. I bring position into gun selection for the obvious reason that some pistols are shot more accurately in some positions — a few dictate position. A point to consider then in deciding what class to enter — or if you favor a position/style — what pistol to buy.

Classes are established in production-standing, and production-freestyle. At this time a full range of proficiency classes have been established in the rules for the latter; standing is shot in open competition, but that can be expected to change in the future.

Note this carefully. Classes are by manner of manufacture, position, and proficiency — not gun type or caliber. No break for 38's and 45's, or revolvers and autos. You with your Ruger, and that guy with his Auto-mag head to head. Begin to see my point? In some classes your existing hardware won't cut it — and if you're trying to trophy in triple A freestyle, you'd better be equipped.

So. Let's look at the available pistols and see where they would fit best. Depending on what you have hanging in the closet you can figure out what to enter; if you've yet to pop for a piece, you can decide what class appeals to you and buy the right hardware. (Everything has a place — and everything in it.) There's three types to consider: revolver; semi-auto; and single shot.

Just about everybody with a maggie has it in a revolver. The conventional pistol epitomized. Traditional. Being traditional, these are best shot standing up on your hind legs (like a man). Shot freestyle, the gas jet from the barrel-cylinder gap is obnoxious, if not painful, in any position but prone. There's still a problem.

In freestyle classes, the pistol must be kept off the mat. If you've a Smith, with a big set of Goncalo Alves, you can't do this prone without setting the butt in the support hand — not unless your knuckles drag on the ground when you walk anyway. So, this forces you to shoot from a less than perfectly stable position — sure it's better than holding it out in the air — but not the best.

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traditional stock style, can be held (legally) in one hand and supported by a (heavily gloved) fist under the trigger guard. Much more solid, but the gas jet still blows powder grains and trash in your face, and the butt will occasionally pinch the heel of your hand against the ground. No fun.

Besides all this, revolvers for the most part aren't as accurate as needed for, say — triple A scores. Shoot 'em standing up.

Competitive semi-autos can be counted on the thumb of one hand — the Auto-mag.

It seems like everybody that's been pistol shooting for a while has a 45 — but one that's stock is hard to find. No bueno. If you do have a stock Gold Cup, shoot it in the standing class — you'll get creamed freestyle.

Back to the big stainless self-loader. The accuracy potential inherent in this pistol, and the reduced aiming error of the long barreled versions, is wasted in the standing class. Freestyle is the only way. Yet the long grip/frame gives the same problems when shooting this one prone as the big Smith. Leaner style is the hot setup — at least with the 10 inches. My shooting buddy/closest competition gives me fits with his 10 inch 44 AMP this way — his personal high of 35 is a damn tough AAA score to beat. (Voodoo maybe?)

In the most unconventional of the conventional pistols, you have the ubiquitous T/C, the XP, the Merrill, the Hawkeye, and the Navy Arms replica rolling block. Without the obnoxious barrel/cylinder gas jet, or moving parts, these pistols are friendly in any hold. However, the XP and, to some extent, the T/C, just don't hang right in the hand while standing. Besides, the inherent accuracy is wasted. Freestyle for sure.

Depending upon your hand size vis a vis the stock size, you'll have the same problems shooting prone I've already mentioned. Two hands on the stock just isn't as steady as one under the forearm. The XP forces you to shoot it leaner style — and in this fashion it's as stable as if on a bench. With the T/C's, a special short stock would solve the problem for those of us with small hands; unfortunately, nobody makes one yet. If you do try to shoot the break open pistols leaner style — watch out for your legs, as clearances are small. Laid back with one leg drawn up, and laid flat on the ground is possible. Work on something stable and safe to fit your anatomy.

So, where does this leave us? Well, my picks would be a Super Black Hawk for standing, and an XP for freestyle — except neither cartridge is quite right.

We'll get to that aspect next time.

Whether you're a casual or inveterate reader of *The American Handgunner*, you probably thumbed past this page and said, "Whoa, never saw that before."

You're right. This is the first of a new

column on handgun metallic silhouette shooting. It will be oriented toward those of you who make up that 80-90 percent of the shooters I mentioned earlier — and those that wish they did.

We'll talk about cartridges next month, then move into how to shoot — tips and techniques, and then on to how to put on and conduct matches. We'll cover important matches, rule changes, and new equipment. Whatever interests you — just let me know.

Be talking to you.



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Cooper's Column

The Latest On What I.P.S.C. Is Up To

At the Phoenix meeting between the National Rifle Association of America and the Executive Council of the International Practical Shooting Confederation the following principles were enunciated as the elements of practical shooting. Pending the ratification of the constitution of I.P.S.C. by the regional directorate, these principles will be considered binding upon the international executive and all participating regions. They are not subject to alteration or adjustment prior to the World Meeting in 1979, at which time such matters of policy may be examined.

1. Accuracy, power, and speed are the equivalent elements of practical marksmanship, and practical competition must

be conducted in such a way as to evaluate these elements equally (DVC).

2. The practical challenge must be diverse. It is not necessary to invent a new course of fire for every contest, but no one course of fire may be repeated enough to allow it to become the definitive measure of practical skill.

3. Practical shooting is *freestyle*. No course of fire may prescribe a shooting position, nor may a contestant be required to load his piece in any prescribed way. Circumstances may be created, however, (barriers, physical limitations, simulated disabilities, et cetera) which will force a shooter into certain stances or positions. In essence, the problem is posed in general, and the contestant solves it in par-

ticular.

4. The practical challenge must be realistic. Courses of fire must follow a practical rationale, and simulate reasonably hypothetical situations in which weapons might be reasonably used. ("That could never happen" is a valid objection to any practical course of fire.)

5. Weapon types are not separated. Double and single actions, revolvers, auto pistols and single shots all compete together without handicap. This consideration does not apply to the power of the weapons, as power is an element to be recognized and rewarded. Neither does it apply to a stipulated reload, which may be placed at a specific point in any course of fire.

6. Practical competition is open to all decent citizens, without regard to occupation. It may specifically not be limited to public servants.

7. Practical competition is normally conducted using practical targets, which reflect the general size and shape of such objects as the weapon used may reasonably be called upon to hit, in its primary intended use.

8. Practical competition assumes a graduated difficulty of challenge, and no shooting problem nor time limit may be protested as prohibitive. Note that this does not apply to non-shooting problems, such as weights to be lifted nor obstacles to be surmounted.

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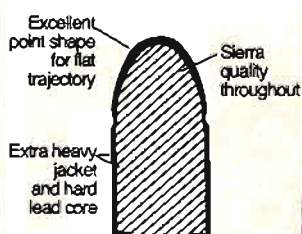
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In connection with the foregoing, the tendency of some designers to turn a shooting match into a track meet should not be allowed to carry us wide of the mark. Obstacles and changes of position should commonly be used to stress competitors, but not to grade the sprinters among themselves while eliminating the clumsy — who may shoot very well despite their clumsiness. Running, jumping, climbing and crawling are all part of practical shooting, in proper measure. But *shooting* excellence is our primary objective. *Agility*, while important, is secondary to the placement of quick hits.

The following letter was received from a recent graduate of A.P.I. It reveals very clearly that what two decades of competition have taught us is still a mystery to our official persons. I think it a wonderful comment upon the relative efficiency of private, as opposed to public enterprises.

Dear Friends:

Well, I finally learned the truth about you folks and your Modern Technique. On December 16, 1977, I attended an eight-hour firearms training course presented by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.) to our office.

The instructor, twenty-five year veteran agent and "firearms specialist" told us:

1. F.B.I. concepts of pistol shooting have not changed since World War II.

2. Two hands at close range are useless. ("If you get into a gunfight at close range, I guarantee you'll go one-handed. And, if it's the first time, you'll be killed.") Moral: Always begin with your *aroud* gunfight.

3. Any good one-handed shooter can beat any two-handed shooter.

4. You should not use your sights in practice because you can't see them at night.

5. At mid-ranges, seek cover first.

6. One-handed shooting allows the shooter to place his left hand over his heart for protection.

7. The "F.B.I. Crouch" is essential, in that (a) it reduces your height as a target, and (b) it places your line of fire at the belly line, at any distance (on flat, level ground).

8. The belly line is superior because the chest bones deflect bullets.

9. The overwhelming superiority of such (A.P.I. type) experts as he has seen proves only that even a bad technique is good if one practices it enough.

Following our very informative classroom session, we went onto the range to practice our newly learned skills. The instructor did stress keeping your eye on the front sight — which I couldn't fault. But, did you ever try doing it with the gun down near your hip? Of course you Modern Techniquers never had a good top view of your front sight anyway.

On the range, we eventually fired a drill of six rounds, reload and six more. Even after all the training I had just received, I lost my mind and reverted to the Modern Technique. "I forgot about you," the instructor said. "From now on you shoot six, reload the same 'clip' from a box and then shoot them off. *That will even things up.*" I still beat half the line. Those I didn't beat were using speed loaders. No, speed loaders are not unfair.

I suppose the proof of any technique is the skill of its adherents. Our instructor told us the F.B.I. shoots one course which calls for twelve rounds to be fired in twenty seconds. "With practice most agents can do it," he said.

Can you Modern Techniquers match that?

— Anonymous Police Agent

We call to the attention of all participating regions and sections that the term "freestyle" means that the shooter may not be told how to handle a given problem. Specifically, he may not be told which hand he may shoot with. He may, on the other hand, be told that some part of his body, including either hand, is at some point presumed to be disabled. There is an important difference in these two directives, since anything done on the range after the disablement of any part of the body must be carried on as if that part of the body continued disabled. If you

have two hands we assume you will use them. If you do not, you can neither draw nor load with both.

We point out that certain types of exercises have been given specific names by general acclaim. If a shoot director intends to use a modification of one of these standard courses, he should not refer to it by its standard name. For example, "El Presidente" is shot at a fixed distance (ten meters) and in a fixed par time (ten seconds). All targets are at the same distance; the shooter starts back to the target. If any modification is made in this pattern, it

would be better not to call the result "El Presidente" but rather to give it a new name. This to avoid confusion, of which we have plenty as it is.

The United States National Practical Pistol Championships are scheduled (Oct. 11-14) at the Wes Thompson Saugus, California. Contact is Mike Fichman, P.O. Box 843, La Canada, California, 91011, (213-790-6922).



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THE LAW ENFORCEMENT BOOK OF WEAPONS, AMMUNITION AND TRAINING PROCEDURES: Handguns, Rifles and Shotguns by Mason Williams, *Firearms and Ballistic Consultant, Libby, Montana*. The text provides data on firearms, training, and ballistics, and discusses the history of firearms. It also gives information on selecting the appropriate weapon and ammunition, testing of ammunition and basic ballistics, care and maintenance, specific training procedures, and carrying and firing techniques. 77, 544 pp. (6 3/4 x 9 3/4), 506 il., 1 table, \$32.50

AMERICAN POLICE HANDGUN TRAINING by Charles R. Skillen, *Yellowstone County Sheriff's Dept., Billings, Montana*, and *Mason Williams, Firearms and Ballistic Consultant, Libby, Montana*. This text objectively covers a wide range of subjects related to police handgun training. It presents factual, constructively critical evaluations of such training and investigates the subtleties of mental conditioning in relation to handgun training. Training by rote receives a similarly comprehensive analysis. Psychology, the legality of firing, private combat training schools, and training procedures based on modern concepts are all handled in detail. 77, 216 pp., 77 il., \$11.75

A HANDBOOK ON THE PRIMARY IDENTIFICATION OF REVOLVERS AND SEMIAUTOMATIC PISTOLS by John T. Millard. This volume presents a simple yet concise and accurate method for the primary identification and recording of revolvers and semiautomatic pistols. It uses a seven-point system with which the reader can identify and record data on any firearm. 74, 168 pp., 87 il., cloth \$10.50, paper \$7.95

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Handloading

By Dan Cotterman

Keeping the Lead Out

A bore that is caked and smeared with lead can spoil the accuracy of any gun and defeat the usefulness of the most carefully assembled handload. Leading is a specific problem that requires specific measures if it is to be overcome. Clean-up operations with special lead-removal tools or prolonged sessions of scrubbing with solvents and wire brushes are janitorial; not preventive.

The alternative for many handloaders has been a retreat to the almost exclusive use of swaged, half-jacketed bullets that expose no lead to direct contact with the bore. I have nothing against swaged bullets, for, after all, they have much to recommend them in matters of expansion within a versatile range of velocities and consistent accuracy. However, to avoid the use of cast bullets, along with their wide range of usefulness and economy is to miss out on a lot of what handloading has to offer.

Groove lubricants have thus far proved only a partial solution as far as reducing or, better yet, eliminating leading is concerned. An alternative to these was a product called Swagemagic, marketed some years ago. Swagemagic was a liquid in which graphite was suspended in an evaporable liquid vehicle. Although effective in all but completely eliminating leading with cast bullets, its use required swabcoating the bore as well as bullet dipping. The reward for your trouble was in knowing you no longer had to face the discouragement of squeezing the trigger on a carefully assembled 235-grain load, only to have a 234-grain bullet leave the muzzle.

Since those early days, I have discovered an easier way of doing away with the accuracy loss that occurs as a result of lead smearing. I cannot, in good conscience, state that this is my discovery alone, for I was clued in on the idea by a devoted handload experimenter named Rusty Wilson who, in turn, said his information came about through contact with a British experimenter named Jim Jukes. That's as far as I'll trace this revelation for now. Suffice it to say that good tips on better handloads travel fast. I feel fortunate in being able to pass the word along to others who can benefit from it.

Excellent results have been obtained

through the use of dry graphite sheets which are pressed, cookie-cutter fashion, over the mouth of the case after the powder charge has been added. The bullet is then seated. The result is amazingly lead-free shooting with, in the case of fast-burning numbers such as Bullseye, Hodgdon's HP38, Winchester's 231 and so on, a measurable gain in velocity. More on the subject of velocity gain in a moment.

The material is called colloidal graphite. It comes in small, rectangular ribbons in a choice of thicknesses that run from .033-inch, to .046-inch, to a maximum thickness of .064-inch to meet the individual needs of the handloader. These ribbons are available under the name, *Ipso Gun Lubricants* from Industrial Products Company, Dept. AH, Box 14, Bedford, Mass. 01730. The latest price information at hand indicates a flat \$1.25 for a box of 18 ribbons.

A note of caution: Orders will be filled with the .033-inch thickness unless otherwise specified. Our handloading thus far has involved the use of the .064-inch thickness, which is to be recommended unless inside-case space is a factor. The greater thickness resists tipping once the wad is pressed into place and offers more coating effect.

Using the graphite wad is remarkably easy. However, I should note that the lubricant works more efficiently at temperatures of around 70 degrees and higher, not a restrictive problem when one considers the average temperature of a handgun barrel during prolonged sessions of shooting when the leading problem is greatest.

A velocity gain of perhaps 5 percent is nominally possible with handgun-length barrels, provided, as noted earlier, a charge of one of the faster burning propellants is used. Relatively slow-burning mixes that depend on the retardant effect of the bullet for ignition may not reflect a velocity advantage as a result of using these graphite stuffers.

In longer barrels, such as, for example, might be encountered in the recently-issued 14-incher aimed at metallic silhouette shooting with Thompson/Center Arms' single-shot Contender, a better velocity gain might be realized, even with

other than the fastest-burning propellants.

A parallel of comparison is noted in Wilson's experiments with a fairly well known charge in the .405 Winchester rifle cartridge. Using 53 grains of 3031 behind a 400-grain cast bullet, seated in Winchester brass and using standard Winchester large rifle primers, an average velocity of 1970 fps was attained. Adding the graphite wad on a subsequent string of similar loads resulted in a velocity average of 2070 fps. The velocity gain is, however, negligible when compared to the blessing of a practically lead-free bore.

In handguns the .45 Long Colt has been charged with 5.5 grains of Bullseye behind Lyman's linotype-cast bullet number 454309. This model weighs in at 235 grains and is regularly fired from a Ruger Blackhawk with a four and 1/8ths-inch tube. Velocity increase, using the graphite wad (sans grease-groove lubricant) averages 37 fps; that is, from 797 to 834 fps. Again, negligible, but worth noting... especially when it is accompanied by other, more significant, advantages.

Long-term use of colloidal graphite lubricants promises increased accuracy life for barrels through a substantial reduction of erosion and gas cutting in forcing cones and barrels, to say nothing of the benefits attendant to less lead transfer.

As I said at the outset, the concept of providing lubrication for lead bullets is anything but new and the method presented here is certainly more innovative than original. It is, in this regard, significant to acknowledge the fact that the late Phil Sharpe, a noted experimenter and author, long ago devoted a considerable amount of writing to the virtues of colloidal graphite lubricants with bullets that exposed raw lead to gun bores.

Now that such a lubricant is easy to get, inexpensive and easy to use, it would appear that there is another component definitely worth adding to the ideal handloaded cartridge.

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From CHIVALRY To COMBAT

By J. Scott Dugan



We've come to think of the two-hand grip, the half-crouch, and double action shooting as techniques fundamental to combat handgunning. We're wrong. As recently as 1911, Walter Winans wrote in *The Art of Revolver Shooting*: "This style of shooting is about upon a par with holding on to a horse's mane, or to the pommel of the saddle, and calling it riding." In fact, experts at the turn of the century believed that a single hand grip, an erect stance, and single action fire were basics not only for formal target work, but for all phases of handgunning.

Supporting that view, William Reichenback in 1936 recommended in his book *Stiggins and Bullseyes* that the shooter stand with pistol held at arm's length, body erect. The other hand should be left in the pants pocket, or held behind the back for better balance. Paul Weston's advice in *Target Shooting Today* deals only with wrapping the hand properly around the grips; he ignores the other hand entirely. And Henry Seebbins, author of *Teaching Kids to Shoot*, complains that children often have trouble supporting the weight of a revolver held at arm's length with one hand, of course. His solution: improve strength in that hand. One book features a chapter entitled "There's Only One Grip." And what is that grip? The single hand hold, of course. After all, the handgun, by definition, is designed to be held in one hand, right.

Accordingly, the old-timers compensated for a world of one-armed handgunners. Different theories were born, gained and lost popularity; some lived and some died. They were literally years of hit and miss.

The hunter pulls his new .357 and centers the sights on the running deer. He fires and misses, loses precious time as the gun kicks high, rising to the right. He pulls the revolver back into line, but the prey is obscured by dense brush. The next time out he grips the stocks according to the convention of the day — tightly, with knuckles white. He fires again, dropping the deer. Conclusion: the best grip is a firm one. Tight control lessens recoil.

Several seasons later, he pulls the



magnum cautious from the holster. The deer looks up, searching for the hint of a sound, then continues grazing. He grips the stocks with bloodless knuckles and takes careful aim. The blade waivers diagonally across the deer's neck. He squeezes the trigger a millisecond too late and misses cleanly. Revised conclusion: grip the stocks only as hard as necessary, lightly if you can. Excessive pressure causes unsteadiness.

Next he tries a hybrid grip, one which lessens recoil and keeps a steady hold. The two hand hold? Don't be ridiculous. The new experts squeeze tightly with some fingers, lightly with others. The balance makes for a smoother trigger squeeze. And besides, there's only one grip, right?

There's only one stance, too. The duelist stands with feet planted at ninety degrees, looking much like a fencer. He lifts the pistol slowly, deliberately without fear of excess motion. In theory, this leaves the smallest area open to his opponent's fire. But in fact, if he were hit, the bullet would rip through not one lung, but both; not one kidney, but both; not one leg. . . . The stance was changed. And that stance was. . . Drop to one knee? To a prone position? A half-crouch? Never! It's more difficult to fire from these positions — one-handed. The new position: face the opponent head on. Body erect and fully exposed. No consideration was given to stances which might better protect the vital areas. No consideration was given to grips which might help to direct quicker, more accurate fire to the adversary. But one factor received a great deal of consideration — tradition. Tradition



ourweights survival. This attitude in shooting tactics and shooting philosophy had carried through from dueling days to target shooting and practical handgunning.

And these limitations apply equally to double action shooting. In *Target Shooting Today* Paul Weston warns the reader against trying to use double action point shooting for practical defense work. A handgun cannot be fired proficiently since one hand must hold, cock, aim, and fire the weapon. And what about the other hand? You're forgetting, how many grips are there?

The biggest controversy is about potency. While today's experts might recommend nothing less than a .357 magnum or a 12 gauge shotgun for home defense, Winans swears there's no substitute for a salt load. The same advice applies to other firearms. The thirty-eight was more than adequate, and apparently the .357 would have been considered a veritable cannon in his day. In fact, when the magnum first went into production in the 1930's it was criticized by some because of its heavy recoil. Heavy indeed, with only one hand to control the weapon.

On dealing with assailants, Winans offers a much more "gutsy" approach than his latter-day counterparts might. The gunman holds his Smith and Wesson Russian model at his victim's stomach. Unafraid, the victim snaps his hand down onto the top strap of the revolver, releases the locking catch, and pushes the barrel down, emptying all six cartridges and thereby disarming his opponent. Neat and simple, unless the gunman first empties one or two of the bullets into the brave victim, thereby disemboweling him. In

any case, this approach is markedly different from today's "Give

'em what they want" philosophy.

I certainly don't mean to suggest that these men were without merits. As early as 1894, experts offered advice on what clothing and colors to wear to a duel in order to make the worst possible target for an opponent. Others set precedents by endorsing adjustable sights over the traditional fixed type. Previously the movable blades were thought to be too fragile, hardly sturdy enough to be practical for general use. In *Automatic Pistol Marksmanship* William Reichenbach joins in support of the newer autoloading over more traditional revolvers. And of course the original grips and stances, training and strategies serve as foundations for the development and evolution of newer, more refined ones.

But the greatest contributions were by men like Winans who pioneered safe firearms handling. He tells of friends who pick up his revolvers, then shout "Ha, I'll shoot you!" His students point jammed revolvers at his face, and ask puzzling questions, like: "Why won't it go off? I'm pulling the trigger as hard as I can." Actions like these seem comically, pitifully stupid to us today. But probably one of the main reasons we find this behavior so unthinkable is that Winans and his contemporaries, even his predecessors emphasized safe handling so long ago.

In the years since, the emphasis in handgunning strategy has shifted to a more pragmatic approach: Hit the mark as quickly and accurately as possible. Period. No exceptions made for matters of style and form. No consideration given to behavior appropriate to "gentlemen" who duel at dawn. No restrictions without any rational basis. The traditional one-hand stance has been retired to the target ranges. In fact, in one of the most recent shooting books, *Combat Handgun Shooting* by James D. Mason, that stance has been described as "an anachronism left over from pistol dueling days, [which] has little relevance to current dynamic combat shooting modes." Certainly, the author is correct in stating that "This style is still useful, however, to teach and perfect fundamentals of marksmanship." But law enforcement officers, military personnel, and the general public no longer have to depend on techniques adopted from past centuries. The growth of practical handgunning for sporting and combat use has changed the focus of shooting skills from contrived collections of rules and customs to useful, effective tactics. Handguns are not used according to rules of proper form and style, but according to what works best. And they should. Life should never be weighed in the balance against tradition. Never.

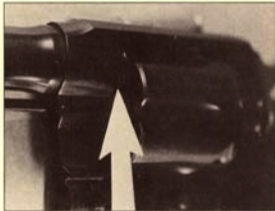


Drawings by Thomas J. Voss

The other day I drove out to see Haywood Nelms, my favorite country gunsmith. The official purpose for my visit was to see what progress was being made on a .44 Special revolver he is building for me using a Model 28 Smith as raw material.

Well, as I fully expected, my disassembled Model 28 is still sitting in a cigar box gathering dust while Haywood waits on a replacement gear for his lathe . . . I just may yet get to shoot that gun before the Tri-Centennial.

I don't remember now how the subject of accuracy in handguns came up. Anyway, it prompted me to mention a friend in town who had recently bought a beautiful new Python, then promptly traded it off at a loss because it didn't seem able to deliver the kind of accuracy he thought it ought to.



