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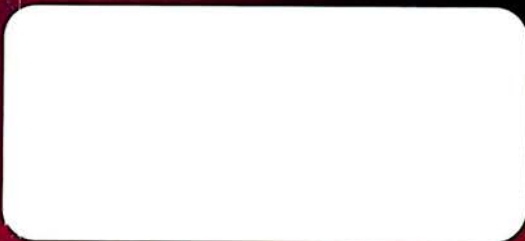
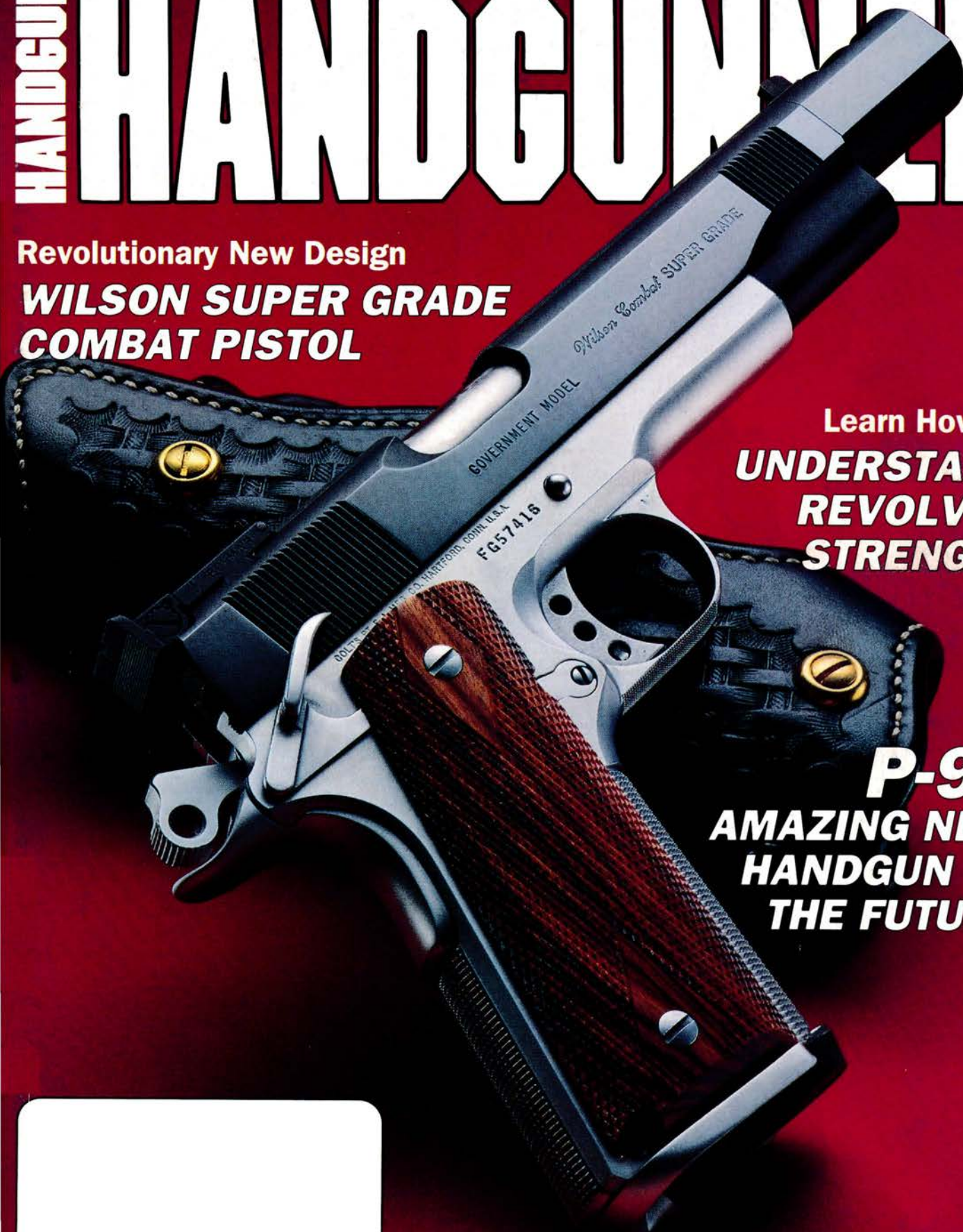
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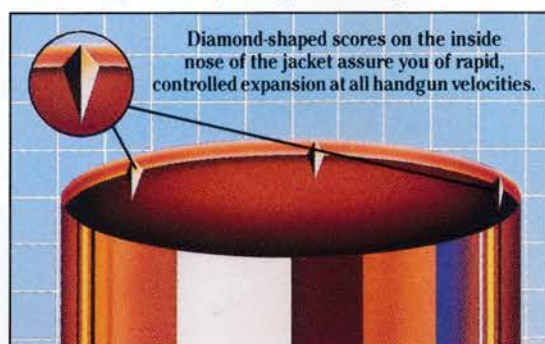




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170 gr. HP/RXT



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But now "Old Slabslides" is retiring from the battlefields, replaced by the new 9mm pistol, so we can fire the same ammo as our NATO Allies who don't have the more powerful .45.

How much longer will the .45 be made? No one knows. But while it is, we're proud to salute the Americans of the ".45 Era" by issuing a separate, firing, commemorative .45 in honor of each of the four American armed forces that carried it.

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Limited Edition; Fires .45 ACP

The worldwide edition limit is only 1,911 guns, in honor of the year it was adopted for military use. This highly restricted limit guarantees rarity and collector value. Even the serial numbers are special,

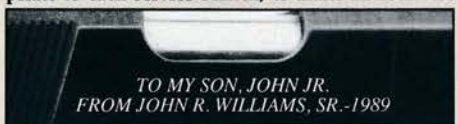
between 0001 and 1911, with the prefix "USA" for U.S. Army.

This is the military-model .45 M1911A1, and all parts are interchangeable with GI-issued guns. It is even fitted with a rare and desirable lanyard with gold-plated mounts. It fires .45 ACP ammo and could be called upon to defend your home and family.

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The exquisite custom handwork of master pistolsmith Bill Wilson: the Wilson Super Grade combat pistol. Photo by Ichiro Nagata.



AMERICAN HANDGUNNER

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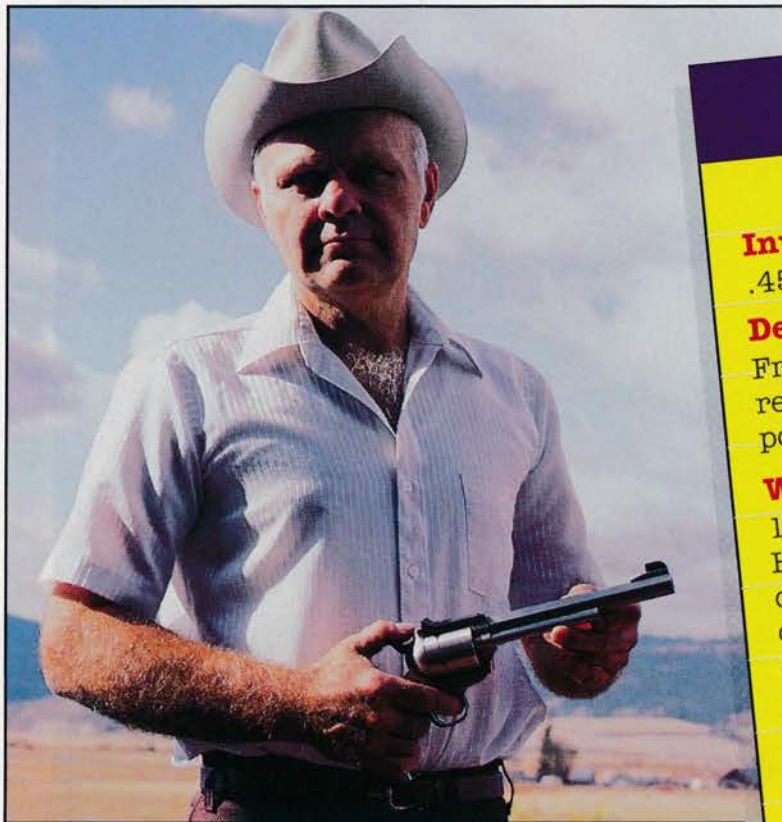
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Dick Casull

Inventor:

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Bleeding Heart Commies

It seems we have a few bleeding hearts who read this fine magazine. They condemn Colonel Charles Askins (for his article in the March/April 1989 issue) who risked his life doing a job he was trained to do to keep this great country free from tyrants, outlaws and scum.

While these idiots set back on their ass and enjoy all the freedom, such men as Askins fought to preserve it. They should not even be allowed to live in such a country as the United States of America.

In my opinion, they are commies. I have no use whatever for people like this. I am a red blooded American.

Print my letter in your magazine for all the bleeding hearts to read or I will cancel my subscription. OK? These idiots make me mad.

Bruce Thurmond
Sullivan, Mo.

Askins for President

Colonel Askins writes it like it was! Today's method of handling murderers and dopers encourage scum to overlook the laws.

They know they have nothing to fear.

I say nominate Col. Askins for president or at least attorney general.

Ben Mishler
Phoenix, Ariz.

Spineless Wimps Chastise Truly Fine American

I was appalled at the number of letters written—by gun owners yet!— chastising Col. Askins for his article in the March/April 1989 issue. Not only was the article well written from the heart of a truly fine American, but also it expressed what Americans everywhere should be like.

It's deplorable that the breed of man like Col. Askins is passing from the American soil and even more deplorable that these men are being replaced by a bunch of spineless wimps.

If American freedom's security rests on the shoulders of those wimps, I'd better learn to speak Spanish and go into drug dealing in order to stay on the winning side.

I was especially irritated by a letter from a man in the Midwest (as a Midwesterner, he really should know better). This man had the audacity to accuse Col. Askins of ignoring morality and the law for 50 years.

If we had more Col. Askinses around, there wouldn't be such a terrible crime wave in the U.S.

Like Askins, I refuse to submit as a passive victim of crime. If some creep breaks into my home, he'll receive the contents of a 20 round magazine, then I'll vacuum up what's left. I'll rest contented knowing that another dirt bag is permanently off the streets.

In closing, I just want to urge gun owning Americans everywhere to stand up for their Constitutional rights, don't be passive victims and always "Vote Your Gun Rights"

Gregory McCullough
Homer, Alaska

Cowpoke's Two Cents

The protests you've already received about Col. Askins' article in your March/April issue are probably more eloquently and completely stated than anything I could come up with. But I wanted to add my vote.

I cowboy for a living, riding and working out of a solitary cowcamp for five to six months of every year. A handgun is as regular a part of my wardrobe as chaps, spurs and hat. I'm comfortable with that.

I believe the mentality Askins displayed does as much to fuel the anti-gun fires as any gun-related crime committed. Please, Col. Askins, for all of us who quietly, sanely and sensibly carry a gun, hang up your pen.

Louise Wolgemuth
La Jara, Colo.

G'Day Mate

Just a note from Down Under to let you know that *American Handgunner* is much appreciated here.

Your forthrightly objective editorial policy and superb graphics are particularly refreshing especially when compared to that other periodical which lacks Guts and Authority.

Thanks again for an excellent magazine.

A.R. Purdy
Kilsyth, Australia

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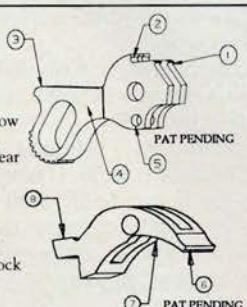
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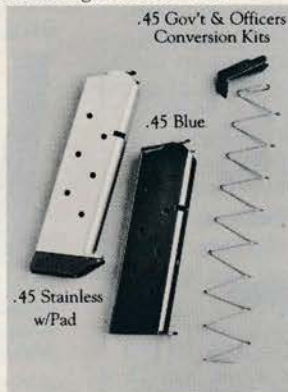
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| 86 IPSC Combat World | 87 West Coast IPSC |
| 88 IPSC Combat World | 88 West Coast IPSC |
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| 84 IPSC Indoor Nat'l's | 86 Florida Inv'tl |
| 85 IPSC Indoor Nat'l's | 87 Florida Inv'tl |
| 86 IPSC Indoor Nat'l's | 88 Florida Inv'tl |
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Delighted With Dillon

I've had a Dillon Square Deal press for two years and have used it regularly with no problems. However, I began shooting a 10mm and since the 10mm is new I've been having problems finding reloading components.

I took my troubles to Randy Korlec of Dillon Precision in late 1987 and he told me Dillon was seriously considering making precision 10mm dies, but was still in the planning stages.

In checking with Randy eight months later, he told me Dillon went ahead with the plan and had 10mm dies. I was thrilled!

But then I learned the 10mm dies would not fit my Square Deal press. I was sick at the thought of entering another season of competitive shooting with a single-stage press for my 10mm.

I told Randy I'd sell my Square Deal and buy a 550B which would allow me to reload 10mm on a progressive press. He suggested that I pack up my Square Deal and send it back and Dillon would put the price of it toward my 550B!

But I explained that there was nothing wrong with the Square Deal and, besides, I had other dies for it. "No problem," Randy said, "Send them in too and we'll exchange them for dies that fit the 550B press."

So, gentlemen, what company genuinely cares about their customer's needs and goes out of its way to satisfy him? Dillon, that's who!

Richard Edwards
Billings, Mont.

Shocked With Ayoob

I read with shock Massad Ayoob's *Cop Talk* column defending the Beretta 92 pistol (May/June 1989).

If Ayoob feels the Beretta 92 is such a good service pistol for military or police use, why does he not use it for duty? He says the weapon does not fit his hand. Hah!

Does he feels it fits everyone else's hand?

Once again, the Pentagon has flubbed up. What do they expect the soldier to do after firing 3,000 rounds in combat in the jungle somewhere? Turn it in for another deficient weapon?

Horse cookies!

We need to return to a more efficient weapon and retire these pains. The Beretta 92-F is very little better than nothing.

B. Dixon
Guthrie, Okla.

World Class Service

I really enjoyed your recent article (May/June 1989) on George Huening and his World Class pistol. It was an accurate and well-deserved writeup. I can say this

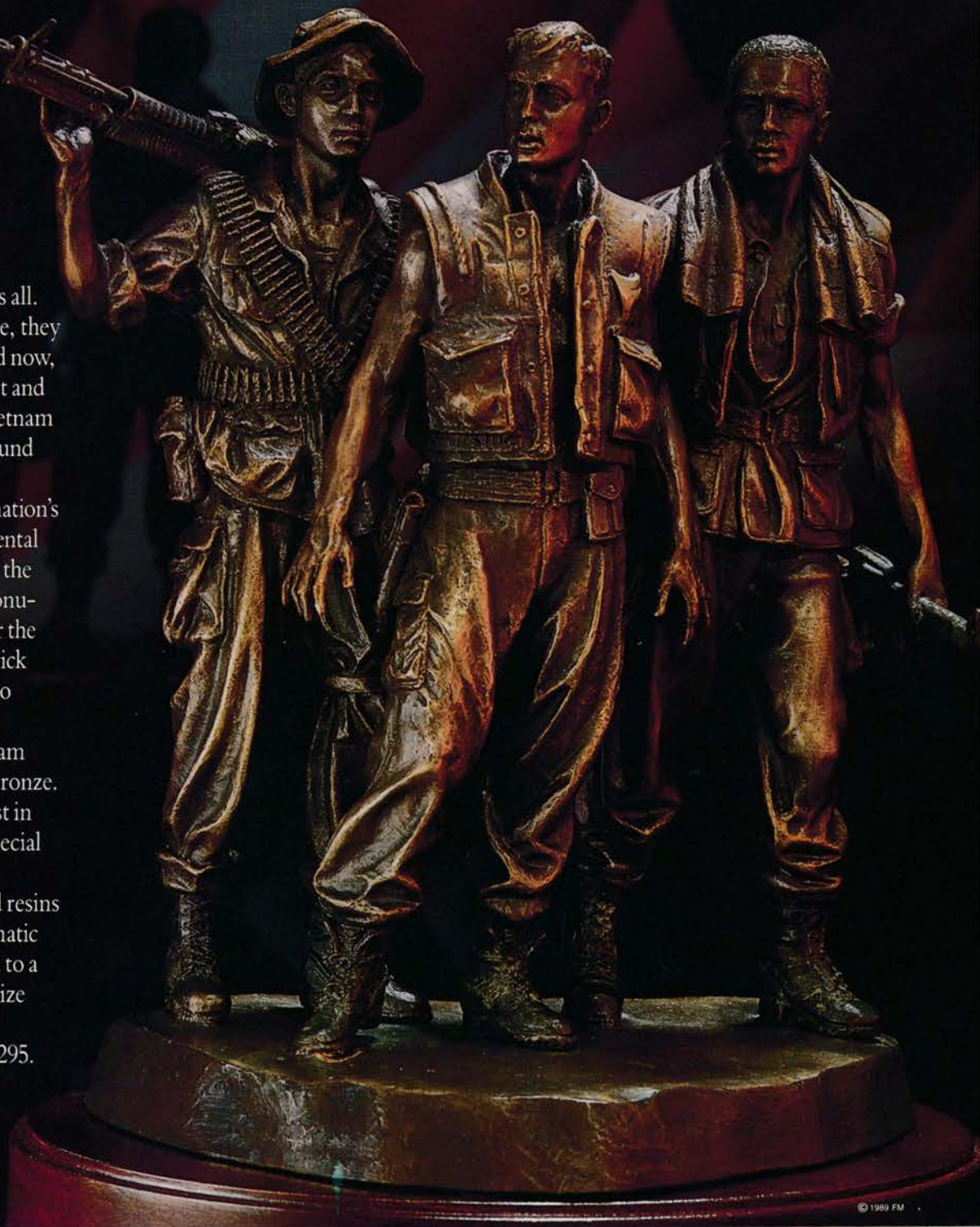
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because I recently took delivery of one of his guns.

From a cosmetic, functional and accuracy standpoint, George's modular pistol is near perfection. But, believe it or not, getting there was half the fun.

Throughout the ordering and fabrication phases of the project, George treats you in a truly professional manner. For example: phone calls were promptly returned; questions were asked and answers were listened to; but most of all, all commitments and delivery dates were met.

After delivery he followed up to make sure everything was to my satisfaction. Believe me, it was (and still is)!

I can fully recommend George and his work as they are both truly world class. Now, if he could only develop an Aim-point that locks onto the X-ring and a trigger mechanism that would prevent me from jerking . . .

Jim O'Young
Sunnyvale, Calif.

Teenage Reader: Shooting Is Better Than Drugs

Let me start off by saying that I think *American Handgunner* is the best handgun publication in the U.S.A. You combine all the aspects of the sport of handgunning into one nice, neat package instead of dwelling on one specific boring topic like self-defense or collecting.

I don't subscribe to your magazine, but I buy it off the newsstand with my lunch money. You see, I am a 14-year-old boy who started shooting when I was 12 with a little High Standard .22 Magnum derringer.

I believe that shooting is a better way to have fun than drugs or alcohol. I can't seem to grasp the concept of people trying to ban guns when there are those bigger problems.

I see kids wasted on drugs every day at my high school, their lives ruined. The people who are trying to ban handguns should try getting rid of drugs in this country instead of guns.

They say that a violent crime is committed every day with a gun. What they don't say is that these crimes are committed by junkies. Now maybe you can tell me where the problem lies—guns or drugs.

When I am 21, I hope there will still be guns around and not drugs.

Eric Kelley
Monticello, Ind.

IPSC: Irrational People Squabbling Constantly

I will buy the beer if you will bring Rob Leatham and Cameron Hopkins to the table for an arg. . . , well, discussion on IPSC shooting.

In his column in the March/April 1989

issue, Mr. Leatham congratulates the 1988 IPSC Nationals for a lack of major problems. One sentence caught my eye: "Where were the standard smears? 'The course of fire's not realistic.' (As if that was significant in a sporting event anyway.)." (My italics)

Mr. Hopkins, covering the same match in the May/June 1989 issue advises, "Realistic scenarios that simulate the defensive use of a handgun give life to IPSC shooting." (My italics)

Seriously, a round table discussion on the current status of IPSC competition would be most enlightening. I'm sure Dave Anderson and a number of other shooters and theoreticians could present valid points of view also.

In my six years of competition there have been many changes. Where are the Cooper Tunnel, the Wailing Wall, the Rhodesian Wall, etc.? Even assault courses have become bland. Dozens of "no-shoots," always a double tap to test the latest in compensators. Carrying your buddy by the belt? Let's get serious.

If the president of IPSC refuses to sanction the course of fire of USPSA's nationals and singles out USPSA as an example of bad course design, what has happened?

All international competitions (golf, tennis, the Olympics) operate under uniform rules from country to country. Should the US members flout the international organization or would it be better for USPSA to go its own way and develop its own rules?

Perhaps USPSA could become ASPPC, the American Somewhat Practical Pistol Association.

Dudley S. Thomas
Newburgh, Ind.

Beneath Contempt

I feel compelled to take issue with Masad Ayoob's characterization of certain employees at Smith & Wesson. In his article on recent changes at Smith in the May/June issue, he observed that "affirmative action employees (were) more interested in their paychecks than a heritage of quality" (p.73).

This type of back-handed "good old boy" racism is beneath contempt. It surely has no place in a publication which claims to represent the *American Handgunner*. I do believe that includes people of all colors, doesn't it?

Jeffery A. Fong
Seattle, Wa.

Ayoob replies: The quality control problems as related to affirmative action at S&W had nothing to do with race. They had everything to do with expedience: to get the gov't contracts of the early Nam years, S&W under Bangor Punta filled the quotas with people hired too quickly to be trained to the old standard of 'skilled craftsmen paid only for perfect pieces.'

Affirmative action hiring—done too precipitously—was a symptom rather than

a cause of S&W's well-known QC plunge in the '60s. Today's much better-led S&W team under Tompkins, Ltd. is imbued with far greater pride in workmanship."

Felon Says He'll Get Firearms Illegally

I'm a convicted criminal, yet before my conviction I had no prior felony convictions. That allowed me the authorization to have a license and/or permit to buy and carry a firearm whether there was a waiting period or not. How many of these people who have tried to kill policemen and massacred children were felons?

My point is that most criminals received guns illegally and still will. Now I'm a felon, I cannot own a firearm legally.

So for example, let's say I buy one, anywhere, it's illegal. But I, the criminal, still have one. I cannot use it legally for self-defense, for my family, for food, so I can only use it for crime, whether being beat to death while my family is robbed, raped and killed.

My crime is not murder, rape or robbery, but I'll get a firearm illegally to protect my family and myself.

Anton Omar LePanto
#18470-013

U.S. Penitentiary
Lompoc, Calif.

AMERICAN HANDGUNNER WELCOMES letters to the editor of no more than 350 words. Letters must include the writer's full name and address. Letters must be signed by the writer. Typewritten letters are preferred, but legible handwriting is acceptable. Send your letters to *Speak Out, American Handgunner*, 591 Camino de la Reina, Suite 200, San Diego, CA, 92108.

Stalking the Killer Tomato

Those who decry hunting are bothersome enough, but these animal "rights" activists are stretching the point a bit. (How can a moose have "rights?") The United States Constitution enumerates many things, but it's hard to imagine our Founding Fathers envisioning woodchucks and barn rats created equally with people.)

Whether you hunt or not is beside the point. These extremists do not limit their activism to anti-hunting—they hold that eating a T-bone is immoral and scientific animal research is unethical. We have yet to determine if stepping on a bug is tantamount to Murder One, but we presume it is also "cruel."

In a ridiculous letter betraying their absurd views, *People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals* writes to handgun hunter Ted Nugent to object to his hunting. PETA's Teresa L. Gibbs says:

"I am hopeful that, upon reflection, you will be eager to switch to a more humane, healthy pastime such as hunting down and collecting wild vegetables and fruits."

Pass the shovel, we're hot on the trail of a killer tomato!

BOOK REVIEWS

Soviet Russian Postwar Military Pistols and Cartridges, 1945-1986 by Fred A. Datig. Hardbound, format 8½ by 11 inches. 152 pages, profusely illustrated. Handgun Press, Box 406, Glenview, IL 60025. \$32.95 postpaid.

I can remember, about 35 years ago, buying my first hardbound gun book—Fred Datig's volume on the Luger. At about the same time, Mr. Datig had already begun his research on the military weapons of Soviet Russia. The result of these long years of assembling hard-to-obtain data is an ambitious project: Eighteen volumes in a series entitled *The History and Development of Imperial and Soviet Russian Military Small Arms and Ammunition, 1700-1986*.

The first book of the series to be published, the one we are covering here, is actually Volume 16. The title describes its contents, and it covers a group of pistols that have received minimal book and article treatment in the western world. The Makarov, the Stechkin, and the new PSM pistol are here in great detail. This includes not only mechanical data, but also the historical background and such minutiae as markings, proofs and variations, an area of great interest to collectors.

In addition to this, there is a fascinating chapter on clandestine weapons which will be read with interest by both gun people and military historians. Cloak-and-dagger items of this type have figured in several post-war assassinations, and the facts assembled by Datig show clearly that the "cyanide bullet" is not a myth.

The final chapter gives a full treatment to the postwar Soviet pistol cartridges, and includes data on the original German rounds, such as the 9mm Ultra, from which they were developed. Throughout the book, you are acquainted with the principal Russian designers—Tokarev, Korovin, Makarov, Stechkin—and those of more recent renown, such as Lashnev, Simarin, and Kulikov. And, the female designer of the 5.45mm PSM cartridge, A. D. Denisova.

Speaking for myself, I was especially interested in the line drawings at the front of the book, showing the early prototype test pistols by Korovin, Prilutsky, and Voyevodin. Mr. Datig's writing style has not changed over the years—the tone is *Encyclopaedia Britannica*—but then, he's not trying to entertain. His purpose is to inform. As usual, he does this well. This book will become the standard reference on Soviet pistols of this period.

J. B. Wood



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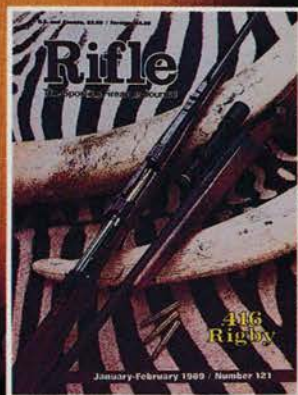
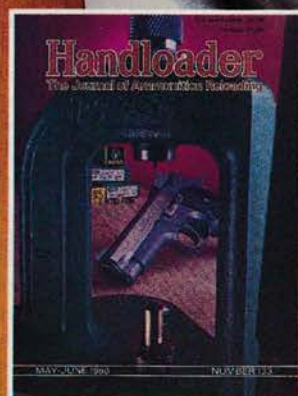
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HANDGUN HUNTING

J. D. JONES

GO HOG WILD ON HUNTING PRESERVES TO GAIN SOUND HUNTING EXPERIENCE

Have you noticed how many instant experts there are since handgun hunting has become more popular? Seems as if everyone who ever touched off a round in the general direction of anything—including his foot—is now writing about handgun hunting.

Frankly, some of these guys don't know one end of an animal from another and probably never will. The only way you can find out what really happens in hunting is to get out there and do it. Make the mistakes everyone else makes and learn from them.

If you want to find out about terminal ballistics forget the horse dung about shooting newspapers, ductseal, gelatin and the like. Go shoot a live breathing animal and get in there and get your hands wet. Learn a little anatomy and follow the bullet path from entrance 'til you find either it or the exit hole. Pay a little attention to what has happened on a couple hundred "autopsies" and you'll learn some things you never would have imagined.

"Well, gee," you think. Deer season only comes around once a year and our state's success ratio is 7% so if I'm twice as good as the average gun hunter it will only take me a thousand years to get to perform a couple hundred autopsies. You are absolutely right and that's the same odds your instant expert is facing.

The only difference is many of your "experts" are readers also and simply parrot what they have read over the years without having the slightest knowledge of if it's right or wrong.

The correct interpretation of those "autopsies" is also very suspect until you have learned a few things about what to look for and where to look for it.

Now that I've shattered your image of the "great gunwriter," let me tell you of one who wrote about hunting for about 10 years before he killed his first deer. No, maybe I'd better not. Let's just say you can get as much or more experience in a few short years as many of the guys who successfully write for the slicks.

How? Easy. Two very simple, very economical ways.

One, hunt Wyoming for antelope. In some areas you can take one buck and up to five does. Doe licenses are \$50 a throw and shooting a doe will tell you the same thing as shooting a buck. Besides, they taste better.

Six antelope taken in a few days, and their autopsies while everything is fresh in

your mind, will teach you a lot. Simply looking at the entrance and exit holes tells you almost nothing.

Secondly, hunt preserves for hogs or exotics unless you live somewhere where there are lots of hogs that aren't protected. Hogs are of medium game size and have quite a bit of stamina which leads to some interesting conclusions if you shoot enough of them with a variety of calibers and bullets and do some thinking about the results.

I recently shot hogs with a spectacular gelatin performer that gave terrible results in 150 pound hogs. Other exotics such as Corsican rams, blackbuck and the like also make very attractive trophies.

The variety of species of exotic animals is almost limitless. The weight range available goes from around 85 pounds through a ton. Hunting in this manner you can gain the benefit of 20 or so animals in a few years and be far ahead of some of the "experts" in knowledge. Addition-

ally, remember that some people have 20 years experience—others have one year's experience 20 times.

Hunting exotics on a game preserve is probably the best way to get hunting experience to prepare you for a trip of a lifetime. "Experience" only comes by doing something. Unless you experience a happening you can only guess how you will react.

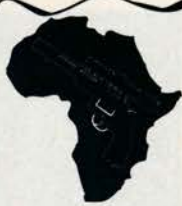
It is not at all unusual for Mr. Deadeye on the target range to become Mr. Badeye when hair is put behind the sights. Some individuals experience a great deal of excitement complete with a double shot of adrenalin and a heart rate faster and harder than a jackhammer. That makes it impossible to hit anything if, in fact, the individual is of an emotional state to try.

The range of emotions experienced is endless. A state of excitement is probably the most frequent. In the case of hog hunting I would rank excitement as number one, fear as number two. These emotions, when essentially uncontrolled, lead to totally erroneous interpretation and memory of what occurred.

I have witnessed the above things happening—including witnessing quite ordinary experiences that when related by the individual involved became virtual life and death confrontations.

The individual involved has what he thinks is impeccable memory of the occurrence—only it is not the actual occurrence but the occurrence as his mind perceived

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The Auodad, or Barbary sheep, cannot be hunted in its native north Africa anymore, but thriving herds roam the Hill Country of Texas on exotic game hunting ranches. It's an extremely challenging animal to hunt.

it. As experience is gained the emotional problem is minimized, facts are accurately interpreted and recalled.

The individual has learned from experiencing certain things and does a better job each time similar occurrences are repeated. This process can go on practically forever.

In my own personal case, I can sit down where it is quiet, shut my eyes and virtually "playback" visually, in color, ordinary incidents for a short period of time after they happened. In some other cases that were very intense at the time, I can still reach back 30 years or more and do it very accurately.

I'm told by both beginning hunters and a few preserve owners about the excessive dangers of hunting the terrible Russian Boar that a life and death confrontation is expected by some hunters. When it doesn't happen he is confused and disappointed.

Sometimes he just leaves never to venture into the field to hunt again. Frankly, so much BS is written about hunting pigs it's a wonder any thinking man would try it. Some guys would have you believe that you had better carry your own tree with you when hunting them as you don't have a chance against them with a .458 Mag on the ground and they are hunting you!

The truth of the matter is hogs are usually very enjoyable to hunt and not dangerous at all. Think about it. If they were as dangerous as you read about, wouldn't

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someone, somewhere get hurt by one?

Sooner or later wouldn't just one of those hunters have a *misfire* and instead of killing the hog with a single brain shot just before it tore his throat out, actually get bumped or bruised or *something*?

Face it, man, everybody can't be a hero! Enjoy hunting for what it is. If you are after a life threatening experience you can find that in just about any bar almost any night—and that one will be for real.

The basic fundamentals of hunting can be learned from reading the experiences of another. Hunting itself can only be learned by doing it. You can learn more quickly by hunting a preserve with a good guide—one that doesn't try to jack you around with war stories of danger—than probably any other way.

Admittedly, good guides are rare but they do exist. A skilled preserve owner, if he knows your lack of experience, will automatically put you with the best guide he has available.

Be honest with the guy. Hunting in a preserve isn't always easy. If you don't believe that try running with the dogs at Joe Meeks Telico Junction Hunting Preserve. Then when the hog isn't a trophy, catch it, tie it, catch the dogs, turn the hog loose and take the dogs after another. It helps if it's about 110 degrees and humidity is 96%. Don't worry about the guides not letting you get in on the fun—they will.

Most preserves feature hogs and a va-

riety of other game ranging up to a ton or so in weight. Perhaps the most interesting exotic to hunt is the nilgai in its essentially native habitat in South Texas.

He is a 600 pound antelope with excellent eyes and is normally a very wary animal. He is fairly tough to kill as he has a lot of stamina and a thick hide over his shoulders.

Hit him right with a big boomer and he is yours. Hit him wrong or without enough bullet—say a 240 grain HP from



Russian boar are tough to hunt, but aren't considered dangerous game.

.44 Mag—and you have a real job putting him down. In my experience it has been tough getting within a couple hundred yards of one without ambushing him.

He was practically unknown until a few years ago, but the herd is now estimated at 250,000 animals. The Kenedy Ranch, south of Corpus Christi, is an excellent place to hunt them with the added bonus of being able to see literally dozens of trophy deer.

Preserves provide excellent entertainment, experience and value if you know where to go and what to look for. I've been very satisfied with the following and they welcome beginners as well as experienced hunters. Maybe one of them will suit you.



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512-640-3222

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Telico Junction Hunting Preserve
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615-887-7819

Mike Morales
The Kenedy Ranch
Sarita Safaris, Inc.
P.O. Box 8995
Corpus Christi, TX 78412
512-880-5354

LEATHAM'S COLUMN

ROB LEATHAM

PROPER PREPARATION PREVENTS POOR PERFORMANCE: LEATHAM'S TIP TO WIN

Ahh, the beginning of the season. That time when we start getting everything in order and attempt to forecast what equipment we'll need at the end of the season just when it's beginning.

The trick is to have your guns and gear ready when you need them so you can avoid problems like I experienced at The Masters last year. My Long Range gun changed its point of impact drastically when the barrel heated due to a minor problem with the bedding.

When you put off getting ready until the week before a match, you may not have time to correct any problems. Believe me, I know!

What we are talking about here is *preparation*: Making sure everything is in good condition when you line up the shot. This means a whole lot more than cleaning your gun and polishing your brass; mental preparation is just as vital.

Total preparation means, among other things, making sure your gun, your ammo

and you are all compatible. Do you know exactly what the point of impact relationship is to the sight alignment at 10, 15, 25 and 50 yards?

Even more basic, do you know how your gun is sighted-in? Are you even using the same ammunition in a match that you used to sight-in? I've found that changing from 130 grain jacketed bullets to lead of the same weight not only changed my vertical impact but also horizontal as well. Changing bullets can cause a drastic shift in your point of impact.

Don't even get me started on the difference between a light practice load and full-power "major" load for the matches.

And while we are talking about loads, how many of us really take the trouble to experiment and find the most accurate load? How about testing to see which powders give the most consistent velocity and lowest pressures?

You say you don't have a chronograph? Shame on you! I wouldn't even consider

going to the range for a day of practice without my PACT timer and chronograph.

You say you don't have a timer either? Oh my!

Better not complain about poor results if you don't put forth the effort. You gotta pay if you wanna play!

Preparation. How many of your magazines give you a periodic jam? Have you marked them so you would know which one consistently causes stove pipes or fails to lock the action open? Test everything!

I have one gun that simply won't function with a recoil spring under 10 pounds. Yet I use it with no problems with a Wilson 13 pound spring. Imagine what would have happened if I had not taken the time to test my springs and then installed a fresh spring before a major match?

How about routine maintenance on your gun? How often do you change your Shok-Buff? Do you wait for it to be torn, or do you replace this inexpensive part routinely?

Do you keep your barrel free from lead? It's a hell of a lot harder to clean a badly leaded barrel than it is to keep it from getting that way in the first place. The same goes for cooper fouling with jacketed bullets. You have to shoot an incredible amount before the accuracy is affected, but it does happen. Keep 'em clean!

I have one barrel in a Wilson Accu-Comp LE, the same one I used to win the last IPSC World and National titles, that had over 6,000 jacketed bullets through it before I finally got around to cleaning the darn thing. It took more than four hours spread over two days, not to mention 24 hours of soaking time! A barrel full of cooper is no fun!

When is the last time you changed your extractor? On a 1911 pistol, 90% of all weapons failures I have seen have been due to extractors that were poorly fitted, excessively worn or broken.

You can't always just drop in a new one to cure the problem either. If it's too tight, you may have feeding problems that could be incorrectly diagnosed as a barrel throating problem. Too loose and you will see extraction and ejection troubles.

Check the tension and bite on your extractor frequently and carry a spare that has been fitted properly to the gun.

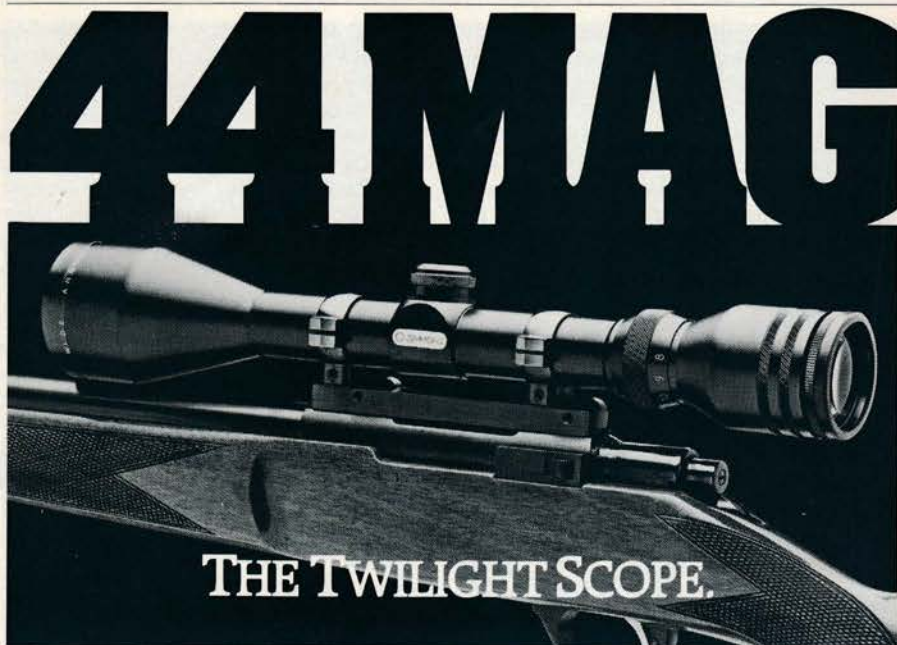
Keep the gun properly lubricated. This is one of those small things that can make a big difference.

