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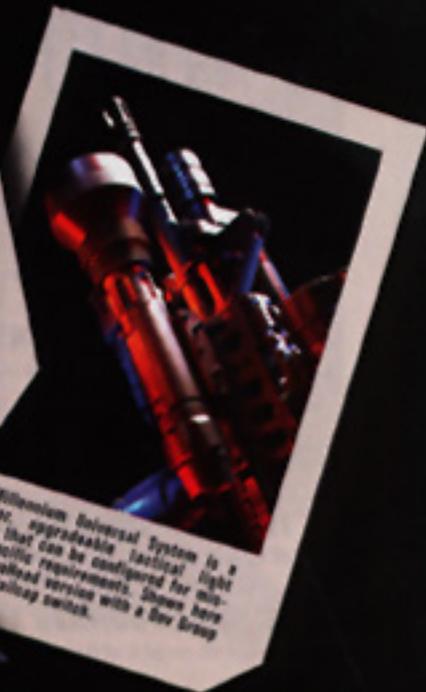
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AMERICAN HANDGUNNER®

Volume 27, Number 162

2003

MARCH•APRIL



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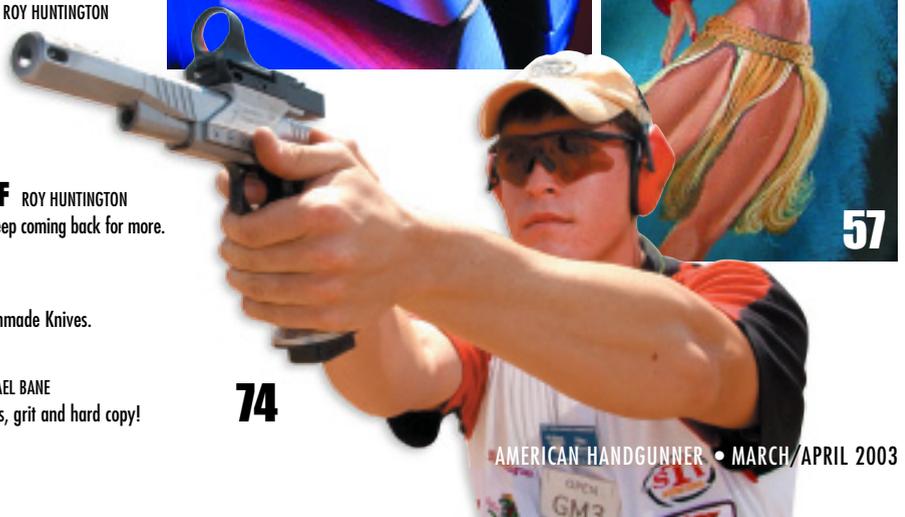
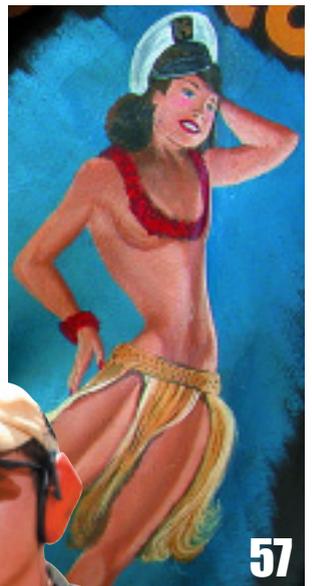
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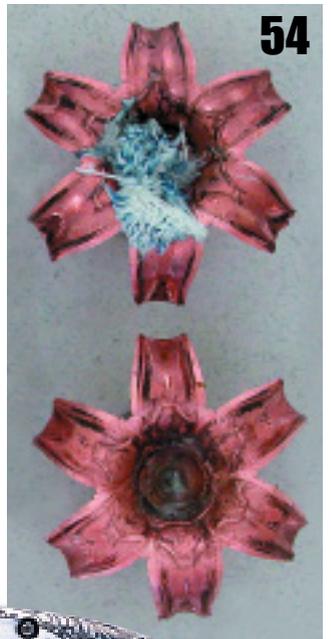
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GUN OF THE MONTH



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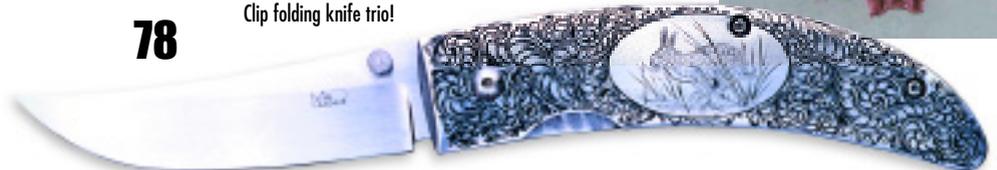


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SPEAKOUT

**YOUR FORUM
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PROBE**

JANUARY / FEBRUARY

I would like to respectfully disagree with Clint Smith's recent column (Jan/Feb) on the subject of Point Shooting. I'm a 25 year veteran officer and training officer for my department, and have long experience with handguns, both professionally and personally. As a firearms instructor I have recently incorporated the concept of point shooting into

our training. I believe in the stress of an armed encounter, fine motor skills are lost, and getting a sight picture is a fine motor skill. I teach my officers that as long as their view of their weapon is smaller than the target, they can hit it by keeping both eyes open and the weapon inside of the target.

I took a spare department Sig P-220 and knocked the sights off, gave this weapon to a random officer, and had him shoot the standard qualification course out to seven yards. I told him to keep both eyes open, point the weapon and have "faith." He kept a tight group, center mass, and I invited other shooters to view this. I want them to get away from the idea they are there to shoot the X-Ring — they are there to learn to survive and prevail. There's no question that outside seven yards I tell them to aim. I

also tell them they should have their shotgun out. Clint is wrong, but that is OK. I just don't want a viable training method to be discredited.

Sgt. Bruce R. Smith
Via e-mail

Clint Responds: I cannot argue with your perceptions. Training only approximately 900-plus people a year for the last 20 years — ranging from SWAT to Sam and Suzi homemaker — I've reached some conclusions. People will rise to the level of the instruction they receive. As a teacher, I often contemplate that — with the techniques I teach — the only things I'm betting are my student's lives. Taking into consideration proximity of the threat and weapon retention problems, make mine sights — Respectfully, Clint Smith

Continued on page 12



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SPEED AND ACCURACY FOR CHRISTMAS

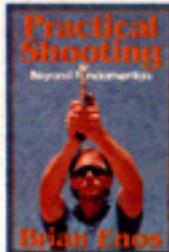
As a student of shooting, you know that the real difference in skill shows up when you compare time-to-hit. You also know that the only way to improve your hit time is by diligent practice. The problem is that without a timer you have no way of knowing if you are moving toward your goal of hitting more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

Both the Club Timer 2 and the MKIV Championship Timer are carefully designed with this mission in mind. Both will tell you everything you need to know about most strings at a glance with no button pushing at all. If you do want to review your individual shot times, each will display all the shot info at once (Shot number, split time, total time) so you don't have to page back and forth in some sort of VCR programming drill. The MKIV goes several steps beyond the Club Timer 2 allowing you to program and simulate advanced courses of fire, includes a full feature chronograph, ballistic computer and lead calculator.

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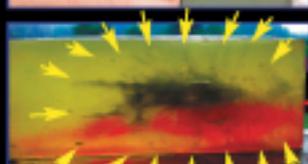


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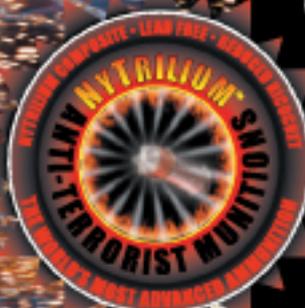
When it hits softer organic targets, it fragments at a slower rate, with larger fragments dissipating into the target creating literally hundreds of wound channels. At night you can see the shock cavity a full seven inches in diameter!

A conventional round can penetrate most human torsos, dissipating a portion of the bullets energy into the target, and wasting the balance traveling into the area behind the target. The composite Explosive Defractor Core™ of the Extreme Shock Explosive Entry AFR Round acts as a perpendicular defractor plate that blows the fragments at virtual 90-degree angles to the wound channel! 100% percent of the energy is transferred into the surrounding tissue mass. This is the reason that the effective E-Shock wound channel is up to (depending on caliber) an astonishing 80 times the size of the entry wound!!



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Fluff And Nonsense

Per the article by Ayoob (“Cop Talk”) in the Nov/Dec issue, regarding the inability of an individual to shoot a large frame Smith and Wesson pistol — this is utter nonsense! LAPD’s Metropolitan Division has roughly two hundred and eighty men and women who all carry the large-frame S&W in .45 caliber. They train, carry and shoot them in real world shootings with unparalleled success. Tell the author to get real and leave the fluff to dime romance novelists.

Scott Reitz
Via e-mail

Light ‘Em Up

In the Jan/Feb issue, Clint Smith made some good points in his article “Technological Taffy.” One of them raises some questions in my mind that I’ve never seen addressed. Clint, like some other experts I’ve read, is against compensated weapons for self-defense because of the hot gasses they vent when fired. My questions are how do those gasses compare to the gasses discharged to the side, from the front of the cylinder, when a revolver is fired? What happens if you fire a revolver next to your body in a weapon-retention situation? Does this mean a revolver should not be considered a suitable self-defense weapon? Someday, I would really like to see an article addressing these concerns. (Hint, hint!)

In the meantime, I’ll continue to look forward to each issue of *American Handgunner*. Please keep up the good work and remember that someone out there reads every word.

Ed Ross
Via e-mail

Ed, your wish is our command. Clint is currently running some tests and the results will be published in Handgunner. Editor

How’s That Again?

How refreshing to read the critical comments from Alex Hamilton about the Colt Gold Cup. Most gun magazine writers never met a gun they didn’t like.

Jack Dapra
Via e-mail

Red Oregonians

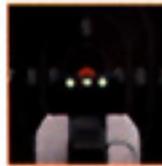
My family and I live in Oregon. Only the Multnomah Co. and Lane Co. metro areas voted Blue. The entire rest of the State voted “Red.” Believe me when I say here in Oregon we are definitely “Red” and are tired of the Peoples Republic of Portland and Eugene (the liberal stronghold cities) giving folks the impression we’re a bunch of liberal, democratic, anti-right,



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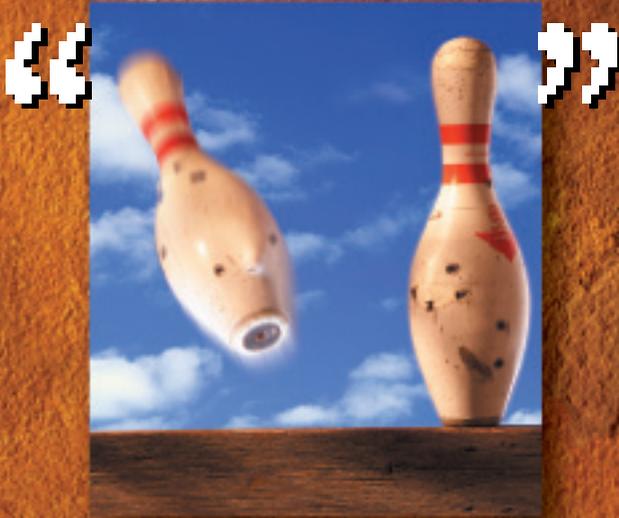


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Mike W.
Via e-mail

And I think most of 'em read Handgunner based upon the e-mail and letters I received reminding me we have friends all over. Editor

Bullshit Snobbery?

Instead of printing petty divisive rhetorical bullshit snobbery, such as was on the Insider page of the Jan/Feb issue, why don't you use the space to increase the understanding of those All-American Bush Supporters who have forgotten the US Constitution?

Rudolf Charles Lohmeyer
Winter Park, FL

Rudy, being the snobby, petty, rhetorical bullshitter I am, it only seems natural that's how I'd write, eh? Editor

Men Of Few Words Dept.

You publish the best handgun magazine in the industry — and I read them all.

David Barlin
Via e-mail

Great Magazine! I enjoy it all the way to the staples!

Miguel Gonzalez
Via e-mail

I love the magazine. Nothing else even comes close to it.

Mark Caswell
Via e-mail

Thanks guys! Editor

A Bullseye

Just wanted to tell you your Insider column on Red America, Jan/Feb, hit a nerve and I've shamelessly copied it without your permission and passed it out to anyone who will hold still long enough for me to force one onto them. While I understand you generalized some, the thrust of the editorial is right on the money. I hope this strikes a chord and helps to motivate all those "silent majority" types to keep voting. Speaking of which, I'm still celebrating the last elections! Thanks for a

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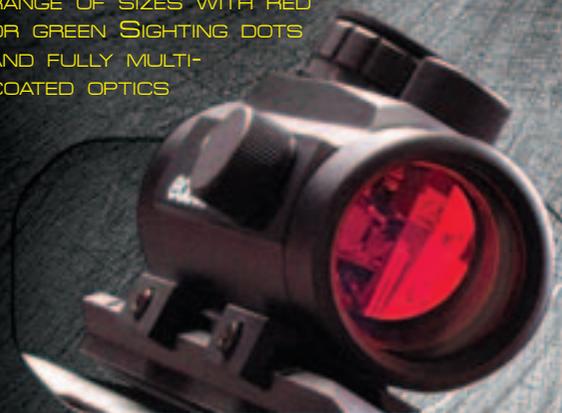
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Jess Albertson
Red American
Via e-mail

Clint Kudos

Now more than ever I look forward to reading your magazine with the addition of Mr. Clint Smith's column. Clint is someone we can all learn from in the self-defense realm. I've been reading your magazine since 1980, and it just gets better as the years go by.

Steven P. Fishman
Via e-mail

Advertisers Vs. Readers

In response to the "Speak Out" Nightmare in Royal Palm Beach, Jan/Feb issue: The newsstand price of *Handgunner* is \$4.95 — imagine the price if there were no paying advertisers. Does \$499.95 sound too high to avoid ads? I depend on the ads for product comparison and information on new products. I'd hate to have to learn about them on the streets.

Pete Cernak
Via e-mail

To those who complain of too many advertisements in your magazine, perhaps they don't realize that without those advertisements the newsstand price would be \$504.95. Without advertising, radio, television, newspapers and magazines would be so expensive virtually no one could afford them. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for it's the advertisers who pay for our media.

Also, if the Nov/Dec issue was your worst-ever issue — as one letter writer complains — I'm glad I renewed my subscription. If that was a bad one, I can't imagine what's to come!

Ken Valentine
Upland, CO.

When 144 = 122

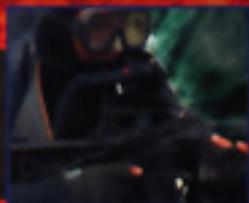
I want a recount! Seems like my first issue of 2003 is missing over twenty pages at the end. I kept looking and looking for page 144 to read the rest of Huntington's Insider column, but couldn't find it. I always enjoy your publication — from cover to cover — but you must have gotten a few Florida vote-counters on your staff to make that mistake!

As to the rest of the issue, my hat's off to the LAPD SWAT for selecting the Kimber Custom II .45 for their issue side-arm. I think one of the problems plaguing many PDs across the nation is choosing a small caliber side-arm. I believe it was none other than your own Clint Smith who, when asked as to why he preferred

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SPEAKOUT

the .45 ACP, said that "They make bigger holes, and bigger holes leak more fluid."

T. Jones
Via e-mail

I have been offered many things to continue a magazine subscription. Watches that glow and play music underwater, phones shaped like every piece of sports equipment imaginable, even fleece pullovers that have giant advertisements stitched into them; but your technique of leaving the end of the article off and sending me to a page that doesn't exist (Red America, pg. 122 of the Jan/Feb issue) is the best hook I've ever seen! Ok, ok, you win — I'll re-up if you print the remainder of that article in the Mar/April issue.

Mark Caswell
Via e-mail

Mark, it seems you're onto us. Our nefarious subscription renewal ploy seems to have been too transparent for our tactically-minded readers. Drats. Keep your eyes open for our next attempt — it may be even more dastardly! By the way, go to page 120 (above the Glock picture) to finish my column. Now the secret's out of the bag. Editor

Even Priests Like Us

The article, "Personal Artifacts" (Sept/Oct 2002) by Roy Huntington, with photos by Ichiro Nagata represents the best of superb writing and classy photos that the magazine art can produce. Nagata's photos and Huntington's writing were as elegant as the Bowen Custom handguns that were displayed. My highest compliments to you all, and I always enjoy Ayooob's articles.

Rev. Edward Berry Hanson
Conyers, GA

We'd like to take credit, but when you work with something as scrumptious as Bowen's guns you can't hardly go wrong. We appreciate your kind words. Editor

A Good Cause

Just wanted to thank you (and everyone else at *American Handgunner*) for featuring our World Trade Center Fund Raising Knife. Our phone has been ringing non-stop and your inclusion of the project in the magazine is greatly helping its success.

My hat is off to you and we send our thanks from everything working here at Spyderco.

Joyce Laituri
Spyderco
Via e-mail.

Colt Vs. AWA

I can't believe Colt can't see the forest for the trees. They are their own enemy.

Continued on page 110

AMERICAN HANDGUNNER • MARCH/APRIL 2003



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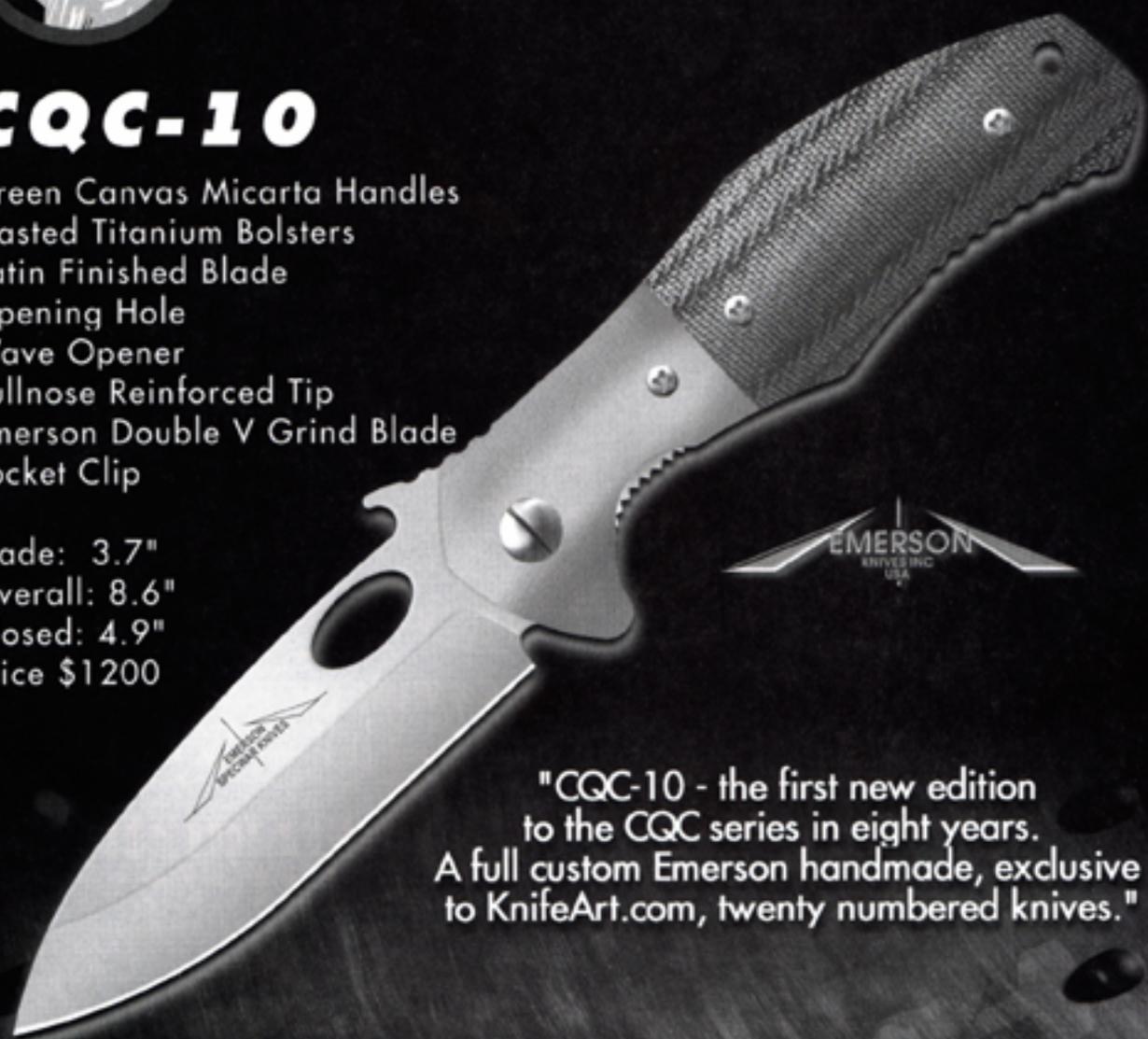


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Pat Covert, American Handgunner, March/April 2002

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Charles E. Petty

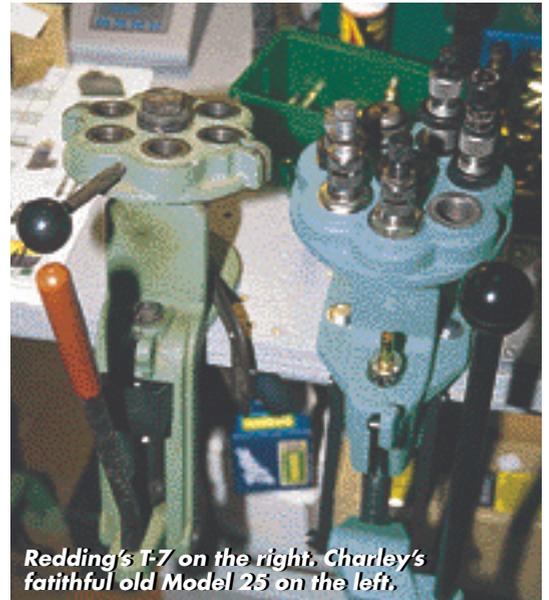
SAGE ADVICE
FROM THE
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TRY A TURRET

The purchase of a loading press can be a difficult exercise, prone to adding grey hairs. There are lots of choices and since the purchase of a press is almost always a lifetime investment we want to get it right the first time. And even an experienced reloader may need something new if his needs change.

For someone who wants to load a variety of cartridges, the backbone of any arrangement is a single-stage press. Almost any cartridge we might wish to load can be done on this simplest of tools. The exception might be major forming or swaging operations or loading super-large stuff like the .50 BMG. At the other end of the spectrum we'll find an assortment of progressive loading tools with ever increasing sophistication and capacity.

There is another option we hardly ever hear about. That's the turret press. At the age of 16 my very first loading tool was a Lyman True Line Jr., which was a small turret press. The advantage was that since all I loaded was .38 Special I just had to turn the turret to the proper die. There was no need for adjustment.



Redding's T-7 on the right, Charley's faithful old Model 25 on the left.

Updating An Old Friend

Turret presses have been around a long time. Redding, Lyman and Lee have had them for years and recently RCBS added one to their line. Now Redding brings us an update of their Model 25 turret press. This one is called the T-7 because it can hold seven different dies. And this is where the beauty of turret presses shine through. You can install several sets of dies that are most commonly used and save some time and also avoid the inevitable small changes that creep in when we repeatedly screw them in and out.

The T-7 is a massive critter that shows a distinct connection to Redding's Ultramag with a 1" diameter ram, compound linkage and clever primer catcher. I've always been a little reluctant to do real heavy work on a turret press for fear that the turret might move around under heavy pressure from something like case forming. The T-7's turret is supported at

the back by the solid cast-iron frame with a fit that's so close you can't even slide a piece of paper between the turret and frame. My concerns were dashed onto the rocks for I full-length sized some of the Ultra magnum cases without incident, and then tried forming a couple of cases since I was feeling daring. No sweat.

The primer seating and catching arrangement comes from the big Ultramag and is some pretty smart engineering, as engineering goes. Any time you do high volume loading the spent primers can be a problem. Some catchers overflow if you don't empty them often and some would rather put the primers on the floor. The T-7's ram is hollow so the spent primer falls straight down and into a tube that serves as a catcher. A better arrangement — when you're loading a bunch — is to take the plug out of the tube and direct the primers into a trash can. The primer seater is also borrowed from the Ultramag and is one of the best press-mounted priming arrangements there is.

The priming arm is mounted to a pivot point on the press and is not spring-loaded in any way. There's a slot in the ram where the priming arm rides. On the up-stroke the primer cup is cammed out for you to insert a primer and on the down stroke the arm drops into the slot and allows the primer to be seated straight down. This is a very precise arrangement so there's little or no chance for the primer to end up mis-aligned. And the best part of all, there is a very good sense of "feel" as the primer is seated.



Handy But Handle-less

Redding's new press removes most of the concerns voiced about turret presses and is suitable for all but the very most strenuous loading jobs. I have used it with great success with but one reservation. It is difficult to turn the turret. This is both good and bad. Obviously we do not want a turret that can move about during loading but we still want to be able to turn it with relative ease. Even using the dies for leverage the turret is difficult to move and would benefit greatly from a small handle. One isn't there because if their new primer feed mechanism is installed it would interfere. I'd really like to see a removable handle.



For more information contact: Redding Reloading Equipment, 1089 Starr Rd., Cortland, NY 13045; (607) 753-3331; www.redding-reloading.com



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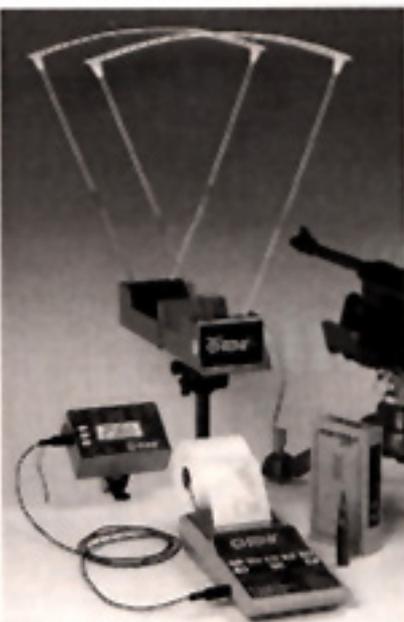
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Off Duty Carry In The Time Of Terrorism

At the Gun Rights Policy Conference of 2002, sponsored recently in Phoenix by the Second Amendment Foundation and the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, one topic was how the War on Terror is affecting American law enforcement. The two panelists selected to discuss it were Federal agent Ken Blanchard and I.

Local law enforcement is far from helpless in fighting terrorists. Remember that "home-grown terrorist" Timothy McVeigh was arrested by an Oklahoma State Trooper shortly after the bombing of the Murrah Building. The terrorists know that street cops on the ground in America are a deadly enemy to them, and they're preparing to take them out. One captured Taliban training tape depicts them murdering cops during a routine traffic stop. As the officer approaches their car from the rear, the driver sounds his horn and the trunk and back doors spring open, with terrorists popping out firing fully automatic weapons. In the film, one runs up to the "downed officer" and finishes him off with a coup de grace to the head. The training

film is set on a four-lane highway. There are not a lot of four-lane highways in Afghanistan. It's obvious this training prepared the terrorists for action in heartland America.

Holstermakers like Lou Alessi have been quoted as noting a significant increase in off-duty concealment holsters since 9/11/01. Authorities such as David Grossman, West Point lecturer and author of "On Killing," have called for our police to be more vigilant and more heavily armed off duty. The cops are listening. Personally, I'm seeing more cops "carrying" off duty who didn't before. I'm also seeing more guys who used to wear a little .380 or .38 snub on their own time go to bigger guns with more power and more rounds. These same officers tend to be carrying more spare ammo, too.



Learning From the Past

The threat is from radical Islamist groups. We've seen their strategies in other countries, particularly Israel: Suicide bombings. Mass murders of the innocent with full auto assault rifles. We've also seen how to counter these threats.

Israel encourages concealed-carry of handguns in public by private citizens. In the last year, we've seen a significant increase in the number of attempted mass shootings in Israel that have been stopped by either armed citizens or plainclothes police/security personnel. A terrorist with an assault weapon opens-up on passengers at a bus stop. A passing Israeli citizen draws his 9mm pistol and cuts him down. The first responding security professional finishes the job with a few well-placed shots from his own M16.

A radical Islamist gunman opens fire in a school, shooting a few helpless students. Before the attack can turn into a massacre, a civilian volunteer draws his concealed pistol and shoots the terrorist dead. Since the

Maalot massacre of the 1970s, Israel has armed and trained selected school-teachers and volunteer parents and grandparents who provide discreet armed security. The system works.

In a crowded public place, a terrorist attempts to detonate the "suicide bomb" package strapped to his body, but 9mm pistol fire kills him before he can trigger the device. American newspapers will report that he was shot by "security" personnel. In fact, the mass murder was prevented by a nice Israeli lady, an ordinary wife and mother, who happened to have both an alert eye and a concealed semiautomatic pistol.

Professor Grossman warns that Islamist hate groups hold particular rancor over the mass shooting in a Hebron mosque several years ago by a deranged Israeli with a government-issue M16, and fervently seek payback with mass slaughters in Jewish synagogues and Christian churches. Only a matter of weeks after 9/11, just such a church massacre took place in Pakistan. Less than two weeks after the first anniversary of 9/11, seven Christian charity workers were murdered execution style in that country by Moslem fanatics. A growing number of houses of worship in the United States are quietly encouraging the off-duty cops — and licensed civilian pistol-packers — of their congregations to carry their weapons to services for security.



Within days of the Christian charity workers' murders, five innocent victims were executed in heartland America during a Nebraska bank robbery. The suspects, when arrested, proved to be ordinary scumbags instead of terrorist scumbags. This made little difference to their victims. Terror is terror, death is death, and saved lives are saved lives. An off-duty cop prepared to engage four terrorists is equally well prepared to engage four murderous armed robbers. Carrying a full-size weapon and plenty of ammunition is always a good idea, even on your own time.

The Israelis, who have already experienced America's future in these matters, agree. The most popular carry gun there, for off duty cops and armed citizens alike, is the 9mm auto with double stack magazines. The Beretta, Browning P-35, Glock, and Jericho — the latter a home-grown clone of the CZ75 — are all in wide use.



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DOIN' THE TRAINING MACARENA

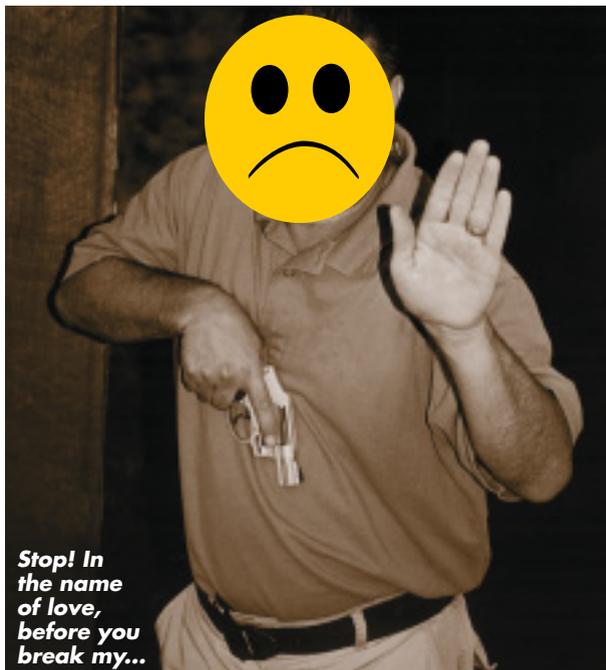
Nearly every Monday morning we start a new class here at Thunder Ranch. With that start, there is almost always a first-timer at the Ranch who has attended no-small number of courses at other schools. We kindly refer to these new first-timers as “gun camp junkies.” All is usually well until we go to the range and the staff and I are exposed to the newest in “gunfightin’” techniques.

In a recent class, several of the junkies demonstrated “the pistol rolled sideways muzzle tucked into their groin technique.” It’s got a name but we won’t honor it here. In this position, the muzzle points at their crotch and feet, and I was pointedly advised the “gun at my crotch thing” was used by SWAT-type guys. This technique, it seems, was for working around each other and when doing cross over and button-hook door entries and such. After pointing out the shortcomings of pointing the muzzle at the tool of their ability to reproduce life, we proceeded — and were met with yet more surprises.

