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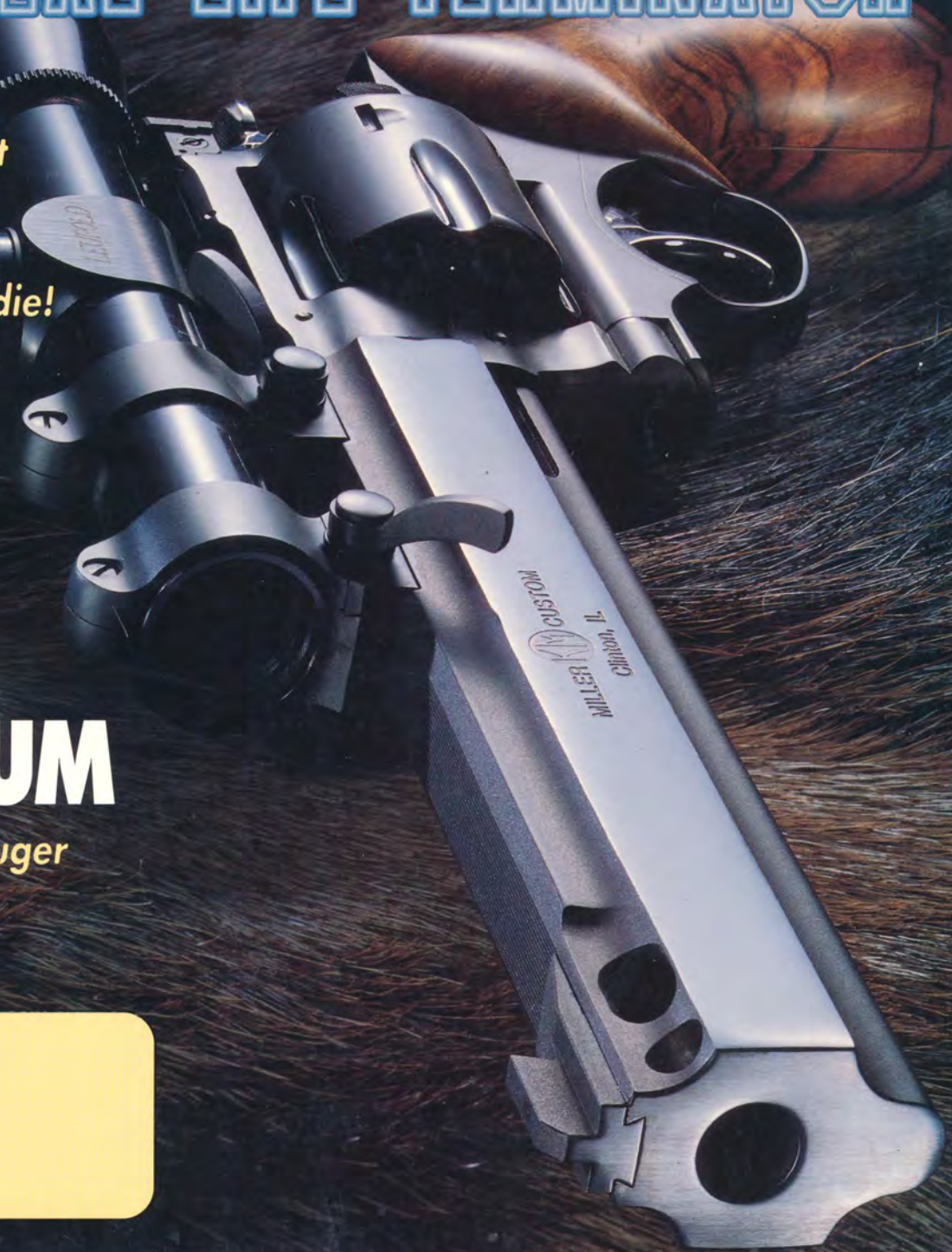
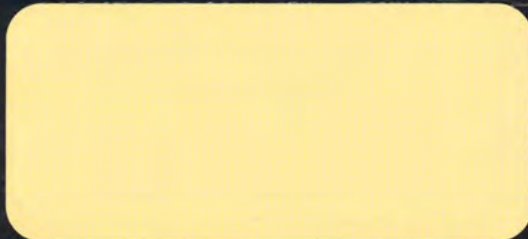
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freak just won't die!
Massad Ayoob's
chilling account
on page 70

.44 MAGNUM

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has greatly increased its value as a collector's piece in recent times."

John Walter, *The Luger Book*

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T157



Kent Miller's outstanding conversion of a Ruger Redhawk .44 Magnum to his Miller MercComp system. Photo by Ichiro Nagata.



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AMERICAN HANDGUNNER

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Frigid Luger

I have just received the July/August issue of *American handgunner* which features what you describe as the "sexy" Luger.

Stop it. Guns are appealing in many ways, to all the human senses, but they are not sexy. They do not arouse sexual desire, except in conjunction with some unfortunate psychological malfunction.

Yes, I read the article and, no, I don't care who else mis-uses the word "sexy" or in what context. We do not need otherwise respectable firearms publications telling the world that we are sexually aroused by firearms.

That is sick, and whether or not you mean "sexy" to be taken literally, you owe it to America's responsible, law-abiding and *sane* gun owners to choose a different adjective.

Eugene Goon
W. Hyattsville, Md.

To Tell The Truth

American Handgunner is a good magazine. I especially like your critical view-

points in your gun tests that sets *American Handgunner* apart from the rubber-stamp editorial policies of other publications.

Keep a hard line in the magazine and increase it if possible! Tell it like it is!

Never be afraid to tell the truth—people want this attitude. If you are aware of faults or defects in market products, let us know! We demand it! We've got to have someone out there we can count on.

Do you have back issues available? I'd appreciate a complete list of all back issues, annuals, etc. published by *American Handgunner* so I can bring my collection up to date.

Again, keep telling it like it is. Don't shy away from controversy and the truth; this is how the industry improves. You provide a valuable service to us and it is appreciated.

Raymond Skrika
Perth Amboy, NJ

Unfortunately, we do not have the space to inventory a collection of back-issues. We have a few recent back-issues on hand, but if you need some older issues

to complete your collection, try the local gun shows or scan the ads in *Shotgun News* (Box 669, Hastings, NE 68902; three issues a month, \$20 per year). Contrary to what the name would suggest, *Shotgun News* carries want-ads for all sorts of firearms and accessories, including books and magazines.

Editor:

Un-American Beretta?

We noted the new Beretta ad with the Italian Beretta 92F lying on what appears to be the flag of the United States of America. If this photo upsets us, it is equally nauseating to read the b.s. (both outright and implied) in the text of the ad.

Italy had been buying more military goods from the U.S. than the U.S. had bought from Italy. The "test" was set up so that *only* the Beretta could win. It was a simple matter of politics and economics, and quality had nothing to do with it.

The durability of the 92F might be compared to the combat durability of Mussolini's Finest during World War II.

Putting "U.S.A." after the name "Beretta" in no way justifies posing the Beretta on top of the U.S. flag. But then it is said that spitting on the flag is also allowed by the First Amendment.

Eugene L. Harshbarger
Guatemala City, Guatemala

Change. For The Better.



Even the package is improved—just look for the red, white and blue.

Law enforcement agencies use it for training—so you know it's good.



Improved quality control makes our new ammo better by a long shot.

American Eagle's accuracy and superior, reliable functioning look good on paper—and in practice.



American Eagle introduces a lot of change...for a little change. Our new line of pistol and rifle ammo—14 cartridges in all ranging from 25 Auto Pistol to 30-06 Springfield—offers loads of improvement for just a few pennies more. Improved product. New packaging. And the same superior, reliable performance American Eagle has always delivered. So go with the line that offers the best recreational ammo for the money. American Eagle. It's from Federal, so you know it's good.

AMERICAN EAGLE
BY **FEDERAL**

Extinct Sport

What do dinosaurs, the Dodo, and organized combat pistol shooting have in common? The correct answer is, "They're all extinct."

My participation in IPSC began in the mid 1970's while a deputy sheriff in Arizona. Over the years, the game has obviously changed. "Transformed" would be a better word to describe the evolution of IPSC.

Change is good, and can result in tremendous improvement. Today's cars are much more fuel efficient than those of 20 years ago, but the purpose of the car remains the same—to get you from one place to another.

IPSC has not changed, it has transformed. Originally, IPSC provided organized competition for those interested in combat pistolcraft. Today, it is neither combat oriented nor practical in nature. It is a legitimate sport, but shares little with the real world in terms of combat pistol marksmanship.

Capt. Steve Osborn
United States Marine Corps
Barstow, Calif.

Scumbag Lawyer

I've been reading *American Handgunner* almost as long as I've been practicing law. In terms of providing good technical information on handgun performance and ballistics, your magazine is top of the line. (Hell, I even like Massad Ayoob's articles.) But, your sense of humor is another story.

Geez, guys: "Scumbag lawyer? Isn't that redundant?" (*American Handgunner*, May/June 1991). Come on, is that the best you can do? As my old Uncle Homer used to say, if you can't say something good about someone, at least be funny.

For example, did you hear what the masochist said when they asked her why she'd married a cop? "Beats me."

Oh well, maybe I'd better stick to law and maybe you should stick to providing us—even us scumbag lawyers—with great gun articles.

James R. Chamberlain
Las Vegas, Nev.

I'm No Money-Grubbing Lawyer!

Alright, that's enough! I can't take it anymore. I've just completed reading your May/June 1991 edition of *American Handgunner*, which contained in the *Speak Out* column (1) game regulations on hunting and harvesting of lawyers, and (2) your comment that the phrase "scumbag lawyers" is a redundancy.

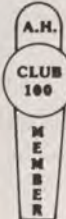
I'm a corporate/tax attorney in Atlanta, Georgia. I do not handle personal injury, malpractice or product liability cases. Most of my clients are hard-working small businessmen and women trying to get by in the regulatory mess the



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(Democratic) Congress has created.

I'm also an avid handgunner, having attended Massad Ayoob's Lethal Force Institute (revolver class, July 1990) and am slated to attend his LFI I in July, 1991.

I vehemently resent being lumped in with the bad apples out there. That would be like condemning all police officers for the actions of the sadists in Los Angeles who recently brutalized a defenseless person.

If you want to knock lawyers, that's your constitutional right. But please limit your criticism to the dishonest, money-grubbing lawyers.

I hope you give this letter your thoughtful consideration. I also hope you publish this letter to express the fact to your readers that not all attorneys are detestable, dishonest scumbags who should be scorned and avoided like pariahs.

Lawrence M. Merlin
Atlanta, Ga.

Actually, readers are cautioned to treat pariahs with more courtesy. They didn't choose to be pariahs, they were born that way. Editor.

Best In The Business

You have, quite simply, the best magazine in the business. *The Ayoob Files* and Nagata photos, on their merits alone, put you well ahead of the competition.

Ayoob's report on the Miami shootout was a marvelous bit of journalism whose worth transcends the small closed world of your industry. I have given (lent) that issue of *AH* to literally dozens of friends and relatives, some of whom would "recoil" at the idea of even owning a handgun, and all have been "blown away" by Massad's piece: not one of them read the story less than twice.

Nagata's work is always first rate. His work on the Ed Brown guns (some time ago) is absolutely the best that I've seen in your business.

In addition to these two first-raters any good story you include between the covers is just icing on the cake.

Will Ryan
Neversink, NY

Guns Don't Win

I am totally confused. I have been reading *American Handgunner* since I was a boy. Everything I have read in so many words tells me that if you are going to shoot any combat you must have a Wilson, Springfield, or Brown or you just will not do any good.

Yet, the Bianchi Cup was won with a gun built by Frank Glenn. How is it possible to win with a pistol made by someone else?

I went to a local range in Marianna, Fla., last month to get some information on shooting IPSC and I asked the men

there if I should get a Wilson or Springfield and should I get a .38 Super or .45 and they laughed at me and told me if I wanted a good gun that works all the time to see the man in the blue shirt that was over on the side of the range.

One man told me the people that shoot those guns you read about are being paid to shoot them and the rest are just using them because they read in the magazines about them and figure that is what you have to have.

If you took all the guns away from them and gave them all the same guns to shoot and with a few days to practice they would stay just the same in the standings.

One man said, "Shoot a gun that you know who it was built by— and not someone that works for him."

They almost all said that Wilson probably hasn't built a gun personally in years.

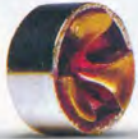
Then I said, "But, they are shooting champions and the big matches are won with their guns!"

I was told that the man in the blue shirt shot on the U.S. Olympic Team. He has won all kinds of championships in Bullseye and Combat and his guns have won or have been in the top five in all the big matches and that just a few years ago the Masters was won with one of his guns.

Is the magazine misleading the people

Continued on page 14

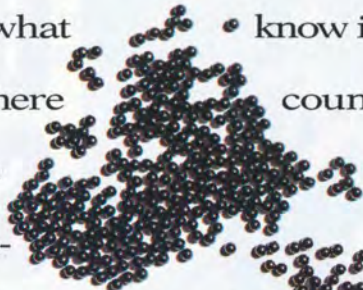
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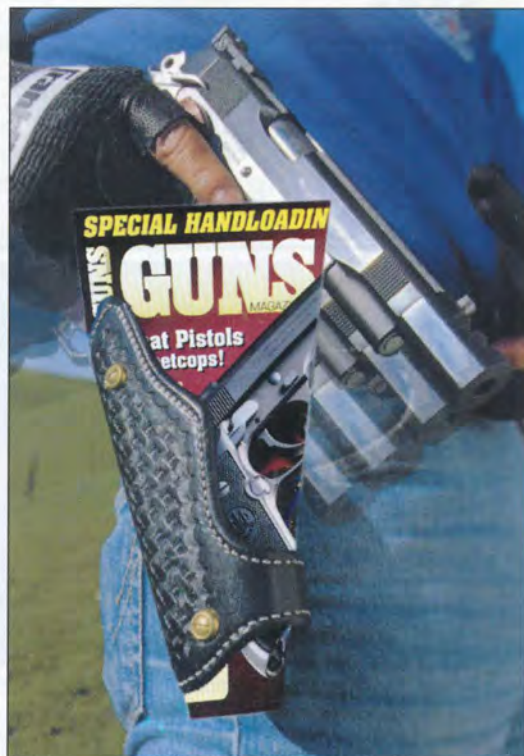
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SPEAK OUT

Continued from page 10

into believing that their advertisers are the only competent gunsmiths?

Jim Berkley
Chipley, Fla.

Jim, your comments are most interesting and I'm sure some other readers have similar questions, so I'll answer your concerns here.

Let's start at the top with your assertion that only guns from "big name" gunsmiths can win matches. You cite a winning gun built by Frank Glenn as being proof, presumably.

Actually, longtime readers of this magazine won't find Frank to be exactly an "unknown." One of Frank's custom Bianchi Cup revolvers graced our Nov/Dec 1983 cover. He's well-respected and well-known among the cognoscente of custom handguns.

But your main point seems to be that there is something unseemly, almost unethical, about top competitors being paid to shoot a certain gun. I take it, then, that there is something immoral about Nike shoes because Bo Jackson is paid to wear them.

You see, Jim, we handgunners have long criticized the media for refusing to put handgun shooting on TV. Why shouldn't The Masters or the Steel Challenge be shown on ABC Wide World of Sports, indignant shooters complain justifiably?

So the shooting sports made a conscious decision to professionalize the matches in order to demonstrate the legitimate sporting value of handguns.

You began to see official team uniforms, just like race car teams and basketball teams.

You began to see rich prize purses, just like tennis tournaments and golf matches.

Finally, just recently, you began to see shooters—who are in fact highly skilled athletes—earn sensible salaries for their talents. Just as Johnny Bench is

paid to endorse barbecue sauce, so too is Rob Leatham paid to shoot a Springfield Armory pistol.

Does this mean that somehow there is something "wrong" with the Springfield Armory pistol? Of course not.

Rather than complaining about how "unfair" you seem to think it is for a professional shooter to reap the rewards of years of training, you should instead recognize the benefits of portraying the handgunning sports as legitimate disciplines of professional athletics.

When Ted Kennedy introduces the Brady Bill, Part II, to ban the ownership of all handguns without "legitimate sporting value" (a familiar turn of phrase, no?), don't you think it would be nice if we could point to the Rob Leathams and Jerry Barnharts as proof that semi-automatic handguns are tools of highly paid professional athletes?

Or do you think that a few guys at the gravel pit chugging beers and shooting bottles between burps is a better image?

Moving to your next point, you suggest that Bill Wilson has not built a gun in several years and it is wrong to buy a gun from someone who doesn't actually build it himself.

Jim, ever since the first caveman taught his CroMagnon buddy how to sharpen a flint axe, there has been a system of master-apprentice. The great gunmakers of Europe, even today, operate a very regimented system of master teaching journeyman, journeyman teaching apprentice, the time-honored skills of the master himself.

I have toured the famous gunmaker James Purdey & Sons in London, and I can assure you that the gentleman who orders a \$40,000 sidelock shotgun from Purdey does not get a gun built by Mr. James Purdey, who of course has been dead for a 100 years.

Nor yet do they get a gun from one of the master gunmakers employed by Purdey's. The master will perform a final inspection and personally execute the more detailed handfitting, but it is apprentices and journeymen who do a good part of the work.

I don't have a problem with knowing that Bill Wilson has passed on the legacy of his masterful skills to his trusted and loyal apprentices. I have examined guns of circa-1980 built by Bill Wilson personally and I have seen 1990 guns built by his shop.

Guess what? I will honestly tell you that the guns from Wilson's Gun Shop today—whether built by Bill or another craftsman there—are indistinguishable. The quality is that consistent.

Lastly, your rather tacky comment that we only write about guns built by advertisers is absurd. I direct your attention to Paul Liebenberg (two cover stories, 1986 and 1988) who has never bought an ad. Steve Nastoff, recipient of a 1988 cover story, has never bought an ad and never plans to. He's too busy already!

Ditto for Jim Boland, Leonard Baity, John Linebaugh, John French, J.M. Custom, Bruce Gray, Bob Grieder, John Martz, John Lawson... shall I go on?

The simple truth is that our editorial decisions are based on the merits of a story for the readers.

Cameron Hopkins
Editor-in-Chief

Loves BearHug

About three years ago I purchased a set of grips for my S&W Model 686 from BearHug Grips. They fit my hand like a glove and are made out of a beautiful piece of presentation grade walnut.

I took them off the gun to clean it about a month ago and the left panel broke in two pieces right at the point where the screw goes through. I called Deacon at BearHug and explained what happened and he said I had probably over tightened the screw and cracked the grip.

I returned them to him for repair. I just received them back, and they look just like new. The crack is almost unnoticeable and they have been refinished with a nice buff wax. All of this was done at no charge to me even though the damage was my fault.

Please print this letter in your *Speak Out* column. I think this kind of service and high quality product deserves to be brought to the attention of the shooting public, and I would like to thank BearHug for a great job.

Steve A. Miller
West Palm Beach, Fla.

Readers will want to note that Deacon Deason of BearHug has recently relocated to 17230 County Road 338, Dept. AH, Buena Vista, CO 81211, phone: 1-800-BEAR-710.

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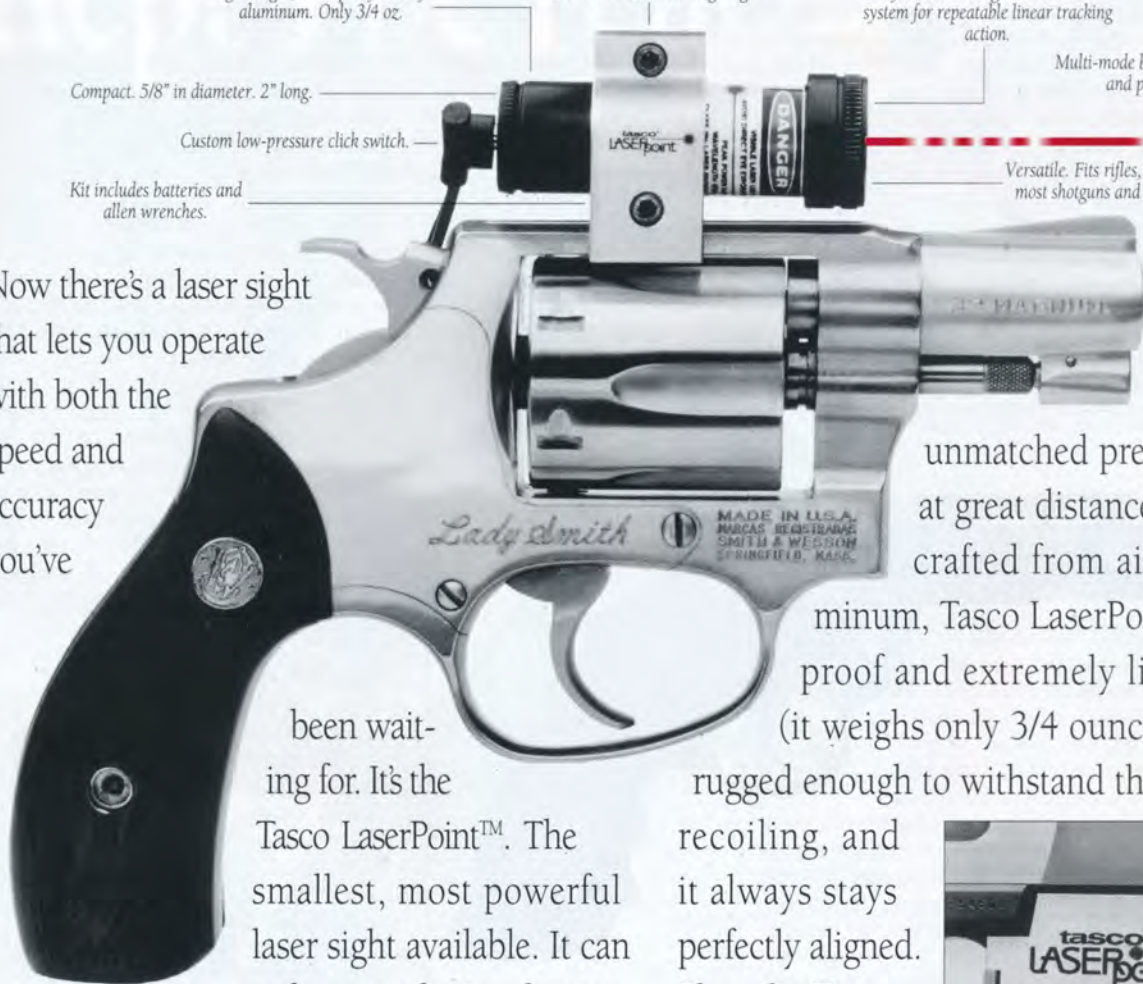
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NOSTALGIC JOURNEY BEGINS WITH BUILDING A CLASSIC PPC REVOLVER

The first time I fired on a police range I had just turned 21. My dad, a reserve officer on the Tacoma Police Department, had obtained permission for me to use the range during the lunch hour. I entered the deserted basement facility right at 12 and put my brand new Colt Official Police on the shooting bench next to a box of store-bought cartridges.

Nervously, I reeled my target out to 50 feet, loaded the cylinder, cocked the hammer and began to put slow pressure on the trigger.

A head popped around the barricade to my left and a middle aged detective asked

maximum range of 50 yards. This innovation was met by static and loud, rude comments.

Heck, everybody knew you couldn't hit anything at 50 yards double-action with a 4" barrel, let alone with the 2" barrel off-duty guns.

The wall of flak only made me more determined than ever to demonstrate the potential of DA-only fire. I walked down to the hardware store in the rain, oblivious to the typical Washington weather.

I bought a brand new Model 15 Smith (then called a Combat Masterpiece) and one of the new Centennial .38 special



Building this PPC revolver was a nostalgic journey for John, who mainly builds combat automatics.

in a loud annoyed voice: "Boy, what in the hell are you doing?"

"I have permission to shoot down here," I managed to stammer.

"That's not what I mean," was the reply. "Why did you cock the hammer?"

"I was just going to fire a string."

"Well," the older man grinned, "you're here to learn, and this is your first lesson: If you have time to cock that hammer you have time to dive for cover, and I strongly recommend that you do just that."

Forty years later, that's still sound advice.

Double-Action Skills

Three years later, when Chief Gilmore appointed me Rangemaster for TAP, I taught double-action shooting out to our

lemon squeezers. This battery was state-of-the-art in 1954.

I didn't have a bit of trouble shooting a qualifying score with service issue ammunition in the Model 15.

"Well," I told my partner, "that was the easy half!"

Snubby Qualification

I had never fired a qualifying score over the FBI course with a Detective Special, but I found that the smaller J-frame Smith allowed me to use my thumb as a trigger stop, making a uniform two stage pull that was very comfortable.

Even in this era before speed loaders and modern concealment holsters I managed to make a qualification with the two incher.

"How'd you do that?" a chorus of

officers queried.

"Just pointed it at the target and pulled the trigger," was my sardonic reply.

Wheelgun Progress

Double-action wheelguns have come a long way since those last days of thumb cocking. I recently bought myself a Model 10 Smith as the basis for a PPC wheel gun. I wanted a finely tuned and highly modified revolver with which to demonstrate the speed and accuracy possible in double action only mode to my classes of Security Officers.

I chose a bull barrel configuration to give adequate muzzle weight without an underlug. I mounted the Douglas match grade blank to the frame with my new MGW barrel wrench, recently purchased from Brownells. The fitted Delrin wrench inserts fit the frame closely, preventing any possibility of springing.

In that the front extractor rod support is done away with, it was necessary to install a crane lock ball, using my MGW crane lock ball fixture.

The usual action smoothing and an overtravel screw for the smooth, narrow trigger transformed the Model 10 into a sweet DA job. A careful checking of the timing finished the action work.

The barrel needed a recessed crown; I did the job in the lathe. The forcing cone, or lead, was cut to gage with the proper pilot and reamer, through the bore, from the muzzle.

Sights And Grips

For sights, I chose a Power Custom Double Master rib. Besides having a four position rapid adjustment rear sight that can be sighted in at every position with a vernier screw, then returned to the four different zeroes by merely turning the elevator knob to the desired numbered position, the base mounts a pair of Weaver see-through rings.

I can use an Aimpoint or a pistol scope when I want one of these options, or use the iron sights without dismounting the optical sighting system. This combination makes a versatile revolver system for our local action shooting events.

I finished the project with a pair of Hogue Monogrip™ rubber grips. I also have a Hogue wood grip with a smooth surface that I use for certain events and one of Brown's oversize cylinder latches. I've found this large latch very fast and quite impressive when I demonstrate speed reloading.

Fixed Sight Challenge

On a recent trip to the range I ran afoul of a shooter with definite opinions on DA shooting. "You can maybe shoot a group with that trick gun," he said, "but my Model 10 has fixed sights and all I can do is group high left.

Continued on page 108

How Wild Bill Hickok Kept The Peace

All the intricate scrollwork and the powerful portrayal of a naval battle recaptured.

Completely authentic with the look and feel of the original.

The powerful Liberty Eagle is captured in superb sculptured detail.

The trigger-guard, guardplate and backstrap are embellished with 22 karat gold.

To commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the U.S. Marshals

The Wild Bill Hickok Revolver

He was the most famous Marshal and Gunfighter of the Old West and he upheld the law with his legendary marksmanship...and his legendary gun.



Now, for the first time, that same revolver—a .36 caliber 1851 Navy Colt—has been re-created. Issued by the U.S. Marshals Foundation in cooperation with the

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Shown smaller than actual size on display.

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The First Re-creation of His Legendary Revolver

This reproduction was created directly from the original Wild Bill Hickok Revolver, under exclusive authority granted to The Franklin Mint. It has not been authorized or endorsed by the Colt Firearms Division of Colt Industries Operating Corporation, nor will it be produced in a manufacturing facility operated by that company.

HOW TO GET STARTED IN RELOADING BY LOOKING OVER THE BASIC GEAR

When I started reloading over 20 years ago there wasn't much variety to chose from in terms of reloading equipment. The presses were all more or less single stage presses and the reloader didn't have the advantage of any packaged "kit" containing all the essential items.

Today, the situation is completely different for the beginning reloader and it is easy for many beginners to become confused by the wide range of products available.

Any shooter venturing into the world of reloading has to analyze just exactly what calibers he will be shooting and determine how much money he has to spend on equipment.

Economics is a primary reason why most of us reload, despite the advantages gained through careful assembly of hand-loaded ammunition for improved accuracy or increased downrange performance.

The savings gained by reloading that



RCBS RockChucker

the fact remains, most of us reload because it saves us money. Or, at best, allows us to shoot more on a limited budget.

So with a view toward the economics of the situation and not the possible performance-enhancing aspects, let's examine what the beginning reloader has to work with today.

Single Stage Press

The first question should be, how many different handgun cartridges and calibers does the shooter want to reload? If the shooter enjoys a wide range of handguns, and or rifles, including everything from the .32 H&R Magnum to the .454 Casull, then any number of excellent single stage presses should suffice.

In fact, several companies have kits available for the beginning reloader that provide most of the items needed.

Lyman has the Orange Crusher Starter Kit that includes the Orange Crusher Press, the reloading dies, the Model 500 Reloading Scale, a case lube kit, a loading block, a powder funnel, a primer tray, and their latest edition reloading manual.

RCBS probably has more individual items to assist the reloader than anyone, including a number of starter kits for the beginning reloader.

The RCBS RockChucker press has earned the reputation of being the "old reliable" of single stage reloading presses. There may be bigger single stage presses and there are several that are just as good, but there are none better in terms of design or quality.

The RockChucker was among the first

heavy duty single stage reloading presses to be offered and it has remained among the best for reloading heavy rifle cartridges for several decades.

Progressive Press

But the trend in reloading today is away from single stage presses and toward the progressive reloading press.

That's because many of you no longer have the free time available to spend all night reloading only 300 empty cases for the next shooting session. Or if you do you will be shooting not 300 rounds at the next practice session, but 1,000 or more!

Your time is valuable and you would rather spend it on the range instead of at the reloading bench, so the interest in progressive reloading presses for reloading pistol cartridges has grown exponentially in the last few years and the leading name in progressive presses is none other than **Dillon Precision**.

Dillon has a wide range of progressive presses that are truly state-of-the-art. Their 450 Jr. is aimed primarily at the beginning reloader and it could be best described as a semi-progressive press. It can be operated as a single stage press or after the reloader has mastered the basic principles it can be operated in the semi-progressive mode.

For those who are a little more aggressive in their outlook and can master the principles of reloading quickly, the Dillon Square-Deal is probably one of the best bargains available in progressive reloaders. I have been using one in 9mm Parabellum for some time and I have reloaded as many 1,200 rounds in approximately three hours, and that includes the various interruptions one normally associates



Dillon Square Deal

once-fired case ejected from the favorite blaster has been incentive enough for all of us to start reloading.

Yeah, I know reloaded ammo can be more accurate than comparable factory ammo. And it can be also be made more powerful. And it can provide a wider variety of projectiles in any given caliber, but



Dillon 450-C Junior

The new XTP™ Bullet

outperformed six reputed stopper pistol bullets.



Recent tests pitted six of our competitor's bullets head-to-head with our new XTP™ pistol bullet. The results were astonishing.

All seven brands were shot, at numerous velocities, into both wax and water. Some performed adequately in one medium, but failed miserably in the other. Several brands failed to expand at all at low velocities; and others, which did

expand well at low velocities, invariably over-expanded and broke apart at the higher velocities.

Just one bullet, the new Hornady XTP, consistently expanded with control and held together in both the wax and water tests.

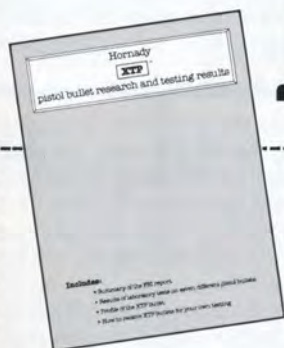
XTP bullets are currently being put to the ultimate test – by law enforcement officers across the

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RCBS Piggy Back

with a young family.

If there is a complaint with either of

these machines it is the use of Dillon's own dies, which are not the standard 7/8x14 dies, and therefore are not compatible with standard reloading presses.

(Dillon does use standard 7/8x14 reloading dies in their Model 550 and Model 1050 progressive presses, both of which are built for the more discriminating customer.)

In fact, it is my opinion the Dillon Model 1050 is the finest, fastest and best progressive press available today at any price, bar none. It is not inexpensive, but then quality never is.

RCBS has kind of snuck in the back door with progressive reloading presses through introduction of its Piggyback system. The Piggyback II can be mounted on top of the single stage RCBS RockChucker to create a fully automatic progressive press.

It allows those who want the RockChucker for reloading heavy rifle cartridges to have their cake and eat it too for high volume pistol shooting.

I have been using a Piggyback on my RockChucker for some time now and have found the system worthwhile, even if the reloader must pay attention to keeping the priming system clean for good functioning.

Carbide Dies

When I started reloading carbide sizing dies were considered a luxury by



Dillon 1050

many experienced reloaders, but today anyone who reloads a straight walled pistol case without a carbide die is someone who has too much time on his hands.

Carbide dies eliminate the need for case lubrication and thereby speed the process of reloading.

Hornady has an extremely good die in their series of New Dimension Reloading Dies using titanium nitride instead of carbide. The titanium nitride sizing die has a super-hard coating that lasts and is not harmful to the reloading cases. I have been using these dies in a couple of different calibers and have been well pleased with the results.

For the money Lee also has a very good product in its line of carbide sizing dies, but the Lee Carbide Speed Die will work only with Lee presses and not with any of his competitor's designs. So keep that in mind before deciding on this one die that is supposed to replace the conventional three die set. It will in a Lee press, but it won't on an RCBS Rockchucker or even an old Lyman Spartan-T press.

Other Essentials

Among the essential items that any beginner should get early on would be any number of reloading manuals, and I can't stress this point too heavily. Quite honestly, in the business of reloading there is no such thing as too much information.

Please, purchase every reloading manual your budget will allow and read them from cover to cover.

The next most important item would have to be a good quality dial caliper, so you can measure both your empty cases and the reloaded round to guarantee the correct overall length. Several firms have good quality calipers available including

Continued on page 91

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NEW VIDEO TAPE RECREATES REAL LIFE GUNFIGHT FROM 'AYOOB FILES'

Dennis Anderson and Chuck Remsburg and their staff at Calibre Press don't work on deadline. It takes longer for them to produce a training manual or video than it does for an elephant to gestate. It was with this painstaking care that they produced the outstanding modern classics *Street Survival* and *Tactical Edge*, and the vital video *Surviving Edged Weapons*.

When they sent me a copy of their new videotape *Ultimate Survivors* to review for the Police Bookshelf catalog, I was at first skeptical. Subtitled *Winning Against Ultimate Odds*, it seemed more like an inspirational film for Sunday morning cable than a guide for intact emergence from violent encounters.

Eighty-five minutes later, I knew I was wrong. In its way, *Ultimate Survivors* may just be the most useful compendium of advice on making the commitment to stay alive that Calibre has produced yet, and that's saying a lot.

Graphic Violence

The flick focuses on two current and two ex-cops. One was familiar: Steve Chaney, whose chilling video recreation of the incident in which he was clubbed and stabbed and his partner Linda Lawrence was shot and killed, had often been shown at Lethal Force Institute.

The psycho copkiller took 10 bullets, most of them solid hits, before he went down for the count. (See this issue's *The Ayoob Files*).

Tormented with "survivor guilt" over the death of his young rookie, Chaney's life went into a tailspin of divorce and self-doubt. It took a second gunfight, in which he had to shoot the gunman four times, to make him realize that he could cope and control.

He is today a well-adjusted career sergeant with the same department, Baton Rouge PD.

Car Chase

Washington State Trooper Mike Buck-



Sgt. Steve Chaney (left) is the subject of this issue's "Ayoob Files." Here he is with director Dennis Anderson (center) filming the recreation of his shootout.

ingham was in pursuit of a drunk driver at over 100 mph when the quarry lost it, ramming a third car and sending that vehicle into Buckingham's cruiser. The police car spun some 70 yards, out of control, before it exploded into an inferno that nearly cremated the trooper alive.

He had been unconscious after the moment of impact. By the time rescuers dragged him from the car, Mike's hair and ears had been burned off, his face badly charred, his fingers burned to claws, and his arms and legs so badly torched the muscles contracted and stiffened permanently.

Photos from the hospital shown on the video depict arms and legs that look like overcooked hot dogs, blackened and split.

The agony of major burn survivors—Buckingham was third degree over half his body—is legendary. But hope, courage, and religious conviction kept this strong man fighting.

Buckingham is today a traffic safety instructor, a living example of the horrifying dangers those who abuse their privileges with any instrument of power present to themselves and others.

Buckingham refused plastic surgery. Part of his adaptation was demanding that others accept him as he was.

Marshal's Shootout

Deputy Mike Thompson of the US

Marshal's Service knew that his ability with his service revolver was dangerously mediocre.

When he rotated through the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, for routine in-service training, he made a commitment to work extra on his own time to improve his survival shooting skills with the issue Smith & Wesson Model 66 2 1/2" revolver.

Two years later, that commitment would save his life.

Thompson and a partner were escorting a career criminal and Federal prisoner who specialized in armed robbery, to a hospital. He had faked chest pains to set up an escape attempt.

As they emerged from the car, the team was hit by two of the prisoner's gang, a man and a woman, both armed with handguns. The male covered

them with a .357 Magnum while the woman searched for Thompson's gun. She tried to tug it from his shoulder holster, but it wouldn't come free.

As the gunman glanced at Thompson's partner, the marshal saw his chance.

He drew, firing once as he came up and again when his revolver extended to arm's length. The bullets struck the bandit in the chest and face, killing him.

