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**AMERICAN**

# HANDGUNNER

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE OUTSTANDING AMERICAN HANDGUNNER AWARDS

67522 T&E

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LOADING TIPS**

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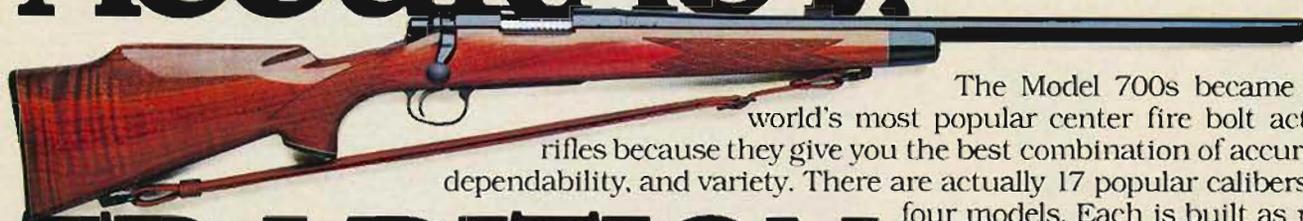
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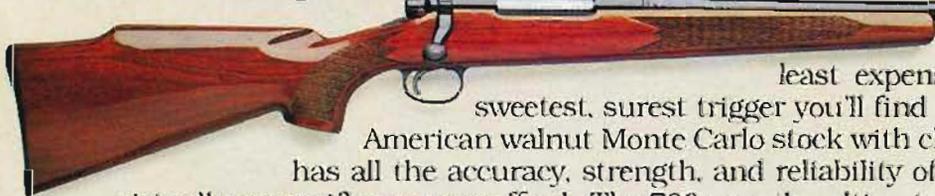
finish, its deep-cut checkering. The crisp look tells you this rifle means business.

# APPEARANCE.



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Model 700	17 Rem.	222 Rem.	22-250 Rem.	233 Rem.	3006 Rem.	243 Win.	28-06 Rem.	270 Win.	7mm Mauser	7mm Rem.	7mm Rem. Mag.	30-06 Spfld.	308 Win.	7mm Rem. Mag.	300 Win. Mag.	8mm Rem. Mag.	375 H&H Mag.	458 Win. Mag.
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BDL	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
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# THE NEW MAGNUM FORCE IN HIGH SPEED, PRECISION RELOADING. THE NEW LYMAN T-MAG.

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Our T-Mag is designed to give you all the speed advantages of turret reloading without even the slightest sacrifice in strength or precision.

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# AMERICAN HANDGUNNER

JULY/AUGUST 1981, Vol. 6, No. 29

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COVER: Ruger Blackhawk, S&W 29, Ruger Redhawk, Lama, all featured in our special .44 Mag section. Photo by James D. Mason.

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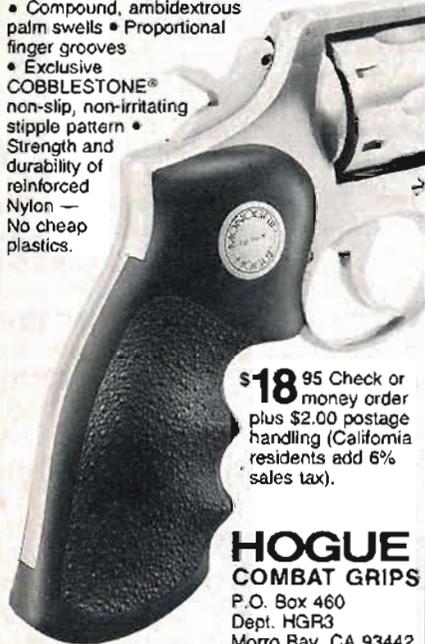
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# SPEAK OUT

## PISTOLS ON PLANES: AA CAPTAIN SAYS OK

I read Lucy's comments on firearms carriage aboard airlines and would suggest that you put American Airlines at the top of your list of air carriers. You stated that law enforcement personnel have lost their rights to be armed on aircraft. Not so on American.

American permits Law Enforcement Officers to carry weapons aboard in the performance of his/her duties and makes special procedures for them to clear security. In addition, the Captain meets the armed person and is aware of his/her seat. I personally take very good care of all armed personnel when aboard and many times am able to get them preferential seating.

In addition, no advance notification of firearms in checked luggage is required other than at point of check in that firearms are in checked luggage. The weapon must be unloaded, and if it is a handgun must be in a locked case only openable by the owner. Sporting rifles/shotguns do not require a locked case. (Although I strongly recommend it.)

You will find that American caters to the firearm owner with a courtesy not found on any other airline. Myself and many other of my pilot friends are avid gun owners and collectors and we welcome you to come see "what we do best."

Ronald R. Brice  
Captain, American Airlines

## WIPE AWAY THE LEAD WITH CLOTH CLEANER

In a recent issue of The American Handgunner, there was an article on the new Ruger Redhawk .44 magnum revolver. The author had much trouble getting rid of residues (from the bluing, I believe) from the barrel. He finally arrived at the right combination.

I am having similar problems with my .44 magnum, Hoppe's No. 9 solution will not work. I tried to find the magazine, but I have misplaced it somewhere.

Any help you can give me on this matter will be greatly appreciated.  
Hashime Saito  
Tucson, Arizona

*Firstly, since the Ruger Redhawk is stainless steel, your problem would not be from bluing, but, rather, from leading. The best product we have seen for removing lead residues is called Wipe Away and it's a cloth that is easy to use, and really works. Write Belltown Distributors, Box 444, Bedford Hills, NY 10507.*

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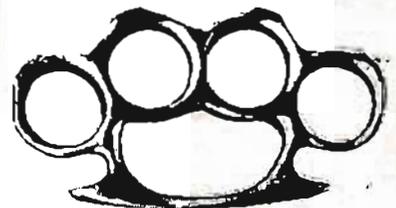


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Another good choice for the iron animals is our new 7mm-08 Remington cartridge. This potent, compact package is ideal in short-action rifles. With a 140-grain bullet it optimizes down-range ballistics and retained energy, clear out to 500 meters. It's available in your choice of a factory load or as components.

The new 7mm-08 Rem. is chambered in our superaccurate, heavy-barreled Model 700 "Varmint Special." This rifle has a specially selected stock to meet strict weight restrictions for metallic silhouette events.

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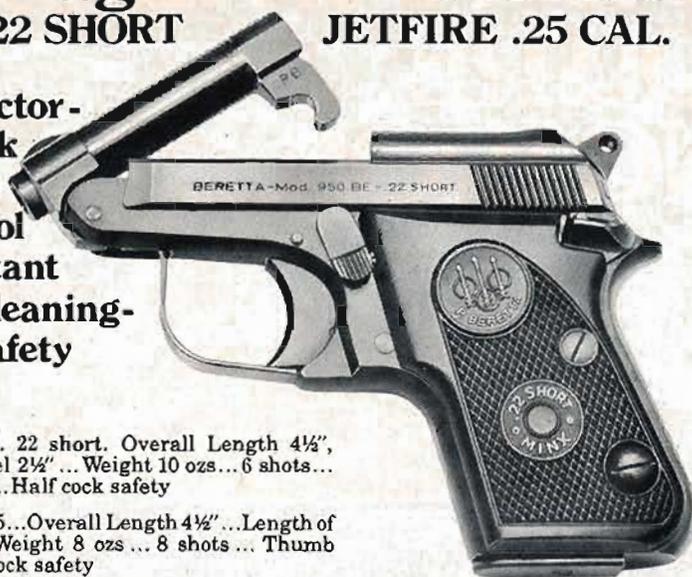
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## SPEAK OUT

(Continued from page 6)

### .22 RUGER IN ALASKA TRAPPER'S FAVORITE

Re: Ruger .22 autos.

I too have friends in South Africa who report 1000's of rounds through their Rugers. The only real complaint I have with the Ruger is the painful process of loading clips. Load more than 5 clips and your thumb hurts. Have suggested to Ruger that they sell a loading tool much like the old Luger loader/screwdriver. I'm sure they could stamp them out by the 1000's for a few cents each and could be kept on a key chain.

Tip: Ruger can rebuild and reblue most of their .22 autos for very little. Know guys that pay peanuts for rusted or nonworking Rugers (\$5-\$10) and send them to Ruger to rebuild and refinish. Two weeks later they get a "new" firearm back.

Have always wished that Ruger would offer their auto in .22 short. Think there is a small market for such a pistol. As a trapper, I use .22 short on trapped animals. Also .22 short is ample for 50-ft indoor target shooting. Ruger missed the boat when they discontinued the Bearcat. They are very popular here with trappers. Bearcats sell for \$200 here now—if you can find one.

Allen G. Skinner  
Anchorage, Alaska

### WEAK-HAND RELOAD FOR THE WHEELGUN

Weak-hand reloading was covered in the Nov/Dec issue in an article by Rick Miller, however, there is another way of reloading a revolver without snapping the cylinder in and out: (1) Cup the revolver in your left hand with the trigger guard at the base of your second and third fingers. The left thumb should be at the cylinder release, and the muzzle pointed away from you. (2) Push the cylinder release with your thumb and push out the cylinder with your second finger. (3) To extract the fired cartridges, hold the revolver with the trigger guard at the base of the fingers with the first and second fingers going through the frame where the cylinder was, push the extractor rod with your thumb, and turn the pistol muzzle up to dump out the fired brass. (4) Stick the muzzle in your belt to hold the gun. Reloading can be accomplished now with the use of either a speedloader, or with loose cartridges. (5) Now liftout the revolver and close the cylinder.

This sequence is easy to use and a safe way to reload.

Myles Shinsato  
Honolulu, HI

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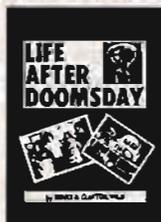
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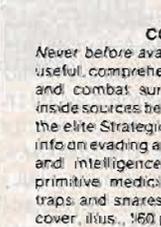
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# INDUSTRY INSIDER

JERRY RAKUSAN

## NEW ANTI-GUN PRESSURES COMING DUE TO INTENSE MEDIA COVERAGE

Here's a scenario that is popping up more and more. A gun designer wants to produce his dream gun, but bumps into the realities of getting cash to start up. "Eureka," he exclaims as he decides that the fastest way to raise money would be to put out a limited edition series of guns, charge a good buck for them—as collector items—and thus finance his tooling, etc.

Looking back we find the High Standard Crusader; still not into production, but delivering commemorative models at mucho bucks. Wildey has a special edition of his auto pistol in the works, engraved, cased, and with all the trimmings.

What next? The Coonan .357 auto? The Bren Ten? The Sokolovski .45? Whatever happens, hope that it does not become a trend.

Handgun industry quote of the month: An Associated Press reporter asked Colt Firearms Division President C. E. Warner how people he meets socially, react when they learn he makes guns for a living. Ed replied, "Usually you'll find a group at a party divided into those who love it and tell you about guns, and those who hate it and ask you questions."

We understand, Ed. Sometimes the whole world seems like that.

### COLT SA ARMY GONZO

Meanwhile, back at the Colt plant, the model P is gonzo. That's right, the Peacemaker, the venerable Single Action Army of 1873, will cease production in 1981, and this time for good. Production had been trickling down up until the first, wartime discontinuance in 1941, but the fast-draw craze of the Fifties, and the stunning success of the Colt-pattern Ruger single actions, revived the gun in 1955. The cancellation includes the classy, adjustable-sight New Frontier model.

The factory cites general economic reasons as the cause of the decision. Prices on the beautifully made single actions, with their case hardened frames and nice blue jobs, were soaring. Today's handgun market accepts high prices more readily than ever before... but only for high performance hardware. The SAA wasn't doing anything performance-wise that it hadn't been doing for a hundred and eight years.

This is not to say that the Single Action Army might not be reborn yet again some time in the future, but it won't be the same gun you knew. Word from the factory is

that a new single action would have re-designed lockwork to allow safe hammer-down carry on the sixth round, à la the Ruger New Model. Though Colt never got burned as badly in civil liability suits as Ruger, there were too many turkeys for comfort out there, who didn't know enough to keep an empty chamber under the Peacemaker's hammer.

### ELECTROLESS NICKEL

Another Colt newie is an electroless nickel finish on the J-frame guns (Mark III revolvers), as a production option. This finish is also available on Pythons and O-frame autoloaders, but only through Colt's Custom Shop.

The new finish will make the Mark III Trooper and its sister guns more desirable than ever. Colt doesn't make a stainless gun, but this finish (on all metal surfaces, including the mechanism) is felt by some firearms metallurgists to be superior to stainless alloys in terms of hardness and durability, while offering essentially the same corrosion resistance, and easier machining for lower cost. An added advantage is that while stainless parts sometimes have a tendency to gall, electroless nickel's smoothness makes for almost an action job in itself. Those who've tried the shiny new MK III say the action is far slicker than before. This should boost sales; while the MK III has long been accepted as rugged and durable, in terms of both staying in time and handling heavy loads, a smooth action was never its strong point.

### PYTHON SILHOUETTE

In the Python line, we have another new snake in the family: the Python Silhouette should make its debut about the time you read this. Tailored expressly for the metal animal game, this long-nosed .357 will come in a fitted Halliburton accessory case like the well-received Python Hunter of last year. Price will be about the same: just under \$1,000.

The Connecticut gunmaker is also looking at the new 75-pound Firepower magazine, a drum similar to that for the Soviet AKM machinegun, which can theoretically give each GI equipped with an M-16 an equivalent level of firepower to a Squad Automatic Weapon for a short duration. Though Masters and Johnson say "It isn't the size of your wand that counts, it's how much magic you've got," any M-16

(Continued on page 55)

# The Incredible Dan Wesson .44

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# SILUETAS

PHILIP C. BRIGGS

## NRA SILHOUETTE COMPETITION CATERS TO AVERAGE SHOOTERS

It's been almost six years now since the first national championship long range handgun silhouette match, and nearly five since the birth of the sport's first national sanctioning body, the IHMSA. That group has done a lot to promote the new sport, has a rapidly growing membership, sanctions matches in all 50 states, and seems to get most of the media coverage. But there's a far larger national sanctioning body, that has the potential to involve even more shooters, that has done a tremendous amount of good for the nation's gun owners, and has been sanctioning silhouette matches for eight years now—the NRA.

### HUNTERS PISTOL

In 1973 the NRA was encouraged to sponsor the first national championship rifle silhouette match by members of the Tucson Rifle Club, one of the first US clubs to shoot the popular Mexican sport. This same club hosted the first national championship long range handgun silhouette match in 1975, and in 1976 at the second championships, shooters in attendance organized IHMSA, and adopted the first set of formal rules. The leadership of NRA watched the growth of the new version of the sport with interest, and in 1977 moved to bring all forms of silhouette competition—rifle, pistol, and airgun—into the fold. The NRA silhouette committee, holding their first meeting in Washington, D.C. that fall, began the work necessary to include both the long range handgun game, as formalized by IHMSA, and a new, short range variant developed by a club here in Phoenix that has become known as Hunters Pistol.

### STOCK-AS-A-STOVE

From the start, the NRA silhouette committee was interested in promoting the sport, and encouraging participation from shooters that weren't involved, or interested in their other sanctioned forms of handgun competition. The rules were written to facilitate competition by the average shooter, equipped with an out-of-the-box, stock-as-a-stove pistol and to allow shooters to compete in both IHMSA and NRA matches with the same pistols under similar rules, and in equivalent classifications. There has been some departure from those early, closely related rules by both organizations, but the opportunity for a shooter to compete with similar equipment in ei-

ther groups matches remains and they both offer regional as well as national championships in all their sanctioned versions of the sport to allow local shooters the chance to compete against the best.

The NRA's second national championship was held in the fall of 1980 near Reno, Nevada at the Washoe County shooting range on a new eight-bank range built just for the occasion. Although not the biggest handgun silhouette match ever held, with only 187 entries, it was certainly the most



*Wichita pistol used by some shooters is a superb out-of-the box performer.*

ambitious ever, consisting of 120 targets fired over two days, 60 at a setting.

The range sits 20 miles out from Reno, in the sparse high desert that surrounds the city, against a back drop of craggy mountains; the desert soils at the site provides excellent target contrast, and the range lends itself to shooting high scores.

Although promotion was low key, no doubt accounting for the low and principally regional turn out, some of the top national shooters did compete. The AAA unlimited class for example, included four IHMSA national unlimited champions—Skip Talbot (1977), Stan Hannigan (1978), Dave Tobin (1979) and Jim Jonasen (1980). Many of the entrants were IHMSA shooters, and the sponsoring club, the Reno Silhouette Association successfully prevailed on the NRA representatives to honor IHMSA classifications for shooters that hadn't established NRA classifications. Skip Talbot observed that this event had some of the best shooters in a match he'd shot in—and that they proceeded to shoot over their heads.

Scores were starting high in the top unlimited, conventional (production) and modified conventional classes, with seven 120's shot in AAA unlimited, one in AA unlimited, a 120 and a 119 in conventional  
*(Continued on page 77)*



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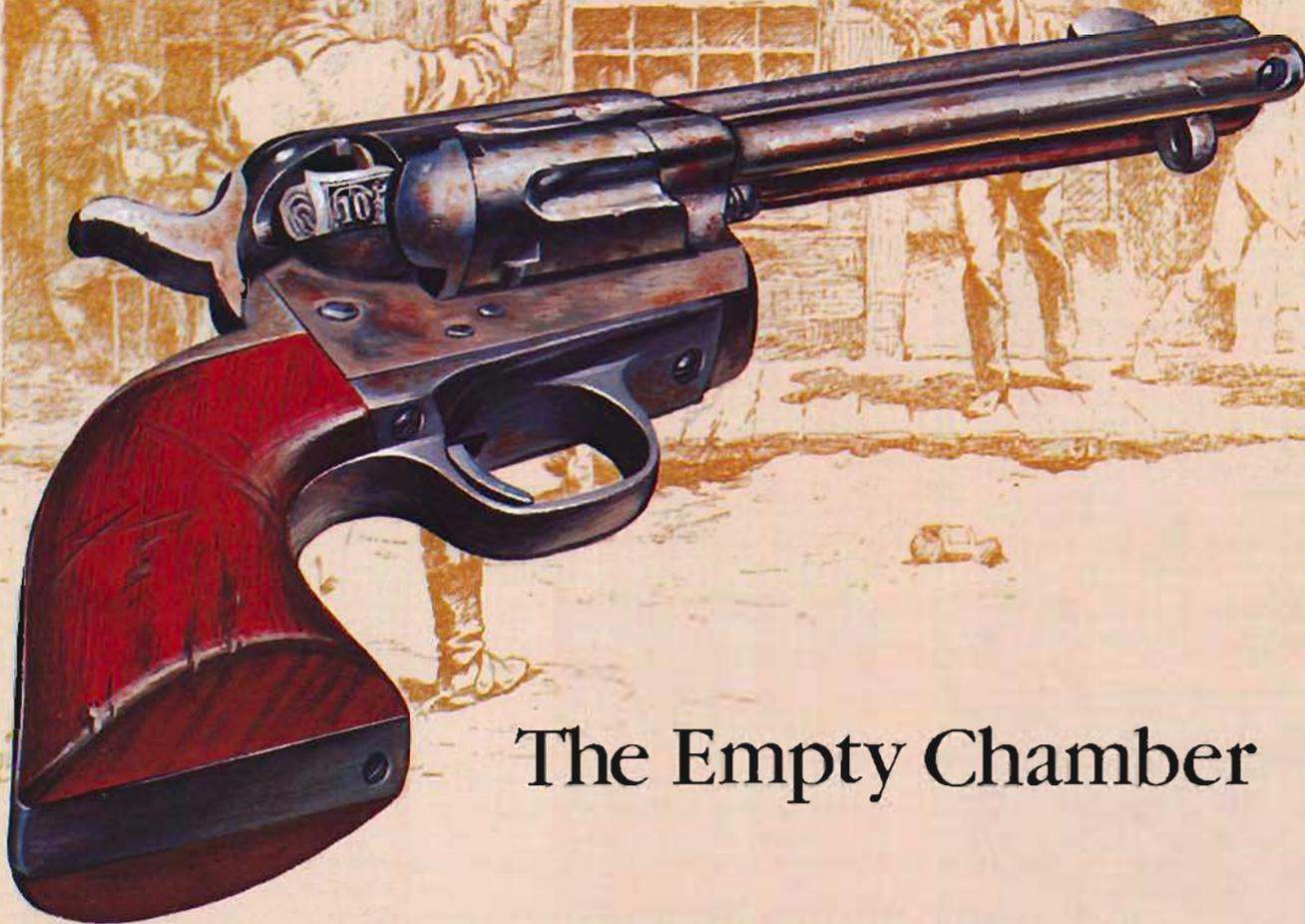
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## The Empty Chamber

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

Despite the lessons of history, there are still

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

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

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

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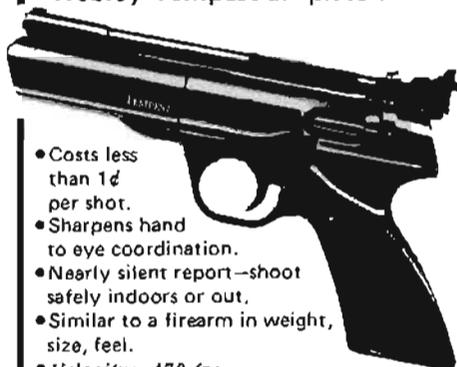
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Practical Pistol shooting has become synonymous with the .45 ACP. The reasons this has occurred are many and varied. One major reason is that the Colt 1911 and its many variations is in fact a superb defense firearm. The second major reason is that the matches and rules in most Practical Pistol competitions have been designed by persons that believe in the .45 and have stacked the deck in favor of the big bore semi-auto, often at the expense of the practical aspect. The reasons many of us believe in a big bore defensive gun are sound, but the fact remains that to be competitive in practical pistol matches one



The "backward" safety on H&K's P9S is feature that takes getting used to.

must use a big bore semi-auto. This, of course, eliminates the majority of police and security officers from a very valuable form of competition and deprives the U.S. Practical Pistol team of some very fine shooters.

Practical Pistol shooting will never develop its potential until more people who carry a gun for a living are attracted to the sport. At this time police officers can receive support and recognition through their departments only by competing in PPC matches. While this may be of questionable practical value, it is a lot better than no competition at all. Actually, one of the major weaknesses of PPC is now developing to be a problem in Practical Pistol matches as well. This problem is the "special" guns that have developed. Special guns detract from the practical aspect of most shooting sports. I am glad to have discovered a gun that may help bridge the gap between duty and match use.

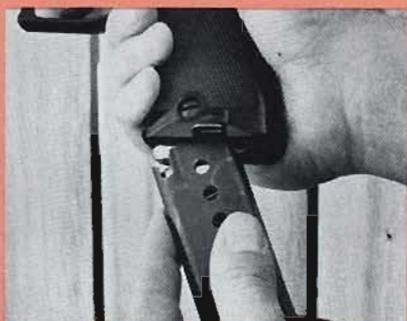
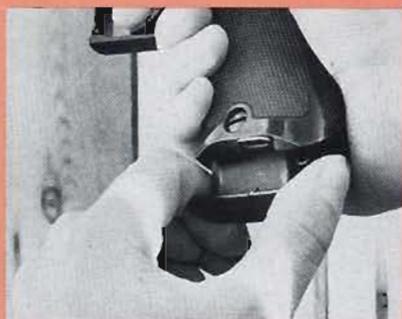
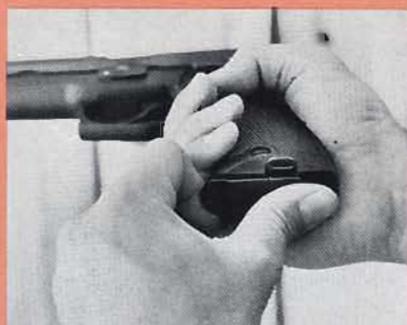
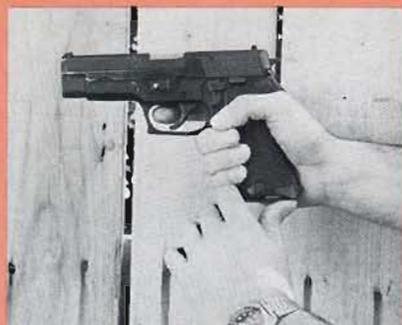
Until 1975 I had competed in\*PPC matches for the enjoyment of competition. For its training value, however, I taught and participated in several practical shooting activities the best of which were in the San Diego area. We used our service revolvers and did very well. After reading about Ray Chapman winning the World Practical Pistol Championship in 1975, I developed "Big Frog in Little Pond Itis." I decided to switch to a semi-auto, which was possible in our police department, and make a try at SWPL and IPSC competition. Several thousand dollars worth of guns later and some success, I found myself eliminated from contention at the 1979 "Second Chance" match by multiple jams. In that frame of mind I was very receptive

(Continued on page 86)



### HECKLER & KOCH P9S .45

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**Butt magazine release seems awkward, but gets easier with practice. Sequence shows steps involved in release technique as outlined below.**

## After learning the technique butt release is not so slow

By Seth Nadel

The method suggested by Jerry Usher for speed reloads with the butt magazine release on some semi-autos is easy to do, but hard to write down.

Start from a two hand hold, with the left index finger under the trigger guard. To reload, bring the left hand down, putting the left thumb on the floorplate of the magazine. Rotating the hand up, push the butt release with your thumb while hooking the index finger around the front lip of the floorplate. Pull the magazine out and down in your left hand and drop it as you reach for the reload magazine. Reload as with a Browning button type pistol.

The important thing is to practice until you always draw the magazine

out. When you blow it, you end up with a mag stuck halfway out of the well. One other problem is the tendency of the magazine to hit the ground with the lips, with the possibility of damage. It never bothered the mags on the BDA I tested, but you may want to drop the magazine against your leg to reduce such damage.

This system works, and works well with some practice. After working with the BDA for two weeks fairly steady, I could manage reloads only one-half second slower than with my familiar Gov't Model. And I have seen Jerry do it faster than that. Work with your gun, indoors, unloaded, over some padding. Then you can show your pals that a butt release is not all that bad.

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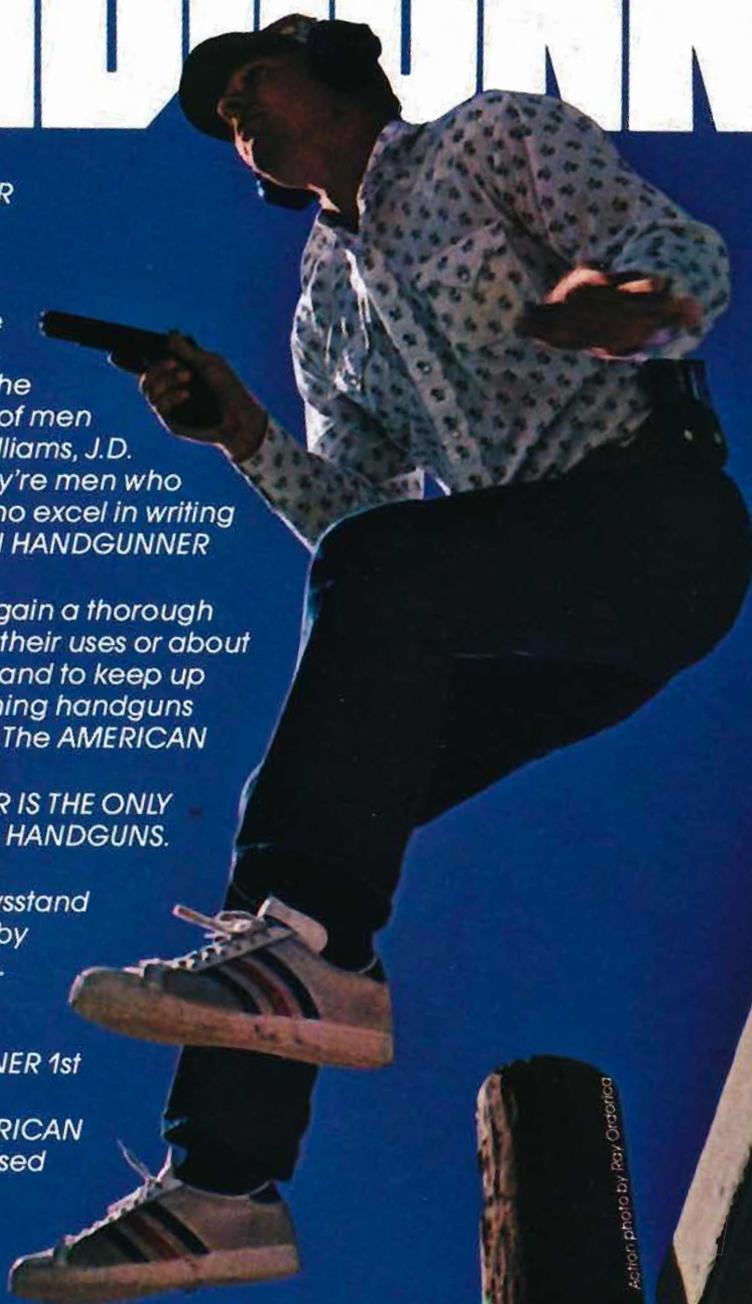
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Action photo by Ray Ordofica

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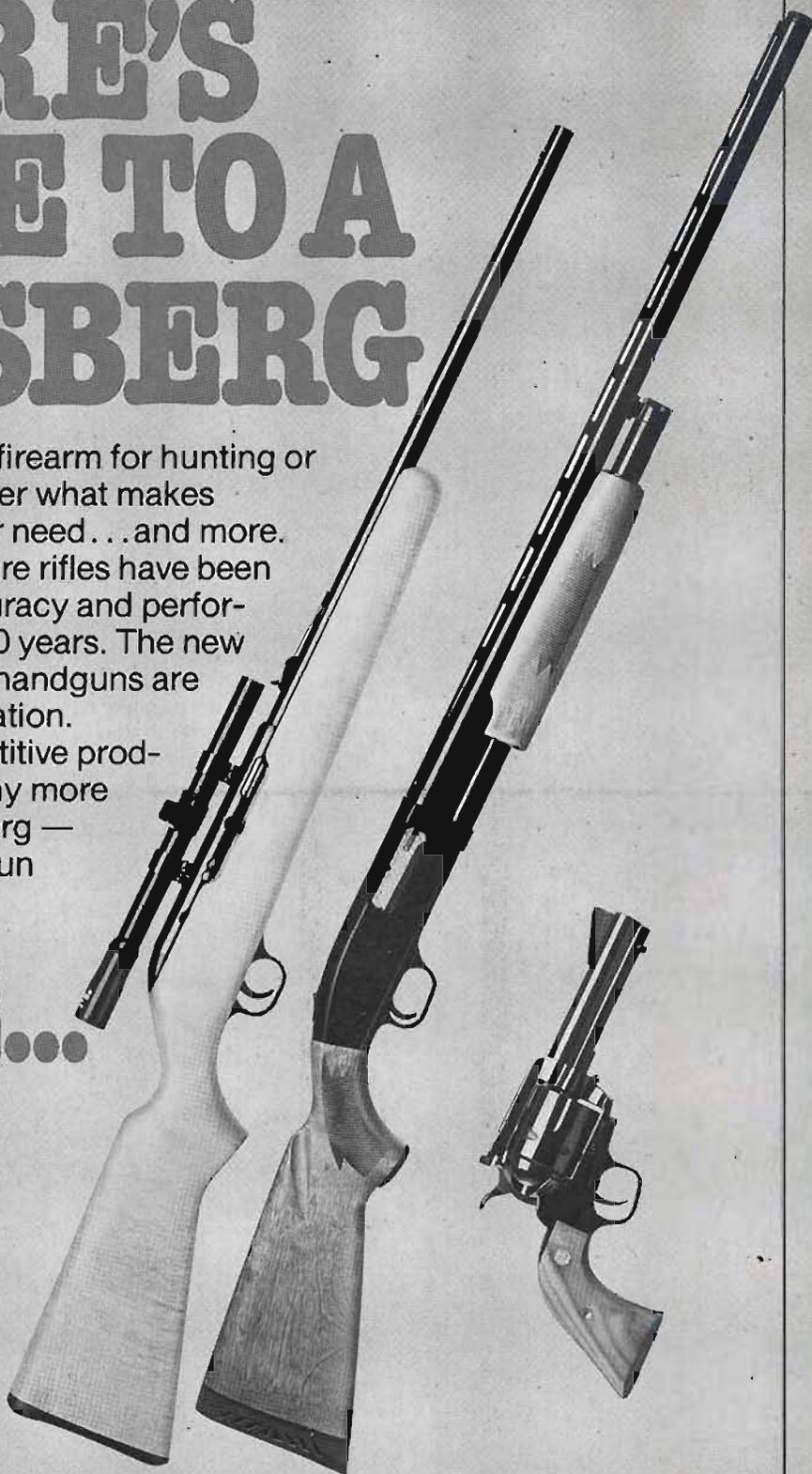
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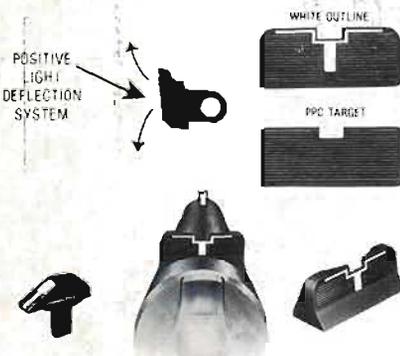


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# SIGHT SETTINGS

LUCY CHAMBLISS

## THE SECURITY GUARD BUSINESS: BOOMING BUT LACKING TRAINING

Private security guards at an installation in Florida last year went on strike for a raise, and they got one—to \$11.50 an hour. Some police officers who have demeaned security guards with such terms as "Door-shakers," may not be making \$11.50 an hour. A career as a security guard looks brighter now, with constantly improving pay, conditions and job stability. The private guard companies are hiring young well-educated, trained officers who are no longer "needed" by state, county, and municipal agencies.

