

HANDGUNNER

A CRITICAL LOOK AT COMPACT 9MM's

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1990

AMERICAN

HANDGUNNER

7522 T&E

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PISTOLS!**

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CUSTOM SHOP

**ALLEY
SHOOTOUT!**

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TRUE STORY
OF A
BLOODY
GUNFIGHT





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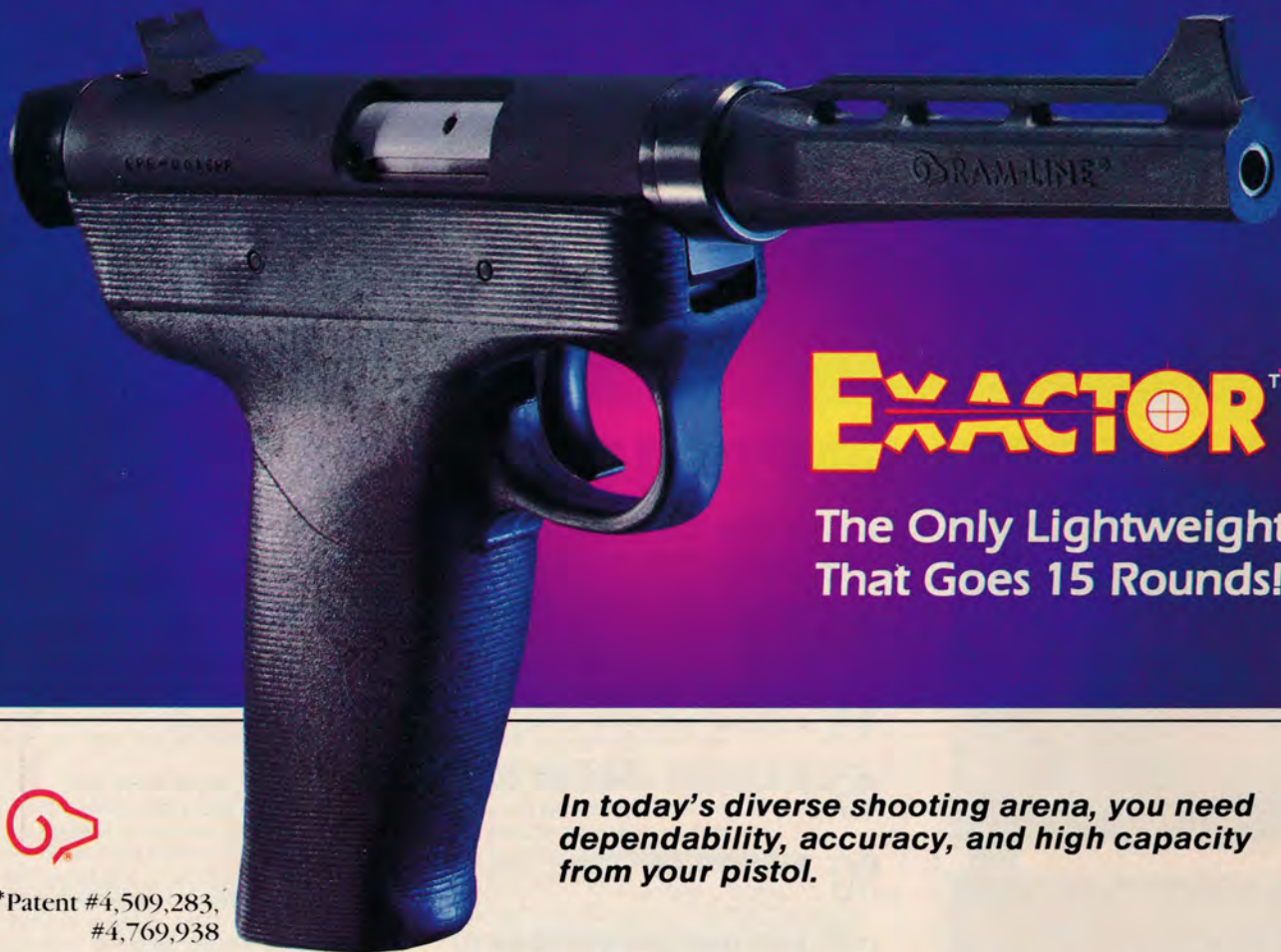
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EXACTOR™

The Only Lightweight
That Goes 15 Rounds!



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

In today's diverse shooting arena, you need dependability, accuracy, and high capacity from your pistol.

Only Ram-Line's® **Syn-Tech™** .22 caliber pistol delivers it all in a tidy 20 ounce package. Engineered from the ground up, the **Syn-Tech™** pistol combines special polymers, steel, and aluminum alloy, to provide strength, durability, and unmatched balance. The design is based around several Ram-Line® patented innovations*, and the latest in computer and aerospace technology.

The "dynamic" grip is easy to hold, and feels natural in your hand. The unique **constant force sear** gives you the feel of a target grade trigger right out of the box. The Ultralight 5½" barrel* is damped by the polymer to yield unexpected accuracy.

The 15 round magazine give's continued shooting enjoyment. This unique Ram-Line® magazine makes reloading a pleasure - **NO MORE THUMBUSTING** as with the "Heavyweights." With the magazine's **patented** constant force spring*, the last round is as easy to load as the first.

The **Syn-Tech™** pistol was designed with safety and X-ray detectability in mind. A double motion of the safety is required to put the pistol in the "fire" mode. This is easily accomplished on the **Syn-Tech™** pistol by a natural down and forward motion of the thumb, without breaking your grip. In the safe position, the hammer, trigger, and sear are all blocked, and the trigger is disconnected from the sear.

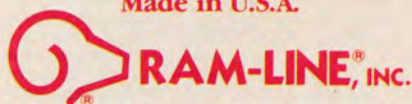
Cleaning and disassembly are quick by simply removing the hex screw and lifting the receiver from the grip. The bolt stop pin and bolt slide are then free of the receiver and you're ready to clean up. Reassembly is quick and certain.

The Ram-Line® **Syn-Tech™** .22 pistol comes in a custom molded carrying case complete with target.

So when it comes time to punch paper, cans, or varmints, rely on the Ram-Line® Syn-Tech™ pistol.
\$199.97

**Exactly What You've
Been Waiting For.
AVAILABLE NOW!**

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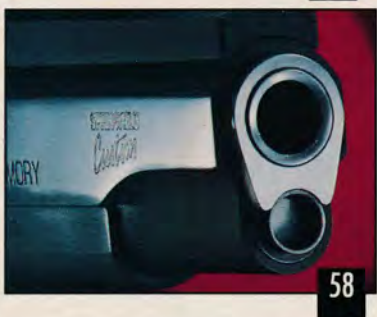
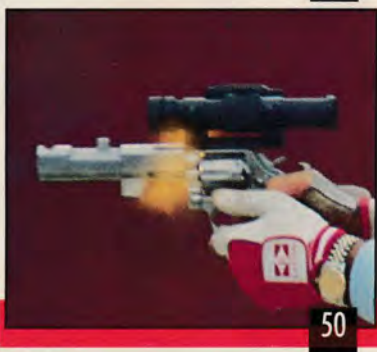
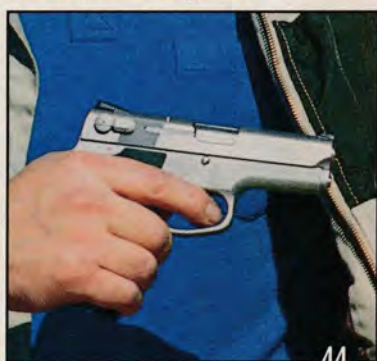


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Springfield Armory's new Custom Shop now offers the Distinguished Model, a fully customized .38 Super for IPSC. Photo by Ichiro Nagata.



AMERICAN HANDGUNNER

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The Audit Bureau

AMERICAN HANDGUNNER (ISSN 0145-4250) is published bi-monthly by Publishers' Development Corp., 591 Camino de la Reina, San Diego, CA 92108. Second class postage paid at San Diego, CA 92108, and at additional mailing offices. Subscriptions: One year (six issues) \$16.75. Single copies \$2.95 (in Canada \$3.95). Change of address: four weeks notice required on all changes. Send old address as well as new. Contributors submitting manuscripts, photographs or drawings do so at their own risk. Material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage. Payment will be made at rates current at time of publication and will cover all world rights for the material. Advertising rates furnished on request. Reproduction or use of any portion of this magazine in any manner, without written permission, is prohibited. Entire contents Copyright© 1990 Publishers' Development Corp. All rights reserved. Title to this publication passes to subscriber only on delivery to his address. SUBSCRIPTION PROBLEMS: For immediate action, write Lani Manuel, 591 Camino de la Reina, #200, San Diego, CA 92108 or call (619) 297-8032.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to AMERICAN HANDGUNNER, 591 Camino de la Reina, #200, San Diego, CA 92108.



PACT MKIII
\$279.00

TRAIN WITH THE BEST

The \$64.00 question

What do shooters like **Rob Letham, Jerry Barnhart, John Pride, Charles Grabbatin, Brian Enos and Chip McCormick** have in common, besides winning a pistol match or two? They all train with PACT Championship Timers. Now let's face it, these guys can have any timer they want. So maybe there's a reason why they choose PACT, over all others, for their vital practice sessions.

Why do I need a timer?

Whether you are training for competition or self defense; if you are going to improve you've got to keep track of the two elements of marksmanship that you are striving to master: **accuracy and speed**. Would you consider practicing without a target? Of course not, because without a target you have no measure of your accuracy. By the same token, without a timer, you have no accurate measurement of your speed and no way to tell if a given technique is helping or hindering your progress.

Of course shooting timers, like guns, are **not created equal**. A well designed shooting timer is an invaluable training aid which will dramatically improve your practice sessions. A poorly designed timer, with functions that are inconvenient or difficult to use, becomes nothing more than an expensive buzz box that distracts you from your shooting each time you use it.



Advanced display

The PACT MKIII features an **advanced 32 character display** instead of the four digit display commonly found on other timers and cheap alarm clocks (sorry guys, but facts are facts). This display allows the MKIII to display **all** of the information about a given shot (shot number, split time, total time) at a glance and eliminates the hassle of having to "toggle" back and forth between functions in order to review your shot string.

Full function keypad

Our 32 character display and 16 key keypad make the MKIII about as easy to use as your pocket calculator. For example to

enter a "PAR TIME" of four seconds, simply push "PAR." the MKIII will ask you to "ENTER PAR TIME AND PRESS SET" so you push "4," "SET." Want to change it to six seconds? Push "PAR," "6," "SET," it's that simple!

A few of our features

- A buzzer that's **loud** enough to hear with your earphones on
- **Sensitivity** of shot detector is adjustable
- Instant GO or **adjustable** fixed or random delay
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- Automatic **Comstock** function
- **Lap** function

Order Today

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PACT MKIII.....\$279
CHRONO-MOD with M5 Skyscreens (optional)\$69.95
M5 Skyscreen Mounting Bracket (optional but nice).....\$24.95
Battery Powered Printer.....\$125
Extra Printer Paper (6 rolls).....\$12
Extra Skyscreens. \$25 each \$45 pair

*Shipping & Insurance \$5.50 UPS ground/\$10 UPS 2nd day air. Extra shipping for bracket (separate package) \$3 ground/\$6 2nd day air. Bank service charge for VISA/MC. COD fee \$2.50. Write or call for foreign rates. Texas residents add appropriate sales tax.

Brochure Available covering the PACT product line of shooting timers and chronographs, \$1.00.



P. O. Box 531525
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- **9 Volt** battery
- Advanced training functions allow simulation of **complex courses of fire**
- Two stop plate inputs. **Man vs Man** mode gives both shooters total times, who won and margin of victory.
- **Auxiliary output** drives relay for horns, lights, moving targets, etc.
- Drives optional battery powered **printer**

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"The finest Chronograph I have ever used"
... Ross Seyfried

By having the \$69.95 CHRONO-MOD (skyscreens included) installed in your MKIII, you enable it to double as the best portable chronograph on the market. When operated as a chronograph, the MKIII performs all of the functions of the PACT Precision Chronograph and includes our new Glint Guard™ pat. pend. detection circuitry. In addition the MKIII will automatically calculate the **power factor** of each round fired.

30 Day Money Back Guarantee

We designed the MKIII, we build it, and we sell it factory direct to you. We take full responsibility for your satisfaction. If you are not 100% satisfied with any PACT product, return it to us undamaged (no fair driving over it) within 30 days, and we will refund your money. That's our promise and you can depend on it.

Lifetime Warranty

The MKIII features a real **simple repair policy**. If it breaks due to a defective part or faulty workmanship we'll **fix it free**. If you break it (people really have driven over them, ask Mickey Fowler) we will fix it for cost. No hassles and no questions asked.

Shop Around & Call Us Last

Before you buy a shooting timer take the time to do a little research. Call the different manufacturers and get their literature. Compare each timer feature for feature and watch out for bizarre operational limitations, like the inability to review shots when using a PAR time or the requirement for two machines to run a Man vs Man event. You'll find that dollar for dollar and feature for feature the PACT MKIII gives you more honest "bang for the buck" than **any** other shooting timer on the market.



*"It takes
championship
quality equip-
ment to remain
a champion."*

Rob Leatham
Reigning USPSA National
Champion and IPSC World
Champion

SPRINGFIELD

Custom



*Your fastest, most
affordable source for
America's highest
quality custom pistols.*

Want a top notch, high tech 1911-A1 pistol for IPSC competition similar to the ones used by world class action shooters Rob Leatham, Doug Koenig and Ken Tapp, all members of Springfield's elite Super Squad? How about a precise, reliable wadcutter or hardball gun every bit as accurate as the ones used by bullseye champions Tom Woods and Ralph Talbot? Quality built Springfield Custom pistols are the choice of champions.

Under the direction of renowned pistolsmith Les Baer, the Springfield Custom Shop employs the very latest patented state-of-the-art technology and the highest quality parts—including Springfield's forged steel 1911-A1 components—to build premium grade 1911-A1 custom pistols. Concerned about turnaround time and cost? We're as fast as any custom operation you'll find (we're talking *weeks*, not years). And our prices are extremely competitive. For the ultimate in value and fast delivery, choose one of our popular custom packages. Or, give us your specifications, and we'll build your custom pistol precisely the way you want it, including any of several optional finishes. Quality? Champions only use the best, and that says it all.

For a complete list of custom services or for ordering information, call Karen or Monica at the Springfield Custom Shop: (309) 441-5549. Or, send \$3 for Springfield's four-color, all-product 1990 catalog.

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GEORGE E. von ROSEN
PUBLISHER

CAMERON HOPKINS
EDITOR

BRUCE EDWARDS
ASSISTANT EDITOR

JOHN HART
GRAPHIC DESIGN

RENEE NUKALA
ADVERTISING PRODUCTION

CASEY CLIFFORD
ADVERTISING SALES

JEROME RAKUSAN
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR EMERITUS

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

ICHIRO NAGATA
PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

NYLE LEATHAM
PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

JOHN TAFFIN
FIELD EDITOR

MASSAD AYOOB
LAW ENFORCEMENT EDITOR

FRANK JAMES
HANDLOADING EDITOR

DAVE ANDERSON
PRACTICAL SHOOTING EDITOR

J.D. JONES
HUNTING EDITOR

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LEGISLATION EDITOR

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ROB LEATHAM
COMPETITIONS EDITOR

JAMES E. FENDER
SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR

WILFRID WARD
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NATIONAL ADVERTISING:

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Sarah Brady, Nostradamus And The Death Penalty

Congratulations on sticking it to Sarah Brady and Handgun Control Inc. However, it is my observation that she, her cohorts and others of her ilk are being used by Iran-Iraq and Russia.

As Nostradamus said, out of the east will rise one in purple. I also believe World War III has started.

People kill people, guns do not. They are only tools. Look what happened here in Florida: the case of the man who punished his step-son for messing his pants and playing with himself by making him eat his own excrement, then shoving his head in the toilet until the child died. The jury only gave the *b!&*\$(%d* life in prison instead of the death penalty.

The courts are jamming the jails and then turning the same scum right back out on the street where he proceeds to do the same things that got him arrested the first time.

The end is near. I intend to carry a pistol for my self-protection regardless of

who or what the powers-that-be say.

James H. Waddey
Zephyrhills, Fla.

Kill The Lawyers

My subscription to *American Handgunner* has in the past proved disappointing. That disappointment has become enduring antipathy.

I find Cameron Hopkins' gratuitous and vicious assault on lawyers in his review of the .40 S&W (Sept/Oct 1990) personally offensive. While the Bar may have more than its share of scoundrels, that fact does not justify the indiscriminate calumny Mr. Hopkins heaps upon the profession. Are all gun owners degenerates and murderers because a few deranged individuals have committed atrocities with firearms?

Cancel my subscription and forward the balance of my subscription fee to the address above.

Thomas J. Hall
Attorney at Law

P.S. Lest Mr. Hopkins accuse me of

attempting to censor him, note carefully that I have not suggested that his writings be banned. I have merely chosen to spend my money elsewhere.

Editor's Reply: We certainly intended no disrespect for the thousands of principled members of the bar, men and women of the highest integrity who have fought so valiantly to bring justice to the people of America. We did, however, intend to disdain the sort of lawyer who plays on the basest of human emotions, greed, to fleece honest, hard-working Americans. The "how to sue a gun company" book by lawyers Windle Turley and James Rooks is just the sort of rubbish that has tarnished the honored practice of law.

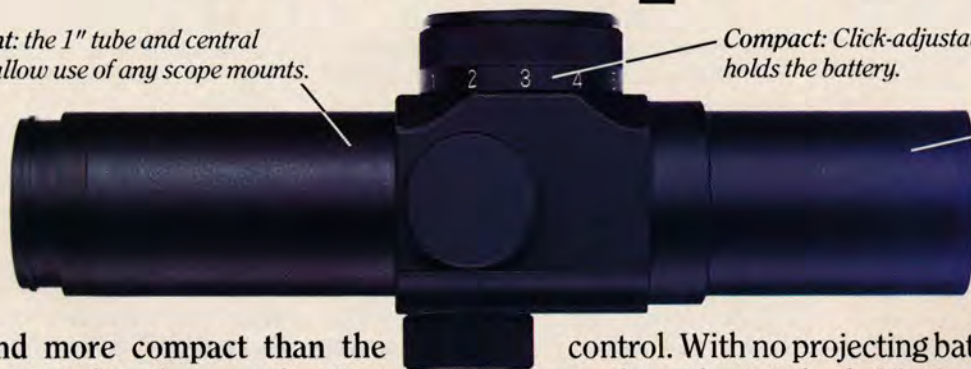
Fair Reporting

My interest in the shooting sports has always been strictly handguns and I have subscribed to *Guns & Ammo* for many years, but after picking up the July/August issue of *American Handgunner*, I'm not renewing my subscription. Instead, I am enclosing an order for a subscription to your magazine.

My reason for this is that you make it clear that after testing a product, you are not afraid to include the negative features of a weapon as well as the positive. On

The Ultra-Dot Sight: Counterpoint

Easy to Mount: the 1" tube and central adjustments allow use of any scope mounts.



Compact: Click-adjustable brightness control holds the battery.

Lightweight: the whole sight weighs just 4 ounces and is just over 5 inches long.

Lighter and more compact than the other "point" sights, the new Ultra-Dot Sight presents a superior point of view.

The Ultra-Dot is the smallest and lightest sight Action Arms has ever offered. It's so compact that you'll wonder where the battery is.

The Ultra-Dot has its battery pack incorporated into the small, click-adjustable brightness

control. With no projecting battery pack, it mounts easily with standard 1" rings on virtually any firearm. Write for the Action Arms full line catalog.

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Philadelphia, PA 19124

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We cut the crap.

The more you shoot the more you need the cutting power of Kleen-Bore.

No. 10 Copper Cutter, joins popular No. 10

Solvent in the Kleen-Bore line. This new, high strength



solvent removes copper, lead, plastic and other bore residues fast while it helps prevent rust and pitting.

Gunk-Out™ is a powerful cleaner and degreaser that blasts away dirt, dust and powder ridden oil residues from actions, bolts and trigger assemblies.



Wherever Kleen-Bore's family of quality products are sold.



Northampton, MA 01060

the other hand, the editors of *Guns & Ammo* seem to be afraid of alienating advertisers by bringing to the readers' attention any bad features of a product.

I read magazines for information as well as for entertainment and I like to feel that when I go out to buy a gun or shooting accessory, I have all the information available to me to make a well-considered choice. To me, providing that information is the duty of gunwriters and editors.

I believe also that manufacturers should be grateful to those who find flaws in their products so they may correct them for their customers' sake.

Thomas B. Channel
Sacramento, Calif.

Truck You, Lee Iacocca

Chevrolet sponsors the Sportsman's Team Challenge, a shooting competition in Florida. Lee Iacocca, head dilettante at Chrysler/Jeep, wrote a book calling for the ban on "Saturday Night Specials," and pretty much telling NRA members to go take a flying leap.

Iacocca is a financial supporter of Handgun Control, Inc. Remember that the next time you buy a car, truck or 4WD. Write to Chevy and let them know you support them because they support you. Send a copy of the window sticker to Lee Iacocca and remind him why he lost the sale.

(More people were killed in Jeeps last year than were killed with assault rifles. Nobody *needs* four wheel drive. Maybe we should ban semi-automatic transmissions?)

Mark Moritz
Scottsdale, Ariz.

J.D. Sniveler

I read the replies to "Saga Of A .45 ACP Revolver" and, frankly, I think most people missed the point. Okay, so maybe S&W laid an egg with that particular gun, but who is the sucker who put the full price down on a firearm and took it home without even looking at it?

I've read enough of J.D. Jones to form the opinion that he is little more than a sniveler. He uses most of his column space to advertise his own wares and he gets paid for it. He snivels about anyone who doesn't use his products.

He even has the audacity to snivel about half-moon clips! A nuisance? Compared to what? Tying your shoes, maybe, or washing the dishes? What about loading and unloading a single-shot pistol all day?

I pass up many chances to write letters to gun publications, but I had to reply to this. Please do not allow the cackling of other readers to induce your other writers into turning your excellent magazine into

a witch-hunt.

Michael B. Raymer
New York, NY

Whole Hole

10mm Lite? 9mm? .45 ACP? The expansion of a .45 ACP hollowpoint is "iffy" at best. A slow moving hollowpoint that does not expand is nothing but a round nose with a hole in it. If you fill the hole, you add more weight. Cut the shoulder of the bullet (Keith style) and you have just invented the 200 grain semi-wadcutter.

Try this bullet in .45 ACP or the FBI's 10mm Lite and you will find that you just might have something to write about. Now that "We The People" have paid to re-invent the wheel and the .45 ACP, maybe we can re-invent the semi-wadcutter— just don't put a hole in it.

Robb Walraven
Portland, Ore.

Kart Still In Business

The Sept/Oct 1990 issue ran an article "The Secret Guns of Claudio Salassa" by Cameron Hopkins. In his article he mentions that Kart went out of the barrel business several years ago, which was true. But, he failed to mention that he has relocated and is making barrels again.

His new address is:
Frederick H. Kart
Rt. 6, Box 830
Garner Road
Shallotte, NC 28459
phone: (919) 754-5212

Reuben Hafter
Scottsdale, Ariz.

Clark Barrels: Pro

Your article entitled "The Secret Guns of Claudio Salassa" really started out to be an excellent profile of a first-class pistolsmith. But you made several statements in the article showing your lack of in-depth knowledge of pistolsmithing and one that is so untrue and libelous that an immediate bold retraction and apology are due.

As a member of the American Pistolsmiths Guild, a pistolsmith of over 20 years and a friend of Mr. Clark's, I demand you print an immediate retraction.

Every product entering our shop undergoes a series of tests before it is incorporated into a pistol. One of the tests is to check the part for proper heat treating specifications. The Rockwell C scale hardness number is usually stamped on the part for future reference. Not once have we ever tested a James Clark match barrel and found it to be soft.

Not being satisfied with your first ignorant statement, you had to enhance

Continued on page 12

PROUD TRIBUTE TO THE "OLD WARHORSE."

Buckle Honors Retirement of the .45—Authorized by NRA-Established Defense Fund.



Shown Actual Size;
Fits Standard 1" to 1 1/4" Belts

Solid Sterling Silver; 24-Karat
Gold Plated Pistol and Border—
Limited Edition of 950



24-Karat Gold Plated Bronze—
Limited Edition of 2,000



Jewelers' Bronze—
Limited Edition of 5,000



Own an original work of gun engraver's art by the man whose rifle set a new world's record, Lynton McKenzie, engraver of the \$201,000 Safari Club International Rifle.

Since 1911, Americans have defended our freedoms with the M1911A1 .45 Automatic Pistol. It has served longer and fought more battles than any other firearm in American military history.

Now, to honor the retirement of the .45 from military service, The American Historical Foundation, in conjunction with the NRA-established Firearms Civil Rights Legal Defense Fund, is proud to announce the .45 Automatic Commemorative Buckle.

Important And Useful Collectible

This is an important collectible that can be worn daily, as it makes a proud statement about the owner. It captures the spirit and tradition of the "Old Warhorse"—and the patriotism and military valor associated with it.

The historical importance of this milestone dictates that this buckle be the finest of its type. So, we went to a firearms engraver—not a buckle maker. And the man we commissioned is, in our opinion, the best gun engraver in America. Some call him the best in the world. He has engraved guns of all types for presidents and kings, not to mention the Safari Club International Rifle which sold for \$201,000, a new world's record.

A Lynton McKenzie Original

We wanted this buckle to be a genuine, original "McKenzie." It is. Your buckle is actually struck directly from the steel master hub, hand engraved by Lynton McKenzie. The work is so precise that even under magnification each buckle actually looks hand engraved. The engraving style is classic English. All details of the M1911A1 are clearly visible. The whole design is contained within a border of bound oak leaves, signifying order, security and honor.

This buckle is "gentleman" size and fits

standard 1" to 1 1/4" belts, so you can wear it with a suit or sport clothes.

Individual buckles are crafted in three different limited editions, as shown above.

Authorized By NRA-Established Defense Fund

It is appropriate that this important buckle is authorized by the Firearms Civil Rights Legal Defense Fund, established by the National Rifle Association. They fight the legal maneuverings of those who would take away our constitutional right to keep and bear arms.

This NRA-established Fund has wholeheartedly officially endorsed this buckle—the first time it has ever lent its support to a commemorative.

The Fund receives a portion of each reservation fee, and its name and other commemorative inscriptions appear on the back of each buckle. This will add to your pride when you wear it and enhance the buckle's value as a collectible.

Engraved Serial Number

Each buckle is engraved on the reverse with its own limited edition serial number. The buckles are available individually or in matched sets of three—each with identical numbers (a good idea for collectors). These original buckles could become important collectibles in the future.

The Foundation issues a Certificate of Authenticity with each buckle, attesting to the edition limit, the assay of the precious metal, the origin of the master engraving by Lynton McKenzie, and the official endorsement of the NRA-established Defense Fund.



Belt By Tex Shoemaker

A top-quality belt by famous holster maker Tex Shoemaker is also available. Each is made of thick, saddle leather, fully leather lined, stitched

and embossed with a basketweave pattern. Width is 1 1/4"; available in tan or black. Please specify length and color.

How To Reserve

This is available exclusively from The American Historical Foundation. To place your reservation call (toll-free, 1-800-368-8080), use the reservation form below or personally visit. With your buckle you will also receive Membership in the Foundation. Satisfaction is guaranteed, or return within one month for a full refund.

This is a rare opportunity to acquire a Lynton McKenzie original, show a piece of history, tell the world about your interests, contribute to a good cause, add to your collection, and own a buckle you can wear with pride—all at the same time.

RESERVATION

Please respond by 10 December for Christmas delivery.
Satisfaction Guaranteed or Return in 30 days for a Full Refund
To: The American Historical Foundation
1142 West Grace Street, Dept. H298
Richmond, Virginia 23220
Telephone: (804) 353-1812
Toll-free reservations: (800) 368-8080.



Please send the following .45 Commemorative Buckle(s) engraved with the Limited Edition Serial Number on the reverse.

- Jewelers' Bronze, at \$19.
- 24-Karat, Gold Plated Bronze, at \$45.
- Solid Sterling Silver, 24-Karat Gold Plated Pistol and Border, at \$195.
- Collectors' Matched Set of Three (one of each version), at \$249 per set, a savings of \$10.

I also wish to reserve the following saddle-leather belts at \$22:

Size: _____ (Tan) Size: _____ (Black)
☐ Check or money order enclosed. ☐ Charge my credit card.

Name _____

Address _____

For Visa, MasterCard or Amex, please send account number, expiration date and signature. Va. residents add tax.

H298

GUNS for shooting.



GUNS for customizing.



GUNS for hunting.



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Whether you're a competition shooter or back yard plinker **GUNS** can help you stay on top of the latest shooting trends. Read about the newest guns and gear. Get shooting tips and techniques. Plus take a look at the big money shooting sports.

Customizing:

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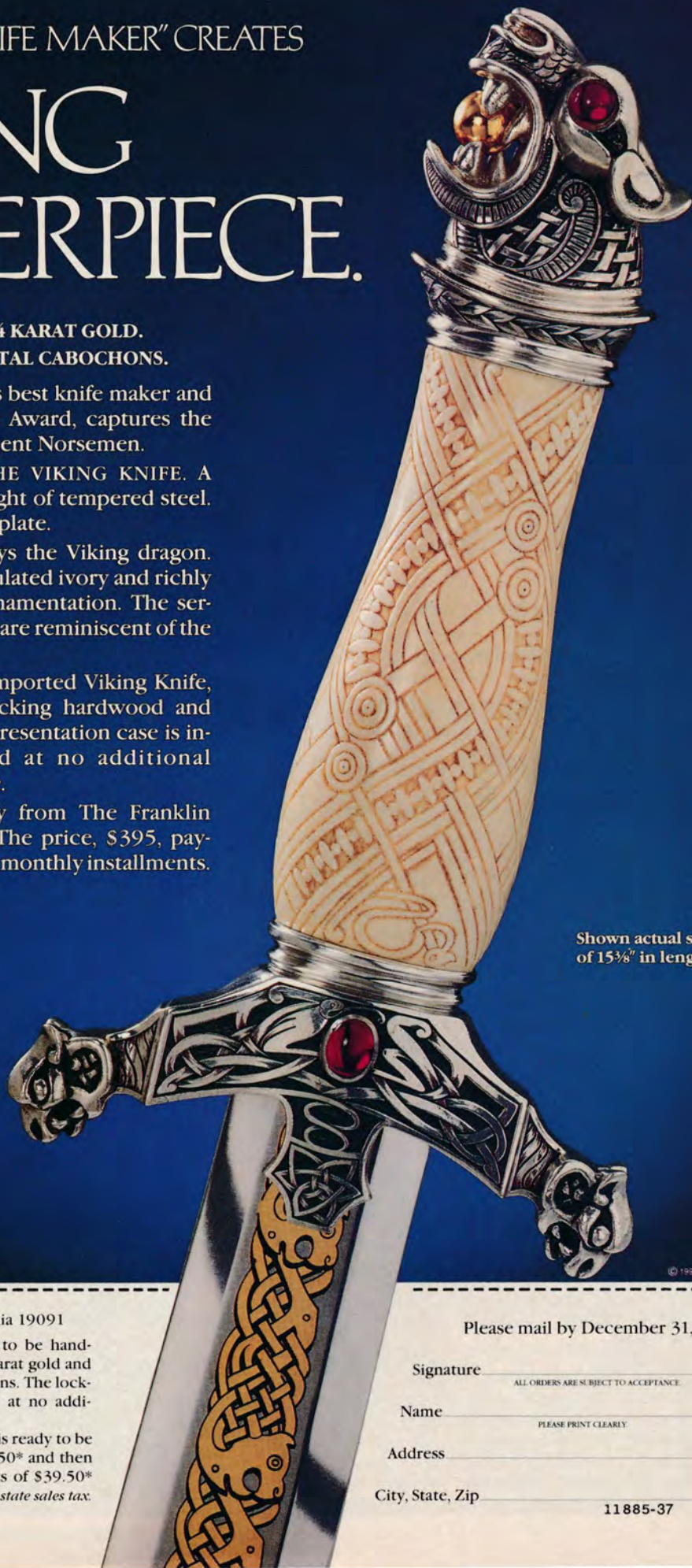
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SPEAK OUT

Continued from page 8

it with more words of questionable intelligence. You compared Bill Wilson's barrels to James Clark's with the implication James' barrels were of inferior quality in comparison. Your words are so unfounded and show your lack of knowledge of what a quality product is, I personally will find it hard to give your future articles much credibility.