Next, our new friends showed us the “bodyguard with their back to the bad man” technique. The response was to draw, bend over at the waist and shoot the pistol upside down. After the initial first round response, a stand-up swivel at the waist and shoot over the shoulder shot was delivered. This was followed by a gyration and a jump to the left, shoot, jump to the right, shoot, and then dart to kneeling and shoot. Slightly stunned I asked what this whirling dervish dance was about? I was promptly told the jumping bean thing was to be used to “protect principles and make the bodyguard hard to hit by incoming fire.” Uh, huh.

They asked me what I thought about it all and I asked them what their true, everyday professions were. “Banking and computers” were the chirped replies. Hum, I was slightly confused. Without drawing a breath their next statement was approximately: “This stuff is really cool, you know, all the jumping running and gunning.” Duly noted.

But here’s a thought: Why not simply quit your dance, turn around — and shoot the cause of the problem?



Stop! In the name of love, before you break my...

Technique, Environment and Marksmanship

There is a continuing controversy over which shooting technique is best. It is, in fact, a moot point. Application of various correct techniques could exist for the trained, the untrained, for law enforcement officers, and even lawfully-armed civilians. What is, in fact, the best technique? Based on whose opinion? And, what is their opinion based upon?

As an example, the Harries flashlight technique is good, except on hard right corners. A Weaver-like stance is good — until maybe you apply it while shooting prone under a vehicle. Almost all range techniques work perfect until they are applied in a fight. Both Weaver and Isosceles are excellent, until you add body armor, gas masks, moving targets, low light and incoming fire. Survival is not based solely on technique. Survivability may hinge on the use of the correct technique appropriate to the environment you are fighting in.

Oh, and yes, marksmanship is always valuable.

Mystics And Magic

There are no mystics and no magic — and no shortcuts. But Americans like magic, just look at Las Vegas. With some regularity, training magicians come to live here in the land of the free, generally from a homeland where private firearms ownership is not even allowed. Many of these self-proclaimed wizards-of-wonder poof some lateral-axis-centerline-dynamic-multi-functional-handgun-technique on us and we belly-up to the bar.

You gotta’ love us. We Americans are renowned for our great, national sense of humor, but our work ethic in some areas is sometimes questionable. Honestly? For most of us, all the scientific studies and Zen of shooting should be replaced with a little hard work, a case of ball ammo and applied fundamentals. Ask yourself a question: “How many of you get to shoot as much as you like?”

In the little time — and with the little ammunition available to you — wouldn’t it make sense to practice the undeniable fundamentals of marksmanship? So, let’s not be stupid. Why not consider, instead, the option of working hard with our minimal time and ammunition to develop good fundamental skills?

And, if the time comes — heaven forbid — quit dickin’ around and just shoot the guy.



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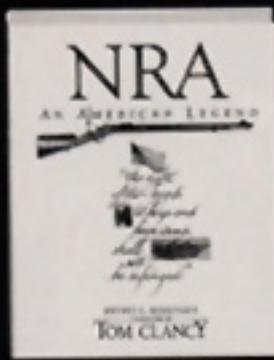
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Do we have your attention?

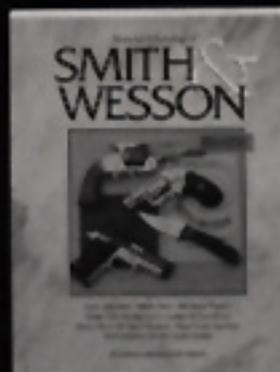
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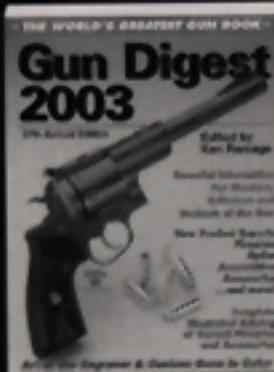
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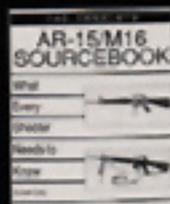
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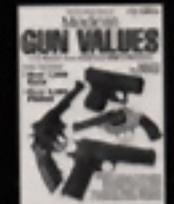
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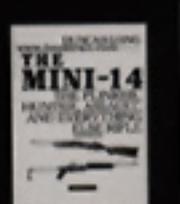
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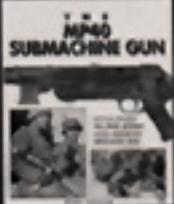
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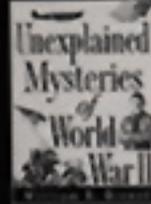
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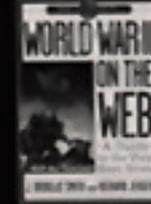
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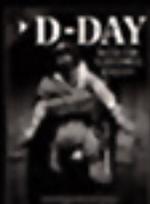
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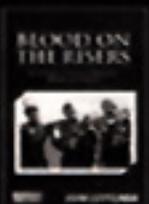
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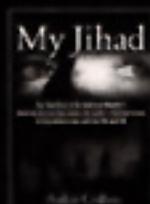
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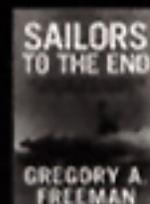
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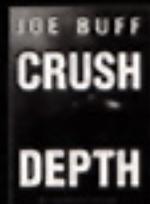
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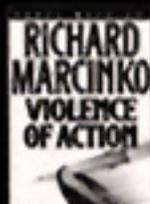
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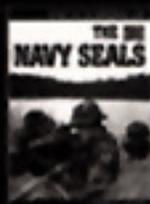
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Itsey-Bitsey, Teeny-Weeny

Old J.B. (John Browning for those of you who are unsophisticated, new readers to *Handgunner*) did a real service for future generations of gunsmiths when he designed the sights for the Colt 1911 automatic. The original sights were simple, strong and cheap — and they were also small, difficult to align quickly and virtually impossible to adjust. The revised 1911-A1 pistol had sights only marginally better. From the early days of bullseye competition, fitting 1911s with better sights has been a thriving business. Just think about it: If J.B. had put a decent set of sights on the old war horse, what famous sight makers wouldn't be here today? A twist of fate and a new industry is born. Maybe Browning was smarter than we think on this one? He left a little something else for us to fuss with.

As the years progressed, practical pistol competition demonstrated the need for sights that were strong, highly visible and easy to pick-up at speed. Gunsmiths designed sights to meet the demand, both fixed and adjustable and few have achieved the success of the fixed sight designed by Wayne Novak.

Novak's® sight provides an excellent sight picture. Properly low-mounted in the slide, it's very strong and resistant to the knocks and jolts a service pistol sometimes has to endure. Installation is a fairly straightforward process, and the smooth, streamlined design resists snagging on clothes and is easy on the hands in malfunction clearance drills.

Finally, it has pleasing lines and when installed presents a handsome, finished appearance. It's not surprising that by 2002, more than a million Novak sights had been manufactured. In addition, there have been some very similar designs, changed just enough to avoid infringing on Novak's patent, and some foreign imports that are blatant copies.

I've called it a fixed sight, but it would be more accurate to call it semi-fixed. It can be adjusted for deflection by moving the sight left or right. Elevation, however, is adjusted by filing down the front sight or fitting a higher one.

AN ELEVATING EXPERIENCE

Wayne Novak has designed a new version of his famous sight that adjusts for elevation as well as deflection. The example illustrated here is fitted on a Colt Series 80 .45 ACP. Novak also fitted a new front sight, neatly and expertly dovetailed into the slide. Front and rear sights are both fitted with optional tritium night sight inserts.

Like the original the new sights adjust for deflection by drifting the in its dovetail cut. A hex-head screw then locks it against unintended movement. Elevation is changed by a large, click-adjustable slotted screw. Each click moves point of impact about one-quarter inch at 25 yards.

Out of the box, the Colt printed 200 grain Black Hills semi-wadcutters three inches high at 25 yards. I turned the adjustment screw clockwise twelve clicks, and the next group was centered right at point of aim. The new sight retains the fine features of the original — a handsome appearance and non-snagging qualities, and the same high standards of workmanship.

Sights on duty guns worn in open holsters are especially susceptible to bumps with door frames, automobile doors and steering wheels. With many adjustable sights the sight blade — the part that actually moves — is exposed and vulnerable to damage. The "adjusting" portion of the Novak sight fits a recess in the solid steel of the sight body, protected against the slings and arrows of outrageous misfortune. The design makes the adjustable version virtually as strong and



Adjustable sight leaf is protected against bumps and knocks by the solid steel of the sight body.

as durable as a fixed sight.

The choice of fixed or adjustable sights is a matter of compromise. Fixed sights are simple and tough, since there is little that can go wrong. Once sighted in they are unlikely to go out of adjustment. The disadvantage is they are more difficult to regulate and they commit the shooter to a specific load.

Adjustable sights are easier and faster to regulate. For me the biggest advantage is they can be quickly adjusted to hit center with different bullet weights and velocities. The disadvantage has been the perception — and sometimes the reality — they're more vulnerable to damage. Those days are officially over now.

The new Novak model combines the flexibility of adjustable sights and the toughness of fixed sights better than any I've ever seen. Yup, that's what I said. These are the toughest ones out there. Period. Currently they are available for 1911-style pistols. Slides fitted with Novak fixed sights can be adapted to the adjustable version with one additional cut.

Novak's Extreme Duty® adjustable sight currently retails at \$69.95 in plain black or white dot versions, \$99.95 with tritium dots or bars. 

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CROOKS AND
BUNGLING
BANDITS

Wonder What Kinda Silhouette Targets They Use Now?

Officer Lim Kim Soth of the Cambodian National Police swears the shot was accidental, but his “ten-ring” hit got him a huge reward, and his unintended precision has become the gold standard for his comrades.

Kim was foot-patrolling the area around Angkor Wat, the 9th-to-13th century temple that is his country’s biggest tourist (and hard currency) attraction, when he saw two men “relic-poaching” — searching for antiquities with a metal detector. Kim gave chase, and as they ran into the forest, he flung a couple of rounds after ‘em, mostly just to hurry them on their way. To his shock, one of the poachers dropped like a box a’ rocks, grabbed his groin, and commenced his rendition of an air-raid siren. One lucky or unlucky shot had taken the guy’s testicles, as they say, clean off.

Kim’s first thought was that he was probably going to get fired, and spend the rest of his miserable life staring at the south end of a northbound water buffalo between sessions of picking off leeches.

And when Chea Sophat, the Siem Reap regional cop-honcho blew into town, Kim knew his goose was cooked and cleaned. Not so, folks. The Top Cop handed a thunderstruck Kim a cash reward greater than his annual salary, patted him on the po-po, and remarked as to how he’d like to see more of that kinda marksmanship. It seems the right honorable Chea Sophat hates relic-poachers with a deep and abiding passion, and he feels that while many men will risk a little jail time for a ruby-eyed golden Buddha, there ain’t no dude alive who doesn’t fear having those other kinda jewels torn off. He said this incident sent the perfect message to the relic-poachers; something like, “You try steal our jewels, we shoot yours off.”

And the message wasn’t lost on Kim’s squadmates, either. They’re working on their “jewel-shots,” and if you’re planning on touring Angkor Wat, we advise that you don’t even walk, look, or breathe like you might light-finger something. Man, more than a year’s pay! That’s some serious shooting incentive.

IT’S A “MY DADDY AN’ HIS DADDY” KIND OF THING

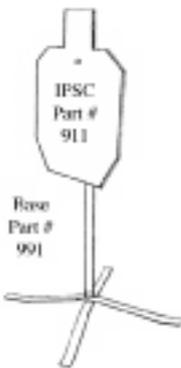
Actually the speaker usually refers to, “An’my daddy done it an’ his daddy done it an’ his daddy’s daddy done it too,” when some doofus is explaining a stupid family tradition, which we suspect is the case here. Enter our non-PhD candidate Chaddrick Dickson, 25, who was hospitalized in Monroe, Louisiana, suffering from a bad case of .22 caliber slug perforation. Oh, it didn’t come outta no gun, he explained. He was just a’beatin’ the cartridge on the floor, trying to get the gunpowder out for his dog, when the dang thing went off an’ popped him.

“And why,” deputies asked, “Were you trying to get gunpowder for your dog? What the heck does your dog need gunpowder for?” Chaddrick looked at ‘em in disbelief and explained, “Well, I mix it in his food to make him mean.” Hey, doesn’t everybody know about that?

Continued on page 94

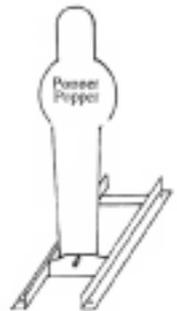
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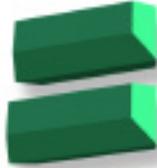




Ken Hackathorn

When a .38 Equals a Sidewinder

One of the hot topics of the day is whether airline pilots should be armed on commercial flights. Like so many topics related to firearms, the attitudes are either very warm — or extremely cold. Since I fly often I have a feeling that arming pilots simply makes sense. Considering the fact if an airliner is taken over, and the pilot is no longer in control of the aircraft, the US Government's option is to send up a couple of F-15s to blast the airliner from the sky. Personally, I would prefer the pilot, co-pilot, or flight engineer to have the ability to fix the problem with a handgun, versus a Sidewinder up my ass. Or your ass. How would arming pilots be best served? A simple, but complicated question.



First, pilots would undergo annual training with the issue handgun and be required to meet a basic skill and safety standard. All airlines require the flight crew undergo annual flight simulator training and qualification. Four hours of handgun training would not be difficult. There are excellent truck trailer, indoor live-fire ranges that could travel to any airport or airline training facility for this purpose. Any flight deck personnel who do not wish to be part of the program would not be required to take part. These folks would get to consider the effects of a Sidewinder missile and let's just hope you and I aren't aboard when they get to consider that very fact.

ANCIENT TECHNOLOGY

Now, to the meat of the issue — what kind of handgun? I think it's quite simple when you consider the great variety of skill levels and interest in firearms the vast array of pilots are likely to have. I recommend the Smith & Wesson Model 64, .38 Special revolver, in 3" heavy barrel form, with a bobbed hammer that permits only DA fire. The M64 is chambered for .38 Spec. only and, while many may think the .357 Magnum M65 a better choice, remember the word "Magnum" would cause a news media feeding frenzy — "Pilots to Tote Magnums for Airway Shootouts." And, the public would flinch and over-react about as much as the average pilot who fired one in the confines of a cockpit would.



In DA-only mode, there is no concern or worry of someone cocking the hammer and then having an AD in the process of lowering the hammer — bad news on an airplane. Forget about the pilots or air crew walking around the airport with a blaster strapped on their hips. With the degree on insanity in current airport security regulations, this

would cause a real hassle. The simple answer is to not arm the pilots, but arm the airplane. In the flight deck (what we used to call the cockpit) the M64 would be stored in a secure lock box with a punch key code access, three or four number system. Only those pilots or flight deck personnel who have been trained and qualified would have the code access that could be changed every 90 days or so.

The lock box would be located so that both the pilot and co-pilot have easy access. The M64 would be loaded with a high performance frangible .38 Special cartridge with a superbly lethal design. I'm sure the ammo boys could come up with just the perfect bullet in

about one day. Note that penetration of the fuselage causing decompression is a fallacy created by Hollywood. But, if it keeps the flying public feeling safe, give the boys a wonder-round of frangible design. Place a spare six rounds in a Safariland Comp 3 speedloader in the lock box for spare ammo needs.

IsosoWeaver-Laser Stance

If you have ever sat in a flight deck seat and considered the ability to shoot back over your shoulder toward the access door, you may note that traditional firing stances and techniques don't work well. (*Sounds like an entirely new series of arguments between the Isoseles vs. Weaver crowd will be made possible here. Editor*). Therefore, on each of these aircraft-issue S&W M64 DAO revolvers install a pair of Crimson Trace laser grips.

Remember, the distance is short — as little as three feet to the door — lighting conditions are normally low, and shooting from such a twisted position makes seeing the sights difficult. Hence the Crimson Trace laser grips. When the crew comes aboard, they remove the M64 from the lock box, check to insure it's loaded, return it to the lock box and check off the pre-flight check list like so many other operations they perform before each flight. It's simple and easy to put in place. When there is an Air Marshall on nearly every flight, this may not be needed, but for far less money, the armed cockpit makes far too much sense to me.



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TO CUTTING-EDGE
IN CARRY METHODS

Give The Man A Hand

Handmade articles of even the very best quality are never perfect. And it's precisely because handcrafted items are minutely flawed that we prize them so highly. After all, any CNC-controlled, laser-guided mechanical dynamo can make something perfectly. It takes a human being to err.

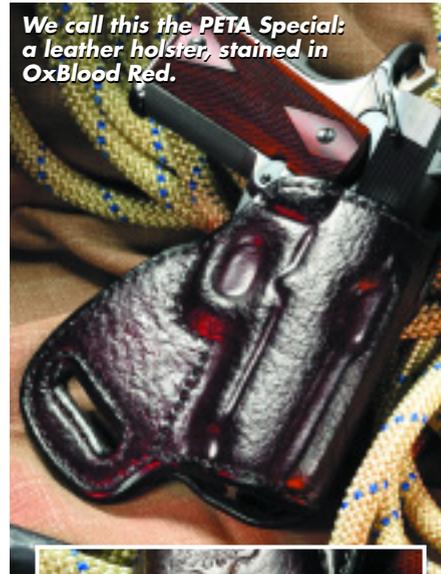
Imperfect as we know we are, we especially value the hand-fitted custom gun or the hand-stitched leather holster because we see the tiny goofs, the nearly imperceptible errors.

The mistakes represent little pieces of the maker's heart, his own flawed soul, handcut in each microscopically mis-

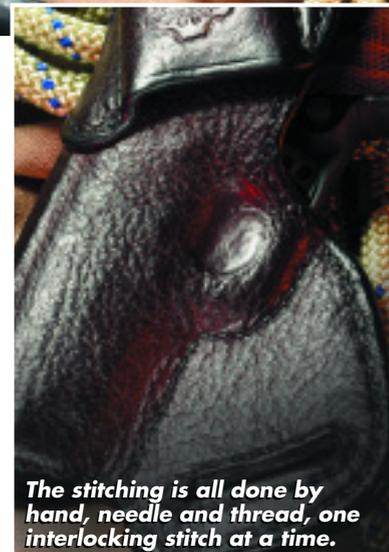
aligned imperfection. And we know that a man, not a machine, made them.

Handwork exhibits such magnificent detail that we are often awestruck by the years of apprenticeship necessary to become a master craftsman. The skill of a Tiffany jeweler fascinates us just as the artistry of a custom gunsmith entrances.

Handguns have always been a good example of utilitarian artistry. From an ornately engraved 1860 Colt presented to the Czar of Russia to Gen. Patton's ivory-stocked S&W, the gunsmith makes everyday knock-about guns into useful tools of handmade beauty. These are functional — not purely decorative — works of art; the products of custom pistolsmiths, knifemakers, gunmakers and leather-makers. Long may their kind prosper!



We call this the PETA Special: a leather holster, stained in OxBlood Red.



The stitching is all done by hand, needle and thread, one interlocking stitch at a time.

ONE Is The Loneliest Number

(Excerpted from a letter written to *American Handgunner* by Paul Litwinow. Since it was almost poetic, we felt it best to present it poetically ...)

*I am a one-man shop.
I do not stock any products.
I accept customer input as to product design.
Forget it, if it doesn't work for me.
I hand-stitch all my products except gunbelts.*

*I am a one-man shop.
I only use the finest leather.
I destroy all my botched products.
The Spectre IWB holster can be made in many versions, depending on the customer's requirements.
Employees? Forget it.*

*I am a one-man shop.
Most of my customers don't realize what they are getting.
I can't stop until I did my best.
Basically, I'm a perfectionist.
My best is always improving.
I just can't help it.*

*I am a one-man shop.
I began making holsters when my wife joined the Philadelphia Police Department.
I put a lot of detail into my holsters.
I send sketches to customers who want to know what their handgun will look like in the holster.
I am a one-man shop.*

The Chippendale Holster

If you want to see unbelievable handcraftsmanship at its finest, look at Louis XIV furniture. Or, something a little closer to home than Versailles, a Renegade SOB holster.

Handmade by master leathermaker Paul Litwinow of Ironoak Leather Products, the Renegade Small Of Back (SOB) holster that we recently tested is a perfect example of handmade handgun leather at its finest.

This hard-bitten Philadelphia holstermaker operates a classic one-man-shop specializing in extremely well-made and practically designed carry rigs. Pancakes, inside-the-pants, Yaqui slides, belt scabbards and crossdraws, Litwinow offers the most popular concealed carry styles for all suitable makes and models of handguns.

The holsters are hand-stitched using the finest leather, horsehide, cowhide, sharkskin and exotics like ostrich and stingray. The edges are superbly buffed and dark stained. Hand-carving and stamping are available, along with matching belts, mag pouches and a selection of color choices.

The Renegade SOB we tested was hand-stained with what has to be the best name for a color since Cobalt Blue — OxBlood Red. Tan, dark brown and black are also options.

The hand-boned fit was custom made for a Commander-sized pistol, nice and

tight but still fast. We tested the holster with a Les Baer Stinger and found the fit was perfect.

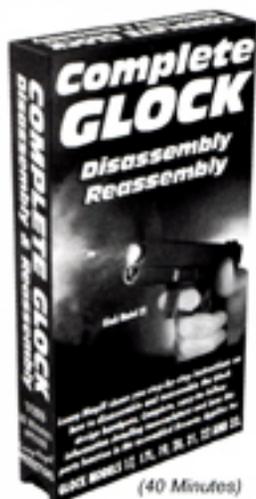
We are not what you would call charter members of the small-of-the-back fan club, but we focused on the positive aspect — the quality of construction, materials and overall craftsmanship. In every aspect, the Ironoak Leather holster is superb. The leather is beautifully tanned and treated, unmarred by scars or scratches. The boning is sharp and distinctive and the stitching is even and tight.

Delivery time from Litwinow is quoted as 11 months, however, we have a hunch that might increase a wee bit after this article appears. The price of the Renegade SOB is \$79.99 in cowhide and \$94.99 from the master holstermaker and chief bottlewasher himself.



Ironoak Leather Products; (215) 548-9177; www.ironoakholsters.com

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Complete Glock Disassembly & Reassembly

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

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- Complete attention to nomenclature of parts
- Applies to all Glock models

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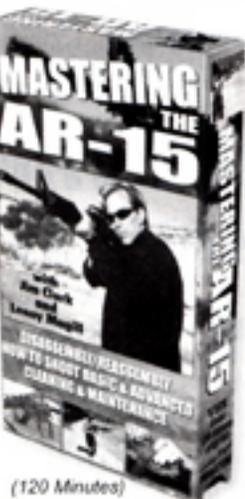
(40 Minutes)

Mastering the AR-15

Everything You Need to Know About the AR-15

Champion shooter and master gunsmith Jim Clark of Clark Custom Guns joins Lenny Magill in showing you complete disassembly and reassembly procedures as well as basic and advanced shooting techniques. Grip, stance, trigger control, sight picture and 4 practical shooting positions. You'll learn how to load, unload, and shoot at 25 yards to 150 yards with speed and accuracy. Plus, see the awesome fire-power of the AR-15, how to fieldstrip, clean and lubricate, self-defense shooting positions and much more!

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DVD • #X0160D • \$34.95



(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 automatic cycle another round? Over 9 different handguns in all are shot, tested and evaluated underwater.

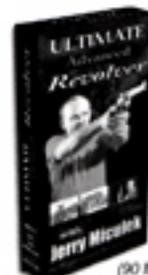
(60 Minutes) Item #X0403 • \$24.95



Women's Guide to Firearms

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

(90 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.

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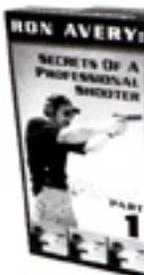


Move Shoot Live

Learn To Survive a Gunfight!

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

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Ron Avery

Secrets of a Professional Shooter

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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.

(75 Minutes) Item #X0445 • \$29.95



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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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John Taffin

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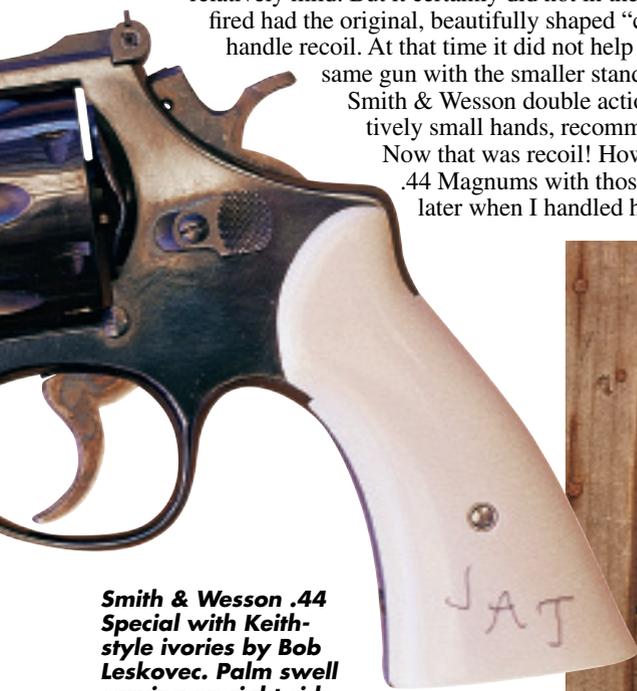
Colt 3rd Generation Single Action Army 4 1/4" .38-40 engraved by Dale Miller. Stocks are Eagle's Ultralvory.



Magnum Recoil Madness

It is an experience I'll never forget. Sometime around 1957 I first fired a 4" Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum with full house loads. The local gun shop had one of the first examples from the factory and, instead of selling it, rented it out and sold the cartridges by the piece so everyone could feel real recoil. When I fired that first shot my immediate reaction was to be thankful I only had six cartridges. We were teenagers and we had never fired anything above a .45 1911. And we all lied to each other saying, "That's not bad at all."

Over the years we learned to handle recoil. And today, what with hot-loaded .45 Colts, .480 Rugers, .454 Casulls, and .475 and .500 Linebaughs, the .44 Magnum feels relatively mild. But it certainly did not in the 1950s. The 4" .44 Magnum we fired had the original, beautifully shaped "coke-bottle" target grips to help handle recoil. At that time it did not help that much, at least until I tried the same gun with the smaller standard Magna grips as found on most Smith & Wesson double actions. Elmer Keith, who had relatively small hands, recommended the smaller grip. I tried it. Now that was recoil! How in the world could he shoot his .44 Magnums with those small grips? I found out much later when I handled his sixguns personally.



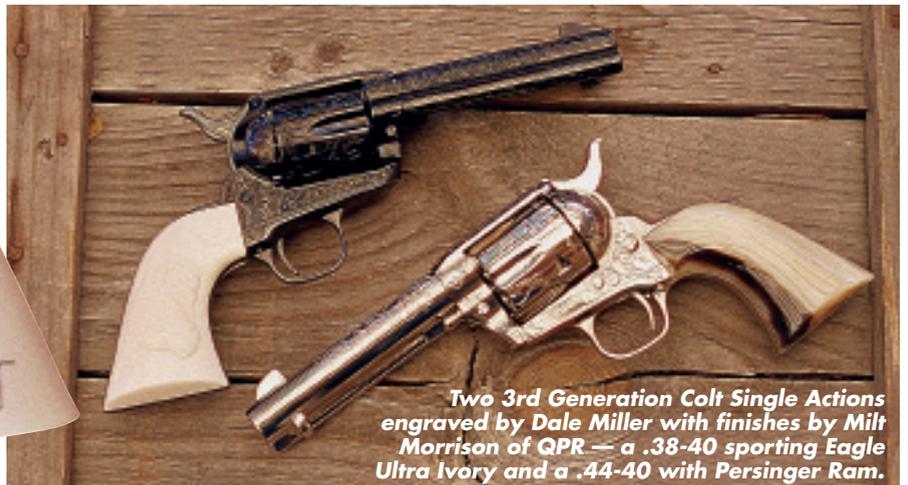
Smith & Wesson .44 Special with Keith-style ivories by Bob Leskovec. Palm swell carving on right side controls recoil.

Ivory To The Rescue

Keith admitted he did not spend his time pounding hundreds of rounds per session through his Smith & Wesson .44 Magnums. In fact, after waiting 30 years for the .44 to arrive, that first year he fired a grand total of 600 rounds. Add to this the fact the grips he used were carved ivory — very specially carved ivory. The first time I held his 4" sixgun I discovered why the grips worked so well for him. The carving filled in the natural hollow of the shooting hand, providing for a very solid gripping surface that prevented the gun from twisting in the hand when fired. When I acquired a Smith & Wesson Elmer Keith Commemorative, a 4" .44 Magnum naturally, it seemed natural to equip them with the proper stocks. I called upon Bob Leskovec of Precision Pro Grips to duplicate the Keith-style in ivory polymer.

Long before Keith had the .44 Magnum he spent several decades shooting the "Keith Load" in both Colt Single Actions and Smith & Wesson double actions chambered in .44 Special. When I duplicated his load using original balloon head brass, in either a 6" Smith 1950 Target or 7" Colt New Frontier, muzzle velocity was over 1,200 fps. Carved ivory grips were definitely necessary to comfortably handle the loads in these, by today's standards, lightweight sixguns.

Continued on page 95



Two 3rd Generation Colt Single Actions engraved by Dale Miller with finishes by Milt Morrison of QPR — a .38-40 sporting Eagle Ultra Ivory and a .44-40 with Persinger Ram.

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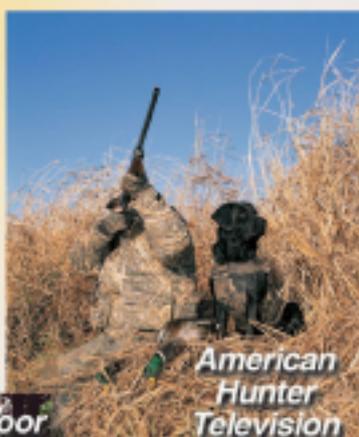
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Texas Trophy Hunters

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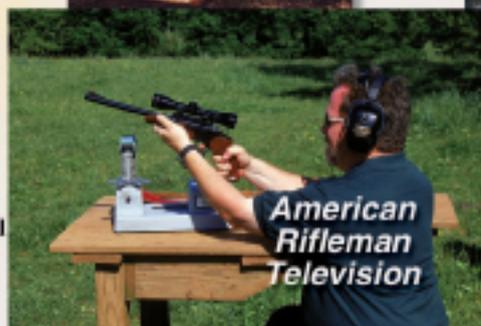
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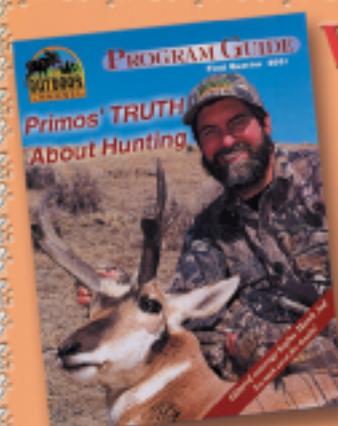
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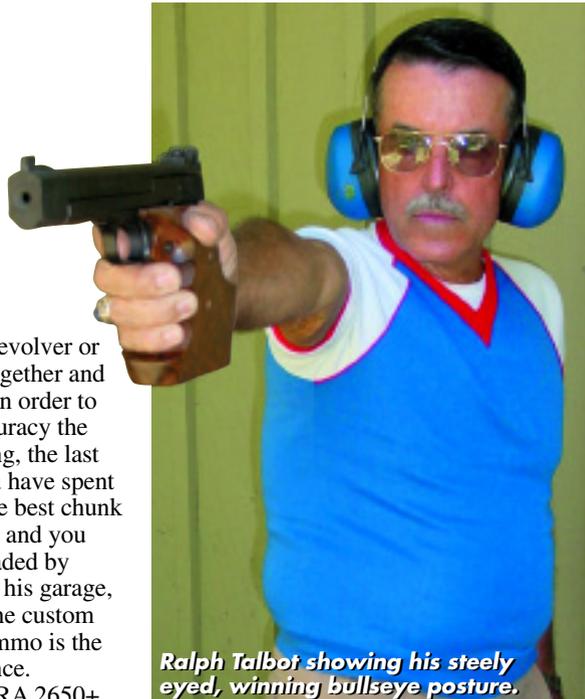
Alex Hamilton

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON PISTOLSMITHING TECHNIQUES

Generic Fodder = Generic Groups

When you have your revolver or semiautomatic all together and everything is right, in order to produce the best possible accuracy the handgun is capable of shooting, the last big factor is the ammo. If you have spent your hard-earned bucks on the best chunk of tight-metal money can buy and you shoot generic ammunition loaded by Bubba Blowup in the back of his garage, you're wasting all the work the custom gunsmith did. High quality ammo is the key to high quality performance.