The upgrading of the police profession in the last 10 years has resulted in lower crime rates, so now some thinking has been to save dollars by cutting the police budgets first. Layoffs, both actual and rumored, make job security the prime concern of many officers who cannot survive on whims of whether governing bodies will at best keep them on without even a cost of living raise, or at worse, fire them.

### NO MORE GRANTS

Government grants and funds are shrinking or gone, so who has the money? The private sector, which is able to charge, within competitive bid bounds, what it takes to get and keep trained personnel. The time is coming for private guards for businesses and individuals who can afford them. Police departments which took years to build are being cut in half over night. The very thin Blue Line left in governmental agencies will have to take care of those not able to hire protection.

Large and small companies bid on the government installation contracts for guards. Old-fashioned me, thought the federal agencies such as Secret Service, or NASA, guarded their own properties. Not true, some if not all, obtain their security from competitive bidding among private companies.

Some states have unarmed and armed classifications for guards, though I think the unarmed designation must be disappearing. That position always seemed to me as useless as a handgun without a barrel. The firearms training required for security guards is inadequate in almost everyone's opinion, partially due to the unavailability of instructors. Police firearms instructors allowed and willing to teach for private companies on a "moonlight" basis are scarce. Usually on today's legal requirements there is not enough work for full time employment. Also, lia-

bility insurance for instructors, if they must provide it themselves, is almost prohibitive in cost. Insurance has to be provided by the company you teach for, but if you are forced to buy it, you simply have to and include the cost in your teaching fees. I would not be without such coverage until the courts stop giving judgments for such far reaching liability.

### REFRESHER NEEDED

Basic and regular refresher qualification shooting is bound to be required by law as the private guards become more numerous, or company owners are influenced by firearms oriented personnel who know the value of such training. Police went through years of inadequate training until court decisions convinced agency heads that a trained officer was cheaper than a lawsuit awarding thousands of dollars for proved negligence, lack of training, etc. In the private company, you have even a more competitive public relations image to deal with. You are merchandising an unattractive product if your guards frequently kill or get killed.

### ONLY 5 HOURS REQUIRED

In 1980, the Florida law concerning Watchman, Guard, or Patrol Agency licenses required only 5 hours classroom instruction—when to use a gun: 1 hour, legal limitations: 2 hours, and the rest divided between safety and maintenance of the handgun. Range qualification requires only 3 hours, the target can be the large Colt silhouette, or equal, and the weapon must be the same as used on duty. The first stage of the qualification course is the only real pressure stage, 12 rounds fired in 30 seconds from 7 yards. The rest of the 30 rounds are fired at 25 yards, some at the barricade with left and right hand, and choosing the sitting, standing, kneeling, or prone position for the last 6 rounds. All rounds after 7 yards may be fired single or double action. There is no mention of periodic requalification. This training, which is very typical of that required in any state, qualifies an armed guard to patrol. Before we ridicule this training, remember that 20 years ago not that much training was required of either a rookie or a veteran officer, in many states, including Florida. We have improved and so will the private guards.

For the three years I have been on the  
(Continued on page 57)

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The fixed sight version, the Lawman MKIII, is also available with 2" and 4" barrels.

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# HANDGUN HUNTING

J. D. JONES

## ELEPHANT DOWNED BY HAND CANNON WHILE HHI ORGANIZES BOAR HUNT

Last week while standing in brilliant sunshine at the bottom of a 50-60-foot-high bank in powdery snow a foot deep at about five below zero I looked up just in time to see two does run across the skyline brilliantly silhouetted against a beautiful dark blue sky. They ran through flying powdered snow and their coats glistened brilliantly. I can't remember a more beautiful sight. Those few seconds made years of hunting worthwhile. I hope you see something comparable to it sometime.

Deer season's over and via the Shot Show in New Orleans I'm heading for the

fall. (HHI, Box .357 Mag, Bloomingdale, OH 43910—\$15 annual dues)

This year has been a good one for hand-gunners. Larry Kelly (Mag-Na-Port) using a .375 JDJ SSK Hand Cannon had a fantastic year, killing two elephants and over 35 head of other assorted big game with the .375 JDJ. The cartridge is a full length .444 Marlin necked to .375 caliber. Larry's Hand Cannon is an SSK custom T/C.

SSK makes the barrels, scope bases and RCBS makes the dies. The .375 has a little brother, the .358 JDJ and two big brothers, the .411 and .430 JDJ cartridges. All are very powerful. Complete guns or barrels are available. The .375 is the most versatile. 44.0 grains of H-322 give a 270 grain Hornandy spire point 1900 fps, amazing accuracy and killing power. Larry's 300 grain Hornandy FMJ's completely penetrated both elephants' heads. (SSK Ind., Rt. 1, Della Drive, Bloomingdale, OH 43910 (614) 264-0176) Jerry Kraft bagged a gigantic moose in Alaska. Horn spread measured 68.5 inches, wet. Not bad for a pistol! Tom Shippy, again with a .375 JDJ dropped an antelope in excess of 200 yards as did Gary Geraud with a .30-40 Krag T/C. Delbert Roberts had a spectacular hunt on exotic sheep with a custom S&W .44 Mag.

Certainly not everyone was successful—including me. I went to Alaska for 25 days  
(Continued on page 79)

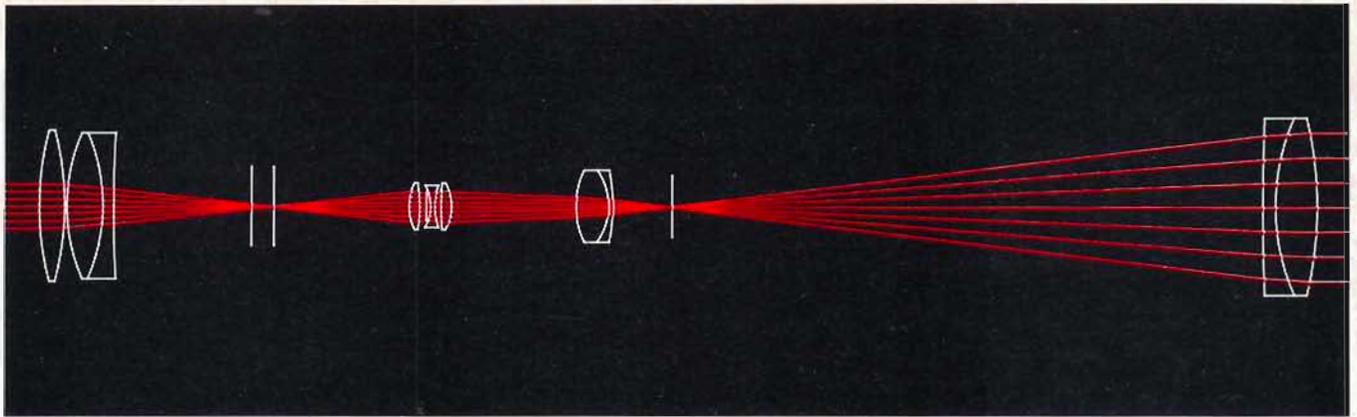


T/C IN JDJ caliber will get varmints just as well as the largest of game.

Hall Brothers Wilderness Area, Route 4, Box 392, Savannah, Georgia 31405, to meet some friends and check out this 15,000 acre swamp with a bunkhouse, guides and dogs for a possible Handgun Hunters International boar hunt-blast this



One shot to the head bagged trophy for Larry Kelly who used .375 JDJ T/C. JDJ barrel for T/C is by SSK Industries and is Mag-Na-Ported by Kelly.



## Making a high performance optical system is one thing. Making it last a lifetime is another.

Ask Leupold's chief optical engineer to single out the one quality that makes his scopes clearly superior to all others, and you get a very non-optical answer: "It's the way we make them hold together."

To prove his point, he'll take you down to the shooting tunnel beneath the Leupold plant, the only place with enough sound insulation to run the impact testing machine shown here. With several scopes firmly clamped in place, the machine slams these fine combinations of beautifully finished lenses and precise mechanical systems through worse torture than produced by the recoil of a .375 H & H magnum. Every new scope design must survive several thousand cycles in the prototype stage to assure that production models will stand up to the same kind of punishment in the field.

"The difference," he points out, "is whether the scope will function perfectly after such abuse, or if it will be a tube full of loose parts."

Making scopes that won't unravel here, or in the field where terrain, horses and heavy caliber rifles exact their toll, starts by manufacturing every component with a watchmaker's precision. Up to 11 separate lenses for each scope are computer designed, ground and



polished to a near-perfect surface with precisely the right curvature. Each lens is physically checked against a master to make sure its shape conforms exactly to specifications. Those which do not meet the optically-measured tolerances are not used in Leupold scopes.

Lenses, adjusting mechanisms and other components must be installed within the scope tube not only to be firmly anchored, but also perfectly aligned to create a flawless optical system.

The optical system diagram above, which was used to create the Leupold Vari-X III 3.5x10 scope, was actually drawn by an electronic plotter from the computer program that designed the system. Com-

puters are used by Leupold to achieve optimum design characteristics in each scope, including the desired magnification, the field of view and the eye relief... the distance from your eye to the metal rim of the eyepiece. This is where Leupold never scrimps, nor has the company ever allowed eye relief... and the shooter's safety... to be sacrificed in order to squeeze out more field of view.

The quality of the lenses and the design of the optical system combine to produce the optical excellence hunters expect from a Leupold scope. Take a few minutes looking through a Leupold and you'll discover this excellence in light gathering ability, in edge-to-edge sharpness, in flatness of field, in precise resolution and in lack of distortion.

With all of that going into each Leupold scope, it's also comforting to know that if your equipment doesn't exactly get pampered out in the woods, and if you shoot thundering loads, everything will hang together hunt after hunt, year after year.

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# HANDLOADING

DAN COTTERMAN

## MORE HELPFUL .45ACP INSIGHTS GAINED FROM READERS LETTERS

A damnable loss occurs when communications from independent experimenters wind up in some dust-laden mail basket. That's why, last time around, I laid the groundwork for including contributions from you, the reader of this column. In continuing such a plan—call it an open exchange of ideas and experimental discoveries—I am demonstrating faith in my conviction that this is the best way to share a maximum amount of useful data. Much serious handloading is done outside the so-called "gun press," beyond the advantage of mass publication. That's a condition I hope to remedy.

As I said at the outset, it will not be possible to print everything that is received.

### COLT .45 BENCH TEST

Powder	Ch. Wt. (gr.)	Group Size
Unique	5.6	4-.678"/5-.950"
Bullseye	3.8	4-.665"/5-1.15"
Herco	6.0	5-1.28"
Herco	6.2	5-1.40"

However, if you wish to take part in this exchange, feel free to contribute information on loads, components, and products. Your comments and ideas will receive thoughtful consideration.

The concept of sharing information is assuming healthy proportions, as is evidenced by a constant increase in the volume of mail received. Interest in the .45 ACP has, thus far, taken a position of priority, and, although our exchange is aimed at including all reloadable handgun cartridges, the persistence of communications dealing with this hoary favorite demands exposure.

Jack Williams, of St. Joseph, Illinois, is a dedicated handloader with whom I have communicated for many years. He's like a lot of us in that he loads his own ammo, but also he does his own accuracy work. His comments are interesting and may prove useful to you.

"The gun I am shooting now is a standard Colt Gov't 1911-A1. I got it from the DCM program through the NRA. All modifications are by me and are as follows: Colt NM barrel and collet bushing; recoil buffer; trigger job (also added trigger shoe); Bo-Mar rib; throated barrel ramp.

"I got a hold of some Hornady 200-grain lead SWC bullets and tried them with Bullseye, Herco, Unique, 700-X, and W-W 230."

Williams encloses the results of the

handloads he tested in the gun described. Five-shot groups were fired at a distance of 25 yards with the use of a Lee machine rest.

Williams explains, "Primers used were Alcan L.P. seated with a Lee priming tool, the new one with the tray, which I like very much.

"I shot two control groups. One with Remington factory 185-gr. SWC FMJ. They grouped about 1.125" center-to-center. The other control group was with Remington 185-gr. H.P. I had horizontal stringing with the group. It measured about 1.73" center-to-center. Three shots were touching in a cloverleaf pattern.

### TWO CONTROL GROUPS

"700-X in three loadings was bad:

4.1 grs.—3.192"

4.3 grs.—2.471"

4.5 grs.—3.142"

"230 wasn't too good:

4.2 grs.—4.425"

4.3 grs.—1.687"

4.4 grs.—1.305"

"Bullseye in 3.6-grain charges gave 2.926", and with a 4.0-grain charge gave 2.53". Herco in a 5.8-grain charge opened to 3.781". Unique in 5.4 grains gave 2.827", and with a 5.8-grain charge gave 2.7", with four going into 1".

"All bullets were seated to a L.O.A. equal to the factory Remington 185-grain JHP.

"I have also been working with the Taurus 200-grain lead semi-wadcutter. I can get groups of about 1.6" with 6.0 grains of Unique.

"Cases used were mixed military and commercial with little attempt to separate different cases. Cases were sized with an RCBS carbide die. I used an RCBS taper-crimp die set to take out the bell and not too tight on the bullet.

### LEADING PROBLEM

"There is a leading problem, but not very much. It is easily removed. I fired 75 rounds in this particular test with the Hornady lead bullets, and then proceeded to run another 100 or so lead rounds through the spout and the leading was minimal. A buddy of mine says that the Taurus bullets are giving him real leading problems, but that could be his barrel."

We should note that, although Williams says the 230 didn't produce his best results,

(Continued on page 59)

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**BLOCKER TEFLON-LINED HOLSTERS  
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Several years ago Roy Baker introduced his famous Pancake holsters. Made of two pieces of leather sewn together along the leading and trailing edges to form a pocket for the handgun, with belt slots in the leading and trailing edges, the Pancake was an immediate success. Today, most major holster manufacturers offer some version of pancake holster. The original Baker Pancake has two slots in the leading edge, allowing the user to wear it with gun butt canted forward, FBI style, or straight up and down, often as a cross draw.

Recently, I received two holsters for testing from Ted Blocker's Custom Holsters, 3559 Lashbrook, Rosemead, CA 91770.



Two models for the .45, with teflon. Author says Blocker holsters are fast.

Called the "Bodyguard" and the "Security," these holsters are of standard pancake configuration with single belt slots fore and aft. Made for the Colt Govt. model pistol, the Bodyguard has a thumb break retaining strap, while the Security holster has an adjustable tension retainer.

What makes these holsters unique? Both are fully lined with a thin sheet of Teflon. This Teflon liner reduces to a minimum the friction on the gun when it is being inserted or drawn from the holster, which reduces gun finish wear to a minimum. In addition, the Teflon adds extra body which should greatly extend holster life. Normally, as holsters are used, the leather slowly stretches, just as leather boots will stretch. The Teflon lining should reduce or prevent this. An additional advantage is perspiration can not work through the leather to damage the gun.

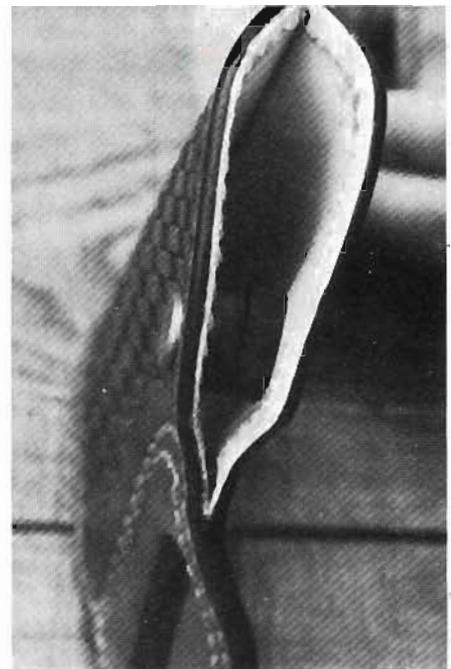
Teflon liners are not new to me, but this is the first time they have been offered commercially as part of a sporting holster. For approximately 10 years, western fast

draw shooters have been making their own liners out of 1/16 inch sheet Teflon. A pattern is first made from paper by trial and error and the Teflon is cut to shape with a sharp knife, curled into a cylinder and slipped into the fast draw holster. This greatly extends the life of a hard used fast draw rig. Before the use of the Teflon insert, it was not unusual to see a fast draw holster with the leather worn down to the metal lining at the top of the pouch, where the ejector rod head rubbed at every draw.

Ted Blocker is a fast-draw shooter who started producing fast draw rigs as a hobby in 1972. Today, he produces some of the finest holsters available, with his hand carving being as fine as any I have seen. Ted's is a custom operation with many different finishes available. His two-tone brown, with basket stamping is especially attractive.

Being a hobby custom holster maker myself, I am not easily impressed, but Ted's work is first class. I find the lazy-s curve of the back border of the basket stamping, on the adjustable tension holster, very pleasing to the eye. In this day when man's manual talents are constantly being replaced by machines, I was pleased to see that the basket stamping is done by

(Continued on page 70)



Teflon inner lining protects holster. Also, draw speed is greatly enhanced.

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# COP TALK

MASSAD AYOOB

## HIGHWAY VS CITY ISSUE-GUN CHOICE: THE CONTROVERSIAL IDEAL FIREARM

It wasn't long ago when any police firearms instructor would tell you, "A .357 Magnum is just the ticket for Highway Patrolmen 'cause they have to shoot through cars and don't have to worry about bystanders. A .38 wouldn't work for them, but it's the logical gun for city cops, 'cause a Magnum will shoot through a felon and wipe out ten people before it stops. A metro policeman won't have to shoot at cars anyway."

Thinking is more enlightened today. Some state police agencies have done studies that indicate they're not terribly likely to have to shoot endways through an Oldsmobile, and more urban agencies are issuing the .357 than ever before.

### THE DEMARCATION LINE

How much of a demarcation is there, really, between the duties of rural and highway peace officers, and those of their blue brethren in the megalopolis? Will it require different guns, different calibers, different ammo?

Well...

Today, more state police and highway patrol agencies issue .357s than .38s, but the margin is about the same as the popular vote difference between Carter and Ford. In fact, it may tip the other way: at least two such agencies require that .38 Special ammo be carried in the issue .357. Iowa troopers carry 125-grain semi-jacketed S&W .38 specials in the Model 13 Smiths that are slowly replacing their Model 10s, though the Chief, Col. Ed Dickinson, says he'll switch to a similar loading in .357 once every trooper has been issued a Magnum. Colorado State Patrolmen, though they've been issued four-inch Colt Python .357s for years, just recently switched from the 158-grain round nose lead .38 to a JHP in the same caliber.

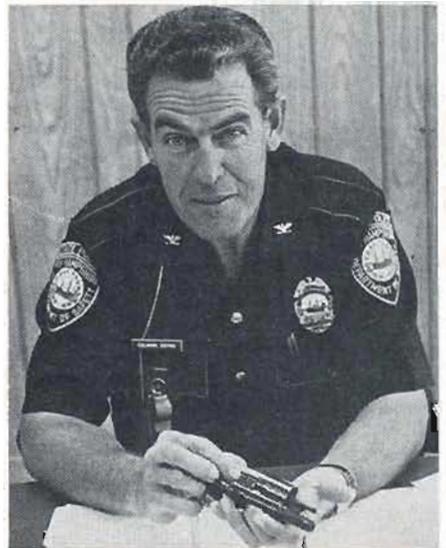
### THE HIGHWAY SPLIT

You might say that on the highway, .38 and .357 are split about down the middle, not counting Illinois State Police with their 9 mm S&W Model 39 automatics. One or two highway patrols went to the .41 Magnum shortly after it came out, but I understand they switched back to .357. An agency that de-escalated and then changed its mind was the New Hampshire State Police. In the early sixties, their 6" .44-frame Smith .357s were traded in for 4" Model 10 .38s, but a few years ago they

became the first SP outfit to adopt the Model 66 Stainless Combat Magnum, and took full advantage of the Magnum firepower with 158-grain jacketed .357 hollow-points.

Let's take a look at NHSP's experience, because it's kind of a microcosm of what the .357/.38 controversy is all about. Ostensibly, they scrapped the big-frame .357s so they could do away with the bulky flap holster, and go to a lightweight gun with a quick border patrol scabbard, and eliminate the Sam Browne shoulder strap. Of course, they could have achieved the same with a 4" Combat Magnum, as indeed they did later. The fact was that many officers couldn't handle magnum recoil and were carrying their 27s and 28s with .38 ammo in the chambers. Oddly enough, the shoulder strap remained for some time, though it's since been dispensed with. At the time the Model 10 was adopted (it was issued, incidentally, with 125-grain JHP loads, an effective .38 formula), then—Lt. Les Menzies, the department firearms instructor, had completed a survey that showed a New Hampshire trooper was most likely to encounter a firefight at a robbery scene or a family disturbance call—the exact same circumstances that initiate most metropolitan shootouts. He felt that the .38 would be more controllable, hence more effective as an anti-personnel weapon. And that the ability to

(Continued on page 28)



Col. Dayon (NH State) loads standard command officer's desk gun—2" .38.



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## COP TALK

(Continued from page 26)

shoot through automotive sheet metal was extraneous to the purpose at hand.

Let's digress for a moment. There are two kinds of state-level uniformed law enforcement agencies: highway patrols, which do nothing but traffic work, and true state police organizations that provide complete law enforcement services to rural areas that are too small, thinly populated, or poor to afford their own police. NHSP is



Popular two-gun concept illustrated with belted 9mm and holstered .38 Spl.

one of the latter, as are most. A pure highway patrol, for obvious reasons, does skew the gunfight statistics toward fire-fights involving vehicles, simply because they're always on the road, and don't face the same hazard calls as "all-purpose" lawmen. For the pure road trooper—in Colorado, for instance, or Florida—the .357 does make more sense, though I believe both those departments are issued .38 ammo.

But even in a shootout that unfolds on an Interstate, the capacity to penetrate an automobile may or may not be essential. The situation is often one where the suspect opens up on the officer after the latter has walked up to the suspect's vehicle: it's a point blank death duel, and the trooper or patrolman is likely to be shooting through an open window. On the other hand, the cop's best tactic in such a confrontation is to drop to the ground; the angle is such that the suspect now can't shoot at him without opening his door, but an officer with the right gun and load can drill cleanly through the door and take the driver out.

Let's expand on that for a second, using an actual case that involved a mid-west state trooper. As he approached the right-side door of what turned out to be a stolen Pontiac, the trooper saw the driver's hand

rise, and found himself looking down the barrel of a 9 mm Luger P-08. He drew his issue Smith 19 4", and fired one shot through the passenger window.

The bullet, a 158-grain Remington semi-jacketed soft point .357, pulverized the glass. The core of the bullet struck the subject in the upper right chest, and coursed through right lung, heart, and left lung, stopping in the ribcage on the left side. From the autopsy photos I saw, it appears that the separated jacket of the bullet struck the gunman an inch above where the rest of the slug went in, creating a large flesh wound near the right nipple.

#### ALIVE & DANGEROUS

The gunman's own door was open, and either the impact of the bullet or his convulsive muscular reaction to taking the hit threw him out the door and onto the ground. He rolled or scuttled toward the left rear of the car, belly down. The trooper moved cautiously around the front. The whole time, the gunman was trying to pull the trigger of his Luger; either it was defective, or he had not remembered to release the thumb safety. Desperately, the would-be cop killer reached up with his left hand and jacked the toggle action, ejecting the live round from the chamber and seating a fresh one. He aimed again at the trooper, then lowered his head and died. He had run out of blood, fully ten seconds after a .357 slug had pierced his heart and lungs at point blank range.

You can make a case in any direction from this documented incident, depending on what you want to prove. Those who feel as I do that the JSP .357 round has excessive penetration and minimal shock power can certainly point to it; had it not been slowed by the sheet of safety glass, the slug would almost certainly have penetrated the felon's body with enough retained force to inflict a fatal wound on any innocent standing behind him. Advocates of monstrously destructive police loads like the Glaser Safety Slug would announce flatly that a man hit in the same place with one would have been instantly neutralized. They're probably right, but the Safety Slug's plastic capsule of #12 shot floating in liquid Teflon wouldn't have entered this particular gunman's body at all. On hitting the window, it would have disintegrated along with the glass, and the punk with the Luger would have been harmlessly showered with neutered birdshot.

#### 9mm PENETRATION

Take the 9 mm used by Illinois State Police, and by such metropolitan agencies as Salt Lake City PD. Penetration of body armor or auto bodies actually exceeds that of most equivalent .357 loads. Yet, the Illinois troopers, who for many years carried them with full-jacketed hardball, bemoaned the fact that the bullets would penetrate a felon completely, with little shock effect. In one case, the bullet exited even after coursing through the thorax and

through the thick, hard center of the gunman's spinal column. After ISP went to the softnosed Winchester 100-grain power point in 1976, there was an incident at 52 yards in which a suspect was shot through the chest; the bullet exited without deforming, and the gunman ran over a hundred yards before dropping dead. Had he been otherwise inclined, he might have killed the trooper who shot him.

The policeman's sidearm is not there for shooting cars; it's there for shooting "the most dangerous game," which happens to be a soft-skinned mammal that is often supercharged with narcotics and virtually immune to pain or fear, immune to psychological and, to some extent, even physiological shock. The two targets demand opposite performance. The high penetration of a "car gun" makes it ineffective as a manstopper, and dangerous to bystanders. Light expanding-bullets at high velocity are very effective in flesh, but penetrate sheet metal rather poorly.

The .45 ACP hardball is a definite contender for the title of all-around police cartridge. It's hampered by the fact that most police departments consider the Army automatic too "tricky" to issue. It does offer excellent penetration with a straight-on shot on a car, and its stopping power against armed assailants is legend-



The obsolete cross-draw flap holster is still in use by some departments.

ary. The bullet tends to course through muscle and bone, expend its energy, and stop in the elastic skin on the opposite side. However, the nature of the round-nose jacketed bullet is that it cuts a narrow wound channel, and there are several cases on record where it decidedly failed to drop an assailant who hadn't been hit on a large bone or vital organ. Also, this slug will ricochet dangerously off pavement, or off tough sheet metal at acute angles.

The seldom seen .41 Magnum (in the low velocity lead Police load) does combine good metal penetration with very good stopping power and minimal over-penetration of flesh. However, the gun is violent to control, and is not considered

(Continued on page 32)

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It all started one day last winter when Chuck Pulliam, member of the Yuma Police Department, and handgun enthusiast, complained to me about not being able to find what he wanted in the way of a duty

weapon. Chuck was carrying an S&W 19 custom 6" with Bo-Mar rib. Over the past several years we had tuned it, put custom grips on it, and had gone as far as practical. I was beginning to think Chuck was relying on gadgetry to try to improve his shooting rather than spending his time at the range. Nonetheless, he is a customer and his checks don't bounce, so I tried to listen to him with some degree of courtesy.

He complained about everything! First he complained about his gun butt poking him in the ribs when he sat in the patrol car, then he complained that he couldn't lean over to reach the right door, and on and on.

When I more or less tactfully suggested he might find a 4" gun more comfortable and he said he refused to sacrifice accuracy

*(Continued on page 31)*



# FRY

*(above & below) This Smith & Wesson K-frame Model 15 Combat Masterpiece .38 Special sports R&J grips and slab sided 4-inch Douglas barrel for the ultimate police duty sidearm with custom, yet reasonable, PPC accuracy.*

Converting a duty gun for comfortable carry and accurate shooting

*By Frank Fry*



# .38 SPECIAL

for comfort—the seeds of his gun were then planted.

Several days later we got together and began to discuss the problem seriously.