As demanded before, I want to see an immediate apology and retraction to James Clark, an industry icon of character and honesty who has been producing quality barrels and parts before the majority of pistolsmiths in the business today could wipe the milk from their mouth.

Alex B. Hamilton
10-Ring Precision, Inc.
San Antonio, Texas

Clark Barrels: Con

In reference to your comments about Clark barrels in the last issue, I would like to say that I have some problems also.

I have had one barrel where the lugs

"sheared off," one where they had cracked, one where the upper lugs peened over (that one cost me a Marine Corps contract), one where the chamber cracked, one that had a gouge in the bore ahead of the chamber and several "Pin Gun kits" where the barrel would not screw onto the comp.

Each time I complained, I was told, "It's your fault."

If I'm wrong, I'll admit it, correct it and insure that it won't happen again. I can't say that about Mr. Clark.

If a product is defective and the maker doesn't care, then he should be willing to take the heat.

I want this information to be constructive, not destructive.

D.R. Middlebrooks
The Combat Shop
Surry, Va.

Pity Kitty

I find it ironic that Massad Ayoob chooses to sympathize with Bernard Goetz and slam Kitty Dukakis in the same article. Both of these people are suffering from a life-threatening disease. In your reference to Mrs. Dukakis' chemical dependency you show a lack of understanding about addiction.

Your desire to write a catchy phrase as a gun enthusiast has allowed you to take a low blow at another man's wife. Direct

criticism of Mr. Dukakis and his stand on gun control would have been much more appropriate.

I have greatly enjoyed your writing in the past, but I look forward to a more direct attack on anti-gun forces in the future.

Steven Soeteber
Marion, Wisc.

Massad Ayoob Replies: Believe me, my intention was to slap Michael, not Kitty. I actually have a great deal of regard for the woman.

As I tell my students, about the only thing that Jeff Cooper, Mike Dukakis and I have in common is that the three of us are arrogant, the three of us are opinionated and all three of us are married to beautiful, gracious, highly intelligent women who help make up for the fact that we are often assholes.

Seriously, it's nice to know someone with some sensitivity is reading what one writes. Take care.

AMERICAN HANDGUNNER welcomes letters to the editor for the *Speak Out* column. Letters should be typewritten, but legible handwriting is acceptable. Letters must be less than 350 words. We reserve the right to edit all published letters for clarity and length. Send your letters to *Speak Out*, American Handgunner, 591 Camino de la Reina, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92675.

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World Champion Rob Leatham's secret .38 Super and major 9mm loads. Are they too hot to handle? Is IPSC headed down the wrong road?

INFORMATIVE ARTICLES

Guns & Ammo's Bob Milek matches single-station reloaded ammo against ammo loaded on a Dillon progressive. Conventional wisdom says that matched cases, cleaned primer pockets and trickled powder charges will outshoot ammo produced on a progressive reloading machine. Don't bet on it!



INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

The Stockton Schoolyard Shooting "The Rest of the Story?" Did the state of California not only approve the killer's gun purchases, but also pay for the drugs that drove him into his homicidal rage? Read the unbelievable facts!

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EXCITEMENT AND COMFORT ABOARD A HOUSEBOAT FOR ALASKAN BEAR

Last winter friend Jim Hebert called with a super idea for an Alaskan black bear hunt. He hooked me on the idea without much trouble so a Handgun Hunters International hunt was planned. Like most of these wonderful plans, a few pitfalls occurred.

Essentially the hunt was to go like this. Fly to Wrangell, Alaska, load up on a houseboat and head out into the island-inland waterways area along the coast. Park the houseboat and hunt from small outboards.

Live on the houseboat. Hot showers, good food, great beds, someone else to do the cooking and all the work. Ride around in small boats to locate the bears on the beach; then run in with the boat, stalk 'em and kill 'em.

Everyone can take two bears. The last couple years they have been running close to 100% on filling out. Simple, easy, relatively inexpensive—should be great.

Competition between the guys on a couple of boats. Camaraderie, sportsmanship, and great fishing to top it off. Why not? Hell yes, let's go!

Hunting Companions

Pete Pi of Cor-Bon and I teamed up early. By the way, Cor-Bon has acquired the rights to the JDJ line of bullet designs which includes the exclusive rights to sell the bullets and molds. This acquisition rounds out Pete's extensive line of bullets and loaded ammunition for sportsmen and police usage. Contact him at P.O. Box 10126, Detroit, MI 48201 (313-894-2373) for details of his premium ammunition lines.

Dates were set. Two boatloads of us were going. Plan 'A' looked good. Then disaster struck. The other boatload of guys cancelled. Did that deter us? No way. Committed and dedicated, we continued on.

I met Pete in Seattle. Overnighted in a town I won't name because I might want to go back. Spent an interesting evening in a "suicide" bar on the waterfront watching the clientele and a few "heart 'o gold" but not very talented strippers.

Interesting evening. Successful too—we both survived it.

Arrived in Wrangell the next morning. Chuck Wagner, our Captain and owner of Alaskan Coastal Adventure Charters, and his mate met us at the airport where they were dropping off their previous clients. One of our guys, Terry Portal, had been relaxing in town for a few days. Keith Shoaps was on the same aircraft with us.

Capt. Wagner said it was a shame we had to kill time until the next morning to leave because the others weren't getting in till then. Quick decisions—adrenalin up—fly them out to the boat tomorrow. We'll get an extra day of hunting that way and they can get in some fishing as you can't fly and hunt the same day in Alaska.

Spectacular Scenery

Supplies and licenses were purchased and transported to the boat. We were off. Even with overcast skies, the beauty of the area was impressive. Seven or eight hours later we dropped anchor in a quiet inlet and everyone but me headed out for a half hour look for bear.



Alaska's breath-taking natural beauty was enough to stop our hunting editor in his tracks to admire the scenery before he continued on to slay a big coastal bruin. J.D. popped this sow with his 9.3 JDJ in a T/C Contender.

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One good sized one was seen. Excitement ran high during the evening. Naturally most of the evening was spent discussing guns and loads with more than a few experiences thrown in for good measure.

The next day Keith and Terry took the big outboard and Pete and I struck out in the little one. Struck out is the proper terminology for the first few hours. Lots of cruising, no bears.

Impressive tide changes. As the tide went out the water dropped and starfish by the thousands were exposed clinging to the rocks. Seals mocked us. Small animals scurried along the shoreline. Eagles were abundant with hundreds seen by each of us during the course of the trip.

Cloudy skies and a light breeze made a light insulated jacket necessary. Being an inveterate beachcomber and finding lots of debris on the beach, I walked and looked while Pete scanned the distant shorelines—and found a bear.

Since the beaches were narrow and bears aren't usually in the habit of staying on them for long periods of time, I didn't have a lot of hope for this one but we tried for it. He disappeared into the bush.

We did, however, see 14 bears that day without taking a shot. Keith and Terry each got a bear—spotting 15 and obviously doing a better job than we did. With these kinds of numbers everyone was confident.

Exciting Stalk

Ed Greisburg and Dan had come in by floatplane and spent the afternoon fishing. A 75 and a 150 pound halibut rewarded the effort and provided a little excitement. The next day Ed and I hunted from the small boat. Bears were numerous.

Getting a shot wasn't the easiest thing to do. In fact it was a lot easier to screw up a stalk or, due to just plain bad luck, have a bear simply walk back into cover before we were close enough to shoot. Finally, I got a chance at what looked like a great place to stalk a medium sized blackie.

By medium size I mean 300-350 lbs. which is far larger than I've become accustomed to in the Lower 48. These guys are beachcombers and eat well, therefore, they grow to quite large sizes. In Pennsylvania, for example, blacks in the weight range of 500+ lbs. are maybe 2%. In this area of Alaska, try 10% or so.

In any event, I beached the boat intending to make my stalk of 500 yards through the timber. Forget that. The bush was so thick the only way in was with a chain saw or on hands and knees through a bear tunnel.

I chose the beach approach. Within 50 yards I found myself in one of the most beautiful places in the outdoors I've ever been in. Even during the stalk I

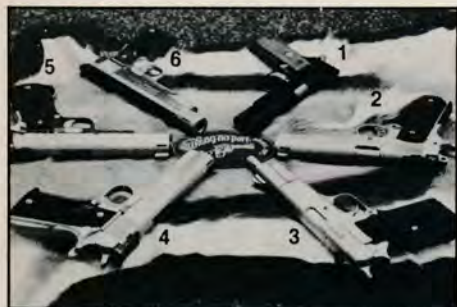
had to stop and admire this particular spot several times.

For the first time in my life the stalk went as it was supposed to. I didn't make a single mistake. Not one slip up, not one sound. As I approached the spot I had picked to shoot from, I had that nagging feeling things were going too well. I eased up behind the chest high rock and slowly eased my head up to look over only to see nothing but beach, rocks, timber and water. Of course, no bear.

Okay, he either was out of sight in a ditch or behind a rock or he had simply gotten tired of the beach life and went back into the bush for a snooze. I propped up the 9.3 JDJ (.444 Marlin necked to 9.3/.366", 270 grain Speer soft bullet at about 2,100 fps) on its new lightweight experimental bipod and got the B & L binoculars out. Nothing alive showed. Still nothing 20 minutes later.

I decided to check things out from a different angle. Moving to my left 10 yards I spotted my bear busily eating grass behind the rocks about 100 yards ahead of me. A quick evaluation of the situation revealed my best option was to simply wait him out.

About 40 minutes later the bear appeared grazing on the sides of a ditch he was standing in as he headed toward the dense cover. About that time the sun broke through the clouds and complicated



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J.D. says that one of the many pleasures of hunting is the camaraderie found with good friends in a back-country hunting camp. Here he is being a comrade.

matters by glaring on the water behind the bear. Furthermore, the bear went behind a log and I couldn't tell for sure where his chest line or even his front leg was.

Land Of Big Bears

I waited till the last moment to shoot. I figured 15 feet or so from the heavy cover was close enough. I picked a spot as low on the shoulder as I could and skinned a bullet over the log into him. Water flew off the animal and he dropped like a rock and rolled on his back kicking.

Almost instantly roars of rage echoed the shoreline and the bear came up on his chest and headed for cover flopping and roaring. It was a most impressive performance.

To make a long story short, I pumped a round into everything that looked like a vital area as it showed. After three more rounds everything was quiet again.

The first round went in the left leg, exited the brisket, re-entered the leg on the far side and also completely penetrated it. Frankly, this was one of the most destructive wounds I've ever seen. Both legs were broken and the sternum shot out. However, nothing of anything immediately vital was hit.

The next went through the neck center, unfortunately missing the vertebrae but doing severe damage. The next went through the top of the shoulders missing the spinal column by an inch and leaving an inch and a half hole all the way through. The last one went in the left top of the shoulder, penetrating the neck lengthwise without striking the spine and exited under the right eye.

Ed heard it all—shots, bullets striking and bear roaring—from 500 yards downwind.

This turned out to be a 300-350 lb. sow, about as big as black bear sows get. The pelt was in beautiful condition and will be again after the taxidermist finishes with it.

The incident proved again that you simply can't hit them around the edges and kill them cleanly. You have to hit them right and with lots of power.

Reloading the single shot wasn't a disadvantage and does have the added effect

of making one conscious of at least trying for good shot placement.

The little bipod worked very well and you will probably see it in production this fall. It weighs about 2.25 ozs. and unlike some others that are much heavier, does not change the gun's point of impact.

More Excitement

More excitement occurred the next morning as Ed and I were returning to the houseboat at dusk. I ripped out the bottom of the boat on a submerged rock and almost lost the engine. Only about half an inch of one clamp and my left hand held it. The water temperature was

probably not over 40° which means, at my age, immersion for a few minutes equals certain death.

The rip tide was also running in. Water spurted 18" at first through the bayonet wound-like hole through the aluminum. Got the motor back on, fired it up and sank 15 feet from the shore. I figure we made it out of the rip tide by about 20 seconds. A radio effected a quick rescue.

Pete, by then known as "Shamu" due to a killer whale sounding near him while he was fooling around in a little eight foot plastic boat, had some engine trouble and spent the night on the beach alone—a real character building experience.

All in all we collected eight bears for six hunters—two made Boone and Crockett record size with skulls scoring over 20. Both of them probably weighed over 500 lbs. Four of us couldn't pick one up to get it in the boat—it was necessary to sort of ooze it over the gunwale into the boat.

All pelts were prime and unrubbed. Lots of bears. Lots of action. Success. Beautiful scenery. Good guys to hunt with. No one got hurt. Hell of a good trip.

We intend to do it again next May. If you are interested in going and know something about operating small boats and can hunt without a guide, contact Jim Hebert, Big Game Safaris, 1982 Heritage Hill Ct., Rochester Hills, MI 48064.



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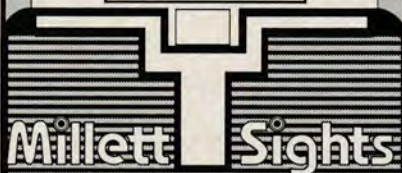
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HANDLOADING

FRANK JAMES

NEW SIERRA RELOADING MANUALS FEATURE 3 HANDGUNNER EXPERTS

The first reloading manual I ever had in my possession was the 44th Edition of the *Lyman Reloading Handbook* and while I still have it on my shelf, it is now retired. Many other reloading manuals have taken its place and the newest one to join the pack is not one, but a set of two books, The 3rd Edition of *The Sierra HANDGUN Reloading Manual* and *The Sierra RIFLE Reloading Manual*.

Many companies come out with a new reloading manual every few years, even if some of these manuals are aimed at one specific type of projectile like a book solely concerned with cast bullets. But Sierra can't be accused of generating a lot of needless paper because this is only the third edition of their manual.

to be used in a local IPSC match, Rob's message is one worth reading.

Well-known writer Bob Milek wrote the section on "Handgun Hunting" and he provides special insight into both the specialty pistols with which he is often associated and the standard revolver.

J.D. Jones, another fellow columnist of ours, wrote a piece on "Big Bore Hunting Handguns" and his summary of the .40 caliber and bigger handguns is a great guide to both the beginning and experienced handgun reloaders.

Think about that for a second—two out of four experts are *American Handgunner* columnists. Sierra Bullets could have chosen any gunwriter from any magazine, and they selected two from *American Handgunner*. That says some-

But the true star writers of these manuals are the men who endured the endless hours of research to create the data tables and load computations necessary for an accurate and safe reloading guide.

My first edition Sierra manual was printed in 1971. That's okay because the fellows at Sierra have done their homework and the result is one of the best reloading manuals ever produced.

Sierra has wisely separated handgun from rifle and produced this two volume set of manuals with one devoted solely to handgun calibers and the other to rifle calibers.

They depart from tradition in that they have employed many authorities to write introductions and commentaries before each data section and a section titled "Competitive Handgunning" is written by David Bradshaw.

He does an excellent job of reviewing the history and significant events of IHMSA. He also digs into the details of the equipment and load requirements for any shooter wishing to compete in silhouette shooting and competition.

Our own *American Handgunner* columnist Rob Leatham wrote a section titled "Action Pistol" and he summarizes the developments in the various aspects of the sport associated with IPSC or NRA Action Pistol.

Whether you are using a worked over .38 Special revolver for an NRA Action shooting match or reloading a .38 Super

thing about the quality of this magazine.

But the true star writers of these manuals are not these fellows, but the men who endured the endless hours of research to create the data tables and load computations necessary for an accurate and safe reloading guide.

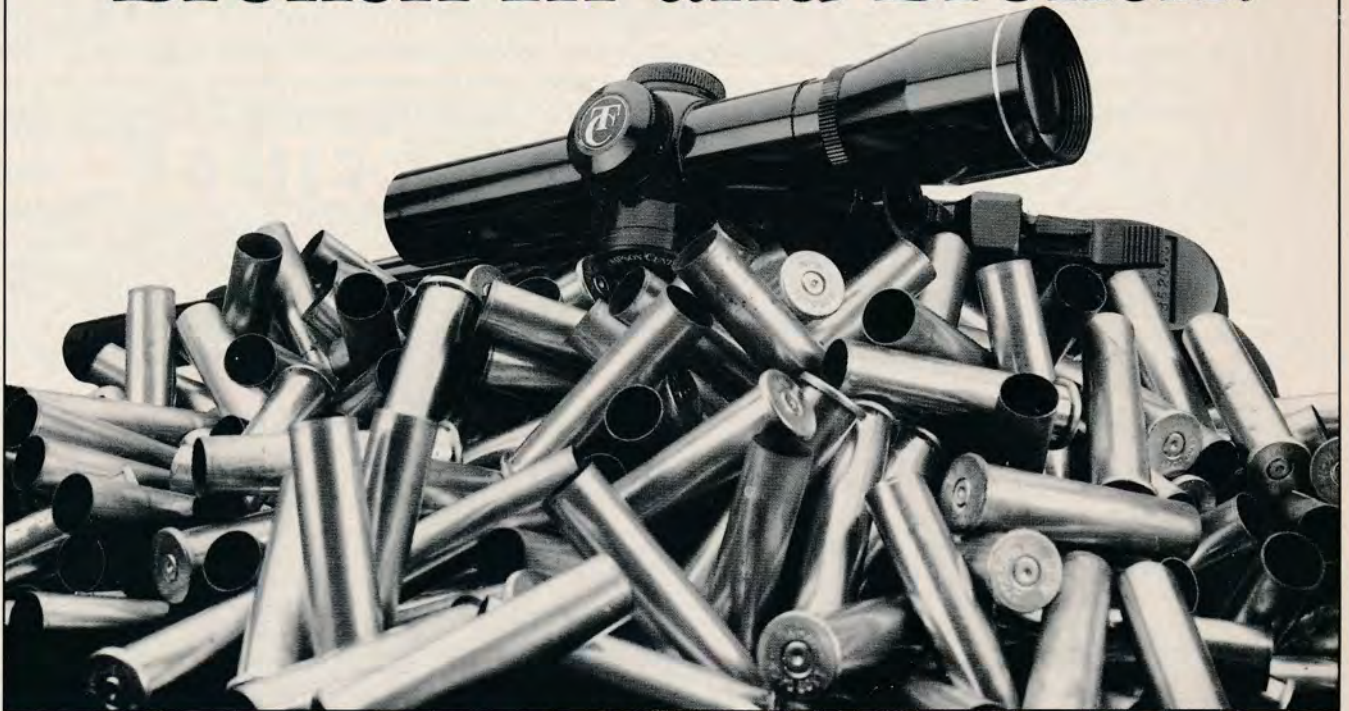
The researchers are given credit in the front of these manuals (in order of appearance): Bob Hayden, Ted Almgren, Martin Hull, Bill McDonald, and Lane Ponich. Each man brings an impressive set of credentials to the table and all of them have a long history with Sierra. They also are the true experts of this field having studied external ballistics over many years and the wealth of their knowledge is shown in the richness of these new manuals.

The Handgun Manual loading data is divided into two parts, the regular data for ordinary handguns and then separate data listings for various calibers used in the so-called specialty pistols like the Thompson Contender and the Remington XP-100.

There is an abundance of information provided besides the basic loading data recommendations. Listed information includes the ballistic coefficients of rifle

Continued on page 106

The Difference Between "Broken-In" and Broken.



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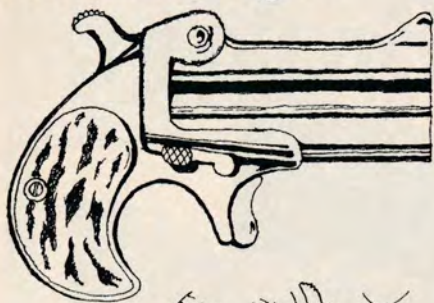
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HANDGUNNING HINTS

Bennett Viken & Robin Sutton

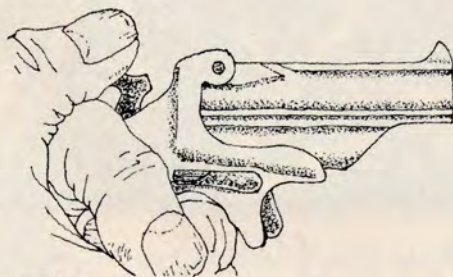
The Derringer



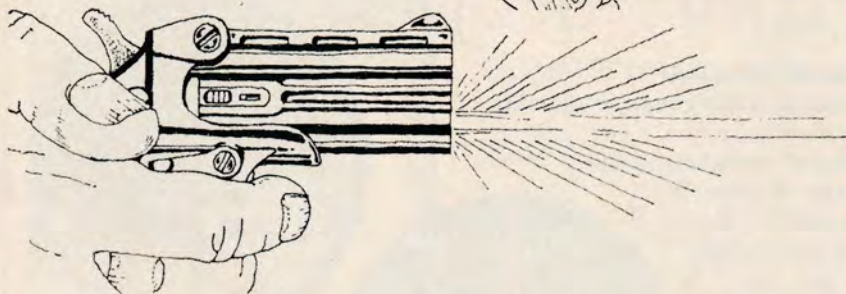
1. The derringer packs a mighty wallop for its size. But that very size can make it difficult to shoot.



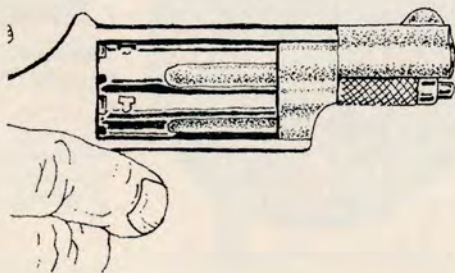
2. The two-hand hold helps. First, grip the derringer in your off-hand. Forget about the trigger or hammer. This hand's job is steadying the gun.



3. The shooting hand takes care of the cocking . . .



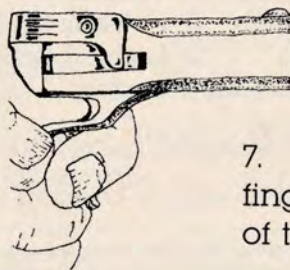
4. . . and the firing.



5. Of course, if your derringer has a back-up role, you'll want to practice one-handed also.



6. And remember to familiarize your off-hand.



7. Don't let those fingers creep ahead of the muzzle.

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Are law-abiding, responsible citizens likely to criminally misuse firearms? Aren't they more likely to shoot themselves or a loved one than to protect themselves from crime? Doesn't gun ownership provoke violent behavior? Is spousal homicide or a tragic gun accident the likely result of introducing a gun into a usually placid, loving household?

You and your non-gun-owning neighbors may have strident opinions on these questions. Scholarship has the answer. And the answer to each question is—no.

Law-abiding Americans are not criminally aberrant, gun or no gun. Gun owners use guns for protection from crime about a million times yearly, while, through training and education, gun accidents have gone down over 50% in the last 20 years. Gun ownership does not lead to aberrant behavior, and typically loving couples remain loving, while fami-

lies with long histories of violence and drug abuse may well end in spouse abuse, even homicide.

The evidence of scholarship remains on the side of law-abiding gun owners. Yet they are threatened by

that guns are the problem.

This, of course, is the editorial position of many newspapers and broadcast outlets. You can imagine the feeding frenzy when a new "study" is released. Society's "watchdogs" become starving alley cats eager for any scrap of evidence to fill their need. And their need is to substantiate preconceived editorial positions that firearms should be banned, owners monitored, and rights ignored.

Consider a Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) study of "Handgun Crime Victims" released this past summer. While 90% of violent crimes are not committed with a handgun, this study focused solely on that 10% that are. And, while it was a study of some crime victims, it did not

Those most likely to be the victims of violent crimes are those in areas where restrictive gun laws are most apt to be enforced and where potential victims are least likely to be armed.

quasi-scholarship and the misinterpretation of good research. Even when respectable researchers point out the limitations of their work, gun prohibitionists point to it as *proof positive*

address victims of crime who have relied on handguns for self-defense.

This is not a "problem" with the study, mind you, but no study on a controversial topic is released into a vacuum. Media hostile to firearms civil rights seized on the July 8 study as still more justification for a ban or other restriction to public access to handguns.

Handgun Control, Inc. quickly released a statement that the right to bear arms in this country costs Americans \$1 billion each year on medical cost associated with the treatment of people who have been shot.

This plays pretty well to the public health community who believes as an Article of their Religion that injurious objects be banned, regardless of their ability to be used for good.

There are important findings in the BJS study, but gun owners will have to avoid popular press coverage to find them.

The key finding in the BJS study is that there are almost 640,000 handgun-related violent crimes annually. This means 640,000 instances. Many involve the same criminal over and over again.

That's less than the 645,000 protective uses of handguns noted by Professor Kleck of Florida State University, virtually all of which are single victims using a gun in a single instance of self-defense—the survey on which Kleck relied didn't ask about multiple uses of guns for protection from criminals.

Notice that the press coverage of the BJS study did not note that the vast majority of handgun-related crime victims are not injured. In stark contrast to their preconceived notions expressed edi-

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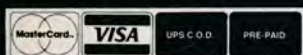
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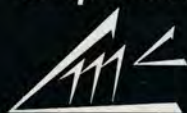
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torially, injury is less likely to occur if the criminal uses a handgun.

Media also did not indicate that roughly five-sixths of the injuries suffered in handgun-related crimes are not the result of gunshot wounds. Presumably, these are beatings.

Indeed, the key new finding of the study is that only about 15,000 non-fatal handgun shootings of crime victims occur, compared to previous criminological estimates of 30-35,000, and media-hyped estimates by anti-gunners of 200,000. It compares, incidentally, to Kleck's estimate that gun-wielding would-be victims shoot 8,700-15,000 criminals annually—mostly using handguns.

Paradoxically, advocates of more restrictive gun bans point to this study as justification for their position, but the BJS study supports another view. Those most likely to be the victims of handgun-related violent crimes are those in areas where restrictive gun laws are most apt to be enforced and where potential victims are least likely to be armed.

In short, males too young to possess, much less purchase a handgun legally are perpetrating more and more handgun-related crimes. And they are doing so on the streets of cities where, by and large, it is unlawful for law-abiding citizens to carry a gun for self-defense.

And, contrary to the mythical "crime of passion" between persons in otherwise loving, placid relationships, the BJS study shows that, relative to other crimes, handgun-related crimes are disproportionately apt to involve strangers and to occur on the streets rather than in homes.

The study also proves that high incidence of gun ownership does not equate to a high incidence of gun crime. With handgun ownership highest among non-Hispanic whites, handgun use in violent crime was especially high among blacks and Hispanics. Handguns were used in about 22% of the violent crimes committed against black males compared to 9% of those committed against white males.

As with a recent American Medical Association study of homicides (with data corrected) the data suggest a very serious problem of criminal violence, especially gun-related violence—directed against blacks, especially relatively young blacks, and, to a lesser extent, Hispanics—in both instances, attacks from members of the same ethnic minority.

To NRA, this calls for action to address the security of black and Hispanic Americans, the question of inner-city public safety, and the need to identify and rectify the root causes of violence.

Above all, it underscores the need, not to assail the Second Amendment, but to enforce it.



Paul H. Blackman, PhD., is a research fellow with the National Rifle Association of America.



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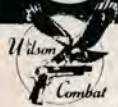
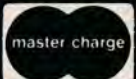
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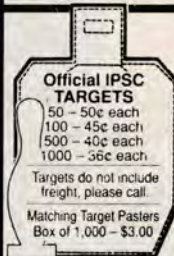
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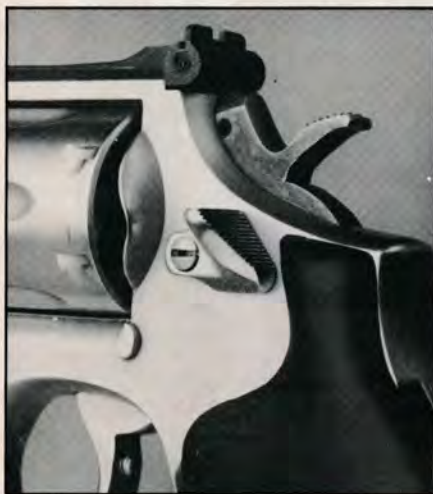
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Heinie Specialty Products has introduced a Drop-in Compensator Kit for 1911 pistols. This unit has a match-quality, fully throated stainless steel barrel with over-size hood area and custom-fitted bushing for increased accuracy. The kit also features a dual port compensator, Wolff recoil spring and more. It is currently available in .45 ACP, with other calibers expected in the future. For further details contact Heinie at 323 W. Franklin, Havana, IL 62644.



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UNDERSTANDING REVOLVER TIMING

By Torin Smith

Having been a gunsmith at a major Smith & Wesson warranty station for a number of years, I've repaired literally thousands of Smiths and similar revolvers such as the Colt MkIII and MkV, the Ruger DAs and the Dan Wessons. These revolvers are similar in the principle used to turn the cylinder and it is specifically the subject of cylinder index timing that I wish to address.

I've felt for some time that this is an area that needs attention: many of these revolvers that I've repaired have had problems that stem directly from repair or custom work.

To understand this area of cylinder index timing, we will begin with a limited description of the function of the hand, cylinder stop and cylinder.

As you begin your cocking stroke, either DA or SA, the cylinder stop is disengaged from the cylinder. As the cylinder stop clears the cylinder, the hand engages the ratchet and begins to turn the cylinder. Approximately halfway through the cocking stroke, the cylinder stop is released and rides against the outside perimeter of the cylinder.

As the cocking advances, the hand continues to turn the cylinder with the cylinder stop riding against it. Just prior to full cock (SA) or hammer release (DA) the hand rounds the corner of the ratchet pad and slides along the right side (as viewed from the shooter's position). If the revolver is functioning properly, the cylinder stop's locking into the cylinder should be simultaneous with the hand rounding the corner of the ratchet pad.

At this time the chamber will be properly aligned with the bore (assuming that all is well with the various factors that control cylinder alignment).

Now, the hand, when it rounds the corner of the ratchet pad, is sliding between the pad and the frame. It is critical that the distance between the pad and the

frame matches almost exactly the width of the hand. I say "almost" because the tolerance would actually be $+.0000$ — $.0004$ ". In other words, the hand should be absolutely no wider and a maximum of $.0004$ " smaller than the distance between the pad and frame.

Timing Check

How is this important to the average revolver owner? If the hand is too narrow it is possible for the cylinder to fail to lock before the hammer falls and the cartridge fires. If the cylinder is not locked

First, and very importantly, some revolvers of every make come from the factory with slow timing.

(by the cylinder stop) it is not in perfect alignment. Misalignment translates into: shaving of bullets, reduction of accuracy and in extreme cases, misfires due to off-center firing pin strikes.

You can check your own revolver by this simple test:

First, be sure that the gun is unloaded.

Next, lay the revolver in your left hand with the barrel pointing left and the cylinder cupped in your fingers.

