

HANDGUNNER

HANDGUN HUNTING

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 1986

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AMERICAN

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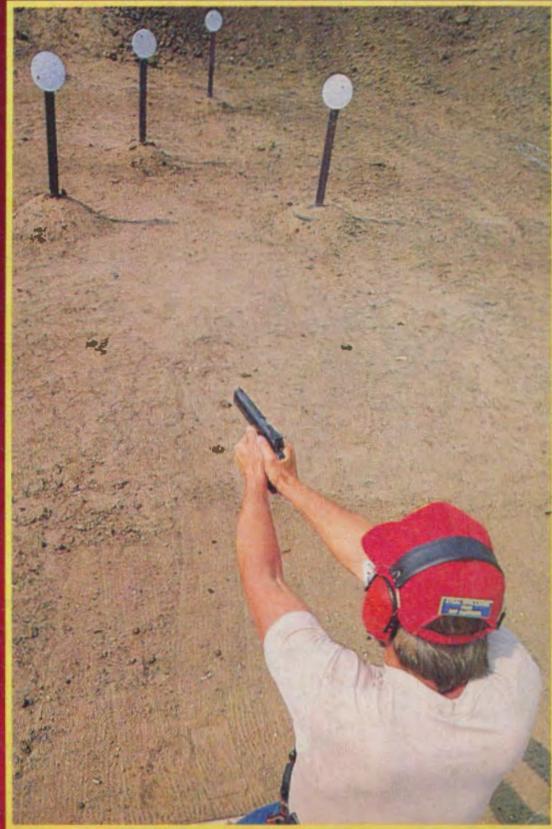


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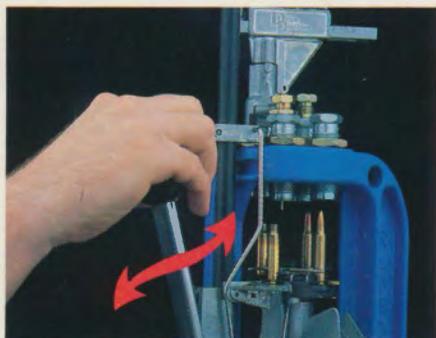
**MODEL 66**

## EASY AS A-B-C...

Most shooters realize that reloading is the most economical way to enjoy their sport, but many shooters are unaware of just how simple and easy it is to reload. In fact, the Dillon RL550 System is the easiest in the world to learn to reload with. How can we make that statement? It's simple, since all of the reloading steps are performed with one stroke of the handle, there is less to remember (or forget) than with the old fashioned single station press. Skeptical? Follow me through the ABC system.



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**C** Advance the index sprocket with your thumb and your Dillon RL550 will automatically eject the loaded round into a convenient bin. What next? Repeat step "A", sound easy? You're damn right, it is.



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**Complete (Less Dies)**



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# AMERICAN HANDGUNNER

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

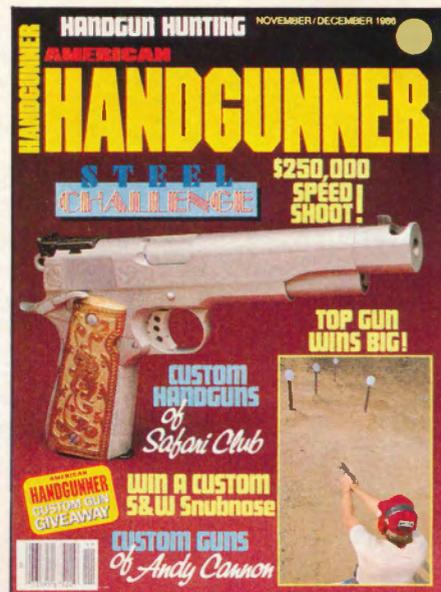
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Cover: American Handgunner's Steel Challenge prize pistol. Photo by Roger Andrews. Inset: Chip McCormick, Top Gun.



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 . . . Ross Seyfried

Until now shooters looking for a dedicated chronograph have been torn between two choices. To go with a full feature skyscreen based system at a premium price. Or purchase a low end "break screen" or "down range box" at a more reasonable price but lacking the ease of use and superior performance of the microprocessor based skyscreen machines.

- each time you fire

```
#05 3456.2 FPS
AV: 3447.1 FPS
```

After you complete your string, you press the REVIEW button to see the following:

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- highest and lowest velocities

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- extreme spread and average deviation of your rounds

In addition all shots can be individually reviewed after you have finished your string. Why is that important? With other chronographs you must shoot, stop, put down your gun, pick up your pencil, write down your velocity, put down your pencil, pick up your gun and repeat. That stinks! With the PACT PC, fire your whole string, up to 200 shots, then use the REVIEW button to receive a statistical summary of your string followed by the display of each shot fired.

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# HANDGUN LEATHER

BOB ARGANBRIGHT

## ROADRUNNER HOLSTER IS COMFORTABLE AND CONCEALS LARGE AUTOS VERY WELL

While studying the new Sparks catalog, I found what appeared to me to be an excellent strong-side hip holster for the Colt .45 autopistol. Cataloged as the Roadrunner, from the photograph it appeared to be an improved pancake style holster. The next mail carried my request for a sample "Roadrunner" for testing.

I am delighted with the Roadrunner holster. Of a modified pancake configuration, it has all of the pancake's advantages with the problems solved. The opposing belt slots raise the holster higher than the traditional fold over belt loop, and distribute the weight over a much larger area of the waist belt, both increasing wearer comfort. My sample holster, when worn just behind the point of the hip on the strong side (the so called "FBI carry"), places the muzzle of a Colt .45 Government model at the very top of the hip pocket. The pancake design tends to ride closer to the body than other hip holsters, and the Roadrunner adequately conceals a full size Government Model under a jacket.

The Roadrunner is constructed of one piece of lightweight, handmolded leather in



an attractive cordovan color. Rather than the traditional two piece pancake construction, the pouch is made of a single piece of leather folded at the rear, with a heavy welt down the

front edge. This produces a lightweight, closed bottom pouch with a sight channel formed by the welt. The trigger guard is enclosed for safety, yet the holster is formed so there is no leather in the critical trigger guard-grip junction, allowing a full shooting grip with first hand contact. Many holsters fail this crucial test.

Rather than the usual thumb break retaining strap, the Roadrunner relies on proper wet molding for a secure friction fit. For a holster designed for defensive use, this is far superior. Ray Chapman has told me that he has seen many of his students at the Chapman Academy, when under the pressure of competition, miss the thumb break on their holsters and attempt to muscle the gun free. In a life or death situation, missing the thumb break during a panic grab for your gun could be fatal.

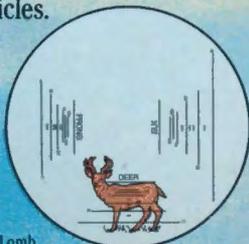
And finally, the feature which makes the Roadrunner special is a steel band encircling the top of the pouch. This adds rigidity to the pouch, adds to the friction fit security, and prevents the pouch from collapsing after the gun is drawn, allowing easy one hand reholstering. The steel is covered with leather, and encircles the pouch around the trigger guard rather than around the front. This allows the front of the holster to be low cut, speeding the draw. The roadrunner is as fine a strong-sided high ride hip holster for Government and Commander Models as I've found. The Sparks catalog is \$2 from Milt Sparks, P.O. Box 187, Idaho City, ID 83631.



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*The first, firing, collector longarm ever issued to honor the Americans who fought for freedom in Vietnam.*



Optional-walnut display case



*"Bear any burden,  
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Support any friend,  
Oppose any enemy..."*  
JFK, 1961

Like their fathers and older brothers who served at the Bulge, Okinawa and Pusan, our Vietnam Veterans served our nation for the same principles of "duty, honor, country" that have always guided our American fighting men in combat.

And, like many dedicated Americans, the Thompson served proudly in all three wars. In fact, many Vietnam Veterans report that the Thompson was more highly sought after than any other weapon, due to its reliability under jungle conditions and the stopping power of the .45 ammo it fired — two characteristics found lacking in certain other military-issued weapons.

Now, the American Historical Foundation is proud to honor our Vietnam Veterans through the issuance of the Vietnam War Commemorative Thompson.

## Limited Edition Of Only 1500

Only 1500 will be made in this strictly limited edition commissioned by The American Historical Foundation and built to the Foundation's specifications by the official maker of the famous Thompson, Auto-Ordnance Corporation. Each is specially serially numbered between 0001 and 1500, with the prefix V (for Vietnam). This serial number is also inscribed on the accompanying Certificate of Authenticity, which attests to the 24-karat gold plating and the edition limit.

The Vietnam War Commemorative Thompson is being produced in a semiautomatic firing version, so no special license is required to own one. Upon special request, a deluxe model, with nearly full coverage of hand engraving, will be produced and numbered within this edition limit.

These special, engraved models are available for \$4,500 each. A \$500 deposit will place your reservation.

The Vietnam War Commemorative Thompson has already been classified as a Curio and Relic by BATF, an acknowledgment of its collectible status. Firing instructions are included.

## Special Commemorative Features

This Thompson is a real man's weapon, constructed of 12 pounds of steel and walnut, but hand built with special commemorative features.

You sight across the 24-karat gold plated rear sight base and through the special, gold plated activator knob with a single rib, symbolic of the DMZ that divided the two Vietnams. The highly polished, gun-blued barrel is cut with 35 deep cooling fins and mounted with a mirror-

polished, 24-karat gold plated Cutts Compensator and front sight.

Your finger curls around the 24-karat gold plated trigger, as your left hand and right arm grasp the American walnut stocks — original G.I. production — hand finished with seven coats of hand-rubbed lacquer and polished to a gleaming presentation grade.

The stocks show off the 24-karat gold plated sling swivels, swivel mounts and screws which affix the black leather military sling.

You cradle the precision-milled receiver, which is highly polished to highlight the roll-engraved and gold-gilt filled commemorative inscriptions. The presentation side bears our Flag, the Vietnam Service Medal, the famous Thompson "bullet" trademark, and quotations from both Presidents Kennedy and Reagan. The reverse bears the special serial number, the issuing organization and the Thompson patents.

The shoulder stock is fitted with two, full-color, fired-enamel cloisonne medallions, bearing a gold plated inscription in black — symbolic of the Vietnam War Memorial — surrounding a circularized yellow and red flag of the Republic of Vietnam. The pistol grip is fitted with a matching medallion embossed with the Great Seal of the United States and commemorative tributes.

## This Is A Firing Thompson!

This no-nonsense Commemorative is a fully functional, firing Thompson, chambered for the same famous, readily available, .45 ACP ammunition that G.I.s and American shooters have used since 1911. Because it fires in the semiautomatic mode, you do not need a special submachine gun license to own it. Anyone who can own a standard hunting rifle can own this Thompson Commemorative. And because it is a firing Thompson, it could be called upon to defend your home and family in the same manner in which it has defended American lives and freedoms for over 65 years. If you do not have a firearms license, we will coordinate delivery with you through your local firearms dealer after your reservation is received at Foundation Headquarters. If you do have a federal license, send a signed copy, and your Thompson will be delivered directly to you.

## Highly Collectible

Because of the extremely small edition limits and their availability as semiautomatics, Thompson commemoratives have become some of the most highly collectible firearms in recent history. Previous Thompson commemoratives have been quickly fully subscribed and now bring significantly higher prices on the collector market.

A furniture-finished walnut display case, green vel-

vet lined and fitted with an acrylic glass lid and three solid brass locks, is also available to show and protect your investment.

## How to Reserve: Satisfaction Guaranteed

Available exclusively from The American Historical Foundation, you may use the reservation form below or call toll free. Your satisfaction is guaranteed, or return for a full refund within one month.

With your reservation, you will be made a Member of the Foundation and receive expert information concerning the history, care and display of military arms and edged weapons.

Prompt response is required if you are to be one of only 1500 men, museums and organizations worldwide who have the opportunity to own one of these extremely rare, firing showpieces. If the edition is sold out before your reservation is received, your deposit will be refunded and your name placed on a standby list. This special commemorative Thompson is assured a place of honor in any collection, and it provides a lasting, tangible link between those Americans who fought for freedom in Vietnam and their forebears of World War II and Korea.

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Satisfaction Guaranteed or Return in 30 Days for Full Refund

To: The American Historical Foundation  
1142 West Grace Street, Dept. B121  
Richmond, Virginia 23220  
Telephone: (804) 353-1812  
24-hour toll free reservations: (800) 368-8080

Yes, I wish to reserve the Vietnam War Commemorative Thompson, selectively plated with 24-karat gold, with roll-engraved inscriptions and deluxe presentation-grade finish. Only 1500 will be made. I will also receive a Certificate of Authenticity, membership in the Foundation and information concerning the history, care, display and firing of the Thompson.

My deposit of \$95 (or credit card authorization) is enclosed. Please invoice (or charge my credit card) for the balance due:

- in four equal payments of \$300.
- in six equal payments of \$200.
- in full.

My payment in full (or credit card authorization) for \$1295 is enclosed.

Also please send the optional furniture-finished walnut display case. Please add \$225 to the final charge of the payment I have selected above.

Name.....

Address.....

For Visa, MasterCard or American Express, send account number, expiration date and signature. Virginia residents please add tax.

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Instead they chose to pay the single copy price. Perhaps they didn't realize that by subscribing they would have saved more than \$10 off the cover price with a three year subscription. Better yet, the convenience of home delivery could have saved them several trips to the newsstand, hoping that at least one copy of the latest *Handgunner* remained.

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waiting for. Besides that, every issue will bring you great columns on: combat shooting, pistolsmithing, customizing, IPSC, handgun leather, and much much more!

Just think, if you don't subscribe, someday you could end up at your local newsstand with your hands out and your mouth wide open when they tell you, "We're all out!"

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**AMERICAN  
HANDGUNNER**

**America's Only Magazine Devoted  
100% to Handguns**

# HANDLOADING

DAN COTTERMAN

## SIERRA RELOADING MANUAL OFF BASE ON 9mm LUGER CARBIDE SIZING DIES

I said feedback would be welcome. We got it. A while back, Stephen Shalet, of Elk Park, PA, outlined a system for handloading the .45 ACP. He said, "I have always adjusted my seating die so that it loaded my .45 ACP cartridges to headspace on the bullet. (That is, the bullet touches the rifling.) This allows the use of a heavy taper crimp or roll crimp. All that is necessary is to make sure that the base of the round is even with the chamber hood. This is adaptable to any length or weight of bullet, except perhaps light, short semi-wadcutters. Feeding, chambering, and headspace are constant. Also, cases require trimming less often, if at all, since the case does not headspace on the case mouth, and case length is not critical."

Outstanding among the feedback letters was one from Walter W. Burdin, a Mobile, AL, handloader who wrote, "Without taking a thing from Shalet's accomplishment, I must say that he has reinvented the wheel. Briefly, this works extremely well, especially for target loads. I have used the method for years, and have loaded up to factory levels with no indications of excess pressures.

"Now, let me expound a little. I started handloading years ago when I was working on my outdoor pistol rating. Not long after I started, one of our local shooters (a Lifetime Master, as I recall), showed me his method for tailoring a target load for minimum headspace. It takes a little while the first time, but if you lock your dies well, you never have to do it again. Disassemble the .45 and set up your dies. Then, with empty cases, seat the slug to where it feeds smoothly and positively, but still has no appreciable slop at the head. You can assemble the barrel and slide, insert a test round, and check the headspace very precisely. Then you set the die to crimp the bullet without changing the overall length. This works well as long as you stay with target loads, and exceptionally well with wadcutters.

"After a few years of intensive work I decided I was never going to be a champion and cut back on my match shooting . . . however, I did not abandon the loading method. Since I load for several .45s, I did increase the headspace by minute amounts until I had a round that would work in all of my pistols with acceptable accuracy and complete reliability. Most of my loads are now service level and there have never been any pressure signs from these. The few loads above that level used the traditional methods and were no fun to shoot (not very accurate, either), so I generally stay away from the hot stuff."

Burdin says the late Alton Dinan, a New England gunsmith and handloading experimenter, developed the method. "His tests," Burdin continues, "indicated that a light crimp produced a more accurate load than taper crimping . . . he used a roll crimp, with the rim turned in for about half the thickness of the case, so there was still a small ridge for safety."

Something of a minor gnostic clash has been occurring. Writing in the July/August issue of *American Handgunner*, I mentioned availability of an RCBS carbide-insert resizing die in 9mm. Confusion resulted because both old and new Sierra reloading manuals state as follows: "The tapered case (of the 9mm Luger) prevents most manufacturers from offering resizing dies in the tungsten carbide versions. . . ."

Those who thought they'd discovered disagreement apparently did not note that the Sierra writer said *some*, not *all*, manufacturers. That was probably because such dies

were available from Lify Tyme, of Covina, Calif., a long time ago, when Sierra's 9mm section was written.

The real difficulty lies in the fact that, according to RCBS customer service technician Jay Postman, *all* carbide resizing die inserts are tapered, at least to some extent. "That's because even with a straight-sided cases, like the .357, there'll be a slight taper after firing," he explained. Moreover, it's certain that no manufacturer has ever been prevented from offering carbide dies in 9mm.

I checked with Sierra on this and spoke with their bulletsmith, Jim Hull, who indicated that the controversial statement would not appear in future printings of the manual.

Bulletsmith? The title ties in with an excellent new Sierra service. To reach one of Sierra's bulletsmiths for answers to your handloading problems, you have but to call 1-800-223-8799 between 7:30 in the morning ad 2:30 in the afternoon, weekdays, Pacific Time. The 800 number is in effect throughout the U.S., except in California, where the number to call is 213-941-0251. Soothing sooth in solution of handloading difficulties is free; however, if you're up to your ears in a ballistics puzzle and they have to fire up the computer, there's a \$10 charge.

Your suggestions for better handloading are appreciated and will be published as soon as possible. The address is Handloading, Rt. 1, Box 7, Llano, CA, 93544.



## The Handloader's Right Hand



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ROB LEATHAM

## TO PERFECT YOUR SKILLS IS THE GOAL OF PRACTICE, NOT PERFECTION ITSELF

Practice makes perfect. How many times have you heard it? Dozens, hundreds, thousands. Do you actually believe it? I don't! I like to think perfection is unattainable.

Think about it for a minute. What is perfection? I've watched auto racing, golf, basketball and any number of other sporting events and cannot say I've ever seen perfection. Yes, I have seen a hole-in-one, 215 mph laps at Indy, Brian Enos shooting down 505 consecutive plates at The Bianchi Cup. As exciting and spectacular as these feats are, I cannot say any were examples of perfection.

Now, before you start calling me names and thinking up examples to prove me wrong, think about what perfection is. Perfection is something we strive for, something to be desired and pursued—but is never reached. If that were to happen, would not all learning stop? Who is to say when perfection is reached?

What we strive for is to do as well as we possibly can at our chosen task. We are pistol shooters. We strive to shoot pistols as well as we can. To do this we practice. I shoot tens of thousands of rounds a year, trying to master the handgun and with every round I fire I become more aware of how much more I must learn.

We experiment. We try any and everything, keeping those techniques and skills we find useful and discarding those of no value. Practice is a research and development exercise. We find new ways to do a given task, then *perfect* it. Both in its application and execution.

Did you catch the working word there? *Perfect* what you are doing. Improve your skills. Seek perfection in *how* you do things. You are only able to control the outcome of what you are doing, with the way you are doing it. *Perfect the way*, the methods needed to execute the task at hand. Learn to shoot as well as you can and though you never will become perfect, you may become the best and that is all anyone can hope for.

Now that today's lesson has been delivered, let's look at some of the practice drills you may use to develop your skills.

When practicing, if it be for a match or self-defense, keep in mind you would like to develop a state of mind that you would be able to duplicate in a stress situation. If you are practicing for the IPSC Nationals and are using a set of basic exercises, realize now it is not OK to miss a shot or bumble a draw, unless it would also be OK to do so in the match. You will do in the match what you do in practice.

Skills are developed on the practice range and exhibited at the matches. Use range time

wisely. Avoid wasting ammo and concentration. Enjoy the practice so will you enjoy the match. Never force yourself to practice if you really don't want to. A hundred rounds fired with concentration and control are better than a thousand fired frivolously.

What kind of physical skills must one have to compete in an IPSC or other action-type pistol event? Learn to draw the pistol quickly, safely and consistently. Always strive for improvement. Learn to rapidly reload the weapon while moving and behind cover. Learn to shoot targets at different distances as quickly as possible. Find out whether you prefer to swing your gun left-to-right or right-to-left and why. Neither has been proven superior, yet most people have a preference.

A few drills I use frequently are as follows: From the draw:

1. Single shots on a target from varying distances of 10 to 40 yards.
2. Same as above, but two shots.
3. Multiple shots on multiple targets. Example: two targets at 10 and 20 yards. Draw and fire two shots on each, alternating the close target first, then the farther target first.
4. Two shots on a target at 5 yards, reload and repeat.
5. Two shots on one target at 40 yards.
6. Two shots each on three targets at 40.
7. I like to finish a practice session with some sort of complicated drill such as

an *El Presidente*.

8. Fire a magazine or two slow fire at a 50 to 60 yard target, trying for the most centered shots possible.

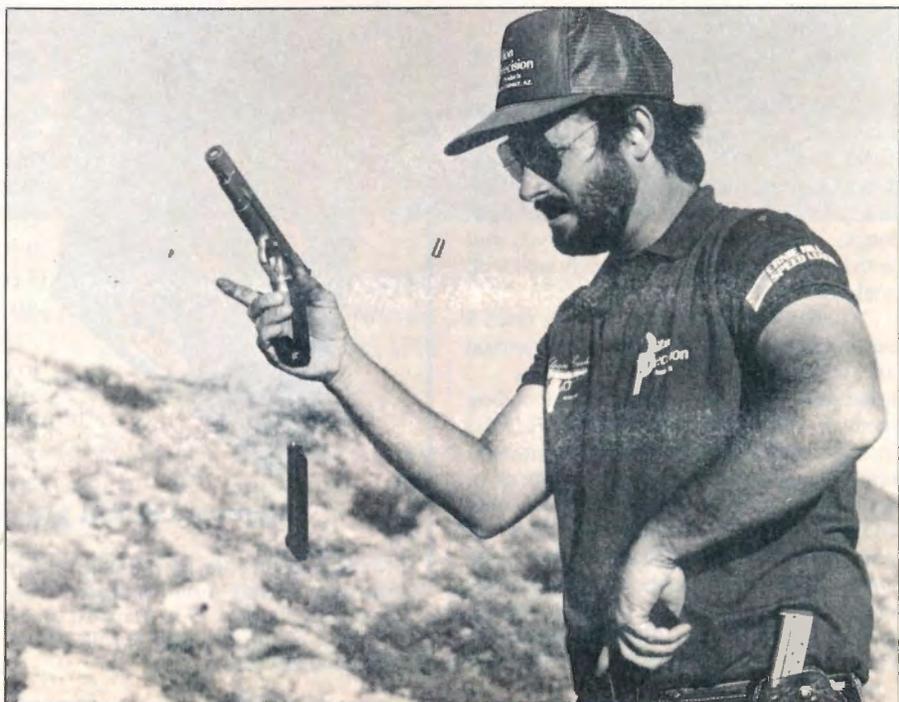
These drills are only a basic guideline, but when you can perform them consistently and quickly you will at least have a basic foundation to build on. Later you will find other types of shooting problems will need to be mastered such as weak-hand and strong-hand, shooting around obstacles and shooting partially concealed targets.

I practice these things frequently and find they can be most humiliating. Ever tried to quickly hit a 35 yard target strong-hand? Don't wait to see it in a match first! Be prepared when you get to an event and you will be better prepared to deal with the task.

By now we should have come to the conclusion that we must practice as often as possible to build and maintain our skill level. There are many aids that you can purchase these days that claim to make you a better shot. Some are valid, but far too often they are simply a waste of your money and time. One that most good shooters use is the electronic timer of one brand or another.

They are very helpful in showing you exactly where you need improvement. You will find it almost impossible to work out little kinks in your draw without an accurate timer as the time required to perform a draw is very small. Any of the good timers will tell time in hundredths of a second.

With a lot of practice and perseverance, anyone can become a competent pistol shot. If you work real hard for years to come, you may end up being one of the greats. I personally know most of the best practical shooters and know for a fact none were born great shots. Each and every one of them work very hard to build and increase the skills they use. Who knows, one of you may be the next Mickey Fowler or Brian Enos. You may be closer than you think.