The Yuma Police Department allows its officers to carry .357 Mag pistols, however the qualification is done with .38 mid-range wad cutters. Both Chuck and I agreed that accuracy had priority over power and presently he gave me carte blanche to produce a gun to satisfy his needs both for accuracy and carrying.

After some small search we found a suitable S&W M15, the old barrel was removed and having no idea of what barrel designs might appeal to Chuck, I proceeded to present him with some shapes for his approval. The first purchase I made was a supply of 1½" dowel rods to make prototype barrels. We wanted the heaviest possible barrel, yet it had to complement the frame and overall contour of the gun. We looked at square barrels, triangular barrels, fluted barrels and several exotic and weird shapes. We finally settled on 1" design with flat top and sides, with about a ¼" radius between, and a round bottom. This seemed to satisfy Chuck and had the best potential of the samples offered.

#### STRAIGHTFORWARD WORK

The basic machine work was straightforward. The Douglas blank was threaded and fit to the M15 frame, indexed and cut to a long 4", set up between centers and turned to 1". The top and sides of the barrel were then milled flat and the rear portion contoured to the receiver for an eye-pleasing blend. The ejector rod recess was a basic end mill operation and the gun was beginning to take form. I have always been reluctant to apply heat to a target barrel, preferring, when possible, to drill and tap so the ejector rod hanger required some thought. An end-milled extension was made forward of the ejector rod cut in the barrel and a steel block made to fit the new cut. The block was then drilled to accept a collared plunger and spring. This unit was then fitted to the ejector rod, and held in place with two 6/48 screws. A long shallow forcing cone was cut in the breech, the barrel screwed back into the receiver, and initial test firing took place. Recoil with mid range wad cutters was mild and with Plus P only slightly more. Muzzle jump was noticeably less than with a standard Model 15.

The next project was the sights. I have always liked the idea of a replaceable front sight and the DWA front sight blade width was exactly correct for the width of the rear blade. An ⅛" high ramp was made and slotted for the DWA sight, drilled and counterbored for 6/48 screws and attached to the barrel. The sight blade was trimmed from the bottom till the original height of the S&W sight was reached. The sight base and sight were drilled together to accept two small pins. It might be noted that the screw heads are hidden beneath the front sight blade which not only makes a neat



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# CONTENDER

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**Bull-barrelled Frank Fry .38 Special absorbs recoil well under rapid-fire.**

installation but locks the screws in place. An extra sight blade was also prepared for future use at this time.

The barrel was now cut to finished length and a target crown machined at the muzzle. The second test firing produced some very satisfactory results. Rapid firing required no effort to bring the muzzle back into line. The mass of the gun soaked up recoil easily. Fifty yard groups easily bench rested into the center of a PPC target. The action was then tuned, polished and balanced. A few rubs with some emery paper, a lick or two on the buffing wheels and it was ready for a blueing bath. Finally a set of R&J grips were installed. Empty the gun weighs in at 42 oz.

Chuck has carried this gun on duty now for 8 months and tells me it is exactly what he ordered. 

Frank's Gun Shop, 4646 E. Cty 15 St., Yuma, AZ 85364.

R & J Grips, 508 W. MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, CA 94609.

Dan Wesson Arms, 293 j Main St., Monson, MA 01057.

## COP TALK

*(Continued from page 29)*

suitable for general issue. Like the .45 auto, it's really pretty much an "experts only" gun.

One comes, inevitably, back to the .38 and the .357. While I like the 110-gr JHP in either caliber, for the minimized recoil and reduced penetration coupled with substantial shock effect, there are cases of dramatic failure to shoot through barricades. I dislike the 158-grain bullet's substantially greater recoil, but that weight gives three advantages: auto body penetration is good, the bullet will print in roughly the same place as the 148-grain .38 mid-range wadcutter ammo the officer is almost certainly trained with (thus making sure that his gun is reasonably well sighted in for this duty load, compared to 110-grainers which often hit inches away from the practice load's point of impact), and because, in a hollowpoint loading, it deliv-

ers maximum energy transmission and is unlikely to exit the target mass and cause danger to standers-by.

A better answer may be found in the new generation of 38/357 loads developed by S&W Ammunition and Remington. These are 90-grain semi-jacketed pills at extremely high velocity. These rounds have been known to pierce "bullet-proof" police vests that stop .44 Magnum slugs. At the same time, you're getting up into the lower regions of rifle velocities where secondary shock waves are set up that tear apart living tissue for a fist-sized radius around the wound channel.

However, there hasn't been time enough for sufficient reports to come in from the field as to whether this bullet will reliably drill through car doors, or whether it will dangerously drill through felons.

The all-lead hollowpoint 158-grain .38 Special is a load that grows more popular



**Popular Jordan-style holster shown with S&W stainless Model 64 M&P .38.**

with police every week. In the 1000-1100 FPS range out of a 4" service revolver, this is a formula that mushrooms dramatically, hits hard by whatever criterion you're using to measure it, and virtually eliminates overpenetration. Capability of drilling through barriers, however, is mediocre.

W/W's LHP .38 may be the ideal .38 Special load. You may never see the equivalent in .357, because the leading problem demands an alloy so hard that the expansion capability would be impaired, but if the .38 is your gun, and you don't patrol the Interstates, the 158 gr. LHP in the fast +P loading may well be your choice.

The same round in a solid Keith Semi-wadcutter is growingly popular with police, as a compromise between the ineffectual roundnose and the hollowpoint bullet that in some regions is too hot to handle politically rather than ballistically. Massachusetts State Police went to his round in their Model 10 .38s after their JHP 3-D brand service ammo caused a hue and cry in certain circles of that politically ultra-liberal state.

NYCPD went to this load, but watered it

down to standard ( $\pm 900$  fps) velocity. Most other agencies have kept the "+P" velocity specs (in the region of 1000-1050 fps), and many feel that this may be the ideal all-purpose police cartridge. The chopping shoulder of the Keith style bullet does deliver much greater stopping power than the round-nose, and in the .38, velocity is "just about right" in that complete felon-body penetration seldom happens, while auto body penetration is adequate. Oddly enough, the Keith style bullet is quite good for shooting through steel. Remember, round noses glance off, and hot lead is a lubricant substance. If you're shooting at a car from an acute angle, the sharp shoulder of the spinning semi-wadcutter takes a biting purchase into the steel and drills through instead of sliding off.

### 4-INCH HERE TO STAY

Enough of ammo. What about the guns? There was a time, and not so long ago, when street cops carried mid-frame four-inch 38s, and highway lawmen packed 6" heavy frame wheelguns. The six-inch is outé and will remain so; it is too awkward to carry all day, monstrously uncomfortable to sit down with when carried in a conventional police holster, and actually harder to shoot accurately in rapid combat fire at point blank range because the longer sight radius is harder to line up even roughly.

The big Colts, such as the New Service .45 revolver carried for so long by the New York State Police, are history now, but the "N" frame Smith & Wesson is still extremely popular in the Highway Patrolman .357. This gun offers much less recoil than any other weapon in its caliber save the heavy barrelled Colt Python and Dan Wesson Pacesetter, neither of which are popular as issue service revolvers. The action is smooth and trouble-free, accuracy is superb, and the gun is formidable in appearance without being unduly bulky in the holster, at least in the 4" barrel length. Several state police agencies still issue it, including the Texas Department of Safety, and because it's such an excellent dollar value (the best in the S&W catalog, I feel) many municipal and county lawmen who buy their own weapons choose it. As an issue gun, the N-frame Smith has but a single drawback: a lot of people with small hands find it slightly awkward.

### COMBAT MAGNUM CHOICE

There was a time when Smith sold as many Model 28s to cops as they did Model 19s. This is not now the case; the trim Combat Magnum is the odds-on choice for both individuals and departments who are upgrading to .357 Magnum firepower. The stainless Model 66 is especially popular, and at least four state police agencies have switched to it.

For all the talk about police automatics, the real trend is to the .357 revolver. In fact, a lot of departments that have gone to the

*(Continued on page 70)*



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The

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# 25-5

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## SW's Latest For Big Bore Revolver Shooters

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*By Jerry Ahern  
Photos By Sharon Ahern*

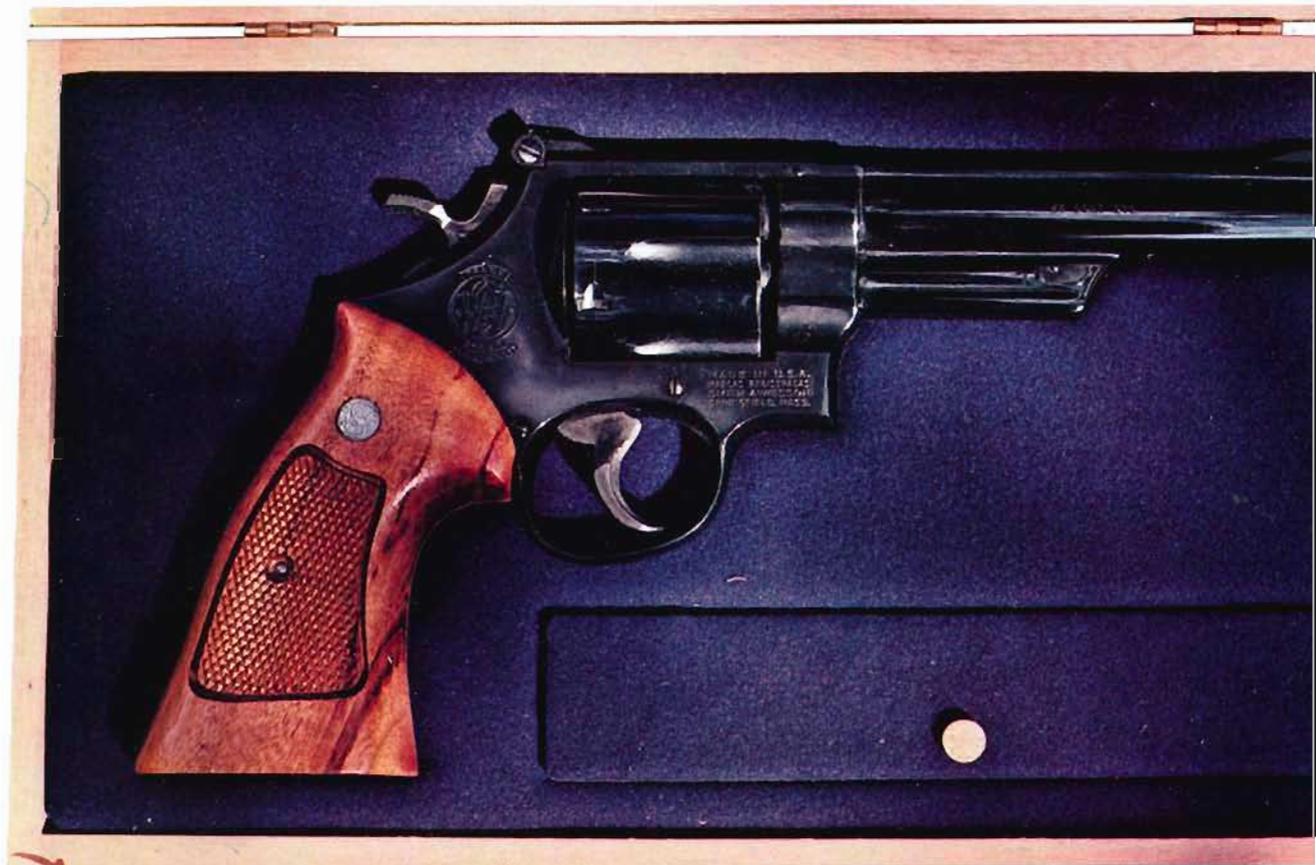
ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR caliber conversions in recent years has involved taking an N-frame Smith & Wesson—usually a Model 27 .357 Magnum or the .41 Magnum four-inch M&P—and converting to .45 Long Colt. To be sure, there were plenty of excellent single actions in the still popular frontier cartridge, but the Colt New Service was the last DA made in the round.

The .45 Long Colt offered several advantages as a cartridge for defense and sporting use. The big, 250-grain lead bullet was a proven manstopper and when handloaded with modern bullets the veteran cartridge was excellent in the field. And, this performance potential could be realized in a non-magnum cartridge—hence lesser recoil and pressure.

The only double action revolver available in any .45 caliber round was the Smith & Wesson Model 25 1955 Target, but this only in ACP and Auto Rim. To use factory ammo with better than the standard military ball performance, the Auto Rim had to be abandoned and the ACP round used with three-round half-moon clips.

Then, Smith & Wesson startled the shooting public with the announcement of a limited edition 125th Anniversary commemorative Model 25 in .45 Long Colt. The relatively few guns produced were enormously popular and most likely never shot, especially those with special 125th Anniversary markings. But the idea of a .45 LC d.a. that actually came that way from the factory was even more popular.

Roy Jinks, Smith & Wesson historian and noted firearms author, indicated that offering a production .45 LC version of the



Model 25 wouldn't be quite as simple as one might imagine, this as he gestured towards a display rack of new Smith & Wesson handguns at the 1978 National Association of Sporting Goods Wholesalers Show in November of that year. One of the guns he gestured to was a Smith & Wesson Model 25-5—in .45 Long Colt. Jinks and others at Smith & Wesson had wanted a longer cylinder if the gun was to be made at all—not a standard Model 25 but chambered for the Long Colt round. This was it.

Meanwhile, the new .45 revolver demanded a few things—namely the new Federal 225-grain lead hollow point semi-wadcutter load and a suitable holster. The obvious choice was Lawman Leathers Dirty Harry Holster. Made for the six and one-half-inch 29 in .44 Magnum, it would easily accommodate any caliber N-frame with similar barrel length. And similar is the word. Smith has standardized its N-frame barrel lengths to 4, 6, 8 inch—no more 3½ inch or 5½ inch Model 27 .357, the 8½ inch N-frames. And no more the 6½.

The Model 25-5 was a six-inch. When it arrived at the co-operating dealer's shop, it was hard to imagine proprietor Sid Harper grinning any wider. The 25-5 is that impressive.

The 25-5 is available in the customary three barrel lengths—four, six and eight. The rear sight is windage and elevation adjustable, the fixed front ramp featuring a bright red insert, easy to pick up in the white outlined rear notch. Grips are the Goncalo Alves oversize target stocks, hand-filling and leaving plenty of room for constructive whittling if the owner wishes to alter the profile. The trigger is the grooved target type, case hardened, as is the wide-spur checkered target hammer.

The 25-5 is cased in a French-fitted walnut presentation box, the gun complete with cleaning rod and accessories. The Lawman Leather holster, comfortable with a big gun such as this, is easily adjustable to any average sized person. Women or very

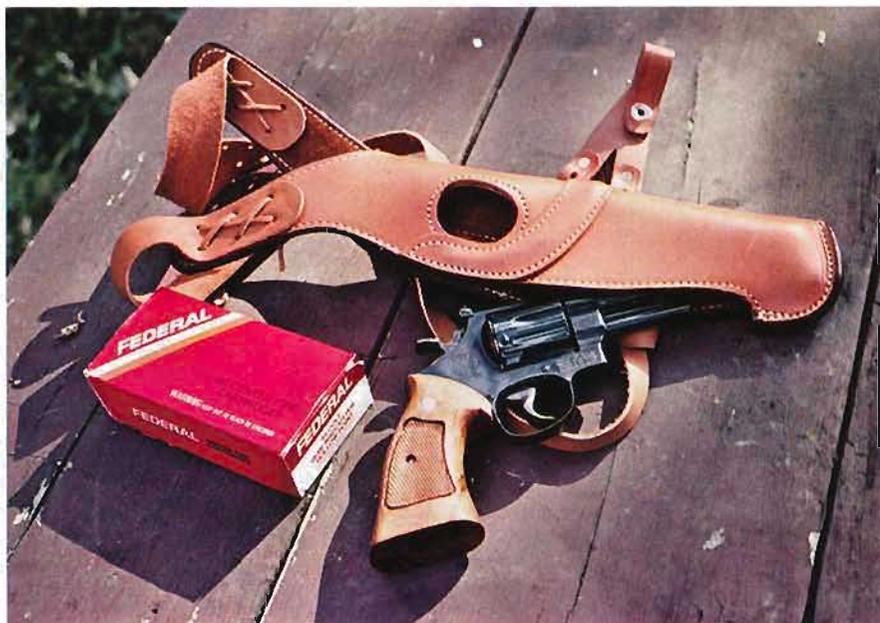
small men might find the rig a bit oversized. With the unique cylinder cut out in the holster, surrounded by spring steel, the Dirty Harry holds the 25-5 comfortably and securely. modern gun, it was decided to test the 25-5 with only modern ammo—the new Federal round. At a nearby outdoor testing facility the 25-5 proved its mettle.

Because of the 225 gr. bullet of the new Federal round and the hotter loading, recoil with the 25-5 was noticeable, yet not at all unpleasant. At twenty-one feet, then again at thirty feet, cloverleafing with the 25-5 was more the rule than the exception. Going back out to fifty feet, firing from a modified kneeling position, this writer was able to obtain consistent groups of about three inches—and yours truly isn't noted for marksmanship.

The technical aspects of the 25-5 were just what one expects from a top-of-the line Smith revolver: indexing was accurate; lockup achieved well before the hammer reached full stand; cylinder alignment was even, with no wobble when the cylinder was spun open and consistently even light areas showing between the cylinder and the crane and frame. Single action trigger pull was even and broke cleanly with minimal overtravel, while DA pull was steady and smooth.

This new Smith & Wesson is a gun American shooters have been looking for for quite a long time, and proof that Smith & Wesson does respond to shooter demand and is just as interested in the sportsman as the policeman. Yet, with the 25-5 in .45 Long Colt, Smith & Wesson has catered to both. On the frontier, the .45 Colt round was used for game shooting, defense against predators, enforcing the law and ordinary self-defense. The new .45 Colt sixgun—the one from Smith & Wesson—will have no less versatile a future.

And, this new gun in this massive non-magnum caliber may be the first step towards high performance handguns without mag-



**Left: The gun looks great in a Dirty Harry type holster. Holster is by Lawman and ammo by Federal. The barrel is 6". This gun is proof-positive that Smith responds to shooter interest.**

**Left: Here's the long-awaited, new S&W Model 25-5 in a nifty French-fitted presentation case. It has a ½" shorter barrel than the gun Smith used for the 125th Anniversary but sports a slightly longer cylinder.**

num recoil—a dramatic step backward in time but forward in technology.

As this is written, suggested retail for the six-inch Model 25-5 is \$419.83, and the guns are in full production and available on dealer's shelves, though with their popularity you may spend a good amount of time hunting one down. 

# HANDGUNNER

## CUSTOM PISTOLSMITH DIRECTORY

**T**his is the bi-annual update of our regular annual Custom Pistolsmith Directory. For the complete listing of 99-plus custom pistolsmiths, including a regional directory, refer to AMERICAN HANDGUNNER January/February 1981 issue. Our next full directory will appear in the Jan/Feb 1982 issue—watch for it. Our exclusive Directory is the most up-to-date and complete in print!

For any of you who missed our 1981 Custom Pistolsmith Directory, back issues are available for \$2.00 each from AMERICAN HANDGUNNER, J/F ISSUE, 291 Camino de la Reina, San Diego, CA 92108.

As always, the 'smiths listed here all do general pistolsmithing work—trigger jobs, barrel work, sight installation, etc.—and one step further: their custom specialties, as listed, separate them from being just a repair facility, and highlight them as skilled handgun craftsmen.

### SILHOUETTE 'SMITHS

The 1982 Directory will feature, in addition to our regular listings, a special listing of Silhouette 'Smiths who work on, or build custom silhouette unlimited handguns. Anyone wanting to get on the list, write or call Managing Editor Mike Packard (714) 297-5352. The listing is free—the ton of extra work you'll receive from being listed is your problem.

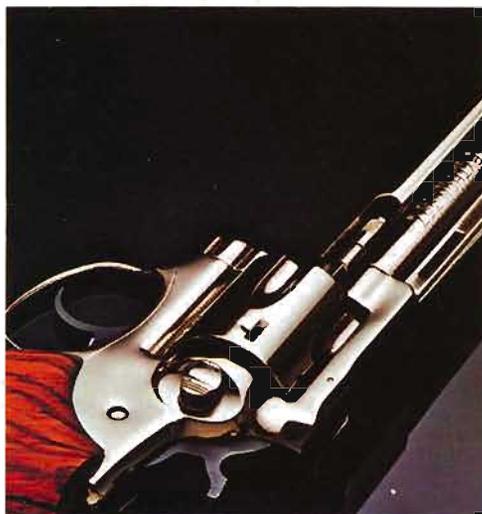
### NEW LISTINGS

**AUTO SHOP** (Marvin Wetstein), 8545 Washington Blvd., Culver City CA 90230, (213) 836-0179—Customizing, accurizing of .45 autos.

**BROADWAY ARMS CORP.** (Joe Pruden), 4114 East Broadway, No. Little Rock AR 72117, (501) 945-1853—Custom combat Colt, S&W, Ruger.

**CW SPORTS** (Collin Weisz), 218 3rd. St., Riverdale ND 58565, (701) 654-7612—Action jobs on Ruger, S&W, Colt revolvers. Ruger is specialty.

**DAVIS CO.**, 1176 No. Knollwood Circle, Anaheim CA 92801 (714) 952-2191—Bill Davis' second shop, managed by son Jeff; home of the Davis Custom PPC gun, the Smolt, and the Cougar, PPC custom conversions and super duty-tunes on S&W, Colt, Ruger.



**DEMPEY CUSTOM GUN**, 19715 Bolton Bridge Lane, Humble TX 77338, (713) 446-7842—IPSC .45's, PPC revolvers, customizing, accurizing, conversions, rebarreling on Colt, S&W, Ruger, and Dan Wesson.

**J&G SALES, Inc.** (Richard Aldis), 442 Miller Valley Rd., Prescott AZ 86301, (602) 445-9650—Tuning and custom revolvers (S&W, Ruger, some Colt). Also .45 combat conversions and work.

**PAUL JAEGER, INC.**, 211 Leedom St., Jenkintown PA 19046, (215) 884-6920—PPC Packages, specializing in S&W and Ruger, IPSC packages, XP-100 conversions.

**MAC'S .45 SHOP** (Jim McDonnell), Box 2028, Seal Beach, CA 90740, (213) 443-1679 or 438-5056—Customizing and accurizing .45 autos. Patented "Accu-Guide" combat system. Also custom .45 frames and barrels to order. Trigger installation and other work done while you wait. Call for appointment.

**MIKE'S GUNSMITH SHOP** (Michael Ray Watkins), 918 84th St., Lubbock TX 79423, (806) 745-1269—Trigger and accurizing for NRA match, .45 auto combat a specialty. Will build PPC and IHMSA unlimiteds.

**J. MICHAEL PLAXCO**, Rt. 1 Box 203, Roland AR 72135, (501) 868-9787—Full competition combat autos for IPSC, basic to full house custom packages. Some S&W custom revolver work. Delivery within 10 weeks in most cases.

**PRECISION SPECIALTIES, Ltd.**, (Fran Brown), 24 Davis St., Springfield MA 01104, (413) 734-2665—PPC custom revolvers, action tuning.

**QUALITY PISTOLSMITHING** (Stephen M. Snider), Box 301, Energy IL 62933, (618) 942-7285—Custom duty-grade S&W 39's and 59's, combat .45's. Special finishes—Nitex, Metaloy.

**RPS GUNSHOP** (Jim Rice), Box 3502, Central Point OR 97502, (503) 664-5010—PPC custom and duty revolvers, bull barrels, tune and accurize, some auto work.

**SCHLUTER'S GUNSMITHING & SALES** (Don Schluter), 568 6th Ave., San Diego, CA 92101, (714) 239-0181—Custom tuning Colt and S&W revolvers, .45 auto tuning for combat or match.

**SHOOTIST SUPPLY** (John Cook), 622 5th Ave., Belle Fourche SD 57717 (605) 892-2822—Revolver and auto work, IPSC autos, mail order accessories for .45's.

**BILL WISEMAN**, 3600 Old College Road, Bryon TX 77801, (713) 846-3570—Ex-marine gunsmith specializing in .45 accuracy jobs. Also works Brownings and other autos.

**B. WITT GUN WORKS** (Carl Witt), 4020 Ridgelane, West Linn OR 97068, (503) 656-6186—IPSC modifications to S&W and Colt autos. Bo-Mar, MMC, S&W sight, hardchroming, rebluing, action tuning.

## UPDATED LISTINGS

**BEHLERT CUSTOM GUNS** (Austin Behlert), US Rt. 1 Northbound, Monmouth Junction NJ 08852, (201) 687-3350—Combat and PPC, wide variety.

**BELLS CUSTOM SHOP** (Dave Norin), 3313 Mannheim Rd., Franklin Park IL 60131, (312) 678-1900—Reliable and accurate .45's for combat.

**LOU CIAMILLO** (Maryland Gun works), 26200 Frederick Rd., Hyattstown MD 20734, (301) 831-8456—Specializing in Ruger, S&W, and Colt conversions for police combat.

**DUNCAN GUN SHOP**, Box 1959, 414 2nd St., N. Wilkesboro NC 28659, (919) 667-3222/838-4857—Guaranteed X-ring accuracy custom PPC revolvers.

**JACK'S GUNS & RELOADING** (Jack Abene), 3911 W. Waters Ave., Suite 3, Tampa FL 33606, (813) 932-8824—PPC tuning and auto accurizing.

**LEE JURRAS**—retired from full-time 'smithing.

**ALAN C. MARVEL**, 3922 Madonna Rd., Jarrettsville MD 21084, (301) 557-7270—Accurizing autos and revolvers, specializing in Colt .45 auto and .38 Super conversions in standard and long slide, trigger tuning on High Standard and S&W M41 autos.

**GREG ROBERTS**, 2145 Delaware St., Santa Cruz CA 95060, (408) 426-7630—High quality revolver work. S&W, Colt. Also quality reloaded ammo in .38, .357, .45 calibers.

**SHERMAN'S CUSTOM GUNS** (Walt Sherman), 9621 Rose Rd., Tallahassee FL 32304, (904) 877-3390—Specializes in Colt Python actions, but will do S&W K or N frames.

**TRULOCK FIREARMS** (George Trulock), Box 74, Whigham GA 31797, (912) 762-4678—Caliber conversions on N-frame S&W, old model Ruger and new model stainless steel Blackhawks. Custom auto and revolver work.

**WALTERS INDUSTRIES** (Dave Walters), 6226 Park Lane, Dallas TX 75225, (214) 691-6973—Combat and NRA target .45's.

**ROYCE O. WEDDLE**, 4111 24th Ave., Norman OK 73069, (405) 364-0444—Custom target revolvers, action jobs, single or double action trigger smoothing.

**WILSON'S GUN SHOP** (Bill Wilson), Rt. 3, Box 211-D, Berryville AR 72616, (501) 545-3618—Acclaimed Wilson Combat .45 autos, basic to full house selection with varying price ranges. Custom accessories available also.



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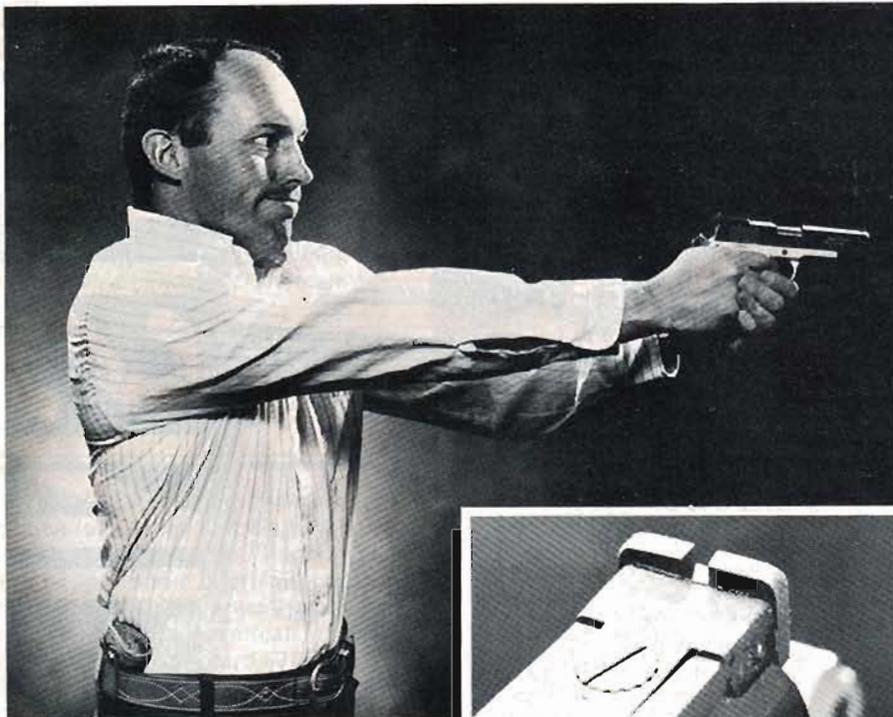
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# CHUCK TAYLOR

## Commando Special

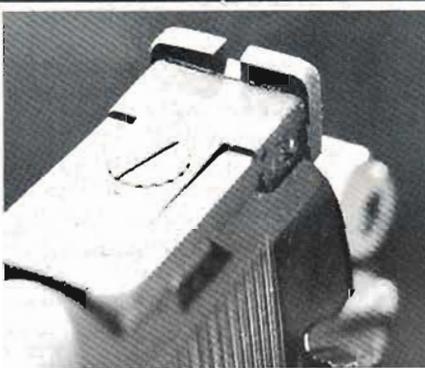


By John S. Farnam

THE CHUCK TAYLOR COMMANDO SPECIAL is a Colt Lightweight Commander that has been skillfully modified by the distinguished gunsmiths at Sportswest in Denver under the supervision of Chuck Taylor, well-known IPSC shooter, author, and top-flight weapons training specialist.

These days there is a plethora of gunsmiths claiming to do quality work on the Colt auto. Some are excellent, most are decent, a few are abominable. Among the very best are Ikey Starks and George Orndorff of Sportswest. Their work has enjoyed a superb reputation, which is doubtless why Chuck chose them to make the weapon which bears his name.

By latest count, the number of modifications available on the Colt auto exceeds one-hundred. You can get everything from a vented, extended barrel to an ambidexterous slide release! Most of these have



**Melted adjustable Bo-mar rear sight for de-horned, instant sight picture.**

been created at the behest of IPSC shooters looking for every possible competitive advantage. It has not been a one-way street, however. As anyone who has attended high-level IPSC competitions will attest, many of these highly-modified, finely-tuned competition guns have proven ungainly, heavy, finicky, and prone to stoppages.

