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2002

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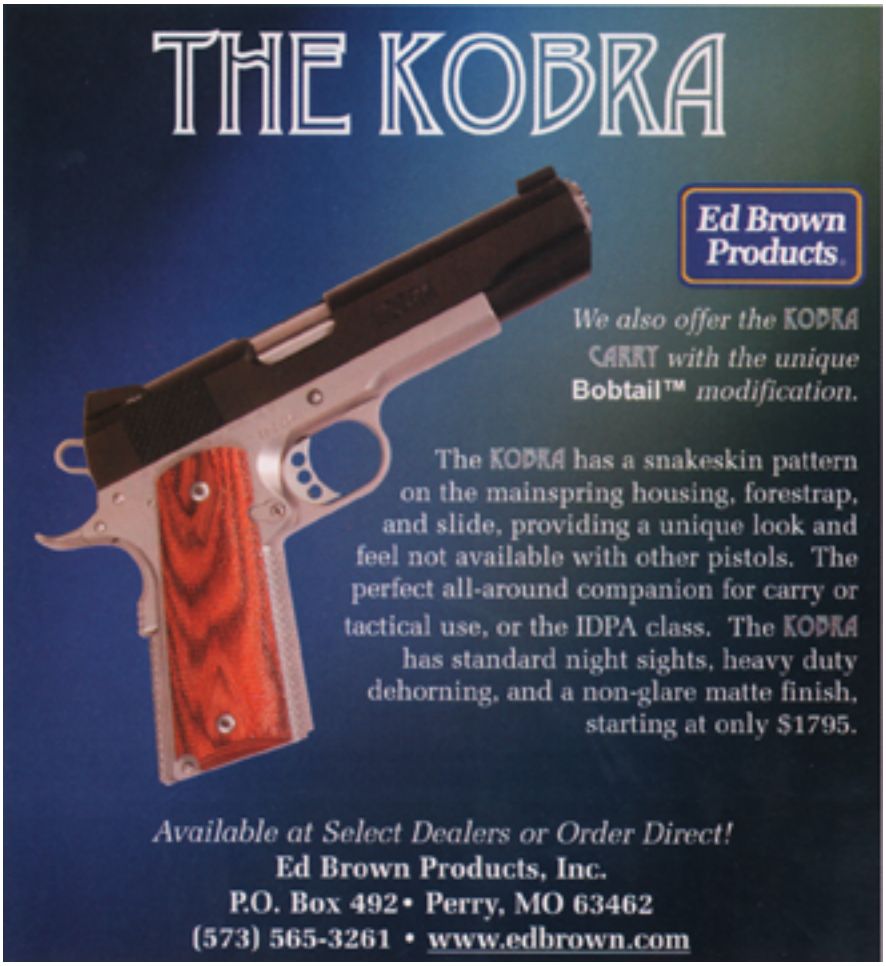

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SPEAKOUT

YOUR FORUM TO PONTIFICATE, PONDER AND PROBE

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

Is the item in "Add It Up" in the September/October issue about Sarah Brady buying her son a rifle for his birthday really true? Where was it reported?

Ben Ballengee
Abilene, Texas

The incident is documented in Brady's book, "A Good Fight." According to Dave Workman in the August issue of Women And Guns, *the rifle was purchased at Hopkins Guns in Milton, Del. Editor*

Prince Of Tears

I think it's damn cruel to expose those of us whose income is less than princely to gorgeous photos of Hamilton Bowen's guns. I was particularly reduced to tears by that M1917 Redhawk, a Triple Lock for the 21st century. And of course you had to sneak in a mention of that .38/44 Heavy Duty converted to .45 Colt. Thanks!

Your "Insider" article was nothing less than wonderful. I remember the emotions I felt when an elderly nextdoor neighbor gave me my first .22, a Stevens Gould Model single-shot target pistol. I already owned an African trade musket and a Japanese knee mortar, but this was my first real cartridge gun, and something very special.

I like the direction *American Handgunner* is heading. From the 2¢ holster to the very affordable Walther P22 (I just got one) to Bowen's unattainable masterpieces, it's a nice mix. And certainly holds my attention.

Peter Caroline
Via email

Deja New

The last edition reminds me of the 1970's *Guns and Ammo*. Diversity of subjects, not too many black guns with obligatory light attached, great revolver articles, and a mix of the best gunzine writers.

Rob Leahy
Via email

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As a student of shooting, you know that the real difference in skill shows up when you compare time-to-hit. You also know that the only way to improve your hit time is by diligent practice. The problem is that without a timer you have no way of knowing if you are moving toward you goal of hitting more quickly or sliding back. Of course any timer will give you your shot time, but you are really looking for more then that. You want a timer that teaches you what you need to know about your shooting in a simple and straightforward manner allowing you to focus on your shooting instead of jacking around with your timer.

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SPEAKOUT

Common Sense Voodoo

I've been a student of Clint Smith's since 1994. His writing is just as informative as are his classroom lectures.

I called him once and said, "Clint, I just bought a super-duper over-under magnum '99 ... What do you think of them?"

"If you've already bought it, then why do you even ask me?" he answered.

Thomas *"850-plus hours at Thunder Ranch"* Lilleberg
Via email

But He's Our Slob

In my opinion, J.D. Jones epitomizes the American slob hunter in mind and body. Please cancel my subscription now.

Frank Calkins
Jackson, Wyo.

In regards to the article "Don't Save The Seals," by J.D. Jones, all I can say is this: no seal ever burglarized my house and no whale ever raped my wife.

James Miles
Chicago

But only because of the diligence of guys like J.D. Jones. Editor

CCW Serious

I'd like to see more letters from readers discussing authors like Jeff Snyder. CCW is an issue that strikes fear into the hearts of lots of Americans. How many people think education, training and raising awareness about the self-defense aspects of gun ownership should be sponsored by the federal government? What does the average taxpayer think the dollars that go to law enforcement actually buy us? I've been a subscriber for a couple of years and pretty much read every word cover to cover. It just seems that now, with the September 11 attacks never far from anyone's thoughts, we can use your periodical to provide more of a format addressing both the pro and con issues of private gun ownership.

D. Buonopane
Boston

Even Chicks Dig Us

That was a very nice issue of *American Handgunner*. Your insider column especially is a keeper.

Susan Houde-Walter
Via email

Forgive Thy Neighbor

Smith & Wesson is back! After the illicit affair they had with the Clinton administration I vowed to have nothing further to do with them. Then I heard they

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may be coming back around under new leadership. I have a Model 24 that malfunctioned so I called them. After a short but courteous conversation I was told I should send it in. I did, they fixed it, postage paid and no fee. In the return box was a note with a subtle but gentle hint that the problem may have been my fault. Welcome back Smith & Wesson.

Ron Hadsall
Yerington, Nev.

Stick 'Em Good

I caught this story on the 11 p.m. news some time ago. An armed burglar breaks into a home and is confronted by the homeowner who is armed with only a knife. The burglar shoots at the homeowner, missing him. The homeowner promptly attacks the burglar and stabs him 15 times, ending his life. Apparently, there are times when it is appropriate to bring a knife to a gun fight.

R. Car
Via email

Half-Cocked Wackos?

While conducting a search of the Web for practical shooting articles, I was amazed to see the Violence Policy Research Center's Website pop up. VPC is one of the largest anti-gun lobbies in the U.S. and has apparently decided to take on the shooting sports as a new "target."

On the Website are quotes from people such as Rob Leatham and supposed experts from different practical shooting videos and books. It appears the VPC is amassing these quotes and adding or omitting critical commentary before posting them on their site to further their anti-gun agenda. Mr. Leatham is portrayed as a man who fantasizes about the day he can be involved in a public shootout so that he can be a hero. And all practical shooters were painted as half-cocked wackos who represent a danger to society. As if it is only a matter of time before each of us snaps.

As an IDPA member who might also lose my mind at any moment, I would like to thank a few people before I go. First, I'd like to thank Mr. Bill Wilson for the IDPA, and then Col. Jeff Cooper for introducing quality firearms training to the public. Third, I'd like to thank Massad Ayoob for introducing us to the important responsibilities of owning and using a firearm. Also thank you to Mr. Leatham, who is an inspiration every time I go to the range. Lastly, I would like to thank *American Handgunner* for introducing me to these guys. Thanks fellas.

Sean Mann
Fort Bliss IDPA; El Paso, Texas

Filipino Handgunner

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mine. It's been three years since I started purchasing your magazine, and it has helped me choose the right firearm, ammunition and accessories.

Once again thank you for the help your publication has given the firearms community here in the Philippines. More power to your magazine.

Alvin C. Gilladoga
Manila, Philippines

Think Twice

Tell the writer advocating airline passengers carry guns aboard airplanes to give a look-see to your article about the law-abiding citizen's accidental discharge with his Kel-tec.

I can picture it now. I'm sitting in my window seat reading the in-flight magazine when the nice gentleman in the seat next to me stands up patting his front pocket for his money clip to pay the stewardess for his vodka and tonic. Bang, the .32 caliber bullet passes through my magazine and my complimentary bag of peanuts and punches a neat, round hole in the Perspex window. Which then explodes, sucking me and my magazine into the thin, cold air at 35,000 feet.

Trust me, I'm all for law-abiding citizens carrying concealed weapons. But you have to accept the fact some people haven't gotten parallel parking and blinking red lights down yet.

George Eliseo
Via email

Magic, Lucky Pants

Roy Huntington's article about his friend accidentally shooting a hole through his pants pocket sure struck home. In 1965 I was 21 and I bought a single-action six-gun and a holster for some quick-draw. I thought I knew how the Old West gunfighters did it.

As my confidence grew so did my speed. Then my thumb slipped and the gun went off before it cleared the holster. I felt it thud into my foot. I waited for the pain and blood sure to come. I checked my kneecap. Still there. My foot wiggled and there wasn't any blood in my boot. Body parts seemed to be working. Had I literally, albeit unwillingly, dodged the bullet?

I traced the bullet's path. First it went through the bottom of my holster and through my pant leg. It then crossed over my knee and went down my leg on the inside of my pant leg. It came back out at the ankle and went into the ground beside my boot.

My appreciation for firearms was not diminished. But my sense of humility had grown tremendously.

J. David Woodend
Rockville, Md.

I had decided to lower the boom on a growing rat population so I packed up my little .22 auto, a flashlight, and a couple of loaded clips. I left the house and loaded my gun and when I reached the place the rats were living I slipped a loaded clip into the Ruger and chambered a round. I reholstered my weapon with the safety off and was amazed, shocked and dismayed when it went off. In the holster! I had a bullet hole in my pants just below the bottom of the holster. But when I got back to the house I found no sign of a bullet wound.

I had reholstered my loaded gun in the dark. The safety strap, which has a natural inclination to curve towards the gun, slipped through the trigger guard and bridged between the two sides of the holster. So that when the gun was seated the trigger was pressed, firing the gun.

I learned several things from this. First, you don't get very many chances like this one. And never holster a loaded, cocked gun.

Jim Brown
Via email

Damn 1911s

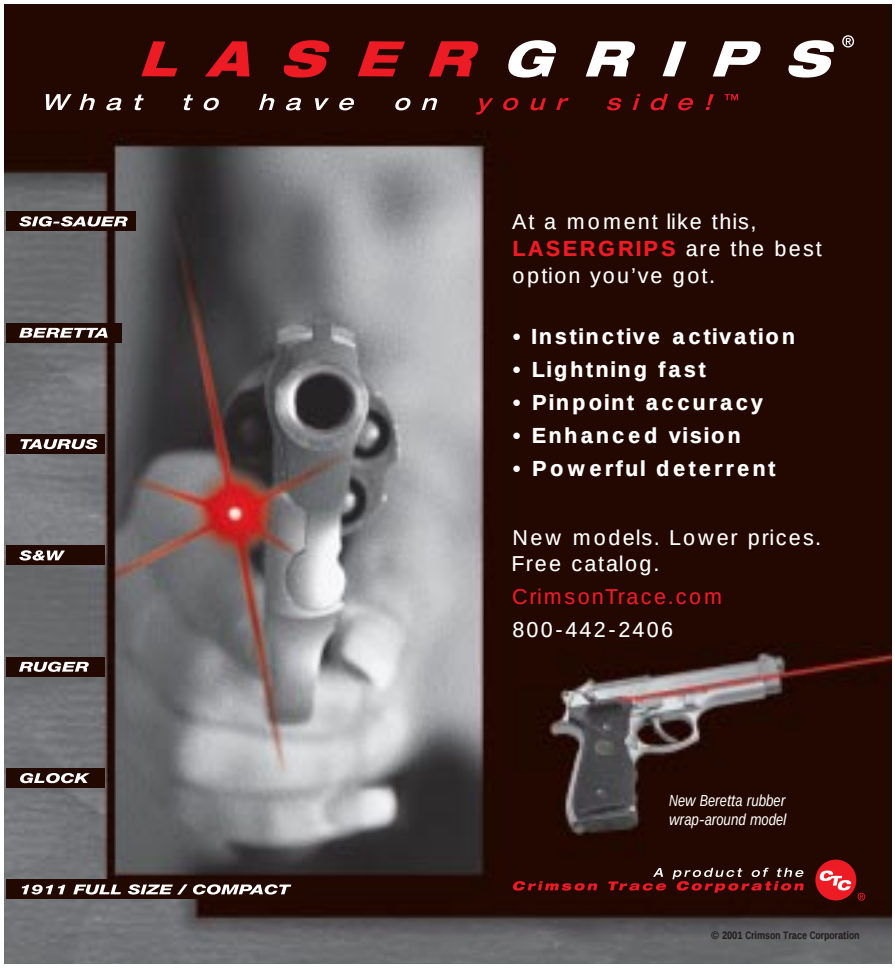
I am a longtime subscriber. And you're the best magazine. But I always thought you pay too much attention to 1911 A1s and their clones. Now I have to clap my hands about the two items published about the Luger. Thank you for not forgetting the classics, and please remember to continue remembering the old stuff.

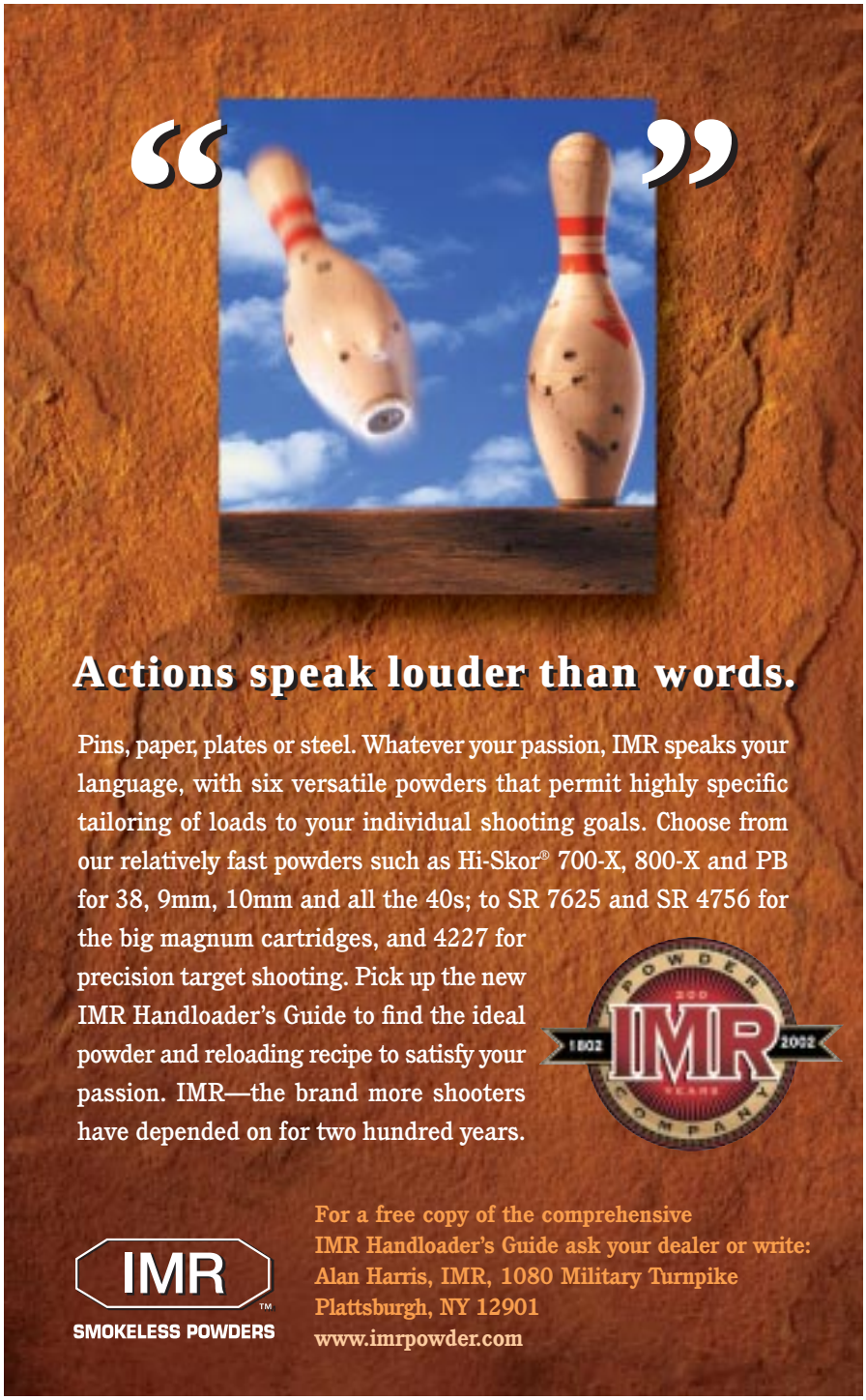
Nello Casoni
Uruguay

Deep Penetration

I just read your column, "Penetration Testing Big Bore Handguns." It's fascinating reading, though I can't say I'm surprised at the results. Randy Garrett was kind enough to email me some ballistic information last October, and he filled me in on the findings at Linebaugh's seminar.

In my opinion, Taylor and Wooters were closer to the mark than those who rely on energy alone. Kinetic energy is a decent thumbnail indication of a cartridge's power, if that's all you have. But I believe it places disproportionate premium on speed, unfairly handicapping those big, heavy, long bullets you and I seem to prefer. A cursory glance at the sidebar penetration chart in your article shows that it's not speed that puts the .45-70 and .500 Linebaugh at the top of the class. Other factors play in the complex field of terminal ballistics, and those who presume to hunt animals that bite back would do well to heed them.





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There is a fanatical quest for speed in today's shooting world unlike any we've seen since Roy Weatherby's heyday. But I've always felt if something is worth putting a whole through, it's worth putting a big whole through. To pique my interest in cartridge, tell me it starts with the number 4, looks like it could have been shipped in a cigar box without rattling around too much, and is about 100 years old. Then my ears really perk up.

Thanks for serving as such an able representative of us old-fashioned (but not quite as addled as some would believe) shooters.

Shane Wrixon-Becher
Vista, Calif.

Return To Practicality

Having just read your May/June issue, I felt like commenting in support of Rodney Martin's opinions regarding the great IPSC-IDPA debate. IPSC erred many years ago, I feel, when you needed to carry around an extension cord in your range box to power the multitude of goodies you could bolt onto what used to be a practical pistol.

I stopped shooting IPSC back in the early '90s in favor of metallic silhouettes and Olympic Free Pistol, when the techno-wars were at their height and gadgetry ruled. I had a lightly customized 1911-A1 that I saw no need to ruin as an expedient to competition. About the same time I first heard of Tactical Pistol, and later IDPA. Happily, ISPC saw what was happening, and today's unlimited, limited, standard, production and revolver classes have more than made amends. The practicality, at least in firearm design, has returned.

I.J. Larivers
Cleveland Pistol Club
Harare, Zimbabwe

Nosy Northerners, Eh?

My wife and I recently took a cruise to Alaska that originated in Vancouver, requiring we pass through Canadian Customs. The custom's agent asked my wife if we had any guns at home. She naively answered, "Yes." And then he asked if we had concealed weapons permits. And she said, "Yes." He asked if there was any chance we were transporting guns into Canada. This I can understand, and she said, "No."

Unfortunately, I did not hear these questions. Because if I had, she knew I would have been outraged. And she was right, I was infuriated. What we legally have in our home is no business of any foreign official, or domestic for that matter.

Bill and Jan Mains
Casa Grande, Ariz.

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Step up and take aim with the U22 Neos from Beretta. This revolutionary new American-made pistol is going to change the way you think about .22-caliber handguns.

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All Beretta pistols come with a cable lock to aid in safe storage.

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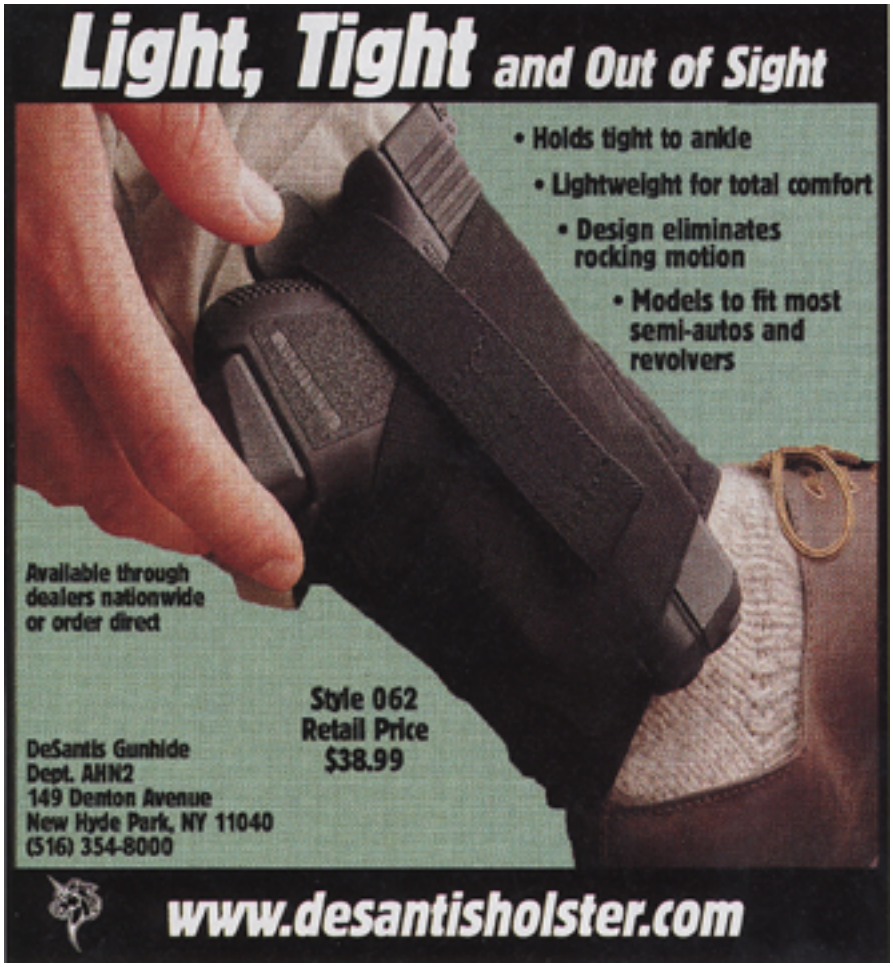

SPEAKOUT

Last Straw

I will renew my subscription to your magazine only after you realize the 1911 is not the only gun your readers are interested in. Not all of us can afford $2,000 highly-specialized pieces. Most of us enjoy going out and shooting up a tin can or some semi-formal target shooting. Some guns right out of the box have proven to be reliable for duty use without the expenditure of time and money to make the 1911 equal them.

James C. Smith
Delta, Ohio

Questioning Ayoob

My wife is an experienced physical-education teacher who knows her kinesiology. She brought this issue to my attention (July/August 2002).

The Rogers flashlight technique requires the user to squeeze the whole weak-hand to operate the butt-end on/off button of a Surefire flashlight. In a tense or panicked situation, it is highly probable that even an experienced shooter will reflexively squeeze with both hands at the same time, since the two kinesthetic acts are both similar and symmetrical, and we tend to automatically do symmetrical things with similar body parts. When the strong hand squeezes, it is highly likely that the trigger finger of that hand will also squeeze as part of that symmetry, especially if the shooter has developed the bad habit of "milking" his pistol.

Thus it is very possible to experience an accidental discharge while turning the flashlight on or off.

In the Harries technique, it is the thumb, and only the thumb, of the weak hand that operates the flashlight's switch. It is much easier to separate the action of the weak-hand thumb from that of the strong-hand index finger (or even the strong hand, if the entire shooter "milks" his pistol), since the two actions require very different kinesthetic movements and possess no symmetry. Thus with the Harries system, light-switch modulated accidental discharges are much less likely.

Of course, I'm prejudiced about this. Mike Harries was my dear friend, shooting buddy, and long-time pistol coach.

Steve Henigson
Eastsound, Wash.

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"As a hobbyist and shooter, I needed to refresh my memory on the 1911 .45 A1. 25 years ago I was a Armorer in the U.S. Army, I wish I had your videos then. I learned more things on your video in 2 hours about the .45 than in the Army's armorer school." Russell Aumann

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PISTOLSMITHING

Alex Hamilton

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON PISTOLSMITHING TECHNIQUES

.22 Rarified Aire

Sucking accuracy out of a semiautomatic pistol is a pretty straightforward proposition. The custom pistolsmith simply welds, hammers and fits everything together so tight it takes two donkeys and a mule to pull the slide back. To get a revolver to shoot heart-shaped groups involves a complex relationship — the marriage of bullets to throats to barrel bores and crowns. Both are a complicated mess some gunsmiths never master.

Getting a .22 caliber semiauto to shoot is a whole different ballgame, especially if you want it to shoot the center out of a target perched at some unreasonable distance. Few pistolsmiths will tackle a .22 to try and make it shoot under 1" at 50 yards. One superlative gunsmith, and member of the American Pistolsmiths Guild, who can force a .22 to shoot against all odds is Lou Lombardi of Falcon Machining in Scottsdale, Ariz.

If you want to shoot sub 1" groups at 50 yards, you must have ammunition that does the job. Quality match-grade ammunition such as Eley or Federal Gold is expensive, but there is one brand, Aquila, that will hold .5" groups (or better) consistently when shot from a test barrel. Aquila's plain-old standard velocity is Eley primed ammunition, made in Mexico and priced less than a buck for a box of 50. But it shoots as good as Eley Tenex. Give it a try and upon firing you'll instantly smell the Eley priming material.

This Volquartson is serious .22 medicine.

Photo: Ichiro Nagata

ATTAINING THE UNATTAINABLE

In order for your Model 41 S&W or Ruger Mark IV to shoot sub-1" groups at 50 yards, here is what you must do.

Line your barrel or replace it completely with a high-quality match grade rifled one, in either European .114" land diameter or a .116" ID American bore.

Then, the crown must be made perfectly concentric to the bore. It makes no difference if it is 90, 45 or 11 degrees, but it must be concentric and sharp if the bullet is going to leave the bore evenly with equal pressure on all sides.

When you are shooting match ammunition in tightly cut match chambers, one drop of oil on the top of the case of the top round will help. This facilitates the loading sequence, keeps the fouling soft, and makes cleaning easier.

The S&W Mod. 41 is the result of careful reworking and is what the doctor ordered.

Tight is Good

Factory .22 caliber barrels in pistols such as Smith's Model 41 are supposed to be built for target shooting or to accuracy standards a cut above the norm. But, they are still chambered to handle all brands of ammunition from the cheapest and poorest quality to the finest. That's the way it has to be in today's world of generalities. Manufacturers cut rimfire chambers — the heart of rimfire accuracy — with an exceptionally long chamber and a 50 lead (the point at which the bullet enters the rifling) in front of the bullet so all brands of ammunition will fit.

Chamber diameter is also left on the generous side. Match chambers, on the other hand, are cut by a custom pistolsmith to tight tolerances with a lead that will allow the .22 rimfire cartridge to chamber easily in a semi-automatic pistol. If the gunsmith uses a plain old "match reamer" made for a rifle, the .22 cartridge will come within 3/32" from fully seating and the force of the semi-automatic bolt will not have enough energy to push the bullet into the rifling as does a bolt-action rifle. The solution to this problem is to cut a custom chamber with a 10 to 20 lead, such as those cut by a Bentz reamer, which are available from all reamer manufacturers.

The Bentz reamer was developed to cut chambers so the bullet would be held tightly in the chamber with minimal wobble. A 1.50 lead means the bullet gradually enters rifling, and the cartridge has no problem seating when the bolt closes. The only difference between the Bentz reamer and other tight chamber match reamers, such as the Winchester Model 52D, is the lead. With the tight match chamber you may have trouble getting some ammunition to seat, such as heavily waxed Eley Tenex.

For more information, contact Falcon Machining, phone: (602) 482-7333.

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HANDLOADING

Charles E. Petty

SAGE ADVICE FROM THE HANDLOADING GURU

Lilliputian Reloading

I can't begin to count the number of times people have told me they would like to start loading but it just took more space than they had to offer. Loading setups can occupy a lot of space — but they don't have to. A few square feet of temporary floor space and part of a closet shelf will do. If you've got someplace to put one of those 2'x6' workbenches from the home improvement store you a have a luxurious amount of room and probably don't deserve it.

Okay, maybe you do.

One misconception is that you have to have a bench that's both heavy and unmovable. Ah ha, not so. If one was to do major reforming operation with large cases, or perhaps bullet swaging, then it would be needed. But, even full-length sizing of standard rifle cases doesn't take a lot of effort. And sizing handgun cases is almost effortless.

Another misconception is that everything must be permanently mounted. In fact, nothing has to be. A pair of stout "C" clamps will hold a press for all but the most strenuous work. RCBS has a handy die-cast aluminum base with drilled and tapped holes that will mount a wide variety of tools. I put powder measure stands on a small square of plywood and use a "C" clamp to hold it on the bench. When not needed it sits out of the way under the bench.

Several companies offer simple pedestal mounts that occupy little space and can be put in a closet when not in use. Midway USA has a "Portable Reloading Bench" that only weighs 5.25 lbs. But it has a base that's 17.5" in diameter, which provides a very stable platform. It's 27" high, which is a good bench height, and it has a top platform that is 9"x9" and can hold a variety of clamped goodies.

THE KIT AND KABOODLE

Low-tech C-clamps work wonders when space and budgets are tight.

Yet another argument we hear is that it costs too much to get started. That's almost always an excuse rather than a reason because regardless of how cheaply you can buy factory ammo, you can load it for less. In actuality, a very complete loading setup can be bought for less than the cost of a modestly priced gun. And the savings start immediately.

The first-time buyer of loading equipment faces a lot of decisions and has lots of opportunities to get it wrong. The beginner doesn't need the same sort of sophisticated stuff a benchrest shooter uses, but it's an equally large error to be too cheap. Most loading equipment will last a lifetime so it might be wise to spend a little more up front to avoid having to replace unsatisfactory gear later.

All of the major makers of loading equipment: Hornady, Lee, RCBS and Redding offer kits containing basic equipment. Some have extensive packages that really do have everything you need. The hardest part is going to be deciding whose stuff to buy. I have gear from just about everyone and use things as much by habit as anything else. My bet is that anyone who is thinking about taking-up reloading knows someone who already reloads. They can help you in a couple of ways. Ask them what they bought, why they bought it, and would they buy it again. Then badger them out of an hour or so of hands-on instruction. I can write 'till I'm blue in the face talking about something your buddy can show you in five minutes.

It's Only Money...

The Midway Portable Reloading Bench in a tidy package.

The marketplace is a bewildering mass of selling and pricing practices. When I was getting started in reloading there was a gun shop one town over that carried everything a loader could want at prices that were considerably below those charged in hometown shops. So every month or so a bunch of us would take a ride to get what we needed.

Today you can almost always find stuff for lower prices at mail order houses, but by the time you include shipping costs it may not represent a big savings. This is one of the best areas in shooting where comparison shopping can pay, but you must factor in the value of personal service and instruction available at local stores. This can often offset the slightly higher prices they have to charge.

But, there is one ironclad buying rule: Never buy equipment based on price alone. If the inexpensive item doesn't end up meeting your needs you'll surely replace it and have wasted those original dollars. Sort of like those $5 socket sets that are so hard to turn down.

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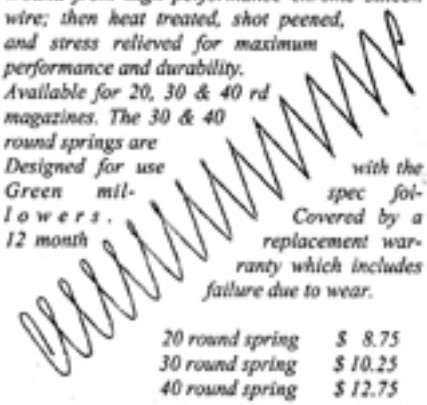

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HANDGUNHUNTING

J.D. Jones

TIPS, TECHNIQUES AND POLITICAL-INCORRECTNESS

One Hump Or Two?

Camels were introduced into Australia during the exploration days of the great Australian desert. Like the Australian donkey, they eventually became feral animals and proliferated. Donkeys are a terrible problem for ranchers in some areas of Australia. I was on one station (ranch) where the owner wanted 16,000 donkeys killed. There is simply nothing to do with them but eradicate them if a rancher is to survive.

The Australian Asian Buffalo has been pounded and it numbers greatly reduced. Camels, however, while not having spread in territory or numbers as the donkeys (and wild horses), are still a significant problem to ranchers. But more on these dumb dromedaries later.

It Ain't All Romance

Originally, the Professional Hunter — now simply popularly called the PH (and definitely not the politically-incorrect White Hunter) was an individual who hunted and killed excess animals professionally, wherever they were found. By the way, "White Hunter" was simply a correct term to describe a white hunter, as there were, and are, plenty of black hunters too, called, oddly enough, "Black Hunters."

Like it or not the job exists today in this country on a very professional basis. I know this for a fact, as I supply many of them with suppressed firearms and am aware of some of the jobs they do. They may have operated in your backyard without your ever knowing it. They thin deer herds, coyotes, mountain lions and more.

The Hollywood version of King Solomon's Mines, with Stewart Granger, stereotyped Granger as the typical White Hunter. Handsome, impeccably dressed, suave, debonair and brave — as well as nailing the wealthy client's wife while the poor client is being trampled by a buffalo. That may be a true picture of some PHs, but not many. I've met my share who were filthy, unshaven, sitting with a beer in one hand and cigarette in the other with their nuts hanging out of their shorts. The real PH falls somewhere in-between the extremes. Don't we all?

12,000 Miles To Smoke A Camel

Robin: Camel Culling Queen

Back to those nasty feral camels. One Australian trip was special. Alan's wife was a petite, sophisticated urban executive who was not a shooter and had never hunted or even been in the outdoors. Tents, donkeys and the outback were as foreign to her as staying in anything less than a four star hotel would be. Alan bought her a lightweight, light recoiling .257 JDJ SSK Contender and gave her some shooting instruction. Like most women who do not fear guns and are given excellent instructions, she listened and learned quickly. Apprehensively — Robin was ready for the unknown.

Flying to Australia sucks. First to Honolulu, then Sydney, then Darwin, then a charter into the outback to a dirt strip. Next came hours in the truck to camp, which turned out to be bare dirt as, of course, the PH was too busy — read "lazy" — to erect a camp prior to our arrival.

On day one it was decided Robin was to shoot first, if a suitable opportunity presented itself. It did, and she knocked over eight donkeys with eight shots with the 100 grainers from the .257 JDJ. An hour later, three camels came running at us. I hit one in the center of the chest with a 270 gr. Hornady with the .375 JDJ, which caused quite a commotion. Two veered toward our right and sped-up. I reloaded, while keeping my eye on the one that was down. Suddenly — BLAM — from right behind me. I looked around just in time to see a camel going end over end from a shoulder-spine shot and an intense look on Robins face, turning into a big smile as she reloaded.

That was ten years and two kids ago. Robin is still petite, still beautiful and still hunts. It's always satisfying to see a woman embrace newfound abilities, especially when they involve shooting and hunting.

So take a lady hunting, and it doesn't have to be feral camels in the outback of Australia, either. Just take 'em.

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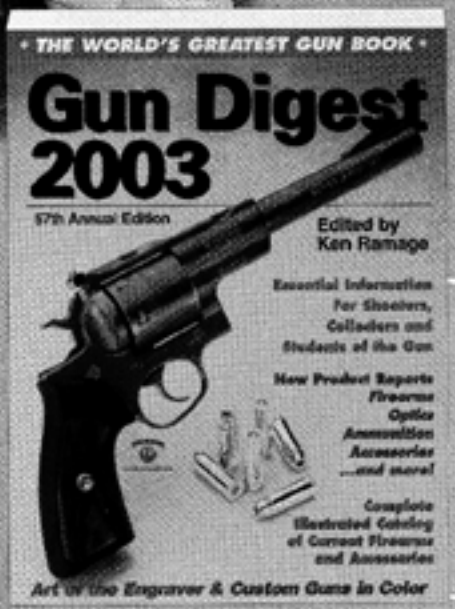

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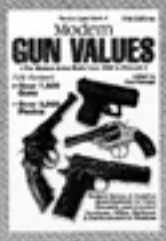

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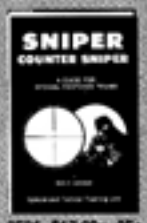

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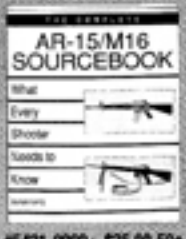

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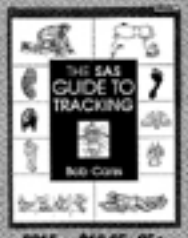

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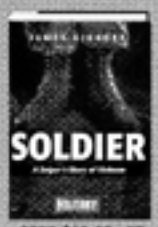

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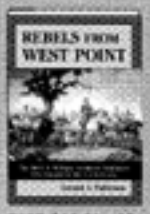

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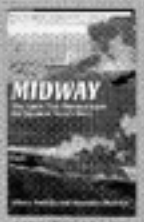

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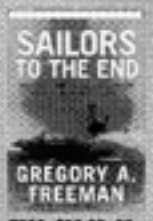

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REALITYCHECK

Clint Smith

FIRST-PERSON THOUGHTS ON SURVIVING IN THE REAL WORLD

POINT-LESS SHOOTING

INSTINCTIVE: Relating to, prompted by, or based on a strong natural impulse.

I'd say it's pretty tough to shoot a handgun instinctively, since no one I ever met dropped from the womb handgun in hand. Should it ever happen, there then I guess would be someone with the potential to be an instinctive shooter.

Gifted gunmen, the likes of Ross Seyfried, Bill Jordon, Rob Leatham and the "Burner" Jerry Barnhart, may have been born with natural skills. But being simply gifted isn't the end of the story. I'll bet $5 somewhere in the mix is a little dose of practice.

As I understand it, point shooting would mean the firing of a handgun without using the sights. Arguments provided in support of point shooting say if a threat is closing in there is no time to look at sights. Another might be that because the target is so close sights are not required to make hits. And besides, looking at the sights wastes time.

The argument: "He's so close I can't miss," can be countered with a more logical, "He's so close I'd better not miss." Besides, if point shooting is the cure-all then knock them bumpy things off the front of that slide.