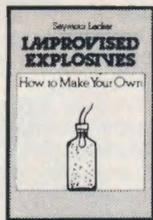
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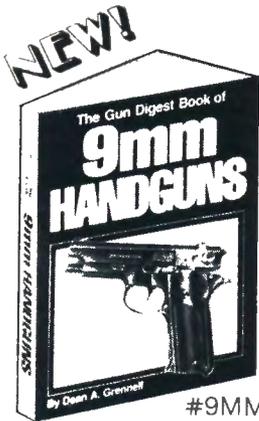
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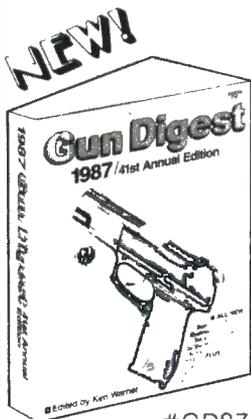
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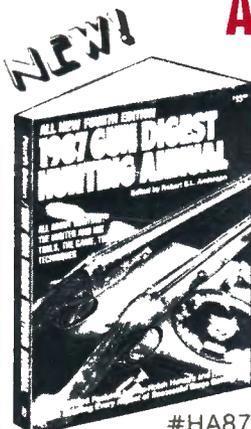
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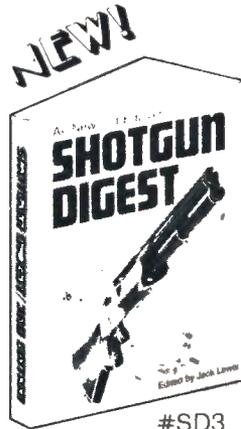
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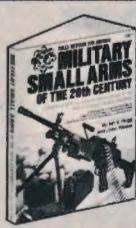
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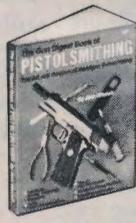
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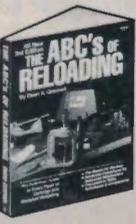
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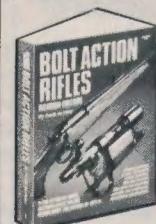
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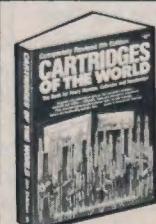
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 #PSRC..... \$13.95

# HANDGUN HUNTING

J.D. JONES

## BULLET SELECTION IS LARGELY A MOOT POINT AS LONG AS YOU HIT CORRECTLY

Cast bullets versus jacketed. Hollowpoints versus soft points. Lightweight versus heavyweight bullets. Which has the most stopping power—the most killing power?

The controversy will never end. But let's put a few things to rest—at least for the duration of this column.

The deadliest bullet is the one that is placed properly. It's true that some .44 Magnum lightweight hollowpoint bullets will disintegrate very shortly after impact with a deer-sized animal. It's also true that same bullet, after its velocity has dropped, may fail to penetrate the shoulder muscle and shoulder blade of an adult whitetail.

It's also true that a bullet that disintegrates shortly after impact will kill like a lightning bolt if the impact area is over the heart, lungs, brain or spinal column. It is also true that even if it doesn't have enough penetration for a shoulder shot at long range, the same bullet slipping in between two ribs and piercing the heart will quickly be fatal.

The same bullet would likely have enough

penetration to pierce the skull or the spine just behind the head. It's also true the same bullet, or any other for that matter, can impact in an area that will give everything from a superficial scratch to a lingering death.

My point is simply that deer are easily killed with any properly placed bullet of adequate power. The heart cannot tell if it is pierced by a 180 Sierra HP or a 340 grain cast bullet. The owner of the heart can't tell either.

Now, if you want to argue about what does the best job under a certain set of circumstances you can make a good case for a particular type projectile. Just pick your particular case and go to work on it. You will undoubtedly come up with a good argument. Then pick another set of circumstances and you will probably come up with a pretty good argument for something else. Try it, it's kind of interesting.

About the only kind of bullet that I can't come up with a decent argument for using is a fairly pointed round nose or those that would be a round nose if they didn't have a little flat

point on them. They are usually considered silhouette bullets or designed as penetrators. Revolver velocity isn't high enough for them to give much tissue damage in passing through. A blunt round nose, however, does an amazing amount of damage as does a cast bullet with a substantial flat point.

I don't have a bone to pick over any particular type of bullet—I use most of them or I wouldn't know what to expect of them.

Generally speaking, bullets made from tubing are my least favorite. The last bear I took was with a Federal 240 grain HP from a 44 Mag revolver at about 75 yards. He stood up and the Federal 240 punched his breastbone, heart and spine before glancing off a rock and howling away. Doubt if a 20mm would have been more effective on that shot.

There seem to be quite a few uninformed shooters who think cast bullets can't be made to expand effectively. I'd like to recommend Verl Smith's small book, *Jacketed Performance With Cast Bullets* to those who would like to know how to do it. It's \$6.95 postpaid from Lead Bullet Technology, POB 357, Cornville, AZ, 86325.

For normal whitetail hunting, if a revolver is of larger bore size than .357 most any bullet will do an adequate job if it's put in the right place. Bullet selection for the high velocity single shots is another subject altogether and the above may or may not apply to them, depending on caliber.

While we are dealing with a controversial subject you may have read the short in *Gun Week* regarding Beretta U.S.A. contributing to the campaign of a Mr. Sachs—an anti-gun candidate for the office of Governor of the state of Maryland.

Well, I wanted to see for myself what the score was—particularly since the Beretta-sponsored outing to visit their plant and a shooting facility in conjunction with the Outdoor Writers of America convention was several people shy of what it would have been if Beretta had not made the contribution to Mr. Sachs, so I inquired by letter.

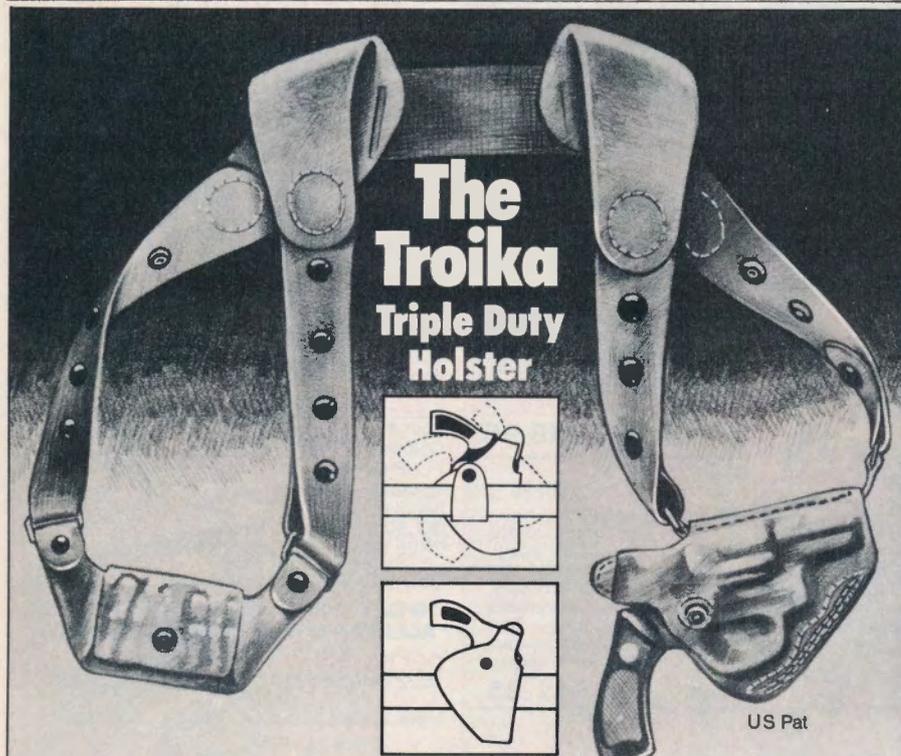
Mr. Robert Bonaventure, Vice President and General Manager, replied to the effect that yes, Beretta did in fact contribute to Mr. Sach's campaign and it was obviously a mistake. They were not aware of Sach's true feelings as he maintained a low profile of his anti-gun sentiments. (Kinda like a snake in the grass type? JDJ)

Beretta has "formalized" strong working relationships with numerous pro-gun groups and arranged a screening process with NRA/ILA to review political candidates and has established a strong policy of support for the pro-gun lobby.

They claim to have invested over \$200,000 in support of shooting and the shooting sports.

The letter was exceptionally well planned and contained considerably more detail than presented here. All well and good, if it happens.

I doubt if much of anything would have happened if pressure hadn't been brought to bear on Beretta by interested parties. Now I think I'll watch and see what happens.



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\*Patent Pending

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### EASY TO USE

The MKII is about as easy to use as your pocket calculator. For example, to enter a stop beep or "par time" at 4 seconds, simply push "PAR". The timer will tell you "ENTER PAR TIME AND PUSH SET" so you push "4", "SET". Want to change it to 6 seconds? Just push "PAR", "6", "SET", it's that simple!

### GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE:

Let's say you fire six shots, reload and fire six more shots. Here is an example of what the Timer will display:

```
#012 .27 6.67
FIND SHOT 7
```

- You have fired 12 shots.
- Your twelfth shot came .27 seconds after your eleventh shot.
- Your total time was 6.67 seconds.

```
#007 1.54 4.07
FIND SHOT
```

Now you are curious about how long your reload took, so you tell the Timer to "FIND SHOT #7" and you see that your reload took you 1.54 seconds. [The timer between your sixth and seventh shot.]

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```

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# COP TALK

MASSAD AYOOB

## STUN GUNS NOT EFFECTIVE; DRAW GUN, NOT BATON, AGAINST KNIFE ASSAILANT

I've been reading a lot about the Nova "Stun Gun." Have you worked with it? What is your opinion?

Compassionate Texan

I think the Nova "zapper" is a neat little item, if you know what you're doing with it. Its 50,000 volts with low amperage can, indeed, turn a bad guy into a whimpering mass of protoplasm with no ill effects, if you can hold the unit on him long enough, in the right place!

The Nova delivers about the same "electronic ballistics" as the famous Taser, but is not considered a firearm like the Taser and can be owned by any private citizen freely in most jurisdictions.

The problem is, you have to hold it on a guy for two or three seconds to make it work. At the Ordnance Expo show in Los Angeles in January, 1984, John Farnam and I were the only two volunteers. John deliberately did not fight back because he wanted to feel what

it could do, and after a couple of seconds when he did want it to stop, it had already numbed out his muscles and he was "neutralized."

I tried to do the same thing, but when the prongs went in under my left ribcage, my left hand disavowed any knowledge of my intellectual research purposes and slapped it away. If you try to just zap the opponent, it's easy to defeat.

I believe it is useful only for the one out of 100 people who buy it, who know "pain compliance." That is, if you want to make the north side of the bad guy's body turn north-east, so you can get a good restraining hold on him, you apply the Nova to the south side of him in a northeasterly direction. As his body moves instinctively away from the pain, he surrenders himself to your restraining hold.

Without that knowledge, you'll have to find a way to hold him still for two or three seconds while you apply the electro-output

into his nerve centers, and he probably won't sit still for that. When applied by an amateur, the Nova in my experience is likely to cause the individual to move suddenly away from the pain, and reflexively try to punch you out.

Still, when you press the button and the blue bolts crackle across the probes, it *does* make a lot of people step back.

### BATON OR GUN AGAINST KNIFE?

*As a practicing martial artist and long-time follower of your work, I am aware that you don't think much of the nunchaku (karate sticks) but seem to think the world of the PR-24 Police Tonfa stick. Yet I was told by an officer who attended one of your seminars that you had said you would drop your PR-24 and draw your gun if you faced a person with a knife.*

*To me, the ability of nunchaku or tonfa or PR-24 to take a knife out of an attacker's hand means that you wouldn't have to kill a 15-year-old kid who came at you with a knife. Since you seem to make a big thing out of not killing people unless you absolutely have to on the one hand, yet put down the ability of superior martial arts weapons to defeat knives without gunfire, you are being hypocritical.*

L.A. Martial Artist

To answer that question, we have to go beyond the weapon and into psychology. I teach the gun, the knife, and impact weapons. If locked in a room with a guy who had nunchuks or a sidehandle baton, and was personally armed with a knife, I believe I would come out alive with a broken arm and

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my opponent would not come out at all. The "chuks" and the PR-24 have reach, but lack the speed and flexibility of a trained knife-man who has virtually no weight and momentum that he has to balance his quick-moving body against.

I am one of 15 men on the national PR-24 Instructors' Staff, and have lectured at national PR-24 baton instructors' seminars, open only to certified instructors and intermediate/master instructors. I have said there what I'll tell you now.

When a man armed with a gun *and* a club faces a man armed *only* with a club or a knife, he should draw his gun. It is understood that while all three are deadly, the gun is above the knife and the knife is above the club in pure lethality. If I face a guy with a knife and pull a club, I've just implicitly said to him, "Punk, I'm so much more a man than you are, I can take you with a less lethal weapon."

Now, that guy with the knife has no choice. To save face with himself, or with the other bikers in the bar or in front of the woman with whom he began the domestic dispute that resulted in the call to police that brought me here, *he cannot psychologically back down against a lesser weapon that I threaten him with.*

To save face, he has no choice but to fight me, and now I have to use PR-24 or nunchaku to their full power, to break his bones and perhaps cripple him for life. There is also a chance that I'll lose this encounter, and fall at his feet, forfeiting to him my gun and the keys to my patrol car. At moments like this, I remember the old patrol sergeant's axiom: "We ain't there to win fights, we're there to *stop* fights."

If I pull my gun on that young man with a knife or club, he knows he can surrender to me without losing face, because no one from the Wicked Witch of the West to the "Prez" of the Pagans Motorcycle Club could call him a wimp for dropping a knife or a lead pipe in the face of a drawn .357 Magnum revolver or .45 automatic. That means a greater chance of him dropping his weapon with no one being hurt. And if he comes for me, with the deadly force of his knife or club, I'm a lot less likely to lose.

When you blend in the critical legal and moral factors of "escalation/de-escalation of force" and "deterrence," you see why drawing the gun and stepping back in the face of threat from a "contact weapon" is the most reasonable, prudent, safe, and ultimately humane thing you can do, *for all concerned including the armed offender.*

I love my PR-24 as much as Jeff Cooper loves his .45 auto, and the one has become nearly as much a trademark of mine as the other has become a trademark of his, in police circles. But, just as Jeff teaches his students to use their .308 rifles against attackers with .45s if they're smart enough to gain the distance, I teach my students to draw their pistols against knife or club and step clear, instead of forfeiting the advantages of weapon technology, training, and range, and stupidly closing with the attacker on his terms instead of theirs.



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# SILUETAS

BERT STRINGFELLOW

## SILHOUETTE SHOOTING TECHNIQUES MAY BE BASIC, BUT STILL ESSENTIAL

The technique for firing a well aimed shot which strikes the target in the desired spot is the same for any rifle or pistol. The shooter must be prepared for the shot he is firing. He must have developed grip control, concentration for sight alignment and eye focus, breath and trigger control. A match is won or lost in the preparation stages, long before the match is attended.

The first step in preparing for competition is the selection of a pistol and cartridge. I personally recommend the Thompson Center Contender in either .357 S&W Mag or the 7mm TC/U cartridge for anyone who wishes to begin silhouette competition. The 7mm TC/U offers a flatter trajectory. However, a bit more care is required at the loading bench.

Thompson Center has made a number of improvements through the years, so be sure to purchase the latest model.

The next step in match preparation is the cartridge load development. Follow the load data from one of the many manuals available and test the loaded cartridges for grouping capability on paper targets at a distance of at least 50 meters. A one and one-half inch, five-shot group at 50 meters should be the maximum acceptable group size. A smaller group is more desirable. (Note: Hornady has developed an excellent pistol silhouette load data supplement to their loading manual which is available from Hornady of Grand Island, NE, 68801.)

After choosing a pistol and developing an accurate load for it, the fun begins. The shooter should take the combination to his local silhouette range and shoot targets at the four silhouette ranges. Adjust the pistol's sights to allow a six o'clock hold on each of the targets and *record the sight settings* from a predetermined zero, such as the bottom of the screw adjustment. Don't trust your memory for sight settings.

Consistency must be the shooter's goal. Select a shooting position which is comfortable and easy to get into. Align the sights on the correct target, then concentrate on the front sight. Center the front sight in the rear sight notch and make sure the top on the front sight is level with the top of the rear sight. Place the target on top of the front sight (a six o'clock hold).

Take a deep breath, exhale about half of it and hold the remainder. Focus the eye on the front sight, allowing the target and the rear sight to blur, then press the trigger until the pistol fires. Think in terms of pressing the trigger, rather than pulling it. If the shooter slowly presses the trigger, while maintaining his front sight focus and sight alignment, the pistol will go off as a surprise and the target will fall.

The grip or hold on the pistol must be the same for every shot. Use a hold or grip on the pistol which is strong enough to control the recoil, but do not try to overpower the pistol.

A pistol begins its recoil before the bullet exits the barrel, so a tight grip will shoot low and a loose grip will shoot high. Consistency is the answer.

Practice as much as possible and use a coach. Silhouette shooters are a friendly bunch. Just ask and you will be surprised how much help is ready and waiting. When you can't get to the range, dry fire the pistol at home. Concentrate on consistency and practice the drill of sight alignment, grip, breath control and trigger pressure. Practice until the front sight stays rock steady when the trigger breaks and the hammer or striker falls.

A shooter must develop a system for organizing and packing his shooting equipment for his trips to matches. This may not seem too important, but I have seen top competitors show up at championships missing everything from their sight screwdriver to their match ammo. Everyone seems to remember their pistol, but forget their accessories.

After arriving at a match and signing up the shooter should inspect his pistol one last time. Check the screws for tightness, return the rear sight screw to zero and then adjust it for the first bank of targets. Sight black is a great aid in sight alignment, especially in bright sunlight, so give the front and rear sights a light coat. The shooter should be ready to do his best. Club matches are very enjoyable and provide good competition, but the shooter should also consider them as an opportunity to practice and improve his shooting skills.

Silhouette matches are fun and exciting. If they weren't none of us would be participating. However, the shooter should never let his excitement cause him to forget his concentration on position, grip, sight alignment, front sight focus and trigger pressure.



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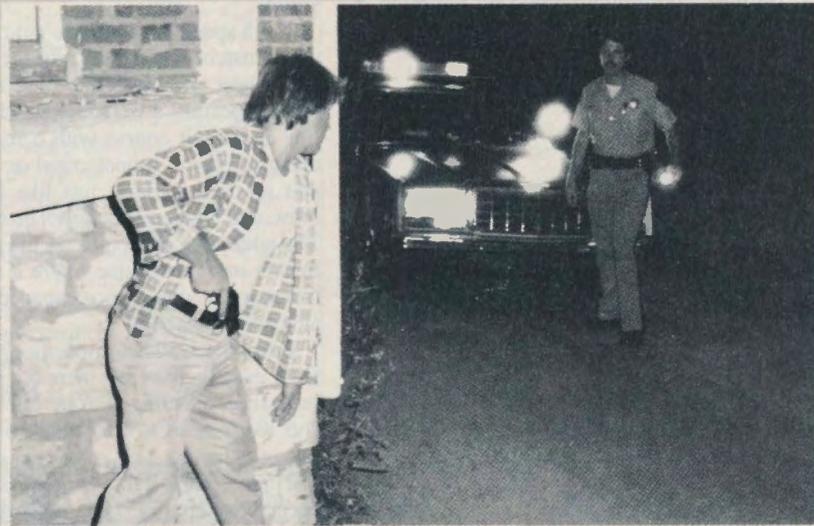


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CAMERON HOPKINS

## THE ROGERS COMBAT ASSAULT HOLSTER FEATURES NEW DESIGN, NEW PATENTS

Competition holsters, like Congress, hunting rifles and wives, are the result of compromise and concession. It seems you never can get exactly what you want without sacrificing principle for expediency.

The two prime requirements of a competition holster are at odds. Retention and speed, they conflict. We want a holster to be a vice grip clasping the pistol as tightly as a miser clutches a dollar bill. Yet we also want the holster to be slicker than oil on a mirror affording a fast, snag-free draw.

Of course the holster must reconcile these opposing directives while remaining in compliance with IPSC holster rules.

And those are just the obvious problems for a holster maker. Our intrepid leather stitchers must then allow for the vast diversity of shapes in custom IPSC pistols. Longslides, shortslides, fat comps, skinny comps, large widgets, small widgets.

Last but not least, the holster design must accommodate a variety of cants and slants, belts and bodies, positions and postures.

Bearing all that in mind, imagine my eyebrow wriggling higher and higher when I heard Bill Rogers extoll the new Rogers Combat Assault holster. It does not, Bill claimed, compromise speed for retention. It meets IPSC rules, and it fits all custom guns. Could it be the perfect holster?



Not quite, but the Combat Assault comes as close to that mythical notion of the Ultimate Holster as I've ever seen. Here's why.

Without going into a dissertation on holster engineering, suffice it to say that the

Combat Assault is possible only because of Rogers' patented thermo-laminate process which is a sturdy shell of plastic sandwiched between inner and outer layers of leather. The heart of the holster is the plastic insert which retains its configuration even after Hulk Hogan body-slams you into prone.

The Combat Assault features an entirely new design in that there is no welt and the holster itself is separate from the belt attachment. It's a two-position holster that combines—instead of compromising—speed and retention. This is accomplished by a “retention wedge” within the holster that permits the pistol to ride in two positions, loosely or firmly. There is also an adjustable tension screw.

For a speed draw (quick 'n dirty and standards matches) you merely insert the pistol in the holster. Its low-cut profile and lack of friction permit a very fast, glitch-free draw. For an assault course with a re-holster test during a sprint, tunnel crawl or wall climb, you insert the pistol, just like for a speed draw, and then give the pistol an extra shove. The additional shove pushes the pistol a hair further into the holster where it engages the “retention wedge.” Once engaged, that pistol ain't going nowhere!

From the wedged-in position the pistol is fairly easy to draw, but there is a sensation of resistance, a feeling of drag. But that's OK as you won't need a laser-quick draw after a retention test.

There's more. The Combat Assault incorporates a separate belt attachment that is

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It has come to our attention that due to occasional incompatibility of the Llama firing mechanism with some types of U.S. manufactured ammunition there is a possibility of an accidental discharge if the pistol is dropped or receives a blow with the hammer down in the rest-position and a round in the chamber.

TAKE NOTICE that the following safe-gun handling rules must be obeyed to avoid the risk of serious bodily injury:

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*Never carry the pistol with the hammer in the half cock position or permit the hammer to remain at half cock. While the hammer may visually appear at half cock, it may not be securely engaged into the half cock notch and only be perched on the edge of the notch.*

Llama Gabilondo y Cia, S.A.  
Stoeger Industries

screwed onto the holster itself with three screws, the bottom-most incorporating a rubber grommet for adjustment. This is a patented design called a "hook and loop tab system."

The hook and loop tab system serves to cant the holster away from the body which moves the butt of the pistol outwards. This allows for a more positive, quicker grip. It can also put the holster in violation of the two-inch rule. (*"The maximum inside dimension of the handgun may not extend more than 50mm (2") from the competitor's torso while standing relaxed."*)

The Combat Assault, on my belt on my waist, was in gross violation of this rule. The pistol protruded a good three inches. I hasten to add, however, that the Combat Assault does not violate the two-inch rule in all circumstances. We have tall shooters and fat shooters and stocky shooters and lady shooters—all these physiques are different. And the holster may ride in different positions on the belt.

But I found it necessary to do what any self-respecting IPSC shooter would do—customize it! I replaced the rubber grommet around the bottom screw with a thicker grommet which levered the holster into my waist. The holster now meets the two-inch rule on my belt, my waist. You may not have this problem, and the holster may fit you perfectly right from the box. Then again, you may have to put two grommets in place.

Another problem with the Combat Assault is that the gun drags in the holster even in the "quick release" mode. I dry-fired a bunch of practice draws, and the holster continued to cause fumbled draws. A phone call to Bill Rogers brought the solution—silicone spray. Actually, don't just "spray" silicone, drown the holster! Squirt silicone in there until it gushes out. Let it dry overnight and then drench it again. When the leather lining is completely saturated with silicone, away go the snagged draws. The silicone treatment does not affect the retention characteristics, it just alleviates a sluggish and awkward draw.

The Combat Assault holster is a sophisticated design combining speed and retention. The separate belt attachment permits a more accessible grip on the pistol. The thermolaminate construction keeps the holster from squishing flat when you go prone. It will pass all retention tests.

You may or may not find the two-inch rule a problem, but you can always replace the bottom screw's grommet with a fatter one. You will need the silicone trick to get the holster working properly. Give at least a week of dry-draws, with silicone, for break-in.

The Combat Assault deserves your consideration. It's available with a muzzle forward slant or straight up and down. The six-inch model fits most all Colt Gov't Model comp guns, and the five-inch model fits standard Colts. It's available in black or brown. The basket weave version retails for \$74.95 and the plain goes for \$68.95. For more information or to order, call 1-800-874-1610 toll free during business hours (PST).