Now, slowly draw the hammer back with your right thumb while keeping tension (or drag) on the cylinder with your left fingers. Put enough drag on the cylinder that you're sure the hand is pushing the cylinder instead of the cylinder spinning ahead by itself.

If all is well, then you should notice an audible click and visually observe the cylinder stop jump into the notch in the cylinder just before the hammer cocks.

If the hammer cocks before the cylinder stop locks the cylinder, then the hand is too narrow and the index timing is slow.

How does this relate to repair and custom work? Often times I see revolvers that have action jobs that are smooth and light but out of time (slow cylinder index timing). On disassembly and inspection all too often the cause of slow timing is readily apparent: the sides of the hand

have been polished!

As I brought to your attention a few paragraphs ago, width of the hand is extremely critical, therefore any polishing can result in slow index timing.

At this point, I'd better clarify a few important facts to consider before becoming angry with your gunsmith. First, and very importantly, some revolvers of every make come from the factory with slow timing. Not terribly slow but an identifiable amount.

Second, slow index timing can be a product of use, especially if the use borders on abuse, as in forcing the action when the cylinder is jammed.

Third, if your extractor is loose when seated against the cylinder (if it can be rotated slightly) the index timing may appear to be slow, when actually, if cartridges were in place the extractor would be held in the correct position and the timing may be proper.

Do not test this with live cartridges! Check with empty, deprimed cases or have your gunsmith tighten the extractor.

I recommend that you check your revolvers before having action work done just as a safeguard against misunderstanding between you and your gunsmith. There are plenty of top notch gunsmiths around so finding one shouldn't be too difficult. Any smith worth his salt should be quite willing to go over the gun with

you before beginning repair.

Some of you may have noticed that as you cycle the

action of your revolver, the cylinder spins ahead and locks long before the hammer is released. This raises the question of how relevant is this issue of slow index timing.

Consider this: how often have you had the action of your revolver become difficult to operate after you've fired a number of rounds? If you shoot an average amount then you've probably experienced this.

Often what has happened is that powder residue has collected under the extractor, which causes the cylinder to bind (fail to revolve easily).

Another possibility is that a primer backed out with sufficient force to drag along the breech face also causing the cylinder to bind. There are other causes of cylinder binding but the important thing is that the cylinder does bind and when bound it cannot spin ahead but only moves as far as the hand pushes it.

Cylinder index timing becomes an issue because if the hand doesn't push the cylinder far enough it won't be locked in and lined up when the cartridge is fired.

As to the correction of the problem, it is best that you refer this to a qualified gunsmith because the repair of this problem goes into an area of close tolerance fitting.



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There are two kinds of grips in this world: Roy Fishpaw grips and all the rest. Roy is a custom grip maker and he is superbly talented. His grips are astonishingly beautiful and at the same time remarkably functional, a classic blend of practical craftsmanship coupled with artistic expression that results in a truly special set of grips. People just call them Fishpaw grips, and that says it all.

Fishpaw grips are built one at a time, by hand, in Roy's woodworking shop. There are no industrial sanders, no assembly lines, no computer-driven cutters. There is but a set of hands that are blessed with a special talent; there is but a heart that is dedicated to lovingly producing quality. He is the sort of man that is sadly becoming a vanishing breed in the industrialized America of today—the skilled artisan.

Roy is a veteran of the US Coast Guard where he served for 22 years before retiring to pursue his passionate hobby of fine stockmaking. He worked for 10 years at building both rifle stocks and handgun grips before he decided to concentrate solely on the work he loves best, handgun grips. "I would rather be known as a custom grip maker," says the Virginian craftsman in his melodic southern drawl, "I much prefer working on handguns."

True Custom

This courteous and friendly southern gentleman personifies the values and traditions of what has come to be a dying heritage that we quaintly call "Old World Craftsmanship." Roy still works with his hands, alone in his quiet shop with the musty scent of linseed oil and fresh wood shavings. Like the village artisans of a bygone era in Europe where we derive our Old World cultural heritage, Roy Fishpaw is a dedicated craftsman who has developed and nurtured his talent for woodworking over a lifetime of apprenticeship to his trade.

"I feel the word 'custom' is a very much abused word. Most things we see from day to day are called custom this and custom that and really they're not custom at all," explains the gentleman who cares so passionately about quality for the sake of quality, "I feel the word custom should be just that, 'Made To Order' and not off-the-shelf."

All of Roy's grips are handfit to individual guns. One size most certainly does not fit all. "There are variations in frame size, which are just part of the manufacturing tolerances, and there is simply no way you can get a proper wood-to-metal fit without handfitting a grip to an individual gun," Roy told me matter of factly.

Roy requires that a customer send his gun for the grips to be fitted. If you wish to order a set of Fishpaw grips, you place your order with Roy and he marks your name on a calendar. When it's your turn, Roy drops you a note to send your gun via UPS and he then keeps it for about a month. It comes back to you now with a very special touch—a set of truly custom grips.

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Roy Fishpaw builds each pair of his magnificent custom grips one at a time, by hand. He requires that you send your gun for the grips to be individually fitted to your gun.



The Incredible Custom Grips of **ROY FISHPAW**

*Here's a true master craftsman, a custom grip maker
who still handfits revolver grips one at a time.*

*By Cameron Hopkins
Photos by Roger Andrews*





Roy uses a number of exotic materials for his custom grips. You can see the finished look of polished Dall sheep horn (above) while the raw horn is shown for comparison (right).

plus a few other unique styles, like the gorgeous hammer-shroud of sumptuous French walnut on the pictured Chiefs Special. "Whatever the customer wants is what I try to build. I don't know how to say this without it sounding bad, but I don't have a style that I can call my own," Roy said, "There are so many good grip designs that there isn't a need for anything new. Basically what I try and do is build what the customer wants— within reason!"

Exotic Materials

Roy works with exhibition-grade hardwoods renowned for their beauty. Walnut is king of the woods for guns and Roy keeps an inventory of exquisite samples of English, Claro and American walnuts with striking grain patterns of deep color and swirling figure. Other types of walnut such as Bastogne, Circassian and French are also available.

One distinguishing characteristic of Fishpaw grips is the use of exotic hardwoods. Roy has a particular fondness for Snake-wood, an extremely rare hardwood that grows sparsely in the remote areas of South America. The second rarest wood in the world, Snakewood is also known as "leopard wood" and "speckled wood" for its distinctive grain pattern. Unlike common woods which are sold by the linear foot, Snakewood is so rare that it is sold by weight!

Roy also employs some exotic materials for grips that are as beautiful as they are unique. Through a game biologist friend in



Alaska, Roy has obtained Dall sheep horns from natural winter kills that he uses to make some of the most distinctive grips in the world. The color of the horn varies, Roy says, from an attractive shade of red to dark brown depending on what part of the horn is used. "The top part where the rams butt heads is sorta pink in color," Roy laughs, "But it really makes a nice grip for a sheep hunter or the guy who's looking for something a little different."

Traditional non-wood materials like stag horn and ivory are Fishpaw specialties. His ivory is aged for one year so that it can completely dry out before Roy is ready to handfit the precious white material to a gun. To paraphrase a well-known winemaker, Roy Fishpaw fits no ivory before its time. (All of Roy's ivory is legally imported from Africa in strict adherence with CITES regulations.)

Why A Custom Grip?

Handgun grips are much more than handles— a good grip can make a gun shoot better and a bad grip can turn a tack-driver



A classic material for grips that is still popular is stag horn (above) that Roy fit to this custom S&W Model 63.

"It can take from six to 14 hours, depending on the grip, to complete a set and this does not mean starting at 8 and finishing at 5 and calling that nine hours," says the good natured grip maker, "My prices for grips in wood run from \$90 to \$200 per set, depending on what is wanted. Prices for ivory are individually quoted."

Roy can build grips of the various popular styles such as Jordan, finger-groove, Roper, wrap-around and thumb-rest

into a flinch-o-matic.

A properly contoured grip that fits *your* hand is largely what this business of ergonomics—human engineering—is all about. It's what makes a sixgun "feel" or "balance" in your hand comfortably.

A good grip improves your shooting because of enhanced ergonomic factors. A well-fitting grip allows you to reach the trigger properly, helps you to control the recoil easily by actually reducing felt recoil, makes it easier to exert a steady and uniform grip pressure—in other words, shoot better.

Conversely, an ill-fitting grip accentuates felt recoil and turns an otherwise easy-shootin' revolver into a painful palm-pounding instrument of torture. A classic example of this phenomenon can be found in the Charter Arms .44 Special Bulldog, which really does bite with the atrocious factory grips. Slap on a pair of Pachmayrs or install a custom grip, and the Bulldog becomes a tame pooch.

An improper grip can also reduce a handgun's accuracy by refusing to give you, the shooter, the control you need over the vital fundamentals of handgun marksmanship. As everyone knows, one of the most basic tenets of marksmanship is trigger control. Well, you can't "control" what you can't reach! A cumbersome grip makes it awkward to comfortably place the pad of your trigger finger gently on the trigger to subtly manipulate that all-important arc of steel (plastic, if it's a Glock).

Another fundamental of handgun marksmanship that suffers with a poor stock-job is your ability to maintain a consistent grip. Shift your grip around on the gun, or vary the pressure of



your grip, and watch your groups open up. In contrast, a good grip actually facilitates a consistent and regular grip.

When you get into the area of "point shooting" or "instinct shooting," the difference between a good grip that makes the gun an extension of your arm and a hunk-o-pine that makes the gun dangle from your hand like a catcher's mitt, well, the difference there is so great that the comparison is absurd. You can pretty well scratch any chance of hitting if the grip doesn't fit you.

I hope these points about the advantages of properly fitting grips are boring. I hope I've belabored the obvious. If not, then you really must feel the difference yourself between a good set of Pachmayr's on a heavy-kicking magnum and one with the factory grips.

Perhaps you've hefted one of the N-frame Smiths with a set of Guy Hogue's remarkable *Monogrips* and then tried an N-frame with those factory-installed bulbous blocks of Goncalo Alves that must have been designed for an orangutan. The big S&W N-frame has a well-deserved reputation of having the



This exquisite set of French walnut Fishpaw grips on a Chief's Special are specially contoured to shroud the hammer. The finger groove "combat style" grips are handmade by Roy Fishpaw from select Exhibition Grade wood.



Roy stores his select-grade ivory for one year to allow the material time to cure. This ivory has been fitted to a Freedom Arms single-action. At left is an attractive piece of Snakewood, an extremely rare wood that Roy favors.

world's worst factory grips that *might* fit Hulk Hogan if he's been taking his steroids.

If you've tried factory grips and then tried some of the after-market grips like the excellent ones from Pachmayr, Hogue, Herrett,

Continued on page 102

NEW BAN ON .38 SUPER, 9MM IS A SENSELESS WAY TO STIFLE SHOOTERS

Recently I read a newspaper article about some major league baseball players who were in trouble for using oversize gloves. A few years ago the controversy was about using too much pine tar on bat handles.

Meanwhile auto racers complain about restrictions on engine size and turbo boost, pro golfers and skiers use ever more exotic materials in their golf clubs and skis, and football players bulk up their muscles with steroids. In every sport, it seems, there are those who push the rules to the absolute limit, then start whining to have the rules changed so they can push some more.

IPSC, it seems, is no different. It's been suggested lately that the IPSC power factor (bullet weight times velocity divided by 1,000), currently set at 175, should be reduced to 170.

The reason? Because shooters have been loading their .38 Supers to make major with light bullets at high pressures and velocities. And, we're told, such loads are dangerous and cause excessive gun wear.

Now this makes a lot of sense. If these loads truly are dangerous and can be proved to be dangerous, then apply IPSC rule 7.27, which has been in place for years: "Ammunition which, in the opinion of the Match Director or the Range Officer, is considered unsafe must be withdrawn from the match upon request."

If the problem is gun wear, that's no reason to change the power factor. Shooters who absolutely have to have every possible advantage should be prepared to pay the price. And, at any rate, for reasons which I will explain later, I don't believe a change in the factor would have any effect on this problem.

But it seems to be human nature to blame rules, or equipment, for problems which are caused by other factors. It's the easy way out.

Super Scapegoat

Now we're seeing the .38 Super cartridge and the IPSC rules getting blamed for problems caused by those few people who insist on having every possible competitive edge plus a bit more.

Recently I read in an article on loading the .38 Super that was so ominous and foreboding it made the process look like trying to build a space shuttle out of old beer cans, full of profound dangers and

difficulties and serious moral issues.

There are so many misconceptions about this cartridge that it's become almost hopeless to discuss it, but let's give it a try.

The first thing to understand is that there is nothing new about loading the Super to major levels. I suspect loads factoring over a 175 power factor (p.f.) were in use 60 years ago. Robert Chatfield-Taylor (a well known hunter, shooter, and gunwriter in the '50s and '60s, best remembered now for the .416 Taylor wildcat which he made by necking down the .458 Win. cartridge) in a 1972 article mentioned his load for the Super—a 125 gr. Speer over an unspecified charge of Unique for a velocity of 1,439 fps and a 180 p.f.

He also mentioned that he had seen heavy .38 Super loads being used by sev-

With the help of John Adams, then executive director of the Southwest Pistol League, he handloaded the 125 gr. Speer bullet to 1,600 fps. (p.f. 200!!).

Yes folks—believe it or not—Jeff Cooper, Mr. .45 ACP himself, was shooting .38 Super major loads back when Rob Leatham was 12 years old and IPSC wasn't yet in existence. This, mind you, with standard brass, a non-supported chamber, in an aluminum-framed Colt.

Cooper didn't stop there. When cases started to blow he went to cut-down .223 rifle brass (similar in exterior dimensions to the Super, but with more strength in the case head area) and got the 125's up to 1,750 fps which works out to a power factor of almost 220.

Super Pressure

Another misconception is that any .38 Super major load is right at the edge of maximum pressure, somehow more dangerous than maximum loads in any other cartridge. The SAAMI maximum working pressure for the Super is 35,700 copper units of pressure (CUP).

The limiting factor is the strength of the case; standard barrels are cut away at the bottom of the chamber to enhance feeding and leave a section of the case unsupported.

(The pre-'64 Winchester M-70 and

Yes folks—believe it or not—Jeff Cooper, Mr. .45 ACP himself, was shooting .38 Super major loads back when Rob Leatham was 12 years old.

eral Arizona ranchers in the early '30s, prior to the appearance of the .357 Magnum. (*Guns and Ammo*, May, 1972).

Early Super Loads

I found several other references to heavy .38 Super loads that do not include the power charge, but since *American Handgunner* doesn't show load data unless it has been checked and found within specifications by a reputable lab, I won't show them here.

An August, 1973 article in *Guns & Ammo* by Rick Miller lists a 160 gr. lead bullet at 1,100 fps (p.f. 176).

A *Shooting Times* staff report (June, 1974) shows .38 Super load data for a 137 gr. bullet at 1,340 fps, for a 184 p.f.

A letter to the editor in the June, 1976, *Shooting Times* issue gives load data for a 140 gr. cast lead bullet at 1,310 fps in a 5" Colt .38 Super (p.f. 183).

And in a story in the December, 1973, *Guns & Ammo*, Jeff Cooper wrote of his experiments with the .38 Super. He fitted one of Irv Stone's superb Bar-Sto barrels, 6 1/2" long, to a Colt Commander and got 1,350 fps from factory 130's (p.f. 175.5).

Springfield 1903 rifles with their coned breeches do the same thing.)

It's important to note that the use of standard, non-plus P brass and unsupported chambers was taken into account by SAAMI in arriving at the figure of 35,700 cup.

What sort of pressures do major loads develop? In an article for the Nov./Dec. 1986 *Handgunner*, Charles Petty had Winchester pressure test some Super loads using 160 gr. lead bullets and WW 540 powder.

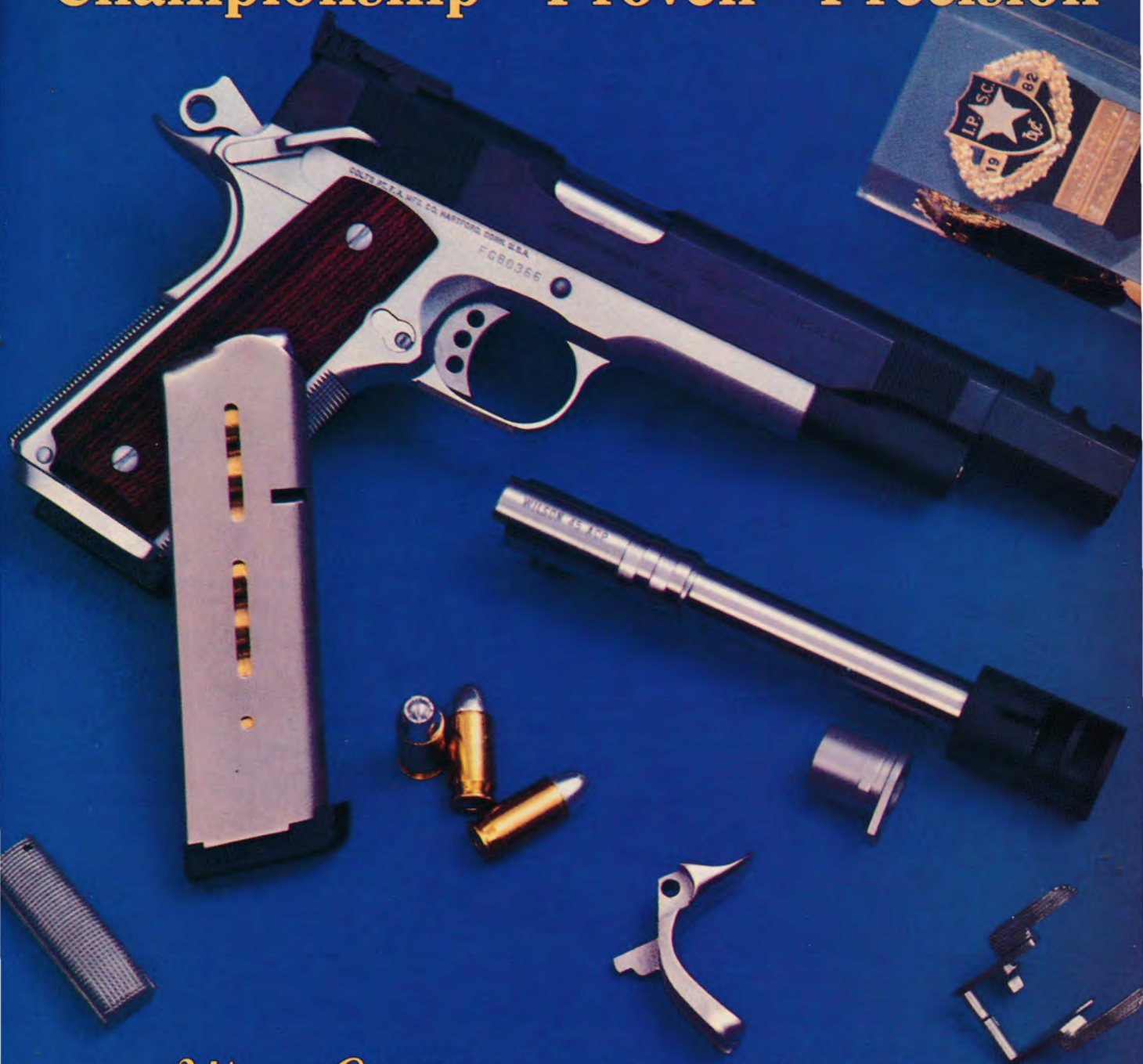
He wrote, "Winchester testing determined that a safe major load for .38 Super with 160 grain bullets and WW 540 is 7.0 grains. In the 5" pressure barrel this load developed 32,000 CUP."

Petty further reported that in his gun, using the 160 gr. bullets, he reached 1,123 fps (p.f. 180) with 6.5 gr. of WW 540. It seems likely that with his smaller powder charge pressures were lower as well, possibly around 30,000 CUP, or less than 85% of SAAMI maximum.

The *Accurate Arms Co. Loading Booklet* (4th. Edition) shows six load combinations with three different pow-

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ders that make major in .38 Super, and I'm absolutely certain they would not publish such data unless it had been pressure tested and found to be well below SAAMI maximum.

Now it hardly seems fair to single out the Super as being somehow exceptionally dangerous when loaded to 85% of maximum. Magazines and loading manuals publish data for other handgun and rifle cartridges at this level all the time. Maximum loads in the Super require the same care and diligence in loading as any other round, no more and no less.

Technical Strides

A couple of technical innovations provided an extra margin of insurance. The first was the fully supported chamber with integral feedramp. Pistolsmith Jim Clark began using integral ramps in 1959, not so much to increase strength but to enhance feeding on his famous .38 Special target conversions.

In 1981 Charlie Kelsey of Devel was building the "Gammon II," a gun that was years ahead of its time. Wanting to use the .38 Super, he had Irv Stone make a barrel that completely enclosed the case right up to the extraction groove, with barrel and feedramp machined in one piece.

Chip McCormick used this gun for some time, making him probably the first Big Name shooter to use the Super in competition. Rob Leatham started his incredible series of wins with a .45 ACP in 1983, but by 1984 was using a Super and his achievements with it certainly helped make the cartridge's reputation.

The second innovation was the use of +P brass with extra-heavy case walls in the area just ahead of the extraction groove. The use of this +P brass and fully supported chambers provides a greater margin of security.

A comparable situation is that of the .45 Colt cartridge, for which industry maximum working pressure is 15,900 CUP in deference to the many old revolvers still around. For use in the very strong Ruger Blackhawk revolver, or the even stronger Thompson/Center Contender, it's common to see magazines and manuals publish load data that far exceeds industry maximum pressures, with the warning of course that such loads are to be used in these strong guns only.

(I can't help noting that the same writer who expresses such distaste for .38 Super major loads—generating 85% of SAAMI maximum—has no qualms about publishing load data for the .45 Colt that run around 25,000 CUP, or near-

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WHAT PROS REALLY CARRY ON THE STREET (PSST, SOME GO UNARMED)

When I had the privilege last summer of again coordinating the firearms track of the American Society of Law Enforcement Trainers international seminar, this time in San Diego, I conducted an informal survey of the guns the staff instructors were carrying there versus what they carried at home. The results were interesting to say the least.



Model 60 Chief's Special has always been a good hideout gun.

Devel custom Smith & Wesson Model 59 converted to an ultra-compact 14-shot 9mm, similar in size and conception to the current Model 6906.

For the trip to San Diego, however, he brought a small, light, inexpensive Grendel .380 auto. He states he has had good luck with his Grendel using Silvertip, and he felt it was adequate for domicile defense in close quarters since he would not be carrying. Knowing several people who'd had their guns stolen in the course of air travel and long trips, he felt it was a gun he could afford to lose.

Instructor B has nearly 20 years with a Federal law enforcement agency. At work, he generally carries his issue Smith & Wesson 6906 compact, loaded with "9BP" Federal 9mm hollowpoint. His authorized, privately owned optional gun

es weapons and tactical training for a large metropolitan police department. His daily carry gun on and off duty (he wears a suit to work) is a Colt .38 Detective Special. Outside his jurisdiction, he chose not to carry a gun in California.

Instructor D is a sergeant and survival trainer with a large Western city's police department. On duty and off, he wears his issue Ruger P-85 9mm with department standard Winchester 147 grain subsonic



Now discontinued, the Detective Special is a six-shot .38 Special that cops like.

hollowpoints. I noticed that this was the gun he wore to the ASLET seminar.

Instructor E is a civilian who works full-time training police, civilians, and



As street-wise cops are the first to tell you, the Glock 17 is a fine friend to have behind your hip when the feces hits the oscillator. This 9mm is rugged, reliable.

is a Star PD loaded with issue Remington 185 grain standard velocity .45 hollowpoints. He wears it, he says, for "raids, parties, and barbecues."

A third favorite is a LaFrance Custom Nova 9mm, an \$800 Star BKM cut down to the size of a Walther PPK/s .380 but loaded with full-power Federal 9BP. This was his choice for the warm San Diego weather, carried half the time in a pocket, the other half in an ankle rig.

Instructor C is a captain who supervises

military in combat small arms use. His normal carry gun is a lightweight Colt Commander loaded with .45 hardball. Recognizing California's stringent enforcement of gun laws *vis a vis* his civilian status, he chose not to bring a gun to the seminar.

Instructor F, a captain with a municipal police department back East, normally carries his department issue S & W 4506 and CCI Lawman ammo both on and off-duty. However, he was planning a

Of the seven primary instructors, only four walked armed in San Diego. The law prohibits civilians, even if they work full-time as police trainers, from carrying concealed handguns in California unless they are residents of the state with hard-to-get concealed carry permits.

Out of state peace officers *are* allowed to carry, *if* they are documentably on police business such as law enforcement training and in possession of their ID. One not fitting the latter description is, however, allowed to keep a loaded handgun with him in the hotel room that is his temporary domicile.

The instructors ranged in age from slightly under 40 to 59. All were male. All had over 10 years experience and some, over 20. All had experienced armed encounters. Some had to kill their opponents. One had been shot seven times himself.

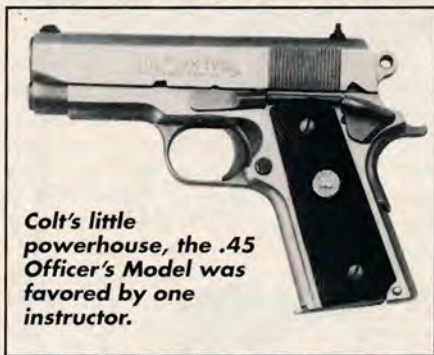
In addition to the seven designated instructors, this survey includes four more who graciously consented to serve on the popular Panel of Police Firearms Experts which traditionally concludes the four-day, intensive training course.

Guns Of The Experts

Instructor A was a retired cop now serving a major police academy as a senior combat weapons instructor, and technically a civilian. Licensed to carry in his home state, he generally wears a

trip to Mexico after the seminar, a country where bringing a gun in at all is difficult to negotiate, and one of military caliber like 9mm or .45 is impossible.

Accordingly, he carried a Ruger Service



Colt's little powerhouse, the .45 Officer's Model was favored by one instructor.

Six 4" .357 Magnum with Federal 125 grain hollowpoints, and a Smith Model 38 Airweight Bodyguard with FBI loads for backup, during the week of the seminar.

Instructor G is a 23-year sergeant with a large sheriff's office in the Midwest. On duty at the range, he carries either the S&W 6906 issued to detectives by his department, or his preference, the Glock used by special investigators. A Glock 19 was his carrying iron (carrying polymer?) during the seminar, and ammo was issue Federal 147 grain HydraShok.

Instructor H is a lieutenant with a very large metro agency in the West. On-duty he wears a Beretta 92F; off-duty, a Smith

669 Compact, both with issue 9mm Remington hollowpoints. The latter was his carry at the seminar.

Instructor I is an ex-cop now working for a noted commercial training academy closed to civilians. He accordingly did not carry in San Diego. At home, he is licensed to wear a S&W Model 3914 slimline 9mm compact, and his home defense pistol is the same maker's Model 645 converted to single-action first shot mode and chambered for .45 ACP.

Instructor J heads training for a specialized unit in the South. He carries a cocked and locked Colt .45 auto on-duty and off, and did so at ASLET.

Instructor K is a small-town police chief with a large training background and a spokesman for LEPSA, Law Enforcement for Preservation of the Second Amendment. On-duty he wears as issue Ruger GP-100 .357 revolver and a 2" Model 60 S&W .38 for backup, and off-duty carries a Colt Government or Officers .45 and the same Model 60. The Officers and the snub .38 were on him at ASLET.

Of the 11, we note that four of the survival instructors were not carrying guns, in three cases because it was illegal. Following the law is something we cannot find fault with. After all, following the law was the *raison d'être* for the audience of 368 instructors and the tens of thousands of lawmen they're responsible for training.

Two carry backup guns nearly all the time and did so, legally, in San Diego. Their feeling is that off-duty with no backup or communications, the life saving features of the second weapon might be more needed than ever. Most of the 11 to my knowledge carry backup on the job, and most of them strongly advocate the practice.

Only three of those who did carry wore something other than their standard plainclothes weapon from the home front. One did so for reasons of concealment in hot weather, one for legal and situational reasons, and one because he feared theft of his luggage. Note that only one of the instructors relied on anything lighter than a .38 Special.

Only one carried a revolver as primary weapon during ASLET, though two did so for backup. Only two carried a revolver as a duty weapon at home.

The above information is perhaps a thousandth of what this writer learned at ASLET, whose annual seminar is probably the finest in the world. Police officers interested in joining the American Society of Law Enforcement Trainers, which will have an extensive advanced live-fire combat weapons track in January, 1991 in Palm Beach, Fla., can write on letterhead, or enclosing a photocopy ID, to Massad Ayoob, LFI, P.O. Box 122, Concord, NH 03301. An application form will be sent by return mail.



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A LOOK AT THE UNIQUE BREED OF REVOLVER WE CALL THE "PPC GUN"

A revolver modified for use in Practical Police Competition is always an eye-opener for a shooter who has agonized through an out-of-the-box double-action pull. Fast, stable and accurate, these highly modified revolvers will punch tight groups without causing shooter distress, and their availability often changes confirmed single-action-only shooters into enthusiastic double-action fans.

The most popular candidates for conversion to PPC guns are the Smith & Wesson K-frame Model 10 and the Ruger Six series. These are closely followed by S&W L-frames and Ruger GP-100's. An occasional S&W N-frame or a Dan Wesson may also be modified, but these latter two cost considerably more because no aftermarket components are available and everything must be scratch-built.

PPC Modifications

These modifications break down into barrel, action, sight, finish and accessory work. Since the finished revolver can't be any more accurate than its barrel, this component must be chosen and modified with great care.

You might begin with a high quality

barrel blank or choose a pre-threaded and milled barrel to suit your purposes. A set of frame and barrel, tap and die for the specific basic revolver being modified are necessary to insure interference-free fitting.

Since the weapon will be finished with a particular type of bluing or will be plated, all lubricant must be removed from

Since the finished revolver can't be any more accurate than its barrel, this component must be chosen and modified with great care.

the frame and barrel threads before final assembly. It will be necessary to chuck the barrel in the lathe to turn small amounts from the mating face until the barrel seats in the proper position for effortless extraction rod function.

After seating, the barrel face must be cut back to proper barrel/cylinder face clearance. The gap must be square and fall within the desired tolerance range of .004" to .006" when all of the cylinder endshake is accounted for or removed.

The optimum forcing cone angle can

next be cut. The angle varies for different stock revolvers, but in this instance, you might elect to cut an optimum 11° angle.

The accepted method of cutting this angle is with a reamer supplied in Brownell's Revolver Chamfering Tool Kit. The kit contains a barrel facing cutter that can be used to carefully cut the barrel face back to proper cylinder gap. All of these tools must be guided with a bushing in the bore close up to the cutter and cutting must proceed slowly and steadily to prevent cutter or reamer chatter. Use a proper lubricant and clear the cutting teeth often.

Some revolvers have a double taper cut in the forcing cone, with an 18° cut at the mouth for easy entry of full wadcutter projectiles. You should carefully check the cut with the proper barrel chamfering plug gauge.

It is necessary to dismount the cutter,

clean the cut of all chips and then gauge progress. While this procedure is slow, it avoids overcutting and a ruined barrel.

A Crowning Achievement

Then you are ready to crown the muzzle and once again Brownell comes to the rescue with muzzle and cylinder facing and chamfering tools. These piloted cutters make short work of what used to be a slow and painstaking lathe operation.