When Ralph Talbot, an NRA 2650+



Ralph Talbot showing his steely eyed, winning bullseye posture.

club, Distinguished High Master class bullseye pistol shooter tests pistols and ammo from a Ransom rest, the ammunition is critically screened for quality and proven accuracy. Twenty-two caliber handgun ammunition is easy since it can't be handloaded. If you are testing a .22 pistol or rifle and you want to determine the potential accuracy, Ralph suggests you use Eley Ten-X, Aquilla SE, Federal Gold Medal Ultra Match 1,000B, CCI Green Tag, or Federal Standard #711. Shoot all of them to see which one your lead injector likes best.

When we test .45s, handloaded match-grade ammunition is significantly important and is loaded with acute care. Primers are either Federal or Winchester Western large pistol, both of have consistently proven to be the best. Brass is virgin, once-fired Winchester. Ralph says, "Using old brass will produce variable accuracy and is not acceptable."

PATIENCE, POWDER AND PERFECTION

Bullets are the real key and if you want to use a factory jacketed one, the most reliable, perfect bullet is a Nosler 185 jacketed hollow point. The US Marine Corps Marksmanship Training Unit at Quantico, Va., discovered this fine bullet when they were forced to load their own to remain competitive after match ammunition from Federal was no longer tested and graded for accuracy. Federal now loads their Gold Match with the load that proved to be the best over the years, but they no longer test ammunition lots for accuracy. The most accurate, clean powder charge we have found to use with this bullet is 4.7 grains of Winchester Super Target, (WST) shotgun and handgun ball powder.

Finely sorted, cast bullets are the real key to superb accuracy and this is what Ralph Talbot has to do to cast bullets that shoot under 1 1/2" at 50 yards. First, the lead is composed of 60% linothype and 40% range-lead, giving the capability of casting up to 600 good bullets without having to refill the melting pot. This creates a batch of 600 bullets of the same mixture. It's important you do not dilute or add any other lead during the casting from this pot so the lead remains consistent. All 200 grain SWC Hensley & Gibbs bullets are cast in a four cavity

H&G #68BB bevel-base mold.

Each cast bullet is now inspected, weighed and sorted into a plus or minus .5 grain lot. They are weighed again and separated into a .1 grain lot. The .1 grain lot becomes the super accurate, "long line" 50 yard load used for machine-rest testing. The remaining .5 grain lot will be loaded and shot at the 25 yard, "short line" and in timed and rapid fire events. A slight taper crimp is used to hold the bullet in the case.

The powder is Winchester WST, which is the old Winchester AA shotgun powder and has proven to produce consistent ignition curves and excellent clean burning accuracy. The charge to use with the accurately weighed H&G's is 4.2 grains of WST. Although there are many old shooters still using superbly accurate Bullseye powder, WST has proven to be equal to it—or more accurate—and is certainly cleaner burning than the world's dirtiest powder, Bullseye. You used to always be able to tell who on the line was shooting Bullseye by the thousands of black specks on their faces and clothes, but not so with WST

These super accurate 45 loads will help you take that wonderful walk to the winner's table in any shooting event in the world.

Gunsmiths Get Stoned!



Finally, from the dark and dim lit shop of inventor Al Marvel comes a Model 1911 sear jig that is practical, simple and perfect. As you can see in the photograph, Al's marvelous little thing-a-ma-bob will cut a 1911 sear to the perfect factory angle or change it to what ever geometry your little ol' heart desires in seconds and it will be perfect and square since your stone rides on a precision roller.

As you know, other jigs have one big fault and that is keeping the top of the sear square, thus introducing dreaded creep into your fine trigger job. American Pistolsmiths Guild member—and one of the original founders—Al Marvel has just made your life at the bench more fun. This extraordinary little gunsmith's friend will sell for around \$45 and you can order direct from Al at (410) 557-6545 in Jarrettsville, Maryland. Jigs for the S&W 41, 52 and Browning HP pistols will be forthcoming.



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BETTER SHOOTING

Dave Anderson



Fast...Faster... The Big Lie

One obstacle to better shooting is an unrealistic expectation. Newcomers to shooting often compare themselves — not to good shooters — but to the wildly exaggerated performances they read about in books and see on television and in movies.

There seems to be something about the topic of shooting that causes normally honest people to turn into baloney merchants. In the shooting literature I read while growing up in the '50s and '60s, there were casual references to “quarter second” draws, presumably including reaction time.

Current fast-draw competitors do indeed record times in the .2 second range. But to do so they use highly specialized equipment and techniques. Their holsters are leather-covered steel tubes, revolvers are hammers are modified for easier access. They await the start signal with both hands poised just above the gun, one hand twisting the gun just clear of the holster while the other slaps the hammer back. The “shot” (actually a blank) is fired in the general direction of the target just as the barrel clears leather. Fast draw champions are gifted with exceptional reaction time and eye-hand coordination, but the techniques and equipment of fast draw have little corollary in the real world. Fun? Yes. Practical? No.



Rob Leatham's average draw times are in the range of .90 second. If you're only half as fast as Leatham you're still pretty good.

Real vs. Unreal

Now let's look at a more realistic challenge: using a service-type revolver or autopistol, full power ammunition, a practical belt holster, drawing to an A-zone hit on an IPSC target at seven yards. Don't be discouraged if you can't draw and hit in a quarter second. No one else can either. Welcome to the club.

A few years ago I was shooting with national and world champion Rob Leatham. Using a limited-class 1911

and a practical belt holster — Leatham performed ten consecutive draws, the ten shots fired into a three to four inch group centered in the A-zone. His average draw (including reaction time) was around .9 second. I have no doubt he can draw and fire considerably faster, but group size would suffer.

If you can draw and hit consistently using practical equipment in 1.5 seconds, as measured by an electronic timer, you're doing quite well. From concealment, or from a modern police security holster, under two seconds is still very good.

DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY...

Maybe you recall the scene in *Lethal Weapon* in which Mel Gibson uses his Beretta service pistol to shoot a “happy face” pattern in a silhouette target at what appears to be 25 yards. Very impressive, except that even if the shooter has the accuracy capability, the gun doesn't. To make a nice symmetrical happy face the gun has to be capable of shooting about 1/2 inch groups at 25 yards.

Few custom-built match guns are capable of such accuracy, and exactly no service autopistols are. Berettas are among the more accurate service pistols but even so they seldom shoot better than two-inch groups at 25 yards. Many autopistols are doing all they can to hold four-inch groups. Movie magic at work here.

A friend who is a police officer sometimes conducted groups of school children on tours of his headquarters. He'd show them the communications center, neat gear such as polygraphs and breathalyzers, demonstrate photography and fingerprinting, and generally try to show them a good time and build a positive rapport.

The highlight for the students was always the firing range, where they would watch from behind soundproof windows while he did some shooting for them. He used to prepare well in advance by poking a smiley face in a silhouette target with a pen, running it back to the 25-yard line, and dimming the range lights so the target was in shadow.

He always concluded his demonstra-



Pistolsmith Jack Weigand had a bad stage at a match and concluded it with a little fun. This smiley face came to fruition at about 7 yards.

tion by firing a fast string of shots into the backstop in the general direction of the target. Then he would activate the switch to retrieve the target carrier and stand proudly facing the students until the target stopped beside him. The students, most of whom were familiar with the movie, would cheer and clap loud enough to set off car alarms in the parking lot.

All of which was fine, and good theatre, until a day came when instead of cheering the students simply stood there looking puzzled and disappointed. Turning to look at his target my friend saw there wasn't a mark on it. Another officer had removed the prepared target and replaced it with a clean one. Now, if only someone would do that to Mel Gibson ...



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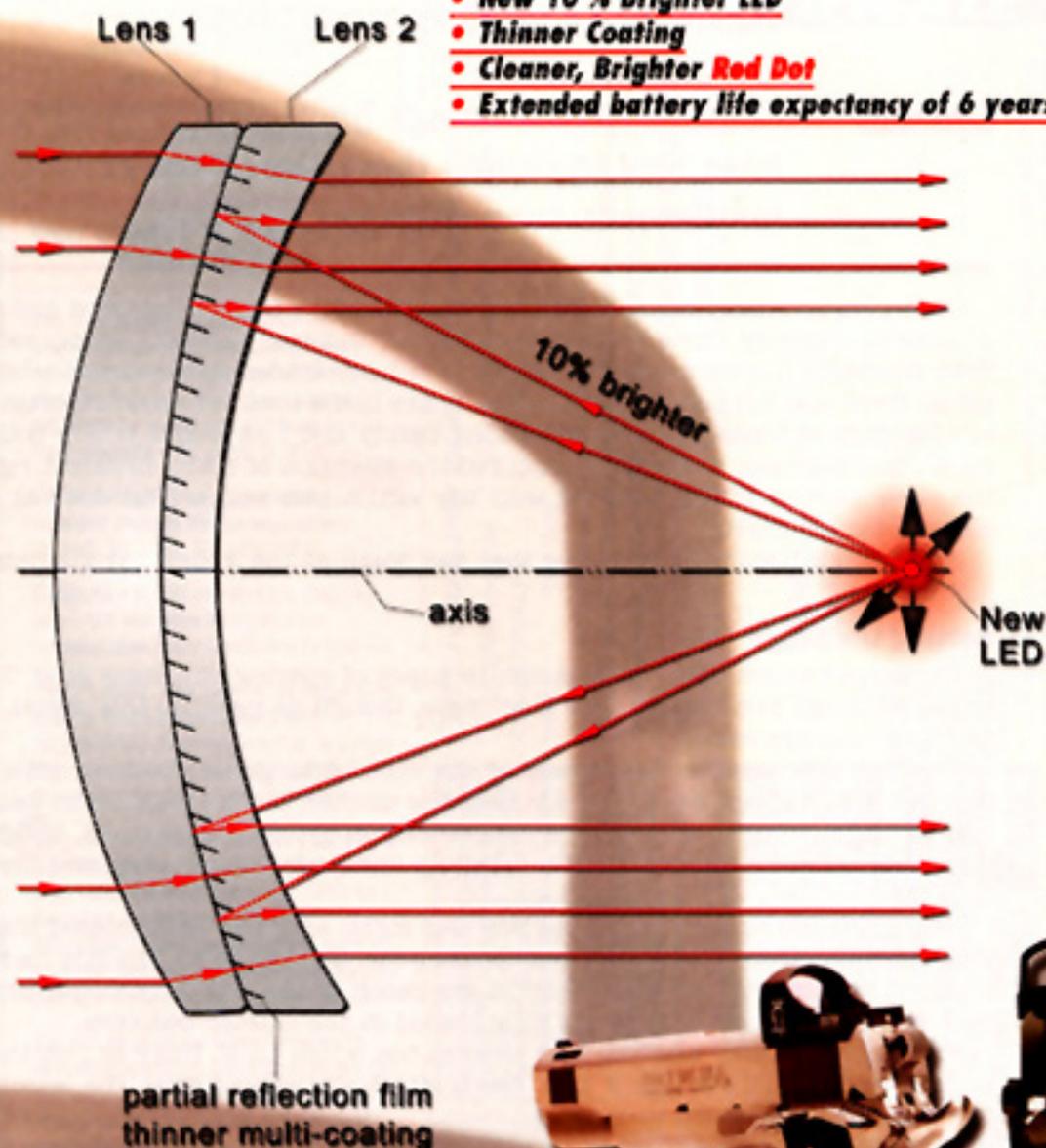
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The outstanding features of the new DOCTER^{sight}® red dot sight make it the most desirable sight of its type now available. Even though it is smaller, lighter in weight and more compact than most red dot sights, it is extremely strong and durable, withstanding up to 500 G's of recoil. The frame is made of stainless steel, brass and anodized aluminum.

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The AYOOB FILES

SAVING MOM: THE SOUTH BEND INCIDENT

Situation: The mother is held hostage, terrorized, about to be killed. There is no one there to deal with the hostage-taker but an eleven-year-old boy.

Lesson: Courage knows no age limit. When we teach our loved ones how to defend themselves and others, the benefits may accrue even after we are gone.

On a pleasant early summer day, veteran detective Dennis Reichard and I sit in the office of district attorney Chris Toth in Fort Wayne, Indiana. A tough, no-nonsense professional, Toth generally has no mercy for people who leave loaded guns around where little kids can get at them and kill people. Nor does he spare home invaders who terrorize helpless middle-aged women at blade-point. He is briefing Denny and I on a case where both these elements have come together, a case that captured the attention of many firearms rights advocates in the early part of 2002. It ended with the victim safe and a man dead at the hands of an eleven-year-old child.

And it ended with Chris' ruling that the death at the young boy's hands was absolutely justifiable.

Setting the Stage

His name has not been made public, in hopes of sparing him some grief. That makes sense to us. We'll call him simply "The Boy" here, though as usual in this series, all other names and locations are real.

The Boy was smaller than many of the other fifth grade children, little more than four feet tall. Life had not been easy for him. His mother, a drug addict who had become a criminal to feed her habit, was doing a long stretch in prison. Sue Gay, 45, his grandmother, had taken him in and adopted him. Thus, legally and de facto, Mrs. Gay was his mom as well as his grandmother.

Her husband had died when The Boy was eight, and they both missed him. He had taught The Boy many things, including how to use guns. Even at eight, The Boy had absorbed everything he was taught, and could handle the recoil of the 1911-style Spanish Llama .45 auto that was kept cocked, locked and fully loaded in the master bedroom.

Now only Mrs. Gay and The Boy lived in the house on N. Huey St., on the northwest side of South Bend, Indiana. But if Mrs. Gay's late husband was gone, the lessons he had taught The Boy remained fresh in his mind.

In the early evening hours of the night in question, mom and child were home alone when they perceived a visitor at the door. Peering out the window, Sue was not pleased when she saw the large, bearded black man. His name was Tony Murry, age 28, but she knew him by his street name, "Casper." He was a friend and cohort of her imprisoned daughter, and she hated to have bad influences like that around The Boy, but she had promised to be civil to her daughter's acquaintances. Against her better judgment, she let him in.

It became immediately apparent he had been drinking heavily. She didn't realize that he was also on a drug binge, but her wariness increased.

Continued on page 100



*With More
Than 50
New Models
To Choose
From
The Industry
Selects The*

BEST THREE GUNS

A TRIO OF EXCELLENCE

It's rare, indeed, to have an opportunity to own one of these three top choices of the Shooting Industry Academy of Excellence. Judged by their peers, Rugers 77/17RM HMR rifle and Gold Label Side-By-Side shotgun and the Kimber Eclipse Series .45 ACP pistol represents the epitome of design and quality in their fields. The fact they were chosen by industry insiders makes the selection even more prestigious.

The new Hornady .17 Magnum Rimfire has swept the shooting world. The ultra-high velocity of this newest magnum translates into flat-shooting fun in the field and on the target range. The .17 HMR takes up where the .22 Magnum leaves off and the field-proven Ruger 77 series is a perfect platform, offering the accuracy and reliability Rugers are famous for.

The aura of the double barrel shotgun is reduced to its essential elements with the Ruger Gold Label Side-By-Side. Virtually an instant classic, this classically styled, distinctly American shotgun kindles visions of pheasant fields and eager pointers. Experts are already calling it "affordable old-world craftsmanship" that you can buy over the counter.

Kimber re-wrote the book on 1911 design. When introduced, Kimber's 1911 pistols rapidly made their name known on the competition circuit and in the self-defense arena. Kimber's manufacturing tolerances account for the performance of their 1911 pistols and the newest — the Eclipse — takes it a step higher with eye-catching features that embrace the technology behind the design.

All in all, this trio would put a final period on anyone's collection.

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"Best of
the Year!"**



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See pages 00-00

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J.D. Jones

BLAZING BLASER



*Presto-change-o:
pieces and parts
go back together
with no loss of
accuracy or zero.*

Until now, Thompson Center had the corner for a highly versatile interchangeable barrel hunting handgun. That's over now. Enter Mark Kresser, SIGARMS Sales and Marketing manager and the Blaser R93 bolt action rifle — which just happens to be the most versatile and modern bolt gun in existence. Add a bit of Yankee ingenuity and now there is a Blaser prototype, straight-pull bolt action repeating pistol with a three-shot magazine. How about them apples?

The Blaser action is short, shallow, with an unusually compact trigger mechanism and straight pull bolt action. Since stocks, forends, barrels, bolts (right or left hand), bolt heads and magazines are all interchangeable it was a simple matter to fabricate a pistol grip and short barrel to produce a prototype handgun with the same features as the Blaser rifle. Since the bolt locks into the barrel, a considerable savings in weight and length are achieved. For a complete summation of all the features try SIGARMS.com.

Straight-Shootin' Straight-Pull

To see if the new gun actually worked, I went to Bill Brewster's Texas Trophy Club Ranch (830-376-4545) to give the only prototype a workout. Mark warned me the prototype was a bit on the crude side and, having worked with lot of crude prototypes before, I was somewhat surprised when I laid eyes on the Blaser. The prototype appeared and worked far better than a lot of quite expensive custom bolt action guns — and sported a piece of fantastic wood to boot.

As usual, I took my rain with me and that slowed down the actual shooting a bit, as we had important Whitetail work to consider also. The 14" barreled .30-'06 BLASER was equipped with a Harris bi-pod and Leupold 2X scope.

Shooting in a misting rain and poor light conditions I fired three shots at 96 yards with Federal Premium 150 grain ammo in a myriad of ways to see how the pistol performed in the real world. Off the bi-pod, bi-pod attached off a backpack with the side of the bi-pod dug

into the backpack for two of the three shots, then no bi-pod, and also after removing and replacing the barrel, removing and replacing the scope, bolt, magazine, bi-pod and reassembling.

Ten shots went into 2", with two shots at seven o'clock (from the bi-pod dug into the backpack), opening the entire 12 shots to 2.5".

Each group was around an inch. Three shots at 194 yards grouped under 2.5". Generally bi-pods on handguns do change elevation when rested on different surfaces and this was visible as the groups developed, although of minor importance at 100 yards.

The excellent trigger contributed a lot to the accuracy achieved and the finish never showed a hint of rust.



NO RAINY DAY BLUES

This was Texas brush country and the only way to hunt it is from blinds. Not usually my cup of tea, however the abundance of trophy deer kept my eyes glued to the binoculars and adrenaline pumping. I do enjoy watching them and with the guiding and advice of Bill Brewster, from the ranch, the experience was totally enjoyable.

With two days to hunt and poor weather conditions, I passed on numerous trophy bucks that I did not feel comfortable shooting at. Higher powered optics would have changed that as the 2X in poor light conditions at a couple hundred yards leaves a lot to be desired. When a trophy eight-point came into the open in decent light on the last evening, the BLASER spoke and the buck dropped in his tracks. Bill lasered it at 128 yards. Although I passed on at least 10 eight-point bucks larger than him, to me he is the perfect buck — a very respectable animal scoring 132. All with a perfect shot ending a perfect hunt with an almost perfect prototype.

PS: You can't place the first order for the Blaser pistol: I already did.



World Famous Street-Fighter Will Give You A **FREE GUN...**

**Just To Prove He Can Take It Away From You Bare-Handed
As Easy As Candy From A Baby!**

Dear Friend,

I want to send you a free gun. (It is identical in CAD-imaged specs to the standard military-issue "Red style" training gun.)

There are 2 things I want you to do when you receive it:

- (1) I want you to set the gun aside, and watch the four videos I will also send.
- (2) Then, I want you to give the gun to the toughest, biggest and most coordinated friend you have... and ask him to:

Point The Gun At You And Squeeze The Trigger!

It is important that you choose someone who is larger than you. Preferably, he should also have some skill at fighting. *A black belt karate master would be perfect.*

Why am I asking you to do this? Because, I want to **prove** to you that what you see on these video tapes will allow you to instantly take that gun away (bare-handed) and *put him down on the ground* before he can move a muscle to squeeze the trigger! And once down, you will be able to **keep** him on the floor. You'll be in complete control.

As you will see in these tapes, you do not need strength, or special agility, or even previous skill in fighting. You will see how even a small man (5' 5", 140 pounds soaking wet) can easily disarm and take down a bodybuilder (6' 2", 240 pounds) trained in judo!

It's an astonishing fact to learn, but it is true nevertheless. What you are about to learn are the **identical** "Disarm and Disable" tactics used by elite U.S. military personnel, big city SWAT teams, and high-profile security enforcement...

Which Have Been Kept Secret From Civilians (Like You) For Almost 20 Years!

Now, let me tell you about this gun. It is a detailed and exact replica of the "Red style" guns used by the military for training. It was designed and hand casted so that *all the tolerances are identical*. It has the feel, heft and balance of an authentic high-powered automatic pistol, yet is crafted from special solid polymers so it can be used for real-life training.

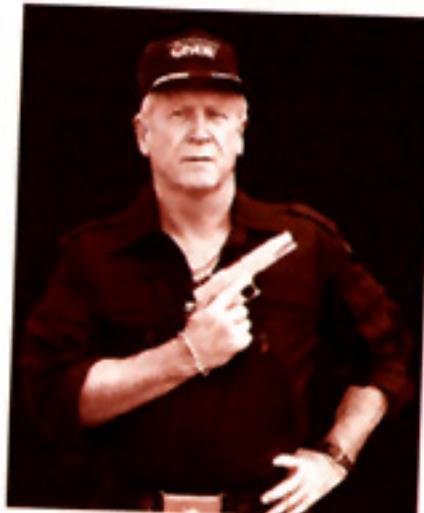
This gun would fool an expert who picked it up blindfolded — *only* the solid bore and the color (yellow) give it away as a training weapon. (The color is used for two reasons: To avoid misunderstandings with people who do not realize it is a training gun, and to keep you from accidentally picking up a real gun to practice with.)

There is one important alteration to this training gun. The **trigger guard** has been strategically changed so it will not snap the finger off your training partner, as a normal

trigger guard would. This alteration allows you to train without "pulling punches", and speeds up your learning curve dramatically.

Now, don't get the idea the "moves" you are about to learn are difficult, just because they have been held in secret by some of the most feared fighters in the world. *The moves are simple and natural...* yet utterly devastating when used against an armed attacker. You will be able to quickly take away your assailant's gun, **and you will also learn:**

- The *most important* (and *toughest*) decision you **must** make in any armed confrontation... and how to make it intelligently and morally (so you never have to second-guess yourself later!)
 - Why the *incorrect* disarming techniques will actually **force your attacker to fire...** whether he's decided to or not!
 - Why a man with a gun standing just 2 feet away from you is at a disadvantage... and how to use simple "leverage" to make him regret it forever!
 - Why the correct way to "clear" a weapon increases your chances of **not getting shot** (first rule of bare-handed gun fighting) by 60%!
- What's more, you'll also learn how to disarm an attacker who has a knife... along with:
- How to tell when your attacker is just "bluffing" with a knife... and when



*"The release of these
tapes is unparalleled
...it may save your life."*

Colonel Robert K. Brown, USAR (Ret.)
Founder and publisher of
Soldier of Fortune Magazine.

he's about to commit to stabbing you! (Crucial knowledge for making your best fight-ending move!)

- The *single most important decision* you must come to terms with in a knife fight!
- How to protect your most vulnerable "targets" during a knife fight... and how to use these rapid-blood loss areas **against your assailant to end the fight instantly!**

Plus, you'll learn the tactics of taking away a club or baseball bat from an attacker... and also:

- How to tell where the "sweet spot" of a club or baton is... where all the *damaging power* is located! (And how to avoid it!)
- Where the "safety" area of the club is: the 20% of any swing where the power of the club is wasted (and where your opportunity to *end the fight* lies!)

And, once you've disarmed your attacker and are facing him bare-handed... well, that's just child's play now. These tapes will show you:

- How to use the secret of your body's natural "fulcrums" to bring anyone to their knees... using only 12 pounds of pressure and a tiny "torque" of your wrist! (Once you understand the secret, even a fighter twice your size can be dropped in a blink... with no more exertion on your part than you'd use to open a tin can!)
- How to master the strongest grip you're capable of — no matter how "weak" you think you are!
- The devastating secrets of *joint manipulation* (the lazy man's method of effective fighting!)
- The 4 crucial moves you must make when being "held up" from behind! (Or being forced to kneel from behind... one of the more *common* assault techniques used by desperate criminals and hostage takers!)

PLUS — and this is *my favorite* part of the package — you get an entire video of street-fighting "Dirty Tricks"... the same sneaky moves used by professional soldiers and cops who can't afford to waste time fighting by the old "rules of the street". You'll learn:

- The 2 psychological responses *all* top warriors "surrender" to the instant a fight is at hand... that *increases their chance of survival and victory by 400%!*
- How to quickly "cancel out" any size or weight advantages your opponent has!
- The secrets of "Single Finger" takedowns... using moves that are **indefensible even by a larger and**

more experienced opponent!

- How to use "pain enhancement" tech to convince your assailant to stay down until the cops arrive!
- **How just 6 pounds of pressure on a nerve can set you free from almost any hold!**
- How to break away from strong-arm choke holds!
- **The natural "guides" on your attacker's body that automatically guarantee a correct strike!**
- The 12 take-down tricks that are never taught in karate "schools"!
- **How to avoid the horrible mistake most fighters make with groin kicks!**
- **How rookie fighters "telegraph" their moves... and not to do it yourself (and use your knowledge to gain advantages over your dumber attackers)!**
- How to reverse the worst fighting position you could ever find yourself in!
- **Your 5 best "first strikes" to end any fight instantly — a split second before it begins!**
- The sneaky ways professional fighters use the element of surprise to turn around dangerous situations... even when they're the ones who've been "jumped" by an assailant unexpectedly!
- **The simplest way to gain a "technical" advantage when you appear to be overmatched!**

And more. A lot more, in fact. For example... **How only 4-6 pounds of pressure can snap a shinbone... How to "adjust" his attitude without doing obvious harm... A detailed "map" of anatomical targets (for example: where the thumb ends at the thigh is a crucial nerve point — reaction: numbing shock when kicked)... And, the most decisive move you can make to end any fight instantly!**

As you can see, the secrets revealed in these amazing video tapes will give you a powerful new way of moving in the world, because...

You Will Never Again Walk Your Streets In Fear!

Are you having trouble believing all this? That's okay — I'm used to people being suspicious... *at first*. But the truth is, what you are about to learn is praised by professional soldiers, and law enforcement personnel all over the country. They *all* agree that this new system can be learned quickly and easily, and will work on the street under even the worst conditions imaginable.

Here is how we came to discover these "professional warrior" bare-handed fighting secrets: For a long time now, I have been connected to the "inside" of certain elite military and law enforcement circles. (Including the Navy SEALs and US Army DELTA soldiers — the most dangerous soldiers on the planet.) My goal is to help civilians like you to understand the super-effective fighting skills that have been developed. I want my family to feel as safe and protected as possible, and I'm sure you want the same for your loved ones.

Anyway, through certain inside "contacts" (which I am **not** going to tell you about) I was approached by two of the most respected professional combat trainers in the world: **Randy Wanner** is a feared martial arts expert who for years has been training federal and state law enforcement agencies in "street survival fighting tactics". (He was also the former Martial Arts editor for *Soldier of Fortune* magazine.) His name is well-known among the elite "warriors" of modern-day combat, and he has gone toe-to-toe with street fighters from all over the world to prove his techniques are superior to anything else out there.

Bob Taylor is considered one of the country's most experienced experts in close quarters combat. State, local and federal law enforcement agencies use him frequently for training. He is also a specialist in counter-terrorism for African, South American and Central American governments.

These two guys are in demand all over the world. Their clients include the U.S. military, big-city SWAT teams, international anti-terrorist squads and top security firms in 15 foreign countries. These clients hire Bob and Randy for just one thing:

Their Incredible Skill In Quickly Teaching Their Unique "Bare-Handed" Disarming and Disabling Techniques For Armed Attackers!

This new fighting system took over 20 years to develop. It was necessary because soldiers and officers who were supposed to be disarming their attackers were, instead, *getting shot and disabled themselves!*

Randy and Bob decided to find out what was wrong. They used their connections within the military establishment to get "training" bullets for their weapons. These bullets (called "Red Jets") are almost impossible for civilians to get. They are made of wax and polymer, yet are calibrated to fire from real weapons and can blow a hole in quarter-inch plywood from 15 feet. These training bullets were necessary for Bob and Randy's research, because...

They Used This Live Ammunition On Each Other To Develop Their New Disarming System!

Let me tell you — it takes some kind of guts to face a gun loaded with live ammo. Those wax bullets travel at *over 400 feet per second...* and even if they don't tear up your body like real bullets, these guys have the scars to prove getting hit with them isn't pretty. *No one else in the world has ever done this kind of live-weapon research!*

The first thing they found out, of course, was that 99% of the disarming tactics being used by soldiers and cops (and still being taught by smug karate masters who have never had to face a loaded gun in person) **DO NOT WORK!**

This has to stop. It's irresponsible. It's stupid — especially when Randy and Bob have, after 20 years of tough research, come up with simple and easy-to-learn ways that **do** work!

Their discoveries have revolutionized the way modern professional warriors approach armed attackers — already, there are cops who are on record saying these new skills have

saved their lives in the street!

Why do you — as a civilian — need these skills? Are you kidding? The whole world has gone psycho. The odds that you will be faced by an armed attacker — without a weapon of your own to rely on — are getting worse every day. This kind of advanced knowledge (even if it is easy to learn) isn't a luxury for American men anymore. The facts are staggering:

- M.I.T. (the famous university) did a study uncovering the fact that **5 of every 6 twelve-year-old kids are going to be the victim of a violent crime in their lives!** That's almost *everybody*, sooner or later!
- Jean O'Neil (of the **Nat. Crime Prevention Council**) says that victims who are forced into an attacker's car *rarely* walk away alive!
- And every kind of horrible crime is becoming more and more common — you are no longer safe in your home, in your car, in a restaurant, or on the street surrounded by other people!

What's more, new studies show that women who *fight back* are less likely to be raped. And that learning some form of self-defense is your *best bet* against a criminal population who is prepared to use force and violence on a whim.

But there's a BIG problem here. The way most Americans are going about getting prepared to defend themselves is simply...

Not Going To Work!

Here are the facts, my friend: Most martial art studios are run by people who have *never been in a real fight before in their lives...* and you will probably be trained (in a *huge* class) by people who have been prematurely promoted to "black belt" just to handle the classes! These "store front" studios operate exactly like health spas — they lure in large numbers of people, and get the money up front. It's a business.

And the garbage being sold to women offers only the pale illusion of self-defense: Tear gas, stun guns and the fancy alarm sirens people are "arming" themselves with are worthless in most cases of attack.

In reality, you have only two choices: Remain a vulnerable "potential victim" who trusts that God will protect you... or learn the **RIGHT** way to defend yourself.

It's not hard to do. In fact, it's relatively *simple*...

Once You Understand The "Inside" Secrets!

Well, there's a "hitch". You see, the only way to even get any personal training from Bob or Randy was to get into their heavily-monitored seminars. But to get in, you need **2 forms of official credentials and licenses** (plus about \$850 for the full board of instruction). Only professionals — elite soldiers, police SWAT teams, high-profile security agents — have been allowed to learn this life-saving stuff...

Until Now!

Why now? Because, after about a year of intense negotiation, we convinced Bob and Randy to go into a video studio and — taking as long as they needed — produce the **first video package ever** of their most trustworthy tech-

niques for facing an armed attacker bare-handed.

And they did just that. After weeks of filming and editing, they created the only package in existence for people (like you) outside the world of professional warriors. **Yet they pulled no punches in presenting their new fighting system!** What you get here is all their best techniques, best advice, and best training methods!