Thompson then snapped a shot behind him, spun, and bought the gun up to eye level, firing his fourth shot. He kept accurate count, one of the few people in that situation who have. This was the shot that killed the gun moll.

Smoking POT

Those who dismiss post-shooting trauma contemptuously as "POT" will learn much from this courageous survivor's life after the shooting.

Thompson beat the post-shooting stress with positive mental attitude and a focus on training, as Chaney had coped with the help of Vietnam vet buddies.

Thompson's story is an inspirational *tour de force* that instills the value of training and confidence as they relate to close-range shootout survival.

God Said To Kill A Cop

The film begins and ends with what may be the most compelling story, that of

Ken Tuthill. Ken had been on the street for 11 years with the Nassau County PD when a man he issued minor traffic tickets to, snapped.

The subject hunted down Tuthill, saying later that God had told him to kill a cop, and when he came across the officer doing paperwork in a mall parking lot, he shot him in the head at close range.

The Remington rifled slug from the single-shot weapon literally tore Kenyon Tuthill's face away. The eyes were destroyed, both jaws disintegrated, the nose and features all blown away. The force of the shot drove teeth and bone fragments into Tuthill's arm along with the lead.

He never lost consciousness. Anger kept him going that night, trying to radio for help and hearing only animal sounds coming from his throat.

Seventy hours of reconstructive surgery over 20 operations gave him sort of a face back, and today he speaks with only a hint of a nasal twang.

Testifying against his would-be killer kept him going, and after the conviction

he lost his purpose, drifting through depression and suicidal tendencies until he was committed.

What brought him through the ordeal was the love of life, the love of a good woman, the caring of a surgeon who himself had lost both legs

and did the operation on Ken from a hydraulic chair.

Sunday Lesson

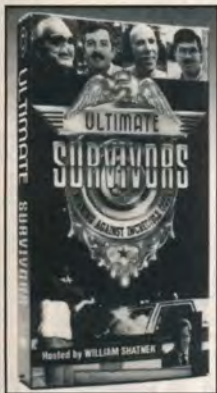
Does that sound trite, like a movie script? Too many important values do.

Maybe this flick *would* play well on Sunday morning TV, though the hospital pictures might make some of the television congregation lose their bacon and eggs.

But, more significantly, it reaffirms the values of life, the values that fuel the fight for survival when things go Condition Red, lessons to others for staying alive and overcoming adversity. Today, his face reconstructed amazingly well, Ken Tuthill is a newspaper columnist of surpassing skill. There a lesson lies.

The film is available at your local police equipment dealer, or for \$59.95 plus \$2.00 postage from Police Bookshelf, P.O. Box 122, Dept. AH, Concord, NH 03301.

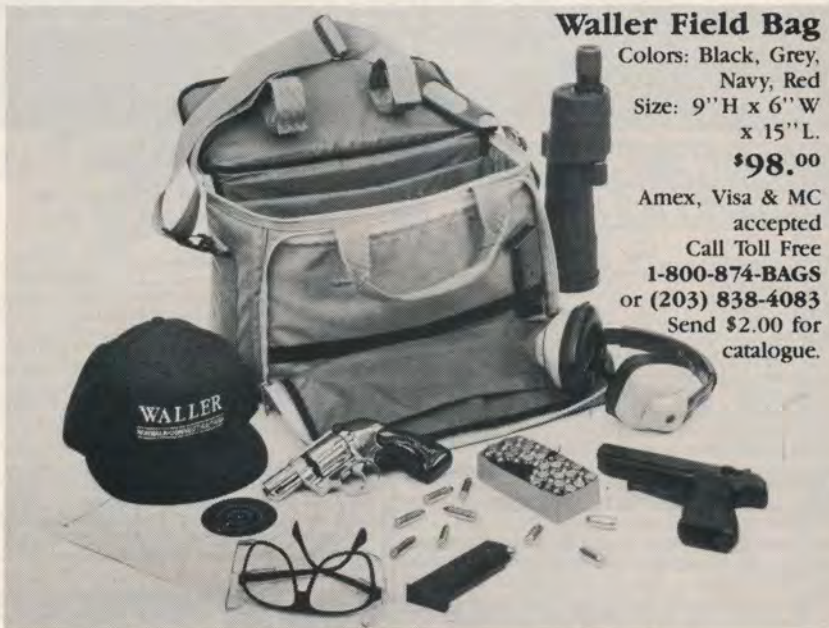
I hope you learn from it as much as I did. These four profiles in courage made me proud to wear a badge... and proud to be a member of their same human race.



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- Comp I & Comp II (Specify Caliber & Model of gun)\$ 7.50
- Safariland Comp III (S & W K or L)11.50
- Safariland Loading Blocks (S & W K or L)13.50
- Safariland Shooters Box19.95
- HKS (all sizes)7.25

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Barrels and Comp Kits are available in 9mm, 10mm, 38 Super, and 45 Acp. Please specify Cal.

- 6" 45 Acp Match Barrel\$130.00
- 6" Ramped Match Barrel130.00
- 6" Threaded Barrel (.575 x 40)140.00
- Pin Master Comp Kit270.00
- Heavy Pin Master Comp Kit335.00
- Pin Master Comp Only125.00
- Barrel Bushings (Blue or Stainless)12.50
- 2 Piece Guide Rods (4 1/4", 5" or 6")15.00
- Barrett Mag Guide (Blue or Stainless)25.00
- Aimpoint Grip Mount (Fits Colt Gov't)45.00
- 45 Auto Adjustable Scope Mount37.00
- Ruger MKII Adjustable Trigger15.00
- Ruger MKII Target Grips19.95
- 4 Finger Sear Spring6.00

ED BROWN



Four Star Comp with 5.5" barrel

- | | | |
|--|---------|-----------|
| | Blue | Stainless |
| High Grip Beaver Tail Grip Safety..... | \$31.95 | \$33.95 |
| Maxi-Well..... | 31.95 | 33.95 |
| Slotted Commander Hammer..... | 35.95 | 38.95 |
| Extended Thumb Safety..... | 29.95 | 31.95 |
| Ambidextrous Safety..... | 49.95 | 54.95 |
| Hex Head Grip Screws..... | 7.95 | 8.95 |
| Four Star Comp with 5.5" barrel (bushing, link & pin included) 45 Acp or 10mm..... | 328.50 | 338.50 |
| Oversized Thumbblatch (For S & W Revolver)..... | 23.95 | 24.95 |
| S & W Ext. Slide Release (For 645, 745, 4516, 1006)..... | 41.95 | |
| (For 3903, 3904, 3906, 3913, 3914)..... | 41.95 | |
| (For 5903, 5904, 5906, 6904, 6906, 4006)..... | 41.95 | |
| Beaver Tail Installation Jig..... | 17.95 | |
| 1 Pc. Heavy Duty Guide Rod & Plug..... | 25.95 | |
| Reverse Recoil Spring Plug (Blue)..... | 15.00 | |

Accessories for .45 acp Revolvers

- 10 Full Moon Clips for the .45.....\$ 4.50
- 100 Full Moon Clips for the .45.....30.00
- Full Moon Clip Extractor.....1.00
- 10mm Full Moon Clips10 for 12.00
- "Shoot the Moon" Loader Holder.....8.95

Chapman 8900 Screwdriver Kit

- 12 slotted, 2 phillips, 10 allen.....\$26.95



Pachmayr

GRIPS

- | | | | |
|-------------------|---------|------------------|---------|
| Presentation..... | \$20.00 | Grippers..... | \$24.00 |
| Compac..... | 23.00 | Signature..... | 25.00 |
| Pro Grippers..... | 24.00 | Pro Compacs..... | 23.00 |

ACCESSORIES

- Auto Pistol Sights\$53.45
- Nylon Trigger12.55
- Custom Wide Barrel Link, Stainless.....19.75
- Widged Tool2.95

HANDGUN RELOADING COMPONENTS

- | | | |
|--|---------|----------|
| Handgun Bullets | per 500 | per 1000 |
| Winchester 9mm 115gr FMJ..... | \$27.75 | \$51.00 |
| Winchester 9mm 124gr FMJ..... | 28.75 | 52.00 |
| Remington 9mm 147gr JHP..... | 33.00 | 60.95 |
| Remington 38 Auto 130gr FMJ..... | 29.00 | 52.00 |
| Remington 38 148gr HBWC Lead..... | 21.00 | 35.00 |
| Remington 38 158gr SWC Lead..... | 21.50 | 35.95 |
| Winchester 40/10mm 180gr JHP..... | 44.75 | 80.50 |
| Winchester 38 125gr JHP..... | 29.00 | 51.25 |
| Winchester 38 158gr JHP..... | 32.00 | 60.25 |
| Remington 44 180gr JHP..... | 43.00 | 77.50 |
| Remington 44 240gr JHP..... | 48.95 | 87.00 |
| Remington 45 Acp 185gr JHP..... | 47.50 | 83.95 |
| Winchester 45 Acp 230gr FMJ..... | 46.50 | 84.00 |
| Handgun Brass | per 500 | per 1000 |
| Winchester 40 S & W UNprimed..... | \$56.00 | \$104.95 |
| Winchester 9mm UNprimed..... | 40.25 | 71.00 |
| Winchester 357 Mag. UNprimed..... | 42.00 | 72.95 |
| Rem. 38 Super-P UNprimed (Yellow)..... | 39.00 | 75.00 |
| Rem. 38 Super-P UNprimed (Nickel)..... | 43.00 | 80.00 |
| Winchester 10mm UNprimed..... | 56.95 | 105.95 |
| Winchester 44 Mag. UNprimed..... | 56.00 | 99.50 |
| Winchester 45 Acp UNprimed..... | 51.95 | 93.00 |

Many more handgun reloading components available at discount prices. Send for 1991 price list.

B-SQUARE

Laser Sights and Scope Mounts

- | | | |
|---|---------|-----------|
| | Blue | Stainless |
| Dan Wesson (Vent Rib Clamp)..... | \$44.95 | \$54.95 |
| Colt Python (barrel clamp) 4, 6, or 8"..... | 44.95 | 54.95 |
| Colt King Cobra (Barrel Clamp)..... | 44.95 | 54.95 |
| Colt 45 with Pachmayr slide release..... | 59.95 | 69.95 |
| Browning Buckmark..... | 44.95 | |
| Browning Hi-Power..... | 59.95 | |
| Beretta/Taurus 92/99..... | 59.95 | 69.95 |
| Taurus 66 (Barrel Clamp)..... | 44.95 | 54.95 |
| Desert Eagle..... | 59.95 | |
| Glock 9mm..... | 59.95 | |
| FIE TZ 75 9mm Auto..... | 59.95 | |
| Ruger GP 100 (Barrel Clamp)..... | 44.95 | 54.95 |
| Ruger Redhawk..... | 54.95 | 64.95 |
| Ruger Blackhawk/Super Blackhawk..... | 54.95 | 64.95 |
| Ruger Single Six..... | 44.95 | 54.95 |
| Ruger P85..... | 59.95 | 69.95 |
| Ruger MK I, MK II (Dovetail Mount)..... | 44.95 | 54.95 |
| Ruger MK I, MK II (Mono Mount)..... | 44.95 | 54.95 |
| Sig 226 9mm Auto..... | 59.95 | 69.95 |
| Smith & Wesson K, L, N..... | 44.95 | 54.95 |
| S&W 41 (Heavy or Standard Barrel)..... | 54.95 | |
| Smith & Wesson 422/622..... | 44.95 | 54.95 |
| Smith & Wesson 5906..... | 59.95 | 69.95 |
| T/C Contender..... | 45.95 | |
| B-Square 1 inch Rings..... | 16.95 | 16.95 |
| B-Square Laser Sight..... | 299.95 | 299.95 |
| Laser Sight Mounts (Starting at)..... | 34.95 | 44.95 |

- Grip Safety, Gov't or Comm.....31.45
- Mainspring Housing, Flat or Arched.....\$15.25
- Slide Thumb Guard (Blue or Stainless).....17.95
- Snap Caps 9mm, 38 Special, 45 Acp.....11.95
- Mag Bumper Kits, Colt Mags (set of 5).....14.35
- Magazine Bumper Kit, Hi-Power (set of 5).....14.95
- Mag Bumper Kit, Hi-Power (set of 5).....14.95
- Colt Officers Magazine, Stainless.....25.15
- Colt Gov't Magazine, Stainless.....23.35
- Browning Hi-Power Magazine, Stainless.....29.65
- Beretta Magazine, Stainless.....31.45
- Sig P226 Magazine, Stainless.....35.95
- PT-92/99 Magazine, Stainless.....31.45

24 HOURS OR LESS.

SPECIALTY AMMO FIRMS CATER TO NON-HANDLOADING HANDGUNNERS

Just for chuckles for most of you and to keep the blood pressure elevated on a few of you: I wouldn't take the FBI Director's job—it doesn't pay enough to pay for my ammo. (For those who came in late, J.D. is referring to a letter from a reader in the May/June issue in which the writer facetiously suggests J.D. should run the FBI if he knows so damn much about the 10mm. Editor)

However, had the FBI appealed to my sense of patriotism and asked my opinion regarding the move they were contemplating regarding the 10mm Auto and a gun for it, they would now not be confronted with what is known to some as *The 10mm Problem* which is having a masterful cover-up being done on it.

Surely, with all the cop writers out there, there must be some of them with proof of the problem and enough guts to tell the public what's happening. We have plenty of reporters who delight in exposing various subjects embarrassing to the government—why not expose the "10mm Affair"? (Sorry to butt in again, but please see the *Industry Insider* column on page 126 for details on the 10mm Affair. Editor.)

I'd publicly like to thank those nameless individuals in the employ of nameless firms and agencies who try to keep me informed of many things in the firearms field as they develop. I'd like to publicly assure them they will forever remain nameless.

.40 S&W Bounce Test

While we're at it, let's go back to my bouncing off the ground a .40 Wimp bullet. Many of you were astute enough to

recognize that powder location in the case can in some instances be critical.

Ballisticians from two companies were kind enough to point this out to me. One admonished me for pointing the gun downward and said I really wasn't expected to test like that. One estimated a 300, the other a 400 fps drop in velocity under some conditions.

One stated the small pistol primer in the case was a serious problem with some powders and predicted cold temperature problems with others.

There are quite a number of individuals more accurate with a bow than many of the current crop of over-the-counter auto pistols.

(Here we go again—J.D. is referring to the March/April issue in which he reported that he fired a .40 S&W round into a gravel path only to find the bullet on the surface. Editor.)

FBI Ain't Wimps!

I have pressure data in my possession from one relatively new cartridge loudly proclaimed by some as the "last word" that shows one of the recommended loads to vary up to about 15,000 CUP depending on whether the round was pointed up or down prior to chambering and firing it in the pressure gun.

Seriously, I do like the 10mm cartridge and simply can't fathom our FBI and policeman who are able to cope with armed drunks, drugged bodybuilders who hate

cops, irate wives, high speed chases, armed robbers, murderers, being daily cursed, spit on and otherwise insulted—even on special occasion harassed by attorneys—being too wimpy to handle the 10mm.

Gimme a break will'ya!

The 10 in its full-power version with a good bullet is a significant ballistic step ahead of the 9mm in its finest hour as a mankiller. It arguably may be better than the .45 ACP when comparing existing factory loads (with the exception of Peter Pi's Cor Bon load for the .45 and his 10 load isn't bad either).

Neither will match the .451 Cor-Bon which is about to make its appearance.

Hot .45 Loads

Over 20 years ago when I carried a .45 I developed a load that propelled the 200 grain Speer HP at 1,200+ fps depending on barrel and length. Frankly, at the time I couldn't have cared less if the gun was junk after the last shot in it was fired, but I did fire several thousand of that particu-

lar load without harming the guns.

I tried it on deer-sized animals and figured it was a 50 yard gun at best. I see nothing in the 10mm that exceeds this by enough to make it worthwhile, although my Delta Elite with Heinie drop-in barrel and comp is a better gun at longish ranges than the .45.

It wasn't before the barrel change. The Heinie Comp does hold it down well.

This new 10 is ballistically about the same as the old .41 Avenger or realistically a 10mm Avenger only operating with a straight case instead of bottlenecked and at higher pressure.

Just fired the same gun two days ago with a Heinie .40 Wimp barrel and magazine. Needs a little work to get it to feed reliably but that's just a few minutes job. Seems accurate and I think it will be a real neat tin can gun for my wife.

Pachmayr .38 Super

Since the .38 Super is in the gun news, a lot some of you old timers may remember the gun Pachmayr built for me about '74 or '75. A full-blown job for its time, it still incorporates a feature not matched by today's hotshot pistolsmiths such as a slide tensioner that allows you to tailor the slide velocity to the load.

My most frequently used load pushed the 115 grain Sierra at 1,575 fps and never gave any trouble except at matches where I punched holes in many of the steel targets and many accused me of cheating 'cause the Super essentially shot flat to 100 yards and I wasn't using a .45.

Sometimes ya can't win.



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I've used the gun very seldom since the late Seventies and it will still stay in five inches at 100 yards if I'm having a good day.

Good as these calibers are for competition or defensive work, none of them can really be called adequate for hunting any sort of big game under general conditions. Sure, if they are used like a bow and arrow you can take some game with them — but they must be used with the same care as an arrow.

As a matter of fact I think there are quite a number of individuals more accurate with a bow under optimum conditions than many of the current crop of over-the-counter auto pistols in anyone's hands.

Specialty Ammo

Having spent a good deal of time this spring with 9mm and .45 ACP in a fairly wide variety of guns, I'm not so sure ammo isn't another part of the problem.

I am convinced in 9mm if you want an accurate pistol you had better get a decent Luger or Lahti and go from there. Even with the crummy "V" rear and inverted "V" found on Lugers, one of my four-inch guns with the stock trigger will shoot half-inch groups at 25 yards with some military surplus Egyptian ammo.

Black Hills 9mm shot into three-quarters of an inch from the same Luger.

Seems like we are reaching the point again where small specialty manufacturers like Black Hills, Garrett and Cor-Bon are doing quite well giving the shooter high quality, high performance ammo. The shooter gets what he wants which isn't in many cases being produced by the biggies.

Probably not enough serious interest in handgun ammunition for the big boys to spend a lot of time on it.

It's very reminiscent of 1960s era when a small company called Super Vel revolutionized the handgun ammunition industry by introducing high performance handgun ammo which forced every major manufacturer in the world to change what they were doing.

Frankly, if you don't reload but do hunt with a revolver I'd strongly suggest Garrett or Cor-Bon ammo. The Black Hills is not loaded to the velocities and pressures of the other two.

Anyone interested in a 200 high-power rounds per day varmint hunt for varmints in the 200 to 2,000 pound class in the summer of '92 contact me at SSK. This will be a class-A operation and wives are okay.



Readers interested in the products mentioned in J.D.'s column can reach the companies at Cor-Bon, P.O. Box 10126, Detroit, MI (313) 894-2373; Black Hills Ammunition, 3401 S. Hwy. 79, Rapid City, SD, 57701, (605) 348-5150; Garrett Cartridges, P.O. Box 178, Chehalis, WA, 98532, (206) 736-0702; SSK, 721-AH Woodvue Lane, Wintersville, OH 43952, (614) 264-0176.



PACT Club Timer

By Cameron Hopkins

The new PACT Club Timer offers the sort of quality you've come to expect from PACT at a very affordable price.

The palm-sized Club Timer is designed for small clubs that run a few

shooters in a combat course once a month or big clubs that run scores of shooters through a five-stage monthly match. Now wait, you say, how can one timer be perfectly suited to a big, sophisticated club and also a small, beginning club?

It's easy because both clubs need the same thing—a reliable, affordable timer with all the functions necessary to run their matches. The bigger club needs five timers for its five stage match and at the right price of PACT Club Timer, buying five is cheaper than buying two of the "big brother" PACT Mk III Championship Timers.

The small club only needs one timer, but couldn't justify buying one before. Now it can!

Both clubs need the proven features that only PACT delivers. Features like a choice of instant or delayed *Go!* and an easy-to-read display that shows the number of shots fired.

Both clubs agree that it's not fair for a shooter to have an RO show him an obviously false time with no way to verify how many shots the timer picked up. PACT solves that with a display of the number of rounds recorded. Lesser timers don't give the shooter that break, they just declare a time and that's that.

One feature both clubs need is a stop plate hook-up that tells if the connection is right. The Club Timer displays "error" if the stop plate isn't reset properly.

The big club will like the ability of the Club Timer to run a remote printer. Yes, you just push the *review* button and tell the Club Timer *yes* when it asks if you want to print. It's that simple!

Like all PACT timers and chronographs, the advanced software in the Club Timer is upgradeable. PACT is already planning their first upgrade to include some Championship Timer features like *Par Time* and increasing the time limit for PPC shooters.

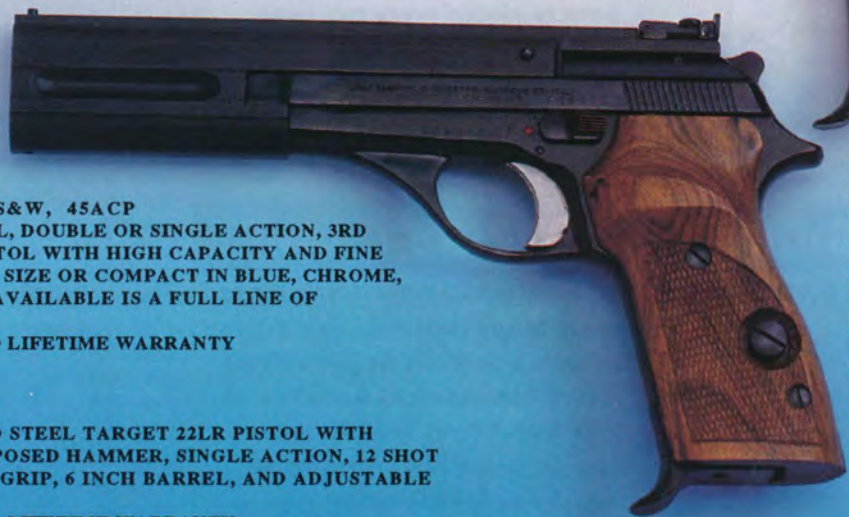
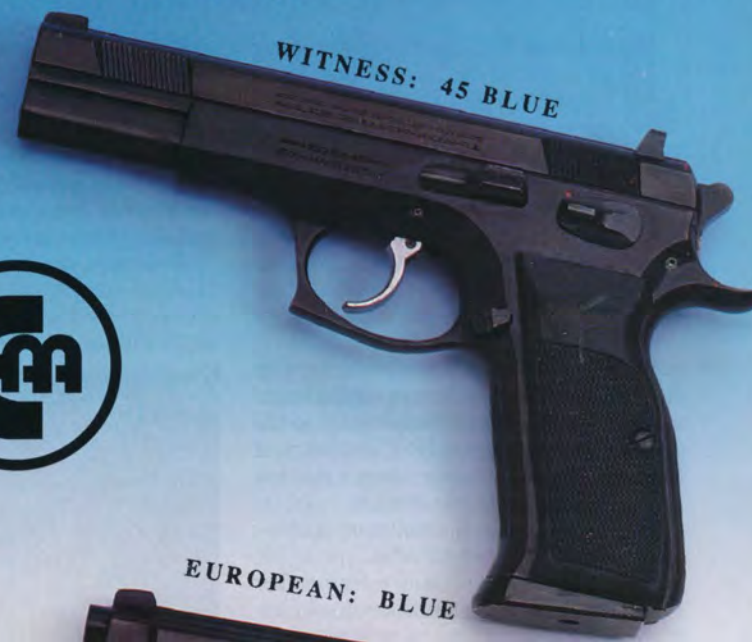
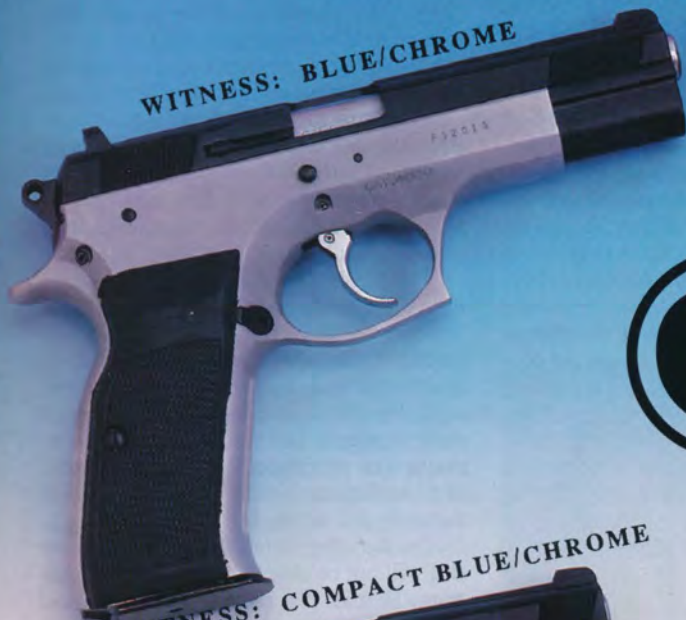
We tested the PACT Club Timer at a combat match held at the Lake Elsinore Sportsmans Association range in southern California. Range Officer T.J. Johnson and I alternated running the 20-odd shooters through our stage. I intentionally gave T.J. only the most basic instruction on how to work the Club Timer: "Here, push this button."

Even though he was unfamiliar with the unit, T.J. had no problems running the shooters through. The timer picked all the shots, even muffled shots fired under two 55 gallon drums. We found the Club Timer easy to use and dependable. The compact size was real handy as we clipped the timer onto our clipboard.

When a competitor gives a stage his best shot, he deserves to be scored with the best timer, the new PACT Club Timer.

For more information on the new PACT Club Timer, call the innovative company toll-free at 1-800-722-8462.

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WORLD PRESIDENT FAVORS KEEPING GUNS, SCOPES FREE FROM ANY BAN

Jean-Pierre Denis is the current president of the International Practical Shooting Confederation. His interest in firearms goes back to 1944, when as a 14-year-old boy he saw German forces leave his native country of Belgium as the Allies advanced.

Starting a gun collection at that time was very easy, he recalls. It was quite literally a matter of going out into the streets and picking up the guns you wanted.

J.P., as he's known to his friends, retired from the Belgian army reserve with the rank of major and serves on the board of directors of several companies. At the 15 year reunion of the IPSC founders at Columbia, Mo., I had a chance to chat with J.P. about the Confederation.

DA: *Jean-Pierre, how many countries are now members of IPSC?*

JPD: At present there are 40 member countries. With the reunification of Germany we are getting many new members from what used to be East Germany, and we have been getting inquiries from Yugoslavia.

DA: *Do you anticipate seeing former eastern-bloc countries joining the Confederation?*

JPD: It depends to a large extent on their firearms laws. We have one absolutely strict rule—no country which denies its citizens the freedom to own firearms and keep them in their home can be a member of IPSC.

Hong Kong, for example, very recently changed its laws because of IPSC and for the first time in many years residents can keep their firearms at home rather than at an armory.

DA: *Is IPSC becoming recognized as*

a legitimate international shooting sport?

JPD: That goal has already been achieved. IPSC certainly is a respected and recognized shooting discipline, though there are still those who don't realize how big this sport has become internationally, or how influential it can be.

I already mentioned the example of Hong Kong. Another example is Germany, where the law specifically prohibited citizens from practicing drawing a



J.P. Denis of Belgium was first elected IPSC president in 1983 and he has been re-elected every two years since.

Nyle Leatham photo

firearm from a holster. This has been rescinded due to pressure from IPSC members. We are seeing a very fast growth rate in Europe, particularly in

Germany, Italy, and Spain.

DA: *To what do you attribute this acceptance?*

JPD: Undoubtedly, it is due in large part to our splendid safety record. At one time or another I've participated in just about every shooting sport, so I know what I'm talking about when I say that no other shooting discipline approaches our safety standards.

In fact, I don't feel comfortable on a range with shooters who have not been trained to IPSC standards of safety.

At our European matches, we make a point of inviting police and other officials in the firearms bureaucracy to attend. Always they are highly impressed with our rigid enforcement of safety. Many times I have been told that IPSC has by far the strictest standards for safe, competent gun handling.

DA: *With the move towards a common European economic community it appears there will be more uniformity in gun laws. Do you think this will adversely affect IPSC?*

JPD: There are both bad and good developments in this area. There is no doubt that permits will be needed to own and use firearms, even in countries which formerly did not require them.

On the other hand, the issuing authorities will not be able to arbitrarily deny permits. That is, if a citizen has no criminal record, no history of violence or mental illness, then the permit must be issued. So this is an improvement for some countries.

DA: *Many IPSC members aren't aware that for years you have been subsidizing the travel and communications expenses of your office from your own pocket. Does revenue from memberships now cover operating costs?*

JPD: It's coming closer, though there is still a shortfall. If revenues from the royalty programs were included then all costs would be covered, but it's my view that the royalties should not be used for operating expenses. Rather, they should be used to improve the quality of competitions around the world.

DA: *What royalty programs are in effect at present?*

JPD: An agreement has just been completed with Tanfoglio and Springfield Armory. Tanfoglio will produce a series of pistols in .40 S&W which will carry the IPSC logo and will be marked "Ultra-IPSC Approved."

These pistols will be exclusively distributed in North America by Springfield Armory, who as you know have always been strong supporters of IPSC. Half the royalties from each pistol sold will go to the IPSC governing body of the country in which the sale occurred, the other half to the international office.

The funds received by our office will be used to improve the quality of international matches, for example, by purchasing range equipment or by helping offset the travel costs of trained range officers.

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DA: *The International Range Officers Association (IROA) was formed in 1988 to develop and train range officers and ensure that IPSC rules were applied consistently around the world. Has IROA been successful in meeting its objectives?*

JPD: IROA has been tremendously successful. With so many countries and new members joining IPSC, it's essential that we have trained, capable range officers.

Any region that wants to put on a major international match can call on IROA for assistance in course and match design, and to supply a core of trained range officers. This means that even regions with a small membership base can hold international class matches with IROA's help.

Ecuador, for example, is hosting a Level IV match on November 24, 1991, in which IROA will design the course of fire and provide the range officials.

DA: *What are the requirements for a Level IV match?*

JPD: IROA has developed guidelines for four levels of sanctioned matches—Club, Sectional, National, and International.

For a Level IV match the guidelines are minimum 300 rounds, 25 stages, and the capability to host from 300 to 600 shooters. The biggest obstacle to international competition is the burdensome cost of travel.

We hope to develop a system in which international matches can be held in five

zones of the world—North America, South/Central America, Africa, Europe, and Australia/Asia.

Ideally there would be a Level IV match held in one of these areas every six months, with every sixth match designat-

Barnhart and Doug Koenig with optical sights, many shooters, especially in the U.S., are rushing to adopt these sights. There are some in IPSC who feel these sights have no practical value and should be banned. What is your position

If this sport is to contribute to our knowledge of the practical use of firearms, shooters must be free to innovate. Who is to say what will be considered practical 10 years from now?

ed as a World Championship.

DA: *You've always been a strong proponent of good course design. How do you feel about current trends in this area?*

JPD: In the last two years or so there has been a great improvement in course design. In past years many courses could not be sanctioned, at least not without major changes.

Now I get many courses that can be sanctioned with only minor changes, and I recently received two matches from the U.S., designed by Lloyd Harper I believe, that were approved with no changes at all.

There are getting to be so many matches that you must have a good course of fire to attract competitors.

DA: *Following the victories by Jerry*

on this?

JPD: As president of IPSC I have a real problem with the idea of banning anything. If this sport is to contribute to our knowledge of the practical use of firearms, shooters must be free to innovate.

Who is to say what will be considered practical 10 years from now? I can remember when telescopic sights on rifles were thought to be too fragile for any serious use, yet today we see them on infantry weapons such as the Steyr AUG.

It is true that having a shooter switch his sights on just before a stage does not strike me as practical, but there can be many solutions to that problem, perhaps a

Continued on page 89

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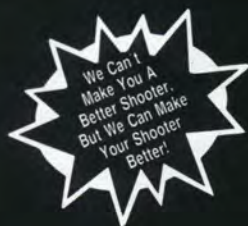
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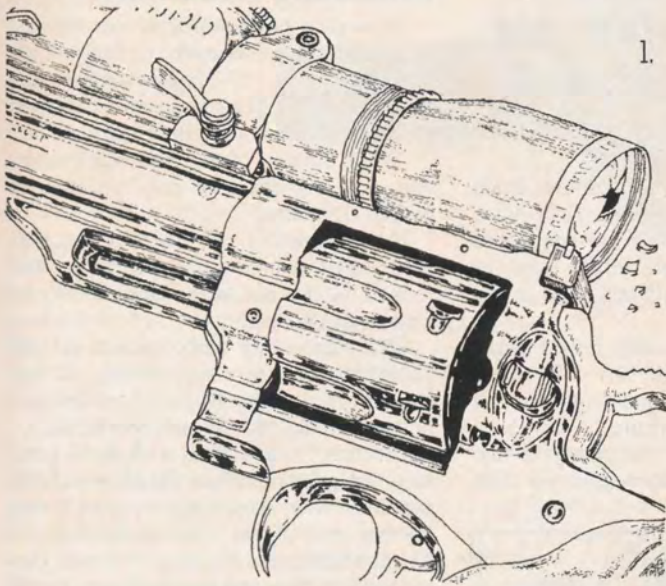
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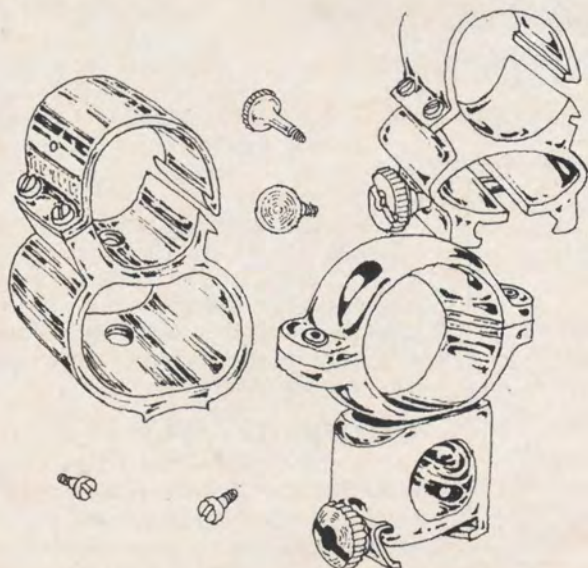
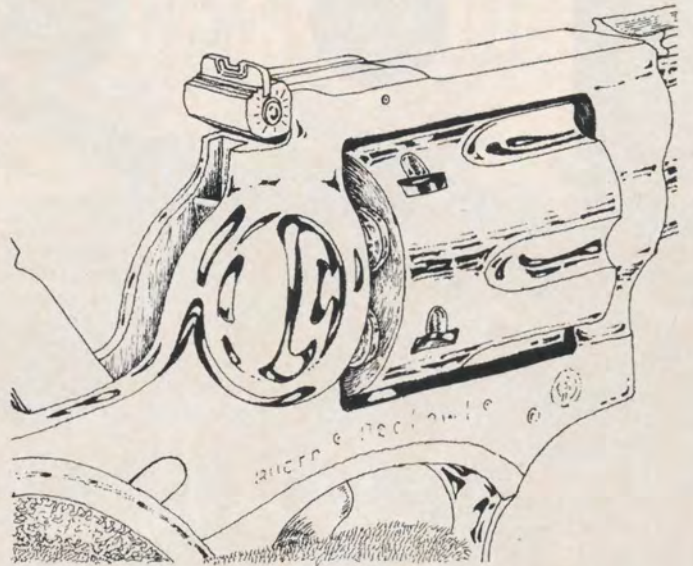
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HANDGUN PROGRESS MARCHES ON WITH GRIZZLY, BUCKMARK, M.O.A.

No activity in the handgun world has ever been as directly responsible for handgun development as silhouetting. It is obvious that if the long-range game had not come about 15 years ago, we would not have many of the excellent long-range pistols that we now have.

The Dan Wesson SuperMag series, .357, .375, and .445, are all a direct result of silhouette shooters clamoring for better and better sixguns. The Ruger .357 Maximum *should* still be in production—in my humble opinion, it is one of the finest

long range revolvers ever built.

With the repeal of the infamous Price Ceiling Rule that has choked IHMSA for the past several years, we are starting to once again see progress in the revolver field and hopefully will see more in the near future.

Revolvers for silhouettes have been at the status quo under the Price Rule but not so semi-automatics and single-shots. I have had the good fortune to test three such silhouette pistols the past year and am happy to report the results of such tests here.

All three of these have applications for silhouetting and for hunting and at least two of them would be excellent for the Precision and Long Range phases of The Masters.

Browning BuckMark

Browning has been involved with .22 semi-automatic production for many years. The former series of .22 pistols were beautiful guns, but held no fascination for me as the grip angle did not fit my hand.

When I heard of the BuckMark series with a newly designed grip, my interest perked right now!

At least until I saw the first one. The rear sight was poorly executed and looked liked it had been stamped out of a Campbell's soup can.

Then Browning woke up and saw the potential sales for a real quality .22 and started offering the 10-inch barrelled Silhouette Model and Varmint Model .22's.

Accuracy was superb with these guns, the grips were right, and the price was reasonable. Now Browning has gone a step further and offers what is basically a Varmint/Silhouette Model with a more easily handled five and one-half inch barrel. Perfect for shooting Standing .22 Class.

This Browning is called the Target Model and that it surely is. The heavy bull barrel of the 10-inch model is still present as well as the full length rib with six transversal slots for ease of scope mounting using Weaver rings.

Sights are Millett adjustable rear and a front post that really is a post, making the target Model impossible for holster use. I would like to see Browning offer an optional interchangeable front sight so this .22 could also be used as an easily carried field pistol.

