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- Powered by two high-output lithium batteries (10-year shelf life)





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SPEAKOUT

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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

In regards to Clint Smith's Reality Check (September/October 2003), I have to agree with his opinion. Especially about being a fool if you send someone down-range to be "acclimated to incoming fire." Being new to the shooting world, I can't argue what is proper training and what is not. However, Clint's mentioning of being shot at while

holding a target struck a nerve. Common sense tells me to stay as far away from that situation as possible. Being acclimated to incoming fire isn't something any student should have to go through. Standing there in an open range, while live ammunition is being fired near you, I'd say chances of accidental death are a little too high for my taste. In a real shooting situation, I assume, a person wouldn't be standing there waiting to be shot, they'd be moving to avoid the danger, probably wouldn't even hear the shots, and possibly doing something to alleviate the threat.

Firearm safety is a very important part of owning a firearm, as well as the proper training on how to handle firearms in various situations. But in no way is it necessary to put your life in danger by standing down-range. As Clint

says, "All of you have been burned, all of you have *not* been shot." And hopefully, no one will have to get shot while performing some fool's training exercise.

Keilana "KJ" Jones
Hilo, HI

Stupid is as Stupid does

In the "Reality Check" by Clint Smith (September/October 2003), I am embarrassed to say I am one of the fools Mr. Smith refers to in describing a student who goes down range and stands next to a target while others shoot around them. This was a training technique taught at a facility by none other than guest instructor and "World Famous Tactical Shooting Instructor" Ken Hackathorn —



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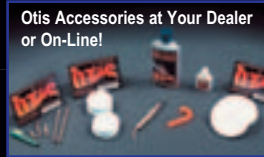
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as depicted in a Wilson Combat advertisement on Page 7 of the very same *American Handgunner* issue.

My initial reaction was very similar to that of Mr. Smith's. However, I'm ashamed to say that after Mr. Hackathorn and range staff demonstrated, I ignored my fears and proceeded down "Fool Street" with every other student. While I was very impressed by Mr. Hackathorn's instruction, I left with a bitter taste in my mouth and have tried to forget the day I placed myself in that position — but promising never to doing that again.

Unfortunately, Mr. Smith's article reminded me of the day that not only was every student an "idiot" — but that even someone with the credentials of Mr. Hackathorn can be just as "stupid."

Randy Skaggs
Woodland, CA

Hackathorn replies:

Mr. Skaggs makes an interesting point concerning Clint Smith's "Reality Check" of Sept/Oct. Clint is a superb instructor and fine gentleman. His insight and views always enlighten. There are different levels of training, basic marksmanship and gun handling, tactics and advanced shooting skills and finally, stress and realistic scenarios to test skills and mental control. When faced with a life and death encounter the real weapon is your brain, the sidearm is simply a tool to fight with. Under life-threatening stress you will do only what you have confidence in your ability to do. At the most advanced levels of training (and this is not for the average shooter) we often put students under stress to show just how the brain works — or doesn't — when stressed. Simunitions training is often used to check how well the student performs. Other special techniques work well, when students have proven to be extremely competent.

While "some" down-range techniques are reserved for special training environments, they are used to insure that those who go in harms way understand in the real world there is NO firing line, and you will have good guys — as well as bad guys — down-range. The term "train the way you fight" can fly in the face of traditional safety concepts. One must determine if he wishes to learn to fight with a handgun, or learn to shoot a handgun. Sometimes you can be so safe that you are unsafe, or you can be unsafe to learn to survive. No one should be forced to do anything they do not feel is unsafe for "them." Fighting with a handgun is very serious business — big boy rules apply.

As for being "stupid," that's a decision we choose to make for ourselves. I hope your experience on the training

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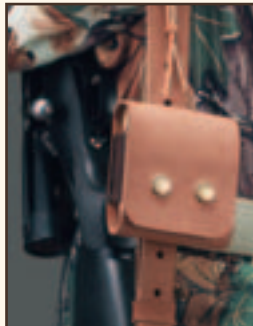
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Photo By Sherry Chen

SPEAKOUT

range with me did not cause you excessive trauma. If so, please accept my apology. Ken Hackathorn

Editors Note:

Neither American Handgunner, our attorneys, the mailman, the guy who takes care of the plants in the office, Julio the night custodian, my new dog, Tony who runs the deli upstairs, Zelda who handles complaints, or I, think standing down-range while someone — anyone — shoots in your general direction, is a particularly good idea. Guns go full-auto — even the space shuttle can blow up. We recommend you don't do it. Ever. No matter how famous the instructor might be. Editor

Offensive? Us?

I just picked up a copy of the May/June 2003 issue of *American Handgunner* this afternoon. I was astonished by your idiotic, cop-out response to reader Steven Webber ("Vulgar? Who, Me?") Although Mr. Webber is correct, as you so neatly latched onto, that crude, vulgar and, yes, offensive language abounds in our society today, what he did not mention is this language is usually used by people who don't know any better way to express themselves. Anywhere and any time a vulgarity or offensive expression is used in lieu of expressing an idea, there is usually a better way to make the point using non-offensive words.

Your writers may be, as you claim, "strong-willed and fiercely independent types." Nonetheless, they are also your employees and/or consultants, and they are paid to write for your magazine. If you instruct them not to use offensive language, they should be capable of doing that, or they should not be professional writers. A professional writer should have sufficient command of the English language to be able to express his/her ideas in language that is acceptable to any reader, in any household or setting. Any writer who is not capable of writing "clean" should be seeking a different line of work. Your apparent defense of the use of vulgar language in a commercial periodical is inexcusable.

Harwood W. Loomis
Via e-mail

Aw' hell, Harwood, you got me on that one. Damn. Editor

E-7 = MC2

Just finished my Sept/Oct issue and it was very good all the way around — a great issue. The *Insider* column was simply awesome, very powerful, and I thank you for that insight.

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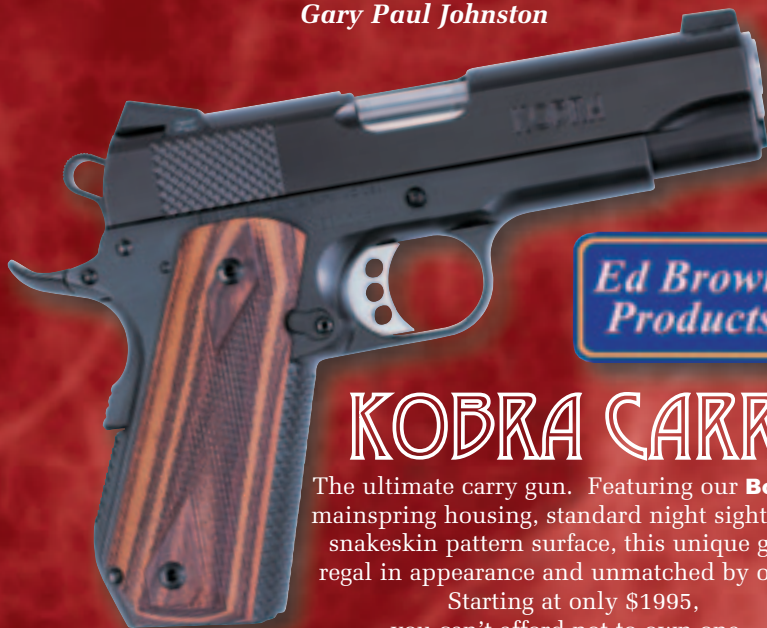


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SPEAKOUT

However, when I looked at the "add it up" numbers I was shocked to see I would only get \$1,000 bucks a month if I were to retire in another eight years of service as an E-7. So, I got out the pay-chart and the calculator. I was shocked to see you made a mistake. The lowest amount an E-7 retiring this year could make is \$1,418.55 a month; that is if the E-7 put the rank on his last year in the service and was an E-6 the two years prior to that. If the E-7 was an E-7 for his last three years of service, he would earn \$1,557.25 a month. This roughly \$500 oversight might be small potatoes to some, but it most definitely makes a difference to the retiring E-7!

The point you were trying to make is granted, though. Congress has a sweeter retirement package than the military. Please post a correction on the E-7 pay. I wouldn't want you to cause some calculator-challenged comrade in arms a sleepless night wondering what happened to his retirement pay.

Clint Brawley, (T)Sgt USAF
Via e-mail

Clint: It's still a travesty, if you ask us. No foolin'. Thanks for all you and your comrades-in-arms do for the rest of us. Editor

More Ginger's Legacy

It seems we struck a chord with Ginger's Legacy (*Insider*, Sept/Oct '03) and received a flood of mail from you all. Most wanted to simply tell us their story about their dog, and many thanked us for reminding us all how valuable those four-footed friends can be. We'd like to take some valuable American Handgunner space to share some with you. Suffice to say, there were some moist eyes in the Handgunner office as we read over them.

I salute to you sir for your self-evident truth editorial about individual responsibility. A true independent, self-sufficient rugged individual will defy political correctness everyday by doing the right thing, discomfort be damned. I've had to put down beloved animals at Ranch Nuge over the years, and it sure fortifies the soul knowing you didn't give in to the disconnected convenience of hiring others to do our dirty work. You're not alone Roy. That's the America I see everyday in my travels, as personified by the intellectual instinct to keep and bear arms so as to never be helpless.

Carry on, American Handgunner Blood Brothers.

Ted Nugent
Via e-mail

Ginger's Legacy was a very touching story. Last year we lost our family dog to a traffic accident, so I know Roy's pain.

Knowing this pain, and how grief works, I wanted to reassure Roy he did the right thing in putting Ginger down.

If you ever watch the TV show *Animal Cops*, you'll notice it's often a certain "type" of people who mistreat their animals. It's also of note to ponder the fact they are also the same kind of person we find ourselves confronting in self-defense situations. Possibly, the good guys in life can be found by watching how they treat their animal companions.

No matter how combat ready I try to make my mindset, I still get teary-eyed over stories like Ginger's Legacy.

Mike
Via e-mail

I cannot think of a more poignant example of personal responsibility than *The Insider* column, "On Responsibility." Mr. Huntington's very eloquent tribute to a loyal companion and the responsibility he owed — and ultimately took for her sake — speaks strongly toward his character. Just as Mr. Huntington no doubt felt privileged to "belong" to Ginger, she also was fortunate to share her life with a family who loved her enough to let her leave in peace, with the respect and dignity she deserved. This column and its message will stick with me for a long, long time; and I thank you.

Bill Ward
Via e-mail

I just got my issue of *Handgunner*, and as always, went to *The Insider* first. The tears have almost dried on my face, now. Please give my condolences to your family, and please accept my condolences, too. It's hard to lose a family member as special as Ginger.

Rick Williams
Via e-mail

I'm going to send your essay to someone — my Niece — whose pet recently died. But Ginger's story has special meaning for my wife and myself, as well.

"Clementine" is a mixed-breed that looks a little like a small Golden Retriever, and has been a part of our family for nearly 17 years. The things that happened to Ginger have all been happening to Clemmie as well, and my wife and I have been trying to come to grips with what must eventually be done.

For now, the vet doesn't think Clementine is in pain. She's deaf and doesn't see very well. She sleeps most of the time, and she's lost a lot of weight. And, while she's still usually able to jump up on our bed or into the car, we sometimes have to lift her.

On Saturday mornings it has always been my practice to take her for a ride up

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SPEAKOUT

to a nearby field where she used to run in happy circles and chase the rabbits, squirrels and Canada Geese that congregate there. Somehow, she knows when it's Saturday, and she patiently waits until I head for the car and she jumps, or is lifted in. She can't chase the animals any more, but when we get to the field and she gets out, she breaks into an awkward trot, and I think she's happy.

Having shared your experiences with Ginger, I congratulate you for seeing your responsibility and accepting it. Neither my wife nor I are sure we could be that brave.

Kevin Cooney
Via e-mail

I have never cried over a gun magazine until I read your story about Ginger. I cried mainly because I have two 13-year old American Eskimos, and I know someday soon I will face the same decision you faced with Ginger — the worst thing about owning dogs.

I have a website called "InMemoriam" where people can establish eMemorials to their departed loved ones. There is also a pet section that I've not been working on lately, but have been planning on updating www.inmemoriam.org/resources/pets.shtml.

I plan on putting Ginger's story there, with your permission.

Br. Mike Robinson SGR
Keeper of InMemoriam
Via e-mail

"Ginger's Legacy — A True Story" really got to me. Shortly before we moved out to Arizona, our Irish Setter/Newfoundland mix, "Bruce," had reached the point where he was having "accidents" and had trouble getting around. We had it somewhat easier than you did, since Bruce always loved going to the vet's office, with all of its fascinating smells, so we said our goodbyes there, and took him home for burial. It was still damn tough for all of us. Many thanks for a wonderful — and very necessary — story.

Peter Caroline
Via e-mail

I've just finished my first reading (one is *never* enough) of my Sept/Oct issue of *American Handgunner*, and now I'm wondering why am I still subscribing to a half-dozen other so-called gun magazines — when this one is as complete as one could ever hope for. With your sister magazine, *Guns*, coming every month *American Handgunner* every other month, I now realize I don't need any of the others. There are no bad articles, topics, or writers in your magazine, but I relate to two of them a bit more than the others. John Taffin, for



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SPEAKOUT

his nostalgia, and Charley Petty. Charley never fails to give me a mental boost when he debunks many of the myths of handgunning and reloading.

Roy Huntington's *Insider* column touched my heart, yet again, with his article about Ginger, his Golden Retriever. My Irish Setter was a bit over 15 when we could no longer see her suffer with arthritis, cataracts, and the inability to get up a step or two, so made the painful decision to put her down. She helped raise my two sons, and was a beloved member of our family for a long time. She is still missed.

Thanks again for providing me, and so many others, I'm sure, with well-written magazines that stand head and shoulders above all the others — and are always joys to receive and read.

Charles J. Payne
Tucson, Arizona

My three sons are grown, but otherwise I could have written your story two years ago (though perhaps not as well). After 14 years, my Golden also needed mercy, and not from the vet that scared him so. How fortunate we are to be in a society that, even with its restrictions, permits us the tools to be as good a friend to our pets as they are to us. I will forever remember my own tears at the last thump of his tail as he slipped off in peace, but I will also be secure in knowing that a good thing was done.

Richard B. Lyman
Pound Ridge, New York

About a dozen years ago I convinced my wife we needed a dog due to her being home alone and my working nights as a police officer. We went to the pound and got Buffy — a Dalmatian-mix “pound-puppy” without any spots. About six months later some friends gave us Emmy-Lou, a 5-year-old German Shepherd. It took a long time for them to bond, however, Emmy-Lou became the dominant dog.

Emmy-Lou loved to hang-out/sleep on the landing of the stairs going up to our master bedroom. If she were completely blocking the landing, Buffy couldn't get past. Buffy would bark & growl and Emmy-Lou would move — but mostly not.

About five years later, Emmy-Lou developed a cancerous growth in her mouth. Eventually, the cancer did spread and on one weekend I heard her gasping for breath. The vet couldn't see us for about an hour, but that gave me one last hour to give her her favorite treat (a bagel) and to fetch her frisbee and tennis ball. I got her leash and assisted her into the car. I saw Buffy watching this from around the corner.

Continued on page 106



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HANDGUNHUNTING

J.D. Jones

**TIPS, TECHNIQUES
AND POLITICAL-
INCORRECTNESS**

TIPS AND TACTICS

With hunting seasons upon us, maybe a few tips are in order. Now I know all you experienced old guys don't need them, so either turn the page, or stick around to see if there's something you can argue with.

First, take that advice of "shoot him low, behind the front leg" and forget it for now. If you're in a tree stand and shooting downward, that hit can easily result in a quite-nasty brisket wound and an unrecoverable animal. This kind of hit usually bleeds badly for a short time and then quits.

Think of the angle of your shot. The best idea is to aim to have the bullet traverse the greatest portion of the chest cavity, regardless of the angle. Frontal shots are often deceiving. You've got to pay close attention to the direction the animal is facing. If a dead-center chest hit at the base of the throat is indicated, it's a very deadly shot. However, if the animal has a bit of angle on you and the hit is dead-center, it may well miss the vitals entirely. Watch the angle of the animal closely — seldom is an animal directly facing you or standing exactly broadside.

Generally, with most animals standing on the same elevation as you are, the best hit is about one-third to one-half way up the body, from the bottom edge — after picking the appropriate angle. With an animal exactly broadside, a slightly behind-the-shoulder hit will penetrate both lungs giving a quick kill. The same hit, slightly behind the shoulder if the animal is not broadside but facing toward you, will normally hit one lung and ultimately be fatal. Recovering him or not is problematical. In that instance, the hit should be ahead of the shoulder. The heart is located low in the body, pretty much between the front legs, and the great mass of large veins and arteries generally run from the top of the heart between the lungs. An excellent hold is to aim at the opposite shoulder — or from the front of the shoulder — to exit behind the other shoulder depending on how the animal is standing.

Body Target Testing



Bowhunters use full body targets, and targets showing the internal organs of a deer are easy to find. If you aren't positive of the anatomy of the animal, I suggest you buy a full body target and examine it from different angles. Then, you can determine for yourself, that if an animal is below you, a higher hit is necessary, and if higher, a lower hit is required.

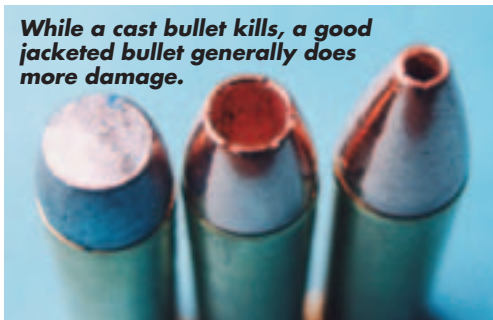
I very strongly recommend against head or neck shots in general. Properly executed they are instant killers, however, the head and neck are most always moving and the target very small. An improperly placed shot usually results in the animal dropping, and then jumping up and running off with little chance of recovery.

HOW TO GET TO CARNEGIE HALL

Cast-versus-jacketed bullet is always a great controversy. And, there's no doubt about it — a properly placed cast bullet kills. A commercial jacketed expanding bullet is usually more accurate and with identical shot placement, does more damage, resulting in quicker recovery of the animal. Sights? An optical sight allows more precise shot placement and most importantly, shows you branches you cannot see with the naked eye. Don't like scopes and can't see iron sights? Try a good dot sight. Also, quit hunting at least a half-hour before dark. Yeah, I know that's one of the most productive times to see deer, but it's also one of the best times to hit and loose one. Sure-Fire makes a lens for their flashlights that highlights blood and might be a good



While a cast bullet kills, a good jacketed bullet generally does more damage.



investment if you insist on using up all the daylight.

Most importantly though, is your performance. Practice, practice, practice — just like Carnegie Hall. Shooting — and not just from a bench and sandbags — should tell you your effective range. Remember to keep your emotions under control, since a wildly beating heart and excited mental attitude doesn't belong in a shooting situation.



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For The Eyes Of American Handgunner Readers Only: Shocking New Fight System Teaches You How To Easily Defeat and Disarm **ANYONE** In **ONE SECOND** Without Using A Single Punch, Throw, or Kick!

And The **BEST** Part is That You'll Learn It All From The Guy Who Took It To the Meanest Streets in America... Just to **PROVE** His System Would Work Against **ANYONE... ANYTIME!**

Dateline -- Visalia, CA -- If you have any friends who are SWAT cops or well-placed in the Spec Op military... *then you've heard the rumor*. You know the one: There's a brand-new “scare the hell out of everyone” fighting system **slaughtering** every single “old” martial art out there. And only a few people (mostly professionals) are supposed to know about it.

Yeah. I thought that rumor was bull, too. Until I got a call from Fairbanks, Alaska. And it's all true. *I'm still in shock*.

I also want to tell you about your **FREE** “Multiple Attackers” video waiting for you - but more about that in a minute. First, I want to tell you a story that's going to blow your mind.

Here's what going on: There really is a guy named Larry Wick out there. He's not a myth. And yes, he cruised around the country **proving** how easily and simply a small guy can *butcher* larger, more skilled opponents.

Anywhere, anytime, against anyone.

Wick... a true master in the martial arts... logged 30 years experience of mixing it up in the street. But — in a sudden flash of insight — he realized that *every single part of his black belt training had gaping holes that could get him killed*. Holes that any street punk could break through. Sometimes by luck, sometimes by superior skill. Sometimes just by ganging up on him.

And that just got him fired up. So Wick spent *years* developing a new way of fighting. And I mean new. *Nobody* has seen anything like this before. Not you, not the top street fighter in your town, not the steel-eyed killers in the deepest parts of the Spec Op community. *That's why there's so much buzz*. That's why the entire fighting world has been so shaken up (and why all the rumors are flying).

Get this:

- ✓ **Every move — every single one in this new system — takes out your opponent in ONE SECOND.**
- ✓ **There are NO throws, NO locks, NO punches and NO kicks... so it's incred-**

ibly easy to learn, fast.

- ✓ **And... it is designed to work against larger opponents. Groups of them, in fact. You will actually welcome multiple attackers.**

Hold on. I know you're skeptical. Lord knows I sure was.

But then I got that call from Alaska. Middle of nowhere. That's where Wick lives. Yet... “insiders” in the military, the FBI, and savvy cops trek up there, on their own. Just to learn Wick's astonishing new fighting secrets.

Because they work like crazy.

This is proven stuff, too. Wick **ONLY** trains against multiple attackers, and **ONLY** against guys who outweigh him by twenty pounds of muscle. He's not interested in bullying smaller opponents. He's a small guy himself (maybe 175 soaking wet). And he knows from experience that — in the street — you don't get attacked by *smaller* guys.

Nope. In the street... you get sized up... and the **ONLY** time you're attacked is when the bad guy knows in his heart he can crush you like a pretzel. Him...

And His Buddies!

This is where “normal” martial arts *fails* you. That fancy spinning kick, those cool blocking moves, even your elbow smashes... all *bull* in the street. There's no time. You get **ONE** strike in, and even if you connect, you have the other punk already attacking you from behind.

So Wick just avoided strikes altogether. And concentrated on simpler, faster moves that **instantly demolish the “soft parts” of your attacker.**

You don't have to kill him. *But you can if you need to.* Because you're in charge, from the very first second of the fight to the time (only a few seconds later) when it's all over.

This is why cops and federal agents and Spec Op guys *love* this new system.

You can learn it wicked-fast. (In fact, just *watching* Wick make the moves is really all you need to understand it. He created the



Larry Wick has turned the martial arts world on its ear with his new “subtle” fight system that has been proven again and again on the streets against larger, more aggressive attackers!

entire system so it instantly “downloads” like melted butter into your muscle memory. You will be *shocked*.)

It's instantly useable in the real world.

Where your attackers will be in *groups*, often armed, and much *larger and meaner* than you.

And... **it's just deadly effective.** You won't even *break a sweat*, and yet the damage you do...

Will Leave People Afraid Of You Forever!

How can I be so sure of myself about all this? First, because all those cops and military guys *don't waste time with stuff that doesn't work*. They *know* they need the best, newest, and most devastating moves available... because their enemies spend *all* day, every day learning how to hurt opponents.

And second... **Wick PROVED his new system in the real streets of America.**

Yep. Wick traveled **into the nasty heart of American street fighting and survived**. No fancy dojo's... no rules... no referees. Not even a *cage* to keep out bystanders. It was a bloody, senseless, and savage experiment. Which nevertheless proved *beyond a shadow*

(Continued on next page...)

of a doubt that...

This New System Can Beat Anybody, Anywhere, Anytime!

But hey... Wick's video instruction speaks for itself. These are, hands down...

The Nastiest, Most Effective And Easiest To Master Fighting Secrets You Will Ever See!

Completely savage street survival designed for the real world — where your opponent isn't helping you train — he's trying to KILL you. This is street survival as you've never seen it. And guess what?

As a reader of this magazine, you're one of only a *handful* of guys who will get to see these secrets. For everyone else out there, this amazing stuff will remain just a rumor.

Wick is so hidden away, that except for the cops and soldiers who track him down... you're among the chosen few who now know he even exists!

Here's what I have for you: We flew Wick down to California, and spent three days videotaping his best stuff. Out of all those hours of tape, I have chosen the **most incendiary Hand-To-Hand and Weapons material, and put it on four video cassettes.**

Best of all...

I Want You To See It All... For FREE, If You Choose!

Because you *need* to see this new system — and try it out for yourself — to believe it really is everything I've promised you it is.

It's that new.

It's that *different*.

This is a 4-tape set (nearly 4 full hours) covering tactical gun and hand-to-hand survival techniques.

These secrets will instantly put you in a different "fight zone" than everyone else out there. You know this is a Golden Age of fighting — with so many parts of the world colliding, that all the old "can't be defeated" styles of martial arts ARE being defeated.

It's a new game. If you're still stuck try-

ing to defend yourself with fancy kicks and strikes that take more than a second to complete... you're MEAT on the street.

This will change everything for you. These secrets are...

- ✓ **Incredibly easy to master** (you can pick most of it up just by *watching* these videos!)
- ✓ **Designed to be used by smaller men against larger multiple attackers...**
- ✓ **And is so deadly, and so *new*... that your opponent won't know what just blew through him.**

Let him *think* he has the advantage over you... because he's bigger, or meaner, or has a weapon. Or has several friends behind him, laughing and itching to have some fun at your expense.

Let 'em laugh.

They are just *seconds away* from suffering such **intense pain and lasting humiliation...**

That They Will Remember You With Fear And Trembling For The Rest Of Their Sorry Lives!

So here's the deal: Just call my office at **1-800-899-8153** and tell whoever answers you want "**Larry Wick's Tactical Street Survival**". You can use your credit card. Or, if you prefer to pay by check or money order, just fill out and mail the "Tactical Survival" Priority Order Form below.

The price is only \$97, **but you don't risk a penny.** Not one single penny.

I want you to check this material out for yourself for 6 full months. That's plenty of time to prove to yourself whether this is bull... or the real thing.

If you aren't **completely and utterly blown away** by what you learn... just send the videos back (in any condition) and I'll refund your purchase price immediately.

No questions asked.

No hassles, either.

That means... if you choose... you can see everything...

For FREE!

Plus... if you call or write within the next

7 days... I will *also* send you a **free** bonus video on dealing with Multiple Attackers. Very intense stuff.

It's the advanced, "**next level up**" stuff the Spec Op guys are so interested in.

And this bonus video (over 30 minutes of pure insane action) is yours to KEEP, no matter what. It's my gift to you, just for checking Wick's stuff out.

You must hurry. As part of our special agreement with Wick, there is a strict limit of videos that can be released and they're only available to American Handgunner readers and a handful of my "hotlist" customers.

Demand is intense, (it's a long line, full of cops and agents and soldiers), so I will hold these video sets for a limited time, (I've set aside 188 for American Handgunner readers), then pass them along.

So please don't wait around, and let this opportunity slip through your fingers. **There is absolutely NOWHERE else you can find these secrets.**

To the rest of the world, this stuff is still a RUMOR.

The cat's only partly out of the bag. And *only* for guys reading this magazine.

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I've told my staff to expect your call.

Sincerely,

James Curley

P.S. Wait... I want to make this deal impossible to pass up. If you call right now, I will *also* send you a **free** bonus video on dealing with "Multiple Attackers". Very intense stuff.

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Right now there's only 188 duplicated and I do not plan on making any more. When they're gone, it's over and your out of luck. So please hurry.

P.P.S. You'll receive a BIG package, including Larry Wick's 2-tape "Tactical Street Survival"... 2 more tapes on "Tactical Gun Survival"... plus you get a FIFTH video -- your FREE 30-minute "Multiple Attackers" tape.

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OLD VS. NEW



Top, WWII Colt; bottom, fancy new Kimber.

Recently I spent a pleasant morning at the range, shooting the two .45s shown here. The top pistol is a military surplus 1911A1, made by Colt in 1943. Below it is a Kimber Classic, stock except for the nice Kim Ahrends grips. Here's how they compared.

Reliability: The magazine in the 1911A1 was in tough shape. I made one concession to the older gun by using the same Ed Brown magazine for both. The 1911A1 functioned reliably with jacketed ball ammunition. It choked once on a lead semi-wad-cutter and once again on a jacketed hollow point. The Kimber functioned perfectly with all ammunition tested. Standard features include a throated barrel, polished feed ramp, extended ejector, properly adjusted extractor, and lowered ejection port — all of which enhance reliability with various ammunition types.

Accuracy: Over sandbags at 25 yards, the 1911A1 would usually hold four of five shots into three inches, with a flyer an inch or two high or low. I had one group with all five rounds inside three inches, another with three shots clustered but with flyers both high and low. The Kimber shot nice round groups averaging right around two inches.