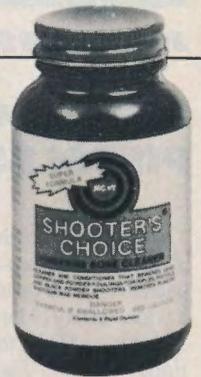


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# PISTOLSMITHING

JOHN LAWSON

## HAVE TOOLS, WILL TRAVEL—ROVING PISTOLSMITH STAYS BUSY AT MATCH

A weekend match or training exercise, in which seldom-fired street carry guns are used to expend up to 500 rounds, often reveal a wide variety of latent functioning problems. This proved to be the case at a recent International Combat Shooters Association (P.O. Box 631, Cathlamet, WA, 98612) meet at Pacific Pistolcraft's facility near Cathlamet, Wash.

Twenty-six police, security, military and civilian shooters from as far away as Arizona fired under cloudless skies. As designated pistolsmith and Range Safety Officer, I was in a unique position to inspect and tabulate the problems experienced by each pistol or revolver. I had a busy time; malfunctions were experienced in all three major categories.

The primary numbering system of malfunctions originated with Royal Flying Corps Armorer during the first part of World War I to designate simple or intermediate (Class I and II) stoppages that could be cleared without using tools, or the more

complex problems that required the services of "Ak Emma" armorers to put right.

Our weekend shooters experienced the more common Class I malfunctions with both pistols and revolvers.

**Pistols:** Failure to go completely into battery were due to rough extractor hooks, unthroated barrels and lead wiped across case necks by taper crimp dies. In one instance a rough slide face caused by cleaning jag damage was the culprit.

A Gold Cup would not feed Lyman 452460 bullets up its unaltered feed ramp.

**Revolvers:** Cylinder jams due to high primers in tight primer pockets or incomplete press handle strokes were encountered twice.

One puzzling cylinder and crane lockup was caused by three granules of unburned powder under the extractor, adding to the rearward pressure of an extremely tight barrel/cylinder gap and lead splatter and carbon on the cylinder face, resulted in the extractor rod digging a shallow groove across the breech face and freezing the assembly. A rawhide mallet freed the crane, but it would have responded to the heel of a hand, keeping it a Class I.

Class II Malfunctions were slower to clear.

**Pistols:** A squib round was the result of

taking a break and not making a ritual restart when loading a batch of ammo.

Annoyed by loose grips, a compulsive grip-screw-tightener had compressed the walnut grips, jammed the screw into the bushing and when the grips again loosened, he had stripped the threads in his alloy Commander frame. This was not a stoppage, but it required re-tapping the frame for oversize bushing and use of double sided tape on the back of the new walnut grips to prevent a recurrence.

The front sight of a stainless Officer's model loosened, but it did not release and become lost. It did require an eventual re-staking.

**Revolvers:** A Model 19's occasional light hammer fall was traced to use of a hammer spring of the wrong tension weight. A second hammer blow did the job, but it also had to be replaced.

Class III malfunctions that sent shooters to my truck looking for a loaner weapon were also present.

**Autos:** A Wichita rear sight moved in the dovetail because the lock screw had backed out from the hammering of some 300 heavy loads and had to be drifted to center and the lock screw properly tightened.

An undimpled slide stop over extending into the magazine well caused a slide to lock back in mid-string. (This is referred to by pistolsmiths as the Series 70 Syndrome.)

An undersize magazine catch screw head released and dumped the magazine in mid-string.

A stepped-on magazine caused a failure to feed. It was saved by judicious tapping over a mandrel. I have found that a body and fender man's hammer works better than anything for this job.

**Revolvers:** A Model 28 jumped grossly out of time, allowing the firing pin to center punch and deform the joint between the cylinder and extractor. It was sent out for major rebuilding.

My most surprising discovery of the weekend was that most of the malfunctioning carry weapons had never been given a proper wringing out of 300 rounds or so on the range. Some were new, out of the box, though the box had been discarded years ago.

The second busiest truck at the meet belonged to a custom holster maker. The obvious failures of certain kinds of holsters were most evident during the man-to-man competitions. This may have been partly due to the warm weather; visitors to the rain coast of Washington always come dressed for rain and foul weather.

I did make one great resolution: I am in the process of putting together a portable (hand tool only) pistolsmithing shop for the bed of my pickup. Later, when I can find a small generator, I may be able to mount a tiny drill press and grinder.

On the conscious level, it will be a practical addition to our next meet, while on a nostalgic plane, it reminds me of an Ordnance truck that jostled through morning mists in the Korean hills during the year of the Dragon.

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# MASTER TIPS

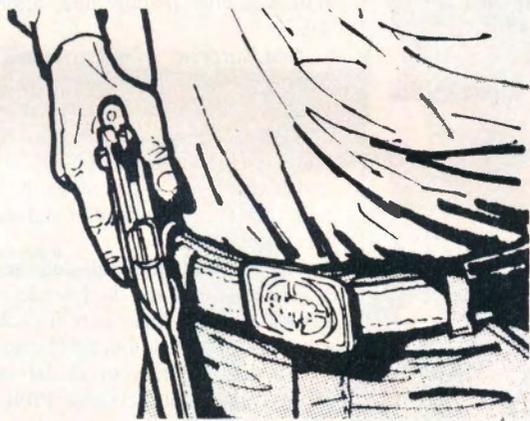
Collected by Jon Winokur

## Competition Leather

A good competition holster should have the following features:



1. It should be designed so that once it's adjusted to the proper position on the belt, it won't rock or slide during movement or drawing. (The belt should be rigid enough to prevent torsional movement of the holster while drawing.)

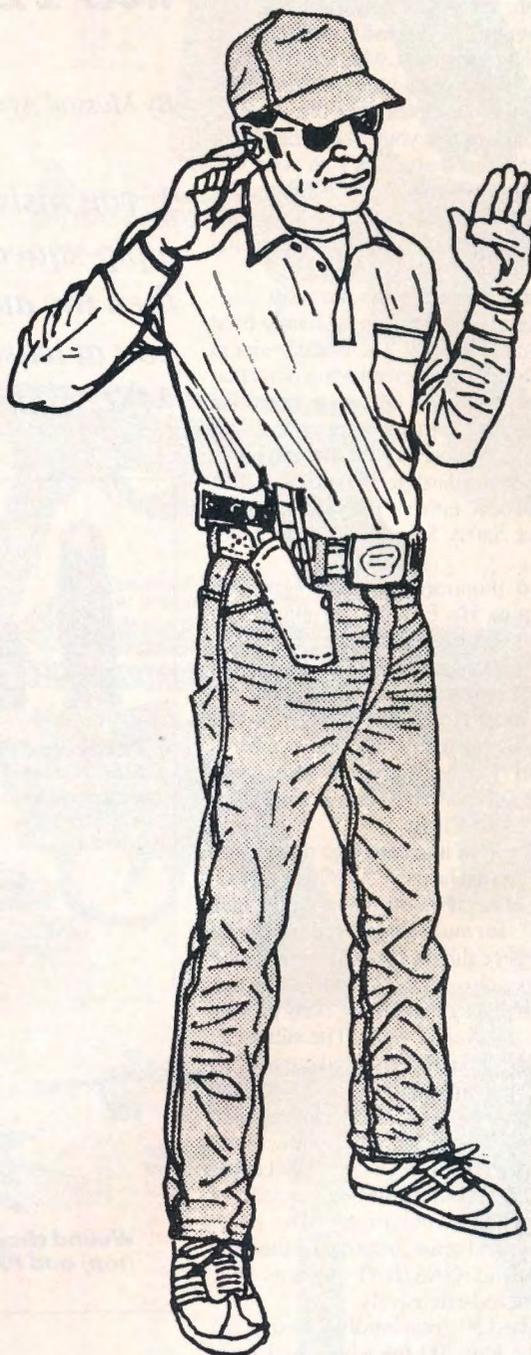


2. It should position the weapon so as to permit the shooter to establish a firm grip on the pistol from the beginning of the draw.

3. It should be designed so that it's as easy to re-holster as it is to draw.

4. A tension device should be incorporated in the construction of the holster to insure security after long and continuous use.

I prefer a holster that's cut down in the front so I don't have to raise my shoulder much during the draw.



BILL ROGERS, President, Rogers Holsters.

Most people knowledgeable on combat firearms agree that the .25 auto is a poor excuse for a defensive handgun, but many cops in search of tiny backup guns to fit their tailored uniforms, and civilians with pistol permits who can't abide a bulge in the Brooks Brothers, still rely on them. The need has existed, obviously, for a more effective .25 round.

Standard .25 ACP ball tends to slip through flesh, creating a tiny, dimpled, ice-pick-like wound. It is easily deflected by bone; I've met two men who survived .25 shootings when the blunt little jacketed bullet glanced off their temples. Yet the conventional wisdom was that you'd need a head shot to stop a determined attacker with your .25. For this reason, it was the one caliber for which I recommended the now almost impossible to find KTW armor-piercing round.

Winchester, in many ways our most innovative handgun ammo maker, valiantly tried twice to upgrade the .25. The first attempt in the early '70s was a jacketed hollowpoint that just didn't get going fast enough to open. By the '80s they had a hollowpoint with a tiny ball bearing in the nose to push the lead into a mushroom; at standard (feeble) velocity, that wasn't a success either. The much talked about Glaser Safety Slug in .25 Auto never did appear.

One who monitored the problem was Edwin Sanow. He brought an engineer's mind to his avocation of practical ballistics, and his publications in the field made him one of the fastest-rising young gun writers, and one of the most controversial. Fans of fast mid-caliber hollowpoints saw him as a Messiah who had risen in the Hoosier state, while the big-bore fans perceived him as something of a ballistic Anti-Christ.

His first venture into cartridge design was the .25 ACP round he calls "MSC," for Maximum Sub-Caliber. Feeling that if the "lighter and faster" formula improved stopping power in larger calibers it should work for the little one, he also sought a projectile that would punch through the heavy, bony protection of a felon's cranial vault. The silhouette came from the jacketed truncated cone (JTC) developed by Davis and Robbins for the USAF and now seen in Frontier's 9mm and .45 offerings. The point was hollow, however, and sharp edged so that the bullet could bite into bone and drive through instead of glancing off like a round-nose. The bullet material was solid brass, inspired by the German MEN and GAS/BAT designs that Sanow had tested extensively.

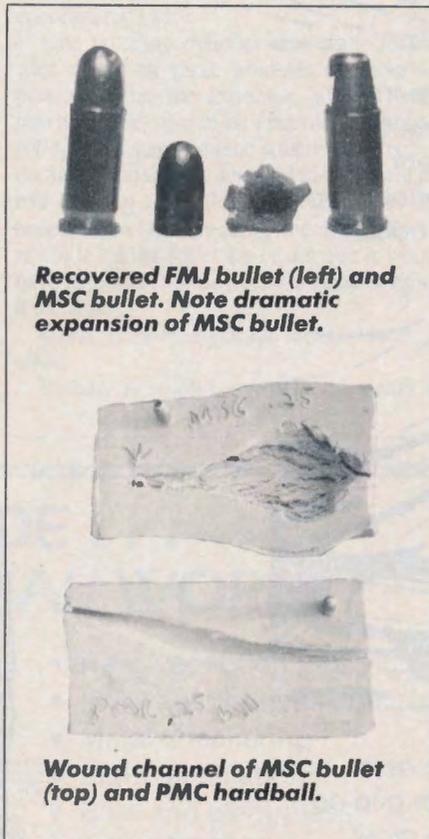
The standard 50 grain hardball load in .25 travels in the low 700 fps when fired from pocket pistol barrels, and 45 grain hollowpoints like the Winchester Expanding Point with the ball bearing or the equally non-expanding Blazer hollowpoint from Speer only add another 100 or so fps. The MSC, however, comes screaming out of the mousegun's muzzle at around 1200 fps. With the light, hard bullet, it can do so at safe pressures.

Never having seen a .25 that would mushroom, Sanow accepted fate and designated

# Maximum Sub-Caliber .25 Ammo

By Massad Ayoob

*If you insist on carrying a pip-squeak .25 auto, then the author insists you at least carry MSC ammo in it.*



Recovered FMJ bullet (left) and MSC bullet. Note dramatic expansion of MSC bullet.

Wound channel of MSC bullet (top) and PMCH hardball.

his projectile a "Non-Expanding Hollowpoint;" the function of the hole in the nose would be only to give it more purchase into hard resistance for skull penetration. Furthermore, with its weight to the rear, he hoped it would tumble once inside soft tissue, to create a miniature version of the M-16 bullet's famous "buzz saw effect."

First question: would it feed? We ran it through a Beretta Jetfire, a Colt Pocket .25, and a little old FN—predecessor of the

"Browning Baby"—that I bought used for this test for \$85 at Riley's Gun Shop in Hooksett, NH. One strong point of .25s, by the way, is their reasonable price for about any version besides a Baby Browning, including the highly functional yet *el cheapo*-priced Raven pistol. We experienced no failures whatever; recoil worked the slide smartly, and the jacketed truncated cone slid easily into the chambers.

Next came standard testing mediums. Blocks of Roma Plastilena #2 medium density modeling clay at room temperature were used. A "control round" of 50-grain FMJ PMC entered the block, veered upward halfway through, and exited. A second shot was fired into two blocks end to end; the totally undeformed projectile stopped in 10". Even where the first bullet tumbled, the widest part of the "wound track" was only 5/8 of an inch. Failure both for limited effect and for "soft tissue overpenetration."

We then tried the MSC out of the same FN pistol. While the block had merely quivered on impact of the FMJ .25 slugs, it jerked violently as the MSC projectile struck, and the sides of the block visibly expanded. This "balloon effect," etched permanently in the Roma Plastilena, reflects what ballisticians call "temporary wound cavity" and trauma doctors call "hyperextravasation," or blood-shot tissues in the disrupted area through which the temporary shock wave passed.

Cutting open the Roma Plastilena, we found that the MSC's disruption of the medium had begun before a depth of two-inches was reached, creating a blown-out area almost two-inches in diameter, or nearly four times what the FMJ had done. Penetration was now manageable, approximately 4½".

And, surprise: it had expanded. Instead of closing in on itself as Sanow had predicted, the thin walls of the hollow cavity had split and spread down to the solid base of the bullet. Half of the brass "fingers" thus created had sheared off in the medium. The bullet had turned sideways at the end and come to an abrupt halt.

I for one don't think self-defense is a job for a .25 auto, but if you do, I would urge you to get some MSC, make sure it cycles through your gun and load nothing else in the pistol. For a distributor, your dealer can contact Aron Lipman at Personal Protection Services, 101 Pittston Ave., Scranton, PA. Retail is about \$15 for nine rounds.

If you're considering trading in your .38 for a .25 loaded with MSC, you should run rather than walk to your nearest mental health center. But if you or some Good Guy or Gal you care about routinely trusts their life to a quality-made .25 auto, MSC will get that puny caliber up off its knees—or maybe, up off its back and onto its knees—and give that individual a fighting chance to live long enough to realize that a bigger gun keeps you alive better. The Maximum Sub-Caliber has got to be the best defense load for the .25 auto, and we're looking forward to testing the .380 and .45 ACP versions Sanow and Lipman are now collaborating on.



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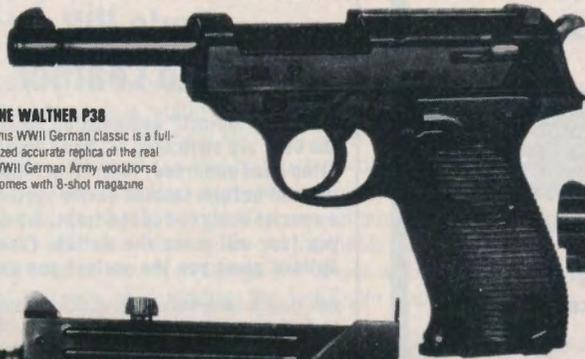
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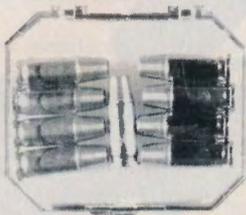
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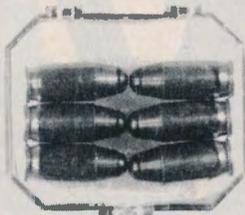


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## For The Record

I would like to set the record straight about one point in my article on Mag-Na-port's Professional .44 Magnum which appeared in the May/June 1986 issue of American Handgunner.

It seems that I could have unintentionally given the impression that the gun I test fired was serial number 001 which was the cased and sealed presentation revolver that appeared in one of the photographs in my article.

The truth is that this was actually one of two Professionals that I received for evaluation. Mag-na-port specifically asked that I not fire or work the action of the Professional number 001 and this request was honored.

This revolver was used only for photographic purposes and all firing and handling was done with the other revolver (serial number AHL 5727) which was identical in all respects except that its action was not sealed.

I regret any inconvenience to your readers that may have been caused by my failure to clarify this in the article.

Dave Arnold

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# The AYOOB Files

By Massad Ayoob

## GUNFIGHT AFTERMATH: THE LUIS ALVAREZ INCIDENT

**Situation:** You just used lethal force in righteous self-defense. Have you won?

At 6:08 p.m. on December 28, 1982, a shot was fired inside a video arcade that would rock the city of Miami to its roots. Within minutes after the fatal shooting of an armed suspect by a Miami police officer, a riot had begun that would take another life and cause millions of dollars in property damage. Although Professional Standards, the Miami police department's internal affairs unit, would rule the shooting to be justifiable, the Metro-Dade prosecutor's office saw fit to charge the officer with manslaughter. A classic instance of defending the justifiable homicide case in court was now underway.

Alvarez was 23-years-old at the time of the shooting, with a year and a half on the job, and had sufficiently proven himself to the extent that he was already a field training officer for younger recruits. At 3:00 that day he had picked up his new trainee, Luis Cruz, 21. Around 6 p.m., Alvarez parked the cruiser outside a video arcade in the tough ghetto of Overtown. The arcade was known to be frequented by dope dealers and other criminal types. Alvarez and Cruz began a routine "walk-through."

As they were about to leave, Alvarez noted a bulge under the yellow sweater of a tall, slim man playing an electronic game. Without speaking to Cruz, Alvarez approached the man and placed his right hand on the bulge. "What's that," asked the uniformed officer.

The suspect, Nevell "Snake" Johnson, 20, replied, "It's a gun."

Alvarez instantly placed his left hand on the bulge as his right hand drew his department-issue service revolver, a Smith & Wesson model 64 stainless steel .38 Special with 4" heavy barrel. He did not point the gun at the suspect, but instead held the left side of the revolver near the suspect's face. "Don't move," Alvarez stated according to the witnesses. "We're going out of here nice and quiet."

Alvarez tried to remove the gun, but couldn't; the sweater kept slipping over it and snagging. He placed his left hand on Johnson's shoulder to hold him still, turned his eyes toward the rookie who was now moving toward them, and told Officer Cruz, "Get the gun."

At that moment, "Snake" Johnson suddenly spun toward Alvarez, his arm moving. Alvarez could only see that the upper right arm was coming forward.

Alvarez fired. A Federal 158-grain lead semi-wadcutter hollow-

**Lesson:** You won the battle, but you could lose the war. Now you face the legal aftermath.

point at +P velocity struck Johnson at the point of the eyebrow, tore through the brain, and lodged fully mushroomed in the back of the head. Johnson instantly stiffened, lost consciousness, and fell to the floor. He would never awaken.

Alvarez broadcast that someone had bumped his arm and his gun had gone off, and requested an ambulance and backup units. By various accounts there were 35 to 57 people inside the arcade at the moment of the shooting. As Johnson fell, a young woman screamed, "They've killed The Snake!" Other patrons streamed outside shouting, "The pigs killed a brother for nothing!" The riot was underway.

At the same time, the wheels had been set in motion for the longest criminal trial in the history of the state of Florida.

It is not for me, in this article, to debate whether political motivations caused Officer Luis Alvarez to be charged with manslaughter. Rather, let us consider the attacks that were made upon him in court, and how his mind-set and his perceptions of his gunfight affected the trial and its outcome.

**Shotgun attack.** In the shooting, Alvarez faced a man armed with a .22 revolver; in court, he faced a shotgun barrage of charges. He was to learn that opposing counsel will take everything that might have been wrong with the handling of the incident, magnify any such possible oversight, and may indeed create issues that did not in fact exist. In the first stage of the encounter, he faced death at the hands of Nevell Johnson, who despite rumors to the contrary was in fact proven to be armed with an RG model 14, 3" barrel revolver loaded with Stinger .22 Long Rifle hollowpoints. The gun had been stolen, and there was evidence that Johnson might have used it to commit at least one felony prior to having been shot.

In the second stage, he faced the destruction of his life in a slower, more painful way: a Hispanic officer who had been convicted of manslaughter in the slaying of a black man did not have a promising future in prison. Even if acquitted, he knew, his ability to earn a living for the rest of his life would depend on the outcome of the trial.

**Not all issues can be covered** in this short discussion of the case. The trial lasted between seven and eight weeks, and the transcripts of testimony run to many volumes. As an expert witness

*Continued on the next page*

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Continued from page 27

for the defense, I was unable to be present for the testimony of other witnesses, and therefore will speak only of the issues brought up when I was cross-examined by Abe Laeser, the masterful attorney who led the prosecution's case against Alvarez.

**The cocked gun issue.** A cornerstone of the prosecution's case was that Alvarez had, against regulations, put his gun to the suspect's head and cocked it. Then, the prosecution wanted the jury to believe, Johnson had turned quickly to comply with the officer's orders—as opposed to turning to draw his gun—and the officer panicked and “the gun went off.”

Both sides had tested the spent cartridge to prove one way or another if it was fired single or double-action, and the results were inconclusive. There is enough primer flowback at the instant of firing that the heavier indentation of a single-action hammer fall is obscured in the primer pattern compared to the lighter impact of the shorter DA hammer drop.

The issue would be decided by the jury with logic. It happened that I was the one who had the golden opportunity to destroy the cocked gun argument, and did so with less than a minute of testimony. I explained succinctly the seven or eight reasons why the one eyewitness who said the gun had been cocked was not a credible witness, certainly not as credible as the many closer eyewitnesses who never saw the gun's hammer thumbed back. In fact, Alvarez had intentionally fired double-action, to save his life.

A lesson was learned here. Before the trial was over, all Miami PD revolvers had been modified to fire double-action only. Had this been done *before* the shooting, the prosecution, in my opinion, would have had one less red herring to throw before the jury.

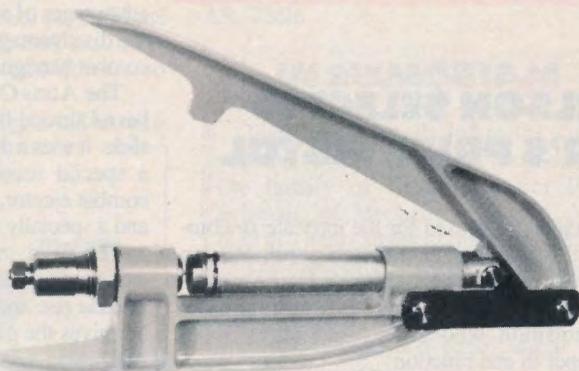
**Denial response.** Alvarez was badly hurt by that first statement, recorded at dispatch center and played back many times for the jury, that “someone bumped his arm and the gun went off.” As soon as investigators were on the scene, Alvarez explained that no one had bumped his arm, and he didn't know why he'd said that. The prosecutor grilled me on it, implying that it was intentional deceit employed by the officer in the wake of a wrongful shooting.

I replied that it was something else entirely: *denial response.* Alvarez was a young man who had taken the police job to help people, not to shoot them. Suddenly, he had been caught up in a death duel. He had fired a bullet into the head of a young man and seen him fall, and he knew that the person he had shot could not survive. There was something inside him, I explained to the jury, that said “I can't be responsible for this terrible thing.” It was, I continued, analogous to the person who has been told that a loved one has died and replied, “Impossible! He can't be dead!” When the mind faces something too terrible to intellectualize at the moment, the result is often a verbal denial of what has happened. The jury accepted this.

Continued on page 62

# TEST REPORT

## LEE HAND PRESS



By Dan Cotterman

We tested Lee Precision's Pro-1000 fully-automatic press and published the results in our November/December 1985 issue. "It's the world's fastest handloading press," says the Lee catalog, and we're not inclined to argue the point. The Pro-1000 indexes automatically, feeds cases into the shellholder, reprimers, dispenses powder, and plinks loaded rounds down the chute with amazing alacrity—all as a result of simply pumping the operating lever.