Chuck has carefully analyzed all the available modifications, most of which he has had considerable personal experience with, and refined them down to include only those which have proven legitimately helpful and do not degrade the carryability and reliability of the weapon. The Chuck Taylor Commando Special is designed to be carried concealed and give its

owner every survival advantage in an actual armed encounter. It is *not* designed to win IPSC matches (though it may well do just that).

Here then is a description of the Chuck Taylor Commando Special:

**Standard Colt safety.** Many of the enlarged safeties add unacceptable bulk to the weapon. Ambidexterous safeties tend to get "elbowed" off inadvertently when the weapon is carried concealed, according to many left-handers who have employed this modification. Left-handers should have a left-hand *only* safety or, learn to shoot right-handed.

**Standard, functional grip safety.** The grip safety performs a legitimate function. If the weapon is dropped or jarred from the shooter's hand, it is rendered inert the moment it leaves his grip—a good feature. Most shooters have no trouble with it and forget it's even there. Those few who do have a problem with it should have it modified to suit them rather than have it pinned out of action.

**Crisp trigger 3.5 lbs.** As they come from the box, Colt autos have a trigger that is heavier and creepier than most of us want. A crisp, three and a half pound pull is about right, lighter and you're flirting with unintentional discharges, heavier and you're adding milliseconds to your first round.

*(Continued on page 39)*

*A .45 tuned for street/survival with just the right accessories and smithing for concealment and smooth-functioning reliability*



**Commando Special concealment rig is Milt Sparks holster and Bianchi belt.**

Ikey's trigger jobs are among the best.

**Sights.** Wide, serrated ramp in front—adjustable, rounded-off Bo-mar in the rear, “melted” into the slide. Sights need to be conspicuous and striking enough to be picked up rapidly when the gun is drawn; yet they must not excessively protrude from the weapon adding bulk and bothersome sharp corners. Ikey has masterfully installed the Bo-mars in a way that maximizes their usefulness yet keeps excessive bulk to a minimum. The weapon remains slick and fast. Unlike some, the Bo-mars are husky and rugged—a necessity with a carry gun.

**Checked front strap.** Very helpful during the draw, particularly when drawing from under a coat. It fixes the hand in position, prevents the grip from shifting.

**Heavy, hardened barrel bushing.** Enhances accuracy. Does not bind or wear excessively like some. Bushing wrench is provided with gun.

**Beveled magazine well, 60 degrees.** Nearly all endorse this modification. Greatly speeds magazine changes. Experience has shown 60 degrees to be the preferred angle.

**Throated and polished feed ramp.** Another universally endorsed modification. Greatly enhances feeding reliability, enables the weapon to reliably use a variety of ammunition. I tested it with all the commercially available hollowpoints as well as several other high-performance loads, and it functioned flawlessly. I personally prefer hardball, but you can use your favorite hollowpoint with confidence.

**Chuck Taylor Commando Special logo.** Identifies the gun for what it is. Enhances pride in ownership.

**Colt Lightweight frame and Colt slide.** Rounded and dehorned throughout. Ejector area ported out. Slide is gloss finished (blue) on sides, frosted on top. Frame is shot blasted white. When selecting a .45 auto on which a life may depend, premier gunsmiths agree: stick with a Colt. There are “other” .45's, and many people like them, but if there is one thing Colt can do well, it's build a .45 auto.

So, if you routinely carry a gun concealed, the Chuck Taylor Commando Special was designed for you. It combines reliability, shootability, power, controllability, simplicity, durability, carryability, convenience, and quality in a weapon that is available at a reasonable price. Designed by a gunman, built by experts; it is a gun for gunmen. If the foregoing describes the kind of weapon you've been looking for—don't pass it up.

Author's note: The Chuck Taylor Commando Special is available thru Sportswest (ask for Ikey or George) 2200 W Alameda Ave., Alameda Square Shopping Center, Denver, CO 80223 (303) 934-4466. Price \$700-\$750 complete; delivery: 4-6 weeks.

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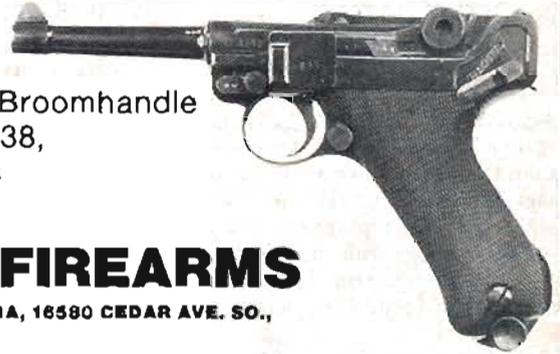
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By Evan P. Marshall

SMITH & WESSON BROKE with tradition on January 13, 1981, and invited a select group of gun writers to preview new gun and ammunition offerings. American Handgunner staffer Evan Marshall not only test fired these guns extensively at the factory, but brought a number of them home for in-depth evaluation.

Marshall also toured the factory, and saw first hand S&W doing everything possible to produce enough handguns to meet current demands. Furthermore, in spite of rumors to the contrary, S&W is producing the J frame .38 snubs in large numbers. Here is his report.

#### MODELS 439/459

The second generation S&W 9mms that we have heard so much about are finally a reality. The 439 and 459 retain the aluminum frame, but offer a number of advantages over the original versions. The rear sight has been replaced with a fully adjustable version with sheet metal wings to prevent snagging on clothing. Also new and sorely needed is a wider extractor

made of stainless steel that offers reliable extraction of all 9mm loads. S&W had found that the wide disparity in rim thickness had made the original extractor only marginally adequate.

Early prototype 439s and 459s did not retain the hammer drop feature of the slide safety. The safety had to be applied and then the trigger pulled to drop the hammer. The possibilities for accidental discharge were obvious, so S&W returned to the original format.

While it was not commonly known, S&W Model 39s and 59s would discharge if dropped with the safety off. While condi-

(Continued on page 41)

## S&W INTRODUCES

# New Guns & Ammo

*On the heels of the new 9mm auto pistols, come steel-framed versions, a stronger frame .357 Magnum, and a 9mm revolver, plus new hollowpoint ammo for .38 & 9mm*

"CHIEF SPECIAL"  
38 SPECIAL—STANDARD PRESSURE  
125gr NYCLAD HOLLOW POINT

70 CAL

38 SPECIAL  
"4 P" 125 gr JACKETED HOLLOW POINTS

50 CAL 90 CAL 56 CAL

ALL SAMPLES FIRED INTO GELATIN  
FROM S&W MODEL 38  
2" BULLET

NYCLAD 9mm 125gr HOLLOW PT.

76 CAL

9mm 175 JACKETED HOLLOW POINTS

30 CAL 39 CAL

ALL SAMPLES FIRED INTO GELATIN  
FROM S&W MODEL 459



**M547 9mm revolver (top)**  
**L-frame M586 .357 Mag (middle)**  
**New steel-frame M559 (bottom)**

tions had to be exactly right, it was possible. To eliminate this problem, S&W has introduced a firing pin block that holds the firing pin immobile until the trigger is pulled.

Last but far from least, the guns have been redesigned so that they will feed virtually any 9mm load on the market. I repeatedly filled the magazine at random with loads ranging from Super Vels 90 grain jhp to Remingtons 124 grain full metal jacket offering. The weapons fed all without a hitch.

#### MODELS 539/559

Over the succeeding years S&W have received countless requests for steel framed 9mms. Finally, after several years of research, S&W has introduced the 539 and 559.

These steel frame pistols incorporate all the improvements of the 439 and 459. Unlike the aluminum frame guns, the steel ones can be accurized. My 559 is currently being accurized by a well known custom pistolsmith and we hope to have it finished in time for the Bianchi Cup.

#### MODELS 586/686

When S&W introduced the Model 19 medium frame .357 Magnum, it was envisioned that police officers would practice with .38 wadcutters. Today, those departments that issue .357 Magnums routinely practice and qualify with full power Magnum loads. This coupled with new high intensity Magnum loads has created problems with medium frame .357s.

S&W response to this problem has been to introduce a new "L" frame .357 Magnum, the Model 586. The Model 586 is designed with a larger cylinder and heavier barrel to withstand constant use of Magnum loads. The grips are interchangeable with the "K" frame, so custom grips can be easily installed.

The 586 will be available with either a four or six inch barrel. The four inch version will weigh 42 ounces unloaded; the six inch will weigh 46 ounces. It will come standard with a smooth combat trigger and semi-target hammer. The four inch will come standard with a red ramp and white outline, while the six inch will come with a plain patridge or red ramp. The Goncalo Alves target grips have a speed loader cutaway.

S&W refers to this Model as the "Distinguished Combat Magnum" and it will certainly be popular among NRA Police Combat Shooters who prefer the S&W for the "Distinguished" stage. While the cylinder size is different than the "K" or "N" frame, Colt Python speedloaders work perfectly.

The 586 has proven extremely accurate. I've gotten groups under 1" at 25 yards with S&W Nyelad wadcutter ammo. Federal 125 grain jhp .357 loads have proven virtually as accurate. It will also be offered in nickel and stainless steel (Model

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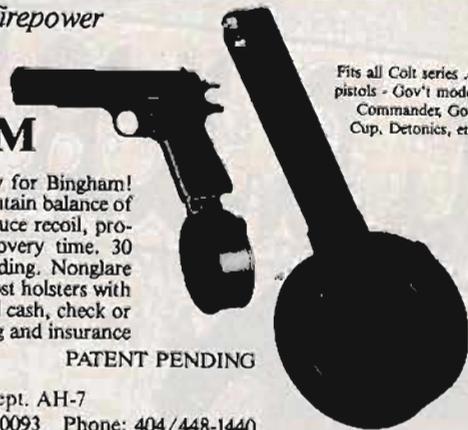
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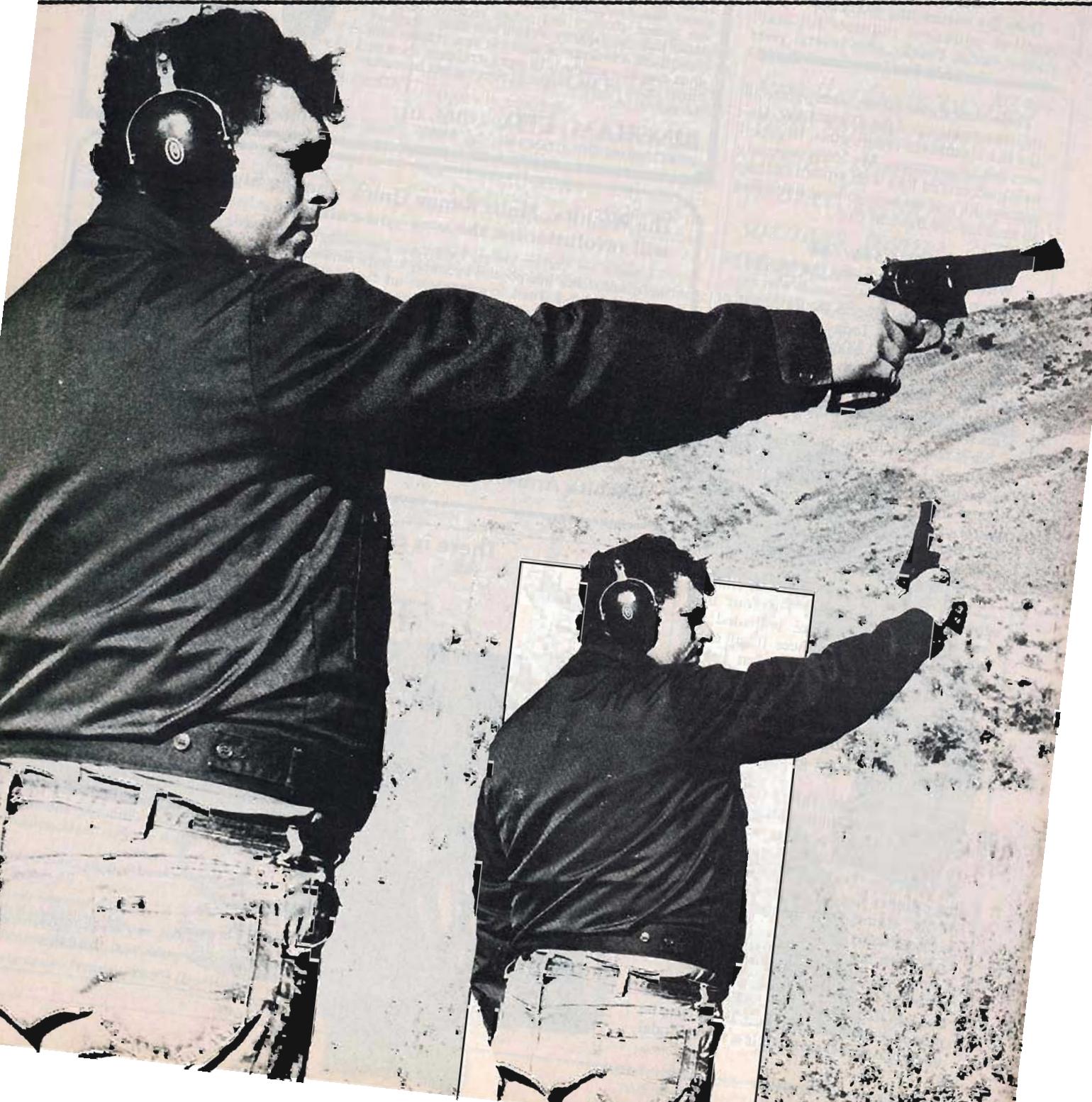
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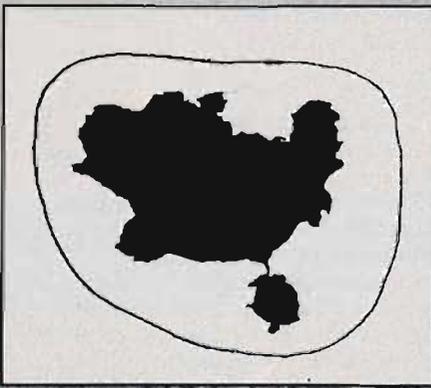
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# WARRIOR



# S FOR MAGNUMS



## Your Initiation To The Big Boomers Can Be Made A Lot More Pleasant If You Take It A Step At A Time...

By Mike Venturino

We are living in the age of the magnum handgun.

Metallic silhouette shooting with handguns is a fast growing sport; handgun hunting is being legalized in many areas; and the total selection of magnum handguns available from various manufacturers is simply amazing.

The only benefits a magnum handgun offers over the standard calibers are power and flatness of trajectory. On the other hand, the side effects of that power are noise and recoil—both of which make the magnum a very difficult handgun to learn to shoot accurately.

No one that I have ever met has become even a mediocre shot with a magnum handgun by using full power loads in it from the very beginning. To become an accurate marksman with a hard-hitting, big bore handgun requires much practice with what I term "learning loads; handloads for a big bore handgun that are mild—say no more than 900 FPS at the most, and accurate." By accurate I mean groups no larger than two inches at 25 yards—when the handgun is fired from either a mechanical or sandbag rest.

Another requirement for "learning loads" is that they be relatively cheap. This is a tall order in this day and age, but since

it takes much ammo to become good with a handgun, cost is a consideration.

Jacketed bullets for this variety of handgun are a waste—pure and simple. For "learning loads" their ability to expand into the classic mushroom is useless, and worse yet, at low velocities it is possible for them to stick in a handgun's bore. And they are too expensive for most of us to shoot hundreds and thousands away in practice.

If a handgunner does not cast his own bullets then the soft, swaged lead bullets put out by various manufacturers are the ticket. Unless driven too fast they will not lead the bore.

For those who already own bullet casting equipment the moulded lead bullet is a far better route to go. Casting your own bullets gives you a latitude in bullet weight, alloy, diameter, and lubricant not available to shooters of store-bought bullets.

I know my cast bullets are good because I have tested thousands of them through over a dozen handguns using a Lee Pistol Machine Rest. I have yet to find a revolver that will not shoot groups of at least two inches at 25 yards with the proper loads—with cast bullets!

Self-cast bullets are good and by far the cheapest bullets available. *I know!*

Bullet design is not greatly important for "learning loads" except that the bullet should be accurate. If the shooter will do most of his practicing at paper targets then the standby wadcutter shape or the semi-wadcutter is best because of the clean holes they will cut. For varmints such as gophers or small game this same reasoning is sound.

However, if a roundnose bullet (or mould) is all that is available don't sell it short. Some of these old-fashioned looking bullets are amazingly accurate.

For my own use I have generally settled  
*(Continued on page 44)*

**At the far left, notice that recoil is slight. That's because author is using his "learning loads." The gun is a S&W Model 29 .44 Magnum. Inset shows usual recoil of .44 Magnum—how's that for a big jump? Top photo shows target with a nice 25 yd. group measuring 1 1/4" shot with author's best load of Bullseye. This powder and the Unique have been around a long time and make great learning loads. Cast bullets make good loads for inexpensive shooting and were used by writer. So, learning loads were set up to be cheap, accurate, and to lessen recoil.**

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## LEARNING LOADS

(Continued from page 43)

on the various semi-wadcutter designs as I use them in both practice and full power loadings.

In .44 caliber I use either Lyman #429421, or RCBS 44-250K. In .41 caliber the Lyman #410459 and the RCBS 41-210K are fine, and for .357 Magnum both Lyman #358477 or RCBS 38-150K are good choices. However, for my last birthday my wife gave me a Lyman mould #35891 for a bevel base full wadcutter bullet that has shot rings around some of my previously favored bullets—accuracy wise.

It pays to experiment!

In general gas check type bullets are good but the gas checks are a needless



**Heavy recoil of magnum caliber guns  
can be toned down with learning loads.**

expense at the velocity level of "learning loads."

Again; the individual design of bullet is not so important as long as they are accurate, plentiful, and reasonably priced.

As important as the bullet design picked for practice loads is the choice of powders. Accuracy and economy are still the watchwords. Nearly any of the faster burning powders are suitable regardless of brand.

Don't figure that just because one of the slower powders is the best choice for full magnum loads it will be good for reduced loads with reduced charges. Powders such as 2400, IMR-4227, or H-110 which are good for the high velocity loads, will give incomplete burning or maybe even misfires at low pressures. Accuracy will also be poor.

My favorite powders for "learning loads" are Bullseye and Unique. Accuracy is easily obtainable with both these propellants using moderate charges, and because of those moderate charge weights the cost factor is low.

Recently I have used some other powders such as SR-4756 and Red Dot, with very good results so my mind is open as far as powders are concerned.

As an example of the cost factor I will use my favorite load for my Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum Model 27. It consists of one of the aforementioned cast bullets over a charge of 4.0 grains of Bullseye.

Velocity is around 850 FPS at 25 yards,

groups average about 1½ inches. But, the powder cost per shot is also excellent with 1,750 charges to a one pound (approx. \$8.00) can of powder!

When using these light charges of fast-burning powders it pays to be very cautious about double charging a case. Where the above mentioned 4.0 grains of Bullseye in a .357 Magnum case is fine, a double charge of 8.0 grains may blow the gun to pieces. I check every case after charging them. It takes a little longer—but I'm loading for accuracy and safety—not quantity!

The fact that a handgun can be just as sensitive about its powder charge as a rifle is generally not well known. However, it is true.

### 4.0 GRAINS BULLSEYE

When working up with Bullseye for that .357 Magnum target load I tried 3.0, 3.2, 3.4, 3.6, 3.8, and then 4.0 grains using the handgun in my Lee Pistol Machine Rest. The 10-round groups with 3.0, 3.4, and 3.8 gave nowhere near the accuracy as those with 3.2 and 3.6 grains. But none of the charge weights gave near the excellent accuracy of the 4.0-grain charge, whose groups very rarely measure over 1.5 inches, and then only a fraction or so over.

To check this out I shot this test over again twice and the order of accuracy always stayed the same. Loads with 3.0, 3.4 and 3.6 grains always averaged over two inches; loads with 3.2 and 3.6 grains hovered right at the two-inch mark, and the 4.0-grain charge always was much under that.

This experience convinced me to always test various powder charges when striving for accuracy with handguns.

I have also seen the use of a filler material such as dacron recommended for light handgun loads. I disagree with this after trying it. For me accuracy deteriorated in every instance.

One practice I do heartily recommend for "learning loads" is the use of the full-length magnum in both .357 and .44 Magnum calibers.

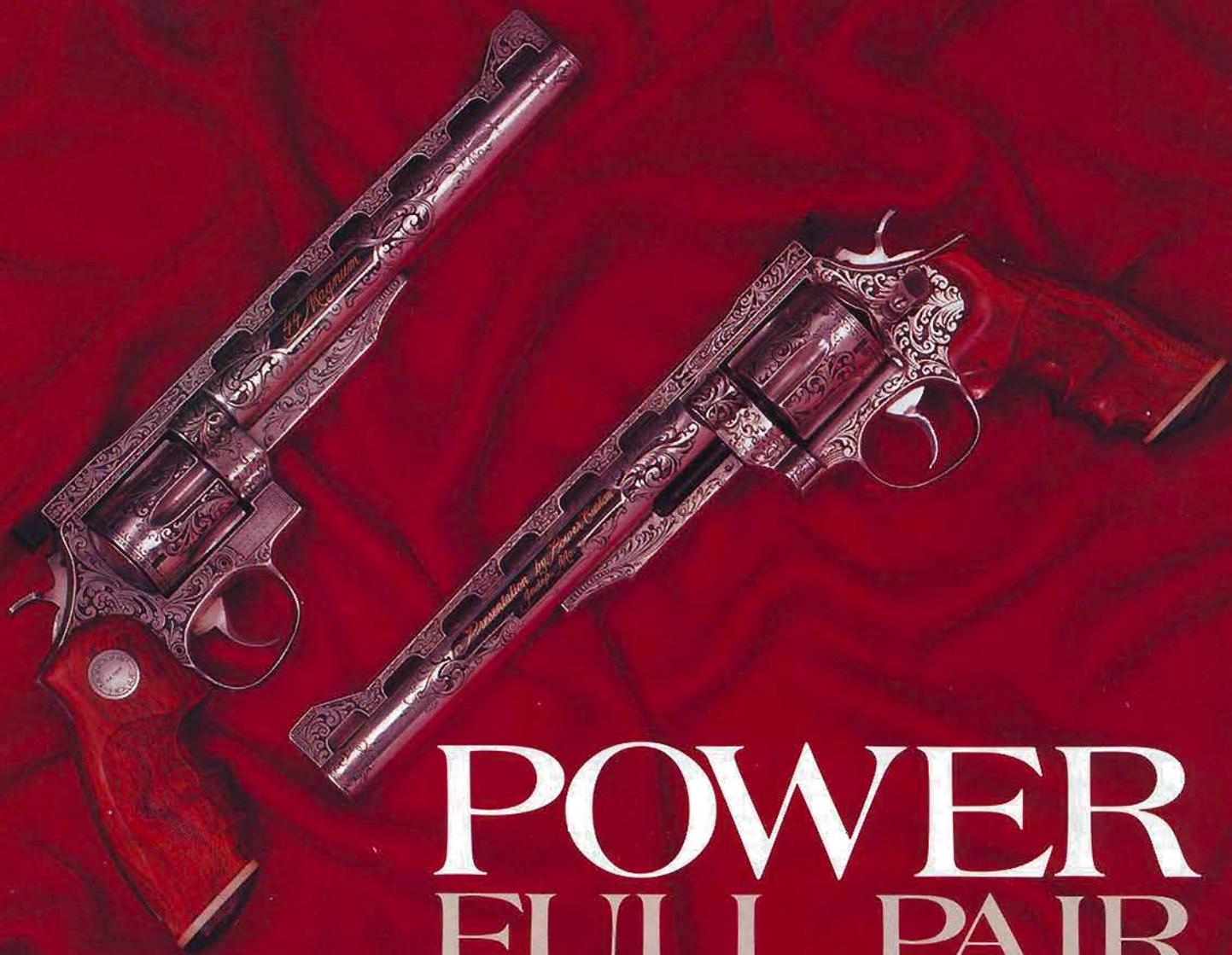
### MAGNUM BRASS BETTER

In fact, it was my inability to achieve any kind of accuracy with my Smith & Wesson Model 27 .357 Magnum using loads in .38 Special brass that lead me to experiment with the various powder charges in .357 Magnum brass as I just mentioned.

Even using factory match .38 Special wadcutters that are known for their accuracy my Model 27 would not present me with a 10-shot, 25-yard group of under three inches. Nor has it done so with any load I have put in .38 Special brass.

Checking this matter out a bit further I found that my Smith & Wesson Model 29 .44 Magnum would not shoot nearly as well with .44 Special loads. But, put .44 Special-class loads in .44 Magnum brass and accuracy was again excellent.

(Continued on page 70)



# POWER FULL PAIR

*Ron Power customized .44 Magnums  
with Frank Hendricks engraving*

WHEN RON POWER does something to a gun, you can just bet that it will turn out to be a classic job. The pair of .44 Magnums shown here are evidence to the truth of that statement.

Ron first told us about these guns several years ago, and every chance he had, he would end his conversations with; "Wait till you see these guns."

The story behind these guns will interest not only those who admire fine engraving, but also anyone interested in handgun conversions. Ron took the basic S&W Model 58 frame, added a Model 29 cylin-

der (Ron does not believe in rechambering), then installed his own barrel and rib. The guns are, of course, tuned to perfection, using many of Ron's own accessory parts to assure a smooth and long life.

The classic engraving job was done by Frank Hendricks of San Antonio, and combines the heavy leaf patterns with fine scrolls in a blending of the two that bespeaks of artistic talent and good taste.

The guns, unfortunately, are not for sale. They were made especially for Mr. Edward Benson, President of Royce Electronics.



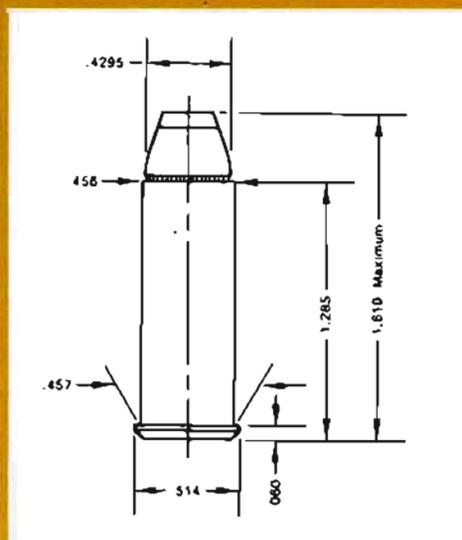
# HAND LOAD ING

THE  
.44  
MAG



There's more to it than just packing the case for high-speed blast-offs, for instance . . .

By Don Zutz



ONE OF THE FUNNIEST stories I've heard is about a local handgun silhouette shooter who thought he'd beat the game by having a Contender chambered for the .444 Marlin cartridge. He thought the larger round would give him an advantage over shooters using the .44 Magnum, because he was sure the added powder capacity would flatten trajectories and deliver positive knockdown power on the distant rams. But the first time he shot it with full-throttle loads, it broke a bone in his hand!

There are a couple lessons to be learned from that tale. First, there's always somebody who wants more, more, more. Secondly, everything has its limitations. Both apply to reloading the .44 Magnum, since there's more to this cartridge than merely stuffing in great gobs of powder for the highest possible velocities.

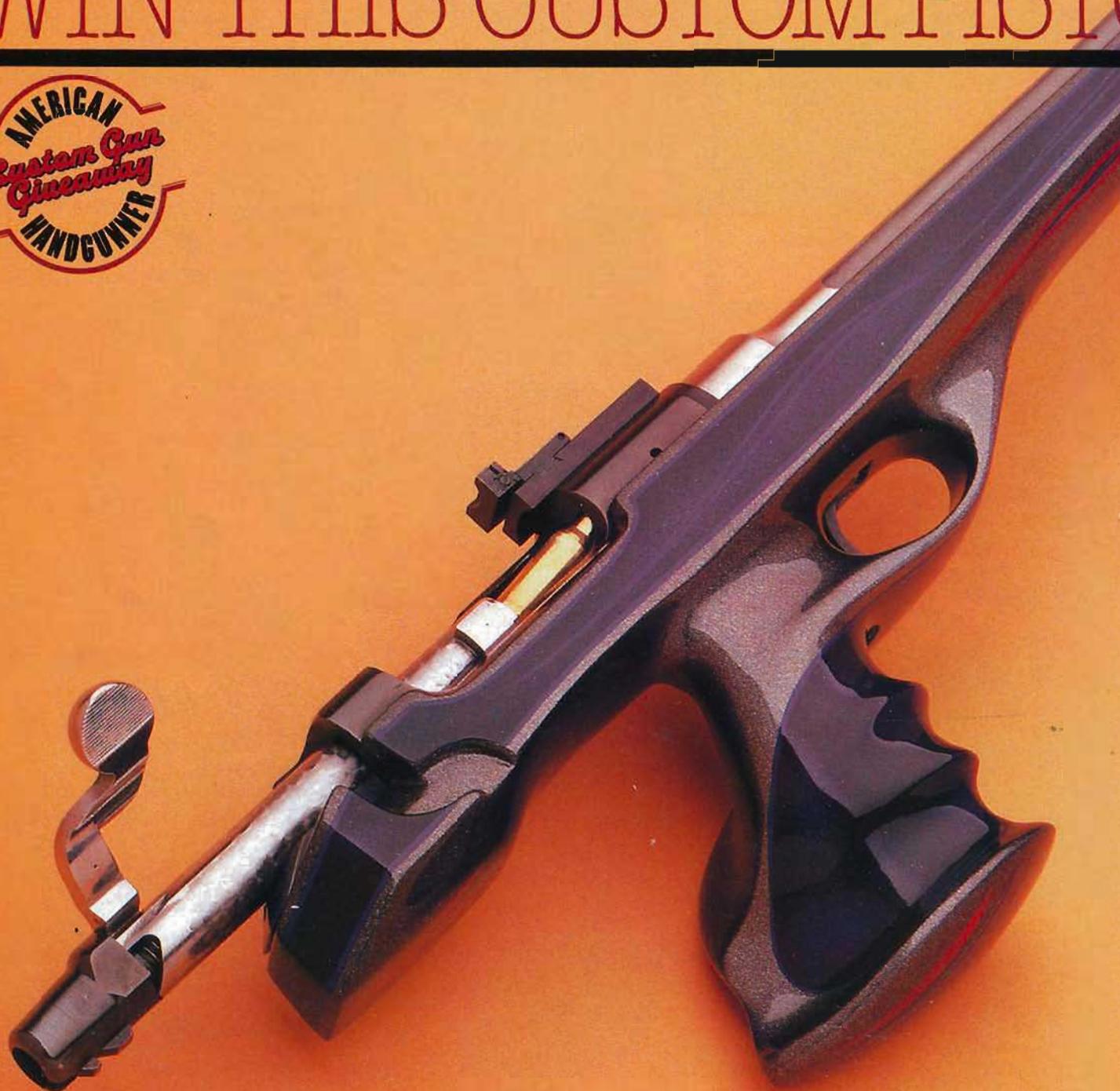
Introduced in 1955, the .44 Magnum is essentially a lengthened version of the old .44 S&W Special, which is itself a lengthened form of the even older .44 S&W Russian. Aside from having basically similar case dimensions except for length, all similarities between the .44 Magnum and the earlier rounds end there. To run signifi-

*(Continued on page 55)*



# SILHOUETTE

WIN THIS CUSTOM PISTOL



# THE SHOOTERS

## MODEL FROM H-S PRECISION

The first time that we have been able to offer our readers a chance to win a silhouette pistol, we have a real beauty!