Practical shooting: At three to five yards on full targets, indexing the gun by looking over the slide, the 1911A1 held up quite well. The heavy 7-plus pound trigger was a minor hindrance; breaks between shots averaged around .20 seconds compared to .15-.16 with the Kimber. On more difficult shots such as 7-yard B-zones and 25-yard full targets the big square sights and crisp 4-pound trigger of the Kimber proved to be decisive advantages. Breaks between shots averaged around 50-percent longer with the 1911A1.

Shootability: After a couple of magazines the short tang and long hammer of the 1911A1 began chewing away at the web of my hand. The sharp, square edges of the mag well resulted in slower mag changes, the heavy trigger made practical accuracy more difficult, and the manual safety provided a skimpy rest for the shooting thumb. The Kimber's wide grip safety, nicely contoured thumb safety, crisp trigger and beveled mag well made it easier to handle and more comfortable to shoot.

But Why?

Incidentally the 1911A1 was no clapped-out beater, fished out of a ship's bilge after fifty years. Even under the pressure of wartime demand Colt put together a pretty nice gun, well-fitted and detailed. The hammer, thumb safety, magazine release button, even the trigger were all neatly checkered. If the old 1911A1 was the only gun I had available for personal defense I wouldn't feel too sorry for myself.

But the modern 1911, of which the Kimber is a fine example, is a better gun. It's more reliable with high performance ammunition. It's more accurate, easier and more comfortable to handle and shoot. And current models with positive firing pin lock (mine is an early model) are safer against accidental discharge if the gun should be struck a heavy blow.

What created the modern 1911? Competition. Competition — first among shooters — then among custom gunsmiths, and finally among manufacturers. It was practical shooting competition, developed in the '60s and taking off in the '70s that really spurred development. Consider this: In the first 60 years after 1911, the principal variations were the slightly modified 1911A1, the aluminum-framed Commander, the Gold Cup, the steel-framed Commander and the (soon discontinued) collet bushing.

The past twenty years have seen the development of the modern 1911. Variations such as high caps with steel, aluminum, and synthetic frames, compacts and subcompacts, both single and double stack, double-action versions and a semi full of other goodies make up the world of the 1911 today.



1911 RULES! NOT...

The competitive arena is a brutal racetrack, one that ultimately improves both equipment and techniques. There remained one problem — the dominance of the 1911 design. The 1911's features, most notably its crisp, short, light trigger release and fast trigger reset made it virtually unbeatable in top level competition. There wasn't much incentive to improve other models.

Now there is. The International Defensive Pistol Association (IDPA) and the International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) now have divisions for stock, or lightly modified service pistols and revolvers.

Competition is at work again. Shooters are finding which guns work best. And they are finding simple and inexpensive ways to make good guns better. In future issues we'll be examining these guns and modifications, all toward finding what equipment helps give top shooters that "winning edge."





The 10-Ring Bye-Bye: Stick A Fork In Me – I'm DONE!

That's what I told Roy-Boy, your semi-intrepid editor here, and I figured that's enough. I'm DONE, okay? "Whattaya mean *done*?" he kinda squeaked. I explained.

Done like **DONE**; I says, *Like I don't write stuff anymore*, you know? Now I do other stuff. He squeaked again, then made assorted choking noises. I thought for a minute the kid got cookie-crumbs down his windpipe. No such luck. Then he started spewin' word-salad about *Why? an' Who's gonna take your place?* and blah-blah-blah.

Why? Easy. I was sittin' at my computer writing, and I realized I wasn't *fishing*. Good high tide today, too. The beach should be nice. Can't go today; gotta write. Then it hit me: If "X" equals the number of days of fishing I got left, an' "Y" equals days writing instead of fishing, then "X" minus "Y" equals ... *Less than X!* Like I said, *easy*.

Who's gonna do it? Sounds like an editor-problem to me. I got problems of my own. I needed some fresh 20-pound test line. Ha! My semi-doofus nephew, John Connor, has some! Two houses down, I rummaged through his garage, got what I wanted, then figured I should tell him I took it. He was just winding up his quarterly defense of his piddly little gun collection. You can read about that, 'cause I hooked him



Sequoia Blankenship

THE 10-RING

up to write about it. Now he's the editor's problem.

Yeah, you might even like him. He's an ex-sneaky-commando type, ex-metro-cop-type, got a sprained sense of humor from my sister, he gets all dopey from the smell of fresh-burnt gunpowder, and he writes. I like him and I figger' you'll likely commiserate with him and his battle with his wife in his first actual column.

Forgot to tell him about that 20-pound test, though.

Tide's in. I'm DONE.

Commander Gilmore



Roy Huntington

Glock Wins Over Gucci – This Time, Anyway

John Connor

I muttered, "Okay, okay," giving it my best dejected-hangdog look. I would have shuffled my feet, too, but doing the ten-year-old-kid foot-shuffle would be way over the top. I said, "I'll give up desserts."

I couldn't see her eyes — mine were still downcast — but I know she didn't even blink as she batted that one back over the net, hard! All right, I don't know squat about tennis, but I know about gettin' the ball whacked back at you at 152 mph, straight for your throat.

"Yeah, right," she snapped. "How often do we even *have* desserts?" I saw a faint glimmer of hope; a chance to derail the topic.

"Not often enough!" I lobbed back, but no dice. She switched to her backhand and whopped that one.

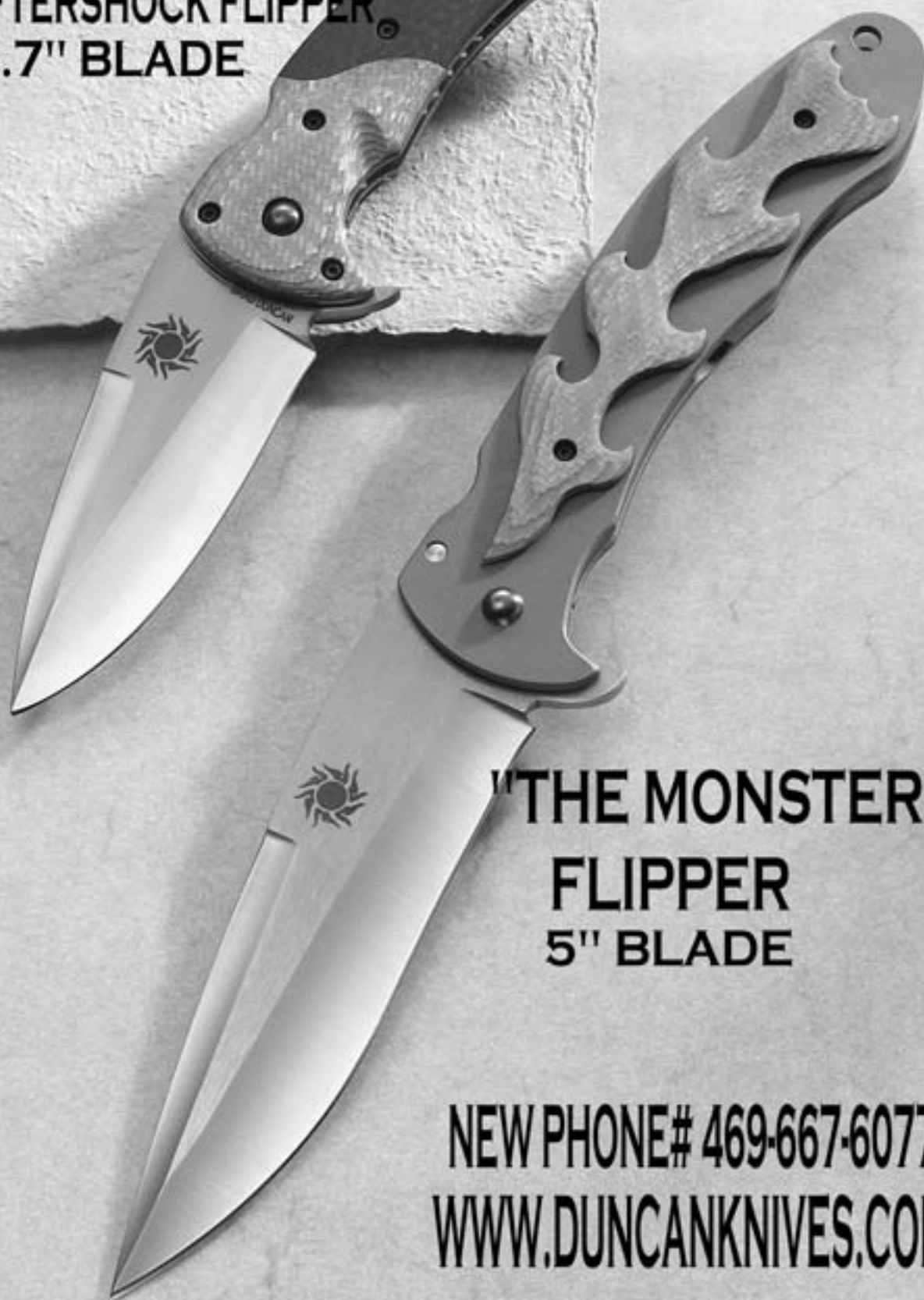
"Off the subject, dear." Damn. She said "dear." She only says "dear" when it's a substitute for "jackass."

The subject was — *my guns*. Specifically, that I sorta semi-collect guns. I mean, nothing big-time; no Janet Reno "arsenal," or an open account at Bob's House of Thunder-Sticks. I just have some guns stuck in a nice closet gunsafe. No fully-engraved jobs, no gold

Continued on page 88

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SAGE ADVICE
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Brass From Non Toxic Ammo

Brass is any loader's most important commodity and we're always looking for bargains. The best of all is to find some on the ground. We usually reload to save money and *cheap* would not be too harsh a description of some. I've seen grown men push and shove to be the first to get to a piece of .45 brass.

Not too long ago I got a call from a buddy who had found some Federal .45 ACP brass with a small primer pocket. That was news to me but a check with Federal revealed they had changed to a small primer for their non-toxic BallisticClean .45 ACP ammo. Lead-free primers and bullets are becoming a fact of life because of environmental concerns. Urban sprawl is driving a lot of shooters indoors and airborne lead can be a health hazard for those who are exposed to it on a daily basis. That usually means employees. The guy who goes to shoot for an hour or so now and then has little to fear.

New heavy-metal-free primers use a compound commonly known as Dinol to replace lead styphnate as the initiator. It behaves very differently and has required some changes in manufacture. The initial impulse pressure of Dinol-based primers is much higher than usual and primer setback became an issue. To address that, Winchester started using a much larger flash hole in .45 ACP brass with lead-free primers. Testing showed the larger flash hole had no detrimental effect and the brass can be reloaded without concern.



In addressing the same problem Federal has taken a different approach with three different elements. They switched to a 0.175" diameter primer which is commonly seen only on cases where convention dictates a small pistol primer. The normal large pistol primer has a diameter of 0.210" is used on all other .45 ACP ammo. Next they increased the diameter of the flash hole by approximately .020" and then applied a crimp around the primer. Crimping primers is common in military ammunition but rarely seen in rounds loaded for the commercial market. Crimping primers came into use with the early machinegun ammunition. In the case of .45 ACP military ammo a crimp was always applied to ball ammunition but not on "match" grade stuff even if the loads were the same. One can only suppose Federal is being extra cautious.

REAM 'YER POCKETS

I got a box of Federal's new BallisticClean .45 ammo that uses a 165 gr. compressed copper bullet and small primer. The ammo functioned perfectly and was nicely accurate. But the wheels fell off when I tried to reload the brass. It's absolutely mandatory the primer pocket be either reamed or swaged to remove the crimp. I did that and, using appropriate Federal small or large pistol primers, ran off a bunch of a load I know to be consistently accurate and duplicate 230 gr. ball ammo. That was 6.8 gr. of Vihtavuori N-350 with the Hornady 230 gr. FMJ bullet. Ten rounds using the large primer averaged 786 fps, with a spread of 63 fps from high to low velocity. Those loaded with the small primer averaged 733 fps, with a spread of 87 fps. That's a pretty big difference.

I'm sure it would be easy enough to find a powder that worked better with the small primer, but reaming pockets is a real chore and when you consider the modest cost of new brass these days, not an economical deal to me. And there's another thing to think about. Today many of us use progressive loaders and if we tried to cram a normal primer in the little pocket it's going to be a mess to clean up — and there's also a risk the primer might pop. It only takes a glance at the headstamp to be warned. If it reads, "Federal .45 ACP NT" check the primer to be safe. There's nothing wrong with loading them if you diligently keep them separate from normal brass and have the equipment for dealing with the crimp.

New Sierra Manual



The arrival of *any* new loading manual is very good news. Things are changing so quickly with the addition of new powders and bullets it's hard for a fellow to keep current and, sadly for the guys who write the manuals, new stuff always comes along about the time the book goes to press. I do not envy them that job.

The new Sierra manual combines rifle and pistol data into a single volume, but retains the loose-leaf format that allows the book to lie flat on the bench. This seems like a small thing, but I find it to be a great convenience. I'm sure there will be more to talk about after we've had a chance to use the book awhile.





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THE SIXGUNNER

John Taffin



THE .41 MAGNUM TURNS 40



"Nothin' ever turns out right!" The natural order of things should have been the .38 Special, the .41 Special, the .44 Special, all followed in the right order by the .357 Magnum, the .41 Magnum, and the .44 Magnum.



Would the .41 Magnum have been better off if it had been chambered in the 1950 Target?

It's a shame things don't always turn out the way they're s'posed to... nothin' ever turns out right!" So said Harry Carey as the Marshal, to John Wayne as Quirt Evans in the 1947 production *Angel and the Badman*. He was speaking of being cheated out of hanging the reformed gunfighter-turned farmer, but he could just as easily be speaking of the .41 Magnum. If ever a cartridge did not turn out the way it was s'posed to, the .41 Magnum is it. What went wrong?

Several things have worked against the .41 Magnum almost since its very inception. Instead of welcoming a new cartridge, several gunwriters did their best to scuttle it from the very beginning. They did the same thing with the .357 Maximum. Perhaps they were upset because of its illegitimacy. It just didn't follow the natural flow of things. Before the .357 Magnum of 1935, there was the .38 Special of 1899, and even before this, there was the .38 Long Colt and the .38 S&W. In 1930, the .38 Special was hot-loaded to the .38/44 Heavy-Duty and then lengthened to become the even more

powerful .357 Magnum.

The .44 Magnum also has a natural ancestry. The .44 S&W American arrived in 1869, it was modernized to the .44 Russian in the early 1870s, which was then lengthened to become the .44 Special in 1907. Several big bore sixgunners, most notably Elmer Keith, began heavy loading the .44 Special even before the .357 Magnum arrived. After three decades of promoting his heavy loads in the Special, Keith and his cohorts were rewarded in late 1955 with the first .44 Magnum. Everything had moved along naturally just the way it should have.

It Just Ain't Nat'ral


On the other hand, the .41 Magnum cannot point to a specific ancestry complete with father and grandfather. Colt produced both the .38-40 and the .41 Long Colt in their Single Action Army, which came close to .41 caliber with a barrel groove diameter of approximately .403", the same barrels being used for both calibers. Custom gunsmiths such as Pop Eimer and Gordon Boser use cut-down .401 Winchester brass and new cylinders in these Colt Single Actions, to produce .40 caliber Magnum sixgun cartridges. Call them uncles of the .41 Magnum.

Colt came oh-so-close to producing a true .41 in 1932. Both the Official Police and New Service revolvers were chambered to a .41 Colt Special. Three years before the arrival of the .357 Magnum Colt had a true .41 with a muzzle velocity of over 1,100 fps from the New Service. Did they produce it? Did they promote it? Did they send test sixguns and ammunition to the gunwriters of the time? Nope! They did none of these things. The project was shelved and never to be seen again. Perhaps Colt felt the Depression would keep it from becoming a success. Perhaps. However, that didn't stop Smith & Wesson from introducing a new sixgun and cartridge in the midst of the Depression three years later. It sold so well the gun makers at Springfield could not keep up with the demand. Call the .41

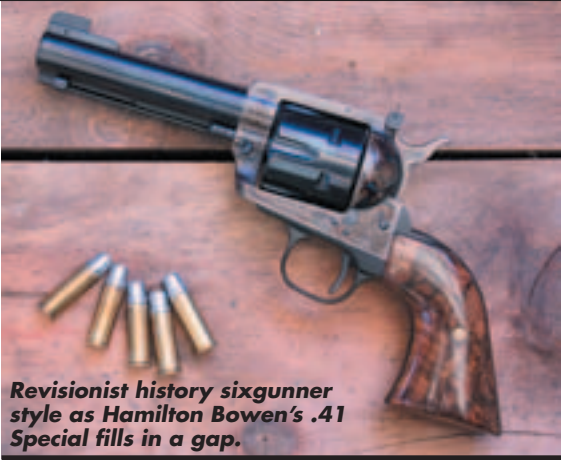
Colt Special the long-lost father of the .41 Magnum.

The Colt version of the .41 Special may have disappeared, however some of us — with the aid of gunsmiths such as Hamilton Bowen — have tried to rewrite history by building our own .41 Specials. Bowen converts the Colt Single Action, the Ruger Old Model .357 Blackhawk and the S&W L-framed Model 586 to .41 Special. Brass is made by simply trimming .41 Magnum brass to .44 Special length. Some would view this as a step backward. I see it as using an excellent cartridge, and at the same time, trying to provide a legitimate ancestry to the .41 Magnum.

The .41 Magnum is also considered to be somewhat of an interloper since it arrived at the wrong time. An ordered universe called for the .357 Magnum to be followed by the .41 Magnum, which in



There is not a deer in the world that would know the difference between being hit by a .44 Magnum and a .41 Magnum.




Revisionist history sixgunner style as Hamilton Bowen's .41 Special fills in a gap.

turn would unveil the future .44 Magnum. Instead of following this natural order, the original Magnum arrived in 1935, followed by the .44 Magnum 20 years later in late 1955 and the .41 Magnum in 1964.

The .41 Magnum not only arrived at the wrong time it also arrived in the wrong package, at least wrong for its intended purpose. Elmer Keith and Bill

Continued on page 100



S&W's Model 57 was offered in three standard barrel lengths of 8", 6", and 4" and in Bright Blue or nickel finish.



REALITYCHECK

Clint Smith

**FIRST-PERSON
THOUGHTS ON
SURVIVING IN
THE REAL WORLD**

A Hard Look in the Mirror

The cover of this publication boldly reads *American Handgunner*. It's a publication held in high esteem by many because of its quality — and others hold it in disdain because of the same reason. Yet, even we suffer at times from the “newest and greatest” syndrome — call them trends and techniques that amaze and astound.

Inside our pages there are handguns named after English princes and sights claiming to be innovative that can be found on old African rifles made long before anyone reading this was born. On the next page the killing of bowling pins is promulgated, although I can find few who have been attacked by the pot-bellied oak posts. The folks who make the best double action revolvers in the world promote their latest semi-automatic? Everybody demands their pistol is best and used by the most elite of all crime fighters — and who among us really cares, because we know that mostly they just take reports.

Something is promoted as the gun used by world champions. And that means what to a woman being assaulted in her home? There are the magazine ads promoting the “X” gun to the “X” generation of extreme shooters. I guess skateboarding must be tougher than when I was a kid.

And, no matter how much it costs, one should go to a school that guarantees to make you a better shooter. Period. I have always wished I could say that. There are Italian pistols and German pistols — all we need is a Japanese pistol and the Axis would be alive and well. But most of the Pacific Rim folks can't have handguns, so no Evil Axis after all.

One of my favorites is the “It's a lot lighter but has 70-per-

cent more firepower.” Firepower from a handgun? I've seen a few F-4 Phantoms put down what I thought was firepower in the form of umbrellas tied to the top of 500 pound bombs. Actually, I didn't really see that much 'cause my head was kinda down. But, when the bombs landed so close they sucked your helmet off your head, I thought *that* was firepower.

Then we have the TV screens mounted on top of handguns. I wonder if you can get MTV or the Extreme channel looking through that red dot-thingy. Oops, it's off, oh crap, the battery died.

And then there's always a section on magic handgun bullets. So, I have to ask, since you have been shooting a handgun, how many new pistol projectile designs have you seen introduced on the market? Lots, right? Wanta' know why there's been so many? I'll let you guess why. Handgun projectiles, which normally don't travel much over a 1,000fps, sometimes (usually?) don't work.

Or if we run a reality check on effectiveness, most handguns don't work all that well anyway.

Sure, people are killed by handguns — just ask the Brady boobs. Then again, lots of people are killed by lighting. Hmm, sounds foolish, but if I had a choice I'd rather whack 'em with a lighting bolt than a handgun.

Then someone drags out the gelatin blocks. You know, we might have all been better off when we just ate the wiggly stuff. I repeat, I have never been attacked by gelatin and shooting it proves what to me in the middle of a fight? Not to worry though, consider this thought:

Would you willingly go to a gunfight with a handgun?



HANDGUNS FOR FUN RIFLES FOR REAL



This is *American Handgunner Magazine*. In one hundred and-some pages there are a bunch of ads for everything from knives to plastic grips. Hell's-fire, there was even an ad to change your pistol into a rifle. But in the whole magazine there were only two ads for rifles, real rifles. Folks, without putting a hole in your balloon, maybe we need to wake up and smell reality. Handguns are concealable; they can sometimes win a fight if used effectively. Handguns work best when you remember to carry one of size and substance regardless of whether or not it is comfortable to wear. Handguns are a tool designed to respond to a fight someone

else starts and when you have no viable route of withdrawal — or escape.

We are not talking about choices. If there was a choice to be made we should choose to leave the area of contact. If there is nothing but a handgun available — or if it was your personal choice — then being mediocre with it is not good enough. And, if there was in fact going to be a fight with no option for withdrawal, a rifle is a better choice and more effective.

But then, handguns are truly at their best when they are used to fight your way to a rifle. A rifle you should not have put down in the first place. Play with handguns — fight with rifles. Period.



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The AYOOB FILES

SUDDEN ASSAULT: THE PLANA/IBARRA SHOOTING

Situation: A landlord/tenant dispute turns deadly when the tenant discovers he's brought a club to a gunfight.

Lesson: Have your defensive handgun readily available. Remember, there's a time to invoke your right to remain silent — and a time to tell authorities what happened.

Let's go back to October 1, 2001, a little after 8 PM. Emilio Plana, 51, is a Latin American who has come to Miami, Fla., to make something of himself, and the traditional ethos of hard work that he has brought with him has made it happen. When he's not working on his dream career as an actor in TV commercials, he's making his living in real estate, partly as an agent and partly through his rental properties. He's at one of the latter tonight, a duplex at 3429 SW 7 Street, cleaning up after a tenant whose lease ran out yesterday. With him are his fiancé, Keyla Castillo-Sanchez, and her 13-year-old son, who because of Florida's laws regarding juvenile witnesses in criminal cases, we can only refer to as L.N. The boy thinks the world of Emilio, appreciating the kind and attentive way he treats him and his mom. He considers Emilio Plana his stepfather.

The three are working together to clean up an abandoned apartment which has been left with floors covered with sticky goo, and food rotting in the refrigerator. A few minutes ago, the previous tenants have arrived to pick up a microwave oven they left behind, and to collect their security deposit. The tenant of record is Luis Ibarra, 35, an unemployed laborer, and with him are his common law wife Alina Reyes and their 13-year-old son, R.I.

Luis demands his security deposit. The landlord calmly explains that because the apartment was left filthy, costs of tonight's cleanup will have to come out of it, and the electric bill will need to be deducted, too. Ibarra will get some money back, he explains, but it won't be the full amount and it won't be until the accounting is squared away.

Luis and Alina become loudly angry. Luis accuses Emilio of "f---ing" him, and both he and she call Emilio "a robber" and other epithets. The disgruntled tenant snarls something about taking what's his, and stalks outside to his vehicle. Moments later he returns holding a short steel crowbar. Luis Ibarra strides into the bathroom and begins smashing the toilet. He's a strong man, stronger and heavier than the landlord, and his powerful blows with the steel tool quickly shatter the heavy porcelain toilet. Water rushes out, swiftly flooding the entire apartment.

Emilio shouts to Keyla in Spanish, "He's smashing up the bathroom! Call the police!" But his girlfriend, terrified by Luis' sudden outburst of violence, freezes with the cell phone in her hand.

And now, his face contorted with rage, Luis Ibarra strides purposefully out of the bathroom and toward the landlord and his fear-frozen girlfriend. The deadly crowbar is clutched tightly in his right hand. As he closes with them he begins to raise the bludgeon, as if to shatter their skulls as easily as he did the toilet...

Continued on page 76

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COLT VS. SPRINGFIELD VS. KIMBER

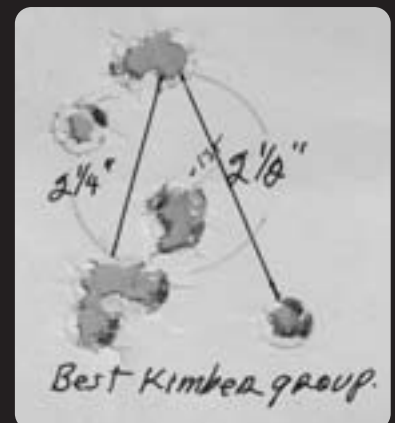
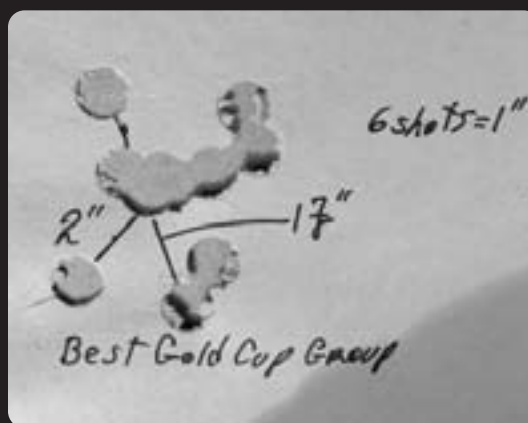
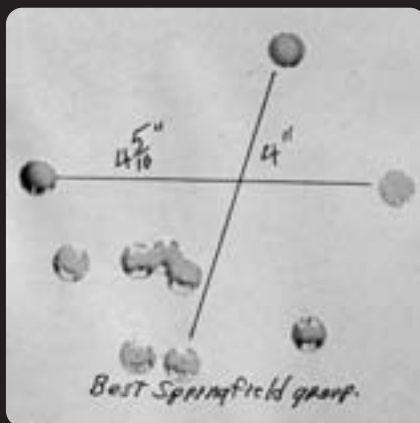
When a customer calls a pistolsmith wanting him to build a custom pistol or revolver that will shoot the pharmacist card out of a witch-doctor's pocket at one hundred yards, there are two basic questions to be answered. The first is, "What is the best platform on which to build the gun giving the best value for hard earned money?" The second is, "How much will it cost?" The two questions work together, and the gunsmith must put prejudice aside and give the customer the very best value for his money. For a jillion years, Colt has dominated the market, but only because they were the only real kid on the block, so I recommend Colt for the basic platform. Then came Springfield Armory, with a high quality competing pistol, that needed the same work as a Colt Government to turn it into a match gun — but its price was considerably less.

As the years went by, everybody who could manufacture a product got into the 1911 business, but the production guns that ruled were Springfield and Colt. But, Colt refused to raise their bar to meet the Springfield competition. Then, along came Kimber and the bar for production gun quality hit an all-time

high with slides tightened to frames, factory adjustable sights and tightly-fitted barrels. Springfield answered the challenge with their "loaded" model and the race was on, with Colt falling further and further behind. There are others out there, but to build a match gun using a brand "X" as a base, does not give the customer good value for his or her money.

In order to test the market, every few years we test entry-level pistols from a machine rest to see where American production guns are at, as far as shooting and quality go. The guns are checked for tightness, heat treatment of metal, fit and finish and several other points, including taking them to the range and shooting them off a machine rest.

This year we tested three .45's: A Springfield entry-level model, a Kimber entry-level Custom II and a Colt stainless steel Gold Cup. After years of producing Gold Cups that would not shoot, would not function and would not do the job for which they were sold, I thought Colt needed an advantage. The Springfield was borrowed from a good customer, the Kimber was purchased from a distributor and the Gold Cup was borrowed from Nagel's Gun Shop here in San Antonio.



The Shocking Result!

All three pistols were Ransomrest tested at 50 yards with two handloads and three factory match loads. The first handload was 4.7 grs. of WST under a 185 gr. Nosler JHP; the second load was 4.2 grs. of WST under a .451" H&G weighed bullet, third was a Western factory match load with a 230 grain bullet; fourth was Remington Factory 185 gr. SWC match and fifth was Federal Factory match 185 gr SWC. Each pistol was shot with the same ammunition in the order listed above. The results were

surprising to say the least.