The cylinder chamfer is cut after removal of the extractor star, which is never chamfered. You have to be careful in chamfering the cylinder chambers. Allow plenty of support for the case rim. Better a too small chamfer than a too deep one.

And, never chamfer a cylinder that will be used with .357 level loads, for obvious reasons.

Crane Lock Ball

Doing away with the extractor rod's front detent plunger makes installation of a crane-lock ball and spring mandatory. The easiest way to locate the hole in the crane is with a crane lock jig made by Maryland Gun Works and supplied by Brownell's.

After you drill the hole, the stainless steel ball and spring are seated permanently with a special swage that closes up the mouth of the hole and retains the ball. Next, the spot in the frame where the ball comes to rest when the cylinder is closed is located and dwell-drilled so that the ball snaps into position and holds the crane in locked position.

Action Tuning

Action work consists of smoothing up the double action trigger pull and replacing
Continued on page 104

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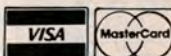
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BY JOHN TAFFIN

TAFFIN TESTS

The Eighties were certainly interesting for the big bore sixgunner, to say the least. We enjoyed a tremendous time of development. The .454 Casull became a reality and in the process became the undisputed

first practical .50 caliber revolver, the .500 Linebaugh, which quickly became the new King of the Sandpile claiming "the most powerful" crown.

The .500 offered kinetic energy power not with Magnum velocities but

.500's reloaded 440 grain bullets at 1,250 fps.) We could argue from now to eternity about which is *really* the most powerful.

Linebaugh did not sit back on his laurels, but instead decided to combine

the .475 Linebaugh

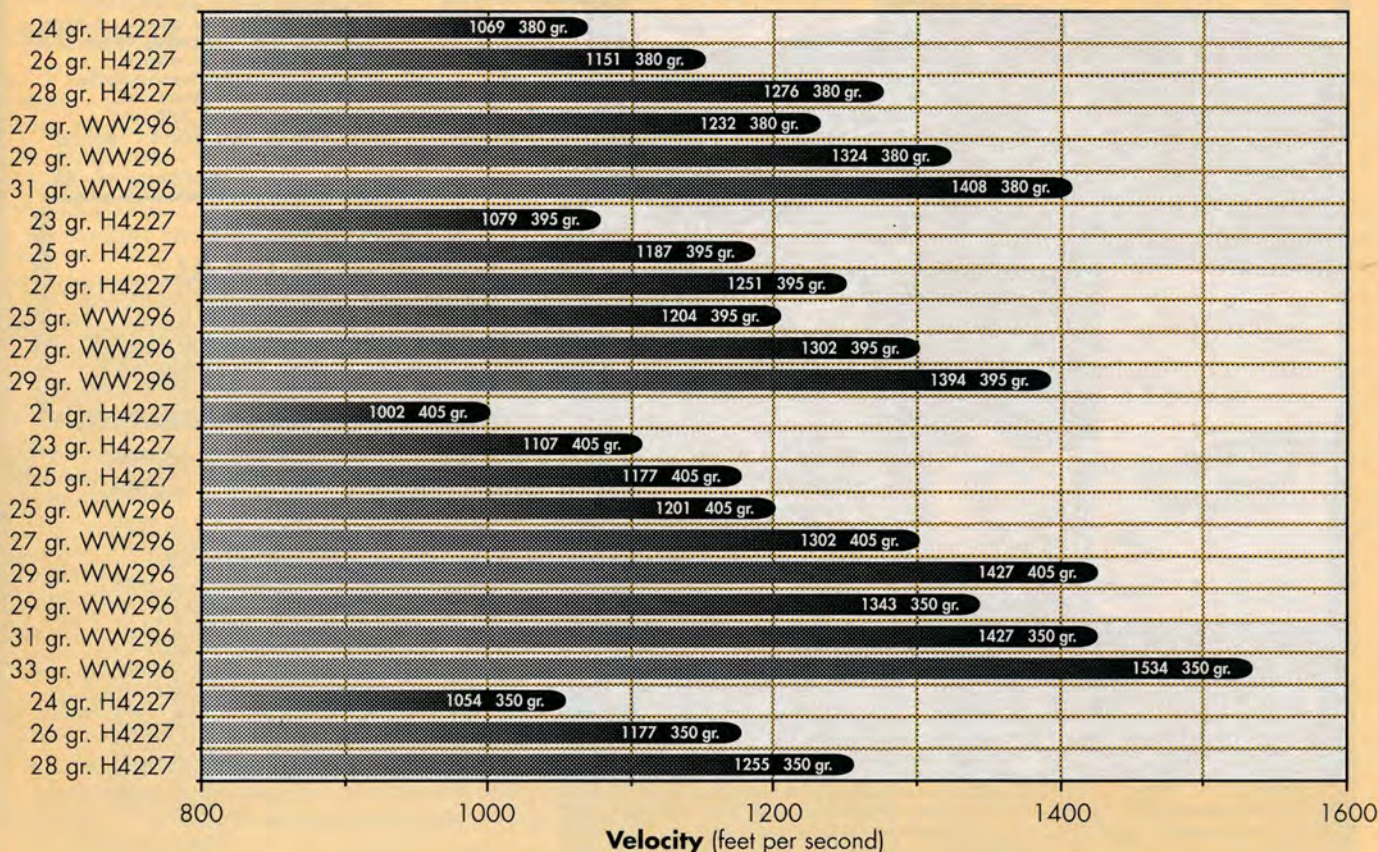
"world's most powerful" in the process.

A young gunsmith, one John Linebaugh of Cody, Wyoming, went the .454 Casull one better and offered the

by utilizing super-heavy 440 grain bullets at moderate velocities. (The .454 Casull's factory loadings of 300 grain bullets at 1,700 fps compare to the

the bullet weight of the .500 with the penetration of the .454 Casull. To John Linebaugh's mind, what was needed was something somewhere in between

HIGH PERFORMANCE FAVORITE LOADS FOR THE .475 LINEBAUGH



WARNING: Approach all handloading carefully by reducing charges listed by at 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 big .45's and the bigger .500. He split the difference and the result was the .475 Linebaugh.

Some wildcats are easy to make, some very difficult. The .475 has to be one of the easiest wildcat revolver cartridges to make. The starting brass is the standard .45-70, preferably Winchester brand, which is trimmed to 1.410", and it is ready to load. (If any other brand of .45-70 brass is used, the process becomes more difficult as inside neck reaming is required.)

The RCBS Custom Shop (605 Oro Dam Rd, Dept AH, Oroville, CA 95965) offers case trimming dies and inside neck reamers as well as reloading dies for the wildcat .475 Linebaugh. I made .475 cases the easy way—I dropped them off at my local gunsmith and asked him to trim them in a lathe to a maximum 1.410" with 1.400" being acceptable.

Trimmed brass was de-burred, run through the RCBS full length sizing die and expanding dies in succession and they were ready to load and shoot.

Reloading of the .475 is as simple as any other straight walled revolver cartridge and after my experiences with the .500 Linebaugh, I used nothing but CCI #350 primers for reliable ignition.

The .475 Linebaugh achieves its highest velocities with WW296 or H-110 with John Linebaugh's recommended maximum loads being 33.0 grains with the 350 grain bullet, 31.0 grains with the 385 grain bullet, and 30.0 grains with the 400 grain bullet. With these loadings in a five and one-half inch revolver and in cold weather, I achieved muzzle velocities of 1534 fps and 1408 fps respectively for the first two bullets and the third charged proved to be too heavy for the particular .475 I was using, resulting in hard extraction.

Casting bullets from all of these aluminum bullet moulds is quite easy with bullets dropping from the mould when cooled. Cooling takes a little extra time when 400 to 440 grain bullets are being cast.

For loading the .475 Linebaugh, I use four cast bullets: LBT's #476.350LFN at 350 grains, NEI's #390.477 at 380 grains, LBT's #476.420LFN at 395 grain, and LBT's #476.440LFN at 405 grains.

All bullets are cast from a mixture of three parts lead to four parts type-metal to acquire the respective weights. All bullets are sized to .476" in RCBS's sizing die and lubed with Thompson Bullet Lube.

The .475 Linebaugh is a superbly accurate with most loads tested giving incredible accuracy for such a heavy recoiling revolver. From a purely mathematical standpoint, a full house .475 load in three pound Bisley revolver provides 55 ft./lbs. of recoil; a .44 Magnum in the same weight gun gives

20 ft./lbs.

These figures do not take into account felt recoil which is determined by shape and size of the grip and the shooter's strength and mental attitude.

The most accurate load in the .475 Linebaugh during my shooting sessions has proved to be LBT's 405 grain bullet over 19.0 grains of Blue Dot for 1250+ fps and a 25 yard, five-shot group from a standing rest of three-fourths of an inch!

Of 54 loads tested, forty-four shot at two inches or less at 25 yards, 20 were at one and one-half inches or less, and five were at one inch or less.

Favorite loads for the .475 include the 380 grain NEI SWC over 18.0 grains of Blue Dot for 1171 fps and 31.0 grains of WW296 for a full 1408 fps. Switching to the LBT bullets, I like the 350 grain bullet over 28.0 grain of H4227 for a very practical and accurate 1255 fps; 9.0 grains of WW231 for an equally accurate practice load at 922 fps; and 33.0 grains of WW296 for a full 1534 fps.

Switching to heavier bullets in the LBT lineup, a "moderate" load for the 395 grain bullet is 18.0 grains of Blue Dot for 1190 fps; and full house loads are assembled with 25.5 grains of #2400 (1355 fps) and 29.0 grains of WW296 (1394 fps).

Four hundred grain bullets at 1400 fps give all the recoil anyone could want, believe me!

The same caution applies here as to all Magnum loads assembled with WW296 or H110. These two powders should be used only for heavy loads and could prove dangerous if used for lighter loads. Blue Dot, H4227, and #2400 can also be used for full house or lighter loads and WW231 or HS-6 for lighter, practice type loads.

Often muzzle energies are quoted to compare cartridges. Many shooters subscribe to a different theory for comparison, namely elephant hunter Pondero Taylor's Knock Out Theory. This mathematical figure is arrived at by multiplying Bullet Weight times Caliber times Muzzle Velocity divided by 7000.

Using this formula, a 240 grain .44 Magnum at 1400 fps is rated at 21 TKO while a 395 to 405 grain bullets at 1400 fps in the .475 are rated right at 38 TKO or nearly twice the obviously powerful .44 Magnum.

Like its bigger brother, the .500 Linebaugh, the .475 is not practical as a target gun, silhouette revolver or personal defense gun though I'm sure it would come close to 100% as a one-shot stopper. It is a hunting handgun for the sixgunner who prefers a traditional revolver with iron sights that will deliver the ultimate in penetration and power coupled with portability.

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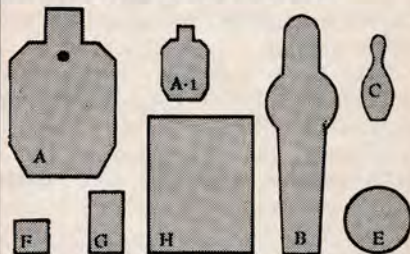
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THAD RYBKA

Custom Leathermaker Extraordinaire

By John Taffin

As a long time leatherworker myself, a student and connoisseur of good holsters for well over thirty years, I have a pretty good idea of what is good leather and what is not.

When I started sixgunnin', the top holtermakers were S.D. Myers, Lawrence, Bohlin, and a couple of upstarts by the name of Bianchi and Hume. A small shop in New York run by Chic Gaylord turned out some excellent field holsters and undercover rigs.

Fast Draw was just coming into prominence and Arvo Ojala was the top name in "quick leather" soon to be joined by Alphonse and Andy Anderson.

Over the ensuing years, some major companies have disappeared and a number of really fine custom shops have come upon the scene. One of these is Thad Rybka Custom Leather Equipment.

Rybka leather is excellent leather to say the least. Thad combines the required three elements of good leather, namely leather quality, craftsmanship, and design. In fact, his designs are unique and coupled with his workmanship really makes his leather special.

Thad is a disciple of Chic Gaylord and Andy Anderson, top names in leather in the 1950's and 1960's where he learned to provide minimum leather with maximum comfort and security. I have an M-81 crossdraw that was custom made for a pet four-inch Ruger three-screw Blackhawk converted to .44 Special that is absolutely perfect in execution. The M-81 rides high and the front half of the trigger guard is covered which helps to hold the Ruger .44 Special in close to the body. A very fast holster.

My second Rybka rig is a *Tomahawk* crossdraw, semi-flap, made for the Ruger

Super Blackhawk 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ " .44 Magnum. This hunting rig carries very high and very comfortable, and is a favorite of such sixgunners as Larry Kelly and Hank Williams Jr. An order is in for a second one for the 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ " .454 Casull with a bead front sight. This is a very hard gun to holster and Rybka will be adding a channel to keep the front sight from digging into the leather.

It is obvious that Rybka leather is handmade, not machine-made—and I mean that as the highest compliment. Every piece of leather that Rybka turns out is hand-cut, hand-sewn, and custom molded to the exact gun it is to carry. Rybka leather is fitted so precisely that it almost seems to "snap shut" on the gun as it is holstered.

Thad is heavy on crossdraws and rough-out leather. He believes that linings are just asking for trouble so he reverses the leather and furnishes most of his holsters with the smooth side in. The rough side out also wears well and is scratch resistant.

For scoped handguns, Rybka offers *The Packmule*. This rig has a full flap to protect the scoped handgun whether it is worn on the belt, pack frame, or saddle. It is also provided with pouches on the front for extra ammo, knife, etc.



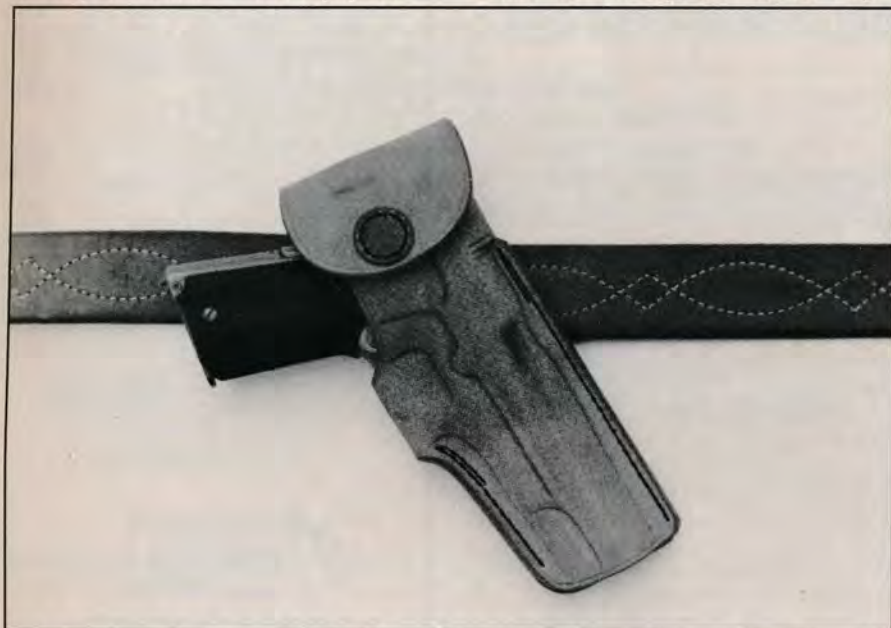
Rybka's M81 was Taffin's pick for his pet three-screw Ruger .44 Special.

One of Rybka's latest designs is the *Ursa*, a quarter-flap, high-riding, crossdraw, rough-out, hand-molded design for revolvers and semi-automatics. For my examination, Rybka sent along *Ursas* to fit the 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ " inch Blackhawk and the Colt Government Model.

Ursa? What kind of name is that for a holster? A call to Rybka brought the answer. Ursa is short for *Ursus Horribilis*, the magnificent Grizzly Bear.

Rybka offers other rigs with such interesting names as *Southern Comfort*, *Bearpaw*, *Range Rider*, *Ghost Who Walks* and *Speed Scabbard*.

Be prepared to wait for Rybka leather, but be assured that the wait will be worth it as the leather will be worthy of your finest handgun. A couple of bucks will get a complete catalog and price list from (Rt. 1, Box 466, Dept. AH, Odenville, AL 35120).



Suitably named the "Ursa," this flap design is made to take the elements and protect the pistol entrusted to it, in this case a Colt .45 auto.

AS WE'LL DEMONSTRATE, THERE ARE TWO RELOADING PRESSES ON THIS PAGE.

You don't need glasses. They're both right in the middle of the page. First, there's the RCBS Rock



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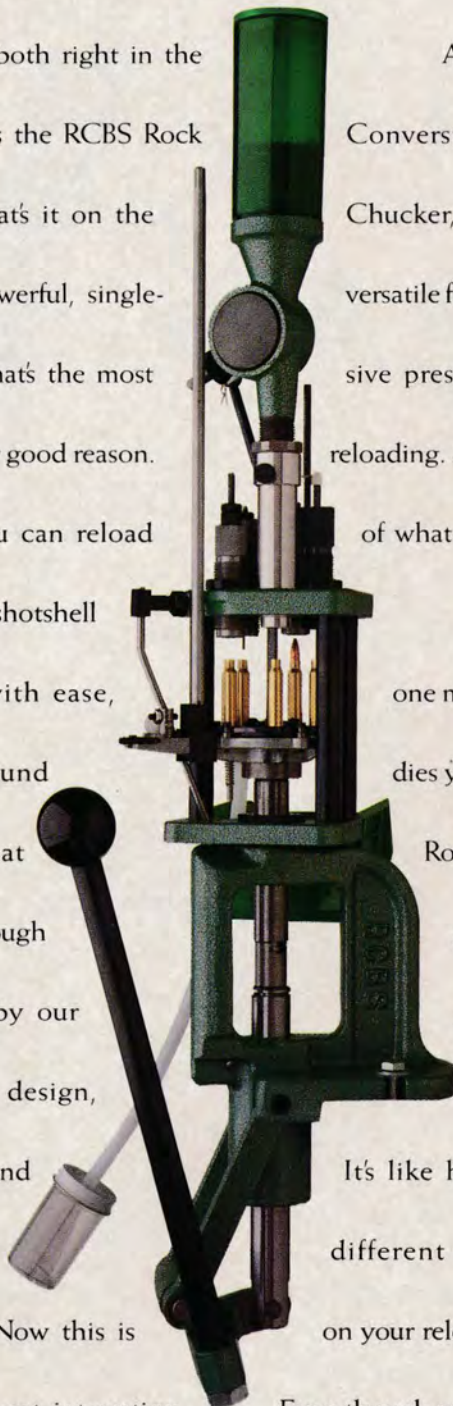
It's versatile. So you can reload anything from pistol to rifle to shotshell rounds. And you can do it with ease, thanks to our rugged Compound Leverage system. Durable? That



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S&W

MINI NINE

By Massad Ayoob

Photos by Ichiro Nagata

The long-awaited S&W Model 3913 is here. Many believe it has been too long in coming. Some felt the original Model 39 of the mid-1950s was too big all along for a nine-shot 9mm Parabellum with single-stack magazine.

When the early '80s saw the introduction of the S&W Mini-Gun, formatted as the Model 469 in blue and the subsequent 669 in stainless (later to become the 6904 and 6906 respectively), some thought that S&W had gone in the wrong direction.

Why try to make a pistol short and light when you were going to make its grips big and fat to house a double-column magazine?

Were not the guns that inspired the Mini-Gun—the ASP and the Devels—single-stack Model 39s or 39-2s cut down to thick Walther PP dimensions?

Some inside the S&W plant were also asking that question, but S&W was preparing for the M-9 pistol evaluations, and a magazine of 13 rounds was considered necessary. The bonus turned out to be that the 469-class weapons were small enough for concealed carry in a holster, but held enough rounds to be suitable as low-profile uniform police duty guns.

The Mini-Gun soon became the fastest-selling auto pistol in the S&W catalog, fat grip profile not withstanding.

As late as 1988, when S&W invited gunwriters to a brainstorming conference that touched on such ques-

tions as which should come first, a compact .45 or a compact Nine, sentiment for the latter was strong.

S&W Academy's spokesmen felt the demand was strongest for the little Parabellum, while a majority of the gunwriters said their feedback indicated a .45 would be better received. The latter point of view won out, with the Model 4516 predating the 3913's introduction by a period of several months.

First Impressions

The slim, flat-back Delrin "handle" of the 3913 feels good. It seems particularly well suited to those with small hands. Not surprisingly, a LadySmith version is also offered. It has different cosmetics from the standard 3913 (aluminum-framed stainless) and 3914 (aluminum-framed carbon steel in blue).

The LadySmith version has a streamlined frame that arcs from the front to the trigger guard in the manner of the Mauser H/Sc pocket pistol. The stainless also sports pale gray Delrin grips to set off the color.

Our sample has the rounded trigger guard *à la* the early Model 39, but with grooves at the front for a finger forward hold, in the manner of the 4516. In fact, the whole pistol looks like a very slightly smaller version of S&W's .45 ACP compact.

While the big Smiths of the Third Generation (four digit model numbers) do not fit holsters for earlier

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Featuring all of the design improvements of the Third Generation autos, the Model 3913 includes an integral barrel bushing to achieve lock-up at the front of the slide (right and top). Also, a full length recoil spring guide rod is used. A nice feature for a concealment pistol like this mini-nine is the bobbed hammer (above). All and all, author Massad Ayoob likes the 8-shot Nine, but he thinks the 3913 would be better off without that pesky pinky pad on the bottom of the magazine (above right) which, he says, adds an unnecessary bulge to the otherwise slim pistol.





generation versions due to their enlarged and squared trigger guards, I found my test 3913 fit perfectly into a Model 469 concealment rig by Ted Blocker.

The light alloy frame makes it ride most comfortably inside the belt or slung from the shoulder. Though the spec sheet has it weighing 26 ounces unloaded—an erroneous carryover from the 6904, perhaps, since that gun *does* go 26 ounces empty—my test pistol tipped the calibrated Pitney-Bowes scale to only 23.0 ounces *sans* magazine.

Fully loaded with eight Winchester 115 grain Silvertips in the magazine and a ninth in the chamber, carry weight of the pistol was 28.5 ounces.

To put this in perspective, I weighed

my wife's .38 Colt Detective Special on the same scale. A post-'72 model with Pachmayr Compacs, the classic "snub-nose .38" weight 25.5 ounces empty. Though cataloged at a nominal 21 ounces, the post-'72 barrel design of the Dick Special added weight, and Pachmayrs always do that, too.

Loaded carry weight with six Federal 158 grain +P lead hollowpoint FBI loads was 29.0 ounces. Thus, the 3913, which was exactly the same overall length as the two-inch Colt at 6¹³/₁₆", weighed half an ounce less when loaded with half again as many cartridges.

A more relevant comparison would be against other stainless S&W autos. It shaped up like this:

	Empty	Fully loaded
S&W 5906	35.0 ozs.	44.0 ozs.
S&W 6904	26.0 ozs.	31.5 ozs.
S&W 4506	37.0 ozs.	45.5 ozs.
S&W 4516	32.0 ozs.	40.0 ozs.
S&W 3913	23.0 ozs.	28.5 ozs.

Clearly the lightest entry in the catalog, the 3913 is also trim and flat. It is to the S&W series what the P-225 is to the SIG-Sauer lineup: a compact version that sacrifices some magazine capacity for minimum bulge under clothing and for a grip-shape much better suited to the small-handed user.

Just what does that ammo sacrifice cost? As with the SIG's, the smallest



Undercover cops in particular will like the diminutive profile of the 3913 while at the same time having the punch of the 9mm Parabellum available in the comfortable S&W design. Using an ambidextrous safety/decocker, the 3913 features the controversial three-dot sighting system of two dots on the rear and one on the front. Some love the dot system and others hate it—rarely is a shooter neutral on this point. These particular dots are on S&W's low profile Novak rear sight.

S&W 9mm actually forces you to carry more weight per available shot in the fully loaded gun.

With a 44 ounce 5906, each of the 15 shots costs you 2.93 ounces of carry weight. The loaded weight of a 6904 is much more efficient, with 2.42 ounces carried for each of the 13 shots at your disposal.

The 3913 assesses 3.16 ounces of loaded gun weight for each of the nine shots it puts at the disposal of your trigger finger.

3913 Vs. 3904

Perhaps the most relevant comparison is that of the full-size Model 3900 to the compact version. Only now, more than 20 years after their landmark adoption of the

Model 39, is the 2,300-member Illinois State Police switching to the higher capacity S&W 9mm, and numerous other departments coast to coast have been perfectly satisfied with the full-size, single-stack Smith Parabellum.

Nine Winchester Silvertips weigh roughly four ounces. Thus, the trio of guns available in the S&W 3900 family stack up as follows:

	Empty	Fully loaded
S&W 3906	30.0 ozs.	34.0 ozs.
S&W 3904	26.0 ozs.	30.0 ozs.
S&W 3913	23.0 ozs.	28.5 ozs.

Now, the 3913's carry weight per available shot ratio of 3.16 ounces per round looks better; with the chunky all-

steel 3906 that ratio is 3.77 ounces, and with the classical aluminum-framed service 3904 it goes 3.33 ounces per shot.

Accuracy is as good as the old 39, 39-2, or 439 ever were, if not better. When the 469 was introduced with the new bushing design that would be carried through into the Third Generation guns, it became the first little gun to outshoot its own big brother gun.

Today's service-size Smith Parabellum will do around 2 or 2½ inches at 25 yards with good ammo, about the same as the larger caliber 4506.

How does the 3913 stack up?

Accuracy Tests

Since this was a street gun, it was tested street style, firing from a barricade

two-handed instead of off a bench or from a Ransom Rest. With me was Vince O'Neill, a nationally known police trainer from the Lawrence, Kansas PD.

Throughout the testing, with almost every type of round used, the 3913 we were using (serial number TEA 9164) would put two bullets close to each other and then print a flyer, with the second round most commonly extending the three-shot group considerably.

Hardball ammo is notoriously inaccurate in 9mm Parabellum. We found that Federal's well-made American Eagle 124 grain FMC would consistently print 4 1/8" to 4 1/4" groups, usually with two of the three bullets within an inch and a half of one another.

The currently popular Winchester 147 gr. JHP subsonic round— sold only to police— is normally very accurate in a service pistol. With our test 3913, we would typically put a pair an inch and a half apart, and a third would go 2 1/2" to 3 1/2" away from the rest of the group.

O'Neill did, however, print one memorable three-shot group that measured 7/8" center to center.

Federal's 9BP 115 grain jacketed hollowpoint has an outstanding reputation for accuracy and for street stopping



power. It would typically put two in an inch with a third extending the group's radius to between 1 1/4 and two inches. The best group was again O'Neill's: two Federal hollowpoints 5/8" apart, with a third stretching the group to 1 1/4 inches.

CorBon ammunition, though marked

"Police Only" is in fact legal for civilians to purchase, sent a factory-loaded 115 grain Sierra hollowpoint screaming out of a compact 9mm at nearly 1300 fps, performance hotter than +P+ level.

S&W pistols handle it fine and at this
Continued on page 87

A Critical Look At HIGH-CAPACITY COMPACT NINES

By Massad Ayoob

Ten years ago, if you wanted a high-capacity compact 9mm Parabellum with staggered magazine, you were talking a custom proposition. Send a Browning Hi-Power or a Smith Model 59 to Charlie Kelsey at Devel, prepare to part with a thousand late 1970s dollars, and the custom gun was yours.

We've come along way, baby. Today there are scads of chunky little twelve-and-up shooters on the market, for the same price (or a few dollars more than) you'd pay for a standard "wondernine."

There were, and are, those who thought "high capacity compact" was an oxymoron. The staggered magazine necessary to accommodate the extra rounds fattens the grip area and compromises one of the most critical concealability factors.

The pistol-packin' public didn't see it that way. When Smith & Wesson introduced their first mini-gun, the Model 469, they abashedly admitted that they'd put in the fat grip to accommodate a 12-shot magazine so the gun would be eligible for the M-9 military pistol tests.

Factory insiders practically hung their

heads when they admitted, yes, if they had it to do over again, they *would* base the gun on the slim-grip, straight line magazine of the 439 and wind up with perhaps a 7- or 8- shot pistol. That is precisely what we have now in the new S&W 3913.

But that was then, and this is now. S&W execs will inform you that the 469/669 quickly became the best-selling gun in their auto pistol lineup, and the

Continued on page 94



Among the more popular hi-capacity compacts are the Glock 19 (left), HK P-7M13 (above) and Springfield Armory P-9 Compact (top).





BIANCHI CUP '90

*The first perfect score in the history of
The Cup is fired not by any of the
returning champions, but by a youngster
who had never won a major match.*

Story and Photos by Nyle Leatham

It is late May. The drenched green hills of central Missouri echo the drill sergeant voices of range officials, single note trumpet blasts of starting horns and the rhythmic drumfire bursts of closely spaced pistol shots.

Doug Koenig from Pipersville, Penn., is making his fourth try to win the Bianchi Cup at the National Rifle Association's 1990 National Action Pistol Championship which many handgun enthusiasts consider the world's premier pistol match.

Cash and merchandise prizes for 1990 totaled some \$175,000.

Koenig is only 21 but he is one of the elite trio along with Ken Tapp and Rob Leatham sponsored by Springfield Armory which company president Tom Reese calls his Gold Team.

In 1987 and again in 1988 Koenig won the top junior award. Last year he was disqualified at Bianchi. His ammunition failed the chronograph test for sufficient velocity to make the required power factor of 125,000 by the formula of feet per second times grains of bullet weight.

This year his loads are fine. He is shooting 140 grain CP cast bullets out of his Frank Glenn custom Smith & Wesson .38 Special. Except for a new Shilen barrel, it is the same gun with which Rob Leatham won the Bianchi in 1985.

Koenig will shoot his way flawlessly through the match to earn the first perfect score of 1920 points in the 12 year history of the Bianchi Cup. All 192 shots, 48 each on the four stages of Practical, Barricades, Plates and Mover, were inside or touching the 8-inch diameter 10-ring.

Rob Leatham placed 10th this year. About his young friend's phenomenal shooting Leatham said with some pride, "I taught Doug a few things— certainly not all I



knew—but he just figured the rest out for himself.”

Koenig said, “I had worked hard and shot well in practice and the match just all came together for me.”

What Is Practical?

After 1984 when the NRA took over, the Cup was renamed the NRA's National Action Pistol Championship. But the match persists in answering to its older alias, the Bianchi Cup, honoring John Bianchi of Bianchi International, the financial catalyst at the start of the match in 1979 and namesake of the coveted top prize still awarded.

There were, of course, other founders. We who love this growing and evolving modern sport in all of its varieties of which the Bianchi Cup is one shining facet owe them much. They were a strong willed set of independent thinkers who shared little beyond a joy in competition that rewarded fast and accurate handgun skill.

Jeff Cooper, unless you have been on Mars, you will know. Revered founder of the International Practical Shooting Confederation, he is an eloquent writer and instructor. On the dust jacket of his new and very readable book, *To Ride, Shoot Straight and Speak the Truth*, he allows

Nyle Leatham's high speed Nikon F-4 captured Doug Koenig in a stop-action sequence showing him blowing down the 10 yard plates in the Falling Plate Event. Whirring of the 7-frames-per-second motor drive also shows the action of Ken Tapp's draw and presentation of his weapon to the barricade. Note the ESPN cameraman in the background on the right of the red-shirted Range Officer.

