REALITY CHECK

THE "WHY ME?" SYNDROME

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2003

KIMBER'S NEW LAPD SWAT .45 ACP DYNAMO!

THE ORIGINAL .357 MAGNUM

pg. 46

CCW: 12 CARRY OPTIONS

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AMERICAN HANDGUNNER®

2003

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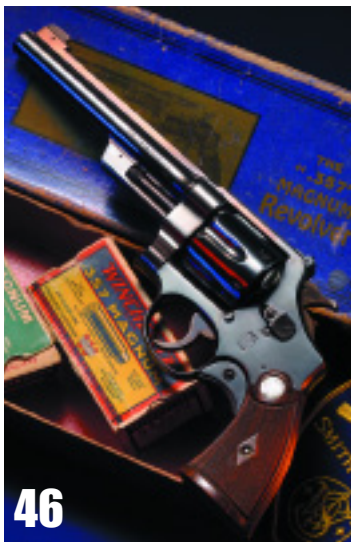
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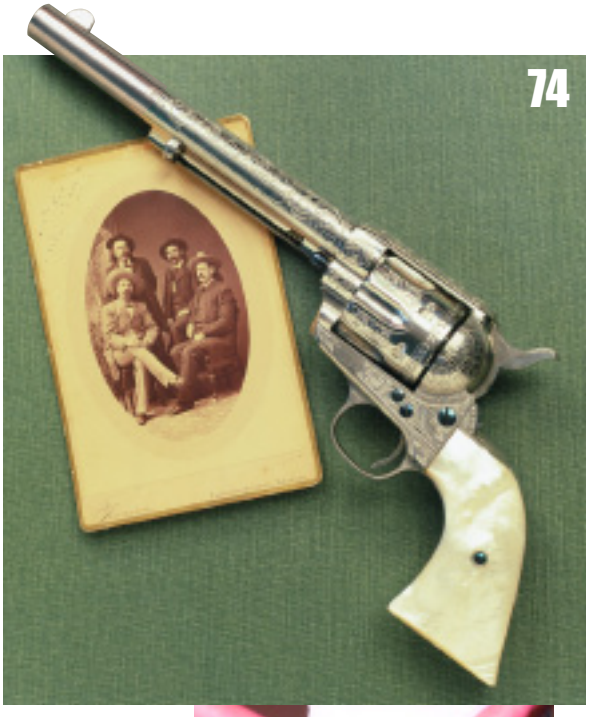
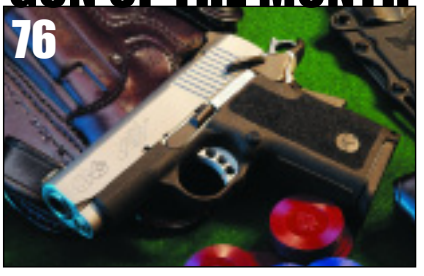


GUN OF THE MONTH



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SPEAKOUT

YOUR FORUM TO PONTIFICATE, PONDER AND PROBE

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER

Thanks, Gila Hayes, for the article in the Nov./Dec. issue entitled "First Day Jitters." The interviews were with real, everyday women, just like me, and it really hit home. Regardless of the initial reasons to learn marksmanship, it's practical and fun. I'll pass the article on to my other lady friends, one of whom is taking a handgun class with me soon. Hopefully, more ladies will find the joy of handgunning and other shooting sports as well. By the way — black powder rifle shooting is tops!

Thanks for a great magazine. This is the second issue I've read cover-to-cover on our new subscription. The photos are always good, and it all makes for a great read!

Lisa Jasper, wife and mother
Dripping Springs, Texas

Notorious Low-Life

Invariably when I receive my copy of *Handgunner*, I turn immediately to the letters section. And, what do I spy there, but a reference to Mr. Dave Workman, and something he wrote about in *Women and Guns*.

I question your dependence upon Mr. Workman, a notorious low-life, as a source of valid information. I happen to know that miserable wretch intimately, as I stare at him each morning in the mirror. For years, his mother has begged him to have his name legally changed to end her public embarrassment. His children have sought court intervention to prevent him from naming them as his heirs. It would not have been my first choice to factually support anything I ever wrote — and I'm stuck with him, alas.

Seriously, very kind of you to rely on my veracity to lend credence to something in your fine publication. I am flattered.

Dave Workman
Via e-mail

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SPEAKOUT

SIG-nificant Magic?

The article on the SIG P228 in the Nov/Dec issue has raised some curious questions. The "before" photo shows a slide marked "Exeter-NH." The "after" photos show a slide marked "Herndon-VA." Does the Robar NP3 plating process always cause this drastic shift in geographic polarity and alteration of the basic molecular structure of the metal?

J. Paullin
Via e-mail

Robar says they can perform magic with their work and here's living proof. Of course, the subjugation of the molecular ionic interface and the cross-field, sub-space pulse wave may have had something to do with it. But that's the secret part of the process. Editor

Damn Upset

I just got my Nov/Dec issue. As always, *Handgunner* is a fine publication. The only thing that upsets me are those who write and say they will cancel their subscriptions if you print one more 1911 article. I happen to enjoy all the articles. I own many pistols but I realize I don't know it all, so keep informing me, even if it's about a 1911. I'll continue to buy what I can afford and learn about the rest.

Those other guys will probably buy the next issue just to see if there's a 1911 article they can complain about.

G. Bowman
Via e-mail

Gonna Blow Up

Just finished "My Dog Ate My Gun" in the Nov/Dec issue and may have to go to the doctor to repair the damage I did to my side from laughing too hard. Quit it! Stop now! I can't afford the doctor bills!

Wallace Rockford
Via e-mail

I'd Walk A Mile

J.D. Jones continues to kill anything that walks and he's done it again with the camel caper. Great stuff, and I'll bet it lights up your switchboard. Of course, those idiots don't seem to understand he was hunting in another country, according to their laws, and I'm sure the camels are as destructive as I've heard and read about. Rodents are rodents, no matter how big they are. Keep it up, J.D. And keep taking those pretty girls with you when you go.

Gary Jessman
Via e-mail

Testicular Airing?

J.D. hit it on the spot with those professional hunters. I've been to Africa and

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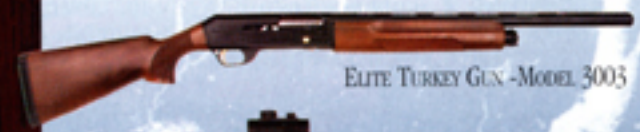

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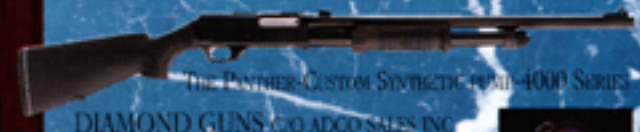

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invariably, about the time you're settling down around the fire, the PH [professional hunter] sits down and airs out his privates while he sucks on a local brew. Believe it — I've seen it.

P.S. Camels, eh? Maybe we've seen everything now. What's next J.D.? Whales?

Conrad Holt
Via e-mail

An Even Half-Dozen

I've been a subscriber to *Handgunner* for many years and really enjoy it. The bad thing? It only comes every other month.

Richard Bhrman
Chattanooga, Tenn.

The Worst Issue Ever

I've just finished reading the Nov/Dec issue of *Handgunner* and feel it's the worst issue I have ever read in all the years I've been a reader. If *American Handgunner* doesn't change, I'll not renew my subscription.

Wiliam Kachenko
Via e-mail

Reader's Nightmare?

Your publication has become an advertiser's dream and a reader's nightmare. There are very few articles of value and it's mostly a collection of advertisements. I am removing my name from your mailing list and will not renew my subscription. I refuse to pay for advertisements. I'd rather pay for worthwhile articles and unbiased evaluations of products.

Greg Downey
Royal Palm Beach, Fla.

Yup, that's us. Not a damn thing worth reading. We waste our time every month doing this and finally these two fellows caught on. Geez. Got to be sneakier about it in the future ... Editor

Gun Junkie

Wow! I've never done this before, actually writing to a gunzine. I have the Sept/Oct issue in my hand and it definitely opened my eyes. I learned something from the Ayoob files, laughed at the Mexican Loop holster, and when I got to editor Huntington's column, I found I could identify with him on all counts. Being a "Gun Crank," I'm sure he can relate to me when my wife calls me a Gun Junkie.

I got that "new teacher" feeling after finishing the issue. I always liked and respected my old school teachers but looked forward to the new ones. I'm looking forward to your next issue.

Jonathan Compton
Via e-mail

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Never Read Revolvers

Let's just say it. I like the 1911 and rarely read anything having to do with revolvers. Having said that, I want to send kudos on a job well done by Huntington and Nagata on the Bowen Classic Arms piece in the Sept/Oct issue. The text, layout, museum-quality revolvers and drop-dead photos all combined to produce an article that drew even my auto-pistol fan eye. Good job, guys.

Steve Osinski
Ft. Bragg, N.C.

Marvelous Marvels

I definitely agree about those Marvel conversions for .22s. I own a 1911 and a Para and have used the unit on both pistols with the same results every time. The accuracy is amazing and makes you appreciate quality, especially when it's this affordable. After seeing the Marvel covered in your magazine, I'm definitely going to subscribe. What a great combination of great guns featured in a great magazine. It just doesn't get any better. I especially enjoyed Mr. Huntington's personalizing the magazine with his editorial, and that really caught my attention.

Scott Schwebe
Montrose, Colo.

Too Tough Kid

I wanted to thank you for your continued support of the STI/*American Handgunner* World Shootoff Championship. You have given shooters a match of superb quality. I would also like to thank you for your nice comments about me during the awards ceremony. I really appreciated your words.

Tanner Cunningham
Via e-mail

Tanner deserves my praises. He was the Junior and "B" Stock Auto World Shootoff Champion, and a sterling young man. Editor

Absurdly Sabots

The article by Fortier on the CZ52 (Sept/Oct) was well done but when I got to the section about the .223 Timbs I had to chuckle. I've been loading sabot rounds in my Tokarev (using Hornady V-Max bullets) for more than three years now. I surely didn't have the gall to rename a cartridge simply because I used a different bullet in it.

As a wildcatter, I have no problem with naming a cartridge I've changed the dimensions on, but this is absurd. I love the CZ's action — hate the grip.

Mike Sarkisian
Via e-mail

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CZ52 Fun

At $150, the CZ52 is a powerful yet reasonably economical "plinker" — a fun gun if there ever was one. Customization, as shown, enhances looks and for a few hundred dollars more, you can significantly improve accuracy. But, for that kind of money, you'd be better served to buy a 1911. Keep the 52 for fun.

Overlooking David's penchant for costuming, it was a nice article and I look forward to more. Perhaps something on the Mosin-Nagant "gas-check" — another inexpensive fun gun?

Ken Wainwright
Via e-mail

The gods of fun guns have listened, Ken. Check out this issue for a slightly tongue-in-cheek "Komradely" look at the 1895 Nagant. Complete with costuming. Editor

Liar, Liar

Naturally, several words came to mind when I read the quick mention of Sarah Brady (Insider column, Sept/Oct) having given her son a .30-'06 Remington Model 700 for his birthday: hypocrite, elitist, liar, two-faced — you know the usual. Then another word came to mind: Felon.

Isn't it against Federal law to buy a firearm on behalf of someone else, or does that only apply to handguns? And, if it does only apply to handguns, will Mrs. Brady try more feverishly to outlaw any purchases of so-called "sniper rifles" now that her son has his safely in-hand? I shake my head and wonder what has happened to the gene pool, and common sense.

Dr. Craig Merrell
Dallas, Texas

As far as we know, it is lawful for a mother or father to purchase a hunting rifle for their offspring. There are other laws regarding gifting firearms to close family members, and they should be checked for your state before you do so. But still, this Brady caper leaves us shaking our collective heads too ... Editor

More Hype?

My buds and I are all hyped-up about having Clint Smith aboard with a regular column and we're looking forward to some major features from him. It looks like this will be pumping up the readership for sure, and I'll bet it blows the competition out of the tub, to boot. Good thinking.

Mike Sheldon
Stockton, Calif.

Waiting for the Mailman

It's the middle of September and I'm waiting for the mailman. Six issues a year is not enough! All of the usual superlatives apply. *AH* is the only magazine that gives me more of what I buy a Handgun mag for. I never tire of new ways to present 1911s. More, more, more!

Al Aho
Norwich, Conn.

Bullet-Resistant Badge

I just finished reading Sept/Oct Ayoob files, "Barricaded Cop-Killer: The James Cantwell Incident" and had to write. One of the officers shot by the suspect is my father-in-law, Joe "Freddie" McDaniels. His badge took the brunt of the hit of the .303 round, and because of it he was able to administer first-aid to himself. I thought you'd like to see his badge, with the bullet hole. Freddie is only 5'3" tall and when you see that hole, and realize his chest was behind it, it makes you stop and think.

Thanks for a great magazine and taking the time to tell the story.

Chad and Tammy McDaniels Forsting
Via e-mail

Oops...

In Taffin Tests, Nov/Dec issue on the .218 BEE, the loading data for the .218 BEE and Mashburn BEE were swapped. Our thanks to several readers who took the time to point it out. Editor

AMERICAN HANDGUNNER™ welcomes letters to the editor for the *Speak Out* column. Letters should be typewritten, but legible handwriting is acceptable. Letters must be less than 350 words. We reserve the right to edit all published letters for clarity and length. Due to the volume of mail, we are unable to individually answer either written correspondence or e-mail. Send your letters to *Speak Out* , American Handgunner, 591 Camino de la Reina, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92108; internet: www.americanhandgunner.com

REALITYCHECK

Clint Smith

FIRST-PERSON THOUGHTS ON SURVIVING IN THE REAL WORLD

Why Me?

For many young Americans, their first job is not necessarily the one they intend to choose for a life-long career. As a young man in 1968, I had a summer job that consisted of walking a lot and carrying heavy, dangerous objects. I'm sure had my mother known what I was doing she would not have appreciated it. Mothers are like that.

One very hot day while out walking, one of the fellows I was with flopped awkwardly to the ground and the sound of wet thumps filled my ears. Immediately the air around us filled with a buzzing and ticking din. Even though we weren't the brightest light bulbs in the box, we were smart enough to get under our helmets in short order.

To this day, I can vividly remember — as I sat behind a too-small tree — the question passing through my mind like a continuous-loop video: "Why are these guys shooting at me?"

Webster's defines "why" as: reason, cause or baffling problem.

I've seen a video of a Midwestern police officer in court confronting the felon who shot her in the neck, causing the officer to be confined to a wheelchair for life. During their day in court the officer's question to the shooter was a simple one — why?

The officer said that at the time of being confronted by the gunman she had chosen to put her sidearm down. Then she raised her hands in a position to show compliance with the gunman's wishes. All done in an attempt to de-escalate the situation. Assuming this non-threatening position, the officer was shot in the neck by the gunman.

This is what detectives call a clue.

Why Do You Carry A Gun?

A decision to carry a firearm in the public forum requires a commitment of enormous proportions. After making this decision, a person is often buried under an onslaught of information. Carry this ammo. Don't modify the gun or you'll get sued. Buy this holster. Buy this gun. Get this training and do this and do that and don't do anything but do everything.

When you decide to carry a handgun, you had better consider it's now a tool of your trade. And, just like a plumber, you must be qualified with the tools of your trade. But, unlike a plumber, you must be willing to use those tools to defend yourself and your family.

If you're not willing to work to be qualified and not willing to use this tool — you should consider leaving the gun at home. And you need to consider whether you should own one at all. It's not halfway. It's all the way or nothing. You can't shoot them "a little bit" to scare them away.

And let's just say it out loud. If you shoot you'll get sued. I'm not saying this is bad or this is good, it just is. If you shot Attila the Hun caught in the act of doing what he did best, you would still probably get sued. For many of the students here at the school, their biggest problem is between their ears. They're so worried about getting sued they forget why they carry a firearm in the first place.

Avoid the fight if you can, but if there is a fight then be in it to win. No rules, no quarter, and cheating is the order of the day. Yes, you'll be sued. So what. You'll be alive to be sued. Oh, and so you know, if you're dead you won't be sued. Or you won't care.

Photo: Ichiro Nagata

It's Not About Glamour or Coolness

It's about this. If you carry, are you ready and willing to use this handgun to defend yourself? Just as importantly, are you ready to be held responsible for your actions? Always remember — regardless of everything else firearms were and are used for — the one you have on your hip is intended for one thing: Saving a life, and possibly taking the life of another in the process.

Everything other than this, from sporting clays, IDPA, IPSC, bowling pins, bullseye, everything — and I mean everything — is just a game.

Yeah, But Why Me?

While walking through a rice paddy one of the Marines I was with was shot. The Midwestern cop was shot while being submissive, doing what she thought was the right thing at the time. You must ask yourself when, or if, someone confronts you on the street, what will be your response? Will you brain-lock on this fleeting question of "why me?" Or, will you respond with rapid, deadly force to save a life, without wasting time philosophizing?

And, why you? Because you, like me, and maybe to our collective surprise, are simply not exempt from life, and bad things can happen to good people. We may simply be in the way of an idea some miscreant has at a particular moment. But we're in the way.

Most of all, it's because the bad guys will do what they do best, and most don't care who falls in the process. We mean nothing to them, they are predators and set on winning. But, of course, that's only if we allow them to win.

Charles Daly

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Massad Ayoob

Cops Need To Fly Armed – NOW

Sky marshals are much in the news these days. We hear from many officers thinking of applying for the job on the theory it pays well and should be exciting. Certainly, the pay is fair, but the "exciting" part approaches delusional thinking. There are already reports that even the most recently-hired members of that service are burning-out at a rapid rate. It's not hard to understand why. This may be the single most boring job in law enforcement.

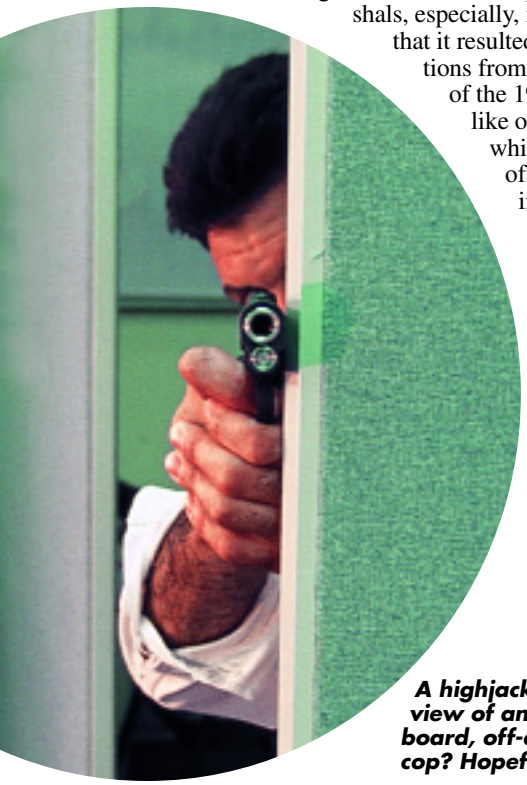
As any frequent flyer can tell you, during a huge majority of commercial flights nothing out of the ordinary takes place. When you're flying as a passenger, you hope to have an interesting companion to talk with, or a good book to read. Failing that, you cross your fingers for an in-flight movie you haven't seen yet, and if nothing else, you can always try to sleep through the trip.

The sky marshal has none of these options. He or she can be fired for literally sleeping on duty. Typically, these operators are on their own, without partners to talk with. Indeed, if an inspector from the service is aboard to rate the marshal's performance, striking up an animated conversation with a seatmate would be seen as turning away from vigilant watch. Reading is forbidden for a similar reason, as is shutting out ambient sound by putting on earphones, or narrowing the visual scan by tunneling in on a movie screen.

My old friend Don B. Kates, a noted criminologist, says this same thing was observed back in the 1970s when the Sky Marshal program was a hot item after a wave of "skyjackings." He wrote, "The problem for sky marshals, especially, is boredom so extreme that it resulted in endless resignations from the marshal program of the 1970s. The job is not like ordinary police patrol which is likely to provide officers with a lot of interesting activity on each shift, between dispatch calls and routine interactions with people. Instead, unless there actually is an attack, the poor sky marshals have nothing at all to do on flight after flight they travel on day after day. Four months, and you're liable to be sitting in a little rubber room."*

It would make a lot more sense to listen to voices like LAPPL (Los Angeles Police Protective League), who have cried out for the government to authorize all sworn police officers to carry guns aboard planes. With the nation's 700,000 officers all doing two weeks or more of vacation every year, and often traveling on department business, this would vastly enhance current security with zero added cost to the taxpayers. There are thousands of us who have already completed the FAA's class on flying armed, but most of us can now only take advantage of the privilege when extraditing prisoners. With a stroke of the pen allowing this, the Attorney General could dramatically multiply the number of armed, trained, confident professionals in crisis management onboard commercial flights.

* *Gun Rights, Armed Volunteers for America,* by Don B. Kates.



A highjacker's view of an on-board, off-duty cop? Hopefully.

OBVIOUS PROOF

In recent months, we've seen the positive effects of having such security in place. When an Albanian flight was hijacked, the immediate reaction of two armed security personnel onboard quickly, and fatally, ended the hijackers' mission, saving countless lives. When a man from the Middle East opened fire at Los Angeles International Airport, plainclothes guards of Israel's El Al airline swiftly shot and killed him, saving countless lives.

On the West Coast, one state police agency has told all its sworn personnel to go armed on commercial flights within the state, which geographically is one of our largest. However, most flights cross state lines. This is why national authorization is needed.

And if this sets a precedent so one day armed citizens who can prove their competence are allowed to carry on board ... well this might not be a bad thing, either.

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TAFFINTESTS

John Taffin

THE SIXGUNNER HIMSELF: GUNS, GEAR AND MORE

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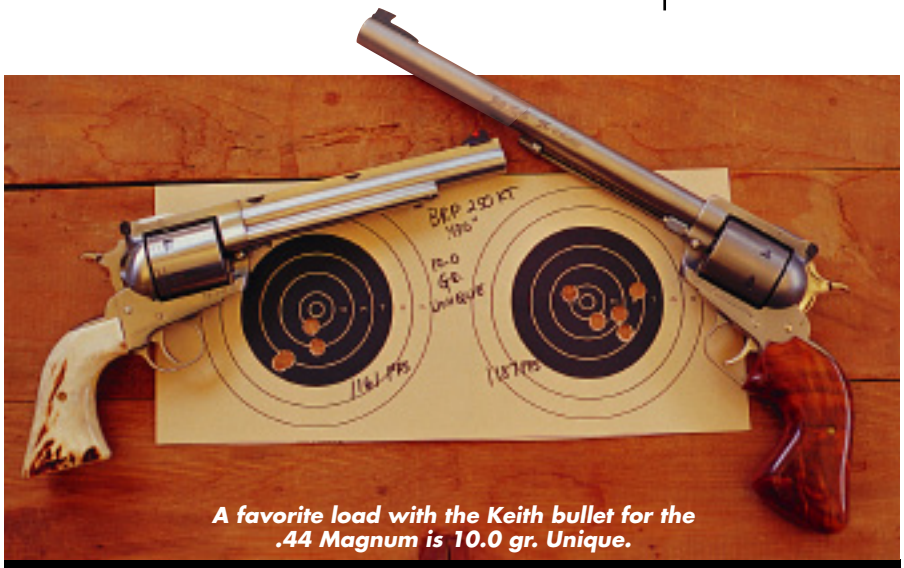
From the 1870s until the eve of World War I, the accurate .44 Russian served admirably in Smith & Wesson's single-action and double-action top-break revolvers. The black powder load was a 246 gr. round-nosed bullet that zoomed around 700 to 750 fps.

Come 1907, and Smith & Wesson brings forth their first solid-frame, swing-out cylinder, big-bore, double action revolver in the form of the beautifully crafted New Century. Known as the First Model .44 Hand Ejector and the Triple-Lock, it could have been chambered for the same .44 Russian. Instead, the gun maker took another great step forward, lengthening the .097" Russian cartridge case to the 1.160" .44 Special.

But it was definitely an example of two steps forward and one step backward.



A favorite load with the Keith bullet for the .44 Magnum is 10.0 gr. Unique.

CHART 1

SIXGUN	MV	GROUP
Colt 7" New Frontier	1,112	1"
Colt 5" New Frontier	1,062	1"
S&W Model 24 6"	1,066	2"
S&W Model 624 4"	1,023	2"
TLA Improved #5 5"	1,096	1"
TLA Flat-Top Target 7"	1,128	1"

CHART 2

SIXGUN	MV	GROUP
S&W Model 624 4"	1,190	1"
S&W Model 396 3" MtnLite	1152	1"

Groups are five shots at 50 feet.

BRP's 250 gr. .44 Keith bullets loaded in Special and Magnum brass.

SILLY Manufacturers

Ammunition companies loaded the .44 Special to the same level as the .44 Russian. And the .44 Special's true capability would not be discovered until the late 1920s.

Elmer Keith and others experimented with the .44 Special for the next 30 years. Many sixgunners tried to get ammunition companies to bring out a real .44 Special load ... but it remained, and for the most part still remains, a custom proposition.

Before World War II, the .44 Associates — an almost mythical organization — freely shared information about the .44 Special with each other. Keith was a member of the Associates. Two of the favorite loads circulating around the country were the Keith Load of a 250 gr. hard cast bullet at 1,100-1,200 fps, depending upon barrel length. And there was the same bullet over 7.5 gr. of Unique for 900-950 fps.

Now, for the first time, as far as I know, we have a commercial .44 Special load approaching the Keith Load. Buffalo Bore, heaven-sent, now loads a true 255 gr. Keith bullet at 1,050-1,150 fps, the only variable depending upon your sixgun and, pardon me, your barrel length.

Tested in the following six .44 sixguns, five are chambered for the .44 Special, but lucky Number 5 is a .44 Magnum. All groups are five shots at 25 yards *(see chart 1)*.

In addition to the Keith-like loading, Buffalo Bore is also offering a defensive loading consisting of a 185 gr. jacketed hollowpoint for use in five-shot .44 Specials. They are not to be used in the Charter Arms Bulldog .44 Special *(see chart 2)*.

BRP Bullets

In the early 1980s, when Roger Barnes told me he was retiring from teaching and going into the bullet casting business, my first thought was this was a classic example of "jumping from the frying pan into the fire." But Roger was able to make the transition successfully by offering premium quality bullets; he casted while his wife Pat managed quality control.

When Roger's wife passed away after a long illness, he decided he couldn't do it anymore by himself. He sold the business to Jay Sanders in Oklahoma.

Continued on page 108

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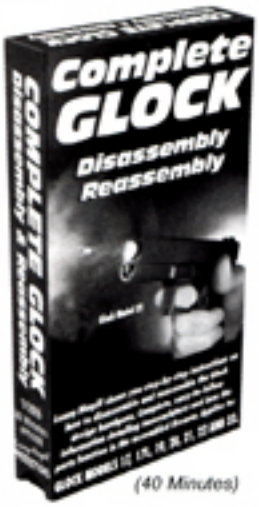

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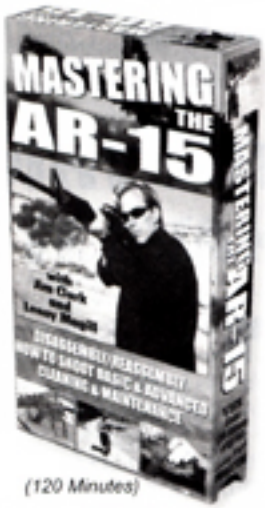

(120 Minutes)

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!

