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JANUARY 2003

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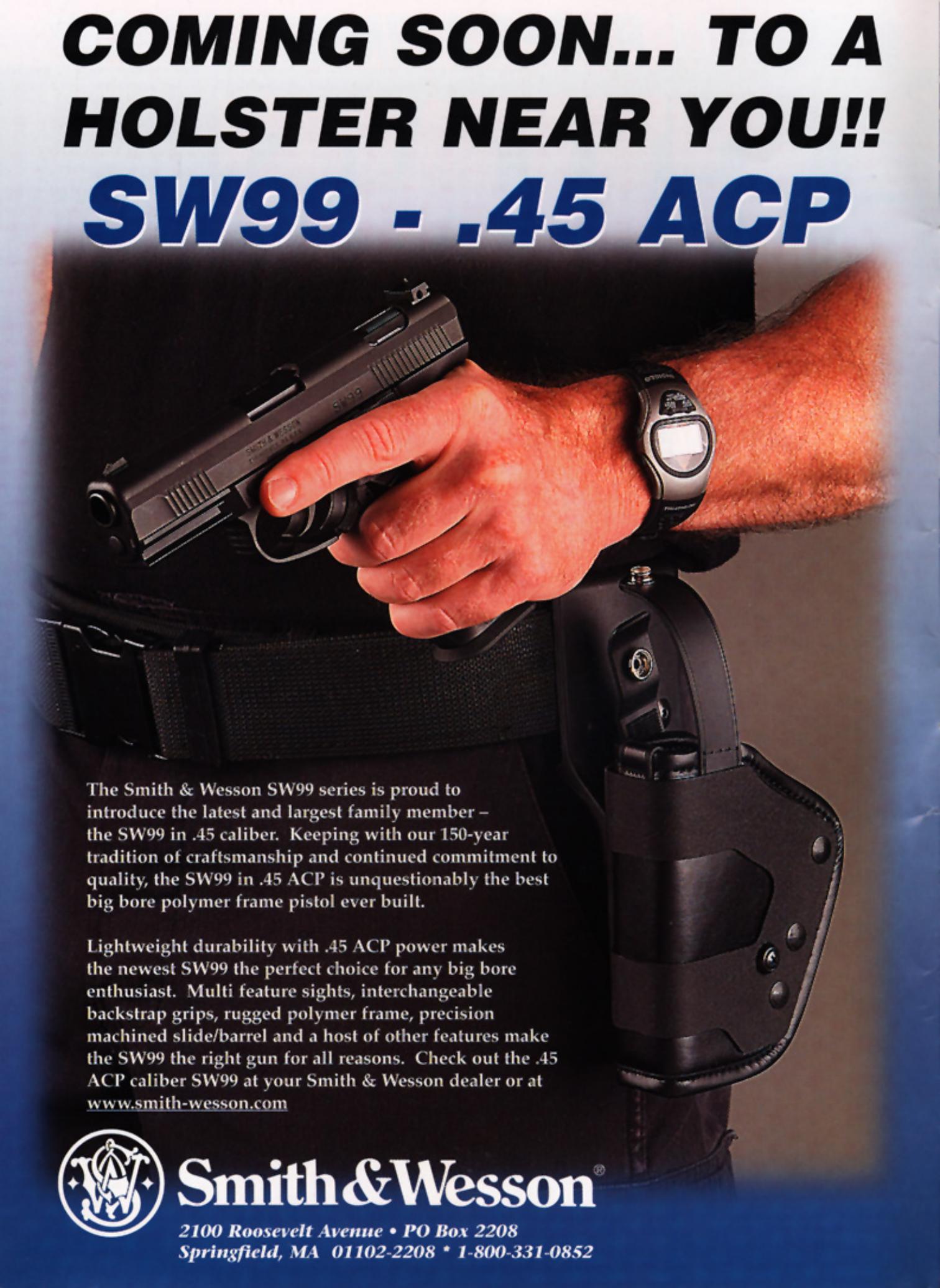
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MAGAZINE

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By Charles E. Petty

Photo by Ichiro Nagata



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are custom made with more and finer bristles than lesser brands. The bell-pack cases are made of ballistic nylon, with heavy duty zippers. The Bore Obstruction Removers are designed to avoid deforming a stuck bullet and will gently force it out of the bore with multiple taps from the Memory-flex rod. The Memory flex rod is nylon coated, aircraft-grade cable with compression welded fittings that will support over a quarter ton of pull force!

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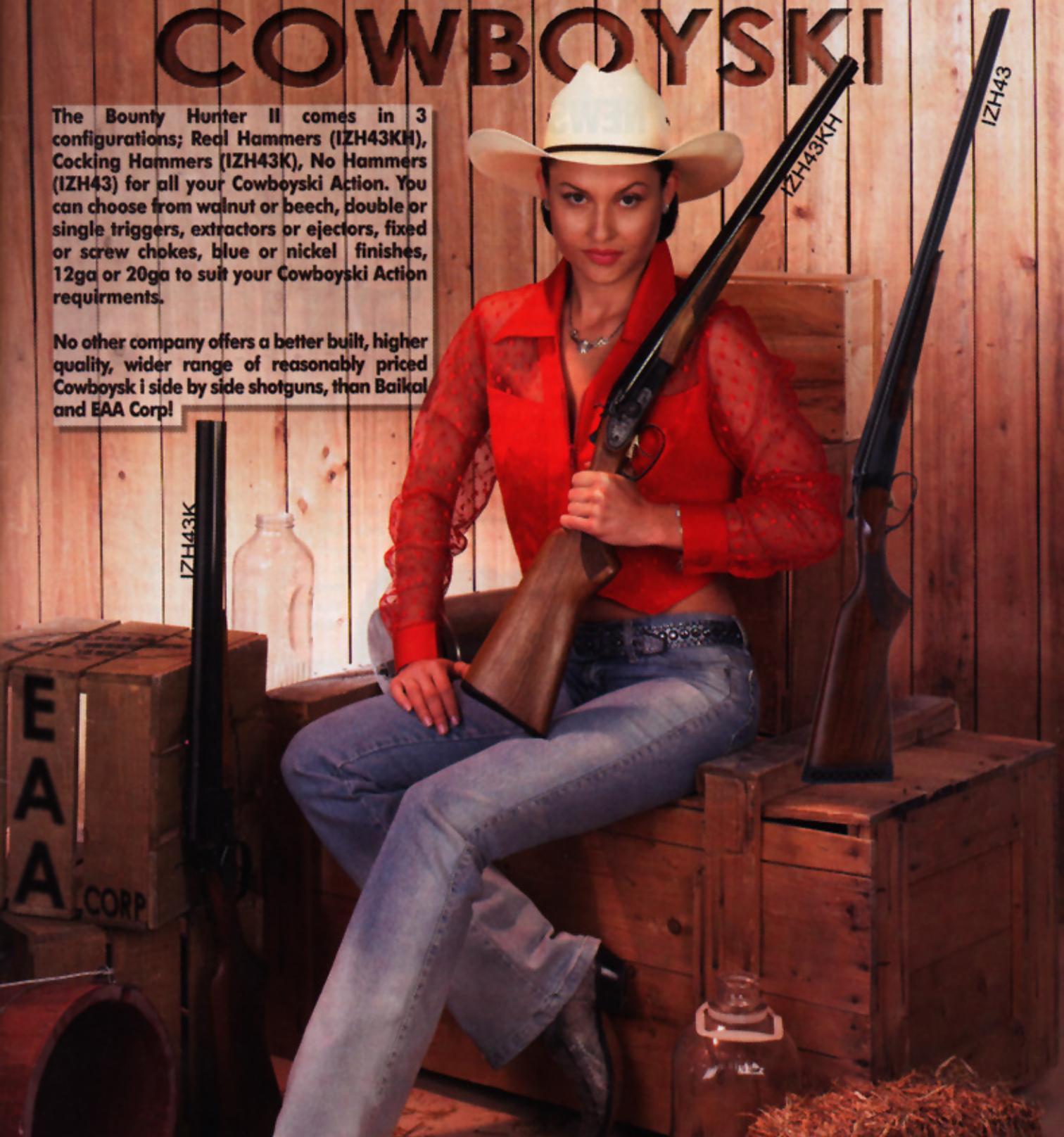
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## GOOD NEWS!

**F**all is such a delightful time of year. In my part of the country, the oppressive days of late summer are now past, and the first hint of the longed-for winter rains have teased us by speckling the dusty ground. Not enough to do any real good, it leaves us hoping for more. But by God's grace, the rains will come soon enough.

Other good harbingers of change come in the fall.

For those who shoot, it's just about now we may begin hearing rumors of new and interesting things from the various firearm manufacturers. With the big industry event, the SHOT Show, just around the corner, there are usually interesting changes in the wind. In just the past few days, I've learned of two new developments, both of which are rather exciting.

### Hurrah! Good News From USRAC

Without checking a bunch of reference material, I think it's safe to say the Winchester Model 1894, produced by the U.S. Repeating Arms Company, has been in continuous production longer than any other domestic sporting rifle. The old girl has suffered through a great many changes over the years, and in my opinion, few of them have been positive.

I'm speaking here primarily of the various "safety enhancements." The Winchester's original design, incorporating a half-cock safety notch, was simple and trouble free. Anyone with the mental acuity to tie his own shoes could figure out how to manage this correctly.

The first deviation from this proven arrangement was the incorporation of a rebounding hammer. I have owned several of these, and although this system causes no real difficulties, the departure from the elegantly simple original design is lamentable.

The same faint praise cannot be lavished on the egregious cross-bolt safety that has been a standard feature on recent production M94s. This device is essentially useless, occasionally dangerous, and is an unsightly blight on an otherwise fine traditional rifle.

Simply by grasping one of these rifles around the receiver to pick it up, it's possible to brush this safety on without realizing it. I've seen this happen first-hand on many occasions. Expecting a bang, pressing the trigger brings only a click. I've also seen people lever two or three rounds through the chamber before realizing they've fallen prey to this damnable device.

In our litigious society, it's understandable companies should seek to make their products as fool-proof as possible, but permitting these safety modifications to inhibit proper function is unacceptable.

The good news is the days of cross-bolt equipped Winchester '94s are numbered. USRAC has redesigned the M94 to incorporate a tang-mounted safety, similar to current production 1892 and 1886 rifles. Falling naturally under the thumb, this will be easier to use if desired, and will be far less obtrusive than the former safety.

Other interesting developments are in the works at USRAC, but I'll have to share these with you at a later date.

### Savage Announces New AccuTrigger™

I happen to share Dave Anderson's opinion (*GUNS Magazine*, December, '02), that the Savage 110 series is an exceptional value. Every sample I have experimented with has been superbly accurate. The sole complaint I would make is the out-of-the-box trigger is unacceptably stiff for good shooting.

The Savage 110 is certainly not alone in this fault, as — with the rarest exceptions — all factory rifles are saddled with the same flaw.

What a surprise then to hear from Brian Herrick, V.P. of Marketing at Savage Arms. He advised not only that Savage is upgrading to a new trigger system — it's designed to be adjusted by the shooter! How wonderful to find a modern American sporting arms maker that desires to treat its customers as thinking, intelligent people.

The new AccuTrigger™ is adjustable within a range of 1½ to 6 pounds. Its design is safe against accidental discharge, even if roughly handled or dropped. The Savage team has extensively tested this new trigger against all manner of both production and custom triggers. The new design is not only lighter in weight of pull, it requires less travel and shows less creep.

The new AccuTrigger™ will initially be offered on the various Savage varmint, law enforcement, and heavy barreled long-range rifles, commencing in January, 2003.

Savage is to be congratulated, both for leading the industry in providing a superior trigger, and for their faith in the intelligence of the end user. Great job, guys!

*continued on page 71*



# Home Defense Rule No. 3: Identify Your Target

Using a bright light to identify and momentarily blind things that go bump in the night is always a good idea. Who knows, you might even get a chance to ask Santa about upgrading your present—after all, you need another tie like, well, another tie. But another SureFire high-performance flashlight you could use. Especially one like the E2e Executive Elite, the smallest light SureFire has ever made that qualifies for tactical use (60 lumens or brighter). At just over four inches long and weighing about three ounces, this mighty mite sets a new standard for real power in an ultra concealable package. With a Military Specification Type III hard-anodized finish, the E2e can take some serious abuse. So this Christmas when you hear a bump in the night, go downstairs and tell Santa what you really want, a new SureFire.

## E2e Executive Elite

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**GUNS MAGAZINE**  
NOVEMBER 2002

# CROSSFIRE LETTERS TO GUNS

**GUNS MAGAZINE™** welcomes letters to the editor for "Crossfire." Send your letters to:  
**CROSSFIRE**, GUNS Magazine, 591 Camino de la Reina, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92108. Email: [ed@gunsmagazine.com](mailto:ed@gunsmagazine.com)

## Letter Of The Month

John Taffin's review of the Ruger Super Blackhawk Hunter model was exhilarating. As with all of John's reviews, it was an extremely interesting article. John is perhaps the greatest gun writer currently in print. He congratulates Ruger on making a .44 magnum that most any hunter can afford. I second that, and take it one step further.

I think all Ruger's handguns are wonderful values. I know that here in Boise, Idaho, armored car guards are paid something just slightly above minimum wage. I worked for a couple of the local companies for a few years. Thank goodness for Ruger. The GP model revolvers and the P series autos make it possible for even an armored car guard to be very well armed for much less than other makes of handgun.

Extremely well built, and very reasonably priced, Ruger makes it possible for anyone to be more than adequately armed. Thank you, Ruger, for thinking of the workingman!

Zeke Corder  
Via e-mail

## Twists And Turns

*Below follows just a short excerpt from a friendly and jovial letter from GUNS reader Loren Bengtson. We're seriously thinking of ignoring his request simply to prompt him to write another entertaining letter.*

*Editor*

I can stand it no longer. The concept of providing a dimension for rifling twist measurements seems to be lost on many writers, and your magazine is but one offender.

My preferred method of expressing twist is merely to state a length, for example 11 inches. This assumes the reader will understand that the twist is one turn in the given length. I have not had much luck getting the world to convert to my method, probably

because the rest of you still cling to a few remaining freedoms.

Since you refuse to accept my enlightened method of expressing twist, I suggest, as a compromise, that you provide rifling twist data in the form of 1:11", as the NRA does in their fine magazines. This still requires the reader to know the 1 in the dimension means one turn of the rifling, but is a very reasonable assumption.

Loren D. Bengtson  
Rising Sun, Ind.

## Birthday Gift

I was given a subscription as a birthday gift. My first issue is September, 2002, and going on what I've seen, I can't wait for the next issue. You guys cover everything.

Keep it up!

Nathan Jackson  
Eatonton, Ga.

*Nathan, we're glad you're pleased so far, but just wait till you see the annual swimsuit issue!*

*Editor*

## Those Darn Fuzzy Sights

In your November issue, John Taffin talks about how iron sights get fuzzy as you get older.

After installing telescopes on several of my guns and tilting my head just right so my Varilux lenses would show a clear sight picture while standing — and all but giving up on bench or prone shooting with iron sights — I have discovered a simple solution.

For computer terminal viewing, I purchased a pair of 1¼ power, drug-store glasses, which work well. One day I decided to try them for shooting. Problem solved. For me, 1½ power works just as well and the target looks okay, too.

On another subject, Taurus or someone needs to develop a larger grip with a bigger

setback from the trigger for their otherwise excellent .41 magnum Tracker. For people with a larger hand, the trigger guard slams the middle finger unnecessarily hard.

Brian Smith  
Via e-mail

## Arming Pilots

As long as the pilot uses the gun to defend the cockpit, I don't have a problem with the pilot having a gun. However, the pilot's job is to fly the airplane and he (or she as the case may be) shouldn't be clearing the airplane of hijackers.

The cockpit door MUST remain closed and locked at all costs. The next time this happens (and I certainly hope it doesn't), not all of the hijackers will be as quick to identify themselves until they really have the airplane under control. I'm sure they realize now why the airplane crashed in Pennsylvania and will do something to correct that.

Steve Ockinga  
Via e-mail

## Mea Culpa

The article by David Fortier on the VEPR IIK gave a URL for Robinson Armaments as: [www.robarms.com](http://www.robarms.com). This is incorrect and is someone's personal Website. If you can send me the correct URL it would be appreciated.

Albert Castagnola  
Via e-mail

*Reader Castagnola is absolutely correct. It seems the correct URL is [www.robarm.com](http://www.robarm.com). We apologize for the error.*

*Editor*



**ENTER TO WIN!**

# They Chose JUST ONE You'll Get ALL THREE!

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



## It was a great year for handgunners.

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

2002 also saw the long awaited return of the Ruger Super Blackhawk Hunter. This is the sixgun John Taffin described as, "All the handgun hunter could ask for." Bull-strong,

rust-proof and equipped with excellent adjustable sights as well as quick detachable scope rings, the SBH Hunter is justly popular.

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

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# SHOTGUNNER BY HOLT BODINSON

Woods-wise at the age of 9, Holt Bodinson's first shotgunning experiences involved chasing rabbits with a 12-bore Stevens single barrel. His advice to the beginning shotgunner: "You must have a gun that fits you well."

## K.I.S.S.

**C**leaning out my reloading room recently, I came across a set of shotshell reloading tools that brought back a flood of memories, and reminded me how simple reloading can really be.

The tools pictured, plus a hand-cranked roll-crimper, a hammer-type resizing die, and a wad punch that I gave away years ago, loaded a ton of shells in the '50s for my father's Fox Sterlingworth double and my Stevens single shot.

The 12-gauge reloading set consists of a cutaway Winchester "New Rival" blackpowder shell to show you how to load a shotshell; a depriming punch; a primer seater; a shot-and-powder dipper graduated in ounces and drams; a loading sleeve/funnel; and a wad-seater punch.

We bought fiber filler wads, card over-powder and over-shot wads, primers and shot from a local sporting goods store. Because we lacked a powder scale, we "dipped" DuPont Bulk Smokeless shotgun powder that was measured volume-for-volume with black powder. Our standard load was 3 drams of Bulk Smokeless and 1½ ounce of shot. It patterned beautifully.

At some point, we acquired 50 Remington 12-gauge brass shells that accepted large pistol primers and 11-gauge wads. We sealed the overshot wads with a few drops of waterglass (sodium silicate) that

we bought at the local pharmacy, but frankly, we found low base paper shells much handier and much lighter to carry.

Looking back, the only thing I miss is DuPont Bulk Smokeless powder. It was a terrific propellant in our .45-70 Trapdoors and .44-40 Winchesters.

Well, we gain a little and we lose a little.

## Two, Great New Books For Shotgunners

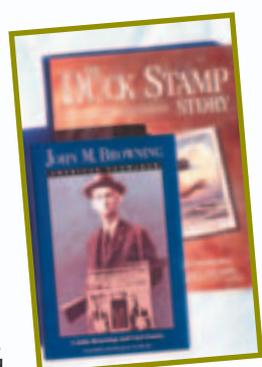
*John M. Browning — American Gunmaker*

Here is a "must read." John Moses Browning's official biography written by his eldest son with additional historical data by Col. Reid Betz, co-founder of the Browning Collectors Association.

For shotgunners, here are the inside stories on the creation of the Browning Auto-5 and Superposed; Winchester Models 1887, 1893 and 1897; Remington Models 11 and 17; Stevens Model 520; plus pictures and descriptions of the many shotgun models that never made it to full production. And, of course, the histories and pictures of all the other commercial and military firearms designed by this genius of a man.

You may have read any number of books and articles on John M. Browning, but none approach the quality of this biography. It's thoroughly entertaining, anecdotal, handsomely illustrated, and very well written.

Hard-cover, 390 pages and priced at \$27.95, it's available from Shootin' Accessories Ltd., [800] 676-8920.



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Here is the complete history of the evolution of the stamp from the passage of the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act of 1934 to the present. Yes, that beautiful little stamp you buy every year at the Post Office, enabling you to hunt waterfowl, has now raised half a billion dollars for habitat acquisition and management and is the greatest success story in the annals of modern migratory bird conservation. If anyone needed proof that "hunters pay for conservation," here it is.

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Soft-cover, 206 pages in full color, priced at \$29.95, it's available from Krause Publications, [800] 358-0929.



**Below:** The author's first set of shotshell reloading tools might appear primitive, but they worked well.

**Right:** These good new books should add pleasure to those many hours when shotgunners are not hunting or competing.



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BH02

# QUARTERMASTER

BY JIM GARDNER

## Wild Bill's Leather

**Y**ou know, we gun guys are just as bad as the womenfolk. When one of the gang here at *GUNS* brings in a new firearm or related, all the guys gather to give it a good inspection. Recently we enjoyed looking over a new holster rig.

*GUNS* Magazine's publisher, Tom von Rosen, recently ordered a rig from Wild Bill's Concealment Holsters. He selected the "Pro Choice Package," adding to it a double magazine pouch to supplement the single mag pouch that is standard for this package. Frankly, this is darn nice leather gear.

Bill Bowden is the man behind Wild Bill's. A former peace officer, he's spent enough 10- and 12-hour days wearing a handgun to know what features make up good carry leather. He also likes to make certain new CCW holders get the gear they need.

"The best holster in the world," Bowden said, "just won't work right when you mate it with a flimsy department store belt."

This is why Wild Bill's promotes a variety of special package rigs. The end result is you get the right gear and save a bunch of money, too. Imagine that.

Looking at TvR's new rig, I noticed the holster is a proven pattern that's been known by many names over the years. The dual belt slots stabilize the holster perfectly — essential for smooth, fast presentations. Attention to detail is excellent, with a reinforced lip for easy reholstering, and first rate hand boning to the gun's contours.