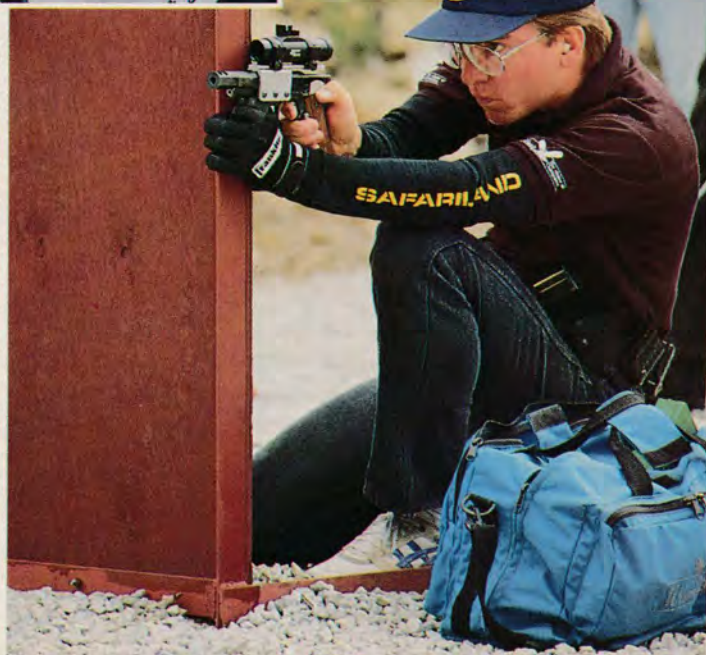


himself to be called “The Pope” because he is “held to be infallible in matters of small arms doctrine and technique.”

Cooper now declares anathema his followers that have espoused the heresies of moderation and gamesmanship, and have redefined the sacred word “practical” to achieve popularity with shooters and sponsors at the cost of disavowing self-defense and the martial arts.

Cooper is probably the only one who could or would say “I invented the sport

Jerry Barnhart of Team Colt shot a Bill Wilson “Super Grade” with a special frame-mounted stabilizer for gripping the barricade. He shot from a kneeling position to minimize the spring effect of the plywood barricade.





The thrill of victory! Doug hoists the Bianchi Cup in celebration as match founder John Bianchi applauds the first shooter to ever fire a perfect 1920.

of competitive practical pistol shooting." But say it he did in print.

And he is probably the only one who would or could say, "Ray Chapman stole the Bianchi Cup match and ran away with it when we weren't looking." But that also he did say, in a taped interview last March.

You must understand that Ray Chapman and Jeff Cooper are friends and hunt together though their views diverge on the moderate philosophy the Bianchi Cup represents under the guidance of Chapman and the National Rifle Association.

Cooper may not like Chapman's Bianchi format with its "speeded up bullseye" style of shooting. The heavy-barreled, specialized revolvers are pretty useless for anything else. No reloads.

No humanoid targets. The "action" comes from the movement of the targets, not the shooter. Age and physical prowess are equalized.

Some find boring any format you can practice to perfection. But a lot of dedicated competitors prefer the challenge of Bianchi Cup to all other forms of shooting.

Chapman's Views

Chapman's views also are based on impeccable credentials:

Genesis in the old South West Combat Pistol League in the California leather slap days.

First IPSC world champion in 1975 in Switzerland and almost certainly the only shooter to compete in every world meet.

Participant in the Columbia Conference; director of the Chapman Academy which is home to the Bianchi Cup.

Match director of every Bianchi Cup/ NRA National Action Pistol Championship.

Chapman thinks the Bianchi format is destined to grow. He says he already has NRA support to promote a network of state, national and international matches. He says, "The Germans are working on a Bianchi style match right now that could become the European championship. We already have matches in Australia, Canada and South Africa and many of our states. The smaller matches could qualify a shooter to come to a real international championship to be held here every couple of years."

Low Profile

Another name not so familiar to the new generation of shooters is Dick Thomas, a Columbia, Mo., attorney who has chosen a low profile despite his importance to the history of the Bianchi and modern action shooting in general.

It was Thomas who encouraged and often funded early efforts that resulted in the Columbia Conference where IPSC was born. He bankrolled the building of the Chapman range and other spinoffs such as the Soldier of Fortune match.

Thomas says that sometime in the coming months he is planning to invite all the old timers back for a fun shoot and get together.

Wouldn't it be great to see shooters in action such as Jeff Cooper, Ray Chapman, Robert Brown, Raul Walters, Bruce Nelson, Rick Miller, Dave Westerhout, Ron Lerch, Ken Hackathorn? Well you get the picture.

Back To The Future

The friendly pistol carrying ghosts rattling about amid the turning paper targets and the clanging plates are fascinating, but the 1990 match wrote new history as score sheets continue to show startling trends.

In addition to the first clean match score new records on three of the four stages indicate levels of practiced excellence which could hardly have been imagined by the original designers.

In 1980 when Mickey Fowler won his first Bianchi with a score of 1879, *American Handgunner* called it a score "likely to stand as the target score for future participants as long as the Tournament employs the same four individual matches."

The following year when Mickey Fowler won again breaking his own record with 1890, the *Handgunner* saw the handwriting on the wall and made an amended prediction that someone would win John Bianchi's prize of \$5,000 to the first person to break 1900. Boldly venturing a guess, the *Handgunner* even said that perfect tie scores decided only by X counts wouldn't be too surprising. And that is how it is today.

This year 71 shooters beat the 1980 winning score. Thirty eight shooters broke 1900. Four shooters had only one bullet out of the ten ring, tying at 1918 points with their X count deciding 2nd through 5th places.

Lemoine Wright's winning score from last year of 1914-152X would have placed him 14th this year.

And how did last year's top scorers do this time? Mostly not as good as the smaller potatoes kept pushing up from below.

1989	1990
1st Lemoine Wright	37th
2nd Gib Niswander	62nd
3rd Rome Gutierrez	28th
4th Ray Gray	13th
5th Ross Carter	4th

The median score in 1981 was 1605;



John Pride of the LAPD Bomb Squad must find the intense pressure of competition pretty mild compared to his job! The two-time Bianchi Cup champion is shooting a John French custom L-frame, here shown just as a PMC bullet leaves the muzzle. Note the gunpowder flashing from the cylinder gap.

in 1990 it was 1840.

This year 21 people scored perfect 480's to clean the Practical Event. Curtis Shipley set a new X-count record of 45.

Forty three shooters cleaned the Barricade Event and Ed Duda set a new X count record of 47.

The Moving Target Event saw five perfect scores with Andrew Shrode's 39-X's breaking Bill Wilson's 34-X shot in 1986.

Thirty percent of all entrants hit the required 48 targets on the Falling Plate Event thus in effect tying for first place. Places first through sixty-fourth were then decided on the X-count earned.

Time To Change?

Are inordinately high scores a problem that must be dealt with by rule changes or match redesign? Opinions vary.

Ted Deacon of Columbia who has made the Bianchi top 10 more times than anyone else likes it just the way it is. Deacon says "Continuity with the past is important and I think X-count decisions work fine."

Mickey Fowler believes the opposite. Having won three times and had three very near misses he dislikes the idea that a single near miss of the 10-ring can eliminate any possibility of winning.

Race car driver Fowler says, "There ought to be a way to come back from a mistake. It's like if in a car race you had no chance to win because you were passed in the first lap."

Fowler agrees with shooters who think it is time for tougher targets or additional stages.

Drama And Excitement

At the Bianchi there are as many small dramas as there are shooters. Walter

Blackwell of Warsaw, Ind., has shot almost every Bianchi. He had two guns break and shot his IPSC gun with open sights rather than miss it.

Ralph Horne of Jefferson, Mo., was 94th but as far as he was concerned he won the whole match because this year he met his goal of cleaning the plates.

Canadian Mario Di Paolo sweated blood as RO Lauren Neal courteously addressed his challenge of her call of one of his mover shots as an 8. She deferred to referee Dale Vannatter who peered at the hole with template and plug and said yes. It put Di Paolo in second place overall and I think Lauren was as happy as Mario was.

Keeping Pace

Amid the excitement and confusion of the Cup, if you as a competitor or avid spectator really *must* know what is going on, whom do you ask?

Ray Chapman? Nah. Match directors have to keep their eye on the bigger picture.

Are Olin Barjenbruch and John Gordon and Jim Hewins and Guy Neal keeping the range officers on their toes?

Is Addison Sovine of Action Targets keeping his steel plates and target timers infallible?

And will the skies over Columbia cease their nonstop weeping that has turned the Show Me state jungle green and left only mail boxes and street signs above water? In the nearby Missouri River lowland town of McBain, its 34 inhabitants have once more fled.

NRA Coordinator Jim Davis? Hardly. He is too busy making sure Ed Klecka and Veronica Greene and Karen Mehall take care of shooter hospitality and too



Christie Rogers won her third Ladies title, this time with a revolver. In the past she has used a .38 Super auto with ProPoint sight.

many requests from the press for print-outs of daily results.

Well, there is always Data Processing Coordinator Maurice Harris and his computer crew, but even with each day's posted results it is comparing apples and oranges since competitors shoot barricades, mover and plate stages on different days.

Ah, shall we ask the shooters themselves? You're joking. What with match nerves, psyching themselves to win and steeling themselves to lose, they don't know anyway.

What we can do is the same thing the shooters resort to when they can no

Continued on page 100



Tom Campbell's tricked-out 9mm is from the S&W Performance Center (left) fitted with a Tasco ProPoint scope in a custom mount. An S&WPC pistol for speed shooting (below), Brian Enos' IPSC gun on a 5906 chambered in the new .356 TSW (see p. 110 for details on the new caliber). Ross Carter's Colt .38



Super (right) by Bill Wilson was good for top auto at 4th place with an impressive 150-X. Rob Leatham shot this Frank Glenn custom S&W .38 Special (below right) with a custom ProPoint featuring three red dots spaced horizontally for the lead on the moving target. The center dot was for the normal targets while the left and right dots were for the two directions of travel of the moving target.

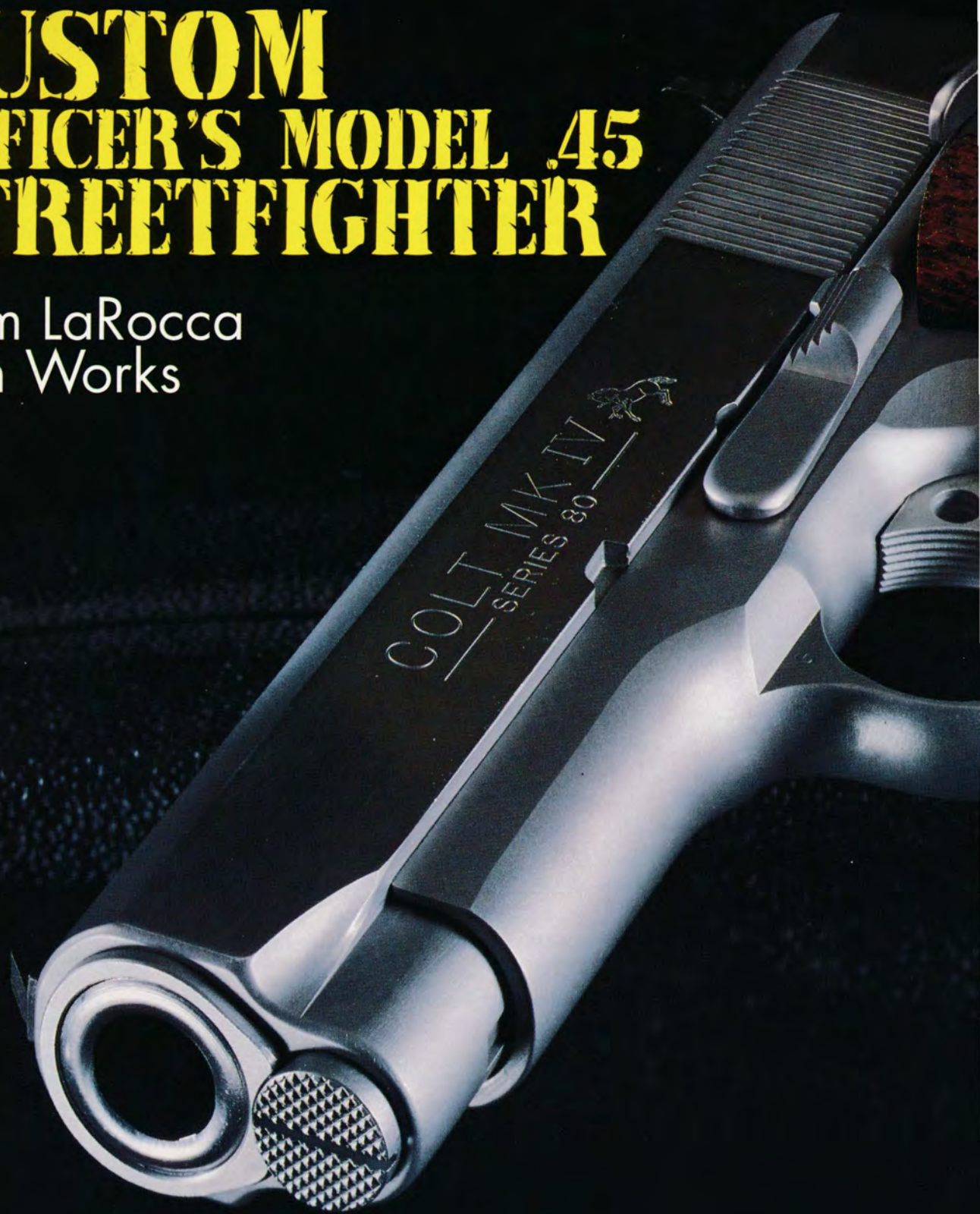


GUNS & GEAR OF THE TOP TWENTY

SCORE	COMPETITOR	GUN	GUNSMITH	HOLSTER	SCOPE
1920—157X	Doug Koenig	S&W .38 Spl.	Frank Glenn	Safariland	Tasco Pro Point
1918—158X	Mario DiPaolo	S&W .38 Spl.	M. Charlton	Ernie Hill	Tasco Pro Point
1918—156X	Steven Weber	S&W .38 Spl.	Ron Power	Ernie Hill	Aimpoint 3000
1918—150X	Ross Carter	Colt .38 Super	Bill Wilson	Safariland	Tasco Pro Point
1918—144X	Ray Navarre	S&W .38 Spl.	DFW Custom	Ernie Hill	Burris 1X
1916—168X	John Pride	S&W .38 Spl.	John French	Safariland	Aimpoint 5000
1916—165X	Edward Deacon	Springfield 9mm	Nuline Guns	Ernie Hill	Burris 1X
1916—161X	Mickey Fowler	S&W .38 Spl.	John French	Safariland	Aimpoint 5000
1916—151X	Curtis Shipley	S&W .38 Spl.	John Farley	Safariland	Tasco 1X22
1916—150X	Rob Leatham	S&W .38 Spl.	Frank Glenn	Safariland	Tasco Pro Point
1914—158X	Andrew Shrode	S&W .38 Spl.	Dave Ewer	Safariland	Tasco Pro Point
1914—158X	Brian Enos	S&W .38 Spl.	John French	Safariland	Tasco Pro Point
1914—155X	Ray Gray	S&W .38 Spl.	Riley Gilmore	Safariland	Tasco Pro Point
1912—154X	Jerry Barnhart	Colt .38 Super	Bill Wilson	Safariland	Tasco Pro Point
1912—152X	Ken Tapp	S&W .38 Spl.	Clark	Ernie Hill	Tasco 1X
1912—145X	Don Kehoe	S&W .38 Spl.	Don Kehoe	Safariland	Tasco Pro Point
1912—145X	John McNally	S&W	Larry Leutenegger	Safariland	Tasco Pro Point
1910—154X	William Judycki	S&W	Judycki	Ted Blocker	Aimpoint 3000
1910—152X	Frank Glenn	S&W .38 Spl.	Frank Glenn	Safariland	Tasco 1X
1910—152X	Herb Conly	S&W .38 Spl.	Walter Cabell	Ernie Hill	Tasco Pro Point

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Rugged and reliable, the LaRocca custom Officer's Model .45 ACP incorporates everything that the street-wise savvy of a gunfighter would demand in a self-defense pistol.

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The custom Officer's .45 streetfighter— tough, reliable, accurate. If you think you're ready for a serious gun, grab a fistful of this .45.

For more information, contact Mike LaRocca at (508) 754-2887 or write to LaRocca Gun Works, 51 Union Place, Worcester, MA 01608



THE GUNS OF THE SPRINGFIELD ARMORY CUSTOM SHOP

By Cameron Hopkins

Photos by Ichiro Nagata

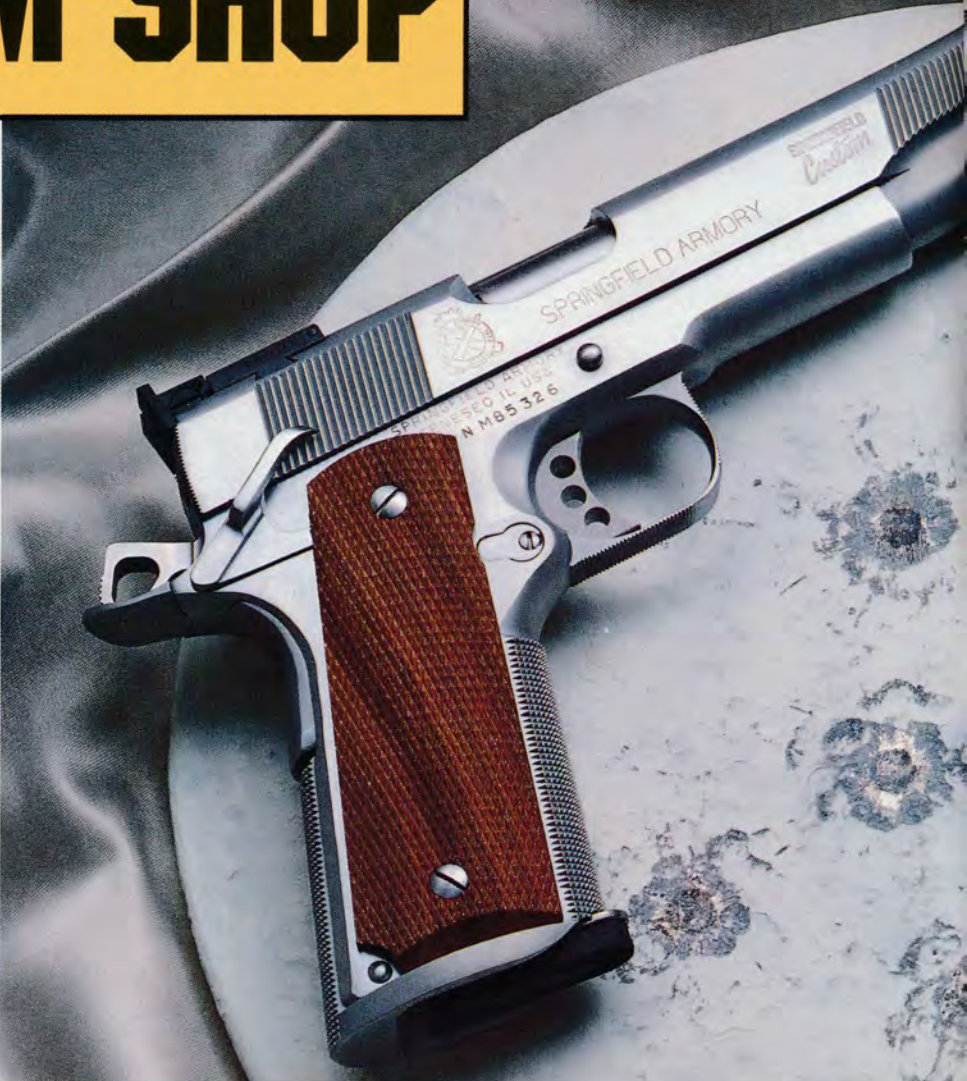
If there's anything that America loves, it's a victorious underdog. Facing adversity, struggling valiantly and finally winning—that's the spunk we admire.

And that is the spirit of Springfield Armory, a small family-owned gun company that was founded by a poor country boy whose love for World War II small arms turned from a hobby into a part-time military surplus business and then eventually matured into a full-time manufacturing plant boasting \$20 million a year in sales.

The guns of Springfield Armory are for the most part military weapons—such classics as the great Government Model of 1911, the powerful .30-06 M-1 Garand, the ultra-accurate M-1A, their splendid version of FN's famous FN-FAL battle rifle and their excellent SAR-8 rendition of Cetme's G-3.

Not all of the Armory's guns have military origins, however. The SASS (Springfield Armory Single Shot) is a sophisticated bolt-action conversion for the 1911 that turns the autoloader into a single-shot, long-range hunting pistol. Springfield's Omega 10mm and the P-9 9mm are both modern sporting pistols.

Company founder and family patri-



arch Bob Reese boasts an extensive collection of World War II sniper rifles (the Germans had the best, he says), but the





A solid bushing is used on all self-defense custom guns, for reliability.

Bob Reese, founder of Springfield Armory, designed the SASS pistol that he's showing to the author (center) and champion shooter Rob Leatham. SASS stands for Springfield Armory Single Shot and it's a bolt-action conversion for the 1911 pistol.

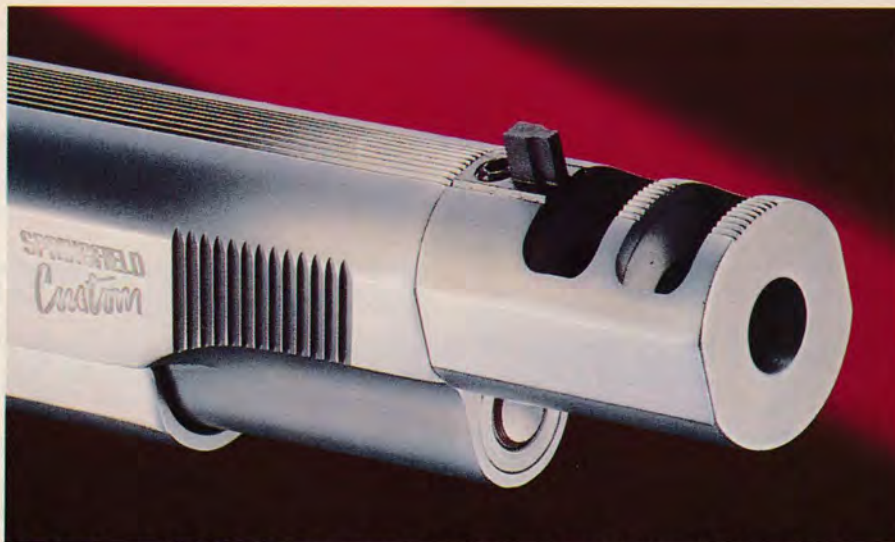
centerpiece of his collection of military odds and ends is a Sherman tank! The tracked monster stands guard on the quaint country lane leading to the Reese family farm.

Taking On Tradition

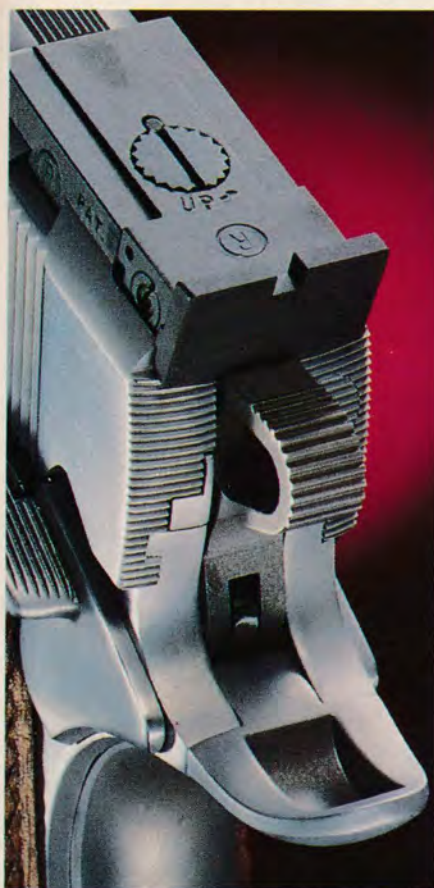
It was not so very long ago that Springfield Armory was a little-known name to handgunners, although the firm enjoyed a fine reputation with high power rifle shooters with their excellent M-1A copy of the army's M-14 battle rifle of Korea. However, since 1985 a series of brilliant maneuvers have propelled the Illinois-based company towards the front lines of autopistol sales with their 1911-A1 model now commanding the high ground in the battle for the hearts and minds of .45 shooters.

Springfield Armory's successful blitzkrieg is nothing short of a stunning





The Distinguished Model's dual-chamber compensator (above) differs only infinitesimally from Bill Wilson's "Super Grade" but that was intentional, as the story explains. The special-order custom self-defense pistol we ordered (below) features a Swenson safety, Heinie mag release button and 30 lpi checkering on the front of the trigger guard. The Custom Shop can handle any special-orders.



A wide variety of options are available as these close-ups show: (above) Bo Mar sights, Brown beavertail, (top) Brown mag funnel, (right) S&A mag funnel.



commander, company president Tom Reese, youngest son of founder Bob Reese.

Tom recognized the tremendous influence of combat shooting and the publicity that top IPSC stars like Rob Leatham, Brian Enos and Mike Plaxco were gaining. With characteristic Reese grit, Tom refused to accept the inevitable when he saw that literally every single combat

shooter fired a Colt pistol.

Why should Colt automatically own this market, Tom thought, just because they happen to have made the same gun for umpteen years? After all, at the time Colt took this silly "practical shooting" game for granted and did nothing for the combat shooters. At the time that Tom led the Armory forward, Colt didn't support any grassroots development of the sport by donating prizes to, say, the Apple Valley Rifle and Pistol Club. Colt didn't pay for any endorsements, they didn't sponsor any shooters, they didn't support a team.

Editor's Note: Colt has finally taken note of the above. Several months ago Colt announced the formation of Team Colt with the signing of their only full-time professional shooter, Jerry Barnhart.

"Competition Proven"

Five years ago Tom Reese was confident that his Springfield Armory pistols

Continued on page 82

The AYOOB FILES

ALLEY SHOOTOUT: DEATH OF THE GARDEN GROVE RAPIST

Situation: An armed rapist lays an ambush in a dark alley, .380 Beretta in hand.

Lesson: In a gunfight, shoot fast and often. With a big gun. Be resolute, don't quit.

It is chilly, almost midnight in Garden Grove, California. My associate Ken Holt and I stand in the narrow walkway between a schoolyard and a *cul de sac* of modest homes with Garden Grove Police Sergeant Steve Sanders. The big, easy-going cop is flashing back. A little more than four years ago, a man shot him and permanently injured him in this dark, narrow little alley. And Steve took the man's life in self defense.

It was June 21, 1986, a Saturday night, when it happened. Sanders was an Investigator then, one of several assigned to the maddening case of the man the papers called The Garden Grove Rapist, and whom the cops had code-named Ski Mask. The elusive perpetrator had held the community in the proverbial grip of fear for some five years.

He'd committed a long string of burglaries and rapes. His M.O. was to surprise a couple at gun- or knife-point, tie up the husband, stuff him in a closet and make him listen as he raped the wife. His trademark ski mask had made him thus far unidentifiable.

He was deadly when cornered. In '81, for the first time, a victim resisted. A victim had Ski Mask down and was pummeling him when the rapist pulled a knife, stabbed the homeowner, and fled.

After that, Ski Mask would carry one of the guns he had stolen. At his home he kept a cache of jewelry and money, and several stolen firearms including a Browning Hi-Power. But the one he preferred was a P-34 Beretta, a .380 auto manufactured in 1942. He used it to shoot the next two unarmed victims who dared defy his will.

One, James Atwell, a construction worker, died of a .380 hollowpoint through the heart. The long list of felonies Ski Mask was wanted for now included murder.

Sanders and the other investigators had received a tip about a man who lived in a Garden Grove condo. Barrie Hill was 35, separated from his wife, and had done time for rape and burglary years before in another part of California.

Because of a vagary of local law, the records in that community had been purged of this data, and of the fact that Hill was a registered sex offender. Thus, he had not shown up in the broad informational net Sanders and the other detectives had cast out.

The surveillance had begun early that evening. Sanders was wearing camo fatigues that helped him blend into the darkness. For some time, GGPD had authorized the Colt .45 automatic as an option to the .38 revolver, and like most of the Garden Grove cops, Sanders had seized the opportunity to upgrade his survival equipment. His partner, Dave Kivler, was carrying a Series 70 Colt Government Model under his jacket, with a spare magazine in a clip-on Bianchi pouch on the opposite side of his belt. Sanders, whose preferred street Government Model was in the shop, was in the interim carrying a pistol he rightly considered a collector's item, a Colt National Match (pre-Gold Cup) auto in a hip holster he'd made himself, and with two spare magazines in an Uncle Mike's fabric pouch. As per regulation, both men were using department ammo, 185 grain Winchester Silvertip .45 ACP hollowpoints.

Sanders and Kivler were hidden by darkness in the area where the Lawrence School

Continued on page 64

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AYOOB FILES

Continued from page 62

yard meets the parking lot when they saw the shape of a lithe, medium size man emerge from some bushes and move toward a parked car with two people in it. At that moment, a police surveillance van turned onto the street, bathing the furtive silhouette in headlight beams. The man sprinted out of the glare and disappeared into the shrubbery to the right of the officers, beyond which was a *cul de sac*. They stood still, their ears straining for telltale sounds.

After whispered radio conversation, they decided the likeliest place for the suspect to have gone was toward the *cul de sac*. They moved as quietly as they could down the narrow walkway, with chain link fence and shrubbery on their left and a block wall fence on their right.

By now, their cocked and locked .45 autoloaders were in their hands, held low.

And then the gunfire erupted. The men themselves were perhaps three feet apart, muzzle to muzzle.

They reached the end of the walkway, the backyard of a compact home. A camper was parked near the mouth of the alley. Sanders was on the right, Kivler on the left. With his back to the wall, Sanders saw his partner moving past him toward the mouth of the alley. He instinctively grabbed him and pulled him back.

In so doing, he probably saved his life. Inching forward, his pistol extended down in front of him in his right hand, the tall investigator saw a figure lurking by the camper. The man was in a squatting position, with what appeared to be a pistol in his hand.

There was a ski mask on his head.

"Police! Freeze," Sanders bellowed.

"Freeze," the rape-murderer yelled back like an echo.

Sanders remembered from his training that a man who's talking reacts slower. He wanted to distract the suspect, for him to think about something besides the pistol.

"Drop the gun," he commanded. Sanders had now pulled back from the edge of the block wall, where he could still see the suspect but at least had some cover himself.

But Hill was playing his own game. He moved to his right, Sanders' left, to clear the cover and get a clear shot at the cops. The suspect shouted, "Back off!

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Drop the f---in' gun!"

And then the gunfire erupted.

Perhaps five feet separated the camper at Hill's back, and the edge of the wall where Sanders had taken position. The men themselves were perhaps three feet apart, muzzle to muzzle.

Sanders saw the flash of Hill's .380, its blast a dim, lost echo, and felt the burning impact of the slug tearing into his arm. In the same second, he returned fire. The .45 at the end of his arm roared three times, and Sanders moved back behind the wall.

A Smith & Wesson brand 90 grain hollowpoint had entered just above his wrist, burrowed up his forearm, exited the elbow, and gone into his chest. The bullet stopped on Sanders' Second Chance vest and was found later in the breast pocket

*The walkway is filled
with a deafening volley
of gunfire. Kivler
empties his magazine.*

of his camo shirt. He never even felt a bump in his chest.

But the bullet had separated his ulnar nerve almost completely, the impact jerking his arm like a sledgehammer. Picture the nerve as a coaxial cable, and then picture all but two or three strands severed. It felt like fire at the points of entry and exit, burning with the worst pain Sanders had ever felt. He was convinced that he'd been hit twice.

