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AMERICAN

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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE OUTSTANDING AMERICAN HANDGUNNER AWARDS FOUNDATION

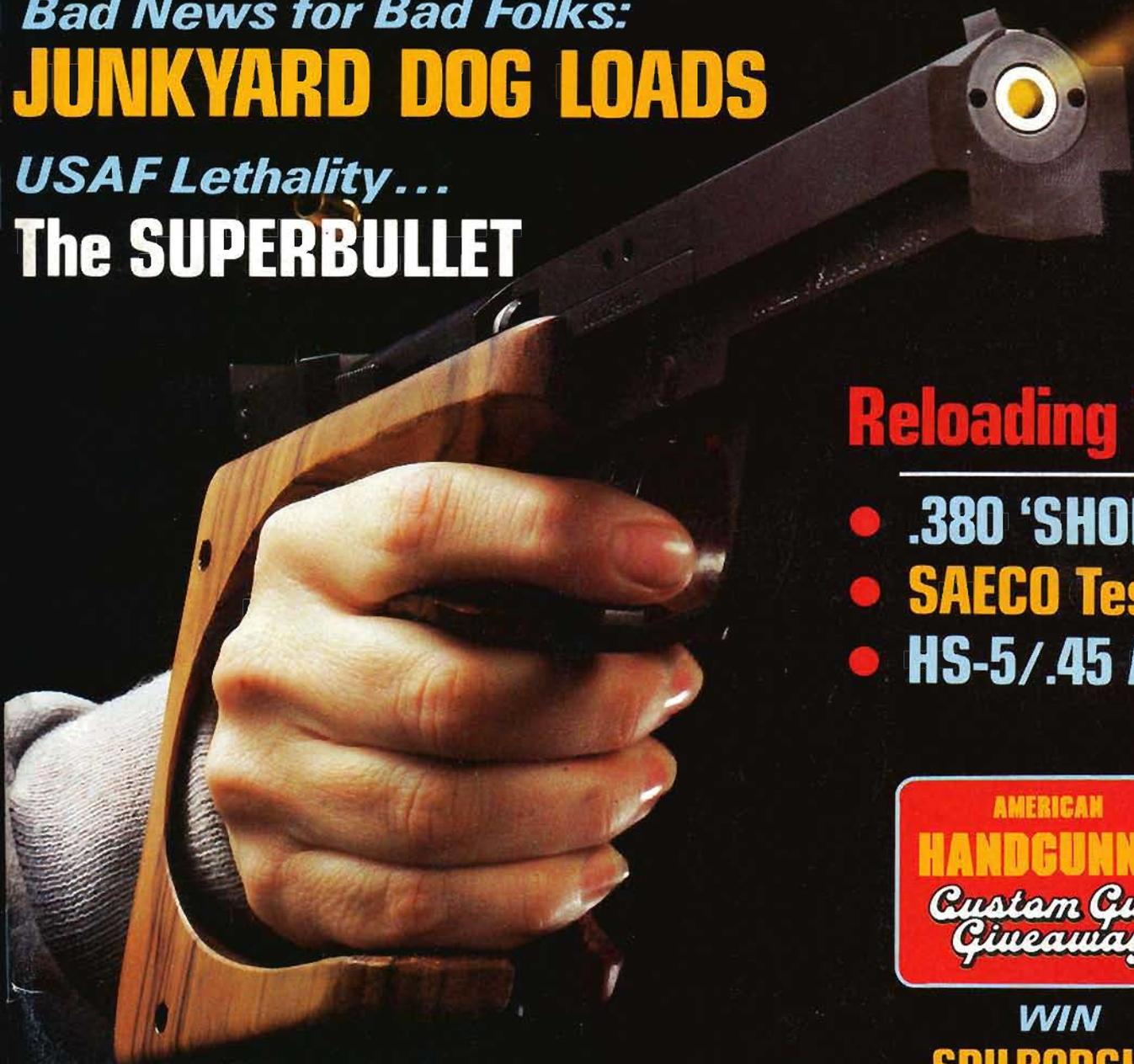
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Bad News for Bad Folks:

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(See Page 40)



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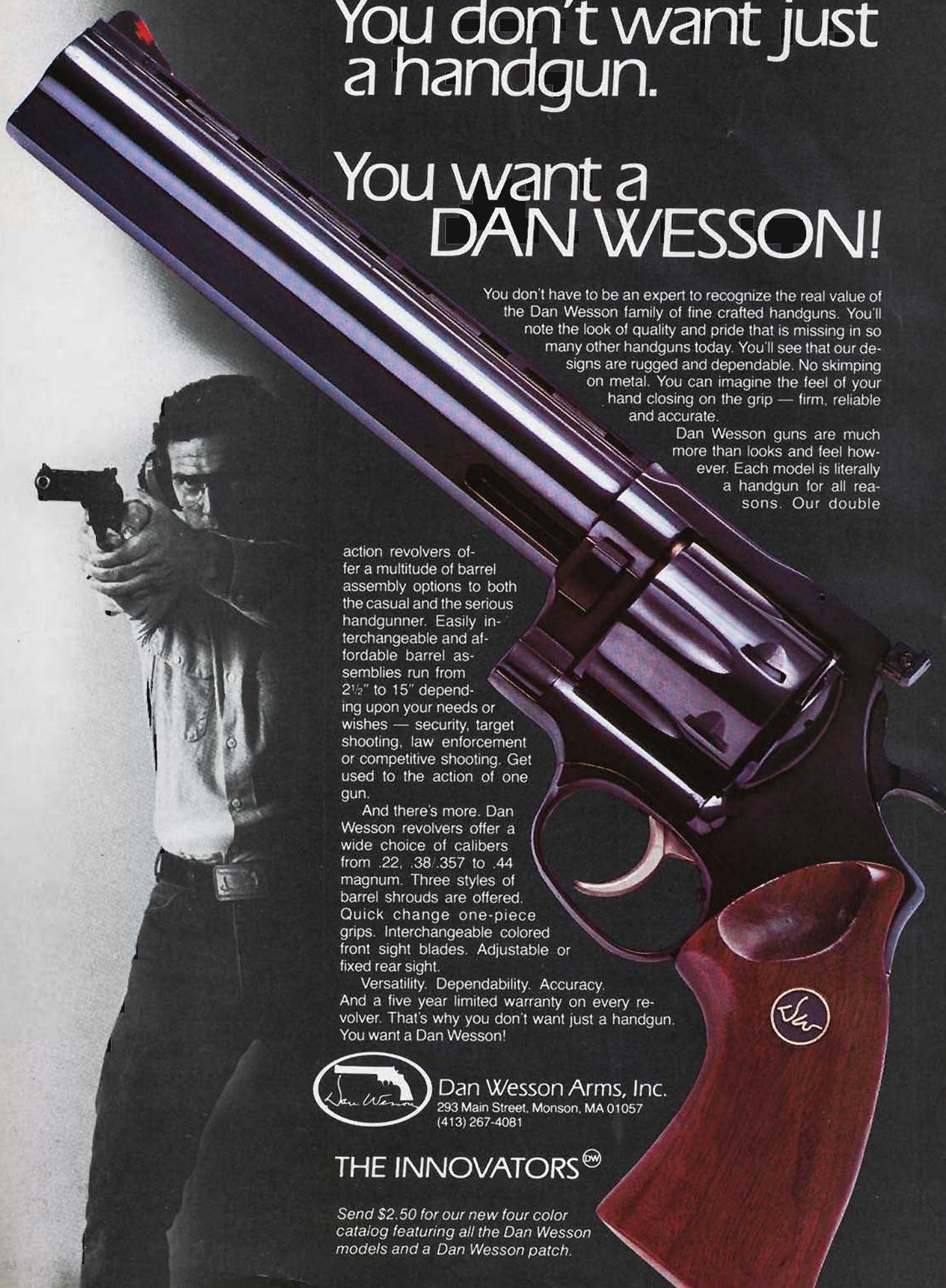
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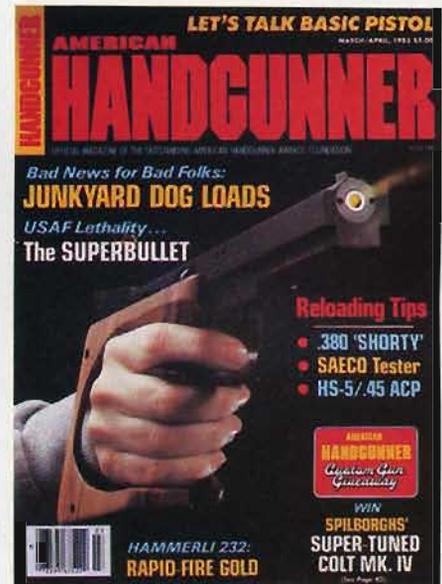
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COVER: The new Hammerli 232 shoots for the Olympic gold. Photo by Neil Nissing.

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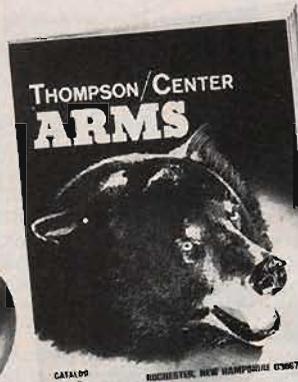
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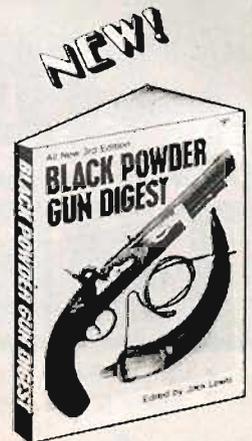
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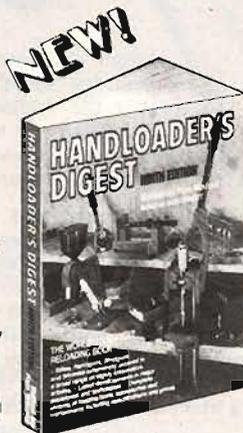
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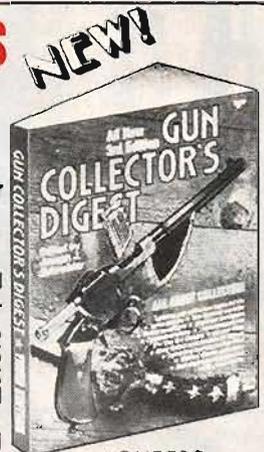
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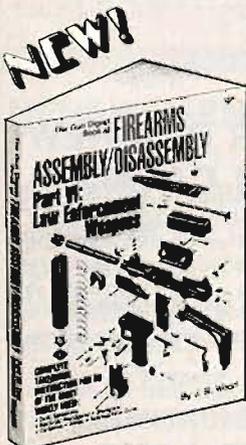
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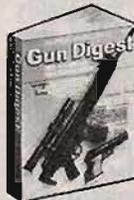


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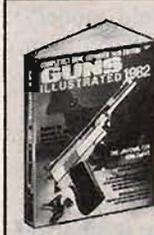
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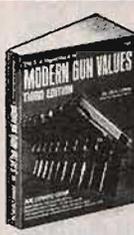


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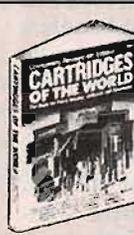
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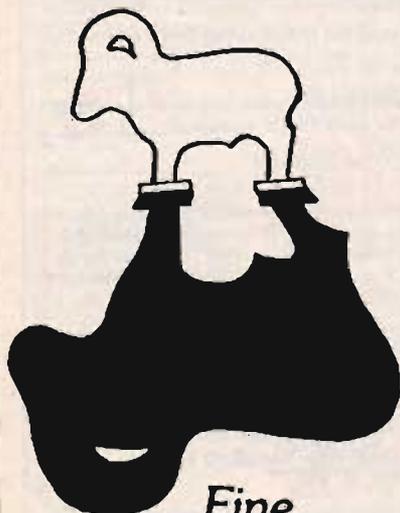
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RUGER OFFERS TRANSFER BAR KITS FOR 'OLD MODEL' SINGLE-ACTIONS

Kevin Parsons, president of Armament Systems and Procedures (ASP), of Appleton, Wisconsin, reports the company will offer stainless Ruger Security-Six revolvers converted from .357 Magnum to .44 Special. Word is, too, that ASP has purchased rights to produce the highly frangible Glaser Safety Slug, and that production will start soon.

Ruger Transfer

Sturm, Ruger now offers a Ruger Transfer Bar Conversion Kit without charge to owners of its "old model" single-action Single-Six, Blackhawk, and Super Blackhawk revolvers.

The kit, which must be installed at the factory, comprises seven new parts—hammer, pawl, transfer bar, trigger, cylinder latch, cylinder latch spring, and cylinder base pin.

Once installed, the firing pin cannot contact a live cartridge under the hammer unless the trigger is drawn to its rearmost position. Therefore, a gun fitted with a transfer bar conversion is unlikely to discharge when dropped on its hammer.

A similar transfer bar action has been the factory standard assembly on all Ruger single-action revolvers produced since 1973. However, conversion kit parts are not interchangeable with the actions in later production guns.

Ruger's "old model" single-action handguns were designed true to the single-action tradition of the earlier revolvers they resemble.

Even though instructions for the owner/shooter to keep the hammer over an empty cylinder were packed with these guns since production began, in 1953—and a 100-year safety tradition among single-action revolver shooters to do so—several accidents occurred when inexperienced handlers dropped "old model" Rugers while the firing pin was resting on the primer of a live round.

Some controversial court actions involving these accidents were decided against Ruger—which ultimately led to discontinuance of the "old models." Concurrently, the company started to stamp the barrel of each new production gun, warning the user to: "Read the instructions." This move, understandably, drove purists to distraction, but such is the way of the product liability jungle.

After production was discontinued, "old model" Rugers quickly became collectors' items.

The Transfer Bar Conversion Kit is

good news in two respects. First, it can prevent an accident, should an "old model" Ruger be mishandled.

Second, the kit does not change the external appearance of the guns, and kit parts can be removed entirely and replaced with original action components to maintain the revolver's collector value.

Although the kit provides transfer bar protection, it does not bring the "old model" fully up to "new model" design. For example, the kit does not provide the loading-gate/hammer interlock feature of "new model" Ruger revolvers.

Ruger's specific plan for the new system is this: While the Ruger "old model" single-action revolvers have always been safe to use when handled properly, Sturm, Ruger & Company nevertheless developed the new Single-Action Conversion Kit to be fitted to any "old model" Ruger single-action revolver. These new parts will protect the shooter from an accidental discharge, resulting from a severe blow to the hammer if he has forgotten to load only five cartridges and keep the hammer down on an empty chamber.

"Old model" owners interested in the conversion should write Sturm, Ruger & Co., Inc., Lacey Place, Dept. OM, Southport, CT 06490. Do not send a revolver until requested by Ruger to do so.

The Sentinels

High Standard, now with its new East Hartford, Connecticut, work force up to strength, is reintroducing two models this year, the dual-cylinder Sentinels and the Derringer in .22 LR.

Introduced in 1974, the Sentinel was completely redesigned in 1975, with a steel frame and shrouded barrel. However, production was halted in 1977 when HS management changed and the firm's manufacturing facilities were moved from Hamden to East Hartford.

The Sentinel will reappear in three versions—2-inch, fixed sight; 5-inch, adjustable sight; and 6-inch, adjustable sight. Each revolver will be supplied with two cylinders as standard equipment, one chambered for .22 LR, the other for .22 Winchester Magnum Rimfire.

The .22 LR Derringer was a victim of the move too, but is being reintroduced because of the expanding women's market. It seems that High Standard's .22 WMR Derringer is just the right size for a lady's hand or purse, but its trigger pull is too stiff. And HS officials told *American*

Continued on page 22

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Turbo
1200

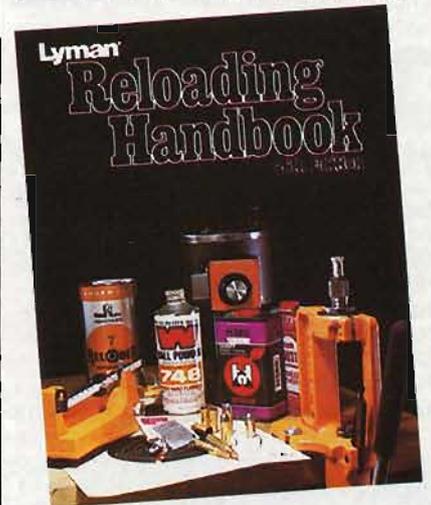


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SILUETAS

PHILIP C. BRIGGS

I'm not sure why, but in the minds of many shooters, "surplus" carries a negative connotation. Maybe it's from back when there was a DCM, and NRA members had a pipeline into the military, shooters could buy military components

TEST LOADS

7-08 Remington XP-100

Bullet	Powder Type	Charge (Grains)	Case	100-yard Group Size (Inches)	Average Velocity (fps)
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139 Salvage FMJ	BL-C2	41.0	R-P 7-08	1.39	2178
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168 Sierra MK	H4895	38.0*	LC-72M	1.80	2281
168 Sierra MK	H4895	38.0*	LC-75	1.26	2273
168 Sierra MK	H4895	38.0	R-P 7-08	1.11	2243
175 Sierra BT	4064	37.0	LC-75	1.75	2143
175 Sierra BT	4064	37.0	R-P 7-08	1.52	2126

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growing up in hand-me-downs, or eating too many meals made up of leftovers. Or maybe they're just spoiled.

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shooters of the day bought military components, new or surplus, because they were of good quality and they were inexpensive.

Though all we can buy nowadays are surplus components, contrary to popular opinion, these virtues still hold.

Some of the early handgun silhouette experimenters recognized this, and used readily available military brass as the basis for their wildcatting. Gates worked with both the .308 and .223; Ugalde and Ingram the .223; and Talbot the .308.

Elgin finally settled on the .300 Savage as a basis for his highly successful 7mm IHMSA to avoid the hassle of forming his original, slightly shorter, cartridge, a 7mm on a 1 1/4-inch-long .308 case.

The 7mm IHMSA can, of course, be made from .308 brass, but the 7mm-308 is simpler. The rifle shooters developed this popular wildcat shortly after the .308 was released, and it has become quite popular in recent years, particularly among rifle silhouette competitors. Remington people, knowing a good thing when they saw it, recently have commercialized the cartridge as the 7-08 Remington. (If only they'd had the good sense to offer the XP in this chambering.)

Wes Ugalde popularized a 7mm wildcat on the .223 case for use in unlimited Contenders. The cartridge is simply formed, turned out to be a dandy, and was natural for the Contender. Thompson/Center recognized this, and adopted the chambering, christened 7mm TCU, for the

highly successful 10-inch bull-barreled production gun.

Still, with all of this history and intent behind these cartridges, you'll still find shooters who buy commercial brass for use in reloading.

"That surplus stuff's junk," they'll say, or "Those crimped-in primers will ruin your decapper," or "The crimp's too hard to remove," or "It doesn't have enough capacity."

Piffle! I've been using ex-military brass for years, for wildcats and tame cats, and none of what those folks say is true.

Recently, I had the opportunity to put my opinions to a test that would be of interest to handgunners.

The catalyst was a visit to Thunderbird

Cartridge Company, Inc., P.O. Box 302, Phoenix, AZ 85002. Owner Eric Lutfy does a large amount of commercial reloading, but most of his business involves buying huge quantities of military surplus, small arms ammo and brass from all over the world, and either reselling it in small lots, or salvaging the components.

Right now there is a tremendous amount of .223 brass around, and Eric's shop was jam-packed with drums of shiny-new once-fired cases ready for packaging and shipping to dealers and commercial reloaders. Mixed in with all of this was a drum or two of .308s; and back in a corner was a large quantity of slippery looking salvaged 139-grain 7mm FMJs.

Continued on page 24

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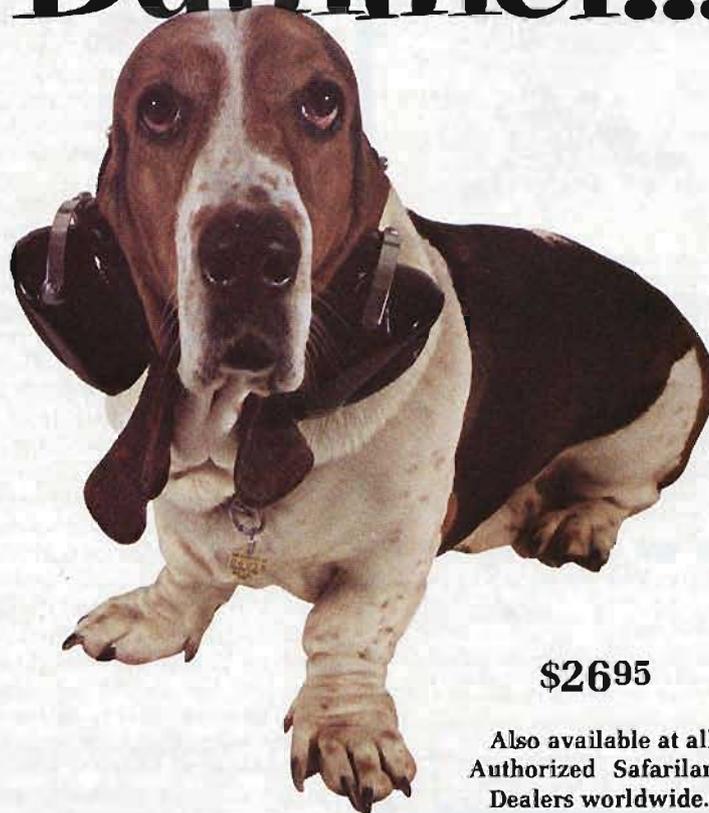
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COP TALK

MASSAD AYOOB

WEAVER VS. TURRET: ONE OF 'EM COULD BE EXACTLY RIGHT FOR YOU

The two-hand hold isn't for sissies anymore. Now, it's the mark of a shooter who knows handguns. Unfortunately, a lot of people aren't doing it right. And those who are, tend to cling with zealous fervor to the first method that worked for them. "What's a Weaver stance?" PPC shooters say scornfully, and combat gunners who've adopted the Weaver mode answer, "The Weaver hold is the technique used by the true experts, and anyone who just locks both hands in front of himself is an ignorant amateur."

As is often the case with ideological rifts, the truth is somewhere in the middle.

Amateurs, whose only role models for combat shooting are TV cop shows, tend to grab their handguns any which way with two hands, point it in front of them, and crank the trigger. Professionals use one of two systems, the Weaver Stance or the Fairbairn Iscosceles position, which I call the McGee Turret stance, after the man who popularized its use in America.

When Jeff Cooper introduced freestyle combat matches in the mid-1950s, a local deputy named Jack Weaver started winning them all. He was using a position in which he bent his right elbow a bit and his left elbow a lot, pushing out with the first and pulling in with the second. This created an isometric tension vise on the pistol itself, and the bent elbows served as shock absorbers for recoil, permitting faster recovery with hot ammo.

Fairbairn was a British officer who ran the Shanghai Police training section in the early part of this century, when the city experienced problems that made Watts look like a Cub Scout Jamboree at Disney World. Fairbairn studied the gunfight problems his men were facing, and concluded that they would win more shootouts if they took their .45 automatics in both hands and shoved them straight out in front of their eyes, with their elbows locked in a position that formed an Iscosceles triangle relative to their torsos. Damned if it didn't work! The concept languished for decades, and was resurrected by Lt. Frank McGee of NYCPD, who made it the standard training method for New York cops. He taught it as a turret position; the shooter's upper body becomes a gun turret that rotates at the hips.

The two systems for double-fisted shooting operate on different principles. Each makes different promises, depending on what it is the shooter wishes to accomplish.

The Weaver is an isometric tension lock designed to absorb the recoil of heavy combat loads, and snap the gunhands back down on target. It achieves this better than anything else. With a proper Weaver hold, you can lock in on a quick sight picture and pull the trigger as fast as you can and, if you've done it right, you'll have a group in the kill zone of a silhouette target at close combat ranges. The Weaver is *not*, however, the most solid platform for accurate shooting because you are pulling in with one hand and pushing out with the other, resulting in too much waver for a true precision lock on the target. You'll hit it someplace, if you're good, and you'll hit it quick, but you may not hit it dead center. If you're not experienced at what you're doing, you may not hit the target at all.

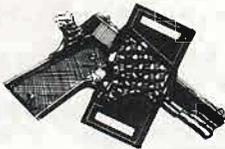
Where the Weaver has recoil recovery as its No.1 selling point, the Fairbairn/McGee position produces precision placement. You shove the gun out in front of you, locking everything in your body—shoulders, elbows, wrists—and you wind up with the steadiest possible position for shooting a handgun while standing up on your hind legs. PPC shooters use this position exclusively because their game is accuracy, fairly quick, with light loads, instead of hitting someplace very quick with heavy ammo. When you're counting on one shot, the PPC shooters have the system that will best guarantee a center hit.

Weaver fanciers say that the turret position has no value because the locked joints create a fulcrum that allows recoil to throw the pistol farther upward when it goes off. This might be true with .44 Magnums and other super-heavy rounds, but it doesn't really translate to .357s or .45 automatics, let alone anything of smaller calibers. *The fact that you are pushing the gun out with your joints locked in itself creates a sort of isometric tension arrangement.* That fulcrum theory works with full-auto weapons, which fire ten rounds per second, but it doesn't really happen with semi-auto pistols or revolvers. The deeply bent left elbow of the Weaver goes with the fact that your left side will be quartered toward the target, assuming that you're right-handed.