The belt was supplied in 1½-inch width. It's made of very good



quality leather, nicely stitched, and with a nice, solid-brass buckle. The magazine pouches were constructed with tough Chicago screws rather than stitching. Magazine pouches see a lot of hard use, and these appear very durable.

Ready for the shocker? Bill sells this entire rig — holster, belt, and single magazine pouch — for \$125 plus shipping. It's a heck of a good deal!



### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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# QUARTERMASTER

BY JIM GARDNER

## CornerLock

As shooters and gun owners, we are occasionally guilty of beating our chests and shouting about our rights, without giving sufficient acknowledgement to our responsibilities. One such responsibility is to do our level best to see that children or unauthorized persons can't gain access to our firearms.

There are a variety of ways to ensure this. If money and floor space are not an issue — a large, dedicated gun safe is the best approach. For a number of reasons, this is just not an option for some. One of the nicest, most economical alternatives to a conventional gun safe is the CornerLock, manufactured by Knox Industries.

The CornerLock unit consists of a pressed-steel bracket designed to be securely bolted into a room or closet corner with four lag bolts (supplied). Once installed, a cover plate prevents removal of the lag bolts, while a 9¼-inch diameter steel ring accepts the triggerguards of up to six rifles, shotguns or handguns.

In use, a sliding section coupled with unique key lock secures the circle of steel safeguarding your firearms. This locking ring is nicely vinyl coated to protect their finish. For long guns, a non-marring synthetic barrel rest is furnished.

For those who would mount their CornerLock in an exposed area, Knox offers a very attractive accessory cabinet. It features smoked-glass doors, oak or powder-coated finish, and simple, three-screw installation.



These products are very modestly priced. The CornerLock retails for \$49.95, the CornerLock Cabinet for only \$139.95.

Sadly, we've all heard of heartbreaking tragedies involving firearms and children. If you have children or grandchildren, or even if you live in a neighborhood full of the little crumb crunchers, do the right thing. Secure your firearms. Some lessons are simply too painful to learn the hard way.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

**Knox Industries**

[805] 227-4099

www.knox.com

## "When I get out, I'm getting a Browning safe."

*Inmate #8390027, a.k.a. "Sledge"*

Sledge is currently serving a seven to 15-year sentence for his fifth conviction on breaking and entering an occupied dwelling (he has plea bargained away over 20 other "B and Es" and admits that he has done more than he could count in his 13-year criminal career). In a letter to Browning written from his cell, Sledge freely admits, "My partner and I broke into hundreds of houses, many with so-called gun safes, and after we tried to get into a Browning gun safe, it was the last thing we ever wanted to see."

In his letter, Sledge cites a previous advertisement for Browning gun safes under the headline, "The Competition Hates Our Guts."

He responds, "Now that I see what goes into your safe, I see why I could never open one. The competition isn't the only one who hates your guts!"

Sledge can't stay locked up forever. Isn't it nice to know that your valuables can?

[browning.com](http://browning.com)



While nicknames, inmate numbers and mug shots have been fabricated, written excerpts are taken from an actual letter received by Browning. Do not assume that any safe is impenetrable — it is not! A knowledgeable thief can get into virtually any safe with the appropriate tools and enough time. A safe is a deterrent and a delaying device. You can make it even more effective by placing it in the right location and anchoring it to the floor and wall.

# QUARTERMASTER

BY JIM GARDNER

## Lee Shooter program

**H**andloaders generally fall into two separate categories. The first group looks upon reloading as a necessary evil. These fellows usually want to get their loading chores completed as quickly as possible, so they can get out to the range and burn 'em up.

Handloaders in the second category take great pride in treating their handloading as if it were a scientific experiment vital to our national interests. These guys patiently record every conceivable detail of their loads and the resulting range tests. Regardless of where you fall within these two extremes, keeping good records of your proven handloads is vital.

Record keeping is only one facet of the Lee Shooter Program from — you guessed it — Lee Precision.

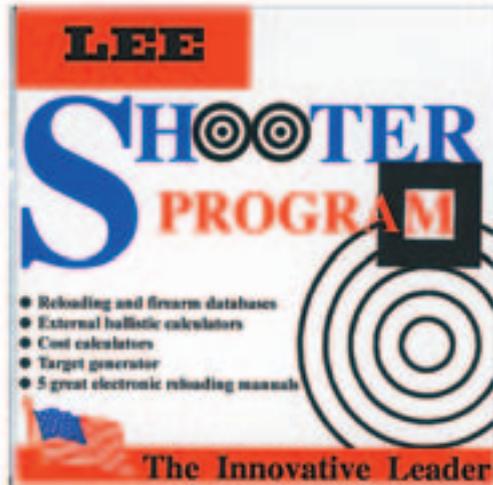
The Lee Shooter program has more functions than an

oversized Swiss Army knife. It has two nicely detailed logs, the first for your handloading info, and the second to itemize your firearm collection. The program also contains nine different calculation programs, which will effortlessly give you information on such topics as trajectory, recoil, wind drift, etc. The program also allows you to print out a variety of different targets.

One of the most useful features of Lee's Shooter Program is the PDF versions of five different component data sheets and loading manuals from top manufacturers. These can be viewed conveniently on screen or may be printed out for easy reference at the loading bench. Also included is a catalog of Lee Precision's line of reloading and bullet casting products.

System requirements are modest. Windows 95 or higher, a CD-ROM drive, and less than 40 Megs of free hard drive space will be needed.

So what does all this good info cost? Merely \$19.98 plus postage. For more information, check out the Lee Website or give them a call.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**

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[262] 673-3075

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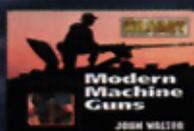
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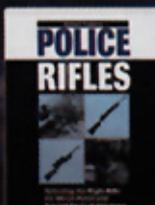
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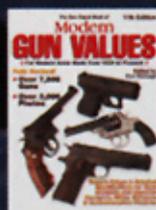
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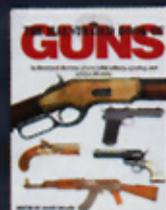
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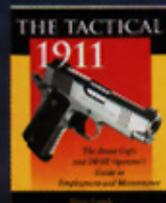
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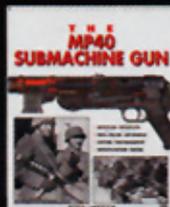
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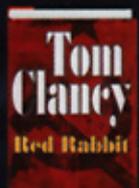
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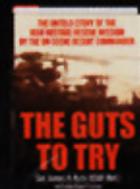
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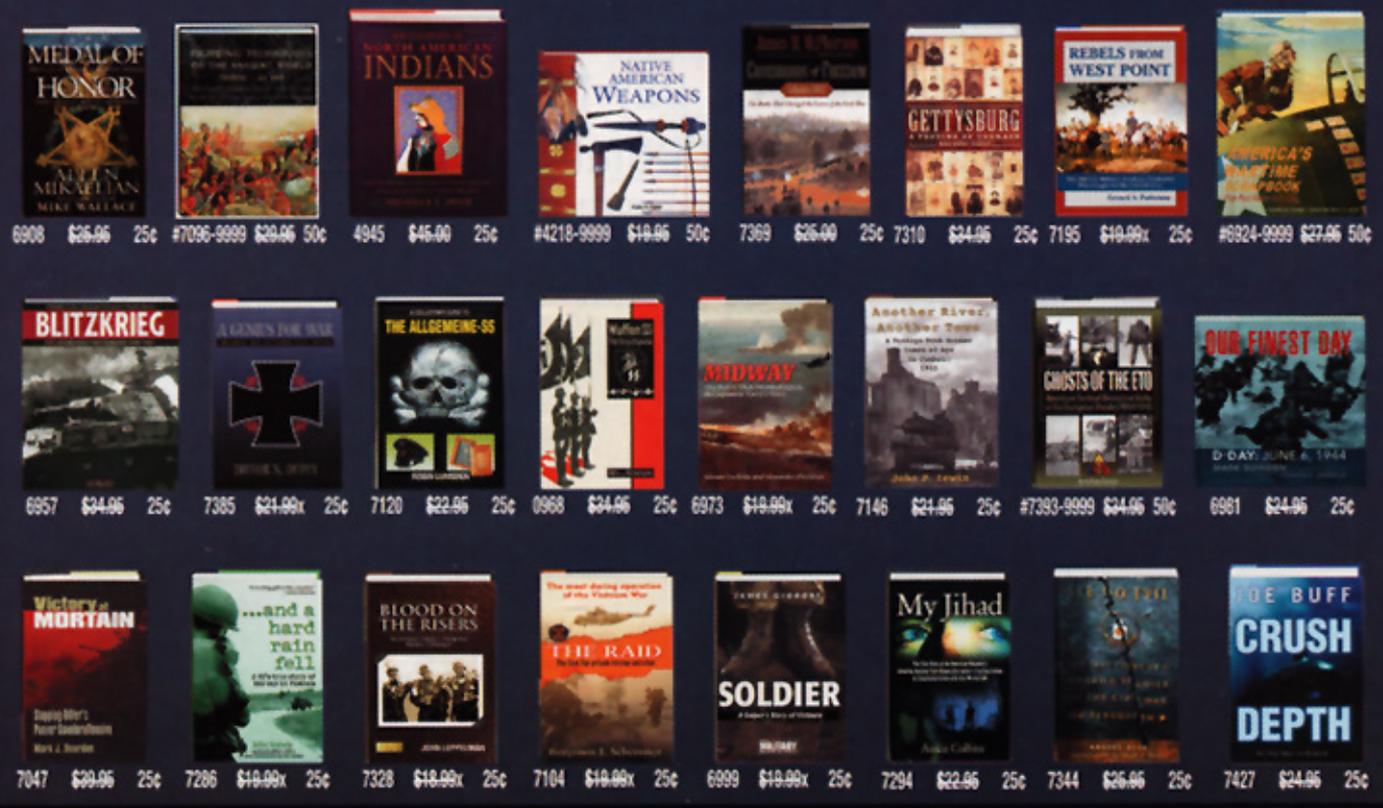
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# AN AMERICAN CLASSIC — THE RUGER BISLEY

By Glenn Barnes

More value than you pay for, is the author's assessment of the popular Ruger Bisley revolver.



**A**ccording to Webster's, a "classic" is defined as: A work of enduring excellence or a standard of excellence. Noah Webster could well have included Bill Ruger in his dictionary under "classic." Not since Colonel Sam Colt has there been a gun maker who had his finger on the pulse of what American shooters and hunters want and need.

His modern day innovations and inventions have helped two generations of shooters excel in their sport. Handgunners in general and single-action lovers in particular, owe a debt of gratitude to Bill Ruger.

## Finest Ever?

In 1986, Ruger offered to the public what is arguably the finest single-action revolver ever to be manufactured — the Ruger Bisley. Based on the popular Super Blackhawk frame, the new Bisley differs somewhat from its parent sixgun.

The grip frame of the Bisley is obviously an adaptation of the original Colt Bisley design, with some very important changes.

First, the grip frame of the Ruger Bisley does not come up as high behind the trigger guard as the original Colt, which directly adds to the controllability of the sixgun, especially when shooting heavy loads. Second, the grip frame is wider than the Colt's, which spreads felt recoil more evenly in the hand, thereby reducing the painful slap associated with heavy loads.

The hammer spur is low and swept back, just where it should be, with deep serrations for a firm purchase when cocking the revolver for firing. The trigger has more of a curve to it than a Colt Bisley's, which adds greatly to trigger control. In essence, what Ruger did, for many of us, was create the perfect sixgun — good looking, as well as highly functional.

Why don't we look at and discuss a few of the reasons why the shooting public is so enamored with the Ruger Bisley. Let's talk about strength first.

## One Big, Tough Sixgun

Topping the scales at a whopping 48 ounces, the Bisley obviously carries plenty of steel on its frame. Plenty of steel doesn't mean a whole lot by itself, but if placed in the

proper areas, areas that take the brunt of pressure when a cartridge is fired, it adds greatly to the strength and longevity of the sixgun.

Ruger added the extra weight where it needed to be, with no excess, creating a revolver that is bull strong, but still pleasing to look at, with smooth, classical lines. Combining this rugged construction with a superior grip design, plus the use of durable coil springs, resulted in perhaps the strongest, most comfortable shooting sixgun on the market.

Another reason shooters turn to Ruger is purely economical. Price. The average American is not wealthy. Mortgages have to be paid, our cars run better when they are serviced regularly, the kids need new shoes, etc. Fortunately for us, Ruger has always kept the average guy, or gal, in mind.

Affordability has been a hallmark of Ruger products since the first Mark I rolled off the line. With the Bisley, we get just that. Retailing for an attractive \$535, the Ruger Bisley is one of the few things in life that delivers more than you pay for, in terms of price and quality.

### Designed For The Hunter

Most who consider purchasing a Bisley sixgun, do so with the sole intent of using it as a hunting tool. This is where the big Ruger really shines. Designed from the outset with handgun hunters in mind, the Ruger Bisley combines all of the features a hunter desires (accuracy, strength, power and portability) with good looks and quality. That's a hard combination to beat!

I purchased my Ruger Bisley, chambered in .44 Magnum, several years ago with the primary intention of using it as a backup for my rifle. Anyone who has hunted wild boar knows things can sometimes get hairy and close real fast. I wanted a sixgun that was accurate and powerful enough to handle any hunting chore I deemed necessary. I got all that and then some.

### Three Big Bores And A .22, Too

Ruger offers the Bisley in three calibers suitable for big game: .357 Magnum, (suitable for deer sized game at rea-

FACTORY LOADS			
Load	*	Velocity	Group
Winchester 250 grain Partition Gold	*	*	1½"
Remington UMC 180 grain JSP	*	*	2"
Fiocchi 240 grain SJSP	*	*	1½"
HANDLOADS			
Bullet	Charge	Velocity	Group
Hornady XTP 300 grain	21.0 grains H110	1,300 fps	1"
Speer JSP 300 grain	21.0 grains H110	1,164 fps	1"
Hornady XTP 240 grain	21.0 grains 2400	1,325 fps	1" to 1¼"
Hornady XTP 240 grain	18.5 grains 2400	1,190 fps	1½"
Speer JSP 240 grain	18.5 grains 2400	1,150 fps	1½"
D&J hard cast SWC 240 grain	18.0 grains 2400	1,090 fps	1½"
Bullet Doctor hard cast SWC 240 grain	8.5 grains Unique	1,045 fps	1½"
D&J hard cast SWC 240 grain	8.5 grains Universal Clays	1,065 fps	1½"
Hornady XTP 240 grain	23.0 grains H110	1,310 fps	1½"
.44 SPECIAL HANDLOADS			
Bullet	Charge	Velocity	Group
<i>(These handloads are for use ONLY in Ruger .44 magnum handguns!)</i>			
D&J hard cast 240 grain SWC	6.5 grains 231	915 fps	3"
Bullet Doctor hard cast 240 grain SWC	7.5 grains Unique	1,039 fps	1½"
D&J hard cast 240 grain SWC	7.5 grains Universal Clays	1,055 fps	1½"

*Groups are an average of five, 5-shot groups fired from rest at 25 yards.  
\* indicates no velocity available (the chrono was off at the taxideermists).*

**1** The Ruger Bisley looks like a classic 19th century revolver, but inside, it's modern and bull-strong. **2** The Bisley is a favorite for customization.



**1**

**1** The Bisley is a fine hunter's handgun. Add some nice gunleather, like this rig from El Paso Saddlery, and you're fit for the field. **2** Author Barnes enjoys loading for his Bisley almost as much as shooting it. Great components abound.

sonable ranges, say under 50 yards), .44 Magnum and .45 Colt. Loaded with properly constructed bullets, both the .44 Magnum and .45 Colt are exceptional big game cartridges, capable of taking the largest of North American big game.

Currently, the big-bore Bisley's are offered in only one barrel length, 7½ inches, and you may have any finish you like, so

long as it is blued steel. The small-frame Bisley .22 LR sports a 6½ inch tube, and wears the same finish.

We've agreed the Ruger Bisley is a bull strong, economical, hunting sixgun, but how does it perform on the range? Just how well does it shoot? Is it a one-load handgun, or can it handle several different loads to make it a more useful hunting tool?

### Putting It To The Test

For our accuracy test, I chose my .44 Magnum Ruger Bisley. This revolver has proven itself to be very accurate with several different loads, so we decided to try a few more loads to find out its true potential. My good friend, Larry Leadingham,

*continued on page 64*

**2**

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Gone Huntin'

Hunters Journal

Hunting Across America

Hunting the Country

Joe Bucher Outdoors

Midwest Outdoor Magazine

Northwest Hunter

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Outdoor America

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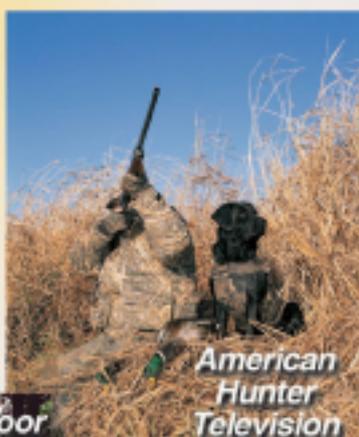
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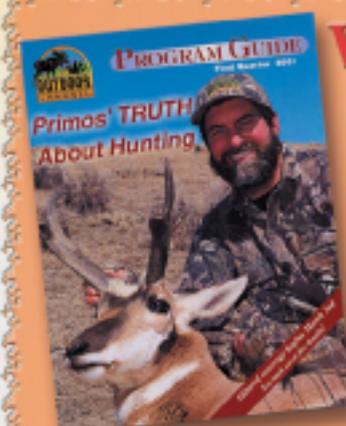
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# KEL-TEC SUB-2000 CARBINE

By J.B. Wood

*Veteran commentator J.B. Wood has long admired pistol-caliber carbines, and he's pretty darn pleased with this one.*



## KEL-TEC SUB-2000 CARBINE SPECIFICATIONS

WEIGHT:	4 pounds
LENGTH, OPEN:	30 inches
LENGTH, STOWED:	16 inches
HEIGHT, STOWED:	7 inches
WIDTH:	2 inches
BARREL LENGTH:	16.1 inches
SIGHT RADIUS:	14.5 inches
MAGAZINE CAPACITY:	10 rounds, supplied
SUGGESTED RETAIL:	<b>\$ 3 8 3</b>

While back — 1997 to 2000, actually — Kel-Tec offered perhaps the ultimate pistol-caliber semi-auto carbine. Called the Sub-9, it offered several innovative features. The most notable was the ability to fold the carbine for storage, reducing its length by about one-half.

The Sub-9 did, though, have one minus point: because of its aircraft-grade aluminum alloy receiver and other factors, it was very expensive to manufacture. This resulted in a retail price around \$700. It was definitely worth it, but sales were not brisk.

### Second Life For A Great Design

So, George Kellgren, president of Kel-Tec, redesigned it. He retained all of the best features of the Sub-9, did away with parts requiring excessive manufacturing expense, and produced the new Sub-2000. Its retail

3



OUTERS





**1** The folding feature is novel and appealing. **2** The aperture rear sight pops into place automatically when the carbine is unfolded for use. **3** Accuracy was extremely good, especially considering the short sight-radius and a trigger described as "rather stiff."





price is just slightly more than half the original tariff of the Sub-9. In performance, however, the two are equal.

The novel folding feature was retained of course — but now there is an actual latch that locks the barrel unit in the stowed position, as well as a built-in key-operated lock. With the Sub-2000 locked in this position, the firearm cannot possibly be fired by a child or an unauthorized person.

### Magazine Versatility

The Sub-2000 comes with a nice Mec-Gar magazine, permanently blocked to 10-rounds capacity per current Federal requirements. The Sub-2000 will, though, work perfectly with high-capacity magazines of the correct type. My carbine is set up to accept S&W 59-series magazines, but the Sub-2000 may also be ordered to accommodate Beretta, SIG or Glock magazines.

You can easily see the advantage here — your carbine and handgun can use not only the same cartridge, but also the same magazines.

The magazine release is a push button on the left side in the traditional location. It has a healthy spring and retains the magazine securely, but I would feel better if it had a molded protective “fence” around it like those present around the safety. You have just heard my only criticism of the Sub-2000.

### A Most Positive Safety

The manual safety is a cross-bolt, push-button that both blocks the sear and disconnects the trigger bar. When pushed to the right for firing, it exposes four equally spaced red dots. Thus, regardless of the



**1** Front sight is a highly-visible protected post. **2** Two accessories are shown here: The butt-stock extension and spare magazine carrier. **3** Wood's test gun was set up to accept S&W magazines. **4** A key-lock secures the stowed carbine in the folded position. If there is such a thing as a child-proof gun, the Sub-2000 in the folded and locked position is it.

angle of view, you can see it's ready to go. There is a very positive detent for both on- and off-safe positions.

The location of the cocking handle is unusual — on the underside of the buttstock shaft. This is good, because it keeps the sides of the Sub-2000 flat, with no handle protruding in either direction. However, when firing from belt level, avoid tucking the butt under your arm, as the moving bolt handle can pinch your side.

The Sub-2000 has a pivoting internal hammer, so any competent gunsmith could give it a nice trigger pull. As with most U.S. made firearms of the past 50 years, the Sub-2000 has a rather stiff trigger pull, although let-off was clean. After getting used to it, it caused no difficulty at the range.

### Good Sights — Great Accuracy

The fixed aperture rear sight automatically erects itself and locks into place when the barrel unit is unfolded. The front sight is a square post, shielded inside a protective ring, and is made of a translucent pink-orange polymer. It's highly visible. Opposed coin-slotted screws allow adjustment both vertically and horizontally.

In test firing the Sub-2000, I used a kneeling position, with the weak side elbow properly supported on the knee. Test ammo used was 115-grain Winchester Silvertip, Magtech 124-grain FMJ and Norma 124-grain +P JHP.