(110 Minutes) ***Item #X0444 • $29.95***

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.

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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***

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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!

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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.

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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.

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Masaad Ayoob shares the secrets of the StressFire Handgun, Shotgun and Rifle shooting system in this three tape series. Learn to master the combat handgun, fire a 12-gauge shotgun and put five blasts into a silhouette in one second, and increase your speed, accuracy, control, and confidence with the semi-automatic & fully automatic rifle or carbine.

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HANDGUNLEATHER

Cameron Hopkins

FROM CLASSIC TO CUTTING-EDGE CARRY METHODS

THE THIGHS HAVE IT

Hardly anyone agrees on every little thing, especially when it comes to tactical gear. And disparity of opinion is found among the members of SWAT teams and Spec-Op units as well. The Navy SEALs favor the SIG P226, while the D-boys opt for customized 1911s.

Different strokes for different folks.

But when it comes to holsters for their Kimbers, Springfields, SIGs and Wilson's, the one piece of gear upon which every group agrees is the Safariland Model 6004 tactical thigh holster.

Safariland owns the tactical thigh market like Hershey's owns the chip market — or is that Intel? The point is, if you're on a team, you're tightening the twin elastic straps of the 6004 around your strong-side quads.

Why such dominance? Two words — Bill Rogers. The former FBI agent turned holster designer imbued the 6004 with a host of features, not the least of which was making it totally crush-proof, waterproof, corrosion-proof and, yes, even GI-proof.

The newer versions of the 6004 are designed to mate with the holster interface rail of a SureFire-dedicated handgun WeaponLight. SureFire's handgun light features a trigger guard-mounted adaptor rail for the light to attach to the pistol. Incorporated in the adaptor are a pair of holster interface rails, or wings, that mate with corresponding slots inside the 6004. The advantage to this system is the handgun can still be re-holstered, even without the light in place.

Safariland-sheik: Model 6004 Tactical Rig

The holster interface keeps the gun from flopping around in what would become an otherwise overly-roomy rig for a light-less pistol. The 6004 also incorporates one of the simplest, fastest and secure retention devices in the thigh holster industry — a niche market if there ever was one.

There is a molded sight track in the holster to prevent the front sight from snagging. The holster itself attaches to a contoured thigh pad, which in turn cinches to your leg with two adjustable, elastic straps. The entire rig suspends from your belt with a length-adjustable, Velcro®-backed strap.

The holster is made with Rogers' most significant contribution to holster technology, the Safarilaminate (née thermo-laminate) method of bonding an inner piece of suede to an outer shell of tough, durable Kydex. The holster also boasts an adjustable retention screw.

In sum, the 6004 is one of the toughest, safest, fastest, most secure tactical thigh rigs available.

Latch Key Holsters

The secret to the speed and security of the Safariland 6004 is a clever, thumb-activated retention strap that envelops the top of the holstered pistol. Called the Self-Locking System (SLS), the lock consists of an inch-wide, U-shaped hood that pivots over the top of the pistol, be it a double-action SIG or a single-action 1911, holding the gun securely in place.

Accidentally knocking off the hood could be a problem for tactical team members, what with all the gentle treatment they give their gear — jumping out of airplanes, rappelling down buildings, running through jungles, and generally making a mess of things. That, now, is the clever part of the design.

There's a large thumb button that must be intentionally pushed down, then rocked forward to release the safety hood. With practice, a user can disengage the rocker switch almost as fast as drawing the gun with no strap in place. One fluid motion, down-forward, up and out. The 6004 is available for pistols with, and without, dedicated flashlights, in black or desert camo. The list of pistols is short — your basic everyday 1911s, SIGs, Glocks and other tactically-correct handguns.

Photo: Ichiro Nagata

WHO ARE THOSE MASKED MEN?

Special Forces are found in all branches of the armed services, even the Air Force. The Marine Corps does not have any Special Forces. However, the leathernecks are technically a part of the Navy, which has SEALs as their representatives in the Special Operations Command (SOCOM).

The Army has the most. They are divided into "groups" such as the Fifth Special Forces Group or Seventh Special Forces Group. The Air Force has the Ravens, whose primary function is to rescue downed pilots. The Navy has the SEALs broken into "teams" instead of "groups." Odd-number teams are stationed on the East Coast, even-numbered on the west.

The Marine Corps considers every Marine to be special, so they do not have a Special Forces element per se. However, they do have specially trained units called Force Recon that perform many of the same functions as Special Forces in other branches.

And the one thing they often all agree on is the superiority of the Safariland 6004 holster.

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HANDLOADING

Charles E. Petty

SAGE ADVICE FROM THE HANDLOADING GURU

Loading The Old Warhorse

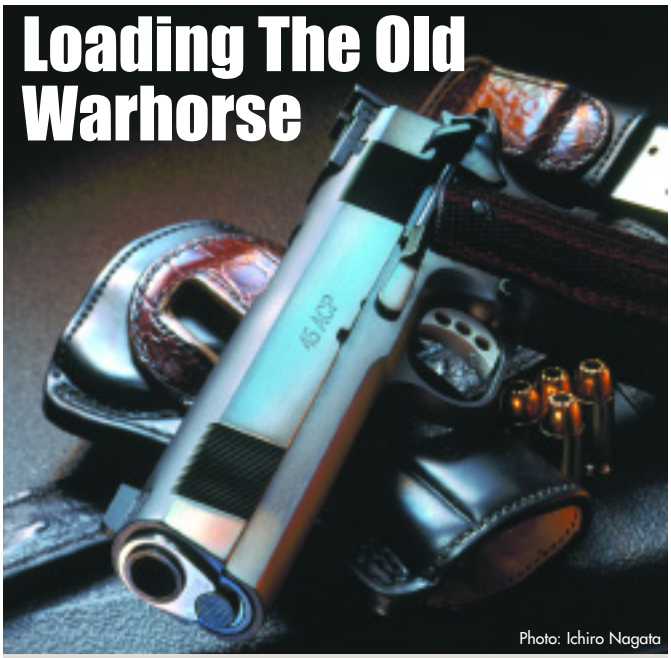

Photo: Ichiro Nagata

We can never know for sure, but I'd bet big bucks the .45 ACP is either number one or two on the list of most commonly loaded handgun cartridges. And here's why.

The depth of the market for Government Model 1911-style pistols is simply incredible. The best evidence of this is the success of Kimber. Colt was vacating the market by the middle '90s and Kimber took up that slack. Springfield Armory upgraded their guns to compete, and sales of Government Model clones continue at 50-75,000 guns a year.

Loading the .45 ACP was once a simple matter of deciding whether you wanted to put 5.0 or 3.7 grs. of Bullseye under the Hensley and Gibbs #68 bullets. One was the target load and the other a full power IPSC "major" charge. You absolutely can still do that today and not go wrong, although there are many more options to explore.

One thing that compounds our decision making is the vastly larger number of bullets on the market today. IPSC shooters, at least in the beginning, used cast bullets in their 45s. So did bullseye shooters, but with a 185 gr. semi-wadcutter. When they wanted the best possible accuracy, many used jacketed bullets of the same weight and style. The other choice was the traditional 230 gr. FMJ round nose hardball bullet.

Where the expansion in the bullet market has come is in the area of hollowpoints. Of course everyone thinks of hollowpoints as being for defensive cartridges, but we've learned they can be wonderfully accurate too. Now, when I'm trying to find a more accurate .45 load — you know they're never accurate enough — I try to include a couple of hollowpoints. So far, the Hornady XTPs and Speer Gold Dots in various weights have shown lots of promise and I plan to repeat some of those tests with Sierra and Nosler hollowpoints.

Different But Same?

I'm sure it's not a secret Hodgdon does not manufacture smokeless powder; they buy it from a number of different sources. Some of those have always been ball powders from Winchester. Hodgdon even went so far as to come up with their own trademark — Spherical — for the same stuff. If you look at the labels of a number of Hodgdon powders you'll see, "Made in U.S.A." and know they came from Florida. Today the plant is owned by giant defense contractor General Dynamics and is known as St. Marks Powder Co., but previously it was Primex and before that, Olin or Winchester.

It's not exactly a secret, but neither is it common knowledge, that sometimes they both sell the same powder but with different numbers or names. Not too long ago a couple of Winchester powders — 540 and 571 — were discontinued.

Now along comes a press release from Hodgdon reminding us their HS-6 is exactly the same as 540, and HS-7 is just 571. They go on to state the loading data is exactly the same. The bottom line here? If you have a load using data for 540 you can directly substitute HS-6 powder. Ditto for 571 and HS-7.

But still, be careful — and don't assume just because powders from two companies have the same or similar numbers it means they can be interchanged!

THE VAST RIGHT WING CONSPIRACY

I received a letter recently from a reader who complained bitterly because a load I had published was entirely too puny for his tastes. He went on to accuse me of being a "pawn of the industry and a participant in the conspiracy" to deny him information about the "real" maximum load. What's wrong with this picture? And would you care to bet this same guy would be first in line at the lawyer's office if he somehow succeeded in blowing up his gun — or himself? The industry has very wisely established limits on pressure to ensure each cartridge will fit, and be safe to shoot in, a mechanically-sound firearm of the appropriate caliber. So, if common sense makes me part of the conspiracy, call me guilty.

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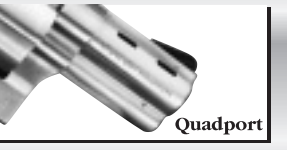

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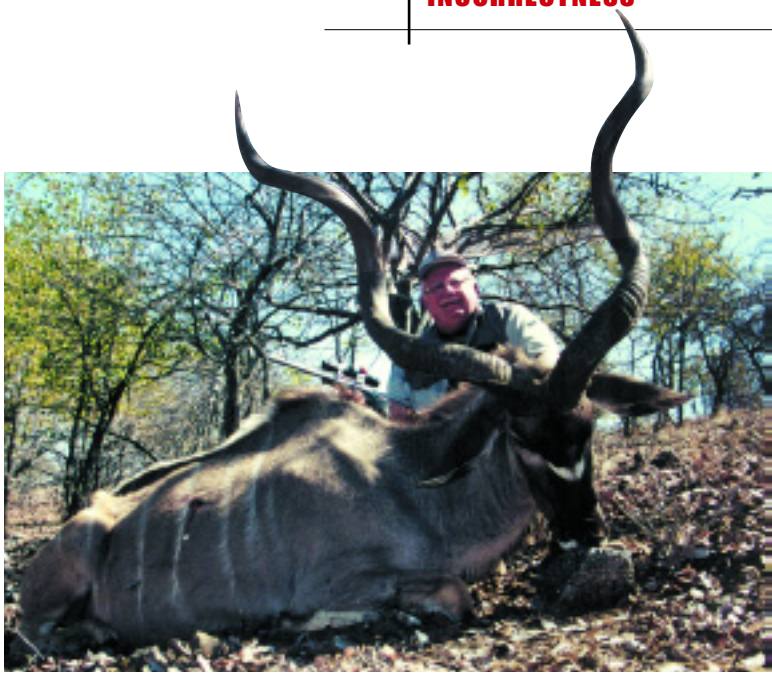
J.D. Jones

TIPS, TECHNIQUES AND POLITICAL-INCORRECTNESS

Kudu Commentary



Handgun Hunters International sponsors hunting trips for members in various places. This year, one was at Sand River Safaris near Messina, South Africa. Sand River is owned by Johann Wolvaardt (sandriver.co.za) and represented in the US by Jim Hebert (248-620-9426 –Detroit area). Jim has coordinated numerous trips for me over the past 20 years.

This was a plains game trophy hunt. For the first few days the weather was cloudy and cold and few animals were seen under those conditions. This animal behavior is normal in Africa — at least in Zimbabwe and South Africa. No sun equals no animals. Then it turned hot, and so did the animals.

Accommodations were first class, as was food and most importantly — vehicles. Jane and I spent the first days hunting with Johann (a former Selous Scout who certainly knows his business) and the last half of the trip with Peit — a quiet, competent, hard-working young man with a great future in the business.

Numerous things occurred worth writing about. However, for the purpose of this column, let's concentrate on a Kudu — often called the Elk of Africa. He is a large majestic animal with great spiral horns and, like most African animals, is keenly aware of predators of any description.

In the bush he's always a challenge to hunt. Often his horns are hidden in the bush and difficult for the professional hunter to evaluate. I depend on my PH to evaluate any animal — if I'm looking through binoculars I cannot be preparing to shoot, and, in any event, 99 percent of the time wouldn't know how to evaluate a trophy.

.375 JDJ VS. TWIG

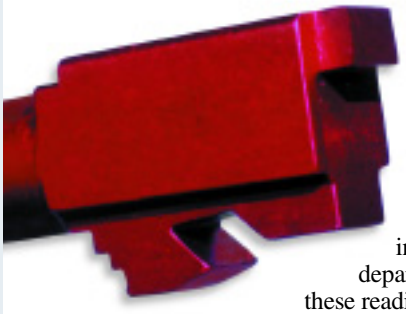
In my experience it seldom happens this way, but suddenly there was a magnificent Kudu bull standing broadside at about 50 yards, with a clear lane through the bush to him. I raised the SSK .375/06 JDJ and placed the crosshair of the Leupold 4X for a shoulder–spine shot. I touched it off expecting the bull to fold on the spot under the crushing impact of the 270 gr. Hornady impacting at 2,400 fps. Only he didn't fold — he ran without a sign of being hit.

Piet had not yet seen the impact of the bullet of a heavy hunting handgun and he and the tracker immediately, quickly, moved to the spot the Kudu was standing to evaluate the shot by following the tracks. I felt it was a clean miss but couldn't determine why as everything was right as the shot was fired. We stayed on the track for fully two hours without a sign of blood until we found him in the thick bush. Another 30 to 40 minutes was spent determining there was no sign of a hit on either side of him. Piet quietly asked if I would like to take him now. I answered, "No, this is his lucky day. Let him go, let's go find another." Piet's expression clearly showed — for a split second — he thought I was nuts for passing on an outstanding trophy animal.

Thirty minutes later I stood in my tracks where I had taken that shot and Piet walked forward a couple of steps and picked up the severed twig the 270 Hornady had dead-centered. Due to the height of the scope above the bore line, I couldn't see the twig when I fired, but it clearly showed lead in the severed section. It wasn't large and probably would not have had much effect if it had been a few feet from the bull, instead of a few feet from the muzzle. Lady luck was with Mr. Kudu that day.

No More Stupid Accidents

This isn't usual for my column, but it's important and I want to take the time to spread the word here. Occasionally cops shoot cops. It's tragic, but it happens. I'm aware of two fatalities in the last year during training exercises when real guns were used. Training can be a bitch in more ways than one and if there aren't dummy guns to be used and real guns get in the act, sometimes a funeral follows in about three days. Remorse starts immediately. The lawsuits begin a bit later.



Dave Manson of Manson Precision Reamers (Dave makes reamers for the firearms industry) has produced an inexpensive bright red aluminum dummy barrel for the Glock series of handguns, designed to prevent tragedy in the course of training. Any department can certainly afford these readily-recognizable units.

To use, simply remove the original barrel and insert the dummy. It works in any holster, the action can be manually cycled (without ammunition) and if a loaded magazine finds its way into the gun, a round simply cannot be chambered and therefore can't be fired. Anyone looking at the gun can easily tell if the red dummy barrel is installed — or not. The changeover takes only seconds and cannot harm the firearm. Just do it.

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Pat Covert, American Handgunner, March/April 2002

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Dave Anderson

SOLID ADVICE TO KEEP YOUR COMPETITIVE EDGE HONED

ALL WOUND-UP

ISMI recoil spring system for Commander style pistols.

Marc Cosat's goal is to bring gun spring technology into the 21st century. He found it odd pistolsmiths recommend changing the recoil spring in 1911-style pistols every 1,000 to 3,000 rounds; yet the valve springs of an Indy race engine undergo 3 million compression cycles in the course of a race. In running the 24 Hours of Daytona, the springs undergo 13 million compression cycles.

Why such a difference? It's a matter of materials and construction. Most gun springs are wound from high carbon steel, often referred to as music wire. Cosat notes, "Current music wire spring technology is basically the same as it was 100 years ago." Music wire has good tensile properties, good corrosion resistance and is easily formed into springs. On the negative side, it tends to vary in quality from lot to lot; has a maximum service temperature of 250 degrees; and can begin to be affected by heat at only 175 degrees.

Cosat's company, Integrated Systems Management, Inc. (ISMI) manufactures most springs from chrome silicon wire, the same material used in race engine valve springs. A few ISMI springs are made from stainless steel. The bulk product has been certified by the supplier to meet aerospace manufacturing specifications. Once wound, ISMI springs are heat-treated, shot-peened and stress-relieved which, Cosat says, "Enhances grain structure, and promotes maximum longevity and consistent performance."

Loosing Your Free Length

Many 1911 shooters have noted a new recoil spring often loses 1/2" of free length after just a few hundred shots. Cosat explains the spring has passed its "first yield point," the point at which it will not return to its original length.

The first yield point is a function of the quality of materials used and the deflection — the difference between free length and the length at position two. Cosat says that with good quality music wire springs, first yield occurs at about 80 percent of total deflection, a threshold that is passed with every compression cycle.

Recoil spring tension is one of several factors that determine slide velocity. Say we install a new, conventional "18 lb." recoil spring. In position one, it exerts a certain amount of pressure to keep the gun in battery. For illustrative purposes, we'll say 10 lbs. of pressure. At maximum compression in position two, it exerts 18 lbs. of pressure.

Now we fire a few hundred rounds. The spring passes its first yield point and its free length is shortened by 1/2". At position two it still exerts 18 lbs. of pressure. But at position one, the shortened spring may only exert 8 lbs. of pressure to keep the gun in battery. Now, upon firing, the slide accelerates more quickly, reaches a higher speed, and hits the frame harder. Cosat comments this is the reason we can install a new spring and shock buffer and for 200-300 rounds the buffer is practically untouched, then in the next 500 rounds it gets chewed up.

COSAT'S TERMS:

FREE LENGTH:	Length of the spring when not in the gun.
POSITION 1:	Slide forward, gun in battery, spring partially compressed.
POSITION 2:	Slide fully retracted, spring at maximum compression.

Put The *Bounce* Back

All springs lose free length with every cycle. Cosat claims that due to the materials and post-coiling treatments used in making ISMI springs, they lose free length at a much slower rate than music wire springs. ISMI springs function differently. An "18 lb. equivalent" ISMI spring doesn't exert as much force at position two as does an 18 lb. music wire spring. But since it loses so little free length, says Cosat, "after 500 rounds, the ISMI spring probably exerts a minimum of 20 percent more load in battery than a music wire spring."

Therefore, on firing, the gun stays in battery longer and slide velocity is reduced. Less energy is transferred to the frame and the overall ejection/feed cycle is smoother. Cosat is so confident of his springs that he makes a simple guarantee: If in 12 months of purchase the spring loses 3/8" of free length it will be replaced free, regardless of the number of rounds fired. He cites the case of a documented 56,000 rounds with the same spring, with a loss of free length of 0.160".

I can't afford 56,000 rounds at this time but my more limited testing supports ISMI's claims. I measured a recoil spring, then installed it in a 5" Springfield 1911. In addition to firing about 1,000 rounds, I put the spring through roughly 3,000 compression cycles by manually working the slide. Yup, I was bored to tears, but if you watch television at the same time, marking off each 100 cycles, it's not so bad. Ah yes, the things we do for *Handgunner* readers. So far reduction in free length has been nearly imperceptible, on the order of 0.05". And functional reliability has been 100 percent. Not bad, we'd say.

ISMI makes a wide range of springs for handguns and AR-type rifles. ISMI, P.O. Box 204, 7002 West 1000 North, Carthage, IN 46115; (765)565-6108; www.ismi-gunsprings.com

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TACTICAL ADVANTAGE

Ken Hackathorn

TIPS AND TRAINING ON TACTICS, GUNS AND EQUIPMENT

Don't Flip 'Em The Finger

One of the easiest ways to determine whether a person is dialed-in with firearms, and handguns in particular, is to watch where they place their trigger finger when they handle a firearm. The next time you go to a gun shop or gun show, notice how many people instantly put their fingers on the trigger. Folks new to guns will almost always put the finger to the trigger, and many will go ahead and pull it to make it click — often resulting in a loud noise. If you want to be tagged as a rank amateur, put your finger on the trigger as soon as you pick up a handgun. But standby to suffer the consequences.

Better? Keep your finger out of the trigger guard, register your finger firmly against the side of the frame or slide, and keep it there until you bring the handgun up or out to shoot. The instant your handgun comes off-target, the finger comes out of the trigger guard and back to the "register" position. Don't simply hinge your finger out of the trigger guard so it can easily slip back to the trigger with a simple closing of the finger. If you slip or fall, are startled or fear loosing the handgun, you'll naturally try to grab the pistol. If your finger goes to the trigger with the grip strength you normally apply to retain the handgun, it might go off. Oops.

This is a big "no-no." Get that finger off of the trigger.

Now we're talking. You can still cover a threat safely this way.

Perfect Placement Is Paramount

Some trainers teach to actually place the tip of the trigger finger against the protruding tip of the slide lock on an auto pistol so you will know right where the finger belongs. Doing this on a 1911-type pistol may push the slide stop out of position, just far enough to cause the slide stop to engage the disassembly notch and lock the pistol. This can happen to other auto pistols as well. My advice is to avoid doing this unless you want your pistol to choke. It's best to place your finger on the slide of your pistol, or on the frame below the cylinder of your wheelgun.

If you are involved in physical activity where weapon-retention is an issue, or moving in or around people, keep your finger out of the trigger guard. When covering a threat, don't place your finger in the trigger guard unless you believe you need to shoot. If you're committed to shoot, then having your finger on the trigger is fine. However, if you haven't made up your mind — or are not sure — keep your finger out of the trigger guard and pressed firmly against the slide or frame of your handgun.

Under the stress of a life and death encounter you will have much more pressure on the trigger than you realize. If your pistol has a 5-lb. sear release, 2 lbs. of pressure will already be applied and you won't even know it. Trigger manipulation is the art of releasing the sear to fire an accurate shot. Trigger control is all about the art of restraint — knowing when and what to shoot. If you work with your finger on the trigger you have short-circuited the process of trigger control.

A startle response — a bump or shove, or even a loud noise or shout — can start a chain of events that can allow you to trip the trigger and end up with disastrous results. Act like a pro and don't allow yourself to put your finger in the trigger guard — unless it's part of the firing stroke. What's the best part of all this? You don't even have to go to an expensive shooting school to learn this critical skill.

No one is so good they can violate this rule. If you aren't dialed in to this fact, start changing your gun-handling habits. Now.

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PISTOLSMITHING

Alex Hamilton

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON PISTOLSMITHING TECHNIQUES

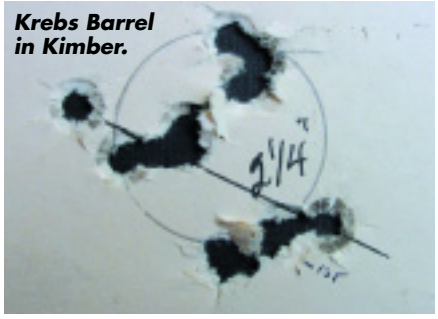
Drop-In Accuracy?

Right up front let's get something out of the way — "There ain't no such thing as drop-in accuracy." There's also no such thing as a pre-fit barrel or a full-length guide rod that does anything what-so-ever to stiffen the action and enhance accuracy. People will argue and fight about it, but this is my opinion.

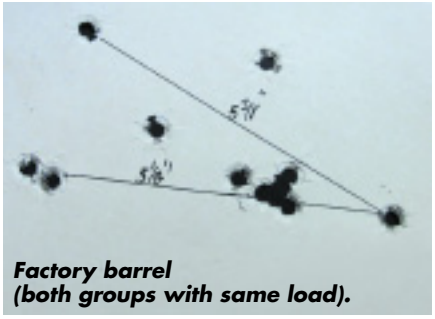
You also cannot buy a barrel from a place 1,500 miles from where you live and have it show up in your mailbox already fitted to your pistol. Full-length guide rods float inside the frame of your semiautomatic — just sit there taking up space — and can cause malfunctions, as do recoil buffers. And speaking of recoil buffers, if you have a pistol that is recoiling so fast it needs a buffer to cushion the blow, you have the wrong recoil spring in the gun.

There are some products out there that come close to giving you drop-in accuracy, and if you have any technical expertise you can install them yourself. One of these neat little items is a $216 match-barrel kit manufactured by Marc Krebs of Wauconda, Ill., (847) 487-7776.

Marc's barrel is about as close to a drop-in fit as a mother-in-law. Marc's invention is one of those, "Why didn't I think of that?" products and should make the home gunsmith 'bout as happy as a hog sleepin' in the sun. The kit contains one match barrel, one match bushing, three snap-in moon-shaped shims of different thickness, one link and pin, and two pieces of shim stock.



Krebs Barrel in Kimber.



Factory barrel (both groups with same load).

The Machine Never Lies

Before testing Marc's match barrel I purchased a brand new Kimber Classic II and had one of the finest machine-rest testers around give it a test. Ralph Talbot, a retired US Army Distinguished Master competitive shooter and former president of the Texas State Rifle Association, took the new, unfired Kimber out to the range, locked it down in his Ransom rest, and gave it a go.

Five 10-shot groups were shot at 50 yards using a combination of hand and factory loads used by the majority of today's precision pistol shooters. Those loads are: **(1)** 4.7 grs. Winchester WST, Federal case and primer, Nosler 185 gr. JHP bullet; **(2)** 4.2 grs. 200 gr. H&G bullet; **(3)** Western factory match, 185 gr. TC bullet; **(4)** Remington factory match Targetmaster, 185 gr. SW; **(5)** Federal Gold factory match, 185 gr. SW.

What took place next was pretty surprising but confirmed previous tests. The Custom II, the least expensive pistol Kimber makes, shot some unbelievable groups at 50 yards. The same gun with the Krebs barrel installed was even better! Check out the table.

Load:	1	2	3	4	5
Kimber	5⅞"	4"	5 13/16"	5⅜"	3"
Krebs Barrel	3⅝"	4"	4⅜"	2¼"	2⅜"

As you can see, the box-stock Kimber turned in some pretty impressive 50-yard groups, but American Pistolsmiths Guild member Marc Kreb's "do it yourself match barrel" definitely tightened up the accuracy. The Krebs barrel installed in a "loose as a goose" Colt Gold Cup or old G.I. .45 should improve accuracy by a good 50 percent or better, depending on how loose the slide is on the frame. The unit comes with a match bushing, but it was too loose in the Kimber slide, so I used an MGW barrel bushing that, when fitted, must be removed with a wrench. The bushing must be tight and perfectly fitted so as to lock down the barrel at the muzzle.

BLUED? STAINLESS? OOPS?