In an Iscosceles position, your torso is facing the target straight on, which is why the locked and triangulated arms work so well. Foot placement? You'll probably have 'em parallel and spread for balance in a PPC match. The good news is that, on the street, it doesn't matter where your feet are

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because your body has become a gun turret that pivots at the hip.

The Turret is probably better for instinctive shooting, darkness shooting and precision shooting. The Weaver undeniably offers better control in hot-and-heavy rapid fire at a big target, but it requires more practice.

A Weaver shooter normally stands with his back straight up, often tilting the head slightly so he doesn't have to bring the gun up as far. Usually, Turret shooters will crouch slightly, and almost always will do so under pressure; a match shooter who uses this position will often tilt his head and upper spine rearward for cantilevered balance in a handgunner's variation of what rifle competitors call "the Russian position." Do it with your feet too close together and, with a moster Magnum load, your toes will come up off the ground. Leaning away from the gun works only with mild ammo.

Hand placement itself should be tailored to the individual. If you have big hands with long fingers, you might want to wrap the thumb of the support hand over the back of the shooting hand. I find that comfortable with a small frame revolver, okay with a K-frame, and impossible with anything larger. I usually just curl the thumb up, which allows my other fingers to squeeze that much harder. The thumb of the shooting hand should be curled down, too, for the same reason. For me, this means trimming or rounding the cylinder latch on S&W revolvers.

A kneeling position can be tricky. For some, placing the support arm on the bent knee works well. A large-bellied person will find that uncomfortable, though, and any wobble caused by leg muscle strain will quiver right through to the gun. I prefer to kneel with my back straight up and not use the knee for support. I find I'm more comfortable that way, better balanced, have full-length sight relief (bending the elbow to the knee pulls the gun in too close to my eyes), and simply shoot better in this mode.

In fact, it wouldn't hurt to practice kneeling on *both* knees. It's a remarkably stable position, and comes in handy for wounded cops.

There's no need to learn just one system to the exclusion of all others. Try every way, and take the best of each technique and tailor it to your own physique and shooting style. Don't be suckered by fellow shooters who are dogmatic about there being only one correct style. That's the kind of attitude that, halfway into this century, had policemen and soldiers using the archaic dueling position to defend their lives. Techniques have been developed that enable you now, more than ever before, to produce greater shooting accuracy and gain more control over a handgun. These techniques were developed by handgun masters too savvy to believe that there was "only one right way." 

WHAT!?

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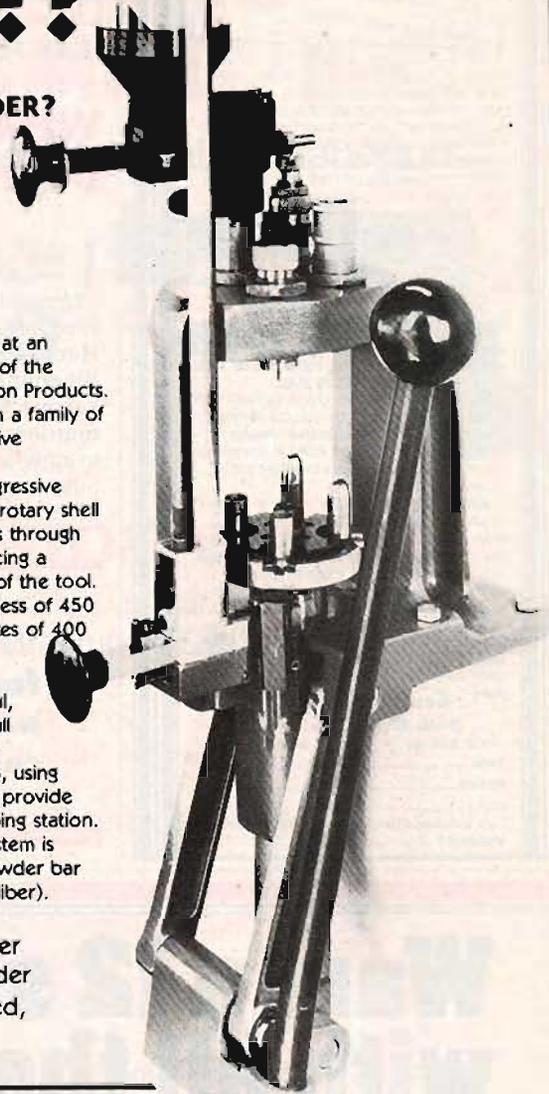
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HANDGUN HUNTING

J. D. JONES

WHAT ARE YOUR INTERESTS? DO YOU WANT TO SHOOT BEARS?

I think occasionally all of us experience something worthwhile in our lives that others of similar tastes should know about. A couple of years ago I founded Handgun Hunters International, P.O. Box 257 Mag, Bloomingdale, OH 43910, annual membership \$15, on that premise. Members contribute their own experiences relating to guns, ammo and hunting, and these are published in *The Sixgunner*. This gives *The Sixgunner* a very wide variety of expe-

riences on which to draw. I think the same idea can be used in this column. Frankly, *Handgunner's* editorial director Jerry Rakusan wants audience participation in the column, and I think it's a great idea. Let's find out what you want to tell others about your experiences and what you want to read about in the column. Let me know just what your interests are and let me draw on your experiences to make the column more enjoyable and informative.

"I learned a little about the behavior of foxes and spent a totally engrossed four-and-a-half hours. I don't call that an unsuccessful hunt."

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Write to Handgun Hunters International with your questions or comments.

A very highly respected custom knife-maker, R.W. Wilson, 113 Kent Way, Wier-ton, WV 26062, invited me to Pontiac Lodge at Chapeau, Quebec, Canada, for a look at some real fishing lakes and bear country. Last spring there, R.W.'s wife, Sa lena, got a black bear that missed the rec-ord book by under 1/2-inch after the skull was dried. Well, Canada just isn't pistol country and I couldn't get excited about going, but I'm weak when someone wants to go hunting. So I spent last weekend sit-ting very quietly, looking for bears and at foxes. Four medium bears and one big sucker had been regularly working over the garbage pile from a logging camp. Now, I can't see any difference between hunting that site and sitting over some other kind of bait. I do not like sitting in one spot, motionless, waiting for game to come in. Saturday was different though. From 20 minutes until five to pitch dark, one coon and three foxes put on a real show. I sat on a little dirt pile, with a 1898 Krag across my lap and a few branches stuck in the ground in front of me to break up my outline. When one fox was within 8 feet of me, I made a noise and literally scared him out of his wits. Another came to within about three feet before I scared him off, only to have him come back to within two feet and head for my lunch before I whacked him a light tap with the Krag. After that, he stuck around till about dark, but frequently looked over with more than a little distrust at the big guy who'd hit him. These foxes kept their distance from the coon. They obviously feared him more than me. Once, while at a half-trot and looking over his shoulder at the coon, one fox ran into an empty plastic bottle. The resulting noise sent him at least 18 inches straight up! Well, with all of this action going on around me, I knew that big black son of a gun was going to slip silently into view, at which point the coon, foxes and ravens would scatter and I would, with surgical precision, make a .30 caliber hole in his hide. Suddenly I realized it was far too dark to shoot, my bear wasn't my bear and the hunt was over. I learned a little about the behavior of foxes and spent a to-tally engrossed four-and-a-half hours. I don't call that an unsuccessful hunt.

A Canadian bear license costs about \$25, entitles you to a spring and fall black bear, and is purchased with no difficulty in any store that sells sporting goods. Ned Sullivan runs Pontiac Lodge, P.O. Box 8, Chapeau, Quebec, Canada, JOX IMO. Seems to know a lot about bears, too. the rates are a steal—\$35 daily room and board. If you want a guided hunt, he can probably fix you up. If you want to fish, I know he can. If you want a scenic place for a little R&R, Pontiac is worth looking into. Accommodations are neat, attractive and clean. The food is good. It wasn't handgun hunting, but it's worthwhile. I thought you should know about it.



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HANDGUN LEATHER

BOB ARGANBRIGHT

IS THERE A PERFECT HOLSTER RIG FOR COL. COLT'S SHERIFF'S MODEL?

It is the dream of many a handgunner to someday obtain his very own custom handgun. If this is to be a working gun, custom features such as non-standard barrel length create problems when the proud owner tries to locate a proper holster. In the past, I have solved this problem by making my own holsters. However, when I recently obtained one of the scarce new single-action Colt .44-40 Sheriff's Models, with its 3-inch barrel, I decided to see what was available for this piece among commercially made holsters.

While attending the 1981 SHOT Show, I took my problem to Richard Nichols of Bianchi Gunleather. I was surprised when Richard told me that his company has received a number of requests for Sheriff's Model holsters, and that most of them were for Bianchi's Model CDI24 spring-loaded, cross-draw holster. Because this holster is designed for plainclothes detectives, it appears that some Sheriff's Models are being carried as defensive weapons.

However, I wanted something more traditional and decided to accept Richard's suggestion of a No. 1L, which is a silicone suede-lined version of the old Threepersons holster. I felt this especially appropriate, as legendary Southwestern lawman Tom Threepersons designed the original holster for a single-action Colt. His sixgun and Myres-made holster are in the Bianchi Frontier Museum collection.

Within a month, I received a beautifully executed "snubby" SA holster. Combined



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with Bianchi's B7 cartridge/gunbelt, it makes an excellent field rig.

While checking to see what else was available, I thought of El Paso Saddlery which specializes in top-quality handmade replica holsters. After many hours studying the firm's fascinating catalog, I ordered a Model 1895 shoulder holster. This is a copy of a late 19th Century rig and includes four cartridge loops on the shoulder harness. The treatment of the leather loop which goes under the offside arm is interesting. This leather strap has been folded and stitched to produce a round, bag handle effect which is more comfortable to wear. It provides that classic touch which says "quality." El Paso Saddlery claims that legendary Texas gunfighter John Wesley Hardin used such a holster while headquartering in El Paso. My Model 1895 shoulder holster has the attractive fish scale stamping unique to El Paso Saddlery.

While both holsters were perfectly executed, I still wasn't satisfied, as I wanted a sample of the traditional Western hip holster for my Sheriff's Model. A phone call to Bob McNellis of El Paso Saddlery brought me two such holsters. At Bob's suggestion, I requested a copy of an original El Paso Model 1890, plus one of the company's more modern "Austin" holsters. The Austin is a copy of a holster which was popular with Texas Rangers, and was made during the 1930s by A.W. Brill. When the package arrived I was pleasantly surprised to find that Bob had sent a suede-lined, full hand-carved "Duke" holster in place of the Austin we had discussed. More about this holster later.

The Model 1890 is an exact duplicate of an El Paso Saddlery-modified Mexican Loop holster from the 1890s. Many original Mexican Loop holsters are found with the skirt torn through at the loop. The El Paso version has been modified to prevent this by riveting a separate loop to the skirt. El Paso lawman John Selman, famous as the gunfighter who finally bested John Wesley Hardin, appears in a photograph wearing a single-action Colt in an 1890 holster. I especially like this holster because the fold at the top of the pouch is at a slight angle, producing a slight muzzle-forward angle of the holster. This is perfect when the gun is carried to the front of the strong side hip. This is the preferred holster position of today's fast-draw shooters, as well as many IPSC competitors. This holster angle also allows the Model 1890 to serve effectively as a cross-draw holster, working especially well with the short barreled Sheriff's Model.

The second El Paso Saddlery holster, the "Duke," is a close copy of the holster worn by John Wayne in his more recent western movies. That alone makes it a winner. I like the way the suede lining is rolled over the top edge of the holster, preventing it from pulling loose. Before using the Duke holster, I treated the lining with the silicone solution provided for this purpose in

Continued on page 23



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for all ages. Other information regarding the "Diana MPS Conversion System" may be read in the 1982 Gun Digest, Guns-July, 1981 and Police Product News, November, 1981 — articles written by J.I. Galan. For additional information contact your dealer or:



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SIGHT SETTINGS

LUCY CHAMBLISS

HERE'S A LOOK AT THE NATIONAL SPORTS FESTIVAL—AND N.Y. LAW

Civilians tell me, "If I go to Phoenix, I want to shoot it all," when I encourage them to shoot the exciting International Championships and Final Team Tryouts. Attempting to shoot five matches at Phoenix is *not* the way for non-subsidized handgunners to compete consistently or enjoy U.S. International Shooting. There is no aggregate of Free, Standard, Centerfire and Air Pistol at the International Championships. Bullseye-oriented shooters should remember this is not the way International shooting is done.

Spending time and money while maintaining enthusiasm for all the pistol events can discourage and bankrupt a shooter—probably during the preliminary tryouts or, for sure, in the finals. Specialization in not more than two events (three, if one is Air Pistol), I believe, will provide years of shooting scores within a particular shooter's ability. Also, a competitor who specializes can probably afford and enjoy the sport longer.

National Sports Festival

A particularly welcome recognition that comes from the annual International Championships is that teams are now sent by the U.S. Olympic Committee and the NRA to the National Sports Festival. Incidentally, 1980 scheduling problems, mainly with Air Pistol, were resolved at the '81 Phoenix matches, and conditions were much improved. After placing fifth in Women's .22 Pistol at Phoenix (while clearing several jams in the Duel Fire), I found myself in the eight-member Women's Pistol Team bound for Syracuse, New York, and the Festival, July 21-27. Prior to this year, I didn't know that so many shooters are included in this national sporting event. However, now that the Olympics include Free Pistol, Rapid Fire and Air Rifle for men, and Air Rifle, Standard Rifle and .22 Pistol for women, shooters aren't overlooked as these Festivals enter their fourth year.

Shortly after returning from Phoenix in June, team members were notified by the NRA of procedures for travel to Syracuse. Either the USOC would buy a competitor a plane ticket or reimburse him or her for automobile travel expenses. I drove to Syracuse and arrived in a rainstorm on July 21 at Syracuse University where the 2,500 athletes were to be housed and fed. Through quick, efficient work on the part of team manager Mike Griggs, assistant

manager Sally Carroll and assistant manager for Pistol Bill Hilden, our room and parking space assignments, ID cards and uniforms were immediately available.

The only inconvenience during the Festival was the great amount of time and energy spent in checking all firearms in and out of the Syracuse University Security Department in order to comply with state laws and university regulations. The security office was located in the basement of a building about four blocks from the dormitories. All competitors' firearms were required to be checked in by security immediately on team members' arrival, and then were checked in and out daily by signing forms for each gun before going to the range and upon return from shooting. Security personnel were most helpful, but the check-in-check-out routine was an added burden on shooting competitors that was not shared by other athletes. At times, particularly during the first two days, there were sometimes as many as 20 shooters crowded into a 9 by 12-foot room, filling out forms, after having lugged heavy gun cases down a steep flight of stairs. The apparent size and weight of cases carried by shotgun and rifle competitors made me glad that I am a handgunner. However, the roadside sign at the Pennsylvania—New York state line warning that possession of a handgun carries a year's mandatory prison sentence made me momentarily regret my short-barreled firearm. Before leaving home, I had received from the Festival committee a form on which I was required to list all handguns I would take into New York State. Also enclosed was a copy of a special emergency act passed by the New York State Assembly, allowing Festival competition shooters to bring handguns into the state. If the legislators had neglected to do this, there would have been no firearms competition at all at the Festival. Having to check guns in immediately after firing made it necessary to do all disassembly and cleaning of pistols at the range. This isn't as satisfactory as returning to the usual motel room where you can meticulously clean and inspect each part.

Pistol range facilities provided by the Syracuse Pistol Club were adequate. Club members volunteered as match workers and were very hospitable. After working the International events, they expressed a desire to try these kinds of events in club matches. "Looks like fun," they said.

Continued on page 22



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John Lawson started his gunsmithing career in 1946 by accurizing small bore target rifles for his shooting teammates. In later years, he changed his specialty to custom work on .45s and .22 pistols used in NRA target competition. In addition, he gained a national reputation in collecting circles by his expert reconditioning of a large number of World War II trophy pistols.

Lawson is a plain, blunt man of Armenian extraction who talks with his hands and can move people to tears when he pours ketchup on an excellent steak. And likewise, tough fighting men stand in his shop, similarly moved, as they thank him for combat pistols that saved their lives when, suddenly, the chips went down.

John G. Lawson's Sight Shop is at 1802 E. Columbia Ave., Tacoma, WA 98404, phone (206) 474-5465.

—Donald B. McLean

Some months ago, Jeff Cooper asked why his pistol fed empty cases every time, but jammed with short semi-wadcutters. The answer is *untimely leverage*.

As the normal feed cycle begins, a cartridge is stripped from the magazine by the slide face, which drives it forward and upward at an 8-degree angle, parallel to the magazine lips, until the bullet nose strikes the feed ramp. Shape and protrusion of the bullet nose dictate the cartridge's maximum upward angle as it slips along the ramp and the case slides under the extractor. The most critical point of feed is the bullet's contact with the chamber top. At this stage, short bullets cause the case to jam between breech face, feed ramp and chamber top, held firmly by the extractor hook, which has assumed the role of a wedge. The result is a solid jam, caused by leverage exerted at the wrong time.

Properly designed bullets are long enough to strike the chamber top sooner,

letting the case slip under the extractor sooner, without wedging or contacting the barrel feed ramp in the wrong place.

If short semi-wadcutters must be used, the pistol frame must be opened to a more blunt shape and the feed ramps must be made over to a shallower feed angle. But this is at the cost of less case support at the chamber mouth where support is already



Cutaway shows how short semi-wadcutters jam in untimely leverage.

in a grey area. The result could be badly bulged cases on firing.

The most common cause of pistol inaccuracy—more than barrel/bushing fit or lockup slop—is an oversized chamber. Cut to a funnel shape to allow easier feed, the tapered chamber's bottom permits a case to drop at the rear. (A quick check to determine whether this condition exists in your pistol is to lay a fired case on the beam of an accurate machinist's square and slowly rotate it between the fingers. If light appears, the case head is not square with the sides.)

Occasionally, this is caused by use of a long link, a National Match barrel that does not mesh with the slide properly or similar misalignment, usually also causing off-center primer indent. The fix is obvious.

If caused by an oversized chamber, the best cure is to use a proper long semi-wadcuter bullet, throat the barrel for a tight fit on the short perpendicular sides protruding from the case and cross the fingers. Usually the bullet, if it is cast of hard alloy, will tend to straighten out the case sufficiently to prevent bent case heads.

Taper crimping prevents a bullet from receding during ramp strike. A "disappearing bullet" of proper original overall length will jam as solidly as a too-short bullet. A smaller neck sizing plug or a larger bullet sizing die may cure the problem.

Another frequent cause of inaccuracy in

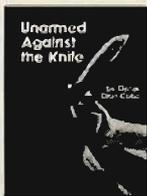
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RHODESIAN S.A.S. COMBAT MANUAL

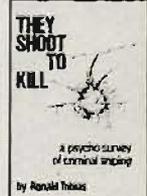
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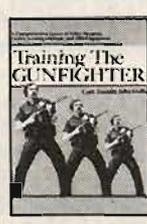
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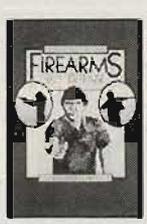
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INDUSTRY INSIDER

Continued from page 8

Handgunner that new .22 LR hyper-velocity loads make the .22 LR Derringer a practical defense weapon.

Bits and Pieces

Smith & Wesson has decided to offer its mace products to the civilian market. Test marketing has started in S&W's home state, Connecticut. Sterling Arms is expected to be in full production this month on its new X-Caliber production facility. Ruger's announcement of a limited edition of 5,000 of its Standard auto pistols was received with much collector enthusiasm. This Standard and Mark I automatic were discontinued in December after a 33-year continuous production run. The line is replaced by the new Mark II line. At this writing, the Penn Central bid to take over Colt Industries seems to be on the rocks.

SIGHT SETTINGS

Continued from page 19

Rapid Fire, Precision Fire and Duel Fire were contested on two bays of five targets each. These, along with the timer, I was told, belong to the NRA. The targets, with the same type of aluminum frame used at Phoenix, were extremely fast—they spring like a bear trap.

The only things missing for this important competition were wind protection at the ends of the line, back of the shooters, and empty case protection between shooters. Women shooters stood no more than 12 inches apart because of the closeness of the target frames. The customary wire screens fastened to pistol box lids to stop .45 cases let .22 brass through, mainly because shooting stand height required in International is too low to provide protection. Even sheets of heavy cardboard, or target backing cloth mounted at proper height would have slowed wind gusts and stopped the flying empties. When such problems can be solved so simply, dodging hot cases and wind interference should not be part of such an important match. Remedies had been planned, I understand, but somehow got lost in the last-minute rush. NRA officials are aware of the problems, and will incorporate solutions for next year's Festival, scheduled for Indianapolis, Indiana.

The men fired Free Pistol and Rapid Fire; the women fired the .22 International Ladies Match. The women's event was won by the Army's Ruby Fox with 578 x 600; civilian Evely Kostellie was second with 574; Cathy Compton of the Dallas Airport Police scored third with 571; and my 569 took the fourth place award. Kostellie and I were teamed together, both

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being from the South, to win the gold in the team match. Festival athletes, with respect to their places of residence, are divided into regional teams to simulate international competition.

Levi-Strauss supplied all competitors with attractive warm-up suits, caps, shirts, windbreakers, and equipment bags, each article carrying the Festival emblem. You might remember, when buying sports clothes, to patronize Levi's. While deriving advertising, the company is doing something extra for sports competitors.

The opening ceremonies were at Syracuse's Carrier Dome. Many of the events were held there, too. What a great place it would have been for rifle and pistol matches, with spectators able to view targets on a giant TV screen! Spectators, 20,000 paying ones, cheered and applauded competitors the night we marched into the gigantic arena. About 400 media people covered the Festival. ABC network's Chris Schenkel was master of ceremonies and actor Cliff Robertson offered a tribute to the competitors.

What events did the news people cover? There'll be more about that in the next issue of *The American Handgunner*. There were some things concerning this that you may not realize. I didn't. Meanwhile, if you have comments about things I mention in this column, write to me  at this magazine.

HANDGUN LEATHER

Continued from page 17

the Bianchi Gunleather Care Kit.

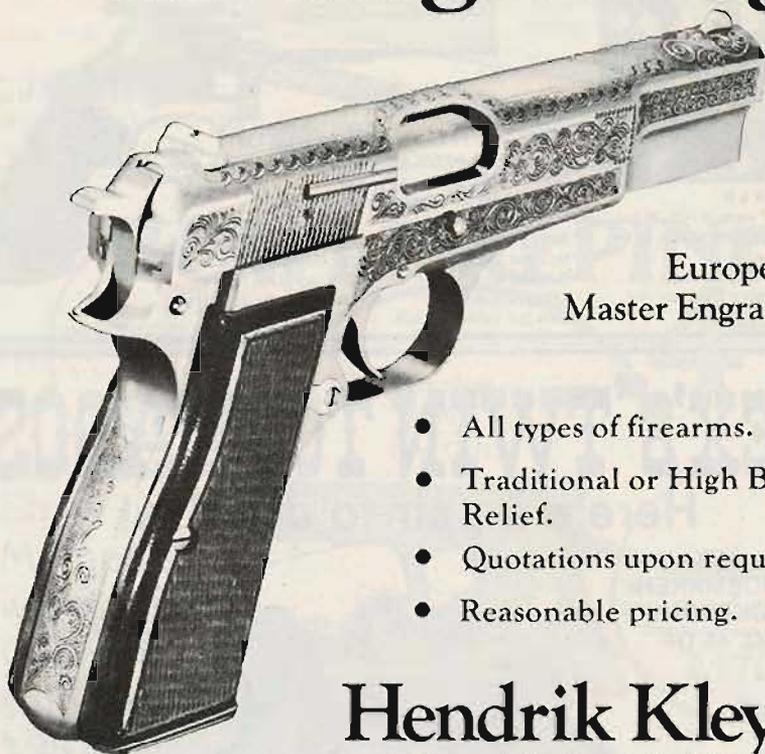
El Paso Saddlery is one of the few manufacturers that can supply holsters with full hand carving. Billy Wootres, formerly with the S.D. Myres Saddlery, has been hand carving leather for 45 years and does all of El Paso's hand carving. Billy is a great-nephew of George Scarborough, the Deputy U.S. Marshal who, in 1896, shot and killed old John Selman in a gunfight in El Paso. Billy's carving on my Duke holster is of the highest level of craftsmanship and, when teamed with a fully carved belt from Alfonso of Hollywood, it is a true showpiece. These two examples cover the evolution of the single-action holster from the Mexican Loop of the late 19th Century to the best of the Hollywood versions.

Living in St. Louis, Missouri, I was pleased to learn that El Paso Saddlery holsters are crafted from the finest full-grain cowhide, obtained from the Herman Oak Leather Company of St. Louis.

While these four holsters fulfill my Sheriff's Model holster needs from hideout to display, I intend to continue my search for leather for the piece. Why not a steel-lined fast draw rig for my snubby?

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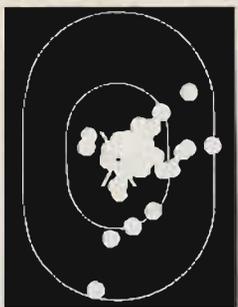


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SILUETAS

Continued from page 11

"Hmmm. Maybe I ought to try some of those in the 7mm-08 and 7X47mm pistols I'm testing," thought I.

