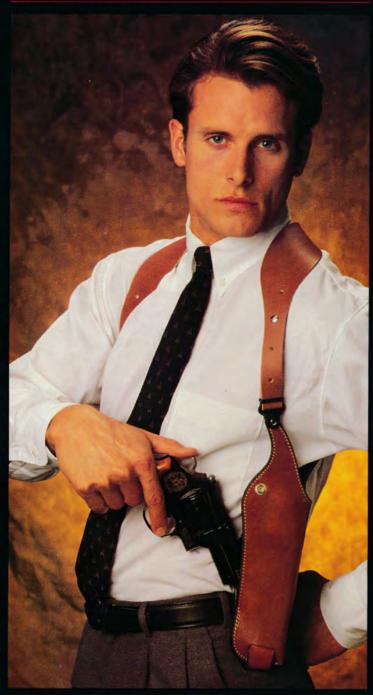


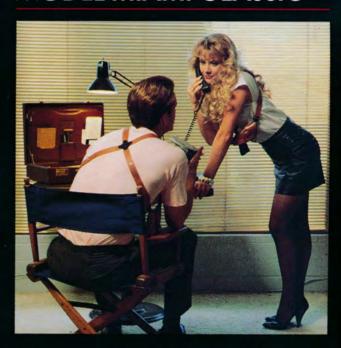


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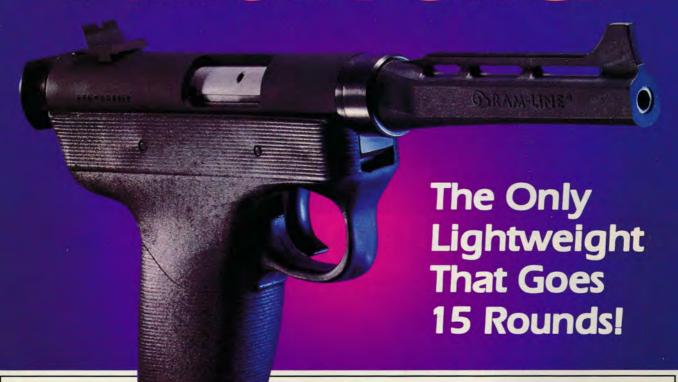
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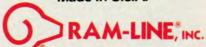
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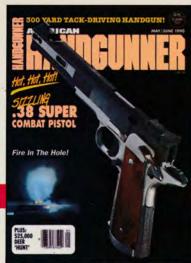
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*Patent #4,509,283, #4,769,938



Jim Boland's incredible custom Colt Lightweight Commander in .38 Super, a "steel sensation." Photo by Ichiro Nagata.







AMERICAN HANDGUNER

MAY/JUNE 1990

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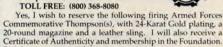
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I'm writing to commend Pete Vicroy and entire staff of Vic International for all their help and expertise in creating what I think is the best comp I've ever tried.

Before buying a comp, I did a lot of research and eventually decided on the Vic Classic. I called Vic and found myself talking to none other than Pete Vicroy, the president. I explained to him what I was looking for and the price range. He explained how his comp worked and all the particulars.

Well, off went my gun to a small town in Ohio where Vic is located. Two days later I got a call from Pete's wife Laurel who informed me that my gun had arrived.

As the time passed I was getting anxious to get my gun, but finally it arrived and I was very please with the work. No tooling marks, bluing matched mine, all very well fitted. I took it to the range and found it even better!

Thanks, Pete and all the staff at Vic International! Keep up the good work!

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Peter J. Baxer Nashville, Tenn.

Airbrushed Nipple

I would like to address an issue of sexual discrimination you seem to be practicing more frequently. Being a woman reader, I am over-whelmed by your sexist match coverage, advertisement and editorials.

Coverage of the 1988 IPSC Nationals addressed the women competitors there as "Amazonians" outweighing their male counterparts by at least 40 pounds. I was not amused.

Once again in your November issue, you demonstrated your distasteful judgement by allowing the advertisement in which a woman in a tuxedo jacket with short-shorts was scantily holding a product. You or someone else had to have airbrushed over this woman's nipple because they just don't grow on the side of the breast, which is all that was showing.

What consumer is going to go out and purchase this product because a halfdressed bimbo is pictured in an ad who probably doesn't know the muzzle from the grip?

Last, but certainly not least, there was the sex kitten in the *Pistolsmithing* col-

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Assembly

umn in your January issue. Although the article was amusing, you have to realize how detrimental this can be to our cause as pro-gunners.

You seem to isolating your magazine toward the exclusive audience of men. What's next, a brown paper cover? If so, let it be known. But in the meanwhile, don't try to sell me gun news between the lapels of half dressed women.

Suzan Cooper Vinton, Va.

Praise The Lord And Pass The Ammunition

I just received your handgun magazine. I sure like getting it. It's a nice book.

I am a holiness preacher and I believe in guns. No country ever won a war simply by the military, no way.

That's why I think everyone is entitled to a gun or whatever they want. Handle the criminal, not the gun.

Don Paytes Loveland, Ohio

P.S. The constitution was written to protect government and also the citizen.

Revolver Man Fires Back

Upon reading the *Handgun Hunting* column by J.D. Jones in the March/April issue, I felt compelled to respond to some of his remarks, especially those concerning the use of revolvers and iron sighted pistols for hunting.

I build and use revolvers almost exclusively, including the heavy .475 and .500 Magnums, and I have to confess that I favor these guns to the scoped single-shots. Revolvers may not be as effective as these guns, but the question of "effectiveness" hinges upon how you define it and the value you place upon it.

Once the question of power is resolved— that which is adequate for the task at hand— then effectiveness does not necessarily become a function of range or precision. "Effectiveness" is a concept best applied to grenades and machineguns, not sporting arms.

In handgun hunting, it is more a question of sportsmanship. Sportsmanship, in turn, is established by the hunter himself. If a revolver hunter using only iron sights stalks within range (whatever that might be) to humanely take the game, he has done what sportsmanship requires.

There is no doubt that scoped guns and single-shot pistols increase your chances of bagging game, but killing is not the only object of hunting. By J.D.'s definition of "effectiveness," we would all use a .378 Weatherby rifle with a 12x scope!

But for many of us, the guns that we like are inextricably intertwined with our hunting experiences. I like the classic, elegant simplicity of fine revolvers. Free from cumbersome scopes and long, unwieldy

Continued on page 12



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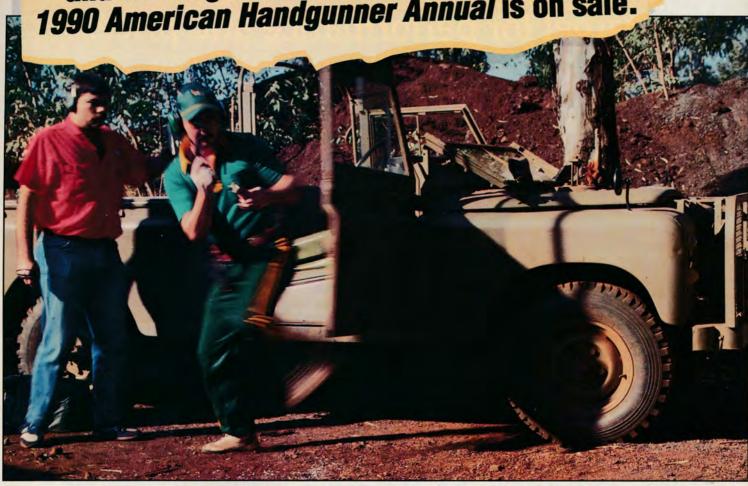
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- A look at Smith & Wesson's 45-16, Century Arms' .50-70 and Springfield Armory's P-9.
- American Handgunner's exclusive Club 100 Pistolsmith directory and BONUS catalog directory.

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SPEAK OUT

Continued from page 8

barrels, they can be carried unobtrusively in small, tidy hip-holsters, not in clumsy shoulder saddle-bags or on slings.

I cannot use large, clumsy handguns that are unnatural and repugnant to my paw. If the gods had intended that I see well, they would have given me fine, clear 3x vision.

To put things in perspective, J.D. raises legitimate and important questions. He is welcome to his views. However, those of us who don't subscribe to his theories of handgun hunting are not diminished as hunters. Some of us just prefer to hunt our own way with our own guns.

Hamilton S. Bowen Bowen Classic Arms Louisville, Tenn.

Gruesome Sport

I am somewhat disappointed in your story (March/April 1990) on the 1989 USPSA National Championships. You painted a gruesome and misleading account of a sport in which thousands of law abiding citizens compete every weekend, not only in this country but across the globe.

As a director of USPSA, I can assure you that very few members are thinking of eye-socket shots or blood letting lung shots.

Yes, IPSC uses a humanoid cardboard target which can be traced back to our founders and their objective of testing *defensive* shooting skills in a realistic scenario. This tradition has been carried on since the beginning and will continue as long as I'm involved in the sport!

Once again you've attacked our Regional Director, Dave Stanford, and his inability to work with the international body (of IPSC) and president J.P. Denis. I will be the first to admit a less than perfect relationship between them, but at a recent USPSA board of directors meeting, Mr. Denis attended and we discussed several issues in hopes of bringing any misunderstanding to an end.

Without a doubt this was one of the most productive and rewarding meetings ever and let me say that in the near future IPSC and USPSA will be closer than ever before.

Marc Halcon USPSA Area Director San Diego, 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.

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RICHARD E. GARDINER

ANTI-GUNNERS WAGE PROPAGANDA **WAR TO BRAINWASH OUR CHILDREN**

new tactic being utilized by anti-gun forces is an assault on the sensibilities of our children. Recent "education programs" devised by firearms foes amount to little more than brainwashing. They seek to implant a fear of firearms-guns are portraved as inherently evil.

Anti-gunners piously proclaim that this psychological warfare was originated in the interest of safety. In fact it was designed to produce an entire generation programmed to look upon firearms with distaste.

The motive, of course, is political. Anti-gunners have experienced years of failure in their effort to bring about outright firearms prohibition. Now they want to build a future political base by invading the minds of our young people.

It's a morally disgusting way to do business, and the end results could be ominous unless we counter with the truth and do it now.

The NRA Truth

And what is the truth? Anti-gunners never mention that during the past 20 years, accidental firearms fatalities have been reduced by 52%, in large part due to non-political firearms safety training efforts by organizations like the NRA.

Non-fatal firearms accidents have also experienced a dramatic decline. In fact statistics show that it's far safer for a young person to participate in competitive shooting than to engage in sports like baseball, basketball, and football.

Hunter safety training is now available across the nation, and some 700,000 youth are certified every year. Our opponents never mention this fact, nor do they

mention that the original hunter safety program was devised and implemented in New York State by the NRA. Now let's look at some other current facts about child safety, facts that anti-gun propaganda efforts choose to ignore.

Firearms Facts

In 1988, the latest figures available from the National Safety Council, show that 2,200 infants and toddlers age four and under died in home accidents.

Of these 2,200 tragedies, 800 were caused by fires.

Drownings were responsible for 350 deaths.

An additional 350 fatalities were the result of a variety of factors, including electrocution, explosive materials, hot substances and corrosive liquids.

Choking claimed 250 young lives, while suffocation was the cause of 220 fatalities.

Falls took the lives of 110 of our children, with poisoning responsible for an additional 60 tragedies.

Gases and vapors exacted a toll of 40 toddlers.

At the bottom of the list were 20 accidental deaths brought about by firearms. We at the NRA deplore any accidental death involving guns, especially when a young life and all its potential are lost.

Yet realism compels us to point out that percentage-wise, the number of small children killed in firearms accidents is a far cry from the insidious fabrications we hear from anti-gun forces and in the media.

Youth Education

Still, the death of any youngster is one

too many. That's why the NRA recently introduced a unique firearms safety program aimed at protecting the lives of small children. The program has no political implications, nor does it seek to portray firearms as "good" or "bad."

Instead we have chosen to rely upon education, rather than propaganda, as a workable tool for reducing accidents. Drawing upon the expertise of elementary education specialists and child psychologists, the NRA has developed a program tailored for elementary school children that pushes safety without condemning personal beliefs or infringing upon rights millions of Americans cherish.

The crux of the message to kids is this: If you find a firearm, stop, don't touch, leave the area, tell an adult. Presented in a creative manner children easily grasp, adherence to this simple procedure saves lives.

The training aids include a coloring book, coloring sheets and posters. Right now 350 schools and police departments are implementing this NRA safety effort. The program has been introduced into 11 school districts in 46 states and hailed as a great success.

What You Can Do

More can be done, and must be done, if we are to circumvent the anti-gun "safety" efforts being devised by those who oppose us. You, the American gun owner, can help by contacting your local legislators.

We need key leadership to assist us in placing this program in every school throughout the nation. There is no better way to deal with the issues of gun safety and parental responsibility, and at the same time avert needless tragedies.

Urge your lawmakers to contact the NRA's State & Local Affairs Division at 1600 Rhode Island Avenue, NY, Washington, DC 20036 (202) 828-6000 for free safety materials that can be distributed throughout your local and regional school systems.

I would also urge you to contact local teachers, school officials and county, district and state education leaders. Explain that you, as a responsible gun owner, want responsible gun safety education available to area youth. Tell them about our NRA program, and what it's designed to achieve.

We all must be aware that legitimate, workable ways exist for reducing firearms accidents. Let's not let our children's lives be used to achieve the political goals of the anti-gun movement and instead truly keep them safe in the responsible manner we now have at hand.

Richard Gardiner is Director of State and Local Affairs for the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action.

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Omega Maverick Sights

Omega Sales of Mag-Na-Port fame is offering two new sights for improved shooting. Shown here are the Outline rear sight blade and the Maverick Range Finder pistol sight.

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The AYOOB FILES

TAXICAB SHOOTOUT: THE MARK YUHR INCIDENT

Situation: An armed robber wants more than your taxi fare and your cab. He wants your life.

Lesson: When cooperation fails, a Colt .45 in a holster works better than an empty wallet.

It is almost midnight, and the full moon over Miami makes the city look the way it does in the art deco travel brochures. Mark Yuhr, 33, enjoys the beauty of his city as he cruises his Dodge Diplomat, a former police car that now wears the yellowish-brown paint job of the Diamond Cab Company, toward the taxi stand near the Tiger Tail Lounge.

A quiet man who lives alone, Yuhr's pursuits include pistol shooting and reading gun magazines like *American Handgunner*.

In this city, it was once impossible to get a concealed carry permit unless you were influential, and even then it was only good in the county of issue. Florida's recent pistol permit reform has changed this. Yuhr is one of the many citizens who took advantage of their right to get a statewide concealed carry permit after paying \$145 for the application and taking a 4-hour firearms safety course.

Under his chamois shirt, cocked and locked, is a Colt Combat Commander .45 auto in a Milt Sparks "Summer Special" inside-the-waistband holster. Almost under the seat, in a small gym bag near his feet, are a spare Colt magazine and a Taurus Model 85 two-inch.38 Special revolver.

Because some gunwriter had urged that all pistols be carried one round down from full capacity, Mark has only six Winchester Silvertips in his .45's mag, and one more in the chamber. Likewise at the advice of gunwriters, his .38 snub is loaded with mild 148 grain midrange target wadcutter loads.

From the Tiger Tail comes a man who seems to fit the upscale, yuppie image of this fashionable Coconut Grove neighborhood. About five-seven, slim but muscular, the man is wearing a well-cut linen suit that looks yellowish brown in the glare of the sodium mercury lights that line the streets. His shirt is open at the throat, revealing gold chains around the neck. The only thing incongruous is the sunglasses the dark-haired man is wearing at 11:45 p.m.

As the dark-haired, clean-shaven customer enters the back seat of the Dodge, he tells Yuhr in a Spanish accent that he wants to go to an address near Coral Way and 27th Avenue. Yuhr puts the taxi in gear.

The sunglasses don't really pique the veteran cabbie's curiosity. There are more than a few strange folks in Miami. What does put him on edge is that as they near the area, the passenger keeps changing the address he says he wants to go to.

When they reach the place the man specified, he points up the street and tells the driver, "Two houses up." Yuhr cooperatively pulls in front of the house indicated. Meaning that they've arrived, the cabdriver says, "This is it."

In a different sense, truer words were never spoken.

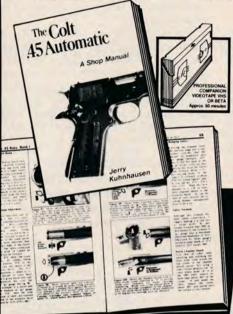
From the corner of his eye, Mark Yuhr watches his passenger reach as if for a wallet. But when the hand emerges, it holds instead a shiny autoloading pistol. Yuhr recognizes it instantly as a stainless or nickeled Smith & Wesson 9mm.

Continued on page 97

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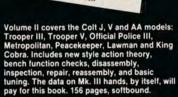


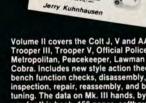
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J. D. JONES

SAGA OF A .45 ACP REVOLVER AND HOW S&W JUST COULDN'T FIX IT

arren Page (now deceased) is a legend among rifle accuracy fanatics. He is the man who made the saying "Only accurate rifles are interesting," the byword of the benchresters. He was a top notch writer and man.

I knew Warren in his later years and maybe learned a little from him. He always assumed any rifle good enough to be marketed was reliable. Things have certainly changed.

Accuracy was secondary to reliability. I sometimes think neither counts very much today with some manufacturers—and writers.

Just a couple days ago I read an article about one of the new *premium* Wondernines that grouped over five inches at around 65 feet from a machine rest. And the author didn't bat an eye— just went on singing the praises of this weapon to the skies.

I know Warren wouldn't have had much respect for either the gun or the in any practical way he can, such as sending it back to the factory or an authorized repair station with the written complaint and urging warranty repair.

If you prefer, you can send it back yourself. Guns you buy at a gun show or from another individual— Let The Buyer Beware is the word of the day. They are usually for sale for some reason and many of the factories will take care of them, but don't bet on it.

Many of the companies have authorized repair centers that do excellent work but are usually not equipped to do major repairs like replace a frame or cylinder. Different manufacturers have different reputations in the field.

If you want to know about a revolver's reliability and durability, try asking a silhouette shooter who has been at the game for five or 10 years, likewise in bullseye or the action shooting game. The guys experienced in the games can tell you what works and what doesn't. They are a great source of information.

man that praised it. Or maybe he would have found the whole thing just—uninteresting.

A Real Dud

Well, just what do you do when you buy a new gun and find out it's a real dud? Frankly, it's between you and the manufacturer as your local gun dealer has nothing to say about what happens after the sale. Obviously he should be interested in your problem and try to assist you For example, the Dan Wesson revolvers have the reputation among silhouette shooters as the most accurate you can buy. On the negative side, the reputation also includes the aside that you may have to send it back to the factory a couple of times to get the most out of it. But, the factory will *eventually* get it right.

Special Guns

After reading all the praise and glory in the slick gunmags of the new S&W

quality push, *new* Third Generation pistols, *new* management and particularly how wonderful the *new* 625-2 in .45 ACP is, I decided to try one.

The following is not intended to embarrass or criticize any writer. The writers' test guns were furnished by the factory and if it isn't common knowledge, it should be that, on occasion, just maybe some of those "gunwriter specials" are a little different than the one you may buy at the local emporium.

Certainly not even the majority of manufacturers make a special selection, but I'm convinced some of them do. Some of the manufacturers have admitted to me that the gun I was sent was a "special." In one case I was told that their chief gunsmith had over 30 hours working on a rifle to get it to shoot the way it did when I received it.

.45 Auto Rim History

I currently own a pair of 1917s, which is really the first revolver chambered for the .45 ACP, as well as a 1950 Target and maybe a 1955 Target. Haven't looked in that safe lately.

The .45 ACP was put into the 1917 as a WW I emergency measure. As in the auto pistols, the case headspaced on the case mouth. The cylinder was cut back at the rear to accept metal half moon clips capable of holding three rounds and provide for simultaneous insertion and ejection of the rimless ACP case.

Sometime after the war, Remington introduced the rimmed version of the ACP case, the .45 Auto Rim. The most popular usage of the guns was to use the .45 ACP ammo without the moons and simply flick the cases out of the chamber with a fingernail to avoid the pain in the you-know-what of loading and unloading clips. In the event of one sticking, another cartridges rim could be used to pull it out.

Shooting The Moon

In common usage the moon clips are prone to be bent. The rim thickness of various cases varies considerably but since the cartridge headspaces on the case mouth, accuracy should not be affected.

Moons can be used until they interfere with cylinder rotation. If the chambers are cut too deep, the cartridge will headspace on the moons and still fire. Accuracy can be adversely affected by moon thickness, rim thickness and bent moons which all can have the effect of giving varying ignition and headspace.

A moon that is bent and still can rotate may lift a cartridge high and give a spongy effect to the firing pin blow. It can be more complicated but I'm sure you get the general idea.

J.D.'s 625 Ordeal

A couple months after ordering the Smith & Wesson 625 from my distribu-Continued on page 20

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HUNTING

Continued from page 18

tor, it arrived. I opened the package to be greeted by the dirtiest gun I've ever seen "new in the box." Haven't seen one that filthy since I last fired a couple hundred cast bullet loads through a revolver.

I popped open the cylinder and the barrel was badly fouled as were the chambers and everything exposed to the effects of combustion. My first impression was a mechanic at the factory had a hell of a time getting this one to shoot well enough to ship.

(S&W advises that one in 100 guns has a full box of ammo run through it in testing; the gun is then cleaned and shipped.)

Personally, I'd call that a used gun and price it accordingly. Would you want to pay full-retail for one of my Handcannons after I'd shot it 50 or 100 times in "testing?" If so, please contact me. I have some used cars for sale too.

The bolt had marked the cylinder all the way around. The rear of the barrel sported a burr large enough to cut yourself on if you hit it wrong.

Cylinder gap was approximately .016" on the left side and a .008" feeler gauge easily slid through the right side.

The crane was simply a mess. The part of the crane that the cylinder fits on at the front should be round and a close match to the front of the cylinder. This one was filed in flats all the way around. The cylinder could be tilted in any direction on it.

Cylinder end-play was excessive. If I had been a dealer buying it for sale to the public, I would have tried to return it to the jobber because of good business practices and the fact no one in the general public is stupid enough to believe this 625 is a "new" gun.

Certainly the gun should have been

Certainly the gun should have been totally cleaned up, at the very least. I can understand a large company taking a chance and putting out a lousy gun on the assumption that the odds are good of it ending up with some schmuck who wouldn't know the difference between a good one and a poor one.

I can understand that. I can't agree with it.

Back To The Factory

I was leaving for a stag hunt in Scotland in a day or two and didn't have time to delve into the 625 any further. Accordingly I returned it to S&W with a cordial note.

After I returned from the hunt I got a postcard from S&W stating that the gun would be repaired and returned in two to three weeks from receipt, and if I had any questions to call.

Since it was about that time already I figured it would be along soon. About six weeks later I decided to call and see if it

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Chino. CA 91710 (714) 597-4726 was misplaced.

My inquiry was met by a lady with a seemingly indignant answer of "We just got that gun. It will be at least another two or three weeks. They are going to refinish it."

Fine, I thought. Fall, the best shooting time of the year, is already over anyway.

I believe I got the gun back December 14 the first time. It still needed the usual trigger job, the cylinder gap was excessive, it had end-play in the cylinder and it needed re-throating and the barrel set back—about what I expect is the average for what I see coming out of the pipeline.

After a trigger job I took it out. Since it was bitterly cold, I decided to shoot from inside the truck. Loaded her up with six 230 grain Federal Match loads, stuck it out the window and got two bangs and a whole bunch of clicks.

Opening it, the problem was obvious— headspace was way off. Tried it with the half moon clips and it went "bang" every time and threw bullets somewhere in the general direction it was pointed.

Elevating the rear sight as high as I dared, it was hitting almost to the point of aim at around 30 yards or so. Accuracy seemed decidedly mediocre combining the Federal Match ammo and my pickup door benchrest. Gave up in about 30 rounds.

Factory Tour, Part II

Being pretty disgusted at this point, I found I could slip a .050" feeler gauge between the case head and standing breech. Another call to S&W and a conversation with a friend revealed that some of the early guns went out that way, but the problem was supposed to have been corrected.

Got the name of the guy to send it to with a letter explaining the problem. Sent it.

Some time later a call from the gentleman, Mr. Maack, informed me that, on examining the gun, they had found a place in the frame that was so thin they were afraid it would bend if I dropped it, so they were going to replace the frame.

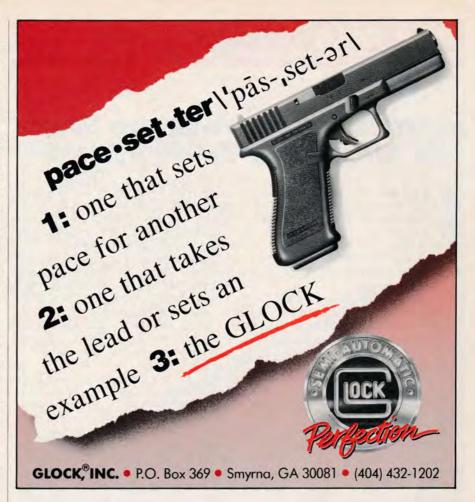
The rest of the conversation revealed that the 625-2 does not headspace on the case mouth— it headspaces on the moon clips. Fifty-thousandths excessive headspace is okay by the *new* S&W and they would not correct that.

It was further revealed that the previous models were made for the .45 Auto Rim cartridge and that had nothing to do with the *new* 625.

In due time the gun was returned. It now has .011" cylinder gap, quite a lot of side play in the cylinder, moderate cylinder end-play and that's about as far as I looked.

After I saw the factory target shot with Federal ammo at 25 yards and the three inch group, well, let's just say I was "uninterested" in the gun at that point.

Continued on page 87





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SAFETY LEVER IS LIFE-SAVING DEVICE AND NOT JUST A DECOCKING LEVER

'm not sure "pet peeve" adequately describes my feelings about something that is getting cops shot. Let's call it a "primary concern in officer deaths."

I'm talking about the current vogue of telling police officers not to use the safety catches on their pistols.

It's the rage today to use Stalin's concept of revisionist history and tell cops that the lever on their S&W or Beretta service pistol ain't a safety catch after all, it's just a decocking lever.

Never mind what the engineers or the patents say about it being a safety. Never mind that the pistol can't fire when that safety is engaged. These instructors tell you to carry off-safe.

One cop who works with me just got back from a seminar where he was told of one agency where the officer whose S&W is found on-safe will be penalized five days without pay. A famous West Coast agency issues a special holster to prevent the service automatic from being carried on-safe.

Just so it doesn't look like pussyfooting, let me come right out of the closet here.

I believe this practice is already getting cops shot and is going to get more of them shot for so long as it continues.

When the Del Rio, Texas, PD was looking for new guns, the evaluation

team pointed out two of several factors that convinced them to select the S&W .45 automatic. One was, they said, that "the FBI rates the 4506 as the Number One choice for law enforcement."

More to the point, they added, they had surveyed other Texas departments and "Austin P.D. said that three policemen were saved last year by the S&W safety systems during struggles with suspects."

Illinois State Police, with more than a score of years with the S&W 9mm, is now well over a dozen saves due to the handgun's design.

Only a few of these are firepower related. All the rest involved suspects who gained control of a trooper's weapon and were unable to shoot him, either because the criminal couldn't activate the manual safety or because the officer had intentionally pressed the magazine release button and activated the disconnector safety so the round in the chamber could not be fired. Numerous other such saves are documented coast to coast.

Undersheriff Eric Cooper of Las Vegas Metro PD told me of one officer who had been saved twice in two separate incidents when his issue S&W Model 59 proved shootable for him but not for the bad guy.

S&W's Tom Campbell documented another double save, a Riverside, California, cop overpowered and disarmed of both his duty weapon and his backup .380 auto. One perp tried to shoot him with one gun, the other with the other. Neither got off a shot. Both the duty S&W 659 and the backup Walther PPK-S were carried on-safe.

Case Studies

Can we point to cases where carrying off-safe got the cop shot? As a matter of fact, yes.

Cops in a Washington town were taught to use their Beretta safeties only as decocking levers. A scumbag ripped one officer's 9mm from its holster and shot both the cop and his partner. There is no indication that this man could have worked an on-safe 92F before the surprised cops could have rectified the situation, unless he'd had a Beretta owner's manual.

In Texas, an off-duty cop was in a street struggle with a perpetrator when his Walther PPK-S .380 came loose from its nylon holster and fell to the sidewalk. The punk grabbed the cop's own pistol and put a Glaser Safety Slug into his head. Men who knew the victim officer stated that he carried his pistol off-safe.

Contrast these tragedies with another Washington community where policy strongly suggests that the issue Beretta be carried on-safe.

A suspect disarmed a sergeant of his 92F and attempted to shoot him multiple times. Each time the pistol failed to fire, he'd work the slide and try again. Still no go. Another officer hearing the struggle drew his own Beretta and, instantly releasing the safety, shot down the gun grabber.

The sergeant was not injured and by the time it was over, there were three or four 9mm Silvertips rolling around on the floor.