Misalignment of barrel and chamber causes bullet to be shaved and can be dangerous if excessive.

Some Thoughts On Handgun Accuracy

Haywood Nelms has very little use for someone like that. "You've got to be either lazy or dumb not to try to find out why a fine gun like that won't shoot as it should."

I couldn't entirely agree. "I don't know, now, Haywood. I know some pretty gunwise guys I've seen throw up their hands and trade off what they consider to be a 'dud' . . ." I put in thinking of a well known gunwriter I know.

"Well, I'm certainly no authority but all I know is that I have yet to see a handgun that shot like that where there was not a discernable reason to be found. 'Course I don't say one won't come along tomorrow, but I'm gonna have to wait and see it to believe it. Usually what's wrong is something that can be fixed in a small shop. It may not always be cheap, but it's cheaper than trading off a fine gun at a loss and replacing it."

"Haywood, what do you do when a customer walks in and hands you a revolver, say, and says that it won't keep six shots in a large Oklahoma buffalo chip at ten yards?"

"The first thing is to find out all I can from the customer about what it does do that may be special or unusual . . . does it keyhole bullets . . . or is there a lot of lead or fire at the barrel-cylinder gap when it goes off . . . things like that can give a clue. If nothing told to me seems out of the ordinary, I shoot it myself. Sometimes there's nothing wrong at all and the problem is the shooter. A few test shots, anyway, will usually tell me where to start looking."

DIMENSIONS

"For the sake of discussion of potential problems, though, I

have to start right off where accuracy begins. The first thing is the dimensions and the place to begin is the chamber or chambers, in a revolver. Chamber diameter isn't really too critical unless it is way too loose and allows the cartridge to seat in different positions from shot to shot. Of course there has to be some play to accommodate variations in case size, but it's small. Put a cartridge in your favorite revolver then take the rim between the nails of your thumb and forefinger. You'll find that it can be moved laterally, however slightly.

"Ideally, chamber-to-cartridge fit should be close and tight. This ideal chamber would then present the bullet to the forcing cone of the barrel in exactly the same way for each shot. But, about the only time a gun maker can make such a chamber is for a test gun or a single shot, and only then when the potential buyer fully understands the problems inherent in such chambering. This sort of chamber can never be used in self-loaders.

Their feed systems require the cartridge to change direction slightly upon entering the chamber, and space has to be provided to take care of that. Cartridge dimensions also vary somewhat from maker to maker and even between lots of ammunition put up by the same maker. Finally, the springy nature of brass requires a little space to expand into under pressure so that, as pressure drops, it can recover and facilitate easy extraction.

"If the chamber's too small the shooter will know it; he'll have trouble loading. This can usually be corrected by polishing out the chambers to size, or reaming them. If they are too large, though, the answer is a new barrel, or cylinder if the gun is a revolver.

"Haywood, isn't chamber length a more critical measurement than diameter for accuracy?"

"I think so. In autoloaders the problem is obvious. Most, but not all of these headspace on the mouth of the case. If the chamber is just a mite too long you've got a problem getting even ignition . . . the cartridge wants to slide away from the hammer or firing pin. Also, you get irregular entry of the bullet into the rifling. Revolvers headspace on the rim and there has to be a little play here to facilitate cylinder rotation and keep the occasional primer sticking out a bit from tying things up. But, here you have the old business of the unsupported front end. Revolvers, with their roll crimp, tend to leave the bullet unsupported at the instant of firing to jump to the place where the chamber is bored at bullet diameter. This situation, of course, is aggravated in cases where we use the .38 Special in the longer

357 Magnum chamber, .44 Specials in .44 Magnum chambers, etc.

"Too short a chamber of course can usually be reamed out. If yours is too long, though, you need a new barrel or cylinder.

"If the chamber turns out to be ok, the next thing I look at is the barrel. Not all of them are bored and rifled perfectly. Worn tools and less than the best craftsmanship can cause uneven internal dimensions which can really play hob with accuracy. Slugging your barrel will usually reveal, through a decrease in the effort needed to push the slug, a place where the internal dimensions get larger. When a bullet enters this area under pressure it will expand and then have to be swaged down again as it passes on. This never happens evenly, and there may be some gas escape; the result is a distorted, inaccurate bullet. If on the other hand your problem turns out to be a tight spot in the barrel, you'll note the increased resistance as you try to push the slug through. Here your bullet gets swaged down and after passing is loose and rattles about in the remainder of the barrel losing gas and accuracy. For a 'jug' barrel — one that's big inside — forget it. Get a new one. If the tight spot is not too bad, and the rest of the barrel is ok, lapping may be the answer. Watch out, though ... lapping is hand work and usually expensive these days. Again, usually the best and cheapest answer is a new barrel.

"Another barrel problem is caused by damage to the crown at the muzzle. If this surface becomes uneven, it allows gas to escape unevenly at the instant the bullet exits, resulting in a tipped bullet usually. Fortunately, a damaged crown is usually easily and cheaply corrected. Not so, however, with problems at the other end. On revolvers, the forcing cone and shank of the barrel where it passes through the frame and meets the cylinder face is as exceedingly critical area. Revolver bullets are under extreme pressure as they pass this point, and if they are not supported perfectly all the way round by the forcing cone they will become badly distorted and off balance. If the shank itself is also damaged so that the gap is uneven then you'll have irregular gas loss and more distortion. Damaged forcing cones and shanks can be repaired by cutting off the damaged portion and setting back the barrel. New threads and a new shoulder will usually have to be cut and the barrel installed again and the front sight centered properly. In some cases, when a new barrel is very hard to come by, this may be the answer. My bet is that it will usually be better, though, to go for a new barrel.

If barrel shank or forcing cone are damaged, inaccuracy will result. Repairs can be expensive.



Damage to the crown at the muzzle will cause uneven gas release and tipped bullets.

"What causes damage to the forcing cone in handguns?" I asked.

"Lots of things can. Factory oversight usually, but dirt or sand on ammunition that is fired, deformed bullet jackets, a misaligned cylinder ... sometimes undersized hard jacketed bullets will allow gas cutting, too.

"The size and shape of the firing pin can be important too. Each maker has developed his own shape and size after much experimentation with live primers, to assure that hammer fall will give uniform ignition and minimize the danger of punctured primers. Older revolvers sometimespeen their firing pin holes downward slightly in the frame taking them out of best alignment with the most sensitive part of the primer. A good smith can fix this.

SPRINGS

"Haywood, what about springs? Other than human and powder power, they provide the dynamics that make handguns work, and they can make a big contribution to accuracy — or the lack of it — and sometimes in ways most of us would not suspect."

"Yes, I think that the most important part springs usually play lies in the perfect balance of all those which act directly as part of the lockwork. Together with the smoothness of contact surfaces, their evenness and balance make for a truly fine, smooth action. If hammer or trigger return springs are too weak or too strong, everything is thrown out and it becomes really hard to get rounds off accurately.

"In autoloaders, the recoil spring, if it is not stiff enough, can fail to return the barrel to the exact same position each time — no matter how well the rest of the gun may be 'accrued.'"

"You know, Haywood, as you were discussing last week, extractor springs can sometimes play a roll in accuracy few of us would suspect. Depending upon the shape and fit of the extractor, they can bring pressure against the base of a cartridge in the chamber which can be good or bad. If consistent in holding the cartridge always in the same position, accuracy can be helped. In revolvers a similar situation can apply with the circular extractor head. If it is not pinned in proper alignment with the chambers, the coil spring which powers its return can impart a lateral pressure to the rims of all cartridges in the cylinder, with similar results. Finally, there are always the little hand spring which secures the band against the cylinder ratchet until rotation is complete, and the cylinder latch spring without which lockup won't happen. If it fails, the result can be both inaccuracy and real danger."

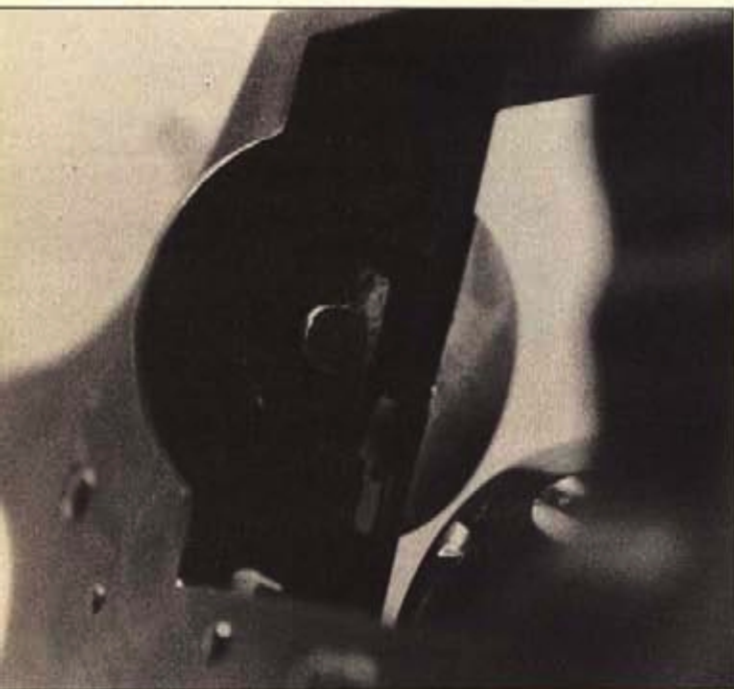
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ALIGNMENT OF PARTS

"The place where the cause of inaccuracy is usually found, though," Haywood went on, "is in the positioning of parts."

"Autoloaders are of several types. Their basic accuracy depends largely on how much and what sort of barrel movement is built into the 'system.' Thus, the small pocket pistols such as the Walther PPK which have their barrels firmly mounted to the frame are inherently the most accurate. Next come the Luger and P-38 types in which barrel movement is slight, straight front-rear, and carefully controlled. Finally, the heavy caliber Brownings, such as the .45 ACP, are a veritable clattering mass of moving barrel and slide, as their out-of-box performance usually amply reflects. So much has been said and written on how to accurize the .45 that it doesn't merit repeating here. Suffice it to say that the barrel of a pistol must return to the same place with respect to the sights each time it is fired if it is to be accurate. The design of the gun determines how the fitting is to be done. A good smith can handle it."

"In revolvers, proper alignment of chamber and barrel is crucial. I guess of all the complaints I get, guns that are out-of-time are the most frequent. These are the ones in which, in single action fire, the hand does not quite rotate the cylinder enough for proper lockup. The chamber isn't then quite lined



Springs that keep the hand engaged and make cylinder latch operate are all important to safety and accuracy.

up right and, if fired, at the minimum the bullet will be shaved on one side. If the condition is excessive the gun can be destroyed. Timing is usually easily repaired by adding a bit of metal to the lower notch of the hand then reshaping it.

"Perhaps the next most common problem is the bent or sprung revolver crane. Here some oaf has dropped the gun on its side or has flipped the cylinder open and closed. The result is looseness and misalignment, and loss of accuracy. The only answer is a new crane."

"As the years have passed, the larger makers have expanded their lines of revolvers considerably. One result of this has been that the old standard frames now serve several calibers. Smith & Wesson's little J Frame intended for the .32 and .22 now also carries the .38 Special. The K Frame guns which were all .38 Specials until after World War II now include the .357 Magnum in the Model 19. The big N Frame guns now accommodate everything from the .357 Magnum through the .41, .44 and .45. Cylinders of differing lengths have been used for these different

calibers and, as a result, a small bushing is added on some models in front of the cylinder to make the headspace correct. The use of full bore loads can sometimes crunch and damage this bushing so that it allows excessive headspace — and poor or no ignition. The bushing is easily replaced."

AMMUNITION

"Haywood, in all this talk about accuracy, don't leave out another all important ingredient: ammunition. Granted, if the gun itself isn't right good ammunition won't help much, but assuming that it is ok, ammunition can very well be the problem. American factory ammunition is pretty generally of high quality, but it is not all equally accurate. Then there's the matter of 'preferences' which certain guns seem to have for a certain load by a certain maker. An identical gun may do best with an entirely different load put together by a different maker. I think that there is clear evidence, too, that there is a difference in performance between lots of the same load by the same maker!"

"Yeah, Old Reg Leg, I knew you'd manage to work that ammunition lot business in one way or another . . ."

"Naw, Haywood, I'm serious. Ammunition components — most particularly powder — are made up in batches rather than as a continuous process, and no two batches are ever exactly alike. Cases, primers, bullet diameters and hardness, crimp tightness, and probably a thousand other little things enter into it. Inevitably, small differences enter which make one lot better than another in a certain gun — or in all guns."

"I still keep a 'little black book' on all the commercial ammunition I buy. It's listed by lot number, and in it go comments on all that I note when shooting that ammunition. Right now I have one batch of Czech military surplus 9 mm Parabellum that has a terrible record for misfires. This isn't common with modern ammunition, and I think the problem is the hardness of primer metal. These usually fire on the second try."

"Handloaders would do well to 'keep book' on their product as well. They enjoy the added freedom to mix and match components and, in some cases, even try bullets of differing diameters. To keep track of your good performers you must keep records identifying all the elements that went into them. Here's what my record looks like for handloads . . . unfortunately the makers are not as careful as they might be about marking lot numbers on their packages:

.45 COLT

Lot	Date	Case	Primer	Powder	Bullet	Crimp	Filler	Seal	Quantity	Remarks
H1H	1/77	W-W	CCI	630	Speer	Heavy	None	Valspar	50	
		0.6G	350	16.7 gr	225 JHP	Roll				
		m02	D02F	630 S						
				HO 8						

In this case, the maker did not mark his bullets with a lot number and I had to settle for this listing.

"For me, by far the hardest part of lot discipline is returning spent brass to the right lots. It's not too bad with revolvers, but with autos I always end up with a batch of 'unidentifieds.'"

"Try different colored nail polish as a primer and bullet sealer, dummy," Haywood offered; "it works just as well and gives you a color code to go by."

"Let's not forget the really important things about ammunition and accuracy. Uniform primer seating, for example, is ten times more important than having the best primer. If not fully seated, a primer will resist the hammer fall and make the hammer seat it before it fires — if it does at all. Bullet seating must also be very uniform. It can change headspace. Crimp tightness needs to be very consistent."

"For the handloader, carefully metered charges are an obvious element of accuracy. Bullets must be of best quality. All too often home cast or swaged bullets may have air bubbles or spaces in them that destroy balance. Some autoloaders, too, have a tendency to be rough on soft point bullets in loading, distorting them enough to adversely affect accuracy."

"Finally there is one point in particular that the handloader needs to remember. We have several cartridges in wide use today which date from the turn of the century, with its bulky smokeless powders, or even from the black powder days. These are overly large and long to handle today's smokeless powders, particularly when light target loads are used. The .38 Special, .44 Special and .45 Colt are good examples of what I am talking about. Small charges in these large cases tend to slosh about and never take up the same position with respect to the primer from shot to shot. As a result, combustion is uneven and inconsistent, and so is accuracy. Although rare in handguns, there is another aspect of this that is dangerous. I don't believe that even the ammunition makers fully understand why, but some powders can, in very light loads, detonate if they are ignited just right by a hot primer flash in one of these long cases. Catastrophic destruction of the gun results.

"Rifle makers have long known about this phenomenon. In rifles, it seems to be restricted to certain slower burning powders. Mr. P. O. Ackley, the famous gunsmith, has become quite an authority on these detonations over the years and has even been successful in predicting for the gun makers exact loads in certain cartridges which would produce the result!"

"I believe that handgun shooters can solve the problem conveniently, through the judicious use of fillers. First you load your case with the small charge positioned right where you want it over the primer. Next you fill the remaining space in the case with a light, inert material then seat the bullet so as to hold powder and filler in place. I've heard of kapoc, oatmeal and rice being used as fillers. I like Cream of Wheat myself... it smells so good when you shoot it! Of course, when you use fillers you are also using a very light load, but it pays to know what you are doing to yourself always. Fillers tend to do two things, which have mutually cancelling effects:

— They tend to cool the overall process of combustion of the powder, and by doing this they also tend to reduce pressure generated.

— But, on the other hand, they also add a bit of weight to the total of bullet, filler and combustion products which the powder must push down and out of the barrel, and in this way they tend to increase pressure, or can do so. Usually you can expect to get a small loss in 'zip' from the load.

"There's something else about fillers to remember, though," put in Haywood. "I've known some loaders who, seeing how well they worked in light loads, decided to try them in heavy, near max loads that still do not fill large cases. Here you've got to be very careful to remember that you must add the weight of filler that you add to the weight of the bullet, then consult your loading table to be sure the powder charge you use is below the maximum."

"Right!"

"Safety and accuracy are a little more important than 'zip,'" added Haywood. "It should be clear that there are a lot of things that could impact on both. When I have a customer who calls and says that he has a problem, describes it and asks me what is wrong, I try to tell him the most likely and logical causes, but I also suggest that he have a qualified gunsmith look the gun over and verify my telephone 'diagnosis.'"

"If a person spends his hard earned cash for a fine gun, like your friend who bought the Python and then traded it for a loss, it sure seems to me that it would be worth while to spend ten or fifteen dollars more to have that gun checked out first. If it proves not to perform well with any commercial ammunition of any kind — and some do — the problem may yet be a very simple one and very easily corrected. If it turns out to be a factory defect, the makers are very good to stand behind their product and will fix it or have it fixed at one of their regional service centers. After all, if your four hundred dollar air conditioner or hundred and fifty dollar lawn mower doesn't work right, you don't go trade or sell them without first seeing if what is wrong can't be found and fixed. A fine handgun is nothing magic or mysterious and no less a machine, so why not have it looked over too?"



A sprung yoke can result from flipping the cylinder open and shut or dropping the gun. It will hurt accuracy.



Revolver ejector head, if not pinned, can exact a twisting pressure upon cartridges at the base.

Colorado Handgun Laws...



Good or Bad?

By Hal Swiggett

I resent being picked on!

Just because I like chocolate pie, raw pineapple and blondes does not make me fair game for discrimination. I don't think it does at least.

I also like handguns. I don't think that makes me fair game for discrimination either.

But Colorado does.

I don't know about the chocolate pie, raw pineapple or blondes but they sure as heck have singled me out as a handgunner. And all the rest of you one hand but usually held in two hunters.

Effective the first of this year Colorado legalized handguns for the taking of big game. Big game such as deer and black bear. Sounds great on the surface, doesn't it? It really is and I might be wrong for carrying this big chip on my shoulder. Bear with me a short while and see what you think.

To quote their Division of Wildlife Regulation — "Chapter 2 — Big Game — Article 1: MANNER OF TAKING — c. Handguns: 2. Black bear and deer may be taken with any handgun having a minimum barrel length of four (4) inches, using a lead slug or jacketed soft-nosed bullets NOT LESS

Rangemaster, Sven Bjorlund points to author's hits. The kill area cannot be seen at 80 meters. As it was 30 degrees and raining, author looks a little worse for wear. Swiggett claims the jacket was none too warm.

THAN .300 INCHES IN DIAMETER (the emphasis is theirs) in any handgun cartridge with ballistic ratings which meet or exceed the .357 magnum as determined by the manufacturer's rating."

Sounds great doesn't it. I like that part. Colorado has long been a top big game hunting state with privileges granted to archers, muzzle loader hunters and riflemen. Handgunning for big game was verboten.

But let us get on with the regulation. Under PARTICIPATION it reads: "b. 8. Those hunters who wish to take deer or black bear with a handgun must pass a proficiency test and be in possession of the proficiency certificate (card) issued by the Division of Wildlife and then also be in possession of a hunter safety certificate, if required. The fee for such proficiency certificate shall be \$3.00."

Thou givest and thou takest away.

A privilege granted but with a great big IF in the way. Why us? Why handgunners? Riflemen, Heaven forbid, don't have to show they can hit the side of a barn at 30 yards. Black powder shooters don't have to prove they even know how to load a rifle. Archers are not required to show they know how to draw their bow. But handgunners — we have to prove we can shoot and

answer questions. Both. Not one but two sections to the test. Ten questions and a target.

How are we getting along? Are you beginning to see my point?

INSTRUCTIONS — PROFICIENCY TEST FOR HANDGUN DEER AND BEAR HUNTERS reads: "1. Applicant must pass a written exam. There will be ten questions on the exam. More than three questions answered wrong will indicate a failure. 2. After written exam has been successfully completed, the applicant must fire six shots, with four or more hits, scoring within the seven ring on a standard NRA 50-yard slow fire pistol target (7 ring = 11 inches). Distance shall be 50 yards and the firing position shall be the choice of the applicant. No artificial support may be used under the gun. 3. Applicant may take the test again should he fail the first time. If applicant fails the test the second time, he must wait 30 days. A new set of ten questions will be used for the second test, if required."

Now that you know the requirements for Colorado handgun hunting let me toss one more of their questions at you. Getting on down to number 5, it says, "Shooter applicant will be asked what bullet, powder and charge is contained in the ammunition being used at the time of the test." If this isn't changed it means only handloaders will be able to pass. I don't know a single loading company who reveals how much of what powder they

I've only hunted in one country where it is done. Though much of, or most of, Europe has done it for years. I hunted moose in Sweden some years back. Every hunter in that country takes a test. Both written and shooting BEFORE he is allowed to buy his big game rifle. Many practice for months using club rifles. Many take the test several times before passing. The shooting part is at a two-headed moose 80 meters down range. Four shots are fired at him standing still. The "kill zone" is your target but you can't see it at that distance. Before shooting the range master shows where the bullets must hit to score. All four must hit within that scoring area.

This out of the way old two-head starts running. He trots right along on a track. One shot as he goes left. Another as he comes back. Then do it again. Four shots. Three of which must hit in the circled zone. Then repeat that sequence. Two times the aspiring moose hunter has to shoot at this moving critter.

I did it just like the rule book calls for. In weather hovering right at the freezing mark. In a soft drizzle. My four shots at the standing target were all hits as signaled by the rangemaster when I put my rifle down. After the first go at two-head on the move he signaled three hits. All that was necessary. When the last of my second four shots was off, the rangemaster came running to the firing line with shouts of joy. I had passed on my first try. Having been told earlier many had to do it several times but not

RIGHT: Author receiving the coveted evergreen sprig from head forester Nils-Bertil Nilsson. Photo taken moments after alg kill. FAR RIGHT: Hal Swiggett meets King Carl XVI Gustaf after the alg (moose) hunt. There was a lot of talk about the Mannlicher 30-06.



put in any cartridge.

Questions for the written test are of the same caliber as the idea, as you no doubt assumed. Childish. At least no handgunner will have any problem here. Then comes the kicker. After answering those ten written questions — at the bottom of the page — "ESSAY (no score value) Why do you want to hunt with a handgun?" Please don't have too much of a reason because they only allow 2½ lines for this "essay."

Page 2 of the written test is filled with questions such as, "What type handgun will you use? Do you participate in competitive matches? Will you hand-load your hunting cartridges? Caliber being used? Bullet? Powder? What Maximum distance do you consider best for positive hit? All good questions — no doubt about it.

Maybe I'm wrong on this thing. Maybe I've just got an oversized chip on my shoulder. You tell me. Is it right to single out handgunners for something of this nature and not make shotgunners, black powder shooters, archers and riflemen go the same route?

I'm not against shooting tests. In fact, with so many totally inexperienced shooters taking to the hills every season I would definitely lean in favor of such action. Don't get me wrong. I'm not proposing such a thing. Colorado has already done that. I'm only stating my opinion.

really taking it serious I guess it must have been true. At least the rangemaster seemed to think I had performed quite a feat.

A few days later I killed a moose. A Swedish "Alg" with that same 30-06.