It didn't take long to bag up 1000 of each and, a couple of weeks later, I was once again reloading military brass.

The 7mm-08 was first, and I took a little extra time to obtain some additional data for those of you who still approach military brass with some trepidation.

Screwing the 7mm-08 die into the press, I sized a quantity of LC-75 and LC-72 match, and R-P 7mm-08 brass for comparison tests. The .308 brass sized to 7mm-08 with no more effort than the fired R-P brass, and the crimped-in primers of the LC-75 cases were removed without extra effort or trouble. (The match brass is nice, as the primers are not crimped-in.) Crimps were removed with a drill, rather than with a reamer or a swage. I used a 1/4-inch bit, sharpened to a 60-degree point, chucked in a drill fastened in a vise. A brief touch on the spinning bit removed the crimp.

The resized .308 brass (call it 7mm-308) is shorter than the 7mm-08 and, to eliminate this variable, I trimmed them all to the same length. Weighing ten cases of each to determine uniformity and case capacity, I found the following average weights and spreads in weights: LC-75, 184.5 and 3.9 grains; LC-72 match, 184.9 and 3.6 grains; and R-P, 167.1 and 2.5 grains.

The military cases are heavier by 17.8 grains, and therefore do have less internal volume; as brass is about 8.5 times heavier than water, the difference is about two grains of water or enough volume that top loads should be reduced a grain or two. Top velocities can still be obtained, though few shoot top loads in a pistol.

The bullets have a nicked steel jacket, like many foreign bullets, and a solid lead core. Weighing ten FMJs and ten Sierra 140 SP's yielded the following average weights, and spreads in weights: salvaged 139-grain FMJ, 139.0 and 1.3 grains; and Sierra 140-grain SP, 140.1 and .7 grains.

The test pistol was a Remington XP-100 Silhouette that had been rechambered to 7mm-08 at IHMSA headquarters, P.O. Box 1609, Idaho Falls, ID 93401. For these tests, I installed the barrel action in one of the new foam stocks from H-S Precision, P.O. Box 512, Prescott, AZ 86302. This stock has an aluminum V-bedding block drilled and tapped for the XP action—one size fits all (and it's the last accessory stock you'll have to buy, because it can be moved from pistol to pistol). My custom 6X Leupold long-eye relief pistol scope, made from a 12X AO by W.A. Siebert, 22720 S.E. 56th Place, Issaquah, WA 98027, was fitted to eliminate aiming errors.

The accompanying table shows the test loads and the results. You'll note the pistol

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shoots well, especially for a skinny barrel shot 15 times without a break to cool down.

The salvaged bullets did and didn't shoot better than the Sierra products, and for the same load the R-P brass performed better than the military, as one's preconceived notions would indicate. But before "I told you so!" rises in your throat, let me point out that some salvage component loads beat some all-commercial component loads, that you couldn't find these differences without a 6X scope, and that 1/4-inch is not a real difference (i.e., not statistically significant) for this limited number of groups fired.

I rest my case.

I've had some letters from Handgunner readers that have reminded me of an oversight in my March-April, 1981, article on the custom rolling block pistol. My mistake, and I hope that it hasn't caused too many of you to experience a deep and unfulfilled longing. The pistol was built at GunSport Centers, Inc., which did a fine job. If you're interested in having a replica of my pistol built, or have some other custom project in mind, write Chuck Byers at GunSport, 15207 N. Cave Creek Road, Phoenix, AZ 85032, for the details.

And don't forget to write me at P.O. Box 22074, Phoenix, AZ 85028-0074, with any comments you may have on past and/or future columns.



PISTOLSMITHING

Continued from page 20

an intrinsically accurate pistol is use of soft alloy bullets or wrong diameter bullets with flat bases. On firing, the bullet squishes down to bore size, but excess lead is extruded to the rear as nearly imperceptible fins, large enough to upset the bullet's flight. Obviously, this enlarges groups and, the greater the range, the larger and more irregular the group will be. The solution is to use hard alloy bullets sized correctly for your barrel—the same diameter it slugs and mikes, or a half-thousandth larger.

Another, more insidious cause of enlarged groups is use of wheelweight alloy for bullets. Modern wheelweight alloy, unlike that used 15 years ago, is worthless for bullets because of the addition of metals that prevent obtaining uniform bullet size. You can check your batch of alloy by making a Cerrolow bullet in your mould and comparing it under a powerful magnifying glass with a bullet from your cast. Careful comparison may reveal rounded base edges and shoulders, and generally out-of-balance bullets that result from the alloy's uneven shrinkage. Less apparent may be lack of dynamic balance caused by settling of ingredients in the alloy.

Some top flight shooters have given up bullet casting in favor of factory loads because they have cast up several batches of bad alloy and were unable to diagnose the problem.



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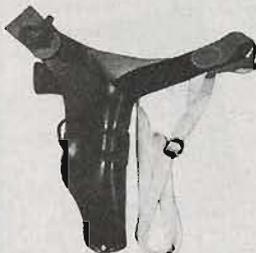
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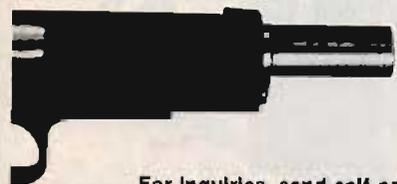
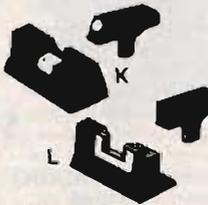
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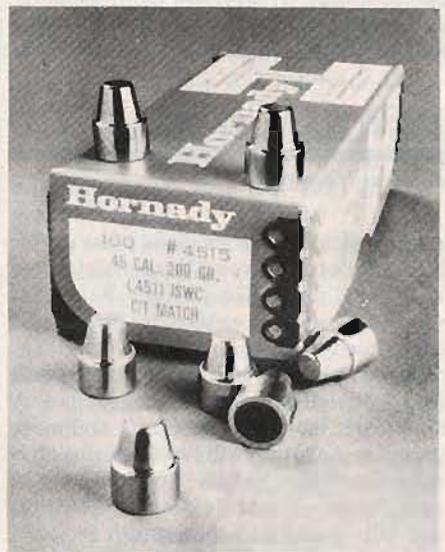
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There may be problems with bullet moulds that cause out-of-balance bullets and inaccuracy. The worst condition is lack of concentricity when the two mould halves are in place. The fix is a new mould and hiding the sledge hammer your bullet casting buddy uses to move the spruce plate around.

When choosing a factory bullet for extensive use, it pays to buy a box or two for tests before laying in a supply. If the bullet seats to a proper protrusion for certainty of feed, and still provides a favorable length inside the case without crowding water capacity of the available powder space, you can proceed to experiment with an accurate powder charge. Do not presume that a load accurate in one pistol will be as accurate in another. Barrel diameter, chamber dimensions and muzzle crown can vary between weapons, causing different groups.

If there is obviously an accuracy problem, use a logical sequence from magazine to target, investigating every step of the way. There has to be an answer, but you can't find an answer until you have isolated the problem.



New bullet is designed for combat and target

Hornady Manufacturing Company announces availability of a new .45 caliber pistol bullet designed for combat and target shooters. The .45 caliber 200-grain jacketed semi-wadcutter, combat/target match, is a jacketed version of the long-time favorite design used for formal target shooting, as well as IPSC competition and practical combat. In its jacketed configuration, the bullet delivers consistent performance at both combat and target velocities, offering a wide range of applications. For more details, contact Hornady Manufacturing Co., P.O. Box 1848, Dept. AH, Grand Island, NE 68802.

SPEAK OUT

This is to thank you and *The American Handgunner* staff, especially writer George E. Virgines who gave me a prompt, professional, straight-forth reply to my inquiry about his article in the July/August, '81, issue, "Sheriff's Model .44-40s." His letter was appreciated.

Donald B. Snyder
South Bend, Indiana

REDHAWK INFLATION

It wasn't too long ago that I know I read that when Ruger introduced the new Redhawk that the price of the revolver would be somewhere in the mid-\$300 price range. After going to several gun shops in my area, pricing this gun, I'm finding the lowest price so far is \$550, with a one-year wait, to \$675, right now, and even some people talking as much as \$800. How can anyone expect to have an interest in a superb product such as the Redhawk and wind up selling his eyeteeth to get one?

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INEFFECTIVE .38

In your recent article "Why Are We Still Using the .38?" (*The American Handgunner*; September/October, 1981) writer Evan Marshall stated that the .38 caliber round is totally ineffective for the police officer. As a recent victim of what can happen when a .38 does not do the job, I cannot agree more. I was assigned to the Federal Protective Service at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, when the last riots broke out in April, 1981. The riot started when two Cubans tried to kill each other with homemade *machetes*. One of our officers tried to stop the ruckus and was forced to shoot one of the Cubans. Not only did the .38 round fail to stop the Cuban, it went completely through him and traveled another 50-75 yards, until it came to rest in the wall of a barracks building. The Cuban did not even realize that he had been shot until he saw blood coming out of him. *And this was a solid hit in the high right chest!* When the Cuban saw the blood, he let out a scream and fell to the ground. It was his yelling that started the riot and subsequent actions that occurred that night. The round that hit him was a 158-grain round nose lead bullet, and for all time made me a believer in the anti-.38 stance. The worst of it is that my department is now even more committed to the "ricochet special" that we are forced to carry. And we are in buildings that are concrete and marble. You can imagine what confidence this gives us when we are forced to decide if we have

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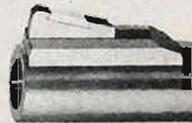


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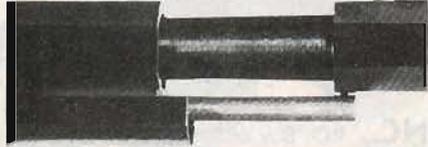
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to shoot! All I can add is that I hope more people in the command ranks start to realize what can happen when things like this keep happening.

Michael J. Kiernan
Officer, Federal Protective Service
Germantown, Maryland

LET CROOKS SHOOT 'EM

I just finished reading the feature "Guidelines for Police Officer's Use of His Sidearm" (*The American Handgunner*, September/October, 1981), and I'm very surprised. I thought that everyone had decided that police officers should stand there and let crooks shoot them. I'm glad that someone still has the guts to defend the police. I'm not a policeman or any kind of law enforcement officer. I'm a private citizen who is fed-up with everyone hollering for the criminal's rights. My God, what about the officer's rights? I look at the situation this way: We are responsible for putting the people in office who decide who the officers are going to be. The officers are trained to know when to use their weapons and when not to, so we should trust in that knowledge and let the officers do their duty, which is to protect themselves and us from criminals. I have never written to a magazine before, but I feel that we, as private citizens, must support our law officers. I think this was a superb article and I hope others will show their support. Please tell the author, Bradley J. Steiner, that there are still citizens who believe that law enforcement officers are the good guys and criminals are the bad guys. I think Steiner said everything perfectly. Thank you.

William H. Horn
Raleigh, Mississippi

BACK-UP AN ISSUE

In reference to your "Speak Out" column in the January/February, 1982, *Handgunner*, on Page 68, J. Harvey Wieler of Fairbanks, Alaska, writes, in part: "Surprise, surprise, not one, but two, articles in the November/December issue on my favorite controversial cartridge, the .38 Super." My question is this: What magazine was he reading? What year? I've read and re-read my November/December, 1981, issue several times and I'll be damned if I can find anything on the .38 Super. Do you publish a different magazine for Alaska?"

Carl J. Morgan
Florissant, Missouri
Apologies, Carl, the magazine goes in one form to the entire lower 48, Hawaii and Alaska, and the magazine you're looking for is the November/December issue, all right, but for the year 1980. Look 'em up and you'll find Dick Thomas' "Pistolsmithing" column and Dan Cotterman's "Handloading" column in the November/December, 1980, issue of The American Handgunner feature your favorite cartridge, the .38 Super.

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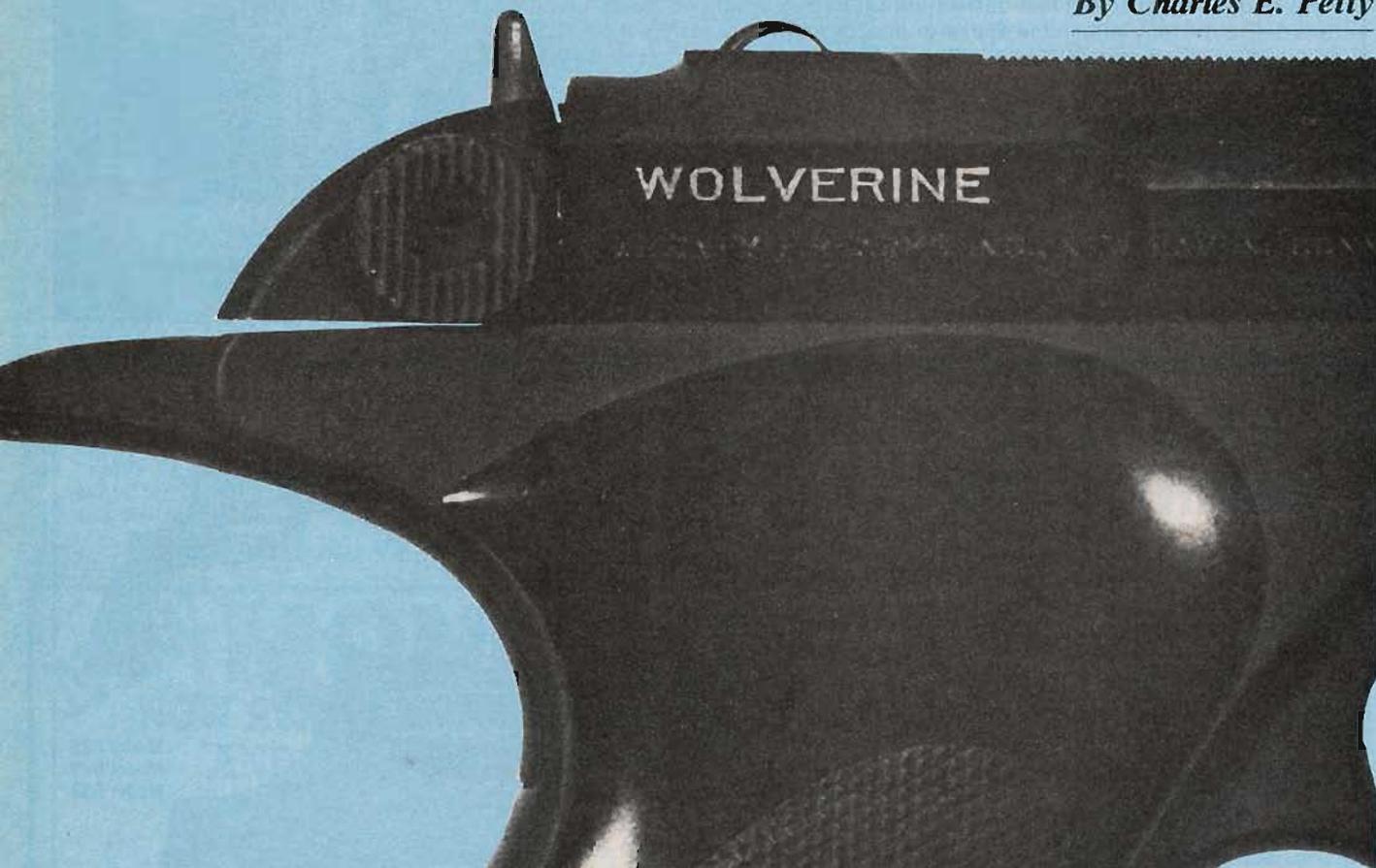
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This gun of the '50s was a design whose time had come just a bit too soon

REMEMBER THE WHITNEY?

By Charles E. Petty



It's a ray gun . . . No, it's a Wolverine?" That waggish comment from one of my teenaged buddies greeted our first look at the new Whitney Wolverine at the local hardware store that served as a gun shop. That was more than 25 years ago, and the Wolverine still looks like a ray gun to me. Still, I found the gun more than a little appealing, and remember thinking of how much grass I'd have to cut to own it at the 1956 price of \$39.50. I never did, and now that Whitneys are approaching \$200 I'm paying for my mistake.

If ever there were something before its time, it was, and maybe still is, the

Wolverine. And if ever there were an industry more tradition-bound than the firearms business, or firearms buyers, I've missed it. The unconventional appearance may have been ultimately responsible for the demise of the Wolverine, but there were other contributing factors.

I sought out the designer, Robert L. Hillberg, at his Connecticut home, and he graciously shared an afternoon with me. Hillberg is an energetic man who rarely sits. He travels constantly, representing various firearms manufacturers as an expert witness in court cases. It was charitable indeed for him to spend so much

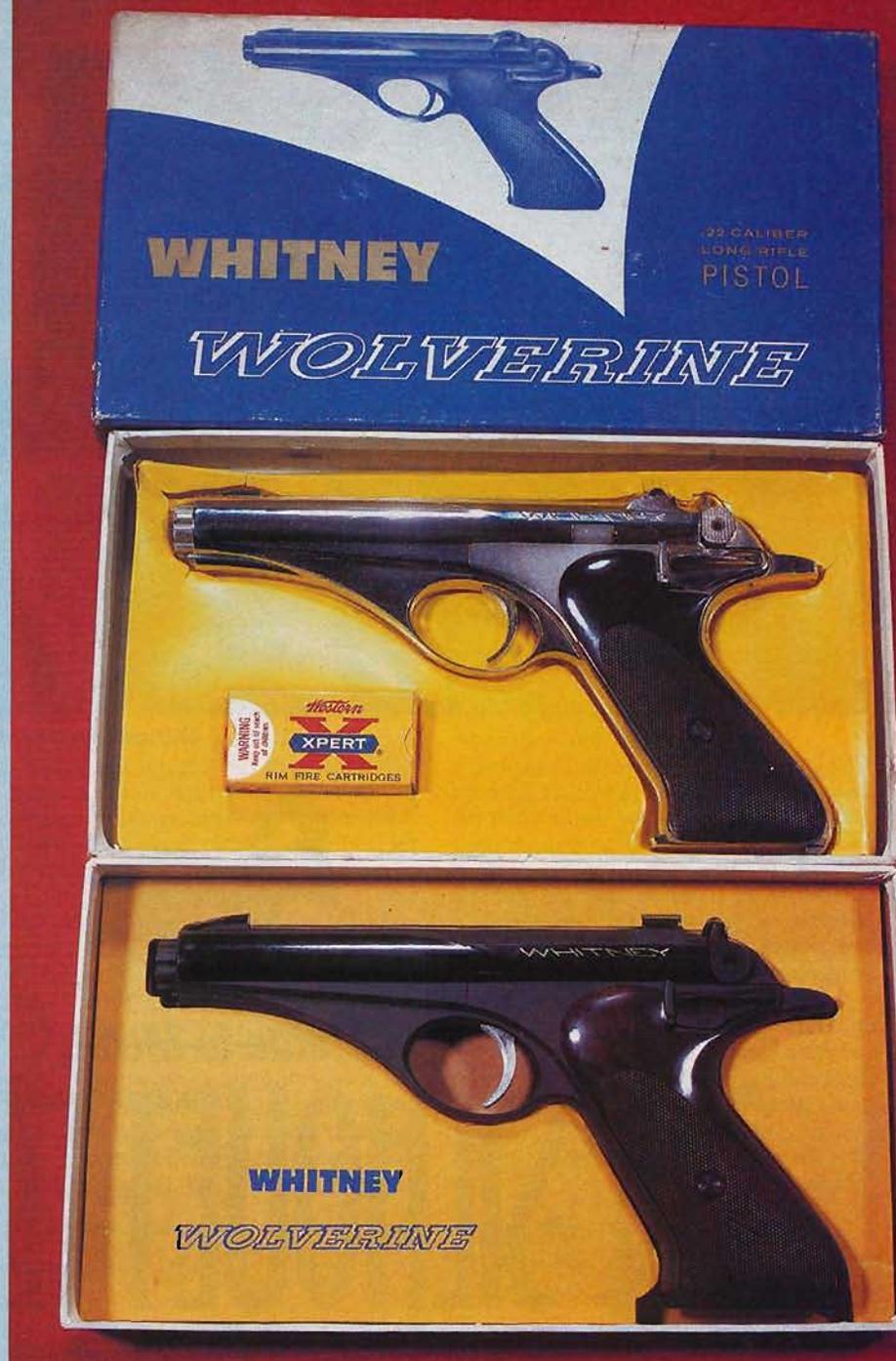
time answering questions from a collector trying to turn writer. I had been told that the Whitney was a painful subject for Hillberg, and I found that to be true as we relived the short life of the gun.

Hillberg's interest in guns began when he was a youngster, and was nurtured by an older friend, collector and shooter, Bill Schutte. In 1937, Hillberg designed a sub-machine gun chambered for the .38 Super cartridge and submitted it to Colt. The company didn't buy the gun, but hired the young designer. During World War II he worked for several aircraft companies, adapting armament for aviation use. While working at Republic Aviation, Hillberg designed a novel pistol he called the "Tri-Matic" which was a double-action design that could be easily converted from .22 to .32 to .380 simply by changing barrels, magazines and ejectors. The gun was not produced, but drawings of it bear a remarkable resemblance to the Wolverine, and show a flair for streamlining learned in aircraft design. Following the war, Hillberg went to work for the High Standard, Inc., as head of research and development. There he was mainly concerned with the company's work for Sears, Roebuck, but also participated in the design of High Standard's experimental military 9mm pistol called the T-3.

Hillberg left High Standard in 1953 and went to Bellmore Johnson Tool Company which did contract work for many firearms companies, and it was there that the Wolverine was born. The gun was designed along lines of the earlier "Tri-Matic," and the first model gun is so marked. The model gun is actually two halves of a frame held together by bolts, and is an odd looking gun indeed. This was done so that various internal parts could be tested without the expense of having castings made until the design was firmly established. The one-piece casting also allowed freedom for the external appearance to follow any line the designer wanted, and Hillberg wanted to break away from the conservative, static lines of the time.

When the model was completed, Hillberg again took his design to Colt, and again the major manufacturer declined. Hillberg and Howard Johnson of Bellmore-Johnson decided to go it alone. When it came time to decide on a name for the gun, they were very aware that the father of interchangeability, Eli Whitney, had been a neighbor. To further cement the association they attempted to purchase the site of the original Eli Whitney factory, but were unable to do so and were forced to settle for a nearby location. The choice of the Wolverine trade name was also a reflection of the man. Hillberg has three loves: guns, auto racing and football. His favorite team was the Michigan Wolverines.

It is no small feat to establish a new gun company, and it is most important to insure an adequate system of distribution. In



The Wolverine's 1956 price was \$39.50. Nowadays, the collector's tab is nearing \$200. The streamlined design and aluminum frame weren't readily accepted.

an effort to minimize these problems, they signed an exclusive worldwide distribution contract with J.L. Galef & Sons of New York. The association with Galef led to one source of current confusion about the Whitney. Hillberg explained that one of his demonstrative tricks to show reliable functioning was to "finger" the gun in such a manner that it sounded like a machinegun firing. When Galef saw this demonstration he remarked, "It's lightning fast," and wanted to use the trade name Lightning. The earliest Galef literature on the gun calls it the "Whitney Lightning Wolverine," but, when the gun reached the market, Hillberg prevailed and it was simply the Whitney Wolverine. Collectors

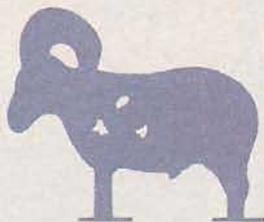
seeing the early literature have searched in vain for a Whitney Lightning.

Production began in 1955, using frames cast by Alcoa of Type 218 alloy, and carry the Alcoa name under the left grip. The original boxes also had a small adhesive sticker with the legend, "We chose Alcoa Aluminum." Serial numbers began at 100,000, and many collectors have wondered why they started so high. Bob Dearden who worked at Whitney supplied the answer. According to Dearden, serial numbers were supposed to start at 10,000, but the employees operating the numbering machine was impaired by drink and put in too many zeros. In addition a small num-

Continued on page 74



The adults may fire XP-100s while kids shoot .22 LR.



Mettle-to-Metal:

THE SILHOUETTE FAMILY

IHMSA fun includes dad, mom, kids, chickens, turkeys, pigs, rams and production handguns . . .

By Jim Costilow

Verline Carwile is one woman who isn't bashful about stating her reasons for entering metallic silhouette competition—and neither are several other women who've become participants and/or coaches during monthly shoots sponsored by the Lemon Grove Rod and Gun Club at its range near Alpine, California.

"I just got tired of my husband having all the fun," she says. "He got to spend all the money, and was having fun every weekend going to some shoot. So I just decided to get in on some of it."

Of course, there are other reasons for this club's popularity with the "gentle" sex, one is that there are now and have been

several women who serve on the club's board of directors, and another is that all members are geared toward family—rather than individual—entertainment. Whatever the reason, the Lemon Grove club has reservation-only space availability for IHMSA-sanctioned monthly shoots. Shooter couples often travel more than 50 miles to participate in a sport that welcomes men, women and children on an equal basis in competition.

What makes metallic silhouette competition different from other types of shooting sport? Why would shooters participate in silhouette events and not in NRA or other types of competition?

With these questions in mind, I went to seek the answers at one of the Lemon

Grove club's shoots—and I had a royal ball for the entire day.