Here's what you get in this amazing, just-released video package:

- **4 full-length videos** (almost 5 solid hours) — teaching you all the advanced combat techniques for instantly disarming and disabling (bare-handed) any assailant coming at you with a gun, club or knife (the most common weapons you'll see on the streets!)
- Included is the famous **"Dirty Tricks"** video of Bob and Randy's favorite moves — really sneaky ways to manipulate and "put down" any attacker before he knows what happened... and keep him down until help arrives or you decide an "alternative" course of action! Even trained street fighters *twice your size* will go down fast — and stay down — with these astonishing fighting secrets!
- Plus, you get your specially-made **"replica" gun...** yours FREE just for ordering the video tapes.

The techniques you will discover on these tapes are the *identical* ones taught to elite soldiers, SWAT team cops and high-security personnel...

With One Important Difference!

In these videos, you get the incredible advantage of seeing everything via **3 separate cameras** (mounted stage left, right, and overhead)...so you get *multi-angles* and *slow-motion repetitions* of each and every move! This means you get an increased understanding... and you'll follow a faster "learning curve" than even the professionals get during a seminar!

This is no Hollywood B.S... these are real techniques used by cops and soldiers! **And make no mistake** — this stuff should *only* be used when you are faced with what the professionals call **"Condition Red"**: The point where you have **absolutely** decided that your assailant has already made the choice to harm you... *and you must act to save your life!*

That's what this tape package is all about. You, ultimately, have to take responsibility for yourself, and for your actions. We can't do that for you. Neither can we guarantee that what you learn here will make you invulnerable to harm — that would be a stupid claim, and you would be a fool to believe it. No, what you have here is an **OPTION**. You are giving yourself one more (powerful) choice in this crazed, dangerous world — the choice to not be a vulnerable victim who has no idea what to do... even though you know that certain harm is imminent!

I don't rob people. I don't like to hurt anyone, and I don't like to see other people get hurt. It sickens me that the criminal element has taken over our streets, and is invading homes with impunity. That sucks — and I, for one, am damned glad to have tools like these

to take back my little piece of the world.

And I believe you feel the same way. That's why I want you to see these tapes for yourself. Right now.

Here's the deal: All you need to do is call my office at **1-800-899-8153** and ask for **Department FC-53** (that's a toll-FREE call and won't cost you a cent) and tell the person who answers that you want the **"Fighting Chance"** video package... along with your free replica gun. Have your credit card ready. Or, if you prefer to pay by check or money order, simply fill out the "Priority Order Form" below and mail it with your payment to:

TRS

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Visalia, CA 93292

The cost of this incredible package is just \$97 — that includes everything *and* you have a...

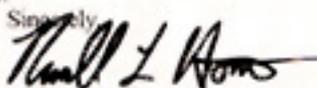
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But you do need to hurry! Even though we have many allies in the military and law enforcement "brotherhood" who support our attempts to "de-victimize" civilians, you should know there are many others who are scared to death with the idea of giving these secrets away. We have already been "stopped" by the U.S. Navy for offering another product... and the truth is, there are no guarantees this product won't be "stopped" also.

If that happens, you won't be able to get this information at any cost, anywhere. So, you see, it's very important that you order **now**, while you have this letter in your hands... and don't risk having these tapes withheld from you!

Sincerely,


Dr. R.L. Horne

P.S. One last thing — it's important. Please read these "testimonials" now.

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"In my 50 years of military combat experience no one has done the hands-on research of being unarmed against a live weapon... until now! Study and master this tape. It will save your life."

— Major General John K. Singlaub, USA (Ret.)

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— Phillip Morrison, demolition/anti-terrorist/crowd control expert, Director of Uniformed K-9 division.

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"The knowledge in these four videos could save your life."

— Neil C. Livingstone, author and expert on terrorism and national security.

"...Without a doubt this is the most viable and practical system of weapons disarmament in existence."

— Colonel Fred Caristo, USA (Ret.)

"...It is my opinion that every active-duty law enforcement officer should have access to this video series. These videos will save lives!"

— Dave Chatellier, CEO of "A Place To Shoot", 20 years active military service, 13 years Civilian Special Operational Services.

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THE SIXGUNNER

John Taffin



**RUGER'S TINY TWOSOME
BRINGS SMILES TO KIDS
AND GRANDPAS ALIKE.**

KIT-GUN COOL

Fifty years separate this original Flat-Top, flat-gate .22 Single-Six (top) from the current New Model .32 Magnum.



Laura, age 16, prefers the slightly larger and heavier Single-Six .32 Magnum.



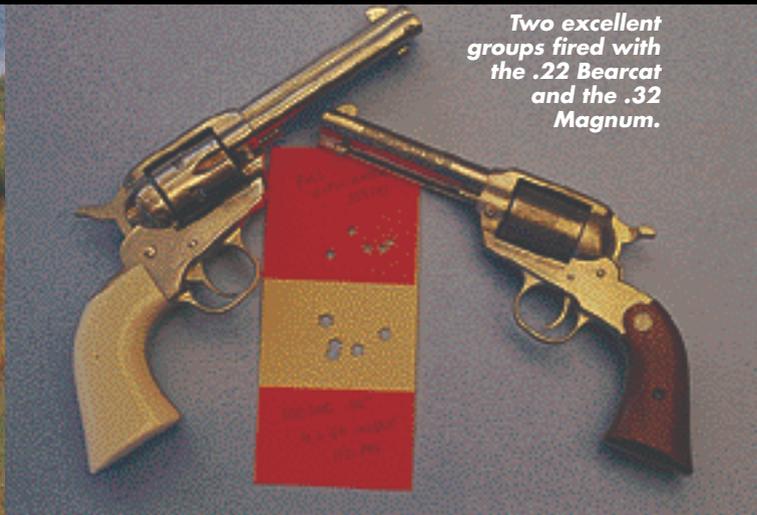
Four beauties: Elyse, Laura, .22 Bearcat, and .32 Single-Six.



Technology can be a wonderful friend. But sometimes it causes more work and stress than it saves. How well I remember my high-school history teacher prophesying we would see labor-saving devices that would, in fact, do just the opposite, causing us to work harder with less satisfaction. I don't know what he was using for a crystal ball, but he was right on the money.

The simple and satisfying aspects of life have too often been replaced by the complex and mundane. Fortunately, a few simple and enjoyable things remain. They now come in stainless steel.

Is there anything more enjoyable — and at the same time more simple — than shooting tin cans with a .22? If there is, I



Two excellent groups fired with the .22 Bearcat and the .32 Magnum.

simply don't know what it is. And I think that if I could capture the enjoyment we experienced as teenagers shooting .22s, and spread it from one end of this country to the other, why it would certainly have a most positive effect on people's attitudes.

Now there are those who would have us believe times have changed to the point where kids and guns no longer go together. And I believe that's total nonsense. Simply ridiculous. Kids and guns have always gone together, ever since the first blackpowder squirrel rifle went bang in front of a mesmerized 10-year-old.

Even in this high-tech decade of the 21st century, we still hold on to the basic fact that kids and guns, when tethered to proper teaching and supervision, do go together. Time spent with a kid shooting is an almost absolute guarantee that child will not be a problem later on.

Just look around your own household.

Kids and Rugers

Ruger has been making single action .22s for a half-century. I'd hate to have to count the number of adults who will not only admit their first handgun was a .22 Ruger — but will also confess it's still one of their favorite sixguns.

My first revolver was a .22 Ruger Single-Six, which I owned in the mid-

Kids and guns have always gone together, ever since the first blackpowder squirrel rifle went bang in front of a mesmerized 10-year-old.

1950s. By the time the '70s arrived, my son was 10 years old and ready for his first revolver.

It had to be a .22, it had to be a single action, and it had to be a Ruger.

The bargain we struck was I would pay half, if he would save up the other half. It took him quite a few odd jobs, but on his 10th birthday we walked into The Gunhaus and put down \$39.50 for a brand-new Ruger Bearcat.

The shop owner threw in a box of .22s, I fashioned a belt and holster, a friend made custom grips, and another generation was ready to enter the satisfying world of sixgunning. He still has that Bearcat. His son — my grandson — already has designs on it.

The Bearcat's Purr

Ruger recently announced two new sixguns. I consider these little revolvers

Continued on page 84



Ruger's six-shot, stainless-steel, .22 Long Rifle Bearcat.

TEST RESULTS

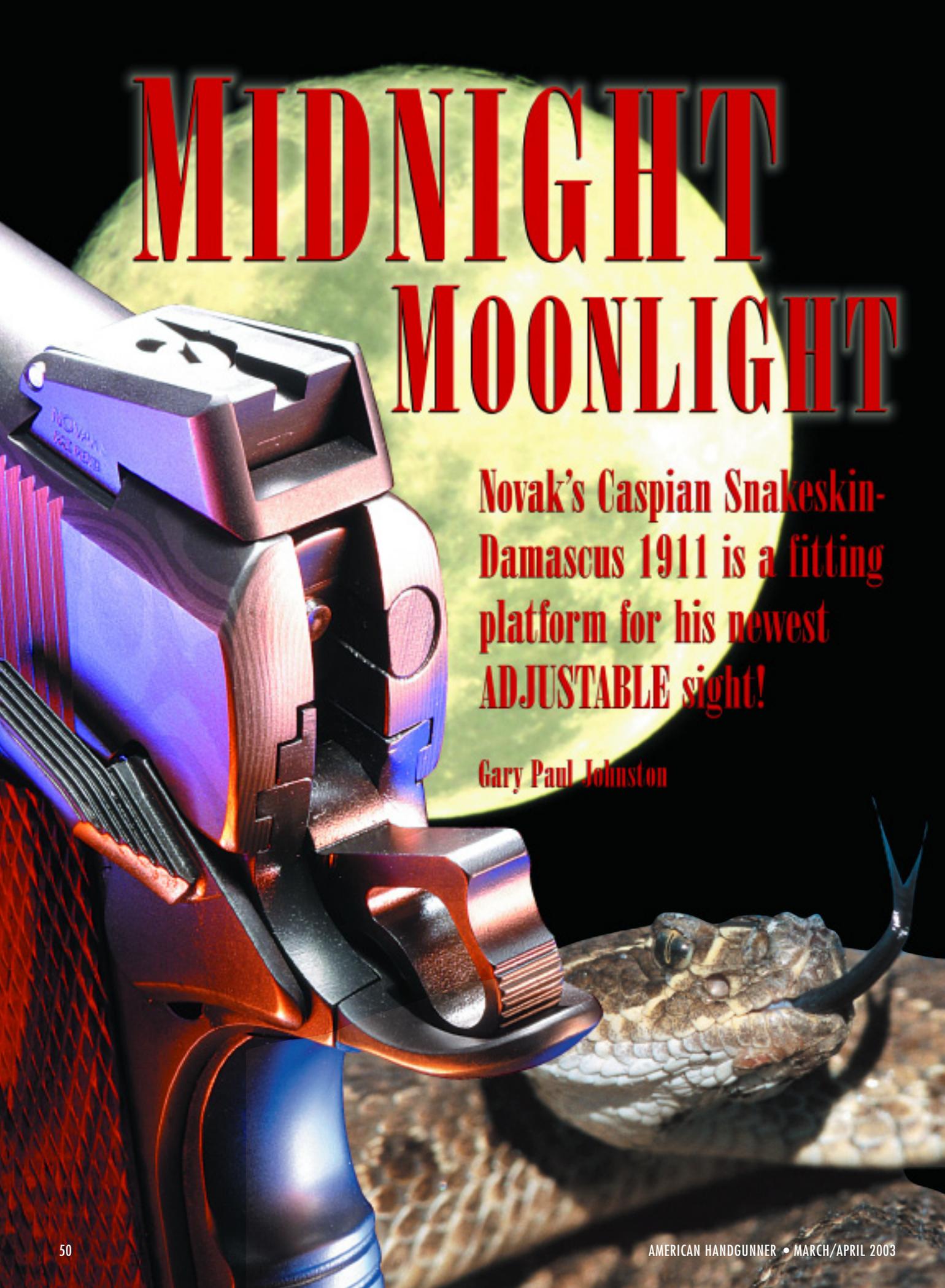
STAINLESS STEEL BEARCAT 4" bbl .22 LONG RIFLE

LOAD	MV	GROUP
CCI Blazer	961	1"
CCI Standard Velocity	853	1"
CCI Mini-Mag +V	1,135	1"
CCI QuikShok	1,252	1½"
Federal Lightning	1,028	1"
Federal High Velocity**	1,140	2"
PMC Rifle Match	829	1½"
Remington High Velocity*	995	1"
Winchester HP High Velocity	1,056	1½"
Winchester Wildcat	1,036	1"

STAINLESS STEEL RUGER 4½" SINGLE-SIX .32 MAGNUM

LOAD	MV	GROUP
Federal 85 gr. JHP	937	1"
Hornady 85 XTP/11.5 gr. H110	1,102	2"
Hard Cast 100 SWC/4.2 gr. Unique	1,122	1½"
Hard Cast 100 SWC/10.5 gr. H110	1,119	2"
Hard Cast 100 SWC/3.0 gr. Unique	829	1"
Hard Cast 100 SWC/4.0 gr. AA#5	808	1"
Hard Cast 100 SWC/2.6 gr. Red Dot	764	1"

* Indicates one misfire **Indicates two misfires
All groups five shots at 50 feet.



MIDNIGHT MOONLIGHT

Novak's Caspian Snakeskin-Damascus 1911 is a fitting platform for his newest **ADJUSTABLE** sight!

Gary Paul Johnston



Long renowned for his Novak Lo Mount Sight, pistol-smith, Wayne Novak passed the one million mark in this sight two years ago and is still going stronger than ever. However, not being one to rest on his laurels, Wayne Novak became interested in an advanced adjustable combat sight not long after his Lo Mount Sight went into production, and experimented with several designs.

The one thing Novak insisted on was that his adjustable sight look exactly like his fixed Lo Mount Sight. He was also determined to make a sight that was tough enough for the most extreme duty while at the same time being simple.

After nearly twenty years, Wayne Novak notified me he had designed and produced the adjustable sight he had been in search of for nearly two decades. He calls it the "Novak Extreme Duty Adjustable Sight." Based upon the Novak Lo Mount sight in outline, the Extreme Duty is nearly always mistaken for its fixed predecessor at first glance. Consisting of a total of only nine parts, the Extreme Duty Adjustable Sight is a lesson in simplicity.





“This snake-skin Damascus Novak seems as if it’s being silently observed under the midnight moon...waiting to strike.”

To debut his Extreme Duty Adjustable Sight, Novak selected a Colt pre-Series 70 Gold Cup frame and a 6-inch slide from Caspian Arms, and assigned the project to his master gunsmith, Joe Bonar. This wasn't just any 6-inch slide, but one of Caspian's deluxe Damascus slides.

Forged from several types of steel including stainless, Damascus

steel has been used to make superior knife blades for thousands of years. Not only is Damascus steel very strong, but it is also extremely beautiful with the various steels swirling throughout the metal. Master forgers who make this steel create almost unbelievable art forms within it.

Recently, Caspian Arms began using Damascus billets to make exotic slides for 1911 pistols. With no two being identical in pattern, each slide is unique and beautiful. However, it's the Caspian 6-inch long slide that

stands alone, and this is the slide Novak chose for what is his flagship 1911 pistol.

Different from Caspian Damascus slides I have examined previously, the pattern of the steel in this one resembles that of a python having dots within circles running its entire length. The extra length of this slide provides a quantum leap to the beauty of the Damascus pattern — but more on that later.

A Blend of Talent

In addition to its pre-Series 70 Colt Gold Cup National Match frame, the pistol's Caspian Damascus Long Slide is fitted with a Novak 18 kt. gold bead front sight. After precisely drilling the hole for the solid gold rod and installing it in the steel sight blade, both are drilled and a pin is installed to prevent the gold bead from ever coming out. I have this sight on several of my Novak Custom pistols, and believe me, if you can see your target, you can see this genuine solid gold bead.

Precisely fitted to this long pistol is a long 6" .45 ACP Match barrel. This one is crafted by Kart, along with their match bushing. Long favorite of Novak's, Kart barrels are made well and perform just as predictably. Beyond this, Novak's flagship pistol is equipped with a Videki Colt Gold Cup-style wide adjustable trigger, to

Continued on page 98



Raised wings protect the blade on Novak's new adjustable sight.



WEL

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Ultra 26mm
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HEX BULLET HI-JINX

Taurus' Capable Copper Bullet

Charles E. Petty



It's been a long time since we've seen the name of a handgun manufacturer on a box of ammo. The last time was Smith & Wesson ammo, and that was over 20 years ago. When I saw the first ad for the new Taurus fodder, it was pretty clear this was a marketing, rather than a manufacturing, effort. Nonetheless, it is very different from the common "me-too" product. At a glance you can tell it's derived from the Barnes X-bullet, which has an enviable, and well deserved, reputation as a rifle game bullet.

In this business the word "new" is badly abused, and the Taurus ammo breaks no technological ground. What it does do — very well I'd say — is adapt for handgun use the technology used in Barnes X and Winchester Fail Safe rifle bullets.

Taurus thinks this is pretty cool stuff. "Advanced Handgun Cartridges" and "20 Superior Cartridges" are prominently printed on the box label. So is the fact the bullet is 99.95 percent pure copper. But the really important thing is the Hex Bullet trademark. To be sure, it puns the

X-bullet. But it is also accurately descriptive of the projectile's expanded shape.

I suspect people view bullet expansion as a random event, and there was a time when this was true. But no longer. Modern designs expand along engineered lines by building weak points into jackets or bullets that, when they encounter fluid mediums, the pressure inside the hollow point pushes outward and causes the bullet to fail (rupture) along predetermined lines.

Yet another myth is you must have the highest possible velocity for reliable expansion. That's a crock. In fact, too much velocity can be just as bad — or even worse — than too little. The engineer must perform a delicate balancing act between the rate and amount of expansion to achieve desired levels of penetration.

Most good hollowpoints will penetrate about an inch of gelatin before expansion starts and will reach their maximum size between 3" and 5". Increase the velocity above the design parameters of the bullet and penetration will be reduced. This is contrary to conventional wisdom, but the increased velocity will make the bullet expand more quickly and the increased area acts just like a parachute. If velocity is reduced, penetration will increase at

first because the braking action of expansion is less.

When the FBI began to test bullet performance with barrier materials in front of the gelatin block, a very different picture of bullet performance emerged. Hollowpoints that once expanded beautifully turned, effectively, into ball ammo when their noses became plugged with cloth or other non-compressible material.

Designers developed several methods to overcome these obstacles and found all that was needed was to get the bullet to start to expand. Because once the nose opened up a bit, the fluid medium would wash enough of the barrier material away to allow expansion to continue. Gelatin testing shows us initial expansion will be delayed a little — usually by an inch or two further into the block — and overall penetration increases proportionately.

Construction of all the recent "premium" handgun bullets consisted of a lead core covered with a conventional jacket or one made of brass. The exception here is Speer's Gold Dot, which has a copper jacket plated onto a lead core.

Bob Morrison, now Chief Operating Officer of Taurus International Manufacturing, has a long history in the firearms



industry. He had been particularly impressed with the hunting performance of the Barnes X-bullet when he was a manufacturer's representative for Barnes. He wondered if something similar might not be a good handgun bullet.

But before this could be done, there was a substantial hurdle to clear. The Gun Control Act of 1968 has serious prohibitions against "armor piercing" bullets. More commonly, these were referred to

as "cop killer bullets" that purportedly defeated body armor worn by law enforcement officers. The major feature of the bill was that bullets without lead cores were generally prohibited.

Over a period of time, Barnes made some samples and Morrison submitted them to ATF for consideration. Two points were vital: construction had to be pure (99.95%), and therefore relatively soft copper; and quite obviously they

could not penetrate standard body armor.

Morrison reported in due time ATF notified Taurus that, "the submitted samples are not armor piercing," effectively removing the legal cloud of GCA 68.

But we must be aware that some states follow the wording of Federal statutes when writing their own codes. So it's only prudent to check for legal pitfalls in state law.

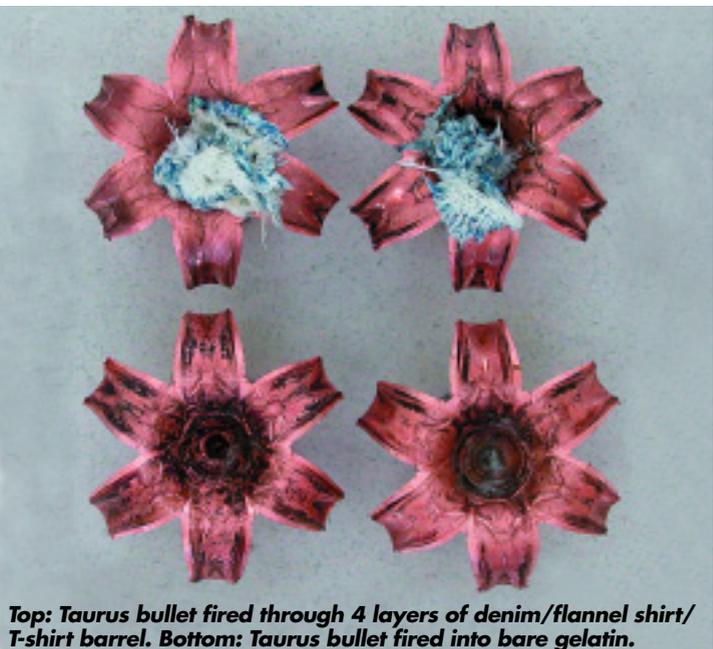
One of Morrison's early decisions was
Continued on page 107

Gelatin Test Results				
Test firearm: S&W 4506 with 5" barrel				
	Velocity (fps)	Penetration	Expanded Dia.	Recovered Wt.
Bare Gelatin	964	12.5"	0.853	184.5
FBI Heavy Clothing	958	13.25	.863	185.9
4-Layer denim	962	13.0	0.856	185.5

Accuracy Test Results				
Test firearm: Rock River Arms Match 5" barrel				
Velocity (fps)	1	2	3	Average
989	2.46	2.12	2.48	2.35

Velocity From Various Handguns		
Firearm	BBL Length	Velocity
SIG P-220	4.4	950
Colt Commander	4.5	993
Kimber Elite Carry	4.0	940
Colt Officer's ACP	3.5	923

Accuracy results are 10 shots @25 yd. from Ransom Rest. Velocity is the instrumental average of all shots as measured by a PACT chronograph.



Top: Taurus bullet fired through 4 layers of denim/flannel shirt/T-shirt barrel. Bottom: Taurus bullet fired into bare gelatin.

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Check out more
great holiday buys
online!

Victory model U.S. Navy marked Smith & Wesson .38 Special caliber revolver and M3 styled shoulder holster. Most often used by pilots and aircrews as a personal defense weapon.

Fighting Handguns of WW II

Heroes, Their Hardware and the American Fighting Spirit.

Clint Smith

Much has been written about the small arms — specifically handguns — used by American Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Aircrews in the conflagration known as World War II. The manufacturers, the number of pieces produced, the fit and finish are duly noted and documented.

But what of the individual stories of these American servicemen using handguns? In a war rife with artillery and aircraft carriers, started by Stukas and ending with the blazing flash and mushroom cloud of the atomic bomb — what possible role could a handgun have played

Indeed, it seems at times, handguns played pivotal roles in the often very

personal fights for freedom that occurred at toe-toe distances during the war. One only has to read some of



Colt 1903 .32



Both a Colt 1911 and 1911A1 are shown with an original Vest Emergency Sustainance manufactured by Cappel MacDonald & Co. for the United States Army Air Force circa 1943. Both the 1911 and 1911A1 pistol were used in World War II.

the Medal of Honor citations to see, in sterile, official, but nonetheless dramatic text, exactly how a .45 or a .38 in the hands of a brave soldier proved the handgun had and still has a role in warfare. There are enough old-timers still around who, reluctantly, can still share their experiences. Here are some of those.

**General Order Number 35,
9 May 1945:**

Private Thomas A. Baker,
Company A, 105th Infantry,
27th Infantry Division
Born 25 June 1916,
Killed in Action 12 July 1944,
Saipan, Mariana Islands.

Over a period from 19 June to 12 July 1944 Private Baker's Company A was heavily engaged in combat. His company pinned down by strong enemy positions, Private Baker single handedly attacked fortified positions with a bazooka. Several days later encountering several groups of enemy soldiers numbering up to twelve men, he attacked alone without hesitation. On July 7th, a force of several thousand Japanese soldiers attacked the perimeter where Private Baker stood in defense. Seriously wounded, with his personal weapon destroyed from hand to hand combat,

Private Baker was given a pistol. Refusing to be evacuated, he was last seen alive back against a tree with pistol in hand. Later, when units returned to the battlefield, Private Thomas A. Baker's body was found, — empty pistol in hand — with the bodies of eight dead Japanese soldiers lying at his feet.

**General Order Number 95,
30 October 1945:**

Corporal Edward A. Bennett,
Company B, 1st Battalion, 358 Infantry,
90th Infantry Division.
Born 11 February 1920,
Passed 2 May 1983 Campbell, California
1 February 1945
at Heckhuscheid, Germany.

While in the advance, Corporal Bennett's company was pinned down by a strong machine-gun position. Corporal Bennett, flanking the enemy position, closed with and killed one enemy soldier with a knife. Proceeding into the building he charged the machine gun position killing three enemy with rifle fire, clubbed one to death with his rifle and dispatched the last three enemy gunners with .45 caliber pistol fire.

Iwo Jima March 1945

In possibly the only ground action of it's kind involving Army Air Force pilots and aircrew, the Japanese assault on Iwo Jima in March 1945 goes down as unique. Several hundred Japanese broke out of a containment pocket and staged an attack through the tent area of the newly arrived fighter squadron personnel. In the ensuing melee United States Army Air Corps personnel armed with .45 caliber pistols, M-1 Carbines — and assisted by a Marine patrol in the area — killed over three hundred Japanese.

Okinawa Jima, 1945

Serving as a medical Corpsman 3rd Platoon, Company G, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines on Okinawa Jima on 2 May 1945 Robert E. Bush moved fearlessly among his wounded Marines. Exposed to fire as the Japanese counterattacked, Corpsman Bush was administering plasma to a wounded Marine officer on the ridgeline. Holding the plasma bottle in one hand the corpsman drew his pistol and emptied the weapon into the on-coming mass. Corpsman Bush, wounded to the degree of losing one eye, continued to protect the wounded marine with an M-1 carbine until his charge could be evacuated. President Harry S. Truman awarded corpsman Robert E. Bush his Medal of Honor 5 October 1945.

Iwo Jima 3 March 1945

Leading Marines of the 1st Battalion, 28th Marines, 5th Marine Division, Sergeant William G. Harrell was standing

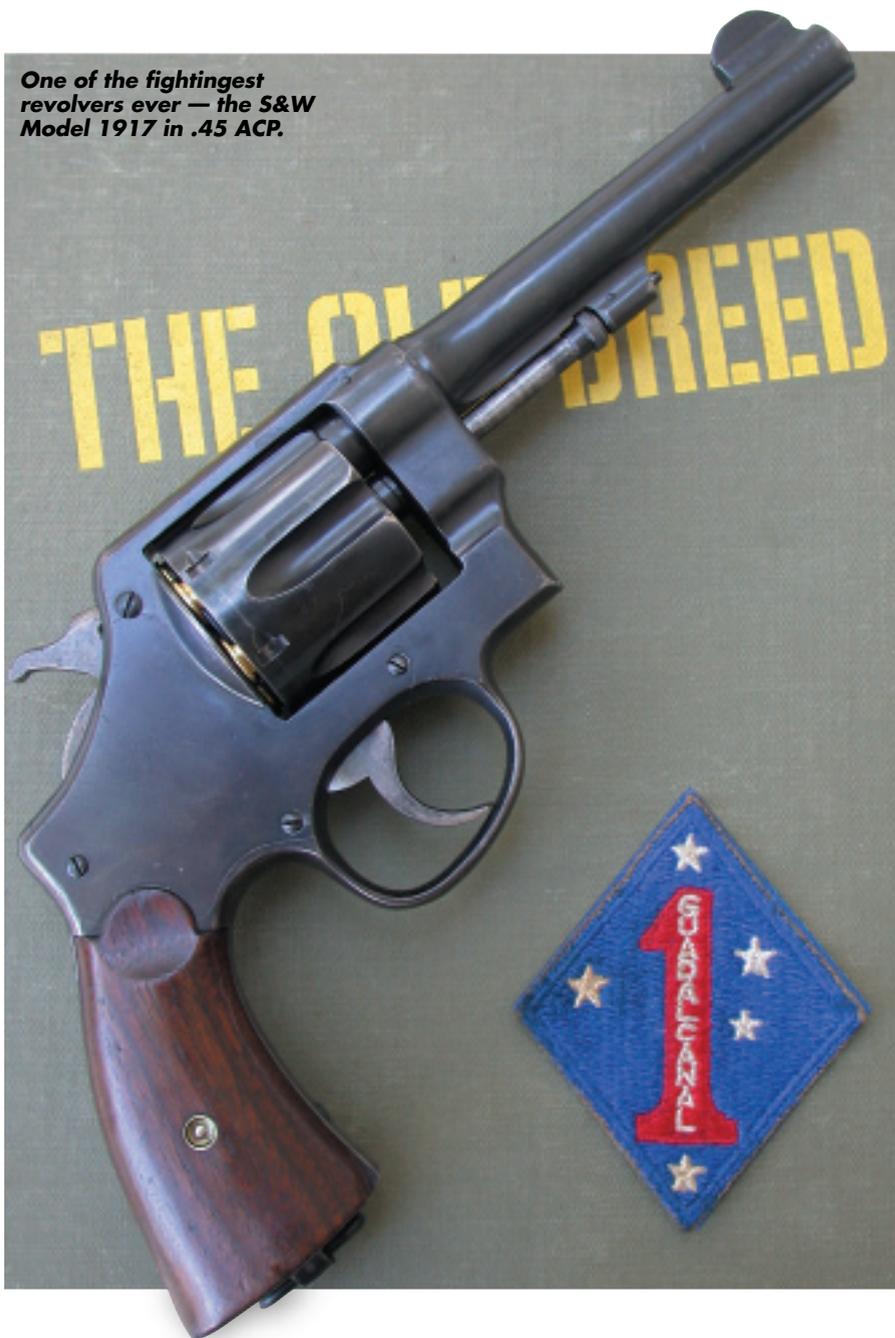


The author's father is seen receiving a Distinguished Flying Cross on Saipan in late 1944. Other awards are a DFC 2nd award, Air Medal with 5 Oak Leaves, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal. In addition are Aerial Gunner's wings, Staff Sergeant stripes and 7th USAAF shoulder patch.



Colt 1911A1 in an M-3 shoulder holster with 27th Squadron 30th Bomb Group 7th USAAF flight jacket. The Zoe Mozart pinup is the nose emblem of the Sky Skow III, a B-24. The Sky Skow III's entire crew was killed in action October 1st, 1944 over Iwo Jima. The A-2 jacket is a reproduction of the jacket worn by the author's namesake, who was the top ball turret gunner on the Sky Skow III.

One of the fightingest revolvers ever — the S&W Model 1917 in .45 ACP.



watch in the darkness of 3, March, 1945 on Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands. In the early hours of dawn, Japanese infiltrators attacked his position. Opening fire with an M-1 Carbine Sgt. Harrell killed several of the enemy soldiers as an exploding grenade severed his left hand. Drawing his pistol he killed a sword-wielding opponent who entered his position. As more enemy poured into his position he killed several more until his pistol ran out of ammunition. Surrounded by several enemy troops, he picked up a grenade that had been thrown at him and held it against the remaining enemy soldier occupying his position. The blast severed Sgt Harrell's right hand and killed the enemy soldier. Sgt. Harrell was evacuated the next morning, his position surrounded by a dozen enemy dead.

Sgt. William Harrell was awarded the Medal of Honor 5 October 1945 at the White House by President Harry S. Truman.

Sgt. Harrell passed 9 August 1964 in San Antonio, Texas.

High Flying Heroics

Flying five miles above Germany in aircraft with quirky talismans like "Flak-Magnet," "Corky," and the "Impatient Virgin" adorning their aircraft, the aircrews of the B-24s and B-17s sustained tremendous losses of life and aircraft. Raids with losses of sixty aircraft were not uncommon. Sixty aircraft may not sound like many but the number of lives lost could be shocking. Sixty aircraft equates to six hundred empty beds — and six hundred empty places at the chow hall that evening.

