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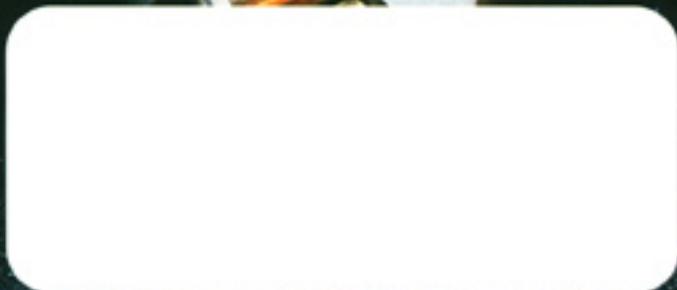
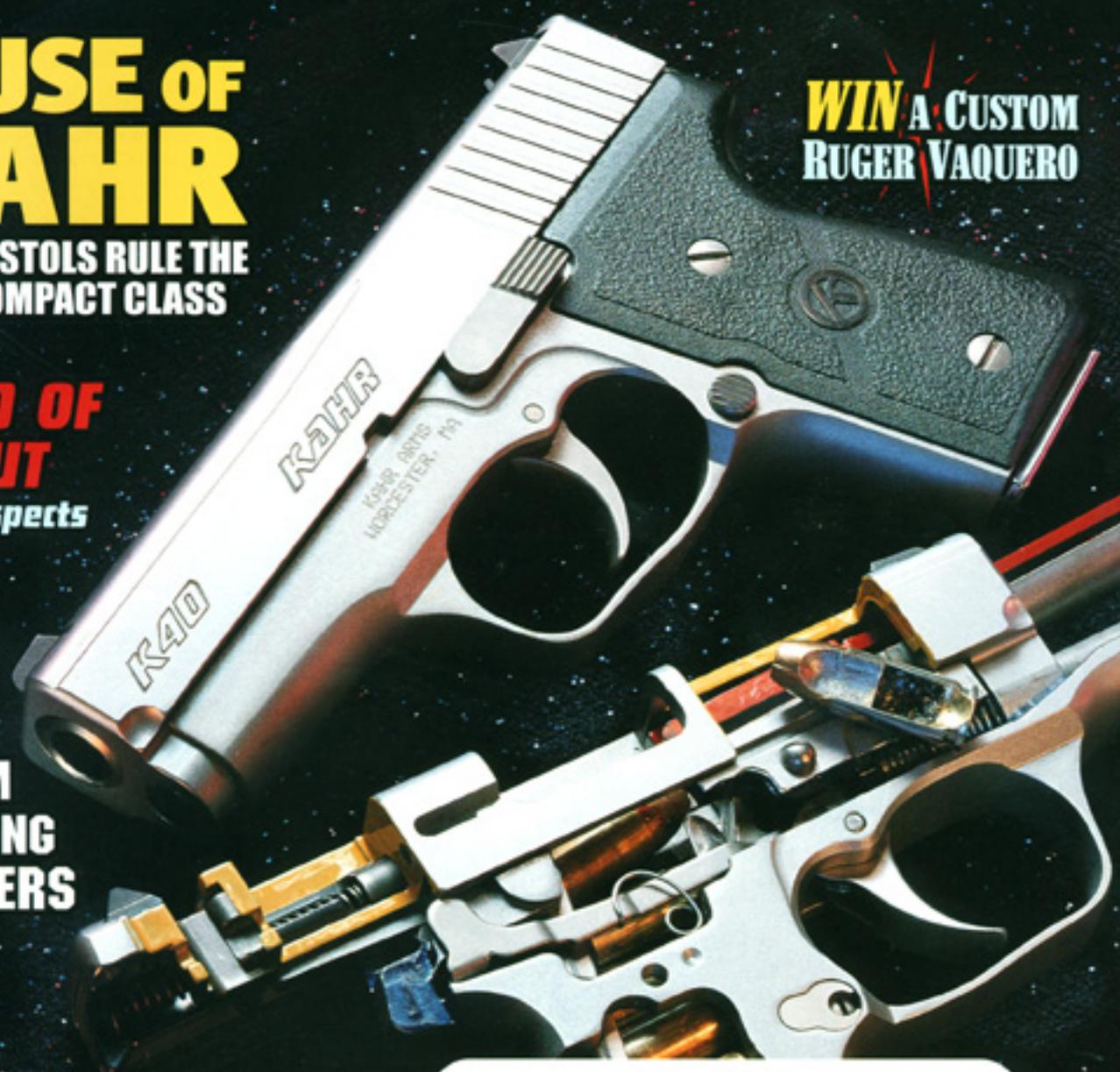
*Mental Aspects
Of Edged
Weapons*

**CUSTOM
BROWNING
HI-POWERS**
(P. 52)

**The IPSC Power Factor
Does The New Criteria Make
Ballistic Sense? (p.26)**

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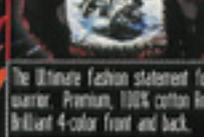
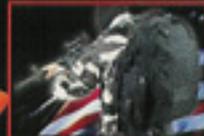
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AMERICAN HANDGUNNER®

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2001 Vol. 25, Number 154

On The Cover:
Kahr K40 and cutaway
Photo by Ichiro Nagata



FEATURES

- 22 **TAFFIN TESTS** John Taffin
Beartooth Bullets offers original style Keith semiwadcutters.
- 26 **THE IPSC POWER FACTOR** Charles E. Petty
Why did IPSC lower the power factor? Bullets and ammo are better.
- 40 **THE .22 MAGNUM AS A REVOLVER CARTRIDGE** Mike Cumpston
The .22 WMR can be effective in wheelguns, despite lower velocities.
- 44 **THE AYOOB FILES** Massad Ayoob
The "reflexive draw stroke" and how it saved a cop's life.
- 49 **BETTER SHOOTING** Dave Anderson
How to avoid excuses on your path to being a better shooter.
- 51 **CLASSIC TEST REPORT** Mike Cumpston
The venerable Model 27 is still the all-time best .357 Magnum from S&W.
- 52 **ABBREVIATED BROWNING** Charles E. Petty
Custom "chopped" Hi-Powers from Bill Laughridge.
- 58 **RISE OF THE HOUSE OF KAHR** Massad Ayoob
How an upstart gun company captured the ultra-compact CCW market.
- 68 **BLOOD OF THE CUT** Steve Tarani
What mental preparations are necessary to deal with an edged weapon.
- 72 **POET IN STEEL** Patrick Covert
The amazing Howard Viele and his masterpiece knives.
- 74 **S&W'S NEWEST HAND EJECTOR** Charles E. Petty
The Performance Center brings back a legend.
- 76 **POWDER POSITION** Charles E. Petty
What happens to a cartridge as the powder moves position in the case?
- 78 **THE SIXGUNNER** John Taffin
Grips galore from leading custom makers.
- 84 **AMERICAN HANDGUNNER CUSTOM GUN GIVEAWAY**
You can win a custom Ruger Vaquero from Alex Hamilton and Jim Riggs.
- 107 **AMERICAN HANDGUNNER CATALOG SHOWCASE**
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COLUMNS

- 8 **SPEAK OUT**
- 19 **PISTOLSMITHING** Alex Hamilton
- 20 **COP TALK** Massad Ayoob
- 25 **COMBAT SHOOTING** Dave Anderson
- 35 **TACTICAL ADVANTAGE** Ken Hackathorn
- 36 **GUN RIGHTS** Jeffrey Snyder
- 38 **HANDLOADING** Charles E. Petty
- 42 **HANDGUN HUNTING** J.D. Jones
- 48 **THE 10-RING** Commander Gilmore
- 50 **HANDGUN LEATHER** Roy Huntington
- 91 **GUNNY SACK** Charles E. Petty
- 122 **INDUSTRY INSIDER** Cameron Hopkins



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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF CAMERON HOPKINS

ART DIRECTOR LISA STAHLHUT

ART ASSISTANT RICH STAHLHUT

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT JESSE JONES

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT EDWARD CARLSON

ADVERTISING PRODUCTION JULIE A. GALBOS

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR ICHIRO NAGATA

COMPETITIONS EDITOR NYLE LEATHAM

FIELD EDITOR JOHN TAFFIN

SHOOTING EDITOR CHARLES E. PETY

LAW ENFORCEMENT EDITOR MASSAD AYOUB

GUN RIGHTS EDITOR JEFF SNYDER

PRACTICAL SHOOTING EDITOR DAVE ANDERSON

HUNTING EDITOR J.D. JONES

PISTOLSMITHING EDITOR ALEX HAMILTON

LEATHER EDITOR ROY HUNTINGTON

EDGED WEAPONS EDITOR PATRICK COVERT

SUBSCRIPTION	(619) 819-4539
	subs@americanhandgunner.com
EDITORIAL	(619) 819-4535
	ed@americanhandgunner.com
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING	(619) 297-6655
	class@americanhandgunner.com
PRODUCTION	(619) 297-8520
	production@americanhandgunner.com
INTERNET	www.americanhandgunner.com

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

STEVE EVATT

NATIONAL ADVERTISING:

591 Camino de la Reina, Suite 200,
San Diego, CA 92108 (619) 297-8520
Fax: (619) 297-5353
email: steve@americanhandgunner.com

EAST COAST ADVERTISING:

SIG BUCHMAYR
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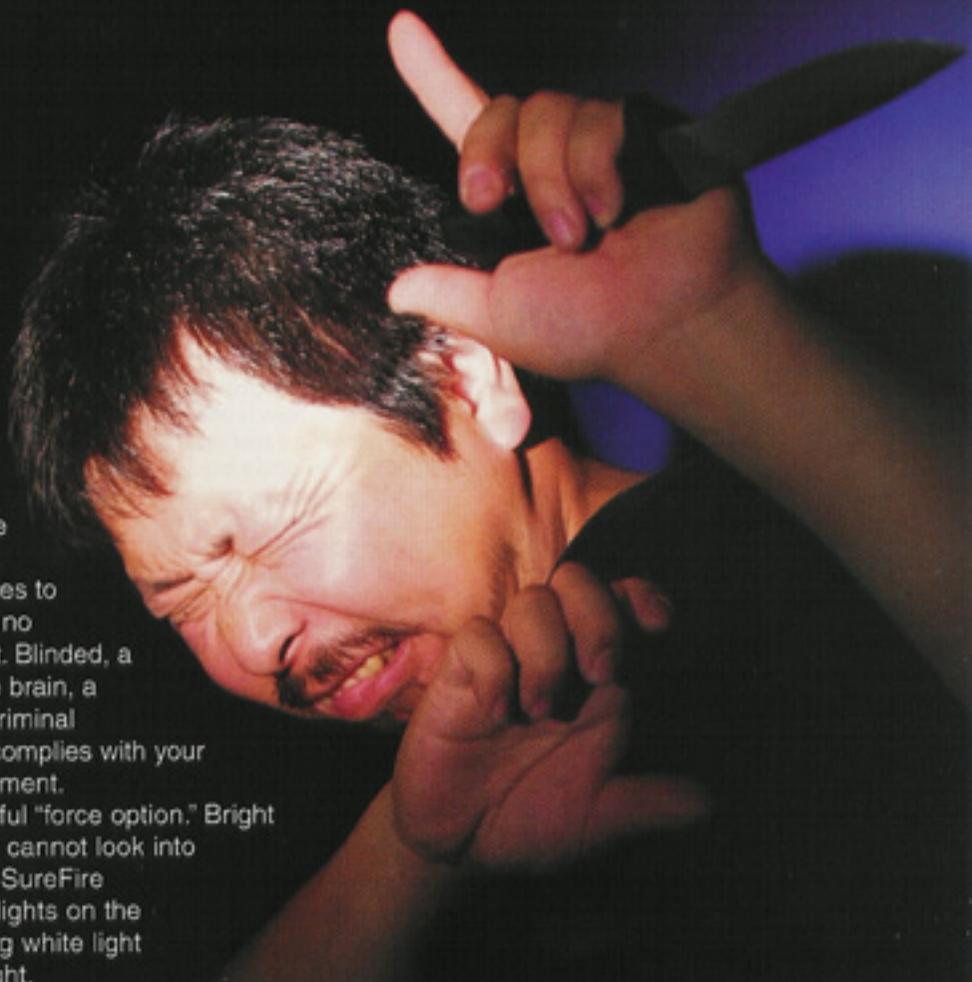
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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2001

Oh Say Can You See?

I was using granny glasses for several years until I finally got tired of taking them on and off. I opted for the off-the-shelf bifocals available at most discount stores. Of course this did not help my seeing the sights. A pilot friend of mine introduced me to a product that has helped immensely. This product is called "Optx 20/20 Hydrotac Reading Lenses." They are essentially a heavy vinyl bifocal that is user-applied to sunglasses, and reuseable. I find that I can cut these vinyl bifocals into 3/8" diameter spots, about five spots out of each bifocal, and apply this spot to the upper inner corner of my glasses.

I chose a power that allowed my focus to be about 8" past my front sight. Wow, I can shoot again! These lenses are available from Walgreens stores in the Memphis area, but I couldn't find them in Dallas, for about \$20 for two

lenses in one pack. The manufacturer is online at www.optx2020.com.

Ray Vaira
Ash Flat, Ark.

A Dangerous Gun

I have enjoyed your magazine for many years and thought it was about time that I shared my best "American" story with you. Many years ago, in connection with my work, I traveled worldwide with a handgun. Whenever I arrived at an airport I went to the red zone and stated I had a gun. The best reply I ever had was in Texas.

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carefully maintained under perfect laboratory conditions—where it is "untouched by human hands", lest it is contaminated and the finish ruined! The Titanium is transferred one molecule at a time, layer upon layer—15 layers to be precise, using highly-advanced Magnetron-Ion-Plating (MSIP) and Arc-Ion-Plating (AIP).

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Happy Mags

I just wanted to write to inform your readers of a great experience I recently had with Chip McCormick Corp. I had purchased several of his Shooting Star magazines off of Ebay that were advertised as new Chip McCormick mags. Upon using them, I discovered that none would feed the last round when fired out of my Colt Combat Commander, Enhanced.

So I sent them to Chip McCormick for inspection with a cover letter explaining my dilemma. I was not looking for a refund, but basically trying to determine whether they were the "real thing." Within a week, three of my magazines were returned, with the fourth being replaced by his "Power Mag" magazine for me to inspect. He stated that the Combat Commander had a faster cyclic rate and the standard springs were probably having trouble keeping up with the slide.

Not only did I not expect them to get back to me so quickly, I certainly didn't expect a higher quality replacement magazine. I had asked them to let me know if I need to replace the springs and offered to purchase new ones. Now, that's outstanding customer service and standing by your product.

John Howard
Alexandria, Va.

Small Guns

While I certainly enjoy your magazine, I feel that I must respond to the "Pistolsmithing" (July/August '01) on several points:

The pictured pistol is the Walther PPK/s, not the PPK as noted in the caption. The PPK/s has a steel backstrap and holds on more round than the PPK. The PPK/s therefore has a larger grip, while the PPK is more suited to those with small hands.

The PPK and other "pocket poppers" are "real guns." They are neither "toys," nor "pop guns," but are potentially deadly weapons and should be treated as such. While some small caliber bullets have been reported to bounce off of a bad guy's noggin occasionally, one should not expect this result or treat a firearm as if it will not instantly kill whatever is in front of the barrel.

Considering the extensive use of pistols chambered in .380 or smaller calibers by Germany and Italy in World War II, I should remind the good author that better men than him or me have fallen before such rounds.

Small-framed pistols chambered for service rounds can be very intimidating and uncomfortable to fire. A double-action revolver can be fired in a matter of seconds by anyone strong enough to pull a trigger, including the bad guy or a five-

2 GREAT SHEATHS

Polkowski/Kasper Companion

1 GREAT KNIFE

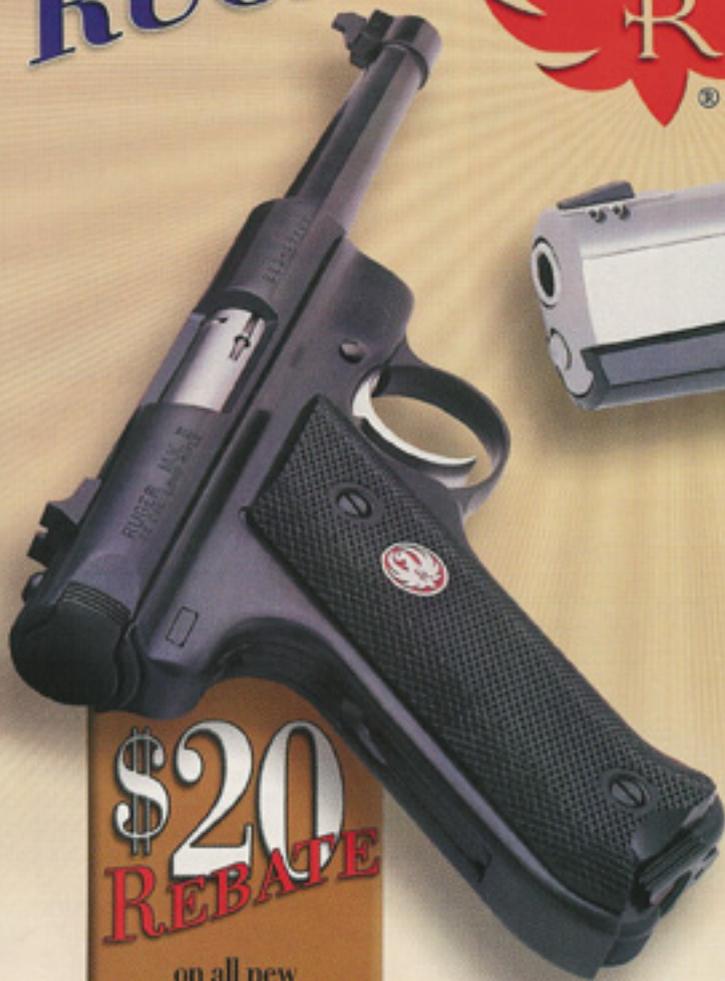
AI Polkowski, custom knifemaker extraordinaire, and Bob Kasper, designer, writer and instructor, created their custom Companion. CRKT's model offers all the original's simplicity and strength, complete with two molded Zytel® sheaths, offering a wide variety of carry positions. The AUS 6M full tang stainless blade is ground for strength, with Razor Sharp, or Combination Triple-Point™ Serrated cutting edges. Molded POM scales have a textured, non-slip surface. It's the fixed blade system with maximum flexibility.

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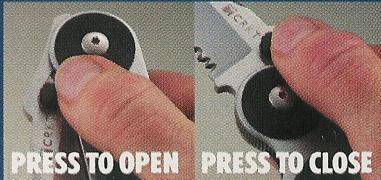
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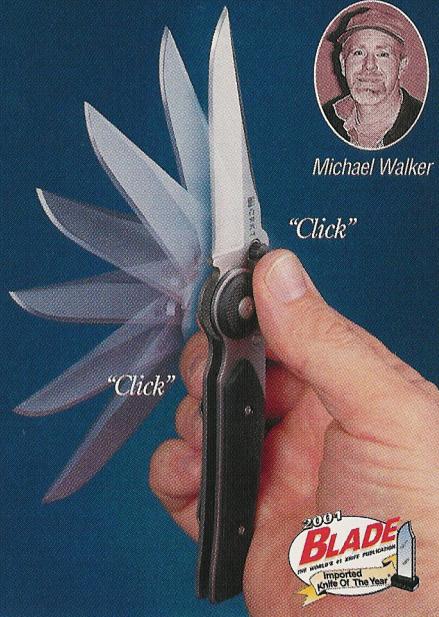
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Michael Walker



SPEAKOUT

year-old child. The Walther PP series offers a classic pistol with manual and internal safeties that is reasonably accurate, all in an attractive, comfortable and concealable package.

While there are times when a .45 is much more suited to the job at hand, there is certainly a place in the world for these fine firearms that were the first commercially successful double-action pistols. And I find the trigger pull lightens considerably after the first 300 to 500 rounds.

Matt Winslow
Cody, Wyo.

Support For S&W

Just a quick note to say thank you for your recent positive articles on S&W. As an avid IDPA shooter, I can tell you that there is no better site for IDPA competition than the Shooting Sports Center run by S&W in Springfield, Mass. S&W has been a stalwart supporter of IDPA since inception, yearly sponsoring the S&W IDPA WinterNationals.

Say what you like about past decisions, but I believe that an American cornerstone like Smith & Wesson deserves our support and now, with new owners, our renewed trust.

Ted Earnshaw
bearshaw@sprynet.com

Bush To Bush

Your "Industry Insider" comments about the NRA being a "bona fide king-maker" brings to mind the closing line of the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* in which our main character isn't sure what to do with his new-found power, but he's sure he'll think of something.

I wouldn't worry about the "struggle against the blue-helmeted foreigner." Rather, I'd worry about this Bush undoing his father's damage to the Second Amendment.

It was the first Bush who instituted the shameful ban on the importation of guns that looked like assault rifles. It was the first Bush who signed Brady and other laws that assigned criminal intent to buyonet lugs and flash suppressors.

This is inaccurate: President Bill Clinton, not President George Bush, signed the Brady Bill. Editor

This Bush can rein in the ATF. This Bush can undo the FBI's illegal retention of NICS inquiries. This Bush can remove many of the restrictions on gun shipments. Many of these restrictions can be undone the same way they were executed—by Executive Order.

Another inaccuracy. Restrictions on the shipping of firearms by private citizens are largely enforced by private shipping companies, such as UPS. It was an administrative rule by UPS, not government edict, that greatly impedes the shipment of firearms. Editor

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SPEAKOUT

We need to recover what was taken from us in the past, not worry about some blue-helmeted bogeyman.

John Steinke
Reno, Nev.

Happy With Ruger

I purchased a slightly used Ruger PC-4 .40 S&W carbine from a local gun store. After a few outings the firearm began to fail to eject the spent casing from the chamber. I contacted Ruger's service department and received a letter from the service manager, Mike Smisko, authorizing me to return the carbine for repairs.

I sent it and it was promptly returned. I was concerned about the cost because I was not the original buyer, but I opened the box and found a letter explaining what work was performed on my carbine and a "no charge" bill. This is first-class service above and beyond what was due.

Another big plus is Ruger is an American company. This means a lot to this Vietnam vet.

Roger W. Reed
Lascassas, Tenn.



Poster Boy

My husband is a physician and a captain in the U. S. Army, but he's still a boy at heart. Our computer room is *his* room and it is decorated with laminated pictures from *American Handgunner* and *GUNS* Magazine. Needless to say, this room reeks of testosterone. Keep up the good work.

Darla Redger
Augusta, Ga.

Did you check the kitty box? Testosterone smells rather like napalm, and napalm smells like victory! Editor

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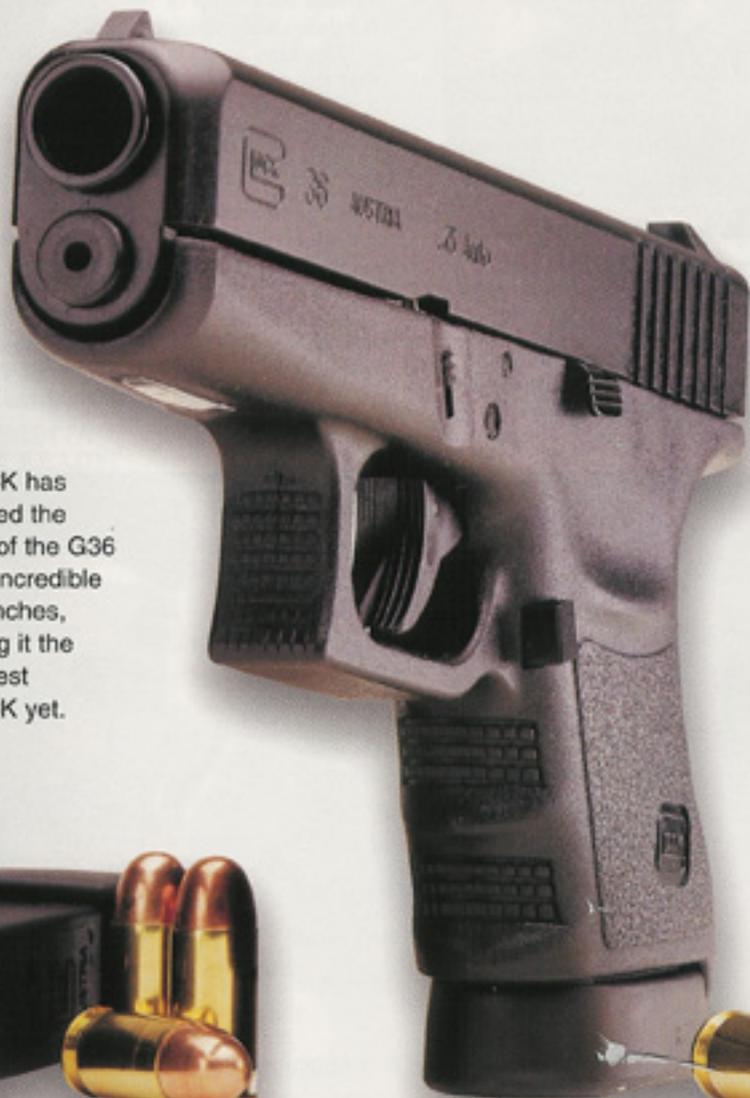
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(from left to right) Dick Metcalf, Tom Gresham, Jim Zumbo, Wayne Fears, David Foster, David Petzal, and (seated) Jim Carmichel.

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INSIDE THE PRESSURE COOKER

Gunsmiths are some of the world's most knowledgeable craftsmen in many fields. And it would be hard to find any craft that requires as much skill and knowledge in so many areas as gunsmithing does today.

The gunsmiths of a century ago had limited metals to work with and were seriously handicapped when it came to making products that required their steel to be of the highest tensile strength. They had impure steel, cast iron, wrought iron and a few other metals—and that was about it.

If they were lucky, they could get their hands on some Swedish steel, which had an excellent natural mix of some of the ingredients in today's fine crucible steel.

To obtain the necessary hardness on the surface of crucial parts, such as hammers and triggers, early gunsmiths baked the parts at high temperature in an organic mix of bone, leather and other stuff that would impart a hard carbon surface to the part.

The parts were pulled from the 1,400-degree mix after soaking up the heat for up to an hour and then quenched in cold water.

This process formed a beautifully colored case of very hard carbon layer on the

outer surface of the part, giving both long life and beauty. Modern gunsmiths use a case-hardening product named Kasnit to do the same job, but Kasnit does not impart color to the object.

Today's super hot cartridges, such as the .454 Casull, generate pressures that the old gunsmiths could not even imagine. We need special metals with properties that will take thousands of rounds of these little bombs and still maintain integrity.

Yesterday's blackpowder handgun cartridges generated little more than 5,000 psi of pressure. Today's .45 ACP produces around 18,500 psi, the great .44 Magnum cranks out 42,000 psi, and the knock-'em-in-the-dirt .454 Casull guns up an arm-bustin' 52,000 pounds of muzzle gee-whiz.

And that is just the beginning of the story. A .454 Casull Super Redhawk has to withstand the rigors of firing proof loads that boil up 40 percent more pressure, an overcharge of 70,000 psi in each cylinder, pushing a jacketed bullet out of the throat, into the forcing cone and through the rifling. That's an awful lot of stress on some heat treated steel.

The Handgun As Claymore

Now here is the most important part of the equation. Ruger and other manufacturers spend hundreds of thousands of dollars giving you what you want—big, high pressure cartridges. I have never understood why shooters want these tendon-snapping, wrist-crunching handguns, but the manufacturers and the gunsmiths are here to give customers what they want. So be it.

Ruger's research into these monster cartridges is deep and comprehensive. When you as a customer request a pistolsmith to build you one of these big bruisers using one of your own pet revolvers, the pistolsmith may not have the knowledge to fully understand the physics that go into the building a 50 oz. elephant stopper.

The hapless pistolsmith, being in an ever-starving position, may take on the job for a change of pace, and the money. I have heard rumors of a gunsmith out west who did just that and is now missing part of his hand.

When customers and wildcatters alike want a big handgun built on an existing platform, always be aware of the physics of what you are about to attempt. Many years ago, IPSC shooters were demanding pistolsmiths to build 9mm pistols on the 1911 frame that would make the major IPSC power factor of 175. The results were, in some cases, catastrophic. There are just some things you cannot do with existing handguns without maiming or killing yourself.



Ruger Super Redhawk is the strongest DA revolver ever made.

HUMBERTO RAPOSO'S DESIGNER STEEL

The tough stainless steels used in modern firearms, such as 410 or 416, does not have the characteristics and safety margin necessary to contain the massive pressure of a handgun cartridge like the .454 Casull. Instead of looking for solutions to complex, perplexing problems—like how to contain up to 70,000 psi in a revolving cylinder that dates to Sam Colt's patent—the firearms industry goes outside to expert metallurgists. Even in Ruger's large, modern factory, they go to outside sources.

Companies such as Carpenter Technology, an outfit specializing in space-age crucible tool steels, are charged with finding the solution. In Ruger's case, Carpenter came up with one of its newest stainless steels developed for the space industry named "custom 465 stainless," a name registered as a trademark. This complex steel is described by Humberto Raposo, the inventor, as a "premium melted, martensitic, age-hardened alloy, capable of 260 ksi ultimate tensile strength when peak aged."

Custom 465 stainless is a steel with tremendous resistance to stress and cracking. Custom 465 stainless could actually withstand up to 92,000 psi so the 70,000 psi of Casull's proof loads have a considerable margin of safety. Which just makes you wonder—what else does Ruger have in store?

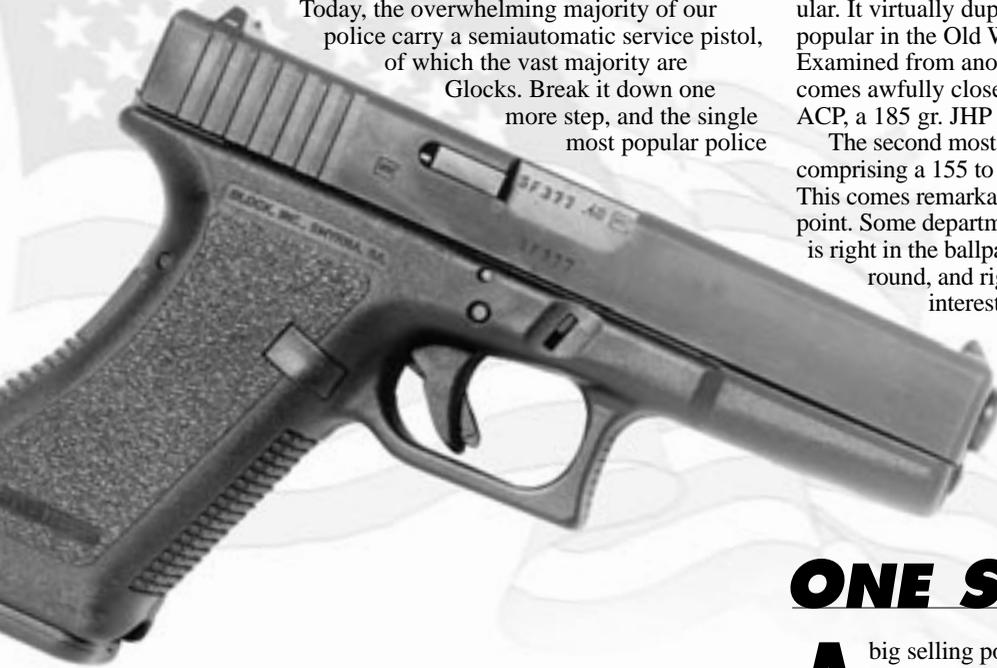


MR. POPULAR COMES TO AMERICA

When *American Handgunner* began publishing in 1976, the overwhelming majority of U.S. police carried a double-action service revolver in .38 Special or .357 Magnum, of which the lion's share was the K-frame Smith & Wesson. There has been a lot of water under the bridge since.

Today, the overwhelming majority of our police carry a semiautomatic service pistol, of which the vast majority are

Glocks. Break it down one more step, and the single most popular police



THE BEST OF BACK-UPS

The Glock is an ergonomic pistol that is extremely simple to operate. It may be the single easiest type of handgun to teach a rookie to use, from ground level "this is your weapon" indoctrination to competent performance in a complicated police shooting qualification. It has proven itself to be extremely reliable and amazingly easy to maintain, requiring only one day for a complete armorer's course.

The G22 in particular has easy recoil, barely more than that of its 9mm sister gun and predecessor, the G17. A Glock .40 and a Glock 9mm of the same frame configuration can fit in the same holster, and the magazines in the same pouches. This has proven to be a desirable economy for police departments in Boston, Miami and the Oregon State Patrol, all of whom upgraded from 9mm Glocks to the dimensionally identical .40 S&W.