As an important sidenote, there is something shooters and gunsmiths should know about the Kimber Custom II pistol. Everything under the slide composing the lower unit is stainless steel.

Winslow Potter, in Kimber's Custom Shop, said, "This is done because the stainless guns are so popular it's easier for Kimber to simply make the frames and parts from stainless steel and blacken them using a special procedure."

I found this out the hard way when a customer's gun was polished out to the tune of $250 labor and, when dropped into the bluing tank, came out silver. It was one of those distressing gunsmith days!

As A Side Note...

Have you ever wondered why an expensive handgun like the Colt Gold Cup is one of the only products you can purchase, and when received, does not work, does not perform the function for which it was intended and has to be taken to an outside person to make it do what the factory says it should? Why have shooters put up with this for the last 90 years? I'll be "hog swallered" if I can answer that question!

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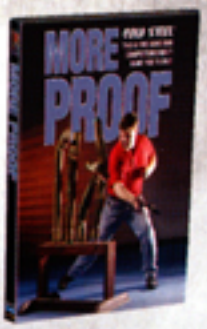

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THE 10-RING

Commander Gilmore

See What Terrible Things Happen When You Don't Have Guns?

By Sequoia Blankenship

When those gun-grabbing liberal Canadians started outlawing and seizing firearms, we warned 'em about "weapon substitution syndrome," but oh, no, those smarty-pants wouldn't listen — and now the violence has spread to the croquet fields.

Cops in Calgary, Alberta, reported that on a sunny, peaceful spring day, some folks playing softball at a public park were sharing the lawn with a buncha folks engaged in a game of croquet when somebody said somethin' about somebody's momma, then somebody hoisted a middle finger, and then the fists started flyin', and then ... other hands reached for other things.

Do the math. See, lots of softball players share just a couple of bats. But every croquet player has their own genuine, tight-grained, hardwood-headed croquet mallet.

Three men went to the hospital with mallet-induced head injuries, one went straight to surgery with a potential terminally-bonked noggin, four were treated and released, and nine more were arrested. Them croquet players are such ruffians, I always say. They've just got that "outlaw" look about 'em.

"I didn't realize croquet was a contact sport," said Detective Dean Vegso. Oh, this is just the beginning, Dean; next it'll be the badminton players.

EXCUSE ME, OFFICER? CAN I OPT FOR BEING SHOT, INSTEAD?

So, you think it would be pretty bad to get shot by a cop? There's a guy in the jail ward of a Florida hospital who can tell you what's worse. After robbing the At Cost Liquor Store in St. Petersburg, our Crime King fled the scene in his Crookmobile, leading officers on a brief chase ending with a gaudy but inconsequential crash. CK — now known as "Stumpy" — leaped from the crunched car and took off on foot, easily outdistancing the two-legged cops chasing him. But he couldn't quite shake that four-legged one, the officer in the tan hair coat named "Scooby." Scooby soon caught up to Stumpy and began enthusiastically biting him in the buttocks, which caused Stumpy to spin around, to protect his gnawed backside. The problem with this approach is, it exposes one's "front-side." That put Scooby's dental armory on dead-level with Stumpy's groin. One snap, and the suspect lost his will to fight, the ability to run, and his penis. Now, how many of you just involuntarily crossed your legs and went, "Yow!"?

I'll take the bullet, thanks.

QUICK, PERCIVAL, RUN AND BORROW ALISTAIR'S BULLET

Political brass hats attending the recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Queensland, Australia, naturally assumed they were receiving the sharpest, tightest security possible. After all, Queen Elizabeth II and British Prime Minister Tony Blair were among those attending. Those 4,000 pistol-packing cops assigned to security must have been pretty impressive. Trouble is, many of them were armed with one bullet — and many of them with none.

The story broke in a cop paper, the *Queensland Police Union Journal*. "We had some members (of the security force) who were issued with one bullet and others not supplied with any ammunition at all," stated an editorial. "How can the QPS (Queensland Police Service) run out of bullets?"

It seems that one of the results of Australia's recent draconian gun-control laws is that it's now extremely difficult for even law enforcement agencies to get supplies of ammunition. Queensland's politically-correct Superintendent, Paul Stewart, admitted the problem but brushed it off as "a logistical challenge." Opposition Police Spokesman Jeff Sweeney felt a little differently about it. "The whole situation sounds like some macabre game of Russian roulette," he said.

Well, Barney Fife only needed one bullet, and he got away with it for 20 seasons, didn't he?

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Massad Ayoob

The AYOOB FILES

"DID HE HAVE A GUN?": The Lessons Of The Thomas Shea Incident

Situation: Two men fit the description of armed robbers, and one turns with what appears to be a gun. You fire — and a 10-year-old boy lies dead.

Lesson: Complainants need to be thoroughly investigated — the attacker you shoot may not be a goblin.

Back in the 1970s, I was feature editor of *The Finest*, the magazine of the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (PBA), the NYPD patrol officers' union. I spent a lot of time on the streets with the cops of the "A houses," NYPD-ese for the highest-crime precincts. Some of them were in Brooklyn. Throughout the city, cops in those days were paranoid about being thrown to the wolves in the wake of a justifiable, but politically incorrect, shooting. Officers and union officials would cite numerous cases, but one in particular always led the list: the incident involving Police Officer Thomas Shea. This is his story.

* * * *

On April 28, 1973, Tom Shea was 36 years old and had been a New York City cop for almost 12 years. He had worked uniform and plainclothes, with a distinguished record in the Tactical Patrol Force and the Brooklyn North Task Force Narcotics Unit. He had been in three shootings, none fatal.

A former mental patient went after him with a cleaver, and Shea dropped him with a single .38 slug to the belly.

A doper tried to open his chest widthwise with a linoleum cutter, but succeeded only in ruining Shea's uniform and cutting his hand. As the man fled, Shea fired three shots and scored one hit in the leg that resulted in his capture.

And once, perceiving that a fleeing armed robbery suspect was shooting at him, Shea opened up with one of his .38s and dumped him with a neck shot. No gun was found at the scene, however. (Shea had also sustained a complaint for striking a teenager twice in the head with his gun butt during an arrest.)

And he was about to fire a weapon in the line of duty for the fourth time. It would be his first fatal shooting, and his last day carrying a gun as a New York City police officer.

* * * *

In the pre-dawn hours of April 18, 1973, Shea was working midnight shift with his partner Walter Scott. Both were wearing casual plainclothes. They were assigned to the Anti-Crime Unit, and they were encouraged to dress in a way that would make them look like street people and "blend in," like the Belker character on the old TV series *Hill Street Blues*. The Anti-Crime Unit was the precursor to NYPD's current Street Crimes Unit.

NYPD's approval of the semiautomatic pistol was a score of years away in the future, and almost every Anti-Crime cop carried two guns to make up for the limited firepower of the only authorized weapons — blue steel .38 Special revolvers with fixed sights. Shea carried a Smith & Wesson Chief Special five-shot snub in an inside-the-waistband holster behind his hip, and a 4-inch six-shot S&W Model 10 heavy barrel in a shoulder holster. Scott was similarly armed. They were driving a vehicle intentionally selected to look like something other than a police car.

Continued on page 102

ENTER TO WIN!

They Chose JUST ONE You'll Get ALL THREE!

The handguns shown here were picked as the top three for 2002 by industry professionals who represent the Shooting Industry Academy of Excellence. Kimber's Eclipse Custom II was selected as the Handgun of the Year. You can win it plus the other two in the Pride & Liberty Sweepstakes.

It was a great year for handgunners.

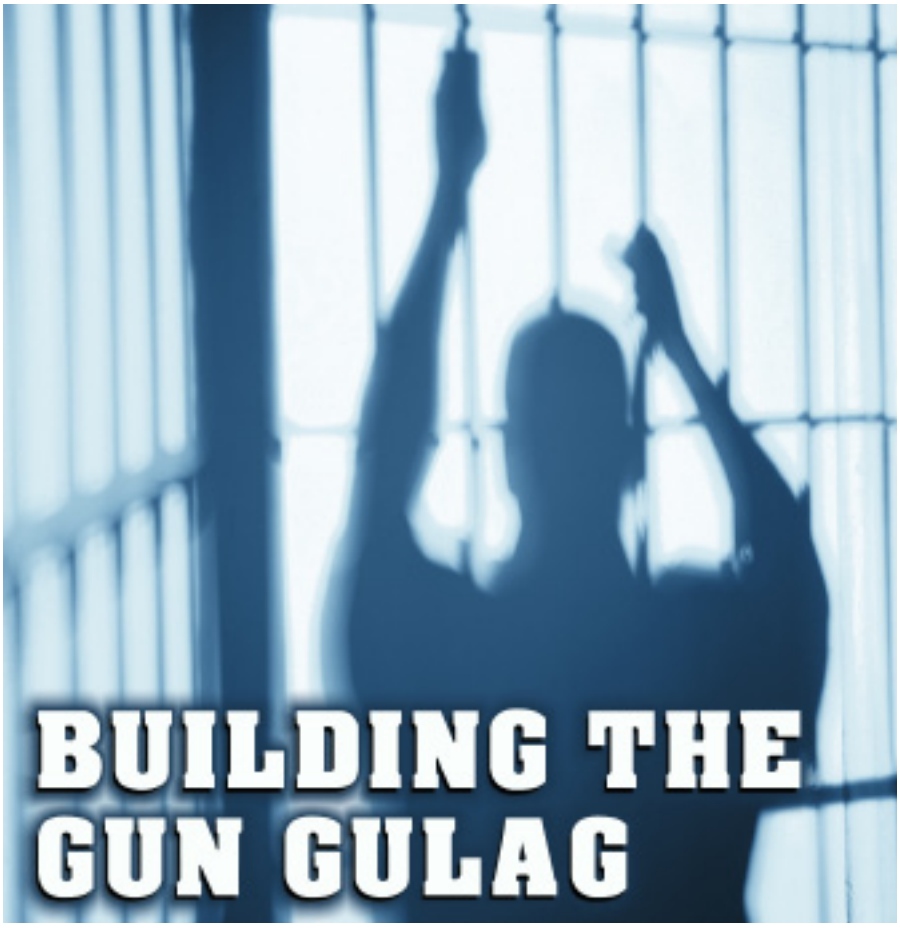
2002 saw the introduction of the Springfield Armory X-Treme Duty — an innovative, DAO polymer import, with a uniformly fine trigger action. This slick-shooting pistol is winning converts across the country.

2002 also saw the long awaited return of the Ruger Super Blackhawk Hunter. This is the sixgun John Taffin described as, "All the handgun hunter could ask for." Bull-strong, rust-proof and equipped with excellent adjustable sights as well as quick detachable scope rings, the SBH Hunter is justly popular.

Perhaps the sexiest handgun to appear on dealer's shelves this past year is the Kimber Eclipse Custom II. This two-tone stainless beauty is shattering sales records for 1911 pistols. The Eclipse Custom II not only looks great, it'll make you look good as you examine that tight group on your target. Careful, close-tolerance construction and hand fitting where needed are the reasons for its outstanding accuracy and reliability.

GUN RIGHTS

Jeff Snyder



President Bush has instituted a crime-fighting initiative called Project Safe Neighborhoods. The program funds 113 new assistant U.S. attorneys to serve as full-time prosecutors for violations of federal firearm offenses under tough mandatory sentencing guidelines. It also provides $75 million to fund around 600 new full-time state and local gun prosecutors.

Bush's program has its roots in Project Exile, the brainchild of David Schiller, a federal prosecutor in Richmond, Va., who began aggressively prosecuting federal firearm offenses in 1997. As explained by Schiller's boss, then-U.S. attorney Helen Fahey, Exile was "named for the idea that if the police catch a criminal in Richmond with a gun, the criminal has forfeited his right to remain in the community … He will be 'exiled' to federal prison."

Project Exile quickly garnered the NRA's support, as part of the NRA's overall strategy for combating new gun laws by criticizing the lax or non-existent enforcement of existing federal gun laws by the Clinton administration. The strategy had the sound-bite simplicity necessary to appeal to attention-deficit disordered Americans: No need to pass new laws — just enforce the existing ones.

Gene Healy, an attorney and senior editor at the Cato Institute, has recently published a policy analysis that recounts the history of Projects Exile and Safe Neighborhoods. And he describes their results and mounts a scathing critique. (Available online at www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa-440es.html.) Healy's fundamental criticism is, in order to support the Second Amendment, supporters of Projects Exile and Safe Neighborhoods are infringing the constitutional principle of federalism, which is the principle that the federal government only has the few powers specifically enumerated in the Constitution — the rest being reserved to the states and to the people,

Continued on page 82

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BETTER SHOOTING

Dave Anderson

Winkin', Blinkin' and Nod

Blinking — closing the eyes just as the shot is fired — is the mildest form of flinching and the most common shooting fault. Action-movie directors love the "downrange camera" angle, focusing on the gun and the hero's face while a fast string of shots is being fired. Almost invariably the actor's eyes blink in exact time with the shots.

Directors should either forego this camera angle or have their heroes wear sunglasses. It's too much to expect actors to learn to keep their eyes open when almost all shooters have the same problem. I've seen videos in which even top world-class competitors blink occasionally. Say it's not so …

Blinking imparts no movement to the gun, so it's possible to blink every time and still be a good shot. The problem is in improving the situation. Unless you can keep the eyes open and observe what's happening, it's very difficult to improve.

Previously we've talked about dry firing to train the subconscious to keep the eyes open. It's one of the many benefits that can make dry firing an invaluable tool. Now I'd like to suggest an intermediate step. Instead of going from dry firing to live fire at a target, go to live fire without a target. Huh?

Pick a large safe area as a backstop, like a dirt berm, free of rocks which might deflect a bullet. Now align the sights and watch what happens as the gun fires. Don't evaluate, don't criticize. Just observe. Be curious.

Exactly what does happen as the gun fires? Do the front and rear sights remain aligned as the gun lifts in recoil? Does the front sight appear to jump out of the notch in the rear sight? Does the front sight go straight up, or does it move to the left or right? Does it settle back into the rear sight notch as the gun comes down from recoil?

Once you know how the gun tracks, you can start making subtle refinements to grip and stance so the gun tracks consistently back to its original position after each shot. This consistency is one of the keys to really fast, accurate shooting. You can achieve it, but only if you know what's happening.

Bench Presses For Your Eyeballs

Visual acuity is an important element of good vision, but not the only element. Other factors include peripheral vision, speed of adaptation to changes in light, and speed and accuracy of focusing. I've been nearsighted most of my life and have needed corrective lenses since age six, but on the other elements of vision I do quite well. One eye doctor commented, "You actually have good eyes, you just can't see anything." Maybe I should trade 'em for bad eyes that can see?

When shooting iron sights the ability to change focus quickly from target to sights is what it's all about. Focusing is accomplished by muscles that change the shape of the eye, and like any other muscles they need exercise.

Also, like any other muscle, you exercise them by forcing them to work. Tape a sheet of newspaper or some other document with varying print sizes on a wall 36" away. Take another document and hold it as close as your master eye will focus, roughly in line with the paper on the wall. Shift focus as rapidly as possible from one to the other. Actually any objects would do; your thumbnail and a light switch on the wall, for example. The reason I like printed material is to force the eye to focus sharply in order to read the print.

You'll be surprised how quickly the eye muscles become fatigued and focusing becomes more difficult. Even a minute or so of this exercise a day helps. Keeping the muscles strong and supple is especially important as we age. The eye tends to harden as the gray hairs appear, making it more difficult for the muscles to focus at short distances. That's why we all hold *Handgunner* at arm's length to read it when we can't find our glasses.

Moderately, Masterly Dominant?

Keeping both eyes open enhances depth perception and increases peripheral vision. Those with a strongly-dominant master eye find it easy to keep both eyes open. I know instructors with this type of vision who insist everyone should shoot with both eyes open, unaware how difficult it is for some people.

If the master eye is only moderately dominant, the shooter gets a secondary image from the other eye that can be distracting. Some competition shooters use clear tape across the shooting glass lens over the non-dominant eye, which degrades the image just enough it's no longer a distraction.

Ideally we want both eyes open while shooting. If it really is distracting, the shooter has to make choices. So arm yourself with some newspapers, clear tape and a blank berm — and get to work.

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*Caspian™ slide w/front & rear cocking serrations, lowered & flared ejector port (standard) *The frame is your choice of either a Chip McCormick™ forged steel or a Caspian™ titanium. *Barrel is a hand fit stainless match grade w/hand fit match bushing. *Trigger is a lightweight McCormick™ match set to crisp 3 LB pull. *Hammer & sear are EDM cut tool steel designed to provide a lifetime of optimum performance. *Grip safety is your choice of either a Wilson™ or McCormick™ "High Grip" beavertail with raised palm pad, hand fitted & contoured to the frame. *Full length guide rod, Ed Brown™ contoured mag well, tactical mag catch, Wilson™ "Bullet Proof" slide stop & extractor, & Wilson™ ambidextrous thumb safety, all standard. *The sights are your choice of either Heine™ slant pro or Novak™ standard, or you may choose any other sight style as an additional option. *Finished in our Ballistic Kote™ polymer, in your choice of colors, includes deburring. *Grips are Alumagrips™ with the IDPA logo, standard, or a variety of exotic wood grips as an additional option. *The IDPA Package is available in 9mm, 9X21, 9X23, 40 S&W, 10mm, 400 Corbon, 45 ACP.
$1,799
This Package Was Designed for the Specific Needs of the IDPA Shooter.
These Pistols are Guaranteed to Shoot a 1" Group at 25 Yards.
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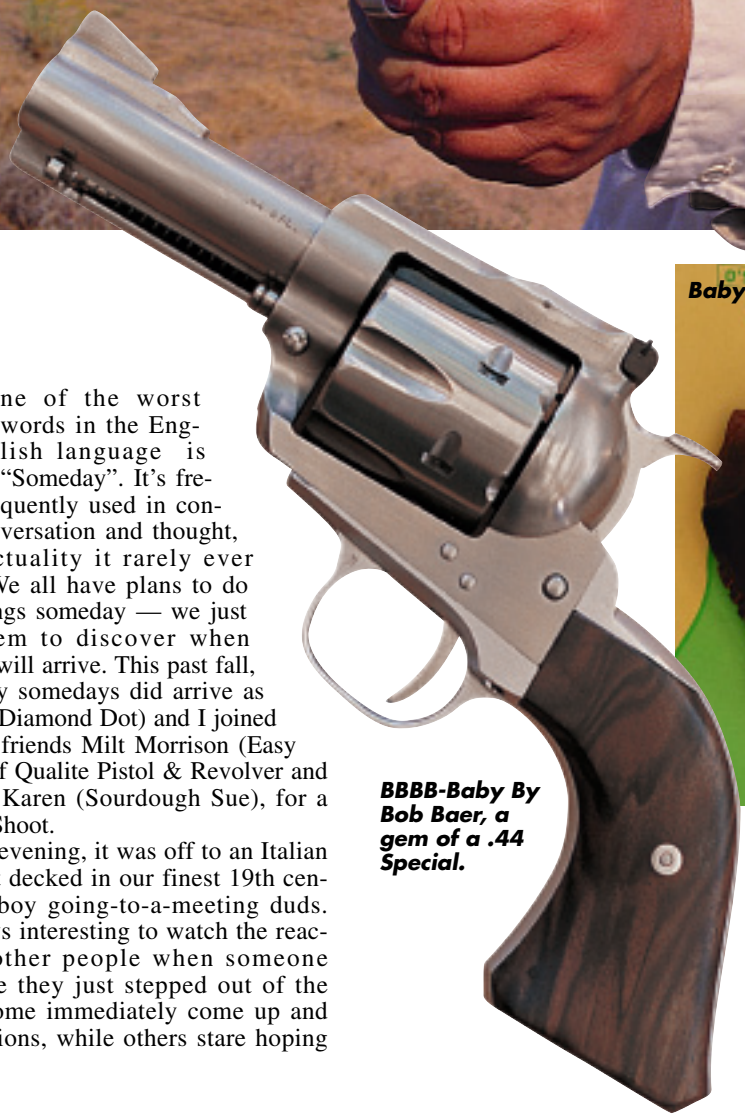
THE SIXGUNNER

John Taffin

MEET TAFFIN'S TOY... AND BABY TOO



BBBB-Baby By Bob Baer, a gem of a .44 Special.

Baby does deliver!

Taffin's tag notched on the butt.

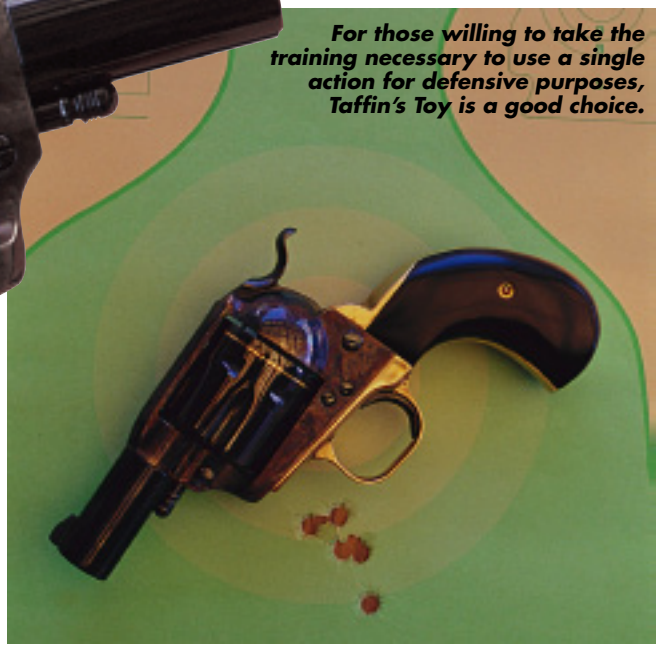
One of the worst words in the English language is "Someday". It's frequently used in conversation and thought, but in actuality it rarely ever arrives. We all have plans to do many things someday — we just can't seem to discover when someday will arrive. This past fall, one of my somedays did arrive as my wife (Diamond Dot) and I joined Colorado friends Milt Morrison (Easy Money) of Qualite Pistol & Revolver and his wife, Karen (Sourdough Sue), for a Cowboy Shoot.

In the evening, it was off to an Italian restaurant decked in our finest 19th century cowboy going-to-a-meeting duds. It's always interesting to watch the reaction of other people when someone looks like they just stepped out of the 1880s. Some immediately come up and ask questions, while others stare hoping

Morrison's round butted grip frame even fits large hands well.

Before: Taffin's Toy began life as a Cimarron Bisley Model.

After: Taffin's Toy after Milt Morrison's expert touch.



For those willing to take the training necessary to use a single action for defensive purposes, Taffin's Toy is a good choice.

they will not be seen doing so. And when I see someone begin to ask, I beat them to the punch with, "Why are YOU dressed so funny?"

Taffin's Toy

After supper, I pulled out a few sixguns with the idea of coming up with a different kind of custom sixgun. I also had copies of a few old articles from the 1920s through the 1950s concerning customizing Colt Bisley Models.

"What do you think, Milt?," I asked him. "Ready for another project?"

As a result, a Uberti/Cimarron Bisley .44-40 was sent to Milt's shop, for conversion to a real hideaway sixgun — single-action style. I wanted a true 19th-century-style Belly Gun, a term once used for short-barreled, easy-to-conceal sixguns.

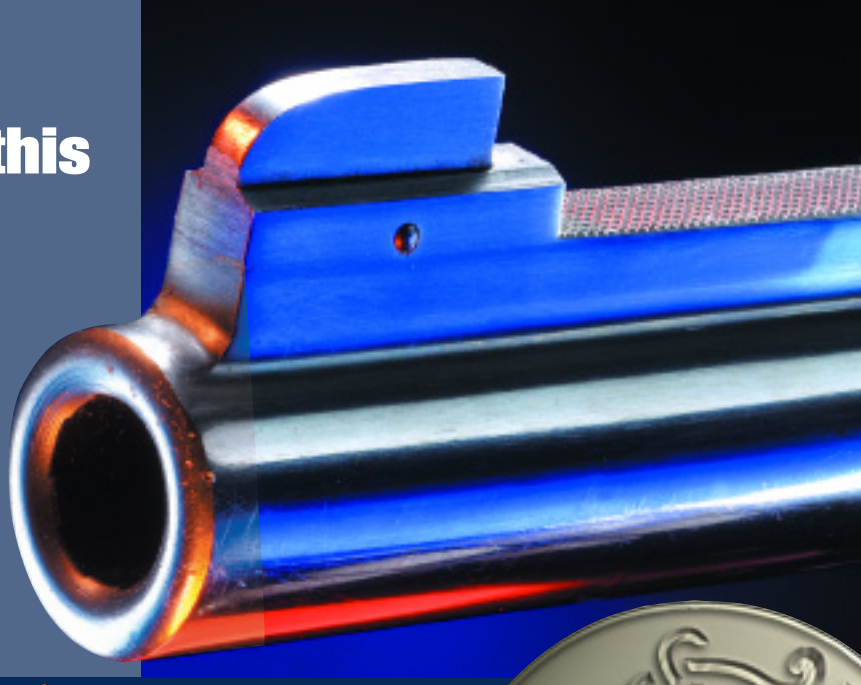
Turned loose to use his artistic freedom, Morrison came up with the perfect single action for concealment and defensive use. The result was a single action defensive sixgun so special Karen dubbed it "Taffin's Toy."

This was no easy-to-accomplish project. Morrison removed the ejector rod housing and the ejector mount slot on the right side of the frame, welding and re-contouring the frame in the process. The standard Bisley grip frame was removed and replaced by a brass QPR Bird's Head grip frame adapted to a Colt-style mainframe. At the same time, the original Bisley hammer was changed from its link system to a roller system to work with the new mainspring. The entire action dutifully was tuned in the

Continued on page 80

MADE IN U.S.A.
NON-EROSIVE
DU PONT

Elegant and Deadly, this unrivaled statement of the gunmaker's art will always hold court as the first "Magnum"



Magic: S&W'S RARE REGISTERED MODEL

Charles E. Petty • Photos: Ichiro Nagata

Dick Tracy called it the world's most powerful handgun, and for a long time it was. But I'm sure in 1935 nobody at Smith & Wesson had any idea attaching the word magnum to a stretched-out .38 Special would launch a trend that prospers today.

The cartridge was the .357 Magnum, which is what they called the gun too. And it was the most expensive product in S&W's line, as much a powerful handgun as it was a work of art.