AIMLESSLY AWKWARD

UN-AIMED FIRE

True un-aimed fire would probably be best represented by the emergency firing of a handgun from a retention position very similar to hip shooting. But, in this case, the pistol is elevated so the muzzle is pointed at the threat and the left side of the grip is along-side the pectoral muscle of the chest.

Applications may be muzzle-contact conflicts in a "hands on" fight over control of the handgun. Many (most?) standing physical fights deteriorate to ground–fighting. Such a fight may dictate the shooter deploy the handgun in very close proximity. It may be hard to look for the sights with a 200-pound threat sitting on top of you while pummeling your face and head into the asphalt. Un-aimed fire would be appropriate to drive the threat away from you, creating distance so you can engage with accurate sighted fire to stop the fight.

AIMED FIRE

Anyone who has actually fired a handgun at any amount would be a fool to dispute that accurate bullet placement is accomplished by carefully aligning the sights on the target and pressing the trigger. I'll readily admit it's not always feasible to apply pristine marksmanship. But, if I had some inkling the fat lady was about to sing — make mine "aligned sights."

WHAT'S BEST?

It might depend on the amount of time and effort you can devote to the skills involved. Repetition is the mother of skill, and practice makes perfect. What effort will you commit to saving your life? What time, what monies, what level of tenacity — what sighting technique?

Another point may be the litigation factor, especially when firing a gun without a good idea of where those bullets are going. You can rest assured somebody involved is going to have a lawyer. If I were responsible for training others I would come up with a really good explanation of why I taught point shooting over aimed fire — or vice-versa.

If point shooting is endorsed, it would be a bold assumption to work under the premise that one knew more than the sum total of all firearms knowledge. Indeed, the basic foundation supports, "Looking at the sights is a good way to hit the target." Think about it.

Just maybe all these techniques are correct based upon where they are applied. But then again, you should choose wisely, as only your life depends upon your selection. Besides, sights must be somewhat important — we name some of our most honored institutions after them: Gunsite, Front Sight, The Site and Insights.

Then again, on occasion there are also Loose Sights. Fortitudo Honorus.

Aiming is a good thing.

By Seqouia Blankenship

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COPTALK

Massad Ayoob

OPINION AND FACTS FROM THE MEAN STREETS

WEAVING AN ISOSCELES?

You've probably heard it all during this ongoing debate between the Weaver stance and variations of the Isosceles shooting platform.

"Isosceles is more natural!"

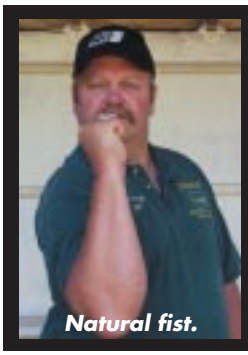
"Weaver is bio-mechanically stronger!"

Now comes Marty Hayes, founder of the Firearms Academy of Seattle. An experienced street cop and an experienced competitor, Marty has done well in national and state championships.

Marty has come to believe a combination of body reactions under stress — and how the shooter's hand fits the sidearm — may be the actual determining factors as to whether the Weaver or Isosceles will better serve during a reactive shooting.

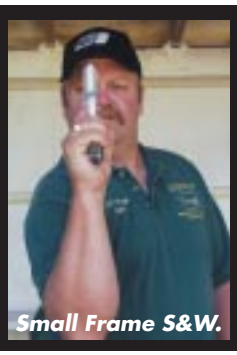
When the officer has found which technique works better under these conditions, they have found their "Default Shooting Stance." This is the firing posture which the officer should revert or "default" to when the chips are down.

"I believe in the old saying that in crisis, a human being is less likely to rise to maximum potential than to default to what has been ingrained by training and experience," said Marty.



Natural fist.

Large Frame S&W.



Small Frame S&W.

Fist-Fit Factor

Recently, Marty told students, "We follow our instincts in a crisis. We center ourselves with the threat, because a creature with binocular vision instinctively wants to get more visual input and this maximizes the field of view. Where the head goes, the body follows."

Isosceles proponents have been saying this all along, with support from medical and combat research that dates back to the early 20th century. Marty maintains there's more to it than that.

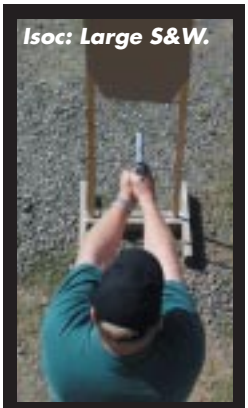
"We make fists when we're threatened," he continued. "We need to adapt this to the gun. Particularly, we need to adapt this to how the given handgun fits the grasp of the given officer."

"It's all in how the hand fits the gun," Hayes stated flatly. "When the hand tightens spasmodically into a fist, it changes the alignment of hand to arm, which accordingly can change the alignment of the gun."

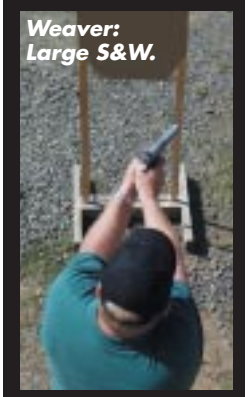
He has found when the hand is large and/or the circumference of the handgun's grip-frame is slim, some variation of a Weaver stance seems to give the best natural alignment of gun with target when the shooter's hands convulse into fists.

"If you have small or medium sized hands and a large handgun, such as a Beretta, or larger revolver, the Isosceles will probably be your best default stance," explained Marty.

"It is no coincidence, in my opinion, that the large-handed Jeff Cooper came to like a shooing stance (Weaver) that allowed his 1911 to line up easily and naturally with his dominant eye. Conversely, I also don't believe it's a coincidence the modern IPSC shooters, who all shoot fat-handled, double-stack guns, primarily like a version of the Isosceles stance."



Isoc: Large S&W.



Weaver: Large S&W.

Editor's Note:

Handgunner's reputation for bringing new ideas into the limelight is an integral part of our philosophy. At times, these ideas may be controversial. This is one of those times.

The Firearms Academy of Seattle is well-known and Marty's reputation as a trainer is well-established. But, I know many will have a fundamental difference of opinion with the hypothesis presented in Ayoob's report.

After 20 years of law enforcement field and range experience, it's been my observation people revert to prior training protocol when under stress. If they train Weaver, they revert to Weaver. I know too many people of all shapes and sizes who shoot successfully with either (or both) techniques to believe hand-size plays a significant role. Personal experience also shows it's often virtually impossible to assume an Isoscles stance when wearing hard body armor and a load-bearing vest.

We welcome your comments.

Finding the Default Mode

With four years of research behind the concept, using hundreds of students in both daylight and low light, Marty reports the equation seems to be, "small hand plus large grip equals Isosceles, and large hand plus small grip equals Weaver." The research has included shooting under extreme stress with a heart rate monitor attached during exercises such as Firearms Academy of Seattle's "fight and shoot" drill involving extreme physical exertion prior to shooting.

"The ones who revert to what we previously determined to be their default stance tend to lead the pack in shooting performance," said Marty.

Dim light shooting is where this concept seems to shine. I saw it in the low-light range at the Firearms Academy of Seattle. Any sort of point shooting where the shooter cannot visually index the gun with the target will be extremely dependent upon a stance that creates a body position index to align the weapon with the threat. I think Marty Hayes is onto something here.

For further info, contact him at: Marty@firearmsacademy.com, or you can call him at (360) 978-6100.

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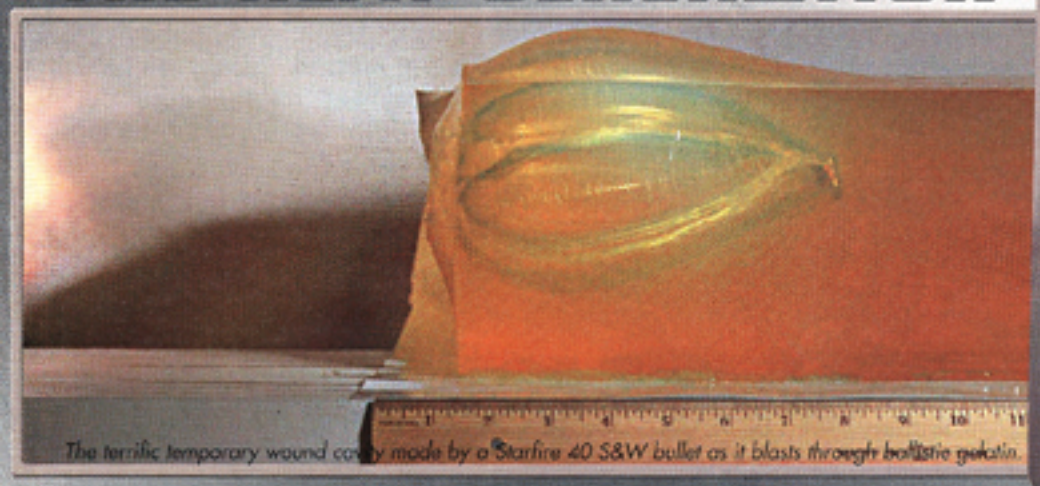

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THEY CALL HER "MRS. FORCES"

But she thought she was just a lady doing some grocery shopping … A few months ago the media widely reported that "Israeli forces" shot and killed a Palestinian suicide bomber before he could set off his torso-wrapped explosive charge in a crowded supermarket in Efrat, south of Bethlehem. Nobody was surprized at this story — except the Israeli Defense Forces, the surviving shoppers, and the Israeli mother who capped the bomber.

Muhammad Ashimali, a 22-year old Palestinian with an Israeli work permit, had already set off one small remote-detonated explosive charge filled with nails, which wounded several shoppers, but that blast was only meant to draw security and emergency services personnel to the scene. Once Ashimali had a larger audience of targets, he was supposed to set off a much larger charge wrapped around his chest. His plan slid down the toilet when one dazed Israeli lady spotted him leaning against a wall, hastily fumbling with wires under his jacket. Stepping close to make sure she had a clean shot and a safe backdrop, she pulled a pistol from her shopping bag and capped the bomber twice in the head, irrevocably canceling his ticket. The story played pretty straight in several European countries, but most of the American media transformed her into "Israeli Forces." Apparently the news-brass felt it wasn't a good idea for folks to think they might be able to defend themselves. Maybe she shoulda' called 911? We don't think so.

By Sequoia Blankenship

NO, NO, I'm More Disabled Than You Are!

And the subtitle to this one is, "Never bring a knife to a gunfight even if it's a really, really big knife." When two middle-aged patients got into a beef over a handicapped parking spot in front of a hospital in Spring Hill, Fla., bystanders were concerned, but wondered, how much damage can two disabled men do to each other?

Lee Damron gave 'em an answer, whipping out a sword he carries in his car and advancing on Richard Cavalier, doing his best pirate-with-a-sword impression. Cavalier, who had vaulted out of his car and into his wheelchair, wasn't all that impressed. He pulled his licensed 9mm pistol and tried to explain to Damron the old equation, you know; "pistol equals sword times nine." The police arrived before any serious carnage was done, but The Fourth Musketeer needed "special facilities" in his new room that night. And, in an amazing display of rational judgment, prosecutors decided that it's not a crime for a wheelchair-bound guy to pull a licensed pistol on an angry assailant with a sword. Don't try this in California, kids.

WE DON'T THINK HE'S GETTING THE JOB

Connecticut has some pretty loony gun laws, and as a result, police departments often get applicants with zero firearms experience. Gilbert MacConnell wasn't one of them. He'd already passed his written and oral exams and the physical agility test, and was down to the final screening interview before realizing his dream of becoming a cop with the West Hartford PD. But we guess passing those exams didn't mean he's particularly bright.

Gilbert and his screener were battin' the breeze when the subject of guns came up, and Gilbert assured his interviewer that sure, he had his own pistol, and it was right out in his car. Did he have a permit for it? Well, no, he replied, and the gun wasn't registered, but soon he'd be a cop, and that wouldn't be a problem, would it?

A PD spokesman told reporters that before he was booked, Gilbert actually asked, "Does this mean I'm not getting the job?"

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The Shocking Story of How the Feds Are Trying to Prevent You From Getting This Elite Combat Training!

When we brought together former Navy SEALs and DELTA Force soldiers to teach their spec-op level armed and unarmed skills to a small group of ordinary civilians for 4 intense days, word quickly got back to Washington — *and the whole thing sent shockwaves throughout the entire Defense bureaucracy!*

Top-level government "higher-ups" started asking serious questions and even conducted "private" investigations. 3 different *privately owned* training locations suddenly "clammed up" and said we couldn't rent their facilities for our Camp!

It was clear that the "Powers That Be" didn't want us "sharing" such highly-valued military-level skills with ordinary civilians. *But we did it anyway!*

There will never be another *DELTA/SEAL Training Camp* at any price! The "Powers That Be" simply made it *impossible*!

However, they didn't stop us from videotaping the entire Camp. Now those tapes are available to *Soldier of Fortune* readers for a very limited time. TAKE NOTE! Once the "Powers That Be" hear about this, it could be ending soon...

Former DELTA & SEAL Team Commandos came together to offer civilians elite "spec-op" level armed and unarmed combat training... and it will never be repeated again!

Please don't set this article aside. *Seriously.* Tomorrow may be too late to respond!

If you are finally ready to become **100% certain** you've done *all you can* to protect your home and family from *any* assault from *any* type of criminal scum... and *quit* being a walking target for the robbers, rapists and psychopaths prowling your streets...

Then This Will Be The Most Important Message You Ever Get!

Here is what it's all about: This message is going to *outrage* some very important (and very *dangerous*) people... **people who would very much like to see me go away and never again mention the words "Delta/Seal Training Camp" ever again!** You see, my company, TRS, put together a series of elite combat courses that were hosted by actual **Navy SEAL** and **U.S. Army DELTA** veteran trainers (with *real-life combat experience*)... who, for 4 incredibly intense days, shared *everything* they knew about close-quarters weapons and unarmed combat. And they shared it all with *civilians* like you... the ***ONLY*** time in the history of the U.S. military that this kind of high-level training was revealed to *anyone* not already *inside* the Special Forces!

These training camps will never be held again! They cost **$3,750** *just to attend*... and everyone who came *raved* about what they learned and came away with. The camps were the *most complete training* in "elite level" military hand-to-hand and firearm expertise *ever* offered to ***anyone*** outside the **Special Forces**. It was a **dream come true** for anyone who *ever* wanted to learn (and *master*) the **inside secrets of brutally-efficient hand-to-hand combat and expert-level handgun training...** the kind of knowledge that will make even the *craziest* streetfighter think three times before trying to take you on... and, if he *does* come after you, he will suddenly (and painfully) realize...

He's Made A Very Serious Mistake!

We went way out on a limb to offer these camps... and we made a lot of people *very* angry.

And now it's over. These amazing camps will *never, ever* be held again. (We were **banished from 5 of the country's major gun ranges** at the last minute, under *very mysterious* circumstances, before finding the courageous California range we finally held these camps at.) Now, even that opportunity is *gone forever*...

Slammed Shut By Outside Forces We Simply Cannot Fight Anymore!

That means you can *never* attend a DELTA/SEAL training camp like this yourself - even if you have the **$3,750** each attendee paid just to get in... plus the *hundreds of dollars* in airfare... plus hotel costs... vacation time off... food... and equipment. By even conservative measures, *most* attendees shelled out over **$5,000** to come. Yet, even at that outrageous price, they considered it *the bargain of a lifetime*. **Four days of intense, personal training** in combat-tested hand-to-hand fighting tactics... plus the *complete mastery* of "elite military level" handgun shooting skills. Taught by the *most respected trainers* on the planet - actual combat veterans from the ranks of the **Navy SEALS** and the **U.S. Army DELTA** Special Forces!

But *you* can experience the **same training** - through a hyper-intense video package of the *actual minute-to-minute training* at the camps - and, even better, the price is a mere *fraction* of what everyone else had to pay! **Not even a significant percentage of the cost...** *less*, even, than what the attendees used up in **9mm** and **.45** bullets during a *single day* of these adrenaline-charged camps!

You read that right - these tapes are available to ***you*** for what amounts to *spare change* compared to the outrageous costs the attendees had to shell out! No matter how you look at this... it's the *greatest bargain* you'll ever come across... for what will *instantly* become...

The Most Important Fighting Skills Of Your Life!

Just like the attendees, you are going to *witness the highest level* of training instruction, direct from the best teachers in the world. In fact, because of the **advantages** of better camera angles, professional editing, up-close shots of whispered advice, and your ability to *rewind* and go over any point until you "get it"... **you have an even *better opportunity* to learn than many of the attendees did!** Just by studying these sophisticated, "executive-level" training sessions, you will learn:

- **Incredibly-effective fighting techniques you can master overnight...** skills that give you the *devastating ability* to instantly take down even

a steroid-enraged street *punk twice your size!*

- **Simple defense strategies** for "arming" your family and loved ones with the skills, know-how and awareness to *avoid 90% of the crime* that **ruin** *other* people's lives (carjacking, rape, assault)... and to *reverse* any attack so you come out the *winner* and **never the victim!**
- **Expert "elite military level" handgun shooting skills that will instantly put you among the most respected "weapons savvy" people on the planet!**

And what's so great about this training you'll see is, it's all "packaged" to be learned **fast** (*overnight*, really)... even if you've never trained in anything before! In fact...

- **You don't need any previous training or skills at all** - *most* the attendees had no military experience, no gun-handling and no self-defense training before coming to these camps!
- **You don't need to be in good shape** (or any kind of shape at all) - this was *not* a bootcamp based on survival skills! In fact, many of the attendees were "desk jockey" types, including executives from **Fortune 500 corporations** (aged 50 and over)... and others were young students *from every walk of life* and occupation imaginable!
- **In fact, all you really need to get the most from these training tapes is the simple desire to change your life, quickly...** to *stop walking in fear*, and instead, give yourself (and your loved ones) the **immediate, totally-devastating skills** necessary to control *every potentially-violent situation* you could ever encounter in this increasingly-dangerous world!

And the best part is, **you'll learn it all very fast** - because you have the *very best trainers in the world*, right there, teaching you in the hottest training available anywhere! This high level of training is almost *impossible to comprehend* without witnessing it for yourself. It's all given and overseen by **Tom Carter** and **Frank Cucci**...

Without Doubt, The Most Respected "One-Two" Team In The Country For This "Real Combat" Training!

Tom Carter spent 17 years in active service, first in the **Green Berets**, and then as an "Alpha One" team leader with elite **DELTA Special Forces**. (He was *one of just 5 men* to complete the required selection course - 95 others couldn't hack it!) He and his men were in some of the **heaviest firefights** (against Russian-trained Cuban storm troopers) of the **Grenada** invasion - *five* of the six Blackhawk choppers carrying them were too shot-up to fly again! In **Haiti**, protecting **President Aristide**... in **Peru**, Tom was *hand-picked* to help their Navy go after the notorious **Shining Path** terrorists (the *bloodiest butchers* of this century)... private ops in **Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Equador** and **South Africa...** he has been written up in magazines on 3 continents (including **Newsweek**)... his corporate clients include **Solomon Bros. World Trade Center** headquarters in New York, plus various **U.S. Senators and ambassadors** overseas (as security supervisor). Serious stuff.

This illustrates the **astonishingly high level of instruction** you get with these tapes.

Frank Cucci has an equally interesting history. For *12 years* he was one of the *top* **Navy SEALS** - a member of the "elite-of-the-elite" **SEAL Team Six** (which has had about a *dozen* books and movies dedicated to them), where he saw mortal combat. These are the "**first in, last out**" soldiers in any action... and they get very "unusual" freedom in how they do their jobs in the field because of their *spectacular success* in "black bag" operations. Frank was the **creator and Chief Instructor of the Naval Special Warfare Unarmed Combat Course...** and the techniques he brought to the **SEALS...**

Have Been Used In Every Recent U.S. War And Engagement!

Frank is a nice guy... but when it comes to hand-to-hand combat, he's absolutely the *last* man you'd want to come across. He teaches incredibly-effective (and *brutally vicious*) fighting secrets that come from his training in **Jeet Kune Do** (where he studied with the famous **Dan Inosanto, Bruce Lee**'s training partner) and the respected Thai boxing master **Surachai Sirisute**. Frank is a professional who *knows* how to impart serious training secrets ***FAST***!

Just *watching* these videos will literally **transform** you... because once you've witnessed the **inside secrets and tricks and special training** that can be yours (and so easily), you will be a *different man*. The kind of man who can hush a room just by walking in... with a **sense of calm confidence and centered power** that shines like a searchlight in your eyes.

Here's a "taste" of what you'll learn:

- Incredible "military tricks" that can take you from absolute rookie to a **master** of the handgun in *just a few short hours!*
- **Insider fighting secrets** that *only the most elite soldiers* who have faced *real* combat could ever share with you!
- How to handle a weapon *better* under **overwhelming stress** than most people can in the calm serenity of an empty firing range!
- **The 8 huge mistakes almost all men make with firearms...** and how to handle *your* weapon like an expert overnight! (Even if you've never picked up a gun before in your life!)
- Where to strike your opponent to **end any fight instantly**, no matter how big he is, or how surprised you are by the attack!
- **The 12 "tactical" survival rules you must know** to win an armed encounter with any attacker - including the horrendous "Hollywood" mistakes *most people make* that get them seriously hurt or killed! (Some of the most "normal tendencies" you have are **100% wrong!**)
- **The one "basic" mistake even some cops and soldiers make** (despite their expensive training) that *erases their training advantage* in a streetfight! (You'll *never* fall victim to it yourself!)
- Why a simple change in your "**mindset**" will mean the difference between being a victim... and being *safe*!
- **How to handle pepper spray!** (A great tool that even the most deadly soldiers now consider *an important part of their self-defense package* - but you **must** know how to handle it correctly!)
- **Single takedown moves that require no strength whatsoever!** (*Perfect* to teach your kids and wife... or to use when you're hurt or attacked by bigger men!)
- **How to immediately win a fight** if you find yourself on the ground, on your back, with a *bigger opponent* on top of you!
- **Why untrained shooters often pick the wrong targets 100% of the time!**
- How to cancel out the **7 most common ways** criminals surprise families *inside their own homes!*
- **The 2 "warrior-tested" combat secrets of *winning a fight every time*!**
- **How to unleash the "animal secret" within you** that can *turn around* any situation where you are horribly outnumbered and surprised! (A *40lb. wolverine* uses this secret to drive off whole wolf packs from their *own* kill!)
- **The fastest way for even a gentle, never-in-trouble man to instantly bring up the necessary aggressive response to attack!** (This secret is often *all you need* to force back an assault, since most criminals are *not prepared* for expert, aggressive counter measures!)
- **How to control the "shakes" and super-hot adrenaline dump that occurs during tense, violent situations!** (You'll be *cool, smooth and effective* no matter how confusing things get... just the *opposite* of how most men react!)
- How to "finish" a complicated situation with clever (yet simple) pain-compliance tactics that will guarantee you have complete control over your opponent!
- **Plus,** how to fight (and win) *barehanded* against clubs and knives... how to choose **the right gun for you**... how to teach your wife and kids **the basics of self-defense** (so they will never be surprised by an attacker)... and *more*.

So much more, it would take me a **dozen more pages** just to outline it all!

What you get in this package is **7 complete video tapes** - over *9 solid hours of intense training and insight into real combat skills you can learn quickly!* These tapes were painstakingly edited down from **over 245 hours of raw footage**... so what you get is **ONLY** the "down and dirty" important stuff. All the meat,

all the secrets, and all the **"hot" info** is there for you in a *super-condensed*, easy-to-watch (and *master*) format.

And you get *everything* the attendees received, too - *nothing has been held back*. In *addition* to the 7 video tapes, you also get the same **Manual of Self-Defense Tactics** the attendees got. This heavy manual is *packed* with information and details on home security, gun safety, secrets of effective shooting, tips on handling attackers, **everything**. Corporations have **paid over $800 a piece** for this manual (the exact one you will receive)... *and it is not available anywhere else in the world for any price!*

And the best part is... it is all *yours*...

For A Ridiculous Fraction Of What Everyone Else Had To Pay!

So here's what you need to do now: Call my office right away at **1-800-899-8153** (Ask for Dept. DS-35). Tell whoever answers you want to get your copy of the "**Boot Camp Video Package**" sent to you immediately. You can use your credit card. The cost for this amazing package is ***just $177***, plus $12 shipping and handling (it's a *huge* package!). Once we get your order, your package will be **rushed** out to you by return mail - all 7 videos, plus the Tactics manual, *everything*.

That **outrageously-low** price is going to send *shock waves* through the country when word of it finally leaks out! (It's *less than 6%* of the total costs nearly all the attendees had to pay to come to the camps - you aren't even paying what the attendees shot up in shells *in a single day of training! Their* ***hotel bills alone*** *were higher than that!*

Your satisfaction is 100% Guaranteed. If, after examining these videos for a full 6 months, you aren't happy... simply return them... and I will refund every penny of your purchase price. No questions asked. This is the most generous guarantee ever offered for this kind of elite level training. You risk absolutely nothing.

My friend, if you are even **remotely** interested in learning the honest secrets of hand-to-hand combat and handgun shooting - as taught by and for the **Special Forces** - then this deal is the **absolute bargain of your life**. Corporations like the big oil companies and financial giants in New York pay *thousands of dollars* in fees to Tom and Frank for their advice... but even for all that money, those executives and big-wigs *don't even begin to see the detailed secrets and inside stuff* ***you*** *will get with these videos!*

You need to call **RIGHT NOW**! As soon as word leaks out that we are selling these tapes...

The Same "Powers That Be" Who Shut Down The Training Camps Will Attempt To Halt These Videos!

The DELTA/SEAL Training Camps are now *history*. I don't want to go into the details, but the end was a messy affair. Even though *every single police officer* who visited the camps (and there were many) *liked* what they saw... even though *every news media person* who came by **raved** about the quality of the training (and discovered there was nothing even remotely "strange" about the corporate execs and business owners and students and blue-collar people who attended)... even though the *government agencies* who investigated found *nothing illegal* or even "quasi-legal" going on... even though there were no rednecks, no skinheads, no neo-Nazi's, no one with wild-eyes to be seen anywhere... *despite* all this...

We Still Were Stopped Cold!

I would *love* to tell you there is another camp coming up soon you could attend personally... but there isn't. *They are never going to be held again*. Not for $3,750... not for a *million* dollars.

I would also like to tell you to relax about getting these tapes... but that would be wrong, too. **I absolutely cannot guarantee a set of tapes will be here for you tomorrow!** Too much has happened that has ruined my faith in the "future". If you want these tapes...

You Must Act Right Now... Today!

I'm *serious*. The money, really, is *irrelevant*. (The manual you get *alone* is worth twice the purchase price of the entire video package.) What *you* pay for these tapes doesn't even amount to much more than a few lessons at the local karate club... or a new handgun... or a couple of hot nights out on the town. **Yet, what you get is worth so much more.** The *confidence*. The *skills* to repel attacks, and *win confrontations in seconds*. The *sudden lack of fear* you will feel just going out on the streets... and the *incredible feelings of safety* you can offer your family and loved ones.

But you must order right now - while the opportunity to get these amazing tapes *still exists*. And while you are still "hot" with the knowledge that - truly - **your life is about to change in fantastic ways...** as soon as a few short days from now!

The number, again, is **1-800-899-8153**. ***Order right now.***

Sincerely,

Russ Horine

P.S. One more thing - *it's important*. I thought you might like to see what the people who attended these camps had to say about the experience. Here's some of their comments:

"The best money I ever spent. The training and skills I learned are invaluable!" **John Heltsley** -

"Now I have a greater sense of self-confidence." **Rick Chase** -

"It was an incredible experience to pick the brains of some of the best guys in the world." **Mark Johnson** -

"My investment was paid back a thousand-fold." **Chadd Mars** -

"There was an incredible amount of knowledge and skill imparted to us in a short period of time." **Patrick O. Harper** -

"I now have a tremendous ability and self-confidence in the use of a firearm." **Richard Sands** -

"I was skeptical at first. Every expectation I had was by far exceeded. Thanks!" **Brady Patrick** -

"Just the confidence of knowing that you're trained by the very best, most knowledgeable soldiers in the world makes this camp mandatory for anyone who's serious about protecting himself and his family!" **Briant Tennant** -

Priority Order Form! *100% Money-Back Guarantee*

Call 1-800-899-8153 (Ask For Dept DS-35)

For *fastest* service use your credit card and Call Toll-FREE!

❑ **YES!** I can clearly see that this is a unique opportunity to learn (and *master*) incredibly intense skills for self-protection (and the protection of my loved ones)... taught to me by hard-nosed combat veterans from the ranks of the **Navy SEALS and U.S. Army Delta Special Forces**! I realize that my chance to have and *own* the tapes of these famous training camps is truly a *once-in-a-lifetime bargain*... I also realize this rare opportunity may be ***taken away at any time***! Therefore, please rush my package to me by return mail — all 9-plus hours of videotape, plus the Training Manual (all of it unavailable anywhere else, at any price)! Here's how I wish to pay:

❑ I prefer to pay with my credit card; ❑ Enclosed is my Check /Money Order for $189 ($177+$12 S&H, Made payable to OTS)

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COMBATSHOOTING

Dave Anderson

SOLID ADVICE TO KEEP YOUR COMPETITIVE EDGE HONED

Okay, Pardner, Slap Some Plastic

Synthetic holsters are extremely practical. They're slim, light, very strong and rigid and practically impervious to wear and to the elements. But they're, 'er, synthetic. It's what's good about them, and to many shooters, what's just a little bit bad about them. But still, beauty can often be seen in function. And that is where synthetic holsters really come into their own.

Another cool thing is the sound they make. Slide a handgun into a properly made and adjusted synthetic holster and there's a business-like"click" as the gun seats. It's one of those sounds that inspires confidence, like the sound of the slide racking on a 1911.

Michaels of Oregon holsters: Top to bottom, Old World inside-pant holster, Kydex paddle holster.

Injecting Your Kydex

Uncle Mike's newest is made of injection-molded Kydex. The holsters are held snugly against your body with either a belt loop or paddle. They're slim, light and well-designed and the front edge is cut down so during the draw, the muzzle clears leather, 'er plastic, more quickly. Two screws allow holster tension to be adjusted to suit the user.

Extra holes on the paddle version allow the angle to be changed for a straight, muzzle-rear, or muzzle-forward draw. The paddle is secure, but with enough flex to be comfortable.

A new feature available is a Kydex thumb break. The precisely-molded holster holds the gun securely, but some people are required by regulation to have a strap. Others, like outdoorsy-types who spend time on boats or in wilderness areas, may just want an extra margin of security. The thumb break attaches with screws and can be removed and replaced as needed.

Models are available to fit most popular handguns and accessories and there is a thigh-carry option.

Rotating Options

Fobus holsters are precisely molded in two halves for specific models. These are then riveted together to provide a secure fit, and can be purchased with a belt loop or paddle option. A further option is the "Roto-Holster" system. With this widget, the holster can be rotated and then locked in position anywhere over a full 360 degrees to accommodate a wide range of carry positions.

Believe it or not, with the appropriate harness, the Roto-Holster body can be used as a shoulder or thigh rig. There's also a universal mounting system that allows the holster to be bolted in any of hundreds of possible positions. Need to stow 'yer piece under a store counter or in a vehicle? Here's your answer.

My S&W L-frame revolver fits the sample holster perfectly with that satisfying click, and I selected that model to see if the holster pulled the gun in snugly against the body. The paddle is large enough to support the heavy gun comfortably, with enough flex to it so it adapts to the body. The holster is amazingly lightweight, and, at around 3 ounces, is about the same weight as the six cartridges in the cylinder.

Models are available to fit most popular handguns and many accessories, like flashlights, cuffs and magazines.

Fobus paddle holster with S&W L-frame .357.

Long Live Leather

For inside-waistband carry, leather is still hard to beat. It's more comfortable against the body than a hard synthetic, and with a rough-out exterior, the holster surface clings to the clothes to help hold the holster securely.

Uncle Mike's line of Old World holsters are made in Italy. The inside-waistband model has a soft, suede-like outer finish that helps keep the holster in position. The spring steel belt clip can be moved to the off-side for left-handers. It's very comfortable and concealable.

The Leather Arsenal makes a fine inside-waistband holster. It has a smooth interior and rough exterior for a smooth draw, while a steel band around the top makes re-holstering easier. Two loops snap securely around the belt (loops for both 1¼" and 1½" belts are provided). Quality of materials and workmanship is excellent.

For more information: Fobus USA, 1300 Industrial Hwy., Suite B-3, Southampton, PA 18966; (215)355-2621; www.fobusholster.com. Michaels of Oregon, 1710 Red Soils Court, Box 1690, Oregon City, OR 97045; (503)655-7964; www.unclemikes.com. Leather Arsenal, 27549 Middletown Rd., Middletown, ID 83644-5029; (208)585-6212.

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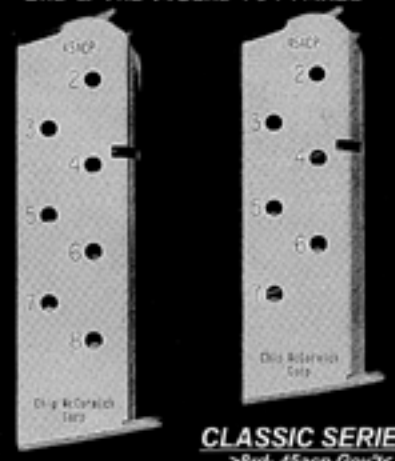

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Blued.....$13.99
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Shorter length for situations when concealment carry comfort is most important.

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Converts 8rd POWER MAGS into extra capacity mags for smaller Compact & Officers sized pistols. Also provides extra gripping area for shooters with big hands.

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Precision ground and finished for correct angles and function.
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$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.
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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.
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$16.95 Stainless or Blued

Match Grade Slide Stop

Serated lever pad. All edges are beveled. Correct pin size for improved accuracy.
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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.
Blued
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No Other Grip-Safety Offers a Higher Grip!

"Drop-In" Low Mount Rear Sight

No Machining
No Refinishing

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 (60°x.290"). Just knock out the old blade sight and install the new "Drop-In" rear sight. This new and innovative sight completely encloses the dovetail cut, yielding the most blended, customized look obtainable with a low mount sight.
Dovetail Front Sight...$24.95

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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.
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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.

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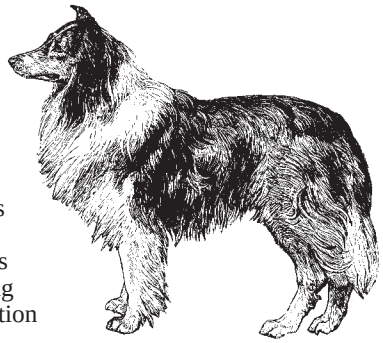
HANDGUNLEATHER

Cameron Hopkins

FROM CLASSICS TO CUTTING-EDGE IN CARRY METHODS

Lashie Come Home



There are moments in this life when we must simply accept things for what they are, no matter how seemingly foolish or absurd. The voice-activated TV remote control is one. The LASH holster is another.

The Locking Action Safety Holster (LASH) is a remarkable new — what's the word I'm looking for? — thing. The device holds a pistol in Condition Three, yet allows the user to draw, rack the slide, chamber a round and come up with a loaded pistol, all in less than a second.

Made by the Phalanx Corporation of Boca Raton, Fla., the LASH consists of a rectangular housing in which there is a chamber plug. You insert your empty pistol into the LASH and push down against the gun's recoil spring tension. LASH's chamber-plug slips into the chamber and the pistol is rocked into place, fully "holstered."

In the LASH, your pistol's slide remains partially retracted. Being in Condition Three, your pistol thus has an empty chamber with a loaded magazine in place.

To draw, you assume a firing grip and push down — that would be the direction of your toes — which allows the LASH to push your slide back. Pull up to release your pistol from the LASH and, as the gun snicks free, the slide springs forward, picking up a round from the magazine. It's slower to write than to perform.

The idea here is to accommodate those who are required to carry in Condition Three, yet offer a fast draw to a fully loaded, ready-to-go pistol. Death row wardens and U.S. Embassy guards in Lebanon, take note.

THE LEVEL IX HOLSTER

Blame Safariland for all this level-stuff. Trying to easily describe the degree of retention capability of different holsters, Safariland's marketing department came up with the notion of rating holsters — theirs of course — on a scale of one to three.

Using Roman numerals because they're somehow more imposing — think Super Bowl LXVIII — the Safariland system culminates in the Level III triple-secret-retention SSIII model that features not one, not two, but three separate locking devices, or methods, or ideas, or somethings.

Now enter (drum-roll please) the Level IX holster, the LASH from Phalanx Corporation. Entirely self-dubbed, the Level IX LASH holster seems to defy the usual logic. The company claims the LASH features "nine levels of retention," yet I can find exactly one retention mechanism, a plug that prevents the gun from being drawn.

However, I did notice that each LASH is shipped with the following items: one training video, one safety booklet, two orange plastic dummy rounds, one safety plug, one combination barrel blocking rod, one combination lock, one keyed lock and one hex wrench.

Adding it up, I came to — cue the Twilight Zone music — exactly nine items. You don't suppose?

EMPTY GUNS, EMPTY MINDS

Let us wax philosophical for a moment on this whole question of empty guns. Is it safer to carry a gun in Condition Three than Condition One?

Yes and no. If you're a hydrocephalic moron apt to bobble, fumble or sail a loaded gun across the floor, yes, Condition Three is safer. Assuming you have a modicum of intelligence and can be counted on to stay reasonably calm in the face of danger, no.

The conditions of carry, for those who came in late, are numbered one through three. If you don't know them, find out what they are. Condition Three is an empty chamber, a loaded magazine in place. Hence the LASH.

But what it all points to is personal responsibility. Jeff Cooper put it another way: "Safety lies between the ears, not the hands."

Which is to say, there is no substitute for training. It takes approximately 7,000 repetitions to develop muscle memory. Remember too that any physical task requiring fine motor control goes out the window as your heart rate approaches 140 beats per minute. An adrenalin dump associated with a life-threatening experience will — count on it — push your heart to over 160 beats per minute.

You had damn well motor-programmed whatever survival skill you wish to retain at 160 beats per minute, including parrying a knife thrust, J-turning a car, or drawing a pistol.

Condition Three is an administrator's carry mode. Not even the greenest rookie cops are subjected to such indignation. No, that honor is reserved for our unarmed forces. Ah ha, perhaps the LASH is a contender to replace the Bianchi M12 military holster?

An asterisk to all this is what has been called Condition Zero, an empty chamber with no magazine in place. Take this little test, if you dare. Walk up to any of the National Guardsmen on duty anywhere and offer a reward of $100 for every round of 5.56mm NATO that they can produce out of the magazine in their M16s. You'll win. Don't you feel safe?

If you still want to, you can contact the Phalanx Corp. at 4521 North Dixie Highway, Boca Raton, FL 33431; (954) 360-0000; www.phalanxarms.com

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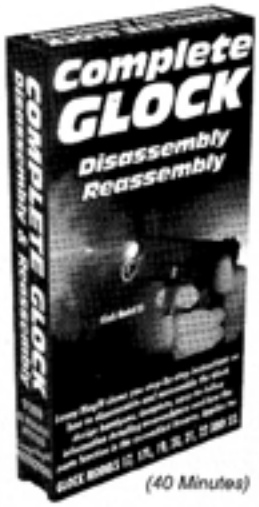

Complete Glock

Disassembly & Reassembly

This program shows, in detail, step-by-step instruction for disassembly and then reassembly of the Glock series of pistols. Complete attention to proper nomenclature of parts & how they function in this professionally produced, easy-to-follow video program. This information is good for all Glock handguns.