When U.S. cops started switching from wheelguns to autos, the basic choice was a 16-shot 9mm versus an 8-shot .45. The .40 S&W was introduced by S&W and Winchester in 1990 as a cartridge that would split the difference. Most duty-size .40s were 12-shot pistols. Chamber a round into your Glock 22 and slip in your LE or pre-ban 15-round magazine, and you have a 16-shot .40. Not surprisingly, many departments saw this as the best of both worlds.

gun in America is the Glock G22.

The G22 is a full-size pistol on the standard Glock frame, neither compact nor mini. It is chambered for the .40 S&W cartridge. Firing a 180 gr. JHP at a subsonic velocity of just under 1,000 fps, the first iteration of this round remains the most popular. It virtually duplicates the ballistics of the .38/40, a cartridge popular in the Old West, but with a more efficient projectile. Examined from another angle, the subsonic .40's performance comes awfully close to that of the mildest police load for the .45 ACP, a 185 gr. JHP running at 935 to 1,000 fps.

The second most popular load in the .40 is the medium weight, comprising a 155 to 165 gr. JHP stepping out as fast as 1,200 fps. This comes remarkably close to the 158 gr. .357 Magnum hollow-point. Some departments use hot 135 gr. JHPs at 1,300 fps, which is right in the ballpark with the legendary 125 gr. .357 Magnum round, and right next to the .357 SIG, which has garnered interest in police quarters of late.

In all three incarnations, the .40 S&W cartridge has earned a good reputation for stopping power. This critical element of the police selection process is satisfied with the adoption of the .40 S&W round.

ONE SIZE FITS ALL

A big selling point for the G22 is that when it's purchased for uniformed troops, the agency can buy the slightly more compact 14-shot G23 for smaller-statured officers and plainclothesmen, although some prefer to conceal the G22 itself. There is the even smaller mini Glock, the 10-shot G27. This little gun appeals as an off-duty weapon, a sidearm for detectives and administrators, and a backup gun. The Georgia State Patrol issues each trooper both a G22 for the duty holster and a G27 for backup and off-duty wear.

Kentucky State Police recently traded their Walther .380s for Glock 27s as hideouts to backup their issue weapon, the S&W Model 1076 in 10mm. The G27s have been so well received that, in a reverse of the usual paradigm, the KSP is considering a switch to the G22 as a main gun, so the service pistol will match the backup. It's reassuring to know that the same two spare 15-shot magazines will feed either of the two guns you're carrying.

The G22 has never been Glock's most accurate pistol, although it is generally accepted as accurate enough for police duty. Police pistol teams may gravitate to the competition Glocks, which take the same magazines but have slightly longer barrels and slides. Some departments have adopted that style, a model known as the G35, for duty issue. The G35 is also a .40 S&W. The G22C, with recoil compensation vents installed at the factory, has found some favor among small police departments and individual officers, but its sales are miniscule compared to those of the regular Glock 22.

Ergonomics, affordability, ease of training and maintenance, and an excellent balance of in-gun firepower with cartridge potency have made the Glock 22 our most popular single law enforcement handgun today. The ability to have identical guns for backup and off duty has distinctly sweetened the deal.





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When Elmer Keith first started experimenting with sixgun bullets in the '20s, he soon found that the available designs left much to be desired in both killing power and long-range accuracy. His first step in the right direction resulted in blunt-nosed bullets designed to be used in both .44 Special and .45 Colt.

However, the long-range accuracy was not there, so he went to work and designed a series of bullets for Ideal, now Lyman, that featured a semi-wadcutter bullet with three equal bands of the same width and height, one deep square-cornered grease groove, and a deep crimping groove.

The four most well-known designs from Keith are #358429, a 173 gr. bullet for the .38 Special; #429421, 250 grs. for the .44 Special; #454424, 260 gr. for the .45 Colt; and #452423, 240 grs. for use with the .45 Auto Rim. Both the .38 Special and .44 Special designs predated the .357 and .44 Magnums, but were easily adapted to the new hotrods when they came along.

Ideas come and go, designs change, and today it is almost impossible to find true Keith bullet molds, except for the .44 blocks from RCBS (#44 250KT) and NEI (#260429). Any older Ideal or Lyman molds found with the above numbers and no letters should be of the original Keith design. Keith often bemoaned the fact that mold makers changed his design "much to its detriment."

I often receive queries about where sixgunners can find ready-cast bullets of the original Keith bullet designs. Nearly every company offers semi-wadcutter bullets that have become generically known as "Keith bullets," but until very recently none of them were true to the original. Enter Beartooth Bullets.

Beartooth has been offering premium quality, heat-treated to BHN 21+, custom hardcast bullets mainly of the LBT style from .22 caliber up through the .600

Nitro Express. Now Marshall Stanton of Beartooth Bullets has true Keith bullets, both a 250 gr. .44 for the Special and Magnum, and a 265 gr. .45 that serves just fine in .45 Colt and .454 Casull.

Keith designed his bullets before gas checks and he never did accept them. Beartooth's Keith bullets are true Keith bullets, right down to their plain bases.

Beartooth's .45 Keith bullet measures .452" in diameter and was loaded over Elmer's old recommended .45 Colt loads

of 6.0 grs. of Bullseye at 830 fps; 10.0 grs. of Unique, 1,025 fps; and 18.5 grs. of #2400, clocking out at 1,050 fps from a 7½" Ruger Bisley and grouping five shots into 1½" at 25 yards.

With the 250 gr., .430" .44 bullet in the .44 Special, again with Keith recommended loads, the results were 5.0 grs. of Bullseye, 765 fps; 7.5 grs. of Unique, 935 fps; and 17.0 grs. of #2400 for 1,250 fps and five shots into 1½" at 25 yards from a 7½" Colt New Frontier .44 Special.

And finally, using Keith's old .44 Magnum loads with this bullet yielded 730 fps with 5.0 grs. of Bullseye; 8.5 grs. of Unique, 990 fps; and the long time standard load of 22 grs. of #2400, 1,490 fps and a five shot group of 1½". All loads were shot through the 7½" Ruger Bisley .44 Magnum sixgun.

Beartooth is a true custom casting company with very little stock on hand

Continued on page 113



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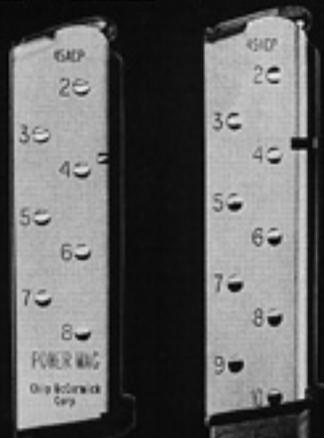
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7rd-45acp Officer

Stainless.....\$18.50
w/base pad...\$19.50

10rd-.38 Super Gov't

Stainless.....\$26.95
w/base pad...\$29.95

9rd-10mm Gov't

Stainless.....\$26.95
w/base pad...\$29.95

Completely Prepped for Reliable "Match Grade" Trigger Pull

Precision ground and finished for correct angles and function.

>Ready for Sear installation<

\$11.95

Precision ground and finished full cock. Half-cock shaped to protect sear. Sides narrowed to clear slide. Beveled edges for carry comfort.

Two tone "customized" appearance

>Ready for installation<

\$24.95

Hammer

Super Lightweight Aluminum Trigger - Fully Adjustable

Skeletonized stainless steel bow and aluminum shoe make this a super light weight trigger for maximum dependability. Fully adjustable for over-travel and take-up. Trigger characteristics can be fine tuned to suit individual preference.

\$17.95

Extended Mag Catch

18 lpi checkering & extended for easier access without compromising carry comfort.

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Stainless or Blued

Match Grade Slide Stop

Serrated lever pad. All edges are beveled. Correct pin size for improved accuracy.

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Stainless or Blued

Highest Grip Position - "Extreme" Control - 1911 Grip-Safety

Highest grip position improves control over muzzle flip during rapid fire situations and gives the pistol better pointability for instinctive shooting with quicker first shots. All edges are beveled and palm section is raised for positive deactivation and faster draws. No other brand offers such a perfect fit, simple installation, comfort, and completely blended appearance.

Fits .250 radius.

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No Other Grip-Safety Offers a Higher Grip!

"Drop-In" Low Mount Rear Sight

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You save \$50 to \$100+ on the installation costs associated with other low mount type sights. Fits any 1911 or Browning Hi Power pistols with standard military type dovetail sight cuts (80"x.200").

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\$47.95

"Slim Carry" Grips - 40% Narrower for Carry

"Slim Carry" rosewood grips are 40% narrower than standard 1911 grips. An obvious enhancement for concealed carry pistols. More than ever, 1911 manufacturers are making their pistols shorter in length and height. "Slim Carry" grips are narrower, which makes 1911 pistols more concealable and comfortable to carry while still offering a secure grip. Same features, quality, & beauty as standard CMC rosewood grips. Custom screws and bushings are included for reliable attachment.

For: Gov't, Cmdr. & Officers/Compacts.
Standard size grips for Gov't & Officers \$36.95

\$56.95

Concealed Carry Extended Ambidextrous Thumb-Safety

Unique design ensures fast and positive deactivation in speed situations while allowing for maximum comfort in carry applications. Every exposed edge is completely beveled and contoured. This part blends perfectly with the "Extreme" grip-safety. The look of custom hand blending with simple installation and fitting.

\$17.95

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Stainless or Blued

Ambidextrous
Stainless or Blued

\$29.95

Practicing With The Practical

Holsters from Wilson Combat are extremely well-made and represent exceptionally good values. There are no “race” or trick holsters, just proven, practical designs. The holster shown here is the Practical™ model in black sharkskin. Construction is in three layers— a stiff layer of thermoplastic, a suede lining and sharkskin exterior, all laminated together. The holster is precision molded to the handgun model it will carry, in this case a Beretta Elite II.

Fit of the holster to the handgun was excellent, secure yet allowing a smooth draw. A tension screw beneath the trigger guard allows fit to be adjusted. The gun is carried at a slight angle, muzzle-to-the-rear, tucking the grip snugly against the body.

Effectively concealing any full-sized autopistol with a belt holster requires at least a medium-length jacket. If for some reason all you can wear is a light jacket, you’ll likely need an inside-waistband holster such as the Wilson Featherweight IWB™ or Summer Companion.

The Practical holster is easy to maintain with no more than an occasional wipe with a damp cloth. It’s tough, durable and handsome enough to complement even the finest custom handgun. The price is amazingly low, just \$75 in cowhide or \$100 in sharkskin. The sharkskin not only looks good, but it also seems to be nearly impervious to minor scuffs and scrapes.



The Wilson holster line includes models paddle holsters, waistband models, a belt slide, two lightweight models in molded Kydex®, single and double magazine carriers, a flashlight pouch, and belts in both 1.25" and 1.5" widths. Right-hand models in black cowhide or sharkskin are stocked for immediate delivery; left-hand versions and other leather colors are available on special order.

Wilson Combat, Dept. AH, 2234 CR 719, Berryville, AR 72616; phone: (870) 545-3310; website: wilsoncombat.com

Ghost Busters

For practical shooting competitors, the ideal holster is one that holds the handgun perfectly positioned so that the shooting grip can be immediately acquired; holds the gun securely even during strenuous movement; and permits a smooth, resistance-free draw. That seems simple enough, but since every shooter is built differently, in practice that means the holster must have a wide range of adjustments. It also needs a retention system that will hold a heavy competition gun and still release instantly on demand.

The Ghost Holster meets these difficult challenges very well and is rapidly gaining acceptance among IPSC competitors. The body of the holster is made from anodized aluminum, fitted to a synthetic belt loop. It is infinitely adjustable over a wide range of height, cant and rake so that the shooter can position the gun butt precisely as desired.

There are two retention devices. A pin in the holster engages a small hole in the front of the trigger guard of the pistol, which must be drilled by the owner. Currently, the Ghost Holster is offered only for pistols

with synthetic frames so the job is easy enough, providing the owner doesn’t mind a hole in the guard.

The second device is a trigger-guard lock that is activated by rotating a lever on the back side of the holster so it points backward, parallel to the gun butt. This positively locks the pistol in place. The position of the lever protects it against being accidentally released by bumping into things. During the draw as the fingers begin to close around the gun butt, they engage this lever quite naturally and flip it to the upright, released position.



A nice feature is that the same holster can be used for both Open and Limited class IPSC competition. Holsters are available for STI and SVI pistols, the Bul M-5 and several Glock models. The holster shown, for STI pistols, performed perfectly.

Adjustments for position were straightforward and the range of adjustment more than adequate. Draws proved smooth and effortless. The holster was loaned to a shooter who had been knocking on the door at several matches but never quite won. After a couple of practice sessions, he won his first match the following week with the Ghost Holster.

Quality of materials and workmanship is first rate, and the holster is lightweight and comfortable. Minor concerns noted are the need to drill a small hole in the trigger guard and some scuff marks on the front of the frame where it contacts the metal holster body. These marks are cosmetic only and don’t damage the gun in any way except appearance.



The Ghost Holster currently sells for \$149.95. For more information contact Ghost Holster, Dept. AH, 8539 E. Clovis Ave., Mesa, AZ 85208; Web site: ghostholster.com; e-mail: support@ghostholster.com

IPSC Recently Lowered The Power Factor For “Major” Caliber. Does It Accurately Reflect The Ballistic Reality Of Stopping Power In The New Millennium?



Less is **More!**

The IPSC Power Factor

By Charles E. Petty

Photos By Nyle Leatham



Diligentia, Vis, Celeritas— accuracy, power, speed. This is the motto of the International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC), encapsulating the three vital aspects of practical shooting. Speed and accuracy are skills present in the shooter, but power is an attribute of the weapon. Power, as the concept applies to practical shooting, refers to the capacity of the cartridge to impart a fight-stopping blow to an adversary.

To ensure that the cartridges used in practical shooting competitions are suitable man-stoppers, the rules call for a test of the competitor's ammunition. Originally, this was done by momentum on a hinged steel plate called a "ballistic pendulum."

The match organizers would shoot the ballistic pendulum with a "standard" gun and load, usually a Colt Combat Com-

mander with 230 gr. hardball for "major caliber" and a Browning Hi-Power with 124 gr. ball for "minor caliber." Competitors would have to equal or exceed the travel of the pendulum with their match ammo and gun to "make major."

Hardly anyone willingly shot minor caliber because the scoring rings on the IPSC target penalized a shooter for anything but perfect hits with a lower score for minor.

With the advent of affordable and reliable chronographs, the cumbersome ballistic pendulum was relegated to the scrap heap of IPSC history, along with stop plates and Rhodesian walls. Chronographs were used to test competitor's ammo to meet a "power factor" of either "major" or "minor." Major equated to the old 230 gr. hardball out of a Commander; minor corresponded to ball ammo out of a Hi-Power. The power factor of major was set at 175 and minor at 125.

The power factor is simply bullet weight in grains multiplied by velocity in feet per second, divided by 1,000. This is a variation of the calculation for momentum. The product is divided by 1,000 just to make the answer come out in a nice little number. There are no units assigned; it's just a number.



Power Factors For Common Loads

Firearm	Barrel	Caliber	Bullet	Velocity	Factor	Open	Standard	Production
S&W 442	2"	.38 Special	110 gr.	823 fps	91	minor	minor	minor
S&W 442	2"	.38 Special	125 gr.	885 fps	111	minor	minor	minor
S&W 442	2"	.38 Special	158 gr.	788 fps	125	minor	minor	major
S&W 686	4"	.38 Special	110 gr.	926 fps	102	minor	minor	minor
S&W 686	4"	.38 Special	125 gr.	944 fps	118	minor	minor	minor
S&W 686	4"	.38 Special	158 gr.	862 fps	136	minor	minor	major
S&W 686	4"	.357 Magnum	125 gr.	1,239 fps	155	minor	minor	major
S&W 686	4"	.357 Magnum	158 gr.	1,177 fps	186	major	major	major
SIG P-228	3.8"	9mm Luger	115 gr.	1,259 fps	145	minor	minor	major
SIG P-228	3.8"	9mm Luger	124 gr.	1,111 fps	138	minor	minor	major
SIG P-228	3.8"	9mm Luger	135 gr.	1,001 fps	135	minor	minor	major
SIG P-228	3.8"	9mm Luger	147 gr.	919 fps	135	minor	minor	major
SIG P-229	3.8"	.357 SIG	125 gr.	1,422 fps	178	major	major	major
SIG P-229	3.8"	.357 SIG	150 gr.	1,084 fps	163	major	minor	major
SW-99	4.0"	.40 S&W	135 gr.	1,173 fps	158	minor	minor	major
SW-99	4.0"	.40 S&W	155 gr.	1,044 fps	162	major	minor	major
SW-99	4.0"	.40 S&W	165 gr.	1,070 fps	177	major	major	major
SW-99	4.0"	.40 S&W	165 gr.	906 fps	149	minor	minor	major
SW-99	4.0"	.40 S&W	180 gr.	942 fps	170	major	major	major
Kimber	5.0"	.45 ACP	165 gr.	1,149 fps	190	major	major	major
Kimber	5.0"	.45 ACP	185 gr.	1,026 fps	190	major	major	major
Kimber	5.0"	.45 ACP	200 gr.	1,093 fps	211	major	major	major
Kimber	5.0"	.45 ACP	230 gr.	890 fps	205	major	major	major
Colt	4.25"	.45 ACP	165 gr.	1,104 fps	182	major	major	major
Colt	4.25"	.45 ACP	185 gr.	972 fps	180	major	major	major
Colt	4.25"	.45 ACP	200 gr.	1,055 fps	211	major	major	major
Colt	4.25"	.45 ACP	230 gr.	876 fps	201	major	major	major

- Open Class requires a factor of 160 for major, 125 for minor.
- Standard Class requires a factor of 170 for major, 125 for minor.
- Production Class requires a factor of 125 for major. There is no minor scoring.

The original power factor of 175 was based on a practical average of a Commander's velocity with hardball, which was between 775 and 800 fps. The 175 number allows just a little safety margin within the actual values of 178 to 184 for the velocities shown.

Making the power factor with a .45 ACP really wasn't a big deal until a young hotshot by the name of Rob Leatham popularized the .38 Super for IPSC. The common factory load of a 135 gr. FMJ bullet at 1,200 fps wouldn't "make major," but some handloads with heavier bullets would, although nobody wanted to talk about the pressure levels. The .38 Super produced major power factor scores with minor caliber recoil—a perfect solution to "accuracy, power, speed."

The New "Major"

Now, after several years of work, 15 members of the President's Council of IPSC have come up with a whole new lineup of categories and power factors. President Nick Alexakos said the change was due to the dynamic nature of practical shooting: "This is not a stagnant world. We must evolve or die."

Reflecting the international nature of the sport, Alexakos referred to the difficulties of air travel and possible future roadblocks to shooting abroad. Carrying enough ammo for a big match can result in steep excess baggage charges. Nor is it beyond the realm of possibility that an airline, acting unilaterally, could decide ammunition is a hazardous material and refuse to carry it at all. This hasn't happened yet, but the new IPSC rules are designed to make it possible for a competitor to buy factory ammunition at a match that would meet the power factor requirements.

Although Alexakos didn't exactly say it in so many words, being able to use factory ammo is also a safety issue. Some of the .38 Super loads make the 36,500 psi SAAMI pressure limit for the .38 Super as big a joke as putting a 55 mph speed limit on an interstate highway.

New Bullet Designs

Alexakos believes that IPSC needs to become more concerned with the real uses of handguns, rather than with gamesmanship. "There is no reason to push velocity anymore since bullet designs are so much better," he observed, referring to the new generation of self-defense ammo like the Federal Hydra-Shok and Winchester STX. Ammunition available today represents a quantum leap over the loads from the '70s when IPSC's power factor rules were evolved.

However, it is significant to note that IPSC conducted no actual tests of currently available self-defense ammunition before arriving at the new power factors. The numbers were arrived at "by committee," quite literally. Here are the new IPSC classes and power factors:



Open: 160 major, 125 minor.

Standard: Pistol must fit within a box just slightly larger than what would be required for a standard 1911 pistol without optics or comps; 170 major, 125 minor.

Production: Duty pistols of 9mm or larger caliber. The gun must be DA or DAO. Single stage triggers are not permitted and the trigger must pull 5 lb. or more; 125 major, no minor scoring.

Revolver: No optics or comps permitted; 170 major, 125 minor.

Real World Relevance

Since the original power factor was derived from the founder's ideas of what the most effective defensive cartridge was— we must remember the frame of reference— it is reasonable to wonder if there is any correlation between these new power factors and currently popular defensive cartridges for both civilian and law enforcement needs.

We've chosen representative loads that could conceivably fit the new parameters and also included the venerable .38 Special simply because it continues to be widely used for personal defense.

Using information published in the catalogs of the major ammunition manufacturers, we constructed a table of well-

Continued on page 83



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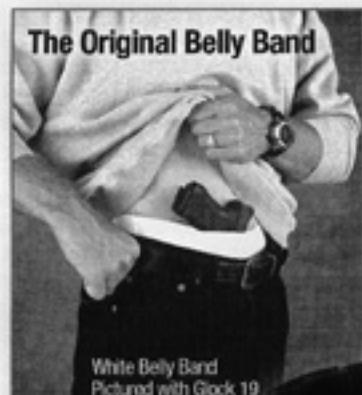


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Item # B0048W (White) • \$34.95

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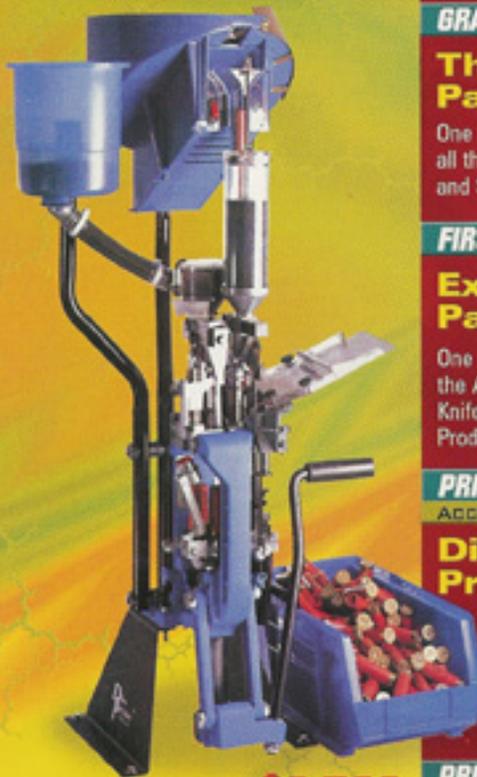
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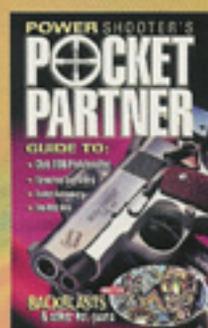
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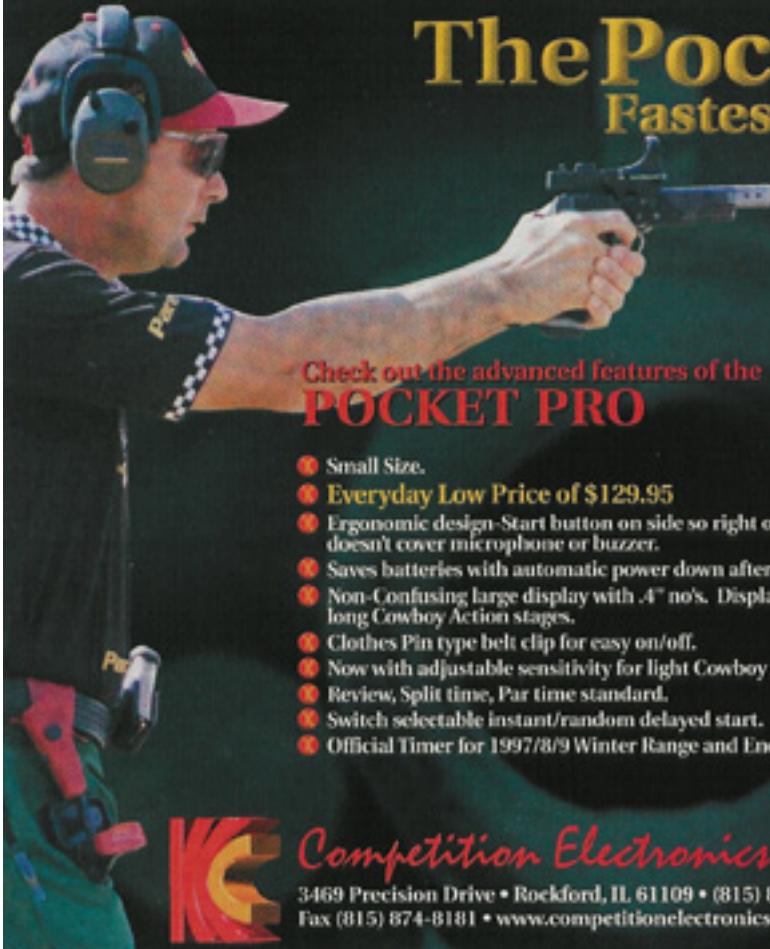
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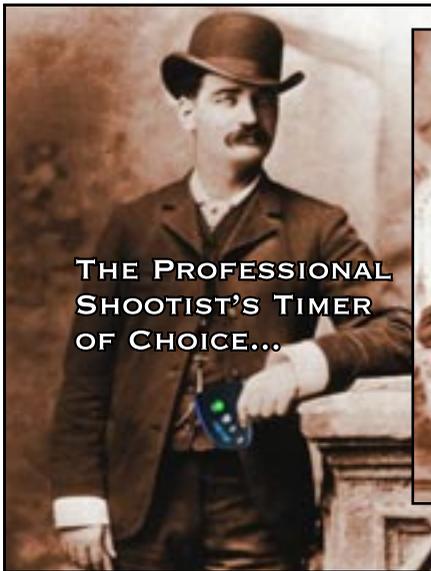
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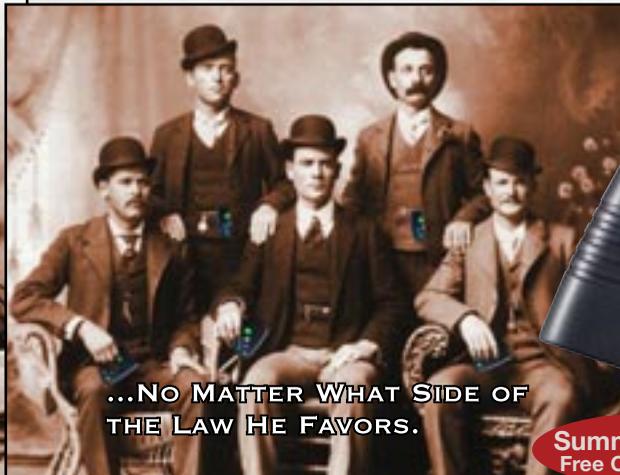


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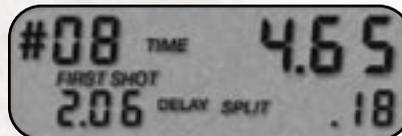


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Endless hours are spent discussing the merits of what type and caliber of handgun is best suited for self-defense. We need not add to this discussion. Most readers have already made their choice for their ideal sidearm. We need more realistic practice and less fussing over what gun is best.

DRIVING THE KAHR

Like many of you, I am always looking for an excuse to procure another handgun. Recently, I added a new one to my pile, a Kahr P9. For use with a fanny pack, I have favored either a S&W Model 3913 or Glock G19. Sometimes my Wilson Compact CQB 1911 does duty in my fanny pack, but my favorite is the Smith 3913.

At the 2001 SHOT Show, I examined the Kahr P9 and noted that it's smaller, lighter and every bit as easy to manipulate as a Model 3913. Kahr pistols have established a proven track record for reliability in a very compact self-defense pistol. With the size of a .380, they fire a proper 9mm round.

The Kahr's DAO design makes for a very simple firing stroke. The DAO trigger action is very smooth and allows for accurate use. The only real drawback to the Kahr is the weight.

Upon first handling prototype Kahr pistols, my feeling was that regardless of how small it was, it was just too heavy to ever be a good pocket pistol or ankle piece. However, Kahr introduced the new P9 with a polymer frame that tips the scales at a scant 17 ozs. Even when fully loaded, it remains light enough to carry in a jacket pocket or a small fanny pack.

So, with a new Kahr P9 in my possession, I set out to give it a shake down. After a few burps on the first 100 rounds, all in the form of failures-to-feed, my Kahr has ran without a problem. My only real complaint is that the slide release is far too bulky for the pistol. It sticks out in an excessive manner and compromises much of the good, slim profile of the pistol. I broke the sharp corners and beveled the edges to make the slide stop more user-friendly. Kahr should address this shortcoming.



Express Yourself

My friend John Benner, of the Tactical Defense Institute (2174 Bethany Ridge Rd., West Union, OH 45693), told me of his preference for Ashley express sights fitted to his choice of sidearm. John is a serious trainer and has little time for gadgets or gear that do not perform. He states that the AO Sight System is his recommended choice for a self-defense sidearm.

After putting the Kahr P9 in my pile, it seemed like a perfect platform for AO sights. In short order, a pair of Ashley sights were on my Kahr P9, and this has been one of the best moves I have made.

AO sights are patterned after English express sights fitted to African dangerous game rifles. This "express" sight system consisted of a large ivory bead for a front sight and a shallow V-notch rear blade sight, typically with a single gold line at the base of the V. All the hunter had to do was center the ivory bead in the V.

The express system is extremely fast. Place the ivory bead on the target where you wish the bullet to strike, and press the trigger. AO sights for handguns are the ultimate combat pistol sights. They are not target, competition, or hunting sights. Yes,

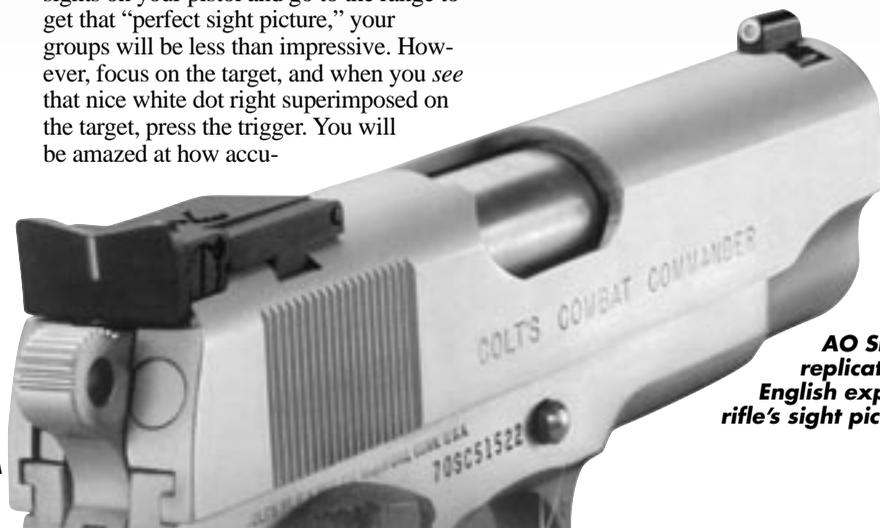
they can be used for such, but they are designed for ultimate speed at close range. At 10-yards-and-less, they rule.

Under stress, most people focus on their threat. Under the best circumstances, individuals experiencing great stress *see* their sights as they launch bullets. Ideally you *look* at your sights in a fight, but if you at least *see* the front sight as you align the pistol, you'll do just fine at the normal 10 yard or less ranges.

Seeing your sights—particularly the front sight—is the key. And this is where the AO Sight System shines. If you put AO sights on your pistol and go to the range to get that "perfect sight picture," your groups will be less than impressive. However, focus on the target, and when you *see* that nice white dot right superimposed on the target, press the trigger. You will be amazed at how accu-

rately you can shoot with this technique.

For those of us that have had to learn to deal with bifocal glasses because we cannot see our sights clearly, AO sights are very practical. Would I put AO Sights on all my pistols? No. But for the handgun I carry for self-defense, they are superb. Check the AO system out. Once you give them a try, you will discover the speed at which they can be used and understand why African professional hunters preferred the express sights when the time to hit the target was the difference between life and death.



AO Sights replicate an English express rifle's sight picture.

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“SAFETY” IS NOT EVEN WORTHY OF OUR CONSIDERATION AS AN ISSUE

On April 18, the Violence Policy Center released a report, “Where’d They Get Their Guns?: An Analysis of the Firearms Used in High-Profile Shootings, 1963-2001” (vpc.org/graphics/where.pdf). The report surveys firearm information (including how the firearm was acquired) relating to 65 “high-profile” shootings, most of which (59) occurred from 1980 onward.

In the report’s conclusion, the VPC claims that “specific firearm design characteristics—concealability, high capacity and large caliber, among others— make certain guns more prone to use in multiple shootings.” The report concludes with an endorsement for “The Firearms Safety and Consumer Protection Act” (H.R. 671 and S. 330) to end “the firearms industry’s deadly exemption from health and safety regulation,” by empowering the Department of Treasury “to set minimum safety and design standards... and ban specific firearms in extreme cases when no other remedy is sufficient.”