Test distance was 25 yards, and the well-centered groups were surprisingly small. The Winchester load grouped into 1 1/4 inches, the Magtech into 1 1/4 and the Norma load clustered into an impressive 7/8 inch. The groups would open a little at greater distances, but they'd still be marvelous. The Sub-2000 is very accurate.

### Add-Ons And Doo-Dads

One of several optional accessories I tried was a neat spare magazine carrier that attaches to the buttplate assembly. It has a push-button latch to hold the magazine in place. Other useful options are a 1-inch buttstock extension, flashlight and laser mounts, a sling, and a nice soft case with magazine pockets.

For either police or civilian use, the pistol-caliber carbines have a lot of good points. The cartridge (and in this case the magazine) may be interchanged with your handgun. Accuracy is much improved for most users compared to the handgun. And, since they look a lot like a submachinegun, the intimidation factor may be a plus.

Efforts at logic aside, the Kel-Tec Sub-2000 is just plain fun to shoot...  And it folds!

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# HANDGUNS BY MASSAD AYOUB

Shooting instruction from his father sparked a lifelong interest. Today, Massad Ayoob is an award-winning practical shooter, author of numerous books on the subject, and through his Lethal Force Institute has taught many thousands of students.

“No matter how powerful multi-million dollar push-button killing technology tends to become, war always seems to end on the ground with armed men facing one another with conventional small arms.”

## Handguns Show Up In The Strangest Places

**H**andguns have been to the North Pole, the South Pole, and pretty much everywhere in between. Handguns rode along on the B-29 that ushered in the era of nuclear war. Butterfield's in San Francisco recently auctioned off the Colt 1911 carried by Major “Dutch” van Kirk aboard the plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

The pistol, serial number 468425, was an original 1911 model rather than the 1911A1 that was somewhat more in evidence during WWII.

### Pistols And Fighting Men

No matter how powerful multi-million dollar push-button killing technology tends to become, war always seems to end on the ground with armed men facing one another with conventional small arms. A powerful handgun has been a source of comfort to fighting men for centuries.

There is no more high-tech field army than that of the United States in Afghanistan at the moment, yet the handgun continues to play a significant role. Field reports indicate enemy soldiers take a lot of 9mm ball rounds from the Beretta M9 before they go down (what's new?). And generally fall to one or two hardball slugs from the .45 autos that are still in the hands of some special forces personnel, notably the Army's Delta Force.

There is reportedly a groundswell of requests from our troops to be issued .45 caliber pistols of whatever type to replace the 9mm. Their problem is not with the Beretta pistol so much as with the 9mm FMJ round.

While allied snipers with precision rifles have taken an awesome toll of the enemy, a surprising number of up close and personal gun-fights have reportedly occurred in the caves. Some of our troops have been photographed with a holster on each hip.

### In Other High Places

The White House has always contained handguns, and not just the duty weapons of the

Secret Service. Richard Nixon's gun collection included two engraved specimens, a Smith & Wesson Chief Special .38 presented to him by the NRA when he was Vice President, and a Colt Government Model .45 auto given him by Elvis Presley.

President Reagan was licensed to carry a Smith & Wesson .32 revolver when he was head of the Screen Actors Guild, and years later, first lady Nancy Reagan told reporters that she habitually kept “a cute little gun” in her bedroom.

I was present at the press conference where the first President George Bush pulled a miniature .22 revolver — I couldn't tell whether it was a North American Arms or a Freedom Arms — from his suitcoat pocket. A Texas Ranger who bodyguarded our second President Bush during the primaries told me that our current leader is not only pro-gun, but a very capable handler of firearms himself.

### The Guns of Churchill

During the Boer war, Winston Churchill shot several enemy soldiers with his pistol, a “broomhandle” Mauser. In WWII, disgusted to learn that his chief bodyguard carried a feeble Webley .32 auto, Churchill got a Colt Government Model .45 for him.

When he discovered that the security man had gone back to his mousegun, legend has it that the Prime Minister of England snatched back the .45, racked a round into the chamber and on-safed the gun, thrusting it into the capacious pocket of his big overcoat. There it remained for the rest of the war.

Churchill also kept a Thompson submachinegun discreetly accessible in the back of his limousine. British gun expert Richard Law has found photographs of the Prime Minister in which the outline of the big Colt automatic through the fabric of Churchill's heavy ulster is clearly visible. A few years after the war ended, Colt presented one of their first lightweight Commander .45 autos to a grateful Churchill, who reportedly kept it until his death.

### Grimmer Note

We must remember that criminals are known to hide firearms creatively. In Minneapolis recently, a female police officer was murdered by a woman who did just that. Officer Melissa Schmidt and her partner, Tammy Friestleben, responded to the call of a drunken woman who had threatened her niece with a gun.

They confronted Martha Donald, 60, searching her car and patting her down, finding cartridges but no weapon. The woman said she had to go to the bathroom, and when the female officers accompanied her to the ladies room, she produced a pistol she had concealed between the cheeks of her buttocks and opened fire.

Schmidt was struck below her body armor in the abdomen. She and her partner drew and returned fire, killing the assailant, but the wounded officer died in surgery. She was 35 and had been on the force for six years.

This column is respectfully dedicated to the memory of Officer Missy Schmidt. Donations to the officer's family in her memory can be made to the Melissa J. Schmidt Fund, PO Box 158, Dresser, Wis., 54009.





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# RIFLEMAN BY DAVE ANDERSON

At 14, Dave Anderson acquired his first centerfire rifle—a .303 Lee Enfield with which he took his first whitetail. Despite a distinguished record in competitive pistol shooting, the sporting rifle remains Dave's first love.

## Proper Lubrication Of Working Parts

**F**irearms are simple machines requiring proper lubrication. The thought of two dry metal surfaces scraping together grates on my nerves like fingernails on a blackboard. This is especially so where parts are under heavy load.

Most bolt-action rifles are designed to cock on opening. The nose of the cocking piece engages an angled surface on the rear of the bolt body. As the bolt handle is lifted this angled surface cams the cocking piece back, compressing the mainspring.

These cam surfaces are quite small, and the powerful mainspring provides a heavy load. When these surfaces are dry, or worse yet, covered with dust or dirt, the effort required to lift the bolt is increased considerably, as is wear on these surfaces.

Bolt locking-lugs and their recesses are another example of metal-to-metal contact under load. As the bolt is lowered, the rear surface of the lugs engage the locking lug recesses and move the bolt slightly forward to fully chamber the cartridge.

### A Little Dab 'll Do Ya

To minimize wear and ensure smooth operation, these contact areas need proper lubrication. For this purpose, a modern high-tech grease is preferable to light oil.

I like syringe-type applicators that put a quality lube right where it's needed. Kleen-Bore TW25-B grease is available in a syringe, as is Wilson Ultima Lube.

With these high-quality lubes there is no need to overdo it. Just a dot of lube on the cocking cam and on the rear surface of each bolt lug is sufficient. If the rifle is used in dusty conditions, the bolt should be cleaned and re-lubricated regularly.

### Locktime — Design Priorities

In any rifle action, designers have to make choices that reflect their priorities. Mauser 98 military actions are sometimes criticized for their slow lock time — that is, the interval from when the sear releases the cocking piece to when the firing pin strikes the primer.

A fast lock time is desirable from a viewpoint of practical accuracy, since it allows less time for the muzzle to move after the trigger releases the sear. This is especially important when firing from unstable positions such as offhand.

The slow lock time of the Mauser is not a fault but a deliberate design choice. Reliability and speed of fire were considered more important than minor increments of accuracy. The Mauser used a heavy cocking piece/firing pin assembly and a fairly light (by current standards) 19-pound mainspring.

The lighter mainspring made the

M98 bolt easier to manipulate rapidly from the shoulder, while the heavy firing pin assembly assured positive ignition.

Reliability is important in sporting rifles but so is accuracy, while speed of fire is usually less important. As the bolt-action evolved from a military to a sporting rifle, designers began to introduce “speed lock” designs with faster lock times.



### A More Modern System

The original Winchester Model 54 was similar to the Mauser, in that the firing pin had a fairly long travel (about 1/2 inch) and slow lock time. About 1932 Winchester introduced the “speedlock” feature on the Model 54.

It used a lighter cocking piece/firing pin, a more powerful (23 pound) mainspring, and shorter firing pin travel (about 1/4 inch). The same speedlock, with an improved trigger, was used on the subsequent Model 70.

The popular Remington 700 has a fast locktime, provided by a lightweight cocking piece/firing pin, short travel and strong (24-pound) mainspring. The downside to these actions is bolt lift is somewhat harder due to the stronger mainspring that must be compressed.

It is important to understand there is a relationship between cocking piece/firing pin weight and mainspring strength. The designers achieved what they felt was an optimum balance, and it is risky to change that balance unless you know what you're doing. Fitting a heavier mainspring will shorten locktime and maintain ignition reliability, but might add vibrations that affect accuracy.

### Hotrodding

It's common for gunmakers building sporting rifles on old Mauser actions to fit a lighter cocking piece assembly and/or install a stronger mainspring. Shooters who want even faster lock times, such as metallic silhouette competitors, sometimes fit even lighter firing pins and heavier mainsprings to current models.

Brownell's catalogue lists kits designed by champion rifle competitor David Tubb, which include titanium and aluminum/steel construction firing pins that weigh about half of factory standard. They come with extra-strong Wolff replacement mainsprings. The kits are available for a large variety of popular bolt-action rifles.

These kits provide very fast locktime, and are popular with silhouette shooters who require accuracy from the offhand position. Bolt lift is increased, but for this purpose speed of fire is not a priority. Extra-heavy “Blitzschnell” mainsprings by Wolff are also available from Brownell's for a variety of bolt actions.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Brownells, Inc.  
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“It is important to understand there is a relationship between cocking piece/firing pin weight and mainspring strength. The designers achieved what they felt was an optimum balance, and it is risky to change that balance unless you know what you're doing.”



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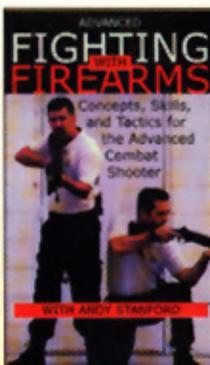


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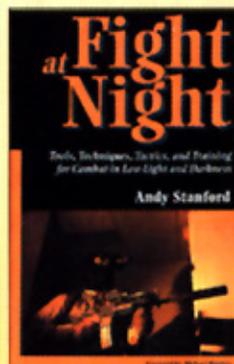


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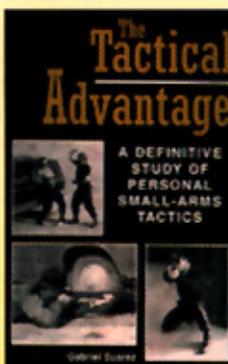


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# HANDLOADER BY CHARLES E. PETTY

Charles E. Petty began his handloading career at the age of 15 with the purchase of a used Lyman Tru-Line Jr. press. Forty-five years after loading that first .38 Special cartridge, Charlie remarks, "It's a lot of fun."

## Electronic Powder Scales

**O**f all the chores in reloading, weighing powder is the most critical. The unit of weight we use, the grain, is a really small quantity (7,000 grains to one pound), so being able to accurately weigh charges requires equipment that is capable of a high degree of precision.

A little over ten years ago, the first electronic reloading scale came on the market. They were an adaptation of a scientific scale and came about because someone saw its potential for handloaders. At around \$500, those first units were expensive, but the first time I used one I was hooked.

The speed and convenience was, for me, worth every penny. Notice that I didn't say anything about accuracy, for the electronic scales have the same plus or minus .1 grain sensitivity that is found with good beam balances.

### Electronic Scales Today

The good news is prices have come down a lot, and the utility of the scales has improved. All of these work using a device called a strain gauge that is sensitive to very small changes in weight... but it is also sensitive to changes in temperature and humidity. This can cause the zero to shift if we aren't paying attention.

Any scale can get out of adjustment, but electronic scales need an extra bit of TLC. That's why it is best to use them where temperatures are moderate and constant.

Over the years I have used quite a few different electronic scales and have formed some pretty strong opinions based upon that experience. First of these is that I will never be without an electronic scale again. The time they save and ease of reading is invaluable to me.

The second observation is you really have to learn to live with the scale and keep it happy. Obviously it needs to be in a clean, stable spot and kept perfectly level. Remember I said heat affects accuracy. Even the small amount generated by the solid state electronic circuitry mat-

ters, and when you turn the scale on you need to wait awhile — as much as 30 minutes — for it to reach equilibrium and stop showing drift. My solution to that is simply to never turn it off.

My typical use is probably different from most, but I have not had good luck with battery powered units. They are less expensive, but I found battery life to be short. Unless you can get an AC converter, in the long haul the cost of batteries can really add up.

### The Handiest Feature?

Electronic scales have a "tare" feature that is a great convenience. Tare is almost another word for "zero" because when you hit the tare button the weight on the pan is zeroed out and you can measure differences.

If you were sorting bullets by weight, all you'd have to do is find one that weighs what you want and then hit tare. From that point on the reading is going to display a plus or minus difference from the standard weight.

Another helpful use of the tare function is when we're adjusting the powder measure on a progressive loader. It's difficult to try to drop a charge in the scale pan, but all you have to do is tare out the weight of an empty case and use it to catch the charge. Since the weight of the case has been zeroed out, the reading is going to be just the weight of the powder.

So, do you "need" an electronic scale? For the majority of reloaders who use only a few powders and have standardized loads I'd say the answer is absolutely not. But for someone who loads a wide variety of calibers and likes to try different loads, my answer is the opposite. The time savings can be huge. The electronic scale stabilizes within a second or so, but even the best magnetic damping on a beam scale takes many times longer.

### And The Winner Is

Electronic scales are an excellent example of getting what you pay for. It is rare for me to say something like this, but I've tried a lot of the scales on the market and the hands down winners are the PACT Digital Precision Powder Scale or the RCBS Powder Pro Digital Scale. The only difference between them is the color. Both are made by PACT, but they put the RCBS product in a green case.

They are unfailingly accurate and stable. An added attraction is that they can be coupled with the Digital Powder Dispenser. With it, all you have to do is calibrate the dispenser for the powder you're using and then enter the desired charge weight via the keyboard.

Pushing the "dispense" button automatically trickles the desired charge weight into the scale pan. The two parts communicate via an IR interface, so the scale tells the dispenser when to stop. For someone who wants to weigh every charge this is a great convenience.



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## By Holt Bodinson

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**W**illy Sutton, the notorious and colorful safecracker of the 1950s, was asked once why he robbed banks. Willy responded, "Cause that's where the money's at." Safe makers and safecrackers have been playing a cat and mouse game since time immemorial, and for once, we are the direct benefactors because firearm safes continue to get better and better.

In the gun world, gone are those beautiful glass door gun cabinets that showcased so well the blued steel and oiled walnut they contained. They have become the stuff of antique shops.

It really is a shame. Having to lock away fine firearms we delight so much in diminishes our sport and our pride of ownership. I often hear a comment that runs something like, "Well, you know, I stuck that gun in the back of the safe and I forgot all about it. I haven't even fired it in 10 years."

### New Reality

Unfortunately, times do change, and stout steel gun safes are an important part of any gun owner's home today. They protect our firearms from theft and fire and prevent misuse.

The better models cost as much as a quality firearm, but they are worth every penny of it when you consider the cost of replacing possibly irreplaceable firearms, or preventing an accident. Or worse,

allowing the parasites of our society to arm themselves illegally at our expense.

When gun safes first appeared on the market, they were made of thin gauge sheet steel with rudimentary locks and were so light you could move them around from room-to-room by yourself.

### Priced Right, And Easy To Place

Lightly built, foot locker-type gun safes are still available, but now they're called "security cabinets." Their redeeming virtues are that they are inexpensive and when properly secured to the floor or wall will provide some degree of resistance if burgled.

The brands in this category most often seen in large discount stores and advertised in mail catalogs are Homak and Stack-On. Homak's and Stack-On's 8-gun cabinets, for example, weigh 90 pounds and retail for between \$150 and \$180. Need more space? Homak offers a 12-gun and Stack-On, a 16-gun security cabinet that runs about \$265 and weighs 110 pounds.

These entry level security cabinets might offer additional advantages other than low cost. Where load bearing qualities of the flooring is unknown, such as a second floor, apartment, or manufactured home, or where the placement of a heavy safe is physically impossible, these light weight units may prove to be essential.

They can also be used as supplemental security cabinets to a primary safe for the storage of less valuable firearms. An obvious use is for storing ammunition safely under lock-and-key. Homak and Stack-On offer a variety of security cabinets, safes, and pistol boxes at various price points so check them out on the web.

### Most Novel Safe In The Business

And speaking about safes to fit in difficult spaces, Zanotti Armor offers a high quality hybrid safe that is assembled at home from six interlocking panels. At the moment, Zanotti offers five models that range in weight from 400 to 925 pounds and hold from 16 to 52 long guns. The panels consist of a top, bottom, three side walls and a door.

The panels are interlocked by 3/8 inch, nickel-plated steel "L" shaped pins that slip into steel tubing sections welded to the interior surfaces of the panels. The slip fit is held to a tolerance of .003 inch, and the safes are completely assembled and hand fitted at the factory

**1****2****3**

**1** Quality safes like this Browning Platinum model will last several lifetimes. **2** Wall mounted vaults like this Phoenix Riflelocker are an alternative to a free standing gun safe. **3** Don't think small. It's false economy to purchase a too-small gun safe you'll outgrow in short order. Don't forget your safe is likely to

to insure the panels will align properly when delivered.

The body is made from 1/8 inch and 3/16 inch steel; the door from 3/16 inch steel; the locking bolts are 3/4 inch steel; and there is a triple relocking system if the combination lock is tampered with.

Shipped in three or four boxes from the factory, a Zanotti safe can be delivered and installed without anyone knowing you have a safe. Because their safes can readily be disassembled and relocated, Mark Zanotti tells me that their safes are very popular with law enforcement and military personnel and gun owners whose jobs require them to move often.

I asked Zanotti what the single heaviest panel in their safe designs is. He indicated that the door is always the heaviest component and weighs 110 pounds in their 16-gun, 400-pound model, and up to 175 pounds in their 52-gun, 925-pound safe. Zanotti models retail in the range of \$1,000 to \$2,000. They have just created a Website and also have a dealer network.

Stepping up to the security of a more traditional safe, what features or characteristics should you be looking for? In short, what makes a good safe?

### Voice Of Experience

No one knows safes like a Certified Locksmith, so I asked Scott Warren of Roadrunner Lock & Safe, the largest gun safe dealer in Tucson, Ariz., how a consumer should shop for a safe. Warren is a Liberty safe dealer. Liberty, considered the number one selling safe company in America, also manufactures the National Security brand of gun safes.

Whether a safe carries the Liberty, National Security, Fort Knox, Browning, Remington, Sportsman Steel, Zanotti, or other name brand label, there are some basic considerations and design characteristics that a consumer should be aware of. In a capsule, here's what Warren emphasized.

### Fire Damage Vs. Burglary

A safe should protect your firearms from fire as much as from burglary. In fact the more I think about it, the possibility of fire damage probably exceeds that of burglary in most homes. No safe is fire proof, but a quality safe should provide resistance to high temperatures for limited periods of time.

On a national average, typical peak temperatures in a home fire range between 800 and 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit, and the typical times for containing a home fire average from 15 to 30 minutes. Paper chars at 405 degrees F and most ratings are based on the amount of time it takes the internal temperature

**5****4**

be used to hold other valuables in addition to your firearms. **4** Many safes, such as this Liberty, are as attractive and as beautifully finished as a fine piece of furniture. **5** The more bolts, the bigger the bolts, and the more sides of the door secured, the better. **6** Among the most popular Liberty safes are those furnished in this tough, but no frills finish. They're sometimes described as "garage safes."

of a safe to reach 350 degrees F when exposed to an external temperature of 1,200 degrees F.

Safes are tested and certified for fire resistance by two independent laboratories — Omega Point Laboratories (Omega) and Underwriters Laboratories (U.L.). At a minimum, a safe should provide 30 minutes of protection at a house fire temperature of 1,200 degrees F.

Ratings are clearly expressed as 1200°/30 minutes, 1200°/45 minutes and so forth. Safes that have been independently certified carry a label from Omega or U.L. clearly stating the fire rating. Look for it.

Safe manufacturers use several methods of building fire resistance into their safes. The most typical design uses one or more layers and thicknesses of U.L. rated fireboard in the interior walls, ceiling and door. Sportsman Steel Safes adds an additional layer of Pyro Ceramic.

The better quality safes also employ a fire seal around the door frame that is heat resistant or heat activated. These are important design characteristics to look for when shopping for a safe. I have also known existing safe owners who lined their bare-walled safes with dry-wall to provide a level of fire resistance.

## Burglary

No safe is burglar proof, but a safe will buy time — time is what the average burglar doesn't have. He wants to break in, steal something of value, and get out as quickly as possible.

Similar in concept to their independently certified fire rating, Underwriters Laboratories issues a basic certification for "Residential Security" units. To achieve this basic seal of approval, safes are drilled, hammered, punched, chiseled, pried and otherwise tampered with in a professional manner.

A U.L. seal for "Residential Security" is another label worth looking for at the time of purchasing a new safe, since it says something about the quality of the design and mechanics of the safe.

Almost all gun safes are pre-drilled to permit owners to anchor them securely to the floor so they can't simply be carted off in a robbery. Nevertheless, I asked Scott Warren how heavy should a safe be to forestall a burglar from lugging away the whole kit and caboodle.

In his judgment, a safe weighing 750 pounds and probably loaded with an additional 200 pounds of firearms should be pretty secure.