The Springfield shot the following 50 yard groups: 5.25", 8.75", 6.33", 5.33" and 4.87". The Kimber shot as follows: 5.87", 2.50", 5.81", 5.50" and 3.00". The shock came with the Colt Gold Cup which shot: 3.50", 2.25", 4.50", 2" X 1.87" with six shots inside 1" and 3.00".

Even though the Gold Cup is not an entry-level pistol, historically, it never shot much better than one, so this \$1,100 pistol shot as good as many full-house custom match guns — even though it seemed too loose to perform well. I checked out a

stainless Gold Cup in the Colt booth at the NRA last March, and it was so loose I was embarrassed for them, so it seems to be a little early to recommend you purchase one — but times are changing.

I still recommend a plain-old Kimber Custom II on which to have your gunsmith build a custom tack-driver. Colt must create a track of quality products before respect from pistolsmiths is earned once again. Of course, if you want an off-the-shelf, precision-machined, "one-and-one-half-inch" model 1911, treat yourself to one of Ed Brown's fine 1911's, or do some very serious shopping around before you plunk down your hard-earned cash.





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When a suspect throws you a curve, Boyd's Loop lets you circle ahead of the danger — but it's not as simple as it seems.

LESSONS FROM THE OODA LOOP

The OODA Loop was conceptualized by Col. John Boyd, a famous fighter pilot and war-fighting theorist. In the last several years, the concept has become part and parcel of law enforcement training. This is a good thing. There's no better strategy for surviving action/reaction crises. We teach it in class, we try to live it in the street, and we explain it to juries in court when it's imperative for them to understand why an officer used force as he did.

The better we understand where something came from, the better we can understand, teach and explain how it works. I therefore strongly recommend the excellent new biography by the gifted writer Robert Coram, *BOYD: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War* (Little, Brown & Co., hardcover).

OODA stands for Observe, Orient, Decide, Act. It's generally pronounced in the last two syllables you hope your attacker utters when he realizes you've used the concept to turn the tables: "Ooo. Duh." Interestingly, Coram reports that Boyd insisted it should be spelled out when described ("Oh, Oh, Dee, Ay") but finally, grudgingly accepted that people would utter his acronym in only two syllables. Boyd himself also wrote it "O-O-D-A."



OODA – Not KISS

While Col. Boyd recognized that simplicity of technique had great merit, he also realized not every response could be kept simple in the face of complicated problems. Observes Coram, "The OODA Loop is often seen as a simple one-dimensional cycle, where one observes what the enemy is doing, becomes oriented to the enemy action, makes a decision, and then takes an action. This 'dumbing down' of a highly complex concept is especially prevalent in the military, where only the explicit part of the Loop is understood."

Speed is the key to making it work. Confidence is the key to speed, because without it there will be deadly hesitation.

Boyd was known to say, "The only way to get a fighter pilot's attention is to whip his ass." This is why he would go aloft with what we now call "hostile learners," start with them on his vulnerable six o'clock position, and promise to reverse positions in forty seconds. He generally kept the promise in less than half that time, but his nickname "Forty Second Boyd" came from his caution in giving himself a 20-second fudge factor. That's a lesson in itself.

If you've ever trained in-service police, you've seen the same thing. No experienced street cop will adopt a new technique until you can make him see and feel why it's better than what he has already trusted his life to.

In Example

Consider something you could face as soon as you go back on duty after reading this: a gun-grab. You **Observe** a movement from your gun-side flank. (But you only observe it if you're alert, in Condition Yellow.) You **Orient** to the situation as you recognize it's a snatch attempt. (But only because you're trained and have anticipated the situation.) You **Decide** what to do. (But only because training has taught you which techniques will work to retain your weapon against this attack, and which ones won't.) Finally, without hesitation (because you've gained confidence in training), you **Act**, and carry out the retention technique. (But it's only successful because every link in the chain was forged in your mental armory and in your own indomitable will beforehand.) OODA? You bet. But was it "Keep It Simple, Stupid"? Not really, because neither the situation nor your response process could really be called simple.

Remember that the other guy has a loop going too, and

yours is linked to his until the encounter is over. Your job is to get inside his loop and neutralize the danger swiftly. In a situation where you've had to fire, the subject will often reflexively turn away as he realizes he's losing the fight he had planned to win. In the time it takes you to observe this, orient to it, decide it's time to stop shooting, and act by halting your finger's rapid stroking of the trigger, you may have fired a few more shots. The turning man has been shot in the back, through no fault of your own, but this will have to be explained in court. We use the OODA Loop for exactly that purpose, and the more the public — the jury pool — knows about it beforehand, the better they'll understand the explanation. Col. Boyd's work has been widely publicized in the general media during the latest Iraqi operation, and this is all to the good.

Col. John Boyd's work endures. The OODA Loop is but the tip of a very profound iceberg that grew from this warrior's thinking. Anyone who carries a gun can benefit from studying this brilliant conflict strategist. I can think of no better place to start than Robert Coram's *BOYD: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War*.





"Barbecue" Rigs.



Mernickle Custom Holsters

Way up in the North Country of British Columbia, Canada, Bob Mernickle has been living his dream. He loves leather and guns — don't we all? Bob started making holsters as a necessary hobby. He competed in fast draw competition and couldn't find a rig that met his needs. So, he made his own. After setting a world record, the other competitors wanted to know where he bought the holster. Bob was able to turn that hobby into full-time employment in 1993. Since then, Mernickle Custom Holsters has become a force in the business. He

has married innovative high-tech design and traditional craftsmanship into his creations. Now he and his family have reached another milestone. Bob, his wife Sherrie and their two girls are picking-up, lock, stock, barrel, dog, pots, pans, holsters and Beanie Babies and are moving to the good old U. S. of A. This is not a spur of the moment impulsive act. It culminates five long years of thought and immigration legalities to move his whole business and family to Fernley, Nevada, just outside Reno.

"It just makes sense for us," Bob says. "Over 98-percent of my orders come from the U.S. It will make shipping a whole lot easier and I'll have more products available to me to include in my holsters, especially the exotics. Shipping across international borders makes using exotic skins and leathers almost impossible. And, on top of that, I can do more custom gun work. Shipping a custom gun into Canada for a holster is practically impossible. Besides, if Americans are spending American dollars, the taxes should rightfully go back to Americans." Already thinking like an American, we'd say. Welcome home, Bob.

"OOT AND ABOUT?"

Bob's line of leather gear includes almost all the varied disciplines of firearm holding devices.

Authentic Western, Hollywood Western and Concealed Carry are the top sellers. He also produces variations on the theme with Fast Draw, Cowboy Action and Field Carry rigs. You'll find that the leather used on every Mernickle holster is top-of-the-line, flawless, vegetable tanned, tooling hides from Hermann Oak Leather, the Rolls Royce of leather. But what Bob does with the leather is where the artist and craftsman merge. His pebble-finish Hollywood Western rigs are breathtaking and the carved rigs will bring a tear to your eye.

Bob also specializes in inlay. The PS6 extreme high-ride concealment holster can be inlaid with snake and, along with a matching belt, it would be the absolute envy at any Texas barbecue. It's a pure Mernickle

design which incorporates a leather tab with a quarter to half-inch welt on the back of the holster that rides between the body and the holster. When the belt is cinched down the welt pushes the bottom of the holster out and the top inward so the gun rides close to your body, solving the holster flip problem often seen in high rides.

Mernickle's Cowboy Action series belts and holsters are specially designed for the world of Cowboy Action shooting. The rigs are made to get the gun back into the holster as quickly as it is to draw it out. The holsters have a lip curl so the cylinder will not hang up when re-holstering. Bob developed a feature called the "lock-system" for these rigs. It allows the shooter to set the holsters where they want them to stay put. The "CA" series belts and holsters are fully lined with 6/7-ounce vegetable-tanned tooling leather.

Mernickle Custom Holsters is a true customhouse. When you call them and order a rig, you talk with Bob. Design and price are decided on, and then he proceeds to make your holster. Nothing is "off-the-shelf," although you wouldn't know by the prices. It usually takes about six weeks from the time you speak with Bob until the doorbell rings and the nice deliveryman hands you a box full of beautiful leather.

Mernickle Custom Holsters will be back up and running July 1st — so, buy American. Now if we can teach him to say the words out and about instead of "oot and about" we'll have accomplished something. But, I don't think we'll ever be able to get rid of his webbed feet.



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BETTER SHOOTING

Dave Anderson

LEATHAM: Career Longevity

In the music business they talk about “one hit wonders” — on top of the world one day, answers to trivia questions the next. Over years of practical shooting competition I’ve seen many such wonders — shooters who display truly world-class performances, sometimes for a stage, sometimes for a whole match and even occasionally for several matches.

Yet somehow they never seem to maintain their performance level and before long, drift out of the sport and take up something else. Around 1989, when Rob Leatham had won his fifth national and third world championship, I asked him why shooters who clearly have ability and talent so often seem to fade away.

“Oldest story in the book,” said Rob. “For one stage, or one match, they apply all the focus and concentration and discipline necessary to shoot their best. Then, after they’ve won a stage, or a few matches, they start thinking they’ve got it all figured out. They think from now on, it’s going to be easy.”

Early in his career, after winning the national and world titles at age 22, Rob knew complacency would be a deadly trap. “It was a temptation to think, hey, I’m the world champ, I can just coast along and keep on winning. I never let myself think that way. In any sport, as soon as you stop improving — you start falling behind. It never gets any easier.”

LANGDON: Effective Training

Ernest says, “Every time you go to the range, have a plan for that practice session. Write down what your objective is, what the plan is to reach that objective and then stick to the plan. I like to keep each session about 200 rounds. It takes 50 or 100 rounds before you really start to improve, but after 200 rounds, it’s easy to get sloppy and careless. Make it a goal at every session to improve your mental sharpness so you can put your best effort into every shot. I might have more than one practice session in a day, but I’ll take a break after every 200 rounds.”

“At the top level of competition you must be able to shoot at a subconscious level. You can’t be thinking about it. To get to that level takes a great deal of shooting, but you’ll get there much faster through concentrated effort and disciplined practice.”



Langdon



Leatham



Plaxco

PLAXCO: Mental States

Some years ago Mike Plaxco was staying at my farm home while putting on a training seminar. He commented how fortunate I was to have a place to shoot next to my house. Most shooters, Mike said, only practice when they feel like it. They’re used to shooting when they are relaxed, comfortable, having fun. Then comes a day when everything goes wrong. They break a shoelace, get a speeding ticket, make a procedural error in the first stage. They go to the next stage frustrated and fuming and have a train wreck.

Mike asked me if I knew how much someone’s state of mind might affect their shooting? I had to answer I didn’t know; I only practice when I’m relaxed, comfortable and having fun. Mike grinned, then said, “You should know. Next time you’re upset about something on the farm, maybe an expensive part breaks or a tractor tire goes flat, and the last thing you want to do is shoot, go get your gear and shoot a few drills.”

The subconscious mind doesn’t like surprises. The subconscious likes routine, familiarity. Disciplined training can achieve a state in which the subconscious mind takes care of gun indexing and trigger control and the conscious mind is just along for the ride. But if the subconscious has been conditioned to shoot only when the shooter is relaxed and comfortable — and then the state of mind changes drastically — suddenly the situation is no longer routine and familiar. The subconscious says in effect, “Whoops, I didn’t train for this. Back to you, conscious.”

Break the habit of training “only when you feel like it.” Set up a training routine and make yourself go, even if it was a bad day at work and your new car just got scratched. The subconscious needs to be shown it can still look after the shooting, independent of what’s going on with the conscious mind.



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Down and Dirty

Once you have developed a training regiment that reflects the needed skills you feel are important, it's time to define any other specialty areas that may be important to your self-defense while using a handgun. Many people spend extra range time developing weak-hand firing skills. While I agree this is useful, the facts are that under life and death stress, few people actually use their weak or non-dominant hand to fire their handgun. Yes it does happen, but not nearly as often as most people assume. So, train with both your weak and strong hand, but don't waste a great deal of ammo doing it, unless your ammo is free. Learn the mechanics of one-hand shooting, and do a few drills when range time permits.

One area that is often not addressed properly is the basic skills of "ground fighting" with your sidearm. Simply put, what do you do when you have been knocked to the ground, or take a topple when you trip over an obstacle? Can you access your sidearm and put it into action from the ground? You should try drawing your sidearm while on your back or stomach.

You can practice these skills at home on the floor with an empty weapon. Make sure regardless of how you land on the deck, you can move to access your handgun and



present it to the threat. I recommend you practice this at home before going to the range for live-fire. A key issue is if you are struck or shoved to the ground, that you land in such a manner that you can still fight. If your head hits the pavement, you may be knocked unconscious or be temporarily dazed. If knocked back — or you find yourself falling backwards — be sure and tuck your chin to your chest to minimize the chance your cranium will get its bell rung.

When falling forward, try to roll your torso to land on your arm and shoulder. Trying to stiff-arm your impact will often lead to a broken wrist or arm. Most folks do this reflexively with their strong hand, and as you may have noted, it's pretty difficult to run a handgun well with a fracture of the wrist, hand, or arm. Note that while the middle-of-the-back holsters look real cool, imagine what happens if you were to fall back onto your back — with your handgun placed on your spine. Spinal injuries are bad enough without putting your sidearm in such a critical area. If you don't like a normal, strong side hip carry, then try something like a shoulder rig, ankle or pocket holster.



Do you know where your bullets are going — after the target?

No Big-Toe-Holes, Please?

When you go off to the range to practice your ground fighting skills, I suggest you use a ground cloth or old piece of carpet to position yourself. Do your first practice without a concealment garment to get the moves down correctly. Then, once you have the techniques down, add your normal concealment coat, shirt, or vest.

I prefer to start teaching students lying on their backs with their feet down-range. Raise the torso to give a clear line of fire to the targets and insure you don't put a hole in your big toe. Next, start on your stomach with your feet still down range, then roll over to your side, draw your gun and engage your target. After these skills are mastered, start with your head down-range and on your stomach. You'll find you may have to push your body up with your support hand while you engage the threat with your strong hand only. Or, simply roll to your side and fire with both hands. Try placing your body parallel to the firing line and practice engaging target from both sides of your body. *NOTE: when laying on the ground and shooting up at your targets, it's easy to not realize your bullets may be passing OVER the backstop or berm. Always check to insure you have a proper angle and that any rounds being fired are safely trapped by the backstop.*

GUT IT OUT

Once you have mastered the basics here, try engaging targets as if they are off to your flanks, and set up problems with multiple targets. If you are lacking in mobility do to a physical limitation or age, getting up and moving quickly to cover may be difficult. Try rolling to get out of the kill zone if you can't move like you did when you were 16 years old. These ground-fighting skills may not look pretty on the range, and may even result in a good razing by your buddies, but most survival skills aren't very fancy or ninja-like. But, they can save your life and allow you to win.

Being down does not mean being out in a gunfight. After a range session training on ground-fighting skills, you may return home dirty and sore, but you'll be way ahead of the shooting range princes who adore their perfect shooting stances — and brag about the tiny groups their wonder-blaster produces time and time again. Train the way you fight. Winning isn't always about who has the best group or fastest time. Sometimes it's just who stayed in the fight.



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TAFFINTESTS

John Taffin

**THE SIXGUNNER
HIMSELF: GUNS,
GEAR AND MORE**

Buffalo Bore Ammunition



Final Score: Buffalo Bore 1, buffalo 0.

It began with the idea of one more near-perfect packin' pistol, this time in the then-new .480 Ruger.

A call to Bob Baker at Freedom Arms resulted in a Freedom Arms 4.5" Field Grade Model 83 .475

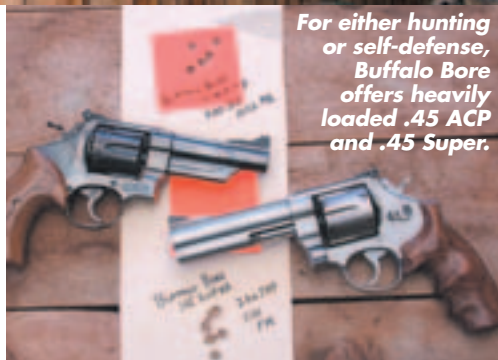
Linebaugh, with an extra cylinder chambered in .480 Ruger. One of my near-perfect packin' pistols is another

Freedom Arms Model 83, a 4.5" Premier Grade .454 Casull, with three extra cylinders in .45 Colt, .45 ACP and .45 WinMag. This has been one of my do-it-all sixguns for well over 15 years now. I expected the new combination of .475 and .480 to do just as well, and I was not disappointed.

The original factory loaded .480 Ruger from Hornady was a 325 grain JHP with a muzzle velocity of 1,206 fps from a 4.5"-barreled sixgun, namely the Freedom Arms test gun with the .480 Ruger cylinder in place. I wanted something different for what I was about to hunt. In late November 2001, I took the Freedom Arms 4.5" .480 Ruger to the YO Ranch to take part in the 12th Annual Handgun Hunters Against Hunger Hunt for the benefit of the Salvation Army. Over the years more than 100,000 pounds of meat have been donated through this one hunt alone. I personally had taken almost everything the YO had to offer, from Fallow Deer, Axis Deer, Blackbuck, Ibex, Whitetail deer, Mouflon, Corsican, Marino, Four-horn, Waterbuck and Aoudad, to name some of them. I got the heads; the homeless got the meat. I wanted something really big this time.

My quarry on this hunt would rival the Eland shot in South Africa several years ago as the largest animal I had ever taken with a handgun. I was going after a bison, the American Buffalo. On the first morning of the hunt, my guide, Don McMinn and I were out at daylight and it took us about an hour and a half to find a group of a dozen or so bulls on the 50,000 acre ranch. I picked out what

For either hunting or self-defense, Buffalo Bore offers heavily loaded .45 ACP and .45 Super.



Sample Loads:

Sixgun	Load	MV	Group/ 25 Yds
HEAVY .45 COLT			
Ruger Super Redhawk 9.5"	325 LBT	1,403	n/a
Ruger Super Redhawk 9.5"	260 JHP	1,592	n/a
Ruger Redhawk 7.5"	300 JFN	1,367	.5"
HEAVY .44 MAGNUM			
Ruger Super Redhawk 9.5"	270 JFN	1,545	n/a
Ruger Super Redhawk 9.5"	300 JFN	1,392	n/a
Taurus Raging Bull 6.5"	325 LBT	1,570	2 1/2"
Taurus Raging Bull 6.5"	300 JFN	1,618	1 1/2"
HEAVY .41 MAGNUM			
Freedom Arms Model 83 10"	265 LBT	1,481	7/8"
Freedom Arms Model 83 10"	170 JHP	1,885	7/8"
HEAVY .454 CASULL			
Taurus Raging Bull 6.5"	300 JFN	1,590	1 1/2"
Taurus Raging Bull 6.5"	360 LBT	1,400	2 1/2"
Ruger Super Redhawk 9.5"	300 JFN	1,332	1 1/8"
.475 LINEBAUGH			
BFR 6.5" .480/.475	420LBT	964	7/8"
BFR 6.5" .480/.475	420LBT	1,307	1 1/8"
.480 RUGER			
Taurus Raging Bull 6.5"	370 LBT	987	2"
Taurus Raging Bull 6.5"	410 LBT	1,154	7/8"
HEAVY .44 SPECIAL			
Colt 7.5" New Frontier	255 Keith	1,112	1 1/2"
S&W Model 24 6.5"	255 Keith	1,066	2"
TLA Flat-Top Target 7.5"	255 Keith	1,128	1 1/2"
.45 ACP +P			
S&W Model 25-2 4"	185 JHP	1,171	1 1/2"
S&W Model 25-2 4"	.45 ACP 200 JHP	1,042	1 3/8"
S&W Model 25-2 4"	.45 ACP 230 JHP	939	2 1/2"
.45 SUPER			
S&W Model of 1989 5"	185 JP	1,296	2 1/2"
S&W Model Of 1989 5"	200 JHP	1,219	2 1/2"
S&W Model of 1989 5"	230 JHP	1,121	1 1/2"

* Indicates tested with scope in place.



Taurus Raging Bull .454 performs well with Buffalo Bore's Heavy .45 Colt loads.

Continued on page 49

MAGNUM *performance*

IS NOW AUTOMATIC

Now you can get high-performance ballistics without sacrificing the tactical edge of a high-capacity autopistol.

GLOCK has taken its proven "Safe Action System" technology and applied it to the sizzling new .357 auto cartridge.



G31
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Full Size



G32
Available Ported
Compact



G33
Sub-Compact





UNDER THE



U.S. FIREARMS CRAFTS SAAs... A NEW-OLD WAY

Charles E. Petty • Photos: Ichiro Nagata

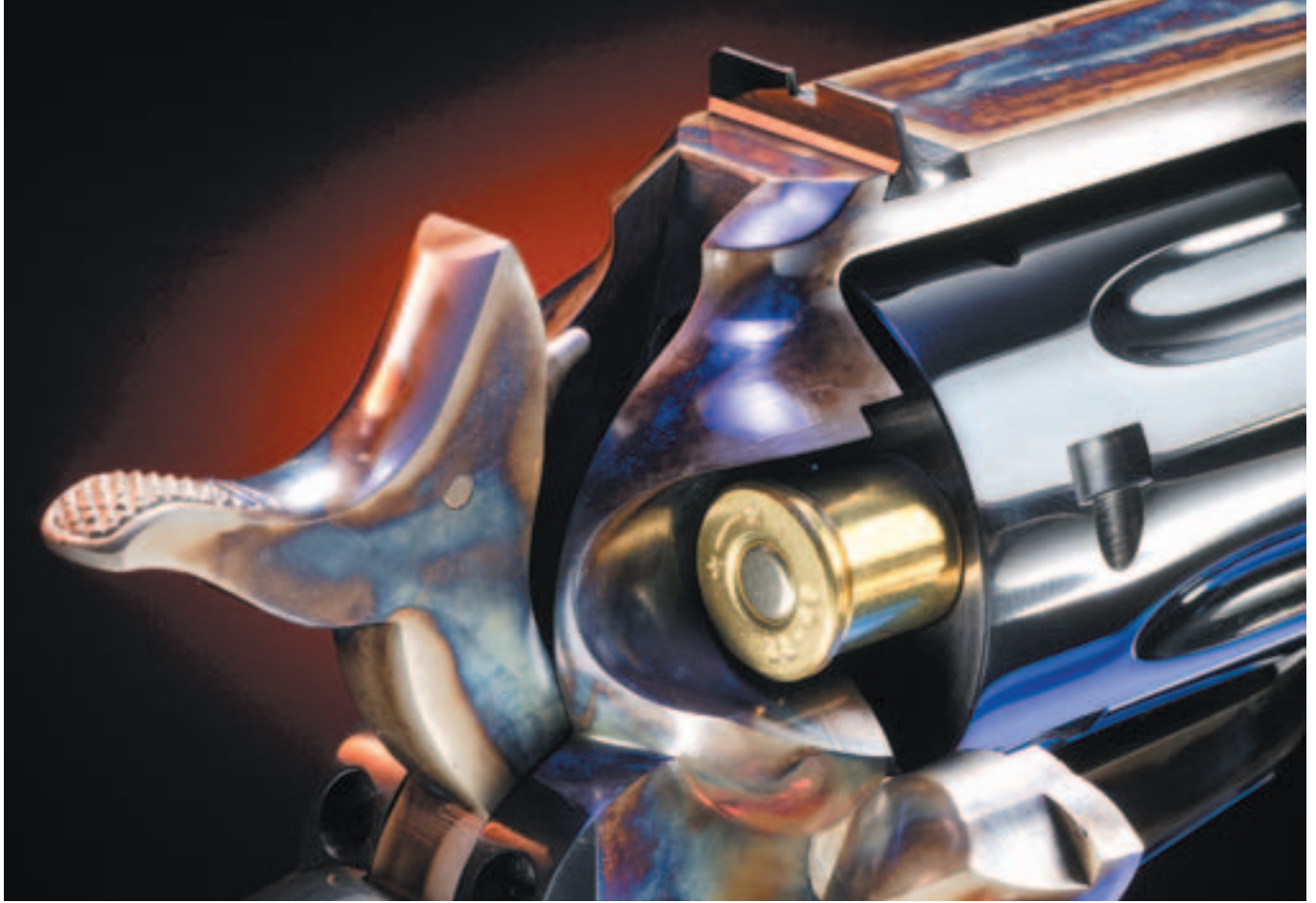
I'm beginning to question my mental health. After all, I am spending lots of time shooting — and appreciating — guns and cartridges that were all the rage over 100 years ago. The guns are descendants of the 1873 Single-Action Army and the cartridges all have “WCF” in their name.

The creepy thing is you don't even know you're regressing until it's too late. When I was a youngster and these things were common I was much too busy being a bullseye shooter and struggling with the earliest steps of my writing, to be bothered with ancient history. I was able to spend some time at the High Standard plant in Hamden, CT and Smith & Wesson in Springfield, MA. And, to get to those, I had to drive right by the Colt factory in Hartford and the famous “purple onion.” That's what locals called it, but Colt called it, “the dome.”

In the course of those travels I learned the vagaries of “gun valley.” Some engineers and key machinists moved in circles among the various gun companies. And so it was that a great



DOME



friend, the late Ralph Kennedy, left High Standard and went back to Colt. And with that came the opportunity to spend a couple of days in Hartford. In a way, if you've seen one gun plant, you've seen them all, but that wasn't the case at Colt. There was a real sense of history in the old oak floors and the single most impressive thing was watching the process of

color case hardening. I watched them prepare single-action frames by carefully packing them in a container with bone meal, charcoal and other stuff and then put them in an oven set in the floor. The thing was sealed and we went to lunch.

We had to be back in the finishing area in a couple of hours for the opening of the furnace. The parts come out red hot

and are quenched in a water bath. It was disappointing to see blackened, ugly metal come out of the powdery mix. But then they dipped them in a pan of oil and it was just like the sun coming up. The metal came alive with the rainbow of colors that range from a pale brown to the darkest blue. Isn't it strange the process that awed me so was almost as old as firearms themselves.

Time Warp Forward

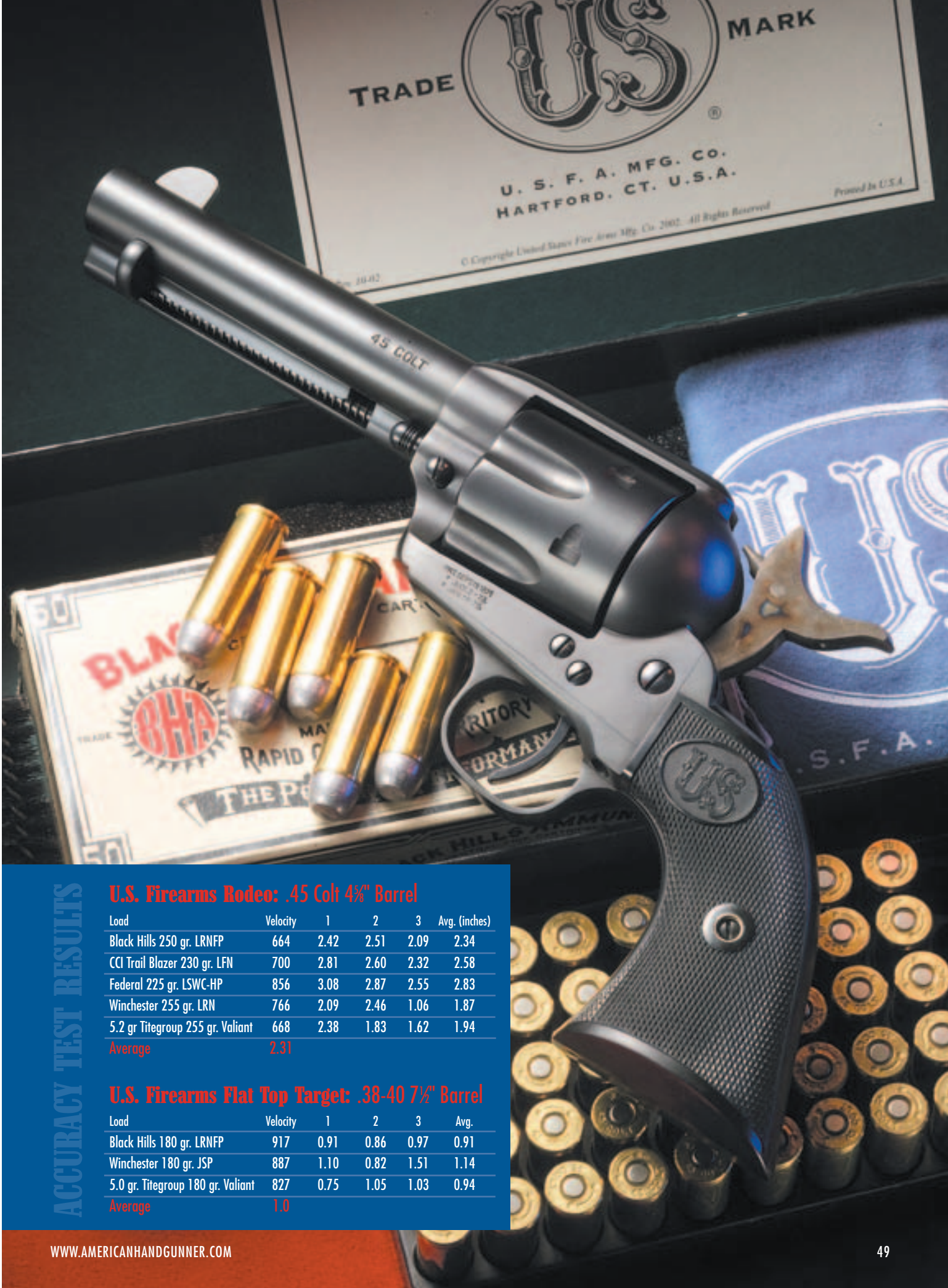
Colt is gone to a plant in West Hartford and the sprawling old building on Van Dyke Ave. is in disrepair. So now we get to our story. In 1995 U.S. Firearms began operations "under the dome." I had seen some of the guns and liked them, but my regression was not then complete. That happened last summer as I drove through Hartford on I-91. Now the dome was restored to its original purple, and the gold rampant horse reared above it. Call me sentimental if you wish, but this was something I *had* to do.