FACT: No cop can go through life "not letting anyone get close to his gun," and even a weapon retention instructor will find his techniques failing him when two bad guys have grabbed him and the third is beating him upside the head.

A safety catch buys time in these situations. Also, no snatch-resistant holster can help when the attack comes on the officer's already drawn pistol.

FACT: Though we have solicited the information through these pages and elsewhere, we still do not have a documented case of a police officer being shot because he had any difficulty in operating the safety/decock lever of his service pistol when carried on-safe.

Do some cops have trouble manipulating that little lever? Sure. That's why so many instructors find it expedient to tell them to just leave the gun off-safe.

In fact, operation of the slide-mounted safety is simple for anyone properly trained and moderately practiced. The trick is getting used to it.

One of my cops, an ex-NYPD man

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with 20 years of revolver habituation, carried his S&W 659 off-safe for a year at my recommendation. During that year, he practiced like hell. Today, when he draws his issue S&W auto, the safety pops off like lightning.

Another of my cops is ambidextrous, and got into the bad habit of popping the safety with his free hand. At a shooting class recently, he missed the safety and was ragged mercilessly by the class. He apologized to me for making me look bad, and I told him it was easier to handle than going to his funeral.

Shooting qualification with me the following week, he was popping the safety before his 4506 was clear off its Ted

Blocker duty holster.

When will the trend in training change to reflect street reality? The sad history of it is, many administrators wait until someone dies or sues before they change equipment and policy.

That's what it took for so many agencies to get vests, and shotguns, and auto pistols, and hollowpoints; perhaps that's what it will take to get them to take a realistic look at proper use of the safety catch.

It won't be too hard. All it'll take will be one good lawyer, and one widow of a cop murdered with his own off-safe duty pistol.

"The safety catch was right there on the gun," the lawyer will tell a jury of common-sense lay people. "The killer confessed he just grabbed the gun and pulled the trigger. He didn't know about safety latches.

"But the department forbade the officer to use that safety catch, ladies and gentlemen. If they had forbidden him to wear a seat belt and he'd gone through the windshield, you'd find them negligent.

"This was the same thing. They literal-

ly forbade him to be safe!

"Were they too lazy to train him to take the safety off when he had to fire, himself? Or did they just ignore what was common knowledge in police work: that safety catches save lives?

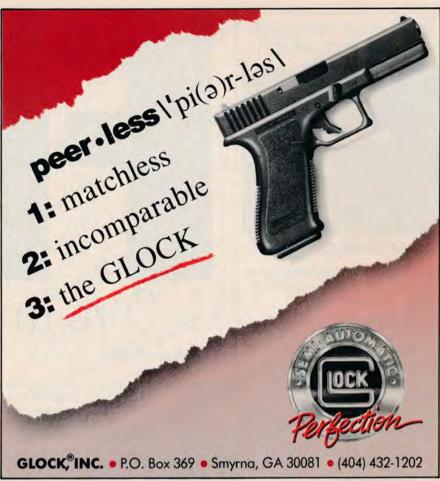
"It doesn't matter, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, because their negligence led directly to the death of this young officer ...

There is also industry precedent. Warren Barron of Beretta tells me his firm encourages on-safe carry of their pistols

for maximum officer safety.

Though the Smith & Wesson Academy is into the decocking lever school of thought, S&W's own law enforcement sales division strongly encourages carrying on-safe, say Rich Mackney and Tom Campbell.

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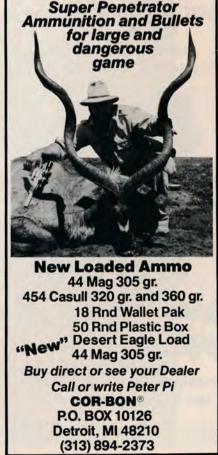
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By Walter Walsh

t began with a single FBI issued 9mm round, a 115 grain Silvertip, fired in the Miami Massacre. After passing through the suspects arm, it entered his chest, mushroomed perfectly, and headed for his heart. When it stopped just short of his heart, it touched off one of the greatest upheavals in law enforcement firearms in 100 years—the FBI's new 10mm.

As the controversy continues, American Handgunner will try to explain not only what has happened, buy why. Along the way, certain facts of life in law enforcement in this country may make you pause and wonder how anything gets done in a bureaucracy.

We begin with a bit of history of the FBI. It began July 26, 1908 as the Bureau of Investigation. Not allowed to carry sidearms, it was a haven for political hacks until 1924, when an attorney named John Edgar Hoover was appointed director.

The 1932 Lindbergh baby kidnapping shocked the nation, as in that era, like today, state agencies had to stop at the state line. Federal laws were passed, and the FBI started to carry handguns. The 1934 crime package put the FBI into law enforcement.

It took the "Kansas City Massacre," with the death of one FBI agent, three local officers, the prisoner they were escorting, and the wounding of two other agents, to convince the FBI that agents had to be marksmen.

It is not clear what guns the agents carried in those days, but there is some indication that the S&W Model 10 in .38 Special was the choice. There is a photo of J. Edgar Hoover being presented the first Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum in 1935. This revolver, with a three-inch barrel, became the official FBI gun.

It is not widely known that in the Thirties the FBI issued Colt .38 Super pistols. They were intended to overcome the body armor of that time, widely used by the desperados of the day. In fact, the FBI Academy still has some Thompson submachineguns in .38 Super.

Somehow, between the Thirties and the Seventies, FBI agents mysteriously lost the capability to operate semi-automatics.

Finally in the Eighties, some FBI agents have gradually moved to more modern sidearms, and I have worked with some agents who broke the rules and used all kinds of pistols, including Colt .45 autos carried cocked and locked.

The heavily trained (but untested) Hostage Rescue Team carries Browning Hi-Powers, while the SWAT-trained agents in each office carry S&W 5900 series pistols. It was from one of these that the infamous Miami round was fired.

Panel Of Experts

After the Miami disaster, the FBI decided that something must be done. It is *what* they chose to do that shows how a bureaucracy prevails over common sense.

Their first move was a good one they convened a workshop of ballistics experts to examine from a fresh prospective how handguns stop attackers. Foremost among the panel members was Dr. Martin Fackler of the U.S. Army Wound Ballistic Laboratory.

The most significant outcome of the meeting was a realization that in order to stop an attacker, the projectile must penetrate to vital organs and disrupt those organs. The failure of the round in Miami to do just this allowed that attacker to kill two agents and wound five more.

The unfortunate outcome of the panel was a focus solely on penetration and other aspects of terminal ballistics rather than the tactical elements of the shootout.

One overlooked comment of the panel bears further examination. "Overpenetration is not a problem when the police only hit with 20% of their shots."

The panel decided that a 10% gelatin mixture is the best available medium, and 12 inches of penetration is the minimum acceptable amount. The FBI decided to test a new cartridge based on these criteria.

Controversial Test

It is not just *how* they tested, but *what* they tested. Moreover, the conclusions they reached raise disturbing questions. What follows is based on three principal sources: the actual FBI test results, reports about the test in *The FBI Bulletin*, and an FBI video conference over a special law enforcement training network.

The test was to determine what new caliber the FBI would use in a new semiauto pistol to replace the aging revolvers of J. Edgar Hoover's era.

The contenders were the 9mm Parabellum, the .45 ACP, the 10mm Auto and a new round based on a single handload, a watered-down 10mm Auto with a 180 grain hollowpoint at 950 fps. This is the round that *American Handgunner* editor Cameron Hopkins playfully dubbed the "10mm Lite."

The first problem is how they tested these three cartridges. The firing test was in eight parts, with various barriers placed in front of this magic recipe of 10% ballistic gelatin. Each firing test was done five times, for a total of 40 shots. Nowhere in any of the sources is there any indication that any of the tests were run more than once.

I can agree that the testing consumed mountains of gelatin and hours of officer time, but I would think that at least the best rounds would be tested several times, to verify results.

In fact, the test data becomes rather slippery. There is a factor called experimental error. That is, if I conduct the same test, any test, several times, I will get different answers.

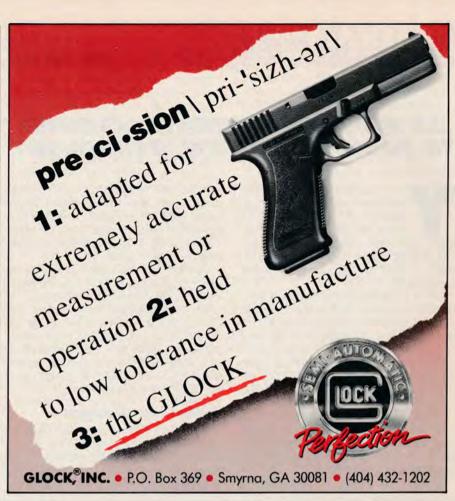
Every test has a certain margin for error due to variables in both the things tested, and the measuring devices. For example, no one thinks of firing just one round over a chronograph, no matter how carefully and uniformly we loaded the ammo. Thus the same bullet, at the same velocity, can produce different results if the test is run several times.

The FBI firearms staff seems to have ignored this.

Unexplained Contradictions

Yet in the November, 1989 issue of *The FBI Bulletin*, the issue with a cover story on the FBI 10mm, there is an article by the FBI Institutional Research and Development Unit. The article is titled "Ammunition Selection: Research and Measurement Issues."

Continued on page 93





ROB LEATHAM

.38 SUPER EXPERIMENTS CONTINUE TO PROGRESS BY NEW TECHNOLOGY

ou remember all the horror stories you were told about loading the .38 Super to major? Well, almost anyone who has much experience with the thing will tell you that the rumors of your gun vaporizing in a cloud of Blue Dot were greatly exaggerated.

Most of this nonsense stemmed from the fact that we had all become somewhat complacent towards the development of new products and equipment in the early to mid-Eighties. You were told— and I myself said it— that you should stick with relatively heavy bullets, 160 grains or so, and the slowest powders to get the velocity necessary to make major.

Well, a lot has changed since 1984-1985 when the Super rage began. At the time we were experimenting, trying to do things with the little cartridge that had never been attempted before.

All the cries rang out about "over-

pressure" and "dangerous loads." In some cases, it was true. The problems came from .45 ACP reloaders without any experience in developing loads for what was basically a high pressure wildcat round—myself included!

Blown cases, cratered primers and splintered grip panels were common problems when proper caution was not used.

So what happened? As you know, the .38 Super has become the cartridge of choice for any serious competitor. The answer is simply that we experimented until we learned how to control the Super. Here's what we learned in the Eighties, the "decade of the .38 Super."

Better Gun Designs

The overwhelming preference for jacketed bullets by top competitors is due to advantages that are more significant in .38 Super than in .45 ACP. The pressures and temperatures generated by the Super actually erode more of the bullet and lube.

A jacketed bullet reduces the smoke from the burning lube and molten lead, which can be visually detrimental in some weather and range conditions.

The jacketed bullet has also been found to stabilize better than lead, thus greater accuracy is achieved. Jacket fouling replaces leading as the major cleaning dilemma, but this is neither better nor worse.

All that pressure developed with the Super has allowed great strides forward in gun design. A compensator on a Super has roughly *twice* the gas pressure to work with than a .45 ACP. More efficient compensator designs are now profitable that would have made little or no difference with a .45 ACP.

The bore of the Super, of course, is smaller than a .45 and that combined with lighter bullets creates far less of a twisting motion as the gun fires.

To a small and, I believe, insignificant degree, you can also include the flatter trajectory of the Super as an advantage over the .45 ACP. Same goes for the shorter leads necessary on moving targets. It doesn't seem to matter.

Naturally with any change come problems. The initial glitch was the increased pressures. In the years since the Super Boom, gunsmiths have developed better mechanisms to hold the round. Fully supported chambers such as the Wilson barrels installed on my full-house Wilson

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The next problem was the primer. That one as simple— merely substitute a magnum primer for a regular one. In most cases a small rifle primer works well too.

The noise. Well, that's one problem with a Super that hasn't been beat and the .45 still retains an advantage. The things are *loud*, and the current loadings favored by top shooters often use 130-135 grain bullets really blister the eardrums.

After some exposure you will become used to the increased muzzle blast and noise level. I personally don't have a problem with this. I can live with the increased noise for the benefits.

Barrel life is shorter with the Super compared to the .45 ACP. I feel the reason for this is the jacketed bullets more than the increased pressures. Again, I think the advantages of the jacketed bullets far outweigh the increased wear.

The 10mm Craze

The latest 10mm craze, or .40 caliber as you wish, seems to boast lower pressures than the .38 Super and higher mag capacity than the .45. The various 10mm's seem to fall smack between the Super and the .45 ACP.

While the first and foremost concern is always *Safety First*, we must also realize that the high pressures of the .38 Super— the very thing that makes it

potentially unsafe— is its best advantage over the 10mm.

As much as some don't want to admit it, the reason for the Super's effectiveness is precisely those high pressures. Nothing is going to increase the efficiency of any compensator design as much as an increased pressure of a larger volume of higher velocity expanding powder gases.

Regardless of which design works best, they all function better with high pressure gases. This explains the use of light bullets in the Super— we are actually trying to raise pressures.

The trick is not to step back to a 10mm, but to devise ways to get higher pressures more safely. If you want one of the .40 calibers, that's fine with me, but it may not make a better wheel. You pick—.41 Action Express or .40 S&W, two rounds that are ballistically equivalent. Both offer advantages over the Super, but not because of the cartridges themselves.

Pistols can be chambered in these two rounds that are not capable of accepting the longer case length of the .38 Super. In most instances, this will result in a higher mag capacity by one measly round. One.

A Springfield Armory P-9 or a Smith & Wesson Model 4006 will both hold 11 rounds of .41 AE and .40 S&W respectively. Of course you can get 16 or 17 rounds of good ole 9x19 in same gun, but that's only minor caliber, right? Not necessarily!

With the Super we were skeptical at

first about shooting major. Today we're equally skeptical about shooting 9mm Major, but in the same way that we conquered the Super, so too may we approach Major Nine.

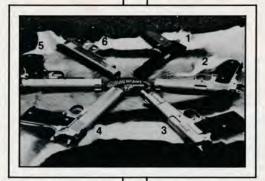
With few differences, we're pushing the same 135 grain C.P. Elite out the barrel at 1335 fps. Pressures are similar in Super and 9x19. (Actually pressure curves are different, but not enough to scare away someone with wildcat experience.)

I know from personal experience that major velocities are achievable from the Nine because I've been experimenting with it recently. I'm not ready to give out data, but I'm getting there.

What's the point? If you're talking 1911 design, I agree with you completely. Stick with the .38 Super. The Super and the 9x19 have the same magazine capacity in the 1911 so there's no point in the grief of working with the shorter round.

But what if you could get major power factor out of a P-9 holding 17 or 18 plus one in the chamber? And still get the thing reliable and accurate? Then you may have something!

The .45 ACP was definitely the IPSC Cartridge of the Seventies and the .38 Super was unquestionably the IPSC Cartridge of the Eighties. Will the .40 S&W or the .41 AE or maybe even the 9x19 be the IPSC Cartridge of the Nineties? The writing's on the wall.



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hen the Sheriff's Department of a nearby county decided to allow officers armed with the Government Model to equip their pistols with Para-Ordnance large capacity frames, it gave me an opportunity to assemble and study the hybrid weapons in the shop and to do extensive testing on the range.

Some department requirements were: Absolute functional reliability under duty conditions, reasonable longevity, compatibility with existing leather, easy maintenance and the capability of accurate sustained fire in the hands of officers trained with the Government Model, without the necessity of extensive additional training.

On the surface, the Para-Ordnance frame seemed an excellent option, especially for the K-9 officers currently armed with 9mm pistols, since they need a large capacity magazine because of the difficulty of reloading while handling their partner. Most said they would feel more comfortable armed with a larger caliber.

The Para-Ordnance frame is compatible with slides and parts of Series 70, 80 or pre-70 vintage, Colt or aftermarket. But, like every hybrid, there's more to it than just swapping a few parts.

Fitting The Parts

A preliminary partial assembly will show which recoil spring system should be used. If the frame has a tendency to scrape the slide's spring housing during recoil, use of a rod follower buffer system will put things back into alignment.

I use an 181/2 lb. recoil spring and compatible firing pin spring. A standard weight 23 lb. hammer spring works well and provides an adequate margin of reliability for duty use.

I always fit a Wilson combat extractor and ejector. The extractor is stoned and set as in the GM. The ejector can be shortened until it just ejects long loaded cartridges. As with the GM, slide ports may have to be lowered and re-shaped for uniform, reliable ejection.

Always check the tightness of the plunger tube and make certain that the special long magazine catch and wide trigger loop function freely. Lubricate internal moving parts sparingly.

You can fit a wide grip safety if it is needed, but those that require frame modification create some headaches. The material from which the frame is made pins files and clogs stones rapidly. The resulting raw edges at the cuts are obvious and hard to conceal.

Birchwood Casev aluminum black applied with a cotton swab colors the aluminum alloy fairly well, but nothing seems to last for any length of time. This same problem exists with other alloy frames. My favorite wide grip safety for these aluminum frames is a Kings that requires no frame modification and alters well to a rounded spade shape.

The 13 round Para-Ordnance magazine is obviously the heart of this conversion. The first thing I'd suggest is that you obtain several spares for rotation with those being carried.

The next order of business should be to fit bumper pads to the thin overhanging bottom plates; this prevents handling

Continued on page 65

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"I had to stop and write to tell you my thanks for producing this course. Even though I'm living on a ranch in the boondocks, just word of mouth has me swamped with rifles to clean and oil and repair. Since hunting season has started, there's more work out here than I can handle. I'm seriously considering opening my shop up as a full time business. Thanks to everyone at Modern Schools." Allan Nance Dewington, Alberta, Canada

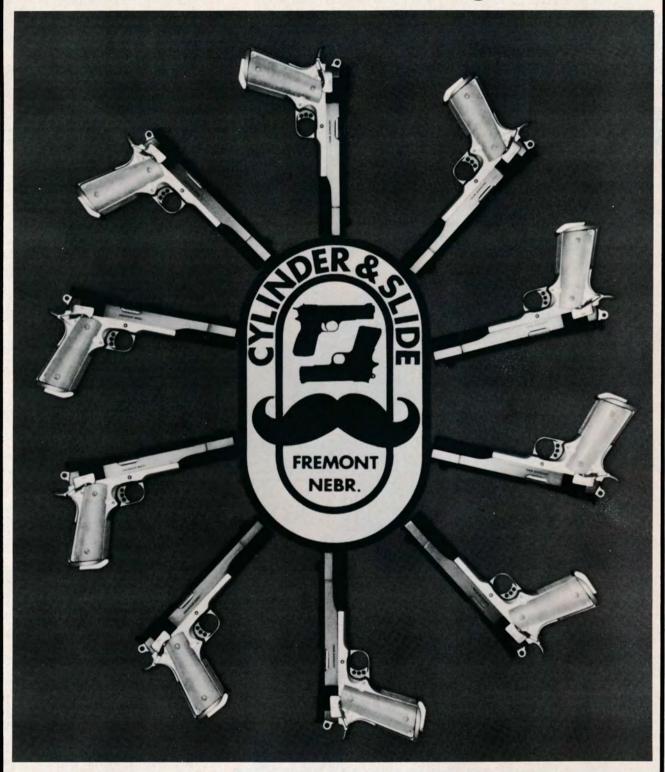
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JOHN TAFFIN

CONCENTRATION IS THE REAL KEY TO KNOCKING OVER 40 IN A ROW

t's going to be a great match. The first chicken slams down perfectly and that is always a reassuring sign. The next nine are also all perfect center hits. The Super 14 Thompson/Center Contender .30-30 is definitely doing its job.

Now move on to the pigs. Five pigs, five shots. Five picture perfect shots. Nothing to get excited about yet; chickens and pigs are the easy targets and things are going awfully well. Five more shots. Same story, perfect performance by gun, load and shooter.

Next the 150 meter turkeys, the worst of the four silhouette targets and I'm already starting to think: "If I make it through the turkeys, the rams will be a cinch." Mistake number one.

Settling down into position, I tried to relax. Load! The action of the Contender is broken open, and the .30-30 with 150 grain Hornady Spire Point over 26.0 grains of H4198 drops easily into the chamber. Placing the loaded T/C beside me, I lay back and again try to relax.

Time is not a factor. Two minutes is a lot of time, even for single-shots. No need to hurry. I would have plenty of time to pick up the gun and get ready on the next command.

Fire! Only then do I wriggle down into Creedmore and pick up the .30-30 Contender. Cock the hammer, line up the sights. Perfect picture, squeeze the trigger ever so gently. Perfect hit and the first turkey goes down, solidly center punched.

I start to think about getting all five turkeys. Mistake number two.

The next four all go down with picture perfect hits. Again I think: "If the turkeys go down the rams will be easy" and my fate is nearly sealed now.

Time to relax again and wait for the target setters to do their thing. Score so far: Shooter 25, Targets 0. I can smell a perfect score.

Load! Drop the .30-30 round into the T/C, snap it shut, relax and wait. Fire! Line up the sights, squeeze, clang!, down goes turkey number six, followed by seven, eight, and nine.

One to go. Then the rams will be easy. I run through the rams in my mind, 1-2-3-4-5. All perfect hits. Second bank, 6-7-8-9-10, again perfect hits. A perfect score with the Contender .30-30.

That is exactly what I was thinking as I miss turkey number 10! Yes, the 10 rams did turn out to be easy; 10 perfect hits. But it was too late. No perfect score. The last turkey got me. Why?

Concentration

The answer is obvious. Instead of concentrating on the last turkey, I was already shooting rams in my mind, already getting all 10 rams and that perfect score and forgetting about the target at hand.

When I squeezed the trigger on that last turkey, were the sights perfectly aligned? I can't remember. They could not have been or I would have had a perfect hit. The fact that I can't remember shows that my mind was elsewhere. I was distracted, rather I distracted myself from the business at hand and the result was a crucial miss.

The problem was certainly not with the Contender. It was performing perfectly. The problem was not the bullet, nor

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the load, nor the weather, nor the wind, nor anything. Everything was perfect. The problem was me.

I am convinced that the top shooters are not necessarily the best shooters. That sounds contradictory. But the top shooters in any phase of competition are not necessarily the most skilled at marksmanship, but they are the ones who come closest to 100% control of their mental

No one can do it perfectly, but those who consistently come the closest are those that consistently finish at the top.

When one begins the silhouetting game, or any other phase of competition, important choices have to be made. Purely choices of attitude.

One major choice is the conscious decision to compete against other shooters or to compete against yourself. Competing against other shooters can bring much frustration. Competing against yourself— striving to beat the previous score, trying to improve each timebrings success. All a matter of attitude.

And when you decide to compete against yourself, you soon find that you have beaten the competition in the process!

Mental Control

I'm a long way from 100% mental attitude control. In silhouetting I would rate myself at 85-90%; in testing handguns and blocking out the thoughts of heavy recoil and other distractions, around 95% or more.

I have not yet learned how to block out all distractions during a silhouette match and get up into that 95% plus range. Distractions like the next shooter talking to his spotter, or spectators talking to each other often break my concentration.

The ultimate distraction occurred in a state match as I looked over my loaded. cocked and aimed revolver to find a TV cameraman in front of me taking video pictures.

That rattled me so bad—the thought of accidentally shooting someone even though he was a complete idiot- that I swung on the wrong bank of targets and was mentally ruined for the rest of the match.

Once during a match while shooting from Creedmore with a .357 Magnum, my blast shield slipped down sometime during the match. As I finished and got up from the rams, someone said to me: "What happened to your leg?"

The blast from the cylinder gap had blown a three inch circular hole in the thigh of my Levis and my leg was a bloody mess. I never felt a thing.

Yes, go ahead and buy that new gun if you really believe it will raise your scores. But at the same time, take stock of your mental attitude. Championship shooters win the mind game long before they ever win the match. Good thinking and good shooting.

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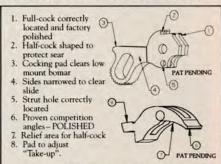


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GARTHWAITE

nity to learn a pistolsmith's skills from a master, saving a lot of trial-and-error experience. Shortly after becoming interested in practical shooting competition, he made the acquaintance of master pistolsmith Richard Heinie of Havana, Illinois.

Heinie was impressed with his interest and attitude, enough to share the technical knowledge and skills he had acquired. This is something like offering a young hockey player the chance to play on the same line as Wayne Gretzky.

Heinie is recognized as one of the very best in the business, and his workmanship is second to none. Heinie has some interesting ideas about custom gunsmithing. He feels that many people can learn the technical aspects, but what can't be learned is a total commitment to quality. A true custom smith, he says, won't let work out of the shop until it is the very best he can do.

He must become his own toughest critic, continuously trying to improve, for in today's competitive market to stop improving is to start falling behind. Heinie remarked, "I can look at the first guns I built and see flaws in them. I'm not ashamed of that, because that was the best I could do at the time. But I learned better, and I hope to keep on learning. Jim Garthwaite is one of the very few pistolsmiths I know who has the same attitude, which is why I was glad to show him some of the tricks of the trade."

The two gunsmiths are competitors, not business partners, though they work together on some designs such as the short-slide, coned barrel compensator system. But Garthwaite's guns aren't intended to be clones of Heinie's designs. For example, Heinie prefers a twin-port exhaust system on his compensators to provide maximum sight radius, while Garthwaite feels a single large port gives slightly better control of muzzle rise.

Garthwaite works only on Colt or Springfield Armory pistols. All work is done to order, whether it's a basic relia-Continued on page 92

By Dave Anderson

ustom pistolsmithing of America's classic autopistol, the Model of 1911, has been going on for a long time. One can classify the nature of this custom work into four eras.

The first occurred with the growth of bullseye shooting from the '30s through the '50s. Accuracy was the goal, and smiths such as J.D. Buchanan, George Elliason, John Giles and Frank Pachmayr found ways to build an astonishing level of accuracy into the old gun.

The second era came with the start of practical shooting competition, which emphasized complete reliability and fast handling. A wide range of modifications became popular (for example, extended safeties and checkered frames) which made the gun faster to use and easier to control.

The pingun and the Plaxco compensator ushered in the third era, in which pistolsmiths concentrated their efforts on making better and more efficient compensator systems.

Currently the technology and methods of building an accurate, reliable, and controllable competition pistol are well known, and in purely functional terms one custom 1911 is pretty much like another. It's becoming increasingly difficult to come up with really new ideas.

In order to differentiate their work and

showcase their abilities, the best pistolsmiths are putting more effort into detailing and the highest possible level of workmanship to make the gun more aesthetically pleasing.

This is the fourth era, in which craftsmanship raises a purely functional tool into a form of art.

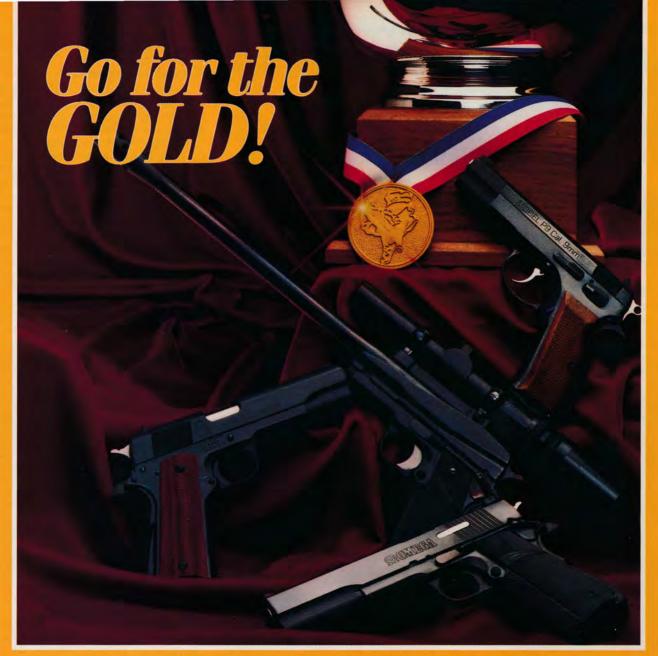
Work at this level requires a combination of special skills: the precision technical skills of a master machinist, an artist's sense of line and proportion, and an iron self-discipline that accepts only the best as good enough. There will never be many people with this combination of talents.

One writer has suggested that there are no more than 10 such masters in America, and though I'd hate to try and pin it down that close, I think he's on the right track.

Jim Garthwaite is a young pistolsmith from Watsontown, Pennsylvania. He began building competition guns in 1983, and already the quality of his work shows he belongs in the top ranks. Such rapid progress is unusual, but Garthwaite had a couple of advantages that have helped him develop his skills relatively quickly.

His family background is in precision machine work; his father was a machinist for 32 years, his grandfather a pattern maker, and he acquired from them an interest in precise metalwork and high quality workmanship.

His second advantage was the opportu-



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DAVE ANDERSON

REFLECTIONS ON IPSC IN THE 80'S: GROWTH, CHANGE, DEVELOPMENT

decade in the growth of practical shooting.