I cite the VPC report not in order to take issue with its data or claim, but because it so nicely exhibits, and seeks to exploit, the reigning value of our time: safety.

Curiously, safety was not deemed to be Man’s Highest Value, nor its creation Government’s Principal Service, by the Founding Fathers. In fact, the Constitution doesn’t even list health, education or welfare among the 17 subjects which Congress has a power to legislate (Article I, Clause 8 of the U.S. Constitution).

Further, not even one of the amendments that make up the Bill of Rights includes any exception for safety. You will not read there that Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of the press— except as may be necessary for public safety.

No where does it say that the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed— except as may be necessary for protecting the public.

Careful reading won’t uncover this: that each man shall be free from unreasonable searches and seizures— unless

we would really be more safe if we were subject to continuous public surveillance.

Safety Not An Issue

Why is that? Did the Founders simply not care if innocent lives were lost for no good reason? Were they heartless, unfeeling brutes? Maybe the Founders just didn’t care about the children!

Did the idea just never occur to them that, by creating some exceptions to rights in the interest of public safety, it might be possible to *prevent* crime, rather than simply punishing criminals *after* the fact, when it was too late?

Apparently the Founders did understand the concept, but rejected it as the principal object of good government. Benjamin Franklin said, “They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.” [Historical Review of Pennsylvania, 1759.]

This is more than rejection; this is contempt for those who crave safety. What twisted world view could these men have shared that would lead them to conclude that liberty was more important than safety?

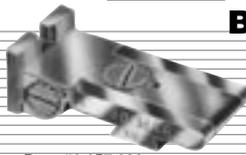
Liberty Or Safety

I know of no detailed examination of the relationship of liberty and safety in the writings of the Founders. All we have are aphorisms like Franklin’s, or Thomas Jefferson’s translation of Beccaria’s observations on false ideas of utility that “...would take fire from men because it burns, and water because one may drown in it.”

Possibly, to the Founders, the idea that anyone could think safety preferable to liberty was so craven, so repugnant, that it was, for the most part, unthinkable and unworthy of comment. Sadly, it has fallen to our lot to consider this, because we are not the men the Founders were: what was repugnant to them has become precisely that which allures us.

In safety vs. liberty, we have a way to take the measure of the distance of ourselves from the Founders. I will make a start with two observations, one

Continued on page 98



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How To Get The Most Out Of A Progressive Press

Life without progressive reloading presses, believe it or not, did occur. Granted, IPSC and the other “action” or “defensive” shooting games demand not only a bunch of ammo for matches but also many times more for the training needed to get good. And that means you need a progressive tool. There are several good ones today, and there are a few handy tricks and tips that can make life with a progressive loader easier.

Most of us use a progressive to produce large quantities of a single load, but sometimes we face hurdles in getting things setup. Those of us who change loads or calibers, especially going from large to small primers, have even more work. Over the years, I’ve found some things that seem to ease the process along. I make no claim for their efficacy or even their originality, but here are some things that have worked for me.

Sizing Die: I like to install and adjust the dies in the order in which they are to be used. Powder and primers are to be studiously avoided until *everything* else is setup. Sizing dies are the easiest—just screw the die in until it touches the raised shell holder, back off just a tad, and lock it down. The decapping pin may need to be adjusted to kick the primer out. The easiest way is to use an empty case. Resize it, and if it goes back in the gun with ease, move on to the next die.

Expander Die: Adjusting the expander die (or powder dispenser/expander) isn’t really difficult, but it’s usually overdone. The case mouth must be expanded to get a bullet started for seating, and that’s all. We are not making the Liberty Bell. Over-belling the case mouth to make a funnel big enough for the Long Island Ferry to pass through is counterproductive. It shortens brass life and can impede the case’s subsequent transition into the seating die.

To set the correct amount of belling, use the same sample case that you used to set the sizing die. I like to start by screwing the die body in to a point where it’s about 0.5" above the shell holder. Screw the expander stem fairly high in the die so it won’t touch a case and then, with the ram raised and the test case in place, begin to screw the expander stem down until you feel it make contact with the case. Then lower the case a bit and turn the expander stem down by a turn. You can easily feel the expander begin to

work, and you’ll go down a couple of turns before the case begins to get any belling of the case mouth.

As I adjust the expander down, I’ll take the case out and try a bullet in the case mouth. At first it won’t go at all, but gradually it will begin to go into the case mouth just a little. There probably won’t be much of a visible bell at this point. All we need to do is set a bullet on the case such that it sits up straight for seating. Remember, less is best. We want the least amount of expansion possible.

Seating Die: Again, use the same case to adjust the seating die. Unscrew the seating stem way up into the die and begin screwing the die body down on the empty case. If the case hasn’t been overly expanded, you’ll be able to screw the die right on down until the case comes into contact with the crimp ring in the die. The seating stem just won’t want to turn any more.

At this point, take a bullet and begin seating it. Gradually increase the seating depth until you reach a point where the case mouth is even with the start of the crimp groove on the bullet, if it has one, or it is very close to the desired final length. Then turn the whole die down by 1/4 turn and see what you get for a crimp. Generally it won’t take more than 1/2 turn to get a good crimp. That last little bit where the crimp is being applied will also increase the seating depth a bit, so some fine tuning of the seating stem may be needed.



POWDER MEASURES FOR DUMMIES

Following the correct steps to adjust the three dies, we should have succeeded in making a dummy round. Before we go to town and adjust the powder measure, first chamber-check the dummy to see if it fits in your pistol’s chamber. Don’t assume that it will, check it. Some barrels have match chambers that are tighter than normal SAAMI chambers; better safe than sorry.

Assuming your dummy fits, it’s time to adjust the powder measure for the desired charge. Take another fired case and run it through the expander station and make a

powder catcher that can be used over and over. If you use an electronic powder measure, just put the case on the scale and when the weight stabilizes, press “zero.” Then when you weigh it with powder, that’s the only weight you’ll see.

If you’re using a conventional balance beam scale, the case can still be used to transfer powder to the scale pan. On most progressive loaders it’s difficult to put the scale pan under the powder measure, so this can be a handy transfer method.

Unless we change components, these settings only need to be checked occa-

sionally as we load. But often we change powders or charge weights, so I keep a little box on the bench with an assortment of “powder catcher” cases.

After you get a charge that seems about right, throw 10 charges and weigh them in the scale’s pan. Ten charges will often show a slight inaccuracy that a single charge won’t, especially with flake or extruded powders. Do the math—move the decimal one place, and, presto, you’ll have your single charge weight good to the nearest 100th of a grain instead of to the nearest 10th.



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THE .22 MAGNUM AS A REVOLVER CARTRIDGE

BY MIKE CUMPSTON

Since its introduction in 1959 and in subsequent load development, the .22 Winchester Magnum Rimfire (WMR) has been seen primarily as a rifle cartridge. Nevertheless, with the early introduction of WMR chambered revolvers, a large percentage, if not the majority, of rounds fired emanate from handguns.

Personal experience with the WMR centers around one of the early Ruger New Models with a 9.5" barrel. This was a replacement piece for an all-stainless model of the same description, which displayed exceptional accuracy from the WMR and Long Rifle cylinders and accounted for a considerable bag of small game and varmints.

When the revolver was "gonified" in a house burglary, the stainless variation was out of print and in demand by collectors. The carbon steel model quickly

demonstrated its capacity for taking a significant amount of the challenge out of the general run of sporting handgun activities. With the Long Rifle cylinder in place, it walked away from a Ft. Worth-area Hunter Pistol match with the blue ribbon, competing successfully with premium target autos and revolvers.

It also did quite well at rimfire competition at the then-new Heart of Texas Silhouette Association in Coolidge, Texas, coming in first in a match I don't remember. At least I have a nicely struck medal from Blackington's to remind me of something I have completely forgotten.

With the magnum cylinder in place, the Ruger fits in nicely with my penchant for subsistence camping—an activity where the food supply is heavily dependent upon small game and semi-edible varmints gathered in the field. This activity was popularized by such notables

as Earl Standley Garder back during the Cold War scare and I have never quite lost my enthusiasm for it.

Original Load

The original Winchester load, a 40 gr. JHP with lead exposed above the jacket, provides a real advantage over any Long Rifle load and will definitely shut down a jackrabbit at reasonable revolver ranges. I learned that the CCI Maxi-Mag HP also works well out of this long barreled revolver and from Contender single shots, but does not expand quite as readily at reduced velocities.

During the last decade, there have been a few additions to the .22 WMR cartridge line-up and I have tried several of them as they became available. When Federal introduced the 50 gr. JHP loading, it got good reviews from rifle shooters. From my Ruger, velocities

peaked at 1,147 fps affording no expansion and a pronounced tendency to tumble after impact.

The CCI Maxi-Mag +V ripped out of the buntline barrel at over 1,700 fps. Unfortunately, my best 25 yard groups measured 6.5" with the stinger-like bullets.

Recently, Federal Cartridge has come out with a load using a 30 gr. Sierra JHP rated for 2,100 fps from a rifle and Remington has introduced a 40 gr. JHP load that breaks 1,700 fps from rifles. I realized it was time to update my .22 Magnum data base by seeing what these loads might offer the rimfire handgunner.

Reality Check

I would also do a reality check on the old favorites from Winchester and CCI. To make the whole thing more interesting, I arranged for the loan of a Smith Model 17 with the more commonly encountered 6" barrel.

The owner of this revolver is one of those "better shots" I mentioned earlier. He does all his competitive shooting in the Leppert mode and has converted this revolver to DA-only. This modification, while it suits the owner perfectly, put a strain on my ability to shoot small 25 yard groups.

Five round groups from the Model 17 ran a consistent 2" to 2.5" while the same rounds from the Ruger provided accuracy hovering around the 1" mark.

All of these loads provided consistent in-flight stability and produced nice round holes on target. All loads, with the exception of the CCI FMJ, demonstrated hollowpoint-type disruption of water-filled cans at 25 yards. Shot-to-shot velocity variation was somewhat more consistent in the long Ruger. This was particularly true with the hypervelocity Federal load.

CCI Maxi-Mag 40 gr. FMJ: This load was selected as a "control" to determine whether the hollowpoints were actually providing a disruptive effect on water-filled containers. It did provide through-penetration of water-filled cans with none of the dramatics associated with bullet expansion or tumbling. The load is quite accurate and remains popular among silhouette shooters.

Remington 40 gr. JHP: This relatively new load is a streamlined JHP with

no exposed lead at the nose. While suitably accurate in the revolvers, it is probably more at home in rifles or the Contender. Upon striking water-filled cans, the bullet would begin to tumble. While no significant expansion took place, the effect on the target was spectacular.

Federal 40 gr. JHP: At 1,744 fps from the Ruger and providing groups of just over 1", this load has a lot to offer. It expands explosively on water-filled cans. Like other rimfire magnums, it seems to thrive on the longer barrel lengths. The 6" Smith showed a high velocity spread, but still produced a group of just under 2".

Winchester 40 gr. JHP: This is the original JHP load. It is likely still the best for the revolver shooter. It demonstrates good disruption on water-filled targets at 25 yards. Even at 50 yards, the exposed lead tip expands and fragments in paper wetpack leaving a truncated bore diameter bullet. Numerous bullets recovered from wetpack show no tendency to tumble in media and the recovered slug generally presents the classic mushroom. Long range or lower velocity bullet performance can be improved by using a sheep's foot blade or Xacto knife to stress the jacket longitudinally between the lead tip and the bullet ogive. Eight to 10 shallow cuts do the job and, so modi-

fied, bullets recovered at 50 yards mushroomed to .30". A recent five round group with the modified bullets went into 1.1" at 25 yards.

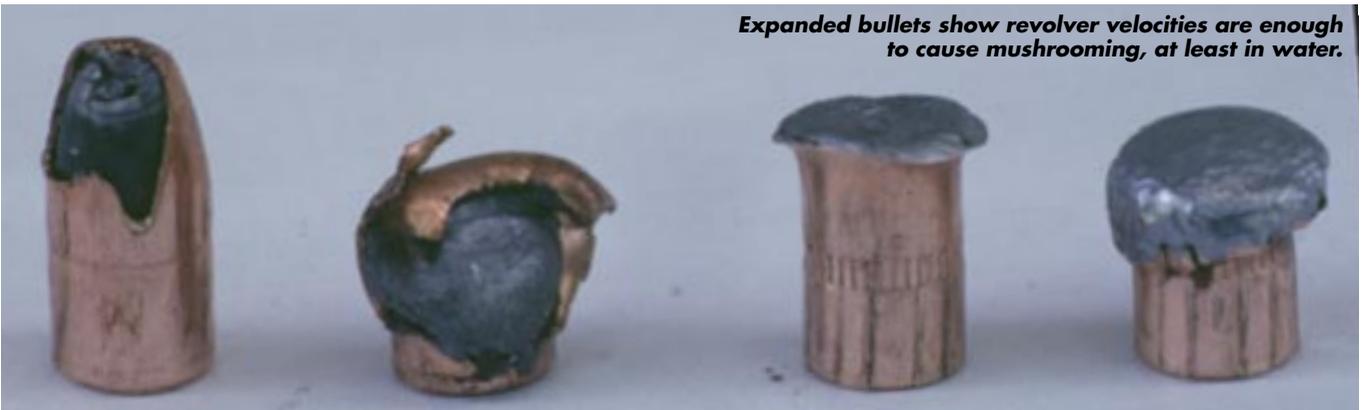
Federal 50 gr. JHP: This load was well received by rifle shooters but is not particularly advantageous as a revolver round. The bullets do not expand, but do tumble in media. The load functioned 100 percent in a 3.5" AMT Auto Mag. The same gun would not function with WW and CCI. However, average velocity was only 777 fps.

CCI Maxi-Mag 40 gr. HP: This load came out shortly after introduction of the WMR. The lot I clocked several years ago produced impressive velocity. This bullet remains stable in media and tends to fragment rather than mushroom. It also benefits from jacket modification as mentioned with the Winchester load.

My favorite choice for a revolver load remains the original offering from Winchester. This long standing preference is challenged by the new hypervelocity number from Federal. I would like to see future WMR loads tailored for maximum performance in shorter handguns that are handier for general utility. Such a move might also enhance the effectiveness of the mini revolvers and snubs  marketed for self-defense.



Expanded bullets show revolver velocities are enough to cause mushrooming, at least in water.

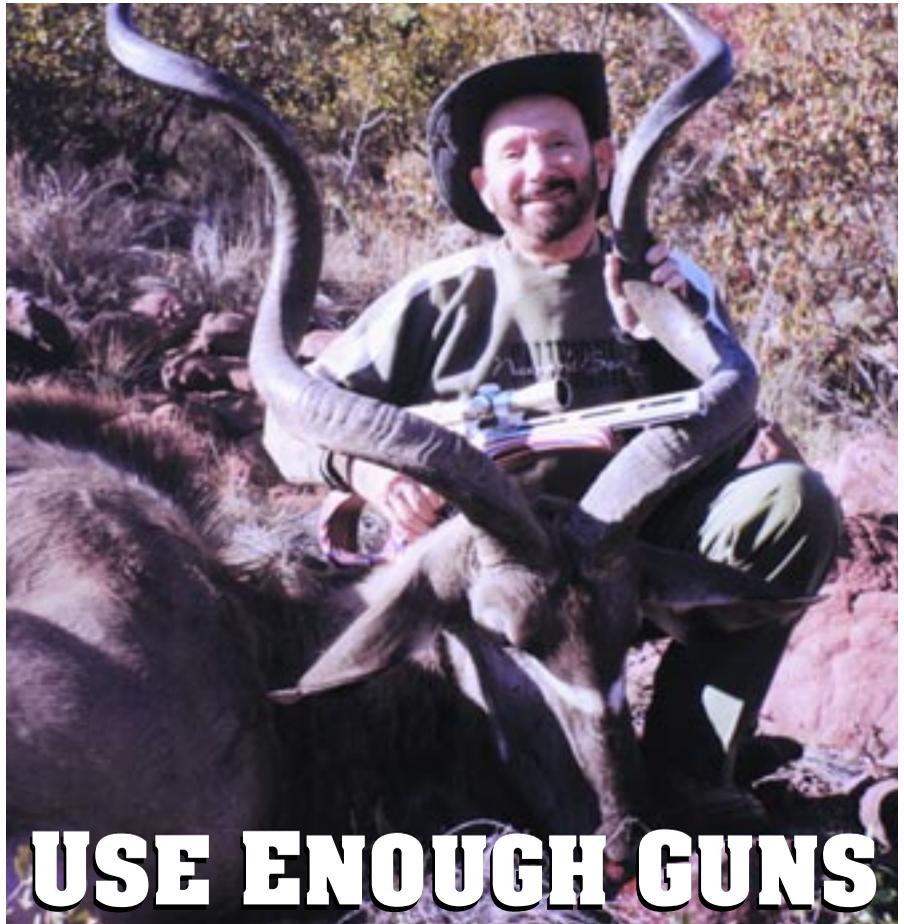


THE GOLDEN JOYS

Africa! The Dark Continent. Shrouded in mystery, mystique and often a great deal of excitement. Jim Hebert is a hunter of some repute himself, a hunting consultant as well as friend of many years. His description of Mahlapholane in South Africa was irresistible. I was hooked for another safari— and in turn, I snared three Handgun Hunters International (HHI) members as well as my wife and booked a hunt there in the latter part of June, 2001. Gary McAllister, Jerry Beigel and Curtis Ballard were the three HHI members who rounded out the party.

Fortunately, the accommodations and gourmet cooking were as great as advertised. A pair of Danie's— we'll call them Danie I and Danie II— met us at the Jo'burg airport, and six hours later we were gazing at kudu, impala and wildebeest in the wild. Located in the Waterburg mountains, Mahlapholane is a beautiful place, with a lodge situated next to a lake full of hippos that, incidentally, sound like a two-stroke dirt bike being revved when they talk.

The mountains aren't really very high— just rough and extremely rocky with a ballpark elevation of around 3,000 feet. Downright treacherous walking, everyone fell at least once. But there were no real injuries. The hills were high enough that my idea of "walking" them is driving to the top and walking down.



An impressive array of hardware and ammo came with us to Africa. Everything from a .300 Whisper to a 6.5 JDJ to a 6.5 Mini Dreadnought, a .338-'06 JDJ, .375 JDJ, .454 Casull, .475 JDJ and a few other calibers were represented. Everyone had a successful hunt with a wide variety of game taken.

I was particularly pleased to hunt with Jerry on the first day as it was his 70th birthday. Danie II got us into kudu country with the sun at our back and a beautiful mountainside to look over. Winter in South Africa is chilly at night with occasional skim ice in the morning and 55-degree afternoons with bright sun. Perfect hunting weather.

Early in the morning, animals tend to head for the high hillsides to get into the sun to warm up. That morning was no exception. Five bulls leisurely climbed across the hillside from our right, seeking warmth. Although the brush was thick, it was easy to tell all of the five were "beeg ones, beeg bulls," as Danie II would say.

Jerry had plenty of time to get ready. Ambushes are like that if done right. How-

ever, the very steep uphill slant was tough to deal with. One of the bulls stepped into the open at the top of a small red cliff and stopped while angling toward us at about a 45 degree angle. Jerry's 2x Leupold on his 6.5 JDJ Contender showed he was looking at him practically from underneath.

Jerry asked, "Where should I shoot?" I was watching from over his shoulder through binoculars and could see the kudu clearly with only one green branch across what I thought was the right place and answered, "Through the green leaves." The 6.5 cracked almost instantly.

The heart-shot kudu jumped forward twice and fell end over end about 60 yards down the mountainside, dead long before he stopped rolling. What a great shot on a great 55" bull for a 70th birthday. Afterwards, the rangefinder showed it to be 115 yards to the face of the cliff.



Additional photos of J.D.'s safari can be viewed at www.sskindustries.com. Click on HHI. Jim Hebert can be reached at (248) 620-9426. The two Danie's operate from www.sahunters.com

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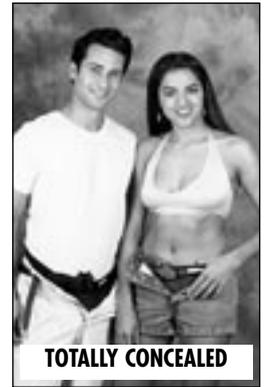


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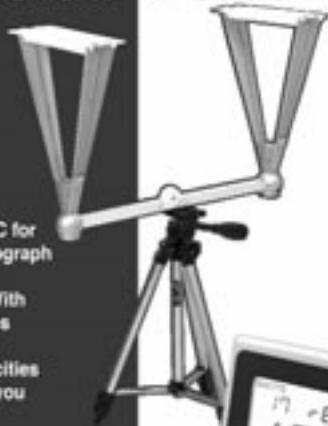
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REFLEXIVE DRAW: A GUNFIGHT IN NASHVILLE

- Situation:** Attacked by a grinning felon, your only choice is draw or die.
- Lesson:** When survival is at the razor's edge, swift reactions save your life.

There are four levels of physical skill. At the bottom is *unconscious incompetence*. This is the person who not only doesn't know what he's doing but— God help all involved— does not yet realize he doesn't know what he's doing. When guns are involved, this is a scary thing. Next up is *conscious incompetence*, the light bulb that comes on and says, "I don't know what I'm doing!" Such people are less dangerous, because they seek competence and take great care to avoid getting in over their head until their skill has improved. Easily achievable is *conscious competence*, the realization that, "If I think about what I'm doing, even for just an instant, I know I can do it correctly." This is probably all the skill that is needed to solve life-saving problems most of the time.

But the loftiest achievement is the one we all seek. Some call it the Zen state or being in the zone. Laymen call it "running on auto pilot." Trainers use the phrase *unconscious competence*. This is the ability to automatically perform the life-saving task on cue, without consciously thinking about it. This reflexive response delivers the quickest reaction. Some say it also delivers the most effective reaction.

It is part of what the late martial arts master Bruce Lee was talking about when he spoke of the desirability of "the empty cup." What he meant was the ability to keep conscious thought from getting in the way of what the body and the subconscious mind knew had to be done, and knew how to accomplish perfectly if not interfered with, and slowed down by, cognitive thought.

Unconscious competence does not come cheap when it involves a complex psycho-motor skill like drawing and firing a defensive handgun. Experts say it will take some 3,000 to 7,000 repetitions— depending on the dexterity of the individual and the complexity of the technique— to create enough longterm muscle memory for this "auto-pilot" response to take place.

One man who paid the price through constant, diligent training was Officer Greg Lee of the Nashville (Tenn.) Metro Police Department. It may well have saved his life. This is his story.

* * * * *

May 2, 1995. Officer Lee, 33-years-old with 14 years on The Job, is working the three-to-11 evening shift. At 6:20, he responds to a call for a domestic dispute. He knows the players. He has been to see them before, on similar calls.

Paul Hildreth, 38, is an average size, Caucasian male and the black sheep of an otherwise high-achieving family. Though he has a degree in engineering from the University of Knoxville, he is chronically unemployed. Alcoholism and abuse of drugs, particularly Dilaudid, are the reasons why. When he's under the influence, he becomes physically violent, and though he has "priors" for armed robbery and assorted drug offenses, his live-in girlfriend, Deborah Rutter, is the single most frequent target of his hostility.

Continued on page 100



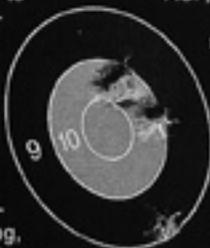
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"Hi-Skor" 700-X is the fastest burning of IMR powders for handgun loads. An exceptionally clean burning, double-base powder, it combines highly economical efficiency with adaptability to virtually all handgun cartridges. It is one of the most cost-efficient powders available for high-frequency reloading of cartridges such as the .38 Special, 9mm Luger and .45 ACP.

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SR 4756 is a slightly slower-burning powder that safely provides medium to higher velocities in non-magnum cases.

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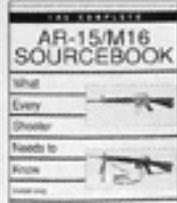
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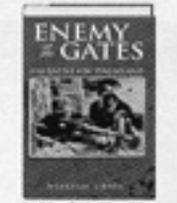
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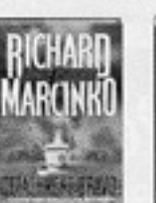
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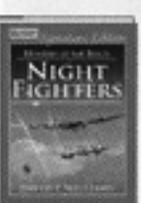
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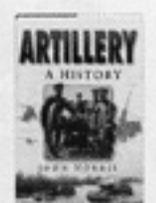
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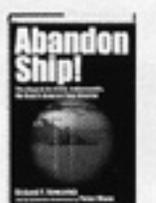
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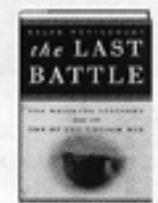
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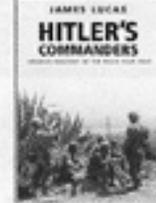
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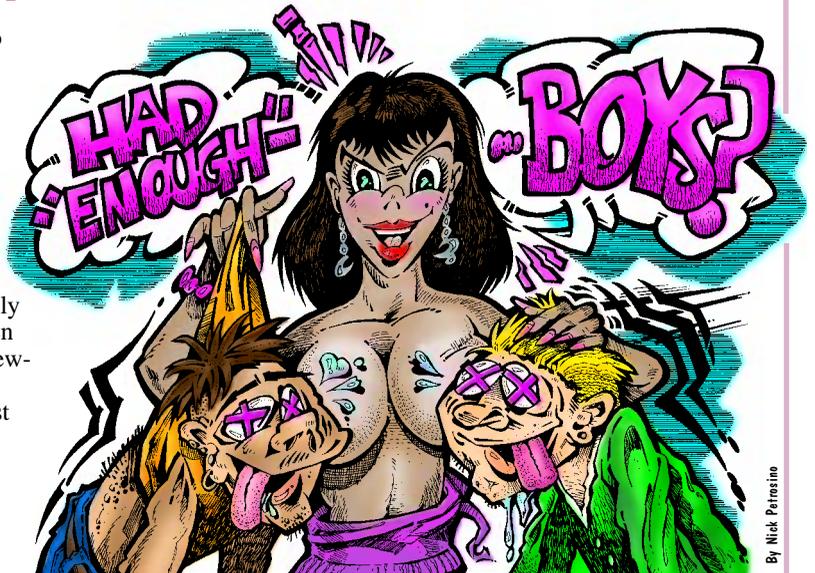
THEY USED THEIR 38s, BUT NO FIREARMS

Those poor businessmen in Bogota. First, they have to launder all that drug money— poor babies— and now they're getting ripped off by a vicious gang of robbers who don't even use guns to pull their heists.

Colombian police are doing their best to wrap up the last members of a gang of "gifted" young women. Officers said the girls would hang out around ritzy bars and restaurants, pick up well-heeled guys, and once in the dudes' cars, whip off their blouses and invite the guys to "have a taste."

Their breasts were smeared with a strong but relatively tasteless drug that sent the victims off to la-la land. When they woke up, they were minus cars, wallets, watches, jewelry— and plausible alibis for their wives.

The Bogota cops were most amazed that after the first "Taste Me" robberies were publicized, guys who knew they were probably about to be drugged still fell for it! Then, after three of the girls in their late teens and early 20s were caught and ... evaluated... the cops said they sorta understood.



The Germans Didn't Have A "Croc Squad"

But they do now, sorta. In Eltville, Germany, the call has gone out for blue-suit sharpshooters, especially if they own their own rifles and aren't afraid of getting wet— or maybe eaten. See, they weren't really prepared to deal with crocodiles.

Toothy was first spotted by a guy who had been bicycling on a path along the Rhine River, when he stopped and wandered off into the bushes to take a leak. He nearly stepped on a suspiciously

lumpy-looking log when the "log" exploded in a fury of flailing tail and teeth, then charged off into the river. Yeah, the guy emptied his bladder, all right.

But the police thought he was nuts. A crocodile in the Rhine? Right. Then there was a second sighting, and a third, and then the confirmation that this ain't no amiable alligator, but a potential killer croc. Police said they had no clues as to where Toothy— estimated at five feet long— came from. Got a wetsuit and a .475 Linebaugh?

The World Of Anti-Ballistic High Fashion

Hey, you know how fashion-conscious we are here at *American Handgunner*. You know, obsessing over stuff like matching the finish on the slide of our autopistol to our belt buckle. Stuff like that. Haute couture, that's us. And now we have a favorite designer of ladies formal gowns, too.

In the recent Miss Universe pageant held in Puerto Rico, Miss Israel wore a simply stunning floor-length diamond- and pearl-encrusted gown designed by fellow Israeli, Galit Levi. Yeah, it was lovely, but most of the watching world missed an important feature of that gown that Israelis really appreciated: it's bulletproof.

A spokesman declined to publicly discuss the gown's resistance threat level or how it was so subtly constructed.



EXCUSES, EXCUSES

It's a natural human trait to want to think well of ourselves. One way to achieve that is to be successful in every endeavor we attempt. Conversely, if we try something and fail, our self-respect and sense of self-worth is diminished. We feel badly about ourselves.

Excuses help save the ego in individual sports in which the participant has to accept sole responsibility for success or failure. Competitive shooting, running and golf are examples of activities in which there are no opponents to be faced directly. The real "opponents" are the dividing forces within oneself. The challenge is to master and direct one's mental and physical abilities under extreme pressure.

Competitive shooting is especially merciless. There is virtually no luck involved. Even in as difficult a sport as golf, there is an element of luck. Knowing that the fickle winds of chance have some bearing on the outcome can help protect our egos. After a bad round, we can assign at least some of the blame to an unexpected gust of wind, a bad bounce off a sprinkler head, a spike mark on the green.

If the gun malfunctions, the shooter should have tested it better. When you miss or shoot a bad score, you are responsible, no one else.

That can be a tough burden to bear, and a timely excuse can help ease the pain. Constantly changing equipment is especially effective—albeit rather costly—since you get to play with lots of new toys, acquire a reputation as a local expert and still have a handy-dandy excuse at the ready.



Photos By Nyle Leatham

Success Is The Best Medicine

Preparing excuses in advance can promote a losing attitude and lead to lack of focus, lack of effort and dissipation of energy. Still, if excuses help people get off the sidelines and into the game and feel better about themselves, they may serve a purpose.

But there is a better way to protect the ego—succeed. And the way to do that is to take control of what success means. If competitive shooting can be tough on the ego, it is also an activity that lets you define success. If success means winning every time you compete, you better have a robust ego. Even the best in the world lose sometimes. And success is determined to some extent by how well others do, not just how well you do.

Instead, you can measure success by measuring your per-

The Advantage Of Crappy Guns

A more subtle defense mechanism is to handicap oneself with inadequate equipment. When I began shooting IPSC matches long ago, the winning ticket was a 1911 .45 ACP lightly customized with better sights, trigger and safety. At that time there were no separate divisions for revolvers or double-action autopistols as there are now. And those who used such guns were severely handicapped.

Still, some shooters would show up with a DA auto one year, the next a revolver, the next a 9mm. I suspect that in some cases this selection—likely made at a subconscious level—was a way to save face, to protect the ego from bruises. It allowed the subconscious to cope better: "I did pretty good considering the equipment I was using."

Competitors owe me or anyone else an explanation as to why they choose to compete or not, or the equipment they select. The only opinion that matters is your own.



sonal progress. If you set a goal of getting better, month by month and year by year, success is under your control. You don't have to be concerned about what others do because it has nothing to do with what you do. Excuses become irrelevant because there is no point to them. You aren't going to fool your own subconscious. Oh yes, if you keep improving long enough, eventually you'll win. Be gracious in victory.





A VULCAN MIND-MELD HOLSTER

Since 1973, Richard Heinie, gunsmith extraordinaire, has been building some of the finest 1911-based pistols around—and that’s a simple fact. You may not know that he also formed an alliance with Lou Alessi of Alessi Holsters to make a proprietary carry rig just for Heinie Specialty Products.

Lou is no stranger to the pages of *Handgunner*, and aside from being a certified character and icon of the holster industry, he makes some of the finest leather gear around. A gunsmith extraordinaire and a legend in the holster business— what happens next, you might ask?

What happens is the D.O.J. holster made exclusively for Heinie by Lou. It’s a proven performer in the field with various bad boys, DEA agents, and a boatload of stealthy undercover and just plain cops having worn it for a long spell.

Recently, Lou and Dick did a Vulcan mind-meld and improved the original design with a reinforcement band around the holster opening to give it even more strength and to keep it spread open for one-handed reholstering.

It’s all based upon a Bruce Nelson design, but it has been “filed on” to hone the edges even further. The straight draw makes it adaptable for different carry modes and, frankly, is my favorite angle. I’ve been accused of being somewhat “bent” when it comes to my opinions, but my favorite holster angle has always been straight, on a strong-side rig.