- *Complete disassembly & reassembly of Glock pistols*
- *Complete attention to nomenclature of parts*
- *Applies to all Glock models*

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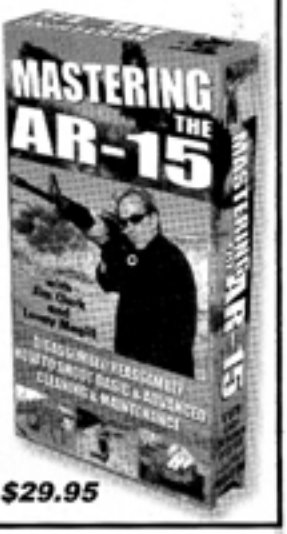

(120 Minutes) ***ITEM #X0160 • $29.95***

CrossFire

Shooting At and From Moving Vehicles

This program is a realistic look at what to expect when shooting at and from moving vehicles. Join **John Pride** and **Mickey Fowler**, as they demonstrate their professional shooting skills. You'll see, it's not easy shooting at a moving target. Highly recommended for all law enforcement and special operations personnel!

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Underwater Shooting

Test and Evaluations

Are handguns effective underwater? How far and how fast will the bullet travel? **What happens when you shoot a Glock 19 underwater?** How about a Colt 1911? Will the automatics cycle another round? Over 9 different handguns in all are shot, tested and evaluated underwater.

(60 Minutes) ***Item #X0403 • $24.95***

Women's Guide to Firearms

Host Gerald McRainey (actor on Major Dad) leads you through an entertaining, easily understood program, **providing a full understanding in the fundamentals of firearms** for the beginner as well as the more experienced shooter. It has been called the most comprehensive how-to video on the use of handguns ever produced. Expert instruction is given by World Champion pistol shooters Mickey Fowler and Mike Dalton.

(60 Minutes) ***Item #SD012 • $19.95***

Jerry Miculek

Ultimate Advanced Revolver

Jerry Miculek is recognized as the **fastest and most accurate revolver shooter in the world**. His speed and skills have been verified in hundreds of local and national competitions. In this program, he shares with you some of the techniques and secrets he has mastered over the past 25 years.

(90 Minutes) ***Item #X0419 • $29.95***

Move Shoot Live

Learn To Survive a Gunfight!

What happens in a real gunfight? **Where, how and why do people get shot?** You'll learn these answers and the importance of practicing movement for true self-defense shooting. Includes actual gunfight footage, analyzed by Lenny Magill, showing the effects of movement and your survival. Take your self-defense mindset to the next level!

(93 Minutes) ***Item #X0172 • $29.95***

Ron Avery

Secrets of a Professional Shooter

Shave tenths of a second from your times, **drawing skills from holster, concealed carry** and even from a **table top, shooting on the move**, and many unique training drills designed to develop peak performance in all your shooting abilities. Plus Much More!

(over 3 hours) ***Item #X0441 • $79.95***

Precision Rifle

Lenny Magill & Mickey Fowler

This program shows you everything you need to know to shoot modern, scoped precision rifles up to 800 yards. You'll see how to mount a scope, how to sight in using a bore sighting device, how to test the rifle out at 500 yards, how to break in your rifle one shot at a time for the utmost accuracy. Highly recommended for those interested in long range precision shooting.

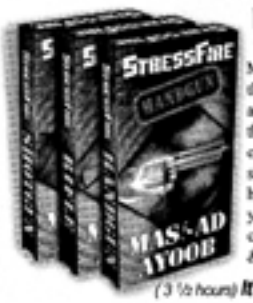
(75 Minutes) ***Item #X0445 • $29.95***

House Clearing & Cornering

Wilson/Hackathorn/Magill

What would you do if a burglar broke into your home? What are your chances of apprehending the intruder? Once you know an intruder is in your home, you should call 911, then get your firearm. In this video you'll **learn tactics and techniques** that are proven to increase your chances of success and survival.

(90 Minutes) ***Item #X0141 • $34.95***



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THE SIXGUNNER

John Taffin

Al Goerg's shoulder holsters for the handgun hunter carry a 10" Ruger Flat-Top .44 Magnum and a 6½" S&W .44 Magnum stocked by Roy Fishpaw.

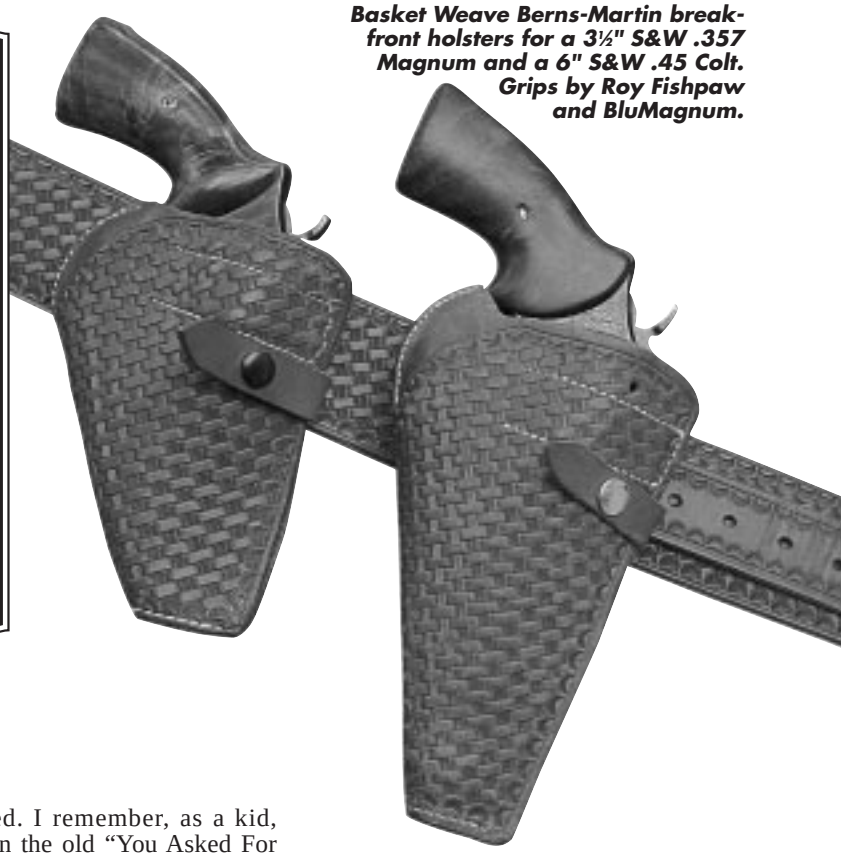
Tom Threepersons holsters: The left-handed scabbard is by S.D. Myers. Shown for comparison is a current version from El Paso Saddlery.

GOOD, GONE GUNLEATHER

I'm not a collector but after nearly 50 years of shootin' sixguns, I have certainly accumulated a lot of stuff. I don't want to simply "collect" because to me that denotes that I have to find one of every version and type of whatever is being collected. But accumulation, now that's different. It allows one to relax and simply, well, accumulate.

Two of my "accumulations" include out of production plastic stag grips — such as found on many a sixgun in many a hero's holster in many a B-western — and also older holsters no longer available. The former can be found at gun shows for practically nothing, and while I threw these away in the 1950's, I find myself using them and also simply gathering them in the new millennium. I'm not sure just why, but it feels right.

A 6½" S&W .44 Magnum rides in a 1950's flower carved George Lawrence #34 while a TLA #5 resides in one of the last, perhaps the last flower carved #120 holsters to leave the George Lawrence plant.



Basket Weave Berns-Martin breakfront holsters for a 3½" S&W .357 Magnum and a 6" S&W .45 Colt. Grips by Roy Fishpaw and BluMagnum.

Holsters are also worth searching out at gun shows. I'm not interested in high dollar fancy rigs, but everyday working rigs from the great holster craftsmen of the middle of the 20th century and even earlier. Even a gun show with very few offerings of firearms in my price range becomes interesting as I search out grips and gun leather. Here's an idea of what I look for.

Berns-Martin

In the early 1930's, Berns designed it and Martin crafted it and the result was one of the best sixgun rigs for peace officers ever devised. Berns preferred a 7½" Colt Single Action but wanted a rig that would allow him to carry it high and still allow a fast draw, no matter whether standing or sitting. His idea was a breakfront spring clip holster that allowed the sixgun to come out the front rather than the top.

The strong spring holds the sixgun securely but still does not impede a fast draw. One simply pushes slightly down and out and the sixgun virtually springs into the hand. The Berns-Martin was a particular favorite of Col. Askins and used to carry a 4" S&W .357 Magnum while he served on the border patrol. Berns-Martin Speed Holsters were produced in Washington as well as Mississippi and Georgia over the years. The company was eventually purchased by Bianchi to get the patent which was then used to produce the Bianchi Break Front line of duty rigs.

Chic Gaylord

Gaylord was a leather genius pure and simple. From his shop in New York City he provided the first true concealment rigs for men all over the world who needed to be armed and do so without being detected. I remember, as a kid, seeing Chic on the old "You Asked For It" show wearing a baker's dozen holsters, all concealed. Now Gaylord was not a little man by any means but to be able to do this shows the grand design of his leather. He was truly the father of concealment leather.

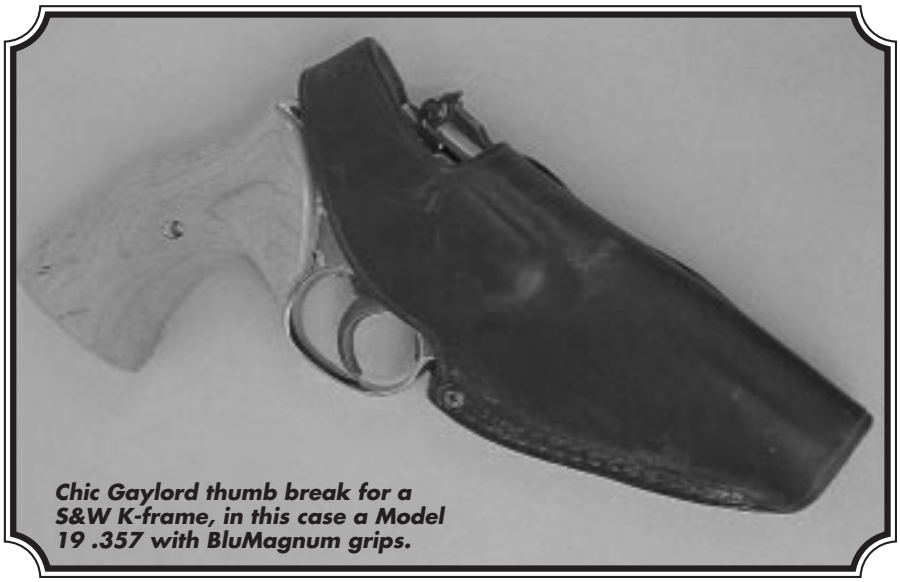
Gaylord pioneered such concealment rigs as the "8-Ball." This was a side pocket holster for wearing a small handgun in the front pants pocket. The "Blue Streak" was a hinged shoulder holster that allowed one to fire at anyone who grabbed from behind without even removing the gun from the holster. And, of course, his near legendary Ankle Holster. Gaylord was known for making the most with the least amount of leather (today, Thad Rybka carries on in that same tradition). Everyone supplying quality concealment leather today owes a debt of gratitude to Chic Gaylord for leading the way.

Al Goerg

Goerg was "the" pioneering handgun hunter. He did not carry a sixgun as a matter of convenience but actually went after big game routinely with only a sixgun — long before it became popular. His exploits were often written up in *GUNS* magazine in the 1950's.

Goerg needed a lightweight comfortable rig to carry a big sixgun and found nothing available to his liking or satisfac-

Continued on page 132



Chic Gaylord thumb break for a S&W K-frame, in this case a Model 19 .357 with BluMagnum grips.

Massad Ayoob

The AYOOB FILES

POPPING BUBBLEGUM: A Case Study of the Retreat Requirement

Situation: The rapist who threatened to kill you is reaching and your only defense is an illegal gun. You shoot and are convicted of Manslaughter.

Lesson: "The wheels of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small," is sometimes applicable to the wheels of the criminal justice machine.

The most righteous shootings involve good guys vs. bad guys, with stark delineation of the just prevailing over the evil. Sometimes, though, telling lessons can be found in the kind of incidents one expert calls "scumbag vs. scumbag." It's not about whether the survivor is someone you'd invite home for dinner. It's about whether he did the right thing under the circumstances; what are the implications of his actions; and how those actions would be judged by good girls and boys.

Such are the lessons of Ronald Davis vs. Wayne Strack, Superintendent of Fishkill Correctional Facility, and Dennis C. Vacco, New York State Attorney General. And thus the appeal to set aside the conviction of the appellant in the case of People of New York vs. Ronald Davis.

In the United States, deadly force is a mature body of law. Between the states, laws are remarkably homogenous, as they are for the most part between nations. But a few differences exist between jurisdictions, and one of these is the matter of the retreat requirement.

Some laws state if an innocent victim is attacked in any public place where he or she has a right to be, it is lawful for that victim to hold his or her ground and defend their self with necessary force, including lethal force if warranted.

Other states so emphasize the principle that deadly force must be a last resort — the exception being an attack in the victim's home where Common Law principle of "the castle doctrine" applies — that the victim is required to at least attempt a retreat before applying lethal force. However, all such jurisdictions make it clear that retreat is only demanded when accomplished in complete safety to oneself and others.

New York is such a state, and therein lay the crucial issue as the Second Circuit of the United States Court of Appeals analyzed the Davis case, argued on April 20, 2001. The court reached their decision October 29 of the same year.

Use of force expert Ed Mandelbaum has said of the Davis vs. Strack decision, "I respectfully suggest that everyone involved in use of deadly force training should read this opinion."

Prelude To A Rape

June 20, 1992, Harlem. Ronald Davis, 23, is a small-time felon. He's run numbers since his mid-teens. As a career criminal, albeit one of victimless crimes, Davis feels the police and prosecutors are not his friends. Thus, when he himself is victimized, he does not report it to the authorities.

For seven years, Eddie Ray Leonard preyed upon Ronald Davis. Leonard, also known as "Bubblegum," 43 years old and standing 6" tall, also weighs 435 pounds. When his size, strength and sheer viciousness are not enough to intimidate his victims, Bubblegum

Continued on page 98

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Marlin – Model 1895 Cowboy 45/70 with octagon barrel • *marlin.com*

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PRIZE 7

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PRIZE 8

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300 Winchester Short Magnum (WSM)

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PRIZE 9

KNIFE OF THE YEAR

Benchmade Model 690 folder
benchmade.com

PRIZE 10

ACCESSORY OF THE YEAR

Michaels of Oregon Sidekick
Professional Kydex holster
michaels-oregon.com

PRIZE 11

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TACTICAL ADVANTAGE

Ken Hackathorn

TIPS AND TRAINING ON TACTICS, GUNS AND EQUIPMENT

Photos: Cameron Hopkins

WHAT IFS?

Most *American Handgunner* readers have given thought to the type and model handgun they've chosen for self-protection. Handguns and ammo have been carefully considered, as well as an appropriate holster. Hopefully each of us has taken the time to practice shooting, becoming familiar and proficient with our handguns in the process. Some readers my even be fortunate enough to have attended one of the top shooting schools, or attended a class by a skilled shooting instructor.

All these things go a long way to insure your success if ever faced with a life-threatening encounter. Police officers are trained to use their sidearms with skill, and most will tell you that when they left the academy they were in top form with their handguns. Most importantly, they will be required to measure up on the range with regularly scheduled qualifications. Depending on where you live, range time can be difficult for many. While these issues are of great importance, the most critical factor is the issue of awareness, "having a plan" when the manure hits the fan.

Most savvy self-defense specialists agree that a wise person will visualize what his or her actions should be if faced with a life-threatening scenario. Take the time to consider when and where you will most likely be faced with a threat. Once you have decided on these facts, think through the options and the best plan of action you can take to insure your safety.

Fumbling In The Dark

If you keep a handgun in your home for self-protection, consider how you may most likely be attacked. Will your problems come after dark? Is your home secure and easy to defend? Are you best served to call 911 and wait for the police, or do you plan your own defense?

Whatever your choice, always plan and train for the "worst-case scenario." Plan, rehearse and train for the worst that can happen. What if the phone lines are cut or put out of action? Is your cell phone charged and handy? Do you keep your weapon available and quick to put into action? Is there a good flashlight stored where you keep your self-protection firearm? If not, plan to make these things happen.

Can you get to your secure firearm and put it into action (loaded and ready to fire) in less than 5 seconds? If it takes you more than 10 seconds, you may be facing a serious problem.

THE "IF ONLY I HAD" CLUB

Have you practiced searching and clearing your home or place of business? If not, I guarantee you'll screw-up when the flag goes up. All professionals rehearse their fighting plans. SWAT teams rehearse over and over again to get their execution right. Criminals and terrorists plan alike, rehearsing and then observing their targets before attacking.

If you've never played "What If" games concerning your best plan of action if threatened or attacked, you are behind the eight ball. The next time you pull into the parking garage and prepare to leave your car, ask yourself what you would do if someone tried to attack or rob you as you returned. Look for positions of cover or escape, best fields of fire, and — most importantly — positions that allow you to view all angles of approach or attack.

Believe me, if you haven't given this even the slightest degree of thought, you sure as hell won't be able to do it when you find yourself in a fight for your life. Forget what the action heroes do in the movies; when the action starts most mortals find it very difficult to use even the smallest part of their conscious mind to make decisions, discriminate targets and watch their flanks.

Note that one of the most dangerous conditions existing in a gunfight is the trend to fixate on the target. You see the threat as your only issue and quickly tunnel vision sets in. You may be behind cover, feeling safe, keeping well aware of your threat, and this target fixation will be so intense you will not see anything else going on around you. You must keep checking your flanks and rear. Far too many good men have failed because they did not see the bad guy coming from another direction.

If you think you can come up with a good plan when the bullets are buzzing around your head, you're on Crack. Plan, rehearse and train for the disaster scenario. Many people survive attacks because their attackers were less trained and skilled than they were. Don't count on this to be the case because Lady Luck will desert you in a flash. Plan ahead, rehearse if possible, and train with your sidearm. But a handgun is just one part of the equation. Stay Safe.

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TAFFINTESTS

John Taffin

THE SIXGUNNER HIMSELF: GUNS, GEAR AND MORE

Excellent powders for the Bees are Accurate Arms AA1680, and Hodgdon's H4227 and Lil' Gun.

They Said It Couldn't Be Done, So He Did It!

In the early 1960s, big game hunting with a handgun was starting to take hold (mainly thanks to the writings of such as Elmer Keith and Al Goerg). Pistoleros were also looking to seriously start handgunning varmints. For Keith, a handgun had always been a weapon of convenience when it came to hunting, since he always had one strapped on.

Goerg, however, championed the handgun as the primary firearm for hunting, even such game as bear, Dall sheep and moose. The same situation existed when it came to varmints and small game. For decades, outdoorsman had been very fond of packing a .22 sixgun or semiauto as a weapon of convenience. Now, for the first time, handgun manufacturers began offering hot, small-bore centerfire cartridges for small game and varmints. Most of these hot little cartridges were short-lived, but caused a stir, nonetheless.

Smith & Wesson introduced the .22 Jet in 1961. With its milk bottle shape, it never did work correctly in the Model 53 revolver. Unless it was loaded very mildly, the case jammed up against the recoil shield when it was fired and the cylinder would not rotate. This condition has always plagued anyone trying to use anything other than straight-walled cartridges in a revolver cylinder. At about the same time, Winchester introduced the .256 Winchester Magnum, which, along with the Jet, was also based on the .357 Magnum case. Colt chambered at least two revolvers, a Single Action Army and a Trooper in .256, but they never saw production. There was the same problem with setback as in the .22 Jet.

Standard .218 Bee, case fire-formed to the Mashburn configuration, .218 Mash-burn Bee.

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.218 BEE

REEDER CUSTOM SUPER BLACKHAWK 8"

Bullet /Load	MV	Group*
Hornady 55 SX/13.5 gr. H4227	2,143	1"
Hornady 55 SX/14.8 gr. AA1680	2,024	5/8"
Speer 40 SP/13.5 gr. H4227	2,424	7/8"
Speer 40 SP/14.8 gr. AA1680	2,159	7/8"
Speer 45 SP/14.8 gr. AA1680	2,252	7/8"
Speer 52 JHP/13.5 gr. H4227	2,183	7/8"
Speer 52 JHP/14.8 gr. AA1680	2,021	7/8"

.218 MASHBURN BEE

REEDER CUSTOM VAQUERO 9"

Bullet/Load	MV	Group*
Hornady 45 Bee/10.0 gr. H4227	1,717	5/8"
Hornady 45 Bee/11.0 gr. Lil' Gun	2,159	7/8"
Hornady 50 SX/12.0 gr. H4227	1,950	7/8"
Sierra 40 SP/12.5 gr. AA1680	2,150	7/8"
Speer 40 SP/10.0 gr. H4227	1,839	7/8"
Speer 45 SP/10.0 gr. H4227	1,896	7/8"
Speer 45 SP/12.0 gr. H4227	1,983	7/8"
Speer 45 SP/12.5 gr. AA1680	2,152	7/8"
Speer 45 SP/10.0 gr. Lil Gun	2,038	7/8"
Winchester Factory 46 JHP	1,932	7/8"

*Five shots at 25 yards.

A Different Bird

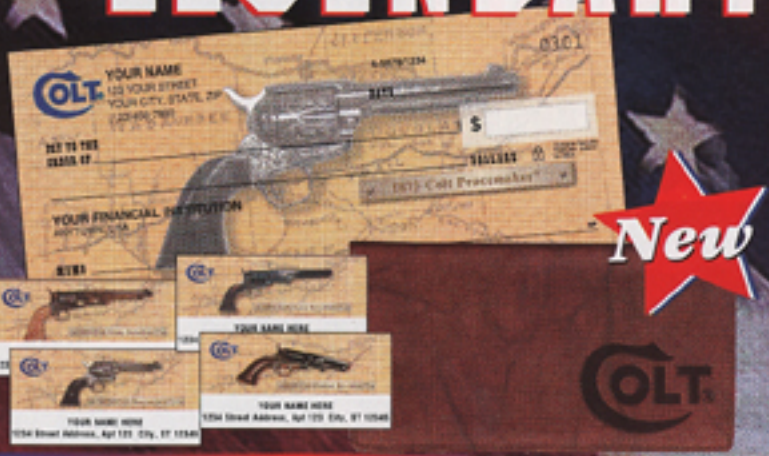
Ruger went a different route and fitted their Blackhawk with a single shot breechblock. It worked just fine with the .256 and Ruger called it the Hawkeye. The third cartridge, the .221 Fireball, was introduced in the bolt action Remington XP-100 and experienced moderate success among varmint hunters.

A wildcat that showed up, known variously as the Bobcat, the .357/44 B&D, and the .44/357; was a .44 Magnum necked to .357 Magnum and used in re-chambered Ruger .357 Blackhawks. It has been sworn by and sworn at by an equal number of shooters, and in my experience only worked well when the chambers were cut to allow a nylon collar to turn the bottle-necked shape into a straight-wall cartridge.

Enter Gary Reeder, of Reeder Custom Guns, who would not believe that bottle-necked cartridges would not work in revolvers. Instead of working with any of the above mentioned sixgun rounds, Reeder turned to an old standard rifle round, the .218 Bee for his experiments. The .218 goes back to the time before World War II when it was introduced in an upgraded version of Winchester's

Continued on page 139

LEGENDARY POWER



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BETTER SHOOTING

Dave Anderson

Shooting Lessons From The Movies?

The atrocious shooting techniques displayed in movies and television don't really bother me. Bad guys watch movies too, and if they learn to hold their pistols sideways, blink at every shot and rack shotgun slides five times for every shot fired, that's fine with me. Once in a while they even manage to get it right. Here are a few examples — and the lessons provided:

LONESOME DOVE: Ranger captain Woodrow F. Call (Tommy Lee Jones) hands a holstered revolver to the youngster Newt (Rick Schroeder) and says, "It's better to have that and not need it than to need it and not have it."

Lesson: The good captain nailed it. The thing about any defensive weapon is the fact you'll likely never need it. But if you do, you'll really, really need it. It calls to mind Mark Moritz's immortal contribution to shooting literature. When an acquaintance proclaimed, "There ain't no rules in a gunfight," Moritz replied, "There is one rule — have a gun."

REVENGE OF THE PINK PANTHER: Peter Sellers, as Chief Inspector Clouseau, stops at a Paris traffic light and a young woman hitchhiker (actually transvestite Claude Rousseau) jumps into the car. The conversation ensues ...

Clouseau: "You know, generally speaking, it's dangerous for a beautiful girl like you to be hitchhiking at night."

Rousseau: "I know. That's because generally speaking, beautiful girls like me don't carry guns."

Clouseau: "Ah, yes, yes…(ponders for a moment)…are you saying you carry a gun?"

Rousseau: "Mm-hmm … I've got it in here somewhere (rummaging through purse) …oh, it's not very big."

Lesson: Some people are more in danger of being assaulted or robbed than others and all the wishing in the world won't change that fact. In many situations, women and the elderly are vulnerable. When there's a great disparity in physical strength, even a not-very-big gun can even the odds. Of course, it shouldn't be buried at the bottom of a purse.

SIX DAYS, SEVEN NIGHTS: Harrison Ford, as pilot Quinn Harris, and passenger Anne Heche, as Robin Monroe, are being pursued by murderous pirates after crash-landing on a tropical island.

Quinn: "I thought that's what women wanted … men who aren't afraid to cry, who are in touch with their feminine side."

Robin: "Not when we're being chased by pirates. Then we want them mean — and armed."

Lesson: Nice dialogue, except Quinn isn't armed. Years ago a liberal columnist wrote how badly he wanted a gun when an intruder broke in. No doubt when his car goes off an embankment and rolls he'll decide safety belts aren't a bad idea too. Don't wait until the pirates are on your heels to acquire a gun and the skill to use it. Plan ahead if you elect to choose to make a handgun part of your personal defense plans.

THE GHOST AND THE DARKNESS: Val Kilmer, as John Patterson, exchanges his bolt-action .303 British for what appears to be a Martini-Henry .577/.450. He confronts a man-eating lion at a range of a few yards and the rifle misfires. His hunting partner, Remington (played by Michael Douglas), is several hundred yards away and fires a shot that scares the lion off. When Patterson explains about the misfire, Remington stares at him in disbelief and says incredulously, "You … you exchanged weapons? You went into battle with an unproven rifle?"

Lesson: It may sound hard to believe that someone would trust their life to a firearm they have never fired, but I suspect it happens quite often. I recollect reading how a police officer unboxed his brand-new S&W M-66 revolver and looked it over admiringly. Then he loaded it with the six cartridges from his old, blue-steel M-19, put the M-19 in his locker, holstered the unfired M-66 and went back to work.

I doubt many police officers would do this today, but surely there are thousands of guns bought for home and self-defense that have never been fired. A minimum of 100 malfunction-free rounds should be fired through any defensive gun (tested with the ammunition to be used for defense). And frankly, I'd be happier with 200.

THE WILD BUNCH: General Mapache is about to fire a belt-fed, water-cooled Browning machine gun being held by several of his men, while a German military adviser (staying near cover) shouts repeatedly, "It must be mounted on a tripod!" Only after his method proves unworkable does the general sourly order his men, "Put it on the tripod".

Lesson: If you're unfamiliar with a particular type of firearm, set your ego aside and get training in how to use it. And if you're the one doing the training, just maybe at times it's not a bad idea to stay near cover. Many police firearm instructors wear body armor as a matter of course.

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY: Eli Wallach, as Tuco, says: "When you have to shoot, shoot, don't talk."

Lesson: When you have to shoot, shoot, don't talk.

Couldn't have said it better myself.

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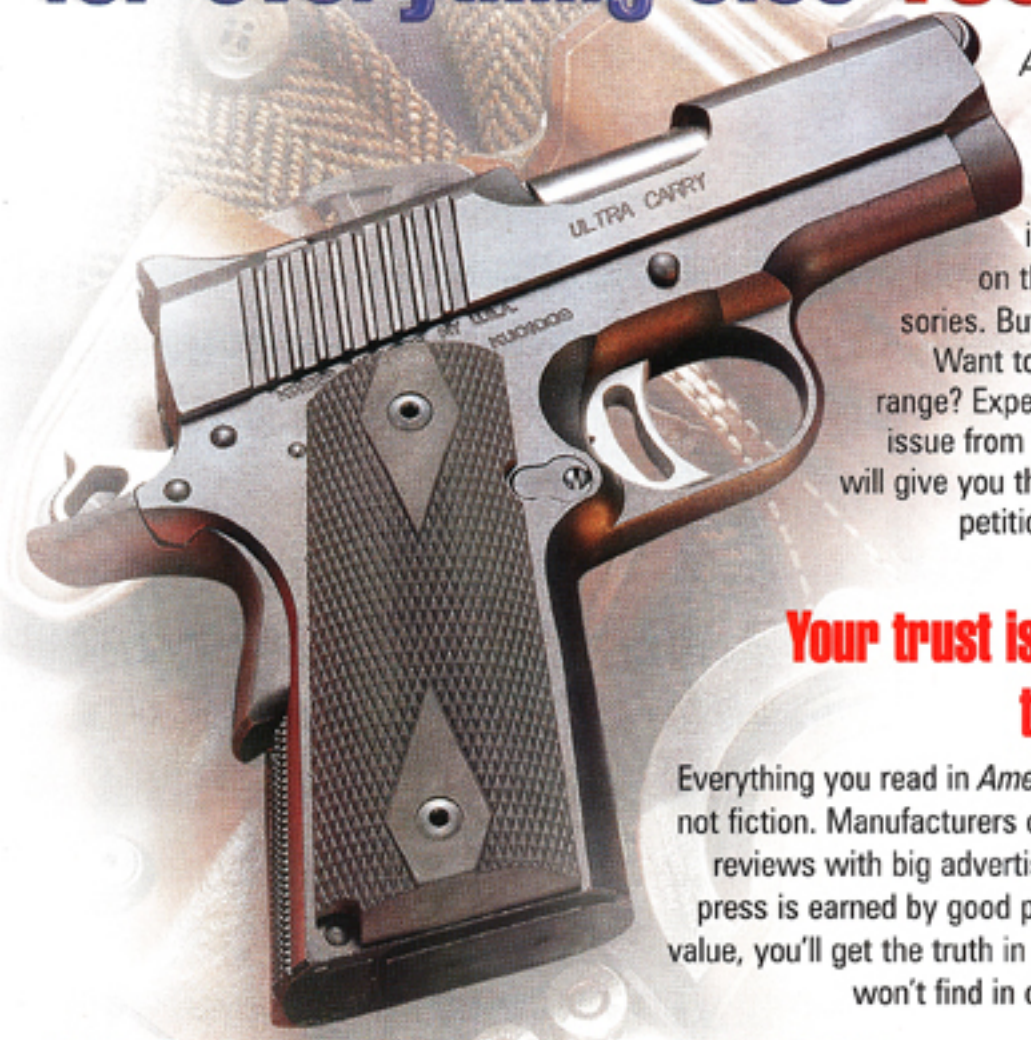

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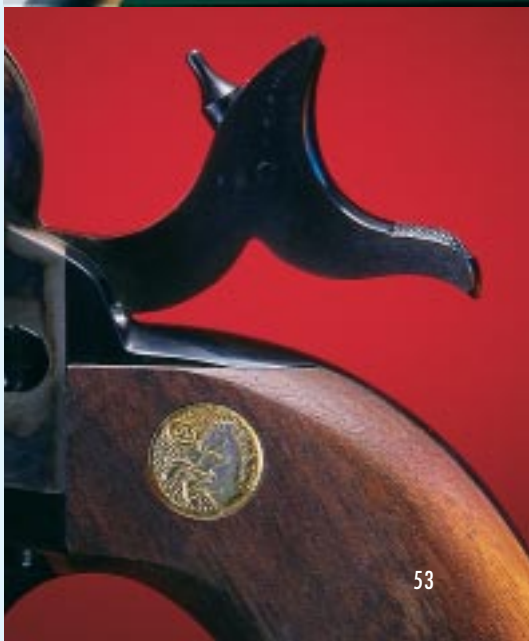
DOUBLE ACTION

SINGLE ACTION

DA/SA

Single Action, Double Action, DAO... CAN SEMANTICS GET YOU KILLED?

Massad Ayoob
Photos: Ichiro Nagata



What's "single action," "double action," or "double action only"? Accepted gun lingo, like Webster's dictionary, often allows multiple meanings for the same term. The resulting confusion can be farther-reaching than you'd think. Indeed, can blind, knee-jerk adherence to dated terminology stop the forward learning curve? You bet.

It's understood a single action handgun will operate in only one way: its hammer must be cocked to fire, and that cocking action normally makes for a fairly light, short trigger-pull for every shot. Defining a double action handgun gets a little trickier, given the complexity of both gun design and the English language. There can be more than one definition, and which is the "first" definition is not necessarily the "preferred" definition.

• "Double Action" (abbreviation: "DA"), First Definition: A trigger mechanism in which a single, usually relatively long and heavy, pull of the trigger both cocks and fires the gun. Synonym: "trigger-cocking."

Everyone familiar with handguns knows what "DA" means. The line in PPC shooting rules that says, "All rounds in this stage will be fired double action" is clearly telling you it's against the rules to thumb-cock the hammer for the advantage of an easier, crisper trigger pull. So far, so good. We're all on the same page of "the shooter's dictionary."

• "Double Action," Second Definition: A trigger mechanism that allows two different

methods of activating or firing the gun.

This is certainly a common definition. But, today, is it the controlling definition? A standard style Smith & Wesson Model 10 revolver can be fired with just the long, hard pull of the trigger or by cocking the hammer to create the easy single action let-off, and it fits this definition. Ditto an Army issue Beretta M9 (92F), which can be fired with the conventional double action pull for the first shot but whose self-cocking mechanism will create a single action pull for subsequent shots until the gun is manually de-cocked.

But what about a "hammerless" revolver like S&W's Centennial series, or the Taurus CIA? What about the M9's sister gun, the Beretta 92D, or a Kahr 9mm or .40 pistol? All of these can be fired only with a single kind of trigger stroke — the long and heavy one that cocks and then discharges the gun.

This latter class of handguns is generally called "Double Action Only," or DAO for short. This common usage indicates the world of the shooter currently takes the first definition above, trigger-cocking followed by trigger-firing in the same stroke of movement, as the controlling definition of double action. How can the second definition of double action (i.e., "two ways to shoot it") be applied to a gun which can only be fired one way?

If we call such a gun not only double action, but double action only, the common usage of the term shows acceptance of the first definition at the expense of the second. If "double action" means two different action types, then "double action only" is a contradiction in terms. It's as oxymoronic as saying "this one single two things."

The two explanations of the term "double action" presented above might be called mechanical definitions. As we look at how guns are used, as opposed to how they are designed — as we seek a bio-mechanical definition, if you will — we can come up with yet a third definition.

• "Double Action," Third Definition: Requiring a long, relatively heavy pull of the trigger to fire the gun.

This is a definition better suited to a shooter or firearms instructor than to a gun designer, but it gets the point across. This third, bio-mechanical definition is also in lockstep with the first of the mechanical definitions listed above. It's not incongruent with what might be the most succinct description of this new breed of handguns: "self-decocking," a term coined by my old friend and master firearms instructor John Farnam.

Now, all of this combat semantics stuff can be interesting over a couple of beers after the guns have been locked away, but at the end of the day, does it really matter? Sadly, at some times and in some venues, the answer is yes. We need to discuss it for more than the sake of argument.

Why It Matters

Case in point: the Springfield Armory XD (X-treme Duty) pistol. Springfield's advertising says, "The polymer-framed XD pistol's revolutionary design offers single action trigger feel in a double action pistol." So, which is it, single or double action? And why does it matter?

We'll get back to the "which" question shortly. Why it matters, for one thing, is that IDPA, the increasingly popular International Defensive Pistol Association, will only allow it, for now, in the Enhanced Service Pistol (ESP) division along with single action medium caliber pistols like the 1911 or the Browning Hi-Power. Springfield Armory wants it to be included in the much more popular Stock Service Pistol class alongside conventional double action autos and Glocks.

The concern with "gun defintions" goes far beyond pistol competition...

The concern with "gun definitions" goes far beyond pistol competition, a fact we've seen play out in court many times. It is a given that a cocked handgun in single action mode can go off much more easily than one in DA mode. This has been known to lead to unintentional shootings, sometimes with tragic consequences.

One such occurred in Canada, Crown vs. Gossett. Montreal constable Alan Gossett was charged with manslaughter and went through hell before he was finally acquitted in the accidental death that involved a cocked S&W Model 10 revolver. In New York City, armed citizen Frank Magliato cocked his Colt Detective Special revolver as he pointed it at a junkie coming at him with a club, and it discharged unintentionally with fatal results. He was convicted of murder, but the US Supreme Court later reduced the conviction in New York vs. Magliato to manslaughter, and the luckless citizen served several years hard time at Fishkill State Penitentiary.

There have also been cases involving conventional handguns that were double action by both mechanical definitions. Prosecutors have attempted to establish an element of negligence by alleging that the guns were cocked to "hair-trigger single action status" when in fact, both

Continued on page 105

SINGLE ACTION DAO DOUBLE ACTION

Women's Impressions:

FIRST-DAY JITTERS

Take The Advice Of Those Who've Gone Before!

Gila Hayes

Her stomach discontentedly churns the early breakfast bolted-down in place of her usual coffee. Delays for road construction and a wrong turn have stolen her extra driving time and the dashboard clock counts only minutes before the early morning class starts. Parking her Volvo at the range, she vacillates momentarily wondering if she should don her holster and gun before entering the classroom. Should the pistol be loaded or unloaded? The clock makes the decision: there is no time to put on a belt, holster and gun and only seconds remain to scoop up her notebook, lock the car and race for the range clubhouse.

Kathy Jackson learns to take advantage of cover. An instructors steadying hand can be an integral part of the learning process.

Brady Gunns tackles the Combat Pistol Run.

Rushing down a hallway she hears a burble of conversation and an occasional male guffaw, but as she enters the room utter silence descends. Simultaneously, the instructor calls the class to order. "Grab a seat," he booms, and a dozen sets of eyes focus on her, alone. Through anxiety-clouded vision she spots a chair in the back row. A rivulet of perspiration meanders down her spine and her stomach lurches as she slides into the seat. As the defensive handgun class gets underway, this student wonders what possessed her to tackle this.

If Only I Had Known

Going to an unfamiliar location to learn a new physical skill induces anxiety in anyone — male or female. For women entering the male-dominated shooting discipline, the stress is amplified by feeling like an outsider. Some of these pressures are unlikely to disappear completely, even if taking an all-women's

I asked women what they wished they had known before going to shooting school.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"I wish I had known that a lot of normal women shoot and shoot well and have used guns in self-defense. No one knows this until they actually get involved — it is like some big secret. You never hear of it in the media."