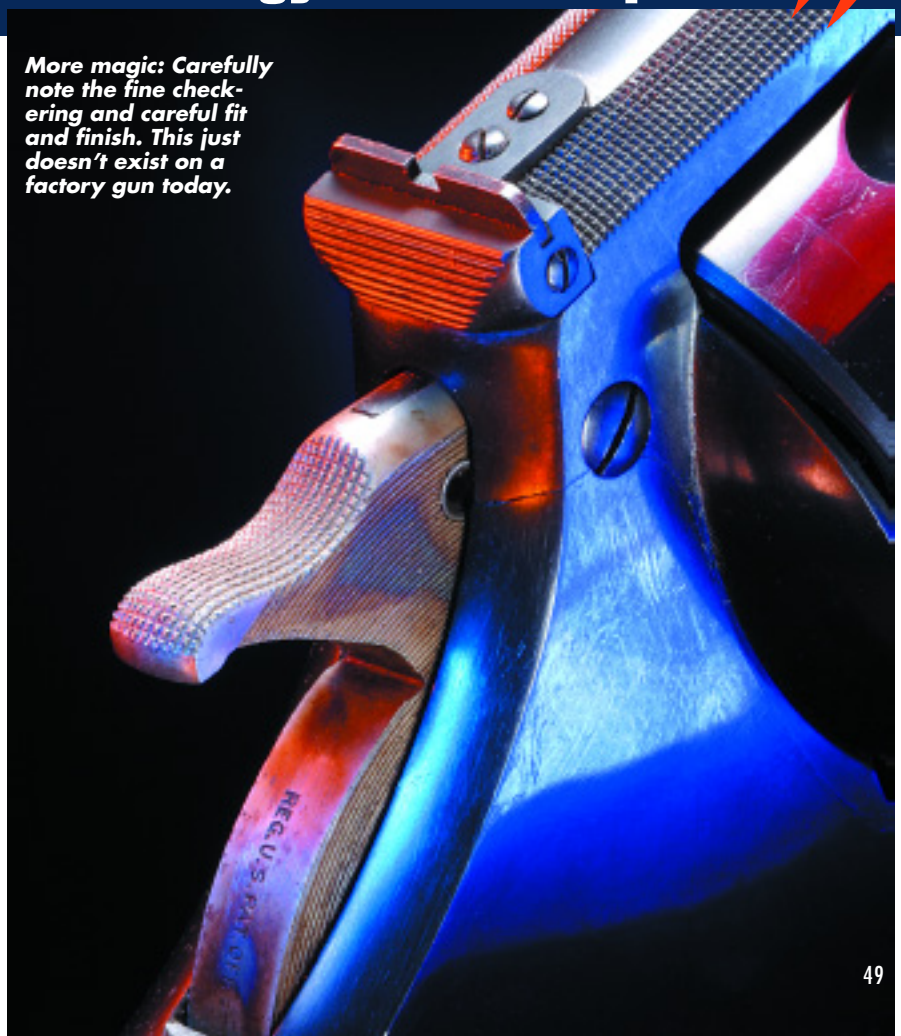
Some tend to view the quest for handgun power as a recent development. And they'd be wrong. Back in the '30s, Colt and Smith & Wesson were engaged in somewhat of a power struggle. Colt's entry, the .38 Super, grew to popularity in many branches of law enforcement. And it would be hard to write a more colorful tale today. So let me bring you a bit of the story from *Smith & Wesson Hand Guns*, written by Roy C. McHenry and Walter F. Roper in 1947.

History Lesson

Then, as now, automobiles were significant bullet barriers. And the .38 Super, "... had no trouble boring through metal and safety glass with enough surplus energy to kill or maim the occupants," wrote McHenry and Roper.

OFFICE OFF
REVOLVER
Mr. Charles Petty
American Handguner
591 Camino de la Reina
San Diego, CA 92108
Dear Mr. Petty:
We received your letter
one of the origina
introduced in 1935,
was available with
maximum of 8 3/4
individual's sp
registration n
When the gun
and return
which inc
length a
certifi
compan
SMITH & WESSON

"They had produced a cartridge with a velocity of 1,515 fps and a muzzle energy of 807 foot pounds."



More magic: Carefully note the fine checkering and careful fit and finish. This just doesn't exist on a factory gun today.

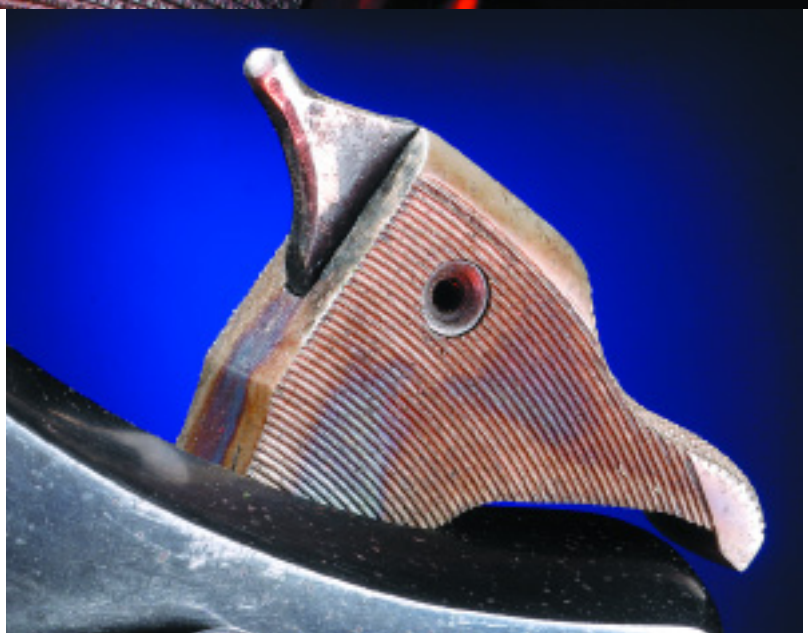
"In other years, the .38 K Model Smith & Wesson had been a popular police arm, but its ammunition lacked the energy to tear through trick vests, heavy car bodies and bullet-proof glass. Along in 1933, Vice President Douglas B. Wesson decided to do something about it."

The first effort was the .38/.44 Smith & Wesson cartridge — a .38 Special case loaded with a 158 gr. lead bullet at a speedy 1,115 fps. To handle it, S&W used the frame from their .44 Special (later called "N" frame) and we had the famous .38 on a .44 frame. Roper wrote, "Major Wesson consequently fitted a .44 frame with a barrel and cylinder bored for the .38 and found the additional mass modified the gun's tendency to dislocate the shooter's shoulder."

But that was not enough. On paper the .38 Super still had a slight edge. Roper stated Douglas Wesson consulted Elmer Keith.

"They decided the weight of the bullet and the powder space in the case were sufficient, and concentrated on increasing the charge until they had produced a cartridge with a velocity of 1,515 fps and a muzzle energy of 807 foot pounds — far beyond the ballistics of any existing pistol or revolver cartridge."

"But to avoid the deplorable results



"A wallop that will knock over a bull elk will take all the fight out of a man if he is hit in the arm or leg."

that would follow if the new cartridge were loaded by mistake into an ordinary .38 Special, the case was lengthened slightly so it could not be inserted into the chamber."

To test the new round, Wesson reportedly went hunting and took an elk, several deer and a grizzly.

"As a man-stopper, the magnum is deadly. A wallop that will knock over a bull elk will take all the fight out of a man if he is hit in the arm or leg."

And finally, a powerful example of why one should never say never.

"The magnum cartridge is the most powerful ever designed and will likely remain so for some time. While it would be possible to develop one of higher velocity or greater energy, the gun that would chamber it and fire it without excessive recoil would be so heavy that no shooter could hold it at arm's length and fire it with any accuracy."

Don't you just love it?

Magnum-itus

Other references mention different people. The most authoritative text is Roy Jinks' *History of Smith & Wesson*. Jinks reports that Phil Sharpe — a very respected writer of the pre-war period — had been working with S&W in the development of "The Magnum." And it's widely reported Winchester manufactured the ammo, although Remington may well have been involved too since one source mentions them.

None of the references seem to say who first attached the word "magnum" to the cartridge. It comes from the Latin "magnus" which means, simply, "large," and was apparently used first in the 16th century to identify a bottle of champagne that was twice as large as the standard 750 ml. bottle.

The name became popular, to say the least, and it's now hung on a host of cartridges, none of which are twice as large — or twice as powerful — as their standard

Continued on page 98

SMITH & WESSON
THE
".357"
MAGNUM
Revolver
WINCHESTER
.357 MAGNUM
158 GRAINS LEAD BULLET
SMOKELESS CARTRIDGES
NICKEL PLATED SHELL
STAINLESS NON-MERCURIC OILPROOF
MAGNUM
NON-EROSIVE
SMITH &

WHEN TECHNOLOGY AND COMMON SENSE COLLIDE — WHO WINS?

Technological TAFFY

Clint Smith

In March, I had a student show up at a Defensive Handgun school with a brand new, out-of-the-box, Glock Model 22. During the first range session, the pistol fired about two rounds and then started into a series of stoppages that never allowed more than three rounds to be fired in a row.

With the gun at the fiddle table and subsequent disassembly by one of my staff, who is a Glock-qualified armorer, my first suspicions were confirmed. The brand new gun had been given a "tune-up" by the gun store salesperson before the pistol had ever had the first round fired though it. Our FNG (foolish new gunman/woman) had been told, "This is just the stuff you need put on this pistol to make it a fightin' pistol and ready to go."

To the tune of $400, our friend had his almost assured-to-work Glock transformed into a polymer hammer. The Lesson — don't fix what isn't broke.

Your new Glock doesn't need an extended magazine release, extended slide lock, "faster" recoil spring, or an insert-thingy to fill the hole at the back of the grip, which is covered, by the way, with a black rubber-grip condom thing. Most other handguns don't need this "stuff" either. For fun? Maybe. For real? You be the judge.

Guns and Lumens

Who would like to turn a flashlight on in the middle of a fight?

Better yet, who might have to turn on a flashlight in the middle of the fight?

We might.

How about a need to confirm the status of the potential threat's hands or identify precisely what it is we were planning to shoot at? Is it a threat, or Aunt Agnes home after a late-night bender?

Current flashlight technology is good, and practicing several techniques of flashlight/handgun application is even better. Got a gun mounted light? Practice techniques independent of the gun-mounted light, just in case the gun or the light — or both — puke and you need to transition to a new gun or new light. A fight probably won't be what you think it will be and besides, if you knew there was going to be a fight you should have transported yourself away from that area anyway.

My friend Dave Spaulding recently attended an international firearm's instructor conference. Dave offered to help teach a block of instruction on flash-

Unvented, the pistol muzzle still leaves a mark on the shooter during weapon retention application.

Flaming death in action — do I really need to set myself on fire? In weapon retention, or in close proximity fights, the vents may be a detriment to the shooter. The pistol wasn't broken so why was it fixed with a bunch of holes in the slide?

lights and the low-light firing of handguns in these particular environments. It seems Dave was slightly taken to task by some of the younger warriors present, as his techniques were declared "old fashioned."

Dave himself was declared sort of out of touch with current technology by the young folks.

Everyone knows (including Dave) that current technology has spawned a new generation of flashlights that can, arguably, be used as weapons to blind your opponents into oblivion. As things often do, they progressed to the point where Dave was challenged by some of the young folks, and they selected to use the "flashlight weapon" to prove their point. Dave was to respond to the threat, if he could — there being no chance, of course — since the young warriors were armed with powerful, blinding, zillion mega-beam flashlights.

In the ensuing melee, our high-tech, flashlight-armed, youngster-cop got shot in the crotch by a recently "blinded" Simunitions-armed Dave. Immediately the young warrior declared it was a "lucky" shot. So be it. Dave is an old guy who practices marksmanship, so apparently the light bothered him enough he shot slightly low — as luck would have it. Good flashlights are a good idea. Practicing marksmanship is a good idea too.

Note: With flashlights, one is none and two is one. If you really need a light, have two. This could apply to handguns as well.

Holes, Hiders and Death

Troubled by the "awesome recoil" of the 9mm, .40 or .45 ACP, some consider — and even purchase — pistols with recoil-reducing "holes, vents and slots" chopped into the barrel and slides of their defensive handguns.

With interest, I note the advertising photos with the pistol being fired as streaks of flames stream from the apertures cut into the slides and barrels. I guess the flaming things are to illuminate the front sight in low-light conditions. Wonder what is does for your night vision?

Ever been in a fight? Ever been on the ground in a fight? Ever wonder how much fun it would be to shoot a vented flame-throwing handgun next to the trunk of your body or near your face, during, say, a weapon-retention struggle over your handgun?

Maybe that's why everyone wears those cool Terminator-like wrap around glasses. Got any sunscreen? Maybe a pistol with one hole in the front is actually enough, thereby directing the projectile and the flaming death-thing toward the threat — rather than in directions it was never intended to go.

About now an antagonist might say, "Clint is a nice guy, but old fashioned." For the record, I'm not opposed to technology solving a problem that actually exists. I could use an ambidextrous safety because I am left handed. I could use a larger, high visibility front sight because my eyes are 60 years old. I could use a beavertail mounted on an older series 70 Colt or Browning Hi-Power to eliminate hammer bite every time I fire the pistol. Or I could shoot a Glock.

Technology is a wonderful thing. So is logic, practice and hard work. Imagine that.

"The young warriors were armed with powerful, blinding, zillion mega-beam flashlights."

Good examples of two excellent flashlights by Surefire Products...and an improvised light? A student actually brought this contraption to the range for night-fire exercises. Go figure.

Holster Heart-throbs

Left, Alessi's Close Quarter Covert (CQC) has an easy "on-off" feature using snaps.

"CLASSIC" OR TRASH — IS IT TIME TO RETIRE "OLD RELIABLE?"

Dave Douglas

I was at the range a few weeks ago trying out a new 1911 from CQB Products. Right next to me was a grizzled old detective from the local police department. From his lime green polyester pants, white patent leather shoes and matching belt, I could tell he probably worked the burglary unit.

I watched him, out of the corner of my eye, so as not to be too obvious as he reached into a tattered briefcase and pulled out an old belt-slide holster with a thumb snap. The holster was as long-in-the-tooth as both of us put together. At some time during the holster's long and, I guess, illustrious career in law enforcement, it must have been shiny black — but you could hardly tell that now with the gouges and finish worn down to the quick.

The detective slipped his belt out of the last two loops of his pants and slid the holster onto it. He re-looped the belt and cinched the whole thing down good and tight. Back in the briefcase, the officer searched through suspect photos, reports, handcuffs and a small container of fluid I really don't want to know more about. A look of surprise and success crossed his face as he pulled out a little

Kramer's horsehide "Woman's Belt Scabbard" is arguably the finest women's holster available.

Indeed, the Black Hills Leather double-gun rig looks better on some people than on others.

The SLP series from Delfatti are lightweight and eminently concealable.

Mernickle's carved and exotic leather rigs can give you an idea of how far you can go with the idea.

Smith & Wesson Model 60. He brought it up to his lips and blew across the cylinder and barrel to clear away the cobwebs and what looked like a chunk of Oreo cookie. The detective had to reach across his belly and use both hands to holster the model 60, his right hand to hold the gun and the fingers of his left to spread the holster open wide enough to slip the little gun inside.

Wild Bill's Concealment gets the job done with paddles and more.

C. Rusty Sherrick offers handsomely made horsehide that actually works.

High Noon calls this the "advanced version of the topless." Topless what? We want to know more!

Milt Sparks, out of Boise, Idaho, is about as famous as it gets in the leather business.

Kydex kool — Uncle Mike's on left, Blade Tech on right.

Bianchi has rocked the boat in both concealment and duty gear with their new Accumold Elite synthetic gear. It's tough as nails and looks good.

The funny/sad part of the whole incident was I was not a bit surprised. After 27 years as a cop, I can't tell you how many times I've seen this same Kabuki Theater played out.

Maybe it was my time in the Army before becoming a cop, or perhaps more probably a situation during the academy I vividly remember, that makes me take note of such situations.

An officer was standing over me screaming as loudly as he could, "You take care of your equipment and it will take care of you, Recruit. Do you hear me?" Boy, did I ever hear him. Yes sir, he was loud and clear. We were going through CS gas training and I hadn't taken care of my protective mask. The filters were shot and I had the snot-ropes running down my face and profusely watering, fiery eyes to prove it. From that day until now, and probably until someone throws a flower and some dirt on my box to eternity, I'll remember his words. Which brings us to holsters.

The holsters of today have not really changed their primary function since I first started carrying one. They hold a gun. Heck, a bag, sash, garter strap or tight pair of jeans will do that too. But what they do have today that simply wasn't available a couple of decades ago is well-thought out design, retention capability and high-technology materials.

Duty gun belts, holsters and accessories are available now in high-tech plastics that are half the weight of leather rigs, yet perform and look just like their leather counterparts. The smell of real leather and the tradition that goes with it aren't there, but neither are the back injuries that come from carrying around 35 lbs. on your hips while jumping in and out of a patrol car.

Also available today are retention devices built into the holsters that just plain won't let the bad guys get a hold of an officer's gun. But, they allow the officer to rapidly draw the gun when needed. The design folks literally spend thousands of hours working out ways to

Continued on page 85

What remains to be said about Mitch Rosen Extraordinary Gunleather? Get some.

LAPD SWAT

LOS ANGELES' FINEST CHOOSE KIMBER'S CUSTOM II.

Gary Paul Johnston

On August 11, 1965, the Los Angeles Police Department became embroiled in one of the most lawless and violent incidents in American History, the (first) Watts Riot. As a young police officer with the LAPD assigned to what is now the Southwest Division, I worked 12-hour shifts during the two weeks it took to return order to the city.

In the wake of the Watts Riot, and a general escalation of drugs, violence and organized resistance against public safety — not only in Los Angeles, but across the country — LAPD undertook the creation of a special unit to deal efficiently with critical incidents. As early as 1967, the first element of this unit was in place. Called the Special Weapons And Tactics Team, it formed an acronym that would influence law enforcement around the world — SWAT.

Operating out of the LAPD's highly-specialized Metropolitan Division, today's LAPD SWAT team is a different animal than that of the 1960s. Growth and refinement means team members remain cutting-edge students of the ever-changing science of crisis resolution. Which is why LAPD SWAT remains the most respected group of its kind on the planet.

An old slogan I read on a bumper sticker said, "When people are in trouble they call the police. When the police are in trouble they call SWAT!"

.45 ACP FIREPOWER

LAPD Swat officers meet the Kimber on issue-day.

The early-design SureFire 610R was an integral part of the Kimber-LAPD package.

As LAPD SWAT's Lieutenant Mike Albanese said, "We're the last ones to call. There's nobody else. The buck stops here."

Originally a boot-string entity within the Los Angeles Police Department, the SWAT team consisted of officers who furnished much of their own equipment, including their own weapons. Not satisfied with the performance and capacity of standard issue .38 Special revolvers, SWAT requested — and was ultimately allowed — to carry model 1911.45 ACP semi-automatic pistols.

.45 For a Reason

Though recognized for its superb handling and reliability, the model 1911 is even more renowned for the .45 ACP cartridge it fires. Legendary for its fight-stopping power, this round and the pistol in which it was introduced began their tenure with the US Military in 1911 and served for a half-century through the Vietnam War. Remaining as popular as ever for the same reasons, this duo is now replacing the 9mm pistol in the holsters of many U.S. Special Forces in Afghanistan.

POLICE
LAPD SWAT CUSTOM II

“First and foremost, the pistol must work every time, all the time.”

But with the LAPD’s heavy budgetary constraints, the department was unable to purchase 1911 pistols. When SWAT eventually received permission to issue such sidearms from Property Division — selected from confiscated and turned-in pistols — there were too few to satisfy the need. Officers furnished their own 1911s, and for 35 years LAPD never purchased .45 ACP 1911 pistols.

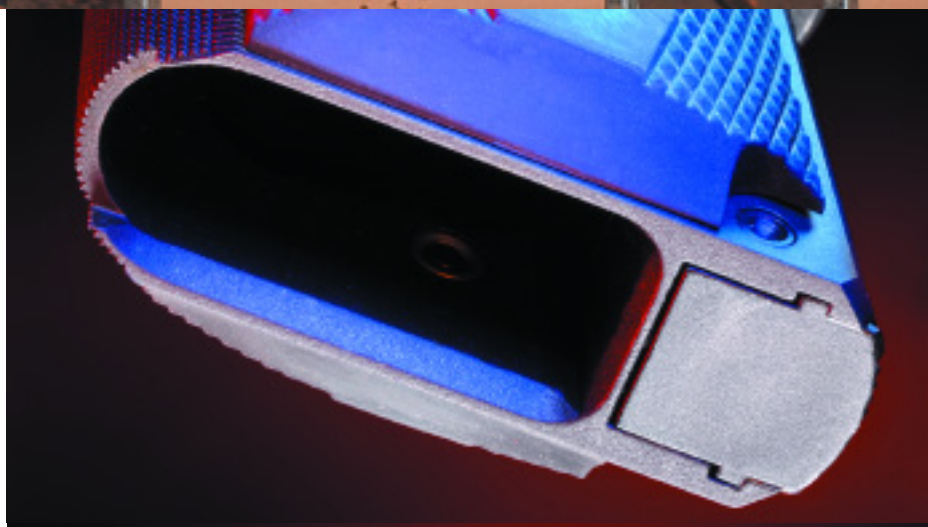
Whereas LAPD SWAT may have improved exponentially since 1967, its 1911 pistols have all but worn out. Even with regular repairs and replacement, there has always been the problem of uniformity, with SWAT 1911-type pistols being of various makes, vintages and finishes, with a variety of sights and other parts. But it was a problem unsolved until early 2002, when the decision was made to purchase new pistols.

Five Brands Tested

The model 1911 is the most popular pistol in the world. Dozens of companies manufacture them, or import their clones. And the old adage “you get what you pay for” doesn’t necessarily apply. One can pay twice the money for a new pistol that won’t perform as well as another.

At the top of the performance list is reliability. First and foremost, the pistol must work every time, all the time. The pistol must also be combat accurate. Depending upon which “expert” you talk to, the definition of this elusive term varies.

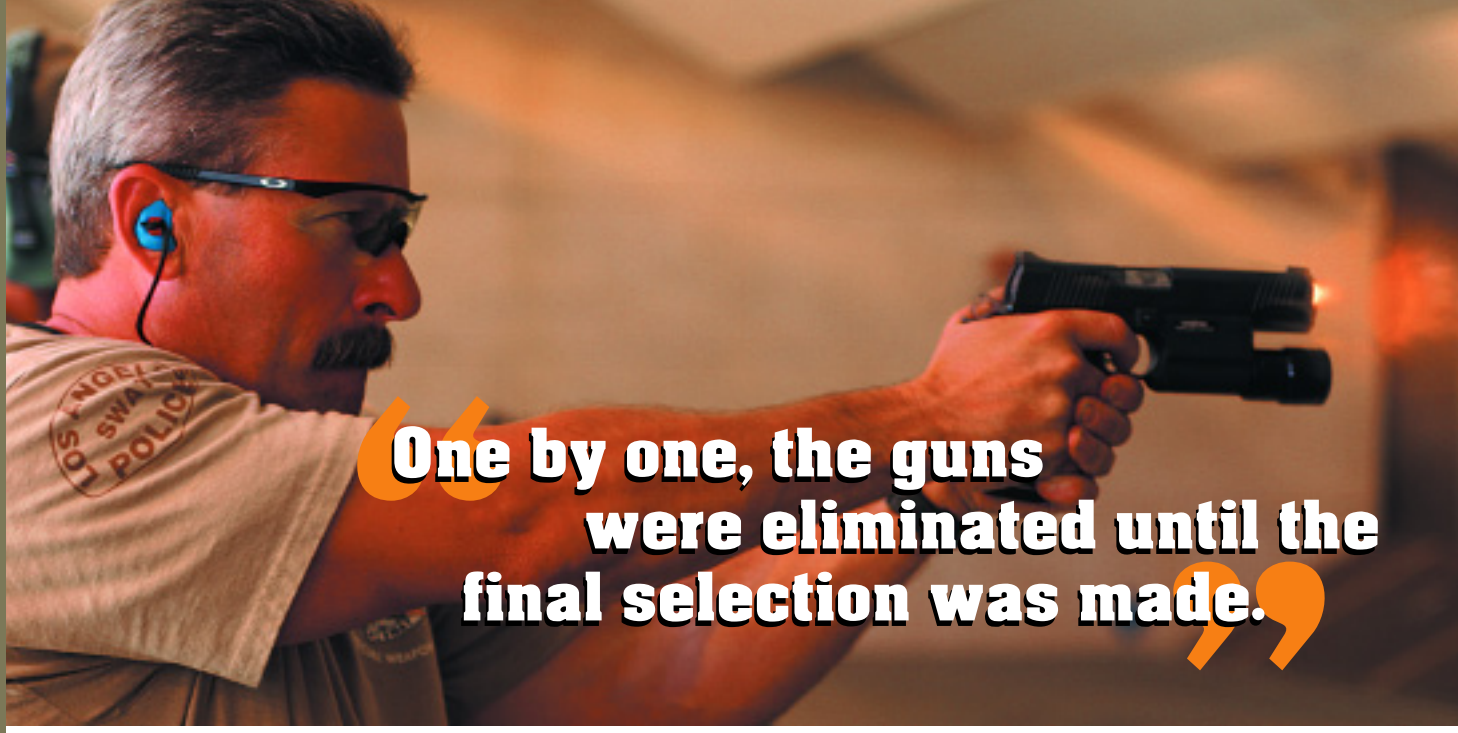
In my opinion, any pistol that works every time and breaks 4" with 5 shots at 25 yards is combat accurate. After reliability and accuracy comes stopping power, and the .45 ACP cartridge pretty much takes care of this by itself. Other



KIMBER CUSTOM II

LAPD SWAT

AMERICAN
HANDGUNNER
KIMBER, YONKERS, NY U.S.A.
KLA114154
LAPD SWAT CUSTOM II
LAPD SWAT CUSTOM II
LASER PRODUCTS
Fountain Valley, CA 92708



"One by one, the guns were eliminated until the final selection was made."

considerations include safety, sights, trigger and ergonomics in general.

In its search for a new 1911 pistol, the LAPD SWAT Team selected to test pistols from what it considered the top five 1911 manufacturers. Kind of the "best of the best," so to speak. Though you're free to work the pieces of this puzzle, we're going to be polite and leave it to your imagination.

As one would expect, testing was rigorous. Every aspect was tested, retested and evaluated, one against the other. One by one, the guns were eliminated until the final selection was made. Kimber not only won, but won impressively. But remember, Kimber manufactures over 40 models of 1911s.

If you think the Kimber 1911 model tested by LAPD SWAT was a top-of-the-line Kimber Custom Shop Target .45, think again. It was none other than Kimber's entry level 1911 — the Kimber Custom II. Though by Kimber's standards a "plain Jane" 1911, the Kimber Custom II still comes with plenty of special features to qualify its name. These include fixed combat sights (dovetailed front sight), rounded (no-bite) speed hammer, stainless steel throated barrel, polished feed ramp, lowered/flared ejection port, 4-pound trigger, extended thumb safety, "beavertail" grip safety, beveled magazine well, and black checkered rubber grips. Until Kimber, most of these features were found only as aftermarket custom options. The Custom II is arguably the most .45 ACP 1911 for the money — ever.

Continued on page 88

Kimber supplied Meprolight tritium sights. Note the extended combat safety.

LAPD SWAT KIMBER CUSTOM II

SPECIFICATIONS:

Caliber:	.45 ACP
Operation:	Short recoil, single action, semi-automatic
Barrel Length:	5"
Overall Length:	8¼"
Weight:	38 oz.
Feed Device:	7-shot box magazine
Safety:	Thumb safety, grip safety and firing pin safety
Sights:	(Front) Combat blade; (rear) "U" notch drift adjustable for W/E. Meprolite inserts optional
Grips:	Black checkered rubber
Finish:	Matte black, stainless steel

THE EYES HAVE IT

It's either too close .