## Important Construction Points

### The Steel

The more costly the safe, the thicker the steel in the body and door. The steel used in safes is designated by gauge or fractions of an inch. Gauge measurements are meaningless to most of us so here are some approximate fractional conversion figures for the most popular

gauges in the safe business:

- 10 gauge = 9/64 inches
- 11 gauge = 1/8 inches
- 12 gauge = 3/32 inches

The steel forming accomplished in the safe business is impressive. For example, the whole body of Liberty's safes, including their top of the line models that have 3/16 inch thick sidewalls, are fabricated from one piece of steel with only the top and the bottom being welded on.

Sportsman Steel safes bend-form the body from 1/4 inch steel. The advantage of this form of fabrication is that there are no long vertical, welded seams holding the safe sides together. In safes having welded and ground seams, burglars can readily "pop and peel" the welds. Finally, more expensive safes like Sportsman Steel can be ordered with double-steel walls as well as a double-walled door.

### The Locks

The locking system of a gun safe consists of a combination lock, an operating handle, and an arrangement of gear- or cam-operated locking bolts that secure the door to the safe body.

Sargent & Greenleaf dial or electronic locks dominate the safe business and are used almost universally in both economy and premium models. In some designs, the standard combination lock is supplemented by a direct key lock that gives the owner immediate access to their safe.

Warren indicated that electronic locks are becoming increasingly popular. Using a key-pad to punch in an alpha-numeric code is much faster and more accurate than spinning a combination dial back-and-forth. Also, electronic locks can be self-illuminating so access in the dark is facilitated.



### All-Important Locking Bolts

Ideally, the safe door is locked to the safe body by locking bolts extending from the top, bottom and both sides of the door. The size, number and location of locking bolts varies with the quality (and cost) of the safe.

The less expensive safes may have one 3/4 inch diameter bolt on both sides of the door, while large premium models might have as many as 26, 1 1/4 inch diameter bolts projecting from the door locking all four sides. In short, the more bolts, the bigger the bolts, and the more sides of the door secured, the better.

### Doors And Hinges

And speaking of doors, the door should be recessed snugly into the body of the safe to make the use of a pry bar essentially impossible. Given the bolting arrangement of quality modern safes, it doesn't seem to matter greatly whether the safe door has internal or external hinges.

For example, in the comparable Liberty and National Security lines, Liberty safes feature internal hinges and National Security, external. Remington safes sport internal hinges, Browning and Sportsman Steel safes, external.

## Burglar Beaters

Quality safes offer some form of additional protection to prevent burglars from easily drilling through the locking mechanism to withdraw the bolts or to drill in from the sides of the safe to punch the bolts out of battery. These areas of the safe are routinely reinforced with additional hardened steel and various anti-drilling systems.

For example, the gear mechanism that extends and retracts the locking bolts in the premium quality Liberty safes is protected by a hardened steel plate holding over 100 ball bearings. The ball bearings are there to deflect and break drill bits. Other safe designs make use of a hardened, angled deflector plate to accomplish the same end.

The better guns safes are further protected by a reloading system. If the main lock is punched, drilled or destroyed, one or



*Installed, the Zanotti safe belies the fact it may be broken down into easily carried sections. It's a brilliant design.*

Buy a safe with the future in mind. In short, unless you never plan on buying another firearm, buy a bigger safe than you need at this point in time. The additional space can be used to secure other valuable possessions and is there to serve your future firearm storage needs.

more hidden spring loaded pins are activated that lock up the cam or gear mechanism operating the locking bolts so that the bolts cannot be retracted.

Finally, there are subtle levels of protection given to the door operating handle itself. Imagine a burglar using a sledge hammer on the operating handle to open the safe. The locking handle of a Browning safe features a shear pin that breaks if excessive force is applied to the handle. Liberty incorporates a built-in clutch system that disengages the handle.

## Interiors And Finish

Buy a safe with the future in mind. In short, unless you never plan on buying another firearm, buy a bigger safe than you need at this point in time. The additional space can be used to secure other valuable possessions and is there to serve your future firearm storage needs.

If you live in a humid region of the country, do check to see if the safe maker has incorporated a provision for wiring in a dehumidifier.

Every safe manufacturer offers a variety of interiors. Choice is a matter of matching a design to your needs. Unless you're handy, buy a factory interior.

Exterior finish is another option to examine. You may be able to save some money by going with a more simple finish.

## Guarantees

Aside from short-term warranties on combination and electronic locks, the better safe manufacturers will fix or replace your safe if there has been an attempted break-in, an actual break-in, or a fire. That's what I would call faith in your product.

## The Gun Vault And Hidden Room Option

As an alternative to having a gun safe, some homeowners have converted an existing room into a secure gun repository by adding a steel vault door and securing or eliminating any outside windows. I have a friend who even reinforced the ceiling of such a room with sheet steel.

Safe-like vault doors pre-hung on hardened steel frames are readily available from the major safe manufacturers. Fort Knox, Sportsman Steel Safes and Browning feature them in their catalogs.

Smaller, handgun and rifle size, gun vault units are available that can be

installed in a wall or otherwise secured. The Phoenix and GunVault companies supply affordable, quick access electronic vaults that are popular with law enforcement and homeowners alike.

The ultimate deception and one of the most unique answers to potential theft is the creation of a hidden gun room in a house. The possibilities are endless, particularly when a new home is being built.

## Cost

As Locksmith Scott Warren pointed out, it doesn't make much sense to put \$10,000 worth of firearms in a \$200 safe. Buy the very best you can afford. A quality safe will last several lifetimes.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

### Browning

[800] 333-3288  
www.browning.com

### Fort Knox

[800] 821-5216  
www.ftknox.com

### GunVault

[623] 445-0309  
www.gunvault.com

### Liberty Safes National Security Safes

[800] 247-5625  
www.libertysafe.com

### Phoenix USA (Gunlocker)

[800] 894-4858  
www.gunlocker.com

### Remington

[800] 243-9700  
www.remington.com

### Sportsman Steel Safes

[800] 266-7150  
www.sportsmansteelsafes.com

### Zanotti Armor

[319] 232-9650  
www.zanottiarmor.com

### Homak [www.homak.com](http://www.homak.com)

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OVD3	1-3/4"	14"	\$26.95
OVD4	2"	10"	\$26.95
OVD5	2-1/2"	8"	\$26.95
OVD7	2-3/4"	6"	\$28.95

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Model "S"  
Flex shaft machine has ball bearing 1/8 hp motor. Kit includes electronic foot control, heavy duty handpiece, and 35 accessories.

FT230 ..... \$229.95

### LOCKBACK FOLDER KITS

440-C Stainless blades, kits contain all necessary pins, nickle silver bolsters are pre-welded to liners. Order handle material separately.

<b>WHITETAIL</b>	6 5/8" Overall 2 1/2" blade	29.35
<b>SS776 Whitetail</b>		
<b>GRIZZLY</b>	7 5/8" Overall 3" blade	34.95
<b>SS774 Grizzly</b>		
<b>LYNX</b>	2 3/4" Overall 7 1/8" blade	23.50
<b>SS771 Lynx</b>		

### WEEKEND PROJECT KITS

Include 440C Stainless blade, handle material, pins and instructions.

#### RENAISSANCE DAGGER KIT

Overall length is 6 1/4"

SS167K Renaissance Kit ..... 10.95

#### COBRA KIT

Overall length is 7 3/8"

SS166K Cobra Kit ..... 9.95

#### SPORTSMAN KIT

Overall length is 7 5/8"

SS164K Sportsman Kit ..... 9.95

#### LETTER OPENER KIT

Overall length is 8 1/2"

SS201K Letter Opener Kit ..... 9.95

#### FISHERMAN'S FILLET KIT

Overall length is 12"

SS199K Fisherman Kit ..... 8.95

### RAZOR EDGE KITS

Beautifully satin finished, 440-C Stainless Blades are 8 1/2" overall, blade is 3 1/2" kits include: blade, brass corby rivets, brass guard, tubing and Dymondwood handle material.

**CHICKASAW SKINNER**

SS443 Chickasaw Blade only ..... 15.95

SS443K Complete Kit ..... 23.95

**CHOCTAW DROP POINT**

SS441 Choctaw Blade only ..... 15.95

SS441K Complete Kit ..... 23.95

**CHEROKEE CLIP POINT**

SS442 Cherokee Blade only ..... 15.95

SS442K Complete Kit ..... 23.95

**DAGGER BOOT BLADE**

440-C, Satin finished blade is 7 3/8" overall, 3 1/2" blade. Kit includes blade, pins and black Micarta handle material.

SS444 Boot Blade only ..... 16.95

SS444K Complete Kit ..... 18.95

### CUSTOM KITS

The kits below include stainless steel pre-shaped blade, brass rivets, tubing, guard and handle material and step-by-step instructions.

#### WASHITA HUNTER

SS463 Washita Blade only ..... 19.95

SS463K Washita Kit ..... 27.95

**SIOUX HUNTER**

7 5/8" overall with 3" blade

SS458 Sioux Blade only ..... 17.50

SS458K Complete Kit ..... 25.95

**CHEYENNE HUNTER**

9 1/8" overall with 4 1/2" blade

SS495 Cheyenne Blade only ..... 18.75

SS495K Complete Kit ..... 27.00

**KAW SKINNER**

7 1/2" overall with 3" blade

SS782 Kaw Blade only ..... 25.82

SS782K Complete Kit ..... 34.00

**NAVAJO SKINNER**

8 7/8" overall with 4 1/4" blade

SS783 Navajo Blade only ..... 24.72

SS783K Complete Kit ..... 32.20

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PV301 Standard Panavise ..... 32.25

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BOK101 ..... 11.95

**HOW TO MAKE FOLDING KNIVES**

A Step-by-Step How-To by Ron Lake, Frank Centofante and Wayne Clay

BOK102 ..... 11.95

**CUSTOM KNIFEMAKING**

By Tim McCreight

BOSCK ..... 13.95

**THE COMPLETE BLADESMITH**

Forging Your Way to Perfection

By Jim Hrisoulas

BOP301 ..... 39.95

**KNIFE TALK**

The Art & Science of Knifemaking

By Ed Fowler

BOK111 ..... 11.96

**THE WONDER OF KNIFEMAKING**

By Wayne Goddard

BOK114 ..... 15.95

**STEP-BY-STEP KNIFEMAKING**

The complete guide to making knives.

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BORSSK ..... 17.95

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BL114	1/4	1800	1/2"
BL111	1/3	3600	1/2"
BL332B	3/4	1800	3/4"
BL333B	3/4	3600	3/4"

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Kit includes: Four 3/4" sewed muslin wheels, one 3/4" loose muslin wheel, one each greaseless brush-on cutting compound in grits 240, 320 and 400, one blending bar, one bar of white rouge and a polishing guide.

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6" Kit ..... 59.95

8" Kit ..... 79.95

10" Kit ..... 99.95

#### TRADITIONAL CUTLERY KIT



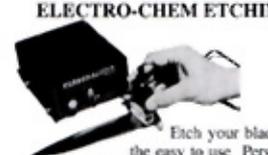
11 pc. traditional style cutlery set includes pre-shaped surgical stainless blades shown above plus handle material, and rivets. Carving set and steak set also available.

SS801 11 pc. Traditional Set ..... 69.95

SS807 ★ Carving Set ..... 19.50

SS803 ★★ Steak Set ..... 25.95

#### ELECTRO-CHEM ETCHING



Etch your blades with the easy to use Personalizer Plus etching machine. Type name or draw a personal design on the special stencil material provided, then follow the easy to use instructions for professional results in seconds. Complete Kit contains everything you need to etch stainless, carbon steel and more.

EC302 Personalizer Plus ..... 179.95

### HIDDEN TANG KITS

440-C Stainless blades are about 10 1/4" overall, blades are 5 1/2". Kits supplied with blade, brass guard, threaded pommel and block of Dymondwood handle material.

#### TEXAS BOWIE KIT

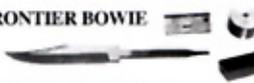


The Texas Bowie Blade, (12 1/2" overall, 7" x 1 1/2" x 3/16" thick blade), brass guard and pommel and a pre-drilled dymondwood block for the handle.

SS494 Blade only ..... 27.95

SS494B Kit complete ..... 39.95

**FRONTIER BOWIE**



SS914 Frontier Blade only ..... 13.95

SS914K Frontier Kit ..... 27.95

**CAPE SKINNER**



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Made from 440C Stainless Steel

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SS262 Gut Hook Blade ..... 8.70

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Overall length 7", blade 2 3/4"

SS260 Tundra Blade ..... 8.70

**KODIAK**

Overall length 6 1/8", blade 2 1/2"

SS261 Kodiak Blade ..... 8.10

**THE SHARK**

Overall length 5 1/2", blade length 2 7/8", 2 3/4"

SS176 Shark Blade ..... 8.95

### STAINLESS DINNERWARE

440-C Stainless Kit includes: 4 forks, 4 knives and 4 spoons, rivets and handle material. Great gift

SS500 ..... 64.96

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Precision machined of solid brass 5/16" heads slotted for easy installation. Use RD3 Rivet drill for perfect countersinking and alignment.

CP601 Pkg 12 Rivets ..... 12.12

RD3 Rivet Drill ..... 19.95

# Les Baer

## Premier II 9MM

Les Baer 1911 .45s are well-known for their accuracy. Petty finds they also know how to build a mean-shootin' 9mm.

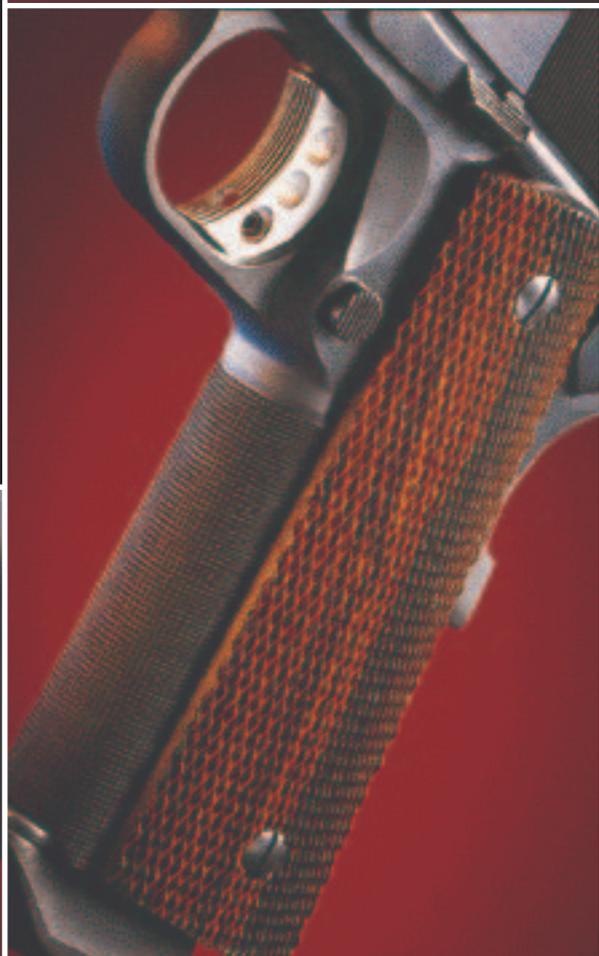
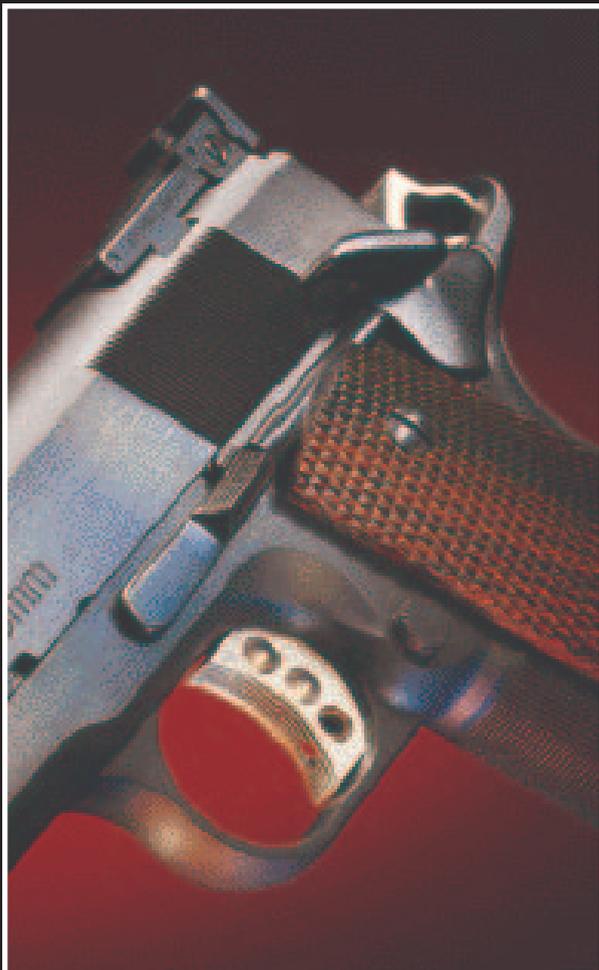
**Story By** Charles E. Petty **Photos by** Ichiro Nagata

**F**or quite a few years, I've held the opinion that the 9mm Luger is not a particularly accurate cartridge. Further, I've found most 9mm pistols aren't capable of utilizing what little accuracy the 9x19 seemed to possess.

To a degree, this is still true, but within the last couple of years a few guns have crossed my path that showed me that some Nines can indeed shoot. All of these were seriously customized, and with them I also found some factory ammo that was pretty good too. There are a couple of match loads that do shoot quite well and, surprisingly, some standard hollowpoint and ball loads aren't too shabby either.

There's another incentive to find accurate 9mm pistols. Competitive events such as IDPA, PPC and some speed matches do not look down on the 9mm. After all, the cartridge is widely used in both law enforcement and personal defense, so maybe it's worth a more serious look.

*continued on page 46*



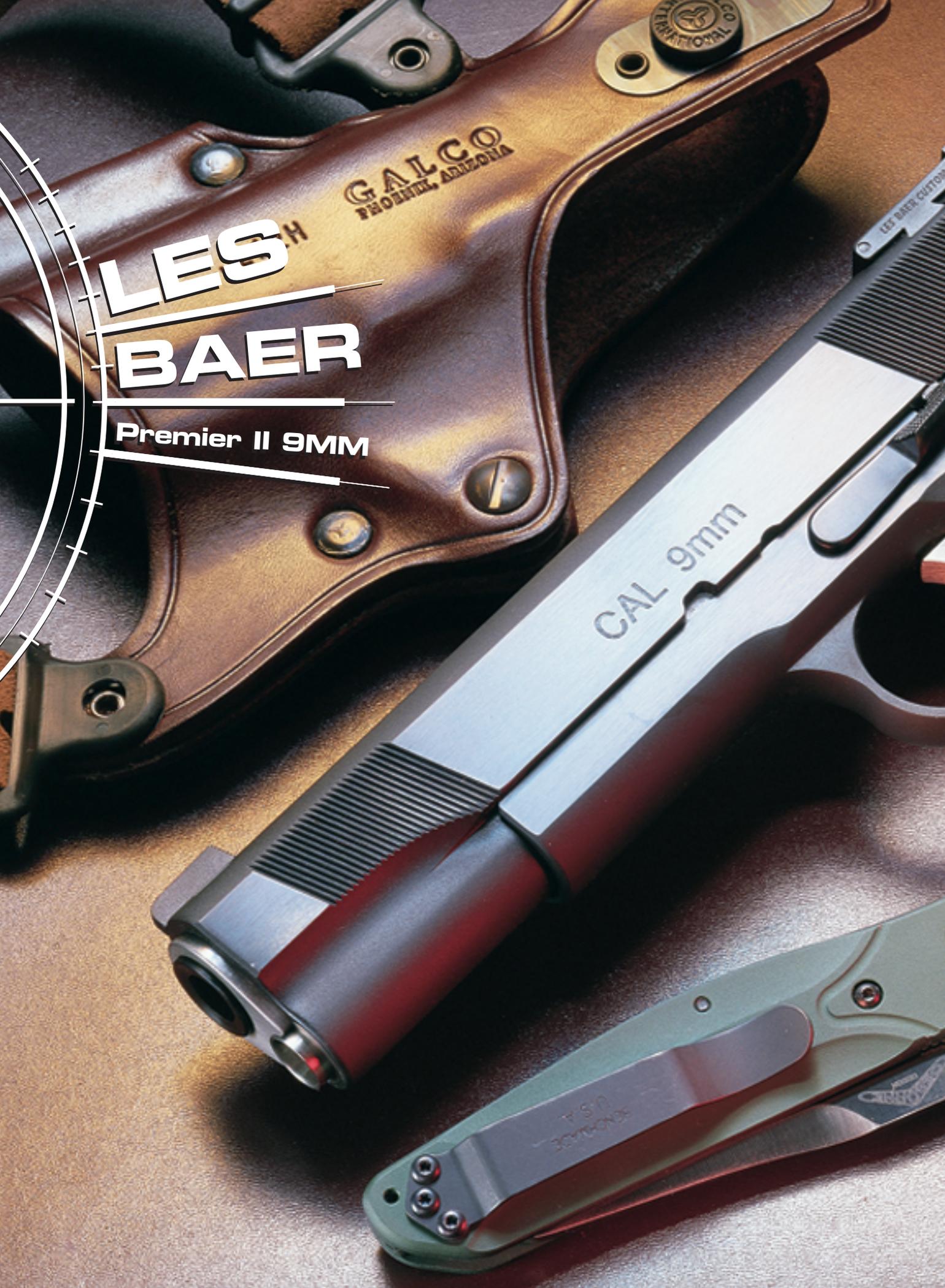
### ACCURACY TEST RESULTS

Load	Velocity	1	2	3	Avg.
Black Hills 124 gr. JHP	1,218	1.48"	1.31"	1.87"	1.55"
Federal Gold Medal 124 gr. FMJ	1,121	1.87"	1.78"	2.08"	1.91"
Speer Gold Dot 147 gr. JHP	974	1.74"	.04"	1.88"	1.89"
Remington Disintegrator 105 gr.	1,213	1.53"	1.79"	2.50"	1.94"
Remington Match 147 gr. FMJ	950	2.26"	1.73"	1.63"	1.87"
Winchester 147 gr. BEB	945	2.35"	2.65"	1.99"	2.33"

**Average For All Loads: 1.92"**

Accuracy results are 10 shot groups at 25 yards from Ransom rest.  
Velocity is the instrumental average of 30 rounds as measured by a  
PACT Professional chronograph.