These are just some of the little things that will give you an edge because you'll be confident in your reliable gun.

Just as you can fine tune your gun, you can also prepare your brain. This is where the tricky stuff begins.

How many of you practice nothing but 10 and 15 yards shooting, because you enjoy it and, besides, it's a pain to walk all the way out to 25 or 50 yards to score and

Continued on page 24



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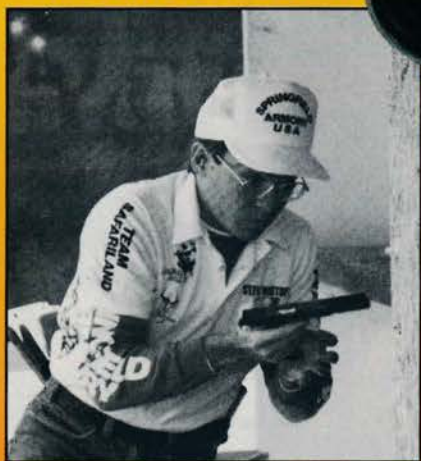
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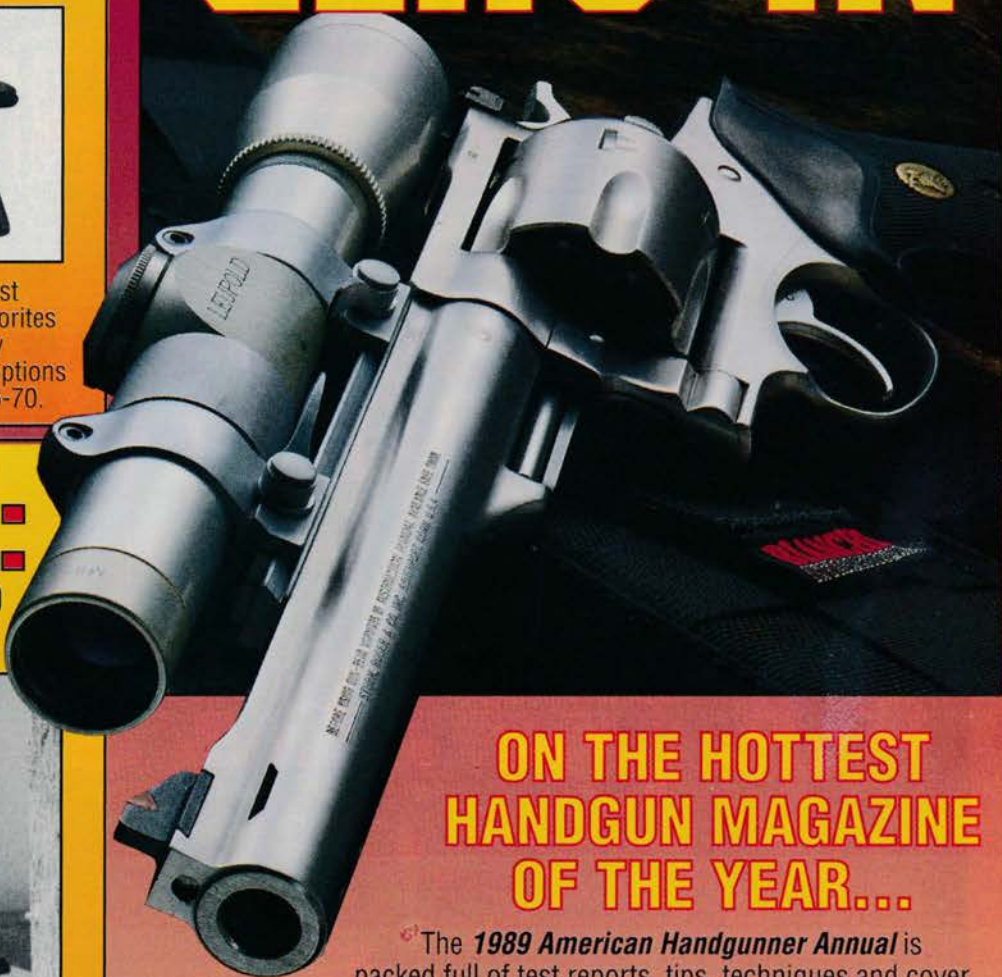
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		1	40/12 Firecrackers - Br. 480 pcs., Case 15,360 pcs.	6.00	127.00					Missiles and Helicopters			
		2	80/16 Firecrackers - Br. 1,280 pcs., Case 15,360 pcs.	13.25	127.00			36		Junior Jets w/Reports	8.60	86.00	
		3	40/50 Firecrackers - Br. 2,000 pcs., Case 16,000 pcs.	19.50	132.00			37		Two-Stage Helicopter Spin Up - \$2.00 ea.	16.80	168.00	
		4	10/200 Black Cat - Br. 2,000 pcs., Case 16,000 pcs.	21.75	156.00			38		Two-Stage Space Jets (12 to pkg.)	4.00	40.00	
		5	40/12 Black Cat - Br. 480 pcs., Case 15,360 pcs.	6.75	150.00			39		Reconnaissance Planes (1 pkg. of 6 - \$3.95)	7.25	72.50	
		6	Lady Crackers - Br. 1,600 pcs., Case 51,200 pcs.	11.00	208.00			40		Plane Flying at Night (12 to pkg.)	7.25	72.50	
		7	Jumping Jacks - Br. 576 pcs., Case 11,520 pcs.	12.25	220.00			41		Flying Disc or Satellite	2.50	25.00	
			Underwater Firecrackers	BOX	CASE			42		Large Missile - \$1.75 each	17.50	175.00	
		8	M-60 - works in water. Box 72 pcs., Case 1,440 pcs.	15.00	241.00			43		Giant Missile - \$2.15 each	21.50	215.00	
			Sky Rockets	DOZ.	GROSS					Smoke and Novelties	DOZ.	GROSS	
		9	Pop Bottle Rockets, report - 144-\$5.00, 3,600-\$96.00		5.00			44		Two Colored Smoke	2.00	20.00	
		10	Black Cat Bottle Rockets - 144-\$6.00, 3,600-\$112.00		6.00			45		Cherry Smoke Balls (assorted colors)	2.00	20.00	
		11	Whistling Moon Travelers - 144-\$9.95, 2,880-\$157.00		9.95			46		Small Tanks	6.80	68.00	
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		15	Butterfly Rocket	6.80	68.00						PKG.	DOZ PKG	
		16	Parachute Rocket with Flare	6.80	68.00			50		Red Rat Chasers (144 to pkg.)	8.30	83.00	
		17	4 oz. Skyrocket w/Stars or Report	9.00	90.00			51		Party Snappers (50 to pkg.)	.90	9.00	
		18	6 oz. Skyrocket w/Stars or Report	10.50	105.00			52		Aircraft Carriers (2 to pkg.)	2.80	28.00	
		19	8 oz. Skyrocket w/Stars or Report	11.75	117.50			53		Champagne Party Poppers (pkg. of 12)	2.10	21.00	
			Night Display Shells	EACH	DOZ.			54		Whistling Jacks (24 pcs. to pkg.)	1.25	12.50	
		20	Saturn Missile Battery - 12 shot	1.80	18.00			55		Rocket Guns (pkg. of 12)	7.00	70.00	
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		22	#100 Floral Shell	9.50	95.00					Sparklers and Fountains	BOX	DOZ. BX.	
		23	#200 Giant Floral Display	11.80	118.00			57		Sparklers - 10" (96 pcs. \$4.50)		4.50	
		24	100-shot Magical Barrage	6.50	65.00			58		Sparklers - 14", Morning Glories (144 pcs. \$12.95)	12.95	129.50	
		25	Frightened Bird	4.00	40.00			59		Sparklers - 20" (12 to box)	8.75	87.50	
		26	Soiree	5.00	50.00			60		Black Snakes - 72 snakes \$2.35, 288 snakes \$7.00		2.35	
		27	News Transmitter	4.00	40.00						EACH	DOZ.	
		28	Kaleidoscope	4.50	45.00			61		No. 3 Assorted Colors Cone - 7" Fountain	1.15	11.50	
		29	Garden-in-Spring	6.50	65.00			62		Jumbo Carnival Cone	2.10	21.00	
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		32	Box of 12 Festival Balls	14.50	145.00			64		Roman Candle - 8 shot	8.40	84.00	
		33	Night Parachute	.85	8.50			65		Roman Candle - 10 shot	11.00	110.00	
		34	Day Parachute	.85	8.50					Assortments	EACH	DOZ.	
		35	Marching Cicada (61 4-inch firing tubes)	18.99	189.90			66		Mad Hornet Assortment Box - \$34.00 value	24.00	240.00	
								67		Black Hornet Assortment Box - \$45.00 value	30.20	302.00	
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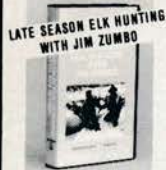
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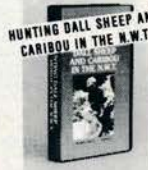
1. Jim is editor-at-large of Outdoor Life and author of "Hunt Elk." Learn how to hunt the late season, see numerous monster bulls, and watch a successful on-camera hunt for a big 6 pointer.



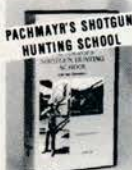
5. 3 bucks and 2 does are taken on-camera plus lots of "how to" including hunting techniques, how to judge trophy quality, how to tell does from young bucks, the use of the hunting vehicle and more.



2. Trophy judgement and shot placement are shown in detail as are 5 successful hunts resulting in Mule Deer bucks taken on-camera (4 hunts in Colorado's early season and 1 in the late season).



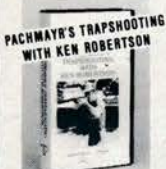
6. From base camp to fly camp, to hunting on horseback and foot, you'll feel like you're part of the hunt. An 11-year-old Dall Ram and a big Mountain Caribou are both taken on-camera in exciting sequences.



3. An excellent synopsis of the famous 2½ day course. Instruction includes field shooting techniques for incoming, outgoing and crossing birds. Targets simulate driven grouse, ducks over blinds, and flushing quail and pheasants.



7. At each station, and for all 25 shots, you'll learn from instructor Ken Robertson, 3 shooters, and computer-generated graphs covering stance, gun hold, eye hold, where to break the target and how much lead.



4. Computer-generated graphs reinforce Ken Robertson's instruction of a different shooter at each station. Stance, gun hold, eye hold, timing and lead are covered. You'll want to play this one over and over.



8. Tips on sighting in, cross-hair wobble, trigger squeeze and more. Techniques for shooting while prone, sitting, kneeling and standing. Swing and lead techniques. This tape is a must regardless of your experience level.

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VHS	Beta	38 min.
VHS	Beta	60 min.
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VHS	Beta	38 min.
VHS	Beta	36 min.
VHS	Beta	36 min.
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Continued from page 20

paste, and then you pitch up to a match with long, difficult shots?

If there is any fault in preparation as a whole that I notice in my students, it's the lack of time spent practicing difficult shots.

Most people don't enjoy drills at 50 yards. Well, guess what? Most people don't enjoy dropping a bunch of 50 yard shots in a match either!

You must practice the whole gamut of skills to give yourself confidence in a match. You must teach your subconscious what it needs to see in order to fire reflexively. You must teach yourself to hold the gun steady before, during and after the shot as the projectile leaves the gun on its way to the target.

Without turning this into a class lesson, you must teach yourself the discipline to perform whatever tasks are required.

On the swing side, you have those who never shoot fast in practice citing the old adage that if you can make the hard shot, you can surely make the easy shot. Well, there's one small glitch with this logic.

First, we need to rethink our concept of "hard" and understand that what makes a shot difficult is not the distance to the target, but your ability to hit quickly. I've seen 10 yard shots at partial targets in awkward positions that were much tougher than 50 yard shots at clean targets.

Shoot each shot at a speed that gives you the quality of shot you desire, and no slower. I am no more impressed by someone who shoots all A's slowly than I am by someone who shoots all D's quickly.

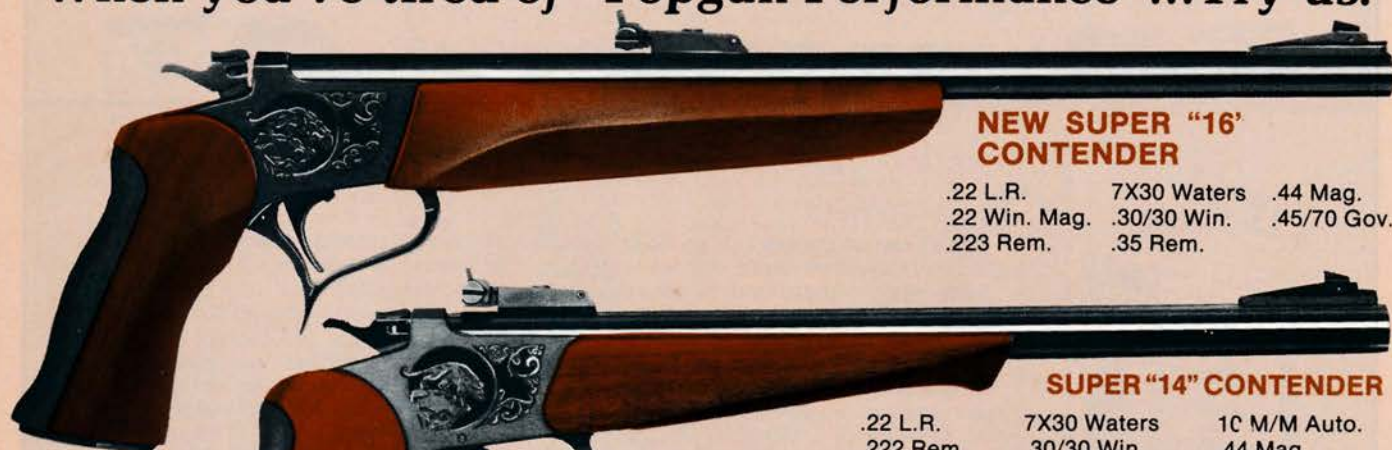
I ask my classes which is better, too fast or too slow, and the answer is invariably that it's better to be too fast than too slow. I don't buy that. Neither is better, each is wrong!

We need to do it right. That means fast sometimes and slow other times. It means as fast as we can get the quality of shot we desire.

Preparation must begin as soon as possible, and that means now. The season is just beginning and it's time to get ready. Proper practice with properly prepared guns, combined with research and testing of new equipment and techniques, will guarantee your finest performance.

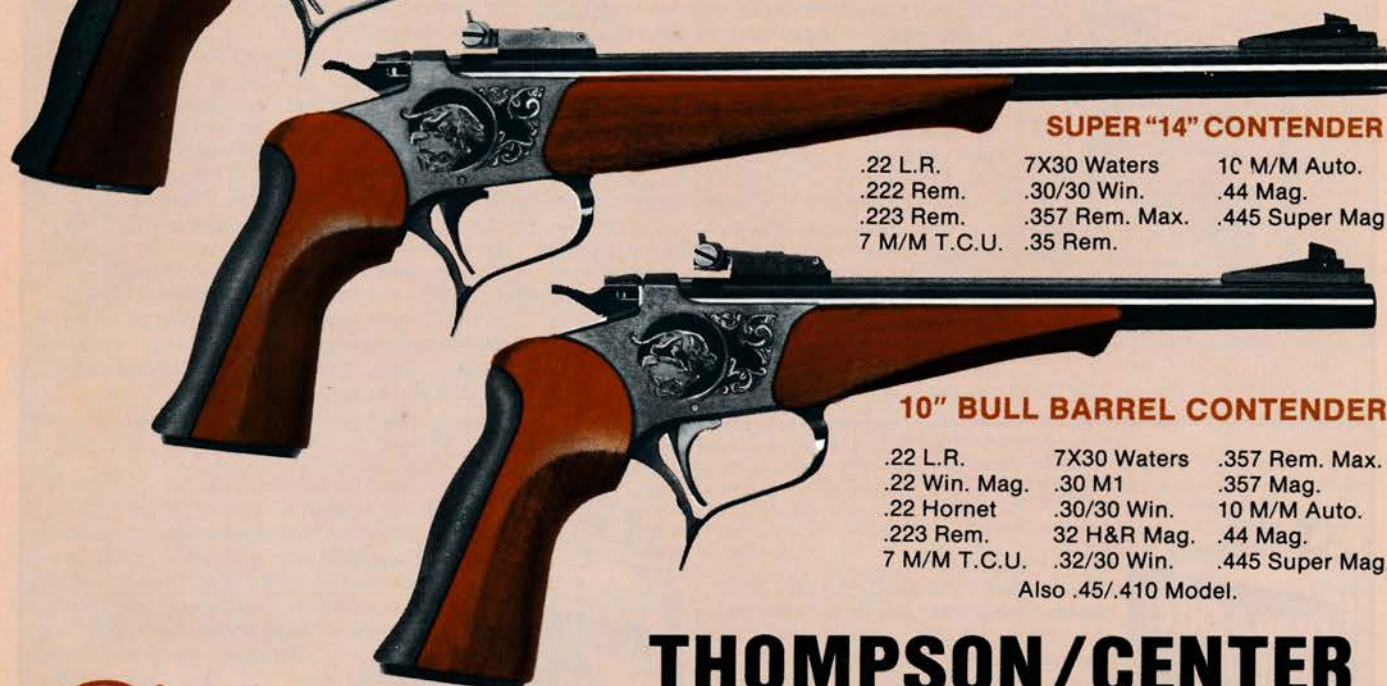
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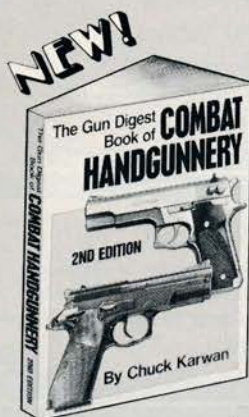
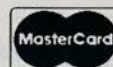
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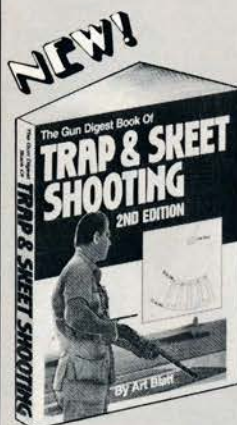
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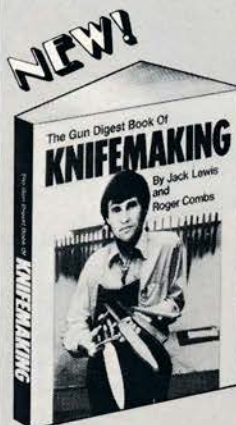
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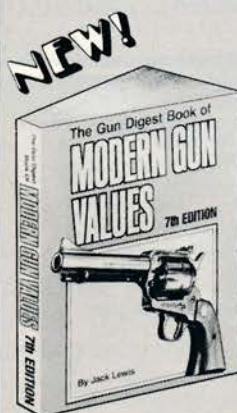
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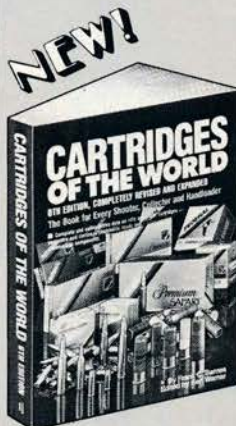
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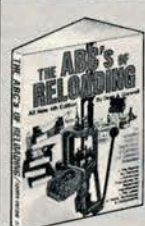
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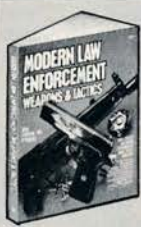
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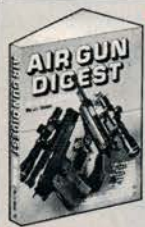
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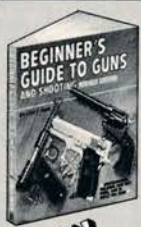
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GET OFF YOUR DUFFS AND ACT! THE GUN-HATERS ARE IN FULL BATTLE CRY

Legal ownership of handguns in America is threatened like never before.

During the past several months, our Second Amendment rights have been hammered by a coalition of anti-gunners, media commentators and misguided lawmakers who have been duped into believing the propaganda fed them by both the press and organized firearms foes. 1989 is a pivotal year. America's law-abiding gun owners must shake off their lethargy and battle back.

Encouraged by their victory in Maryland last year, handgun opponents predicted that in 1989 they would blanket the nation with anti-gun legislation. Those of us at the NRA prepared for the assault, expecting tough congressional battles over "waiting periods," "Saturday Night Special" legislation, federal registration and the predictable deluge of new schemes.

Then, in January, the dam burst. That's when repeat offender Patrick Purdy walked up to a Stockton, California, schoolyard and began firing at innocent children.

The nation was sickened by this madman's actions, and America's disgust created a fertile climate for the major offensive the anti-gun movement had kept waiting in the wings.

Within a matter of weeks, handgun foes switched their legislative emphasis to all semi-automatic firearms—rifles, shotguns and pistols. Photographs of Purdy's semi-automatic firearms fueled the attack, and the media proved eager to join in the fray.

Editorial writers and television commentators across the nation took up the anti-gun cause. Although reporters rarely bothered to check the facts, this media blitz provided tens of millions of dollars in free anti-gun advertising.

When those of us at the NRA attempted to sift through the hysteria and present not only accurate technical information, but also the plain and simple truth, we were often shouted down by a new barrage of emotionalism masquerading as news reportage.

As you're aware by now, this climate of superstition and fear led to an outbreak of anti-gun ordinances in California. Lawmakers, confused by endless waves of propaganda, seemed eager to strike down ownership of any firearm equipped with a semi-auto mechanism and capable of accepting an external clip.

Anti-gun lobbyists attempted to convince legislators that any semi-auto—

rifle, shotgun, or pistol—was essentially an "assault weapon" waiting to happen.

Our opponents claimed that criminals, in a matter of minutes, could convert a standard semi-automatic into a fully automatic "machine gun." The entire premise is, of course, ridiculous.

But the truth no longer matters to the anti-gun movement and their media allies.

In an attempt to counter the lies being spread by the anti-gun movement, the NRA has provided lawmakers at both the state and national level with expert testimony by law enforcement officials.

Time and again these police experts have said that standard semi-automatic firearms are rarely converted to fully automatic, due to both the difficulty and the fact that criminals don't obtain their firearms over a sporting goods counter.

These law enforcement experts have cautioned state legislators and Congress that bans on semi-autos only restrict the law-abiding. They add that in their capacity as police officers, they rarely witness the prosecution of felons who violate existing firearms laws.

So what we're seeing is a rash of proposed anti-gun legislation filled with bias and with no justifiable impact on crime. Proponents are trying to spread these new laws layer-upon-layer atop the 20,000 firearms laws already in place across the nation.

Yet at the same time, police officials are telling us that America's criminal justice system isn't bothering to prosecute criminals who repeatedly break existing firearms laws. What's the sense of creating new laws if the old ones aren't being enforced?

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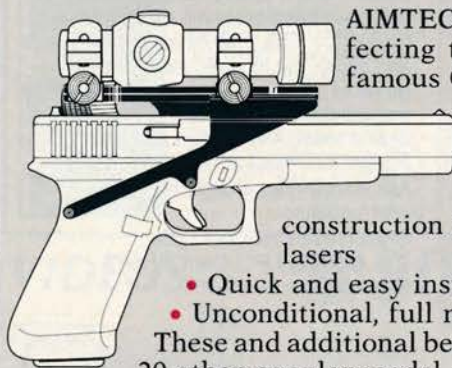
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It's a question each of us must ask our local authorities, since the anti-gun movement refuses to acknowledge the question and legislators seem bewildered by the complexity of it all.

The truth no longer matters to the anti-gun movement and their media allies.

By neatly sidestepping the real issues, the anti-gun movement has managed to gain momentum. They have the nefarious advantage of molding tragedy into emotional attacks that tug at the heartstrings of a nation sick of violence and fed up with crime.

Those of us at the NRA are not immune to the same feelings. We're sick and tired

of criminal acts eroding the constitutional rights of the law-abiding. We're also aware that millions of decent Americans who also own guns feel exactly the same way.

That's why we've countered the current onslaught of anti-gun legislation with a crime control program that can help end the violence without sacrificing firearms owners' rights. We've outlined a multifaceted project designed to put criminals who use firearms behind bars. We've asked all the states and Congress to step up prosecution of violators.

We want mandatory sentences that immediately take these criminals off the streets.

We want more prison space made available, and an end to the plea bargaining, pre-release programs and paroles that set outlaws free before they've served even a small fraction of their time.

We've also asked federal authorities to establish an instant identification system, much like that used by credit card companies, so that dealers can block at the counter the sale of guns to convicted felons and the mentally incompetent. In this manner, law-abiding citizens may continue to purchase firearms for sport and self-defense without undergoing demeaning and often capricious "waiting periods"—a system that burdens law enforcement, costs taxpayers millions of dollars and has repeatedly failed to reduce crime.

We think a war on crime rather than guns makes common sense. Yet our opponents have doggedly stuck to their totally inane attacks on gun ownership. Why?

Because an end to crime isn't the motive behind their efforts. Instead they self-righteously feel that American citizens are no longer intellectually and constitutionally capable of owning firearms. Theirs is an elitist attitude, to be sure. Yet at this moment in time, it is also a quite powerful one.

Can they succeed? Yes—unless legitimate gun owners rise up *en masse* and block their efforts. We are 70 million strong.

Yet many have remained strangely silent during the past months while the gun wars raged at their hottest. Right now firearms foes are working harder than ever to try to ban all semi-automatic pistols. This means you would no longer be able to purchase guns including semi-auto Berettas, Brownings, Colts, Glocks, Rugers and Sig-Sauers, to name a few.

And in Maryland, which passed its "Saturday Night Special" law under the premise it would block the sale of small, inexpensive handguns to criminals, officials now want the ban extended to expensive, technically superior firearms.

This should give you some idea of the deceit that governs the anti-gun movement. And it should tell you what lies ahead for all legitimate gun owners, unless we act decisively and act now.

James Jay Baker is a gun owner, hunter, shooter and director of Governmental Affairs for the National Rifle Association's Institute for Legislative Action. The NRA is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to supporting your right to keep and bear arms through its lobbying, education and promotional programs. Membership is \$20 per year and includes a subscription to The American Rifleman or The American Hunter. For more information, please write to the NRA at 1600 Rhode Island Ave., N.W., Washington, DC, 20036.



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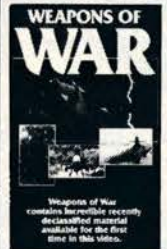
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INSIGHTS INTO IPSC

DAVE ANDERSON

THE STATUS QUO MUST BE QUESTIONED TO MAKE ADVANCES IN PISTOLCRAFT

It's been said that there are two kinds of people in this world—those who say there are two kinds of people in the world and those who don't.

In the world of competition shooting there have always been "two kinds of people," or at least two basic approaches. One is to decide in advance what types of equipment and techniques are correct, and then draw up rules to suit these preconceived ideas; the other is to pose a shooting challenge and let competitors figure out for themselves the best way to meet it.

Looking at the rules, equipment and techniques used in the various shooting sports, one can make a couple of conclusions. The first is that the former approach is the more common. The second is that the latter approach has been responsible for most of the genuine progress and improvements in firearms and shooting techniques.

The shooting sports, for some reason, seem to abound with a host of myths, superstitions and half-truths that through time and repetition have come to be accepted as facts. Unrestricted competition has a way of challenging conventional wisdom and encouraging innovative thinking.

Take the search for rifle accuracy. Just a few of the accepted facts in the first half of this century were that the barrel was the key to accuracy, while the action was of little importance; that a long barrel was more accurate than a short one; and that barrels first showed wear at the muzzle, where the bullet was going the fastest (it was for years an article of faith with many shooters that the way to restore accuracy in a rifle was to cut an inch or so from the muzzle).

In the late 1940's benchrest competition came along, and a lot of firmly established



Today's practical shooting offers challenges that would be inconceivable 10 years ago.

beliefs got a rude jolt. For the benchrest clan no idea was sacred, no matter how well entrenched.

Among many other things, they found that the action has a lot more effect on accuracy than had been suspected; that a short, stiff barrel is likely to be more accurate than a long one; and that barrels wear out from the breech end, rather than the muzzle.

The impact of this freewheeling, no-holds-barred, innovative approach to competition has been tremendous. Knowledge gained by benchrest shooters has gradually been applied to factory rifles and ammunition, benefitting hunters and shooters who may never even have heard of the benchrest game.

It's not just that the best rifles and ammunition are more accurate, though they are. The biggest benefit is that such a high level of performance is so widely available, at such relatively modest cost.

A big-game hunter can go into his local gunshop and buy a lightweight, synthetic-stocked, stainless-steel barrelled rifle along with factory ammo and get performance comparable to target rifles of 30 years ago. And the equipment will maintain that level of performance in hot weather or cold, on the desert or in the rain forest, year after year.

Handgunning is by no means immune to the myth-making process. In fact, when the topic is fast draw or speed shooting it's safe to say that it leads the pack. In his fine book *No Second Place Winner* Bill Jordan comments, "There has been a great deal of foolishness written about fast gun work. Tales of the old time gunmen, in particular, have been exaggerated to the point of being completely ridiculous to a logical person. Nor has the modern fast draw been slighted in this respect. For some unexplained reason, it is a subject that tends to make unmitigated liars out of normally honest men."

These myths, combined with the "we know what works best" attitude (an attitude that continues to this day) have continually hampered the development of better handguns and shooting techniques. The few real advances in pistolcraft that have occurred in this century have been a result of people who refused to accept conventional wisdom as fact.

One such person was the late Ed McGivern of Montana, whose shooting feats with double-action revolvers are legendary. His book, *Fast and Fancy Revolver Shooting* (1938), documents some of his accomplishments, such as hitting five clay pigeons thrown in the air, hitting thrown cards on edge, and firing five shots into the area of a playing card at 15 feet in $\frac{2}{3}$ of a second.

When he began his experiments in the early 1900's the experts of the day, of course, already knew all the answers. The single-action revolver was the only gun suitable for fast work, and it had to be shot by "instinct" since it was impossible to use the sights for fast shooting.

McGivern quotes some of these experts in his book: "Double action shooting will ruin any shooter's holding . . . and make hitting or grouping of shots quite impossible." And, "The use of double action in

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The International Range Officers Association will soon publish a regular newsletter for all IPSC range officers. The newsletter is free and available upon request. It seeks to share information about IPSC from around the world along with useful guidelines for performing as a more effective range officer.

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newsletter will inform you of the calendar of classes (which are free) being offered by IROA so that you can become certified as a range officer.

IROA originally sought to obtain names of accredited range officers to receive the newsletter through the governing body of IPSC in America, the United States Practical Shooting Association. However, USPSA refused to divulge the names in an apparent attempt to restrain IROA from disseminating the newsletter.

"If you wish the newsletter sent to all 1350 US Range Officers you may direct

that many copies of the newsletter, in separate covers, to this office. I will then consider forwarding the newsletter," said Dave Stanford, president of USPSA in a letter to Nick Alexakos, president of IROA.

To obtain the "forbidden" IROA newsletter, send your name and address along with a short note stating that you would like to receive the newsletter to:

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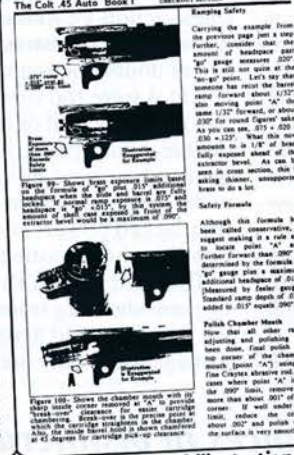
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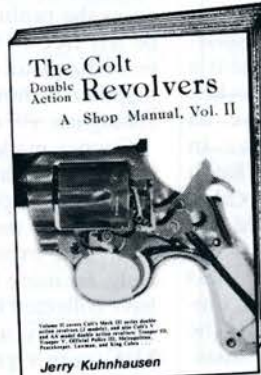
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this work (fast draw) is almost sure to throw the aim off."

Unlike the experts, McGivern did not claim to know what worked. Rather, he set out to find what was best by "making rather thorough tests of many of the long-established customs and beliefs which existed and were quite generally accepted as absolute facts . . . it will be readily seen that some of the results secured by the experiments conducted have disturbed, and in some cases actually reversed, some very well-fixed opinions and beliefs."

McGivern had little time for, or patience with, the self-styled experts who "in a loud voice assert . . . that they know the limitations and possibilities of revolvers, including the 'impossibility' of aiming or using sights, or squeezing and controlling triggers, during . . . this kind of aerial shooting."

He also commented, "I simply do not

wrote, "The modern double-action revolver is the only gun worthy of serious consideration."

Police pistol competition was limited to revolvers. (Why not? After all, we know what works). Just as 50 years earlier everyone knew the new-fangled double-actions could never be as fast as the old single-action Peacemaker, now everyone knew that autopistols could never be as fast as double-action revolvers.

Autos were too slow because the safety had to be released or the hammer cocked; double-action pulls, if present, were too heavy; they were finicky, unreliable, had to be perfectly clean to function at all; they lacked power; and they didn't "point right" for hip shooting.

The right way to shoot, of course, was by point shooting from a deep crouch with the free arm held across the chest to protect against enemy fire.

The few real advances in pistolcraft have been a result of people who refused to accept conventional wisdom as fact.

always agree with the romantic, nonsensical chatter dished up by certain persons who base their opinions on theory and unsupported rumor . . . instead of on practical comparative tests.

"In all probability they couldn't hit a washtub tossed in the air without the services of a surveyor to first measure all distances for them, and probably would also expect the surveyor to hold the tub stationary while they shot at it."

McGivern had invented a better mouse-trap, but the world didn't exactly beat a path to his door. People, especially when organized into bureaucracies, have an amazing aptitude for resisting change. In his book *Sixguns* (1955), Elmer Keith wrote "For years McGivern advocated double-action shooting for all police and law enforcement officers . . . his voice was just one among a multitude and was lost in the wilderness . . . it is only in comparatively recent years that the FBI, the Border Patrol, and some police organizations have added double action shooting to the menu."

Then a funny thing happened. McGivern had made tremendous contributions to modern pistolcraft by challenging conventional wisdom, but by the 1950's his discoveries had become the conventional wisdom.

Keith and other writers of the day were nearly unanimous in recommending the double-action revolver. Col. Charles Askins later became a revolver critic, but back then he wrote "Speed guns are best made up with revolvers as the basic arm . . . the only worthwhile fast jobs are limited to the sixguns." (*The Pistol Shooter's Book*, 1953.) In a chapter of this book added to the 1961 edition Bill Jordan

Those were some of the accepted beliefs when, in the late '50s Jeff Cooper started the practical shooting revolution. Like McGivern before him, Cooper tried to avoid preconceived ideas, and find out what worked and why. He later wrote, "If a man wishes to shoot single-action, or from the prone position, or standing on his head, he is free to try. Only thus can we discover what works best. The course poses the problem, and the shooter must be left free to solve it. Any serviceable, powerful pistol is eligible, and all compete together without handicap." (*Cooper on Handguns*, 1974).

Cooper made another innovation—he introduced other interested shooters to freestyle competition. As more people participated the fund of ideas, information, and experience grew proportionately, far more than any one person could have collected in a lifetime.

That's why, without in any way slighting McGivern's great accomplishments, I think Cooper has contributed more to the knowledge of pistolcraft than any other person.

Practical pistol competition has had a tremendous impact on the tools and techniques of defensive shooting, both for individuals and for law enforcement agencies. It relates as benchrest competition does to hunting—or perhaps as automobile racing relates to street cars and high performance driving.

It's inherent in freestyle competition that not every idea will be a winner (if we knew the answers in advance there wouldn't be much need to experiment).

Inevitably there are bound to be some wrong turns and evolutionary dead ends.

Actually even these provide some benefit—they give all the self-proclaimed martial artists something to complain about as they're sitting around waiting for the big gunfight.

For example, several years ago some competitors experimented with a technique of looking at the holstered gun while waiting for the start signal, rather than at the target. Well, some of the gunfighter types carried on as though the Supreme Court had repealed the Second Amendment and made Pete Shields president for life. That particular fad seems to have run its course and faded away, not because rules were passed against it but because it didn't pass the test of time and competition.

I guess I shouldn't kid the martial artists, but it's hard to take seriously some self-styled "realists" who can't tell the difference between the racetrack and the interstate, especially when they avoid competition the way werewolves avoid the dawn. A true martial artist, it seems to me, is one who studies the tools and techniques of competition and determines which can be adapted to self-defense.

He knows that match shooting is a proving ground for ideas, and that the fewer restrictions there are, the more innovations and concepts will result.

Those who know all the answers before the questions's even been asked are still active. Currently their pet hate is the recoil compensator.

Now all a compensator does is reduce muzzle rise, get the sights back on target quicker and allow a faster rate of aimed fire. This is a good result. It's what we're trying to accomplish, and any real martial artist would approve of technology that achieves it.

But not the experts.

Recently an article appeared about a match which stipulated no comp guns, heavy barrels, optical sights—just "street-worthy" gear, as defined by the match director. (We know what works, right?)

Even the current USPSA handbook includes a stock/tactical gun class which prohibits "extended barrels, compensators . . . porting of any type." (Presumably a stock Springfield Armory Omega with factory porting isn't really a stock gun.)

I've tried to find just what it is about comps that makes them so terrible. "Police on the street don't carry comp guns." Sure. Thirty years ago police on the street didn't carry autopistols either.

"They just aren't practical." Why not? "They just aren't, that's all. We know better." Right. And autopistols aren't reliable, and double-action revolvers aren't as fast as single-actions.

The freedom to experiment and innovate is one of the two major factors that has made practical shooting competition so valuable. The other factor—and it's even more important—is course design. But that's another story.



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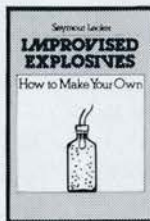
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COP TALK

MASSAD AYOOB

REFLECTIONS ON THE BETTER HALF: A COP'S WIFE IS WHAT MAKES A COP

My wife Dorothy enters the bedroom as I finish dressing for work. She sees the Colt .357 Magnum slide into my uniform holster, and cocks an eyebrow under the cascade of her long brown hair and says, "A Python night. Must be a good rookie."