The Pacific theater flyers fared no better in many cases. Air strikes flown from Saipan to Iwo Jima meant ten-hour flights over the vast loneliness of the Pacific Ocean. Not a big deal, unless the number two engine is feathered, the hydraulics and fuel tanks are leaking and waist gunner is bleeding from flak injuries. At best, they could crash-land upon arriving back at Saipan. At worst, there awaited a salt-water ocean filled quickly by enemy ships and patrolling sharks.

Modest Heros, All

Walking into Union Station in Kansas City, Missouri on VJ day, C.W. Staples — recently of the 44th Bomb Group, 68th Squadron, 8th Army Air Force — wore the decorations appropriate to a B-24 tail gunner with forty combat missions. The 31-year-old Sergeant, considered an "old man" by that day's standards, wore a Bronze Star with cluster, Air Medal with four Oak Leafs, Distinguished Unit Citation and numerous other awards on his blouse. Shot from the sky three times over Europe, the now spry 90 year old quietly, almost bashfully, recalls his service. He declares, "I did nothing compared to guys who lost their lives." In my humble opinion, I disagree.

Sgt. Staples carried two Remington-Rand 1911A1 pistols on every mission — one in a shoulder holster and the other stuffed inside his flight boot. This method of carry survived a parachute jump from a burning B-24 over Fortress Europe. When asked why he carried two he smiled and said, "Because I couldn't think of a way to carry three pistols and I couldn't figure out a way to get my fifty caliber guns out of the damn turret and carry them and the ammo. I wasn't a particularly good pistol shot, but carrying the pistols was in a word — comforting".

Continuing he declared "I was not going to go quietly if captured." Probably a good idea, as on more than one occasion American aircrew members were attacked and killed by German civilians after bailing out over German soil.

In a scary-as-hell-itself moment, Sgt. Staples recalled, "It was December 28, 1944. The target was Kaiserslautern, Germany and they had shot the hell out of us. Van Dyke, my pilot, was struggling to keep 'it' in the air. We had bad damage and when I say bad, I mean I could look outside through holes big enough to fling a basketball. We were on fire and loosing altitude. We ended up crash-landing on a Luftwaffe base in Merville, Belgium. We sat down hard, and I ran like hell. I had two .45s — one in a shoulder holster and the one, from my boot, was in my hand. I wasn't a good shot but it was damn comforting to have it in my hand. Fortunately, the British had taken the airfield shortly before our unscheduled visit."

Continued on page 89

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Springfield's new SubCompact XD shows its short stature nestled next to a bi-tone 4" XD.



CHESTER
FEDERAL PROTECTION
CALIBER 147 GR. SXT

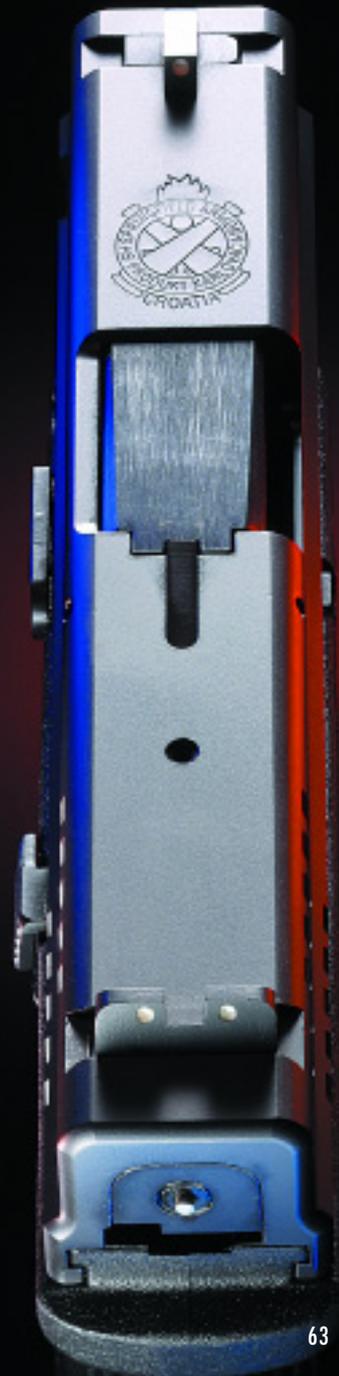
Interfire Cartridges
at touch-off & percussion

Springfield's NEW

TINY TERROR

SUBCOMPACT XD

Shoots Great ...Less Filling



Roy Huntington

The importance of heritage can't be stressed enough when it comes to quality. It's the rare occasion that produces instant excellence when a new product is introduced. Most often, promises are made, hype is exercised and broad smiles and knowing nods are on senior executive faces as the fanfare commences. All too often, the balloons and give-away pins end-up being the highlight of the day, as the much-anticipated new widget proves to be a dismal disappointment.

Without a solid background of performance and integrity, how can a potential buyer of any new product — especially a firearm — predict the long-term results of his commitment of money, time and effort? They can't. Without that lineage to point at and say, "There, see, they've been around. Their stuff works, performs in the real world and can be relied upon," — then it's a gamble, a leap into the nether-regions of hope and doubt. One needs to ask how much risk they are willing to put on the table when they're potentially dealing with their lives or the lives of loved ones.

Most people deal in risk the way we might handle a Brown Recluse spider — gingerly and with great respect for the potential of disaster. Which is why we're talking about heritage and how it affects what you see on these pages. Springfield Armory has introduced something new here in the SubCompact XD. This isn't just a "cut-down" version of a full-sized pistol, but a re-engineered and re-designed off-spring of the parent pistol — and the parent company itself. Heritage.

Life is a series of options and exceptions and frankly, Springfield's newest has just raised the bar on the expectations one should have on new options. Simply put? This is a serious fighting pistol, for serious people who recognize quality, reliability and performance in the real-world. And now we're going to explain exactly why this seems to be the case in this situation.

Something Old & New

Yes, the basic design was initially introduced a few years ago as the HS2000. A poor marketing effort led to the acquisition of the design by Spring-



“ We were told to shoot the snot out of it. So we did. ”



Striker status indicator pin and grip safety are important parts of the total package.



Loaded chamber indicator is a visual and tactile helper. It's the little things ...

field Armory and nothing better could have happened for all-concerned. Springfield's ability to market properly and co-engineer ideas with the parent Croation manufacturer, led to a blend of solid ideas from America with the supreme manufacturing skills of the CNC team in Europe. What was good on its own was now suddenly even better.

The XD series is the lifeblood of the Croation factory and as such, is treated with the respect due. They are relying upon this marriage of efforts to keep the wheels turning on the home-front, so no expense or effort is spared in quality control and attention to detail. There is a reason it's called "old world craftsman-

ship" and you can see it when you handle the XD. There's a subtle blend of Eastern European minimalist design and functionality, diluted with a Teutonic flair for what pleases the eye. It works — and it looks good doing it.

But how — and why — the SubCompact version? Dennis Reese, Co-Chairman of Springfield Armory said it simply: "There was a brainwave to go in that direction. Field research revealed quickly there was a demand for a smaller version of the XD. Shooters loved the full-sized models and made it clear they wanted one for easy concealed carry. They also made it amply clear they wanted the same reliability and



The Oldest Name In American Firearm
SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

SUB-COMPACT

XD-S

SERIAL

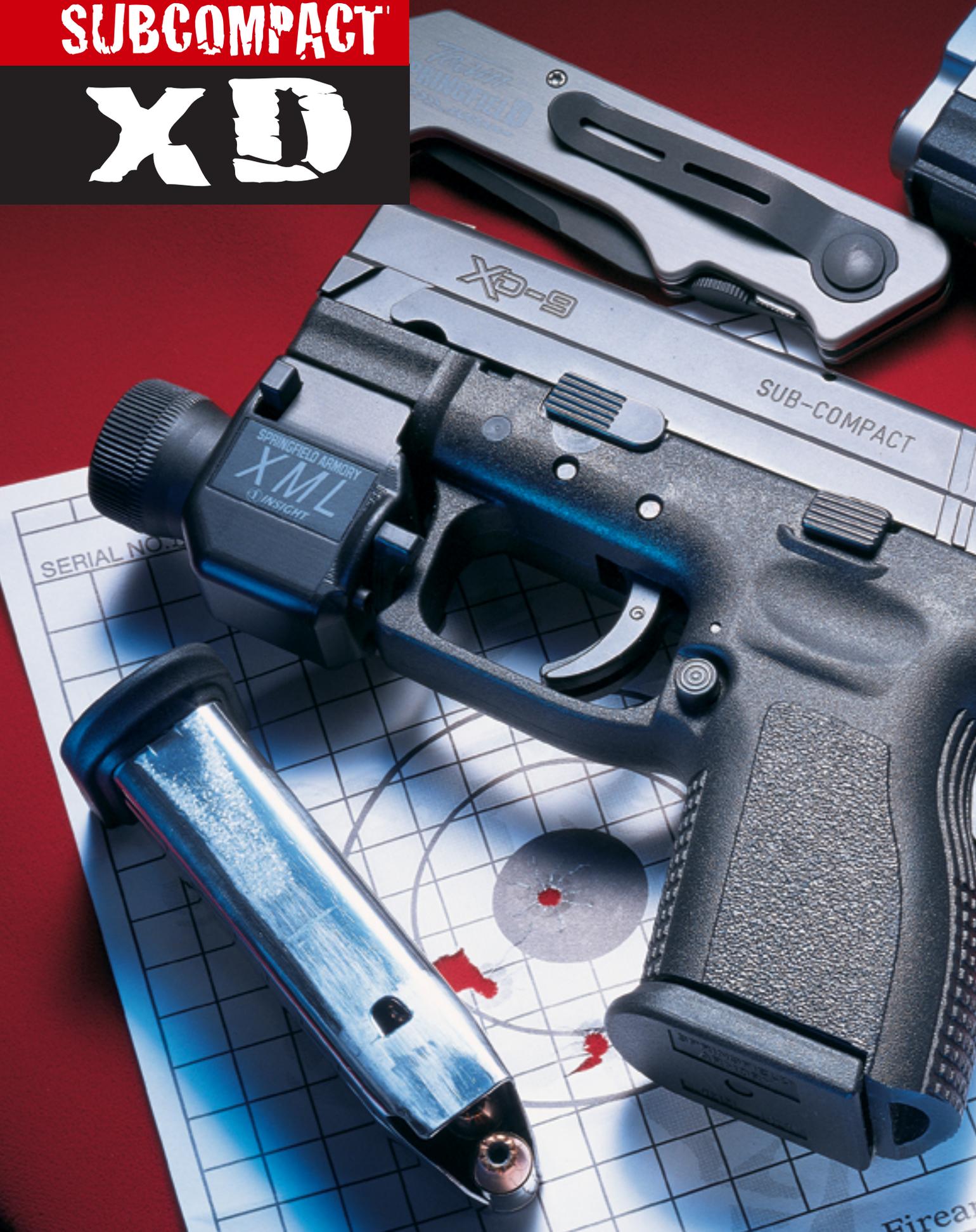
SUPREME

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XD

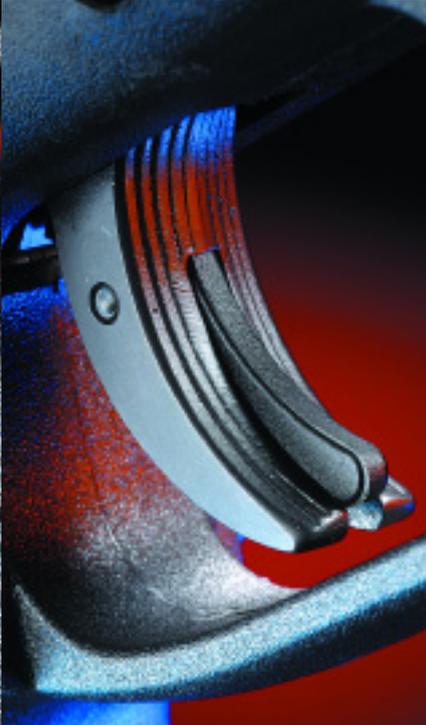




The Oldest Name In American Firearms
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The Xtreme Mini-Light was custom designed for the SubCompact XD but can fit any pistol with a rail mount.



shootability the full-sized models have.”

So there you go. But, unlike some makers who simply cut-off barrels and dust covers, engineers on both sides of the Atlantic put their collective heads together for some re-design work. After listening carefully, the XD was essentially re-engineered inside to make sure it worked right in the new, smaller mode. The feed ramp and other important parts were modified or created from scratch, the timing of the slide opening was carefully calibrated and other semi-secret things were done. It all was proven on a CAD computer and, after some 20 trips to the factory, the SubCompact XD was finally born — a homogenous amalgamation of steel and polymer that looks as serious as it works.

Demonstrably Diligent

Pre-production prototypes have already undergone torture tests ... some accidentally. One writer sample (ostensibly for “photos only”) was shot thou-

“ For me, the real test is a big match, and I came away more enthusiastic about the XD design than ever before. — Rob Leatham ”

sands of times prior to being returned with a note that read, "Worked great. We torture-tested it and there were no problems." Oops. We're sure there were collective sighs of relief from the staff at Springfield, but nonetheless, the SubCompact worked when it wasn't supposed to.

At a recent demonstration in Southern California, prototypes were subjected to the abuse of a dozen writers and industry hangers-on. There were literally thousands of rounds put through the guns and, from personal experience, I can attest they ran like the proverbial Black Forest clockwork. There were smiles all-around by the end of the day and the little guns were resting on the range table, still breathing heavily from the exertions of the day.

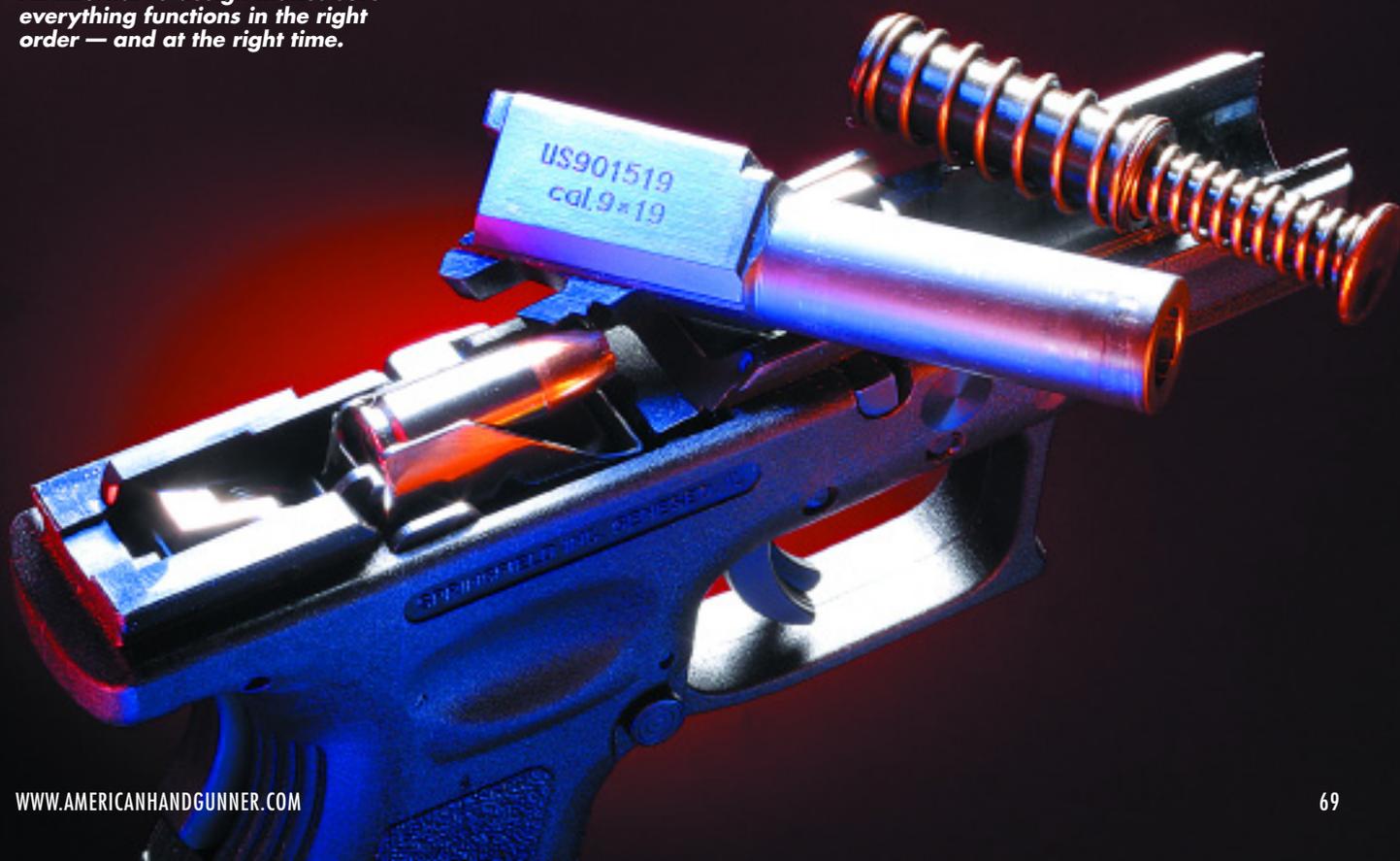
Not content to believe what we hear, *Handgunner* received our own test gun — an extremely early release SubCompact XD. Frankly, there were still a few rough edges showing some engineering shop work on the frame, but the pistol was in final guise form and we were told to "Shoot the snot out of it." So we did.

First impressions of the test gun mirrored previous experiences. The grip frame is simply a shorter version of the full-size XD and I found my smallish hands could manage two fingers on the front grip strap while the little finger cupped the bottom of the magazine floor plate. A call to Lane Pearce of Pearce Grip fame revealed he's already hot on an extended floorplate to catch that recalcitrant pinky if you so desire. Still, the grip is comfortable and it's a cinch to control

Continued on page 121

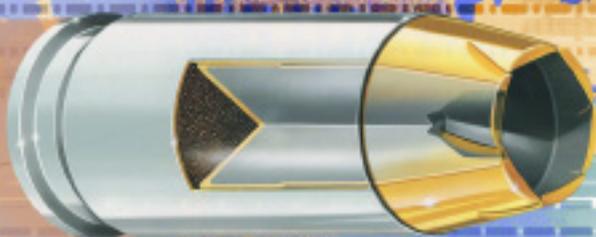


An internal re-design makes sure everything functions in the right order — and at the right time.



THE MODERN BULLET

State of the Art?



Or Are We Stuck in the Neolithic Period...

CHARLES E. PETTY

On April 11, 1986 at about 9:20 in the morning a group of eight Special Agents of the FBI attempted to apprehend two suspects wanted for a series of bank robberies in the Miami area. Something like five minutes later two agents were dead, three were grievously wounded, and three more had lesser wounds. Only one agent was uninjured. Both suspects were dead.

The fight became the subject of critiquing by countless authorities — qualified or not. The armchair experts pontificated to no end, but the bottom line lesson was, if you're going to have a gunfight, rifles are the way to go. Michael Platt — a genuinely bad person — was armed with

a Ruger Mini 14 and two revolvers, and his rifle trumped the agent's .38, .357 and 9mm handguns. One agent was able to use a shotgun to good effect but it was made abundantly clear that stopping power is not a handgun thing. Early in the fight, Platt received a wound from Agent Jerry Dove's 9mm pistol that was judged to have been "non-survivable" but he fought effectively for about four more minutes and brutally murdered Dove.

In the aftermath of the tragedy there were two highly significant events. First, the FBI convened a "Wound Ballistics Conference" at the Quantico academy that brought together recognized authorities from the medical and law enforcement communities. The idea was to find

better armament in terms of either gun or ammo. Learned papers were presented and when all was said and done they couldn't agree either. There were the same two camps as before: big and heavy (read .45) and light and fast (read 9mm).

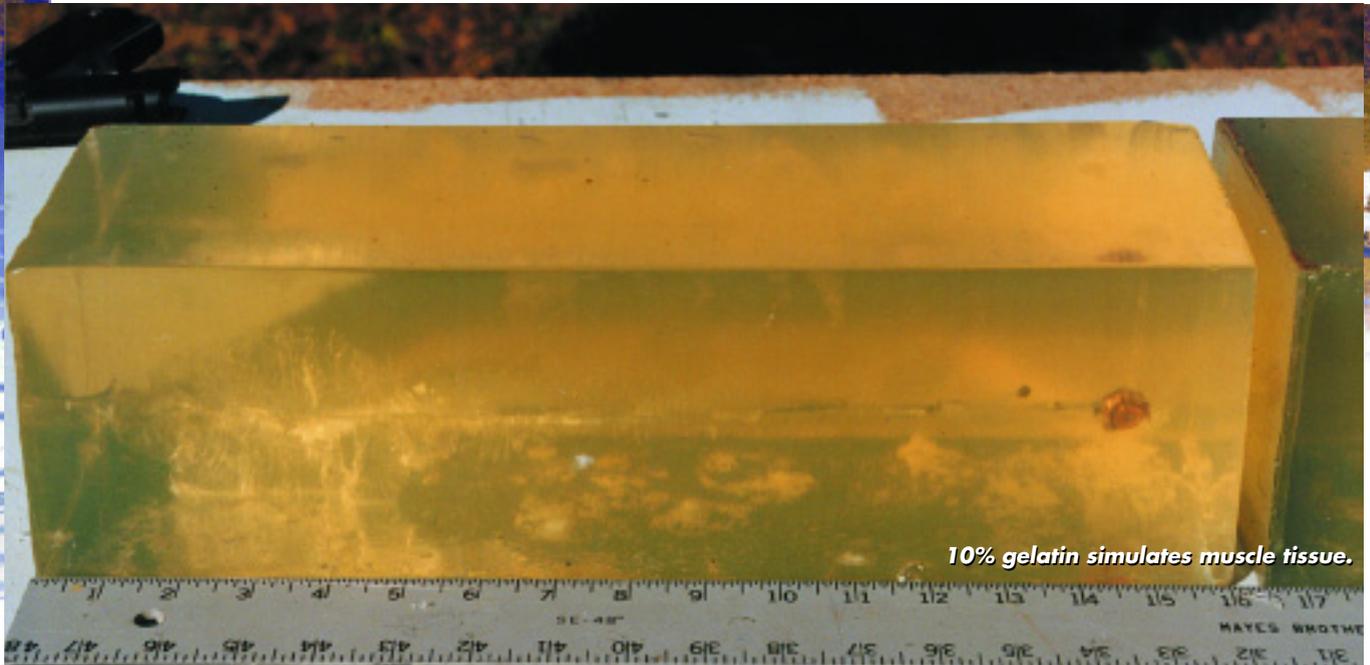
But the other result has truly revolutionized ammunition as we know it. It began with some work done by Dr. Martin Fackler that found that 10% ballistic gelatin very closely duplicated muscle tissue when hit by a bullet.

Let The Tests Begin

With that as a starting point the staff of the FBI Firearms Training Unit devised an eight part test that placed barrier materials in front of gelatin blocks.



.45 ACP Speer Gold Dot: hollowpoint size and depth is varied to provide optimum performance for different weights and velocities. Left to right, 185 gr., 200 gr., 230 gr.



10% gelatin simulates muscle tissue.



Bullets recovered from gelatin; left to right, Remington Golden Saber, Federal Hydra-shok, Speer Gold Dot and Taurus copper hex bullet.

These were light and heavy clothing, 3/4" plywood, wallboard, automotive sheet metal and windshield glass. Their requirement was that the bullet defeat the barrier and penetrate a minimum of 12" of gelatin. That's a severe test and quickly revealed that hollowpoint bullet construction — that we once thought was just fine — didn't work very well. The tests were designed to specifically reproduce shooting situations in which FBI agents had been involved, but the idea was quickly accepted by other law enforcement agencies.

Remember, this was around 1988 and it was probably the first time a customer did independent testing and told an ammo maker what they wanted. In the past ammo companies "knew best" and told us so. I well-remember talking to one ammo executive who didn't know of my study of the FBI's work and presumed I was a recent turnip truck faller. He was trying to sell the same old bill of goods the FBI was showing to be fallacious. When he discovered I had some independent knowledge, the conversation ended abruptly. If you want to call it corporate ego that's fine by me. Those whose ammo didn't fare well cried foul, threatened lawsuits, claimed the books were cooked and generally whined. But

luckily, all to no avail.

It got pretty unpleasant for awhile. More than a few pet oxen were gored when the 147 gr. 9mm Luger load was shown to be superior to various light/fast loads. Lots of ink was spilled by wounded "experts" who tried to defend their positions and one writer was accused of "adjusting" a police report to support his view. The agency even went

so far as to state, on the record, that the writer's story was not accurate.

To say the FBI test created a controversy would be to state the obvious, but sometimes I think it was taken much too seriously. One writer concluded that since round "A" penetrated 12.2" it was "better" than round "B" that "only" penetrated 12.1". Such is the tyranny of numbers for, in the real world, a tenth of an inch is of

These days, a modern hollowpoint has pretty much taken-over from the classic lead SWC when it comes to self-defense loads.



“Those whose ammo didn't fare well cried foul, threatened lawsuits, claimed the books were cooked and generally whined.”

no great consequence and surely inside the range of experimental error.

When production ammunition was first tested, Federal's Hydra-shok was a clearly superior bullet design. At about the same time, the FBI was working with the 10mm Auto cartridge and Federal was the only one of the major ammo companies who would load the relatively small quantities of ammo needed for the tests. Remington and Winchester declined. Federal produced 10mm ammo that performed well in the test and they won a substantial contract. Hydra-shok was also accepted for 9mm and .45 pistols. Of course the other ammo companies have smart engineers too and when management realized there was real competition, research began seriously. The result was Remington's Golden Saber, Speer's Gold Dot and Winchester's ill-fated Black Talon which was quickly replaced by the excellent SXT, which is available today.

Parity Arrives

As chance would have it I was in Anoka, Minn., when Federal learned the results of an ammo bid. There was chagrin in the highest degree. Remington's Golden Saber .45 ACP had been essentially equal to the Hydra-shok in the FBI tests and was significantly less expensive. Since performance was not an issue, cost won. Federal had a long ride of exclusive contracts, but all good things come to an end and the situation today is that premium loads from Federal, Remington, Speer and Winchester all perform far better than anything we've ever seen before.

But don't close the book yet. There will always be tweaking going on with small changes we never really even notice. And we've just seen a couple of new loads that may spell further change. Those are the Quik-shok which is the brainchild of Tom Burczynski who started it all with the Hydra-shok and the even newer solid copper Hex-bullet from Taurus. My testing, as reported in *Handgunner* suggest both are viable challengers to more conventional ammo.

Consistently Changing

Not all that long ago the biggest decision you had to make for an ammo purchase was what color box you wanted, but the arrival of premium loads, led by Federal, created a multi-level marketing picture that now has four tiers.

Cost has always been an issue for ammo buyers and inflation drove prices ever higher. Premium ammo rightly demanded a premium price, but it also was going to run into consumer resistance at some price point. The marketers came up with 20 round boxes (Remington offers 25) which kept the cost per box down but allowed the cost per round to creep upward. Today those are accepted as normal, but I still don't care for them.

Another result was the arrival of
AMERICAN HANDGUNNER • MARCH/APRIL 2003

Test setup for FBI auto windshield test.



Bullets (Speer Gold Dot) from FBI ammunition test; left to right, bare gelatin, heavy clothing, auto sheet metal, wallboard, plywood, auto windshield glass.

generic products. Ammunition costs are very much subject to economies of scale. If you make boatloads of only one item the unit cost can be held to the lowest practical level, so if you've got one machine that is dedicated to making just one load and it runs all the time it can be very cost effective. Packaging is another expensive part of the process and a plain box — be it white, red or yellow — doesn't cost as much as one that is printed in three or four colors. Most generic ammo is also loaded with common FMJ or lead bullets, but recently Winchester has introduced a line of generic "personal protection" ammunition with effective hollowpoint bullets. It is more expensive than generic ball, but not as high as their premium stuff.

Control of costs is a huge factor in the ammo business. Folks like us who hand-load wouldn't even blink at using a powder that costs a dollar or two more a pound, but fractions of pennies can be a big deal. If you added just two tenths of a cent (\$.002) per round to bottom line cost that's \$2,000 per million rounds and if we're talking about hundreds of millions of rounds that becomes real money — real quick.

So we have premium, brand name and generic levels of U.S. made ammo but now we've got a fourth tier as well — the imports. Ammo is made all over the world and the American market is attractive to manufacturers who operate in low wage markets such as the former Iron Curtain countries or Asia. From them we see both surplus and newly-manufactured ammo at very competitive prices.

When you look at this big picture it might be possible to conclude that we've

gone as far as we can go. Not for a moment do I believe that. As an observer, I didn't expect to see several of the things we now take for granted and we've recently seen new defensive and an ever-increasing lineup of non-toxic and frangible bullets for training. The lure of "owning" the defensive ammo business, as Federal did for awhile, is so great I'm sure bright engineers are thinking about, or

maybe even testing, new ideas even now.

Police officers and citizens who depend upon a handgun for personal defense are far better equipped today than on that sad day in 1986, but the bottom line is unchanged. We cannot depend on any special gun or super-ammo to solve a problem — unless we have the ability to operate it swiftly and efficiently.



Gelatin block shot with poorly expanding bullet on left, rapidly expanding on right.



Golden Saber Mushroom

STI/AMERICAN HANDGUNNER



**WHAT IT'S
LIKE TO EAT
DESSERT
FIRST!**

ROY HUNTINGTON

Each year the *STI/American Handgunner* World Shoot-Off shapes up into a high-intensity series of focused, sustained personal contests on enough levels to keep anyone's concerted interest. This year, some of the old time, big names and previous winners were not on-hand due to scheduling choices and there may have been collective sighs of relief emanating from the golden hills of Colorado.

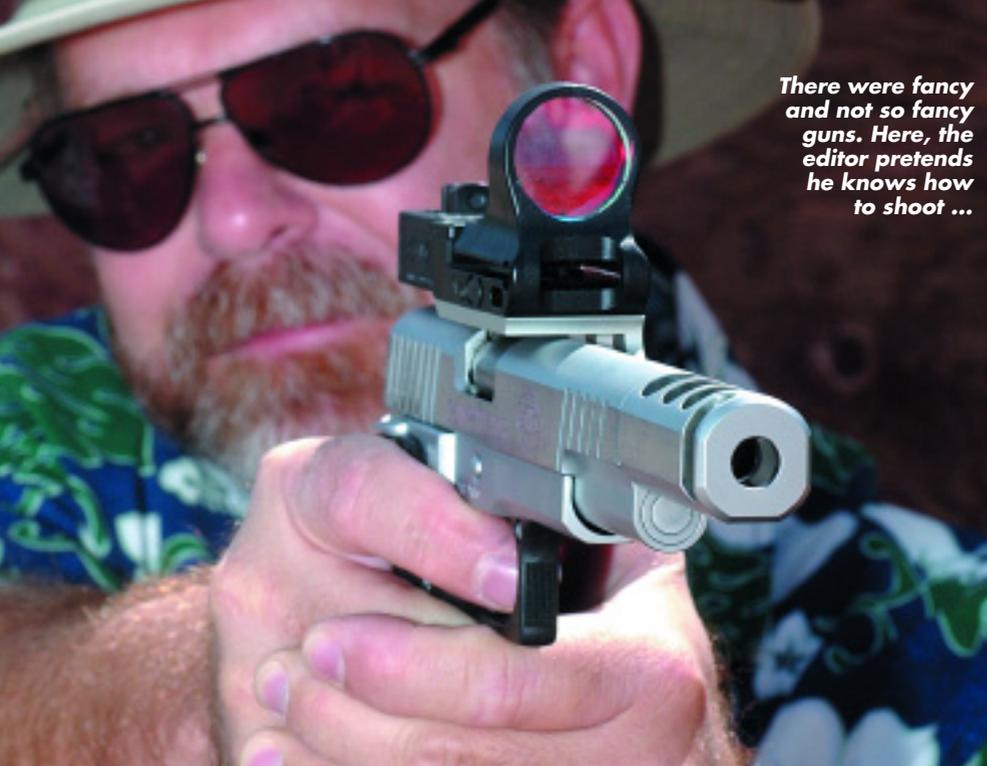
Missing were revolver whiz Jerry Miculek and Jerry Barnhart (who usually comes, teaches, shoots and wins ...). Yet, this ever-eclectic assemblage of shooters, gawkers, hawkers, kids and general good-timers still yielded a rip-roaring show which left everyone with piles of empty brass and semi-thoughtful concentration

on what needed to be done to make it back to next year's event.