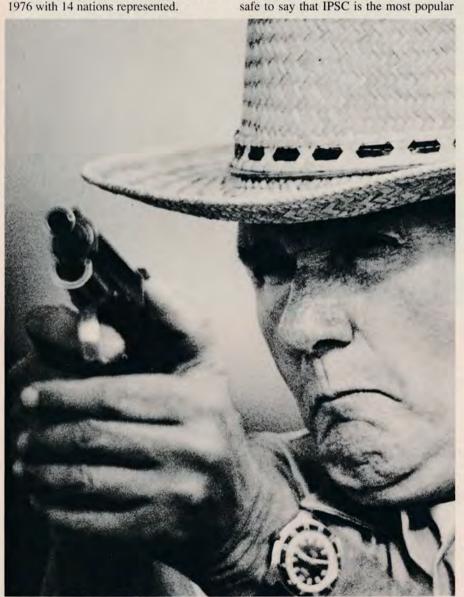
The sport began in the mid-Fifties in California and expanded in popularity in the Southwest. From about the mid-Sixties on it became established throughout America and began to draw interest from other countries, culminating in the formation of the International Prac-

tical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) in

he Eighties was an important

Like any new organization, IPSC had some growing pains and considerable debate over its identity and direction (a debate which has never really ended).

But the basic soundness of IPSC principles and direction can be illustrated by the fact that it is now practiced in nearly 40 countries. Only Olympic-style (ISU) shooting has a wider representation, and considering the relatively few people who actually practice that sport, I think it's safe to say that IPSC is the most popular



Col. Jeff Cooper founded the International Practical Shooting Confederation in 1976 and remains today IPSC's Honorary Lifetime Chairman. There are nearly 40 nations across the globe that are members of IPSC. Col. Cooper established the eight principles of practical shooting that still set the tone for matches today.

form of competitive handgunning in the world today.

Expert Opinion

In reviewing the decade I listed my view of some of the highlights, then solicited opinions from two prominent competitors who have also been involved in IPSC throughout the decade.

Marc Halcon is director of the San Diego Firearms Academy, member of the Board of Directors for the United States Region of IPSC and winner of the coveted *Prix du President* at the 1986 U.S. National Championships. Marc has been involved in the administration of IPSC at every level, from club president to section coordinator to area director.

I also sought the opinion of well-known competitor J. Michael Plaxco who is a former national champion, U.S. Gold Team member, custom pistolsmith, and director of the Plaxco Academy. Mike is now a member of Team Smith & Wesson.

Skill Level Increases

One highlight is the increase in the level of shooting accomplishments.

Because IPSC has no fixed course of fire this can be a bit hard to measure, but fortunately we do have the classic *El Presidente* which has remained constant. This was originated by Jeff Cooper while training guards for the president of Guatemala (hence the name) around 1970, and was picked up as a standard course by the Australians.

It's a straightforward exercise, requiring only 12 rounds. Three targets are set 10 meters downrange. The shooter starts with his back to targets, hands above shoulders. On signal he turns, draws, fires two rounds at each target, reloads, and fires two more at each target.

"Par" is considered to be a perfect score (60 points) fired in 10 seconds for a hit factor (score divided by time) of six. Par is rated as 100 points.

(To get the par score, multiply the hit factor by 50 and divide by 3; for example, if a shooter scored 45 points in 15 seconds his hit factor would be 3, and his score would be 50.)

It's become customary to sneer at the "El Prez" because of tactical flaws (i.e. two rounds per target when there are multiple targets, reloading in full view of the targets) and as a training program it does have its faults. But as a simple, basic test of handgunning skills it is hard to beat.

When originally designed this course was thought to be impossible, but by the end of the Seventies the best shooters were scoring well over 100 regularly.

Cooper On The El Prez

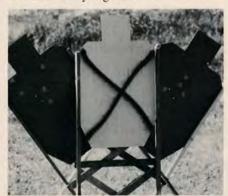
In The Complete Book of Shooting (1982 edition) Cooper wrote "If you can fire a Presidente on demand at par you may be considered to be a competent pistol shot. If you can fire 120 on demand you may join anybody's first team."

Then in an interview with Jon Winokur (American Handgunner, March/April 1987) Cooper described what he considered some of the most phenomenal performances of all time.

He says, "I'll give you another example: they took Ross Seyfried, who's a great shot, and bought him a warehousefull of ammunition and had him just shoot El Presidentes. He was under no pressure and he shot all afternoon.

"He finally shot a 59 in 6.2 seconds, which comes out to about 165 points, 65 points over par [actually 158.6 points]. He must have known that sooner or later, going as fast as he could, being a very fine shot— as I say, probably the best shot now shooting— he would get a record score."

Cooper doesn't say when this occurred, but since Seyfried won the world championship in 1981 and retired from competition in 1984, I assume it was in the early Eighties.



The IPSC target changed three times in the '80s from the Milpark to Florida 8 to Brussells. Shown is the Brussells.

So how does that relate to present scores? Well, a little while back I tried an El Presidente, shooting 52 points in 4.32 seconds, which works out to a score of 201. Is that a record performance?

Alas, by current standards it's not even close. I'm still 10 or 15% behind the really fast guys, just as I was in 1980.

Recently I was chatting with Mike Voight, one of the rising stars of IPSC, and Mike mentioned that in a local match he had shot a 57 in 4.28, which works out to a score of 222.

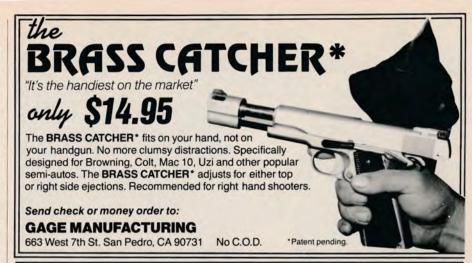
In practice, shooters like Voight, Angelo Spagnoli, Doug Koenig, and a few other master class competitors are running times in the 3.7 second range while dropping only 8 or 10 points.

Runs like these would come out to scores of 235-240. I would say that there are ten or a dozen shooters capable of scoring a 250— not always, and not on demand, but occasionally.

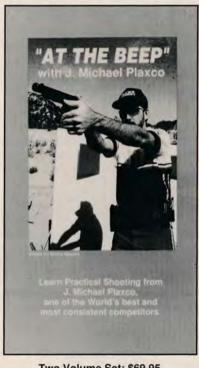
Such scores were unheard of a decade ago, and would have been unimaginable 20 years ago.

Better Shooters?

I don't think it can be claimed that



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Shooting from behind cover, like this barricade, is part of IPSC's emphasis on simulating self-defense shooting scenarios. Major caliber auto pistols of Browning's 1911 design predominate in competition.

today's shooters are inherently better shots, though in an equipment-related sport it's hard to compare different eras.

(Take auto racing, for example, are Prost and Senna better drivers than Fangio and Nuvolari?)

Improved scores have resulted from a number of factors: better equipment, certainly. More shooters, therefore more good shooters. The wider availability of good instructors. And the development of the "pro-circuit" of matches, bringing the top shooters together regularly, improving both techniques and equipment.

Shooting equipment, both guns and holsters, underwent significant changes in the Eighties. Yet I believe that the two most important equipment breakthroughs of the decade didn't involve either guns or holsters.

A Progressive Change

The most important innovation, in my opinion, was the availability of moderately priced, progressive reloaders. Only those who started out with single-stage machines can fully appreciate the progressives.

When I bought my first centerfire handgun in 1973 the only progressive machine was the Star, then as now a superb reloader, but it cost as much as two Colt Gold Cups or Pythons.

When the Dillon RL-300 came out it

seemed like a bargain at \$365, but when the updated model RL-450 became available factory direct for only \$185 it seemed like nothing short of a miracle.

They say Henry Ford put a car in every garage. Well, Mike Dillon put a progressive loading machine on every loading bench. There are some fine competitive models- Lee, Hornady, and RCBS all make very good, reasonably priced progressives- but I'd be willing to bet that there are more Dillons in use than all others combined.

It's hard to overestimate the impact this had. To improve you must shoot, to shoot you must reload.

I can remember when loading 300 rounds meant three hours of work, processing those same damn cases over and over. With my much-loved Dillon RL-1050 I can load 300 rounds in 10 or 15 minutes. Ah, bliss.

Time Marches On

The second major technological innovation was the electronic timer. Before these timers came along range officers had to time courses with a stopwatch; starting the watch simultaneously with the start whistle, and stopping when the shooter signaled he was through by knocking a can off a post with his hand, or shooting a stop plate.

Obviously the possibility of error was large. The new timers were accurate to two decimal places and eliminated this

source of error.

Those of us who were involved in designing courses of fire could have cried for joy when the timers came along. No more "engage Targets One to Three with two rounds each then shoot stop plate" instructions to drive the revolver shooters crazy.

Timers are equally valuable in training. Speed and accuracy are equally important in IPSC- as one of the ads correctly states, practice without a timer is like practice without a target.

Computer wizards Ron Bailey (Competition Electronics) and Ronin Colman (PACT) offer high quality, reasonably priced timers. Top of the line models also provide chronograph capabilities, and unless you already have a chronograph these are much the best buy.

Currently I'm using a PACT Mk.III which is just loaded with useful features- par time, keyed beeps, benchmark beeps, 32 character display, full chronograph features, and an accessory printer to help in keeping up a practice log. I can't praise it too highly.

Attack Of The Pingun

In 1980 John Shaw won the Nationals with a Clark Pingun in .45 ACP. It's an indication of the basic soundness of the 1911 pistol that the same gun would be quite competitive today.

About the only noticeable differences between the 1980 gun and a current full-



race model would be the expansion chamber comp, the mag chute, and the smaller hole in the barrel.

For awhile there was debate over which was better, the heavy barrel weight alone or the expansion chamber. But after Mike Plaxco won the Nationals in '82 with an expansion chamber design which he pioneered, the debate was pretty much over.

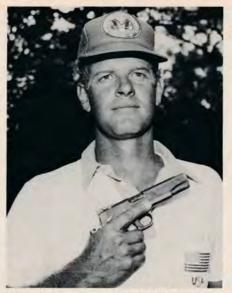
Mag chutes, like the popular Smith & Alexander unit, are a worthwhile improvement, making reloads faster and more consistent.

The switch from .45 ACP to .38 Super by top shooters came as a bit of a surprise, but in retrospect it was only logical.

The minimum bullet diameter allowed by IPSC rules is .355". Any cartridge with a larger diameter than that will have more torque and lesser magazine capacity, so the ideal IPSC cartridge is one that shoots .355" bullets and has just enough power to make major. That's what the .38 Super does.

Mike Plaxco comments, "One of the first things we learned was how to make the guns run reliably while firing thousands of rounds of full-power loads.'

When the Supers first came out it took a while to achieve the same degree of reliability as the .45's, but with fully supported chambers with one-piece feed ramps, and better brass, the problems seem to have been solved.



Ross Seyfried won the IPSC World Championship in 1981 with a Colt .45 auto, sans compensator. Today's guns are far more radically customized.

Holsters Improve

Crossdraw holsters were the rage at the start of the decade. That's because it was common then to have the shooter start each stage from the "IPSC handclasp" position, that is, with the hands clasped in front of the body.

These "bellybutton" rigs drove the

more self-defense oriented types into an absolute frenzy, and much thought was put into ways to ban such rigs while still allowing more practical (i.e., concealable) crossdraw holsters.

At one time a rule was suggested that would disallow any equipment worn between two imaginary lines extending vertically through the nipples. One objection to this was that anyone who really wanted to use such a rig could always have one nipple surgically removed. (I'm not making this up.)

Fortunately the proposal wasn't adopted and IPSC was spared the ignominy of being the only shooting

sport with a "nipple rule."

Course designers solved the problem by having shooters start from a variety of hand positions; hands at side, hands above shoulders, holding a grocery bag, writing, holding a steering wheel.

Competitors found that a strong side, muzzle vertical carry gave the best access under the widest range of circumstances.

A Fierce Battle

Ten years ago competition holsters from Bianchi, Blocker, Davis, Horseshoe Leather, Rogers, and Sparks were all popular. Ernie Hill Speed Leather first appeared in the mid-Eighties with a combination of superb design and quality that virtually took over the market.

Many of the other makers have simply

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abandoned the competition market as a result of Ernie Hill's unbeatable quality to concentrate on police, concealment, and utility models.

One maker who didn't concede the competition market to Hill was Safariland, who acquired Rogers Leather in 1985. Rogers holsters were already very popular for their sound design and lightweight, plastic laminated construction. Bill Rogers continues to design holsters for Safariland.

Mike Plaxco notes, "Early Safariland designs were really ahead of their time. I remember about 1980 or '81 we used to take their Sight-Track models, cut down the front, and add a tension screw."

Plaxco also speaks highly of the design



abilities of Bill Rogers, pointing out the "Lock Block" system on the Safariland 008 model as an example of a neat, simple, and reliable method of retaining the gun while allowing a fast draw.

While we've been fortunate to get some brilliant designs from Ernie Hill and Bill Rogers, it's a pity we aren't seeing some new models from some of the other makers.

It's true that the competition market isn't all that big compared to, say, the police market, but it serves as a good testbed for new ideas, and the favorable publicity from a winning design would seem to be a worthwhile attraction.

Industry Support

Marc Halcon comments that the thing that most impressed him about the decade was the growth of an entire industry based on practical shooting and the similar action shooting sports.

Reloaders, timers, custom guns and holsters are some examples. Others include gear bags, cast bullets by the ton, designer shooting glasses, electronic ear muffs.

Cottage industries sprang up to offer every conceivable special part and acces-



Age 18 with first money won in a match, \$200!

Age 13 with dad's Model 29 .44 Magnum

ROB LEATHAM, Shooter Of The Decade

Age 23 after winning his first of six IPSC national championships

sponsored teams, such as those from Springfield Armory, and more recently, Smith & Wesson.

IPSC Principles

While this is likely to be a growing trend, Marc Halcon cautions that industry support can be a two-edged sword. IPSC, as its principles clearly state, recognizes that the practical purpose of a handgun is personal protection.

Some people just get horrified at the thought of someone actually being concerned over protecting his life—columnist Carl Rowan is a good example.

So despite the fact that IPSC is obviously a sport in the same sense that Olympic fencing is a sport, it will always draw some criticism.

Halcon is concerned that there may be pressure from sponsors to change the sport to make it more "socially acceptable."

While industry support is welcome, IPSC has succeeded, and will continue to grow, with or without such support. That's because it is based on sound principles, it is a tremendously challenging sport, and the skills developed relate to reality.



sory that could possibly attach to a Government Model. Bill Wilson pioneered the concept and his entrepreneur savvy catapulted Wilson's Gun Shop into a \$2 million a year business selling nothing but "combat .45" parts.

Chip McCormick Corp. made a business out of magazines, and Smith & Alexander helped you put them in.

Shooting academies sprouted up over night. Jokes like, "You won a match, when're you opening a school?" soon became cliches.

"I don't think anyone anticipated that IPSC would become such a major shooting sport," Halcon noted.

Plaxco agrees. "In the last few years we've seen big corporations recognize that IPSC is a major sport." As evidence he points to the appearance of factory-

If companies are looking for innocuous sports to support they already have plenty to choose from, from bullseye to silhouette to action shooting to speed shooting.

(I can't help noting that none of these sports are exactly thriving, while IPSC matches, often with far smaller prizes, are turning competitors away because they're over booked.)

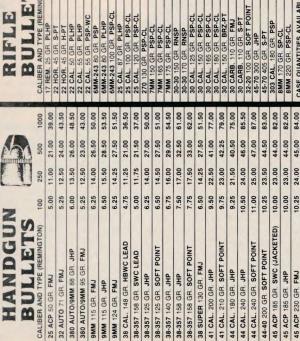
As one senior IPSC administrator told me, "We get criticized by fringe groups from one side who say we're too concerned with realism, and from groups on the other side who say we aren't concerned enough. That's a pretty good indicator that we're on the right track."

Rules & Guidelines

Plaxco says, "In its initial years IPSC

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was looking for an identity. In the '80s it developed a philosophy of shooting and competition that's reflected in its rules and guidelines."

IPSC was recognized as a sport, not combat training; yet it's not "just" a sport, for it is based on situations that could occur in the real world.

Nick Alexakos, who served as IPSC Vice-President and chairman of the rules committee for most of the decade, was primarily responsible for the evolution of the rules.

As IPSC grew, the rules necessarily grew as well, to cover unforeseen situations.

Range Officers

As the sport became bigger and more complex, with prestige and money riding on the outcome of matches, the role of the range officer became more important and more difficult.

Most regions, including the US, started programs to train range officers and ensure that qualified officials were available to run matches.

In 1988 the International Range Officers Association (IROA) was established by the world body to set standards, provide training material, and assist regions in setting up their own programs where needed.

Range officers take as much pride and satisfaction in doing their job well as shooters do in shooting a good match, and rightly so. The best and most experienced officials are in demand to help design and run matches and to train new officers.

Administrative Growth

At the world level, Jean-Pierre Denis of Belgium was elected president and got IPSC organized on a sound financial and administrative basis.

Prior to that the organization was chronically starved for funds, with regions paying their affiliation dues late or not at all. The world body is still far from rich, but at least it's able to do its job of communicating with and assisting the regions.

Here in America, Dave Arnold and Dave Churilla founded the United States Practical Shooting Association (USPSA) and helped put the US Region on sound footing. USPSA director John Sayle drafted a proper constitution.

Women And IPSC

From 1979 to 1989, the total number of shooters at the U.S. nationals doubled, while the number of women in the match increased by a factor of six.

The increasing number of women and the high standards of ability they demonstrate is a very positive trend, indicative of a growing interest by women in firearms and the shooting sports.

My 11-year-old daughter Andrea says her heros include Olympic-medalist skater Elizabeth Manley; rock singer Paula Abdul; and current U.S. and world IPSC champion Debby James.

She takes figure skating and music lessons, but she also shoots very well and plans to take lessons from Debby someday. I can hardly imagine that kind of interest appearing 10 years ago.

Over the past few months I've talked to some of the top women shooters to get their views on how to bring even more women into the sport. It's an important topic that deserves a full column of it's own.

Courses Of Fire

Sometimes I come across an article or letter in which the writer says "IPSC courses aren't practical anymore, not like in the good old days."

I know immediately the writer is someone who hasn't been involved in the sport for a long time, if ever. There are still good and bad stages, as always, but the overall trend is certainly improving.

We don't do much climbing over sixfoot walls, swinging over alligator ponds, or crawling through tunnels any more. Current courses are usually based on realistic scenarios.

Yes, some could stand improvement, but designers are trying and generally doing very well. The 1989 US Nationals had a very good course of fire, much better than those of the Seventies and early Eighties.

The Shooting Press

American Handgunner is the only national gun magazine that has supported and promoted IPSC competition since it started.

Some of the other magazines ignored the sport for years, until it got too big to ignore any longer, at which time they turned around and began carrying on as though they had invented it.

To tell the truth I'm a gun-magazine junkie; I buy them all and find something to like in them all, and the more IPSC coverage the better.

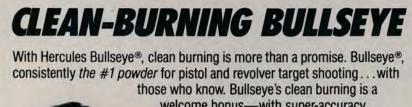
Still, I'm glad that the *Handgunner* was covering IPSC when IPSC wasn't cool.

This magazine has consistently covered the accomplishments of women competitors as well, and in 1979 began running a column by PPC champion Lucy Chambliss—the first time, I believe, that a national gun magazine has had a women columnist. Jerry Rakusan, editorial director for many years and now retired, deserves credit for being ahead of his time in his policies.

Decade's Top Competitors

To make an estimate of the top 10 shooters I took the results of the four world championships held in the Eighties, then took each shooter's two best placings and added them. (For example, a shooter places 4th, 6th, 10th, and 18th—his rating would be 10).

Continued on page 68





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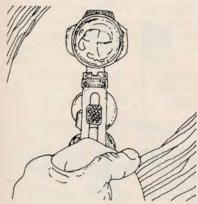
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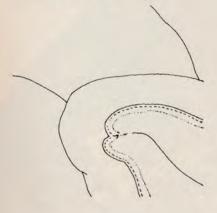
Bennett Viken and Robin Sutton

Shooter Stability

1. A steady sight picture is important in aiming your gun and hitting your target. And the greater the distance to your target, the more important the steadiness of that sight picture becomes. To maintain a steady sight picture, you must anchor yourself to the terrain, thereby overcoming the tics and movements of tense muscle and tendon.

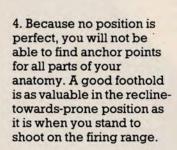


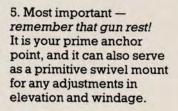
3. The more anchor points you can establish, the less stress from muscle quiver and fatigue will distract you. Choose anchor points that you can grip and brace yourself against.

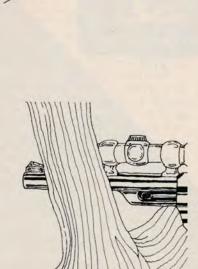


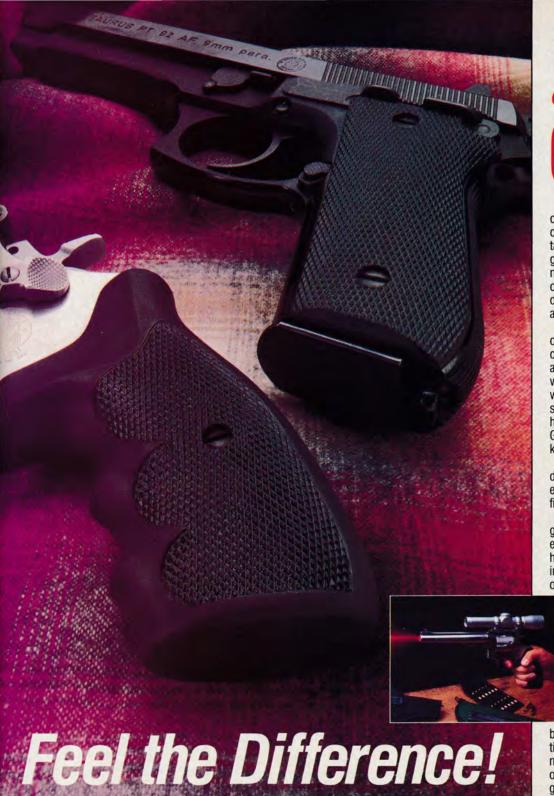


2. Settle the gun into position first so that it is in the proper firing position, and then fall away from it to find your own anchor points in the terrain.











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ELMER KEITH WAS MISTAKEN ABOUT GAS CHECKS ON CAST LEAD BULLETS

wenty-one years ago Elmer Keith wrote:

"Gas-check cups are useless on revolver bullets, in my estimation. They raise pressures from 3 to 5 thousand psi. Also, they do not upset to fill the chamber throats, and do allow gas to cut by them in the chamber throats to blow the lubricant out of the grease groove and melt the driving bands on the bullet. Often, there is also further gas cutting of the top strap of the gun at the barrel and cylinder junction."

These words have become virtual decrees from on-high to a significant number of magnum caliber revolver shooters in the United States today and a stunning indictment of gas-checks from the one man who got the .44 Magnum revolver developed and built.

Yet, the equally renowned Skeeter Skelton often listed the gas-checked .38 Thompson bullet as one of his favorites and a large number of silhouette competitors using cast bullets would use nothing but gas-checked bullets in competition and argue vehemently that Keith was mistaken.

Who's right?

Modern Opinion

The question of cast bullets using gaschecks came up in a recent conversation with Bruce Merkur, Sales Manager with Redding-Saeco. Bruce is one who believes strongly in gas-checked cast bullets because he feels the cast bullet shooter is only going to achieve accuracy combined with high velocity by using gas-checks and he cites the example of a recent test done with his Thompson Contender featuring a 14" barrel in .35 Remington.

Using the Redding/Saeco #399 truncated cone 180 gr. bullet and 33.0 grs. of Accurate Arms #2230 powder he was able to shoot 13/4" groups at 100 yards with an average velocity of 1875 fps for five shots.

He goes on to say the same bullet when loaded to the 1175 fps velocity level in a .357 Magnum case will demonstrate almost one third less deviation than a gas-checked 158 gr. bullet loaded to 1300 fps. He emphasizes his belief that gas-checked bullets are the only way the cast bullet shooter is going to get accuracy and high velocities.

Marty Liggins of Accurate Arms Company agrees with Bruce in his observation that gas-checked bullets are more accurate than plain base or bevel base bullets and he explained the reasons why.

The base of the bullet is harder and therefore doesn't deform as easily. He has recovered bullets from a capture tank that were fired from loads employing a slow burning powder and found unburnt powder embedded in the base of the non-gas checked bullet.

Piston Problems

There are a number of reasons why this embedded unburnt powder deteriorates accuracy in plain base or bevel base cast bullets.

The first is it deforms the base and the base of the bullet is the most important in terms of its inherent accuracy. It is the face of the piston in this "engine" and if it is deformed the thrust forces are misdirected unevenly which will throw the bullet off after it leaves the barrel.

The second problem is the one of snags and burrs and the uneven resistance they create as the bullet moves down the barrel. The bullet is a piston, but it is also a bearing and if that bearing has a rough spot around its circumference it will not roll true. The third problem is the one associated with its gyroscopic stability. Remember, once the bullet enters the rifling of the barrel it is spinning and, like the wheel on your automobile, it must be balanced.

Go out to your car and clip 8 ozs. of weight on one side of your front tire and then try and go 80 mph down the road. You will get a hell of vibration out of it and the same thing can happen in the barrel of your gun with a lead projectile that has unburnt powder embedded in only one side of its base.

So Why No Gas-Checks?

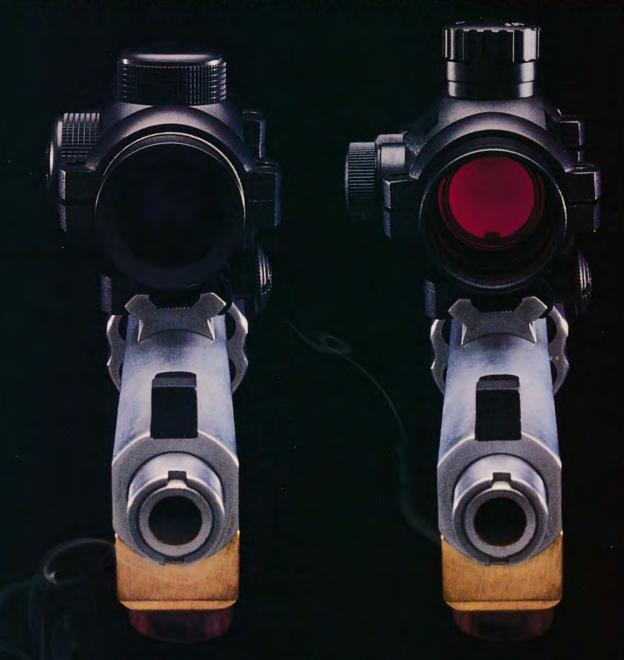
That being said, you would think the vast majority of cast bullet shooters would be using gas-checked slugs, but a review of the sales records of a couple of mould companies doesn't substantiate that viewpoint.

Tom Griffin of Lyman Products Corporation says that while the majority of their rifle bullet moulds are gas-checked designs almost three quarters of their handgun bullet moulds are plain-base or bevel-base bullets.

Redding/Saeco reports they sell no gascheck moulds for handgun bullets in their automatic cast blocks used by commercial

Continued on page 85

THE 1989 BIANCHI CUP COMPETITION PROVED WE HAVE NO COMPETITION.



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"Combat Masterpiece."

In June 1950 a .22 version was added, known as the .22 Combat Masterpiece. It was intended for training use but was also popular as a plinker. When S&W adopted their current system of Model numbers in December, 1959 it became the Model 17. It is one of my all time favorite Smith & Wesson revolvers. I owned a .22 Combat Masterpiece for years and still regret trading it for something else that's long gone too. Now I have another— and, hopefully, better sense.

The new Model 17-6 is primarily distinguished from the older version by the inclusion of a full lug under the barrel. Why, you may reasonably ask, is this needed on a .22? Well, I think it improves the feel and pointability, but I guess it's mostly cosmetic and to make the gun look more like their popular L-frame Model 586.

The gun comes with S&W's combat style grips which, although I don't particularly care for them on a hard kicking gun, are just great with the .22s minimum recoil.

Two other visual differences are the trigger and sights. Although I'm not sure

Once they have learned that the gun won't hurt them and that they really can hit something with it, the transition to the more powerful .38 is much easier. If you start them on the .38 or, heaven forbid, the .357, the first thing they're going to learn is how to jerk the trigger and that is a hard habit to break. If they get the basic skills first, the teacher's job is easier.

It's also an absolutely dandy camp and trail gun; perfectly suitable for small game and it's no trouble to throw a couple of boxes of ammo in pocket or pack for plinking wherever the opportunity occurs.

Shooting the new Model 17 is every bit as much fun as I remember from my old one and accuracy is quite good. As expected, best accuracy was obtained with standard velocity ammunition and groups opened up a bit as velocity increased, but the average of just a bit over 2" is not to be sneezed at.