# LES BAER

Premier II 9MM

GALCO  
TOMBIGLON, ARIZONA

CAL 9mm

TSN  
3570003

LES BAER CUSTOM



9mm  
LUGER  
135 GRAIN

**FEDERAL**  
PERSONAL DEFENSE  
HYDRA-SHOCK IUD

CALIFORNIA  
INTERNATIONAL

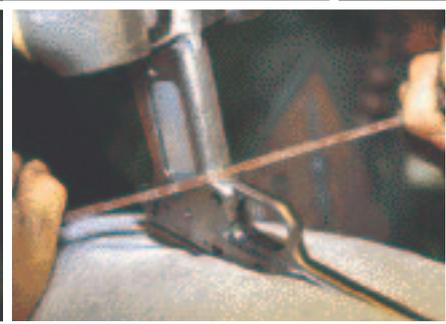
**GUNS**  
MAGAZINE

# A Visit To Les Baer Custom

By Charles Petty

GUNS Magazine visits Les Baer Custom and finds the secret to great guns is still carefull hand work.

1



**1** Contrary to myth, Les Baer pistols are built by hand, one-at-a-time, the right way. Here you see a number of critical operations being performed, including cutting the lower lugs of the barrel by hand. **2** Les Baer test fires every single pistol before it leaves the facility. This is an impressive level of personal involvement. For a manufacturer, this is the ultimate in quality control.

**T**he miracles of modern manufacturing methods have made it possible to produce Government Model pistols that are far superior to those of days gone by. And this fact has led to a widespread misunderstanding about the guns that come from Les Baer.

Most people, myself included, think of his guns as “semi-custom,” where production parts are tweaked to get better fit and accuracy.

We couldn't have been more wrong.

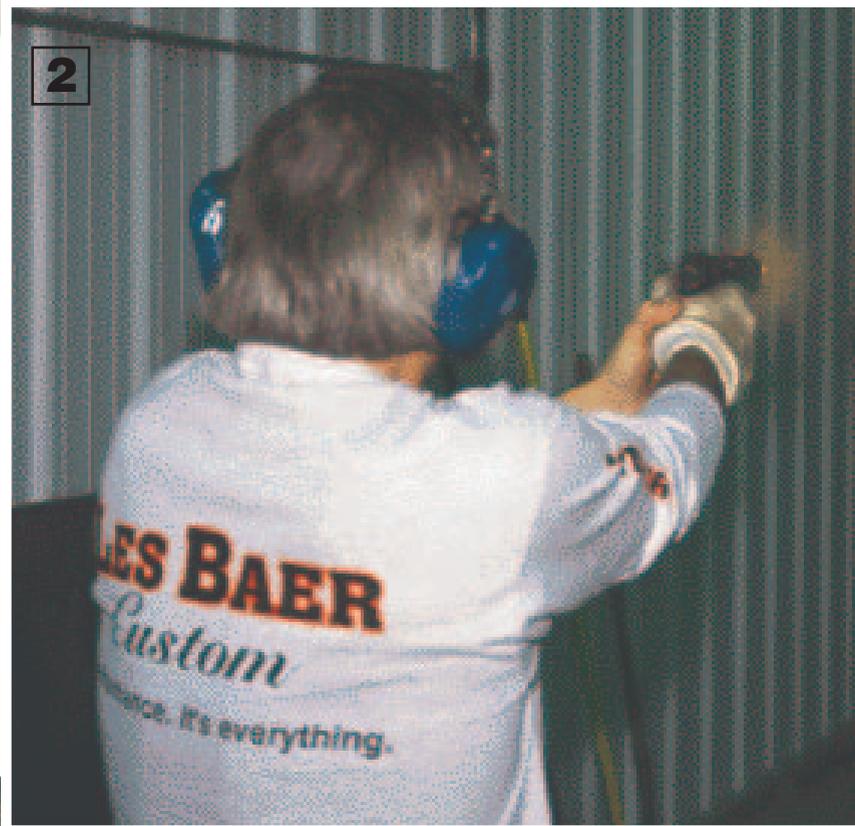
I knew this almost from the minute I walked through the door of his shop in Hillsdale, Ill. It was like nothing I expected. I thought I'd see lots of machines. Instead I saw lots of files. Yep, those hand-operated things that cut metal.

It was a throwback to the Air Force shop where I trained over 40 years ago. The facility is filled with workbenches bearing tool boxes loaded with files, stones, scrapers and reamers. All these tools are operated not by air or electricity but by the hands of somebody who knows how to use them.

### Building A Baer

Let me tell you how the system works.

Baer operates in a constant backorder situation, but the wait for one of his pistols is considerably less than we have  
*continued on page 45*



# The Bad Guys Hate Us!

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## PREMIER II 9MM

continued from page 40

### The Need For An Accurate Pistol

To learn what this cartridge is capable of, you need a pistol of proven accuracy. So when the idea of giving a more serious look at the capability of the 9mm cartridge began to take shape, the first thing I did was to order a Les Baer Premier II pistol in 9mm. Of course, good things take time, but eventually, the pistol arrived. It was well worth the wait.

I did not ask for anything beyond the basic Premier II package. Les Baer 1911s are famous for their precise tolerances, and my sample is accurized to the hilt, with not even a hint of play in the slide to frame fit. We know that the most critical element of an accuracy job is the way the bottom barrel lugs ride over the slide stop pin. This is the place to look for good — or shoddy — work.

You want to see even rub marks on both feet and the corresponding area of the slide stop pin. It seems to me this is one of the more difficult parts of the accuracy job, because there are so many custom "accurized" pistols around which show poor fitting in this area. Those 'smiths should go take some lessons from Baer, as I've yet to see one of his guns that didn't have a well-fitted barrel.

And the really neat part of this is the lugs are cut without the aid of precision milling machines and the like. In Les Baer's shop they use a store bought lug cutter and finish the job by hand — with files and emery cloth. The outside of the Premier II is just as good. It has a brightly polished blue finish, flawless checkering, adjustable sights and a wonderfully crisp 4-pound, 3-ounce trigger pull.

### Out Of The Box

Every new Baer-built pistol I examine appears to be fit so tightly it can't possibly function, but then it always does. This one was no exception. My normal routine is to shoot 50 to 100 rounds through a gun before it goes to the Ransom Rest, so the new Premier II got 100 rounds of assorted ammunition followed by a thorough cleaning and inspection.

### First Shot Out Syndrome

Nothing out of the ordinary was seen. But in the Ransom Rest, the gun exhibited the common trait of putting the first shot from the magazine out of the group. This effect is well documented and happens because the gun does not go into battery the same way when you load manually as it does during the firing cycle. In this case, almost every first shot went high by half an inch to an inch.

This tells me the barrel is not going up into the slide as much for that first shot.

Because of the initial tightness of the pistol I chose to — over a period of several weeks — shoot it another 500 rounds prior to serious testing. I did this by handing a buddy a box of ammo and a couple of magazines. What I accomplished in addition to fully breaking-in the pistol was to have three guys who *really* want this gun in addition to myself.

**An unexpected consequence of all this shooting is a new respect for the 9mm Luger cartridge. While my initial reservations about the accuracy of service pistols is unchanged, the cartridge has the potential for serious accuracy.**

### Problem Solved

Returning to the Ransom Rest, the benefit of the additional shooting was immediately obvious. There were still a few first shot flyers, however, the incidence was dramatically reduced. While the "first shot out" effect may be a forever thing with guns that are not tightly fitted, this isn't the case here. All it required was more shooting. Yeah I know... what a pity.

An unexpected consequence of all this shooting is a new respect for the 9mm Luger cartridge. While my initial reservations about the accuracy of service pistols is unchanged, the cartridge has the potential for serious accuracy when the right load is plugged into a proven-accurate pistol such as the Baer Premier II.

In addition, when not striving for ultimate accuracy, the 9mm Premier II is a pleasure to shoot. The moderate recoil of the 9x19 cartridge in a frame that fits my hand like a comfortable old glove makes it possible to shoot well and quickly. And with that potential comes another bonus... it's a whole bunch of fun to shoot.



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## A VISIT TO LES BAER

*continued from page 45*

grown used to. When an order reaches the top of the pile, all of the parts needed to build that gun are placed in a tray holding eight guns.

The tray fits comfortably atop a rolling cart where it will remain until it's finished. From the stock room, it goes into the shop where it will move from one bench to the next until every operation is completed. But I'm getting a bit ahead of myself, for the parts that go into the tray need some explanation.

The guns from Les Baer are not simply accurized pistols that someone else made. Every component that goes into the gun is either manufactured by Baer or made to his specifications by a vendor, often with molds or tooling owned by Baer.

At first, frames and slides were provided by a vendor, but in 1993 Baer purchased a machine shop in his home town of Allentown, Pa., and by mid '94 he was making those too. The shop has grown to occupy 28,000 square feet and holds 16 CNC machine centers.

### The Foundation — Frame To Slide Fit

The building of a gun begins with the fitting of slide to frame. As they come into the shop these two parts won't go together at all. Using a gauge, a few thousandths is removed from the frame rails until the slide just begins to fit onto the frame. It is then lapped the rest of the way to a smooth, snug fit with no horizontal or vertical movement.

Another area of careful hand work is the front strap checkering. The frames come in with the checkering started by a machine, but the 30 lpi pattern is completed by hand. The next step involves the external fitting of the safety, beavertail and mainspring housing. These parts are blended to the frame by polishing as needed.

The barrel and how it is fitted is the heart and soul of any accurate Govt. Model pistol. Baer's barrels are made by Kart — although they're marked Baer — and are beautifully made. During my gunsmithing days it took a long time to fit a barrel due to the differences in dimensions from one part to another.

Starting with beautifully uniform components, barrel fitting at the Les Baer shop goes much faster... although the task is no less demanding.

### "Best On The Market"

Kart makes these barrels to Baer's specification, but uses his own proprietary rifling design. "I've been buying barrels from Kart since 1976," said Baer, "and he makes the best pistol barrel on the market."

There are multiple steps to fitting the barrel. The bushing will not even think of

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starting onto the barrel so it is reamed to a preset dimension. Then the bushing is fitted to the slide.

In my opinion, the fit of bushing to slide on the Baer guns is, if anything, too tight. A bushing wrench is positively mandatory and it had best not be flimsy plastic. Baer wisely includes a good one with his pistols.

The next step in barrel fitting is to cut the headspace extension for both width and length, so that it fits the slide with little or no space. That done, the bottom lugs are cut with a standard hand-rotated cutter which leaves the fit impossibly tight.

From this point the final fit is achieved by hand — file and try... file and try — until it is just right. The last bit is done by gentle polishing of both the lugs and slide stop. This is exactly how I was taught to do it all those years ago.

Next, the sights are installed and a final polish is done to blend all the edges, such as fitting the back of the extractor and ejector flush with the slide. From there, it's off to finishing.

**"The demand is much too heavy for Les Baer himself to build guns anymore, but he personally test-fires each and every one — sometimes as much as 100 rounds."**

### Finishing Touches

Blueing is done on-site, but plating and Baercoat®, (a durable, self-lubricating finish) are done by vendors.

When the nearly completed pistol comes back from finishing, the internal fitting of the beavertail and thumb safety is done, the barrel ramp is polished, everything is checked out and the trigger job is finished.

The demand is much too heavy for Les Baer himself to build guns anymore, but he personally test-fires each and every one — sometimes as much as 100 rounds. After this they are cleaned, inspected once more, drenched in Break-Free™ and sent off to the customer.

When all is said and done, over 40 man hours of labor are involved in every pistol.

Over quite a few years I have tested a number of Baer pistols and examined dozens more belonging to friends, or which were found in gun shop showcases. The thing that impresses me most is the consistent quality of the work. Baer bristled when, at the start of my visit, I referred to his guns as, "semi-custom." There is nothing semi about them.

### Some Thoughts On Value

Forgive me for a moment of editorial opinion that is mine... and mine alone. It really wasn't all that long ago that you could buy a nice used Colt Government Model for \$50. In 1965 I charged \$100 to completely authorize the gun, including a set of Bomar sights. I wasn't alone back then, that was simply the going rate.

And the guns most of us did back then would shoot every bit as well as one for which, today, you might pay more than 20 times as much. When I hear of someone charging thousands of dollars above the basic cost of the gun, I want to say bad words.

There may come a time when someone's work is that valuable but I don't think we've gotten there just yet. Maybe for a fine engraver and lots of gold, but not for a basic accuracy job that is — let's be real here — unchanged from the principles set down in the 1950s.

I consider myself a pretty good judge of craftsmanship and my job gives me the chance to examine lots of custom guns. Sometimes what I see is disappointing.

### Looking Past The Shine

The important points I look for are not visible from the outside. You've got to field strip the gun to see them. I want to see the bottom barrel lugs cut to provide full and even contact with the slide stop pin.

The headspace extension on the barrel should fit the slide with little or no daylight visible, and the bushing fit between slide and barrel must provide the correct forward lockup. Some of the most expensive pistols I've seen suffer in these areas, however lovely they may be on the outside.

Right now, I bet that some of you are making the analogy of the Beemer and the Bug. Both will get you from point A to point B, but there is a difference in how they do so. The thing doesn't hold up with guns though. Sure leather seats and oodles of horsepower cost more but where do we find something comparable in this pistol.

To be certain, there's some "eyewash" common to both (leather seats or ivory grips for example), but neither of those improve the utility of the product at all. They look nice and cost more but beyond that do nothing better than less expensive options.

When we talk about custom pistols there's no such thing as list price, but all the good 'smiths have packages that have the same features. Here we can compare apples and apples.

The bottom line is I find Baer's prices to be middle-of-the-road and sometimes even a little low. But you won't find anything low or middle about the workmanship and performance of these guns. They're not cheap. But at least here, you get what you pay for.



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# TRAINING F FIN OP

**“I was at SIGARMS Academy attending an Advanced Tactical Marksman Observer course — four politically correct words today required to simply say ‘sniper.’”**

I low crawled another few feet through the field and then paused. I could say that I was checking my bearings, or perhaps that I was listening, but truth be known I was trying to catch my breath. Even though it was a cold November day in N.H., and I was wet from crawling through a marsh, I was sweating so bad my glasses had fogged over.

I was hot, wet, tired and basically blind. I took a couple deep breathes and then removed my glasses and tried to wipe them clear. Putting them back on I ever so slowly turned my head and checked my mud encrusted sniper rifle, a Sako TRG-22, lying next to me. She was filthy, but good to go.

My objective, a treeline, was only 15 to 20 feet away. The field I was in was under constant observation, and while my ghillie suit made me almost invisible as long as I remained still, I had to move sooner or later — and it's motion that most often gives you away.

### **Temporary Security**

Ever so slowly, I slid myself forward inch by inch. As soon as I entered the thick cover of the treeline, I breathed a sigh of relief. Whereas I had felt naked and exposed crossing the open field, here in the woods I felt relatively secure and almost invisible. After catching my breath I slowly rose up behind a tree and had a look. Two trucks were parked less than 150 yards away. In the back of one was an observer scanning the field I had just crossed, the treeline, and the ground before me, with a set of Steiners. Along with him was my target.

As I took in the situation, the observer turned and seemed to stare directly at me. My heart skipped a beat and I slowly slid back down out of view. I had two options, take the shot from here, or try to move closer. After a brief brainstorming session I decided to get closer. Within a few moments I was back in the field, inching along towards my target.

OR THE

# ATTENTION

STORY BY: DAVID M. FORTIER  
PHOTOS BY: ROBERT SILVERS AND THE AUTHOR

**GUNS Magazine** takes a look at SIG Arms Academy's Advanced Tactical Marksman Observer course.

## Fatal Decision

It was a decision I would live to regret. With only 70 yards of open field separating us and time running out, I kicked the safety off my Sako, rose up enough to engage my target, and fired. While my shot, a blank round, would have taken out my target, I was immediately spotted and "eliminated."

An instructor walked over to me, talking on his radio as he laughed and said, "Man, Dave, they had no idea you were there, but I think they called in mortars on you when you rose up for that shot!" Yes, I had blown it.

As I walked over to join a group of my fellow students who had either completed the exercise or been eliminated, I thought about the mistake I had made. I had passed up a shot to try to get closer, and in doing so had been eliminated. It was a lesson learned. Luckily though, that's why I had come to SIGARMS Academy, to learn.

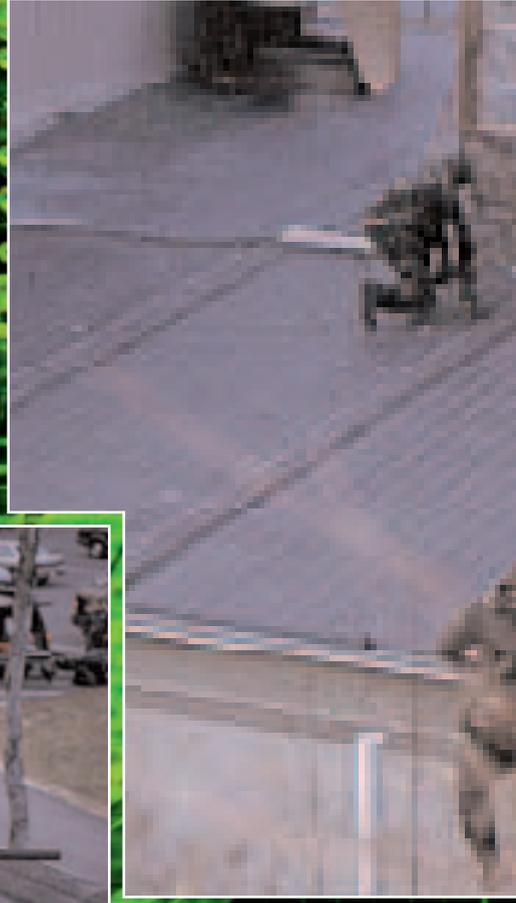
I was at SIGARMS Academy attending an Advanced Tactical Marksman Observer course — four politically correct words today required to simply say "sniper." A five-day law enforcement only course not offered to civilians, it's designed to take the police marksman to the next level of proficiency.

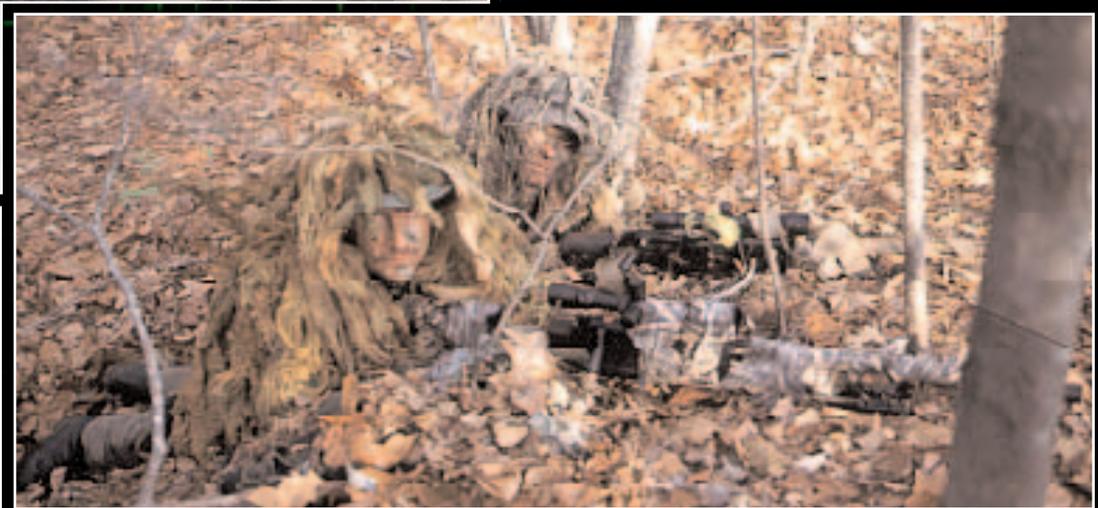
## Preparing For The Unthinkable

I have the utmost respect for designated police marksmen. They are a special breed who face a daunting task. It's not politically correct to speak openly of such things, but the hard truth is this: If a police marksman is



**Right:** Knowing how a bullet is likely to perform against an intermediate barrier, such as glass, is vital knowledge for the designated marksman.





given the green light on a callout, he must instantly be able to make a surgically precise shot.

It must be accomplished no matter how far he has just run with all his gear, how hard his heart is pounding, how bad the environmental conditions, and despite the fact that his target is moving or partially obscured by an innocent hostage.

Not only must he be able to make the shot, but he must do it under the pressure of knowing a miss means innocents will surely die. And he must do it while looking through high-powered optics at the face of the living, breathing human being he is about to kill.

If all of this wasn't sobering enough, he must make this perfect shot every time without fail. This is the reality of the police marksman, the last recourse when lives are on the line and there are no other options.