If you feel left out by all this automation, Lee has a small outfit, the Hand Press Kit, that'll allow you to become fully involved with the entire handloading process. The press itself weighs less than two pounds, with die and shellholder installed. It's about 3½ inches wide when it's closed and measures less than a foot in length. The Hand Press sells for \$29.95 and will accept standard dies and shellholders. Two-die rifle kits sell for \$44.98; three-die carbide pistol kits sell for \$54.98, and each kit includes the Hand Press. As a bonus, each die set comes with a small plastic powder scoop. This means that, practically speaking, one would have all he needed to get into reloading. Or the kit can become a useful adjunct to any existing reloading set-up.

"Imagine yourself loading at the range, at the hunting camp, or on the front porch . . ." There's also the pleasant suggestion that the Hand Press will allow you to remove certain operations—resizing and repriming, for example—from the basement or garage to the living room or den so you can work as you watch television. When you're resizing, you'll find it quite easy to place the body of the Hand Press against the inside of your leg as you push the lever. Resting one elbow on the arm of the chair during resizing operations makes it even easier.

Instructions for the Lee Hand Press, as

well as those for Lee dies, are clearly written and well illustrated. Study everything before you begin, take heed of the precautions that are noted, proceed slowly at first, and you'll be able to turn out good handloads.

There are, however, a few things that are not noted on the instruction sheet. There's the matter of lubricants, for example. Lee cites the detrimental effect oil-based lubes have on powders and primers, then goes on to recommend Lee Lube, which is not oil-based and which can be thinned with water. Lee Lube has no ill effect on any handloading component. But don't forget to clean the machine oil out of the Lee expander die. This die, which is unique in its design, is equipped with a hollow neck-expander insert through which it is possible to dispense powder charges using either the Lee Auto-Disk Powder Measure or the Lee Powder Funnel. It's a slick idea and being able to drop charges as the case neck is expanded, just prior to bullet seating, helps a lot, but it's no place for machine oil.

This test employed Lee's three-die carbide set in .44 Magnum. Because of the carbide insert at the mouth of the sizing die, no lubrication was necessary, and that's a real convenience whether you're residing in the den, in camp, or at the range. Lee carbide pistol dies come in 9mm, .38/.357, .44 Special/.44 Magnum, and .45 auto.

You'll get the knack of using the Hand Press in a fairly short time, but it helps to know at the outset that seating bullets is, to say the least, awkward if you don't use the leg technique mentioned earlier. The hard part, when both hands are being used to hold and operate the press, is to place a bullet above the case neck and hold it till it moves into the seating die. It's easy, though, if the body of the press is resting on the inside of one leg.

Priming can be done in a number of ways.

*Continued on page 32*




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# THE GUILD SPEAKS

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## GUILD MEMBER BILL WILSON SELECTED TO BUILD HANDGUNNER'S PRIZE PISTOL

Bill Wilson of Arkansas is one of the top pistolsmiths in the country and is a relatively new member of the American Pistolsmiths Guild. Bill is the Guild member chosen to build the custom gun given to the winner of the *Triple Threat* stage of the 1986 Steel Challenge. The *American Handgunner*, sponsors of the Challenge, considered only members of the Guild for this project, and we consider it a real honor for Bill to have been selected.

Bill was trained as a watchmaker at Oklahoma State Tech and became a part of the family watchmaking business. For most of his life he has been a chronic gun tinkerer. This combination of training and interest proved to be a major asset.

He viewed gun parts as *huge* by comparison to those of watches. It also helped him understand the need for precision, and the relationship of minor changes on the operation of the whole. This background and experience has given Bill the ability to operate precision measuring instruments and

machine tools used for the intricate steel-to-steel fit required in a match pistol. His top quality match pistols are made from top quality parts, made and assembled by a pistolsmith who knows and cares about proper fit and function.

A top competitive shooter in his own right, Bill is a two-time winner of the Second Chance Shoot, has won the IPSC Midwest Championship twice, has placed fifth in the IPSC World Championships and is a two-time member of the IPSC Silver Team. He is the only shooter to score a top-five finish in every major shooting event.

As a result, he has built a national reputation as many shooters realize that here is a combination pistolsmith/shooter of many unusual talents. These shooters have kept Bill busy building match grade pistols for them, but he has managed to find time to develop what he feels is the ultimate practical handgun.

He began development of this pistol he calls the "Accu-Comp" in the spring of 1980.

He produced the first of the present design almost a year later. This started a real landslide and it has been a runaway hit on the combat circuit ever since. This gun has all the advantages of a long slide or pin gun without the disadvantages. It is "state-of-the-art" in a combat handgun.

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The latest improvement to the Wilson Accu-Comp is the "LE," which stands for Leatham/Enos. It features one large port and a unique captured recoil spring system.

Bill operates one of the finest and most modern custom pistolsmithing shops in the country. In addition to himself, he employs several other fine pistolsmiths that he has trained in his own methods. He is too busy to complete each modification himself, but he has a very close working relationship with the other smiths and carefully supervises



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In addition to the day-to-day bread and butter custom gunsmithing operation, Bill also manufactures a large number of his own custom accessories and special parts. These include sights, triggers, Shok-Buff kits, magazine base pads, safeties and others too numerous to list.

Bill prides himself on being a full-service



operation for the practical shooter. He maintains one of the largest inventories of forty-five accessories and leather goods anywhere.

The American Pistolsmiths Guild is proud to have Bill Wilson as a member and is pleased and honored to have had him selected by the *American Handgunner* to build the custom pistol for the winner of the *Triple Threat*.

Bill will be very happy to build an Accu-Comp "LE" for you. Write to him for details at Wilson's Gun Shop, Inc., P.O. Box 578, Dept AH, Berryville, AR, 72616.



## IN MEMORIAM

The American Pistolsmiths Guild wishes to extend its deepest sympathies to the family of Guild Member Fred Schmidt, of Mechanicsville, VA, who died of a heart attack on May 30, 1986.

The pistolsmithing fraternity has lost a fine craftsman, a reliable businessman and a good friend. However, his many accomplishments and contributions will long be remembered.

We bid a fond farewell to our member and friend, Fred Schmidt.

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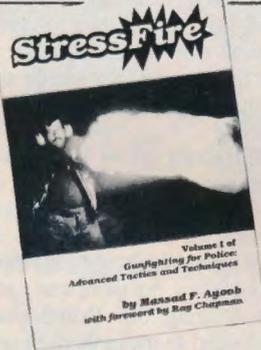
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## LEE HAND PRESS

*Continued from page 29*

Using Lee's Improved Priming Tool is one way, but what comes with the Hand Press Kit is the Lee Ram Prime system. To prime with this system, you move the shell holder to the Ram Prime shellholder adapter, which screws into the top of the Hand Press. Priming punches, large or small, are press-fit into the ram. The conversion takes only a few seconds and priming, although somewhat slow, will go along smoothly. It is, however, important to hold the press in a vertical position to prevent the case to be primed from tipping slightly. If everything isn't just right, you may begin feeling the edges of primer cups "bite" their way into the primer pocket.

The 1.6 CC plastic powder scoop that comes with Lee's .44 Magnum die set was checked to see whether it picked up the powder weights listed on the instruction sheet. It didn't, which fact may well be attributable to conservatism on the part of the manufacturer, or perhaps to lot-to-lot powder density variations. For example, the 1.6 is listed as picking up 21.6 grains of 2400. Repeated scooping and weighing gave average weights of 20.0 grains for a level scoop and 20.7 for a heaping scoop. This is a charge that might be loaded behind a 160-180 grain bullet in the .44 Magnum, and even if one went over the 21.6 grains listed the charge would be somewhat less than maximum.

It's easier to get into trouble with irregular or excessive crimping, which can occur if case lengths vary. For this reason—and emphasis here is on the use of a roll crimp—it's important to trim all cases to the same length, even if they wind up a little shorter than standard, to assure that crimps will be uniform.

Full-length resizing of .44 Magnum cases was a breeze, and also neat, because of the carbide (no-lube) Lee sizing die. But the advertising says it's also possible to resize .375 H&H Magnum hulls. No attempt was made to go that heavy, but there was a session of full-length resizing .303 British empties. The effort required to move them in and out of the die was considerably greater than it was with the .44 Magnum cases, but the operation, which was limited to 20 resizings, went along satisfactorily.

There was, of course, no carbide resizing die advantage with the rifle stuff, which meant that cases had to be lubed. The inconvenience and mess, especially if oil-based lube is used, isn't worth it, not when you're in peril of staining upholstery or picking up outdoor grit. So, go for the Lee Hand Press Kit if you've a need for a neat, portable handloading rig, but by all means get it with a carbide die set.



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# STEEL CHALLENGE

# 1986

*Chip McCormick wins  
the \$250,000 speed shooting contest  
with an Auto-Ordinance  
.38 Super*



Photo by Nyl Leatham



*By Cameron Hopkins*

**S**hort and stubby is out; lean and sleek is in. At the 1986 Steel Challenge only one shooter in the top ten fired a .45 ACP. Eight of the top ten shot .38 Super and one fired 9mm.

The .38 Super (or the Super .38, as you prefer) has won the past two World Speed Shooting Championships. The 1986 Steel Challenge saw Chip McCormick of Texas win with a custom .38 Super built on an Auto-Ordinance Government Model. Pistolsmiths Bob Grieder and Fred Tripp teamed up to create this low-recoiling and accurate .38 Super.

The match offered the largest prize purse of any professional handgunning competition. Bigger than the biggest Bianchi Cup. One quarter of a million dollars—

# AMERICAN HANDGUNNER'S ENGRAVED ACCU-COMP AWARD

by Dave Arnold



Photo by Roger Andrews

One of the top awards at the 1986 Steel Challenge World Speed Shooting Championships is a customized .38 Super Wilson Accu-Comp donated by American Handgunner. The gun, which was awarded to the winner of the Triple Threat stage, is engraved by Jerry Usher. This is the top of the line customized pistol handmade by the artisans of Wilson's Gun Shop (Box 578, Dept. AH, Berryville, AR, 72616, (501) 545-3618).

The man behind the Accu-Comp is Bill

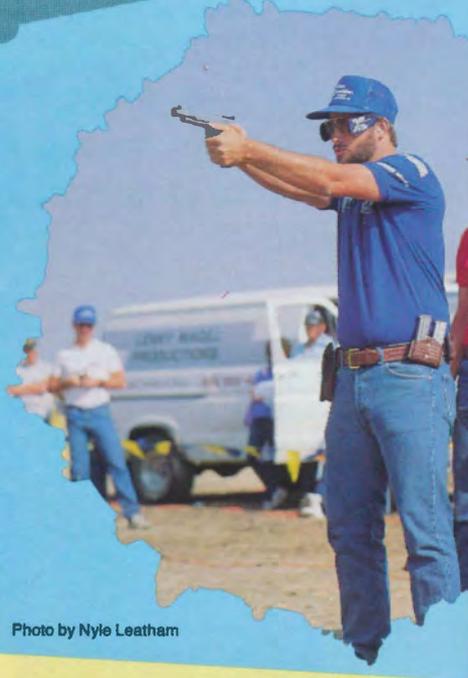


Photo by Nyle Leatham

\$250,000—was distributed to the 260 competitors based on the method used in all professional sports—he who is bestest gets mostest.

Chip's victory, which netted him \$9,000 in cash plus prizes estimated at another \$3,000, came after a tight race among four top shooters.

It wasn't exactly a photo finish, but it was neck-and-neck into the last furlong.

And it was on the first day that Chip would begin his climb into the lofty arena known as the winner's circle. Chip and three other competitors bunched together out of the starting gate and not until after the first turn, through the second turn and along the homestretch would Chip pull in front.

Squadded with the specially selected Master Blaster detail of shooters, Chip began the match with *Colt's Speed Option* stage. Chip's time was 6.84 seconds for four runs and that clustered him at the top with Rob Leatham, John Shaw and Angelo Spagnoli. Angelo won *Colt's Speed Option* stage with a time of 6.20 seconds.

Brian Enos could have shot better on *Speed Option*, but he rebounded on the second stage, *In and Out*, to join the front runners. Rob Leatham won *In and Out* with a 10.12. Chip shot it in 11.29, and he remained a strong contender.

After the first day, the leaders huddled together:

Rob Leatham: 16.35  
Angelo Spagnoli: 17.83  
John Shaw: 18.12  
Chip McCormick: 18.13

The second day of the match would see Angelo drift behind and Brian join the four front runners as they pulled steadily ahead.

On the second day Jupiter aligned with Mars and Brian shot with a passion. Two stages, two wins. Brian trashed his first of four runs at the demanding *Aimpoint Outer Limits*, but he recovered and won the stage with a 15.87. Brian gained a lot of ground here against Chip's 17.22.

*Safariland's Five To Go* also fell to Brian's blazing .38 Super. He picked up nearly two full seconds on Chip here with a winning time of 12.01.

Jostle jostle, shove shove—the four repositioned themselves around the first turn.

Brian Enos: 47.90  
John Shaw: 48.61  
Chip McCormick: 49.35  
Rob Leatham: 51.04

Considering Brian had just won both stages on the second day, a gambling man would figure he's on a roll. In fact, a lead of over half a second is quite commanding on the third day. Not a cinch, mind you, but just enough of a cushion to allow for one mistake. One.

Continued on page 68

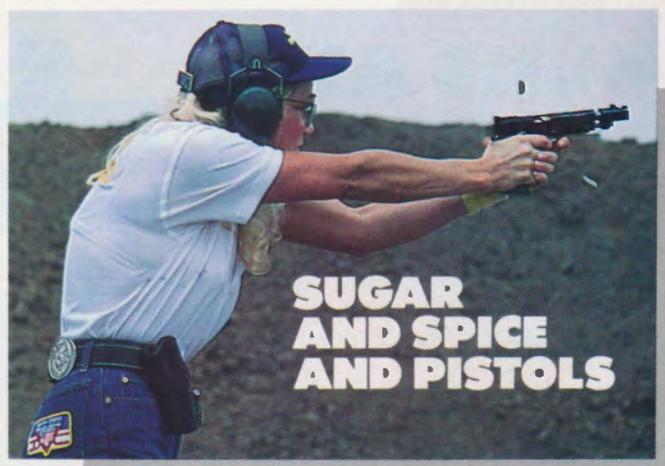




Photo by Roger Andrews

Wilson who, in addition to being one of the country's top pistolsmiths, is also a world class combat pistol shooter. Not only has he represented the U.S. at the 1983 World IPSC Championships, but he also consistently wins or places high in other combat style matches like the Steel Challenge, the Bianchi Cup, the Second Chance Bowling Pin Match, not to mention various IPSC competitions. This intimate knowledge of the shooting game has

*Continued on page 66*



## SUGAR AND SPICE AND PISTOLS

*By Linda Knab*

She's a florist who shot a second-hand, straight from the box .45. Wanda Miculek competed on the Top Women's team at the Steel Challenge. Californian Carol Gratzke shot her Colt .45 with Wilson Accu-Comp LE. With her extra light trigger, and personally loaded ammo, Carol came in third woman, overall.

Most of the other women shooting the Steel Challenge this year shot either .38 Supers or 9mm. The difference is recoil recovery, sight time. From Colorado, Jo Anne Hall, top woman, used a Liebenberg, .38 Super. She had just changed from a .45 for recoil reasons. Why not a 9mm like Joanna Fichman? Because Jo Anne wants to shoot IPSC without switching guns.

The 1985 IPSC National Woman, and top woman in Vienna's European Championship,

*Continued on page 66*



**R**ecipe for success: heaping scoop of clout from a manufacturing giant like Safariland; liberal dose of hands-on saavy from a top competitor like Bill Rogers; full measure of marketing cleverness from a whiz kid like Safariland's Ken Dodd.

Simmer in the heat of intense competition until done. Presto—Team Safariland!

Team Safariland is a five-person team of top flight IPSC competitors organized under the banner of Safariland/Rogers. Safariland and Rogers Holsters merged in 1985. Team Safariland made their debut at the 1986 Steel Challenge.

Team members are Bill Rogers, Christie Rogers, Scott Carnahan, Bill Wilson and Mike Plaxco. They wear distinctive gold and black uniforms in matches.

The concept of a team made up of both in-house personnel (Scott is in research and

development at Safariland, and Bill and Christie are of Rogers Holsters) and independent shooters is novel. The result is an exciting new concept of promoting the shooting sports.

Long known in the automotive racing world, the concept of a team participating in competition holds that prospective customers will heed the accomplishments (and notice the equipment) of champions.

From the experience of the Team in competition will come new and better products, products to benefit all shooters. Team Safariland can speak intelligently on the needs of competitive shooters through the only valid source of knowledge—experience.

Furthermore, Team Safariland represents a deep commitment to support and promote the handgunning sports. Team Safariland is on the cutting edge of today's fastest growing handgun sports.



# GUNS AND GEAR *of the*

# STEEL CHALLENGE

Only one .45 ACP in the top ten.  
An unknown holster maker taking first through fourth.

The top four shooters using non-Colt Colts.

Eight out of the top ten residing in the Southwest.

A 50-50 mix of "name-brand" pistolsmiths and "unknowns."

Surprising or predictable? The answer depends on how deeply you ponder the

(Clockwise from top right) Randall .45 ACP; Steyr GB 9mm factory prototype of new competition pistol; Colt .38 Super; Smith M-10 .38 Special with Aimpoint 2000; SIG P-210 9mm with comp.



statistics and also on your awareness of "background," a journalist's term for behind-the-scenes information.

The sparcity of the big bore .45 ACP is not surprising. The trend since 1984, when Rob Leatham catapulted the Super to prominence when he won the IPSC Nationals, has been toward the .38 Super. Two years later, it appears the competition shooters have completed the transition from .45 to Super.

Why? Two reasons: less recoil and muzzle flip; increased magazine capacity. The Supers at the Steel Challenge consume a different load than Supers in IPSC. Light bullets at moderate velocities (versus heavy bullets at high velocity) are favored in the Challenge where there is no "power factor" or minimum load requirement.

Several of the top Super shooters revealed their loads, and most agreed in their selection of cast lead bullets in the 125 grain

*Continued on page 69*

## GUNS AND GEAR OF THE TOP TEN

Name and Home State	Handgun	Caliber	Pistolsmith	Holster	Score
1) Chip McCormick (TX)	Auto-Ordance	.38 Super	Tripp/Grieder	Hill	73.61
2) Brian Enos (AZ)	Springfield Armory	.38 Super	Bill Wilson	Hill	74.52
3) Rob Leatham (AZ)	Springfield Armory	.38 Super	Bill Wilson	Hill	74.93
4) John Shaw (TN)	Essex	.38 Super	Jim Clark	Hill	75.68
5) Jerry Barnhart (MI)	Colt	.45 ACP	Steve Nastoff	Rogers	75.92
6) Angelo Spagnoli (CA)	SIG P-210	9mm Luger	Gray/Boland	Davis	78.52
7) Dan Clements (WY)	Colt	.38 Super	Dan Clements	Davis	81.36
8) Michael Voigt (CA)	Colt	.38 Super	Voigt Custom	Davis	82.64
9) Tim Knutson (AZ)	Colt	.38 Super	Tim Knutson	Davis	82.94
10) J. Michael Plaxco (AR)	Colt	.38 Super	Mike Plaxco	Rogers	83.00

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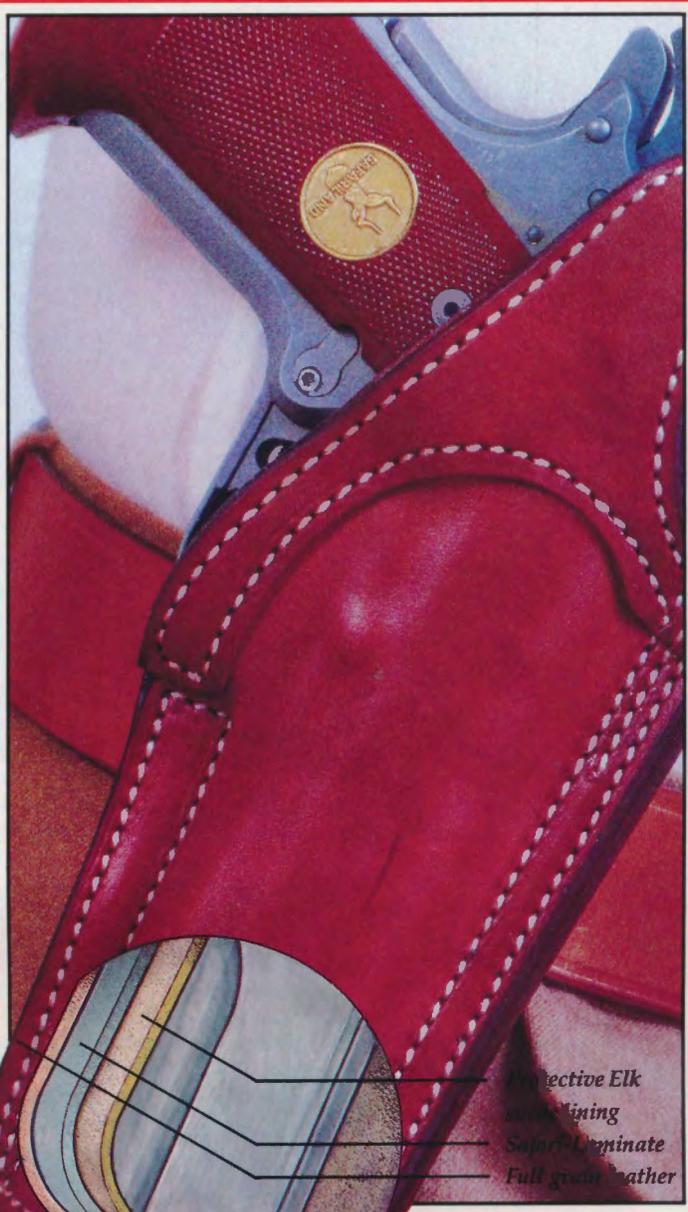
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By Charles E. Petty



I don't suppose it will come as much of a surprise if I say that the .38 Super is *the* hot ticket for IPSC shooters these days. The Super's popularity is well deserved, but there's a price to pay for the advantages it offers.

The problem is that the cartridge has to be pushed hard for major power factor loads. "Major power factor" is a number, an index, indicating the energy (power) of ammunition used in IPSC competition, a number determined by multiplying the bullet weight in grains by the velocity in fps, and dividing the sum by 1,000. The "major power factor" minimum is 170.

Reloaders began stuffing 158 grain cast bullets into Super cases and achieved the major power factor at around 1080 fps. This certainly seems like a logical idea, but published loading data for this combination was virtually nonexistent.

Hercules Blue Dot powder emerged as the favorite propellant. Lots of credit for discovering Blue Dot should go to pistolsmith Bill Wilson. Bill's Blue Dot loads were the first such loads to be pressure tested by Winchester and found to be within SAAMI pressure specifications.

But in conversations with Bill, I learned he had some concern over problems associated with using Blue Dot. Among other things, Blue Dot was said to suffer from lot-to-lot variation necessitating careful load development with each opening of a new can of powder. Blue Dot didn't always meter well through my Dillon 550 and I would have an occasional load that was obviously a little light in the charge.

# Reloading .38 Super for IPSC

## Reloading WINCHESTER 540 in .38 Super

Bullet	Powder Charge	Velocity	Power Factor
160 grain RN lead (.357")	5.8 grains	1015 fps	162
160 grain RN lead (.357")	6.0 grains	1030 fps	164
160 grain RN lead (.357")	6.2 grains	1080 fps	173
160 grain RN lead (.357")	6.3 grains	1110 fps	178
160 grain RN lead (.357")	6.5 grains	1123 fps	180

**Test Pistol:** Colt Government Model  
**Test Barrel:** Wilson .38 Super, five-inch  
**Case:** Winchester (unfired)  
**Primer:** Winchester small pistol  
**Loaded Length:** 1.230"  
**Taper crimp:** .380-.381"

**WARNING:** This data is intended for information only. This data is merely a guide and should be used with caution because of unavoidable variations in firearms and handloading components. Neither *American Handgunner* nor the author accept responsibility for results obtained using this information. This data applies to the .38 Super and is not for use in the .38 ACP. Do not under any circumstances attempt to fire .38 Super cartridges in guns chambered in .38 ACP.