That began the process that culminates in the two guns you see here. One, the Rodeo, is the U.S. Firearms answer to inexpensive imports. The other is a Flat Top Target that re-creates one of the rarest original single-actions. It was something I suddenly wanted real bad.

The best way to describe what U.S. Firearms has done — or is doing — is to say they are taking an 1873 revolver and installing it in a factory with the most modern manufacturing technology avail-

Continued on page 92



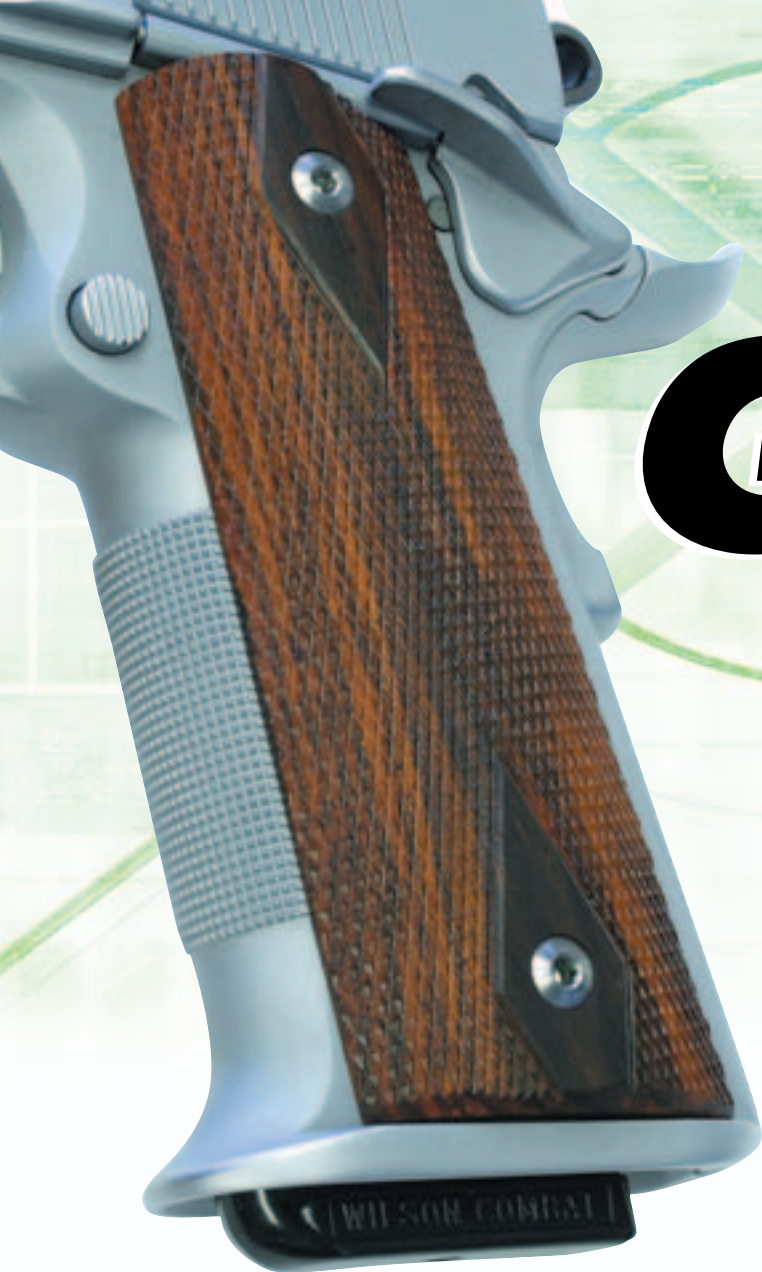


U.S. Firearms Rodeo: .45 Colt 4" Barrel

Load	Velocity	1	2	3	Avg. (inches)
Black Hills 250 gr. LRNFP	664	2.42	2.51	2.09	2.34
CCI Trail Blazer 230 gr. LFN	700	2.81	2.60	2.32	2.58
Federal 225 gr. LSWC-HP	856	3.08	2.87	2.55	2.83
Winchester 255 gr. LRN	766	2.09	2.46	1.06	1.87
5.2 gr Titegroup 255 gr. Valiant	668	2.38	1.83	1.62	1.94
Average	2.31				

U.S. Firearms Flat Top Target: .38-40 7½" Barrel

Load	Velocity	1	2	3	Avg.
Black Hills 180 gr. LRNFP	917	0.91	0.86	0.97	0.91
Winchester 180 gr. JSP	887	1.10	0.82	1.51	1.14
5.0 gr. Titegroup 180 gr. Valiant	827	0.75	1.05	1.03	0.94
Average	1.0				



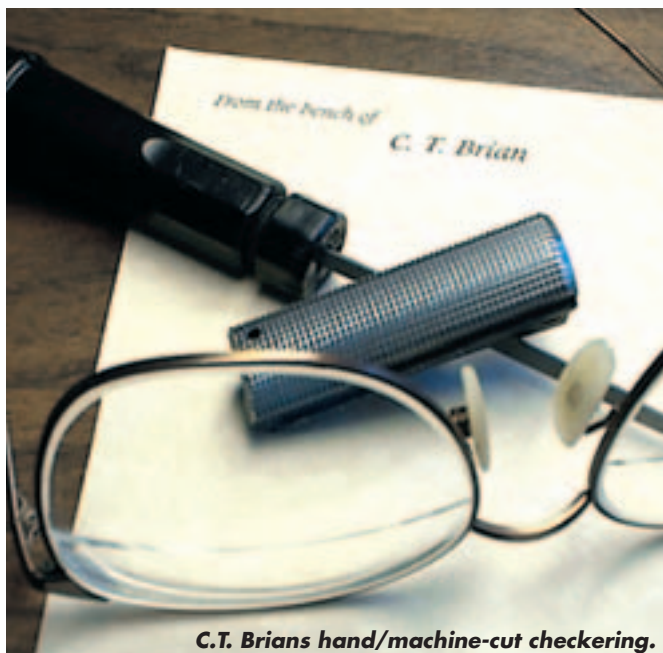
GET A GRIP!



Check out the conamyds on this baby ...

From Snakeskin To Conamyds, It's What's "Up-front" That Counts.

Larry Pomykalski



C.T. Brians hand/machine-cut checkering.

One of the primary considerations on a fighting handgun is ensuring it handles well under the stress of a gunfight. This means the gun must be comfortable, fit the shooter and present a non-slip gripping surface for the sweaty, rain-soaked or bloody hand that might have to hold it.

Custom gunsmiths have devised a variety of ways to improve the handling qualities of a gun that must display "marksmanship at speed," as it were. And while they add a practical and important asset to the fighting handgun, they're also one place a 'smith can stretch out and add a personal touch, something that simply isn't possible with many other modifications.

The classic 1911 has received the most attention from custom gunsmiths, and for good reason — it presents a near-perfect combination of power, size and ergonomics. It's also large, heavy and recoils somewhat more than most other fighting handguns on the scene. This has made it a perfect candidate for modifications that improve the shooter's grip.



**Snakeskin
from Ed
Brown**



**The wave from
Dane Burns.**

There are a number of ways to improve the handling of the 1911 and sharply checkered grips are the first place to add some traction. After that, the smooth and wide front-strap can use a bit of grip, especially under challenging conditions. And adding that grip has become an art all its own among those that specialize in 1911 work. So, in no particular order of important or glitz-appeal, here's some ideas so you can sound like you know what you're talking about when you order that \$4,000 custom 1911. You are ordering one, aren't you ... ?

Brownell's Insta-Grip

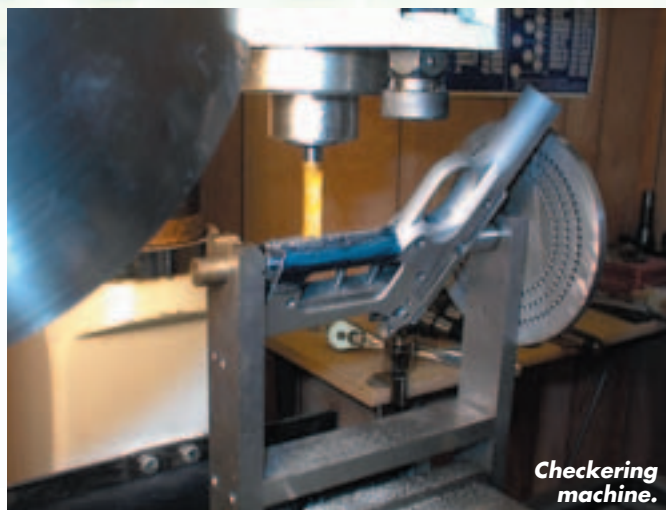
One way to add some temporary traction to your favorite pistol without raiding your kid's skateboarding supplies is to pick up some "Insta-Grip" from Brownell's. (If you're not already familiar with Brownell's, they're the world's largest gunsmithing supply house, and they carry just about everything firearms related. Their massive catalog is a must-read for any shooter.) Insta-Grip is a sheet of adhesive traction tape that's been pre-cut into shapes and sizes suitable for most every handgunning need. It's a great way to experiment with different textures before you decide to have a permanent alteration done to your favorite pistol.

Stippling

Created by repeatedly displacing metal with a sharp punch, fine stippling creates a surface that resembles medium-weight sandpaper in both appearance and feel. Done well, it's attractive and very 'hand-friendly', for want of a better description. Done poorly it looks like you dropped your favorite pistol from a speeding Pinto and allowed it to skate along the asphalt. Oops.

A variant of ordinary stippling is the "Sharkskin Stippling" as performed by pistolsmith Ted Yost of Chino Valley, Arizona.

Continued on page 91



**Checkering
machine.**



Stippling from Ted Yost.

LOAD 'YER BATTERIES HI-TECH HUNTING MORE IS BETTER!

ROY HUNTINGTON



Peltor and Walker's electronic muffs.

Photos: Roy Huntington



**Magellan
GPS.**

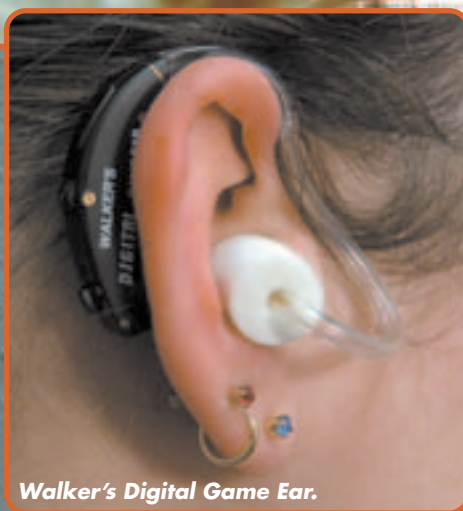
Since the time Krog picked up a rock and threw it at a rabbit, hunters have been on a never-ending path to find a better rock. "Hey, a sharp rock works better than a dull rock," exclaims Krog's brother-in-law Gorf. And, so begins yet another journey toward that high-tech hunting mecca, that melding of the hunter's mind and wallet to finally arrive at the nervana called "the perfect hunting widget."

It seems after two or three million years — or so — guys are still looking for those sharper rocks. Today, we've got some seriously sharp ones, in the form of what are probably some of the finest handguns and ammo the world has ever

laid eyes on. These days, if you can think it, chances are pretty good you can buy it. Due to the administrations of files and CNC mills at places like S&W's Performance Center, SSK Industries, Taurus and others and a host of custom pistol-smiths, the age of the hunting handgun is upon us.

But still, there must be more, indeed, there *needs* to be more. Man (okay, and some women) don't live by handguns alone. Fancy doo-dads and goodies to make those days afield more fun and — let's just say it — more reliable, are important. In today's world of all work and little play, to take a few days off to hunt your favorite spot means you have to hunt smarter, safer, better and, it seems,

Kershaw



Walker's Digital Game Ear.

faster. I don't just mean you need a 300 HP Quad to propel you rocket-like into the backwoods (although at times that might be just the ticket), but it doesn't hurt to get there sooner, find the spot quicker and get to hunting with a minimum of fuss.

And, while you're at it, creature comforts don't hurt, and often it's those little things that can spell the difference between "Gee whiz, this is a blast" and "Can we go now? Please?"

What's Hi-Tech?

Easy. Anything cooler than a sharp rock is fairly hi-tech, depending upon your outlook. But for our sakes, we're talking those things that, by dint of their smart application of some technology, help to make their added weight in the field not outweigh their benefits — either real or "perceived" ones — if you know what I mean. If you *think* your new \$500 laser rangfinder will make you a deadlier hunter, then it will. Make you a deadlier hunter, that is. Maybe.

But, maybe is often better than "maybe not," we'd say. Do you really *need* a Magellan Meridian Color GPS where you're going? If it's way in the woods, probably so — or at least it's a nifty and convenient way to not get lost. But most of the time you probably don't *need* one. I know many of us grew up with a .22 rifle in one hand and an old dog near the other, walking those hundreds of acres of our youth. I'd put big money most of us never got lost either. But still, too much city living, too much TV-induced brain-deadness and too much just "too much" have left many of

us with an edge not quite as sharp as it used to be.

Enter that GPS. Also enter things like the Walker Digital Game Ear. For those of us who've been around a bit, this handy widget plugs into your ear and serves to amplify surrounding sound, while still shutting down if it hears a loud blast — like that .45-70 SSK Hand Cannon going off in the general direction of that Greater Kudu that just stepped out in front of you (we can dream, can't we?). Walker's Quad Muffs accomplish the same thing, but cover both ears like standard muffs. The Peltor version is just as comfy and we have to confess, after wearing one of these electronic hearing gizmos in the field, it's hard to go back to what mother nature gave us. The *snap* of a twig sounds like a 747 making an unexpected landing on a wooded mountain-side. "Er, uh, is that a deer sneaking up on me, Merle?"

More Is Better

We've also come a long way from the yellow glow of the Ray-O-Vac double "D" cell 99-cent flashlight. Since we're in the field for shorter times these days, we also find ourselves out and about in the scary dark more and more. A stout light, like one of Sure Fire's models or a nifty Twin-Task from

Continued on page 94



Streamlight

Surefire



Nikon 5700 Digital Camera.



RCBS Hi-Tech Electronic Powder & Scale.

The El Paso model 1942 Shoulder Holster.



BOVINE BEAUTY

Military Holsters from the folks at El Paso Saddlery Co.

Clint Smith

Whereas most people believe the Creator made cattle for purposes of food, I personally think they were made for providing all of us with a source of leather for holsters.

Contemporary users support materials and designs made of nylon or plastic, which is probably okay but then again, it may be better served-up as panty hose or soda bottles. I have a couple of plastic and nylon holsters in a box in the garage, but in all candor they don't do much for me.

Over the years I've had the privilege of meeting and using leather holsters from people whom I respect in the business. Bruce Nelson, before his untimely

passing, showed me the value of "good" leather. Milt and Bonnie Sparks were two of my personal favorite people and producers of leather products — and Tony & Pam Kanaley continue to carry on the traditions and high quality of the Sparks product line. Another of my favorite holster makers, especially in the area of older styles, patterns and vintage designs, are the folks from El Paso Saddlery Co.

The Real, Old West

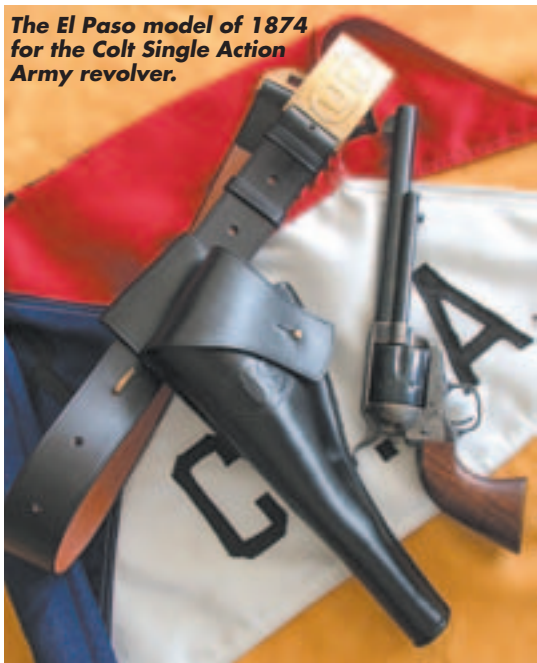
The dust from the Bison herds had not settled much before the El Paso Saddlery shop opened its doors in 1889. Located, in of all places, El Paso del Norte or El

Paso, Texas to most of us. From there, the owners have produced holsters for over one hundred and fourteen years.

The promulgation of cowboy shooting sports has brought new interest to many old holster designs; but never doubt for a moment the El Paso Saddlery folks ever stopped making the older, but very effective designs. Copied by many — exceeded by none — the tradition continues.

One of the strong suit cards of the El Paso Saddlery people is their line of military-style holsters. I have a strong personal interest in the area of correct U.S. martial equipment, as well as do historical re-enactors and collectors. As

The El Paso model of 1874 for the Colt Single Action Army revolver.



The El Paso model 1911 for the .45 Colt Pistol. The correct military designation for this holster is Pistol Holster, Model of 1912, for Automatic Pistol, Caliber .45, Model of 1911.



The El Paso model 1940 for the 1911 .45 Colt Pistol. The correct military designation for this holster is the Model of 1916, for Automatic Pistol Caliber .45, Model of 1911.

interested parties, we need to take note of the bovine hide manipulations of El Paso Saddlery.

Model 1874

The Model 1874 is a fine reproduction of the first U.S. Military holster made for the then newly-adopted 1873 Colt New Model Army Metallic Cartridge Revolving Pistol. The holster is designed to be worn butt-forward due in part to the fact at that time in history, the saber was still considered a primary weapon. The indigenous American Indian horse warriors gave the long knives a run for their money on the open plains. The rattling cumbersome sabers soon passed into the application of parades only. The butt-forward carry requires a drawing stoke to first, undo the flap and then, a strong hand, turned inside, thumb to the rear grasp of the butt kind of operation. Upon drawing, the revolver is rotated counterclockwise to bring the muzzle to bear on-target. Not necessarily fast, the primary issue was actuality security for the revolver while mounted or dismounting intentionally — or from an unexpectedly bucking Cayuse.

Model 1911

As is recorded by history, the adaptation of the 1911 Colt self-loading .45 pistol eased the burden of operation for the horse soldiers. You could simply lift the flap and draw the pistol with one

hand and put the pistol to work. The drawing stoke directed the muzzle toward the bad guy as the muzzle cleared leather. The 1911 model or “Pershing” as the El Paso folk’s call it, must be in recognition of “Black Jack” himself. The holster is mounted to the cartridge belt by a military-style wire hanger and has a swivel feature to ease the hang of the holster while mounted. It’s also helpful if you are dismounted and the holster is tied down to the leg. The swivel allows the holster to turn without binding on the hanger. Experts

may also refer to this holster as the model of 1912, which is the correct designation, and people may very well be impressed that you know that. Or not.

Model 1917

At the on-set of America’s entry into the “Great War” there were simply not enough 1911 auto pistols to go around. To help meet the demand, the factories of Colt and Smith & Wesson produced a nominal 300,000 .45 caliber revolvers. These revolvers required a holster, which was actually the same holster as



The El Paso 1911 belt with the # 5 Patton Holster. El Paso Saddlery makes this leather rig for a variety of handguns.



The El Paso 1911 General Officers belt with the #5 Patton holster for the 1911 Colt pistol and double magazine pouch.

that used for the 1909 Colt .45 Colt revolver. Ordinance officials designated this original design as the "Holster, .45 Revolver 1909 model." The government produced this holster from 1909 to 1911 and then again from 1917 to 1918 to meet wartime demands.

The Second World War brought about a demand for a revolver holster. Coming back on-line was a new designation of the M2 model, which was made in a reversed format from that of the early 1909 version. A later M4 version was made, sans the bottom plug and was simply sewn shut. El Paso Leather simply refers to this holster as the "1917." They designed the three-quarter-flap holster for the 1917 Colt and Smith & Wesson revolvers. As a point of interest, the current El Paso holster also fits the Colt Model of 1909 New Service .45 Colt revolver, in case there are re-enactors interested in being charged by re-enactor Moro warriors.

Model 1940

The El Paso Model of 1940 is, more correctly, the military model of 1916. This holster is a flap design with the wire hanger for hook up to the military web cartridge belt. This holster design has served the United States issued 1911 from 1916 through World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam and in all con-

The El Paso model 1917 for the Colt and Smith & Wesson 1917 revolvers.



flicts in between. Military doctrine generally advocates the pistol be carried in a hammer-down, empty chamber mode, with the fully loaded magazine in place.

As they will, sentries and carriers of this pistol and holster combination developed a technique to draw and load the pistol with a single shooting hand. After clearing the leather, the operator rotated

the slide inboard and racked the slide on the holster as the pistol was shoved forward toward the target. This action of dragging the slide across the holster chambered a cartridge, readying it for fire. This is one of the more functional and yet protective of the holster designs. It's not for speed, but for protection of the handgun while in combat. But, as with all things, practice will develop good working defensive skills even for this style of holster.

Model 1942

This is the El Paso version of the holster that carries the military designation "Model 3 Shoulder holster." Worn by aircrews, tankers, paratroopers and anybody else who could come up with the holster and the 1911 pistol to carry into combat. It was originally designed to meet the demand for personal defense weapons for aircrews but not interfere with aircraft controls. The M3 model has a single cross-body strap and was made from 1942 until 1945.

A second-generation holster, designated the "Model M7" was made from 1944 until use of the 1911A1 was discontinued. The M7 had a cross shoulder strap and as well a strap that went around the trunk of the body. The M7 was used in World War II, Korea and an

Continued on page 81

DOCTER: MEN OF SCIENCE

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Fearing he would get in trouble for having an army Colt, Rasmus peened out the "US" acceptance stamp on the left side of the frame. He also expertly removed the cartouche from the wooden grip and refinished it as new.



Although the exterior of Rasmus' Colt shows some light pitting from the leaking roof of his old barracks where it was hidden, the interior remains in like-new condition.

CAVALRY COLT

THE AMAZING JOURNEY OF A 6TH US CAVALRY TROOPER — AND HIS COLT

GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

Born in Denmark in 1858, Rasmus Bolinsson Rasmussen immigrated to America with his family two years later, and although the Rasmussens settled in Kansas, Rasmus never liked farming. Too young even to be a drummer boy during the Civil War, Rasmus joined the US Cavalry in late summer, 1876 to replenish the losses to the 7th Cavalry suffered at the Little Bighorn. Remaining there for six months, Rasmus was then transferred to the 6th US Cavalry, A Company, where he remained for the duration of his career.

Rasmus loved the Cavalry and followed the movements of the 6th Cavalry through the Southwestern United States during the Indian Wars, largely in pursuit of the famed Apache, Geronimo. In 1902, Rasmus was mustered out of the Army, "To die of malaria," he would later say.

However, Rasmus did not die. He settled first near Fort Riley, Kansas, his home base, married, and became a carpenter, a trade he learned in the Army. In about 1917 Rasmus and his wife moved to Los Angeles, California, where his health continued to improve. There he built houses for a living.

During this time, Rasmus built a house for a young lady whose fiancé was in the Army fighting during World War I, and the Rasmussens grew to become close to

***Rasmussen's
Model 1873
Colt .45 Single
Action Army
revolver with most
of the original sur-
viving equipment he
was issued while in
the 6th US Cavalry.***

this family. After the war, the couple was married and had two children, one of them a boy, who grew up knowing Rasmus as an uncle.

Not only did the soldier with malaria not die from the disease, but his health was totally restored. Rasmus continued to build houses in the Los Angeles Area until about 1959 at the age of 101, when he fell from a ladder. Never completely recovering from the fall, Rasmus Bolinsson Rasmussen passed away in the Veterans' Hospital in Los Angeles in 1961 at the age of 103.

The Gunfighters He Knew

The amazing thing is the young boy who grew up knowing Rasmus heard the endless accounts of his experiences in the 6th US Cavalry. What's more, he himself survived two wars and a long career in law enforcement, and remembers Rasmus' sto-

ries vividly. Not only was Rasmus present when Geronimo surrendered, but he knew and was a close friend of Tom Horn, one of Geronimo's strongest advocates. Being stationed in southern Arizona for so many years, he also knew Wyatt Earp and his brothers, Doc Holiday, Bat Masterson, the Clantons, Curly Bill Brosius, and all the rest. Incidentally, the only one of the bunch about whom Rasmus had anything good to say was Masterson, who he described as a gentleman.

Rasmus told the boy about the 6th Cavalry's journey to China to help the British Army put down the Boxer Rebellion, where he gave a vivid account of participating in the last mounted charge using lances. It was during this time that Rasmus was thrown from his mount, being left on foot with dozens of Boxers

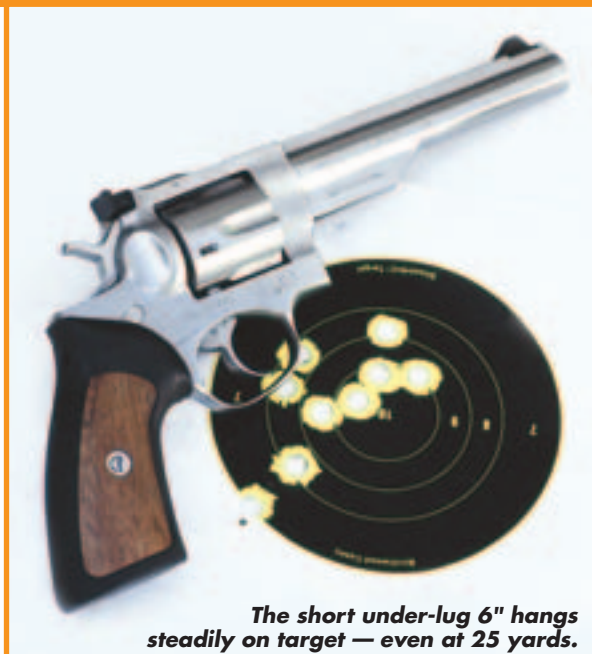
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Maximum Boogy

Morphing Ruger's Uncommon GP100 Into An Extraordinary Gorilla Gun

Mike Cumpston



The short under-lug 6" hangs steadily on target — even at 25 yards.

Hamilton Bowen's Target Sight for the GP100 is solid steel and simply doesn't get any better for this application.

Acept it. In the kingdom of precision target games, the revolver has become passé. But though a cause of remorse for some, this doesn't change the fact there remains something fundamentally satisfying about casual bullseye shooting, and other pursuits that aim for accuracy.

Stalwart, dedicated .38 Special target revolvers have been supplanted by the .357, the preferred caliber for shooters who view their revolver as a multi-purpose tool. So the challenge becomes finding a magnum revolver that shoots pleasant target loads at an accuracy level exceeding the shooter's capabilities.

The .357 failed to impress early researchers as a tack driver. Elmer Keith recorded his .357 Smith hand-ejector never quite equaled his old .38/44 Outdoorsman, even when the same basic components were used. Dean Grinell recorded that while accuracy did happen, he never regarded the .357 as possessing gilt-edged accuracy. Add to this equation that not until recently has the modern target revolver been able to survive extensive shooting of gun-eating magnum rounds.