Or too far ...

Armor*ize* Those Peepers.

George E. Dvorchak, Jr., M.A. (Anatomy), M.D.

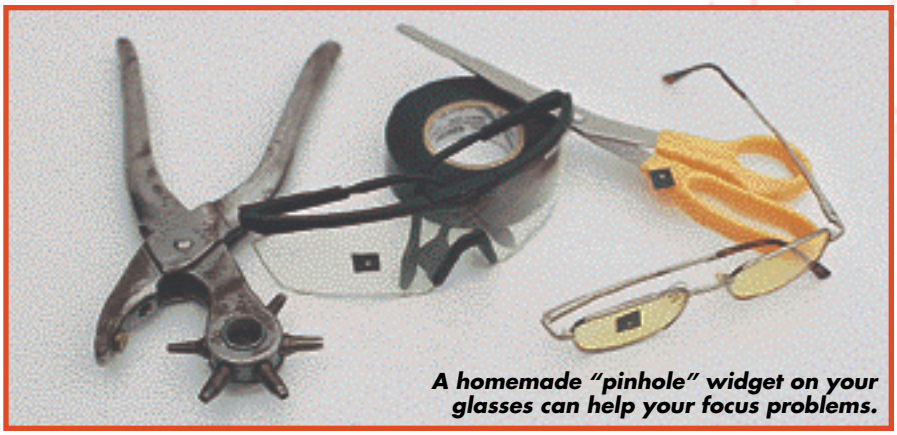
Two fundamentals of marksmanship are trigger pull and sight alignment. Strength training will help hold that handgun as steady as possible, and to properly align the front and rear sights. Yet how the eye focuses on sights and target is the most critical aspect of alignment. It's not black magic. But a few words may help clear the fuzziness of the mechanics involved in this all-important aspect of our sport.

Our eye is an extraordinary organ, allowing us to distinguish objects, shapes and colors located both near and far. Even when watching for animals in the field, with ease we can distinguish a deer's antler from a tree's branch. Most of us pick-out colors with ease, and because our eyes automatically adjust themselves see an object in both bright and dim light.

And to protect this precious gift, whether shooting, hunting or just cutting that dirt patch you call a lawn, impact resistant eye glasses are a must.

This isn't rocket science. But there are a few things to keep in mind before you plunk down two bucks for discount shooting glasses.

To avoid image distortion, you want a high-quality lens. Such an optically-superior lens will cause little, if any, image distortion — which is obviously important when looking at your sights and target. This is definitely a category where you get what you pay for. Two dollar eyes? Get $2 glasses. Otherwise, spend some money.


A homemade "pinhole" widget on your glasses can help your focus problems.

Protection

Naturally shielding our eyes are those tiny hairs sticking out from our eyelids. They're not there just to give girls (and boys) the "come hither" look. They block debris.

Optics are always an option and can add years — and accuracy — to anyone's fun.

If something gets past these little soldiers then tears form, which act as an eye wash. This fluid-flow coats the eye and washes out what may have gotten in — which is well and good when tiny widgets like small bugs get in the eye. But when something forcefully strikes the eye serious damage can result.

These are reasons we need to always wear our shooting glasses — whenever we're around flying bits and pieces — whether on the range or in the shed grinding away on something. When on the range, keep a sharp good eye on the fellow next too you. His ill-timed revolver may toss at you lead and unburnt powder.

And there is no excuse for eye injuries on the range because of the prevalence of impact-resistant lenses. But you get what you pay for. Inexpensive sun glasses can offer some protection, but are usually heavier than quality shooting glasses. Plus cheap sunglasses have all the short-comings and pitfalls you'd expect, from poor optical quality to simply suffering from trying to do a job they were never designed to handle.

If something comes at those baby blues of yours from an angle, those sexy $3 shades probably won't protect them. They usually don't offer UV protection, so why bother anyway?

When nosing around for protection, you want lenses that block ultraviolet (UVB and UVA) light radiation. Sunglasses should have an American National Standards Institute label stating how much of this light is blocked. If doing lots of outdoor shooting, choose ones that give maximum protection against these invisible demons from above.

Yellow, Green or Amber?

Whether target shooting indoors or hunting in the woods, pick the lens color best for the particular situation. A solid inexpensive lens system for various occasions are Walker's All Sport Glasses, and each set offers three colors. An added bonus is the fact the light polycarbonate lenses are non-distorting, and scratch and impact resistant.

So what color works best for what instances?

Amber (yellowish orange) and **Yellow**: These colors are good especially in low and regular light, and when hunting or target shooting on a cloudy day, or shooting indoors. They also provide high contrast and sharp definition, helping you to distinguish objects, especially in the woods.

Vermilion (Red): This color is preferred by sporting clays, trap and skeet

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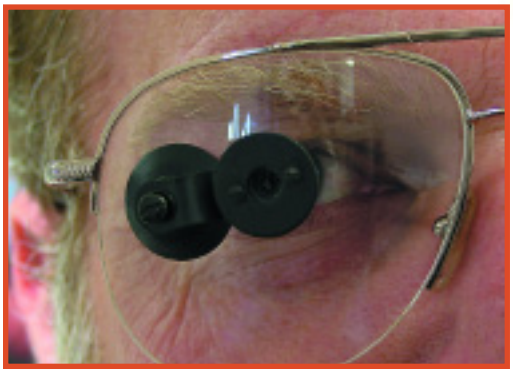
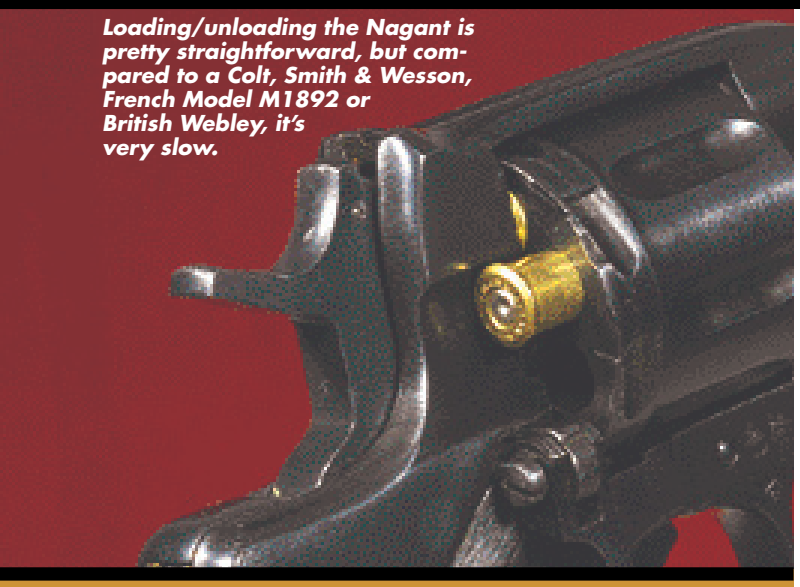


Of course, the easy way is just to buy a Merit Optical Attachment and stick it on your glasses. Be prepared for magic things to happen.

KOMRADE NAGANT'S REVOLVER

NO WONDER THE SOVIET UNION FELL APART

David M. Fortier • Photos: Emily K. Fortier



Loading/unloading the Nagant is pretty straightforward, but compared to a Colt, Smith & Wesson, French Model M1892 or British Webley, it's very slow.

In the late 19th century, the introduction of smokeless powder by the French created a flurry of activity among the world's armies. State-of-the-art weapons were obsolete over night, leading to a mad scramble to replace black-powder weapons.

Imperial Russia was caught in the stampede. A new small-bore Mosin-Nagant replaced their Berdan rifles, and then they sought a modern revolver. Since the 1870s, Russia had issued blackpowder .44 Russian Model Smith & Wesson top-breaks referred to by Bolsheviks and Tsarists alike as "4.2-line revolvers" due to their bore size. In the old Russian measuring system, a line equaled 1/10." And the big Smiths were popular and hard-hitting. And it was good.

But realizing their Yankee Smith & Wessons were falling behind the times, the Russians sought a suitable

The Nagant is a surprisingly accurate service pistol. Recoil is light and report is mild. But in combat, against multiple adversaries, the poor stopping power and slow reloading were a real liability.

The 7.62 M1895 Nagant Service Revolver lived a surprisingly long life. Though Belgian designed, the Nagant served the Imperial Russian and Soviet Red Army from 1895 to 1945.

replacement to take them into the 20th century. And they found what they were looking for in the Belgian-designed Nagant "Gas Seal" revolver.

That "Funny" Gun

The Fabrique d'Armes et Leon Nagant was founded in 1859 by Emile and Leon Nagant. These two brothers produced rolling-block rifles and pistols for sale in Europe. Realizing the Russians were in the market for a new service revolver, the Nagant brothers offered several Belgian models to choose from. Chocolate, anyone?

Tsarist representatives, impressed by gas seals, in 1895 chose adoption and sent this red-headed Belgian to serve in the Imperial Armies. And the Reds, being Reds, followed suit, putting it to war in World War I, the Communist Revolution, the Fighting of 1918-1920, the Winter War of 1939-40, and the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945.

The M1895 Nagant revolver's uniqueness depends upon its gas-seal design. All revolvers, upon firing, leak gas from between the cylinder mouth and the forcing cone. The Nagant however was gas tight, its secret shrouded in a nifty mechanical arrangement where the cylinder is cammed forward upon cocking — tucking the coned breach end of the barrel into the

The gas sealing system of the Nagant works as follows: With the hammer uncocked the cylinder is in its rear position. Notice the cylinder gap.

With the hammer cocked the cylinder is cammed forward. Notice absence of cylinder gap. At this point the front of the cartridge is actually inside the barrel.

Features of the Nagant are both it's simplicity and toughness. The weapon strips easily for maintenance.

mouth of the aligned chamber.

Ergo the Nagant's cartridge demands a unique design. Seating the bullet below the case mouth means that, upon firing, the case seals against the inside of the barrel, forming a gas seal, boosting efficiency, hooray! Though this may not sound so spectatcular now, imagine the frozen-fingered, belly-growling Commie soldier leaning back on a snow drift shouting to his buddies after a long swill of vodka, "I think this here Nagant has a velocity increase of up to 150 fps." But his buddies might guffaw, tell him he's crazy, find it impossible to suspend disbelief — because the Nagant in both looks and function is very much a product of the 19th century.

Simple, reliable, the cylinder holds 7 rounds and rotates clockwise. An ejector rod is housed under the barrel. The gun can be fired either double or single action, and the usual lanyard loop is present on the butt of the weapon. The unloaded weight is 28 ounces; drop 7 rounds into the cylinder and it ups to 31 ounces.

Power-wise, the Nagant leaves a bit to be desired. It was chambered for the 7.62 Nagant (7.62x38R) cartridge designated "Cartridge, Type R" by the Russian Army. The standard military loading was a .30 caliber 103-108 gr. flat-nosed steel jacketed bullet with a lead core that crawled along at approximately 892 fps — less than spectacular terminal performance. Not a particularly endearing trait in a combat pistol.

Comrade David

In the recent past, a large quantity of M1895 Nagant revolvers showed up on the surplus market in as-new/rebuilt condition. They stirred a lot of interest. Century International Arms imported a large quantity and I purchased my revolver from them. It arrived in as-new condition, was arsenal rebuilt, and was originally produced in 1944 by Tula and came with a holster, lanyard, cleaning rod and screwdriver. Price? At the time, less than $100. Astounding.

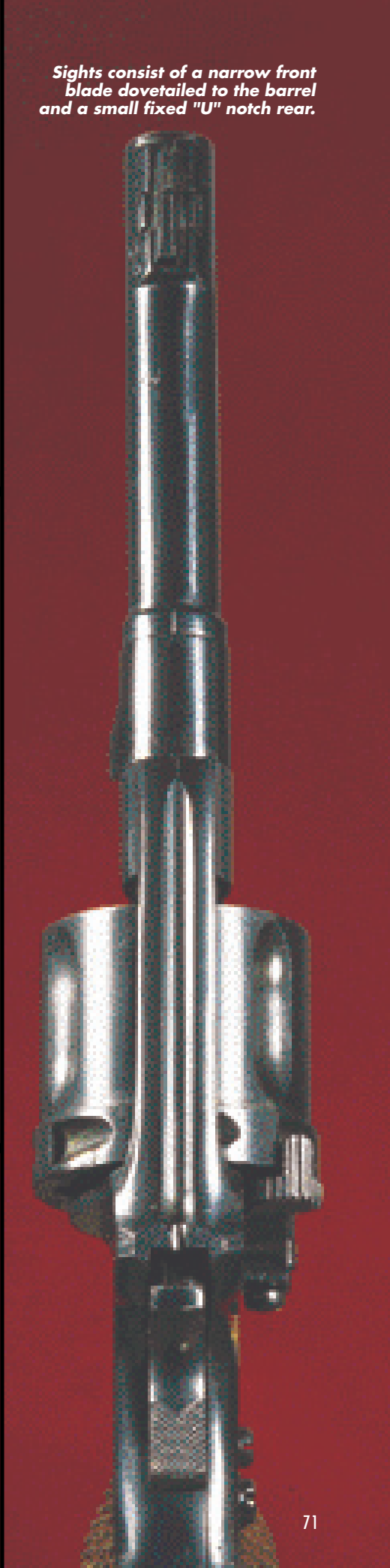
As 7.62 Nagant ammunition is both scarce and pricey, I also purchased a conversion cylinder chambered for .32 ACP. This was inexpensive; money very well spent.

While the Nagant is mechanically and historically interesting, I was more interested in how it felt in the hand, and how it performed. While odd looking (it is European, remember) I have to say I like its feel. It handles and points nicely. But

Continued on page 100

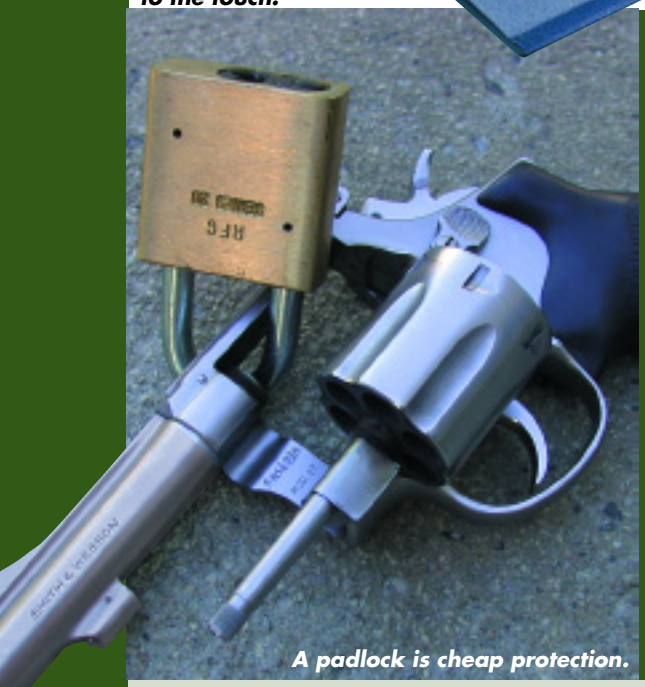
The odd-looking 7.62 Nagant with some of its contemporaries. Left to right, 9x19, 7.62x25 Tokarev, 7.62 Nagant, 8mm French Revolver, .455 MKI.

Sights consist of a narrow front blade dovetailed to the barrel and a small fixed "U" notch rear.



Gun Guard Double GunVault is quick to the touch.

The big guys: When you need it all, the best way is a honking, big, heavy safe. They are usually fire-resistant too.



A padlock is cheap protection.

Preventing Unwanted Access

This is no blatant "round-up" of advertisers, nor is it a "suck-up" attempt to garner advertising dollars. It's an important call to readers of *Handgunner* to take responsibility for their sport, their avocation, their hobby and maybe their jobs. It's not nice, it's not pretty and it's not fun, but we have to look this difficult topic squarely in the eye — and then do something about it.

This past year, a police officer was shot and killed by his young son, who was playing with his Dad's duty pistol. Another's truck was burglarized and the stolen handgun was used to wound a 7-year-old. In either case, had the handgun involved been rendered safe with a lock, the results would probably have been very different.

Mossberg's cable lock is typical of what is available from manufacturers these days when you buy a new gun.

This isn't a conspiracy to take your guns or render you unable to defend yourselves should the need arise, but simply a call to action, to take steps to "make safe" those firearms you have on hand. A few moments, the twist of a key, the snap of a padlock, and the deed is done. A mind can rest easy, and just perhaps a life can be saved.

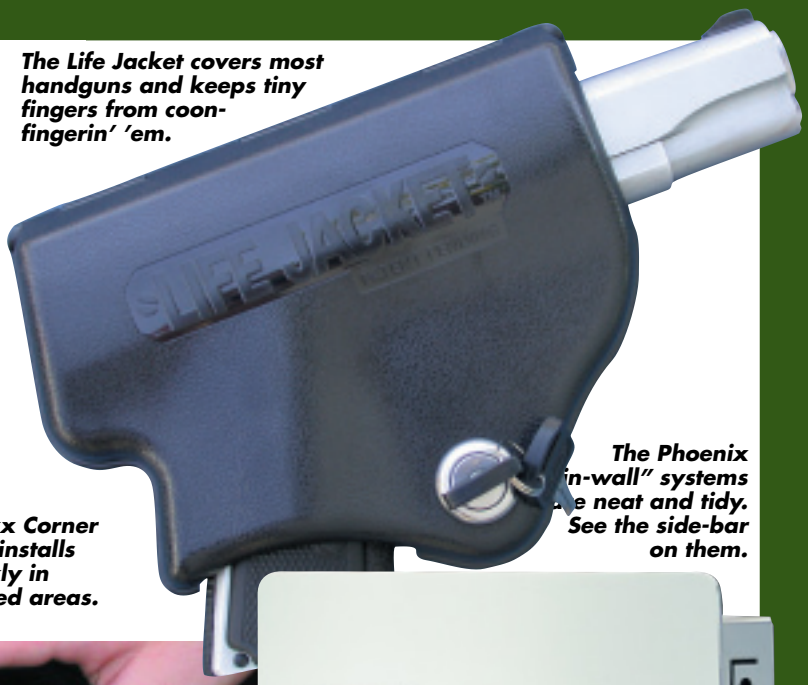
Let's be real ugly for a moment and admit the truth. When a person is injured or killed by the intentional or un-intentional use of a firearm — especially a handgun — the bad press garnered makes it difficult to justify our need to have them. The "If it saves just one life" sound-bites appear from HCI and we are once again demonized and prosecuted in the court of public opinion. It behooves us to do what we can, all the time, to prevent such things from happening. Not only to save the life involved, but to continue to protect our rights. So please bear with me here.

But My Kids Are Safe

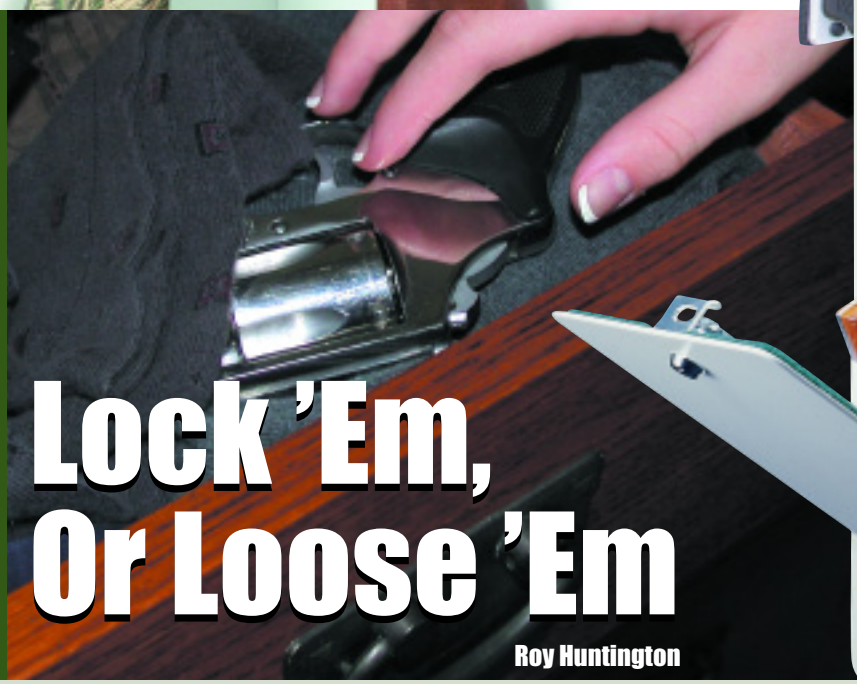
And they probably are. You've hopefully taken the time to raise them to be gun-safe, to be responsible around your firearms. Indeed, lots of kids enjoy hunting, plinking and competition with family-owned guns. These kids aren't the problem.

Think about the little miscreant next door. The one whose parents allow him to paint his hair green, has a foul-mouth, and otherwise makes you pause and consider the possibility that human sacrifice might not be a bad idea after

Knoxx Corner Lock installs quickly in unused areas.



The Life Jacket covers most handguns and keeps tiny fingers from coon-fingerin' 'em.



The Phoenix "in-wall" systems are neat and tidy. See the side-bar on them.

Lock 'Em, Or Loose 'Em

Roy Huntington

all. He's the problem. He's the wild-card, the unknown factor in the equation. In our math book, "X" equals "?" when it comes to his predictability.

If little Brett, the green-haired problem from next door, should stumble onto your home-defense handgun while you're downstairs and the kids are "playing" upstairs, what might happen? You say it's well hidden? Think about your own explorations at age 8 and then tell me again that "things" can be well-hidden from the prying fingers of a pre-teen.

Would your kids intervene and, screeching at the tops of their collective lungs, yell "Come quick Daddy, Brett's got the gun." Hopefully. But why not make sure it can't happen to begin with?

The list could go on. A houseguest? A burglar while you're away? Who knows? But we do know it happens — just read the local newspaper.

But it doesn't have to happen. We can control it, we can manage it, and we can do it without compromising our own safety and ability to respond to threats.

Can it be inconvenient? Costly? Awkward? Sometimes. But the cost in time and money is nothing compared to the possible alternatives. Besides, it just makes sense to control your personal firearms when you're not actively engaged in using them. Ownership of firearms is an incredible responsibility. Rise to the occasion.

But How?

Fortunately, there are some very smart people who have asked this same question and have come up with some seriously good answers. But again, it's not always good to rely solely upon technology to fix a problem. Education is at the fore-

Waller's Soft Safes are rugged and high quality. They can be locked, they float, and even offer a level of fire-resistance.

Pro-Lok's solution is this unique, flexible lock that offers solid-steel resistance to tampering.

front of prevention, and educating is what we have to do.

Whether you agree with their politics or not, take a hard look at the NRA's Eddie Eagle program. It's decidedly a political, and simply warns kids if they find a gun: "Don't touch it, leave the area and get an adult." Simple, and it works. That way, if they are visiting at little Billy's house and little Billy breaks out Dad's Glock, your kids leave it alone, blast out of the area and grab the first adult they come to and snitch little Billy off. Perfect.

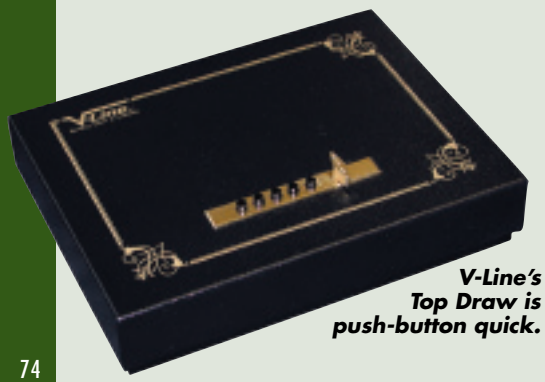
You can also look towards hunter safety classes, 4-H, Scouts and other groups for training. Take the time and send the kids. It's like putting a million dollars in the bank and can pay dividends in the thousands of percent should the occasion arise.

The Mechanics Of It

Chances are pretty good if you have a big collection of firearms you've got a safe or locking cabinet of some kind. Yet too many people still keep the shotguns and rifles leaning in a hall closet and the handgun or two under the bed, on the top shelf of the closet, or buried under their Jockey shorts in the dresser. There are a few ways to handle the problem, and they depend on your needs.

If you want to simply lock-up your collection, any of the quality safes from any of the reputable makers offer the epitome of protection, from both fire and theft. You spend your money and you get what you pay for in this department. Look

Continued on page 115



V-Line's Top Draw is push-button quick.

A NO-BRAINER

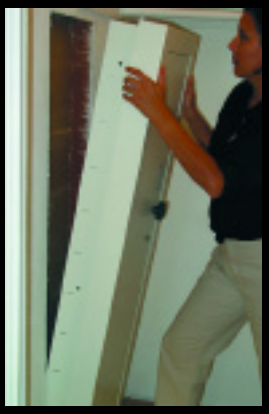
Rich Stahlhut

Tamper alert notifies owner of attempted unauthorized entry.

First things first — I was a wee bit skeptical of Phoenix USA'S so called "easy" installation of their wall-mounted safe. To put it bluntly, I had good reason to be nervous. Last time I tried to install something in my closet (shelf and hanger rack) It crashed down on top of my head. Although I'm not really "handy" I couldn't completely blame myself. I purchased an inferior quality product which didn't last 30 seconds. But this time, this was not the case. This safe is pure quality and built right. And any screw up would rest squarely on the installer's "Head." That would be me.