*A major discovery—  
 Winchester's 540 ball  
 powder eliminates the  
 Blue Dot blues for  
 .38 Super shooters!*

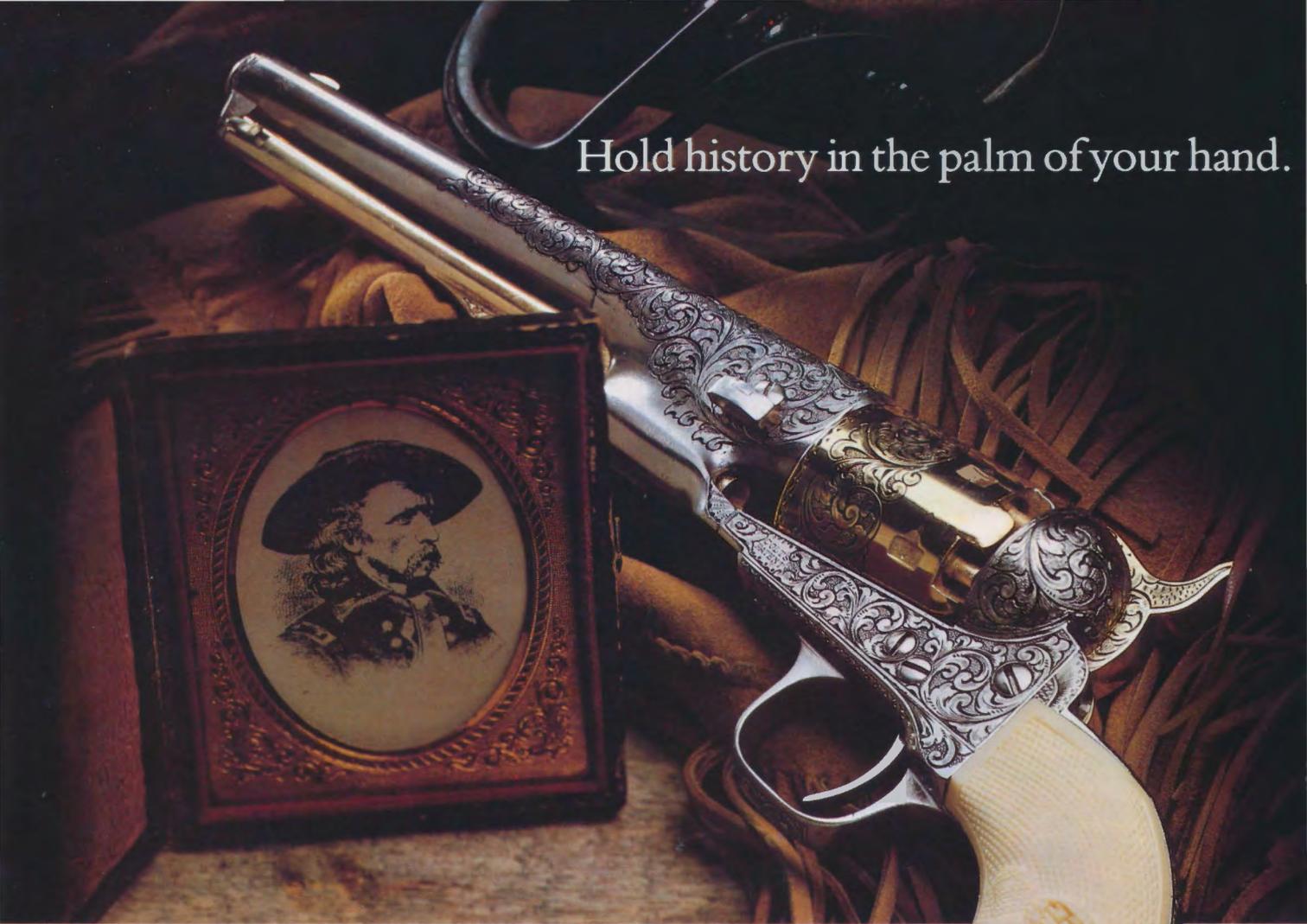
But the real concern for me is that it appears Blue Dot is at the peak of its useful range. Pressures are close to maximum and a small increase in charge produces a big increase in pressure.

Bill concluded that, "What we need is a powder developed specifically for the .38 Super, a small grained powder that will meter efficiently with a burning rate somewhere between Unique and Blue Dot."

The goal was lower pressures; a requirement was that the powder meter well. The breakthrough came from an idle suggestion from Winchester's product manager, Mike

*Continued on page 76*

Hold history in the palm of your hand.



## GENERAL CUSTER'S REVOLVER Re-created for the first time ever.

GENERAL GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER was a connoisseur of fine handguns. And this classic .36 caliber percussion revolver was one of the prizes of his collection.

Sleek and modern in appearance, it has relief-carved grips, a handsome wolf's head hammer, and deeply inscribed scrollwork by one of the finest gun engravers of Custer's day. Thus, it was the ideal gun for the legendary general whose love for possessions of beauty and elegance was well-known.

And now, by special arrangement with the distinguished private collector who is its present owner, this historic revolver is being re-created—in all its rich detail—for the first time ever.

Master craftsmen working directly from Custer's own gun will produce every part, every mechanism. Thus, the re-creation will look, feel and handle precisely like the original. You can hold it in your hand. Feel its weight and substance. Then cock the hammer and squeeze the trigger—to discover for yourself the unique satisfaction Custer

must have felt the first time he fired it.

Totally safe, since it cannot be loaded or fired, this fascinating re-creation will be hand-assembled, sheathed in fine nickel plate, then electroplated in gold and imported solely for the individual collector who has ordered it.

The price is \$395, payable on a convenient monthly basis. A display rack will be provided at no extra charge.

To acquire this superb replica, sign and return the coupon by December 31, 1986.



Shown smaller than actual length of 13 inches.

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This re-creation was created directly from the original Custer Colt Revolver under authority of the gun's owner. It has not been authorized or endorsed by the Colt Firearms Division of Colt Industries Operating Corporation, nor will it be produced in a facility operated by that company.

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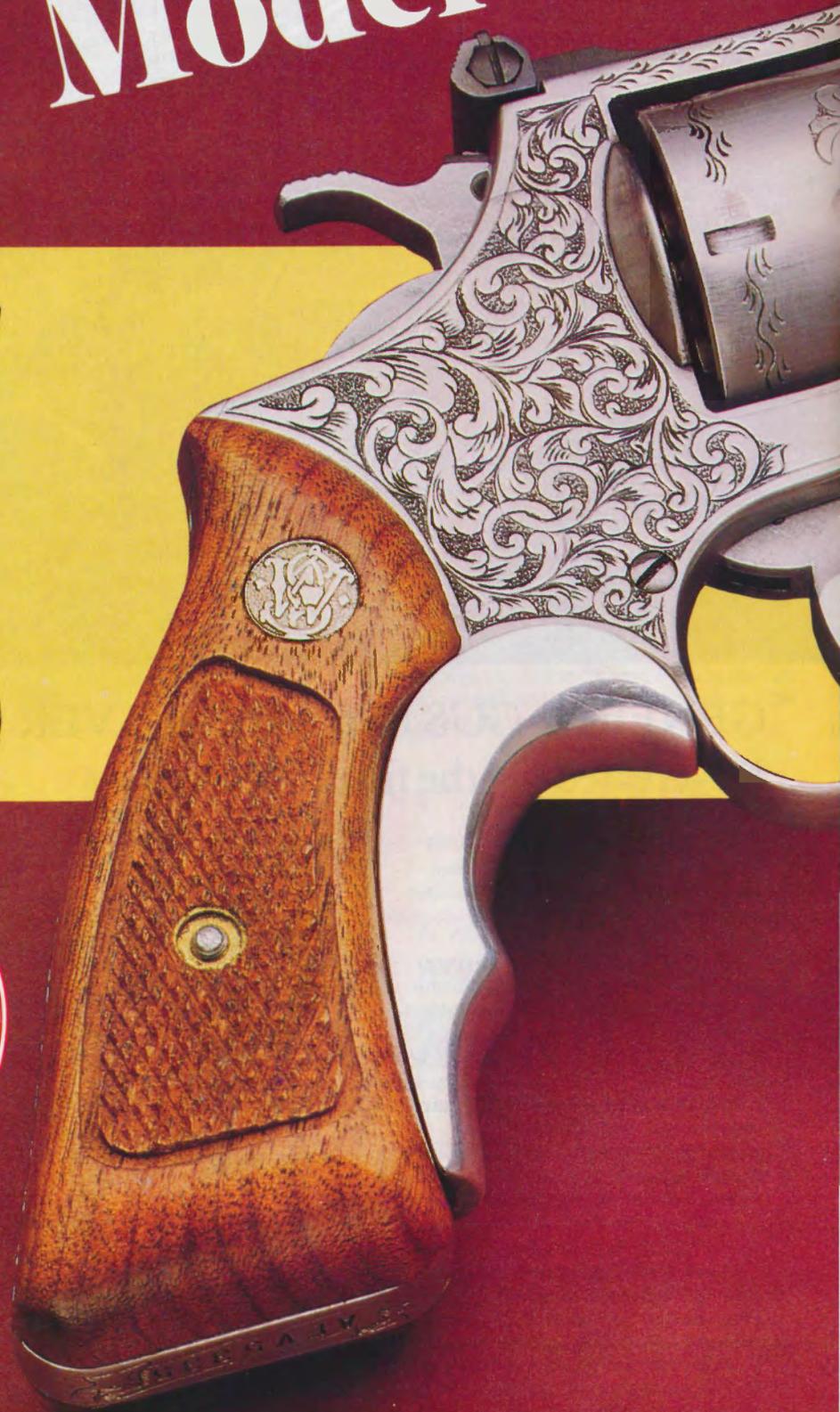
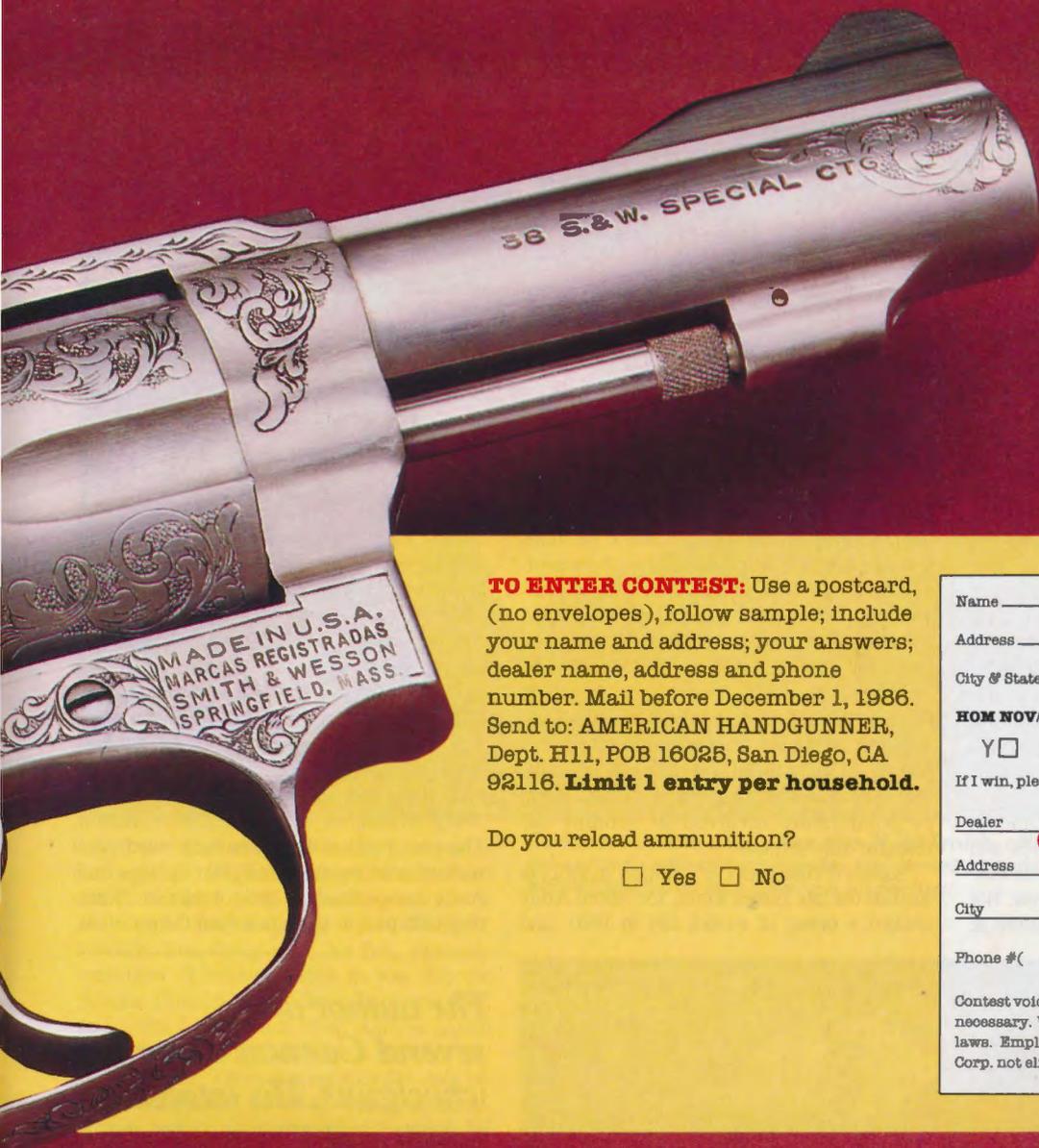


Photo by Roger Andrews



**TO ENTER CONTEST:** Use a postcard, (no envelopes), follow sample; include your name and address; your answers; dealer name, address and phone number. Mail before December 1, 1986. Send to: AMERICAN HANDGUNNER, Dept. H11, POB 16025, San Diego, CA 92116. **Limit 1 entry per household.**

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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.

## Wessinger Custom Guns and Engraving puts prestige into this pocket pistol.

Wessinger Custom Guns and Engraving is happy to present to the *American Handgunner* and a lucky reader this custom Smith and Wesson revolver. George Wessinger, Secretary of the prestigious American Pistolsmith Guild, has endeavored to create a handgun that is different from most presented here. This revolver started as a three-inch Model 60 with a square butt in .38 Special. To make this revolver a real shooter, ideal for home defense, backpacking, plinking, or police off duty carry, George milled a slot in the top strap and installed a fine adjustable sight in black stainless steel from a Smith and Wesson 22/32 Kit gun. He then milled, from bar stock, a ramp front sight and silver soldered it to the heavy barrel. The trigger was then

polished and the action lightened and polished to give a smooth DA and a crisp SA. This revolver is small but easy and fun to shoot. Due to the addition of a grip adapter instead of oversize grips, it is very concealable but easy to handle.

Rose Wessinger, the engraver at Wessinger Custom and a member of the Firearms Engravers Guild of America, has adorned the little revolver with scrolls, leaves, and borders to enhance the unique design of the Smith and Wesson. She has given it a personal touch so that the winner will have a truly unique handgun.

Wessinger Custom Guns and Engraving offers a complete line of custom handguns. This line includes PPC and Action revolvers with slab or round barrels on Colts, Rugers

or Smith & Wessons. A specialty of the shop is a super double action on the Colt Python. Also offered is a complete line of custom .38 Super and .45 autos. This shop is well known for high quality refinishing in bright blue, matte blue, and electroless nickel, either bright or matte.

Wessinger Custom Guns and Engraving would be glad to build you a duplicate of this little revolver, either engraved or plain, or custom build any handgun to your specifications. The shop considers quality work to be the best advertisement and welcomes inquiries. Estimates are gladly given by phone or mail. Contact George or Rose at Wessinger Custom Guns and Engraving, Route 1, Box 40, Wessinger Road, Chapin, SC, 29036, (803) 345-5677.



# ANDY CANNON GUNS:

*a second look*

By Massad Ayoob

Pistolsmiths may work on several different models, but each seems to develop one specialty. Jerry Moran has built some fine S&W .44s, but is famed as the acknowledged master of reworking the Colt Python. Lou Ciamillo is certainly one of the best on S&W actions, but is widely hailed as *the* best in the country on double-action Ruger revolvers. Though much money has been won with Bill Wilson's scoped heavy-barrel revolvers, he'll always be associated with fine .45 automatics.

So it is with revolversmith Andy Cannon. He has built some award winning .45s and the Colt Mk. III he did for me is the smoothest specimen of the breed I've ever seen. But the man's forte is the street combat Smith &

Wesson revolver, and a growing number of serious professional shooters think he tunes that gun better than anyone else in the world.

About half of what he does is for wheelgunners who shoot competition, ever since Bill Rogers set national Bianchi Cup records on the Mover and Barricade events in '84 and on the Falling Plates in '85 with a Cannon Custom PPC gun he'd won at the '83 Cup and found to be slicker than anything else in his battery. Prior to that it had been said of Andy, "the street is his meat," and he had been preponderantly involved in building the finest of duty sixguns.

Satisfied customers in addition to Rogers include the late Elmer Keith, for whom Andy slicked a brace of model 29s in 1980, and

handgun aficionado Hank Williams Jr., who owns perhaps ten Cannon-modified revolvers. World speed champ, national IPSC titlist, and Second Chance winner Mike Plaxco has one, too.

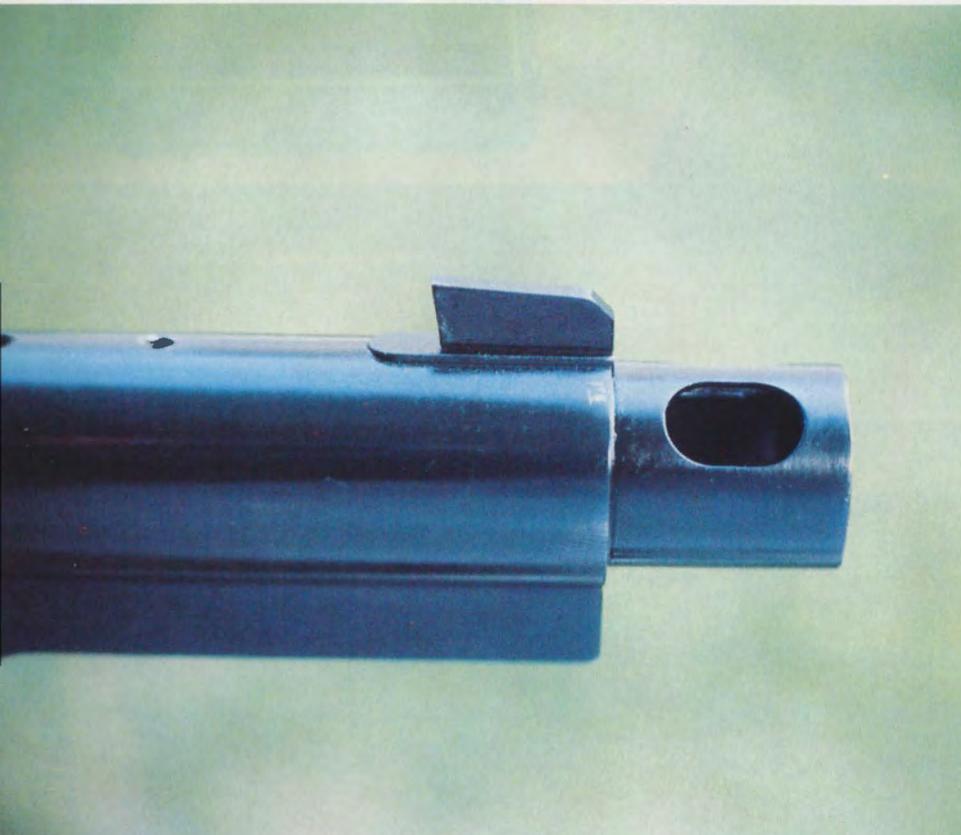
One thing you rarely see in a writeup of a custom 'smith is analysis of complaints about their work. As director of one of the so-called "Big Four" shooting schools, Cannon is at the top of my list of recommended self-defense revolversmiths for S&Ws, and I have feedback from at least 75 graduates who've sent Andy wheelguns on my recommendation. The one criticism that came back was from a student who insisted on lighter springs than Andy recommended, and got misfires. Refitting with proper springs solved the problem.

*The author owns several Cannon custom wheelguns. His latest is a Smith and Wesson M-25 in .45 Auto Rim.*

In 1978 *Handgunner* published my profile of Cannon. The result was a deluge of orders that allowed Andy to go full time into 'smithing. The power of *American Handgunner* to make a gunsmith's reputation has been proven many times before and since. Sometimes I write about a custom 'smith, I get angry letters from people who bought his work and didn't like it. I got two such complaints on Andy. One turned out to be a pistol frame sent to him for plating that didn't get back from the vendor quickly enough for the customer, and the other was an action that wasn't light enough for the owner, a man who never carried a gun and didn't realize his had come with a street instead of a competition pull.

This, let me tell you, is extraordinarily good feedback. When the complaints run less than 1% and *those* turn out to have been either unfounded or quickly and courteously rectified, you know you are dealing with a professional you can trust.

My own half-dozen guns from Cannon



**Cannon Comp is milled integrally into Douglas barrel. Front sight is by Wichita. Holes for Aimpoint mount are deliberately drilled off-center. The author explains why in the accompanying text.**



**Cannon Custom guns, like this M-25 Smith, all feature superb trigger/action jobs. Andy offers two grades for street or competition purposes. Douglas barrel 1-14 twist has Cannon underlug.**

have been most satisfactory. The first was an early model 66, tuned on extremely short notice because Andy knew I'd need it as a duty gun. Another was a .45 ACP 4" revolver that Andy gave his full, DA-only treatment. It has twice shot its way into the Second Chance money for service revolver, and when I got it back from Andy it would group in 3" at 50 yards from a Ransom rest with hardball. There was another DA only N-frame Smith, a .44 Mag with coil mainspring, and the aforementioned "best Mk III I've ever seen," and a Dan Wesson with light action strictly for PPC. All did exactly what they were supposed to.

The latest Cannon gun in my battery is another model 25-2, this one sporting a Douglas 1-in-14 twist barrel and Cannon's top-rate action tune and accuracy job. In my first match with it, I took a first place Master award in a National Championship. I haven't Ransomed it yet, but it refused to leave the ten ring at 25 yards in tense competition, and hand-benched at 50 yards has put Federal 185-gr. .45 ACP hollowpoints in just under two inches.

This slick instrument features the new CannonComp, a recoil suppression chamber resembling that on a compensated IPSC .45 auto, but integral. That's right, folks, Andy machines it right into the barrel. My gun's tube looks 6½" long, but the lands and grooves end at 5½". Here, by God, is a compensator that ain't gonna come loose on you! The CannonComp seems to work better the hotter you load the gun. In the aforementioned tourney, recoil was mild with 185-grain midrange target loads at 15 and 25 yards, and when I switched to the hot hollowpoints at 50, I was not consciously aware of a

*Continued on page 74*



**Andy Cannon inspects a tight cluster in Bianchi target from one of his S & W Model 25s in .45 Auto Rim. That's impressive at 50 yards.**

# Handguns of Safari Club International

*Exquisite custom handguns created on special commissions from SCI  
bring big bucks at auction for conservation and education programs.*

*By A.H. Staff*





## **.454 Casull Magnum**

**Donor:** Freedom Arms  
P.O. Box 1776  
Freedom, WY 83120

**Background:** Ron Ptashkin is the manager of the Freedom Arms Custom Shop. Freedom Arms makes the .454 Casull Magnum single-action revolver, the most powerful production revolver in the world. Dick Casull invented the .454 Casull in the 1950s, about the same time Elmer Keith designed the .44 Magnum. The .454 Casull, still a newcomer as a production gun, has already proven itself against large and dangerous game in Africa.

**Scrimshaw:** George Walker of Aspen Hills, Wyo., performed the scrimshaw work on the ivory micarta stocks and knife handle.

**Handgun:** .454 Casull Magnum single-action revolver

**Caliber:** .454 Casull Magnum

**Sights:** adjustable iron

**Stocks:** ivory micarta

**Custom Case:** made from solid Goncalo Alves by Ron Ptashkin

**Auction Price:** \$4,500.00

**Purchaser:** Sandy Satullo



## **JDJ 1986 SCI Handcannon**

**Donor:** J.D. Jones  
SSK Industries  
R. 1, Della Drive  
Bloomington, OH 43910

**Background:** J.D. Jones is a member of the *American Pistolsmiths Guild* and specializes in custom Thompson-Center Contenders, known as *Handcannons*, in potent wildcat calibers for big game hunting. Perhaps the most popular—and certainly the most powerful—big game cartridge for hunting is the .375 JDJ. A necked-down .444 Marlin, the .375 JDJ has taken all of the Big Five of Africa several times over. It is the favorite cartridge of handgun hunters who shoot *Handcannons*.

**Engraving:** Ken Hurst (P.O. Box 249, Rustburg, VA, 24588) performed scroll engraving on the blued barrel highlighted through the French graying process. He also executed two spectacular game scenes on the receiver sides. One side panel features a charging rhino and the other sports a charging Cape buffalo. Inlaid in gold on alternate sides of the barrel are "SSK 45-70" and "SCI 1986." Gold bands adorn the muzzle and breech. The trigger is gold plated.