Enter, stage left, the 6" GP100. Years ago I had one of these, a short-shroud variation, and foolishly traded it off. My personal personnel records indicate at that time I was happy with sub 2" groups at 25 yards — the accuracy level recorded with most loads. The revolver had cycled a considerable number of high-pressure rounds and never did



One to 2" groups at the 25 yard line made the skinny-tubed GP100 (top) the darling of the dance



develop any significant signs of wear. XTP 125 grainers over near-maximum charges of 296 rattled teeth on adjacent ranges, making shooters think somebody was working a short 12-gauge on the Combat Range. Heavy loaded 140's were about as bad, shouting large plumes of flame while bombarding the forcing cone with high-temperature vapor. Yet no signs of erosion marred the stainless forcing cone.

The short shroud, round barrel GP weighs plumb 43 oz., which is 2 ounces heavier than a full shroud 4" and 3 oz. lighter than the same 6" gun with a full length under-lug. The 43 oz. weight complements my ergonomic (*see Cumpston's*

pin-up calendar featuring his fine ergonomics. Ed.) and accurate model 617, and is ideal for sustained off-hand work. Besides, I like the Victorian-Streamline looks of the skinnier tube, and steadfastly, wholeheartedly, deny that when it comes to handguns looks are only skin deep.

At L.M. Burney Distributing Co., I received yet another sign my feet march to the beat of a different drummer. Everybody else wants the full lugged 46-oz. version of this gun. And why not? You get 3 oz. more metal, for the same money. So Ruger didn't even have any of the round barrels made up. While waiting, I had no choice but to consider the options that wring-out the GP's best accuracy. No new grips for me. The factory slide-on jobs fit my hand better than anything else, virtually nullifying any recoil proceeding from the worst magnum loads.

Trigger reach is not only ideal for single-action control, but so well adapted to the trigger-cocking mode that GPs turn in off-hand double action scores rivaling the single action. On the down side, GP trigger pulls are a liability lawyer's delight, and can stand some reduction. I canvassed other shooters about the Wolff Spring Kits and ordered a set from Dillon.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with the Ruger supplied sights. The Zigurat-shaped front sight rivals the Patridge post in its versatility. The sight picture is such that in most lighting conditions I can use them without glasses. Nevertheless, nothing better in this world exists than the custom-made rear sights

Continued on page 111



Wolff springs assured reliability while lightening the load considerably in the trigger-pull department.



PROMISED FUNCTIONALITY

WILSON
COMBAT
COB .45s

MASSAD AYOOB
PHOTOS: ICHIRO NAGATA



More than twenty years ago, Bill Wilson sold a great multi-purpose 1911 for a fair price. Today, his product is even better.

If memory serves, the first major write-up of a Bill Wilson gun was in the November/December 1980 *American Handgunner*. At the time, Bill preferred to work only on late model Colt commercial 1911s, and he guaranteed 2.5" groups at 50 yards. In that article, I found the workmanship was splendid. We chucked a test Wilson into a Ransom machine rest and did indeed break 2.5" at 50 yards with Federal Match hardball. The hammer tended to "follow" on the light-triggered gun, but that was common with the custom trigger jobs of the time.

Bill Wilson has come a helluva long way. Today, Bill doesn't build handguns himself — he supervises construction. The Wilson Combat handgun line is put



WILSON COMBAT



together from carefully selected parts, many of the main components outsourced, by a cadre of well-trained pistolsmiths. They are "semi-custom" in the current parlance of the trade. For this issue, three of his CQB (Close Quarters Battle) line were selected to be highlighted. These were the compact (\$1,940), the standard 5" model (\$1,895), and the new Light Rail version of the full size CQB (\$1,995). One of each was sent to Ichiro Nagata for his incomparable photography, and one each of the latter two were sent to me for hands on testing.

First Look

The guns were good lookin'. The finish was Armor-Tuff, which Wilson Combat advertises as "the hardest, most durable, chemical and heat resistant thermally cured finish (phenolic resin heat cured paint) available." Early on, Bill tired of being dependent on the quality of the customer's base handgun as a predicate for his final product. He began with the famous Wilson 1911 parts series, the culmination of which may be the famously accurate Wilson barrel, all of which are included with the CQB. Among these are the excellent Wilson Combat grip safety and the popular Wilson Combat fixed sights with Night Eyes tritium option. He continued "going vertical" in production with the frames and slides, which are produced to Wilson Combat's specifications by Kimber. (The Light Rail frame is made by Caspian.) Tyson Anderson, Wilson Combat's sales manager, tells me his firm is "very close" to manufacturing its own slides and frames to the same exacting standards.

The components are then painstakingly

fitted (I've observed the process in Berryville, AR) by craftsmen Bill has trained, and whom he is comfortable calling "experienced master pistolsmiths." These include Roy Broadley, Sam Dunham, Travis Gregory, Jeff Phillips, Ron Phillips, James Waters and Jim Wilson. Jeff, Sam and Travis were listed on accompanying documents as having built the Light Rail pistol; Sam, Jeff and James, our standard CQB. Those papers listed Rodney Sharp as having done the final test-fire and inspection on each. Enclosed were targets, groups fired from 15-yard bench rest with 200 gr. H&G lead semi-wadcutters over 4.5 grains of Vihtavuori N310 and Winchester LP primers, giving 850 fps, and seated to 1.250 OAL with .469" taper crimp. Each group was a

one-holer, with none of the individual bullet holes sufficiently distinct to measure center to center. Edge to edge, each measured less than an inch.

The pistols had right hand only thumb safeties, and GI-length recoil spring guide rods, which simplify takedown. (I was glad to see this; I agree with Charlie Petty, Les Baer and others that a full-length recoil spring guide serves more perceived needs than real ones). Field stripping was easy, with the bushings only hand-tight. Working the slides, one instantly gained a sense of excellent fit and polished smoothness. The CQB's *feel* like custom guns, instead of mass-produced. The checkering was just right for me, though a little abrasive for the hands of one or two testers who shot them later.





WILSON COMBAT

WILSON
COMBAT
COB
45s



AMERICAN
HANDGUNNER

CORE PERFORMANCE

CHART 1: RESTED

Brand	Load	5-Shots	Best 3
Black Hills	230 gr JHP	3 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
CCI Lawman	200 gr. JHP	2 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
Federal Ballisticlean	165 gr zinc JSP	2 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
Federal Hydra-Shok	230 gr JHP	3"	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
PMC	230 gr. FMJ	2 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
Remington +P	185 gr. JHP	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	1"
Winchester Ranger	230 gr. JHP+P	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
Handload	185 gr JHP	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	2 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

CHART 2: BARRICADE

Brand	Load	5-Shot	Best 3
Black Hills	230 gr JHP	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	5/16"
CCI Lawman	200 gr JHP	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	9/16"
Federal Ballisticlean	165 gr zinc JSP	3 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
Federal Hydra-Shok	230 gr JHP	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	7/8"
PMC	230 gr FMJ	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	5/8"
Remington	185 gr JHP +P	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	5/16"
Winchester Ranger	230 gr JHP+P	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
Handload	185 gr JHP	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

(185 gr Montana Gold JHP, 7.3 gr Herco, Winchester Large Pistol Primers)



Testing began at Marty and Gila Hayes' Firearms Academy of Seattle while I was there teaching. Wilson Combat had promised 3.8 pound trigger pulls, and 1" to 1.5" 25-yard groups. Revolversmith Grant Cunningham was on-site, and he weighed the triggers for us. The standard CQB went three pounds on the nose, the Light Rail gun, three pounds, six ounces. Both were very consistent. What about the accuracy?

Accuracy

FAS is a superb tactical facility. But, being just that — a *tactical* facility — it does not sport target shooter niceties such as bench rests. I tested the traditional frame gun, serial #WC000047, by getting down behind a plastic 55-gallon drum used to replicate cover on one range, and resting my two-hand hold on top. The ground surface was uneven, and this caused a little bit of wobble, just as in real life. Still, the CQB acquitted itself well under these "real world-replicating" circumstances. The wobbly surface exacerbated human error. For instance, four

rounds of Black Hills were in a 1.5" group when the fifth shot blew the cluster to nearly double size (*see chart 1*).

With one load — the wobbly support notwithstanding — the 1.5" guarantee at that distance, 25 yards, had been achieved. Remington 185 grain +P has always been one of our more accurate .45 rounds. Going with the "best three" rule, more than half of the loads equaled or exceeded that standard. Still, it was obvious I wasn't giving the pistol a chance to strut its stuff. Using a handload consisting of a 185 gr. Montana Gold JHP over 7.3 grains of Herco and Winchester large pistol primers, Canadian police investigator and firearms instructor Nick Bolton was able to fire five rounds into an inch at 25 yards — from the right-hand barricade position. Clearly, "#47" was a one-inch gun.

To The Barricades

Nick was obviously onto something. It was time to heed the cry of the French Revolution: "To the barricades!"

I switched to the pistol with the inte-

gral light mount frame, serial number WCSF0176. The distance was 25 yards; the stance was strong-side standing barricade as in PPC shooting (*see chart 2*).

Note that five out of seven were in the promised range 1.5" or better, and under an inch in the "best-three" measurement. Particularly satisfying was that Black Hills load. The center-to-center spread between the best three shots, all in a cloverleaf, was less than the diameter of a single .45 caliber bullet. Clearly, Wilson Combat had fulfilled its advertised promise. We were obviously dealing with guns that could meet the advertised standard of 1.0-1.5" 25-yard accuracy, *even when tested from firing platforms more precarious than a bench rest, let alone a Ransom rest.*

Shooting the CQB's

In the course of two LFI courses, I passed the pair of Wilsons around among staff and students after class, and during breaks on the range. There were precious

Continued on page 89



JOEL PIRELA'S EDGED REALITIES

VISIONS VISIONS VISIONS

OF STEEL

PAT COVERT
PHOTOS: ICHIRO NAGATA

Joel Pirela sees knives. When he goes to bed at night, he counts knives jumping over a fence. He dreams of knives chasing each other down alleyways, dancing at high school proms and falling off of high places. When he “cuts” his computer on, knives pop up on the screen. Joel Pirela lives in a world surrounded by knives. And he likes it.

Joel is somewhat of an enigma in the world of custom knives. He’s never made a knife in his life, yet he’s highly respected by many top custom knife-makers, tactical users and collectors. He sells some of the finest tactical knives on the market, but it’s not about the money. For Pirela, it’s all about seeing his dreams become realities and watching his fantasies come to life. Pirela is a *creativo*, with a passion for knives, and his visions of steel have made him one of the hottest designers in the industry today.

Born and raised in Caracas, Venezuela 34 years ago, Pirela grew up in a family fond of weaponry. On his 12th birthday his father, a Navy commander, gave him a 9mm Browning Hi-Power, and within a few years he was taking to IPSC shooting like white-on-rice. He competed in combat shooting for many years in both IPSC and IDPA, preferring the latter for its more realistic scenarios.

DET2A: Dynamic Entry
Tactical Tool Axe.



**Xenon Folder
(left) and Vector
Folder (right).**

In the natural course of events, knives began finding themselves in his pockets for personal protection, and soon he graduated from Spydercos and Microtechs to custom fare by makers such as Pat Crawford and Ernest Emerson. All the while he was pursuing a career in Graphic Design, and with his flourishing talent came a desire to design knives that did what he needed them to do — and look like he wanted them to look.

Says Joel, “After several purchases of custom knives, I found myself wanting additional features, so I grabbed a sheet of paper and began drawing profiles of knives I hadn’t seen before. After many hours of drawing, rendering designs on my computer and testing balsa wood prototypes, I came up with my first design: the Vector.”

Fast From The Start

Joel’s Vector design was different. The blade is a melding of the imposing Hawkbill design with the wicked Japanese tanto. According to the designer, “The drawback of the Hawkbill blade is it is made for slashing, not stabbing. With the Vector profile you could achieve both. Using the interception of two blade grinds allows you to grab more material and drag the blade for even deeper cuts. The tanto-like tip adds incredible piercing power, making the Vector an awesome defensive tool.”

Having relocated to Miami, Florida in 1994, Joel took his design to noted custom knifemaker Reese Weiland, who lived in Tampa. Weiland agreed to make a working prototype, and when it was nearly finished he received a shop visit by Tony Marfione, owner and founder of Microtech Knives. Marfione told Weiland

Continued on page 95



T-Axe®: Tactical Folding Axe.



**Task-Tusk Folder (top) and
Squalo Fixed blade (bottom).**

Make Mine A Tranter



The Board of Trustees of the Armories, A7/273

Move Over H&K, Meet the First “Squeeze-Cocker”

Martin Green



The Board of Trustees of the Armories, A6/415

Long, long ago in a gun shop far, far away — OK, Covent Garden in London — was a young man of about 17 years, hanging, as they say now. That used to mean something far less pleasant, of course, but not on this particular day. “Take a look at this,” said the manager, casually reaching below the counter and pulling out a small percussion revolver of about .36 caliber. “It’s broken, but might make a nice piece for a project.” It was then I held my first Tranter revolver.

Made in about 1855, it had seen better days. With a jammed action, no finish and a bent cylinder pin holding the cylinder at a jaunty angle, it clearly needed a good home. I bought it for the price of a burger meal today, and in exchange enjoyed many happy hours fixing and refinishing that little revolver. I could not have

known that some 20 years later I would take the same company that made that revolver and produce handguns once again. If I knew then what I know now I would have worked in real estate or law, or even driven a London Cab, but sometimes we follow our heart, not our head. Idiot.

Producing revolvers through the last half of the nineteenth century in Birmingham, England, the William Tranter company offered a wide range of models

and calibers. Starting with percussion pepperboxes and ending with centerfire revolvers — including a very respectable .50” calibre percussion revolver (stopping power, anyone?) — the line-up was always interesting.

William Tranter’s early percussion revolvers are generally divided into four types, the main difference being the type of rammer used to seat the ball in the cylinder. These were similar to the Colt rammers, but would lay alongside the barrel rather than under it. The early ones were even removable, so you could keep it somewhere “safe.” Great idea guys. Later ones, like Colt’s, were more sensibly fixed to the frame.

Tranter revolvers were double action in the old fashion sense. Meaning they could be fired either single action, or double action. Two ways, see? Double the pleasure, as it were. Which was, of

Continued on page 80



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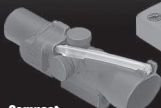
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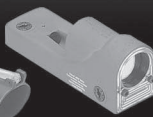
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Gun	Load	Velocity	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Average
Novak Custom S&W 3913	9mm 105 gr.	1,233 fps	1.25"	1.30"	2.04"	1.53"
S&W PC-40	.40 S&W 145 gr.	1,088 fps	1.28"	1.13"	1.26"	1.22"
Kimber Super Match	.45 ACP 175 gr.	1,024 fps	1.45"	1.59"	1.33"	1.46"

Velocity is the instrumental average of 10 shots at 10 feet as measured by a PACT Professional Chronograph.
Accuracy results are five-shot groups at 25 yards from a benchrest.



The Disintegrator bullet on the left shows the distinctive flat nose that makes identification easy. FMJ ball on right.

shooter alike. Today's training environment is very different, but the need still exists. Many agencies use "shoot houses" where firing can be done at near-contact ranges. Couple this with the popularity and usefulness of steel targets and a frangible bullet becomes even more desirable.

If you shoot at steel targets, the chances are good you've been stung by a bullet fragment, even when you were 10 or 15 yards from the target. It happens, and I've got the scar to prove it.

In the recent past, frangible bullets have been made according to two general formulas using mixtures of elements in either powdered or solid forms. For example, one type uses a mix of copper and tin in powder form combined with a binding sub-

Continued on page 102



Clint Smith, of Thunder Ranch, says: "Real guns are wheel guns," and Scott Mulkerin, President and chief metal-cutter at SDM Fabricating, agrees. SDM is known for their elegant competition handguns — pistols and revolvers — and this month's Custom Gun of the Month is no exception.

If you speak "competition" you've come to the right place. SDM can build what you need — from a simplified "stock" IDPA pistol to a full house custom dream gun, Scott speaks your language. SDM shoots what they build in the real world of competition so they know what works — and what doesn't.

This well-bred Model 625, courtesy of S&W, shows its heritage in the fine lines and business-like demeanor N-frames are known for. SDM takes a good competition or fighting revolver and, through the application of careful machine and handwork, enhances the "good," transforming it smoothly, almost effortlessly, into "great."

Among these custom touches are:

- Conversion to double action only
- Competition action job
- 5" bbl cut to 4" and re-crowned
- Competition chamfer on cylinder, along with chamber numbers
- Polished hammer, trigger, screws, latch and ejector rod
- Miculek Competition Grips (Courtesy of Jerry Miculek)
- Millet rear sight (Courtesy of Millet)
- SDM 14 ct. Gold bead front sight
- Two SDM "Supersights" (Red & Green)
- Talon Tactical Kydex Holster (Courtesy of Talon Tactical)

A perfect companion piece to this breath-taking revolver, is the superlative VORAX, a working blade designed for the professional who needs full size performance in a more compact, 6" blade package. This is a battle blade you can stake your life on if you ever had to, at a size and weight that will ensure it's always in your Go-Bag, backpack or truck. Tough as elephant hide, Merworx knives are made in the USA and are legendary for their real-world capabilities.

The companion Talon Tactical Model R4 Kydex holster is a classic IDPA design and is custom-built for the SDM 625. Kydex has proven its mettle in IDPA competition and Talon makes some of the best.

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John Morrison

Take one retired cop with a bunch of nerve damage, one sorta-rare HK PSP squeeze-cocker pistol, and start searching for a good comfy shoulder holster. Go ahead. Good luck. What I got was “We don’t make a rig for that” from production manufacturers, and a minimum bid of \$364 from “custom” makers. (Expletives deleted. Lots of ’em.)

Then a pal put me in touch with Jerry at Haugen Handgun Leather in Bismarck, North Dakota. “No problem,” he said. Three weeks later, I was blown away with the best fitting holster I have ever slid a gun into. Remember tweaking the thumb snap on that last holster for two hours until it worked? Shoving your pistol in and out 300 times until it felt right, or rattling it around in a leather gun-bucket? Forget it; Jerry’s an artisan, not a hide-butcher. The fit is like the door of an S-

600 Mercedes. *Slith-click*. My socks don’t fit this well. Don’t smell as good, either.

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and three-row hand stitching in the photo, and note: *zero* crummy elastic crap.

Here’s the coup de grace: The price of this double-fine custom shoulder rig, neat, sweet and complete? \$129.95, in US dollars. That’s \$4.95 more than my first-choice “production” maker’s price for “we don’t make a rig for that.” Best five bucks I ever spent. But hey, that’s just my opinion, and he doesn’t even advertise in *Handgunner*.

If you gotta’ see for yourself, go to www.HaugenHandgunLeather.com and enjoy yourself. Jerry’s an okay guy, and tell him you saw it here.



TRANTER

Continued from page 72

course, needed when hordes of angry Russians were bearing down on you in the Crimea for disturbing their borscht bowls. Incidentally, a good way of identifying Tranters quickly is by the small pointy extension to the rear of the trigger. It's this, passing through a slot in the rear of the guard, that trips the hammer.

Tranter was a very successful company. They made handguns to a high standard and of a strong, solid frame design. Manufactured throughout the last half of the nineteenth century, they saw active service in all corners of the British Empire. I understand a pair of Tranter double action army revolvers in .450 centerfire were even owned by a certain General George Armstrong Custer, who you may be familiar with. Though in hind sight, Gatlings may have been a wiser choice for the General.

Solidly-Framed Fun

There was constant competition from a number of successful British manufacturers, including Adams and Webley, as well as an upstart by the name of Colt. It's interesting to note the British revolvers were often preferred over the Colts because of their solid frames, larger calibers and double action. Though this issue, like most in the gun world, is a contentious one. I

would like to think if Elmer Keith and Jeff Cooper had been shooting in the 1850s, they would have carried British revolvers. Or at least argued about which was best in the pages of the fictional equivalent of *American Handgunner* called "British Handgunner." Ah, what might have been.

The most popular caliber produced by Tranter seems to be the 54-bore or about .45 caliber. But, as mentioned earlier, they were available up to 38-bore or .50 cal, in a 5-shot model. They also featured good sights, having a rear sight on the top strap, rather than a notch in the hammer like the popular American Navy Colt of the time. Which was also "just" a .36 caliber. Notice anything here? The ghost of all those "9mm vs. .45" articles may just have had their roots there. Now, if they would only stop.


Tranter's most interesting revolver has to be their early double-trigger model. Patented in 1853, it looked like a regular revolver but with a second trigger sticking down from midway along the trigger guard. It worked like this: You rested your trigger finger by the regular trigger, but your next, or middle finger, rested on the lower one. If you required a single action shot, you would cock the hammer by pulling back on the lower trigger. The hammer would come back and the cylinder would turn. A light pressure on the upper trigger would then fire the weapon. If in a hurry — and at short range — pressure on both together would cock and fire the weapon double action. It may sound

strange, but long ago I spent a sunny day at the range with one, and given a little practice, it works really well. Sort-of.

So, H&K invented the squeeze cocker with their P7 did they? It's worth adding the double trigger model also featured a clever auto safety. A small bar moved up between the hammer and cap whenever the hammer started back, and would then drop out of the way as the trigger was pressed fully back. And all this in 1853.

Tranter II

One could write a great deal on the history of the Tranter, but you'd probably yell and throw things. Still, it's an interesting company with a real history. A company I am proud to have run for a few years in the 1990's when, for a short time, we manufactured the Tranter "Century" Pistol. The Century looked a little like a compact CZ75 and was offered in 9mm and .40 S&W. If you can, checkout the review in the 1995 *Guns and Ammo Annual*. A bit of firearm history, there.

Of the Century's made, several were sold in the US, so you may see one at a show sometime. Consider yourself blessed. Serial No. 1, a cased 9mm stainless, is now part of the Royal Armoires Collection and thus the property of her Majesty. I am delighted to report the name lives on in other hands, and hope we have not seen the last of the William Tranter Company of Birmingham, England. Hey,  you never know ...

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BOVINE BEAUTY

Continued from page 56

additional contract was issued for production for the Vietnam War.


As an additional footnote, in 1956 U.S. military policy dictated the coloring of government issue holsters be changed from natural tan to black. This is the reason for different colored military holsters, all of which can be the correct color based upon the issue era.

#5 Patton

El Paso Saddlery made this style of holster for General George S. Patton prior to World War II. In many photographs of "Old blood and Guts" himself, his ivory stocked Single Action Army revolver is shown in the El Paso holster attached to the 1911 General Officers style military leather belt. Researching the holster and the General one only needs to look at the Virginia Military Institute photo archive records to see the holster's presence.

The current holster made by El Paso is available for revolvers and semi-automatic pistols. The semi-automatic #5 holster has a partially exposed trigger while holstered which, by contemporary standards, is considered a negative design pattern. Hopefully anyone who bought a holster of this type and quality would be bright enough to draw from it without setting themselves on fire by prematurely placing their finger on the trigger during the drawing stroke.

A complete line of belts and magazine pouches are available to support the military holster products of El Paso Saddlery. All holsters are available with lettered embossing of the different military branches; to include the Confederate States of America, which I am sure would make somebody somewhere unhappy. Then again somebody is always unhappy about something.

One thing is for sure, anyone who acquires the leather products from El Paso Saddlery will not be camping with the unhappy campers. The El Paso craftsmen have made a quality product for many decades and to their credit they continue to do so in a world filled with nylon and plastic ge-gaws. If you want a good military holster, get one made from a cow that ran through the El Paso Saddlery shop. You  won't be sorry.

A special thanks to Ryan McNellis and Don Long for their help. For more information contact, El Paso Saddlery Co.; (915)544-2233; John Spangler; (801) 947-9442; (U.S. military firearms, holsters and equipment); www.oldguns.net

References: U.S. Military Holsters and Pistol Cartridge Boxes, Edward Scott Meadows.



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AYOOB FILES

Continued from page 54

Thanks to his perfectly clean record and small arms knowledge he picked up in the National Guard, Emilio Plana is licensed to carry a concealed handgun in the state of Florida. As is his habit when he is collecting rent and things like that, he has a gun in his pocket. It's a Smith & Wesson Model 66 with 2" barrel. Though it's chambered for .357 Magnum, he has it loaded with Winchester 125 grain +P .38 Special semi-jacketed hollowpoints. He has test-fired it only once, long ago, and the single fired case remains in the chamber under the hammer. The gun holds only five live rounds.

Emilio carries it in his right trouser pocket, inside a Bianchi thumb-snap belt holster to keep the gun's sharp edges from tearing through the pocket lining. Like many untrained in pistol-packing, he takes comfort from the gun's presence but has never practiced quickly bringing it to bear. As he sees Ibarra coming toward him he grabs for the gun. It comes out ... with the holster still securely wrapped around it.

Everything seems to go into slow motion as Emilio desperately rips the holster off the gun with his free hand. As the tan scabbard falls to the kitchen floor, Ibarra is closing the gap, the heavy metal club rising in his hand, Plana pulls the trigger as fast as he can, simultaneously trying to get his other hand into a proper firing position to stabilize the revolver.

L.N. will never forget this moment. He has watched in horror as Ibarra moved toward his mother and Emilio with what L.N. will describe as, not a run, but an "aggressive walk." Emilio and Keyla are trapped in a corner where the kitchen enters the hall, with nowhere to run. As the first shot explodes, the muzzle flash illuminates the imperfectly lit room, burning into L.N.'s memory the image of Ibarra's upraised bludgeon. L.N. closes his eyes in terror as two more gunshots rock the room. He opens his eyes to see Ibarra walking away from his mother and Emilio, toward the front door. He appears to be hurt. Ibarra stops at the threshold, vomits, then staggers outside and collapses to the ground. Alina Reyes shrieks, "You've killed my husband! You've ruined my life!"

Immediate Aftermath

Alina is screaming in a mix of fury and fear. Unsure how many rounds he has fired but thinking his gun is still partially loaded, Emilio wants to get the revolver out of the volatile scene. He rushes outside, shoves the S&W under the seat of his car then races back. He plucks the cell phone from the hand of the stunned Keyla and calls 9-1-1. In his conversation with the emergency dispatcher, he will beg for medical assistance and state that he shot a man who came at him with a weapon. When asked how long ago, he will blurt,



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"Five minutes." The rest of the conversation is taken up with the dispatcher giving him instructions for CPR.

The first responding officer is Sgt. Jim Billberry of the patrol division of the Miami Police Department. He observes Plana, covered with Ibarra's blood, desperately performing cardio-pulmonary resuscitation on the downed man until the paramedics arrive to take over. Then Plana is handcuffed. He tells the officers where the revolver is. By now Detective Emiliano Tamayo of MPD is on the scene. Tamayo has "caught" the call as lead investigator. Plana tells him, "I want to tell you my side of the story." The detective replies that he appreciates that and he'll soon have a chance to, but for now, Tamayo has to secure the scene. Plana gives consent for a search of his car and the apartment, and is placed, manacled, in the back seat "cage" of a patrol car.

By the time Detective Tamayo returns to him and begins to read him his *Miranda* rights, Plana has had time to reflect on the advice the public hears from virtually every attorney: "Don't waive your rights! Say nothing until your attorney tells you to!" He quietly tells the detective, "I wish to invoke my right to remain silent." Very shortly, his girlfriend will say the same thing. L.N., the juvenile, will never even be asked what happened.

Meanwhile, Luis Ibarra has been pronounced dead on arrival at the receiving hospital. Understandably stricken with grief and anger, his bereaved widow blurts a story of Emilio approaching Luis as he was leaving and shooting him in the back again and again — four times, five, the story keeps changing — pumping bullets into him as he lies helpless on the ground outside. She claims that Emilio went into the kitchen to get the gun, creating a platform for premeditation of murder. With only this input, the police have no choice but to arrest Emilio for Murder in the First Degree. Later, claiming that Plana had shot an unoffending Ibarra three times in the back, the Dade County prosecutors will successfully argue against bail. Emilio Plana will rot in the Dade County Jail from this night, October 1, 2001, until his trial at last commences on March 31, 2003, a period of almost exactly eighteen months.

The Trial

The Second Degree Murder trial of Emilio Plana, Case Number FO130087 in the Circuit Court of the 11th Judicial Circuit, began on March 31, 2003 in the Dade County courtroom of Judge Cecilia Antonaga. Lawyers on both sides had changed as the case developed. By the time Plana had hired Mark Seiden to represent him, the State's will to prosecute had solidified. It would be a duel of two capable courtroom veterans. Shana Seitchik is an experienced prosecutor and a skilled questioner who impressed me as having done her homework. She was



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assisted by an equally sharp Yvonne Leto-Sanchez in second seat. However, in Seiden, she was probably up against the best defense attorney she had ever faced. A veteran street cop who worked as a Metro-Dade County detective while attending law school at night, Seiden emerged as a young *wunderkind* of the defense bar when he ably partnered with the famous Roy Black in the high profile defense of Miami Officer Luis Alvarez in 1984, winning his acquittal. You can learn more about him in Roy's memoir *Black's Law*, available in bookstores everywhere, but suffice to say that Seiden is a master of presenting forensic evidence and of structuring a defense that demolishes the prosecution's case brick by brick and leaves nothing standing when he is done. Mark's very capable co-pilot at second seat was Raquel Suarez.