We've been together since 1965. She noted on the second date that I kept a Colt .45 automatic somewhere in my '58 Dodge, and her acceptance of that part of my life accelerated our relationship.

She was part of my life when I pinned on my first badge, hid her pain when she went through all those nights of a young cop's bride. The nights when she doesn't think he'll come home, the nights when he comes home bitter and haunted by the horror he has seen, the things he has been forced to do, the dichotomies of human value he's been thrown face to face with.

She was there to share my bitter fury when I was suspended with recommendation to terminate for "promoting insubordination," there to share the sweet taste of victory when the police commission vindicated me on the false charge.

And there to proudly run her long and gentle fingers over the sergeant's stripes I started with on the police job that followed in a new department, after the defeated old chief had to write me a letter of reference when I gave him back his patrolman's shield, dripping in invisible K-Y Jelly.

She says, "A Python night," and I don't

Our wives are like our Pythons, the creme de la creme, only we don't get to wear them with our uniforms as badges of honor.

have to ask. She knows that when I'm working alone I carry a .45 automatic, but when I'm working one-on-one training I carry a .357 Magnum revolver. It's the gun we issue our cops, though they can switch to an automatic if they can qualify to an extremely high standard. By definition, the ones who qualify that high aren't rookies anymore, and don't need the Training Lieutenant to be riding with them.

Any good department has a Field Training Officer, or FTO, program. The new ones ride with the vets. The Academy installed their engine, and we break it in for the first 500 hopefully trouble-free miles. My agency has its share of good



FTOs, and a sergeant named Bob Wunderlich who knows training inside out. They are the ones who polish the raw material and make it work. The chief sends them out with the training lieutenant for a final inspection, a final polish.

This is what Dorothy means. At the Colt factory, the regular bluing process finishes a Trooper .357, and a highly skilled inspector gives it its final test. The young cops who come to me are like those Colt Troopers: they work every time, and they get the job done.

At the Colt factory, the elite Python is the super-expensive prestige gun, its final fitting done by the most seasoned workmen, its final polish done with a 400-grit emery as fine as talcum powder.

When I've got a really good young cop to ride with, one I know has listened to the street-smart trainers like Wunderlich, I know all I have to deliver is the final 400-grit polish, the tiny subtleties of technique, differences only another professional can notice in a product of already fine quality.

The police wife sees the metamorphosis. She knows that the gun reflects the cop as surely as the pet mirrors the personality of the owner. She knows that

when I'm rolling with an average cop, I'll carry an average gun, a Smith & Wesson Model 13 just like his. I'm here to give him confidence in what The Department gave him to work with, and I'd be the ultimate hypocrite if I sat next to him and said, "Of course, you can take care of yourself with a revolver," and then shifted my \$1500 custom combat .45 automatic as if to add silently, "Of course, I wouldn't carry a piece of crap like that."

But when I get a really good one, the mood seems to reflect, and the four-inch .357 that goes into my holster is that Colt Python. Like any cop's wife, Dorothy knows that "Pet reflects the personality of the owner" syndrome.

She was with me when I used that gun to take First Master at the Fraternal Order of Police National shoot in 1977, when I used it to set the record high of 597 out of 600 on the service four-inch only course at the New Hampshire Police Association annual match in 1988.

Its action was tuned by Jerry Moran, who no longer seems to be available, and without him to maintain it she knows I use it sparingly. In short, it comes out only on special occasions.

"Good cop?" I hear the tenderness in her voice. It's a mother's question; like any cop's wife, she's learned to feel the quality of his partners through him, sight unseen.

"The best," I answer. "Rick was a paramedic before he came to us. He's got that feel for people, for helping professions. He's already learned to tell BS from fact, and he won't break when there's blood all over the place."

We hug as I pass by her. It's been a long time since I had to promise her I wouldn't come home in a box. Cops' wives learn not to verbalize their fears, just as they learn to feel what their husbands are feeling when they go to work.

She has noticed that, for me, wearing the Python to work is like a rite of passage, something I started doing subcon-

sciously long ago on the night I felt the rookie was going to graduate with honors.

Cops could not be cops without cops' wives. We have the highest divorce rate around, and one of the highest suicide rates, and the wives who stay with us and keep us going are the unsung heroines of the whole profession.

Our wives are like our Pythons, the *creme de la creme*, only we don't get to wear them with our uniforms as badges of honor except on promotion day or at our funerals, when the Chief hands her the folded flag he just took off our coffin.

The hug ends, and I head for the door, thinking how lucky I am this beautiful woman is mine, and the telephone rings before I get out. It's a cop I trained in the Midwest who has a crisis on his hands. Two nights ago, a young officer there got into something that ended tragically, with the death of a 15-year-old. The patrolman is under sedation. He has only bruises on the outside; the dangerous wounds are in his psyche. "I wanted to help people, not kill them," he kept saying before the sedative took effect.

I call my chief and get permission to come in late. Then I call the other guy's chief. He tells me the kid is 25 and a year on the job, a job he's wanted since childhood. The officer's wife is 19, with a small child at home and another on the way, and she wants him to turn in his badge, wants that with a deep and bitter passion.

The young cop has gone on paid leave, heading to his parents' home with his wife and child. When something brutal has happened to you, it is nature's way to head back to the nest, to draw in the curtains against the pain. The chief out there tells me he'll give the kid my number.

I tell the chief to leave two messages. One, for the young patrolman to phone me collect.

The other, for his stricken young wife to make a collect call to Dorothy. When crisis strikes a cop, there are damn few support mechanisms in place for him, and a damn sight fewer for his family.

When the call is over, I set the phone gently in the cradle. I hate to feel tired at the beginning of the shift. Dorothy will wait for her call at home, as I shall wait for mine to be transmitted through the P.D. She'll handle this on her own, just as she handles home protection while I'm gone, the way most cops' wives do: a loaded gun where she can reach it, reinforced by the knowledge that she's gone through crisis before and prevailed, sometimes by herself and sometimes vicariously through her spouse.

As I walk down those steps to go to work, I know I've got more than one Python at my side. Two finely-tuned machines, a hard mechanism and a sometimes-harder organism, both of which I can trust my life to along with the lives of brothers and others. Both powerful, both high-performance tuned. Both proven over the years.

And both, utterly reliable.



TACTICAL USE OF NIGHT SIGHTS

They glow in the dark, but are they lighting your way to trouble? Use night sights wisely with these tactical tips from a street-savvy gunfighter.

By Massad Ayoob

Night sights, first popularized by inventor Julio Santiago and his Day-Nite unit, have been with us for some time. They are among the most misunderstood of handgun accessories. They do indeed make good shooting easier in the dark, but as always, there is no free lunch.

First, they are not permanent. In the past, some were sold with over-rated half life. One sight I acquired in the Seventies, advertised as having a ten-year service expectancy, had dimmed out in half that time.

Installation was another problem. One popular brand came in a brass casing that had to be fitted into the sights by your own gunsmith. The first firm to install their own suffered a lot of broken units in the field. It was reported that one batch of night sights had failed so badly that they'd contaminated an armory with radioactivity when they broke during installation.

Today's products are better made. Factory-produced night sights using self-illuminating Tritium are manufacturer-installed as options on guns ranging from the Israeli Galil assault rifle to some SIG pistols. New aftermarket firms have streamlined the installation process, improving reliability, durability, and cost effectiveness.

Running a school that teaches combat shooting around the US and in Canada, South America, Europe and Africa, I get to see a wide spectrum of these devices as installed on the average consumer's gun, not specially tailored for a gunwriter. My experience is that the Trijicon unit has the highest rate of customer satisfaction. My students and I have yet to experience a failure with one, and the glow of the sights is extremely bright. The experienced factory staff will install them for you if you send them the pistol's slide or the revolver's frame and barrel, and I've not yet seen a botched job. The price is competitive and reasonable. The installation is particularly simple and reasonable if your gun already has colored dot sights, such as the Colt Officer's Model ACP or the Heckler and Koch P7. My own P7 was sent to Trijicon to become the test gun for this article.

First, if you're an IPSC shooter, be advised that a good set of night sights is almost mandatory for winning night matches. In defensive handgunning, however, there are two areas where, no pun intended, night sights shine.

One is home defense. The safest and surest armed home protection tactic is to avoid searching the house for intruders, instead marshalling the family into a safe room and taking cover, calling the authorities and laying a defensive ambush in case armed intruders seek you out.

A burglar with a weapon who silhouettes himself in the doorway of the darkened safe room is a perfect target for night sights. The length of a room is distance enough for a shot with a poorly aligned pistol to miss entirely, or to strike the potentially lethal intruder in a less than incapacitating location, allowing him to get off shots at innocents. The precise alignment afforded by the glowing sights gives a greater guarantee of a stopping hit.

The great disadvantage of night sights—the glow that can give your presence away to an opponent as you move in the dark—is eliminated now. The sights are visible only to those behind the gun, and that means only you and yours. Instead of seeing a green glow in time to sneak behind you, the only color the home invader is likely to see is a bright orange muzzle flash, repeated as necessary.

The second situational category is a wilderness survival scenario. When one must kill animals for food, one becomes acutely aware of the fact that nocturnal animals are often more easily hunted than creatures of the daylight.

While this foraging often involves a beam of light in the animal's eyes, the nature of this type of hunting is such that you don't always get a clearly silhouetted sight picture with conventional sights. Night sights increase your chances of dropping the food-bearing mammal in its tracks, where it can be retrieved for sustenance. (While night sights would obviously be a boon to poachers, we are

Continued on page 108

SILUETAS

JOHN TAFFIN

HOW TO REVIVE THE SILHOUETTE GAME WITH A REFRESHING NEW CHALLENGE



The weather conditions were lousy, as rotten as they could possibly be and still hold a silhouette match. Twelve inches of snow on the ground, more where the wind had blown, and the temperature at 32 degrees with a freezing rain. The kind of weather that chills a silhouetter to the bone. Since targets could not be set even using a four-wheel drive which would quickly bog down in the heavy, wet snow, snowmobiles were pressed into service. Surely no one would show up to shoot silhouettes in such horrible weather and conditions.

But show up they did, and our local club had our highest turnout ever recorded as 125 signups were registered and shot through that winter day in 1982. Since that time it has been downhill and now even when the weather is perfect, we have a big day if we have 25 signups for a match. Shooters used to come from Washington, Oregon, Utah and Nevada as well as far corners of Idaho to take part in our monthly shoots. Now we cannot even get all of the local silhouetters out in perfect weather.

Is this an isolated situation? I think not. I have talked to other silhouetters around the nation and this seems to be the norm rather than the exception. What has happened?

Is all the excitement gone? Is silhouet-

ting on its last legs? What can be done to reverse the trend?

Silhouetting has had a tremendous impact on the handgunning world. Silhouetting is directly responsible for the development of many new handgun cartridges over the past ten years as well as a great improvement in handguns and sights for long range shooting. Handgun hunters as well as silhouetters have benefitted immensely from the direct influence of silhouetting on manufacturers of handguns and related items. While I certainly do not consider myself as one who has all the answers, I will put forth some ideas herewith and hope some readers will also respond with some of their own ideas. Some ideas may sound radical, but perhaps radical changes are necessary if silhouetting is to reverse its downward trend and grow once again. And I offer these as food for thought from one who normally prefers the status quo and who usually resists change very strongly.

Let's look at the following areas that possibly need change: challenge; course of fire; competition; compensation and cooperation.

Challenge: Perhaps this could best be labeled lack of challenge. When silhouetting started in the 1970's, it is doubtful that anyone ever envisioned that the game would be conquered. Basically, the only

firearms available to shoot 15 years ago were .357, .41, and .44 Magnum revolvers from Colt, Ruger and Smith & Wesson. As the game progressed, revolvers took on longer barrels, better sights and more powerful chamberings. At the same time Thompson/Center directed much of their efforts towards the silhouette game. We have reaped the rewards of much better handguns, but the guns are too good for the game as it is now set up.

Add to this, the exotic unlimited guns that have come along, and 40 x 40's have become commonplace with some shooters simply needing to show up to be guaranteed a perfect score. The lack of challenge for the top shooters brings in boredom and they go off to shoot action pistol or take up archery or whatever will give them a fresh challenge. The joy is found in the trek to perfection not in the arrival. The challenge must be brought back to the game for International and AAA shooters.

Course of Fire: The course of fire remains the same as it was originally set up: chickens, 50 meters; pigs, 100 meters; turkeys, 150 meters; and rams, 200 meters. It was a tough course, but it has been conquered over and over again. Is it time to take a serious look at changing the course of fire?

What are the options? A few possibilities that surface are:

1) Setting the targets at longer distances, out to a maximum of 500 yards for the ram.

2) Going to smaller targets. This could be very expensive if all clubs had to change the size of their targets but it could be phased in over a period of time as targets need to be replaced.

3) Setting targets not at the standard distances but at unknown distances. This makes it a little more realistic for the silhouetter that is shooting steel as preparation for hunting.

4) Along with the idea of preparation for hunting, mark each animal with a kill zone and change from counting targets that simply go over to targets that have solid hunting hits.

5) Take a serious look at The Master's Long Range course of fire. Targets are not engaged from left to right but from close to far. For example, targets are shot in a sequence of one at 100 meters, then one at 200 meters, and then back again for a total of 10 targets in 90 seconds instead of five targets at one distance in 120 seconds. There is no time for making sight corrections from near target to far target and *no spotters are allowed*. The shooter must know his gun and load intimately.

Competition: While the course of fire remains incredibly easy for some good shooters, other good shooters can no longer compete for a very simple reason: they can no longer see the sights. Many of the pioneers of silhouetting have dropped out for the reason as stated to me by one well-known handgunner: "I'm not going out and embarrass myself by competing in

Double D class simply because I can no longer see the sights well enough!"

The answer is simple: The time has come for scopes. Too many experienced silhouetters and would-be silhouetters are now locked out of the game. Action pistol shooters use scopes, The Master's Tournament allows the use of scopes, big game hunters use scopes, varminters use scopes, Hunter and Field pistoleros use scopes—all God's chillun use scopes except in long range silhouetting! (With one exception, that being unlimited standing class under NRA rules.)

Even if scopes were limited to non-magnifying 1x or electronic scopes such as the Aimpoint or ProPoint, the results would be accomplished. It is not magnification that is needed but sight definition. A shooter could declare to shoot in scoped class or iron sight class, not in both. The idea being to open up silhouetting for those who are now locked out, not give those with good eyes another way to compete.

Compensation: Could it be that more shooters would take part if the prizes were larger? Some of us are only interested in the shooting for shooting's sake, but others cannot see spending more than they can receive even if they take first place. Maybe it is time to take a good look at the prize structure. Maybe more would shoot if the prizes were more than a small trophy. Maybe more would shoot if they could recoup at least the amount they spent for ammunition and travel. Maybe.

The top winners in The Master's Tournament each took home more than \$15,000. What did the top winners in IHMSA Internationals and NRA Nationals receive? A handshake and a trophy.

Cooperation: We now have two major organizations putting on silhouette matches: IHMSA and NRA. Each has its own rules and ranges. Would it not be better for shooters if both groups got together and established one set of rules and allowed all ranges to be used for either organization? Even the NFL and AFL were able to iron out their differences and merge and the result has been an explosion of fan support for football.

It is a sad state of affairs when The Master's Tournament and IHMSA Internationals are held at the same time. Many of the shooters involved would like to take part in both. It is time for some real cooperation to be evident here. IHMSA will have to make the move as it is the largest organization.

Could not IHMSA appoint a committee to seek cooperation between all three groups of IHMSA, NRA and The Master's Tournament? The end result would certainly benefit all shooters.

Silhouetting is now at a crucial time. We can back into a corner and defend silhouetting as it is now to the death. Or we can take a realistic look at the situation and do what is necessary to save the sport. There are no other choices.



TEST REPORT

tains a female snap that mates with a male snap on the front of the belt slide. The top end of the loop serves as a hammer safety strap. All quite compact.

When removal of the holster is desired, one simply unsnaps the loop and the holster can be removed from the belt loop. While in the belt loop, the holster holds the sixgun high and tight to the body allowing even a 7½-inch barreled sixgun to be worn while sitting.

The design allows the holster to be worn either butt forward or backward on either the right or left side and when the holster itself is removed, a semi-automatic can be carried in the belt slide, also

TEXAS HIGH RIDER

A unique holster system for sixguns.

By John Taffin

One of my favorite sixguns is the 7½-inch single action, be it of the Ruger or Colt persuasion. I like the way they balance in my hand and I especially appreciate the fact that they shoot so much better than the shorter barrels. At least for me. There is a major problem, however, as they are very difficult to holster comfortably without going to a shoulder holster.

The problem has been solved, and quite ingeniously, by Alvin Brickey, a holster maker from Lancaster, Kentucky. These holsters, or rather *holster systems*, are marketed exclusively by Texas Longhorn Arms (P.O. Box 703, Dept AH, Richmond, TX 77469) and are known as the Texas High Rider.

The idea behind the Texas High Rider is to allow any barrel length to be carried high and comfortably and also to permit the holster to be easily removed when one comes into town without the necessity of removing the holster belt. Brickey accomplishes all of this by combining a holster with a belt slide.

The holster fits into the belt slide and is locked into place by the bottom end of a loop on the front of the holster that con-

on either side and butt forward or backward.

I have been working with both 4¾-inch and 7½-inch single actions and find that the draw from either can be accomplished quickly and smoothly. And, of equal importance, the whole system is quite comfortable to wear without the weight of the heavy handgun pulling the pants down.

The Texas High Rider can be had in smooth or roughout leather, dark, tan, or brown finish. All are made from top grain cowhide. They can also be had in basket weave, carved, or fish scale design. Price of the basic Texas High Rider system is \$67.50 for 4¾- and 5½-inch single action guns and \$73.50 for 7½-inch single actions. For double actions the price is \$3.00 more.

Once the first system is purchased, holsters can be purchased separately to fit the original belt slide for \$55.00 and extra belt slides can be purchased for \$18.50.

For those who may prefer a more traditional holster, Texas Longhorn Arms will also offer a standard belt holster that rides high on the belt. For more information, send \$2 to Texas Longhorn Arms.



The AYOOB FILES

ARMED CITIZENS FIGHT BACK: HISTORY'S LESSONS

Situation: The anti-gunners smugly denounce your right to self-defense. After all, the police protect you.

Lesson: History says differently. Two famous cases of armed citizens coming to the rescue.

The powerful forces that would ban civilian ownership of handguns in this country have great influence with the general media. This is one reason that when a berserker like James Oliver Huberty cuts loose in a place like the McDonald's in San Ysidro, the newspaper and TV editorialists scream for more restrictions on citizens' gun rights.

But only the gun owners reflect on how the tragedy could have been averted had a single, competent armed citizen been present to deal with the problem.

This is not a new phenomenon. We've seen it over many years. In this column in the past, armed citizens who've assisted the police or solved the problem themselves have often been highlighted. Some of the great gun battles of history show that as long as there have been guns, there have been citizens with the courage to pick them up and lash back at the forces of evil. Consider the two following examples.

August 1, 1966, Austin, Texas. Charles Whitman, a model of young manhood gone berserk, has murdered his wife and mother, then climbed to the pinnacle of the University of Texas' clock tower. He has a 6mm Remington Model 700 bolt action rifle with scope, a Remington 760 pump rifle in .35 Remington caliber, a .30 carbine, and a JC Higgins semi-automatic 12 gauge shotgun, produced by High Standard, with a barrel he has sawed off.

He also has a Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum, a P-08 Luger, a Galesi .25 automatic, and a pair of Colt single shot derringers in .22 Short.

The Texas Tower sniper has just opened one of the most nightmarish chapters in American crime. Using primarily the 6mm, he opens fire into the streets. Before his guns fall silent, he will have killed a total of 16 innocent people, and shot and wounded 20 more.

The anti-gunners will forever after speak of Charles Whitman as the archetype of the beast they seek to destroy. They conveniently leave out one very pertinent fact:

The Texas citizens shot back.

The August 15, 1966 edition of *Newsweek* told it this way: "High on the tower, he kept up his murderous barrage, racing around the observation deck, firing swiftly under each of the four gold-edged clocks that face out over the campus—and each blast from the powerful deer rifle rang out with the ear-splitting blast of a stick of dynamite. By now, however, the world below had begun to fight back. City police, state troopers, Texas Rangers—and ordinary, gun-bearing Texans—converged on the tower." (Emphasis added).

Firearms authority Jan Stevenson notes that the very first volley of return fire came from a private citizen armed with a .30 M-1 carbine that he had purchased for \$15 through the NRA-affiliated Director of Civilian Marksmanship program.

This return fire of combined police and citizen weaponry clearly limited the death toll. For the first few minutes, Whitman had roamed the parapets unmolested, coolly and calmly raining his deadly fire down upon helpless targets. Now under fire himself, he was forced to crouch down behind cover and keep changing positions. Whitman had become more concerned about his own survival than about getting good firing angles.

Newsweek itself admitted this: "Now the great Westminster chimes of the bell-tower clock had sounded the half-hour of 12:30, and the steady crackle of returning fire from law-

Continued on page 96

PISTOLSMITHING

JOHN LAWSON

NEW BROWNELL'S MOUNTING FIXTURE CURES SIGHT RIB INSTALLATION WOES

One of the major trends of the 80's is toward Action Shooting. As a matter of fact, you can hardly ever walk onto a firing line, these days, where a highly specialized pistol or revolver oriented to the action sports isn't in use.

The impact of action shooting is spinning off to pistolsmiths as increased demands from handgunners for optical sights, scopes and ribs with rapidly adjustable iron sights. This demand has often turned into a lucrative addition to a shop's services, provided they didn't try to meet it with the obsolete eyeball technique of alignment and hole spotting.

The old squint, squirm and body english routines with cross test level and machinist's square are rapidly disappearing in favor of fixturing techniques that are fast, accurate and uniformly reliable, resulting in mountings that are perfectly collimated with bore centerline on the first try. Some of the other systems require considerable plugging and tinkering to get properly aligned. At least, this has been my experience.

Recently, Power Custom, in collaboration with Brownells, brought out a unique sight, scope and rib mounting fixture that is an amazing engineering feat; it not only locates holes for revolver mounts and ribs, but also quickly adapts to a configuration that allows perfect location of mounting holes on the longer hunting and silhouette guns, such as the TC and XP-100.

But, its versatility doesn't end there. It will also handle bolt action rifles and most shotguns, making it the most universal fixture ever designed for gun shops. Purchase of this one fixture will put a shop into the mounting business on a broad spectrum of customer guns. I've used mine for a number of months now, and it has paid for itself several times over.

I found only one fault with the SSR fixture for revolvers and single shot pistols, and that was easily remedied. Quite possibly, this would not even be a problem for your shop. I found that when I moved the fixture from milling machine table to production table for the drill press, that I had to re-level the fixture slightly. This proved cumbersome with the socket head cap screws supplied as legs for the leveling legs; the fixture had to be tilted off base to get an allen wrench into the socket for adjustment.

I quickly remedied the inconvenience by substituting two 1/4"-20 x 1" hex head, grade 5 bolts. Chucking them in the lathe

with threads protected by a thick brass shim, I turned the heads flat, square and smooth with a carbide bit, turned on the lock nut and I was back in business. A pair of $\frac{1}{16}$ " open end wrenches allows me to level the fixture and lock the leveling screws in place with great accuracy in a fraction of the time it originally required. I can watch the bubbles of the cross test level throughout the whole operation.

The SSR fixture holds and aligns revolver barrels very accurately by the effect of two centers at the crown and the lead. An action support through the cylinder opening supports the frame and a lower frame clamp allows the entire frame and barrel to revolve around the pair of centers to insure that the top strap is square to the drill bushing mount, resulting in holes that are truly centered in the frame and perpendicular lengthwise.

Happily, the SSR fixture uses the same size drill and tap bushings as the Forster sight mounting jig, so you may already have what you need in this department. The Forster locating pin is a great convenience for checking the holes in a rib to determine whether they are centered in the rib.

Years ago I made up a set of locators with $\frac{3}{16}$ " shanks that had short locating pins exactly clearance drill size for base mounting screws. These drop in with great certainty when the holes are central, and I prefer them to the 60° locating center; the few minutes it took to turn them out of drill rod was well worth the effort. If you don't want to make your own aligning tools, Brownells sells a set of hole center punches that will accurately align #6, #8 and #10 holes through the fixture's bushing plate, with the proper bushings.

While the SSR fixture is spot-on accurate for revolver and some pistol mountings, due to the centers aligning both ends of the bore, it shares the same weakness that the Forster and B-Square rifle fixtures have: The fixture aligns on the outside contour of the barrel, in the case of the Forster and SSR, and the inside receiver contours in the B-Square.

We'll end this session with a grim safety reminder from *Oh, Pshaw!* This is directed toward pistolsmiths who still allow clients to roam through the plating area of their shop:

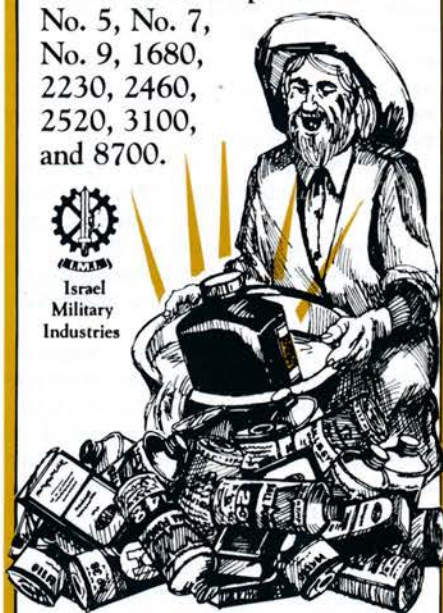
“The chap who told the shooting yarns,
No longer is a bore,
For what he thought was H_2O ,
Was H_2SO_4 .”



The Gold Standard

If you have been mining for gold in a pistol powder, pan some Accurate No. 2. Accurate is setting a new gold standard for reloading pistol cartridges. It's even labeled in gold, so dig around your dealer's shelf before the Gold Rush begins. And while you're there, look for the full line of Accurate powders:

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HANDLOADING

CHARLES E. PETTY

PRESSURE SIGNS FROM REVOLVERS AND PISTOLS ARE DIAGNOSED DIFFERENTLY

We have all been taught to look out for pressure signs in our reloading, but when you talk about pistols most folks tend to think the primer is the best clue. It isn't.

Very often, by the time the primer shows the traditional signs of flattening or cratering, the pressure is already above reasonable limits. There are other, better, things to look for.

Don't think I mean we should ignore primer signs, that isn't what I mean at all, it's just one of a number of clues we have to tell us something about pressure. And just because a load is safe in one particular gun doesn't mean it will be safe in every gun. That's why we keep harping on "work up loads gradually."

Revolvers and automatic pistols give us pressure signs in different ways. While there are plenty of things to look for in automatics, the best clue of all in revolvers is the ease—or difficulty—with which you can extract fired cases.

When you can invert a revolver and have the cases fall out, you can be sure that pressure isn't a problem, but if you have to beat upon the ejector rod to get them out that's a solid gold guarantee that pressure is too high.

Ejection of fired cases should be virtually effortless and if you have to begin to really push on the ejector rod, it's too much. You may also see some primer signs at this point although severe flattening may not occur with loads that are only moderately difficult to eject.

Another place to look is at the headstamp of the cartridge case. The case head takes a lot of the pressure load and, since it is forced against steel as the case is shoved back into the recoil shield, the effects will show up in the markings if pressures are excess.

Actually you can see changes even with safe maximum loads but it won't be nearly as pronounced. The degree to which this is visible is partially dependent upon how deep the markings were in the first place and this varies considerably from one brand of brass to another. Winchester cases seem to have a relatively shallow headstamp whereas Federal's are much deeper. This process isn't instant, but it's something else to look for.

With automatics there really are a lot more things that can warn of excess pressure. There will always be an area of the case that is less than completely supported because there must be some sort of barrel ramp. The first thing to look for is any sign

of swelling in the unsupported area.

You don't need a micrometer for this either, you can see it with the naked eye. Any bulging of the cartridge case is an absolute sign that pressure is too high.

Back in the early days of the .38 Super in IPSC, shooters used to accept a slight amount of swelling as normal. Part of that was due to using Winchester .38 Auto brass. Those cases were thinner in the web area and wouldn't handle the pressure levels that had to be used to make major loads. Winchester has now changed the design of their .38 Auto and .38 Super brass to strengthen this area. Even the slightest swelling, regardless of the make of brass or caliber of the pistol, is too much.

There's one very useful sign that is found on the primer that most folks don't recognize. Have you ever seen a firing pin indent that appeared to be elongated? This is caused by the firing pin being dragged across the primer as the gun unlocks, but before the firing pin has a chance to retract fully into the slide.

Revolvers and automatic pistols give us pressure signs in different ways.

This can often be encountered with Government Model automatics, although it can also crop up with almost any gun. This may also be accompanied by shearing bits of metal off the primer.

Sometimes you'll see an accumulation of brass around the firing pin hole. If you see this, pressures are pretty high and it's a good clue to look at some other signs. Chances are that there will also be some primer flattening, but this is something that's hard to judge.

Another sign is the depth of the firing pin impression. If it appears to be shallower than normal, it could very well mean that the indent has been pushed back out by pressure.

Still another point to examine is the imprint left by the breech face on the primer itself. This is always going to be present and each individual gun marks the primer in its own way, so the important thing is whether the amount of marking has increased or changed compared with standard loads.

An extremely useful, although subjective, piece of evidence, is the force with which a cartridge case is ejected. Most

guns usually have a fairly repeatable ejection pattern and the shooter soon becomes accustomed to it. Anything that causes a major deviation from this norm is a good clue. A change in ejection pattern can't be taken as a sign that pressures are automatically too high, but it should be a warning and prompt further investigation.

All automatic pistols leave marks on the cartridge case as a normal part of the firing cycle. These are the clues that firearms examiners use to match a gun with a cartridge case, but they can be useful to shooters too. The two main marks to watch for are those made by the extractor and ejector. A change in either of them is yet another warning sign.

They don't automatically prove something's wrong but if you suddenly see a big burr knocked on the case by the ejector or a deep gouge in the rim by the extractor, pay attention!

The key to evaluating all these subjective signs is in comparison with standard loads. If you become familiar with the marks left by factory ammo, then you can usually see when sudden changes become more severe as you work up a handload.

One problem with this method is that cases that have been reloaded and fired a number of times will collect multiple marks and it's impossible to tell which ones are new. I think it's a good idea to use new brass for working up hot loads anyhow, so you may be able to use these signs.

Primers can still provide valuable evidence and this should be integrated into the whole picture before a judgement is made.

And we shouldn't forget the condition of the primer pocket. This is an often stated warning in rifle reloading, but is equally valuable with both pistols and revolvers. Any time a primer seats too easily it indicates that the primer pocket has become enlarged. The most common cause is excessive pressure.

Any case with a loose primer pocket should be discarded and the load checked. Of course if you just throw brass in a common box you won't be able to determine anything and I think that's another good reason for segregating brass.

Any brass, regardless of caliber, that I use for maximum loads or for working up a new load, is kept separate from cases I use for normal shooting. I carry that a step further with cases for the real hot ones like the .454 Casull or .44 Magnum. Those are kept in their original boxes or separate MTM boxes, along with their complete loading history. If one or more

Continued on page 85

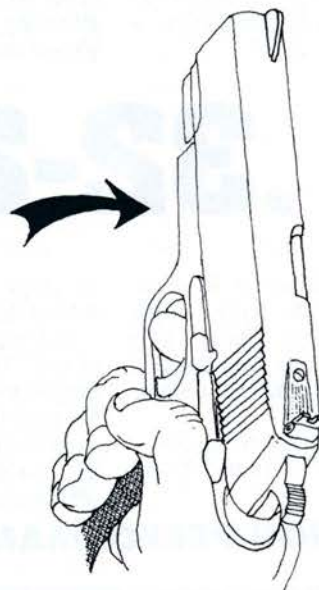
HANDGUNNING HINTS

Bennett Viken and Robin Sutton

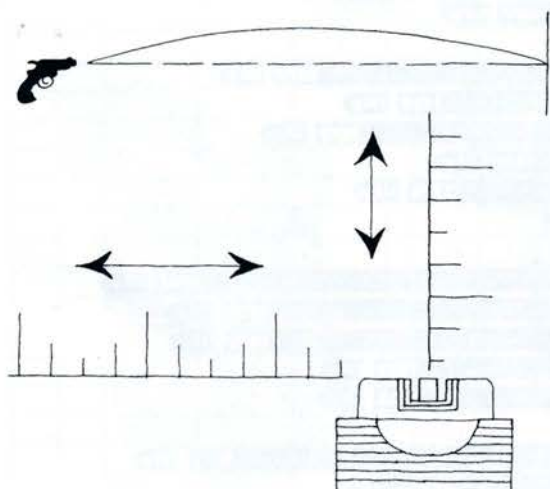
Vertical Sight Alignment



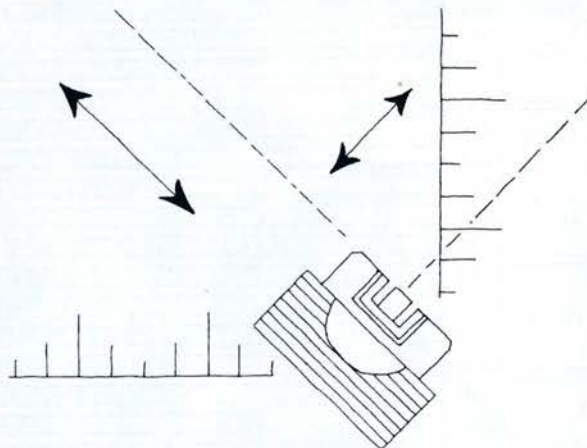
1. It's a good idea for all hunters and combat shooters to practice unorthodox positions.



2. But no matter what contortions you get into, don't cant the gun.



3. Gunsights are designed to work on a horizontal-vertical axis. Trajectory determines the vertical limb and windage determines the horizontal.



4. Although the bullet will still obey the basic laws of physics when the gun is tilted to the side, the sights no longer have a consistent, accurate reference to the target. Our hint: Keep your gun upright.

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TAFFIN TESTS

The .32-20 has always held a fascination for me for two reasons. My two favorite writers both really started their sixgun-writing careers with the .32-20. Elmer Keith related how, as a teenager, he broke broncs to get enough money to buy his first centerfire Colt Single Action, a seven and one-half inch .32-20.

My search for the .32-20 has not been so successful as my mentors. Have you priced a .32-20 seven and one-half inch Colt Single Action lately? Although I've seen them priced in the trade papers, I've never seen one in more than 30 years of attending gun shows. Maybe I should rephrase that. I've never seen one *in shoot-*

it was who decided to chamber the Thompson/Center Contender in .32-20.

Even though the .32-20 will reward the reloader with exceptional accuracy, one has to be more than a little bit of a traditionalist to appreciate the .32-20. While it is basically the same length as a magnum, it is not quite as easy to load as "normal" revolver cartridges for two very important reasons.

First, it is a bottle-necked, or tapered, cartridge which means carbide sizing dies are not available and the reloader must go through the messy task of lubing cases before sizing and then wiping them clean afterwards. Some of the new water soluble lubes really look good here.

Secondly, the necks of .32-20 brass are literally paper thin. Hit the mouth of the case on the bottom of the sizing or expanding die, albeit ever so slightly, and the brass is gone.

Loading the .32-20 also requires some knowledge of the groove diameter of the barrel. The Thompson/Center chamber-

the .32-20

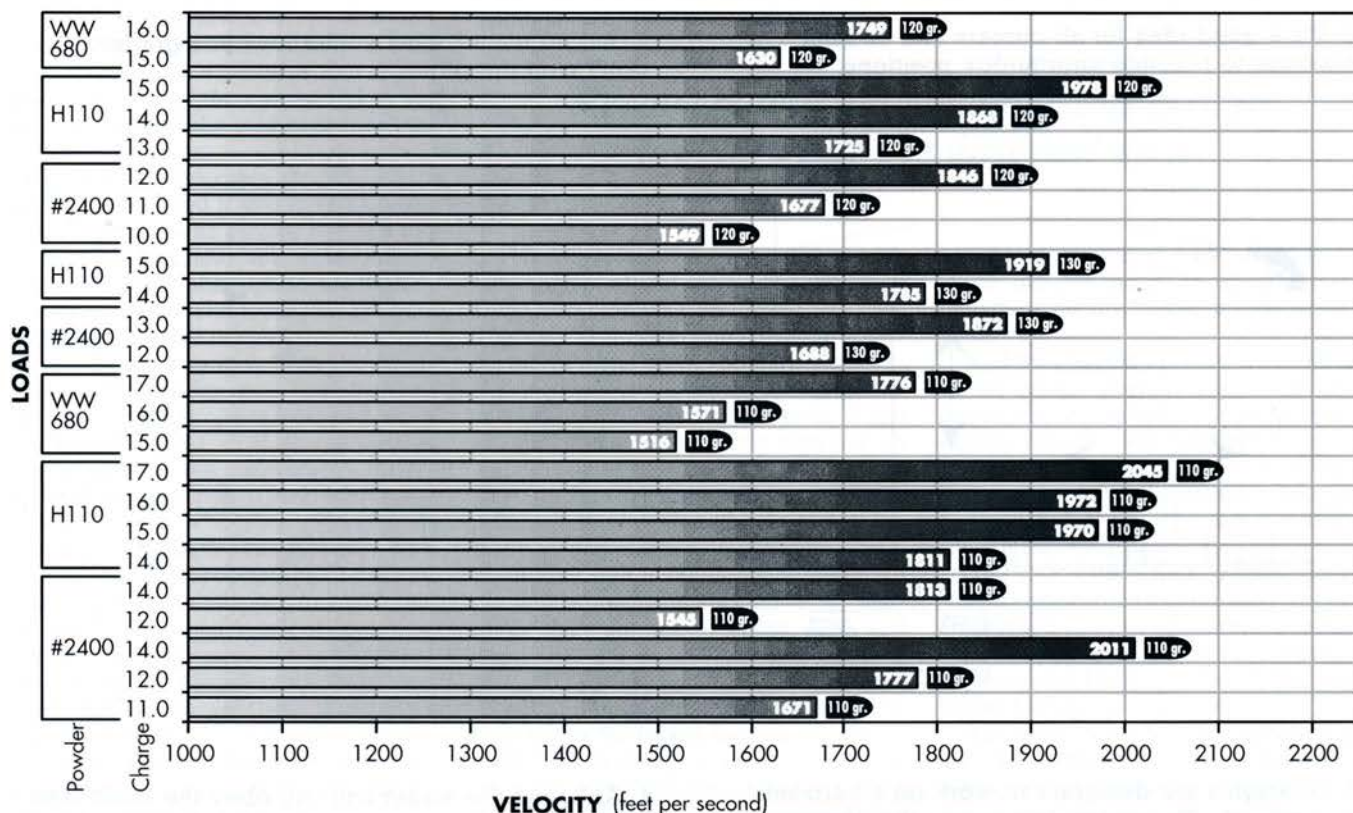
Thirty years later, Skeeter Skelton, freshly mustered out of the service at the end of WWII, stopped in Chicago long enough to purchase—yep, you guessed it—a seven and one-half inch Colt Single Action .32-20.