Time went into slow motion for the big cop, the well-documented tachypsychia effect. He knew he'd been shot and didn't know how bad. Suddenly, the image of his three year old son flashed in front of his eyes. It gave him a surge of strength. Sanders lunged forward from his cover position, to re-engage.

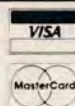
In the second or so that mental process had taken, Barrie Hill had run around the camper and was sprinting toward the other end of the alley, the pistol still in his hand.

Sanders raised his own pistol, pulled the trigger. Nothing happened. Thinking the Colt had jammed, he reflexively racked the slide, ejecting the chambered round to the floor of the alley and cycling in another. Still, the pistol did not fire.

In the interminably long tachypsychic second, Steve Sanders realizes that he is too weak to shoot, that the burning pain in his arm and lower hand reflect an injury that is interfering with his shooting, and that there doesn't seem to be time to change the pistol to the other hand. Again comes the image of his child, the family he will survive for, and again comes the surge of strength.

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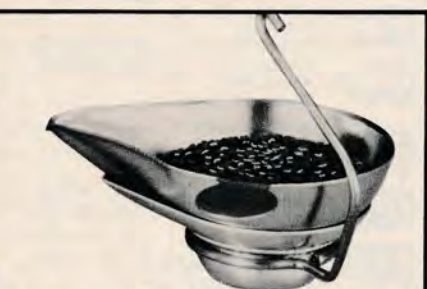
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The walkway is filled with a deafening volley of gunfire. Sanders fires once more. Kivler empties his magazine. Hill turns to his left, snapping a shot at the detectives over his shoulder. He grunts and lurches as Sanders fires, jerks again and clutches at his lower back as one of Kivler's .45 slugs strikes home.

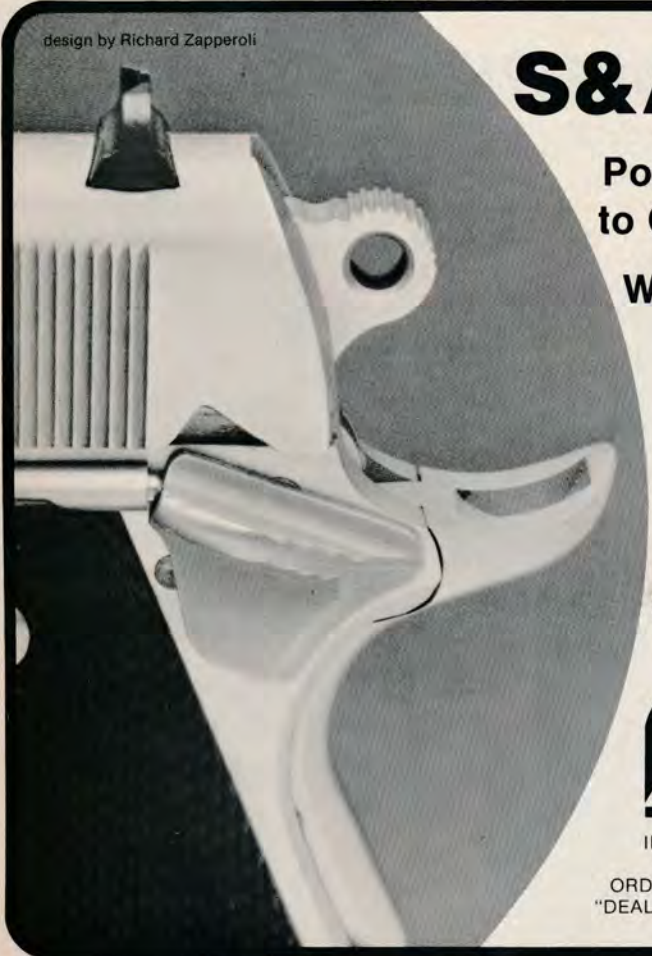
And then he is gone.

Both cops reload. As Kivler tugs on his spare magazine, the belt clip releases and the whole pouch comes off the belt. He has to rip the pouch away before he can thrust the fresh "clip" into the Government Model.

As Sanders tears open the Velcro flap on his fabric clip pouch, he is trying to remember how many shots he has fired. He thinks four, but he wouldn't swear to it. He is correct; the live round he ejected is still rolling on the alley floor, one round is in the chamber, and there are two Silvertips left in his depleted magazine as it bounces onto the walkway, replaced with the fresh one that brings Sanders back up to a full eight in the Colt automatic.

Sanders and Kivler radio in their situation, then move cautiously forward. But Hill is gone. A distance away, they hear glass breaking. Sanders curses silently; the bastard is in someone's house now, and that's a job for SWAT, not for two detectives who have at least one gunshot wound to worry about. They hold their

Continued on page 68



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position, awaiting reinforcements.

Meanwhile, Barrie Lee Hill has his own problems. His .380 jammed after his last shot, and he has fumbled with it until it is live again. Inside the empty house he has broken into, he stops to rest.

Hill has been shot five times with .45 caliber bullets. He is dying. At least two of his wounds are lethal. Yet the one that bothers him is the one that struck his big toe. He takes the shoe off to ease the pain of the swollen foot, blood spilling onto the carpet of the empty home he has invaded.

Hill has travelled a considerable distance. He can hear the wailing of the police and ambulance sirens. He emerges from the other end of the house, staggers about 50 yards, and slumps against a tree in the front yard of another home to rest.

The owners of the home are returning from a drive. As they pull up to the sidewalk, they think the man leaning against the tree must be a drunk, and they shout at him to leave. Hill waves the pistol at them and screeches, "Get the f--- out of here!" Terrified, the driver peels out, leaving Hill alone, a blood-soaked bundle at the foot of the tree.

Hill has lost an enormous amount of blood. He almost certainly realizes he is dying. He has handwritten a journal of his life and his crimes that will be found later. Surprisingly articulate, it reads like Jack Henry Abbot's *In the Belly of the Beast*: a long self-serving whine in which he states all his victims deserved it and had to pay for the women and the bosses who rejected him.

He is the kind of man who will finish his life with what he sees as a poetic, heroic gesture. "I am captain of my fate, and master of my soul."

His life, his blood, and his strength have run almost completely out of him. The cops have killed him, he knows, but he won't give them the satisfaction. With the last of his remaining strength, Barrie Lee Hill performs the only documentable, redeeming act of his life.

He raises the Beretta, places the muzzle to the side of his head, and pulls the trigger.

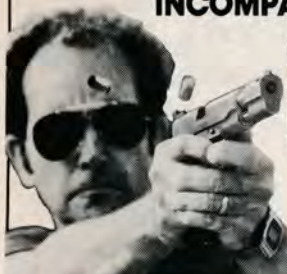
Gunfight Analysis

There are several learning points, some tactical and some personally inspirational, to be learned from this shooting.

The incident proved yet again that there are no magic bullets, not even .45 hollowpoints. Those who say that a single .45 round in the torso will drop a man 19 times out of 20 obviously never met Barrie Hill. At 5-foot-11 and 190 pounds, he was by no means a bear of a man, and toxicology screen done on what little blood the officers left in his body showed no alcohol or drugs.

Reconstruction showed that the first bullet, fired by Sanders within a fraction of a second after Hill had shot the officer, struck the very outside edge of the right

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side of the gunman's head. It ripped through the earlobe and tore the ski mask, entered the crouching man's shoulder, and ranged down into the chest. It was a severe wound but would have been survivable with swift Emergency Room care.

The second bullet went through Hill's left arm and entered his abdomen, driving deep and doing so much damage that pathologists told Sanders this gunshot would not have been survivable.

The third bullet struck Hill in the foot, specifically in the big toe. Autopsy photos do not show it to be particularly damaging. It is what pathologists call an "adynamic" wound, one that does not contribute to cause of death or create life-threatening injury. Yet this is the one that seemed to bother Hill the most, based on his actions as reconstructed after his death.

As Hill was running down the alleyway, he was struck with two more .45 Silvertips. One caught him in the right back, a through and through wound that caused massive liver damage according to the autopsy report and photographs. This was the second lethal wound.

Sanders recalls Hill jerking and grunting as this shot went off, but Kivler was shooting at the same time and the second lethal wound could have been inflicted by either officer.

The fifth bullet was definitely fired by Kivler. It struck the rapist-killer in the hip. Unfortunately, Hill was your basic well prepared criminal: he had a small but solid pair of binoculars in the hip pocket of his running pants. Kivler's Silvertip struck the binoculars, shattering both them and the bullet. This was painful enough and hard hitting enough to cause Hill to jerk and grab himself there when the bullet went home, but the only actual damage was shrapnel and broken glass distributed over the buttock's surface.

Had this bullet continued on course without the intervening target blunting the impact, the Silvertip would almost certainly have shattered Hill's hip and destroyed his mobility, sending him sprawling into the driveway at the end of the walkway. This could have had differing results. The downed murderer would not have been able to travel many hundreds of feet and threaten more innocent people. On the other hand, given the energy he was able to expend after several .45 wounds, it is entirely likely that he would have reacted like a wounded tiger. One other consideration is a function of chance: it was after his last shot at the detectives that his Beretta jammed. It is unlikely that he could have cleared it before the officers, reloading if necessary, nailed him to the ground permanently.

Sanders, remember, still had three cartridges left in his service pistol.

Sometimes we learn from the Bad Guys' screwups, just as we do from the Good Guys'. Any gun expert could tell you that the model 1934 Beretta was a MilSpec weapon, designed to feed with

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We were at the shooting range on a sunny afternoon. A non-threatening situation, to be sure. And that's when I decided a handgun was *not* what she needed for home security. At close range it was simply too inaccurate. Especially for someone inexperienced with firearms. I had to ask myself: would she stand a chance during a surprise encounter with a home invader in the dead of night?

So I told her I'd have to think about it awhile—not really knowing what to recommend for home security, other than a good set of dead-bolt locks, which I knew she already had.

The next day from my office I called a friend on the police force. I told him what had happened, then heard him chuckle. He knew immediately what I was talking about. *"I'd expect those results from anyone who doesn't practice a lot—let alone a novice,"* he said. *"We train with handguns all the time to stay proficient from that distance."*

The problem was more than just the difficulty of firing a handgun at close range. Would she be able to load it easily? And what if she did have to fire it? Bullets pass easily through walls...would her children asleep in another room be in danger? Clearly, a handgun wasn't the answer.

"How about a shotgun?" my friend on the force asked. Then it was my turn to laugh. The thought of this lady shouldering a shotgun was even more difficult to imagine than a six-shooter in her hands.

"Seriously," he said. *"There's nothing more intimidating in a potentially violent confrontation, and with the right choke, you can't miss at close range."*

He had a point there. And a small bore shotgun, say, a .410, might be easy enough to handle for an average-sized woman. I told him thanks for the idea, then paid a visit to my firearms dealer.

What I discovered is that there is a .410 pump-action shotgun made specifically for women and for home security. It's made by Mossberg—the same company that supplies shotguns to the marines and to police forces across the country.

It's called the Home Security 410, and it comes with a wide choke, hand grip on the forearm pump, and a security cable lock to protect against accidental use by anyone without a key. I could even buy one with a touch-activated laser sight, which allows easy, instant sighting in darkened rooms.

The more I considered it, the more I realized the Home Security 410 was just what my friend needed. Accuracy was no problem. It packed more punch on impact than a .44 magnum. What little recoil a .410 has would be absorbed by both the front and rear grip. The risk of errant bullets in the home is minimized. But perhaps most important, the sheer intimidation factor of a pump-action shotgun—especially one with a laser sight would probably be enough to neutralize any home invader all by itself.

Before we next visited the shooting range, I picked up a Mossberg Home Security 410. In no time, she wasn't just hitting the silhouette, she was absolutely *obliterating* it—shooting from the hip, with quick rounds of the .410 shells.

If you have a lady friend who's in the market for a handgun. I recommend you look into the Home Security 410. You can find more information at any better firearms dealer, or you can contact Mossberg at (203) 288-6491.

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total reliability with military ball (round nose, full jacketed) ammo, and likely to jam on wide-mouth hollowpoints. It was the hollowpoint in the chamber that got Sanders.

(He has the bullet now as a souvenir, totally unexpanded and dented only slightly on one edge of the hollow cavity. It could literally be reloaded and fired again.)

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Ironically, Hill had a mix of S&W and Remington ammo in his pistol, though only the S&W was left in the magazine after he blew his brains out.

Police Lessons

Now, let us look at the Good Guys. Sanders, 32 at the time of the shooting, was an Air Policeman from age 19 until joining Garden Grove PD at 24. In 1975, he had been top gun in the shooting contests at his airbase, and he had been SWAT certified. He was an excellent shot.

He fired the first three shots with one hand extended due to his awkward position, the last from a Weaver stance as Hill ran down the alley. Why was he twice unable to fire when he tried to?

Like many Weaver shooters, Sanders had become accustomed to a firing position that kept the thumb on top of the manual safety of his .45 Colt auto. This position, unfortunately, pulls the web of the hand back from the grip safety. When the injury to the ulnar nerve weakened (and inflamed with pain) the lower half of his gun hand, his grip apparently relaxed enough to allow the grip safety to engage, preventing the weapon from being fired.

A shooting grasp with the thumb locked down fist-like, as advocated by such great .45 champions as Ray Chapman and John Shaw, tightens the web of the hand on the grip safety, and also maximizes all possible hand strength on the gun. Had Sanders been taught this grip, I am certain that he could have continued firing when Hill was still close, and finished the would-be copkiller before he reached the edge of the driveway.*

Note that the first shot fired struck the officer in the gun arm. This is extremely common. There is something in the mind of an adversary that perceived the gun, not the man, as the danger. Where the eyes focus, the body follows. Shots will cluster around the gun or gun arm. You see it just on humanoid Duelatron-type targets.

Readers recall this column's coverage of the FBI Miami incident, in

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which: Suspect Platt was hit not once but twice in the gun arm; agents Hanlon and McNeill were struck in the gun arms before taking their later wounds; and Agent Mireles was struck in his forward arm as he was bringing his shotgun to bear on the opponent.

This mandates weak-hand training. Sanders was familiar with weak hand-only firing, but made the conscious decision to keep the gun in his wounded hand to save time, and to reinforce his grip with the support hand. After reloading, he switched his .45 to his left hand as he and Kivler continued their pursuit of the

No one was impressed with the performance of the .45 Silvertip that night. Nearly all the bullets shed their jackets.

would-be copkiller.

Equipment must be reliable under stress, and not just the gun. Note that Kivler's "convenient" clip-on magazine carrier came off his belt when he went to reload. I have seen that happen many times on the range with that particular Bianchi accessory. The Bianchi Clip-Grip is a much superior unit.

The soft Uncle Mike's pouch as used by Sanders, while slow, is reliable. After the shooting, Kivler's friends at the PD bought him a new magazine pouch.

No magic bullet, as we've said, exists. At the same time, no one who looks at this incident including Sanders was impressed with the performance of the .45 Silvertip that night. Nearly all the bullets shed their jackets upon entering, and while some did tremendous damage, Hill seemed to be among those not impressed. Sanders hopes his agency will adopt Speer Lawman 200-grain hollowpoints, which have a better reputation as "street stoppers."

Now, let us look at the mental aspects. Knowing that he was shot, angry and frightened, Steve Sanders seized on the mental image of his child to gain the renewed strength to keep fighting. We see this again and again among gunfight survivors.

To survive, one must have something to survive for. The person who swears he or she will return to spouse and children is the one who probably will.

Tachypsychia was clearly evident here, the slowed-down perception of time in the midst of a life-threatening encounter. The initial burst of gunfire — Sanders shot once by Hill, Hill shot thrice by Sanders — took place in no more than a second. From when Sanders ducked back behind the wall,

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analyzed his situation with what seemed like aching slowness, and then emerged again with renewed will to do battle and duty, could also have been no more than a second.

Tachypsychia is reported by half or more of all shootout survivors I've debriefed. Expect it to happen, and don't let it frighten you. Know that you are still moving at full speed... and so is your opponent.

Finally, the use of concealed soft body armor made a difference here. The bullet that could have run through Sanders' chest and killed him after exiting his arm stopped on the hidden vest, with so little impact he didn't even notice it.

The bullet was recovered after Sanders got home from the hospital. He was the 365th documented save by Second Chance Body Armor.

Yet .380 level firepower delivered to the torso will continue to kill Good Guys who ignore the reality of the job, and ignore the advice Sanders gives cops he talks to: "A gunfight can happen to any cop. I learned it that night."

Shootout Aftermath

Steve Sanders returned to duty and was promoted to Patrol Sergeant, the capacity in which he presently serves. His duty pistol is now a custom 14-shot .45 auto on a Para-Ordnance frame. Like all Para-Ordnance owners I've debriefed, he is happy with the system and finds it totally reliable.

Doctors initially told him he'd never hold a gun in that hand again. You wouldn't know that from his firm handshake. He still carries on his right hip, and estimates a 12% loss of function in the arm. He's grateful.

"I'm just glad he was using the Beretta .380 instead of the Browning Hi-Power 9mm he'd stolen," says Steve. A higher velocity bullet that did mushroom would have completely severed the nerve, and Sanders' amazing recovery from the wound would have been severely mitigated if not totally prevented.

The shootout that night ended a five-year reign of terror. The man who died as an attempted but failed copkiller had murdered one angry victim, wounded a second with the .380, and stabbed a third. If one of those men — or one of the many other men and women he'd terrorized — had been able to reach a gun they knew how and when to use, the crime wave of Barrie "Ski Mask" Hill, the Garden Grove Rapist, would have been over much sooner.

Instead, two brave young police officers had to risk their lives in a bullet-torn alleyway to end the horror once and for all.



The author is grateful to Sgt. Steve Sanders, Garden Grove PD, and Lt. Rich Wemmer, Los Angeles PD, for making this research and this article possible.

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IPSC

Continued from page 35

ly 160% of SAAMI maximum, for the use in the T/C Contender only.)

So the safe, sensible, and prudent thing for the .38 Super shooter to do is to stick to lead bullets weighing 160 gr., keep pressures in the 30-32,000 CUP range, use +P brass, and have a fully supported barrel fitted to provide a greater safety margin. (The integral feedramp on these barrels improves feeding reliability as well, a nice bonus.)

A properly set up gun will handle these loads for a long, long, time. My current Super has well over 50,000 rounds of such loads through it; the frame and slide aren't cracked, no part has ever broken, and it still has the original extractor.

Super Superiority

But remember those shooters mentioned at the outset, the ones who are always pushing the limits? They began to use up some of this extra margin of security by going to lighter bullets at higher velocities and pressures. To understand why, it's necessary to understand what makes the Super so superior in the first place.

Forget the stuff about the extra magazine capacity. The two extra rounds compared to a .45 are a fringe benefit, a nice bonus certainly, but the Super would excel in competition even if all guns were limited to six rounds.

I've read several times that the Super is better because lighter bullets produce less recoil when loaded to the same power factor as heavy bullets. This is simply not true. At the same power factor, a light bullet produces more recoil energy than a heavier one.

Let's compare two rounds, both loaded to make a power factor of 185. In .45ACP we'll load a 200 gr. bullet to 925 fps with 5.8 gr. of powder "X." In .38 Super we'll load a 160 gr. bullet to 1,156 fps with 8.0 gr. of powder "Y." Same power factor.

In a 2 1/2 lb. gun the .45 produces 4.79 ft/lbs of recoil. The Super turns up 5.13 ft/lbs. of recoil energy. Then why is the Super better? Because of the expansion chamber compensator that is standard equipment on current match guns.

The simplest way to explain how an expansion chamber comp works is to say it does the opposite of what recoil does. Recoil moves the gun back, parallel to the axis of the bore. But because the shooter is holding the gun below the axis of the bore, it can't keep moving back, so the gun tries to pivot around the shooter's hand, changing rearward recoil into muzzle rise.

Then the bullet exits the barrel and the column of powder gas blasts against the front interior wall of the comp, pushing it



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forward, again along the axis of the bore. But it can't go forward, because the shooter is holding onto the gun, so the forward motion is turned into downward motion that counters muzzle rise.

The jet effect as the spent gases escape out of the top opening of the comp helps too, but it's the forward pressure on the front of the comp that really does the work. Now compare the column of powder gases to a column of water from a firehose. If you want to knock something down with the stream of water, then the bigger the volume of water, and the greater the pressure, the more effective it will be.

In the .45 we have 5.8 gr. of powder producing, say, 15,000 CUP. In the Super we have nearly 50% more powder at double the pressure. That means faster recoil recovery and a faster rate of aimed fire.

Twin chamber comps are even more effective since there are two walls (in effect, twice the surface area) for the powder gases to push, though the gases that reach the second chamber are considerably reduced in volume and pressure.

Lighter Bullets

Then some shooters got the idea of using up some of that extra safety margin to kick pressures up still higher. Some people seem to have the idea that shooters want to use light bullets to reduce recoil, and high pressures are an unfortunate side effect. The truth is the opposite.

Shooters were trying to raise pressures without raising the power factor of their loads, and to do so they went to lighter bullets. They also went to jacketed bullets which don't lead the barrel at high velocity, don't smoke as much, and also raise pressures a bit.

A 130 gr. bullet at 1,423 fps has a p.f. of 185, just like the two previous examples. Recoil energy is 5.72 ft/lb in a 2 1/2 lb. gun. But now the shooter is burning maybe 11 gr. of powder and the pressures, well, no one I know has pressure tested their ammo, but I'm sure pressures are well over 40,000 CUP.

That means even quicker recoil recovery and a still faster rate of aimed fire. And if the gun wears out quicker, well, that's part of the price you pay for speed.

Tell a top shooter that he should give up a competitive edge to make his gun last longer and he'll think you're nuts. You might as well tell George Brett that he's better off striking out so as not to break his bat.

The futility of lowering the power factor to solve the problem of high pressure loads seems obvious. Sure, shooters might be able to make a p.f. of 170 with 130 gr. bullets at safe pressures. But some shooters don't want safe pressures, they want to use high pressures and trust the supported barrels and +P brass to hold them.

Other shooters want to use high-capacity 9mm's and start firewalling the

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9mm case. Lowering the factor will likely cause more problems, if anything.

For arguments sake, let's say the thumbsuckers get their way and the p.f. is cut to 170. Five minutes after that happens someone will be loading 115 gr. or even 100 gr. bullets in his Super, trying to factor 170-plus while keeping pressure as high as the gun and brass will take.

Meanwhile, someone else will be lading powder into 9mm cases, so he can go to matches with an 18-round major caliber auto.

Power Factor Debate

Well then, you say, maybe there should be no power factor at all. Okay, let's look at the Steel Challenge which has no power factor.

The bullets just have to reach the target and mark the paint. Do shooters use nice safe, strong guns that last forever? Dream on.

What they do is use light loads and then cut away some of the gun's margin of strength to make it lighter, faster, more reliable with light loads. One gunsmith cuts out one of the barrel's locking lugs so the gun will work better with light loads. Another cuts out both locking lugs and turns the gun into a straight blowback!

Still others use aluminum frames, titanium comps, they turn down barrels and mill away non-critical areas of the slide until it is little more than a shell. Full-house steel shooting guns cost a lot more to build than IPSC guns, they are no safer, and they don't last any longer.

The fact is this: no matter what the rules are, the top shooters are always going to be running on the edge. That's what it means to be a top shooter.

The suggestion that the power factor should be lowered in response to problems that a few shooters have brought on themselves is one I think is irritating and offensive. Power factoring should only be discussed in the context of cartridge effectiveness. The suggestion that it should be lowered to solve the very problems that shooters bring themselves, in search for the Ultimate Competitive Edge, is irritating.

The idea is a copout, a way of ducking the issue. The problem is not the power factor, and fiddling with it is not going to solve the problem. The problem is high pressure loads, and the question is whether these loads are safe.

Some people take the position that with modern +P brass and supported barrels, there is enough margin of safety that SAAMI specs can be safely exceeded. SAAMI recognizes that some older cartridges fired in modern guns can be loaded beyond 19th century pressure levels, cartridges such as the .45 Colt, 7x57, 8x57 and .257 Roberts to name just a few.

The counter-argument is that loading to pressures above industry recognized limits in order to gain a slight

competitive advantage is foolhardy and irresponsible.

That's the issue that should be addressed, not the IPSC power factor.

Stick To Proven Loads

Personally, I strongly recommend against light bullet/high pressure loads for several reasons. One is that the question of safety hasn't been resolved. It can't be proven conclusively that these loads are unsafe; neither can it be proven that they are.

A second reason is that for all but the most careful, meticulous reloaders there is not enough margin for error. To give just one example, if a worn-out standard Super case gets mixed in with your good +P stuff, you've just set the stage for a blown primer at the very least.

A third concern is accelerated gun wear. I hate the thought of laying out big bucks for a custom gun and then feeding it a steady diet of what are, in effect, proof loads. (I'll admit that if I had a factory sponsor ready to build me a new gun every six months, this wouldn't be a concern.)

And finally, for 99% of us these loads don't do a damn bit of good. To explain what I mean, say we stick an average driver behind the wheel of a 650 horsepower race car and he takes it around the track in, say, one minute. If we tweak the engine up to 675 HP, will his lap times improve?

Of course not, because the average guy doesn't have the ability to use more than a fraction of the power that's already available. What he needs is instruction, training and experience, not a few more ponies.

The Super, with a well-designed comp and heavy bullets loaded within SAAMI specs, is already so quick that not one shooter in a 100 can begin to push the gun to its limits. Unless you are consistently shooting high-end Master class scores, the high pressure loads will bring you increased costs, increased risks, increased gun wear—and they won't improve your score one bit.

Paying a price for improved performance is one thing. Paying the price and getting nothing in return makes no sense at all.

Major loads in .38 Super can be achieved safely. They need not be any more troublesome than the full power loads used by shooters in other disciplines, such as pin shooting and metallic silhouettes.

And while we're at it, I'd bet that the load that has blown up more guns than any other is the 148 gr. .38 Special wad-cutter load—used by PPC and bullseye shooters—accidentally seated over a double charge of fast burning powder).

But be sensible. Stick to heavy bullets, keep pressures well below SAAMI specifications, and use a fully supported barrel and +P brass to provide an increased margin of safety and durability.



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THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY OF GUN WRITER'S "SPECIAL" GUNS

They sent *that* to a gunwriter? I couldn't help but think of that question posed to me last year by one of my "emergency" gunsmiths.

Every gunwriter is either real handy himself or has an emergency gunsmith. For me it is one of 'smiths at Shapel's or Buckhorn who understands that I am on a deadline and anything I bring in is needed yesterday.

Usually, I need a quick change of sights or scope base mounted, but once in awhile they have to help me get a gun in shooting condition. Such was the case as I took in the sixgun that raised the "They sent *that* to a gunwriter?" And this came back to mind today as I read again about handguns being "specially selected" for gunwriters.

Special Treatment?

That stupefied question and incredulous

look had been raised by a brand-new gun right out of the factory in a brand-new caliber, the .445 SuperMag. Since it was a prototype, it had one major glitch. The cylinder chambers were rough, so rough that I had trouble extracting fired brass without tapping soundly on the ejector rod.

All of this was mentioned in my coverage of the .445 SuperMag for *American Handgunner*. Gunwriters often get the first guns out of the factory and, if I may say so, we do a needed service for both public and industry by finding problems before major production runs.

This gun certainly proved that it was not "selected" to make sure that a gunwriter got the best.

Pick Of The Litter

Do gunwriters get specially selected handguns? Handpicked to provide the best possible results? Maybe.

Firearms companies are definitely

between the proverbial rock and hard place in this situation. If they hand pick 'em, there are those that would say they are dishonest. If they don't, just as many would say they are stupid. It is definitely a no-win situation.

A few other examples I have received may shed some light on this query. A few year's back I received a call one evening from Elgin Gates of IHMSA. "John, I just got the first Pachmayr Dominator in .357 SuperMag. Would you be interested in trying it out?" Now this gun was fresh from the factory and Gates had not opened the carton.

"Sure, send it on over."

A couple of days later when I received the Dominator, I was very unpleasantly surprised to open the box and find a silhouette gun with no sights. Now there are days when I shoot *as if* I had no sights on my gun, but under normal circumstances I prefer the advantage of good sights.

Upon calling Pachmayr, I found that they were even more surprised than I was. "It *can't* get out of here without sights!" But it did. It happens.

When working on an extensive piece on .357 Magnums, I received a beautiful test-sample Desert Eagle. Bright nickel finish and a five-digit serial number with all matching numbers. Gathering up some factory jacketed ammunition, I prepared to try it out for the first time.

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ed, the slide was pulled back to chamber a cartridge and allowed to move forward. Aiming at yonder rock, I slowly squeezed the trigger. Click! Pulled back the hammer for a second try. Click again. And again. Work the slide and chamber a new round. Click.

Now I began to look at the gun a little more closely and found the firing pin was missing. I immediately called the people at Desert Eagle and upon explaining the situation I heard:

"Oh, no! Someone sent you our photography sample." I offered to send it back, but instead a new firing pin was sent to me. With such a distinctive serial number being available, I subsequently purchased the .357 Desert Eagle.

Just this week I received a Smith & Wesson Magna-Classic, a beautiful six-gun with its distinctive high-polish stainless finish and 7 1/2" L-frame style barrel. I spent an hour or so taking color pictures before I cocked the hammer.

When I did, I was surprised to find no firing pin. Surely this was not the reason that this new offering is being advertised as "the most accurate revolver you'll probably never shoot!"

No, it was obvious what had happened. This new .44 had been a display gun at the SHOT Show or some similar gathering where firing pins are routinely removed for safety and security. When it was packed up and sent to me, the miss-

ing firing pin was forgotten. It happens.

Handpicked Lemons

I think of other "specially selected" handguns I have received over the past few years. From both Colt and Dan Wesson, revolvers came through with crooked rear sights. The pin holding the rear sight had been drilled off-center. It happens.

A test T/C Contender in .45-70 had been chambered so that the rim recess was too deep resulting in misfires. Yep, it happens.

From MOA came a single-shot pistol with the rear sight just barely hanging on. Someone forgot to tighten it before it was "specially selected" and sent to me. It happens.

Even Freedom Arms, which has tight quality control and produces the most expensive American made revolvers, is not immune. Four years ago, in conjunction with The Shootists Holiday, we stopped at Freedom Arms and "specially selected" a .454 Casull.

Later in the day we all went out to shoot and Bob Baker of Freedom Arms was with us. The .454 would not function. Yes, it happens even with expensive handguns.

Baker borrowed a file and a screwdriver, dis-assembled the .454 on the tailgate of Mike Venturino's pickup, and in a few minute's time and with a few file strokes had it functioning perfectly.

I have heard of one shipment of 50

Ruger Super Blackhawks that came through with crooked front sights. All of them. It happens.

No harm done in this particular instance as they were all destined to be made into shorter-barreled sixguns. But it does happen. At least the factory was consistent.

When the Ruger Super Blackhawk 10 1/2" silhouette model became available, I immediately ordered two of them. One order was placed with a distributor and the other with Ruger for a gun for testing and evaluation. Both arrived during the same week. Both were used for silhouetting.

To keep things simple, my wife normally used one and I used the other. They looked identical, shot identical, except for the fact that one of them did not have enough rear sight adjustment for me to get on rams with 240 grain bullets. So I used that gun and switched to 300 grain bullets when I got to rams. My wife used the other with 240 grain jacketed bullets and 23.0 grains of WW296 all the way through the course.

With one gun I took first place in the state and with the other I shot high in the Internationals. I switched to the second gun at Internationals, the 240 grain bullet gun only as the rams were set at 200 yards, and I had just enough sight adjustment to make it.