**Handgun:** Thompson-Center Contender

**Caliber:** .45-70

**Barrel:** custom SSK barrel with Arrestor muzzle brake

**Sights:** Leupold 4x scope in SSK rings and mounts

**Stocks:** Pachmayr grips and forend

**Custom Case:** (not shown) French fitted case by American Display

**Auction Price:** \$4,800.00

**Purchaser:** "Lucky" Nightingale

## **Mag-Na-Port Stalker**

**Donor:** Larry Kelly  
Mag-Na-Port  
41302 Executive Drive  
Mt. Clemons, MI 48045

**Background:** Larry Kelly is a member of the *American Pistolsmiths Guild* and specializes in custom handguns for hunting. His unique Mag-Na-Port process for reducing recoil and muzzle jump on handguns, rifles and shotguns is a favorite modification with hunters and sportsmen alike. The *Stalker* shown in the photo was originally developed as a custom Ruger Super Blackhawk, but is now available as a conversion of a Smith and Wesson 629 for those shooters who prefer a double-action revolver.

**Engraving:** Eric Gold performed fine scroll engraving on the frame, cylinder and barrel in the Bolino style with the initials and Roman numeral "S.C.I. XIV" to commemorate SCI's 14th annual convention.

**Revolver:** Smith and Wesson Model 629

**Caliber:** .44 Magnum

**Sights:** Leupold 2x scope in rings and bases from SSK.

**Stocks:** Pachmayr

**Custom Case:** (not shown) By Ron Ptashkin of Freedom Arms Custom Shop.

**Auction Price:** \$3,400.00

**Purchaser:** Herbert Bobchin

*America's foremost handgun hunter shares his four decades of experience and knowledge. Learn about his favorite guns, loads and techniques for this exciting sport.*

# J.D. JONES ON HANDGUN HUNTING

*By J.D. Jones*



**Hunting handguns come in all shapes and sizes. From the diminutive .22 LR Hammerli Hunter (left) to the awesome .375 JDJ Contender from SSK, these two guns can take any game on the face of the planet.**

When the editor asks for a full-length feature about handgun hunting—big, medium and small game—it's easy to over-react. After all, the "secret" to successful hunting of any kind is really rather basic. One: buy a gun. Two: learn how to use it. Three: hunt where there is a lot of game. Four: kill.

But, and it is a large BUT, for the beginner there is a bewildering array of equipment available, and usually limited funds to spend on it. Obviously, we all know much of it "will do," some of it is totally unsuitable and some truly excellent. The trick is to spend your money wisely on suitable equipment.

Let's assume you wouldn't be reading this magazine if you didn't have at least a smattering of knowledge about handguns and probably own one or more already. If you are an expert, I'm probably going to bore you for awhile. Sorry about that.

Chances are that if you already own a decent handgun and know how to use it, you

are already minimally outfitted for small game hunting. I got started with an Ortgies .32 auto that was given me by a friend who relieved a bootlegger of it during prohibition.

Since I was only seven or eight at the time, didn't subscribe to *American Handgunner* and the little .32 wouldn't fire a single shot anyway, I guess my parents thought I was safe enough. The 7.65mm caliber identification was baffling anyway. Everyone figured it was just a souvenir and I would continue using the .22 rifles for scaring hell out of the local groundhog population.

A couple years and a Stoeger catalog remedied that situation. First I figured out the 7.65mm was a .32 auto. Next I obtained a few cartridges for the sum of six cents each from the local hardware store.

The gun went "click" instead of bang. Stoeger showed a spring behind the firing pin. The firing pin was hollow. Stretching the spring and filling it half full of wadded up paper gave an occasional "bang" between "clicks."

In short, I got it working and set out to hunt something with it. I sat about five feet from a groundhog's hole for about a week until he poked his head out whereupon I stuck one of those .32 FMJ bullets through it. Damn near deafened myself and got my first handgun trophy with the same shot. Couldn't even tell anyone about it. Figured I'd get my butt warmed when I got caught using the .32 and wanted to postpone that as long as possible.

The point is, if I could do it at seven or eight years of age, anyone with a little determination can get started with whatever they have on hand. Yeah, even if it's a .25 auto. I've taken a few rabbits with those.

Equipment isn't really the point of discussion here, although the particular equipment available may well be the deciding factor in the method of hunting. Remember that first groundhog. As a kid, I figured that was the only way I had half a chance of killing him. The distance was right for the skill of the hunter. Frankly, I doubt if you could pay me to take another that way; I'd have to make it a little more sporting. At this point in my life, I simply detest just about any kind of "sit and wait" hunting. But that doesn't mean there's

anything wrong with deer-stand hunting.

I later graduated to a High Standard .22 LR auto-pistol and that's the place most beginners should start. At least with a reasonably accurate .22 of some sort. In my mind, revolvers are safer firearms than semi-autos. This has nothing to do with the actual mechanisms themselves. I simply feel it's easier to screw up with an auto pistol than a revolver. The other side of the coin dictates that the shooter with an auto is a more careful gun handler than a revolver shooter. Whatever—all of them will bite if you ask to be bitten.

A good quality revolver by Charter, Colt, Dan Wesson, Smith, Ruger or several other manufacturers is capable of most small game hunting. Appropriate game includes cottontail rabbits, jackrabbits—although the .22 LR cartridge is a little light—and varmints such as rats and prairie dogs. The .22 LR is definitely too light for groundhogs. (I include woodchucks, rock chucks and whistle pigs with groundhogs.) The .22 LR does fine for coon and possum hunters in spite of the animal's size. They are usually taken from a tree with head shots.

Right now I figure the S&W M-41 is the best handgun hunting semi-auto you can buy. The Rugers aren't in the same class, but do have adjustable sights which is very important in any handgun used for hunting or recreation. The AMT Lightning is available in a wide array of barrel lengths some of which are all set for a scope. The Brownings are also good. There are several other semi-autos that will do—but not as well as the M-41.

The auto pistols have the advantage of greater accuracy than revolvers as well as greater magazine capacity. They are also more prone to jamming and their mechanisms must be kept clean if they are to work properly.

The revolver will generally be more reliable as long as it is kept clean. Powder under the extractor star is a prime jamming complaint of revolvers. The revolver will also work with .22 shorts or .22 longs, but I don't recommend them. They tend to build up lubricant and lead in the chamber that is difficult to clean out. Long Rifle ammunition



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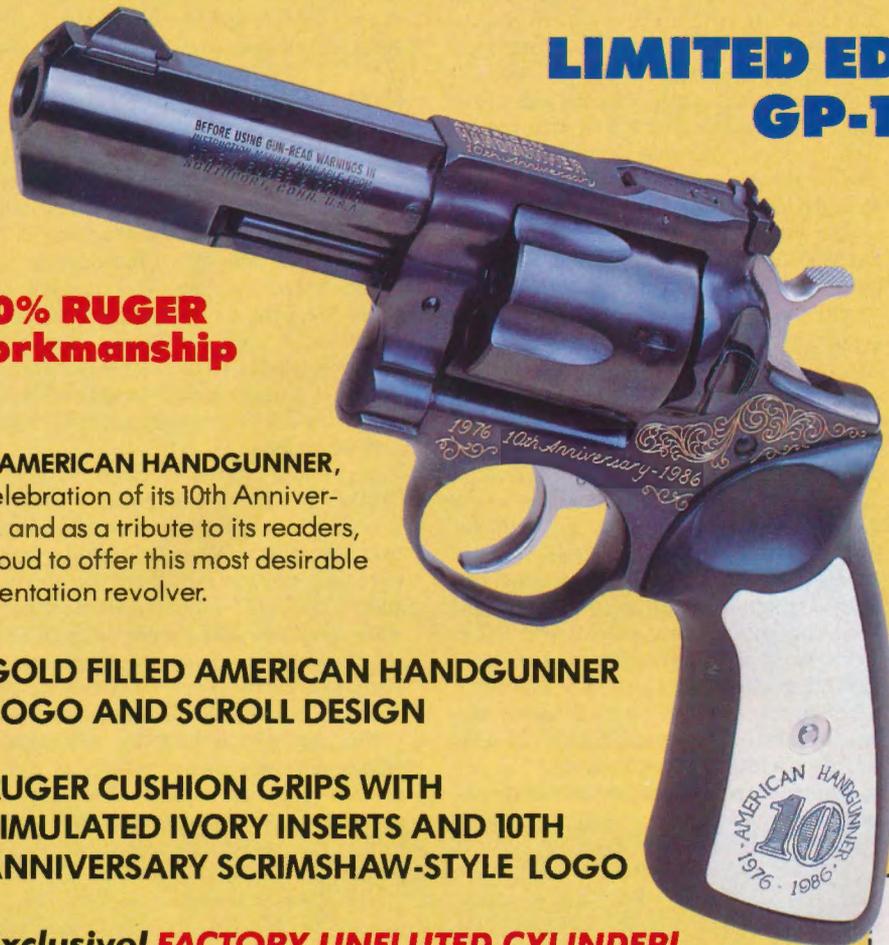
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shouldn't, and sometimes can't be used in a chamber fouled by shorts. Case length of the long is the same as the Long Rifle and its bullet the same as the short. Can't see much use for either.

Short barrels are handy, but give up a little power and balance for portability, which isn't much of a consideration in hunting anyway. A barrel length of five to eight inches is probably the best length for a .22. The 10" Thompson Center Contender pistol is about the same size and weight as a 7.5" barrel revolver. It is usually more accurate than the run of the mill semi-autos and will usually out-shoot revolvers by a considerable margin in both accuracy and power.

Small game is, naturally, small. The vital areas of a cottontail or squirrel only cover a couple of square inches. Precise shot placement of a head or heart-lung shot requires short ranges and good shooting. Larger animals, such as groundhogs, have vital areas covering several times more area than that of a squirrel. This makes it easier to hit and longer shots can be taken at the larger animals while still within the capability of a vital area hit.

The .22 Magnum puts .22 LR rifle power in a .22 pistol. The power advantage is worthwhile for hunting, but certainly not for recreational shooting as the cost will eat you alive. My favorite jackrabbit combination is an eight-inch S & W .22 Magnum revolver and hollowpoint ammo. The ammo is light in weight. A couple hundred aren't even noticeable in your jacket pocket. This rimfire magnum rolls jacks quite well out to about 75 yards with hollowpoints and if you don't think carrying a lot of ammo is important, you just haven't shot running jacks with pistols when there are plenty of them.

The .22s are really worthwhile on prairie dogs. A scoped auto or Contender in Prairie Dog Town will still be interesting out to 100 yards or so, and won't break you in ammo costs. Unfortunately, most pistol scopes have a parallax problem at very short ranges which limits accurate shot placement detracting from their use in short range squirrel hunting. A quality scope with parallax adjustment from ten to 200 yards is badly needed.

Fox and coyote hunting are very popular in some areas of the country. A fox is a lot easier to kill than a coyote, but I think even the .22 Mag in a revolver is a bit light for them unless the distance is very close and good shot placement is possible. I can't really recommend the .22s for these animals because of their size and the usual methods of hunting them.

Other cartridges than .22s are certainly useful in small game hunting. The various .32s in good quality guns can be quite effective. The Dan Wesson and Ruger .32 Magnums would substantially increase killing power over a .22 LR. My Walther GEP .32 Long wadcutter target gun would be deadly on cottontails and squirrels due to its extreme accuracy and flat pointed 100 grain bullet.

The various .38, .357, .41, .44 and .45 caliber guns loaded with either factory lead bullets or lead, low velocity handloads do



**Wilson Magnum Hunter in .44 Magnum with 2X Leupold scope.**

### J.D. JONES' HUNTING LOADS

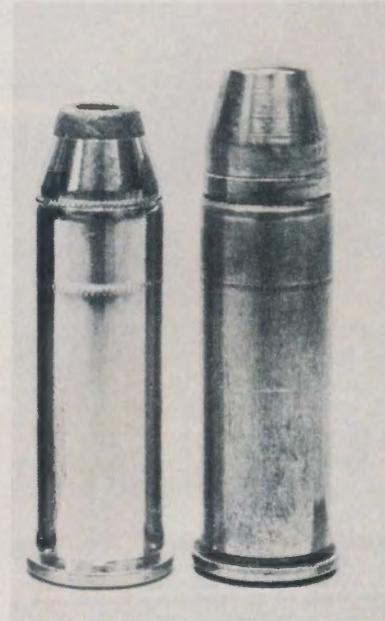
	BULLET	CHARGE	POWDER	VELOCITY
41 Magnum	170 Sierra	23.5 grs.	630P	*
41 Magnum	210 Jacketed	20.5 grs.	WW296	*
41 Magnum	275 JDJ Cast	19.0 grs.	WW296	*
44 Magnum	240 Jacketed	24.0 grs.	WW296	*
44 Magnum	320 JDJ Cast	21.5 grs.	WW296	**1420 fps
44 Special	260 JDJ Cast	various		
45 Colt	270 JDJ Cast	Mild Loads		
454 Casull	340 JDJ Cast	29.0 grs	WW296	1580 fps
257 JDJ	100 Nosler Prt.	34.5 grs.	4320	2640 fps
6.5 JDJ	120 Speer	34.0 grs.	4320	2410 fps
6.5 JDJ	125 Nosler Prt.	33.0 grs.	4320	2325 fps
270 JDJ	130 Nosler BT or Prt.	35.0 grs.	4320	2415 fps
309 JDJ	165 various	51.0 grs	4350	2350 fps
358 JDJ	250 Speer	48.0 grs.	4064	1959 fps
375 JDJ	270 Hornady	46.5 grs.	H4895	1960 fps
411 JDJ	400 BELL	48.5 grs.	H4895	1725 fps
411 JDJ	210 Sierra	43.0 grs.	H4227	2300 fps
45-70	400 Speer	52.0 grs.	H322	1670 fps
45-70	500 Hornady	48.0 grs.	3031	1450 fps
45 ACP	Factory Loads			
38 Special	Factory Wadcutters			
357 Magnum	Factory Loads			

\*Most revolver velocities will vary 200 FPS from gun to gun.  
\*\*Average Redhawk 7.5" velocity.

well and are not terribly destructive of small game. In other words, you would still have something left to eat and you wouldn't have much left from something like a full house .357 Herrett.

Varminting can use a lot of "crossover" guns and calibers. Guns and ammunition that are effective small game getters can also be efficient short range varmint guns. However, if you want to get serious about varminting, it becomes a long range sport and practically the domain of the single shot guns chambered for rounds such as the .221 Fireball, .223, .256 Magnum, .22 Hornet and a multitude of small, and not so small, high velocity, flat shooting cartridges. Many of them are capable of consistent 200 yard prairie dog hits, and a prairie dog isn't very big.

The T/C Contender dominates this area of the sport and the Remington XP-100 has its following also. Both guns are excellent. Some of the other single shots are also excellent, such as the Pachmayr Dominator conversion of the 1911 Colt, while some leave a lot to be desired and I can't comment on some of them since I haven't used them. The bolt action Wichita pistols are superb competition guns and suitable for some varminting. They do not have a safety mechanism and can only be recommended with a great many restrictions to their use.



**Standard 240 gr. JHP .44 Magnum (left) and author's favorite 320 gr. hard cast lead bullet (right).**



**Cape Hartebeest fell to this custom Remington XP-100 chambered for potent wildcat cartridge.**

Medium game includes javalina which is really a pretty small animal weighing between 35 and 60 pounds. Deer usually weigh from 100 to 175 pounds, for whitetail, to around 225-250 pounds for a good-sized mule deer. Also included in medium sized game is boar—usually feral pigs, which in most places weigh 150-200 pounds with occasional 3-400 pounders found in certain areas. Antelope seldom weigh much over 100 pounds, but are considered long range animals. Other game such as bighorn sheep and wild goats usually fall in this weight class as do the majority of black bears, although 4-500 pounders aren't unusual.

The guns and ammunition required to hunt these medium game animals all fall into the high powered category. The method of hunting and terrain to be hunted make many choices more realistic than others. For example, I would probably take a 6.5 JDJ SSK Contender as my first choice for antelope. It shoots very flat and 6.5mm 120 grain bullets give superb performance at long range. I'd probably expect to shoot at around 200 yards with the rig.

However, if all I had was a .45 automatic, I'd change my style of hunting. I'd find a place where the antelope traffic was heavy, be it a crossing or a waterhole trail, camouflage

myself and wait until something came into range—and bust it. In most places this would be a lot more productive than trying to stalk within positive killing range with a .45. A Colt Gold Cup in the right hands with the right ammo would probably take an antelope at 100 yards if everything was right.

For the most part, figure the .357 Magnum to be a 100 yard antelope gun as is the .41 and .44 Magnum revolvers. Most revolvers are hard pressed to consistently shoot five-inch 100 yard groups from a sandbag rest. Add in shooting error, and most revolvers in most hands are 100 yard guns. Some people and some guns will stretch that.

Scopes help with accurate shot placement. They don't improve inherent accuracy of the gun, but will improve the practical accuracy of the whole rig. Believe me, it's hard to precisely place a shot at 100 yards with iron sights. Even a 2X scope allows much more precise holding. On an iron sighted T/C for example, it would be very difficult to hold for an antelope's heart at 100 yards. With the same gun and a 2X or 4X scope, a heart shot is simple with a decent rest.

Scopes on revolvers are worthwhile too. Even at short range in the woods, you can use the scope to define an animal more clearly, identify horns that are invisible to the unaided eye, avoid otherwise unseen twigs and branches and shoot more precisely with greater speed than with iron sights.



The proper way to use a low power scope is to use it just like iron sights. Simply look with both eyes open at the target. Place the sight between you and the target. Align the crosshair and touch it off. Looking through the scope and then waving the unit around looking for the target simply doesn't work. The scope is unsurpassed at the long range aspects of the sport.

Whitetail deer and hogs are usually taken at short range in a large part of the country and antelope and mule deer at long range. It makes good sense to outfit yourself with the right kind of equipment for the type of hunting and the animal you intend to hunt. I'm not much of a fan of the .357 Magnum for animals over 100 pounds or as distances stretch out.

The .357, in most areas, is what I consider marginal in the field. Sure, you can kill almost anything with a .357 under the right conditions—or a .22 LR for that matter. In the field, the "right conditions" seldom exist.

The .357 kills poorly with marginally placed shots. The larger bore guns, or those of smaller bore and high velocity, blow a bigger hole through animals. Bigger holes mean more tissue destroyed, more and faster bleeding and a quicker kill. It's as simple as that.

I have difficulty in understanding the thinking of some shooters who feel they have to use the .357 to "defend" it when far better calibers are available. The .357 Maximum in a revolver is slightly more powerful than a .357 Magnum in a 10" T/C and that certainly never set the world on fire as a red hot hunting round. It can never equal a .41 or .44 Magnum in actual game shooting.

Good revolvers usually shoot groups of around five inches at 100 yards. With iron sights, a good revolver shot has an effective range of around 100 yards. A scope will add another 50 yards or so for the individual who knows what he is doing in both shooting and ammunition. Shot placement certainly has to be good, but the .41, .44, and .454 Casull are quite capable of good performance on medium size game at these ranges.



**Maryland Gun Works  
Magnum Hunter S&W 29  
with unique shrouded  
barrel system like Dan  
Wesson. Grips by Hogue  
and tip-off scope rings  
from Kimber.**

Obviously, on a target range a lot of excellent shooters group considerably better—but that's on a range, not under average hunting conditions. And when the wind is blowing, snow flying and you are cold and out of breath, your effective range may be only 25 yards with the best of gun-cartridge combinations.

In the woods, the revolvers are at their best. With the right loads, the .44 Magnum and .454 Casull have all the power necessary to take any American game assuming the hunter is skilled. Pigs and deer are no match for a well-placed shot from any of the modern magnums.

As ranges stretch out the relatively small bore cartridges are not only feasible, but far superior in performance to revolvers. The .30 Herrett, .357 Herrett, .35 Remington and 30-30 in standard T/C guns provide admirable service. The XP 100 in 7/08 and .35 Remington give excellent performance.

With proper handloads, these cartridges all give at least 150 yard performance that far overshadows anything that can be done with a .44 Magnum. Accuracy is superb with the worst of them giving at least three-inch groups at 150 yards with decent ammunition.

Long range performance requires bullets of relatively good sectional density driven at

relatively high velocities. A rifle, or rifle shaped, bullet is necessary to retain its velocity at long range. Short for its diameter, a bullet such as a 240 grain .44 bullet loses its velocity quickly and is not as efficient in flight as a rifle-type bullet that is long in relation to its diameter. At this stage of development, most of the truly high performance cartridges in handguns are either wildcat cartridges, such as the 6.5 or .375 JDJ, or rifle cartridges chambered in XP 100s.

One thing worth remembering is that the long range cartridges work equally well at short range, while the reverse is not true.

Once we get to game the size of elk, or the far larger moose and large bears, the only two revolver cartridges that should normally be considered are the .44 Magnum and .454 Casull. The .44 is available in a wide range of good guns. The .454 only comes in the excellent Freedom Arms revolver, which I think is the finest revolver you can buy today in terms of strength and quality of workmanship. The .454 operates at very high pressures and requires care in bullet selection. The 260 and 300 grain bullets by Freedom Arms are the best now available.

Ordinary bullets designed for use in the .45 Colt may give poor results when driven to 2000 fps possible in the .454 with 250 grainers. On these large animals, I feel the 320 (44) or 340 (45) grain cast bullet I designed are superior. They have the penetration necessary to effectively down these large animals. Penetration is about double that of 240 grain bullets and won't break up on large bones assuming a suitable bullet alloy is used. The modified truncated cone shape drills a neat hole through flesh. Full metal jacketed bullets used in silhouette shooting can be considered "slick" in passing through flesh, and seldom do as much damage as the cast bullet although they usually penetrate well. The .454 has had only limited use because it is a recent development. However, it is more powerful than the .44 Magnum and should give correspondingly better results.

## Handgun Hunting Organizations

### Handgun Hunters International

P.O. Box 357 MAG

Bloomington, OH 43910

publishes *The Sixgunner* magazine about handgun hunting; various member's benefits including special discounts, special hunts; dues, \$20 per year, include *Sixgunner* subscription

### Handgun Hunters Hall of Fame

41302 Executive Drive

Mt. Clemons, MI 48045

non-profit organization promoting handgun hunting through education and conservation programs; special emphasis on educating school children about guns, hunting; various member's benefits; dues \$15 per year

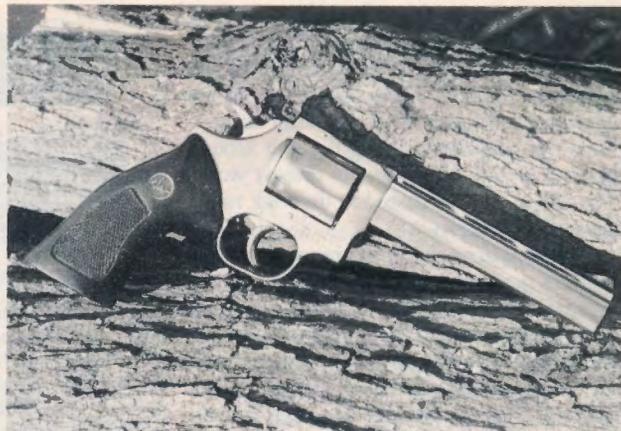
### Safari Club International

5151 Broadway, #1680

Tucson, AZ 85611

non-profit organization promoting hunting, conservation, education; publishes *Safari Magazine*; official keepers of Record Book of handgun hunting trophies; world's leading hunting organization; dues, \$20 per year, include subscription to *Safari*.

**Dan Wesson  
.44 Magnum  
makes a good  
choice for stock  
hunting handgun.  
Use full house loads.**



**Mag-Na-Port's Stalker is a Ruger Super Blackhawk .44 Magnum with custom touches like sling swivels, action job and scope base.**

The introduction of the .375 JDJ (444 Marlin necked down to 375) in SSK custom Contender barrels made the handgun hunting of any animal in the world a feasible undertaking. Other cartridges in the custom SSK barrels with the same capability are the .411 JDJ, 45-70, and .475 JDJ. The smallbore JDJ cartridges also extend the effective range of handgunners considerably. Custom XP 100 conversions by many good gunsmiths are even more powerful. SSK also makes these conversions.

When it comes to the over-the-counter guns, you can't go wrong with Colt, Charter, Dan Wesson, Smith, Freedom Arms Thompson Center, or Ruger even though most of them will require some minor gunsmithing in the form of a trigger job to make them really more suitable in the field.

Several firms now specialize in custom hunting handguns and they are usually well worthwhile as an investment in performance. In any event, the sport is growing very quickly.