Carol English, medical transcriptionist

"We got into firearms training for self-defense reasons, and we continue to put money and time into becoming better marksmen for the solid belief that it is a necessary form of self-defense for women. Neither one of us would say we love guns, or we love playing with our guns. Shooting is not a sport for us, it is a way of survival."

Tracy Delawie, stalking survivor.

"I remember being caught by surprise at my first class to be in the same room with someone actually carrying a holstered gun casually and openly. It is odd the things that catch your attention."

Helen King

"I do get tired during classes. I have been promoted to behind a desk and don't have the endurance that you get from fieldwork. I make sure I eat right and drink a lot of water and just drive on through the fatigue. Class time is too precious to not take full advantage of being there."

Jackie Marlow, timber industry professional

.

"I drove to the range where the class was going to be held and looked around, so it would not be a completely unfamiliar environment."

Kathy Jackson, mother of five

"Pack the lightest possible range bag, because it will feel like solid dead weight by the end of the course."

Lyn Bates, founder AWARE

Women often learn in different ways than men. Talk can be an important part of the equation.

"I had all the anti-gun ideas one absorbs without awareness..."

Brady's largish-hands fit a 1911 just right. Fit is important for anyone and the right gun can help decrease anxiety levels.

class. However, women in defensive handgun classes unanimously report that better preparation would have relieved their first-day anxiety, had they only known how to prepare. Make a checklist of everything required for the class, to avoid arriving without a vital piece of gear. If a workbook or textbook is part of the course, obtain it in advance and read it well. If none is offered, ask the school what they recommend as preparatory reading. That's the easy part.

I asked women what they wish they had known before going to shooting school. The women sharing their experiences fit no single mold. Some are in their 30s, others are twenty or thirty years older. Their professions range from the timber industry, real estate, banking, the law, trucking, nursing and alternative health care. Several hold positions with large corporations, and many are mothers. Despite their professional accomplishments, these capable women confess to fears ranging from low-level anxiety to being "worried silly" before their initial handgun classes.

"I was nervous about being around guns," explain Megan Brown, who learned to shoot after a friend was abducted and raped. A surprising number of female shooters have backgrounds that are not pro-gun. "I had all the anti-gun ideas one absorbs without awareness," remember Lyn Bates, a founder of AWARE (Arming Women Against Rape and Endangerment), the premier women's armed defense training organization in the Northeastern U.S. While in her 30s, Lyn grew curious about firearms through a gun-owning colleague. Though her interest was strong, a lifetime's worth of anti-gun propaganda followed her to the range. "My hands were sweating and shaking when I first picked up a gun to shoot," she related.

Where to Begin

Women enrolled in classes appropriate to their level of experience are usually pleasantly surprised at how much they

The right equipment is vital.

GEAR UP!

Finding the right gun is a challenge for the woman new to the world of defensive handgunning. Without coaching, many do not realize that the hand should snug the backstrap in the center of the palm's web while the trigger finger's first joint contacts the center of the trigger. Without this fit, the trigger stroke is difficult and often pulls the muzzle off-center at the end of the trigger pull.

Without doubt, the smallest defensive handgun of good, fighting caliber currently available, is made by Kahr Arms. Caliber choices are 9mm and .40 S&W, and frame material choices encompass the light and easy to carry polymer frame of the "P" series, or the heavy easy to shoot all-steel frames of the company's other pistols.

For slightly larger hands, women have long-appreciated the thinner grip and short trigger reach of the 1911 type handgun. Glock pistols are a close second, though the trigger reach is slightly greater. Women have flocked to gun stores buying the super compact G26 and 27 models and the Glock 19s in recent years.

Holstering the gun is the next challenge. For range work, offset or drop holsters go far toward eliminating the difficulty of drawing a gun that nearly touches your armpit. For concealed carry, some women do well with an IWB holster if it is radically canted to keep the grips away from the ribcage. Others have succeeded with a cross-draw holster like Galco's Cover Six snub-nosed revolver rig or Haugen Handgun Leather's Wedge design. Whatever holster is selected, don't make the mistake of hanging it on a flimsy belt. It will never work or carry comfortably without rigid support from a belt. Again, Galco is one of my favorites, with the attractive "Concealable" two-ply contour belt and fashionable buckle.

Sometimes the smallest things make the greatest difference. I am surprised how many women report having a lot of trouble loading their pistol magazines. Asked to describe what she thought would constitute a perfect handgun class, Lyn Bates, founder of AWARE, closed with the thought that "All the students would be issued a SuperThumb" loading device! This simple device can go a long way toward easing the magazine loading blues.

Amplified hearing protection falls into the same category, though more expensive. What good is a $600 or even $1,000 class if the student can't hear the instructor's advice? A $150 pair of Peltor, Dillon or Walker's active hearing muffs is an excellent investment.

Finally, don't forget the water. Many defensive handgun classes demand more strength and endurance then a lot of students can muster. Fatigue comes on much earlier if the student fails to drink enough water. "Dehydration can easily slip up on you," warns Lyn Bates. Though avoidable, dehydration's headache, dizziness and loss of concentration can cost much of the benefit of the afternoon of a shooting class.

Kramer's rig drops the gunbutt for accessibility.

enjoy shooting. In Lyn's first class, the NRA instructor provided guns for the beginning students to use, and she loved the activity immediately. One of my own students, midwife Joanne Blanton, enthused, "I love to shoot! I love shooting well even better!" The skills she is learning make the experience all the better.

Unfortunately, that contagious gusto is squashed when a novice starts at a class that is too advanced. "I had just gotten my gun a few weeks before the class and had only shot it a couple of times," recalls Chris Cunningham. "I didn't really understand the basics, and the only one I could talk to about it was my husband. He wasn't real sure I would be able to survive the class, so my confidence level was pretty low," she admits. Pulled out of the class for a little one-on-one coaching, Chris quickly caught up and has gone on to become a leader at her shooting range.

If unsure about her basic shooting skills, a woman can't go wrong with an introductory class. "Luckily we decided to start with the basic class; it would have been a mistake to start with the level two class," remembered Helen King, a new shooter who I taught. With good safety habits established and a clear understanding of the fundamentals, she will excel at the intermediate skills of the next level of training, including use of cover, low light shooting and more.

Heidi Smith of Thunder Ranch, however, appreciates the "clean slate" beginning women bring to the famous Texas school. Since they have no bad habits to unlearn, these women are sponges for self-defense skills and mindset. Her husband, Clint Smith, agrees. "I wish all the students were women!" he grinned. He gets his wish 10 to 15 percent of the time, with three or four women attending the average Thunder Ranch pistol class. "At the beginning of class, I ask them 'Do you have butterflies in your stomach?' Then I tell them 'Don't worry, I do, too.' " He smiled.

For better or for worse, women are intensely social beings. As a distinct minority in the class, anxiety about being

Continued on page 112

RETURN TO THE THRILLING DAYS OF YESTERYEAR WHEN 'SUPER' EQUALED .38 SPECIAL!

.38 AMU with original unused kit.

'Super' Government Models

CHARLES E. PETTY

If you say, ".38 Super" to a bullseye shooter he won't think of an IPSC racegun but of a Government Model .38 Super converted to fire the .38 Special cartridge. Long before there was any such thing as IPSC, bullseye shooters were using "supers."

In the three-gun bullseye match, .22, centerfire and .45 pistols are used. In the centerfire matches you may use anything of .32 caliber or larger, up to .45. Most competitors just shoot their .45 twice. As a young shooter I sometimes shot a revolver (the S&W K-38), but soon concentrated on the .45. The first time I shot a super, it was a nearly revolutionary experience. Even though we don't think of .45 target loads as being hard to shoot, the super-light recoil of the .38 wadcutter makes shooting them a real pleasure.

In the years immediately after World War II, bullseye pistol shooting experienced rapid growth and the automatic pistol was standard in both .22 and .45 matches. That provided a real incentive to have a .38 as well. The old .38 Auto — or later .38 Super — technically could have been used, but both gun and ammo were notoriously inaccurate. The .38 Special, on the other hand, was wonderfully accurate, and good target

ammunition was readily available. Logic led to the thought of making a .38 Special autopistol.

In an article in the February, 1986 issue of *The American Rifleman*, the late Jim Clark attributes the first .38 Special conversions to gunsmiths Howard Peters of El Paso, Texas and A.E. Berdon of Lakeland, Florida working in 1949-50. But it was Clark who made them famous. His first ad appeared in "The Rifleman" in January, 1952 and you can still get one today from Clark Custom Guns.

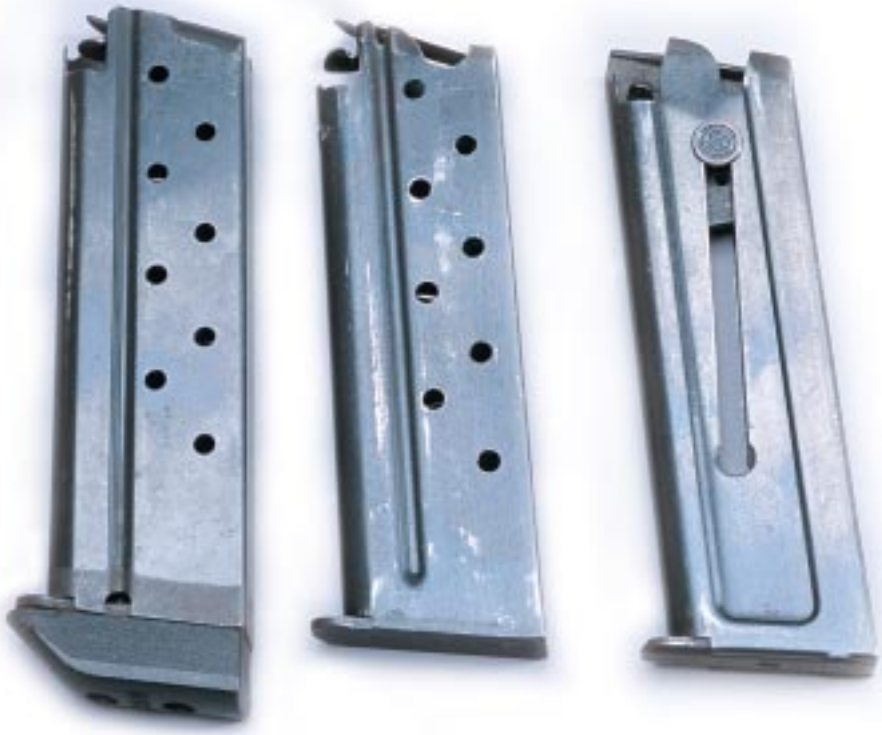
At first glance it might seem like a mere re-chambering job but the case dimensions didn't allow that. The actual diameter of the .38 Super case is larger than the .38 Special. This was long before the days of custom barrels but really not too big a problem. The original chamber was simply reamed out about 0.10" oversize and a steel sleeve silver soldered in place. This could then be chambered to proper dimensions. Surprisingly the cartridge rim diameters are similar enough that no modification to the slide was necessary. Since it's a semi-rimless case, the .38 Super is actually a little larger in the rim than the .38 Special, so only an adjustment of the extractor was normally required.

If you look at some of the earlier guns the barrel will be marked "Colt Super .38 Auto." These are the barrels that were sleeved and they are also known as "skinny" barrels for their .50" diameter — much smaller than what we're used to. Also, a major element in getting any Government Model pistol to shoot well is the fit of the barrel to the bushing. The factory bushings were quite loose, so sometimes a sleeve was fitted into the bushing to tighten that up a bit.

Ramped Solutions

The next step in the evolution was to experiment with some different rifling twist rates. The standard twist for the .38 Super was 1:16. At the sedate velocities of the .38 target loads, the twist was too slow and bullet stability was marginal. Opinions varied, but rates of 1:10 or 1:12 were common. Of course they still weren't

Magazines: left, unaltered .38 Super; middle, modified to use with .38 Special; right, Gold Cup .38.



The first time I shot a super, it was a nearly revolutionary experience.

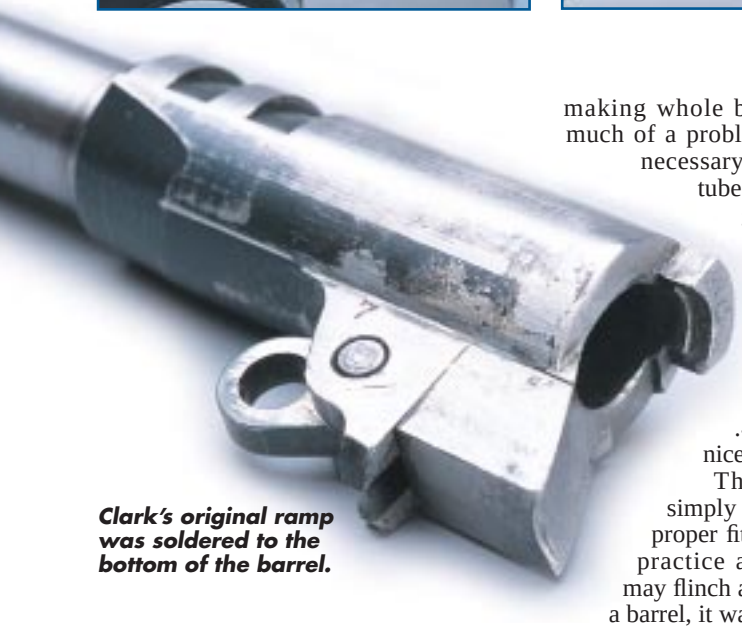
Left barrel has sleeved chamber, right is new custom.

Two different barrel styles: top modern custom barrel, bottom original "skinny" barrel

Colt .38 Special Kit

Colt .38 AMU

Colt Gold Cup .38



Clark's original ramp was soldered to the bottom of the barrel.

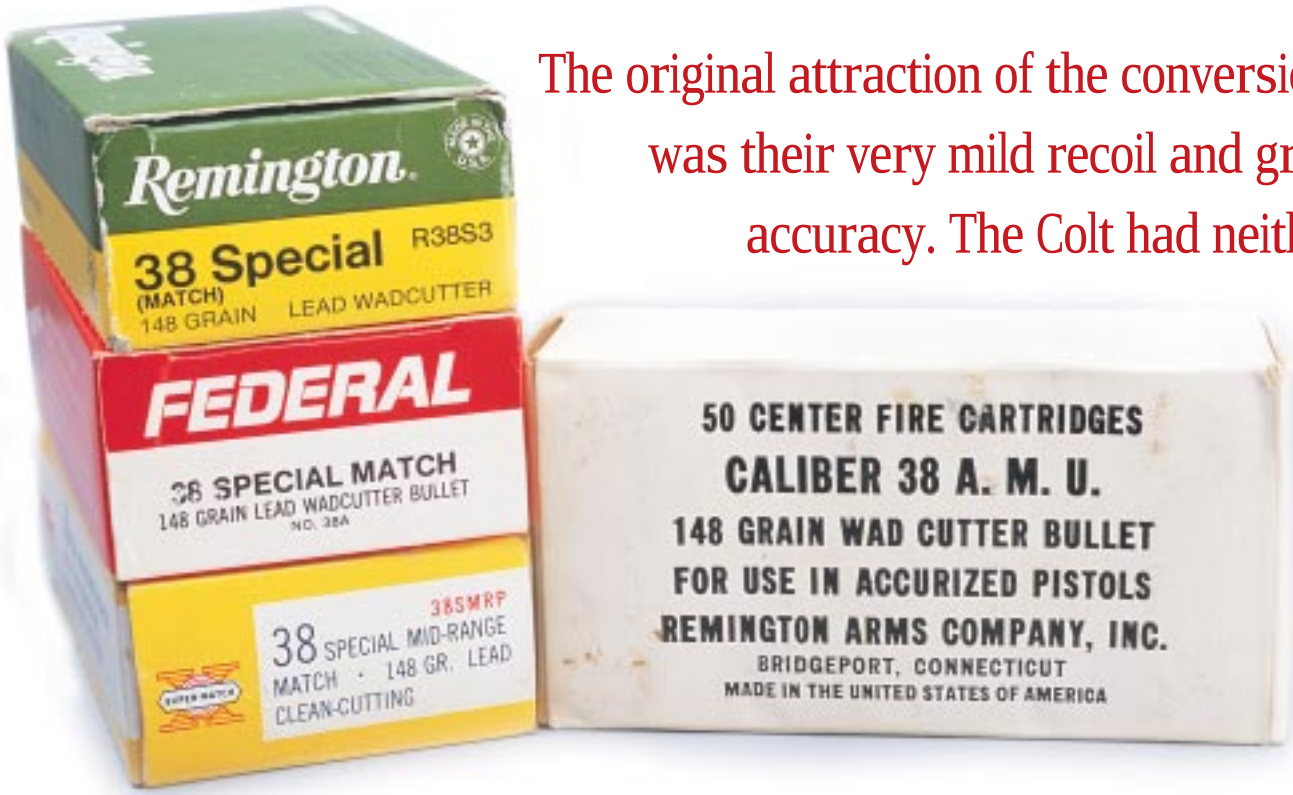
making whole barrels but this wasn't much of a problem either. All that was necessary was to simply cut the tube off an old GI barrel to get the locking surfaces, ream it out, and sleeve in a barrel made from a Douglas blank. This also made it possible to have a barrel the same diameter as the .45, which added some nice extra weight.

The original lugs were simply welded up to allow for proper fitting. This was common practice and even though some may flinch at the idea of welding on a barrel, it was a non-event as long as it was done properly. The final step in the evolution is when custom barrels from BarSto and others became available.

If you look at a .38 Special wadcutter cartridge, it's nothing more than a cylinder with a rim and a bullet seated flush with the case mouth. This is about the least-favorable shape in the world to get to feed into an automatic pistol. Most autoloader cartridges have a rounded bullet to lead them into the chamber, but the blunt end of the wadcutter places great demand on the alignment of the cartridge within the magazine. And of course, back then there weren't any special magazines either, so the original .38 Super magazines required some complicated modifications.

The Super conversions brought us something commonplace today. We're all familiar with the "ramped" or "supported" barrels used on Government Model pistols of all calibers these days. Many shooters believe these were the result of some early disasters in the evolution of the .38 Super in IPSC, where

The original attraction of the conversions was their very mild recoil and great accuracy. The Colt had neither.



.38 Super conversions: top: Dinan, bottom Clark

Jim Clark Sr.

some aggressive handloads had an unpleasant tendency of rupturing cases. But the ramped barrel goes way back to the mid ’50s and the late Jim Clark. We didn’t invent anything new at all.

Feeding was always a problem for the conversions, and Clark reasoned that one cause was the transition from the feed ramp of the frame to the barrel. A small gap is almost unavoidable and any edge is an opportunity for a hang-up. Clark believed eliminating the gap would make it easier to achieve reliable feeding. His solution? Craft a ramp and silver solder it to the barrel. A cut was made in the bridge of the frame to provide clearance, so the feeding cartridge faced only a smooth ramp on the way to the chamber. Clark came up with that idea in the ’50s so don’t let anyone tell you it’s a new idea. Later he would make a complete barrel from a Douglas blank and the ramp was an integral part.

Left, .38 AMU; right, .38 Special

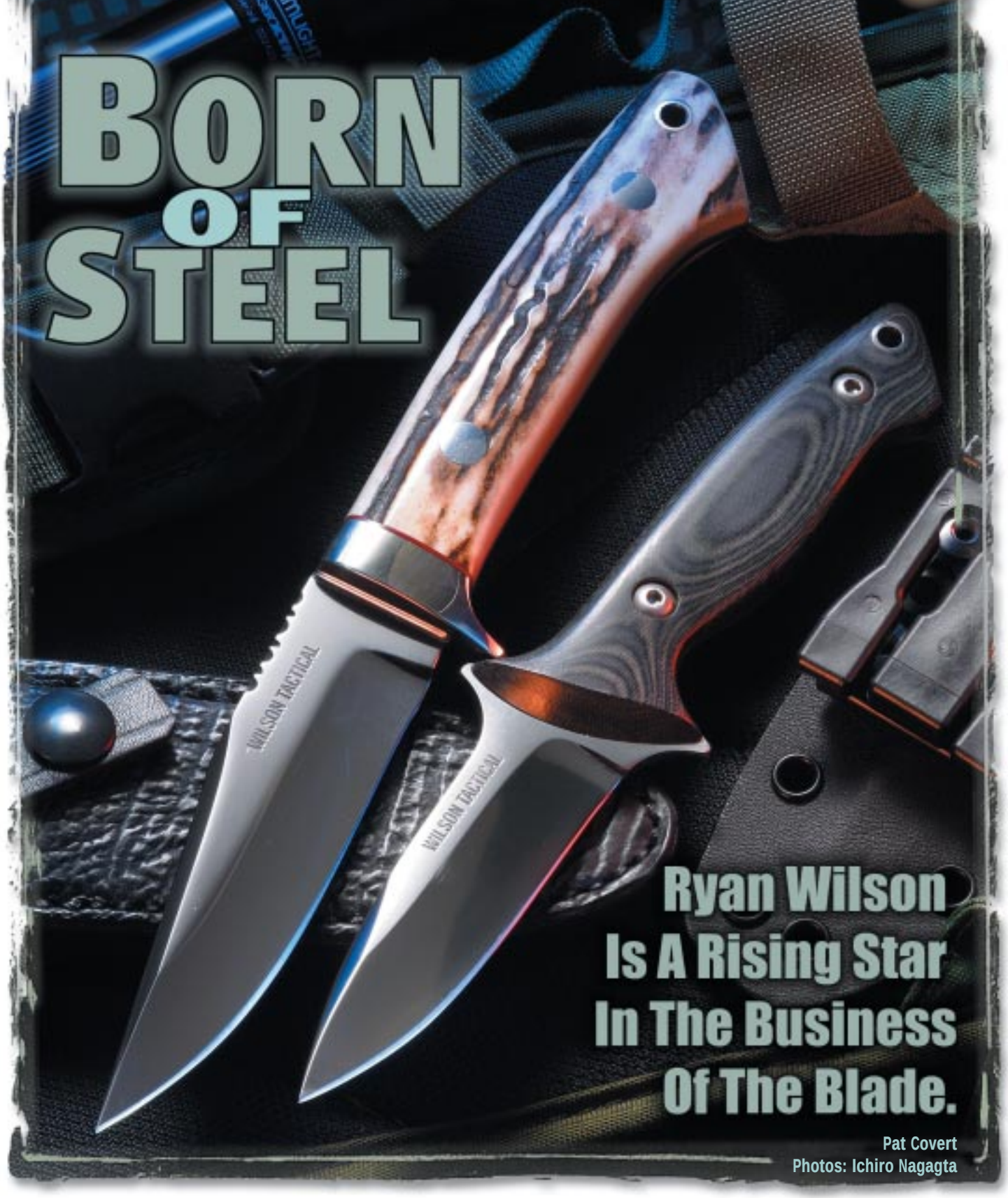
Colt’s Blundering

Clark really was a leader in the development of the .38 Super conversion but all the good custom gunsmiths of the time did similar jobs. Pretty soon custom barrels became available and it wasn’t long before Colt recognized a market opportunity and in 1960 they introduced the Gold Cup National Match .38 Special. This was very much a good news/bad news story. The really good news was the Colt pistol had a properly designed magazine, eliminating those troublesome modifications we did before. The bad news was the pistol really didn’t shoot very well.

The original attraction of the conversions was their very mild recoil and great accuracy. The Colt had neither. The locked breech design of the Super really moderated recoil. So much so that good function was not always easy to achieve. But it was also key to the accuracy, and the custom gunsmiths of the time knew how to fit things up for good accuracy.

Colt’s logic was to do away with the locked breech design and convert the pistol to straight blowback. That solved

Continued on page 128



Born of Steel

Ryan Wilson Is A Rising Star In The Business Of The Blade.

Pat Covert
Photos: Ichiro Nagagta

Most custom knifemakers will tell you the job ain't easy. They'll also tell you not to give up your day job unless you're ready to make some sacrifices. If you're lucky, you'll be able to break into full-time work in your 30s or 40s. God willing, and the creek don't rise, you'll have a good clientele built-up by the time you hit 50 and can make a good living fulfilling your lifelong dream of being a custom knifemaker. If you still have the fire in your belly.

Now, imagine doing all this by the time you are just 20. Thanks to a little luck and a lot of hard work, custom knifemaker Ryan Wilson of Berryville, Ark., has done just that. From the luck side of the equation, Ryan was fortunate enough to grow up around his father's shop — the highly respected custom gun works known as Wilson Combat. But a strong work ethic was instilled in him at an early age. At 6 he began working in the shop

after school, doing odd jobs and step-and-fetch-it duty. At 14 he knew the equipment and logistics and could perform any function necessary to produce a modified tactical handgun. By 17 he was in charge of the whole Wilson Combat custom shop.

While Ryan is fond of firearms — he lives on 140 acres of prime hunting land in northwest Arkansas — he just happens to like knives more. He remembers getting his first pocketknife at five and being fascinated by it. He built his first "kit knife" when he was 12. By 14 he was making them on a regular basis for his own hunting purposes and as gifts for friends. The more Ryan learned about the machining equipment in his dad's shop, the more his knives improved. It wasn't long before he began building knives from scratch.

While other teens were still trying to figure out to do after high school, Ryan was forging a career. He made his first custom knives at the age of 16, a run of 50 tactical fixed blades offered in the Wilson Combat catalog. No ordinary fixed blade knives, these were of a difficult integral design in which the blade, bolsters and tang are machined from a solid piece of steel billet. The first 50 knives sold like hotcakes, and the design is still sold today, listed in the

Continued on page 110

By 17 he was in charge of the whole Wilson Combat custom shop.

HANDGUN SAFETIES

THE FIRING PIN SAFETY: SECOND TIME AROUND.

CHARLES E. PETTY

Frames: Left to right: Colt National Match, Kimber Series II, Colt Series 80

When Colt installed a firing pin safety in the Government Model pistol in 1980, those who claimed it interfered with the trigger pull soundly cussed them. And it did. Interfere with the trigger pull, that is. Shooters decried the "new" Series 80 gadget and rent their hair and cried out, "Oh, woe is me." But they were wasting their breath. It seems the idea wasn't new at all.

Top: Colt pre-war National Match with Swartz safety. Bottom: Kimber Series II with revived Swartz safety.

In 1937, William L. Swartz designed a 1911 firing pin safety with no connection to trigger components. It was operated by the action of the grip safety. Today, examples with the Swartz safety are scarce collector's items, for Colt didn't make many. World War II proved the death of the Swartz safety, as wartime military pistols did not include it.

After the war ended the safety did not return. For reasons unclear, a firing pin safety became desirable in the late '70s, which prompted Colt to introduce a far more complicated system to do the same job.

We all know the most important firearm safety is human, not mechanical. But guns have used safeties for ages. Customarily, they prevent the gun from firing with a mechanical block that prevents the movement of a part, usually the sear or hammer.

Safeties can be active or passive. An active safety is a lever or button the shooter must move. We're all familiar with these. A passive safety does not require a deliberate operation to work. Guns have more of these latter ones than we tend to realize.

Series 80

Perhaps the best-known passive safety is the disconnector found on all semi-automatic firearms. This prevents the gun from firing unless the gun is properly closed and in battery. Firing pin safeties are also passive.

The original firing pin safety

idea goes all the way back to 1909, but it wasn't until Swartz received U.S. Patent 2,140,946 on December 29, 1938, that Colt put one in a production gun. During the late '30s, the Colt National Match .45 pistol and the .38 Super were the only two Colt guns with the Swartz safety. It was approved by the factory for use in all Government Model pistols, but the onset of World War II prevented its installation.

The idea of somehow locking the firing pin is thought desirable because there is always a possibility a pistol might discharge if dropped. It takes a combination of things going wrong all at the same time for this to happen, but it can happen. Colt's answer was a design that prevents the pistol from firing unless the trigger is depressed. It was not well received and pre-Series 80 pistols were much in demand. They still are.

Criticism of the Series 80 safety was based largely on the fact that the trigger action included lifting the firing-pin lock installed in the slide. In other words, the trigger had to compress a spring and move a small part, adding to the poundage of the trigger pull. While this complaint has some merit, the fault lay more with the execution than the design.

Unless the Series 80 parts worked together smoothly, the shooter could feel a definite lurch in the trigger pull when the safety disengaged. It was not unusual to find rough parts or crooked holes that complicated things.

Some critics proclaimed it was "impossible" to obtain a match trigger on a Series 80 pistol. Of course that wasn't really true, but there was a certain learning curve for pistolsmiths to master the skills. A Series 80 trigger often took longer to hone than a standard trigger; gunsmiths consequently charged more.

But the Series 80 doesn't get as much criticism these days because of Colt's shrunken presence in the market. Hardly anyone buys a Colt right now, so hardly anyone complains. People are buying Springfield Armory and Kimber 1911s, both of which lack Series 80 parts.

Swartz Returns

Enter the Kimber Series II. In response to the needs of law enforcement agencies — which frequently mandate a firing pin safety — Kimber brought back the Swartz design.

Their Series II pistols have an updated Swartz safety. If I didn't tell you there was one, you'd never know. Okay, there is one way. Since the safety is keyed on the grip safety, if you were to fieldstrip the pistol and happened to depress the grip safety — something normally done when holding the pistol — you can't remove the slide. It's one of those things that blindingly dawns on you after a few moments of absolute confusion. "Let go of the safety dummy," you tell yourself.

The safety uses a simple push rod that rides atop the point of the grip safety. When the grip safety is depressed the rod is pushed up and lifts the firing pin block located in the slide. The Colt Series 80 uses two little levers that are moved by motion of the trigger to do the same thing. In the Swartz design a "U" shaped block is lifted to release the firing pin. There's no effect whatsoever on the trigger pull, but the two designs accomplish exactly the same thing.

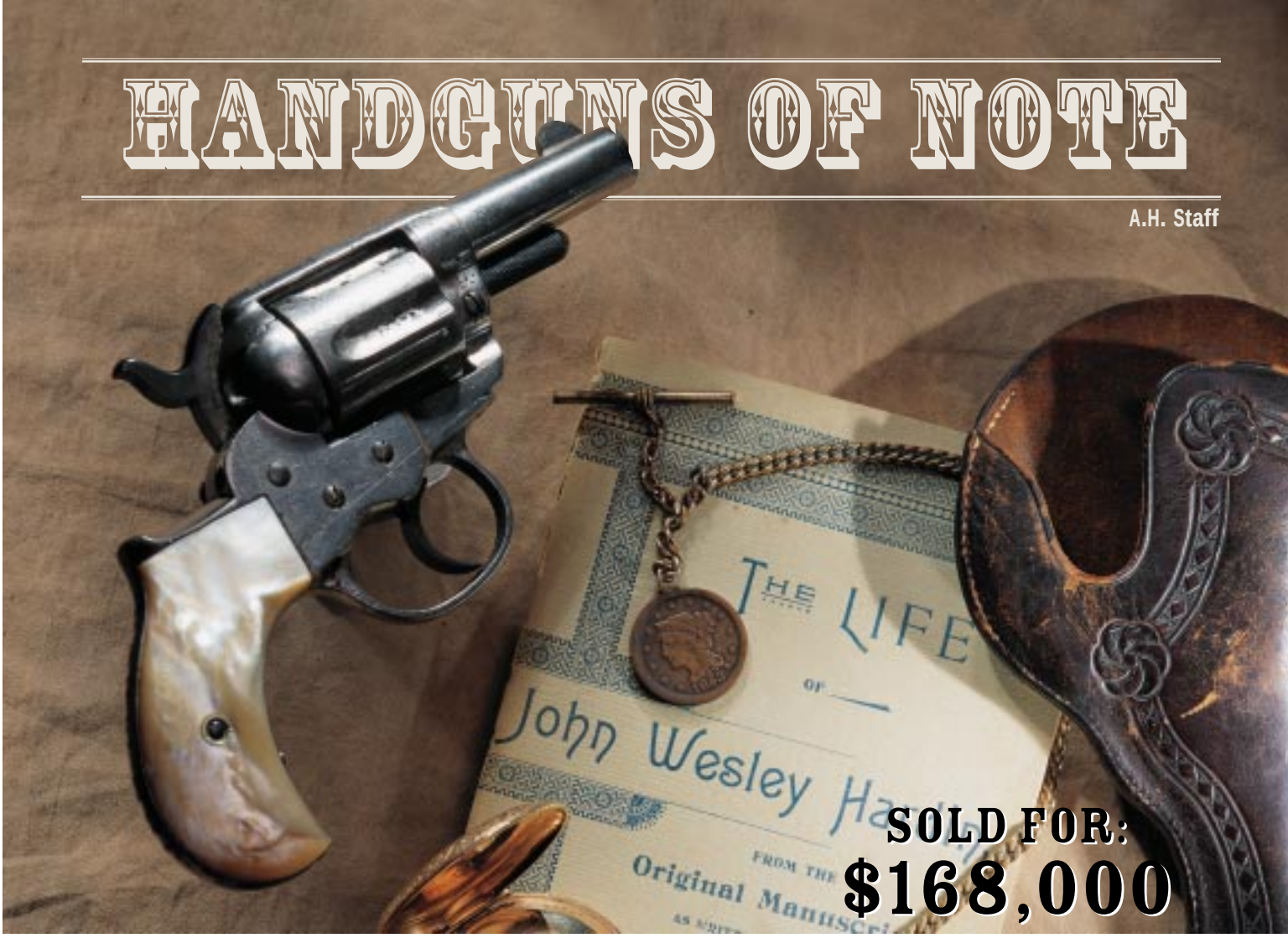
Today we can find some form of firing pin safety on most automatic pistols of recent manufacture. And, they operate in much the same way as the Colt. The good news about the Swartz/Kimber safety is that it's sneaky. Unless you know — you can't tell it's there. It just quietly does it's job with no fanfare. So you see, old is new again.

Slides: left to right: Colt National Match, Kimber Series II, Colt Series 80

Grip safety and plunger from Kimber Series II.

HANDGUNS OF NOTE

A.H. Staff



SOLD FOR: $168,000

JOHN WESLEY HARDIN'S DEATH GUN

Hardin's cousin by marriage, James Miller, known as "Killing Jim," had requested legal assistance in a case involving armed altercations with Sheriff G.A. (Bud) Frazier. In two shooting incidents, Miller had survived being shot by Frazier, thanks to a steel plate insert placed by Miller in his clothing. Their feud, which began in 1891, eventually resulted in the death of Frazier, murdered by Miller in 1896.

Hardin had responded to requests from Miller to prosecute Frazer in court, having been shot by the latter in April and in December, 1894. Trial was scheduled for April of 1895, in El Paso; Frazer had been arrested that December. Tiring of the wait, Miller eventually killed Frazer.

Miller was known as "the most dangerous man that ever lived," according to an acquaintance, Dee Harvey. In 1908, Miller would be the prime suspect in the murder of Pat Garrett, killer of Billy The Kid. In 1909 Miller was lynched, after he killed a rancher in Ada, Oklahoma.

Court records show John Wesley Hardin was carrying a Colt Lightning Model 1877, serial number 84304 and an Elgin watch, serial number 4069110, when he was shot and killed on August 19, 1895. The revolver and the watch had been presented to Hardin in appreciation for his legal efforts on behalf of Miller in his trial for murdering Frazer. That trial lasted from April 8 to 14, 1895, ending in the jury being deadlocked.

The Colt, (with a .38 caliber, 2½" barrel) is nickel-plated, with blued hammer, trigger and screws. The backstrap is hand-engraved: "J.B.M. TO J.W.H." It wears mother-of-pearl grips.

The Lightning is recorded in Colt factory ledgers as shipped on July 16, 1891, to Hartley & Graham, New York City, with five like guns in the shipment.

The Colt is accompanied with a tooled leather holster, marked with a barely visible stamp of an El Paso maker. The hunting case pocket watch by Elgin is a 14 karat, gold-filled, lever set, inscribed on the front: "April/7th/1895." The inscription on the top of the inside lid reads: "J.W. HARDIN/From/J.B.MILLER." There is also a gold-plated brass chain, with a fob of a liberty head penny, with the date 1853 (the year of Hardin's birth).

The set includes a mounted photograph of Miller and Hardin, likely at the time of the presentation of the revolver and watch. The photograph is marked: "Simpson/602 Main St./Ft. Worth, Tex."

The original John W. Hardin, Esq. business card and, "The Life of John Wesley Hardin From the Original Manuscript, As Written by Himself" (1896) rounds out this rare and historically-significant bit of Americana.

Our thanks to Greg Martin Auctions for supplying photos and information. Phone: (800) 509-1988; www.gmartin-auctions.com

Note: Property documented in inventory of John Wesley Hardin estate, recorded at the time of the outlaw's death in1895. To quote: "1 .38 Colt Pistol (84304), white handle./1 watch, Elgin, on movement (4069110).

Condition: Revolver excellent, with 75-80% finish remaining; some flaking on frame and cylinder. 75% blue on trigger and hammer. Tiny nick on toe of left panel of pearl grips. Minor wear on holster.

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Engineered Spit And Polish By Robar Turns This Compact Package Into Near Perfection.

Dave Spaulding
Photos: Ichiro Nagata

The SIG 228 GROWS UP

Let's just say it. No gun is perfect. Since today's handguns are built to meet the needs of the masses, there are a few of us who, not quite fitting the "masses mold," would like some features on a given pistol to be a little different. You know what I mean — "I wish this gadget was a little smaller so it wouldn't hit my thumb," or, "If that gizmo was a little trimmer it would fit my hand better." Those kind of things.

Enter the SIG P-228. The 228 is one of the finest carry handguns around. It fits my hand like few others and is compact enough to carry concealed with ease. I tend to gravitate toward medium sized, compact pistols, as they can be used for a wide variety of functions. The SIG 228 is just such a pistol.

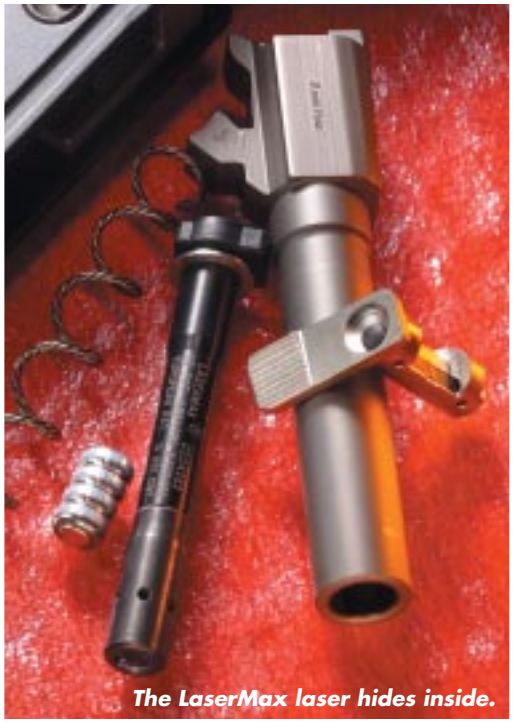
But still the SIG needed, as editor Huntington says, "some filing-on" done. I didn't want a package deal either, or to let someone else decide what my gun needed. I wanted it modified by someone who would truly understand what is needed in a custom defensive pistol and who would not talk to me like I was a child. "Don't insult your customers" should be rule one in the gunsmithing business. Unfortunately, it often isn't.