Using Weaver see-through rings, I have mounted a Bausch & Lomb 2X LER scope on the top rib of the Target Model and still am able to have instantaneous use of the iron sights should the situation demand it. Loosen two screws in the rings and the scope can be removed for use of the Target Model for .22 silhouetting.

Both the grip frame and the walnut grips are the finest ever offered on a semi-automatic .22. Or maybe I should just say they are the best feeling to my hand of any .22 semi-automatic I have ever encountered.

The gold (?) trigger has a built-in adjustable stop. All three Browning .22's—Varmint, Silhouette, and Target—have been sent to my diggings over the past two years for testing. They have all been invited to stay and checks for their purchase have been sent back to Browning.

Grizzly .357/.45

The first time I witnessed the Long Range Event at The Masters Tournament, I surmised that the perfect gun for such an event would be a high-velocity, bottlenecked semi-automatic cartridge. This thought was shared with the reps from



The M.O.A. single-shot pistol is capable of sub-MOA (hence the name) at 100 yards. John's test gun is chambered in .250 Savage, a good hunting round.

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Desert Eagle at the match with my suggestion that a .44 Magnum be necked to .30 caliber in a 10-inch barrel and fitted with a scope.

That would be just the ticket for handling the varying distances, target sizes and minimum time allowed for shooting the course of fire.

The same semi-automatic would be welcomed in long range silhouetting, a game that has been thus far dominated by sixguns and single-shots.

The Utah-based firm of L.A.R. is now offering a bottle-necked cartridge chambering in their Grizzly semi-automatic. The Grizzly is a large pistol to say the least and was originally chambered in .45 Winchester Magnum and is now available in both the relatively new 10mm and the wildcat .357/.45 Win. Mag. The latter is simply a .308 Winchester cut to length and necked down to .357 caliber.

The L.A.R. Grizzly is aptly named as it is the largest of the semi-auto's avail-



Browning BuckMark with a B&L scope, a good Field Pistol rig.

able. Looking much like a Colt Government Model, the Grizzly weighs in at a recoil reducing 58 ozs. fully loaded and the recoil can be reduced even more by replacing the barrel bushing with a add-on compensator.

Everything about the Grizzly is big. The slide has a massive look, and the grip frame measures 2.5 inches from front to back.

Originally tested in .45 Win. Mag., this is one of the few handguns that has ever

intimidated me. Not because of recoil, which is stiff in the unported .45 Win. Mag. with full-house loads, but because of my stubby fingers mated up with the massive grip frame. At first, I just did not feel I was in complete control.

Others handguns, like the .454 Casull or .475 and .500 Linebaughs kick worse, but in spite of the recoil, I always have control of the grip frame. I did not have this feeling with the Grizzly.

With familiarity comes confidence and the Grizzly no longer feels overly large in my hand and I have used it extensively with the 10mm, .45 Win. Mag. and the wildcat .357/.45 Win. Mag.

The ejection port of the Grizzly is also huge to allow the positive extraction/ejection of the longer .45 Win. Mag. and .357/.45 Win. Mag. brass. Sights are Millett fully adjustable white outline rear mated with a ramp front sight with an

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Burris



Grizzly .45 Win. Mag. has potential as a silhouette pistol.

orange "T" on the ramp. Both can easily be painted black for silhouette competition.

Grips are Pachmayrs made especially to fit the Grizzly. They wrap around the front strap and the back strap is also checkered rubber.

The safety is pure Government Model utilizing a grip safety mated with an ambidextrous thumb safety. Trigger pull is smooth and good. No mush, no creep.

The six-inch barrel protrudes one-inch in front of the slide when used without the compensator. A 10-inch barrel would be more desirable for competition. Finish of the Grizzly is a dull, non-reflecting black except for the ambidextrous safety which is nickel.

The front of the trigger guard is squared off and serves no purpose whatsoever for me as I cannot reach it with my left hand and still maintain a proper two-handed grip.

Slide to frame fit is very tight rivaling custom Colt Government Model competition guns. Information plus brass and dies for the .357/.45 are available from L.A.R. Manufacturing Inc. (4133 West Farm Rd., Dept AH, West Jordan, UT 84084).

M.O.A. Maximum

This single-shot pistol is available in all of the standard silhouette cartridges as well as the .250 Savage, .358 Winchester, and .45-70. to name a few. The test gun

received from M.O.A. Corporation (P.O. Box 185, Dept. AH, Dayton Ohio 45404) came with four barrels, .30-20, .357 SuperMag, .250 Savage, and .308 Winchester.

Winter settled in on me before I was able to really work with the .30-20 and .357 SuperMag, so they will be used later, but I have managed to put in quite a bit of time with both rifle cartridges.

The M.O.A. is a falling block pistol. A lever rides in front of the grip and is pushed forward to drop the block. The hammer is then cocked exposing the chamber. A new round is inserted, the lever returned to its position and a button on the right side of the chrome moly steel receiver pushed down to bring the firing pin into position. This makes for a simple but rugged pistol.

All barrels are Douglas and are free-floating in the walnut forearm. The rear sight is a Millett mated with a .088" wide front blade.

For test firing the M.O.A., the rear sight was removed and using an M.O.A. scope mount, I replaced it with a Redfield 2X-6X LER scope for testing of the .250 Savage and .308 Winchester. The former is a pleasant shooting cartridge and the latter barrel came with an integral compensator for which I am quite thankful.

The M.O.A. requires a special wrench to remove barrels and although the use of a vise is recommended I was able to change barrels in the field. The .308 was tested first as it is fascinating to shoot such a rifle cartridge in a pistol. I then removed the .308 barrel without the aid of a vise and successfully replaced it with a .250 Savage barrel. The scope is frame mounted and was used with both barrels.

The M.O.A. is capable of excellent accuracy for silhouetting and also makes an excellent hunting pistol for non-dangerous game. Like many single-shots other than the Contender, the M.O.A. would be very slow for this shooter to operate in a stress situation.

The potential of all three of these silhouette pistols once again points up to me the desirability of allowing scopes in IHMSA silhouette competition. Quality handguns are available for silhouetting more than ever and veteran silhouetters continue to find themselves locked out of meaningful competition.

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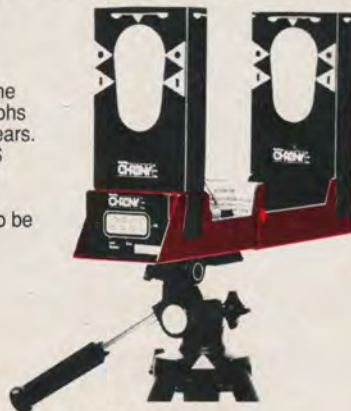
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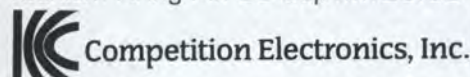
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TEST REPORT

DILLON 450 *Junior*

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By Tony Lesce

The beginning reloader faces a real dilemma today in terms of choosing his equipment. Many experienced reloaders, myself included, have in the past advised the beginner to purchase a single stage reloader when first discovering and exploring the art and science of reloading metallic cartridges, but there are built in problems with this approach.

The first is the beginner's reluctance to start with an admittedly slow means of reloading and one that is blatantly labeled "Beginner". When you were a kid no one wanted the training wheels left on the bicycle while riding with their friends, even if you hadn't mastered all the fundamentals of pedaling two wheelers. That attitude back then usually resulted in more than a few scraps and bruises, but that was the price of childhood pride.

That same attitude today when combined with a shallow background in reloading fundamentals and a complex progressive machine can result in more than injured pride. If you're lucky, you will only suffer the humiliation of carrying around a cleaning rod and hammer handle in your hip pocket as you drive the bullet back into the case from non-charged loads during your range session, but the result will be much worse if your charge is too great or even doubled through negligence and ignorance.

Therefore it was easy for many to say



a beginning reloader should always start with a single stage reloading tool, because it was simple and by the time the student had reloaded several thousand rounds he had the basics down pat. This approach has some validity, but it doesn't take an Albert Einstein to realize you are going to be spending a lot of time in the reloading room just to shoot a couple of hundred rounds the following Sunday despite the substantial financial gain achieved through use of reloaded ammo versus factory ammunition.

Several thousand rounds of any caliber on a single stage reloading press takes time, too much time for many of us, and that's why progressive reloaders are so popular.

Add to this situation, the question of what the student reloader is supposed to do with his single stage learning tool after

he has mastered it and moved onto a more advanced machine, and you have a true dilemma.

That is until now, because Dillon Precision has a viable alternative to this problem and it has applications for even the most advanced reloader. It is the Dillon 450 Jr.

The Dillon 450 Jr. is an O-frame press with a patented revolving shell plate and is delivered with the dies already installed in the tool head. It comes with a powder measure, cartridge ejection mechanism, collection box and it is available in the following calibers: .380 ACP, 9mm Parabellum, .38 Special/.357 Magnum, .38 Super, 10mm Auto, .41 Magnum, .44 Magnum, .45 ACP and .45 Colt.

This press is designed expressly for the beginning reloader, but comes with the added advantage of being a manually indexed, rotary shell plate, semi-progressive reloader. Here is a unit designed expressly for those with limited reloading experience while at the same time providing the capability offered by a semi-progressive machine. Which means experienced reloaders will value its addition to their workroom benches as well.

It is worth mentioning that the 450 Jr. comes out of the box already adjusted for the cartridge length, bullet depth, and crimp. Only minor adjustments are needed, if any for the start up operation of this press.

The Dillon 450 Jr. can also be used in the limited reloading of some rifle cartridges, but the mode of operation is different allowing only use of the first two stations and you are limited to rifle cartridges using the same shell plate as the available pistol cartridges.

To further simplify matters Dillon has a comprehensive manual for the 450 Jr. that covers every aspect of its use, including any combination of non-Dillon pistol or rifle dies. Add to this, the assistance provided by their toll free 800 number (800-421-7632) and there is absolutely no reason anyone should experience trouble with any Dillon product.

The most notable feature of the Dillon 450 Jr. is the price of \$119.00 and for this amount you get a top flight reloader. That is one hell of a bargain when you consider this unit will reload at the rate of 250 pistol rounds per hour with very little practice.

The Dillon 450 Jr. has made me change my previously held opinion about the beginning reloader's need for a single stage machine. That is no longer a valid viewpoint, in my opinion, because of the 450 Jr. The 450 Jr. better serves the beginning reloader than any single stage reloader in existence while at the same time providing a low cost semi-progressive press for the advanced reloader.

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PIN SHOOTING SIXGUNS

By Mike Carmony

Shooters to the line!" Without looking at the shooter who will be in the position next to you, you check to be sure you have on your protective earmuffs, and that you have a couple of spare full-moon clips loaded with 230 grain lead roundnose cartridges.

If your trigger finger spasms and jerks more than one shot off target, you may need to dump the empty clip in the cylinder and quickly reload. You make your way to your firing position, standing behind a table covered with dirty carpeting. The shooter in position next to you was your friend a minute ago, and he will be again a minute from now. But at the moment you know that he is the best shooter in the match—the one you must beat to win.

You don't look over at him.

"Load and make ready."

Wiping your sweaty hands on your pants, you grab the neoprene-gripped handle of your Smith & Wesson Model 25-2 and remove it from the nylon holster on your belt. The cylinder opens and you fill the six big holes with six 255 grain semi-wadcutter loaded .45 ACP rounds, all held together with a full-moon clip. The cylinder snaps closed again.

With your right thumb, you pull back just slightly on the hammer and turn the cylinder, to be sure that the full-moon clip isn't bent just enough to cause the cylinder to bind up, giving you a 25-pound trigger pull when the money is on the line.

The wheelgun is making a comeback in bowling pin shoots!



The author competing with a snubnose at the Second Chance bowling pin shoot, the premiere match for pin busters.

Assured that your revolver is ready, you settle yourself into your stance. You've experimented with a variety of positions, but find yourself most comfortable with a Chapman Stance, your gun arm locked at the elbow, with your support hand pulling back strongly into your shoulder as if mounting a rifle.

You keep your finger out of the trigger guard as you try a few "dry runs," bringing the gun up from a 45° angle to

bear on the bowling pin which is your first target.

"Shooters ready!"

You lean forward, putting most of your body weight on your front leg, knowing that this will immensely help you control the moderate recoil of the big revolver as your point of aim moves from one bowling pin to the next. The 6½ inch barrel of the big



An unusual conversion of a S&W Model 27 to .38 Super. Since full-moon clips are fast to load, pin shooters prefer them to speed loaders, thus the impetus for this conversion.

Smith is now lightly touching the table in front of you.

"Stand by!"

A sudden rush of adrenaline hits you, as it always does the moment before the buzzer sounds. You welcome it, knowing that it will make you stronger, tighter, faster.

Your eyes momentarily focus on the first bowling pin, but you quickly remind yourself to refocus on the black patridge front sight as soon as the gun comes up.

Bzzzzzzzzzz!

Your arms half swing, half punch the revolver out toward the bowling pins. Your finger is already starting to roll back the smooth double-action trigger as the gun comes up. Your eyes find the front sight and you put it somewhere near the middle of the first bowling pin as the gun fires.

Your peripheral vision registers the movement of the first pin as the heavy .45 slug drives it back and off the table, but you continue to focus on the front sight. Your finger rhythmically rolls the trigger, as you put that sight on one pin after another.

When there are no more pins left to shoot, you look back to see if you have any deadwood to clear. All the pins are gone.

Your last bowling pin bounces with that distinctive hollow clonk, just as you look over at your opponent's table and see his last pin roll off the back.

You did it! You got them clean! Five pins for five shots.

"Unload and show clear."

Your body relaxes as you open the cylinder and punch out the mostly-depleted full-moon clip so that the range officer can inspect

the gun. You re-holster the big revolver and reach over to grasp the extended hand of your opponent, who is smiling broadly. He is once again your buddy.

You grin at him as you point to the expensive, big-name custom compensated autopistol in his speed holster. You just can't resist saying mischievously, "That's what you get for bringing that gamey-looking thing out here!" You both laugh.

Revolver Comeback

No question about it, revolvers are making a comeback in the burgeoning sport of bowling pin shooting. When Richard Davis, president of the Second Chance body armor company, invented pin shooting and set up the first national pin match back in the Seventies, no one really knew for sure what gun to use.

For the first few years, the championship flip-flopped between revolver and semi-auto shooters. Soon the automatic, specifically the 1911-style .45 from Colt or "clone," completely took over the sport.

By about 1980 it was nearly impossible to even place high enough with a revolver to win a gun at Second Chance. It was just about a waste of time to shoot pins with a wheelgun.

Or was it? A few diehards never were willing to give up the comfort and reliability of their "19th-century technology" handguns, and kept right on stubbornly shooting pins with them. As the sport grew, more shooters entered local pin competitions, bringing with them whatever gun they owned, auto or revolver.

Meanwhile, pin shooting was rapidly becoming as much a science as an art. The five-second five-pin table times that won some of the Second Chance matches in the mid-Seventies were barely enough to be in the prize money a decade later.

The great advantage of the Colt .45 had been firepower—you had eight big slugs to launch rather than six. Shooters discovered what had been obvious all along: no matter how many rounds your gun held, you had to clear your tables with five or six shots to have a decent time!

Savvy pin shooters also noticed that the wheelgun gave them another advantage—the rolling trigger action of a good double-action revolver gave them a more natural rhythm as they moved across the tables.

The revolver action, with its better "surprise break," forced the shooter to keep the gun on target without jerking it away under the adrenaline-pumped stress of the match.

The same phenomenon was occurring at the Bianchi Cup. As we all know, the heavy-barreled, optical-sighted .38 or .357 revolver totally dominates the match these days. All the top Cup shooters from Mickey Fowler to Rob Leatham now leave their autos at home when they trek to the Chapman Academy each spring.



A John Nowlin custom .45 ACP pingun features a slab sided Shilen match barrel, Metaloy finish and an incredibly smooth DA trigger.

Sixgun Attack

At Second Chance, the sixgun men were making their move. Leading the charge was Jerry Miculek, currently the hottest revolver man on the circuit. Jerry had set the single-run five-pin record back in 1981, but really came into his own in the latter part of the decade, winning the Master Blaster Pin Gun event in '88, and the MB Stock Gun event the following year.

Jerry promises to be a formidable competitor in the Nineties as well, having won the first Master Blaster shoot-off and the accompanying \$5,000 cash award sponsored by Winchester at Second

Continued on page 120

MINIMIZING "DWELL TIME" KEEPS A MASTER CLASS SHOOTER AHEAD

A common misconception is that in order to shoot fast, you sacrifice some of your ability to shoot accurately. This is untrue. In order to shoot fast, accurate shots, the shooter must simply learn to do less.

Speed is economy of motion. Speed is also economy of time. All excessive motions and time lags must be eliminated to increase speed.

When you first started practical shooting, your main concerns were safety and hitting the target on demand. As your skill increased, you worked on techniques that made you a better shooter and increased your gun handling ability.

Now it's time to work on your ability to shoot fast and still maintain an acceptable level of accuracy.

Dwell Time

Your main concern now is trying to eliminate the down time, the time when you're off the air, dead in the water, riding the clock. This is what I refer to as dwell time. Masters have learned to keep dwell time to a minimum.

This is the biggest difference in ability between the A-class and the Master class shooter. Reducing one moment of dwell time may not make as visible an improvement in your shooting as, say, learning proper trigger control, but after you've reduced dwell time in enough different areas, the overall improvement can be dramatic.

Dwell time is present in the entire shooting process. It's fractions of seconds here and there, but add a few hundredths per shot over 10 shots and that can make



Mike Plaxco is a veteran competitor. Here he's in action at the '91 Steel Challenge shooting for Team S&W.

Nyle Leatham photo

a half-second, and the winner.

You can watch Rob Leatham or Jerry Barnhart shoot, and at the end they're faster, but you won't see where they're getting it. But they are getting it, bits and pieces at a time. This is where matches are won and lost.

Analyze Your Technique

Dwell time can be an extremely diffi-

cult thing to diagnose. It exists in different areas and in different amounts for each shooter. I can teach a shooter 90% of the abilities he needs to develop; however, dwell time exists within that last 10%.

Just like learning any shooting skill, it's important that you are able to analyze your technique and realize your need for improvement. I've found that when I can get my students to just think about it, they start to improve.

I can show you the path, give you a few directions, and talk about a few areas that are classic time wasters, but you will need to analyze every aspect of your shooting, and then you'll need to experiment to work through them on your own.

The timer is how you prove to yourself whether something is faster or slower. When you're trying to reduce dwell time, you may not be able to rely entirely on feel; the solutions to eliminating wasted time are found externally.

You may have an awareness that you're not operating as efficiently as you might, but the proof will always be read from the timer display.

Use your timer to help you see where you may be wasting time, and to see when you're reducing your dwell time. Analyze your split times from target to target, reload times, course movement times.

These will give you very important information you can use to isolate different areas you need to work on.

Timer Exercises

I suggest running a given series of exercises using the timer. Which exercises you'll perform will be determined by what you're trying to find out.

One-shot draws are a good place to start to let you analyze your reaction times to the gun, to the target, to the sight, and to the trigger. Set up two or three targets to monitor your target acquisition times. Set up targets at short and long range to discover how quickly you can be aware of an acceptable sight read that insures a consistent hit.

Set up an exercise that tests your movement from box to box. Again, excessive dwell time is present in the entire shooting process, so you'll have to take steps to discover it wherever it exists.

A fast shot is one that breaks as soon as the gun stops moving; therefore, another lag is in the time the shooter can be aware of an acceptable sight read on the target.

The gun should go directly on the target, stop, and the shot should break instantly. Many shooters, especially when they're trying to "speed up," will move the gun quickly to a shooting position, but won't see the sights immediately settle on the target because they slam the gun to a stop.

The shooter must learn to feather the gun onto the target in that last bit of extension into his final shooting position

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so that the shot can break the instant the gun stops moving forward. It is a sense of shooting to the target.

Economy Of Motion

Economizing motion can also be from combining motions. Some natural motions can be incorporated, such as moving the gun to the next target in recoil.

When you're developing the skill of recoil control, you want to see the sight rise in recoil and come back down to exactly the same spot on the target where it was previously.

But when your technique is developed to that point, the recoil time should then be used as travel time to the next target. As the sight rises on the first target, it tracks through the air and comes down on the next target.

If you read the sights when you fire the shot, you don't need to see the sight return to where it was previously unless you're going to shoot that same target again. And in that situation—the double

Reducing the amount of dwell time is just as important to winning D-class as it is to winning the Nationals. Reducing dwell time is learning to make your current skills more efficient.

tap—the sight will rise, return, and rise again, at which point the gun should then be on the way to the next target.

Again, recoil should be used as travel time, not lag time.

Reloading is a classic example of combined motions. Most shooters will see the sight rise and return on the target before they bring the gun back for the reload, but it's possible to use the recoil time to bring the gun back to reloading position. Try this for yourself with the timer and see the difference.

Target Acquisition

A major area for most people is target acquisition. This is something that Rob Leatham beat us on for years.

In the mid 1980's, Rob's target acquisition was far superior to everyone else's. We were all shooting the shots at the same cadence, but Rob was getting to the target and shooting faster. We were letting the gun stop and verifying the sights and breaking the shot, whereas Rob was shooting as he was acquiring the targets.

To reduce the lag time from target to

trigger, you must learn for yourself what constitutes an acceptable sight picture, because "acceptable" is a relative term.

An acceptable sight picture to Rob Leatham may be completely different than what a B-class shooter needs to see. Driving the gun around the targets is like driving a car along the road: you read the sights and you read the road, and you can only drive as fast as conditions and your skill level allow.

Relative Speed

Speed is always relative. It depends in part on your reaction time, reflexes, muscle tone, state of mind, and skills. But reducing the amount of dwell time is just as important to winning D-class as it is to winning the Nationals. Reducing dwell time is learning to make your current skills more efficient.

You learn techniques that allow you to shoot faster in your practice routines. The key word is "allow." The techniques that allow you to shoot faster don't cause you to shoot faster.

Anytime you go to a match and consciously try to alter the flow - you try to speed up or slow down—you're out of sync and out of rhythm, and you're losing.

That's what the training is for. You win or lose a match long before you step up to the line at a match and load your gun.

I'll borrow a quote from Brian Enos' new book that summarizes a strong belief I have on the subject of speed: Speed is a byproduct of attention. That's never more true than when applied to the subject of dwell time. Pay attention—close attention—and you'll begin to see where you're wasting time. Keep paying attention and you'll see the dwell time begin to shorten.

If you'll review this article, you'll see that nothing in here that improves speed hurts accuracy in any way. When you're concerned with shortening dwell time, you're not really increasing speed, you're decreasing time.

The effect may be the same, but the difference in attitude is important. To shoot faster, learn to do less.

J. Michael Plaxco has been a top practical shooting competitor for over 10 years. He's won the US Nationals, Steel Challenge, Second Chance, SOF, and 3-Gun championships, and is a premier member of Smith & Wesson's professional shooting team. In addition, Michael teaches all levels of practical shooting, from beginning to advanced, through the Plaxco Academy. He's also produced a two-tape video instruction package, "At The Beep," and is the author of a forthcoming book on practical shooting, entitled "Practical Pistolcraft: Shooting From Within." For more information, contact J. Michael Plaxco at P.O. Box 54-AH, Roland, AR 72135, or call (501) 868-9787.

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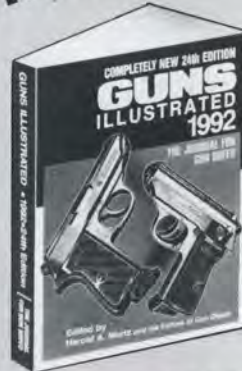
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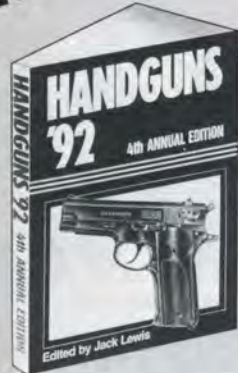
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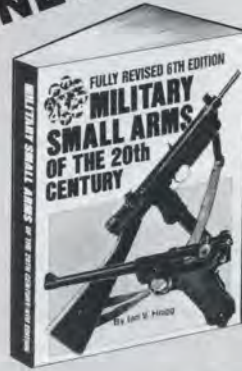
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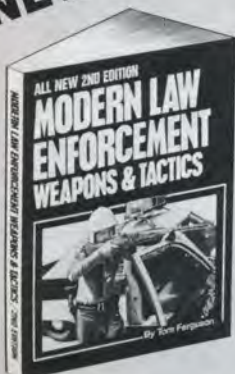
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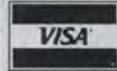
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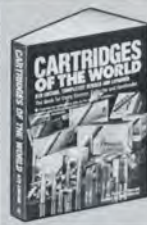
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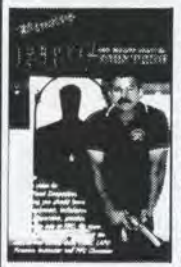
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To Blue

Some of John's personal guns that have been refinished include (left to right) blue, nickel, stainless, electroless nickel and Mag-Na-Life.



Or Not To Blue

By John Taffin

The sixgun was the pride of my young life. Nearly 20 years earlier, Colt had stopped the manufacture of the grand old Single Action Army because of lagging sales and also to make room for wartime production.

It looked like the old Colt would never be seen again but after the war, thanks mainly to the proliferation of westerns on TV in the 1950's, the Single Action—the beloved Model P—was resurrected and I was fortunate enough to be able to buy, with my limited funds on credit of course, the first .45 Colt Single Action to hit my part of the country.

That sixgun sold for \$125, an awful lot of money for a teenager who was making all of ninety cents an hour.

About the same time, *GUNS Magazine* featured movie fast-draw consultant Arvo Ojala on the cover and I ordered an Arvo Ojala fast draw rig, black basket weave, to fit the 7.5" barreled Colt and got deeply involved in the shooting sport of the time.

Action shooting had yet to be discov-

We took the duty guns of a sheriff's department and put them to the test with some of the more popular gun finishes on the market. For one whole year these tough-bitten lawmen wore their guns on patrol. Used 'em, abused 'em. Now, one year later, we'll see how these finishes held up.

ered, silhouetting was a long ways off, and only the hardy soul ventured forth with handgun to hunt big game. The top handgun sport of the time was fast draw and clubs sprang up all over the country.

My Colt looked a little drab next to the custom black Ojala rig and wanting to fancy things up a bit, the .45 was taken apart and everything sent off to be nickel plated. It came back in a few weeks, and I

quickly assembled it and fired the first cylinder full.

The result was quite disappointing. That was my first experience with re-finishing a sixgun and it was disastrous. Most of the nickel plating came off the cylinder in long strips the first time the re-finished Single Action was fired and I was crushed. My beautiful .45 Colt was a mess.

Needless to say I had to spend quite a

Metaloy

Metaloy is another hard chrome finish and most guns are finished in what Jim Kelley of Metaloy describes as a Star Burst finish. This is a glass beaded finish that wears well and also holds oil better than smoother finishes.

Metaloy hard chrome is a super fast finish that minimizes the time the gun to be re-finished needs to be left in the plating bath and Kelley informs me that this avoids brittling of the gun parts.

Metaloy plating cuts the coefficient of friction and inner parts will work smoother and slide rails of semi-automatics will also work with less friction. A good trigger on a sixgun of, say, three pounds, will



go to around two and three-quarter pounds with the Metaloy plating. Cost for a typical handgun is \$100.

A Smith & Wesson Model 66 .357 Magnum was Metaloy'ed for this project and carried daily by a Deputy Sheriff in a duty holster. It looks as good as it did when it was put into service with no noticeable wear nor scratches.

The Deputy pointed out that the gun does get dirtier easier which is to be expected with the glass beaded finish as opposed to the original smoother stainless finish.

Enduragard

Accurate Plating & Weaponry offers both brush chrome and matte chrome finishes in their Enduragard. This, again, is an industrial hard chrome finish that is very wear resistant and rust resistant.



Bob Cogan of Accurate Plating and Weaponry does both handguns and long guns and offered to do both for our tests. A Department Remington Model 870 was sent off and received the Matte Chrome finish. This weapon is carried in a patrol car daily and after one year, the finish is, as expected, still perfect.

The handgun sent off to Cogan was a Smith & Wesson Model 686 .357 Magnum that is carried daily in a duty holster by a uniformed officer and this is the gun that is carried on dirt bike patrol also.

This test gun received the brush chrome finish except for the top strap which is a matte finish. As with all of the other industrial hard chrome finishes, the Model 686 finish is still the same after one year of use. No scratches nor wear is apparent.



Some of the sheriff's guns that Taffin monitored for a year of hard use include (left to right) Enduragard M-686, Metalife M-36, Dura Chrome M-59, Black Manganese. One and all, the deputies were happy with the gun finishes.

Dura Chrome

This is a hard chrome finish that has been available since 1931, but only recently available for handguns. The Shooter Shop's Dura Chrome finish is offered in matte, stainless-style, and an Ultra Mirror finish. Prices are \$100 for the first two and \$140 for the latter.

Dura Chrome is rated at 72 on the Rockwell scale and is advertised as one of the hardest finishes and will not gall, chip or peel. Wear is eliminated on slide rails of semi-automatics and functioning is smoother.

The Dura Chrome finished duty gun is a Smith & Wesson Model 59 that is carried daily by a Deputy Sheriff. After one year of constant use, the slide (the frame could not be finished as Dura Chrome is not used on alloys), shows no wear nor scratches at any place. It looks the same one year later as it did when it was originally returned to me.

The peace officer is well pleased with the finish on his Model 59 Smith & Wesson and recommends it highly. This particular finish is available only from Patrick Connors at The Shooter Shop and is guaranteed or it will be re-done at no cost.



Black Manganese

Ed Banks offers a dull black, non-reflecting finish that he advertises as the original MIL-SPEC finish used on all military weapons since 1950. Banks calls his finish not pretty but practical.

This finish is for working guns not show guns and is desired by those who want a flat black finish that will not reflect light. It is quite popular with pin shooters and especially law enforcement personnel.

The test gun chosen for this project was a SIG P220 .45 ACP which is carried daily by an undercover narcotics officer. As it turned out, some discoloration occurred in the finish, not because of the finishing job done by Banks but because of the heat-treating of certain areas of the SIG P220.

Banks said this has only happened thrice before and in all cases it was traced to the former heat-treatment afforded the metal parts. The protection is still there but the finish is a dull olive green instead of dull black in the affected areas.

I have seen the same thing happen to guns that were re-blued with the offending area coming out in a purple color. The resulting finish did not bother the undercover agent in the least. He is quite pleased with the finish because of the desirability of having a non-reflective finish in his line of work.

After one year of constant use and daily being carried in an inside the pants holster, the black manganese finish on the SIG P220 is still around 99% and promises to offer many years of service.

Black manganese only works on steel guns, no stainless nor alloys need apply. Even though it is a dull finish it is quite attractive on a business gun and could be a life saver in an undercover situation.





SIG 9mm with SSK Khrome and a SIG P-220 .45 in Black Manganese.

SSK Khrome

This finish, offered by J.D. Jones of SSK Industries, is best known around the game fields of the world as that finish applied to SSK HandCannon barrels for T/C Contenders and also to complete custom Contenders.

I have a number of SSK custom T/C barrels with chamberings in .257 JDJ, .375 JDJ, and .45-70 seeing the most use and all of these are finished in SSK Khrome. This is an extremely tough and hard rust-resistant industrial chrome that can only be applied to steel surfaces, no aluminum alloys. SSK offers it on rifles, shotguns, and handguns as well as the SSK line of custom T/C barrels and guns. For testing for this project, a SIG P226 9mm with night sights was sent off to SSK.

The 9mm SIG is the duty gun of one of the female officer's with the Sheriff's Department. It was carried daily in a duty holster and also often carried under the seat of the officer's personal car.

After one year of continuous use, this duty gun also looks the same as it did when it went into the test, no wear, no scratches. The officer was and remains very pleased with the finish on her 9mm.



Black Gard

John Cook of Shootist Supply offers the black hard chrome finish that is known as Black Gard. This is a finish that in appearance is somewhere in between a bright blue finish and the dull black finish of black manganese.

It is advertised as harder than nickel, Teflon or parkerizing, but applied in a much thinner coating than nickel or Teflon.

Cook says it will not scratch if dropped on concrete. We did not try this to find out, and will simply take him at his word on this feature.

Cook offers a harder finish, his Chrome Gard, which is applied first and then the re-finished gun is followed with the Black Gard treatment. Black Gard is non-reflective without having a completely dull black finish.

The Chrome Gard goes over all parts and some gray inner parts will be noticed that do not get completely covered with the Black Gard, but they are still protected by the Chrome Gard finish.

Two handguns were sent off to Shootist Supply for the Black Gard treatment. The first gun was an undercover agent's Smith & Wesson Model 60 stainless .38 Special. Cook called to tell me that they did not want to do a stainless gun.

"What if I send you another gun, a steel one, and you do it and also the stainless gun so we can see how both react?"

So off went a second gun, a blued Ruger Super Blackhawk. Both guns came back with the Black Gard finish and were put into service for a year.

The Ruger received the ultimate test. When it was not being fired it was at all times stored in a leather holster. Twenty-four hours a day, each and every day of the year of the test.

Many shooters have seen the finish of their blued guns ruined by storage in a leather holster for much shorter periods of time as the chemicals used in the tanning of the leather can attack the finish. After one year of continuous storage, the Ruger .44 shows no effects of the abusive storage.

The second gun, the Model 60, has been carried daily by an undercover agent in an ankle holster. It has started to show some wear around the end of the barrel particularly just as Cook expected if the finish was applied to a stainless gun.

Actually the wear is not all that extensive considering the use the little .38 has received. The peace officer who carries this back-up weapon still prefers the Black Gard finish to the original stainless finish for his type of work.

Metalife

This finish is advertised as "SS Chromim M" which means a stainless steel looking chromium finish from Metalife. Metalife also has a hardness of 70 to 72 on the Rockwell scale and will not crack, chip or peel and its addition cuts down friction. Plating build-up will be no more than .0002".

Metalife can be applied to semi-automatic aluminum frames in stages. That is, the part involved must first be plated with electroless nickel and then finished off with Metalife. Extra charge for this two-stage process is a reasonable \$15. Alloy framed revolvers are not done. Normal handgun price is \$78 to \$83.

Metalife also offers a complete custom job on Smith & Wesson N-frame sixguns. The grip frame is round-butted, the barrel is cut to two and three quarter or three inches, and Metalife is applied. The total cost on a customer's gun is \$295.

The test gun supplied to Metalife was a Smith & Wesson Chief's Special, a two-inch Model 36 .38 Special. This gun, depending upon the weather, has been carried in an inside-the-pants holster, in an ankle holster, in a boot top, and in the pocket of insulated coveralls.

Once again, the test gun came through the one year testing period looking the same as it went in. No scratches nor wear on the finish whatsoever.

During the course of the year, this particular revolver was further enhanced by sending it to Teddy Jacobsen (16315 Redwood Forest Court, Dept AH, Sugar Land, TX 77478. Phone 713-277-4008).

Jacobsen is an ex-cop now in the gunsmithing business and he did one of his famous action jobs on the little Chiefs Special along with polishing the trigger smooth, de-horning the hammer spur, and also jewelizing both hammer and trigger. When combined with the Metalife finish, these modifications make the Model 36 into a near-perfect pocket pistol.





Ruger .44 Super Blackhawk with black chrome finish, and S&W Model 36 with Metalife finish.

bit to have it done right after that fiasco.

Things have changed enormously since those 1950's days. At the time the choice was blue or nickel and that was it. Today we have numerous finishes available and it gets quite confusing as to just what is the best finish for the situation. A search through the advertisements in *American Handgunner* reveals just how many various finishes are available.

Never let it be said that *American Handgunner* does not respond to its readers. In June of 1989, we received a letter from Bruce Rogers stating: "I thoroughly enjoy your magazine, as it covers all aspects of handgunning: guns, ammo, leathergear, competition, techniques, etc. All aspects, that is, but one, and that's the outside of the gun. That's right, the finish.

"Time was, the choice was easy—blued or nickel. Now there's those, plus satin nickel, 'Coltguard,' Armaloy, hard chrome, black chrome, electroless nickel, parkerizing, etc., etc. Even plating for stainless steel guns.

"Not being trained in metallurgy or electroplating, and having a few pistols which could use a facelift, I would like to know what are the differences in these options. Which hold up the longest, are the most resistant to holster wear, don't adversely affect the underlying metal, etc. Could you get someone with the expertise necessary to write a full article on the subject?"

Well, Bruce, *You Asked For It* and here it is.

However, what you asked for would take a book rather than an article to really cover completely and I am certainly no expert, but we did set up a controlled situation to test as many finishes as we could find re-finishers who were willing to take part. So call this a basic course in handgun

us a good cross section of handgun use as duty guns see much use, but little abuse.

The following duty guns were re-finished: SIG P220 .45 ACP, S&W Model 60 .38 Special, S&W Model 59 9mm, S&W Model 686 .357 Magnum, S&W Model 66 .357 Magnum, SIG P226 9mm, and a S&W Model 36 .38 Special.

One of the re-finishers offered to do a long gun also and a department 870 Remington was provided. In addition to these guns, I sent along my personal Ruger .44 Super Blackhawk and will also comment on other sporting handguns that I have had re-finished in the past.

The accompanying chart shows the companies which participated in the project. After each name is the finish that is involved, the gun(s) that was sent to them and the turn around time, including shipping both ways.