## Hunting Handgun Specialists

### Mag-Na-Port International

Larry Kelly  
41302 Executive Drive  
Mt. Clemons, MI 48045  
(313) 469-6727

*Custom Stalker and Predator conversions of S&W Rugers; Mag-Na-Port recoil reducer; action jobs*

### SSK Industries

J.D. Jones  
Rt. 1, Della Drive  
Bloomington, OH 43910  
(614) 264-0176

*Custom T/Cs, custom T/C barrels in various calibers; T'SOB scope mounts; Arrestor muzzle brake*

### Wilson's Gun Shop

Bill Wilson  
P.O. Box 578  
Berryville, AR 72616  
(501) 545-3635

*Magnum Hunter custom conversions of S&W Rugers; action jobs; Wilson Quick Detach scope mounts*

### Buff Busters

Mickey Fowler  
419 W. Palmer Ave.  
Glendale, CA 91204  
(213) 245-4241

*Custom conversions of Ruger Redhawk; Buff Buster series of custom Ruger conversions*

### Ron Power

P.O. Box 1604  
Independence, MO 64055  
(816) 833-3102

*Ruger Redhawk Grand Master conversions; action jobs; scope mounting*

### Maryland Gun Works

Lou Ciamillo  
26200 Frederick Rd.  
Hyattstown, MD 20734  
(301) 831-8456

*Aimpoint Hunter custom conversion; Aimpoint bases; action jobs; rebarreling*

\*This list of firms specializing in custom handguns for hunting is for information only. The *American Handgunner* assumes no responsibility, stated or implied, for the work offered by these firms. Inclusion in the list is not an endorsement, and omission is not indicative of negative intent.



By AH Staff

**Part Two: Revolvers, Competition, Pistolsmithing, Optical and Iron Sights, and Personality Profiles.**

As a service to our readers who have saved their *Handgunners*, we present Part Two of an index of every article we've published in our ten year history. Due to the number of articles, we split the index into two parts, the first of which appeared in the September/October Tenth Anniversary Issue. Part One covered Single-Shot Pistols, Automatic Pistols, Cartridges and Reloading, Handgun Hunting, Holsters and Leather and Miscellaneous.

The index covers only feature articles, not our regular columns. Due to the popularity of *Handgunner*, virtually all of each press run sells out on the newsstand. However, we have a few back-issues available for purchase. For information on availability, contact Tara Hietpas, Handgunner Circulation, 591 Camino de la Reina, Suite 200, San Diego, CA, 92108.

**Optical and Iron**

**THE DYNAMIC DUO,** Bob Tremaine ..... Sep/Oct 1976  
Don Wesson mated with Precision Reflex pistol sight.

**THE MAXI-MOUNT,** J.D. Jones ..... Sep/Oct 1977  
A nifty new scope mount for the Thompson Contender.

**THE T/C INSTA-SIGHT,** J.D. Jones ..... Nov/Dec 1977  
It's not a scope, it's not an iron sight—it's insta-sight!

**A SILHOUETTE SCOPE,** J.D. Jones ..... Jul/Aug 1979  
Fontaine's silhouette scopes are tested.

**GUTTRIDGE "QUICKLINE" SIGHT,** Gene Crum ..... Jul/Aug 1980  
An exciting new concept in handgun sights.

**OMEGA PEEPSIGHT,** J.D. Jones ..... Jan/Feb 1981  
Test of Omega's new peepsight.

**WEAVER'S NEW HANDGUN SCOPE,** Walter Rickell ..... Nov/Dec 1981  
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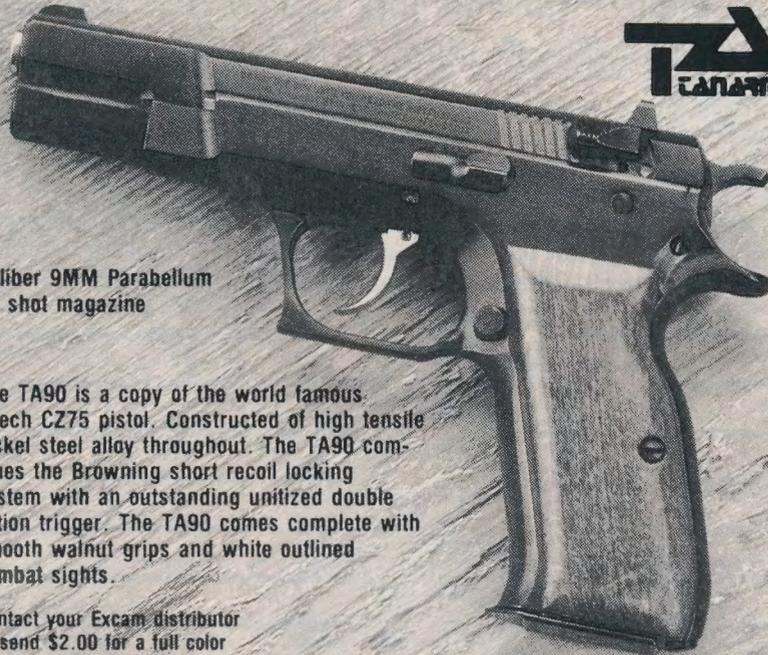
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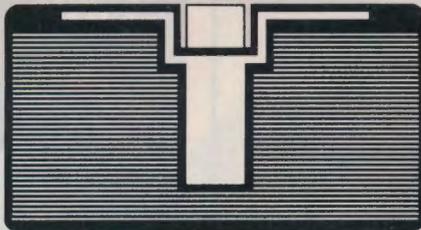
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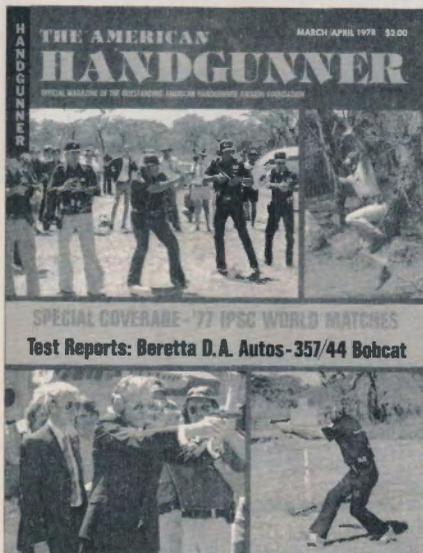
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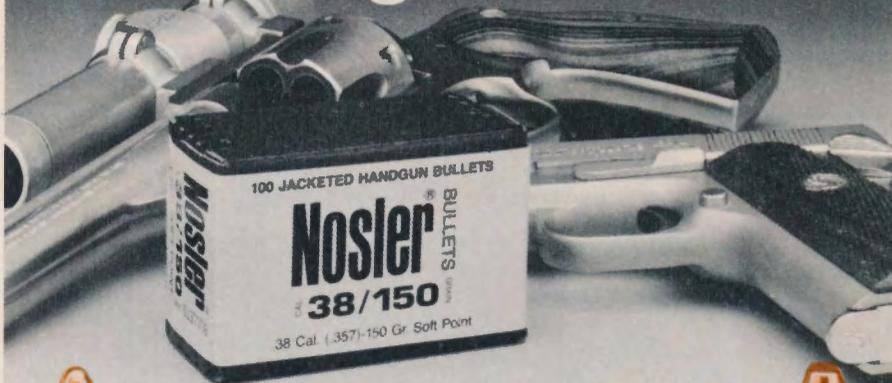
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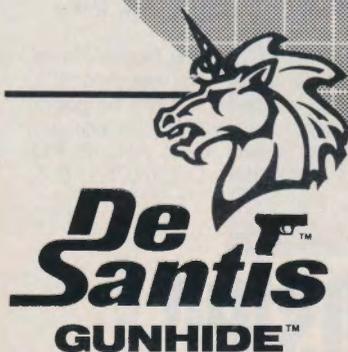
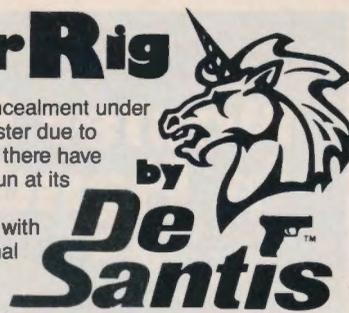
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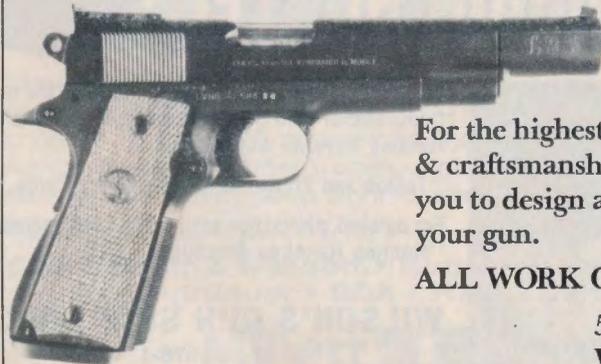
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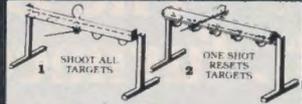
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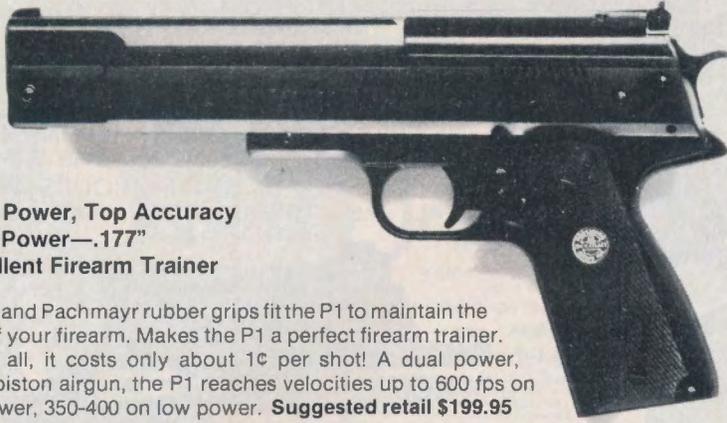
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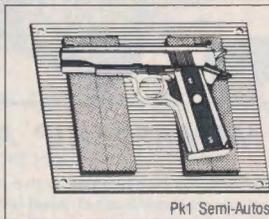
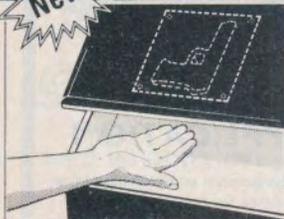
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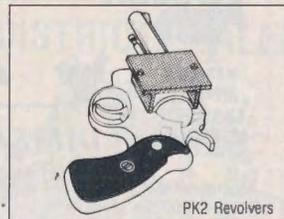


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Bert Stringfellow	May/June 1986
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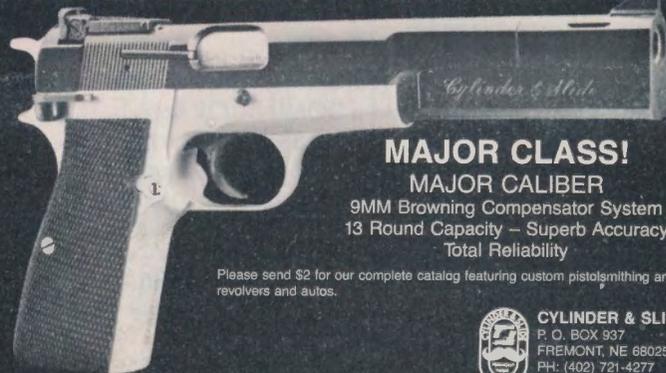
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## THE AYOOB FILES

*Continued from page 28*

**Precognition.** Alvarez had admitted to the investigators that he had not seen the gun in Johnson's hand, but instead had seen only the upper right arm moving swiftly forward. The prosecution found experts, including Alvarez' own Officer Survival instructor, who stated that one should not fire until one actually saw the gun in the opponent's hand.

When confronted with this by Mr. Laeser, I replied, "If you wait to see the gun, you're going to see what comes out of it." I then demonstrated to the jury that action beats reaction, and that if the opponent's hand is already on the gun, the killing stroke will be literally too fast to time: you hit the "start" button on the stopwatch as you see the arm begin to move, and at virtually that same moment the shot goes off before you can hit the "stop" button.

Alvarez, I explained, had taken his eyes off Johnson as he looked to the rookie Cruz and told him to take the gun; he felt Johnson move before he turned and saw the arm coming forward, and had to assume that Johnson's hand had already reached his revolver. Any hesitation at this point would have meant death at the hands of a known armed man, and perhaps also the death of his young rookie and of other innocent persons all around them.

I arranged to access the records of the Miami PD firearms training, and determined how many times and days and hours Alvarez had been to the range to qualify, and how many other officers had been present. We were thus able to prove that Alvarez had seen other policemen draw guns literally thousands of times.

He had learned to associate the forward movement of the upper arm with a detective reaching for his crossdraw holster, or a patrolman bringing up his gun from a strong side position; Johnson could have reached his gun either way. Because the movement of the upper arm was consistent with a man drawing a gun, and because Alvarez knew that the suspect was in fact armed with a firearm, I explained, his subconscious mind would instantly make the connection and assume, "He's going for the gun." This is called "precognition," and, again, was accepted by the jury. It is believed that the Alvarez case was the first successful use of the "precognition defense" in a shooting trial.

**The head shot question.** The prosecution argued that because Miami PD regulations said that one should always aim for the center of mass instead of the head in a shooting, and that in close quarters the gun should be tucked into the officer's hip and aimed at the opponent's belly instead of being stuck in his face, Alvarez had violated regs and shown bad judgment.

I replied that Johnson had obviously not read the police regulations. I demonstrated to the jury that, *Johnson would not have seen the revolver at the officer's hip-level, and therefore, would not have been deterred by it.* I reminded the jury that the officer draws his

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gun primarily to intimidate and prevent bloodshed, and Alvarez in good faith tried to do so in the only way open to him: by bringing the gun up to Johnson's face and showing it to him.

In addition, eyewitness testimony showed that there were at least two or three innocent bystanders directly behind suspect Johnson. Had Alvarez followed the book and fired from the hip, a bullet that overpenetrated or missed would have probably struck one of those innocents. Using defense lawyer Mark Seiden as Johnson, playing the role of Alvarez myself, and placing the prosecutor in the position of a bystander, I showed that a missed shot from where the prosecutor wanted the gun held would have killed him, while the upward angle of Alvarez' real-life head shot would have angled a missed or exiting bullet safely over the heads of the bystanders. The jury nodded their agreement.

**The location question.** The accusation, "You were someplace you had no right to be, so you're partially at fault for the shooting taking place at all" is normally used against civilians instead of cops, but was thrown at Alvarez in this case. The argument was that Alvarez and Cruz were out of their sector, and had they stayed in their assigned patrol district, nothing would have happened that night.

I answered the prosecutor, in part, "One of the things the field training officer has to do is train his recruit in 'locaide,' or the ability to find his way around. He might have been called into Overtown to assist other officers, as so many officers from other sectors were called that night (when the riot broke out). Therefore, it was critical for him to show the young officer where everything was in the adjacent districts where he might be called, including this little arcade with a history of attracting criminal types. Had he been called there to assist an officer, would it have been better for him to pull over and whine to a citizen on the street, 'I'm a Miami police officer and I'm lost — can you direct me to the video arcade?'"

If you have a good reason to be where you are, your location is normally defensible if it becomes an issue after you've been in a shooting.

**The question of approach.** Miami regs suggest that the officer facing an armed felony suspect stay at a distance and cover him at gunpoint, then send a backup officer in for disarming, searching, handcuffing, etc. It was alleged that Alvarez had violated this principle in his handling of Johnson, thus setting the stage for the shooting.

The answer, of course, was again that the regulations had not foreseen the situation. If Alvarez had covered him with drawn gun from a distance, Johnson was only a half-step from cover in the canyon of the tall, electronic video games. From there he could have engaged officers in a shootout claiming multiple innocent lives inside the establishment, or taken hostage the two or three people who were adjacent to him when the shooting went down. I pointed out to the jury that Alvarez had risked only his own life

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when he closed with the potentially dangerous suspect in such a manner that bystanders were less likely to be hurt; it was an act of selfless heroism, not foolishness or arrogance or bravado.

**Employment of backup.** Alvarez was attacked on this from two angles. One was that Alvarez should have called the SWAT team when he observed a potentially armed man in the establishment; the other was that he should have employed his partner, Cruz, more actively in the capture of suspect Johnson.

To the first, we replied that there are some 50,000 calls a year for police service in the Overtown district, and SWAT can't be called out for all of them. The special reaction team is reserved for barricaded gunmen and other extremely high-risk threats. The suspect carrying an illegal weapon is a daily fact of life for a Miami patrol officer, and Alvarez was both courageous and correct to handle it as he did. Besides, if the bulge had turned out to be a colostomy bag, would the SWAT team then charge Johnson with "possession of a disgusting weapon"?

A stronger argument was that Alvarez, the first to spot the danger, should have taken the "covering" position, and sent young Cruz in to handle the disarming. (How this would have done anything but force Cruz to fire instead of Alvarez was never quite explained). I was asked if I would have done it different with my partner.

I replied that I might have, but Cruz was not Alvarez's partner. "Partnership," I explained, "implies a pairing of equals. Cruz and Alvarez were not equals. Alvarez was to the new officer as a parent is to a child, a guardian to his ward. At least in the early stages, the rookie is someone for the field training officer to protect, not someone who can back him up. It was absolutely appropriate for Alvarez to take the most dangerous part of the action onto himself, because he was the more experienced, the more highly trained." I added that I couldn't help noticing that the prosecutor's assistant, a former judge, was one of the finest attorneys in the state, and that *this* was a true partner; the prosecutor did not have a rookie law school graduate at second seat on this major case.

**Gun modification.** Alvarez was attacked on two counts of gun modification. At some point, his issue service revolver had had two coils removed from the trigger return spring, slightly lightening the pull. For many years, S&W armorer's school had taught this modification for service guns, ceasing to do so only—coincidentally—at about the time of the Alvarez trial. The prosecution found a firearms professional who testified that this modification made the gun "more lethal, with greater firepower." On cross, Mark Seiden destroyed him on that, and I confirmed in my direct testimony that lethality was a function of the department-issued bullet, not the launcher, and that a lighter trigger return spring would slow time between shots and thus reduce firepower. The point is not that the prosecution failed to convince the jury that Alvarez was a "gunfighter" who had



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dangerously modified his duty weapon; the point was that the prosecution *tried* to do that. Since the trial, lawyer Seiden, an ex-cop and fine pistol shot, has made a point of carrying factory stock guns for self-defense.

Alvarez had also fitted his gun with plastic, finger-groove Rogers combat grips. These are extremely popular among Miami cops, but technically violate a rule not to use plastic stocks, a rule that came out back when the only plastic grips available were sleazy, slippery, fake mother-of-pearl. Bill Rogers himself had shot this argument down in testimony before I arrived, and the prosecutor didn't give me the chance to use what probably would have been my best "line" in the trial. Previously, he had implied that smooth plastic meant slipperiness (an implication that the gun had wrongfully and accidentally gone off). Had I been asked if the relatively smooth surface of a Rogers grip made it slippery, I was prepared to reply, "Counselor, my wife's backside is *smooth*, but it is not *slippery*."

There were numerous other issues in *Florida v. Alvarez*, but those mentioned above are the most significant learning points for the average police officer, or lawfully armed private citizen, who might one day face trial after a shooting like the one that enveloped Officer Alvarez. If there is a bottom line, it is this: "If you act in good faith and have competent counsel, any attack against you can be successfully deflected." Alvarez' counsel was the best: Roy Black, considered

by many Florida's top criminal defense attorney, and Mark Seiden, the architect of the defense, who is to murder trials what Rob Leatham is to speed shooting matches.

After nearly eight weeks of trial, the jury took only two hours to return a verdict of "not guilty." Luis Alvarez was free, but his problems were not over. The FBI investigated him with a view toward the US Justice Department charging him under 42 USC 1983 with conspiracy to violate Johnson's rights to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. To its credit, FBI ruled that there were no grounds to so proceed. A *civil* suit against Alvarez, Miami PD, and the city was settled out of court for \$1.1 million dollars.

At this writing, Luis Alvarez is on paid leave from the police department as he has been since the night of the shooting, patiently awaiting the day when the city will have the courage to return him to the job he loves, the job he did and did well the night he faced The Snake in that video arcade.

The last time I spoke with Luis, he was well aware that he had been put through a living hell for defending his life against an armed man who turned on him, but he never doubted that it was better than being dead, and to this day is convinced that if he had not fired, Johnson would have killed both him and Officer Cruz.

Having been immersed in the case for more than a year, I believe his assessment is absolutely true.



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## SUGAR AND SPICE

*Continued from page 35*

Christie Rogers fired her Wilson Accu-Comp .38 Super, and came in second woman. This was Christie's second Steel Challenge, her first being 1984.

A true veteran of the Challenge is Joanna Fichman, fourth woman overall. Joanna used Bruce Gray's 9mm, HK P7M13, modified. The squeeze cocker took some getting used to, but Joanna handled it with competent ability. Less recoil frees the shooter's concentration.

Skill, concentration, and recoil. No matter what caliber, no matter who worked on the gun, recoil is not a shooter controlled entity. The less recoil, the more control the woman has, the faster she recovers her front sight. No front sight—ho hit.

Debi Saylor is a good example of concentration, shooting the only revolver among the women. Her .357 L-frame, shooting .38 Specials, has Wichita sights. Even with the pressure of only six shots per load, Debi came in seventh woman overall. In the Steel Challenge, most men wouldn't trust their own skill enough to get through a run, without a nervous breakdown, using a revolver!

Next year, Debi will be back with a .38 Super. It offers less recoil, is lighter to handle, and has more capacity. Less recoil means quicker sight time. If she can better what she did this year with a wheelgun, watch out top women!



## PRIZE PISTOL

*Continued from page 35*

enabled him to develop a number of customized autos and revolvers which have established an enviable reputation for accuracy and reliability.

Over the years, Accu-Comps have excelled in all the combat shooting competitions. Originally designed for the Second Chance Bowling Pin Match, the Accu-Comp is built around the basic Colt 1911 frame and slide. The main features of the Accu-Comp are its barrel and compensator which are designed to increase accuracy and reduce recoil even when heavy loads are shot. Instead of the usual barrel bushing assembly, the Accu-Comp barrel has a heavy forward taper that allows it to mate directly with the slide. Attached to the front of the barrel is a compensator that deflects the gases driving the bullet down the barrel upward. This, together with the weight of the compensator, helps in reducing muzzle jump during firing.

The pistol also has a full-length recoil spring guide system that helps keep the spring centered. This is fitted with a Wilson poly-fiber Shok-Buff washer that helps reduce wear and stress to both the frame and slide. Other features include a speed safety, beavertail grip safety, Bo-Mar combat fully-adjustable rear sight and a stainless steel magazine produced by Wilson.

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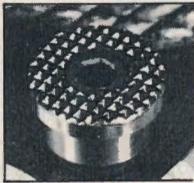
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Unlike many custom guns, the Accu-Comp is a handsome pistol that has retained the classic lines of the Colt 1911. Many of today's customized "trick guns" often look quite ugly, but Bill Wilson has managed to attach the compensator assembly so that it appears as though it is part of the slide.

This special Accu-Comp was hand-crafted by Wilson's top pistolsmith, Shop Foreman Ron Phillips. Ron put his heart and soul into the Triple Threat Grand Prize, and he says it's the finest Accu-Comp to ever leave his workbench.

The stunning finish on the Triple Threat Grand Prize is from Metaloy. Jim Kelly of Metaloy (Box 578, Dept. AH, Berryville, AR, 72616) applies this rust-inhibiting, durable finish to both competition guns and service guns alike. Many of the nation's top pistolsmiths like Bill Wilson and Steve Nastoff prefer the Metaloy finish and feel it is the standard by which all other plating must compare.

Its appearance has been considerably enhanced by some tasteful engraving that has been applied to the slide and the hand-made bronze grips. This has been done by Jerry Usher, who is also a competition shooter of some renown. He has represented the U.S. at the 1977 and 1979 World IPSC Championships, has placed high in several Bianchi Cup events and won the Top Revolver Title at the Steel Challenge in 1984.

The engraving was done with a Gravermeister power engraving tool. This enables the engraving to be done in such a manner that there are no very deep cuts in any areas of stress. Consequently, this engraved Accu-Comp is a pistol that can be used in competition and not relegated to some display case. Jerry believes that many other competition shooters might like to enhance their favorite competition pistols with this style of engraving. (Jerry Usher, 29000 Gladiolus, Canyon Country, CA, 91351, (805) 251-0530)

The handmade bronze grips are indeed gorgeous, but many shooters find presentation-grade wood stocks to be most handsome. Hogue Combat Grips (P.O. Box 2036, Dept. AH, Atascadero, CA, 93423, (1-800) GET-GRIP) donated a selected set of stocks made from Kingswood. The stocks feature Aaron Hogue's flawless handcut checkering.