It is at The Robar Companies, and that's the first place I thought to call. Because Robar delivers what I like to call "Adult" service.

Robbie Barrkman, owner and operator of Robar, is not only knowledgeable about firearms and their custom modification; he is a man who has been in more than a few tight spots. Prior to coming to the Unites States, Robbie was a member of the South African Defense Force, where he specialized in counter-insurgency operations.

SIG SAUER
SIG ARMS INC
Herndon-VA

Haugen Handgun Leather and Columbia River's M-16 tactical folder round out this Robarized P-228 package.



The LaserMax laser hides inside.

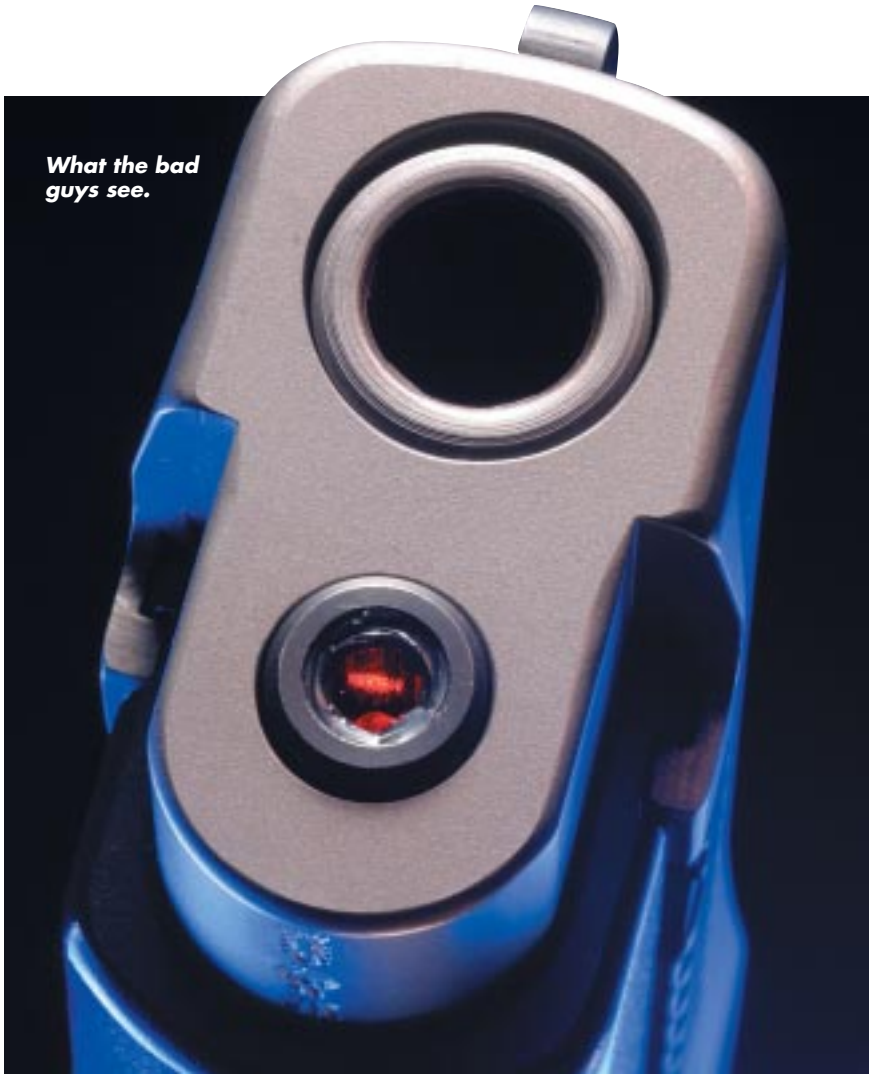
During this time he saw more than his share of personal close-quarter combat. While in the South African military, Robbie traveled to Arizona where he studied weapon craft with Jeff Cooper at the American Pistol Institute, better known as Gunsite. While attending this course, Cooper asked him to become part of his staff, which Robbie did. He moved to the United States and spent the next five years teaching and performing custom modifications on guns for Col. Cooper at the Gunsite facility.

As time went by, the gunsmith operation grew to the point where Robbie decided he needed to incorporate to protect his business. Not wanting to use his own name, he used the first few initials of his first and last names to come up with Robar. Today, the Robar Companies are actually three different operations.

The first (and most profitable) is the plating company, which plates firearms with such high-tech finishes as NP-3 and Roguard. But its biggest customer is the aerospace industry. The second company is the well-known custom gunsmith service. The third offers quality firearms training to both law enforcement and legally armed citizens. Additionally, Robbie works as an adjunct-instructor at the famed Thunder Ranch training facility. It's because of this extensive background and knowledge I chose Robar for many of my custom firearms needs.

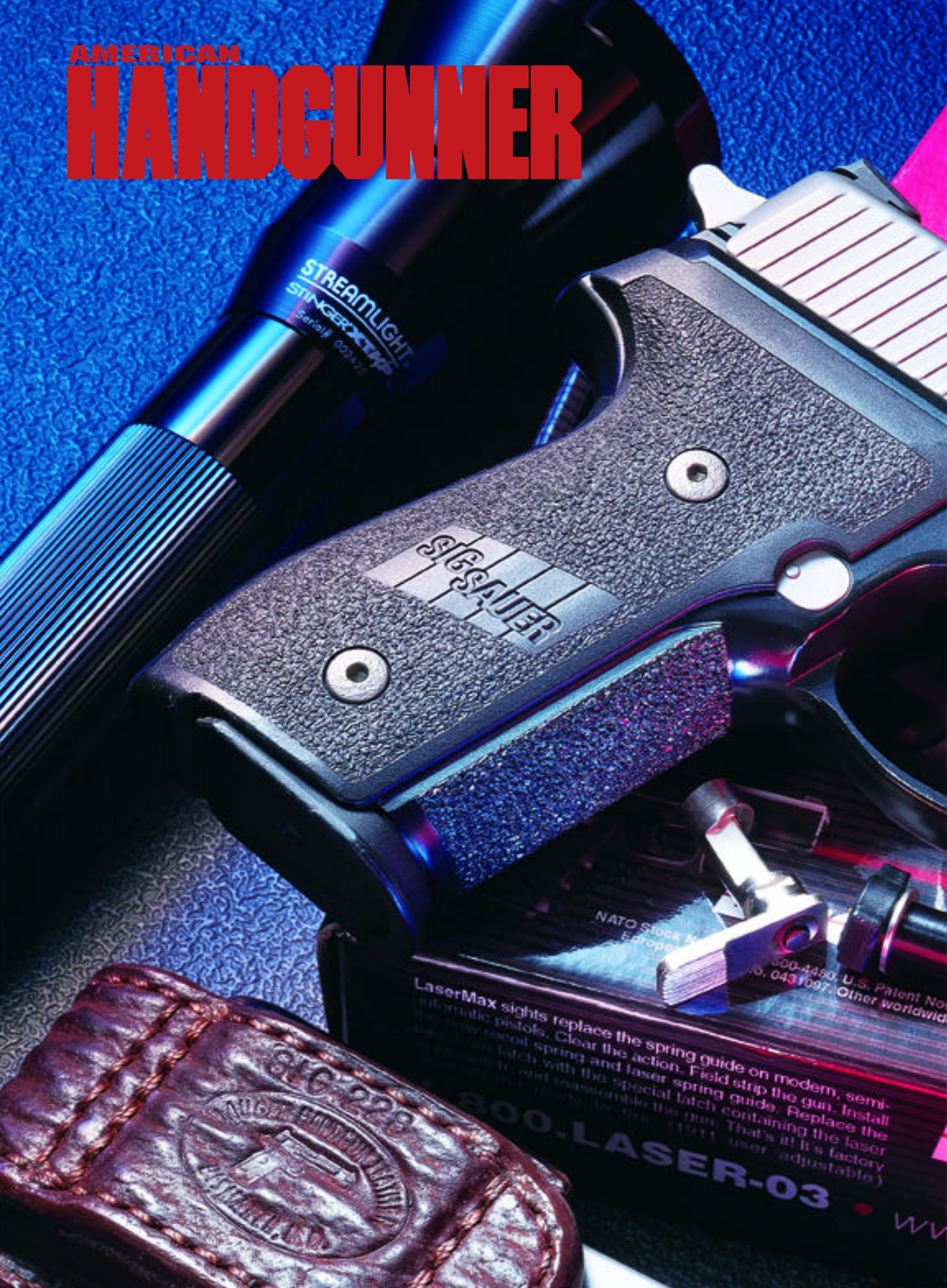
Robbie and his staff are willing to perform a wide variety of modifications to a customer's firearm. No job is too big or too small for Robar's attention. Their goal is customer satisfaction, and considering that much of the business coming to Robar is repeat business, this level of satisfaction must be extraordinarily high.

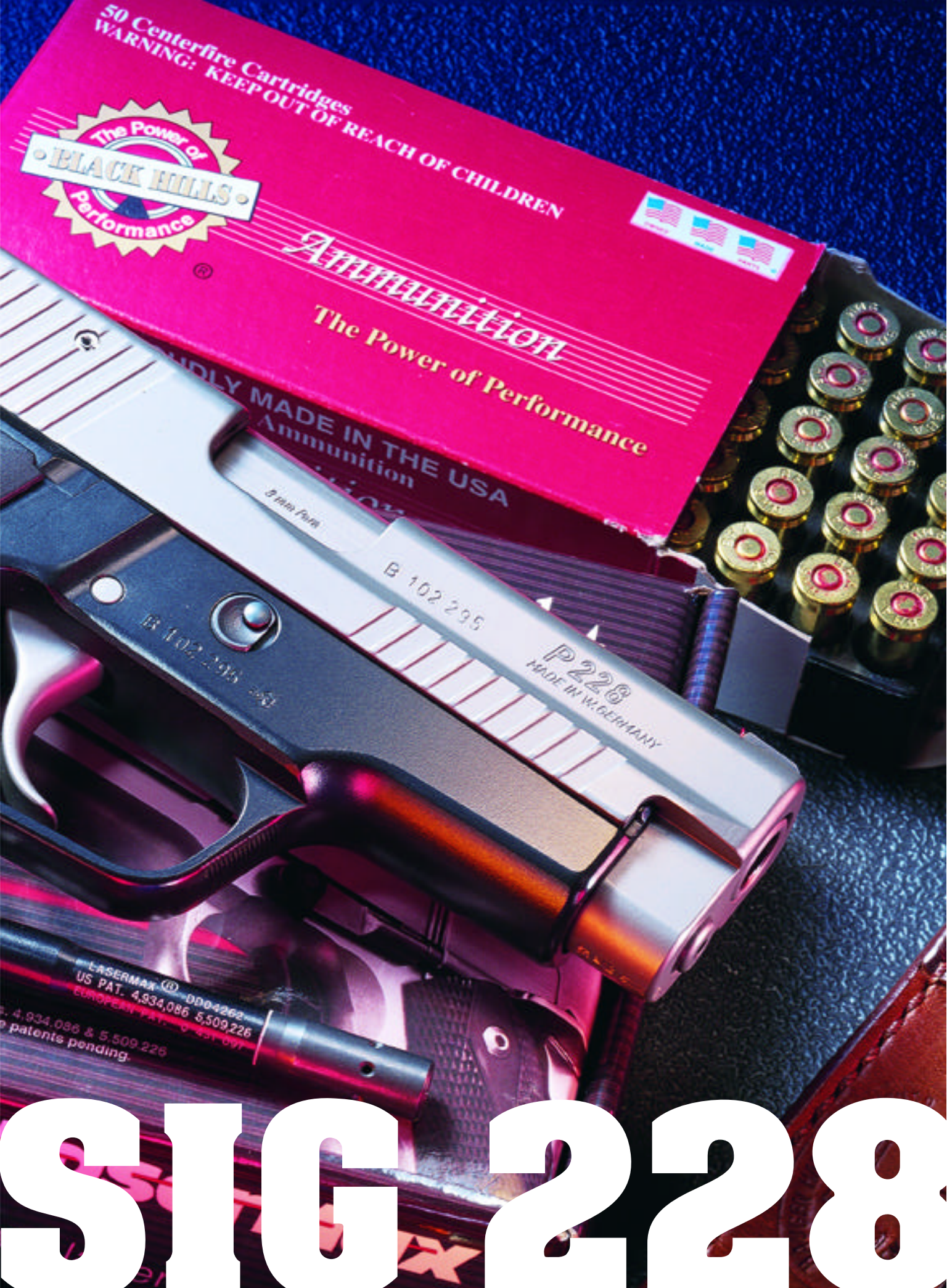
No job is too big or too small for Robar's attention. Their goal is customer satisfaction...



What the bad guys see.

AMERICAN HANDGUNNER

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US PAT. 4,934,086 5,509,226
patents pending

SIG 228

Recently, I found myself in Phoenix teaching a firearm course, so I took the time to stop at the Robar facility and speak with Robbie about my 228. While I had some ideas concerning what I wanted, I decided to tell Robbie what my needs were and let him come up with the solutions. After a short discussion, the work was agreed-upon, and I took my leave to wait for the gun's arrival.

Perfection is a concept that is subjective, at best. In the case of my Robar custom 228, perfection appears to have

The "Before" shot: Fighting pistol that it is, the SIG still benefited from the massaging administered by Robar Companies.

been achieved. The first thing I noticed as the wrapping came off was the two-tone finish. The top half and all internal parts were plated with NP-3, a self-lubricating silver-gray finish that bonds to metal like no other substance I can describe. NP-3 is the substance many of the aerospace parts Robar plates are finished with. If it's tough enough for Space, the mean-streets of Ohio shouldn't be a problem.

The alloy frame was graced with Roguard, a rust-proof finish with the deep black color of a Montana night sky. Far superior to bluing or Parkerizing, Roguard is one of the most durable black finishes currently available. To sweeten the deal, prior to the plating process all of the pistol's sharp edges were "broken," which, when combined with the custom finish, give it a smooth-to-the-touch feel that reminded me of running my hand across the hood of a high-end European sports car. Well-polished, that is.

As I felt the SIG was already a very sleek pistol in both design and function, the combination of the de-burring and plating just enhanced the lines of this exceptional autopistol. I was a happy camper indeed.

At my request, Robbie cut forward cocking serrations into the slide. While the serrations are somewhat controversial,

Continued on page 123

ACCURACY CHART

Ammo Type	50 feet	25 yards
Black Hills 115 grain JHP	3.25"	2.5"
Federal 124 grain Hydra-Shok HP	3"	2.75"
Winchester 147 grain SXT HP	3.25"	1.75"
Remington 147 grain Golden Sabre HP	3.5"	2"

Looking like modern sculpture, the NP-3 and Roguard finishes accent one another, enhancing reliability and performance.

QUIK-SHOK

A Triple Play —

Component parts: left to right: jacket, core, assembled bullet, final formed shape.

QUIK-SHOK PERFORMANCE

Load	Weight	Velocity	Penetration	Dispersion	Firearm
9mm	115	1,325	9.5"	3"	Kahr Mk9
9mm	135	1,180	9"	3.8"	"
9mm	135	960	9"	3"	"
.38 Sp.	110	1,125	8.7"	2"	S&W 4"
.357 Mag.	125	1,400	8.75"	4"	"
.357 SIG	115	1,450	10.25"	3.25"	Glock 31
.357 SIG	135	1,350	10.5"	3.78"	"
.40 S&W	135	1,325	10.25"	3.62"	Kahr Mk40
.40 S&W	155	1,200	9.8"	4.12"	"
10mm	155	1,350	11.5"	3.8"	Glock 20
.45 ACP	165	1,250	10.8"	3.8"	Glock 30
.45 ACP	230	950	10.12"	3.65"	"

Notes: Penetration and circular dispersion results are the average of 5 shots into 10 percent calibrated gelatin covered with standard heavy clothing. Velocities shown are published factory data.

If the name Tom Burczynski is not familiar, you are either a newcomer or not paying attention. Burczynski is the designer of the Hydra-shok bullet that, in 1985, started a real revolution in defensive handgun ammunition. It's become the standard against which all others are measured, making Burczynski, arguably, the most influential bullet designer of the 20th century.

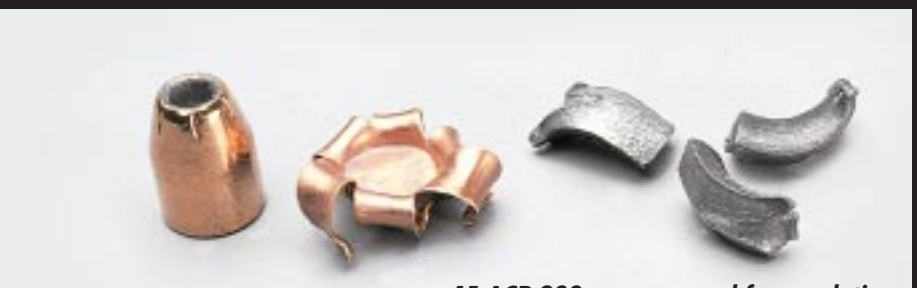
One of the quickest ways to start an argument is to broach the subject of the best handgun bullet, or load. Experts — often self-appointed — pontificate to anyone who listens. Most of the time their premise is based upon some form of energy, and their message — spoken or not — is more is better. Sometimes there is even some pseudo-science involved, but often positions are argued simply because, "I'm the expert and I know these things."

Startlingly absent is adherence to the scientific method. While it surely would be nice to know, efforts to quantify "stopping power" are a tad futile since there is no such thing in science. Actual shootings are virtually never alike. And though gelatin is the best substitute we have, it provides, at best, an estimate. Most of the theories we hear rely heavily on energy. The bullet with the most energy almost always wins.

Cut through the BS though and there is a single, simple truth. Before any of this

AMMO In Lead

Charles E. Petty



.45 ACP 230 gr. recovered from gelatin.

ACCURACY TEST RESULTS

Load	Velocity	Accuracy
9mm Luger		
Test firearm: Les Baer Premier II with 5" barrel		
115 gr. +P	1,401	1.61
135 gr. +P	1,212	1.42
135 gr. Subsonic	1,019	0.94
.40 Smith & Wesson		
Test firearm: S&W PC-40 with 4.5" barrel		
135 gr.	1,364	1.57
155 gr.	1,219	1.64
.45 ACP		
Test firearm: Rock River Arms Match with 5" barrel		
165 gr. +P	1,322	1.63
230 gr. +P	1,003	1.07

Accuracy is the average of three 5 shot groups at 25 yd. from sandbags. Velocity is the instrumental average of 10 shots.

aforementioned pseudo-science can be considered, it comes down to this: we must still make holes so fluid can run out. Anything that interferes with that is evil. Recoil is not our friend, but is the inevitable consequence of trying to make bullets go faster. As I see it, the best plan is to make as many holes as possible in the least amount of time. Modern training methods teach us to keep shooting until the threat is neutralized, and most begin with a double-tap.

Viva La Revolución

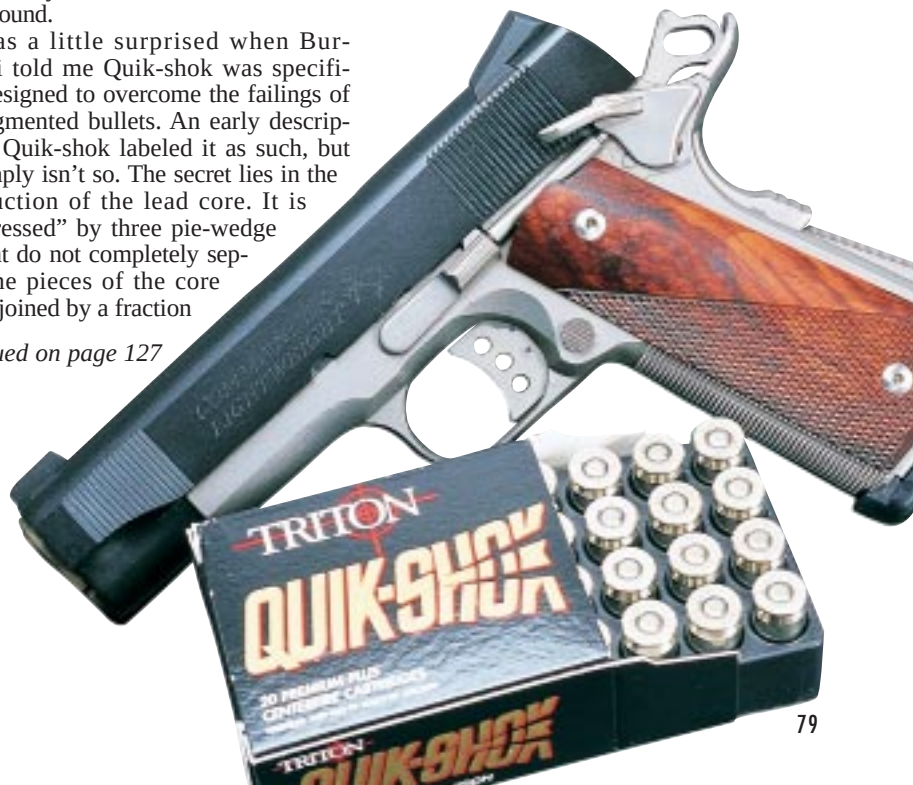
One thing is undeniable. Within the last 20 years handgun ammunition, especially the bullet, has undergone a revolution. The absolute leader of this revolution is still Tom Burczynski's Hydra-shok. Federal was licensed to make it, and it was nearly 10 years before the competition began to catch up. Today, if you test premium handgun ammo from any of the major manufacturers you will find their performance very similar. We owe much to the FBI's ammunition test procedures, which, at the very least, provide a valid comparison of one bullet against another.

Today we're looking at what might well be the next revolution and it's called Quik-shok. Burczynski's new concept follows impeccable logic: make more holes. With Quik-shok you get three. This is not a duplex or multi-ball load, but when the bullet begins to expand it separates into three equal segments diverging a bit from the centerline to produce independent wound tracks.

We need to be very precise in describing this because there is a real risk someone will get the wrong idea. For some time now we have had "pre-fragmented" projectiles that were loaded with shot of various sizes. These were described with mostly anecdotal evidence as being highly effective, and there surely have been reports of spectacular successes. But there have also been failures where surface wounds did little to incapacitate. Even worse were reports the bullet broke upon contact with something like a leather jacket. But perhaps the single most discouraging thing was the high cost — somebody once called it obscene — at $3 per round.

I was a little surprised when Burczynski told me Quik-shok was specifically designed to overcome the failings of pre-fragmented bullets. An early description of Quik-shok labeled it as such, but this simply isn't so. The secret lies in the construction of the lead core. It is "pre-stressed" by three pie-wedge cuts that do not completely separate the pieces of the core but are joined by a fraction

Continued on page 127



MY DOG ATE MY GUN

And Other Stories From The S&W Customer Service Department.

Mike Cumpston

By Sequoia Blankenship

"Now this vintage S&W has a bold yet sophisticated taste."

To the lay observer, it would seem now that since those wacky Englishmen have crawled back into the dismal socialist bog that spawned them, a Smith & Wesson Customer Service Representative should be leading a fairly dull life. A working knowledge of the product line and company policies should be all these minions need in and to efficiently go about their business. Oh, they are in Massachusetts, so a crash course in "How Not To Sound like Teddy Kennedy," on the telephone would be a necessary concession to the target market. Beyond that, what could be very challenging about variations of the single theme, "My gun is broke — can you fix it?"

Curiosity lead us to the Smith & Wesson Customer Service department to assemble a "typical day in the life" sort of story. What, indeed, would qualify as the unusual, when it came to requests for repair, replacement and whatever else the imagination might cook-up from proud Smith & Wesson owners?

As it turns out, the efficient employees must not only need a comprehensive knowledge of changing company practices, as well as federal, state and local law, but must also be well served by a good grasp of the panoply of human knowledge and culture. For instance, some knowledge of fluid dynamics, pressure curves and potentially terminal ballistics seems to come in handy at times.

The following are actual requests, questions and inquiries as received by the Smith & Wesson customer service department. They have to be true — we're not creative enough to make them up.

Bubbles In The Bathtub?

Caller: *"Would it be safe to fire my Smith & Wesson 4506 in the bathtub?"*

Customer Service: *"We would consider firing any Smith & Wesson product submerged in a bathtub — or elsewhere — to be a hazardous practice. Our products are tested and warranted safe under Earth-normal atmospheric conditions, including such variations of temperature as might be found anywhere on the planet. We strongly advise against firing any of our handguns under water and believe that the water volume in the standard household bathtub is insufficient to safely contain the projectile even if nothing else of a serious nature occurs."*

Polymorphic Morphology

Of late, product liability concerns have bailed out the clueless novelists who insist on writing about safety catches on revolvers. If they don't have them now, they soon will. History now boasts more than one "Automatic Revolver." Thus far, Steven Kings .38 Caliber Colt Woodsman remains unredeemed. But what about this?

Caller: *"Where is the lever that changes my 317 from double to single action. I've looked all over the gun and can't find it. Is it that little round thing above the cylinder thingy? When I turn the key in it, the whole gun quits working."*

Thank God.

Is This Covered In The Warranty?

Some things have nothing to do with defects in materials or workmanship.

Caller: *"I went fishing and took my Walther TPH .25 ACP with me in the boat. I used to have a Fisherman's Billie in my tackle box but, in this state, it's illegal to carry a club. So what I figured was the .25 auto would be perfect for finishing off big fish. I gotta' license and all.*

I was out in the middle of the lake and caught a fish. He was slippery. When I went to shoot him, the Walther squirted out of my hand like a bar of soap and went to the bottom of the lake. These guns have grips that are too slick. Is this covered by the warranty?"

Customer Service: *"In order for the warranty to be in effect, you would have to have at least SOMETHING to send us."*

This Could Happen To Anybody

Caller: *"When I was leaving for work this morning, I put my Smith on top of the car. When I got to the station, I realized what had happened. I re-traced my route and found the gun all right but it had been run over by a car. It got damaged. I was wondering if this would be covered by the Warranty?"*

Customer Service: *(Recalling the time she sandbagged the $1,000 Sony Dig Camera off the hood of her jeep at forty miles per hour.) — "That doesn't really come under 'Normal Use' but go ahead and send it in and let us take a look at it. One of our gunsmiths will look it over and, if it's not covered, we'll send an estimate."*

The Dog Ate It

Animal Behavior is an interesting field and the Customer Services Rep will encounter it from time to time. Also essential is an empathetic grasp of inter-species bonding. As we know, the canine philosophy is tri-parate. It is expressed: "if you can't eat it or (unprintable) it then, (unprintable) on it". We like dogs, nevertheless. Fortunately, in this example, the first and printable imperative of dog philosophy is all that comes into play.

Caller: *"My Rottweiler got hold of my .40 Sigma and chewed it all up. Since the gun is plastic and all, is this sort of damage covered by the warranty?"*

Customer Service: *"This is the first time I've heard of this happening. Do you mind if I ask how the dog got your pistol?"*

Caller: *"No, not at all. It was in my nightstand unloaded and cable locked and everything. The thing is, Sylvester is*

Continued on page 129

Goddess Artemis-Diana walks her hounds, courtesy of S&W.

A TRADITION IN TRANSITION

Owners, managers and bean counters come and go, blown like thistles on the wind. But the true greatness of any lasting endeavor grows from the dedication of those who actually do the work. My experiences with the Smith & Wesson Customer Service span a decade and more, but two recent projects illustrate the point very well. About a year ago, I got with Wayne Di'Angelo at the Custom Engraving Shop and we hashed out a project involving my .44 Mountain Gun. I had admired his scrollwork and the picture quality Bulino engraving he had applied to one of the guns in the catalogue.

The revolver was in the hands of an in-house gunsmith who was making sure everything was up to optimum specifications. Pat Frates in Customer Service was masterminding the entire project. Suddenly, things became very complicated. The company was in transition to its current owners and the Custom Engraving Shop fell victim to the general retrenchment — an abiding element of the Smith & Wesson legacy became history.

In the ordinary course of business, my Mountain Gun project would have died an abrupt death. However, as a harbinger of their subsequent actions, the new owners of Smith & Wesson decided to make good on all

Continued on page 109

This classic Model 29 was restored to as-new condition. Your dreams CAN come true.

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10th Anniversary SIG Sauer P229

Celebrate 10 years of P229 production... Create a lasting legacy for the shooting sports.

In 1992 the first SIG Sauer P229 rolled off the assembly line at SIG's new manufacturing plant in Exeter, New Hampshire. Since then, the P229 has earned a reputation for reliability and durability in the toughest law enforcement scenarios.

The first Anniversary Edition ever offered by SIGARMS, the Heritage Edition P229 pistols are a tribute to this reputation. Chambered in 40 S&W, each pistol features a stunning but functional sequentially numbered brushed stainless steel slide etched with 10th Anniversary engraving highlighted with 24kt gold, 24kt gold plated hardware, and presentation quality cocobola grips. Packaged in a presentation quality glass topped walnut display case, your Heritage Edition 10th Anniversary Sig P229 will be the pride of your collection.

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A portion of the sale from each Heritage Edition firearm will benefit the Heritage Fund and its efforts to preserve our hunting and shooting traditions.
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Smith & Wesson's Model 41

Sam Fadala

Collectibles, Edibles, And A Lesson In History

Smith & Wesson historian Roy Jinks wrote a book titled *History of Smith & Wesson*, and in it he tells the story of young Joe Wesson's keen interest in semiautomatic handguns. "[Joe's] father had given him a free hand in the development of new firearms," Jenks astutely tells us. But, like all great tales of yore, there's a catch, a disappointment, a crashing of expectations. For even after gathering examples of every semiautomatic pistol manufactured in the late 19th century, young Joe Wesson remained unimpressed.

In 1909, spring came, as spring does, and there took place a meeting between Joe Wesson and a firearm designer from Liege, Belgium, named Charles P. Clement. Mr. Clement offered something that appeased little Joe's soul. For soon after that

The rear sight is a classic — fully adjustable and repeatable.

The Model 41 just plain feels good in the hand and the controls function smoothly.

Once the guard is down, the barrel comes free easily and it's time to clean-up.

meeting, Clement's .25 caliber semi-auto pistol design rights were negotiated straight into S&W's hands.

In possession of the heart of Clement's little pistol, which featured a barrel locked into the frame by trigger guard and cross bolt, Joe Wesson set about improving the design. He added a thumb-bar safety to prevent firing until the gun was fully engaged by the shooter's hand, and then, in 1910, recognized left-handed shooters with a finger-activated safety in the grip's front strap. A recoil spring "disconnector" was another improvement, enabling the slide easy rearward travel —whereas previously only strong hands could operate it.

Next move was a new .35 caliber cartridge. Tooling up began in 1912, and production soon after in early 1913. The new .35 caliber S&W semiautomatic pistol was catalogued at $16.50, with its safety device strongly advertised as a major feature.

But curses! Woeful World War I stepped in to cease production of the semi-auto pistol in question. Arms for battle were needed, not arms for plinking. And by the time the pistol found its way back on-line in 1919, sales had dropped off the radar screen... though such things didn't exist in 1919. (*Except for maybe on spaceships, whose existence to this day is still doubted by naysayers and the uninitiated. Editor*). Shooting members of the public, just as addicted to convenience then as they are today, were interested in the semi-autos with larger frames and cartridges readily found at the local crossroads' general store — not an offbeat .35 caliber S&W. Sales remained feeble. The

Ten rounds top off the magazine but are plenty unless you shoot with your eyes closed.

model was dropped in 1922 after 8,350 units were manufactured. The silence was deafening.

Checkered Past

Today an S&W .35 caliber semi-auto pistol in excellent condition fetches $500, though one especially gullible collector recently laid out over $3,000 for the redesigned streamlined model chambered for the .32 ACP cartridge. By the late 1940s, S&W had its Model 39 single-action semi-auto on the market, along with the Model .44 double-action, the first of its kind produced in the United States. Continuously improved 9 mm pistols rolled from the factory as well. But no one asked the high-grade target auto-loader in .22 Long Rifle to dance, until entered stage left sweet Mr. Model 41.

In July of 1947, the X-41 and X-42, two experimental models, were completed. Always interested in refinements, the company did not offer a true factory model until mid-September 1957, serial number 1,401 of the company's Automatics.

Target shooting was the name of the 41's game. It came with a 7⅜" barrel and muzzle brake. Regardless that the general shooting public was ignored in favor of target buffs, the company could not produce sufficient 41s to meet the demand. They sold like them proverbial hotcakes. Only 679 units rolled out of the door in 1957, but by the close of 1958 the factory had built and assembled 9,875 Model 41 pistols. Even this high number, however, was still too low to match orders.

A lighter 5" separate barrel was offered in 1958 for field use. Smart move! After all, the snap-down trigger guard removal of the barrel made swapping one for another simple and fast. A customer could order the pistol with 5" barrel in place, or buy the barrel separately. A 41-1 came along in 1960 chambered in .22 Short for International Rapid Fire competition, but only a thousand were made with the light aluminum slides necessary for function with the low-power Short.

Through Points In Time

In August 1963, the Model 41 earned its excellent 5" barrel, still available today along with a 7" barrel. Stoeger's Shooter's Bible of 1964 shows the Smith & Wesson Model 41 with 7⅜" barrel grooved for Olympic centerweights. Also listed is a Model 41 with 5" barrel, plus another with a heavy 5" barrel, all three sub-models going for $100 retail. Along

Continued on page 130

SPEC IT OUT:

Caliber: .22 Long Rifle

Magazine Capacity: 10 Rounds

Barrel Length: 7" or 5"

Overall Length:
12" with 7" barrel
10.5" with 5" barrel

Material: Carbon steel

Weight: 41 oz.

Sight Radius:
9⅝" with 7" barrel
7⅞" with 5" barrel

Stocks: Checkered hardwood with modified thumb rest for right – or left-handed shooters

Sights:
Front-1/8" Patridge,
Rear-Adjustable Click

Finish: S&W blue with sandblasting, matting, and serrations around sighting areas to break up light reflection

Trigger: 3/8" width (.356) with S&W grooving and adjustable trigger stop

Hammer: Internal

External Safety: Single slide

Suggested Retail Price: $958.00

Disassembly begins by pulling the trigger guard down.

You can win a Government Model

TO ENTER CONTEST: Use a postcard (no envelopes, please) and follow the sample shown. Send to AMERICAN HANDGUNNER, Dept. H11, P.O. Box 880409, San Diego, CA 92168-0409. Entries must be received before December 1, 2002.

Limit 1 entry per household. This contest is open to individuals who are residents of the United States and its territories only. Agents and employees of Publishers Development Corporation and their families are excluded from entering. Contest void where prohibited or restricted by law. Winners must meet all local laws and regulations. Taxes and compliance with firearms regulations will be the responsibility of the winners. Winners will be notified by CERTIFIED MAIL on official letterhead. No purchase necessary to enter.

HOM NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2002:

Name _____

Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

Email Address _____

Sample

If I win, please ship my gun through:

Dealer _____

Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

Phone ( ) ____ - _____ Store hours __ am __ pm

From Gemini Customs, LLC

Marc Morganti of Gemini Customs, LLC is one of the newest members of the American Pistolsmiths Guild. His attention to detail is a hall-mark of Gemini Customs and is evident in this Custom Caspian. Not content with available custom guns, Marc took on the task of becoming a custom pistolsmith. Today, Gemini Customs, LLC, addresses their customers needs by offering unique pistols that precisely meet the needs of their customers.

This "One of A Kind" pistol is etched with the American Handgunner logo and has been custom-serialized with "Handgunner 02" — never to be repeated. Starting with the superb stainless steel Caspian frame and slide, this 5" gun features commonly requested enhancements covering reliability, accuracy and ergonomics. The final result is a fine handgun for the field, range or self-defense use.

Equipped with target sights with a fiber optic front insert, bull barrel for added weight, match-grade critical parts, checkering and final custom polish and bead blast, the sum of the parts shows the attention to detail Gemini Customs, LLC is rapidly becoming famous for.

Features include:

- 25 LPI Checkering
- Wilson Custom parts
- Ed Brown tactical safety, magazine catch and mainspring housing
- Briley supported reverse recoil plug
- Bomar BMCS adjustable rear sight
- Dawson Precision Fiber Optic front sight
- Kings stainless steel ejector
- C&S disconnector
- Wolff springs
- Ahrends custom grips

This month's winner also receives a custom holster/mag pouch combo from High Noon Holsters and an Al Mar SERE 2000 tactical folder, etched with the American Handgunner logo. High Noon, famous for their line of rugged, real-world carry holsters, is up to the task of carrying this Gemini Customs, LLC Government Model. The Al Mar SERE 2000, (an award winning design) featuring VG-10 blade steel, deep pocket clip and textured G-10, completes this unique, highly customized package, available only to American Handgunner readers.

The total value of this incredible trio is over $3,400!

PLUS AN AL MAR SERE 2000!

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www.geminicustoms.com

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GUNS WITH A PAST

Grady Pardue's two Colt .45 revolvers and an old LASO badge he is believed to have worn. The Colt New Service (below) was used to kill two armed robbers.

THE GUNS OF GRADY PARDUE

For This Lawman, Only The .45 Colt Would Do!

Gary Paul Johnston

Through the years, we have seen the continuous revolution of the great handgun caliber controversy with strong support for virtually everything, from the smallest to the largest cartridges that can be carried. Right or wrong, good or bad, each one of these people has had their reasons for their choices. Grady Pardue was no exception.

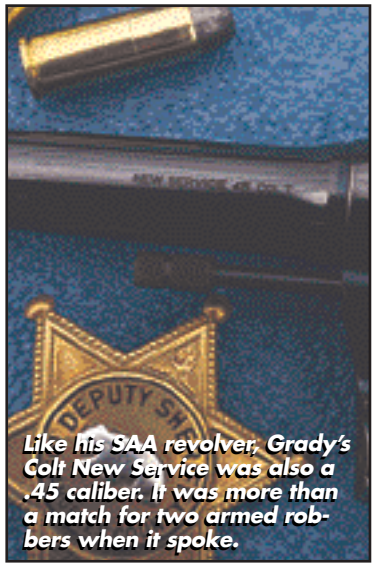
Born in Texas around the turn of the century, Grady Pardue became interested in guns and shooting at an early age, and later worked as a deputy sheriff in a small town somewhere in West Texas. The gun he carried for duty was a Colt Single Action Army revolver in .45 Colt.

Made in 1923, this Colt SAA bears serial number 345184, but the replaced frontstrap was made in 1887, suggesting the original was damaged, or altered in some way. Although the .45 Colt cylinder looks to be original to the gun, the barrel is obviously a replacement, and since it's a factory 4¾" barrel, the gun may have had a longer barrel, or again, the original barrel could have been damaged.

Although the history of Grady's Colt SAA prior to his owning it may be incidental, what was done to the gun (presumably by him) is interesting. As was popular then, a Marble "gold" bead front sight was professionally fitted to the gun, possibly to provide a better sight picture as well as making the gun shoot to point of aim. This particular front sight replacement required the original be filed down, leaving only a short nub. The Marble sight came with a groove in its bottom and two holes drilled through it from side to side. Two hardened pins were also furnished. This sight was slipped over what was left of the front sight and tapped into place against the barrel. Using the two holes as pilots, the original front sight nub was then drilled and the two pins driven through both sights and peened. The result was a new custom sight that was as rigid as the original post.