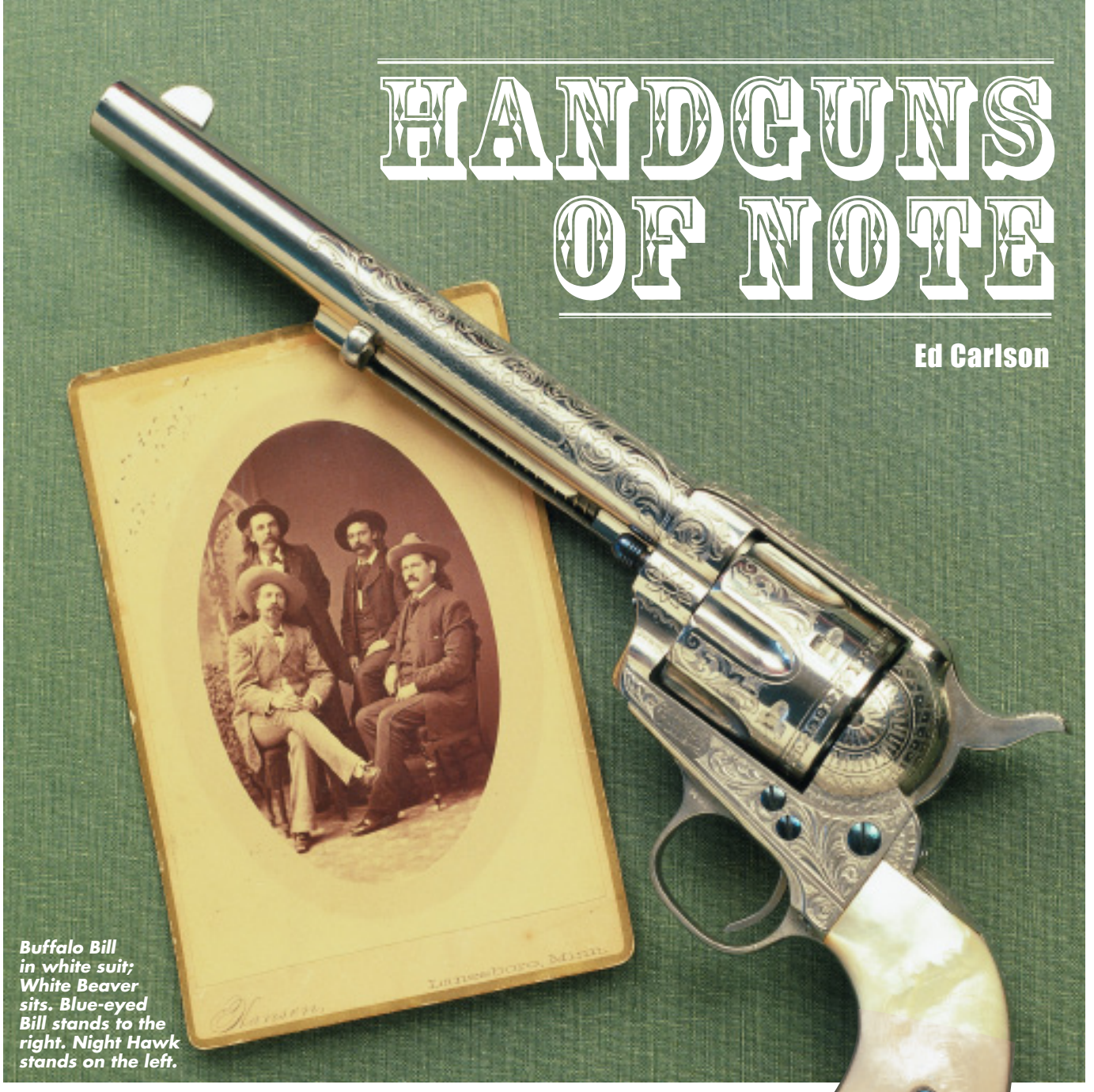
The directions were simple enough and I had almost all the necessary tools, except for a drywall saw and a stud finder. My wife insisted she was a stud-finder, but I insisted on the electronic version. After buying the two needed items, my wife and I cautiously started the job. I noticed very quickly this was an easy operation. To break it down into a few basic parts — you measure the space, cut out the wall and then screw the safe into place. It really is as simple as that. The safe fit perfectly and it was obviously designed to be this easy. For once — when the directions said only a few minutes was needed — it really was. We had the entire project finished quickly and although I did most of the work — my wife could have done it herself. She made a great hand-model instead. The only thing she might have found difficult would have been lifting the safe into place. It is heavy and that's a good thing.

The Phoenix safe is a well-thought-out design, and showed excellent quality. This is one well-built safe. It has many good features and it really is as easy to install as it says it is. With a young child in the house, getting older by the day, I can sleep well at night having done the right thing by adding another level of security. It was fast, easy and affordable, and it doesn't get any better than that.



HANDGUNS OF NOTE

Ed Carlson



Buffalo Bill in white suit; White Beaver sits. Blue-eyed Bill stands to the right. Night Hawk stands on the left.

THE NIGHT HAWK COLT

"Night Hawk" Colt SAA, nickel-plated and with pearl grips. From William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody to Dr. George Powell, the "Night Hawk." Circa 1888.

Trusted and loyal friends of Buffalo Bill Cody, the three brothers Powell practiced medicine and sported colorful nicknames bestowed upon them by Indians they'd healed. For though they hailed from the flatlands of LaCrosse, Wisc., the brother's Powell predominantly practiced their doctorcraft on Indian Reservations. And in doing so became famous, sort of.

White Beaver is what Dr. David Franklin Powell called himself. Dr. George Powell was called Night Hawk because of his penchant for springing awake in the middle of the night to care for the infirm. William Powell, a pharmacist and a general practitioner who specialized in treating women's diseases, was known simply as Blue-Eyed Bill.

This photo of the brothers Powell alongside Buffalo Bill was taken many moons ago in Laneboro, Minn. But the pistol, one of the great single actions of all time, a gift from Buffalo Bill to Night Hawk assumedly for his service as a physician during Custer's fateful campaigns — the pistol still remains. Engraved in the shiny pearl grip is the word NightHawk, circa 1876.

Once upon a time in the possession of the estate of Fanny Powell, daughter of Night Hawk, this old gun is now consigned as part of the largest private collection of Buffalo Bill memorabilia held in private hands. And come January 28 it should fetch between $150,000 to $200,000. If interested, contact Greg Martin Auctions at 1-800-509-1988. Otherwise we recommend ripping this page from the magazine and tacking it up alongside those calendar girls who mock you from above your workbench.

You can Win This ULTIMATE Kimber Ultra TEN II

From Custom Arms Co.

The Kimber Ultra Ten II is designed for maximum-capacity concealed carry. Weighing just 24 ounces, and with a 3" barrel, it carries .45 ACP power in a small package. The stainless steel slide has rounded edges, the bull barrel is bushing-less, and the chamber and trigger are match-grade. Grip circumference is virtually identical to a standard 1911. The frame insert is machined from 7075-T7 aluminum — the lightest and strongest material available. Both slide and barrel are machined from forgings.

Building on this capable platform, Pete Carber of Custom Arms Co. (CAC) has crafted a number of performance-enhancing upgrades. The sides of the polymer frame have been stippled. A feed and reliability package have been performed. And the entire gun has been de-horned for ease of carry. Also, this Ultra Ten II has been fitted with XS Sight System's 24/7 Big Dot sights for rapid sight acquisition. In addition to the CAC custom Kimber, Garrity Gun Leather has supplied an exquisite Incognito, I.W.B. holster and mag pouch that perfectly compliment this modern defensive handgun.

Benchmade's Nimravus, a fixed-blade beauty, is handy but tough. With a modified Tanto point and black Teflon coating, the Nimravus is 7.82" long and weighs 4 ounces. When not cutting stuff, it quietly rests in a fancy Kydex sheath.

Features include:

- Polymer frame with stippling
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- Reliability package
- Dehorning
- Match-grade trigger, barrel and chamber
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TO ENTER CONTEST: Use a postcard (no envelopes, please) and follow the sample shown. Send to AMERICAN HANDGUNNER, Dept. H1, P.O. Box 880409, San Diego, CA 92168-0409. Entries must be received before February 1, 2003.

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 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2003:

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Email Address _____

Sample

If I win, please ship my gun through:

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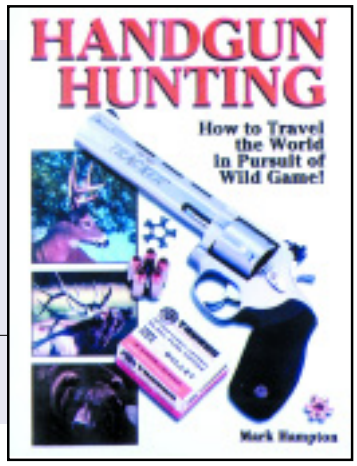
Phone ( ) ____ - _____ Store hours __ am __ pm

J.D. Jones

HANDGUN HUNTING

Traveling The World In Pursuit Of Wild Game

By Mark Hampton



In the early '80s, I organized an African Safari for several members of Handgun Hunters International. Mark and Karen Hampton were among those who hunted the million-plus acre Nuanitsi Ranch in Zimbabwe on that memorable trip. Mark was an outstanding hunter, a more than excellent shot, and mentally in full control of himself in exciting — and dangerous — situations. Certainly at that time I didn't know we would become lifelong friends, or Mark would become one of the most competent and successful handgun hunters of trophy-class game worldwide.

As a teenager, Mark was a member of the Sports Afield trap-shooting team. He has been a farmer, a law enforcement officer, an educator, a hunting preserve owner, and is now the Honorable Mark Hampton, State Representative in Missouri. He still owns the farm and Show Me Safaris, and is first and foremost a very experienced, highly-perceptive hunter.

In Mark's new book, he takes the reader to Missouri and then throughout the world to many exotic locations in search of a wide variety of big game. Africa, Alaska, Australia, South America, Mongolia, China as well as locations in Europe and Russia are well covered. The book is profusely illustrated throughout its 200 pages, and, in addition to easy reading hunting stories, gives the reader a great deal of information. From various calibers, handloading and handguns, to their performance on truly large game, Mark covers it completely. I expect both the beginner and experienced hunter will enjoy and learn from Mark's experiences.

Frankly, I'm proud of Mark and the job he's done. This is the first handgun hunting book to be published in quite awhile and it's well worth adding to your library. It's published by Krause Publications, or you may obtain a postpaid autographed copy for $26.95 from Mark Hampton, PO Box 108, Summersville, MO 65571. No credit cards, but everything else is accepted.

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- Joe Bucher Outdoors
- Midwest Outdoor Magazine
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SIXGUNNER

Continued from page 45

process and also all cylinder end-shake was removed.

The original barrel was discarded and replaced by a 2" long, .8" in diameter barrel. The rear sight notch was changed from its v-shape to give a square picture, and a new front sight was fitted. The trigger was also contoured to match the inside of the trigger guard. Finally, the mainframe was re-color cased, the rest of the gun was finished in QPR's high luster Black Diamond blue, and an 18K gold band was inlayed around the cylinder.

It's certainly one of the most beautiful and efficient single-action belly guns that ever existed. And one any 19th century gambler, outlaw, or lawman would certainly have appreciated. Chambered in .44-40, it's potent but easy to shoot and control with the heavy barrel. A "Toy" it is anything but; however, it's still a welcome addition to my Big Boy's Toy Box... as you might imagine.

Baby's Born

For several years, friend and fellow shootist Bob Baer has suggested I send him a proper sixgun for customizing. One Sunday morning before church I hit the gun show early before most of the vendors had even opened their tables. But there was one open early that had exactly what I needed for the project, at the right price.

I purchased the Old Model Three Screw .357 Ruger Blackhawk and sent it to Bob Baer with instructions to simply build me a special gun, his choice of style and caliber. Having seen, handled and shot many of Baer's creations — from short barrels to long barrels, from round butts to lanyard rings, from .22s to .357s to .44s, with all kinds of artistic touches abounding — I certainly didn't know what to expect. But I had every confidence I would not be disappointed.

Since Baer has a pretty good idea where my heart lies, the conversion is a .44 Special. The front and rear edge of the grip frame are both tapered to make it more comfortable in the hand, with no sharp edges to emphasize recoil.

Tedd Adamovich of BluMagnum made fancy walnut grip blanks that Baer expertly fitted to the brightly polished aluminum grip frame. The aluminum ejector rod housing is polished bright, while the rest of "Baby," as Baer dubbed it, is finished in a hard nickel plating. To aid in the project, gunsmith Keith DeHart re-chambered the cylinder and furnished the 3" barrel. The total package weighs an easy-to-pack 30 ounces.

The Little Things

Other special custom touches include a shortened base-pin head and a thinned

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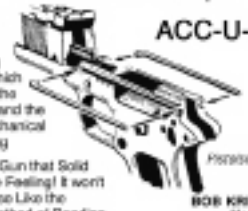
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ejector rod head with a recess in the bottom of the ejector housing. This means the housing does not have to be removed to remove the base pin. The hammer spur has been slightly lowered, broadened, and checkered, the top strap tapered on both sides, and the front edges of the cylinder chambered.

One of the really special custom touches is a very slight offset placed at the back edge of each chamber enabling one remove fired cartridges with a thumbnail. Of course, the entire action has been smoothed.

> **"It's certainly one of the most beautiful and efficient single-action belly guns that ever existed."**

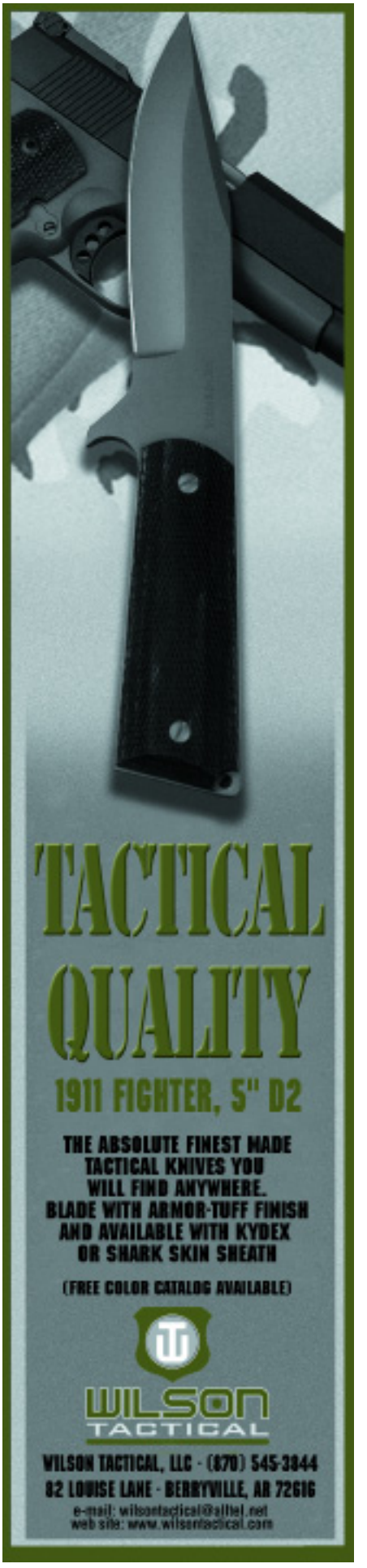
Sixguns are very personal. And to identify this as my very personal sixgun, special markings on this .44 Special include my initials, "JAT," on the front of the frame.

In front of the trigger guard on the bottom of the frame we find "RGB" and "01 SS SPL." The RGB is for Robert G. Baer, and the SS is for Skeeter Skelton — who inspired us all in so many ways.

There is another marking, one that is truly amazing, found on the bottom of the butt. Bob Baer made a Texas-shaped brand for me, and placed it on the butt. But he never realized he duplicated the marking I've used on any artwork since my grade school days. There is some magic in this sixgun.

In addition, he also crafted an easy-to-carry holster and marked it with my "brand' and his logo. This brand is made by a crossbar with a curved loop on the left side to make the "J," a straight line on the right for the "T," and a crossbar in the center to make my middle initial, "A." Altogether, it's a Special Sixgun with special markings from a special friend. I was able to take Baby to Texas early this spring, and Bob and I broke it in shooting 250 gr. Keith bullets over 7.5 gr. of Unique. Like Bob, it will do to ride the river with.

Bob isn't a professional gunsmith but rather builds guns for the love of it. You are welcome to incorporate his ideas in your special project, and if you would like to discuss sixguns, or Marlin lever-guns for that matter, he may be reached at (281) 342-5643. Milt Morrison is a professional gunsmith, a fine one at that, and can be found at Qualite Pistol & Revolver, 15462 E. Batavia Dr. Suite B, Aurora CO 80011; (888) 762-3030.



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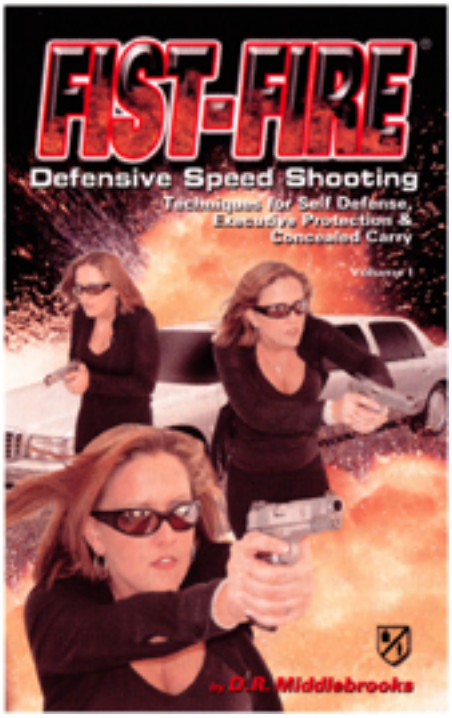

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GUN RIGHTS

Continued from page 40

as affirmed in the 10th Amendment. Under the Constitution, crimes involving firearms are matters reserved to the states. Congress was not given any "police powers" in the Constitution that would give it authority to enact general criminal laws.

Thus, in encouraging the violation of the 10th Amendment in order to "save" the 2nd, supporters of Project Exile are engaged in a self-contradictory and self-destructive enterprise. First, they are encouraging the further federalization of crimes, already growing at an alarming rate. Second, they are tacitly affirming it is acceptable to ignore and override the Bill of Rights for reasons of political expediency. If it is okay to infringe on the 10th Amendment in order to achieve the political goals of gun owners, then logically there can be no objection to others seeking to infringe the 2nd Amendment to achieve their political goals. It's just a question of whose ox is being gored and majority muscle.

No Felonies

So it goes in the world of pragmatism and realpolitik. As recounted in Healy's analysis, it appears from the early results the overwhelming majority of those prosecuted — and receiving mandatory minimum sentences of five to 15 years — are persons who have no violent felonies on their records. Indeed, federal Judge Richard Williams, commenting on Richmond's Project Exile, has noted that "90 percent of these defendants are probably no danger to society." This should come as no surprise since hardly any federal gun laws require real criminal intent, just mere possession.

In one of the more bizarre prosecutions but, please note, well within the letter of the law as penned by our oh-so-careful, oh-so-concerned Congress, a 33-year old Colorado Springs woman was convicted when federal authorities found she had posed nude in photographs with a firearm. Her prior drug convictions made her a felon in possession under federal law, and she was convicted and sentenced to prison.

What in the world is the NRA thinking in supporting these programs? The guiding political stratagem seems to be that, if existing gun laws can be well enough enforced, the resulting decrease in gun crimes will sufficiently reduce or eliminate popular demand for further gun control legislation. Crime will be low enough that too few people will care enough to make it a viable political issue. Thus will existing gun owners' rights be "protected."

Let's look at a couple of the underlying assumptions that have to be true for this

strategy to work. First, that gun control laws work. Strange indeed that an organization whose usual claim is gun control laws do not work, do not keep guns out of the hands of violent criminals, adopts a political strategy whose success requires their usual claim be proven wrong. Indeed, if gun control laws do reasonably work as long as they are enforced, then what is the basis for objecting to more of them?

> **"We live under a system of representative government in which the principal goal of our lawmakers is to survive, i.e., be re-elected."**

Disregarding the 10th Amendment in order to achieve a political goal for gun owners is a concession that others have an equal right to infringe the 2nd Amendment for their political ends. So the 2nd Amendment cannot be the basis for an objection to the laws.

Second, politicians will not enact further laws if there is no need for them. Or, stated otherwise, law-making is based on a rational assessment of whether the law will achieve its stated purpose. Does anyone remotely familiar with contemporary law-making believe this? Consider these examples in answering the question: (1) murder is against the law, but politicians still enact hate-crimes legislation; (2) murder is against the law, but politicians still enact gun-free school zone laws.

Endless Law-Making

We live under a system of representative government in which the principal goal of our lawmakers is to survive, i.e., be re-elected. Lawmakers must buy the consent of the governed every two or six years by being perceived to be "doing something" to better a majority of the voters' lot. This system guarantees endless law-making, in which the purpose is not so much to actually solve the problem addressed, as to be perceived as doing something to address the voters' concerns or enhance their lives.

On the voters' part, laws are food for satisfying a single, unending appetite – the desire for free solutions to their problems (i.e., solutions that come at somebody else's expense). On the politicians' part, law becomes, principally, a psychotropism, a tool for manipulating perception. Stated otherwise, the law's symbolic value is its primary utility.

Thus, the success of the apparent political stratagem behind Project Exile

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depends on the program succeeding in reducing gun crime to a low-enough level so few people will care about gun crime that politicians will have nothing to gain by promising yet more solutions to the problem. But there are at least two problems with this.

First, people measure their satisfaction level relative to the current state of things, not absolutely by reference to some fixed mark of how bad things once were or could be. No one thinks or feels today's murder rate is good and acceptable even though the rate was significantly higher in the 1980s. The existing state of affairs is never acceptable. When there are only two murders with guns per year, this will be viewed as an intolerable burden and blemish on our civilization. Remember Sarah Brady's standard? If it saves even one life. That is in fact the true standard of anyone who expects a "free" — i.e., a political — solution to this problem.

The second problem is that the success of this stratagem assumes the motivation for most people's support for gun control is actual concern with gun crime. This is the same assumption John Lott makes in his book, *More Guns, Less Crime*. If, however, support for gun control is principally a cultural issue, if it is rooted primarily in personal philosophy or ideology – ideas about the way people should behave – decreasing gun violence rates will have little to no effect on curbing the appetite for further controls.

Many of us, myself included, believe the gun control debate is principally an issue of the character and mores of contemporary Americans — in which the arguments over gun crime and suicide statistics are used as tools for advancing the goals of the participants on each side of the debate, but are not the real underlying motivation driving the debate.

In support of this view, one might note John Lott's research that sets forth the strongest evidence yet that concealed carry laws lead to decreases in violent crime. But this has not yet led to the mass adoption of reformed concealed weapon laws by citizens and politicians honestly concerned with decreasing crime — though the evidence suggests this actually works. If gun control is principally a cultural issue, no amount of gun-law enforcement can eliminate the desire for further controls. It is guns these people want eliminated, not gun crime.

Support for Project Exile and Project Safe Neighborhoods should be terminated at once, and gun owners everywhere should call for their elimination. These programs are only laying the foundation for a gun gulag to be added to our already existing drug gulag.

Jeff Snyder can be reached at jsnyder@ekks.com. His website is www.nationofcowards.net

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HEART-THROBS

Continued from page 57

make this happen. And cops' lives have been saved by the score because of this.

More innovative ideas are being thunk-up by holster makers for the concealment market than ever before. Comfort, speed of draw, concealability and retention are all being considered when new offerings are released. More CCW carriers want quality and performance, not just price. You can find holsters today that simply snap onto the belt — yet hold the gun so securely you could do handsprings down main street and not loose the gun. Of course, I'll have to sit-out the handsprings. I generally just slip and fall on a wet spot or trip on a tree root.

For the traditionalists among us who insist on real leather, you have your choice of cowhide, horsehide, exotic skins or a combination of all. Some swear the best medium is horsehide for its fiber density. Others go the opposite direction, felling that cowhide is the only way to go. Some people like Fords and others like Chevys. Neither is going to budge. So what. They both are right.

Each medium has its own benefits. Just pick the one that's right for you, considering how it benefits your particular application. There are new rigs out there combining all three mediums that also throw in a little high-tech plastic and metal to boot. Horsehide outer shells lined with soft cowhide, a little metal band in the throat of the holster to hold it open for a quick and positive re-holster, and a small plastic grabber thing-a-ma-jig inside for retention. The best of all worlds, maybe?

The bottom line of this whole dissertation is crack open your wallet. If you have to use a crowbar — or even the jaws of life — do it. Find a quality holster that fits your needs and buy the thing. Clint Smith uses a rule-of-thumb for this. Figure you should spend one-third the price of the gun on leather for it. Gads, sounds expensive, doesn't it? It's just like motorcycle riding though. Ten dollar head? Buy a $10 helmet. How much is your life really worth?

Do you have a birthday coming up? Why not answer the age-old question of, "What do you want for your birthday this year, honey? " with a gift certificate from your favorite maker. It's time to retire that old misshapen thumb snap rig to the junk drawer. Or the garage sale or the doggy chew toy bin. If that's difficult for sentimental reasons, rename your junk drawer "The Holster Hall of Fame" if it makes you feel better.

If you don't take advantage of new technology as it appears, you're crazy. Besides, it's always fun to get something new, eh? Check out the pretty pictures and see what you're missing. Like they say, "It's only your life."

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LAPD SWAT

Continued from page 64

Also included on this and all Kimber pistols is the Mark II Firing Pin Safety System. Operating via the grip safety, this firing pin safety is totally independent of the trigger and cannot affect trigger pull. When the grip safety is depressed, the firing pin safety is deactivated. When the pistol is not gripped, the firing pin safety is applied automatically.

When the smoke cleared, the LAPD SWAT Team specified two additional options on its Kimber Custom II: Kimber's tritium Meprolite Night Sights, and 30 lpi checkering on the front strap. In addition, LAPD wanted the right side of the slide roll-marked "LAPD SWAT," with a special serial number range beginning with KLA114, the "K" for Kimber and LA114 for LAPD SWAT's call numbers. It was a done-deal.

Roles to Fill

Although sidearms are usually primary defensive weapons for officers on patrol, they are secondary on tactical SWAT callouts where shoulder-fired arms generally take over. Any time a police officer responds to a probable deadly force incident, the shotgun or patrol rifle is normally the weapon of choice. But most of the time officers on patrol cannot anticipate when a situation will turn deadly, and are armed only with their sidearm. This is why the pistol is so important.

> **"If a carbine, sub-machinegun or shotgun should fail during a SWAT crisis resolution, the pistol must be instantly available to take over."**

If a carbine, sub-machinegun or shotgun should fail during a SWAT crisis resolution, the pistol must be instantly available to take over. It is, in this sense, a backup weapon. But this is not its only function.

Depending on the myriad of circumstances they have to face, SWAT officers must be able to adapt and overcome these challenges. If extremely tight quarters preclude the use of a long gun, an officer may have to sling this weapon and use his pistol until the situation changes. This may happen when opening a door, or when searching nooks and crannies of buildings and houses. And to backup sit-

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uations like this, LAPD's 80 SWAT officers were issued two Kimber Custom II .45 ACP pistols.

Twenty years ago, the SureFire Classic 610R Tactical Pistol Light was designed for the 1911 by SureFire President John Matthews and LAPD SWAT Armorer Bob Weber, now with Safariland International. It has ridden on LAPD SWAT pistols ever since. Operating on 6 volts, this light provides 60 lumens of brightness to identify and target, and can subdue suspects without having to fire a shot.

Mounted to the pistol in front of the trigger guard, this light locks to an elongated slide stop. In addition to a power switch, the light can be activated by squeezing the grip during a normal hold.

> **"None of the LAPD SWAT Kimber Custom II pistols were given special treatment before being issued."**

Since the mounting system of the Classic 610R requires several minutes of installation on any 1911 pistol, one LAPD SWAT Kimber Custom II pistol is a dedicated light gun. Though available to the SWAT officer during "normal" patrol, his uniform pistol during this time is the Kimber Custom II without a light. Officers carry hand-held lights on duty belts, which can be used with the pistol in any number of combat techniques. The Harries technique, invented years ago by Mike Harries, is the hold taught by LAPD SWAT.

As one would surmise, these two Kimber Custom II pistols require two high-grade holsters. That is where Safariland comes in. Issued to SWAT for general patrol are Safariland's Model 6004 and Model 6004 Level II Retention Light Mount holster. Molded of tough synthetic, these holsters have a matte pebble grain finish, and the former comes designed with an enlarged section made to precisely fit the light mounted on the gun.