As a handgun competitor for many years, I have always subscribed to the popular belief that handgunning—and almost all shooting for that matter—is a sport that is reserved, unfortunately, for males in a family. My attitude was that I would go shooting by myself—at least until my sons grew older. And, I had resigned myself to the impatience and irritation on the part of my beloved spouse when range times got longer and expenses got higher. I felt these would be little enough payment for a sport I so enjoyed. No longer. There now is a shooting sport the entire family can enjoy—together.

This sport is the up-and-coming Inter-

national Handgun Metallic Silhouette Competition, as defined and regulated by the International Handgun Metallic Silhouette Association, Inc. The sport was slow to start, plagued by stacks of individual rules imposed by sponsors. IHMSA now is bringing order out of chaos through establishment of firm rules for sanctioned clubs and matches.

One of the best IHMSA developments is the ruling on guns. Rulings that have prevented occasional shooters from entering ordinary competitions deal with firearms themselves. The initial expense, then additional expenses for bull barrels, shroud sights, metered triggers and the like soon exclude the non-dedicated shooter. If his wallet is sometimes flat, as it is with most, then equipment prices, plus the staggering cost of travel, accommodations and entry fees will finish him. IHMSA, however, offers two competition classes, one for the everything-goes unlimiteds, the other for production guns. The IHMSA definition of a "Production Gun" reads: "... a gun that is or was a catalog item on or before January 1, 1979, and was readily available

"I just got tired of my husband having all the fun."

to the general public. The gun must be complete at all times in form, finish and mechanical function as manufactured, and only parts which are manufacturers catalog items for the particular model may be used for repair or replacement. A trigger job may be performed on the gun and sight-black may be used for sight identification. No other internal or external change may be made on the handgun used in competition ..."

Further ease is in the rules section on optical devices: "... not allowed are scopes or any optical device, artificial rests or supports, slings, padded or unnecessarily heavy clothing, or any kind of wrist or arm supports or bracelets ..." This means that all one need do is bear the initial expense of the gun and ammunition—and practice. It doesn't cost an arm and a leg for competition in IHMSA's Production Class. With the savings, the wife and kids can become participant shooters, too.

The competition is set up with a variety of classes and styles so that novices will not be outclassed. The master will find he's shooting against other masters, and novices against fellow beginners. Competition is fair and equal for everyone.

Not left out are scoring and target. Scores are tabulated by hit or miss. The shooter either hits the target and knocks it down, or he misses. It's just that simple. Targets range from chickens at 50 meters, pigs at 100, turkeys at 150 and rams at 200. The targets are cut from steel plate, each with the different metal silhouette of a particular animal. A solid hit on the silhouette target will take the targets down, and a



At this silhouette range, family participation is a way of shooting sport life.

glancing hit will turn them. The total possible number of hits is 40. Trophies are awarded in each class of more than five shooters. There isn't the expense, skills, dedication, determination or hassel required of the paper target competitor. It's fun for the entire family.

Considering the entire family, one wouldn't expect children to fire .44 Magnums. So, IHMSA has developed rules and target sizes for .22 Long Rifle, as well as for the big-bore handguns. And this is where a shooter's mettle is tested.

At the Lemon Grove shoot, I was thoroughly surprised by a tiny lady with a .357 Magnum, and a 12-year-old boy stunned me with both handgun and rifle in the .22 LR area. I'm good, but I really was embarrassed by the lad. It was just an off day, I

guess. All shooters have days like this—when they look for excuses.

Scores improve with practice, as will shooting skills, but in talking with some of the older hands you'll find that silhouette shooting never gets downright easy. Sometimes there are days when the targets just will not fall. And there are other when a bounce off the dirt in front of the steel will take the target down. The best part is that the shooter never knows. So, it's always a challenge, never a snap.

Silhouette shooting in the production class is inexpensive, fair, and usually requires little travel for participation in local club events—what with silhouette clubs springing up all over the country. Anyone with a handgun can shoot silhouette. No

Continued on page 65

Here two women join in the fun, one shooting, the other coaching.



THE ELEMENTAL HANDGUN:



“Simple is best” for the practical shooter . . .

BASIC PISTOL

By Rick Miller

In the beginning, the pioneers of what is now called freestyle practical pistol shooting thought of it as a test of the equipment and skills necessary for survival in a lethal defensive confrontation. As a consequence, the majority of early matches placed the emphasis where it belonged: ranges were short, 5 to 15 yards; multiple targets were used; and each and every match most certainly did not require reloading, and strong- and weak-hand shooting. Classic matches such as the Mexican defense Course, Flying M, Ambidextrous Defense, and Concealed Carry Course fairly reflected the requirements of defensive shooting. In fact, several were developed from actual shooting scenarios. Many current matches, however, do not make any attempt at this realism.

As a result of this drift away from realistic requirements over the past few years, there now is a decided trend toward more sophisticated and costly equipment to meet these artificial challenges. Pistols that may cost upward to \$1,500 to \$2,000 to build, and that the happy owner would never dream of carrying on the street, now

appear in practical pistol matches for several reasons. First, this sidearm with all the “bells and whistles” is so costly that the owner would never take the chance at loss or damage that street carry might well entail. Second, in most cases the pistol is not a practical piece. A 6-inch long slide, hook trigger guard, exaggerated beavertail grip safety, ambidextrous extended slidestop, razor sharp coarse checkering, and 6-inch vented barrels do not enhance a sidearm with which one may be forced to defend his life. These pistols are game-winning devices used by people who are interested only in excelling at artificial tests.

I am not blaming competitors for this trend. Practical pistol shooters have developed these devices to meet challenges presented to them. It seems logical that the basic problem lies with poor match design, lack of knowledge of what practical shooting is supposed to be, and what it is supposed to accomplish. I think, however, that sincere practical shooters might ask whether their equipment and techniques truly reflect the essence of defensive use of sidearms. Moreover, match designers should ask themselves whether the tests they devise have any relationship with

reality—whether the skills and equipment required to solve the problem relate to the real world. This would go a long way toward solving the problem practical pistol shooters now face.

With that off my chest, I will go on to the true subject of this article, the basic, Spartan, unquestionably practical sidearm. Because the automatic pistol is the more efficient arm, and because only a few people opt for the wheelgun in freestyle competition, opinions and comments in this article will be confined to the selfloader. The theme to be stressed is: “Simple is best.” However, this applies equally to revolvers.

Just what elements go into the whole that comprises a no-nonsense defensive handgun?

Foremost on the list of desirable “must” qualities for a defensive sidearm is reliability. If it won’t function every time, without fail, nothing else matters. It must work under all circumstances. No equipment alibis are allowed in a match or on the street.

Second to reliability is *power*. The sidearm must strike an adequate blow. If it won’t halt a determined attacker with one reasonably well-placed hit, it may not save

your life. This point cannot be over-emphasized. Pistols that take an inadequate cartridge may indeed be easier to shoot, but there is a good chance that they won't get the job done.

Third, the design of the pistol, coupled with the cartridge it takes, must be such that the shooter can control the weapon—given a reasonable amount of practice. Recently, this point has been belabored, but the blunt truth is that the old Colt .45 Auto still strikes a better balance between power and controllability than any other sidearm. For those who doubt, this point is easily proven in side-by-side comparison.

Durability, compactness, concealability and ease in reloading are essential qualities, though somewhat less important. Concealability is not that big a hassle. As illustration, I stand 5 feet, 8 inches, tall and weigh about 150 pounds. Yet, I can conceal a full-sized .45 Auto under a light sportshirt and, if I don't make any foolish moves, it's no sweat. Anyone else can, too, with proper holstering. Speed reloading is of secondary importance, as gunfights occur at close range, and usually the outcome is decided before each combatant has fired three shots! Practical pistol shooters do way too much reloading in today's matches. This hits the poor revolver shooter—who may be very accurate with his weapon—right between the eyes.

For several reasons, accuracy falls at the bottom of the list. In defensive shooting, the ranges are very short and the target, in most cases, is quite generous in size. Almost any handgun is sufficiently accurate to solve any problem a practical shooter might face, as long as the shooter does his part. Typical gunfight ranges are measured in feet not yards, and any pistol that will print into 6 inches at 25 yards will fill the bill. Most standard quality handguns will print into 4 to 6 inches or less at 50 yards. So much the better. If you are not a pistol shooting champ of one sort or another, don't worry about your pistol's accuracy. With rare exceptions, your pistol will shoot more accurately than you may realize.

A costly accurizing job is called for only when the pistol isn't up to snuff, or if the shooter is a championship caliber performer. Unless this is the case don't worry about it. A well-tuned pistol can do wonderful things at 50 yards and beyond, but few people can take advantage of that potential. Furthermore, all accurized pistols are a bit touchy when it comes to damaged magazines, poor reloads, and just plain dirt, grit and crud.

Beyond reliability, power, controllability and reasonable accuracy, practical pistol shooters should be concerned with good combat sights and trigger release. These last two factors will allow any shooter to take advantage of all the former.

Factory fixed sights on most auto pistols are too small and completely inadequate for their intended purpose. High visibility fixed combat sights, such as those made by Hoag, King or Micro, serve the purpose



The Browning P-35 has four different barrels for different match applications, each fitted to the pistol for best accuracy. Bo-Mar rib adds bulk and weight.

nicely. They are rugged, economical and easy to install, and allow the pistol to be used quickly and accurately. They are difficult to zero correctly when the pistol doesn't look where it shoots, and this is their only drawback. An easy expedient, until factory sights can be replaced with something more effective, is to simply file the factory rear sight notch so that it is a little wider and deeper than original.

Adjustable sights are fine, but even the rugged ones, such as Bo-Mar and Micro, will not last indefinitely. Also, they are much more expensive to install. On the plus side, they are accurately and easily adjustable for any given load. The shooter will just have to make his own choice.

Along with installation of good sights, trigger work is probably the most important custom touch required on any serious handgun. Without a crisp, clean reasonably light trigger release, it is difficult to utilize any accuracy the piece might possess. Trigger release on an auto pistol should be between 3½ and 4½ pounds, and it should be adjusted by someone who

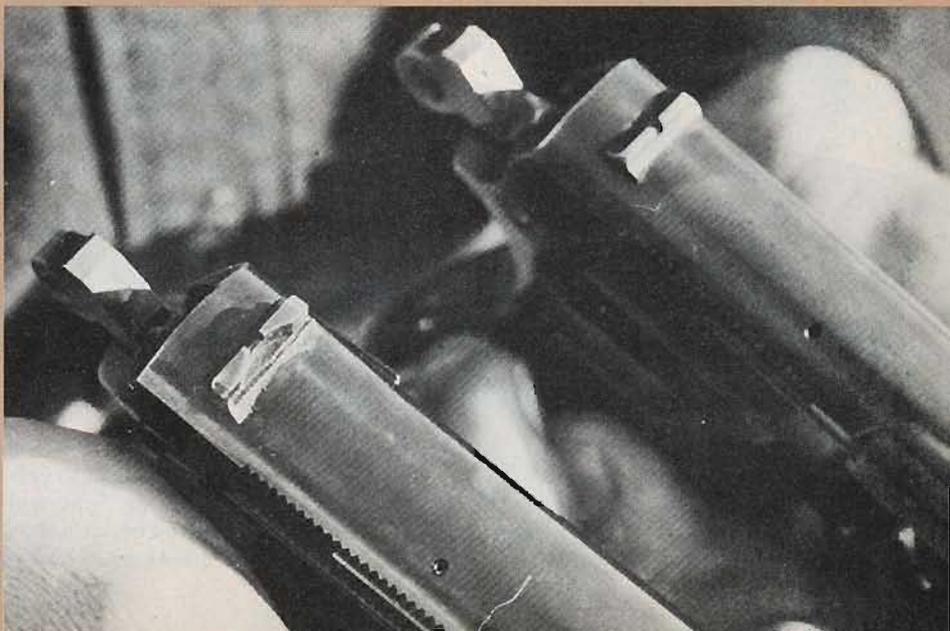
knows how.

Some other touches that are beneficial—but not absolutely necessary—are beveled magazine wells, speed safeties, throat jobs, trigger stops, fine checkering (not coarse), and rust-resistant finishes. These all serve useful purposes on the competition pistol, as well as on the defensive piece.

Other modifications are necessary only when a functioning problem crops up—a loose firing pin retainer, or troublesome slide stop, for example. Most of the other stuff is gingerbread. If you want it and can afford it, that's fine. Every shooter likes to dress-up pistols a bit. Just don't think that showboat customizing will win matches. You must do that yourself!

When setting-up a practical pistol for personal use, remember: "Simple is better." Utilize only modifications that are truly necessary—and that you can readily afford. Your sidearm will be the better tool for its simplicity. You can spend all that money you saved on ammo and lots of time in practice, where it will do the most good!

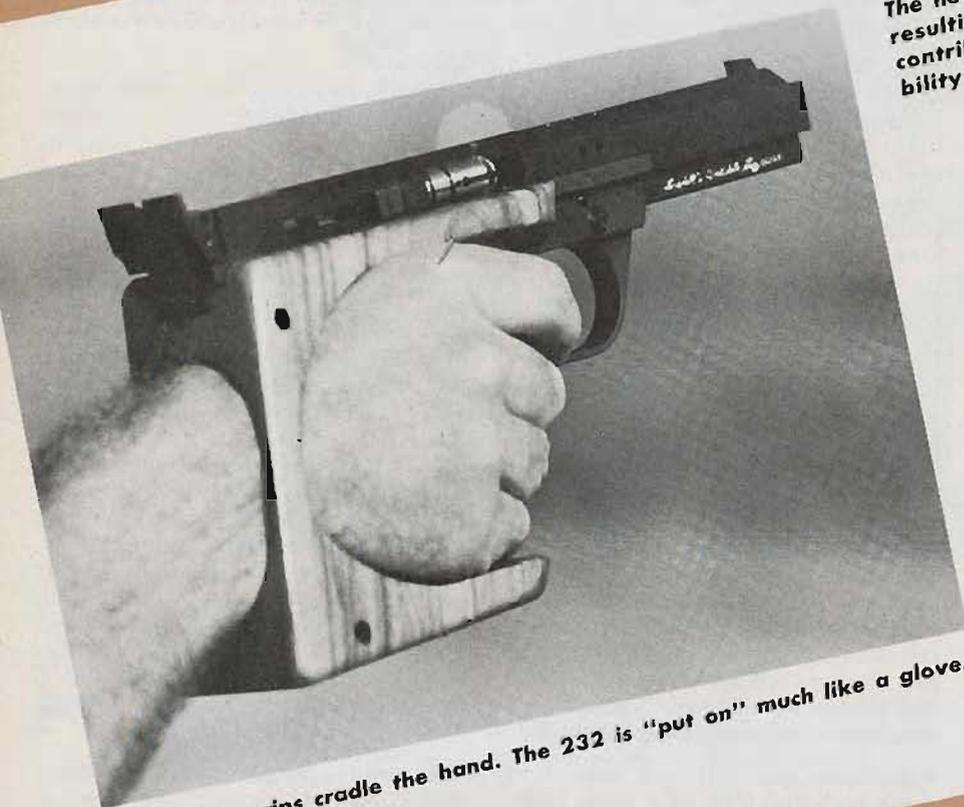
P-35, rear, has a factory rear sight. A like model, foreground, has Safari-Arms high-visibility sight with high configuration, and deeper, wider notch.



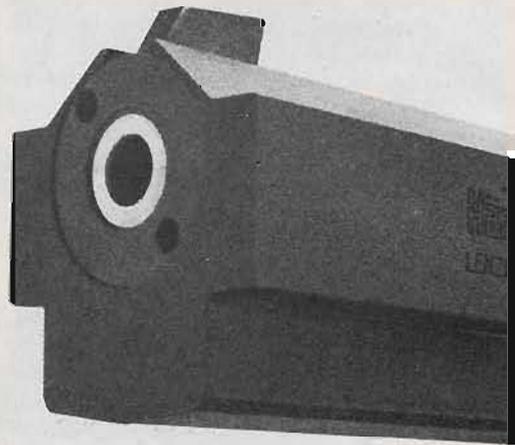
The Gun that Wins the

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The latest Hammerli Rapid Fire pistol makes the world's best even better

By James D. Mason

Among the pleasures of many specialized shooting sports are the equally specialized firearms used in competition. The International Rapid Fire event requires handguns with unique features for the demanding 25-meter course of fire. Among leading suppliers of these specialty handguns is Hammerli of Lenzburg, Switzerland.

Currently, Hammerli guns are imported by Mandall Shooting Supplies, Inc., 7150 E. Fourth Street, Scottsdale, AZ 85252. Hammerli's now discontinued Model 230

was one of the first current generation rapid-fire handguns. That gun incorporated the critical weight dimensions and self-loading reliability necessary for this particular sport. The earlier 230 model had some unpopular features, however, such as a baffled gas diffuser that required frequent cleaning.

Outwardly, the new Hammerli Model 232 appears no different from its 230 predecessor. But the number of important changes add up to improved performance. These changes were based on critiques

given over the years by top-seeded rapid-fire shooters.

In the 232, overall length was shortened 3cm by bobbing the muzzle and barrel. The forward barrel shroud, which formerly contained the gas baffle, has been replaced with a solid steel unit. The frame is now die cast from alloy to compensate for increased overall weight. The result is a gun with greater muzzle weight, which is better balanced and stable during recoil. The shorter sighting radius and muzzle weight aid in acquisition of the first target



A Hammerli becomes an extension of the shooter's arm.



Above, International Rapid Fire event is fired at 25 meters. Right, 232 breaks down by rotating disassembly switch on left hand front frame. At far right, Morini grip is tailored to shooter's hand.



of a 5-shot firing string.

The gas diffusion system is replaced on the 232 by easy-to-clean 60-degree gas ports drilled through the top of the barrel, just ahead of the chamber area. These ports (1/8-inch diameter) are drilled three on each side of the bore, about 3/8-inch apart. Hard propellant gases escape during firing to reduce the ballistic impulse and to stabilize the muzzle for rapid recovery, especially in the third 4-second phase of the rapid fire shooting event. It was noted that none of the ports were threaded to allow adjustment of the venting system for use with milder ammunition. The specific impulse range necessary to operate the low-mass breach bolt is narrow and critical; optional plugging for at least the two rear gas vents would be desirable to regular gas impulse and assure reliable operation with light loads.

The grip angle has been reduced, making the handle straighter than on the previous model. This will appeal to American

shooters who are accustomed to the 105-degree handle of the Colt .45 ACP. This new handle angle seems to assure a more natural wrist set that aids in pointing the gun, especially on the first target of the 4-second phase.

Two types of grips for the 232 are available from the factory, one is a standard slab set with thumb and adjustable side rests. The other is an orthopedic Morini cage style grip. The test gun had the Morini set, which is supplied in small, medium or large size. The medium fits my hand nearly perfectly, and requires only a bit of carving out at the bottom where the wrist contacts the grip opening. Morini grips are like a cradle for the hand, providing a wooden section that supports the back of the hand, just ahead of the wrist. The hand must be cupped to slip into this cage arrangement. The gun is "put on," much like a glove. This grip is a totally different experience for handgunners who have not experienced a great deal of international

shooting. The Morini contours fit every anatomical curve of the hand, and make the gun feel like an extension of the arm.

The Model 232 retains nearly all of the quality features of the 230. The gun is especially stable during shot release. When dry firing, no perceptible sight movement was attributable to triggering or hammer drop. Lock time is very short, contributing to the gun patterning reliably to the sight picture at the time of let-off, which is highly important in the rapid fire event; the Hammerli "shoots where it looks."

Trigger design is fully adjustable, so a

steop. Several brands of ammunition could not be made to feed in this particular gun. No "new" Eley ammunition was available for testing (this is the stuff with nickel cases and dry lubricant). RWS R-25 ammunition may feed well, but was not available for testing. All bullets that did feed into the chamber showed signs of bullet shaving from chamber throat contact and some caught the 3 o'clock edge of the chamber on the first round only. Because this 232 test gun was a "loaner," I was chary about doing the ramp/throat job on a \$1500 handgun.

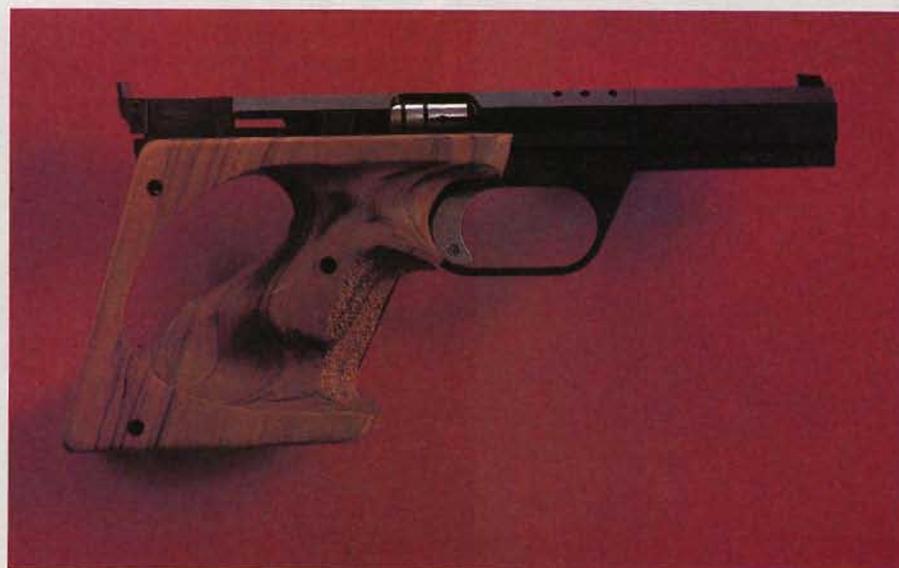
gas portholes and seat setscrews in them for this purpose.

The Hammerli sights are a joy. The front sight blade is 1/8-inch wide and press fitted into a longitudinal dovetail. The front barrel bushing secures the sight by covering the front of the dovetail. The issue blade is undercut, but other blades can be made to fit individual shooter preferences. The rear sight is mounted on an adapter that is pinned to the alloy frame. The adapter block houses a resilient buffer pad, designed to damp impact of the breech bolt as it recoils against the frame. The rear sight aperture is shallow cut to facilitate fast sight alignment and target acquisition. The rear aperture piece is slant mounted to reduce glare and presents a wide, continuous surface to the eye; there are no distracting shapes or corners.

The 232 is supplied with a tool kit that includes screw-drivers and Allen wrenches to fit all the fasteners in the gun. A disc-type spanner fits the front barrel bushing. Chamber and bore brushes and a threaded cleaning jag are included, along with a two-sectioned cleaning rod. The round spanner has a milling cut on the side that is used to gauge the opening of magazine feed lips. Lips can become bent or worn and, if they are too wide or narrow, it affects reliable feeding.

The 232 breaks down easily by rotating the disassembly switch located on the left-hand front of the frame. Moving the latch to the rear releases the receiver to slide forward off of its retaining pin. The hammer should be let down or else it will intercept a flange in the rear of the receiver, making disassembly impossible. The breech bolt is removed easily from the rear of the receiver, allowing barrel cleaning from the chamber end. Spraying the receiver openings with Breakfree or similar lubricating solvent removes powder residues which will cause unreliable operation, if left in the gun. Maintenance of the 232 is quick and easy.

The 232 series is a handgun for the International Rapid Fire, a fascinating, challenging shooting sport. The gun has no other practical applications. Its specialized design and configuration represents state-of-the-art gunmaking, incorporating the best current technology regarding rapid fire courses of fire. The design and craftsmanship put into this pistol merge with practical, economical engineering and production skill. The balance of theory and practice has produced a gun of classic quality. This handgun should take its place at the top of the best of the International Rapid Fire pistols. 



shooter can change any characteristic of the pull to suit a particular style. Three different trigger lengths are available to provide the most comfortable reach for the individual. The trigger system is fully adjustable for take-up slack, sear/hammer engagement, pull weight, and override stops. The test gun was adjusted for a crisp, light pull of a little under 2 ounces, requiring only minimum pressure sensitivity to make a release as crisp as the breaking of a small glass rod. Short hammer arc and a fast-rate mainspring make for short lock time.