Heinie’s D.O.J. for women has just been given a thorough wring-out by Wife Number Two. Suzi is a working cop who totes a Les Baer Thunder Ranch 1911. It is adjustable for cant away from a woman’s sometime ample hips and is contoured to fit their gentle— bless them— curves.

Mrs. Suzi pronounced it “Nicely done, well made and an all-round user-friendly rig.” So there you go.

Readers can learn more about the Heinie-Alessi holster from Heinie Specialty Products, 301 Oak Street, Quincy, IL 62301; phone: (217) 228-9500.

A Topless Spanky From Down Under



It’s hard not to like a company that names its holsters along the lines of “The Topless,” “Spanky” and “Down Under,” of which we had better only say that it has something to do with inside-the-pants holsters. At the risk of being redundant, I must say it’s always a delight when I see high quality at reasonable prices. Once I got past the whimsical nomenclature, that’s what I found.

In today’s world of discount everything, including holsters, sometimes a fellow has to remember just what a holster is supposed to do. Phrases like “save your life” and “keep \$1,500 worth of custom gun in one piece” come to mind. Would you trust your life to a \$10 motorcycle helmet? Ditto for holster gear.

I found the High Noon designs to be solidly grounded in the real world and built like they knew what they were doing. Fit, finish and just plain usability were first-rate. Of course they wouldn’t be in these pages if they weren’t because I won’t write about junk. Except to trash it, but that’s another story entirely.

A shoulder rig, called the “Undertaker,” was made to fit the aforementioned Wife Number Two and her Colt Agent, recently found for a price that would make you cry if I told you. It fit just right. She’s particularly picky about shoulder rigs, but damn if this one wasn’t comfy.

It didn’t, as she said, “Pull and tug at your blouse and make you look like you slept in your shirt.” Not that she sleeps in her shirt, mind you.

Good stuff, good people and fair prices. What more would you want? Okay, okay, don’t go there.

Readers can reach High Noon Holsters at P.O. Box 2138, Palm Harbor, FL 34682; phone: (727) 786-7528.

HOYT HOLSTERS HANGS IT UP

That fine old maker of holsters, Hoyt, legendary from the moment they opened their doors, is calling it quits. After 75 years, sales have simply been in a decline mode for too long and the company is going to give up the fight. Carol Lee, at Hoyt, said they are selling off their equipment and dummy guns and putting a final period on the Hoyt legacy.

I remember paying upwards of \$110 cash money in 1982 for a Hoyt break-front duty rig that made greased lightning look slow when you drew. Other cops thought I was insane to pay “That much!” but that forward rake and no-limits quality spoke for itself. Adios to Hoyt and thanks for a good run.





A classic 27 (top) and a new stainless version from the Performance Center.



Smith & Wesson Model 27 By Mike Cumpston

Many bellwether handgun designs achieve classic status by virtue of a significant advance in firearm technology. More often than not, such an arm takes its place in the public consciousness because of its association with important historic events. The Colt SAA, introduced at the dawn of the cartridge handgun era, won military acceptance during the active years of the Western migration. The Luger and the 1911 introduced the citizen-soldiers of World War I to the practicality of the self-loading pistol.

In contrast, the original Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum, later known as the Model 27, was a linear outgrowth of technology and trends already in place at the time of its introduction. The revolver bore a very close resemblance to the N-Frame .38/.44, an item developed to employ sharply uploADED .38 Special rounds in response to law-enforcement needs.

Aside from being the first "magnum" revolver, innovations were relatively

minor. The checkered top strap remained a unique identifying feature as long as the revolver kept its traditional profile. The original .357 was the first modern center-fire to employ individually recessed chambers to enclose the case head.

An overview of the literature suggests that this revolver came into being because of the enthusiasm of Smith & Wesson scion Major Douglas Wesson and a handful of like-minded handgunners. Two significant events accompanied the introduction of the new revolver and cartridge: The company presented the first registered production revolver to FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover; and Major Wesson used an 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ " pre-production revolver to take a wide variety of North American big-game animals, including a grizzly bear.

The .357 Magnum came forth as a premium-grade tool equally suited to law enforcement and sporting applications. The company anticipated that the high per-unit cost of the revolvers and the Depression economy would make them

limited-production items.

From the time of introduction in 1935 until 1938, the revolvers bore individual registration numbers and included a certificate of registration. Demand for the premium handgun far outstripped expectations. With the completion of some 5,500 units, it became obvious that a limited production strategy was not practical, and individual registration stopped.

The .357 Magnum had gained a firm foothold among law-enforcement officers and outdoorsmen and had captured the imagination of the shooting public at large. By 1941, wartime caused a cessation of production. Something over 6,600 revolvers had left the factory. In the mid-1950s, the gun took on the numeric designation Model 27. Design changes followed those in the rest of the revolver line.

The Model 27 set the pattern for and retained a place in the growing array of Magnum revolvers. The 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ " variation,

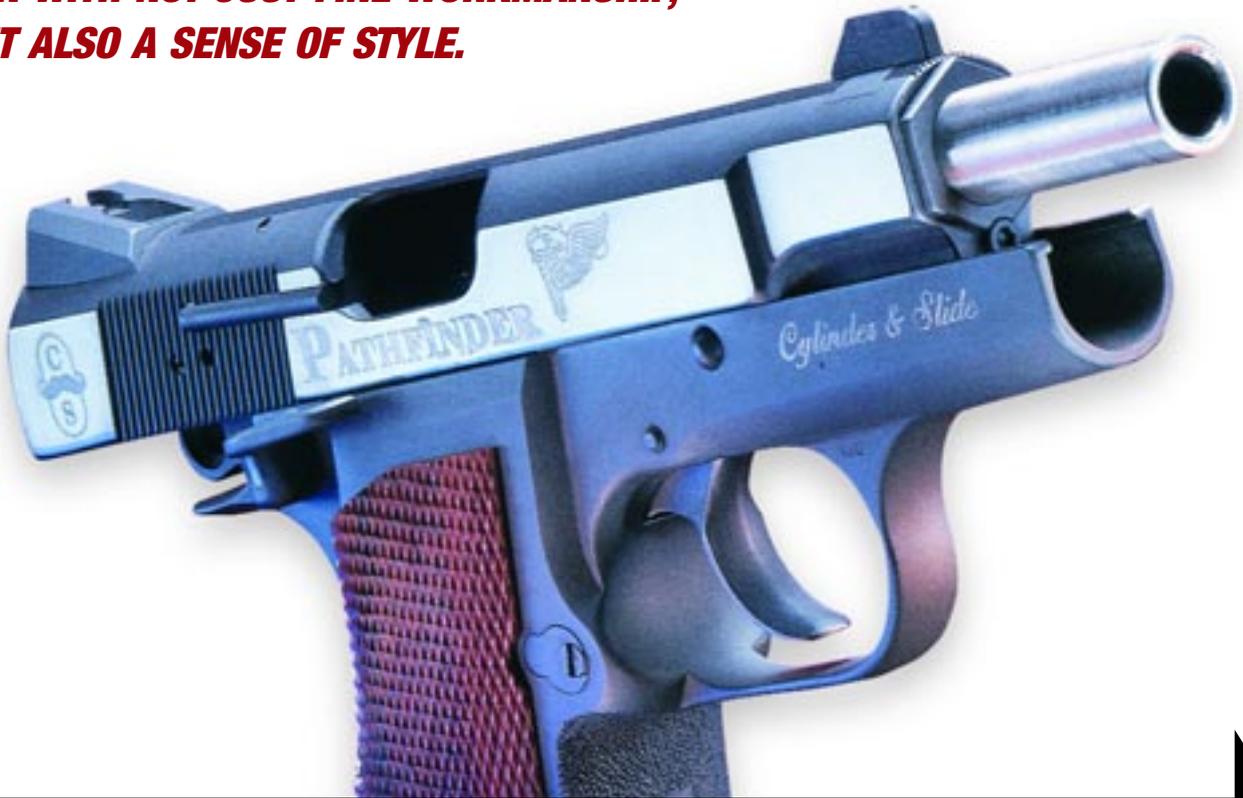
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The author chose an 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ " specimen made in 1974 to test. He liked the balance of the long but thin barrel.



THE CHOPPED AND CHANNELED CUSTOM GUN IS BACK! BILL LAUGHRIDGE SHRINKS THE HI-POWER TO A COMPACT, CONCEALABLE CARRY GUN WITH NOT JUST FINE WORKMANSHIP, BUT ALSO A SENSE OF STYLE.



abbreviated **BROWNING**

**By Charles E. Petty
Photos By Ichiro Nagata**

Whenever anyone asks about custom gunsmithing on the Browning Hi-Power, they are sure to be told of Bill Laughridge's shop, Cylinder & Slide. The folks at Cylinder & Slide are best known for working on Hi-Powers and 1911 Government Model pistols, but they also work on Ruger, H&K, Para-Ordnance, Colt Mustangs, Kahr, SIG and Smith & Wesson pistols, plus Colt, Ruger and S&W revolvers.

But when they're not doing normal stuff, Laughridge likes to turn big guns into little ones. The latest in that line is called the Pathfinder. It is a seriously chopped version of the Browning. We need to remember that Cylinder & Slide

is a true *custom* shop. The customer has lots of choices to make too, so the two guns you see here are just examples of what *can* be done.

One is built on a genuine Browning, the other on a clone from FEG in Hungary. The seriousness of the chop job can be told with just a few measurements.

	<i>Hi-Power</i>	<i>Pathfinder</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Length	7.25"	6.5"	-0.75"
Barrel	4.75"	4.1"	-0.65"
Height	4.9"	4.4"	-0.50"
Weight	1.86"	1.69"	- 3 ozs.

This is about a 10 percent reduction in every dimension. These numbers are

taken from actual measurements in comparison with a full-size Hi-Power.

Such metal reduction amounts to a huge amount of work. Removing that half-inch from the grip requires that a section be removed from the middle. They can't simply take some off the bottom, because the grip feel would be altered and there wouldn't be anyplace to put the mainspring. Once the section is removed, the two pieces have to be welded back together in perfect alignment.

Unless you look *real* hard, you won't even see where the welding was done. The area of the frame where this work is done is a virtually stress-free zone, so strength is not compromised at all.



There were two Hi-Powers used in the test: a Hungarian clone and a Browning original (right).



MINI-BROWNING WITH BARSTO BARREL

Load	Velocity	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Average
Black Hills 115 gr. JHP	1,292 fps	2.36"	2.52"	2.14"	2.34"
Golden Saber 124 gr. JHP	1,089 fps	3.12"	3.45"	2.20"	2.92"
Federal 165 gr. JHP	1,049 fps	3.55"	2.29"	2.64"	2.83"
Pro Load 135 gr. FMJ Match	1,004 fps	2.66"	2.46"	2.73"	2.62"
Gold Dot 147 gr. PHP	903 fps	1.51"	2.11"	1.81"	1.81"
WW 147 gr. FMJ Match	958 fps	3.52"	2.66"	2.84"	3.01"
Average					2.59"



One of the pistols tested had the SFS conversion, which allows a single-action to be "cocked" by the safety after pressing forward on the hammer.

Shortening the slides did not require welding. There was enough metal to simply remove some off the front and relocate the front sight. The clone had enough metal at the front to allow the original press fit bushing to be used, but the Browning did not. Laughridge had to install a screw-in bushing of his own manufacture.

Reliable Functioning

Compact and lightweight handguns are quite the rage right now and public demand is for ever smaller and lighter guns. But every time you chop a pistol, the whole dynamic of the gun changes—sometimes to the point where operation becomes problematic. So the pistol-smith must walk a tightrope between

reliable function and giving the customer what he wants.

Sadly, the customer often wants something he just can't have. The geometry of any tilting barrel imposes limits on how short the barrel can be while still functioning.

The guns you see here are Laughridge's first two of the Pathfinder design. In the past other gunsmiths have offered shortened Hi-Powers, but not very many have been done. These are very much works in progress. And, yes, there were a couple of bumps in the road we'll talk about later, but once those were ironed out, both ran and ran well.

Even though they look very much alike at first glance, there are many dif-

ferences in features. The Browning gun seems to have everything you can do to a Hi-Power, in addition to the shortening. The first thing you'll see is the mirror blue on the slide, matte finish on the frame, and tasteful stippling on front and back straps. The top of the slide is grooved and the rear is checkered. It sports an ambi safety, Novak night sights and a very comfortable beavertail.

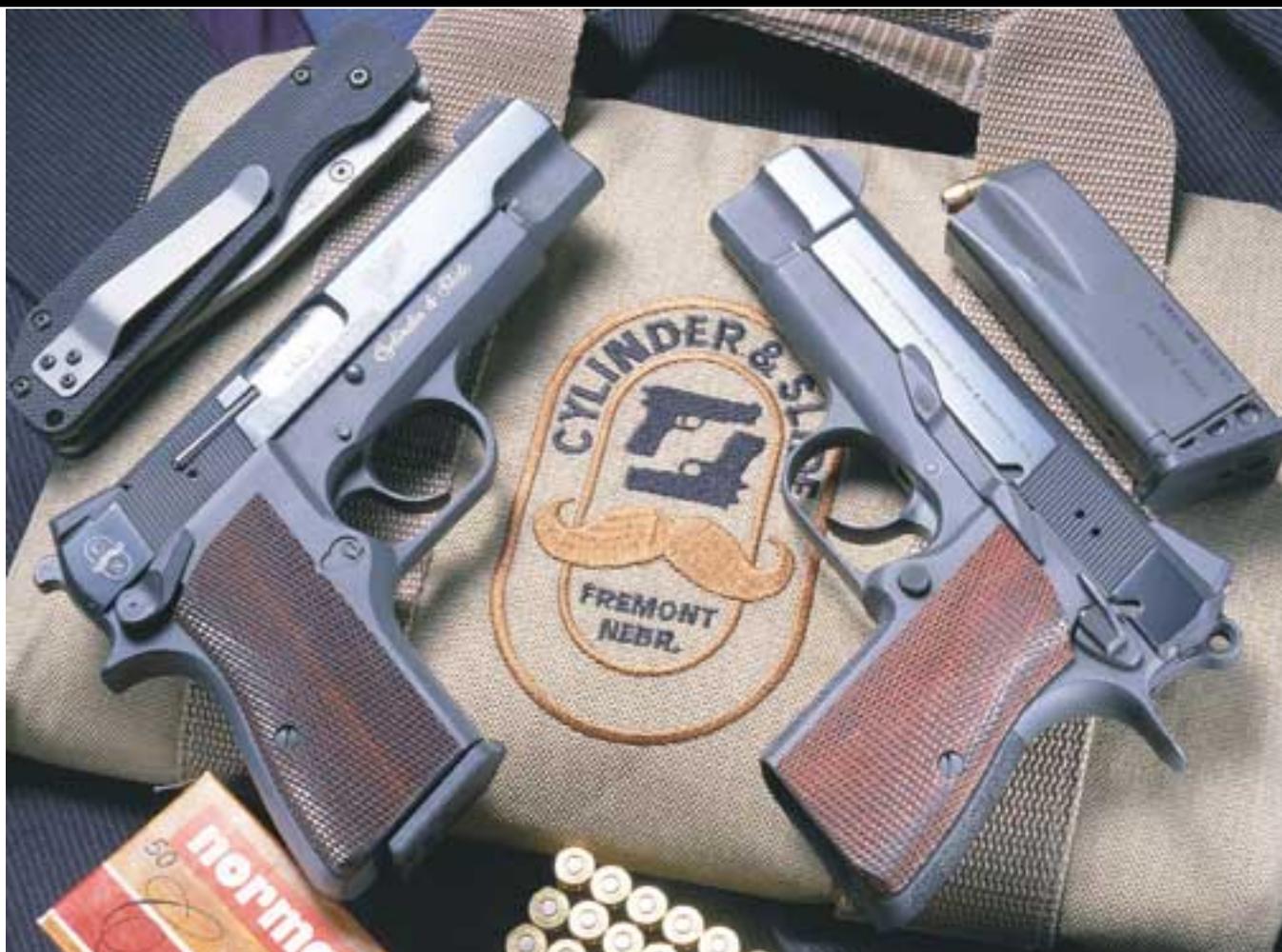
Beavertails on Hi-Powers aren't the same things we're used to on Government Models. Hi-Powers do not have grip safeties, so a blank must be welded or silver brazed onto the frame and then finished by hand. It is an expensive modification, but one that makes the grip feel even better.

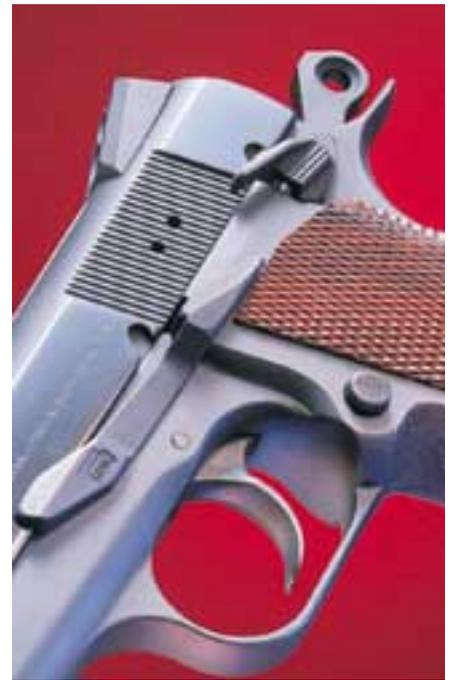
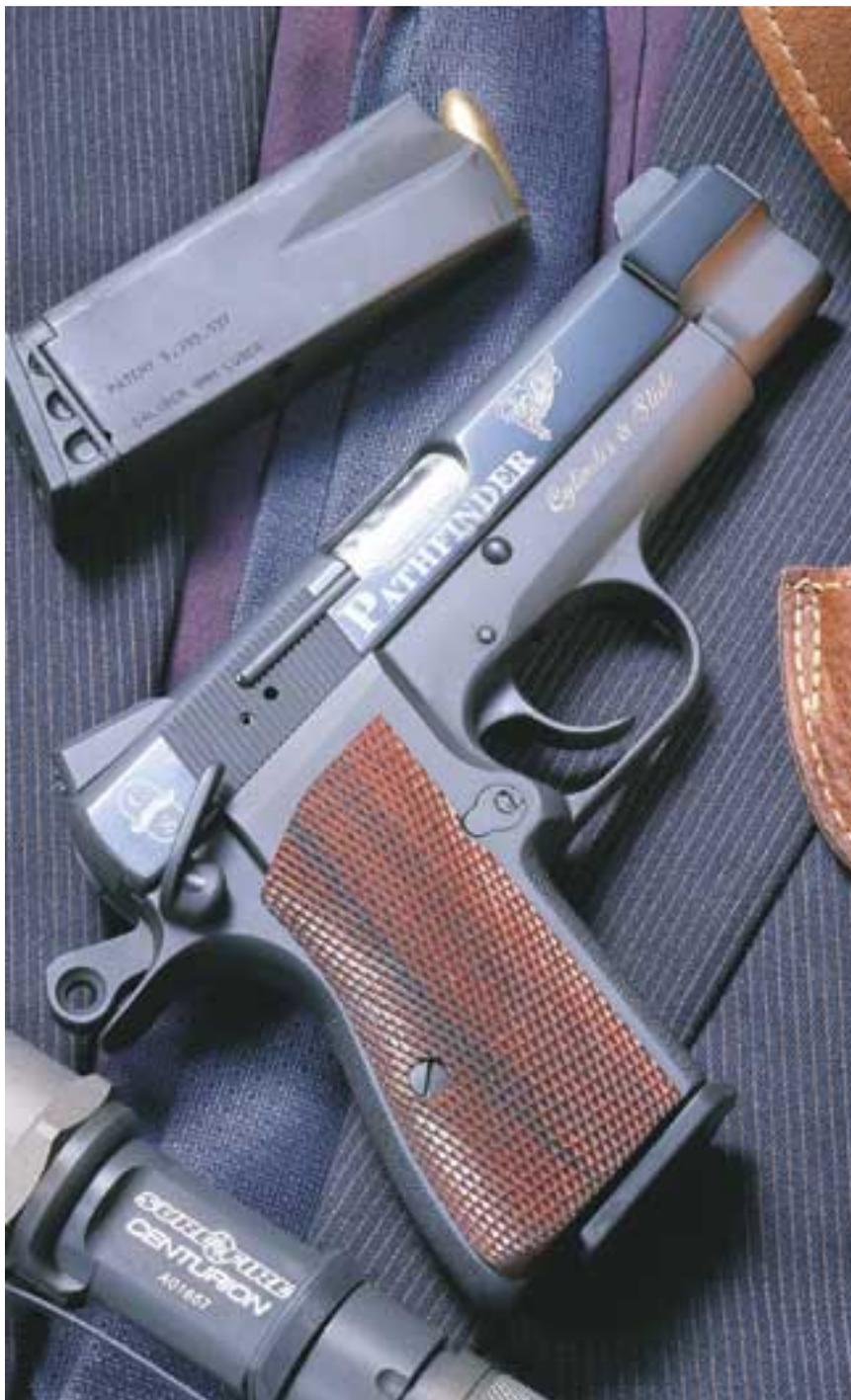


MINI-BROWNING WITH ORIGINAL BARREL

<i>Load</i>	<i>Velocity</i>	<i>Group 1</i>	<i>Group 2</i>	<i>Group 3</i>	<i>Average</i>
Black Hills 115 gr. JHP	1,305 fps	3.69"	2.47"	3.52"	3.23"
Golden Saber 124 gr. JHP	1,078 fps	2.65"	3.08"	2.78"	2.84"
Federal 165 gr. JHP	1,045 fps	3.39"	3.63"	2.99"	3.34"
Pro Load 135 gr. FMJ Match	990 fps	2.98"	3.00"	3.02"	3.00"
Gold Dot 147 gr. PHP	899 fps	3.15"	2.97"	2.26"	2.79"
WW 147 gr. FMJ Match	948 fps	3.71"	2.55"	3.81"	3.36"
Average					3.09"

Notes: Accuracy results are five-shot groups at 25 yards fired from Outers Pistol Perch. Velocity is the instrumental average of 10 shots measured with a PACT Professional Chronograph.





Why Browning has never offered a mini version of the Hi-Power is beyond us. Custom is the only way to get one.

Internally, there's more of Laughridge's flawless craftsmanship. A BarSto barrel is fitted to the slide. The shortening necessitates a screw-in barrel bushing, which also aids accuracy. The trigger is great. It breaks crisply at 4¾ lbs. and the overtravel stop is a real asset to accuracy. All the trigger parts are replaced. Other than being a pretty expensive job, there's nothing to criticize.

The FEG clone is a much plainer Jane— but no less interesting. Gone are the purely cosmetic features. There is no checkering, stippling or grooving. Sights

are Novak, minus the tritium. The barrel is the original. The most radical feature is the trigger, which is a "Safety Fast Shooting" kit (SFS) imported and distributed exclusively by Cylinder & Slide.

The SFS kit allows you to push forward gently on the cocked hammer. It will move down to look like it's in an uncocked position, but when you push it forward, the ambi safety is automatically engaged. Then, when you push the safety down, the hammer hops back to the cocked position, and the gun is ready to fire in the normal single-action mode.

The SFS adds a mechanical hammer block to prevent the hammer from hitting the firing pin unless the trigger is pulled. It also locks both the sear and hammer.

The use of the FEG clone can save you money because the cost of a new gun is considerably less than current prices for a Browning— when you can find one. Laughridge will perform the work on a customer's gun as long as it passes his inspection.

Down To Business

Over the years, I've adopted a test procedure that is comprehensive and lets me really get to know the gun. If possible, each gun goes to the range at least three times. The first is for a break-in and function test with 50 to 100 rounds of generic ammo. The gun is cleaned and inspected for wear.

The next trip is dedicated to group shooting and chronographing. Again, the gun is cleaned and inspected. The final run is a longer function test with a variety of different loads. When all is done, the total number of rounds fired is 300 to 400, sometimes more.

That was the procedure I followed with the two Pathfinder pistols. The Browning gun had a stoppage about halfway through the first test that was found to be caused by a tiny piece of bullet jacket metal getting wedged between the top barrel lugs and the corresponding cut in the slide. It prevented the pistol from going into battery. It took awhile to figure *that* one out. The FEG gun had no stoppages. Both shot to point of aim at 25 yards.

Cleaning and inspection showed some



Custom touches include tasteful stippling of the front strap and a custom BarSto barrel. Of course the most radical work is the shortening of the grip.

tiny bits of jacket metal in both guns, but nothing that seemed to be particularly significant. About halfway through the accuracy testing on my next trip to the range, the Browning began to need a tiny nudge, now and then, to go into battery. This got progressively worse, and by the time chronograph measurements were done, the slide just wouldn't close without help.

Testing of the FEG pistol was largely uneventful until near the end when it, too, began to be reluctant to go fully into battery. By then it was clear that we were suffering from worn-out recoil springs.

Back home it was a two-man job to fieldstrip the Browning because the battered, collapsed recoil spring prevented the slide from retracting to the point where the slide stop pin could be pushed out. Fieldstripping any Hi-Power is something of a pain unless you use the thoughtfully provided second safety notch that will hold the slide in the proper position. Couldn't do that either.

The FEG fieldstripped without difficulty, but there was virtually no tension left on the recoil spring. Remember that chopping changes the whole dynamic of the pistol? The spring situation is a perfect example. Any time you reduce the weight of the recoiling mass (slide and barrel), the recoiling velocity of the slide is increased considerably. And that is hard on springs. To the phone!

As soon as I began to describe the problem to Laughridge, he exclaimed, "That's my fault! I should have mentioned that spring life is short and sent along some spares." Our discussion revealed that, between the two of us, the pistol had fired over 400 rounds before

the spring failed. As a result, Laughridge will ship each gun with a good supply of springs and instructions to change them every 300 rounds.

Next, we talked about the little bits of jacket metal. Again Laughridge knew what I was talking about. A small rough spot on the feed ramp of the FEG was visible and easily fixed. The Browning was another story altogether. There were no visible sharp edges, but some small pieces were visible in the chamber.

A look through a bore scope gave the answer. The chamber had a very sharp shoulder, which was brightly marked with jacket metal scrubbing around the entire circumference. The possibilities were either a chamber that was just a little too short, or an improperly cut throat that was tight and scraped off some jacket. In any case, this had to go back.

Parts flew to Nebraska. Laughridge found that the chamber needed to be slightly deeper. Parts flew back, along with a supply of new recoil springs. And, sure enough, a cure was wrought. With new recoil springs installed, both guns ran flawlessly with a good assortment of ammo. This time I wanted to measure the rate of shortening of the recoil spring. Exactly 100 rounds were fired. Measurements showed:

<i>Spring</i>	<i>Length</i>
New	3½"
after 100 rds.	3¼"
failed at 400 rds.	2⅞"

We know that the initial collapse of any spring happens very quickly, but they will then normally operate for some time

before showing much more shortening. Laughridge's suggestion of 300-round replacement seems wise here.

Work In Progress

Now you see why I called this a "work in progress," because it turned into a great problem-solving exercise. And because of that, I find it hard to judge the guns too harshly. If these were production guns, that would be different, but these are the first two mini-Brownings Laughridge ever made.

Back to the range for a brief function test. Now we have guns that run just great and I'm confident that the next ones Laughridge builds will just get better with experience. And with problems solved, the mini-Brownings were cleaned and inspected yet again. Both went to the range for a fourth time.

As you can see from the table, accuracy was good, so the Browning, and my trigger control, were put to a test. There are some famous (or infamous) gongs at our range: 12" diameter steel plates located a measured 72 yards from the firing line. Using 124 gr. Speer Gold Dot ammo, the Browning's first 10 shots at the gong gave nine tremendously satisfying clangs. One of the other valuable lessons I've learned over many years is to quit while you're ahead. 

Readers can learn more about the mini-Brownings or the other custom services offered by Cylinder & Slide Inc., P.O. Box 937, Dept. AH, Fremont, NE 68026; phone: (402) 721-4277; website: www.cylinder-slide.com

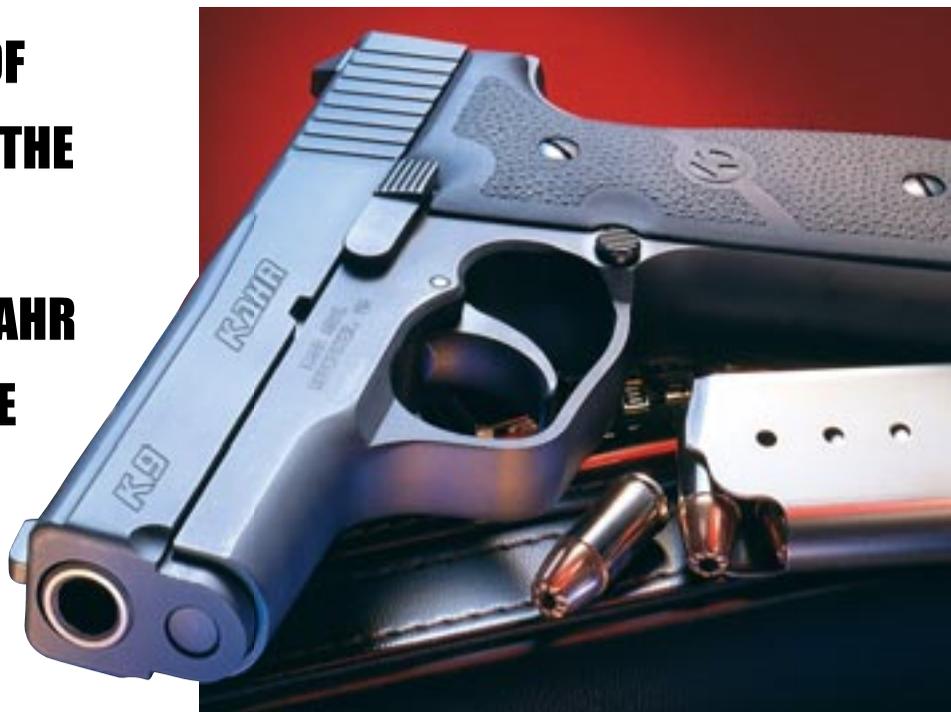


Kahr MK9 (top) is the smallest of the Kahr family, compared to a K9 (bottom).

THE RISE OF THE HOUSE OF KAHR

KAHR ARMS CAME OUT OF NOWHERE TO DOMINATE THE ULTRA-COMPACT PISTOL MARKET. WHY DID THE KAHR DESIGN FLOURISH WHERE OTHERS HAVE FAILED?

**BY MASSAD AYOUB
PHOTOS BY ICHIRO NAGATA**



They had a small booth in an out-of-the-way corner of the massive firearms trade exhibit known as the SHOT Show, yet nothing so trivial as a remote location could impede the buzz. Word was spreading across the show floor about this new gun called the Kahr. It was said to be the slickest little double-action 9mm pocket pistol since the Devel conversion of the Smith Model 39, and it was being offered at an unbelievably low price.

Such talk is a magnet. I was drawn to the humble booth like a moth to a searchlight. My first reaction was, “No way. Somebody paid a fortune to build this prototype, but no way can it be produced as nicely as this. Not at the price they’re talking. If it even works. Big if.

“They’re gonna get a ton of prepaid orders, cash the checks, and disappear,” I surmised pessimistically. Shades of Bren Ten. In the immortal words of The Fonz, we now admit that we were “Wr... wruh... wrong!”

Now six years later, Kahr pistols have become one of the handgun world’s greatest success stories of the last decade— the Glock of the Nineties. (Kahr has gone on to pass the tortuous approval test by NYPD for off-duty carry with the K9 model.) No less a personality than Bill Wilson has put forth a series of customized Kahrs. Dealers tell us they can’t keep them in stock.

The models have evolved from small to smaller to smallest, light, lighter and lightest and increasingly more high-tech



as polymer models have entered the line. The 9mm chambering has been expanded to the .40 S&W caliber.

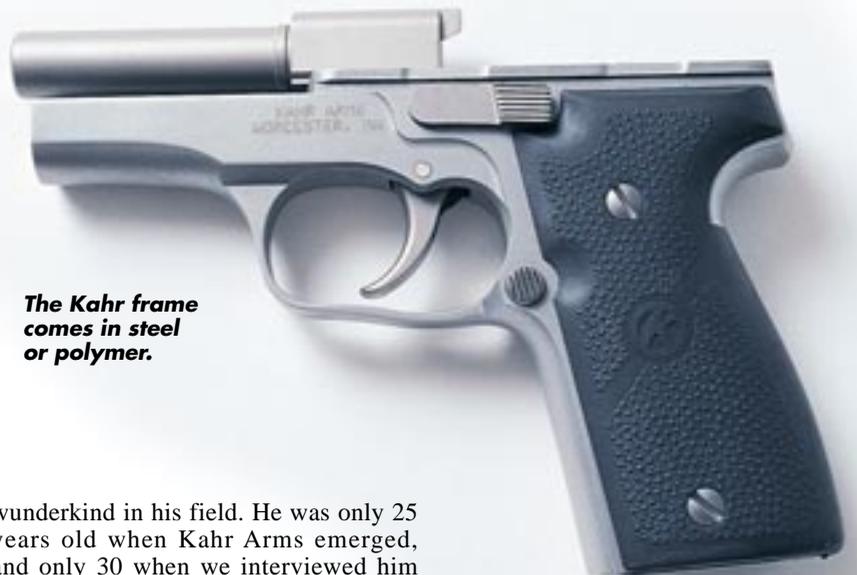
Not only has the line expanded with new models and calibers, the company itself has risen like a dot-com stock. Kahr Arms absorbed Auto-Ordnance and now manufactures and sells that company's Thompson submachineguns and generic 1911-A1 pistols.