A complete holster rig from Safariland (1941 S. Walker Ave., Dept. AH, Monrovia, CA, 91016 (818) 357-7902) accompanies the Wilson Accu-Comp Grand Prize. The holster is a Rogers Combat Assault which is the state-of-the-art competition holster currently adopted by Team Safariland and other top shooters. The rig is based on a Rogers Gunfighter velcro lined belt with two Idaho single mag pouches and a triple mag pouch.

It is now standard procedure to present guns as awards in shooting competitions. However, it is not often that the gun is an engraved competition handgun like this Accu-Comp. Together with the engraving,

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its estimated value is \$3,500 which makes it the highest priced single prize of the match. The shooter who eventually won this fine pistol was Rob Leatham, the current reigning IPSC World Champion, and one of the finest action shooters of all time.

Actually, Rob is no stranger to the Accu-Comp as he has used one to win all of his many titles so he will certainly appreciate this beautifully engraved presentation version.



## STEEL CHALLENGE

Continued from page 35

Brian made two mistakes.

Brian's disaster came on *Winchester's Show Down*, actually one of the easier stages. His first run was poetry in motion—gunfire harmonically mixed with ringing plates. He lowered his pistol as quickly as he'd drawn it, and was nearly re-holstered. Gorgeous shooting—except he missed the stop plate! The clock still ticking away (at about a thousand dollars a second at this point), Brian re-aimed, re-fired and re-re-holstered.

OK, OK, don't get flustered. You get one "throw-away" run by scoring your best four of five runs at the steel. No big deal, that would be the "throw-away."

Brian calmed himself and shot a good second run. Third run now. Those who don't learn from the past are doomed to repeat it—Brian nearly re-holstered before realizing he missed the stop plate. Re-aim, re-fire, re-re-holster.

Chip smelled victory like a leopard senses prey. He'd just watched Brian blow-out and he had the advantage of knowing his quarry was in easy reach.

Chip won *Winchester's Show Down* with a 11.12, more than two seconds faster than "Quick on the Holster."

As the Master Blasters moved into the sixth and final stage, *American Handgunner's Triple Threat*, the sound of a hungry bunch of woodpeckers drifted in the air. Woodpeckers? No, just the sound of the leaders tap, tap tapping on calculators to check the standings after *Show Down*. (Whoever recommended against checking the scores of your opponents during competition never went to the Steel Challenge!)

Coming into *Triple Threat*, Chip held a slim lead:

Chip McCormick: 60.47  
Brian Enos: 60.90  
John Shaw: 61.98  
Rob Leatham: 63.17

Couldn't Brian catch Chip who stands ahead by less than half a second? On any stage except *Triple Threat*, yes. But on *American Handgunner's* stage? Not a chance.

Chip won *Triple Threat* last year and is the fastest shooter on very close range Steel Challenge courses. He proved that on the old *Double Trouble* match, and no competitor argues with Chip's claim to turf on *Triple Threat*.

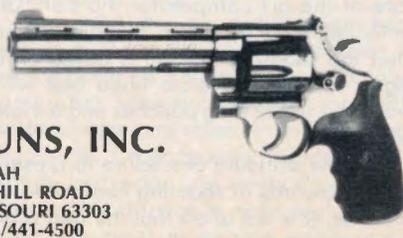
Yet, a gun can always jam and so can a shooter's brain.

But it was not to be. Chip dialed back his

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scorching speed by two-clicks to "play it safe" on *Triple Threat*. He placed second in the stage for which *American Handgunner* gave him \$500.

Rob Leatham, knowing he was out of the running at nearly three seconds behind first place, turned it loose. Boy, did he turn it loose! Rob set a new world record for *Triple Threat* with an average time of 1.47 seconds to draw and fire three accurate shots at three separate targets.

For that *American Handgunner* awarded the finest single prize of the Steel Challenge—an engraved Colt .38 Super customized by Bill Wilson. (See the accompanying sidebar describing this exquisite pistol.) In addition to the \$3,500 pistol, the *Handgunner* awarded Rob with a check for \$1,000.

And so it ended. Chip high-stepped away whistling "The Eyes of Texas Are Upon You" and Brian shuffled off to Bianchi Cup. The rest of us went for a cold beer.



GUNS AND GEAR

Continued from page 36

range (casting being casting, there is always a variation in bullet weight due to alloy composition) travelling at anywhere from 850 fps to 1000 fps. A few shooters used bullets in the 158 grain range, the standard IPSC bullet, at around 800 fps.

You can expect to see the Super dominating charts of the top shooters' gear for awhile. At least through next year. There is a new cartridge currently being developed that may replace the Super. Details are sketchy at this point, but you can expect a full report on this new factory cartridge (new caliber!) in *American Handgunner*.

The unknown holster maker who claims the top four spots is no longer unknown. His name is Ernie Hill and he's carved himself a

piece of the competition shooter's pie with some exciting innovations in holster design. Basically, his improvements involve twin retention screws holding a relatively heavy steel insert in place. The leather-wrapped steel holster holds its shape and provides a solid nest for a competition handgun. It is not at all heavy despite the steel lining.

Why are the top shooters using non-Colt Colts? In a word, money. The various clones of Colt's Government Model are less expensive than the brand-name. Is that why the Big Boys are shooting Springfield Armory, Essex and Auto-Ordnance guns? To save a few bucks on the gun that gets \$1,500 worth of custom touches? Of course not!

The top shooters are "endorsing" the clones by shooting them in competition because they are paid. No shooter would reveal his endorsement "price."

There is nothing unethical about this. We

Continued on page 72

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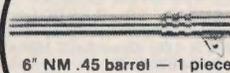
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Continued from page 69  
 see champions from all arenas using products as paid endorsements.

One top shooter who claimed to be shooting an endorsement pistol in the match was fibbing. Or else his Colt-copy was an exact clone—I saw "COLT'S PT. F.A. MFG. HARTFORD, CONN. U.S.A." stamped on the frame when I verified the shooter's claim by glancing at his holstered pistol.

That is unethical. It's one thing to actually use a product you endorse, but it's entirely different to claim you use the product when you don't.

The demographics showing eight of the top ten shooters residing in the Southwest is not surprising. Wider expanses of land allow for more gun clubs. A hunting/shooting tradition exists south of Mason-Dixon. A Wyoming shooter, Dan Clements, doesn't fall in the Southwest category, but Wyoming fits into the hunting/shooting heritage that nurtures the development of top shooters.

Only one Yankee, Jerry Barnhart from Michigan.

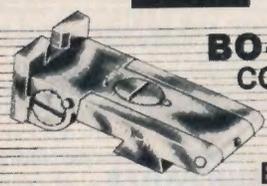
The equal distribution of "brand-name" and "unknown" pistolsmiths is a bit puzzling at first glance. One would expect more familiar names in the top ten, say eight out of ten.

The message here is that just because a pistolsmith has not come to prominence through the pages of *American Handgunner*, or through another vehicle, is no reason to doubt his talents and qualifications.

Of the 11 pistolsmiths in the top ten, five have had their work featured in *American Handgunner*. Three more have received minor mention leaving only three of 11 as real newcomers to you.

As you see, there is more to a chart listing the "guns and gear of the top ten" than mere trivia.

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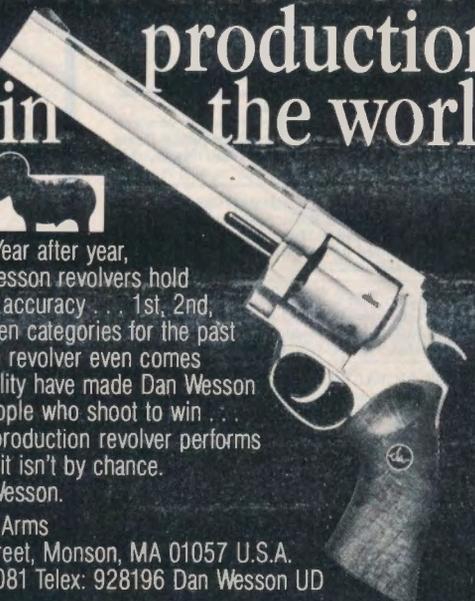
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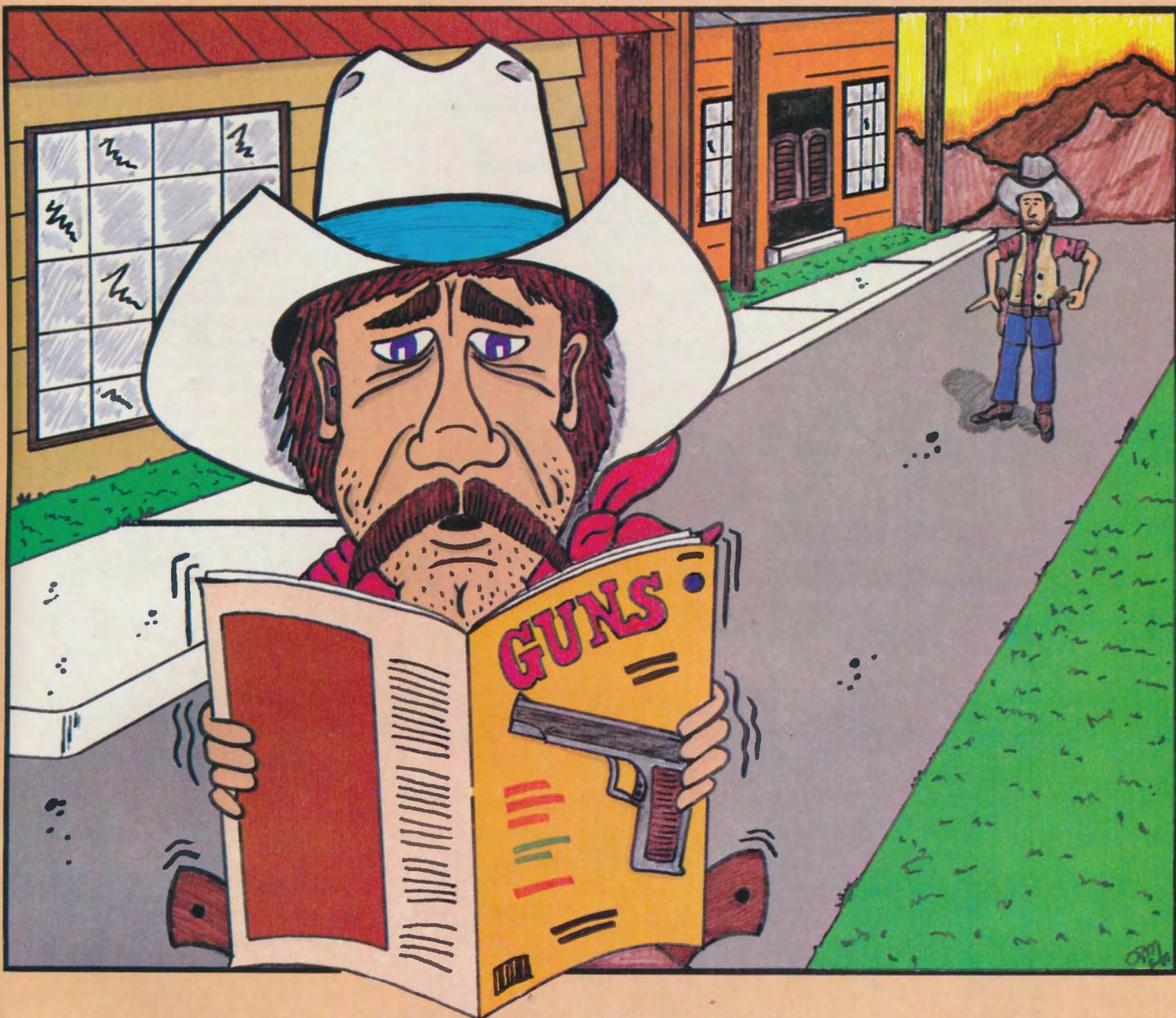
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# ANDY CANNON GUNS

Continued from page 43

change in recoil. I was dimly aware of a louder blast, but in the heat of the moment could detect not a whisker difference

between 185 grain bullets at 700 and 1000 fps.

You don't need a Douglas barrel for this latest innovation. Andy can cut it into a Smith .44 Magnum, or the beefy barrels of a Colt Python or S&W L-frame .357. He has been doing mostly the latter, and his most popular conversion is a 4" 586 or 581 reshaped into a gun with a 3" barrel and 1" integral compen-

sator. I've not handled one yet, but Andy swears that 125-grain Federal Magnums through it feel like +P .38 from a conventional model of the same gun. Most buyers also opt for Andy to recut the butt to K-frame round configuration. Such a .357 done on your gun will set you back \$150, plus \$100 to \$200 for the action work depending on the level you want, and another \$40 for the round butt.

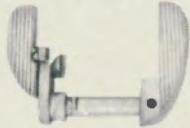
My new .45, which Andy calls his Custom IPSC Revolver, goes for \$575 with a glass-beaded blue finish, \$75 less if your gun is a 629 or other stainless that won't need refinishing. Sights are Wichita post front with Millett rear, and an Aimpoint base by Weaver, included in the price.

I had noticed my Aimpoint mount listed just a tad to starboard, and figured old Andy was getting feet of clay until he explained the slight canting was deliberate: "The battery weight of an Aimpoint causes it to over-balance very slightly to one side, and while that doesn't cause problems in a .38, it gives an irritating rolling recoil motion to a heavy caliber gun like yours. The slight offset of the mount on your N-frame restores recoil to a normal feel," Andy said.

Prices for the fancy competition stuff are competitive with what other masters are charging, and less than prices I've seen on the work of less skilled craftsmen. But Cannon's strongest point is the street wheelgun—the Smith & Wesson service revolver.

You noticed that he has two levels of action work. The basic \$100 rebuild goes far beyond

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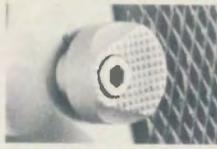
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And now you can use the very same ammunition in a sporty new long gun from Marlin. The Model 9 Camp Carbine.

If you're into 9mm, or expect to be, we've got a hunch you're going to really like this gun.

For one thing, the Model 9's 16½" modified Micro-Groove® barrel delivers more than a 22% increase in muzzle velocity and a 50% boost in energy over a 4" barreled 9mm handgun.

an "action job." It encompasses complete cylinder realignment, and complete, tight re-timing so the S&W pre-times, that is, locks its cylinder before the hammer begins to fall. He finds chamber sizes vary by as much as one and a half thousandths on factory S&W cylinders, so he finish-reams all chambers to identical dimensions. Cylinder gap space is brought to an exact .005", appropriate for street work.

This, of course, is in addition to the famous "Cannon action." Smooth as glass with no discernible "staging" in its uniform double action trigger stroke, I find such an action on a stock Combat Magnum to stay on target as well in fast work as a Douglas barreled, BoMar-ribbed PPC gun with a conventional S&W action. Yet, on this \$100 street gun, you don't have to worry about light hits. Cannon has his own springs custom made by Wolfe, and reliability with Magnum primers is where his work begins.

In the super-deluxe version, \$200 buys you all the above plus accurizing. Hold an S&W to the light in silhouette and spin the cylinder, and you'll often see the barrel/cylinder gap opening and closing. Andy cuts the front of the cylinder exactly square. The barrel is then pulled, and the forcing cone is not only squared perfectly vis-a-vis the cylinder, but is now dished to 11° to prevent lead shaving and ensure that a totally undeformed bullet hits the lands and grooves every time. If necessary, he recuts the muzzle to a perfect crown as well.

You have the option of Andy's coil main-

spring, which he stocks for those who insist it gives them a better feel. He does them only on K and L frame guns now, and personally thinks they're not as even in resistance as his own special, flat mainsprings. I have an old one on an N-frame and can't tell the difference, though it is smooth.

Depending how busy Andy is, he says his

turnaround time for a full-house gun is eight to fourteen weeks. The \$100 or \$200 action jobs for street guns turn around, as a rule, in two to five weeks. The more you want, the longer it takes. Welcome to the planet Earth. Personally, I take whatever time any gunsmith quotes me and double it. You'll notice we pessimists are never disappointed,

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and unlike optimists (who, at best, only get what they expect) we are often pleasantly surprised.

Drop Andy a line at Cannon's Guns, P.O. Box 357, Dept. AH, Victor, Montana, 59875. He'll send you his detailed catalog, with ordering and shipping instructions, at no charge. It will also include his phone number, and if you call him, he'll be quite candid about what you do and don't need. Personally, I've found the \$100 Smith revamp to perform superbly and never missed not ordering the extra \$100 worth of work on that fine service revolver.

I am 100% satisfied with the guns Andy has done for me, and of the large sampling of other shooters I have input from, I'm seeing an unprecedented 99%-plus satisfaction rate. If you're looking for a to-the-wall match six-gun with which to shoot for loot, you can't do better than Cannon, and if you want to wring maximum street/duty/all-around performance from your conventional S&W revolver, I would respectfully submit that Andy Cannon should be at the top of your list.

The three out of several hundred owners who told me they weren't initially happy with Andy's work all were answered courteously, swiftly, and satisfactorily. None of them knew of Andy's reputation during his decade as a working cop before he retired on disability to devote himself to guns.

That career was spent as a Fish & Game officer in New Hampshire, where I live. During that time he had become head of firearms training for the statewide police academy, and his skill with a gun was already a local legend. People still talk of the night when Andy was in Code Three pursuit of a carload of deer poachers, and the suspects flung a full-auto M-2 .30 carbine out the window just before they pulled over and abjectly surrendered.

It turns out that as one violator in the back seat was aiming his machinegun out the window at the pursuing officer, his brother sitting next to him had knocked him senseless with a right cross, grabbed the M-2, and threw it out of the car. "You fool!" he screamed hysterically at his brother, "That's Andy Cannon in that cruiser! You shoot at him, he'll kill us all!"

Ya know, I feel kinda comfortable having men like that build my serious sixguns.



## RELOADING .38 SUPER

*Continued from page 38*

Jordan. "Try 540," he said.

If WW 540 has been loaded in .38 Super, the data hasn't been published. This venture into never-never land called for extreme caution in determining a starting load. I did quite a bit of pondering before selecting a starting load and working up.

I began the tedious process of loading and chronographing ten round batches increasing the charge by a tenth of a grain with each batch. Testing was done using new Winchester brass and Winchester primers.

The bullet was Wilson's cast round nose (Saeco #391), sized .357", which weighs 160 grains. All loads were assembled on a Dillon 550 using Redding titanium carbide dies. The loaded round was seated to an overall length of 1.230" and taper crimped to .380-.381".

It was immediately apparent that WW 540 showed promise, for there was less unburned powder and the gun was, by comparison with Blue Dot and some other powders I tried, cleaner. Over the course of several months I tested well over 50 different loads and worked up major loads that are safe and effective.

Even though I was making major velocities without gross signs of excess pressure, all the eyeballing in the world can't take the place of measurements of actual chamber pressure. SAAMI's specifications for the .38 Super (+P) show a maximum average chamber pressure of 35,700 CUP and good sense dictates that loads come in enough below that figure to allow a margin of safety.

Winchester's R&D department pressure tested the loads I developed. Their pressure testing procedure is far more complex than simply sticking a round in a pressure barrel and firing it, for they must be assured that the load is safe under extremes of temperature beyond those normally encountered. They test at ambient temperatures and also at -40° and +140°F to be sure that temperature extremes do not cause pressure excursions. In addition, the test evaluates the effect of powder position within the case.

Winchester testing determined that a safe major load for .38 Super with 160 grain bullets and WW 540 is 7.0 grains. In the five-inch pressure barrel this load developed 32,000 CUP at 1100 fps. This should be considered the maximum safe load.

My data was developed in a five-inch Wilson barrel in one of his Accu-Comp custom Colts. This points out an interesting fact of reloading life—it is highly unlikely that a real live gun will produce the same velocities for a given powder charge compared to a laboratory's pressure test barrel.

In my gun, 6.3 grains of WW 540 makes 1110 fps. Major loads appear to be attainable at charges well below the 7.0 grains Winchester needed in the pressure barrel.

No attempt to load maximum (7.0 grains), or near maximum, should be attempted without carefully working up from the starting load, 5.8 grains, recommended in the accompanying table.

Some .38 Supers I've seen have been severely ramped and throated and leave a portion of the web of the case unsupported. For this reason, it is important that fired cases be inspected for any sign of bulging in the unsupported area. New barrels with fully-supported chambers, like the Wilson barrel, are recommended.

I'm sure that WW 540 is a good powder for .38 Super, but I'm equally sure that this isn't the last word. Winchester is soon to release a new line of shotgun powders and some of these look as if they may be likely candidates for more Super developments. For now, WW 540 seems the best choice.



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# INDUSTRY INSIDER

JERRY RAKUSAN

## REAL WALTHERS PLEASE STAND UP; HINTS ON DEFEATING ANTI-GUNNERS

The concern caused by the introduction of the Manurhin PP series of auto pistols (will the real Walther PPs please stand up) has been put to bed. Matra Manurhin recently announced that Manurhin S.A. of France has stopped making the German-designed PP-series pistols, and that the existing inventory represents the last of these to be imported into the U.S. Matra Manurhin International indicated that they will continue customer support, and that warranty service will be provided.

Oh to be in England, now that bespoke gunsmiths are producing pistols for skittle matches, and where, in some matches, a back-up gun is described as one for which Bianchi offers their Model 12 ankle holster. Of course, you all know that "bespoke" refers to custom-made articles (in this case, guns) and skittles are the English equivalent of bowling pins.

Speaking of skittles, my new satellite dish brought an interesting bowling game into my living room, one that has not evidently

migrated west of the Alleghenies. It's called candlepin bowling, and uses small pins about the diameter of the head of a standard bowling pin. My first thought upon seeing this quaint game was, "That might make one hell of a .22 rimfire target." Have any of you Northeasters tried candlepins with .22s?

I talked the other day to Terry Kopp, gunsmith out of Lexington, Missouri (13 Highway, zip 64067). His latest catalog (\$2.00) offers a lot of pistolsmithing services, including his renowned Government Model barrel conversions to such exotics as .30 Mauser and .30 Luger. He also lists a K-10 conversion, which he says is the Bren Ten cartridge with the rim turned down to fit the .38 Super slide, and the case shortened just a bit. Terry is having trouble getting .40 caliber barrels and 10mm ammo, so he has not had a lot of opportunities to work on this.

I said, in an earlier column, that we have to separate the sporting use of handguns from the criminal use in the eyes of the public at large. The question is, how?

I have a plan. I want every reader who believes as I do to write every major TV network, every major TV cable company, every local, regional and national TV program guide. I want you to tell them about just one of the many handgun sports, the Steel Challenge.

Tell them about the 266 shooters who competed, tell them about the 52,000 rounds of ammo they shot; tell them about the safety of the matches; tell them about the cash and prizes worth over a quarter million dollars; tell them about the shooters who came from Austria, Guam, Canada, Hawaii, and from more than 20 of the 48 contiguous states; tell them about the more than 18 young ladies who competed along with the men. And, tell them that while some folks might like to watch such "sports" (?) as a couple of bozos knocking each others brains out, or the Kansas State Tractor Pulling Contest, or (yawn) the U.S. Tennis Open, we'd like people out there to see us in action.

If that don't convince them tell them about the IPSC Nationals and the IPSC World Match, and tell them also about the tens of thousands of action handgun shooters throughout the country who compete at the hundreds of clubs from Florida to California.

Then ask them why we can't get just a little of that time to tell the story of an exciting sport that deserves a chance at TV exposure.

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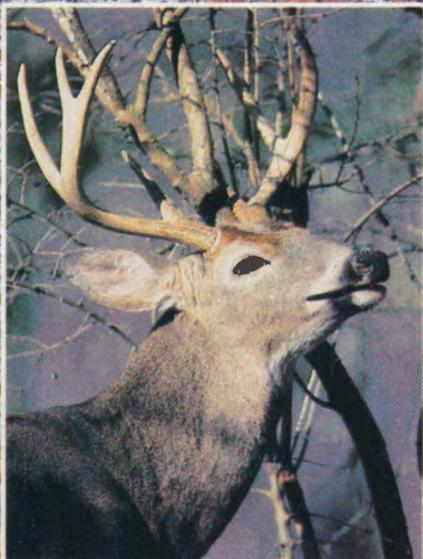
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Experienced hunters agree that handgun hunting adds a new meaning to "being out there". You're not only presented with the challenge of thoroughly understanding your game and reading their signs correctly, but stalking at a closer range.

Smith & Wesson Magnums® are the preference of handgun hunters. With their superior out-of-the-box accuracy, smooth trigger action, and strength to handle hunting loads, our Magnums see more opening days than any other make. And with their availability in carbon or stainless steel and the wide selection of barrel lengths, sights, and features, you're virtually assured of a model that's right for you.

So this fall, whether it's going to be big game or varmint, there's nothing more exciting than hunting with a handgun. And no better handgun to do it with than a Smith.

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