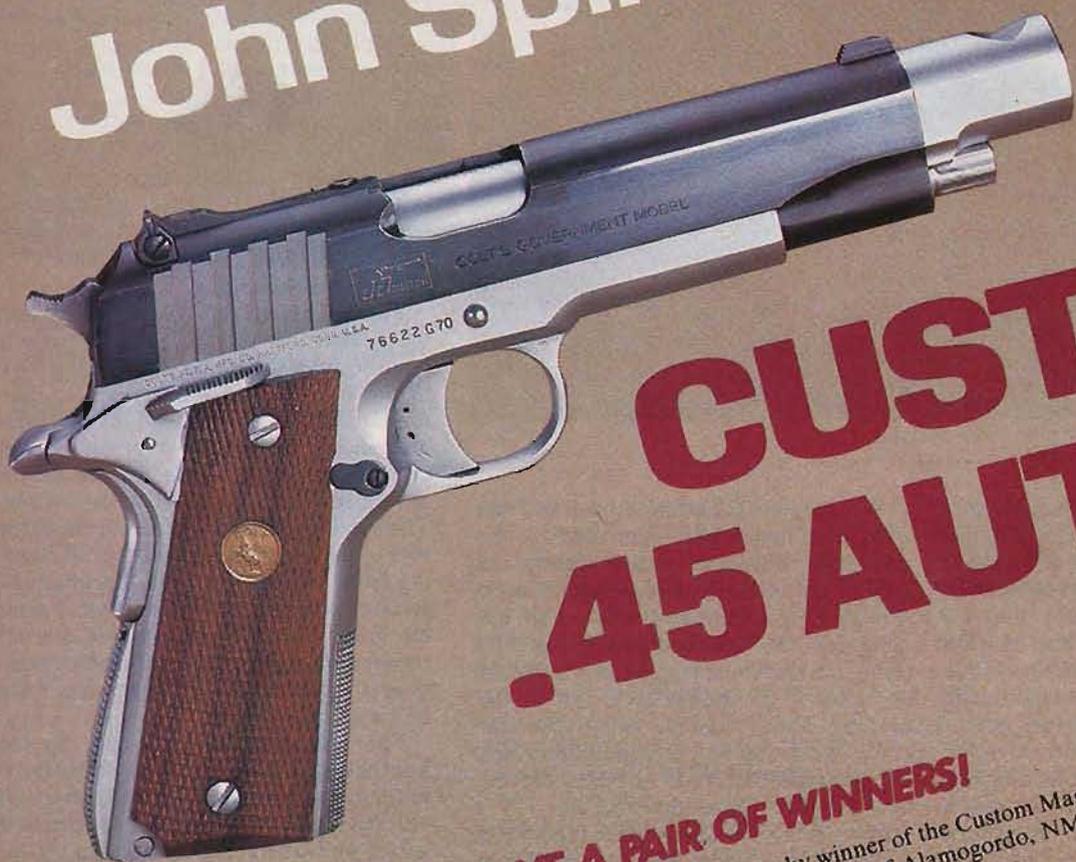
On the range, the gun fired with great stability. Tracking and shot-to-shot recovery were a "piece of cake." However, like most of the other guns of this type, it needs a ramp/throat job to assure reliable feeding. Polishing the ramp would help, but opening the rear end of the chamber throat will bridge the "steop" between the ramp and the barrel face. Some older Eley .22 shorts jammed consistently into this

Winchester T-22 Shorts worked the most consistently and were used for the test series. Bullets did shave slightly, but would feed. Accuracy surely was not up to the capacity of the gun because of this condition. An International Rapid Fire pistol must machine rest inside of 2-inches or better at 25 meters or is not in the running. Many shooters will try several kinds of ammunition to determine which the gun likes best. R-25 and Eley are the most popular competition rounds.

Many rapid-fire shooters like to use CCI .22 shorts for practice. This ammo delivers highly acceptable accuracy at a considerable saving over the foreign competition fodder. The CCI showed noticeably less "poop," though, and did not eject positively in the Hammerli, occasionally causing stovepipes. Again, to be able to plus a pair of the gas ports would increase impulse to assure reliable functioning with these lighter loads. The majority of competition gunners will thread the two rear



John Spilborghs



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WE HAVE A PAIR OF WINNERS!
Andy Burns of Houston, TX, is the lucky winner of the Custom Mag-Na-Port Ruger Speed Six .357, shown in the May/June issue. Glen Redman of Alamogordo, NM, is the lucky winner of the H-S Precision Custom XP-100, featured in the July/August issue.



TO ENTER CONTEST: Use a postcard, follow sample; include name, address, HOM-M/A, local dealer name and address. Mail before April 1, 1982. Send to AMERICAN HANDGUNNER, Box 16025, San Diego, CA 92116.

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<small>Contest void where taxed or prohibited by law. No purchase necessary. Winner must comply with all federal and local laws. Employees and agents of Publisher's Development Corp. not eligible.</small>		

John Spilborghs of Santa Barbara, California, is a master pistolsmith. His many innovations, including a 6-inch version of the venerable Colt Auto, appeared in the July/August, '81, issue of *American Handgunner*. This issue's Giveaway pistol is a highly tuned Colt Mk. IV Government Model, with standard 5-inch barrel, shortened slide. Spilborghs variation of the Williams recoil compensator modified to

serve as the barrel bushing, extended recoil spring guide, and Spilborghs indexing recoil cap. An S&W adjustable rear sight is milled into the slide for protection and strength, and modified at the front to engage a recess at the top of the barrel, over the chamber. This projection serves as a barrel lock device, guaranteeing constant barrel return to position and enhanced accuracy. Front and rear grip straps are hand

checked for positive grip, the magazine well edges are beveled to ease magazine insertion, and the ejection port is widened for fast exit of spent brass. The hammer is bobbed to prevent clothes hang-up. This is a fine example of custom pistolsmithing, a prize well worth winning. Shooters interested in John's work may write him at 1110 E. De La Guerra, Santa Barbara, CA 93103. And, good luck!



The Model 58 S & W reworked to .45 Colt with Farrant grips.

In the world of freestyle practical shooting the autoloading pistol reigns supreme, with the vast majority leaning in favor of the modified Colt 1911 .45 ACP. There is, however, a small but dedicated group of pistoleros who tenaciously stand by the time honored revolver. In this article we'll discuss what it takes in terms of equipment to be competitive today with a wheelgun in the sport of combat pistol shooting.

Over the years experience has shown that a well handled revolver CAN be competitive with a well handled autoloader. It should be understood that this requires a very high level of skill on the part of the shooter. On the average, I'd say that the top wheelgunners must work about twenty-five percent harder in practice to turn in a winning performance in stiff competition than does the auto-pistol man.

In June of 1977, at the first International Practical Shooting Confederation U.S. National Championships near Golden, Colorado, several revolver shooters distinguished themselves in the competition. Don Jandro of Arvada, Colorado, fired a Smith & Wesson Model 19 in .357 Magnum to place eleventh, and John Lazzaro of Keene, New Hamp-

WHEELGUNS ON THE PRACTICAL CIRCUIT

By Rick Miller



shire, used a 1917 S&W in .45 Colt chambering to finish fourteenth. Both men posted scores just a notch below the winning totals tallied by users of the .45 Colt Auto. Similarly, in April of 1978 H. W. Umbrger of Memphis, Tennessee, used a Model 19 modified by himself to take eighth place in the IPSC Midwest Championship at Berryville, Arkansas.

Despite the acknowledged advantages that the autoloader possesses, a good revolver, well handled, can be a perfectly satisfactory defensive tool. Sometimes we tend to lose sight of the fact that in the upper levels of match shooting, competitive skill and pressure is apt to be rather ferocious, to say the least. Any "A" Class or upper "B" Class wheelgun competitor (or auto-pistol man for that matter) should be technically capable of handling most street situations without trouble.

Most marksmanship problems in competition tend to be more difficult than the average "live" situation. Any confronta-

Left: wheelguns for practical shooting. From Top: S & W Model 66 .357 Magnum, S & W Model 19 .357 blue, Model 58 S & W chambered for the .45 long Colt.



The Fitz grips on this Chief's Special provide much greater control. The old Bianchi #3 holster is excellent for undercover.

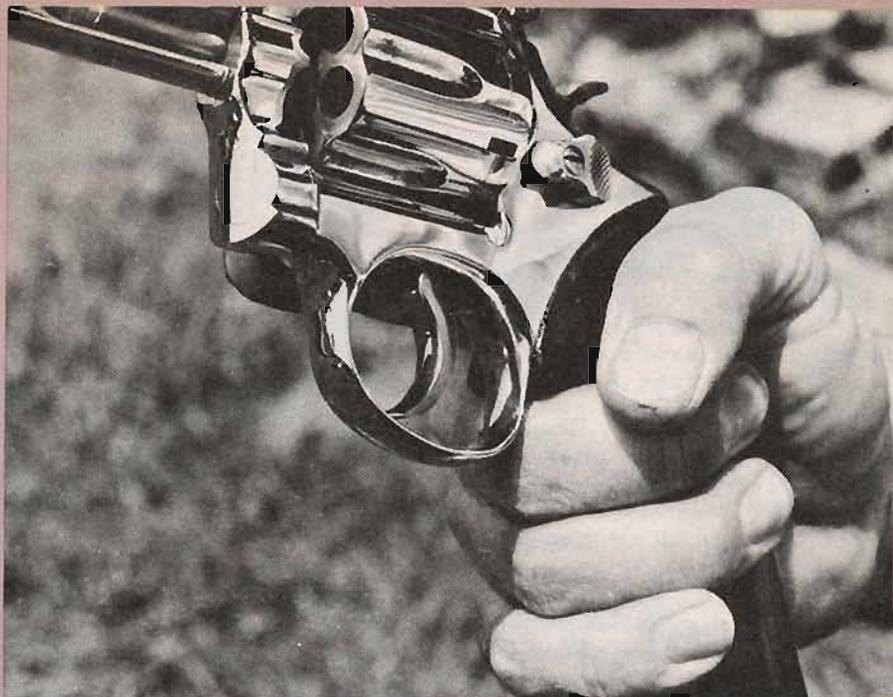
tion in which you are called upon to shoot in defense of your life is apt to be pretty tense, but the actual shooting requirements usually are quite simple for the trained and experienced handgunner. In pistol shooting, as in most other worthwhile endeavors, the man is more important than the instrument. Skill plus a steady hand will be the deciding factors in competitive or defensive shooting, regardless of whether you favor auto-pistol or revolver.

Although the autos are more popular . . . don't underestimate the value of a good revolver

With the foregoing thoughts in mind, let us now take a closer look at the equipment employed by the freestyle practical revolver aficionado.

While most auto-pistol users favor the Colt 1911 in various guises, wheelgun shooters lean toward the Smith & Wesson revolvers by a wide margin. The S&W design is favored in large measure because of the better "feel" of the actions, and their potential for custom tuning. The most popular individual weapon is the S&W Model 19 .357 Magnum. Generally speaking, the Model 19 is fa-

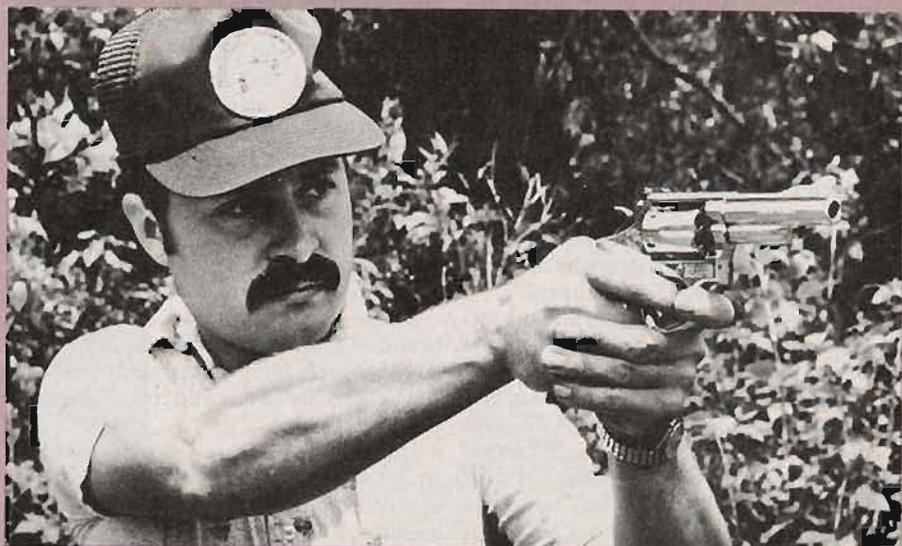
Continued on page 68



Many experienced double-action shooters prefer a smooth, narrow trigger for better feel and control, as on this S & W Model 19.



The S & W .41 magnum recoils about the same as the .44 magnum and bullet selection now is good. 210 grainers work well on rams.



Bob Woodford, a veteran competitor from the Fort Harmer Combat Pistol League of Marietta, Ohio, demonstrates the Weaver stance.



Self-Defense
Home Brew:

JUNKYARD

Some really bad news
for night intruders that won't
smoke on through the wall
to the kids' room...

By Joe Zambone

There are several reasons why a .44 Magnum revolver isn't as effective in a home self-defense role as you'd like to think. If you're "entertaining" an intruder at night, when it's pitch black inside the house and out, your chances of scoring a hit are not good enough to stake your life on. Then, assuming you get in a lucky gut shot, what's to say you'll anchor the intruder? He may very well be doped up, and a large slug passing through him may not even be felt until after he's blown you into the woodwork. I lost several buddies in Vietnam who died after emptying full magazines of .45 ACPs into whacked-out Vietcong soldiers, so it *can* happen.

The most important reason, and the initial basis for this article, is simply the fact that the .44 Magnum, shooting factory fodder, is too powerful to use unless you live in a home or apartment with steel walls. The energy of a 240-grain .44 slug is legendary. Everybody knows it'll drill holes through 6-inch timbers and have enough punch left to take out a herd of Boy Scouts. This begets a question you might think on: What happens when you

miss the night intruder and slam a round through the wall into the kids' room? Protecting life and property while killing off the family is the best reason I know of to refrain from using .44 Magnums for home defense.

Until, however, I spent some 80 hours of research and came up with a bunch of the deadliest loads ever devised which *won't* blow holes in your walls. Some 600 test loadings went into the following data. I'm betting *my* life on 'em. I trust you can too.

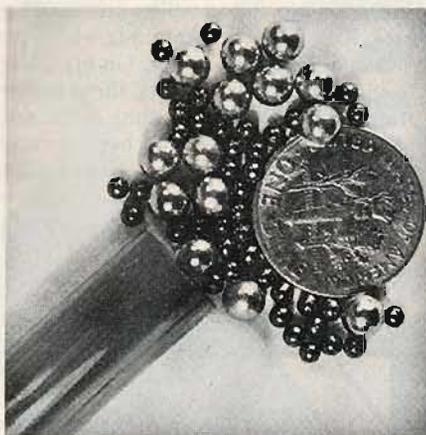
These loads are based on the Speer brand of empty shot capsules, available anywhere reloading components are sold. They come 50 to a box and cost slightly under \$5 per box.

Instead of shooting a bullet at an intruder, the shot capsule loader has a choice of several pellet loads and three "flechette" loadings. Flechettes are nothing more than tiny dart-like pieces of wire that can do incredible damage to a fleshy target, but

which expend their energy against a piece of wallboard or plywood without tearing out huge chunks. Both shot and flechette loads spread out nicely, giving you a much better chance to disable or kill an armed intruder than if you use bullets in the .44 Magnum revolver.

The shot capsules, cylindrical blue plastic with white end caps, do not rifle in the barrel of a revolver. For this reason, there is no leading problem. And you shouldn't worry about scratching the bore with the steel-wire flechettes I'll offer here. Once out of the muzzle the plastic capsules disintegrate, allowing the shot or flechette loads to continue on to the target. My tests show that the end cap usually remains intact, and hits the target too, which is sort of an added bonus.

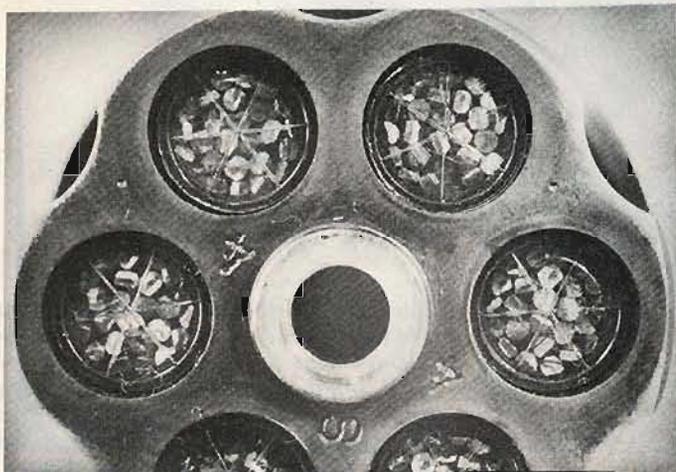
There are no big tricks involved with loading these shot or flechette capsules, but a bit of experimentation might improve your patterns. All my loads were shot in an Interarms Virginian Dragoon stainless steel .44 Magnum, with an 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch barrel, but if your home weapon has a shorter barrel or is somehow different, try



tops trimmed as much as possible, which allows for either more shot content or longer flechette rods in the capsule. I used an X-Acto knife to do this. Make sure you trim evenly and don't take a finger off in the process. There is no worry about an end cap coming off, because the capsule is seated down tightly against the charge of 7.0 grains of Unique powder.

Various powders are listed on the shot capsule box by Speer, and you might give these a try. For me, Bullseye didn't throw as nice a pattern, so I stayed with the Unique. The 7.0-grain load is just about a compressed charge, by the way, which is how I attempt to load *any* .44 Magnum round no matter the purpose.

Upper left, brass rod flechettes are shown with capsule. Above, mixed shot diameters make a real stopper. Right, Dragoon's chambers carry flechettes in crimped shot capsules. Below, the author's would-be supper chicken was sacrificed in testing flechettes.

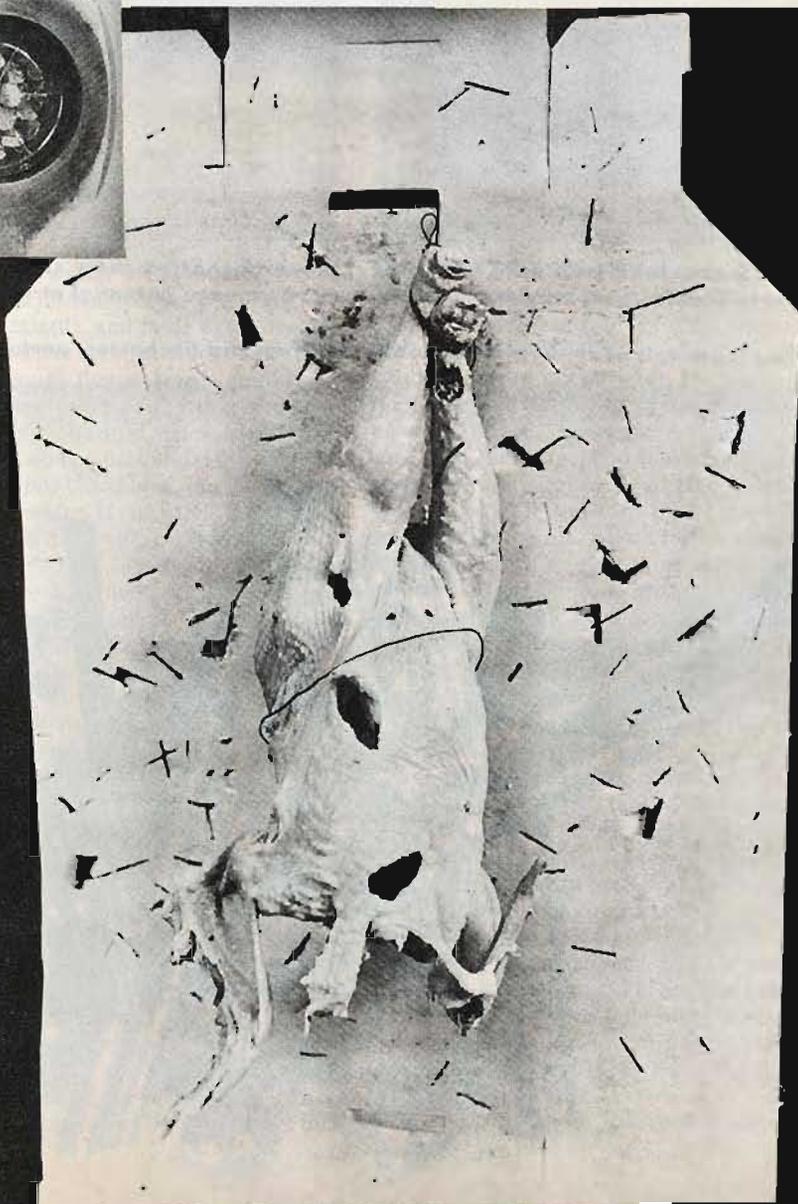


a few different powder charges to determine the most effective pattern for your own handgun.

TEST CONSTANTS: Each Federal brass .44 Magnum case was primed with a CCI No. 350 Magnum primer for positive ignition. Each final test load was fueled with 7.0 grains of Unique powder. Even half a grain more caused my patterns to go to hell in a handcart, while less powder caused an undue drop in the load between the muzzle and the target. Range for pattern testing was a consistent 21 feet. For penetration tests on one-inch (which are really about ¾-inch thick) pine boards, the range was reduced to 15 feet, about the normal distance you'd use in shooting in a home defense situation.

Each case was sized in RCBS dies (tungsten), belled very slightly (you don't have to force the shot capsules in), and the capsule itself was seated so overall length was just shy of sticking out of the end of the cylinder on my Virginian Dragoon. Speer recommends an overall length of 1.6 inches for the finished round, but I achieved better results with tailoring the length to my cylinder. Use a *firm* crimp on the shot capsules so they won't fall out.

All my tests were made with capsule



Not that it matters much, but weather for the tests was vintage Washington State drizzle, maybe 55 degrees, with no wind. At normal house temperatures there should be little, if any, variation on patterns and muzzle velocity.

Muzzle velocity is estimated, because I lack a chronograph and it wouldn't make a lot of difference anyway. I figure I'm pushing the capsules out at about 1,100 fps, and all muzzle energy (ME) data is figured on the basis of that velocity.

SHOT LOADS WITH STOPPING

ABILITY: (1) It's only fair to use a factory load as a comparison. CCI offers a dandy load using No. 9 lead pellets (about 210 of 'em), 10 to a plastic container, which are guaranteed snake-stoppers. On my 21- by 32-inch cardboard targets, these pellets printed 88 hits, with 59 hitting in the area which would be occupied by a normalized abnormal adult male. The pellets penetrated the pine board to a depth of slightly more than 1/4-inch, which would

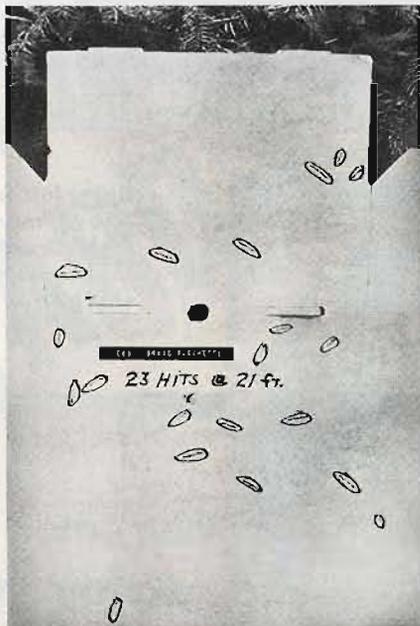
probably not be a fatal wounding, but which undoubtedly would deter an intruder in a bedroom.

My opinion? Use 'em for snakes, but don't bet your life on this loading. If an intruder is doped out of his gourd he'll still kill you *after* you've laid one of these into his body. Your only hope is to put the load right into his face, in which case he probably won't bother you again until he gets out of the slammer on parole.

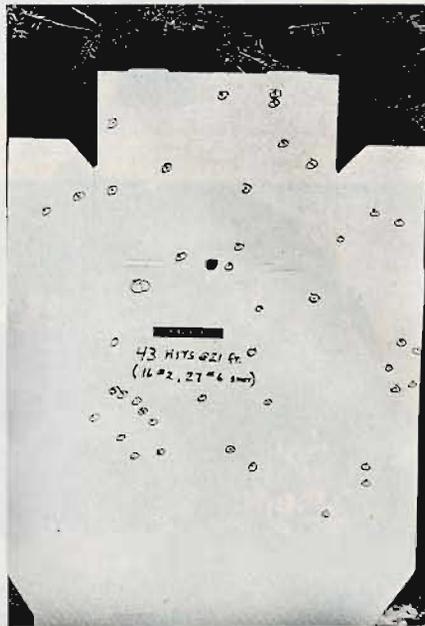
The factory loads, incidentally, have far



No. 2 shot load scored 23 hits at 21 feet—painful, yes, maybe not lethal.



Brass flechettes show significantly more damage potential at test range.



Mixed No. 2 and No. 6 load placed 43 hits in man-sized silhouette target.

Raw materials of Junkyard Dog loads are brass rod flechettes, various sizes of lead shot. None will penetrate walls.



Shot capsules provided containment for the author's flechette and shot loads, plus barrel protection for the Virginian .44 Magnum revolver used for tests.



more muzzle blast and recoil (which is still minimal compared with a bullet load) than any of my Junkyard Dog rounds. I might point out that you *don't* want muzzle blast and flash, because these can ruin your hearing and night vision in a hurry.

(2) Home-grown No. 6 shot loads. Careful loading, with the cut-off capsule tops, will allow you to cram 70 of these pellets into a Speer shot capsule. They are one hulluva lot more effective than a factory bird-shot load.

Each pellet weighs about 2.0 grains, delivers about 5.4 ft.-lb. of energy at the muzzle, and prints 49 hits on the cardboard, 35 of them in a man-sized area. The total shot load weighs about 130 grains, and packs a wallop of some 350 ft.-lb. of ME at 1,100 fps.

My opinion? These spread very nicely, virtually guaranteeing a number of hits in the dark. When they hit, they do far more damage than No. 9 shot. The pellets penetrated almost 1/2-inch into the pine boards, and would create the worst case of acne an intruder has ever seen. More important, a face and chest full of these would disable an opponent instantly, unless he wore armor. They would not, however, be fatal. Neither would they stop a thug if you put all the pellets into a chest protected by, say, a goose down ski parka.