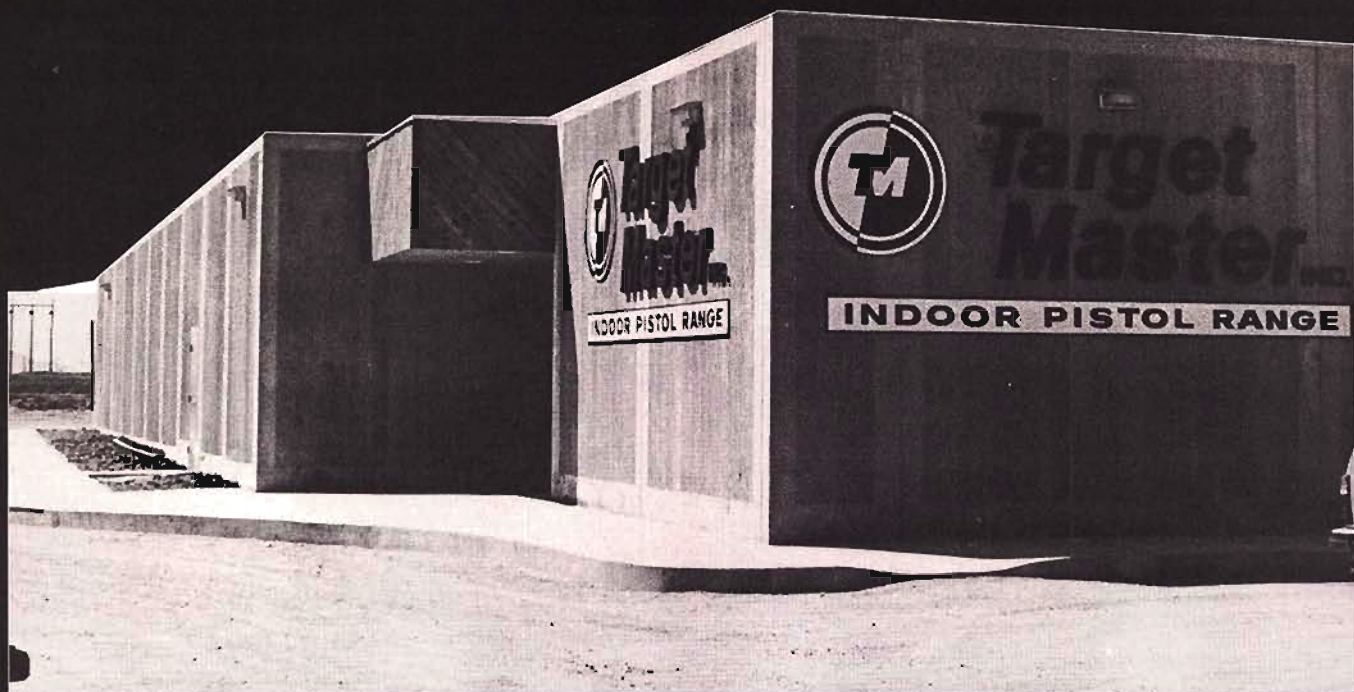
The point for relating this instance is to show I have taken tests and was able to pass them easily. So it isn't the test that upsets me with Colorado's new ruling. It's being singled out as a handgunner that upsets me.

If riflemen, black powder shooters, archers and shotgunners were tested as to their proficiency with their chosen arm I would never question a handgunner doing the same thing. To put it another way — since handgunners are required to take a proficiency test it seems only fair that riflemen, archers, black powder hunters and shotgunners be required to do the same thing.

Am I wrong? Do I really have a chip on my shoulder? I've hunted in Colorado for a quarter of a century and spent many hundreds of dollars in that great state. But I'm going to have to give another hunt there long and careful consideration. I'm at the point right now that if they don't like my handguns they don't like me. Or my rifles. Or my black powder guns.

True, the state of Colorado has legalized handguns for the taking of deer and black bear. A great move. Then they spoiled it by discrimination.





Above: The building is solid, poured, reinforced concrete walls and floor and ceiling.

Below: Part of the modern lounge area with a view of the ranges.

Opposite Page: The wide open style of range allows just about any type of handgun activity.

It should be obvious to the most pro-gun conservative that we cannot have people wandering around large cities and in suburban areas firing handguns, no matter how expert they may be. I believe that the future of handgunning in urban and suburban areas lies in the planned and intelligent creation of Shooting Complexes. These indoor ranges would provide the necessary facilities for shooting sports under controlled and safe conditions on a year round basis. Two of the retarding factors in handgunning has been the range locations and the weather. A range that may be ideal during summer and fall may be impossible to shoot on the rest of the year. Most ranges serving urban areas are located so far out of town that it becomes a chore to reach them.

Target Master, Inc., 1351 West 33rd South, P.O. Box 25322, Salt Lake City, Utah 84125, appears to be a reasonable and practical answer to urban shooting. The acceptance of this shooting facility by both the City Fathers and law enforcement has been so favorable that the owners are already planning another range. It would appear that this concept should be applicable to hundreds of other cities and metropolitan areas throughout the country. The owners and operators of Target Master are Gary Williams and Harvey Jackson — both former police officers. They know the problems inherent in firearms and yet, they have had enough experience to realize that the pent up demand for a place to shoot is growing rapidly all over America. They also know that it is better to instruct people in the safe and sporting use of the handgun than to allow these people to possess handguns and not know how to use them safely or intelligently. These two factors contributed to the long series of discussions that led to the creation of Target Master.

Target Master is located within Salt Lake City on a six lane feeder route built on a curve so that visibility is high. The building was constructed of poured, reinforced concrete — floor, walls, roof, so that it would be impossible for a stray shot to leave the inside of the building. There is parking area the full length of one side, in the back and in the front. There are signs on three sides of the building so that traffic coming from either direction can see the signs.

There are no windows and only one door in addition to the main entrance. The entire building has been specially wired against break-ins, plus having the interior covered night and day by special lights that detect movement. All doors are steel with special locks. As one approaches the front of the building, the main entrance is on the left with a large overhang to protect the shooter against rain or snow. The lobby is comfortably large, carpeted and finished off in natural woods. Directly ahead of the main door is a counter that holds shooting accessories. Target Master does not sell firearms. Behind the counter is the wall of the gunsmith shop and storage area that backs up the merchandise in the counter.

On the right of the entrance is the large, well lit and well ventilated classroom, also carpeted and equipped with chairs and desks and tables. A drinking fountain and washrooms are also located in this area.

To the left of the entrance is the lounge with tables, chairs, candy machine, soft drink machine and coffee machine. The partition wall that runs between the range and the lounge, entrance way, office and Range Officer's control board is constructed of double glass panels, each on a different angle than the other and separated by about two inches of space. Part of this "glass" is bullet proof plastic that will

Is This The Future Of HANDGUNNING?

By Mason Williams

deflect and stop most handgun projectiles. Entrance to the range proper for shooters is through a double door next to the counter and cash register. There is another single door leading from the Range Officer's area directly into the range.

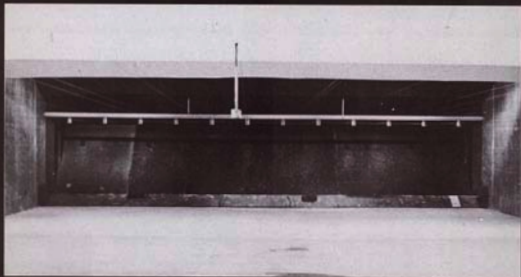
The range itself has twelve firing points

the range proper. Every modern convenience has been included in each firing point.

The range proper is lit by several banks of lights so that any portion of the entire range may be illuminated at will. The firing area is ventilated so well that there is no chance for gases, smoke, or air pollution.

Unfortunately, the physical aspects of any business, while important, do not necessarily guarantee a profitable and well run business. Anyone contemplating going into this business should realize that the physical plant is not nearly as important as management.

One of the reasons why I was so in-



and is twenty five yards in length. The entire range installation was handled by Carwell. The backstop is the bullet grabbing curved surface that Carwell has used for many years that eliminates back splatter, ricochets and gathers the spent bullets at the bottom of the backstop. Each firing point is separated from the next one by plastic partitions lined with steel plates. Targets are controlled by the shooter and may be stopped at any place between the firing point and the backstop. Lights are installed to shine directly on targets at seven yards, fifteen yards and twenty five yards. Each shooter has direct communication with the Range Officer. The trays that block each firing point may be dropped thus opening up instant access to

ing materials to gather. The air is constantly fresh. Banks of infra-red heaters keep shooters and their equipment comfortably warm. Wall areas are covered with heavy, rubber backed carpeting thus adding substantially to the sound deadening materials used throughout.

Above the target carrying cables, the range "ceiling" is covered with angled sheets of steel plus acoustical materials. Ventilation keeps the air on the range clear and clean. In the center of the range floor is a large drain pipe so that the range may be hosed down every morning and every evening, thus providing a clean surface.

So far, I have concentrated upon the physical aspects of Target Master. Unfortunately,

interested in attending the opening of this range was to discuss the future plans that both Gary Williams and Harvey Jackson had brought up during a series of brief conversations at the National Rifle Association Convention. Both men had indicated to me they wanted to encompass the entire field of handgunning, not just conventional NRA shooting and matches. Once I had seen the nearly completed range, it became obvious that their plans did not go far enough.

To make a long story short, by the time you read this article, Target Master will have set up shooting schedules subject to changes based upon actual demand. First of all, Target Master will be closed Sundays and Mondays. This is based upon the

habits of the people of Salt Lake City and similar modifications in business days will be observed in other parts of the country.

They will set up certain evenings and times during the day for conventional bullseye shooting. They will make the ranges available for NRA courses of fire, competitions and league shoots. Next, classes will commence shortly covering the safe handling of handguns to prepare shooters for practical handgun competition. This fast growing sport has mushroomed in recent years until it has become extremely popular on outdoor ranges. As far as I know, Target Master will be the first range that will develop these surprise courses of fire for indoor, year round shooting. Certain evenings and days will be set aside for this type of firing. Next will be the fantastically popular

lar Bowling Pin matches that are ideal for indoor ranges. Both Gary and Harvey are already planning for shoots, leagues and crowds of spectators for this latter type of match. Note that all of these matches have tremendous spectator appeal.

Classes will be run covering the use of the handgun for defensive purposes for anyone who is interested. This includes housewives, youngsters, old people, people living alone and those who merely want some simple, yet practical instruction in the use of a handgun including people who are out at odd hours of the day and night.

Target Master has already been approached regarding use of the range for instructing Hunter Safety Instructors and personnel. Several guard and security firms have indicated definite interest in

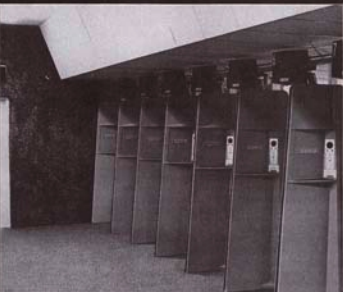
weigh the negative use of the handgun.

Charges for range use are based upon half hour periods. There will be memberships for individuals and for families. Right now, all of these details are being worked out and questionnaires are being sent out to shooters to determine how much time should initially be devoted to what type of firing and what course of fire. I anticipate that by August of this year, a basic, sound routine will have been developed allowing any shooter to participate in his or her style of shooting.

And then of course, there remains the public relations aspect of such an operation. This takes in all of the service clubs — Rotary, Lions, etc. — with short talks during lunch hours. In addition PR will include constant contact with the City Fathers, other shooting organizations in the



Note the carpeted walls and the steel exit door. Partitions are by Caswell.



Gary Williams standing behind the counter in the doorway of the gun shop.

use of the range for training purposes.

As I pointed out to Gary and Harvey, there was no reason why they could not set up special hours for small bore rifle shooting, classes and instruction. In addition, metallic silhouette matches could be run using both small bore rifle and caliber 22 handguns, thus furnishing these shooters with year round practice.

So far, both newspapers and TV have given Target Master coverage and I expect to be working closely with TV people to set up monthly half hour programs covering practical handgunning matches and the bowling pin matches that provide so much spectator appeal. It is time that the American people commence referring to the sporting use of the handgun, but this cannot happen until they are shown the sporting uses of the handgun that far out-

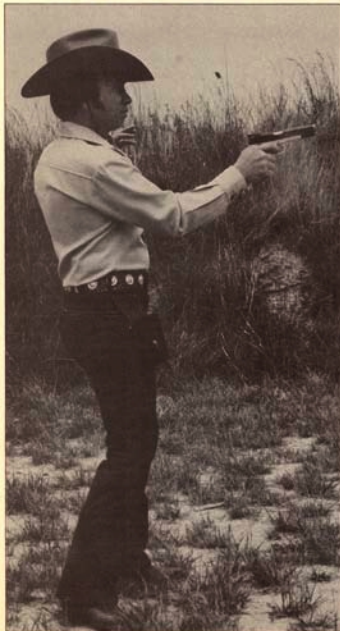
area plus correspondence with other similar shooting facilities throughout the country in order to perhaps increase shooter services or improve the organization. It is not enough to build a plant and then sit back and wait. Variety, new concepts, new services and other progressive ideas are needed to turn a physical plant into a money making operation.

I believe that this type of shooting concept will not only increase the use of handguns but will make the average handgunner a much safer shooter over the years. It appears to me that this is very definitely the future trend in handgunning and from what I have been able to learn, there remains a tremendous potential for this business to say nothing of a service for the American handgunner.



IN SEARCH OF THE PRACTICAL HOLSTER

By Rick Miller



Efficient and practical holster design has always been a rather elusive and subjective area of discussion. Judging from the leather goods seen hanging at the hips of many American handgunners you might be excused for thinking the whole subject of proper holster selection is either hopelessly complicated or of no serious importance. It seems quite a few peace officers and civilian pistol packers attach little importance to proper handgun leather, or don't know how to go about picking the right equipment to meet their individual needs.

This situation is somewhat puzzling, because Americans have always had a deep affinity for the short gun. Anyone who owns a handgun of any description will have strong views on why it is the best one to fill his needs. Regardless of the validity of those thoughts, whether his line of reasoning favors power, controllability, economy, compactness, weight, firepower, or whatever, those views will be hard to shake. On the other hand, ask our typical average handgun owner what holster would most properly fill his personal needs, and you will most likely be met with a blank stare or a shrug of the shoulders.

It is true that a certain class of handgunner has given this subject quite a bit of deep thought. The freestyle combat pistol competitors, a small group of thinking peace officers, and a diminutive but select group of civilian handgun packers all realize that self-defense with a sidearm is a very competitive proposition. It only makes sense to these pistoleros to use the best equipment available today. It should be kept in mind that these knowledgeable shooters are a distinct minority among handgun owners, the majority of whom have little notion of what constitutes "good" leather gear.

Perhaps if we take a look at a number of classic designs from the past and present, the elements that go into sound holster design will become a little less mystifying. There will undoubtedly be some good models, both past and present, that won't be covered, but the ones that will be described are all outstanding designs and should serve as excellent illustrations of what to look for.

Thell Reed point shooting from an Andy Anderson Thunderbolt rig. Note empty case above and behind pistol.

The original idea for this story was given to me by Bruce Nelson of South Pasadena, California. Many of the thoughts contained herein came from him, and anyone keenly interested in holster design should find them thought-provoking, because Bruce is eminently qualified to speak on the subject. Bruce has many years of law enforcement work behind him, both in uniform and as an undercover narcotics agent. For many years he shot regularly in freestyle combat pistol matches with the Southwest Pistol League, rising to a position of prominence in A Class competition. He also teaches for Jeff Cooper as an instructor with the American Pistol Institute. In addition, he's a very talented holster designer, having spent three years with a major holster company, and he has some definite ideas of his own on the theory and design of holsters for different tasks.

The first holster that we will look at has a mixture of good qualities, and several not so good. The clamshell holster has been maligned and kicked around by many writers and theorists over the years, but the fact remains that it possesses a

number of desirable features. It is unusually secure from unexpected "take-aways" by a would-be assailant, as well as safe from loss in a rough and tumble fight or chase. By virtue of its positive lock and hidden release button, the average hood bent on snatching an officer's weapon is foiled before he even makes the attempt.

This type of rig requires a lot of practice to develop any real speed, but with sufficient work and perseverance the clamshell can be amazingly quick into action. For best results this holster should be mounted on the gunbelt rigidly in the "highride" position, as opposed to the lower and less rigid swivel mount often seen. Swivel holsters are notorious for "beating your leg to death" while running. There are no safety straps to fumble with or to slow the draw; and more importantly, there is only one condition of readiness.

On the draw, the shooter grasps the gun butt, the forefinger enters the trigger-guard and presses the release button concealed in the leather behind the guard. As he does so, the whole outside half of the holster flies open under spring pressure,

leaving the pistol in the shooter's hand. There is no drawing motion as is usually necessary with other holsters, the weapon is simply thrust forward, up, and into line with the target. With practice this technique can be surprisingly fast and smooth.

The clamshell is an approved holster with the Los Angeles Police Department, and over the years it has proven to be a reliable holster, despite myths to the contrary. It is available from the Safety Speed Holster Company, 32077 West Beverly Boulevard, Montebello, California, 90640.

The clamshell does have several distinct disadvantages as a duty holster. Both hands are required to replace the pistol and close the holster, this is time consuming and awkward, especially if your other hand is occupied with another task. After the draw has been made the open holster lying along your leg can be a nuisance, it tends to flop around and get in the way if any sudden movement is called for. Nevertheless, the clamshell holster is an



On author's Summer Special metal band around top of holster keeps it from squashing flat under the belt when pistol is drawn.



This is the original Summer Special made by Bruce Nelson back in 1967 and worn during his days as an undercover narcotics agent.



The Summer Special carries the pistol well above the pant's belt making it possible to get a good solid grip at the start of the draw.



The Hardy-Cooper shoulder also handles large frame revolvers nicely. This Model 27 rides comfortably, with weight split between shoulder and belt.

interesting design, and worthy of mention for its good features.

The Yaqui Slide is a curious little holster that usually fails to impress most observers at first glance. It is such a simple, straightforward design that its outstanding qualities are often overlooked, but the Yaqui Slide in many ways is the epitome of what a good holster should be. It is neat, compact, comfortable, fairly secure, concealable, offers good gun hand contact, and it is as fast as any waistband holster, and better than most.

In this trim little belt slide the pistol rides slightly out and away from the body, with the gun butt riding high and free from leather and body. This cuts down a bit on concealability, but at the same time improved gun hand to pistol butt contact is achieved. This improved access helps with a smooth fumble free draw, which is one of the chief failings of most hideout holsters of any description.

Careful fitting of the leather provides adequate friction to make the Yaqui Slide secure enough for most activities, short of very strenuous and severe action. This unique belt slide was developed by Eduardo Chanin of San Salvador, brought back to the U.S. by Jeff Cooper, and is now produced by Milt Sparks, Box 7R, Idaho City, Idaho 83631.

Shoulder holsters, it seems, are continuously being designed and put on the market, but most of them just don't quite have the right combination of design and execution. Very few people seem to be comfortable either wearing or working from this type of gun harness. I think this reflects the general lack of well designed models now available.

A properly designed shoulder holster, it seems to me, offers several real advantages for the person who must carry his

side arm undercover. It offers reasonable speed and easy access by the weak hand, but more importantly it provides just about the ultimate in concealability. Since this type of rig carries the pistol rather high and against the bulk of the upper body, it is fairly easy to hide a good sized weapon. Further security is provided by the left arm, which normally is carried directly over the pistol, where it helps to cover any telltale bulges.

The foregoing makes it sound as if the shoulder holster would be an excellent choice as a hideout rig. This is true, but the would-be user must be cautious in making his selection. The only shoulder rig that I'm personally acquainted with that will properly handle a large frame revolver or selfloader is the old Hardy-Cooper design. This rig, designed thirty odd years ago by Captain A.H. Hardy and modified by a then youthful Jeff Cooper, has been out of circulation for many years, and for all practical purposes was impossible for the average handgunner to lay his hands on.

By popular demand, Milt Sparks started several years ago to produce an almost exact copy of this excellent old design. It has been tested and endorsed by Jeff Cooper himself, and in several ways is superior to the original models. I've examined several authentic examples of this fine old holster, and find that the new rigs as made by Sparks are constructed of heavier leather, and have an extra belt slot cut inside the toe of the holster.

The extra belt slot is designed to help pull the butt of the pistol in close to the body for an extra measure of concealment. It does the job very well, and it doesn't interfere with securing a good grip during a quick draw. With the horizontal spring gripping the weapon around the

being given to initial hand to gun contact. In addition, almost every example I've seen has the annoying habit of squashing flat under the pants belt after the pistol is drawn. At first glance this may not seem critical, but there are times when you need to put your weapon away quickly, or with one hand.

One final fault of the typical inside waistband holster is the method by which it is attached to the belt. A metal spring clip is normally utilized, and this is a chancy system at best. It is all too easy to draw the holster right along with your pistol when using a rig with this type of belt hook!

The Summer Special was designed by Bruce Nelson to correct these chronic shortcomings of the inside waistband holster. Initial inspiration for this holster came from a "live" incident related by Lieutenant Larry Carpenter of the Ventura County, California Sheriff's Office. Late one night Deputy Carpenter had occasion to arrest a suspected lawbreaker. The man surrendered peacefully, but became unruly when an attempt was made to handcuff him. Carpenter was handcuffed in subduing his man because his waistband holster had gone flat after the weapon was drawn, and he could not replace it with one hand, the other being occupied with the recalcitrant troublemaker. So, there he was, with an obstreperous suspect in one hand, and a pistol he couldn't use or conveniently get rid of in the other! Eventually after much thrashing about, and somewhat the worse for wear, Lieutenant Carpenter was able to subdue his prisoner.

After hearing the story, Bruce Nelson set out to design an improved inside waistband hideout holster. The Summer Special was the end result, and the consensus of opinion among knowledgeable gunmen is that Bruce succeeded very well indeed.

The Summer Special carries the pistol high so that it is easy to achieve a good quick grip without fumbling. A strap with snap fastener anchors the holster to the pants belt, and thereby eliminates the dubious spring clip. Around the top of the holster, encased in leather, is a metal band to hold the holster open so that the pistol may be replaced easily with one hand. The holster body is made of lightweight leather, rough side out, to help anchor it in position against the clothing.

The net result of all these features is a hideout holster that is comfortable, concealable, secure, versatile, and lightning quick into action. This holster is quick enough that it has been used to win a number of practical pistol contests. That is a very unusual distinction for a hideout holster. The original Summer Special was developed in 1967, and has been in constant demand ever since among undercover lawmen.

Bruce Nelson does not actively seek orders for his unique designs, being

primarily interested in the theory and development of improved holsters and leather gear. However, if you are interested in obtaining a Summer Special, contact Milt Sparks, Box 78, Idaho City, Idaho 83631. Milt makes this holster exactly to Bruce Nelson's specifications.

Full race speed rigs usually come in for quite a bit of criticism concerning their practical utility. That image of sacrificing everything in order to obtain the greatest measure of speed under competitive pressure is now beginning to fade. The holster that started this trend towards more practical competition holsters is Andy Anderson's famous Thunderbolt rig.

The Thunderbolt boasts a number of outstanding features, but the most notable is undoubtedly the adjustable tension screw that replaces the archaic safety strap found on most holsters. This screw is precisely and quickly adjustable for whatever tension the wearer desires, and provides complete security during strenuous activity.

Other good elements of the Thunderbolt rig include full metal lining of the holster for rigidity. Front welt construction to eliminate sight drag, or the need for sight rails, and solid union of belt to holster for positive positioning are several more noteworthy points.

As it stands, the Thunderbolt would make an excellent police duty rig. The adjustable tension screw could tend to snag on things, but it would be a simple matter to move it around to the back side and make it accessible through a hole in the holster's back flap. In that position the adjusting screw would be completely hidden while the rig was being worn.