Seeing it Happen

In July, it was my privilege to cover the issuing of the Kimber Custom II to the LAPD SWAT Team at its headquarters in downtown Los Angeles. After a briefing on the pistol by SWAT Armorer Jim Moody, it was off to the range. Here I had a chance to become acquainted with the men who do the LAPD's toughest job. Although there are no finer police officers anywhere on the face of the earth, and while they display total confidence, I

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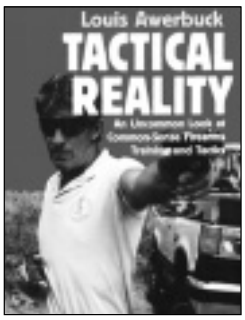

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found them all to be humble, honest and humorous — perfect gentlemen.

During five hours of intensive shooting on the huge range at the LAPD's new Davis Center, thousands of rounds of .45 ACP Winchester factory 230 gr. FMJ and Law Enforcement (only) 230 gr. Ranger SXT were fired through the Kimber Custom II pistols. The LAPD SWAT Team uses only factory loaded .45 ACP ammunition for both practice and duty — with the Winchester SXT Jacketed JHP carried on patrol.

As smoke and empty brass filled the air, many impressive groups appeared on targets from five to 25 yards, as the men continually moved from one firing line to the next. None of the LAPD SWAT Kimber Custom II pistols were given special treatment before being issued, and none had ever seen the inside of the Kimber Custom Shop. Other than their special markings, night sights and checkering, all are standard Kimber Custom II models like the one I own. After being test-fired with 65 rounds each, and targeted from fixtures, they were shipped directly to LAPD SWAT.

Personal Experiences

Shortly after returning home, I received a sample LAPD SWAT Kimber Custom II to test for myself. I found the pistol identical in all ways to the ones I had seen in the hands of the LAPD SWAT operators.

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Shooting my sample LAPD SWAT Kimber Custom II brought no surprises. The pistol performed just like the other Kimbers I own and have tested over the years.

In shooting various brands of .45 ACP ammunition, I experienced no malfunctions and found its combat accuracy excellent. A tactical light made target identification instant, and thanks to Meprolite-light night sights hits were easy even in pitch-dark scenarios similar to those the LAPD SWAT team often deals with.

With the adoption of the Kimber Custom II, the LAPD SWAT team finally has a brand new top-grade 1911 type .45 ACP pistol that is not only uniform but also markedly safer than previously carried.

For you collectors, the bad news is these specially-marked pistols are exclusive to the Los Angeles Police Department. However, whether you're a collector, a professional, or one who wants to own a pistol that is the choice of this elite group of men, you can purchase a standard Kimber Custom II for yourself. And, it's California-legal.

For more information, contact Kimber, 1 Lawton St., Yonkers, NY 10705, (888) 243-4522, www.kimberamerica.com; SureFire L.L.C., 18300 Mount Baldy Cir., Fountain Valley, CA 92708, (800) 828-8809; Safariland, Dept. AH, 3120 E. Mission Blvd., Ontario, CA 91761, (800) 347-1200.

NOTE: All action photos were staged for photographic purposes to illustrate the Kimber Custom II LAPD SWAT pistol, and may not necessarily conform to standard LAPD SWAT operating procedure.

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EYES HAVE IT

Continued from page 67

shooters. It highlights conditions where there is a poor background.

Clear: This color — or lack of — is also good on overcast days, or at the indoor range. Put these cool glasses to work with clear lenses to cut the grass or when using a chain saw. They're also handy when using firearms equipped with a scope or electronic sights, especially when hunting.

Dark lenses of all types cut down on glare that causes snow blindness, and allows you to see better in bright light without straining. On any bright day, dark lenses offering ultraviolet protection should be worn. Many in the medical community believe that macular degeneration, a leading cause of blindness in those over 55, may be related to excessive exposure to sunlight in our early years.

In my brother's medical practice, he reminds his patients to always wear sunglasses and reinforces this practice with his two small children. Even when they learned to walk, whenever they were in the sun, they had on their sunglasses.

Not all glasses fit the same way. For handgun and rifle shooting, glasses that cover the eyes and curve somewhat around the sides of the head protect against debris coming from the sides.

When skeet shooting or bird hunting, those that ride high on the nose are preferred since you are shooting at objects moving upwards. When looking up with standard glasses, the top of a standard frame can get in the way. Generally, any type is better than none. But for the design that works for everything get frames that wrap around the face since they stay on better and offer more all-around protection.

Focusing Issues

As we age, our sight changes, and it's especially noticeable in the mid 40s when we start to hold *Handgunner* out at arm's length to focus on the print. To better understand what happened to your eyeballs, think of this focusing problem like a camera lens that needs to be focused. Here is when terms like nearsightedness and farsightedness come into play. In our teens and 20s our eyes adjust rapidly to both. But with age, as our reflexes slow, our eyes also have problems getting it all together. I hate when this happens.

Farsightedness, or hyperopia, is a common refraction problem causing blurred vision of close objects. We begin to notice something is wrong with our vision when we find ourselves holding our reading material at arms length. A simple way your optometrist or ophthalmologist can correct this is with reading glasses.

For the shooter, when the glasses are used, we can now see the sights clearly but the target is now blurred.

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Nearsightedness, or myopia, is when distant objects are blurred. This is a condition affecting roughly 20 percent of the population and commonly begins between the ages of 8 and 14. If you have myopia, your eye is generally slightly out of round, with light rays focusing in front of the retina instead of directly on it. This results in distant objects being out of focus. Although no treatment has been shown to eliminate the need for corrective lenses, it's important this condition be recognized and corrective lenses be worn. For some, a doctor will recommend a surgical procedure.

If you have trouble focusing on your handgun's open sights, try a "pin hole" device you can make and attach to your shooting or reading glasses. This will improve focusing at all distances. My pistol coach, an "old" 40-year-old army sergeant, had this handy gizmo on his glasses. Today I need all the help I can get to keep focus. Of course you could do it the easy way and simply buy a Merit Optical Attachment, and presto — you've got just the ticket to solve your problems.

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PG-30 Model 30 (10 round mag. only)

Grip Extensions are available in red, green, blue, and black

Grip Enhancers (Compact and Full Size) Models w/frontstrap cut-out

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PG-NFML 9mm/40 SW/357SIG
Non Full Metal Lined Mags.
PG-FML 9mm/40SW/357SIG
Full Metal Lined Mags.
PG-2021 Model 20 (10mm)
Model 21 (45 Auto)

Grip Enhancers are available in red, green, blue, and black

Plus One Extension (Sub-Compact Model 27, 33 and 36)

Suggested Retail $9.95

PG-2733 Model 27 (40SW
Model 33 (357SIG)

This product adds one round to the model 27 or model 33 converting the factory nine round magazines to ten rounds. (legal limit)
Note: It is unlawful to alter a post ban magazine's capacity to hold more than ten rounds.

PG-36 Model 36 (45AUTO)

This product adds one round to the model 36 converting the factory six round magazines to seven rounds.

Magazine Extensions (All Pre-Ban High Capacity Magazines)

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PG-G9P2 Plus Two for (9mm)
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Not for use on any ten round magazine.

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MAGIC

Continued from page 50

parent. Sadly, in the minds of some shooters there is another equation: magnum = better. That is not automatically so by any standard of objective measure, but no marketer of magnum anythings has done much to change the perception.

So with the cartridge in hand, and recalling Roper's comments about recoil, S&W needed a gun to shoot it. "Retaining the general lines of the .44 and without noticeably changing its proportions, they added metal here and there and finally restored the top rib of the barrel..."

Roy Jinks continues the story.

> **"As I read Roper's words about recoil I laughed at first, because today some people think a .357 is relatively puny."**

"In developing the revolver for the new cartridge, the factory did not consider the revolver would have wide sales. In fact, they planned the new revolver would be a custom-built handgun registered to each of the individual purchasers. The customer had a choice of any barrel length he wanted from 3½" to 8⅜". He could chose from seven different front sights and it would be zeroed at the factory for any range out to 200 meters.

To me, the finish of the revolver is most striking. The top of the barrel and frame are hand checkered at 48 lines per inch and the blue is that gorgeous deep-blue produced by the carbona or hot oven process. Jinks explained the polished gun went into an oven packed with bone, pine oil and carbona wax and was then heated to 750 degrees. The temperature was then reduced to 400 and held for several hours. Afterwards, the gun was quenched in oil.

Of course the secret to any beautiful finish is the polishing. In any gun factory of the old days, polishers were among the highest paid workers because a job done wrong could ruin a gun. Jinks also mentions that during the Depression era of the '30s when the Registry Guns were made, jobs were scarce, and the men took great pride in their work.

Stocks were selected from the best walnut available; this was before the arrival of "target" stocks that were so popular later. So Smith & Wesson designed a grip adapter to help fill the

space in the grip area. If the customer wanted a grip adapter the gun would also be shipped with a shorter grip screw should the owner wish to remove the adapter. Even the box was special. Blue and gold with the identification ".357 Magnum Revolver" on every aspect. Inside was bright red with printed instructions in English and Spanish.

In short the gun was the best Smith & Wesson could make at the time, and they charged accordingly. At a time when the most expensive gun cost $45, the .357 was $60. I don't know what that would work out to in Y2K dollars but I'm sure it would compare to the finest of custom work today.

Smith & Wesson's idea was to "register" each revolver to the original purchaser, and a fancy certificate would be issued for each gun when the owner returned the warranty registration. In addition to the serial number, which was in the normal location on the butt, cylinder and barrel, there was a separate "REG" number on the frame in the yoke cut.

The Gun Is Born

The first .357 Magnum was finished on April 8, 1935, and given to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. Jinks reports orders far exceeded the company's ability to produce guns, which was at a rate of about 120 per month. In 1938, the registration procedure was dropped after approximately 5,500 guns were made. The revolver continued in production until World War II converted S&W to war work. Total pre-war production was 6,642 guns. The magnum returned in late 1948. When S&W adopted model numbers in 1958, it became the Model 27.

As I read Roper's words about recoil I laughed at first, because today some people think a .357 is relatively puny, and there are handguns with twice as much recoil that really do hurt the shooter. I don't know if there has ever been a real shoulder dislocation, but the exaggeration makes a great point. We embrace magnum cartridges and welcome a bit of pain and the idea that somebody thought — 67 years ago — it was perhaps too much gun is almost funny.

Nonetheless, what you see here is perhaps the high-point in factory-built revolvers. Nothing available over the counter today can compete on all levels, and that's too bad. Or is it? Sometimes, it's nice to know magic once existed. For real.

The gun you see here was shipped June 4, 1936, to a sporting goods store in Denver, Colorado. Smith & Wesson has extensive records on the Registry guns. Historical research is available for most older models. There is a charge of $30 for this service. For more information, contact Roy Jinks, Historian, Smith & Wesson, 2100 Roosevelt Ave., Springfield, MA 01102.

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Continued from page 71

someone with very large hands may find the grip just a little on the short side. As I got to know the Nagant I noticed the cylinder does not lock except when cocked, so with the hammer down you can spin it. Neat. Except I've always abhorred old revolver designs with this feature.

Loading is simple, and slow. The loading gate is easily thumbed open with the firing hand with rounds dropped in as you rotate the cylinder clockwise. Load seven rounds and snap the gate shut. The hammer has a large, easy-to-reach spur, and it's a simple matter to thumb it back for single-action shooting. The trigger pull in the single-action mode measured approximately 6 lbs. Though heavy, it was crisp.

Double action mode is where the Nagant runs into trouble. Heavy fails to begin to describe it. "Is it broke?" comes close, but still falls short. Alas, words fail me. This dreadful pull is due to the fact that firing double-action must not only raise and release the hammer as it spins the cylinder, but must also cam the cylinder forward.

Whew.

To test the Nagant's accuracy, I fired it from sandbags at 25 yards. I was unable to locate any original Russian service ammunition and so used what was available, a commercial load from Fiocchi. This features a brass case and uses a 96 gr. flatnose FMJ. While extremely expensive, it's at least boxer primed. I also tested the Nagant with the .32 ACP cylinder — due to the cost of Fiocchi's load. The .32 ACP loadings used were Winchester's and Sellier & Bellot's FMJ, along with Winchester's 60 gr. Silvertip HP.

Target Shooting?

In bright light, the Nagant's narrow front sight provided a fine aiming point. In addition, the single action trigger was good, with just a bit of creep. Touching a Fiocchi 7.62 round off showed recoil was non-existent. The 96 gr. FMJ loped across the chronograph at an average velocity of, yawn, 914 fps. There you go.

What the Nagant lacked in power it made up for in accuracy. My best 5-shot group came in at 2" and the Nagant averaged a respectable 2.5." Hits were easily made on silhouettes at 50 yards. Switching cylinders, we had some fun shooting .32 ACP. The cylinders swapped easily, and the .32 ACP unit closely matched the revolvers finish and functioned perfectly. Groups opened up into the 3" to 4" range, depending upon the load. No problems encountered.

Finishing our work on the bench, we decided to see how the Nagant performed in the real world, shooting a variety of drills from 2 to 50 yards using the issue holster. This features an ammunition pouch that holds a spare 14 rounds,

enough for two full reloads. Here the Nagant vapor-locked and its short-comings became readily apparent.

Though I could make good hits while engaging multiple targets, it was very slow going due to the double-action trigger pull. No doubt a husky Cossack could do better, but the trigger got the better of this Maine boy. I also found the narrow front sight hard to pick up at speed. Lowlight? Forget it.

The worst was yet to come. The real trouble began after you shot your seven. First you thumbed the loading gate open. Then you began unlimbering the ejection rod. To do this you must first twist it clockwise to unlock it, pull it straight out, twist the collar to which it's attached to the left, line a chamber up with the rod, and punch the rod straight back. Does the term "Rube Goldberg" ring a bell?

This is not Samuel Colt's Single Action Army though, and empties do not eject with ease. The case mouths flare open, as designed, to form an effective gas seal. Due to this they require quite a bit of force to punch out. A couple of times I had to put the butt of the pistol against my chest as I fought to kick an empty free. It was also disheartening to see some of these expensive empties split at the case mouth.

Things didn't get much better once the cylinder was empty. It was almost impossible to dig the tiny rounds out of the cartridge carrier on the holster, especially while wearing gloves. As your fingers go numb in cold weather, it only compounds the difficulty of indexing the small blunt cartridges in the proper direction for insertion into the cylinder. Geeze. No wonder the Soviet Union fell apart.

No matter how much I practiced, I couldn't get my reloads much quicker than 12 to 15 seconds. And I thought heel magazine releases on European autos were slow. If your trench was being overrun it'd be best to fire your seven and then let the Nagant hang by its lanyard while you wielded a sharpened E-tool, or a big rock.

But Is It Fun?

As a collector's item, plinker, or trail gun for use on small game, the Nagant is a great find. It's tough as a bag of hammers, accurate, and will stop a bunny in its tracks. I thoroughly enjoy shooting mine and its fun factor is high. At the low prices they're found, they're a steal. Mated to the .32 ACP cylinder Century sells, they're reasonably inexpensive to shoot. However, if the year was 1905 and a Japanese officer had just dropped into my trench armed with the sword of his ancestors, I'd be wishing for my top-break .44 Smith. When it comes to a combat pistol, you want speed, usable accuracy, and power. Here the Nagant comes up short. But hey, don't we all, sometimes?

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AYOOB FILES

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At approximately 4:00 a.m., the record shows, the officers heard a radio report from a marked patrol unit. Couched in the terminology of the time, it described, "two male Negroes about 23, 24 years of age," who had stolen a taxicab at Liberty Avenue and Van Wyck Expressway.

When Dispatch asked if the suspects were believed to have weapons, the patrol unit radioed back, "Possibly a gun." At 0422 hours, the report was supplemented: the stolen cab had been found, and the suspects had not yet been apprehended. "One perpetrator was wearing a white hat and black overcoat, the other a brown leather jacket," came the report over the police radio. Scott and Shea mentally logged the information.

Police Officer Scott was driving the unmarked unit on New York Boulevard and passing 112th Road when he observed two black males, one wearing a white hat and the other a brown leather jacket. "Hey, Tom," he said to Shea, "Over there, on the side of the road, those are the two guys from the taxi-stickup."

In the following moments, there would be a flurry of gunfire and lives would change forever.

Conflicting Accounts

Before long, Shea would be telling detectives what had happened. He and Scott had identified themselves as police officers, and the shorter of the two suspects, the one in the white hat, had drawn a dark-colored revolver from his pocket, stating, "F**k you, you're not going to take me." When he turned the gun toward Shea the officer opened fire with his Model 10.

The man passed the gun to the taller suspect, then collapsed, said Shea, and that second man ran off with the gun and escaped from view. Scott reported chasing the second man, who he said fired at him with a blue steel revolver that looked like a "Saturday Night Special," and Scott returned a shot with no apparent effect before the fleeing suspect disappeared from view.

However, minutes after the shooting, an African-American man had run into the middle of nearby Dillon Avenue and flagged down a passing police car. "Help! Help! Shooting! My son! My son!" The man was Add Armstead, age 51, and he told the police he and his son had been walking to Armstead's workplace intending to arrive early when a white car had pulled up and a white male emerged.

His story went, "We were walking to work when a car pulled up and a man got out. He hollered, 'You black son of a bitch,' and I ran. I had my pay from yesterday, and I thought he was going to rob me. Then he started shooting…"

The two accounts were starkly different. But there was no argument about

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one thing. Lying at the scene was Clifford Glover, dying of a .38 caliber gunshot wound. The track ran from point of entry in the upper-right back, going upward and slightly leftward, through the upper right lung and tearing open the right subclavian artery before exiting just to the right of midline of his chest.

Clifford Glover was 10 years old. No gun was recovered near him. On June 12, 1973, the Grand Jury indicted Police Officer Thomas Shea on the charge of murder.

At Trial

Under activist union president Bob McKiernan, the PBA swung into action, hiring Attorney Jacob Evseroff to lead the defense. Meanwhile, the public was choosing sides. Much of the city and most of the cops thought Shea was being railroaded. Some thought he was a child murderer who should burn for the death of the youngster.

It was, without question, one of those cases when politics roils the justice system. Thomas Hauser's "The Trial of Patrolman Thomas Shea" is the most thorough account of the matter. Hauser wrote, "Community pressure for a murder indictment was enormous. Shortly after (newly-appointed Queens County District Attorney Michael) Armstrong had taken office, a group of black businessmen and elected officials had visited him to urge that Shea be dealt with harshly. 'Remember,' one of the men warned, 'your appointment as District Attorney runs out in December. We'll be around for the fall election."

Witnesses on each side proved to be imperfect. Internal affairs investigators insisted that Shea's partner could not have seen what he said he saw from his vantage point. Having been in three previous shootings, one of which featured a suspect who turned out not to have a gun when Shea said the man had fired at him, didn't help the defense at all. Nor did the comment by an officer at the scene, possibly Scott but certainly not Shea, that inadvertently went out over the radio as he stood near the dying boy: "Die, you little f**k."

On the other hand, great flaws developed in the credibility of the prosecution's witnesses. One woman who corroborated Armstead's tale of cold-blooded murder was impeached by a statement she had made the day of the shooting that she hadn't seen a thing. Armstead himself, the state's star witness, was a weak link.

The jury learned that while he referred to the dead Clifford Glover as his son, the boy was in fact the son of his girlfriend instead. Having claimed at first that he never owned a gun, Armstead subsequently admitted he had a stainless steel .38 revolver he kept at work and sometimes carried — a gun he had "taken" from a customer's car where he worked. At least some of the jurors had to look askance at a prosecution that would ignore possession of a stolen gun and illegal carry of same in

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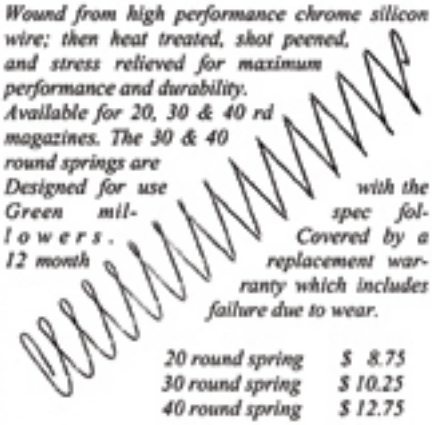

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New York City, particularly when they learned Armstead was a convicted criminal who had served four months for statutory rape. Defense lawyer Jack Evseroff took Armstead apart for the inconsistency in his testimony: now he saw Shea shoot Clifford, now he didn't, etc.

Police had found a starter's pistol in a sewer on Dillon, the street where Armstead had flagged down a police car, and a retired cop had found a discarded black toy handgun that was close enough to the scene to have been ditched after the shooting.

The prosecution made a big deal about the stainless gun of Armstead's not resembling the black gun described by the officers, and the gun being found too far from the scene for Armstead to have planted it there. However, the jury was smart enough to realize that Armstead could have taken a gun from young Clifford and gotten rid of it any number of ways before hailing a marked police car.

They had heard character testimony about Shea from numerous black witnesses, including an African-American cop who testified that Shea had once risked his life to save this officer's. They were not about to accept he suddenly decided to step out of his car one night and murder a black child for no reason in front of two witnesses. There was an abundance of reasonable doubt.

The jury found Thomas Shea not guilty. However, the NYPD would not admit it all might have been a witch-hunt. At the end of August, 1974, Thomas Shea was fired from the police department for "failing to use utmost care in handling and discharging his service revolver." In short order, his marriage fell apart and he was in financial ruin.

Aftermath

In the wake of the Shea prosecution, the PBA became much more aggressive about encouraging officers to say nothing to investigators after having been involved in shootings, and wait for the arrival of a PBA lawyer. More than a quarter of a century later, this advice has become institutionalized.

On a February night in 1999, a 23-year-old immigrant named Amadou Diallo was killed in the Bronx by four officers who fired a total of 41 times when, after initially fleeing the officers, Diallo spun and jerked out a square black nylon wallet that looked like a small semiautomatic pistol. Officers Ed McMellon, Sean Carroll, Ken Boss, and Richard Murphy did not make the circumstances of Diallo's furtive movement as immediately clear as might have been, and the incident snowballed into a show trial for murder that ended in the acquittal of all four officers.

None were reinstated with full privileges; McMellon and Murphy have joined the Fire Department of New York, and Boss and Carroll remain on "modified assignments," without guns or arrest powers.

Stephen Worth was hired by the PBA to

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defend McMullen, and was the de facto leader of the four-lawyer defense team in the Diallo case. "There were other incidents in the '70s that led to the PBA taking a harder line in defending accused officers, and officers' increasing reluctance to speak to investigators after being involved in shootings," Worth told me recently. "However, in my opinion the Shea case was a crystallizing event in that regard. It was the first of the new wave of 'controversial police shootings' in this city."

The Lessons

The good guys must always be clearly identified as such. Armstead was able to convince senior NYPD officials and city prosecutors he did not hear the officer shout "police" and thought he and his young companion were being robbed by grungily-dressed men who stepped out of an unmarked white Buick Skylark and pointed guns at him. Under similar circumstances, a criminal could shoot an officer or armed citizen and theoretically get away with it by claiming he thought the good guy was a bad guy.

Secure evidence at the scene if at all possible. Rookie cops in New York City and elsewhere have long been told emphatically how important it is not to let a street criminal run off with the bad guy's gun, particularly after you've shot him. The Shea case is almost invariably cited as an example why. However, the two officers didn't "let" Armstead escape with a gun; Scott testified he shot at him, but missed.

Details can be murky. Could Armstead's silvery stainless revolver have been mistaken for a black gun in the poor pre-dawn light? Sure. I know one officer, a certified S&W armorer, who identified the bad guy's gun (in a lit room) as a gray-finish Smith & Wesson Highway Patrolman. It turned out he had the brand right, but it was actually a stainless Model 67. In crisis, your perceptions may be imperfect as to detail, and it seldom does anyone any good to be overly specific. If you aren't absolutely certain he had a black gun, the best description is, "He held a gun that appeared to me to be black."

Understand that, biologically, the younger viper has the stronger venom. It was never proven that 10-year-old Clifford Glover did in fact point a gun at Officer Shea, but both Shea and his partner swore he did. Recent tragedies have reminded the nation that very young people can indeed commit murder. Might Clifford have been unable to distinguish fantasy from grave reality, to the extent that he would turn and pull a toy gun or starter pistol like the ones found nearby later? Stranger things have happened.

Armstead admitted to sometimes carrying an illegal, loaded gun — a serious felony in New York City. Might Armstead have had the boy carry his gun for him? His statutory rape record does not show great concern for child welfare, nor

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does his statement after Shea's acquittal: "For that one kid, there's going to be a thousand whites that die." In this case, we will simply never know.

You must be prepared to defend a shot in the back. There are a variety of circumstances in which a person can be justifiably shot in the back. This was apparently lost on both command staff of NYPD in 1973, and the prosecutors of the time.

Suppose I pull a gun to murder you, and you draw your own in self-defense. As I see your gun coming up, I duck and spin away faster than you can see and react in the dark. Your shot was justifiable, but it hit me in the back and under the standards applied to Shea, you would be wrongfully accused of murder. If as I flee from you I turn my arm and start to bring a gun up on you, with my back still to you, you have a choice: shoot me in the back, or die. This would duplicate the angle of Shea's bullet that hit young Glover. Anyone who lawfully carries a gun must be prepared to authenticate these facts to those who would judge them.

Cross-racial shootings carry the potential for unjust aftermath. As much as we might like to pretend otherwise, this is still a racially-striated country. After the acquittal, Jacob Evseroff told reporters one day he would like to defend a black cop who killed a white kid so people would stop calling him a racist. Good luck, Jack. My experience is that it goes both ways. In California, I spoke for a black man who had killed someone of the same ethnicity as the prosecutor, and truly don't believe he would have been charged with murder if he'd slain a black man under the same circumstances. He was acquitted (by an all-white jury). On the East Coast, I took the case of a black man who had slain a white racist who had attacked him and was about to kill him. His lawyers settled the case out of court, fearing a jury of white Archie Bunkers who might have convicted him on the race factor alone.

The bottom line is this: Real world use of deadly force isn't always the clean-cut good versus evil that is depicted on the television and movie screens. Sometimes, the decision has to be made in a split second in the dark as it was made by Thomas Shea on the night in question.

And sometimes, the ending isn't happy — for anyone. Jack Evseroff put it best when he told me years later, "This incident was a tragedy for all concerned, including Tom Shea."

It took Tom Shea a long time to put his life together. The incident cost him his job, his family — life as he knew it. Moving far from New York City, he found the courage to rebuild. He is 65 now, in a strong marriage to a second wife, with whom he has had two sons. He built a good second career in the private sector. "I really just want to put it all behind me," he told me. Today, Tom Shea chooses not to own firearms.

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TAFFIN TESTS

Continued from page 22

The first time Jay ventured to the Shot Show, he was individually, and without collusion, accosted by every gun writer who uses BRP Bullets. And we dutifully warned him not to let the quality slip. He certainly took the warning to heart, and has continued to turn out premium quality bullets just as his predecessor did.

Two of my favorite BRP Bullets are the 290 gr. gas-checked .44 SWC and the 305 gr. gas-checked .45 flat nose. With the .44, my two favorite loads have been 10 gr. of Unique for 1,100 to 1,150 fps, depending upon barrel length, and 21.5 gr. of either H110 or WW296 for about 200 fps more muzzle velocity. With the heavy .45 I go two directions. In the .454 Casull, 32.0 gr. of either H110 or WW296 gives 1,600+ fps, while a much milder loading for heavy frame .45 Colt sixguns is 21.5 grs of either powder for right at 1,200 fps from a 7" Ruger single action. All loads exhibit excellent accuracy.