All re-finished guns were photographed before they were returned to duty and again one year later after continuous use. This turned out to be double work in all cases (except one) as all re-finished guns came through the year looking exactly the same at the end as they did at the beginning even though they were carried daily in uniform holsters, in patrol

Gun Finishers

Company Name	Finish Name	Test Gun	Turn-Around Time
The Shooter Shop 514 N. Main Butte, MT 59701	Dura Chrome	S&W M-59	11 days
Metaloy Industries Rt. 5, Box 595-H Berryville, AR 72616	Metaloy	S&W M-66	26 days
Metalife Industries Box 53, Mong Ave. Reno, PA 16343	Metalife	S&W M-36	33 days
SSK Industries 721 Woodvue Lane Wintersville, OH 43952	SSK Khrome	SIG P-226	38 days
Shootist Supply 622 5th Ave. Belle Fouche, SD 57717	Black Gard	S&W M-60	43 days
Accurate Plating & Weaponry 1937 Calumet St. Clearwater, FL 34625	Enduragard	S&W M-686	66 days

finishes rather than a complete treatise.

The pages of *American Handgunner* were searched to find those who advertise that they re-finish handguns. All were contacted and those who were willing to take part were informed that for the most part they would receive duty guns of peace officers to re-finish.

These guns would be carried for one year and then examined to see how the finishes really held up. I felt this would give

cars, under seats, in ankle holsters, on motorcycle duty, including the "county dirt bike," that is, carried by an officer who patrolled the dirt roads of the county.

This speaks extremely well of the finishes that are offered.

Basic Blue

Those who have been around sixgunning long enough will remember when Smith &

Continued on page 90



Rimfire Wonder!

By John Taffin

Until June of 1986, Freedom Arms had pretty much ignored silhouetting as no one in the operation knew much about the game. Besides, the .454 Casull was always touted as the world's most powerful pistol which made it perfect for hunting but scared off most silhouetters.

Accuracy backed up by reasonable power was needed in the silhouetting game and it took quite a while for the Powers That Be at Freedom Arms, as well as most writers, to give equal billing to the inherent accuracy of the Freedom Arms revolvers.

But then something happened that brought silhouetting to the attention of the folks at Freedom Arms. The first *Shootists Holiday* was held about 15 miles outside of Freedom, Wyo., in 1986 and hosted by Freedom Arms.

This was nothing more than a bunch of handgunners invited to get together for a week of shooting and sharing ideas

much like an old time mountain man rendezvous.

Silhouette targets were requested along with a silhouette range before we met. Freedom Arms complied with our wishes and a silhouette range was set up at the ranch of the public relations director. It was probably the first time that most, if not all, of the Freedom Arms people had ever seen a silhouette target.

By the next day we were discussing the use of the Freedom Arms single-action revolver in silhouetting and I sat with Jim Morey, who was the sales manager at the time, and we designed a silhouette package which would be not a .454 but a .44 Magnum with the same excellent Bo-Mar sights that were on my personal 10-inch .454 Casull.

I suggested that one of the first silhouette .44's be sent to top revolver silhouette competitor David Bradshaw, which was done. As luck or fate would have it, I wound up shooting beside Bradshaw two

months later in the 1986 Internationals. He used a Freedom Arms .44 Magnum, while I used a Freedom Arms .454 with 260 grain bullets at 1650 fps. I shot a 70x80 with the .454 and Bradshaw, who is a better shot than me and also was using the easier shooting .44, did better with, I believe, a 76x80.

The Freedom Arms single-action was certified as a Production gun for both of us. At those same International Matches, Elgin Gates talked with me about the possibility of a price ceiling. The figure mentioned was well above the selling price of the Freedom Arms revolver.

And then the curtain fell in the form of the "price ceiling rule" using a figure much lower than that earlier mentioned. The Freedom Arms single-action was ruled out as a production gun.

You may talk all you want to about the "protection of the game" and trying to prevent an "equipment race" but you will never convince anyone at Freedom Arms

that this rule was not directly aimed at them.

Thanks to a lot of pressure from members, the new officers of IHMSA put the price rule up for a vote of the membership again during the summer of 1990.

Even before the official tally was in, I was contacted by Freedom Arms. "Do you think the rule will be thrown out?" was the question. I was confident that it would be.

Then they asked, "What do we have to do to get the Freedom Arms revolver certified for production competition?" And then I realized that both Bradshaw and I had our guns certified in the 1986 Internationals! The guns were already legal once the price ceiling was gone!

I received a second call from Freedom Arms again before the rule was finally voted on. This one informed me that they were working on a new silhouette revolver—not a big bore but a .22!

They needed all the particulars as to weight, barrel length, sight radius, etc. Shortly thereafter a most welcome call came through.

"John, this is Randy Smith at Freedom Arms. A prototype .22 silhouette revolver went out Second Day Air today. You will have it by day after tomorrow."

It is no simple matter for a .22 to make silhouette weight when chambered in the large framed Freedom Arms Single Action. The cylinder was shortened and the barrel extended back

ACCURACY TESTING OF THE FREEDOM ARMS .252 CASULL

Ammunition	Velocity	50 Yards	100 Yards
Federal High Velocity	1,158 fps	1"	
Federal High Velocity HP	1,108 fps	1.125"	1.750"
Federal Champion	1,048 fps	1.125"	2.0"
Federal Spitfire	1,201 fps	1.250"	
Federal Spitfire HP	1,228 fps	1.375"	
CCI Green Tag	1,007 fps	.875"	1.875"
CCI SGB*	1,083 fps	1.375"	
CCI MiniMag	1,045 fps	1.250"	1.875"
CCI MiniMag +V	1,290 fps	.875"	1.0"
CCI Pistol Match*	1,123 fps	1.0"	1.125"
CCI Stinger	1,356 fps	.875"	2.0"
PMC Zapper	1,126 fps	.750"	1.50"
PMC Match Rifle*	974 fps	.875"	1.250"
Winchester High Velocity	1,009 fps	1.0"	1.750"
Winchester T-22	1,073 fps	.625"	1.0"
Remington Target	1,078 fps	1.250"	
Remington Yellow Jackets	1,286 fps	.875"	

Barrel Length: 10"
 Chronograph: Oehler #35
 Groups: 5 shots measured center-to-center
 *indicates forcefully fit into chambers.

Who could imagine one-inch groups at 100 yards from a revolver? Freedom Arms, that's who!



Author Taffin thinks the .252 Freedom Arms revolver will rewrite the record book for .22 silhouette. It's every bit as accurate as a single-shot "hand-rifle" yet features the nice balance and feel of a single-action revolver. John is shooting the longer 10" version here.

through the frame.

If you have a copy of Keith's *Sixguns*, you will recall a .45 ACP revolver pictured with a shortened cylinder. I had expected the .252 Casull, as the .22 Model is being called, to look strange with its short cylinder. It does not.

The hammer also has four holes drilled completely through the side to help cut weight and improve lock time. The 10-inch barrel is tapered from approximately .780" at the frame to .750" at the muzzle end. All of this adds up to a silhouette pistol that is one ounce under four pounds.

Grips are black micarta that to me are much more attractive than the standard reddish colored grips. The .252, as expected, comes with the famous smooth Freedom Arms action and trigger job resulting in an easy cockin' hammer and a crisp trigger release. The trigger has also been fitted with an adjustable stop.

The excellent competition sights are from Iron Sight Gun Works and consist of a finely adjustable rear sight and a very sharply undercut front post.

As all Freedom Arms revolvers fitted with adjustable sights, the front sight is easily removed, by loosening one Allen screw in the front of the ramp base, and replaced with higher or lower blades.

The rear sight is also removable by loosening two screws and can be replaced with a scope mount base. Freedom Arms



The .252 Casull trigger is skeletonized for a faster lock-time. The hammer drives two firing pins forward for positive ignition of the rimfire case.

can supply either Leupold bases and rings or an SSK T'SOB set up.

The latter is mandatory on the hard-kickin' .454 revolvers but the Leupold outfit is perfectly adequate for the .252 Casull.

Hunting Model

This .22 looks so good that I immediately called Freedom Arms and suggested that the silhouette competition .22 would not be enough and they should offer a hunting model. I should have known that they would be well ahead of me.

A few weeks later I rendezvoused with Bob Baker of Freedom Arms in the San Antonio airport as we both arrived to take part in a handgun hunt. Our good friend Hal Swiggett met us at the airport to make plans with Bob to meet after the hunt and test the first .252 Casull fitted with both a .22 LR and .22 Magnum cylinder. This one has a seven and one-half inch barrel and will be their hunting model.

.252 Test Firing

The weather had been so bad with high winds that my first testing of the .252 Casull was done at 25 yards by tacking a target to a cardboard box and firing by resting my hands on the swing out spare tire of my Bronco.

Freedom Arms had reported one-hole groups at 30 yards on their indoor range and using their excellent machine rest with some brands of ammunition, so I expected pretty good results.

I got excited right now when I saw what this .22 was capable of with iron sights and a less than desirable rest. The

cylinders on the .252 Casull are very tight and Freedom Arms found so much variation in the size of .22 bullets that they decided to make the cylinders tight realizing that all .22's will not fit.

Results at 25 yards were so good that I could not wait to see what could be done at 50 and 100 yards. The Iron Sight Gun Works rear sight was removed, the

Leupold base was inserted into the frame slot on the top of the frame of the .252 Casull, and tightened down and I went to my gun room to select a proper scope.

The task fell to the T/C Contender RP 3x20 as it has a very tiny dot that I felt would aid accurate shooting.

100 Yard Accuracy

I waited and prayed for a day without wind and we got one, the only one in a three week period, and I was immediately out with the Outer's Pistol Perch positioned and targets set up at 50 and 100 yards. Seventeen loads were test-fired at 50 yards and 11 of these were then fired at 100 yards.

There are a very few big game rifles that will shoot into one inch with three shots at 100 yards. Here we have a revolver that will do it with a full cylinder of five shots!

Both Winchester T22's and CCI MiniMag +V's put five shots into one-inch at 100 yards, closely followed by the CCI Pistol Match load at 1.125" and the PMC Match Rifle load at 1.250". Actually, as the chart indicates, there are no bad loads for the .252 Casull and any .22 load would deliver silhouette accuracy.

The next step is to try this .22 in actual silhouette competition. Unfortunately, silhouette competition has shut down for the winter as this is written so that phase of testing will have to wait.

This .22 definitely has "40x40" capability. For more information contact Freedom Arms at 1 Freedom Lane, Dept. AH, Freedom, WY 83120. Phone 307-883-2468.



The trigger includes an over-travel stop, a nice custom touch on a factory gun.



The original founding members of IPSC (from left to right) Lew Sharp, Jim McClary, Ken Hackathorn, Bob Arganbright, match host Dick Thomas, Donald Lockhart, Dr. Albert Pauckner and Rick Miller.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY IPSC

By Dave Anderson
Photos by Nyle Leatham

Columbia, Mo., is an attractive city set amidst farmland and rolling green hills, rated in a national survey as one of the five best places to live in the U.S. For action and practical shooting enthusiasts Columbia is a special place. Here the NRA Action Shooting Championships, better known as the Bianchi Cup, are held each year at the Chapman Academy.

And it was here, during the week of May 24-29, 1976, that the International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) was founded.

Fifteen years later, the Confederation has become one of the most active and influential shooting organizations in the world, with 40 affiliated countries.

The man who arranged the original Columbia conference, Richard Thomas, decided to host a reunion of the founders, with invitations going out also to a few other interested parties. Thus it was that some 75 shooting enthusiasts, mainly from the U.S. but also from countries as far away as Norway and Thailand, con-

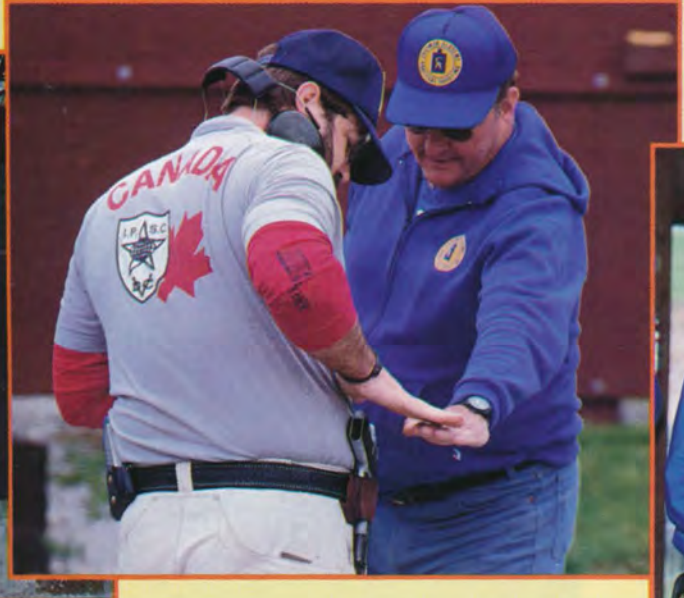
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Bob Arganbright (above) gives a demonstration of the old leatherslap technique of hip shooting. IPSC founder Col. Jeff Cooper (below) gave a moving speech at the banquet. Ed Brown (on right, bottom photo) presents match winner Bill Wilson with his prize gun. Ray Chapman (on right, below left) shows Nick Alexakos the 1976 legal hand position for the draw.

The Columbia Conference of 1976 resulted in the founding of the International Practical Shooting Confederation. This year marked the 15th anniversary of IPSC and a great occasion to bring the original founders back for a nostalgic combat match.







Ichiro Nagata, ace photographer, competed with a Flash Gordon style of revolver he designed and Don Golembieski built. The Shanon 40mm sight is a prototype red dot scope that Ichiro brought from Japan.



A close-up look at the peculiar breed of custom guns specially modified for the rigors of speed shooting at the Steel Challenge.

By Dave Anderson
Photos by Nyle Leatham

STEEL GUNS!



The switch to optical sights is the biggest technological change in action shooting guns since the development of the expansion chamber compensator. At the 1991 Steel Challenge dot sights were everywhere—many of those who stayed with iron sights did so only because they hadn't had enough practice time to feel confident about changing.

Jethro Dionisio shot brilliantly with iron sights, winning four of seven stages, but when I asked him if he would still be using iron sights next year he smiled and replied, "I don't think so."

But building an optically sighted steel gun is not easy. The problem is that shooters want light guns for fast handling on the draw and from target to target. At the same time they want optics with 30mm tubes for a bright picture and fast acquisition of the dot, heavy duty construction, and strong sight bases that will endure many thousands of practice rounds.

Trying to meet these opposing needs is enough to drive a gunsmith batty. The popular Tasco PDP2 Pro-Point with rings weighs just under eight ounces, with the sight base adding from one to four ounces.

Leaving the iron sights off saves an ounce or two, but the rest of the weight reduction has to come from the gun. So all over the country milling machines were whirring and metal shavings falling to the floor as pistolsmiths skeletonized slides, fluted barrels, and manufactured parts from lightweight materials.

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SMOKIN' STEEL!

Jerry "The Burner" Barnhart scorches past everyone at the Steel Challenge with his blistering speed shooting!



By Cameron Hopkins
Photos by Nyle Leatham

There is a razor-thin dividing line between winning and losing in any sport. The thrill of victory, the agony of defeat as Frank Gifford exuberantly exclaims every Sunday afternoon.

We see this edge in the wide receiver who leaps beyond his normal ability, putting his every fiber of energy into one desperate lunge to haul in a Hail Mary pass. We see this edge in the downhill racer who recklessly throws himself into a blinding turn to gain that extra split-second that is the difference between winning and losing. We see this edge in a sprinter, a boxer, a pitcher, a shooter.

Yes a shooter. In the rarified atmosphere of top-flight pistol competition where liter-

ally thousands of dollars ride on the next shot, the need to run on the ragged edge is vital to winning.

The last two IPSC national championships have been settled by less than *one percent* difference in scores between two longtime rivals, Rob Leatham and Jerry Barnhart. The Bianchi Cup is routinely awarded based on tie-breaking X-count. And in the 1991 Steel Challenge, Jerry beat his arch adversary Rob by six-tenths of a second!

This is what sport is all about—an exciting photo finish after a really close race. An athlete pushes himself to the very limit of his endurance and potential,

Team Colt anchorman Jerry Barnhart shot a flawless match, setting a new world record for the "high disaster factor" Outer Limits stage on his way to winning his second World Speed Shooting championship.



In the man-against-man shoot-off (left) Doug Koenig (near) and Jerry Barnhart become a blaze of speed as they dual head-to-head for the \$5,000 cash prize. Jerry won the shoot-off, the only man to ever win both the main match and the shoot-off. The shoot-off began with the shooters sprinting to knock a can off a post (below) reminiscent of the old Flying M stage. Here 1990 champ Jethro Dionisio (right) gets the jump on 1989 champ Angelo Spagnoli.



reaching, stretching. And sometimes he wins and sometimes he loses, but always it's thrilling to see a champion exert himself to the limit.

Jerry Barnhart, the anchor of Team Colt and one of the most respected and well-liked pros on the circuit, danced on the edge at the Steel Challenge and came away \$15,000 ahead and immeasurably richer in experience.

Pace Setter

Jerry set the pace from the beginning in this three-day event that is billed as the Speed Shooting World Championship. He had camped out on Wes Thompson's Lake Piru Range for three weeks prior to the match, practicing 500 rounds a day on

the actual targets and ranges where he would soon capture his second Steel Challenge title.

The practice paid off. Jerry dominated the match from the very beginning, but his pace was sporadic. Some stages he incinerated, living up to his moniker of The Burner for his blistering speed. Other stages he throttled back, coasting around the plates like a driver taking a victory lap.

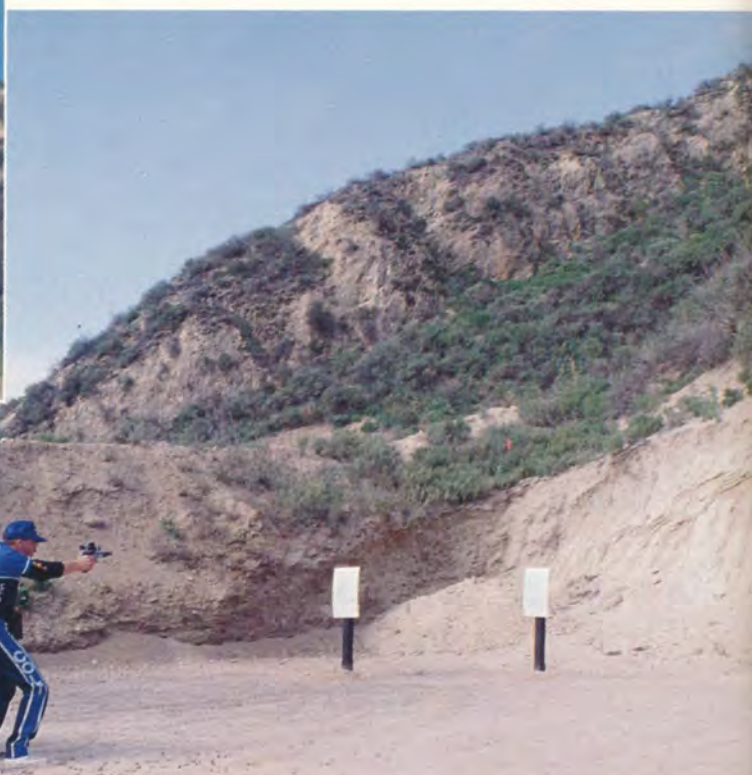
But it was those thrilling five stages when The Burner hammered down the accelerator that everyone will remember

as the day that Jerry Barnhart put it all together.

Record Setting Run

Jerry nearly set a new world record for the treacherously difficult *Five To Go* stage with a smoking time of 11.31. Ironically, the defending Steel Challenge champion, Jethro "The Jet" Dionisio from the Philippines, tied that record-setting time to the hundredth of a second!

Jerry continued to turn up the wick on *Outer Limits*, the stage so appropriately named for its uncanny ability to do weird



Debby James (above) reloads her Colt .38 Super customized by Bill Wilson as an Accu-Comp Super Grade. Rob Leatham (right) shot a Springfield P-9 in 9x21 caliber with a Tasco Pro-Point sight.



things to normal shooters. The 25 and 40 yard targets that make this the most difficult stage of the match are daunting as their shiny white paint gleams downrange, way downrange.

Jerry sizzled *Outer Limits* with a world record setting time of 11.85 for the best four out of five runs. (In the Steel Challenge, every stage has five targets, one being the designated "stop plate," and the shooter makes five runs, scoring only the best four. Total time for the seven stages is added together to determine the winner. A five second penalty is imposed for a missed plate.)

Burning Outer Limits

Now if you've never seen *Outer Lim-*

its before, try to visualize this—two dinner plates sitting on wooden posts 25 yards away, maybe 15 yards between them. Behind the china plates, 40 yards further downrange, are two IPSC-shaped targets, 18"x24" rectangles. In the center of the range is a salad plate at 20 yards. The idea is to draw your pistol on a start signal and hit each plate once with the salad plate being shot last. The others can be shot in any order at your discretion.

The Burner fried those plates on his best run in an unbelievable 2.67 seconds! *Outer Limits* in two-point-six-seven! That's called running on the edge.

It was literally and not just figuratively running on the edge. When the smoke cleared on that phenomenal run, Chief

Range Officer Mike Higashi wasn't sure that the fourth plate, the right-hand 25 yarder, was hit. If it was a miss, Jerry would suffer the mandatory five second penalty for a missed target. Needless to say, in a game that is measured in hundredths of a second, eating a penalty of five Big Ones is disastrous.

Running On The Edge

The Range Officer marched solemnly downrange and carefully inspected the steel disk. The crowd let out a cheer when he smiled back at the audience and gave thumbs up signal. Jerry's 115 grain Hornady XTP bullet had quite literally hit the edge of the plate, splitting the bullet in two and leaving only half a



Range officer Jeff Nelson bends down to verify Jerry Barnhart's clutch hit at 7 o'clock. The plates are freshly painted for each shooter for just this very purpose of insuring the shooter gets credit for even edger hits.



bullet strike.

But a hit is a hit in the Steel Challenge and an edger counts just the same as a savage hit.

Talk about concentration, Jerry said that he *saw* the bullet ricochet off the edge of the plate. "I saw the red dot was splitting the top edge of the plate, but I was confident of the gun's accuracy so I went ahead and broke the shot. As I was moving off the plate, I actually saw a piece of bullet jacket go straight up off the edge of the plate. I knew I had the hit," said the 31-year-old shooter who revolutionized practical shooting a year ago when he introduced the electronic sight.

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Ladies of the STEEL CHALLENGE

By Dave Anderson

ed, that those days are gone forever. Judy won the ladies' championship with a time of 87.05 seconds, and in the process she became (1) the first woman to shoot a Master class score at the Challenge, (2) the first woman to repeat as champion, and (3) the first person, male or female, to win consecutive championships.

In a field of some 250 shooters only 30 shot a better score than the Team Smith & Wesson lady from Montana.

Despite facing strong competition (including 1989 champion Shirley Hamilton and IPSC U.S. and World champion Debby James) Judy took command right from day one and kept building her lead through the seven

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Does anyone remember the early days of action and practical shooting competition, when there might be two or three women competitors in a match and the Top Ladies' score would be 30 or 40% of the winning score? Judy Woolley's brilliant shooting performance at the 1991 Steel Challenge served as a reminder, if any were need-

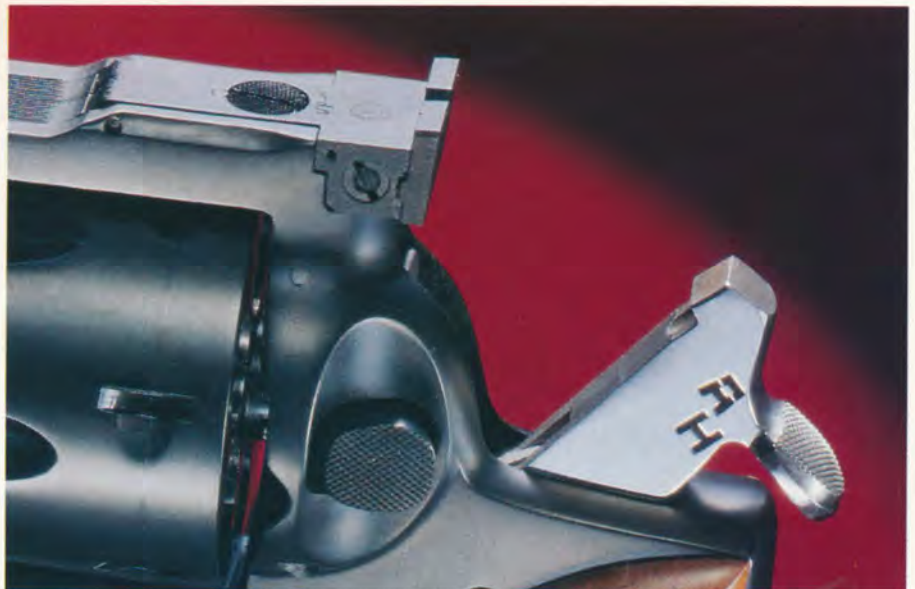
Ruger Redhawk MercComp

The amazing story of how pistolsmith Kent Miller tames the recoil of a .44 Magnum and transforms the Redhawk into a precision instrument that outshoots many rifles!

By Cameron Hopkins
Photos by Ichiro Nagata







When Kent Miller's exotic conversion of a Ruger Redhawk .44 Magnum moved into my house, there was a lot of grumbling from the neighbors. The beautifully reworked Redhawk took up a scenic spot on the fourth shelf of my gunsafe with a breathtaking view overlooking the rifle rack.

The first to grouse was an old Winchester Model 70. "Look, this Ruger kid has got a lot of nerve. Moves into the neighborhood and starts shooting better groups than me! I'm a darn rifle, for goshsakes, and I don't take kindly to any upstart wheelgun out-shooting me!"

Then one of the ritzy neighbors in the high-rent district, an expensive Freedom Arms .454 Casull named Thurston, start-

ed griping: "We are charmed to make the acquaintance of our distinguished new neighbor, Mr. Ruger, however we do wish he wouldn't be so... so... ostentatious! Those 100 yards groups really should be reserved for guns of my refined upbringing, not some... some... *nouveau riche* revolver!"

Being a conscientious landlord, I did my best to settle the dispute over Kent Miller's custom Ruger as calmly and as quickly as possible. I called a town meeting to discuss the situation with all the neighbors in the gunsafe. This is what I said:

"Thank you for sharing your feelings about Mr. Ruger on the fourth shelf. I know we want to live in harmony together, so in the interest of preserving the peace, let me explain that some things have changed since many of you were first cut and rifled.

"Mr. Winchester has indignantly complained that some upstart wheelgun is shooting better groups at 100 yards than he is capable. This is true.

"The Kent Miller custom Redhawk, living at .44 Magnum Avenue, is turning in some phenomenal performances at the range. Just last weekend he produced an incredible 1.42" three-shot group at 100 yards— not 50— while I regretfully recall that the best Mr. Winchester could manage, in his 7x57 Mauser attire, was a modest 1.75".

"Ladies and gentlemen, you need to banish these stereotypes you



Note the immaculate fit of the Bo-Mar sight (top right) into the frame and the handmade cylinder release button. The 50 lpi checkering on the backstrap (below left) is flawless.

have about handguns— especially revolvers— as being basically inaccurate. Fifty yard guns, you scoff. Paint-can accuracy, you jeer. Well, I'm afraid not.

"It wasn't so very long ago that many of you long guns begrudgingly admitted that the Freedom Arms .454 Casull was an exceptional breed of revolver that could, under certain conditions, shoot as well as an average rifle. You put this down to some fluke, some peculiarity of the Freedom Arms gun.

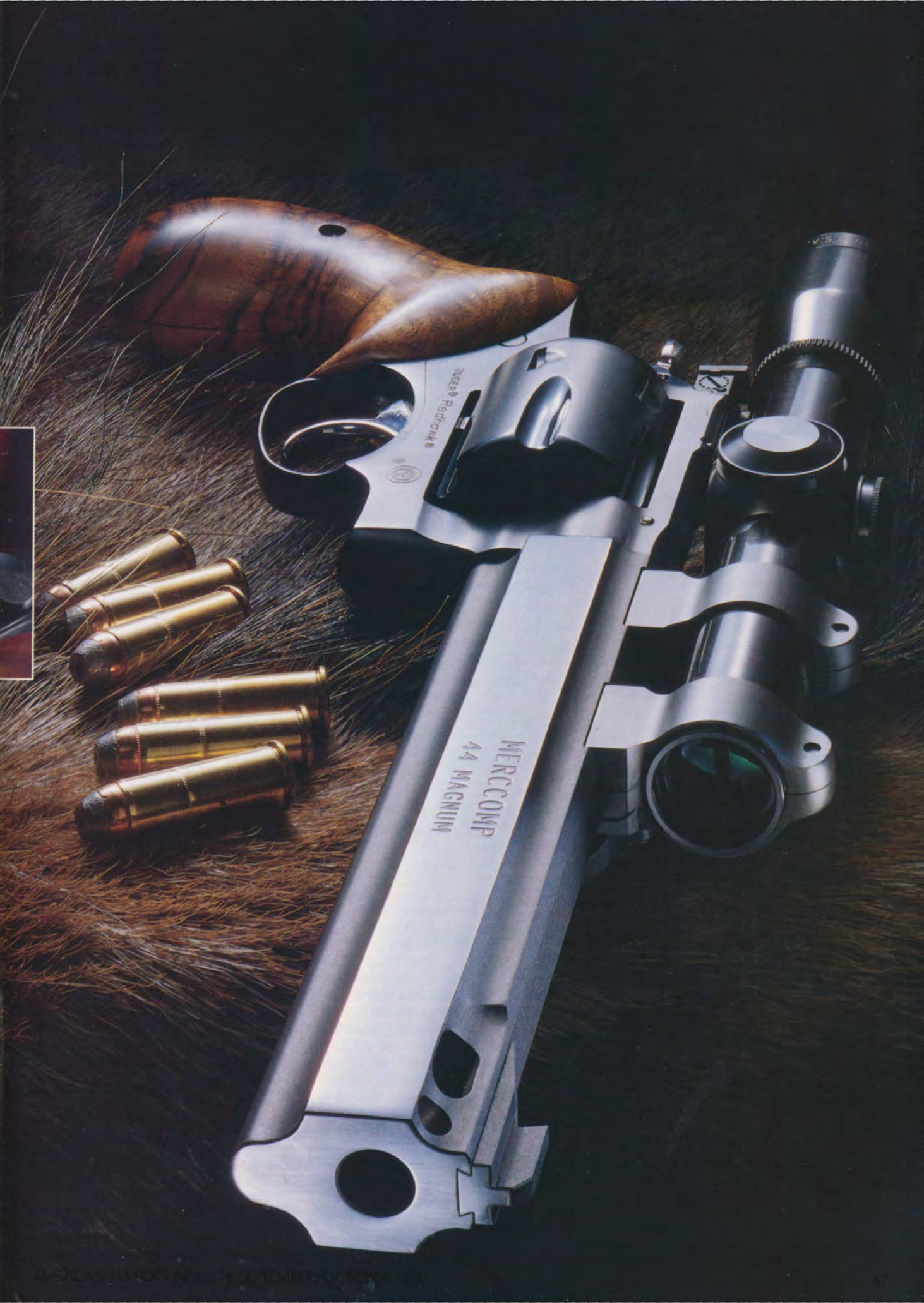
"What with line boring the cylinder, hand-fitting the barrel and precision-machining the frame, you dismissed the Freedom Arms gun as an exception to the rule.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, I submit that you have now seen that such outstanding accuracy and performance is possible even in a Ruger Redhawk... providing of course that Mr. Kent Miller of Illinois works his magic."

The Miller Miracle

Kent Miller, 38, resides in the sleepy hamlet of Clinton, Ill., population 7,500, in the same house he bought in 1972 after





UMC
Remington

MERCOCOMP
44 MAGNUM



The Miller MercComp incorporates a mercury filled underlug and a dual port compensator. The system is astonishingly effective at dampening felt recoil. Note the tasteful installation of the handmade front sight in a precise dovetail cut. We test fired the Miller Redhawk (right) at a southern California range with AH reader Scott Sturm.

he married his high school sweetheart, Linda. There in the heartland of America, Kent lives according to the very essence of the American work ethic— always strive to produce the very best.

Kent's deep pride in his work is evident in the exceptional conversion he performed on the .44 Magnum Ruger Redhawk you see here. From the precisely handfitted action to the intricately machined barrel, the Miller custom Redhawk is a stunning example of the gunsmith's art.

It is also a phenomenally accurate revolver, as a near-riot in the gunsafe showed.

In a solitary one-man shop, Kent works with his hands and a few rudimentary machines. "Most of the big name gunsmiths would laugh at my equipment," Kent gaily admits, "I have pretty basic stuff, none of those fancy mills and lathes. But I tell you what, you sure learn how to machine with this little one-third-horse mill!"

Primitive tools or not, the Miller MercComp conversion of a Ruger Redhawk shoots. A dinky lathe with a cheesy milling attachment may be from Metal Shop 101, but Kent nevertheless produces a gun that features very sophisticated and detailed fitting.

The workmanship is only half the



story, however. Let's talk about the amazing accuracy first.

Secret To Accuracy

There is really no secret to an accurate revolver— start with premium components and fit them right. This is the formula that Freedom Arms has so successfully bartered into its enviable reputation of making the "world's finest single-action."

If that's true— and it is— then Kent may be making the world's finest double-action revolver because the methods are virtually identical. Kent begins his MercComp conversion of a Redhawk with a .41 Magnum straight from a black and gold Ruger box.

That's right, forty-one not forty-four. By starting with the next smallest size, Kent is able to line-bore the cylinder's six chambers in precise alignment with the

barrel, just like Freedom Arms.

"I make up a sleeve that screws into the frame with a four-jaw chuck," Kent explained, "and then I bore a hole through the center of that with the same reamer I'll use on the cylinder, .4295". Then I set it up in a vise, cock the gun and brace the cylinder so it won't move.

"This lines the cylinder up so it would be in the same position it would be when you pull the trigger. Then I simply reamed the chamber throats by hand.

"The chambers are already bigger than a .44 Magnum throat, so then I come in from the back. The pilot for the chambering reamer comes into the throat hole I just reamed, so if the original chamber was out of line, I would still be reaming a new hole in line with the throats."

This is line boring— the procedure of exactly aligning the cylinder's chambers with the bore. It is one of the secrets to accuracy in a revolver. Kent line bores by hand, turning the throat reamer and chamber reamer slowly, meticulously, one revolution at a time. A few thousandths of metal whisks away with each methodical

turn of the reamer. Slow but very sure.

By way of comparison, the throats in Kent's custom cylinder measure .4295" while the throats in a stock Ruger Super Blackhawk that I measured are .433".

Another trick of the accuracy trade is setting the timing of the cylinder's lock-up. The cylinder needs to snap into position with the finality and sureness of a bank vault door slamming shut. Not too soon, not too late, but just at the right time to align the chamber with the bore just as the hammer clicks back. This is also a hand-fitting job of finesse that Kent performs with a practiced eye.

In conjunction with setting the timing, Kent also performs a beautiful action job. He hones the double-action stroke down to a crisp, smooth 10 pounds and coaxes the single-action trigger to break at a sensible 3½ pounds.

A cleverly installed over-travel screw

MEET KENT MILLER

By Cameron Hopkins



Kent Miller holding up the 2.5" Krieger barrel blank that became the slab sided beauty it is now after Kent went to work making steel chips. The pile is everything that didn't look like a barrel!



Kent Miller wrote a five page type-written letter that arrived with the Redhawk MercComp which, when you get right down to it, basically explained all the goofs on the gun.

That says a lot about Kent— unpretentious, humble, honest. He is the first to admit his mistakes, insignificantly trivial though they may be, and the last to brag about his accomplishments. He was more concerned with letting me know what was wrong with the gun than what was right with it.

You can say what you will about the shift in our society that has blurred traditional American values, but the fact remains that a man with a high sense of

personal ethics and morals is a man you can trust and respect. Kent Miller is such a man.

Kent grew up in the heartland of America where he learned at his father's knee to take pride in working hard and doing your best. When asked how he learned to create such exceptional custom guns, Kent was quick to credit his father's influence: "I inherited it from my dad. He was an engineer on the railroad, but he also makes really beautiful furniture. He has an eye for detail in working with his hands."

Kent's father introduced him to guns at an early age. "When I was a kid I was real interested in guns," the soft-spoken

gunsmith reminisced, "My dad let me reload when I was 10. By the time I was 12, I had all the ballistic charts from Remington and Winchester memorized. I could tell you the velocity and muzzle energy of just about anything out there!"

His first "gun" was a Sheridan air rifle, but Kent quickly graduated to the real thing when an uncle took him rabbit shooting with a .22 rifle. From there he graduated to plinking at the city dump and before you know it young Kent had his first gun of his very own. Then as now, he got it the old fashioned way—he earned it.

"My first gun was purchased with

Continued on page 92

prevents the trigger from snapping past the point where the hammer falls. This aids in a good follow-through, a key to accuracy.

The over-travel screw incorporates a tiny piece of plastic tubing so that a "staged pull" can be achieved by substituting a longer piece of tubing. You just compress the plastic for the last millimeters of travel to get the "staged pull" that double-action PPC shooters prefer. Our test sample did not include this feature.

Krieger Barrel

Kent was unfamiliar with Krieger barrels when I suggested he use one for the Ruger MercComp, but he's a believer now! John Krieger of Germantown, Wis., makes his record-setting premium barrels in the most time consuming, old fashioned method possible. But, mercy, those

"out dated" Krieger barrels do shoot!

John cut-rifles his specially selected 416R stainless steel barrel blanks with a single-point cutter, which is the oldest and slowest method of rifling. John's custom-ground cutter removes one-tenth of a groove per pass through the gun-drilled barrel, so if the blank is a six-groove barrel like this .44 Magnum used by Kent Miller, then the cutter makes 60 passes.

Contrast this to a button-rifled barrel that makes one pass.

The machinery in Krieger's shop was originally designed to manufacture barrels for the military, but with John's retrofitting of custom tooling and fixtures, the machinery has gone from holding a sloppy Mil-Spec tolerance of .002" to adhering to the Krieger standard of .0001". That's *one-ten thousandth's* of an inch!