You read it here first—Kahr Arms may well be the next Kimber on the 1911 horizon.

One thing few observers realized when Kahr first trotted onto the scene was that the firm wasn't just a stand-alone. From the beginning, Kahr was a division of the Saeilo Group. Pronounced "Say-low," the parent company was founded in 1983 by Kahr Arms' founder, Justin Moon's father, Rev. Sun Myung Moon. According to a company spokesman, the Rev. Moon is no longer involved in the Saeilo Group.

Specializing in precision metalworking, Saeilo was in a position to render the fledgling gunmaker expert advice on metallurgy and production efficiency. By 2001, Saeilo would employ 220 workers, and some 20 percent of its income was generated by the Kahr Arms division.

Justin Moon designed the guns and serves as CEO of the company. He is a



The Kahr frame comes in steel or polymer.

wunderkind in his field. He was only 25 years old when Kahr Arms emerged, and only 30 when we interviewed him for this story.

The son of the founder of the controversial Unification Church, Moon is well spoken and articulate. He has produced the most successful small pistol to ever enter the market with so little fanfare. He is as engaging to interview as he is gifted in his ability to make a good gun.

The Interview

Ayoob: Tell us something about your background.

Moon: I was born in Seoul, Korea, on

July 17, 1970. I came to the U.S. in 1973 and have lived here ever since. I went to school, from kindergarten to high school, at Hackely School, a small private school in Tarrytown, N.Y. I graduated from high school Cum Laude and was accepted into Vassar College. I transferred from Vassar to Harvard University and graduated Magna Cum Laude with a bachelor of

THE HOUSE OF KAHRS



	Kahr P40	Kahr P9	Kahr K40	Kahr K9	Kahr MK 40	Kahr MK9
Caliber	.40 S&W	9mm	.40 S&W	9mm	.40 S&W	9mm
Capacity	6+1	7+1	6+1	7+1	5+1	6+1
Trigger	DAO, 7-10 lbs.	DAO, 7-10 lbs.	DAO, 7-10 lbs.	DAO, 7-10 lbs.	DAO, 7-10 lbs.	DAO, 7-10 lbs.
Barrel	3.5"	3.5"	3.5"	3.5"	3.08"	3.08"
Twist	1:16 polygonal	1:10 polygonal	1:16 polygonal	1:10 polygonal	1:16 polygonal	1:10 polygonal
Length	6.1"	6.1"	6.1"	6.1"	5.35"	5.3"
Height	4.55"	4.55"	4.55"	4.55"	4"	4"
Weight	16.8 ozs.	15.8 ozs.	24.1 ozs.	23.1 ozs.	23.1 ozs.	22.1 ozs.
Frame	polymer	polymer	stainless steel chromemoly	stainless steel chromemoly	stainless steel	stainless steel
Sights*	white bar-dot	white bar-dot	white bar-dot	white bar-dot	white bar-dot	white bar-dot
Finish	matte stainless	matte stainless	matte stainless matte black	matte stainless matte black	matte stainless	matte stainless

**Tritium night sights are an available option.*



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arts degree in economics.

Ayoob: How did you become involved in firearms?

Moon: I have been interested in guns for as long as I can remember. Even as a child, toy soldiers and toy guns were my favorite playthings. My favorite subject in middle school and high school was history. I loved reading about weapons of all sorts.

Ayoob: Your shooting experience?

Moon: My first experience shooting was with my older brother when I was 14. He also liked guns and took me shooting with friends and family. We would have a great time setting up and shooting targets with an assortment of firearms. Ever since that first shooting experience, I continued to pursue my interest in firearms. I maintain several subscriptions to firearms magazines which I voraciously digest.

Ayoob: Training?

Moon: My training in firearms comes largely from reading about guns

and from practicing with my brothers and some friends involved in the personal security industry.

Ayoob: Tell us how you became involved in the firearms industry.

Moon: When I was finishing my junior year at college, I began thinking about the path I should follow after I graduated. I thought about doing what everyone else did— either join Corporate America or continue with education. However, upon reflection, those options did not appeal to me. I wanted to work right away, and in a field I enjoyed.

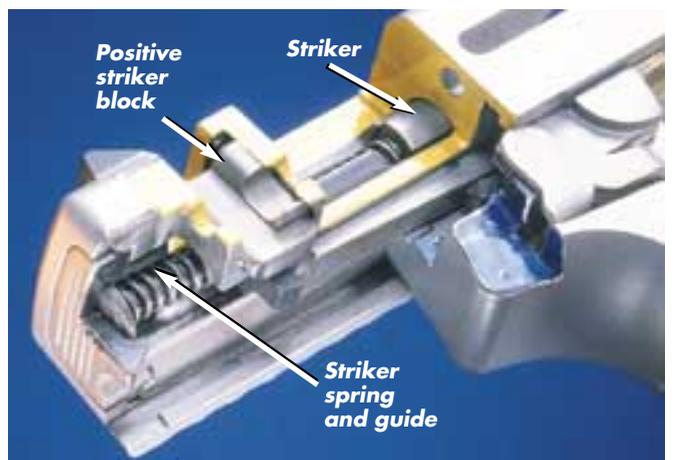
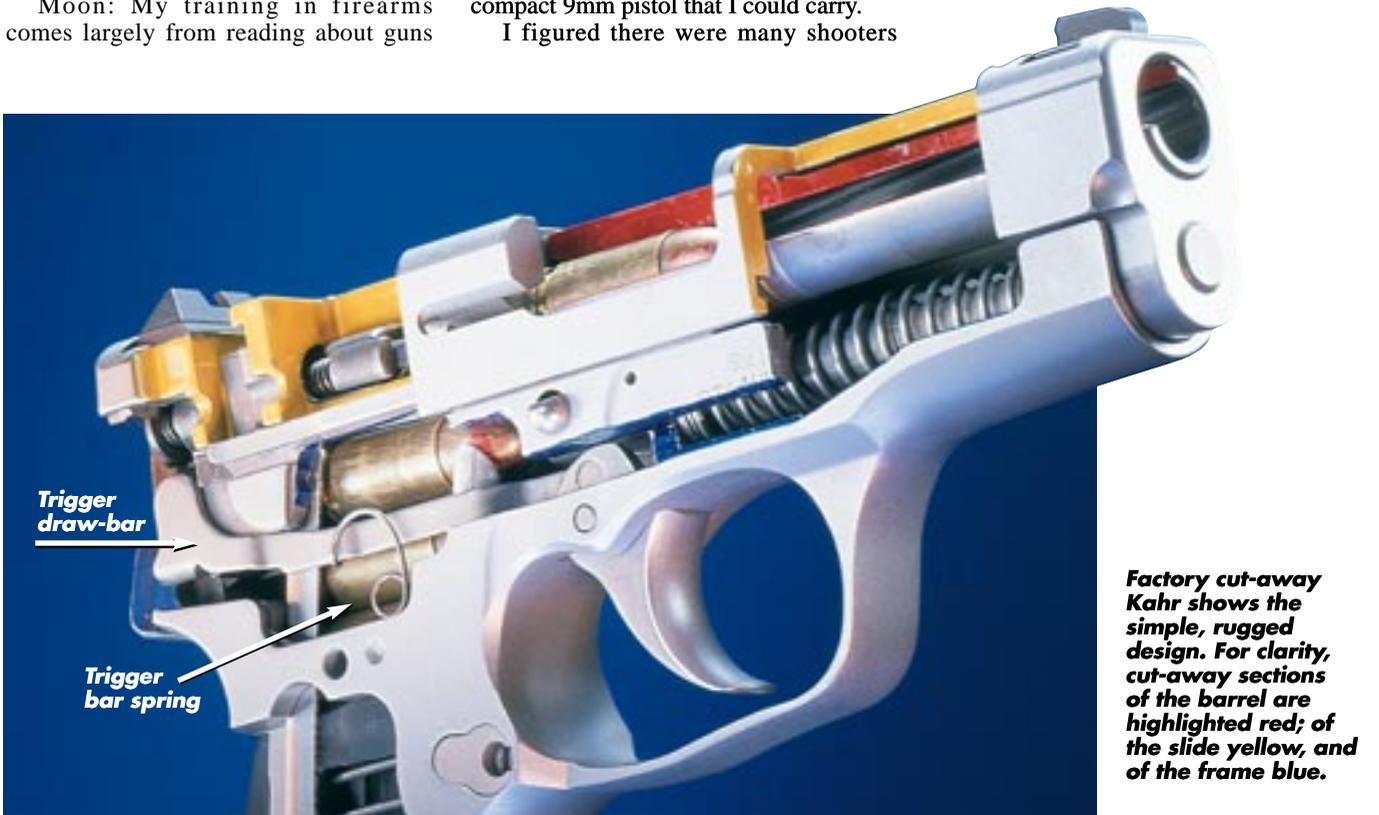
I decided that I would like to work in the firearms industry. I had been licensed to carry in New York State since I was 18, and had looked for an ultra-compact 9mm pistol. However, to my chagrin, I could not find a pistol with the quality of construction and features in design which I felt were appropriate for a carry arm. Therefore, I decided to design an ultra-compact 9mm pistol that I could carry.

I figured there were many shooters

like myself who desired to have a truly carryable 9mm pistol. I spent the summer and much of my senior year designing the mechanical layout of the pistol and prototyping various design concepts. By the time I graduated I had pretty much solved all the conceptual problems that hindered the manufacture of the pistol that I had in mind. From there I partnered with Saeilo to move to prototype the pistol and prepare for production.

Ayoob: Where did the name Kahr come from?

Moon: When it came to marketing the pistol, I did not feel that Saeilo would be a “catchy” name to put on my gun. I wanted a name that was short, easy to remember, and symbolic of the high quality of manufacture. Given Germany’s renown for engineering prowess and quality, I wanted a name that







sounded German. That's how I came up with "Kahr."

Ayoob: What do you feel was the heart of the Kahr pistol's design concept?

Moon: The primary specifications that I started with were to build a double-action-only, breech-locking, striker-fired 9mm that was no larger than a Walther PPK .380. Breech-lock mechanism and striker-fired pistols have been around for decades and the use of that basic technology was of course borrowed from prior art. The challenging aspect of the development was to figure out how to incorporate those features into a gun that was no larger than the venerable PPK.

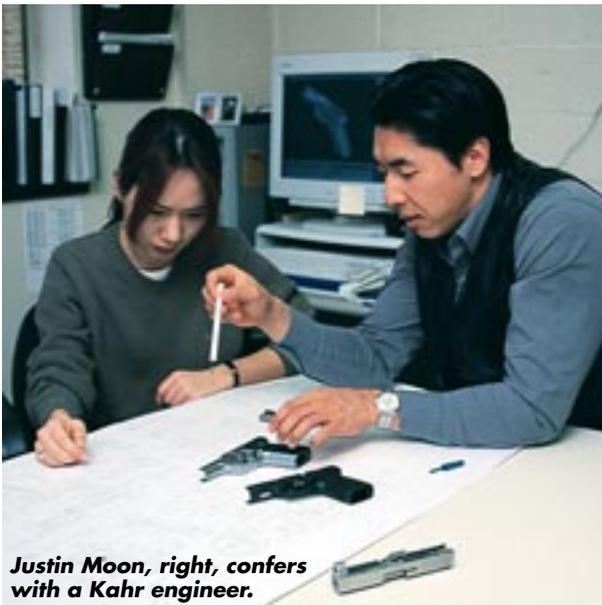
Ayoob: Yet, in the end, you wound up with, what, four or five patents on the Kahr design?

Moon: In all, five patents were received on the Kahr pistol design. The most important of the patents is the Staggered Barrel Locking Lug. By offsetting the barrel lug and staggering it with the trigger and trigger bar assembly, I was able to greatly reduce the vertical height of the pistol from the trigger to the top of the slide. This innovation made it possible to greatly lower the bore axis of the pistol and helped compress a breech lock design toward the dimension of a simple blow back design.

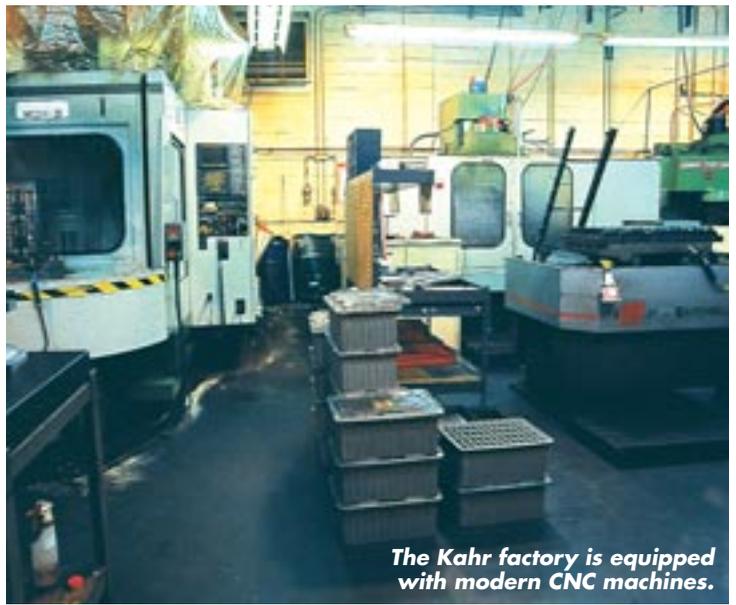
That innovation in conjunction with a second patent that explained a Method of Retaining a Trigger Bar Onto a Trigger made the Kahr pistols possible. This second innovation was necessary in order to keep the thin overall dimension of the pistol. The second patent made it possible to attach the trigger bar to the trigger with the minimum use of space.

The third patent covers the Striker Activation System of the pistol. The use of the "cocking cam" to both actuate the striker and deactivate the safety gives Kahr pistols a uniquely smooth and consistent double-action trigger pull.

The fourth patent explains a method of



Justin Moon, right, confers with a Kahr engineer.



The Kahr factory is equipped with modern CNC machines.

an Inertia Fired Striker. This patent is less critical in that there are a number of methods explained in the art of how to achieve this function.

The fifth patent is related to Kahr's unique extractor design. The extractor's uniqueness is that its pivoting motion is limited in one direction to make "failures to extract" a near impossibility. Furthermore, the extractor has a unique mechanical design which enables it to be self-cleaning.

Ayoob: A lot of people in the industry thought it was very honest and forthright of you and your company to license the double-captive recoil spring design from Larry Seecamp, instead of just copying it and fighting it out in court as Llama and Para-Ordnance did.

Moon: Yes, the double-recoil spring design was licensed from Seecamp.

Ayoob: You built your first 9mm, the K9, to take 9mm +P and +P+ ammo, and one complaint was that the springs were strong enough to make the gun's slide hard to draw back. Tell us where you went with that.

Moon: The recoil springs in the first K9s were 24 pounds. Based on the feedback from customers who experienced difficulty in manipulation of the slide, we changed the recoil spring to the current

design of 18 to 20 pounds. At this time we only offer one strength of recoil spring in the Kahr K9 models— 18 to 20 pounds.

Ayoob: Did this impact the company's policy of warranting the guns to handle +P and +P+ 9mm, and full power .40 S&W?

Moon: According to our instruction manual we recommend only high-quality factory ammunition of the proper caliber. The Kahr 9mm can handle +P loads and in the Kahr .40 S&W we recommend regular pressure, high-quality factory ammunition.

Ayoob: Warranties?

Moon: We offer a limited lifetime warranty on all the Kahr models. As long as the gun has not been abused, we will stand behind our products.

Ayoob: What's your best seller?

Moon: Polymer pistols are the most popular.

Ayoob: What's on the horizon for Kahr Arms?

Moon: We do not discuss ongoing research and development projects publicly. We continue to pursue a number of promising projects and are committed to introducing new products on a continuing basis.

Ayoob: There is speculation on the Internet that your father or his church

own your company. Your response?

Moon: I currently am the majority shareholder of Kahr and operate my business to provide high quality firearms to the public and to make a profit.

Ayoob: What's your reaction when commentators on the Net try to bring religion into it?

Moon: I am a member of the Unification Church, but I do not hold any formal positions in the church. I proudly participate and support my church and my community. This is, after all, a free country. I cherish my First Amendment rights as well as my Second Amendment rights. 



Short is good. Kahr incorporated a number of space-saving innovations in the basic design.



SO YOU CARRY A COMBAT FOLDER. A BENCHMADE OR MAYBE EVEN AN EMERSON. GOOD FOR YOU. NOW FOR THE TOUGH PART— WHAT IF YOU ACTUALLY HAVE TO USE IT?

PETA, this photo is for you! Students at an edged weapons seminar learn what it feels like to slice real flesh, two goat carcasses.



Arlington County Sheriff's Deputies arrived at the scene of an incident where a young man had been slashed across the throat with a box-cutter and left to die in the street, right in front of his own house. Already in shock and gurgling in a pool of frothy blood that bubbled from his esophagus, the man sputtered and twitched as emergency medical technicians did what they could to keep him alive. Hours later, the ER doctor walked into the waiting room to tell the man's wife and children that the blade missed his jugular by a quarter

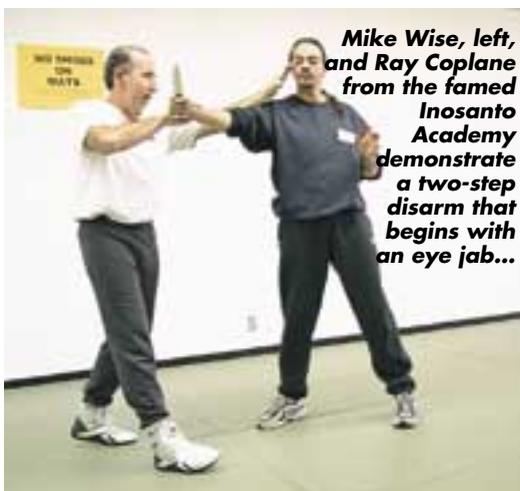
of a centimeter and that he was going to make it— a very lucky man.

The horrors of receiving a cut in a knife fight can only be exceeded by the horrors of delivering a cut, or a bullet, in a defensive or pre-emptive strike. The most common mind-set to getting cut on the street is, "Sure, I'll just take a little cut and then I'll blast him with everything I've got." Let's take a moment to analyze the full impact of what happens in an edged weapon encounter.

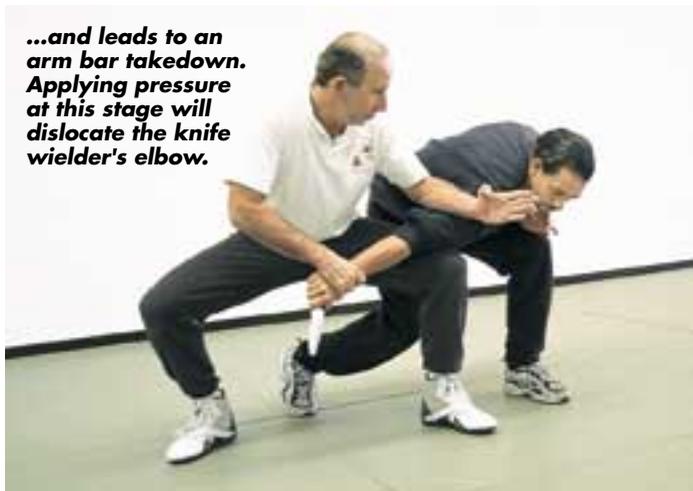
Although many of us have received a paper cut, cut ourselves shaving or even had a few stitches from a bad slip with a

knife, very few of us have shared the experience of separating flesh deeply enough to see the glistening white of sinew or the naked horror of our own bone. Those who have gutted a deer or skinned a rabbit might have some idea of the extreme nature of what an edged weapon can do to flesh.

All cuts are not the same. There are varying degrees of lacerations, ranging from a nick with a Gillette to a Skil saw accident. What is the difference between a lethal laceration and a nonlethal cut? The delineating factor is, of course, the result of the cut. If the result is loss of



Mike Wise, left, and Ray Coplane from the famed Inosanto Academy demonstrate a two-step disarm that begins with an eye jab...



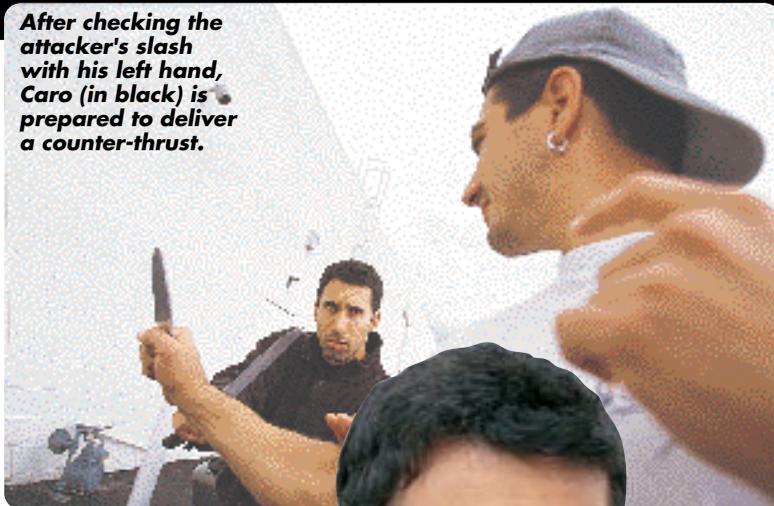
...and leads to an arm bar takedown. Applying pressure at this stage will dislocate the knife wielder's elbow.

BLOOD OF THE CUT:

THE MENTAL ASPECTS OF KNIFE FIGHTING

By Steve Tarani Photos By Ichiro Nagata

After checking the attacker's slash with his left hand, Caro (in black) is prepared to deliver a counter-thrust.



life, then a cut is determined to be lethal. If not, then a cut is labeled nonlethal. The line of demarcation can, however, be a very thin line.

There are gruesome cuts that are nonlethal, and there are tiny punctures that are fatal. The severity of the cut is not necessarily linked to its survivability. Like in shooting, placement is 95 percent of the game.

Bloody Truths

Have you ever had to clean a large cut and then bandage it? Ever get that queasy feeling of trying to stitch your own cut closed or having to do it to someone else, or even just watching the doctor tug away at the cat gut? There are some horrifying photos of lethal cuts from recorded police cases that would cause even the strongest stomach to shudder. For this exact reason, we have omitted morgue photos from this article, although it would be highly instructional. Rest assured that lethal cuts are quite effective and nothing to sneer at.

As in the true story about the slashed throat and the box-cutter, had the razor's edge penetrated only a few millimeters further, he would not have been able to spend next Thanksgiving with his family. In



Damon Caro of the renowned Inosanto Academy is one of the most highly skilled masters of Filipino knife fighting.

This is just horseplay for the camera, although a shark glove might help in a knife fight.



Damon Caro (right) is literally a blur of motion as he parries down-and-away to deflect a strike.

his case, the cut could have easily gone either way, fatal or survivable.

In the study of combat with edged weapons, there are many different types of cuts. Hopefully, it's still before dinner and you won't mind going through the list.

According to the Southeast Asian blade cultures in which the fighting arts of Eskrima, Arnis, Kali, Sabetan and others have perfected the use of a blade to a high degree, there are two primary groups or styles of cuts.

The first group is considered primary. Primary cuts include the *slash*, an example of which is O.J. Simpson's infamous ear-to-ear severing of Nicole's neck. Another primary type of cut is the *hack*, for which we have adequate examples in Jeffery Dahmer's victims. Then there is the *thrust*, which many inner-city gangs favor for highly effective screw-driver stabs. Shank stabbings in prison are all thrusts.

Just for the record, the majority of lethal cuts recorded on police blotters over the past decade were thrusts. The thrust is the most lethal of the primary cuts.

The second group is considered ancillary, or "backup cutting." These include *scraping* or *skinning*, which are much like an ice-scraper against ice on a windshield. Hunters are quite familiar with this technique.

Another secondary cut is the *tear*, common to various West Japanese edged-weapon systems which involve hooking the flesh with barbs notched along the edge of certain fighting knives. This technique is specifically applied to the trachea in hand-to-hand combat.

Coring is similar to the move you apply to an apple core. *Puncturing* is used in certain Filipino knife fighting techniques that involve knife handling designed to puncture the kidney or

bladder. This technique is similar to a can opener applied to a can of juice.

There are yet other types of cuts, but they are traditionally reserved for dedicated, long-term students of the bladed arts. However, for our purposes, the foregoing study should suffice to illustrate that there is more than one type of "cut" available. Receiving of any one or all of the above cuts could result in either a nonlethal or fatal outcome.

Defensive Usage

Let's take a look at the other end of the table. What if you find yourself in a combative situation from which you cannot de-escalate or escape? What if you must defend your life with that trusty combat folder clipped oh-so-tactically to your pocket?

What kind of cut would you deliver? A primary cut? Secondary cut? Would you



Ichiro Nagata displays the leftovers of a goat carcass after a classful of students have hacked away.

Dull-edged training knives are used for practice.



The author is an edged weapons master, having studied in Java, Japan, Indonesia and the Philippines.

be thinking about what type of cut would be the most effective and where to place it. Or would you just be hacking and stabbing away at anything in front of you?

Just as there are no 100-percent ways to stop a fight with a handgun bullet, so too are there no certainties with edged weapons. And just like with their propellant-launched cousins, blades can stop a fight just like bullets with one of two means— pain compliance and mechanical compliance.

Pain compliance is not a very reliable method because people have varying levels of pain tolerance. It has been proven time and time again in the heat of battle that adrenaline can increase pain tolerance to far beyond what would be considered normal. The only remaining solution is mechanical compliance.

An excellent example of mechanical compliance would be if you hit an opponent in his center-mass with two direct hits in A-zone at close quarters with a heavy-duty pistol. There is a very high likelihood that the mechanical effect of 460 grs. of copper jacketed lead will

produce an instantaneous stop. Not assured, but likely.

A knife, however, doesn't offer the same degree of confidence as a firearm. The "stopping" ability is severely limited because a knife is a contact weapon, not a ballistic weapon.

The only two options available with a knife are exsanguination or to sever a nerve bank. The A-zone for a knife is the closest arteries to the heart. If you sever one of these hosepipes, you've got somewhere between 15 and 20 seconds prior to the beginning phases of bleed-out. Slicing one of the major arteries in an extremity, which is difficult to do in a knife fight, can take over a minute for bleed-out symptoms to occur.

The mere fact that an opponent realizes that he has been cut severely could possibly be enough to play a psychological factor in your favor. Some people do not have the mental toughness to look at a gaping slash on their own body, see their own spurting blood and continue to attack. Others, however, are unphased by the sight of their own blood.

You must consider the harsh reality of carving into a human body with a sharp edge, even in the context of defending yourself or your family. Think about what it would feel like to slash your tactical folder across an assailant's belly, tearing open his stomach wall and watching the wet loops of gray intestine spill into his lap. Imagine the sound of your blade scratching over a rib, sinking into your attacker's lung, his blood bubbling frothily from the wound. Edged weapons are brutally intimate. Know this before you deploy one. Understand exactly what you are about to do.

Most of us lack any formal training in self-defense with an edged weapon or even with our bare hands, for that matter. The opportunities for training do exist out there and are easily within the grasp of most defensively aware citizens. Two of the top "shooting" schools offer edged-weapon programs— Jeff Cooper's Gunsite and Massad Ayoob's Lethal Force Institute.

It Cuts Both Ways

While it takes a good deal of mental preparation to deal with the enormous psychological impact of slicing up another human being, it also takes some mental homework to deal with the eventuality of getting cut. The chance of getting cut in a knife fight is close to 100 percent. Even the most skilled practitioners of edged weapons, those who have studied the blade arts, admit that they would expect to be cut in a fight.

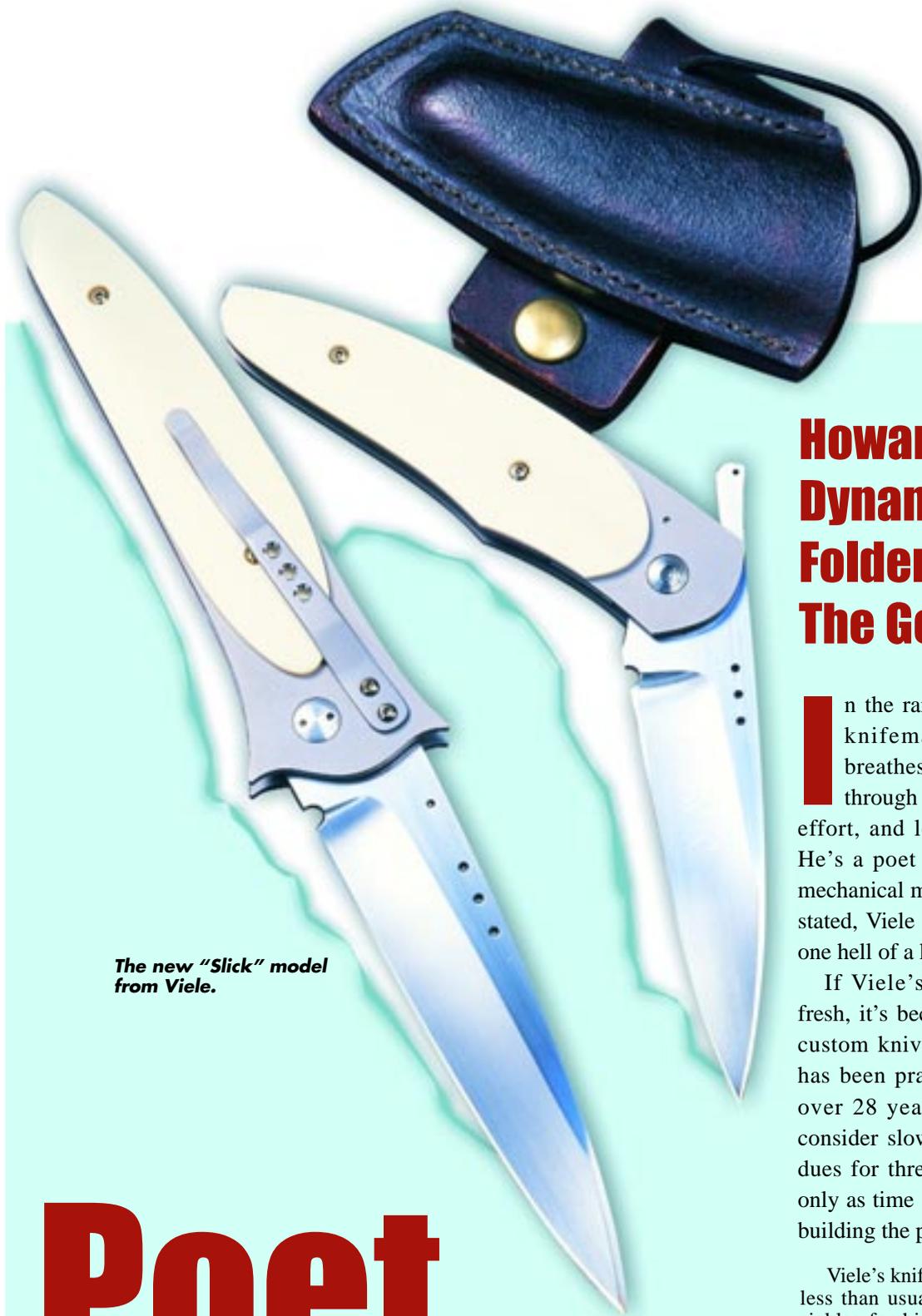
Nobody wants to get cut. However, the potential for receiving a cut from a sharp edge exists in every aspect of our life, from opening a box at work to shaving in our own bathroom. How can we prepare to deal with getting cut, especially in a knife fight?

It all starts with the preparedness of the mind. In blade cultures of the Far East, masters of knife fighting, share with us their ancient wisdom in this modern day: "With the edge, you have already been cut or you have cut another. Surrender yourself to the fact that you have been cut or have cut another and do not focus upon the thought 'I have been cut' or 'I have cut another.' Now is the time to make your next move and not to assist your opponent by distracting your own mind."