(3) Home-grown No. 2 lead shot loads. Nasty stuff here, with each pellet weighing between 5.5 and 6.0 grains, and the whole capsule load weighing about 125 grains, 22 of these little devils will fit, if you take care in loading them. Each pellet packs nearly 15 ft.-lb. ME, for a total of about 34 ft.-lb. ME per load.

The pattern was very good, with all pellets hitting the cardboard and an average of 16 hitting in a man-sized area.

Penetration was superior (but still not enough to turn your living room wall into Swiss cheese). Many pellets penetrated 3/4-inch pine boards, and most went through galvanized sheet metal at 15 feet. They also burrow through flannel shirts (an old one which is now too big) and then create a deep wound channel. In winter these would be good against bundled-up targets.

My opinion? Good load, but with a not-too-dense pattern. If you can live with putting maybe a maximum of four of these in an intruder's face, when aiming at the sound of his movement, you have a good load. Each pellet could be fatal if it hits in the right spot. The load will disable anyone who is trying to make you into a victim. Even a body hit will be like getting shot with a .22 LR round.

(4) Home-brewed No. 2/No. 8 lead shot round. Each load contains 18 No. 2 lead pellets and 34 No. 8 lead pellets, for a total of about 147 grains per loading. All we've done here is fill a lot of the space around the large pellets with smaller pellets which, while hardly fatal, will still get an intruder's attention. If an area doesn't receive a severe wound from a large pellet, it will still probably get wounded. Sort of an insurance clause.

The pattern spreads very well, guaranteeing many hits, if you aim in the approximate direction of an intruder. Because there are slightly fewer No. 2 pellets in this

load than in the No. 2-shot-only load, energy is increased. The large shot blew holes through the pine boards while the No. 8 shot penetrated to a depth of 1/2-inch in most cases. Galvanized metal was penetrated easily by the No. 2 shot.

My opinion? Dandy load for shutting off someone's water before he can shut off yours. If you're interested in loading this one, you'll need to follow a certain sequence: drop six small shot into the capsule, then four large, and shake down; six small and four large; six small and four large; six small and four large; then 10 small and two large. All additions should be tapped down so everything will fit.

(5) Improved home-brew lead shot load: Each capsule gets 15 No. 2 shot and 28 No. 6 shot, for a total weight of about 140 grains of shot per capsule. The whole capsule packs a punch of about 378 ft.-lb. of ME at 1,100 fps, and is a gilt-edged guaranteed man-stopper.

The loading sequence is precise: four small and three large, tapped down; five small and three large; four small and three large; five small and three large; five small and three large; cap it off with five small No. 6 pellets. Tap or shake the pellets down after each addition.

This load patterned well, but, for some reason, shot a bit low at 21 feet. The cardboard received 43 hits total, with 16 No. 2 shot and 27 No. 6 shot on paper. Man-sized target hits were 11 No. 2 and 17 No. 6, for a total of 28 hits.

(Continued on page 76)

THE USAF SUPERBULLET

How does it compare with the old standby .45 ACP in terms of accuracy, reliability, lethality and stopping power?

By Patrick F. Rogers

Every shooter wants that combination of gun and cartridge that will give him maximum accuracy and effectiveness combined with absolute reliability in functioning. Choosing the right combination can be difficult. Today's high prices make it worse. To buy and test one box of cartridges of each loading in a single popular caliber, such as .38 Special or 9mm Luger, would be extremely costly.

The choice is especially difficult for the automatic pistol shooter. Automatics were designed to function well with hard metal jacketed round-nosed bullets. Each time an automatic fires, the next round must be stripped from the magazine and guided forward over the feeding surfaces and into the barrel. Any change in bullet shape or construction may lead to jams. Often, the only cure is extensive modification by a competent gunsmith.

This places a premium on being right. The serious pistol shooter must view each new development with a jaundiced eye

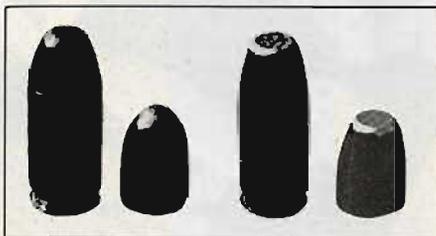


Photo compares .45 ACP round, left, and Hornady 230-grain USAF bullet.

and cold-bloodedly inquire, "What can it do for me?" and, "Can it do better than what I already have?"

It's with this callous attitude that shooters view Hornady's announcement of a remarkable new design in automatic pistol bullets. The new bullets are full metal jacketed (FMJ) with lead cores, but differ significantly from earlier designs. The traditional round-nosed bullet shape is replaced with a truncated cone. The new design has a long, cylindrical bore-riding

section. A large flat area forms the bullet's nose. Hornady has introduced the design in 124-grain 9mm and 230-grain .45 bullets. They are intended to replace the standard round-nosed bullets in 9mm Luger and .45 ACP.

The design comes from the U.S. Air Force program to develop a new 9mm automatic pistol to replace the .45 Colt as the U.S. service sidearm. The bullet's basic design was developed by the Air Force Armament Laboratory. Hornady produced the first lots of test bullets for the Air Force and was sufficiently impressed to produce the new bullets for the civilian market.

Claims for the new bullets are impressive, particularly for the 9mm. They include: (1) major improvements in accuracy; (2) feeding and functioning reliability equal to that obtained with standard bullets in unmodified pistols; and (3) increased effectiveness in combat, making a 9mm with the new bullets more lethal than the current U.S. Army .45 ACP.

If true, the design is a significant advance in bullet development. It's ob-

Photos by David L. Samson



Pre-'70 Colt was used in testing.



Swiss SIG was part of 9mm test group.



World War II P-38 was in 9mm testing.



Pre-'70 Gold Cup saw use in .45 test.



Also tested was this 9mm S&W 39.



This is the '40s 9mm Belgian Browning.

vious that the Air Force and Hornady think so. The Air Force has selected the 9mm bullet for the new service pistol development program. Hornady is betting that the new bullets will sell to civilian shooters. Frontier has announced that it will provide .45 and 9mm cartridges loaded with the Hornady bullets. Obviously, laboratory analysis and test firings went well. Still, this does not guarantee effective results in the field. Many a lovely theory has been murdered by ugly facts. What will the new bullets do in average guns under field conditions?

To find out, I obtained a supply of the new 9mm (Hornady No. 3556) and .45 (Hornady No. 4518) bullets, and assembled a group of typical 9mm and .45 caliber military automatics. All of the pistols were in original, unaltered condition. Some had seen considerable service. All showed excellent bores, and their magazines were in proper operating condition.

I also scrounged up a remarkable assortment of military ball ammunition, supplemented by current, commercial, FMJ and hollow-point production ammo.

The objective of the test was to determine whether the new bullets would function perfectly and deliver improved accuracy when fired from average military pistols in the hands of an average shooter.

I decided to do all the firing at 25 yards. A two-handed hold was used, with elbows supported by the shooting bench. All tests were fired at the same range under the same shooting conditions.

It may be argued that this method is not scientific. This is true because the human element was not eliminated. However, using machine rests or special test barrels simply would have, on a small scale, duplicated Air Force tests.

My 9mm test pistols included a 1940s-vintage Browning Hi-Power, a 1943 Walter P-38, a SIG 210, and a Smith & Wesson Model 39. With Belgian, German, Swiss and American pistols, the potential tolerance problems were given every opportunity to appear.

Each pistol was fired first with 9mm military surplus, round-nosed FMJ ammunition, followed by similar U.S. commercial cartridges. The once-fired cases were then



Function evaluation shows P-38 ejecting case to left. In 8-shot rapid-fire test with the new 9mm bullet, this World War II relic functioned perfectly.

reloaded with the Hornady 9mm bullets. A powder charge of 6.0 grains of Unique was used to obtain the standard NATO 1200 feet-per-second (fps) muzzle velocity. (This load was used for experimental purposes. It appeared safe in the guns used, but should not, under any circumstances, be considered as a "recommended load.")

The test results were, indeed, interesting. Functioning of the 9mm Hornady loads was perfect in all four test pistols. Accuracy results are shown in the accompanying table. Reported Air Force results are shown for comparison. Note that the Air Force tests were fired at 50 yards, rather than 25, and that special test barrels, rather than production pistols, were used.

With one exception, the results were

about what was expected, and this convinced me that the Hornady 9mm bullets are a significant improvement. Definite accuracy improvement was achieved. Feeding and functioning were flawless in the pistols tested.

This would have been a classic case of testing confirming theory, if it hadn't been for that annoying exception. The 1940-vintage Browning Hi-Power refused to cooperate. It fired 2 3/4- to 2 1/2-inch groups with any type of 9mm cartridge I put in it.

I have no reasonable explanation for this. The Browning Hi-Power had no particular advantage. I have not done a large amount of shooting with Hi-Powers. The SIG had by far the best trigger pull. The

Continued on page 66



The P-38, fired with British surplus rounds, grouped poorly at 25 yards. Varying weapons/ammo tolerances account for 9mm inaccuracy.



SIG gave 4-inch groups at 25 yards with U.S. commercial ammo. Reloading commercial cases with Hornady bullets cut group size 50 percent.



The astonishing Browning High Power scored 2-inch groups with British surplus ammo—and anything else fired through it during 9mm testing series.

SHAPING-UP "SHORTY"

Reloading functional reliability into the .380 ACP



By Don Zutz

Some of the most popular pocket autos are chambered for the .380 ACP, otherwise known as the 9mm Short. It is a stubby case with a maximum length of 0.680-inch and a suggested trim-to-length of 0.677-inch. As a standard 9mm round, it uses bullets with a nominal diameter of 0.355-0.356-inch. The maximum average pressure of this relatively small cartridge is 18,900 cup, which generates a muzzle velocity of 900-1,100 fps with the normal bullet weights of 90 to 115 grains.

Although the .380's paper ballistics are not impressive to many handgunners, the cartridge has served its purpose as a self-defense or off-duty weapon. One rap against the .380, however, has been malfunctioning. This can be especially true with indifferently assembled reloads, and the purpose of this short article is to point out areas of investigation for improving the operational reliability of the .380 ACP with handloads.

The key is modification of reloads to fit

the dimensions and operating level of the individual pistol, because, though the industry has ammunition standards for the .380, gunmakers have varied their dimensions and tolerances considerably. This, coupled with the already small dimensions, complicates matters for the reloader.

For example, overall loaded length may be an important factor in proper feeding and chambering. Industry standards suggest an overall loaded length of 0.984-inch for the .380, but it isn't unusual to bump into a pistol that requires a shorter OAL, depending on the nose design of the individual bullet. Handloaders will have to check this out on their own guns, but don't be surprised if some .380s necessitate cutting that back to 0.960-inch or a tad less with certain bullets. I note, for example, that Sierra suggests an overall loaded length of just 0.930-inch for the .380 with that company's 115-grain jacketed hollow cavity; likewise for their 90-grain JHC pill. Thus, don't be hesitant to work with overall loaded lengths.

Nose shape can also be a factor in

smooth chambering in the .380. A round nose seems best, as some of the jacketed hollow points will catch on the shoulder by reason of their flat frontal designs. An effective new bullet is the 90-grain Alberts round-nose which is made specifically for the .380 for an overall loaded length of 0.980-inch. Charges of 2.5/Bullseye, 3.0/WW 231, or 3.5/Unique will give it about 900 fps in the short .380 barrels. At these speeds, the bonded dry film lubricant on these Alberts bullets leaves the bore remarkably clean.

For the smoothest feeding, Hornady's 100-grain metal-jacketed round-nose bullets fill the bill. These can be driven to 950 fps by 3.6/Green Dot and 4.4/Unique. Bullseye reaches its maximum under this bullet around 3.5 grains for roughly 900 to 950 fps. Those who like to experiment might try the 115-grain Hornady jacketed HP; it seems to expand reliably at these velocities, although each handloader will have to find his own OAL. The 115 Hornady HP can be driven to about 900 fps by

Continued on page 64

RELOADING

PUT 'EM TO THE SAECO TEST

This precision device allows you to roll your own cast bullet alloys to specific degrees of hardness



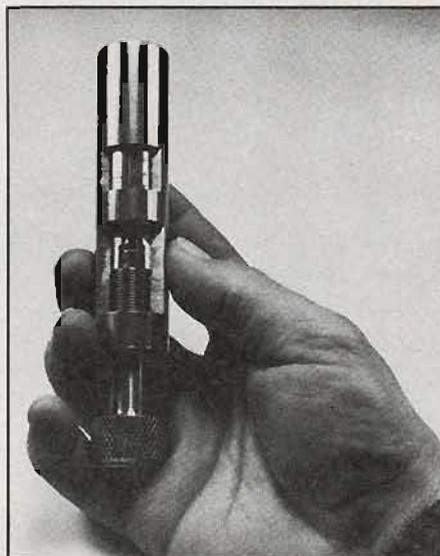
By Mike Barrach

The majority of handloaders who cast their own bullets use either a specific formula for the desired alloy or the "scratch the base with your thumbnail" method. Using a formula such as that for No. 2 alloy is, no doubt, a better practice, providing the lead, tin, bar solder, etc., is fairly pure. Any change in the ratio of these metals will directly affect not only the hardness of the alloy, but also the weight of the bullet.

Because most of the metals bullet casters use are so-called "scrap," the purity of the metals usually is questionable, as is the resulting batch of alloy.

If the question of bullet hardness and consistent alloy mix lies in the back of your mind, there's a solution for it. It's called the Saeco Bullet Hardness Tester.

As its name implies, this device measures the hardness of a cast bullet with ease and simplicity. Maintaining the alloy's



Cast bullet is placed in seat within main screw. The screw is turned clockwise until bullet nose meets indenter.

hardness from batch to batch is accomplished easily with this tool. Or, if desired, the hardness of the alloy may be changed just as easily to suit other needs.

The Saeco Hardness Tester is a well-made instrument built to take many years of use with no sacrifice in accurate readings. Its all-steel construction measures 1 inch in diameter and just over 5 inches long with the main screw fully seated. The main screw has a multi-stepped seat to accommodate just about all popular cast bullet diameters. The seat diameters measure 0.319, 0.367, and 0.467 inch.

Use of the tester is not difficult. To measure the hardness of a cast bullet, first hold the tester in a vertical (upright) position with the main screw down far enough to easily insert a bullet in its appropriate seat. With the bullet inserted, hold the tester upright and turn the main screw clockwise until the nose of the bullet makes contact with the indenter. After contact is made,

Continued on page 61

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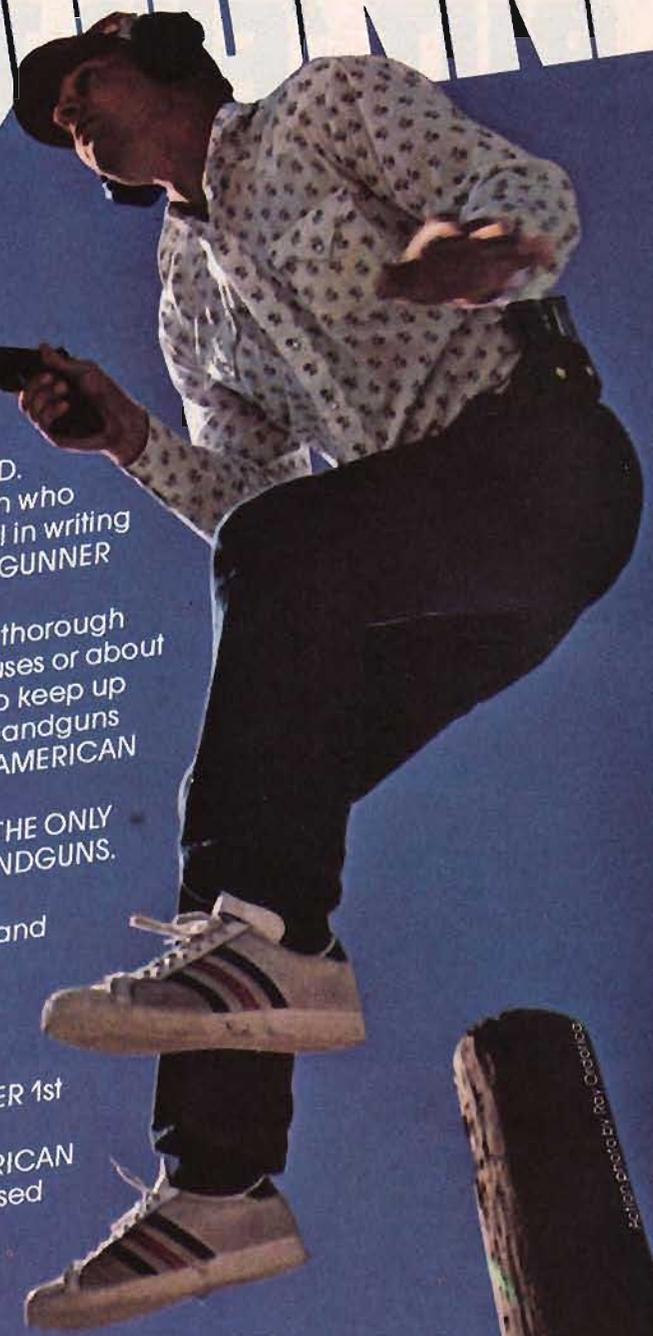


Photo: © 1995 by [unreadable]

RELOADING

HS-5, ACCURACY AND THE .45 ACP

This Hodgdon powder puts some hustle on the heavyweights



The author's Gold Cup delivered top performance with reloads using Hodgdon HS-5.

By Don Zutz

Some time ago, in a column in *Guns Magazine*, I wrote that my most accurate loads with target-type bullets of 185 grains came with either Bullseye or Unique powder.

Shortly thereafter, however, I received a

most constructive letter from James L. Linford of Seattle, Washington, who is apparently an active bullseye shooter and an experienced experimenter with the .45 Auto. With tens of thousands of test shots behind him, Linford offered two comments: one was that his Gold Cup delivers extremely precise accuracy with a powder seldom, if ever, mentioned in the

same breath as the .45 ACP—Hodgdon's HS-5. The second comment was that his .45s proved to shoot as accurately, if not more so, with 230-grain bullets than with target-grade 185s.

My own additional shooting causes me to believe that Linford knows whereof he speaks. First, I loaded a variety of different

Continued on page 62

Get a Grip on Your Scope-Mounted .45

By Albert C. Neeley

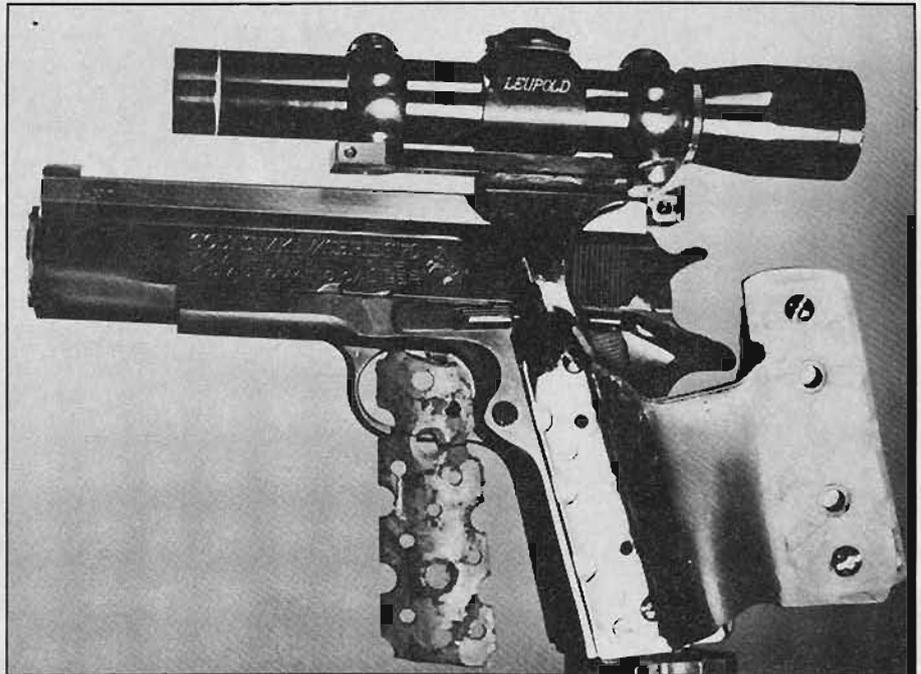
When I wanted a scope sight on my Colt .45 Automatic for occasional ammunition evaluation, options for a suitable mount were limited. A grip-type mount offered several desirable features. It is conveniently available, compatible with the BoMar Rib, permits use of target-velocity ammunition, requires no alteration of accuracy tuning, and is easy to interchange between iron sight and scope configurations. The most objectionable feature turned out to be the smooth metal surface of the grip mount. The changeover from Pachmayr Signature grips with iron sights to the metal grip with scope was disconcerting. Efforts to correct this deficiency revealed a practical way to achieve the fine feel and appearance of Pachmayr grips on metal grip mounts. The result is shown in the adjacent photos.

The procedure involves removal of the steel insert from the left Pachmayr grip and use of the neoprene "skin" to cover the grip mount surface. The main objective is to remove the insert, yet leave the neoprene in good condition. A bench grinder with 36-grit wheel will remove the neoprene with no melting or smearing. Simply start grinding on the back of the Pachmayr grip, taking care to keep inside the edges of the steel insert. Before much steel is ground away, heat generated at the spot being ground will separate the steel-to-neoprene bond. Very little heat is required. Move the grinding spot along the insert area, while coordinating grinding pressure with mild force to peel the neoprene loose. The insert, essentially intact, can be removed in a short time.

The neoprene skin will retain the insert impression, including the border and "buttons" formerly anchored in the insert holes. The new mount grip surface must be prepared to fit this irregular surface pattern. This step is important to assure a firm, solid fit. To obtain a final shape, duplicating the Pachmayr contours, first remove a small amount of aluminum to flatten the surface. The steel insert now serves as an accurate template for locating the several recesses to be cut in the aluminum grip. End mills, sizes 3/8 and 1/4 inch, in a lathe with milling attachment provide sufficient accuracy. A drill press used carefully also will suffice. The photo shows the grip surface properly prepared, with neoprene cemented only along the back edge.

Continued on page 65

Plastic surgery on Pachmayr "skin" returns this automatic's fine feel



Neoprene skin on left side of Pachmayr grip is lifted carefully, the steel insert is removed. Next the mount grip is tailored to fit underneath the skin.



The finished conversion shows the original grip skin relocated over the grip mount, providing the solid feel identical to that of conventional Pachmayrs.

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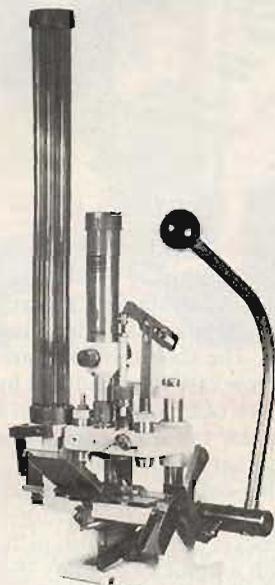
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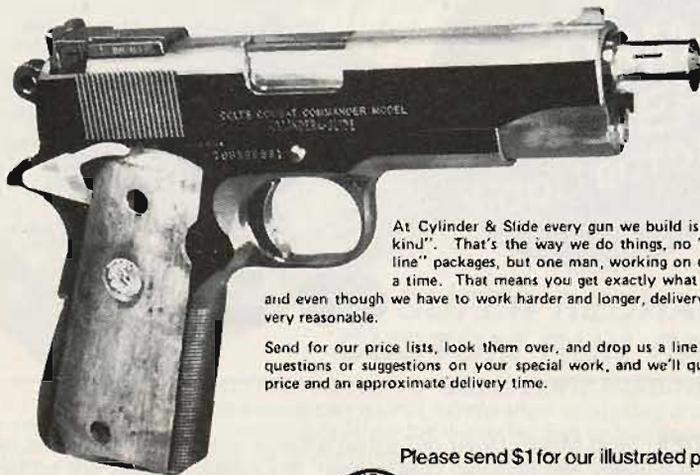
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Pacific Tool kit prepares cartridge cases

Pacific Tool Company introduces its new Case Care Kit, containing everything required to prepare cartridge cases for reloading. The Case Care Kit includes Pacific's new case lube pad and loading block, three case neck brushes in the most popular calibers, large and small primer pocket cleaners, and a chamfering-deburring tool. An accessory handle which fits the neck brushes and primer pocket cleaner is also included along with a bottle of Pacific's special case lubricant. The kit retails for \$21.95. For more information, contact Pacific Tool Co., Box 2048, Dept. AH, Grand Island, NE 68891.