After laboriously cut-rifling the barrel,

the Krieger blank is then hand-lapped to align the finish with the direction of the bullet's travel.

"Lapping does not remove any material— well, it's non-measurable— but what it does is to get the lay of the finish. All finishes have a direction to them. If you look at a finish from a milling machine, you'll have circles; if you use a surface grinder, you'll have straight lines. With our barrels, we line the finish up with the direction of the bullet travel. That's all the lapping is for— to make sure the lands and grooves are laid in the right direction," John explained.

"You look at the reaming marks in a button-rifled barrel. You won't see any in a cut-rifled barrel that's been lapped," John concluded.

Kent took one look at the polished

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The AYOOB FILES

DAY OF THE TERMINATOR: THE CHANEY /LAWRENCE INCIDENT

Situation: Supercharged by drugs, the unstoppable copkiller takes bullet after bullet and keeps coming.

Lesson: Never surrender! Keep shooting... even after a point-blank head shot fails to drop a nightmare attacker .

August 1, 1977. The pretty young rookie cop and her field training officer leave the Broadmoor District Station of the Baton Rouge, La., police department to begin their day of patrol. Things look routine. But the tour will end abruptly— savagely, for one, and for the other, life itself will end the same way.

The pair's first call of the day was a suspected burglary in one of the townhouse apartments at the Broadmoor Plantation complex. They had to park five buildings down and walk to the one where the complainant, a white female, waited for them.

Officer Steve Chaney unsnapped his holster as he entered. He had seen only a couple of scratches on the door by the lock, but the lock was still secure. Checking out houses for nervous citizens was something they did all the time. The downstairs was empty. So was the upstairs, except...

One bedroom door was closed. None of the others were. Ready to draw, Chaney snapped it open. It was shoved back in his face. Chaney kicked it inward.

All he could tell was that he was facing a male Caucasian. What he couldn't know was that John James Mullery, 42, had a long criminal history that ranged from assault to kidnapping, with emphasis on the physical abuse of women. Chaney assumed he was a burglar.

He was wrong. Mullery was the boyfriend of the woman who owned the apartment. He had come to lie in wait and murder her today. He had prepared for that "big moment." Investigators would conclude later that he was heavily under the influence of PCP and cocaine, and that this would play a significant role in the nightmare that was to follow.

Mullery jumped at Chaney. The average-size cop stiff-armed him backward, and the assault he braced for didn't happen. Instead, Mullery began screaming hysterically. "Shoot me," he screeched. "Get it over with! Shoot me!"

"We're not here to shoot anybody," Chaney replied, explaining that they were there to just get things sorted out.

Suddenly, Mullery's rage passed as quickly as it had come, and it seemed to the lead officer that the man had mellowed out, and it was going to be okay now. Chaney reached down and fastened the snap on his holster.

And it happened then, with lightning suddenness.

Gun Grab! Gun Grab!

Mullery lunged for the gun on Chaney's right hip. The officer had made a point of wearing a holster with top reputation, but the attackers left hand grabbed the stocks and wrenched so violently that the weapon came free.

Chaney instinctively dropped his own right hand to protect the Smith & Wesson Model 64, but the gun was already coming out of the holster. Steve closed his right hand on the cylinder.

The struggle was on. Mullery had control of the grips and the trigger, and with superhuman

Continued on page 72

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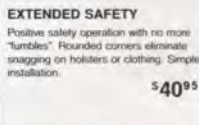
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Continued from page 70

strength, thrust the gun at the officer and tried to fire. But Chaney was deliberately clutching the cylinder tight, full force, preventing it from rotating and allowing a round to fire.

Rookie Officer Linda Alsobrook Lawrence, age 30, had now drawn her identical four-inch S&W, and came up in an Isosceles firing stance.

Chaney would say later that in their two weeks on the street together, "We had talked about that kind of situation. The plan was for her to stay back where she could see what was happening, and if I couldn't gain control of the gun, she would fire. I realized I wasn't going to be able to control my gun. That's when I told her, 'Go ahead and shoot him!'"

As he gave the command, Chaney jerked his arm upward, raising the attacker's arm also.

Linda Lawrence fired.

Feeble .38 Special

She was behind Chaney and slightly to the side, and the concussion of her shot slapped into her partner. Chaney saw the bullet enter the inside of the gunman's forearm near the wrist. The effect of the hollowpoint was dynamic.

Chaney was sprayed with blood and hamburger-like fragments of flesh. He would be told later that the force of the bullet "had torn loose all the muscles in (Mullery's) forearm."

But .38 Special ballistics don't always beat the effects of narcotics. The man's grip did not lessen. The 6' 0", 199 pound attacker held on as if his hand was a steel band.

It had gone from bad to worse. The same spray of blood and gore that had splattered Chaney had spurted between the officer's hand and the gun. Slick now with blood, he felt the cylinder turn even though he held it with all his might.

Mullery fired two shots.

Chaney was able to keep the gun away from himself and the bullets tore into a nearby wall. Instinctively, Chaney reached down with his left hand and grabbed the muzzle of his revolver, and he ripped up and out with all the power he could muster.

He had unknowingly rediscovered a classic baton retention technique from the Japanese martial art of *Kendo*.

Pulling himself away, Chaney turned the weapon and fed it into his right hand, taking a Weaver stance as best he could. He fired two shots.

Both .38 Special hollowpoints struck Mullery square in the chest.

But he didn't go down.

The Terminator

Instead, he turned, and lunged at Linda Lawrence. The back of his right

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hand smashed into the back of hers, deflecting the gun, and Chaney— unable to shoot without hitting his partner at that moment— saw the criminal's hand describe a circle, and suddenly Linda's service revolver was in Mullery's hand instead of hers, and immediately, he fired the .38 once into the center of her chest.

Linda had jumped onto a bed to get a better firing angle when she shot Mullery in the arm. That was where she was, eight to 10 feet away, when he jumped her for the gun. And that was where she fell instantly, motionless.

To Chaney, it seemed that the man had travelled the three yards distance, disarmed his partner, and fired "in the time it takes you to bat your eye."

Unstoppable Beast

Unable to fire without hitting Linda, Steve had bravely lunged forward as the shot was fired. Then, Linda's gun in his right hand, the enraged and bleeding Mullery wheeled on Steve.

The officer's onrushing momentum made them collide. Mullery grabbed the gun in Steve's hand, and Steve grabbed the one in Mullery's. The officer consciously wedged his left little finger behind the trigger of Lawrence's S&W, blocking it against the enormous pressure as the attacker struggled to fire.

Mullery had the superhuman strength, but for the first time, Chaney had the leverage. He managed to rip both revolvers out of the madman's hands, and turning away, threw himself to the floor.

On his hands and knees, Chaney did something that later critics would wonder at, even call bizarre, but which those of us who study real-life struggles for guns see with surprising frequency.

On his hands and knees on the carpet of the bedroom, Chaney fired one gun in each hand as rapidly as he could, *into the floor*. He emptied Lawrence's gun completely as Mullery beat on his shoulders and back of his head. He fired one shot from his own, leaving a single live round in the cylinder.

With his left hand, Chaney tried desperately to throw his partner's empty .38 out the window with his left hand. Just as he began the movement, Mullery hit him, and deflected his aim. The revolver bounced off the edge of the window frame and landed on the floor.

Mullery was swarming over him now. Chaney's left hand came near the attacker's face, trying to push him back, and the crazed attacker bit down on the cop's finger.

The endorphins released by the fight or flight response killed the pain. To the battered lawman, it was almost a respite. He remembers thinking, "Go ahead, chew on that for a minute."

Someone had told Chaney that it was important for bullets to strike bone if they were to have stopping effect. He thought that perhaps the reason the man was still going with two holes in the kill zone and

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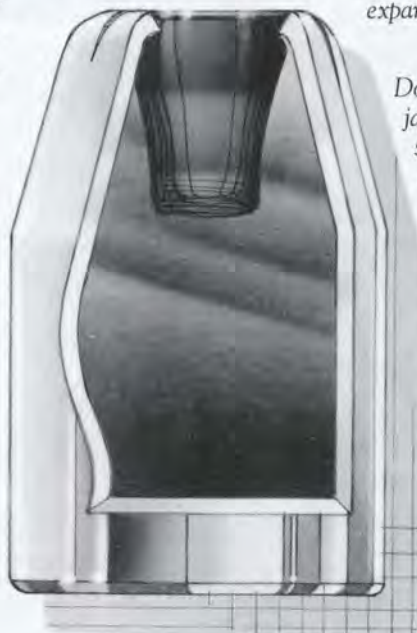
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one in the arm was that no bones had been hit yet.

Deliberately, Steve Chaney probed the muzzle of his gun against Mullery's left side until he found a rib. He pressed the gun against the bone, and fired at muzzle contact distance.

Mullery opened his mouth and released Chaney's hand. He said to him, in a low growl, "Oooh. You got me a good one that time."

And then he lifted the officer up bodily, and threw him across the room.

The Golem

Talmudic scholars speak of the demonic Golem, a symbolically mythical creature at once subhuman and superhuman, totally evil, and totally unstoppable in its orgy of human destruction. John Mullery had become the Golem.

He had taken four severe gunshot wounds now, three potentially fatal, but he had thrown the cop eight or 10 feet across the room like a child tossing a teddy bear. Chaney smashed painfully into a bureau.

Like most people in such encounters, he had lost count of his rounds. He brought his gun up in a two-hand Weaver stance, levelled the sights and stroked the trigger.

Click, click, click...

Some sage described the sound of your gun going "click" when you were in danger, as the loudest in the world. It was distinctly audible to the Baton Rouge cop. Unbelieving, he clicked several times before he accepted that the only gun he had left was empty.

The gun was empty, but it was still blunt and hard. Chaney lunged forward at Mullery, pistol whipping him on the head. The gun glanced off without creating any stunning blunt trauma to the brain. Chaney beat him with the gun until his arm felt so heavy and tired he couldn't raise it any more. It wasn't working.

Time for plan B. Time for more bullets.

Mullery was still coming. Chaney managed to knock him down as he ran across the room. He wedged himself in a corner to protect his gun, shielding it by turning his back to Mullery, as he reloaded.

Baton Rouge at that time did not issue quickloaders, but Chaney was a serious competitive shooter and had seen on the range how much faster they were than other revolver ammo systems. It was a privately purchased Dade speedloader that he drew from his belt to recharge the weapon.

But it wasn't like a range reload. Mullery was behind him, and he had accessed his own weapons now. He hammered savagely at the officer's back and shoulders with a tire iron, and then amidst the impacts Chaney felt and unspeakable, piercing pain that almost drove his consciousness from his body.

Shortly after the incident, Chaney would remark softly, "That's where we found the tire iron and the knife. I guess it must have been then that he stabbed me

in the back."

Badly wounded, Chaney closed the cylinder as he ducked down and shoved the Smith & Wesson almost blindly under his left arm. He then fired one of the only two shots of the fight he would trigger one handed.

With his head ducked down, he could see the bullet tear its way into the area of John Mullery's solar plexus.

The attacker jerked backward. Chaney spun to face him and grabbed him by a forelock of hair, jerking the psycho's head forward and down.

Chaney brought his gun up and, at near contact distance, shot Mullery through the top of the head.

He looked down at the wound as the man collapsed. He saw what appeared to be a hole through the head. He let Mullery fall.

It was over. It had to be over now.

God, He's Still Alive!

He staggered across the room to a dresser, and leaned against it to breathe. He glanced over at the man who had nearly killed him.

Mullery was getting up again.

Steve Chaney refused to succumb to the horror. As John Mullery rose, dripping with blood, still ready to kill, the officer grabbed his gun firmly in a two-hand hold, went to Weaver, indexed the weapon, and opened fire.

Two more shots slammed into Mullery's chest. Nothing.

Another shot ripped into his abdomen. Nothing.

Chaney had one bullet left in the gun. He fired. The bullet smashed into Mullery's pelvis, breaking the hip.

The Golem went down at last.

The Bloody Finish

Chaney reloaded again, with his last speedloader, his last six rounds. He covered the downed man. He seemed still down.

With the death battle over, Chaney's first thought was his rookie partner. She lay still on the bed. Chaney scooped her up in his arms, turned to carry her out.

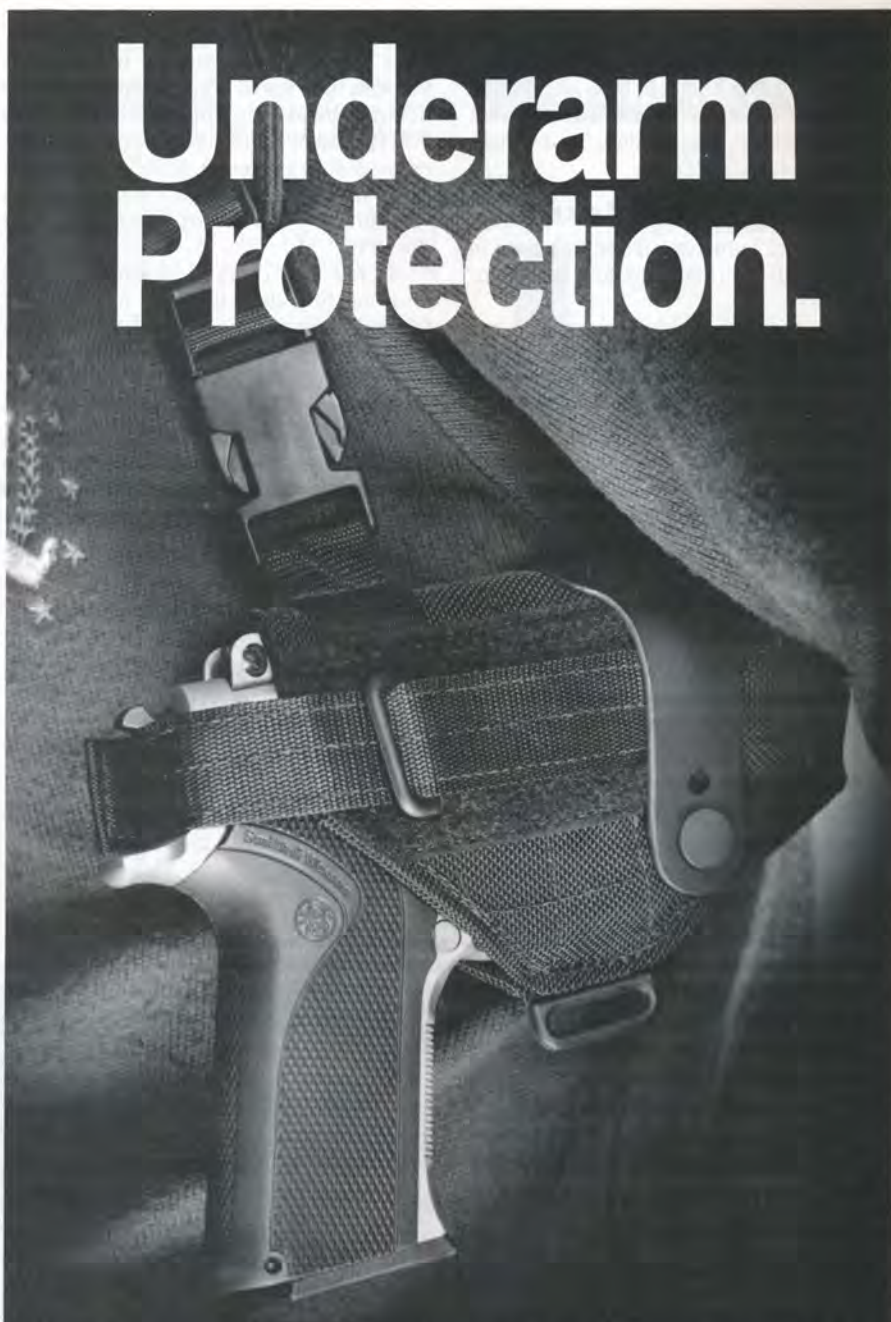
John Mullery had crawled to the door.

Chaney set Linda gently on the bed. Nearing collapse, he dragged his antagonist away from the door. "How much blood is there in a human body," Chaney would muse quietly later. "Five quarts or something? He must have lost nearly all his blood. The carpet was soggy with it. When you walked across the floor, his blood would ooze up around your feet."

He dumped the still-living man away from the door, and staggered back to the bed. He tried to lift Linda again, and he couldn't. His own wounds and his exhaustion had finally spent his strength.

He looked at her helplessly, and in the last terrible moment, realized the truth, even as the unnatural thing on the floor behind him finally ran out of blood and died.

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The bullet John Mullery had fired had struck her in the heart. Linda Lawrence, four months on the job, was dead. She was the first female police officer to be murdered in the line of duty in the state of Louisiana.

Stopping Power Lesson

There are numerous learning points in this tragedy. We'll take them in no particular order.

Stopping Power. My sources tell me the round used in both police weapons involved was a popular brand of 125 grain semijacketed +P .38 Special hollowpoint.

That same round, loaded at .357 Mag-

num velocity of roughly 1,400 fps, is perhaps the most devastating manstopper you can feed into a conventional police or defense handgun. But weakened to the 900 fps range in +P .38 Special, its history as a street stopper has been "Sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't." This was largely a case of "Sometimes it doesn't."

There was dynamic tissue damage with the first shot, the only one fired by Linda Lawrence, but adrenaline and drug rage overcame the damage to the extremity and slowed John Mullery little if at all.

Dynamic hits in the body cavity triggered no cessation of hostility. Lawrence, however, was killed instantly by a single

identical .38 bullet through the heart.

Firepower. Some say that "firepower" is a meaningless term in handgun technology. Bullshit.

"Firepower" means who can throw the most projectiles fastest and most accurately, and is a relative term depending whether it's used to discuss the street or the battlefield.

Tell Steve Chaney that more firepower and more potent guns would not have been good things for him to have at his fingertips on August 1, 1977.

As it was, the speedloaders— crude technology compared to the semiautomatic pistols of today's police establishment— almost certainly saved his life. A second loaded handgun that could have been accessed instantly might also have ended the encounter sooner and with less innocent bloodshed.

Tactical Matters. Baton Rouge PD did not give out portable radios to patrol officers until after the Lawrence tragedy. Quickly summoned backup might have made a difference.

As it was, Steve and Linda, and then just Steve, were alone to face the horror until, after realizing that his partner and the copkiller were both dead, Steve was able to drag himself to an apartment telephone to call headquarters.

Concealable body armor had been available for some six years before this incident, but the feeling in that part of the

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country was that it was too hot and cumbersome, and neither officer was wearing it. The cheapest \$100 vest would have easily defeated the bullet that killed Linda Lawrence. But neither officer was wearing armor.

At the time of this shooting, the first truly effective system of weapon retention techniques was just being field tested by Jim Lindell in Kansas City. Today, Lindell-trained officers would easily use leverage techniques to defeat the multiple gun-grabs that Mullery was able to perform against Lawrence and Chaney, neither of whom had yet been trained in the discipline.

Do not take this as a history lesson. In the year 1991, as I write this, a very prestigious department in the Northeast has recently made much of issuing all its cops high-capacity semi-automatic 9mm's. The same agency issues neither vests nor portable radios.

In 1977, Baton Rouge like the rest of the police mainstream was armed with the conventional revolver, no manual safety, point gun and pull trigger.

Consider if Linda Lawrence could have thumbed her gun "on safe," or pressed the mag release and activated the disconnecter safety that would have kept a standard S&W autoloader from firing. Or if Steve Chaney could have done the same at the opening of the encounter.

We are continually told that cops are

too stupid to release their safeties. Excuse me?

Steve Chaney was smart enough to lock a cylinder, block a trigger, and reinvent an arcane martial arts disarm during this deadly fight.

No one has yet shown me a case of a cop who got shot because he didn't get his or her safety off, and I've challenged them publicly to do so (count this as one more).

But cases of cops saved by these features are legion. As I write this article, a fresh one is on my desk: they got the guard's gun away, it didn't go off when they tried to shoot him, so they beat him and left him alive because they couldn't find the safety.

Early Warnings

The subtleties of the disciplines known as "Pre-Assaultive Behavior Cues" and "Verbal Crisis Intervention" were known only to a handful of police psychologists at the time of the incident, and even today are not widely taught.

It is understandable that the two officers missed at least two terrifying red flags, when there was still time to shut the thing off.

First, Mullery opened the encounter by screaming his wish for the officers to kill him. To the untrained, that sounds suicidal, and we are all conditioned to respond to suicide with help and succor,

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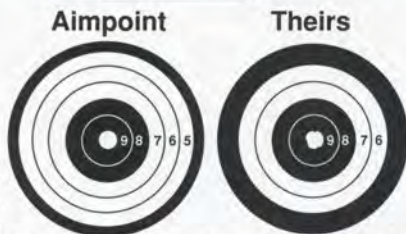


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not preparedness to fight.

But the man who is suicidal has just expressed the intent to cause the taking of human life. He is, by definition, *homicidal!*

The inner directed homicidal impulse may quickly outer-direct, and those who tried to be his understanding rescuers are likely to become his first victims.

But, because the police establishment didn't teach this then (and seldom does today), it is understandable that Chaney de-escalated at that point by snapping his gun into the holster.

Today, a highly trained officer would create more distance at that point, and be more rather than less prepared for a sudden lethal assault that might require him or her to shoot in proper defense.

Second, note that Mullery began the encounter with wild hysteria, and suddenly became unnaturally calm. This tricked the officers into thinking, as Chaney would say later, that “He was mellowing out.”

No! Very often, this sudden mood swing from fierce aggression to suspiciously sweet compliance is a phenomenon you might call “The calm in the eye of the storm.”

It is quite likely *not* to mean that everything is copesetic now, but to mean instead that what the opponent is really saying is, “I have gone beyond words. I will quiet down now and lull my antagonists into deadly complacency. My anger will resolve now, not into words, but into physical *action!*”

Note that the Baton Rouge officers were attacked at exactly this point.

This does not mean that when a man calms down, you shoot him. It means, like the suicidal behavior cue, that you should extend your distance to give yourself a more favorable reactionary gap, and be prepared to properly and instantly apply countervailing force to restrain what may very well now be imminent threat.

This will come as news to many officers today. Scant wonder we cannot blame two cops in 1977 for failing to recognize it.

Self-Training Factor

If the people who issue your guns and give you your training don't give you everything, get the rest yourself. Chaney had not only bought his own speedloaders; he became an award-winning shooter on his own time.

Some advisors say competition training will get you killed on the street. My research shows the exact opposite: those who have fired in the psychogenically-stressed heat of competition tend as a rule to do far better when the real gunfight comes later.

Note that Chaney fired nine shots and scored nine solid hits, seven of them from the two-handed hold he had trained with, and under almost unbelievable stress.

Don't trust the theories of those who often have never shot in a match or in a fight. The documentable reality of the street is that shooting under match pressure off-duty makes you shoot better under deadly pressure for real, and Chaney is but one more in a long line who've proved it.

Failure to Properly Utilize Partner. Partners are equals, and should share burdens. The plan that had Linda Lawrence set back out of harm's way was not the most sound. Today's officer with a highly trained department, but in Linda's position, would choke out the aggressor as soon as the assault on Steve began. But this is now, and that was then.

Consider, too, that the relationship of the rookie to the field training officer is not one of equal partners, but rather, one of child to parent, ward to guardian.

This is irrespective of gender. It was natural and understandable that Chaney, only two weeks on with a rookie just four months on the job at all, would want the junior back away, and the senior in where the decisions had to be made lightning fast.

If armed citizens learn anything from the tragedy, it might be this: *The typical pattern of an armed couple is trained male, inexperienced female. Train your partner the way you want to be trained.*

Chaney was in the process of trying to do just that when this nightmare took place.

Shot Placement

I've taught for years with the videotape Chaney did for the Huntington Police Department about this incident. A question that always comes up is, "Why did Linda shoot for the arm with that potentially decisive first round?"

We don't know. Perhaps she aimed somewhere else and missed. We know that in gun encounters, people focus their eyes on the opponent's gun, and where the head goes, the body—and the bullets—will follow. That could have been a factor here.

Chaney had jerked the man's arm up as he gave the command to fire. Perhaps Lawrence interpreted this as a body language signal to shoot for the arm. Or, perhaps, the selection and training process had left her out there subconsciously incapable of taking a human life, and she intentionally shot to wound. *We don't know.*

In the safe clarity of 20/20 hindsight, a pelvic hit would have dropped him, a torso hit might at least have done better than the arm hit... and a bullet through the ear would have done it all.

The head is the most distant part of the offender's body when he and the good guy are struggling for a gun, and when the man is tunneled on your partner, he's unlikely to see your gun muzzle in time to duck.

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the brain, and is an opening that seems to guide the bullet inside the cranial vault when fired from the side, helping to guarantee a destruction of primal brain that

If shots to center of mass and other areas have not worked, shatter the pelvis and immobilize the body of the beast.

shuts off the organism like a light switch.

Chaney had the right idea when he shoved his gun into Mullery's side, but someone steered him wrong with the "shoot the bones" stuff. Unless you're talking about breaking the hip, it's not terribly relevant.

How many of use have had broken ribs and not even bothered with the beltwrap? Ribs are not immediately vital.

The muzzle blast of a gun, even a .38, tears soft tissue apart. A muzzle contact .357 wound looks like a near-contact 12-gauge slug wound—if it strikes soft tissue, where the violently expanding muzzle gases can tear underlying flesh apart.

Half an inch down, with the muzzle in an intercostal space between the ribs, Chaney's shot would have blown out the spleen and hemorrhaged Mullery out much faster.

But the rib actually shielded Mullery's body from the muzzle blast, turning what could have been an explosive contact wound into merely another tunnel through tissue, with the muzzle blast spent blowing a stellite flesh wound out of the skin above the rib.

If you must dig your revolver muzzle into your antagonist to shoot, the autopsies combined with the after action reports teach us to seek a *soft* vital target, not a hard one.

Autopsy Results

John James Mullery was shot 10 times before he finally went down for the count. It is useful to note the location, and the order, of those 10 direct hits with .38 Special bullets.

#1: Forearm near wrist. #2: Chest. #3: Chest. #4: Left side of thorax near spleen, muzzle contact. #5: Center mass, near diaphragm, near contact. #6: Top of head, near contact. #7: Chest. #8: Chest. #9: Abdomen. #10: Right hip.

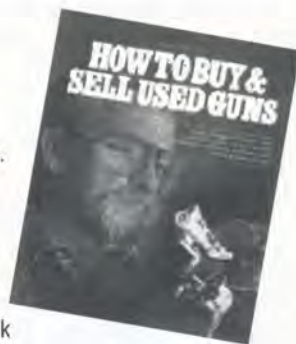
It seems unbelievable that these hits did not neutralize even the most drug-crazed human monster. *The top of the head?*

Investigators determined later that,



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because of the angle of the shot (front to back, up to down, head tilted forward) the bullet had struck on such an angle that it smashed an entry in the skull, creating what Chaney logically saw as "a hole through the head," but deflected the bullet in a backward skid that brought it high over the brain.

It never struck vital, deep brain tissue, and only caused enough concussion to very temporarily stun out Mullery.

Perhaps most significant is that the bullet which finished the fight was the one to the pelvis. Chaney, the sole survivor of the horror, would flatly state later, "I think the bullet in his hipbone was the only one that kept him down."

If the brain is fully oxygenated, you can blow the heart out of the body and the organism can fight for up to 14 seconds.

But the pelvis is the cross-member of body support. Shatter this vital axis of skeleto-muscular construction, and the body will be down within a step.

Indeed, if this had been the first shot of the gunfight instead of the last, it might have ended there, and Linda Lawrence would perhaps today be a 45-year-old police veteran who lectured at survival classes, and Steve Chaney would have been free of the survivor guilt, and maybe even John Mullery would have seen the error of his ways and limped into classes for abusers of women and drugs

to tell them that they were on the wrong path.

But it wasn't. The lesson is this: if shots to center of mass and other areas have not worked, shatter the pelvis and immobilize the body of the beast, anchoring it where it can be better dealt with.

Firing Into The Floor

When people see these videos, they shake their heads in violent body language at the point where Chaney, now in control of the two loaded service revolvers, tries to empty them into the floor instead of into Mullery.

The five bullets might have dwelt better in the copkiller than in the hardwood. One critic called it "bizarre."

Wrong. It is a dynamic we see again and again when people grapple for weapons in close and deadly combat, akin to the dynamic that causes so many victims of accidental discharges to throw the guns away from them.

There is something in the psyche that says, "De-fang the snake!" It is a conscious or subconscious attempt to empty the guns and make them not loaded guns anymore, but dead and harmless things that will no longer threaten the innocent.

We learn from Chaney. Fight that instinct. If you are in control of the trigger but not the muzzle, by all means, de-fang the snake. If you are in control of the firing mechanism *and* the muzzle, by all

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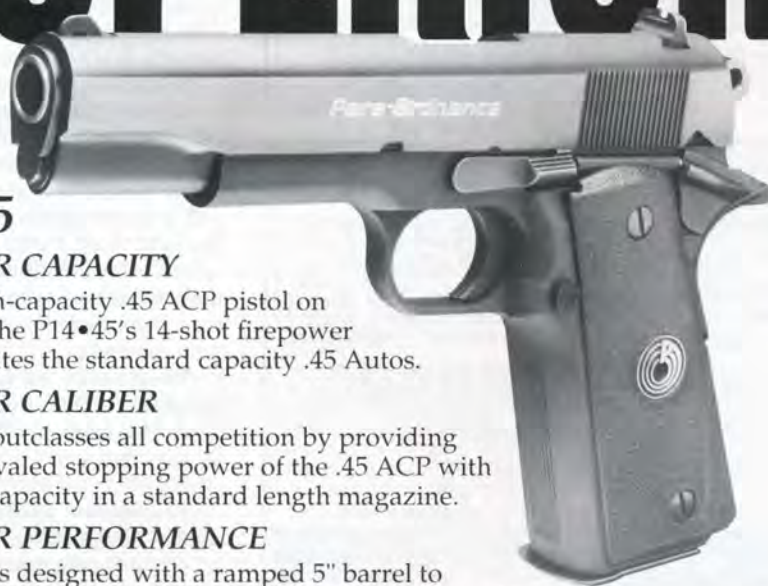
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means, direct the barrel where it will do the most good, and deposit the steel snake's fangs inside the deadliest serpent.

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Hidden Danger

Some people think that women should not do police work because they are weak and helpless. My intensive studies in that area, real-world, make me disagree. But I've seen a more deeply hidden danger that they don't talk about much at the Academy, and Steve Chaney put his finger on it.

He knows *now* what no one in his position could have known *then*: kidnaper and assaulter and planner of murder John Mullery had a long history of violence against women.

Chaney believes that seeing a female in the position of an authority figure may have pushed the woman-hating Mullery over the edge. It is something armed women need to think about when they take command of danger situations.

Epilogue


You reading this, and I writing it, owe a lot to Linda Lawrence and Steve Chaney. The lessons of their nightmare are to keep us alive.

As I type this manuscript, I wonder how much that I learned from Steve's videos is in me as I patrol with a .45 automatic, and study pre-assault cues, and certify instructors in weapons retention, and preach to cops the doctrine of the concealed ballistic vest.

The death duel with Mullery was not Steve Chaney's last lethal force encounter in the job he stayed on as he fought the terrible effects of post shooting trauma, effects that cost him his first marriage after the 8/1/77 shooting.

Sometime later, another woman abuser pulled a gun on Chaney, and Steve put four bullets in the criminal's center mass before the gunman could pull the trigger.

He would say later that as the antagonist went down, riddled, his first thought was, "Oh, God, not me, not again." But then he realized that he had done what had to be done, and that this time, none of the good guys had died with the bad guy.

The lesson he found was simple. Sometimes, Steve Chaney said softly, "You can learn positive lessons in ways that aren't positive." 

The author wishes to thank Denny Anderson at Calibre Press, Lt. Gary Ferrel of the Huntington Police Department, the staff of the Louisiana state law enforcement academy, and especially now-Sergeant Steve Chaney of the Baton Rouge Police Department for making this article possible... and for sharing so much in the hope that it would help decent people to stay safe and alive.

LADIES OF STEEL

Continued from page 63

stages of the match. Her winning margin—more than 10 seconds—is even more dramatic when you consider that less than 2 1/2 seconds separated the next four women's scores.

As a member of Team Smith & Wesson Judy shoots a Performance Center automatic in 9mm Luger (9x19) with a frame mounted safety and a prototype scope mount. It's most unusual feature is what's not there—namely, a compensator.

How come? "It was a tradeoff between recoil control and weight," Judy explained, "With the very light loads we use here, recoil isn't much of a problem. I was more concerned with keeping the gun short and light, for more speed on the draw and from target to target."

What sort of practice routine did she follow? "The gun was only ready to go a month or so before the match, so I didn't shoot all that much, maybe 6 or 7,000 rounds. I've found that all the standing around you do at matches, talking to people and waiting to shoot, is really tiring so I did a lot of exercising in the last year, walking three or four miles several days a week."

The esprit de corps shown by Team Smith & Wesson at the match impressed many of the spectators. Whenever Judy shot, teammates Brian Enos, Jerry Miculek, and Mike Plaxco were on hand. "I really appreciated the support of the other team members," Judy commented, "We always shot as a group during practice, so having them there during the match helped me feel more confident and relaxed."

Judy used the popular Safariland Final Option holster, and ammunition loaded for the S&W team by Black Hills Shooters Supply with 115 gr. Speer hollowpoints.

Shirley Hamilton finished second in the match and went on to win the ladies' shootoff. Her Springfield Armory 1911 pistol was customized by her husband Bill and by Colorado gunsmith Gary Kimball, who fitted a triple chamber compensator. After experimenting with several jacketed bullets Shirley found that the 124 gr. Hornady gave the best accuracy.

Bill Hamilton also made the forged aluminum scope base for the Tasco Pro-Point. Light and compact, this base gets the sight as low as possible on the gun. Shirley likes the fact that it works with her Ernie Hill Fas-Trac holster.

But why is it such a vivid shade of purple? "To match the base pads on my magazines, of course!" Shirley laughed. The Hamiltons are marketing this scope base (in various colors) at a suggested retail of

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With four National and two World championships to her credit Debby James is undoubtedly the best woman IPSC shooter in the world. At the Challenge, though, she was clearly not shooting up to her ability.

Part of the problem may have been the lack of opportunity to practice on the Steel Challenge ranges; another may have been lack of time to make the transition to an optically sighted gun, forcing her to compete with her iron sighted IPSC gun.

I say "may" because this is purely speculation on my part. Debby herself refused to make any excuses. Proving she can lose as graciously as she wins, Debby gave Judy Woolley full credit for the win.

Top amateur was won by Valerie Levanza, with a fine score that placed her third overall among the women competitors. Valerie was awarded an S&W revolver tuned for Bianchi Cup competition by J.M. Custom of San Jose, Calif., and fitted with a Tasco Pro-Point.

The pro-class shooters shot for cash, with Judy Woolley collecting \$2,500 for the overall win and another \$250 for second place in the shootoff, while Shirley Hamilton received \$500 for winning the shootoff.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Continued from page 56

vened at the Chapman Academy ranges near Columbia to shoot the old courses of fire, reminisce about the old days, and talk about both the past and the future of the Confederation.

American Handgunner, which also came into being in 1976 and which has always been a supporter of IPSC, was well represented. In addition to this writer, Law Enforcement editor Massad Ayoob, Handloading editor Frank James, and Photography editor Nyle Leatham were present.

The past 15 years have seen innovations in handgun competition that are mind boggling. If, in the early '70s, someone had predicted the incredible variety of shooting competitions we have today he would have been regarded as some kind of nut.

If he had said that a time would come when matches would have purses of \$250,000 and more he'd have been considered a raving lunatic.

Professional shooters? Factory teams? Get serious, folks.

Cooper's Influence

The level of interest in handgun shooting sports had been growing throughout the

'50s and '60s. Jeff Cooper wrote a number of articles about the freestyle competitions held by the Bear Valley Gunslingers (formed in 1956) and the Southwest Combat Pistol League (formed in 1963).

Recalling those days, he wrote, "We had a wonderful time. We tried all sorts of things. We shot quickly at short distances, and more slowly at long distances. We pivoted, ran, and jumped. We crawled under logs and we climbed trees. We used standard courses like PPC and the Mexican Defense Course, but we invented more." (*Beginner's Guide to Combat Shooting*, May, 1985)

To understand the impact Cooper's articles had, remember that at that time the only formal competition open to civilians was one-handed bullseye shooting.

No drawing from holsters. Oh, there was some western fast draw activity, but they used blanks or wax bullets and were regarded by the gun press as harmless nutballs playing at being cowboys.

The PPC was for police only; the NRA refused to sanction matches in which civilians fired at humanoid targets. Bullseye was and is a rewarding and challenging activity, but exciting and entertaining are not words that come to mind.

Columbia Conference

The opportunity came in May, 1976. Richard Thomas, an attorney, shooter, and gun collector from Columbia, Mo., arranged for Cooper to teach a shooting class on the Midwest Practical Pistol League range.

Thomas writes, "Jeff, Ken (Hackathorn) and I prepared an invitation list. The response was so encouraging that Jeff decided, just maybe, we could use the gathering to establish a new world order in the realm of practical shooting."

What followed was the Columbia International Combat Pistol Conference, a series of shooting exercises, competitions, and meetings.

The minutes of the proceedings were recorded by Jeff Cooper. The introduction to the minutes states in part, "There are enthusiastic shooters everywhere who wish to perfect their skills with the sidearm and who wish to compete against each other with weapons which make sense to them in a manner which seems realistic.

"Such people cannot find satisfaction in competition as it is currently organized, and therefore wish to form their own organization."

And that's what they did. The title chosen for the new organization was the International Practical Shooting Confederation.