With Andy Anderson in retirement for the past couple of years anyone wanting a Thunderbolt was just out of luck, unless he could find one on the secondhand market. This was a rather iffy proposition, as only a limited number were made, and most of these were not for sale. Thunderbolt fanciers can now take hope, however, for custom leatherworker Gordon Davis, Box 446, Arcadia, California 91006, is advertising a nearly exact copy of the famous original. I've been using one of Gordon's outfits off and on for about a year now, and find it quite serviceable.

The five holsters described above are not being held forth as the only good holsters of their type available. To be sure, there are other fine examples we could discuss, but space is limited. Each of these five is designed and intended to fill a different need, but they all possess certain qualities in common. They all offer good security with quick access, good gun hand contact, comfort for continuous wear, neat and trim design and construction, as well as top quality materials and workmanship. The prospective buyer would do well to note these necessary features when searching for a holster to fill his own individual needs.

The Yagui Slide makes a handy utility holster for the .45 Auto. Note how pistol butt rides well clear of leather and clothing.



middle, there is no binding of the pistol's muzzle on the draw, as sometimes happens with several other models with different retention systems. The Hardy-Cooper has a very generous cutout near the toe to allow the pistol muzzle to clear leather without binding.

When properly adjusted, the Hardy-Cooper rig splits the weight of the weapon between the shoulder and waist belt. This is another plus when packing a full size heavy frame defensive sidearm.

The inside waistband style of holster has become quite popular with undercover lawmen who may need quick access to their weapon, but at the same time must maintain a very low profile. Here again, proper holster selection is not as easy as it may appear. Most inside waistband holsters position the handgun very poorly for a quick draw, and are quite floppy, with little consideration

"Shooter ready?"

The question was directed at me. I was on the firing line at the North Valley Shooters Association Range in Gridley, California. My .45 automatic Hardballer was loaded, safe, and holstered. I was the third shooter, following my husband, in this Advanced Practical Pistol Match.

The first shooter was fast and accurate, my husband the same. It was do or die. I could shoot well, slow, but well. The question now was, would I! I still couldn't believe I was going through with it! All 92 pounds and five foot two inch—ME!!

My mouth went dry and I longed to run home to my kitchen and sit down with a tall glass of iced tea, but my husband Steve and our nine year old daughter Carol waited with great expectations and high hopes. I was a pistol pack'n mama!

Clapping my hands in front of me, I nodded to signal that I was ready. The only thing in the world was that first target just five yards away, and the other two, one on either side at ten and fifteen yards.

All of my husband's careful patient instructions left my consciousness. There was nothing left now but—do it! After only one month of practice at the regional range with our local club, I had embarked on my first match.

The whistle blew, and for me, the match really began. All other roles vanished from my mind; I was only one thing, a shooter!

Training and the subconscious took over. I felt the gun going off while concentrating on the front sight, putting two rounds on each of the three targets.

A little shaky through the reload, but total concentration returned to the front sight again as I repeated two rounds on each target to complete the stage.

The command came, "Clear and holster the weapon!"

I made it through the first of four stages! My hands shook, but I made it.

When we checked the three targets, we found all fives! My time was twenty seconds, which is slow, but accuracy is what I "aimed" for as a novice. All fives was more than I hoped for!

Steve just grinned like he knew it all along and Carol was so proud because that was her mom!

How does a relatively normal wife and sometimes sane mother of a nine year old and a two year old get into such an unlikely position? I could say I became interested in my husband Steve's hobby, pistol shooting, but that wouldn't be entirely correct.

Actually it began because his practice with the Peninsula Practical Pistol Club (3PC) took so much time away from the family on the weekends. I tried crying, terrible headaches, and just plain being angry and miserable. But he still left the house with his beloved pistol, enthusiasm high, despite my forlorn and "poor me" looks.



PISTOL PACKIN' PARTNER

By Linda M. Knab

Sundays weren't much fun anymore, being left behind with two small children. I was doing the same thing I did all week long!

A decision had to be made. At least he didn't leave for weeks at a time to go hunting or fishing! Since I couldn't talk him out of his practice sessions, the only thing left to do was to join him!

Once I mentioned that it would be interesting to "try" shooting from a holster, there was no stopping my man! For my birthday he surprised me with my very own holster and belt! (His next birthday I intend to surprise him with a needlepoint kit!) So, I buckled down and buckled up and began to practice my "quick" draw in earnest.

Steve was very gentle that first week of "dry" practice! He taught me the basic and most important procedure of handling a gun; safety. I heard over and over again, "Point that gun downrange, not into your stomach!"

Gradually I began to do things as second nature, and I got my draw down to a whooping three seconds! I think it was my grim determination that surprised Steve the most. I put everything I had into my concentration.

I must admit, being so small, the .45

was a handful, even unloaded! Funny sight or not, I was determined to go shooting with him.

I didn't realize that "shooting with Steve" also meant shooting in a match! Yet, here I was, on the way to the second stage!

Stage two had three targets 35 yards downrange. At that distance, accuracy really counts. The least little flinch drops a round and a miss counts against the score.

Next to the targets was a twelve inch medal impact plate. "The Gong!" A hit on the impact plate would stop the clock.

Hitting the targets at that distance is an "iffy" proposition for me. I tend to jerk in anticipation and consequently drop rounds into the dirt, or nick the top edge of the target! Consistency isn't one of my virtues!

At practice it sometimes took a shooter three or four tries before hitting the gong, and stopping the clock. Under the pressure of a match, it could be worse. It all depends on how one stays cool and programs his mind.

The night before the match, I fell asleep going through this stage in my mind. Even though I was terrified that I would use magazine after magazine trying to hit "The Gong," I visualized one try, one hit.

PISTOL PACKIN' PARTNER

I forced myself to think positive. Now came the test!

When the whistle blew, I really locked in on that front sight; squeezing the trigger as smoothly as possible. Two rounds on each target. Reload. And then "The Gong." Sight squeeze and pray.

The "p-ting" I heard was music to my ears! I did it! The first shot and I actually hit it! All those good thoughts helped!

I dropped two rounds off the targets, which was fantastic. Not that I dropped them, but that it wasn't four or five. Now I was really hot! I was ready to take on the third stage; the moving target.

Two barricades, 50 feet apart, housed the moving target on a wire rig, fifteen yards downrange. Two "innocent bystander" targets were positioned so that the only safe area for me to shoot was in the middle. A maximum of twelve rounds could be placed on the target, six each pass. There would be three seconds to reload before the second pass.

At my nod, signaling that I was ready, the target appeared from the left. By the time I drew and sighted, it had already traveled 25 feet or more! I got off four shots. Reloaded, and shot four more times on the second pass. Out of my eight shots, only five hit. That was still good for me and I was quite content. This time!

My hot-shot husband lost count and put on thirteen! He lost a five and had five points deducted from his score. We were off and running to stage four—literally!

The fourth and final stage was an obstacle course, complete with a gong at the end to stop the clock! This was where procedural errors counted. A dropped pistol was an automatic disqualification for the entire match. Touching the pistol while moving would cost ten points. Several good shooters lost points because they instinctively pressed against a holstered pistol when moving between firing positions.

This was the stage that was the most fun, and of course by this time, the competition was keen between shooters!

Steve and I watched as the first shooter stood "ready" on the firing line. His look of anticipation reminded me of the very first time I went with Steve to shoot with the JPC.

I'll never forget that first moment firing with the club. I had been the only woman, but they accepted me as any other new shooter. They all had been shooting for some time and all had been in matches. Most had attended Jeff Cooper's American Pistol Institute in Arizona, including Steve.

I had stayed in the background as much as possible and watched as the men went through the firing stage. The first three shooters had jams. I dreaded a jam, especially a stovepipe.

When my turn came, I was literally shaking. I couldn't tell if it was the cold morning air or just plain fear. I told myself over and over, just do what I had practiced dry run; same thing, only louder.

The first time the whistle blew for me at practice, my mind froze. As I went through the stage, my knees began to shake uncontrollably. I hardly even noticed the recoil of my .45! But my eye never left that front sight!

To describe what is happening in photos at right you'd have to be a little mouse in the corner... and you would have heard comments from the author like: "At last an official NCPL match"... "If determination counted, I would have won hands down"... "Load—ready—fire" and finally... "I DID IT... I DID IT... I DIDN'T THINK I COULD!"

After that first Sunday, I began to relax and not feel as self-conscious about shooting in front of other people.

My big competition was myself. Since I wasn't out to challenge my husband or the other men, the respect I gave them was returned.

Besides, Steve and I were enjoying a sport together. I was learning how to handle a pistol as well as foster a confidence in myself. *I was learning about me!*

When the match announcement came, the guys convinced me I had to try. After all, I did hit the targets, sometimes!

But as I was to learn, hitting the target isn't exactly all there is to a practical pistol match! There's "time" that constant pressure while you lock in on the front sight, reload, or clear a jam. Fractions of a second can seem like hours.

Each Sunday morning we would go through the stages of the upcoming match. The club members went out of their way to encourage me, but every time I went up to check my targets and counted the rounds I "dropped," I couldn't help but wonder, how could I ever hope to be ready for a match? I wasn't even sure I knew what "ready" meant.

Each week I would do better than the preceding Sunday. My confidence grew and I realized that "ready" meant just having the guts to go through with it!

As I prepared my head for the event, it became important. It was something I looked forward to, like a trip to the des-

tist who looked like Burt Reynolds!

That was just how I felt about this final stage. Anxious and scared to death! The obstacle course pulled it all together, and is what practical pistol shooting is all about.

The first obstacle was a four foot high barricade to go over and assume a firing position directly on the other side.

I am not athletically inclined, but I had come too far to panic now!

I prepared my mind for the course before me and nodded to the match director that I was ready.

The whistle blew. I drew my .45 and fired at the two targets on either side of the first barricade ten yards away. Two rounds on each. Everything felt right. I put the safety on, and holstered the gun, giving an extra shove before taking off.

It was with a great deal of effort that I climbed over the barricade! On the other side I got into my shooting stance for the next two targets fifteen yards directly downrange. Two rounds on each. Reload.

Safety on and jam the pistol back into the holster.

A white chalk line marked the way around a barrel and led to a 26 inch high tunnel constructed of unattached boards on two wooden horses. There was a five point penalty for each board dislodged.

I scrambled under the tunnel, clearing the boards and did a quick zig zag around two more barrels. The last line of fire was behind a door size barricade with an 18 x 18 inch shooting window.

On the other side were two more targets, five and ten yards away, and "The Gong" at ten yards. I almost had it made! My time just had to be good. I could at least run as fast as the others!

I drew and sighted on the first target. The dust flew behind the targets as I pelted away, two rounds on each. I reloaded, quickly and smoothly, nucking my elbow in as my husband had instructed hours on end. I sighted "The Gong" and could feel the hang-up building against it. My Achilles' heel!

I fired and missed. Three more misses. I took a deep breath and rested my arms on the window. Sighting very carefully and squeezing the trigger ever so gently, I hit it! Finally!

Oh well, 56 seconds wasn't as good as 30 or 28, but at least I did stop the clock!

I can't be sure if it was relief or exhaustion that I felt as I took off my rig. A little of both I guess. I accomplished something that in my wildest dreams I didn't think I



could or would want to for that matter? I did something different and even daring.

These days I'm finding that Steve's hobby is definitely my hobby.

In fact, at my second match I was the one who didn't want to leave! Steve and Carol paced around waiting to start our three hour trip home while I cheered on the only other woman shooter!

More and more women are becoming involved in this sport—with or without their men! In the first match there were

three other women competing. The men encourage and hope to see more women enter the matches. So much so they have a special "Best Female" trophy! (Their hearts are in the right place!)

Since pistol shooting has become *our* hobby, Steve and I have more to share with each other and our daughter.

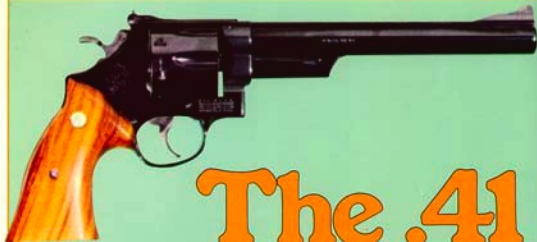
Although we can't take our two year old son along to the matches because the distance is too far, we can at least have Carol with us. What she learns from just watch-

ing us and sharing the moments of "Good Shooting" as well as the less exhilarating times, is more than any lecture or talking about things could ever do.

Perhaps being a practical pistol family isn't the norm for most, but it's the feeling and the togetherness that count.

For us there's always another match just around the corner. Steve is anxious and ready for the event. And guess who will be right there with him? You got it! His Pistol Pack'n Partner ME!!





The .41

TOP CHOICE...

By Evan P. Marshall

If there were a contest to determine the world's most unappreciated handgun cartridge, the .41 Magnum would win easily. In spite of its superb performance, it has not won widespread acceptance. The reasons for this situation, are rather complex.

The .41 was introduced in 1964, because of the insistent demands of lawmen for a handgun that would provide one shot stopping power with none of the disadvantages of the .357 or .44 Magnum.

Two loads were provided by Remington for this new caliber. The first was an all-lead 210 grain semi-wadcutter commonly referred to as the "police load." The second was a jacketed soft point Magnum load that was designed as a high velocity hunting load.

For some inexplicable reason, some of the departments that adopted the .41 ignored the police load and issued the jacketed soft point load. Its heavy recoil makes rapid fire double action shooting extremely difficult, and qualification scores suffered as a result.

Other departments that adopted the .41 compared their qualification scores fired with the police load to those previously fired by their officers using .357 Magnums loaded with .38 wadcutters. This, of course, is hardly a fair comparison, but this is the type of logic that was used to discard the .41 Magnum.

Other departments, such as Los Angeles, looked at the expense of changing over to a new caliber and rejected the .41 on economic grounds alone. Other departments were reluctant to adopt the cartridge because of its Magnum im-

age. It's regrettable that the Model 58 was not roll stamped .41 Military & Police, instead of .41 Magnum.

In spite of all these problems, the .41 Police load is the best cartridge available for law enforcement in this country today. The .45 Auto is its only rival for this title, but I don't consider it the best choice as an issue arm. The manual of arms for the .45 Auto is considerably more complex than the double action revolver, and unless you have a police department full of gun nuts you'll have safety problems.

The .357 Magnum is generally the first choice of police departments looking for a gun more powerful than the traditional .38 Special. The .357, however, is not without some serious drawbacks for law enforcement purposes.

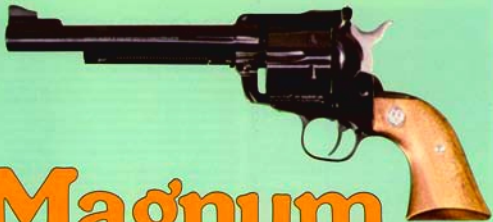
First of all, in the commonly carried barrel lengths, its stopping power is seriously curtailed. One popular load, for example, is rated by the manufacturer at 1550 feet per second. I've chronographed this same load out of a four inch barrel at only 1142 feet per second, which is a critical loss in stopping power. The .357 depends upon expansion for much of its stopping ability, and expansion is



Of the .44, .41, .357 Mags, and .38 Special — first two give one shot stopping power with lead bullets.

largely dependent upon velocity.

Second, the .357 has a dangerous tendency to over-penetrate. For fifteen months before being promoted to Sergeant, I was assigned to a unit that handled the on-scene investigation of all shootings by and of police officers. During that period of time, every shooting in which a .357 was used was a through and through wound. In two instances, officers were wounded when the slug from their partner's



Magnum

NOT QUITE...

By Massad F. Ayoob

Touted as the ideal police service handgun load, the .41 Magnum has been poorly accepted in the thirteen years of its availability, despite a strong initial push in the gun and police magazines. Many of the departments that adopted it found it unsatisfactory for several reasons. San Francisco was the first major department to choose it as standard issue; SFPD's chief rangemaster Bob Abernathy told me, in 1969, why it didn't work out. "Someone in the purchasing department, arbitrarily, without consulting anyone who might know about firearms, ordered .41 Magnums, and proceeded to arm the recruits with this weapon," said Bob. Where before 95% of the SF patrolmen had always qualified, the average plummeted to 50%. A switch to .357 sent the scores back up into the 90% range. Bob's feeling was that the .41's excellent ballistic performance was meaningless if the cops couldn't be trained to deliver it accurately.

Nevada Highway Patrol said they abandoned the .41 Magnum after four years of issuing it because their automatic loading machine "was a continual problem. We felt that the weight (bullets, brass, powder, etc.) was a factor in the machine's problems. Additionally, we had some rather severe training problems in developing acceptable combat shooters with this weapon. Although (Chief James Lambert) personally believe(d) that the .41 Magnum with the lighter load or with reloads did not develop such a recoil that it could not be handled, many of the men felt that it did. . . ." Note that the problem with recoil was with the Police load, not the JSP Magnum. When Nevada switched

back to the .357, scores and morale both shot back up.

The problems that plagued SFPD and NHP with the .41 in the Sixties still exist today.

Take, for instance, the practice ammo. While a few well-funded Federal agencies like the Secret Service do all their practice shooting with factory full-loads, it's a rare local or even state PD that can afford the same. Most departments either load their own on automatic Sear-type machinery, or purchase less expensive "remanufactured" practice ammo by such makers as 3-D. As San Francisco found out, and as San Antonio did later when they went to the .41, loading the heavier stuff is more difficult than churning out .38 wadcutter or service rounds. To my knowledge, no large "remanufacturers" produce .41 practice ammo of any kind. There are so few of these guns in police hands, the market just isn't there to justify tooling up for the caliber.

The drop in the qualification scores has been explained away in two directions by the .41 advocates. On the one hand, they say, many of the departments that dropped the .41 were using the too-potent Magnum load; moreover, the radical drop may

have been caused in part by the fact that the officers were going from a target load in the .38 to a full load in the .41.

Both of those are right as far as they go, but you've got to go further to analyze the drop in shooter proficiency that comes with the adoption of the .41.

The Magnum load admittedly doesn't belong in law enforcement, at least for routine duty. Blast and recoil, anyone short of Elmer Keith will admit, are virtually uncontrollable



S & W .41 Mag. Model 58 with speed-loaders.

TOP CHOICE . . .

.357 penetrated a felon and struck them. This over-penetration took place regardless of the type of bullet used.

Third, the muzzle blast and recoil of full power .357 loads is not conducive to accurate double action shooting. Medium weight revolvers such as the S&W Model 19 or Ruger Security Six merely compound the problem. Furthermore, it's significant that virtually every department that issues the .357 uses .38 wadcutter for qualification.

Fourth, to obtain maximum effectiveness with the .357 you need a hollow point load. This type of ammunition creates all kinds of public relations problems, and most departments prohibit the use of such loads.

None of the above problems exist when the .41 with the police load is used. With a velocity of under 1,000 feet per second when fired from the four inch barrel, this load still has a rating over 60 on the Hatcher Relative Stopping Pow-

posed scarcity and expense. San Antonio, Texas, after a careful study of all the available law enforcement handguns chose the Model 58. They were able to obtain 400 Model 58s in a matter of a few weeks at a price only \$20 higher than the Model 10s they had been issuing.

Still another often heard criticism is the unavailability of factory ammunition and reloads for practice. San Antonio was able to obtain 65,000 rounds of ammunition from Remington in a few weeks time, and currently get their reloads at \$3.50 per box of fifty. They haven't experienced any difficulty in qualifying with the Model 58, and even their female officers have qualified with the .41 police load.

The .41 has long been criticized because of its lack of ammunition interchangeability. I've carried a Model 58 or 57 for the last seven years, and although I've been involved in a number of "panic" situations over the years I've never found

er scale. A rating of 50 is considered the minimum rating for reliable one shot stopping power.

The .41 Police Load is an ideal urban caliber, because of its adequate though moderate penetration. I've been able to obtain first hand information on ten police shootings using this load. Nine were non-fatal one shot stops, while the tenth was a fatal. None of these shootings involved through and through wounds.

In spite of its limited penetration, it is adequate for commonly encountered barricades. I've seen it penetrate a car body and terminate the activities of the felon inside, without endangering innocent bystanders.

Muzzle blast and flash are not a problem with the police load. Because of the Model 58's 41 ounce weight, its apparent recoil is similar to the .38 police service load in a S&W Model 10.

Furthermore, the lead bullet .41 load cannot be attacked on "Geneva Convention" grounds. The lead semi-wadcutter creates none of the controversy that



1. semi-jacketed hollow points do when

seen in the officer's ammo loops. One advantage of the Model 58, that's often overlooked, is that when observed in the officer's holster it is often mistaken for a S&W Model 10. The benefits of a Magnum revolver that resembles the traditional .38 Special should be obvious.

Another objection voiced against the Model 58 is its sup-

posed scarcity and expense. I've carried two boxes of .41 ammo in my brief case for years, but have never needed it in spite of being involved in large scale civil disturbances.

The field of handgun hunting finds the .41 almost as widely ignored as that of law enforcement. The .41 is overshadowed by the .44 Magnum with its supposed superiority. Whether this is justified or not, deserves closer examination.

First of all, typical factory loads should be compared. With this in mind, I loaded up my gear and headed to the nearest range. A Ruger Blackhawk in .41 Magnum and S&W Model 29 in .44 Magnum were used, both with 6 1/2" barrels. An Oehler Model 11 Chronograph with skyscreens was used to check velocities. The results are listed below:

Load	M.V.	M.E.
Remington .41 210 gr. jsp	1403 fps	924 ft. lbs
Winchester .41 210 gr. jsp	1405 fps	923 ft. lbs
Remington .44 240 gr. jsp	1305 fps	907 ft. lbs
Federal .44 240 gr. jhp	1312 fps	926 ft. lbs
Remington .44 240 gr. jhp	1292 fps	888 ft. lbs
Winchester .44 240 gr. swc	1316 fps	919 ft. lbs
Speer .44 200 gr. jhp	1435 fps	914 ft. lbs

Unfortunately, there isn't a factory hollow point load for the .41 Magnum. Consequently, the .44 Magnum hollow point loads out-expanded the .41 soft point loads.

In the recent handgun ammunition tests run by the Federal Government, only one .44 Magnum load outperformed

NOT QUITE...

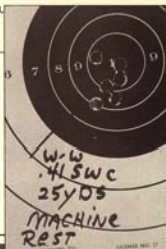
in rapid combat fire. Moreover, the bullet will almost certainly exit a felon's body, retaining more than enough energy to kill any hapless bystander situated behind him. But all the departments who tried the .41 *weren't* using Magnum loads: San Francisco, at least to some extent, used the standard lead-bullet "police" load, Nevada used it almost exclusively, and New York City had used the police load in their tests of the Model 58 M&P revolver, after which the gun/cartridge combo was rejected for approval as being too violent to control.

Some .41 fans say, "If you think the .41 Police load kicks in the Model 58, try a full-house .357 in a mid-frame model 19!" I'll buy that; I just don't think the mid-frame .357 is controllable by the average cop *either*, unless light-kicking 110-gr. loads are used. For the average officer, who has limited training (and, one must assume, no inclination to

1. Maybe lettering should have read "Military and Police" to increase sales.

2. Here's the 58 by S & W ... great one shot stopping power.

3. Good accuracy at distances police normally shoot.



practice except when required), a hot .38 Special or 9mm, is about the maximum he can learn to control with rapid-fire accuracy.

Consider, too, that the Models 57 and 58 are large-frame guns. Many police departments, such as the Texas Highway Patrol, issue the N-frame Highway Patrolman .357, and seem happy with it. Nevertheless, a lot of cops with average or small hands find the big guns more difficult to control with accuracy than the more compact mid-frame guns.

One writer, in a recent issue of "Law and Order," stated that the ideal criteria for a service revolver would be a six-shot, medium-frame gun of .40 caliber or larger. Such a gun does not exist, and perhaps never will. In 1969, I asked then S&W executive Vice President Doug Hellstrom whether the company would bring out a 5-shot .41 on the K-frame. He showed me the engineering blueprints to prove that even if the cylinder were a 4-shot cloverleaf, the .41 cartridge simply couldn't be squeezed in between the cylinder axis and the topstrap of a K-frame gun and still have enough chamber wall around it.