### World Class Training

The officer who accepts this staggering responsibility deserves the absolute best training available. While there are many fine firearm schools out there, one school in particular has set the pace for such instruction. This school is SIGARMS Academy.

In operation for over 10 years, SIGARMS Academy has gained a well-deserved reputation for being one of the top training facilities in the country.

Located in rural Epping, N.H., the Academy sits on over 100 acres and is home to a wide range of courses. Whether you're looking to learn how to safely carry and effectively deploy a folding knife, handgun, defensive carbine, precision rifle, learn of the legalities of self defense, or even counter car-jacking skills, SIGARMS Academy is your one stop training facility.

I have attended many of their courses in the past and have always been impressed. So my partner, Rob Silvers, and I attended their ATMO course to get a first hand look at what they have to offer the police marksman.

**1** Thorough knowledge requires testing against many types of glass, at different angles and with varying distances between the glass and the target. **2** The SIG Academy range offers lots of space to accommodate riflemen and their gear. **3** Shooter and observer train in rooftop deployment. **4** Stealthy, undetected approach through wooded country may be an unlikely requirement for an officer from an urban department, but it must be trained for nevertheless. **5** Paper targets unmercifully record shot placement. Simply hitting the target is not good enough. Correct placement is vital.

## Dream Facility

The Academy itself is new, well designed, and ever expanding, allowing training both indoors and out. Easy to find and with lodging and food conveniently located nearby, it's an excellent school with a very professional staff. The main building houses the school's offices, a large classroom, eating area, and an indoor range facility.

The classroom is equipped with modern teaching aids to better illustrate any points being made as well as a good old-fashioned chalk board. Their indoor range is set up for non-toxic frangible ammunition which allows shooting on steel plates as close as yards with no danger.

## Indoor-Outdoor Shooting

The indoor range can also double as a large classroom. A separate area is set up for weapons maintenance, with all the required gear on hand. Next to this is a strong room where students can safely store their firearms after hours.

In September 1999, the Academy opened a 300 meter rifle range, thus increasing their training options. This range features both paper and steel targets, with movers to be added. The range can handle 16 shooters with all their gear sprawled out very comfortably, and up to 32 shooters by closing it up.

In addition to the known-distance range, the large acreage available allows stalking exercises and a "Steel Plate Hunt" to be performed. Plus they have an "Area-51" where you can literally shoot 360 degrees, having to spot and engage targets in all directions.

Excellent use of space enhances the training and raises the challenge for rifle students. Being situated in Northern New England, one can train in four very different seasons, and see the affect on your zero and gear.

On my first visit to the facility there was a raging blizzard, and on another trip, our instructor was harping on us about our water intake so there'd be no heat casualties. Their latest addition has been a shoot house. This of course allows a variety of training options for both individual and team scenarios.

## Voice Of Experience

An impressive European name and a fine facility does not make a noteworthy school — it's the staff that's the key. John Peterson III, their Senior Firearms Instructor, is a former Special Forces Sniper/Observer Instructor and therefore very familiar with the Art of the Rifle. Down to earth and friendly, Peterson is a professional's professional. Unlike many though, he has no ego and has little use for anyone who does. Instead he is utterly devoted to his students.

Peterson was our instructor, and Rob Silvers and I quickly earned the nickname "Team Euro" from him. This was due to our choices in sniper rifles. Silvers brought an Accuracy International AWP topped with a Schmidt und Bender scope. I chose a Sako TRG-22 with a 2.5-10x42 I.O.R. Tactical scope.

In addition to the Sako, my equipment consisted of a Glock G23, web gear, cammies, ghillie-suit, Bushnell Yardage Pro 1,000, Mil-Dot Master, Meopta HA 70 spotting scope, I.O.R. 8x30 binocular, GPS, Lahti rifle rest on a cammied camera tripod, 500 rounds of 175 grain Black Hills Match, face paint, log book, knee pads, rain gear, and other assorted items.

It takes a lot of gear to be prepared to make the best of a learning opportunity such as this.

## Hitting The High-Points

Now I will be blunt. This was a five day, 60+ hour, in-depth course. I'll only be able to touch on the high points of the experience in this article. The course was taught in a systematic method where every segment was built, and interfaced with, the previously taught subject.

Throughout the course, students had to take what they had learned and properly apply it to overcome various challenges. It was demanding, both mentally and physically, as well as requiring superior marksmanship skills.

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Our class was composed of police marksmen from around the New England area and Canada. They were a great bunch of guys to train with, professional to the core, and serious about improving their skills. This was good as Peterson wasted no time, and the course started promptly in the classroom on the first day.

As the employment of sniper/observers, their missions and applications, authority to engage and rules of engagement were covered, many a good point was driven home. Ed Gross from Crosshairs Inc., was brought in to speak, and he made the point there is no "average" range for police sniper engagements. While 60 to 75 yards is often quoted, the truth is there is no "average" shot. Designated marksmen must be prepared to take a shot from 25 to well over 300 yards.

Gross went on to give a sniper critical incident presentation. This covered actual shootings (with video and narrative of them), incident debriefs, and the lessons learned. The video footage was graphic, and bluntly illustrated what being a sniper entailed.

Gross then went on to debunk the fallacy of "Tactical Disarmament." This is attempting to shoot the weapon out of the hand of an individual. This flawed tactic became popular after a widely televised incident in the Midwest. However, in several other incidents that were not televised, this tactic resulted in tragedy.

From the classroom we headed to the range and immediately got to work. We began by checking our zeros, doing various scope adjustment exercises, and then shooting in increments from 25 to 300 yards to determine our bullet drop.

### First Shots Fired

We began the second day back in the classroom covering the principles of observation and target detection. Then moving to the range, we checked our cold bore shot and got to work. It was cold, about 30 degrees, and nasty out, but we were glad to be out of the classroom busting caps.

Here we brushed up on the basic shooting positions — firing from the Hawkins position, unsupported prone, sitting, seated, kneeling, and Olympic offhand on paper and at steel. Then things began to get more serious and we went through tactical shooting exercises intended to induce stress.

As an example, we had to sprint 100 yards to our rifles and fire 5 shots from the prone at a 1-inch dot on a face target 100 yards away, all timed and in competition with one another. While I was the slowest runner, I managed to catch up once behind my rifle, and finished first, with five rounds into less than 7/8 inch.

The next course of fire forced the sniper to shoot from a variety of difficult

positions. Then it was shooting on steel silhouettes at unknown distances, timed and under stress, from 75 to 325 yards. Oh, by the way, head shots only please. This required the shooter to both be able to accurately judge distance (no laser rangefinders allowed) and know their bullet's trajectory.

### Shoot / No-Shoot Training

Later, we did live fire utilizing the CAPS III video simulator technology. This plays a life-size movie with multiple critical incidents onto a canvas screen in front of a bullet trap. The snipers, paired in teams, were located in urban and rural hides and contacted by radio.

The teams would then have to make a decision on these highly realistic and difficult incidents if and when to take a shot. At the sound of the gunshot, the video automatically froze and the shot was checked in the screen and assessed.

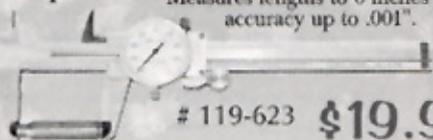
This allowed the snipers to watch real moving people (via video) through their rifle scopes from an actual hide and, if required, take a shot. They were then able to see exactly the result of their shot. It was excellent training.

Day three found us covering range estimation techniques and technology, and doing rural range estimation exercises and fieldcraft exercises. We then were back on

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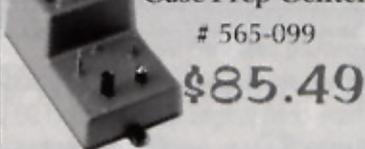
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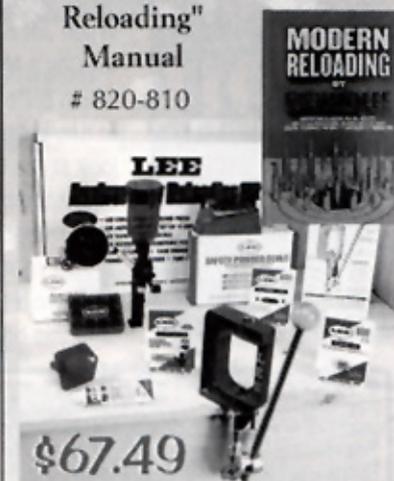


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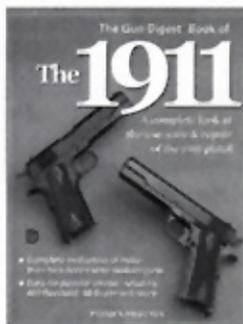
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the range doing position shooting followed by an urban sniping course of fire.

## Becoming One With The Earth

At this point, it was back in the field, where we did a rural stalk in full ghillie. Here we had to stalk to within 125 yards of our target undetected, fire a blank round, and still remain undetected to high powered optics. It was dark by the end of the stalk but our day was far from done.

We grabbed some food and then engaged in judgmental/threat-identification training with live fire via the CAPS III system. This was again great training. Sound like a full day? We weren't done yet.

Hustling back to the 300 meter range, we fired on steel via night optics. We also employed artificial illumination and worked on tactical countdowns and coordinated fire. We did a lot with night vision devices and finally called it a night around 11:30 p.m.

Day four found us in the classroom learning how to prepare, plan and conduct for engagement through intermediate barriers. After extensive instruction, we headed to the range for live fire. During this phase of training we engaged targets through a variety of commonly encountered glass types.

These included common home-window glass, security glass, and skyscraper glass. In addition, we also engaged Threat Level IV body armor inserts. During this testing we fired a multitude of different loads and bullet types and gauged their effectiveness. All students found the results most interesting.

## Shooting For Record

We then shot an urban sniping course for record. This involved engaging a reduced size face target with two shots from various difficult positions. Two man teams had to navigate from position to position and make their shots as best they could while under a time limit. It was interesting to note the fastest and most experienced shooters often shot off a pack rather than a bipod.

The next challenge involved an extensive rural stalk by two man teams. The mission was thoroughly planned; we were given pictures of our targets and maps before being dropped off. We then had to stalk undetected to our objective, locate our targets, prepare a hide, and gather intel on the area.

## Pistol Work Too

Each team had to then engage their primary targets and then egress while engaging secondary targets with their sidearms. This really showed the importance of teamwork, good tactics, and the need for quality optics and gear.

The last day culminated with the Final Exam. This was a timed course of fire that forced the sniper to put into practice everything he had learned. It was both physically and mentally demanding.

The event was timed and you had to hustle, yet you were required to approach

each firing position tactically. I won't go into detail, but can say that it entails everything from climbing onto roofs, shooting through windows, under obstacles, and much more.

### Final Assessment

In the end, I came away very impressed by John Peterson's sniper course. Peterson is an excellent teacher who made the absolute most of the terrain and equipment at his disposal.

His adjuncts, Sergeant Ed Gross, Officer John Grasso, and especially Sergeant Mike Tkac did a superlative job. The students were all impressed by the quality of the instruction and training, and I noticed some real improvements made during the 5 days. For the individual officer or department looking for superior training, I suggest considering SIGARMS Academy.

*Peterson is now working as an adjunct instructor on the staff of a number of different training companies and serving on the Executive Board of the American Sniper Association, www.americansniper.org, and the International Association for Counterterrorism & Security Professionals, www.iascp.com. He can be reached at jmpeterson@keepandbeararms.com*



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# LEVERGUN LOADS

## .30-30 WINCHESTER

Taffin shares a host of good loads for one of our most-used, but least-praised rifle cartridges.



BY JOHN TAFFIN



I was recently taken to task by an individual on my Website ([www.sixguns.com](http://www.sixguns.com)). He accused me of being intolerant, and further suggested there is a whole new world out there I need to see. I freely admit to being intolerant. One of the major problems with our world today is we are overloaded with tolerance. I'll stay intolerant, thank you.

I've also seen the "new world" and I don't like it all that much. Daytime television is part of this new world, and I have found if I want a break in the middle of the day, the only way to enjoy television is to plug in a videotape — preferably a classic western movie.

I learned this lesson when I surveyed the current content

of daytime television programming, which seems to consist mainly of two types of shows. The first are the infamous infomercials (does anybody *really* watch these things?), and the second, which are loosely referred to as "talk" shows (how *can* anybody watch these things?).

When I was a kid in a galaxy long ago and far, far away, I actually had parents who felt it was their duty to teach me certain things. One of those had to do with talk. There were certain things that were not discussed in polite company, and other things that were never discussed at all.

All such barriers are down on daytime TV. No subject is taboo, and there is no subject so gross, so obnoxious, so embarrassing, it cannot be paraded in front of

**Left:** Truly deserving of the label *Classic*, this Winchester Saddle Ring Carbine dates back to the first decade of the 20th century. **Below:** It is hard to beat the Marlin 336 Cowboy for shooting cast bullets.

everyone. It seems to me that most of us would want to hide these things if they occurred in our family. Perhaps, the participants are a different species.

### Taboo Subject?

Certainly, shooters like to talk. We love to talk about our guns, about hunting, about shooting, just about anything and everything connected with firearms. Except one. In polite company it seems that the .30-30 Winchester cartridge is a taboo subject.

It's rare to find anyone who will admit they shoot one, let alone own a rifle chambered in .30-30, and even harder to find is someone who will admit they actually reload for the .30-30. After all, for years we've been told by several different experts that the .30-30 is a difficult cartridge for the reloader.

What are the facts? Both Marlin and Winchester have been producing .30-30 leverguns for more than 100 years, millions of them in fact. This means either one person has stockpiled all these leverguns in a huge warehouse, or a lot of people have purchased and continue to purchase .30-30s without talking about it.

If they do talk, it's usually to point out they really bought the .30-30 levergun as their kid's first hunting rifle. A task it fills admirably, with excellent performance combined with mild recoil.

Perhaps it is taken home in a plain brown wrapper and only shot when no one is around. As to reloading, the .30-30 is the 13th most popular set of rifle reloading dies sold by RCBS, outselling the 7mm Remington Ultra Mag, 7-08, .22 Hornet, .338 Winchester, .300 Weatherby, 8x57, 6.5x55, .280 Remington, .222 Remington, .260 Remington, .338 Remington Ultra Mag, and .220 Swift.

No one is reluctant to talk about any of these cartridges, so what's the problem with the .30-30?

It's time for all the .30-30 users to come out of the closet and let the world know they shoot this grand old cartridge, and they do it with great enjoyment and success.

### Personal History

The .30-30 occupies both a soft and a sad spot in my heart. A Winchester Model 94 chambered in .30-30 was one of my first rifles in the 1950s. Then in 1963, I was faced with the prospect of being able to pay my college tuition that quarter or feed my three little kids, but no way to do both.

That, of course, was no contest, so to be able to stay in school I had to sell three very special firearms, a second generation, 7½ inch barreled .45 Colt SAA, a S&W 1950 Target .44 Special, and a pre-64 Model 94. I had no choice, but it still hurt.

That's the down side, but the upside is all of these guns have been replaced many times over. Currently, I have at my disposal for testing and shooting enjoyment five .30-30s, all lever guns, as well as a T/C Contender with both 10- and 14-inch barrels.

The leverguns consist of three Winchesters: one of the current trapper models, a pre-'64 Model 64, and a pre-World War I Saddle Ring Carbine; from Marlin comes one of the current 336 Cowboy leverguns and it is mated up with a "homemade" trapper.

## LEVERGUN LOADS: .30-30 WINCHESTER

(For use only in modern .30-30 rifles in excellent condition)

**Test Rifle: Marlin 336 Cowboy 24 inch Barrel**

### CAST BULLET LOADS

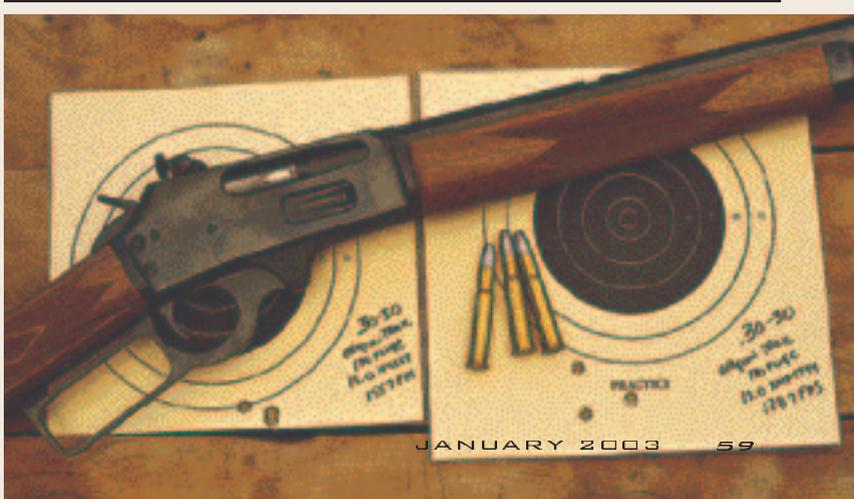
Bullet	Load	Velocity	Group
Oregon Trail 170 gr. FNGC	15.0 gr. H4227	1,557	3/4"
Oregon Trail 170 gr. FNGC	17.0 gr. #2400	1,862	1"
Oregon Trail 170 gr. FNGC	26.0 gr. IMR3031	2,028	1¼"
Oregon Trail 170 gr. FNGC	13.0 gr. XMP5744	1,287	1¼"
Oregon Trail 170 gr. FNGC	20.0 gr. XMP5744	1,798	1½"
RCBS #30-180FN	13.0 gr. XMP5744	1,241	1½"
RCBS #30-180FN	18.0 gr. XMP5744	1,654	7/8"

### JACKETED BULLET LOADS

Bullet	Load	Velocity	Group
Sierra 125 gr. FPHP	33.0 gr. H4895	2,202	1½"
Sierra 125 gr. FPHP	35.0 gr. H4895	2,356	1½"
Sierra 125 gr. FPHP	31.0 gr. H322	2,376	1½"
Sierra 125 gr. FPHP	33.0 gr. H322	2,613	1"
Sierra 125 gr. FPHP	33.0 gr. H335	2,421	1"
Sierra 125 gr. FPHP	35.0 gr. H335	2,546	1½"
Hornady 150 gr. RN	31.0 gr. H4895	2,080	1½"
Hornady 150 gr. RN	33.0 gr. H4895	2,094	1½"
Hornady 150 gr. RN	29.0 gr. H322	2,181	3/4"
Hornady 150 gr. RN	31.0 gr. H335	2,178	1/2"
Speer 150 gr. FN	27.0 gr. Reloder 7	2,208	3/4"
Speer 150 gr. FN	29.0 gr. Reloder 7	2,330	1½"
Speer 150 gr. FN	29.0 gr. H322	2,194	1¼"
Speer 150 gr. FN	31.0 gr. H322	2,335	1½"
Winchester 150 gr. Silver Tip	31.0 gr. H4895	2,094	1¼"
Winchester 150 gr. Silver Tip	33.0 gr. H4895	2,215	1"
Winchester 150 gr. Silver Tip	29.0 gr. H322	2,180	1½"
Winchester 150 gr. Silver Tip	31.0 gr. H335	2,162	7/8"
Winchester 150 gr. Silver Tip	33.0 gr. H335	2,282	1½"
Hornady 170 gr. FP	27.0 gr. Reloder 7	2,085	5/8"
Hornady 170 gr. FP	28.0 gr. H322	2,204	3/4"
Hornady 170 gr. FP	28.0 gr. H335	2,029	1½"
Hornady 170 gr. FP	30.0 gr. H335	2,135	1¼"
Hornady 170 gr. FP	28.0 gr. H4895	1,912	1½"
Hornady 170 gr. FP	30.0 gr. H4895	2,017	1½"
Sierra 170 gr. FP	26.0 gr. H322	1,855	1¼"
Sierra 170 gr. FP	28.0 gr. H322	2,090	7/8"
Sierra 170 gr. FP	30.0 gr. H335	2,105	1½"
Sierra 170 gr. FP	25.0 gr. Reloder 7	1,939	1"
Sierra 170 gr. FP	27.0 gr. Reloder 7	2,025	1"

### MARLIN 336 COWBOY MOUNTED WITH 4X SCOPE:

Bullet	Load	Velocity	Group
Federal 170 gr. Hi-Shok	Factory	2,030	7/8"
Hornady 150 gr. RN	Factory	2,350	5/8"
Hornady 170 gr. FP	Factory	2,220	3/4"
Remington 170 gr. Core-Lokt	Factory	2,199	3/8"
Speer Nitrex 150 gr. FP	Factory	2,310	3/4"
Speer 170 gr. FP	30.0 gr. H322	2,203	3/8"



**1**

By the way, “trapper” refers to lever-actions with shorter barrels than the traditional 20-inch carbine length. Winchester built a fair number of these, with barrels as short as 12 inches. These extra-short, fast handling guns were popular for many uses, as well as for use along the trap-line.

### The Marauder Lives Again

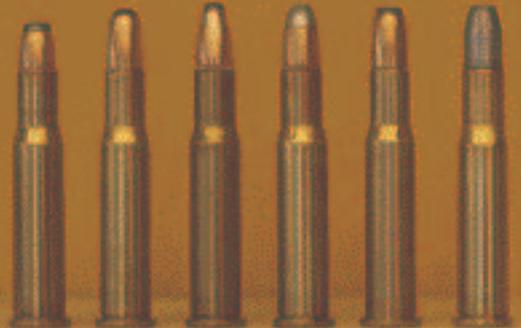
Several years ago, a fellow traveler gave me a barrel and magazine tube from the old Marlin Marauder, a short-barreled .30-30 that I drooled over as a kid. For the past several years I have been looking for an older Marlin that was neither drilled and tapped for a scope mount nor had a hammer block safety.