In the conclusion to the minutes Cooper noted "The Conference stands as a landmark in the development of organized competition with the sidearm... if each of us now does his best to insure the success of the world organization so that it may become a truly operative body, he can say that he has done something useful



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IPSC Thrives

The success of the founders and those who followed them can be seen in the tremendous growth of practical shooting, and the influence it has on both techniques and equipment. The reunion conference was a time to take pride and satisfaction in past achievements and to look to the future.

It was also a time for some shooting. Founders and guests shot the classic stages from the early days of practical shooting; the Advanced Military, designed by Jeff Cooper and H.G. Taft in 1946; the Mexican Defense, adopted and modified by the California shooters in the '50's; the FBI duel; the "1976" match by Ray Chapman, and of course the El Presidente.

Competitors were required to use guns and gear from the 1976 era, meaning "walk and draw" rigs, no compensators, and (God Forbid!) no optical sights.

Tom Campbell showed up with his legendary S&W "Supergun," though to my disappointment he left his chest holster at home. Ken Hackathorn, 1976 match winner, used a well-worn .45 Auto in one of the all-time classic rigs, the Andy Anderson "Thunderbolt."

High overall was won by famed pistolsmith Bill Wilson. In addition to making the winningest guns in IPSC history,

Wilson is a world class shooter, having placed in the top five at virtually every major match on the pro circuit and representing the U.S. on teams at world shoots.

Bill shot the same 5" .45 with which he competed at the 1979 World Championships. Wilson won two stages, the FBI Duel and the Advanced Military, coming within two points of a perfect score on the latter; he dropped his two points at the 10-yard line, after cleaning the more difficult 50 and 25 yard sections.

Ken Hackathorn was overall match winner in 1976. The 15 years that have passed since then haven't hurt either his speed or accuracy; he again placed first among the founding members with a solid display of shooting, finishing high in every stage.

The scoring system was a real nostalgia trip, with a shooter's score determined by adding his best three placings. Margins of victory and the number of rounds in a stage were irrelevant, i.e. if I beat you by 1% on a 6-shot stage, and you beat me by 50% on a 30-shot stage, we'd each have a score of 3, a first and a second. We've learned a few things over the years.

IPSC Nostalgia

The history and development of practical shooting has always been of special interest to me. So as much as I enjoyed the banquet, the courses of fire, and the shootoff, the highlight of the gathering

for me came on Friday evening.

With the shooting completed, guests met at the range shed to get out of the rain, where Ken Hackathorn led an informal discussion about the conference 15 years earlier.

Hackathorn explained how the founders had been divided into a number of committees, such as title, power, targets, holsters, and rules, with each committee meeting in the evening and reporting their recommendations the following day.

Someone asked how the title of the organization was picked. "The first recommendation of the title committee was to call it the International Combat League," Ken explained, "But some of the countries were concerned about the word 'combat' in the title. So we used the term 'practical' instead, since it wouldn't offend anyone and yet it was clear to us that the practical use of a handgun is for self-defense."


Why call it a confederation instead of a league or federation? Jim McClary, a founder and now a lieutenant in the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division fielded that one.

"Some of the European members said they had a problem with terms like association or federation," he recalled, "while us southern boys had no problem at all with the term confederation."

Maybe things worked out for the best.

Continued on page 88

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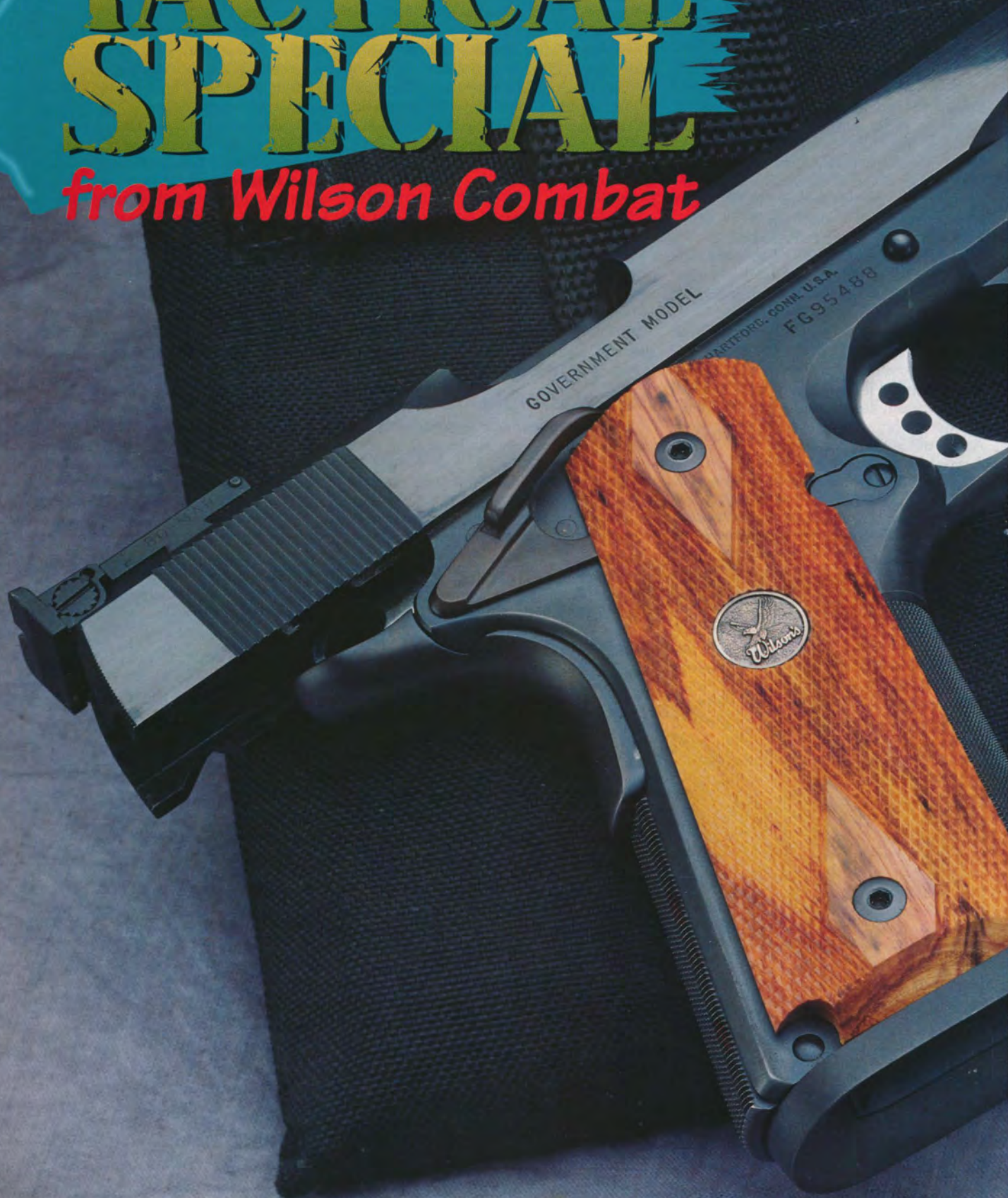
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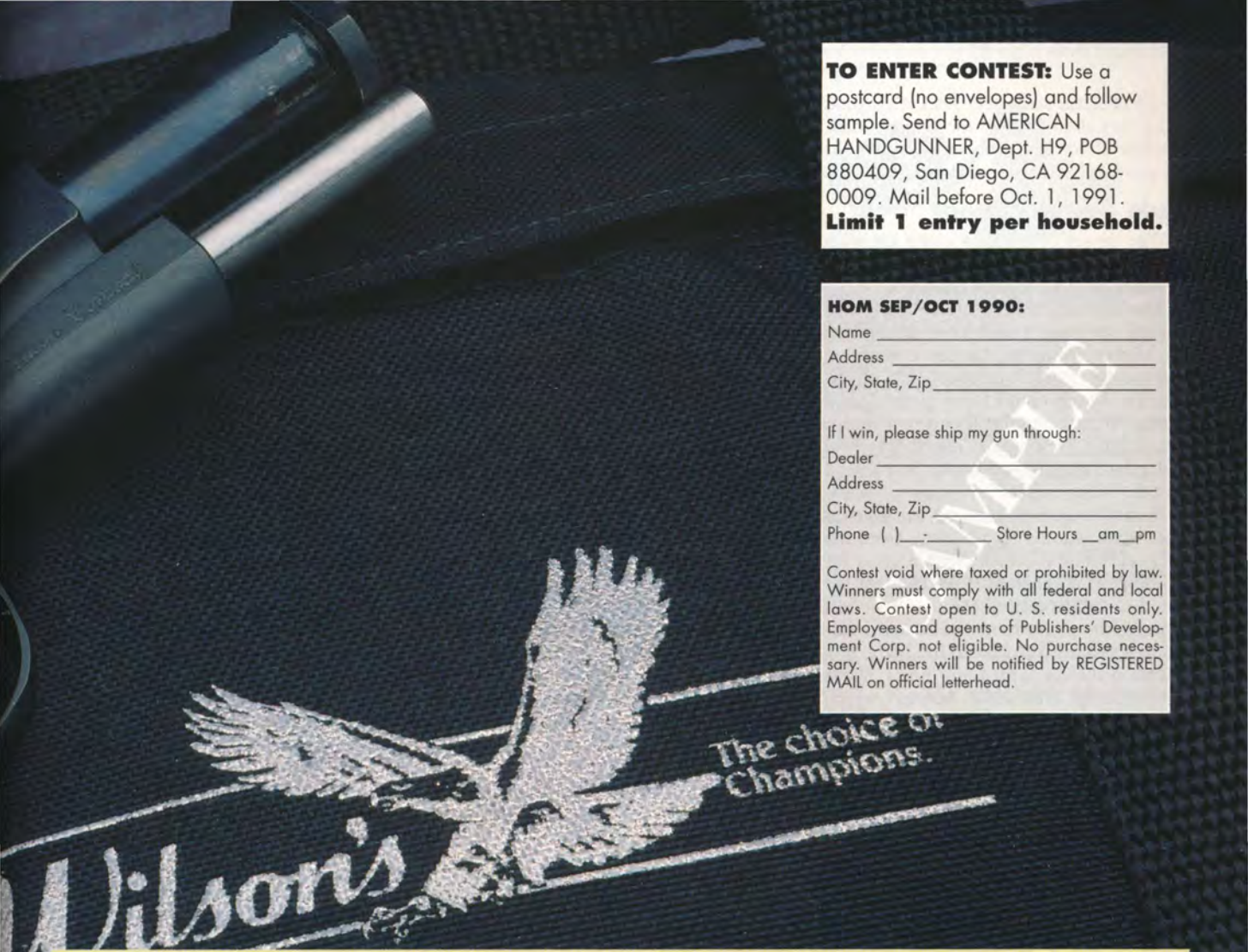
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As my daughter said later, "Dad, it's a good thing they didn't call it the International Combat Shooting Confederation or we'd have to call it 'Icksick' instead of 'Ipsic.'"

Rule Development

The target committee came up with two targets, the Option and the Item, both of which have since been replaced.

Hackathorn commented, "I always thought we made a mistake in appointing Dr. Herbert Wong to the title committee and not the target committee. As a physician Dr. Wong could have given sound advice on an anatomically correct target, and besides, if someone asked why you had a bad match you could just say 'I shot the Wong target.'"

Ken also commented on the holster rules. "We wanted to get away from the walk-and-draw rigs which were good for nothing but competition. We thought we could define a practical holster— belt through the pants loops, maximum distances from the gun butt to the body, gun retention during jumps and turns. What we ended up with was... holsters which were good for nothing but competition!"

In talking with the founders it was obvious that all of them take pride and satisfaction in having helped start a shooting sport that has grown so dramatically, and that they want the Confedera-

tion to prosper.

Hackathorn noted the advantages of international recognition. "There are always some who start agitating to pull out of IPSC whenever they don't get their own way," Ken noted, "But with all the pressure shooters are under to justify their sport, which has more credibility—a sport that's practiced in 40 countries, or a sport that you and your buddies carry on in the local gravel pit?"

Stupid Courses

The founders agreed on two major areas of concern— courses of fire and the equipment race. Ken Hackathorn told how police officers often ask about IPSC, how they've heard it's ideal training for them.

"I have to tell them, if they are serious about surviving, don't shoot IPSC," he said. "It hurts me to say that. I'm very proud of being an IPSC founder. I'm glad to see the sport grow. But in good conscience I can't tell people to take part because I see so many courses of fire that make you do things that are stupid or suicidal."

Jim Cirillo, who as a member of New York's famous Stake Out Unit survived more gun battles than many competitors have shot matches, gave an example.

"We all know how an El Presidente goes; two rounds on each of three targets, reload and repeat. If any of you saw me shoot that stage, you saw how I did it.

"I shot once at each target, then went

back and shot once more at each, then I did my reload and repeated. So I shot a poor score, and maybe looked silly doing it, and people may say I'm making a big thing out of nothing.

"But I will not do something or teach something in training that has the potential to get me killed. I don't care what people think or what my score was. You will do in combat what you do in training."

Equipment Race

The other criticism is of the equipment race. Many of the "realists" could accept the modifications that are common on current match guns, such as better sights, triggers, magazine loading chutes, and better controls.

Many can even accept compensators as a practical accessory. But optical sights that must be switched on before use... well, that's just too much to accept.

Hackathorn commented, "I hope no one will think I'm being critical of Jerry Barnhart. Jerry is a wonderful athlete and a prince of a fellow. But when he won the Nationals with an electrically powered optical sight last fall it really shook people up. I heard from many people that IPSC has just gotten completely off track, even from some I never expected to be critical."

Yet no one wants to stand in the way of innovation. In his address to the group Jeff Cooper commented, "We need the experimenters and innovators. We need to



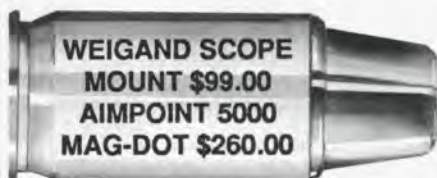
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Perhaps the day will come when competitors will have different types of matches from which to choose. One match might specify tactical guns, concealable holsters, and ultra-realistic courses of fire, while next month's match might be completely open, with the multi-shot assault stages many shooters love.

Naturally the World Assembly of Regional Directors will decide whether a tactical class is developed, but I hope they make use of the experience and insight of people like Jim Cirillo, Ken Hackathorn, Rick Miller, Dick Thomas and the other founders who had the foresight and energy to pioneer this sport.



INSIGHTS

Continued from page 31

switch incorporated in the safety or in the grip, or perhaps manufacturers can develop batteries with a two or three year life.

These are improvements that could help all shooters. But there won't be any developments if we start restricting competitors.

Now if you want my personal opinion, I don't like the way the gun looks and handles with optical sights, but I must be honest and say I haven't tried them much.

DA: *There seems to be an increasing interest in a stock or tactical class for IPSC. What are your thoughts on the subject?*

JPD: I think it has a great deal of promise, and certainly there is considerable interest in the idea in many regions. While we don't want to restrict innovation, we have to recognize that there is a wide gap between stock guns and the highly modified guns used by the factory teams.

So maybe the time has come to recognize a tactical class at the international level. The problem, of course, is how to define tactical class.

Some would like it restricted to totally stock, unmodified guns while others would allow any modification so long as the gun fits in a box of a specified size. There will have to be considerable discussion before we arrive at an acceptable definition.

DA: *Are any changes being considered in the holster regulations?*

JPD: This is all part of the tactical class question. For what we might call the open class, I don't expect any changes.

However if a tactical class is developed then holsters might be limited to duty rigs or "practical" holsters, though as we know from experience it is very hard to define what a practical holster is or to enforce regulations.

DA: *Do you expect any changes in targets?*

JPD: The IPSC paper target has been well accepted and there are no changes

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planned. I think we could use a greater variety of metal targets.

At present the only approved metal targets are the Pepper popper, eight-inch round plates and six-inch square plates. Some regions with only small ranges on which to shoot want half-size poppers to increase the degree of difficulty. Perhaps some metal targets of other shapes and sizes could be approved as well.

DA: Proposed changes to the power factor at the last World Assembly have caused some concern. What developments are taking place in that area?

JPD: A proposal for a three-tier power factor was made at the Assembly, with five regions agreeing to test it on a trial basis. The system did not prove very successful and as a result of reports from the five regions this proposal has been dropped.

There are some other proposals being made and I hope all Regional Directors have an opportunity to study these. We will be discussing this subject again at the next World Assembly in October.

However, I want IPSC members to know that no changes in this important area would be made without a great deal of study. If the Assembly agrees that a different system should be tried, we would again ask several regions to test it for a year or so and report back to the Assembly.

DA: If you could speak to every IPSC member or prospective member, what would be the most important things you would say?

JPD: I think I would ask them to remember that IPSC is truly a unique sport. There is no other shooting sport that rewards accuracy, power, and speed equally, as we recognize in our motto "DVC."

And it is a sport in which it is not enough just to shoot well, for you must also be able to keep your head and think clearly under great pressure, to solve problems and overcome obstacles. Many times I've observed that the men and women who excel at this sport are not only fine athletes, but highly intelligent people as well.

The greatest reward for me has been the opportunity to meet many wonderful people and to make friendships that will last a lifetime.



TO BLUE OR...

Continued from page 52

Wesson offered Bright Blue sixguns and Colt's parallel finish was Royal Blue.

Pythons and .44 Magnums from the 1950's and early 1960's are easy to spot as they are prime examples of the best possible blue finish available. One could literally see oneself in both of these finishes.

Today, Dan Wesson offers a blue finish that rivals both the Colt Royal Blue and Smith & Wesson Bright Blue of days gone by and it is very difficult to photo-

graph blued Dan Wessons because of the reflection of any available light on the metal surface.

The secret of a beautiful blue job is the polishing. This is time consuming and costly, and to keep cost down, all Colt, Ruger, and Smith & Wesson blue guns are no longer polished as carefully as they were 30 years ago.

This has of course, resulted in much duller looking blued sixguns. To obtain a really fine blue finish on a Colt, Ruger, or Smith & Wesson it is necessary to search out a custom 'smith who is willing to take the necessary polishing time.

Blue, at least in my opinion, is the most beautiful finish available. A sixgun with a highly polished blue job matched with a fine pair of ivory or exotic wood stocks is just about as good as it gets.

Blue, although aesthetically pleasing, offers very little protection. It scratches easy, is prone to holster wear with use, and will rust if not immediately cared for when used in foul weather.

Shiny Nickel

While blue is in the metal, nickel is a plating on the metal. This finish was popular in the 19th Century as it afforded greater protection against black powder than did blue finishes.

As earlier recounted, poor nickel will strip off and even good nickel jobs will flake off in time. It is rare to find an old nickel plated sixgun that has seen use that does not have some of the finish gone.

Standard nickel looks unnecessarily gaudy to me.

I have four nickel plated sixguns. A matched pair of 7.5" barreled Remington 1875's with ivory micarta grips for use in quick draw demonstrations and wild west shows, an old Colt Bisley .44 that had enough minor pitting that too much polishing would have been required to be re-blued so nickel was chosen, and finally a Model 29 four-inch .44 Magnum that came in a trade. The latter will eventually be stripped and finished in a high polish blue.

We've come a long way from the simple choice of a few years back of either blue or nickel. In this particular case, progress is wonderful.



HANDLOADING

Continued from page 20

Dillon, Lyman, RCBS and many others.

Another important item that is used heavily by any reloader is an inertia bullet puller, because all of us make mistakes.

When I worked in my youth as a meat cutter I could eat my mistakes, but believe me you can't eat your mistakes from the reloading bench. Or if you do it will be a much more painful experience than eating a thick 'n thin T-bone!



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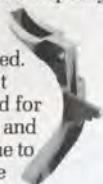


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This is a neat and easy-to-use jig for installing our beavertail grip safety. Heat-treated super-hard so hand filing right up against it is okay.



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Stop screwdriver slips! Replace your ruined screw slots with these Allen Head screws. **Blue #803 and Stainless #804.**



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Made in both **Blue #890 and Stainless Steel #891**, this new part is more oversize than any other. Angled slightly to keep thumb from contacting slide and has double angle to fit thumb perfectly. Requires gunsmith fitting for safe operation.



1911 Ambidextrous Safeties

Required for the IPSC weak hand stages as well as left-handed shooters. **Blue #892 and Stainless Steel #893.** Requires gunsmith fitting for safe operation.



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#897 fits 9mm guns with double stack magazine and 40 Smith & Wesson.
#898 fits 9mm guns with single stack magazine.



A bullet puller allows you to start over if there is even a hint or a doubt about a problem with any suspected reload. Take my word for it, because I have blown up enough guns to tell you "Don't do what I did, but do what I say" on this matter.

Another item that you will never have enough of if you use a single stage press is loading blocks. It seems I am always running out of empty blocks because of different case preparation stages or different calibers I'm working with, so be advised and purchase several reloading blocks.

Among the items under the listing quasi-essential would have to be the taper crimp die for auto pistol cartridges. You can get by without one, I know, because I did for several years way back when, but then you can also walk to work every morning instead of driving with the air-conditioner on.

Case Cleaners

Case tumblers will probably be next on the beginning reloader's list after he has acquired and mastered all the previous items in his reloading inventory. Case tumblers clean the fired cases to a like-new finish and there are a number of good reasons why they are needed.

Clean cases not only look better but after reloading they function in the gun better than dirty ones, especially after several firings. It really doesn't do the reloader much good to spend hours cleaning his pistols and revolvers, particularly the chambers, and then turn around and load dirty ammo into them.

Dillon has an excellent one that I have been using, but so does **RCBS**, **Lyman** and **Hornady**. All of these case tumblers work well with corn-cob tumbling media and the result is a better reloaded round.

Dillon, however, is the only one to provide for a quick and easy means of retrieving the brass from the tumbler with their Case Media Separator and it works extremely well. If you need a tumbler, you also need the Dillon Case Media Separator.

Just let your handgun practice and your desire to practice more be your guide to reloading.



KENT MILLER

Continued from page 69

what I earned de-tasseling corn. There's corn seed companies around here and they hire kids to go out and pull the tassels off the corn. You go out like at 7 o'clock in the morning and start pulling tassels," Kent recalled.

When he finally saved enough for the gun of his dreams, he didn't buy it, he bought another he never even planned on. Who knows, perhaps this gun was

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prophetic. Perhaps this childhood experience kindled the spark that would eventually blossom into Kent's abiding affection for Smith & Wessons. In any event, it was a turning point for the young farmboy.

"I had my heart set on a Ruger Bearcat. I had looked through all these catalogs and magazines and I just had to have that Bearcat. My dad took me to the gunshop, I looked at the Ruger Bearcat and my heart just sank. It was little-bitty and looked like a toy gun.

"My dad pointed out a Smith & Wesson K-frame .22, four-inch barrel, and said this is the one you want and hands it to me. He thought Smith & Wesson was the best gun going. I paid \$81 for it brand-new," Kent recalled.

That first .22 whetted Kent's appetite for handguns, but his dad's Model 19 .357 Magnum and Model 29 .44 Magnum gave him a taste of big bore fun. The love affair with Smith & Wesson revolvers was germinating.

In 1971, Kent graduated from high school and bought his first centerfire handgun, a Ruger Blackhawk in .44 Magnum. "I paid \$115 for it," Kent said, "And I still have it!" Kent soon discovered reloading and bought a hunting rifle, a Remington Model 700 ADL in .30-'06.

The young carpenter—for he had learned his father's woodworking skills—married his high school sweetheart, Linda, in 1972 and soon the young couple was struggling to buy their first home, which they accomplished in 1973. "I'm still in the same house," Kent said, "But I've turned the garage into my shop now!"

How did Kent get started in gunsmithing? "I was always interested in how guns work, but I was afraid of taking one apart because I was afraid I'd never get it back together," laughed the man who would be destined to become a master gunmaker, "The word *gunsmith* to me was the word. I didn't care about being the guy who won the matches, the guy who was a good shot. I wanted to be the guy that made the gun."

Kent started out slowly, very slowly. He made a set of cherrywood grips for his Blackhawk in 1977 and steadily began to learn more and more about gunsmithing. It was strictly trial and error for Kent.

The smartest thing he ever did, he allowed, was to order a Brownells catalog. "Just by looking at the tools, I figured out what they were for and even what you're supposed to do with them," Kent continued, "But the thing I'm most proud of is that I've never had any training. I read four or five books and the rest I picked up from fooling around with guns. I never even spoke to another gunsmith!"

"I believe everyone has a God given talent and working with my hands is mine. All I'm doing is developing what God gave me, that's how I look at it." Already his 13-year-old daughter Becky

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is showing promising signs of continuing the Miller family tradition of fine craftsmanship—she's stippled her first back-strap already! She's also quite a seamstress, a loving Dad declares proudly!

By now Kent had given up furniture making and was working as a quality control inspector at a nuclear power plant. He applied the same meticulous attention to detail, always looking for flaws and how to fix them, that he would later display in his painstaking work on custom revolvers. In six years he rose to QC foreman.

By 1980 Kent had acquired his Federal Firearms License to work on other people's guns. He started out with just bluing guns and parts for local customers and then branched out into general gunsmithing repairs and a few odd action jobs of S&W's.

In 1985 Kent, with the support of his wife Linda, took the plunge. He quit his job and opened Miller Custom specializing in Smith & Wesson revolvers. In 1986, he conceived and developed the MercComp system of recoil reduction.

The big break came for Kent in 1988 when an old buddy of his from the power plant named Lee Schaffert moved to California. "Lee was an aspiring gunwriter," Kent explained, "and he said he'd try to get an article written about my guns. He sent a bunch of feelers out to about 10 different magazines and *American Handgunner* was the only one that came back with a positive response.

"He wrote the article and you agreed to publish it, which I've always been grateful for. That got me off the local work and to national work," the talented gunmaker acknowledged.

Despite the national publicity, Kent suffered a severe setback when a year or two later a company approached him to do conversion work on HK 9mm subguns. He began working exclusively on the Class III conversions of the HKs and quit taking orders for handguns. "The money was pretty good and the work was steady," Kent sheepishly admitted. But suddenly the company decided to take its work in-house and Kent didn't have a job.

But he regained his clientele and began doing the work he loves the most and does the best, converting Smith & Wessons to MercComps.

"I need to give credit to a really good customer," Kent diligently reminded me to include this in the story, "John Russell of New York and I became really good friends. He's flown out here to stay with me. He paid for my ads awhile back. He's been a really good supporter, both morally and financially. I'll pay him back someday."

Kent, I have no doubt Mr. Russell already feels like he's been repaid in a coin that has no price. The pleasure that comes from helping a friend is surely worth more than any currency.



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STEEL GUNS

Continued from page 59

Jerry Barnhart's match winning gun was built by Wilson's Gun Shop on an aluminum frame Colt Commander. Since the prototype scope base would have obscured the serial number, a practice BATF frowns upon, Colt had to pull a Commander from the production line and stamp the number on the bottom extension of the frame.

The gun sports the usual modifications such as beavertail grip safety, extended thumb safety, frame checkering, and the popular and proven Wilson dual-port compensator. Weight of the empty gun is 36 ounces.

"By going to an aluminum or titanium comp and a polymer guide rod we could have cut another couple of ounces off," Jerry explained. "But I didn't want the gun any lighter. With the steel comp the balance point is moved forward, which really helps give me a feel for where the gun is pointing."

Trigger pull on Barnhart's gun is a beautifully crisp 1.75 pounds. Jerry advises, "A clean, light trigger is critical for speedshooting at the Master level. You want to be able to break the shot the instant the dot reaches the plate."

Barnhart's gun is a prototype, but Wilson offers two "Steel Special" models (either iron or optical sights) on standard Government models. These are full house guns with all the goodies—frame to slide fit tightened, trigger job, ambidextrous safety, beavertail grip safety, exotic wood grips, checkered frontstrap and main-spring housing.

For better functioning with light loads the Wilson dual-port bushing compensator is fitted and the slide lightened by 3.25 ounces. The optical sight version is tuned for proper ejection under the low-mounted scope base.

These guns are a remarkable value in today's market: \$1,720 with Bo-Mar iron sights, \$1,865 for the optical version which includes the scope base and a Tasco Pro-Point (based on a customer-supplied gun). A gorgeous full color catalog with stunning Ichiro Nagata photographs features the full line of custom guns and is available for \$2 from Wilson's, Route 3, P.O. Box 578-A, Dept. AH, Berryville, AR 72616.

Other Lightweights

Jack Weigand of Weigand Combat Handguns, Inc. attacked the weight problem from a different angle, staying with a steel Caspian Arms frame and slide but radically milling away metal from non-critical areas and using a titanium compensator and polymer guide rod.

Still not satisfied with the weight reduction, Jack even fluted the barrel! Complete with the strong, lightweight

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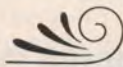
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GUNS AND GEAR OF THE TOP TWENTY

Name	Time	Pistol	Caliber	Pistolsmith	Load	Bullet	Press	Holster	Sight
Jerry Bamhart	68.29	Colt 1911	.38 Super	Bill Wilson	4.5 grs. WW231	Hornady 115 gr. XTP	Dillon 1050	Safariland	Tasco PDP-2
Rob Leatham	68.86	Springfield P-9	9x21	several	4.5 grs. WW452AA	CP Elite 115 gr.	Dillon 1000	Safariland	Tasco PDP-2
Matt McLearn	69.48	Caspian 1911	9x21	George Smith	4.8 grs. AA#2	CP Elite 115 gr.	Dillon 1050	Ernie Hill	Aimpoint 5000
Brian Enos	71.15	S&W prototype	9mm	S&W Perf. Ctr.	Black Hills (factory)	115 gr.	none	Safariland	Aimpoint 5000
Doug Koenig	71.36	Springfield 1911	9x21	Spgfld. Cst. Shop	4.0 grs. WW452AA	CP Elite 115 gr.	Dillon 1000	Safariland	Tasco PDP-2
Arnt-Magne Myhre	71.92	Springfield 1911	.38 Super	Frank Glenn	5.0 grs. SuperLite	Sierra 115 gr.	Dillon 1050	Safariland	Bo-Mar
Jethro Dionisio	72.11	Colt	.38 Super	A.S. Balolong	3.5 grs. SuperLite	CP Elite 125 gr.	Dillon 1050	Ernie Hill	Bo-Mar
Patrick Sanchez	74.92	Colt 1991	.38 Super	Pepe Oliveros			Dillon	Safariland	Bo-Mar
Angelo Spagnoli	75.83	Springfield 1911	.38 Super	Boland/Ruff/Jones	4.2 grs. WW452AA	Hornady 124 gr.	Dillon 1050	Ernie Hill	Bo-Mar
Chris Lacson	75.84	Colt 1911	.38 Super	First Option	4.4 grs. WW231	Hornady 115 gr.	Dillon 1050	Ernie Hill	Bo-Mar
J. M. Plaxco	76.63	S&W prototype	9mm	S&W Perf. Ctr.			Dillon 1050	Safariland	Aimpoint 5000
Mike Voight	77.80	Springfield P-9	9x21	George Huening	4.25 WW Super Lite	Hornady 115 gr.	Dillon 1050	Safariland	Bo-Mar
Aaron Bush	78.02	Caspian 1911	.38 Super	Frank Behlert	4.3 grs. WW231	Hornady 115 gr.	Dillon 1050	Ernie Hill	Tasco PDP-2
Geoffrey Reisland	78.35	Colt 1911	.38 Super	June Badua	4.6 grs. WW231	Remington 124 gr.	Dillon 1050	Safariland	Bo-Mar
Ken Tapp	79.14	Springfield 1911	.38 Super	Sprgfld. Cts. Shop			Dillon 1050	Ernie Hill	Bo-Mar
Jerry Sun	79.67	Colt 1911	.38 Super	First Option	4.4 grs. WW231	Hornady 115 gr.	Dillon 550	Ernie Hill	Bo-Mar
Bruce Platt	81.20	Caspian 1911	.38 Super	Frank Behlert			Dillon 1050	Ernie Hill	Aimpoint 5000
Jim Griggs	81.37	Springfield 1911	.38 Super	Jimmy Mitchell	4.4 grs. WW Super Lite	Remington 115 gr.	Dillon 1050	Ernie Hill	Aimpoint 5000
Rick Schelske	81.43	Colt 1911	.38 Super	Mike Johnson	7.2 grs. WW540	Winchester 124 gr.	Dillon Sq. Deal	Ernie Hill	Bo-Mar
Marc Senate	81.52	Springfield 1911	.38 Super	4th Dimension	4.5 grs. WW231	SureFire 115 gr.	Dillon 550	Safariland	Bo-Mar

Weigand scope base and Aimpoint 5000 weight is 40 ounces. The quality of workmanship and detailing on Weigand's guns is outstanding.

There were many variations on the lightweight theme. A-class winner Jim

O'Young fired a Springfield Armory 1911 pistol built by George Huening of World Class Pistols, with lightening flutes cut into the slide, barrel, and compensator and fitted with Huening's high-tech carbon fiber, graphite and aluminum

scope base.

Master class shooter Ian Martin's gun had a skeletonized slide and an unusual compensator with exhaust ports on the side, rather than on top. Ian explained that this design kept powder gases from fouling the front element of the sight or obscuring the view of the target.

Martin had nothing but praise for the handling qualities and reliability of this gun, built by Competition Gun Works, whose address, appropriately, is 1911 Fairway Dr., San Leandro, CA 94577, Ph. (415) 357-6430.

Other Guns

Despite the high tech lightweight guns being used, most shooters seem to feel that a weight of 40 to 50 ounces for the empty gun with sight and base is acceptable.

Rob Leatham shot his way to a strong second place finish with his 46-oz. IPSC gun, a Springfield Armory P-9. The Custom Shop would no doubt have gladly built him a lightweight 1911, but Rob indicated he's come to prefer the feel and handling of the P-9, not to mention the 1.25 pound trigger pull!

Teammate Doug Koenig, who won the 1990 IPSC World Championship with a P-9, decided to go to a 1911 for this match. A twin to Koenig's gun, with a skeletonized slide, was shown at the Springfield Armory display, but public relations director Bob Gueskin indicated the Custom Shop may not offer this model for sale.

The problem is liability. Springfield Armory is concerned that no matter how many disclaimers they attach to the gun someone will start running IPSC major loads through it

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and then complain when the gun wears out prematurely.

The Performance Center guns used by Team Smith & Wesson members Brian Enos and J. Michael Plaxco were chambered for the 9x19 round, weighed in at 45 ounces, and featured frame-mounted safeties, available at this time only on Performance Center guns.

I noted that Plaxco's gun had a Tasco Pro-Point while Enos used an Aimpoint 5000, which I assume is just a matter of personal preference. The trigger pull on these guns is outstanding—more like a tuned bolt action rifle than a semi-automatic pistol.

Wheelguns Galore

Considering this is supposed to be an autopistol game, the number of revolvers in use was amazing. Of course, the world's fastest wheelgunner, Jerry Miculek was there, gathering crowds whenever he went to the line with his S&W Model 27.

The editor jokingly asked Miculek if he could give a three-minute lesson in how he shoots so fast (rather like asking Michael Jordan how he jumps so high).

Jerry replied in his Louisiana drawl, "Take a high, strong grip on the gun, get the tip of your trigger finger as low on the trigger as possible, and use a narrow, serrated trigger."

What, not a smooth trigger as the experts have told us for years?

"Can't shoot really fast with a smooth trigger," says the man who should know, "Your finger keeps sliding up the trigger and losing leverage. Use some fine sandpaper and just break any sharp edges on the serrations to protect your trigger finger."

Several shooters used S&W 27's with the seven-shot conversion from Baumanize, Inc. (P.O. Box 286, Bohemia, NY 11716-0286, ph. (516) 567-0001.

Why a seven shot revolver when each string of fire is only five rounds? The shooters explained that it gave them the confidence to shoot fast, knowing they had a couple of extra rounds on tap to make up misses.

Optics For Speed

How about the optics? The hot set up seems to be an Aimpoint 5000 or Tasco Pro-Point with a 30mm tube and a big 10-minute dot. Both companies had samples at the SHOT Show in January but experienced delays in getting into full production and distribution.

I suspect the public relations and sales people of both companies are heartily sick of phone calls asking "When can I get a big dot sight?" Both companies indicate the delays have been sorted out and the big dot sights are now going out to distributors.

As for sight bases, there are getting to be so many that the *Handgunner* is planning a roundup article on them for a future issue.

Steel Leather

Holster makers, of course, are quickly adapting their products to optical sight use. I didn't take a survey, but just noting the holsters in use on the range my impression was that the Safariland Final Option was far and away the most popular model, probably outnumbering all others combined.

An optically sighted gun has the balance point high and to the rear, making holster retention more difficult. The trigger guard lock on the Final Option is ideally suited to optical sight use.

The Ernie Hill Fas-Trac is still popular and was used by three of the top eight in pro class.

Popular Calibers

Though various caliber guns were used, .38 Super, .38 Special, 9x19, 9x21, the ballistics were mostly about the same—a 115gr. jacketed bullet at 1,000 fps. Not exactly grizzly medicine.

Why jacketed bullets? The smoke from burning lube on lead bullets fogs up the front element of the optical sight. Barnhart's winning load used W-W 231 powder and the Hornady XTP 115 gr. hollowpoint bullet. Hornady had other goals in mind when they designed this bullet, but those I've tried have given superb accuracy and every test I've seen reported similar results.

Mike Plaxco indicated that Team Smith & Wesson used ammunition especially downloaded for this match by Black Hills Shooters Supply with Speer's 115 gr. bullet. Springfield Armory team members Leatham and Koenig fired a recently-introduced 115 gr. bullet from C.P. Bullets. It has a jacketed base that won't lead the compensator even at low pressures.

Where do we go from here? Well, Ichiro Nagata, the *Handgunner's* photography editor, had a Shanon prototype electronic red dot sight with a 40mm tube and the clearest, brightest sight picture you ever saw. We should have lots of neat stuff to play with in the next couple of years.