Being the 11th rendition of this high-speed shoot-fest, the crowd of well over 200 shooters from eight countries and 34 states (including 60 first-timers) came together yet again for the often-stated "Best damn match there is." Since STI came aboard to co-sponsor the match, things have gotten even more interesting and, as Don Kemble from STI said, "Good people, great shooting and the kind of spirit and involvement you just don't see anymore at a match." Couldn't have said it better ourselves, Don.

Every contestant has a story behind them and unlike most other matches, the contestants are drawn from virtually every other shooting sport. The "fast gun" crowd





There were fancy and not so fancy guns. Here, the editor pretends he knows how to shoot ...



Left to right; Blake Miguez — match winner, STI's Don Kemble and young Tanner Cunningham enjoy the wins.

with optics and slick, gussied-up race-guns show-up, and shoot right alongside the slow-talking cowboy contingent (who generally politely ignore the proliferation of “fancy modern iron”). These gentlemen and ladies of the old west insist the smokeless powder rage is simply a fad and will soon fade away, leaving the competition to the “real” guns.

These single action shooters, many refugees from the Cowboy Action games — some heretics wearing ball caps and running shoes (without spurs) — as usual fought their own isolated battle as if they were the only ones there. Gary Herst was formidable and the often-winner, Harold harms, was just a bit off his own usual pace.

This year, a serious competitor emerged from the more modern crowd in the guise of one Blake Miguez. He rapidly had the old salts like Saul Kirsch and Angus Hobdel wondering what happened. Angus said, “Suddenly Saul and I both realized that no one was going to beat Blake the way he was shooting this year!” And they were right.

Strange But True

The STI/Handgunner World Shoot-Off attracts a powerfully loyal fan. The fact each stage — and there were 17 of them (not counting side matches and other fun stuff) — was a man on man event makes it the “most fun” as one youngster said, of all the matches. These “man on man” stages can also actually be man vs. woman (the eternal struggle?), man vs. kid, old guy vs. attractive young





girl and pretty much any other combination the luck of the draw and the squad may see fit to render. As Paul Miller said, "All steel and all shoot-off is like having dessert for each course of the meal. It's a great crowd pleaser and the clang of the steel falling and that final, not-to-be-denied clank of the stop plate makes it hard to hide who's winning."

Usually, only the "big" guys get to play in the shoot-off's at most matches. The regular folks are all eliminated and then get to sit around and watch the fast guns have all the fun. Not at the STI/Handgunner Shoot-Off and it's for a good reason. People are here to have fun and if the fun meter had been turned on during that week in Colorado, it would have blown a 1,000-amp fuse.

Part of the fun is the place itself. The San Juan Shooting Range in Montrose, Colorado, is a bit of heaven for anyone who likes things that go bang. Cowboy shooters, steel aficionados, rifle shooters, shotgunners and you-name-it are welcomed. The facility is first-class, well thought-out; and the husband and wife team of Paul and Kerry Miller own it and run it like clockwork. Besides, the film *True Grit* was filmed nearby so you get an idea of the kind of country we're talking about here. A bit of heaven in these United States.

The concept of the match is Paul's alone and for the past 11 years he and his wife have managed to put it on with the kind of zeal and gusto that makes people keep coming back for more. This year's

Continued on page 124



STI's Don Kemble, Handgunner's own Steve Evatt and editor Roy Huntington joined hands with Kerry and Paul Miller of The San Juan Range to pull-off this exciting match.



Pardue Persian brought up to modern day standards with a liner-lock and thumbstud .

Brothers In Steel

Photo:
Jim Weyer

Photo:
PointSeven
Studios

Mel Pardue and Warren Osborne Excel In Both the Custom and Factory Arenas.

Pat Covert

An Osborne interframe with jasper inlays and gold artistry by Julie Warenski.

Osborne's "Wing" dagger shown here in two styles of inlays, San Mai Damascus (top) and gold pearl (bottom).



Photos:
PointSeven
Studios

Osborne's Model 31 dagger demonstrates the knifemaker's incredible for modernizing an age-old subject — in Damascus steel no doubt!



At the 2002 Blade Show in Atlanta I had the unique experience of dining with two of the country's top custom knifemakers, brought together by the commonality that both are collaborators in the Benchmade design arsenal. Mel Pardue, one of the early participants in what we now call the "tactical folder" genre, is known for making no-nonsense folders of clean design and strong construction. Warren Osborne is renowned as one of the preeminent makers of fine gent's folders, not just in the U.S., but worldwide. They are both seasoned veterans with a huge amount of respect for each other's work and, when it comes to talking knives, they are brothers in steel.

What is striking when watching these two gentlemen together, is the vast differences in virtually everything else about them. On the surface, the dissimilarities are like night and day: Pardue is from Alabama, Osborne from Australia. Pardue is the boisterous, fun-loving southern boy. Osborne the quiet, reserved thinker. Pardue wears Hawaiian shirts, Osborne starched and buttoned cowboy garb. Osborne is clean, Pardue is Van Gogh. The list goes on and on to the point that if these two men were anymore dissimilar they'd bounce off of each other like pinballs if they ever met in a narrow corridor.

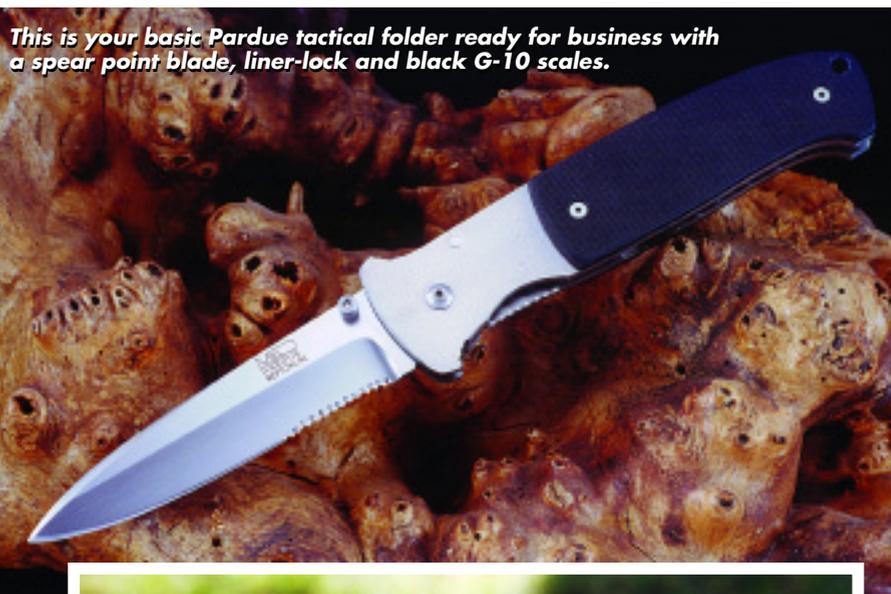
But things are not always as they seem. Surfaces can be deceiving. Once you start digging into these knifemaker's pasts the more similar they become. Is Pardue really the simple country boy he appears to be? Is Osborne the finely polished man from Oz?

Contrast & Commonality

The career stories of Mel Pardue and Warren Osborne share both common twists and contrasting ironies. Both share a rural upbringing. Pardue, whose interest in knives goes back to age six, was born in Selma, Alabama and lived there until his family picked up roots and moved south to Mobile. At the tender age of ten, Pardue started making knives on a part-time basis in 1950, under the tutelage of a retired railroad engineer. As young as he was, he knew then that he was hooked for life. Mel went on to get a college degree and he attributes his knowledge of mechanical engineering to much of his success. Today, Pardue resides in the pastoral town of Range, Alabama, where he crafts hi-tech custom folders for a well-established base of knife collectors.

Osborne grew up on a dairy farm near a small township in the central east coast of Australia. Between his farm duties and a keen interest in hunting and fishing, Osborne learned to make knives out of necessity. His first works were fashioned from whatever he could find, and he recalls cutting up more than a few used crosscut saw blades during his formative

Continued on page 96



Photos: Jim Weyer



Clean design is a Pardue trademark, exhibited here on a tactical folder with Damascus blade and jugged bone scales.

Factory Customs VS. The Real Deal

Factory collaborations with custom knifemakers have been all the rage the past few years, and rightfully so. It's a win-win situation for all parties involved. The manufacturer gets a solid design out of it to boost sales, the knifemaker gets recognition for selling his own work, and the consumer gets an affordable knife with a pedigree.

But the bottom line in any knife is performance, so how do factory customs stack up in comparison to the original knifemakers work? Is the switch to different materials such as steel and handle scales worth the savings? Can production standards come anywhere close to a handmade?

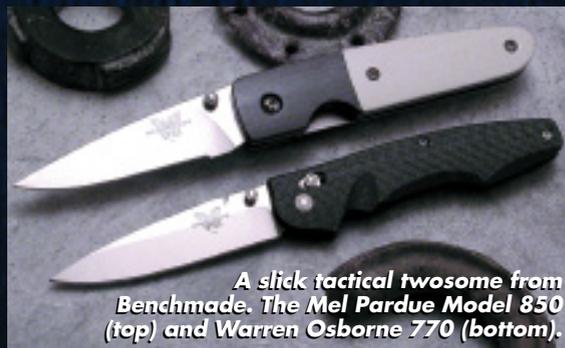
The answer to all of these questions is simple: it all depends on the manufacturer. In most factory customs you can expect a change in blade steel from the knifemaker's original. This can drastically reduce the price of a production knife, but it doesn't mean you're getting a drastically inferior knife. There are many excellent that are not far off more expensive ones like ATS-34 when it comes to cutting and holding an edge. In fact, many of

these are easier to sharpen than more expensive steel.

Knife manufacturers also help keep prices in line by switching to molded handle scales as opposed to more expensive and exotic materials that have to be ground by hand or machine. A prime example here is Zytel, a common synthetic used in factory handles. Zytel is proven to be both durable and maintenance free — and it definitely makes a knife more affordable.

I've actually had custom knifemakers who have switched over to manufacturing confide that their production knives are better than their customs because the CNC machining can hold tolerances better and reduce the possibility of errors.

So what do you look for in a factory custom to assure you're getting a good deal and a good product? First, look over the specs and make sure the blade steel is at the very least second tier, like 440C or one of the others available. Next, check the price of the knife. A decent factory custom will run anywhere from 25-50% the cost of the custom knifemaker's original. If a knife is simply priced extremely cheap, then it's probably built too-cheap. Also, check out the fit and finish of the factory knife. If the knife excels in these areas, chances are it will in all others. Finally, a little knowledge and research can go a long way toward making a good decision, so bone-up before you buy.



A slick tactical twosome from Benchmade. The Mel Pardue Model 850 (top) and Warren Osborne 770 (bottom).



MAKE MINE A THOMPSON

Gun-guy and Novelist Stephen Hunter on Guns, Gangsters and America.

Michael Bane

Stephen Hunter's powerful novels of the Swagger clan, including Vietnam sniper Bob the Nailer and his hardcase father, Earl, have found places both on the New York Times bestsellers' list and in the hearts and bookshelves of gun owners everywhere. Beginning with *Point of Impact* in 1993, Hunter has created an imposing body of work made even more powerful by his uncompromising — and dare we say refreshing? — views on guns and their place in American culture. For the first time, Hunter sits down with *Handgunner* for the inside scoop on the gun culture's preeminent literary voice.

Michael Bane: *From reading books like Point of Impact and Hot Springs, which are so evocative of Arkansas and the South, a person might get the impression you grew up south of the Mason/Dixon line spending your afternoons toting a shotgun.*

Stephen Hunter: Actually, I grew up in a Chicago suburb in an academic household — my father was a professor at Northwestern. Guns were absolutely forbidden, taboo, evil. I absolutely could not have a gun in the house.

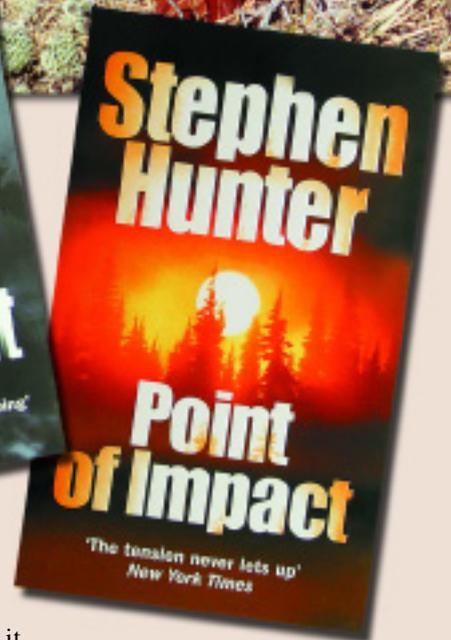
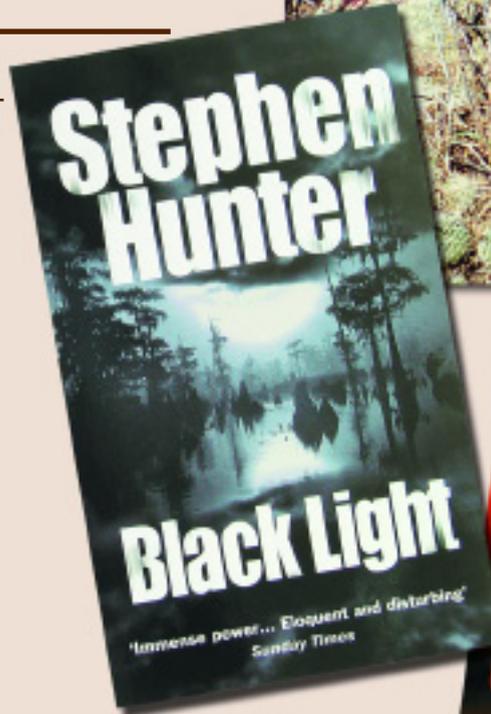
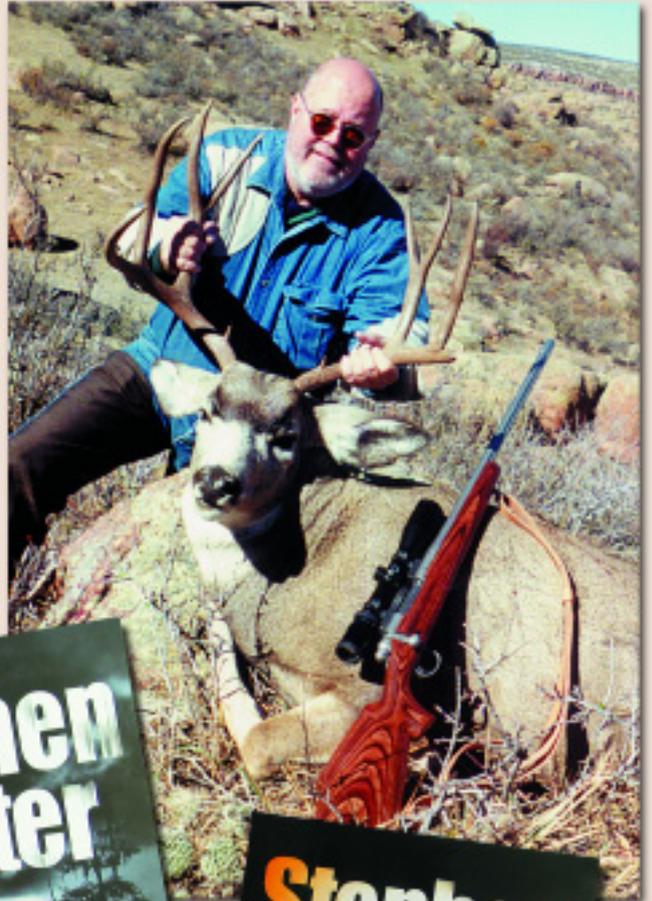
MB: *So how, and when, did you first start shooting?*

SH: The thing is, I loved guns from the start. I think my first coherent memories are of guns. I remember an episode of *Dragnet*, I must have been seven or

eight years old, which would make it 1953-54, where Sergeant Friday is going after a fleeing felon. "Be sure to bring plenty of .45s for the Thompson," Friday says. "It looks like he wants to go all the way..." The next day, I started drawing guns in my school notebook; all my notebooks are filled with drawings of guns. And it was phenomenally liberating to my imagination! I started writing fiction with guns before I was 10 years old.

MB: *But you drifted from the fold?*

SH: Okay, I went through a period of



creepy liberalism when I worked at the Baltimore Sun and thought all guns should be banned. But I knew on some deep level I was denying myself, not being who I was. I wasn't a movie critic yet, and I was on my way to see a movie I thought might help me along. I got to the theater early, so I went next door to a magazine stand. There was a gun magazine on the rack, I remember it had a picture of the S&W 745 introduction. I bought that magazine, read it from cover to cover, then subscribed. It was like I

suddenly remembered who I was. I bought my first gun right after that, a Taurus PT-99.

MB: *Everything changed after that?*

SH: Absolutely. I was who I was, and I was where I belonged. If the world or the people around me didn't like it, f**k 'em. I was going to be myself.

MB: *What drew you to the movies?*

SH: I liked the stories that the movies told; I liked the heroes, I liked the adventure. But I was never attracted to the movies as a career. I always knew I was going to be a writer. I think that's both remarkable and lucky, to know at the age of 10 who you are and what you're going to do. There's a marksmanship principle that I try to adhere to in my life: Aim small; miss small. I knew what I wanted to do, what I wanted to aim at.

MB: *So here's the question American Handgunner's readers are waiting for: How did you find Bob the Nailer?*

SH: Sometime around the late 1980s, I read Charles Henderson's book *Marine Sniper*, about Sergeant Carlos Hathcock. That book was very provocative to me. Hathcock lost his spotter, and that made my vision of a sniper even more fascinating. I started thinking about a sniper, and old sniper with a backpack of grief. And Bob Lee Swagger was born. That first book, *Point of Impact*, was a hellish experience. It took three years to write and I made many, many mistakes. At one point, the book was more than 1,000 pages long, and still no crime had happened!

MB: *Did you ever hear of what Hathcock thought of Bob the Nailer?*

SH: I heard that *Point of Impact* was on his bedside table when he died, but that he probably hadn't read it. He wasn't a man who read books like that.

MB: *When you were writing Point of Impact, did you intend to write other books about Bob the Nailer and his family?*

SH: I had absolutely no idea. In some ways, I was disappointed in my career, because every book seemed to be starting anew. But I didn't want to be one of those one-book-a-year guys. But the characters from *Point of Impact* lingered in my mind, and I realized I had to deal with them ... One discovery led to another discovery, and I found my life's work.

MB: *The relationship between Bob the*



Nailer and his father, Earl, who was killed early on, is central to the whole series, if series is the right word.

SH: The model for the relationship between Bob Lee and his father, Earl — the cop who was killed by a couple of punks in a field when Bob Lee was young — was Ty Cobb. Cobb was a monster in some ways, but he had a father he adored who died when Cobb was young. Everything Ty Cobb did was to prove himself to his father. So I wrote that Earl was a war hero who was killed when Bob Lee was young. But I couldn't get Earl out of my mind, and I realized that I had to go back and sort him out. The "Earl" book became *Hot Springs*.

MB: *I grew up in Memphis in the 1950s hearing stories about Hot Springs, Arkansas — a cross between Sodom and Gomorrah and hell itself. Hot Springs was Vegas before there was a Vegas. How did you discover Hot Springs? And why did you decide to place Earl there after WWII?*

SH: I bumbled into it. I had wanted to write a gangster novel, but a small city gangster novel. I also wanted to do a novel set in the 1940s — I liked the music, the clothes, the cars, but most of all, I liked the guns. It's one of those times when you had a real mix — the military weapons of WWII, the bank robber guns from the 1930s, some of the European semi-autos, Mauser, Lugers and

the like. Plus, the guns of the Old West hadn't yet declined in popularity, so you had Colt Peacemakers and the lever guns all mixed in with the newer stuff. Finally, I wanted to write more about Earl, and I seemed to remember that hot Springs was a big gangster town. It was pure luck I discovered in the spring of 1946 there was a gangster war for control over of the town.

MB: *Let's talk a little about Pale Horse Rising, your most recent book. It centers around a really grim Mississippi prison in the 1950s and a rescue mission by Earl and an elite posse of — gunwriters!*

SH: That book had its origin in the film version of *The Green Mile*, which presents a prison Death Row in Mississippi in the 1930s as a caring and compassionate place. I knew that such a place would have been a cesspool of violence, corruption and racism, and I wanted to write a Mississippi prison book that sort of reversed the polarities.

I think of my books by the guns that were used in them. *Hot Springs* was my Tommy gun book. *Pale Horse Coming* is my revolver book. My first heroes were Elmer Keith and those guys from the golden age of gunwriting. There's also something so attractive about those guns from that time period, those great

Continued on page 92

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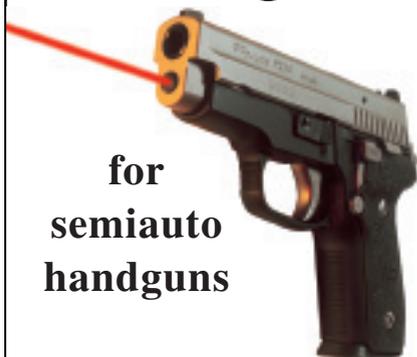
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Continued from page 49

Single Action Kit Guns. These are small, easy to pack, easy to shoot revolvers. The type all kids can start with and, if the truth be known, all adults still enjoy. I can't emphasize enough that kids and men and women who are beginning to shoot should start on the right track with revolvers that won't beat them up. These little guns fit the bill tidily.

Ruger's two new offerings, both in stainless steel, are the resurrected .22 Bearcat, and the .32 Magnum Single-Six with a new grip frame. Ruger's Bearcat entered the .22 scene in 1958, and it was clear this little single action was definitely inspired by the old Remington 1858 Pocket Revolver.

Unlike the Single-Six, the Bearcat features a one piece grip-frame/mainframe combination, originally cast from aluminum alloy, which later was replaced with steel. The Bearcat has been especially popular with those who must consider weight. Backpackers, hikers, fishermen, smokejumpers, anyone who wanted a lightweight .22 that would carry unobtrusively reached for a Bearcat.

The .22 Single-Six is one of the great sixgun success stories of all time. The original models had a flat-top frame with a drift adjustable rear sight, and by the time the New Model arrived in 1972, nearly 600,000 Single-Sixes had been sold. In the 1980s, a new cartridge called the .32 H&R Magnum arrived. When Ruger chambered the Single-Six in .32 Magnum in 1984, the little .32 had finally found a home worthy of its potential.

When Ruger switched to New Model production with a transfer bar safety in both the Single-Six and Blackhawk series, they elected to drop the Bearcat rather than add a transfer bar. The Bearcat was resurrected in 1993 and is now available in a stainless-steel version complete with a transfer bar safety. However, unlike the Single-Six and the Blackhawk sixguns, the Bearcat features a half-cock notch on the hammer.

With the Bearcat being offered in stainless steel — and the arrival of the stainless steel Single-Six in .32 Magnum with a shorter grip frame — I decided to order both as test guns with the idea of my grandkids being the testers. Once these Rugers arrived, Elyse Panzella, age 17; Laura Seals, age 16; and Brian John Panzella, age 9, joined me to test Ruger's newest Single Actions.

The Good and the Bad

The Bearcat has a very small grip frame that fits the smallest of hands, yet also works in my large, stubby-fingered Grandpa hands. The newest .32 Magnum has a 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ " barrel and features a new shorter grip frame. The kids all liked the

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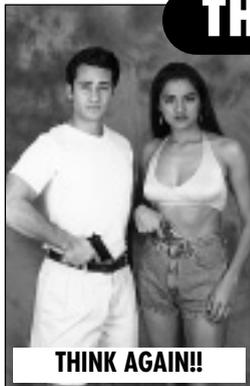
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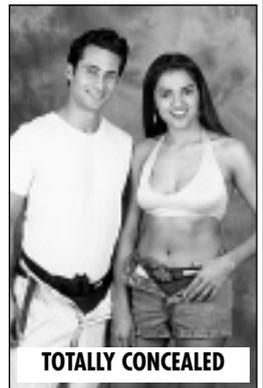
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way this grip frame mated with their small hands, and I found it quite usable by tucking my little finger under the grip. The .32 Magnum Single-Six, which looks much like a slightly miniaturized Vaquero, should find great favor with younger kids and those with small hands who enjoy Cowboy Action Shooting.

I was disappointed to note the Bearcat came with ill-fitting grips. This was easily solved when I remembered I still had the original grips from my son's Bearcat of 30 years ago.

Could they possibly fit?

Not only did they fit the newer grip frame, they also matched up better than the current factory stocks. The false ivory grips on the .32 Single-Six are an excellent fit, however. But, as I have found several times before, someone at the factory is too ham-handed with a screwdriver. One grip was cracked.

This problem was easily solved with a pair of custom ivory-style grips from Get-A-Grip. They had sent me a box of samples just before the Rugers arrived. One pair happened to not only be the new shorter size, but also had a hidden screw inside the right grip panel that gave the appearance of Colt-style one-piece grips. They fit very well, feel just right, and look awfully good.

One other problem surfaced with the Bearcat. Or the ammunition used. Or perhaps a combination of the two. The Bearcat features recesses in the back of the cylinder for the .22 case heads. Match up a maximum recess in a cylinder with a minimum rim thickness and a misfire is possible.

Misfires happened once with both CCI's Green Tag and Mini-Mag, once with Remington's High Velocity, and twice with Federal's High Velocity. Of the five misfired cases, four ignited on the second try. Perhaps this Bearcat has one cylinder recess that is deeper than the others.

It always pays to check any revolvers with recessed cylinders with a variety of ammunition. No malfunctions of any kind occurred with the .32 Magnum Single-Six, nor were any other problems encountered with the .22 Bearcat.

Easy Handling

Both of these little sixguns feature fixed sights. They are very close to being dead-on for windage, while both shoot low with most ammunition. It would be an easy task to sight them in perfectly.

There is quite a variation in the point of impact of various .22 Long Rifle loads, so it would be necessary to make a choice before filing on the front sight. My unsolicited advice to Ruger is to give us a Bearcat with adjustable sights. This little .22 is too sweet not to have the advantage of being sighted in perfectly.

Although both guns are stainless steel, they are quite different. The .32 Magnum Single-Six is all steel and brightly polished. The smaller Bearcat is a satin-finished

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Cylinders are quite different, other than just in size. The .32 Single-Six has a normal, fluted cylinder, while the Bearcat cylinder is non-fluted and features engravings of both a bear and a cougar, as well as the words "Ruger Bearcat" on the main part of the cylinder and ".22 L.R." at the rear of the cylinder.

Trigger pull on the 22-ounce Bearcat is 76 ounces, which is much too heavy for a gun this size. I normally prefer a trigger on an everyday workin' sixgun to break at 48 ounces. The .32 Magnum fares better, coming from the factory 2 ounces shy of 4 lbs. By removing one leg of the trigger return spring from its post on the grip frame, the trigger pull came down to 44 ounces.

This is just fine as it is. However, once these test guns are purchased — and my grandkids insist they be purchased — I'll have my gunsmith see if he can bring the trigger pull on the Bearcat down to between 3 and 4 lbs.

Shoot 'Em Lots

One can see from the faces of the kids in the pictures that we had a great time testing these little sixguns. We shot paper, we shot cans, I even spent some real enjoyable time hip shooting with the .32 Magnum. I had quite a bit of odds and ends in .32 Magnum ammo leftover and lying around, so what better way to burn it up and retrieve the brass than by hip shooting .22 cartridge boxes?

With eight grandkids in the family — and several of them fast approaching the "gun of my own" category — I predict both of these little sixguns will be in the Taffin family for quite awhile.

The Bearcat will spend many years traveling in backpacks, fishing tackle boxes, pockets, anywhere a small space is encountered that will accept this diminutive .22. Add the fact it's stainless steel, and it will be a most valuable sixgun for years to come. Someday one of my grandkids will take one of their grandkids shooting with this same .22 Bearcat. I've no doubt.

And the .32 Single-Six? It should ride on many a hip traveling over sagebrush covered deserts, into the foothills, through timbered areas and on to mountain tops. Anywhere there is no chance of encountering a large dangerous animal, but where the feel of a sixgun on the hip brings great comfort. Whether the varmints encountered might have two legs or four.

And the unanimous vote?  Just look at the grins.

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WWII

Continued from page 60

By the way the "tail gunner" still works everyday and shoots skeet, clays or hunts every weekend. Good for him.

Some Final Thoughts

Most documentation shows the 1911 pistol and it's variants as being the most prolific handgun used by Americans in combat. But, there are plenty of documented photographs showing revolvers smack-dab in the middle of combat. For instance, there is a dramatic photo taken at Tarawa showing a Marine approaching a bunker area entrance with a 1917 Smith & Wesson .45 caliber revolver. It's cocked ...

**Many perished in
obscurity in flaming,
flak-riddled hulls
over Germany
and Iwo Jima.**

Whether or not they are effective, whether or not "we" like them, handguns did, and do, have a place in combat. Either as a comforting tool or as a close-quarter fighter, handguns served a purpose in World War II. And they beat an entrenching tool every time.

I read every citation for every Medal of Honor awarded to Americans in World War II as part of my research. The citations pay no attention to politics, religion, the color of skin or ethnic background, and every American should read them. You'll then grasp who paid for the freedoms we all enjoy.

Some of the heroes are remembered, but many perished in obscurity in flaming, flak-riddled hulls over Germany and Iwo Jima. These, and the Sailors who were incinerated in Kamikaze and U boat attacks; the G.I's and Marines who filled the dirty frozen or wet foxholes of Attu, Normandy, Tarawa, Africa and Italy are the ones. They paid the price. 

Books: Medal of Honor Recipients 1863-1994, *Lang, Collins & White*; One Damned Island After Another, *Howard Whitley*; Flying Boxcars, *Col. Edwin B. Miller, Jr.*, U.S. Infantry Weapons of World War II, *Bruce Canfield*. **World Wide Web:** *John Spangler and Marc Wade*, *WW II weapons holsters and period equipment*, www.oldguns.net **Oral interviews:** *C.W. Staples*, through his son *Rick Staples*, Overland Park, Kansas.

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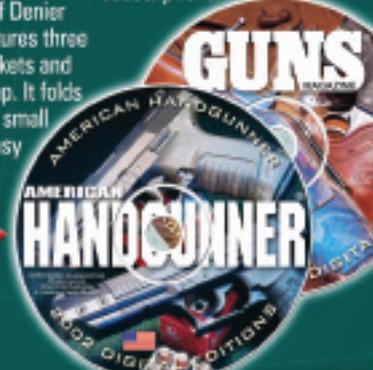


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STEPHEN HUNTER

Continued from page 81

Smith & Wesson revolvers.

I began *Pale Horse* with the idea of a posse of those great gunwriters riding to the rescue. My homage to the Good Old Days that never were! (*Editor's Note: The posse referred to includes revolver legend "Ed McGriffin," ex-Border Patrolman "Charlie Hatchison," author of Second Place is No Place "Bill Jennings," war hero and movie star "Audie Ryan," Winchester ace "Jack O'Brian and, of course, "Elmer Kaye" and his legendary hotted-up 44 Special.*)

MB: What guns are particularly provocative to you these days?

SH: I've been in a Peacemaker state of mind lately. Plus Smith & Wessons from the 1930s and 1940s. Both of those types have those incredible lines, that incredibly high level of artistic rendering. I'm also starting to get a taste for .45s, maybe a genuine WWII 1911. *Pale Horse* got me focused on revolvers, though. Revolvers are such fabulous contraptions, as 19th Century as the day is long, but still modern in a way. I just love 'em.

MB: Is there a "Holy Grail" gun that you'd love to own?

SH: I'd love a perfect example of a Thompson submachinegun; one of the M1A1 cheap military versions they made during the war. There's something about those guns and their lines that's just legendary to me. They're so profoundly American.