I'm sure that a diligent test with more brands and types of ammunition would discover something that would shoot even better for .22s are like that, persnickety. All guns seem to have a preference for one load or another and .22s are

		RACY RESU Five-Shot Groups A	The state of the s	
Cartridge	Velocity	Smallest	Largest	Average
Federal 37 gr.	960 fps	2.28"	2.90"	2.61"
PMC Zapper	896 fps	1.82"	2.49"	2.04"
CCI Match	918 fps	1.73"	1.90"	1.82"

why, S&W has dubbed the 4" barrel version I have "semi-target" for it has the smooth trigger that has been an optional extra for some time and is, I think, far better for double-action shooting that the standard grooved trigger. The grooves may be fine for single-action, but they'll wear the skin off your trigger finger in a hurry if you shoot much double-action.

The sights also mark a return to the better days of the past, for the front sight is a plain Patridge with the undercut that used to characterize S&W's target sights. It presents the best sight picture and, while it doesn't look as sexy as the red ramp, it is far more functional.

My fondness for the Model 17 is more practical than anything although it does make a nice companion piece to the Model 586 now that it has the full barrel lug. But the reason I like it is because it's one of the best guns I know of for teaching someone how to shoot.

The K-frame has the potential of a decent trigger and it has the size and feel of the .38 and .357 revolvers that many people chose for their defense guns. The lack of recoil in the .22 makes it ideal for teaching someone the basic skills of sight alignment and trigger control without having to worry about the noise, and almost automatic flinch, that comes with new shooters.

especially picky in that sense, so if pure accuracy is important to you it's worth the time to test a number of loads.

One of the things that has been a problem with some S&W .22 revolvers has been sticky extraction. When you've got a cylinder full of empties it often requires an effort to eject them and sometimes you have to rap the ejector rod with a piece of wood to get them started. This is very much a function of the type of ammunition you're shooting and standard velocity loads are much less likely to be a problem.

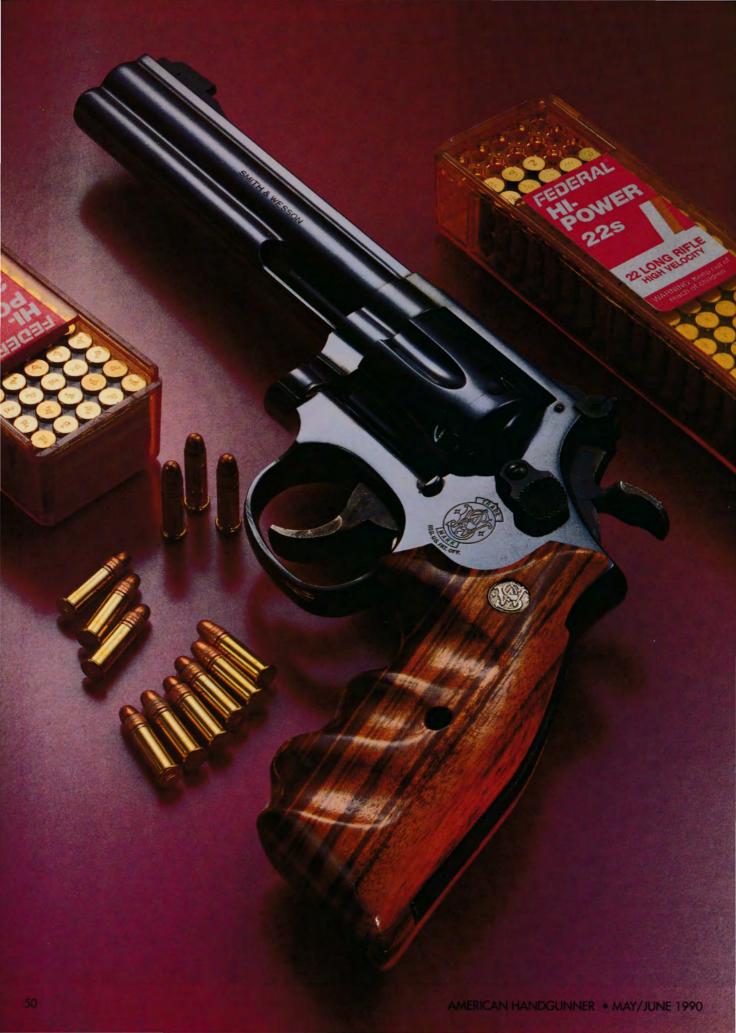
My old Model 17 had it and so does the new one, although it's much better. As long as the gun is clean extraction is easy, but as it gets dirty you may find, as I did, that you have to push harder. It's easy enough to push a patch through the cylinder every now and then, which helps a lot.

The Model 17 is one of the few S&W revolvers left with recessed chambers (charge holes) and this is a worthwhile feature for it helps prevent damage to the gun if it's dry fired but it can also be an area that needs cleaning attention. The recess is a nice place for crud to accumulate and unburned powder, bits of lead or bullet lubricant can accumulate in there and cause the cylinder to bind.

What happens is simply that the cartridge doesn't go all the way in to the







chamber and the rim, rubbing against the frame, can cause the cylinder to drag or be difficult to turn. A toothbrush is the best cleaning method I know of for this and anyone who experiences a problem with free cylinder rotation should check this first.

Although they've almost disappeared, one of the most fun things there is to do with a .22 revolver is shoot Shorts. The .22 Short is such a pipsqueak that most folks ignore them but they really are fun and the beauty of a .22 revolver is that you can shoot anything you want to in them. If noise is a real problem where you shoot you could even use the CB ammo that's available from Remington and CCI.

There are several variations available with the new Model 17. The 4" barrel version I tested is known as semi-target for it has the standard hammer and combat trigger and there's also a 6" barrel with the same features. There are also target versions in 6" and 8 3/s" barrel lengths that have target hammer and trigger. Suggested retail prices range from \$368.00 for the semi-tar-

get configuration up to \$414.50 for the 8³/₈" barrel target version.

It seems to me as if a lot of people ignore the .22 in favor of more powerful guns and miss a lot of inexpensive fun. Back in the early days of my shooting career I measured my wealth in terms of how many boxes of .22 ammo I had. That was when it cost fifty cents, but I hope there are kids today who do the same thing. Even though it costs more now, the fact is that you can still shoot .22s for a whole lot less than anything else and anyone who wants to be a good shot can learn just as much from the .22 as anything.

To me, the main attraction of the M-17 is the versatility. It is unsurpassed as a training gun for new shooters. It's ideal for a camp or trail gun for dispatching the odd snake and would certainly do for taking small game for the pot. And as a plinker it leaves nothing to be desired. The ability to shoot any and all .22 ammunition is something that's unique to revolvers and you haven't had plinking fun until you zip through a couple of boxes of .22 shorts.

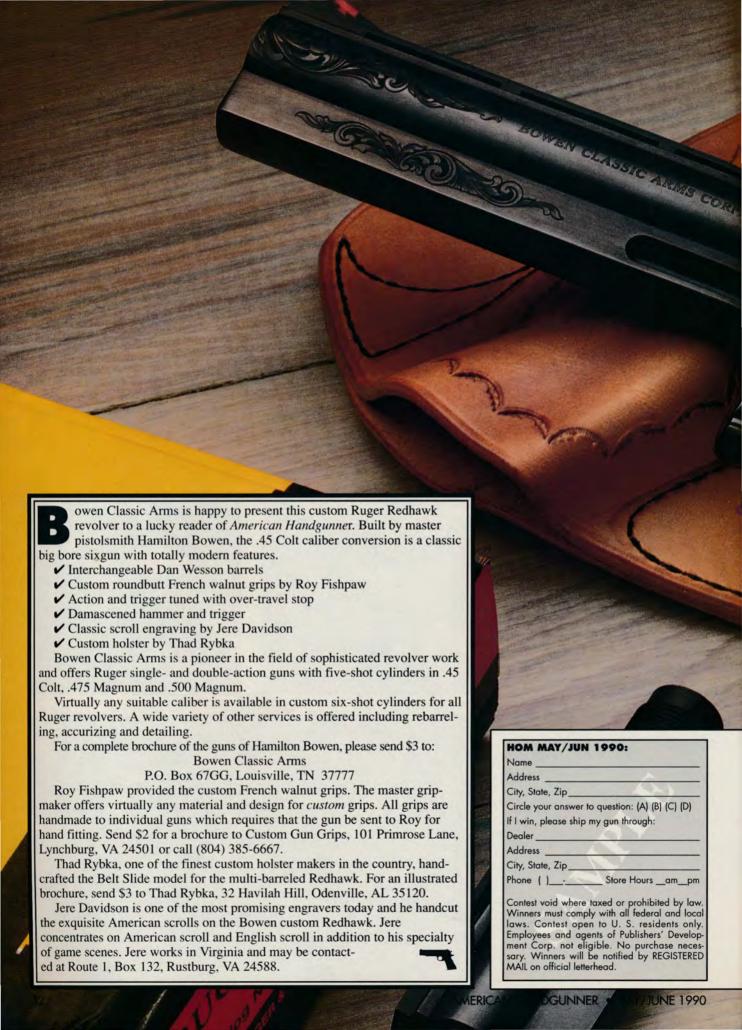


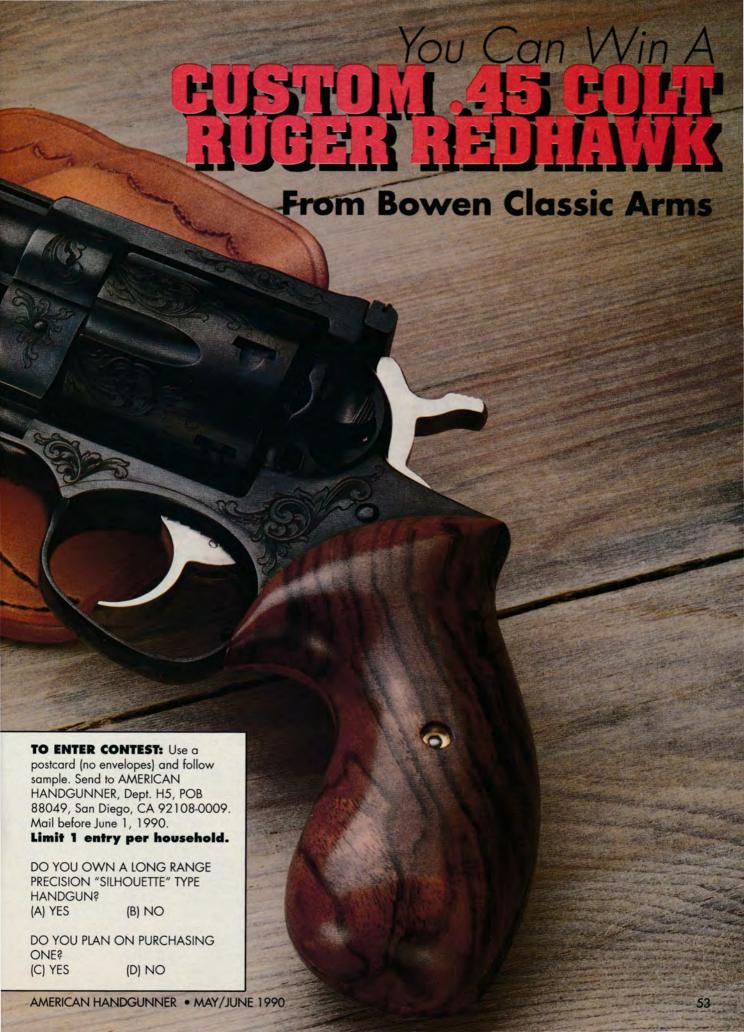


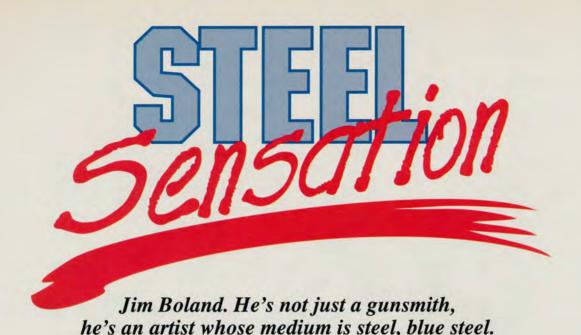


Among the many refinements of Smith & Wesson's classic .22 Masterpiece are a wide target trigger (right), a transfer bar safety to prevent the gun from firing if dropped (above), recessed chambers (above left) and a wide target hammer (top left).









By Cameron Hopkins Photos by Ichiro Nagata

his gun is simply awesome!" gushes
Thomas Jow, M.D., the owner of
Jim Boland's steel sensation.
Ah yes, nothing like the objec-

Ah yes, nothing like the objective analysis of a physician. What could excite Dr. Jow, normally calm and collected, to such heights of hyperbole? This incredible custom .38 Super pistol, that's what.

Actually, it's *complexly* awesome. There's nothing simple about this masterpiece of gunsmithing genius that *is* the steel creation of James W. Boland. From the radically sculpted, handmade grip safety that raises the hand's grip dramatically to the brilliantly executed triple-chamber, dual side-port compensator, precious little about this gun is simple.

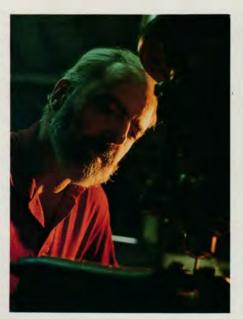
It's a steel gun made of aluminum. "Steel gun" refers to its purpose, not its construction, like a pin gun is for shooting bowling pins, not a gun made out of sewing needles. This steel gun is designed by Jim Boland expressly for shooting steel,

the white steel plates of the World Speed Shooting Championship competition known more commonly as the Steel Challenge.

The dominant characteristic of the special-purpose pistol is its light weight. Jim Boland's steel gun, customized from the aluminum alloy frame of a Colt Lightweight Commander, weighs an astonishing 27 ounces. (A stock Government Model weighs 38 ounces.)

Yes, 27 ounces *including* the radical triple-chamber compensator, enlarged mag funnel and all the extras you see in Ichiro Nagata's marvelous photographs.

So where did all the weight go? Metal shavings on the floor under Jim's milling machine, that's where! The slide is hogged



out, skeletonized, slimmed down and Oprah Winfrey-ized. We're talking crash diet folks!

First, the ounces fell away in steel slivers as Jim thinned the slide down where the cocking serrations are found under the rear sight. Next, he slimmed the top of the slide by raking a cutter across the top radius to remove a few more precious shavings of steel.

Inside the slide, however, is where Jim pared most of the flab away. He relieved a lot of metal at the rear of the slide where the ejector passes. (By the way, Jim Boland struck again with his magical touch with a welding torch—the ejector is welded up and re-cut, not simply replaced with an extended "combat" ejector.)

There is a porthole cut into the left side of the slide, a "firing pin indicator" if you will. Look inside to make sure...yep, there she is, the firing pin *is* present and accounted for.

It looks like steel termites went to work beneath the Bo Mar fully adjustable rear sight. Gobs of metal has been removed in this non-stress area of superfluous baggage. (Check out the photo on page 109.)

The barrel, which is the unsurpassed match-grade version from Bar Sto Precision in .38 Super, has been turned-down on a lathe to skim off a few more grams.

The compensator is relatively huge, yet it's surprisingly light. As you can see in Ichiro's photographs, the comp is somewhat of a Swiss cheese affair. The underneath, what would otherwise form an underlug, is completely milled away to reveal the full-length guide rod.

Jim Boland machines his guide rods from scratch. He seems



to either machine or weld everything from scratch, if you haven't noticed that already.

At the rear of the compensator unit, just in front of where it mates with the slide, is a "false porthole." It looks like a porthole, but it actually doesn't go all the way through the metal. The oval shaped hole matches the gas port in the side of the compensator, so in one sense it's a cosmetic touch to add symmetry to the design. But it's also a practical touch that shaves more weight off the finished product.

A further weight savings is realized in the attachment of the compensator body to the barrel. It is the typical "cone style" of attachment wherein the compensator is threaded and epoxied onto the barrel to replace the standard barrel bushing with a tapered cone of steel. Jim Boland utilizes this technique, but as you can see in the photos, the cone is relatively small.

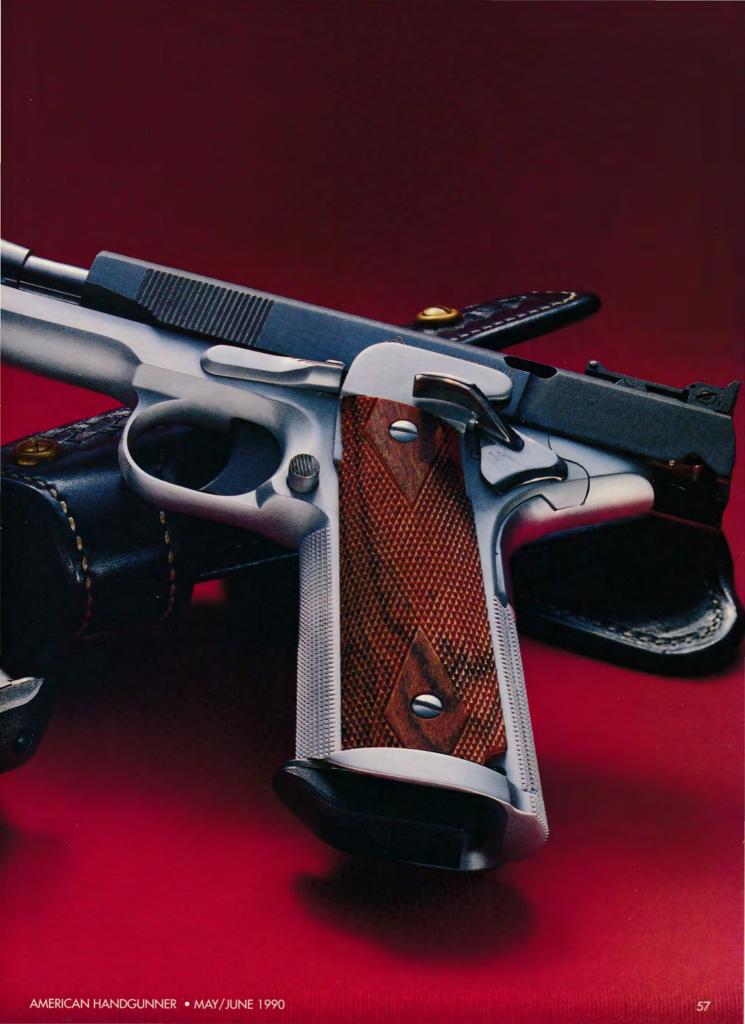
Handling is the key in speed shooting, gun handling. The light weight of Jim Boland's steel gun provides for a beautifully balanced pistol that points as naturally as your finger. Just as one of the remarkably light shotguns of the finest London gunmakers is renowned for its smooth handling, balance and pointability, so too is this Best Quality pistol engendered with those qualities that make a firearm feel like a physical extension of the shooter.

The light weight is part of it, the ergonomic grip is another. Look at that beavertail that Jim Boland sculpts by hand from a block of steel that he welds to the frame.

Take advantage of American Handgunner's detailed and extravagant color pictures— look at the smooth fit of the beavertail to the frame, see how it elevates the hand 5/8 inches higher than the









highest of after-market tangs, *notice* what a beautiful job Jim Boland has done to blend the re-shaped hammer into the new beavertail.

Now, keep admiring those stunning photographs and *imagine* how your hand would fit snugly up into that wide beavertail extension. Think how your hand would reach higher on the gun, much closer to the center of the bore where you can exercise considerably more leverage to hold the gun steady during rapid fire.

It's almost as if Jim Boland took a human hand and melted a gun around it. Call it human engineering, call it ergonomic design, call it user-friendly, it's all the same thing— a gun that shoots naturally, swings freely, balances beauti-

fully and just flat feels good.

Take the "mud flaps" and "gas pedals" for example, excellent examples of gunmelted-to-hand. These accoutrements are Jim Boland trademarks, distinguishing characteristics that set his guns apart even when seen from across a room in a holster.

A mud flap is a thumb guard, a tastefully handmade flap of steel that fits under the grip panels in between the extended Swenson thumb safeties and the slide to prevent the shooter's thumb from rubbing against the slide and retarding its movement. Jim Boland handfits each mud flap to each of his custom pistols, one at a time. This is not a casting, it's machined out of bar stock and mated to a gun individually.

A gas pedal is the aforementioned extended Swenson thumb safeties, one per side in the ambidextrous mode that most customers prefer. Jim lops off the little lever that comes on a Swenson safety and welds on a blob of steel. From that blob he machines the over-size levers and then serrates them by hand. The result is what is known as a gas pedal.

Add the two together, gas pedal and mud flap, and you have a perfect platform for resting the shooting hand's thumb in what is called the "high thumb grip." This shooting grip positions the thumb on top of the thumb safety— I mean, gas pedal—and gives strong control of the weapon by pressing down on the gas pedal in a vise-like grip. Wrap the supporting hand's

thumb on top of the shooting hand's and you have a very strong grip with considerable leverage to hold the muzzle steady during rapid fire strings.

Another improved handling quality that Jim Boland builds into his steel gun is a long sight radius. Popularized by two-time Steel Challenge champion Chip McCormick, a long sight radius gives the shooter a sharper "flash sight picture" for shooting those plates at warp speed. The sight radius on Jim Boland's masterpiece is 8½ inches.

Check out the checkering! Remember, this is an alloy framed Commander, not a chrome moly gun. Cutting those rows of sharped diamonds is easier in aluminum than steel only in that the metal is softer and easier to cut, however, any gunsmith will pick steel over alloy if you ask him which he would rather checker.

Checkering an alloy frame is more difficult because it's much easier to slip with the file and dull a diamond. The file clogs up quicker, it's harder to compensate for an error.

To get it *perfect* in alloy, like Jim Boland has done, is a greater testimony to his checkering talent than is the equally flawless checkering of the steel main-

and see what she says.

Probably call the men in the white suits to bring the funny looking sport coat for you!

Non-Test Test

How does Jim Boland's steel sensation shoot? Quite honestly, I don't really know. With the few rounds that I fired through the gun, I don't feel qualified to comment. I think a proper test should involve at least 2,000 rounds, usually with the gun fired in local IPSC matches over the course of a few weeks. "Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong in a match" has often proven Murphy's Law of Pistol Jams.

Unfortunately, the Boland .38 Super was not made available to me except to run a couple of magazines through the gun with a very protective Tom Jow, Proud Owner and Mother Figure, hovering nearby.

I don't blame him. If I owned this oneof-a-kind experimental pistol, I damn sure wouldn't let some yahoo editor of some dumb gun magazine take my gun for three weeks and shoot the bejeesus outta it just to see if it breaks!

And Jim Boland didn't have time to



spring housing. Both are cut at 20 lines to the inch, the preferred pattern for a slipfree grip.

Incidentally, notice how the checkering on the mainspring housing wraps around and continues into the pistol's frame. It's another small touch that indicates Jim Boland's emphasis on ergonomics.

Jim cut 30 lines to the inch on the front of the trigger guard to provide the support hand's index finger with a solid purchase to help pull the gun back into the hand. This is called a "finger forward grip" which is often found in conjunction with a "high thumb grip." Just for fun sometime, tell your girlfriend that you like a finger-forward, high-thumb grip

build one just for me to shoot for an article and cover story of *American Handgunner*. Let me make a short story long and explain how this came about.

Several years ago I approached this eccentric genius to borrow a gun for an article, and he unloaded on me.

"Whatcha think's gonna happen if you write an article about my guns? People are gonna call me, that's what. They're gonna call and they're gonna wanna buy one, and where will that leave me? Answering the damn phone all the time, that's what. Won't get anything done around here.

"No thanks, I don't want any article. The next thing you know people will be calling from the east coast at five in the morning. No thanks!"

Jim Boland doesn't mince his words. It was a shame that you, the readers, wouldn't learn of this outstanding gunsmith's talents, but so be it.

I saw Jim off and on at the Southwest Combat Pistol League, here and there at the Steel Challenge or the West Coast Invitational. We chatted amiably and enjoyed each other's company.

Then came the Springfield Armory Trophy Challenge when I saw an obviously distraught Jim Boland bearing down on me. Uh oh, here's trouble.

After quickly dispensing with the formalities of Hihowareyou, Jim hit me with a broadside.

"I've got a bone to pick with you," Jim began, quickly warming to his playful irritation, "Just what in the hell do I have to do to get you to write an article about my guns? You've got articles about all these gunsmiths, half of em were still in grade school when I was building .45's.

"So tell me, Mr. Editor, just what in hell do I have to do to get an article about my guns?"

That's the Jim Boland we all know and love. Predictably unpredictable, the quintessential Genius At Work.

I mentioned that, well, I asked you about an article on your guns about three years ago and you didn't want any part of it.

He looked at me like I was a blathering idiot not to know any better and simply said, "Well, I changed my mind!"

So, to make a long story longer, that's when he showed me the Amazing 27 Ounce Steel Gun. He said the gun belonged to Tom Jow and it wasn't quite finished yet but I could arrange to borrow it from Tom for an article.

The good doctor *did* finally send me the gun with his blessing to shoot it, precisely 11 days before that dreaded thing we editors so appropriately call "deadline." Sorry folks, no time for an in-depth evaluation.

We'll just have to rely on second-hand reports from the owner, Dr. Jow, and from one of his shooting buddies. His rangemate is marginally qualified, I suppose, to hold an opinion on the topic of a custom 1911. He might be credible as someone knowledgeable on guns made for speed shooting.

Yes, it's Angelo Spagnoli, none other than the 1989 Steel Champion himself, the "world's fastest shooter." I guess we can take Angelo's opinion as valid!

Accuracy And Loads

Along with the gun, Tom sent me a four-shot group that Angelo fired at 25 yards off a sandbag rest. It measures 3/4 inches horizontally by 5/8 inches vertically. The load was 4.2 grains of WW 452AA with a Hornady 124 grain jacketed flat point. A Winchester small pistol primer ignited the whole shebang in Midway cases.

Tom and Angelo worked up some

loads for this gun. Remember, this gun is designed for Steel Challenge loads—mousefarts—not IPSC major loads. This alloy frame wouldn't last very long with a lot of the 130 grain Pocket Rockets that the hot-shots are shooting at 1350 fps to make major with the Super these days.

(Jim Boland offers an identical version of this gun weighing 34 ounces with a steel frame that *is* designed to fire IPSC major loads. Even Pocket Rockets, if you must.)

All of these loads are in the neighborhood of 1,000 fps. According to Tom Jow, "All loads had very little muzzle rise, substantially less than any other gun I tested them in. All loads grouped very well, all less than 11/4 inches.

Powder	Grains	Bullet
WW 231	5.0	124 Hornady
WW 452AA	4.2	124 Hornady
WW 571	9.0	115 FMJ
WW 452AA	5.0	124 Hornady
WW 231	4.2	125 Remington

Compensator

The compensator is a triple-port design with three expansion chambers. The two rearmost chambers vent to the top through one large port each while the

Jim Boland's specially designed triplechamber comp has three different sized ports, two that channel gas upward and one that directs it sideways. The author explains Boland's design in more detail in the text.

The comp attaches to the Bar Sto barrel, which Boland says is "the best," with a threaded-cone arrangement. Note how the barrel's bottom lugs have been cut off and welded to Boland's specs. The fulllength guide rod is made by Boland. third chamber vents gas sideways through two oval shaped ports.

Jim had built another very light (25 ounces) steel gun for Ken Barwick earlier with a basic single-port compensator, but Jim realized that such a light gun shooting such light loads should have a different compensator design.

Jim theorized that by having at least two chambers, or ports, the comp would be more effective. He also calculated that each chamber had to be larger and longer than the preceding one.

Jim Boland went to work and did what he does brilliantly— experiment. He discovered that positioning the first baffle, or wall, very close to the end of the bore would result in the base of the bullet still sealed in the barrel when the nose entered the first expansion chamber.

This first expansion chamber would, in effect, strip the initial shock wave of the rushing column of air in front of the bullet and the hot powder gases behind the bullet.

As the bullet enters the second expansion chamber, which you can see in Ichiro's photographs is longer than the first one, more of the gas is directed upward through the large port in the top.

Finally, the bullet enters by far the largest of the three chambers in this triple-port compensators. There the bullet seals the chamber and forces the gas out the two opposing lateral ports. Jim theorized that this would have the same effect as a rifle's muzzle brake helping to tame felt recoil (as opposed to dampening muzzle rise, which the first two chambers do).

During this experimental phase, Jim Boland also researched the question of the effects of radically reducing the weight of the slide. He removed as much physical weight from the slide as possible which resulted in an extremely fast cycling time and less muzzle flip.

The result, as Dr. Tom Jow so eloquently puts it, is simply awesome.

Mad, Mad, Mad World

Shooters of the Southwest Combat Pistol League, the actual home-club that developed IPSC under Jeff Cooper in the Fifties, refer affectionately to Jim Boland as the "mad doctor."

Jim, you might say, is the Pistolsmith-In-Residence for the League and he is highly regarded by the shooters there.



He's certainly respected for his gunsmithing talents, but at the same time he's given wide berth as he walks around the matches to the beat of his own rather different drummer.

The last time I met Jim at a match, we discussed his new triple chamber comp on this lightweight Steel Gun and shooting monkeys. No kidding. Those were the two topics we chatted about.