Dear John

One of the most frequently asked questions I receive pertains to the availability of "authentic" Keith bullets. Now, for the first time, BRP is offering a premium quality, 250 gr. Keith bullet for use in the .44 Special or .44 Magnum.

Recently, I've been testing a batch of BRP Keith .44 hard cast bullets in various .44 Special and .44 Magnum sixguns with the following results. All loads were assembled with the BRP sized to .430" and loaded in Starline .44 Special brass over 7.5 gr. Unique using CCI #300 standard pistol primers.

CHART 3

SIXGUN	MV	5 SHOTS/25 YDS
.44 Special/17.0 gr. #2400/Starline Brass/CCI #300 LP Primers		
Colt New Frontier 5" 3rd Gen.	1,154	1⅞"
Colt New Frontier 7" 2nd Gen.	1,208	1⅝"
S&W Model 24 6"	1,171	1"
S&W Model 624 4"	1,156	2"
TLA Flat-Top Target 7"	1,295	2"
.44 Magnum/10.0 gr. Unique/Starline Brass/CCI #300 LP Primers		
Ruger Hunter Model 7"	1,168	1⅛"
Ruger SBHWK 10"	1,187	1⅝"
S&W Model 629 6"	1,158	1"
.44 Magnum /22.0 gr. #2400/Starline Brass/CCI #300 LP Primers		
Ruger Hunter Model 7"	1,502	1"
Ruger SBHWK 10"	1,589	1⅝"
S&W Model 629 6"	1,499	1"

All groups are five shots at 25 yards. Two Colt New Frontiers were used, a 5" 3rd Generation yielding 1,014 fps and five shots in 1" — and a 7" 2nd Generation resulting in 1,067 fps and a group of 1⅞".

Switching to Smith & Wessons saw a Model 24 6" do 990 fps and 1", while a companion Model 624 4" registered 943 fps and 1". The final testing with this load was performed with a Texas Longhorn Arms 7" Flat-Top Target for 1,011 and 1" fps .

The only fly in the ointment for testing both the Buffalo Bore factory loads and the Keith bullets from BRP Bullets was the shooter's antique eyes, which rarely allow one-hole groups anymore *(see chart 3)*.

BRP has a complete line of premium quality bullets for everything from the .32 Magnum through the .500 Linebaugh. Other recent additions to their line include two heavyweight .44s, a 310 LFNGC and a 325 LBTGC; two .45s, a 260 SWCGC and a 305 LFNGC. And finally, for those who shoot either the .480 Ruger or the .475 Linebaugh, two LFNGC's, one at 335 gr. and the other at 360 gr.

Jay Sanders just recently completed the move to Montana and BRP can now be found at P.O. Box 70,Whitehall, MT 59759; (406) 287-3120. Buffalo Bore is located at 100 Freeman Cr. Rd., Carmen, ID 83462; (208) 756-8085. Both can be found on the net at www.sixgunner.com.

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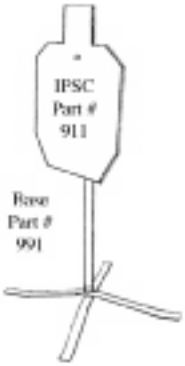

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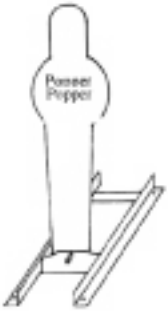

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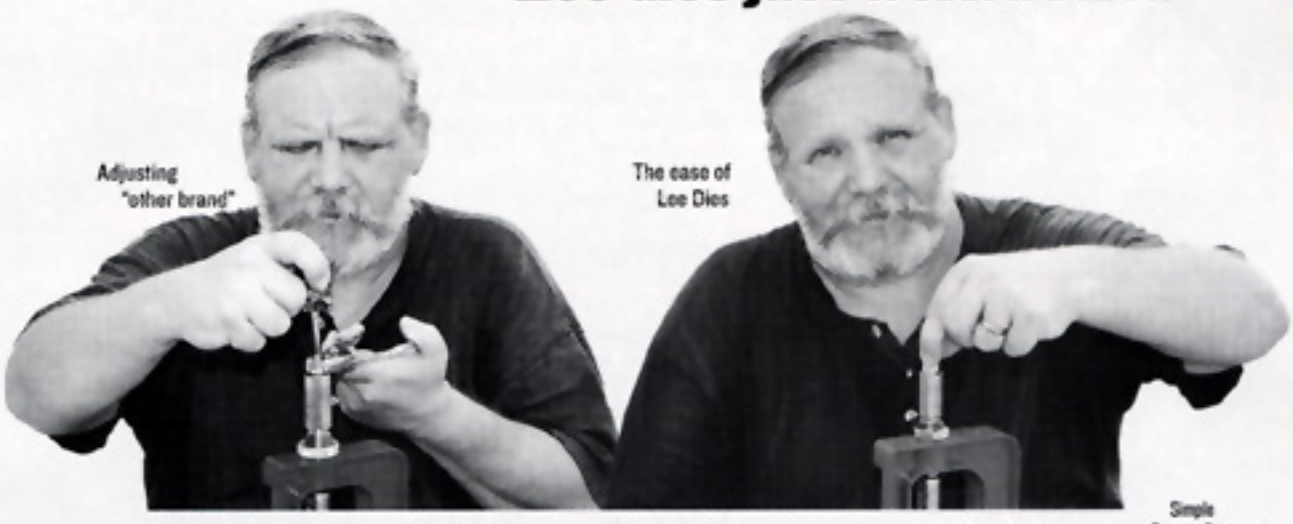

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Charles E. Petty

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A thriving industry has grown up to supply clothing and accessories every bit as important to cowboy shooters as guns. We usually think in terms of belts and holsters but there really is a lot of other stuff we routinely need. You know, like cleaning gear, tools, lunch and other necessities. Dillon brings us a Mason's tool bag that has been virtually unchanged for over 100 years. It is made of leather and canvas and looks old right out of the box. There are two sizes (20" and 24") and there is a hinged steel re-enforcing frame around the top to hold it open. There's room for tons of gear or even a take-down rifle or shotgun.

They also have a beautifully constructed piece of leatherwork called a Stage Strip. It is made of heavy tan leather and has two rows of precisely-sewn cartridge loops. It will hold 10 on each side and handle most popular cowboy cartridges (.38-40, .44-40, .44 Special and .45 Colt). The strap is 11½" long and 1½" wide. There is a sturdy brass snap so you can hook it to a belt or cart. I don't know about anyone else, but it has always seemed to me that cartridge loops are either way too tight or too loose. This one is just right.

For more information, contact: Dillon Precision, 8009 Dillon's Way, Scottsdale, AZ 85260; (800) 223-4570. www.dillonprecision.com

Charles E. Petty

REDDING PRO SERIES COMPETITION DIES

One of the better kept secrets in handloading is that Redding makes a die set specifically designed for users of Dillon progressive loading tools. They call them the "Pro Series" and they have now expanded that offering to include a Competition Seating Die.

The competition dies have a micrometer adjustment permitting control of seating depth in increments of .001". While we know that precise seating is a big deal in rifle cartridges, it can also be a factor with handguns. Redding's Competition dies have precision-ground sleeves to hold the bullet in perfect alignment so it goes into the case without any misalignment. Seating depth is then adjusted with the micrometer atop the die.

The design of the seating die does not permit the inclusion of a crimp ring within the die so the set includes one of Redding's separate crimp dies. Dies intended for autoloading cartridges have a taper crimp, but those for typical revolver rounds have one of Redding's unique Profile crimp dies. This is a combination of taper and roll crimps that has been shown to often improve accuracy.

Since the Dillon presses perform the expanding function at the same time as powder is charged, the Pro Series set does not include a normal expander die. The sizing dies are Redding's proven titanium carbide for straight cases but steel sizing dies are standard for cartridges such as the .44-40 or .45-70.

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Charles E. Petty

EAGLE HERITAGE SERIES GRIPS

Even though the economic reasons were probably sound, I hated it when S&W closed their wood shop and began using grips from outside vendors. I know somebody will yell at me for not using the factory-approved word "stocks," but I've called them grips all my life and am too old to change now.

Besides, that's what Eagle Grips calls them and they have come to the rescue with their "Heritage" series for S&W K- and N-frames and some Colt revolvers. Eagle Grips specializes in Indian rosewood grips for a zillion different pistols and revolvers. They also have available more exotic materials such as bone or horn, or a very realistic synthetic ivory material.

My favorite of the older S&W grips were those with the diamond in the middle of the checkering pattern. In fact that diamond is a valuable clue in my search for older S&W revolvers that might need a good home. And of those old grips, the best of all are those with the "coke bottle" shape that are a bit thicker in the middle. This shape fits the palm of the hand in a natural (they thought of this before things became ergonomic) manner. More plainly — they feel good.

I tried the Heritage Series grips on a pair of S&W revolvers with both N- and K-frame styles. The fit was every bit as good as I've come to expect from factory grips and the hand-cut checkering provides a nice non-slip feeling without being too sharp. They're simply beautifully-done, classic grips.

Eagle Grips, 460 Randy Rd., Carol Stream, IL 60188; (800) 323-6144; www.eaglegrips.com

BROWNELLS MAINSPRING HOUSING HONE

This is one of those neat little things that works wonders in an unexpected location. When I first heard of honing the interior surface of a 1911 mainsprin housing, my reaction was, "Who cares?"

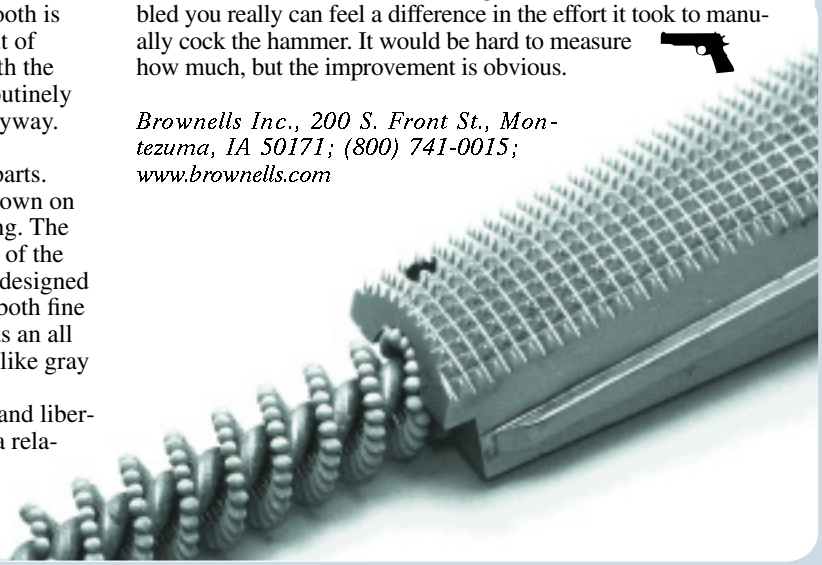
One of the golden rules of pistolsmithing is that smooth is good. Rough is bad. But there is also an element of "out of sight, out of mind." I think it's nearly sinful to mess with the mainspring on a 1911 and the only folks who do that routinely probably don't know how to do a proper trigger job, anyway. But this is another, easier, option.

The 1911 mainspring housing actually has moving parts. When the hammer is cocked the hammer spur pushes down on the mainspring cap which, in turn, compresses the spring. The cap is a pretty close fit inside the housing, and the coils of the spring touch too. Brownells now offers a pair of hones designed to fit the inside diameter of the housing. They come in both fine and medium grit, but I suspect medium will do nicely as an all purpose grit. Probably the best description is they look like gray bore brushes.

In use, the hone is chucked in a variable speed drill and liberally lubricated with honing oil. It's important to run at a relatively slow speed (the instructions say 750 rpm) and to always keep the hone moving. It only takes a few seconds to get a good polish. If a finer finish is needed the fine hone can be used as a second step. It's important to thoroughly clean the inside of the housing to remove grit and oil before reassembly.

When all is done and the housing cleaned, oiled and reassembled you really can feel a difference in the effort it took to manually cock the hammer. It would be hard to measure how much, but the improvement is obvious.

Brownells Inc., 200 S. Front St., Montezuma, IA 50171; (800) 741-0015; www.brownells.com



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PREVENT ACCESS

Continued from page 74

for a low of around $500 to a high of "the sky's the limit" here. From six long guns and a few handguns to dozens of long guns and dozens of handguns, you can find what you need. Phoenix USA, Browning, Heritage, Fort Knoxx and other names you'd recognize work in this category.

Down the scale are the locking steel cabinets from Homak and others. Basically a heavy-duty locker, often with combination dials or those fancy "round" keys, these work for most situations but offer little or no fire protection. Some makers offer hard plastic boxes and corner locking boxes too. Look to Doskocil, Knoxx Industries, MTM and others to offer affordable ways to lock them up.

An interesting way to answer the, "How do I keep my home defense handgun handy" question is the electronic keypad wall safes and handgun-sized lock boxes. Phoenix USA, V-Line, Gun Vault, Homak, MTM and others offer various versions. From top quality, all-steel with electronic pads to simply locking boxes with a rudimentary key or fingerpad locks, these are easily installed in a wall or secured to a bed frame, closet wall or even a dresser drawer.

Other Goodies

An interesting concept is offered by W. Waller & Sons. Their Soft Safe looks like a conventional zippered gun rug but has some secrets. Aside from protecting your gun's finish from abuse, they float, are somewhat fire-resistant and, due to the virtually pick-proof integral lock, comply with Federal requirements for transporting guns.

Indeed, many "soft" cases can be locked with a simple padlock but don't offer the kind of protection a hard-shell case or box can deliver. Still, something is infinitely better than nothing. The Waller clearly leads the pack in this category.

From cable locks, like those offered by Pro-Lok and various firearm manufacturers, to the innovative Life Jacket, from Mogul Corporation, the options are many. If you have a revolver, simply snapping a padlock around the frame when the cylinder is open will prevent most "events."

This is where the Life Jacket excels. It offers the protection from prying little fingers, yet allows you to access your home defense gun quickly if needed. Out of sight, out of mind is important when dealing with kids and guns. If they can't touch, play or otherwise coon-finger it, they soon loose interest. So covering it, locking it away, and otherwise keeping it out of sight will always work best.

But, whatever you do, take the time to do it. It might be the most valuable 30 seconds you've ever spent.

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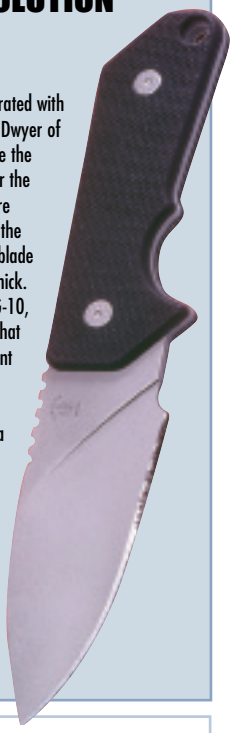

Buck Knives has collaborated with Mick Strider and Duane Dwyer of Strider Knives to produce the Strider Solution. Built for the harshest conditions where failure is not an option, the wide (1 13/16") drop point blade is 4¾" long and 3/16" thick. The handle is made of G-10, a tough resin laminate that is lightweight yet resistant to heat, cold, chemicals, impact and other abuse. It comes complete with a rugged Cordura sheath in olive green, and with a high-strength Kydex liner. The MSRP for the Model 888 Strider Solution is $220. See the entire line on the web at: www.buckknives.com

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THE HOG HUNTER Lightfoot Knives

Anyone who has been around high-quality custom knives knows the work of Greg Lightfoot. Writer Pat Covert calls the Canadian knifemaker "one of the smoothest designers in the industry." Now Lightfoot tops even his own work with the new "Hog Hunter" fixed-blade offering. The blade is a 6½" S 30 V with a black powder coat. The handle is G10 and the Hog Hunter comes with a Kydex Sheath with the new "hog hide" rubber coating. The Shoulder Harness is a JSP Blade Rigger. Retail price is $450. See the Hog Hunter and more Greg Lightfoot craftsmanship on the website: www.lightfootknives.com

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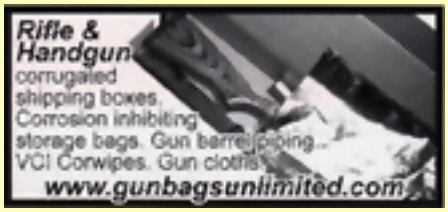

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ADD IT UP

92,000

Number of people the Federal Transportation Security Agency plans to hire to beef up the Homeland Security department.

10,000

Number of Crimson Trace Laser Grips sold to the Singapore Police Force.

4

Number of months scientists spent tracking a goose named Kerry tagged with a satellite transmitter, until they found him in an Inuit hunter's freezer.

82

Percent of Americans who support the death penalty.

1

Number of Congressional Medal of Honor winners who almost had their medal confiscated at Phoenix Intl. airport. It seems the sharp edges of the medal had security in a tizzy. Retired Gen. Joe Foss, WWII veteran, was stopped when his medal set off the alarm. After a 45 minute cluster, Gen. Foss left with his medal. "It was so nonsensical," he said. "While you're looking at some clown like me, the terrorist would go by."

34

Percentage of incarcerated felons who admitted they had been scared off, wounded or captured by victims who turned out to be armed.

0

Number of successful highjackings of Israeli airliners since their pilots began carrying guns.

Continued from page 146

of being unsophisticated, of being "One of those gun people," of being insensitive to the needs of the "rest" of society, of putting our platform at the forefront of our voting beliefs. I'm tired of hearing pontifications from ivory towers about "our" part of America from people who have never changed a spark plug, planted a seed or helped build bookcases for the school library. I won't tolerate a condescending attitude anymore; won't tolerate biased, uneducated rhetoric about firearms, hunting or the shooting sports; and I plan to vote at every opportunity. And so should you.

Now you'll have to excuse me. I've got some planting to do, a painting to finish, a light fixture to install, and my daughter and I are going hunting and we have to zero her rifle.

Life is good.

Glock And NYPD

Since the adoption of some 25,000 Glock Model 19 pistols, the NYPD's pistols have sometimes suffered what is being called a "Phase Three" malfunction. Basically, according to NYPD sources, the jam occurs when a fired case is partially extracted but the case mouth is solidly lodged under the extractor with the mouth of the case firmly wedged against the barrel hood. This particular jam is not reducible via standard "tap and rack" methods to clear stoppages. A pry-tool of some type is usually needed.

An upgrade to Speer 124 grain Gold Dot Hollowpoint ammo at 1,225 fps failed to completely correct the problem. Others at training facilities have noted similar occurrances with Glock Model 19s. At press time, there was a trailer on-site at the NYPD range facility, apparently staffed with a Glock armorer making modifications to the NYPD pistols to combat the problem. We applaud Glock's efforts to get to the bottom of things and to make it right.

YOU KNOW YOU'RE A GUN NUT IF...

- *You see footage of the war in Afghanistan and wish you were there to pick up brass.*
- *You understand S&W model numbers.*
- *You can't recall how many firearms you own.*
- *You and your new father-in-law go to a gun show on your wedding day.*
- *You have guns in your safe that you can't, for the life of you, remember how you came by them.*
- *You identify the gun on the cover of the new Dillon catalog before you notice the girl.*
- *You put a Hogue grip on your car's parking brake handle.*
- *You have to run to the range this weekend to shoot because you need some brass to reload.*
- *You guess range and windage whenever you look at road signs.*
- *You buy a gun at a local gunshop only to discover you used to own it .*
- *You're still reading this list.*

CCW State-to-State

If you need CCW info, try this site for updated info regarding CCW laws in most of the states: **www.packing.org**

The "I Expect Things Like This to Happen" Department

We give a hearty *American Handgunner* hand to Afghan President Hamid Karzai after suffering an assassination attempt in September 2002. Leaning out of his car to greet a young boy, a gunman approached Karzai's car and fired two rounds, narrowly missing the President. American bodyguards leapt from a nearby jeep and killed the suspect.

The President then returned to the Governor's guesthouse, where he was staying, and told the BBC's Lyse Doucet, "I'm fine. I expect things like this to happen." Now, if we could only get Karzai a Les Baer 1911 and teach him to use it, he might beat-out the bodyguards next time.

How to Contact Congress

Call the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to be connected to the Washington D.C. Congressional offices. If you don't know the name of your representative, give the operator your ZIP code.

Get the fax number for the office of your representative. Written comments are more permanent than phone calls or e-mails and can make a greater impression. Make sure you reference any bill you are commenting on by number. Thousands of pieces of legislation are worked on in any given year so make sure the one you're concerned about gets the attention.

And most importantly, specifically tell them whether you are for or against a particular bill and personalize the reasons why. Keep it brief and to the point and don't use foul language or rhetoric. But mostly, just take the time to do it.

Too Stupid for Words

If they can't win by telling the truth, they'll try lying. Michael Bellesiles, author of *Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture* will be leaving the campus at Emory University. The Atlanta university has placed Bellesiles on paid leave for the fall semester pending further investigation of allegations he falsified research in his book that alleged few people in early America owned firearms, and that most of the guns they did own were in poor condition.

SPYDERCO'S CLASS ACT

Spyderco knows rescue knives and since the early '80s they've been making them for cops, paramedics, military and anyone else who enters harm's way. To honor those emergency workers who chose to run toward the WTC during the attack, rather than away from it, Spyderco is crafting a limited run of World Trade Center Knives — but these are no ordinary commemoratives.

With a great deal of help, steel was obtained from WTC Building #1 (the operation was video-taped by NYPD to verifiy authenticity) and shipped to Sypderco. Handling the steel was a time-consuming ordeal — it was twisted and burned. Spyderco finalized a design showing the N.Y. skyline silhouetted before the sun, and designed a knife.

To honor the 2,819 lives lost, Spyderco will limit the production to just this number. Each knife comes in a custom presentation box with a letter of authenticity from the owners of Sypderco. One hundred percent of the profits derived from the project will be donated directly to the New York Police and Fire Widows and Children Benefit Fun. None of the numbered knives will be discounted or given away. The cost is $225 and they are available on special order through your dealer or directly from Spyderco. To order from Sypderco, phone (800) 525-7770, x103 or e-mail jparson@spyderco.com.

No Giggles for Google

Google, the widely used Internet search engine, refuses to accept advertising from firearms dealers or companies that sell gun parts and knives, although it will sell ads to pornographic sites.

According to the owners of Bowman's Brigade, a Montana-based online gun parts and adventure gear retail, Google (based in Silicon Valley, Calif.) refused to accept prepaid advertising on three separate occasions in March of 2002. So … if you're a Google user, let this be a lesson.

.50 S&W?

Rumor has it Smith is coming out with a .50 caliber revolver. Preliminary word has it on a very — very — large frame and may use a locking device forward of the cylinder (like the Dan Wesson design). No details yet, but as we hear of 'em, you'll be the first to know.

Clint Smith Wins NTOA Award

Handgunner's own Clint Smith was recently awarded the *Spirit of NTOA Award* in: "Grateful recognition of his continued support of Police Special Operations and the NTOA mission." The NTOA is the National Tactical Officer's Association, an organization dedicated to improving and sharing information for the training of tactical officers.

This award is given to people who are not law enforcement officers but who support the police and tactical community. Smith's award was in recognition of his presentation on the television show *60 Minutes II* having to do with precison SWAT riflemen and the appropriateness of their intensive training for their occupation. At one point, Smith said on camera that, "Some people need to be shot," which caused no-end of hair-pulling and sound bites replayed, again and again. But then he made it very clear why, if the moment arrives, the officer behind the trigger should be trained to the fullest ability possible.

Larry Glick, the Director of the NTOA, presented the award on September 4, 2002, at their annual meeting in Colorado.

THE INSIDER

Roy Huntington

Red America

Let's just face it — most of us are Middle America. We have families, go to PTA meetings, buy Girl Scout Cookies, drive pickup trucks, have a gun or two or six, a wife who makes sure we take out the trash, a good dog, kids who play ball, take dance lessons, play trumpet in the school band, spill ice cream on the carpet (to be licked-up by the dog), and generally make things run in this country.

Most of us live (or were born) in that section of America between the East and West coasts. Some people call it "fly over country" — those long stretches of sorta' flat land, places with names like Arkansas, Wyoming, New Mexico and Texas. As my old friend John Morrison once said, after driving around the country for 60 days in an old Bronco: "You know, Roy, there's the East coast and the West coast and then there's America in between. I know, because I've met 'em."

I have too.

We've been called the silent majority but the key word here is majority. We mind our own business (mostly), unless things aren't right, and then we have a distinct tendency to get involved. Especially if it involves kids, older people or hungry people. We also have trouble minding our own business if bad people are doing bad things to good people. We like to put American flags on things (everything) and aren't a bit shy about it. We vote, don't mind paying school teachers what they are worth and often get along nicely without a personal organizer. Whatever that is.

In a recent article in the March, 2002 issue of *The American Enterprise*, Blake Hurst wrote about the differences in "Red" America (as the last election maps painted Bush country, as opposed to "Blue" for Gore). The article, subtitled: "*Is Middle America a backwater, or a reservoir?*" takes on these important differences between the coasts and the plains:

"Most Red Americans can't deconstruct post-modern literature, give proper orders to a nanny, pick out a cabernet with after-tones of licorice, or quote prices from the Abercrombie & Fitch catalog. But we can raise great children, wire our own houses, make beautiful and delicious creations with our own two hands, talk casually and comfortably about God, repair a small engine, recognize a good maple sugar tree, tell you the histories of our towns and the hopes of our neighbors, shoot a gun and run a chainsaw without fear, calculate the bearing load of a roof, grow our own asparagus, live in peace without car alarms, security guards, or therapists — even find the same wife a lifetime source of interest and joy."

Hurst goes on to say: "Is it really so dumb to choose to live in a place where life is affordable, the roads aren't crowded and you don't have to put up with megalomaniacs and self-important snobs? Red America is full of smart people, as many employers are learning. It's just that intellect, like wealth, isn't flaunted here."

I recently read about a self-described "Blue" American in New York City. After September 11th she found herself, basically, useless. She had no real skills and, as she stood on the roadside cheering the fire fighters, police, plumbers, electricians, equipment operators, emergency workers and others enroute to, and returning from, Ground Zero, she realized something very important.

Those tired men and women passing in trucks make it all happen. They are the ones who do the actual work of running the country. They cause the electricity to flow, the schools to be built, the criminals to be arrested and society to run seamlessly. She realized, with a blazingly bright light bulb of awareness flashing in her mind, she didn't know how to change a tire, grow tomatoes or where electricity comes from.

As she stood, cheering alongside other New York "intellectuals," she thought back to her low-key, condescending attitude prior to 9-11. Her frown if a waiter's efforts fell short of her expectations during a "power" lunch, her irritability at a school crossing guard who held her up — and more, and worse, crossed her mind. She wrote how the experience changed her attitude forever and how she now has trouble being polite to her "Blue" friends. Maybe it's time for her to move.

I, for one, am tired of being accused

Continued on page 144

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Continuing The Legacy