MB: That's true. You can't imagine a Thompson as anything but American.

SH: Somehow, guns represent their countries' national character. In WWII, for instance, American just couldn't produce a Schemmiser. When we did — the M3 Grease Gun — it just looked American. We imprint our national character on our guns. Only the British could make a Webley; only the Germans could make a Luger, and only America could make a 1911. That's fabulous to me.

MB: As a movie critic, what do you think is the best "gun movie" ever made?

SH: *The Wild Bunch*, of course. I really love that movie! The guns used are central to the ideas expressed in the movie. It's set in an age when the ways of the Old West are giving way to the new ways. Pike, the character William Holden plays, carries both a Peacemaker and a 1911 .45. The people who made the movie thought very seriously about what the guns were

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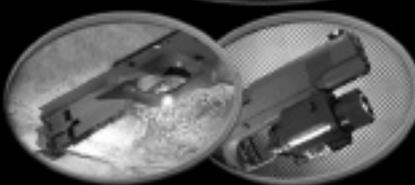
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expressing — the guns weren't there just for show. By the way, did you know that in the movie Holden didn't actually carry a 1911? They couldn't get the .45 to work reliably with blanks, so they used a Star Model B in 9mm. Same thing in *Saving Private Ryan* — I asked Spielberg about that. I found that out about the *Wild Bunch* at the NRA Firearms Museum show on great movie guns. I got home at 9 PM. By 9:17 I'd logged onto the Internet, and by 9:18 I'd purchased a Star Model B and arranged to have it sent to my local dealer. Hey, it's a better gun than you'd think!

MB: *I see where Hot Springs has been optioned and a script is circulating. Who would you like to see play Earl Swagger?*

SH: Tommy Lee Jones. He's a little too left in his thinking, but he's a good gun owner. He's got that blunt Southernness and would make a good Earl. But the studio wants a younger guy and that'd be terrible to me.

MB: *The next adventure?*

SH: It's set in 1953, and Earl goes to Cuba to assassinate Castro. Watch for it in mid-2003.

A couple of days after this interview, the following message showed up in Bane's e-mail:

"Hey Michael. You didn't ask me this, but I think it fits. Frequently I hear, 'I love your books except for all that gun stuff. Why don't you just cut the gun stuff and just tell the stories?'"

That misses the point: the stories start with the gun stuff because it's the guns, really more than the words, that are at the center of my imagination. Show me a pair of ballet slippers, a pencil, a microscope, a dog or a president, and ask me to write a story, and here's what you'd get: zilch. My brain doesn't work that way. Show me, say, a well-used Colt 1911A1, built in the year 1934 and suddenly I'm excited: Hmm? Marine Corps? Used in Nicaragua and China? Or a mobster's gun? Or maybe in the holster of a western lawman, fighting against enforcers from a copper mining company. Or a D.A. in Chicago. Or a woman fleeing a brutal, drunken husband.

My imagination is the only thing I have and it's how I make my living. The guns are absolutely at the center of it, the one thing that stimulates it to produce images, characters and, most of all, energy. You can't write 12 books in 20 years while holding down a fulltime job and raising a family without energy." 

Frequent contributor Michael Bane's first novel, All Night Radio, is also scheduled for mid-2003 release, albeit on a much smaller scale. In the meanwhile, he's happily playing with a new .223 Contender barrel from Mr. Politically-Incorrect himself, J. D. Jones.





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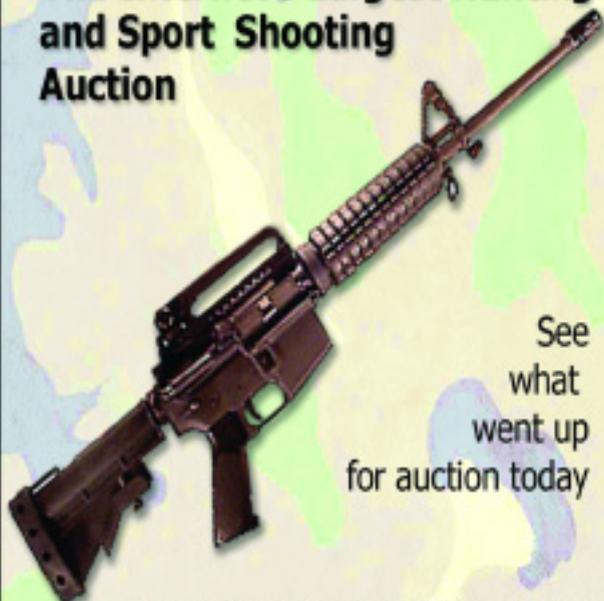


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10-RING

Continued from page 30

He's Not Smart Enough To Appreciate Jail

A judge in Roanoke, Virginia, handed out a suspended sentence for bank robbery when he became convinced that the defendant was too stupid to know how dumb he had been. Also, Maurice Dooley didn't think he had robbed a bank, and couldn't understand why anyone would think so.

Maurice, who is not a customer of Southwest Virginia Savings, entered that establishment to cash a check. The teller explained that he couldn't cash it; Dooley's not a customer, and the check was not drawn on that bank. Dooley then told him that he had a gun, and he should "Try again." The teller relented and agreed, but only if he could photocopy Dooley's driver's license. Dooley handed it over, the teller ran a copy, and the rest is as dumb as Dooley.

SEE? I TOLD YOU THERE WAS A PROBLEM!

Slowly but surely, the former Soviet Asian republic of Kyrgyzstan is sorta draggin' into the latter half of the 20th century, and one of the modern problems they're having to face is alcoholism. It's a tough sell in the Islamic country, because officials don't want to admit there are so many drinkers, much less drunks, in the "alcohol-free" nation. At least one group was recently convinced.

The government was hosting a conference on alcohol abuse in the capital, Bishkek, when the electric power suddenly went off and the windowless interior meeting room was plunged into darkness. Deputy Prime Minister Nikolai Tanayev demanded an answer, and a half hour later, the cops gave it to him. On a hilltop at the edge of town, a bunch of drunken hunters were target-shooting at the ceramic insulators on Bishkek's primary high-voltage lines. Even blasted themselves, they finally blasted the lines down, cutting power to a third of the city.



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TAFFIN TESTS

Continued from page 36

When my wife, who understands, accepts and even aids my passion for six-guns, presented me with the great birthday present last year of a pair of 4" Model 24 .44 Specials made by Smith & Wesson in 1983, it seemed logical to me to equip them with Keith ivories — even though that would cost more than the sixguns. The arrangements were made to ship both guns to Bob Leskovec to have them fitted with matching grips — that is, one set to be carved on the right panel and the other on the left. With the guns, I sent both pictures of Keith's original grips as well as the ivory polymers Leskovec had provided a few years earlier.

In a word, the grips he produced are exquisite. Carved from beautifully grained ivory, they set this pair of Smith & Wesson .44 Specials way above the ordinary. They fit perfectly and feel great. Leskovec can duplicate the grips for any Smith & Wesson, Colt or Ruger single action. There's only one problem. Now these .44 Specials virtually beg to be engraved.

Knife Art

Speaking of engraving, I know of no one better qualified to engrave the above-mentioned Smith & Wessons than Dale

Miller. Dale has done two 3rd Generation Colt Single Actions for me. The first one, a 4" nickel-plated .44-40, is found on the back of the dust jacket of my book *Action Shooting Cowboy Style* wearing stag grips. It is a most beautiful sixgun. In addition to the .357 Magnum, .45 Colt and the .44-40 chamberings now offered in 3rd Generation Single Actions, Colt made a small run of .38-40s in the 1990s. The 4" Colt .38-40 is a very special sixgun to me as it was the first centerfire handgun I ever owned. It was 1957, the gun was from the turn-of-the-century, and naive teenager I was, I let it get away. I always regretted that, so when Colt announced .38-40s would be available once again for the first time in half a century, I immediately ordered one.

The early .38-40s often had accuracy problems as the barrels were oversized. Not so with the 3rd Generations. They have tight barrels, properly sized chambers, and they shoot superbly. When Eagle Grips announced their line of Ultra-Ivory grips, this .38-40 was fitted with one-piece style grips with a longhorn steer carved on the right panel. Stan, one of the gunsmiths at Shapel's, asked me if I had a sixgun on which he could perform an action job and tune-up — just to show me what he was capable of. The .38-40 was turned over to him and the result was a most excellent job of 'smithing. Unfortunately Stan left Shapel's shortly thereafter

and I have lost touch with him.

I now had an excellent shooting, beautifully timed and tuned, ivory stocked 4" .38-40 Colt and the only thing left to bring this sixgun to total perfection was for it to be engraved. It was sent to Milt Morrison of Qualite Pistol & Revolver to be disassembled and prepared for engraving and then shipped on to Dale Miller.

Beautiful seems to be a most inadequate word to describe this .38-40. Perhaps the pictures will do a better job. Miller covered most of the barrel, frame and cylinder with scroll work and also carried out this same theme on the backstrap, allowing some room to have my name engraved in the future should I so desire. I really do not know how to judge engraving. I will say I do not think it could be any nicer than this. To complement Dale Miller's engraving, Milt Morrison of QPR finished the project with one of his Black Diamond bluing jobs. No one can surpass Milt when it comes to beautiful bluing. Unlike rifles and shotguns, which are superb working tools, handguns are personal. Ivory stocks and engraving make them even more so. 

For more information, contact Bob Leskovec at Precision Pro Grips, (724) 449-8360; Dale Miller, (307) 534-5871; Milt Morrison at Qualite Pistol & Revolver, (888) 762-303.



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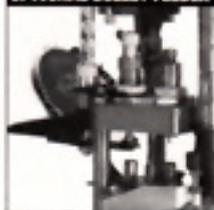
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BROTHERS

Continued from page 79

years. In 1978 Osborne found his way to the U.S., not as a knifemaker, but to pursue a career in training cutting horses.

Osborne honed his knifemaking skills during the 1980s with the help of custom knifemaker Tom Overeynder, of Texas. Overeynder, a highly respected knifemaker in his own right, taught Osborne the basic art of folder making that he has taken to such a high level today.

Distinctive Paths

Both Osborne and Pardue achieved fame during the latter part of the 1980s when the "fancy folder" market was at its peak. These were feast days for the knifemakers, a time when a base model inter-frame-style folder might cost a thousand bucks or more and custom engraving could add three or four times that to the equation. Both Osborne and Pardue were considered among the elite of custom knife artisans of this period and by the time the market tanked in the early nineties both had firmly etched their names in the minds of serious custom cutlery enthusiasts.

In the early 1990s the fancy folder market began waning. The heir-apparent to the upscale folder was an all-new breed of folding knife: the "combat" or "tactical" folder. Earlier developers of this modernized style of fighting knife were custom knifemakers Bob Terzuola, Ernie Emerson and Kit Carson. Egged on by the decline of the high-end folder and a renewed interest in tactical goods spurred by the Gulf War, collectors and users alike began snapping them up as fast as the knifemakers could make them.

The decline in fancy folders and rise of tactical fare had an effect not unlike throwing a hand grenade into the pile of custom knife makers. Early progenitors of this new breed of tacticals saw their business take off and many of the high-end makers — some who had no understanding of the genre whatsoever — jumped ship and fell in line behind them. Caught up in the transition, Pardue and Osborne chose distinctively different paths.

Pardue's knives had all the necessary ingredients found in tactical folders. He was already well versed in the much-revered Michael Walker liner-lock mechanism — the overwhelming choice among early tactical folder users. Further, Mel's designs tended to be sanitary and larger in size, dovetailing nicely with the physical attributes tactical consumers desired. He quickly became entrenched into upper echelon of makers on the forefront of the new tactical folder generation.

Warren Osborne chose to stay the course and continue making fancy folders. While the demand for high-end folders had drastically decreased, it did not totally go away.

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With his reputation for making some of the finest gent's folders on the planet, Osborne was able to maintain a good living selling knives to the high-end collectors that have always appreciated such fine work.

Both men are perfectionists. Pardue may have a joking and fun-loving demeanor, but when it comes to talking knifemaking, he gets downright serious. He has a deep understanding of all things mechanical, and can go on for hours on topics like "holding tolerances" and "custom fitting". Such perfection doesn't go unnoticed in his folders. He is a master at precision and this, combined with an inherent sense of clean design, has gained him his lofty reputation in the industry.

Is Pardue really the simple country boy he appears to be? Is Osborne the finely polished man from Oz?

Osborne's knives are nothing short of pure artistry, "edged jewelry" if you will. He makes his knives with all the precision of a fine Swiss watch, each part meticulously fitted and impeccably finished. Osborne has a knack for taking traditional knife designs and bringing them up to modern day standards with stylistic touches and state-of-the-art precision. Simply stated, Osborne can take a classic design and turn it into contemporary masterpiece.

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MIDNIGHT

Continued from page 52

which Joe Bonar orchestrated a fine trigger job. Also fitted by Bonar is an Ed Brown Memory Grip Safety, a Brown Tactical Thumb Safety, and Brown's 30 LPI checkered mainspring housing and Ultra Lite "no bite" hammer.

The front strap of this gun is perfectly machine-checked with 25 LPI by master machinist, Pete Single, after which Joe beveled the mag well. Joe then gave the entire gun Novak's reliability package and "Carry Bevel" job, where all exterior sharp corners are subtly blended. The entire pistol was then fine bead blasted and blued. Yes, the entire pistol, including the Damascus slide was blued. This was the first time one of Caspian's Damascus slides was blued — and left that way. Since these slides contain both carbon and stainless steel, they are normally left in the white to enhance their beauty with a natural patina. However, Wayne Novak had other ideas.

Recognizing the glamour of a standard unfinished Damascus slide, Novak nonetheless, elected to try the blued route. Bluing stainless steel requires a special operation using special chemicals and just a dash of magic — but the result is clearly more than worth the work — and risk — involved. Actually, one would describe the finish as matte-black, as the surface was first bead blasted. This subtle texture causes the bluing to darken as it absorbs the light cast upon it. Looking like nothing I've ever seen before, this snake-skin Damascus Novak seems as if it's being silently observed under the midnight moon...waiting to strike.

The final touch to this special Novak 1911 is a set of exotic walnut stocks by Spegel. If all the special treatment to this unique pistol was not enough to set it decidedly apart, it is the first 1911 to be equipped with the new Novak Xtreme Duty Adjustable Sight, and what better way to introduce this new sight but riding on the back of this snake?

We Actually Shot It

This pistol literally cried out to be test-fired, and having always been one to come to the rescue of a cry, I could not resist. No, I did not torture-test by any means. Far from it. I merely fired it for familiarity, and to shoot a few record groups. With as perfect a fit as one could ask for, the pistol performed as well as any other 6" long slide 1911 I've fired — and probably better with its Match trigger breaking cleanly at about 2.5 pounds.

But a moment more on the new sights, which helped to make testing a breeze. Nearly identical to the Lo Mount in shape and size, the difference in the Xtreme

Duty is its telltale kingpin located at the lower front. Not really a pin, this hinge consists of two pin-like plungers, one on either side of the sight with a coil spring between them. With a larger diameter inside the sight leaf itself, these plungers are reduced in size where they lock into the ears of the sight base. Although quite robust, the system is not unlike the retaining pins on a watchband.

Swinging up and down on the plunger pins, the sight leaf contains the sight notch, and this can be had in black, white outline, tritium, or Ghost Sight notch. Elevated by a simple coil spring, the leaf is click adjustable via a click adjustable elevation screw. Windage is accomplished by loosening the main retaining screw and drifting the sight base. Beauty is often found in simplicity and this is about as simple as you can get — hence the beauty inherent in the design.

“ The result is clearly more than worth the work — and risk — involved. ”

But I digress. With its long slide soaking up most of recoil, firing the pistol was as tame as the purr of a contented kitten. As is typical of 6" 1911 pistols, cycling of the slide was noticeably slower than with a standard 5" gun firing the same cartridge — but not by much. A peculiar feel, and not as, shall we say “frantic,” as a shorter slide. It added a sense of relaxation to the shoot. By the time the pistol went back into battery I was just about back on target. Wonderful.

In the accuracy department, 5-shot groups at 25 yards measured less than 2", shot from sandbags, with many holding at close to one inch. Even better, the gun never malfunctioned during our relatively brief tests.

I know I'll probably never own this or any other comparable Novak Custom Damascus Long Slide 1911, but I'll certainly own a number of Novak's new Xtreme Duty Adjustable Sights on my other 1911 pistols. This is the most user-friendly adjustable combat pistol sight I've ever used. By the time you read this, the Novak Xtreme Duty Adjustable Sight will be available for not only the 1911, but also other popular pistols. 

For information contact Novak Design, (304) 485-9295; www.novaksights.com; Caspian Arms, Ltd., (804) 472-6454; www.caspianarmsltd.8m.com; Ed Brown Products, (573) 656-3261; www.edbrown.com

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AYOOB FILES

Continued from page 42

Murry seemed casual and friendly at first, chatting about Sue's daughter. Soon Sue politely asked him to leave, explaining that it was 8 PM and she had to be up for work at three in the morning.

"Casper's" attitude changed instantly. He had a long criminal history, and had learned that his menacing glower could intimidate people, but Mrs. Gay knew his kind and was unfazed by his sudden nasty expression. He growled that he wanted a glass of water before he left, and she stood up and went into the kitchen to get it for him.

When she returned, everything had changed.

Taking Hostages

What Sue Gay sees when she walks back into the room freezes her for a moment. Casper is holding The Boy with one arm and pressing a carpet cutter against his throat with the other. Like most Americans, Mrs. Gay has not thought much about the lethality of such an instrument until its use on September 11 of the previous year hammered the lesson home. Now she understands that the child is in lethal danger. So does he; beneath the mop of blond hair, The Boy's face is deathly white in fear. Casper snarls coldly, "Nothing personal."

Then, with unpredictable suddenness, the intruder shoves the boy aside and lunges at the woman, seizing her instead and putting the razor-sharp blade against her throat. "Put the water down," he growls, "and take me to where the guns are!"

So that's it, she realizes. Her daughter must have told him about her late husband's gun collection. Give guns to this dangerous wild man? "No," she gasps, "I won't do it!" Then she turns desperately to the boy and blurts, "Call nine-one-one!"

The child sprints from the room and dashes up the stairs. Casper seems unconcerned. He is focused on the guns, and he presses his blade harder against his new hostage's neck.

What he cannot know is that The Boy has run upstairs for something other than the telephone. He bursts into his mother's bedroom and darts, with certain knowledge, to where the guns are. His right hand seizes the Llama .45 pistol, and with his left he scoops up his late dad's 12 gauge shotgun, a slide action Savage Model 30.

As he rushes back downstairs, The Boy's mind is racing as fast as his legs. Which should he use? He remembers his dad showing him the awesome power of the shotgun, but he also remembers that the crushing recoil knocks his small frame backward. He's bigger now, but not that much bigger.

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Besides, he cannot remember if the long gun is loaded. He knows, however, that the pistol is always loaded.

He reaches his decision at the same time he reaches the bottom of the stairs, and tosses the Savage onto the carpet, out of reach of the bad man who is holding the person he loves most in the world. The Boy takes the pistol in both hands and goes into the Isosceles stance his dad taught him, body erect, legs locked, arms straight out.

It seems to Sue Gay as if the pistol is pointed directly at her. She knows it is loaded, too. The thought that goes through her mind is, "If he pulls the trigger, I'm going to die."

For an instant, the side of the home invader's body is completely exposed to The Boy and his pistol.

Something similar is apparently going through Tony Murry's mind, too. Desperate to hide from that gaping gun muzzle, he jerks his hostage around, trying to get her more squarely between himself and the child with the gun. But he is a big, strong man, his strength out of control with intoxication and excitement, and he swings the woman too far. The momentum carries her to the opposite direction, and for an instant, the side of the home invader's body is completely exposed to The Boy and his pistol.

Carefully aligning the sights and holding the pistol steady as he was taught so long ago, the child thumbs off the safety catch and squeezes the trigger.

The blast of the .45 rocks the room.

Standing erect, weighing only 70-some pounds, The Boy is jarred backward by the recoil of a 230 grain bullet departing the pistol at a velocity of 850 feet per second. The gun climbs, momentarily obscuring his view, but he instantly pulls it back down and prepares to fire again if he must.

But he doesn't have to. Casper has moved away from his mother, who is standing stunned but unhurt, and now he is rushing to the door. The Boy sees him fumble with the lock, get the door open, and disappear outside.

He runs to his mom, and sets down the heavy pistol. Sue Gay hugs him, then hastens to the door to lock it behind the man who has fled. Then she grabs the nearest phone and dials 911.

For Sue Gay and The Boy, the nightmare is over.

Outside, the criminal is running down an alley near the Gay home,

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Charles Cutshaw, Guns & Weapons for Law Enforcement, September 2001

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impelled by the instinctive need to get away from what has hurt him. The 50 yard dash has been accomplished in five seconds flat (Kirk Clayton, Calgary, 1970), and what the drug- and alcohol-abusing criminal lacks in athletic talent he can make up in motivation. But no one is timing him, and Tony Murry will not cross the 50 yard line.

He can feel his body failing him, the knees wobbling, the dizziness. The bullet

inducing hemothorax, the liquid pressure squeezing down his heart and lungs. There is not enough blood pressure to sustain consciousness, and the darkness closes over him. His heart beats wildly, but it does not have enough blood to pump. The blood vessels are beginning to collapse, with too little to keep them filled. Hemorrhagic shock. The sirens are audible now, but Murry can no longer hear them.

“He did what he had to do. That’s an unfortunate burden for an 11-year-old to have on him .”

has caught him high in the chest and punched through his thorax sideways. It is a Winchester Black Talon, and as the sharp petals of its jacket peeled back, they tore through his aorta before the bullet came to rest — fully expanded as if in a Winchester ad — in the opposite side of his rib cage.

Murry’s blood squirts from the ripped vessel as if from a high pressure faucet, filling his chest cavity and emptying his blood vessels. His blood pressure plummets. He has gone perhaps forty yards from the Gay home when his knees buckle and he pitches forward, sprawling face down on the dirty floor of the alley.

The blood fills his chest cavity,

And soon, the darkness has claimed him permanently.

Tony Murry was pronounced dead that night at the hospital emergency room. After reviewing the facts, St. Joseph County prosecutor Toth told reporters, “The young man reasonably believed his mother and himself to be in danger of dying. It was clear to us this was a justifiable homicide.”

Mrs. Gay, who had lived for 23 years in the house where the shooting took place, announced she was moving to the country. Murry, who had flatly answered “drug dealer” when asked his occupation on the occasion of his most recent arrest, cleared a couple of

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pending felony trials from the local docket with his death. His past record included several convictions for robbery and theft.

At the time, Toth said to reporters, "He did what he had to do. That's an unfortunate burden for an 11-year-old to have on him ... it's a tragic situation. Even though this individual who got shot was attempting to rob this mother and her son, he's still somebody's son, and obviously this 11-year-old boy was placed in a situation no young person should ever have to face."

Mrs. Gay said, "I don't know how he did that. One shot and he got him. He's my little hero." She later added, "He's proud of himself. He feels bad he took a human life. But he didn't want to lose me. He lost his dad three years ago to a heart attack."

Toth tells me that The Boy has undergone routine psychological counseling and seems to be doing fine.

Lessons

This was not the first time a child has had to use deadly force in defense of self and family. It has happened before. A stalker entered the home of his ex and her new lover and shot them both, and the man's older son. He in turn was shot and killed by the man's 12-year-old son, with a Ruger Single Six .22 revolver the lad had permission to keep in his room.

“If the girl had been able to reach a gun, she would have been able to save her younger siblings.”

The youngest such defender I know of was a pre-school boy in California who put his mother's Raven .25 automatic to the head of the man who was attempting to beat her to death, and pulled the trigger, killing the attacker instantly and saving his mother's life. Also in California, there was a case of a maniac with a pitchfork who broke into a home and attacked the children who were there. A teenage older sister, unable to access her parents' locked-up guns, jumped out a window and ran to a neighbor's house, begging for a weapon. He refused to give her one, instead calling the police. When officers arrived, they were forced to shoot the killer to death, but he had already murdered the children remaining in the house. These kids' grandmother has since become an advocate for armed citizens' rights of self-defense, and has stated publicly that if the girl had been able to reach a gun, she would have been able to save her younger siblings.



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The Boy made the correct decision in going with the pistol. Investigation showed that the shotgun he had also grabbed was in fact unloaded.

The Boy told investigators he was very careful to aim the gun with the sights and squeeze the trigger, exactly as his adoptive father had shown him. In this situation, point shooting would have been a recipe for disaster. 1911-style pistols with short-reach triggers serve well in very small hands, and this incident was a case in point.

While the shooting in question was an "instant, one-shot stop" in terms of concluding hostile activity, it should be noted that with a fully-expanded, high tech .45 hollowpoint in his chest, the aggressor was able to cover forty yards before collapsing. Medical professionals tell us that if the brain is fully oxygenated at the time of injury, a person can continue conscious, purposeful activity for up to 14 seconds even if blood flow is completely shut off. A lacerated artery does not necessarily shut off blood flow completely.

“This particular coward chose flight instead of fight when The Boy turned the tables on him.”

Could Murry have used his last few seconds to kill his hostage and attack The Boy with his carpet-cutter, or perhaps attempt to disarm him? Yes, but I suspect that if he had done either this resolute young man simply would have shot him some more. Only cowards threaten women and children, and this particular coward chose flight instead of fight when The Boy turned the tables on him.

We all know the saying, "If you give a man a fish, you've fed him for a day. If you teach him how to fish, you've fed him for life." The corollary is that if you use force to protect another, you have protected them for the moment, but if you teach them how to protect themselves and others, that protection also lasts for life.

In going over the case in his office with Reichard and I, Prosecutor Toth mused, "The Boy's adopted father showed his son gun safety and marksmanship and responsible firearms handling. In doing so, he probably saved the life of his widow and the child."

Amen to that. Chris Toth owns a defensive handgun of his own, a 9mm Beretta. He has already taught his own young son how to use it safely. 

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HEX BULLET

Continued from page 55

to retain Alan Corzine as a consultant. Corzine, formerly vice president of research and development for Winchester, is an extremely competent engineer. This is from personal experience, for I have been fortunate to watch the development and testing of Winchester's Fail Safe, Black Talon and SXT bullets during Corzine's watch. He worked on testing and refining the design of the Hex Bullet.

Now Taurus has not built an ammo plant in Miami. And the finished product you see here represents the collaborative efforts of Morrison, Barnes, Corzine, Hodgdon, St. Marks Powders and PMC ammo. And here's how it came to market.

Barnes made the bullets. Hodgdon developed the load using a powder provided by St. Marks. PMC provided the brass and loads the ammo. Taurus distributed it to the market.

As far as handgun ammo is concerned, the Taurus Hex bullet represents a very different approach. The 185 gr. pure copper bullet is loaded to nominal velocities. Remember, you do not have to have screaming, or even +P velocities, to get good bullet performance. Our testing has been somewhat limited due to available ammunition, so we did testing that provided the most information with a relatively small amount of shooting. There are three factors to consider. In order of importance, they are: reliability, bullet performance and accuracy.

If rule number 1 of gunfighting is, "Have a gun," I'd like to see it amended to, "Have a gun that works."

While reliability of modern pistols is greatly improved over older guns, we need to be sure our gun works with the chosen ammo. The Hex bullet has to be a bit longer than a customary lead core bullet because of the lighter weight of copper. Many conventional 185 gr. hollowpoints are about 0.5" long. This is the limiting factor in the shape of the bullet's nose, but since copper is lighter, the bullet has to be longer — about .725" — allowing the nose to have a longer, more gradual taper. At least in theory, this shape will feed very easily. Each of the guns shown in the table was fired 15 to 20 times with the Taurus ammo. There were no malfunctions.

The other thing you'll notice is the hollowpoint cavity is wide and deep and you can see the six skiving marks inside the cavity that determine the bullet's expansion characteristics. You'll also see traces of black in the skiving grooves and at the bottom of the hollowpoint. This is simply an artifact from an annealing operation during manufacture, and is insignificant.

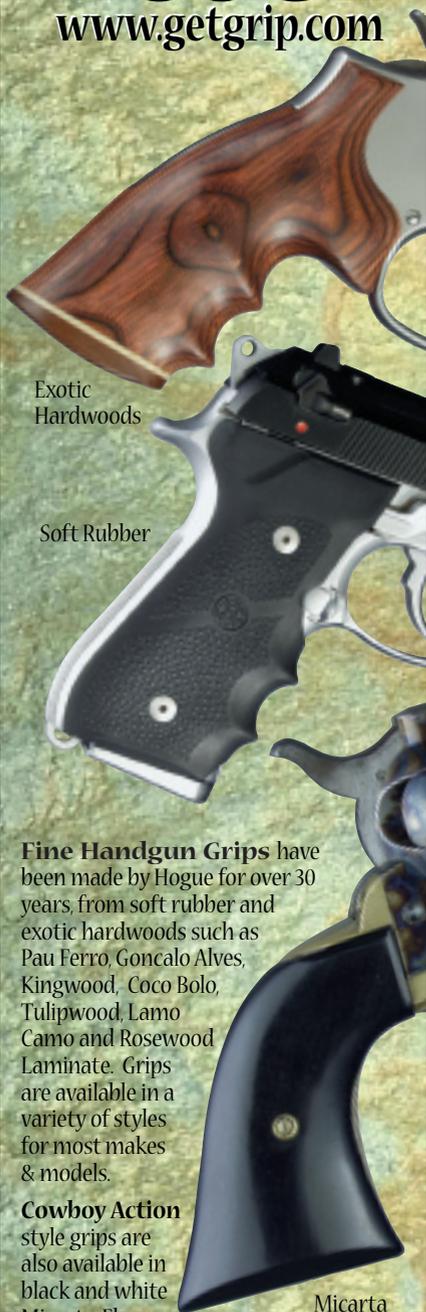
The final observation is there is a dimple at the very bottom of the hollowpoint cavity. The first time I saw something

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like this was during Corzine's development of the Black Talon bullet. The purpose is to provide a small reservoir for debris or cloth so fluid can enter the upper portion of the hollowpoint and initiate expansion. Once expansion starts the material is not a major factor in the finished diameter.

What's The Real Truth?

Bullet performance is hotly debated by self-anointed experts who tell us "this" or "that" is the "best." Many preach velocity above all and present opinion as fact. I wonder how they can be so certain? Indeed, one person's "one-shot-stop" conclusions and criteria may fail miserably when faced with data from another, reliable source.

The FBI concluded that penetration in 10-percent ballistic gelatin should be a minimum of 12". That too can be debated, but allowing for the huge variability in size of human beings and the angles at which they are shot, 12" should reach the middle of the chest on most. It's hard to argue with a demand for as much expansion as possible.

And that's what the Hex bullet does.

We tested it by shooting into calibrated 10-percent gelatin, and the same material covered with the FBI's standard "heavy" clothing which consists of layers of denim, down, flannel shirt and T-shirt material. Another heavy clothing arrangement consisting of four layers of denim, flannel and T-shirt material was also used.

Just a glance at the test results shows the Hex bullet works. There is no meaningful difference in expanded diameter between bullets fired into bare gelatin and that covered with heavy clothing simulants. We see, as expected, a slightly deeper penetration as a result of the clothing. Accuracy is comparable to other good defensive bullets and not an issue. The velocity level is appropriate for the bullet weight and compares with those of other manufacturer's loads with the same weight bullet. Recoil is comparable and manageable. The .45 ACP load is just the first in a series. We can expect to see .38 Special, .40 S&W and 9mm loads with the Hex Bullet in the future.

We need to end with a note of caution. This is truly outstanding ammunition but it's not the long-sought magic bullet. They still do not exist. The ultimate success of any defensive encounter is still the responsibility of the shooter — not the bullet. But having said that, good ammo certainly helps in the equation (see "Gelatin Test Results" chart).

While the data speaks very eloquently for itself, it does show the slight increase in penetration predicted due to the effect of the heavy clothing. The difference in recovered weight is due to fiber remaining in the bullet cavity.



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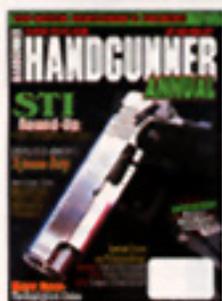
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SPEAK OUT

Continued from page 18

If Colt would lower their prices so mere mortals could afford their excellent SSAs and other fine firearms, then we would have no need for clones. But I can't afford tradition and logos anymore, so I'll settle for a good AWA clone. If Colt wants to keep the respect of the world's shooters it had better display more internal character and business sense.