**Yes, they knew how
quickly a man so armed
could bludgeon people
to death in the close
quarters involved here.**

Ms. Seitchik began with an opening statement that accused Plana of having been in no danger when he shot Ibarra multiple times in the back, a murder he premeditated when he maliciously loaded his gun with deadly hollow points and deliberately retrieved it from the kitchen of the shooting scene. That he had admitted to the dispatcher that he'd left his victim to bleed to death for five minutes without aid. That one of his bullets had broken the victim's spine, so he must have been shot where he lay and couldn't have walked outside before collapsing.

However, her case began to self-destruct as soon as Seiden did his first cross-examination. The scattered and self-contradicting stories of Ibarra's widow did not ring with credibility in the jury's ears, especially after she admitted under Seiden's gentle and compassionate cross that she had instituted a huge lawsuit against the defendant, a lawsuit that would obviously be easier to win if Plana was found guilty in court.

Both Sgt. Billberry and Det. Tamayo testified honestly and professionally. They told Seiden in cross that they had never seen a murderer voluntarily immerse himself in the potentially pathogenic blood of his victim, nor give him mouth to mouth after the victim had vomited. The weapon they had recovered was a solid steel crowbar the length of a tire iron, not the harmless hollow tube the widow had testified it was, and yes, it could certainly be a very lethal weapon.

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Yes, they knew how quickly a man so armed could bludgeon people to death in the close quarters involved here. What would they do if an enraged man came at them with such a weapon? They would, they answered, shoot him until they believed the attack had stopped.

Criminalist Jess Galan testified that the shots had come from Plana's S&W. On cross, he was asked if it was common for people who weren't gun experts to leave previously fired shell casings in their gun. He replied that it was. Was the hollow point ammo an indication of malicious intent? No, Galan patiently explained to the jury, it was universally used by police because it was safer to the public in terms of reduced ricochet and over-penetration.

**The defense now
opened with the moving
testimony of young L.N.
He would not be shaken
on the witness stand.**

The prosecution closed on Monday, April 7 with Dr. Bruce Hyma, the Chief Medical Examiner for Metro-Dade County. On cross, he told Seiden that the gunshot wound in the right side and the two in the back were absolutely consistent with the shooter firing as fast as he could pull the trigger as the other man swung a crowbar past him, with the shooter ceasing fire as soon he realized the clubber's momentum had carried him fully around until he was facing the other way. The bullet that had clipped the spinal column, the doctor testified, would not necessarily have dropped him immediately. While the post-mortem exam had found pressure on the spinal cord from accumulated blood and cerebro-spinal fluid, it would have taken several seconds for it to build up after the small vertebral fracture caused by the .38 slug ... seconds in which Ibarra could walk outside before collapsing. Physical evidence in the form of blood spatter and vomit corroborated Dr. Hyma's opinion.

The defense now opened with the moving testimony of young L.N. He would not be shaken on the witness stand. Next up was Dr. Martin Fackler, the noted wound ballistics expert, who confirmed Dr. Hyma's opinion that Ibarra's wounds were consistent with him swinging the crowbar and momentum carrying his body 180 degrees around in front of a revolver that was being desperately fired at maximum speed in self-defense. He was also able to testify as to tachypsychia, the phenomenon of a crisis being experienced in



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slow motion, which would account for Plana telling the dispatcher that the shooting had gone down five minutes before when, in fact, no more than 30 seconds had probably elapsed.

Then came Stewart James, author of an authoritative text on blood spatter evidence and one of the nation's leading authorities on the topic. He testified unequivocally that the blood spatter evidence indicated that Ibarra was shot inside the house, at the point where L.N. testified he had attacked the defendant, and that he had staggered outside while bleeding and then collapsed. Seitchik's long cross-examination only allowed James to strengthen the opinions he communicated to the jury.

It was nearly 5 PM when James left the stand. After two days of jury selection, the prosecution had spent more than three days trying to convince the jury Plana was a murderer who deserved to spend the rest of his life in prison. In less than a full afternoon, the defense had clearly shown otherwise, and knowing the power that would have with a tired jury, Seiden rested the defense. I hadn't seen a bold finish like that since Seiden and Black won the acquittal of Officer Will Lozano a decade before, when they rested on their destruction of the prosecution's case and never presented a defense at all. I was waiting in the courthouse hall at that moment, to "bat clean-up" as Seiden had put it, but no clean-up was necessary. The state's witnesses had become defense witnesses. Seiden, like his client, had stopped a determined and dangerous attack without expending all the ammunition at his disposal.

The following day, after only three hours of deliberation, the jury found Emilio Plana not guilty.

Lessons

First, the "street side." Use your holster properly and be practiced with it. The Bianchi #5 scabbard Plana had acquired for his gun is an excellent rig and very fast, but only if mounted on a proper belt as the manufacturer specifies. If you wish to carry in your pocket, use a dedicated pocket holster of the kind advertised in this publication. If Plana had drawn from a Kramer pocket holster or a belt-mounted Bianchi, he would have gotten his gun out in time to shoot his attacker in the front before a deadly swing of the crowbar could have endangered his life.

When you load your modern revolver, load it fully. The empty case left in one chamber allowed the prosecution to allege that Plana had fired one more round than he did. Fortunately, all eye and ear witnesses save the widow heard only three shots. If you carry an auto, remember that only a few auto pistols need their magazines down-loaded by one round for reliability: historically, these include the Browning Hi-Power, the first generation S&W 9mms, and the 1911 with most

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eight-round .45 magazines. In any case, a down-loaded auto pistol does not leave an extra spent casing at the scene to muddy the truth of the investigation.

As Robert Ruark so famously said, "Use enough gun." The revolver in question was a .357 Combat Magnum, loaded with 125 grain +P .38 ammo rated for 264 foot-pounds of energy at the gun's muzzle. With the same projectile, a full powered .357 Magnum round more than doubles the impact with 583 foot-pounds. When police departments like Indianapolis PD and the Kentucky State Police had the 125 grain Magnum, the overwhelming majority of their shooting incidents were over as soon as one .357 slug hit the offender's torso.

Now, the "court side." Put all the above together, and it's clear a single Magnum bullet from a quickly-drawn Smith 66, entering from the front and hopefully stopping the attack right there, would have been a much easier scenario to defend in the aftermath than three .38 slugs in the side and the back.

Don't attempt to answer in detail to questions of time, distance, etc. in the immediate aftermath of a life threatening experience. Such stress alters perceptions of time and space. Asked when the shooting took place, Plana would have done better with an honest answer of "Just now" instead of "Five minutes."


Finally, in a world where many investigators read silence as guilt, there are certain facts I firmly believe do need to be told to the police when they arrive on the scene. Suppose Emilio Plana had said this to Detective Tamayo: "This man attacked my girlfriend and I. I will sign the complaint. Keyla and L.N. both witnessed it. He dropped his weapon right there. You know how serious this is, Detective, and you will have our full cooperation in 24 hours after we've spoken with counsel."

Had the defendant in this case uttered those words at the scene instead of invoking his right to remain silent, I think there is an excellent chance that the case of Florida v. Emilio Plana would have been no-billed by a grand jury that recognized it for the justifiable homicide it was, instead of resulting in an ordeal that cost an honest armed citizen a year and a half of his life.

Mark Seiden and I respectfully disagree on this. Mark feels that no person under this kind of stress can avoid being led down the primrose path to self-incrimination by a skilled questioner, and that by invoking his right to remain silent, Plana paid eighteen months of his life to keep the entire rest of that life. As a general rule, Seiden advises to always invoke your right to silence and never give a statement to the police following a shooting.


The decision, as always, is yours. You have an advantage Emilio Plana didn't: time to think about it before such a crisis occurs to you.








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GUNCRANK

Continued from page 24

inlays, no ivory grips. Just good quality, solid, durable, okay — *beautiful* — guns. They're all shooters, not "collector pieces." Okay, a half-dozen are mint, unfired, but they're still shooters, and that only makes sense. Guns are like gold coins you can shoot; like multi-purpose ingots, or investor-quality gems you can also mow the lawn with. I have kids, and they might go to college, see? Sure, I have college savings funds for them too, but ... guns are better, safer, a surer value, and — just *better*. Because they're guns, you know? Of course you do. And, maybe the kids won't go to college, in which case, I have those guns. Nothing wrong with that.

Her objection to my gun-gathering thing, which she calls my "personal perversion," seems to come on like a rogue tsunami on a cyclical basis. Like those wet tsunamis, they seem to come 'outta nowhere, threatening to wipe out the placid beachfront of my gun-sorta-collection for no good reason at all. None I can see, anyway.

It's not like I'm taking food out of the kiddies' mouths or swapping the family silver for an 1873 Colt. About 20 years ago I started my "gun fund" with \$500, and since then I've wheeled, traded and bargained for about 90 percent of my guns, ammo and peripheral gun-junk. Hey, the mortgage gets paid, I got the pinks to the truck and the Outback, and the kids' teeth are straight, so put that pointy-finger of irresponsibility away. That ain't me.

She knows all this. At least, on some level of Vulcan logic, she knows this. And it's not like she's against guns. She's married to *me*, after all. She just has these fits where she believes one or two guns ought to do me. I think these episodes probably have more to do with her unre-

quited desire to throttle a certain soccer referee, or that Wendy's employee who screwed up her order at the drive-thru. But still, the tsunami rolls in.

I had only one more move. I knew it was dangerous — perhaps lethal — but it was all I had left. I pointed to The Sacred Shrine — her shoe closet. "Shall we compare," I drawled, "My *personal perversion* to your *private passion*?"

Gotcha! I saw a half-tremble, a microsecond of doubt, a paper-thin slice of primal fear glimmering before she raised her arms, slapped 'em together across her chest, and tiger-smiled, "Okay, yes, lets."

She opened the Shrine. You know how railroad tracks seem to converge to a point as they disappear into the distance? That's what her shoe racks do in that long, long closet. I had never *gone there*, literally or figuratively. Mentally, I think my head might explode. Physically, I think it might be *mined*; booby-trapped. Claymores, at the least.

"First," she said, "I think we can agree that a woman can never have too many shoes." I squinted. Her eyes flickered. "And a man can never..." I said gently — and she wavered. I pounced. "No, first, let's ask, who has more? Pairs of shoes — or guns?" *Point!* "Ummm ... how many pairs you got in there, honey?" I don't know for sure. Heck, I don't *want* to know! But my gunsafe is one-quarter the size of her shoe closet. I know I scored a point there.

Thud! Bang! Whop!

"But," she parried, "I only wear one pair at a time!" *Whop!* "And I only wear one gun at a time!" Another eye-flicker, but I parried, "Okay, sometimes two ... *Sometimes*. That's like a pair. Sorta."

"How about all that other gun stuff, besides the guns?" This serve was weak, weak ...

"Oh, you mean *accessories*," I asked, "Like holsters and ammo and magazines ..." Her head was bobbing like the back-

window doggie in a Chevy Vega — "Accessories like somebody's *matching belts and purses*?" The bobbing stopped. Dead. She recovers! What a save! *Whop!*


"When's the last time I spent \$600 on shoes?" *Backhand, bang!* I pointed to a pair of wine-red kid leather Dolce & Gabbana pumps. "Those?" I didn't touch them — I knew better. The blow was effective enough without that. The angry orange lights faded from her eyes, and I knew she was mine, *fini*. Shaken, she drifted into dreamy-eyed somnolence, reaching out and stroking shoe after shoe ...

"But," she murmured, "My shoes are *beautiful*... and well-made, and they're *Zanotti's*, and *Versace*, and *Gucci*, and I just love *touching them, handling them, and...*" Her eyes glistened. Tears? Of what? Joy, tenderness, passion? I lowered my voice to a whisper.

"And my guns," I murmured, "The *Smiths*, the *Colts*, the *Glocks* and the *Rugers* ... They're so *beautiful*, and well-made, and I just like ... You know ..." If I'da had an onion in my pocket, I woulda used it, you bet, but I think I got a little honestly misty-eyed anyway. Hey, they are pretty dang beautiful, right?

"And my guns," still tenderly, gently now, "They *increase in value* every day ... I appreciate them, and they appreciate for me — for us ... for us ..."

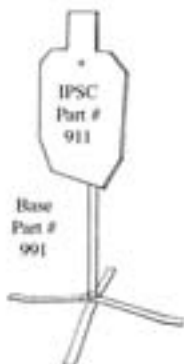
I didn't have to point out there ain't a single pair of heels, flats, pumps, or sling-backs in that cavernous closet-of-dreams that would fetch back ten percent of their original cost. I didn't have to. As long as I didn't rub it in.

There was something else I didn't say, but I think it: "*Point, set, and MATCH, dear!*" I also refrained from any kind of football "victory" dance as I stood, with just the right big, brown, Golden Retriever-type eyes I could muster, toes just touching the tiles at the entrance to the sacred closet. Discretion is, indeed, the better part of valor. 

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Continued from page 68

few complaints. Georges Rahbani, a superb handgun shot, tended to place his finger low on the trigger of the rail gun, where he found an edge sharp enough to draw blood. The rest of us, placing our fingers center on the triggers, did not experience this.

Loren Neill tried the guns. A former state women's champion IPSC shooter, she appreciated the light triggers and the accuracy. Her only complaint was that for her short thumb, the manual safety of the rail gun was a bit stiff to push up into the "on safe" position.

Nick Bolton used "47" as a teaching gun for a weekend Advanced Handgun class. It was there he shot his 1" group from right-hand barricade at 25 yards. "The trigger was lighter than I'm used to," he told me, "and shooting at speed, the shot would sometimes go just a little before I was ready for it."

I found the same. Like Nick, I keep my street single actions somewhere between 4.0 and 5.5 pounds, and use the same in competition. Running a pace-setter on the 60-shot police-style qualification course for an LFI-I class, I loosed a shot prematurely in the weak-hand-only stage that damn near escaped the "A" zone. Another went to 12 o'clock in the "A" from 15 yards. I finished with a 300 out of 300, but those two rounds had left me with a sloppy seven or eight-inch group. Running the same course later in the day with the same ammo in a Kimber Classic II with 4.5-pound pull, I got the same score with a group of 60 holes measuring just under four inches. This wasn't a "bad gun/good gun" thing, it was a "relative familiarity with two starkly different trigger pulls" thing.

Everyone liked the sight picture each Wilson CQB presented. Every tester appreciated the consistency and quick reset of their triggers. And testers were unanimously happy with the reliability of the Wilson guns.

The tight barrel/slide/frame fit caused the cycling to start to become sluggish at around 500 rounds for each pistol. "47" experienced some feed failures with a student's "no-name generic magazines," which also failed to lock the slide open. The rail gun jammed on the feeble and erratic Federal Ballistic clean lead-free ammo, and on one occasion failed to go into battery with a reloaded cartridge of unknown pedigree.

Both guns were cleaned in an L&R Ultrasonic unit shortly after passing the 500-round mark and then re-lubricated with Break-Free, and the sluggish slide operation disappeared. There were absolutely no malfunctions of any kind with any copper jacket/lead bullet factory round and the Wilson magazines —

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100-percent reliability when the guns were used with the manufacturer-recommended magazines and "fed the right stuff." Later, back at home base, we discovered the new Wolff seven-round magazines worked every bit as well.

There was one thing I couldn't help but notice. Twenty years ago, the Wilson custom Colts' hammers had tended to follow. Bill and his team have learned some things. Even in abusive testing, even with the light trigger pulls, we could not make the hammers follow even once on the Wilson Combat CQB pistols.

Wearing the CQB

I carried one or the other CQB for a couple of weeks. The standard model, of course, fit all my Government holsters. The rail gun was snug in a Josh Bulman belt scabbard and a Milt Sparks Versa-Max IWB, but smoother drawing in an old thumb-break holster by Gordon Davis. I used the latter mostly, because CQB's do not have internal firing pins and both of these were set-up like Series '70 Colts. If I was to order my own, I would specify what Bill calls the California Package. This comprises a light titanium firing pin mated with extra strong firing pin and hammer springs, and renders the gun "drop-safe" against impact-generated inertia fire.

Yeah, I know, "I'm not gonna drop my gun." And Sarah Brady says she doesn't need to carry a gun because she'll never be attacked by a dangerous criminal. In either case, to quote a popular book title, "Hope Is Not A Strategy." The very fact we carry guns indicates we are wise enough to prepare for worst-case contingencies. In fights, guns get struck and dropped. \$30 extra for the California Package is money well spent.

Even inside the waistband, no sharp edges dug into me. The CQB's engendered confidence, the Light Rail model the more so when I slid on the perfectly-fitting Insight M3 flashlight and slipped in the 10-round extended Wilson magazine when I set the gun at bedside each night.

Bottom Line

As was true 20 years ago, Wilson guns ain't cheap, but they're worth the price for the quality and for the absolute delivery of promised functions. With factory ammo and Wilson and Wolff magazines, they functioned 100-percent, including with the PMC ball which Wilson Combat recommends against. When you figure how many jobs the \$2,000 gun performs — carry gun, match gun, home defense gun — the three-guns-in-one performance makes it cost-effective.



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GET A GRIP!

Continued from page 51

Ted's technique varies from standard stippling in that the metal displaced is directed into a more aggressive pattern, substantially increasing the grip offered.

Checkering

The classic way of adding grip, and class, to a custom firearm is to checker the areas contacted by the shooter's hand. Depending on the number of lines cut per inch, the resulting area can range from comfortably non-slip to extremely aggressive.

While checkering was done completely by hand in the past, the creative use of milling machines has enabled pistolsmiths to create picture-perfect checkering at a reasonable price. But don't let the use of a machine fool you — there's a great deal of work and skill involved in machine checkering, as anyone who's seen it done can attest. Looking at the rows of tiny, perfect diamonds covering the front-strap of a 1911 is impressive, to say the least.

Well-known pistolsmith C.T. Brian, of Grand Junction, Colorado, adds a twist to his artistic checkering, creating the pattern with a milling machine before finishing each diamond by hand with a file. Effectively doubling the work needed to

complete the front-strap, Brian aims to combine the accuracy of machine work with the pride of ownership that comes from knowing your pistolsmith labored over every detail of your defensive gun. One look will tell you that his results justify his means.

The Wave

Custom pistolsmith Dane Burns of Issaquah, Washington, has developed a new slant on improving the handling qualities of the 1911. Created by milling curving parallel lines in both the front-strap and the mainspring housing, the Wave creates a texture that increases traction on the shooter's hand without abrading clothing or holsters. It's smooth to the touch, but allows a shooter's hand to "sink" into the grooves to resist movement both up-and-down and side-to-side. Unlike most other front-strap treatments, the Wave is dependent on the shooter's gripping force for its degree of friction. The tighter you grip it, the tighter you lock into the grooves. Classy, comfortable and effective — who could ask for more?

Conamyds

Conamyds (from "conical pyramids") are the creation of gunsmith Ned Christiansen of Three Rivers, Michigan. Unlike anything that's been done before, Conamyds are a complex work of intersections and lines milled into the front-

strap and mainspring housing, with the resulting surface resembling nothing so much as a ping-pong paddle.

Like the Wave, Conamyds depend on the shooter's grip for their amount of hold, allowing the shooter to gain more traction simply by gripping the gun a little tighter. As an added attraction, they tend to stop other shooters dead in their tracks when they see them — they're that unusual and attractive.

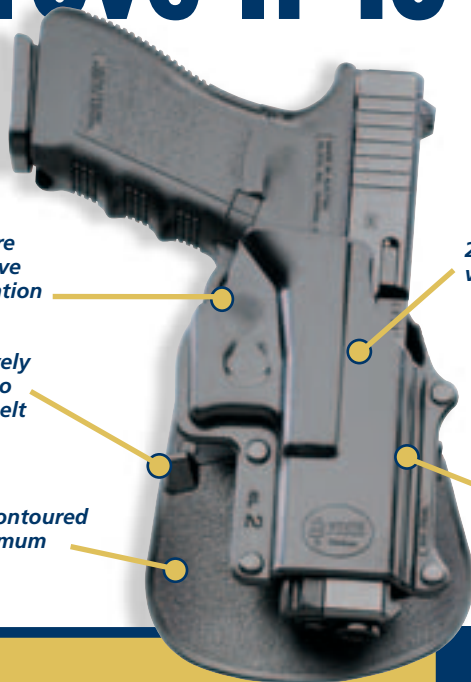
Snakeskin

One of the most visually striking of all the front-strap treatments is the Snake-skin offered by Ed Brown of Perry, Missouri, on his superlative custom pistols. A complex pattern of machined ridges that really does resemble a snake's scale pattern, the texture can be carried onto the slide and mainspring housing, in addition to the front-strap. While the texture adds some serious grip to the gun, it doesn't abrade clothing or hands the way sharp checkering can, and adds a dramatic look while doing so.

Of all the things a shooter can do to add class and personality to a custom handgun, none are more practical than one of the front-strap treatments mentioned. While you can appreciate the beauty anytime, you may appreciate the enhanced traction at the worst of times. Plus, now you know what to order on that fancy new pistol of yours.



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UNDER THE DOME

Continued from page 48

able, but it still requires the final touches of a skilled craftsman for fitting. In the beginning, some imported parts were used, but they have now completed a new manufacturing facility a few blocks away from the original and virtually every part is made right there.

This project is a study in contrasts for we're looking at two guns at opposite ends of the catalog spectrum. First is the Rodeo, which is a mechanically-faithful single-action Army, but with a plain utilitarian matte finish. It's kinda' like the Model T, you can have any caliber you want as long as it's .45 Colt, not that that's a bad thing.

The second gun is a special order masterpiece with lustrous blue and spectacular color case hardening of the frame. The finishing process is done for U.S. Firearms by Doug Turnbull, who is justly famous for both his bluing and case hardening. It can be had in any of the chamberings that were standard for the original revolver. My choice of .38-40 was logical because I have become inordinately fond of it based on experience with a couple of Model 92 Winchester, Remington Model 14½ pumps and a Ruger Blackhawk convertible — whose 10mm cylinder has yet to be dirtied. The cartridge had shown good accuracy with a couple of handloads we'll talk about in a minute, and it's real fun to shoot. As you will see from the accuracy results, it's obvious I'm a genius. Or something.

Particulars

There is very little difference in the actions of either gun. Of course, they have the requisite four clicks in cocking and both are properly timed and lock up snugly. Trigger pulls are between 3 1/2 and 4 pounds on both and, actually, the Rodeo's trigger was better, for it had virtually no creep. The Flat Top's trigger had considerable creep and was a bit rough.

The dreaded curse of most single-action revolvers — either original or replica — is whether or not they will shoot to the sights. Or conversely, whether your idea of ammo and sight picture is the same as the factory's. Here the Rodeo — out of the box — had a slight advantage. Windage was right on and it only took a bit of trial and error to learn where to put the front sight in relation to the rear notch. The Flat Top has a windage adjustable rear sight, accomplished by loosening a small screw. While the front sight is interchangeable, U.S. Firearms offers only one height, which was fortunately much higher than necessary, so it was easily adjusted with a file and milling machine. On the first trip to the range I found the rear sight needed to be moved considerably off-center, and then I saw the barrel was several degrees off vertical.

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Lengthy articles have been written about tricks to get SAAs to shoot to the sights, but my solution was pragmatic. I went to a gunsmith who has the proper barrel vise and carefully snugged the barrel up just enough to bring the front sight to vertical. Then back to the range to gingerly file the front sight down until a center-hold produced consistent results on the target. Then, just to make it look real good, the front sight was milled just enough to eliminate any unevenness from hand filing. All of this was done after Ichi's pictures were made, so if the front sight looks a bit tall, that's because it is. And since I was already at the gunsmith's shop, he touched up the trigger to eliminate some of the creep. But from that moment on, this project has been extraordinarily high in coefficient of neatness measure. It is an absolute joy to shoot.

The Eternal Question

"But can they shoot?" My custom is to do accuracy testing in the Ransom Rest and I must confess this was the first time I'd ever shot a SAA there. In fact I had to order a set of inserts for it. Boy am I glad I did. The Rodeo was tested first and, as the table shows, gave very good accuracy, but when I began to shoot the Flat Top it was a whole new world of accuracy. I'm accustomed to groups like those from the Rodeo, but the first six from the Flat Top were easily half the size. As a matter of procedure I fired six-shot groups (instead of the customary five or ten) so any potential variation due to one charge hole would be the same for all groups.

Ammo selection for both calibers is really not very broad so I elected to use a couple of handloads that I worked up for long range plinking, but had never formally tested for accuracy. The .45 Colt loads are good, but one of the .38-40 handloads was really amazing. I've been using Hodgdon Titegroup for many of the cowboy-style loads I shoot for fun. This one uses a charge of 5.0 grs. Titegroup in Starline brass with a CCI primer. The bullet is the traditional 180 gr. RNFP from Valiant Cast bullets. I have had exceptional results with all of their bullets, but this one is a real dandy.

I need to be very careful not to gush about this, but the accuracy of the Flat Top deserves some. Accuracy testing is something I do all the time, and any gun that produces groups under an inch is a rare thing indeed. It is a rare combination of gun, ammo and propitious alignment of the planets that makes this so. Not only is this gun positively gorgeous — it shoots like gangbusters too. Truly this is the best of both worlds.

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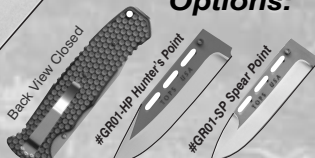
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HIGH-TECH

Continued from page 53

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Bits and Bytes

There really isn't any end to it. If you reload, remember there's more to life in the basement than your \$12.50 Lee Loader and a powder scoop. How about an electronic powder scale like the one from RCBS? Push a button and the right powder weight is thrown, hopefully, even into the pan. It's even sort of fun too. Why be bored when you're doing it to have fun to begin with, eh?

And another thing, if you think you're having fun now, when the excitement of the hunt is over and all that remains are the memories, make sure you've got some photos to gloat over. And, like a good gun, don't scrimp on this one. Around the *Handgunner* office, we use Nikon and Canon and they've never let us down. Both lines (and a host of others) enable you to get anything from a full-auto "camera-for-the-stupid," to a semi-fancy model that can turn you into the Ansel Adams of the deer blind. And, the best part of going digital, is you *know* you've got the picture right then. No guessing and waiting for those "double-prints" from the 60-minute photo place at Wal-Mart. "Aw geez Fred, is that you or the deer? I can't see 'cause of that thumb or sumptin' on the lens." It's the "or sumptin'" part that scares us most.

But mostly, turn on that computer and start surfing. From Cabelas to Bass Pro Shoppes, there's a host of high-tech goodies just waiting for you. And, if there's a 12-year old in the house, they can show you how to use whatever it is you buy...



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VISIONS

Continued from page 71

to have Joel get in touch with him to discuss the possibility of his company producing the Vector. Two months later Pirela found himself signing a contract for his first factory knife collaboration, an incredible feat considering that most custom knifemakers go their entire careers without ever doing a factory collaboration — much less with their very first design!

The Microtech Vector went on to see excellent sales and, indeed, helped establish the company as a cutting edge knife manufacturer. Joel, however, was just getting cranked up, and the success of his first design only added more fuel to the fire within. He and his wife Maria — who provides business and logistical support — came up with the idea of partnering with accomplished knifemakers to produce his designs in limited editions of twenty knives. That has been the business plan for Pirela Blade Design — established in 1998 — ever since. Over the past five years, Joel has worked with over a dozen different top makers on a myriad of projects.

Cream of the Crop

After launching the Vector, Joel's first collaboration was with renowned custom knifemaker Allen Elishewitz. Allen not only produced the first series, but also served as a mentor to Joel during those early stages, helping him establish relationships within the industry. Fate, once again, was on Joel's side. His first collaboration with Elishewitz, the Vortex, sold out during the blueprint stages. Joel was on a roll.

The Vortex, a swoopy tactical folder with a robust clip-point blade, is one of several partnerships with Elishewitz. According to Allen, "Working with Joel is very easy. Not only is he professional about how he approaches a project and deals with a maker, but he also knows exactly what he wants. Yet, he gives me the freedom to incorporate my ideas and modify the design around my production techniques. Joel's designs are very modern and trendsetting."

By far their wildest collaboration is not a knife at all, but an incredibly edgy, borderline-outlandish pickaxe dubbed the Tac-Folding Tomahawk. A post-nuclear blend of titanium, carbon fiber and steel, this preferred weapon-of-choice for some future holocaust, exhibits Joel's unparalleled imagination for envelope-pushing edged weapon design.