Produced especially for the AMERICAN HANDGUNNER Custom Gun Giveaway, this custom XP-100 was crafted by H-S Precision of Prescott, Arizona. Here are the specifics, and as you read them, think how much it would cost you to get a similar pistol made to order.

**ACTION:** Remington XP-100

**BARREL:** Match Grade Atkinson barrel by H-S Precision. This is the only grade they produce, and their accuracy is verified by the number of times they have won national championships; three in 1980 alone.

**STOCK:** H-S Precision's newest design, the FRP-1000-1 "Fiberthane" stock is reaction injection moulded. It is a polythane foam reinforced with fiberglass. The stock has a machined "V" block molded in to eliminate the need for bedding. The paint job was done by "Slimbo" of Prescott, AZ.

**SIGHTS:** Installed and calibrated are a Micro rear sight and a Lyman globe front sight.

**CALIBER:** The latest and hottest cartridge on the silhouette scene, Remington's 7mm BR. Included with the gun is one of H-S Precision's "Tru-Nec" neck turning tools.

**WEIGHT:** 4 pounds, 7 ounces

H-S Precision was founded in 1978 by its president, Tom Houghton. The firm purchased the assets of the Atkinson Gun Co. producers of fine rifle barrels for many years.

In addition to manufacturing target and hunting barrels for shooting sportsmen, they also make test and experimental barrels for the ammunition industry.

Another aspect of H-S Precision is the manufacture of "Fiberthane" gun stocks. They have 8 benchrest rifle models, 2 sporter rifle models, 3 silhouette pistol and 7 silhouette rifles models. There are two versions of the latest silhouette model shown on our prize gun that require no bedding.

H-S Precision will soon have a line of accessory products, including bedding compound, cleaning rod guides, etc. Take a look, also, at their "Sierra

Grande" Lightweight rifle, using the 700 Remington action.

For more information on this pistol, the "Fiberthane" stocks or Atkinson barrels, contact: Tom Houghton, H-S Precision, Inc., P.O. Box 512, Prescott, AZ 86302. Send \$2.00 (refundable on first order) for their new catalog.

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### MORE WINNERS!

November/December contest:

A Safari Arms Matchmaster .45 with Armoloy finish is now proudly owned by lucky winner Doug Grindstaff who is a patrolman with the Fulton, Missouri PD. He was in the process of buying an auto when he won. "I've never won a thing in my life," he said. "Being a police officer you can imagine the use I'll get from this prize."

January/February contest:

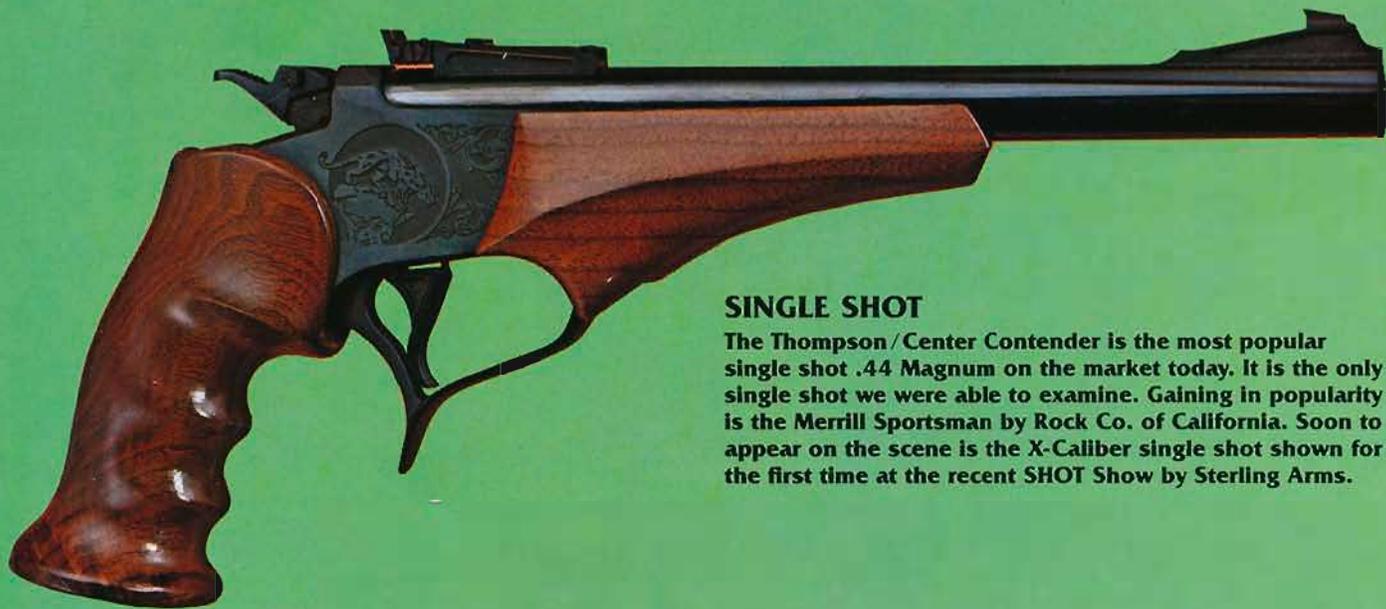
The beautiful satin-brushed and nickel-plated \$1000 .45 auto went to Scott Dickman of Hermosa Beach, California. You all out there can now stop calling our editorial office to ask if you won this gun—it's gone. But don't despair, just call pistolsmith Venry D'Aiguillon at Precision Sports & Crafts (210) 569-3450 and ask him to build you one. Tell him you saw it in HANDGUNNER.



## DOUBLE ACTIONS

Shown here are representative samples of double action .44 Magnum revolvers. From the left: S&W Model 629, a stainless steel version of the Model 29; Ruger Redhawk stainless steel revolver; Llama Super Comanche from

Stoeger, and the S&W Model 29, this one with the 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ " barrel. Not shown, but available or soon to be available are the RG Model 57, Interarms Astra and the Dan Wesson; these guns were not available to us at the time, but will be featured in future issues.



## SINGLE SHOT

The Thompson/Center Contender is the most popular single shot .44 Magnum on the market today. It is the only single shot we were able to examine. Gaining in popularity is the Merrill Sportsman by Rock Co. of California. Soon to appear on the scene is the X-Callber single shot shown for the first time at the recent SHOT Show by Sterling Arms.

# .44 MAGNUMS

A new dimension to the study of today's .44 Magnum handguns.

## How Do They Measure Up?

According to Elmer Keith, it all came together one day in 1956 when Harold Austin, then Sales Manager of Smith & Wesson, called him and said: "Elmer, your .44 Magnum dream has come true." Shortly thereafter, as Elmer relates it, he had a prototype gun and a couple of boxes of ammunition from Remington.

It was not long after production started on the Model 29 that the public relations types came up with the slogan, "The most powerful handgun cartridge in the world." The rest is history.

The Model 29 Smith & Wesson stood alone as the gun chambered for the .44 Magnum until Bill Ruger's .22 Single Six revolver doubled up and became the Ruger Blackhawk Single Action .44 Magnum. The successes of these two guns was all that was needed to bring forth the variety of .44 Magnum revolvers and single shot pistols—and rifles—offered to the shooter today.

It is unfortunate that just as we reached the deadline for this issue, two new revolvers and one single shot pistol were announced, too late for coverage here, but scheduled for test reports in the near future; Interarms announced the availability of the Astra revolver in

AMERICAN HANDGUNNER • JULY/AUGUST

### SINGLE ACTIONS

The single action .44 Magnums have held their own in popularity for a long time. Although Colt has never chambered their single action for the .44 Magnum cartridge, there have been numerous copies that will carry this powerful cartridge. Shown here, from the top, A.I.G.'s Abilene, offered by Mossberg; F.I.E.'s Arminius "Hombre," and Sturm Ruger's New Model Super Blackhawk. Not available for this study, but offered now: Mitchell Arms single action; Interarms "Virginian Dragon," and EMF's Super Dakota.

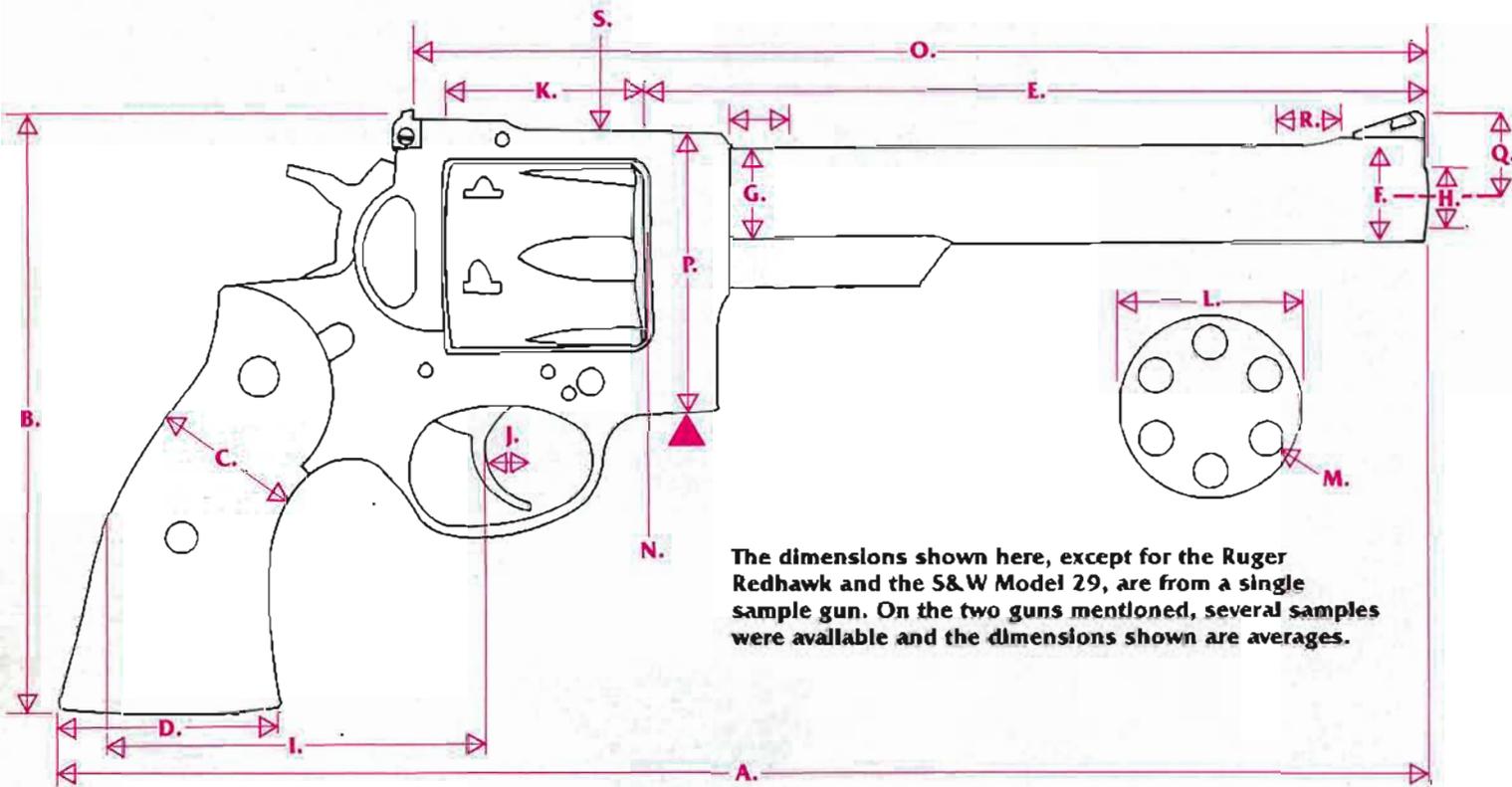


.44 Magnum and Dan Wesson's version of the "Most powerful handgun . . ." is reportedly in production, though we haven't seen one as yet. The most recent offering is the .44 version of Sterling Arms X-Caliber single shot pistol.

On these pages, then, is a representative sample of what's available in .44 Magnum chambering. We have put each of the guns pictured under the critical eye of the micrometer, and herewith present all of the vital measurements of each

model. We forego the words of the pitchman—heavy duty, massive construction, etc.—and show just how big, or how small certain critical dimensions are.

Here, then, are the .44 Magnums of today, the guns that will lead the way into tomorrow.



The dimensions shown here, except for the Ruger Redhawk and the S&W Model 29, are from a single sample gun. On the two guns mentioned, several samples were available and the dimensions shown are averages.

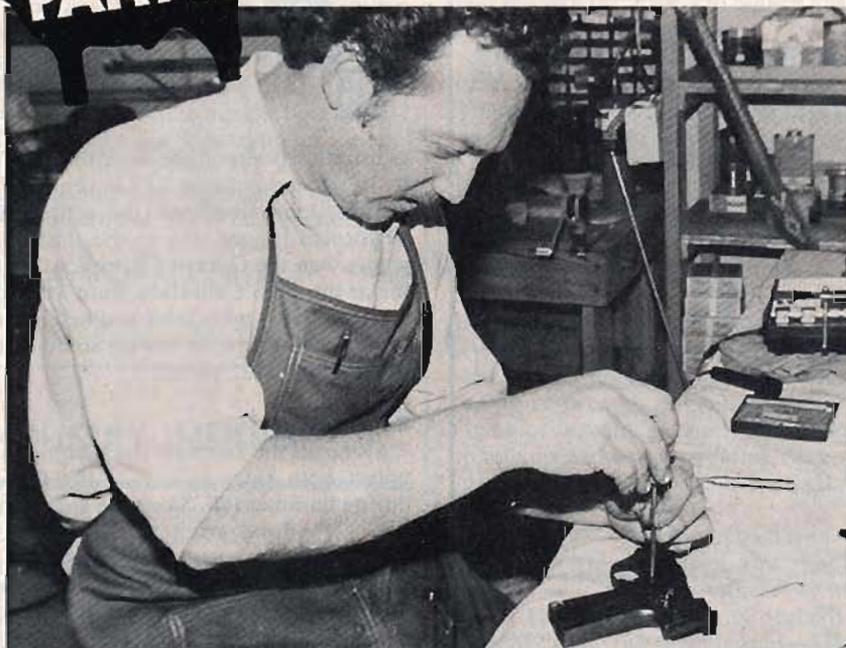
	RUGER REDHAWK	S&W MODEL 629	S&W MODEL 29	LLAMA	RUGER SUPER BLACKHAWK	ARMINIUS HOMBRE	ABILENE	T/C
A. Overall Length	13.0	11.437	13.875	11.5	13.625	11.0	13.5	14.0
B. Height (to top of rear sight)	5.625	6.125	5.875	5.875	5.50	5.125	5.50	6.25
C. Grip Frame (at narrowest point)	1.34	1.22	1.26	1.24	1.14	1.18	1.15	N.A.
D. Grip Frame (bottom)	2.77	1.961	1.92	1.91	2.32	2.80	2.274	N.A.
E. Barrel Length	7.46	5.875	8.312	5.937	7.42	5.50	6.437	10.0
F. Barrel Diameter at Muzzle	.739	.737	.714	.815	.700	.714	.700	.715
G. Barrel Diameter at Frame	.914	.804	.766	.818	.785	.766	.781	.809
H. Groove Diameter	.429	.429	.430	.426	.429	.430	.430	.429
I. Trigger Distance	3.265	3.185	3.31	3.46	3.14	2.68	2.915	3.60
J. Trigger Width	.314	.408	.496	.379	.287	.190	.364	.405
K. Cylinder Length	1.751	1.746	1.745	1.745	1.704	1.76	1.753	N.A.
L. Cylinder Diameter	1.78	1.712	1.712	1.72	1.727	1.73	1.73	N.A.
M. Chamber Wall Thickness (front/rear)	.120 .134	.086 .100	.086 .097	.100 .102	.098 .110	.098 .108	.090 .100	N.A.
N. Cylinder/Barrel Gap	.004	.008	.004	.005	.003	.006	.004	N.A.
O. Sight Radius	9.375	7.875	10.875	8.00	9.625	6.75	9.625	9.187
P. Frame Depth (at barrel)	2.70	2.52	2.54	2.62	2.27	2.23	2.265	N.A.
Q. Front Sight Height (to center of bore)	.963	.900	.902	.962	.870	.615	.890	.888
R. Rib Width (front/rear)	.440 .460	.480 .550	.488 .542	.408 .408	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
S. Top Strap Width	.710	.656	.656	.661	.715	.748	.675	N.A.
T. Balance Point (from muzzle)	7.54	6.21	8.25	5.87	8.00	6.25	7.75	8.00

**.22 SILHOUETTES**

# TUNING THE .22 PISTOL

**A word on shooting  
techniques & how to tune your  
production .22 for IHMSA  
competition**

**PART II**



By Bert Stringfellow

*In the last issue we introduced many of our readers to rimfire silhouette shooting. In Part II the author gives some tips on shooting and tuning some of the more popular .22 handguns.*

## SHOOTING TECHNIQUES

A match is won or lost before the shooter arrives at the match. That is to say, proper preparation will provide a competitor the experience, expertise and confidence in himself and his equipment which will put him in a position to win his match.

The competitor should always sight in his match pistols on paper targets so that he may evaluate his pistol-ammo performance. He should test many different manufacturer's ammo and use only the cartridges which group well at 100 yards (Ram distance) for competition and practice.

When sighting-in a revolver, the shooter should fire separate groups from each chamber in the cylinder to determine if one chamber groups better than the others. If one chamber does group better than the rest, use only that chamber for competition.

Always carry a notebook to record sight settings and ammo performance. Shoot your pistols under different light and temperature conditions and record type of ammo used during each practice session along with the sight setting for each target distance and the point of aim, so that you will have sighting information available for any match or range conditions you might encounter. After sighting in, every practice session should be shot following match procedures. Always shoot the targets in their proper order. If a shooter does not practice following the match procedure of shooting the targets in order from left to right, there is a good possibility that he will shoot a target out of order in a match and that is a miss.

Prior to the 1979 Regional Championships I had been practicing on single targets. At the Championships I missed the first ram, my spotter gave me the sight correction, I made the sight correction and dropped that first ram with my second shot. Zero number two on the score card!!

Remember that consistency is accuracy, the shooter must do everything the same way for every shot. During practice sessions concentrate on grip, breathing, pistol position (cant), sight alignment and then *press the trigger*. Be sure and call each shot before looking at the target; this will help establish the concentration required for good marksmanship.

In freestyle competition the rear reclining (Creedmoor) position has proven to be the most stable position to date. Freestyle Standing allows a two-hand hold and the

*(Continued on page 54)*

**Gunsmith John Bosch is well-known for work on silhouette pistols like S&W M17, T/C, and High Standard shown.**

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## .22 SILHOUETTES

(Continued from page 53)

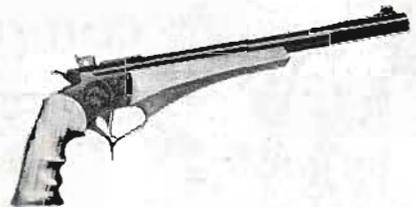
shooter should definitely get both hands on his pistol. The Cooper Combat, or Weaver, stance is my favorite and I find it works very well for me.

To win, the shooter must know his equipment, ammo and himself. All this may seem like a lot of trouble, but believe me, when the Match Director calls you up to receive a Championship trophy, all the preparations are forgotten.

### TUNING THE .22 PISTOL

The IHMSA Production gun rule is not meant to imply that a pistol's action may not be made to function properly. The action may be smoothed by stoning, springs may be shortened or stretched and a trigger job may be performed to improve or correct the performance of a pistol for competition. The stoning and adjusting described requires a complete knowledge of the handgun's mechanism and a good deal of skill, therefore, this work is best left to a competent gunsmith.

John Bosch, Co-owner of Madera Gun & Reloading, Madera, California, is a



gunsmith who has done work on a majority of the competition .22's in central California. John smoothed the actions and performed trigger jobs on the three guns which won the Overall Championship for me at the 1980 California State Match.

I had a visit with John and he gave me the following tips on tuning some of the more popular .22 pistols.

### Ruger MK I

Stone all the burrs off the hammer and polish both sides to reduce the friction during hammer fall. Stone the sear until a two (2) pound trigger pull has been reached. Do not try for a trigger pull of less than two (2) pounds because the pistol will malfunction. Most people prefer either the Ruger or Herrett target stocks.

### Smith & Wesson Model 17

Polish all the moving parts to reduce friction during hammer fall. Use a standard small hammer, as it falls faster than the wide target hammer, thus providing a faster lock time. The trigger pull is adjusted by stoning the hammer notch and sear. Do not reduce the tension on the hammer spring. A .22 cartridge requires a strong hammer blow to get good uniform primer ignition.

The trigger pull may be reduced to a



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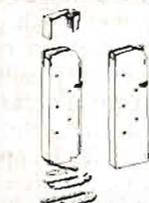
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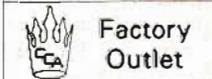
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good clean 1½ pounds and still provide a safe functional pistol.

**Thompson/Center**

Polish all the moving parts to assure consistent hammer fall. To set the trigger pull, stone the trigger notch and mating striker, then trim the trigger return spring until a two (2) pound trigger pull is achieved. Trimming the trigger return spring is a cut and try proposition, this operation should be approached slowly. Grind off a small amount of spring and then assemble the trigger mechanism and check the pull. This procedure is repeated until the desired trigger pull is reached. John cautions that the grinding be done in easy stages, as the spring is easily ruined. After the trigger pull has been set at the desired poundage, use the Allen wrench provided by T/C and set the striker engagement and trigger over-travel. Put a drop of lock tite on the striker engagement adjusting screw to keep it from backing out during firing.

**High Standard**

John says that most High Standard pistols come from the factory ready to go. However, after a bit of shooting some of them develop trigger creep. This creep is removed by stoning the hammer notch and sear. Extreme care must be taken while stoning these parts or the result will be a pistol which chain fires. A very embarrassing situation.

John uses Break Free Oil for all his lubrication needs and he recommends it very highly, especially for the Semi-Autos. John's charge for a tune-up on an undamaged gun is a mere \$12.50, not a very big expenditure for the improved performance. Remember, pistol malfunctions and faulty ammo shall not be cause for an alibi or the allowance of extra firing time.



**INDUSTRY INSIDER**

(Continued from page 10)

owner with a size complex may find this \$75 extender a useful therapy. It's made by Mack Gwinn, designer of the Bushmaster .223 pistol.

American handgunners can look forward to heavy anti-gun pressures in the near future, in spite of the pro-gun attitude of the new President and many of the new federal legislators. This pressure will come from the media. TV is full of stories about the crime problems of the entire country, and most especially trouble spots like Los Angeles and Miami, and all of a sudden, the media has discovered that citizens are arming themselves. Picture stories of citizen groups getting handgun training are mixed with survivalists who are into heavy

armament and ethnic groups who are fearful of racist attacks.

A reporter from ABC's 20/20 program told us that he could not get information on where one could learn to handle a gun from any of the large metropolitan police departments. Perhaps the time has come when those of us who are members and officers of gun clubs should make a concerted effort to introduce ourselves and our shooting programs to local law enforcement officers.



**.44 MAG LOADS**

(Continued from page 47)

cantly higher velocities, a cartridge/handgun duo must also be made to handle considerably higher chamber pressures, and that's where the .44 Magnum is different. Whereas the old .44 Russian and .44 Special were made to take pressures no greater than 15,000 c.u.p., the .44 Magnum was built to take a full 40,000 c.u.p. average working pressure and an individual maximum pressure of 43,500 c.u.p. That, of course, is virtually a rifle pressure. Thus, the .44 Magnum isn't really an example of brilliant designing; technicians merely utilized modern metallurgy to build a huskier revolver and a sturdier case.

Understanding the impact of this intense pressure level is the most important element in a sensible approach to reloading the .44 Magnum. Continuous use of maximum pressure reloads will loosen handguns *muy pronto*. Silhouette shooters discovered that a thousand maximum charges will loosen the big S&W M29, and some of the economy priced single-actions will rattle apart under the strain of just a few hundred maximum loads, homebrew or factory fodder. High pressures and heavy recoil take their toll regardless of gun frame strength and cylinder bulk, and a handloader can't get giddy about souped up reloads without considering the consequences in the form of shortened gun life and expensive repairs.

To date, silhouette shooters have found the Ruger single-action and the T/C Contender to be the toughest .44 Magnums. The Ruger generally outlasts the S&W M29 with full-throttle loads. And the Contender is, in reality, able to take rifle-like pressures for an extremely long life, thanks to a sizeable locking lug.

Despite the threat to gun life, any comprehensive approach to reloading for the .44 Magnum must begin with maximum loads, for its high energies at that level are what sets it apart from the other revolver rounds, hence, it is where we'll start to get specific.

The .44 Magnum uses the same shell holder as the .44 Special. In fact, most

(Continued on page 72)

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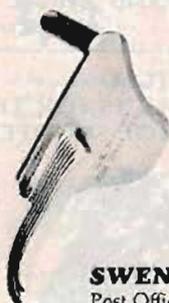
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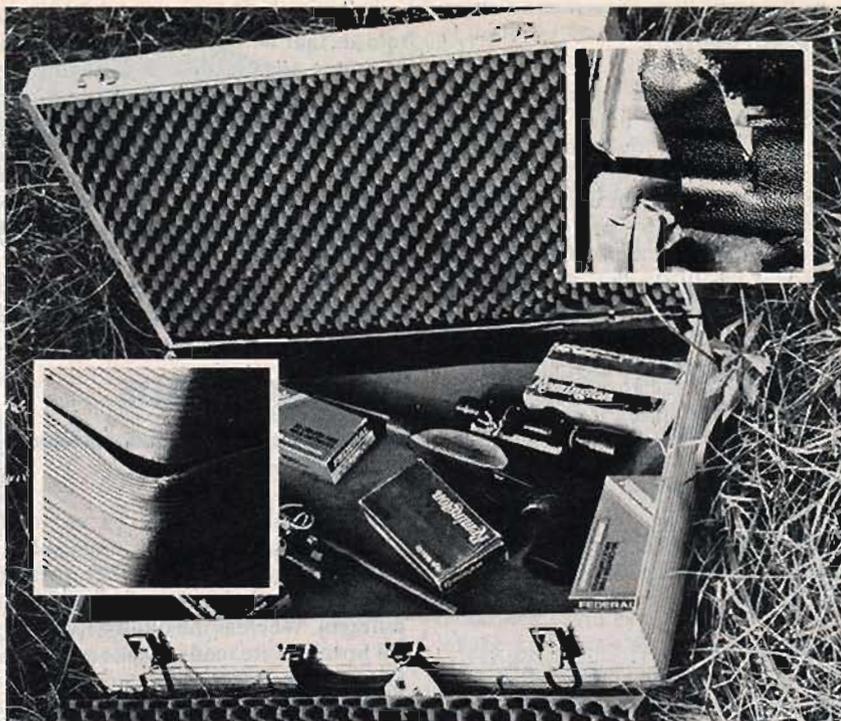
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## One tough case

J.D. Jones

GUN CASES ARE important accessories to protect a shooter's equipment investment. Of the many on the market, I've been hesitant to recommend many of them and in the past have used the Dan Wesson Pistol Case for carrying a lot of cameras, lenses and iron.

Some really fine cases are available though; and they are also financially out of my reach and that of the vast majority of shooters.

ALCO Carrying Cases, Inc., (Walter J. Barker, Sales Mgr., 601 W. 26th St., NYC, NY 10001) an established manufacturer of carrying cases for many industrial and recreational uses, has stepped into the highly competitive handgun carrying case market with a line of high quality aluminum, lockable cases at a reasonable cost. Based on the protection given—they might be called 'dirt cheap.'

Frankly, I was singularly unimpressed with the Silhouette Model tested at first glance. It appeared too lightly constructed and there wasn't enough foam filler in it. A short conversation with the company corrected the latter—another layer has been added to assure a tighter fit providing more security for your equipment. It can also be removed and two layers of equipment utilized with essentially identical security of the cased items.

The Silhouette Model measures 15.5" x 24" x 6" and will easily hold

an XP or T/C unlimited gun, standing production gun, freestyle production gun, .22, spotting scope, ammo and tool kit. Dimensionally, I can't fault it and it'll do exactly the job the manufacturer claims for it.

I've used the sample extensively for about seven months at this writing and made absolutely no effort to baby it. In fact, I'd guess that *that* seven months probably equaled several years use by the average shooter.

At home, I usually fill it up, throw it in the back of the pickup and let it rattle around. It has a lot of miles on it in this fashion. It's survived the airlines, bush pilots and a 70 mile raft trip in Alaska. That includes at least 15 handlings by air baggage personnel.

It's accumulated its share of scratches, dents, dings and "character," but it still works and has not allowed a scratch on anything packed in it. In addition to guns, I trusted my cameras, lenses, strobe and film to it for the Alaskan venture.

I have to admit the case is a hell of a lot more durable than I thought it was when I got it. In fact, I can't fault it at all. At this point it looks a little beat and I probably ought to clean it up a little, but I probably won't. I'm sure it has a few more years service left in it and if it looks battle scarred maybe when some of the freight handlers spot the "Firearms Unloaded" tag they won't even bother to see how far they can throw it!

## SIGHT SETTINGS

(Continued from page 18)

NRA Law Enforcement Assistance Committee, I have seen the constant requests coming to the NRA from security agencies for help in setting standards for their firearms instructors and their becoming NRA certified. Finally, at the October 1980 board meeting the LEA Committee presented a resolution pointing out the following: There are about 500,000 security guards in the U.S. The NRA is recognized in some 30 states as the qualified leader for firearms instruction, including basics and any required refresher. Unfortunately standards for training and certifying instructors do not exist at most any level, from national to local. These commercial police organizations have the money for paying instructors and are looking for ones to hire. Quite a few states have named the NRA as its authority for certifying instructors and the training requirements for guards. The NRA did not seek or solicit this responsibility, but regardless, the public looks to the NRA.