Accept the fact that the blood of the cut is inevitable. Be resolute. Be hard. Be fast. And don't let the sight of blood— your own, or someone else's— deter you from wielding the blade with all the fury and determination your very survival demands.



Steve Tarani is a full-time law enforcement defensive tactics instructor specializing in edged and impact weapons. He is currently available for civilian training and can be reached at (949) 515-0905 or online at www.contactdefense.com



The new "Slick" model from Viele.

Howard Viele's Dynamic Tactical Folders Redefine The Genre.

In the rarified air of top custom knifemakers, Howard Viele breathes easily. His knives cut through that air with no visible effort, and leave no vapor behind. He's a poet in steel, a minstrel of mechanical marvels. Or, more simply stated, Viele (pronounced Vee-lee) is one hell of a knife designer!

If Viele's tactical folders look fresh, it's because he's been making custom knives for a long time. He has been practicing his artistry for over 28 years. While some might consider slowing down after paying dues for three decades, Viele sees it only as time spent toward his goal of building the perfect knife.

Viele's knifemaking career started in a less than usual way. Needing a pair of sickles for his martial arts training, he found there were none available. So the intrepid Viele made them himself. In the process, he discovered that working in steel gave him an opportunity to express himself in a way unlike any other medium he had experienced before. He's never looked back.

Howard Viele has a sixth sense for design. Over the years he has won many honors for his prowess, including the celebrated *Knives '85 Wooden Sword Award*, a citation given by publisher Ken Warner for

Poet In Steel

By Pat Covert
Photos By Ichiro Nagata



The Raven model has an 8.5" Damascus blade.

design excellence. Add to that Best in Show at the New York Custom Knife Show (1983), The Beretta Award at the prestigious Knifemakers Guild Show (1990), plus others stretching back to 1978, and one has to believe that Viele was born with the gift of effortless achievement.

The knifemaker's strong suit is that he keeps things simple. Viele's patterns look like the starting point at which many other makers add their personal touches. They have a natural, lucid flow that flies in the face of visual fluff or trickery. His lines are smooth as a river's current, veering only for the occasional bend that dictates the proper course.

A typical "Viele" will have a simple frame built of titanium liners, bead-blasted and capped with G-10 or carbon fiber overlays. His blade patterns are designed to compliment the frame in such a manner that the knife appears as a whole with the blade fully extended. He is a master of "the package."

Three-Hole Mark

Viele's trademark is three holes, often of diminishing size, drilled completely through the spine of the blade above the grind. His logo is the Japanese symbol for "God of War," an apt imprint for the slick fighting machines this maker yields.

As for blade steel, Viele goes with the flow of customer demand. Currently he offers ATS-34 stainless steel as standard, but it's not uncommon to find patterned Damascus on higher-end models. His knives can also be ordered dressed up in a variety of ways, including burl wood or ivory handle scales.

Another hallmark of a Viele knife is



The RT6 (top) and Stubs are popular among tactical fans.

flawless engineering. The actions on Viele's folders are butter smooth, with just enough friction on the blade to make the transition positive and controllable. Being the perfectionist that he is, everything is machined to the tightest tolerances and his finishing work is impeccable.

Rapid Transit

Viele is one of those fortunate knifemakers whose knives sell as fast as he can make them. His hottest model is the Silent Partner. Looking every bit as sinister as its name, the Silent Partner is an air-splitter. Available in two sizes, the knife sports a long, lean spear point blade, lightweight titanium frame, and G10 (base model) handle overlays.

The large model opens up to a full 9",

the smaller version 8". The blade is engaged via a thumb stud and a liner-lock mechanism in the handle keeps the blade fixed for action. The handle has a slightly flared hilt that both enhances the grip and protects the fingers during use.

Viele's RT6 and RT5 models are also popular among tactical users. These knives have a wicked tanto blade design (3.5" on the RT6, 3" on the RT5) and full-handle scales for ample grip. A radiused thumbhole is used to access the blade and, once again, a liner-lock secures it in place. A notched thumb ramp on the backside of the blade further enhances gripping of the knife.

The newest addition to Viele's folder line is the Slick model. This knife has a

Continued on page 97



The Performance Center Brings Back A Legendary Double-Action Revolver.

When Smith & Wesson introduced the swing-out cylinder around the end of the 19th century, the guns were colloquially known as the Hand Ejectors. That nickname really stuck until specific model names, and later model numbers, became the standard Smith & Wesson nomenclature. The company's turn-of-the-century "marketing" people liked to organize the guns even further in a sort of Darwinian classification by family, genus and species. Accordingly, the guns were further classified by caliber, model and something even more subtle called "change."

You could have a .44 Hand Ejector Third Model or maybe a .38 Hand Ejector Model of 1905 Fourth Change. So even though the basic revolvers remained relatively constant, there were variations in barrel lengths, sights and

mechanical elements that, like the Galapagos, evolved over time.

The result is that many of today's shooters think S&W revolvers *always* had barrel ribs, adjustable sights and full-length underlugs. That's not the case at all.

From the earliest days, there have been different frame sizes related to the cartridge fired. S&W's frames could be simplified into small, medium and large,

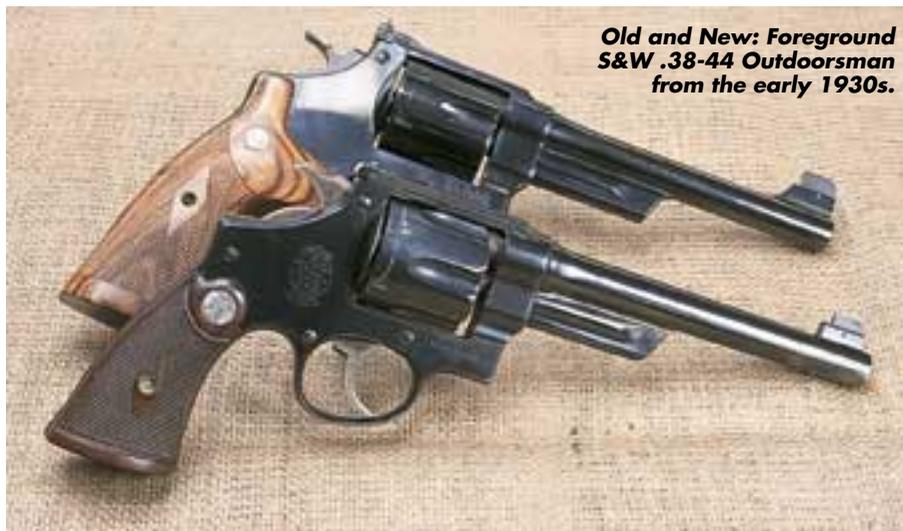
which have evolved into the J-, K- and N-frames we know today. Somehow it seems as if the N-frames took on a special appeal. I know my fondness for them can be proven by both my gunsafe and checkbook.

The Legend Begins

The legend began with the First Model .44 Hand Ejector, popularly known as the Triple Lock. This evolved



The top side plate screw is back.



Old and New: Foreground S&W .38-44 Outdoorsman from the early 1930s.

S&W's Newest Hand Ejector

By Charles E. Petty

quickly into the Second Model which was followed by a Third. Two things distinguished the Triple Lock: the additional locking point in the yoke and a shroud that completely enclosed the ejector rod. Both of those features were judged too costly and troublesome and disappeared from the Second Model.

Law enforcement preferred the heavier barrel of the First Model, so the shroud but not the third lock, reappeared in the Third Model. Both Second and Third models were produced simultaneously and continued that way up until World War II.

The beginning of World War I created a large demand for handguns chambered for the .45 ACP service cartridge. Even though the Browning 1911 was the standard, available production could not meet the demand. It was simple for S&W to make the Second Model in .45 ACP. It was known as the Model 1917. Following the armistice, production resumed.

From the outset, the heavy-frame hand ejector barrel was 6½" long with a slight taper toward the muzzle although 4" and 5" lengths were also available. Most could

also be ordered in a target version that featured adjustable sights. While the front sight was normally a Patridge style, the aiming posts could also be had with gold or ivory beads. While the .44 Special was most common, small quantities of revolvers were also manufactured in .38-40, .44-40 and .45 Colt.

Following World War II, the Second

Model was dropped and only a few Third Model Hand Ejectors were made, but there was a Fourth Model in the wings. The popularity of the somewhat heavier Third Model prompted the design of a ribbed barrel that added even more weight. This was the Fourth Model, and since it reached the market in 1950, it became the 1950 Target. Later, when numeric designations took over, it became the

Continued on page 88



Front of cylinder showing ball detent lockup.

POWDER POSITION: A SPECIAL REPORT ON

WHERE IN THE CARTRIDGE CASE THE POWDER LIES CAN DRAMATICALLY AFFECT VELOCITY OF CERTAIN LOADS.

Sometimes we forget lessons learned long ago until we receive a pointed reminder. I was given such a reminder recently. All of the interest in cowboy shooting, coupled with the fact that I like to shoot the old cartridges, has found me spending lots of time with the venerable .45 Colt.

When time permits, I've been working to find powderpuff loads in the velocity range of 650 to 750 fps for fun shooting. I

and was on its way to becoming standard.

My next turn came quickly, so the gun was not lowered. It went bang as usual. And this is where the light bulb lit up. Dangle the muzzle—pop. Raise the muzzle—bang. This was a fairly dramatic illustration of the effect of powder position.

Later the chronograph showed that the muzzle-down shot was 186 fps *slower* than one where the powder was positioned back toward the primer. This is the reminder. It is pretty common knowledge that powder position *can* be an issue.

Now please don't read more into this

round that is "off sound," which is the technical term for *pop*. When we're working with low-pressure lead bullet loads, there is little risk of any sort of catastrophic failure, but with high-pressure handgun or rifles, it's another story. So anytime it doesn't sound right, make the gun safe and inspect the bore.

Getting A Clue

Other than sound or velocity measurement, there is also another very good clue. In the normal way of things, the brass case expands to seal the chamber. This process is called obturation. But if pressure is too low, this won't happen and you'll see cases that are very sooty. In the extreme, you'll actually see unburned powder wedged between the case and cylinder wall.

If you see that, it's a sign that your load is way too light. Most of the time this will happen with charge weights below the recommended starting load in the manual. This is easily cured with an appropriate increase in powder charge.

For someone like me with an experimental nature, this was also a challenge. What was the effect of position with other powders? One of the big factors in my adventure was the fact that I was using 200 gr. LRNFP bullets to get the mildest recoil possible.

There were two loads under consideration. The first, and the one that went *pop*, was a charge of 5.6 grs. of Hodgdon Clays. Another was 6.5 grs. Unique with

have several .45 Colt revolvers, and one requirement is that the load shoot reasonably well in all of them.

Now comes the circumstance that was the reminder. At the range, we have a couple of 10" diameter steel plates that are great plinking targets. They are a measured 72 yards from the firing line. It's not unusual for several of us to have round-robin competitions for bragging, or harassing, rights.

That day we had something of a marathon going, with nobody able to get a clear advantage. I was shooting an S&W Model 25-5 in .45 Colt, and my arm simply got tired. To rest, I just let the gun dangle at my side. When it was my turn again, I raised the gun and fired a positively perfect shot. The only problem was that it went *pop* rather than *bang*. The load I was using was one that had worked well

than is there. The sky is not falling. The biggest risk is that you might get something the industry calls a BIB (bullet-in-bore). If you fire another round into an obstructed bore, there is a good chance that the barrel will be ringed at the point where the second bullet struck the first one.

This is one of the reasons we harp on checking the bore any time you get a



INTERNAL BALLISTICS



the same bullet. Yes, I know, this is below most starting loads.

Out came the chronograph. The test procedure was to first load the revolver with the muzzle down so the powder would move forward toward the bullet. When these were fired, it was necessary to point the muzzle down—safely—between shots, because the recoil would serve to move the powder around, and normal velocities would be seen after a shot or two.

For the other test, the revolver was loaded normally, but the muzzle was raised to a vertical position—again, safely—before each shot was fired. Here is what happened:

	Forward	Back	Difference
5.6 grs. Clays	493 fps	672 fps	179 fps
6.5 grs. Unique	536 fps	721 fps	185 fps

While neither of the low-velocity shots left a bullet in the bore, they certainly were disconcerting and didn't even threaten to come close to the point-of-aim.

Explanations

It is easy to come up with an explanation for this effect. When the primer ignites, a jet of flame and gas roars through the flash hole to light the charge. If the powder is far forward in the case, ignition is not as efficient. While we always think of fast-burning powders as being easier to ignite, this probably isn't a big factor compared with how far the flame has to travel inside the case before it encounters something to ignite.

When you think about it, my choices were pretty close to the worst possible case. The 200 gr. bullet results in about 10 percent more powder space than with a 255 grainer. And pretty soon it becomes a delicate balancing act between adequate loading density and the desire for low-recoil loads.

Loading density is the relationship between the amount of space occupied by

the powder charge and the amount of space available. The .45 Colt was originally loaded with 40 gr. of FFFG black powder, so we have a prodigious capacity compared to the space occupied by most smokeless powder charges.

Switching Powders

My immediate reaction was to begin looking for slower or bulkier powders. The good news is that most loading man-

uals already have data for some of the new, slower, powders. Obviously, they have the benefit of requiring a larger charge, which results in greater loading density. The plan became obvious—find loads from published sources that generally give velocities between 700 and 800 fps with a 200 gr. bullet.

Obviously, the powder choices had to be somewhat arbitrary. The task would become truly daunting if we tried

Continued on page 80

Effect Of Powder Position In .45 Colt Cases

Load	Forward	Back	Difference
Remington 225 gr. LSWHP	823 fps	856 fps	33 fps
Winchester Cowboy 250 gr. LRNFP	616 fps	688 fps	72 fps
Pro Load 250 gr. LRNFP	774 fps	856 fps	82 fps
8.8 grs. N-350	513 fps	768 fps	255 fps
9.3 grs. N-350	521 fps	795 fps	274 fps
5.5 grs. American Select	441 fps	634 fps	193 fps
6.0 grs. American Select	501 fps	751 fps	250 fps
9.5 grs. SR 4756	355 fps	785 fps	430 fps
10.0 grs. SR 4756	514 fps	820 fps	306 fps
6.5 grs. Unique	536 fps	721 fps	185 fps
7.8 grs. Unique	640 fps	786 fps	146 fps
8.3 grs. Unique	671 fps	852 fps	181 fps
8.0 grs. Power Pistol	655 fps	783 fps	128 fps
8.5 grs. Power Pistol	725 fps	805 fps	80 fps

Notes: Velocity measurements are the instrumental average of five shots at 10 feet as measured with a PACT Professional Chronograph. All loads in Starline brass with CCI large pistol primers with Bull-X 200 gr. LRNFP bullets seated to the crimp groove.



Tiffany-style grips from John Adams on .45 Schofield '72 Open Top.

GRIPS GALORE!

- AUTHENTIC-COPY TIFFANY GRIPS
- HERRETT'S DAN WESSON GRIPS
- BUFFALO BROTHERS SYNTHETICS

In the 1850s and '60s it was quite common for Sam Colt to offer presentation pieces of his sixguns to heads-of-state and various monarchs. It was great advertising. A look through any book that features museum-piece and collector-quality Colt cap-and-ball and SAAs from the middle of the 19th century often reveals beautiful sixguns with exquisite custom grips from the famed New York jeweler, Tiffany & Co. These are known simply as Tiffany grips.

From 1857 to 1875, Tiffany supplied Colt with cast bronze grips that were

overlaid with silver or gold. These grips were carved with intricate patterns and are found on 1851 and 1860 Colts, Cartridge Conversions, Open-Tops and SAAs.

Most, if not all, Tiffany grips found on Colts are of the eagle and justice, Mexican or American eagle, or Civil War battle scene motif. They are virtually priceless today.

It is believed they were the work of sculptor John Quincy Adams Ward, who practiced his craft from 1850 through the 1870s.

Continued on page 86



Buffalo Brothers checkered bone-style grips on Colt Single Action Army.



Herrett's exotic wood stocks for the Dan Wesson.

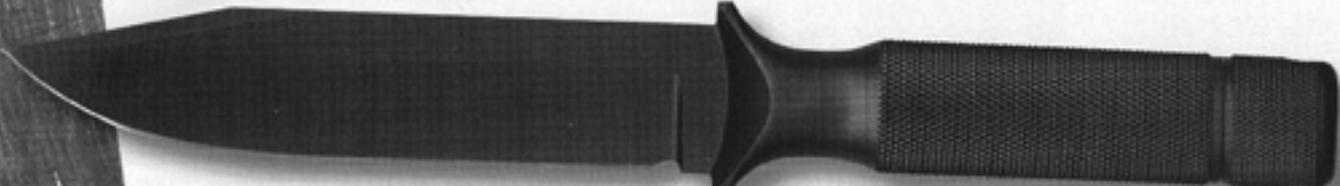


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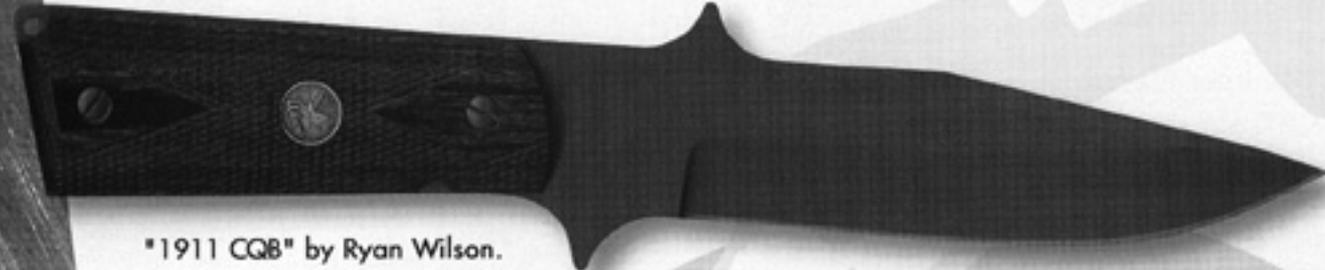
FINE KNIVES • ARTISTIC CREATIONS



"Bulldog" by Greg Lightfoot. Blade Length: 5.125" \$400



"Mark VI" by Chris Reeve Knives. Blade Length: 5.25" \$230



"1911 CQB" by Ryan Wilson.
Blade Length: 5.125" \$220



Those who appreciate fine custom handguns can understand the craftsmanship and functional artistry that a master can impart to what is historically man's most cherished possessions... his weapons. Custom knives and custom handguns share a common legacy of a martial origin, yet today's consummate craftsmen excel with a passion unrivalled. Just as Richard Heinie and Larry Vickers are revered in the handgun circles for the quality of their custom weapons, so too are the likes of Ernest Emerson, Pat Crawford, Greg Lightfoot and Allen Elishewitz sought-after in the custom knife world.

And like these premiere pistolsmiths, the top knifemakers are often booked years in advance, with lengthy waiting lists of prospective customers.

They differ, custom knives and custom handguns, in several respects. First, a top-quality custom knife from a famous "name" maker costs about \$350 to \$600, or roughly a third to a quarter the price of a best-grade custom 1911.

KnifeArt.com is a specialized dealer in high-end knives, making a custom knife purchase easy and affordable. You pay no more buying from KnifeArt.com than if you had bought from the maker himself, without the long wait.

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POWDER POSITION

Continued from page 77

to test all the powders that might be used in the .45 Colt. The powders chosen were Vihtavouri N350, American Select, IMR SR 4756, Unique and Power Pistol. Ammo was assembled in Starline brass with CCI large pistol primers and the Bull-X 200 gr. LRNFP.

Before we could begin, a baseline was necessary, so three different factory loads were subjected to the same factory test. Ammo manufacturers look at the effect of powder position, but there is no standard in the SAAMI specifications or even an informal rule from one company to the next. For our purposes, we restricted the choices to loads that have a difference of 100 fps or less. Shooting straight down is something we can easily avoid.

SAAMI test protocols require that each cartridge to be tested for pressure be subjected to the "SAAMI flip," where the cartridge is rotated in the vertical plane and stopped with the bullet pointing straight up. It is then gently inserted into the pressure gun to avoid disrupting the powder orientation. Since this procedure is standard for both handgun and rifle ammunition, it eliminates any possible source of error introduced by powder position.

Primer Question

Some have already asked if I tried, or why I didn't I use, magnum primers. There are several reasons, foremost of which is that none of the data I started with employed magnum primers and none of the powders chosen is categorized as difficult to ignite. But the other is my experience.

While I didn't use magnum primers in the .45 Colt tests done here, I have tried the experiment in other calibers where I could compare results, with the only difference being standard or magnum primers. In almost every case, the results for both velocity and accuracy were worse with magnum primers.

Sometimes velocities were higher, sometimes not. Sometimes accuracy was worse, sometimes not. In no case was it improved. There would also be frequent instances where magnum primers reduced the consistency of velocity.

Within any string of velocity measurements, there is going to be a difference from the fastest to the slowest. This result is called extreme variation (EV), and magnum primers simply produced higher EVs than did standard primers. Loads in which magnum primers prove to be beneficial are rare. With the exception of true "magnum loads" with very slow-burning powder, like H-110 or W-W 296, I just avoid them.

The point here is that a worst-case scenario has been created deliberately to

investigate a situation that *could* occur in the real world, but really isn't too likely. Unless one is shooting straight down, conditions as severe as those created here are not likely. Even when a gun is carried in a holster with the muzzle down, the very act of drawing and manipulating the gun will position enough powder to a point where the primer can light it efficiently.

Bullseye Bunk

You may have heard some horror stories where it was reported that extremely small powder charges somehow lead to catastrophic failures. Please remember that we are *only* talking about handgun ammo here. Bullseye is often accused, but other powders have been mentioned as well. The theory here is that the primer flashes *over* the small powder charge and causes it to detonate.

In order for theories to become facts, the condition *must* be reproducible under controlled laboratory conditions. And here's where the wheels fall off the theory. Laboratory experiments to see if detonation can be caused with the dreaded 2.7 grs. of Bullseye in a .38 Special have failed to reproduce the effect. Metallurgical examination of guns allegedly blown up from light charges of Bullseye have always shown that the failure is one attributable to high pressure. And, yes, they can tell the difference.

While I learned long ago to never say "never," a more plausible explanation of this theory is the reloader who just can't admit the possibility he double-charged a case.

Proper powder selection is the key to any good load, so the question becomes: why does factory ammo show much smaller effects of powder position? This is information the factories never share—although I'm not sure why— but you can be pretty sure that they use commercial rather than canister grades of powder.

They have an advantage that we don't. They are able to routinely pressure-test ammo as it is loaded, or any time they start with a new lot of powder. Commercial grades of powder are considerably less expensive than those we buy because the powder manufacturers do not have to go through the costly testing and blending process that powder companies must follow for canister grades sold to reloaders. Powder companies must be sure that a charge of powder bought today will give the same results as that which was bought years ago.

So what's the bottom line? In normal shooting, powder position pretty much takes care of itself. But if you shoot straight down, for whatever reason, or try to make *really* light loads— be careful in your powder choices. For the rest of you, this is nothing more than a tidbit of reloading trivia you need to file away in a corner of your mind as something that might possibly matter.



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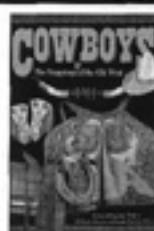
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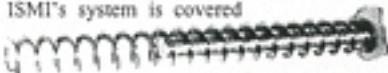
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LESS IS MORE

Continued from page 29

known defensive loads and we calculated their power factor. There is normally very little difference in velocity from one maker to another. The loads chosen are representative.

Note that we only tested factory-chambered cartridges because, according to Alexakos, the ostensible reason for the new power factors is to facilitate shooters travelling without having to carry a small trunk of reloads. Since 9x23 and the other 9-by wildcats are not factory-loaded, there was no point in including them.

Velocities shown are from standard length test barrels and may not represent results obtained from a production gun.

We also decided to test some of the most popular defensive and law enforcement loads in typical defense guns and see if there were any differences. The flaw in this is that there are differences from one gun to another, from one lot of ammo to another. We chose to use a SIG P-228 for the 9mm test gun because it is very popular.

Looking at the information, we can see that the .38 Special won't meet today's or even yesterday's power factor. However, we know that the .38 Special has been imminently useful in defensive shootings for over 100 years. Until the wholesale switch to automatics in law enforcement began in the '80s, the .38 Special was a virtual standard nationwide. The 158 gr. lead hollowpoint +P was the preferred load.

Under the old IPSC criteria, the 9mm Luger was hardly worth considering, but we know that, for a time, it was the most popular caliber for police. The Parabellum is the sidearm standard of NATO, including the U.S. The most popular commercial loads are the various 124 and 147 gr. loadings.

If the highest power factor was the most important criteria in gunfights, the .357 Magnum would be a middle-of-the-road cartridge. Yet we know that the 125 gr. JHP from the .357 Magnum is reputed to be the most reliable one-shot stopper, according to anecdotal as well as substantiated evidence.

Overall, the only calibers to qualify as major in all three divisions—in other words, over 170—were .357 SIG, .40 S&W and .45 ACP.

The only problem with a discussion of power of any kind overlooks the human factor. Power has absolutely nothing to do with this, but self-anointed gurus tell us muzzle energy is the most important factor.

In order for any defensive shooting to have a positive outcome, you first have to make some holes in the target. The greater the recoil, the lower the probability of hitting the target. So where does power fall on the top 10 list of real-world gunfights? It is 10th. The other nine are shot placement.



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Alex Hamilton, former president of the American Pistolsmiths Guild, is the guiding light of Ten Ring Precision, a full-service pistolsmithing shop in historic San Antonio, Texas. Hamilton cut his teeth on a checkering file, his schooling as a gunsmithing being of the traditional kind. He learned how to weld up GI .45 barrels and fit them to rattle-trap Government Models long before there was a Bar Sto barrel to buy or a CNC machine-checked frame to sell. He is the product of an era in which hard work, commitment and a burning desire to be the best separated the cream from the milk.

Today Hamilton continues to dispense custom pistolsmithing services, however, his techniques and methods have improved with the times. Hardly a Luddite, Hamilton embraces technology. He eagerly utilizes new machines, fixtures, tooling and systems to achieve the most efficient means of solving a problem. Yet, there remains an element of black magic in Hamilton's work, something that harkens back to the ancient skills of the masters that have been passed down and still live in the weathered hands of this skilled Texan.

Hamilton chose to bestow a refined and elegant example of Ten Ring Precision's work with a stainless steel Ruger Vaquero featuring the engraving of Jim Riggs. The Ruger revolver has the following work performed by Hamilton:

- Fitted base pin with a locking screw, \$65
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When you include the charge of \$600 for the engraving and base cost of the Vaquero itself, the total value of the Ten Ring Vaquero shown here is \$1,550. Hamilton offers a full range of services for the handgunner, from basic action tunes to full-house bullseye accurizing to self-defense packages on the 1911.

Jim Riggs is a custom engraver who still uses the traditional hammer and chaser technique. His work is priced individually, and ranges for light accents to full coverage museum-quality work.

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SIXGUNNER

Continued from page 78

Most of us can neither afford the six-guns these grips were attached to, nor the grips themselves. However, thanks to the tremendous revival of interest in single-actions during the last decade of the 20th century, we now not only have virtually every single-action from that period of time available once again in replica form. But Tiffany grips are once again available at an affordable price.

And what makes it even more interesting, almost eerie, is the fact that the man offering these grips has the same name as the original sculptor. John Adams, the well-known engraver from Vermont, is applying his skills to the production of Tiffany-style grips.

I recently sent a replica '72 Open-Top .45 Schofield to Adams for fitting a pair of Tiffany-style grips. Working from an original pattern, Adams carves the grips, casts them, plates them, and then fits them to the sixgun. In the process the original backstrap is removed and replaced by the solid Tiffany grip which, of course, adds considerable weight to the original sixgun. It also gives an extremely solid gripping surface.

The end result is a stunningly beautiful sixgun that will certainly gain great attention at any cowboy shooting gathering.

Buffalo Brothers Grips

There are synthetic grips, and then there are synthetic grips. Some are excellent. Some just look plain cheap. Place Buffalo Brothers in the first category. Priced at under \$60 and made for virtually any single-action sixgun, Buffalo Brothers grips come in plain ivory; carved ivory in such motifs as steerhead, buffalo, Hickock eagle, American eagle, and Mexican eagle all based on old time patterns; fleur-de-lis; regular checkering in black or ivory; and even a cracked and antiqued ivory style.

At Winter Range I picked up a Second Generation 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ " Colt at the Buffalo Brothers Cowboy Store and then left it with them for gripping. It came back to me with bone-style grips, checkered with a Texas star in the middle. The butt of these grips exhibits beautiful cast-in coloring that looks like old bone. A great, and inexpensive way, to dress up a single-action.

Herrett's DW Stocks

For most of the production run of the big Dan Wesson sixgun through the early 1990s, a well-deserved reputation for accuracy emerged. However, Wessons were also plagued with rough chambers and barrel ends and cylinder faces that were not parallel to each other.

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they were also the only maker of large frame double-action sixguns that offered a truly usable and comfortable wooden grip. Yes, I know that grips are highly subjective. But it is a rare person that does not find the Dan Wesson large frame stocks to be excellent.

Now that Dan Wesson is under new ownership and producing the best six-guns ever to wear the Wesson Firearms label, the rough chambers are a relic of the past. The barrels and cylinders are parallel. But, alas, the wooden stocks are gone, replaced by fingergroove rubber or laminated grips.

These are high-quality, custom stocks loosely based on the Bill Jordan style.

They are highly serviceable, but I normally require something a little more soul-stirring on my sixguns. Enter Herrett's Stocks. Rod Herrett is offering smooth wooden stocks of walnut or several exotic woods for the Dan Wesson large-frame sixguns. They will fit either current production or early .44 Magnum, .41 Magnum, .45 Colt, or any of the SuperMag frames.

Wesson sixguns do not have a grip frame and normally take a one-piece grip, hollowed out for the grip-frame stud. Herrett's stocks are two-piece, ingeniously designed, and held on securely with two screws. They install easily and if they don't line up you must have installed the interior nut backwards. Flip it and try again. Works fine.

These are high-quality, custom stocks offered in several woods— presentation maple really looks good on a stainless Wesson— and are even more comfortable than the original stocks found on older Dan Wessons. They are loosely based on the Bill Jordan style, but the use of a stud instead of a grip frame allows them to fit the hands of us ordinary mortals who do not have Jordan's huge hands.



Readers can find John Adams at John Adams & Son Engravers, P.O. Box 66, Dept. AH, Vershire VT 05079; phone: (802) 685-0019. Buffalo Brothers produce their grips in the Buffalo Brothers Cowboy Store, 8315 E. Quill St., Dept AH, Mesa AZ 85207; phone: (480) 984-7858; website: www.buffalobrothers.net. And for custom wood grips for the Dan Wesson or any other sixgun or semiautomatic, Herrett's Stocks is found at P.O. Box 741, Dept AH, Twin Falls ID 83303; website: www.herrettstocks.com

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HAND EJECTOR

Continued from page 75

Model 24, still in .44 Special. A model with fixed sights, the 1950 Military, became the Model 21.

The heavier weight also seemed to be the spark needed for the earliest hotrod loads. Elmer Keith's work began here and there was demand from law enforcement for more power. S&W made a .38 Special version of the Third Model which period literature referred to as "a .38 on a .44 frame," which was true, but S&W called it the gun the .38/44 Heavy Duty.

Obviously the heavier gun was suitable for heavier loads, so the industry came up with the .38/44 S&W Special, a cartridge that's ballistically not much different from the .357 Magnum that came later, but identical in dimensions to the .38 Special.

A version of the revolver with target sights was known as the .38/44 Outdoorsman, a name that would become synonymous with S&W revolvers. The 1950 Target was also made in .45 ACP known as the Model 26 and a small number were made in .45 Colt.

To The Present

Retro is in. Nostalgia is fashionable. Last year S&W brought back the most famous of their top break revolvers, the Schofield, and the public's reception was warm indeed for the old classic. This did not escape the attention of the turn-of-the-millennium marketing department, so the S&W Performance Center was again tapped to recreate a masterpiece. We now have a revolver that is most easily comparable to a Third Model Hand Ejector Target. It is officially known as the Model 25 6" Hand Ejector. To this I'd add "of 2001." Inside it is stamped Model 25-10.

It is an intriguing blend of old and new. S&W collectors will often describe guns by the number of screws they have. Don't laugh, it's a handy method. From the earliest days, the guns had five screws: four on the side plate and one just forward of the trigger guard. In 1956, one of the side plate screws was eliminated, and in 1961, the one on the trigger guard went away. Today's revolvers are "three screw."

But the new Hand Ejector has four. The screw at the top of the side plate is back; the barrel pin and fifth screw are not. Does this make any functional difference? None at all, but it just looks nice.