The gun I received from the factory may have been "specially selected." If so,

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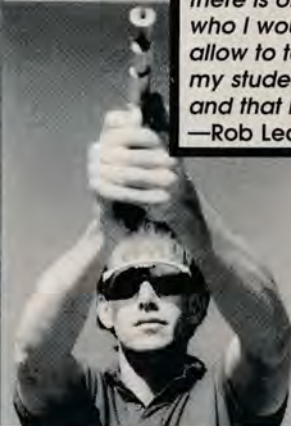
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I could not distinguish it from the one received through regular channels without looking at the serial numbers.

Mistakes happen. Writers receive guns that are far from perfect and shooters purchase guns at the local gunstore that are also far from perfect.

Amazingly Good Gun

But I am constantly amazed at how good guns are. It is a rare sixgun that won't come very close to one-inch or even less at 25 yards with the proper loads. This may take some searching and experimenting but the potential is usually there.

In 35 years of extensive handgun shooting, gun trading, gun buying, and gun writing, and after hundreds upon hundreds of handguns have gone through

my hands, I can say that I have had three sixguns that were complete duds.

Only three. I hope. I qualify that since I am in a state of frustration right now trying to make a .41 Magnum shoot with something other than target type loads.

The three bad guns, interestingly enough, came one each from the Big Three. A Model 27 .357 Magnum from Smith & Wesson with a cylinder gap in excess of .013". I say excess because that is the largest gapping tool I had to measure with at the time.

Then there was a Colt Single Action Army with no sight channel cut into the top strap, and a very early Ruger Single-Six stainless .22LR/.22 Magnum that had everything imaginable wrong with it.

Three bad guns out of hundreds I would

say is a fantastically low percentage.

Other writers have received guns that just would not shoot and some have told me of some guns they had that just would not perform no matter what they tried.

Maybe. Then again, maybe they gave up too quick.

This Gun Won't Shoot!

I love it when a shooter says to me, "This gun won't shoot!" I take it as a challenge to discover if a) the gun really won't shoot, b) the shooter can't shoot, c) the ammunition needs to be changed, or d) all of the above.

A number of excellent guns now reside in my modest shooting collection because someone said, "This gun won't shoot!" One notable example is a beautiful original Ruger Flat-Top .44 Magnum in the rarest of all barrel lengths, 7 1/2". This gun had already been taken to a local gunsmith to be made into a more packable .44 with a barrel length of 4 5/8".

"Stop! Get it back quick!"

Fortunately the gunsmith was slow in this case and had not yet put the hacksaw to the barrel and it was rescued unscathed.

Since it was in the dead of winter, we gathered up a box of factory .44 Specials and headed for the indoor range. The first five shots cut one ragged hole at 50 feet off-hand and I am not a bullseye shooter by any stretch of the imagination.

It was sold to me at a ridiculously low price even though I was openly honest and told him how much the gun was really worth. Must have been livin' right that week.

Guns are like people. There are none that are perfect. Some do perform nearly perfect and some even manage to do so with many flaws. And once in awhile, guns, like people, are found that are real lemons and won't function worth a hoot. It happens.

Probably much less so than with automobiles, but it does happen.

All this leads up to the fact that guns are better than ever. Silhouetting and silhouettes can take much credit for this. So can manufacturers that are willing to listen to shooters. And have.

Every American-made Magnum revolver is capable of shooting Perfect 40's in silhouetting. I've stated often that the guns we have are better than the game.

In addition to having better guns, we have guns that are definitely more affordable and the profusion of good guns is such that trying to make a choice can give a shooter a first-class headache.

Old Guns Vs. New Guns

In 1935, a brand new Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum cost a staggering \$60, or six to eight weeks' pay for the average worker.

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And it is not the only game in town. The number of guns to pick from in many calibers, finishes, barrel lengths, etc. is staggering. This is definitely the best of times for shooters.

Try to count how many .357, .41, and .44 Magnums are available now as well as .22 and .32 Magnums, .357 and .445 SuperMags, and we haven't even begun to talk of semi-autos and single shots.

Got a silhouette gun that won't perform? Don't be so hasty in judgement. Try different bullets. Different loads. Different powders.

Don't overlook the possibility of a weak mainspring that needs to be replaced. I have—and it has cost me targets and, more importantly, a beautiful pronghorn antelope that ran off as he heard "Click!"

Let someone else shoot the stubborn gun but be prepared to be embarrassed. And, above all, do not come to me looking to borrow a "specially selected" six-gun that came from the factory in a state of perfection.

I haven't seen one yet. And if all else fails and your gun still won't shoot, send it back to the factory and explain the problem and expect a quick and reasonable solution.



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Continued from page 61

were every bit as good, if not better, than the brand-name version and he determined that he was going to prove it. He recognized that if he could only get people to try them, they'd like them.

With that in mind, Springfield Armory launched a campaign to gain acceptance of their pistols by competitive combat shooters on the theory that if the top competitors began winning with Springfield Armory pistols, then the average guy just might believe that Springfield Armory pistols were as good as Tom knew them to be.

Pulling out all the stops, Springfield Armory in 1985 formed a professional shooting team and recruited the best and the brightest young marksmen to try their guns in competition. Soon the most respected names in competitive pistol shooting were firing Springfield Armory pistols.

In just five short years Springfield Armory came to be the most generous sponsor of practical pistol matches (\$300,000 in 1990) and the winningest pistol manufacturer. In 1985 you would have to look mighty hard to find a few Springfields amid the sea of Colts at a major tournament; today the tables are turned and there are hundreds of quality Springfield Armory pistols in the major matches.

For example, of the top 10 finishers at the recent 1990 Steel Challenge, 60% used a Springfield Armory pistol. At the 1989 IPSC National Championships, 12 out of 16 of the nation's best fired an Armory 1911; only one lone shooter used a Colt.

Let's Open A Custom Shop

However, despite the total domination of Springfield Armory in the action shooting sports, one thorn remained in Tom Reese's side. As gratifying as it was for him to see his fine pistols so widely used and so highly praised, it nonetheless galled him to see his guns undergo extensive modifications by every Tom, Dick and Harry with a Dremel tool.

We make the best guns, thought Tom, surely we can be the best at customizing them too.

Thus was planted the seed of an idea to form the Springfield Armory Custom Shop. A nationwide search was conducted to find the best pistolsmiths in the country and after carefully considering many applicants, Springfield Armory finally selected master gunsmith Les Baer of Pennsylvania to manage the new Springfield Armory Custom Shop.

Les had already established himself as one of the top combat pistolsmiths in the nation with top-ranked competitor Rick Castelow consistently placing in the top



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16 with his Baer customized pistols. Les himself had proven that he knows how to squeeze a trigger as well as he fine tunes it. His wife Karen, who handles the administrative chores of running the Custom Shop, is also an active competitor.

Inside The Custom Shop

Assisting Les in the day to day operation of the Springfield Armory Custom Shop are his accomplished apprentices, Daryl Person, Lenny Brown, Rich McKinney and Rick Keegan. Each is a highly skilled gunsmith who works directly under Les so a customer of the Custom Shop is assured that his gun will be personally checked by Les Baer.

And good work it is too. The Springfield Armory Custom Shop is a full-service shop specializing in the firm's 1911-A1 model. From basic self-defense packages to police duty packages to full-house race guns, you can be assured of a commitment to excellence in every pistol that passes under the Armory's stringent requirements for quality.

Among the many custom services offered, we selected two "packages" and then we also special-ordered a custom pistol to test the full range of the Springfield Armory Custom Shop.

The first package we selected to test is the Custom Shop's top-of-the-line "Distinguished Model," a .38 Super competition pistol featuring a double-chamber compensator. The second package we chose is the "Wadcutter Pistol" designed for NRA bullseye shooting and featuring a Bo-Mar rib and Aimpoint sight.

Lastly, we ordered a self-defense pistol to our own specifications that was not listed as a package in order to test the Custom Shop's ability to handle a true custom order.

We were interested to see if the Custom Shop could live up to the ambitious pledge it has advertised to deliver a custom pistol within 10 weeks of ordering. This is a unique promise—most custom pistols take from six months to three years, and there's no guarantee that you'll get it then!

The two package pistols were ready within the 10 week delivery time, however, our special-order pistol took over 12 weeks. However, it is important to note that our gun had to be sent out for installation of radioactive tritium night sights which accounted in large measure for the tardy delivery.

Springfield Armory insists on using only the finest components in their Custom Shop. Bar Sto barrels, Bo-Mar sights, Wilson Combat accessories, Brown Products, Smith & Alexander, Heinie, Ahrends, Pachmayr, and more.

The quality of the workmanship on our three test guns is uniformly superb. In fact, we were somewhat astonished to see such quality in what must honestly be called "production custom" work. This is an assembly line using sophisticated CNC milling machines to machine-cut

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the checkering and other batch production techniques.

Still, there is a lot of handfitting in each Custom Shop gun as I saw during a lengthy tour and inspection of the facility. Those aspects of assembly that are done by machine are, actually, superior to handwork in a strictly objective analysis. The machine-cut checkering is exactly correct with laser-straight lines and razor-sharp diamonds cut perfectly by the computer guided milling tool.

An advantage of manufacturing the guns that are to be customized is that the Custom Shop can use Springfield Armory frames and slides that have not been final-machined thereby allowing Les Baer to set tighter tolerances in the last, crucial steps of manufacture than are employed in the standard production guns.

Another advantage of the Custom Shop is the availability of expert opinion on the design of new custom options from the top professional shooters on Team Springfield. Captained by IPSC World Champion Rob Leatham, the Team consults with Les on improvements and modifications to existing models and also contributes fresh ideas and designs for new products.

When looking at the Distinguished Model, one can't help but notice that the double-chamber compensator is a copy of Bill Wilson's remarkable Super Grade design that revolutionized compensator technology when he introduced the dual-

port expansion chamber.

During a visit to the Custom Shop, *American Handgunner* asked Rob Leatham, who had just signed a \$1 million contract to shoot for Springfield Armory Custom Shop after having shot for many years for Wilson's Gun Shop, why the new Distinguished Model was a copy of the Wilson Super Grade.

"Because it's the best," Leatham said, "Why should we make something worse just to be different?" He explained that the Wilson-designed dual-port compensator simply could not be improved upon, in his opinion, so his advice to the Custom Shop was to duplicate it.

Actually, Les Baer pointed out that there are small dimensional differences in the port sizes and the thickness of the face plate of the compensator. The Custom Shop's version is somewhat lighter than Wilson's original.

However, our testing, which consisted of firing both the guns with the same IPSC "major" .38 Super ammunition, could not tell any difference between the two.

The Distinguished Model with its dual-chamber compensator is a "package" that includes the following special features:

- ✓ Low mounted adjustable Bo-Mar rear sight with hidden leaf
- ✓ Dual chamber, tapered cone compensator system on match barrel

- ✓ Full length recoil spring guide rod
- ✓ Shok Buff
- ✓ Lowered and flared ejection port
- ✓ Tuned match trigger (Videki) 3.5 lbs.
- ✓ McCormick Commander hammer
- ✓ Polished ramp and throated barrel
- ✓ Beavertail grip safety
- ✓ S&A checkered mag funnel
- ✓ Extended ambidextrous thumb safety
- ✓ Tuned extractor
- ✓ Extended mag release button
- ✓ Checkered front strap (20 lpi)
- ✓ Flatten trigger guard, checker (30 lpi)
- ✓ Checker under trigger guard (30 lpi)
- ✓ Serrated top of slide and compensator
- ✓ Brushed hard chrome finish
- ✓ Five magazines with slam pads
- ✓ Plastic carrying case with foam lining
- ✓ Checkered walnut grip panels

The retail price of the Distinguished Model, including the 1911-A1 pistol, is a reasonable \$2,450. However, for individuals who hold a Federal Firearms License or have access to one, the "dealer price" is truly exceptional. If you don't hold an FFL or have a buddy with one, ask around your local gun club because there's always a few guys with FFLs in any club.

Designed for the ultra-precise sport of bullseye shooting, the Wadcutter Model is designed to fire wadcutter ammunition only and comes complete with the following features:

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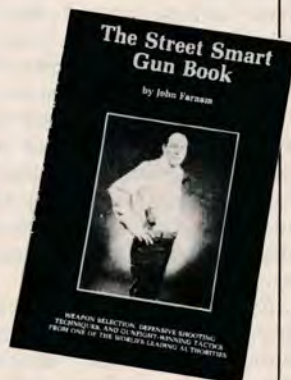
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- ✓ Beavertail grip safety
- ✓ Tuned extractor
- ✓ Fitted slide to frame
- ✓ Pistol tuned for total reliability
- ✓ Bevelled and polished mag well
- ✓ Checkered front strap (20 lpi)
- ✓ Checkered steel mainspring housing
- ✓ Removable grip scope mount
- ✓ National Match barrel and bushing
- ✓ Walnut grips
- ✓ Two magazines with slam pads
- ✓ Test fired 50 yard target
- ✓ Plastic carrying case with foam lining

The bullseye Wadcutter Model's tab is \$1,625, but again there is a handsome savings for those ordering with a dealer's FFL license.

The third of our test pistols is one that we commissioned individually in order to see if the Custom Shop could handle a special order. It is not listed as a "package."

Knowing a little bit about ordering a custom pistol, we were impressed with Les Baer's execution of our special instructions for a customized self-defense pistol. He and his associates in the Custom Shop carried out precisely our exact instructions—which is what a custom gunmaker must do—with only one exception.

We had ordered a Bar Sto barrel, but the tremendous demand for Bar Sto's superior barrels entails a back-order situation of as long as six months. In order to meet our publishing deadline, Les substituted a Nowlin national match barrel. We were notified of the change and we agreed.

Les pointed out that he always informs his clients that if a Bar Sto barrel is specified, it *could* delay the promised 10 week delivery time, depending on the Shop's current inventory of barrels. Les tries to keep a stock of Bar Sto barrels and other high-demand parts on hand, but he is not always able to accommodate his clients as rapidly as he would like. You encounter the same problem in obtaining a Bar Sto barrel from any pistolsmith, so don't hold that against the Custom Shop.

We supplied a Springfield Armory 1911-A1 to the Custom Shop and the following work was performed and charged at the fixed prices shown, which are the same for FFL holders:

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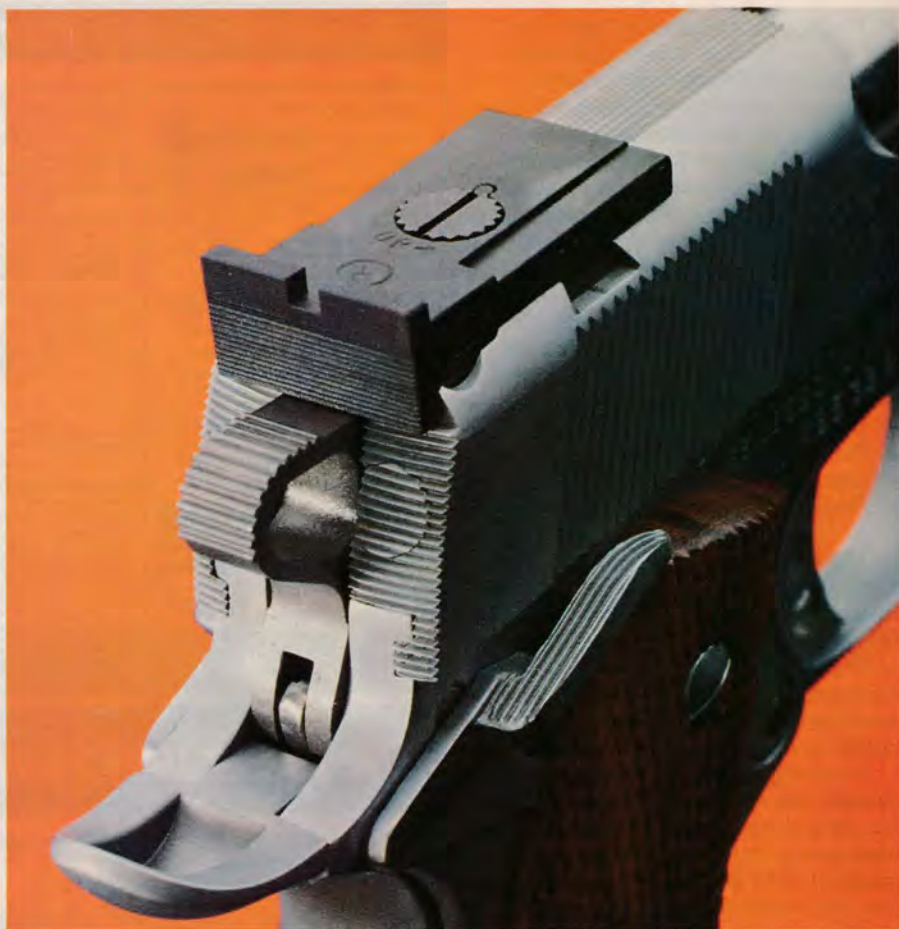
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Overall Impressions

Our general impression on the quality of Springfield Armory's custom pistols was—surprise.

We were surprised that "batch produced" custom guns, assembled literally by the box-load dozens at a time, could display such fine craftsmanship. While modern machinery is employed extensively, we were pleasantly surprised to see such a high degree of hand-polishing and hand-fitting that still goes into each and every Custom Shop pistol.

The five gunsmiths at the Custom Shop are producing truly high quality work that incorporates state-of-the-art production methods with time-honored hand work.

Les Baer built his reputation for top-drawer workmanship and he is instilling that pride in his workmanship in the Springfield Armory Custom Shop. While some traditionalists might scoff at things like the CNC milling machines doing the checkering, the work must nonetheless stand alone and be judged on its merits.

Some would argue that if we begin to discount the obvious quality of such guns simply because computer-controlled cutters were used to make them, then we might as well say that *all* custom pistols must be built entirely with hand tools in dingy basement shops lit only by kerosene lamps!

Quality is quality, period. Whether a Dremel tool or a hand file is used, it's still the experience and skill of the craftsman operating the tool that makes the difference. And that is what the Springfield Armory Custom Shop is doing—producing quality custom guns with the added bonus of reasonable delivery times and prices.

If you want to consider the Custom Shop for your next commission of custom work, you can learn more by calling the friendly and knowledgeable gals at the Custom Shop, Karen and Monica, at (309) 441-5549. If you'd like to receive a catalog from the Custom Shop, direct your request to Springfield Armory Custom Shop, 420 West Main St., Geneseo, IL 61254.



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MINI NINE

Continued from page 49

writing S&W will still warranty their guns no matter how much of this ammo is forced through them. It is, in my opinion, the street load of choice for the person carrying the 9mm. O'Neill, firing from the 25-yard barricade, put two of them in 1 1/8", the third in a still impressive 1 3/4" group.

All pistols seem to have their own distinct ammo preferences, and our sample 3913 was no exception. Winchester's popular 115 grain Silvertip has never been famous for accuracy, but in this gun Silvertip was the star of the show, turning in the best three-shot group of the test: one inch exactly, fired from the barricade by this writer.

All things considered, this is more than acceptable accuracy. The best pairs of every three shot group averaged just under an inch, and three shot groups even with flyers averaged under two inches. This is very good service pistol performance, and very damn good compact pistol performance.

Remember, a couple of years ago when the early Ruger P-85s were shooting atrocious 4" to 5" groups from the bench and the machine rest, the firearms press was calling that "acceptable combat accuracy." Fortunately, Ruger's accuracy standards in the 9mm auto have improved considerably since.

Reliability

Several hundred rounds of factory ammunition were fired through the 3913 including Black Hills, CorBon, Winchester, and Federal in various configurations.

There was only one malfunction during firing. This was the failure of a Winchester Subsonic 147 grain to fully feed and go into battery on the fourth shot in the magazine. A light rap on the back of the slide returned the weapon to battery and firing continued without incident. The 147 grain bullet is much heavier than the Parabellum's designers originally intended, and failures to properly cycle have been noted by at least one other tester with one other brand, as well.

All the rest of the firing was flawless. This did not surprise us. From the beginning, the S&W Mini-Guns have had the balance of slide mass versus spring compression down exactly right, and the pistol has an optimum cyclic rate. The 469 achieved reliability from the beginning, unlike the parent gun which had to evolve from the 39 to the 39-2 to the 439 before it was reliable as produced.

The S&W 4516 large-bore compact, in its first generation, has had problems with a slide that moves too fast and occasionally suffers 12 o'clock misfeeds and premature lifting of the slide stop. Nei-

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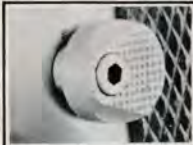
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ther problem occurred in the proven 3913 firing mechanism design, and none was or should be anticipated.

The 3913 is, quite simply, more reliable than the 4516 if this sample gun is any indication. Here we have another first for S&W: when else has a smaller caliber version been more reliable than the larger caliber version of the same gun?

Magazine Quirks

That said, let us consider one problem that always haunted the 3900 series and has not been exorcised in the 3913. This is the tendency of the manufacturer to be overly optimistic about the weapon's maximum capacity for reliable feed.

As noted, only one malfunction occurred during firing. However, time and time again when loading the pistol with a full magazine of eight, there was a failure to feed the topmost round in the magazine. It was noted earlier in the epoch of the Model 39 that, stated 8+1 ammo capacity to the contrary, the weapon worked much better when loaded with seven in the magazine and an eighth in the chamber, and backed up by 7-shot rather than 8-shot magazines. The Illinois State Police learned right quick to stipulate seven cartridges per magazine to guarantee reliability.

Some Model 39s fed fine with eight and one; however, many did not. This is not something unique to the S&W autoloader. One sees the same with the famed Browning P-35 Hi-Power. Ostensibly designed for 13 rounds in the mag and one more in the pipe, the Browning generically works better with 12+1 unless the magazines have been altered.

The British SAS, for whom the Hi-Power is almost an emblem, rigidly enforce a rule of only 12 9mm "22" cartridges per magazine. Again, while many individual Brownings work fine with a full load, all of them seem to work when downloaded one.

That has been the history of the S&W Model 39 as well.

The new generation 3900s are subtly different from other Third Generation S&W autos. A good Model 645 magazine will work perfectly in a 4506, and vice versa . . . a good Model 59 magazine suits the 5906 just fine . . . but the Model 39 magazine does not always work in a 3904 or 3906.

One Round Down

A redesigned magazine is the key to the compact 3913 having the same cartridge capacity as its single-stack big brother guns. As with the little 4616, the body of the magazine extends below the butt and into a plastic floorplate that functions also as a grip extender. As with the 4516, this also significantly compromises the compactness of the gun.

During firing, once the round was chambered and a magazine of eight was seated, we did not experience any second

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round malfunctions.

We did, however, notice that after the first shot was fired and the topmost round chambered, the next round down would have been moved precariously forward. It had not malfunctioned but was "right on the edge." I quickly decided that if I was to carry the 3913, it would be with seven in the mag and one in the chamber, a condition in which that problem does not occur.

Do not construe this as a condemnation of the 3913. For some 36 years now, savvy Model 39 owners have backed off one round from stated capacity in their full size 9mm pistols, from 8+1 to 7+1 to achieve reliability. That the 3913 achieves full reliability with the same 7+1 capacity is an engineering feat, not a fault.

Now, two of the 3913's directly competitive "opposition guns" do achieve full 9-shot capacity with unquestioned reliability. These are the HK P7M8 and the SIG-Sauer P-228. However, the former is all-steel and considerably heavier, and the latter seems somewhat chunkier in the hand, and neither is available in stainless. The 3913 will find its own niche in the market rather quickly.

Finding of Purpose

Many of us hoped the 3913 would be not only chopped and channeled, but *slimmed*. While it's flatter than a 4516, it is still not as flat and trim as a .380.

One has to stretch the imagination to make this a pocket or ankle gun. Why is that, when the dimensions and weight favorably compare to those of such long-established pocket or ankle guns as the Detective Special?

The reasons are the shape of the gun and the distribution of its weight. I desperately wanted to make an ankle gun out of the 3913, but after a couple of days and a couple of different holsters, I had to give up on the concept. The ammo supply in the butt makes the gun top-heavy and causes it to want to shift as you move.

Also, the bulk of a revolver is centered at the cylinder and slopes off as you come back past the hammer area; that part of an auto is not only heavy with ammo, but squared off and protruding. The 3913 bulged considerably more in ankle carry than did the Detective Special in an identical holster.

Pocket? Not likely. In the side pocket of fatigue pants, it jiggled so much of its own weight that it looked as if I had a kitten in my pants that was trying to escape. With jeans, the flatter-bottomed of the two supplied magazines would barely fit, but not the one with the little finger extension, and in slash pockets, concealment was hopeless.

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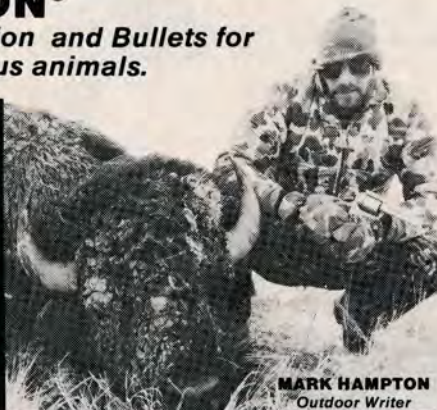
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zine disconnecter safety. This means that a press of the mag release button totally deactivates the weapon if someone else gets their hands on it subsequently. No gun competing with it offers that.

I see three primary markets for this pistol.

A) Those who already use the service-size S&W automatics. Compatibility of handling is total. This is particularly true of those using some variation of the 39 or 3900 now. The gun is distinctly more compact than its bigger predecessors, with the same firepower and the same accuracy, plus the smooth double action trigger stroke that is typical of all the Third Generation Smiths. Single action feels long and is between five and

I sincerely wish the pistol had been made as a seven-shot gun with a flush-bottom magazine.

six pounds on the test pistol, in the Glock ballpark, and quite controllable.

B) Those who want a belt-size gun not much bigger than a .380, but with distinctly more hitting power. Here, the 3913 (and its carbon steel and alloy-framed, blue brother, the 3914) competes directly with the SIG-Sauer P-225 and, to a lesser extent, HK's squeeze-cocking P7M8. Unlike either, the Smith is available in stainless, has thumb safety plus magazine disconnecter safety (a plus or a minus, depending on which school of combat handgunning you belong to), and delivers plenty of reliability and all the accuracy you need.

At less than \$500 suggested retail for the blue 3914 and about \$535 for the stainless 3913, the Smith & Wesson compact distinctly undersells its counterpart from SIG and dramatically undersells the Heckler and Koch entry into the market. At retail list, one can buy two 3914s for the price of a single HK P7M8.

C) Those seeking to upgrade from the snubby .38 revolver as a primary weapon. Because of its shape and weight distribution, the 3913 will not replace the S&W Model 60 stainless or Model 38 Airweight revolvers in pocket or ankle carry application. However, for the large number of police officers and lawfully armed citizens who now carry small-frame .38 snubbies in belt or shoulder holsters as primary armament, the 3913 has a lot to recommend it.

The flat pistol carries well in a shoulder harness or hip-mounted speed rig, and it is every bit as concealable as the stubby revolver. It offers at least the same level of per-shot potency as any .38 Special two-inch, more if loaded with a round like

Continued on page 92

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MINI NINE

Continued from page 90

the CorBon +P which gives a performance level similar to the 110 grain .357 Magnum hollowpoint.

And, instead of five or six shots, you have eight or nine. You also have a much more controllable handgun. Recoil of even +P 9mm in the 3913 was judged by the testers to be milder than that of standard-power .38 Special in a standard-gripped small frame revolver.

The gun fits the hand better than a stock revolver, and trigger manipulation is considerably easier. As stress increases, the value of these ergonomic features increases disproportionately.

The detective or CCW holder who has been thinking of upgrading from the Chief Special class of handgun but has been concerned about portability and concealability, need look no further than the 3913.

Fit, Finish, Accessories

The 3913 comes standard with the Wayne Novak-designed streamlined fixed rear sight, with three-dot motif. Our gun hit about an inch low and an inch and a half to the right at 25 yards with practically everything we shot in it, but this is a common problem with fixed sight guns and can be easily rec-



A LadySmith version of the Model 3913 features a distinctive rake on angle of the frame from the trigger guard to the muzzle, a cosmetic touch that men and women alike find attractive. Other stylistic touches of the LadySmith 9mm include gray grips, "frosted" finish and an imitation Moroccan leather carrying case.

tified by a competent gunsmith or armorer.

I sincerely wish the pistol had been made as a seven-shot gun with a flush-bottom magazine. As it is, the 3913 comes with two nominally eight-round magazines, one with a flat plastic bottom and one with a finger extension. I would use the latter for the reload and the former in the gun in the interest of maximum concealability; even with the little finger tucked under the pistol, the 3913 shoots very well.

The 11° crown at the muzzle, normally a sign of engineers who know what they're doing, seemed roughly cut on this pistol and that could have contributed to the test gun's curious habit of throwing one of every three rounds out of most of the groups. Bear in mind, however, that even with those flyers the groups were still quite good, and the pairs without the flyers were superb.

The flat-stack, compact S&W models 3913 and 3914 will, I think, be sales winners. For a great many people who need to carry a concealed handgun daily, the Smith & Wesson Model 3913 will comprise an ideal set of attributes, and will represent an excellent value.



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COMPACT NINES

Continued from page 49

6900 series of the Third Generation
remains extremely popular in the market-
place.

Similarly, a very high percentage of
interest in the Glock pistol shifted from
the standard Model 17 to the compact
Glock 19 as soon as it was introduced.

Heckler and Koch, like Smith with the
Mini-Gun, engineered the P7-M13 origi-
nally for the US military tests. Gun con-
noisseurs sniffed that the slim, flat lines
of the original 9-shot P7 were among its
greatest selling points, and that the fat-
handled 14-shot model spoiled the whole
concept—yet the gun dealers tell me that
an amazing number of the P7s they sell
are the M13 high capacity variation.

Your compact will be shorter in the
butt, shorter at the muzzle, and lighter
over all. It may not fit your hand as well
as its big brother, or in case of the P7 its
little brother, or in the case of the SIG P-
228 as well as either. Or it may fit better.

Shooters testing my early SIG P-228
sometimes remarked that it gave a them
superior trigger reach in comparison to
their full-size P-226, and some larger-
handed friends carry the HK P7-M13
over the slimmer M8 because, they say, it
fits them better.

Weight Vs. Potency

Are the compact high capacity guns
giving you more slam for the gram than
their bigger versions?

Let's put them on the scale and take a
look.

Action Arms' AT-88 series, well-made
clones of the CZ 75, weigh 42.3 ozs. in
the full size "S" model, loaded with 16
rounds of 115 grain Winchester Silvertip.
The loaded gun has you packing 2.64 ozs.
of dead weight per available shot.

Weighing 38.1 ozs. with 14 of the
same cartridges, the compact AT-88P
gives you a carried weight per shot of
2.72 ozs. This is actually a 3% loss of
efficiency in weight versus firepower
when you go to the compact version of
the Action Arms gun.

A Glock 17 weighs roughly 30 ozs.
fully loaded with 18 115 grain cartridges,
for a very efficient 1.88 ozs. of weight
per available round.

A little Glock 19 with 16 of the same
cartridges goes two ounces less, and for
its smaller size charges you two full
ounces per available round. Thus, though
smaller, the Glock 19 delivers only 94%
of the weight versus firepower ratio that
its big brother offers.

SIG's slimline P-225, their original
compact 9x19, weighs 34 ozs. when load-
ed with its nine rounds, for a disappoint-
ing weight factor of 3.77 ozs. per avail-
able shot. The big P-226 tilts the scale at
only three ounces more with all 16 car-

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tridges loaded, for a much better 2.31 ozs. per shot.