### NRA CERTIFICATION

The NRA Police Activities staff, and their budget, never has and does not now, have the resources to provide services to the governmental police agencies, let alone private guards. The board, therefore, was urged not to miss this opportunity. The board, the NRA President and the Executive Vice President were asked by the LEA Committee to "establish a cost effective program in security guard firearms instruction field." This resolution was adopted by the NRA Board of Directors.

### INSTRUCTOR'S COURSE

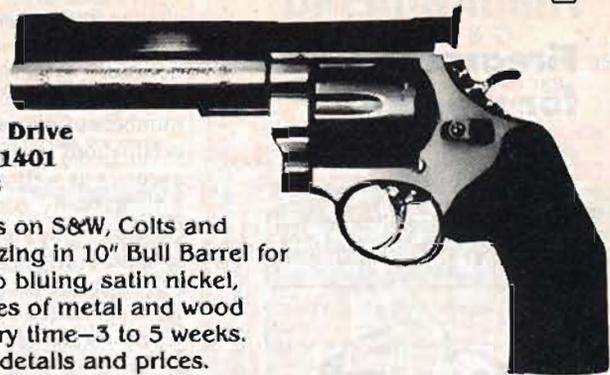
In getting my Security Guard Instructor's certificate, in Florida and Virginia, I noticed the meticulous scrutiny given character, credit, and employment background. However, no actual visual inspection as to your being an expert handgunner or an instructor in marksmanship was required. State licensing agencies and perhaps the NRA, through use of its Field Representatives, should see this individual fire the qualification course he is going to teach. States require and applicant for a beauticians license to give a permanent or a hair cut under state inspection visual testing. Because of lack of pressure to do so, or knowledge of what they are looking for, they fail to even see the firearms instructor fire a round. Maybe the NRA can work for that added requirement. Arming a guard with the capability to try, convict, and execute on the spot, must be shown to be more important than cosmetology.

More on security guards in future columns. Next month, where do the NRA Police Combat Championships go from Jackson, Mississippi? **Lucy**

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## Firearms vest for women



TODAY'S WORLD CONTINUES to rapidly change for women as they become ever-increasingly active. Their necessary defense-mindedness is now more prevalent. Also, additional numbers of women are seeking occupations in police and security agencies as well as in military fields.

Regrettably, concealed weapons carrying equipment is not progressing as is necessary. Few companies recognize the problem in its appropriate magnitude.

For women to attempt use of gear designed for men is most always a mistake as anatomical differences between the two sexes make mutual equipment compatibility virtually impossible, from the two standpoints of efficiency and comfort. Fitting requirements are different, more exacting and individually necessary, for women as the flaring of both the upper torso and hip areas in relation to the waist is far more exaggerated than is the usual case with men.

Suggestions abound from all quarters that women carry small-caliber (.22 Rimfire to .380 ACP and .38 Special) weapons on the premise that 'small' means little weight and bulk (which is true), thus negating the problem. However, this illogic simply means that Milady is inappropriately

and inadequately armed. Also, the little handguns are usually haphazardly secreted in the poorest of places, namely the handbag, one of the top priority targets of street punks. One reasonable solution is to improve the mode of carry.

A joint effort by myself, wife Eunice, and assistance by friend Don Shumar, resulted in the vest solution as pictured here.

This custom-tailored denim vest is an excellent alternative to discomfort, and has worked out very well. Weight distribution of the weapon itself and accompanying magazines far surpass those of an under-the-arm shoulder holster arrangement. This is a definite plus especially if the weapon is large and weighty such as the reworked-for-combat Colt Gold Cup .45 automatic pictured. The vest is designed for concealment carry, so outer clothing must, by necessity, be loose-fitting.

At this writing, facilities are set-up for production of this vest in a variety of fabrics for numerous occasions and climates. Satisfaction is guaranteed or an immediate refund will be sent. A brochure is available for \$1.00 plus a self-addressed stamped envelope (this dollar is deducted from your order) from: Bosselmann, P.O. Box 900, Tombstone, Arizona 85638.



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# HANDLOADING

(Continued from page 22)

the 4.4-grain charge that gave a five-shot center-to-center of 1.305" was fully a tenth of an inch tighter than the 1.405" spread of the 6.2-grain Herco loading.

I have used 230 with the same 200-grain Hornadys in my old Colt Gold Cup (Old? I bought it new for \$125—that's old!) and have had five-shot, 25-yard machine rest groups that measured an inch or less from center to center. Some of these involved 4.2-grain charges with the use of a moderate taper crimp. The object of all this is simply to bring light to the fact that different guns often seem to have different "appetites" when it comes to digesting a particular load combination.

Don Ingram, of Winnemucca, Nevada, is a member of that state's National Guard Pistol Team. He writes that he has been using 228-grain Lee round-nosed bullets, cast from wheel weights only, and propelled by 5.5 grains of Green Dot. Ingram comments, "This load shoots the same point of impact as military hardball, and I have experienced no leading."

Then, he adds, "We are issued 1500 rounds of hardball a year, which is hardly enough to stay on the team, so I load about 8,500 to 11,000 rounds per year, and have had no problems getting 15 to 20 loads per case."

## BULLSEYE ACCURACY

Accuracy is stressed by a report from Paul McCollum, of Lewiston, New York. "Some of the most accurate loads I have developed for use in my LW Colt Commander are: 3.6 grains of Bullseye and a H&G No. 78 bullet. The same bullet and 4.5 grains of Bullseye is also extremely accurate. The Zero 200 grain SWC with 4.2 grains of HP38 is another very accurate load for this particular gun.

"I find that the LW Colt Commander will shoot just about any kind of bullet that is available for the .45 ACP, including the Speer 250-grain SWC—without jamming. It is quite an accurate and dependable firearm.

"My most accurate jacketed bullet load is the Hornady 185 grain JHP with 5.0 grains of Bullseye."

McCollum goes on to portray the "Bullseye scare" as a purely transcendent issue. He expresses his belief that the 2.7 blow-ups reported by Jeff Cooper and me might well be taken with a grain of salt. "Maybe," he insists, "in many of those cases where a revolver was damaged by the so-called 2.7 Bullseye load, the gun was ready to let go with anything."

The foregoing suggestion is plausible. However, the blow-up I mentioned involved, not a gun, but the .38 Special handloaded cartridge itself. The injured, his hand bandaged and his arm in a sling,

(Continued on page 67)

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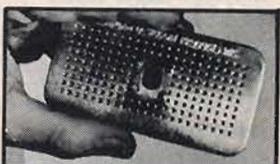
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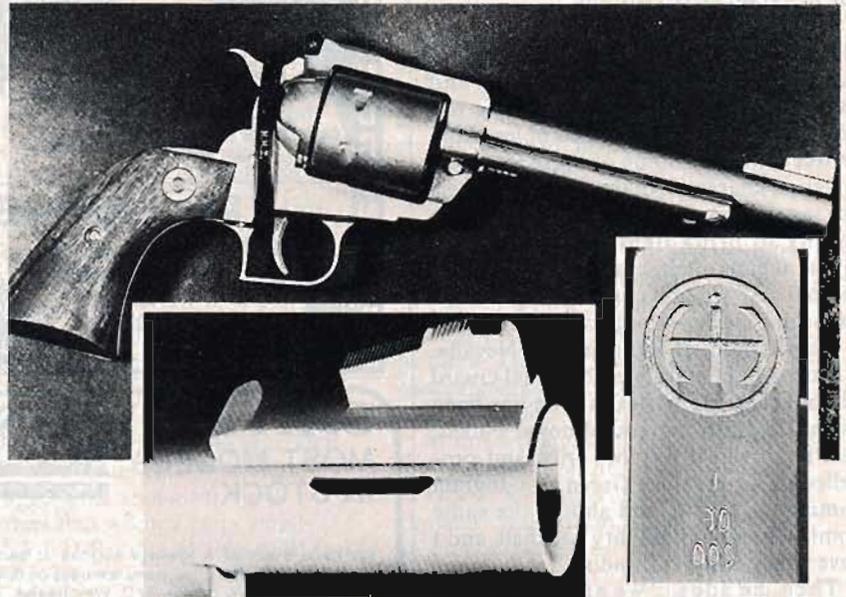
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# HHI SIXGUN

## FOR COLLECTORS & HUNTERS



SINCE THE FOUNDING of Handgun Hunters International (Box .357 Mag, Bloomingdale, OH 43910) during the summer of 1979, the membership has clamored for "collectables."

The first offering was 100 custom knives made by noted knifemaker R. W. Wilson of Weirton, WV. These knives are limited to a maximum of 100. Price is \$210, although that is expected to raise considerably as collectors become aware of them.

The HHI Sixgun is a basic composite of what the members wanted in a Super Blackhawk hunting sixgun. Personally, being deeply into custom handguns for a number of years, it wasn't difficult to select the company and features the gun should have.

Mag-Na-Port Arms has produced a number of limited edition custom Rugers over the past years and their value has increased tremendously. Mag-Na-Port's workmanship is superb and past performance of their guns both in the field and collectors market is excellent.

It was decided to make up a gun that would meet the criterion of: (1) Being an effective, powerful, accurate, rugged hunting handgun. (2) Possess the basic attributes of good sights and trigger pull. (3) Be finished with a very durable, rust resistant finish. (4) Be identified properly and provide an instant collectors item. (5) Keep costs within the reach of most members and provide the opportunity to obtain a gun of increasing value.

The guns start out as a Ruger .44 Magnum Super Blackhawk. The gun is totally stripped. Then the barrel is cut back to six inches and front sight relocated. The barrel is crowned with a special tool to provide an attractive appearance and exceptional accuracy. It is also Mag-Na-Ported. The front sight base is "dressed" for appearance and

full finished to prevent glare. A red insert is incorporated into the sight itself. The rear sight blade is replaced with a SSK White Outline Blade. The ejector housing is replaced with one made of stainless steel. An action smoothing and lightening of the trigger pull is performed. An SSK heavy duty mainspring is installed to decrease lock time. After final assembly the action is sealed to prevent cylinder rotation. Once broken, the seal will not be replaced. The seal assures collectors that the gun has never been cycled.

Stocks are always a problem. Since the standard Rugers work better than any others for me, it was decided to remove the Ruger emblem and replace it with a Federal .44 Magnum Cartridge case head complete with inert primer.

The gun is finished in Metalife SS; a very hard, rust resistant industrial hard chrome resembling a mildly polished stainless steel in appearance.

Each gun is identified as a HHI Limited Edition by the HHI logo EDM'ed into the top strap and the HHI gun number—example "44 of 400" engraved into the top strap. In addition, the underside of the barrel above the cylinder pin is stamped M-N-P with a special stamp to certify the gun is a genuine Mag-Na-Port job. As far as possible, purchasers of the knife and gun will have the opportunity to match their HHI numbers. All lettering is gold filled.

The gun is priced at \$550. A deposit of \$250 is required per gun. Handgun Hunters International membership (\$15 annually) is mandatory to purchase one of these guns.

The HHI Sixgun is desirable as both a functional, workhorse handgun and as an investment that is sure to increase in value. Guns are now available, as are a few knives.

# SHOOT OFF!

## REDHAWK vs. S&W 29

*Can you imagine what happens when these two greats face-off?*

*By Al Pickles*

I HAD INVITED BILL AUBERTIN to my ranch to try my new Ruger Redhawk .44 Magnum double action revolver. As a gun writer I had pretty much completed my own tests and welcomed a "second opinion." Bill worked as a Criminal Investigator for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and was additionally a pistolero of considerable ability.

I guess the realization that we were going to engage in a "big bore shoot-off" struck me the minute he alighted his pickup—he was wearing his own Smith & Wesson Model 29 in a shoulder holster and carrying eight boxes of freshly reloaded ammo.

My first impulse was to cry foul! I knew his 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ " S&W had, shortly after he purchased it, undergone an expensive fine tuning and was now delivering a smooth as glass 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  pound single action let off. On the other hand, my Redhawk was an out-of-the-box early production run which regis-

tered a shade over four pounds on the trigger pull gauge. Probably the main reason I made no technical objection to the pending "duel" was the apparent fact that we would be using Bill's ammo—a condition under which I always like to "bust caps."

Of course, we didn't get into a comparison of the two big magnums right off the bat. Bill was anxious to try out Ruger's new Redhawk after reading articles in every gun and hunting magazine on the market.

The Redhawk, at 52 ounces, actually outweighs the longer barreled S&W Model 29 because Ruger built a solid beefy gun for the .44 Magnum cartridge. When S&W tooled up for the .44 Magnum they used the existing N Frame which was originally made for lesser loadings.

Ruger's 7 $\frac{1}{2}$  inch barrel is topped by blue steel sights with white outline rear and red ramp front inserts. The contrast with the otherwise all stainless steel gun is pleasing,

and the walnut checkered stocks set the whole shebang off very nicely.

Internally the two guns are as different as night and day. Ruger started from scratch with a clean sheet in designing the Redhawk to handle modern developments in cartridges, bullets, and powders. Both the crane and cylinder assembly lock directly into the frame. The chamber wall thickness is 25% greater than that of the S&W 29. Both the hammer and trigger work off opposite ends of the same spring but in spite of this completely new design concept, the Ruger retains simplicity in disassembly. In fact, like the Security-Six, it is one of the easiest revolvers to disassemble of all those currently offered.

By the time Bill and I had shot a full box of his reloads the conversation had worked around to comparing recoil on the two revolvers. We were shooting 240 grain Speer JSP bullets backed by 18 grains of 2400

*(Continued on page 91)*

**Out-of-the-box but heavier built Ruger Redhawk on left was pitted against 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch Smith & Wesson M29 that had undergone expensive tune-up work.**



# THE WORLD'S BIGGEST

# POCKET PISTOL

By George E. Virgines



**The new Colt Sheriff's Model .44/40 with extra .44 Special cylinder in shiny nickel finish and in Royal Blue.**

**T**HE WORLD'S BIGGEST POCKET PISTOL, has once again, made its debut. This newest Colt Single Action is introduced as the "Colt Sheriff's Model 44/40." It is the ever-popular short barrel, ejectorless model that has a heritage going back as far as the 1870's and 1880's and has continued right on to the present. Also it continues to provide all the unique variations to satisfy every Colt Single Action collector's whim and fancy. Even the nick-names attached to this short barrel Colt constitute a variety such as custom model, Storekeepers and/or Sheriff's Model, hide-a-way gun, snubbie, pocket-pistol, and commemorative. An extremely scarce version of the Sheriff's Model of the pre-World War II era is the Bisley Single Action short barrel model. After World War II Colt experimented with the idea of a Frontier Scout Single Action .22 with a 3-1/2 inch barrel, however the idea fell thru. Two very custom special Sheriff's Models were created from New Frontier Single Action Flat-tops with Serial numbers 5410-NF and 5411-NF, both in .45 Long Colt caliber and .45 ACP, and profusely engraved by the master engraver Alvin A. White.

This newest addition to the Colt family will certainly not lack in any way for uniqueness or variety. Even in the 1870's and early 1880's there is evidence that these ejectorless models were supplied on special order basis long before they were listed in Colt's catalogs. In over a century this practice has not changed.

Today, this new Colt Sheriff's Model, 44/40 is being offered in four variations, which should please the most exacting collector. This was not too much the case in 1960 when the first new Colt Sheriff's Model was reintroduced in .45 caliber and with a 3 inch barrel. Production was limited to only 503 pieces, 25 of these nickel plated, and the balance blued with case-hardened frames and equipped with two piece wood grips. Only two of these 1960 models were factory engraved and on the butts only. However some of the 1960 models have been engraved by other than factory engravers. To later enhance these 1960 Sheriff's Models, blond wood cases were made available by Charles Kidwell, noted collector and dealer of Wichita, Kansas. There were 52 single and 11 double presentation cases made up with the lids branded "Sheriff's Model" and the same imprinted on the inside of the cover lining. The interior is lined with yellow gold velvet in the bottom and yellow satin in the lid. This is one of the few and rare examples in which a non-factory case has become a rarity and collector's item.

Actually about the first time that the Sheriff's Model was brought to the public's attention was the advertisement in Colt's 1888 catalog which listed barrel lengths of 3-1/2 inch and 4 inch without ejectors for their Colt Single Action models. The actual count of how many Colt Sheriff Models produced between 1870's to 1940 has not been determined.



**1960 Colt Sheriff's Model .45 caliber revolver. The non-factory engraving was created by Lynton McKenzie.**

But according to the scarcity of these unique models they certainly were and still are a limited production model.

The new 44/40 Sheriff's Model should prove to become a most desirable collector's item. Because of its limited production number it's most doubtful if any of these pocket pistols will be used as shooters.

In fact the statement "Warning: Do Not Shoot This Gun" has become a golden rule for collectors of commemoratives and limited edition guns. If possible in order to keep these very "Special" firearms in mint condition, handling is kept to a bare minimum, thus assure future increases in value. This new abbreviated barrel piece should fit into this category very appealingly.

To initiate the appeal for this new 44/40 Sheriff's Model are the many variations it has to offer. Starting first, four different limited model variations are being made available. First is Model P1932, Sheriff's Model, Standard, quantity: 1000, caliber .44-40, 3-inch barrel, blued with case hardened frame, standard SSA composite stocks with rampant colt and eagle. 1980 retail price \$399.95. Second Model P1934 is Sheriff's Model with dual cylinder and case. Quantity: 1,150, caliber .44-40, .44 Special, 3-inch barrel, Royal Blue with case-hardened frame. Grips are Standard SAA wood with no medallion, all in a French fitted walnut presentation case with glass top. 1980 retail price \$680.95. Third Model P1933, quantity: 600, caliber .44-40 and .44 Special, is similar to Model 1934 except it comes in all-nickel plate and similar walnut presentation case. 1980 retail price: \$680.95.

A fourth variation is offered on a price on request basis

and that is a factory engraved Sheriff's Model, .44-40 and .44 Special, 3-inch barrel, cased with extra cylinder and gold inlaid to customer's specifications.

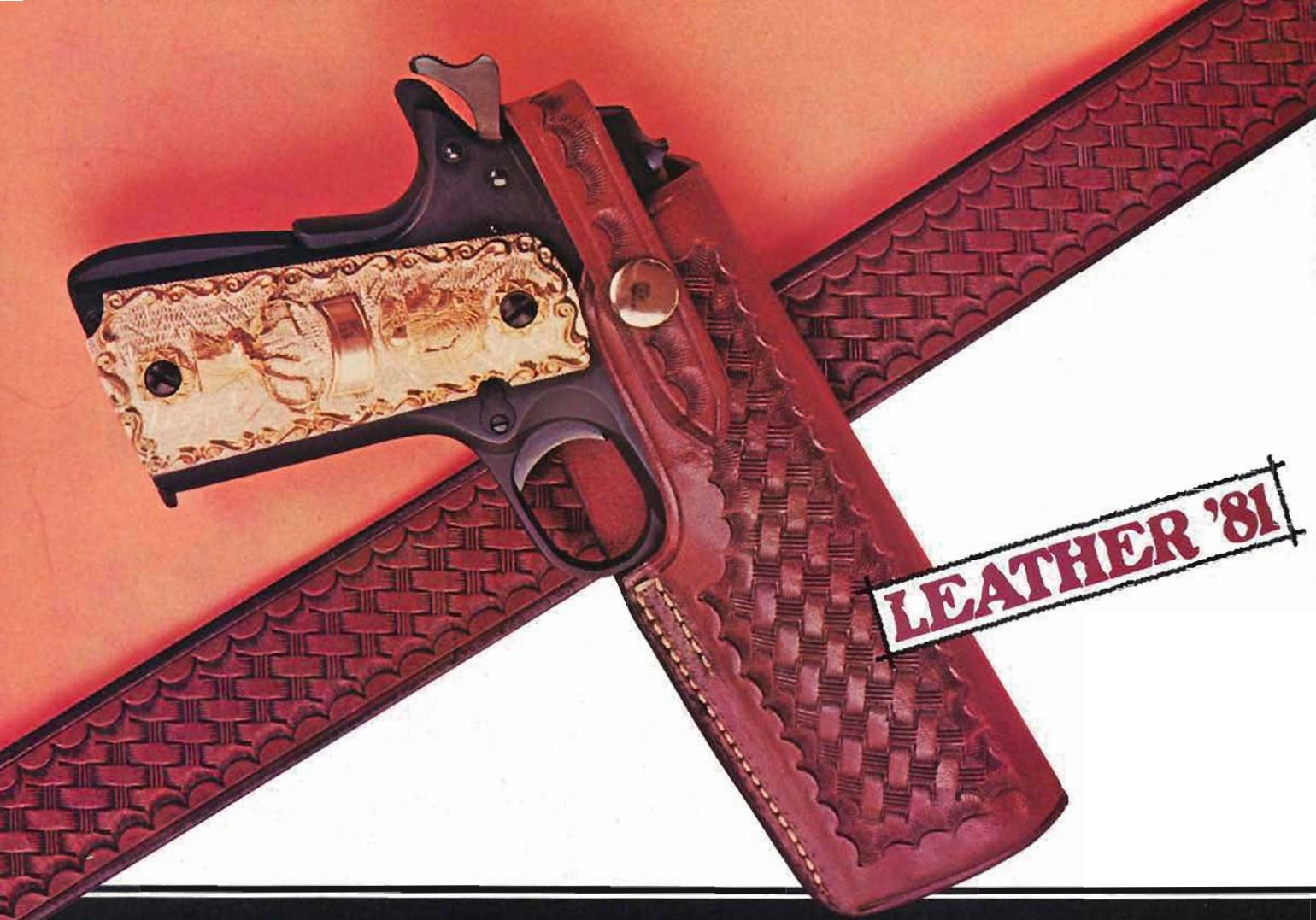
The Royal Blued and nickle-plated models marked on the left side of the barrel "Colt Sheriff's Model," and on the right side of the barrel marked "Colt SAA .44 CAL." The standard model is marked "Colt SAA .44-40." Also all models are numbered in the standard Colt Single Action Army serial number range.

In this day and age in which much concern is generated by interest in trivia perhaps the following might be of interest in relation to this latest Colt Sheriff's Model. Noted in all of the recent ads pertaining to this new model is a "Deputy United States Marshal" badge which somehow does not relate to a gun marked "Sheriff's Model," the reason for the use of this badge is that it was borrowed from the author by Colt in 1979 when the Colt Company was seriously contemplating a new Sheriff's Model but was going to be known as the "U.S. Marshal" Commemorative, and so marked. As a commemorative this would have been a most unique piece but according to Colt has been shelved for the time being.

Last but not least and certainly not trivia is the latest announcement by the Colt Firearms Division that on or about December 1981 the Colt Single Action Army models will all be discontinued. the phase-out will occur model by model each month throughout 1981.

So with this ominous news facing the Colt SAA collector this new and exclusive Sheriff's Model should definitely become a classic in its own time.





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# Holster & Accessory



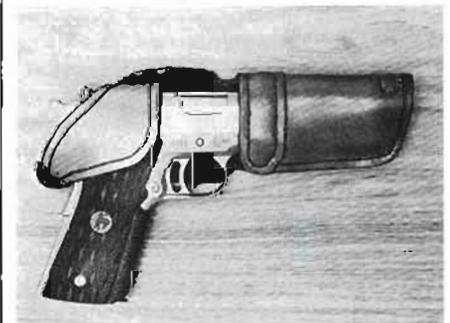
*Hunter Custom*

*Thumb-break, Robert Strong*



*Bianchi #5*

*Cobra "X-100"*

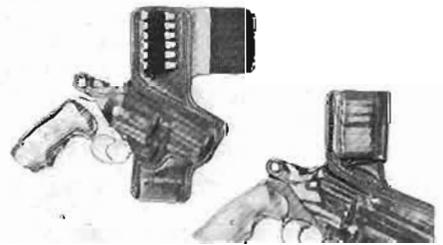


*"Double Action," Seldeen*

*Undercover, De Santis*



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**Lawrence #778**



**Ted Blocker**



**S&W Model 27**



**Roy's Custom Leather**

## HANDLOADING

(Continued from page 59)

brought the fragmented remnants of a brass case to me in a plastic bottle. He reported that he had merely picked up the 2.7 load for the purpose of transferring it from his loading bench to an ammo box when it exploded.

That was almost 20 years ago. The event, although dramatic, was ultimately diminished by the passing of time and by the knowledge that literally millions of Bullseye handloads were being used without mishap.

My abstinence from the continued use of Bullseye didn't come about until I happened to read Cooper's "Blowing Up With Two Point Seven" in the November/December, 1977, *AMERICAN HANDGUNNER*.

Discontinuing the use of Bullseye is a matter of personal choice. My report on the "cartridge incident" was not intended as a horror story; and neither should it be taken as a mandate against the use of this propellant by anyone who continues to find it satisfactory and safe.

Personal choice prevailing, I have found Hodgdon's HP38, an even-metering spherical, to be an excellent propellant for everything from the .38 Special to the .45 ACP—and with a broad range of bullet weights and types.

### HEAVY STOPPING POWER

Ken Pantling, of Leicester, England, agrees with my contention that heavy bullets pack the greatest potential for handgun stopping power. He says he's a keen practical pistol shooter, and goes on to report, "I have been searching for a load that would be easily controllable, but would also show major calibre against a ballistic pendulum. Many shooters have followed the light-bullet/high-velocity path, but I have found that they pay a penalty in terms of high recoil and disturbing blast. I thus started looking at the possibilities of heavy bullets in the .45 ACP.

"What I have been looking for is a .455 Webley-type load in the Colt auto pistol. Jeff Cooper has described the .455 Webley as 'a model of easily controlled stopping power.' I hope to combine this with the tactical superiority of the auto pistol.

"The bullets I have been using are: RCBS 45-250 FN, Lyman 454424, and Lee 454-255-RF. All of which weigh about 255 grains in hard alloy.

"The most successful powders are Nobel 82 and Herco. However, Red Dot and Herco are the only available powders over here so I will list the Herco loads. The best loads I have used are: 5.0 grains to give 690 fps. This just makes major calibre and is very easy to shoot. It probably makes major so easily because of the bullet's sectional density and dwell time against the

(Continued on page 70)



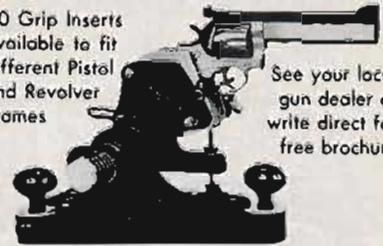
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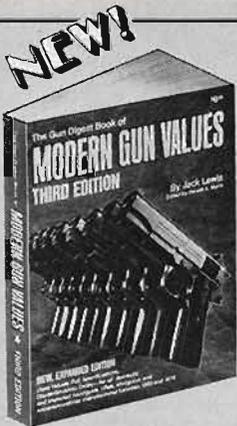
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This edition has been greatly expanded to include all non-military guns introduced in this country between 1900 and 1978,

covering 29 more years than the first two editions. Includes full specifications, introduction and discontinuance dates, detailed descriptions with crisp, accurate illustrations for thousands of domestic and imported handguns, rifles, shotguns, and commemoratives. All guns are listed alphabetically by manufacturer within their appropriate section for easy reference. Each section – handguns, rifles, shotguns, and commemoratives – is prefaced with important tips peculiar to the intelligent buying, selling and trading of that type of firearm. Below is a list of manufacturers covered in this edition:

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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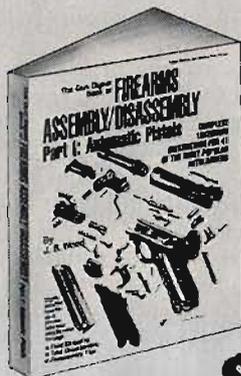
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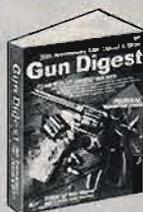
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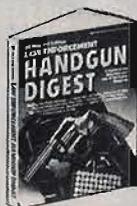
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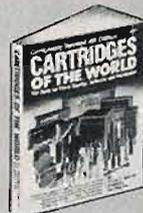
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## LEARNING LOADS

(Continued from page 44)

Now, I save all my .38 Special and .44 Special brass for use in guns chambered for those calibers.

Using Magnum brass for both heavy and light loads could lead to some confusion if one is not careful. It would be a shame to try to stop a grizzly with a "learning load" or pop a grouse with an inadvertently chosen bear load.

The varieties of loads can be identified by a dab of Marks-A-Lot on the primer, but I prefer a different method. I use brass of one brand headstamp for the "learning loads" and another for the Magnum class loads. For example; my light .357 Magnum loads are always put in 200 Browning headstamped cases that I reserve exclusively for that purpose. If I pick up a .357 Magnum case of any other headstamp from my storage box I know it is a hot load.

These practice loads, because of their light recoil will not require the heavier crimp needed for hot loads, therefore, with a little care the brass will last for quite a while. That also helps the cost factor.

These loads are good—for their intended purpose. Don't try to substitute them for high velocity loads. They are for small game, gophers, rockchucks, plinking, and informal competition.

I am not a great handgun shot, but I am much better now than I would have been without the practice made possible by my inexpensive and accurate "learning loads."

but it is difficult to handload. For reliable functioning it has to be seated well out, but it then catches on the rifling when it chambers.

"One spin-off of using heavier-than-normal cast bullets in barrels cut for jacketed bullets is that they tend to take the rifling better because you are not pushing them so fast. This applies equally well for the 9MM Luger."

Mr. Pantling's account of heavy-bullet research is well worth serious review by anyone interested in lending more clout to an already-potent handgun round. Furthermore, his notes on the various feeding characteristics of different types of cast bullets are well taken.

In our next issue I'll have much more handloading information to share. The letters continue to come, and although I can't guarantee a personal reply to each correspondent, the spirit of cooperation is appreciated. We seem to be proving that even though no one knows it all, everyone can benefit when knowledge is provided the advantage of widespread circulation.



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## HANDGUN LEATHER

(Continued from page 24)

hand rather than machine embossed. The holsters have nicely finished edges, double-stitched points of strain, and are finished in an attractive shade of brown.

Adjustable tension holsters are the current state of the art. Such big name custom makers as Milt Sparks and Gordan Davis, as well as holster maker giant John Bianchi, offer such holsters. It was Milt Sparks who took an earlier FBI revolver holster having an adjustable welt to retain the gun, and modified it for use with the Colt .45 auto pistol. Milt inverted the welt, putting the adjustable portion at the bottom of the holster. If one wants more tension on the pistol, the tension screw is



## HANDLOADING

(Continued from page 67)

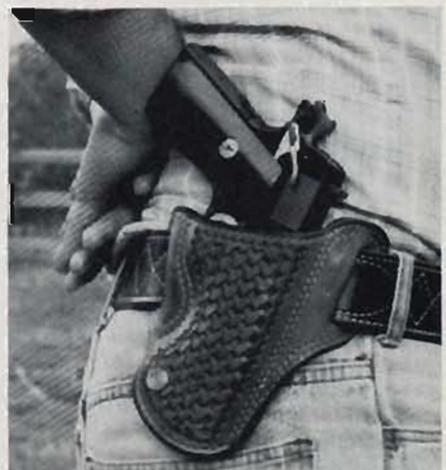
pendulum. Meanwhile, 6.0 grains gives 803 fps and would make a very decent defense load.