The screws are also proof-positive of the special nature of these guns. Back in 1956, the top side plate screw was replaced with a small "ear" on the top of the side plate that engaged a small cut in the frame. This necessitated a corresponding machined cut in the frame. This

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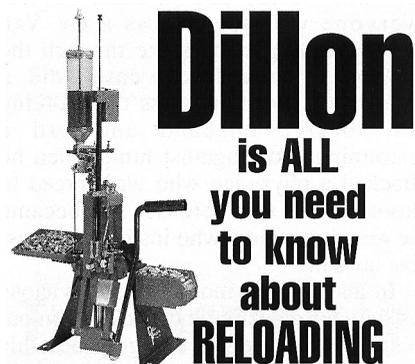
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gun, and similar models to follow, required a special manufacturing run of carbon steel frames, so that cut is missing. Modern CNC manufacturing makes this possible.

The Third Models usually had 6½" barrels, but this one is 6". Again, no practical difference. It is the same smooth taper seen on the older guns and sports a shiny gold bead on the front sight. But that is not for show. Gold bead front sights really do glow in the sun and draw your eye right to the sight. And the gold is set off even more by the dark, mirror blue that you simply don't see much anymore.

The polish job involves several more steps and a high degree of skill. Only a few polishers at the factory are entrusted with these new Hand Ejectors. The polishing shows craftsmanship commensurate with what you'd expect from the Performance Center.

Historically Incorrect

When we look at the frame, the first thing we notice is the most radical departure from historical accuracy. This is a roundbutt frame, a style that was not available in the old days. It does, however, sport a pair of stocks that give it the appearance and feel of a normal square butt. With the exception of the fourth sideplate screw, this frame is thoroughly modern, complete with a frame-mounted firing pin.

When I reviewed S&W's current Schofield, I criticized it for having stocks that were obviously different from the originals. The Schofield was a reproduction, and so the stocks should have been "correct." But the new Hand Ejector essentially amounts to an entirely new model, not a reproduction.

Original pre-war target models didn't have oversize grips, so the stocks don't have to be faithful to anything, but I wish S&W would go back to the target grips of the early post-war period. Those had a Coke bottle shape that feels simply wonderful to me.

The Hand Ejector's stocks are a blend of old and new. The material is a laminate and the shape nicely tapers from a slender top down to a wider bottom. It feels good, although maybe a little thin overall when compared to S&W stocks past and present.

The trigger and hammer on this gun are of the old style, made from forgings, but with some differences. One very interesting thing is the shape of the hammer spur. On pre-war guns, it was a relatively narrow 0.25" with light checkering. This one is a departure from either the standard narrow hammer spur or the wide target hammer.

The spur is teardrop shaped—about .4" wide at the front, and tapering down to a rounded point that's about like the old type. The effect is nice. I've always disliked the wide target hammers, but this

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seems to have the best features of both types. It's comfortable to the thumb and quick to cock.

The trigger is better too. It is a narrow, smooth trigger. It's the same width as the narrow triggers of old, but absent the deep serrations that tend to wear on you during long sessions of trigger-time.

Not A Triple Lock

I first saw this gun at the SHOT Show in New Orleans and so did many others. One observer reported that this is a new version of the Triple Lock. Not so, but it does have a novel method for the forward locking action that resembles the old gun.

Just below the extractor rod on the front of the yoke there is a small ball detent. This is something you'll sometimes see on customized revolvers. The ball detent engages a slot in the rear of the barrel shroud. In effect, it accomplishes the same thing as the old Triple Lock's crane lock, but with much less fuss.

What's missing from this is the forward locking plunger that has been standard on S&W revolvers from the beginning. If it were present, then we would have a new Triple Lock. I wonder why they didn't leave it?

Go Ahead And Shoot It

This new Hand Ejector really begs to be shot. I know that more than a few buyers will salt them away as collector's items, but I hope they get shot because that's one of the best things about this gun. Interestingly, this one is chambered for the .45 Colt, something rare in the real pre-war guns, but very popular today due to the cowboy nostalgia craze.

Factory ammo for the .45 Colt is somewhat limited, but that's okay—this gun is for fun. Nor is there anything we could call a match load. The 250 gr. lead round-nose flat point is a virtual standard in cowboy shooting. Potential defense loads are the CCI Blazer with a 200 gr. JHP, Federal's 225 gr. LHP and Winchester's venerable Silvertip at 200 grs. A total of six different factory loads were tested with an average accuracy of a tad over 2" at 25 yards.

It had been a long time since I had shot a gun with a gold bead front sight, and I'd forgotten how really neat they are. Maybe it's just avarice, but your eye is *really* drawn to the gold. While it is bright, there isn't the sometimes annoying reflection you get off one of the red outline sights in bright sunlight.

This new Hand Ejector comes from S&W's Performance Center and is just the first in a series of new "old" models.

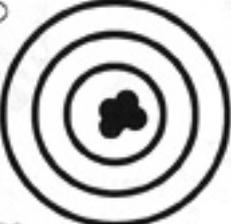


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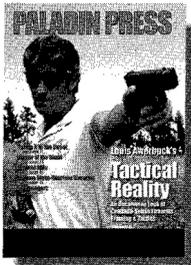
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GUNNY SACK

By Charles E. Petty

AHRENDS REVOLVER STOCKS

The first Kim Ahrends stocks I saw was a beautiful pair of rosewood panels on a custom Browning. Shortly thereafter, a pair of his "Tactical" style went onto my pet Commander. They are there to this day. Now Ahrends has expanded his line to include stocks for Smith & Wesson revolvers.

Before we go further, some purists may fuss about my use of the word "grips" when everyone knows that S&W calls its grips "stocks." Common usage has made the terms interchangeable, in my opinion.

The way a gun feels in your hand is a critical element in whether or not you can shoot it well. Some are too fat, others too thin. For that reason, lots of people try custom grips. But looks are important too, and sometimes grips that look good don't feel that way. Ahrends new stocks blend form and function with some exotic woods into a neat package.

It's hard to describe a feel. But if we use S&W's older standard and target grips as background, I'd say that the Ahrends style falls right in between. The standard grips were often too small, the target style too large, but the Ahrends are just right. The design is just a little square at the front and nicely rounded at the back where the recoil is absorbed. Almost all the sizes are available with or without fingergrooves. To me, fingergrooves never look quite right, but often feel good. That's how these are.



Ahrends revolver stocks are available in a variety of exotic woods for Smith & Wesson J-, K-, L- or N-frames and both round or squarebutt styles. Grips are smooth, but the way the synthetic polyurethane finish is applied gives just a little texture. They aren't slick or shiny, but the wood is protected. All in all, a very thoughtful package.



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GUNNY SACK

By Charles E. Petty

COLD STEEL KNIVES

Cold Steel! What a great name for a knife maker! This California-based cutlery house has a reputation for tough, sharp knives. We'll look at two from different ends of the spectrum—and as to sharpness, I can testify. As I unpacked one, I was insufficiently careful when removing it from the cardboard sleeve and ended up needing first aid.

The big knife you see is the OSS Model. This is a serious fighting knife with an 8½" double-edged blade. The handle is rubber covered with a hand-fitting shape. There's a little palm swell that makes it feel just right, and the texture is very nonslip.

The Kydex sheath is molded so the OSS locks in with a "click" that holds it securely although there's a nylon safety strap as well. The sheath has perforations on both sides so it can be laced onto web gear.

The other is a serious folder called the Recon 1. It has a 4" blade. The handle is embossed with a textured pattern that gives a good grip, and there's a small relieved area where your thumb



goes comfortably. The pocket clip can be moved to the other side, so it's conveniently ambidextrous and can easily be opened and closed with one hand.

Other than the obligatory rope-cutting exercise, the OSS hasn't gotten much use, but the Recon 1 rides comfortably in my right pocket even now. It's still admirably sharp and extremely handy.



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GUNNY SACK

By Charles E. Petty

JR'S HEARING MUFF SWEATS

A couple of years ago, I reviewed these gadgets and thought they were a great idea. You know how miserable it can be to wear earmuffs in hot weather? The Sweats are a simple cloth bag with an elastic band to keep them in place. Well, now there is a new and improved version. These are a 100-percent cotton fabric that looks like the material in a good T-shirt. Sounds almost elegant, doesn't it?

A simple elastic band holds everything in place. So what's to improve? Well, they've changed the material to a more absorbent 100-percent cotton which will be cooler and they've invented the "retaining reed." If simple ideas are good, then the simplest are best of all. This is simple.

There's a hollow in the middle of the earmuff, so when the sweat material goes on, there's no place for your ear and it has to scrunch around the material. The retaining reed goes inside the hollow and makes a little pocket for your ear in the material. It's elegant too.

The reed—that's the same stuff they use to make cane chair bottoms—is formed into a U-shape and the ends are dipped in plastic to form a cap that protects the material from sharp edges.

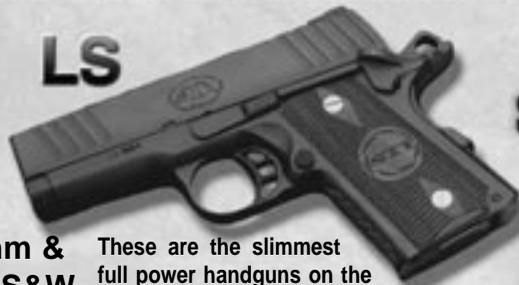
One might wonder if the material would prevent the earmuffs from forming a seal against the skin. In theory that would be so, but as a practical matter you simply can't tell the difference. When you're done shooting the good news is that you don't feel glued to the earmuffs. These are still a clever, economical, gadget that solves a problem.



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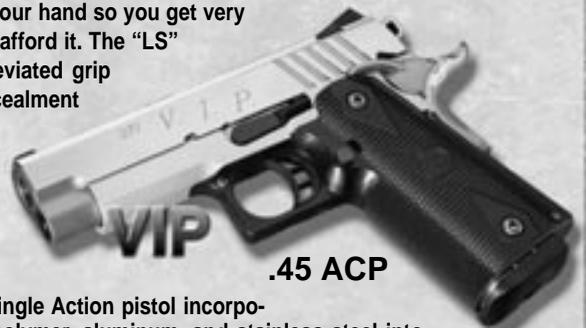
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GUNNY SACK

By Charles E. Petty

UNCLE MIKE'S KYDEX GEAR

Kydex is a neat material. Technically, it's a thermoplastic polymer. This property means that it can be molded into complex shapes. Kydex has become very popular as a part of tactical gear because it is incredibly durable and impervious to almost everything. In run-and-gun training, it is unharmed by rough treatment while maintaining good protection for the gun.

Michaels of Oregon has extensive facilities for injection molding and using that ability they can produce Kydex gear considerably less expensive than similar products.

One of the handiest things about this is the ability to mold things so precisely that the pistol doesn't need thumb-break straps or extensive locking surfaces to provide security to the gun. Obviously this will differ from gun to gun, but there is usually a point on the trigger guard that can be used to snap into a molded spot on the holster.

This may sound a little unusual, but it's one of those things you really need to use to appreciate. When you draw, there is initial resistance until the guard pops free and then the gun is able to move with complete freedom. The fit is close, but once you're past the locking surface, it's fast.

There is a tension screw that can be adjusted from very tight to quite loose. As they came out of the package, all of the holsters I tried would retain the pistol even when turned upside-down and



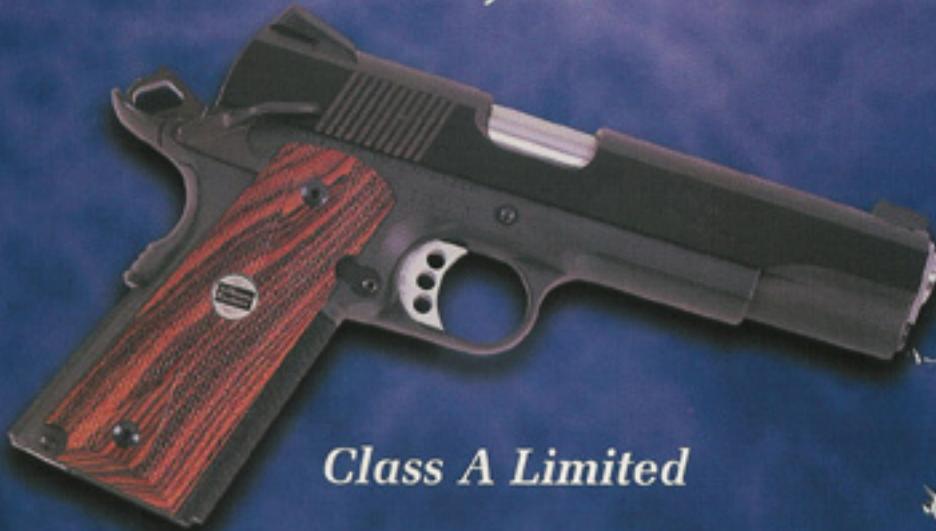
shaken with some force. This is the litmus test, because gun retention is vital. Under normal conditions this should not be an issue.

This time, my testing was limited since I'm a southpaw and Michaels hasn't made the *correct* holster yet, but the gun always seemed to be in the right place considering my limited right-handed abilities. Holsters are available in both belt and paddle styles for most pistols and there are complimentary magazine pouches and handcuff cases too.



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S&W MODEL 27

Continued from page 51

in particular, is the archetype of the high-powered handgun.

Jim Stacey of Albuquerque, N.M., maintains a retirement home for vintage Smith & Wessons. While he was busy recruiting a suitable example for a shooting impression, I busied myself developing a load that would approximate the properties and performance of the original Magnum load.

I selected a generic 158 gr. cast bullet and proved out a load of 15.3 grs. of 2400 over a standard primer. This produced 1,409 fps with only 60 fps variation for 10 rounds in my 4" Ruger. There were no signs of excess pressures. Clocked in an 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ " Smith, the load produced 1,516 fps and 806 ft/lbs of energy. This is remarkably close to the original 1935 load that used the same charge over large pistol primers. This load would comprise an important part of my testing scheme.

The selected revolver was of 1974 vintage, retaining the traditional pinned barrel and recessed chambers. It precedes the globalization of the company and retains the bright blue finish that is characteristic of Smith's premium revolvers. It lacks the finely hand-tuned action of earlier revolvers and has a 4 lb., 2 oz. single-action let-off, while the double-action pulls through at exactly 12 lbs. It has target grips, a target hammer and a narrow grooved trigger.

This revolver has one remarkable feature. There is no indication that the side plate has ever been removed or that "gunsmithing" has ever taken place. This is a rare find. It is almost as uncommon as locating a wild turkey or jackrabbit running around Texas *without* a load of bird-shot under its hide.

Many reviewers complain that the long-barrel 27 is not particularly well-balanced. Elmer Keith sent his test sample back to the factory to have the barrel lopped to 6.5". No such deficit was apparent to this shooter. The long but lightweight barrel and the highly desirable Patridge front sight proved to be important pluses in keeping the revolver on target.

The factors that militated against any show of personal virtuosity in the accuracy department were the heavy trigger pulls, the long trigger reach compared to the K-Frames and modern Ruger revolvers, and the tendency of most of my target velocity ammunition to produce 2" to 2.5" bench groups at 25 yards. My original factory-approximate load was a 2.5", as were the 900 fps loads put up with plain-based bullets in magnum cases. A five-round group of 1.6" came with the Speer 146 gr. short JHP over 15 grs. of 2400 with a magnum primer. This was a 1,266 fps load.

The gun also liked 17 grs. of 296 and the Sierra 158 gr. JHP, which averaged

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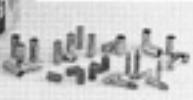


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1,385. The true standout in the accuracy department proved to be the Lyman 358439 over 12.5 grs. of 2400 with magnum primers in .38 Special cases. A bit lighter than Elmer Keith's favorite .38/.44 load, it produced an average velocity of 1,211 fps.

Two consecutive five-round groups went into 1.3" and 1.4", with eight of the 10 within .5". This bullet is the Lyman version of the basic .38/.44 bullet designed by Keith and Harold Croft between 1929 and 1931. This deeply hollowpointed version was, for decades, the prime choice for shooters wishing to exploit the full destructive potential of magnum and heavy .38 loads.

As usual, my shooting impression was weighted toward attempting to make the bullets hit close together from the standing, one-handed, target-shooter's stance. We set up a Texas police target and I commenced with a 10-round double-action string from 25 yards. I then proceeded back to 40 yards in 5-yard increments, firing five rounds of the 1,500 fps/2400 loads at each distance.

At 40 yards, all but one round was contained well within the 12" five-ring comprising a reasonably tight group. Five additional rounds went downrange from 50 yards. All hits were solidly within the torso, with three rounds out of 30 outside of the central 8" group. My 50-yard group had landed three in the five-ring, with the other two rounds heeled-up into a figure eight on the collarbone.

Recoil was unremarkable and the entire exercise was quite enjoyable. Without exception, the expended cases dropped from the chambers with only a slight touch of the ejector rod.

My initial 25-yard bullseye scores were uninspiring. The long barrel hung steady on target, but my trigger control was sufficiently bad as to cancel out the benefits of the long barrel, Patridge sights and oversize target groups. By day two of the shoot, I had gotten somewhat more into the swing of things and managed a 15-round string with only two dropped out of the black into the 8-ring.

These cast bullet loads at 900 fps produced little felt recoil in the 47 oz. magnum. Stacey and I had a great time knocking down 6" plates and flipping spinner targets at 25 yards.

The original Model 27 has given way to a new generation of N-frames. Heavy-ribbed and under-lugged barrels replace the visually pleasing slender barrels of past decades. Ergonomics have supplanted elegance in the current generation of target grips.

Overall richness of fit and finish has undergone subtle alteration with the transfer to new production technology. While the modern inheritors of the tradition often present significant utilitarian improvement, the visual and tactile impact of the Original Magnum makes us wonder what we have given up in the translation.



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|----------------------|-----------------|
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| Bud Blodin | K. McFall |
| G. Riggins | M. Harvey |
| Blade Art, Inc. | B. Maxwell |
| Blanchard's Knives | A. Neely |
| B. Barker | M. Nishikishi |
| K. Cameron | E. Olson |
| B. Conway | T. Palmer |
| "Bl" Crane | J. Pender |
| L. Chow | E. Peltier |
| E. Cook | E. Peltola |
| R. Crawford | Pro-Tech Knives |
| K. Dawson | W. Eagle |
| R. Doyle | J. Roscher |
| D. DeJardin | A. Roscher |
| G. Dixon | M. Salmer |
| R. Dole | J. Schneider |
| L. Donovan | G. Shaw |
| B. Duncan | X. Skelton |
| A. Gibbwell | P. Noel Smith |
| W. Ellis | J. Sorenberg |
| E. Evans | Zeller Knives |
| G. Fowler | M. Szlachowski |
| M.J. Fong | B. Thomas |
| Foster Custom Knives | B. Tiple |
| A. Friedrich | B. Waldrop |
| R. Fryer | T. Ware |
| S. Fyfe | M. Wastel |
| S. Fyfe | A. Washburn |
| S. Fyfe | G. Weiland |
| G. Gillo | J. Whitman |
| "Doc" Gipe | J. Young |
| K. Hara | C. Zetah |
| J.A. Harkins | |
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| W. Heston | |
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| W. Hibben | |
| A. Higginson | |
| E. Holden | |
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POET IN STEEL

Continued from page 73

nifty opening lever on the backside of the blade that is nothing more than, well, slick! The blade is engaged by palming the handle and rapidly flicking the blade open using the index finger or thumb. Like the Silent Partner, this knife has a titanium frame with handle overlays, and incorporates a liner-lock mechanism for keeping the blade in a fixed position.

All Viele folders have a clip on the back for pocket or waistband carry.

Fixed Blades Too

Viele also offers fixed blade knives in his repertoire of tacticals. His Raven model has the aerodynamics of a hummingbird and the attitude of a crocodile, all rolled into one sleek parcel. At 8.5" overall, the Raven features a drop-point blade with a notched thumb ramp opposite the choil. The handle features pinned scales that stop short of the pommel to make room for a lanyard hole.

The knifemaker's Stubs model is somewhat out of character considering its short, pugnacious profile. At 5.5" overall, the Stubs is geared more toward concealed carry. Despite its small size, the knife is more than capable of dirty deeds thanks in part to a curvaceous blade that offers plenty of cutting edge. All of Viele's fixed blade knives are delivered with sheaths.

Hot Property

As mentioned previously, Viele's knives are in hot demand. Viele is a one-man show with an annual production of only 50 to 60 knives. These are readily snapped up by serious tactical users and collectors alike, leaving very few available on the open market. Prices for Viele's folders start at \$450 and go up with the addition of premium handle materials and blade steels.

His fixed blade knives start at \$300 and rise accordingly.

Those on a budget are in luck. Spyderco has had a Viele design in their folder line for years, and more recently Columbia River Knife & Tool has added one to theirs. These production knives feature Howard's keen design at a fraction of the price of a handmade. Choose your weapon!

Howard Viele's knives are considered to be among the elite, but they are not unaffordable. You may just have to wade in the water a bit to find one. Whether you're a serious user or collector, a Viele is a  no-miss proposition.

For more information on Viele knives, contact the knifemaker at 88 Lexington Avenue, Dept. AH, Westwood, NJ 07675; phone: (201) 666-8665; e-mail: hjviele@worldnet.att.net

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GUN RIGHTS

Continued from page 36

psychological, and one philosophical.

First, it is noteworthy that safety nowadays is viewed as something that is provided and delivered, which inheres in the structure of, and is created by controlling, external reality (i.e., banning guns). The citizenry views themselves as consumers of public safety; they expect to have a safe world created for them and delivered to them.

As such, the pursuit of "safety" as a principal goal of government indicates an essential, if not pathological, passivity in the citizenry, indicating that they view themselves as "recipients," and not actors, even in a matter that concerns the preservation of their very lives.

Such a world outlook can arise only in one who has abandoned the idea that his safety is his responsibility, for if he produces it himself, and it is his responsibility, he does not believe it is to be created for or provided to him by others, who are supposed to arrange external reality for him to make it nonthreatening.

His safety is in himself, not in external reality, and certainly not in an illusion that external reality has been rendered safe by the work of police enforcing paper decrees (i.e., guns are banned so I need not worry about being hurt by guns).

Those who view themselves as source and producer of their safety will be concerned foremost with their liberty, for that is the condition needed for them to act and to fulfill their responsibility.

Second, we may view the matter from the perspective of political philosophy. The Founders were schooled in the principles of the common law. As such, they would have believed that the purpose of the criminal law was to provide justice: to avenge or requite wrongs.

Justice can be rendered only after the fact. Since it is unjust to punish someone who has not actually done anything wrong, justice must wait until someone has actually done something morally wrong.

Prior Restraint

Modern law, however, seeks prevention, not justice. Accordingly, it imposes prior restraints on citizens' conduct in order to protect them from themselves. Consider a few familiar examples.

A firearm dealer may not sell a firearm to a convicted felon. Presumably, this has been defined as a crime because it is feared that the felon will use the gun to perpetrate other crimes like assault, robbery or murder.

A citizen cannot purchase or own a semiautomatic assault weapon manufactured after 1994. Presumably, this has been made a crime because it is feared that the citizen will have too deadly a

weapon for robbing banks, going on murder sprees, engaging in terrorism or even starting an insurrection.

Citizens cannot carry guns into post offices or airports, presumably because they might shoot someone or might hijack an airplane.

Viewed from the perspective of the principles of justice established at common law, the use of law as a tool of prevention punishes citizens, not for actual acts that they have committed that are harmful to others and which were committed with an intent to harm or in reckless disregard for others, but simply because of what they *might* do, or because of what someone else might do, later.

Citizens are punished *in advance*, before they have actually done anything that, under common law principles, would be defined as criminal or wrong.

Thus, citizens are subjected to prior loss of liberty and, if they flout the restraints, actual additional punishment, for the commission of an act, not in itself harmful to anyone and which has not been demonstrated to actually have harmed anyone because that event has not in fact happened, but merely because of assumptions, statistical probabilities or fears about what might happen later.

Doing No Wrong

Citizens who have done nothing wrong, morally speaking, are therefore held accountable for a presumed failure to prevent crimes which government itself, with its direct laws against crimes, its police forces, courts and prisons, cannot and does not prevent. All this is the logical consequence of the pursuit of safety instead of liberty and justice.

Only justice, and not safety, is consistent with liberty, because safety can be secured only by prior restraint and punishment of the innocent, while justice begins with liberty and the concomitant presumption of innocence and imposes punishment only after the fact.

The two cannot be combined in a system that "balances" safety and liberty, for they are completely incompatible with one another.

Any attempt to introduce the pursuit of safety into a system of justice founded on liberty must inevitably lead to the destruction of the latter, as the continual erosion of the Bill or Rights in the name of safety amply demonstrates. The Founders evidently instinctively knew this, knew that there is no liberty in safety, and no justice without liberty. They chose accordingly.

And we have chosen otherwise.



Jeff Snyder (jsnyder@ekks.com) is the author of *Nation of Cowards: Essays on the Ethics of Gun Control*, available from Accurate Press, 1-800-374-4049.

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AYOOB FILES

Continued from page 44

It frustrates the officers that each time they intervene, the woman either refuses to sign a complaint, or signs it and later withdraws charges. When separation is suggested, both Hildreth and Rutter reply that they can't live without each other. The cycle of violence continues. The cops know how these things work. A cycle of violence doesn't circle at a level altitude; it climbs higher and higher.

When she objected, he produced a long-barreled, silver-colored revolver.

It may be escalating now. Rutter is hysterical when Lee contacts her. She tells the officer that Paul came home today and told her he had taken all the money out of their checking account. When she objected, he produced a long-barreled, silver-colored revolver and pointed it at her. This time, she says, she'll sign the warrants. Officer Walter Mosley, who has arrived to back up Officer Lee, contacts Hildreth's sister by phone and determines that her long-barreled .22 revolver is missing.

The complainant makes arrangements to go downtown and swear out warrants. Lee returns to patrol, answering routine calls for service and assisting homicide detectives in serving another warrant. All goes routinely.

The Call Comes

At approximately 10 p.m., Dispatch contacts Lee and sends him to meet Rutter, who now has the warrants. These, under local protocols, will be given to the officer by the complainant, and the officer will then make the arrest.

Lee meets Ms. Rutter on the street outside the apartment building, determines that the papers are in order, and waits for backup. It arrives in the form of Officer Duane Brooks, 33.

Nashville Metro has dealt with Hildreth before. He will be verbally abusive, will attempt to start a fight, will stiffen up and resist attempts to handcuff him and remove him. But he has not yet directly assaulted an officer. Still, patterns change, and a gun has been injected into the mix this time. The cops decide that Brooks will cover the back and Lee will approach the front door.

In 1995, Nashville Metro issued the S&W Model 64 .38 Special revolver, but authorized its officers to carry their own 9mm pistols if they preferred. Both

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responding officers have taken this option. Brooks is wearing a SIG P226. Lee, a southpaw, wears a Beretta 92F on his left hip, "on-safe" and locked into a Safariland Level III security holster.

A firearms instructor for both his department and the Air National Guard, this choice allows him to use identical guns in both jobs.

It looks like Dirty Harry's .44 Magnum. Its gaping muzzle is coming up directly in line with the officer's eyes.

The pistol is still holstered as Lee knocks at the door of Hildreth's apartment. The man refuses to come to the door. "It's open," he yells. "Come in."

Reluctantly, Lee swings open the front door that leads directly into the small living room. The lights aren't on there, but light spills in from adjacent rooms, a condition of "dim but not dark" that makes Lee grateful for his flashlight.

He beams Hildreth as he calls for Brooks to come in, and tells Hildreth repeatedly, "Show me your hands." When he can finally see that Hildreth is holding only a cordless phone, into which he is speaking with agitation, the officers enter.

Brooks, the cover man, stands to Hildreth's left, while Lee, the contact officer, faces the man directly. The suspect, wearing only undershorts and undershirt, sets down the phone. Lee explains what's going on, quietly and sympathetically.

"You'll have to put your pants on and come with us," says Officer Lee gently.

But Hildreth blurts angrily, "I'll show you!"

And suddenly the man spins, his hand snaking under a cushion of the sofa behind him. Lee thinks at first he's reaching for his pants, which were in that spot one time before when he arrested him for the same thing. But now Hildreth turns, swiftly and fluidly, and something else is in his hand.

He's Got A Gun!

It looks like Dirty Harry's .44 Magnum, but in stainless, and its gaping muzzle is coming up directly in line with the officer's eyes. It's all he can see: the huge gun, the finger already tightening on its trigger, and the face behind it. Hildreth is grinning exultantly.

And Greg Lee knows he is about to be shot in the face.

It is as if the officer is caught in a sensory deprivation tank. No sound, no sense of touch, only sight to tell him that, as he



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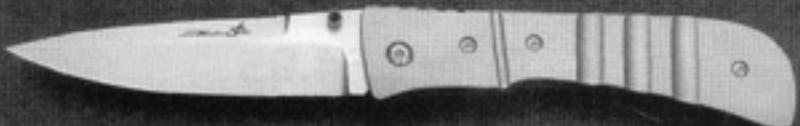
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will himself back and away from the threat, there seems to be more distance between them. Suddenly the grin of triumph on his antagonist's face is replaced by an expression of shock and disbelief. The man behind the giant silver-colored revolver is stiffening, then going down into a sitting position on the sofa behind him, the gun still pointed in an Isosceles two-hand hold at Lee.

And only now does Greg Lee realize that he is firing his own gun, performing a drill exactly as he was trained at Glock school: his weak hand up to shield his head, his strong hand rocking the gun from the leather and firing as soon as the muzzle clears, extending forward as he backpedals and opens the distance.

Brooks says urgently, "Greg, did he shoot you? I saw a muzzle flash!"

Now his Beretta is in his line of vision, still jumping from recoil. His support hand meets his gun hand and he sees the sights for the first time, sees the muzzle dip down toward Hildreth's legs as the shot is fired. He hears the first thing he has heard since Hildreth went for the revolver, a tiny metallic "ting" from a fireplace off to the side.

He sees a huge wound blossom on the side of Hildreth's neck, followed immediately by a heavy gush of blood as if from a faucet, and realizes only now that his partner must be firing too. The second sound that intrudes into the embattled cop's cone of silence is the splashing of his would-be killer's blood onto the floor.

At last his opponent's gun muzzle sags toward the floor as Hildreth slumps forward, landing heavily on the coffee table in front of him, his hand still holding the gun, but limply now.

Man Down

As soon as the revolver's muzzle depressed, both officers have stopped firing. Lee's first thought is, "What the hell just happened?"

Brooks says urgently, "Greg, did he shoot you? I saw a muzzle flash!"

As soon as they've determined that Lee hasn't been hit, Greg radios for a supervisor and paramedics. Duane, on his own radio, advises that neither officer is hurt and repeats the call for an ambulance. Duane Brooks covers the downed man as Greg Lee reaches down cautiously and plucks the revolver from the still hand, holding it by the trigger guard.

How strange, he thinks, that the giant .44 Magnum seems to have turned into a Taurus .22. He instantly understands why,

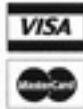
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from his training: tunnel vision had made the gun loom larger.

But normal perspectives are coming back now. The fight to the death is over.

Afterward

Paul T. Hildreth was pronounced dead at the scene. He had been hit with nine rounds of 9mm, 124 gr. Federal Hydra-Shok hollowpoints. Lee had inflicted six bullet wounds, tracking front-to-back; Brooks had inflicted three, the bullets passing left-to-right through the body.

Hildreth had fired one shot. It had gone into the floor where Lee had originally been standing when the suspect pulled the gun. The revolver proved to have indeed been stolen from the home of the dead man's sister.

"We did 2,500 draws in the first week with the SS-III holster, 500 per day,"

The investigation at the scene dragged painstakingly through the night. Lee would always be grateful that investigators examined his gun, counted the rounds, photographed both, then gave him back his weapon with instructions to reload. Other cops elsewhere who had been through the same thing had told him how crushingly punitive it had seemed to them when their guns were taken by supervisors at the scene of a shooting. Nashville Metro's excellent counseling team swung into action, and Lee credits their compassion and insight with helping him and his family through the difficult aftermath of having had to end a human life. Today, carrying on the principle of "courtesy of the road," Lee works as a peer counselor for other officers who have been through similar crises.

After a week of administrative leave, the officers were returned to duty. In July, 1995, the death of Paul Hildreth at the hands of Officers Greg Lee and Duane Brooks was ruled "justifiable homicide." No lawsuit was ever filed in the matter.

Learning Points

Some tell you that you can't learn to draw quickly from the Safariland 070 security holster with its three separate releases, and that you won't be able to off-safe a pistol like the Beretta in a reactive draw. Greg Lee did both, and indexed the weapon and fired and hit, on pure "auto-pilot" reflex without realizing he was doing so. Diligent training and practice had paid off.

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lating the safety and managing double-action to single-action trigger transition, all of which occurred by pure reflex when he needed them.