(While on safari in Africa, I had been asked to shoot some crop-raiding baboons and vervet monekys that were stealing from the natives. The tribe's meager garden was being devestated. Jim and I discussed the question of whether or not it is ethically right to shoot a fellow primate, even in these circumstances where the our evolutionary cousins were stealing food from poor, hungry people.)

No Two Guns The Same

His guns— and I emphasize the plural, hardly any two are the same- are by far the most popular in this historical gun club that produced such champion shooters as Mickey Fowler, Mike Dalton and Jim Zubiena. All three, incidentally, are Boland clients.



They say Jim Boland can take a car bumper and make a gun out of it. Just give him a welding torch and stand back. Truly, his touch with the heli-arc welder is nothing short of spectacular. Jim Boland could weld a head onto a pin.

American Handgunner ran a feature in the 1988 Annual about Jim's "FK Gun," a good example of the mad doctor's incredible welding skills. Basically, he took a Colt frame, cut it apart and re-welded it together again from scratch. This time it accepted HK 13-shot 9mm magazines.

(Think about that for a moment. If Continued on page 109



IM BOLAND'S

he Double-D compensator is Jim Boland's bread and butter. An innovative style of a singleport expansion chamber, the Double-D is distinguished by two remarkable design features.

First, there is a "nozzle" protruding from the face plate of the compensator. This essentially extends the length of the face plate to seal the bullet inside the chamber for a longer time without adding weight to the compensator.

Second, the bottom surface of the expansion chamber features a "scoop" that in cross section looks like the letter D. Hence the name, Double-D.

The scoop serves to direct the hot powder gas upward through the exhaust port far more efficiently than a convetional flat-bottomed comp.

The Double-D is part of a unique "package deal" that Jim offers called the California Competitor. This complete

package is performed on a customer-supplied 1911 pistol.

The California Competitor includes:

- ✓ trigger job
- ✓ melted Bo-Mar rear sight
- ✓ complete checkering (20 lpi)
- ✓ Boland custom mag funnel
- ✓ Boland custom hi-hand grip safety
- ✓ ambi gas pedals and mud flaps
- ✓ Bar Sto* match grade barrel
- ✓ Double-D compensator system

*as available; other brands may be substituted

The California Competitor, as shown in the photo above, costs \$1,200 on the customer's gun. There is a two year waiting list. However, brand-new California Competitors are stocked by Maharlika Sportsmen Shop under a unique contract with Jim Boland. Available for immediate deliver at \$2,600, the California Competitor may be ordered from MSS by calling (714) 598-9854 (Pacific Daylight Time).

BUCKMASTER

A realistic competition for hunters with pop-up deer targets that pits handguns, rifles and bows equally against each other. Oh yes, it also pays over \$25,000 to the winner.

By Massad Ayoob



How many "deer" can you see in this photo?
Mickey Fowler, above, shot the first perfect score ever fired in Buckmaster competition with a handgun! He used a S&W Model 686 and Burris 1.5-4x scope. All competitors are issued a Buckmaster "uniform" by sponsor, RealTree camo, and must shoot from sponsor treestands, Loc-On and Summit.

hen you read about big money matches that are won with exotic spaceguns, did you ever wonder what it would be like to shoot a professional-class handgun match in which all contestants had to use a stock revolver and the kind of ammo you'd just walk into a gunshop and buy off the shelf? A match with perhaps \$125,000 in prizes, and \$25,000 or so to the winner?

If so, look no farther. BuckMasters is nere.

Former tournament tennis player Jackie Bushman founded the BuckMasters organization to do for deer hunters what BassMasters did for anglers. Rather than kill deer for money, Bushman wanted the object of the game to be a realistic deer target.

Inspired by Dirty Harry's "Hogan's Alley" scene in the movie Magnum Force, he set about designing a three-dimensional plastic whitetail deer with an 8x10 inch sensor pad in the area of the heart. A computer terminal raises the deer target from the bush, and a bullet or arrow passing through the sensor pad triggers the switch that drops the "dead deer" on its back.

Bushman, who has a syndicated sportsman's show on the TNN cable net-



work, set the course of fire up to be a visual event. The shooter faces an area of scrub or woods hundreds of yards wide. The deer have been set in well-camouflaged positions and pop up silently, one by one, at random.

Among the bucks will be no-shoot targets, does, and even a shot in one's direction will cost you 10 precious points. A buck in proximity to a doe is also a no-shoot target, unless you get him before she pops up.

You'll start in a treestand, and all shooting will be from there. This is partly because two major treestand manufacturers, Summit and Loc-On, are enthusiastic



BuckMaster supporters, and partly because Jackie's roots and BuckMasters are in the deep south, where stand-type hunting prevails and the treestands are generally a helluva lot higher than the eight feet or so at the tournament.

Today, BuckMaster membership has spread nationwide and the northeast actually has slightly more members than the South, but tradition holds true. The invitationals and the finals are both held south of Mason-Dixon line.

You must be among the top 16 in your class at one or the other of the two preliminaries to qualify for the big-dollar final held since 1988 at the fabulous Callaway Gardens Resort in Pine Mountain, Ga. Both '89 prelims were held in Florida, Daytona Beach in June and Destin in July. Surviving either made you glad that southern deer hunting season is not in high summer.

Course of Fire

In each bout of shooting, you'll fire shots from each of three treestands, a Summit and two different types of Loc-On, and will be given four "shoot" targets per stand. They can be any of nine that are out in the field, and the value of a knockdown is judged by the distance of the target. The nearest (15 yard) target is

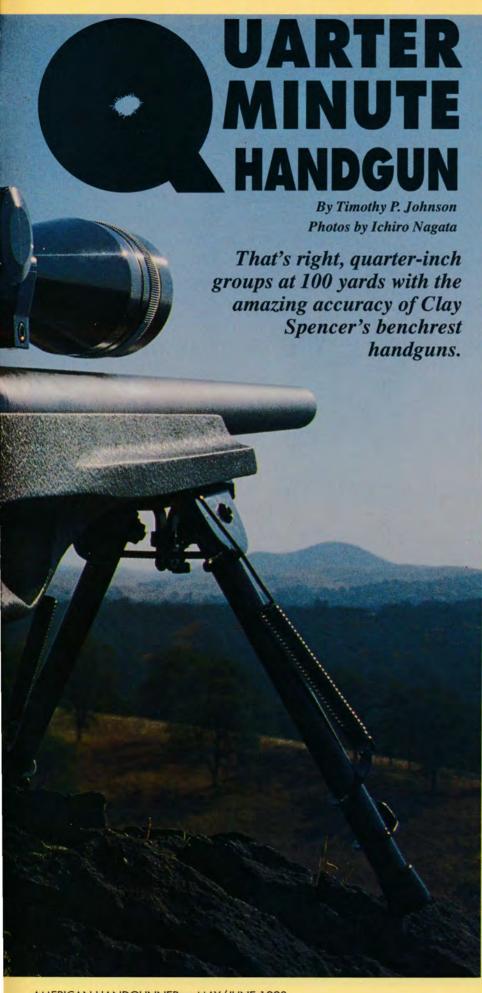
worth a mere five points, while the most distant (100 yard) plastic buck is worth 22 points.

In the rifle competition, the distance ranges from 50 to 175 yards, and in bow, from 15 to 45 yards.

The BuckMasters event, like bowling pin shooting, isn't nearly as easy as it looks. When I heard about it in '89, it sounded like an easy way to win a new Ford Bronco II (the grand prize) and a couple of Yamaha Big Bear 4x4 rec vehicles, prizes for the winners of each weapon discipline in both the preliminaries and the final.

Continued on page 78





he genesis of the .22 and 6mm PPC cartridges has evolved over a 50 year period. In the 1930's, the German military began a search for the perfect "practical" battle rifle. Teutonic researchers concluded that the most efficient battle rifle would need an effective range of 500 yards or less, with a 90% kill probability, a high rate of automatic fire and compact dimensions.

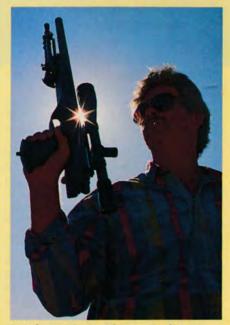
An entirely new class of weapons, the Assault Rifle, was born from that research in the form of the *Sturmgewehr* MP-43. German engineers retained the 7.92 bullet of the Kar-98 Mauser rifle, but the Polte manufacturing firm of Magdeburg developed a case fully one third shorter than the Mauser cartridge— the 7.92 Pistol Patron.

Russia gained access to German technology by capturing the weapons of fallen Nazis. Mother Russia, never one to look a gift horse in the mouth, developed its own version of the *Sturmgewehr* MP-43, the 7.62 SKS.

The SKS initially fired the 7.63 Boevoy 1943 cartridge, which again was a scaled down version of its predecessor, the rimmed 7.62 patron obr 1891.

Considerably later, the United States matched the efforts of the Germans and the Russians by developing the 7.62 NATO round and the M-14 to fire it.

The trend towards more compact military weapons progressed until Russia was using the AK-47 and the United States



Benchrest Gunsmith Extraordinaire
Clay Spencer is very fussy about
accuracy and what it takes to achieve
it. There are two ways to shoot small
groups with a handgun: the Spencer
Way and the wrong way. Spencer
insists on a match-grade, air-gauged
barrel, highly customized XP-100
action, handmade bullets, a certain
powder charge, H-S Precision's
synthetic stock bedded for the action,
and a lot of little tricks of the trade.



had the Stoner System M-16, which fires the 5.56 NATO cartridge.

More recently, the Soviets have gone to the .22 caliber bullet as well, in the form of the AK-74, which was most evident in Afganistan against the Mujahadeen.

Since the shooting sports follow in the foot falls of the military, the .223 (5.56 NATO) has shown itself in many civilian configurations from rifle to wildcat pistol. But what of the 7.62x39 cartridge?

Yes, it too has gone through a civilian metamorphosis. The Russians themselves were the first to "hot rod" the 7.62x39 by creating the .22x39, first used in the now defunct Olympic Running Deer event in the 1962 World Championships. It was later marketed as a sporting round by Sako of Finland as the .220 Russian.

Here in the US, Dr. Louis Palmisano and Roy Vail had been squeezing .220 Swift cases into successively shorter versions in the attempt to create the ultimate bench rest rifle cartridge. After exhausting most of all possibilities of the .220 Swift case, the good doctor was looking for an easier way to reach his goal.

In his own words:

"Some weeks prior to the Super Shoot (the Bench Rest Rifle Championships), I had come across an article by Larry Sterett (Handloader No. 31, 1971). It seemed the possible answer, for it (.220 Russian) was of a shape to meet my requirements and was designed to use a small rifle primer."

Doc Palmisano acquired some .220 Russian cases, only to be pooh-poohed by the notable of the bench rest rifle crowd. The general consensus was that nothing would beat the .222, except the 6x47 on a windy day.

Unlike the others that Doc had asked, Ferris Pindell agreed that the .220 Russian case had definite possibilities and the team of Palmisano-Pindell was born.

When the .22 PPC was first developed, it was named the Pindell-Palm and marketed as a custom bench rest round, with Ferris Pindell as the rifle builder.

The Pindell-Palm team contacted Sako and requested a small lot of .220 Russian brass having the flash holes drilled (as opposed to punched) to .006" and manufactured from 70-30 brass. Sako agreed. The PPC cartridges were evolving.

After considerable experimentation, prototype .22 PPC rounds were sent to the late Dan Pawlak for evaluation. For those readers who do not recognize the name, Dan Pawlak was an interior ballistician and the inventor of Hogdon's



The author dreamed up the dramatic stunt of shooting aspirin tablets at 100 yards to make a show of the gun's accuracy. He also shot itty-bitty silhouette targets and would have shot the wings off a fly if one had landed on his target.

All this fun came from the amazingly accurate 6mm PPC cartridge and an H-S Precision barrel (above).

Pyrodex, the black powder substitute.

Dan's comments were very positive to say the least:

"...this is a very low value (8000 psi residual breech pressure) indicating complete consumption of the propellant and a very low muzzle disturbance. I would extend a guess that this is a unique phenomena of the PPC cartridge design. You have, perhaps, one of the more revolutionary concepts in interior ballistics..."

One of Dan's more outrageous tests was to load a case until a chamber pressure of 80,000 psi was reached. The result was only a small amount of deformation, no case head separations, primer leakage, or blown primers. It should be

sufficient to mention the sheer foolishness of attempting to duplicate those tests, which are beyond borderline at best, and unnecessary, in fact.

By the mid-Seventies, many bench rest competitors were left slack jawed, after falling victim to the groups shot by Doc Palmisano and his son. "How did he do that," was the question of the day.

The reader has, probably, by now referred to the cover numerous times to ascertain if this is, in fact, a handgun magazine. But, the simple truth of the matter is that if any group of shooters is respected by handgun metallic silhouette fraternity, it is the bench rest riflemen. Additionally, handgun varmint hunters

can learn much from the single-holeshooters of the long gun game.

When I became aware of the existence of these cartridges, they had set over 170 world records in both NBS and IBS bench rest rifle competition. Currently, Sako is building their excellent short action bolt action rifles in these chamberings and is importing quality brass.

Long Range Deluxe

Judging by the background, it would seem that either PPC cartridge would be a super long range pistol case. Unfortunately, the reality of the situation was that a number of well known gunsmiths did not feel the project was of any merit.

Often the responses I received echoed those responses received by Doc Palmisano some 15 years earlier:

"The cartridges offer no ballistic improvement over existing wildcats. Chamber reamers are a problem, since chamber dimensions are inconsistent, etc. etc."

Enter Clay Spencer of Spencer Custom Guns, Dept. AH, Route 1, Box 596, Scotsville, VA 24590. Clay may be an unknown entity to the readers of *American Handgunner*, but he is well known as a bench rest rifle gunsmith (and competitor) whose expertise is in building bench rest rifles, silhouette pistols and rechambering T/C barrels.

Two XP-100's were built by Clay and used in our test: one in .22 PPC and the other in 6mm PPC. Both were identically built in the configuration of varmint pistols.

Additionally, Clay had built a 6mm PPC Contender for one of his customer that is almost the equal of the XP's, accuracy-wise.

Being neither a gunsmith nor a machinist, I have forgone my version of the production methods involved in building these pistols for veracity sake. The following techniques described in manufacturing these pistols are directly attributable to Mr. Clay Spencer, in response to my requests.

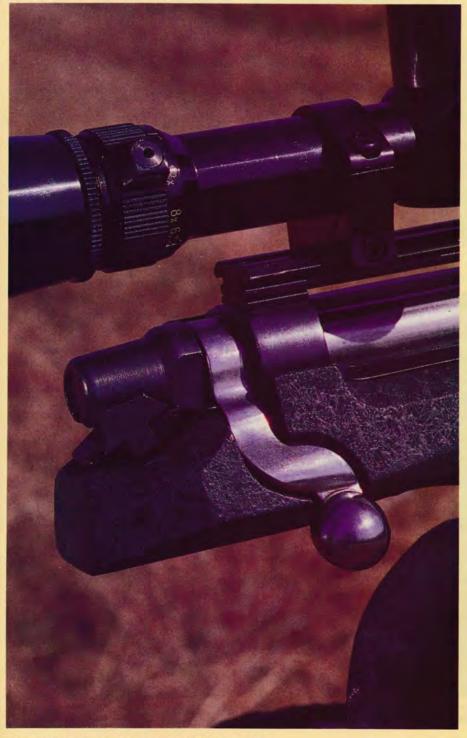
Spencer On The PPC

"After the XP-100's are disassembled and everything discarded except for the action, bolt, and trigger, I set the action up in my lathe and indicate it in. The lug seats are cut and the threads single pointed to insure squareness.

"I then remove the action from the lathe and replace it with a mandrel into which the action was screwed after indicating the mandrel in. Using a right hand cutting tool, the end of the receiver is faced off. Upon completion of this step, both the action and the mandrel are removed.

"The bolt is then disassembled and mounted on a specially made tap that is made up to fit the back end of the bolt. The back side of the lugs are machined, the Remington extractor removed, and

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IPSC

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By that system the Top Ten and their ratings are:

- 1. Rob Leatham (2)
- 2. Jerry Barnhart (6)
- 2. John Shaw (6)
- 4. J. Michael Plaxco (7)
- 5. Ross Seyfried (8)
- 6. Rick Castelow (10)
- 7. John Dixon (11)
- 8. Gary Haltman (13)
- 9. Chip McCormick (14)
- 10. Tom Campbell (18)

A similar rating system was applied to the results of the 10 Nationals held in the decade, except each shooter's five best placings were totaled, with the best possible score being, of course, a five.

The purpose of these charts is not to show who was best at any given time—obviously when Seyfried won the world championship in 1981 or Shaw the nationals in 1980 they showed they were the best at that time.

Rather, it is to show which shooters consistently led the way during the decade. Only those who shot in at least five nationals were included, so some of the rising stars like Garcia, Koenig, and Voight don't appear.

The top five in America (actually it came to six, since fifth place was a tie) in the 1980's were:

Number One, Rob Leatham (Rating: 5)

One of my friends once told me, "Whenever a magazine writes up an IPSC match, all you guys do is write about Leatham." Guilty, I guess.

One might as well write about hockey and not mention Wayne Gretzky, or about basketball and not mention Kareem Abdul Jabbar. Leatham simply dominated IPSC competition in the Eighties.

Look at the numbers: he competed in nine Nationals and won six.

He competed in three world championships and won all three.

When politics prevented the South African shooters from attending the last world shoot, they held their own "Championship of Champions" match in South Africa— Leatham won that too.

Along the way he won the Steel Challenge, the Bianchi Cup, placed second in the Masters, and won far too many major



J. Michael Plaxco won the 1982 U.S. Nationals with the first compensator, his distinctive design that came to be known simply as "The Plaxco Comp."

and local matches to list. As Tina Turner says, "Simply the Best".

Number Two, J. Michael Plaxco (Rating: 8)

Plaxco won the Nationals in 1982, placed second twice and third once. He is the only shooter to make the Top Sixteen in every year of the decade, never finishing worse than 11th.

Probably his most memorable performance was in 1985, when he broke his shooting-side shoulder in a motorbike accident a couple of weeks before the match. He could barely draw his gun. He needed both arms to get the gun out to shooting position, and still placed sixth.

Plaxco also won many other matches, including Second Chance, Soldier of Fortune, and the Steel Challenge.



John Shaw won the '80 and '81 U.S. Nationals back-to-back with a Clark Bowling Pin Model, a customized Colt 1911 .45 that is primitive by today's standards, but was radical back then.

Number Three, John Shaw (Rating: 13)

Shaw only shot in six Nationals, but he won two of them, in 1980 and '81.

He also won the Steel Challenge and twice placed second at Bianchi, losing only on the tie-breaking X-count. Shaw is considered by many to be perhaps the best all-around shooter, equally adept with autopistol, revolver, rifle, and shotgun.

Shaw was one of the first to realize that practical and action shooting sports were catching on in a big way. John pushed for better prizes, more industry support, and did much to professionalize the sport.

At present he seldom competes, devoting his time to his very successful shooting academy, M.I.S.S.

Number Four, Jerry Barnhart (Rating: 17)

In an article about stock car driver Junior Johnson (*The Last American Hero*) Tom Wolfe notes that there are two types of racers: "chargers," who go flat out to win, always, and "strokers," who lay



Here he is, The Greatest. Rob Leatham won six U.S. Nationals and three IPSC World championships in his total domination of the Eighties.



Tom Campbell was quite a sensation in the early '80s with Supergun and Supergun II, a pair of custom S&W .45s when Smith only made 9mm's.

back waiting for the others to crash.

He quotes Johnson as saying, "I'd rather lead one lap and fall out of the race than stroke it and finish in the money."

Most shooters, and I suppose most people, are a bit of both. Not Barnhart. He's a charger all the way.

If you want to gather a crowd at an IPSC match, pass the word that Barnhart is about to shoot. The spectators know he might crash and burn; but they also know that if he really hangs a run together it'll be done as well as humanly possible.

"The Burner," as he's called, won in '87 and placed second the next two years by a whisker. He won the Steel Challenge as well as a lot of other major IPSC matches.

Barnhart is still improving his performance under pressure: as one top competitor said rather worriedly, "Jerry doesn't crash much any more, but he sure does burn!"

Number Five (tie), Tom Campbell (Rating: 19)

Campbell shot a bad (for him) match in 1989, finishing 18th. What's remarkable about Campbell is that for 12 consecutive years prior to 1989 he had placed in the top 16, including third three times and fourth twice.

That's even more remarkable considering the equipment he used. No offense to Smith & Wesson, who are perfectly capable of building a state-of-the-art race gun, but the fact is in the Eighties they didn't.

In the Seventies Campbell built his "Supergun II," a non-comped, nine-shot

never won the Nationals, many people don't realize just how good a shooter he is. Ask any of the other top competitors they know.

Number Five (tie), Brian Enos (Rating: 19)

Like Campbell, Enos never quite won a Nationals in the Eighties, but he came close, placing second twice and third once.

He did win some other big IPSC matches, plus the Masters and the Bianchi Cup (twice).

While I have great respect for all the top shooters, I have particularly high regard for Enos. In a match he is always calm, controlled, unemotional, technical-



Jerry Barnhart won the 1987 U.S. Nationals with a .45 ACP Colt Government Model. Once the fad for the .38 Super started in 1984, Barnhart was the only man to win a Nationals with a .45 Auto.

.45 that was barely competitive by 1980 standards.

By 1984 it was like trying to race at Indianapolis with a front-engine car.

I can't help thinking that if S&W had put some effort in the early Eighties into building Campbell something really trick, say a compensated 16-shot .38 Super, he'd have won a couple of Nationals for them.

Nonetheless, he did win the European championship. Because Campbell has

ly almost flawless.

His approach to shooting seems to resemble that of the Japanese Zen archers, to whom winning and losing were relatively unimportant; the purpose of their mental and physical training was to reach a state in which the highest level of performance could be achieved, seemingly without effort, under any circumstances.

Before we get too esoteric here, I should mention that Enos is capable of both extreme accuracy and blazing speed— witness his fine score at the Precision Event of the Masters, and his time of 0.93 seconds to draw and hit two targets at the Steel Challenge. No matter what the shooting challenge, Enos is always a strong contender to win.

The best IPSC shooters of the past and present are world-class athletes in every sense of the word (that includes the top women competitors as well, whose achievements will be reviewed in a future column).

Marc Halcon notes, "One of the best things about this sport is the fact that anyone who is willing to learn to handle firearms safely and confidently can compete in big matches with the very best." That's one of the many reasons why IPSC is such a great sport.



Brian Enos never won a Nationals, but he nabbed two Bianchi Cups and a Masters. He's considered the consummate competitor, intense yet relaxed.

PISTOLSMITH

Continued from page 28

damage and accidents that could bend the base plate, spill the magazine contents, etc. Barge cement works well to attach neoprene or leather pads. Be sure to punch a hole for punch insertion to allow magazine disassembly.

These magazines need frequent disassembly and cleaning with patches and solvent, as does any duty magazine. To disassemble, just push the pin inward with a punch or the point of a pen, slide the bottom plate forward and remove the spring, follower and bottom plate.

Fourteen rounds is an awesome potential for a .45 pistol. Use of the large capacity magazine has resulted in two unfamiliar conditions: The frame ramp must be smaller and individual bullet strikes are entirely different than in the Government Model.

When you load a GM magazine to capacity, you'll notice a .075" gap between the top case and the mouth of the next case. The bullet nose can "dive" during stripping until the third round is fed; thereafter, cases are in linear contact. Therefore, bullet strike against the frame ramp changes as the magazine empties.

A fully loaded Para-Ordnance magazine has linear case contact from the first round. Bullet strike is, therefore, quite different than in a GM frame. Feed problems seem to be mostly on the first and last rounds stripped.

A good polish of the feed ramp, prop-

er fitting of the extractor, a non-oxidized, highly polished chamber and a coat of good silicone paste wax on the frame ramp will insure feed reliability.

If you find one of these frames that refuses to feed because the ramp shape or angle has been scored, eroded or illadvisedly changed, you can save it by fitting a steel frame ramp.

Cut a half-inch length of 3/8" square key stock for your ramp blank. Carefully mount the frame on your milling machine table with the rails dead level and the setup tight. Using a sharp, new 3/8" 4flute, center cut end mill, cut slowly from the front of the frame to the back.

Do not alternate these cuts. Take your time, use plenty of aluminum cutting fluid, take shallow cuts and cut to a depth of .375".

I would have no qualms about carrying one of these Para-Ordnance frame pistols on duty

When you've removed this section of the frame between the rails you can locate your key stock blank for the screw hole. Use a 2-56 socket head cap screw 1/2" long right at center of mass of the remaining web.

Go through the key stock and frame to proper depth with a #50 tap drill. Enlarge the key stock hole to #42 and countersink this hole #28 to a depth of .250" for the screw head.

The new steel ramp can be roughly

shaped before installation. The top radius is 5/16", cut with a 5/8" ball end mill, .082" deep. Feed ramp angle to suit your conditions. Set in place with epoxy and tighten down with the screw.

This system works with any frame that has a scuffed feed ramp, but often, steel frames only require a 1/4" deep ramp.

Loose Grips

I wish that I had better news, but the grip screws are going to be a problem for some of you. The grips slide around and are disconcerting for many shooters.

They can be glued in place with a double application of rubber cement, but the natural reaction of many is to reef on the grip screws, hammer on the screwdriver handle, then reef some more. This could result in stripped threads in the frame.

There are no separate grip screw bushings because of the size restrictions; the bosses are integral with the frame. If you strip one of these, you can try to re-pitch it with a 12-48 National Special tap.

If that doesn't work, re-tap with a 12-24 NS tap and make a special screw in the lathe with a die. Screw specifications are: .1855" diameter thread by .1545" long. The head is .311" diameter by .072" thick, with a 1/2" radius and screw driver slot.

The assembled pistol fits into and draws freely from most concealment holsters. My duty holster accepts the pistol, but the safety strap won't snap because of the added frame thickness. A longer strap or a custom holster would solve that problem.

Special magazine pouches are necessary. I strongly suggest treating any holster used on the street with a product like Prestone Silicone Spray, available at an auto parts house. Spray the inside, then rub thoroughly with a clean rag. After a few treatments, the pistol will draw like silk.

The Para-Ordnance frame pistols that I range tested functioned flawlessly, after the modifications mentioned, using a wide spectrum of handloaded and factory ammunition. These ranged from H&G 68 loaded cases from a variety of sources to all of the common factory loads carried by local departments.

The only problems I encountered were in trying to feed the old short flatpoint bullet designs. These could easily be accommodated by ramp alteration, but in the present instance, they aren't going to be used.

I would have no qualms about carrying one of these Para-Ordnance frame pistols on duty, provided it received adequate care and good maintenance and inspection at frequent intervals.

I think that it's destined to take its place beside the classic designs and it has the added advantage of providing an officer peace of mind through its potential of adequate firepower against unequal odds in a confrontation.

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QUARTER MINUTE

Continued from page 67

the end of the bolt is bored out to accept a bushing which I had previously made up. The bushing is then silver soldered in place, reinserted in the lathe and the bolt face remachined.

"At this point, the bolt can be made to fit any case head size form .222 to magnum head sizes. After ascertaining that all the machining work is perfectly square, the bolt is put into a milling machine and the Sako extractor is installed.

"Following that, the bolt and action are hand-lapped together using various grades of compound to achieve 100% contact between the back of the bolt lugs and the locking recesses. The recoil lug is then surfaced.

"Next, the barrel is mounted in the lathe and indicated in, chambering through the headstock (not between centers) and the barrel tenion cut around that center. After the chamber is finished and headspace done, the barrel was turned and the crown indicated in and out.

"Lastly, the barrel and action are finished. These particular pistols were beadblasted with aluminum oxide to give the resultant silvery matte finish. The stocks are H-S Precision units that are computer milled from a block of solid aluminum and require no special bedding— just drop in, assemble, and torque down."

'These XP's weigh 91/2 pounds and carry 18" barrels, and could easily be referred to as either a maxi pistol or a mini bench sporter.

"As for the Contender, the factory barrel was cut off in front of the lug seat area, inserted in the lathe, indicated in, and bored out using a special set of shucking reamers and drills which I had made up. Then the threads were started using a single point tool to insure straightness.

"I've had some taps ground so that I can finish all the Contender breeches the same size. The tap is inserted in the lathe and is indicated in while being tapped under power. This brings all the threads cut to match the breech.

"I use H-S Precision barrels made from 4-14 to 4-16 stainless. My rational behind using a segment of the original T/C barrel is to retain the integrity of the block pin hole and the lug seats to facilitate easy mounting on the Contender receiver.

"After the barrel was turned to match the work performed on the T/C breech, the pieces are screwed together and the barrel is left some .020" to .025" longer in order to have sufficient length to insure that an exact fit can be machined.

"Of course, when the barrel/breech assembly is finished in this manner, any interchangeability between this barrel assembly and other T/C receivers may



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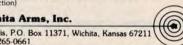
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be lost, dependent upon how precisely the other T/C receiver matches the one that this barrel/breech assembly was custom fit for.