"These velocities were chronographed five feet from the muzzle of a Colt Government Model. Incidentally, all 230-grain factory loads I have chronographed have failed to break 800 fps.

"Of the bullets, I prefer the RCBS. It feeds well in all pistols I have tried. It should be seated with 1/16th-inch of the forward driving band showing.

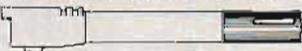
"The Lyman SWC feeds well in my throated pistol, but in few others. It has an excellent shape, and if I had to use my pistol for defense I would load this slug in the chamber and the RCBS loads in the magazine. The practice of loading the most efficient bullet shape into the chamber, and the best feeding shape into the magazine is hardly ever mentioned, but seems a good idea to me.

"The Lee bullet has a good nose shape,



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loosened, the bottom end of the welt is pressed further into the holster and the screw is tightened to hold the welt in its new position. This works best when the holster is empty. With more welt inside the holster pouch, there is less room for the muzzle end of the slide, making the holster fit tighter. One advantage of this system is that the gun need only be drawn upward approximately one inch to clear the tension area of the holster.

In the Security holster, Ted has replaced the tension welt with two large rubber washers, with the adjustment screw passing through them. The bottom edge of the gun muzzle rests against the washers. When the tension screw is tightened, the washers grow in diameter and press harder on the bottom of the slide.

Of the two holsters tested, I personally prefer the Security with the tension device. Worn on a heavy 1 1/4 inch trousers belt and positioned just behind the right hip, it is very comfortable and secure. As all pancakes, these ride high and close, adding to their comfort. The FBI angle adds to the drawing ease when the gun sets this high, and the cocked and locked .45 auto is instantly ready. The lack of a thumb break makes this beautiful holster idiot proof.

Shortly after receiving these holsters I was to shoot in the first annual Soldier of Fortune Combat Match. This included handgun, riot gun and assault rifle matches with the shooter required to wear the sidearm in all three matches. This was an ideal chance to test the new Security holster under actual competition conditions. While the shooter didn't perform as well as I had hoped, the holster came through with flying colors.

I unhesitatingly recommend the Teflon lined Bodyguard and Security holsters, as made by Ted Blocker's Custom Holsters.

## COP TALK

(Continued from page 32)

autoloader have switched back to the six-shooter.

A ripple this writer sees growing into a wave is the re-introduction of the ultra-compact .38 Special service revolver. In effect a small-frame .38 belly gun with 4" barrel and manageable-size grips, the compact service revolver may well take us back to the Thirties when the original Colt Police Positive was the choice of many departments that wanted to combine .38 Special firepower with a gun that was easy to carry on the Sam Browne belt, and off duty.

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inch revolver of mid-bore is still the logical choice as an issue gun, though you can make a good argument for big-bores in the hands of select officers who've proven their mastery of weapons.

If I was arming a metropolitan police force, I'd stay with the .38 Special, and would seriously consider a light-frame gun like the Police Positive or the Police Bulldog, though I'd probably wind up with the S&W Model 10 heavy barrel or its stainless Model 64 equivalent. If I were a State Police or Highway Patrol Colonel, I'd specify a 4" stainless .357.

My metro cops would carry 158-grain lead .38 Special ammo, either the Winchester or the new Federal hollow-point. My Troopers would be issued 158-gr. JHP .357 rounds, and would qualify with that same "Magnum Force."

And if I had an unlimited firearms training budget, I'd let them carry whatever the hell they wanted, above .38 short and under .44 Magnum, so long as they could qualify with it. Probably a lot of them would carry .45 automatics, as I do on patrol, but they'd be in that special category of lucky cops with an understanding administration, like those Honolulu policemen who patrol in their own Olds 440's and Pontiac GTOs.

So much of police work is cliché. In the reality of public police service as it exists today in most of the United States, you've got to find a happy medium that focuses on the lowest common denominator. The guns described above, and the loads, do that as well as anything now available to the law enforcement community.



## .44 MAG LOADS

(Continued from page 55)

manufacturers supply only one basic die set for the .44 Special and .44 Magnum combined. These are the normal 3-die sets (resizer/decapper, case mouth expander, and bullet seater), and they are used in straightaway fashion. My only suggestions for case preparation are that the hand-loader (1) pay some attention to case mouth condition and (2) use as little "bell-ing" as possible. Excess case mouth expansion merely invites early splitting. I find that better accuracy is attained in handguns when the fired cases have perfectly trimmed mouths so that roll crimps will apply a uniform pressure and give a uniform release.

Crimps are very important to the .44 Magnum. They should be used almost universally on the .44 Magnum to prevent bullet movement under recoil and to insure proper ignition and combustion of the slow-burning powders common to this cartridge. Case neck trimming tools handle

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this assignment, of course. The industry's suggested maximum length of .44 Magnum brass is 1.285 inches, while the suggested "trim-to" minimum length is 1.280 inches. Trimming any shorter reduces the initial combustion space, thereby causing higher-than-normal pressures and, in some instances, increasing the potential for poor accuracy by making the bullet take a longer jump.

Magnum primers are always recommended with jacketed bullets to insure the proper ignition with heavy charges of slow-burning powder. However, standard force primers are recommended with cast bullets to avoid deforming the projectile. The .44 Magnum uses large pistol primers, of course. And, as always, the primers



**.44 Magnum reloads: 245-grain Lyman, 240-grain Hornady jhp, and shot load.**

should be sensitively seated so that the cup is pressed over the exposed primer anvils on seating.

For absolutely optimum velocities, only a certain range of slow-burning powders will do. The most efficient powders are 2400, Blue Dot, H-110, 296, and Herco. Although the 4227's are popular with some gunners, neither H-4227 nor IMR-4227 is a very efficient powder in the .44 Mag. It takes 23.3 to 24.0 grains of IMR-4227 to move the 240-grain jacketed bullet at 1,300 f.p.s. from a 7½-inch Ruger Super Blackhawk, while just 17.2-17.5 grains of Blue Dot will give the same bullet 1,370-1,390 f.p.s. in the same gun.

Although Herco doesn't give the highest possible velocities in the .44 Magnum, it trails the best powders by little (about 50-75 f.p.s. at maximum charge levels), and I've had some fine accuracy with it. A 15.8-grain load of Herco under the 200-grain Speer HP gives 1,485-1,500 f.p.s. in the 7½-inch blackhawk, which isn't bad when one considers that it takes roughly 24.8-25.0 grains of 2400 to do 1,500-1,525 f.p.s. Moreover, I find that recoil and muzzle blast are more tolerable with the lighter maximum charges of Blue Dot and Herco than they are with the robust loads of H-110 and 296.

For top speed, however, H-110 and 296

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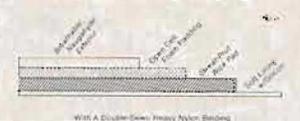
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are exceptional with bullets of 225-240 grains. Both are ball-type powders with similar burning speeds, and a maximum load of 24.5/H-110 and a magnum primer will move the 240-grain jacketed bullet at 1,400 f.p.s. in a 7½-inch revolver. Here again, though, one pays the price for those extra 50-100 feet per second, as the ball types must be thrown in heavy charges resulting in severe muzzle blast and recoil. My own inclinations are to sacrifice 50 f.p.s. or so and keep the .44 Magnum within comfortable shooting levels.

Indeed, one rap against the .44 Magnum is slow recovery for a second shot, and the massive gas blasts from heavy doses of slow-burners like 296, H-110, and 2400 will always be obnoxious. For that reason, along with improved gun life, .44 Magnum owners might wisely consider mid-range reloads that operate 100-200 f.p.s. below maximum. Such reloads still outdo the old .44 Special. For shaved loads, the faster burning powders are indicated; merely reducing the charge of slow-burning fuels can leave air space in the case, and that isn't conducive to perfect interior ballistics. Fast- and medium-speed propellants are better suited to reloads that have air space in the powder chamber. A list of these



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powders includes Unique, SR-7625, 630, 231, HS-5, and HP-38. I had relatively good accuracy results with 9.5/HP-38 and the 180-grain Sierra HC for 1,325 f.p.s. and 12.0/Unique with the 240-grain Hornady for 1,300 f.p.s.

Some fine light loads can be developed for the .44 Magnum for long gun life and pleasant shooting. In fact, I've seen better overall accuracy with the .44 Magnum using mid-range or light loads than maximum charges. Powders like "Hi-Skor" 700-X, 231 Ball, Red Dot, and Hodgdon's Trap-100 give velocities above those of the .44 Special with tolerable recoil and muzzle jump. Still using magnum primers, a 10-grain charge of Trap-100 does about 1,250 f.p.s. with 180-grain jacketed bullets and roughly 1,200 f.p.s. with 200-grain Speer HP's. We get about the same speed with 11.3/231 Ball.

Those velocities were taken with a 7½-inch Ruger Blackhawk, and they could be considerably different if they had been gleaned from a 10-inch Contender. The Contender is a solid handgun that doesn't



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lose velocity potential because of gas seepage at the cylinder/barrel juncture, and its obviously longer barrel does a better job of wringing energy from the powder gases. For example, using 27.0 grains of 296 Ball in the 7½-inch Ruger with the 200-grain Speer jacketed HP gave me an average of 1,509 f.p.s., whereas data supplied by Thompson/Center gives the same reload 1,668 f.p.s. through a 10-inch Contender. Sticking with the 200-grain Speer JHP, 17.5/Blue Dot gave 1,462 f.p.s. in the 7½-inch tube while reaching 1,592 f.p.s. in the 10-inch contender.

Jumping to the popular 240-grain Sierra JHC bullet, we find 21.5/2400 doing 1,353 f.p.s. in the Ruger and 1,418 f.p.s. in the 10-inch Contender. With 22.5/296 under the 240-grain Sierra JHC, the Ruger turned in 1,298 f.p.s., but the 10-inch T/C registered 1,456 f.p.s. It is virtually redundant, then, to note that revolvers are hardly the most efficient guns with .44 Magnum reloads. One will not only find that maximum "recipes" will give greater MV's through the solid Contender barrel than they will from a leaky revolver, but that less-than-maximum reloads in a Contender will often outpace full-throttled loads in a revolver. The point is obvious: with a 10- or 14-inch



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Contender, the reloader can cut his charge slightly for reduced recoil and blast without sacrificing downrange energy. Thus, gun types do make a difference in load performance.

Many shooters like to use cast bullets in the .44 Magnum, and the high velocities often used dictate harder alloys than needed in the old .44 Russian and .44 Special. Soft cast bullets would lead the bore quickly, ruining accuracy. Unless I am badly mistaken, there seems to be a trend toward harder cast bullets, anyway, and .44 Mag. users who mould their own may lean toward a mixture like 10 parts lead to 1 part tin or Lyman's No. 2, which uses 10 parts lead, 1 part tin, and 1 part antimony. My own feeling is that bullets of 240-250 grains give the best cast bullet accuracy in this cartridge, and Lyman indicates that their bullet No. 429412 has given excellent accuracy as a plain-based 245-grainer seated to an overall loaded length of 1.710 inches.

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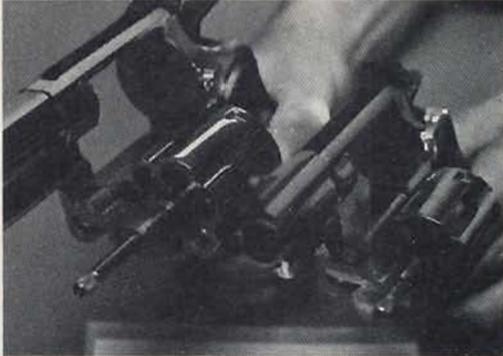
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size, I have a hunch that optimum accuracy in the .44 Mag. will come with cast bullets held to bore diameter. One will have to slug his gun's barrel to be absolutely sure of the groove diameter, of course, as machining can vary; but the industry's standard indicate a 0.429-inch groove diameter for the .44, in which case 0.430-inch would be slightly oversize. This idea of holding bullet diameter at bore diameter is especially needed if reloads are going to be screwed to maximum pressures, because oversized bullets would suffer acute deformation if kicked from behind by intense pressures and rammed into the rifling to be swaged down at breakneck speed.

If cast bullets are to be driven at magnum speeds, a gas check is suggested to protect the bullet's base from heat and deformation pressures.

Although much attention is focused on jacketed bullets and cast slugs, there are two bullet concepts that lend themselves to excellent hunting performances in the .44 Magnum: the Speer half-jacket and the Lyman "Composite" bullet. Ideally, a hunting bullet will expand (mushroom) on impact, and that requires a relatively soft nose. By itself, that requirement could be easily met by casting soft bullets. But magnum velocities complicate matters and if one is going to push high-speed hunting bullets through the .44 Magnum, he must make some provision to eliminate leading. This is handled nicely by half-jackets and composite bullets.

### SPEER HALF-JACKETS

Speer makes two excellent half-jackets for the .44, a 225-grain HP and a 240-grain soft nose. Both have the Keith-style design. The 225-grainer can be moved to 1,525 f.p.s. by 26.0/296 or H-110, while 23.2/2400 and 18.0/Blue Dot give it about 1,500 f.p.s. the 240-grain Speer half-jacket does roughly 1,400 f.p.s. ahead of 24.5-24.7/296 or H-110, and 22.2/2400 registers about 1,375-1,400 f.p.s. Half-jackets should be crimped so that the roll crimp impinges on the leading edge of the bullet's jacket. Half-jackets are *not* suggested for reduced reloads and should always be fired at maximum or near maximum velocities; for there is a possibility that, given low gas pressures, the jacket may remain stuck in the rifling as the lead core continues.

The Lyman composite bullet is an innovative way to give cast bullets both a hard bearing surface to eliminate leading while also providing a soft nose for expansion. It is a 2-part bullet, in fact. The cylindrical shank/base segment is cast separately of linotype for optimum hardness; then, the nose portion is also cast independently of pure lead, and the two are joined with 2-part Epoxy. In .44 caliber, the Lyman composite bullet weighs about 245 grains, and it can be reloaded to high speeds because of the base portion's hardness. Twenty-two and a half grains of 2400, a compressed load, will give it 1,400 f.p.s. with a Remi-

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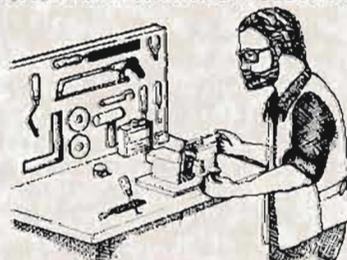
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ngton 2½ primer, as will 17.5/Blue Dot or 16.5/AL-7.

A final observation: I did not have good luck with the softer swaged (not cast) lead bullets being offered commercially. Even at lower speeds, they leaded the bore and gave indifferent accuracy. At magnum velocities, they were impossible. I'd suggest that commercially obtainable swaged lead slugs be held below 1,000 f.p.s. for the best chance at accuracy with light loads such as 6.0-7.0/Unique (800-900 f.p.s.), 5.3-6.0/Bullseye (825-900 f.p.s.), or 5.5-6.5/Red Dot (850-950 f.p.s.). Standard-force primers seem most compatible with these swaged slugs.

Thus, there's more to reloading the .44 Magnum than merely shoveling in the coals for high-speed blast-offs. Gun life, gun type, shooter recovery time and comfort, powder efficiency, bullet performance and selection, velocity levels, and shot charges plus plastic indoor loads—they all give the handloading handgunner a chance to flex his versatility and add new dimensions to the most exciting handgun cartridge going, the .44 Magnum.



## SILUETAS

(Continued from page 12)

and several 118's and 117's in the conventional pistol classes.

Jack Dann was the first to shoot a 120, a new record, his reign was short lived as Dennis O'Brien, a junior and Jack's stepson followed shortly with another straight. By the time the match was over, all four IHMSA unlimited champions, in a stun-



**The unconventional Wichita silhouette.**

ning display of skill, had also shot 120's. Doug Scott survived a couple of banks of a 200m chicken off to take first place in triple A unlimited.

Nolan Jackson of Wichita shot the one straight in conventional and although that's certainly an accomplishment of which Nolan can be justifiably proud, it deserves some explanation. Nolan, you see, used a Wichita bolt action, 10½ barreled 308—not what most would consider a

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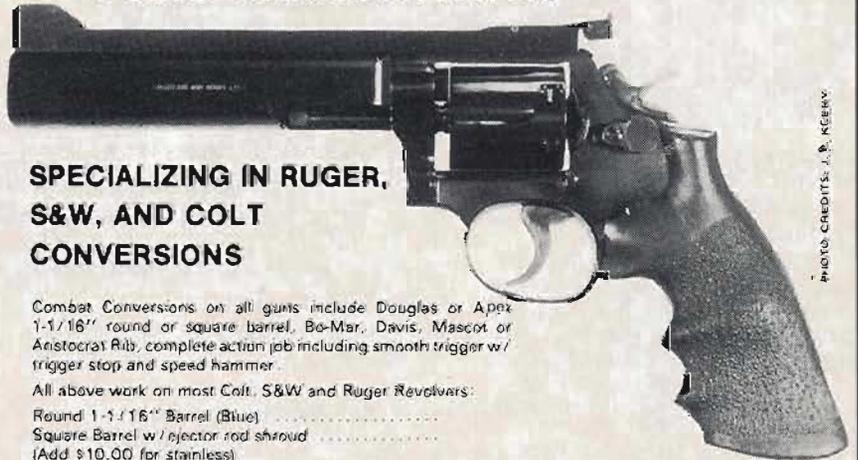


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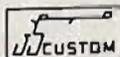


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conventional pistol. But it is, as in NRA's rules conventional pistols are only defined as being a catalog item; the intent being that technically anybody can buy one. I say technically advisedly, as if it were not for the deterrent effect of the \$595 price tag there'd be no way that Wichita, a small firm, could build enough pistols to provide one to every shooter walking his fingers through that catalog. The pistol does provide an advantage, and I feel the NRA should redefine conventional; still, I should tell you that the next three shooters fired a 119, and two 118's—with two, more conventional pistols (T/C 30 Her, Mer. 30 Her, T/C 30 Her., respectively). That the shooter still figures into the equation is shown in modified conventional, where Nolan did nearly as well (117) with the same pistol, but was beaten by a target by a T/C 7mm TCU, and tied (twice) with T/C's—once a 30-30, and the other a 7mm TCU. Still, take ten top shooters, and have

### 1980 NRA National Championships Long Range Handgun Silhouette 120 Target Match

#### Open Standing

Class	Shooter	Pistol	Score
AAA	Skip Talbot-NV	XP-C 6.5mm U*	95
AA	John Dann-NV	T/C 270 VJ	80
A	Charles Kokesh-CA	T/C 7mm TCU	62
B	Sharon Grade-CA	S&W 41 Mag	61

#### Conventional

AAA	Nolan Jackson-KS	Wic 308	120
AA	Jim Shepard-NV	T/C 7mm TCU	106
A	Tom Williams-CA	T/C 30 Her	106
B	Roger Greene-CA	T/C 7mm TCU	107

#### Modified Conventional

AAA	Dave Tobin-CA	T/C 7mm TCU	118
AA	Kathy Miner-NV	T/C 7mm TCU	110
A	Charles Reay-CA	Rug 44 Mag	63
B	Roger Greene-CA	T/C 7mm TCU	117

#### Unlimited

AAA	Doug Scott-CA	XP-C 7mm U	120
AA	Tom Collins-NV	Rem 7mm BR	120
A	Ken Thornton-CA	T/C 30-30	106
B	Geoffrey Wise-NV	T/C 270 VJ	109

\*Custom caliber XP

them shoot a match with each pistol, and I expect there'd be more straights with the Wichita.

I think NRA has potential problems that will arise in other matches in other places that could be eliminated by revising their criteria to include additional factors, such as requiring a minimum production run (say 200) to qualify as a conventional pistol, barring certain action styles, or establishing size and/or weight limits that would eliminate or discourage action types that clearly have superior potential accuracy.

As it stands now, the pistol's eligibility withstood a protest at the match, and it is still legal in the newly defined conventional class, which now allows the same modifications last year's modified class did. Nolan says he'd sold a few pistols like his—some to shooters that he says are obviously going to make sure he won't have that advantage next time.

The standing classes were combined

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into Open standing class (legal under NRA rules, but not in 1981) with anything, including scoped unlimiteds allowed. Still, the shooter is the dominant factor in standing and although Skip Talbot's 95x120 with a custom XP unlimited is a record score, the kill ratio is not any higher than what has been obtained with production pistols in 40, 60 or 80 round matches.

Being a small, low key sort or proceeding the match didn't attract lots of industry participation, but silhouette stalwarts like Thompson/Center, Western Gunstocks and Wichita were represented as were gunsmiths Wes Ugalde and Vern Jenke.

The match ran smoothly and the winners were rewarded with large attractive trophies and merchandise awards, including lots of pistols.

The sport is still new to the NRA, but they are interested and supportive. Keith Gaffney, First Vice President of NRA was there for the trophy presentations. Apparently they were pleased with the match, as the Reno Silhouette Association has been awarded the 1981 long range championships for July 4-7. They've already begun plans for a bigger and better shoot. You can contact them by writing the Association at 247 Wronde!, Suite 100, Reno, Nevada 89502, or calling Carter or Kathy Miner at 702-825-3600.

And if you're a triple A conventional shooter, best take along a Wichita.



## HANDGUN HUNTING

(Continued from page 20)

and got only a caribou. A 125-150 yard running shot with a Hand Cannon in .45-70 caliber saved the trip. The Speer 400 grain bullets gave fantastic expansion. Recovered, one expanded to .930" and weighed 375 grains; the other expanded to .831" and weighed 383 grains. Had I not been shooting a Hand Cannon the whole trip would have been a dry run. I wouldn't have attempted the shot with anything else and no other shots were presented.

While the snow is a foot deep now, varminting will be in full swing all over the country by the time this is printed. Handgunning and varminting go hand in glove. You don't need any specialized equipment to get into varminting. Almost any handgun can be made to work. I killed my first groundhog at about age 8 with a Origies .32 ACP by spending a lot of time sitting about six feet from groundhog holes. It can be done even with a .25 Auto. You may not have groundhogs in your area of the country, but jacks, or whatever can be stalked to within a few feet and killed with the most rudimentary equipment. Running rabbits give the best practice for learning to shoot

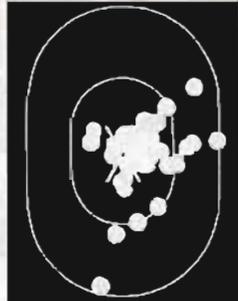
(Continued on page 85)

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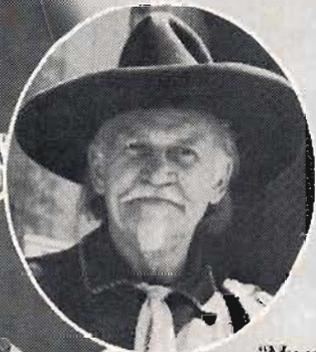
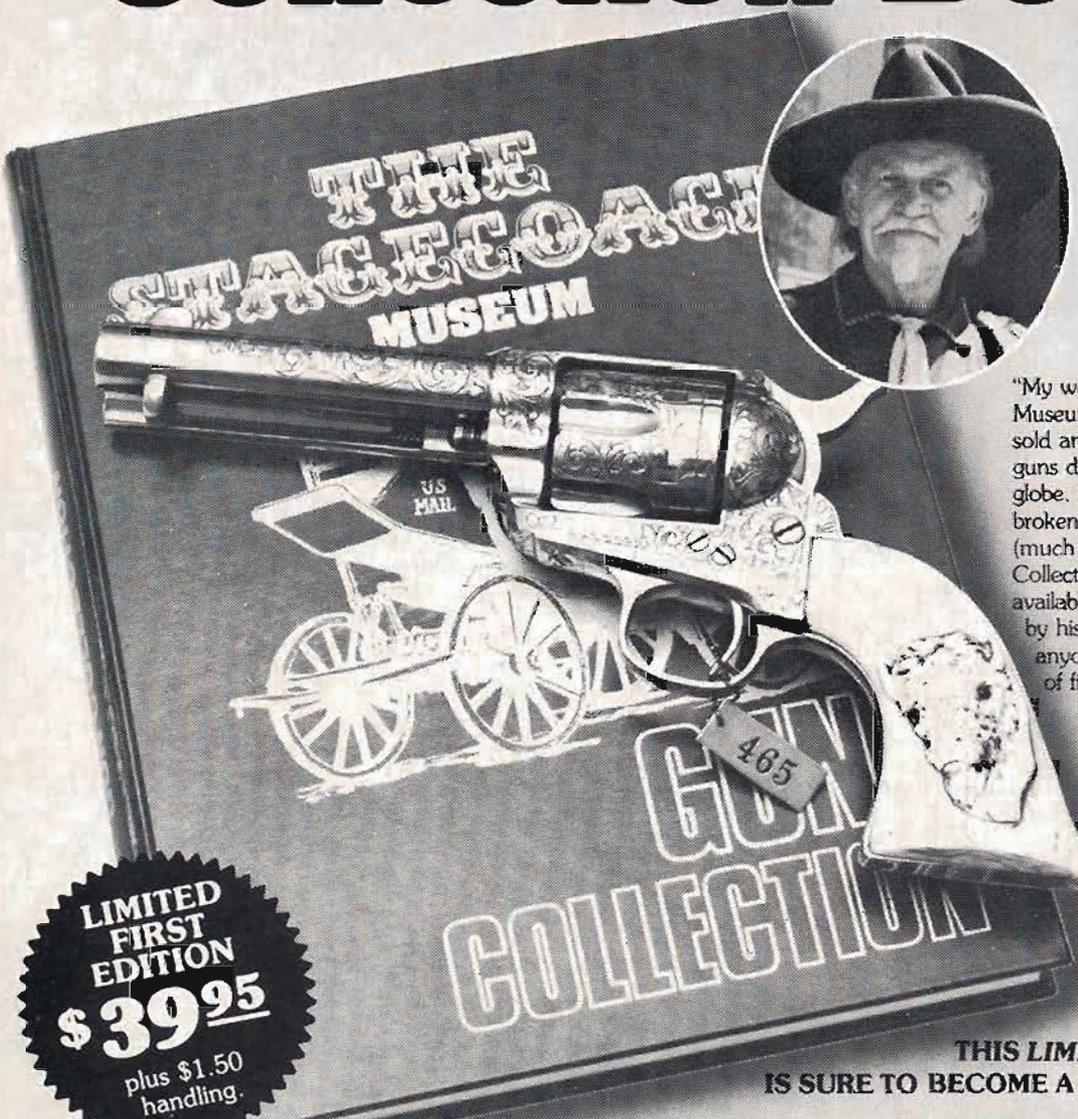
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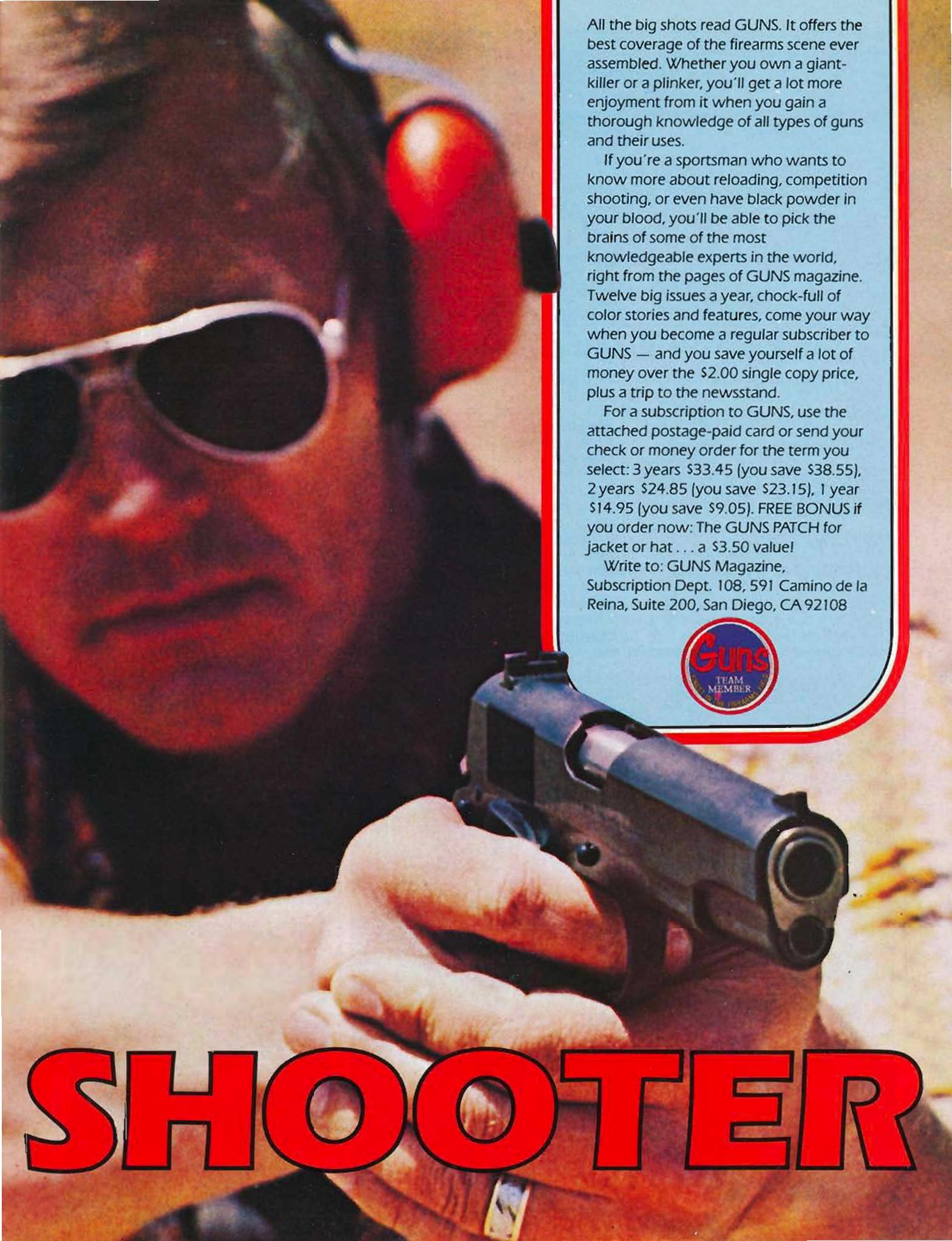
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*By Kevin Steele*

JOHN SPILBORGH'S IS A METAL craftsman of the old school. A native of Belgium, he came to the U.S. fourteen years ago and set up business as a machinist and gunsmith in Santa Barbara, California.