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MERCCOMP

Continued from page 69

sheen of the brand-new Krieger barrel and exclaimed, "The lands are so much wider! And smooooooth!"

I asked John why the lands appear wider and he explained that he uses the SAAMI spec for .44 Magnum which is a six-groove barrel. He said Smith & Wesson uses seven-grooves. "What you do when you change the number of lands and grooves is that you still keep the same percentage of land to groove ratio, so when you have fewer lands, you naturally have wider ones," John noted.

Whatever, the thing *shoots!*

"In all honesty, it's probably more Miller than me," John candidly admitted. "The alignment of the cylinder is more important. No matter how good the barrel is, if it's not lined up right, it'll never shoot."

One last feature of the Krieger barrel that sets it apart from most other .44 Magnum tubes is that John uses a special 1-in-16 twist instead of the standard 1-in-20 twist.

This is an innovation popularized by master gunsmith John French of the Smith & Wesson Performance Center who has done considerable research to demonstrate that a 1-in-16 twist better stabilizes a heavier bullet, like the Sierra 300 grain flat-point, than the standard 1-in-20 rate of spin.

Barrel And Cylinder

Having obtained the superlative Krieger barrel, there remain several more essential steps to achieving the sort of 100-yard pin-point accuracy that the MercComp Redhawk is capable.

The forcing cone and barrel throat dimensions are absolutely crucial.

The actual measurements vary from gun to gun—a Smith is different than a Ruger, for instance—but the basic idea is to ease the bullet's entry into the rifling as smoothly as possible. The forcing cone should not shave the bullet nor should the throating be too sharp so that it distorts the bullet. Kent sets his forcing cone and barrel throat dimensions properly.

Before leaving the barrel and cylinder well enough alone, the next step is to square the face of the cylinder so that it is evenly parallel with the rear face of the barrel. Needless to say, this parallelism should be at exactly 90° to the axis of the bore.

The reason for this is to assure that as the bullet leaves the cylinder and jumps across the barrel/cylinder gap—the most traumatic time in the bullet's travel, like re-entry for the space shuttle—with exactly even gas pressure on the base of the bullet.

If the cylinder is cockeyed to the barrel, the powder gas will push unevenly on the bullet, upsetting it and causing it to skid into the forcing cone unevenly. Bingo, there goes your accuracy.

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This is called bullet shaving and it is an all too common problem on factory revolvers of all makes. While it is theoretically possible to get a properly mated cylinder and barrel on a mass-production gun, it is sadly too rare. You normally only find this sort of precision on custom guns today.

Lastly, the barrel/cylinder gap should be as tight as reasonably possible to still retain 100% reliability. It is possible to hold a cylinder gap of .001" but the slightest amount of powder residue or grunge would bind the cylinder from moving. Not good.

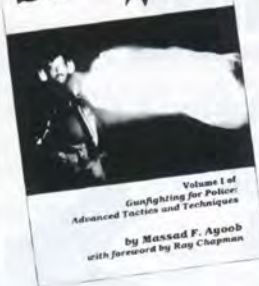
What has become recognized as the ideal cylinder gap for both reliable function and superior accuracy is .003". I've seen a Freedom Arms with a .002" gap, but that's cutting it a bit thin, if you'll pardon the play on words. The Miller MercComp is set with a sensible .003" cylinder gap!

By contrast, your average factory revolver has a cylinder gap of between .006" and .008". Given the fact that many factory guns shave bullets, it's necessary to have a large cylinder gap both to make up for manufacturing tolerances and the inevitable lead and cooper buildup from the shaving.

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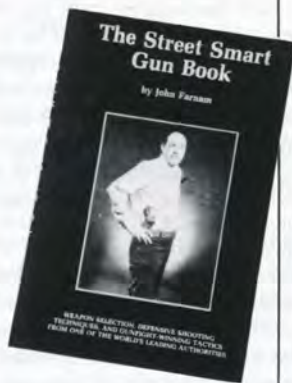
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the inside of the Krieger premium barrel, let's look at what he did to the outside.

The eight-inch Krieger steel was milled with a slab sided, underlugged contour incorporating a custom front sight and custom scope bases. Everything on the barrel is integral except the front sight.

The outside contour is tastefully slab-sided, but there's more work in that contour than meets the eye. "Most gunsmiths have great big floor-mounted mills with digital readouts. I have a third-horse milling attachment that goes on my lathe. Most people could take that slab sided barrel out in about two passes. For me, that took six hours of continuous milling with a three-quarter-inch end mill that takes off .150" with each pass," Kent cheerfully acknowledged.

"I don't have a surface grinder, I have to work it all down by hand. I hope to have one someday, they're real handy," Kent said optimistically.

To obtain that gorgeous shine on the flats of the barrel and also around the cylinder chamfer and in the cylinder flutes, Kent polished and polished and polished and then polished some more.

"I buff it to the highest you can get, which is 550 polish on a hard felt wheel. Then I start with diamond lapping compound which comes in a syringe. I have four different grades of that. I use it with a hand-held grinder—like a Dremel tool except the motor is separate—with a little-bitty miniature brush made of horse hair.

"I squeeze about a matchhead of this stuff on the brush and start polishing. I do that with all four compounds. Then, to get out the very fine circular motions from the horse hair, you go over it by hand with a clean patch or paper towel lengthwise in one direction.

"It's so shiny if you hold it up to the light you can actually see the grain structure in the steel," Kent said.

The result is the finest finish that is humanly possible, a finish rated at an astonishing two microns. A robot might be able to hone a part smoother in the vacuum of outer space, but I don't think a human being can polish steel any finer than Kent Miller. The tedious hand polishing is a \$200 option. The hand polishing option includes the slab-sides plus the cylinder chamfer and cylinder flutes. To dress the gun up with a playful touch, Kent cut the *American Handgunner's* initials in the hammer, AH.

MercComp System

The underlug was machined from the Krieger blank and then hollowed out to contain the mercury that is the namesake of Kent's unique MercComp system of recoil reduction. The underlug contains two ounces of mercury that acts as a recoil absorber.

The MercComp was "invented" in 1986. Kent unabashedly admits that he pirated the idea from the world of competition trap shooting. "I was thinking of

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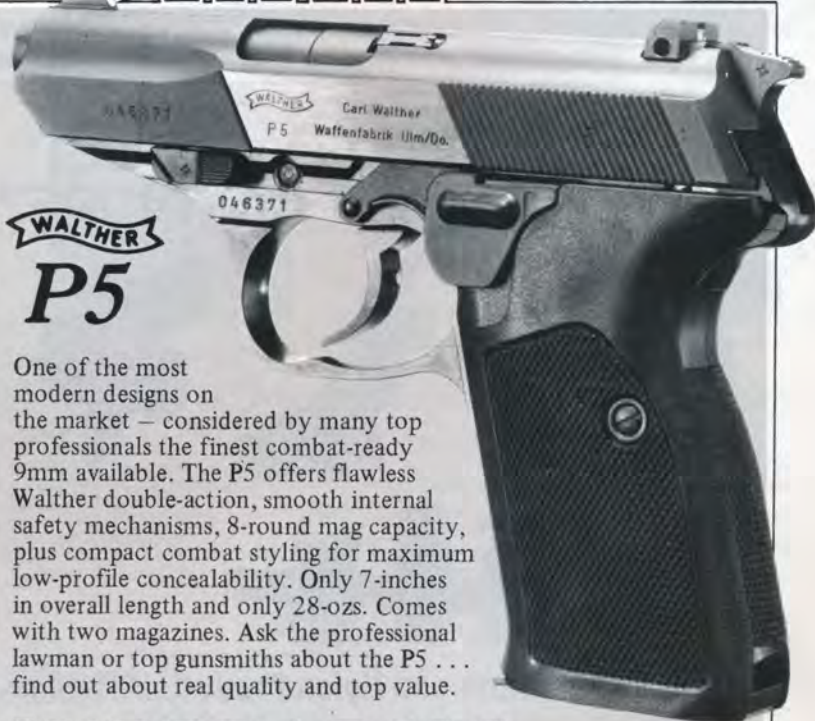
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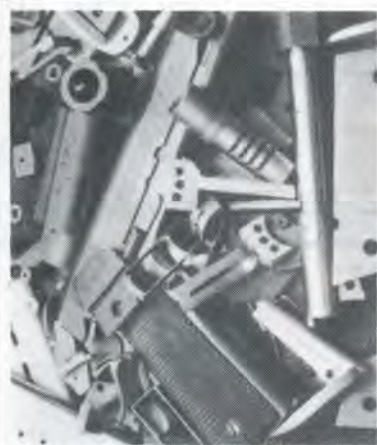
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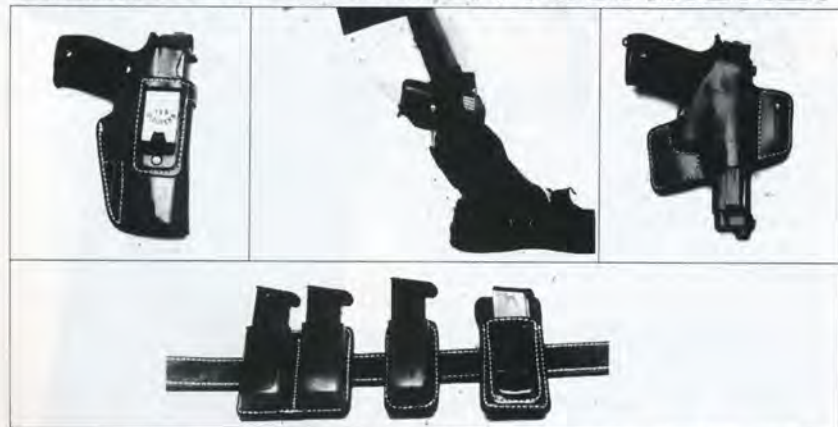
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ways to reduce recoil and the first thing I thought of was the mercury suppressor they put into shotgun stocks. All that it is a tube with mercury in it. They leave enough room for the mercury to slosh around when the gun goes off.

"The principle of the thing— now I don't know anything about physics— is that the mercury stays stationary when you shoot, but the gun moves, so in effect that's like the mercury rushing forward," Kent explained, "It makes sense that as the gun moves backward, the mercury is staying in one spot."

Actually, the design of the MercComp evolved from a primitive beginning. "I started out with a compensator on a .45 and a small chamber underneath full of bird shot. I thought of some kind of spring deal or a hydraulic system, but then I got the idea of the mercury.

"The first MercComp I made with a Shilen barrel had a separate underlug that I welded on there, but I don't like the looks of that. I machine the MercComp underlug integral with the barrel now," Kent noted.

To fill the underlug with mercury, Kent drills a hole down the underlug and

Everybody thinks their comp is better than the next guy's, but I bet if you had everybody who makes a comp shoot a bunch of different ones with their eyes shut, they wouldn't be able to pick their own out.

then welds a plug into the end. Next, he drills a tiny hole in the plug and squirts the mercury in with a syringe. "You gotta be pretty careful with that stuff. You're not supposed to handle it, breathe it or get it in an open wound," said the Illinois gunsmith.

"The MercComp doesn't work very well on a .45 ACP revolver, it needs a sharp snap of recoil to work really well," Kent acknowledged, "It works really well on a .44 Magnum, for instance. I do most of my MercComps on 629s."

The Miller Comp

A twin-port expansion chamber is machined into the last inch of the Krieger barrel. The twin port expansion chamber is one-inch long overall and sports two ports, .750" ID; the rear chamber is larger

at .500" long with a .150" thick constrictor plate between it and the front port at .350" long. Together, the dual-port expansion chamber effectively captures and redirects powder gas to thwart felt recoil and muzzle jump.

Kent has rather unorthodox ideas about his dual-port design: "Everyone is already making a comp, but I wanted to design a compensator in a custom barrel that is big and effective. I don't think the dual-port is any more effective than a single port, but that's what people seem to want.

"I can't really tell much difference between this double comp and the single-port I usually put in a MercComp. Everybody thinks their comp is better than the next guy's, but I bet if you had everybody who makes a comp shoot a bunch of different ones with their eyes shut, they wouldn't be able to pick their own out.

"You can only make one so effective and anything else is just a bunch of hype. Make as big an expansion chamber as is practical with the biggest ports that look good and there's your comp.

"I know this sounds pretty ignorant, but I read about parabolic curves, scoops and scallops and metering ports. Well, I admit I don't know what a 'metering port' is, but I do know that when I have trapped gas, I don't want to 'meter' it, I want to get rid of it! Get rid of that gas the fastest possible way!

Custom Fixtures

A Leupold 2x scope is attached to the laboriously contoured barrel with a set of Jim Wisner's detachable "Kimber-style" scope mounts. These rings feature a small lever that allows the scope to be detached easily without the use of tools and returned to the gun while still retaining the scope's zero.

The Wisner rings fit precisely into a perfectly mated dovetail slot in the Krieger barrel that Kent milled. There is no daylight peeking sloppily around the Wisner mounts. The Miller touch is evident—flawless mating of metal to metal.

The same precise handfitting is evident in the harmonious melting of a Bo-Mar rear sight into the Redhawk's top strap.

"Looks like it was built right in, doesn't it?" beams a justifiably proud Kent Miller.

Go ahead, look at it. Look at Ichiro Nagata's detailed close-up of the Bo-Mar in the Redhawk. Bill Ruger couldn't get it this close if he put the Bo-Mar right into the raw casting!

To gild the lily, Kent checked the elevation screw of the Bo-Mar with a handsome pattern of expertly handcut fifty-line checkering.

The front sight is handmade from a block of steel. Kent shaped the sloping front base and cut a longitudinal dovetail into it for the sharply defined front sight.

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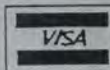
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The sight is staked in place with a hidden solid pin.

The cylinder latch is handmade by welding up a stock Ruger part and grinding it to shape. Kent then checkered the release button at 50 lines to the inch.

Highlighting the barrel for an artistic touch of class is a precisely handcut series of serrations. The serrations are cut at 40 lines to the inch, very fine and each one is parallel. The depth is consistent throughout the length of the barrel, a sign of good workmanship to watch for in checking barrel or slide serrations.

Kent round-butted the grip frame and checkered the backstrap with more of his precise 50 lpi handcut checkering. Anything coarser would be too abrasive on the backstrap, but the finely cut diamonds are an aid in obtaining a solid grip without any discomfort in recoil.

A Smith Man's Ruger

Ironically, the masterpiece of precision that is propelling Kent Miller into the national spotlight is not his specialty at all. Kent rarely reworks Rugers, he's a Smith man. Eighty percent of his Merc-Comps are on S&W Model 629s. The rest are on other Smiths.

In fact, this is only the fourth Ruger Kent's ever customized!

"Everything on that gun is taken off my Smiths. I milled the whole front of

Kent is unashamedly in love with the classic lines and timeless appeal of a handsome Smith & Wesson revolver.

that Ruger down to get rid of the bevel they put on there so that when I put my barrel on there, you can hardly see the joint. On the side, I put the same 27.5° angle and carried it right back onto the frame. That duplicates a Smith & Wesson profile," Kent explained.

Kent is unashamedly in love with the classic lines and timeless appeal of a handsome Smith & Wesson revolver.

"I don't want people to get the impression that I think Rugers are junk, because I don't," Kent allowed, "I compare a Ruger to a four-wheel-drive truck and a Smith & Wesson to a Cadillac. They both serve their owners well as long as they are used for their intended purpose and given proper maintenance.

"Rugers are engineering marvels. Any dummy can see they're physically stronger than a Smith, but at the same time I think Smith & Wesson got some

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bad publicity about being a weak revolver. It's not."

Eye-Popping Grips

A gun of this class deserves nothing but the best when it comes to grips. And if you demand nothing but the finest in handmade grips, you only need to know one name—Roy Fishpaw.

Roy Fishpaw is Fishpaw Custom Grips. A one-man shop, Roy does everything from sweeping up the sawdust from his hand-finished stocks to dealing with pesky salesman trying to con him into buying some ivory. "Had this old boy call the other day," Roy drawled in his southern twang, "Tried to sell me some ivory. I tell you what, this old boy wouldn't know good ivory if you hit him in the head with it."

Roy knows ivory. Roy knows wood. Roy knows grips.

And Roy knows quality, nothing but the finest in material will measure up to Roy's critical eye. Take the gorgeous piece of exhibition-grade French walnut that Roy selected for the Miller custom Redhawk. "It'll pop your eyes out," Roy chuckled into the phone when I called him about how the grips were coming, "We've still gotta wait a couple of weeks for the finish to cure, but I'll tell you what, this piece of French I've been holding back for something real special."

Roy asks a customer to send a tracing of his hand and also UPS the gun itself to him. He then handcrafts a set of grips to your hand and your gun. The contour of the grip is what Roy calls a "Roper style." Everything considered, it is really a Fishpaw original, but Roy is just bashful about taking credit for what is really a unique design.

"Shucks, I didn't design anything," Roy coyly confesses "I just copy what works."

The Fishpaw grip is slender at the top and wider at the bottom, which is how a revolver grip should be made. Roy's grip fills in underneath the trigger guard to help soak up what felt recoil is left after Kent's MercComp system is through reining back the Redhawk's kick.

The exquisitely figured French walnut grips are handrubbed with a special mixture of oil concocted by Roy. "Little of this, little of that," the friendly Virginian described his formula.

The Fishpaw grip is just as comfortable and pleasant to hold as it is handsome to look at.

Shooting The Redhawk

As I said at the beginning of this article, the Miller Redhawk caused quite a stir in my gunsafe. The astonishing accuracy of the gun is, well, unbelievable.

I don't really blame you if you just skip over this last part of the article and chalk it up to just more gunwriter hype. I wouldn't blame you at all, although I would hope that you recognize that *American Handgunner* doesn't indulge in puffery like most other gun magazines.

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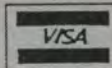
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Be that as it may, the fact is that the Kent Miller revolver shot a three-shot group at the 100 yard line of the Lake Elsinore Sportsmans Association range that measured precisely 1.40". One group does not an accuracy test make, I admit.

But I shot lots of groups, mostly at 65 yards because that's a convenient place to put a target stand at the Lake Elsinore range and it's closer than walking out to 100 to measure groups. I said I was an honest gunwriter, I didn't say anything about not being lazy.

The best load for this particular .44 Magnum consisted of a 240 gr. Nosler JHP over 23.0 grs. of Hodgdon's H-110 powder in virgin Norma cases ignited by a Winchester large pistol primer. The groups at 65 yards ran from a low of .85" for five shots to a high of 1.07".

The best factory load was the Federal 250 gr. JFP which shot into 1.63". I ran out of Federal 240 gr. JHP before I settled

I can throw rocks more accurately than the Miller Redhawk shoots this lead slug.

into serious group shooting, but Kent swears by the stuff.

"I use Federal 240 grain jacketed to test all my MercComps. That's the singularly best shooting .44 Magnum load I know of," Kent attested. Kent's test target that came with the gun measured .630" with the factory Federals shot at 25 yards.

The big Ruger also shot the new heavyweight slugs from Hornady and Sierra very well. There must be something to that 1-in-16 twist. The Hornady 300 gr. XTP shot into 1.87" while the Sierra 300 grainer opened up to 2.13". The charge behind both these behemoths was 22.5 grs. of Hodgdon's H-110.

The worst load I tried was a lead 240 gr. Keith-style SWC. It was absolutely dreadful. I can throw rocks more accurately than the Miller Redhawk shoots this lead slug. I didn't even bother to measure the pattern at 65 yards; it was sprayed all over the paper. Maybe a two-foot "group."

"I can't understand why that thing won't shoot lead," Kent was as puzzled as I was, "That's weird."

John Taffin, our Field Editor and resident expert on cast bullets for big bore revolvers, probably has the answer. He explained that if the bullet is cast too soft it will "strip" in the rifling, skidding down the barrel instead of taking the rifling. Accuracy goes to heck. John suggested I try a gas check bullet or switch to a harder alloy, but the dreaded deadline prevented further testing.

The lead load aside, the Miller custom Redhawk consistently proved that it can break the magic two-inch barrier at 50 yards which is the accepted standard of "match grade" accuracy in a revolver.

When everything was clicking just right—in other words, I was holding consistently on the sandbags, which is harder than it seems—then the Miller Ruger drilled *sub-two-inches* at an amazing 100-yards.

I found the MercComp combined with the dual-port compensator to be remarkably effective at taming recoil, even with the heavyweight 300 gr. bullets. As much as I am impressed with Kent's system, I attribute part of the soft recoil to the heft of the eight-inch barreled Redhawk—a stout 76 ozs.

Pay The Piper

To dance with this charming Redhawk, you must pay the piper. Kent Miller offers a true example of the gunsmith's art—a functional thing of beauty and utility.

I think he under-charges for his work compared to comparable quality I've seen from leading riflemakers and pistol-smiths. However, you are not paying for a "name" gun and until Kent Miller's guns have established a market value on their own merits, you will be getting a bargain.

In a few years, I predict, a Miller revolver will command an extra premium because it will then become a "name" gun.

The MercComp Redhawk as you see it here is \$2,471 on the customer's gun, excluding the magnificent Fishpaw grips. That base price includes the Leupold 2x scope and Wisner quick-detach rings.

The basic MercComp package without the many extra options we included on this showpiece is a very reasonable \$1,395 on the customer's Redhawk.

A revolver with the sort of quality of the Miller Redhawk is priceless. How much is a man's heart and soul worth? For that is what you get when Kent Miller puts his very essence into his work.

Kent does not consider himself an artist and you will find a humble man to chat with if you call him. But listen carefully to what he says because you will be hearing a voice that is all too rare in today's robotic world of molded plastic and synthetic stampings.

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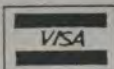
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Continued from page 16

"Really?" I asked. "Let me look at it."

I took his unloaded revolver from the bench, turned my back so he couldn't see what I was doing. I rapped hard on a table support bolt with my brass hammer.

"There now. That should do it." I said, loading the cylinder. I fired six rapid shots and opened the action.

"Damn!" he said, looking through his spotting scope. "Dead center."

"How'd you adjust a set of fixed sights?" my partner asked in a hoarse stage whisper.

"I held low right," I told him.

As we left the range, the baffled fellow approached me and asked, "Really, how do you get a group double-action?"

"I just pointed it at the target and pulled the trigger," I told him. Then I added, "It helps to burn an eight pound keg of 231 and start on a second keg. By then you'll be a pretty fair DA shot."



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John Taffin (left) and Hal Swiggett (right) flank award winner Bob Milek.

Bob Milek Wins Outstanding American Handgunner Award

Longtime gunwriter Bob Milek of Thermopolis, Wyo., won the 1991 Outstanding American Handgunner Award. The award is presented annually by the Outstanding American Handgunner Awards Foundation (OAHA) to the individual who has made a lifetime contribution to the sport of handgunning.

Milek is a writer for Petersen Publishing Co. where he serves as Field Editor of *Guns & Ammo* and *Petersen's Hunting*. A pioneer of handgun hunting, Milek worked closely with the late Steve Herett, also an Outstanding American Handgunner Award winner, to develop the .357 and .30 Herett wildcat cartridges.

Past winners of the prestigious Outstanding American Handgunner Award include such legendary names as Elmer Keith, Bill Jordan, Skeeter Skelton, Col. Charles Askins and Bill Ruger. *American Handgunner* handgun hunting editor J.D. Jones is a past recipient of the coveted bronze award.

American Handgunner field editor John Taffin was recently named president of the OAHA.

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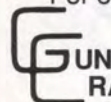
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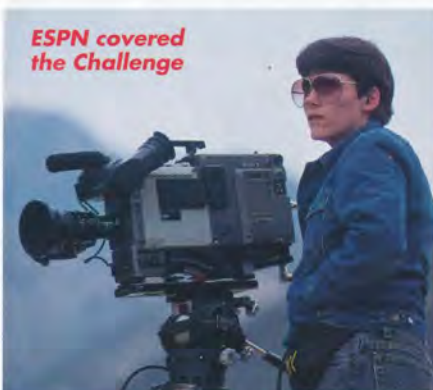
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SMOKIN' STEEL

Continued from page 63

Jerry Barnhart set a new world
record of 11.85 on Outer Limits, an
astonishing two full seconds faster than



Seen lurking around the Steel Challenge was the notorious Gang of Five from American Handgunner (L to R) Ichiro Nagata, Massad Ayoob, Dave Anderson, Nyle Leatham and Cameron Hopkins. AH had more writers and photographers competing than all other gun magazines combined!

the previous record.

Having left the field in a cloud of dust after that remarkable performance on *Outer Limits*, Jerry retired to his trailer to await the third and final day of the tournament. He held a solid lead of almost two seconds over the nearest shooter nipping at his heels, young Matt McLearn of Canada.

The rest of the pack were trailing far behind. Leading the Steel Challenge, you would think, would be cause for Jerry to celebrate. Not so.

"It's the first time I've ever been ahead in a major tournament," confided the champion shooter, "and been trying to just hold my lead. It's completely different to be behind and fighting to win it than it is to be holding the lead."

Jerry shot the ominous stage *Zig Zag* on the third and final day of the Steel Challenge. Like a sharp turn that isn't

properly banked, *Zig Zag* looks deceptively easy to negotiate, but in fact it is a death trap for those who try to go fast.

Jerry nearly went too fast and spun out.

On an early run, Jerry had a few pick-up shots that would be his throw-away run. He held a steady, controlled pace for the next couple of runs and then on his final run, disaster struck.

The third plate didn't ring to his Hornady XTP bullet! Could it be that Jerry Barnhart would spin out on very nearly the last lap of the race?

Chief Range Officer Mike Goodman had been carefully watching the plates, "I think you have an edger. Unload and show safe, and we'll go down and take a look."

Jerry looked confident, just as he had on the edger hit on *Outer Limits* the day before. Sure enough, Mike called back to the crowd, "It's there!" The audience



cy is understandable because he was shooting a state-of-the-art pistol especially customized for the Steel Challenge. The flag carrier of Team Colt shot a Colt Lightweight Commander .38 Super with the slide skeletonized to reduce the weight of the gun, complete with mount and scope, to only 49 ozs. The gun was handbuilt by the craftsmen at Bill Wilson's Arkansas gunshop.

The winning pistol sports a double-chamber compensator that Bill Wilson introduced two years ago as the distinctive Super Grade. Based on a Lightweight Commander, the .38 Super Wilson cus-

Jerry Barnhart (left) chewed up Brian Enos on the man-on-man shoot-off like Mike Tyson against a featherweight. Jerry was unstoppable as he romped through the field of the top eight pros in the Winchester-sponsored \$5,000 shoot-off.

A Hosemaster's Glossary Of Terms

break: (n.) the time between two shots; that's radical, dude, your breaks are running .14.

combat dinosaur: (n.) anyone who was named a Combat Master prior to 1980 (i.e., Mike Dalton, Mickey Fowler).

chill out: (v.) command said to nervous shooter; calm down, settle down; *Chill out, dude, take a Valium.*

dude: (n.) colloquial term of greeting among masculine shooters, usually preceded by salutation, "hey."

edger: (n.) a hit that splits a bullet on the edge of a plate.

flush: (v.) to shoot horribly; dude, you really flushed that stage.

gear up: (v.) to put on a shooting belt, holster and mag pouches.

hoser: (n.) a person who shoots very fast.

hosemaster: (n.) a person who shoots very, very, very fast.

jet: (v.) to blister a stage in record speed; named for Jethro "The Jet" Dionisio.

savage hit: (n.) a dead-center hit on a plate; hey dude, that's a *savage hit*.

savage: (v.) to hit a plate dead-center; he really *savaged* the stop plate!

speed chips: (n.) term coined by Rob Leatham for chocolate chip cookies (which he gobbles before shooting).

totally off scale: (n.) phrase to describe a good shooting performance; You hosed 'em down, dude, that was *totally off scale!*

erupted into applause as Nyle Leatham and a host of other photojournalists dashed down to capture the historical plate on film.

"That's what you call running on the edge," Nyle said as his Nikon F-4 whirred, "Look at that, exactly half a bullet right in the edge! You'll have to print this picture because *this* is the plate that won the match!"

With only one stage remaining, *Showdown*, Jerry was so strongly in the lead that only a gun jam could stop him now. He stumbled a bit getting out of the blocks to run his last race, but true to his champion's form, Jerry fought back the jitters and held it all together to win his second Steel Challenge.

Winning Gun

Jerry's confidence in his gun's accura-

tom gun boasts a super-low, super-light scope mount designed by Jerry and Bill Wilson.

The gun itself is called the "Steel Special" and it retails for \$1,865 exactly set-up just like Jerry Barnhart's. That includes a Tasco "big dot" sight like Jerry's and the new Wilson custom scope mount. (This is the price for parts and labor only; the customer must supply a base gun for the conversion, preferably a Colt or, alternatively, a Colt clone.)

Jerry Barnhart set the practical shooting world on its ear last year when he won the US Nationals with a (gasp!) optical sight. What few people know is that Jerry had been practicing with a Tasco-sighted pistol for last year's Steel Challenge, but he abandoned the red-dot gun until he could practice with it longer.



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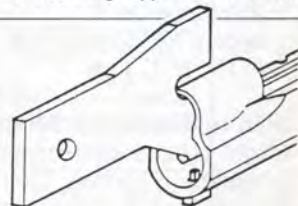
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Jerry Mikulek of Team S&W grips his box-stock 8 3/8" Model 27 way high on the frame. That's an important trick to speed shooting with a wheelgun, the Cajun confided. Plus, Jerry says, use a smooth trigger and not a serrated one.

Practice he did, and now less than a year after his astonishing win at the Nationals, the red-dot sight is the hottest thing since... since... well, I can't think of anything that's ever swept practical shooting so dynamically.

(I know what you're thinking, what about compensators? Well, Mike Plaxco introduced the comp in 1982, but he actually just imported the comp idea from South Africa where he saw one at the '81 World Shoot. Comps had been used for at least a year in IPSC matches before Plaxco finally brought the idea over to the States. Even then, the conversion to the new-fangled technology was neither as fast nor as pervasive as what we're seeing today with the surge of interest in red-dot sights. I can think of nothing that has swept the practical shooting world so quickly.)

Red-Dot Sights

But I digress. The winning gun utilized a Tasco PDP-2 scope, the early 30mm version rather than the new PDP-3 with the wider field of view. The "big dot" in the Tasco and the new Aimpoint 5000 is a 10' dot as opposed to the standard 2' dot.

The top shooters seemed to be evenly favoring the Tasco and Aimpoint. Team Smith & Wesson members Mike Plaxco shot Aimpoint an 5000 while teammate Brian Enos and Team Springfield members Rob Leatham and Doug Koenig all shot Tasco Pro-Points.

The biggest problem with the red-dot sights is getting them. Perhaps by the time this is published there will be more scopes available, but right before the Challenge there were a grand total of 30 Tasco PDP-3's available in the entire country. Aimpoint 5000's were scarce and Tasco PDP-2's with the "big dot" were also hard to find.

Supply and demand will right this situation soon, just about when even newer

scopes will be coming out!

New Optics

New scopes, what new scopes? There were two hush-hush prototypes at the Steel Challenge, a radical new Aimpoint design tentatively called the "Square View" and a humongous Coke-can-looking scope with a 40mm tube called the Shanon Sight.

The Square View is really radical. It's rectangular in shape with what looks like a Sony Watchman TV screen to look through. The field of view is huge through the roughly one-inch by inch-and-a-half viewing screen. The entire unit is made of plastic and incorporates an integral Weaver-style mount to get the unit down low on the gun.

"Put the camera away! No pictures!" stammered a very apprehensive Kim Hendon of Aimpoint when he reluctantly showed me the Square View. I don't understand why these manufacturers are so nervous about the press— would I tell you readers about an exciting new prototype if I wasn't supposed to?

The Shanon Sight is made by Asia Optical, the same company that makes the red-dot sights for Tasco. The Shanon Sight uses a 40mm tube for a whopping 44% wider field of view over the 30mm tube! The only existing prototype in the world of the Shanon Sight was mounted to a Golembieski-custom S&W revolver shot in the Steel Challenge by *American Handgunner* Photographer Extraordinaire, Ichiro Nagata.

Big Dots Get Bigger

Of course the scopes themselves aren't the only things getting bigger. It's the dot inside the scope that needs to be 10' or 12' for IPSC and speed shooting. By the way, it's possible to convert a standard scope to a big dot. If have a standard red-dot sight that you'd like to upgrade to a "big dot," then you should contact Ross Deane

(P.O. Box 802196, Santa Clarita, CA 91380 phone: 805-255-3357). Ross is offering a conversion of a Tasco to a 15' dot, or whatever size the customer specifies, for \$50. That's a whole lot cheaper than buying another sight for \$300-odd.

Then again, you might not need Ross's services. Matt McLearn, the promising young Canadian shooter who finished third in the Steel Challenge, was just settling in to practice with his brand-new 10' Aimpoint 5000 when after five shots, the dot suddenly got bigger.

"I don't know how big it is," Matt told the *Handgunner*, "but I'd guess about 25' judging by how much of the plates it covers up." Matt explained that he was a bit put off by the scope's peculiar dot at first, but after a short while he decided he really liked the giant dot.

I have an early Aimpoint 5000 prototype with a 28' dot and I think it's the hot set-up for close-range IPSC shooting. Matt obviously didn't find the mongo dot a problem with his tremendous third-place finish.

The Jet Crashes

Before the Steel Challenge began, the joke running around the match was about the new award for Top Round-Eye. It was a friendly joke, not at all a mean-spirited snipe at Filipino wunderkind Jethro "The Jet" Dionisio.

It was, in fact, a remarkable compliment to the incredible skills of this teenage superstar. All the top pros acknowledged the Jet's phenomenal talent with that little joke. It was their way of saying, "Hey, we're only shooting for second place."

The other thing people were saying was that no one can beat Jethro except Jethro. Two years ago the Jet astonished the world as a raw 17-year-old kid who very nearly won the whole match. However, the Jet's uncanny speed got away from him and he crashed and burned. The following year, 1990, Jethro was back with a vengeance and won the 10th Annual Steel Challenge hands down.

But this year was to be a repeat of 1989. Jethro's blinding speed is both an asset and a liability because he shoots so fast that if he misses, he often has already hit the stop plate before he even realizes there's something wrong.

So it was on *Roundabout*, the blink-and-you-miss-it stage for hosemasters. The break between the fourth plate and the stop plate, for someone like Jethro, is less than a quarter of a second. And when you're speeding full-throttle, a quarter of a second is an oil slick that throws you off the track before you even realize you hit it.

The Jet smoked *Roundabout*, but missed the fourth plate. Five second penalty. But that's okay, because you get a "throw away run" as the match only scores your best four out of five runs. Normally a person would back off a click

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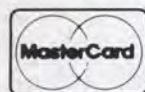
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or two after eating a five second penalty, but not the Jet. He kept the after-burners lit and, to the crowd's collective gasp of horror, missed the fourth plate again. This time there was no grace period—the five second penalty stuck.

Then it happened again on the stage called *Speed Option*. Unlike any other stage of the match, *Speed Option*, as its name implies, features one plate that is "optional." It is a 12" plate at 25 yards and if you hit it, two seconds is reduced from your time on that that run.

In reality, it is not optional. You must hit it to be competitive. Well, the Jet missed it. Twice. Now he had to eat what in essence is a two second penalty.

Seven seconds in the hole, the Jet was finished. But did that deter the Filipino hosemaster? Not in the least. Jethro won an unbelievable four out of seven stages! He finished seventh place overall, under four seconds behind Jerry Barnhart. That's the heart of a champion, the unrelenting spirit of a winner— never say die

Special Winners

In addition to awarding the winner of the Steel Challenge with a check for \$10,000 and a lovely silver cup, the match also recognizes special category winners with cash and prizes.

The top eight professionals in the match go on to compete in a special shoot-off. Jerry proved that when you're hot you're hot—he won the shoot-off and added \$5,000 cash to his winnings. Jerry is the only person in the 11 year history of the Steel Challenge to win both the main match and the shoot-off. (The shoot-off was a team event from 1981 until 1986 when the format switched to man-against-man, so Jerry's record spans '86-'91.)

The nation's fastest lawman is Bruce Piatt of New Jersey. Bruce finished 17th overall with his Weigand custom .38 Super and won the honors for Top Cop.

Top revolver went to Japanese shooter Tetsuhiro Murata who shot a box-stock Model 65 Smith with the sole modification of a Tasco Pro-Point.

Tetsuhiro is prohibited from owning a handgun in Japan, the country with the strictest gun control in the world. There are less than 60 permits to own a handgun in the entire country! Most of those belong to privileged politicians and wealthy businessmen.

Tet comes to the United States once a year and practices his shooting skills with *American Handgunner* photographer Ichiro Nagata. In Japan, Tet makes do with replica handguns that fire tiny plastic pellets.

Despite his involuntary lack of practice, Tet finished 24th overall, just one spot behind *wheelgunner extraordinaire* Jerry Mikulek.

As astonishing as it is for a man who doesn't own a gun to finish just a whisker behind the man who's been compared to the legendary Ed McGivern, that feat is certainly equalled, if not surpassed, by



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the stunning performance of special award winner Patrick Sanchez. Young Patrick, 15-years-old, won four categories: Top Tyro (first year competitor), Top International, Top Amateur (Master Class) and Top Junior!

Pat is from the Philippines and is a protege of speed shooting wunderkind Jethro "The Jet" Dionisio.

As Dave Anderson details in his accompanying sidebar, Judy Woolley of Team S&W took top honors for the second year in a row as Top Lady.

Class winners in Amateur Class were Jim O'Young (28th overall, A Class), Herb Conly (44th overall, B Class), Scott MacCaughy (102nd overall, C Class) and Matt Escobar (153rd overall, D Class).