Colt could build a 6-shot .41 Magnum on their mid-size double actions, which have true .41 frames; they've *done* it, experimentally. But they won't for production, because the market isn't there. Charter's Bulldog in .41? The law enforcement market, increasingly unhappy with the limited cartridge capacity of revolvers, would never de-escalate to a 5-shot uniform police gun, even if a gun that small could be guaranteed safe and long lasting with full .41 Magnum loads, as it would have to be.

The real question, for many officers, goes beyond training difficulties. "It's easier to train someone to drive a Datsun than a Plymouth Pursuit, and cheaper too," they'll say, "but the Datsun won't deliver in a high speed chase, and the Pursuit will, and that's what you have to have! The same argument applies to the .38 versus the .41!"

I'm not sure the argument translates. The .41 was introduced as

the answer to the notorious failure of the .38 as a manstopper, and I'll be the first to admit that it has an excellent track record in this respect. The wide, heavy, sharp-shouldered bullet does have instant and dramatic "anchoring" effects. The police load combines excellent stopping power with good auto body penetration, and with a tendency not to exit the human target substance. In ten recorded Detroit shootings, Evan Marshall told me, not



a single .41 semi-wadcutter exited a criminal's body. Ballistically, from the police viewpoint, the lead-bullet .41 load offers fine performance, and one only wonders what it could do in a lead hollowpoint format.

I'd go as far as to say that I'd seriously consider it as my own service weapon, were I restricted to a standard-manufacture revolver with semi-wadcutter factory ammo. I'd prefer a 4" .44 Magnum with the new Remington load (which almost duplicates the .41 Police ballistically, but with a wider surface and more weight that should give even better knockdown with less penetration), or a .45 ACP wheelgun. But the latter is unavailable from any catalog, and the former is far more expensive than the Model 58, which remains the only reasonably priced big-bore police revolver.

I'd go with that, and for Evan Marshall and Tom Ferguson and a lot of other cops who do a lot of shooting. But I wouldn't recommend it as general issue to cops who fired less than once a month, or cops who might have small hands.

Don't forget, too, that the .41 was introduced before the acceptance of "exotic" .38 Special ammo, the "+P's" and hollowpoints. These markedly increase .38 Special stopping

TOP CHOICE...

the Remington .41 Magnum jsp load on the Relative Incapacitation Index scale. This was the Speer 200 grain jhp load. This particular load has a bullet that expands violently in every test medium I've tried. It seems obvious to me that if the Remington .41 load had been a jhp design it would have outperformed any .44 Magnum load in these tests.

A comparison of handloads in these two calibers is even more enlightening. Again the Ruger .41 and S&W .44 Magnum with the 6½" barrel were used. The results are shown below:

Load		M.V.	M.E.
.41-200 gr. jhp	19.0 gr. 2400	1404 fps	877 ft. lbs
.44-200 gr. jhp	22.0 gr. 2400	1389 fps	856 ft. lbs
.41-200 gr. jhp	18.5 gr. 630	1423 fps	896 ft. lbs
.44-200 gr. jhp	20.0 gr. 630	1378 fps	842 ft. lbs
.41-220 gr. jsp	17.5 gr. 630	1326 fps	856 ft. lbs
.44-225 gr. jhp	20.0 gr. 630	1422 fps	1009 ft. lbs

As shown above, only one .44 handload outperformed the .41 handloads. In all the other instances, the .41 offered better performance with less powder required. Frankly, I was more than pleased with the outcome. As a longtime .41 advocate, I was fully prepared to argue that the .41 was more efficient because it offered 10% less power with 20% less recoil than the .44 Magnum. Obviously, there's no need to resort to such arguments.

Why then does the .41 play second fiddle to the .44? I guess it's probably because most people rely on factory velocity and energy figures on which to base their decisions. Obviously, either the .41 or .44 are excellent hunting weapons with superb stopping power. The .44 Magnum, however, just doesn't outperform the .41 as we've been led to believe.

Furthermore, while they're most reluctant to admit it, most .44 hunters shoot reduced loads a majority of the time. Even Elmer Keith's famous .44 load of 22.0 grains of 2400 and a semi-wadcutter lead slug was a full 2.0 grains below maximum when he introduced it!

One well-known handgun hunter on the staff of a rival publication has replaced his .44 with a .41, because he was unable to determine any difference in the reaction of the game he shot. His arthritic hands, however, can easily tell the difference.

Availability of guns is another point in favor of the .41 Magnum. While Model 58s and 57s are not easy to locate these days, they're considerably easier to find than Model 29s. While their prices are inflated like the 29s, they're generally substantially cheaper than the S&W .44 Magnums. Even the Ruger Super Blackhawk is difficult to find, and often subject to the same inflated price tactic used with the hard to get Smiths.

The Ruger Blackhawk in .41 Magnum,

on the other hand, is readily available at current retail price. It's an excellent hunting handgun, and its substantially lighter weight makes it much more enjoyable to carry for extended distances. My Ruger .41 is extremely accurate, and I wouldn't trade it for any .44 Magnum currently in production.

All in all, it depends whether you want to go along with the crowd or think for yourself. As a Cop, I've depended upon the .41 for the last seven years and it's never let me down. Whether your target has two legs or four, the .41 Magnum should be your first choice.

NOT QUITE...

power. Some (usually semi-jacketed soft nose) will still overpenetrate, and some (lighter hollowpoints) will fail occasionally on tough oblique surfaces like a curving windshield. But when you trade off the control, the accuracy that can be trained into the *average* policeman, I think the balance tips in favor of a good .38 Special load in a mid-frame revolver, over the .41 Police round in a Model 58. "The power is useless if it misses the target."



Enough police stuff for a moment; let's look at the huntsman's fields; even here the .41 hasn't sold like hotcakes either. "A .44 scaled down by 10%" is how most outdoorsmen think of it, though at long range, because of slightly better sectional density, it comes closer to the .44 than that. The fact is, though, that ACLU doesn't care what you shoot at animals, and the .44 Magnum *does* give you an edge on game. The .44 gives a bigger hole for shock and for tracking, more punch at the instant of impact, and it's a lot easier to work up super-accurate .44 loads than .41 combinations.

To the outdoorsman, the .41's real advantage comes by going to the Ruger line where you can buy one for about a half

hundred less than a comparable .44.

It's interesting to note that many people are using a .41 in metallic silhouette competition, where its better sectional density shows up well on 200-yd. steel rams. But most of the winners are still using the .44.

Versatility? I don't find that quality in the .41, even when you look at it just from the police standpoint. In Amarillo, Texas, one of the first departments to go to the .41 and one of the few to *stay* with it, they carry the gun with police loads, 6 more of the same on the belt, and six spare Magnum rounds in case they have to shoot through barricades. But compare that to the .38, .357, 9mm, or even .45 ACP: all can fire midrange target loads (if you call S&W's semi-wadcutter 9mm that), all are available in vari-weight hollowpoint configurations, and all can be had in potent Glaser Safety Slugs, or in conventional or KTW armor-piercing mode for special police operations. Whether your assignment is stakeout, siege, or routine patrol on the street or the highway, there's a load specifically for your purposes. In the .41, you have but one controllable cartridge.

So what's the alternative? Well, for almost any purpose you've got in mind, there's a handgun better suited for the task. An issue gun for rank-and-file cops who don't shoot too much and don't particularly care, and who are increasingly likely to have small hands? The .38 Special, with "exotic" hot loads tailored to the locale and the assignment will make for surer hits, faster shooting against multiple opponents, and generally quicker life-saving.

A gun for the cop who can carry what he wants, and has made a point of knowing weapons and being good with them? The .45 auto gives much greater delivery of accurate rapid fire, with comparable stopping power to the .41 Police (or perhaps better, with readily available hollowpoints). There's more firepower, too, and more compactness.

For the man who wants the ultimate combat revolver, and has his own choice? The .44 Mag with the new Remington police-type load would give marginally better performance and comparable kick with more off-duty recreational options. A model 25 .45 ACP target revolver would give milder recoil, comparable stopping power and penetration, and greater versatility, even though you might have to have the long barrel chopped. It's interesting to note that when NYCPD tested the model 58, they also had an identical prototype gun in .45 ACP chambering, which was found to be easier to shoot. I have no doubt that S&W would bring it out for a large department order; it would be simple to make, and could be produced at the m/58 price. .45 ACP is the one big-bore handgun round that automatic reloading machines can easily be rigged for, and that is available (through 3-D) in cheap, remanufactured practice

ammo, not to mention the surplus handball that's still available to some police agencies.

A smaller-framed revolver with "Magnum Force"? I'm not a great .357 fan. In SWC and JSP configurations, it tends to penetrate excessively, in light JHPs, it's been known to blow up too quick, though not very often. The 158-gr. .357 has as sharp a kick in a 4" mid-frame gun as the .41 does in a big frame, making it unacceptable to me for general use without extensive training. There's also excessive muzzle flash, making it a poor choice for night shooting. In mid-bore, I'd rather bet on .38 Special than .357, 'cause I know I'll get more rounds off quicker, with less damage to my hearing and night vision, and with less likelihood of overpenetration. Study of police gunfight reports indicates there isn't that much difference

between .38 and .357 in stopping power. Frankly, if it's down and dirty and close, I'd feel safer with a model 10 loaded with Glaser .38s than a model 58 with .41 Police.

I'm not down on the .41 Magnum, understand. For some people, it's an excellent compromise. It's the only service-format big-bore revolver around (in the Smith 58), and the cheapest big Mag for the hunter (in the Ruger Blackhawk).

It would be oversimplification to say that the .41 Magnum is too little for experts and too big for amateurs. It's a trio of guns and a couple of cartridges that's interesting to play with, but can be outperformed by a lot of other revolver/load combinations.

The .41 is a nice enough handgun. It just isn't the *ideal* ... at least, not for everyone.

Conclusion:

I don't damn the .41 as a poor police revolver. On the contrary, if you can handle it, with the cool control you'll need in rapid combat fire perhaps using only one hand, its ballistic delivery is a fine compromise of decisive stopping power with just the right amount of penetration.

Even, old buddy, I've seen you shoot and I know you're good with your .41. For pro lawmen like you and Tom Ferguson, it's a fine choice. But it's a rare street cop who'll learn the handgun mastery you guys have achieved, and I'd hate to see Joe Policeman try to live up to an expert's weapon and fail. I'd rather see him carrying a gun he can handle, 'cause .38 hollowpoints that hit save lives on the street, and guns too big for the common denominator to handle can do just the opposite.



AVAILABILITY CHARTS

.41 MAGNUM HANDGUNS

Manufacturer	Model	Finish	Length	Sights	Weight
Smith & Wesson	57	Bright Blue/Nickel	4'-4'-4 1/2"	Adj.	41 oz.
Smith & Wesson	58	Blue/Nickel	4"	Fixed	41 oz.
Ruger	Blackhawk	Blue	4 1/4"-4 1/2"	Adj.	42 oz.
38 oz.					
U.S. Arms	Aldous	Blue	4 1/4"-5 1/2"-6 1/2"	Adj.	48 oz.

BULLETS — CAST

Manufacturer	Grains	Type
Lee	161	Wad Cutter
Hensley & Gibbs	175	Wad Cutter
Lee	192	Round Nose
Lee	195	Semi-Wad Cutter
Hensley & Gibbs	200	Semi-Wad Cutter
Lee	208	Wad Cutter
Hensley & Gibbs	210	Round Nose
RCBS	210	Semi-Wad Cutter
Hensley & Gibbs	210	Flat Nose
Lyman	212	Round Nose
Lyman	212	Semi-Wad Cutter
Lyman	215	Semi-Wad Cutter-Gas Check
Lyman	217	Wad Cutter-Hollow Base
Hensley & Gibbs	220	Semi-Wad Cutter
Saeco	220	Semi-Wad Cutter
Lee	238	Round Nose
Lyman	240	Wad Cutter
Lee	240	Semi-Wad Cutter

Hensley & Gibbs, Box 10, Murphy, OR 97533
 Saeco, P.O. Box 778, Carpinteria, CA 93013
 Lee, 4275 Highway U, Hartford, WI 53027
 RCBS, P.O. Box 1919, Oroville, CA 95965
 Lyman, Middlefield, CT 06455



Bullets — Jacketed

- 170 Sierra Hollow Point
- 200 Speer Hollow Point
- 200 Green Bay Wad Cutter
- 200 Green Bay Semi-Wad Cutter
- 210 Sierra Hollow Point
- 210 Hornaday Hollow Point
- 210 Green Bay Semi-Wad Cutter
- 220 Speer Soft Point
- 225 Green Bay Semi-Wad Cutter Gas Check
- 245 Green Bay Round Nose
- 245 Green Bay Semi-Wad Cutter Gas Check

Factory Loads

- 210 Remington Soft Point
- 210 Remington Lead
- 210 Peters Soft Point
- 210 Win. Soft Point
- 210 Win. Lead

NOTE: Bullet swaging dies are available for .41 magnum from Corbin, P.O. Box 758, Phoenix, OR 97535 and C-H, Box 1, Owen, WI 54460.



A full ballistic performance range for the .41 Mag. is possible through careful, knowledgeable reloading practices. This article explores many facets for getting the most out of this fine Magnum handgun cartridge.

Over the years since its introduction in 1964, the 41 MAG cartridge has had a small but loyal group of advocates. It never has had the favorable press of the 44 MAG nor the distribution and mass acceptance of the 357 MAG. Introduced as a more powerful police service cartridge, the cost and logistics hurdles never seemed to be surmounted in that market. Souped-up 38 Special ammunition was becoming available at the time, giving that venerable police service round a new

Hard the Mag

lease on life.

Without police adoption, the 41 MAG has never really hit the big time. Consequently, the 41 MAG has never achieved its rightful recognition in the line-up of powerful pistol cartridges; many handguns chambered for this cartridge are sold to unappreciative shooters who take the gun only because a 44 MAG is not available. Indeed, the 41 MAG is probably the best single caliber for the Magnum handgunner, where choice or finances allow only one handgun and/or caliber. The full potential for the 41, like all handgun Magnums, is brought out with handloading.

The 41 MAG bullet has a true .410-inch diameter. Older Colt .41 designations were really "fat" 38's, bullets measuring .386-inch nominally. (Note: Undersized .41 Colt ammunition cannot safely be fired in 41 MAG chambers. Do not confuse .38 Special/.357 MAG or 44 Special/44 MAG relationships; the 41 MAG has no such short parent version.) Bullet sizes for the 41 MAG must be adhered to and not confused with other .41 designations. The first flash of popularity at the time of 41 MAG introduction brought forth a number of good, commercial bullet designs in the .410-inch diameter. However, failure to establish an overly significant market share all but stopped proliferation of 41 MAG bullet designs. But the projectiles that were introduced early in the game are excellent and still available to handloaders. So, the 41 MAG does not suffer unduly from a limited supply of commercial or cast lead bullet designs.

Some of the most effective field or defense loads in the 41 MAG are well below full-bore loading levels. Keeping velocity under 1100-1200 fps allows the use of a variety of cast lead projectiles. Properly cast and loaded, no leading problems need be experienced, especially if one of the modern bore cleaning/conditioning systems is used, such as Rie's. Use of gas checks; once quite popular for high-intensity pistols loads, are not as popular today with the availability of well de-

loading 41 Magnum

By James D. Mason

signed, soft-lead core expanding jacketed projectiles.

As might be suspected with a new cartridge introduced since the 1960's, two of the most effective loads for the 41 MAG are Remington factory fodder. The full-house metal jacketed rounds shoot a 210 grain bullet at 1386 fps out of a 6-inch barrel, near the maximum of what comparable handloads can produce. An efficient expanding bullet is provided that works well on game for the hunting handgunner. The factory lead bullet load (210 grain bullet launched at 978 fps from a 6-inch tube) was intended for police service work and is more than adequate for defense and all-around use. Full-bore Magnum loads are not recommended for defensive use, since adverse recoil control problems more than overcome the advantage of increased stopping power of the loads. Even so, the 41 MAG is significantly easier to control than the 44 MAG where both guns are using maximum loads.

In considering loadings for Magnums, three categories of usage need to be considered. First, for handgun hunting, full-bore loads are a necessity. Next come serviceable moderate-to-heavy loadings, best suited to general purpose shooting where volume consumption is involved. And, last come the low-powered or mid-range loadings for plinking and target purposes. This latter group is not given much thought except for those shooters who may only have the one handgun chambered for 41 MAG. The precise definitions of the loading categories given above will be discussed in more detail



Above: Two very effective commercial loads. Left, the Remington 210 grain JHP that delivers close to maximum velocity. Right is the SWC swaged lead bullet that goes out at 1100 fps. Very pleasant to shoot.

Below: The Magnum trio—left to right—357, 41 and the .44. Author says the .41 is the most flexible and the best choice for a single handgun.



later.

A basic discussion on components needs exploring if only to dismiss some of the more common wives' tales and to reduce the shooters' doubts regarding the many choices available. There are no surplus brass supplies for the 41 MAG. So, one of the best sources for brass is once-fired Remington factory ammunition. In the two limited commercial loads, the full-bore factory cartridges are expensive and not usually shot in great volume. The Remington reduced power police lead bullet loads are one of the best all-around, all-purpose loadings for the 41 MAG and are a distinct possibility for building a supply of cases. Otherwise, primed or unprimed Remington brass is the third alternative, if and when it can be obtained in the market. There will be no bargains in 41 MAG brass, save for buying a supply from a shooter who is abandoning a 41 MAG outfit.

Remington brass tends to be well tempered at the case mouth which will contribute to cracking after only a few reloads where the brass has been heavily crimped. Annealing case mouths will lengthen the life of the brass and make the reloading die expander plugs work easier. I prefer the water method of annealing where deprimed cases are stood up in a shallow water pan. Water should come about two thirds of the way up the case to avoid softening of the base portions of the brass. Play a propane torch on the mouth until a dull glow appears, then knock the case over in the water to quench it. Such a procedure need not be done often, but properly done, it can extend case life of expensive 41 MAG brass for over 50 reloadings of moderate intensity.

Primers often take more concern from

shooters than need be. Usually the standard large pistol primer is called for in 41 MAG loads. Magnum primers are needed only for the hard-to-ignite ball or spherical powders, but they are not always needed even in these applications. Actual shooting results are what count, so any primer that works in a given load is the one to use. I have always liked to use one brand of primers as standard, and I find that Remington or Federal primers provide sensitive, uniform ignition. Winchester pistol primers seem to be hotter and work well with ball or spherical powders in the 41 MAG. CCI Magnum primers have always been favored where brisk ignition is necessary. Uniformity and reliability are paramount factors; find a primer that satisfies you and stick with it. Primers can and do make noticeable differences with various powders in different loads, but to continually change primers arbitrarily in search of the "perfect" combination may introduce greater inconsistency than would otherwise be the case.

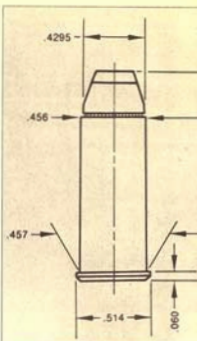
Primer seating is a detail not always given proper attention. Seating by the "feel" method is best for achieving uniform seating depth. Many makes of primer seaters apply a bias to the primer cup, seating the primer higher on one side than on the other. Simply turn the case

180° in the shell holder and apply a second press pressure; the result should be level primers. Preferably, the cup should be seated to .005-inch below the surface of the case head. Primer pockets can be cleaned before seating new primers, but such a practice may have negligible effects on accuracy and may not have to be done except where primer seating depth is grossly inconsistent. The bulk of primer residues fall out at the time of decapping.

The number of powders that can be used in the 41 MAG boggles the mind. As with all other Magnum handgun cartridges, the whole gamut of moderate to slow burning shotshell propellants can be applied. From my own experience in loading the 41 MAG over the years, a select group of powders has tended to perform consistently well and seem eminently suited for the given categories of loads.

The most useful powder is Unique, being applicable over the full loading range of the 41 MAG. It also produces the most consistent accuracy of all the powders tried. Only a few propellants will produce higher velocities within appropriate peak pressure levels, especially with lightweight projectiles.

Maximum field loads with jacketed bullets are easiest to obtain with H-110, 296, 2400, or 630; all powders that are hard to



Representative bullets available for handloading the 41 MAG include: (l. to r.) Sierra's 170 grain JHC, Speer's 200 grain SJSWC HP, Hornady's 210 JHP, RCBS 215 grain cast lead SWC, Speer's 220 grain SJSWC SP, Sierra's 220 grain JHC, and Lee's 240 grain cast lead SWC. With loads given in this article, a whole range of usable ammunition can be prepared for the 41 MAG.

41 MAGNUM LOADS

HUNTING LOADS

Bullet	Grains	Powder	Grains	Velocity	Energy
Lee	240 SWC	#2400	17.5	1165 fps	725 fp
Speer	220	# 630	17.5	1296 fps	823 fp
Hornady	210 HP	# 630	19.5	1391 fps	903 fp
Speer	200 HP	H110	20.0	1387 fps	854 fp
Sierra	170 JHC	# 630	23.0	1535 fps	889 fp

Note: The loads are maximum. Approach from 2.9 grains below maximum powder weights given here.

DEFENSE-GENERAL PURPOSE

Lee	240 SWC	Unique	8.5	1065	605 fp
Lyman	41032/215	Unique	10.0	1230	716 fp
Speer	200 JHP	Unique	10.0	1242	686 fp
Sierra	170 JHC	H-110	24.0	1420	760 fp

FACTORY LOADS (Remington)

Remington	210 JHP	1386	895 fp
Remington	210 SWC (lead)	978	445 fp

Note: Recently Winchester-Western has started loading .41 Magnum rounds in the same two configurations as Remington. Good news for .41 Mag. fans and another source for brass.

1.100
1.615 Maximum

Here are the .41 cartridge specs. Very handy when handloading. Overall length can be exceeded in some cylinders.

One of the best long-range 41 MAG loads uses this Lee Precision SWC cast lead bullet of 240 grains weight. With this bullet, the 41 MAG holds elevation better and carries more terminal energy over the course with less free recoil than comparable 240 grain loads in the 44 MAG. Note Lee's exclusive aluminum mold blocks, both light weight and efficient.



ignite. In using any of these powders, a Magnum pistol primer is useful for proper ignition. This is especially true for 2400, since it tends to leave unburned granules in the chambers that can foul a revolver mechanism. Even with Magnum primers, heavy crimping further promotes complete ignition of the powder body.

Moderate to heavy work horse loads can be generated using IMR 4227, AL-8, Herco, or Unique. Bulls-eye is flexible enough to generate 1100 fps loads, but does not improve on the accuracy of Unique at any loading level. Since Bulls-eye is no longer an inexpensive propellant, it cannot be recommended for economical loading. For these reasons, I have not included Bulls-eye in my lineup of powders for the 41 MAG. The two yeoman propellants are Unique and H-110, each producing a loading range and accuracy performance that is both flexible and universal in all 41 MAG revolvers that have crossed my loading bench.

Bullets are another consideration. The 210-grain weight is considered the best all-around performer in the 41 MAG. Commercial jacketed bullets are available from 170 to 210 grains. Lead cast bullets are available for the 41 MAG from nearly all the major mold makers. Lyman is typical with the 41032 design which has a truncated tapered cone (SWC) nose shape, long considered to be the best

all-around performance. The design is versatile being furnished in 200, 205, 212 (Standard), 215, 220, and 225 grain weights at finished bullets. The 41059 has a Keith-style nose shape, probably no more effective than the 41032, but the former design is available only in the 220 grain weight.