My original search was for a straight grip stock, however as my wrist has given me more and more trouble, I’ve found the pistol grip stock is much more comfortable to use. A few months back, I stopped in Shapels and found just what I was looking for.

Gunsmith Mike Rainey installed the 16-inch barrel and magazine tube. I added a Lyman receiver sight, and I had my long-awaited Marauder. If there’s anything better for deep-woods, close-range hunting of deer or black bear, I haven’t seen it yet.

Actually, any of the short-barreled leverguns — .30-30, .35 Remington, .356 Winchester, .375 Winchester or .38-55 — will make excellent woods guns. We will be talking about the other calibers in future installments. Before anyone asks, I would certainly add to this list any

**1** Fast handling leverguns for close quarters, Trappers from Winchester and Marlin. **2** Some favorite bullet choices for the .30-30: Sierra 125 FPHP, Hornady 150 RN, Speer 150 FN, Winchester 150 Silver Tip, Hornady 170 FP, and Oregon Trail’s 170 Gas Check Flat Point. **3** The wide variety of available jacketed and cast bullets equate to versatility for the .30-30 handloader.

**2****3**

*Winchester's 1892 — chambered for pistol-class cartridges — was an instant success, but the flat-shooting and hard-hitting Model 1894 took American woodsmen and hunters by storm.*



of the short-barreled big-bore leverguns chambered in .44 Magnum, .45 Colt, .444 Marlin, .45-70, and even the .44-40 properly loaded.

With this working battery of .30-30 leverguns, I have short, handy trappers that are just the ticket for use in close quarters. The long sight radius of the 24-inch, octagon-barreled Marlin Cowboy makes nice tight groups when testing ammo. My ancient Model 94 SRC literally personifies slick and smooth when it comes to leverguns, while the sleek Model 64, with its two-thirds length magazine, adds finesse to the .30-30 line up.

### **Origin Of The .30 WCF**

Most shooters believe the .30-30 and the Winchester Model 94 entered the shooting world hand-in-hand. No, not quite.

The Winchester Model 94, the most successful of all Winchester's lever-actions and still in production well over 100 years later, was first chambered in two black powder cartridges, the .32-40 and the .38-55.

One year later, barrels were changed to nickel steel to handle the extra friction caused by jacketed bullets at then unheard of muzzle velocities. The .38-55 was basically trimmed from 2.085 to 2.040 inch, and necked down to .30 caliber to arrive at the .30-30. Known early on as the .30 WCF, Winchester had entered the smokeless powder age.

No levergun cartridge has ever caught the shooting public's attention as did the .30-30. Very few will admit to its effectiveness today. All discussion seems confined to the various magnum cartridges, and we have a new wealth of super-magnums and short-magnums, all of which can be found in the best bolt-action rifles ever manufactured. However, in the late 1890s, the .30-30 left the .38-55 with its 250 grain bullet at 1,300 fps, and the .44-40 with its 205 grain bullet a few feet faster, far behind as it offered a superior bullet at a startling 2,000 fps.

This velocity meant flatter trajectory and extended range, and the .30-30 soon became the deer cartridge of choice. Not only was it highly effective, it was chambered in possibly the slickest levergun ever conceived for carrying in a saddle scabbard, pickup truck rack, or simply carrying through the woods.

Marlin lost no time chambering their Model 1893 for the new cartridge. When scope sights became widely available, Marlin was way ahead of Winchester. The Marlin was designed to eject to the side as opposed to the top ejection of the Winchester Model 94, and was thus much better adapted to mounting a telescope.

Even today, iron sight shooters are more likely to select the Winchester Model 94, while those preferring scopes will more often opt for the Marlin 336, which still retains the side ejection as well as coming already drilled and tapped for a supplied scope base.

For my use, I normally equip both the Marlin and the Winchester .30-30s with receiver sights. Four of my .30-30s carry a Lyman sight, and the fifth wears a Williams receiver sight. Other than for testing loads for accuracy, it seems almost blasphemous to place a scope on any of these trim carbines.

### **Changing Role For The Frontier Rifle**

Winchester's first centerfire levergun, the Model 1873 .44 Winchester Centerfire (.44-40) was designed basically as a fighting weapon. The West was still a very dangerous place and there's a reason why the Winchester 1873 is regarded as The Gun That Won The West. Simply stated, it did.

Lucas McCain may have used a Model 1892 as television's The Rifleman, however had the show been authentic it would have been a Model '73. Of course if they were concerned about authenticity, he would not have been twirling it (someone would have shot him with a Colt Single Action while the rifle was going in a circle), and he certainly would not have been using a trip lever trigger.

By the time the 1894 arrived, most of the West had been tamed, and deer rifles were more necessary than battle rifles. The 1894 Winchester and the 1893 Marlin both fit into the hunting category very nicely. If there is a more perfect no-nonsense deer cartridge than the .30-30 I do not know what it is.

No, it's not a shoot from 300 yards away type of cartridge, however at reasonable ranges, it's still does the job quickly and cleanly. The last deer I shot with the .30-30 was a meat doe for the cowboys on the ranch. One well placed shot and it did its job perfectly, just as it has done over and over again for the past century.

### Easy-Loadin' Cartridge

Not only is the .30-30 a no nonsense type of cartridge, it is mostly found chambered in no frills leverguns. When trying to squeeze the best possible accuracy out of a bolt-action rifle chambered for a long-range cartridge, it may be necessary to weigh all the charges, trim all the cases, neck turn the brass, and whatever else those caught up in the accuracy trip do.

By contrast, when it comes to loading the .30-30, I treat it exactly as I do my sixgun cartridges. Cases are separated by headstamp, placed in a shallow cardboard box (I use the 2-inch deep cardboard trays my preferred brand of dog food comes in), given a light coating of spray-on lube, and always full length re-sized.

I have enough .30-30 brass in rotation that trimming brass has not been necessary, but that may change as cases are used more and more. When I was a regular competitor in long-range silhouetting, my Unlimited handgun was a T/C Contender, Super 14, chambered in .30-30. It was not unusual for

me to come up with tougher .30-30 brass for the Contender by running .375 Winchester brass through a .30-30 full-length sizing die. A good trick you may wish to know.

### Tools And Components

Dies for the .30-30 on my loading bench include RCBS and Hornady, primers are almost exclusively CCI No. 200 Large Rifle, and powder charges are dropped from an RCBS Powder Measure. Brass assortment used is mainly Federal, Remington, and Winchester.

Reloaders have many excellent powders to choose from for the .30-30. I have pretty much settled on Hodgdon's H4895, H335, and H322, and Alliant's Reloder 7.

Neither the .30-30 cartridge nor the leverguns chambered for it have a reputation for accuracy. They both should. In fact, with either factory loads or handloads, the Marlin 336 Cowboy, when scoped, will make it tough for many a bolt-action rifle to stay in the race.

Great bullets abound for the .30-30. When I have time to cast my own, I prefer the RCBS No. 30-180 FN, however, now that Oregon Trail is offering a 170-grain FNGC (Flat-Nosed Gas Check), I don't find it as necessary to heat up the melting pot. Casting time becomes shooting time.

And very pleasant shooting time it is, when using the 180 grain Oregon Trail Gas Check bullet over 15.0 grains of H4227 for a mild shooting 1,557 fps and a 3/4-inch

group for three shots at 50 yards. Makes a great rabbit load and should work equally well on turkeys where rifles are legal for use on big gobblers.

### A Few Favorites

The chart will show you a wealth of great loads for the .30-30, but let me share a few favorites. With 150-grain bullets, the .30-30 Marlin Cowboy seems to especially thrive on loads in the 2,100 to 2,200 fps category. The Hornady 150 grain RN over 29.0 grains of H322 develops 2,181 fps, and three-shot 50-yard groups ran 3/4 inches. The same bullet and 31.0 grains of H335 develops 2,178 and shows 1/2 inch groups.

The 150-grain bullets will handle just about anything I want to accomplish with a .30-30 levergun. If more weight is desired, it is hard to beat the Hornady 170 grain FP over 28.0 grains of H322 for 2,204 fps and a group of 3/4 inch. Just to prove how accurate the .30-30 can be, a 4x scope was added to the 336 Cowboy with result being a 3/8-inch, three-shot 50 yard group using Speer's-170 FP over 30.0 grains H322 for 2,203 fps.

The .30-30 probably will not make many lists of Most Favored Cartridges. It doesn't seem to mind. It simply stays its intended course and does it without fanfare. Given its performance to date, I wouldn't be surprised if the little .30 has another 100 years ahead of it.



# CHRISTMAS IDEAS FOR THE SHOOTER



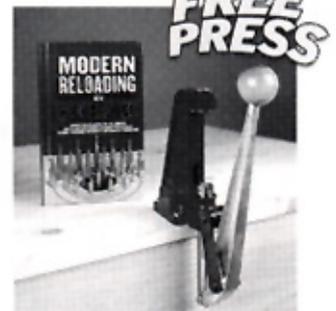
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The hunt had been in preparation for several months. A 4x Leupold is in place on the favorite Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum, the load has been carefully worked up, regular practice has taken place very week. Yes, everything was ready and in place for a successful hunt. At least until arrival at the hunting area.

Expecting to hunt hogs from a stand, with shots out to 75 yards, our hunter now finds the hogs had brushed up, and it would be necessary to hunt them with dogs. The hunting would be close up and fast. Instead of a 4x scope, iron sights or a red dot scope would be the ideal prescription. The scope could be removed, but the factory iron sights were at home in the parts box. Murphy strikes again.

## Young-Eyed Criticism

There are still those who maintain scopes do not belong on pistols. This is an easy statement to make if one's eyes are still able to focus on handgun sights. No firearm is any better than the sights it carries, or the hunter's ability to use them. Hunting absolutely requires good sights and the handgun hunter especially needs the best possible sights — whether iron or glass.

The number one priority in hunting is to be able to precisely place one's shot — no matter what the conditions may be. Big game deserves more respect than a simple, "scopes do not belong on pistols." I know my limitations, and I also know when iron sights are appropriate, and when a scope is mandatory. I can take an American bison at 35 yards with iron sights, however, for a turkey at 45 yards, I need a scope-sighted pistol that will precisely place my bullet right where the neck meets the body.

Sixgun manufacturers certainly believe scopes belong on pistols. All Freedom Arms and Smith & Wesson adjustable sighted revolvers suitable for hunting now come scope ready. Both require the removal of the rear sight, which then allows easy mounting of the proper base. Ruger goes one step further.

The Super Blackhawk Hunter Model, the Super Redhawk, and some versions of the Redhawk are not only set up to accept Ruger rings, said rings come with Ruger's big bore sixguns. Once the Ruger rings are mounted using the cutouts on the barrel and frame of the above-mentioned revolvers, and a scope is properly positioned in the rings, the entire assembly can be removed with a large coin or screwdriver, allowing access to the iron sights. If one is careful in replacing the scope assembly, it will come right back to zero.

## No Quick-Change Act

Suppose one's choice for hunting is one of Smith & Wesson's superb sixguns? Although S&Ws are set up for scope use, as mentioned above, it requires the removal of the rear sight assembly. Under the rear sight lie the drilled and tapped holes that accom-



*This group was shot using the Warne scope base with iron sights in place.*

# Versatility, Thy Name Is Warne

By John Taffin

A new quick-change sighting system for the hunting revolver puts J.T in a poetic mood.

modate a scope base. When mounting a scope, the base must be snugged down tight, and preferably Loc-Tited, before the rings and scope are mounted.

Accomplishing these steps, one is set up for hunting with the scope sight. But what happens if weather conditions are so poor a scope is a liability instead of an asset? What if by some freak accident the scope is damaged? Or, as outlined above, perhaps one arrives at the hunting scene with a 4x scope in place, and finds a red dot scope to be more appropriate. What then?

Wouldn't it be great to have a S&W .44 Magnum revolver that would allow nearly instant access to a choice of iron sights, a regular scope such as the excellent Leupold 4x LER pistol scope, or even a red dot scope?

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## THE RUGER BISLEY

continued from page 22

accompanied me to the range packing a couple of his own Bisley sixguns for a test comparison.

Leadingham uses a standard 7½ inch .44 Magnum Bisley for the majority of his six-gunning chores, preferring his Clements Custom Bisley in the same chambering for everything else.

We tested three different factory loads, nine .44 Magnum handloads, and for added versatility, we also tested six .44 Special handloads. Powders used during our tests were: Alliant's 2400 and Unique, Hodgdon's H110 and Universal Clays, and finally Winchester's 296. Hornady, Speer, Nosler and two different cast bullets topped off our bullet selection, and we used Winchester primers and brass.



### Minor Technical Difficulties

Accuracy testing was done from a rest at 25 yards. Velocities were obtained using a Chrony chronograph, set up 10 feet from the muzzle. Unfortunately, we were unable to obtain measured velocities with all our loads, due to the fact I inadvertently shot the chronograph. Don't laugh! I'm sure I'm not the only one that's ever happened to, but I might be the only one to admit it.

I have owned handguns in the past and I'm sure you have as well, that were very finicky about what you fed them. Good accuracy was only obtainable with one or perhaps two loads. Leadingham and I spent the whole day at the range testing various loads in our Bisley .44 Magnums, a total of 18, and with the exception of one .44 Special handload, they all shot exceptionally well.

Not one group was over 2 inches, with the majority running around 1 inch. The Ruger Bisley is plainly not temperamental. In addition, Leadingham and I carried a couple of customized Bisleys to the range with us, just for comparison sake, and with the exception of that same .44 Special handload, they shot uniformly well. Over the years I have tested several Ruger Bisleys, in all the centerfire calibers. They have proven to be the least finicky sixguns I've ever worked with.

### Favorite Fodder

For my personal use, I've settled on three handloads in the .44 Magnum that cover all my needs. The first consists of a 240 grain



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cast semi-wadcutter bullet, over 8.5 grains of Alliant Unique, for around 900 to 1,000 fps, depending on barrel length and gun.

This load works very well in all .44 Magnum handguns I've tested, and our Bisley was no exception. From the bench, it averaged 1½ inches for several five shot strings. This is a pleasant load to shoot, recoil is very mild, yet it is powerful enough to take deer sized game at reasonable ranges.

My second handload is one I use for 90 percent of my .44 Magnum handgunning chores. Combining either a 240 grain cast bullet or a good 240 grain jacketed bullet, with 18.5 grains of Alliant's 2400 powder, this load produces around 1,200 fps in my 7½ inch Bisley.

Groups run around 1 inch at 25 yards and recoil is still fairly mild. This load actually duplicates the hot .44 Special loads Elmer Keith touted before the advent of the .44 Magnum. For the majority of us, this one load would be sufficient for our needs.

My third handload has been a favorite for many years — 21.0 grains of Alliant 2400 under Hornady's excellent XTP bullet. This is a magnum load, generating 1,300 to 1,350 fps from my Bisley. Recoil is pretty stout, but the excellent design of the Bisley grip frame handles it nicely.

This load is reserved mainly for hunting. I have, however, shot literally thousands of this load through my Bisleys on paper, and it consistently groups better than any other handload or factory load I have used.

### 'Druthers

If I could change anything about the Bisley, it would be to offer it in stainless steel, with the option of 4½ and 5½ inch barrels. Custom gunsmiths such as David Clements stay busy modifying Rugers into about any configuration you can dream up. If you want your Bisley to be a little different, send it to a respected gunsmith. Clements has customized several of my Rugers and he does an excellent job.

You might think I'm a little biased towards the Ruger Bisley revolver. Well, you would be right! I have always appreciated the finer things in life; I can't always afford them, but I do appreciate them, and the Ruger Bisley is one of the finer things.

The Ruger Bisley, celebrating its "Sweet Sixteen" birthday, has earned a reputation that is unsurpassed for quality, accuracy, strength and classical good looks — all at an affordable price. If you're in the market for a new single-action revolver, you should give serious consideration to Ruger's Bisley. It's a bargain at any price.



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# Just Like Grandpa's EAA Hammer Double

A darn good traditional hammer-gun fit for all manner of uses.

By Jim Gardner

**T**he 1873 Winchester lever-action is often given the title, "The Gun That Won The West." The '73 was a fine rifle, but truth be told, this honor belongs elsewhere. Frankly, I agree with the late Skeeter Skelton, who remarked that in his experience, the West was "won" by, "good old soft-iron bailing wire." Any farmer or ranch hand who has made hasty repairs to equipment will surely nod his head in agreement.

Confining our conversation to firearms, the most common working gun of the farmer or homesteader in the late 19th century was the double-barreled shotgun. Until about the turn of the century, when the perfected hammerless gun began to rise in popularity, most shotguns wore external hammers.

External hammer double guns have been largely absent from the American shooting scene for nearly a century. European American Armory has changed this with the introduction of its new "Bounty Hunter" hammer gun.

## No Imitations, Please

Made in Russia, the new EAA gun bears the model number "IZH43K" (for reference, full model number of the model tested is IZH43K 1220EXTFP). EAA uses the name Bounty Hunter for all of its several models of Russian manufactured side by side, short barreled shotguns.

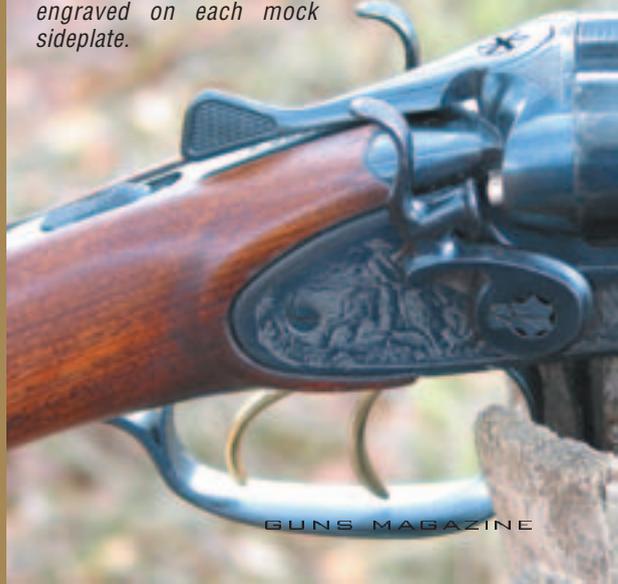
For a number of years, EAA imported what *appeared* to be an outside hammer double. Close inspection showed these were not real hammers, but rather cocking levers. The gun was a simple adaptation of an existing boxlock internal hammer shotgun.

That model was successful, and many were sold to cowboy shooters in particular, but there were rumblings of dissatisfaction. The market demanded an honest to goodness "rabbit ear" double, just like Granddad used to own. No imitation would be satisfactory, thank you very much.

The man behind the big desk at EAA is Keith Bernkrant. Bernkrant is a pleasant fellow, but he's dead serious about his products. When the shooting community speaks, Bernkrant listens. He set about arranging for production of a true, traditional hammer double.



A western scene is photo-engraved on each mock sideplate.



“The most common working gun of the farmer or homesteader in the late 19th century was the double-barreled shotgun. Until about the turn of the century, when the perfected hammerless gun began to rise in popularity, most shotguns wore external hammers.”



*Automatic safety is something not normally found on hammer doubles.*





*Muzzles of the Bounty Hunter are nicely-finished, carry threaded choke tubes, and would form a convincing reason for an intruder to leave your premises post-haste.*

---

“No less a figure than Jeff Cooper has stated in print that perhaps the ideal shotgun for home defense is the simple, trustworthy hammer double. The signal virtue of the outside hammer SxS is the fact that it may be stored with all springs at rest.”

---

### **The Russian Connection**

“I would put these engineers up against anyone in the world,” Bernkrant remarked when asked about the new shotgun. “These guys go from a crude drawing on a paper napkin to a working prototype in just a few days. It’s amazing!”

Bernkrant is proud of the Russian facility that designed and produced this latest model, and well he should be. There is some remarkably clever engineering in this design.

Safety was a primary consideration in the new design. The outside hammer shotgun is simple, but handled carelessly, it can be lethal. The IZH43K uses a rebounding hammer design, which prevents the hammers, when at rest, from contacting the firing pins. Nothing new here.

What is novel is firing pins inter-linked to the triggers. They are not free to move forward and fire a cartridge unless the triggers have been depressed. As if that weren’t enough, the hammers have been so designed that if subjected to sharp blow, they will shear rather than allowing themselves to override the sears and be driven against the firing pins. Coupled with an automatic thumb safety, I do not believe it is possible to build a safer hammer shotgun.

The gun is a box lock, but features mock lock plates on each side to give it the look of a late 1800s side lock gun. These lock plates are photo-engraved with a western looking scene. Vintage side lock guns look nice, but all of that wood removal leaves the stock fairly fragile through the wrist. This design is much stronger.

### **Nice Detailing**

Other good features on the gun come as a surprise considering the modest suggested retail price of \$399. The forend is mounted to the barrels not with a cheap spring latch as on late American doubles, but rather with a nicely inletted lever release. The barrels are threaded for choke tubes, and the gun comes complete with one each full, modified and improved cylinder tube.

The stock and forend are some variety of hardwood, very nicely figured and finished to a pleasing low-gloss. Forend

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is neither beavertail nor splinter in shape, but nicely in between. The pistol grip and forend both wear cut checkering. It's not fancy, just effective.

Frankly it's hard to find anything to complain about. The bores and chambers are chrome plated for corrosion resistance, and are excellently finished. The only sore point in the eyes of this reviewer was the presence of several phillips-head screws. Tradition requires that such should never be used on a firearm, despite the fact that they offer production advantages.

So, what we have in EAA's new hammer double is a very nicely designed and constructed little shotgun. It is far better designed, stronger and probably better made than the average side by side of the 1880s. Okay, what is it good for?