"After that dimension was cut, I put the whole assembly back into the lathe and indicated it back to center. Then, I cut the chamber and the actual shooting barrel. This finished Contender has a 16" barrel and a forearm made from an old piece of Winchester rifle stock.

"I did the tapering back and final inletting of the barrel to insure a proper fit between the barrel, and the receiver and forearm assemblies. Then I drilled the stock and tapped the screw holes so that a proper fit could be achieved between the receiver and the forearm."

Numbthumb Butts In

If this workload were not enough, our old buddy S.A. Numbthumb wanted to get in on the act. The "Thumb," undoubtedly under the tutelage of editor Cameron Hopkins, had some rather grandiose plans concerning the introduction of an entire line of silhouette cartridges.

The last we saw of him, he was crying into the phone (collect) trying to get the backing of every manufacturer in the western hemisphere for his schemes. Judging by the look in his eyes (bloodshot), I have a strong suspicion that his is not the final chapter on the S.A. series.

Back To Business

Prior to proceeding with this evaluation, certain facts must be clarified with regards to the chamber dimensions (more specifically neck dimensions) of these pistols. The bench rest .22 PPC has a neck diameter of from .244" to .246" OD, whereas the .22 PPC-USA has a neck diameter of from .250" to .251" OD.

The 6mm PPC has a neck diameter of .262", whereas the 6mm PPC-USA measures from .268" to .269" OD. If one can succeed in chambering either the .22 or 6mm PPC-USA cartridges into firearms having chambers formed with the bench rest tight neck dimension reamers, then I would suspect excessively high pressures would be the result.

In fact, there have been some reports of this exact occurrence happening in rifles to date. But in general, since these chamberings have until only recently been the forte of bench rest shooters, who are in my opinion the most technologically astute individuals involved in any of the shooting sports, problems of this sort have been rare.

The converse (PPC cases having Sako style necks) is easily possible, but I would expect accuracy to suffer.

Good Bullets

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lets on a scale and to measure the outside diameter with either a micrometer or a caliper, however, until recently, any variation in jacket thickness, air bubbles, or any other internal flaws, were impossible

This is no longer the case, thanks to Vern Junkes' Internal Concentricity Comparator. Vern's machine will be the cause of great consternation among bullet manufacturers, if it ever achieves common usage. The sensitivity of this device is such that merely rubbing a bullet between the palms of your hands will cause it to register a different reading than was previously recorded prior to such action.

This degree of precision may be looked upon as overkill, however, considering that such methods have resulted in under one-quarter MOA groups, in my opinion, precludes their being faulted as unnecessary.

It may seem sacrilegious to say it, but given the choice of purchasing Vern's machine or a chronograph, the chronograph will have to wait!

Clay's method of using the Internal Concentricity Comparator is to separate those bullets showing a three increment deviation in reading as registered on the equipment's gauge.

Any bullet that will not "settle," causing the needle to waiver like a tachometer on a race car, is trashed. This bullet obviously has internal flaws and would be one of those unexplained "flyers" so often mentioned by gun writers. In other words, we were taking the rap for a bum bullet and didn't even realize it!

Another procedure that has proven itself is loading by Volume rather than Weight. The theory (in actuality, scientific fact) is that if it takes 20,000 particles to fill X-amount of space, it will always take 20,000 particles to fill the same Xspace, regardless of where that space is or the atmosphere that X-amount of space has been subjected to.

The bench rest fraternity uses a Lyman 55 powder measure, that has been modified by the addition of the Culver insert (referred to as the Lyman-Culver 55) to meter out their charges in "clicks." This device has the reputation of not only being consistent with itself, but it is also consistent with other Culver modified Lyman 55 powder measures.

It is the norm among bench rest riflemen to refer to their powder charges in the PPC cases as, say, "42 clicks."

"Clicks" and "grains" are not compatible. For example, the 49.5 "clicks" of H-322 that Bob Sutton gives as a loading for

his .22 PPC XP-100, if confused as a weight in grains, would about fill a .308 case! No way could you fit such a weight in a case the size a PPC (USA or benchrest, .22 or 6mm).

Anticipating a disgruntled reader six months from now writing in, "I got Clay Spencer to build me one those XPs in 6mm, and mine won't shoot that good!" causes me to reiterate that these pistols are precision instruments. Your loading components, especially bullets, must be equally precise, otherwise your results will not equal what is reported here.

Test Firing

Before introducing the targets, the mental attitude of the shooters should be discussed. Frankly, neither of us wanted to shoot. Clay had recently competed in the Super Shoot, placing in the top 20 in the aggregate, put in excess of 44 hours at his nine to five job, gone on a three day fishing trip, and attended a funeral upon his return.

Furthermore, Clay was somewhat less than enthusiastic about the article, saying, "How do you demonstrate the precision of these groups to people that are used to thinking in terms of MOA?"

I was apprehensive about shooting the pistol since I do not rate as the world's greatest long distance pistol shot on a good day. It is disquieting to know from the outset that you haven't any excuses. Needless to say, neither of us were prime examples of that "positive attitude" so often spoken of.

Clay had unilaterally decided that he would sight the gun in and I would do the shooting. Conditions were less than ideal, having intermittent gusts of wind blowing in an easterly direction at 15 mph. Clay's first group of his sighter series was .550" x .490" measuring .325" center to center for five shots.

It may be hard for the reader to accept, but this group only rates "good" for Clay and his XP- not outstanding. My first group was a killer 13/4 incher that did little to allay my previous judgement of my shooting abilities.

Shooting Aspirins

Having exhausted our ammunition, Clay went in to reload and I went back to the truck to retrieve my "special targets." Upon his return, I posed the question, "Do you want a challenge"?

"What do you have in mind", Clay responded.

"How about shooting aspirin tablets at 100 meters", I asked, producing a dark blue poster board having three florescent 1/2 inch Target Dots with white aspirin tablets glued to them.

As a warm up exercise I also had two rolls of Target Dot Instant Silhouette Targets of the NRA reduced variety. These targets measure: 1.25 x .899 inches for the Chicken, 1.375 x .720 inches for the Pig, .910 x .825 inches for the Turkey and 1.0 x .845 inches for the Ram.

Clay developed a twinkle in his eye, indicative of his interest being aroused. We shot the silhouettes first, since compared to the aspirin tablet of .410" inches, they were the easier target.

Clay's results on these bumble bee sized silhouettes were two shots measur-

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ing .560" center to center on the Chicken, two shots .205" on the Pig, .257" for the two shots on the Ram, and a phenomenal three shot .235" group on the Turkey.

"Shall we try the aspirin tablets now,"

Clay asked.

He broke the first aspirin tablet (remember this is 100 meters, 110 yards!) with a 12 o'clock hit. Clay missed the second by a mere .165", then hit the third aspirin with a 3 o'clock hit.

After reloading, Clay hit the #2 aspirin with a 3 o'clock hit. We had three rounds left and Clay suggested that I shoot them.

After witnessing a shooting display like I just had, believe me, intimidated is an insignificant description of my feelings.

Clay pointed out the aiming point some 1/s inch left of the Turkey and vertically centered. Additionally, Clay told me when to shoot, drawing on his bench rest developed wind doping ability.

I am happy (relieved is more like it) to report that I hit the Turkey in the breast

with the first shot.

"Coach" Spencer said to halve the distance horizontally of my previous shot and to hold off firing until the wind settled. My second shot was dead center.

"Just do it like that one more time,"

Clay advised.

I did! My group was .335" center to

Could these be The Ultimate Long Range Pistol Cartridges?

center for these three shots and the second and third shots were one hole measuring .215" *outside* diameter. All things considered, a truly remarkable day!

To those doubting Thomas' out there, we fired eight groups (16 shots), all but one *under* 1/2 inch! Far too many shots were fired and by two different shooters for the results to be discounted as a fluke. Simply outstanding accuracy!

Clay summarized after shooting a sub 1/4 MOA group, "The easiest way to have this gun shoot a 11/2 inch group is to run down to the local gunshop, grab a box of bullets off the shelf, go home and load em up and, presto, instant awful!"

That a 11/2" group shot by a pistol could be looked upon as "awful" is a staggering concept to say the least.

If one would have his pistol live up to the potential Clay builds them to achieve, some suggestions are in order. Bullets by the listed custom manufacturers have been found to be the best in PPCs. *The* powder is H-322. Primers are generally either Remington or Federal BR. Cases are formed from Sako .220 Russian as "Doc" Palmisano had originally theorized.

Vern Junke's Internal Concentricity Comparator is almost mandatory to be sure of grouping under ½ inch. If these methods are religiously adhered to, the results will be as reported— if the shooter does his part.

All of this brings us around full circle. Could these be The Ultimate Long Range Pistol Cartridges?

The word "ultimate" leads me to say that we haven't quite worked with them long enough nor has a comparative series of tests been made between the PPC cartridges and other esoteric wildcats that individuals are currently experimenting with to make that claim.

But I will say that if they are not the "ultimate," then they are close enough to it to warrant mine currently being on order!

Custom Bullet Makers

Internal Concentricity Comparator Vern Junke The Accuracy Den 25 Bitterbush Road Reno, NV 89523

custom precision bullets Jeff Fowler Rt. 3, Box 37A South New Hope Road Gastonia, NC 28054

custom precision bullets Walt Berger 4234 North 63rd Ave. Phoenix, AZ 85033

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BUCKMASTER

Continued from page 63

I immediately plunked down my entry fees. The charge is \$350 per discipline in the prelims and \$500 per discipline for

May 31st found your reporter in Daytona Beach, suited up and ready to go.

So what if I'd never shot from a treestand before? It couldn't be that hard.

I was more used to open sights than scopes, and my super-accurate 8" Colt Python stainless would do 31/2" from the bench at 100 yards.

Along for the ride was my Steyr Professional .30-'06 with 2-7x Burris scope, a sub-MOA rifle that would laugh in scorn at an 8x10" hit zone at 175 yards.

And then I got into the damn treestand, which I hadn't bothered to practice from. At Daytona, they were mounted atop sawn-off poles with nothing to lean back against, and the recoil of the first Hornady 150 grain .30-'06 load damn near knocked me out of my perch.

My following shots suffered, not from

flinch, but from cringe.

Cringe is when, believing that you are going to plunge to your death when the next shot goes off, your entire body convulses forward involuntarily as you apply the last few ounces to the trigger. It was all I could do to shoot a rifle score that qualified me for the finals.

On to the pistol. Yes, iron sights hit at 100 yards—but they don't let you identify antlers against bushy background. I may have set the BuckMasters record for shooting does, and though my sixth place overall was high for iron sights at the Daytona preliminary, the first thing I put on my list for the finals was to have gunsmith Brad Lewis at Riley's Sport Shop, 1575 Hooksett Road, Dept. AH, NH, 03106 drill and tap the Python for a Leupold mount carrying a 4x B&L pistol scope.

Guns Of The BuckMasters

There have thus far been four Buck-Masters events. Callaway Gardens in 1988 saw Ken Kiger of North Carolina win Pistol using a Ruger Redhawk and 2x Leupold scope, with Samson ammo. In second place was Larry Lindsey of Alabama, using 71/2" Freedom Arms .454 Casull with factory-furnished 260 grain ammo and the same scope as Kiger.

The Daytona preliminary saw the same two men in the same two places with the same two guns. These were clearly the dynamic duo to beat.

Then came the second '89 preliminary at Destin, Fla. Mickey Fowler, one of the all-time great professional handgunners, was out of retirement and fresh from a warmup six weeks before at the Bianchi Cup he once ruled for a string of three victories that has never been equalled.

Also on the line was Ohio's Blackie

Sleeva, who holds the metallic silhouette record of 155 out of 160 on the Presidents 100.

Mickey used a 6" Smith & Wesson Model 686 with Burris 1.5-4x scope. He wound up keeping it on four power. He became, at Destin, the first man to shoot a perfect bout with a handgun, and reportedly did so three times, his performance marred only by the shooting of a single doe.

The trio of guns Blackie had used to set his record were a Dan Wesson .357 SuperMag, a Wichita Mark 40 in 7mm IHMSA, and a Thompson/Center Contender in 7mm TCU. For BuckMasters, he chose a much more prosaic handgun: a blue Ruger Super Blackhawk he'd worn out once in silhouetting and had to have rebarrelled by the factory, under a 4x Leupold scope.

Blackie came in a close second behind Mickey at Destin. Both had shot scores higher than those that had won previous events.

The stage had been set for the finals at Callaway Gardens, the impressively titled BuckMasters World Gun and Bow Championships.

We all arrived the day before the match to be issued our gear. The dress code for this match is simple: they give you a uniform. RealTree Camouflage furnishes each competitor with a pair of BDU style trousers or overalls and three tee shirts in their unique and field-proven tree bark camouflage pattern. You will wear those while shooting, though your sponsors' patches can be sewn on.

Laid Back Match

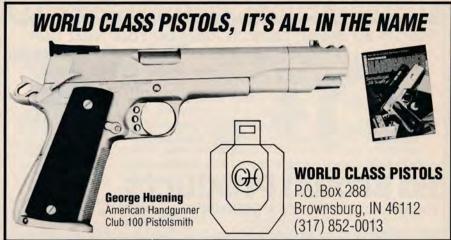
BuckMaster is the most laid back of the money matches. The schedule for the first two days is easy: shoot a round in the morning or early afternoon, then leave at your heart's content, returning only for the optional, hosted barbecue.

Many of the shooters took advantage of the superb quail preserve on the Callaway property. Others, mostly with their families, toured the breathtaking botanical wonder of the Callaway Gardens themselves. Camo days, magnolia nights.

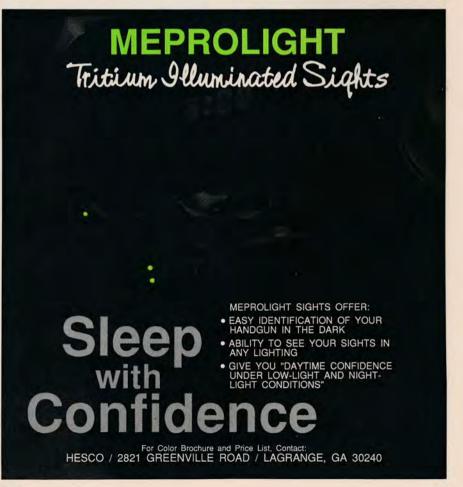
The pressure wasn't as much as the Bianchi Cup, but it was a lot more than Second Chance, and tension was palpable in the air. Of the three men who won their disciplines, the one with the highest accumulation of points would be the Buck-Master of the Year, and winner of the new Bronco II XLT donated by Ford, as well as a Yamaha 4x4 and a Ruger firearm and a decent chunk of cold cash. The Ford bore a sticker price of \$17,264.

Brad Cowell and I were the first two up on the first day. Brad, a Daytona Beach cop, had switched from his Model 29 .44 Magnum to a Colt Python Hunter .357 with 2x scope since the preliminary, and his score took a quantum leap.

My own problem was finding the little guys; they were so well hidden in the Georgia pine bush that I only saw two to







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shoot in my first run of 40 seconds or so. As the second set began, I was squeezing off my Colt as I saw another deer target rise into the field of view of the scope.

After my shot, I snapped the crosshairs of the 4x B&L back down and locked into the black sensor pad of the new target. About the time the shot was breaking my conscious mind said, "Uh, Mas, you know the only time they pop one target up in front of another is in a no-shoot situation?"

Too late. The Federal American Eagle 158 grain JSP struck home, and I had shot my first doe of the match.

Connie Hood followed me, another man who'd changed guns since the prelim. The recoil of his Ruger Super Redhawk .44 Magnum had shaken loose every scope he'd mounted on it, so he'd gone to an 8" Colt King Cobra .357 with 4x Leupold scope, a combo he swore had given him a 2" group at 100 yards. Connie missed spotting a target on his first run, but recovered and hung tough.

Soon it was Larry Lindsey's turn. Larry shoots phenomenal groups with his .454 Casull, and with his gun hand healed from the carpal tunnel problem he'd placed #2 at Daytona in spite of, many thought this would be Lindsey's year to win.

But the hidden targets proved elusive for him as they had for me. Larry's score was disappointing, and for the first time since he'd been shooting BuckMaster, it didn't look as if he'd make the final shootoff. Larry was the first of the heavy hitters to fall. There would be more.

Sleeva vs. Fowler

The first day finished with none of the handgunners maxing the difficult course. Sleeva was first with a 143 out of 180 or so possible, Fowler second by a three point gap. Handgunner editor Cameron Hopkins had, the night before, predicted a Fowler/Sleeva race. He had called it right

Friday afternoon, the second day of basic shooting, saw ups and downs. Kiger, in third the day before with a 136 score, slipped to a 125 this day; Sleeva plummeted to a still respectable 125, and the consistent Fowler was but a point short of the previous day's total.

Jesse Morehead, the first BuckMaster to shoot all three disciplines, had spread himself a bit thin. A powerful 124 the previous day was not sustained by his second score, a 94. It would drop him to fifth place, just out of the shootoffs.

When he set aside his Pentax-scoped Smith & Wesson Model 29 61/2" and picked up his 95-lb. Browning Mirage compound bow, it was the same story: fifth place among the archers. By the time he'd finished up rifle with his bull-barrelled Model 77 Ruger .243 and Pentax 3-9x scope, he was eighth among the long gunners.

It was, nonetheless, a record three-discipline performance for BuckMaster shooting, with top 10 placings across the board. Jesse Morehead is one hell of an all-around deer marksman.

Jeff Gates of Altoona, Pa. was using an L-frame S&W .357 as he had at the previous match, but this time he'd swapped the conventional scope for a vintage Aimpoint Mk III. The morning of the second day, he confided that he didn't think his initial score of 94 would allow him to make the shootoffs, but he rebounded with a strong 124 to just make the cut.

At the end of the second day, four shooters had shot their way into the "finals of the finals" that would begin Saturday morning. Mickey Fowler was in first, followed by Blackie Sleeva, with Ken Kiger third and Jeff Gates fourth.

Several of the shooters had entered multiple disciplines, among them Gates and Kiger, both of whom were shooting rifle. Gates, I suspect, found the long gun a bit distracting. He had some trouble on timing with the rifle, and it made him hurry his shots on pistol. With 20 to 40 seconds for four shots per stand, Buck-Master is not a speed game, and being thrown off pace hurt Gates' normally superb marksmanship.

Kiger, on the other hand, was glad he'd split his efforts into the use of two guns. While the rifle didn't do much to help his pistol work, he said, the revolver shooting definitely sharpened him up for

the riflery later in the day.

By Friday afternoon, the erstwhile handgunner had put all the likely rifle winners in the shade, leading the field with 260 points against Dennis Dadian (246), Johnny Clayton (237), and Dan Ooley (225).

The final day broke hot and muggy. The semifinal shootoffs began with Sleeva against Kiger. Blackie missed three of his targets and Ken four in this battle of the Ruger .44s; the defending champion had been displaced by the newcomer.

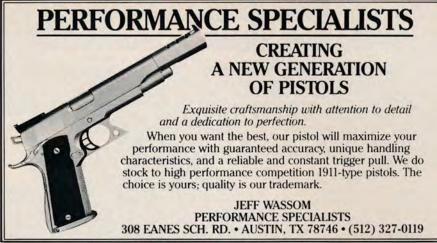
Then it was Fowler against Gates, duelling Smith & Wesson 686s. The coolness of the veteran combat master prevailed, and Fowler won by 35 points.

Now, at last, came the predicted shootoff: Mickey Fowler, the quintessential Cool Professional, against Blackie Sleeva, who had unbelievably parlayed a single action revolver with five and six inch hundred yard groups into the final stage for the money.

Sleeva seemed nervous and self-effacing, Fowler, his usual collected self.

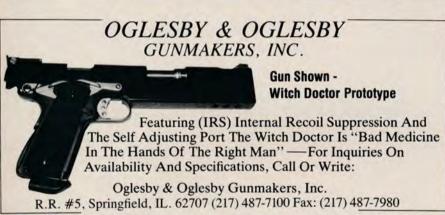
The two went almost target for target. The crunch came in the middle of the three scenarios. The 100 yard target rose first and Mickey settled in behind his cocked 686, and squeezed the shot off. It appeared to hit high in the chest and on a real deer, probably would have been a fatal lung shot. But at BuckMasters, only the sensor pad in the heart area counts.

That critical 22-point target did not fall. The next target came up, a 50 yarder on almost the same axis, and Mickey shot











it fast and clean, slamming it onto its back amidst applause.

As Fowler walked off the firing line, he looked uncharacteristically troubled. A decade before, when a missed reload at the falling plate event of the first Bianchi Cup cost him some 50 points in a tournament he lost overall by only 20, Mickey had just shrugged and laughed. Today, clearly, he was not happy about that high shot on the long target.

Now it was Sleeva's turn. Perceptibly nervous, he took his time settling into the awkward treestand position and dry-firing before he reached down for the four CCI rounds the BuckMasters staffer was patiently holding for him.

The .357 Magnum, it was decided, would no longer be allowed

He shot his first run perfect. So had Fowler, to the same applause. Now came the toughest run, the one from the middle Loc-On treestand.

The 100 yard target loomed again. Sleeva squeezed slowly, oh so slowly, but at the boom of the .44, the target toppled.

As the 50 yarder snapped up, Blackie pivoted and fired...and missed the target Fowler had hit.

The third run, the easiest layout, went as well for Blackie as it had for Mickey. The long target in the middle string had been the decider.

In minutes, it was announced: Blackie Sleeva had won the BuckMasters handgun event, and with it a new Ruger Redhawk, a handsome Yamaha ATV, and nearly a thousand dollars in cash.

BuckMaster Finals

Meanwhile, on the rifle range, the unexpected was happening. Kiger, the lost favorite for the handgun match, was in the rifle finals with Johnny Clayton. Johnny's Remington .243 missed two of 12 deer, and Ken's Winchester .30-'06 missed but one.

Kiger, whose hope had been to win Buck-Master's Handgun, had won Buck-Masters Rifle instead. An hour later, it would be announced, he had done more. Ken's cumulative score was higher than that of Sleeva in handgun or winner Randy Hendrix in bow.

Ken Kiger was the 1989 BuckMaster of the Year, the proud owner of a prize pot BuckMaster executive Alan Brewer estimated at between \$26,000 and \$27,000 in value.

In addition to a Ruger 77 .270 rifle and a Yamaha Big Bear, Kiger accepted the keys to the new Ford Bronco II. As he did so, the 40-year-old electrical contractor and outspoken gun rights advocate told the crowd, "This is proof of something a lot of you have already discovered: a lot of practice, and following the Word of God, are the keys to success. I

think that says it all."

Because the heat of summer in the south turned off many of the shooters and kept a whole lot more away, Bushman expects the 1989 preliminaries and final match to be held in cooler months. It is too soon to announce them because Jackie still has to coordinate around major tournaments.

But we can tell you this. The course of fire will remain the same. You will still be required to use the following specified factory loads, in the four allowed calibers. They are: .44 Magnum, 240 gr. JSP; .41 Magnum, 210 gr. JSP; .454 Casull, any factory load; .45 Colt, any 255 grain factory load

The .357 Magnum, it was decided, would no longer be allowed, bringing the rules back to where they'd been in '88. Nearly half the shooters in the Callaway Gardens final used .357, and fully half of the top 10 did.

Yet one could not say the .357 was taking over, since three of the four Buck-Master money events thus far have been won with Ruger .44 Magnums. Fowler's victory with this S&W .357 in the Destin prelim was the only exception.

Alan Brewer stated that the feeling was that .357 is simply too light a round for deer, and the organization's overriding intent is to make it a realistic hunter's match for realistic hunter's guns.

The gun will still have to be stock, with no heavy aftermarket barrels or other gadgetry. Conventional scopes and electronic sights are allowed, but not lasers, which would be useless for this sort of shooting anyway.

Savvy BuckMasters staffer Mark "Stitch" Stianche, when asked, advised, "From everything I've seen, a good .44 Magnum like the Ruger with a good, solid scope is the way to go."

For information on the 1990 Buck-Masters Series and an application for the necessary membership, contact Alan Brewer at BuckMasters, Dept. AH, P.O. Box 2151, Montgomery, AL 36197.

I found it a smoothly and fairly run match attended 100% by nice people I was proud to share my favorite sport with. I'll look for you there in '90. Meantime, I'll be practicing from my treestand.

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BY JOHN TAFFIN

TAFFIN TESTS

or a number of years now the battle has been ongoing between those who cling to the tried and true, slow moving but heavy bulleted .45 ACP and the fast stepping, but relatively lightweight 9mm.

Chance Body Armor, related how he had returned fire to the tune of 17 hits with 9mm hollowpoints in the torso of his attacker to no apparent effect.

The last shot, in the head, put the attacker down.

Action Express uses a rebated rim, that is, the rim is 9mm size, but the body allows the use of .41 caliber bullets at 900 to 1000 fps.

Yes, the Nine 'Em 'Em will fire 115 grain hollowpoints at 1400 fps from the

same sized semi-auto, but many experts agree that the keys to either defensive or

hunting handguns are caliber and penetration. The relatively slow moving, but heavyweight .41 Action Express is designed for penetration.

The .41 Action Express

There are those who would have us believe that the best 9mm is as good as the .45 ACP and the "records" show that they are equal in "stopping power," if there really is such a thing.

I have been shooting the 9mm quite a bit lately and I am impressed with the quality of a number of pistols that are chambered for the little nine. But just last night I watched the latest "Second Chance" video tape put out by Richard Davis of Second Chance Body Armor. One of the policeman interviewed, who had been saved by wearing Second

Events like this are exactly what Evan Whildin had in mind when he designed the .41 Action Express. There are more varied 9mm semi-autos available than offered in any other semi-auto calibers. Most of these are top quality pistols *but* they are still chambered for the puny Parabellum.

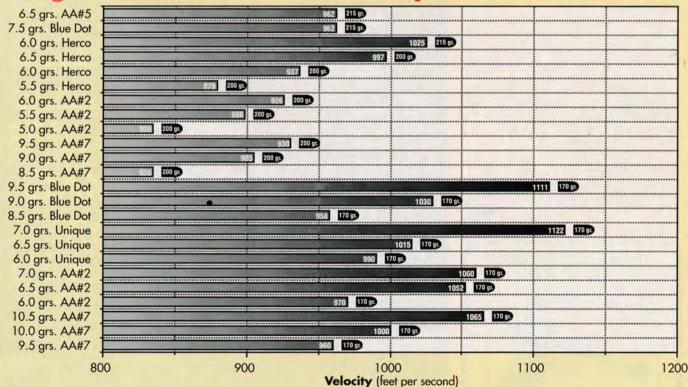
Whildin's idea was to come up with a cartridge that would get all those 9mm pistols up off their knees and go to work by simply changing the barrel, magazine and possibly the recoil spring.

To make this notion fly, the .41

.41 Caliber Evolution

Handgunners who have been around for awhile well know the story of the creation of the .41 Magnum. In the early 1960's, Elmer Keith, Bill Jordan and Skeeter Skelton got together at an NRA Convention and convinced Smith & Wesson and Remington to come up with the ideal peace officer's gun and cartridge.

High Performance .41 Action Express Favorite Loads



WARNING: Approach all handloading carefully by reducing charges listed by a least 10% and working up cautiously. Neither the author nor American Handgunner accept responsibility for results obtained with this reloading information due to the inherent variation in handloading components and individual reloading techniques.

The original idea was a 200 grain bullet of .41 caliber at 900 to 1000 fps. What surfaced was a cartridge only slightly inferior to the .44 Magnum in a loading that was too powerful for police use and in a sixgun that was too large and heavy for everyday uniform carry.

What began as a defensive cartridge, turned out instead to be a first rate out-doorsman's combination.

The original idea was a good one— a 200 grain bullet at around 900 to 1000 fps. And that is exactly what the .41 Action Express delivers. In fact, IMI Samson factory ammunition launches a 200 grain full metal jacketed flat-nosed bullet at 921 fps from my .41 AE, a TZ-75, and shoots into less than three inches at 25 yards.

This is the cartridge Keith, Jordan and Skelton proposed 25 years ago. And it is now available, not in a sixgun, but a high capacity double action semi-automatic from Action Arms, F.I.E. and Taurus.

In addition to factory chamberings for the .41 AE, there are nearly unlimited possibilities for the .41 AE in 9mm's that can be converted over to the larger caliber. I am thinking mainly of the beautiful Browning Hi-Power and the latest line-up of Third Generation Smith & Wesson double action 3900 and 5900 semi-automatics.

.41 AE Testing

During the testing of the .41 Action Express, both for this edition of *Taffin Tests* and for a feature piece on F.I.E.'s TZ-75, more than 1200 rounds were put through the TZ in its .41 AE persuasion. The TZ-75 came as a 9mm with an extra barrel, magazine, and recoil spring to convert over to .41 AE.

While operating flawlessly as a Nine, one problem surfaced with the .41 AE version. Extraction is not 100% reliable and 27 failures were recorded during the 1200 rounds. Either the extractor was not engaging the rim as a loaded round entered the barrel from the magazine or, more likely, it was slipping off as the round was fired. As the gun fired, the slide came back but the fired round stayed in the barrel.