Lee Precision puts out a mold for a 240-grain long semi-wadcutter design that shoots superbly. I find the overall shape more useful than the round nose 41026 from Lyman, except where the latter bullet is used to roll squirrels for the pot. For long distance shooting (50 yards +), the added weight and improved ballistic coefficient of these long, heavy 41 MAG bullets hold elevation noticeably better than 240 grain loads in the 44 MAG. The added sectional density carries momentum well and makes these bullets a natural for use on metallic silhouettes.

Hornady makes only one 44 MAG bullet, a 210 grain jacketed hollow point. It is one of the best performing bullets for full-house handgun hunting. The expansion and mass retention are both favorable on game size animals. Velocities of up to 1400 fps are possible out of 6-inch tubes.

The Speer 200 grain hollow point and 220 grain soft point SWC bullets give favorable terminal impact and weight retention for game hunting. With 630 powder, the 200 grain model can exceed 1400 fps without strain; the hollow point in the

exposed lead nose will down a coyote in close with one pass. In a 4-inch barrel Model 58 S&W, this bullet loaded to a bit over 1000 fps is a formidable stopper for defensive handgunning.

Sierra's unique 170 grain jacketed hollow cavity bullet gives the hottest performance in the 41 MAG. Velocities up to 1550 fps from 6-inch barrels is possible with careful handloading. The best powder for the purpose is 650, although H-110 gives better accuracy with about 35 fps less velocity at peak. The hollow cavity point design is devastating on impact for varmints or defensive shooting. Recoil control is not the problem it is in other Magnums due to the relatively heavy mass of the handgun compared to the low mass of the bullet.

The 41 MAG has got to qualify as the most unsung handgun cartridge available today. Its versatility will put the edge on the 44 MAG for long-range shooting and where recoil control and terminal energy and/or momentum are concerned. While not so many bullet designs are available for the 41 MAG as compared to its larger and smaller cousins, the bullet selections are good and adequate to milk ballistic performance from the 41. I have used the 41 MAG since 1965 and find it to be the most versatile of the handgun Magnum cartridges. Performance, as always, is fully realized only through handloading.



CustomShop

By Massad F. Ayoub

Andy Cannon: Police Pistolsmith

When I first met Andy Cannon, he was a conservation officer in his early twenties and a kitchen-table pistolsmith who kept the local gunshops in business by purchasing a handgun or two a week as lessons in his self-taught study of pistol-slickin'.

Back then, those of us who knew him would walk into a gun dealers, pick up a likely-looking used Model 19, and try the action. If the trigger went back too slick and light, we'd demand, "Who sold you this gun?" If the dealer said, "Um, big guy in a game warden uniform, I think," we'd drop the specimen with the same alacrity as if we'd been shopping in a pet store and saw hoof-and-mouth symptoms.

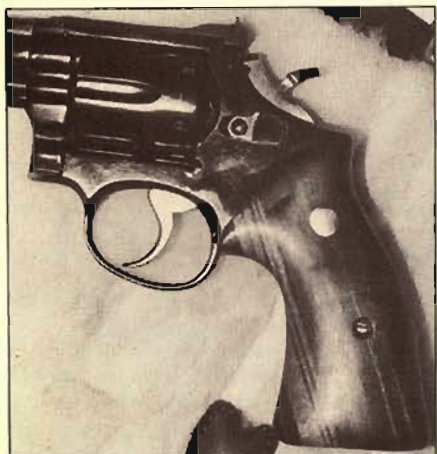
But that, like I said, was a long time and a lot of guns ago. Cannon learned something with every one of those many, many revolvers. Today, he does one of the best Smith & Wesson action jobs in the country, and maybe the best available on a Dan Wesson. What's more, though his national reputation among purists is for his super-light-triggered PPC match guns, a growing contingent of Northeastern lawmen think his biggest contribution is his outstanding modification of the on-duty service revolver.

Andy's concepts go far beyond the smoothness of the double-action trigger pull, but that's the heart of what he does, so that's where we'll start. Not with a "how-to," which nobody can teach in one magazine article, but with an overview of the finished product.

There are multitudes of supposedly "slicked up" Smith & Wessons floating around. A lot of those are basement workshop jobbies. As Andy aptly puts it, "Too many turkeys clip a few coils off the



Cannon at the bench with the work starting to stack up.



Well used 19 shows cylinder latch cut for speed loaders and trigger and hammer are polished smooth.

springs, back off three turns on the mainspring screw, and say 'Voila! I've got an action job and I did it myself!'"

In the second category, and nowhere near as bad, is the guy who doesn't realize that a little learning can be a dangerous thing. The author's experience is that every second cop who graduates from the Smith & Wesson armorer's school fancies himself a custom revolver-smith. That two week course does an exemplary job of what it is intended for—training maintenance men to keep S&W duty guns in functional working order—but the arcane science of almost eliminating felt friction from between eighteen moving contact surfaces isn't in the curriculum, and couldn't be taught in so short a time if it

was. It's like a fresh graduate from an automotive trade school thinking he's ready to soup up Richard Petty's race car.

Some really great action-slickers are out there, and with the boom in PPC shooting, there are more of them. It's like the martial arts craze of the Bruce Lee years: Karate instructors came out of the woodwork, and even though most of them were schlock, when the whole fad was over there were still more good sensei left than there had been before. It's going to slowly boil down to the same with S&W customizers. Right now, in the midst of the boom period, you've got to pick and choose. One of the ones I'd pick, having seen a lot of the best, would be Cannon.

Duty guns are Andy's bread and butter.

Here's 4 Cannon Smiths. Clockwise from top: Towle/Cannon PPC — 19 round butt with 4" tube — 3" Chief with bobbed hammer — 4" Model 15 with deluxe special tune-up.



He takes them down to near a 7 pound double action pull, yet leaves the hammer with enough mechanical backup to smack magnum primers with total reliability. He has gotten his range-only PPC guns down toward four pounds, (compared to maybe 12 out of the blue S&W box) though by doing so he has lightened the trigger return spring to the extent that, glass-smooth bearing surfaces or not, you're going to get a return failure at least once every four or five hundred rounds. In a match, you can kick the trigger forward and not lose much more than ten paper points. On the street, it's different. "I'm hitting 99.2% trigger return reliability in my competition guns," he says, "but that's eight tenths of a per cent short for duty. In a service weapon, 100% reliability is where you start from."

I've shot a lot of Andy's guns, the ones he's doing today, and I recommend them without reservation. He's one of the few people around who can do a really good job on a J-frame 5-shot Smith, with its nasty little coil mainspring; he also works wonders with the big N-frame S&Ws I'm personally partial to. But K frames are his real meat.

He offers two levels of police duty revolver work. One is the basic (\$30) action smoothing, which also involves getting the gun to pre-time for every shot. Smiths don't always pre-time (lock the cylinder in place before the hammer begins to fall, a desirable condition that prevents last-instant trigger jerk), and such a modification is a basic requirement of the real S&W aficionado.

Some of what he'll do will depend on what he has to work with. If your K-model has a good, tough, rugged mainspring, he'll carefully polish that, but if he has any doubt, Cannon will replace it with an N-frame spring as used on the .357 Magnum model 27, cutting in a little relief; this lightens the action measurably

while still giving the hammer blow 110% of the momentum it needs for totally reliable primer ignition.

Andy has a finer-honed "Super" action job for \$40-something, which includes polishing the edges of the trigger and many other niceties. In fact, unlike many other 'smiths, he likes to polish both trigger and hammer. He considers the S&W case-hardening on these parts to be purely cosmetic.

He'll cut Bill Jordan-style relief into your trigger guard, or round the sharp edges off your cylinder latch, or put in one of his own favorite modifications: this latter is a rounding of the left side of the frame at the rear of the trigger guard. If you're right handed, this keeps your finger from getting pinched between finger and frame as can sometimes happen with certain shaped hands. He'll do the opposite side for southpaws, of course.

Other Cannon specials include a .357 Military & Police converted to 2" barrel in blue or stainless. This eliminates bulky adjustable sights, gives a square butt for better hold in a big hand, takes a half inch off the front and cuts weight by some four ounces, leaving you with a very controllable, fast-draw .357 snub. I don't need it, but a lot of people really dig this concept. If you want it, have somebody like Andy do it, because going from the .357-size K gun to a barrel designed for the .38 frame can create some subtle headspace problems in inexperienced hands.

Hammer bobs and other routine jobs are done for surprisingly small prices. Full PPC action jobs are done reasonably on a custom quote basis, *with the understanding that you're shooting targets with wadcutters only*, because he doesn't want one of his super-light guns getting out on the street with lives instead of matches resting on it.

Many officers are now carrying hot 110-grain ammo in their duty .357s. Andy thinks this is the ideal police load, but finds that in the Combat Magnum, his all-time favorite duty gun, Mag 110's shoot so low that to get point of aim/point of impact at all reasonable combat distances, he sometimes has to shave down the front sight. In this manner, you can sight in without the rear sight adjustment resting at the absolute top of the sight-screw threads, a practice which makes the unmodified 19 or 66's sight more vulnerable to damage if bumped on the squad car steering wheel. He will likewise modify fixed-sight S&W's that aren't shooting right on with the chosen load. When he does one of these, you specify the load you want, and pay for the factory ammo burned in the laborious testing process.

Andy limits his PPC gun work to stock revolvers for the Distinguished matches, and action-work-only for heavy barrel open class pieces. For some time he was in de facto partnership with John Towle, the celebrated metallic silhouette shooter and gunmaker who also does fine construction

on ribbed, heavy barrelled PPC smiths. John was doing the superstructures, Andy the actions. I'm not sure whether this liaison is still in effect, but it's worth checking out if PPC is your game.

Andy does maybe a dozen police duty revolvers for every competition gun he customizes. His turnaround time is about a couple of weeks. As with any gunsmith, replacement parts needed to get the gun perfect, cost extra. He charges you only his own price from the factory.

Write to Andy for a current price list. If you're a cop, and it's your duty gun, include a photocopy of your I.D. and he'll give you scheduling preference.

Andy knows his stuff. He got the bad guns out of his system a long time ago, and they paid the dues for the expertise he now puts into his slicked-up S&Ws and Dan Wessons. It is significant to note that he used one of his own 4" Combat Magnum service revolver slickies to win the New Hampshire Police Combat Pistol Championships (holding the current title), which to my knowledge is the only NRA-registered PPC state championship in the nation restricted to factory-configuration 4" service revolvers. He has taken several open-class tournaments with his Douglas-barrel PPC guns.

It's always good to get your #1 equipment customized by a man who plays the game himself and doesn't just do metal-work. There are subtle things about performance in the arena that only another player understands. Cannon is a top-flight PPC shooter, and also a conservation department law officer who confronts an armed man almost every time he makes a stop. Either place, the guns he works over carry him through. Whether you want your revolver fixed for the street or the combat range, he knows where you're coming from, and what you need . . . and how important it is to you.

He also has remarkably competitive prices for the work he does. You can contact him at Box 632, Center Harbor, NH 03271.

If I didn't think Andy Cannon was damn good, I wouldn't give you the address, or him this



Cannon converts the Model 65 to 2" barrel. This is more work than it seems.



Give Your New Model Ruger a Super Trigger

By **LOWELL W. ROBERTS**

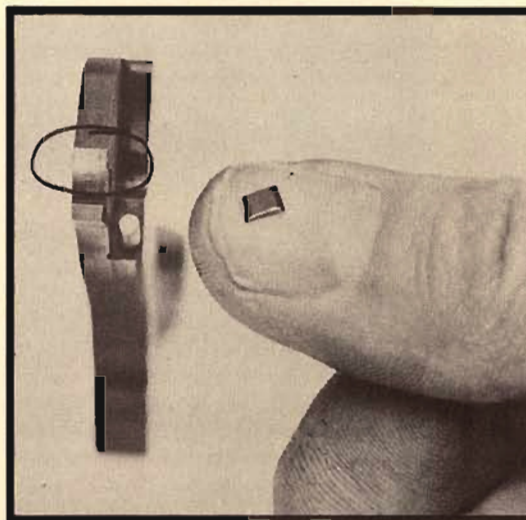
Rugged, accurate, and as handsome as a Hollywood hero, the New Model Ruger Blackhawk continues to grow in popularity. Innovations in design and production methods have been combined by the Ruger organization; permitting them to maintain a high level of quality and safety in their products while keeping the price at an affordable level. That this is appreciated by the shooting public is evident; in my area a dealer receiving a shipment of these guns is staring at empty shelf space soon after the news hits the streets. That is high praise indeed!

While fit and function are adequate from the manufacturer's point of view, the trigger is usually heavy and unacceptably creepy. Most of the serious gun-

ners I know have found it necessary to trot almost every new purchase over to their favorite "smith's" shop for a trigger job. My own Schrader trigger pull scale has more often than not passed the eighty ounce mark while measuring let-off weights, and some required a healthy nudge in addition to the applied spring tension. Now that's just fine if you happen to have direct bloodline ties with that bionic gent on the tube, but for the average shooter, it is a condition which destroys accuracy.

Most gun tinkerers usually try their hand at working such a trigger pull down to an acceptable point once or twice before giving it up as a bad job. While I've been successful on a couple of occasions; it is a job for which I have no love, and less patience. It isn't too difficult to obtain a light pull, but a let-off which is both light and crisp is much more time consuming.

For years Colt Single Action fans have overcome trigger creep by limiting sear engagement. This was done by fitting a small pin into the hammer, just below the



Metal shim should be installed on hammer as indicated.

full cock notch, effectively blocking the trigger's rearward movement. While the method is practical; it never appealed to me, especially if I had to install the pin. To do so correctly would at least require the use of a good drill press, which I didn't have, and final fitting would still be needed to obtain a good pull. The prospects of having to tank that stub of a pin in the event too much metal was removed left me totally underwhelmed. What I wanted was an easy way to reduce the notch depth in a way that would let me start all over again in case I goofed or wasn't satisfied, without having to buy a new hammer.

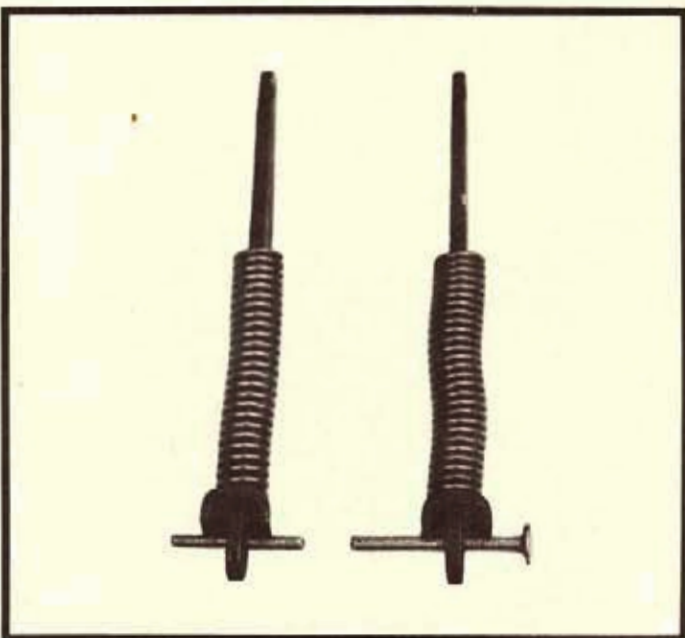
To make a short story shorter, I finally substituted a thin metal shim for the pin normally used, and epoxied it onto the hammer. If I wasn't satisfied with the job; I just heated the shim to 200 degrees, and I could start all over! Not a very esthetic form of gunsmithing to be sure, but it works well and should last indefinitely.

What thickness should the shim stock be? The full cock depth does seem to vary somewhat, so you may have to try a couple of different thicknesses. I've had success with material that runs between .005" and .009". Since the shim isn't subjected to any abrasive wearing action, almost any soft metal which can easily be cut will do. The shim fitted to my own gun; and at least three others, was cut from the flat pressure plate in a Polaroid color film pack (SX-70 type), and has withstood hundreds of light and heavy loads.

Since any work of this kind requires disassembly of the gun, it is a good place to start as there are a couple of other tips you may find useful during the procedure.

If you don't already have them on your work bench, it will be a wise move to have a couple of screwdrivers ground to fit the screws exactly. Little detracts more from a gun's appearance than battered screw slots. Next, hunt up the disassembly

Two coils cut from the mainspring will substantially reduce cocking effort but can also make creep apparent.



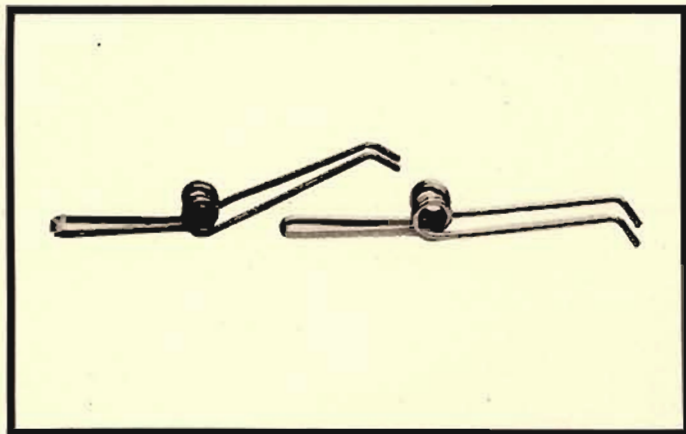
sheet that came with your gun and study it carefully.

The wooden grip panels on the big Ruger are kept in place by a large roll pin through the bottom of the grip frame. They are usually on there *tight*! Trying to pry them off the frame is sure to mar them and looks even worse than butchered screws. Remove the grip screw and insert a small diameter punch through the hole at an angle so the punch strikes the wood of the opposite panel, not the screw ferrule. Tap *lightly* with a small hammer, and nudge the panel loose. Easy does it—too hard and you'll damage the grip.

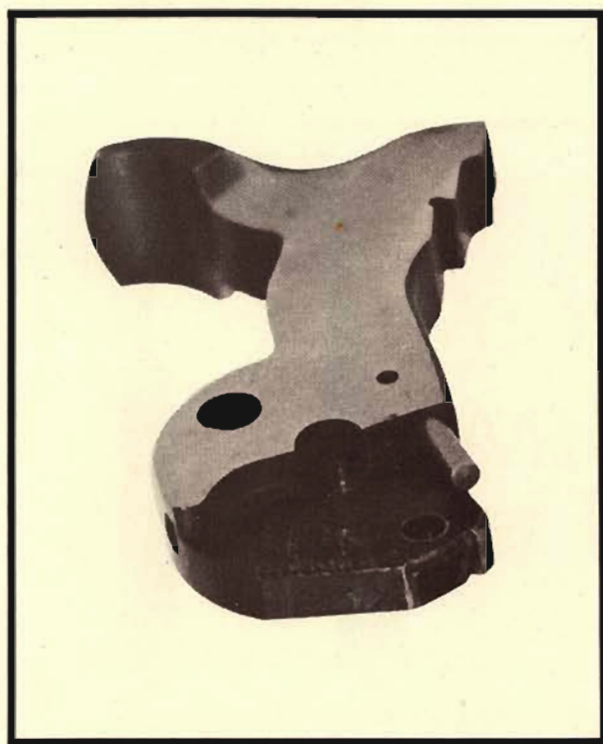
Bring the hammer to full cock and insert a small nail or pin through the hole in the bottom of the strut. Release the hammer. Next remove all five grip frame screws, taking care not to lose the two little spring and plunger assemblies that may fall free. If it is loose, push out the hammer pin. Most of them I have encountered are so tight they have to be driven



A new metal shim ready to install.



Bending the legs of the trigger return spring can reduce the pull weight by pounds, not ounces. Usually $\frac{1}{4}$ " is sufficient.



This hammer, from author's Super Blackhawk, has withstood hundreds of light and heavy loads.

out with a wooden dowel whittled to fit the hole. Use wood as it won't mar the blued finish. It won't be necessary to remove any of the parts held in place by the trigger pin. The hammer can now be removed by pushing it down toward the bottom of the frame while held in the one o'clock position. Progress will be stopped when the spring loaded plunger strikes the trigger. Continue to press down; applying sufficient pressure to compress this spring, while rotating the hammer to the three o'clock position. The hammer and pawl will then come out easily. This little maneuver sounds more complicated than it actually is. Examine the hammer before you start, and it will be apparent how this can be done.

Cut a small piece of shim material to fit the rectangular area below the full cock notch, and flatten it to remove any rough edges or twists cutting may have caused. Shape this tiny piece to match the contour of the hammer; clean both hammer

and shim with a solvent such as lighter fluid, and epoxy into place. Tweezers should be used to place and hold the shim during this operation, especially if the new Eastman Kodak 910 adhesive is used. The manufacturer claims it will bond most anything, and that includes the skin on your fingers. I like it because it does away with the overnight waiting common to other types of epoxy, and is strong enough to permit testing the combination for "feel" in very few minutes.

While the epoxied hammer is curing, remove the trigger return spring from the grip frame. This little gem exerts pressure on the trigger far out of proportion to its size; actually adding pounds, not ounces, to the pull weight. When the loop end of the spring is pressed firmly against a flat surface the legs on the opposite end are also touching, or very close to it. Some of this unneeded strength can be removed by cautiously bending the individual legs upward. Often this is the only

alteration needed to get a light pull. Grasp the spring with needle nose pliers close to the coil and bend upward about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. This is usually sufficient for a three pound pull, depending on the smoothness of the engaging surface of the trigger and hammer. Don't go too far as the spring must retain enough power to positively return the trigger to its forward position. When the gun is reassembled, force should still be required to lift the spring legs high enough to be hooked over the cross pin.

Now is also the time to take care of one other little item—that muscle-bound mainspring. When the trigger is pressed this monster slams the hammer forward with all the finesse of a John Wayne haymaker. The judicious removal of one or two coils goes a long way towards teaching it some manners; makes cocking a heck of a lot smoother too. It can also make existing creep much more apparent too; so leave this one until last, if you do it at all.

By now you should be able to reassemble everything and test your handiwork. A few dabs of your favorite slickum should be applied to all moving parts; including the cylinder ratchet, a spot often overlooked. It isn't necessary to use all five screws just for testing; I've found one on either side of the hammer and the one in front of the trigger guard will suffice for testing. Of course all five must be tightly in place before the gun is fired.

As I said before; the foregoing can in no way be called sophisticated gunsmithing, but when applied with a generous dollop of common sense, you may find you have created a well mannered gentleman on your first attempt. Or maybe a little more tinkering is in order. But, after your buddy tries your gun, his eyes light up and he says, "Say now, that's alright! How about working my gun over too?" You just smile to yourself. You don't even have to tell him how easy it was.





Troubleshooting Your Handgun

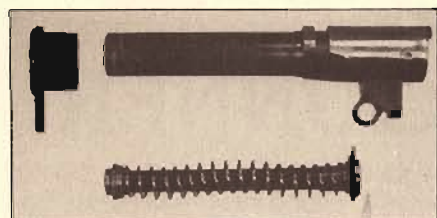
The Star Model BKM pistol, one of the smallest, lightest guns made in the 9 m/m Luger chambering.

By J. B. Wood

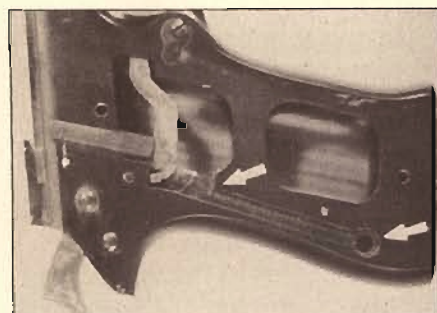
J. B. Wood's book, *TROUBLESHOOTING YOUR HANDGUN*, is available from GUNS MAGAZINE Book Department, Suite 200, 591 Camino de la Reina, San Diego, CA 92108, for \$5.95, postpaid. The book gives similar details on 87 American and foreign handguns. These monthly columns are all new material, and are not included in the present edition of the book.