Along with its barrel, the frontstrap of Grady Pardue's .45 Colt Single Action Army was replaced long ago.

A Marble's gold bead front sight replaces the original.



Like his SAA revolver, Grady's Colt New Service was also a .45 caliber. It was more than a match for two armed robbers when it spoke.

While little else about this gun is known in connection with Grady Pardue, it shows signs of having been carried a lot, and it has also fired plenty of rounds. However, it remains in excellent shooting condition and is about as accurate as any .45 Colt SAA.

Southern Calif. Sheriff

During the Great Depression Grady Pardue moved to Southern California and was first hired by the town of Arcadia, then later by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office (LASO). Although he brought his Colt SAA with him, he didn't carry it on duty in California, but instead purchased a double action Colt New Service. While many of his fellow deputies carried .38 Special revolvers, Grady's New Service was chambered in the .45 Colt cartridge he was so familiar with.

Becoming well respected as a lawman, Grady Pardue's Texas roots and his sense of right and wrong made him a leader. Sometime around 1940, an incident occurred that catapulted Grady's reputation into that of a living legend. In the town of Arcadia, on Double Drive (now Santa Anita) there was a meat locker not far from where the old Pony Express Museum stood. Although the museum is long gone, the meat locker remained at least until several years ago, and may still be there.

One day while Grady was on patrol nearby, he received a call of a robbery in progress at the meat locker. As he pulled into the parking lot, Grady saw two armed men run out of the locker toward their vehicle. Drawing his big .45 Colt New Service, Grady ducked out of his patrol car as the pair opened fire on him from a distance of about 15 yards. As the suspects' guns blazed, Grady brought his Colt up and answered them both with his own big 255 grain .45 slugs. Grady's aim was deadly, and within seconds both robbers lay dead on the ground.

Although he was considered a hero, Grady didn't think much about it. He just happened to be in the right place at the right time and did his job. Continuing with the LASO for many more years, Grady retired sometime around the late 1950's or early 1960's, but his reputation lived on for many years with those who worked with him. Grady Pardue passed away in the early 1970's, and until now, no one with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office probably ever heard of him. Although there are no known photos of Grady, his two Colts remain in the collection of a fellow law enforcement officer who knew him. The real thing, indeed, and his guns speak for him.

HEY COWBOY SHOOTERS!

Before you kiss the girl, snug down your white Stetson and ride off into the sunset, why not do one more good deed? This beautiful silver mounted gun rig and custom ivory-stocked Colt SAA will be auctioned off to benefit the Happy Trails Foundation's Cooper Home. The Cooper Home is a worthy endeavor providing residential care and treatment for 40 abused boys aged 11 to 15 years. There exists a long waiting list of other needy young men and your help is needed.

Raffle tickets are $10 each or 11 for $100. The drawing will be held on December 14, '02 and you need not be present to win. More information is available by calling (760) 240-3330 or at www.happytrails.org

SMITH'S NEWEST IS A BLEND OF 9MM POWER AND CLASSIC ACCURACY.

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 952

CHARLES E. PETTY

Believe it or not, actual human beings finish-fit these guns.

Long before we had IPSC, IDPA or speed shooting there was just one competitive pistol event. And way before S&W had Third, or even Second Generation pistols they had a target pistol that was a real player. The sport was NRA Bullseye pistol and the gun was the Model 52 Master.

The Model 52 evolved from the 9mm Model 39, but it was a true target pistol and compliment to S&W's superb Model 41. In bullseye pistol, there are three matches: .22, centerfire and .45 caliber handguns. Originally, bullseye events were shot with revolvers, but following World War II the use of automatic pistols grew — primarily as gunsmiths learned how to accurize the Government Model .45. The improvements in .22 autoloaders came from High Standard and Colt. But the centerfire match was a different story. Long after autoloaders ruled the other phases, you saw a lot of Colt or Smith & Wesson .38 Special revolvers in the centerfire matches.

Custom gunsmiths began to convert Colt .38 Super pistols to shoot .38 Special wadcutter ammunition, but there was a very real demand for a .38 Special pistol from a major maker. Smith's involvement began with a project that adapted their Model 39 to shoot the short-lived .38 AMU for Army and Air Force pistol teams, but the cartridge really didn't gain much acceptance. Demand for the more easily found .38 Special wadcutter ammo continued to rise. The result was, in 1961, a modified

A jig is used to keep sear engagements uniform.

The trigger of a 952 gets a touch up. Details ... it's all in the details.

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 952

ACCURACY TEST RESULTS

Load	Velocity	1	2	3	Avg.
Black Hills 124 gr. JHP	1,216	.70	1.04	1.22	1.32
Federal Gold Medal 124 gr. FMJ	1,096	1.27	1.22	0.81	1.10
Speer Gold Dot 147 gr. JHP	918	1.83	1.53	1.51	1.62
Remington Disintegrator 105 gr.	1,195	1.25	1.44	1.74	1.48
Remington Match 147 gr. FMJ	920	1.29	1.70	1.52	1.50
Winchester Winclean 147 gr. BEB	934	0.94	0.90	0.98	0.94
				Average	1.33

Notes: Accuracy results are ten shot groups at 25 yd. from Ransom Rest. Velocity is instrumental at 15' as measured by a PACT chronograph.

Model 39 with the double-action trigger locked out. It became the Model 52.

The Model 52 is a joy to shoot. It is also the hardest target pistol there is to shoot well. The light recoil and modest slide pace lull the shooter into a false sense of security. The gentle recoil which makes it so attractive is also the curse. The leisurely pace at which the bullet goes down the barrel means that a shooter who fails to properly follow-through can actually begin to relax before the bullet has left the barrel and turn a shot that would have been a ten into a nine — or worse.

As the popularity of bullseye competition waned, sales of the Model 52, never large, dropped too and the gun disappeared from the catalog. It has been in and out of the catalog and right now it's out, but a gun can be specially ordered through the Performance Center, if you just have to have one.

And Why Not?

One of the things that made the Model 52 so much fun was the shape of the grip which just plain feels good, and an almost-always great trigger pull. So now, with the rise of IDPA and changes in IPSC rules that don't always penalize the 9mm, once more there is a need for a real target pistol from a major manufacturer. What could be more logical than to update the basic Model 52 design, chamber it for the 9mm Luger — which is now competitively cool — and have the whole thing put together by the Performance Center. Voila. We have the Model 952.

A cursory glance won't show many dif-

Continued on page 103

Hand lapping for slide/frame fit.

It's not right until it is.

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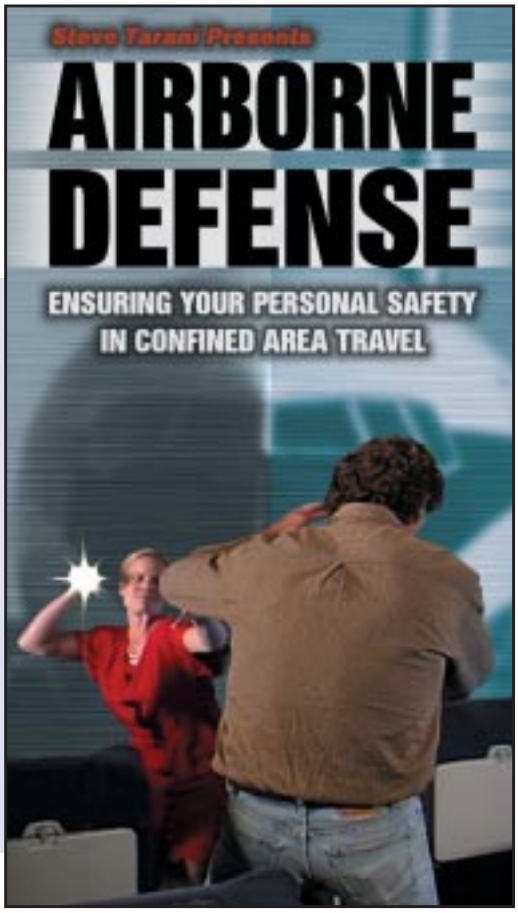
VIDEOREVIEW

Roy Huntington



AIRBORNE DEFENSE: Fighting Back

A Steve Tarani Video

One of the most frustrating elements of the 9-11 attack is the feeling of helplessness many Americans experienced afterwards. If you're like most, you wished you could have been aboard those planes — to help fight back.

Seeing the real-world need for serious survival tactics for today's travellers, Steve Tarani offers his video, "Airborne Defense". Steve's background makes him highly qualified to share his thoughts and experiences on the matter. A full-time defensive tactics instructor, Steve travels the globe teaching essential elements of officer survival.

In this video, Steve introduces civilians to tactics used in military and police training. His concepts on close-quarters self-defense, often using improvised weapons, raises the bar on how a citizen might respond in an emergency. It's down and dirty fighting and he advocates winning at all costs.

If you think about it, it would seem nearly impossible for three or four poorly armed terrorists to take over a passenger jet. Yet it happens. A concerted, focused defense, using effective weapons that virtually surround us, can — and does — change the tide. From rolled magazines to spiked women's shoes, Steve's common-sense ideas are profiled, demonstrated and examined in the real-world environment of the cabin of a jet.

While not dealing with firearms, this video offers simple, easy to remember tools that anyone could benefit from. If you are ever in a dangerous, defensive situation, have the skills, motivation and tools to respond to the threat — and let's win the next one.

For further information, contact Creative Concepts, 15 Shade Tree Lane, Tijeras, NM 87059; (866) 8VIDEOS; www.8668videos.com

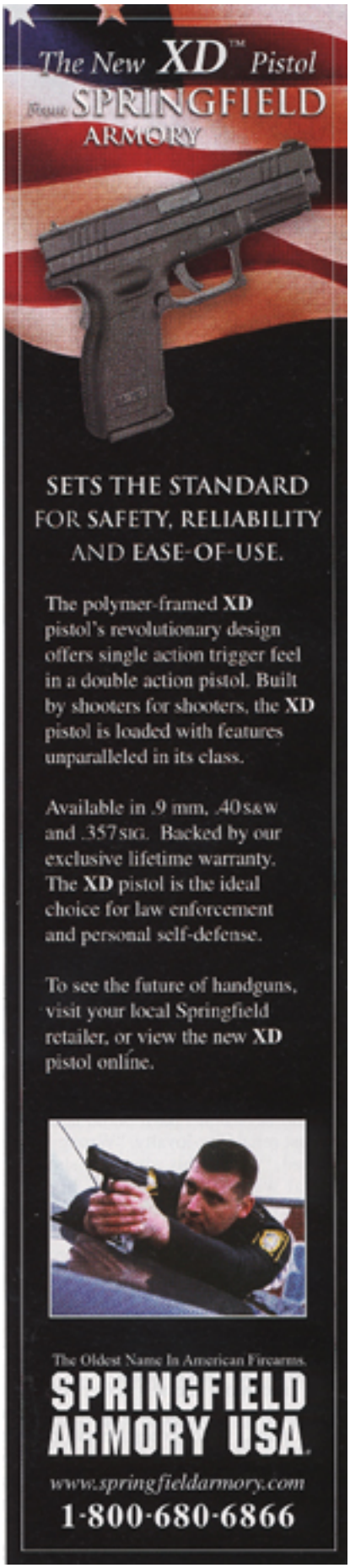


Photo: Ichiro Nagata

TETRA GUN TESTS TOUGH

JOHN MORRISON

My first thought when I opened the box was, "I'm the wrong guy for this." I'm not picky about the oils and lubes I use on firearms, I'm nasty-hyper-critical, in the way only people who have shot for their lives can be. I don't have brand-name loyalty, just reliability-loyalty. "Wrong guy," I muttered, "to send this advertiser-slurry."

That was six months ago. My standards haven't changed, but my gun care products have. Tetra Gun makes a complete line of quality arms care products, centered on their non-petroleum, fluoropolymer-based lubricants.

If you're not familiar with fluoropolymer, it's slicker than owl snot — that's a technical term — and it actually bonds into most metals rather than just lying on top of them. All the lubes are stable from 100 degrees below zero to 750 above, beyond which I'm pretty much null and void anyway. They also have a seizure point 10 times higher than my FFL — Former Favorite Lubricant, I mean — and three times higher than my FF cleaner-preservative. The tech data is impressive, but I was more impressed with the results I saw, felt and touched.

The liquid lubricant and bore conditioner already has a lot of good press, mostly from handloaders who claim some pretty striking velocity gains. Start with a clean, dry, warm barrel and make about 20 wet-patch passes, then 20 dry swabs to bed the particles and remove excess carrier. Expect the first couple of shots to be flyers, and you're done. Repeat every 1,000 rounds.

I don't play with chronographs much, but I was really impressed with the very visible decrease in barrel fouling, and that's got to mean lower friction. This lube is for slides, rails, bushings — anywhere you need good lube to migrate. I'll save the best for later.

The Gun Grease is your basic heavy-duty camming, ramming, anti-jamming treatment. It's goose-crap-slick, but stays put where you apply it better than anything I've used in 40-plus years, especially in extreme heat. And there's that "best" part.

Tetra's spray Cleaner & Light Lubricant is, for my money, the shining star of their lineup, and by far the best triple-threat product I've used. The solvent action is terrific, even removing crud from three pistols I had just cleaned with my FFL — a real crunch test. Just clean thoroughly, wipe dry, and you're left with both a nice level of lubrication and a residual dry finish like a fine, hard wax that slides over fabric and leather, but has just the slightest "tack" to bare fingers.

I was so tickled with this stuff, it was embarrassing. I hate that. So I hammered it for six months, from southern California's muggy summer heat through sand-blasting, grit-blowing winds in the Nevada desert, freezing fall rains, heavy, wet snows and 14-below in the high Rockies. I'm still tickled, but no longer embarrassed. I'm sold.

And that best part? This fluouropolymer stuff just does not seem to attract lint, dust and grit. I'm sure it has something to do with runaway electrons and missing protons, and I don't care. It works. Tetra-Gun gets my business, and my hard-won trust.

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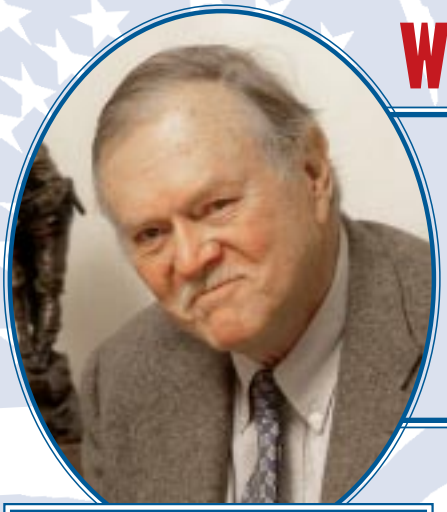

JUNE 21, 1916 - JULY 6, 2002

Few people familiar with firearms would fail to recognize the Ruger name. From it's humble beginnings in 1949 in a small workshop in Southport, Conn., to its present place as the largest firearms maker in America, Ruger has been a consistent leader in design, innovation and value. Ruger's first offering — his .22 target auto — immediately pushed the company into the spotlight.

Accurate and affordable, the .22 led the way toward a legion of designs that proved, again and again, the design genius of the man behind the company. Following on the heels of the semiauto .22, the Single Six was a .22 caliber single action revolver with an entirely new lock-work design using coil springs. Capitalizing on the western rage sweeping the country, Ruger's offering brought the excitement and lure of the Old West into the hands of tens of thousands, and built the foundation for later large bore single action designs, like the Blackhawk and Super Blackhawk series.

Unlike many traditional corporate leaders, Bill Ruger kept his hands in machine oil and personally designed the overwhelming majority of his company's offerings. Regardless of the degree of his personal involvement, his touch and influence remained an integral part of every design up until his passing. It was not uncommon for Ruger to stop, while passing through the plant, take off his coat and plunge his arms into machine oil to help a machinist. The "Old Man," as he was affectionately known throughout the industry, demanded his guns perform in the real world, while remaining affordable to virtually anyone who wanted — or needed — one. And he saw to it personally.

According to R.L. Wilson, firearms historian and Ruger's biographer: "Ruger was a true firearms genius who mastered the disciplines of inventing, designing, engineering, manufacturing and marketing, better than anyone since Samuel Colt. No one in the 20th century so clearly dominated the field, or was so skilled at articulating the unique appeal of quality firearms for legitimate uses."

More than firearms

Ruger was a true Renaissance man, in the fullest meaning of the term, and his interests included a wide-range of arenas. Antique firearms captured his imagination and he was a common sight at auctions around the world. Nineteenth century Western American art, antique cars (he owned more than 30 fine vehicles, from Bentleys to a 1913 Mercer Raceabout), and even the design and construction of his own classic auto, only touch on some of the man's passions. His 92-foot yacht, the Titania, was born from his own design pen.

Bill Ruger's philanthropy was evident through charities in the communities where his factories were located, as well as the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyo., where he served as a member of the Board of Trustees for over 15 years.

Ruger is survived by his son, William B. Ruger, Jr., who is the current Chairman of the company, and daughter Carolyn R. Vogel, six grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his wife, the late Mary Thompson Ruger and a son, James Thompson "Tom" Ruger.

Ruger has been compared to John M. Browning and called a modern American firearms genius. The accolades are well-deserved and indeed, millions of people the world over were introduced to the joys of shooting due to the quality and affordability of a Ruger firearm. From law enforcement to target shooters, hunters, precision riflemen and shotgunners, Ruger's legacy will continue in the form of future design innovations from his company, and in the fond memories so many have of time spent in the field with their Ruger firearms. Rest easy, Bill.

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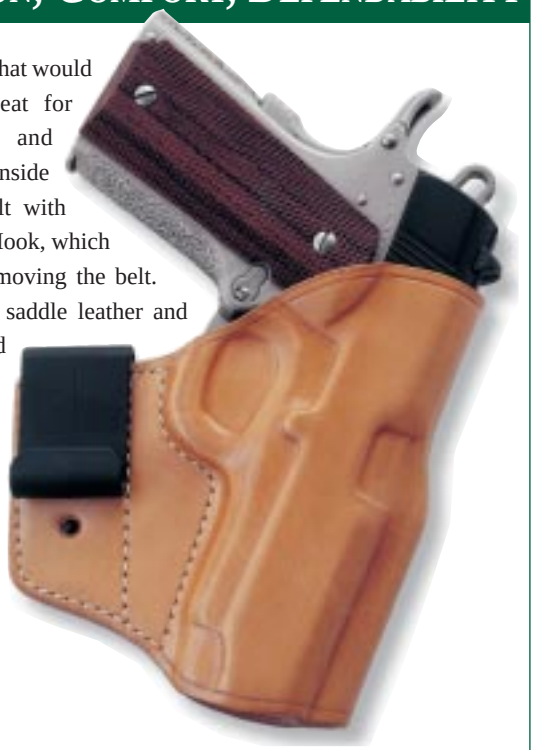

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AYOOB FILES

Continued from page 42

pistolwhips them with his ever-present handgun. His reputation on the street is that of a sadist who loves to brutalize those he robs, particularly when he's ripped on drugs — usually Phencyclidine, PCP, a horse tranquilizer abused by humans to create berserker rage, psychotic violence, and superhuman strength and stamina. Davis will testify later he knew when Bubblegum was on drugs, he "would get wild and violent and go on his missions ... sticking-up people who lived in the area."

Davis was 15 or 16 when he first experienced Bubblegum, who, with a partner robbed Davis and another young male at gunpoint and then forced them to strip nude. A second encounter took place when Davis was about 18. Bubblegum caught him walking alone at night near the corner of 147th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue.

Davis would later testify, "(A)s soon as I turned the corner on 147th Street, Bubblegum was there. He grabbed me by my shirt and said, 'Come here, come here, little bitch.' He had a gun out. He went in my pocket. (He was pointing the gun) towards my chest. He took the money I had in my pocket ... told me to get the f*** out of there."

During spring of 1992 came the worst attack. Lured into a building by a street person, Davis found Bubblegum waiting for him. Stripped naked, robbed, pistolwhipped by Bubblegum after repeatedly having his head smashed against a wall, Davis was savaged in a new way.

"That is when he raped me," Davis later testified. "He stuck his penis in me. I was bent down. I told you he held me against the wall. I kept screaming, telling him 'STOP.' I was in pain. He said, 'Shut the f*** up.' He said he would treat me like one of the bitches. After he stopped he hit me again. I was on the floor. Then he was zipping up his pants. Then he tells me next time he sees me he is going to kill me."

And then, at 9 p.m. on the night of June 20, Davis stood on the corner of 146th Street and Amsterdam and saw Bubblegum for the first time since that man sodomized him and threatened death. They made eye contact. And the big man focused on him like a laser weapon engaging its target.

Ronald Davis felt what Tom Clancy called, "the sum of all fears."

The Shooting

Davis ducks around the corner, out of sight. Terror grows within him. He walks quickly to an apartment on 146th and borrows a handgun from someone he knows. He is thinking only, "I'm not going to let him hurt me again."

Armed without license by the authori-

ties, a felony for first offense in New York, Davis reconnoiters the area, hoping to spot the man he fears so he can escape. He sees Bubblegum on the West side of Amsterdam, near 147th Street. Davis crosses to the East side. Trying to get away he seeks refuge in the apartment of a friend. But the friend does not answer the buzzer, and the foyer to the apartment building is locked from the inside. Trapped in the vestibule, Davis looks over his shoulder and sees Bubblegum has spotted him and already crossed the street after him and is moving fast, trailed by a female companion.

> **Still in a state of terror, Davis runs as fast as he can down 146th street.**

Davis considers running, and rejects it. Every time he has been threatened by Bubblegum before, the man had a gun. The man had threatened to kill him the next time he saw him. This is that next time.

Davis will say later, "I didn't want to get shot in my back."

His back to the wall in terror, his eyes fixed on Bubblegum like a mouse staring at an oncoming snake, Bubblegum glares back. The giant felon and the woman walk by Davis and take a few more steps toward the corner, and it looks as if no harm will pass.

Then it happens. Bubblegum tells his companion, a thief and doper trying to sell him a stolen cell phone, "I have to hit this guy off." He turns toward Davis, his hand reaching to his huge waist where Davis knows Bubblegum carries his gun.

"Stricken with panic," as the Second Circuit will describe him, Davis thinks only, "Beat him to the draw!" Davis pulls the illegal handgun and darts to his right, trying to keep the width of his turning antagonist's body between himself and the gun he is certain Bubblegum is reaching for. For an instant he is behind his rapist, and he fires.

Davis shoots again and again, not counting the bullets driving into the broad back of the man who calls himself Bubblegum. The big man crumples. Still in a state of terror, Davis runs as fast as he can down 146th street.

Eddie Ray Leonard is down, down and dying on the dirty sidewalk of Amsterdam Avenue. These mean streets have tasted much blood before, of the innocent and the guilty alike, and this is a day the fates have chosen for the guilty to bleed. But just because the Harlem streets will not be stained with Ronald Davis' blood today does not mean they cannot still claim his life.

Ronald Davis will be charged with

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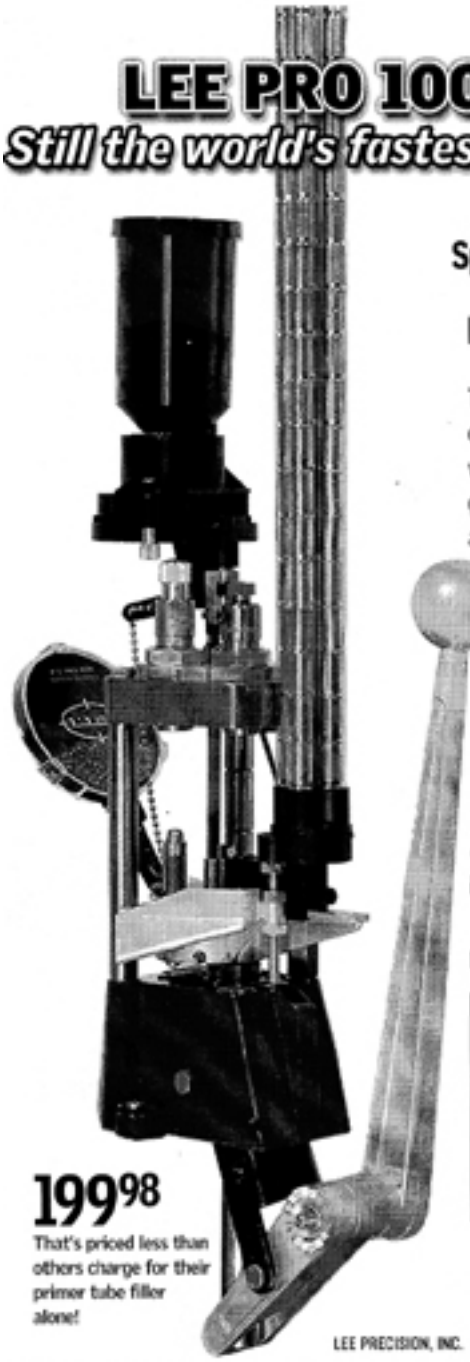

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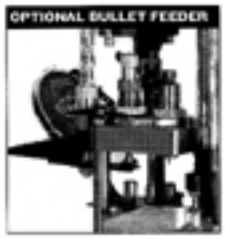

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murder in the death of "Bubblegum" Leonard. And he will be convicted of manslaughter.

The Conviction

Those whose work constantly expose them to the unrelieved grimness of human suffering and death take refuge in gallows humor. Thus, "popping Bubblegum." Thus, the famous NYPD homicide investigator who characterized deaths like Bubblegum's as "misdemeanor murder." Suffering breeds cynicism, and cynicism breeds the sarcasm of unofficial comments like these.

But in the United States, officialdom handles homicide, and officialdom is notably bereft of humor in these matters —gallows variety or any other kind. It is said God notices even the sparrow fall, and it is certainly true the State takes it seriously when even a vulture falls. The law bestows upon an evil man the same rights as the good man.

A senior member of the Guardians, the African-American association of NYPD officers, once said, "70 percent of the crime in this city is committed by blacks, against blacks." Bubblegum was a one-man wave of violent black-on-black crime, and some found poetic justice in the fact he died committing his final such offense. As in most high-crime areas, the overwhelming majority of Harlem residents are victims or potential victims, not perpetrators. It is safe to say there were few in Harlem who felt anything but relief at the death of Eddie Ray Leonard, but even the worst monsters have people who love them and want their deaths avenged. The last words of Ted Bundy's mother to the serial sex-killer before his execution were, "You'll always be my precious son." The System does not tabulate an incident like this one as "Good Guys 1, Scumbags 0." It treats it as the death of a citizen.

The Davis/Leonard shooting was seen by some as "career criminal committing felony by carrying illegal gun fatally shoots other career criminal in back multiple times and runs away." When Ronald Davis was "sent up the river," the river might have been named "Retreat Requirement." While there are many issues in the case, each was something of a tributary to that main stream that flowed toward conviction.

For instance, it turned out the dead man was armed not with a gun, but with a carpet cutter. Not until September 11 would most Americans recognize this device as the deadly weapon it certainly is. At the time of the Leonard shooting, the lethality of a carpet cutter or box cutter was a secret well-kept among criminals worldwide. In England, the popular street weapon is known as a "Liverpool credit card." However, the trial judge viewed it as a lesser weapon, and the defendant's perception he was about to be shot as simply culpable bad judgment.

Davis appears to have been competently represented at trial. The Defense got in the prior assaults by Leonard though they had never been documented. They inserted Leonard's statement to the woman ("I have to hit this guy off") even though Davis had never heard it and thus it could not have contributed to the decisional process for which he was being judged. Anyone familiar with trial tactics can confirm this was good lawyering.

What made the conviction a fait accompli was the trial judge's refusal to allow an instruction to the jury that the shooting could be a justifiable homicide. She felt such a defense was void because she didn't think Davis had lived up to the retreat requirement.

> **"Her carefully crafted advocacy demolished the Prosecution's arguments brick by brick ..."**

Explained that judge, "If the defendant has a duty to retreat ... can he thereafter invoke self-defense by putting himself back in the same position with the gun at the ready? Instead of continuing to get away, he went back to where Bubblegum was minutes before. Can ... the first clear opportunity to retreat with complete safety be ignored?"

She thought not, and this judge allowed no justification argument, only the partial defense of "extreme emotional disturbance."

The Second Circuit later summarized, "The jury accepted Davis's testimony with respect to his extreme emotional disturbance; it acquitted him of the Murder charge, but convicted him of Manslaughter in the first degree and criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree. He was sentenced to concurrent prison terms of seven to 21 years for Manslaughter and five to 15 years for gun possession."

Lawyer To The Rescue

It was about time for the fates to send poor Ronald Davis some good luck for a change. It came in the form of his appellate lawyer. The appeal was assigned to Attorney Frances Gallagher of New York City's Legal Aid Society. Gallagher speaks in a soft voice that camouflages the ferocious heart of a courtroom warrior, and she masterfully constructed a detailed brief on the subtleties of the retreat requirement and how it must be applied under New York law. Her carefully crafted advocacy demolished the Prosecution's arguments brick by brick until none of the

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State's arguments were left standing.

It was argued by the other side that because Davis had not actually seen Bubblegum's gun he could not have reasonably believed himself to be in such danger as to warrant deadly force. The Second Circuit agreed with Gallagher that prior knowledge of Bubblegum always carrying a gun, frequently using it criminally, and having threatened to kill Davis, all created reasonable belief on the defendant's part that the offender could and would kill him.

The law has never demanded the bad guy have a particular weapon, only that his actions create a reasonable belief on the part of the good guy that the bad guy possesses the power to kill. Bubblegum's cumulative actions certainly did so. Besides, the higher court also recognized at the time of the shooting that Bubblegum was close enough to Davis to murder him with the "carpet knife" he did possess. And he was reaching for it when he stated he would "hit (Davis) off."

The trial judge determined Davis lost the right to self-defense when he returned to Amsterdam Avenue after first observing Bubblegum. The Second Circuit found otherwise and sided with Davis, stating, "Under the terms of Section 35.15, the duty to retreat does not arise until the defendant forms a reasonable belief that the other person 'is using or about to use deadly physical force.' The New York Court of Appeals ... further spelled out that this duty does 'not arise until the point at which (the other person's use of) deadly physical force was (actually occurring) or imminent.'"

In other words, Davis didn't have a duty to retreat until Bubblegum reached to his waist. By then, it would have been impossible to do so in complete safety to himself and others as prescribed by New York law, because it was reasonable for him to believe Bubblegum had a gun and that he couldn't outrun the bullets.

The opinion of the higher court stated, "New York Law does not obligate a person to leave a place he is entitled to be merely because there is another person present who might represent a future threat. It is only when the threat becomes imminent that the actor is obligated to withdraw if he can do so in complete safety. We conclude that, under the law of New York, Davis did not lose his entitlement to the defense of justification by reason of his failure to withdraw from the Amsterdam Avenue neighborhood on seeing Bubblegum there."

"The law does not demand you throw a baby from the sleigh to appease the pursuing wolves."

The Second Circuit reversed Ronald Davis's conviction for Manslaughter. It unfortunately allowed the conviction for illegal gun possession to stand. It does not appear the trial defense invoked the common law principle of the Doctrine of Competing Harms, known under the New York rules as the Doctrine of Necessity. Holding that one is allowed to break the law under the rare circumstance where following the law could cause more human injury than breaking it, the Doctrine of Necessity basically says a lesser evil is warranted by the presence of a greater evil.

This is not used as often as it should be in cases of this kind, in which the firing of the gun is correct at law but its possession technically violates the law.

The Davis decision by the Second Circuit confirms that, in jurisdictions which require some effort at retreat before using deadly force in self-defense when attacked in public, the requirement exists only when such retreat can be accomplished in complete safety to oneself and others. The law does not demand you throw a baby from the sleigh to appease the pursuing wolves. Nor that you turn your back on a weapon being drawn by someone who obviously means to kill you.

It is incumbent upon the armed citizen to know whether or not retreat is required in the given jurisdiction. Some states don't require it, and none require it when assaulted by an intruder in the home — under the doctrine that "a man's home is his castle, and attacked there he may stand his ground and need not retreat."

Nonetheless, if circumstances do allow it, at least a token effort at retreat is always a good idea. If nothing else, it shows those who judge you later you made every attempt to avoid using lethal force until there was nothing else you could do. And that you fired as an absolute last resort, as the law universally demands.

The author wishes to thank use-of-force instructor and law researcher Ed Mandelbaum and tactical firearms expert and attorney Steve Harris for their invaluable assistance in making this article possible. Massad Ayoob wrote the authoritative text on civilian use of deadly force in self-defense, "In the Gravest Extreme." He has been an expert witness in many justifiable homicide cases.

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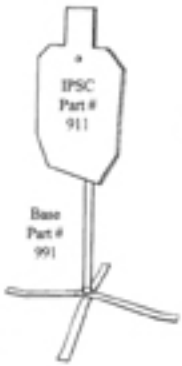

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S&W 952

Continued from page 91

ferences. The rear sight is different and the weird bushing of the original 52 is replaced with the spherical style seen on most Performance Center pistols. At first glance it looks as if the 952 is now equipped with a grip safety, for the backstrap is movable, where the 52's is not.

But it isn't a grip safety, it's a firing pin safety that depends on the grip rather than some connection with the trigger. This is a descendent of the 1930s Swartz firing pin safety once found on Colt Government Models and now seen on Kimber's Series II pistols, or S&W's latest 945. It is a better design and has no harmful effect on the trigger pull, which is a creep-free 4 pounds.

"The ammo chosen was representative of both match and conventional loads and the results held one big surprise."

The thingy that looked like a safety on the Model 52 really is one now. Before, it blocked the firing pin for dry firing, as this one does, but this version has no decocking function, like we're used to with double-action S&W designs. The single-column magazine has a nine round capacity and the ubiquitous magazine safety is present.

The grip shape is very comfortable, which is a big factor in the shootability department, but the mechanical stuff is good too. As we're used to now from Performance Center pistols, the slide to frame fit is slick with no vertical or horizontal movement. You can also feel the thing lock up with a "snick" in that last little bit of movement before the slide goes completely into battery. That feel is the result of the match barrel's bottom lug mating nicely with the slide stop pin. This is how it's supposed to be.

One thing that hasn't changed is how much fun it is to shoot. At 40 ounces, the 952 isn't exactly dainty so it absorbs quite a bit of recoil with weight alone. Recoil is not exactly brutal for the 9mm anyhow, so it's possible to shoot the 952 fast with a minimum of muzzle flip. The 952 does not have the problem of slow bullets so — while you still have to follow through just as with any gun — it is not going to jump up and bite you either.

The 952 is utterly reliable and joyously accurate. Throughout my cus-

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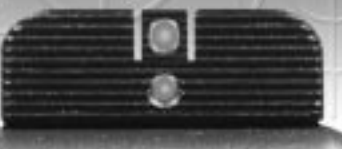

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tomary three step test there have been no stoppages of any kind. First was about 100 rounds for break-in and familiarization. The second part was testing in the Ransom Rest as shown in the table, and the third step included shooting with a wide variety of ammo with bullets of every weight and shape. That part went on longer than usual just because the thing was so much fun to shoot.

In the Ransom Rest the 952 shot well, with occasional flashes of absolute brilliance. Over the last year or so I've had the opportunity to shoot several custom 9mm pistols and chosen six different loads that had shot well in the other guns. So, as a matter of curiosity, the 952 was tested with exactly the same ammo.

First-Shot Opener

There were a few cases where the first shot opened the group up by about 1/2" but it was not an always-thing and seemed to be getting better as the round count went up. Sadly, my testing can't shoot the thousands of rounds that would normally go through a gun like this and I have no doubt this effect would disappear over time.

The ammo chosen was representative of both match and conventional loads and the results held one big surprise. Early on I knew I was going to be testing several 9mm pistols, so it was important to pick ammo that was available in sufficient quantity. One of my rules is to make every effort to include at least one load from each of the major manufacturers. When I got to Winchester, the only load I had in sufficient quantity was a new offering in their USA Winclean line of low-lead ammo. These have jackets of brass with the base covered with a brass washer. These are called "BEB" for brass enclosed base and are loaded with a lead free primer. I mention all of this because the 952 really loved this load. It is the only one to average under an inch for ten shot 25 yard groups. Accuracy had been good in several other pistols but it was outstanding here.

Shooting the 952 reminds me a little of the Model 52, primarily because of the grip shape, but everything else simply happens faster. With the 52, slide movement was slow and it was possible to feel the several components of the slide cycle. You'd even see the empty case hop leisurely out of the port. Not so with the 952. Slide movement was brisk and empties were thrown well clear. The weight really makes recoil be nearly negligible and the accuracy leaves little to be desired. It has none of the difficulties of the Model 52 and is just as much fun. I believe this is what handgun shooting is all about.

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shooter testimony and fact evidence showed otherwise. Three that come to mind are Kentucky vs. Rucker (SIG P226 9mm standard model auto), Georgia vs. Crumbley (S&W Model 686 .357 revolver), and Florida vs. Alvarez (S&W Model 64 .38 revolver) .

All three of these defendants were acquitted, and I was proud to have spoken for each in court, but all three went through unnecessary torment that might have been prevented with double action only handguns. Even before Alvarez went to trial and the false allegation of his cocking his revolver was disproven, his agency, the City of Miami Police Department, ordered all service revolvers on the PD rendered double action only. Local officers referred to them as "Alvarized" guns.

The Montreal Police did the same in the wake of the Gossett incident. LAPD had done so long before either shooting, having not only seen, but experienced, the horrendous liability potential of cocked, too-easily-triggered guns in high stress situations, and NYPD followed suit sometime thereafter.

More Semantics

What of more recent designs that aren't quite either fish or fowl? The Heckler and Koch P7 squeeze cocking pistol was never dubbed either single or double action by its manufacturer, who (perhaps wisely) skirted the issue by innocuously describing the P7's operation mode as "continuous motion principle." This became an issue some years ago in Detroit, when a homicide detective making an arrest on a known killer shot the man after he pulled a hatchet on the investigator and his partners. The detective shot him with an HK P7.

The problem was that at the time, DPD issued revolvers and allowed privately owned auto pistols to be carried by their personnel only if they were "double action." While the shooting itself was perfectly clean, one martinet of mid-level supervisory rank didn't like the detective involved. He put in a complaint on him for having shot the suspect with an unauthorized semiautomatic pistol that was not double action as required. The issue was bucked upstairs to a higher-ranking commander.

Fortunately, what this second boss lacked in technical firearms knowledge, he made up for in common sense. He knew a justifiable shooting when he saw one, and was equally capable of recognizing an occupational backstabbing. He called in the involved detective and asked him to explain the workings of the P7 pistol. "Okay," the supervisor said at length, "so you have to squeeze in on that lever to

cock it before you can shoot it, and the trigger has to be pulled for it to fire?" The P7 owner answered in the affirmative.

"Well, then," said the supervisor. "It seems to me that squeezing it to cock it is one action, and pulling the trigger to fire it is another action, and two separate actions mean double action as far as I'm concerned." He wrote off the complaint as unfounded, solving the problem. However, it would not be a good career bet to assume that all police supervisors would handle such matters this way.

A definition of what is and isn't double action can have sweeping consequences department-wide. After the Alvarez matter and the DAO policy for all guns, Miami street cops petitioned the department for high capacity autos to better equip them to face heavily armed drug dealers.