In talking with F.I.E. about extraction problems, they felt the problem was one of ammunition and that the problem could be solved by slightly altering the locking lugs and slowing down the lock time. Some guns with the locking lugs slightly altered no longer had extraction problems.

After talking with F.I.E, my first regret was that I had not kept track of what round was fired when extraction failed. Running a re-test using Samson 200 grain FMJ's, Samson 170 grain JHP's, handloads with 200 grain full metal jacketed bullets from Accurate Arms loaded over 9.0 grains of AA#7, Bull-X 215 grain SWC .41 Magnum bullet over 5.3 grains of AA#2, and NEI's 195 grain FN over 8.8 grains of AA#7, I kept careful track

of exactly what was happening.

Firing a full box of 200 grain Samson factory ammo resulted in a muzzle velocity of 934 fps and two failures to extract. Switching to 170 grain Samson factory loads yielded a muzzle velocity of 1098 fps and two failures to extract, one in the first magazine of 10 rounds, one in the second magazine, and then none in the next three magazines.

With my handload of 200 grain Accurate Arms FMJ over 9.0 grains of AA#7, I had one failure in the first magazine and none for the next four magazines.

What is notable is the use of cast bullets. I had no failures to extract with cast bullets and it made me wonder if all the previous failures to extract were with jacketed bullets.

Could the pressures with cast bullets be just at the right level for certain extraction? The muzzle velocities for the cast bullet loads in this last go round were 1018 fps for the 195 grain NEI bullet and 970 for the 215 grain Bull-X bullet.

Others have complained of accuracy problems and failures to feed with the .41 AE; I experienced neither except six failures to feed which were traced to my reloading procedures.

Wanting to see if the .41 AE could be loaded without .41 AE dies, I used a 9mm shellholder and Lyman .41 Magnum dies. They worked perfectly. Almost.

The sizing die worked fine, the expanding plug did its job, but the .41 Magnum seating die left the loaded .41 AE round without a taper crimp, which resulted in a sharp edge that would catch on the feeding ramp of the TZ-75.

If one already loads for the .41 Magnum, the addition of a 9mm shell holder and a .41 taper crimp seating die, ground off to the proper length, will result in all that is needed to load the .41 Action Express

When loaded with Lee Carbide .41 AE dies no failures to feed were experienced nor were any experienced with factory ammunition. IMI Samson factory ammunition with the 170 grain JHP is in the 1100 fps range and the heavier 200 grain full metal jacket load is slightly over 900 fps. These are probably good guidelines to stick with in reloading the .41 AE.

Handloading Techniques

Reloading the .41 AE is pretty much the same as for the other semi-auto cartridges. Loaded cartridge length is critical for magazine functioning. Don't believe the printed measurements. Instead try any loaded rounds in the magazine before running a large batch.

The loaded round may fit the overall cartridge length specs but still not function through the magazine because of the shape of the bullet nose.

A good case in point is NEI's 220 grain SWC .41 Magnum bullet. This is a beautiful wide flat-nosed bullet that feeds

Continued on page 86





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VISA

TAFFIN TESTS

Continued from page 85

perfectly in the .41 AE, but the nose is so broad that more than two in the magazine and they wedge against the front sides and refuse to budge.

One would also expect to have a vast array of .41 Magnum bullets to pick from in the 170 to 200 grain range. Not so. Most .41 Magnum bullets have to be seated so deeply into the case for magazine function that the sides of the brass are bulged.

I tried all the .41 Magnum bullets I had on hand and only the Sierra 170 grain JHC is recommended for use in the TZ-75 .41 Action Express. Other semi-autos chambered for the .41 AE may have magazines that are different enough to allow the use of other .41 Magnum bullets.

I especially wanted to use the Speer jacketed 200 and 220 grain soft-nosed bullets, but they also proved to be too long of tooth for the .41 AE.

Components for reloading the .41 AE can be acquired from two sources. Accurate Arms (Rt 1, Box 167, Dept AH, McEwen, TN, 37101, (615)729-4207) has 200 grain FMJ bullets available for the .41 AE, and both brass and ammunition is available from Action Arms (P.O. Box 9573, Dept AH, Philadelphia, PA, 19124, (215) 744-0100)

Sierra's 170 grain JHC proved to be quite accurate in the .41 Action Express. Favorite loads are 7.0 grains of AA #2 for 1060 fps, 6.5 grains of WW231 for 1053 fps, and 9.5 grains of Blue Dot for 1111 fps. All of these loads shoot into two inches or less at 25 yards.

Both 7.0 grains of Unique and 7.5 grains of Herco also proved to be excellent loads grouping just slightly over two inches with velocities of 1100+ fps. With Accurate Arms 200 FMJ, I prefer 7.5 grains of WW540 or 8.5 grains of Blue Dot. These loads are in the 950 to 1000 fps range.

For cast bullet loads, I prefer the Bull-X 215 grain semi-wadcutter. This is a commercial cast bullet designed for the .41 Magnum but it works beautifully in the .41 AE.

Perfect defense loads can be assembled with this bullet in the 900+ fps range by using 8.5 grains of AA#7, 7.0 grains of WW540, or 5.0 grains of WW231. Bull-X bullets are available from Bull-X, 102 S.Main St., Dept AH, Farmer City, IL, 61842, (309) 928-2574.

With most of the semi-auto hype the past few years going to the 10mm and new guns for the 9mm, the real dark horse, the .41 AE, could prove to be the winner in defensive circles if extraction problems can be solved and the guns made 100% reliable with proper ammunition. The possibilities are certainly there.

HUNTING

Continued from page 21

I have a Model 60 I purchased in the early Sixties that has gone under five inches at 100 yards with iron sights on many occasions. More interesting to me than just another crummy revolver.

The sharp contrast between the gun I purchased and those I had seen written about was also interesting. I tracked down several more in local gun shops that also had bad headspace problems.

No Clip, No Bang

Smith & Wesson's new attitude under their new president seemed oblivious to the fact that I did not hide at all my intention to purchase the gun and to write it up, however it came out. Obviously, it appears anyone aware of the lousy quality of this particular weapon is unimpressed enough to do anything about it.

I was repeatedly told by others at S&W besides Mr. Maack that the gun is sup-

The M-29 in .44 Magnum has suffered from what a lot of people call "skipping"

posed to headspace on the case mouth. As it is, this one and many others don't.

I really don't give a damn about this one- after all I really need another S&W when I don't even have time to shoot the old, good ones I own. I'm not even really disgusted with losing the several hundred dollars I paid for it, which was dealer's cost. Occasionally losing money is just another part of doing business.

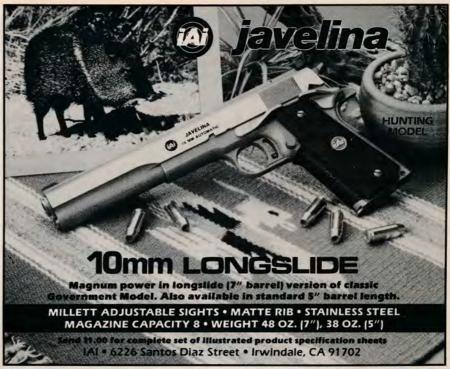
I am disgusted that any firm would put out a firearm with such excessive headspace that the gun will not fire without the clips. Think of all the millions of people who, just like me, have been shooting S&W revolvers for years without the moons.

I don't think that's fair to the public. There is no warning attached to the gun that this model is a departure from the way they have been made since about 1917. There is no alert that the gun is not intended to be used without the clips and it will misfire without them.

Nor is there anything in the instruction manual of value in this respect. In fact the Safety And Instruction Manual states "Smith and Wesson has designed the most reliable firearms available.

Under Loading, it states in part "place a round of the correct ammunition in each charge hole" and nowhere does it even mention the existence of clips. A couple were in the box with the gun though.

The M-29 in .44 Magnum has suffered from what a lot of people call "skipping" which in actuality is the newly designed



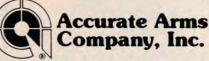




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bolt and spring which are inadequate and fall out of the cylinder notch in recoil of factory loads allowing the cylinder to rotate backwards.

When the hammer is cocked or the trigger is pulled double-action, the justfired chamber is rotated in front of the firing pin again producing the classic "click" of this model.

Factory Fix

My last personal 629 did it the first time on the 34th round through it (Federal 240's, which is a very mild load). This has been going on for almost 20 years now.

The factory doesn't have a fix for it except to put another little spring inside the existing spring. The last one I sent back that was "fixed" that way and rotated backwards the first cylinder fired from it after the "fix."

That is the reason I cannot recommend the 29 as a serious hunting gun. If this hasn't been taken care of in nigh twenty years, I wonder how long it will take the powers that be to wake up.

This sort of attitude and lousy product reminds me of a statement made to me by a S&W factory rep in the black days of their worst production under Bangor Punta in answer to the "poor quality question."

He stated it was manufacturing's job to make the guns, sales' job to sell them and customer service's job to make them work.

Looks like it's still true— except I don't think Customer Service is doing their job.

What An Article!

I realize you haven't read an article like this in the Handgunner very often and probably never in any other gun magazine. Essentially the same thing is printed in Handgun Hunters International's Sixgunner. Most magazines are too worried about the Almighty Advertising Dollar. A few prefer to put the readers first and tell the truth.

I left the next step up to the HHI members to vote on. As I see it, there are three choices:

1) It is possible to send it back to the factory again. Third time lucky.

2) Stick it in a bucket of wet cement leaving the handle out to tie a rope on as an anchor for my fishing boat.

3) Try to make it shoot the way it is, report what it did and then probably make an anchor out of it.

No more inferior quality guns to the customer! And if they need warranty work, then do it the right way in the service department.

(One factory authorized service station I've had truly excellent service from is Cherry Corners, Inc., 11136 Congress Rd., Rt. #1, P.O. Box 38, Lodi, OH, 44254, (216) 948-1238.)

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HANDLOADING

Continued from page 40

casters and that stands to reason because if a commercial caster had to size and insert gas-checks on every bullet he made, he wouldn't make a penny of profit.

This absence of sales for gas-check handgun bullet moulds continues to hold true with Redding/Saeco until you come to one caliber and one caliber alone, the Forty-Four.

In .44 caliber, gas-check bullet moulds predominate and there has to be only one reason: silhouette competition, where accuracy really counts.

Obduration

But what about the other reasons Elmer cited against gas-check bullets? His contention that gas-check bullets allowed the propellant gas to bypass the base and blow the grease from the grease grooves is one that ignores a scientific phenomenon, obduration.

Obduration occurs when the back end of the bullet is under motion before the front end. Reverse obduration can often occur with very high velocity center-fire .22s in varmit rifles when the bullet explodes in mid-air a few yards down range. The problem there is that the front of the bullet slows down much faster than the back of the bullet and the projectile expands to a point of disintegration.

The result of obduration in a cast bullet is the middle of the bullet swells under pressure and achieves a gas seal in the front of the chamber. If the grease groove is very low on the bullet it may very well blow the grease out, but if it is toward the middle of the slug then the grease will have nowhere to go. If there is a very large reservoir of lubricant, then there may be enough to serve the purpose regardless of what is blown out.

Obduration also clouds the issue of a gas-check working in a sense as a bore scrapper as the bullet travels down the barrel. Tom Griffin of Lyman feels it is an advantage in terms of a bore-scrapper and so does Bruce Merkur. But Bruce is quick to point out that is only an opinion of his and not based on any scientific fact because he has no way of proving it.

Forcing Cone

Kent Lomont is mentioned by Elmer in that article of 21 years ago and Kent believes the only thing he has proven to himself over the ensuing years about gaschecks is the fact that gas-check bullets eat forcing cones.

Many shooters place a great deal of emphasis on having a tight revolver, when they should be placing the emphasis on making sure the barrel is lined up properly with the cylinder. The forcing cone is there only to act as a funnel for the barrel and the less actual alignment of

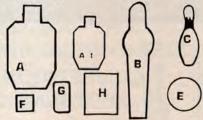


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the bullet it has to do during the jump of the gap from the cylinder to the barrel the better for both wear and accuracy.

The wear of the forcing cone was documented by Kent years ago when Carl Hellstrom of Smith & Wesson would send Kent six .44 Magnums at a time. Kent would paint a "K" or a "T" on the side of one gun with fingernail polish and then shoot only the Lyman #429244 gaschecked Thompson bullet through the Tgun and the Lyman #429421 Keith bullet through the K-gun.

He observed that the rate of wear was almost 4 to 1 in favor of the Keith bullet because after some point between 4,000 to 5,000 rounds the forcing cone on the Tgun would show chipped edges "real bad," while the Keith bullet .44 would go to 20,000 rounds before experiencing the same problems with forcing cones.

Lubrication

Bruce Merkur points out, however, that maybe we aren't really talking about a problem with gas-checks in this situation, but one of sufficient lubrication.

Elmer Keith insisted on large grease grooves on all his bullets and the Thompson bullet features two, but rather small grease grooves and therefore the forcing cones may have worn due to insufficient lubrication.

As to the problem with pressure, Marty Liggins has observed that when two identical loads are prepared with bullets of the same weight and bearing surface, but one is jacketed and one cast, the jacketed bullet gives lower pressure while the lead bullet goes faster at increased

But Kent's experience runs completely counter to this and he feels cast bullets always go faster than jacketed at the same pressure levels.

He points out the influence that bullet sizing has on velocity. For instance, Lee Jurras would use jacketed bullets one thousandths undersized for the nominal bore diameter when he had Super-Vel Cartridge Company as a means of gaining increased velocity.

Kent asked, "What is the bore diameter of the specific gun in relation to the cast bullets being used and what is the diameter of the jacketed bullets?"

He also emphasizes that the correct rifling twist is more important to a cast bullet than its hardness in addition to stating a poorly cast bullet will lead whether it is gas-checked or not.

Elmer's Misconception

Kent Lomont does know the story behind Elmer's opinion that gas-check bullets raised pressure. He said he saw the paper once that Elmer had received from the H.P. White Laboratory and it did indeed show his loads were 3,000 to 5,000 psi less than an equivalent load using the Thompson bullet, but Kent goes on to explain the lab had only run five or





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10 rounds of each load during the testing and this amount of variation was statistically insignificant.

Elmer took it to heart as vindication of his own expertise when, in fact, it could have easily gone the other way. The sample tested was simply too small for any meaningful results or conclusions.

All of these people are experts in the field of external ballistics and each has their opinions and beliefs based both upon objective reasons and subjective ones. Kent Lomont believes in high quality cast Keith plain base bullets, while Bruce Merkur openly acknowledges that his bullet metal is 100% straight wheel weights, and he feels he doesn't get any leading in the bore because he is using gas-checks.

As for Elmer Keith's opinions on gaschecks, I think it is safe to say they don't raise pressure solely by and of themselves. If a load using gas-checked bullets is showing higher pressure than a plain base equivalent load then there is some other factor involved besides the gascheck on the bottom of the bullet.

More Evidence

The evidence also indicates that gascheck bullets are more accurate than plain base or bevel based bullets, and many .44 shooters must agree with this belief or the sales figures wouldn't be the way they are.

As to the problem of the gas blowing the grease out of the grooves, no one has proved or disproved this opinion of Elmer's. It will remain unresolved, but the scientific principle of obduration more or less points against Elmer's theory.

Concerning Elmer's belief that gaschecked bullets aggravate the cutting of the top strap in a revolver. No one— and I mean no one— I talked to has seen any evidence this is true and I personally cannot understand how a gas-check bullet would gas-cut the top strap faster than a normal jacketed bullet.

But all of this is somewhat immaterial in a way, because most of us will continue to use plain-base and bevel-base bullet for no other reason than simple economics. We can't afford to purchase commercially cast bullets with gas-checks and most of us lack the time necessary to cast sufficient quantities of labor intensive gas-checked bullets for both practice and competition.

Therefore, I will continue to cast and shoot Keith plain base semi-wadcutter bullets in my magnum revolvers, but it will be for reasons of economics and because they are damn good bullets, not because Elmer said so.

Elmer Keith is a legend, but the important thing to remember is that he was only human and therefore capable of drawing incorrect conclusions. He is one of my heroes, but on the subject of gas-checked bullets I'm not sure he was totally correct.



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GARTHWAITE

Continued from page 32

bility tuneup and trigger job, or a fullhouse competition gun. The biggest demand is for the full-house guns, and he enjoys doing all the work himself to give his clients a truly custom-built gun.

All work is done in his shop except for special finishes such as Metaloy. He says the .45 ACP is still the most popular caliber, although demand for .38 Supers is increasing.

His compensator system starts with a standard length slide which is shortened a half inch. The shorter slide, he feels, gives a better balanced and faster handling gun. It also cycles extremely fast, and the lighter slide transfers less momentum to the frame during cycling. A coned, matchgrade five-inch barrel is precisely fitted to the slide and frame.

The compensator body is milled from steel and fitted to the barrel, then slide and comp are machined together so precisely that they look almost to be one piece. Garthwaite fits a long ejector to the frame, and lowers and scallops the ejection port. The slide is then carefully fitted to the frame by tightening and lapping it to give smooth and reliable cycling.

He adds a full-length guide rod, set up with Wolff vari-coil springs matched to the loads to be used. Price for this system on your gun, including the match barrel and other parts supplied, is \$600. If the customer wants a Bar-Sto match barrel it will cost an additional \$100 in .45 ACP, or \$150 for a ramped Bar-Sto in 9mm or .38 Super.

All the other modifications that have come to be associated with full-house competition guns are available on an individual basis. Where parts are to be changed, he supplies the parts he feels are of the highest quality, then modifies them when he thinks appearance or function can be improved.

In addition to the parts shown, he has recently begun to use the CMC hammers and sears marketed by top competitor Chip McCormick and feels they are a superior product.

He also highly recommends Craig Spegel stocks.

A ttention to detail is the mark of the craftsman. Take the fitting of the Bo-Mar sights to the slide. Many pistol-smiths make the dovetail cut for the sight base, then make a single cut across the back of the slide for the sight blade and windage adjustment screw.

Garthwaite makes a whole series of milling cuts on the slide, sinking the sight into the slide so neatly that it virtually becomes a part of the slide.

Take the fitting of a Pachmayr thumb guard; this guard incorporates a replacement safety plunger tube and normally is retained by being riveted to the frame and by the left stock panel. Garthwaite first recontours the part, then solidly locks it in place by drilling and tapping two additional holes and securing the part with socket head screws. The left stock panel is then precisely inletted to fit over the new part.

Another example is the fitting of the Ed Brown Maxi-Well. It takes good work-manship to fit this part properly, but Garthwaite doesn't stop there. He reshapes the part, then inlets the bottoms of the stock panels to fit over the Maxi-Well. He's built up a number of jigs and fixtures to help do these jobs as accurately as possible.

The fitting of the hammer and the beavertail grip safety serves to illustrate the combination of practicality, artistic sense and craftsmanship that make up a custom gun. A beavertail grip safety has a functional purpose—it makes for a more consistent draw and a comfortable shooting grip. A lightened hammer likewise has a practical purpose, giving a faster lock time.

Garthwaite opens up the loop in the CMC hammer to lighten it, and in doing so he shapes it so that the lines of the hammer loop follow the curve of the grip safety in an aesthetically pleasing manner.

One can appreciate such work on three levels: its practical functionality, the artistic sense of line and shape, and the technical skills to do the work properly. The same observations can be made about the superb, handcut metal checkering.

When all is said and done, though, this is still a race gun and it has to perform. All the detailing in the world doesn't mean much once the buzzer sounds. No problem. This gun is quick.

The shortened slide makes it light by comp gun standards and moves the point of balance back a bit. It's a very fast-handling gun, quick from the leather and from target to target, and the compensator system is highly effective in controlling muzzle rise and keeping the sights on target. The IPSC or action shooting competitor couldn't ask for a more effective gun.

A shooter who has been using a Garthwaite custom gun for some time is an Ohio electrical contractor named Gerald Barnhart. (If the name sounds familiar, it should. Gerald has a son named Jerry Barnhart who's won the odd pistol match, including the '87 Steel Challenge and IPSC U.S. Nationals.)

Gerald shoots a Garthwaite-built .45 and likes the fast cycling and quick handling characteristics. Metal checkering and workmanship, he says, are second to none. "Jim is one hell of a good gunsmith," Gerald says, "And he's a good shooter as well. I think he'd be a top level competitor if he wasn't so busy building guns."

Another recommendation came from Bill Dickerson, at Bill's Sport Shop in Pennsylvania. Dickerson owns two Garthwaite guns personally and has sold perhaps half a dozen more through his shop.

He says, "I can't speak too highly of Jim. His guns look good, they work good, I think the workmanship is equal to any in the world."

What about follow-up and customer service? "Jim's very concerned about protecting his reputation, he doesn't want any chance of a dissatisfied customer or a gun that isn't up to par. He'll call up customers and ask how the gun is working, just to make sure they're happy with his work. The only problem I have with Jim is that his reputation is already growing so much it takes 18 months or so to get a full-house gun delivered."

Do you really need custom work of this quality? From a practical, rational point of view, maybe not. No one is likely to lose a match because the checkering is full of overruns or unpointed diamonds.

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FBI 10MM

Continued from page 25

Briefly, they state that for a test to be valid the environment must be controlled, test barrels must be of equal length, and the targets must be uniform.

After some scientific discussion, they turn to statistical analyses. They ask: "Did the differences among the calibers happen by chance or are they true differences?" They conclude that due to the labor involved in making the gelatin, five rounds per caliber is a large sample.

"Statistically, however, this is a small sample size and depending on the variability of the data, differences as large as one inch may not be statistically significant."

In other words, a round that penetrated 11 inches in the test may be just as good as one that penetrated 12. We will return to this when we get to discussing the data.

When the research people wrote of controlling the environment, they may have seen the FBI video. In one scene, purporting to show the actual test, it is clear that the test is taking place on an outdoor range, on what appeared to be a cold (the agents all wore jackets) and overcast day.

Did they complete the test all in one day? Or were the photos taken only for a backdrop for the video? No explanation was offered.

The data really gets a teflon coat on the issue of barrel length. In the video, the firearms staff states that all rounds were tested from service type handguns.

In The FBI Bulletin, Agent John Hall of the firearms training unit states that the rounds were fired from test barrels. In fact, he discusses the fact that the .45 and 10mm used a six-inch barrel, and the 9mm a four-inch barrel.

But wait— the penetration table in the test data shows different rounds in the same caliber were fired in different handguns and barrels.

For example, Norma 10mm was fired in a five-inch Colt Delta, Federal 10mm in a six-inch test barrel and a five-inch S&W 645. If I submitted a "test" in this fashion to the *Handgunner*, not only would it not get printed, but the editor would send me a real nastygram. This factor alone tends to cast doubt on the entire test.

Ignoring Other Rounds

What was tested is another issue that needs to be aired. Looking over the list of rounds tested shows that the FBI chose certain rounds, while ignoring others.

Obviously, they could not test every bullet in every caliber, but the omission of many popular police rounds is odd.

For example, in 9mm the original test included only 115 grain Winchester Sil-

vertip (fired in a SIG 226), 147 grain Winchester JHP (from a four-inch test barrel), and Federal 147 grain Hydra-Shok (again in the SIG 226).

The May, 1989 FBI report added Federal 124 grain Hydra-Shok (in the SIG). No other loads are reported, and the same type of testing was conducted in the other calibers.

It seems strange to dismiss entire calibers with such a limited test of loads.

In the entire test, one and only one handload was tested. And who, you may ask, developed the only load tested by the FBI? Why, the FBI, of course.

It does seem strange to me that the only handload tested was the load selected. Could it be that the result was decided before the test?

Only the FBI knows for sure, and for reasons we shall discuss later, we will never know the truth.

FBI Test Results

Having expended gallons of gelatin, hundreds of hours, and no doubt thousands of taxpayer dollars, the FBI decided to analyze the results. Here is where the full impact of the R & D unit's comments hits home.

The FBI tested for permanent cavity by calculating the wound channel volume. Even here their pet 10mm Lite did not do as well as several .45 rounds.

The Norma 170 grain 10mm at 1358

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fps won with a calculated figure of 4.39. Second was the Remington .45 ACP 185 grain JHP at 936 fps with 4.22. Third was another .45, the Federal 230 grain hollowpoint at 828 fps and a figure of 4.16.

In fourth place was the FBI's baby, 180 grain 10mm hollowpoint with a velocity increase from 922 fps to 1035 fps and a calculated volume of 4.11. There is no explanation for the higher velocity for this particular phase of the testing, nor does the FBI explain why the fourth place round was rated first for adoption.

In the original data only the Norma 10mm 170 grain round at 1,358 fps scored 100%. That is, this full power 10mm was the only round to have all 40

shots penetrate 12 inches.

The Federal 180 grain 10mm at 1,035 fps had one "failure" (97.5%). Remington's .45 ACP 185 grain and Federal's 10mm Lite 180 grain at 922 fps each had two that failed to go the distance, or a 95% rate. The raw test data shows that the two .45 "failures" actually penetrated 11.25 inches and 11.75 inches. The R&D folks said that even a difference of one inch may not be significant.

So if the test is 12 inches of penetration plus-minus one inch, the Remington .45 JHP scores 100%. And the selection was based on this test? Performed but one time?

Could the result have been predetermined? In the video presentation, the FBI, including Agent John Hall, stated that they do not claim that their choice is the best choice for all agencies.

But after presenting all of their data, they stated they had two reasons for selecting the new, untried 10mm Lite over the well proven .45 or 9mm:

1) "The .45 and 9mm are fully developed."
2) "We can get more rounds in the gun."

A logical examination of these two statements raises doubts. Yes, both the .45 and the 9mm date from around 1900. But to dismiss them as "fully developed" is wrong.

What the FBI did was to change the rules, and then quickly declare themselves the winners.

Until the Sixties, semi-automatic pistols shot ball ammo, period. Lee Jurras "invented" high velocity hollowpoints, and made them work in semi-autos.

Soon, all of the major factories added HVHP ammo to their lines. We discarded the Thompson-LeGarde tests and the Hatcher Relative Stopping Power models, and worshipped at the altar of velocity.

The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration funded a project with our new toy, the computer, to create the Relative Incapacitation Index. Suddenly velocity for the sake of velocity is *passé*. The new buzzwords are Kinetic Energy, Energy Dump, Energy Transfer; these were the shrines, and the ammunition makers made ammo to fit into our new rules.

Now the rules change.

Just to prove that the ammunition makers will sell anything as long as someone wants to buy it, Hornady introduced three new bullets. And these new bullets, including at least one in 9mm, were designed to meet— you guessed it— the FBI penetration criteria.

Just how long do you think it will take for loaded ammo, made to pass FBI standards, to be on your dealers shelves? I figure about six months.

Magazine Capacity

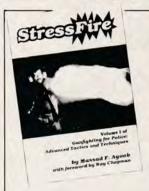
"We can get more rounds in the gun."

That is true, but it raises the question— why do you need them? In the Miami disaster, I have calculated the agents fired at least 77 rounds of 9mm, 38, and 12 gauge. They scored a grand total of 12 hits on the two suspects, or 15% hits. And 10 of those hits were scored by one man, Special Agent Eddie Morales (four with a shotgun, six with his handgun).

Could it be that these agents were not trained for the job they needed to do?

The national average for hits of shots fired by the police in this country is around 20%. Perhaps the problem in Miami was not the rounds that hit, but all of those misses!

Rather than buying new handguns and ammo, the FBI should look to training their people differently.



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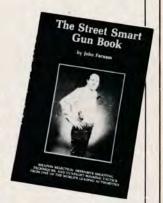
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As an example, the official FBI target is a "blob" target. That is, it looks nothing like a person, but like a fat Coke bottle. Does this target train FBI agents for deadly encounters? Or does it suggest that they will never fire at a person, just an amoeba-like mass?

The target is scored either one or two points for a hit, depending on the course of fire.

And look at their course of fire. One course calls for a possible 100 points, on a 60 shot course. Qualifying is 75 points. How do they do it? Simple— you start the course with 40 points!

If you make 35 hits, each worth one point, you are qualified. (For what?)

That's right, 58% hits is a qualifying score on this course of fire. Yet another Federal agency requires a score of 80%, and if you fail two times in a row, they fire you!

Bureaucratic Mess

What we see here is the bureaucratic mindset, the greatest hinderance to the dedicated agents of the FBI. We are left with some very disturbing questions.

Why do they shoot at the blob target? Could it be that some bureaucrat is afraid that training on targets that look like people is bad public relations?

Public relations is a big thing to any Federal agency, but has it cost FBI agents' lives?

Why do they qualify on a course at 58% hits? Could it be that some bureaucrat "gives" them 40 points so the numbers round out to a nice even 100?

Why did they chose the 10mm Lite? Could it be that the FBI has lost its reputation as a leader in law enforcement firearms training, and is trying to leap to the front with a single stunning move?

Special Weapons

This is not the first time an agency has had a "special" weapon, not really different from the off-the-shelf items.

In the late Sixties, Colt produced the "Border Patrol" .357 revolver, and commercially sold a few marked "Border Patrolman."