Two new bullets are available from Alberts

The Alberts Corporation has introduced two new swaged lead pistol bullets, a .32 caliber, 100-grain hollow-base wadcutter and a .45 caliber, 215-grain semi-wadcutter. The new designs are 100



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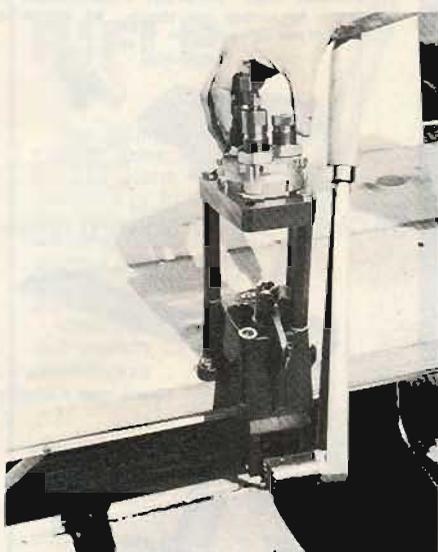
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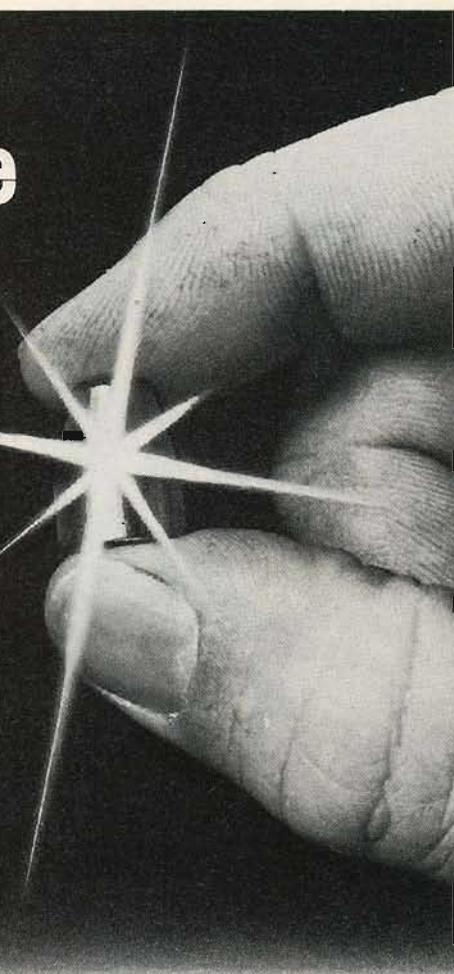
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New Bonanza pistol dies give long service

Bonanza Sports Manufacturing introduces the Carbide pistol dies, made of tungsten carbide, machined to exacting tolerances. These dies will provide long service to the novice of custom reloader. Carbide sizes are only available in .38-357, .44 Special, .44 Magnum, .45 ACP and .32 S&W Long at a cost of \$31.90 and 9mm Luger and .30 Carbine at \$36.50. The carbide 3-die sets are available in .38-357, .44 Special, .44 Magnum, .45 ACP and .32 S&W Long at a cost of \$49.95 and 9mm Luger and .30 Carbine at \$54.55. For more details, contact Bonanza Sports Mfg., 412 Western Ave., Dept. AH, Faribault, MN 55021.

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An advertisement for Michigan Armament, Inc., appearing in the January/February issue of *The American Handgunner*, lists the price of the company's .45 caliber Custombat pistol at \$395. The correct price for the accurized handgun, including Safari ambidextrous safety, Wilson sights, funneled magazine well, polished ramp and throated chamber, Metalife frame, Pachmayr grips, National Match trigger, and Diamond Blue slide, is \$475.

SAECO TESTER

Continued from page 52

the tester may be held in a horizontal position so the vernier scale may be read easily. The main screw is then turned farther clockwise until the long centerline on the bottom half of the vernier scale lines up with the witness mark on the tester body below it.

Care should be exercised in aligning these marks as closely as possible as this is directly related to consistent readings of alloy hardness.

After aligning the marks, all that remains to be done is to read the vernier scale which is graduated from 0-10 in one-step increments. This is accomplished by starting at zero and determining which set of marks line up. When located, the numerical value is the hardness of the alloy.

A pure lead bullet will read from 0-1, new Linotype metal 9-10. A bullet cast of 50 percent lead and 50 percent wheelweights will read out at 5-7, depending on the metal content of the wheelweights.

I used the Saeco tester to check only factory lead bullets. These were Speer's .45 caliber 200-grain SWC. The two I checked gave values of 3 and 4, which is fairly soft. I've used the 50/50 wheelweight-lead formula with good success for quite a few years. Velocities can, if desired, be increased in all the magnum handgun calibers, along with the .45 Colt, without any noticeable leading. Expansion is naturally poor with the bullets that are cast this hard. However, they *are* penetrators.

I use cast bullet handloads only for plinking and practice, so I really don't have any gripes about the accuracy I obtain with them. Considering that I'm not meticulous when it comes to casting techniques or inspection of cast bullets, I can usually get my cast bullet handloads to shoot around 3½ to 4 inches at 50 yards. That's all the accuracy I need for my type shooting. I do have a few loads that will cut a 2-inch group at 25 yards. When I want to get serious with a handgun I switch to jacketed bullets of the appropriate weight for higher velocity and more expansion.

One very attractive feature of the Saeco Bullet Hardness Tester allows the operator to arrive at a desired alloy hardness when combining metals of unknown alloy content. When you're not sure of the content of the metals at hand, you have no for-

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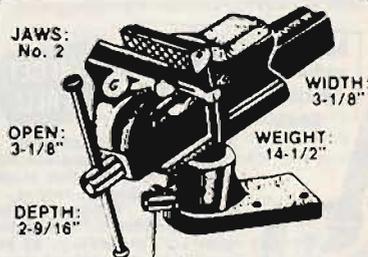
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mula, and are working in the dark. With the Sacco Tester, you can easily measure the hardness of the metals by casting a bullet from each, then combining them in different proportions until the desired hardness is achieved. Casting and testing may be a bit time consuming, but with the rising costs of even scrap metals, it's worth the extra effort, especially if you have a large quantity of the metals available.

Incidentally, there's a direct relationship between the arbitrary numeration of the Sacco tester and the Brinell hardness scale. For pure lead, the Sacco scale reads 0, whereas the Brinell scale shows 5, and when the Sacco tester displays 10 for Linotype metal, a Brinell test for hardness will present a reading of 10 to 13 for the same metal. A conversion scale for translation of Sacco units to Brinell readings is included with each tester.

Because the Sacco scale simplifies measurement of bullet casting metal hardness, you can test the various ingredients at hand, then decide on the exact degree of hardness you wish to build into the bullets.

The Sacco Bullet Hardness Tester is a worthwhile instrument to have on the casting table, but the cost of the tester, at \$83.50, is rather steep. Is it worth the price? Only you can justify its cost to your needs, but I can't think of a better way to blend consistent bullet alloys. And to top it off, it's easy on thumbnails!

For additional information on the Sacco Bullet Hardness Tester and other casting accessories, write Sacco Reloading, Inc., P.O. Box 778, Dept. AH, Carpinteria, CA 93013.



HS-5/.45 ACP

Continued from page 53

handloads with various charges of HS-5 and did some serious shooting from a sandbag rest. My Gold Cup displayed excellent performance with several loads which were checked on three different occasions to verify the first groups weren't flukes. I must note immediately that HS-5 did not produce startling accuracy results at every load level.



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According to Hodgdon's manual, 7.2/HS-5 gives the 185-grain jacketed SWC about 900 fps. That is a maximum load, generating a pressure of 14,200 cup, and I did not get a good group with it. My best groups came with HS-5 and the 185-grainers when I cut to about 6.3 to 6.5/HS-5. Because each gun can be different, the individual reloader must do some development work, of course.

My original article indicated a velocity of 800 fps brought the best accuracy from jacketed 185s. This seems to be the speed at which the Gold Cup's rifling jibes with the bullet to produce the proper stability (spin) for optimum accuracy.

Because most .45 ACPs were made for military 230-grain bullets, it is normally easier to develop accuracy loads with them than with lighter projectiles. For 230-grain jacketed bullets, Hodgdon recommends a starting charge of 6.4/HS-5 and a maximum charge of 6.8/HS-5. Velocities run between 750 and 800 fps, again depending on variables such as barrel length, chamber tolerances, and bore wear. Interestingly, I achieved very acceptable accuracy within this entire load range. The 230-grain Sierra round-nose metal-jacketed slug worked to perfection. I used the C-H taper crimp die to hold it in place under recoil and chambering forces.

A bullet that is catching-on with users of the .45 ACP is Speer's jacketed 200-grain hollow point. The maximum load for this number is 6.8/HS-5 with a standard force primer. I have not chronographed it, but Hodgdon's 7-inch test barrel gave it 894 fps and a chamber pressure of 15,300 cup. Just how far one can back off and still get the proper recoil force for positive functioning will be subject to each gun. In many respects this maximum charge is not uncomfortable to shoot, and it does deliver excellent accuracy in my Gold Cup.

Hodgdon's HS-5 also proved to be a highly acceptable performer with lead bullets. The old 230-grain round-nose is as good as any in this category. Lyman's mold No. 452374 gets the job done. It will range between 225 and 230 grains, depending on the alloy. I did not cast my own, but I used some cast of Lyman's No. 2 alloy for surprisingly effective results. Load the bullet



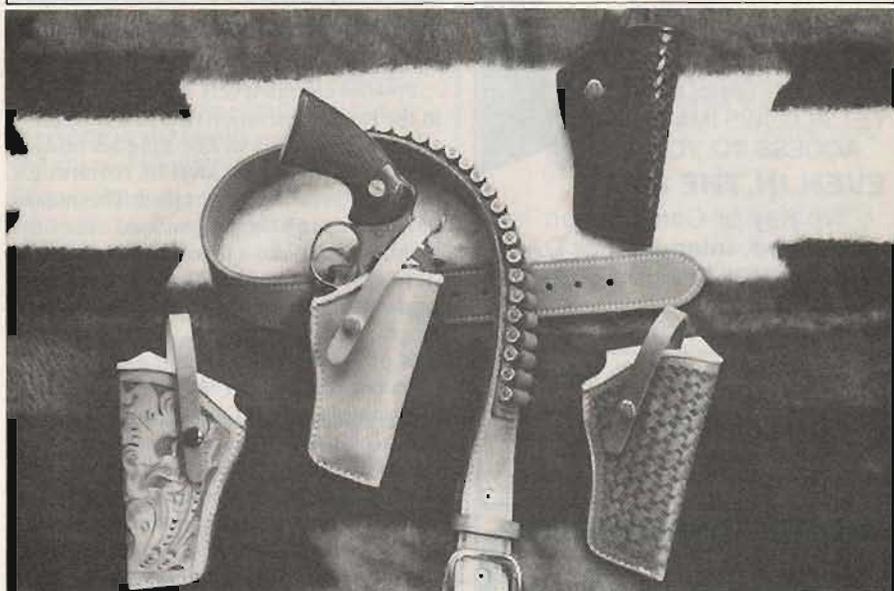
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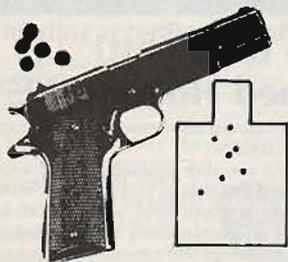
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out as far as possible for minimal deformation in the case-to-rifling jump. This dimension will vary according to the individual gun's chamber length and lead. A normal starting overall loaded length is 1.272 inches, but every added thousandth seems to improve accuracy. Stick with standard force primers for all lead loads, but you just might learn something beneficial by trying a few magnum caps when testing HS-5 under jacketed rounds. In any case, HS-5 deserves a try by those who are working with .45 ACP load concepts.

.380 'SHORTY'

Continued from page 50

3.5/Unique or 3.5/SR-7625.

Powder charge levels are another factor in the proper operation of .380 autos. Each reloader may have to fine-tune his reloads to produce the recoil level he requires for positive operation of his pistol. This means a reloader can't choose one load out of the manual and assume it will work to perfection. Some adjustments may have to be made. Consult reliable manuals for load ranges, and then make adjustments by 1/10th of a grain when working up.

Proper resizing is a major factor in .380 functioning. The smaller pistols often are manufactured with sloppy chambers intended to "funnel" the small round home and, upon being fired, the cases are often badly expanded. Likewise, the .380 has a relatively weak rim which can be damaged on extraction. Restoring the case to lesser dimensions for smooth chambering thereafter can be involved.

One problem is that, due to the 1/8-inch height of a shell holder, the resizing die does not restore the entire case to lesser dimensions. In fact, many resizing dies do not have tight dimensions at the mouth, which compounds the problem. The best approach I know for absolutely full-length resizing is to remove the shell holder, set a metal plate atop the press ram, and pressure the well-lubricated .380 case completely into the resizing die. This restores the lower segment of the case entirely and

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serves to restore case rims back to in-the-round condition. Of course, you will need a knockout rod and hammer to expel each hull from the die, but this is really no sweat. A short knockout rod works best because it produces minimal vibration. I like one that is as wide as possible with a slight radius on the bottom edges.

Resizing in this manner may be a little more work than usual, and it may be unconventional—but it does improve the potential for positive feeding in those pocket-sized .380s.

SILHOUETTE FAMILY

Continued from page 33

special equipment and/or accessory aids are required—or allowed. This is a sport designed for both novices and experts.

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Editor's note: A copy of official handgun silhouette shooting rules is available free of charge from International Handgun Metallic Silhouette Association, Inc., P.O. Box 1609, Idaho Falls, ID 83401.

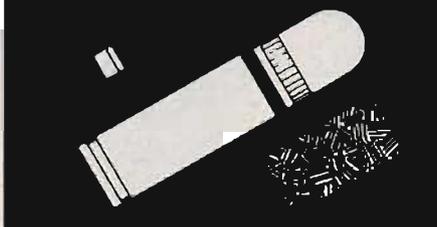
GET A GRIP

Continued from page 54

An 8-40 steel screw with head beveled to fit a tapered recess is necessary to eliminate movement at the lower grip bushing. By cementing only along the back edge, the extra screw is accessible without an additional hole in the neoprene. Once the grips are folded into position, the snug fit between neoprene and prepared aluminum surface provides a solid feel identical to that of conventional Pachmayr grips.

The dovetail track on the commercial grip mount is too short for standard scope sight rings. Some type of extension or dovetail rib is required. The complete installation shown incorporates Buehler rings on a Buehler base designed for the Ruger Super Blackhawk. The irregular top surface of the dovetail must be recut to mate with the base or rib used. The top cut

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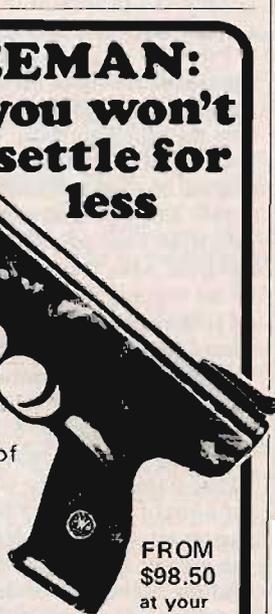
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The commercial grip mount featured in this article is available from Gil Hebard Guns, 125-129 Public Square, Knoxville, IL 61448, phone (309) 289-2700. And by the time this article is in print, Gil Hebard will offer a new grip mount, designed and manufactured by pistolsmith Jim Clark, and a definite improvement on the mount pictured and described here.



SUPERBULLET

Continued from page 49

Smith & Wesson 39 had the best sights. Perhaps the Browning should be regarded as that famous exception which proved the rule. At least no accuracy was lost!

The .45 ACP firing tests were simple and straightforward, perhaps because I had no faulty .45 ACP ammunition to test. Three pistols were used: a pre-1970 Colt Gold Cup, a pre-1970 Government Model, and an ex-GI Model 1911A1. The two fixed-sight pistols delivered 2¼- to 2-inch groups. The Gold Cup, with its superior sights and trigger pull, delivered 2½- to 1¾-inch groups. The new Hornady bullets equalled any other handloads tested in accuracy. No problems in feeding or functioning were encountered.

I think it can be concluded that there is not that much room for accuracy improvement in .45 Colt automatics and U.S. Military ball ammunition. No accuracy was lost in changing to the new Hornady .45 bullets, but not a lot was gained.

Are the new flat-nosed bullets more effective? That question must be settled by analysis. Also, it is necessary to be careful of the slippery difference in the definitions of lethality and stopping power. They sound the same but are different.

Lethality is the probability that, when hit, an opponent is killed or severely wounded. Exhaustive tests indicate that lethality is proportional to the amount of tissue damaged. This corresponds to the amount of energy the bullet transmits to the target. The more lethal the cartridge, the greater the damage done to the victim and the higher the probability of death.

Stopping power is the probability of instantly stopping an opponent's hostile action and rendering him incapable of continuing the fight.

It's important to keep the difference in mind. A pistol cartridge can be highly lethal, but lack stopping power, such as the .30 Mauser. It can have great stopping power and low lethality, like the standard .45 automatic round. Or, it can combine both, as in the .357 Magnum.

Air Force pronouncements, to date, have stated that the 9mm Luger loaded to NATO standards (125-grain bullet/1200

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(fps/400 ft.-lb. of muzzle energy) is equal in lethality to .45 GI hardball. The USAF also has implied that the 9mm flat-nosed FMJ will be more lethal.

The new flat-nosed 9mm FMJ bullet can only increase lethality. The wide, flat nose should increase the bullet's drag coefficient, which will increase the percentage of bullet energy deposited in the target.

On that basis, you can't lose. But, before IPSC tears up my membership card, let's look at stopping power. Hatcher's formula states that a bullet's relative stopping power (RSP) is proportional to its momentum times its cross-sectional area times a bullet's shape effectiveness factor. Making this calculation for the bullets in question, results are as follows:

Bullet	MV	Bullet Weight	Hatcher RSP
.45 ACP FMJ RN	850 fps	230 Grains	62.14
9mm FMJ RN	1200 fps	124 Grains	30.04

Hatcher RSPs have no units. In this case, the formula says that the .45 ACP is about twice as likely to stop an opponent instantly as the 9mm. Practical experience bears this out.

Changing to the 9mm Hornady bullet will improve the 9mm's stopping power. Hatcher was familiar with bullets with flats on their noses. He assigned them a shape factor of 1100, compared with 900 for a round-nosed FMJ bullet. When the new

shape is plugged into Hatcher's formula, it increases in RSP to 36.72. That's not enough. Practical experience indicates that adequate stopping power begins at 50.0, and I have always felt more comfortable with loads that score 55 or better.

Is Hatcher's formula correct, or does it underrate the 9mm? Hatcher's formula can be questioned on two points. It assumes that pistol bullets do not deform when they strike a target. That was true in the early 1930s, but today there are many types of expanding pistol bullets.

A second point, perhaps, is more significant. A considerable body of evidence has accumulated since the 1930s to indicate that energy and momentum are more effectively transferred to the target when the bullet's velocity is higher than 1100 fps. The 9mm loaded to NATO standards is in this class. The question is how much difference would this make.

I have been conducting research for the past few years to develop modifying factors for Hatcher's formula to allow for the new data. I would hazard a guess that the correct shape factor for a Hornady 9mm at 1200 fps is approximately 1500. Applying this to Hatcher's formula gives an RSP of 50. That's an interesting figure. It is at the borderline of effective stopping power. If I am correct, the new 9mm service ammunition will score some spectacular successes and some equally spectacular failures. If I am wrong, and the original, unmodified

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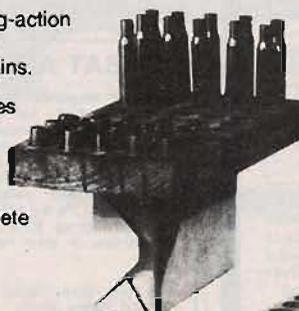


The Coriolis effect on the path (trajectory) of a projectile fired from a rifle or pistol can best be envisioned by taking the innermost coil of a clockspring, pulling it out to make a cone of coils of ever increasing diameters. (See above illustration.) This explains why the path or trajectory of a bullet can be at 6 o'clock, below the line of sight at 50 yds., at 9 o'clock at 100 yds., on the line of sight at 150 yds., and at 3 o'clock at 200 yds., and again below the line of sight at 6 o'clock at 250 yds. These distances are for example only as they will vary depending on velocity.

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Hatcher figure is correct, stopping power will prove to be inadequate. Only time and extensive actual use of the new ammunition will tell.

What about the .45 caliber bullet? Here, there is no problem. Muzzle velocity is in the region where Hatcher's formula has always been correct. Using the Hornady bullet in place of the standard 230-grain round-nose will increase .45 RSP from 62.14 to 75.94, a significant increase in effectiveness. The new bullet design will help to eliminate one of the .45 ACP's vices, its tendency to ricochet off hard surfaces. There may be limited gains in accuracy, but there also will be no loss.

What is the bottom line? I believe that the tests show Hornady bullets deliver improved accuracy and reliable functioning in 9mm. In .45 ACP, they also function and deliver accuracy at least equal to current designs. Effectiveness of the .45s is clearly superior. Effectiveness of the 9mm remains an open question. While the jury is out, I will stick with my .45 automatic and load it with the new flat-nosed Hornady bullets.



WHEELGUNS

Continued from page 43

vored because of its handy size and weight, and because the .357 cartridge can be loaded to make the major caliber classification in IPSC competition. Loaded all the way up, this light frame .357 is a bit strenuous to shoot, but in good hands it will fill the bill nicely.

A small number of pistoleros stand by the bigger "N" frame Smith & Wesson revolvers because they can be chambered for the larger caliber cartridges. These weapons tend to be more cumbersome in the hand, but the big bore cartridges can be loaded to milder levels than the .357's, and still achieve major caliber classification. Such loads as the .44 Special, .45 Colt, .45 ACP, and .45 Auto-Rim all fall into this category. The

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In IPSC competition a scoring bonus is given to those loads that over the years have proven to be adequate fight stoppers. The theory is that control of a truly combat worthy load should be rewarded. Hence, to make major caliber status, a shooter's load must equal or surpass G.I. .45 hardball on a ballistic pendulum. The .357, .41, and .44 Magnums, plus the .44 Special, .45 Colt, .45 ACP, and .45 Auto-Rim can all qualify in this respect.

In the .357 Magnum a 158 SWC loaded over 8.0 grains of Unique for about 1350 FPS should make major caliber. For .45 ACP or the Auto-Rim cartridges 5.0 grains of Bullseye and the 200 grain H & G #68 SWC should pass with about 900 FPS. The .41 Magnum can be loaded down to about 950 FPS with 9.0 grains of Unique and a 210 grain cast bullet. In the .44 Special and .44 Magnum a charge of 8.0 grains Unique and a 250 grain cast bullet will fill the bill at about 900 and 850 FPS respectively.

Minor caliber loads must equal or surpass 9mm Parabellum hardball on the pendulum. A good .38 Special load that will pass is 4.0 grains Bullseye and a 158 grain cast bullet. A load of 5.5 grains Unique and the same bullet will also do the job. These loads may seem a little stiff for competition, but lead bullet rounds must be loaded a bit hotter to equal jacketed bullets on the pendulum.

For those not familiar with the IPSC scoring system a brief explanation might be in order. All major caliber loads receive a one point scoring advantage over minor caliber in the outer areas of the

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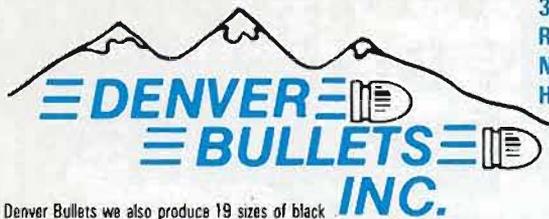


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target. All loads receive the same score in the center zone of the target. Thus, the minor caliber shooter (9x19mm and .38 Special) can make up his handicap by being more accurate, and placing more hits in the center of the target.

The wheelguns used in practical shooting are usually highly modified to improve performance. They don't generally sport the same number of improvements as seen on autoloading pistols, but the changes are just as important for superior performance.

The most important custom work performed on DA revolvers (single actions are not seen in practical matches) is smoothing the action. In this area the knowledgeable double action man stipulates to his pistolsmith that the action be smoothed and polished, but that is all. Springs are not altered in any way in an effort to smooth or lighten the DA trigger pull. Lightening springs is a common practice on PPC guns, but combat pistol shooters avoid this trick like the plague!

It is also not sound practice to lighten the rebound slide spring. On PPC guns this presents no particular problems, because these revolvers are not used for quick shooting. When a wheelgun with a lightened rebound slide spring is fired rapidly, as is the norm in IPSC competition, it tends to balk. The lightened spring cannot perform its task of returning the trigger quickly enough for this kind of rapid shooting. Thus, a weapon so modified is useless for really quick competitive work or defensive use.

Some hard core DA specialists even go so far as to remove the single action mechanism from their revolvers as part of the "slicking up" process. They fire their weapons by trigger cocking for all situations, and removal of these parts gives some small gain in the quest for lighter, smoother operation.

While working over the old cylinder gun for effortless DA work, another trick of the experienced gunner is the installation of a narrow smooth trigger. The wide serrated trigger found on most quality DA revolvers today does not lend itself to quick and efficient trigger cocking action.



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The sighting equipment on good quality DA revolvers (whether on Smith & Wesson, Colt, Ruger, Dan Wesson, or what have you) is generally superior to that found on the average autoloader. In this respect the revolver man is fortunate, for he can usually forego the considerable expense that custom sights entail.

In most cases a red insert or spot of nail polish on the front sight and a white outlined rear notch will suffice for those who prefer a brighter combination than the normal back sights. Sometimes the shooter will round off the outside edges of the rear sight to reduce wear and tear to clothing or the hand. The sights may or may not be adjustable, but it is essential that they be large enough and well enough defined for quick easy pick up by the eye.

Most serious revolver men find it necessary to replace factory stocks with more efficient custom jobs. Generally speaking, factory stocks taper in the wrong direction and do not fit the hand well. They tend to squirm in the hand in rapid fire and control of full power service ammunition is made rather difficult.