Last and most certainly least, your reporter finished an embarrassing 68th overall and for that won Top Journalist. This proves once and for all that gunwriters really can't shoot.

The Burner

"We spent a lot of time on equipment, tuning it for these conditions," reflected Jerry Barnhart as I talked to him in the cool comfort of his spacious travel trailer. The air conditioned trailer is plushly carpeted and in the living room sits a large red mechanic's tool chest with two Dillon 1050 presses mounted on top.

The twin Dillons are set up in .38 Super and .45 ACP. The .45 press belongs to Jerry's dad, but Jerry carried it from his home in Michigan to southern California as a spare.

He was living on the range for three weeks and he couldn't afford to have his press break down, even with Dillon's "no bullshit lifetime guarantee" that promises to speed any customer—not just *The Very Important Jerry Barnhart*—free replacement parts by overnight mail if necessary.

But Jerry was taking no chances. That's why he was living on the range. "Last year I saw people coming out there in their trailers and during the match they'd go and chill out. I decided that was the way to go so I taught some extra classes and saved the money to buy a trailer," explained the two-time Steel Challenge champion.

"This year, by God, I'm going to put my time in. If I get beat, well so be it. But I'm going to put my time in," Jerry growled. It was obvious that he was sincere.

Vise Gun

Just as he wouldn't trust his trustworthy Dillon press, so too Jerry was nervous about sending his pistol through the mail. During his 500 round daily practices, his Wilson "Steel Special" version of the famous double-chamber Accu-Comp worked loose. It's just the normal wear that takes place with any autopistol, the inevitable loosening of the slide-to-frame fit.

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- Left-hand versions.

Technical Data:

- Total l. - 12.6"
- Barrel l. - 8.3"
- Wt. lbs. - 1.94
- Vel. - 430 ft/s
- Trigger pull - 1.65
- Cocking effort - 20

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tioning of the barrel to the slide that really matters for accuracy. The iron sights are mounted on the slide, so as long as the slide and barrel stay in alignment, accuracy is unaffected by the frame.

Ah yes, but Jerry's Tasco scope is mounted to the alloy Commander frame, not the slide. The fit of slide to frame is crucial when the sighting device is attached to the frame, obviously, because this relationship is what determines the coincidence of barrel alignment with sight alignment.

When Jerry's slide loosened up, his groups at 40 yards went from slightly over an inch to slightly over three inches. Most people would be content with a three-inch gun at 40 yards, but not a pro shooter.

Jerry sheepishly confessed, "I was scared to send the gun out to Bill Wilson. You know how things can happen with the mail." What he did to fix his frame will no doubt shock you, but it's the truth as Jerry told it to me on that sunny afternoon in his swank, baby blue trailer.

He put his Colt slide in a bench vise and leaned on the handle. Removing the slide, he tried it on the frame and found it was still a tad loose. Back in the massive vise it went and Jerry again applied the elbow grease to the vise.

Oops, now it's too tight! The slide barely fits on the frame, the rails pinched too closely together. Oh well, no problem, just lap that sucker in.

Jerry asked his two neighbors, Ken

He took the abrasive dust and mixed it with Firepower lubricant to form a homemade goo. Lapping compound!

Tapp and Doug Koenig, both members of Team Springfield who had also parked luxurious trailers on the range for several weeks of intense training, if he could borrow a cup of lapping compound.

Sorry, we don't have any.

Hmmmm. Ever resourceful, Jerry took a couple of Dremel tool grinding bits and pounded them into a fine powder with a hammer. He took the abrasive dust and mixed it with Firepower lubricant to form a homemade goo.

Lapping compound!

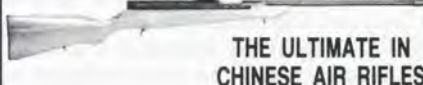
With the gummy mixture Jerry lapped his slide to the frame. The accuracy returned as the gun once again took on the tight tolerances that makes for a pro class pistol.

The groups shrank back and the rest, as they say, is history. Jerry Barnhart won the 1991 Steel Challenge with that gun!



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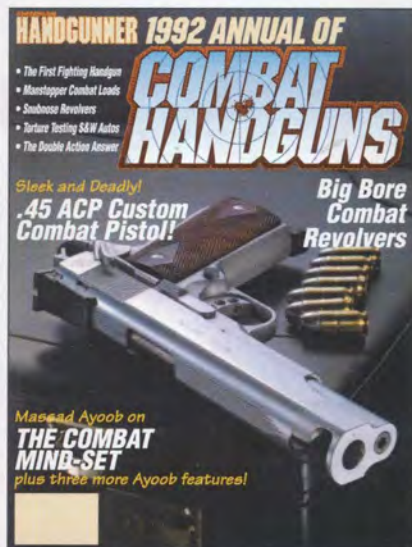
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BY JOHN TAFFIN

TAFFIN TESTS

The .357 SuperMag as chambered in the Dan Wesson heavy frame revolver of the same name or in the Ruger .357 Maximum Blackhawk or even in the Seville Silhouette Single Action, is generally regarded by

handle 180 and 200 grain bullets at normal .357 Magnum muzzle velocities. A length of 1.610" was selected and 180-200 grain bullets did indeed attain the same muzzle velocities as the .357 Magnum using 158 grain bullets.

amount. This is no simple task and certainly required a large investment in time, money, and engineering.

When the .357 SuperMag from Dan Wesson first appeared on the scene, more than one wildcatter was waiting with

the .445 SuperMag

experienced silhouetters as the finest revolver cartridge for long range shooting ever conceived.

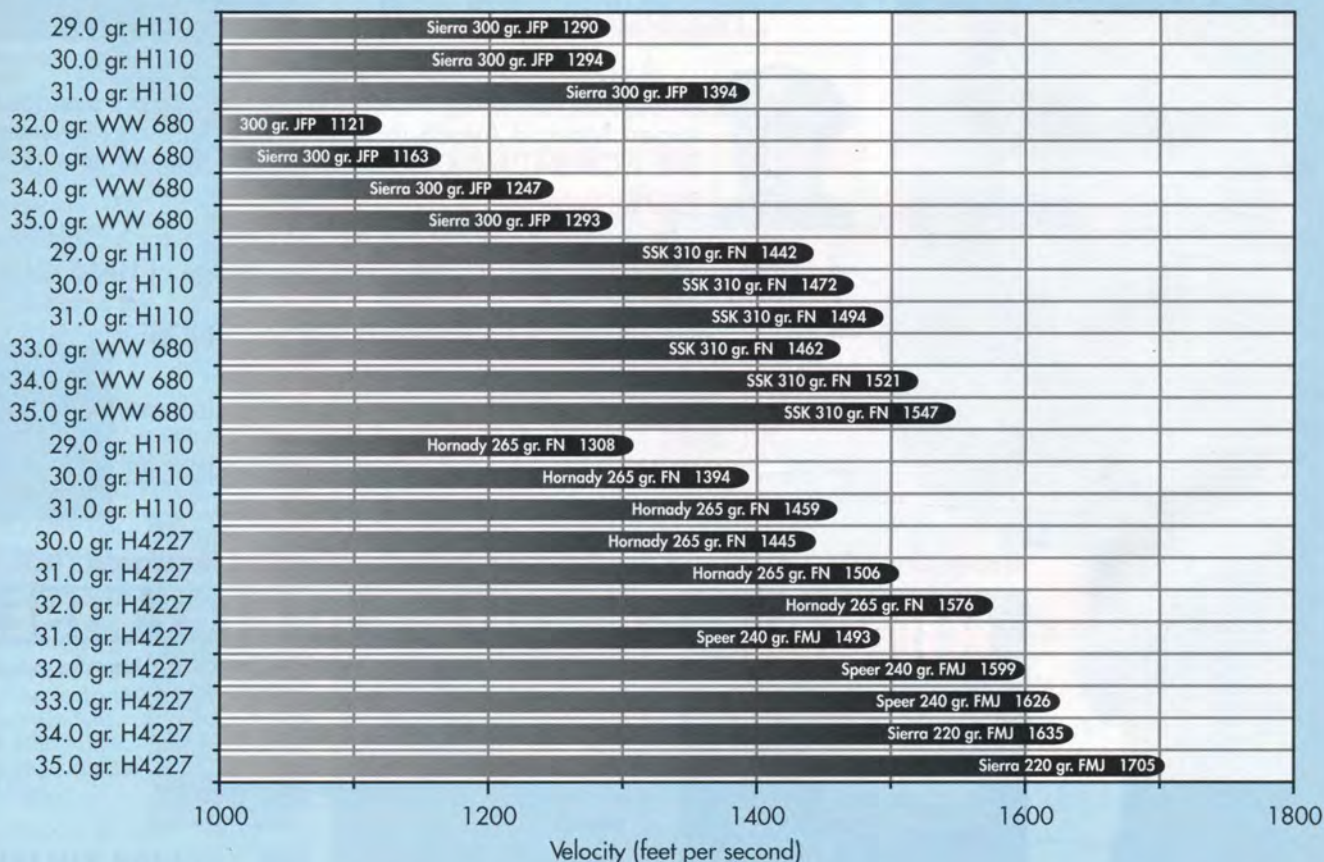
The concept was a simple one. Instead of using a big bore for silhouettes, stretch the .357 Magnum enough that it would

Though the concept was simple, carrying it out was not. It was more than a matter of chambering an existing revolver for the new cartridge as stretching the case to 1.610" also meant stretching revolver frames and cylinders a like

reamers in hand to do one thing: Turn it into a true big bore.

The largest number of these were turned into .44 SuperMags, and I had the privilege of doing extensive shooting of one such early wildcat, the .44 UltraMag.

High Performance Favorite Loads For The .445 SuperMag



WARNING: Neither the author nor **American Handgunner** accept responsibility for results obtained with this reloading information due to the inherent variation in handloading components and individual reloading techniques.

The .44 UltraMag used .444 Marlin brass cut to 1.600", and this brass being larger in diameter than .44 Magnum brass, was swaged and turned on a lathe until it matched .44 Magnum dimensions. The reason, of course, was to also allow the use of the shorter .44 Magnums in the same cylinder.

My good friend Lew Schafer created the .44 UltraMag and by careful reloading we acquired the following muzzle velocities, in cold temperatures of 20-25°, brutally cold when shooting a big bore revolver, using a six-inch barreled Dan Wesson revolver:

200 gr. Hornady JHP	1,718 fps
220 gr. Sierra FPJ	1,670 fps
240 gr. Hornady JSIL	1,596 fps
265 gr. Hornady JFP	1,495 fps
305 gr. cast bullet	1,589 fps

All loads were assembled with WW680 powder and CCI #350 Magnum Large Pistol primers with the 305 grain cast bullet giving five-shot groups of half-inch at 25 yards.

Barrels for the .44 UltraMag were standard Dan Wesson .44 Magnum barrels but because the SuperMag frames used different threads, eight-inch .44 Magnum barrels were cut to six-inches and rethreaded.

Various .44 SuperMags, based on either .444 Marlin or .30-40 Krag brass, have surfaced since, but the ".44 Stretched Magnum" became a production sixgun in 1988.

Dan Wesson and the late Elgin Gates of IHMSA, combined forces to create the .445 SuperMag. Dan Wesson supplied the guns, IHMSA supplied the brass and healthy orders for the new big bore sixgun.

As of this writing, .445 SuperMags are available only from Dan Wesson in both blue and stainless steel versions. No other revolver manufacturer has seen fit to produce the .445 Supermag, so it is either Dan Wesson or a Thompson/Center Contender single-shot.

Brass is available, but no factory loaded rounds. Brass can be acquired only from *The Silhouette* (phone 208-524-0880), and the latest run will be headstamped ".445 Gates" in memory of its creator.

Problems surfaced early with the .445 SuperMag revolver and also with the .445 brass. The first guns had oversize cylinders and the brass was not properly annealed. Problems with sizing .445 SuperMag brass has also resulted whether using either .445 or .44 Magnum carbide sizing dies both of which often raise a sharp ring of metal right above the base of the fired shell.

Standard non-carbide .44 Magnum sizing dies will give better results. In my reloading of the .445, I use neither .445 nor .44 Magnum sizing dies but instead opt for a custom RCBS .44 Schafer Ultra-

Mag sizing die that puts a slight taper on the case from base to mouth, and is much easier on brass.

It is somewhat of a nuisance to use as cases must be lubed and virtually hand fed into the very sharp, very flat base of the sizing die, but the results are well worth it. Most sizing dies have a slight funnel shape at the bottom to assist entrance of the case mouth; the .44 UltraMag die does not.

Except for the case-sizing cautions, reloading the .44 SuperMag is the same as for reloading the .44 Magnum. A good heavy crimp is required both to keep bullets from moving forward in recoil as the big sixgun is fired, and also to get the powder started burning properly. Powder selection is a little different as I stay with H4227, WW296, H110, WW680, and AA#1680, staying away from any faster burning powders.

The same bullets that work in the .44 Magnum also work well in the .44 SuperMag with my preference being for the heavier bullets in the 290 to 310 grain weight range.

The .44 SuperMag is an exceptionally accurate cartridge and this accuracy is even further enhanced by the use of heavyweight bullets such as the SSK J.D. Jones designed #310.429 flat point, the NEI #295.429 GC (available from BRP Bullets, 1210 Alexander Road, Dept. AH, Colorado Springs, CO 80909) or Sierra's 300 gr. JFP. Speer also has a 300 gr. bullet in the works but I have not yet received any for testing as this is written.

Large Rifle primers are usually recommended for the .445 UltraMag/SuperMag/Gates, but I have yet to determine a nickel's worth of difference between the use of Large Rifle Primers and Magnum Pistol Primers. Muzzle velocities and accuracy are both virtually identical whether Federal or CCI Large Rifle Primers, or Federal or CCI Magnum Pistol Primers are used.

The .445 SuperMag has been touted as a silhouette revolver and it is *if* properly loaded. It makes little sense to load it to the hilt and try to shoot 40, 60, or 80 targets with it. Even with the 10-inch barreled version, which is just a shade under four pounds, recoil can be quite disconcerting with full house loads.

For silhouetting, I would stay at 1,650 fps or less with the 220 gr. Sierra silhouette bullet or 1,500 fps with the 240 Speer silhouette bullet. Using the 220 gr. Sierra and 34.0 grs. of H4227, muzzle velocity is 1,648 fps according to the triple sky screens of my Oehler Model 35P chronograph.

The same load in an eight-inch barrel goes 1,635 fps, six-inch gives 1,541 fps, and the Super Fourteen T/C Contender milks it for all it is worth and yields just barely over 2,000 fps.

With the 240 Speer silhouette bullet, I use either 33.0 grs. of H110, 31.0 grs. of

H4227, or 38.0 grs. of WW680 for the 1,500 fps muzzle velocity range from the 10-inch barreled Dan Wesson. These same loads will do 1,350 to 1,450 fps in the six-inch and eight-inch barreled DW's and right around 1,850 in the Super Fourteen.

The heavier weight bullets really make the .445 worthwhile and the replacing of the 10-inch standard barrel or eight-inch heavy barrel that were standard equipment with my early .445 Dan Wesson with a standard weight six-inch barrel makes the .445 handle as easily as a Smith & Wesson Model 29.

Well, real close anyway. The shorter barrel transforms the big Dan Wesson from a clumsy, heavy competition pistol to a very packable hunting pistol.

Hunting with the .445 SuperMag means heavyweight bullets such as the 265 gr. Hornady JFP, the 300 gr. Sierra JFP, or cast bullets such as NEI's 295 gr. Keith style or SSK's 310 gr. flat point. Using 31.0 grs. of H110 with the latter three bullets in the 300 gr. weight range yields impressive muzzle velocities with the six-inch barreled Dan Wesson.

Even with this relatively short barrel length, the 300 gr. cast bullets will go 1,500 fps giving a lot of power from a small package, or the 300 gr. Sierra will do 1,300 fps with the same load. For a slightly less powerful load, try 34.0 grs. of WW680 with either of the 300 gr. bullets.

As this is written, the future of the Dan Wesson .445 SuperMag sixgun is in doubt, as the Dan Wesson company is experiencing serious financial difficulties and may or may not survive. If they do not survive, it will be a sad day indeed for silhouetters and sixgunners everywhere.

If the .445 SuperMag disappears, .357 SuperMag Rugers, Sevilles, or Dan Wessons, as well as .375 SuperMag Sevilles and Dan Wessons can be readily converted to the bigger, and better for hunting situations, .445 SuperMag.

Hamilton Bowen (Bowen Classic Arms, P.O. Box 67, Dept. H, Louisville, TN, 37777, Phone 615-984-3583) can convert single action Ruger .357 Maximums, and I assume Sevilles also, to .445 SuperMag, and Lew Schafer (Three K Industries, 1028 S. Harrison St., Dept AH, Moscow, ID 83843, Phone 208-882-5453) can expertly transform .357 SuperMag and .375 SuperMag sixguns to his .44 UltraMag. Schafer should also be able to supply .44 UltraMag sizing dies.

Presently, my .445 SuperMag is equipped with the standard six-inch barrel. I like it so much, that the 10-inch and eight-inch barrels may be relegated to a long tenure in my parts box. UPS just dropped off 200 rounds of the latest brass with the .445 Gates headstamp. Time to go back to the reloading bench. Hunting season is just around the corner.



PINSHOOTERS

Continued from page 43

Chance 1990.

Other revolver shooters fared well at Second Chance '90. Miculek's Smith & Wesson teammate Brian Enos shot his .357 Magnum well enough to grab first place in the MB Stock category, with an aggregate time of 21 seconds flat for the best five of six tables, just edging out speedster Jerry Barnhart's time of 21.1.

Enos is one of the very few top shooters who is truly ambidextrous between the revolving and auto-loading shooting systems. It was my first year at Second Chance, and I shot strictly revolvers for all the handgun events.

I had the good fortune to win the first of the big money man-on-man shoot-offs and I was rewarded by having Rich Davis hand me a Master Blaster patch and then dump 20 hundred-dollar bills over my head, which of course I immediately groveled up. When we're talking that kind of scratch, I ain't proud!

I also won two guns, one for finishing 13th in the OSS (Ordinary Standard Shooter) main event, another for my second place OSS performance (9th overall) in the 8-pin revolver mandatory reload match.

Needless to say, my "old-fashioned" wheelguns and I will be back next year!

Which Wheelgun?

What kind of revolver should you shoot bowling pins with? Well, Jerry Miculek has done his best work with plain-Jane Smith & Wesson Model 27 .357 Magnums with 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch tubes.

Jerry always has preferred a long sight radius for serious work, and this year he brought new Model 27s specially fitted with long, skinny barrels of about 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

For pins, he uses heavy cast lead slugs loaded on the warm side. Teammate Enos also used a Smith & Wesson .357 and heavy-bullet loads.

For my money, though, the .45 ACP wheelgun is better for most shooters. The classic Smith & Wesson 1955 Target Model 25-2 is my first choice for pins. I've got three of them in active service.

The first is essentially stock, modified only with Millett sights and an action hone by armorer Rick Devoid.

The second is just the opposite—it's been completely tricked out by Oklahoma gunsmith John Nowlin, and has a heavy Shilen match barrel with detachable underlug, Millett sights, porting, Metaloy hard-chrome finish, and an incredibly smooth double-action trigger pull.

I designed my third 25-2 for both competition and occasional concealed carry. Chris Peters had the barrel cut to four inches, then tuned up the action, rendering it double-action only and extremely smooth.

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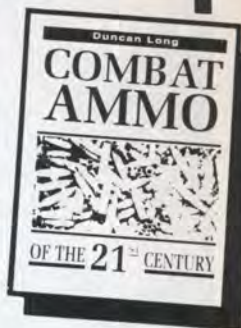
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JHPs, and carried in a Ted Blocker LFI Concealment Rig, this gun accompanied me during the drive between my cabin and the Second Chance range.

I used the Nowlin gun as my primary gun for the shoot-offs and the Pin Gun main event, backed up by either of the other two .45s. For the Stock Gun five-pin match, I shot the stock 25-2 that Ricky did for me, and backed it up with the Peters gun.

For the 8-pin reload event I used the Nowlin gun, and willingly suffered the 0.2-second penalty for having more than a 4-inch stock barrel. It was well worth it to have that big heavy barrel hanging out there to help hold the gun on target with the fast cranking I was doing on the trigger.

Unusual Sixguns

Some highly unusual sixguns surfaced at Second Chance. Pennsylvania gunsmith Rick Gould and buddy Bob Fort were sporting Smith L-frames re-chambered to hold .38 Super cartridges in full-moon clips. I'm not sure those lighter bullets are the optimum for pins, but they would be great for fast-reloading at IPSC revolver matches.

Although I never personally saw it, there was a seven-shot .357 Magnum custom built on a Smith N-frame being used at Second Chance, too!

Of course, there's nothing that says you can't win a pin match with other wheelguns—my shooting buddy Jim Gallagher wins lots of local matches with a well-worn Model 57 .41 Magnum stoked with 210 grain lead bullets loaded to moderate velocities.

The early Second Chance wheelgun victories were won mostly with Smith & Wesson Model 29 .44 Magnums, loaded down a bit. Even with speedloaders, these rimmed cartridges don't afford the fast-reloading you get with .45 ACP and full-moon clips, but you can count on them for six reliably decisive hits if you do your part as pistolero.

If you're a semi-auto shooter and you want to try the revolving route to blasting wood, you'll need as much practice as you can get to help "groove" that heavy double-action pull into your subconscious.

My own pre-match practice sessions include shooting double-action at bulls-eye targets at 25 yards. At that range you'll know in a hurry if you're jerking your shots around.

Besides, bowling pins at 25 feet look pretty big compared to a three-inch black bull at three times that distance. It's a psychological thing, but it works for me.

When you get good at it, you'll really enjoy shooting pins with a revolver. There is something almost sensual about rolling a really nice double-action trigger as you move from pin to pin.

And whatever you do, try not to be too hard on those guys who insist on spraying lead around with those new-fangled automatics!

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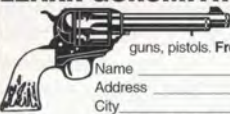
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Hi-Power— given the proper bullet weight, of course.

Hodgdon is said to be working with Paul Miller of **Colorado Cast Bullets**. Paul has been shooting 9mm Major for years and he probably knows more about the cartridge than anyone in America.

Among the Archie Bunkers of the world, it has always been axiomatic that women cannot compete equally with men in pistol shooting. The results of every match from the Bianchi Cup to Second Chance certainly seem to verify this sexist claim.

Indeed, the match organizers even tacitly endorse this discriminating notion of women's inferiority by offering a special prize for *Top Lady*. (I always thought *Best Bimbo* had a better ring to it.)

Jeer no more, guys, for Judy Woolley of **Team Smith & Wesson** finished a very strong second place in the recent **BuckMaster** competition, just a whisker behind match winner Blackie Sleva. Judy beat the pants off such well-respected men as two-time Masters winner Allen Fulford and three-time Bianchi Cup champ Mickey Fowler.

Oh, incidentally, Judy shot a Smith Model 629DX .44 Magnum revolver with full-charge factory ammo. Mickey fired a .44 Magnum **Freedom Arms** revolver, as did match winner Blackie.

Attention Government Model lovers, there is now a heavy-duty replacement blade with tritium inserts for the **Bo-Mar** rear sight. Gunsmith installation is

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INSIDER

continued from page 126

the high forties."

Jinks confirmed that he also suspects the chamber pressure will be high— about 47,000 CUP. By way of comparison, consider the following auto pistol SAAMI pressure specifications for "Maximum Product Average":

9mm Luger	35,700 CUP
.38 Super +P	35,700 CUP
.45 ACP	19,900 CUP
.380 Auto	18,900 CUP

Kramer said that the .356 TSW will have by far the highest chamber pressure of any auto pistol cartridge Federal makes.

Given that we're talking about a pressure greater than even a .44 Magnum (43,500 CUP), how will the S&W pistols handle it?

"Through special heat treatment of the frames," Jinks said.

Take heart, you who shoot the bad-boy cartridge banned by **USPSA**, 9mm Major— apparently your guns only need a "special heat treatment" to be safe.

However, maybe all those brouhaha over the 9mm Major will be resolved soon. **Hodgdon Powder Co.** told me that they have trademarked the name "Major Nine" for a new propellant to be introduced in January, 1992. If all goes according to plan, you'll be able to make major with your Model 59 or Browning

required for the blade with Trijicon inserts, available exclusively from **Tooltech Gunsights**. For info, call (313) 628-1811 or write them at 729 Glaspie St., Oxford, MI 48371.

Gene DeSantis, owner and namesake of **DeSantis Holsters And Leathergoods Co.**, called me the other day to see if I'd received his rather dry press release about some lawsuit he had won.

"It's boring, Gene, give me a juicy quote to put in the *Insider* and I'll mention your press release," I yawned. Editors get jaded, which makes them rude, after seeing their mailbox fill up daily with this self-serving pap that companies call news.

The line was silent for a moment and then Gene cut loose:

"Those lying sons of bitches tried to cheat me! They altered documents and forged papers, but they didn't convince the jury one iota!"

That's more like it! What got Gene's blood up was an award from United States District Court which held that DeSantis' US Patent 4,966,320 for the popular **Gunny Sack™** had been infringed.

"The finding of intentional infringement allows DeSantis' attorneys to move for an award of all DeSantis' attorney fees associated with the lawsuit, and for trebling of the jury's damage award," the press release stated.

Happy birthday to the greatest living gun designer! William Batterman Ruger, founder of **Sturm, Ruger & Co.**, accrued

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75 years of age in June.

If you're eagerly awaiting news on the progress of the wide-body frames from **Chip McCormick, Wilson's Gun Shop** and **Caspian Arms**, here it is:

Caspian Arms hired Wil Schuemann, inventor of the **Hybrid** system, to design their frame for them, and molds should be going to the casting house by the time you read this.

Bill Wilson hired George Huening, noted pistolsmith from **World Class Pistols** and inventor of the carbonfiber scope mount, to design the Wilson frame. The first prototype was finished in June and test firing has already begun. The prototype is in 9mm Luger.

Chip McCormick had yet to complete his prototype when I spoke to him shortly before the deadline for this issue. I expect these frame to come on the market in precisely the sequence they are listed here.

Congratulations go out to pistolsmith Ed Brown who was voted the Outstanding Pistolsmith of 1991 by his peers in the **American Pistolsmiths Guild**. In addition to Ed's talents as a gunmaker, he turns a phrase nicely too. Ed wrote an informative article that drew a lot of reader praise in the May/June issue and we have another in store for you next issue.

Pick which form of government the USPSA board of directors most closely resembles: democracy, theocracy or dictatorship? *Bzzzzz*. Time's up, the correct answer is dictatorship.

At a board meeting in Reno, the board passed a resolution to ban any member from observing their meetings. At a prior board meeting, they resolved to destroy all ballots from the members' election for USPSA president.

There you go, guys— no pesky members to snoop on how *their* elected representatives conduct *their* business! And if there's any question if they really are elected, why, we'll just burn the ballots!

Coming soon— USPSA Thought Police.

Chuck Bane at **Bull-X** has a new bullet designed specifically for IPSC shooting with .40 S&W or 10mm. The truncated cone .40 caliber slug weighs a perfect

140 grs. Loaded up to about 1,285 fps for a 180 power factor, the lightweight Bull-X bullet should be a real dandy.

Proving once again that the only person who can successfully compete with Mike Dillon is Mike Dillon, the innovative firm of **Dillon Precision** will have a new press called the RL-650 in time for Christmas.

Said to fall between the 550-B and the top-of-the-line 1050, the 650 will have automatic indexing and will handle rifle cases (which the 1050 can't). It will not have a case feeder, but that could be an upgradeable option. The anticipated retail price is in the \$700 bracket which puts it closer to the 1050 than the 550.



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FBI SAYS RECALL OF S&W 10mm IS "EXTRAORDINARY BUT NECESSARY"

The FBI has recalled all 10mm pistols issued to field agents following several instances of mechanical malfunction both in training and the field.

The FBI pistol being recalled is the **Smith & Wesson** Model 1076 and until the guns are repaired, the FBI will issue the agents affected by the recall with either **SIG** or **Beretta** 9mm pistols, an FBI spokesman said.

FBI director William S. Sessions said concern for the safety of agents prompted the recall, which he described as "extraordinary— but necessary— until the weapon's reliability can be determined," an FBI news release stated.

S&W vice-president Robert L. Scott acknowledged that the Model 1076 produced under a special contract for the FBI is at fault. Specifically, Scott said the "special trigger mechanism," designed by S&W to accommodate an FBI request, has been determined to be the cause of the pistol's failures.

Scott confirmed an independent report of an incident during a bank robbery in Miami which provoked the recall of the approximately 750 S&W pistols in the field.

A team of FBI agents was staking out a bank in Miami, Fla., when they ambushed a bank robber. An arrest was made without shots being fired.

Later on, one of the agents decided to unload his S&W 1076 pistol and discovered the slide was locked shut. When the slide could not be retracted, the agent attempted to clear the pistol by firing it, however, the trigger was frozen and the gun could not be fired.

One can imagine a certain chill must have run down the agent's spine when he realized he had stopped a bank robbery with a totally useless pistol!

The pistol was returned to the FBI in Quantico, Va., where it was disassembled, Scott said, and then shipped to Smith & Wesson for further investigation.

S&W then determined the trigger was causing the gun to seize up, Scott said.

At this point, Scott said, the FBI issued the recall for the Smith pistols. He candidly acknowledged that there had been two similar failures on the training range, but only the one incident in the field.

The FBI has accepted about 2,000 pistols from S&W, however, only about 750 are actually in the field. Newly-assigned agents from the training academy and certain special assignments carry the 1076, according to the FBI.

The *Insider* asked FBI spokesman Steve Markhardt at the Bureau's Washington, DC, headquarters who is going to pay for all this. There is the actual cost of the repairs to 750 pistols plus shipping, handling and a wide range of associated costs from re-training the new agents to re-issuing replacement guns.

"It will come out of the FBI budget," Markhardt told me during an exclusive interview.

"As far as I understand it, the contract with Smith & Wesson is just to produce guns," Markhardt said as he went on to state that he does not think S&W is obligated to pay for fixing the broken guns.

However, Scott said, "The FBI is not going to be charged anything by us for anything we do to the guns."

The Bureau has authorized acquisition of either Beretta 92s or SIG P-226s while their Smiths are in for service, a spokesman in the Firearms Training Unit said.

"Some of the agents were cross-trained with a service revolver," Markhardt explained, "There's a good chance that what we may do is re-train them to fire the revolver. For the classes that went through the academy with only the semi-auto, we haven't decided what to do yet."

We will keep you posted on developments with the FBI recall, however, I would like to thank Bob Scott of S&W for his forthright and open discussion of the situation. It is one thing to make excuses and quite another to accept one's responsibilities and take action to correct the problem. Well done, Smith & Wesson.

Did you hear about the new .17 Rimfire Magnum from **Federal Cartridge**? This the .22 Win. Mag. necked down to .17 caliber. The little rimfire sends its 20 grain slug, which looks like a grain of rice, at a screeching 2,700 fps.

I look for Harry Sanford at **AMT** to be the first to chamber an auto pistol for the new .17 Rimfire Magnum. His nifty little AutoMag II in .22 Win. Mag. needs nothing more than a .17 caliber barrel to work. I understand **Thompson/Center** will also chamber a Contender barrel for the hot little .17 RM.

Long guns will be available initially from **Ruger**, **Marlin** and— my insider source for this info— **Mauser**.

Dick Cantu of the Mauser, importing firm **Precision Imports** told me that the deal is set to make a simultaneous introduction of guns and the new cartridge at the industry trade show in January.

From our *It Could Be Worse Dept.* comes the news that the Labour party in Great Britain promised that if it comes to power, it will outlaw traditional fox hunting. According to *Firearms News*, the Labour pledge is to ban "any hunting in which the quarry is chased with an aim to kill at the end of the chase." The leftist party claims it does not seek to ban shooting of birds and big game (snicker, snicker).

And to think that here in America we only have to deal with politicians who merely want to ban handguns, long guns, assault guns, and 15 round magazines.

A con man has been working a scam on gun dealers by posing as the new president of **Glaser Safety Slugs** and hawking fake Glaser ammo. Driving around the pacific northwest in a van marked in huge letters "Glaser," the con man hits local gunshops and offers to sell them quantities of Glaser Safety Slugs at a special discount price.

Kurt Cannon, the real president of Glaser, warns that the crook is a "real smooth talker and slick salesman," but the product he's selling is totally bogus. Cannon has taken out full-page ads in *The Gun List* and *Shotgun News*, two tabloids for gun dealers, alerting gunshops to the potential ripoff.

According to a report in the *St. Petersburg Times*, the **Glock** pistol "is involved in more accidental shootings than other guns." The *Times* said a Glock 17 was used May 23, 1991, in an accidental shooting when Tampa vice officer Dolvin W. "Bill" Todd unintentionally shot a surrendering drug suspect.

"Investigators have not determined what caused the gun to fire, but one shot went through the driver's window striking (the suspect) in the upper left arm. Todd's gun, an Austrian-made Glock 17, has a reputation for an overly sensitive trigger," the newspaper reported.

(Shhhh. Don't tell anyone in Tampa, but simple obedience to Rule Three— keep your finger off the damn trigger— would prevent this sort of boo-boo.)

Regular readers of the *Insider* will recall my previous reports on the amazing chameleon cartridge from **Smith & Wesson** called the .356 TSW (Team Smith & Wesson). First it was going to be a 9x21 case headstamped ".356 TSW," but then S&W changed it to 9x22 presumably because John Ricco at **C.P. Bullets** stole the thunder with his "+P+ 9x21 CP."

Now the latest word is that the .356 TSW will be a 9x21^{1/2}!

Team S&W manager Roy Jinks revealed that **Federal Cartridge** will make the .356 TSW and guns for the new round will be available by the end of the year from the **S&W Performance Center**.

Bob Kramer, an engineer at Federal, said the .356 TSW will fire a 135 gr. bullet at sufficient velocity to make major in IPSC. When asked what he anticipated the chamber pressure to be, he said, "In

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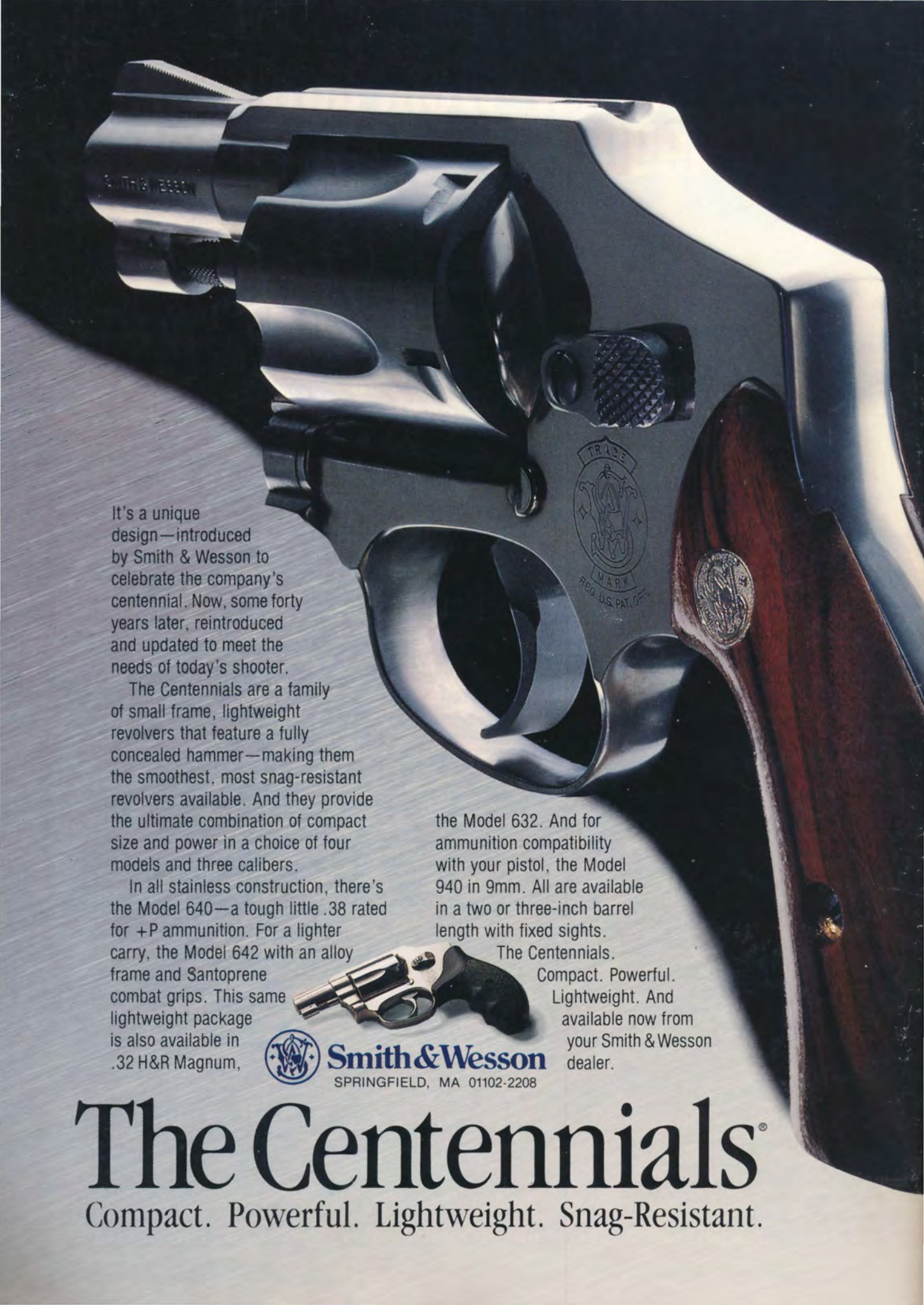
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