Another unique contribution to the Pirela-Elishewitz duo is an upscale version of a legendary old design, the Bambu Balisong — once again done up in titanium, carbon fiber and steel. Imagine whipping this one out at the

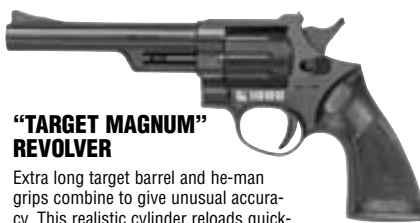
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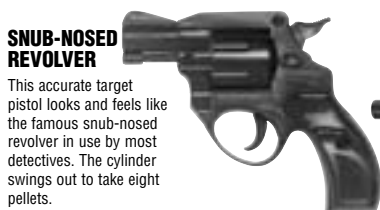
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Folders and axes aren't the only fare on the Pirela menu. The designer teamed up with Strider Knives, whose tactical fixed-blades are legendary among serious users, to produce a nasty bit of business called the "Operator." This is serious steel — Strider can do no less — 10.0" of full-tang raptor claw, 5.5" of that in an S30V stainless steel cutting edge, that takes the Hawkbill blade style to an all-new level. The knife is highlighted by Strider's patented Tiger Stripe camo pattern. The carved linen Micarta handle is a work of art in itself — slim with a deep finger choil and strategically chunked-out finger depressions for enhanced purchase.

Joel's list of collaborators reads like a "Who's Who" of tactical knifemakers, many of who have been featured right here in *American Handgunner*. That rarified list includes Elishewitz, Strider Knives, Walter Brend, Ernest Emerson, Pat Crawford, Warren Thomas, Howard Viele, Darrel Ralph, Greg Lightfoot, Brian Tighe, Trace Rinaldi, Brad Duncan and Steve Ryan. Others include Mike Snody, Wally Hayes, Mike Obenauf, Jeff Hall, Larry Davinson and Duane Carrillo. Whew!

Pick and Choose

One key advantage Joel has is the ability to pick and choose his knife-making partners. This in turn gives his customers a wide selection of designs with different steels and handle materials to choose from. According to Joel, "I think the steel is 100-percent married to the task the knife is going to perform. I ask the knifemaker to help me choose the steel for their specific project, and we've come up with a surprising amount of choices over the years. 154CM stainless steel is the most common, but we've used more expensive ones like S30V and BG-42, as well as exotics like Talonite and even titanium."

While carbon fiber ends up on the handles of many knives Joel sells, he is open-minded about other materials. "I spend more time designing the handle of the knife than the blade, since it's the handle that actually interacts with the hand. My study of industrial design and ergonomics helps greatly. The handle and blade must work together, so every angle, every curve is important. It's not enough to just design a slick-looking knife. First and foremost, it must be functional. The design is the icing on the cake."

One of his hot sellers is the new Xenon folder by knifemaker Jeff Hall. "It's based on my first design, the Vector, but has a host of new design ideas I've collected from my experiences since. The Drop Tanto is one of my new hybrid blade designs that incorporates both flat and hollow grinds — each with a distinct function. This is a blade

designed for deep slicing along the main cutting surface, complimented with a leading edge that offers excellent penetration." The Xenon's handle has a very similar profile to that of the original vector, but also features a notch in the base for wire cutting. A titanium frame topped with drilled carbon fiber scales and a stainless steel pocket clip complete the equation. No small folder, the Xenon opens up to whopping 9.5", with 4" of that in the blade.

Buy Before You Blink

Because Joel's knives are produced in such low quantities, it pays to stay on top of his web site (www.PirelaBladeDesign.com) to see what he currently has available and what's on the way. Typically, Joel will unleash 12 to 16 designs a year, but the custom knifemakers have their own schedules to deal with, so his inventory is constantly evolving. He has a closely established dealer network, and these have the option of custom runs made just for their customers — and they do take advantage. His current exclusives include the Jeff Hall DETA2 Entry Axe for TADGEAR (www.tadgear.com), the Howard Viele Torpedo for KnifeArt.Com (www.knifeart.com) and Elishewitz Bambu Balisong for BladeArt.Com (www.bladeart.com). See their websites for prices and availability.

Pirela Blade Design's clientele is diverse, ranging from serious users like martial artists, police officers and military personnel, to wealthy collector types who just like to admire nice knives. According to Joel, virtually all of his customers have a common thread, "Most are all firearms users as well. They all seem to have magnetism to guns in general. Being an avid gun enthusiast myself, I totally understand. That's why I use firearms and weapons as backdrops in all my photographs." Joel enjoys marketing his knives almost as much as designing them and his full time job as an art director for a Miami advertising agency gives him plenty of practice. He also gives much credit to his wife, Maria, who not only does the bookkeeping, but is actively involved in many of the test and evaluation phases of Joel's projects.

Prices for Pirela's limited editions are right in there with custom knives being offered by the knifemaker's themselves. His fixed blades start at approximately \$400 and folders at \$650. Large, exotic hardware like the Elishewitz Tac-Folding Tomahawk go for \$1,500. For more information on Joel Pirela and his amazing knives you may contact him at his company address below.



For more information contact, Pirela Blade Design, 13224 SW 111 Terrace #2, Miami, FL 33186; (305) 752-6416; www.PirelaBladeDesign.com and www.Tactical-Design.com; e-mail: mami@bellsouth.net

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TAFFIN TESTS

Continued from page 48

looked to be the best lookin' bull, as far as a mounted head would go. I was about 35 yards away. I was using Buffalo Bore's (Buffalo Bore for a buffalo seemed totally appropriate to me!) 410 gr. hard cast bulletted .480 load that does around 1,100 fps from the short-barreled Packin Pistol. Penetration was complete — in one side and out the other — and my hunt was over before the sun even warmed us up.

Buffalo Bore's .480 load had performed perfectly, as I took the first really large animal I know of with the .480 Ruger round. Buffalo Bore's load did exactly as expected. They offer only serious hunting loads for serious hunters. Buffalo Bore's motto is "Strictly Big Bore, Strictly Business" and they mean exactly that. They offer only big bore loadings, every one of which is a serious round for serious purposes. The smallest bore they offer is the .41 Magnum, followed by all the big bore sixgun loadings, .44 Magnum, .45 Colt, .454 Casull, .480 Ruger, .475 Linebaugh, and .500 Linebaugh. Serious stuff for serious hunting.

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Buffalo Bore offers .45 Colt loads suitable for hunting big game where deep penetration is required. All of Buffalo Bore's .45 Colt loads are advertised as "Heavy .45 Colt" and are for use only in modern heavy duty .45 Colt sixguns. There are three standard offerings. For maximum penetration, a hard cast 325 grain LBT-LFN at 1,325 fps; for penetration combined with expansion, a 300 grain Speer PSP (Plated Soft Point) at 1,300 fps; and for smaller critters where expansion is more important than deep penetration, Buffalo Bore offers a 260 grain jacketed hollow point at 1,450 fps. The fourth offering from Buffalo Bore was designed with the mid-framed Freedom Arms Model 97 .45 Colt in mind, and is a 300 grain Speer PSP at 1,200 fps.

Heavy .44 Magnum

Buffalo Bore's standard offerings in .44 Magnum consist of three heavy loads. There is the 270 grain Speer Gold Dot loaded to 1,450 fps; a 300 grain Speer PSP (Plated Soft Point) at 1,300 fps and finally, for maximum penetration, a 305 grain hard cast LBT-LFN (Long Flat Nose) rated at 1,325 fps.

Heavy .41 Magnum

Buffalo Bore, as far as I know, is the only company offering heavy-duty .41 Magnum hunting loads. Their standard weight bullet is a 170 gr. JHP at 1,650 fps. It is joined by two hard cast bulletted loads, a 230 gr. Keith bullet rated at 1,450 fps;



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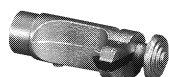
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and for maximum penetration, there is the 265 grain LWN (Long Wide Nose) at 1,350 fps. As with most Keith-bulleted rounds, the Buffalo Bore 230 will not fit the tight chambers of the Freedom Arms Model 83.

Heavy .454 Casull

Buffalo Bore offers two hard cast and one jacketed bullet load for the .454 Casull. The jacketed version consists of Freedom Arms' 300 gr. jacketed flat nose at 1,625 fps; while the two hard cast bullet loads are a 325 gr. LBT-LFN at 1,525 fps and a 360 grain LBT-WFN (Wide Flat Nose) at 1,425 fps. These loads will handle anything that walks!

.500 Linebaugh

John Linebaugh's first wildcat is yet to be offered in a factory-chambered revolver, however it's well represented by custom 5-shot revolvers from John Linebaugh, as well as other sixgunsmiths such as Hamilton Bowen, David Clements, Jack Huntington, Gary Reeder and Jim Stroh. The only factory loads available are those from Buffalo Bore. Three hard cast LBT designs, a 435 gr. LFN at an easy-shootin' 950 fps; the same bullet at a full-bore 1,300 fps; and a 440 gr. WFN for maximum shocking power combined with penetration at 1,250 fps, are all joined by a 400 gr. JHP at 1,400 fps. A 435 gr. LFN at 950 fps may be easy shootin' compared to the others, however it would certainly do the job on a deer or feral pigs.

.475 Linebaugh

John Linebaugh's original .475 was made by trimming .45-70 brass to length. The .45-70 has a large rim that fits in custom 5-shot cylinders fitted to Ruger frames. However there's not enough room for the same rounds to fit in a Freedom Arms cylinder, as the rims would overlap, as well as interfere with the ratchet. When Buffalo Bore began offering .475 Linebaugh ammunition as a factory chambering, the rims were trimmed to fit in the Freedom Arms-sized cylinders. So we now have the excellent Model 83 offered in .475 Linebaugh in all standard barrel lengths, as well as six versions of .475 ammunition from Buffalo Bore.

First comes an easy-shootin' loading of a 420 grain LBT-LFN at 950 fps.; the two heavy-duty cast bullet loads, both at 1,350 fps and both weighing in at 420 grains. One is an LBT-LFN for maximum penetration and the other an LBT-WFN (Wide Flat Nose) for maximum shocking power. For those who prefer jacketed bullets, there is a 400 gr. jacketed soft point at 1,400 fps, and finally two "custom" loadings of a 350 gr. JHP at 1,500 fps and a 440 LBT-WFN at 1,325 fps.

Heavy .480 Ruger

The .480 Ruger is simply the 1.400" .475 cut back to 1.275" and loaded by



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Buffalo Bore to be easier handling than the bigger brother. For practice, or for deer hunting as well, there is the 370 gr. LFN at an easy-shooting 1,000 fps (if we can classify a 370 gr. bullet as "easy shooting"); the same bullet loaded to a full 1,300 fps and my choice for bison, the 410 gr. WFN, which clocks out at 1,200 fps from a 7.5" barrel.

Heavy .44 Special

During all the years Elmer Keith was trying to get ammunition companies to offer his 1,200 fps Keith load, he also asked if they could at least load it to 1,000 fps. Ammo manufacturers were concerned about his heavy load in older guns so he suggested this compromise. It never happened until now. Buffalo Bore offers a true 255 gr. hard cast Keith bullet rated at an even 1,000 fps. This load should do fine for close-range on small deer. The .44 Special also represents Buffalo Bore's first excursion into defensive ammunition with a 185 gr. JHP at 1,150 fps, especially for use in 5-shooters such as S&W's Models 296 and 696.

.45 ACP+P

This 90-plus year old round still remains the number one choice for self defense for a lot of handgunners. Buffalo Bore now offers four heavy .45 ACP loadings. They include three loads with Speer Gold Dots: a 185 gr. JHP at 1,150 fps, a 200 gr. JHP at 1,050 fps and 230 gr. JHP rated at 950 fps. The ACP lineup is rounded out with a 230 gr. FMJ FN at 950 fps.

.45 Super

For those who want everything they can get from the .45, Buffalo Bore offers four .45 Super loads. Two 230 gr loads at 1,100 fps are assembled with FMJ and JHP bullets, while two more JHP offerings are a 200 gr. JHP (1,200 fps) and a 185 gr. JHP at 1,300 fps. Again, JHP bullets are Speer Gold Dots. These JHP versions could also be just the ticket or those who want to use their Model 625 or Mountain Gun chambered in .45 ACP for hunting.

Buffalo Bore's .45 ACP rounds are loaded at 18,500 PSI, while the Supers run around 26,000 PSI. They should be used accordingly. Both are loaded with flash-suppressed powders to aid in defensive shooting, especially at night.

Whatever big bore sixgun you may have, and whatever you may want to hunt, Buffalo Bore probably has the perfect answer for your needs. All loads are tested by Buffalo Bore in actual sixguns so expect the MVs to be as rated. This is good stuff!



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SIXGUNNER

Continued from page 29

Jordan, together, cornered Smith & Wesson and Remington in 1963 and exacted a promise of a new sixgun and cartridge for peace officers. Remember at this time, most defensive ammunition was still of the rounded-nosed lead version. The .357 Magnum JHP ammunition we have today was not yet readily available. Most .45 ACP ammo was hard ball and the .44 Magnum was too big, too heavy and recoiled way too much for use by most law-enforcement personnel.

The Vision

Keith and Jordan visualized a .41 Magnum with both a police load and a full-house Magnum load. They did get both their wishes, however the police load was heavier than it needed to be and the new guns were larger and heavier than most peace officers preferred to carry. The smaller framed Combat Magnum .357 had arrived nearly ten years earlier. Instead of developing a new frame somewhere between the K-frame and the N-frame, Smith & Wesson simply chambered the existing .44 Magnum for the new .41 Magnum, resulting in an even heavier sixgun. This was known as the Model 57, and by removing the adjustable sight and the shrouded ejector rod, it became the Model 58, a somewhat oversized Military & Police version of the new .41. Lately, the idea of a Mountain Gun has become very popular. Perhaps Smith & Wesson would have been better off to use the original Mountain Gun, the 4" 1950 Target .44 Special, as the platform for the .41 Magnum — especially for peace officer use.

A few, very few, police departments adopted the Model 58. However, the round police were looking for would not arrive until the 1990s as the .40 S&W, and in a semi-auto instead of a revolver. Perhaps the .41 was just ahead of its time. Perhaps it would have been more eagerly accepted in a smaller package. Perhaps loaded to the specifications of what became the .40 S&W it would still be in service. Perhaps.

Not Done Yet

However, all is not lost. In spite of the dream of Elmer Keith and Bill Jordan for a sixgun/cartridge combination to aid peace officers, we instead received an excellent outdoorsman's cartridge and revolver. For deer hunting, there is not an animal in the world that can tell a difference between being hit by a .41 Magnum or .44 Magnum. I have shot deer and feral pigs with both the .41 Magnum and the .44 Magnum, and the results were the same. However, when we get to larger, heavier-boned

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and muscled critters, the ability of the .44 Magnum to handle 300 grain bullets places it at a distinct advantage. The heaviest practical bullet for the .41 Magnum is around 250 gr. and this bullet does not shoot well in all manufacturer's .41 Magnums. I have only been satisfied with results using heavy bullets in .41 Magnums produced by Freedom Arms and Dan Wesson.

Four decades after its inception, the .41 Magnum remains the connoisseur's cartridge. At one time Smith & Wesson offered the Model 58 with a 4" barrel in either blue or nickel, the Model 57 with barrel lengths of 4", 6", or 8 3/8" and in either bright blue or nickel. The companion stainless-steel Model 657, came with the same barrel lengths. Only the 6" Model 657 remains in the catalog.

Ruger took to the .41 Magnum early by offering the Blackhawk with both 4 3/8" and 6.5" barrels, and then in the 1980s added the Bisley Blackhawk and the Redhawk chambered in .41 Magnum. Only the Blackhawk remains cataloged. Dan Wesson offered both blue and stainless .41 Magnums at the height of long-range silhouette popularity. Very few are made today, however they are still cataloged.

Hope Exists

One really bright spot in the troubled history of the .41 Magnum is the fact it is chambered in both Freedom Arms six-guns. The large framed Model 83 has proven to not only be the most accurate .41 Magnum I have ever shot, it's also the most accurate centerfire revolver I have ever encountered. Hornady's 210 gr. XTP over 22 gr. of AA#9 (A load only for use in the Freedom Arms Model 83!) clocks out at 1,740 fps from a 10" Freedom Arms Model 83 and shoots 1" groups at 100 yards. Yes, I said 100 yards, not 25! This is using a scoped revolver from a solid rest, of course. The Model 83 has now been joined by the mid-framed Model 97 in .41 Magnum, which is a near-perfect packin' pistol.

My heavy load for the .41 Magnum is the Lyman #410459 220 gr. Keith bullet over 19.5 gr. of #2400 for right at 1,500 fps from a 7.5" Ruger Bisley or 8 3/8" Smith. It is accurate and very flat-shooting. The same bullet over 8.0 gr. of Unique is a very pleasant shooting 1,050 fps. Substitute Speer's copper cupped/lead core 200 gr. JHP for explosive results with either load.

"Nothin' ever works out right!" Had the .41 Magnum arrived in-between the .357 and .44 it would probably have been hailed as a great step forward and would now be one of our most popular cartridges. Instead it is appreciated only by a relatively few sixgunners. Count me as one of them. Happy 40th Birthday to the .41 Magnum. May it be around for its Golden Anniversary, and may I be here to help celebrate it.




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DISINTEGRATOR

Continued from page 75

stance to shape and form a bullet.

Another variation uses a solid, such as tungsten or zinc, usually with a thin jacket. The other concern, since much of this ammo is fired indoors, is that it is free of lead and other toxic metals.

Reliable lead-free primers are a reality now, but not being able to use lead in the bullet almost always results in a projectile that is lighter, sometimes considerably, than conventional bullets. This can contribute to discrepancies in point-of-aim, point-of-impact, and also, possibly, functional difficulties for semi- or fully-automatic weapons.

Hi-Octane Unleaded

It's too bad we can't use lead. It wouldn't be too hard to form a lead powder into a bullet that would be very close to the standard weight yet break up on impact. Unfortunately, the easy path isn't available, so ammunition companies have focused on alternative metals. Several of the alternatives have come close to lead. The one we're looking at today is Remington's Disintegrator.

Disintegrator bullets behave much like ball ammunition until they contact a hard target.

Disintegrator is a new spin on an old idea. When I was a kid, going to the county fair was a big deal and every one of them had a shooting gallery. They took lots of my quarters. There were even stand-alone storefront galleries that operated much like today's indoor ranges. The old mechanical contraptions with moving ducks and spinning targets were really fun — I wish we had them still — but the close ranges made the use of frangible bullets essential. The old time gallery loads often used powdered lead or iron. They would satisfactorily bust a clay pipe or knock over a duck without the risk of ricochet.

Disintegrator is a very high-tech gallery bullet. It's made of iron and when it contacts steel is reduced to little more than dust. The patented bullet (U.S. Patent #5917143) is made by a mechanical process in which a mixture of iron powder with particles of different, but specific, sizes are cold compacted under pressures of 100,000 psi or more.

The bullets are made on specially adapted, high-speed compaction tooling and then electroplated with copper to form a jacket that is thick enough to prevent the rifling from cutting through to the iron. About five thousandths of an inch will do. The finished product looks just like a typical full metal jacket bullet

except for a little flat on the nose that gives away the molded construction.

The Disintegrator is available in a 105 gr. 9mm Luger; 145 gr. .40 S&W; and 175 gr. .45 ACP. Velocities are just a tad faster to compensate for the slightly lighter bullets. The 9mm is 1,220 fps, 1,135 fps for the .40 S&W, and 1,020 fps for the .45 ACP. All use a lead-free primer identifiable by the tiny letters "LF" stamped on the cup.

During my testing there was no significant difference in point-of-aim, point-of-impact and, at the relatively close ranges for which this ammo is intended, these are non-issues anyway.

We've said that one goal of CQB training is to fire at near-contact distances. Remington's data shows that 64.5 percent of the particles have hit the floor within five feet and 97.2 percent within 10 feet. When the bullet hits steel, it is reduced to dust with little bits of plated jacket. I have not seen a piece of either iron or copper that would pose a significant risk to a shooter wearing normal clothing and eye protection at any reasonable distance away from the target.

But no presently available projectile is suitable for use at very close ranges. One source suggested that if the training scenario required shooting at distances closer

than 10 or 15 feet, that risk could be reduced or eliminated by placing the targets on a support of wallboard or the like placed 5 to 10 feet in front of the steel backstop. Remington reports that Disintegrator bullets behave much like ball ammunition until they contact a hard target.

No Bobbles

Disintegrator was function-fired in a number of different pistols with no stoppages of any kind. Remington reports that it has also been extensively tested in sub-machineguns with good results. Since we are really evaluating the ammo, accuracy testing was done with guns known to be accurate. I don't have a real tack-driving full-size 9mm, but I do have a S&W Model 3913 that has been fitted with a BarSto barrel by Wayne Novak. It is a good shooter and while the results might be better with a true target pistol, they are still nothing to sneeze at.

While the primary users of Disintegrator are likely to be law enforcement agencies, anyone who likes to shoot steel fast and close can now do so with safety.



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50 ALASKAN	195.00	350.00	660.00
50-110	210.00	370.00	695.00
500 S&W MAG	125.00	200.00	355.00

CAVALRY COLT

Continued from page 59

advancing and shooting at him.

On seeing this, a young British Cavalry Officer broke from the lines and galloped out to save Rasmus' life. What many people are unaware of is that US and British relations were still not healed from not only the Revolution, but also the War of 1812. However, this single act has been recorded as helping cement US-British relations into the 20th Century.

Rasmus' Colt SAA

Following the Boxer Rebellion, the 6th Cavalry sailed to put down the Philippine Insurrection during the Spanish-American War. Among the accounts from that action, Rasmus told an amusing story involving his Colt Single Action Army .45 revolver. The Army had adopted the Colt New Army Model of 1898 double action revolver, in caliber .38 Colt, and many young officers turned in their .45 Colts for the new lighter revolvers that had less recoil — but not Rasmus. He had carried a 7½" barrel SAA .45 revolver for almost a quarter of a century, and refused to turn it in, which was his privilege.

Chasing him was a Moro warrior who was screaming and swinging a huge razor-sharp Kris.

One day while Rasmus was standing guard, a young lieutenant crossed the picket line to go into the jungle to relieve himself. A few minutes later Rasmus heard a blood curdling scream, and saw the lieutenant running for his life back toward safety with his new .38 Colt revolver in one hand, and holding up his trousers with the other. Chasing him was a Moro warrior who was screaming and swinging a huge razor-sharp Kris. The lieutenant shot the Moro twice with his .38 with little effect, but when Rasmus took out his Colt .45 and shot him once in the chest the Moro fell to the ground — dead. Rasmus recounted the lieutenant went out and got himself a Colt .45 in a hurry.

Among Rasmus' colorful stories, perhaps most fascinating is the one of retrieving his Colt Single Action Army .45. At Fort Riley, Kansas, as he was preparing to leave the service, Rasmus was allowed to keep, or purchase all of his uniforms, equipment, and weapons, except for one — his Colt Single Action Army .45. He lamented over this until three days before his separation when one of the men in his barracks deserted.

Thinking quickly, Rasmus packed his Colt in wagon grease, wrapped it in a rag, and climbed up into the rafters of his barracks. There he found a deep crevice in a

truss formed by three wooden planks. He shoved the greasy bundle down into it and jumped to the floor. It was well-hidden. Rasmus then reported the deserter probably stole his Colt, and the incident was recorded and forgotten.

Nearly fifteen years later, as World War I loomed on the horizon, Rasmus saw an advertisement for civilian carpenters to bid on tearing down the old Cavalry barracks at Fort Riley. You know the rest of the story. When Rasmus brought the stiff, dried out bundle home and carefully cut it open, there was his Colt. The roof had leaked, and there was some surface rust, but the interior of the gun, still packed with dried grease, remained like new. Fearing that he would get in trouble for having an army gun, Rasmus carefully peened out the "US" stamp on the side of the frame, and expertly removed the acceptance cartouche from the one-piece walnut stock. Not long after, Rasmus and his wife moved to California.

Rasmus always kept his Colt loaded with five rounds, and shot it periodically with his young friend. Years later, before he went into the VA Hospital to die, Rasmus gave his friend all his military accoutrements, including his Colt. It was still loaded with five rounds, two of them .45 S&W (Schofield) rounds. He said to him,

"Nobody else would appreciate these things like you will, and you always thought my stories were interesting. I thought they were interesting too, but then, I lived'em."

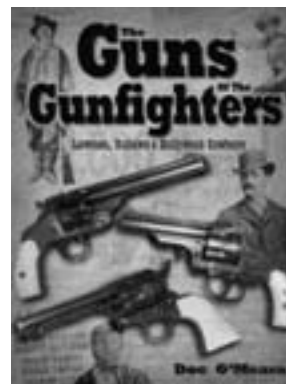
Rasmus' Colt bears serial number 138538 and was accepted by Military Inspector, Ronaldo A. Carr, as the initials, RAC are stamped above the number and on the bottom of the barrel beneath the letter "P" proof mark. There is little doubt these initials also originally appeared on the cartouche stamped on the wooden grip.

Made in 1891, this Colt was among the last military contract Colt SAA revolvers delivered. It was, obviously, a replacement of the Colt Rasmus was originally issued when he enlisted in 1876. The same is true of his .45-70 Springfield "Trapdoor" Carbine that was made in 1884. His original weapons were probably turned in for refurbishing, or to be scrapped.

Any Colt SAA such as this without a history to go with it would still be worth thousands of dollars, but this gun along with its documentation and the rest of Rasmus' uniforms and equipment is priceless, as a collection such as this is literally one of a kind. Rasmus' accounts, his surviving journal, and other information that surfaced have become the basis for a book on his life and adventures.



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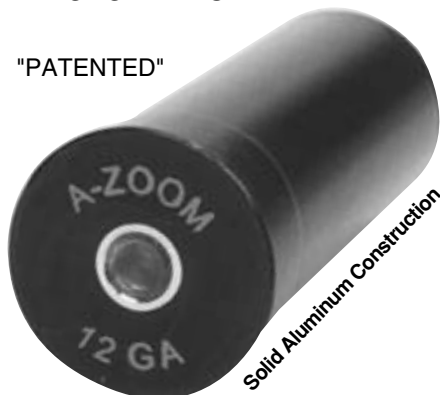
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SPEAK OUT

Continued from page 18

The vet examined her and told us — "It" time." We assisted her onto the table and the injection was given. Emmy closed her eyes, and then suddenly opened, staring at me — then closed for good.

The following evening we heard Buffy barking and growling upstairs. I poked my head around the corner and saw Buffy had made it to the landing, but wouldn't go any further. I called to her, but she wouldn't move. Buffy continued to bark and growl, just short of the landing. I yelled, "Buffy! Get over here, now!" She looked really scared, and she jumped over the landing as if Emmy was still there. That was the only time I had ever seen that behavior. I often wonder if Emmy-Lou paid a final visit to say goodbye to her pal.

John Bellah
Via e-mail

After reading Ginger's story, I was reminded of returning from a long trip to Germany and hugging my wife and boy. After a few seconds of elation, I realized something was missing and asked "where's Ralph?" Anyway, I was in for a parallel experience. Amy, my wife, is reading your story right now — and it's awfully quiet in here.

Gary Smith
Via e-mail

I agree with you about bringing personal responsibility back to life. I thank you for reminding us what is important, and helping to get us back on track — and for the tears running down my face as I read. Nice touch for making me always remember where the tracks are. I'm sorry for your loss.

M. Ullom
Lake Hamilton, FL

Just read the editorial in the Sept/Oct issue, and it brought a tear to my eye. I have a 6-year old Lab and dread the day I will be faced with the same choice. Thanks for an article "from the heart."

PS. Great magazine

Neville Keller
Chicago, Illinois

I guess I have read all of your columns since you became editor at *Handgunner* and have enjoyed them, especially your references to your family. You seem like a fine man, but I cannot get behind you on this issue.

No, you are not the first man to put down his dog in this manner (with a

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firearm), nor do I believe the manner itself is wrong. But when other options are available, they surely should be explored.

Richard Wuest
Clifton Heights, PA

Our family had a long discussion about what to do and our decision was unanimous. I had a long talk with a vet about the particulars concerning how to best manage a quick and painless closure to Ginger's suffering, all done safely with a firearm. Would I do it again? Not unless forced too, due to circumstances — and those circumstances may simply be a look in my daughter's eyes saying "Please Daddy." Editor

I'm an old veterinarian, and have put down many dogs in my practice. Nearly all were done as yours was. We've had three Labs and four Weimaraners of our own, all good bird dogs, and all of them led good lives, closely paralleling Ginger's. Age, though, does take its toll on all dogs.

We have another Weimaraner, a rescue dog named Bleu, who is starting to show some age at seven years. I don't know if I can do it once more, or not, when she is old, but then again, she just may outlive me — I'm 76.

I just wanted you to know I'm an old softie too, tears are still running down my cheeks after reading about your Ginger. Please don't write any more beautiful stories like Ginger's — it really got to me.