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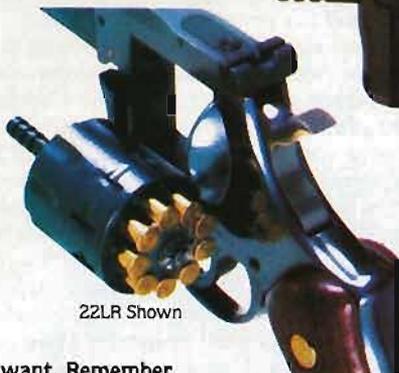
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which swell in this direction) and are contoured to fit the shape of the hand. Some feature finger grooves, but others do not, depending on the taste of the owner. Checkering is also a matter of taste. Some shooters prefer smooth stocks, while others like the secure feeling that good checkering can provide. All the good examples are cut away on the left side, with no hint of a thumb rest, so that speed loaders may be easily used, and so that positive ejection of empty cases won't be hindered. Some shooters also round off the lower edge of the cylinder latch on Smith & Wesson guns to give the speed loader more clearance.

As an aid in speed loading, many shooters feel that radiusing each chamber mouth slightly is a good idea. This should not be overdone, or support of the case had will be lessened. A radius of forty-five degrees and about twenty-five or thirty thousandths deep is enough, and will help funnel each cartridge into its respective chambers with less chance of hang ups.

One last modification that is sometimes seen is Mag-na-porting. Some shooters swear by it, claiming increased control and lessened recoil, while others don't see much benefit. In weapons firing service type cartridges such as the .45 ACP or .38 Special I myself don't notice much benefit. Perhaps in weapons chambered for more potent cartridges such as the .41 and .44 Magnums it

would make more of a difference. At any rate, the .41's and .44's are seldom fired in competition with full loads.

Bluing is still the most widely seen finish on wheelguns, it being traditional and what people are used to, but other finishes are gaining rapidly in popularity. On many guns meant for street duty black teflon is quite often seen. It is the right color in the eyes of most people, and its dull black finish is non-reflective. It also is quite businesslike in appearance.

Hard industrial chrome finishes in various applications are gaining in popularity, and offer several noteworthy advantages over bluing and teflon for duty and competition guns. White chrome, Metallife, and Armaloy, when applied all have a dull white look that does not reflect light and is extremely durable and wear resistant, unlike blued and tefloned surfaces, which will wear rapidly with hard use. The various chrome applications also tend to "slick up" an action to some extent.

The hard chrome finish resists rust, which is important in a duty weapon, it also resists wear quite successfully, which is a relevant consideration to the serious competitive shooter. After spending a lot of money having your pet wheelgun tuned for best performance, it's a comfort to know that it will stay that way for a longer period of time with the hard finish. That is the reason why you see so many match guns white chromed, whether auto-pistol or revolver. Some serious freestyle match shooters will fire a thousand or more rounds of ammunition per WEEK in practice. At that rate their weapons don't last long, so the chrome is applied to stretch the useful life of the pistol and its tune job.

Electroless nickel also works well as a durable finish for sidearms. It comes out a subdued grey color, with the slightest hint of a reddish brown tint in sunlight. It is quite tough and serviceable, as well as cheaper than chrome. It will tarnish when in contact with certain compounds, but silver polish or like cleaning agents will remove the discoloration.

In any course of fire that requires more than six continuous shots, a well handled speed loader is what keeps the wheelgun competitive with the semiautomatic pistol. Considered in that light, it is a very important piece of equipment, and its skillful use can be critical.

Perhaps the best speed loader on the market is the Griffis Second Six. It holds the cartridges securely and its operation is positive. Other popular models are the Dade, which is fast but not too secure, the Safariland Firepower (the old Hunt model), and the HKS Tool Company's Six Second model. These will all give good service when properly handled.

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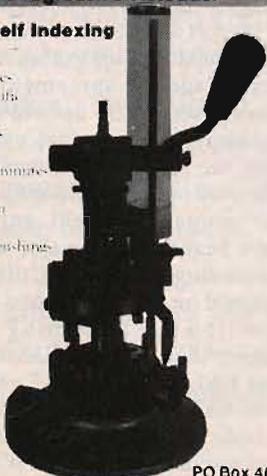
In the area of proper holsters for practical revolver shooting we see just as much variety as in those designed for auto-pistols. Here again, the forward rake design tends to dominate, with the majority of shooters using some type of rig with this feature. You do see some use of the older rigs such as the Border Patrol or Jordan style, and there is limited use of various break front designs.

The Safariland Model #13 is seen frequently in competitive circles, and works very well. It features forward rake and thumb break retention. Out on the west coast the Triple K Model #4 forward rake design is quite popular with wheel-gun shooters. This rig was designed by Combat Master Elden Carl years ago for competition and duty use. Currently, Bill French, a Class A shooter and former Director of the Southwest Pistol League, is a frequent user of the Triple K Model #4.

A holster gaining in popularity among freestyle practical revolver men is the high ride forward rake model offered by Milt Sparks. It features the Hank Sloan tension welt for security, and does not use a thumb break or safety strap. It may be worn on any stiff waist belt, or heavy gunbelt, as the shooter prefers. (Ed, note: GWM Davis is coming out with a new revolver fast draw rig. More on that later.)

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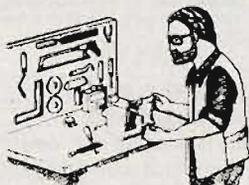


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There are many other points that could be covered concerning weapons, holsters, and modifications. A good majority of them are minor in the over all picture, relating mostly to personal taste and whim. The subjects covered herein, while all of them are not absolutely necessary, are favored by many top shooters. A careful study of the foregoing will help the beginning IPSC oriented revolver fancier to get into the game with a minimum number of mistakes.



WOLVERINE

Continued from page 31

ber of guns were made beginning with No. 1, but these were reserved for employees and friends. Serial numbers in this range have been observed to around 100,950.

In 1956, the frame alloy was changed to Type 380, and a new serial number range was started. This time, serial numbers appear to have started around 23,000. Shortly after the serial number change, at around 24,000, the Lyman Gun Sight Company complained to Whitney that Lyman held rights to the Wolverine trademark because Lyman had used it previously in a line of telescope sights. The Wolverine name was removed from the gun and production continued.

It soon became apparent to Hillberg that Galef's sales projections had been too high and, although the company was gearing up to manufacture fairly high volume, the distribution system was not keeping up with production. In an effort to improve marketing, Hillberg made tentative agreements with Montgomery Ward and Sears to market a cosmetically changed version. Galef held that his exclusive contract prohibited such an agreement, and his view was subsequently upheld by the courts. Whitney was forced to cease production until the legal matters could be resolved. The only option left to Whitney was to sell the company outright, and negotiations were begun with a major arms company. According to Hillberg, the negotiations dragged on for months, and the company's position was becoming unbearable. Rather than declare bankruptcy Whitney was sold to Charles E. Lowe of Hartford who had cash in hand. Hillberg is obviously proud of the fact that bankruptcy was avoided and that no Whitney creditor lost any money.

It is not known at what serial number

Whitney changed hands, for Hillberg recalls that some quantity of previously marked frames were completed by Lowe. The Hartford address first appears around serial number 32,000. One of the first changes made by Lowe was to offer the Whitney in nickel finish. All guns had previously been a two-tone anodized blue, except for a small number which had been highly polished and left in the natural aluminum color. A small number of nickel plated guns bearing the Hartford address are found in the serial number range of approximately 32,200 to 32,900. Production of blue guns continued up to around serial number 37,000. What happened next is unclear, but apparently Galef instituted further legal action and Lowe ceased production of the Whitney for good in 1963.

Mechanically the Whitney was unique. It was designed to be produced with a minimum of hand labor, and to be competitive in price with other guns on the market at the time. There are many novel features in the design, foremost of which is the one-piece cast frame. It was intended to be used "as cast" with only minor polishing and fitting. The internal workings were assembled as a unit and held in the frame by a locking ring at the muzzle. The magazine has a pronounced taper to facilitate insertion, and can be disassembled for cleaning. For all its novelty and sound design the Whitney was not entirely successful. The reasons for this are not only the exclusive sales arrangement, but also the fact that

the public was not ready for such a radical departure from conventional lines. In short, it was an idea whose time had not yet come. Today, however, there is an almost cultish admiration of the gun among both collectors and shooters. It is fun to shoot, but the unavailability of parts might make it unwise to do so extensively. The novelty and scarcity make it appealing to collectors. The net result is that you don't see too many Whitneys for sale, and when they are it is at a considerable multiple of the original cost.



To summarize, for the collector, here are all the presently known major variations:

1. Blue finish, type 218 alloy frame, serial number range 100,000 to approx. 100, frame, Whitney on left. Both markings white filled. New Haven address.
2. Blue finish, type 380 alloy frame, serial number range approx. 23,000 to 24,000. Markings same as #1.
3. Blue finish, type 380 alloy frame, serial number range approx. 24,000 to 31,000 (it is not known if there are any major gaps in this sequence). NO Wolverine marking, other markings same as #1, but some may not be white filled.
4. Nickel finish, serial number range 32,000 to 32,900 approx. Hartford address.
5. Blue finish, serial number range 34,000 to 37,000 approx. Hartford address, markings not white filled.

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JUNKYARD DOGS

Continued from page 47

My opinion? Super shot load for home defense. Any of the No. 2 pellets will cause a hefty wound, and they will penetrate clothing well. The No. 6 shot adds to the attention-getting qualities of this load, and any of these pellets in a person's face will get a lot of immediate notice. At a range of 10 feet or less, a face full of these little whizzers should be fatal.

(6) Home-grown BB/shot load. If you don't have access to a bag of heavy lead shot, or cannot afford it, try good ol' copper-clad steel BBs like the kid uses in his air rifle. They're .177 inch in diameter, which means you can't get as many into a capsule, but they'll work wonders on armed intruders.

I tested two dozen variations of these loads, and the one which works best is composed like this: 14 steel BB shot and 41 No. 8 lead shot. Load it this way: five small, four large; seven small and three large; six small and four large; seven small and three large; cap it off with 16 small pellets (or as many as you can fit in and still get the cap on).

This load put 47 hits into the cardboard at 21 feet, with six to seven BB shot in the man-sized zone and at least 25 No. 8 shot in the same area. The steel shot punches holes in sheet metal like it wasn't there, and the dense cloud of No. 8 shot will definitely get someone's attention.

My opinion? Nice little acne-maker. Will stop most hostilities in a second. BB shot is readily available and it's cheap.

FLECHETTE "JUNKYARD DOG" LOADS: If you're squeamish you shouldn't read any further. The next three loads are positively diabolical, not to mention nastier 'n hell. Even the editor of this magazine accused me of having a mean streak when I told him of these flechette rounds. It's true, however, that I'd like nothing better than to give a creep who's trying to rob me at gunpoint a whole face full of these. It would be his last robbery.

Each of these is made of lengths of metal rod or wire, which you must cut to length yourself. The two loads made from brass brazing rod are easy to cut since the rods are straight to begin with. The small flechette round, made from 0.047 inch diameter steel safety wire (available at machine shops, some auto supply and hardware stores, or at places which do work on airplanes), is another matter: stretch out a length of wire from the spool, maybe 50 feet, then tie the end off securely, pull steadily on it until you can feel it stretch about 10 percent of its length, then cut it off and snip into maybe three-foot lengths which will be easier to work with.

Stretching the steel wire will straighten it, make it thinner and also make it harder.

Continued on page 78

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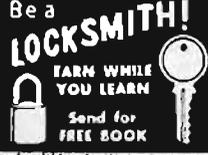
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Continued from page 76

I cut all the thousands of wires I tested with a pair of heavy duty diagonal cutters. Here's how: measure out a piece which will fit into the capsule and yet allow the cap to go on, cut it at an angle so it will penetrate better, and then use this as a master model. If you hold the master between your thumb and forefinger, you'll be able to lay a length of wire or brazing rod alongside it and cut it to the same length. Remember to cut at an angle, which means you'll have to make allowances for extra length. Experiment a bit and you'll master it with no difficulty.

(1) "Fair weather flechettes": These are made from steel safety wire, 0.047-inch diameter, with 44 wires in each shot capsule. Each flechette weighs about 2.6 grains and delivers about 7 ft.-lb. of energy at the muzzle. Total weight of the load is about 117 grains, and total ME is about 316 ft.-lb.

I call these "fair weather flechettes" because they will not do much damage against a fully-clothed target. They tumble as they travel, and most seem to hit sideways at any distance short of belly range. On a T-shirted target, however, they will be absolutely devastating, as they will be against any face that gets in the way.

Pattern is superb, with 40 out of 44 flechettes printing on the cardboard at 21 feet, 30-32 in the man-sized zone. They go mostly where you aim them, and a shot at someone's face at anything up to 25 feet will be a plastic surgeon's dream.

Penetration is very good, with various flechettes (depending on what their angle of tumble was at the moment of impact) going nearly through the 3/4-inch pine board, while others sank in only about 1/8-inch sideways! They make dents in galvanized metal, but wouldn't penetrate a piece of wallboard on a bet.

My opinion? Absolutely the best load to use if you have very thin walls in your apartment. They will create havoc, and since a number of them hit end-on you can get good penetration in flesh at some points while creating large but shallow wounds in other areas.

A face full of these will stop anyone, no matter how doped-up he is, but will probably not prove fatal. Nice load if you want witnesses at your assault trial.

(2) "Bad news flechettes": These are made from brass brazing rod, 0.062-inch (1/16-inch) diameter, with 26 flechettes in each capsule. They are bad news to a flesh-and-bone target.

Pattern is just right, placing 23 hits on the cardboard and 17 of them in the man-sized zone. They go just about where you aim them; if you cut loose with a load at someone's throat, you will probably inflict a fatal wound.

Each flechette weighs about 5.5 grains and packs ME of nearly 15 ft.-lb. Total load weighs approximately 141 grains and packs a punch of 380 ft.-lb., plus. At very close range, say 5 feet, this round will behave like a bullet and make a big hole in the tar-

get. At 30 feet it will still make a number of man-stopping hits on a target.

Penetration is superior, without becoming wall-piercing. The brass rods make deep dents in galvanized steel plate, and will penetrate 3/4-inch pine boards if they hit end-on. Otherwise, they tumble into pine to a depth of about 1/4-inch.

My opinion? Overall, the best, yet safest, round for apartment house self-defense. You won't poke holes in walls, but you'll surely turn a human target into a screen door with one of these. They will positively anchor an intruder if, you put a bunch of 'em into his face.

Purely for research, I shot a dressed (3-pound Arkansas fryer) with several of these flechette loads, to ascertain how they'd do on flesh. I had hoped to take the chicken home later and have it for dinner. Wrong! The damned thing was literally blown into bits at 15 feet; the flechettes cut through leg bones, cut off one wing, and made enormous wound channels in the breast. All in all, this is a very nasty bit of pistol ammo!

(3) "Winter-type flechettes": Made from large brass brazing rod, 0.093-inch (3/32-inch) diameter, each of these capsules holds 11 flechettes weighing 12.2 grains each, and three of the smaller (0.062-inch) weighing 5.5 grains each. They're called "winter-type" because it doesn't matter if the intruder is wearing a parka and long handles—you'll nail him to the wall.

The large rods carry about 33 ft.-lb. of energy each, and the smaller offer about 15 ft.-lb. ME. Total load carries about 394 ft.-lb. of energy at the muzzle, and will gut a moose at five feet.

These things go where they're aimed, and while the pattern doesn't spread as much as with the smaller flechettes, it would only take one hit in the forehead by a large brass rod to prove fatal. The large ones blew out caverns on the reverse side of the 3/4-inch pine boards, and penetrated 1/8-inch cold rolled steel plate like it was cardboard. These are obviously not the sort of loads to light off in a mobile home or apartment with paper walls.

The cardboard target was hit with 13 flechettes at 21 feet, and 11 of them were in the wounding zone. Shot into another fresh chicken, these rounds produced the world's quickest pile of chicken salad. Very ugly and very deep wound channels, with bones cut off wherever a hit was recorded.

My opinion? Go for this one if it's winter, or you suspect the well-dressed bandit is about to visit. He'd have to wear armor to survive these flechettes. On non-armored targets you will cause a fatality and your wife will spend days cleaning up your home. You also will survive nicely.

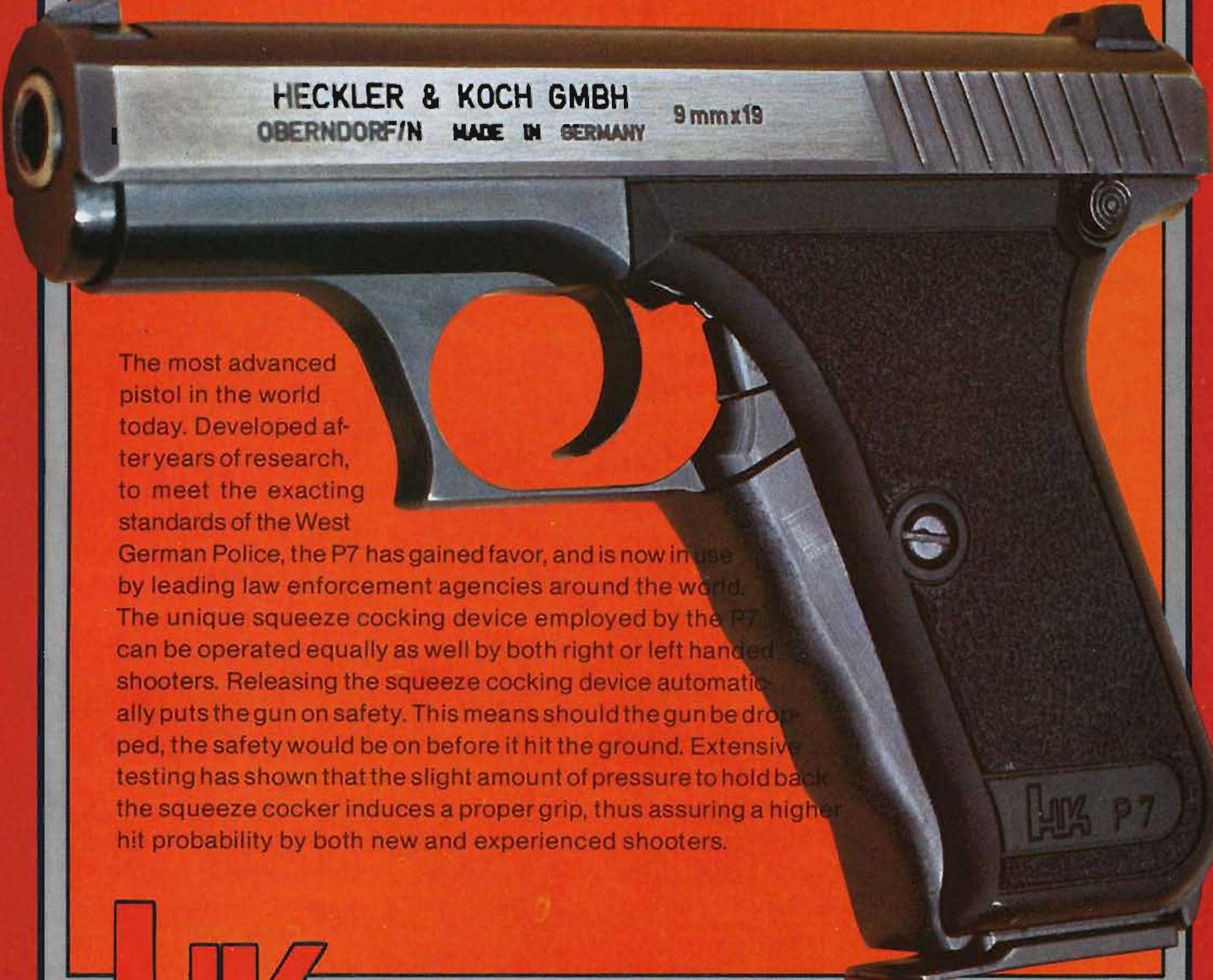
These are alternative rounds, offered as bandit-stoppers which won't kill the family in the next room should you miss. No advice given here should be construed as advice to shoot someone with one of these loads. If and when that happens, you're on your own.



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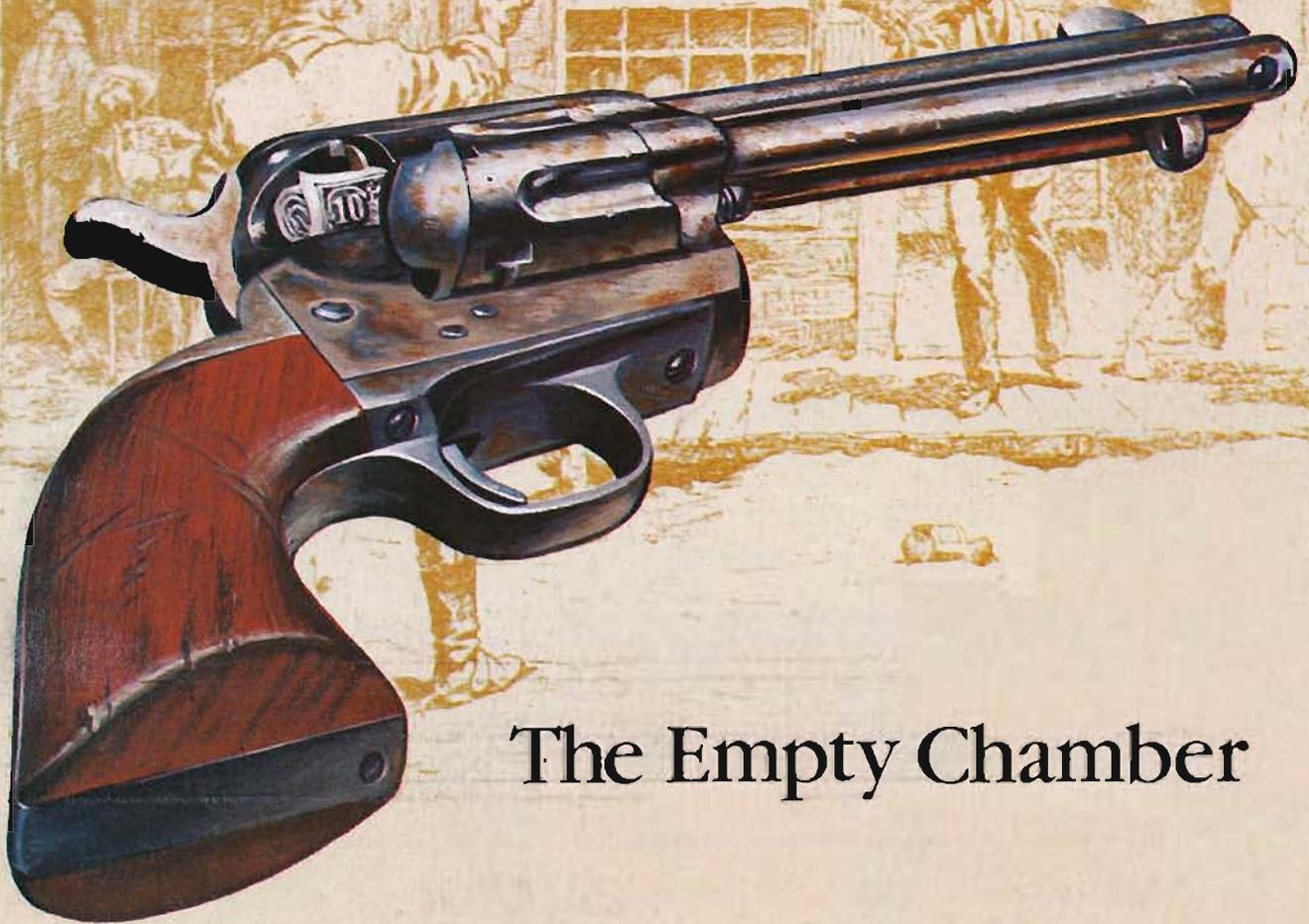
German Police, the P7 has gained favor, and is now in use by leading law enforcement agencies around the world. The unique squeeze cocking device employed by the P7 can be operated equally as well by both right or left handed shooters. Releasing the squeeze cocking device automatically puts the gun on safety. This means should the gun be dropped, the safety would be on before it hit the ground. Extensive testing has shown that the slight amount of pressure to hold back the squeeze cocker induces a proper grip, thus assuring a higher hit probability by both new and experienced shooters.

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The Empty Chamber

From the earliest frontier days of the old west, the mechanical characteristics and limitations of the single-action revolver have been well understood, as the writings of the day amply demonstrate. The safety precaution of loading the "six-shooter" with only five cartridges and resting the hammer on the empty chamber was universally practiced. According to folklore, some cowboys habitually carried "burying money" or their last bank note rolled up in the empty chamber. These old-timers understood that the notches in the hammer provided only limited protection, and that an accidental discharge could result if a fully loaded revolver were to be dropped, or if the hammer were to receive a sharp blow.

Despite the lessons of history, there are still

people who get themselves in trouble by ignoring the following common sense rules of gun handling:

1. The shooter should thoroughly understand the mechanical characteristics and rules for handling the particular type of firearm he is using.
2. The safest way to carry any old style* single-action revolver is with five chambers loaded and the hammer resting on the empty chamber.

**The Ruger "New Model" single-action revolvers are not subject to this limitation and can be carried safely with all six chambers loaded. Some other manufacturers have added various manual safety devices to old style single-action revolvers, but no manual safety can ensure against accidents if the shooter fails to use it properly. Remember: There is no such thing as a foolproof gun!*

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