Lee was four feet from Hildreth when the murder attempt began. There was time for him at the moment to realize he was about a foot too far away to attempt a disarm. As Lee fired, he backpedaled, finishing somewhere between five and eight feet from his would-be killer.

Lee literally "beat the drop," outdrawing the drawn gun.

"At no time do I remember seeing my sights, except when I saw the gun jerk down at my last shot, which turned out to be my sixth," he remembers now. "But my understanding from Duane was that he aimed with his sights for every shot."

Officer Brooks had fired three shots. One entered the shoulder and went straight through the upper body cavity; another entered the back near the shoulder blade and went deep into the chest. The third went through the neck, the last shot of the fight. This was one of only two of the nine 124 gr. Hydra-Shoks that exited, and the massive nature of the exit wound indicated complete expansion.

Pathologists noted that each of the Hydra-Shoks had done significant damage. Brooks, using his sights even at close range, had achieved not only 100-percent hits, but 100-percent dynamic center hits.

The last of Lee's six rounds, jerked low, struck Hildreth in the knee. As it exited, its separated jacket flew sideways, landing on the fireplace. This was the "ting" sound that Lee had heard, during a period of time in which he never heard any of the 10 gunshots fired by himself and two other men in confined quarters with no hearing protection.

Lee's other five shots had all hit solidly in the upper torso. Two of them—believed by some to be the first two shots, since they are consistent with causing Hildreth's initial collapse into a sitting position—went through his heart and lodged in his spine. Lee had achieved 100 percent hits, 83.3 percent of them dynamic center hits.

Reconstruction indicates that Lee literally "beat the drop," outdrawing the drawn gun. This shows us the tremendous speed that comes with a technique applied by a skilled and practiced man functioning at an unconscious competence level. Some time after Lee's first bullet hit him, Hildreth triggered a shot from the .22 that struck the floor.

Lee having moved backward may have saved his life: Reconstruction indicates that if he had still been standing within four feet of the shooter when that

bullet was fired, it would have struck the officer somewhere in the torso. His own return fire also saved him, apparently causing the man who was aiming at his face to jerk the revolver dramatically downward as he fired.

It was the officer's reflexive response more than any lack of ability on the part of the gunman that caused the suspect to achieve zero hits.

Effects Of PST

What police psychologist Walter Gorski defined as "post shooting trauma" occurs even in the most righteous justifiable killings, such as this one. The two symptoms that seem to occur 100 percent of the time are sleep disturbance and "Mark of Cain Syndrome," in which you are treated differently by others after the act.

One writer venomously said that he hoped Lee would be gunned down in the street in front of his children.

Lee confesses to "big time" sleep problems for a long period after the shooting, and he will never forget the brother officer who asked him archly, "Kill anybody lately?"

The family of the deceased did not take it well. The phone Hildreth set down just before the shooting was still connected to a conversation with his brother, who overheard both the shootout and the aftermath, in which emergency medical professionals pronounced his brother dead. Relatives of the deceased flooded Greg Lee— though, curiously, not Duane Brooks— with hate mail.

One writer venomously said that he hoped Lee would be gunned down in the street in front of his children, and in the last seconds of his life remember Paul Hildreth. It required action by Lee's attorney threatening legal redress for harassment to still the poison pens.

No one seriously familiar with the case felt that the 124 gr. Federal 9mm ammunition had failed in any way. The shooting took no longer than four seconds, quite possibly, no longer than two. In any case, Nashville Metro now issues the Glock 22 pistol, loaded with 16 rounds of 165 gr. Winchester Ranger Talon ammunition, .40 S&W.

Reflections on Reflex

The ability to draw and fire— and to move out of the kill zone— reflexively can be a life-saver, as this case graphically illustrates. "Unconscious compe-

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PHOTO BY: ICHIRO NAGATA

tence" can be the fastest avenue toward accomplishing a survival skill set when in the grip of that dexterity-destroying thing called "fight or flight response."

There are no guarantees that unconscious competence will be there for you when you need it. There is no cheap shortcut to achieving it. But Lee is not the first survivor who believes he owes his life to the time he put into training and practicing to cope with sudden, deadly crisis.

In some of the cases where I've been involved for the legal defense teams after justifiable shootings, opposing lawyers have indicated early in the proceedings that they intended to argue a reflexive act could not be justifiable. Their theory was that it did not include conscious thought, which the lay public—the jury pool—associates with "reasonable and prudent action."

Since the definition of justifiability is that it is what a reasonable and prudent person would have done, in the same situation and knowing the same things, these lawyers apparently thought that they had a hook for attacking justifiable acts carried out on "auto-pilot."

That none of them ever actually carried that theory into the trial itself (in my experience, anyway) shows that they were smart enough to think it through and see the fallacy in their own theory, a fallacy which we on the police defense teams were always prepared to shoot down in court. The very fact that the practitioner has performed the dedicated training necessary to achieve an "unconscious competence" skill level with the draw-and-fire movement shows that he and his instructors both understood the desperate, live-saving importance of being able to do so.

The decision to shoot a person in a given situation was carefully made; it was simply made before the fact. If the training had properly encompassed deadly force decision making, as the excellent training of the Nashville Metro Police Department most certainly did in this case, then at the moment of truth the matter was reduced to stimulus/response.

If the defendant officer, or armed citizen, had reasonably perceived the stimulus and carried out the indicated response, then *ipso facto* all the necessary criteria for justifiability would have been met, even if the firing of the gun was itself a purely reflexive response.

Thus, though not yet court tested, reflexive action like this should be absolutely defensible in court. But court is stage two. The street is stage one. You must survive the street before you can even think about the courtroom aftermath. And, as Officer Greg Lee's experience reminds us all, the ability to do the right thing at high speed without conscious thought is worth all the many hours of training that it demands.



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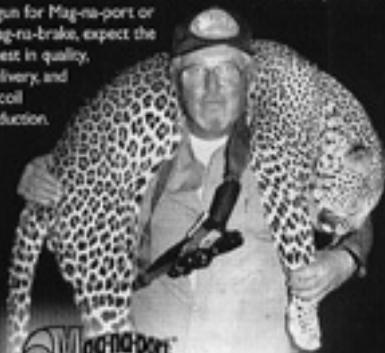
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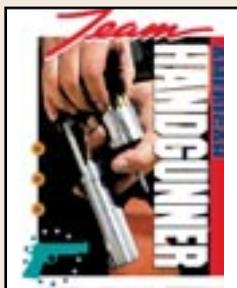
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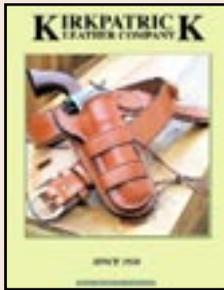
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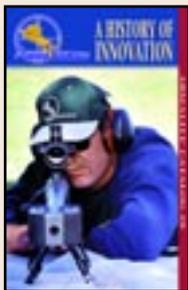
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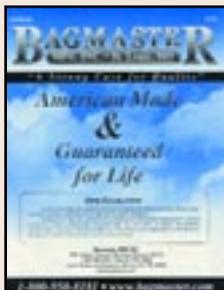
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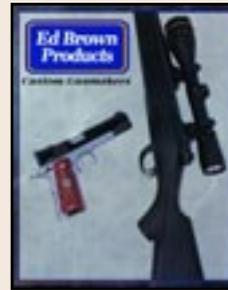
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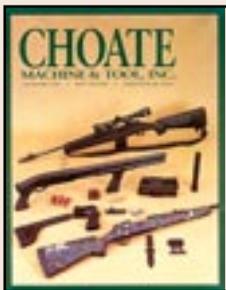
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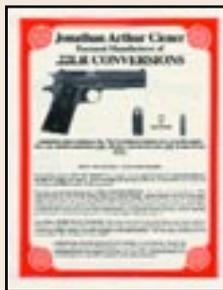
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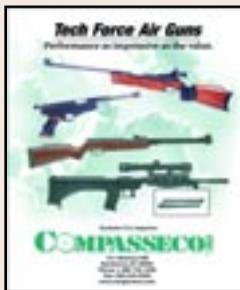
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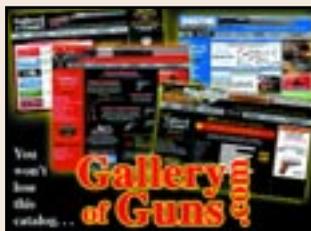
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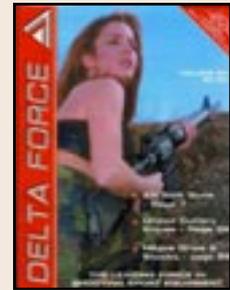
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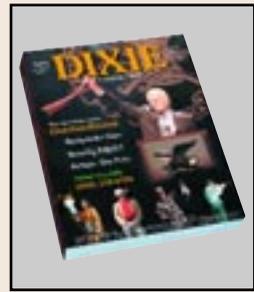
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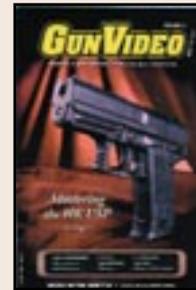
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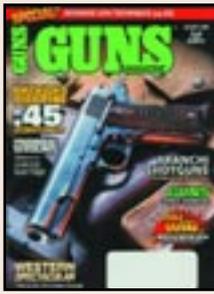
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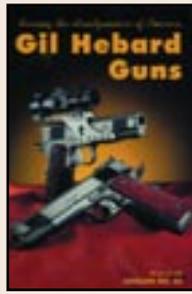
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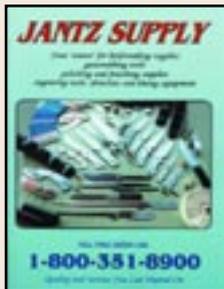
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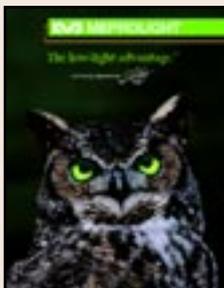
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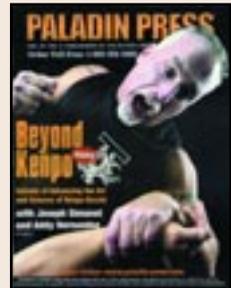
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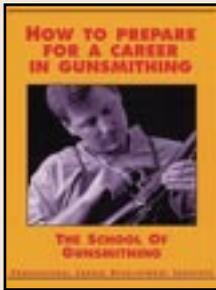


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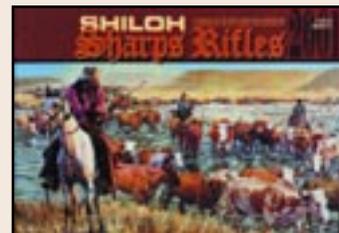
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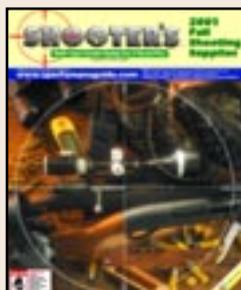
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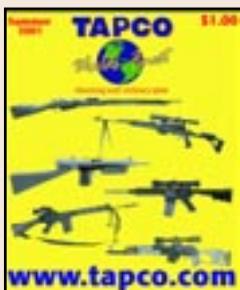
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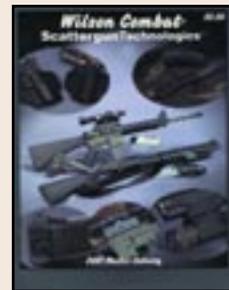
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TAFFIN TESTS

Continued from page 22

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After shooting five different Nosler bullets— 158 gr. .357 Magnum, 210 gr. .41 Magnum, 240 and 300 gr. .44 Magnum, and 250 gr. .45 Colt— I pronounce that these are extremely accurate bullets.

Be advised that Nosler bullets feature a crimping groove that puts more of the bullet itself inside the cartridge case than most other designs so one cannot simply take another manufacturer's data and apply it to Noslers. Either use Nosler's data or start low and work up carefully.

Every load tried in every sixgun shot extremely well. Sample loads include 14.0 grs. of AA#9 under the 158 gr. JHP in the Freedom Arms 7½" .357 Magnum for 1,350 fps and a five shot 25 yard group of 7/8"; 20.0 grs. of WW296 and the 210 gr. bullet in the Freedom Arms 10½" .41 Magnum at 1,419 fps and a minuscule 5/8".

Using the two .44 Magnum bullets in Ruger's 7½" .44 Redhawk resulted in 1" groups with 21.5 grs. of VV N110 under the 240 JHP for 1,535 fps, and 10.8 grs. of VV N350 with a 300 grainer for 1,125 fps.

Finally, the .45 Colt, also in a 7½" Redhawk, shot the same size groups with 18.5 grs. of #2400 for 1,240 fps. Many other loads were tried, and, although space does not permit their showing, be assured accuracy abounds with Nosler bullets.

So there you have it: two entirely different types of bullets from two premium companies. Where penetration is the priority, I go with hardcast bullets. For quick expansion on whitetails, it is a jacketed hollowpoint that gets my nod. Pick the bullet to suit the game and conditions and expect great results.



Readers can find Beartooth at www.beartoothbullets.com or through the post office at P.O.Box 491, Dept. AH, Dover ID 83825 0491; phone: (208) 448 1865. Nosler's website is www.nosler.com or they can be reached at P.O. Box 671, Dept. AH, Bend OR 97709; phone: (800) 285 3701.

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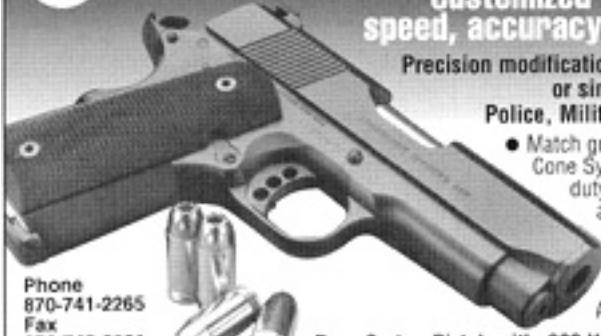
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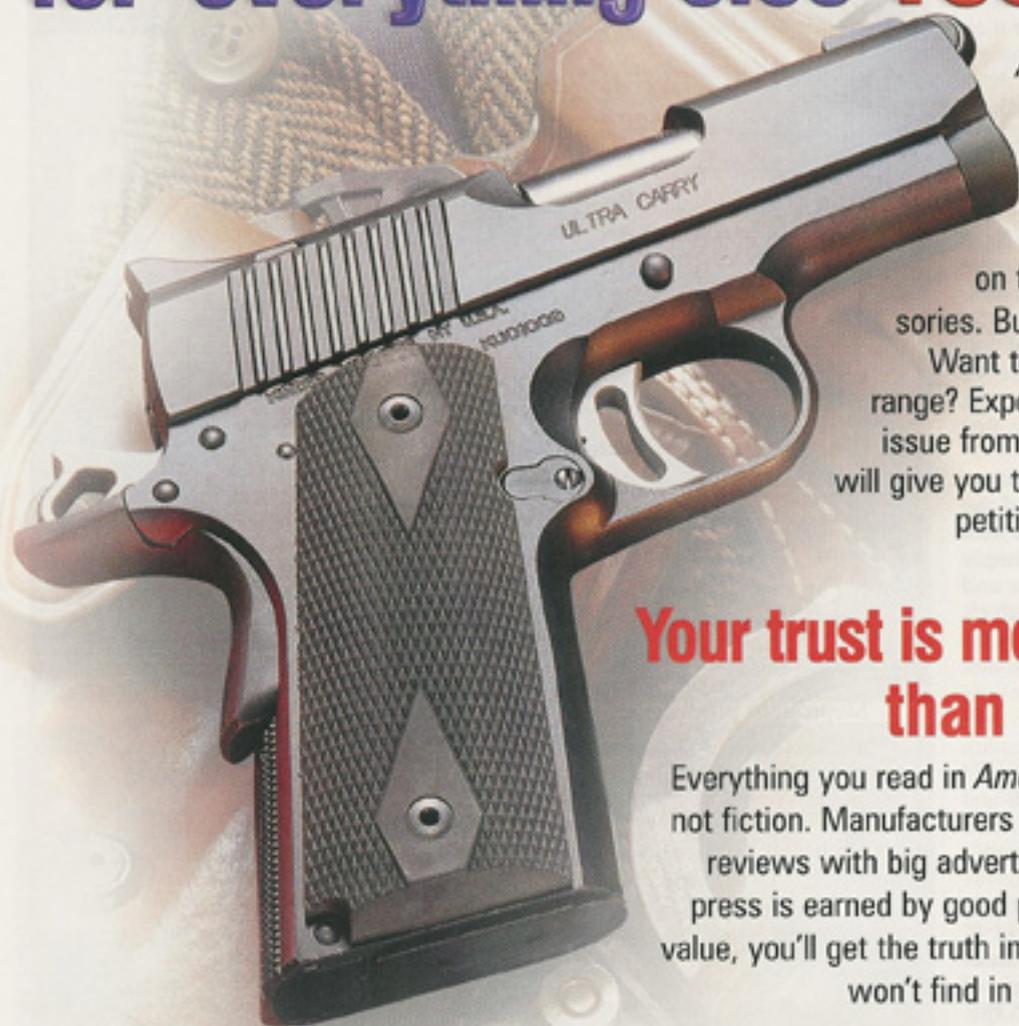
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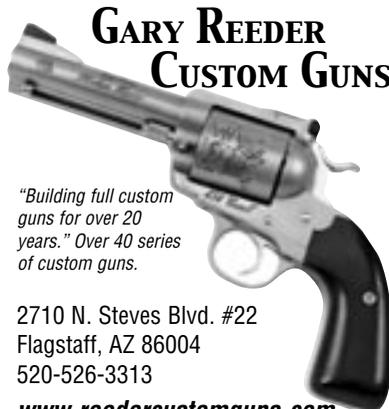


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AMERICAN HANDGUNNER INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

A.T. Custom Gun Works	115	Chapman Academy	82	IMR Powder	45	Phoenix USA	80
Accurate Arms	37	J.A. Ciener	39	Insight Technology	16	Police Marksman Magazine	87
Action Works	115	Columbia River, Knife & Tool	12,14	Integrated Systems Mngt.	83	Quick Fire	100
Ajax Custom Grips	103	Competition Electronics	34	Jarvis Gunsmithing	89	Gary Reeder	115
Alpha Precision	115	Competitive Edge Dynamics	43	K.G. Industries	39	Rock River Arms	81
American Historical Foundation	11	Coronado Leather	101	Kahr Arms	8	Safe & Knife Co.	102
AO Sight Systems	82	Crimson Trace	37	Kaltron-Pettibone	95	Wil Scheumann	90
Arizona Custom Knives	86	Custom Arms	115	Kimber	C4	Sentry Solutions	16
Arntzen Corp.	37	Cylinder & Slide	21	King's Gun Works	105	Shoot Magazine	100
Auto Ordnance	6,87	D&L Sports	115	KnifeArt.com	79	Shooters.com	37
Les Baer Custom	C3	Dawson Precision	89,101,103	Kramer Handgun Leather	86	Shooting Chrony	39
Baird Co.	95	Defense Security Products	43	Krieger Gunsmith	88	Sierra Bullets	92
Bar-Sto Precision	89	Dillon Precision	88	Las Vegas Knife Show	96	Smith & Alexander	102
Benchmade Knives	21	Elishewitz	1104	Law Concealment Systems	105	Milt Sparks Leather	100
Beretta USA	15	Emerson Knives	99	Lee Precision	90	Springfield Inc.	C2
Blackhawk	3	Evolution Gun Works	45	Lightfoot Knives	103	SSK Industries	89
Bo-Mar Combat Sights	37	Fobus USA	99	Lightning Strike Products	106	STI Int'l.	93
Bookspan/Military Book Club	46-47	FTI Inc.	12	Mag-na-port Int'l.	106	STI/AH World Shootoff	91
Broken Gun Ranch	115	Galco Int'l.	14	Chip McCormick	24	Strider Knives	106
Ed Brown Products	94	Glock	17	Meprolight	113	Sturm, Ruger & Co.	13
Bugei Trading	88	Green Mountain Sports	104	MTM Molded	96	Sure Fire	7
Burns Custom Pistol	115	Gun Video	30	Nill Grips	86	Taurus Int'l.	9
Camillus	83	Heinie Specialty Products	97	Oregon Trail Bullet	23	Ten Ring Precision	115
Cannon Safe	88	Heritage Building Systems	37	Oso Grande Knife & Tool	104	Thunder Ranch	98
Carter Custom	113	Heritage Fund	18	Pact Inc.	34	Tighe Knives	101
Caspian Arms	97	HKS Products	36	Paladin Press	90	Universal Shooting Academy	88
Casull Arms	97	Hogue Grips	6	Pearce Grip	105	W.C. Wolff Co.	98
						Waller & Sons	81
						Dan Wesson Firearms	37
						Wilson's Combat	5,81,102

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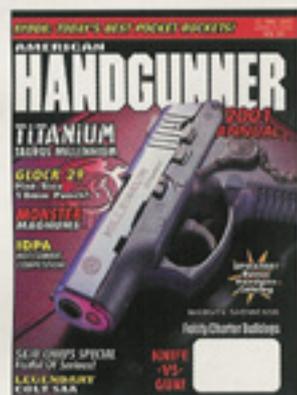
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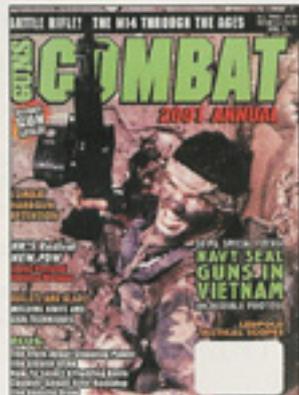


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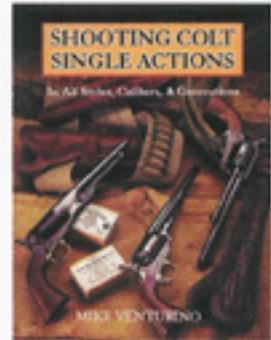
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Write-in votes for Neal Knox for board member in the recent NRA directors election

111,159

Votes for Charlton Heston for board member of the NRA

14,000

"Straw purchasers" of firearms each year, according to an ATF estimate

200

Millions of rounds of 5.56mm that the U.S. Army fires every year in M16 rifles

0.5

Cost, in cents, of each 5.56mm projectile

8

Cost, in cents, of each projectile of a proposed new "lead free" 5.56mm bullet

75

Guns that can be displayed, at maximum, under a McCain-Lieberman bill to restrict gun shows

4,500

Gun shows held annually in the U.S.

2,000

Kmart stores nationwide that will discontinue selling handgun ammunition

Continued from page 122

Smith & Wesson Under New Ownership



If you have not yet heard the good news, Smith & Wesson has been purchased by a consortium of investors, and is once again in American hands. This is greatly encouraging to all who wish to see a repudiation of "The Deal."

Smith & Wesson signed an egregious "deal" with the Clinton Administration, forced to go along with a unilateral abrogation of fundamental issues of gun ownership by their British overseers. It was Tomkins, not Smith & Wesson, that acquiesced to Clinton's Second Amendment coup.

An entrepreneur from Washington State put up the lion's share of the \$50 million purchase price for the Springfield-based manufacturer. Saf-T-Hammer of Phoenix, Ariz., helped put the financing together and its president, Bob Scott, is the new president of Smith.

Scott is a former vice president of sales and marketing for S&W. Chris Killoy, a longtime executive with Smith, was promoted to director of sales worldwide. This is a strong leadership team, probably one of the most experienced and savvy in the industry.

It remains for Scott to tear up The Deal and send the scraps of worthless paper back to England.

THE NEVER ENDING PARADE OF 1911s

Nothing seems to slow the introduction of new versions of the venerable 1911 pistol. At the recent NRA Show we ran across several new ones.

Dan Wesson, newly reorganized after a series of false starts, is debuting a model called the Point Man Seven and Point Man Major.

Kimber is bringing forth the Pro Eclipse and Gold Match SE. The latter is the first Kimber 1911 to be chambered in .38 Super. The Pro Eclipse boasts a handsome

two-tone ensemble with a black oxide finish highlighting its stainless steel construction.

We understand that Auto-Ordnance is not interested in a full frontal assault on the 1911 market, even though the company was recently acquired by Kahr Arms and has new capital. A spokesman for Auto-Ordnance said the company intends to focus on improving its niche product, a semiauto version of the Thompson gun.

Vintage Firearms Art



Conjuring images of the rough and tumble days of America's westward expansion, a new series of classic Winchester posters captures the essence of our firearms heritage.

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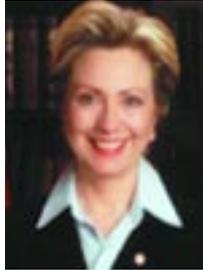
Mama Mia!

The founder of the Million Mom March has been revealed to be an acquaintance of Sen. Hillary Rodham-Clinton and a former public relations executive with CBS News. Donna Dees-Thomases was characterized as a "typical mom" when she started the grassroots organization to protest gun ownership, yet new evidence shows that Dees-Thomases was in fact choreographing carefully orchestrated anti-gun media events.



Donna Dees-Thomases

Merged into the newly renamed "Brady Campaign," nee Handgun Control Inc., the Million Mom March has laid off 30 out of 35 staff members and was on the verge of insolvency when the Brady Campaign rescued it from the financial dungheap.



The Puppet Master

Meanwhile, a speaker at the Million Mom March Mothers Day rally, 2000, has been convicted of shooting a 22-year-old man she believed had killed her son. Barbara Graham was sentenced to 10 years to life for the killing in which she allegedly used a .45 pistol. Ironically, the murder weapon was traced to Graham's son, who died at age 19 in Washington D.C.

This "marching mom" murdered a man with a pistol belonging to her son, who was too young to lawfully own a handgun in a municipality that prohibits handgun ownership even to those over 21.

Graham's lawyer said she will appeal the conviction.

The "Squeeze Me" Gun



Brazilian handgun maker **Taurus International** has joined with the New Jersey Institute of Technology to develop a personalized weapons system, otherwise known as a "smart" gun. The research is focusing on a sensor system that works off the user's hand size and grip pressure.

Other attempts at "smart" guns, none of which have met commercial success, have focused on fingerprint scanners. Too many problems exist for fingerprint technology to work, such as gloves, rain, dirt and blood.

Smith & Wesson has received a \$1.6 million government grant to research "smart" technology. **FN Manufacturing** was awarded \$1.5 million for similar research.

STEYR GETS EVICTED

The BMW motor company has bought the land on which the Steyr-Mannlicher factory is located. The German luxury car giant has given the Austrian gunmaker until the first of the year to vacate the premises. GSI, importers of Steyr products in America, will continue to offer service and warranty repairs, however, parts are limited to stock on hand.

GSI said they expect Steyr to be back up and running after a period of some months.

RUGER WINS HANDGUN OF THE YEAR

The **Ruger Super Redhawk** in .480 Ruger was voted Handgun of the Year for 2001 by the nearly 500 members of the *Shooting Industry Academy Of Excellence*. Considered the most prestigious of all firearms industry awards, the Academy Of Excellence is a "peer recognition" awards program that recognizes the outstanding achievements of companies, products and individuals in the shooting industry.

Marlin Firearms won Manufacturer of the Year along with Rifle of the Year. Shari LeGate of the Women's Sport Shooting Federation won the Shooting Industry award for her work to further the role of women in the shooting sports.

Shotgun of the Year honors went to **U.S. Repeating Arms** for their lever-action .410 which USRAC spokesman Roger Stitt said had a one-word marketing campaign— fun!



Russ Thurman, editor of Shooting Industry Magazine, right, presents the Handgun of the Year Award to Steve Perniciaro of Sturm, Ruger & Co.

Bushnell took top honors for High-Tech Product of the Year while **Leupold & Stevens** continued their run of winning Optic of the Year with their LPS 3.5-14x rifle scope.

Ammunition of the Year accolades fell to **Winchester** and **AcuSport** took Distributor of the Year laurels. Accessory of the Year went to **Michaels of Oregon**. Knife of the Year honors were garnered for the fourth year in a row by **Benchmade**. The Oregon-based blademaker has won Knife of the Year every year since the award's inception. **ASP** won Specialty Product of the Year.

Shooting Industry editor Russ Thurman and Academy director Randy Molde presented the awards during the NRA Show.



INSIDER

Industry Insider

by Cameron Hopkins



Handguns Lead Declining U.S. Gun Production

Firearms production figures for 1999, the latest year available from ATF, reveal that the American gun business continues to decline. In 1980, U.S. manufacturers produced over 5.6 million guns compared to barely 4 million firearms in 1999.

The 30 percent decrease in overall firearms production is primarily due to a dramatic drop in handguns. From 1980 to 1999, handgun production fell by over 1 million guns, from 2.4 million to 1.3 million.

Meanwhile, shotguns dipped only slightly, from 1.3 million to 1.1 million while rifles shrank from 1.9 million to 1.6 million.

A dramatic increase in handgun imports accounts in large measure for the decline in domestic handgun production. **Glock** imported over 200,000 pistols in 1999, various Brazilian manufacturers contributed 154,000 new handguns, German imports accounted for nearly

100,000 units and Canadian pistols (read: **Para-Ordnance**) came in at 14,000.

Coupled with the increased demand for handguns from **Beretta**, **SIG**, **Taurus** and other imported brands, U.S. handgun manufacturers have not been exactly stellar in their new product and marketing initiatives. From 1980 to 1999, **Colt** fell off the map, **Smith & Wesson** lost the law enforcement market and a host of smaller companies went out of business: **AMT**, **Bren Ten**, **High Standard** to name a few.

As we have stated in this column more than once, the U.S. firearms business is in decline for a number of reasons—decreasing crime, increasing restrictions, fewer places to shoot, competition from other activities for leisure time and, most significantly, because gun ownership has become socially tainted, like cigarette smoking.

These days, purchasing a gun can be humiliating. Gun laws stigmatize the

mere act of buying a firearm with an embarrassing “background” check. Alternative recreational pursuits do not suffer this burden. You don’t need to submit your name, rank and serial number to buy a set of golf clubs. No one ever got sued for leaving a 3 iron unattended.

According to industry observers, 2000 is shaping up to be “about 10 to 15 percent off last year.” Handguns are again taking the brunt of the decline, those in the business say. National Instant Criminal Background Checks (NICS) were down 11 percent in July from the same period in 2000.

Only two states reported an increase in NICS applications in 2001—Maryland and New Jersey. Indiana was off the most with a 25.8 percent decline and California was second worst with a 24.8 percent drop.

THE ONE BRIGHT SPOT

Despite a bleak overall outlook for U.S. firearms companies, one bright spot shines through the gloom. **S&W, Ruger & Co.** continues to provide American shooters with quality, innovation, value and timely new products. The Ruger Vaquero has captured the cowboy shooting market. Certainly it can be said that Ruger has best held the line against the imports for our police market. Ruger is also the most prolific maker of hunting rifles. It is a rare corner of the firearms market indeed that Ruger has not identified, studied, and dominated.

Ruger is the number one firearms producer in America, according to ATF production figures for 1999, the latest year available. The Southport, Conn.-based company made 759,751 firearms in 1999, nearly 150,000 more than its nearest rival, **Remington Arms**. Ruger also out-produced **Smith & Wesson**



for the second year in a row to hold the title of “largest handgun manufacturer in the U.S.”

What is the secret? Why does Ruger thrive while others struggle?

A not inconsequential factor is that Ruger owes no money. The company is totally debt-free. It self-insures so it doesn’t have to pay exorbitant liability insurance premiums. Cash is not a problem for Ruger.

But the most significant reason why Ruger dominates the market is because William B. Ruger Sr. has a keen sense of what the American shooter and hunter wants in a gun. An avid gun collector himself, Ruger need only take his own pulse to know what the average American finds tasteful and acceptable in a new gun design.

Furthermore, the company does not brook foolishness from its executives. There is Ruger’s way or the highway. Another way to put it— we will never see a Sigma from Ruger.

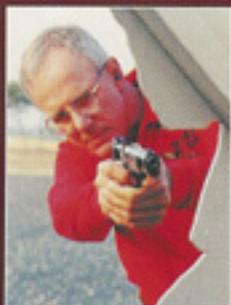
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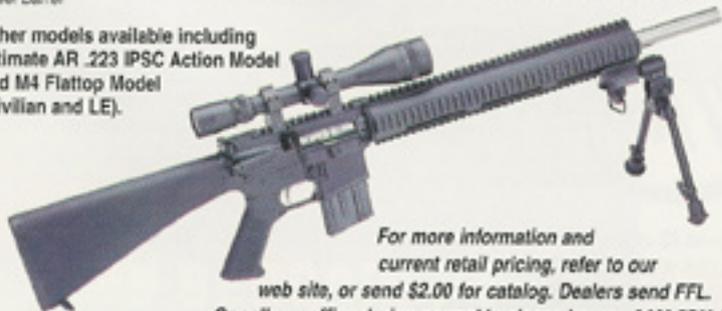
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