The ratio is very close with the 14-shot P-228, which is 32 1/2 ozs. loaded and gives a 2.32 ozs. per shot weight factor. The P-228 is more efficient in this respect than most compact nines when compared to the full size battle pistols they were developed from.

Consider Smith & Wesson's lineup of high capacity 9mm pistols. The 5906, made of all stainless steel, is a chunky 41.5 ozs. loaded with all of the 16 Silver-tips you can stuff into it, for a weight of 2.59 ozs. for every available shot.

Go to the light alloy framed version, though—the 5904 in blue or the special-order 5903 in stainless—and weight of the loaded pistol drops to 33 ozs., for a much more manageable 2.06 ozs. per in-gun round.

When you sacrifice three shots and go for the compact 6904 or 6906, you're down to 29 ozs. gross weight but up to 2.23 ozs. per available shot. Thus, while the Mini-Gun is 14% more efficient in weight to firepower than the all-steel 5906 service pistol, it is almost 8% less efficient than the full size, light-frame pistol in that regard.

We could go on and on, but you get the idea. It may not make sense to trade your service Parabellum for a compact just on the basis of efficient carry of significant firepower.

Remember, however, that the compact isn't just lighter, it's *smaller*. This is of particular significance to the plainclothes lawman or the citizen with a concealed carry permit, and all the more so the hotter your weather and the lighter your clothing.

In overall silhouette, your Mini-Gun or whatever does not compare altogether unfavorably with a 5-shot .38 snubnose revolver.

When you figure that you are taking more than twice the firepower and in some models equalling or exceeding *triple* the .38 belly gun's in-gun capacity, we begin to see where the popularity of the high capacity compact Nine is born.

Concealment Factors

This is not to say that a compact Nine of more than 10 shot capacity can be carried as easily as a small-frame revolver. It can't, except in deep concealment.

A relatively small percentage of cops who pack Glock 17s in uniform have found themselves able to carry the 19 in an ankle holster. I've met exactly *one* fellow who carried a P7 that way, and he was a huge man using the 9-shot version of the pistol.

I routinely carry a 2" revolver on the ankle or in the pocket, one favorite being a chopped and channeled K-frame .357 Magnum that weighs 30 ozs. loaded. I can't wear my Glock 19 or my S&W 6904 either place with any real comfort or concealment, and believe me, I've

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tried. The sharp outer edges and big grips are more the reason than the weight.

Most who carry the compact high capacity Nines conceal them in or on the belt, or in shoulder holsters. There's no question that a 6904 bulges less than a 5904 in either carry. Even when you compare SIG P-228 compact to the P-226 service pistol, with only perhaps a quarter inch difference, there is still a real difference in concealment with some bodies, some holsters, and some clothing.

Compactness does lend versatility for the majority of pistol packers who see good sense in carrying one gun all the time. While the difference in practical

*The more alone you
are when faced with an
armed robbery in
progress, the more
comforting those extra
rounds can be.*

accuracy when you go from a 5" Government Model Colt .45 to a little Officers ACP is noticeable, and the difference between a 4" .38 and a 2" .38 revolver is *dramatic*, there seems to be little real sacrifice when you go from the big 9mm Parabellum to the compact in most models.

Indeed, the original Mini-Gun, with its newer bushing, was a far *more* accurate pistol than the contemporary Model 459, and some testers believe it's even true of today's Third Generation guns where all models share a theoretically identical bushing design.

SIG P-226 versus P-228? You're talking an inch difference at 25 yards, max, once the guns are broken in. My groups with the Glock 17 and the Glock 19 are virtually identical. Some say the different grip shape and the sharp serrations on the 19 make it shoot better than its big brother, for them.

Controllability can be equally subjective. I can shoot a P-226 much better in rapid fire than I can a P-228, but is that because the gun is inherently a better shooter or that I'm just more used to it and like the bigger grip better?

One has to try both models with the same ammo to determine if, with *their* hand and *their* technique, there is any difference in practical combat accuracy.

One can't help noting that a number of police departments have purchased compacts—Glocks and Smith Mini-Guns, most commonly—for issue to *all* personnel, including the uniformed patrol division. This would not have been done if there was reason to believe that it would lead to a mass fall-off in stress shooting potential. On the contrary, tests these agencies did with their own personnel

PRODUCT SAFETY ALERT

Smith & Wesson has shipped over 300,000 Third Generation Pistols. We have had a very small number of reports where a dropped pistol resulted in a broken grip resulting in a failure to fire by releasing mainspring tension. Resultant testing and review have shown that a pistol dropped at a specific angle can cause a fracture of the grip.

As a result of these occurrences and our testing, we have made a change in the grip material to a thermoplastic alloy of increased durability. This new material, which is now being used on all current production models, can be identified by a dimple on the bottom of the grip, next to



the large opening. Additionally, the blue product box has a green dot sticker on the label end.

We believe it unlikely that you will experience any problem with your original grips. However, in order to safeguard our customers from the possibility of such a malfunction, we will make available, free of charge, an easily installed replacement grip. Please inspect your pistol and if you have a model listed below that does not have a small dimple as indicated, please write



us including your model and serial number or call 1-800-338-2466. If you prefer, you can send your pistol to a Smith & Wesson Warranty Station where we will replace the grip for you.

Smith & Wesson's development process is a continuing one. We are constantly striving both to develop new products and improve existing products. We are committed to building the safest, most reliable, finest performing firearms possible.

Models Affected

3904, 3906, 3913, 3913LS, 3914, 3914LS, 1006, 1066, 4506, 4516, 4516-1, 5903, 5904, 5906, 5946, 6904, 6906, 6946

Contact Information:

Smith & Wesson
Grip Replacement
P.O. Box 2208
Springfield, MA 01102-2208



Or Call: 1-800-338-2466

showed minimum performance difference.

But the compact allowed the investigators to carry the same weapon as patrol, and for off-duty cops to carry the same gun as on duty, without complaint no matter what the weather. Not having to issue a new weapon and re-qualify your man when he transfers from patrol division to detective makes sense, and so does the "one gun all the time concept."

Illinois State Police pioneered the latter policy with their adoption of the Model 39 8-shot in 1967, though they

*Thus it is that the gun
has to be picked
somewhat to suit the
lifestyle.*

later relented and allowed snub .38 and .357 revolvers for carry on one's own time.

Another advantage of this policy is that the majority of off-duty cops (and even a large number of on-duty plainclothesmen) don't bother to carry spare ammunition. If all they're going to have is what's in the gun, giving them something that fires 13 to 16 times makes sense.

The off-duty cop, remember, has no partner, no shotgun racked to his dashboard, and no radio with which to call in the cavalry for backup. The more alone you are when faced with an armed robbery in progress, the more comforting those extra rounds can be.

While the policy is logical for large numbers of guns issued to large numbers of personnel, many of whom are not into guns and think "officer survival" has something to do with collective bargaining, the truly aware police officer or licensed civilian gun carrier has other options.

A pistol of 9mm or .45 persuasion with a single stack magazine will hide more discreetly under a shirt-tail than any fat-gripped 12-plus-round Parabellum, and many find it easier as well as more discreet and more comfortable to simply have another slim magazine in the belt on the opposite side to equalize the firepower issue.

Since the HK P7 M13 came out, I've twice attempted for weeks at a time to get used to that fat-handled pistol—and finally given up. My fingers aren't long enough to shoot it as well as its baby brother; the edge of the grip bulges under any kind of light clothing; and a second fat magazine is impossible for me to carry with discretion and comfort.

Yet the 9-shot version of the P7 has always been one of my favorite guns for under a light summer shirt: its flat

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grip profile disappears against the body, the weapon fits my hand perfectly and performs well enough for me that I've thrice shot Bianchi Cup side events with one; and the easy to carry spare mag (or two) on the other side gave me a total of 17 to 25 rounds at hand, compared to the 14 in the bigger rendition of the P7.

Thus it is that the gun has to be picked somewhat to suit the lifestyle. The gun enthusiast and officer survival practitioner is likely to be constantly armed and carrying spare ammo, and for him a non-high capacity auto in .45 or 9mm may be the best choice.

For many of his brothers who will be armed less frequently and will often carry the gun as an afterthought, simply shoving it into the belt on the way out the door, the extra firepower of the high capacity 9mm auto may well make it the pistol of choice.

Idiosyncrasies of the Breed

All guns have their own little characteristics that the user must recognize and adjust to. The breed of high capacity compact Nine Millimeters is no exception.

S&W Mini-Gun: Grip shape is such that it's a higher reach for the thumb to operate the manual safety/decock lever. On the three-digit models, the magazine release button's spring is way too light and can accidentally drop the mag. This does not seem to be a problem with the new generation 6900 series.

SIG P-228: My early sample provided by the factory had nasty sharp edges at the back of the grip panels, and would bite irritatingly into the base of the thumb. My sample also was more erratic about locking its slide back on the last round than your typical P-225 or P-226.

HK P7 M13: Though some critics insist it is more jam-prone than the P7 M8, my experience with a considerable number of the high capacity squeeze-cockers is that they are every bit as reliable as the M8, which is to say, one of the most reliable systems ever manufactured. As with the smaller P7, clean the gas port system carefully if lead bullets are used.

Glock 19: Throws its brass back on a much more acute angle than the bigger Glocks. The petite or short-armed shooter may find spent casings striking distractingly in the face or going down the shirt collar; for them, the Glock 17 with its more sideways ejection arc is the answer.

Try them all, and see which works best for you. If you can foresee yourself struggling with an assailant for the weapon, the Smith Mini-Gun or the Beretta Compact have safety catches that tend to be "proprietary to the owner," and the S&W also has the magazine disconnect safety that can deactivate the weapon with a touch of the mag release button if the antagonist is getting the upper hand.

Big people with big hands love the HK P7 M13. Once you've acclimated yourself to the unique manual of arms that by definition is demanded by any unique design, you'll find nothing faster for an accurate first shot and for sustained effective fire.

The Glock 19 is easy for most people to shoot and is honestly advertised as the highest firepower pistol in the whole compact high capacity array. Just make sure to keep the finger off the trigger until you intend to fire.

SIG's P-228 is an extremely well-balanced pistol and perhaps the easiest of the breed for the revolver shooter to make the transition to.

Only now on the market for brief time,



Ayoob says the new 6906's safety is easier to operate than older 669's.

I suspect it will be a hugely successful gun in the field.

Those who like the cocked and locked carry of Browning style pistols but crave low bulk with high capacity will be well satisfied with the selective double action designs that allow optional cocked and locked carry. These include the numerous CZ 75 clones that have been scaled down, like the AT-88P and the compact version of Springfield Armory's P-9.

When Lee Iacocca introduced the Ford Mustang in 1964, the purists turned up their nose. It wasn't a real sports car, they said, nor was it a true compact sedan like the Falcon it was developed from. If it was neither fish nor fowl, then, what place did it have?

The public, as we recall, told the purists to stuff it. The Mustang was what it was, and it struck a chord with a vast number of people for whom it was the ideal machine at that time in their lives.

So it is with the compact, high capacity 9mm semiautomatic pistol. No, it's not a pocket auto, and no, it's not a full size battle pistol. It is what it is, and for a vast number of police officers, handgun enthusiasts, and armed citizens, the concept has proven to be the ideal machine for them at this time in their lives, too.



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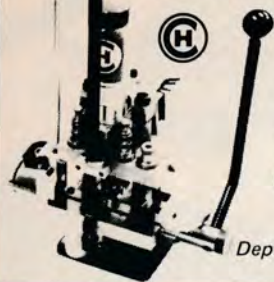
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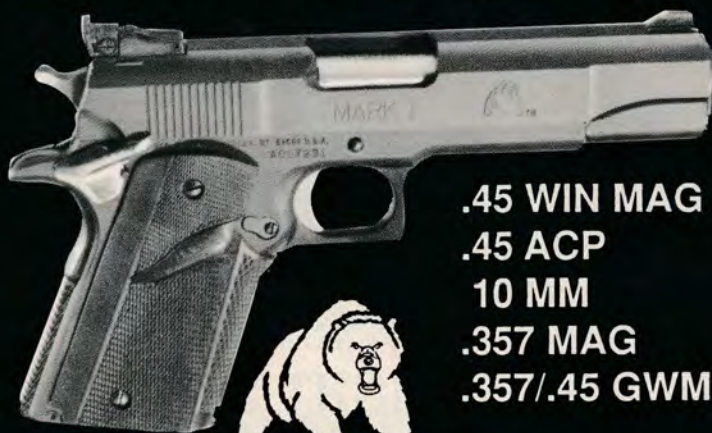
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BIANCHI CUP

Continued from page 55

longer stand not knowing where they stand.

Ask Bud Enos.

This friendly guy with the dangling cigarette, the scruffy shorts and the clipboard is the father of 1983 and 1984 winner Brian Enos. He has also been for many years the self-appointed, meticulously accurate, unofficial Bianchi score keeper.

Bud tracks 50 or so shooters. He chooses them because he thinks they have a chance to win or just because he likes them. The scores on his homemade chart makes comparisons possible and trends apparent hours before official posted scores can be analyzed.

This year match officials ruled Range Officers could not directly provide unchecked scores at Bud's request. He saw no way to perform his usual service but to ask competitors just off the line for a brief look at their score cards at what was for many an uncomfortable moment.

In no case did a shooter refuse. As in the past, the Bud Enos' unofficial scoring system and fountain of Bianchi knowledge remained available to all crowding around him whether spectator, press or competitor.





The Kid Triumphs

It was Bud Enos who first called attention to the fact that Doug Koenig, shooting a different schedule than the recognized front-runners, had cleaned one more stage than anyone else by Thursday night.

That meant if he cleaned his Barri-cades early Friday morning for a perfect score it would really put the pressure on several others who yet had to shoot both plates and mover.

Several shooters sailed through the plates and then it all came down to the mover. At that point almost a dozen shooters had the possibility to tie Koenig's perfect score and beat him on X-count. But one by one their hopes died as 8-ring hits appeared on the whizzing cardboard.

With the \$10,000 first prize and assorted high-priced hardware to call his own, Doug Koenig was not through. In the Colt Speed Event shoot-off on Saturday he worked his way through the list of six finalists. Herb Conly, Ken Tapp, Brian Enos, Rob Leatham all went down to Doug's blazing fast gun.

Finally it was Koenig and Jerry Barnhart. Leatham's record of 2.08 seconds had stood since 1985. Barnhart had two runs of 1.85. Then Koenig did it in 1.84. Another \$2,500.

Doug Koenig said later the toughest thing he did was make the acceptance speech at the awards



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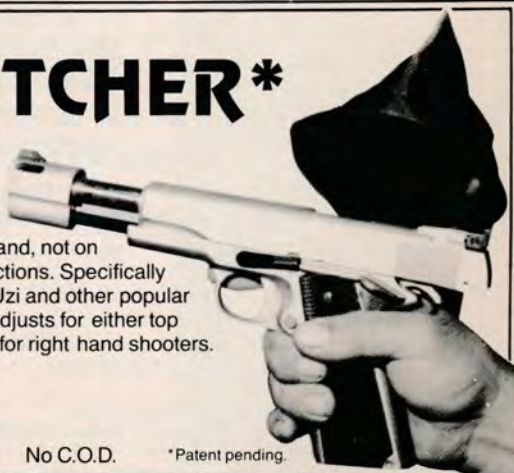
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FISHPAW GRIPS

Continued from page 31

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what constitutes true quality.

"I've made grips for some famous people, but I'd rather not mention names," the soft-spoken Virginian explained. "You see, I want to build grips for people who know guns and who know what they want. I don't want to build a grip for someone who orders it just because I made a set for Hank Williams."

"Just the other day a guy called about a set of grips for a roundbutt Redhawk that he'd seen in the *Handgunner*. After I talked to him for a few minutes I realized that he didn't know what roundbutt means. He had the factory square-frame and he didn't know that a gunsmith would have to roundbutt it before I could build a grip."

"Well, I don't want to sound snooty or anything, but I want to build grips for people who know what they want. People shouldn't have to call me to find out what a roundbutt is."

So if you know guns and you know that you want the very best, go see Roy Fishpaw. He has elevated grip making into an art form.

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For information about grips from Roy Fishpaw, please send \$2 to him at 101 Primrose Lane, Lynchburg, VA 24501 or call him at (804) 385-6667. His waiting list is currently running around four months, however, that is subject to fluctuation.

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PISTOLSMITHING

Continued from page 38

ing the rebound spring with one of less tension. There is a duplicate tension and reduced tension hammer spring system available from Brownell called "power rib" springs that retain their original tensions long after installation.

After installing necessary action shims and polishing moving parts, an overtravel screw is installed in the trigger. This is a difficult operation because of case hardening on triggers, but a spot anneal or grinding a spot with a Dremel tool helps.

The screw prevents overtravel in both single and double action use. Thus, a PPC revolver may be used for silhouette matches as well as DA PPC competition.

Sighting-In

Sights available are superb and well designed. Full-length ribs mount rapid adjustment sights that can be pre-sighted to given yardages and returned to with a simple click of the adjustment wheel or click stops on an adjustable front sight.

My favorite PPC sight is Ron Power's double Grand Master rib that can be sighted to four positions for, say, 25, 50, 75 and 100 yard shooting and has a provision for instant attachment of a scope or optical sight. This makes an extremely versatile revolver that can be used in a variety of ways without stopping to sight in for every change.

Lawson's Own PPC

I recently built myself a PPC revolver on a K-frame, finished it in European rust blue finish and provided it with Double Master rib and a scope sight.

I found that my Brownell/Power SSR mounting fixture made locating and drilling/tapping the necessary holes for secure sight mounting nearly effortless, compared to the old eyeball method of mounting.

Barrels are available in full round-bull configuration or slab-sided models.

Wichita makes a slab sided clamp-on compensator for L-frame revolvers. Virtually any barrel can be converted to a comp style with a little lathe and mill work, and compensated revolvers are definitely with us to stay.

I still have two of my double-action revolvers from the 1950's, and I shoot them occasionally. But, when I switch from one of these to my PPC revolver, it's like changing from work to recreation. Of all my many regrets, not having this particular weapon for competition in the Fifties tops the list.

I'm truly glad that I lived long enough to see the double-action revolver enter the winner's circle in the space age.



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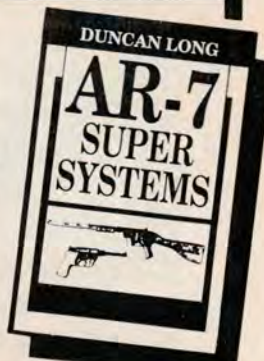
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AR-7 SUPER SYSTEMS

by Duncan Long

The lightweight, rugged AR-7 has long been a favorite of explorers, hunters, survivalists and USAF pilots. Now firearms expert Duncan Long reveals his secrets about the formidable rifle and its companion pistol, the Explorer II. **AR-7 Super Systems** goes well beyond the owner's manual to give you a straight, no-holds-barred assessment of the AR-7's capabilities, reliability, problem areas, and recommended modifications and accessories, as well as suggestions for using the rifle as the basis for a one-of-a-kind exotic weapons system. Worth the price of the book alone are Long's secrets of buying a used AR-7 or Explorer II and tips on how to preserve the value of collector's versions of the weapons. Detailed instructions, photographs and illustrations show owners how to field-strip, detail-strip, clean, reassemble and troubleshoot the firearms with a minimum of fuss. Firearms history buffs will enjoy the in-depth history of the Armalite Company and its development of the AR-7. This book belongs on the bookshelf of every AR-7 owner. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, photos, illus., 144 pp. **\$15.00**



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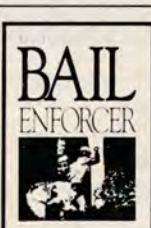
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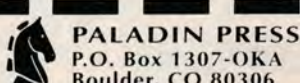
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HANDLOADING

Continued from page 18

and handgun bullets, even down to a chart for separating a true wind into two components for calculating the effect of a cross wind.

All in all, the new Sierra manuals receive a "U-Must-Buy" recommendation and about the only thing I could find fault with is the lack of cast bullet information, but then that is really a minor complaint when compared to the truck load of information provided about jacketed handgun ammunition.

Hornady Video

It seems every time I go to a major tournament or gunshow there is always someone there hawking some screwball video for about three prices. Some years ago I wrote a newsstand journal for another publisher and on the first inside page was a full page ad for videos featuring a long-legged, well-endowed lass in a very small string bikini holding a machine gun. All of which pleased my wife to no end because she thought I had been working on a gun book.

Well, Hornady has a video out on reloading that may please your wife if she is interested in reloading and she hates to take instruction from you. It is entitled simply *Metallic Reloading* and it is 24 minutes in length.

You don't know how tired I am of retail video tapes with the home video atmosphere, but that isn't the case here and every minute of it has a very professional feel to it. This tape explains the principles of metallic reloading in simple, straight forward terms and in the process gives the viewer little pointers on what to expect and look for while preparing his reloads. I highly recommend this tape to every beginning reloader and to all the gun clubs in the country for educating new members.

Frank's AD

Finally, every serious shooter I know has had at least one accidental discharge in his experience. (Whether they will admit to it or not is another subject.)

Well, in my column about gas-check bullets in the May/June issue I suffered the equivalent of an accidental discharge with the computer. I misspelled obturation as obduration.

There really is a word obduration and it means "unmoved by persuasion, pity, or tender feelings."

I suppose that could be said about gas-check bullets under pressure, but the correct word is obturation and it means "to close (a hole or cavity) so as to prevent a flow of gas through it" and that is what a lead slug does in a revolver cylinder.



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6= all stainless steel
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TOUGH TIMES HIT GUN MAKERS AS DAN WESSON, KIMBER FILE CHAP. 11

Into the valley of death rode the six hundred—wading bravely into the financial fray of the bankruptcy courts under Chapter 11 are **Dan Wesson Arms** and **Kimber Of Oregon**. Reports also indicate that **Excim** and **Charter Arms** are both teetering on the edge.

"I can't deny there's problems," Excim's Jim Sprague told the *Handgunner*. "We're dumping inventory to turn it into cash. It's a tough time. It's hard to eat nine millimeters, you know."

The deal to save Charter Arms by moving operations to Oklahoma has been unplugged because of an unpaid electric bill. The buyout of the debt-ridden gunmaker by Z.J. Acquisitions Inc., reported in last issue's *Insider*, did not materialize because the power company and Z.J. couldn't agree on how to settle Charter Arms' unpaid electric bill of \$32,000. *The Bridgeport Post* reports that United Illuminating Co. "shut off power to Charter Arms, forcing its work force of about 125 to suspend operations."

One of the biggest gun distributors in the country, **Outdoor Sports**, has filed Chapter 11. The Ohio-based wholesaler is the number one distributor for **U.S. Repeating Arms** (Winchester), itself an ailing company that USRAC president George Rockwell described as "Just out of the hospital."

And if that's not enough, one of the Big Three handgun makers is throwing a huge chunk of its stock onto the market. A prospectus describing a common stock offering of 1,830,000 shares of **Sturm, Ruger & Co.** contains a provocative hint of a new gun to come from Ruger: "In late 1990, the Company expects to introduce a submachine gun, designed by Uziel Gal, the inventor of the 'Uzi' submachine gun, which will be marketed exclusively to law enforcement agencies and the U.S. and foreign governments."

The prospectus also informs stockholders that, "The Company is currently a defendant in 36 cases involving product liability claims which allege defective product design." Bearing that in mind, and if you happen to have a spare \$50 million sitting around, then you might want to buy up this Ruger stock.

On the other hand, one dead gun company has come back to life. Arizona entrepreneur Richard Voit has acquired all the rights to the **Bren Ten** pistol and will be offering the gun under the new banner of **Peregrine Industries Inc.** This

recreation of the original 10mm pistol will be called the Peregrine Falcon.

Michael Dixon and Tom Dornaus, formerly of the original Bren Ten manufacturing firm of D&D, are both employed at the new Peregrine company. Hmmm.

An interesting new pistol cartridge is in the works from **Smith & Wesson**. Called the **.356 TSW** (Team Smith & Wesson), the cartridge is essentially a European 9x21 case which is dimensionally identical to the 9mm Parabellum (9x19) except for a longer case. The chamber of the .356 TSW carries a throat sufficiently deep to accommodate the seating of a heavy bullet, 150 to 160 grains, loaded at a velocity to yield a "major" power factor as determined by IPSC combat shooting rules.

The genesis of the cartridge is to provide **Team Smith & Wesson** with a round that is ballistically the equal of the .38 Super. Smith & Wesson's 9mm series of auto pistols are too small to accommodate the .38 Super cartridge which is the runaway favorite of action shooters.

The logical answer is to load the 9mm Luger up to "major," but S&W was forced to develop the wildcat .356 TSW in order to circumvent a new United States Practical Shooting Association (USPSA) rule that would ban as unsafe any 9mm loaded up to make the major power factor.

The ban on "9mm Major" was passed unilaterally by USPSA and does not apply to any of the other 39 nations that are members of the International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC).

The 9mm ban also applies to the .38 Super loaded with bullets weighing less than 150 grains. To my knowledge, this is the first time any shooting sport's rules have permitted a cartridge, but banned its bullets.

Speaking of IPSC matters, Attorney Dick Thomas of Columbia, Mo., has announced plans to host a reunion May 1, 1991 of participants in the Columbia Conference of 1976 that resulted in the formation of the International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC).

The reunion will be held in Columbia where 15 years ago some 40 representatives from across the United States and a dozen foreign countries met to formally organize practical pistol shooting. Today there are 39 nations that are members of the Confederation.

Col. Jeff Cooper, considered by many

to be the founder of practical shooting, was elected Honorary Lifetime Chairman of IPSC in 1976 and Thomas says that Col. Cooper has indicated that he will attend the reunion.

Anyone interested in attending—you don't have to have been an original participant—should contact Dick Thomas, 609 East Broadway, Columbia, MO, 65201.

Ed Brown, the master pistolsmith whose guns have previously graced these pages, is the first to offer a do-it-yourself *stainless steel* drop-in compensator. Ed's revolutionary new compensator is called the Four Star and it features four separate and independent expansion chambers. It seems to go the new generation of double comps one better.

"Man, it blows smokestacks like a damn locomotive," gushed a jubilant Ed. He always was one for understatement!

Ed's Four Star is available separately to install on a six-inch barrel or it may be had together with a match-grade barrel to drop-in your pistol. For more info, call Ed at (314) 565-3261.

From our *You Get What You Pay For* Department we have the new JS-9mm from **Stallard Arms**. This is a 9mm semi-auto pistol that retails for \$115. Yes, you read that right—one hundred and fifteen dollars. As the consumer advocate publication *Gun Tests* put it in their scathing review of the jam-prone gun, "Given the price, it is best not to expect an example of fine craftsmanship, right? Right."

Pistolsmith James E. Clark of **Clark Custom Guns** has been elected the Outstanding American Handgunner for 1990. He joins such handgunning greats as Elmer Keith, Col. Charles Askins, Bill Jordan and Skeeter Skelton in receiving the prestigious award. Clark received 32.47% of the ballots cast in the selection from 10 nominees of the Outstanding American Handgunner Awards Foundation, said Hal Swiggett, chairman of the OAHAF.

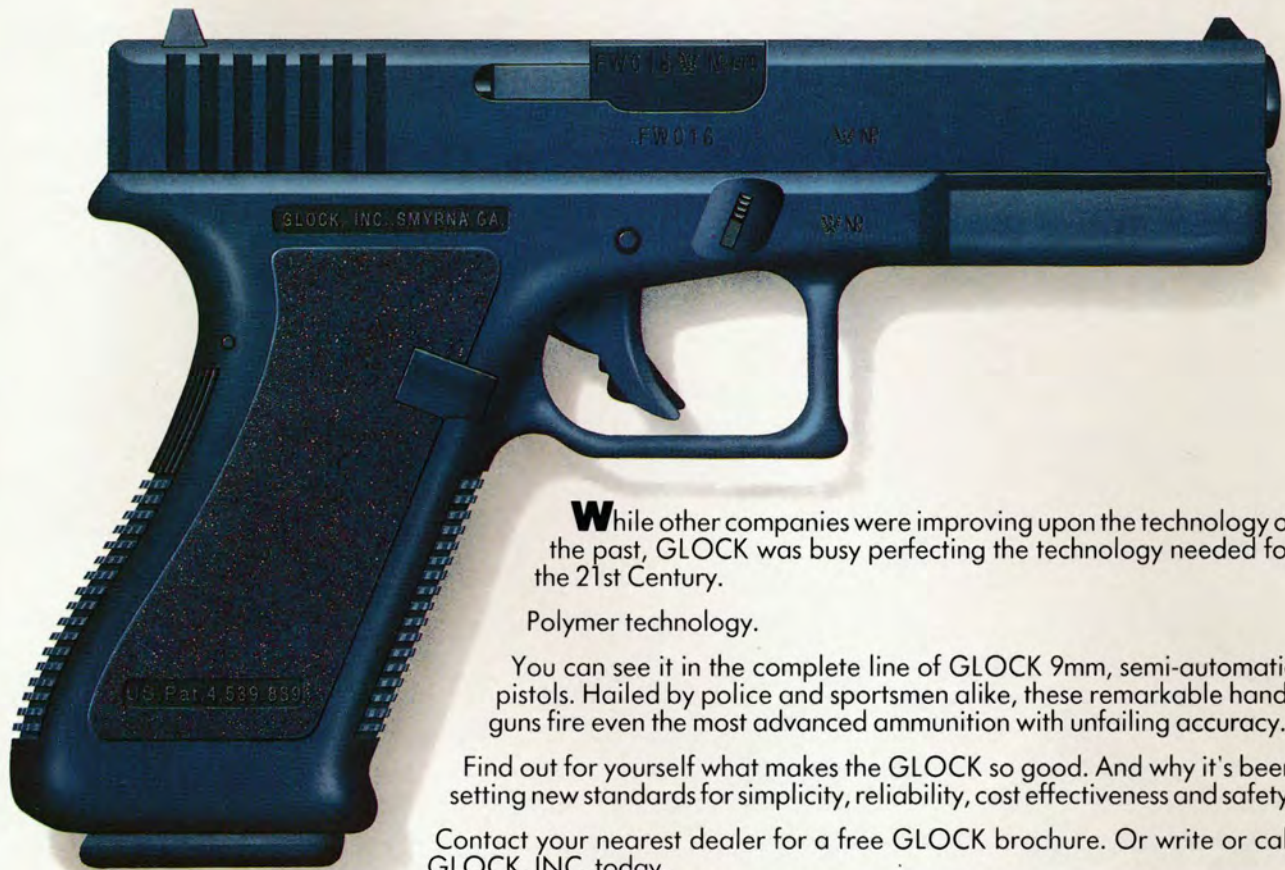
What's a gunmaker to do? You know it's bad when you can't even give the damn things away! Well, that appears to be the problem for **Ruger** in their hometown of Fairfield, Conn.

It seems the township where the Ruger factory is located, little Southport, Conn., adopted 9mm **Glock** pistols. Chaffed at the irritating prospect of their very own cops wearing (yech!) Glocks, the Ruger people responded by offering to take in the township's .357 service revolvers (Rugers, of course) as trade-ins on brand-new P-85 9mm's. Hey, we'll even throw in 20 magazines and an instructor's course!

"It's hard to say no to a gracious offer, but I think [the Glock] is the best weapon for the department," said Police Commissioner William Wenzel in an interview with the local paper. The township paid over \$33,000 for 105 Glocks.



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And, if you prefer a revolver, the Model 610 is ready to go on the line with you. It's available with a full-lug in 5- or 6½-inch barrel lengths and features comfortable finger-grooved grips.

Either way, a S&W 10mm gives you the power and accuracy you expect plus the durability and just plain shooting pleasure you hope for.

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