Opposing the concept, the then-chief said sure, but the autos adopted would have to be DAO just like the revolvers he preferred. Beretta, SIG, and S&W saw no need to make such pistols for one department, and it looked as if MPD would be stuck with the wheelgun — until BATF ruled the Glock pistol to be double action only.

The rest is history. Stuck with keeping his word and hoisted by his own petard, the Miami chief had to allow the Glock, which was in fact adopted. Miami became the flagship department of Glock's fleet, and the Austrian pistol was now off to a fast start in the race that would see the Glock ultimately take a 65percent share of the American police handgun market.

So, we can see the quibbling about what constitutes double action versus single action can have some very far-reaching consequences indeed, in the real world. Now, let's get back to our case in point, the Springfield Armory XD.

Defining the XD

Part of the problem with the XD is that in its first incarnation as the H-S 2000, it was described as a single action gun. "It was advertised in Europe as a single action," says Walt Rauch, a founding board member of IDPA, as he explains the organization's decision.

In the November/December 2000 issue of *American Handgunner*, Sebestyen Gorka wrote-up the H-S 2000. He said, "The trigger is single action only with a long first stage…"

As late as June 20, 2002, the perception continued in some quarters of the firearms press. That date's *New Gun Week* carried an article by Scott Smith titled "Springfield XD Pistol Works For Duty, Defense, Competition." Smith describes the XD as "Having … a crisp single-action type trigger for accurate follow-up shots…"

Yet there is by no means consensus that the XD is single action. Charlie Petty wrote in the June 2002 of *Guns*: "The (XD's) trigger has a little internal lever we've seen before but with a little more hype. Now it is a U.S.A. (Ultra Safety

Assurance) Trigger System. The trigger is, depending on how you view these things, single-action or 'double-action only' (which is what Springfield calls it). Either way, the trigger is good, and a marked improvement over what we're used to with pistols of this type."

The Neither/Nor Position

Of late, even Springfield Armory has backed off on the double action definition of the XD, though it still appears in their ads. In a position paper sent to the IDPA Board of Directors and dated May 13, 2002, Springfield's Dennis Reese wrote, "The XD pistol is neither a true single action, nor a true double action pistol. As the Glock pistol has been described as 'safe action,' the Springfield XD pistol has an Ultra Safety Assurance (USA) action trigger system. Enclosed please find a report prepared by Tioga Engineering on this issue. Please note that neither Glock, nor we, claim that the trigger is either single or double action."

Springfield had commissioned engineer Charles Fagg of Tioga to analyze the matter. Fagg's report of April 18, 2002, includes the following statements. "Confusion exists as to the proper classification of the firing mechanisms of the Glock 17 and the Springfield Armory XD pistols. This confusion stems from the ambiguity of the terms, 'single action' and 'double action' … The terms 'single action' and 'double action' are archaic and have little applicability to many, respected, semiautomatic pistols."

The word "archaic" is significant. Fagg sums up the matter as follows: "CONCLUSIONS: **1.** Neither the Springfield Armory XD nor the Glock 17 qualifies as a single action pistol. **2.** Neither the Springfield Armory XD nor the Glock 17 qualifies as a double action pistol. **3.** Both the Springfield Armory XD and the Glock 17 will fire if the firing pin is released from the ready, or carry, position unless it is intercepted by the automatic firing-pin block. **4.** Both the Springfield Armory XD and the Glock 17 are designed with an array of safety features that, if maintained properly, virtually preclude a discharge unless the trigger is pulled or a chambered round cooks off in a fire. **5.** From a safety standpoint, there is no basis upon which to choose between the trigger mechanisms of the Springfield Armory XD and the Glock 17 if the force required to pull their respective triggers is similar."

From a perspective of pure mechanical engineering, there is one subtle difference between these two striker-fired auto pistols. The Croatian pistol's striker is at, or very nearly at, its most fully retracted point when the mechanism is at rest but ready to fire. The Austrian pistol is so designed the striker is retracted considerably more by the action of pulling the trigger, before the gun fires. An NYPD manual for the Glock 19 described the pistol as perpetually "half cocked." To gun geeks quibbling about details, this could make a difference.

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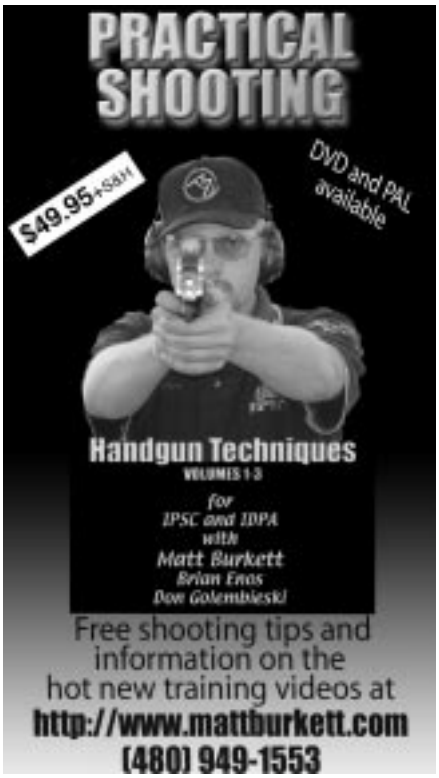

However, in the practical world, what we are looking for is that third definition of "double action" listed earlier: Simply put, how long and how hard is the trigger pull before the gun discharges? It's on this basis that IDPA initially segregated handgun types into four categories. This was done to level the playing field between those competitors who had the guns that were easiest to shoot quickly and accurately, and those which were progressively more difficult. IDPA is, after all, a skill-testing venue and not a forum of amateur handgun designers.

On IDPA's tough 90-round Classifier course, you can make Master with a time of 102.35 seconds in Stock Service Revolver. This generous time is allowed for the double action revolver's longer trigger throw (and concomitantly longer return between shots), as well as its typically longer down time in reloading. With a double action-type Stock Service Pistol, 98.82 seconds is required for a Master's card.

"IDPA is, after all, a skill-testing venue and not a forum of amateur handgun designers."

A 1911 .45 auto in Custom Defense Pistol division is no faster to reload, but with it's shorter trigger stroke for every shot it's generally considered faster to shoot accurately, upping the ante to 91.76 seconds if you want to earn Master status. You can shoot an identical single action auto in a smaller caliber such as 9mm, .38 Super, or .40 S&W for Enhanced Service Pistol, and the speed advantage of lighter recoil brings Master time down to 89.41 seconds. Clearly, IDPA's intent is to cut some slack to the shooter with the handgun that is more difficult to shoot at speed.

At this writing, IDPA limits the XD to ESP division because they consider its design to be pre-cocked, and thus single action, as distinct from the Glock which is only partially cocked with its mechanism at rest. However, consider how its trigger pull compares in actual shooting, from a user's perspective, to other guns in ESP class.

The HK P7, once allowed in SSP, is now restricted to the ESP division. This is because while it is not cocked until it is squeezed, once it is cocked it has a trigger pull that is short and crisp and light like a target pistol's. The switch of the P7 to ESP is not a move I could argue with in good conscience. That gun is at home in the Enhanced class with light and short trigger pull guns like the 1911 in .40 or .38 Super, or the single action S&W 952 target pistol in 9mm.

But consider the trigger "feel" of the XD. As I wrote for *Guns* in June 2002, "The trigger stroke is sweet. A long, easy pressure comes to a firmer resistance, and then suddenly releases. It is conducive to a surprise trigger break once you've made the decision to fire, and that always helps good shooting."

If you think about it, that description is also applicable to our new generation of unquestionably "double action only" auto pistols that are widely accepted in law enforcement, concealed carry and IDPA Stock Service Pistol division. The Smith & Wesson Model 5946, as adopted by departments from the Cincinnati Police to the Royal Candadian Mounted Police; the Kahr K9 that any NYPD officer is authorized to carry off duty; and the Para-Ordnance LDA as issued by the North Attleboro, Mass. Police Department, they all fall into this category.

But the single handgun trigger system to which the XD's feel is most analogous is that of the ubiquitous Glock. The Glock, of course, is the single most popular pistol in IDPA Stock Service Pistol shooting, just as it is the single most popular pistol in American law enforcement right now.

This, in the end, strikes me as the deciding factor. What's good for the goose is good for the gander. Mechanical definitions aside, the bio-mechanical approach to how it feels to manipulate the trigger, and how difficult that is, should be the deciding factor in the subjective rules that attempt to level the playing field for an objective skill test.

This is why, if I had a vote in the matter, I would vote to put the Springfield Armory XD in the same IDPA Stock Service Pistol class as the Glock. An alternative would be to put both in a separate division of competition with other pistols that are neither truly single, nor truly double action under the old paradigms.

When jets first appeared, some old timers asked where the propellers went. When told the jet didn't need a propeller, they still wanted to know where the prop went. They simply couldn't understand and shorted-out when met with new technology. Sometimes, something is simply new and old descriptions no longer fit.

Yet, we step onto thin ice when we try to redefine old terminology long in use. At the same time, Charles Fagg may be right. "Single action" and "double action" may indeed be archaic terms when we seek to define new designs that don't fit old standards of terminology that didn't allow for describing these modern concepts. Don't let adherence to out-dated thinking get in the way of technological progress.

Massad Ayoob was one of IDPA's first four-gun masters, and for the last two years has been match director for Smith & Wesson's big Mid-Winter IDPA tournament.

Continued from page 81

projects currently under agreement. Ms. Frates' job suddenly became much more complicated as she brokered the engraving to the master craftsman, John K. Pease.

Pease, in turn, sent the side-plate to Wayne Di'Angelo — by then an independent businessman — who executed the requested picture quality scene of Artemis-Diana and her brace of sight hounds. She then supervised the re-fitting of the revolver. She took a personal interest in the project and the end result is a flawless, one-of-a-kind weapon embodying the most desirable features of the hand-ejector line.

The other project was the restoration of a 30-year-old Model 29-2 4" to as near factory new condition as possible, with the revolver re-blued to current factory standards. Ordinary, even routine repairs, to a model years out of production, would be problematic at best. However, Smith & Wesson's dedication to customer satisfaction and a great American tradition goes far beyond the ordinary. Customer Service again took the project in charge and completed it to perfection.

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A veteran officer of New York's finest was on duty in the Twin Towers, with his model 60 in an ankle holster. The recovered revolver received special handling by Customer Service representatives. Refinished and fitted with a new set of grips, it's now held in trust for the officer's son, who plans to follow in his father's footsteps.

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BORN OF STEEL

Continued from page 65

Wilson tactical catalog as Model 1.

Over the next few years, the young entrepreneur continued to manage the customizing end of the family business while honing his skills at designing and making tactical knives. An active hunter since childhood, he had an added comprehension of what a knife needed to perform in the wild.

Selling his knives was not a problem. With the connections he'd made in the tactical industry over the years, Ryan had an instant sales base at his fingertips — and he was quickly gaining the same reputation for quality and craftsmanship his father earned over the years.

By the time he turned 20, Ryan had extended his line to several models and his knives were going out the door as fast as he could make them. In 2000, he made the decision to leave the firearms industry altogether and turn his attention to making knives. He formed his own company, Wilson Tactical, and it is his sole focus today.

Flesh Out The Line

Wilson knew to make it on his own he'd need a broad line of knives to appeal to both hunting and combat users. His pedigree in the tactical field and his years hunting graced him with insight beyond his years. Ryan designs multi-purpose knives that serve equally well in the roles of both combat and utility.

Wilson's Model 2 Tactical Fighter is a perfect example of such balance. This full-tang clip point has all the "swoop" of a serious fighter, yet retains all the necessary traits of a solid utility knife. The most popular knife in the Wilson Tactical catalog, the Model 2, can be had in 9", 10" and 11" lengths. It is offered with a variety of Micarta handles. A smaller variation — the Model 12 Hideout — makes for an excellent neck or boot knife at 7½" overall.

The Model 4 IWB (Inside Waistband) Fighter is a medium-sized tactical designed for discretionary carry. At 8¾" overall, this knife has a spear point blade and a slimmer than normal handle and special sheath that allows it to be comfortably carried concealed inside the waistband, either up front or around the small of the back. A black Armor-Tuff blade coating adds even more stealth to the equation.

Fans of the 1911 Government model will slather at the chance to own a Wilson Model 11 Bowie. At 10½" overall, this clip point all-purpose knife comes replete with 1911 pistol grips — the perfect compliment to anyone owning one of the many versions of the legendary handgun manufactured over the years. And yes, Wilson can even fix you up with a set of ivory grips for an added fee.

Wilson's love of hunting comes through

loud and clear in his Model 10 Tactical Hunter. This knife blends a more orthodox Loveless-style bolstered handle design with an edgier clip point blade, once again demonstrating Wilson's propensity for balancing the tactical and utility roles in his knifemaking. A polished blade with a bit of fancy filework on the backside, however, erases all doubt this knife is a hunter. The Model 10 can be had with standard Micarta handles or more upscale and exotic materials such as ivory and stag.

> **"Savvy knife buyers always keep an eye out for young makers on the rise."**

Other fixed-blade models are offered, and more recently Ryan has added a folder to the line designed as a collaboration between himself and noted custom knifemaker Darrel Ralph. Information on the complete Wilson Tactical line is available in the company's brochure and on their Website.

On The Move

Savvy knife buyers always keep an eye out for young makers on the rise because their wares are easier to acquire and their prices haven't yet gone through the roof. A word of advice: Don't blink, or Ryan Wilson might just pass you by. This 23-year-old has already accomplished more than many knifemakers twice his age. And his inherent knack for both knifemaking and business portends great things to come.

The good news is that Ryan Wilson plans on keeping his knives affordable. While passing on the more exotic and sometimes trendy steels, he chooses to use proven and reliable D2 steel to keep costs down. Most of his designs forego the use of bolsters, which also helps save on the cost of a knife. For example, his base Model 2 Tactical fighter sells for just $195, a genuine bargain for the person who wants to go the custom route without the high price tag. Most standard models in the Wilson Tactical group are in the $225 to $250 range, with the production intensive Model 1 integral topping out the line at $350.

It's always nice to see a young person with their head screwed on straight, and even better for blade lovers when they decide to make knives. Ryan Wilson is a welcome addition to the world of custom knifemaking, and his presence bears well for the future of tactical knives.

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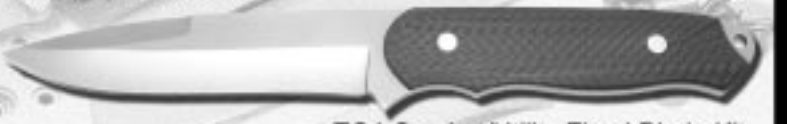

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WOMEN

Continued from page 59

different, not fitting in, and of having no one to talk with, is very real at shooting school.

Most women wish they were just one of the guys during class. That has been the experience of Lethal Force Institute graduate Mary Fleury, who works as a nurse. "Mostly, being treated as one of the guys is a good thing, but every once in a while, I feel like I'm in some cross-cultural experience and I really have to pay attention to the unwritten rules."

Lyn Bates, who has trained at most of the nation's top shooting schools, knows about unwritten rules. At classes, "The guys used to gather behind me and cheer me on whenever I was competing head-to-head against one of their friends, but they never bothered to talk to me otherwise. They didn't particularly like me, and they loved to tease any member of their group who lost to me," she declared.

Taken too far, trying to be one of the guys begets its own anxiety. "I was extremely anxious before my first class," Leaha Wirth of USA Shooting, confessed. "When I went into the class, it was important to me that I appear competitive, calm and not like a 'chick.' Most of the anxiety I felt walking through those doors was self-inflicted," she acknowledged. "I would have been much more comfortable taking a women's-only course or one taught by a woman. I would not have felt so sensitive about my ability to gel with the other students."

For years, Thunder Ranch offered all co-ed classes. Under Heidi Smith's influence, the school now is in its third year of offering a women's-only week-long defensive handgun class. Acknowledging that beginners often feel unfamiliar and uncomfortable, Clint agreed to "Give 'em a gender-like environment." Heidi reported this once-a-year class is a great starting point for women, including the "Wives of guys who've been coming to Thunder Ranch for years." She is excited about the attitude changes that result as these women realize self-defense is all about "What's in your head and your heart, as you learn to care about yourself."

The Peril of Fashion

If an all-women's class isn't available, women may choose to minimize characteristics that make them stand out. Accommodating clothing, accessories and grooming makes range days easier. Long fingernails are the most common shooting impediment. When too long, the trigger finger's nail catches on the trigger guard, instead of allowing a smooth move from the index position to the proper place on the trigger when it's time to shoot. Long nails gouge and scrape the support hand,

and make it difficult, if not impossible, to operate the slide lock, magazine release and other pistol controls.

It's best to trim the nails before showing up at the range, avoiding awkwardness when told to do so by an instructor. Leaha was asked to trim her long, synthetic nails in front of an entire class. "I am a ferocious nail biter and nails hide that," she explained. "The instructor suggested shorter nails. I'm sure he was right, but having that pointed out to me in a class of mostly men made me feel badly when I really just wanted to fit in."

Shown how to succeed, women students are often among the most focused and determined shooters on the line. With advance knowledge of how to dress and how to prepare, a lot of the discomfort and concern about "being different" disappears.

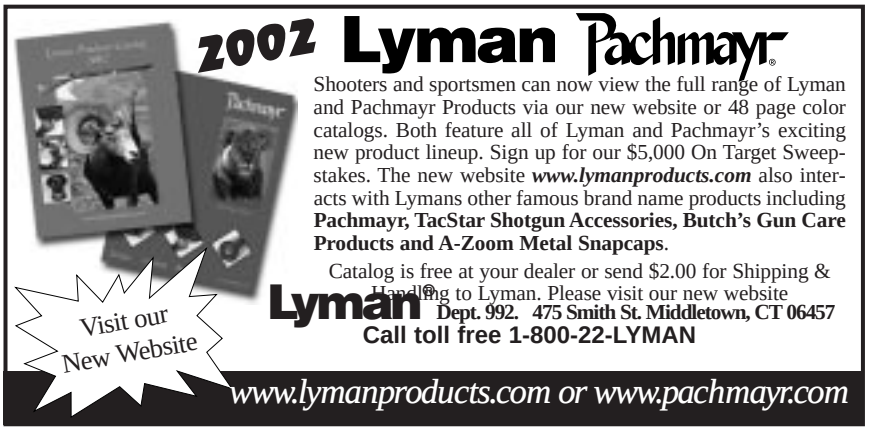
Get in the Right Gear

Shooting school problems further stem from the trouble women have finding guns and holsters that fit properly. The women I interviewed learned that introductory training often helps them identify a good gun and sometimes helps them with carry options. Lyn Bates praises her first NRA instructor for providing the class guns. "I never would have purchased a gun in order to take the class! That would have been like buying a horse before signing up for an introductory riding lesson," she exclaimed.

Choosing the right gun could command an entire article alone. Poor gun fit hampered Lisa Wilson during her first class at Front Sight. "The Glock 19's grip is too large for my hand, greatly affecting my accuracy. My first class was too fast-paced and I was too green to be aware of something that subtle," she explained. Lisa has ordered a Glock grip reduction, like the work of Robar and Burns Custom Pistol.

Vicki Peladut knows her first class with Defense Training International, "Would have been better if I could have had an advance class on picking out my own gun. We didn't know about the grip and the proper way to hold the gun, so how could we have known?" she asks. As a solution, Tracy Delawie and Marybeth Berney, a couple defending against a stalker, participated in a handgun selection seminar at their local range before attempting to learn more about shooting. It was time well spent.

Kenna Hoyser, who runs a dog kennel, selected a revolver as her first gun. Visiting a large gun store let her handle a variety of pistols. "I finally picked the Colt Detective Special and called my husband from the shop to ask if it was a good gun. He gulped because he didn't even know I was shopping for a gun," Kenna relayed. Though she's had other guns since, the Detective's Special remains one of her primary "working guns." Unfortunately, her second gun purchase wasn't so propitious. After paying big bucks for a heavily customized Officers ACP .45 semi-auto,



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Kenna found she couldn't compress the recoil spring enough to lock the action open — a problem students also often encounter with the ultra compact 1911s.

A snub-nosed revolver or .380 semiautomatic isn't always the best women's gun choice, either. "My hand was so bruised after an hour, the instructors helped me devise padding for it so I could finish," Lark Davis remembered. Enrolled in the Firearms Academy of Seattle's intermediate handgun class, Lark's tiny hands could not reach the SIG Sauer 230's trigger without the grip tang striking the base of her thumb. "I didn't know what a problem this would become in a 500-plus round weekend," she says, adding that a .380 doesn't recoil as mildly as expected.

An older woman in Florida asked the clerk in her gun shop to show her how to lock open the Kahr P9 she bought there. Short on time and patience, he taught her to insert an empty magazine in the gun and rack the slide. Imagine our senior citizen's distress to discover she needed to engage the slide lock to lock the action open to clear a double-feed malfunction! Arthritic hands struggle with small levers such as these.

There is little doubt that repeated gun malfunctions disrupt learning in an often fast-paced class. Hand strength and proper technique are critical when shooting most semiauto pistols, a factor that is hard to predict without actually shooting the gun in question. "My gun kept jamming during my first class," petite, athletic Susan Beamer remembered. "The instructor shot my gun and told me there was nothing wrong it. He told me that if it wasn't the gun then it must be something I was doing. He didn't look at how I was holding the gun, but expected me to know what I didn't know."

Many of my students have taken full advantage of the gun rentals found at most indoor ranges. Here they can narrow their choices before spending hundreds of dollars on a gun they may not be able to keep running.

Worse Than A Corset

If Susan felt misunderstood over her gun malfunctions, she's lucky she didn't ask her instructor for advice on buying a holster. Nearly every woman I've interviewed says finding a suitable holster falls somewhere between challenging and impossible. Jackie Marlow, who works in the timber industry, can't understand why few instructors offer holster advice for either men or women. At Massad Ayoob's LFI I lecture she learned how to relieve holster discomfort as well as ease the draw from an IWB holster. "The first useful suggestion I ever got on my gear was in LFI I. I wound up passing that advice on later to a man in another class who was having problems. Why didn't somebody look at us earlier?" she wondered. "How many people who decide 'carrying' is not for them are simply badly advised?"

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In desperation, Chris Cunningham turned to sewing her own leather holsters when she found nothing that fit her curves and her gun, a Heckler & Koch P7M8, for which little off-the-rack gear is made. Chris' home sewing has turned into a basement enterprise where she now stitches holsters for women who face similar problems. Though someone else did the actual leatherwork, Joanne Blanton also designed her own custom holster. Always clad in dresses and skirts, this grandmother and midwife spec'd out a wide, silver concho-decorated belt with a built-in holster. Cummerbund-like, it buckles in the back, hiding her Glock 26 completely beneath a light jacket or vest.

> **"It was important to me that I appear competitive, calm and not like a 'chick.'"**

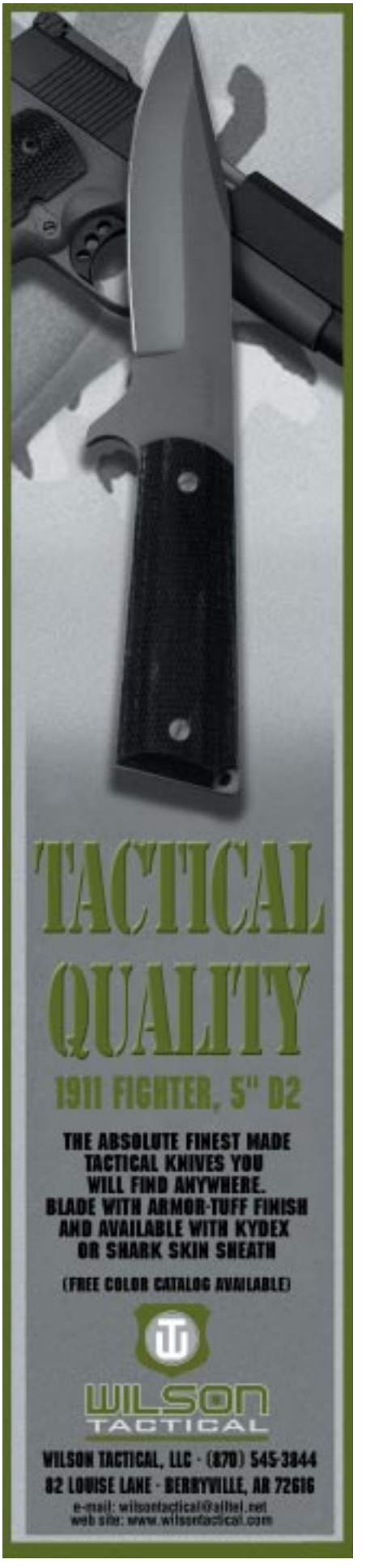
Kathy Jackson, a mid-30s mother of five sons who enrolled in the Firearms Academy of Seattle, received a copy of my book *Effective Defense* as the course textbook. In it, she discovered alternatives to the behind-the-hip holster position favored by her male shooting buddies. Moving her Blade-Tech IWB holster to an appendix carry, she finally was comfortable carrying her concealed Glock 26.

Like a lot of women, banker Brady Gunns benefits from an offset, drop holster. "My husband called Blade-Tech and asked the owner to make something special for his wife. He knew I'd need something that would work with my 'curves.' He didn't know they would have it off the shelf," she relates. "The dropped-offset holster worked wonderfully. For a change, I didn't feel like I had to move parts of my body to draw from a holster."

In leather, the top ladies' alternative is Kramer Handgun Leather's drop holster. Both rigs lower the gun considerably, are fast on the draw and are excellent performers on the range, though neither is best for concealment.

A cheap belt can spoil the function of even an expensive holster, since it must support the gun's weight with minimal movement, especially during drawing. Women have particular trouble finding sturdy belts that are comfortable, yet sufficiently rigid. The curve of a contour-cut belt is easier for most women to wear. I've used Galco's "Concealable" for years, and appreciate the slimmer front sections, since its reduced width means less material poking the abdomen.

Women shooters find great relief in lower-slung "boy-cut" blue jeans and casual trousers. Women's fashion trousers often ride high on the midriff. "In my first class, the jeans I was wearing were a



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problem, and it took an embarrassing rip to figure it out!" Brady recalls. "I discovered the snug-fitting women's cut jean, which might have been the most fashionable, just didn't work with the action on the range." She found the lower, boy's-cut waistband, accommodated an IWB holster with greater comfort, as well as making it easier to draw her gun. "The wardrobe change has been vital in my ability to succeed in the competitions I've entered," she enthused.

Sweet Success

Initially, many women are resistant to changing their style to accommodate the demands of defensive shooting. Once they taste the success of shooting skillfully, most are willing to make changes that increase their ability to perform head-to-head with the men on the range.

Joanne, who has never come to a gun class without a daughter or daughter-in-law in tow, has developed a well-founded self-confidence through her pursuit of defensive shooting skills. Savoring her successes on the range and in tactical shooting exercises, she wishes she could sit and ponder the exercises for a day after class is over. After class, "We debrief all the way home, before having to re-enter our real worlds," she related.

"I was tired afterward and my thumb was bleeding and my hand bruised," remembers attorney Debbe Stein, of her first handgun class. "When I went to work on the following Monday others said 'and you enjoyed that?' Yep!" she enthused.

Nursing cuts and bruises, weary feet and sore muscles, these and the other women like them who go to shooting school find the hard work, fatigue and demanding exercises overshadowed by the pride and accomplishment of a challenge met and overcome. Megan Brown reports though at times she felt training required more strength than she thought she possessed. "I surprised myself with the fighting spirit that was inside of me," she said. She wishes that before attending classes she could have known, "That being a handgunning student is extremely good for self-esteem. I felt great about myself afterwards!"

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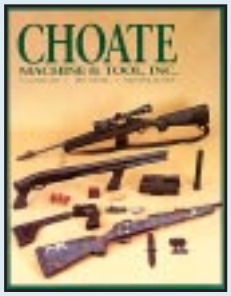

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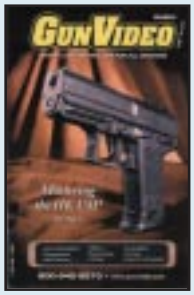

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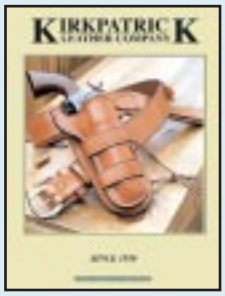

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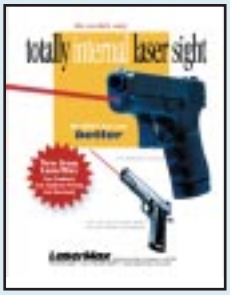

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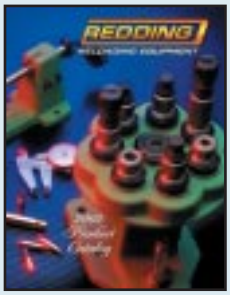

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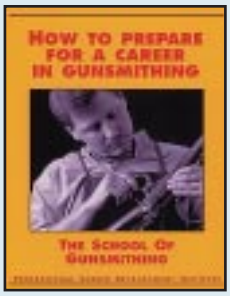

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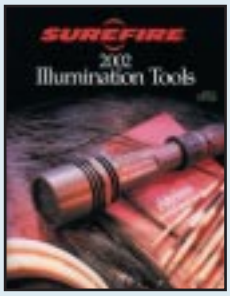

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CATALOG INQUIRY #70

SIG 228

Continued from page 77

they allow an easy "press check" of my pistol prior to shooting or hitting the streets. It's really considered poor form to have an unloaded pistol when attending a gunfight. I've had this modification done to most of my personal handguns and I really see no danger in checking my pistols this way. As long as the shooter keeps their hand away from the muzzle, press-checking the chamber can be accomplished with total safety. You've just got to be smarter than the gun.

To enhance my version of SIG perfection, an action job was performed on the 228 as well as polishing the feed ramp and trigger face. SIG-Sauer pistols are known for superior actions from the box, but can be somewhat gritty at times. Besides, there's not a factory trigger in existence that can hold a candle to the action on my Robar custom 228.

> **"Like the cross-draw, another piece of equipment maligned by those who should know better is the laser."**

The double action trigger of this 228 breaks my scale right at 8 pounds, while the single action trigger is a little over 3 pounds — but that's only half the story. The DA trigger is as smooth as creamy peanut butter with absolutely no creep, glitches or drag, period. The reset of the single-action trigger (critical for quick follow-up shots) is a little more than 1/8 of an inch. With an easy-to-press first shot and a very short reset, this SIG 228 shoots very fast.

On a standard Bianchi six plate rack, equipped with 8" plates, I was able to clear the rack in 2.37 seconds at seven yards from ready. With a first shot time of .62, this is a shot-to-shot time of .35 seconds, including movement. On a six shot "Bill Drill," the average shot to shot time was .22 seconds, with all hits on an 8x10 inch steel plate at seven yards. While I won't be winning the next Bianchi Cup, I believe these times are more than satisfactory for winning the fight for my own life on the street.

Deep Throat, Tight Grip

SIG is well known for its high level of reliability, but throating the feed ramp and chamber does nothing but make it ultra-reliable. The ramp shines like a mirror and is as slick as a dollop of moly grease. No doubt even the widest hollow points will feed into this chamber. Another feature important to me on any carry pistol is the grip configuration. A flat, blocky grip is no good, and the grip on the 228 is nicely curved and contoured. Getting a grip on the SIG 228 is like a solid handshake — firm and steady. To help get my hand up behind the pistol, improving recoil control and point-ability, Robar relieved the trigger guard area where it meets the grip. An effective modification and a nice touch, to boot.

A shortened and flared slide stop release lever seems like a luxury, and you may be right. But, like many people who shoot with a thumb-out grip, my shooting hand thumb tends to rest on the slide stop lever of any SIG I shoot. This keeps the gun from locking open after the last round fired. While many advise this is not a problem as long as they know it's going to happen, I sorta' like the idea of the slide locking back after the last round is fired.

In the middle of an armed "event," even with all of the things that happen to you physiologically and psychologically, it's hard not to notice the slide of one's pistol locked to the rear. In law enforcement we call such a thing a "clue." In this case it would be a clue your gun was empty and you needed more bullets. Yep, no doubt about it, the slide lock is a good thing.

I also had Robbie bevel the magazine well as much as he possibly could. Like many who constantly work to keep their defensive shooting skills sharp, I have a problem area I constantly work at, but never quite get really good at — speed loads, my Achilles' Heel. I practice them constantly, but I can't seem to get to a point where I can do them with any level of reliability.

If I work very hard, practice regularly, and have a good day, I can do a speed load in 1.5 seconds. Many instructors consider this time the minimum for a combat speed load. For me it is an exceptional achievement. I realize part of the equation is my small hands, which have a difficult time flipping the pistol to get at the magazine release button while still holding the gun still to accept the incoming magazine. Knowing my limitations, as Clint Eastwood would say, I need as large a magazine well as can be put on a pistol. Robbie did all he could, given the amount of material available on the grip frame of the 228.

Other neat features incorporated into this pistol were Robar's innovative stippling to the front strap, enhancing the grip, and stippling the grip screws for good old-fashioned cosmetic appeal. The sights on the 228 were left alone since they were previously modified by Karl Sokol of Chestnut Mountain Sports (802-438-5732). These sights consist of a Novak lo-mount rear sight that has a wider sight window, serrated face, and is

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finished in a deep black color. The front is a tritium sight that has an orange face applied around the tritium bead. This contrasting sight configuration allows me to pick up the front sight in situations where point shooting may have been used with conventional sights, due to proximity or speed of action. This same sight system has been placed on all of my semiautomatic pistols.

Home on the Range

There are very few places more pleasant to be than at the range. With few exceptions, there's no place I would rather spend my time. Having a pistol custom modified to your own desires just makes the experience that much better. This SIG did nothing to ruin my day at the range and, as a matter of fact, kept me smiling the entire time. The silly grin elicited some strange looks, but still, I was a happy fellow.

Press the trigger, smile.

Press the trigger, smile again. Easy.

I test fired the Robar 228 with a wide variety of full metal jacket and hollow-point loads to test for reliability. The reason I say wide variety is my test ammo was literally a bucket of ammo collected over the years — a mixture of sub-sonic, standard velocity and +P+ loads with a mixture of bullet configurations. I shot this ammo in no particular order, often times with it mixed up in the same magazine. An invitation to disaster you say? Not with this SIG. It fed everything I could put into it without a single hiccup, regardless of how fast I fired. SIGs are known for their reliability, but this was ridiculous.

With reliability established, I tested a number of loads for accuracy, just to see how tight the Robar 228 would shoot. I tested accuracy using two different methods. I fired at 50 feet using an unsupported two-hand stance, which I feel is representative of combat accuracy. The other was bench-rested at 25 yards, which took the "human factor" out of the process. Well, almost.

Make It Even Better

As good as this SIG is, a number of things made it better. First and foremost is carry gear, leather. Haugen Handgun Leather is quickly gaining a reputation as one of the finest holster establishments in North America. Based on the samples he sent for this SIG, I don't feel this reputation is misplaced.

Haugen holsters are made from only the finest hides and each holster is precision-molded to the exact gun it's designed to carry. The molding on the Haugen holsters I received was so good I could tell what gun it was made for without looking at the label. This is truly custom gear, impeccably crafted.

The model 05 Equalizer is a belt mounted speed rig with a near-vertical cant. I like this style of holster since I

feel it's the best compromise between speed and concealment. The 05 I had for testing had a reinforced mouth band made of crocodile hide. The contrast was not only attractive; my teenage daughter called it "way cool". Now there's an endorsement. Almost a "holster as fashion" observation. With an adjustable tension screw located below the trigger, the Equalizer was not only fast and comfortable. It held the 228 securely in place.

The second holster that Jerry Evans, owner of Haugen Handgun Leather, sent was the Wedge cross-draw rig. This holster is the result of a team effort between Jerry and editor Huntington. In all seriousness, the Wedge is a serious piece of fighting leather. Designed to hold the grip tight to the body when worn cross-draw, when worn the Wedge is both concealable and secure. I will not dismiss the cross draw, as others have, as I have spoken with too many gunfight survivors who used a cross draw carry to save their own lives. A properly designed cross draw rig, like the Wedge, worn on a properly designed gun belt, like the sharkskin Haugen gun belt, is a viable way to carry the fighting handgun.

Beam Me Up

Like the cross-draw, another piece of equipment maligned by those who should know better is the laser. At one time, I too dismissed the laser as a viable piece of survival equipment. But as the units have become smaller and more reliable, I have re-thought my position on these little tools and have come to realize they have a place in anyone's defensive arsenal.

I'm a firm believer in the use of the front sight for defensive applications, but I realize many are not. With an increasing emphasis on "target focus shooting" —AKA point shooting — the laser becomes increasingly important. The problem many detractors have with point shooting is there is no way to insure your muzzle is in perfect alignment with the target. Ah, duh. What the laser does is give a sighted index on the target so the shooter knows exactly where the shot will be placed.

Laser Max is one of the best of the breed when it comes to the use of lasers in defensive applications. Unlike many units strapped on to the gun, the Laser Max laser is incorporated into the gun by replacing the gun's recoil guide rod. With very little adjustment, the Laser Max is on target anytime the pistol is pointed in the right direction.

The Laser Max has proven to be both sturdy and reliable in the field with an increasing number of law enforcement agencies. The Laser Max stays in alignment even with rough abuse, such as dropping the pistol on a hard surface. Because the laser unit is mounted internally, the pistol will work with standard

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holsters. In the case of my SIG 228, the on/off switch is incorporated into the take down lever, so reaching it with my shooting hand's index finger is easy to do. As a matter of fact, the switch is in the same general location as the trigger finger anytime I am off-target.

While many think of the laser as a sighting device, I have come to really appreciate the laser as a training aid. With the laser in the "on" position and pointed at a designated target, I am able to track and correct a student's trigger press by watching the "track" of the laser as the shooter works their trigger finger. Additionally, the student is given a visual representation of what their trigger finger is doing — truly a picture worth a thousand words.

What A Blade

The Laser Max is a piece of 21st century equipment, representative of the state-of-the-art technology now being put into defensive carry gear. How can this same modern technology help to bring the more mundane tools of the trade into the new century? One way is with the use of modern materials, which is exactly what Columbia River Knife and Tool has done with one of their ever popular folding knives.

The M16 folder is a Kit Carson design that may very well be one of the most popular folding knives ever designed. The unique "flipper" device is what sets the M16 apart from most. The flipper is a hump that projects from the back of the knife when it's closed. The knife is easily opened by using the index finger to reach forward and engage the hump, flipping it to the rear, opening the blade about two-thirds of the way. A simple flick of the wrist will then lock the blade open. With only a few minutes practice, these two motions can be blended into one, making for a very rapid deployment.

Having been previously made in both aluminum and Zytel, the M16 is now made in titanium. While adding strength to the M16, titanium keeps this space-age folder as light as possible, yet still big enough to handle a variety of chores. I have long felt if you are going to carry a gun you should also carry a knife. The new CRKT M16 Titanium is a perfect match for the Robar SIG 228. It has a high level of fit, form and function in a package small enough to carry most anywhere. With SIG, Robar, Haugen Leather, Laser Max and CRKT, this is certainly a hard team to beat.