When two gentlemen of such sixgunnig' stature as these two start with the .32-20, you have to take notice.

ing shape that I could afford even in my wildest dreams.

Just when all seemed the darkest as far as the .32-20 is concerned, along came Hunter Pistol and Field Pistol courses of fire under NRA and IHMSA and the deep need was for a light-recoiling, flat-shooting, pistol cartridge for use in short range silhouetting. My Stetson is off to whoever

HIGH PERFORMANCE FAVORITE LOADS FOR THE .32-20



All loads were fired in a 10-inch Thompson Center Contender and chronographed with an Oehler 33. Brass was Remington, primers CCI #400. The 110 grain bullets used were Speer and Hornady; 120 grain were Lyman #311316GC cast lead and LBT #120311FN cast lead; 130 grain was Speer flat point. Approach all handloading carefully by reducing charges listed by at least 10% and working up cautiously. Neither the author nor American Handgunner can accept responsibility for results obtained with this information due to the inherent variation in reloading components and individual handloading techniques.

ing of the .32-20 is in reality a .30-20 as the barrel is .30 caliber, rather than .32 caliber. That is not quite as drastic as it seems as .32 barrels are normally .312-.314" while .30 barrels are usually .308". So the difference in .30 and .32 barrels is not .020" as one might expect but only .004" to .006".

Both of the .32-20 test guns used for this edition of *Taffin Tests* are in reality ".30-20's" as the Ruger Blackhawk used is a custom .32-20 from Hamilton Bowen and is equipped with a seven and one-half inch .308" barrel. The Bowen .32-20 has very tight chambers precluding the use of anything but .308" bullets while the T/C .32-20 accepts both .308" and .312-.314" bullets.

Both test guns are chambered for ".30-20" because of bullet availability and .32-20 dies provided by Thompson/Center are quite versatile as they have two expander buttons, one for .308" bullets and the other for .312-.314" bullets. However, more and more suitable bullets are becoming available in .32 caliber and Speer has just announced a 100 grain .32 JHP to join Hornady's 85 grain and Speer's 90 grain .32 JHP's.

Since the .32-20 started life as a rifle cartridge, I normally use rifle primers, namely CCI's #400 Small Rifle Primers in loading the .32-20, be it for use in the Contender or the Ruger Blackhawk. And, while those .32-20 users that are deeply involved in Hunter Pistol and Field Pistol

opt for a number of different rifle powders, I am more traditional and stay with the normal magnum pistol powders, namely #2400, H4227, H110, WW296, and WW680.

These are my favorites for loading the Magnum revolver cartridges and while the .32-20 is more than 100 years old and arrived long before the use of the term "Magnum," its potential definitely puts it into the Magnum Class.

A standard load for the .32-20 for at least 50 years has been Lyman's #311316, a 120 grain flat-nosed gas check cast bullet over 10.0 grains of #2400. I was particularly anxious to try this long-time favorite in the Contender .32-20, .308" barrel. Sized at .312", the Lyman .32-20 bullets shoots into less than one-inch at 25 yards and moves out at a very respectable 1549 fps.

A duplication of this load can be assembled with 12.0 grains of H4227 and is even more accurate, shooting into almost one-half inch at 25 yards.

New on the scene is Lead Bullet Technology's .32-20 bullet, #120311FN. Loaded over 15.0 grains of WW680, this bullet gets down real close to one-hole performance. Like its counterpart from Lyman, this flat-nosed gas-checked design is excellent for use on varmints be it from a sixgun, a single-shot Contender or a .32-20 carbine. Cast hard, it does the job without damaging a lot of meat should the target be small game. And both bullets

are superb choices for cast bullet use in Hunter Pistol and Field Pistol competition.

Speer's 110 grain JHP known as the "Varminter" is perfect for use in the .32-20. Using this bullet over 13.0 grains of #2400 in the 10-inch Contender gives velocities close to 2000 fps and groups that run under one-half inch. This bullet's accuracy performance is almost monotonous—nearly every load tried with all powders shot into one and one-quarter inches or less.

This same bullet, Speer's 110 grain "Varminter," also performs exceptionally well in the Bowen Blackhawk with either 11.0 grains of #2400 at 1502 fps or 13.0 grains of H4227 at 1525 fps.

Switching to more conventional rifle bullets for use in the T/C Contender really makes the .32-20 sing. Although loaded rounds look quite strange with the tiny 1.315" brass loaded with Hornady 110 grain Spire Point and Speer 130 grain Flat Point bullets, performance is the best I have ever experienced accuracy-wise in 30-plus years of handgunning.

While it may not be the best choice for a self-defense cartridge, and while it is definitely not a big game or long range silhouette cartridge, the .32-20, like its younger, smaller brother the .32 Magnum, it is just about as good as it gets when it comes to Hunter Pistol and Field Pistol



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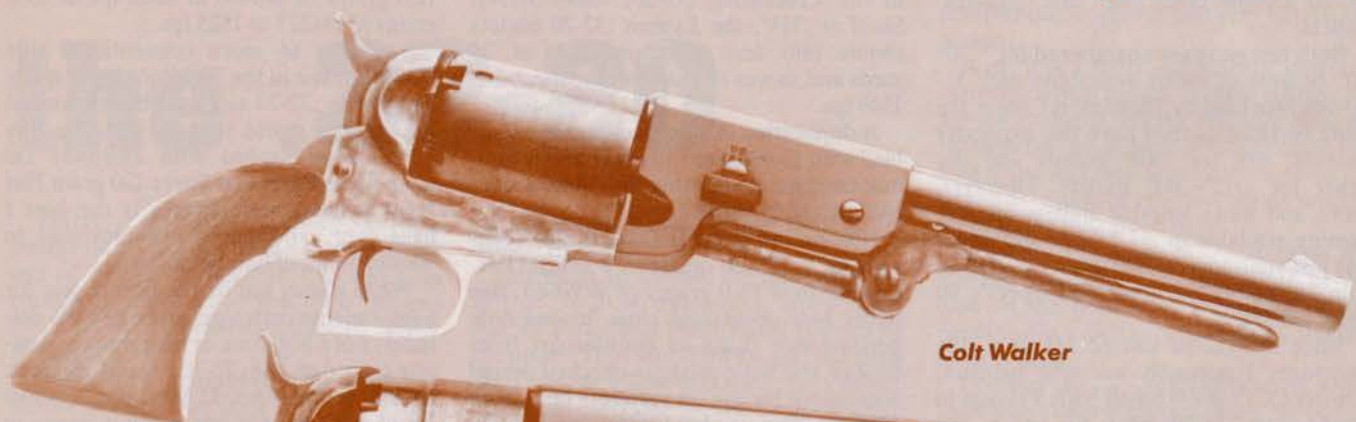


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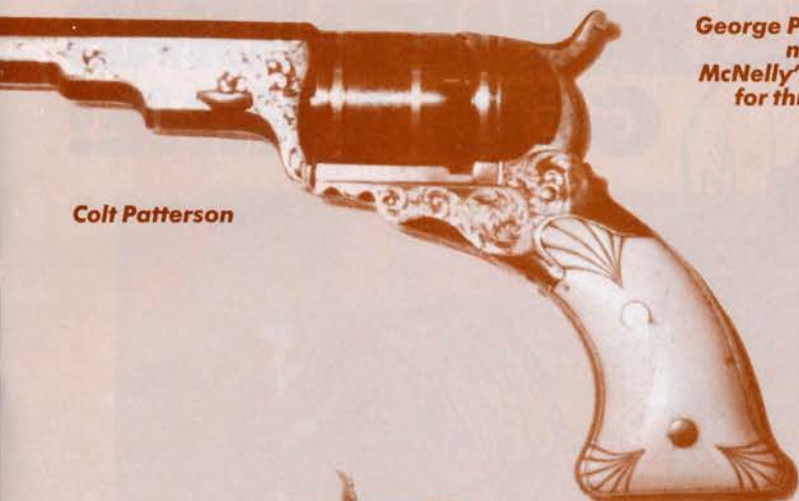
Colt Walker



1860 Colt Army



This salty crew of Rangers is Company F of the Frontier Battalion, circa 1888.

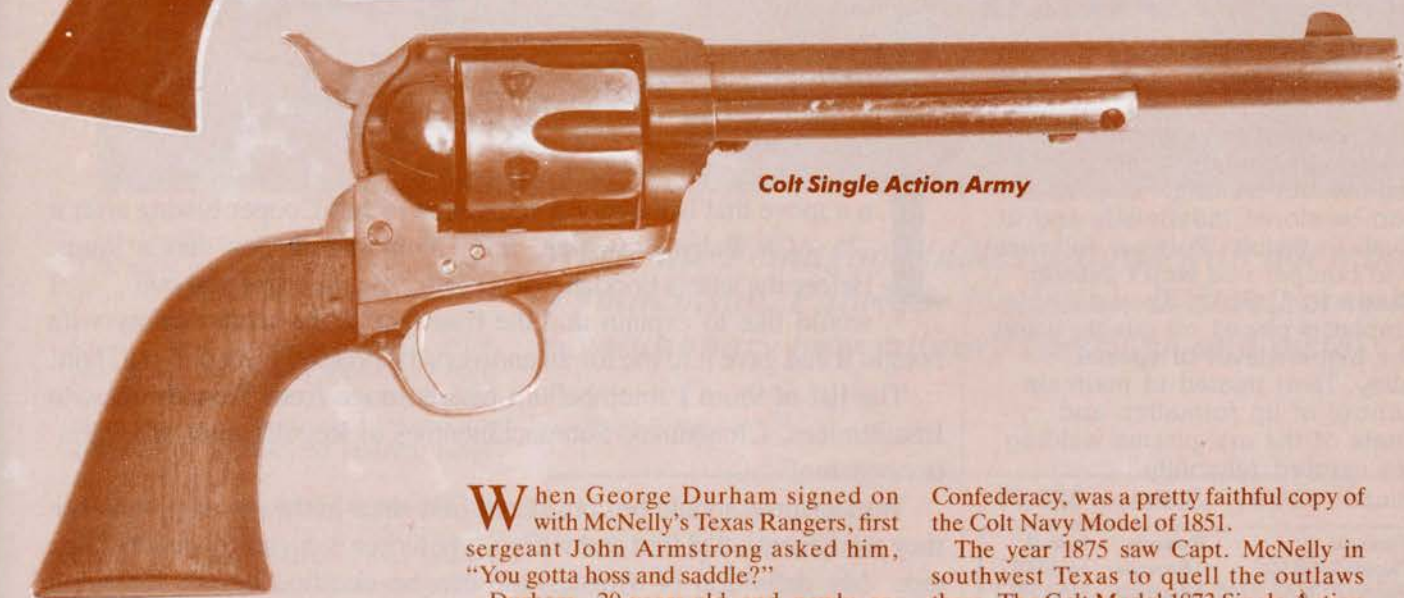


Colt Patterson

**George P. Durham,
member of
McNelly's Rangers
for three years.**



1851 Colt Navy



Colt Single Action Army

When George Durham signed on with McNelly's Texas Rangers, first sergeant John Armstrong asked him, "You gotta hoss and saddle?"

Durham, 20-years-old and newly arrived in Texas, nodded.

"How 'bout a pistol?" Again the answer was a nod.

"You're hired," the big sergeant grunted. The time was April, 1875.

George Durham went on to make a lawman for the following half century. His pistol (handguns are always pistols in Texas) when he signed on with Capt. Lee McNelly's Special Force of Rangers, was a hold-over from the recently concluded campaigns between the North and the South. It was a Leech & Rigdon revolver, Confederate made, a percussion .36 caliber sixshooter. It had been fetched home from the war by George Durham's father.

The Leech & Rigdon was the second most common revolver produced in the South during the 1861-65 unpleasantness. It, like the other handguns made in the

Confederacy, was a pretty faithful copy of the Colt Navy Model of 1851.

The year 1875 saw Capt. McNelly in southwest Texas to quell the outlaws there. The Colt Model 1873 Single Action Army .45 centerfire metallic cartridge was very much in being, but such stripling Rangers as George Durham did not have the seventeen bucks to buy the fancy new belt ordnance. Nor indeed, for that matter, did Captain McNelly. He also packed percussion belt guns, a pair fetched home from the war.

His revolvers were mismatched. The righthand gun was a Remington .44, the Army model of 1858. It was a big gun and an exceedingly sturdy one; it weighed 46 ounces with an 8-inch barrel. The other, the lefthand pistol, was the Colt Model 1860, a .44 like the Remington and a sixshot with 8-inch barrel. It weighed 43 ounces.

The sovereign State of Texas in those halcyon days was a mite on the penurious

Continued on page 77.

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S&W 59, 459, 559,	17 rounds	MAW9117
659, 5904 & 6		
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6904 & 6		
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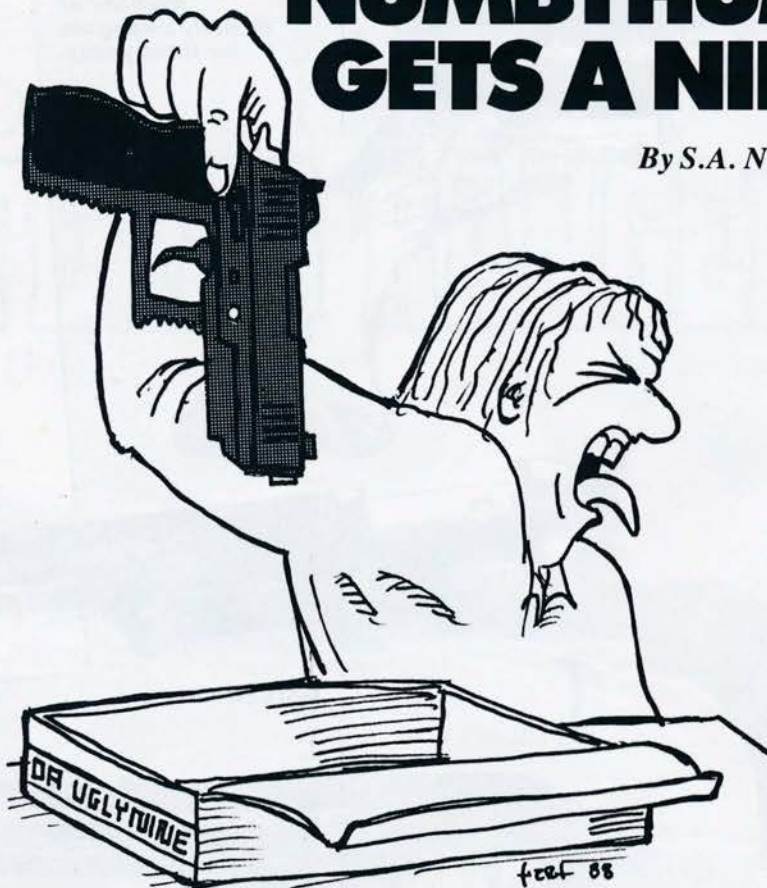
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NUMBTHUMB GETS A NINE!

By S.A. Numbthumb



In a move that is the moral equivalent of Jeff Cooper lusting after a .25 ACP Baby Browning, S.A. Numbthumb now has a 9mm. Before the letters flood in that scream, "But last time you said . . .", I would like to explain that the true fact of the matter is my wife bought it and gave it to me for an anniversary pressie. Neat cop-out, huh!

The list of 9mm Pablumbellum pistols range from Wondernines, to Insaultinines, Clonenines, Submachinenines to Regularnines and variations thereof.

Wondernines should be considered first since in the previous sentence they were mentioned first and wifey's typewriter is currently out of eraser tape. My definition of Wondernine can be clarified by the following statements: I wonder if a determined adversary armed with a bottle of acetone could reduce a plastic pistol to a mound of sticky goo? Or I wonder if I can get my stubby fingers to grow long enough to encircle the overlay fat grip area on this contraption? And lastly, I wonder which Wonder is the most wonderful?

Philosophically (whew!) speaking, the Wondernine is a P.R. expert's collection of bad opinions regarding the shooting public.

Firstly, the assumption has to be drawn that the potential Wondernine shooter is a klutz who needs to be protected from himself. This is the only possible reason for a pistol to have at least three safeties and an 18 pound trigger pull.

Secondly, the shooter of a Wondernine isn't. A shooter, that is. Any person that truly *needs* more cartridges than he has fingers on both hands is not a true shooter.

Continued on page 103

P90 HANDGUN OF THE FUTURE



As modern armies become increasingly tail heavy with more support troops than front line fighters, the need for an effective but compact "personal defense weapon" is readily apparent. While pistols and submachine guns have traditionally filled the role, each has its own shortcomings in tradeoffs between size and weight, accuracy at realistic range, and stopping power.

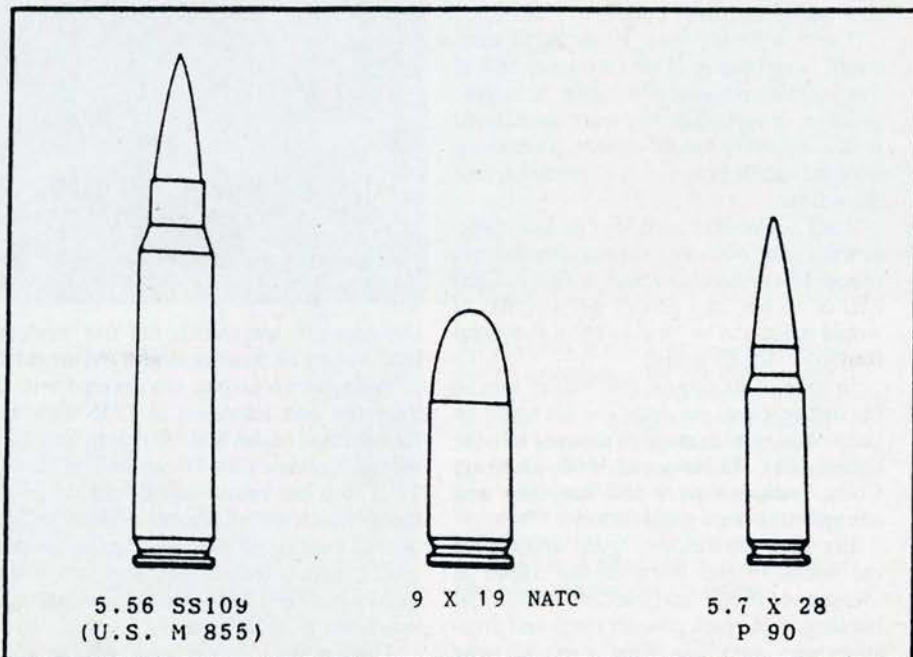
In response, engineers at the old and respected Belgian firm of Fabrique Nationale have been working over the last couple of years on a bold new approach to the problem. Given free rein for experimentation with ammunition and launchers, they have come up with a strikingly configured and highly innovative weapon system that strongly resists characterization.

Its new 5.7 x 43mm cartridge (5.7 x 28mm bullet) seemingly defies the laws of physics in combining low recoil with high velocity and dramatic terminal effect. FN's statistics claim over 30% less recoil than the 9mm Parabellum yet *three times its stopping power*. Citing the in-tissue tumbling effect of the long rear-weighted bullet as the basis for this remarkable figure with a 98% energy transfer on impact, this has provided the basis for a weapon that can be both compact and light, yet exceptionally deadly.

Continued on page 84

While the Pentagon piddles around with adopting a 9mm pistol, Fabrique Nationale is developing a revolutionary new military cartridge and pistol.

By Robert Bruce



UNDERSTANDING REVOLVER STRENGTH

By John Taffin

In 1846 the United States was at war with Mexico and young Samuel Walker, 29-years-old and Captain in the Texas Rangers, found himself and his unit in the regular army under the command of future president, Zachary Taylor.

Colt had introduced the five-shot revolver in 1836, and while it had found favor with the Texas Rangers, who before this time were armed with single shot pistols, it was fragile and left something to be desired.

Taylor ordered Walker east to meet with Sam Colt and order 1,000 new revolvers. It is not really known if Captain Walker had much to do with the design or not, but in 1848 the Colt Walker became the first six-shooter, or sixgun as I prefer.

These were *big* guns by anyone's standards, weighing in at seven ounces shy of five pounds and nearly 16 inches in length. So huge, in fact, that they were not carried in hip holsters, but in holsters that slung over the saddle pommel. The horse carried the weight.

The Colt Walker used 55 grains of black-powder in its massive cylinder chambers to propel 140 grain round balls at nearly 1300 fps, or to put into proper perspective, it would remain "The World's Most Powerful Revolver" for 87 years!

In spite of its power, the Walker was so big that revolver strength was not really an issue. And even as sixguns evolved into the lighter 1851 .36 Navy and 1860 .44 Army Colts, pressures were still very low and strength was not a great factor.

Big bore cartridge sixguns arrived on the scene in the form of the Smith & Wesson .44 (1869) and the Colt .45 (1873), but they used black powder loads and pressures were very low. That is exactly why

shooters are warned to not use modern loads in any of these beautiful old sixguns.

The modern sixgun era arrived with a bang (no pun intended) in 1935 with the introduction of the first Magnum, Smith & Wesson's classic now known as The Model 27. There had been other sixgun developments which we will discuss a little further on, but this sixgun was designed to operate with a factory loaded cartridge, not at the sedate 10,000-15,000 psi of the last 100 years, but at 35,000 psi.

The S&W .357 Magnum was the epit-

ome of the gunmaker's art and the earliest ones were registered and certified by S&W as being virtually hand-fitted. The big, new sixgun gained immediate popularity with both outdoorsman and law enforcement officers and the three and one-half inch .357 Magnum became the official sidearm of the FBI. General George Patton purchased one and during WWII it became the second gun of his mis-matched pair of ivory handled sixguns, the other being a Colt Single Action .45.

Because of the cessation of civilian





All revolvers are not created equal. Some are designed for full-house loads of the most powerful magnums, like the field stripped .454 Casull shown above. The Dan Wesson revolver that author Taffin is shooting can also withstand tremendous numbers of magnum loads, which is why the Dan Wesson is so enormously popular in the sport of metallic silhouette shooting.



The Ruger Super Redhawk and Dan Wesson .44 Magnums (above) are among the strongest big bore revolvers because of their designs, which the author explains in the text. Another good feature of the Redhawk and Super Redhawk (below) is the wide variety of barrel lengths available which make these guns suitable for both scopes and irons. The Freedom Arms .454 Casull (right) is arguably the strongest single-action revolver on the market.



revolvers during the war, it would be 1950 before the .357 Magnum became available to the average shooter in any quantity. Its popularity has never waned.

The original .357 Magnum was, and is still, big, strong, and massive. Even Elmer Keith complained in an article in 1935 that it was too heavy to hold with the eight and three-eighths barrel length.

Bill Jordan, then Inspector in the U.S. Border Patrol, entered the scene and led the campaign for a smaller, lighter .357 that would not be so heavy to pack. Even in its shortest barrel length, the .357 Magnum weighed in at 42 ounces, empty. Jordan was listened to, and in 1956, Smith & Wesson unveiled the Combat Magnum, now the Model 19.

The bulkiest parts of a revolver are the cylinder and grip, and the new .357 Magnum had a cylinder that was 15% smaller in diameter and the grip frame used was the smaller one found on the Military and Police .38 instead of the large .44 grip frame used on the original .357 Magnum.

Jordan was satisfied. Law enforcement officers were now able to pack a powerful sixgun that weighed 14% less—36 ounces as opposed to 42 ounces—and strength did not seem to be a problem. For awhile.

The original .357 Magnum ammunition was assembled with a lead alloy bullet and the standard reload became a hard cast bullet with 14.5 to 15.5 grains of #2400. Things went well.

No one hardly ever saw a jacketed bullet in the .357 Magnum. Then came the modern era of magnum ammunition. Jacketed bullets became readily available from a number of companies plus .357 ammunition using high velocity 110 and 125 grain bullets became the choice of hunters and law enforcement personnel alike.

Something happened. The Model 19's began to groan. The new ammunition was putting a strain on a sixgun that was designed to be used mainly with .38 Specials and only digest .357's when things get serious. Its design pre-dated the hot .357 Magnum loads with 110 and 125 grain bullets. Forcing cones were eaten alive; guns shot loose. Step Two in the evolution of the .357 Magnum revolver had gone sour.

The solution was simple. Combine the best features of the original 1930's .357 and the 1950's Combat Magnum, the Models 27 and 19. For Smith & Wesson, the result was the 1980's Model 586.

The following measurements give a comparison of the three Smith & Wesson

.357 Magnums:

	Model 27	Model 19	Model 586
WEIGHT	42 ozs.	36 ozs.	41 ozs.
CYL DIAM.	1.708"	1.447"	1.558"
THICKNESS*	.220"	.220"	.212"
WIDTH*	.656"	.656"	.660"
BBL/DIAM**	.627"	.501"	.527"

*Thickness and width of top strap

**Barrel Diameter at the forcing cone

We've come just about full circle, from 42 ounces in 1935 to 41 ounces now. But looking at the measurements, one can see that the 586 is not quite as big as the Model 27. The 586 has been beefed up in the forcing cone area, the problem with the Model 19, but still maintains the excellent K-frame grip configuration of the Model 19.

A concession made to modern shooters, who are apparently more concerned with recoil than packing weight, is the use of a heavy barrel with a full underlug as now found on Ruger's GP-100, Colt's King Cobra, and Dan Wesson's Model 15HB. The Colt Python started the trend in 1955, but it has just recently caught on. Without the heavy barrel, weightwise the 586 would probably fit exactly in between the Model 27 and the Model 19.

Continued on page 85



You can WIN a



JARVIS MATCH MASTER L-FRAME

This Jarvis Match Master L-Frame starts life as a Smith & Wesson Model 686. The elaborate custom alterations begin with the installation of a stainless steel match barrel by master pistolsmith Bill Jarvis.

The barrel starts as a round blank 1 1/8 inch in diameter. The precision barrel is then slab sided to just over frame thickness. A second radius is cut along the top into which a Smith & Wesson style sight rib is machined.

The resulting barrel profile leaves greater weight below the center of gravity improving balance, reducing recoil and lowering the sight plane.

The 10 ounce Jarvis barrel underweight matches all barrel dimensions.

The expansion chamber compensator is machined into the barrel with a single, large exhaust port. Behind the gas port is a Patridge front sight of the same height as the factory barrel sight. This allows the use of the existing S&W fully adjustable rear sight.

Between the front and rear sights, the Jarvis MT-2 low profile Aimpoint or scope mount is installed. The mount's profile is low enough to allow the use of the iron sights.

A competition trigger job lends the Jarvis Match Master an incredibly fine action for making those X-ring shots. The trigger is tastefully radiused and then polished to an ultra-smooth high gloss. An over-travel stop is installed.

The hammer is bobbed and polished to facilitate a faster lock time. The cylinders are chamfered and the thumb latch bobbed for faster speedloader insertion.

The finish is a smooth, glare-free passivated finish. The Jarvis Match Master L-Frame is \$627 on the client's Model 586 and \$682 on a Model 686.

For more information about the Jarvis Match Master and the full line of professional pistolsmithing services from Bill Jarvis, contact Bill at Jarvis Gunsmithing, P.O. Box 2423, Dept. AH, Orange, CA 92669 or call (714) 538-5846.



HOM JULY/AUG 1989:

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Circle your answer to question: (A) (B)

If I win, please ship my gun through:

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Phone () _____ Store Hours ____ am ____ pm

Contest void where taxed or prohibited by law. Winners must comply with all federal and local laws. Contest open to U. S. residents only. Employees and agents of Publishers' Development Corp. not eligible. No purchase necessary. Winners will be notified by REGISTERED MAIL on an official letterhead.



TO ENTER CONTEST: Use a postcard (no envelopes) and follow sample. Send to AMERICAN HANDGUNNER, Dept. H7, POB 880409, San Diego, CA 92108-0009. Mail before August 1, 1989.

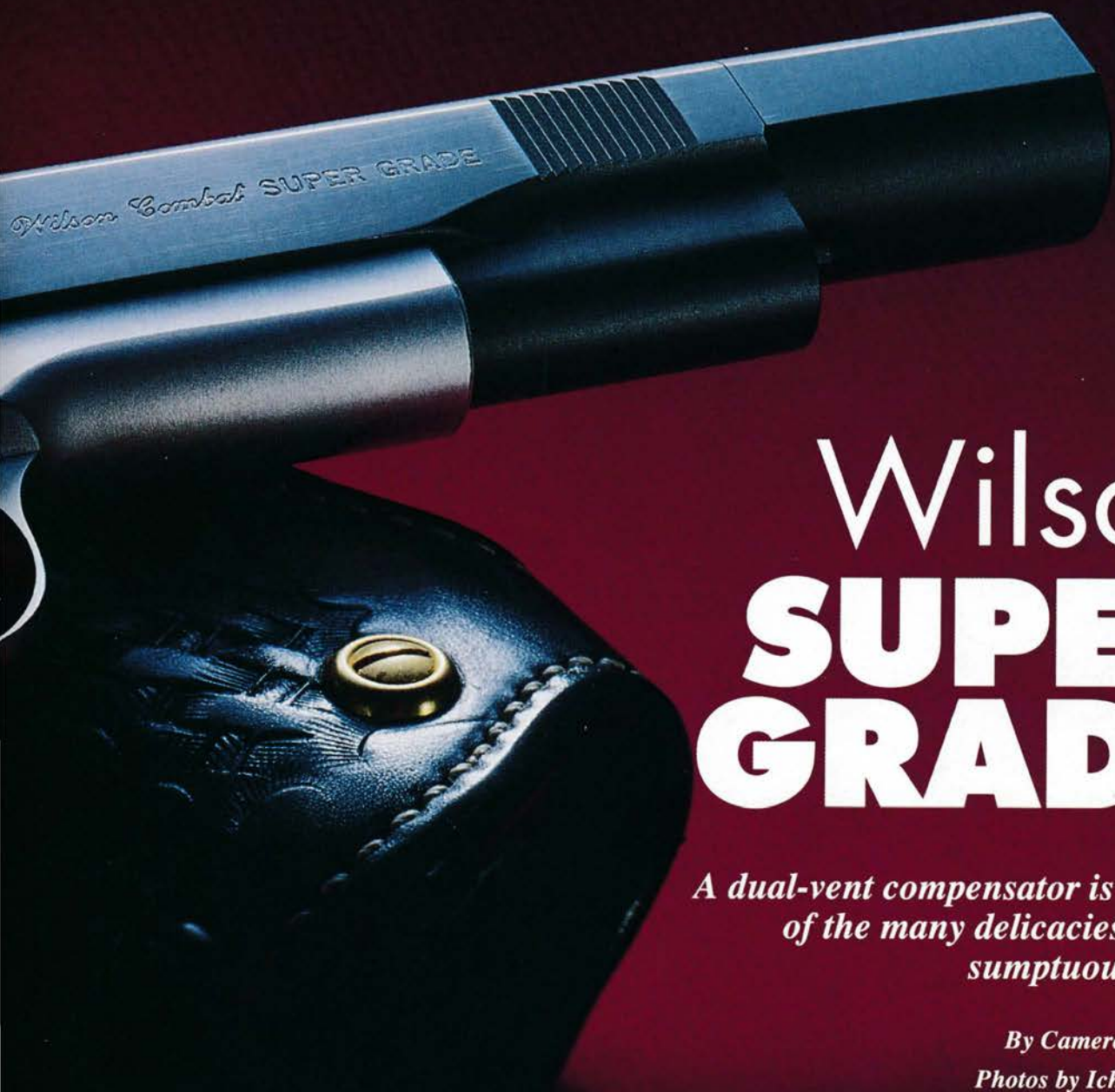
Limit 1 entry per household.

"ARE YOU EMPLOYED IN THE LAW ENFORCEMENT INDUSTRY?"

(Including Public or Private security.)

(A) Yes (B) No





Wilson **SUPER GRADE**

*A dual-vent compensator is but one
of the many delicacies on this
sumptuous pistol.*

By Cameron Hopkins

Photos by Ichiro Nagata

Perfection, said Plato, exists only in the mind of God. We may not be capable of achieving perfection any more than we can invent a totally recoilless pistol, but we can try. We can come close.

It is this quest for perfection that has inspired one of the greatest masters of the gunsmithing craft to create the Super Grade pistol. Lavish attention to detail characterizes this outstanding example of Bill Wilson's pistolsmithing art.

The Wilson Super Grade embellishes a Colt Government Model pistol with the most refined touches in harmony with the most sophisticated modern technology. Perfection, in this case, lies in the blending of Form and Function, beauty and



The precise handfitting (left) of the beavertail and thumb safety reveals the careful attention to detail in every aspect of the Super Grade. The double-chamber compensator (below left) has a thicker face plate in the front than in the center which results in a more efficient reduction of recoil and muzzle flip. The underside of the trigger guard (below) boasts precise handcut checkering.





performance, to result in one of the most astonishing custom handguns to ever grace the breed known as the "combat pistol."

Beyond the intricate handfitting, apart from the gorgeous polishing and honing, the Super Grade features a significant breakthrough in compensator design. The new dual-chamber compensator is the ultimate refinement of a proven design called the expansion chamber.

An expansion chamber is type of muzzle brake that allows the propellant gas to collect in a chamber at the muzzle. As the gas rapidly expands after leaving the barrel, it is forced upwards through the port(s) in the expansion chamber, thus counter-acting muzzle jump.

Double chamber compensators are not entirely new. Bill Wilson did not invent the twin-port comp, although his design is significantly more effective if we can trust the opinion of a little-known shooter by

the name of Rob Leatham.

Leatham, the winner of five IPSC national championships, three world IPSC titles, the Steel Challenge, Bianchi Cup, Triple Crown and slews of regional and state championships, says the Wilson Super Grade compensator is the best he's ever shot.

"I first shot a double chamber compensator back in '84, or it might have been '85," Rob recollected. "Guy Hammond built the gun and it had ports on either side of the front sight. It wasn't much of an improvement over what I was shooting then (a Wilson Accu-Comp LE) so I just blew it off and sold the gun."

Rob forgot about double chamber comps until, recently, a student in one of his competition classes in his Leatham Shooting Institute, showed up with a rather crude pistol sporting twin ports in the top of the comp. The student, Kent Oram from Las Vegas, let Rob play with

his pistol.

"It was a local home-brewed type, not a very good looking gun. But it was the first gun I'd ever shot that was nearly as good as my Accu-Comp LE.

"I called Bill Wilson and asked him to make a twin-chamber. Bill said he'd try it and I gave him a few ideas on what it should look like. Bill did the rest," Rob explained.

Meanwhile, a few other pistolsmiths have toyed with the dual port concept. Guy Hammond, who pioneered the concept, was still making his version and a few others had surfaced along the way. Arizonian Jake Kempton developed a promising design while across the state line in California, Michael Voight worked with another version. Steve Malloy in Arkansas had something similar and George Huening in Indiana also had his version.

None satisfied the discriminating eye of champion shooter Rob Leatham. A few





months passed and eventually the prototype Wilson twin-chamber arrived.

Rob tested the gun and was immediately impressed. "It was the first time I'd ever shot a gun that was everything I wanted—not too long, not too heavy, not too light. The muzzle didn't jump around nearly as much as with the LE comp. This was it!" Rob told *American Handgunner*.

The prototype gun that Rob received, tested and then shot to victory in the 1988 IPSC National Championship differs slightly from the perfected, final version you see here. Rob's prototype had a thin .010" face plate, but the Super Grade dual-chamber design has finalized on a thicker .300" face plate.

Bill Wilson, during his extensive research and testing of the new design, had discovered that the longer the bullet seals the compensator, the more time the gas has to work inside the tuned ports of the double-chamber comp. Ergo, the fatter the face plate, the longer the bullet seals the gases inside.

Of course you can carry fat too far—a one-inch thick frontal plate would be too heavy, too long and thus too awkward. Besides, the burning powder gas dissipates very quickly; there is only so much time that can be utilized to best advantage by sealing the expansion chamber.

The Super Grade's double-chamber compensator utilizes twin cavities separated by a constriction vent that is .010" thick. The rear chamber extends .325" from the barrel's muzzle to the first baffle,

Continued on page 69



Bill Wilson, trained as a watchmaker, says gun parts "look huge" compared to watch parts (left). The Super Grade compensator was designed to minimize felt recoil with a sophisticated expansion chamber with twin exhaust ports. The interior dimensions of the comp and the size of the baffles separating the chambers were carefully planned.