The Star BKM, field-stripped.



The barrel, bushing, and recoil spring unit. Note the captive recoil spring.



The arrows indicate the long recess which holds the magazine safety. On this pistol, it has been removed.

The manual safety lever (arrow) acts directly on the hammer, and also locks the slide. A very well-designed safety system.

This Month:

The STAR BKM

One of the smallest and lightest pistols ever made for the 9 m/m Luger cartridge, the Star BKM is a reduced version of the previously-made Model BKS. Produced in Eibar, Spain, the BKM shows the excellent quality and workmanship that have come to be associated with the products of Bonifacio Echeverria. Although the gun has an external resemblance to the U.S. Model 1911 pistol, its internal mechanism is entirely different.

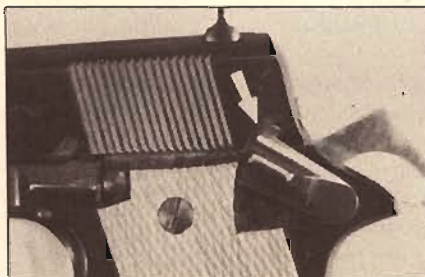
The barrel locking system is similar to the Colt, but is simplified to make takedown and reassembly easier. The firing system is totally unlike our service pistol, with a more direct linkage than the original Browning design, a pivoting trigger, and no annoying grip safety. There is a magazine safety, to prevent firing when the magazine is out, and this is easily removed. After taking off the grips, the large cross-pin of the magazine safety can be drifted out to the right. The manual safety does not act on the sear, but directly blocks the hammer. This engagement actually tips the hammer back, lifting it slightly away from its engagement with the sear. The firing pin is an inertia type, and the pistol may be safely carried with the chamber loaded and the hammer fully down, assuming all parts are original.

Over the past two years, I have seen a number of Star pistols with broken firing pins, and this includes the two that I own. Since this problem has appeared only recently, and is not present on older Star pistols, I think there may have been a discrepancy in a particular production run, an error in the degree of heat treatment. The broken firing pins that I have examined were very hard and brittle, and once I had replaced them with new ones made of drill rod, there were no further problems. There is one point in the design that makes a broken firing pin an additional aggravation. The firing pin is retained by a short pin located underneath the rear sight, and to replace the firing pin the sight must be removed. If you have just spent some time carefully adjusting the sight position before the pin breaks, it can be an occasion for gnashing of teeth.

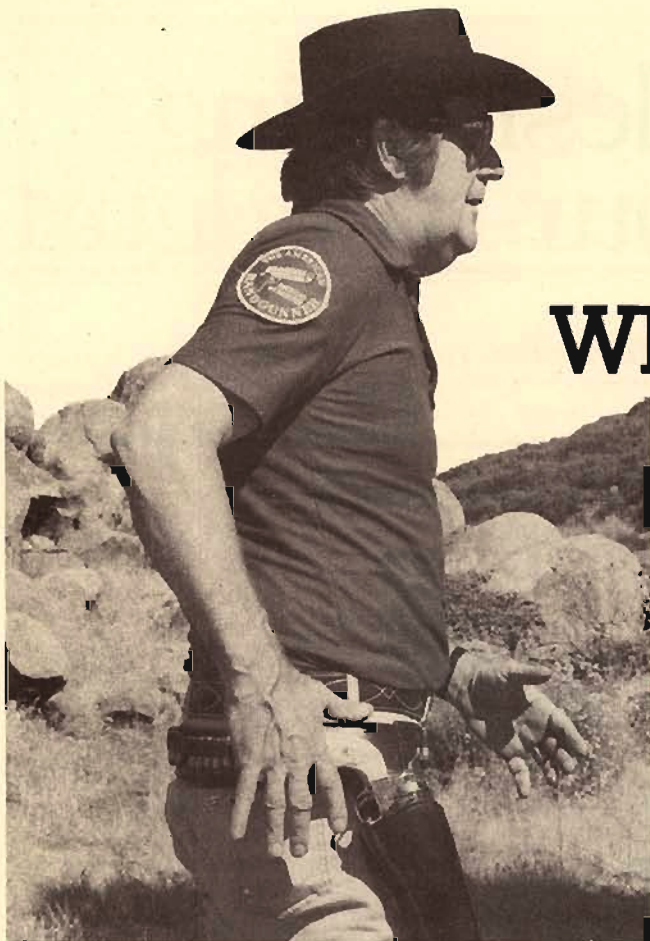
The original grip panels of the Model BKM are made of walnut, hand-checked, and are particularly nice quality. They are secured by two large screws on each side, are fitted well to the frame, and are not likely to break. It should be noted that in case of any breakage, grips or parts, replacements are readily available.

As examples of the attention to detail in the design of the Model BKM, and its execution, there is the indicator on the magazine, which protrudes at the lower rear edge of the floorplate when the magazine is fully loaded, and the slide latch notch in the left lower edge of the slide, which is spot-hardened to prevent peening from impact.

The Star Model BKM is one of the very good ones.



The arrow indicates the stop recess for the slide latch. It may not be visible in our photo, but there is a slight discoloration of the blue in this area, showing that the notch has been spot-hardened to prevent wear.



Who Reads

year. The funny thing is that although they own 6.8 handguns, they only own 4.4 holsters. And here's one that surprised us; almost half have used a speed loader for their revolvers. Another surprise was that more than 60 per cent of readers have one or more pairs of custom stocks for their handguns, and 46 per cent indicated that they would buy a pair during the next year.

Perhaps the most intriguing question on the survey was #10: What handgun calibers do you intend to buy next year? The leader, of course, was the .45 auto with fully 20 per cent of the respondents indicating that they were going to add a Colt .45 auto to their battery. Coming in second was the .357 Magnum, with 18 per cent indicating this caliber, and although they were not specific about the model, chances are that S&W was the top choice and the Model 19 the most sought after model. Third place, where 15 per cent responded, was the .44 Magnum, and if this holds true, the Model 29 will still be hard to find. Fourth place went to the .22 L.R.

the AMERICAN HANDGUNNER?

In the November/December issue of THE AMERICAN HANDGUNNER, we published a readership survey to determine just what kind of audience we had.

To ensure a large number of returns, we offered an AMERICAN HANDGUNNER shoulder patch to everyone who answered the survey. That worked well for us—we received more than 6,000 responses—but not so well for our readers. In the first place, we did not expect that great a response; secondly, many of those who responded failed to put their name and address on the form. Thus, the patches were mailed out late, and there were quite a number who did not receive them because we did not have their address.

The results of the survey are most interesting, and tell us that our audience is 97% male—but we're not chauvenistic about it, and welcome all of the women shooters who want to come aboard—the median age bracket is 18 to 34, and 62% continued their education after high school.

Now comes the most interesting part. Would you believe that the average American Handgunner reader owns 6.8 handguns and that 2.4 of these have been either customized or accurized? More than 73 per cent of our readers bought a new handgun in 1977 and 75 per cent indicated that they would buy an average of 2.1 new handguns in 1978. Fully 73 per cent of our readers handload and 60 per cent of these said they would increase their handloading activity in the coming

with 8 per cent buying one of the many models offering this chambering next year. Fifth place—and I must say that this surprised us—went to the .45 Colt with 7 per cent. Sixth place—another surprise, since we thought it would rate higher than the .45 Colt—went to the 9mm Parabellum. There was a tie for 7th place between the .38 Special and the .44 Special, and that really surprised us; it would appear that Charter Arms .44 Bulldog is generating a lot of interest.

The .41 Magnum came in next with 3 per cent of the respondents saying that they would be purchasing this caliber in the next year. The rest of the calibers indicated a wide interest among a relatively few shooters, running from the .22 Jet through the .45/70 (?). Sprinkled in between were such as the .222 and the 30/30, evidently a reflection of the growing popularity of the silhouette game.

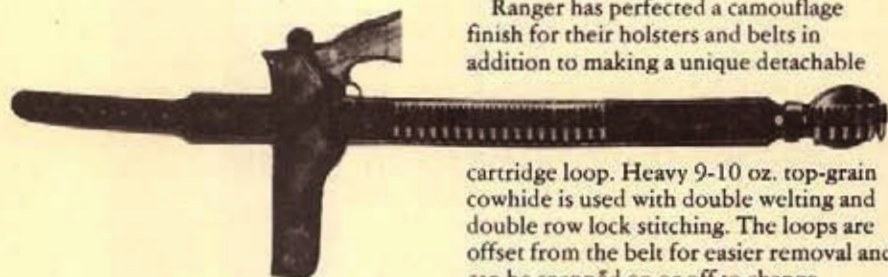
From these results, and others on the survey, we have a pretty good idea of who our readers are, what they are shooting and what they expect in the AMERICAN HANDGUNNER in the future. Be assured that we will try our best to cover every aspect of handgun shooting sports.

We want to thank all of those who took the time to complete the survey. We hope to run another in the future to spot any trends that may be developing as new sports are developed and existing sports grow to maturity.

What's New

Ranger Fills In Much Needed Gap

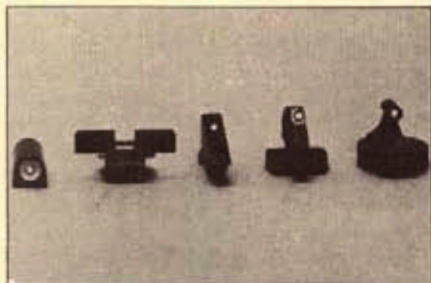
Ranger has perfected a camouflage finish for their holsters and belts in addition to making a unique detachable



cartridge loop. Heavy 9-10 oz. top-grain cowhide is used with double welting and double row lock stitching. The loops are offset from the belt for easier removal and can be snapped on or off to change calibers and still use the same belt. Now you don't have to buy another cartridge belt every time you change cartridges. Other finishes available too and of course basket weave, if you prefer. Contact Mr. Danny Hart, Ranger Leather Products, Inc., P.O. Box 3198, East Camden, Ark. 71701

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(Continued on page 57)

Handgun Hunting

By George Bredsten

What's Available to Hunt and Where — Part II

MISSOURI: Deer may be taken with a pistol or revolver no smaller than 357 calibre. The ammunition used for deer may not be full metal case, the bullet weight not less than 60 grains, nor can there be more than one projectile per discharge.

MONTANA: Handguns may be used to take any species of big game during the general firearms season. Handguns shall not be used to take waterfowl, pheasant, partridge, and/or prairie grouse, except that handguns may be used to take Franklin's blue, and ruffed grouse.

NEBRASKA: Deer may be hunted with handguns, but must use 357 Magnum, 41 Magnum, 44 Magnum, 44 Special "Keith" handload, or 45 Colt "Keith" handload. Small game may be taken with a handgun, but it is unlawful to hunt game birds with a handgun.

NEVADA: Big game (deer) may be hunted with 357 Magnum, 41 Magnum, or 44 Magnum pistols or revolvers having a barrel length of four inches or longer. Small game, varmints or unprotected species may be taken with a handgun.

NEW HAMPSHIRE: A handgun may be used to hunt with if the person has a valid New Hampshire hunting license. Handguns of 22 calibre rimfire are not permitted for taking deer or bear. A handgun must be carried open to view — not concealed — and it must be unloaded in any type of vehicle propelled by mechanical power.

NEW JERSEY: Handguns are not permitted for hunting.

NEW MEXICO: The 357 Magnum, 41 Magnum, and 44 Magnum handguns, using magnum ammunition may be used to take deer, bear, cougar, antelope, and ibex. The 44 Magnum only may be used to take elk, oryx, and sheep. Any centre-fire handgun may be used to take javelina. Only soft nosed or hollow pointed bullets may be used to take those species upon which seasons are established.

NEW YORK: Generally, a handgun may be used to take both small and big game wherever the use of rifles is permitted. Neither deer nor bear shall be hunted with a handgun using rimfire ammunition. Small game and upland game birds may be taken with handguns. Auto-loading pistols having barrel lengths over eight inches

shall not be used for hunting or possessed — except for a law enforcement officer in the performance of official duties. A special permit is required to possess or carry a handgun in New York, and out-of-state permits are NOT recognized by New York. Non-resident citizens are seldom able to obtain such a permit, consequently handgun hunting in New York is effectively limited to residents.

NORTH CAROLINA: In the sixteen western and west central counties a person on his own land, and others with his permission may hunt rabbits and squirrels with pistols having a barrel length of at least six inches, firing bullets weighing 35 to 70 grains with a muzzle velocity of at least 1100 fps.

NORTH DAKOTA: Hunting game birds or game animals with a handgun is not permitted, but unprotected species can be taken with a handgun.

OHIO: It is unlawful to use a pistol while hunting rabbits, quail, pheasants or grouse on a public hunting area. However, any calibre pistol may be used when hunting on private lands, except by persons hunting migratory birds, wild turkey or deer.

OKLAHOMA: Deer may be taken with handguns if: handgun has a minimum of a three and one-half (3½) inch barrel and fires factory cartridges with a minimum of 75 grains soft-nosed bullet and delivers a minimum of 500 ft. lbs. of muzzle energy. Handguns may not be used to hunt elk. Handguns may be used to take turkey, squirrel, and rabbit. Furbearers (bobcat, coyote, striped skunk, spotted skunk, opossum and badger) no restrictions indicated.

OREGON: It is unlawful to use pistols or revolvers to hunt game animals, but non-protected species may apparently be hunted with handguns.

PENNSYLVANIA: Manually operated revolvers are lawful for small game — all seasons except spring gobbler. Manually operated revolvers are lawful for predators and unprotected birds. Manually operated revolvers are lawful for big game. The ammunition must be all lead, lead alloy, soft nosed or expanding bullet.

RHODE ISLAND: Handguns not permitted for hunting whitetail deer, but handguns of 22 calibre and smaller may be used for hunting all small game species.

SOUTH CAROLINA: Landowner permission required to hunt on private land; hunter must have valid South Carolina hunting license and a Game Management Area Permit, where appropriate. Small game may be taken only with the 22 rimfire. When hunting Game Management Area lands, any handgun may be used except that specific arms may be prohibited on certain areas and on special hunts; e.g., certain specified areas permit shotguns only, no handguns permitted on archery or primitive weapons hunts, nor can 22 rimfire be used to take big game.

SOUTH DAKOTA: Handguns are not legal for game hunting, but apparently may be used to take non-game and/or unprotected species.

TENNESSEE: Handguns using 22 calibre rimfire ammunition legal for hunting small game except migratory birds, and except no handguns allowed for hunting small game on wildlife management areas. Handguns using 22 calibre centerfire or smaller ammunition are legal for hunting groundhogs and crows except during deer season. Legal for deer, bear and wild pig are revolvers or pistols chambered for and using the following calibres only: 357, 41 and 44 Magnums and having a barrel length of four (4) inches or more. Juveniles under the age of eighteen (18) years of age are prohibited from using handguns for the purpose of hunting.

TEXAS: Taking of game animals and game birds in regulatory counties is limited to rifles, shotguns and other legal firearms and longbows and arrows. Firearms are further restricted in all counties as follows: It is illegal to use a 22 calibre jet gun or rocket gun or any firearm using rimfire ammunition in taking deer, antelope, elk and desert bighorn sheep. These methods are also prohibited in certain Panhandle counties for taking aoudad sheep. Regulatory counties are governed by regulations established by actions of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission. Non-regulatory counties are governed by general law or special statutes as established by legislative action.

UTAH: No handguns may be used to take upland game birds. Deer may be taken with handguns chambered for the 357 Magnum, 41 Magnum, 44 Magnum, 454 Magnum, and the Thompson Contender pistols chambered for the 30-30 and 30 Herrett — provided barrel length is not less than four inches.

VERMONT: Wherever a rifle may be used in hunting both small and big game, a handgun is permitted.

VIRGINIA: Pistols or revolvers 23 calibre or larger with 350 foot pounds muzzle energy (manufacturer's rating) may only be used for hunting non-migratory game birds and game animals west of the Blue Ridge, and east of the Blue Ridge where rifles are legal. Pistols or revolvers may be used to hunt predatory or undesirable birds and animals

statewide between sunrise and sunset.

WASHINGTON: Blue, ruffed and spruce grouse may be hunted with a handgun. Handguns may apparently be used to take non-game and/or unprotected species, but may not be used to take big game.

WEST VIRGINIA: Big game can not be hunted with a handgun, but a person legally licensed to hunt with a 22 calibre pistol or revolver may use it to humanely kill any deer that has been lawfully wounded or downed by a firearm. Handguns may apparently be used to take small game, non-game and/or unprotected

species.

WISCONSIN: Big game can not be hunted with a handgun, but 22 calibre rimfire handguns are permitted for taking fox, rabbits, raccoon, squirrels and non-protected species.

WYOMING: Handguns may be used to take small game and predators, and while handguns are not specifically prohibited for use on big game, the firearm must use a cartridge with a bore diameter of at least 23/100ths of an inch, with a soft or expanding bullet, normally seated so as to be not less than two inches long.

It should be remembered that the

foregoing summaries are unofficial and that legislative action may have resulted in regulations which supercede that which has herein been described. Also, county and/or local ordinances may exist which further restrict or even prohibit such hunting. It is therefore suggested that the handgunner, considering a handgun hunt in an unfamiliar area, contact the appropriate State Fish & Game Department and/or State Law Enforcement Agency for a copy of the most current information. It is further emphasized that all handgun hunters recognize the need for ethical and responsible behavior afield. Such behavior does help to promote a more favorable relationship with non-hunters/non-shooters, which in turn helps counter the derogatory propaganda of the anti-gun/anti-hunting factions.



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(continued from page 54)

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New .44 Magnum Cartridge

A new .44 Magnum cartridge with a 240-grain Jacketed Hollow Point bullet was introduced by Smith & Wesson at the National Sporting Goods Association show in Houston, Texas.

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Taking Aim

By Gordon R. Stark

Some Calibers Must Remain

Some years ago, Col. Charles Askins, one of the most distinguished authorities on guns of all kinds wrote an in-depth article suggesting the termination of certain handgun calibers which, in his mind, had outgrown their usefulness. The treatise went along the lines that since some calibers were "better" than others, the lesser brothers should be kicked out.

If we stood steadfastly by the argument that any cartridge inferior to another be scrubbed, about all the handgunner would have left is the .44 magnum. Really, when you stop to think about it, once you possess the most, *anything* else seems to pale, if your sole concern is the most power. Sometimes, however, other criteria are far more important and here is where we get in to the real meat of our rebuttal.

A very valid point was made by Askins, one to which I'll instantly agree; that is, a shooter should never select a particular caliber because of "mawkish sentimentality." While a large variety of worthless calibers were cited, others he condemned to oblivion have far more than mere sentimental value going for them and those are the principal ones with which we will be concerned. Actually, when one takes his own hard owned dough and lays it on the line, he shouldn't have to apologize for his choice of weapon especially if it is capable of defending him. Or, if the piece is purely for pleasure, the purchase is made on that basis. In other words, selection of the handgun should always have the ultimate use of the weapon kept in perspective. This is not to say there is no reason for the .44 Magnum's being. It definitely has its place in the hands of the big game hunter who can deliver his shots on the money and handle what most of us consider to be an inordinate amount of recoil. If hunting bear or elk with a handgun is your dish and you don't mind having your hand slammed every time the gun goes off, then the .44 Magnum may be ideally suited for you. For those of us whose needs are less demanding and candidly admit the .44 Mag is simply too much in a handgun, there are numerous choices available, most of which are superbly accurate and decidedly potent.

In plain, old fashioned loadings, the .45's are still considered to be more than



Ideally suited for most needs are the Ruger and Colt with 6 1/2" and 6" barrels respectively. Hard cast or jacketed bullets recommended.

adequate for self-defense and better-than-average on small to medium game at close ranges. After all, if the factory loaded .45 could stop a man in his tracks 100 years ago, who's going to argue with one today?

The better bullet design of the original .45 Long Colt gives it a decided edge over its shorter brother, the .45 ACP. Even so, the latter rates "60" on the Hatcher Scale and can normally be relied upon to do the job 90% of the time. Modern factory loads and particularly, newer handloads have done much to put the stubby ACP on a par with its bigger mate. Remember, size alone does not determine the power inherent in a cartridge and the old .45 LC was designed at a time when 40 gr. of black powder were necessary to send that massive hunk of lead out at 900 fps. Modern powders in the shorter case have acted as the "equalizer."

Now, for those fortunate enough to possess recent production revolvers such as the S & W 1950, 1950 Target or the relatively new Ruger .45 Convertible, use of the .45 auto rim can really soup up this "dead duck."

We cannot begin to place too much emphasis on exercising extreme caution when using hot loads in any gun but be certain to double that caution when older weapons are involved. While the 1917 revolvers and their like *should* be used with modernized ammunition, said ammo must take into consideration age and condition of the World War 1 gem.

A truly fine load, one which can safely be fired from most 1917's, consists of a

200 gr., plain lead SWC over 7 gr. of Unique. Not only is the SWC superior to the GI hardball, velocity from the load clocks out at close to 1000 fps., a 20% improvement in speed alone. If you happen to be the lucky owner of an S & W Target, (1950 or 1955) or the new Ruger, you can crank out handloads capable of quite remarkable performance. Given one of these husky revolvers, (not automatics!) we can get into the field of high speed jacketed loads. Sometimes, however, certain loads that look just great on paper are not only miserable performers but downright dangerous as well. So, as we render info on some of the loads tried, please remember to start out gradually, working up in tenth grain increments. DO NOT start out with maximum loads, regardless of who has tried them before and glowed of their smashing results. Far better to take it easy with 5 or 6 rounds of each new concoction to check for signs of pressure before proceeding to the next level. With these admonitions in mind, here are some of the more common .45 ACP loadings with best results coming from the auto rim cases.

Backed by 14 gr. of #4756, Speer's excellent 200 gr. jacketed hollow points can be pushed out of the nest at about 1350 fps. with resulting energy of 810 ft.



Author's "dream" handgun round is the .357 with the longer barrel. Here's an 8 3/4" Smith & Wesson. Introduced in 1935, the .357 is still first choice of many.

lbs. The load is so violent as to make me question its safety under continual usage. If you even contemplate trying it, start at least 2 gr. lower with the powder and work up at one-tenth grain intervals. Also, try to hold down the number of experimental rounds to the aforementioned 5 or 6 to avoid needless waste and danger.

My personal preference for a .45 "Magnum" is the 225 gr. bullet. This seems to be a fine compromise between good weight and high speed. Speer has a dandy 225 gr. jacketed hollow point which has a tip of pure lead for better expansion. With 9 gr. of Unique, readings of around 1250 fps. can be reached with attendant energy of nearly 800 ft. lbs. Here, I believe it is quite safe to start out at one (1) gr. below and work up as this load is not nearly as ferocious as the #4756 screamers.

If you want a 250 gr. package, Speer's JHP has been worked out by expert pis-

tolero, Jeff Cooper, with 7.2 gr. of Unique. This top man is a firm believer that heavier bullets at somewhat lower velocities offer more in the way of "stopping power" than some of the highly routed speedy lighter bullets. There are two schools of thought on this but I, for one, am not about to argue with Colonel Cooper!

Elmer Keith recommends his *hard cast* 250 gr. SWC bullets backed by 7.5 gr. of Unique, a load that has been used with great success by Skeeter Skelton as well. Use of pure lead bullets at velocities above the 1000 mark should be avoided to prevent barrel leading. Hard cast or jacketed bullets are far better for speed and then, only in tight, late model revolvers.

Admittedly, the .45 Long Colt offers somewhat more flexibility than the ACP or auto rim, especially in the area of flaming hot loads. Remembering that the longer case requires 30-40% more powder to duplicate the performance just cited for the auto or auto rim loads, it would seem the singular advantage here is the ability to reach near .44 Magnum levels. Ron Terrell has done much experimenting in this field and, with a 230 gr. jacketed hollow point bullet backed by 12.5 gr. of 700-X powder, achieved over

1300 fps. velocity and a touch past the 900 ft. lb. mark energywise. Some load, hmm? Subjectively, I would have to believe this brute must jolt the shooter as much as the big .44. Certainly, more than the .41 mags.