E. L. Church, DVM
Custer, S. D.



Ms. Madison and the "new" Ginger. Oddly enough, she was already named when we found her. It seems Ginger's legacy continues. Thanks for all your kind words. Editor

King of Jams?

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, Mr. Hackathorn! Your comment that the 1911 pistol is the "King of feed-way stoppages" in the Sep/Oct issue of *Handgunner* gave me hope that maybe I'm not the only voice crying in the wilderness. I share your fondness for

the 1911 pistol, and carried one for decades as a Texas police officer — but it was also my observation it was less reliable, out of the box, than practically any other quality semi-auto pistol made. My belief was based on not only my own experience with half-a-dozen 1911 pistols, but observations on the police firing range and IDPA matches.

I've kept meticulous records on jams experienced with two Combat Commanders (both tuned by nationally-known 'smiths) and the best they do is about a 1 to 1.5-percent jam rate. True, some magazines do fare better than others, but the record doesn't really support the widely-held belief by custom pistolsmiths that only bad magazines are the cause of jams. My Glocks and Sigs routinely run in the area of .2 or .3-percent jams, and my S&W 3913 has failed to feed once (on a reload) out of over 4,000 rounds.

Having said all that, the 1911 is still the pistol I would go back to if I were on the street again. Kinda like loving a bad woman — you know there are better ones out there, but you just can't bear to let her go!

Jerry Kendrick
Via e-mail

Rude Cowboy Shooters

I must take issue with Mr. Taffin's article in the July/August issue of *American Handgunner* ("Grab 'Yer Sixguns, Pilgrim"). About a year ago I was visiting some friends in Southern California while on vacation. I was invited by one of my friends to go and watch a cowboy action match he was participating in. I was very interested because I am active shooter in IDPA and, to a small extent, USPSA. I was wearing the closest thing to "cowboy clothes" I owned, a pair of cowboy boots, jeans and a borrowed shirt from my friend (one size too small). My friend kept telling me how much fun it was and that I could borrow his guns and maybe shoot a course or two. Needless to say, I was excited to see what cowboy shooting was all about.

When we arrived I felt a bit out of place with everybody in "period dress," but my friend reassured me everything was alright. Then it happened — as my friend was signing in, he asked if I could possibly shoot a few stages with his guns. My friend explained I was visiting and was new to the sport. The gentleman in his "period clothes" looked at me and said I could *not* shoot due to the fact I was not dressed "in appropriate period clothing". I have never been treated like that at any shooting sport before.

On page 75, Mr. Taffin says that, "First time shooters showing up wearing tennis shoes and ballcaps are normally allowed to shoot". This was not my experience and other shooters will probably experience the same elitist attitudes that I did.

I will continue to shoot IDPA with my

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agency issued weapon and talk tactics with like-minded people. If anyone asks me about "cowboy shooting" I tell them to invest in the clothes before they buy their guns because that is what "cowboy shooting" is all about — grownups playing dress-up.

Allen J. Hall
Via e-mail

Allen, that's generally not the way shooters are welcomed at a cowboy match and no matter how you look at it, it's an embarrassment to anyone who shoots. It's this kind of simple-minded, moronic conduct that gives any sport (cowboy shooting, IDPA or whatever) a bad name. If the gun-grabbers see us fighting amongst ourselves, I'm sure they will dance and shout in glee. Editor

Fractional Skeeter

I have just finished my brother John's article on Skeeter's favorite sixguns. I know for an absolute fact he knows the barrel lengths of Colt SA sixguns ie: 4 3/4", 5 1/2", and 7 1/2".

I suppose you could go modern and use 4.625", 5.5", or 7.5" and it would at least be readable and understandable to intolerant old farts like me.

BUT DAMNIT, DON'T YOU FOLKS EVER, EVER AGAIN USE ROUND FIGURES LIKE YOU DID IN THAT REALLY NEAT ARTICLE OR NEXT TIME I'M REALLY GONNA GET SERIOUSLY IRRITATED AT YOU!

Okay, I feel better now.

Sincerely yours,
Terry Murbach

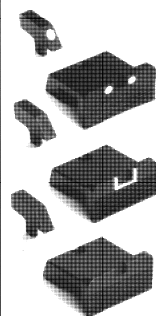
CHAPTER PRESIDENT, IOIOF
(International Order of Intolerant Old Farts ... if you must ask.)

Terry, we lay claim to all the blame on this one. It seems when we send John's stuff from computer to computer here at the office, there is something particular about his word processing program that causes fractions to go to alphabet heaven. We keep telling him the Radio Shack TRS-80 computer he's using needs to be updated and it's getting hard for us to read his 5 1/4" floppy discs, but he usually just growls something about loading a big bore sixgun, so we quit talking about it. Editor

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MAXIMUM

Continued from page 61

tediously handmade at Bowen Classic Arms. The amount of light on each side of the front sight is identical to the picture presented with the factory rear and you get a double bonus in the form of steel construction and finely-graduated positive adjustment. The rear aspect of the sight resembles that of the old High Standard match blades and their progeny. They had two in the shop. I ordered one.

Brown-paper Packages

The GP arrived with a 6-lb. single action pull and that stacy double action so well suited to my method of shooting. The absence of end shake and the minimal side-to-side wiggle of the cylinder was identical to that of my first 6" GP and my current 4" model. The b/c gap looked suitably small; all chambers fell into perfect alignment with the barrel. Disassembly into several modular substructures is well described in the owner's manual and, once you have become accustomed to the process, the GP virtually falls apart in your hands. Reassembly is equally easy. Likewise, installation of the goodies I had on hand was unproblematic.

Experiences of dedicated Rugerites reveal the lighter Wolff mainsprings will frequently fail to ignite the tougher primers. Double-action reliability kicks in at about the 10-lb. weight. So I installed the 12-lb. number. Wanting positive trigger reset, I chose the 10-lb. trigger return spring in preference to the 8-lb. alternative. While the revolver was in pieces, I took the opportunity to lightly polish some of the bearing surfaces and apply Tetra Gun Grease to appropriate working parts. The immediate result — a reduction in single-action let-off to a few ounces under 4 lbs. Incessant dry firing settled the single action release at 3 lbs., 2 oz. It also smoothed things up as well as you could want.

The Bowen rear sight likewise fell into place exactly as predicted in the instructions. Installation is lightning fast as soon as you accept the little front-tension spring (1) does not fit in the hole provided in the sight body, and (2) is completely unnecessary in any event. So it is with my Super Blackhawk. So it is with the GP 100. So it is.

Load Testing

I sat down to chronograph some loads. Since this was to be a target revolver, but a full-gorilla target revolver, I started out with my standard 125-grain hand load consisting of the XTP bullet over 21 grains of 296 and a CCI 550. Five rounds clocked 1,541 fps — consistent with previous results from the 6" barrel length. A single five-round 25-yard group measured 1.7", including the one round I yanked out of a near 1" spread. The Speer Gold

Dot 125-grain Factory load averaged 1,530 and turned in a 25-yard cluster of 1.2" nicely and roundly distributed.

Turning to the dedicated target rounds, I measured velocities much like those chronographed in my 4" GP100. I was using the multi-featured Meister Bullet Company swaged 148-grain Hollow-Based Wadcutters with the extended, reduced diameter nose guaranteed to minimize any ill effects of bullet jump. Loaded in .357 cases over 3.3 Bullseye, they did 795 fps. The same bullet in .38 Special cases over 2.8 bullseye clocked 682 fps.

I also had a batch of 148-grain bevel-based wadcutters loaded over a Terry Murbach-like 5.5 grains of Unique. These had done 1,010 fps from my 4" and recorded 1,032 from the present example. I later put five of these into 1.9" on the 25-yard range. It was now time to find out if I had my Multivalent target revolver or simply something that turned in predictable velocities with previously explored loads. I constructed a reasonably stable shooting rest at the 25-yard range (a rolled up carpet fragment over some hard ammo boxes) and did my best to produce some representative groups. As mentioned, the bomb-like 125-grain loads had turned in highly promising groups. I was hoping I would get target grade accuracy from the wadcutters loaded in .38 Special Cases and, contrary to previous experience, the 2.8 Bullseye loads actually out-grouped the magnum case examples.

I shot a bunch of these and my groups averaged something smaller than 1.5". It is to be remembered that my shooting capability never fully demonstrates the accuracy potential of a given revolver. This is particularly true when I have to use iron sights. My largest group with the .38 special load was 1.7" and I managed a three-group consecutive string of 1.5", 1.4" and 1.1".

Machine Tested

As hoped, the intrinsic accuracy of this rig greatly exceeds my best off-hand shooting on the best of all possible days. My very first shot from the traditional NRA stance sucked. I yanked the round about 1" out of the Shoot 'N See standard 25-yard center. The next 19 however went a good deal better with all of them at least nicking the edge of the target. My deliberate double-action string was even prettier with 10 rounds closely clustered in the black. This happens every once in a great while. Let it be said I tried to better this performance by firing the next string two handed and blew several shots.

It is an accurate revolver. It is a pretty revolver. You can take it out in the rain and it won't rust. You can blast away with full-bore .357 loads and it will not wear out anytime soon. Purchased retail, this identical rig will set you back half the price of anything comparable on the market. Assuredly, I am not going to goof up and trade this one.



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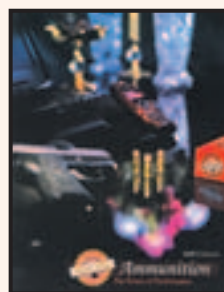
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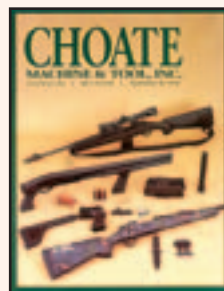
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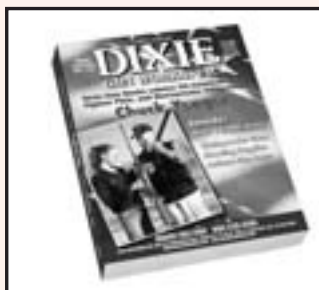
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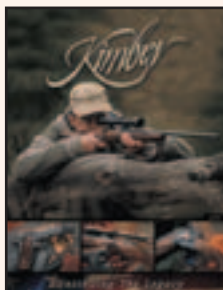
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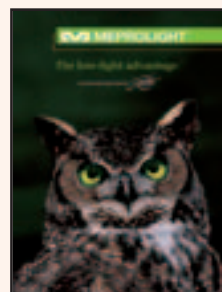
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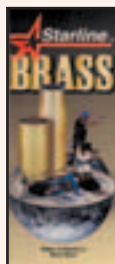
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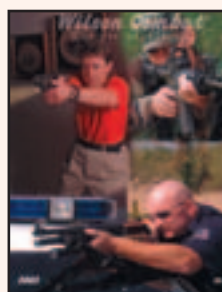
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CATALOG INQUIRY #67



BENCHMADE SWITCHBACK

Every year I look forward to a couple of new knives from Benchmade and every year they come up with something cool. This year it's the "Switchback" — which won the prestigious "Knife of the Year" award from the *Shooting Industry Academy of Excellence*.

The innovation this time is a two-blade design with a normal primary locking blade that is 3.4" long. On the back of the handle is a secondary 2" blade that does not lock. There are a couple of distinctive features. Lock-back knives have almost always been plain and black, but this time the aluminum handles are anodized to a pleasing blue color and tastefully embellished with a little scrollwork. The stainless steel pocket clip can be placed on either side.

To me, the single most important feature of a pocketknife like this is it be capable of one-handed operation. Benchmade's excellent Axis lock makes this a piece of cake. Instead of the more common spring mechanism, the Axis lock consists of a



KNIFE OF THE YEAR

pair of buttons on either side of the handle just below the blade's pivot point. When the blade is opened they pop forward a bit to lock it. To close all you need to do is pull the buttons back a little with your thumb and forefinger. The way I do it is to unlock the blade and then close by pressing the back-side against my pocket. But be careful, they're really sharp.

I've never been accused of great fashion consciousness, but my knife is decidedly stylish.



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HAUGEN HANDGUN LEATHER

It's always fun to discover a small company that makes really nice stuff. Let me tell you about Haugen Handgun Leather. The one I'm using is their Model 213 Speed Scabbard belt holster. It's beautifully boned and molded to fit both the gun and your waist. This one is extra-cool because it's made from brown-dyed sharkskin with a decorative stingray hide trim across the top.

The sharkskin is layered over heavy cowhide but the more I use it the more appealing the shark becomes. The stuff is virtually bulletproof and wears like iron. Of course the measure of any holster isn't how it looks but how it feels and this one has been exceptional in that regard. The one I have is for a Commander-sized Government Model and the first time I slipped a pistol in it was as if the two had been old friends. I'm sure the suede lining helped, but it's rare to find a holster so nicely boned that doesn't require a break-in period. This one was ready to go. The gun was held snugly and it fit me nicely too. The belt loops are curved inward a little which makes the holster — even though it's outside the waistband — ride close to the body and tucks the butt of the pistol in tightly for easy concealability.

Owner Jerry Evans is a retired cop with lots of gun-carrying experience and their list of models and the guns they'll fit is extensive. You can see their standard models on the web site. And, in



these days of escalating prices they're a bargain for a real hand-made piece of gear. Jerry also does all-out custom work, so give him a call if you have a special requirement. 

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SUPERKNIFE

This is another one of those ideas that makes you wonder why it wasn't done long ago. And it also is enough to make me deviate from normal policy and put two knives in one column. I'm a guy who uses a pocketknife every single day. One always stays clipped to my pant's pocket. But even though I am a frequent user I am pretty much a klutz when it comes to sharpening them.

The Superknife eliminates that concern by using something that's been around forever, is inexpensive, and can be found in any hardware store: the utility knife blade. What the Superknife

does — and nicely too — is provide a vehicle to carry the blade safely folded away just like any other pocketknife. It has the same sort of stainless steel pocket clip, locking mechanism and thumb opening stud as seen on many other folders, but the blade is replaceable. Handles are anodized aluminum in a choice of five colors.

If you look at most disposable utility knife blades you'll see a "u"-shaped cut on top of the blade. The Superknife uses this to securely retain the disposable blade. The overall blade length is 2½" but only 1¼" of the actual cutting area of the blade is exposed and it's all held in place by an allen screw. When that end gets dull, you just reverse it and keep on cutting.

A black nylon carrying case is available as an accessory if you'd rather carry it on your belt. The case has room for spare blades and the little tool for replacing them. A great shop, or general use knife.



Superknife, 7498 E. Monte Cristo Ave., Scottsdale, AZ 85260; (480) 348-0544; www.superknives.com



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Bushnell's latest couples a waterproof 8x36 porro prism center-focus binocular with a laser rangefinder. The combination is a bit heavy at 34 ounces. It's powered by a 9-volt transistor battery. Most binoculars are jointed in the middle to allow adjustment of interpupillary distance but the laser must make that impossible, so the left eyepiece pivots over a little more than half an inch. Those who wear glasses may find it easier to remove them to avoid seeing double images. The laser reticule and display is located in the right eye segment. The display is in the lower portion of your view, but is in large, easy to read LED numbers. The power button serves to activate the rangefinder. All you have to do is turn it on with one push, center the object you want to range in the crosshairs and push the power button again. The range is displayed an instant later.

I think everyone overestimates the useful range of this type of



unit and it's totally dependent on the reflectivity of the target object. Those green highway signs are juicy targets but a prairie dog mound isn't so hot. A recent test found the limit at about 400 yards for our test pair, but bright objects could be ranged much further out. The binoculars are sharp and clear.



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The Walther was accompanied by extensive correspondence and literature, including an illustrated 15-page article "Die Walther Armee-Pistolen," by Karl Schafer; two specimens of Sidney Aberman letterhead included — on which this pistol, or one exactly like it — serves as illustration at the top of first page. Aberman was an important pioneer automatic dealer and collector. The .45 Walther in his collection was regarded by Aberman as his favorite piece.



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Photos courtesy of Greg Martin Auctions

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The DeSantis Patriot, style #N84, is the latest improvement on the Sidewinder Rig. The Patriot has an updated thumb break system that is both sleek and functional. The Holster and Double Pouch components are built from padded ballistic nylon and the Harness is wide for comfortable weight distribution plus instantly adjustable using the velcro straps. The Ambidextrous Patriot Shoulder Rig is available immediately for most popular models of handguns. See the entire DeSantis line at www.desantisholster.com or call 1-800-GUNHIDE.

JIGGED BONE REPRODUCTION GRIPS

NC Ordnance

Now you can own fancy "Jigged Bone" Western Grips made famous by Hollywood's legendary Cowboy Stars! "Jigged Bone" grips are faithfully reproduced in ivory like urethane by NC Ordnance Inc. Available for Colts, Rugers, Remingtons, Ubertis, Hawes, Va. Dragoon, Hi-Standard, and S&W. See their 10 page catalog of over 500 reproduction grips and buttplates or order on line at www.gungrip.com



CARABINER Kershaw Knives

Kershaw Knives announces a Utility tool that should be top on the wish list for all the mountain/hiking/spelunking outdoor enthusiasts. Kershaw teamed up with National Geographic to develop an innovative tool combining a carabiner with a knife blade, flat-head screwdriver, and a Phillips-head screwdriver. See this and the entire line of Kershaw Knives at www.kershawknives.com



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ADD IT UP

52

American soldiers killed in Iraq at press-time since the war "ended."

66

Citizens murdered on the streets of Washington, D.C. in the same time period.

\$10 MILLION

Spent to win the NAACP lawsuit against the industry.

\$6,000

Cost of a new Korth revolver. Honest.

99.2 POUNDS

Weight of the world's largest revolver, a scaled-up version of a Remington 1859, with a 1.1" bore.

100,000,000

AK-47 style weapons produced so far, in over 25 countries.

\$1,500

PETA donation to Earth Liberation Front (considered a terrorist organization by the FBI).

33

Percentage of the market dominated by pirated music CDs.

.09

Percentage of accidental deaths attributed to firearms. Motor vehicles, drowning, falls, fires, poisoning, medical mistakes, choking and the environment are all higher.

Continued from page 130

with a ready-willingness to embrace the concept of the *need to do things for the common good* is, perhaps, the backbone of what is America.

And, just perhaps, it's this vibrant, exciting arena of commonality of direction that makes up this concept — this mixing of spirit, history, personality and attention to a common good — that gives life to America. It's her people and how they think, both independently and collectively, that's what is important. It's what has brought us here and, if it dies, will take us with it. We need to stand firm in our heritage, in what made this astounding experiment called America a success, and to not lose sight of where we came from.

It's okay to be right, it's okay to be strong and it's okay to be united for a common good. Stop whining, stop celebrating the mundane, the offensive, the thieves, liars and crooks. Don't let other, real heroes carry the burden for the rest of us. For if we do, they relieve us from having to be quite so heroic ourselves — and that too, is yet another step down that slippery road to nothingness. And what a tragedy it would be if this noble experiment we are a part of — should ultimately fail.

And, frankly, I don't care what the rest of the world thinks about it all. It's what we think about it that's important.

PUBLISHER HONORED

Don't look now, but *Handgunner's* sister publication, *GUNS Magazine*, will be 50 years old in 2005! As a token of his appreciation of the service both *American Handgunner* and *GUNS* has done for the industry, Les Baer of Les Baer Custom, did a little something special. To honor Tom von Rosen — the Publisher of *Handgunner* and *GUNS* — Les made up a very distinctive Thunder Ranch Special. This standard TR Special has been made very special indeed, with the addition of custom serial number TR 02005 and Tom's engraved and gold-inlaid name on the slide.

"I can't believe Les did this and just shows, once again, the kind of people this industry is made of," said Tom. "This gun will hold an honored spot, just as those two Great Western revolvers from our first cover still do. And, I promised Les it will get a regular 'workout' at the range," smiled Tom. What's this? A gun-zine publisher who shoots? Imagine that.



More Knife Stuff

If you like plain talk and knives, get "Knife Talk II" by famed custom maker Ed Fowler. Ed's a regular guy and talks knives, sharp things and philosophy in a manner that pleases the soul. It's just plain fun, and you might learn something too. Get it right from Ed at: Ed Fowler, PO Box 1519, Riverton, WY 82501. It's \$20 (cheap) for a signed copy and \$3.20 for P&H.



The Five Shot Journal

If you like Freedom Arms (and who doesn't?) you need to join *The Freedom Arms Collectors Association*. Their publication, *The Five Shot Journal*, is filled with info you'll want and need to know about all things Freedom Arms, hunting and just plain enjoying these fine revolvers. For more information contact them at: P.O. Box 160302, Miami, FL 33116 or try Facausa@aol.com



HOW TO BE A GOOD LIBERAL Lesson #10

You have to believe that self-esteem is more important than actually doing something to earn it.

CHARLES DALY HP

It had to happen. Someone has finally made a Hi-Power pattern pistol available at an affordable price. Charles Daly, known for their quality shotguns and affordable pistols, is now offering a made-in-the-USA HP. In 9mm, our very early test gun shows surprising quality for the “around \$425” full retail price. Suddenly, everybody can have this sought-after design and still have cash left over to do some fun things to it. Our test gun (an article is forth-coming in *Handgunner*) needs a trigger job and a few sharp edges knocked-off, but for the money, we’re still open-minded. With XS Express sights standard, nestled in front and rear dovetails, rubber grips, extended safety and blued steel, it’s a nice package. We’ll know more once we shoot the snot out of it and we’ll let you know after the dust settles.

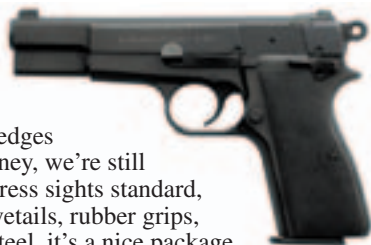


Photo courtesy Ed Brown

1911 Vs. Cape Buff?

And they said Ed Brown couldn’t take a Cape Buffalo with a 1911 — and they were right! He used a .458, courtesy of his guide, after his own gear failed to show up until the last day of his recent safari. Aw’ common Ed, use a 1911 next time! Maybe Cor-Bon will load you up some “special” loads ...

TOUGH STUFF

There are times when all that works is a big knife and these qualify. By an astounding co-incidence, both happen to be Bill Harsey designs, so perhaps there’s a trend there?

The folder — the Harsey Lone Wolf Tactical Folder — is a big, beefy knife, even when closed. When opened, it turns into the “Terminator” of tacticals and is a serious separator. Offered by Lone Wolf knives, it hits around the \$280 mark, which ain’t exactly cheap, but quit complaining.

The other is the Silver Trident™ from Gerber. Former Navy SEAL, Chief James “Patches” Watson (Ret.), Harsey and Gerber got together to make their version of the “ultimate” fixed blade knife. It’s also the first knife to be endorsed by the UDT/SEAL museum in Fort Pierce, Florida. This is arguably one of the finest combat/dive/utility knives I’ve ever had the pleasure to handle, and it’s why I’m telling you about it now. It costs around \$340, which is the same price as three lesser-quality knives, so do your own math.

The Silver Trident is available from Gerber (www.gerberblades.com) and the folder from Lone Wolf Knives (www.lonewolfknives.com).



“Omedetou” Ichiro!

Proving once again he’s the world’s deadliest photographer, *Handgunner*’s own Ichiro Nagata takes first in his division (Senior — but we’ll never tell) at The Bianchi Cup. BANZAI, Ichiro-san!

What’s This? Another 1911?

Industry sources are rift with rumor and half-truths and these may be three of them. Nonetheless, fairly reliable sources (the night garbageman, Jackson, and Grenwald, the florist) agree there are serious rumors about new 1911s afoot. It seems SIG has one up their sleeve and CZ has been making the same noises. We won’t go to the bank yet, but are accepting odds at least one of these will pan-out. Let’s see how wrong — or how right — we are, in a year.

And, we can neither confirm nor deny, those rumors flying about concerning a Glock-produced 1911. These days, nothing surprises us.



Federal Improves Hydra-SHOK

Look for a new generation of this classic Federal ammo soon. We can’t tell the particulars but it raises the bar in this arena.



THE INSIDER

Roy Huntington

AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

DON'T LET THE "IDEA" OF AMERICA DIE



We are a burly, larger-than-life, muscle-bound country. America is populated with the off-spring of adventurers and the fearless people who took a leap of faith into the chasm of uncertainty — to come here to build a new life. These were not ordinary people, content to live under the thumbs of European nobility, but people who, somehow, knew that liberty, equality and economic success could be theirs — if they had the will. Those relentlessly action-oriented people, from all walks of life, left their peasantry behind and planted firm feet on our soil. This had never happened before in the history of the world.

A true story: In the late 1800s an English Lord was travelling in the west. He came to a dirty ranch hand mending a fence and inquired as to the “Whereabouts of your master’s house?” The hand paused, looking up and said, “That man hasn’t been born yet.” Which, quite simply, epitomizes the concept of America. With their own wits and muscle, our ancestors made their way here, succeeded, failed, died, lived, raised families and fought for what they believed in. And did not believe in royalty — or in servitude.

How then, have we, who have the blood of these hardened survivors coursing through our veins, gotten so whiny and finger-pointy? What happened to the stoic fellows who simply took it on the chin, did what was right and kept their complaining to a minimum? Where are the prairie farmer’s wives who buried their own children “out back,” and the lone soldiers who fought against sure

death in the deserts of Arizona?

Why do we celebrate the mediocre? The whiners? The people who complain the loudest? Why do we pay attention to those who mock us from the very countries our ancestors fled from? Here we stand, the richest, most powerful country in the history of the world — and yet, we doubt ourselves and feel guilty about our successes. We pay a price to be where we are, and that price is the spotlight. People will shout, throw rocks, shoot guns at us and want what we have because they didn’t have the wherewithal to manage it themselves. It’s okay to be right. It’s okay to be strong. It’s okay to be decisive and it’s okay to say, “That’s wrong. Stop it. Now.” In short, it’s okay to be American. Yet we are becoming a nation of “middle-roads,” of hesitation in the face of decision-making — a nation of fearful people who hide in their SUVs and wait for someone else to “do something” about it.

It gets worse. What’s with the spate of TV shows and movies in which the “hero” almost invariably ends-up being somehow “dirty” (on the take, murderer — or worse) continues. Why is it bad to be good? How has our definition of “hero” gotten so muddled? Is a basketball star who cheats on his wife, a President who lies, a Senator who steals or a pop star who rants, worthy of attention — other than as a focus of our own solid indignation? Why can’t there be a good guy who is truly good — and a bad guy who is, just as clearly, bad? Why must there always be some middle ground, some compromise? “Oh, he’s a sort of good guy, but not always.” Why are we, as a nation, suddenly so uneasy with the

concept of “this is clearly right and this is clearly wrong?” Why are we so often hesitant to stand up and simply say, “That, right there, is wrong, and we won’t stand for it” — and then back our play.

Which got me to thinking about America in general. Has Darwin’s theory of natural selection been in effect, and are the “good” guys actually becoming slowly extinct? Is the blood-line of that core-group of genetically-tough adventurers who took their lives into their own hands in the early years of this great country becoming — diluted? Simply “coming to America” these days does not make you an American. Now, a plane ticket and a bit of paperwork can get you to here. Then what? And, just as importantly, just because you are born here, unless you participate in what it is to be an American, unless you seize opportunity and become a part of our national culture, what is America *dies a little bit*.

While the concept of the “melting pot” was popular, and the “celebrate diversity” trend a catchy phrase — I think the reality is somewhere in-between. A melting pot denotes a monochromatic sea of *same* ideas, while the concept of “separate but together” that diversity denotes — seems to be simply a jumbled mess of *differing* ideas. Neither concept is what makes America what it is. Indeed, how much diversity can we stand and still maintain our cohesiveness as a nation?

If, to be an American, is to do what comes most naturally to the kind of person initially attracted to this great country — then are we still trying? That sense of savvy Yankee independence, combined

Continued on page 128

When you drew a line in the sand and said: "I want only the best pistols over here"...



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New Kimber .45 ACP pistols - Ultra RCP II (left), BP Ten II (middle) and Custom TLE RL II (right).

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GOLD COMBAT RL II

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The Ultra RCP II™ (Refined Carry Pistol) is the smallest, lightest concealed carry 1911 ever manufactured. A sighting trench is machined into the slide, the frame heel is rounded and edges are blended to prevent hang-ups on clothing and holsters. Slim grips are also standard.

The Custom TLE/RL II™ is based on the LAPD™ SWAT duty pistol, and is the first non-military Kimber with an integrated tactical rail. Custom features include night sights and front strap checkering. A Custom Shop version called the Gold Combat RL II is also available.

The BP Ten II™ is a high capacity, lightweight polymer-framed pistol priced at just \$610, bringing Kimber quality and 1911 reliability into the price range of most popular semi-automatics. The Pro BP Ten II has a shorter four-inch barrel.



PRO BP TEN II



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Continuing The Legacy