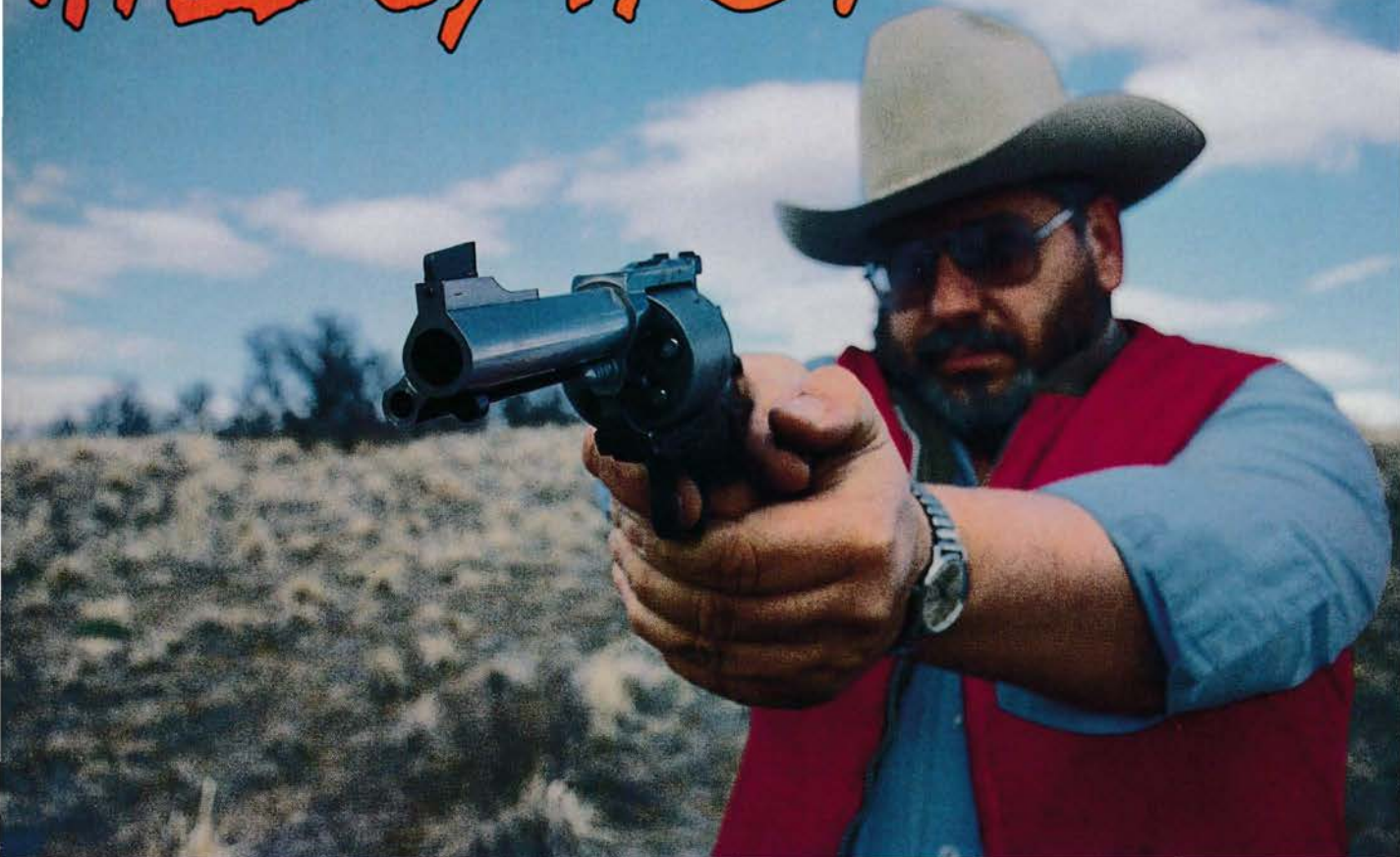
MEET BILL WILSON

Squinting into his jeweler's loupe, the watchmaker bends over the intricate mechanism as he probes gently into the microscopic world of gears and pins and ratchets and springs. He winces as another sharp stab of pain lances into his cramped and tired neck. The long hours of stooping over the work bench have taken their toll.

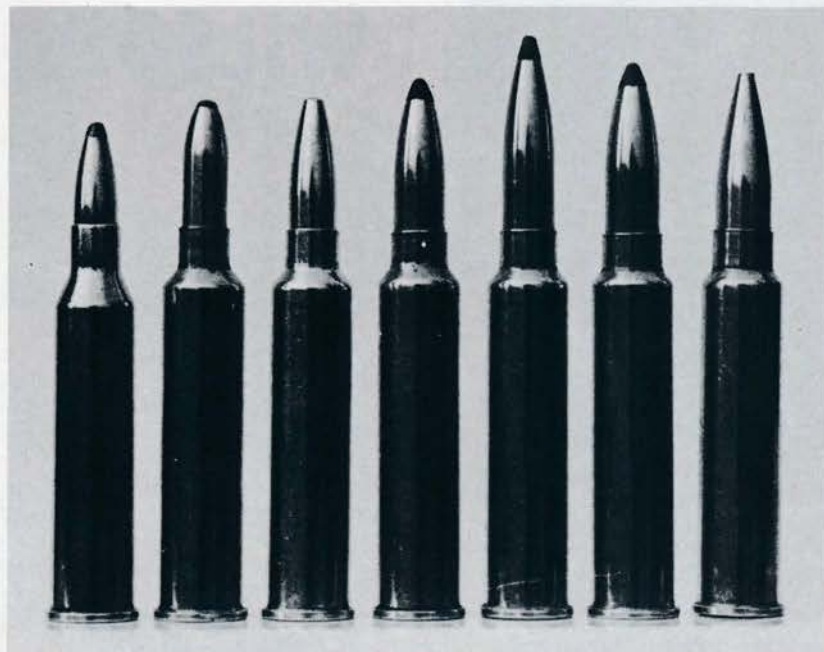
The watchmaker takes a break. He stretches and rubs his sore neck as he walks to door of his farmhouse. Nestled in the rolling foothills of the Ozark Mountains, the little farmhouse is but a step away from the relaxing break the watchmaker needs. Nothing like a few rounds of .45 ACP to relieve the tension.

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WILDCATS!



Handgun wildcat cartridges run the gamut from the massive .500 Linebaugh to the miniscule .25 Rocket.



Wildcats from J.D. Jones on the .225 Winchester case (L. to R.) parent .225 Win., .226 JDJ, 6mm JDJ, .257 JDJ, 6.5mm JDJ, .270 JDJ and 7mm JDJ.





By John Taffin

Gunsmith Cyril "Pop" Eimer was definitely ahead of his time. In the 1920's, at least 10 years before the advent of the first official Magnum, the .357, Eimer was building the .40 Eimer Special in his Joplin, Missouri gunshop. Utilizing Colt Single Actions in .38-40 or .41 Long Colt calibers, "Pop" Eimer mated their .401-.403" barrels with new cylinders chambered for what may very well be the first revolver wildcat.

The .40 Eimer Special, also known as the .401 Eimer, was made by shortening .401 Winchester rifle brass to 1.25 inches and using 200 grain bullets resulting in a wildcat that was the ballistic twin of the .41 Magnum, which was not to be for another 40 years. No less a personality than "Fitz," J.H. Fitzgerald of Colt, tried to

interest that firm in chambering the New Service and Single Action Army for the .40 Eimer Special. Colt could have had the first Magnum, but declined.

What a difference it could have made in handgunning history if Colt had brought out the first Magnum in .40 caliber instead of waiting for Smith & Wesson to lead the way with the smaller .357 Magnum in 1935.

Experimenters, Gordon Boser and Ray Thompson (best known for the four Lyman gas checked semi-wadcutter bullets that bear his name), carried the work of the .40 further by designing bullets for Lyman and doing extensive reloading of the .401 Special as it was now known. An *American Rifleman* article, April 1943, states that Eimer used the .30-40 Krag case (doubtful) for his development

and Boser switched to the .401 Winchester case.

Actually, all four of our high performance revolver cartridges, the .357 Magnum, .44 Magnum, .41 Magnum and the .454 Casull, are the result of wildcatting. While Eimer and Boser were true wildcaters in that they had to make their cartridge cases by modifying existing brass, which later resulted in the .41 Magnum, the other three cartridges were the result of wildcat reloading of existing cases.

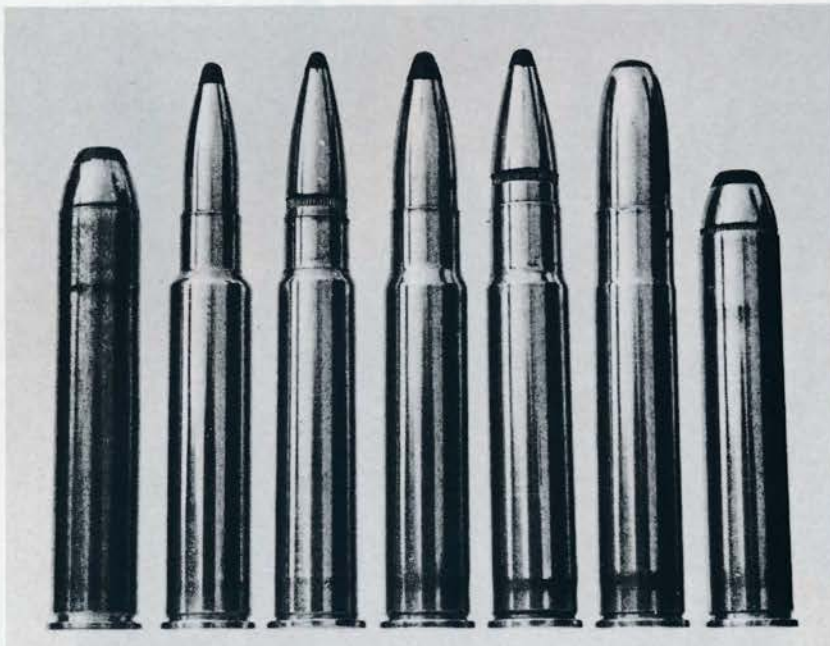
In the 1930's the .38 Special made the transition from a 900 fps load to an 1100 fps load known as the .38-44. Smith & Wesson built a new gun around the first "plus P" load; that excellent sixgun was the 38-44 Outdoorsman. In a very short time the .38 Special case was lengthened to become the .357 Magnum.

Even earlier, fanciers of the big bores were hotrodding the .44 Special, raising it from 750 fps to nearly 1200 fps. Elmer Keith was one of many to push the big .44, and 30 years later the .44 Special was also lengthened and the .44 Magnum was born. Without the work of pioneer reloaders in working with the .44 Special and spreading the word, it is doubtful that we would have seen the .44 Magnum.

In the 1950's a young Salt Lake City gunsmith began working with souped-up versions of the .45 Colt. By first building special five shot cylinders for the .45 Colt Single Action and then building complete guns with five shot cylinders, Dick Casull achieved velocities in excess of 2000 fps with 230 grain bullets. Twenty-five years later, Casull saw his dream become reality as the .454 Casull went into production. Once again an existing cartridge was simply lengthened to prevent its use in older, weaker revolvers.

Another experimenter worthy of men-

Revolver wildcats include (L. to R.) .357 Bobcat, .375 DAK, .375 Super-Mag, .41 Special, .475 Linebaugh, .50 Special and .500 Linebaugh.



Based on the .444 Marlin case, these wildcats from J.D. Jones' SSK Industries include (L. to R.) .444 Marlin parent case, .309 JDJ, 8mm JDJ, .358 JDJ, .375 JDJ, .411 JDJ and .430 JDJ. The most popular seller by far is the .375 wildcat.



Wichita Arms International Model is available in the potent 7mm Int'l Rimmed.



Below, wildcat 7mm's: (L. to R.) 7 TCU, 7 Int'l, 7 BR, 7-08, 7 Int'l rimless.



tion is Jim Harvey of Minnesota. Harvey is known for a number of innovations for the handgunner such as his line-up of zinc-based pure lead bullets which could be fired at Magnum velocities without leading problems. In the 1950's Harvey specialized in converting Smith & Wesson K-22's to the .22 K-Chuck. Harvey's wildcat was made by trimming the .22 Hornet slightly, blowing out the shoulder and rechambering the Smith & Wesson rimfire cylinders accordingly. Harvey's wildcat preceded the .22 Jet; the K-Chuck, with its sharp shoulder, worked while the .22 Jet with its pronounced taper did not.

In the 1970's, handgun wildcatting really increased for at least three reasons:

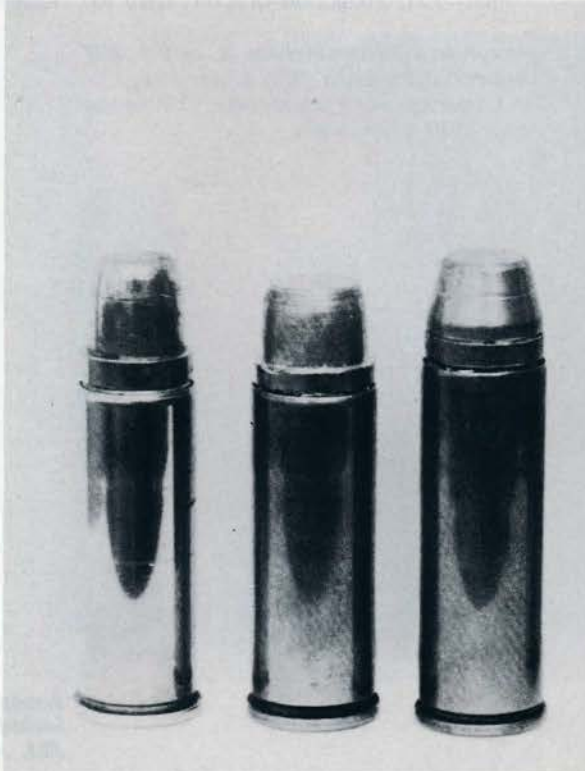
- 1) The production of the Thompson Center Contender gave wildcatters a strong vehicle for their experiments. The single-shot TC has been available in so many factory chamberings that wildcatters normally need only to rechamber an existing barrel to their particular pet.

- 2) The popularity of silhouetting and the constant demand for better cartridges suited for the long range handgun game.

- 3) The increasing popularity of the handgun as a hunting gun and the resulting demand for better cartridges for the task.

Let's take a close look at handgun wildcats that are available, realizing that we cannot cover all of them in one article—a textbook would be required for that. We will simply cover the best and most popular. Some have already reached their potential; some are relatively undiscovered by the shooting public. To be successful, a wildcat has to fill a need, either real or perceived, to keep it alive.

.357/44 BOBCAT: As its name implies the .357/44 is made by necking the .44



Magnum to .357 diameter. This immediately causes problems as bottlenecked cases normally will not work in revolver chambers. When a bottlenecked, or sharply tapered case, is fired in a revolver, case setback occurs and the head of the case jams against the recoil shield preventing the cylinder from rotating to the next cartridge.

The Bobcat "solves" this problem by fitting a nylon collar around the case which in essence changes it back to a straight walled case. Sometimes the collar splits upon firing, which is of no consequence as it has performed its function. Other times the collar stays intact and can be used again.

Since the Bobcat is of .357 caliber, it is a reasonably priced wildcat as a .357 Magnum can be rechambered and the original barrel utilized. If one uses a Ruger .357/9mm Convertible for the task, the 9mm cylinder can be rechambered to the .357/44 and the wildcat can be changed back to a mildcat by simply installing the .357 Magnum cylinder.

Is the Bobcat worth the expense and trouble? Using jacketed bullets, a 6½" barreled Bobcat will give muzzle velocities of right around 1700 fps with 158 grain bullets, 1800 fps with 140 grain bullets, 1900 fps with 125 grain bullets, and 2000 fps with 110 grain bullets. Accuracy is excellent, trajectory is relatively flat, and recoil while heavier than a .357 Magnum, is less than a .44 Magnum.

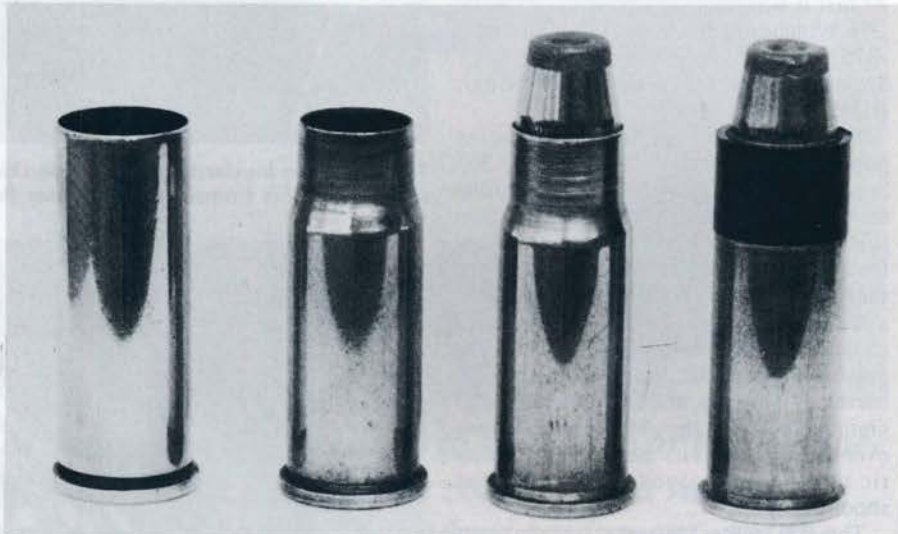
Basically, the .357/44 Bobcat is the ballistic equivalent of the .357 Maximum. Since the Maximum is a standard chambering using straight-walled cases, it would seem that the .357/44 has been rendered obsolete. Its one main advantage over the .357 Maximum will continue to

be the fact that it can be used in lighter, shorter cylindered revolvers. This could be enough of a redeeming feature to keep it alive. Bobcat conversions are now being offered by Moulton's Inc. (2560 San Carlos Ave., Dept. AH, Castro Valley, CA 94546).

.375 DAK: This is a little known revolver wildcat that seems to this shooter to be one that could be quite popular given the chance. The "DAK" comes from its creator, one Dale Kelling, who rechambered a .357 Magnum to use a .375 made by trimming a .375 Winchester to 1.275" and inside neck-reaming the thick rifle brass deep enough to allow it to accept .375 bullets.

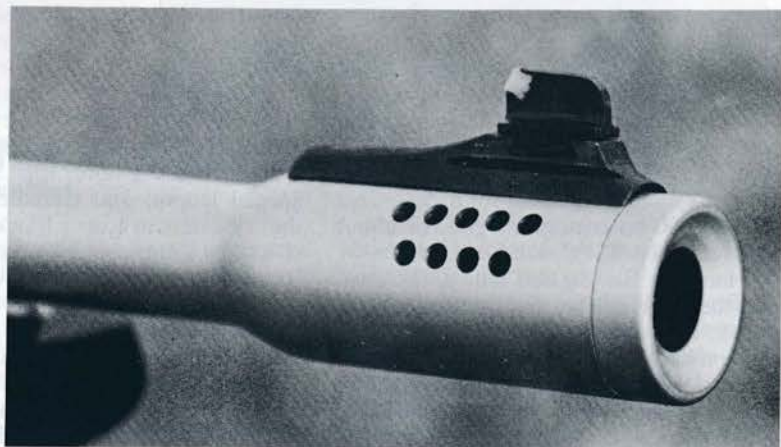
The DAK fits exactly in between the .357 and .41 Magnums, and is capable of driving 185 grain bullets at standard Magnum velocity from a six inch barrel, namely 1400 fps. This past summer I fired a custom single shot that had been chambered to a .375 "short" that was basically the .375 DAK. One of the firearms manufacturers has been toying with the idea of bringing out a .375 on a standard length cylinder allowing it to be chambered in regular revolvers instead of requiring the long cylinder, and thus extra weight, of the .357 and .375 SuperMags.

Initial experiments give the possibility of 1600 fps with 220 grain jacketed bullets which would result in an excellent round



Steps in forming the .357 Bobcat (above): .44 Mag. case is necked to .357, loaded with a 140 gr. JHP and collared. (Right) The .41 Avenger is a .45 ACP case necked to .41 caliber.

(Left) Big bore wildcats dwarf standard loads, (L. to R.) .44 Magnum, .45 Colt, .454 Casull compared to wildcats .475 Linebaugh, .50 Special and .500 Linebaugh. (Below) An SSK Arrestor muzzle brake effectively controls the heavy recoil on some potent wildcats.



for long range silhouetting. Perhaps the DAK will some day be a standard factory round.

.375 SUPERMAG: The .375 SuperMag bears the unique distinction of being a wildcat, in that there is no factory ammunition available, and yet two manufacturers, Dan Wesson and Seville, offer revolvers chambered for it. When the revolvers were first introduced, neither brass nor jacketed bullets were available.

IHMSA placed an order with Hornady for their 220 grain jacketed soft point .375 bullets with the cannelure moved up for use in a revolver; now all Hornady 220 grain .375 bullets have been modified so they can be used in the .375 SuperMag. At first it was necessary to trim .30-30 or .375 Winchester brass to 1.600" to make .375 SuperMag brass. Now .375 SuperMag brass is available through IHMSA.

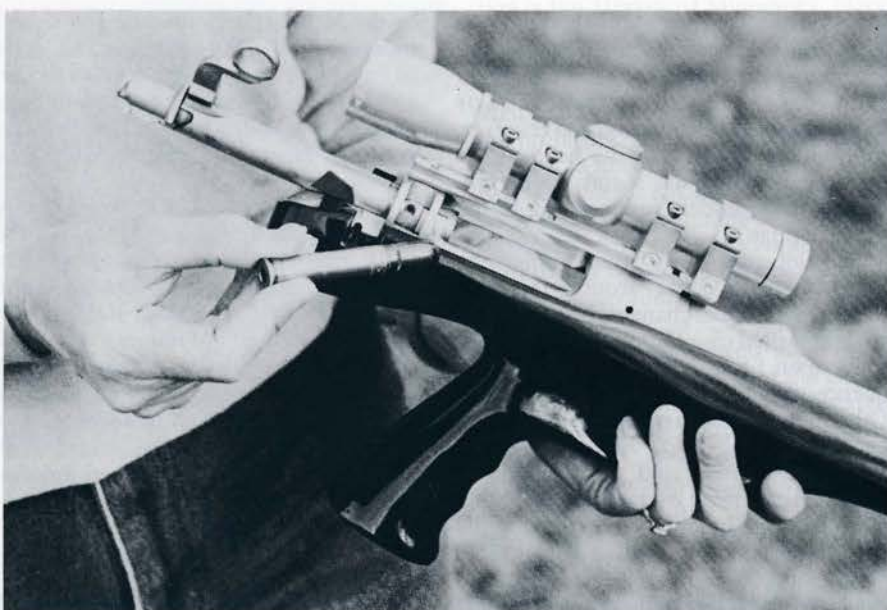
The .375 SuperMag will never be as popular as its smaller brother the .357 SuperMag. There are a number of reasons for this not the least of which is the ready availability of so many different bullets for the .357 SuperMag. However, where the silhouette revolver is also to double as a hunting handgun, the .375 is a better choice. Velocities of 1700 fps with the 220 grain jacketed bullet are possible from 10" barreled revolvers, about the same as 220 grain bullets from the .44 Magnum. However the .375, with its much higher ballistic coefficient, gives a much flatter shooting load.

The .375 caliber has never been in great demand by American rifle or handgun shooters. The .375 SuperMag, while an excellent cartridge, will probably never be a factory load, and I would be surprised if it even survives as a wildcat. This is too bad as it is relatively light in recoil, and yet manages to get to the long range silhouette rams *fast*!

.500 LINEBAUGH: This is as big as they get and still remain manageable. As the name implies, this is the creation of gunsmith John Linebaugh who builds the .500 on Ruger Bisleys exclusively. One of Linebaugh's credos is: "I don't like big guns, just big bullets." By using the Bisley as the basis for his big .500, Linebaugh gives a standard size, five shot revolver that delivers a 440 grain bullet at 1250 fps from a 5½ inch barrel. This is a hunting handgun, pure and simple.

Brass for the .500 Linebaugh is made from .348 Winchester brass, and reloaders report as much as 20 loadings from one case. The .500 is popular enough that customers must expect a waiting period of from six months to a year for a .500. Cost is \$700-800 on customer's gun, or about the same as a .454 Casull Field Grade.

Hamilton Bowen also builds .500's using the Ruger Bisley and the Ruger Redhawk. I have fired .500's from both shops and on both Bisley and Redhawk frames. I found them to be exceptionally accurate, and the recoil, while heavy, will not hurt a seasoned big bore sixgunner.



Talk about a loudenboomer-hardenkicker! Here's a .460 wildcat based on the .458 case. This handful of handgun fires a 500 grain slug.



A trio of Hamilton Bowen's custom .45 caliber wildcats display good accuracy.

BOWEN SPECIALS: Hamilton Bowen has created two "special" length cartridges for two different reasons. First there is his .41 Special which is built on Ruger Security Six frames using five-shot cylinders. Cutting .41 Magnum brass to 1.160" gives the .41 Special which Bowen sees as a 900 fps/220 grain bullet load in a lightweight defensive revolver.

Bowen's second wildcat Special is the .50. For this big bore, the .500 is cut to Special length, and chambered in five-shot cylinders in Ruger Blackhawks. The result is a 330 grain bullet at 700-900 fps. Really big bore shooting without the pounding of the .500.

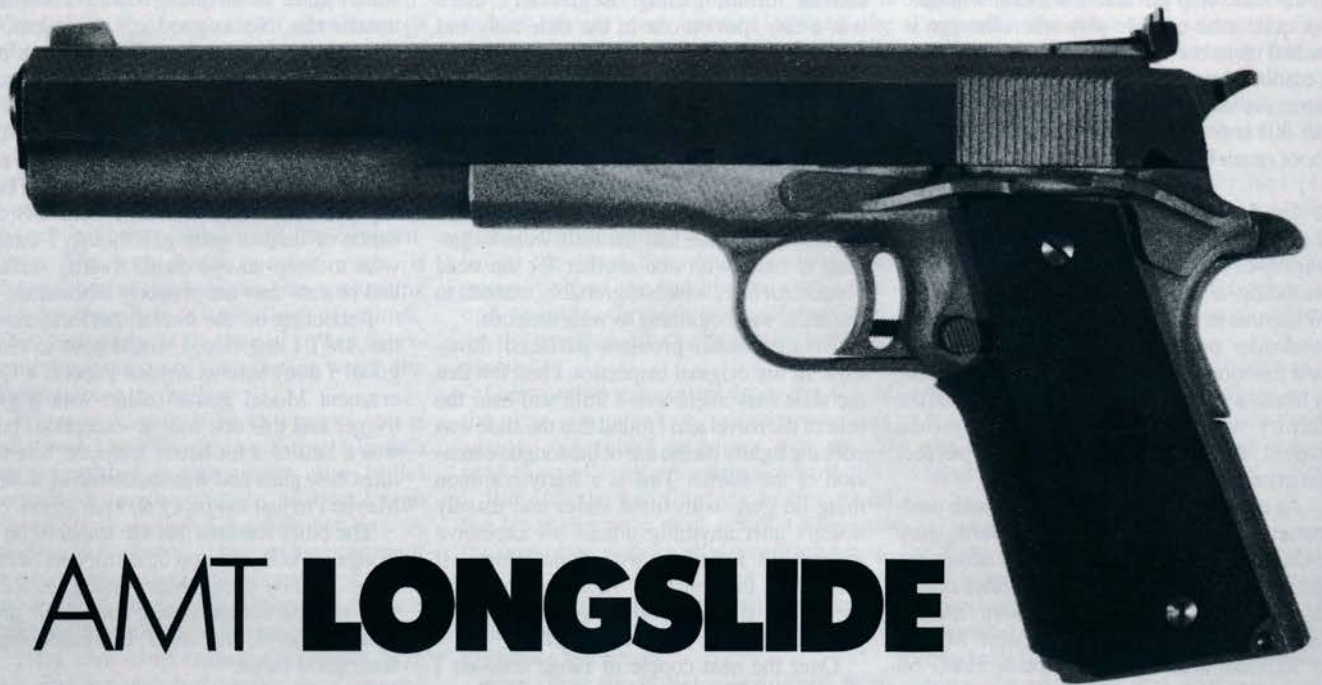
.475 LINEBAUGH: This is the latest wildcat from gunsmith John Linebaugh. These are built on Ruger Bisleys using five shot cylinders and the cartridge itself is easily made by cutting .45/70 brass to

1.400". Initial tests promise 1400 fps with 350 to 400 grain bullets. Price is the same as for the .500; brass, however, is much easier and cheaper to make.

I have fired 400 grain bullets at 1400 fps from my 4¾" barreled .454 Casull—recoil is very heavy. That is precisely why Linebaugh uses the Bisley grip frame. It simply handles recoil better than any other. This wildcat is in its early development stage, but it shows great promise as a hunting handgun for those who like the combination of easy packing and power. I hope to report in depth on the .475 in a future issue of *American Handgunner* as Linebaugh has promised to get one to me soon.

Of all the wildcat revolver cartridges mentioned, none are being made in any great quantities. The .375 SuperMag,

Continued on page 91



AMT LONGSLIDE

By Charles E. Petty

Bullseye shooters are bound to be familiar with longslide accurized Government Models such as those offered by pistolsmith Jim Hoag and others. Early in the '60s, bullseye gunsmiths began fitting six-inch or longer barrels on the thought that the added barrel length would provide better accuracy.

It wasn't long before Hoag carried the thought to its logical conclusion and simply made the slide the same length. The process was expensive, though, for it required two slides to make one gun and some precise welding to get everything to line up right.

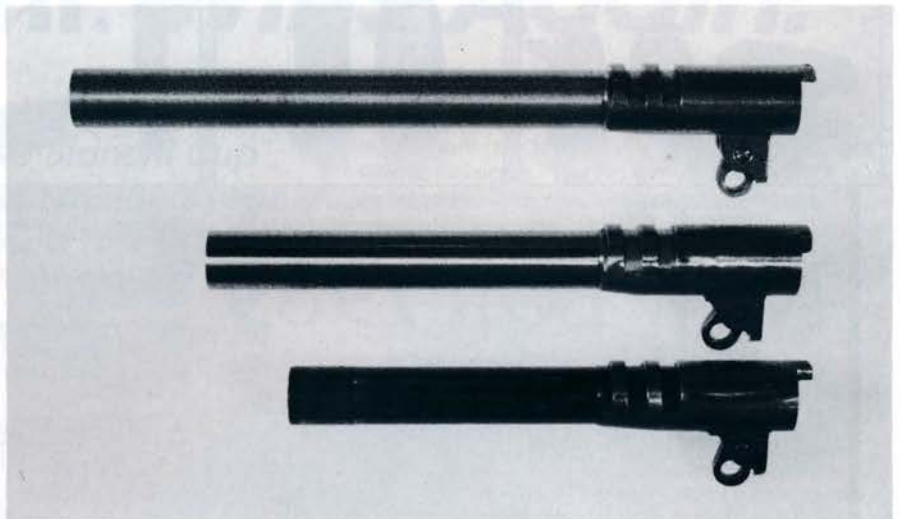
While I was never convinced that longslides were more accurate than a well-built standard gun, they shot quite well. But the real attraction was what that extra length did for recoil—particularly in timed and rapid fire events. It was one of the first steps in the evolution of the comp guns that are so popular today.

Simply add weight to the muzzle and you'll reduce muzzle rise and felt recoil. Until recently these longslides have been available only on a custom basis, but Arcadia Machine and Tool (hereafter AMT, as they are better known) has one to complement their line of all stainless Government Model clones.

They're the same folks who brought us the .44 Auto Mag and recently introduced the neat Auto Mag II.

The AMT longslide has a full seven-inch barrel and comes from the box with most of the refinements that cost extra on other guns. There are adjustable sights, extended safety and slide stop, beveled magazine well, wrap-around grips and a wide Gold Cup type trig-

Box-stock and ready to go to the range or to a competition, the AMT Longslide comes with a variety of combat accessories as standard equipment, not the least of which is a seven-inch barrel and longslide.



As a size comparison, the seven-inch Longslide barrel contrasts with a six-inch barrel and a five-inch standard barrel. The longer AMT barrel gives higher velocities.

ger. The trigger pull, at 5 lbs., is better than some, but will still need some attention.

The top surface of the slide is serrated to reduce glare. Finish is natural stainless with the sides of the slide polished. The frame is matte, apparently bead blasted. One of the refinements you can't see till you take it apart is a long, solid recoil spring plug that adds

about two ounces of extra weight up front where it does the most good.

Stainless guns have a reputation for galling when two surfaces rub against each other and this has been especially troublesome with Government Model guns due to the long slide/frame contact. Better materials and improved lubricants have helped, but AMT

has recognized something that bullseye gunsmiths have known for years. In an accuracy job, the fit of slide to frame is far from the most important element. The heart of any accuracy job is the fit of the barrel lugs to the slide stop pin and this alone will take out quite a bit of slide play when the gun is locked up in battery. And that's the only time it matters. I must admit that there's something attractive about a glass smooth, snug slide fit, but this is really not going to make the gun shoot much better.

On the first trip to the range the AMT Longslide functioned flawlessly with a wide variety of factory ammunition and handloads including a number of hollowpoint types. While this isn't a carry gun, hollowpoints and wadcutter provide the acid test for feeding and function and it digested them all without a hitch. It's nice to see a gun come from the factory with an adequate ramp job on the barrel as demonstrated by the perfect function.

As expected, accuracy was best with wadcutter and two-inch groups at 25 yards were ordinary. The gun also showed a fondness for Federal's 185 gr. hollowpoint and shot nearly as well with them. The ammo says "match" on the label and it really is good stuff. My .45 IPSC load with the ever-popular H&G 68 shot well and functioned perfectly.

The \$499 suggested retail is enough to make it attractive when compared to the cost of a comp gun these days and someone want-

ing to get into practical shooting could do much worse.

After the first range session of about 200 rounds, I cleaned and carefully examined the entire gun for signs of unusual wear or, heaven forbid, galling. Regrettably, there was a tiny spot on one of the slide rails and this caused me to do two things.

After cleaning I gave the rails a liberal coat of Break-Free and then went back to the range. I fired another 200 rounds and looked everything over again. This time, there was no evidence of further galling. The spot was still there, but had not grown. Instead, there was now evidence that the rails were beginning to mate with one another for the bead blasted surface, which regrettably extends to the rails, was beginning to wear smooth.

Another small problem surfaced, however. In my original inspection I had felt that the slide movement was a little stiff near the rear of the travel and I found that the slide was rubbing lightly on the top of the tongue extension of the frame. This is a fairly common thing on guns with fitted slides and usually doesn't hurt anything unless it's excessive enough to interfere with functioning. It doesn't on the test gun. A little lubrication there, and more shooting, will resolve the problem after the break-in period.

Over the next couple of range sessions I shot the AMT Longslide both as a bullseye gun and two-handed and tried to compare the felt recoil with conventional guns. Recognizing that this is purely subjective, I felt that the

AMT was more comfortable to shoot in bullseye timed and rapid fire than a standard gun, although it's a bit muzzle heavy. The longer sight radius is an asset.

When shooting two-handed IPSC style, it wasn't quite as obvious, but there was less muzzle rise. Not as good as a comp gun, but then it doesn't cost as much either. As predicted, operation became smoother with more shooting as the stainless parts wore in. Functioning has continued to be error free and even though I have shot the gun quite a bit with bullseye loads, there just haven't been any problems. Nor has there been any evidence of further galling, although I think it wise to keep an eye on all mating surfaces and be sure they are properly lubricated.

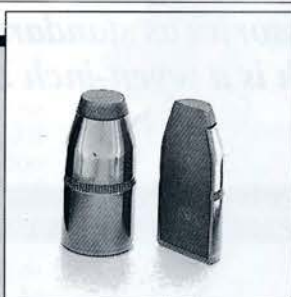
Reflecting on the overall performance of the AMT Longslide, I would have to rate it good. I don't believe anyone expects a Government Model gun to come with a great trigger and this one was no exception, but it was a hell of a lot better from the box than most new guns and was shootable as it came. Maybe I'm just too picky about triggers.

The other features that are standard on the Longslide cost extra on other models or have to be done by a gunsmith. That goes a long way toward compensating for minor problems. At \$499, the AMT Longslide represents good value.

For more information about the Longslide and other AMT guns, write to AMT, Dept. AH, 6226 Santos Diaz St., Irwindale, CA, 91706.



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10mm, 190 Grain FPJ



#8630 Sports Master
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#1725 MatchKing
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#2850 GameKing
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SUPER GRADE

Continued from page 61

or constriction vent, of the compensator. The hole in the constriction vent through which the bullet passes is a mere .012" over bore size. This makes for an extremely efficient gas seal while still allowing sufficient space for the bullet's passage.

The second chamber measures .315" from the constriction vent separating the two chambers to the end of the compensator. The front baffle, or face plate, is three times as thick as the one separating the two chambers, a hefty third of an inch. This face plate is thicker in order to extend the moment of time during which the bullet passes through it.

If we could slow time to a crawl, this is what we'd see inside the Super Grade's twin chamber compensator: the bullet screams from the muzzle pushed by an expanding column of sizzling hot gas. A stop-action photo, taken at the moment the base of the bullet clears the crown of the muzzle, shows this column of hot gas streaming around the bullet.

Next time-stop frame: the bullet is in the rear expansion chamber with its nose entering the rear constriction vent of the double chamber comp. Still, hot gases are spewing from the muzzle in this milli-second of elapsed time, but the first wave of

gas has already begun to expand within the compensator's rear chamber. But instead of dispersing evenly in a 360 degree radius, some of the gas has met resistance.

As the searing gas impacts the walls and floor of the expansion chamber, the gas is forced inward and upward toward the only exit available. Because the bullet has effectively sealed the constriction vent (there is some leakage, but not a significant amount), the gas has no place to go except out the top, through the large scalloped port in the compensator.

Next time frame: now the bullet has passed through the rear chamber and is inside the front chamber. Blistering gas pumps behind the bullet now that a second opening, through the baffle separating the compensator's chambers, has been opened.

Gas continues to erupt from the top of the rear compensator, already working against the recoil impulses that would send the gun's nose flipping upwards.

But still the swirling gas begins to fill the front chamber as the bullet flies into the face plate's constriction vent, the massively thick wall of steel that will hold the remaining gas inside the twin expansion chambers where it will dramatically work to reduce felt recoil.

Stop time: the bullet is inside the frontal baffle thus sealing the two chambers behind it. Furiously pushing in every direction, the gas now has only two places to go—out the two large ports in the top

of the twin expansion chambers.

By now, of course, the volume of the propellant gas has been reduced as the first wave gushed through the rear chamber of the compensator. The remaining gas, still a powerful force to direct in an opposite direction against muzzle flip, is still churning upwards through the compensator's twin ports as the bullet seals the .300" thick face plate for a longer time-moment than it had sealed the .100" thick rear baffle.

The reason for the thicker face plate, naturally, is to delay the gas as long as possible inside the compensator's twin chambers. The narrow clearance of a scant .006" around the bullet retains the gas efficiently inside this remarkable compensator.

How long does all this take? A .38 Super 155 grain bullet travelling at 1200 fps will have made a full journey through the Super Grade dual-chamber compensator in .0000683 of a second!

The Super Grade pistol is a complete gun that comes to a Bill Wilson client thoroughly range tested and ready. Unlike most custom pistols, the Super Grade has very few options for one simple reason—the gorgeous gun leaves no custom stone unturned.

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tributors' inventories, Bill personally selects a Series 80 Colt pistol to begin the transformation into a Super Grade. Only "pistolsmith selected" Colts can be used for a Super Grade and the price of the gun is included in the total tab of the Super Grade.