What holds true for the .45's fairly well goes for the ancient .44 Special but then, why not? After all, the father of the .44 Magnum got his baby born by hot loading the Special and alerting the handgun world of its superior possibilities. Elmer Keith was getting heap big thunder from his .44 Specials when the word "magnum" was relatively new in sidearm vocabularies. Use of Keith's hard cast 240 gr. SWC's or the same weight bullet in jacketed form can be pushed out at velocities of 1200 fps. with 16 or 17 gr. of #2400 powder. And, while I have no proven data as yet, I would well imagine one could carefully reach the 18 gr. level with W-W 296 and attain readings approximating the 1300 plateau. I base this on the fact that this marvelous powder can often be used to produce higher readings with less pressure than some of the older, more commonly used powders. As always, though, such experimentation has to be guided by carefully working up to maximum charges and then, only in tight, late model .44 Specials or the .44 Magnum.

Finding suitable loads in your manuals will prove fruitless as most of the publishers are extremely reluctant to print the hotter stuff. This is perfectly understandable when one considers the huge number of truly ancient .44 Specials, some of which are of the breakpoint variety. Hot load these relics and you may wind up missing part of your face.

Along with the streamlined loads for the .45's and the .44 Special shines THE piece I hold out as the best-of-the-best, the .357 Magnum. I simply cannot restrain my enthusiasm for this 40 year old masterpiece which has more than proven its reliability and versatility for virtually any situation where a handgun can be called upon for service.

The .357 Magnum, when properly loaded and fed through relatively long barrels, is my answer to the prayer for a dream handgun round. This is not to say the shorter barreled versions aren't fine under certain conditions but to realize the full potential of this caliber, the 6" to 8 & 3/8" barrel lengths should be used. Remember, the super ballistics you normally read about are taken from the longest barreled piece, a weapon closely approximating that which introduced the caliber in 1935. To their credit, most loading manuals recognize that theirs is not the busi-

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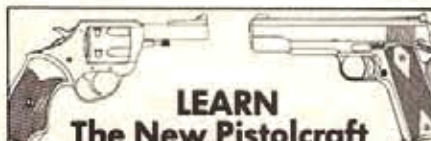


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ness to promote any caliber and quite correctly have gone to the 6" models for the bulk of their testing.

Just as barrel lengths cause variance in velocity, so does velocity vary as respects one revolver to another. In spite of this, a pretty fair rule of thumb tells us that for each 2" of barrel cut from the original 8 & 3/8" version, velocity will drop 10%. If this doesn't quite reach you, whack 30-35% off those juicy figures you see in the advertising copy and you'll get a realistic figure for your pet "snubbie." Even the popular 4" models leave much to be desired when ultimate range and/or power become factors in one's shooting. If you think the velocity drop with shorter barrels is hard to cope with, just look at the drop in energy. (Call it stopping power if you prefer). The drop is staggering.

My 22 year old son has an S&W Combat Magnum that is an absolute joy to shoot. Its double action is so smooth, I once got two shots off at a fleeing bunny before either of us knew what was happening. I was especially surprised because until that time, I had never fired double action at anything. For short range hunting, then, or defense at in-close ranges, this piece comes quite near to being peerless but as the targets get farther out, limitations of its 4" barrel become readily apparent.

One afternoon, the boy and I were leisurely popping away at a rock easily the distance of a pair of NFL goalposts. With just a slight upward tilt of my 6" Colt Trooper, the bulk of my shots were ripping granite with pleasing regularity. The 4" Combat Maggie, on the other hand, was rainbowing its shots at an obvious lower velocity.

We are strictly small game hunters, plinkers and informal target shooters. In our minds, however, we feel the .357 will stop anything we could ever hope to hunt in the California environs and I would have no reluctance whatever to choose this caliber if limited to one piece. Heaven forbid any of us should be so limited but for the man seeking one all around gun, this is probably the one to consider.

Using 14 gr. of #4756, the long barreled .357 will send a 125 gr. JHP screaming out the muzzle at an incredible 1775 fps. with energy readings of 875 ft. lbs. The same load will give you nearly 1600 fps. and close to 700 ft. lbs. of crunch when fired from the 6" revolvers.

I tend to favor a somewhat heavier bullet and have long used the marvelous Speer 146 gr. JHP over 16 gr. of #2400. Lately, I've leaned in the direction of the same bullet backed by 18 gr. of W-W 296 which tends to give higher velocities at lower pressures. In the long barreled Smith, you can get readings of 1650 fps. and better than 850 ft. lbs. of energy. Due to its heavier weight and superior ballistic coefficient, this load is just about tops for long range shooting, especially when wind

and brush are factors. Use the rule of thumb to determine performance in your .357 remembering that even though the long barrel gives overall top readings and the shorter jobs drop considerably, the 6" or 6 1/2" may be best for the compromise piece. No one need apologize for the numerous flat shooting powerhouses available in these barrel lengths. Ruger, Smith and Colt all produce excellent weapons in this category.

Moving down the scale a bit, we find a truly fine old workhorse that would have been doomed to oblivion long ago had it not been for a plethora of splendid, updated loads. We are, of course, saluting the venerable .38 Special. For general shooting, 5 gr. of Unique corked with Speer's pure lead 158 gr. SWC is a dandy. Great for targets and considerable power for animate objects. If you are fortunate in having a heavy frame .38 Special, you can achieve near .357 Magnum performance with the Speer 146 gr. JHP backed by 10 gr. of #4756. As indicated before, this powder is a bit raunchy and should be used with extreme care in heavy loadings. If you can handle this, it really does come very close to .357 performance and is far ahead of literally any factory round labeled "high velocity" or otherwise. You MUST have a heavy frame piece or forget the heavy loads. There is no sense pushing any gun beyond its limits and the .38 Special is certainly no exception. Your safety and the safety of your fellow shooters come first.

Getting back to our distinguished authority, several calibers were cited that survive on nostalgia alone and probably should be retired. Certainly, one of the most "romantic" calibers of all time, especially the days of the old west, is the 44-40. Just the sound of it gets you, doesn't it? While certainly capable of holding its own against the .45 Long Colt as originally loaded, the 44-40 has several handicaps which place it on the marginal list for those who intend to shoot & reload it. The brass is bottlenecked, costly and woefully short of the versatility easily obtained from either of the .45's or the .44 Special. But sentimental value? Ah, that's something else.

One of the prizes of my humble collection is a gorgeous 1902 Peacemaker in 44-40. As most of you know, calibers were seldom marked on the 44-40 Peacemakers. Instead, barrels carried the inscription, "COLT FRONTIER SIX SHOOTER." Since mine has the 7 1/2" barrel and 85% or better original finish, you can well imagine my joy at owning the piece, but shoot it? No way! Especially, since my moderate .45's will do the job better and my piece of history can be preserved for its heritage value.

Much the same can be said for the 38-40 and a variety of other calibers that enjoyed immense popularity in days gone by. Fun to own but that's about it.

Now, many calibers are still made that

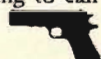
really have little or nothing going for them at all. I doubt if I'd lose much sleep if the .25's and .32's were wiped out completely. Any .38 below the "Special" has no place in my centerfire battery either. (Let's concede that the .22 rimfires are in a class all their own and are best discussed as a separate topic.) The handgun industry is NOT serving the serious minded public by continuing to provide these peewees albeit there is a market for them. And, that market exists solely because these low powered duds show up in gun cases where they'll be seen by women and/or men of slight build and also palmed off on to others that simply do not know better. These are poor excuses indeed for their continued existence when they are woefully lacking in stopping power and aren't really suited for target or hunting chores either. If my daughter could handle a snub nosed .38 Special with service loads when she was merely 8 years old, I find it difficult to justify lesser weaponry for *any* adult, regardless of size or sex. All of which leads us back to the key point: does the handgun you have in mind fit *your* needs as well as your wishes?

Let's admit, then, that there are several good calibers on the market, some old and some new, many of which can and will serve their owners quite well in most situations. We know the .44 Magnum is "king" and in the right hands, superior to all other production handguns. It is not, however, vital to the batteries of all shooters, is not necessary to stop the majority of animate targets faced by handgunners and should not even be considered by big game hunters unless they are committed to reasonably close shot placement. By virtue of its beating out all competitors on the basis of sheer, raw power, it literally makes the remainder of the calibers "obsolete." You simply *must* adhere to this single line of philosophy or be guilty of hypocrisy. To say one well-liked caliber should be junked while 5 or 6 others, quite possibly mediocre, be retained, is pure double talk.

We suggest that the .357 Magnum seems best suited for today's "one choice" handgunner but also feel one equipped with an equally impressive souped-up .45 or .44 Special in late model revolvers may be just as well off. If the above are out of the question for one reason or another, a solid .38 Special should fill in rather nicely.

So, before you let someone tell you your pet handgun is obsolete, take a good second look at the piece. If it's accurate, sound, easily reloaded with a variety of quality rounds and puts out 400 ft. lbs. or better, quite possibly, you already have all that's necessary for the majority of *your* handgun shooting needs. If the weapon is capable of safely cranking out 800 ft. lbs., then you have real magnum power and nobody in his right mind is going to call that kind of a pistol "obsolete."

I rest my case.



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Dear Mr. Carter:

That is exactly what I thought you would say. Even if Doc Sanderson and I get some shooters mad enough to vote us out next board election, we still got to argy for trying this change. It's long over due if the US ever gonna raise up some young shooters who can beat them International furners.

Onliest purpose of all this is to give shooters some choice over having some international style matches on ranges they already got, with pistols they already got. I can recollect the same swivet when the x ring was put ON targets just a spell back. Had a feller call me other night all the way from New Jersey, hollers into the phone first thing, what did I think of this NRA thing. Took me five minutes of his 'spensive long distance time to find out he's got it in his head the new 2400 would do away with his 2700 matches. Not so. It would be something sponsors could add to their match programs if they wanted to. Calmed him down a mite more and now he wants me to work for the new changes in course and target. Most folks do when they stop to figger some.

I did not get elected by being a politician and I may get removed from office for not being one. I am gonna speak up for what I think the Majority of shooters want. If we get the new idea tried, Doc Sanderson's folks around Wimauma ought to say he did his part (he's on the Executive Committee, you know). The ones who don't even want it tried will say that Communist Nat Hale's experiment is gonna ruin "their" game.

Once we quit back and forthin, hope we can get started on the committee's long range shooter development idea. Us civilians been gettin our brains beat out by the military with the help of our own tax dollars long enuf. Time we get some needy money going to the civilian shooters.

Jerry Risson knew well and good what I was gettin into in this Directors job. When I asked him to vote for me, he said Nat, you sure you want it? I do, 'sides I got 30 years before I catch up with Mr. Hottingdon, and can get on the Executive Council.

Nat

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It is with deep regret that we announce that George Nonte passed away on June 30, 1978. A regular contributor to our magazines for more than 10 years, George's ability to convey his vast knowledge of small arms and ammunition in an entertaining and understandable manner will be sorely missed by the many thousands who followed his writings here and in his more than 2,000 other articles and 20 books.

Those who knew him only through his writing were deprived of a personal association that was at the same time enjoyable and educational.

Our deepest and most sincere regrets are extended to his family and his associates.

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(Continued on page 68)

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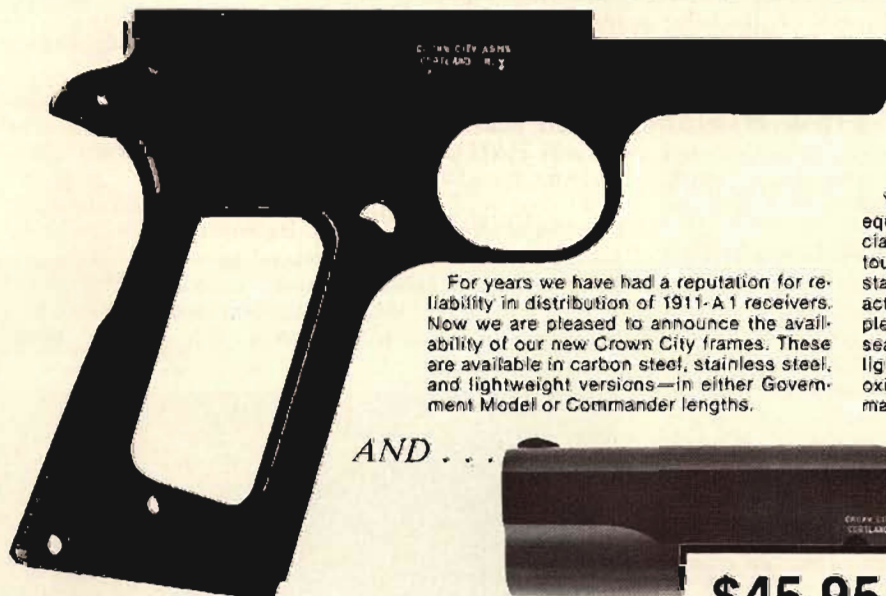
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AmmoScene

By Evan Marshall

The .380 Auto

A decade ago, if a police officer or citizen licensed to carry a concealed weapon would have informed his friends that he was relying on a .380 Auto for his personal protection, they would have shook their heads in disbelief.

Times change however, and today the 9mm Short is a highly popular weapon for this purpose. The reason behind this, of course, is the dramatic upgrading of the effectiveness of .380 loads available. As was true in several other instances, Lee Jurras of Super Vel was initially responsible for this state of affairs.

Lee introduced an 88 grain JHP load that offered substantial increases in stopping power over the traditional 95 grain FMJ loading. This load produced an honest 950-1,000 fps from a Walther and expanded most of the time. Lee readily admitted that such was the case, but pointed out that the load's more efficient bullet shape and higher velocity still offered gains in stopping power even if expansion didn't take place.

Shortly after Super Vel went out of business, Smith & Wesson introduced an 84 grain JHP load for the .380 Auto. I tested some of the initial lots, and was totally unimpressed. Expansion was erratic in duxseal, and velocities were low. I recently, however, tested some current lots of this load and found that the new "version" is a much better performer and on a par with the other .380 loads available.

Remington has just recently produced a JHP load for the .380, and a quick call to Dick Deitz got me a sampling of this new load just in time for my deadline for this column. The slug is similar in construction to their 9mm and .45 ACP JHP offerings.

All these loads were chronographed on my Oehler Model 11 with skyscreens. Expansion was checked by firing into ten pound blocks of oil base clay. Accuracy was checked at twenty yards on the standard IPSC target, and all produced adequate accuracy for defensive purposes.

The weapon originally used in testing these loads was a Garcia "Pony" .380 Auto. Unfortunately, shortly after these tests began, the gun developed excessive headspace and refused to function properly. I was able, however, to get one of Browning's new 13 shot .380s to complete the tests for this article. The gun functioned without a hitch right from the beginning, and with over 300 rounds through the gun without cleaning, I haven't had a single jam.

The various loads are all grouped together, so that the reader can compare the loads easier. The results are listed below:

Load		Velocity	Expansion
1. Remington	88 grain jhp	1018fps	.449"
2. Federal	90 grain jhc	1006fps	.453"
3. Speer	88 grain jhp	1031fps	.467"
4. S&W	84 grain jhp	1036fps	.456"
5. Super Vel	88 grain jhp	1024fps	.469"
6. Frontier	88 grain jhp	1032fps	.451"



Actually, as a quick check of the results will show, there isn't a heck of a lot of difference in the velocities and expansion results of the various .380 high performance loads. There was, however, a marked difference in their reliability of feeding. I borrowed a bunch of unaltered .380s of various makes and tested the above loads for feeding. The Remington and Frontier feed in all the weapons tried, with the others giving virtually the same reliability; about 80%. Frankly though, any weapon that's going to be used for serious social purposes, should be throat and extensively test-fired.

The Frontier load is produced by Hornady using their excellent JHP bullet. The Super Vel is of current production, being made by H&H Cartridge. H&H uses bullets that are especially made for them by Sierra to their specifications.

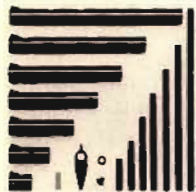
Which is best? Frankly, that's a difficult question to answer. I carry Super Vel in my OMC Backup that rides in an ankle holster as my summertime second gun. I have no illusions, however, about it being a manstopper. As a last ditch or backup weapon, I think the .380 is an excellent choice, but relying on it as a primary means of self-defense is a risk

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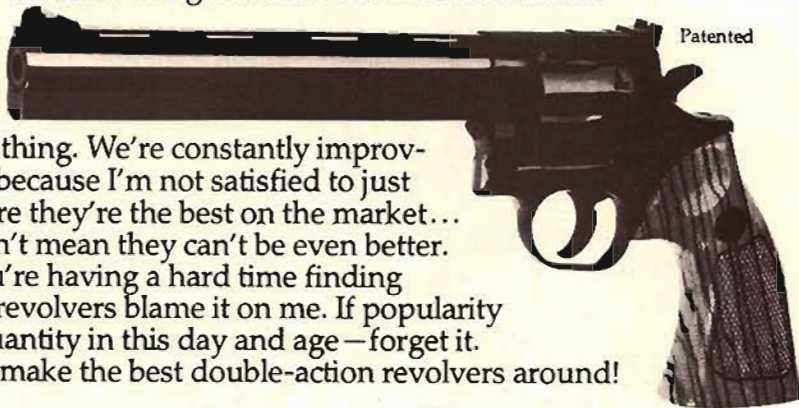
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The Smith & Wesson Triple Lock	Gordon Stark
Handgunning In Australia	John Robinson
Handgun Buffalo Hunt	J. D. Jones
Test Report: Daisy M-62	Ladd Fanta
The Laramie Conversion	Byron Boots
A Clean Handgun Is	Mike Barach
Dan Wesson-Evolution and Development	Mike Barach
Shooting The Dan Wesson	Massad Ayoob
Customizing and Tune Up-Dan Wesson	Massad Ayoob
March/April 1978 AMERICAN HANDGUNNER	
Police Combat Matches	J. Osgood
The .357/44 Bobcat	Massad Ayoob
Flying Brass	Byron Boots
Beretta's New D.A. Auto Pistols	J. B. Wood
Interview: C. Edward Warner/Colt	Massad Ayoob
The Kubik Reloader	James Mason
An Overview of the World's PPC Championships	Jeff Cooper
Equipment and Techniques of World's PPC Championships	Ray Chapman
John Farnam: Mobile Instructor	Massad Ayoob
Bar-Sto Barrels	James Mason
Sterling's .45 D.A. Auto	Terry Hudson
May/June 1978 AMERICAN HANDGUNNER	
Introduction To Handgun Silhouette Shooting ..	Elgin Gates
Hammering The OMC Backup	J. B. Wood
Safety For the S & W Revolver	Massad Ayoob
Hide Covered Handgun Grips	Russ Gaertner
The Little Match That Could	Massad Ayoob
Ron Power—Customizing The S & W	Massad Ayoob
Armand Swenson—Master Of The .45 Auto ..	Walter Rickell
Tools Of The Gunslingers	George Virgines
The Custom Shop	J. Osgood
Test Report—Bianchi's Pistolero Rig	Mike Barach
Complete Guide To Unloading	Gordon Stark
July/August 1978 AMERICAN HANDGUNNER	
Evolution Of Modern Pistolcraft	Rick Miller
Charter's .44 Bulldog And Shotloads	George C. Nonte
Comparing The Big Star Autoloader	C. George Charles
Schwarlose Military Pistol	Gordon Bruce
Trophy Kudu	Tony Weeks
Search For The Humongous Bear	J. D. Jones
Handguns For Silhouettes	Bert Stringfellow
Shooting The Smith Nines	Massad Ayoob
S & W Autos For Law Enforcement	Massad Ayoob
September/October 1978 AMERICAN HANDGUNNER	
The Truth About Mag-Na-Port	Massad Ayoob
Discovered-A Rare 9MM Webley	Gordon Bruce
Superkid Of American Handgunning	Massad Ayoob
Buckshot For Snubbies	Seth Nadel
Custom .22 Auto—The Dieckmann P-66 ..	Dennis Riordan
Super 4 Teens	J. D. Jones
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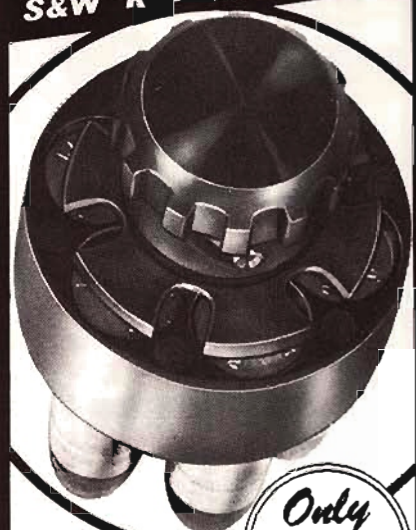
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- Rob Rare

(Continued from page 63)

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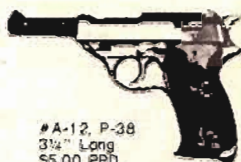
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For further information, contact Paul Judd, Kleen-Bore Div., Yankee Hill Machine Co., Northampton, Mass. 01060.

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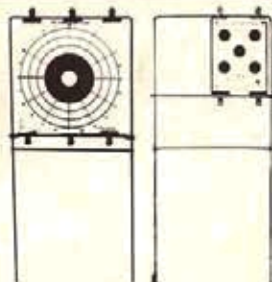
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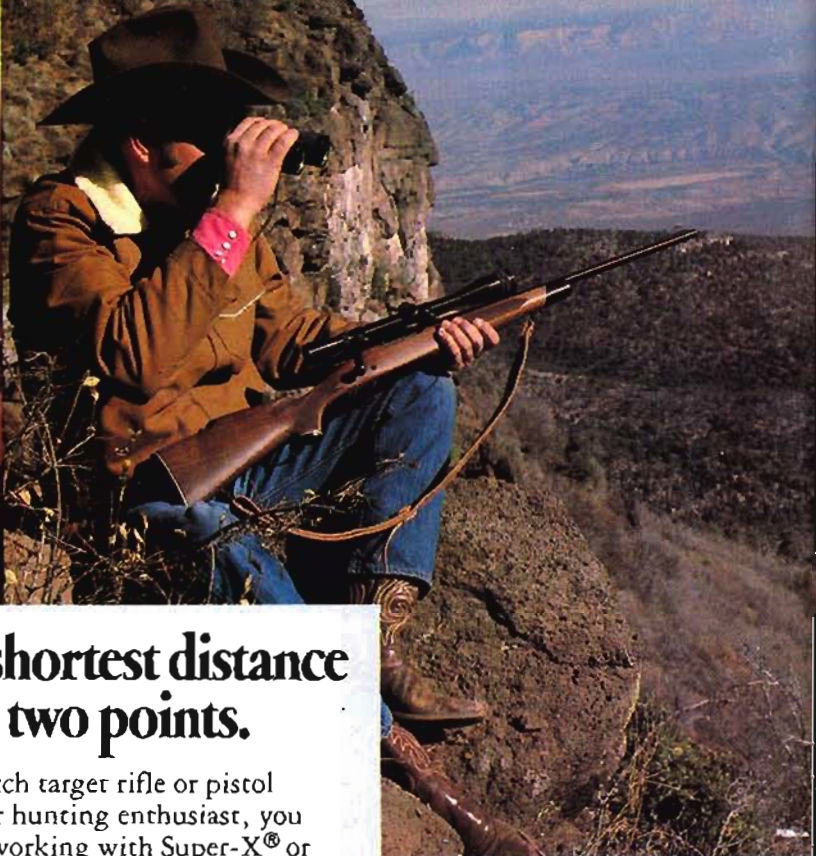
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