## Saddle-Up, Pards

Obviously, the primary market for the Bounty Hunter hammer gun is cowboy shooting. A hammer gun should be good for a few extra "style points" as those fellows say. To the uninitiated, the hammer gun seems as if it would be dramatically slower in operation than an internal hammer shotgun. In truth, this is really not so.

The external hammer gun opens more easily because it is not cocking internal hammers as it does so. It tends to stay fully open, easing the extraction of fired shells. With only a little practice, I found I could fire one shot, open the gun, extract the fired shells, reload, cock both hammers and fire a second shot in about four seconds. Other, more practiced shooters are much faster, I'm sure.

The choke tubes will be a boon to the cowboy shooter, making it easier to topple a more distant knockdown target. Serious cowboy shooters will probably deactivate the auto-safety. Am I suggesting you disable a factory safety device? Uh... no siree.

## Other Uses

So you're not a cowboy shooter? No problem. Do you hunt? In my part of the country, quail are the dominant upland game bird. These quail are particularly sneaky. They hold tight in the thick chaparral until you nearly step on them, then flush from under your feet with all the heart-pounding gusto of a P-51 Mustang.

Mind you, I hold the official title of "World's Poorest Wingshot," but even so, my score on these bantam rockets went up considerably when I switched to shooting a short barreled "riot gun." The open choke of that stubby barrel was just the ticket for close-range gunning.

The Bounty Hunter will do just as well for this type of shooting and you have the benefit of using the tubes to choke down one barrel in readiness for a longer shot. The double triggers make barrel, and thus choke selection, instantaneous.

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**A Great House Gun**

What's that you say, you're neither a competitor nor a sportsman? Fair enough. Odds are however that you have a castle and loved ones to protect. These days, think "defensive shotgun," and the image of some pitch black, plastic stocked, \$1,000 extended magazine semiauto is liable to appear before your eyes. Such high-speed guns are not always the best choice.

No less a figure than Jeff Cooper has stated in print that perhaps the ideal shotgun for home defense is the simple, trustworthy hammer double. The signal virtue of the outside hammer SxS is the fact that it may be stored with all springs at rest.

With all other repeating shotguns, one or more springs are compressed to near maximum when the gun is stored ready for use. A heavily compressed spring may "take a set" over time and function poorly if at all when needed.

The hammer double is simplicity itself. Its operation is easily taught to all family members. The design takes well to long term storage, and when needed — be it six months or six years after being placed at the ready — it will serve you when the chips are down.

Don't give a second thought to the fact that this gun carries only two rounds. In cool, practiced hands, two shots are probably more than you will need.

Of course the best possible outcome is to not shoot at all. Few firearms are as visually intimidating as a double-barreled shotgun. At conversational distances, those twin muzzles look big enough to pitch a cat through. Sometimes that's enough to forestall the problem.

**Still More Versatility**

If you've been shooting long, and have enjoyed a smoky campfire or post-shooting burgers and beers with the gang, you've probably wrestled with this puzzler: "If you could have only one gun, what would it be?"

Of course the right answer, as any gun crank knows, is, "Why would you ever let yourself be found in such a deprived state?" This aside, multi-role guns are an appealing subject.

Having enjoyed many such debates, my eyebrows rose when I spotted rifled insert barrels in EAA's catalog. Calibers offered include .30-'06, .308, .223 and .222, but I ordered a tube chambered for the .45-70. The capacity to fire this heavy-hitting round would add to the versatility of the Bounty Hunter.

The barrel arrived in a very nice case marked Tanfoglio. Everything about the barrel and its construction is first rate. Unlike other such barrels I've seen in the past, this one mounts in such a way as to eliminate clocking as the bullet starts into the rifling. The installation instructions are clear and easily understood. The barrel may or may not need fitting to install properly.

As it happened, the barrel on the Bounty Hunter was just a little shy of the 20 inch length the insert was designed for. It did require two simple and quick lathe operations to make it fit properly. A good 'smith would probably charge \$25 or less for this little job.

Prior to ordering the barrel, I had envisioned making a nifty set of express sights for the gun. To my surprise, the barrel kit included a simple rear sight. Installation was easy, requiring only drilling and tapping one hole in the barrel rib. At this point, we have a very interesting multi-purpose combination gun. The next question was, how would it shoot?

**To The Range, Jeeves**

Initial results were very promising. Being short of both time and ammunition, testing was confined to a quick jaunt to The American Shooting Center, the local indoor range. At 25 yards, firing off-hand, three shot groups clustered into an average of 1½ inches.

Point of impact was 6 inches high, and 3½ inches left of the point of aim. Shooting high is not a concern, as the insert barrel kit actually includes a taller front sight to lower point of impact if required. The kit also features an alternate barrel mounting collar to adjust windage.

Further testing at 100 yards will tell whether or not the point of impact can be satisfactorily adjusted using these supplied components. If not, and if regular use of the insert barrel at long range is part of the plan, then the addition of an after market sight will be a good idea. Scanning the Brownells catalog revealed several inexpensive adjustable open sights that could be successfully employed.

While the .45-70 or other caliber insert barrel offers interesting versatility, the vast majority of these EAA Bounty Hunter shotguns will never be used with one. The shotgun itself is well-made, boasts some very good engineering and safety features, and is fun to use. This is a very nice double shotgun, designed and built to stand up to long use.

Your great-grandad probably owned a shotgun just like this, albeit with slightly longer barrels. If you could ask him, odds are he would tell you his trusty hammer double put a lot of food on table, kept the foxes smoked out of the hen-house, and was just a good all around tool. If you need any of these things done around your own homestead today, you should give the EAA Bounty Hunter a hard look.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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### Cowboys Go To Town

Cowboy Shooting appears to remain the most actively growing segment of the shooting sports. This has been a good thing both for the firearms industry, and for the shooting sports in general. In addition to being a lot of fun, the less than serious, non-threatening nature of Cowboy Action Shooting has succeeded in making inroads into the general media.

National Public Radio, which may usually be described as left leaning, ran an unbiased report on the phenomenon of cowboy shooting, as have a number of major newspapers and magazines. This has been a refreshing and positive development.

Flush with this success, and with the continuing enthusiastic support of its roughly 48,000 members, SASS has announced the first "SASS Convention and Wild West Christmas," to be held in Las Vegas, Nev., December 5th through 8th, 2002. Headquartered at the Riviera Hotel, the event will feature displays of CAS related products and services, seminars and guest speakers, as well as a formal "Yesteryear Ball."

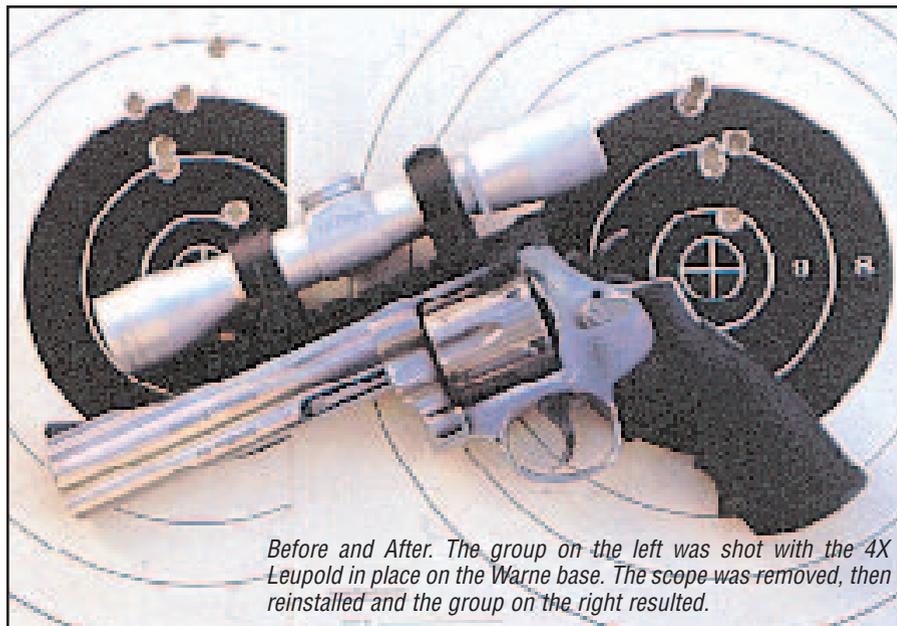
It promises to be a rip snortin' good time. Just be sure to leave your shootin' irons at the homestead. For more information, call the SASS Headquarters: [714] 694-1800.



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*Before and After. The group on the left was shot with the 4X Leupold in place on the Warne base. The scope was removed, then reinstalled and the group on the right resulted.*

Maxima quick-detachable Rings. The base replaces the rear sight on S&W N-frame revolvers and has six cutouts to accept the rings in various positions.

The rings themselves can be removed or reinstalled without tools of any kind, simply by the use of a lever at the base of each ring. They are easily operated by hand whether they are moved counterclockwise to loosen or clockwise to tighten.

The base differs from other scope mount bases. The factory rear sight that was removed is now installed at the rear of the Warne base, while the front sight is treated likewise at the front of the base. Facilitating this is the fact S&W's .44 Magnums now feature an easily removable front sight blade, which can then be mounted in the Warne base.

### Proofing The Theory

For testing, Warne supplied me with a 6-inch barreled, Model 629 Classic with the Warne Multi-Optic sight mounting system already in place. The S&W factory rear sight had been moved from the revolver's frame to the Warne base, mating perfectly with a red-ramp front sight mounted at the forward end of the Multi-Optic base. The original front sight remained intact on the S&W's muzzle.

For optics, a 4x Leupold LER, and a Cabela's red-dot scope stood ready in Warne QD rings. The entire package arrived in a weatherproof hard plastic case, also from Cabela's, making this a grand combination for hunting and traveling.

Smith & Wesson N-frames are among my favorite sixguns, so it was an extreme pleasure to test this .44 Magnum in three ways: with the Leupold LER scope in place, with iron sights on the Warne base, and with the red dot scope. It was easy to visualize this sixgun doing it all on a hunting trip.

Need a precise, scope-sighted magnum for 100 yard shots on whitetails? You've got

it. Feel the need for iron sights? It's the work of a moment to remove the Leupold, and when you do, you'll find your iron sights are mounted, zeroed, and ready for use. Stepping into the thick, dark brush where fast shooting is the norm? Mount that red-dot scope and you'll be well prepared. And by the way, these are not imaginary scenarios. You may easily encounter all of these conditions in one hunting trip to Texas.

### A Good Report

The system works! I shot my favorite loads with the iron sights, which were already close enough that I did not move them; using the red dot scope in place for fast acquisition; and most importantly, with the 4X Leupold. In fact, I removed and replaced this scope several times.

As with any QD ring system, consistency is important when replacing it. Each time I replaced the scope and rings on the Warne base, I pushed the rings towards the front of the base and held that pressure as I tightened the rings. An extra added bonus to my testing was the fact this particular S&W .44 Magnum preferred my hard cast bullet loads to factory JHPs.

Anyone looking for a single sixgun that will excel at just about any task required in the outdoor scene, would be hard pressed to come up with a better choice than the S&W Model 629 Classic .44 Magnum, set up with the Warne Multi-Optic system. As added insurance against unexpected disaster in the field, a second scope — with rings in place and already zeroed — would be a comforting accessory to have along on any hunt.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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## YOU CAN WIN THIS EAA BOUNTY HUNTER

**T**he new Bounty Hunter external hammer shotgun, imported by European American Arms, is a first-class traditional scattergun. While intended principally for the Cowboy Action Shooter, the Bounty Hunter is well suited for a number of uses.

This versatility comes in part from the 20-inch barrels, which are fitted with interchangeable choke tubes, three of which are furnished with the shotgun. Forend and stock are nicely grained hardwood, checkered for a secure grip. The Bounty Hunter uses a box-lock action, but with mock sideplates for a 19th century appearance. These are photoengraved with a western scene.

The Bounty Hunter was designed with safety in mind. In addition to an automatic top-tang safety, a novel interlock prevents the firing pins from striking a cartridge unless the trigger has been depressed. Further assurance against accidental discharge is accorded by the hammers. If struck a hard blow, the hammers are designed to shear rather than override the sears.

Included with the EAA Bounty Hunter will be a rifled-insert barrel for the .45-70 cartridge.

For more details on the EAA Bounty Hunter, see EAA's Website: [www.eaacorp.com](http://www.eaacorp.com); or call them at: [321] 639-4842.



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The prizes featured here were judged best of the year for 2002 by the Shooting Industry Academy of Excellence. The manufacturers are celebrating by giving you a chance to win their award-winning products.

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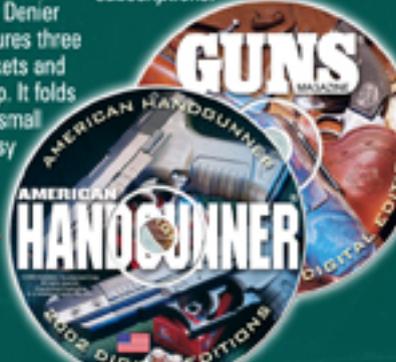


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# NEW PRODUCTS

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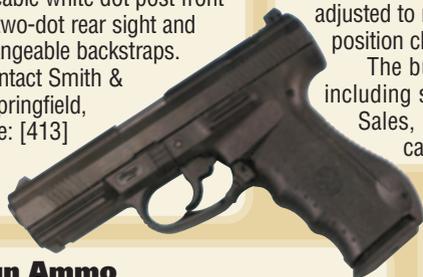
## SureFire/Strider Collector's Combo

Surefire and Strider have teamed to produce the Millennium M2 tactical flashlight/Model SF combat knife limited edition collector's set. The customized Millennium M2 flashlight features a laser engraved Strider Knives logo and the new Click-on Lock-out "Charlie" tailcap, which allows the user to select either momentary light activation or constant-on illumination. The Strider M2 knife is hand stamped with the SureFire logo, has a clip point and features the patented Tiger Stripe finish. Only 1,000 serial numbered sets will be produced. Contact SureFire, 18300 Mt. Baldy Cr., Fountain Valley, CA 92708-6122, telephone: [714] 545-9444, FAX: [714] 545-9537, Website: [www.surefire.com](http://www.surefire.com)



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International Cartridge Corp. announces the arrival of its new lead free frangible 12-gauge shotgun ammunition. The nine-pellet 00 buckshot and slug make for a safer shooting experience because of the reduced danger from ricochet. The exceptional accuracy and small pattern size add to the ammunition's performance. Contact Chris Rearick, Inter'al Cartridge Corp., R.D.3, Box 211-A, Reynoldsville, PA 15851, telephone: [814] 938-6820, FAX: [814] 938-6821, e-mail: [sales@internationalcartridge.com](mailto:sales@internationalcartridge.com), Website: [www.internationalcartridge.com](http://www.internationalcartridge.com)



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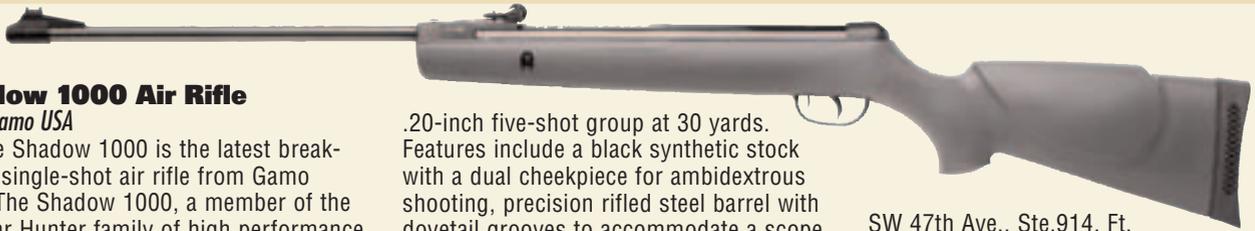
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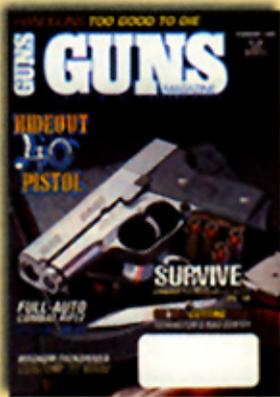
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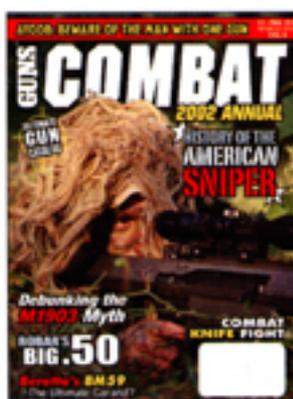
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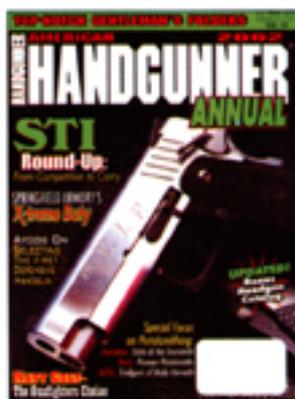


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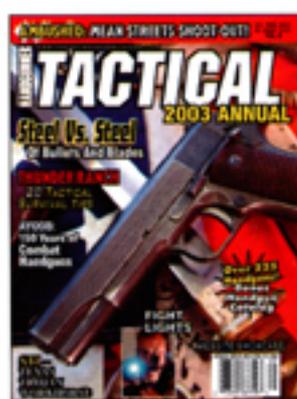


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# CAMPFIRE TALES

BY JOHN TAFFIN

## THE TEACHER LEARNS A LESSON

**F**or more than 20 years, I led a double life as a teacher and gunwriter. Seven years ago, after 31 years of teaching, I hung up my chalk to write, shoot, and hunt full-time. During my professorial years I calculate I had somewhere around 7,000 students, most of them wonderful kids, and I still have a lot of great memories.

It is a rare day that I can move around town without running into at least one of my former kids. I've shot with them, hunted with them, been served by them, had repairs done by them, one of them does most of my taxidermy work, and I probably have been hugged by more women, all former students, than anyone else in town.

Teachers learn very quickly of the truth in the old saw, "You cannot judge a book by its cover." However, we are human — despite the fact some kids would never believe that — and we do make mistakes, sometimes serious mistakes in judgment.

### Three Strikes And You're Mistaken

Take Marshal for example. It was not too long after the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis when the door to my classroom opened one afternoon. I was right in the middle of a great lesson in algebra and had the kids, at least most of them, right in the palm of my hand. Now the moment was broken.

Marshal handed me a transfer slip from out-of-state, and I noticed immediately that he had a Cuban last name. Strike 1. He also had long, stringy black hair. Strike 2. And he was wearing old army fatigues and combat boots. Strike 3. But he wasn't out, he was in... In my classroom.

My first thought was "Lord, I do not need this." Boy was I wrong! I had immediately judged this book by its cover instead of actually reading it first.

For the remainder of the year, Marshal proved to be my best student, and probably the politest young gentleman I have ever known. He often came back at the end of the school day to visit and it was truly a sad time to see him leave at the end of the school year.

One afternoon about five years later, the door to my room opened, and Marshal stepped in once again. This time he was not carrying a transfer slip but rather a small bundle in a blanket. He wanted to share his firstborn with me. Truly, one of the great joys of being a teacher.

### Another Opportunity to Learn

I should have learned from Marshal but sometimes when it comes to learning I'm very slow, and this slowness was especially personified with Arnold. Arnold came from

a large Hispanic family, had very dark skin, and was probably the laziest student I ever had.

In one full year he never advanced past getting his name on a piece of paper. He never did an assignment, he never passed a test. He was never any problem, he was too tired for that. I judged him as the most worthless kid I have ever had. He certainly never came back with his firstborn.

Shortly thereafter, I had Arnold's younger brother who turned out to be just the opposite, a great student, and when he got out of school, he went to work in a local boot shop and has made a very comfortable living, along with several other former students of mine, repairing and shining shoes and boots.

I go to the shop regularly, as it is a habit of mine, a necessary ritual, to have my boots shined before every trip, be it to hunt, go to a CAS match, SHOT Show, NRA Show, whatever. One recent Saturday, I walked in and a different fellow was there to shine my boots, and although it had been 30 years since I had seen him, I immediately recognized Arnold.

I was still judging, and the thought went through my mind that he probably just got out of jail.

### Thankless, Heart-Breaking Job

As we talked, I learned he was just filling in for his brother who had gone hunting. When I asked him what he was doing I was stunned and made to feel very small. It seems Arnold worked in one of the local Senior Citizens' Homes. A place such as Elmer Keith, Charlie Askins, and my step-father all ended their days in.

He told me several stories and one that really stuck with me was about an old lady in a wheelchair who always shouted at him, "Get away from me!" anytime he came near her.

"I figured she just didn't like my dark color," Arnold confessed. He went on to relate that he decided to do something about this, and one day instead of getting away from her, he simply gave her a big hug and told her that he was going to make her like him. She absolutely melted. Her defense mechanism was gone, and they became the best of friends. I knew that woman did not die friendless.

Arnold has one of the toughest and most thankless jobs in the world. As he talked to me I thought of the immortal words of Kipling, "You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din," and I certainly had to say the same about Arnold.

I misjudged this fine man. If I ever again begin to judge by appearances — and not being perfect I probably will — may Arnold come immediately to mind. Some lessons are far too valuable to forget.



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New Member     Renewal  
 If renewal, member #: \_\_\_\_\_  
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\* Must purchase a new Taurus firearm at retail between June 1, 2002 and December 31, 2002. Submit store receipt and coupon to Taurus at: NRA 2002 Offer, 16175 NW 49 Ave., Miami, FL 33014 before January 31, 2003 and receive a 1 year membership in the National Rifle Association in 2002 or 2003. Membership materials will come directly from NRA. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for receipt of materials from NRA.



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