A Super Grade in .38 Super costs \$2795 while one in .45 ACP sells for \$2695. Of course this includes the price of a new Colt Series 80. The Super Grade also comes complete with six stainless steel magazines, 8-round .45 or 10-round .38 Super, and a Gun Guard pistol case. Turn-around time varies between six weeks and six months depending on demand at the time of the order. For more information, contact Wilson's Gun Shop, P.O. Box 578, Dept. AH, Berryville, AR 72616 or call (501) 545-3618.

Little details, often seen only with a magnifying glass, tell the true story of craftsmanship in the finest custom pistols. Bill Wilson's outstanding Super Grade conversion of a Colt Government Model stands proudly as a best-quality gun from the workbench of this remarkably talented pistolsmith.

Cosmetically, the Super Grade is a marvel of handpolishing and handfitting. A tell-tale place to look on a Government Model for signs of inferior workmanship is the dished-out recess on the frame just behind the trigger guard.

All Colt pistols have slight tooling marks here, some worse than others, and it's a sure bet that if a pistolsmith leaves these unsightly blemishes unpolished, then the gun is not a true example of fine craftsmanship. It's the first place to look for flaws on a best-quality 1911.

The Super Grade's brilliant polish betrays not the slightest hint of tooling marks or other pug marks of the manufacturing process. The recess behind the trigger guard is smoothly honed to remove the scratches. Good sign.

The next spot to check for the rigorous attention to detail that must characterize a top-grade gun is the rear of the slide's checkering pattern. This is another dead giveaway for skimping on quality.

The rear of the slide incorporates the head of the extractor and seldom will you find a checkering pattern that precisely matches on the slide and extractor head. Usually the crosscuts on the extractor are badly out of synch with those on the slide itself.

Bill Wilson's flawless rows of 40 lpi checkering match exactly, a signal of superior craftsmanship. In fact, Bill goes a step further than any other custom pistolsmith, to my knowledge, in this regard: he supplies a spare extractor with precisely the same checkering pattern as the slide in case the original one needs to be replaced. *That's* attention to detail.

Speaking of checkering, this is the third aspect of best-grade workmanship on a

custom 1911 pistol. Perhaps the most exacting of all the many hand operations in the building of a Super Grade, the checkering of the front strap, mainspring housing and beneath the trigger guard must be flawless to befit this top quality pistol.

Understand: checkering is done one line at a time with a sharp file. By hand. Some fast-buck pistolsmiths use a milling machine to cut checkering but this results in shallow, dull diamonds. The Super Grade's steel diamonds are precisely handcut.

To check the quality of checkering, first tilt the pistol horizontally and then vertically and look to see if the rows are parallel and square to the frame. Inept checkering lists to the left when botched by a right handed person, to the right by a southpaw. The lines on the Wilson Super Grade are square and parallel.

Next, take a magnifying glass and carefully inspect the sharp rows of steel diamonds. Look for flat spots on top of the little pyramids. Each and every one of the diamonds should be sharply pointed and deeply cut. Also look for over-runs where the checkering file slipped.

Good checkering is very bloody hard to execute; good checkering is a painstaking labor of love that takes hours of tedious handstrokes. The Wilson Super Grade displays textbook checkering revealing the time-consuming handwork that is the hallmark of this superlative pistol. Not a slip, not a flaw, not a flat diamond to be

found, just superb handwork.

Moving up to the top of the slide, the next item to inspect on a fine custom pistol is the installation of the rear sight. The sight should be the unsurpassed Bo-Mar Combat Sight low mounted and tastefully buried.

Hold the pistol up to a light and look for daylight in the dovetail that holds the sight. The slightest hint of daylight reveals a sloppy fit. The sight's base should be press-fit into the dovetail and appear as one solid mass of steel.

The Bo-Mar sight on a best-grade pistol should be sunken into the slide with the rear blade blended into the pistol. Here Bill Wilson has allowed one flaw. The Bo-Mar sight, while it is correctly dovetailed, is not properly melted into the slide.

A tasteful mount involves at least five, sometimes six precise cuts with a vertical mill to subtly remove metal in the slide and thereby marry the Bo-Mar and the slide as one harmonious unit. These machine cuts should be slightly undersize with the final fitting accomplished by hand with needle files and then polishing stones.

Unfortunately, the rear of the Super Grade's slide is simply lopped off with one pass of a cutter leaving the Bo-Mar dangling over the end of the gun.

This is purely a cosmetic matter, it should be noted, for the exceptionally strong Bo-Mar sight is just as rugged and durable with this sort of installation as

with the proper blending of the unit into the slide.

As we move to look at the slide-to-frame fit, we find the Super Grade returns once again to the sort of quality that distinguishes this remarkable pistol. Bill carefully mates the slide rails to the frame by judiciously removing the slop and wiggle in a stock Colt gun.

He meticulously handlaps the reciprocating slide to its stationary mate with such finesse that the slide appears to glide on the rails like an oil-dampened piston.

Smoothly easing back the slide, you can feel the mirror finish on all bearing surfaces as they delicately whisk past one another as the slide retracts. Pull back on a stock Colt slide and you can feel all manner of glitches and snares—careful hand-fitting results in a beautifully smooth functioning of the Super Grade.

Now go to the trigger, an obvious indicator of a pistolsmith's savvy. The Super Grade is equipped with an adjustable National Match skeletonized trigger, either long or short at the client's request. The test pistol's trigger pull is crisp, with very little take-up, and breaks cleanly at 2 pounds 9 ounces on a Brownell's trigger pull gauge calibrated in half-ounce increments.

Now this bears comment. The gun is a Series 80 with the firing pin safety that causes the trigger to activate a spring-tensioned plunger connected to the firing pin. This prevents the gun from firing acciden-

tally if dropped, but it also adds a considerable burden to the trigger's work. It's significantly more difficult to perform a good trigger job on a Series 80 than the older Series 70 guns without the firing pin safety device. Pistolsmiths routinely charge more for a Series 80 trigger job.

However, Bill's skilled hand tuned the trigger and removed the felt effects of the firing pin safety. A 2½ pound trigger that breaks cleanly and crisply is a very good trigger indeed, especially on a Series 80.

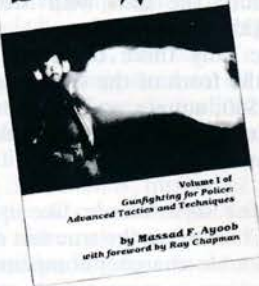
The barrel is a match-grade Wilson brand and the front lockup is accomplished with an oversize cone of steel that replaces the conventional barrel bushing. This steel cone also incorporates the clever double-chamber compensator. The test pistol's six-inch .38 Super barrel includes an integral feed ramp to fully support the Super's case web during firing.

The fit of the barrel is, well, right. The rear locking lugs engage fully and the slide stop rides properly on the barrel's foot. No tell-tale wear marks are in evidence after over 2,400 rounds that would indicate an improper fit.

The barrel hood is handpolished and squared to mate with the breech face. This often over-looked detail is another indication of the attention Bill Wilson pays to his finest pistol.

Needless to say, the barrel's feedramp is polished to a brilliant sheen. Flatnose and semi-wadcutter bullets effortlessly sail up the mirror-smooth chute to the

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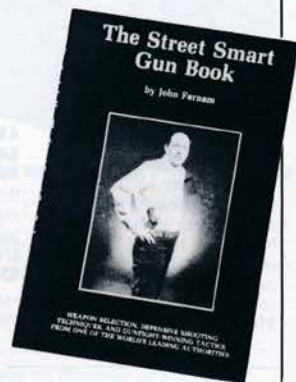
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chamber. Roundnose bullets, the easiest to feed reliably, also glide up the ramp without hesitation.

Ejection of spent cases, thanks to a lowered and flared ejection port, is brisk. Smoking hulls arc free of the Super Grade in a consistent pattern to land four feet to the right and two feet behind the shooter. Consistency of ejection is another sign of careful fitting of a pistol, and the Super Grade exhibits superior performance in this regard.

An ergonomic touch that is also pleasing to the eye comes with the tasteful addition of cocking serrations on the front of the slide. Precisely cut to duplicate the serrations on the rear of the slide, these

cuts permit the shooter to retract the slide easily between two fingers. This is the most comfortable manner to inspect the chamber for a loaded round and also a handy means of cocking the gun to chamber a round from the magazine.

A Wilson beavertail grip safety gracefully follows the contours of the frame as skilled hands carefully handfit the part. The Wilson beavertail with its upsweeping tang allows the recoil of the pistol to distribute its punch to a broader surface of the shooting hand, thus reducing felt recoil. It also eliminates hammer bite.

The hammer is a Commander style that is relieved on the sides to prevent rubbing on the slide as it hits the firing pin. The

hammer hooks are deep and properly cut to allow full engagement of the sear.

A competition recoil spring wraps around the Wilson full-length guiderod to enhance reliability as the gun cycles. A Shok-Buff pad fits between the spring and the end of the guide rod to absorb some of the jarring recoil forces of the gun and keep the slide from battering the frame unnecessarily.

The magazine well is greatly enlarged with, first, an exaggerated bevel and, second, the addition of a customized mag funnel. This highly practical feature is a great help in fast magazine changes. The Super Grade's mag funnel presents a humongous opening compared to the skimpy hole on a stock Colt.

Additionally, the Super Grade is fitted with an enlarged and extended magazine release button.

Kim Ahrends exotic wood grips, either smooth or checkered, are included on the Wilson Super Grade. The client is free to select from Bill's extensive stock of rosewood, kingwood and coco bolo. The gorgeous Ahrends grips are dished out near the magazine release button to permit a faster, more positive access to the "go button."

The striking appearance of the two-tone Super Grade is a combination of deep bluing on the slide and Metaloy plating on the frame. The handsome and durable Metaloy finish covers internal parts like the disconnecter and hammer strut for a long lasting, wear-resistant finish.

One of the few options available on the Super Grade is full-gun coverage with the unsurpassed Metaloy hard chrome plating. To include the slide with Metaloy plating is a \$35 option.

There are only three other options: checking the front of the trigger guard is an extra \$40; square and checker the front of the trigger guard is \$90; adding a custom fit thumb guard costs \$30.

Shooting the Super Grade, like squeezing the Charmin, is the true test of the gun's new double-chamber compensator. Would it perform as spectacularly as Rob Leatham said? Is it truly a revolutionary design that will set a whole new trend in compensator technology? In short, does it shoot?

Unfortunately, the Super Grade picked the worst time of the year to arrive for testing. Arriving only six weeks before the Steel Challenge speed shooting competition, the Super Grade would be tested during the frantic six out of 52 weeks in the year that I expend a disproportionate share of the year's ammo in practice.

Shooting steel eats up ammo faster than any other form of practice because, for one thing, there's no wasted time to paste paper targets and, for another, the Green Valley Ranch shooting park where I practice has all the Steel Challenge courses permanently set-up. No delays in moving the heavy steel around, just shoot!

Going through 1,200 to 1,400 rounds in

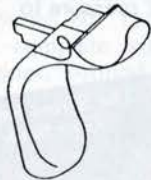
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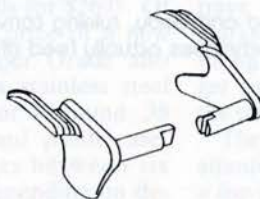
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a weekend is no big thing.

The gun arrived directly from the studio of photographer Ichiro Nagata and had not received the benefit of the usual 200 rounds to break the gun in. The tight slide-to-frame fit suggested a few hiccups would be forthcoming in the first 500 or so rounds.

Surprise, surprise: nary a jam in the first 500 shots. Then the first 600, 700, 800 and a thousand.

Wait a minute, the .38 Super is notoriously finicky. The barrel has considerable free bore and this extended throat is supposed to lead up quickly and cause "failure to go into battery." Moreover, the gun was getting downright gunky with powder residue. Shucks, a .45 might handle a thousand trouble-free rounds, but a .38 Super?

Let's go some more, this could get interesting. Twelve hundred, going for thirteen.

Ah-ha, gotcha! Somewhere around 1,250 a round skidded to a halt on the filthy feedramp. All that oily powder goo stuck in the Super Grade's throat and it coughed!

There you have it, the Super Grade is not 100% reliable. I went on to put another couple of hundred glitch-free rounds through the gun, bringing the total up to around 1400, before heading home for a cold one and the gun cleaning kit.

Surprise number two, or maybe shock number two. After field stripping the lovely little Colt, I expected a real battle with barrel leading. The chronographed loads registered 1150 fps with the hardcast Bull-X 155 grain lead semi-wadcutters. That's zipping right along and the barrel should be caked with leading.

What's this, the barrel's hardly dirty. Whatever happened to all those stories about the Super's fouling horribly and gunking the bore with hard-to-remove leading? I think the answer lies in shooting .356" bullets, instead of .357", and using the exceptional Bull-X slugs which are cast extremely hard and seem to resist barrel leading to a most astonishing degree.

Honestly, a .45 with 200 grain #68's will lead far worse than these fast-stepping Super slugs.

Accuracy? I don't believe it either, so don't write nasty letters calling me a liar. The gun lied! Let's get it over with quickly—a five-shot cluster of 1.347" at fifty yards. That's from a stable roll-over prone position. At 25 yards off the sandbags, well, the gun's just a pathological liar.

It keeps trying to tell me it shoots .675" groups. It keeps tearing rounds holes very close together, and lying through its teeth. Comp guns just aren't that accurate, are they?

Of course Bill Wilson's personal Super Grade is also a liar. It will stand there as bold as can be looking you right in the eye—and shoot a ¾ inch group at 25 yards. Rob Leatham's Super Grade lies

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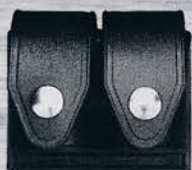
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The most accurate load tested was the 150 gr. FMJ from CP Bullets. Loaded with Accurate Arms #7 powder, the load clocked 1,227 fps over a PACT chronograph. This load is a real tack driver, although the jacketed CP bullets are more expensive than lead slugs.

Another accurate load is the SAECO #930 semi-wadcutter weighing 155 grains. Bull-X casts this bullet hard and I loaded 8.5 grs. of AA#7 for 1,200 fps and an IPSC power factor of 186. The semi-wadcutters tore a 1.300" hole with five shots at 25 yards.

Yet another good load, and my favorite for major caliber IPSC, is the 143 gr. flat point from Colorado Cast Bullets. This load shoots 1.500" at 25 yards, but it's main virtue is less muzzle flip than the other loads mentioned. It's the best bet for fast, controllable double-taps in IPSC matches.

The Steel Challenge load I used for most of the shooting tests of the Super Grade is the Bull-X 122 gr. flat point and 125 gr. roundnose, both hardcast lead. Loaded with 7.0 grs. of AA#7, these loads clock right at 1,000 fps and feel like a mouse farting in your hand. Hardly any kick, virtually a recoilless load.

Muzzle flip and gun torque are dramatically reduced with the astonishing new double-chamber compensator. The Super Grade is not marginally better, it's substantially better.

In practicing for the Steel Challenge, I fired a bunch of double-taps at the 15 yard steel disks on *Speed Option*. These 12-inch circles rang loudly as two 125 grain roundnose bullets sang out as one *ting-ting*. The PACT Mk III timer showed that the hammer blows were less than .15" apart, yet both shots consistently hit three to four inches apart on the steel disk.

This is spectacular. Usually a compensated pistol of conventional design will allow fast double-taps only out to 10 yards or so while keeping the two bullets three to four inches apart. The dramatic double-chamber Super Grade comp permits this sort of fast and fancy shooting out to 15 yards and beyond.

Moving over to *Outer Limits*, I double-tapped the 12-inch plate at 25 yards. Nope, one hit one miss. I slowed down to watch the front sight and fired two single shots instead of triggering a pair almost simultaneously. *Tinging*.

The PACT timer's Review Function said the time between shots was .24" or only .09" slower than a fast double-tap at 15 yards. This is extremely fast sight recovery. The Super Grade comp was beginning to show its stuff.

As the pile of brass grew and the barrel heated up, I began to notice another advantage of the double-chamber compensator. It seems to reduce the pistol's torque in the hand. A standard comp gun

seems to squiggle, twisting sideways ever so slightly during fast shooting. The Super Grade remained remarkably still and easy to control, both in torque and muzzle jump.

Tracking from target to target in a multiple array like in *Five To Go* was also much smoother thanks to the steady effects of the double-chamber compensator. To keep the gun moving smoothly is the key to fast target engagement and the recoil-dampening of the Super Grade greatly facilitated this basic exercise in combat pistolcraft.

Getting back to the original questions, yes, Rob Leatham is right. The new Wilson double-chamber compensator is better than anything he's tried, and better than anything I've tried too.

Yes, it's a truly revolutionary design and I confidently predict that within a short time you'll hardly find a gunsmith still offering the obsolete one-chamber, one-port design.

And yes, it does shoot. Fast, *very fast* double taps. Superior recovery time from shot to shot. Greatly enhanced tracking of multiple targets. Accurate? Well, you can't have everything. It only shoots 1½ inches at 50 yards. The gun jammed once in about 2,400 rounds.

The Super Grade is destined to revolutionize compensator design. Bill Wilson has just taken the combat pistol another quantum leap forward.



MEET BILL WILSON

Continued from page 61

He steps outside and his hand darts behind his hip. Out flashes the parkerized steel of GI .45 as the craftsman takes aim at a particularly large clod of dirt in a freshly plowed field. The gun bucks in his hand as the clod evaporates into dust, but before he can pick up the sights to fire again he must first clear a jam.

"Damn gun," he mutters under his breath, "Never will go a full clip without jamming." He clears the malfunction and shoots two boxes of surplus military hardball, stopping to clear the jams every few rounds.

Frustrated with the pistol, the watchmaker decides to send it away to one of those gunsmiths who advertises his specialty of the Model of 1911. A few months later the gun returns—and jams on the first outing.

The gun had gone to some former bullseye champion who had started a business hacking away on guns. His pistol, as the watchmaker later recalls, was butchered.

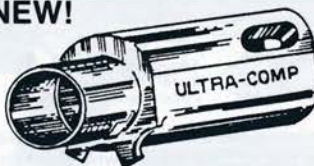
"I was even more unhappy with that gun after it came back, so unhappy, in fact, that I sold that gun and bought a stock Gold Cup," wrote the watchmaker in a book he later authored called *The Combat .45 Automatic*.

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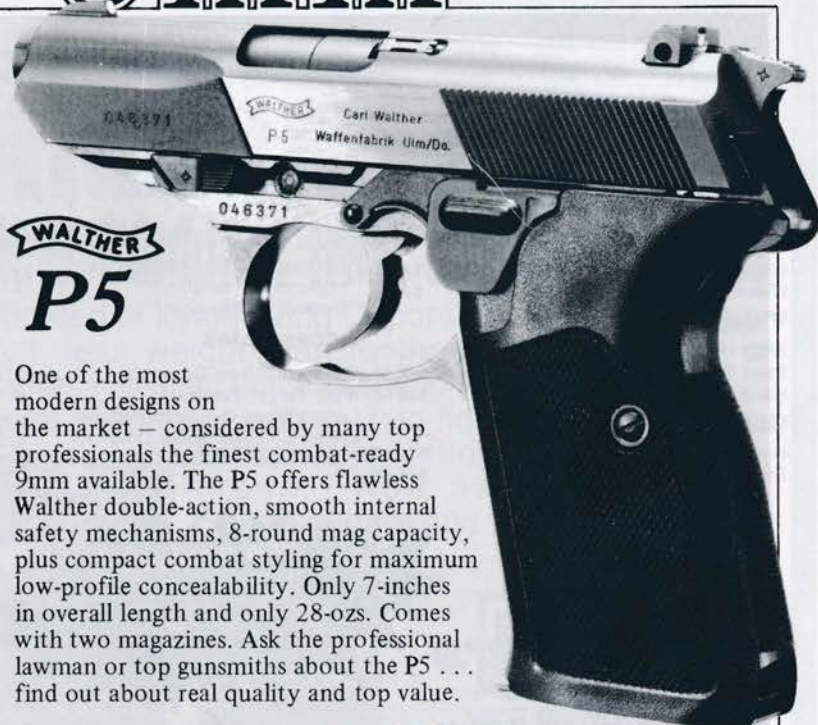
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Yes, the confessed "gun nut" and jeweler went on to write the book on combat .45s, literally. Bill Wilson was that watchmaker and today he is one of the most successful and talented pistolsmiths in the business.

Even though his Gold Cup was good enough to allow Bill to win 14th overall in the 1977 IPSC National Championships, he still wasn't satisfied.

"I got the old common feeling—I needed a new gun. I didn't, but that was beside the point. I sent another Government Model off to a custom pistolsmith and when I got it back, I didn't like that one either.

"I thought that if I could repair watches, if I could make tiny parts for something as intricate as a piece of jewelry or the movement of a watch, I could certainly build a gun. So I sold my second 'custom' gun, ordered a bunch of parts from King's Gun Works and Armand Swenson and built what we now offer as the 120 Competition Grade Gun," Bill recalled.

That first Wilson custom gun was a real humdinger. Accurate and reliable, the gun was the sparkle of Bill's eye. Pretty soon word got around the tiny hamlet of Berryville and spread to shooters in the surrounding Arkansas countryside.

"A couple of my shooting buddies saw the gun, liked it and asked if I could make them one. I found myself spending more and more time building guns and less and less time working on watches.

"My wife Darla and I had a major decision to make: should I step from hobby gunsmithing to full-time gunsmithing, giving up the watchmaking?

"With her backing, I made the big leap, and it was scary. We had no operating capital and just a gut feeling that the market for quality .45 modifications was getting ready to take off. The big shops like Pachmayr were one and two years behind in delivery, and I knew that a lot of shooters were crying out for a pistolsmith who understood IPSC guns and practical shooting," Bill reminisced fondly.

Needless to say, it was a smart move. Today Bill consistently puts more custom pistols into the coveted Top Sixteen of major practical shooting matches than any other gunsmith in the country. Over 30% of the Top 16 guns in the 1988 IPSC Nationals were Wilson Accu-Comps. Go back and pick any year, you'll find similar statistics. His Accu-Comp has won five of the last six IPSC championships and three-for-three IPSC World Championships.

The small custom shop in the picturesque farm country of northern Arkansas has grown dramatically over the years. Today Bill Wilson's thriving business generates nearly \$3 million in annual sales. It would take quite a few repaired watches to match that!

Custom combat pistols are the heart of Wilson's Gun Shop, but Bill also markets

a comprehensive line of combat shooting accessories and after-market parts, like his Wilson beavertail grip safety and Wilson match-grade barrels. The Wilson-Rogers combat magazine is one of the best, and his Group Gripper and Shok-Buff accessories are two of the more popular products he sells.

But combat guns are not the sole domain of Bill's bustling little shop of craftsmen and artisans. Bill is an avid big game hunter and the custom conversions of the Ruger Redhawk and S&W Model 29 have become widely respected. Bill and his personal Wilson Magnum Hunter have taken big game on three of the world's eight continents. His charming wife Darla is also an enthusiastic handgun hunter.

Bianchi Cup revolvers and PPC wheel-guns are also a specialty of Wilson's Gun Shop.

The latest addition, of course, is the Super Grade and its remarkable double-chamber compensator.

Bill Wilson has paid his dues and his successful custom gunshop is testimony to his perseverance and dedication to quality. He's represented the United States in international IPSC matches as a member of our national team. He's won the Second Chance bowling pin shoot and placed in the top five of every other major competition. He knows combat guns.

The watchmaker has become a gunmaker. I don't know how well his old watch repairs are doing, but if he was half as good a watchmaker as he is a gunmaker, I bet they're still keeping perfect time.



TEXAS RANGER GUNS

Continued from page 47

side when it came to providing its fighting minions with sidearms, but on the score of rifles it was a bit more generous. That is up to a point. Each new Ranger was issued a Sharps carbine, the Model of 1869, chambered for the .50-70 cartridge. These Sharps were reclaimed from the war and were converted from percussion by the installation of a new breechblock. The original .52 caliber barrel was relined to a .50 caliber. The recruit Ranger was charged \$17 against his monthly stipend of \$33 for this old Sharps. After his quarterly pay period rolled around the sum was withheld and thereafter the old carbine was his.

Later on, during the shank end of the '70s, Rangers abandoned the old singleshots Sharps and bought the Winchester .44-40 Model '73 carbine. It was a bang up good gun. An improvement over its forerunner, the Model 1866, and while a .44-40 like the '66, it fired a centerfire cartridge with considerably improved ballistics.

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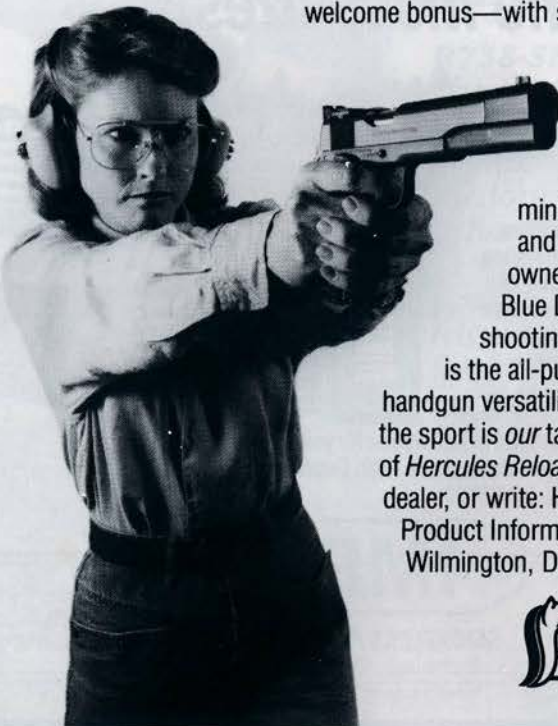
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tages of the Model 73 which held 12 cartridges among other good features, bridled at the price of \$50 and continued to issue the infinitely inferior Sharps. Many Rangers, who by this time had been boosted to the munificent sum of \$40 monthly, bought the Winchester out of their own pockets. Jim Gillett in his book, *Six Years with the Texas Rangers* says he kept his Model 73 all his life. "I killed everything with it. Even buffalo." He also accounted for a few outlaws and a whole gaggle of Apaches, facts gleaned as you peruse his tome.

The Texas Rangers, organized in 1835, saw a lot of war right from the beginning. The first sizeable scrap was in a purely rhubarb to get free of Mexico. Right after that the United States went to war against Mexico and of course the Rangers were only happy to join in.

Four regiments of Rangers were in the plan of mobilization. Actually only three were mustered, equipped, and committed to battle. Of these Capt. Sam Walker, who commanded one of the regiments, was the most famous. He it was who journeyed back east and sat down with the other Sam—Samuel Colt—and between this pair of worthies they designed a revolver which was to become one of the most famous revolvers of the entire Colt line. This was the extraordinary Walker Model.

The year was 1846 and war had been joined against Santa Ana's forces. In the campaign which followed, the Americans drove through victoriously to Mexico City. General Taylor who commanded the Expeditionary Forces sent Sam Walker back east to contact Sam Colt and to remain there until the inventor commenced the production of a big sixshooter.

The revolver as decided upon between the fighting Ranger and the versatile Samuel Colt was a super belt gun. It weighed the somewhat staggering total of 4 lbs. 7 ozs. and had a 9-inch .44 caliber barrel and an overall of 15½ inches. It was a percussion type, a sixshooter, and was not made in the Colt plant as you might conclude but in the Eli Whitney armory.

The giant revolver, which was subsequently dubbed the Walker Model, was ordered to the tune of one thousand units. The first shipment was scheduled to reach Vera Cruz in late September 1847. These were to be consigned, among other units, to Sam Walker's Rangers. In appreciation, Sam Colt shipped a brace of the big forty-fours on ahead to Capt. Walker.

Walker's Rangers were waging a lively campaign against the Mex guerrillas. It was a tenuous chore to keep the lines of communication open between the Port of Vera Cruz and distant Mexico City. The Rangers were assigned that duty. On the 9th of October, his handsome new Colt sixshooters riding on either flank, the intrepid Walker and 350 hard-nose Tejanos were locked in battle with sixteen hundred Mex irregulars in the pueblo of

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A guerrilla, his old smoothbore .69 caliber Eibar-made musket scarcely capable of hitting a man at 60 yards, fired at the advancing horsemen. The ball struck the gallant Walker in the head. He died instantly. He had possessed his new Walker model pistols exactly four days.

The war ended the next month. The part the big Walker Colts played in the concluding hostilities could not have been but minuscule.

The Ranger regiments were armed actually with the forerunner of the Walker sixgun. This was the Paterson Colt, the Model of 1836, called the "Texas." It was a .34 caliber, a 5-shot, with folding trigger, a barrel of but 5½ inches and an overall dimension of only 9½ inches. This was a difficult weapon as much because of the slowness of loading as from any other drawback. Rangers regularly carried two Patersons and sometimes also packed a brace of single-shot percussion pistols.

These latter, for the most part, were the .54 caliber issued to the Army and manufactured at the Springfield Armory. They had been converted from flintlock to percussion type. There were other singleshoot pistols all of which saw hard service.

There was a .44 caliber made by Aston of Middletown, Conn., still another by I.N. Johnson also of Middletown, and still a fourth from the Palmetto Armory at Columbia, South Carolina. These latter pistols were the 1842 model and this was followed by the 1843 model. This latter was more often issued to cavalry units. It was a so-called box lock, that is the hammer was contained within the lockplate. These latter pistols were all percussion by type.

On the score of the rifle, the Rangers were issued the Model 1842. It was a percussion gun, made as both a musket and as a rifle. In the musket version it was a whopping .69 caliber; as a rifle it was only a .54 cal. The rifle, as you might suspect, was the more accurate. Most of these arms were manufactured at Harper's Ferry armory.

During that interlude from the termination of the fracas with the Land of Manana and the commencement of what is euphemistically referred to as the War Between the States (Southern preference) or the Civil War (Northern version) the Texas Rangers were kept exceedingly busy policing the new state what with tracking down marauding bands of Comanches, Lipans, Kickapoos, Pawnees, Kiowas, Apaches and Cheyennes, together with an endless series of engagements with Mexican banditos, and local Texicans who had gone up the owl-hoot trail.

The Walker Colt had arrived too late for real service in the Mexican War but now it really came into its own. It was by far the choice of the hard-riding hard-shooting Rangers and besides packing two of the 4½ pound .44s on his lean flanks, the horse-mounted guardian was



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wont to tote another pair of the giant pistols inommel holsters. His rifle was secondary. His long gun was a single-shot and since his fighting virtually was at the gallop it was not nearly as effective as the battery of Colt sixguns.

The onset of the Civil War left Texas virtually defenseless against her domestic enemies. For the Rangers rode off to war and left the budding state virtually in the hands of the womenfolk, the old men, and the very young boys. No state save Virginia provided more soldiery to the Confederacy than did the Lone Star State. The Texans rode away and made up the cavalry units of such raiders as Jeb Stuart and Jubal Early.

Their sidearms were those of the South. The Leech & Rigdon, the Griswold & Gunnison, the Rigdon-Ansley, the Spiller & Burr and those guns from the Columbus Firearms Co. Altogether but 10,000 revolvers were made by the Confederates. The lot, generally speaking, were spitting image copies of the Colt Navy, sixshooters of .36 caliber, with brass frame, 7½ inch barrel, and percussion by type.

When our Rebel cavalryman could, he acquired a good Union gun. By choice either the Colt Model 1860, a big .44 with an 8 inch barrel and a weight of 2 lbs. 11 ozs.; or the Remington Model 1858, another .44 caliber with 8-inch barrel and a weight of three pounds.

The Union purchased 146,000 Colt revolvers from 1861-65. The next most popular revolver was the Remington. Some 127,000 were bought up. When the end came at Appomattox and the tattered remnants of Lee's once proud soldiery commenced the long trek homeward it was a rare Texas trooper who did not have concealed somewhere among his scanty belongings either the Colt or the Remington revolver.

Texas rebels walked home, some of them more than a thousand miles, and when they reached old familiar haunts they found things in a hell of a pass. Outlaws rode all the trails, the cattle herds were unattended for the half-decade past and these had multiplied and mavericks outnumbered the branded stock. Rustlers were busy with a sticky loop and running iron and Mexican bandits infested the lower Rio Grande from Nueces to Matamoros. Indian raiders lifted scalps from isolated settlers and ran off fat horseflesh from Austin to distant Ysleta.

Those were lively times and even a full decade later, in 1875, the situation had scarcely bettered. It was then that Captain Lee McNelly was authorized by the first regularly elected Texas governor—the carpetbaggers having been chased out—to march into the lower Rio Grande country and bring some semblance of law and order. George Durham was among the first Ranger recruits for the Special Force. He was in for a lively time of it!

Mexican banditos rode into Nueces-town and shot the place to doll rags. After gunning down a dozen of the local citizenry they looted Tom Noake's store and carted off 18 Heye saddles.

Now the Heye saddle in those days was, to use George Durham's terminology, "tha top ah tha line." McNelly arrived the day after the raid and said, "Sgt. Armstrong, get a good description of those saddles. Tell the boys about them. Then order them to empty those saddles on sight. No palaver with the riders. Empty them! Leave the riders where you drop them and fetch the saddles back into camp."

McNelly had recruited a company of 30 men. He had no money, no rations, no horsefeed, few rifles and a paucity of ammunition. He rode from Nuecestown to the larger pueblo of Corpus Christi and went to see old Sol Lichenstein who owned the biggest outfitter's emporium. "Sol," said the Ranger straightforwardly, "the Texas legislature did not give me a peso to meet expenses. But I've got to have supplies. Rifles, rations, cartridges and horsefeed."

Lichtenstein waved his hand toward his stores. "Here's the biggest store and the best stock of all the supplies you'll need between here and San Antone. Take what you think you'll need."

"You may never get your money," McNelly looked serious. The carpetbaggers didn't leave any money in the state treasury. And the legislature doesn't seem willing to spend much to help me bring order down here."

Lichtenstein replied, "I'll do the worryin' you take what you want and sign a receipt for it. Now about rifles. You're plumb lucky, Cap'n, we got in a big shipment by the last boat. All the latest model Henrys, Spencers and Winchester."

"How about Sharps?" McNelly wanted to know.

"Sharps? Sure we carry a small stock for the buffalo hunters but you don't want single-shot rifles for the game you will play," the storekeeper objected.

"I'll take 'em," the Ranger replied.

George Durham in writing in his book *Taming the Nueces Strip* says about McNelly, "He expected that you would not bust a cap until you had your man fair in the sights. 'I don't expect my men to miss,'" he was quoted more than once.

The Special Force took 36 of the big Sharps .50 caliber rifles. Durham writes, "They were boogers I'll tell you! I broke mine open and that .50 bore looked big enough for a gopher to crawl into. It was almost two years before I turned that old single-shot in for a repeating Winchester."

McNelly and his hardcase crew bumped into a band of 12 Mex cattle rustlers. The outlaws drew up in battle front on some high ground across a swampy marsh. McNelly was compelled to walk his horses across this swampy morass to get within fighting distance. The crossing was some five hundred yards and the banditos fired



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at the oncoming troopers the whole way.

McNelly in his official report to the Texas Adjutant General said, "I did not permit my men to unsheath a carbine nor draw a pistol until we were within 75 or 100 yards of the outlaws."

He continued the advance at a walk until firm footing was reached. The steady advance unnerved the Mexicanos and when McNelly and his stalwarts were within pistol range, the outlaws turned tail and rode off. At a slow gallop.

The Rangers, once on firm ground, put their horses into a run and fast overhauled the rustlers. A running fight developed which lasted for six miles. That was a battle of sixshooters. The old single-shot Sharps was of no avail under the circumstances. Says McNelly officially, "It was a succession of single-hand fights for six miles before we got the last one. Not one escaped out of the 12 who had been driving the stolen cattle. They were all killed."

A single Ranger was killed. A lad of only 16, Berry Smith of Lee County. It was his first fight and his last one.

Cow thievery kept on. The outlaws, always in great force, crossed 100 head of vacas at Las Cuevas, some 65 miles above Brownsville on the Rio Grande. McNelly gathered his 30 Rangers and rode all night to reach the crossing. The herd by this time was in Mexico. It was destined for the market in Monterey where there was a demand for 18,000 head of Texas beef.

Without even hesitating at the Las Cue-

vas crossing, indeed without scouting the situation to ascertain the numbers of rustlers, McNelly not only forded the international stream but pushed on inland. His objective was the notorious Rancho Las Cuevas, the rendezvous of all the cow thieves in that corner of the border country. The rancho was owned by "General" Juan Flores Salinas, the renegade leader of the banditos and a political power on the south side of the Rio Grande.

The river was at low ebb and the mud flats on either side bogged the Ranger mounts, all dead tired from the 65 mile overnight gallop. Only five horses were able to negotiate the crossing. The Rangers, undaunted, crossed afoot. The little band, once assembled on the Mex side of the international waterway, pushed on the two miles to Las Cuevas.

They hit the headquarters barely after daylight and killed four of the five defenders during a sharp exchange. Then their native guide informed McNelly, "Este ranch no es Las Cuevas. Esta mas adelante." "This isn't Las Cuevas Ranch. It is farther on." It seems the place was "Las Cuchas" and their objective was still almost a mile beyond.

The element of surprise had now evaporated but the intrepid McNelly pushed on for all that. Directly they approached the stronghold of the bandits.

It was a veritable fortress. Surrounded by a solid stockade made of standing

cedar posts with lookout towers every 30 meters. But that was scarcely the most imposing sight. There before the barricade was an array of something between 200 and 250 heavily armed horsemen.

The Rangers were outnumbered almost 10 to 1. They were by this time almost three miles from the Rio Grande, afoot except for five of their number, and possessed of only 40 cartridges each for the old .50-70 Sharps single-shot. Pistols were no better supplied, some of the boys had 40 rounds and others did not.

Without a moment's hesitation McNelly gave the command to fire. The outlaws fired almost simultaneously. Sheets of lead literally engulfed the tiny law force. Not a man was scratched. After some minutes of steady volleying McNelly gave the order to fall back on the river.

When the Rangers reached the Rio Grande, instead of precipitously recrossing, he gave the order to dig in. When the banditos, sensing the kill, closed in those deadeye Tejanos had those old Sharps ringing like so many church bells as they emptied saddle after saddle.

"General" Flores Salinas, waving a fancy gold and silver inlaid Smith & Wesson .44 Russian, came charging out in the lead of a gaggle of his followers. John Armstrong pitched him from the saddle with a shot through the heart. Armstrong retrieved the heavily engraved pistol and stuck it in his belt. Later he presented it to Captain McNelly.