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Peter Nunez
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1911 Hysteria

Hey, if you don't like the 1911 articles, reach down with your hand, take a hold of the page, and give it a good turn. There, it's all gone now. Give it a rest and get a life!

Jack Feinward
Via e-mail

Male Chauvinist Pig

Good job (Nov/Dec)! I really enjoyed the overall mix and found the Gila Hayes piece on "First Day Jitters" for women extremely informative. (Yeah, I'm a male chauvinist pig, but at least I know it). The Colt New Service piece by Gary Paul Johnston and the John Wesley Hardin pieces were superb. Keep it up!

Frank James
Via e-mail

What? No Response?

I wrote 5 e-mails to gun magazines asking about 1911 pistols, and you were the only one to answer. Thanks very much!

Pedro Mori
Via e-mail

Flushing Toilets

I just finished reading the Industry Insider article in the November/December issue about the Colt suing American Western Arms and I have to say, "Thank you, Colt." I had been waffling about whether or not to buy an AWA revolver, but Colt's lawsuit has made up my mind. If Colt thinks that AWA single-actions are so well made they could be mistaken for a Colt then that's good enough for me — I'm buying one. AWA products do lack one crucial feature that the Colt SAA has — an absurdly inflated price.

Actually, the AWA gun also lacks one other Colt feature — the rampant pony and the heritage and history thus represented. But Colt management has been



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trying to flush that down the toilet for decades and this lawsuit is just another pull of the handle.

Tom Killgore
Owasso, OK

Python Hospital

Recently one of my Colt Pythons became ill. The problem was the DA trigger pull timing was not what it should be. I sent it to Colt for repair, bracing for the worst. A few days later, Colt responded, telling me the repair would have no charge. The repair yielded a DA trigger pull that is beyond expectations. Colt also included a new safety and instruction manual. Colt has added me to their "customer for life" file. It's nice to experience this type of service in this day and age. Thank you Colt!

D. Helms
Via e-mail

PACT Perfect?

I would like to express my appreciation for the unparalleled service offered by PACT Inc. Earlier this year I sent the Townsville Pistol Club's two timers, one a Pact IV the other a Pact III, back for repair and tune-up. What arrived back in return mail were two brand new Pact IVs, plus sensors, all for the cost of the sensors and postage only. Such service deserves the highest expression of thanks the Club and I can offer.

It just goes to show that we can trust our shooting compatriots before just about anyone else.

Geoff Rath
Via e-mail

100 Yard Wonder

If I hadn't seen it I wouldn't have believed it. After reading "Ayoob Vs. The Machine" in the May/June 2002 issue, it made me think of something. My friend David Bradshaw was hunting two years ago when his .308 rifle took a dump and he wounded a whitetail. He ditched the .308 (literally) and lungshot the running buck with his own Les Baer Super Tac. When we pulled the hide, two perfectly mushroomed Remington Golden Saber 230 gr. JHPs fell out.

Bradshaw's groups with the Les Baer commonly run under 3" at 100 yards, and that's for five shots! Hell of a deal, I'd say. It can be done.

Brownie Linder
Via e-mail

High School Kids

In the Nov/Dec 2002 edition of *Handgunner*, I came across your article about "Pre-Emptive Strikes" and it inspired me. The article spoke of the taboo that has been placed on firearms over the past few years. It also brought to light the clean-cut fact that guns are not against the law.

The Second Amendment is self-explanatory. I applaud you for this short but motivational piece.

Vanessa Oler
High School Student
Via e-mail

I feel I must chastise Dr. Merrell of Dallas, TX (Speak Out Jan/Feb). You may call Sarah Brady a hypocrite, because I believe she is. You may call her an elitist, because I believe she is. You may even call her a liar, because I believe she is. But NEVER, NEVER, NEVER call her two-faced. If she were truly two faced, I'm sure that she would wear the other one ...

Jack Williams
Saint Joseph, IL

Skeeter Knew

After reading the article by Roy Huntington on XS Sight Systems (July/Aug 2002) I began a re-read of "Hoglegs, Hipshots, & Jalapeños — Selected works of Skeeter Skelton, Vol II." In an article written in November 1967, Mr. Skelton says: "For combat and snapshooting, a better rear sight would be a very shallow V notch..." used with a front bead. It's interesting that it took nearly 35 years for someone to figure out there are other sight systems than the old bullseye setup. The XS system should be just the ticket for quick shooting. It's a shame it takes us so long to wake up.

We should have listened to Skeeter.
Jane & Paul Davenport
Via e-mail

Springfield The Best?

If Alex Hamilton wonders why the Gold Cup is the only product that does not work, does not perform the function for which it was intended, and thinks the Gold Cup is the ONLY gun that fits the description, he has not shot many pistols.

The exception is Springfield Armory products. All of mine have continued to perform flawlessly. However, if I knew the number of good guns that were ruined by an "outside person," then I'd be "hog swallered" too!

Jim Robb
Via e-mail

AH'a Boys

A couple Christmases ago my wife gave me a CRKT tactical knife. Through carelessness I lost a screw from the belt clip. I phoned CRKT's 800 number with credit card in hand, and a pleasant young lady answered and listened to my whining. I told her I wanted three screws and she asked me for my shipping info which I promptly gave to her. She then thanked me and said there was no charge. Five days later the screws arrived. Imagine that. Great service and great people.

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now — after my friends quit letting me borrow their copies — and love it!

Richard Brewer
 Via e-mail

I've been a loyal reader for some time now and I never see articles on affordable guns. Like most red-blooded Americans I spend what I make, and with today's economy it's tough for most of us to purchase these sweet \$2,000 1911s, Glocks or Sigs. So I went out and bought a \$100 Hi-Point .380 ACP. It hasn't failed me yet and hopefully never will, but my question is, can we see some articles on these types of guns, accessories for this gun and maybe even some history?

Josia Curtis
 Via e-mail

Josia, check out the American Handgunner Tactical Annual (on sale on newsstands or available from us) for a hard look at several makes of inexpensive handguns, including your very own Hi-Point. 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

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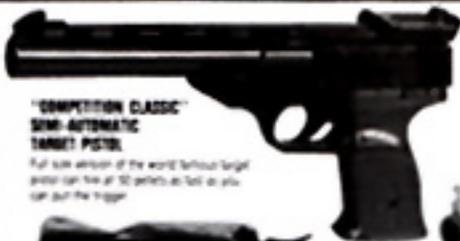
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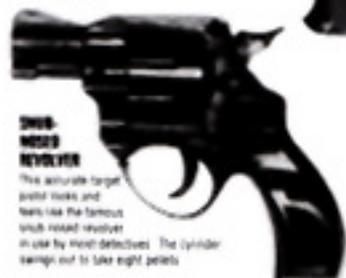
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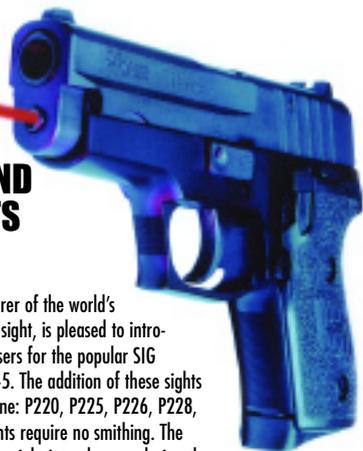
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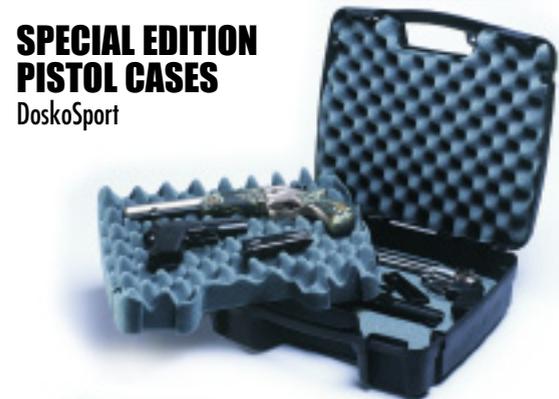
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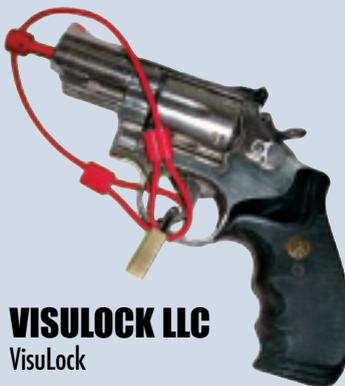
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WEIGAND S&W SIGHT BLADE

Gunsmith Jack Weigand has built quite a few guns that have appeared on the cover of *American Handgunner* and I have had the chance to shoot some of them. Now his business has taken a new direction toward scope mounts, gunsmith tools and sights. A chance meeting last summer brought me up to date on his stuff and found a new rear sight blade installed on my favorite S&W Model 25-5 .45 Colt revolver.

There's nothing wrong with the original S&W sight blade, but bullseye shooters who cut their teeth on Bo-mar sights have gotten used to a wide, black rear sight blade and I, for one, find it more precise.

What Jack has done is design an aluminum blade that replaces S&W's standard part. The new blade is .7" wide and .37" high and extends back over the barrel of the original sight. All you have to do is replace the old sight blade. That's a bit easier said than done, and is not a job for the inexperienced. Special tools are required even though the actual job is straightforward. For this reason Jack offers to do the installation for a modest charge and all you have to do is send him your sight.

I wish I could say my shooting improved dramatically when using Jack's sight. I don't think

so, but I do know for sure the sight picture is much sharper. And — when you can see the sights better — it makes it easier to do the right things for a good shot. And that's a very good deal. 

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At a distance, Alumagrips look a bit different but it's hard to put your finger on why until you get closer. Then you can see the checkering is machined right into the metal.

One of the cool things about aluminum is it's easy to work with and you can pretty much have any color you want in the finishing process, which is known as anodizing.

Alumagrips are made on modern CNC equipment. That means they are a very precise fit, but it also offers a large degree of flexibility in design. For example, they could create complex checkering patterns, such as the Fleur-de-lis you see here and logos such as IDPA's. You can also have customized touches such as initials. They have several colors and are available for both full size and compact 1911 type pistols.

When I first put them on a gun I thought they might be a little slick but that didn't turn out to be the case at all. The most notable



thing was the fact the grips felt warm or cool depending on the ambient temperature. Wood is an insulator, so we don't notice it as much with them, but the aluminum conducts and assumes the temperature of the surroundings. This isn't unpleasant at all. They feel good and look just as good.



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Charles E. Petty

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But that doesn't mean we don't need new springs for guns now and then and when that happens you need W.C. Wolff Co. Their catalog is a genuine who's-who of firearms and packed with useful information. I'm sure there are some guns that aren't in there, but whether you are looking for pistol, revolver, rifle or shotgun springs, their catalog is the place to start.

I'm fond of shooting some of the older autoloaders like Nambus and Broomhandles and those are always unknown quantities that require careful checkout before shooting. So, when a new one of those comes along it routinely gets — at a minimum — a new Wolff recoil spring.



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I bought my first one probably 30 years ago and finally wore it out and had to buy a new one. It is a piece of nice thick sheepskin treated with a silicone lubricant. The sheepskin serves to hold the preservative very nicely but when it does wear off it's a simple matter to replace it with the product of your choice. My practice is to use just a small squirt of an aerosol lubricant or preservative. You don't want to get the sheepskin too wet.

I've found just a quick wipe will remove soot from powder fouling and even though the Gun Buddy gets dirty it still works just fine. I suppose you could rinse it out with mild soap and water, but I never felt the need. The sheepskin seems to get softer with use and the long wool fibers reach into every nook and cranny for efficient protection.

I keep several around the shop so even if the gun is not



cleaned, it can be wiped before going back into the safe. And the good news is it doesn't cost much to have several. They're only \$6.95 postpaid. 

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TINY TERROR

Continued from page 69

the easy-shooting 9mm version.

Will there be a .40 down the line? Lips were sealed at Springfield and eyes averted when we broached the topic. With the hard-hitting, high-performing 9mm loads available today, there's little reason for a .40 in this tiny gun, but if marketing trends ring true, I wouldn't be surprised to see one down the pike. But — I'm just guessing here.

Ergonomics — that all-important buzz-word of the age — are excellent all-around. The grip profile is reminiscent of a Hi-Power and features minimalist thumb-rests, which turn out to be ambidextrous (like the magazine releases). At a glance and a feel, the SubCompact fits snugly in the hand and, unlike many small pistols (especially cut-down versions of bigger ones), it feels like a "real" gun on it's own — not a "make-do" simply in order to achieve a smaller, more marketable size. It's small because it likes to be small and it feels comfortable being there.

Two Tiny Terrors

Machine work is first-rate, showing just a few rare tool marks, and those only on the underside of the slide, visible only when it's removed. A magnet sticks everywhere, except the polymer frame, which happens to be crisply molded. There's also checkering and a light rail which is all part of the package.

Which brings us to one of the best parts about the SubCompact XD — the nifty little light. Perhaps the term "Combat Light" may seem strong for such a tiny device, but it deserves the title. As most things which appear in a "sub" version, the little light is immediately irresistible. "Oh, how cute," exclaimed one lady bystander at the recent demo. I'm not sure I'd use that exact term, but you get the point. It looks exactly like one of Insight Technology's M-3 Tactical Illuminators — only smaller. Much smaller.

"After we started on the design of the SubCompact XD," said Dennis, "We realized there was a need for a light to match. But the radically-shortened frame and slide meant there was nothing on the market."

So, they designed one, working with the team from Insight. While not a blindingly-bright zillion lumen model, the new Xtreme Mini-Light (a 3-volt model) certainly gets the job done. We all know the first rule of gunfighting is "Have a gun." The second rule should be "Have a light," and now you will. The Mini-Light snugs under the SubCompact exactly the way a new born baby killer whale nestles under the mother. Springfield Armory will be the exclusive distributor of the Xtreme Mini-Light and you'll find it fits anything

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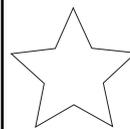
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with a light rail and offers a tidy way to cut down on extra baggage should you be working plainclothes or have an already-overloaded duty belt. Retail should hover around the \$125 mark.

Some design specifics of the XD and the SubCompact are important enough to warrant mention. The Ultra Safety Assurance (USA™) trigger system is very much like other trigger-based safety systems on the market. Why change something that has been proven reliable? The striker-fired action offers an extremely comfortable and reliable trigger pull on the test gun of about 6.4 pounds, with a little more than a quarter-inch of travel before you feel the sear engagement. Then, a simple application of pressure and it breaks cleanly and evenly.

The combination of a loaded chamber indicator (on the top of the slide) and the striker status indicator pin (at the rear of the slide) allows a check of readiness by feel alone. Nice touches, all. The grip safety is what truly sets the XD design apart from the pack. Working in conjunction with a "firing pin" safety, there is virtually no possibility of the XD going off unless there is a series of deliberate movements initiated. Grip it firmly and correctly, pull the trigger deliberately and completely to the rear and the gun will fire. Do anything else and it will just stare at you and call you stupid. There is no external "snick it on and off" safety because you don't need one. Pick it up and you have to make it work, or it won't. Period.

And it Shoots, Too

Shooting revealed no surprises. Groups were always good, and informal targeting revealed reliable sub-2" groups at about 15 yards, fired off-hand on a windy, dusty day. There is simply no real need to fire groups with this kind of pistol at long ranges because that's not what it's for. Having said that, we were able to hit an empty cartridge box at the 50 yard berm more often than not. No fooling. Magazine capacity is 10 rounds and, while we didn't test it, we're inclined to believe the full-sized mags from the bigger XDs would fit as a back-up.

Candidly? This gun shot well, ran like a top and felt unique, as if a new idea had been born. It was unabashedly fun to play with and when in the hand, you intuitively know you have a real fighting pistol on-board, not a make-do pocket auto. Holsters are just now becoming available from the big shops but any custom maker can get you set-up easily.

From the captive dual spring recoil and guide rod assembly to the oversized slide stop and cold hammer-forged barrel, the SubCompact XD gives the kind of performance you'd expect in a full sized gun — but with a 3" barrel and all for around \$489 at retail. Surprising ... and not surprising, when you consider the heritage involved. Funny ... there's that word again.



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SHOOT-OFF

Continued from page 77

crowd was up 20% over last and promises to keep growing. The steel, reactive targets — at ranges from a good, down-wind spit to about 25 yards — keep the crowd busy counting falling plates, pointing and jeering at the misses. Remember, at the STI/Handgunner Shoot they're laughing at you, not with you. Well, sometimes. But you get the drift of the attitude on-hand. Lots of back-slapping, needling and "Here, let me twist those sights some to help" goes around. Great fun all, and the positive attitude prevalent is as addictive as the smell of Hoppes #9. By the end of the first day, everyone always has a big grin on his or her face — along with dust and burned powder — even if they're losing. Can we be arrested for having this much fun?

It Gets Better

Local businesses actually support the match. The local McDonald's sponsored freebies for the kids who helped out on the range and there were McDonald's banners sprinkled around. Can you imagine a McDonald's banner anywhere on a range in Southern California? Neither can we.

"Good people, great shooting and the kind of spirit and involvement you just don't see anymore at a match."

The family atmosphere is rampant, with kids, wives, husbands, dogs and other sundry types running everywhere. Many families go to the match as their yearly vacation. When I queried a couple of Moms about this situation they smiled and agreed it was a "great time," and "Gee-whiz, we can hardly wait for next year." No, really, I'm not making this up.

Prizes for the match are many and each division has it's own prize table. The prizes are picked over in the order a shooter finishes in his or her division. Fair and neat and everyone is happy with the way it all goes down. Scoring is by the "J-Ladder," and can be understood by a math major or a graduate student in calculus — or a nine-year-old kid with a computer game in his hand. But it works and when all is said and done, there is some fast and furious shooting done on the final day. This "real" shoot-off, wherein the men are separated from the boys, and the girls, and the old guys and the cowboys and

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the rest, is a real page-turner and not to be missed as the clock ticks down.

The final one standing is the match winner and that winner was, indeed, young Blake Miguez, much to the chagrin of Kirsch and Hobdel. Too bad, boys. Youth triumphs over old age and treachery in this case. Like the old guy said when asked "How do you get to Carnegie Hall?" "Practice, practice, practice." Maybe next year guys?

Remember, at the STI/Handgunner Shoot they're laughing at you, not with you.

One of the fun parts of this event is the fact there is lots of shooting going on. Most competitors shoot a minimum of 500 to 600 rounds with many topping out at 1,000 easily. If you make it a point to attend the Winchester World Challenge — just prior to the STI/Handgunner Shoot-Off — you get to shoot the STI/Handgunner stages and get more prizes. Both matches may mean upwards of 2,000 rounds fired. That sure beats a weekend IPSC match, eh?

Just look at the photos. Where else can you have this mix of kids, wives, lady-friends, good guns, fun gear, lots of ammo, Colorado sunshine, dynamiting watermelons and cool prizes? No where else, that's where.

Check out the San Juan Range website for match results and other tidbits on "how-to" and "where-at" and such. Paul and Kerry Miller can be found at www.sanjuanrange.com.

With lots of steel, man vs. man, no time limit and as many rounds as it takes to knock 'em down and kill the stop plate — it all equates to a gargantuan good time. I know I'm shooting the next match, so watch out for the sorta' old guy with gray in his beard. I had a nice chat with the assembled shooters on the night of the big feed and came away convinced I'd just met one of the nicest groups of people ever. They must be, since they all read *Handgunner* and were kind enough to tell me what they thought about it. Some people actually liked it.

By the way, come July, offer to give me a boost out of my chair if you see me trying to squirm out of it. I may not be good, but I'm slow, and that's definitely not anything the STI/American Handgunner World Shoot-Off  Championship can be called.

American Handgunner would like to thank Nyle Leatham for his typically great photos and his insight into the history of the match. Thanks Nyle. Editor



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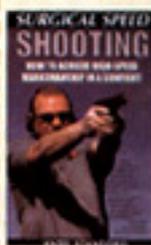
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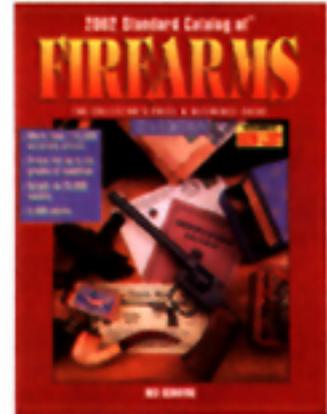
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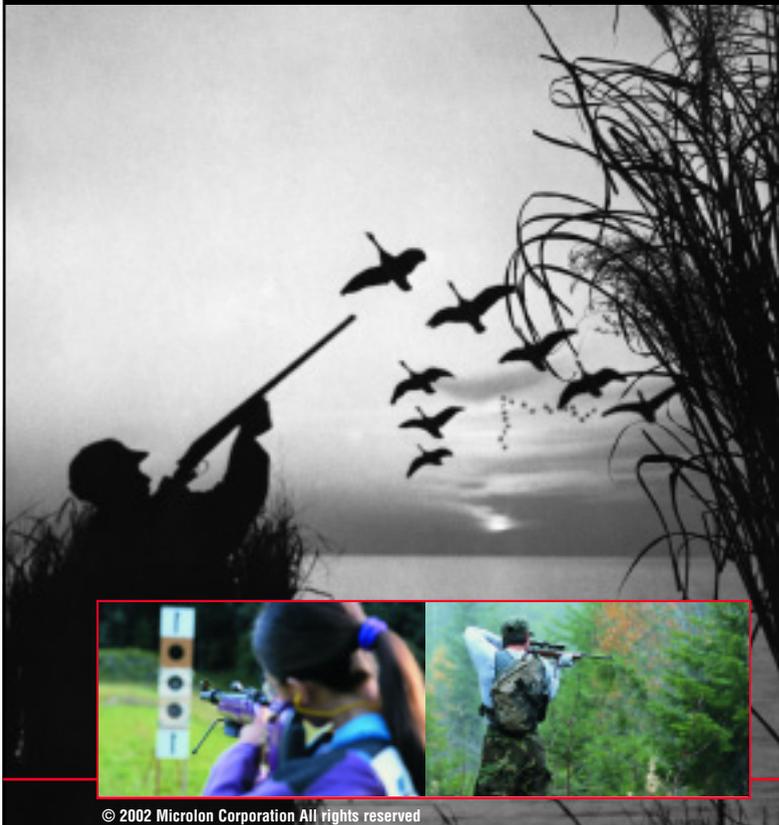
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11

Percentage of 18-24 year-olds in the United States who could not locate their own country on a world map. The Pacific Ocean's location was a mystery to 29 percent.

1

Number of would-be car thieves killed by bow-wielding car-owners. The thief told the hunter/car-owner he had a gun so the hunter shot a broad-head through the bad guy's hips and buttocks. Ouch.

91

Percentage of gun owners who overwhelmingly reject the notion of registering firearms — even after the D.C. shootings.

200

Number of people killed in Muslims vs. Christian rioting at the Miss World pageant in the Nigerian capital of Abuja.

62

Percentage of times a test of the proposed "national ballistic imaging database" produced wrong results.

21

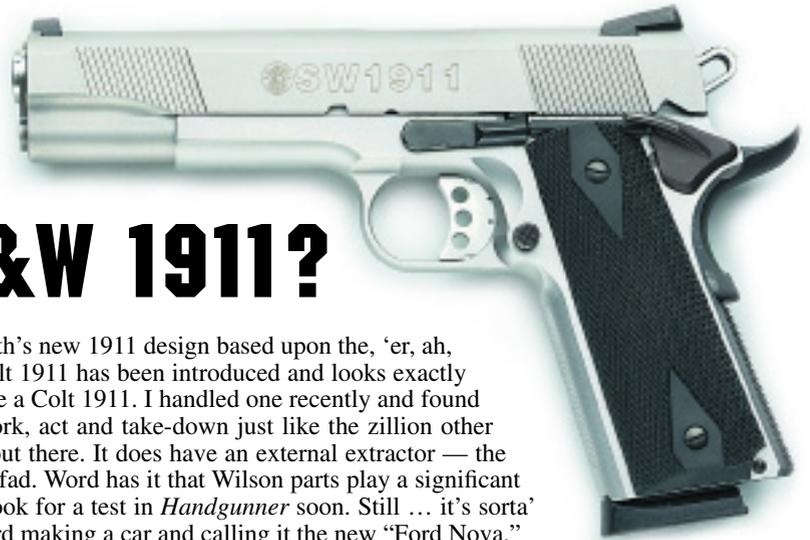
Number of candidates for the U.S. Senate — out of 24 — won by candidates endorsed by the NRA.

69

Deaths per 100,000 in Washington, D.C. — home of strict gun control.

9

Deaths per 100,000 in Indianapolis — home of very little gun control.



S&W 1911?

Smith's new 1911 design based upon the, 'er, ah, Colt 1911 has been introduced and looks exactly like a Colt 1911. I handled one recently and found it to work, act and take-down just like the zillion other 1911s out there. It does have an external extractor — the newest fad. Word has it that Wilson parts play a significant role. Look for a test in *Handgunner* soon. Still ... it's sorta' like Ford making a car and calling it the new "Ford Nova."



Now's your chance to tell us what you always wanted. Ever had a hankering for a semi-auto, .50 Browning pistol, complete with concealment leather by Mitch Rosen? Frustrated because Colt won't make that Single Action Army in .454? Does the idea of a Ruger Blackhawk in 577-.450 Boxer Mk II get your blood going? How about a custom Bowen big bore, based on a Lancaster 4-barrel Howdah pistol in .44 Henry Rimfire (to keep it affordable to shoot)? Tell us, we want to know. Write your requests to ed@americanhandgunner.com and put "Wish List" in the subject line. Let's see what you can think up. Hell, you might even think of something that makes sense and then we'll see if we can twist some maker's arm to see if it works.

The "Ask and You Shall Receive" Department

Finally, someone has listened to us big bore revolver fans out here, lost in semiauto land. I called Taurus last year — after handling one of the new Trackers in .45 ACP — and spoke with marketing guru Eddy Fernandez to complain about something. I told Eddy there was a terrible need in the market for a 4" barrel (no ports, please), fixed sight revolver in .45 Colt and if it could be made in titanium, it would be even better. I whined enough that he took the idea to Taurus-exec Bob Morrison, who had a kind ear.



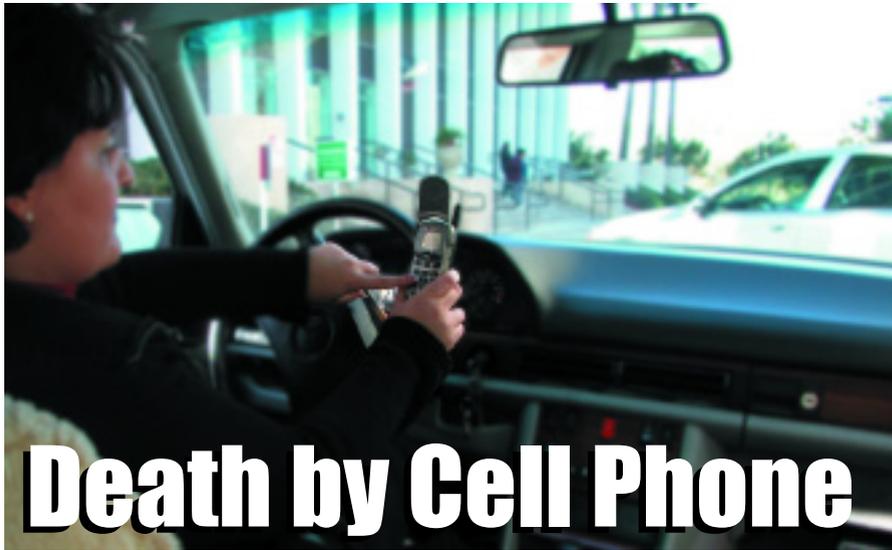
So, I'm happy to announce the Taurus Titanium Tracker "Adventurer" in .45 Colt. This should prove to be a serious gun for big bore aficionados and at around 22 ounces, will be a delight to carry. Loaded with factory loads in the 250 gr. bullet range at around 850 fps, it should be able to solve any CCW problem one might encounter. Loaded with something more serious (it can take it, it's titanium, remember) it would be just the ticket for back-woods fishing expeditions in Alaska as bear medicine. Recoil won't be for the faint-of-heart though, but who cares in that situation? Fixed sights means no hard knock will put it out of business and no ports means it won't light you on fire either. Look for a test in *Handgunner* by our own Clint Smith soon.





THE INSIDER

Roy Huntington



I don't normally like to get off on a tirade, but now and again it seems as if someone has to point a finger at something and say, "Hey, that's stupid." We're talking "Emperor's New Clothes" stupid.

It seems statistics show over 2,600 people were killed in cell phone-related auto accidents last year. These cell phones — apparently of their own volition — caused thousands of people to crash their collective cars into one another, wreaking havoc and leaving bloodstains all over the otherwise pristine interstates. Some regions have already banned the use of cell phones while driving. Sort of a "How many children must die?" reaction, I suppose. Sound familiar? Yet, according to one article, people are willing to put up with this "sad statistic" for the "safety and convenience" of having cell phones. Note the emphasis on the word safety. I put it there for a reason.

I call these kinds of statistics an indication of "An acceptable level of carnage" — deaths willingly tolerated by people so they may partake of whatever convenience, drug, toy, vehicle or pursuit they may want, regardless of how arguably useless it may be in the real world. Many of these pursuits exist well into the "just for the fun of it" category, which — as long as nobody really seems to care that people

get killed doing them — is okay with me. And apparently with you too.

In this particular case, it seems we're also willing to kill some 2,600 people yearly so we can have the convenience of phoning our wives from the comfort of our SUV to ask if we need to stop and buy milk on the way home. Is this a bad thing? I like the convenience of phoning home to see if I need to buy milk. I also like the convenience of being able to call the cops if I see someone getting bashed on a street corner, or if I stumble onto an accident on the freeway (obviously caused by someone else calling home to get an answer on the milk question). Not surprisingly, cell phones can be used for "good" things too — like safety. There's that word again. We say that about guns too, but most don't listen.

Now let's take this where it's been heading and put some often-neglected perspective on these numbers. In the year 2000, about 600 people were killed in firearms-related accidents. Of that group, according to the National Safety Council, there were 60 accidental deaths of children between the ages of 4 and 14 years. These numbers have been steadily declining for the past 100 years, in spite of the fact there are more firearms in the hands of Americans than ever before. And, exactly like cell phones, firearms can be convenient,

fun and, to some, arguably "useless."

However, like cell phones, they can be very important to have when the chips are down. According to Gary Kleck's definitive study on guns in America, those "useless" guns are actually used over two million times a year to protect life and property. Even if it's only one million, or 100,000 the number is still significant. How many lives were saved? How many lives were saved because a cell phone dispatched an ambulance — or the cops? Thousands? Tens of thousands?

On one hand, we have the numbers of cell phones multiplying at extravagant rates — with some 140 million in our hands and increasing daily — while gun ownership is already at its highest level ever. Yet, accidental gun deaths are at their lowest, while death rates related to cell phone use while driving are increasing. Dramatically. While the "acceptable level of carnage" for gun ownership is dropping, the same figure for cell phones is on the rise. Are cell phones "worse" than guns? Or, are the people who use guns simply more careful than those who use cell phones? I don't know.

My question is simple. I have yet to see millions of moms marching on the White House demanding to know the answer to the brutal question: "How many children must die before we outlaw cell phones, those harbingers of death?" I implore we keep our perspective here. For instance, tens of thousands are accidentally killed by physician's mistakes every year and now, it appears, that four times as many people are killed by the mis-use of cell-phones yearly than by the mis-use of firearms. Perhaps it's time to re-focus efforts in directions that are worthy of our time, energy and money. Gun owners are going in the right direction. Let's lighten-up here, get realistic and attack bigger problems with the same zeal the gun-grabbers display when the gun issue is on the table.

Besides, firearm ownership is a right guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. Driving a car is only a privilege, granted by states, and owning a cell phone is, perhaps, a nuisance at best.

But that's just my opinion ... and I could be wrong.

Continued on page 129

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