For more information, contact SIG Arms at (603) 772-2302 or www.sigarms.com; Haugen Handgun Leather; (701) 255-0723; www.haugenhandgunleather.com; Laser Max; (800) 527-3703; www.lasermax-inc.com; Columbia River Knife and Tool; (800) 891-3100; www.crkt.com

Continued from page 79

of the original material. It's then assembled in a conventional jacket. When you examine an unfired Quik-shok bullet, it's virtually impossible to identify it as anything other than a conventional hollow-point. There isn't any shot at all.

Here's the tricky part. When the bullet encounters a fluid-based target, expansion is almost instantaneous and the pre-stressed core divides into three separate projectiles. By controlling the web remaining in the core the amount of radial dispersion can be controlled. The most important point is that three pieces — since the separation is along the length of the core — end up as projectiles with an "effective" diameter the same as, or possibly even larger than, the original bullet diameter. For example, a 230 gr. .45 ACP Quik-shok recovered from ballistic gelatin divided into nearly equal pieces about 0.40" wide and roughly 0.57" long. And that is the dimension to note, for it provides the permanent wound channel. Multiply by three and the potential is obvious.

Mass is important too because each segment has significant weight. One of the drawbacks of shot-filled projectiles is that while there are lots of them, they don't weigh much so penetration is limited. You wouldn't be far off to just divide the bullet weight by three, for the jacket is not a significant component of any wound. I weighed some bits of a 230 gr. .45 ACP bullet recovered from 10 percent gelatin. The jacket weighed 40 grains and each segment weighed 63. Smaller diameter jackets wouldn't weigh as much but you can calculate the weight of the segments of another bullet by subtracting 15 to 20 percent for the jacket. There will be a conflict here for some people who generally think jacket separation is a bad thing. But the reverse is true here. In fact it is necessary to proper bullet performance.

When you first look at the bullet's action, it's easy to wonder, "Now how'd they make it do that?" And then when you figure it out — as Burczynski patiently explains it — the idea has an elegant simplicity. A conventional lead core is extruded through a die with equally spaced fins that divide the core into segments but do not cut all the way through the lead. This central hub holds everything together until penetration begins and is also one of the regulating factors in the degree of spread of the segments.

Development has been a tedious process of experimentation to determine the proper core parameters to produce both penetration and separation. Sometimes these are at cross-purposes because if the segments break apart too soon, penetration will be shallow and dispersion wide. Too late and penetration is likely to be excessive.

Triton Cartridge owns the patent rights for the Quik-shok handgun bullet and is the only manufacturer who can use it for centerfire handgun cartridges. Quik-shok rimfire and shotgun loads are not covered here. Triton has contracted Hornady to manufacture the Quik-shok bullets and Federal to make the brass.

Everything I have seen and done myself leads me to have great confidence in the data shown in the table, provided by Triton and Burczynski. We would never be able to duplicate this type of test.

If you look at the penetration numbers you will see that they range from 8.7 to 11.5". Of course all of these are less than the FBI's mandated 12". My personal opinion is that 12" is a gracious plenty. I've always been comfortable with bullets penetrating around 10", and most Quik-shok loads do that nicely.

"There will be a conflict here for some people who generally think jacket separation is a bad thing."

Another flaw with pre-fragmented bullets is generally poor accuracy. There will always be a somewhat random distribution of weight within the jacket which can introduce a little wobble into the bullet's flight. I wasn't able to test every load, but the results I did get say accuracy is not going to be a problem with Quik-shok.

I chose to use pistols proven to be exceptionally accurate, and the results are comparable to accuracy measurements of other good defensive loads.

Another issue to consider is cost. It's obvious the Quik-shok bullet is more costly to manufacture. But it is not nearly as expensive as the pre-fragmented types. Triton provided retail cost comparisons of Quik-shok with their standard product at the same weight and velocity. The Quik-shok costs an average of 35 percent more.

The final thing for me is very much a matter of personal philosophy. I don't think +P loadings solve too many problems, and it is my hope that Triton will find the bullets work just as well at standard velocities. Evidence to support this is seen in the comparison of their subsonic 135 gr. 9mm, which uses the same bullet as the +P. Even though velocity is over 200 fps slower, there is little difference in the penetration and expansion.

For those of you who like +Ps, this is good stuff. At normal pressures it could be great.

For more information contact: Triton Ammunition Corp., 2010 Route 9W, suite 6, Milton, NY 12547; (800) 861-3362; www.tritonammo.com

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SUPER GOV'T.

Continued from page 63

the function problems because now there was plenty of recoil. It pretty well took care of the accuracy too because the only thing available to lock-up the barrel was a spring.

In fact, they did such a good job of increasing recoil they had to go back and find some way to cut it down a notch. That was done by cutting a series of grooves into the chamber wall. At first glance you'd think it was threaded, for grooves extended the entire length of the chamber. The idea here was for the case to expand into the grooves and retard the recoil. The idea originated in Europe in the early 1900s and can still be found today on a few designs.

Colt's attempt at lock-up consisted of a small spring in the back of the barrel to push forward against the slide stop pin and a snug fit of the barrel bushing. Like I said, the best thing to come out of that project were the magazines, which worked wonderfully in the conversions.

But there really was a good demand for .38 Special pistols, so there were two significant projects that combine to produce some really interesting and rare pistols. The primary reason for the feeding difficulties of the conversions was the rimmed cartridge, so why not just do away with the rim? That was the idea promoted by the Army Advanced Marksmanship Unit at Ft. Benning, Ga. A new cartridge — the .38 AMU — was born. It was simply a .38 Special with most of the rim removed. Ammunition was loaded by both Remington and Winchester, and Colt manufactured a number of "AMU Kits" for the Army. These consisted of all the parts needed to build a gun using a standard frame. S&W also chambered a few of their Model 52s for it. The .38 AMU was short-lived so both pistols and ammunition are not common today.

Kit Guns

The other neat development was the .38 Special Kit. Famed shooter and seller of target guns, Gil Hebard, prevailed upon Colt to make him guns that were complete in all respects except for assembly and fitting. Slides were purposely tight so the gunsmith could fit them and the bottom barrel lugs were not cut at all so they could be fitted too. These were made in very small numbers from 1964 to 1970 (a few were made even later). A .45 ACP kit was also made.

And just as a matter of curiosity, I put a couple of them in the Ransom rest. Sub-1" 25 yard groups were routine, except for the Gold Cup, which averaged something over two inches. Although I no longer compete, it's still fun to pull out a Super now and then and shoot it. After all — they're a piece of history.

SERVICE DEPT.

Continued from page 81

a really smart dog. He figured out drawer handles and cabinet doors a long time ago. He goes wild for Worcestershire Sauce. Can't get enough of it. We had been out to a steak dinner that night. Rotties have a keen sense of smell and, well, I guess, maybe I shoulda' used a napkin when I shifted my IWB rig. I put the Sigma in the nightstand and the next thing I knew there was Sylvester, next to the fireplace just gnawing away at the grip."

Customer Service: *"How did you come to name him Sylvester?"*

Caller: *"Well, we call him Sly, for short. He kind of looks like that dumb actor that played in the Rambo movies. Turns out they're both gun grabbers doesn't it?"*

Like all real Americans, the folks at Springfield have a soft spot in their hearts for man's best friend. They don't even mind feeding the occasional pistol to our fateful animal companions. The Fed-X return engine was activated and sure enough, the lower unit of the Sigma bore the tale-tell signs of canid mastication. The owner had his restored pistol back in short order. How's that for customer service?

The Naked Truth

This Customer Service Representative was passingly familiar with Masters and Johnson and it helped. Fortunately, this customer was into a non-lethal segment of the product line but even so, it brings up some powerful visuals:

Caller: *"Could you send a Smith & Wesson handcuff key out to my house? I locked myself to a piece of furniture."*

Customer Service: *"Why not call the fire department or the police? They can get you unlocked."*

Caller: *"Uh, uh, I'd be kinda' embarrassed and all because I'm like naked and this headboard like keeps me from being able to get dressed or something."*

Customer Service: *"That's perfectly okay. The professional emergency response services encounter naked people all the time. They never even give it a second thought — besides you live about 1,500 miles from our shop and it would take quite a while to get out there with a key."*

Caller: *"Ah, well, besides which, I think, like handcuffs, like they are illegal here or something."*

Customer Service: *"Where did you buy the 'cuffs?"*

Caller: *"Uh, I think I ordered them off this website. Like it was uh, the Community Chest or, 'er, ah, the Treasure Chest or something."*

Customer Service: *"Could it have been 'The Pleasure Chest?'"*

Caller: *"Uh, hey, yeah! That's it man. The Pleasure Chest!"*

Customer Service: *"Well, I may be able to help you after all. That particular concern is not a Smith & Wesson stocking dealer. More than likely though, what you have is a set of Imported handcuffs. They are made on Formosa and the keys don't interchange. Is there a Smith & Wesson Emblem on the side?"*

Caller: *"Uh, there's like these funny letters or something. It says 'Made in Taiw …'."*

Customer Service: *(Interrupting) "They're made in Taiwan. The good news is that if you tug on them pretty hard, they will usually come open all by themselves."*

Caller: *"Ugggggh! &*@#@&*!! Arrrrrgh! &*%^#! Oh, Man!" CRASH! [whock, whock whock] glinnnkkKK! [THUD] …*

"Oh Man, like it worked! Oh wow! Hey, Thanks a million man!"

Customer Service: *"Have a really nice day, and thank you for calling the Smith & Wesson Customer Service Department."*

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S&W 41

Continued from page 85

with these Model 41 options, S&W had a Model 46, one with a 7", another with a 5" barrel. The Model 46, a slightly dressed down Model 41, came along in 1959 for the U.S. Air Force. But, just like the Yugo, its lower retail price failed to impress the buying public.

There are so many fine .22 semi-automatic pistols of both past and present manufacture that singling out the best of the litter becomes a matter of personal opinion. However, the .41 has a cult-like following who believe it remains as good a .22 rimfire sidearm semi-auto repeater as money can buy. I was introduced to the Model 41 by a fan as we sat in his den pawing through his gun collection. He wore a funny hat, a cape, and an amulet, and after speaking in tongues, said:

"This is the best .22 pistol I ever owned."

He handed it to me.

I handled it.

I had to have one.

"But they don't make it anymore," he gloated.

The 2001 Standard Catalogue of Firearms from the Gun List people at Krause Publications shows the Model 41 at around $650 used in top shape, the less-refined Model 46 going for more because of its rarity. Due to further rarity, the Model 41-1 demands between a grand and $1,200.

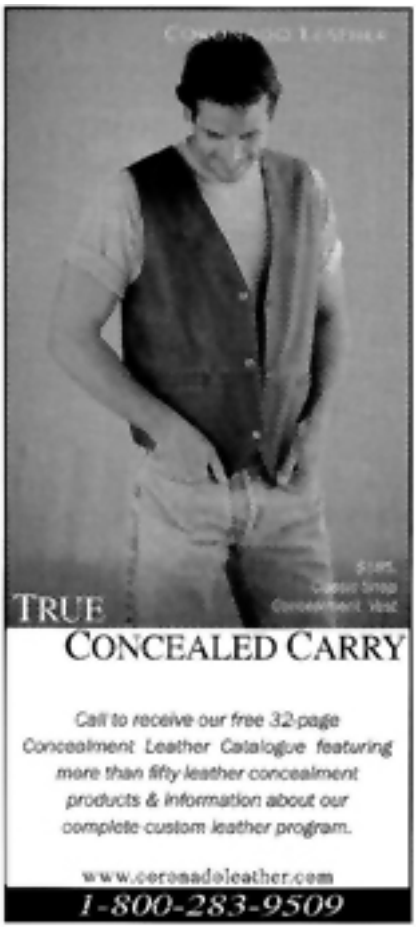
But that wizard was either wrong, or having fun with me. Because the Model 41 is in the Smith & Wesson catalogue. Restyled in 1994 with handsome checkered hardwood stocks showing contoured finger indents, Millet click adjustable rear sight, and for a front sight a 1/8" undercut Patridge, the new model is also drilled and tapped for scope mounts. All of which are important things.

Anachronistic Particulars

The Model 41's design is much of the reason for its lodestone reputation. It is magazine fed, as these pistols are, and graciously bears the responsibility of having a 10-shot capacity. With the aforementioned hardwood grooved grips solid in hand, the pistol is as well balanced, stable, and accurate as anything else.

Sights are about as good as irons get, with precise rear-sight windage/elevation capability. The test model was dead on target at 25 yards, requiring no further adjustment. Trigger stop setting is accomplished with a small Allen wrench (provided) by simply pulling the trigger guard downward then rotating the set screw clockwise to increase travel, counterclockwise to reduce travel. And it must be said again and again — ONLY TEST TRIGGER PULL ON AN UNLOADED GUN.

If the hammer will not fall, the screw



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has been turned out too far. A manual safety is located beneath the rear slide. Click up for safe, down for battery. The magazine release button is also handily located just behind the trigger guard. The slide stop lever rests above the upper left-hand grip panel.

There are two cautions to observe for best Model 41 shooting results. First, the pistol is ammo sensitive. Some brands and loads simply do not work well with the rather heavy slide. Smith & Wesson's Model 41 technologist recommends CCI standard .22 Long Rifle as foolproof. Second, the slide must, of course, be lubricated. But too much grease will cause it to drag.

Perhaps the most impressive design feature of the Model 41 is the takedown for field stripping. The steps are simple. Lock the slide back. Remove the magazine. Snap the trigger guard smartly downward. Pistol must be held horizontal during this maneuver because the barrel is now free to fall away. Lift barrel upward from the frame. Pull the slide back at a slight upward angle. Push the slide assembly forward to free it from the frame. The gun is now ready for cleaning. Reversing the procedure reassembles the Model 41. In the field stripped position, the gun is reduced to six parts: frame including trigger, trigger guard and grips, barrel, magazine, slide assembly, recoil spring, and recoil spring guide.

Feeding Beasts

The Model 41 is designed for .22 Long Rifle rimfire ammunition, including standard velocity, high velocity, target, and match. As a test, mainly to satisfy curiosity, a few groups were fired with RWS R25 .22 Short ammo — single-loaded, of course, as they would not fit or function in the magazine. The Short had too little poop to activate the slide, but groups at 25 yards were well under an inch center to center for 10 shots. Group size in general using proper ammo varied with the talent of the marksman and range conditions. However, anything over an inch at 25 yards for 10 shots was a poor showing by the shooter. Although the Model 41 is still considered a target pistol, mine is destined for another service — mainly gathering edibles on the trail. With a 5" barrel, the Model 41 carries nicely on the side in an Uncle Mike's holster Number 8105-1 Size 5.

Early fall finds me in the high mountains of my home state, Wyoming, for a full month of seeing no city lights. When I go this season, the accurate Model 41 will be a meal ticket at my side, providing mountain grouse and cottontails for the pan. However, the pistol will fire far more shots at inanimate targets. One time a reporter asked a bullet manufacturer where all those bullets ended up.

"Mostly in dirt banks," he replied.

That's where the vast majority of bullets from my Model 41 will come to rest. And I'll enjoy planting every one.

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SIXGUNNER

Continued from page 41

tion, so he designed his own. The Goerg Shoulder Holster is a spring clip, ultra lightweight design that incorporates a cartridge slide on the off-side. The pants belt enters loops on the back of the cartridge slide to help spread the weight evenly. The one design flaw in Goerg's holster is the lightweight, thin shoulder straps that will dig in to the top of the shoulders quite uncomfortably if one wears only a lightweight shirt. I find a heavy wool shirt works just fine, making this a cold weather outfit. Goerg died in a plane crash while hunting in Alaska in the 1960's. His hunting rig has never been topped.

George Lawrence

In 1854 George Lawrence began supplying great leather from his shop in Portland, Ore. At least four generations of the Lawrence family would run the operation before it was purchased by Gould & Goodrich about 10 years ago. G&G moved the operation to North Carolina and a few Lawrence designs were offered briefly and then dropped altogether. G&G was not really interested in the old designs but rather the machinery.

The two most popular Lawrence designs were the #34, an F.B.I. style rig for double action sixguns, and the #120, designed by Elmer Keith for single actions. Both are Tom Threepersons-style rigs that ride high and feature a safety strap for security. They were very popular holsters with outdoorsman and hunters.

S.D. Myres

"Tio" (Uncle) Sam Myers goes back almost as far as George Lawrence. Texas Ranger John Hughes, lawman Tom Threepersons, General George Patton, Colonel Charlie Askins, Bill Jordan and Ed McGivern, are just a few who passed through the doors of S.D. Myres. In fact, Myres made the first Threepersons holster for Tom, who entered the shop in the 1920's with the pattern cut from a tin can. Myers was also the first to produce the Border Patrol style of holster that was "the" uniformed peace officer rig for many decades.

Myers opened his leather shop in Sweetwater, Texas, way back in 1897. In the 1970's, S.D. Myers was sold and moved its operation to Oklahoma. A look at the current El Paso Saddlery catalog and comparing it with an old S.D. Myers catalog reveals El Paso obtained many of the holster patterns of S.D. Myers which disappeared shortly after the move out of Texas. S. D. Myers is history, but many of Tio Sam's designs continue from the El Paso Saddlery shop.

So now, get to "accumulatin" some stuff.

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Charles E. Petty

WILSON CHAMBER BRUSH

I am surely not compulsive when it comes to gun cleaning and I have seen guns loved to death by their obsessive owners. But sometimes we really must clean things we usually ignore. I'm thinking of the chamber of a 1911 barrel — especially one that shoots a lot of lead bullets.

One of those little white lies we hear is that the .45 ACP headspaces on the case mouth, but if you look at average case lengths and chamber depths you'll see it is a rare day indeed when the two meet. There is almost always going to be a space between the case and chamber shoulder. This is prime territory for the accumulation of crud and if enough builds up the case mouth will try to headspace on the crud. This can make the gun fail to lock up. Sometimes conventional cleaning isn't enough to solve this sort of problem.

Wilson Combat has a special stainless steel brush designed especially for cleaning the chamber. The spiral wound bristles are a bit less than an inch long, and half that in diameter, and they fit snugly in a .45 ACP chamber. The leading edge of the brush is squared off so all you have to do is twist the brush a bit and the bristles will clean right to the chamber shoulder. The handle is made of molded Delrin in an easy to hold shape.

For more information contact: Wilson Combat, 2234 CR 719, Berryville, AR 72616; (800) 955-4856; www.wilsoncombat.com

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GUNNYSACK

Charles E. Petty

AMERICAN GUNSMITHING INSTITUTE TRAINING TAPES

The leading cause of death in firearms is inept gunsmithing, either by a hobbyist or alleged professional. Most of the time this is due to a lack of understanding of HOW things work or how truly horrible it is to go wandering aimlessly around a gun's innards with a Dremel tool. The best way to learn how to work on guns is to watch someone who knows how to do the job. This is an area where videotape instruction can be very helpful. It isn't as good as hands-on training, but it is better than just reading something in a book and trying to do it.

American Gunsmithing Institute has dozens of tapes that cover a wide variety of popular rifles, shotguns and handguns. The tapes are divided into two categories: an "Armorer's Course," which has a detailed explanation of how the gun works and the detail stripping procedures; and a series of "how to" tapes that deal with specific tasks.

I reviewed two sets of tapes covering jobs I know well. One was how to do a trigger job on S&W revolvers, and it was exceptionally good because of some oversize training aids that clearly showed right and wrong relations of the hammer and trigger. The other was how to build a Government Model pistol from a kit. This was informative too, but relied heavily on special tools and fixtures that would involve a substantial financial investment for someone who was only wanting to build a gun for himself.

Photography and lighting were very good and it was easy to see fine details in close-ups. This was especially true of the Armorer's Course offerings that very clearly showed how things worked.

For more information contact: American Gunsmithing Institute, 1325 Imola Ave. W. #504, Napa, CA 94559; (800) 797-0867; www.americangunsmith.com

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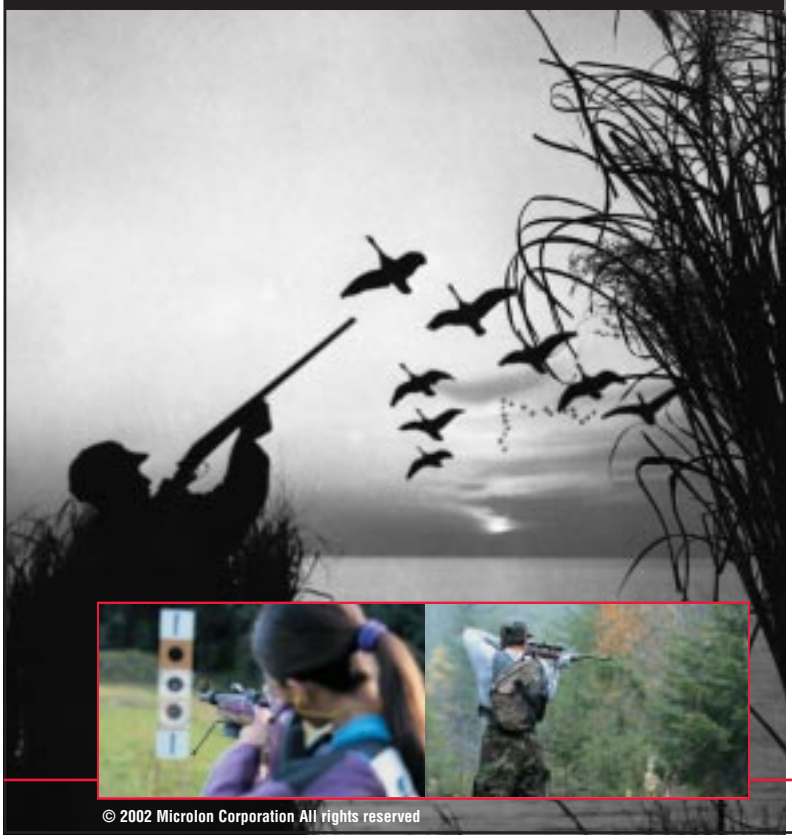

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GUNNYSACK

Charles E. Petty

BLUE WONDER CLEANER

Blue Wonder from Novum Solutions is a really good gun cleaner, but, like many good things in life, it's also a bit messy. It is a thin, amber-colored gel with a pleasant odor. The neat thing is it will cling to a bore brush and stay in the bore until it's removed by further cleaning. The label states it will "dissolve" lead and copper fouling. I'm not sure about that because lead likes to be a solid and what it takes to truly dissolve it is a strong acid. But, what Blue Wonder does do is efficiently loosen that nasty leading and fouling.

I had a couple of .45 Colt revolvers with light leading in the bore from some handloads that were a tad hot. I followed the directions and liberally applied Blue Wonder with a bore brush and let it stand10 minutes. I was amazed by the black crud that came out later and the bore showed no evidence of leading. I'm sure it would be harder to remove heavy leading but this ought to be a good start. It also works very well removing the deposits of carbon and such left on the breech face, inside the cylinder window and on the cylinder face. A patch with Blue Wonder liberally applied seems to rub the stuff off almost on contact.

I said Blue Wonder is messy. That's true, and part of the reason is the packaging. It comes in one of those common plastic tubes and if they would make the hole about half as big as it is you wouldn't get too much per squeeze and make the mess. But I guess that's good marketing 'cause they'll sell more that way. When using Blue Wonder to clean exterior surfaces, I found it helpful to follow with a patch wet with regular bore cleaner and then re-oil.

For more information contact: Novum Solutions, 1585 W. Sam Houston Parkway, Dept. AH, Houston, TX 77043; phone (832) 464-6319; www.novumsolutions.com

GUNNYSACK

Charles E. Petty

BUSHNELL'S MULTI-POSITION SPOTTING SCOPE

I wouldn't say I'm jaded, but it takes something really cool to trip this old trigger. And Bushnell has done it. The latest addition to their Spacemaster line of spotting scopes is a 20-60 zoom with a 60mm front element and a "multi-position eyepiece." The eyepiece rotates a full 90 degrees. And though this makes it look a little strange — somebody at Bushnell called it "the armadillo" — the eyepiece freely moves from the normal straight-back position to a complete right angle, and anyplace in between. Couple that with the ability to rotate the body through a full circle and the possibilities are endless.

I use a spotting scope almost every time I shoot, and taking a look almost always means changing positions. You have to stand up or wiggle into an odd position. But not anymore. It's a simple matter to put the tripod close by and then adjust the angle of the eyepiece and rotation of the body to a position where the most you have to do is lean over a little bit. A new high in laziness for me.

The newly patented design accomplishes the flexibility with a combination of a prism and mirrors, and you would think all those extra reflecting surfaces would cut down on light transmission. If it does, you sure can't tell, for the image is bright and crisp from edge to edge.

Two models exist, a 15-45x50mm which has a MSRP of $259.95 and a 20-60x60mm with an MSRP of $319.95. The "street" price will probably be less so these are a great bargain in both convenience and price.

For more information contact: Bushnell Performance Optics, 9200 Cody, Overland Park, KS 66214; (913) 752-3400; www.bushnell.com

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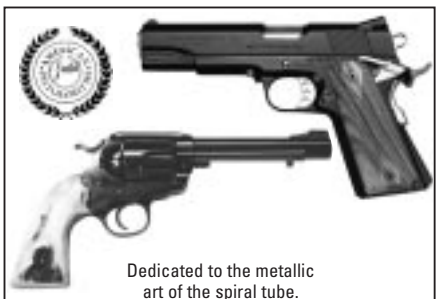

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TAFFIN TESTS

Continued from page 32

Model 92 levergun in 1938. As such, it offered an increase in muzzle energy over the popular .22 Hornet. About two years after the introduction of the .218 Bee, A. E. Mashburn wildcatted the Bee into a blown out version known as the .218 Mashburn Bee.

Reeder took a look at both cartridges and probably figured they would not work in a revolver cylinder. But, something made him try anyway, and we're glad he did. Not only do they work, they work well. I have been shooting two of Reeder's Varmint sixguns, a Blackhawk converted to .218 Bee, and a Vaquero set up in the Mashburn. The sixguns start life as standard stainless steel Rugers but once they are turned into the Coyote Classic, as Reeder calls this model, they are finished in a satin silver color.

Both guns are embellished with the types of critters upon which one would expect to use them. The Bee has a rockchuck and a coyote on the cylinder, with a jackrabbit and a squirrel on the mainframe; while the Mashburn is a little more flamboyant, with a coyote, squirrel and javelina on the barrel. Both are also fitted with round-butted Super Blackhawk grip frames as well as Super Blackhawk hammers and triggers. Both barrels are given a deep inverted crown, which is most appreciated in a field pistol to avoid those accuracy-destroying unexpected dings and bumps. Altogether, a most pleasing and attractive package, either way.

Wonderful To Behold

Both guns proved to be exceptionally accurate, although it did take a little tinkering and experimenting to find the proper loads and bullets. The .218 Bee is at its best with 40, 45 and 50 grain bullets, while I prefer 50 and 55 grain bullets in the Mashburn. You might expect them to be ungainly with such small holes in the barrel and cylinder when built on large frame Rugers. They are heavy, when scoped even much more so, and too heavy to weigh on my postage scale, however they do balance fairly well and are certainly easier to pack and more fun to shoot than a heavy-barreled varmint rifle.

Part of the joy of owning such things is the fact there are so very few around. All in all, they are sure to raise some eyebrows at the range or prairie-dogging some day!

Readers can contact Gary Reeder Custom Guns at 2601 E. 7th Avenue, Flagstaff AZ 86004; (520) 527-4100. Will other larger calibers work on bottle-necked cases when given the Reeder treatment? I will soon find out as I have sent a 7" Ruger .357 Bisley with an extra cylinder to be re-chambered to .356 GNR.

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STYLE N38 THE NEMESIS
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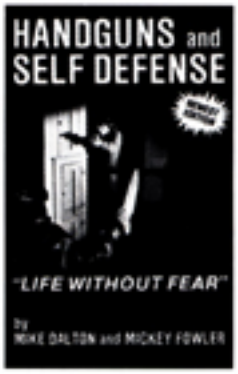

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Percentage overall sales in the industry are up over last year, primarily related to police and government sales, especially ammunition.

50,000

Concealed carry permits issued by Michigan in the first year.

34

Percentage homicide rate is down in Texas since the concealed carry law was enacted by Bush in 1995 — the lowest in over 40 years.

32

States of the Union with right-to-carry laws

44

Cities in California who have either overturned or are repealing and de-publishing their "Saturday Night Special" bans.

75

Percentage of Americans who overwhelmingly agree with individual right-to-carry interpretation, according to latest poll.

1

Number of NRA Commemorative Silver Bullet key chains confiscated by room-temperature I.Q. airport security, citing, "We can't allow anything resembling a weapon aboard." Why are we not surprised?

$21.19

Amount one gallon of Evian water or one box of premium .45 ACP ammo costs. You decide.

Continued from page 146

spread my *Handgunner* out in front of me, there were often curious questions from people about guns, hunting and more. I found there are many fellow shooters and hunters out there, also hesitant to be known. More importantly, I found there are many people anxious to have questions answered about guns, and my magazines often opened the door to those conversations. The assembly applauded. I could tell, they weren't applauding me — but the idea. A "Why haven't I thought of that before?" look flashed across many faces, followed closely with big, mischievous grins.

I continued the conversation. We spoke of our children and our heritage. I pointed out the young man, Tanner, who sheepishly put his arm up and gave a shy wave. After watching that weekend, I was reminded we hold the keys to our children's future. If they go on to value our heritage, it will be because we teach them about it. They will inherit our guns, our gear and our legacy, but only if we help them. If we truly care, we'll do something about it, exactly like those many parents at the match, who were doing something about it. Their kids were there, shooting, competing, trying. "In the arena," as Teddy Roosevelt said. Not plugged into a video game in a dark room.

If we don't take the time to build the foundation today, it will all die, now, with us. Don't let it die. Take pre-emptive strikes. Reach out to new shooters. Demand your local stores stock the magazines you read. And most importantly, pass on the legacy. Today.

Brownells (famous for their "to-die-for" catalog of gunsmithing goodies) is suing Midway USA. Midway's latest offering is an "Affordable Gunsmithing" catalog touting their line of gunsmithing supplies. Brownells claims their own catalog design is "unique and inherently distinctive" for it's format, index, varnish on the cover, four-column product offerings and other specific points. Brownells says Midway's catalog is "unfair competiton" due to design similarities. Brownells asks that Midway, "be permanently restrained and enjoined from further distribution of their catalog and that any infringing catalogs be destroyed." We'll keep you posted on the outcome.

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Before the computer mouse, there was:
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The original "Point and click interface.

CAMMO CONFUSION

First, you carpet your bedroom with the latest in wall-to-wall offerings from Advantage and Realtree. Nicely ask your wife or girlfriend to don her matching nighties (courtesy of your last trip to the Cabelas catalog). Then turn the lights down to simulate dawn in a duck blind, and play the "Can you find me game?" What's the prize? That's 'er, ah, 'um, personal, we'd imagine.

Fly Me To The Moon?

It seems Thunder Ranch has raised the bar in "fun" training. Ever wanted to ride in a helicopter? Like to shoot rifles? How about shooting rifles from helicopters? T.R.'s new "Aerial Gunnery" class is just the ticket. But move fast — the first one's sold out. I hear they're looking for a Sherman tank now ...

PARTS IS PARTS

Got a "Talon" pistol? Too bad. We tried to call 'em but they were out of business. Could this be one of the reasons? This reminds us of the old used-car guarantee: "We guarantee this car completely. If you drive it off the lot and it breaks into three pieces, all three pieces are yours." We're not exactly sure what the "made from alloy metal" in the slide was, but it wasn't much. We're not sure of the details of the exciting moments of the "event," but a sharp-eyed reader spotted this at his local gun store as the customer wanted to know where he could send the gun "to be repaired." Yeah, right. Repaired. Sorta' solder, epoxy, super-glue it back together? If you have one of these winners, we'd be a bit, shall we say, "cautious" about shooting it. Can you say, "paperweight?"

AWA SUED BY COLT

AWA International, Inc. (does business as American Western Arms), the manufacturer of the "Peacekeeper" and "Longhorn" single action 1873 revolvers, has been sued by Colt's Manufacturing and New Colt Holding Corporation for allegedly copying Colt's "trade dress." According to the suit, Colt says it is the only company that can make single action army revolvers which have the "overall appearance" of the Model P. They allege the AWA revolvers are too similar to Colt's and the consumer is buying the AWA revolvers, thinking they are buying a Colt, or that it's a product affiliated with Colt. This is like walking into a Ford dealer and thinking you're buying a Chevy. Give us a break. At least give the customer the benefit of the doubt as to having enough brains to read the tag.

AWA's roll-mark clearly states "American Western Arms" and is packaged to clearly show the manufacturer is AWA. There's also the little tidbit about the fact the AWA is about $900 cheaper than a Colt. You think you'd notice that?

Colt claims the entire overall appearance of the single action army revolvers — from the sights to the color case finish — are Colt's protectable property. This, in spite of the fact that since the 1950s, thousands of replicas have been sold by several companies. Where will this stop? The 1911 design? Will Caspian, Kimber, Springfield Armory, etc. be prevented from manufacturing their models? How about the AR15 clones?

AWA is defending the lawsuit vigorously. In addition to pointing out Colt stopped selling the Model P from 1941 to 1956, since then companies from Ruger to American Western Arms have manufactured single actions — all with no action from Colt (to our knowledge). And it gets better.

According to AWA, Colt is claiming the word "replica" is ambiguous, that it didn't discontinue the manufacture of single action revolvers around 1940, that Colt refuses to admit knowledge of the many other companies making single actions prior to the mid 1990s, that they were unaware replicas were used at cowboy matches prior to 1995 and that the AWA guns are not marked American Western Arms and AWA Italy.

If Colt prevails on its broad "trade dress" claim, it's possible they could prevent all manufacturers of replica 1873 revolvers from selling guns. AWA told *Handgunner* they will continue to fight the lawsuit and continue to improve their own products.

A call to Colt met with the following response: "We do not comment on pending litigation." *Handgunner* welcomes your comments.

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THE INSIDER

Roy Huntington

Take Pre-Emptive Strikes

"It's a pleasure to meet you, sir," said the young man with the gun, looking me directly in the eyes. I smiled as I shook his hand, noticing his firm handshake. The powder smears on his sweaty face matched his serious demeanor. He glanced away quickly and said, "I'm sorry sir, I have to go. I'm up." He moved thoughtfully to the shooter's box, waited — hands high — and when the tone came moved with practiced skill. Plates fell and he was victorious over a startled-looking adult next to him. The young man, Tanner, was 14 at the time and we were at the *Handgunner*/STI World Shootoff held recently in Montrose, Colorado.

It was my first time there and won't be my last. I was introduced to literally hundreds of shooters, from virtually every shooting discipline possible. IPSC, IDPA, Bullseye, Cowboy Shooting and you-name-it were on hand. This unique match is a rare opportunity for competitors and casual shooters to compete with anyone regardless of their particular interest. In the final stages, you might find a western-costumed hombre with a single action, toe-to-toe with an unlimited shooter, steel plates in front, waiting for the horn. And sometimes the single action wins.

After three days of shaking hands, walking the ranges and meeting people, I came away impressed. The people I met seemed genuinely interested to meet the new editor at *Handgunner* and I have to confess, I was genuinely interested in meeting them. There's an old German proverb that goes: "The eyes believe themselves — the ears believe other people." What I believe now I saw with my own eyes. There were no surprises, other than the quality of the young competitors I watched.

I couldn't help notice the concentration on the faces of everyone on the line — but most especially on the faces of those 13- and 14-year-old handgunners. "When," I asked one father, "do you ever see a look of that intensity on the face of a young adolescent?"

He smiled and said, "Not often, and this sure beats the same face while they have a video game controller in their hand, wouldn't you say?" I'd say.

This all caused me to mull it over. In conversation with shooters I recalled how I have often been embarrassed to open my own magazine while I eat at a fast food restaurant. While flying on business, I sometimes hesitate to unlimber a *Handgunner* or *Guns* Magazine — aware of the effect it may have on the more liberal around me. I hesitated to buy a gun magazine and pay for it in front of a string of shoppers at the Piggly Wiggly. I was beginning to feel as if those magazines were contraband and indeed, they must be, because they are increasingly hard to find on the shelves. Then one day it all changed.

It dawned on me there was nothing wrong with my sport, with my vocation or with my hobby. I was breaking no law. My enjoyment of firearms, of their history, use and collecting, had many positive things going for it. Firearms have given me a lifetime of enjoyment, have protected my thin-hide at times and provided my family with food. Why should I be ashamed? Then I had what my shrink-father calls a "catharsis" — I said to hell with 'em.

At the match, I was given the opportunity to say a few words and confess I took advantage of the captive audience. I related my new-found attitude. I reminded the attentive crowd to be proud of their shooting heritage, to share their accomplishments, their children's competition stories, hunting memories and to not be ashamed or embarrassed to be a gun owner. I told them, once I began to

Continued on page 144

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AR .223 Super Varmint Model
(Scope and mount optional)

All AR .223 parts are also available separately including:

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- LBC Bench Rest Quality Stainless Steel Barrel
- LBC Aluminum Gas Block w/Picatinny Top Rail

For more information and current retail pricing, refer to our web site, or send $2.00 for catalog. Normal office hours: 9AM-5PM CST.

Dealers send FFL for dealer pricing. Export information available on request.

www.lesbaer.com

LES BAER CUSTOM, INC.
Performance. It's everything.

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CDP™ (Custom Defense Package) pistols are built in the Kimber Custom Shop. They include features found only on custom-made defense pistols like carry bevel treatment, checkered front strap and Meprolight® Tritium night sights. The full size Custom CDP and the Ultra CDP with three-inch barrel are pictured. All four CDP models are chambered in .45 ACP.

Kimber. Carry the best.

Kimber® is the world's largest manufacturer of 1911 pistols with good reason. Chambered in the powerful .45 ACP cartridge, the 1911 is preferred by the majority of elite law enforcement and military units, as well as professional defense instructors and competition shooters. The brand they most often recommend is the brand they are most likely to carry. Kimber.

Kimber pistols are made in our state-of-the-art American factory, while most other brands are little more than assembled parts made under contract in foreign machine shops. Kimber uses the finest materials and precise manufacturing processes that combine to hold tolerances up to three times tighter than the competition.

The new Ultra Ten II™ has a three-inch bull barrel, polymer frame, stainless steel slide and ten round magazine. Weight is only 24 ounces.

Kimber pistols have a host of custom features others find too difficult to manufacture or too expensive to buy from outside sources. Each Kimber has a one-piece match grade barrel, chamber and trigger group, rounded and blended edges, dovetail-mounted sights, lowered and flared ejection port and beavertail grip safety. Slides and barrels are machined from steel forgings. Frames are machined from forgings or solid blocks of premium aluminum.

Visit one of 1,500 Kimber Master Dealers and compare a Kimber with another brand of 1911—or any other pistol design. See for yourself why Kimber is the best pistol to carry, and why any other brand is just a compromise.

The Ultra Carry™ is chambered in .45 ACP and .40 S&W. Very accurate and absolutely dependable, it is the smallest and lightest 1911 available today.

The new Pro Carry HD™ (Heavy Duty) .45 ACP has a full size stainless steel frame and four-inch bull barrel. It is ideal for duty or concealed carry.

Kimber®

For complete information on Kimber rifles and pistols please send $2 to Kimber, Dept. 169, One Lawton Street, Yonkers, NY 10705, call (800) 880-2418, or visit www.kimberamerica.com

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