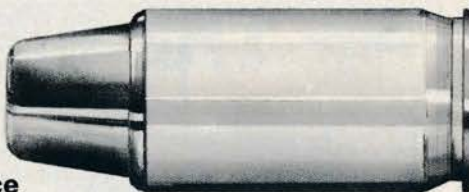


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Unable to beat down the rockhard Rangers, the Mexicans drew off and elected to parley. They sent over a flag of truce. McNelly was obdurate. "Fetch me those cows and do it at once or we'll attack," was his ultimatum.

In any other situation this would have been a bit more than ridiculous. Here was a tiny force of only 30 Rangers, outnumbered by almost 10 to one, fighting with ammunition almost gone, its back to the river, and its horses mired in the mud. If McNelly was simply bluffing he gave no evidence of it. If he concluded he was outnumbered, outgunned, and in danger of annihilation he gave absolutely no sign. "He meant it," George Durham says in his recollections of that moment.

The upshot of the affair was that the Mexicans withdrew, McNelly moved back to the Texas side of the border, and the 100 cows were driven by the rustlers to Rio Grande City, the agreed delivery point, the next day.

McNelly was there but this time had only 10 men with him. He crossed to the Mexican side and here found the cattle but under the close herd of not less than 25 heavily-armed vaqueros. These bucos, according to the official after-action report, "were armed with Winchesters and Colt pistols" and were spoiling for a scrap. As a matter of fact, the whole affair looked like a deliberate trap. A cul-de-sac into which McNelly had neatly tripped.

From the report of Sgt. Bill Callicott, "The Captain motioned and instantly formed into a line of skirmishers. Loaded our old Sharps and covered the Mexicans. The Captain turned to Tom (Tom Sullivan was the interpreter) and said, "Tell those sorry sons'abitches that if they don't deliver those cattle across the river in less than five minutes we will kill all of them. If you ever saw cows put across the old Rio muy pronto it was then."

During another soiree McNelly captured a sizeable herd of rustled King Ranch livestock. He put his Rangers to the business of moving the herd back to the Flying W. The King Ranch, it should be noted, was the biggest spread in all North America. That was a hundred years ago, today it is just as big. Richard King, the owner, had outfitted McNelly and his Special Force when he was outward bound with fresh horses.

After the rustled steers were fetched home again it was not long before a wagon pulled up in front of the McNelly camp and in it were "30 spanking new .44-40 Model 1873 repeating carbines," writes George Durham, "Captain McNelly told us to help ourselves and to turn in our Sharps if we'd rather have the Winchesters. After using the old Sharps, these Winchesters felt like toys. It was Captain King's thanks, I reckon, for the steers we had recovered from Las Cuevas."

McNelly at the time of the battle at Las Cuevas was 31 years of age. Two years later he was dead. One of the greatest Texas Rangers of all time. He died of tu-

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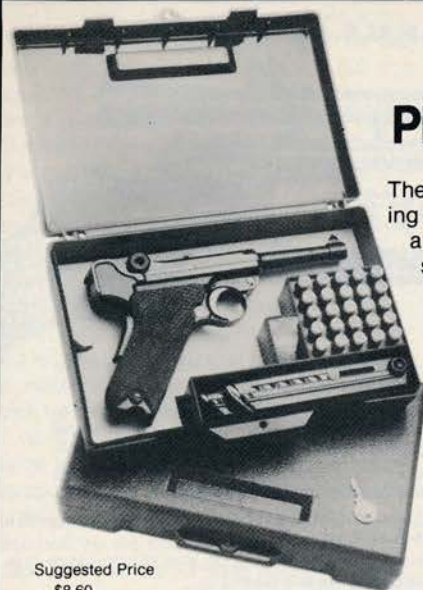


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berculosis. The state legislature complained of his doctor bill as he lay dying in the Menger Hotel in San Antonio.



P-90

Continued from page 49

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Although just 16 inches overall, its "bullpup" configuration allows a respectable 9 inches of barrel. This, combined with closed bolt operation, low recoil force, and a muzzle compensator, provides the basis for very good accuracy in both semiauto and full auto fire.

"Man-Machine Interface"—accommodating the capabilities and limitations of the human body—has also been maximized to this end. The synthetic stock features well positioned thumbholes and grip surfaces to accommodate left or right handed shooters with equal facility.

With a two-fisted grip and the buttstock against the shoulder, the sights are correctly positioned, and the axis of recoil is on one plane within the weapon. The P90 also holds and points very well for hip fire.

There are a host of other fine points to the weapon including its removable red dot electro-optical sight, integral mechanical sights, and low velocity "soft" downward ejection through a tunnel in the grip.

The selector is a horizontally mounted device set just below the trigger, providing SAFE, SEMI, and AUTO function. Non-reciprocating cocking slides are provided on both sides of the receiver. All mechanical operations may be readily accomplished with chemical protective gloves or heavy winter mitts, and stripping for maintenance is both simple and quickly accomplished.

The 50 round magazine lies along the top of the receiver, delivering its rounds by spring tension sideways into a spiraling ramp. This rotates each cartridge in turn 90 degrees in line with the cycling bolt. Also fabricated of light and strong plastic, it is semi-transparent, allowing observation of rounds remaining at a glance.

Although further refinement may be expected as series production gets nearer, FN clearly has a winner already. But, it

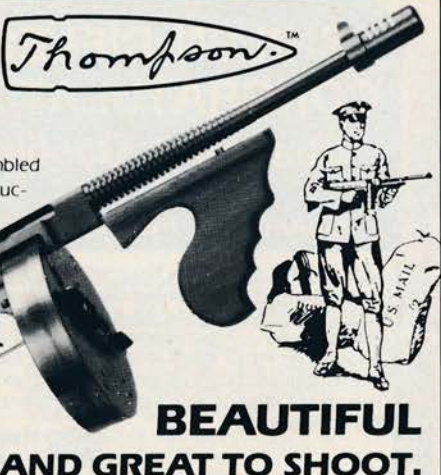


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remains to be seen if their effort to unseat the obsolescent but nearly universal 9mm Luger round will be successful in the short run.

With the US military's avowed interest in a new "Advanced Personal Weapon" there is some incentive. However, it is most likely that initial purchases will be for police use and for special operations/anti-terrorist applications.



HANDLOADING

Continued from page 42

of those show signs of too much pressure such as a loose primer pocket I may discard the whole batch on the grounds that they have all been subjected to the same sort of pressure and are, therefore, all suspect. My Scotch blood sometimes rebels at the thought of discarding a whole box of expensive brass so I'll throw out the offender and use the rest for plinking with lighter loads.

Cartridge cases can tell you a lot about their history if you just take time to read them, but the most important thing is to limit the use of maximum loads to those circumstances when they are really needed. I think it's possible to get just as much shooting satisfaction from loads that are just a bit below maximum.

Most of the time they will shoot close enough to the same point of impact to make a sight change unnecessary and you probably won't be able to tell the difference in recoil either. But your expensive brass, and even more expensive gun, will know the difference and reward you by lasting longer.



REVOLVER STRENGTH

Continued from page 53

The three Smith .357's will all handle modern ammunition; the Model 27 and Model 586 have simply been engineered to do it easier and longer. The Model 19 still packs the best and is still my choice for cast bullet loads. Its smaller cylinder and much lighter weight can become very important at the end of a long day.

Meanwhile back at the ranch, other developments were taking place. Which leads us to a look at the history of the .44 Magnum.

In 1907, Smith & Wesson brought its first large N-frame revolver, The New Century, or Triple-Lock, so named because it locked the cylinder fore, aft, and also at the end of the ejector rod. The new sixgun was chambered for the then equally

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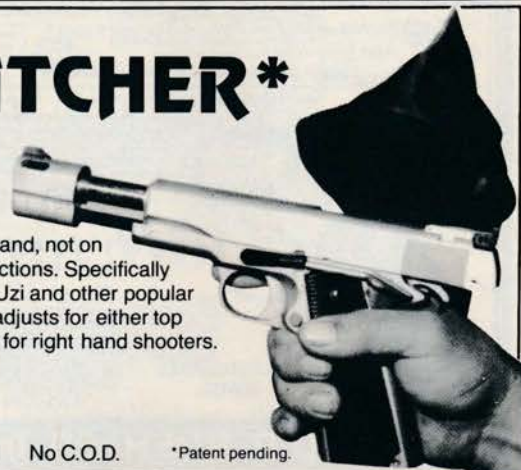
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new cartridge, the .44 Special which propelled a 246 grain soft lead bullet at a whopping 750 fps.

During the 1920's, knowledgeable reloaders developed the potential of the .44 Special to the fullest, obtaining a full 1200 fps using 250 grain hard cast bullets and various .44 Special sixguns such as the Triple-Lock and the Colt Single Action. For 30 years, both in his books and magazine articles, Elmer Keith called for a .44 Special Magnum that would be the equivalent of his load of a 250 grain bullet at 1200 fps.

In the mid '50s, Remington developed the .44 Magnum cartridge and Smith & Wesson promised a revolver that would handle the new load which featured a case that was one-eighth of an inch longer than the old .44 Special. Remington engineers were particularly concerned that the .44 Remington Magnum would not be capable of chambering in any existing .44 Specials since its 240 grain bullet with a muzzle velocity of 1400 fps was in the 40,000 psi pressure range.

With this background, it is interesting to note that the first four .44 Magnums were simply specially heat-treated .44 Special Model 1950 Target Smith & Wessons. The guns held together through the test but at 39½ ounces were extremely light for the heavy .44 load and so Smith & Wesson added weight by extending the cylinder to the end of the frame and providing a bull barrel. This brought the weight up to 48 ounces with a 6½" barrel but the gun was still basically the Model of 1907 without the third locking feature at the front of the cylinder which gave the Triple-Lock its nickname.

Ruger caught wind of the new development when a discarded .44 Magnum brass case was found on a scrap heap. With nothing but this to work with, Bill Ruger went to the drawing board to come up with his .44 Magnum. Three .357 Blackhawks were rechambered to .44 Magnum and when one blew with a proof load, the .357 frame and cylinder were enlarged and the .44 Ruger Blackhawk became reality, and in some parts of the country actually hit the shelves before the Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum.

Elmer Keith, writing in the 1958 *Gun Digest*, with "The .44 Magnum . . . One Year Later" reported that he had fired the big .44 Smith & Wesson at least 600 times during the year using both handloads and factory ammunition. By today's standards, this is not much of a test. Silhouetter's often shoot this many rounds in a week, and I have often run through 600 rounds and even more in a single day of testing guns and ammunition.

Troubles with the .44 Magnum revolvers surfaced when silhouetters started pounding thousands of rounds through them in short periods of time. Forty-four silhouetters began to choose Dan Wesson and New Model Ruger .44's for the simple reason that they will take

more punishment, in the form of both more loads and heavier loads, before they shoot loose.

My favorite .44 Magnums are the first .44's, namely the Ruger Flat-Tops and the Smiths & Wessons. Weighing in at three pounds instead of four, they pack easily.

I especially like Smiths. They have the best trigger pulls, both double and single action, of any factory revolver. They are also without a doubt the best looking double action revolver to ever exit a factory. The lines of a Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum sixgun can only be described as classic.

The only revolver I have that is engraved is a four-inch Model 29. And I've owned more Smith & Wesson Model 29's in the past 30 years than Ruger Super Blackhaws, Redhaws and Dan Wesson Model 44's combined.

The Smith .44 performs perfectly for me. *But*, I rarely push them. Probably 95% of the loads through my Smith's are 20.0 to 21.0 grains of #2400 and a 250 grain cast Keith bullet. These loads gives muzzle velocities of 1200-1350 fps and combine accuracy, power and long gun life. They are, in reality, not much more than heavy .44 Special loads. That is exactly what I use the Smith & Wesson Model 29 as—a heavy .44 Special. The same holds true for my Ruger .44 Flat-Tops.

One Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum that I bought in 1961 is still like new after thousands of rounds simply because it has never had a load through it any heavier than a 250 grain cast bullet at 1300 fps. We understand each other. I don't abuse it and it continues to perform perfectly for me.

With my Ruger Redhaws, just the opposite is true. Probably 95% of the loads through my Redhaws are bullets of 300 grains pushed at 1400 to 1500 fps. The reason is simple.

Smith & Wessons are like thoroughbreds, Rugers are like Clydesdales. Both horses are beautiful, both are winners, but they serve different purposes.

The Smith & Wesson is a "gentlemen's" sixgun; the Ruger is a sixgun that will take heavy loads, rough service and still come up shooting.

Why the difference? What makes a revolver strong? Why will Redhaws and Dan Wesson Model 44's handle 300 grain bullets at 1400 to 1500 fps and still come up shooting?

Every revolver that is chambered for a cartridge that develops heavy recoil must face the problem of "shooting loose." Shooting loose is a term that describes the loosening of the parts that mate together. When new, the cylinder locks up tight. After an extended period of time of firing heavy loads, the cylinder starts to develop both end-play and side-to-side play.

On a double-action revolver, quite often the crane will also loosen and a distinct space can be seen at the point in front of the



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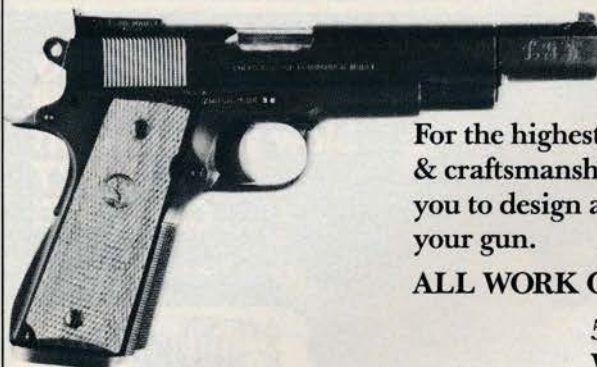
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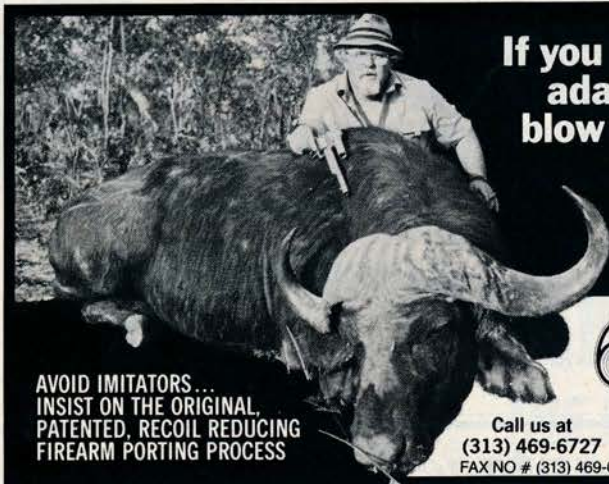
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frame that was originally fitted very tightly.

It is inevitable; it is going to happen. As the revolver is fired with heavy loads, metal parts pound against each other and wear takes place. For some revolvers, it may only take a few hundred rounds, for others several thousand. But it will happen. The larger and stronger the parts are to begin with, the longer the inevitable can be avoided.

The real potential of the .44 Magnum cartridge has just been realized in the last 10 years, or less. Loads with 300 grain bullets at 1400 fps are becoming the norm for those who choose to hunt big game with a .44 Magnum. These 300 grain/1400 fps loads will not blow a Smith by any means; they are within industry pressure standards for the .44 Magnum.

We are not talking about a gun blowing apart but shooting loose. The Smith & Wesson is safe with high performance loads. But at 25% less weight and smaller parts than a Redhawk or Dan Wesson, it is pounded harder in recoil than the heavier .44's.

With new 300 grain bullets designed to be seated out to full length in Redhawk cylinders, 1500 fps is possible, and safely so, in 7½" barreled Redhawks. Attempting such velocities in the Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum would be foolish to say the least.

The whys are easy to answer. I measured a number of .44 Magnum revolvers for a comparison with the following results. (The original .357 Blackhawk is included since Ruger first chambered .357's for the .44 Magnum);

FIREARM	CYLINDER	TOP STRAP	
	Diameter	Thickness	Width
S&W 1950	1.700"	.225"	.656"
.44 Spl.			
Ruger .357	1.670"	.248"	.714"
Blkhwk*			
S&W .44	1.713"	.225"	.657"
Magnum			
Ruger .44	1.725"	.226"	.715"
Blkhwk			
Ruger Super	1.725"	.218"	.713"
Blkhwk			
USA Abilene	1.725"	.317"	.678"
.44			
Ruger Bisley	1.730"	.257"	.716"
Freedom Arms	1.750"	.240"	.779"
SA			
Dan Wesson	1.765"	.341"	.670"
Model 44			
Ruger	1.778"	.260"	.712"
Redhawk			
Ruger Super	1.780"	.371"	.710"
Rdhwk			

*Original .357 Blackhawk was built on a medium frame. Modern .357 Blackhawks are on a large frame.

**Five shot cylinder.

The heart of a revolver is the cylinder. Wall thickness and location of the bolt slot are very important. Both Ruger and Dan Wesson have bolt shots that are offset instead of under the chamber as all double action sixguns before the 1980's. Look at

the bolt on a Dan Wesson and you will find that it is *huge*.

Both the cylinder and the frame of a .44 Magnum flex when a load is fired; if they did not the gun would shatter. The more flexing, however, the quicker the gun shoots loose. Dan Wesson .44 Magnums and Ruger .44 Magnums, both single and double action, have massive top straps. This reduces the flexing of the frame when heavy loads are fired.

Smith & Wesson was moving in the right direction in 1907 when the cylinder of their New Century was locked at the front as well as at the rear. Because of the expense of machining, the triple-locking idea was dropped and the Smith & Wesson's now have their cylinders locked at the rear and at the front of the ejector rod. This gives a flexing distance between locks of four inches.

How about a large framed Python in .44 Magnum?

The engineers from Ruger and Dan Wesson understood how critical this was when it came to building a really strong revolver. Thus both the Redhawk and the Dan Wesson, and now the Super Redhawk, lock their cylinders at the rear and at the front of the cylinders. This changes the flexing distance from four inches to approximately two and one-half inches.

This is probably the most important engineering feature for providing a revolver that will take a lot of punishment before it shoots loose. Of course, all single action .44 Magnums also enjoy this strength factor.

Ruger and Dan Wesson enjoy a great advantage. They built their double actions a quarter century after the advent of the .44 Magnum cartridge. They built guns around the cartridge.

Smith & Wesson adapted a gun they already had. A gun that first saw the light of day in 1899.

By using larger frames and cylinders, both Ruger and Dan Wesson could also use larger interior parts—larger hands, pawls, bolts and cylinder latches.

Some Model 29/629 owners have complained that their guns unlatch upon firing. That is, the recoil unlocks the bolt and allows the cylinder to rotate backwards. To satisfy myself, I put some heavy loads with both 250 and 300 grain bullets through a 4" Model 29, a 6" Model 629, and a Model 29 and Model 629 both with 8 3/8" barrels.

No problems whatsoever with the cylinder unlocking. But it does happen to some

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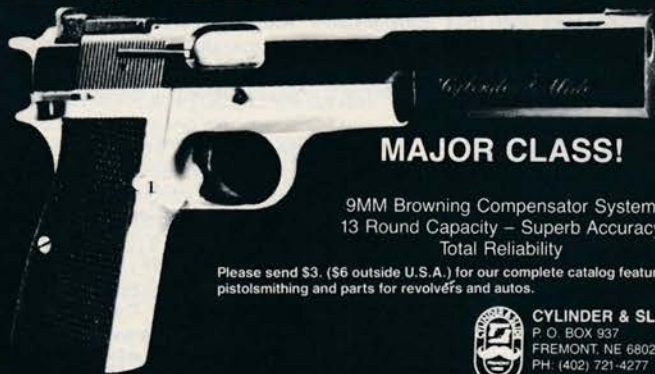
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sixgunner's .44 Magnum Smith & Wessons. The answer would seem to be a larger bolt and a stronger bolt spring.

My hope is that Smith & Wesson will please keep the Model 29 as it is with the possible exception of a stronger locking bolt system. It is the perfect light duty .44. If I had to clean out an alley, I could think of no better revolver than a Smith 4 x .44 loaded with 250 grain bullets at 900-1000 fps. I had Mag-Na-Port build a custom Model 29 4 x .44 with rounded butt, standard hammer and smooth trigger, C-more sights, plus, of course, Mag-Na-Porting. It is my top choice for a defensive sixgun. It packs easily.

Rugers and Dan Wessons, with their larger cylinders and frames, and heavier weight are much more noticeable after a long day.

For hunting, a Smith & Wesson .44 and the same 250 grain bullet at 1200-1300 fps is more than adequate for any deer or black bear. But, how about a companion "Super Model 29?" That is, a larger-framed, larger-cylindered, larger-working-mechanism revolver that is still a Smith & Wesson and will gobble up today's heavy 300 grain bullet .44 loads and ask for more?

And not just Smith & Wesson. How about a large framed Python in .44 Magnum?

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The latest magnum, the .454 Casull operates well above pressures that are too much for any .44 Magnum. Both factory loads and handloads for the .454 Casull go to 60,000 CUPS and beyond.

To handle such pressures, it takes a strong revolver. Dick Casull started with Colt Single Actions, blowing numerous top straps and cylinders. For greater strength, a five shot cylinder was adapted to the Colt Single Action frame, and when this proved to not have an adequate safety margin for the loads that were desired, a totally new frame was designed.

The Freedom Arms .454 Casull obtains its strength from using the strongest steels available, fitting them together with exacting tolerances, and above all a five shot cylinder instead of the traditional sixgun set-up.

Cylinders are fitted very tightly with little or no end- or side-play. Chambers are so tight that all reloads must be checked for fit and most cast bullets must be sized .451" or less. Barrel/cylinder gaps are held below .002", and because of the five shot cylinder, the Casull is not big and clumsy, but manages to pack all this

strength into a 50 ounce package when equipped with a seven and one-half inch barrel.

Freedom Arms had an advantage when they began building the Casull. They did not build it to a certain cost, but built it to safely handle 260 grain bullets at 2000 fps and 300 grain bullets at 1800 fps. The cost was secondary, and that is why a .454 costs 50% to 100% more than other makers .44 magnum revolvers.

Due to demand, Freedom Arms now chambers its Single Action revolver in .44 Magnum and it is built exactly like the .454 which probably makes it the strongest .44 Magnum available.

Sixgunners of the 1980s are fortunate in having the strongest possible sixguns, and fiveguns, available. Every sixgun cannot be treated equally, however. When each sixgun is fed tailor-made loads that do not put excessive strain on the cylinder, frame, or working parts, the result will be long gun life and avoidance of the "shooting loose" problem.

Instead of picking a revolver and then seeing what use we can put it to, it might work better if we decide what function we want our revolver to perform and then buy accordingly.

WILDCATS

Continued from page 66

being chambered in two standard factory production revolvers, the Dan Wesson and the Seville, is probably turned out in the greatest quantities. The .475 and .500 Linebaughs are all custom made, one at a time, so are available, at least for now, on a very limited basis. They should remain fairly popular as American shooters are fascinated with big bore revolvers.

While revolvers can be wildcatted with the fitting of new barrels and cylinders, most semi-automatics simply do not have the strength nor the inherent wildcating capabilities of revolvers. The only standard semi-automatics that have normally been used for wildcating are the Browning designs, Models 1911 and the P-35 High Power. Wildcats that have been built on these are the .38-45, 9mm SuperCooper and the .41 Avenger.

.38-45: This cartridge, as its name implies, is made by necking .45 ACP brass to .38 caliber. Designed by Bo Clerke, the .38-45 was created as light recoiling target round that allowed the use of cheap .45 ACP brass. The bottleneck feature, while difficult to use in a revolver, is of no consequence in the chamber of a semi-auto.

Those who view the .38-45 as a cartridge to be hotrodged run into pressure problems and soon discover that the .38-45 cannot be loaded above .38 Super ballistics. A few TC barrels were chambered



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in .38-45 and the picture changes completely when the .38-45 is fired in a single shot with velocities of 1700 fps possible with a 140 grain .357 jacketed bullet.

The .38-45 actually becomes a viable long range silhouette cartridge when chambered in a 10-inch custom semi-auto as produced by M/S Safari Arms in the early '80s. In such a pistol, the .38-45 equals but does not surpass the .357 Magnum. The advantages are low recoil, target pistol accuracy, and being able to avoid the task of cocking the hammer before each round is fired. The latter allows the shooter to maintain a constant grip for each shot, which could be worth a couple of targets each match.

9MM SUPER COOPER: In the continuing search for more power from the Government Model Colt, noted pistolero Jeff Cooper designed this 9mm Super Cooper in the early '70s to give .357 Magnum velocities in a Colt Commander. Brass is made from .223 rifle cases cut to .38 Super length.

Those who try to push .38 Super brass in semi-autos experience case failure quickly. The 9mm SC uses heavier .223 brass and special barrels that support the cartridge case in the head area, and that also headspace on the mouth rather than on the rim as in the case of the .38 Super. This allows 125 grain jacketed bullets to be pushed to 1750 fps, and 90's to 2000 fps. This is a significant increase over both the standard 9mm and the .38 Super and equal to a long barreled .357 revolver.

.41 AVENGER: Created by well-known handgun hunter and handgun experimenter J.D. Jones, the .41 Avenger is a true .41 caliber on a necked down .45 ACP. The only change necessary to a standard .45 ACP is to remove the barrel and replace it with a SSK .41 Avenger barrel.

Because of the velocities that are possible with this cartridge, Jones recommends .451 Detonics Magnum cases, trimmed .45 Winchester Magnum or .308 Winchester brass be used for making the .41 Avenger. Velocities possible are 1200-1300 fps with the 170 grain jacketed .41 Magnum Sierra bullet and 1100-1200 with 210 grain jacketed .41 bullets. The .41 Avenger is right in the promised land of the 10mm.

Accuracy of the .41 Avenger has proven to be quite good with 25 yard groups hovering in the one to two inch range. While somewhat behind the .41 Magnum in muzzle energy, it has proven itself to be a viable defensive round and adequate for deer sized game at reasonable ranges.

All of the four wildcats on the Browning semi-autos are going exactly the same place. Nowhere! The shooting public seems to have very little, spelled N-O, interest in any of them. That is unfortunate as they are all good special purpose cartridges.

When Warren Center created the Thompson/Center Contender in the 1960's, he, nor anyone else for that

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matter, could foresee the tremendous impact that a single shot pistol would have on the world of handgunning. Consider the fact that the original Contenders were chambered in .38 Special and .22 rimfire, and they have since been custom chambered in cartridges as large as the .50-70 rifle cartridge.

The TC Contender has been wildcatted as no other handgun in history.

Steve Herrett, early in 1972, entered the world of wildcats with his .30 Herrett based on cut-down .30-30 brass. Later, Herrett and Bob Milek worked out the specs for the .357 Herrett. Since T/C's are now chambered in .30-30 and .35 Remington, and especially since both the Herrett creations, with their headspacing on the shoulder rather than on the rim, require very careful reloading, both the .30 and .357 Herrett are on the decline. The Herrett cartridges have also been replaced by many others that are easier to reload and are more potent wildcats. Speer's latest manual does not list either of the Herrett cartridges. Is that an omen?

No one knows more about wildcatting the TC than J.D. Jones, president of SSK Industries. J.D. offers a whole lineup of wildcats for the Contender numbering well over 100 different chamberings. Two of J.D.'s family of wildcats are based on the strongest rimmed cases available, the .225 Winchester and the .444 Marlin.

On the .225 Winchester case SSK offers these wildcats that are made by neck-expanding and fire-forming the Winchester round:

6MM JDJ: This is the groundhog-coyote-varmint cartridge from SSK. Using 75 grain bullets at 2800 fps, it shoots flat and accurately, but is too light for larger game.

.257 JDJ: This is my particular favorite of the "small" JDJ cartridges as I have used it on both deer and chucks to 200 yards. The only reason that it has not been used at further ranges on chucks is the fact that it wears a 4X scope and I can't see 'em. That will change this year as I mount one of the new Burris 2½-7X variable scopes. The .257 will push 75 grain bullets to 2800 fps, 100 grain bullets to 2600 fps and 120 grain bullets to 2400 fps. With 100 grain bullets, Jones calls it a "300 yard deer-antelope gun, if you are up to it."

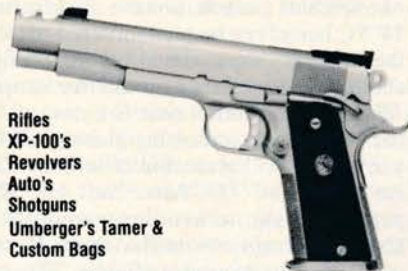
6.5 JDJ: This is SSK's most popular cartridge on the .225 Winchester, in fact it sells more than all the rest put together. Jones recommends 120 grain bullets at 2400 fps for everything: deer, antelope, and silhouettes. It performs so well on game because many of the 6.5 bullets available are designed to expand at the velocities that are obtainable with the 6.5 JDJ.

7MM JDJ: This is also a 300 yard deer-antelope cartridge, in the right hands, and also using the right bullets, namely bullets in the 120-130 grain range pushed at 2400 fps.

On the .444 Marlin case, SSK offers the following wildcats:

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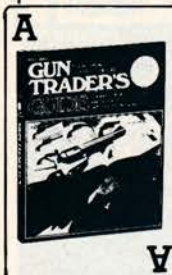
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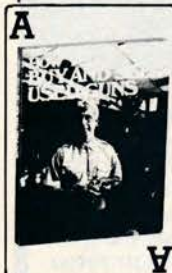
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.430 JDJ: This was the first Handcannon and is simply the .444 Marlin trimmed one tenth of an inch. Since a .44 Magnum 14" TC barrel can be rechambered to .430, this is a very economical big bore single shot. SSK also offers a mould that drops a 350 grain cast bullet that is a natural for the .430 when used on big game at 50-150 yards. The 350 grain bullet will do 1700 fps from a 14" TC. After the .430, SSK began offering necked down wildcats on the .444 Marlin. Now that both Barnes and Freedom Arms are offering 300 grain jacketed bullets, the .430 is starting to look more interesting.

.338 JDJ: Originally offered on the .444 Marlin case, the .338 is now on the .303 British case because of high incidence of case loss when necking from .444 to .338. Using .303 British brass, I've lost a few cases on first firing with neck splits. I like this cartridge using 200 grain bullets at 2000 fps. While not really heavy enough to qualify as a Handcannon, it is an excellent deer cartridge using bullets designed for the .33 Winchester, and it fits nicely between the flat-shooting JDJ cartridges on the .225 Winchester and the bigger Handcannons.

.358 JDJ: Good cartridge made by simply necking the .444 to .35 and fire forming. But, as in the case of the .430, it is hampered by the lack of many suitable hunting bullets in this caliber.

.411 JDJ: Made by necking the .444 to .41, this is another cartridge with potential but hampered by lack of jacketed bullets in the 300-400 grain range. Jones thinks it could be even better than the .375 JDJ if the right bullets are made available.

.375 JDJ: This is it! There are two choices for big game hunting with the TC: first choice, the .375 JDJ; second choice, all the others. For deer sized game, the Hornady 220 grain bullet will do 2000-2200 fps. For the big critters, 270 grain Hornadys can be loaded to 2000 fps, and for the really big ones, the 300 grain Hornady FMJ's will do 1900 fps.

The .375 has been used successfully on Cape buffalo, elephant, and many smaller animals. And the surprising thing about it is the fact that the recoil at the back end is not what one would expect for the results that are possible from the front end. Because there are many excellent bullets available, and also because it can be used on virtually everything, this is the top seller in the JDJ line-up.

This just barely scratches the surface of the SSK line-up. For complete information contact SSK Industries, 721 Woodvue Lane, Dept. AH, Wintersville, OH 43952.

In 1975, Lee Jurras, with an eye towards promoting the Auto Mag pistol, sponsored the first long range handgun silhouette match. The competitors learned a lot from that match; in particular, how inadequate their factory handguns were for what would soon become an official long

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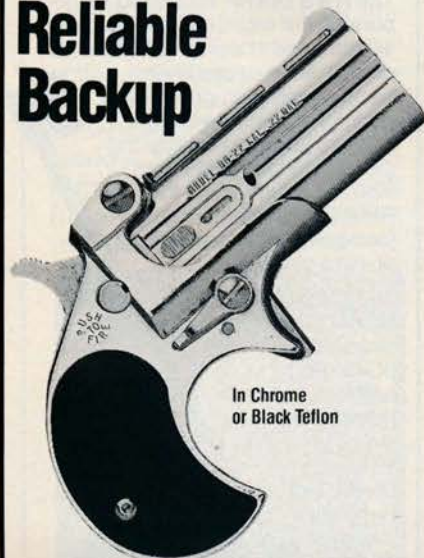
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Very early in the game, Elgin Gates started wildcatting cartridges for both the Thompson Center Contender and the Remington XP-100 concentrating on the .223 and .308 rifle cases. Two of these wildcats, the 7mm-308x1½ and the 7mm/308 are now factory cartridges. Remington lengthened the cartridge case of each by .020" and they became the 7BR and the 7/08. A third, the 7mm/.223 is now factory chambered by TC and known as the 7TCU (Thompson/Center/Ugalde). The 7mm has been the most popular caliber for the single shots for long range silhouetting and three of them still exist as wildcats:

7TCU: Like the .375 SuperMag in revolvers, the excellent little 7TCU has the distinction of being a wildcat that is factory chambered but for which no factory ammo is available. This is the number one cartridge for IHMSA Production class in spite of the fact that it is often found lacking on rams. What it lacks in down-range energy, it compensates for with superb accuracy. With 140 grain bullets, the 7TCU operates best in the 1700-1800 fps range.

7 INTERNATIONAL RIMMED: To give a 7mm with a little more punch, the 7R was developed by necking down and fire-forming either .30-30 or .375 Winchester brass. Bullets in the 140 to 160 grain weight range can be loaded to 2000 fps in the 7R giving much better down-range performance on rams than the little 7TCU. I was privileged to do much of the early load development for the 7R using both 10" and 14" TC's and a 10" Wichita. I found it to be an excellent silhouette cartridge and very accurate, firing a number of iron sighted 200 meter groups that could be covered with my palm.

The 7R remains a wildcat, and is not legal for production competition in the custom barreled 10" TCs, but it is available in the production-legal Wichita. The cartridge itself is destined to remain a wildcat now that T/C is chambering the 7-30 Waters in both 10" and 14" barrels.

7MM INTERNATIONAL: Early in the long range silhouetting game, eight cartridges were wildcatting on .308 brass for use in the Remington XP-100. Those eight, all known as IHMSA Internationals, are .25, 6.5mm, .270, 7mm, .30, 8mm, .338, and .35. The most popular, far and above all the others, is the 7 International. With the capability of pushing both 140 grain and 154 grain 7mm bullets to 2200 fps, this 7 is a sure killer on stubborn rams. Many of the custom XP-100's in this caliber are exceptionally accurate and probably the majority of perfect Unlimited 40's have been fired with the 7 International.

Jim Rock of RPM, manufacturer of the XL (formerly Merrill) single shot pistol, is a long time silhouetter and experimenter. Like J.D. Jones of SSK Industries, Rock

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has worked with a number of wildcats on the .225 Winchester case, notably the .25 Rocket, 6.5 Rocket, .270 Rocket, 7mm Rocket, 7mm Merrill, and the .30 Merrill.

The latest offering from RPM in the XL is the .270 REN, a very mild little wildcat using .22 Hornet brass necked to .270 caliber. The REN, created by Chuck Rensing of RPM, pushes 100-110 grain bullets to 1500-1600 fps and the result is a very accurate cartridge that Rock admits is too light for long range rams "so we head shoot 'em." Both Rock and Rensing do their silhouetting under NRA rules which has a long range unlimited standing class that allows the use of scopes. Because of the low recoil 270 REN, it can be used with close eye relief scopes. The REN is a natural for NRA Hunter Pistol also.

Handgun wildcatters have been on the leading edge of cartridge developments for over 60 years. Quite often, their developments go unnoticed by the general shooting public, but once in a great while a spark is ignited and everyone benefits. Handgun hunters are now reaping the benefits of such wildcats as the flat-shooting 6.5 JDJ and the powerful .375 JDJ and .500 Linebaugh.

Wildcatting has resulted in the .357 Magnum, .41 Magnum, .44 Magnum and the .454 Casull in revolvers; the 10mm in semi-autos; and the 7BR and 7mm/08 in single shots. Is there enough interest in silhouette wildcatting to continue to develop new cartridges? Or will The Master's be the new focus of wildcatting for the 1990's?

Have we reached the outer limits of handgun development, power, and size? Remember, at one time the .357 Magnum was regarded as the ultimate in handgun power. Long live the wildcatters.



AYOOB FILES

Continued from page 40

enforcement officers and civilians (including one man in camouflage firing a tripod-mounted M-14) had begun to rip off chunks of concrete from the protective wall around the observation deck, forcing Whitman to keep low and fire through the drainage slits."

No, we don't know where you can get a "tripod-mounted M-14." We do know that in the mid-'60s, bipod mounts were available for that rifle, and several M-14's were in the hands of All-State civilian rifle teams courtesy of DCM, and more in the hands of civilian military reservists who shot rifle competition. The point is, this return fire greatly hampered the Texas Tower Sniper's ability to keep killing innocent people.



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A-1948

By 1 p.m., four men had negotiated their way through the killing zone to the base of the Texas Tower. They were Austin police officers George McCoy, Jerry Day and Ramiro Martinez, and a private citizen named Allen Crum, an ex-airman who had been lent a rifle by a member of the Texas State Police.

As they made their way upward, they paused on the 27th floor to discover the battered bodies of three of Whitman's victims, his first of the day, and four terrified victims who had been hiding there hoping to stay clear of Whitman since the murder spree had begun. Day escorted the survivors out—a safety requirement, since it was not yet known that Whitman was alone and without other armed accomplices in the building—and Crum joined the other cops on the final, fateful ascent to the roof.

The police buckshot tore through the mass murderer's brain.

Whitman was now situated on the northwest corner of the observation deck. Crum moved in along the south wall, with the cops paralleling him on the north side.

Whitman had sensed that the rescuers would counterattack soon; he had laid down his long-range guns and picked up the fast-handling M-1 carbine. Suddenly, he began moving toward the avenue where the cops were approaching. It is now believed that he had heard a sound and was moving to a position where he could shoot them down from ambush.

But Allen Crum caught the killer's movement. He couldn't see Whitman well enough for a clear shot, so he opened fire into the abandoned corner of the observation deck behind the gunman, trying to draw his fire.

Crum won that desperate gamble. The blast of the armed citizen's rifle made the killer pivot toward the sound. He raised his rifle in Crum's direction.