Just a few years ago US Customs had a minor modification of the Model 686 made up as the "CS-1" (Customs Service #1) by Smith and Wesson.

Is this the FBI's turn and, always wanting to excel, they selected a new handgun in a new caliber?

We will never know the entire story, for a simple reason. William Sessions, Director of the FBI, has personally made the official announcement of the adoption of the 10mm Lite, and they cannot step back from that. In fact, they have just ordered 10,000 S&W pistols.

Evil Plot?

Was this a mistake? I don't believe in the conspiracy theory of life, where everything is the result of an evil plot. Being intimately knowledgeable of the inner

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workings of a Federal agency, I think the FBI's 10mm is the result of some hard working, forward thinking agents, with good ideas, who may have been subverted at the top by some bureaucrats with an eye for public relations.

Let's face it, how many of us paid any attention to what the FBI was doing in the firearms field before the 10mm ruckus? And how many pages of print and gallons of ink deal with the FBI and firearms now?

If this is a publicity stunt, and some in and out of the Bureau say it is, boy, has it worked!

Will the agents be better armed? When compared to the current revolver, yes, they definitely will. Compared to a quality .45 or 9mm, I don't think so.

Would the new 10mm have made a difference in Miami? My forensic friends, one of whom had complete access to the details, say no. But if it had improved that dismal hit ratio, well, yes, it would have helped.

Then why adopt it? As with any police force, it is easier to buy a thing than invest in training. It is much easier to go to Capital Hill with a thing, a pistol, and explain why more money is needed, than to say that your agents need more of this intangible thing called training.

And that would imply that the current FBI training is inadequate, something Mr. Sessions would never want to admit.

Is the 10mm Lite a disaster? No, I think it is just a waste of public money.

But it has raised the consciousness of many FBI agents, and others, about handgunning. Hopefully the Bureau will move past the matériel stage, and look to the tactics that can really save officer lives.

I know- I have been to 11 officer funerals, and I firmly believe that training in good tactics, not flashy hardware, will save my life, and the lives of my fellow officers. Survival is the only victory.

There is good reason that the article is written under the nom de plum Walter Walsh. The author, with over two decades in Federal law enforcement, has seen the FBI react to criticism in the past. Their traditional response has been to find the critic, and see that he is fired or transferred to an undesirable post.

The author has been a firearms instructor for over 25 years in law enforcement, including a three year stint at his agency's academy. Now back in a field post, he is actively involved in officer survival training centering on tactics.

He has the highest regard for the field agents of the FBI, who are often hamstrung by odd regulations from their headquarters. His intent is solely to bring the facts in the open and let them speak for themselves. He wishes to thank those agents of the FBI who helped with this article, who must also remain nameless.



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Continued from page 16

"Give me your money or I'll kill you," the man behind the sunglasses snaps intensely.

Yuhr does not seriously consider going for his holstered .45. He is not about to kill for Diamond Cab's money, let alone die for it.

He hands over the night's receipts and his change, which he keeps separate from his wallet

The man takes the money and growls, "Give me your wallet."

"There's no money in it," Yuhr answers.

"Give me your wallet!"

"There's no money in it."

"Give me more money or I'll kill you!"

"I've given you all the money I have!"

"Get out of the car!"

The man in the back seat gestures savagely with the muzzle of the 9mm, and Yuhr opens his door, slides out of the bucket seat, and steps into the roadway.

He watches as the man climbs between the two front buckets from the back seat. As he starts to emerge from the driver's door, the gunman's head swivels both directions, as if scanning for witnesses. His finger is tight on the trigger of the Smith & Wesson automatic.

Do Or Die

Yuhr suddenly realizes that this man is going to execute him. He wonders for a second if he should fire only once or empty the pistol, and realizes instantly that they are only a few feet apart, and he'll probably have to fire the entire magazine.

As the wiry gunman is halfway out the driver's door, Mark Yuhr makes his move.

He clears the Combat Commander smoothly from the Sparks holster and begins firing immediately, one handed from the hip, as fast as he can pull the trigger.

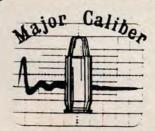
The roar of sustained .45 ACP fire sunders the night, but Yuhr does not hear a single shot. He is concentrating on his would-be executioner, and sees him as if he was at the end of a tunnel.

The man jerks back and forth from the hits as Mark Yuhr keeps firing, and Yuhr sees the dark eye of the 9mm's muzzle point toward him as the man jerks the trigger again and again, but there is no muzzle flash and he hears no shots from the other man's pistol, either.

And now the armed criminal falls back into the car, his gleaming pistol still in his hand. Mark hasn't been able to count his shots, but he realizes that his slide has locked back and his .45 automatic is empty.

Packing 150 pounds on a six-foot frame, Yuhr is not a burly man, but urgency and fight-or-flight reflex give him a jolt of superhuman strength.

With his left hand alone, he grabs the



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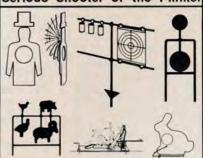
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struggling, wounded gunman and jerks him out of the taxi and onto the street. He can see bloodstains the size of 25-cent pieces dotting the robber's linen suit.

Mark thumbs the slide latch of his Colt auto and the slide slams forward; he hopes the gunman will think his now useless pistol is still loaded.

As the robber sprawls onto the pavement, he dives into the front seat and claws for his gym bag. There is no time to grope around for his spare Colt magazine; the cabbie snatches instead the loaded Taurus .38 with his left hand and covers his fallen antagonist with it.

He drops the empty .45 on the seat and his right hand claws for the radio mike to broadcast a Mayday.

Keep 'Em Covered!

Meanwhile, the gunman, seeing the .38 levelled at him, tosses his 9mm Smith & Wesson away as a gesture of surrender. It lands on the greenswale between the road and the sidewalk.

The wounded gunman tries to get up. "Don't move!" yells Mark.

He has reached the microphone now, and realizes to his horror that it no longer works. A .45 slug, one that missed or one that exited, has shattered the radio mike.

He screams for help at the top of his lungs. The gunman again starts to rise to his feet, blood dripping from his torso wounds. Yuhr puts his foot against the man and shoves him back down to the pavement. The man is trying to say something, but Yuhr can't make out what it is.

Then he hears a voice telling him, "Relax! We've called the police and the ambulance!" Concerned citizens have reached the shootout scene.

Cavalry Arrives

There is no further movement from the man who is lying in the street. In the distance, Yuhr can hear sirens, and common sense tells him he doesn't want to be standing there, unidentifiable, with a gun in his hand as police officers respond to the shooting scene.

He gets out of the car and sets his empty .45, his spare loaded magazine, and his Taurus .38 on the trunk of the cab. He stands next to them, ready to grab the .38 if his downed opponent revives again.

And then the police are there. He steps away from the car and the guns, and raises his hands. The police do not draw their weapons. One of the first responding officers, a blonde policewoman, comes up to Yuhr and says, "Calm down. Relax. Take it easy."

Then the paramedics are there, working on the fallen perpetrator. Yuhr feels nausea welling in his belly and tears burning in his eyes.

One of the officers suggests he sit in the back seat of a cruiser with his feet on the pavement and his head between his legs. The nausea subsides, but he feels the tears coming. His hands are trembling



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violently. An officer comforts him.

In the eerie glow of the rotating emergency lights, the paramedics apply routine procedures to the downed felon as they place him in the ambulance.

But they know from experience that this predator has taken his last victim. Orlando Barroso, age 29, will be pronounced dead at the hospital.

Autopsy Aftermath

Mark Yuhr's defensive burst of rapid fire was effective. Gunshot wound (GSW) #1 struck Barroso in the right chest 21/2" away from the sternum, ripping a gutter through the wiry criminal's pectoral muscle and exiting through the armpit. It was a minor wound.

GSW #2 struck the upper right abdomen, blasting a two-inch hole through the liver, lacerating the diaphragm, and puncturing the lower lobe of the right lung. The spent Silvertip lodged just away from the spine.

The third wound tracked from the upper abdomen toward the back, its angle such that it perforated the stomach, clipped the liver and cut the diaphragm, blasting Orlando Barroso's last meal of rice and meat throughout his peritoneal cavity. The deformed .45 Silvertip lodged in the muscles of the back just under the left shoulder blade.

GSW #4 took the gunman in the left side and stayed in the musculature of the chest, lodging in the back muscles without penetrating the chest cavity.

GSW #5 hit the back of the left arm from the side, clipped the subclavian vein causing significant blood loss, exited the arm, and went on into the left side of the chest, where it lodged in the musculature near the fourth rib without entering the body cavity.

The sixth bullet entered the left forearm and exited the other side without breaking bone or touching any of the great vessels. This bullet may or may not have continued on to strike the body, or it may have been the one that shattered the

An undeformed hollowpoint slowed down by passage through a muscular arm would be consistent with the limited penetration and effect in the torso of GSW #4.

The last recorded wound enters the back of the right arm according to the autopsy and, from its point of entry just above the elbow to its exit in the forearm, cuts through muscle and subcutaneous tissue only. There is blood seepage from torn muscle tissue, but no hemorrhage.

Righteous Shooting

The deceased was 5'7" and 128 pounds, but well developed and muscular. He was not under the influence of drugs or alcohol at time of death.

He was a Marielito, one of the criminals and madmen foisted into Miami from Cuba along with legitimate political refugees during the Mariel boatlift. Tattoos



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on the corpse betrayed the dead man as a member of the Cuban criminal subculture.

Mark Yuhr considered himself well treated by Sergeant Gerald Green of Miami PD Homicide, who handled the case, and indeed, felt that every police officer he came in contact with as a result of this incident was helpful and sympathetic.

Sgt. Green told the anti-gun *Miami Herald*, "This sends a major message to the
rest of the robbers out there. The cabbie
thought his life was in immediate danger."

Yuhr was not, of course, charged in any way with the shootings. His weapons were taken as evidence but his pistol permit was not revoked, and for the three months until his guns were returned he carried a Colt Government Model .45 in the Summer Special.

Post-Shooting Trauma

The rest of society was not so understanding as the City of Miami Police Department and the State Attorney's office. Yuhr was suspended without pay from Diamond Cab and was threatened with a fine by the Dade County Taxi Regulation Bureau, which forbids drivers to work armed.

When an angry Yuhr told the Bureau that he would take his case to court, the matter of the fine was dropped.

After his suspension period, Yuhr worked for Diamond a while longer and then quit. He bitterly resented being punished for defending his life.

He was also troubled by constant anxiety on the job after Barroso robbed him and attempted to murder him. He worked for a while at Tamiami Gun Shop, where he had taken the training class for his gun permit, until the shop closed its doors. He is presently unemployed.

Badly shaken by the incident, Yuhr went an entire night without sleep. Some sort of sleep disturbance, such as insomnia and/or nightmares, seems to accompany every justifiable homicide. Yuhr was, at least, spared the nightmares. He has, however, had frequent flashbacks to the incident.

Post shooting trauma, often mistaken for some sort of guilt, is actually mainly a reaction to society's reaction to your having killed a human being.

Though he was in this reviewer's opinion treated cruelly and callously by his employer, the rest of society supported his actions enthusiastically, and this eased the symptoms of the aftermath trauma.

Yuhr's neighbors told the police they were glad that he had fought back and survived, and that it was a vicious predator who died instead.

Good Riddance, Scumbag

And a predator, Orlando Barroso certainly was. A few years before he had been reportedly sentenced to the Florida State Penitentiary for a long term for having engaged in two gun battles with police.

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SHOOTIST SUPPLY

622 5th Avenue Belle Fourche, SD 57717 An overcrowded prison system had returned him to a vulnerable society far too soon. There is no doubt that Barroso was fully capable of murdering Mark Yuhr, and undoubtedly would have killed a victim who was not armed and prepared to fight to survive.

Barroso did in fact aim his stolen 9mm automatic at his intended victim and pull the trigger several times. The gun was found on the greenswale fully loaded, with the hammer down and the double-action trigger forward. When they bent down to examine the weapon, the responding officers knew why Mark Yuhr was still alive.

The safety/decock lever at the rear of the slide was in the down position. Baroso's knowledge of deadly weapons had not equalled his willingness to employ them against the innocent.

The stolen Smith & Wesson pistol had been "on safe" the entire time the gunman was jerking the trigger and attempting to murder the armed citizen.

Dingus Lesson

This writer agrees totally with Mark Yuhr: the Taxi Regulation Bureau was totally out of line in demanding punitive action on a workman who is at risk of armed robbery and protects himself from murder.

Yuhr had cooperated totally with the gunman and was obviously about to be killed when he finally acted in self-defense. Florida state law permitted him to both carry his gun under license and fire in self-protection, and should supersede any petty regulations of a county bureaucracy.

The S&W 9mm had been stolen from the glove compartment of its legitimate owner. It is a dumb idea to leave guns in unattended motor vehicles, but at least this owner was intelligent enough to leave his "on safe."

The condition of the Smith auto saved Yuhr's life. The history of the semiautomatic pistol in the field shows us many, many cases of a criminal getting his hands on one, attempting to commit murder, and failing because he is unable to release the safety catch.

(One gunwriter observed that the Yuhr/Barroso incident was proof why double-action autos should always be carried "off safe", and commented that "One should never be caught with his dingus down." I believe that observer missed the point. The gun owner who left his "dingus" (safety/decock lever) down on his S&W 9mm saved the life of an honest, armed citizen.

To continue the analogy more intelligently, this writer tells his students to "Keep your dingus down until you need it up, at which time a man who knows what he is doing will invariably get his dingus up immediately and will keep it up as long as is necessary.")

Yuhr fired one handed, from the hip,

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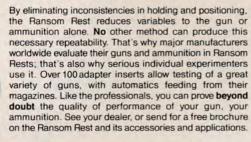


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as fast as he could pull the trigger. The elapsed time between the first and the seventh shot was probably no more than a second and a half.

His .45 Silvertips clearly had effect; the autopsy shows that during the second and a half, the criminal's body moved so violently in reaction to the shots that some hit dead-on from the front as he faced Yuhr and some came in from the left of the body as agonal response turned Barroso's body suddenly to his right. And at least one struck on the right side of the gunman as his body jerked back to his

Depending whether or not one of the bullets went through the arm and into the chest, the gunman was hit six or seven times. The autopsy suggests seven, but Yuhr believes one shot went wild and struck the vehicle.

This would account for the very feeble penetration of GSW #4, which I suspect was mostly spent when it impacted the torso after perforating the suspect's arm.

Bullet Performance

Most of the recovered bullets were deformed, but not all were classically mushroomed. The .45 ACP Silvertip's performance in actual gunfights has been good but not great.

This writer prefers hotter loads, and in any case has been put off by seeing more than one such cartridge come out of the box with its bullet seated backwards in the case, or with the primer inverted.

Yet before one impugns the performance of .45 ACP in general or the Silvertip in particular after examining this case, consider the location of the wounds.

True, the gunman took six or seven hits, still pointed his gun and pulled the trigger, and for a short time after being shot attempted to rise from the street.

However, gunshot wounds #1, #4, #6, and #7 were adynamic—that is, they were mere flesh wounds that would not cause incapacitation or death in and of themselves.

Wound #5 might have been eventually threatening to life and sapping of strength, but only in the long term due to slow but persistent bleeding.

Only wounds #2 and #3, which destroyed the liver and punctured both lungs and seriously impaired the diaphragm and blew out the stomach and its contents, were actually severe and incapacitating gunshot wounds.

We do not know that the wounds occurred in the order of the numbering by the Medical Examiner's Office. Numbering of gunshot injuries is done almost arbitrarily, but in this case, may well reflect the sequence of the hits based on educated conjecture.

Still, it is entirely possible that the two really serious and incapacitating wounds were the last ones, or among the last, inflicted during the short-

Continued on page 104

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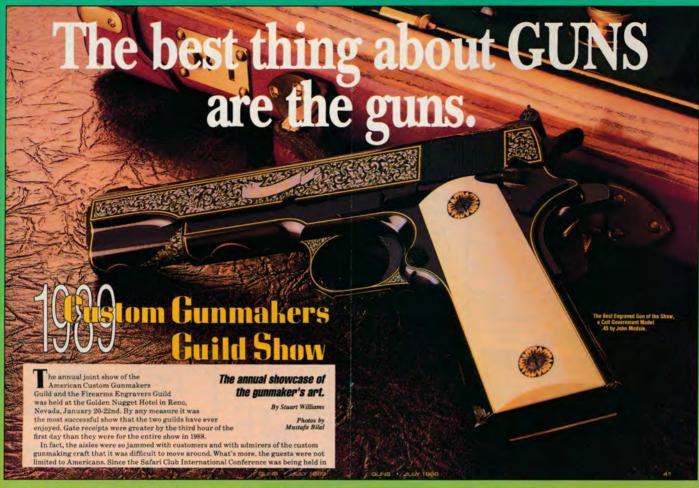
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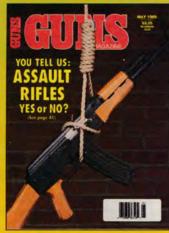
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Continued from page 102

duration burst of gunfire.

The lesson is, the .45 Automatic cartridge is not magic and does not guarantee an instant stop.

We learn also that even severe wounds of the solid abdominal viscera and the destruction of the breathing apparatus do not keep the person the wounds are inflicted on from aiming his weapon and pulling the trigger. Fortunately, we learn it here in a circumstance in which the pulling of the trigger did not result in the death of "the good guy."

Terminal Ballistics

The Combat Commander has a 4¹/₄" barrel. The .45 ACP cartridge has a critical "velocity floor," and while .45 Silvertip this writer has chronographed from a five-inch Government Model barrel hits about 935 fps, it is generally under 900 fps from a Commander and markedly less than that from the 3¹/₂" barrel of the even more compact .45 autos.

Tests in slaughterhouses and examination of bullets recovered from the shootings of human beings tell us that the Silvertip will generally mushroom well if fired from a five-inch barrel, may or may not mushroom from a 41/4", and probably won't expand at all when fired from a stubby Colt Officers or Detonics.

The same is true of most other .45 ACP hollowpoint rounds as factory loaded.

Hit location was a concern here. If Yuhr had brought his pistol up into line of vision, and used the sights (perhaps a two-hand hold, which with training is virtually as fast as hip shooting), all of the hits might have been centered and one could have reasonably expected the incapacitation of the gunman Barroso to have taken place much more quickly.

The gunwriters whose advice Mark Yuhr took had steered him in some poor directions. The Colt .45 system works perfectly with a full seven rounds in the magazine and an eighth in the firing chamber, and any two-inch .38 will be much more effective when loaded with 158 grain all-lead hollowpoint +P rounds, the so-called "FBI Load."

A bag in a car is not the ideal location for spare gun and/or ammo, since one can too easily be separated from it, as happened with Yuhr.

Mark has learned from his experience. Though he says he is satisfied with his pistol's performance and that nothing much except a high power rifle or a shotgun could have been more effective under the circumstances, he has hedged his bets since.

He now carries the spare magazine on his belt in a clip-on Bianchi pouch, and the round in the chamber is a 200 grain CCI Lawman hollowpoint rated for 1,000 fps velocity.

Silvertips remain in the magazines, but he plans to switch to the Lawman

Continued on page 106

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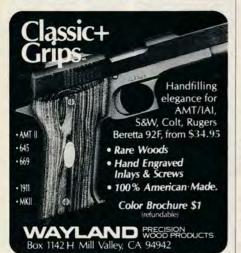


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Police Response

The writer wishes to compliment Sgt. Gerald Green and all the Miami police officers who dealt with Mark Yuhr for their compassion in their handling of the matter.

Though I might draw my gun sooner than some of the Miami cops who arrived at some of the shooting scenes I've followed

Orlando Barroso, whose tattoos included an ominous winged devil, now probably dwells in a place where he sees all the winged devils he can handle.

up on, I find that they deal with so many predators and so many victims that they generally have a finely tuned sense of who is the good guy and who is the bad guy.

It reflects obscenely on our society in general and Miami's in particular that Mark Yuhr, as a result of defending himself, is presently unemployed.

This writer has furnished Yuhr with a quantity of Federal .38 Special FBI loads and of CorBon +P .45 ACP, and an ankle holster by Ted Blocker for his Taurus Model 85. An ankle holster is the readiest access for an automobile driver, especially in an area like Miami with a mandatory seat belt law.

Yuhr has also received a free 40-hour course at Lethal Force Institute.

Write to Massad Ayoob at P.O. Box 122, Concord, NH 03301 if you are a Miami employer with a job opening for a hardworking man who lost his employment because he was an armed citizen who defended himself.

Orlando Barroso, whose tattoos included an ominous winged devil, now probably dwells in a place where he sees all the winged devils he can handle, and that is justice.

It is not justice when Mark Yuhr, who fired only to protect his life from a vicious career criminal, is unable to earn a living as a result.

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ports, but no side venting ports. A before-after shot of the slide showing how much metal Jim removes.



(bottom)



BOLAND GUNS

Continued from page 61

you know Ol' Slab Sides, you'll appreciate that this slight alteration entails relocating the sear and hammer holes, restructuring the entire thumb safety apparatus and completely rearranging the trigger mechanism.)

Jim also cut off the slide rails from the FK Gun's frame and re-cut them insideout, like on a CZ-75. Re-cut the slide's rails to match, he did. Unbelievable.

Look at the beavertail in the accompanying pictures, again. *That's* Jim Boland's welding.

So the mad doctor is *good*, very good. He's also a strange duck. He's been known to refuse a would-be customer's deposit because the customer tried to tell him what he wanted on his gun.

"Most people who want to tell me how to build a gun are amateur gun designers. A guy goes out and shoots a good score in a match and now he thinks he's qualified to design a gun.

"So what I tell these guys is, look, if you want a gun designed by an amateur, have an amateur build it. I know that sounds kinda rough, but sometimes you have to shock em a make em see sense," said Jim about his peculiar Customer Is Usually Wrong approach to business.

Of course he's right, you know. He builds guns for a living, every day, and has been for years. Some of the new generation of shooters were literally messing their diapers when Jim was customizing Government Models. He does know more about guns than the average competitor.

That's Jim Boland. Nicest guy you'll ever meet, sometimes. One day he'll talk

your ear off about gun design and compensators and radical new ideas for improvements, the next day he'll bark at you to damn well stop bothering him while he's working.

Look, if you want one these absolutely incredible 27 ounce Steel Guns, go for it. Call Jim Boland and order one. You probably won't get an answer when you call, but go ahead and try. Or write a letter. He gets around to answering his mail eventually.

Delivery time runs anywhere from two years to two weeks to the crack of dawn next Saturday. Prices are very reasonable, compared to "market." What you'll get might not be exactly what you see here because, like I said, Jim Boland has probably never built two guns exactly alike before.

You can reach the mad doctor at 975 Fairway, Walnut, CA 91789 or try calling (714) 598-9854.

CAMERON HOPKINS

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he newest Army test that gave
Beretta the contract for the M-9
pistol (again) must have left a
sore spot in Southport. Connecticut gunmaker Sturm, Ruger & Co.
stamped their feet and waved their arms
in a special section of their new 1990
Ruger Firearms catalog called "Army
Tests."

I quote the new Ruger catalog: "...The fact remains, however, that the Beretta pistol has a well-documented tendency to have slide fractures— a 'catastrophic failure' in which the slide breaks in two, according to government reports. Beretta advertising claims that their government contract means they are the superior 9mm, but we know this is simply not the truth. Other government reports conclusively refute their claim."

So there lies the gauntlet, will Beretta pick it up?

Rafael Aguirre, a senior executive with Beretta USA, was mildly amused with the whole thing. He smiled in that pleasantly condescending way that a tolerant parent looks on a naughty child.

"We have no comment on Ruger's allegations. The army's report clearly showed that only one gun passed all the mandatory requirements and that gun was the Beretta," Aguirre said.

And now we have the all-plastic pistol, Ram-Line's Syn-Tech .22 rimfire. A gooey glob of molten plastic that's poured into a mold in the shape of a gun. Rather lacks the aesthetic appeal of a mint Colt Python's rich bluing, handhoned action and finely figured walnut stocks, but this is the Nineties. Progress marches on.

The year 2000 is closer in the future than Jimmy Carter's presidency is in the past. Scary thought, huh? (Not the future, dingbat, Jimmy Carter's presidency!)

We've got graphite rifle stocks, polymer Glocks and now a gun made out of the same stuff as a Hefty bag. I happen to like synthetic rifle stocks and I like the Glock pistol (in .45, please, not 9mm) but I'm still a bit leery of an Space Age all-plastic .22 that looks like a World War II Nambu.

I'd like to shoot one and see if the Syn-Tech is capable of such excellent performance that it outweighs its lack of traditional charm.

Hey, some people like *pink guns*. What was it Bob Dylan said? The times they are a'changin.

The hot news from the gun industry's annual trade show (S.H.O.T. Show) is old hat for readers of *Industry Insider*. Last issue I told you about the new .40 Smith & Wesson cartridge, which was announced to everyone else at the show.

The .40 S&W is a shortened 10mm Auto case with a small primer instead of large. There's a bit more to it than that, but only an MIT engineer would care. Winchester is exclusively loading the ammo in two flavors: a 180 gr. hollowpoint at 990 fps and a 155 gr. roundnose at 1150 fps.

You also got the first word on the new Smith & Wesson custom shop, which all the late comers only found out about at the show. It's called the S&W Performance Center.

Don't hold your breath on Colt's new .44 Magnum revolver called the Anaconda, there's still no firm settlement on Colt's future. Just when the sale to the new Colt Holding Company was set to go through, one major player balked.

It seems the state of Connecticutt was going to provide some funding, but when it came time to pay the piper, the state got cold feet. At this writing, the fine folks who unilaterally banned the sale of the AR-15 to civilians still own Colt Firearms.

One juicy item to emerge at the show was a new **Glock** in, ta-da!, .45 ACP. The 10mm Glock is coming (check's in the mail) and the .45 Glock should be available by summer time.

Heckler & Koch announces a new, um, "sporting pistol." What for all the world looks like a semi-auto version of the famous MP-5 tactical submachine gun is touted as the SP89.

Actually it's a black 9mm semi-auto four-pound "target pistol" with a 15 round magazine. It has one of those fancy "wood glove" type grips, like a Hammerli.

It passes muster with the bureaucrats of the BATF, however, and is legal to import. It also tweaks the nose of Drug Czar Bennett and Turncoat Bush who danced to the "Guns Are Bad" tune of the liberals and banned all "assault rifle" imports.

The German gun maker also has a

"sporting" version of their HK 91 and 93 rifles, which is nothing more than your garden variety assault rifle with a thumbhole stock, no flash suppressor and a five-round magazine. Again, this cosmetic covering pleases the petty bureaucrats to no end. The gun is legal to import under the assault rifle ban.

If there's any light at the end of the anti-gun tunnel it's that the pencil-pushers who implement the various and sundry anti-gun laws are amazingly stupid.

Not to be outflanked by HK, the maker of the SAR-48 and SAR-3 is ready with their "sporting" conversions. Springfield Armory's assault rifles have, yep, wooden stocks with thumb-hole grips, no flash suppressors and harmless little ole five-round magazines.

But get this— Springfield also sells an after-market accessory kit consisting of one black plastic stock, one pistol grip, one flash suppressor and one 30-round magazine. It's called the "Accurizing Kit."

A Springfield spokesman explained the euphemism this way: "You have a greater chance of hitting something with 30 rounds than five, right? So that's an accurizing feature. The flash suppressor reduces recoil, so that's an accurizing feature. The pistol grip, well, that's an ergonomic feature for greater accuracy."

Will the real Laserpoint please stand up? Both **Tasco** and **Aimpoint** proudly announced their new laser pistol sights, both called Laserpoint. How did they come up with the same name?

Purely coincidence, said Kim Hendon of Aimpoint. Just an obvious good name, said Gerry Goss of Tasco.

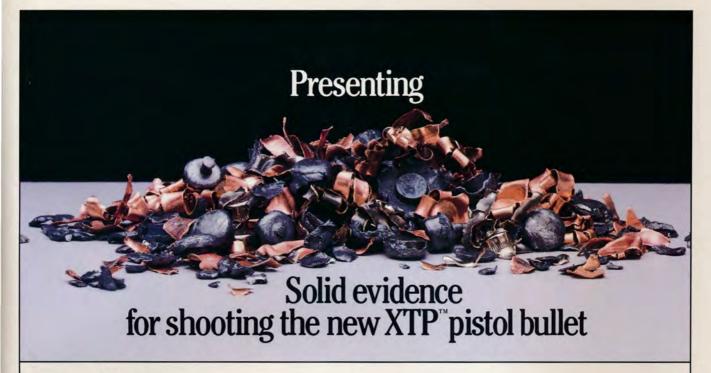
Both sights, incidentally, will be tested in an upcoming issue of *American Handgunner*.

Bob Magee of **Interarms** called to remind everyone that the new Firestar 9mm from **Star** of España is a tiny little pocket-sized pistol like the LaFrance



Nova that was featured last issue. The article suggested that *only* the Nova was that small.

The sub-compact Firestar is a 7-shot 9mm weighing 30 ozs. and measuring only 61/2 inches long.





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