Becoming interested in IPSC shooting several years ago, John drew upon his machining talents and wealth of original ideas to create an extended .45 that was both unique in design and an improvement over the existing methods used to make long barrel auto pistols.

Beginning with a 6" Bar-Sto barrel he expertly fits the barrel to the slide, making  
*(Continued on page 83)*



**Barrel extension sleeve/bushing is patent pending; machined bar stock.**



**Cut in barrel locks into sight extension when barrel returns to battery.**



sure that the barrel lugs mate perfectly with the cuts in the slide. The next step in the conversion is perhaps the most important, and in Spilborghs' case the most innovative. Since John is a machinist, he decided that his extended .45 would feature a custom designed bushing (currently patent pending) that would secure the slide and at the same time increase the sight radius. We should digress at this point to mention that most extended .45's today feature an extended slide. This is accomplished by either casting a longer slide to begin with, or welding sections of two separate slides together. Spilborghs opted for neither, instead an extended bushing was conceived that is milled and turned from a solid piece of bar stock.

As John says, "Welding is welding, you have to take advantage of your talents; I'm good on a machine." The extended bushing is carefully fitted to the gun in a manner that makes it look as if it's always belonged there. Two lugs on the bottom of the bushing lock it to the slide. The recoil spring plug is grooved to index with the forward face of the bushing lugs. The recoil spring guide is extended to meet the plug, and it is buffered to take up recoil shock. The end product stabilizes the barrel to the extent that under one-inch groups can be obtained from the Ransom Rest.

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For example: John's trigger job is done with the help of a special jig he himself designed. The jig is built to hold the main spring under pressure. An Ohaus trigger-pull scale is affixed to the top of the jig and pressure is applied to the spring until the desired "pull" weight is indicated. At this point the spring is cut and re-inserted into the frame. John feels that this method is necessary since the tolerances of spring steels differ, and an arbitrary cut job that might work fine on one gun could ruin another.

After the trigger is adjusted the ejection port is enlarged for easy and positive ejection. The magazine well is beveled and the interior is polished to remove all burrs and imperfections. The grip straps are checkered to the buyer's specifications along with the front of the trigger guard.

An extended slide stop is fitted to the frame along with an ambidextrous safety, both of John's design. The ambidextrous safety differs significantly from the Swenson design, in fact, John's is so different that it is patent pending. The safety itself is machined from a solid piece of bar stock, as are all of John's parts—he uses no castings. The ambidextrous safety produces excellent torque, and its engagement-disengagement sequence is so posi-

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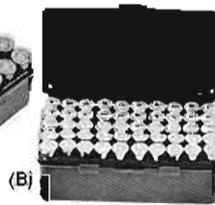
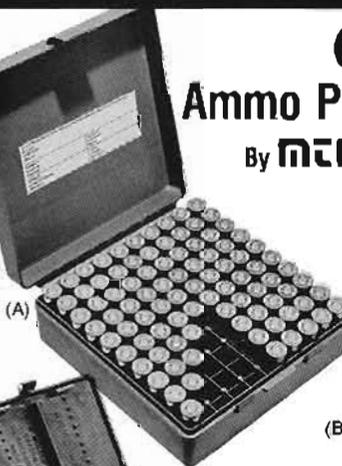
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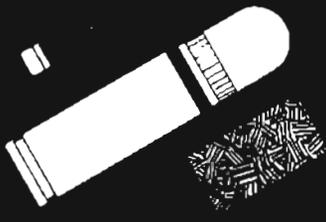
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tive that you can literally "feel" it.

At this point the Spilborghs Custom Extended .45 is complete. The guns are finished in either rust blue or hard chrome to the buyer's preference. The full blown conversion with all parts, tuning, checkering and miscellaneous metal work will set you back \$900 with your gun; delivery time is 3-4 months.

Spilborghs is not the type of man who puts all his eggs in one basket. He offers numerous other examples of custom work that would be of specific interest to law enforcement personnel and PPC shooters.

For example; the Detonics "mini" .45 made a big bang when it hit the market about three years ago. But when most men shoot one the common complaint centers around the purchase the hand has around the shortened grip. John has effectively and with great simplicity solved this dilemma. He simply fits a magazine extension to the Detonics clip which accommodates the little finger. This allows the shooter to effectively hold the Detonics in the normal three finger hold, and the size of the extension can be built to suit the size of the shooter's hand.

Another innovative and simple device of John's is his "Speed Loader Extension" that he will fit to the standard Safariland speedloaders. The extension is especially suited to competition, either PPC or IPSC. The extension makes the loaders easier to remove from their pouches; it makes the loaders more effective in regard to insertion of the cartridges; and it clears all grip styles meaning that the common speed loader cut-outs do not have to be made on oversize target-style factory grips.

When tuning stock .45's without Bar-Sto barrels, John developed a locking system that effectively prevents excess barrel movement. This system centers around a small rectangular groove milled into the extension at the breech end of the barrel. This groove mates with a steel shim which extends downward from the slide in the cut milled for the S&W adjustable sight. When the slide returns to the battery position, this steel shim engages the groove on the top of the barrel surface, locking the barrel in place, where it consistently returns with each successive shot.

John also does some great work on shortened versions of the popular Colt pistols, as can be seen in the photographs showing the shortie Gold Cup and Commander. Excellent balance and "feel" is maintained in all of Spilborghs' custom work, from the extended 6" guns to the shorties ideal for concealed entry by either law enforcement personnel or approved civilians.

Dave Wheeler, an accomplished West coast IPSC competitor, has been using one of John's 5" customs with compensator for the past year. Dave feels that the Spilborghs gun gives him an edge. John Spilborghs can be reached at: JS Customs, Box 40529, Santa Barbara, CA 93103.



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# HANDGUN HUNTING

(Continued from page 79)

moving game that I know of.

A lot of years ago I put another animal on the "varmint" list. I call it a wild dog. They are really a problem in many areas of the country, running in packs, killing small game, deer, farm livestock, and occasionally children. They won't back down from you either. I figure any dog that is where he ain't supposed to be and doesn't wear a collar is a genuine wild dog. The same dog with a collar can be called semi-domesticated. If he isn't doing anything wrong he gets a break. If he is running a deer or in a pack, he's wild and a duster as far as I'm concerned. It would be a good idea to check your local laws prior to embarking on a dog hunt. A few years ago in



.375 JDJ took care of African varmint. T-C hand cannon from SSK Industries.

West Virginia the minimum mandatory sentence for being convicted of killing a dog was more severe than for killing a human being. People lovers got that one straightened out. I didn't mention cats 'cause I just figured everyone knew enough to kill every one of them they found in the field already.

I've got the urge to go to Africa on a handgun hunt. South Africa and Rhodesia are probably the most feasible places to try handgunning now. There are numerous safari outfits in business but as a result of Kelly's hunt, Don Price of Greater Kudu-land Safaris Of Zimbabwe, Nottingham Estates, Box 60, Beitbridge, Zimbabwe, had announced plans to tailor make safaris for handgun hunters. Anyone can write him direct for info. Anyone seriously interested in forming a group of handgunners for an African trip please contact me through SSK whose address is previously listed.



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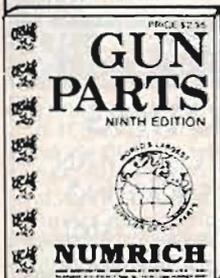
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## COMBAT COURSE

(Continued from page 14)

to an offer by H&K to try the P9S .45. Although put off by its appearance, I liked its feel and was impressed with the way it shot and how easy it was to control in recoil. H&K loaned me two standard guns to evaluate culminating in the 1980 "Second Chance" match where the P9S and I placed 8th out of over 450 shooters with very little practice. Recently I won a "practical" match at Oceanside with it. The match was close and fast which certainly suited the P9S.

The P9S is one gun a police officer could buy that would make an excellent duty gun as well as a very good match gun. The price is too high from an administrator's point of view. It is, however, much cheaper than buying a duty and a match gun, and more sensible. I am convinced that an officer should use the same firearm at all



The H&K P9S trigger guard drops down.

times. Using one firearm type on duty and a different one for matches seriously detracts from the practical value.

The P9S as it came from the factory was more a duty than match gun. With both guns, I have had good double action triggers and excellent single action releases. The pre-travel and other travel of the triggers was, however, a serious problem in precision shooting. The basic accuracy was surprising. Using Super-Vel hollow points at 50 yards from a table rest my "Full House" Hoag MK-IV grouped 5 rounds in 2 3/8" x 7/8" (1.6" ave.). The P9S grouped 3 3/8" x 1 1/2" (2.3" ave.). With Federal hardball at 25 yards off hand the P9S grouped 1 3/4" x 1/2" (1.25" ave.) at exactly my point of aim. This level of accuracy is certainly good enough for any kind of shooting.

The sights, accuracy, and function of the P9S are superb. For both combat and duty use, the sights are perfect as far as I am concerned. The sights are strong and easy to pick up fast. The function was fabulous with every type of ammo I used. The roller block lock up system seems to make the pistol much less sensitive to power variations. The top of the magazine allows the next round to be stripped directly into the chamber. One P9S would even feed empty cases. The other pistol had a burr in the chamber. Once removed, it too fed and functioned with any bullet shape.

Unfortunately, I have had time to put

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only 5000 rounds through either P9S. This is not enough to determine the strength of the gun. Close examination reveals no sign of wear, but the screw holding the double action lock work has to be checked occasionally. I feel the lock up system and light weight slide along with the advanced engineering eliminates the broken slide and frames I have experienced with other semi-auto types.

All is not perfect with the P9S, however. There are four points on the P9S that we had to work on. All of these problems are correctable without expensive gunsmith help. These four points are: the bottom magazine release, the "backward" safety, a trigger stop, and conversion to single action without pre-travel of the trigger.

The bottom magazine release cannot presently be changed but it need not be a serious problem. On a duty firearm it makes no real difference provided the shooter is familiar with the procedure. The need for a one-second magazine change in actual use has not been proven to me. It is not needed in most practical pistol matches either. Where it is needed, it can be learned.

#### MAGAZINE CHANGING

Nick Pruitt is a championship class shooter that works with me for Westec. Nick can do a magazine change on the P9S faster than I can on the Colt. The procedure he uses is to slide the left hand under the gun butt raking the magazine release with one of his middle fingers and stripping the magazine out with the index finger of his left hand. On this motion, his hand travels directly to his loaded magazine on the left front of his belt. His next motion is to grab a loaded magazine and slam it home. While not as fast as Nick, I can change magazines more consistently on the P9S than I can on my Colt.

I have done poorly at times on man vs. man competition due to magazine change problems. Each time it was due to a magazine that failed to drop out of the gun. Occasionally this was due to a dirty magazine well. Most of the time it was due to my short thumb not depressing magazine release properly. Others with small hands



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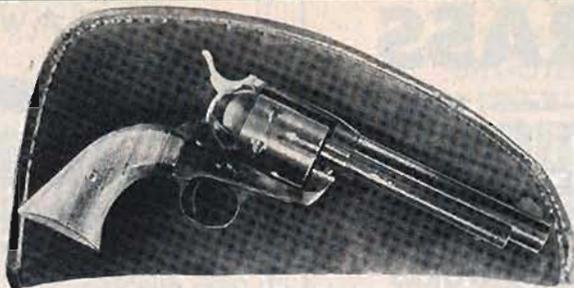
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will find the P9S avoids this problem. Some competitors use extensions on the magazine release button on their Colt to avoid this problem. I never did due to an actual experience that a fellow officer had. The police department was making a raid on an activity that included one suspect that was known to be armed. Our biggest officer was to kick open the door and cover the suspect. The door crashed open, the officer jumped into the room, took a classic Weaver Stance and yelled "freeze," followed immediately by the clang of his magazine hitting the floor. He had hit the magazine release with the heel of his left hand.

When using the P9S, or any other gun with a bottom magazine release, one must be careful in prone positions not to allow the magazine release to scrape on the ground. Nick did this in the 1980 Bianchi Match, and the magazine dropped costing him many points. Don't however, switch back and forth between your types. Make your mind up and practice with one kind.

#### THE BACKWARD SAFETY

The "backward" safety is the same as on most of the German-made semi-autos and the Smith & Wesson model 39 and model 59. No amount of practice will make an upward motion of the safety as natural feeling as the downward motion used by Colt. This problem too was solved by Nick Pruitt and will work on the Smith & Wesson too. By welding on a lever with a slightly changed angle the safety works with an upward or downward motion.

The trigger stop is available from H&K. The plastic trigger guard assembly is available with or without a trigger stop. A perfectly functional trigger stop can be made by using a short self-tapping screw through the plastic trigger guard.

#### SA TO DA AND BACK

I have saved the best for last. There are advantages to being able to easily convert the gun from single to double action and back. To accomplish the conversion one need only cock the weapon, take up all the slack out of the trigger travel and mark a point just ahead of the trigger on the plastic trigger guide that extends down, from the action of the gun. After marking the part remove it from the gun. Use a small drill bit and drill laterally through the piece. Cut off a 1/8" length of a small nail and fit it into the hole. Reassemble the gun, pull the trigger and insert the pin in the hole you drilled. The gun can now be used single action only as the trigger will not travel far enough forward to engage the double action. All that is required to return the gun to double action is to pull out the pin.

With the P9S, an officer has an outstanding duty gun and is not handicapping himself in the least for serious competition except in matches requiring unreasonable magazine changes. I certainly intend to keep using mine.



## NEW S&W GUNS

(Continued from page 41)

686). The Models 581 and 681 will be fixed sight versions of the same weapon. Suggested retails are as follows; 581-\$178 (blue), \$187 (nickel), 681-\$198, 586-\$247, and 686-\$268. The Model 586 will be available in May of 1981.

If you've been looking for a sturdy .357, but didn't care for the "N" frame, this new "L" frame should be just the ticket. You can rest assured that I won't be sending mine back!

### MODEL 547

When S&W President Jim Oberg introduced the Model 547, 9mm revolver, those of us present wondered if S&W was rowing with both oars in the water. I can't speak for the other writers, but I quickly changed my opinion after examining and shooting this superb little revolver.

Originally designed for the French Po-



New S&W M559 9mm with steel frame.

lice, the Model 547 will also be an excellent choice for those who want better performance than the .38 Special without the drawbacks of the .357 Magnum. It should be highly popular with those police departments who have settled on the 9mm cartridge, but who have sizable segments who prefer the revolver to the pistol.

Unlike others who use half moon clips, the 547 uses a unique extractor system. The extractor head is investment cast out of beryllium copper, chosen for its low coefficient of friction and strength.

Another obvious difference in the 547 is the lack of hammer nose. A firing pin is located in the frame and located above it is another pin S&W calls the limit pin. Both pins are retained in the gun by a piece similar to those used in the Model 53 revolver.

The purpose of the limit pin is to restrict the primer indent and reduce extraction problems. Since the 9mm headspaces off the front of the case, variation in shell length can cause a .020" gap between the recoil plate and the shell. The limit pin prevents excessive penetration of the pri-

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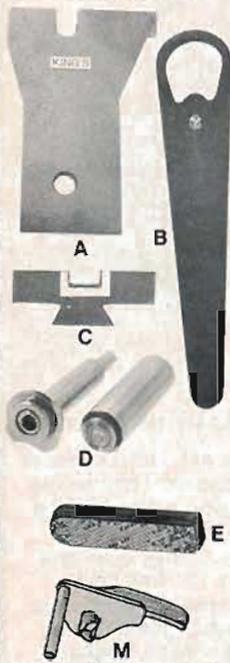


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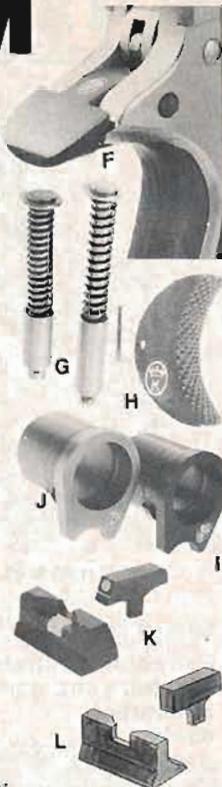
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mer by pushing the hammer back as the case moves back to the recoil plate. If the limit pin is removed, some brands of ammo will give as many as 5 out of 6 pierced primers.

The hammer spur has been bobbed so that it will not contact the shooter's hand when the limit pin pushes the hammer back. The primary advantage of the Model 547 is that the extractor segments are cammed out of the way and offer no resistance during reloading. The segments also easily snap over shells or rounds which get under the extractor.

A stronger main spring and a longer strain screw are used to give a .015" copper indent to fire all varieties of 9mm ammo. This indent is possible with a double action pull of less than 14 pounds and a 3 to 5 pound single action pull.

Because I was curious as to how much would be lost by firing 9mm rounds through a revolver, I chronographed a variety of loads in both the 559 and 547.



## Smith & Wesson

### 9mm: REVOLVER VS AUTO

Load	547	559
a. W-W 100gr jhp	1287fps	1279fps
b. S&W 115gr jhp	1128fps	1123fps
c. R-P 115gr jhp	1187fps	1164fps
d. S&W 115gr fmj	1105fps	1153fps
e. W-W 100gr jsp	1278fps	1264fps

The reason for the excellent performance of this round in the 4" revolver appears to be because the cylinder length provides additional chamber space to make up for the gap between cylinder and barrel.

### AMMUNITION

Along with the new guns, S&W also introduced two new ammunition loadings. Both are 125 grain Nyclad hollow points. One is a non +P for the .38 Special, while the other is a 9mm load. Both were tested for expansion and velocity. The results are listed below:

### NEW S&W AMMO

Load	2"Vel	2"Exp.	4"Vel	4"Exp.
a. .38 Sp1	825fps	.71"	917fps	.78"
b. 9mm	—	—	1145fps	.80"

The .38 load is designed for extensive use in airweight snubs, and offers impressive performance. It will turn the short-barreled .38 into a gun an officer or civilian can depend on. The 9mm load is most impressive and gratifyingly accurate in all my 9mms. S&W is also working on a variety of other calibers with Nyclad bullets.

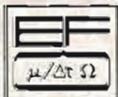
Watch future pages of HANDGUNNER for complete test reports on these new guns.



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## REDHAWK VS M29

(Continued from page 61)

powder. It was not anywhere near a maximum load, but rather an accuracy load delivering a bit over 1000 fps. The recoil was nearly similar with both guns. Trying a hotter factory load of Western 240 grain HSP (index 44MHSP) we noted the Ruger Redhawk delivered what could be described as a "hard push" vs. the "sharp whip" of the S&W 29.

As expected, the challenge of an accuracy test was finally delivered as we polished off the second box of meticulous individually weighed reloads. Targets were set up at 25 yards and firing was to be off the bench. We would not really be shooting against each other as we were very well matched in ability. We were comparing guns and would each shoot several targets with both guns. As mentioned earlier, I was, in effect, matching an out-of-the-box Redhawk against a custom tuned M29.

I wish I could report to you that something spectacular happened. It didn't!



**Test firing Ruger Redhawk .44 Mag. New Ruger did well against S&W M29.**

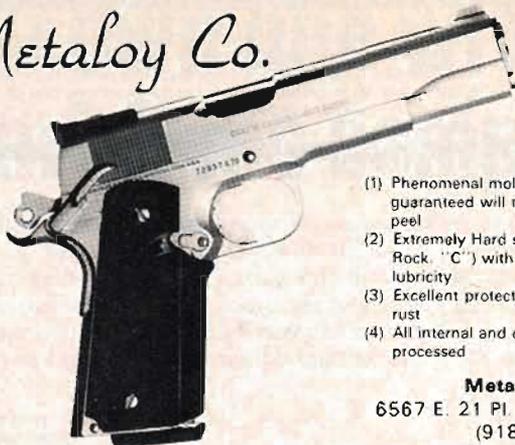
Both guns were so good that the whole thing got sort of boring. Our groups, no matter who was shooting which gun, stayed consistently within 1½ to 2½ inches. At times I would beat my own Ruger using Bill's S&W, and he would beat his S&W using my Ruger. The better group of 5 shots was seldom more than ¼ inch smaller. If we proved anything at all, it was our own honesty in evaluating the potential of the new Redhawk.

It is this potential, however, that makes this report worthy of note. The Ruger Redhawk is capable of delivering, out-of-the-box, accuracy equal to a much more expensive quality handgun which sported an accuracy job by a fine pistolsmith. In addition to this the Ruger is a more modern design, stronger, and made of better materials.

Having satisfied our curiosity, we pocketed our shoulder holsters, and headed up to an old abandoned farmhouse on a hill that was just plumb plagued with rockchucks. Heck, who wants to work on a Monday anyway!



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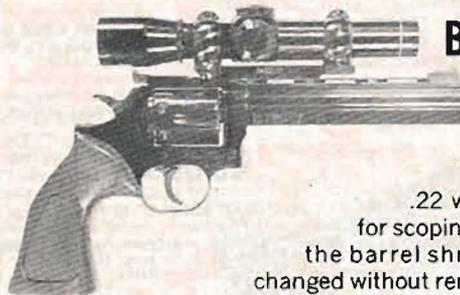


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(Continued on page 94)

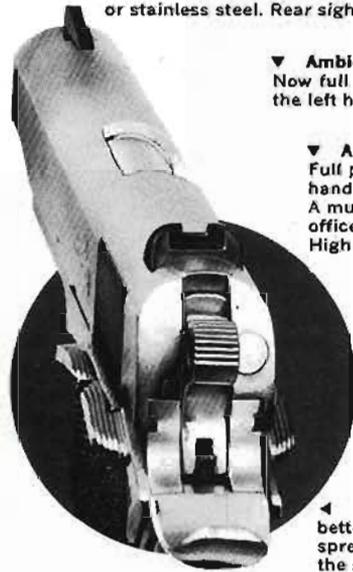
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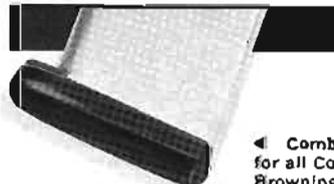
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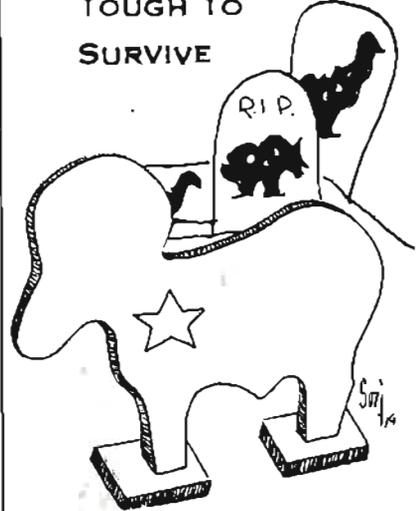
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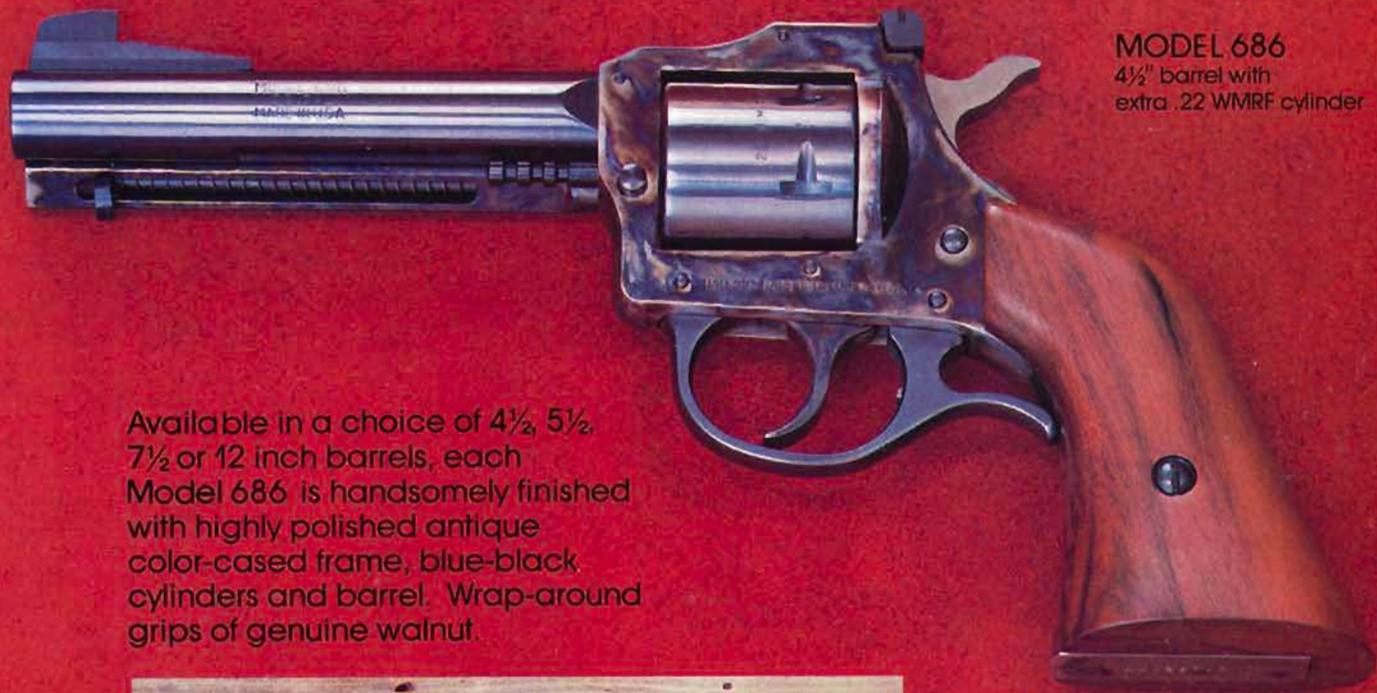
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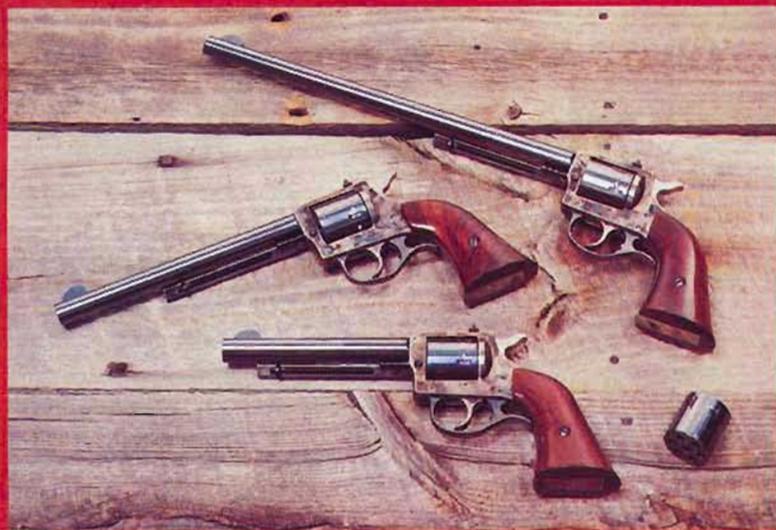
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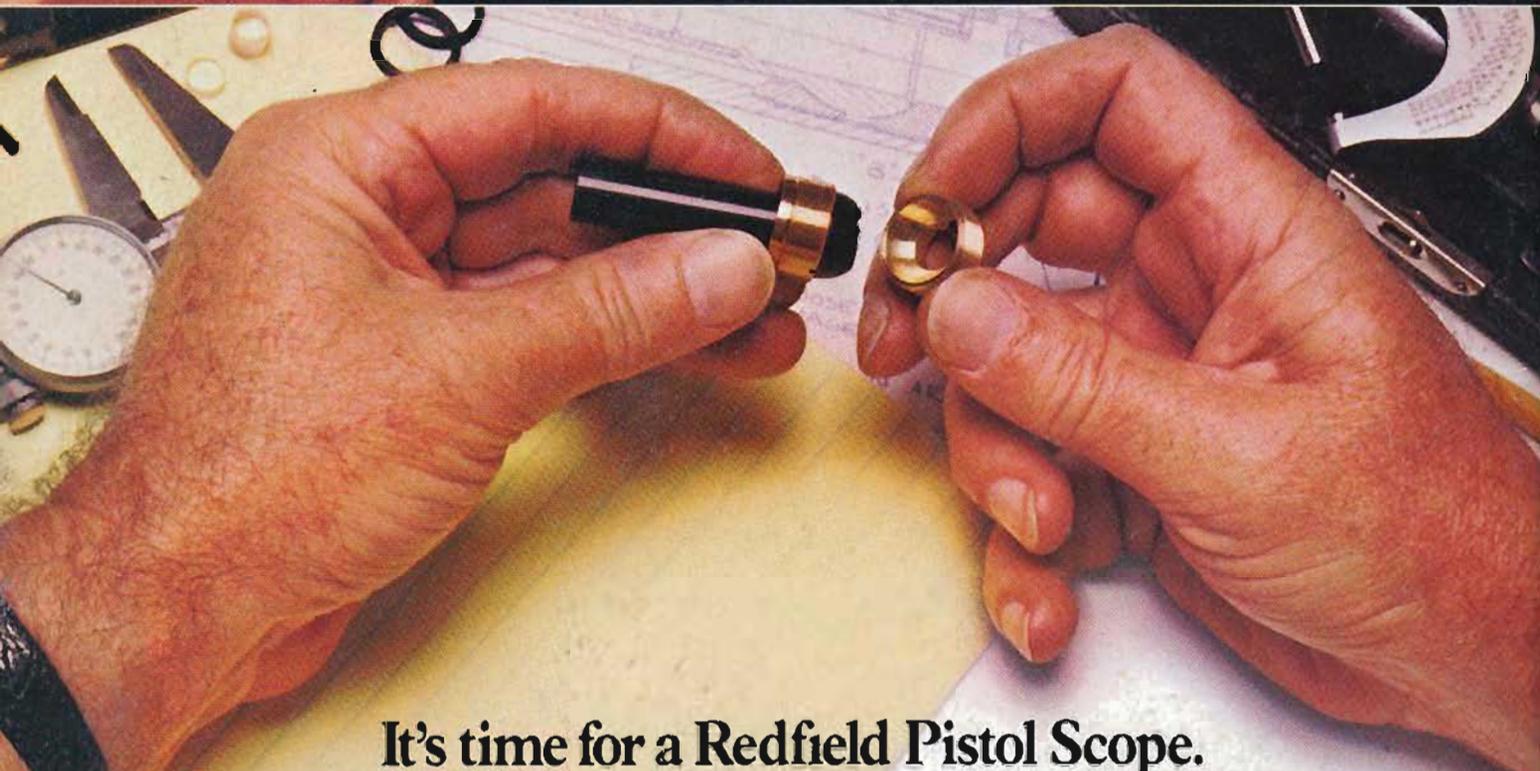
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