In that same instant, the cops rounded the corner of the observation deck and saw Whitman bringing up his carbine toward Crum. Had it not been for Crum's volley, that weapon would already have been pointing toward the cops and blasting them into eternity.

Out of the corner of his eye, Whitman saw the officers. He must have realized he had been tricked, because he showed panic clearly in the heartbeat before Officer Martinez put the first bullet into him. Martinez would say later, "(Whitman) jerked the carbine toward me. He

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couldn't keep it level. He kept trembling, going up instead of coming down with it. I don't know how many shots I fired."

Martinez had lost count of his shots. Most cops in firefights do. Autopsy would show that he fired all six .38 Special rounds from his service revolver, and all six scored. The gunman was hit in the left side, both arms, and both legs.

Whitman began to fall, but the gun was still in his hands and he was struggling to aim it at the officers. McCoy stepped around past Martinez and blasted Whitman with his shotgun. Whitman was slammed back to the floor of the observation deck, but still spastically tried to bring his weapon to bear. Martinez grabbed the shotgun from McCoy's hands and moved in rapidly, pumping and firing again and again as he went. Martinez would state, "He was still flopping and he had that carbine in his hands . . . and I ran at him and shot at the same time."

The police buckshot tore through the mass murderer's brain and shredded his heart. Whitman's arms jerked outward and the carbine fell away. There was no further movement.

The worst mass killer in the nation's history up to that time was dead. The 96-minute reign of terror had ended.

The shots that set the killer up for his demise had been fired by an armed citizen, and those same shots had kept Charles Whitman from murdering the two policemen he had been waiting in ambush for. Though Allen Crum's name would be ignored by future historians, he had unarguably become the Hero of the Texas Tower.

A classic example of armed citizenry in action was the infamous Last Raid of the Daltons at Coffeyville, Kansas on October 5, 1892. The criminals had intended to rob two banks at once. In addition to money, the robbers sought to achieve glory—to, as one of them put it, "outshine Jesse James . . . he never tried this."

On that point, the gang member was correct. Had the Dalton crew better studied the history of their role model, they would have learned that the Jesse James-Cole Younger gang had gotten creamed by the armed citizens of Northfield, Minnesota nearly 20 years before on September 7, 1876.

The armed citizens had, in fact, shot them to pieces. During the initial robbery, the gang had shot and wounded one unarmed, fleeing bank employee, and tortured and killed another. But once the alarm went up, the gun battle was totally one-sided.

Not another citizen would take a bullet, but their avenging fire would kill gang members William Stiles and Clel Miller and severely wound Bob and Cole Younger. The replay in Coffeyville would be much bloodier—and, unfortunately,

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much less one-sided.

Five men rode into Coffeyville that day. Gratton Dalton, the eldest of the brothers, led Dick Broadwell and Bill Powers into the C.M. Condon & Company Bank, while Bob Dalton, the deadliest marksman in the crew, took baby brother Emmett Dalton across the street to the First National Bank of Coffeyville. They could have been a bit less conspicuous: not only were most of them known to some of the townspeople (Grat's false whiskers notwithstanding), but the lever-action Winchester rifles they carried were something of a giveaway.

While the bandits were inside demanding money on pain of death, the alarm had been sounded outside. In those days, there was no FDIC. The citizens' money was in those banks uninsured. The Dalton Gang wasn't just robbing the bank, it was robbing the *people*, and the people bloody well knew it.

The movies to the contrary, Kansas townspeople in those days did not walk around packing sixguns in buscadero rigs and scabarding a Winchester to every saddle. The fact is, not a single citizen had a weapon ready to hand. Even the city marshal, one Connelly, had left his service revolver at home that day.

That was the bad news. The good news was, two hardware stores in proximity to the bank were well stocked with guns and ammunition. The proprietors of Isham Brothers and Mansur Hardware, and of Boswell & Co. Hardware, had money in those banks too. They handed out guns and ammo faster than vendors passing out hot dogs at a ball game. Henry Isham, senior partner in the latter store, joined in the shootout as well.

Among those queuing up at Isham's for hardware was John J. Kloeher, a hard-working man of Teutonic extraction who well understood the tradition of *Scheutzen*. He had worn his fingers to the bone establishing the livery stable of Le-wark & Kloeher, and the accounts he had laboriously built up in Coffeyville's banks were not going into bandits' pockets if he had anything to say about it.

One historian says the rifle he was handed was definitely a Winchester, and another researcher describes it as a "buffalo rifle." This magazine would like to hear from anyone who has more details, but the gun sounds like a Model 1886 lever action chambered for .45-70 or a cartridge of similar power.

The first shot of the fray was fired by citizens, a volley that shattered the windows of the Condon Bank. The citizens drew first blood—what was, for a while, the only blood shed from the bad guys.

A bullet tore into the right arm of Dick "Texas Jack" Broadwell. Witnesses heard him say, "I'm shot! I can't use my arm! It's no use! I can't shoot anymore!"

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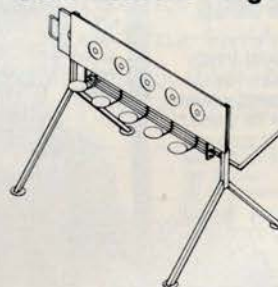
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cash and were the first to hit the street. They exited the back door into an alley, away from the up-in-arms residents of Coffeyville who were out front on the street.

Bob Dalton confronted Charles Gump, who raised a double barrel shotgun he'd just procured at Isham's. Dalton fired first, sending a high-powered bullet just under the twin barrels of the smoothbore. That slug shattered the fore-end and hit the disassembly stud of the weapon, and went on to smash Gump's hand and forearm. Gump staggered into the nearest door, leaving behind a blood-splattered shotgun in three pieces: stock and receiver, fore-end, and barrels.

It is his last act. As he enters the alley, focusing on the getaway horses, he does not realize he has turned his back to the wounded and raging Grat Dalton who is only 20 feet behind him. Dalton shoots the marshal in the back. The lawman pitches forward to his face, twitching and helpless. He is mortally wounded.

At the same time, Dick Broadwell and Bill Powell have made it to their horses. Where one historian says it's impossible to say who chalked up the first bandit death, a second names the shooter.

Bill Powell, already wounded once, is trying to climb into his saddle. John Kloehr raises his Winchester and fires from offhand. The heavy bullet strikes the robber in the back. Witnesses describe a violent jerking motion as Powell falls away from the horse. He sprawls in the dust beneath the animal. Bill Powell has been killed instantly. He is the first of the Dalton gang to die this day.

Broadwell leaps into the saddle and kicks his horse to a gallop. Carey Seaman fires his shotgun and "Texas Jack" twists in the saddle. Then the German-American fires his heavy rifle, and Broadwell appears to be slammed forward in the saddle, his face hitting the horse's neck. Horse and rider continue the gallop. Broadwell is still sprawled across the neck of the horse, either unconscious or deliberately holding a low profile position the way men trained to fight from horseback have learned.

Broadwell's mount takes him out of town. Half a mile out, he falls dead from the saddle, and the horse will be found wandering near the corpse. Broadwell has been hit by Seaman's buckshot, and Kloehr's rifle bullet has gone from back to front through the middle of his torso.

On one side now, Emmett and Bob Dalton are still up and running, untouched by any defensive fire. Down the alley, Grat Dalton is severely wounded and plodding toward the getaway horse that the fallen marshal was trying to cut him off from.

But Bob and Emmett make the mistake of coming into view of the Isham's group, who open fire. Emmett dives into the nearby alley, still untouched by bullets. His brother, the master killer, is not so

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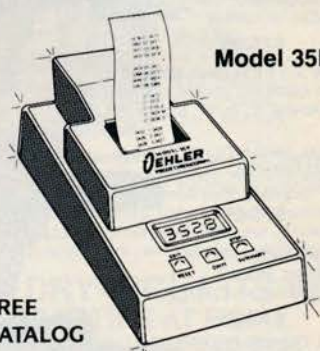
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lucky. Hit in the torso and bleeding heavily, Bob Dalton stumbles into the alley after his brother, leaving a profuse blood trail. He appears to be in great pain; witnesses see him squat on his haunches.

Gunfire is still coming from Isham's. Emmet tries to sneak around for the horses—still carrying the sack of stolen money his friends and brothers are shedding their blood for—while Bob Dalton prepares for his last stand.

He's firing again now from his squatting position, but the shots are going wild. He has reloaded earlier from the cartridge belt at his waist, but now he is running low. He still has a loaded revolver on each hip, but neither has been fired: an eminently practical gunfighter, Bob Dalton knows a rifle job when he sees one.

He knows an enemy when he sees one, too—and now he sees John Kloehr, who has just blown away gang member Broadwell. Bob Dalton tries to bring the rifle to his shoulder but the pain is too much, so he fires from the hip. He misses. Dalton, the blood pouring out of him, forces himself to his feet and leans against the wall of the alley for support as he brings the heavy Winchester up and triggers two more shots at the German he perceives instinctively to be his deadliest foe.

Both bullets miss. Kloehr, as calm and composed as a competitor at a *Schutzenfest*, has carefully brought his own long-barrelled Winchester to bear and begun to squeeze the trigger. Now, at last, the shot is fired—and the witnesses see Bob Dalton, probably the straightest-shooting gunfighter in Western history, appear to be flung violently backward. Dalton falls hard onto his back in the dusty alley, his rifle clattering away. Kloehr's "buffalo hunting" bullet has struck him in the center of the chest.

There are two versions of what happens next. Each variation of the tale has its staunch supporters. But no researcher argues who shot who, because the witnesses saw it.

The wounded Grate Dalton has staggered to the mouth of the alley, seeking the horse Marshal Connelly had tried to keep him from. He stands next to the body of the dying, motionless lawman. Some say that he saw John Kloehr shoot down his brother, and brought up his gun to kill him. Others say that Grate Dalton aimed his gun at the head of the downed marshal for a *coup de grace* and that Kloehr yelled, "You there!" Only then, supposedly, did Grate Dalton turn toward the rifle-armed German and aim at him.

Whichever way it happened, we know from the eyewitness statements that Grate Dalton attempted to aim at John Kloehr—and that Kloehr shot him first. The Winchester bullet smashed through Dalton's throat and into his cervical spine, blasting it to splinters. Grate Dalton was dead before his corpse thudded heavily to

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the ground, next to the marshal he had murdered.

Only Emmet Dalton was left, amazingly still unhurt. Still carrying the cash, he had mounted up and maneuvered his horse between a group of tethered horses as cover from the citizens in Isham's store. When they opened up, their volley killed two of those horses. One bullet hit young Dalton in the arm, and the other entered his left buttock, smashing the hip and exiting his groin.

Now came the single act of compassion that the Dalton gang would display this day. Emmet Dalton rode to where the big brother he idolized lay, and leaned forward in the saddle, dripping blood, reaching his hand down to pick him up.

Bob Dalton uttered his last words in a barely audible croak: "It's no use."

Those words were instantly proven to be prophetic. Carey Seaman had maneuvered in behind the wounded horseman, and now he raised his shotgun. BA-BAM! Witnesses said Emmet Dalton appeared to be catapulted off his horse as he took the two barrels of double-0 buck.

They say there was a long moment of silence before the first townsman cried, "They are all down!"

The gun battle had lasted 12 minutes. Emmet Dalton would be the sole survivor of the Dalton Gang in Coffeyville. His last act of brotherhood had saved his life. Seaman had aimed for the center of his back, but young Dalton had bent so far forward reaching down for his brother that the 18 buckshot pellets caught him at a raking angle, destroying back muscle and shoulder blade but skidding past the vital chest organs.

The other four were dead. The bullets that finally killed Grat Dalton, Bob Dalton, and Dick "Texas Jack" Broadwell were unquestionably fired from John Kloehr's rifle, and one historian believes it was Kloehr's unerring fire that killed Bill Powell as well.

Though all four had already been wounded and the first three might eventually have bled to death had Kloehr not shot them, consider that Grat Dalton was already severely wounded when he murdered Marshal Connelly and that he and the others could have killed more citizens before they fell had Kloehr's accurate, powerful rifle fire not sledged them down when it did.

Thus it was that while a sadly unprepared lawman fumbled and died, a band of armed citizens annihilated a lethal and heavily-armed bandit gang less than a hundred years ago, and one man—John J. Kloehr—was single-handedly responsible for neutralizing 60% to 80% of the murderous band, including the man some experts believe may have been the deadliest marksman of the frontier outlaws, Bob Dalton.

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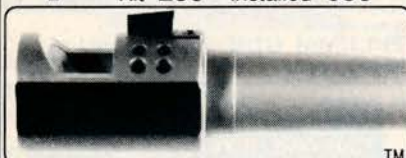
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beyond doubt to have been cold-blooded, cowardly murderers of helpless victims. Perhaps, instead, thinking modern Americans should pay tribute to the likes of Allen Crum and John Kloehr, good and decent men willing to pick up a gun and face incredibly lethal murderers in the defense of their communities.



The author wishes to acknowledge the painstaking work of researcher Ron Hansen, author of the historical novel "The Desperadoes" based on the Dalton Gang, and James D. Horan, the brilliant historian whose "The Authentic Wild West" series may be the best thing ever written on its subject.

NUMBTHUMB'S NINE

Continued from page 48

Thirdly, the potential Wondernine shooter would rather have a revolver anyway since all Wondernines are Double ("the solution to a nonexistent problem," quotes that Cooper fella) Action.

A partial listing (this week) of available Wondernines includes: the 18 shot Steyr GB (Golly Bang?), the 13 shot Star Model 30, the Smith & Wesson 59 and 459—a pair of 14 shooters, the 13 shot Llama Omni (which also does duty as a scientific magazine and is available in the Carl Sagan autograph model), the Korth Semi-Auto pistol and lease-breaker (at \$2475.00 each who can pay the rent?), the Glock 17 and 19, a pair of 17 and 15 shooters respectively (which come complete with a repair and cleaning kit having Armorall and Testor's glue), the Browning Double Action (another "solution" gun), another 13 shooter, the CZ-75, a 15 shooter (having a bluing job by Earl Schieb), and last but not least, the darling of the U.S. Army, the 15 shot Beretta 92F (which comes complete with a tiny scale model of the San Andreas faultline engraved in the slide).

Neither my wife nor myself were able to discern which Wondernine was the most wonderful so we didn't purchase one.

Insaultnines are a class of weapons designed for those shooters who are legends in their own minds. In order to find this class of nine appealing, one has to over-look the fact that they are gosh-awful ugly. They are too big to be pistols, yet too small and underpowered to be rifles. And they lack the sole redeeming feature of the class of weapons they mime—a selector switch.

For those who miss my drift, an Insaultnine is an assault pistol, the very idea of which I find insulting. Only a pea brain would "assault" a position with a

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shot Gonz High Tech Long Pistol (and no,
I didn't make it up), the 16 to 32 shot
Holmes (Dr. Watson split after Sherlock
designed this one) MP-83.

If you like this sort of thing (I'll pass)
go for it.

Clonenines are Wondernines in which
the names have been changed to protect the
guilty. For example, we have the Taurus
PT-99 (which is either Commander
McHale's boat or a copy of the Beretta 92);
the FIE "TZ-75" (a T is a C in Italian); the
Kassnar PJK-9HP (which is ole P.J.
Kassnar's version of the Browning High
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because Submachinenines are very hun-
gry. Farmers also use Submachinenines to
trim scrub pine down to a level short
enough for a bushhog to finish the job.

Again, we have (this time the genuine
articles) Uzi's and MACs along with guns
from Sterling, Sten, Steyr, and Lanchester
(sounds like a law firm), the Czech Samo-
pal 62 "Skorpion" (what every terrorist
wants for Christmas), the Machinenipistole
38 and 40 (known worldwide as
"Schmeisser", yet he had nothing to do
with it. Why didn't they name it the S.A. 38
and S.A. 40? I didn't have anything to do
with it either!); the Walther MP-L and MP-
K, the H&K MP-5, the Socimi Type 821 (it
took 'em 821 tries to successfully copy an
Uzi?), the Viking and tons of other rock-
n-rollers.

Due to the fact that I'm too lazy to
reload 9mm cartridges by the gross of
boxes at a time, I pass on ownership
(begudgingly) of submachinenines.

Lastly we have the Regularnines. The
term may not sound sexy, but here is where
the pretty ones hide. A complete listing of
all the pistols in this category would be
impossible so I'll just mention my favor-
ites. (Hey, it's my article!)

Regularnines such as the Arminex Tri-
fire (which falsely indicates a 3-shot burst
capability), the Auto-Ordnance 1911-A1,
the (Superfine-Regularnine) Browning
High Power, Colt's Government Model
and Combat Commander, the Detonics

Continued on page 109


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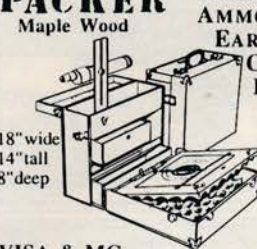
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GUNS STORIES:

THE CASE OF THE "NEWSSTAND NEUROTIC."

10:57 a.m.

Suspect enters Bill's Books & Magazines on 5th and Main and immediately proceeds to magazine rack where he picks up the last copy of GUNS Magazine.

11:03 a.m.

Two unidentified males enter store, also proceeding directly to magazine rack. Suspect nervously peers over shoulder, obviously disturbed by their arrival.

11:04 a.m.

Witness sees one of the unidentified males reach for magazine rack. Suspect obviously mistakes sudden movement for an attempt on his copy of GUNS. Suspect reacts by assaulting both men with a rolled up magazine.

11:16 a.m.

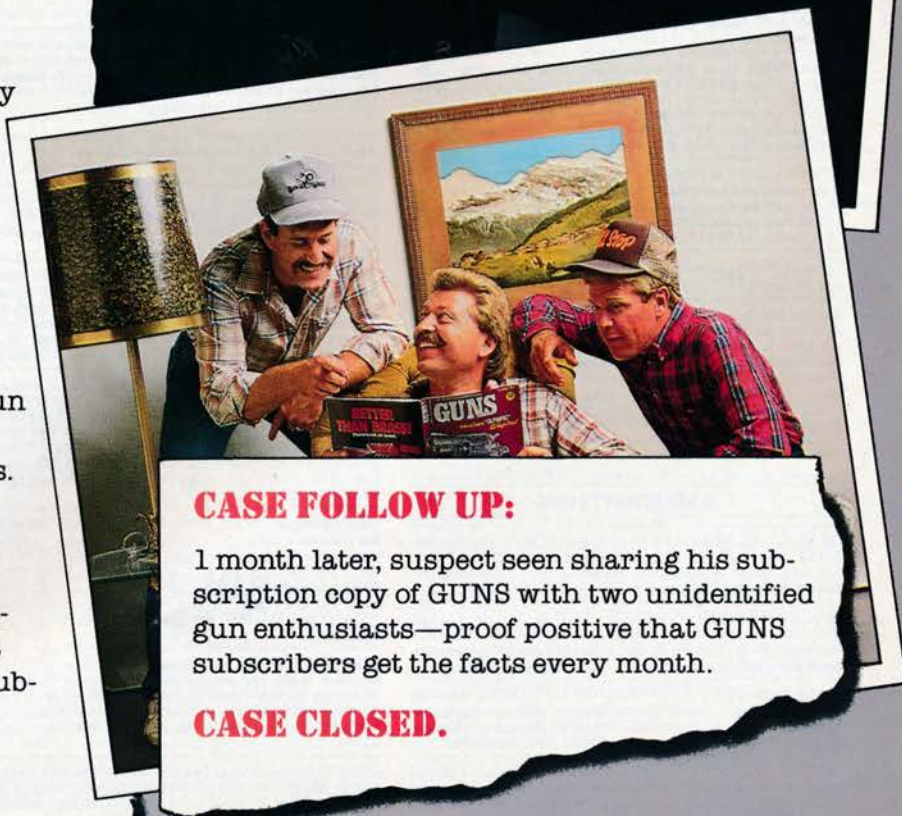
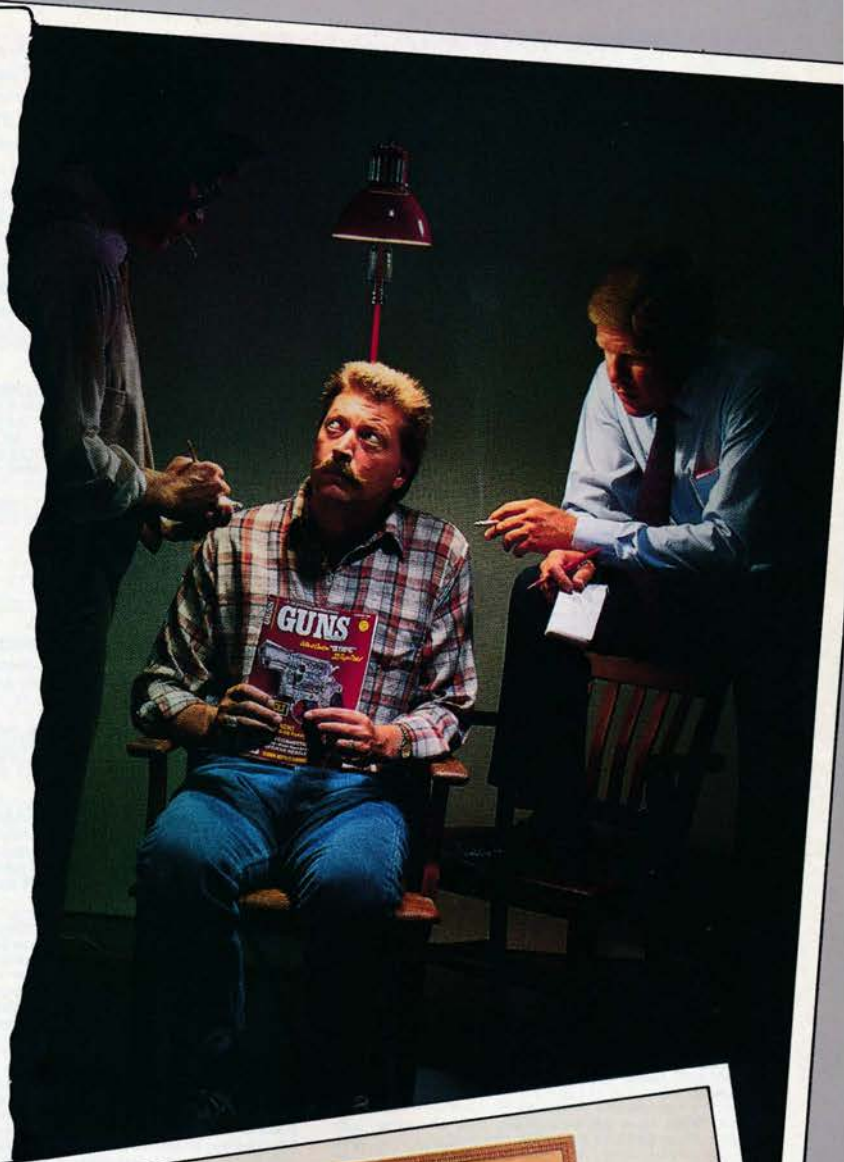
Suspect flees the scene and is quickly arrested for needlessly magazine whipping two innocent fishing enthusiasts.

12:43 p.m.

Suspect confesses to criminal acts. His reason? Nothing was going to come between him and the only magazine he trusted for the latest gun and shooting sport information. He wanted the facts . . . just the facts. He wanted GUNS Magazine.

1:05 p.m.

Suspect is released on his own recognition promising to never frequent newsstands again and agreeing to subscribe to GUNS instead.



CASE FOLLOW UP:

1 month later, suspect seen sharing his subscription copy of GUNS with two unidentified gun enthusiasts—proof positive that GUNS subscribers get the facts every month.

CASE CLOSED.

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NIGHT SIGHTS

Continued from page 37

talking here about the justifiable or excusable violation of game laws under the principle of the legal Doctrine of Competing Harms in a situation where small game must be taken under any circumstances for human survival). Something like a Smith & Wesson .22 Kit Gun with Trijicons would be an ideal choice here.

For the writer, home defense is the most logical purpose for the night-sighted pistols, and those of us who keep them for that have discovered another advantage I've never seen advertised. When you wake up in pitch darkness and need your gun in a hurry, *the glowing green sights*

light your way to the weapon. Particularly when staying in an unfamiliar motel room, you might have to fumble around a bit to find your safety rescue equipment as you awake to the sound of a door being kicked in. Not so with a gun like the Trijicon-sighted P7 we tested: the three glowing dots function like aircraft landing lights in fog, instantly guiding eye and hand to the pistol. With a single dot on the front sight and twin dots on the rear, eye and hand are instantly oriented to where the grips of the pistol are located.

Part of what I teach to advanced classes is building searches, often in darkened premises. This has taken me through many hundreds of searches in pitch-black basements and whatnot. When an intruder who has his night vision has gone to ground, I've learned that the glowing green night sights on the Good Guy's pistol give his position away as surely as a glowing radium watch dial. Held in the low or the high ready, the pistol can be seen by anyone off to the Good Guy's side or to his flank. The rear sight will similarly glow in most conventional duty-type holsters, giving your position away.

There are several fixes for this. A home-made "sight shield" will help somewhat. A better solution is to move with the hand on the holstered pistol; our tests using Pro-Timers indicate that there is only a fraction of a second's difference between drawing with the hand already in position and coming up from a drawn, low ready stance.

With your hand on the holstered side-arm you present a gun grabber with the most difficult possible disarm, and you keep one arm free for defense, balance, and manipulation of light switches, flashlights, and communications equipment.

If the night sight is installed on the front post only, this completely prevents your being given away. However, most of us find night sights index better when the rear sight is similarly treated. This requires a holster that hides the rear sight. A custom leathermaker can produce a scabbard with leather "ears" that come around and cover the glowing sight, rather like those on the old Hank Sloane holster designed for FBI.

With department issue leather, a viable solution for many is to install a hammer shield on the safety strap. This device, a boomerang-shaped small leather attachment that slides right onto the strap, was originally designed to prevent the sharp hammer spur of an S&W service revolver from cutting up the uniform jacket, but on many gun/holster combinations will also cover a Trijicon or similar rear sight. They may be ordered from Don Hume Leather.

Another solution is a conventional butt-up shoulder holster. Since the Trijicons were installed on my P7, I've found myself carrying that gun in a Bianchi X-15 more frequently. An ideal belt holster for night-sighted pistols is the De Santis model 85.

The possibility of giving your position away should not be ignored. One US military Special Forces group discovered Tritium sights a few years ago and soon had them on virtually all their small arms. This lasted until a high-ranking Pentagon official was invited to observe one of their night ops. More than 50 yards away as the expert SF types began their supposedly silent and invisible penetration of the target, the brass hat turned to an aide and asked, "What the hell are all those green fireflies out there?" That particular unit's use of Tritium sights was sharply curtailed thereafter.

Some users have been disappointed to find that after the first couple of shots, the bright flare of the muzzle flash had rendered them unable to still see the small green glow of their front night sight. My experience is that, first, this is most likely to happen with tiny, weak light capsules—one reason I'm partial to the Trijicon, which has a healthy-sized front sight that glows brightly—and that it is most likely to occur with loads that have excessive muzzle flash.

I find that a brightly flaring load—any .357 or .44 Magnum factory round, the new generation of +P .38 Super, +P+ in a .38 Special—can cause the eye to perceive the front night sight as having dimmed out. It is much less of a problem with conventional or +P .38 Special and with standard 9mm loads. In the latter caliber, the Geco Action Safety round, known as the BAT in the US, has a very low muzzle flash in my experience.

I recently shot the FBI Tactical course for qualification at double speed with the Trijicon-equipped P7 in a department night shoot. Light conditions were total darkness save for the rotating blue lamp on an unmarked car 25 yards from the target. The score was a 90% plus, much better than I would have expected with iron sights. Ammo was Federal 115 grain jacketed hollowpoint 9mm. The muzzle flash did not prevent me from seeing the front sight with every shot, and the target was never missed. Flash with such loads is reasonable for night shooting.

The night sight concept comes into its own with a home defense weapon that will be used from an ensconced position against incoming armed intruders. It enhances greatly the chances of a neutralizing first hit, and in this tactical scenario cannot give your position away to an opponent, while significantly increasing your swift, positive access to your defensive weapon in total darkness.

The writer has found the Trijicon product to be the unit of choice, and will be ordering more from that firm. Quality and function are top notch, durability of the sight and quality of installation are second to none, and the price is extremely reasonable, with very fast turnaround time.

For more information, contact Trijicon, a division of Armson Inc., 37716 Hills Tech Dr., Dept. AH, Farmington Hills, MI 48018.



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MILITARY TEST FOR NEW 9mm PISTOL EXCLUDES INNOVATIVE NEW DESIGNS

The military's endless test for a new 9mm pistol plods along. Yawn. The three contenders—**Smith & Wesson**, **Beretta** and **Ruger**—are all still in the running and none of my sources know which one is leading the pack, if in fact one is emerging as better than the others.

Industry observers suspect that if all three guns receive passing marks, the Ruger P-85 has a distinct advantage in the last phase. The final stage of the procurement process, after testing, is the submission of bids. Low man wins.

The Ruger P-85 is the cheapest gun in the test, and I don't mean that as an insult. It's *inexpensive*.

Bill Ruger is quick to point out that the P-85 is the only Made In The USA gun in contention. Perhaps he's splitting hairs, but it's true that Beretta is owned by Italians and Smith & Wesson by Britishers. However, all three guns are fabricated in America.

Which do I think is the best gun for the military? In my view, the best 9mm *service pistol* isn't even running—**Glock**. Ironically, the military's quest to modernize its pistol eliminated the sophisticated Glock by the army's narrowly stringent requirements.

The army insists on "double-action" which it defines as "trigger cocking." Unfortunately, the striker-fired Glock is neither double nor single-action, so advanced is its mechanism. It is "safe action" according to Glock.

Incidentally, the **Heckler & Koch** squeeze-cocking P-7 is also ineligible for this "modernization" because it too doesn't have a 1930's double-action mechanism. Step aside, boys, progress marches on.

The new **Smith & Wesson** catalog is absolutely sensational, a bonanza of lavish color photos and easy-to-read model descriptions. One of my complaints of past S&W catalogs has been the difficulty in sorting out all the options available on the 40 different models.

But the new catalog's color-coded charts, one for each model, tells at a glance that, for instance, a target hammer is available on a Model 19 but not a Model 64. Best of all, this slick new catalog is *free* by writing to S&W Marketing Division, Dept. AH, 2100 Roosevelt Ave., Springfield, MA, 01102.

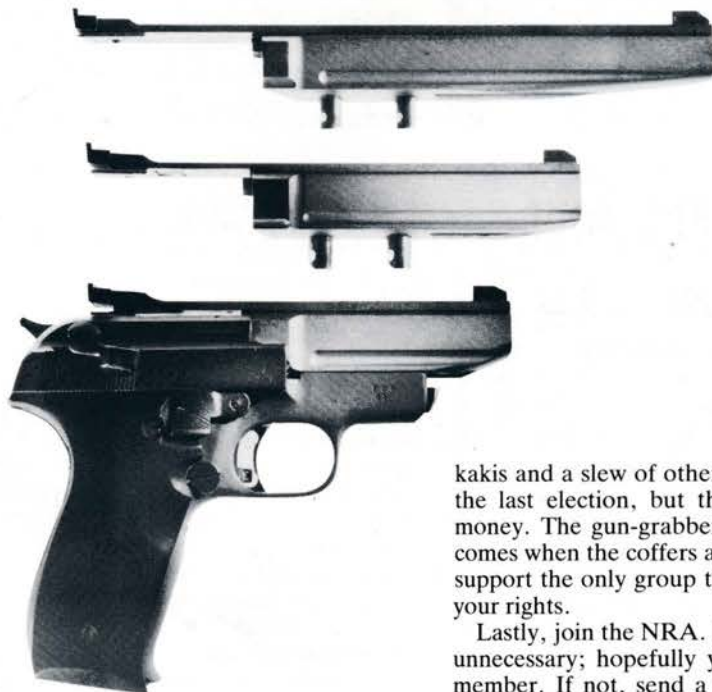
A few issues ago I mentioned the lawsuit filed by **Beretta** against General Motors over the use of the Beretta family name for a car. A settlement has been

reached in which GM will pay \$500,000 to the Beretta Foundation for Cancer Research, plus legal fees. There is also a licensing agreement that allows GM to continue to use the Beretta name for a car model.

The most interesting new guns have an annoying habit of cropping up from mail-order "pay-now-gun-later" companies. We all remember the sad lament of the **Bren Ten**.

So it's my policy to withhold the name and address of any "manufacturer" that advertises pay-now-gun-later. Better to wait and see a gun in the neighborhood gunshop before forking over any cash.

With that caution in mind, check out the **Supreme** auto pistol with interchangeable calibers in .22 LR, 9mm, .38 Super, .30 Luger and .45 ACP. The gun works with a retarded blow-back action and features a "solid cooling rib." It resembles the S&W Model 41 in that the barrel is fixed to the frame while the slide reciprocates.



A company called P.S.M.G. is marketing the Supreme and claims that guns will be available shortly through an exclusive arrangement with distributor Lew Horton. I'll keep you posted.

The new four-digit pistols from **Smith & Wesson** are multiplying. The latest addition is the Model 5903 which is basically a crossbreed between the 5906 and 5904

with a stainless 5906 slide on an alloy 5904 frame. (The 5906 is all-stainless; the 5904 is a carbon steel slide on an alloy frame.)

I understand the new .445 Super-Mag revolvers are being shipped from **Dan Wesson**, which is the good news. The bad news is that brass is hard to find. The only source of .445 brass is IHMSA, which purchased a large quantity from **Brass Extrusion Laboratories**. The word I get is that the folks who run metallic silhouette shooting at the IHMSA headquarters are reluctant to sell brass if you didn't buy your Super-Mag directly from them instead of at a gun shop.

The anti-gun forces are mounting a furious attack on your guns. This insidious attempt to deny you "assault rifles" is but the first step in a move to confiscate all firearms, and guess which ones will be next? Handguns!

If 20 round magazines are evil, how long do you think it will take for 14 round magazines to go? We shooters have never before faced such a savage attack from the anti-gunners. I ask you to do three things:

Write your state and national legislators and demand their vote to stop any anti-gun bills. Make sure you tell your legislators that you will remember their position on this issue when they run for reelection.

Secondly, put your money where your guns are. Send a donation to the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action, 1600 Rhode Island Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036. The NRA helped defeat Du-

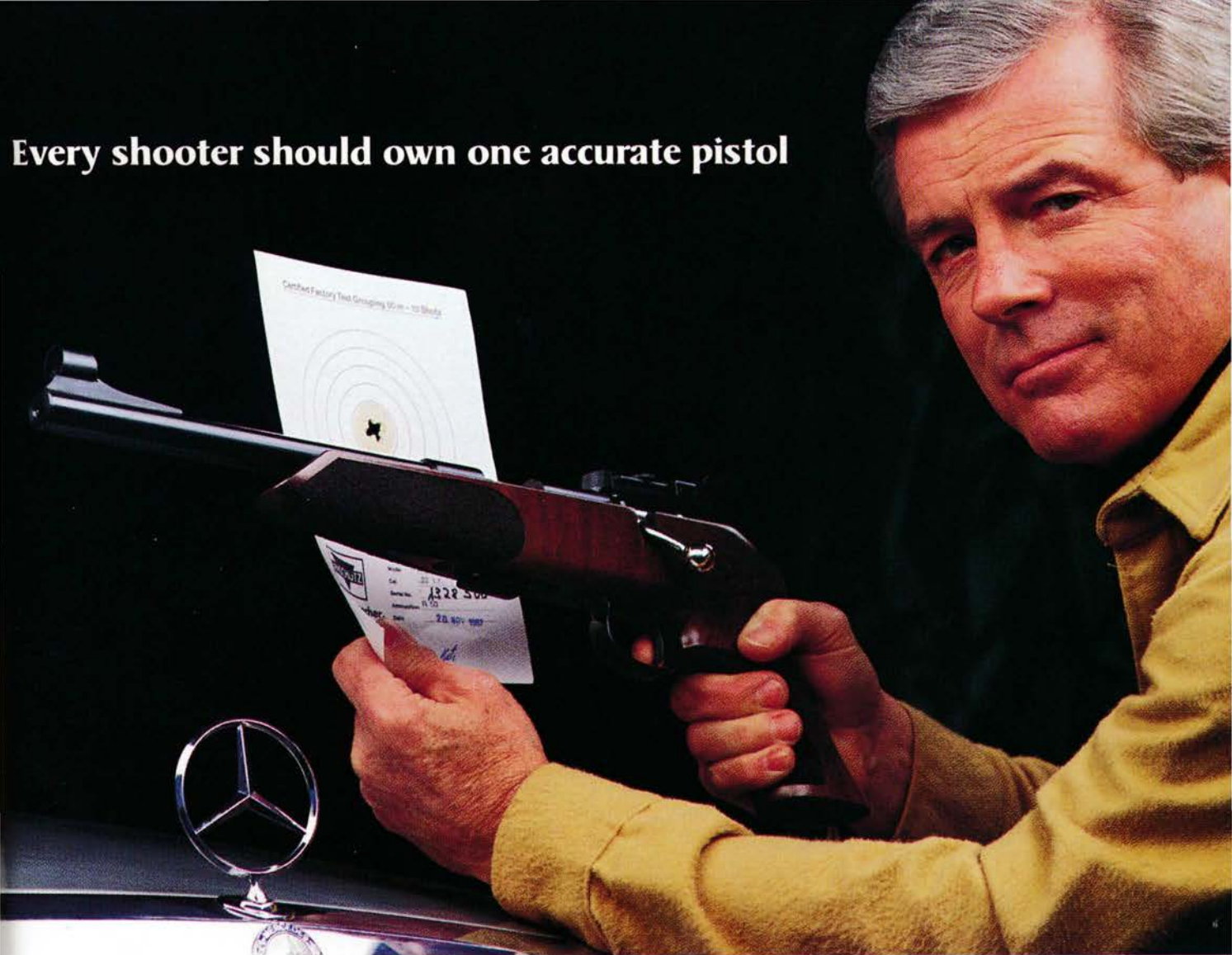
kakis and a slew of other anti-gunners in the last election, but this cost a lot of money. The gun-grabbers latest ambush comes when the coffers are low, so please support the only group that's fighting for your rights.

Lastly, join the NRA. Hopefully this is unnecessary; hopefully you're already a member. If not, send a check today for \$20 to join the NRA at the same address as above, except NRA Membership Division instead of ILA.

Imagine our combined power—if each of you reading this would just send \$5 to the ILA, America's handgunners will have contributed over \$2 million. Like the NRA says, together we stand.



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